

Sentinel vehicle destroyed in fire, cause unknown

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
allegra@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Early Monday morning, the car long used by The Big Bend Sentinel to transport newspapers burst into flames outside the Sentinel office, leaving little more than a burned-out shell, with no immediately discernible cause.

Marfa Fire Chief Gary Mitschke called the fire a “mystery” — at the time of the incident, the car had been sitting unused for days.

“It is odd,” he said. “It had been sitting there — it’s not like the engine was hot. It was cold.”

Mitschke surmised the blaze started in the front seat area of the vehicle, since that would have been the location of possible heat sources, but said there was too much damage to the vehicle to tell much else.

“You have to have a heat source to get a fire started, and the only thing we were aware of in there was the battery and electrical — beyond that, there was no way to tell,” he said. “There’s too much damage there.”

Sentinel employee Maria Gerardo, who used the 2011 Mercury Mariner each week to retrieve newspapers from a printing press in Monahans, said she arrived at the office shortly before 7 a.m. on Monday morning and parked behind the vehicle — immediately, she smelled smoke. But it was a foggy morning, she said, and she didn’t see anything burning.

A few minutes later, Sentinel employee Jessica Mercado went to retrieve towels from the front seat of the Mariner and found smoke billowing out of the car’s cabin — she ran back into the building to alert her coworkers. Gerardo said the smoke seemed to be coming from behind the car’s passenger seat. There was cardboard in the car, she said, which could have helped the fire spread in the car’s interior.

Mercado tried to subdue the flames with a fire extinguisher, but was unsuccessful. That’s when Gerardo told her to step back and wait for help — she had already called 911. The fire department arrived about 10 minutes later, at 7:15 a.m., to put out the fire.

The car had last been driven the previous Thursday, said Gerardo. “Since then, it hadn’t moved at all,” she said.

“It was scary,” added Gerardo. “Afterwards I was thinking, what if that had happened with us driving it?”

Mitschke said that unless more information emerges, the cause of the fire will remain unknown.

“It is kind of a mystery,” he said. “Maybe we learn more down the road.”



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell
In rural Far West Texas, Justices of the Peace confront a death-investigation system that's failing unknown migrants. Read on pages 8 - 11.
Previous Presidio County Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 Democrat David Beebe places commemorative metal crosses at the gravesites of two unidentified migrants he buried during his tenure in Marfa's Cementerio De La Merced.

Dollar General proceeds with third Alpine store after threatening legal action

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
allegra@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — Despite pushback from locals and resistance from city officials, Dollar General will build a third Alpine location after threatening the city with legal action in order to obtain a building permit.

The location, at 1911 N State Hwy 118, will be Alpine’s fourth dollar store altogether — the city is currently home to a Family Dollar in addition to two Dollar General stores.

Locals lined up at a City Council meeting in October to protest the company expanding its considerable presence in the city of 6,000, voicing concerns about noise, light, traffic, safety and dwindling grocery options. Some residents have pointed to the documented impact of dollar

stores in rural and low-income areas — the proliferation of the stores has been linked to the loss of other businesses, including traditional grocery stores, which critics say is deepening problems of food inequity.

In response to the loud resistance from locals, Alpine City Council attempted to stall the building plans — at the meeting in October, council took no action on a replat being sought by the company to consolidate 10 parcels into one, which was necessary for construction to move forward. “Council decided to listen to what the residents had to say,” Mayor Catherine Eaves told *The Big Bend Sentinel* at the time.

But according to Alpine City Attorney Rod Ponton, the city could not legally deny the replat or refuse to issue a building permit for the location. In a press release circulated by the

City of Alpine on Friday, Ponton cited the Texas Local Government Code in stating that replat applications conforming to applicable state and city regulations must be approved — that being the case, the application was approved on December 8, he said.

The city’s hesitance to issue a building permit had already placed it on the wrong side of the law, Ponton said. When the city attorney sent a letter explaining that the city had taken no action on the replat request and did not wish to issue a permit, Dollar General responded on November 16 by threatening legal action against the city. And if taken to court, the city would not have had a leg to stand on, legally speaking.

“Cities can’t block legal businesses doing legal things on private property if they’re otherwise

(Continued on page 2)

Big Bend Regional Hospital District discusses grant funding for telehealth, psychotherapy

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — At Monday’s meeting of the Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD), the board discussed two topics that they’ve been hoping to tackle for a long time: expanding access to telehealth options and mental healthcare services in the Big Bend. Executive Director J.D. Newsom proposed pursuing grants in each arena — ultimately, the board decided to apply for a grant to fund a telemedicine kiosk in Terlingua and opted to table one that could increase access to psychotherapy.

Newsom told the board on Monday that he’d like to seek additional funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture this year by applying to a grant specifically targeting telemedicine. Back in June, the BBRHD announced that

they had received \$5.5 million in funding from the USDA toward healthcare in Presidio and Terlingua. Eventually, that funding will go to the creation of an after-hours clinic in Presidio and a clinic in Terlingua, which hasn’t been served by traditional healthcare services in over 20 years.

For this year’s round of USDA rural medicine funding, the BBRHD has been looking into a telemedicine unit from OnMed that can diagnose — and treat — certain health issues remotely. OnMed describes its products as “self-contained telemedicine kiosks” —

patients are seen via videocall by a clinician and then by a pharmacist, who can dispense medication through the ATM-style machine.

The grant application hasn’t been written yet, but the board is tentatively planning to pilot the telemedicine program in Terlingua, since the program targets extremely rural areas. The

major downside of the OnMed proposal is that it’s expensive — the USDA grant caps off at \$1 million, which would only fund licensing fees for a single machine for three years.

The OnMed kiosk might help solve the perpetual problem of attracting healthcare professionals to live in the Big Bend, but questions about its feasibility lingered. The units have been successful in places like college campuses, where regular use pays off — a small and self-reliant community like Terlingua might not attract the traffic needed to justify the cost. “An important part of the discussion is, ‘Is this too much for a small community?’” Newsom wondered.

Board Chair Buddy Cavness thought it wouldn’t hurt to put together a grant application, which, if successful, would require a 50% funding match.

(Continued on page 3)

Presidio moves to update 911 addresses, as current system stalls emergency response

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — At last week’s Presidio City Council meeting, representatives from the Rio Grande Council of Governments (RIOCOG) attended virtually and in person to discuss the process of updating the city’s 911 address system. Presidio doesn’t have standardized block numbers or street names, resulting in a lot of home delivery mishaps and — more seriously — problems for first responders trying to find the source of an emergency call.

Council last discussed the issue back in July, when the project was first announced. Presidio County has pushed improvements to its 911 county dispatch system over the past few years — the county-wide reverse 911 system, which

can text residents in case of an emergency, is widely regarded as state-of-the-art, and the city of Marfa has already completed the process of standardizing and updating home addresses.

RIOCOG’s Jesus Hermosillo — who also serves as a Presidio first responder — gave a brief presentation on some of the issues facing the city’s address system. Regional RIOCOG reps wanted input from folks in Presidio about how they wanted to approach the project. “Most of these problems have existed for years, if not decades,” Hermosillo said.

There are quite a few issues Presidio will have to navigate creatively: there’s no standardized system for declaring a road a “street” or an “avenue,” which in many cities is defined by whether the route runs east to west or north to south. Some streets have multiple names —

Rosedale Avenue starts on the west side of town as an avenue, then becomes a street through the heart of the city and on the east side, a drive.

Some streets are misspelled — Puerto Rico Street becomes Porto Rico street behind Poncho’s Pizza. First Street and 1st Street are on opposite sides of town. There are several Gonzales streets, none of which are connected. “As it stands, there is no standardization within city limits — we have a random array of street names,” Hermosillo said.

To make matters worse, city and county residents don’t have a reliable way of looking up what their address should be — property addresses are inconsistently reported to the County Appraisal District, whose maps differ from Google Maps or homeowners’ plat maps.

(Continued on page 2)

Marfa ISD to survey parents on 4-day school week

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
allegra@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — The Marfa Independent School Board of Trustees will begin soliciting feedback from parents as it considers implementing a four-day school week in the 2023-24 school year.

At Monday night’s board meeting, Superintendent Oscar Aguero said the measure is being considered in light of feedback from teachers, who have consistently said they need more time for planning and preparation in the school week. Other Texas school districts, including Minerals Wells and Chico ISDs, have switched to the four-day week in response to these concerns, said Aguero, noting it also serves as a teacher recruitment tool.

“They were having the same problems that we were having,” he said. “The teachers are working way too many hours afterwards and the next day.”

A four-day school week would not amount to a permanent long weekend, said Aguero — If the schedule were implemented, Friday would serve as a day for tutoring, lesson planning, and parent-teacher conferences. In his research, he’d found that student performance didn’t suffer as long as they were receiving roughly 30 hours of instruction per week, and that student scores only dipped when Fridays were not set aside for supplemental tutoring. “If the Friday is planned and dedicated to actually improve instruction for the following week, then it’s worth taking that day to give to teachers,” said Aguero. “If it is just a day off, then there was no benefit for the kids — then it becomes just a benefit for adults.”

Aguero had already spoken to teachers and to the student council about the plan — the only group he hadn’t sought feedback from was the parents, who will be surveyed next.

Bus transportation would still be available on Fridays to take kids to campus, said Aguero, who suggested a model of tutoring in the mornings so teachers could have the afternoon for planning.

Board President Teresa Nuñez expressed reservations about the modified schedule. “At first I was kind of for it, but I’m kind of leaning against it,” she said. Because it is a fairly new concept, there is a shortage of data on the model’s effectiveness, she argued, and the relative lack of structure could leave parents scrambling to find babysitters and allow kids with more free time to get into trouble. (Aguero noted kids already had free weekends and summers — and Fridays under the proposed model would not be entirely free.)

“To me, the summers are already planned out,” said Nuñez. “They know they’ll have somebody during the summer to watch them.”

Nuñez also raised the issue of school lunches — the district serves a lot of kids from low-income families who depend on the school for food.

“It’s not an off day,” countered Board Secretary Rene Gonzales, noting the district would still be providing transport and some degree of programming for students.

Ultimately, the board decided to make a survey for parents and to revisit the issue in the new year. Vice President Yolanda Jurado anticipated some resistance. “I think we’re going to have some pushback from some of the parents,” she said. “They’re not off on Fridays. Most people are not off.”

In the districts that had

(Continued on page 3)

Dollar General

(Continued from page 1)

complying with zoning and setback and building standards,” Ponton told *The Big Bend Sentinel*. And Dollar General was operating within the bounds of the law.

“This is not a bordello, it’s not a sexually oriented business, it’s not a drug selling business,” he said. “It’s not doing anything illegal.”

Mayor Eaves said she sympathizes with locals’ concerns over the incoming store — though “not every Alpine resident is against it,” she said — but the city’s hands are tied.

“I get what the citizens are saying who really don’t want it in their front yard, but there’s nothing that can be done,” said Eaves.

The process of paving the way for the new dollar store began in the summer, when the land’s previous owner — Horse Apple 118, LLC — requested it be annexed into the city for commercial use for the purpose of constructing a Dollar General (at the time, the property fell outside city limits). The city approved the annexation, a decision that later generated some controversy — at the October council meeting at which the requested replat was discussed, Mayor Eaves said she had been under the impression the annexation was legally required, though Ponton maintained he had no memory of saying that was the case.

In a letter to the editor published in this newspaper, Planning & Zoning Commission Chair Amit Rangra expressed frustration with the city’s process and perceived lack of transparency around the annexation approval — if the annexation request had come

before the P&Z commission first, Rangra argued, citizens around the site would have been properly notified and would have had the opportunity to attend public meetings on the matter.

Eaves penned a rebuttal stating it was not standard procedure for such a proposal to appear before the commission ahead of City Council. She also said notices regarding public hearings were published in the Alpine Avalanche and on the city’s website.

In any case, both Eaves and Ponton concluded that approving the annexation was the best possible option for Alpine, given the circumstances — building on county land would have exempted the company from city building regulations, and Alpine would not have received any property or sales tax revenue from the business.

“It was in the county at the time, and there were absolutely no regulations,” said Eaves. “Someone pointed out you could’ve had an adult bookstore go in there, because there would’ve been no regulations.”

Eaves said that Dollar General will enjoy a reduced water rate as a perk of building on city land — Alpine, meanwhile, will benefit financially, and the city will be able to enforce ordinances.

“They’re going to have to follow city ordinances — they’re going to have to follow dark sky ordinances,” said Eaves. “The residents of Alpine are going to benefit from the sales tax revenue and the property tax.”

When reached for comment, an unsigned email from “DG Public Relations” stated only that the company was “still finalizing a due diligence phase” for the new location.

911 addresses

(Continued from page 1)

The county’s old maps of Presidio, labeled with as many proper street names as possible, are no longer serviceable — they were stored by an outside contractor on a now inaccessibly outdated computer.

Hermosillo pointed out that all of these problems converge into a major public health risk. He recounted a recent incident trying to respond to the scene of a fire — the person who called 911 could only describe the scene of the emergency by the name of the arroyo that runs behind it. Even for Presidio’s homegrown first-responders, correctly identifying an address can drag out the time needed to reach people in life-threatening situations.

Kayse Muratori, RIOCOG’s new 911/GIS rep for the Big Bend area, said she had also heard horror stories. “Since I’ve been in this office, I’ve already heard of four separate stories of an ambulance not being able to find a home,” she said. “That’s really what started this process. The whole goal is that 911 can find people.”

A longer-term problem is that the United States Census can’t find or count people without proper addresses. The federal government apportions funding based on census information, so an undercount can result in needy communities like Presidio not getting the resources they need.

After the 2020 Census, there were numerous conversations within Presidio city government about whether or not Presidio had been undercounted. “We were only discussing, ‘Why was there an undercount? Were we being discriminated against?’” Hermosillo recalled. “We can’t control people who don’t want to answer the door, but one of the things we can control is

having the correct address and street names so that the census workers can find people.”

RIOCOG Regional Director Marisa Quintanilla explained that she wanted the project to be Presidio-led because it did come with a few hassles for residents. When the new addresses roll out, Presidians will have to update their accounts and paperwork accordingly. “Some of these residents report having three addresses,” she said. “They’re going to have to change everything that comes to their house — the electric bill, the water bill, the Amazon packages.”

Councilmember Arian Velázquez-Ornelas thought that the most sensible way to spread the word would be through a series of town hall meetings rather than having city employees canvass everyone door-to-door. Mayor John Ferguson agreed. “Everything that you’re recommending, it sounds sensible — it’s the direction we need to go.”

In a related step toward standardizing the city’s street names, Presidio City Council formally signed off on an ordinance that had been incompletely filed over a decade ago. That ordinance changed certain street names to honor the city’s veterans — a process that has not been uniformly completed, but could make the 911 addressing project easier.

The veterans who will be honored are as follows: Fernando Daly for his service in WWI; Tomas Ornelas, Calixtro Quiroz, Juan Quiroz, Alfredo Baeza, Ishmael Spencer, Julian Tavarez, Francisco Spencer, Ishmael Madrid, Jose Rodriguez, Henry Daly, Edmundo Nieto, Simon Gonzales and Ralph England for their service in World War II; Manuel Ornelas and Ernesto Madrid for their service in Vietnam.

Presidio County to implement new employee pay schedule in January 2023

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO COUNTY — After a long process of data gathering and deliberation, Presidio County is set to implement its first employee pay schedule in January 2023. The schedule will set standardized minimums for new hire wages in each department as well as a formula for determining how much higher-ranking employees should earn.

The discussion began at a meeting on October 19 — coincidentally, at the same meeting, both Presidio County Sheriff Danny Dominguez and Deputy Joel Nuñez petitioned the court to increase their department’s wages to combat turnover. The heated discussion that followed — and the fact that the court had deliberated raising wages at the Presidio County Jail earlier that year — led the court to agree that wages should be set uniformly and not on a department-by-department basis.

A committee composed of County Auditor Patty Roach, County Treasurer Frances Garcia, Presidio County Sheriff Secretary Shanna Elmore and Precinct 1 Commissioner Brenda Silva Bentley worked together to devise the proposed plan. The team compared pay schedules from Brewster County, Sul Ross and other regional entities and averaged them out in order to arrive at a proposed system of base pay for Presidio County’s employees.

The committee ultimately proposed a 15% difference in wages between starting wages for employees with no experience and “midpoint” employees, followed by a 15% difference between those employees and senior staff. They suggested that individual department heads have 6% of wiggle room to increase pay for new hires who start with experience or a pertinent educational background.

County Judge Cinderela Guevara asked if the proposed schedule included longevity pay for employees who

have made a lifelong career serving the county. Auditor Patty Roach explained that the current schedule did not, but that neighboring Brewster County has a separate procedure for adding longevity incentives to base pay. “This type of design is really easy to administer,” she explained. “Making changes is really simple, moving people is really simple — it has maximum flexibility.”

Presidio County Sheriff Secretary Shanna Elmore chimed in to voice her support for a longevity pay system after a brief discussion on whether incentives should be based on cumulative service to the county — for employees who leave their positions and come back — or consecutive years of service. “I do feel that consideration of longevity is an important part of setting the salary schedule,” she said.

County Clerk Florcita Zubia brought up a case study from within her department — what about an employee who started her position with nine years of experience from a different county?

Roach explained that the schedule was primarily intended to preserve a hierarchy within departments and prevent individual department heads from having to make their case for raises to the court. “This is just a suggested plan — it’s not going to be perfect and not everyone is going to be happy, but it does attempt to be as fair as possible,” Roach said.

Judge Elect Joe Portillo suggested that the county develop a separate procedure for examples like Zubia’s who don’t fit within a neat rubric. “It is difficult and you can’t address every situation — I think what you can do is always leave language in there that will allow commissioners court to address one-offs,” he said.

Guevara ultimately moved to accept the pay schedule as presented, and to implement it in January 2023 to keep things uniform for new elected officials entering office in a few weeks. The commissioners approved both measures unanimously. “I think this is excellent — I think this is a good start,” she said.

MOONLIGHT GEMSTONES

Paul Graybeal, Owner
Ben Toro, Associate
432-729-4526
pgagates@gmail.com
moonlightgemstones.com



P.O. Box 1220
1001 W. San Antonio St.
Marfa, Texas 79843
Mon-Sat, 10-5pm
Sunday by Appt

Lapidary • Silversmith • Custom Jewelry • Rocks • Fossils • Minerals



ALPINE SMALL ANIMAL PRACTICE AND LARGE ANIMAL SERVICES

Mary Dodson, D.V.M.
Zachary Dodson, D.V.M.
3201 N. HWY 118, Box 7
Alpine, Texas 79830
432-837-5416
Mon. - Fri. 7:45 - 12:00 & 1:30 - 5:30
after hours - emergency 432.837.5416

COVERAGE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT

- Landlord/Vacant/Vacation home insurance
- Life insurance
- Business insurance



DONA WARD BLEVINS

Your Local Agent
2100 W HWY 90, STE B
ALPINE, TX 79830
DBLEVINS@FARMERSAGENT.COM
<https://agents.farmers.com/dblevins>

Call 432.837.2225 today!

Smart choices last a lifetime.



Restrictions apply. Discounts may vary. Not available in all states. See your agent for details. Insurance is underwritten by Farmers Insurance Exchange and other affiliated insurance companies. Visit farmers.com for a complete listing of companies. Not all insurers are authorized to provide insurance in all states. Coverage is not available in all states.
Life Insurance issued by Farmers New World Life Insurance Company, 3120 139th Ave. SE, Ste. 300, Bellevue, WA 98005.





THE FRAG MENTED IMAGE

**MAURICIO
MORA**

MONICAABOUMRADGALLERY.COM

DECEMBER 22 - 27

11 - 6 PM

THE DO RIGHT HALL, 110 W. DALLAS ST.
MARFA, TEXAS

RECEPTION
DECEMBER 22 at 2 pm

EMAIL ADS@BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM
FOR ADVERTISING RATES

Big Bend Regional Hospital District

(Continued from page 1)

He appreciated that the proposed OnMed machine was self-sustaining, allowing the board freedom in how they decided to dispatch and operate the unit after licensing fees were paid for. “I like it because we’re not tied to somebody else,” he said.

Next, the board discussed expanding regional access to psychotherapy by partnering with Texas Tech University’s Health Sciences Center, which offers a mental health fellowship program. The program would allow licensed professional counselors (LPCs) in-training to provide low or no-cost treatment to Big Bend residents during their 3,000-hour coursework. “We’ll be able to keep that person busy,” Newsom said.

Newsom explained that Texas Tech is relatively flexible with how communities choose to implement

the program — they offer telehealth options or in-person residencies, provided the BBRHD could provide space, administrative upkeep and other essentials. The requirements for the program would mirror existing services through Preventative Health Care Services and PermianCare, which provide limited psychotherapy services to patients who have a mental health diagnosis.

The board decided to table the idea for further discussion down the line — some board members balked at the idea of paying Texas Tech for a service that essentially allowed their students to charge money for services rendered during their training. Still, they felt it was worth further number crunching and data gathering. “I’m definitely supportive of anything we can do for mental health,” said Board Member Greg Henington.

Marfa ISD

(Continued from page 1)

implemented the four-day school week, said Agüero, reactions from parents were evenly split.

Other news:

Agüero said the installation of new security cameras is about halfway through, and the remaining cameras are slated to be installed next week. Once all the cameras are installed, viewing access will be given to the Marfa Police Department.

After a meeting with the mayor and the police chief, the district is moving ahead with the hiring of a school resource officer (SRO) — a job posting is expected to be circulated by Thursday, said Agüero, and the district hopes to fill the position by February.

After a proposed \$57 million school bond failed to pass in the November election, board members agreed

they should re-evaluate the matter and put another bond on an upcoming ballot. Conversations around how best to approach a prospective bond are ongoing.

Board members voted unanimously to seek a seventh member to fill the board’s vacant first position. A job posting has been shared to the Marfa Shorthorns Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/marfashorthorns> — those interested in filling the position are instructed to submit a letter to the superintendent’s office by Thursday, January 12, no later than 3:30 p.m. The new member will be selected at a board meeting on January 16.

The board was thrilled to announce that Coach Edgar Ramirez has been named Cross-Country Coach of the Year in 1A through 4A Division by the Texas Girls Coaches Association.

Council covers upcoming infrastructure projects, new STR ordinance in last meeting of 2022

By MARY CANTRELL

mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — The Marfa City Council met on Tuesday night and swiftly ran through a lengthy agenda including discussion of grants for street repairs, new Parks Board appointees, an ordinance for newly-adopted short term rental (STR) regulations, and more before adjourning their last meeting of 2022.

Mayor Manny Baeza, Mayor Pro Tem Irma Salgado, council members Mark Cash, Eddie Pallarez, Raul Lara, City Manager Mandy Roane and the city’s new attorney, Sylvia Borunda Firth of Bojorquez Law Firm, were in attendance.

City seeks grant for street repairs

No citizens turned up for a public hearing to solicit feedback on community development needs in relation to the Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG). The city is applying for \$500,000 for street repairs from the program, which is designed to improve low to moderate income communities and is administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Council then approved requests for qualifications (RFQs) for companies GrantWorks and FXSA, which will provide administrative and engineering services for the city should it be awarded the TxCDBG grant. Specific streets for repairs, should the city be awarded the funds, have yet to be chosen. As part of the grant requirements, projects must impact areas where at least 51% of the population qualifies as low to moderate income persons.

\$4 million from state to fund city water

infrastructure projects

After approving the appointment of new Parks and Recreation Board members Michael Camacho and Erik Gomez, council heard from Trey Gerfers, general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District, on the recent award of \$12.6 million dollars from the Texas Water Development Board’s Economically Distressed Areas program (EDAP).

The city will be receiving around \$4 million of those funds for water infrastructure projects including a new wastewater line for Fort D.A. Russell and the development of first-time water and wastewater services to the East Heights neighborhood.

While the county’s pre-application has been approved, a number of financial and administrative details will be worked out over the coming months, explained Gerfers. As is typical with similar programs, the county is anticipating 70% of the funds be grant-funded and 30% of the funds be issued in the form of a loan.

At the meeting, the city agreed to pay their portion of the fee for the grant writer Bill Moriarty, who spearheaded the application process and will now help form a team of bond and financial advisors as well as representatives of the county to manage the funds.

The city also approved a resolution allowing themselves to be reimbursed for the \$11,000 fee later when the \$4 million is received, potentially sometime this summer.

New STR ordinance takes effect in January

City Attorney Firth then took the floor to review the city’s revisited hotel occupancy tax (HOT) and

STR ordinances. The HOT ordinance remains largely unchanged, but the city has chosen to make a separate STR ordinance that fleshes out the new fees and regulations adopted this fall.

The new STR ordinance goes into effect on January 1, 2023, and outlines the new fees — \$500 registration fee plus \$100 per unit — as well as self-reporting safety inspection requirements and penalties for non compliance.

Firth explained that the city needed to prove the amount of money being collected from the new STR registration fees was not punitive, and that the city was simply recouping the cost for enforcing registration fees and health and safety requirements. City Secretary Kelly Perez has been tasked with monitoring Marfa’s STRs more closely on behalf of the city moving forward. The city’s extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) has always been subject to STR fees and regulations and will continue to be under the new ordinances.

Letters will be distributed to STR operators in the new year, alerting them to re-register or register for the first time with the city. The new ordinance will be available online after it goes into effect in the new year, but can be requested sooner through an open records request on the city’s website.

Resigned council member’s seat to remain vacant

Council then officially accepted the resignation of Councilmember Jason Ballmann and discussed whether or not to fill the vacant seat. Mayor Baeza recommended that council leave the seat vacant due to Ballmann’s resignation being so close to the May election. Others agreed the work required to appoint someone for just a

few meetings before the May election was impractical. Candidate filing for available city council positions will begin in January.

Lannan Foundation park donation finalized

Firth addressed council regarding the donation of the park on West 2nd and North Gonzales streets from the Lannan Foundation, for which legal agreements were recently finalized. Council members agreed the park should remain a city park for the citizens of Marfa and to accept the gift as such. Firth said the foundation generously took care of the surveying fees and more. “This is coming to you all without any expense at all. It’s a true gift,” she said.

Customers get increased utility bills, city seeks school resource officer

The meeting concluded with the city manager and police chief’s reports. Roane let council know they were receiving a good amount of public feedback on the most recent utility bills, which reflected higher gas prices the city is now paying to provider West Texas Gas, but the majority of customer bills were correct with less than 10 containing errors. (The city recently switched over to a new software system and as a result, some customer bills have been incorrect.) Chief Steve Marquez said all of the new police fleet vehicles had finally arrived and the search for the school resource officer (SRO) was beginning in earnest, with applications open now until January 9. He said they are hoping to attract a candidate with more experience because they will be stationed at the school, but they are willing to train up.

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF PRESIDIO

394TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CAUSE NO. 8166

To: UNKNOWN EXECUTOR OR ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ESTATE OF ELIAS ABISAB, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ELIAS ABISAB, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ABELINO GOMEZ, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MANUEL GOMEZ, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ANITA KLEINMAN, DECEASED, and ANY AND ALL KNOWN OR UNKNOWN OWNERS OR CLAIMANTS OF ANY INTEREST, RIGHT, OR TITLE IN: Lots 19–32, Block 1, Kleinman Addition to the City of Presidio, Texas, containing 1.25 acres, more or less, in Presidio County, Texas.

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. YOU MAY EMPLOY AN ATTORNEY. IF YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY DO NOT FILE A WRITTEN ANSWER WITH THE CLERK WHO ISSUED THIS CITATION BY 10:00 A.M. ON THE MONDAY NEXT FOLLOWING THE EXPIRATION OF FORTY-TWO (42) DAYS AFTER YOU WERE SERVED THIS CITATION STATED THIS 9th DAY OF January, 2023, AND PETITION, A DEFAULT JUDGMENT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU.

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the petition of plaintiffs at or before 10 o'clock a.m. of the Monday next after the expiration of forty-two days, after the date of service of this citation stated this 9th day of January, 2023, before the Honorable Roy B. Ferguson, 394th Judicial District Court of Presidio County, Texas, at the courthouse in the city of Marfa, Texas.

Said petition was filed in said court, on the 10th day of June 2022, in cause number 8166 on the docket of said court and styled:

ROBERTO LUJAN and JULIA WEST
vs.
UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ELIAS ABISAB, ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF EL PASO, ABELINO GOMEZ, MANUEL GOMEZ, and ANITA KLEINMAN

The nature of this cause is to wit: CLAIMS FOR ADVERSE POSSESSION AND QUITE TITLE OF THE REAL PROPERTY MORE FULLY AND PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS THE FOLLOWING: Lots 19–32, Block 1, Kleinman Addition to the City of Presidio, Texas, containing 1.25 acres, more or less, in Presidio County, Texas, AND FOR A DECLARATION OF A FEE SIMPLE TITLE IN PLAINTIFFS ROBERTO LUJAN AND JULIA WEST AS IS MORE FULLY SHOWN BY PLAINTIFFS' PETITION ON FILE IN THIS SUIT.

The officer executing this citation shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and mandates thereof, and make due return as the law directs.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said court at Marfa, Presidio County, Texas, on the 22nd day of November, 2022.

ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS:
SARAH SIBLEY KLEIN
121 N 6TH STREET
ALPINE, TEXAS 79830

Florcita Zubia, District Clerk
300 Highland Street
Marfa, Texas 79843

By: *[Signature]*

RETURN

This citation was received by me on the 22 day of Nov, 2022, at 10:40 o'clock A.M., and was executed by causing the same to be published in the Big Bend Sentinel, a newspaper published and of general circulation in Presidio County, in which said proceeding is pending, which newspaper is further described in the publishers affidavit, hereto attached and made a part hereof accompanied by a printed copy of the published citation and returned herewith. Said citation was published once each week for four (4) consecutive weeks beginning on the 22 day of Nov, 2022, and ending on the 1 day of Dec, 2022.

Sworn and subscribed before me on this the 22nd day of November, 2022.

By: *[Signature]*, Notary

SHANNA ELMORE
My Notary ID # 129732217
Expires March 3, 2026

THE
MARFA
STORE

NEW LOCATION.
NEW ART.
NEW PRODUCTS.
NEW VIBES.

HOLIDAY HOURS

10 to 5

open every day

but Christmas

HOLIDAY SALE

12/15 to 01/01

10% off everything

but art

@themarfastore

visit our new location at:

inde / jacobs gallery

208 E SAN ANTONIO ST

SHOP ONLINE 24/7

@ themarfastore.com

themarfastore.com

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

FROM YOUR FRIENDS

AT THE BIG BEND SENTINEL

Opinions

PET MATTERS

Cats vs. Dogs

By JEANINE BISHOP

I'm Jeanine Bishop, executive director of Alpine Humane Society and the head of the Far West Texas Rescue Coalition. I live in Fort Davis with seven rescue dogs. In this standing column, I'll share helpful information about life with pets in the Big Bend Region.

Cats or dogs? It can be a fun discussion with friends, right up there with whether you should put beans in chili in Texas. As pets, dogs win with a solid lead in terms of the number owned in the United States: about 77,000, compared to about 58,400 cats, according to the American Veterinary Medicine Association.

But let's look at cats. There are a lot of myths as well as interesting facts about felines. A few persistent misconceptions are:

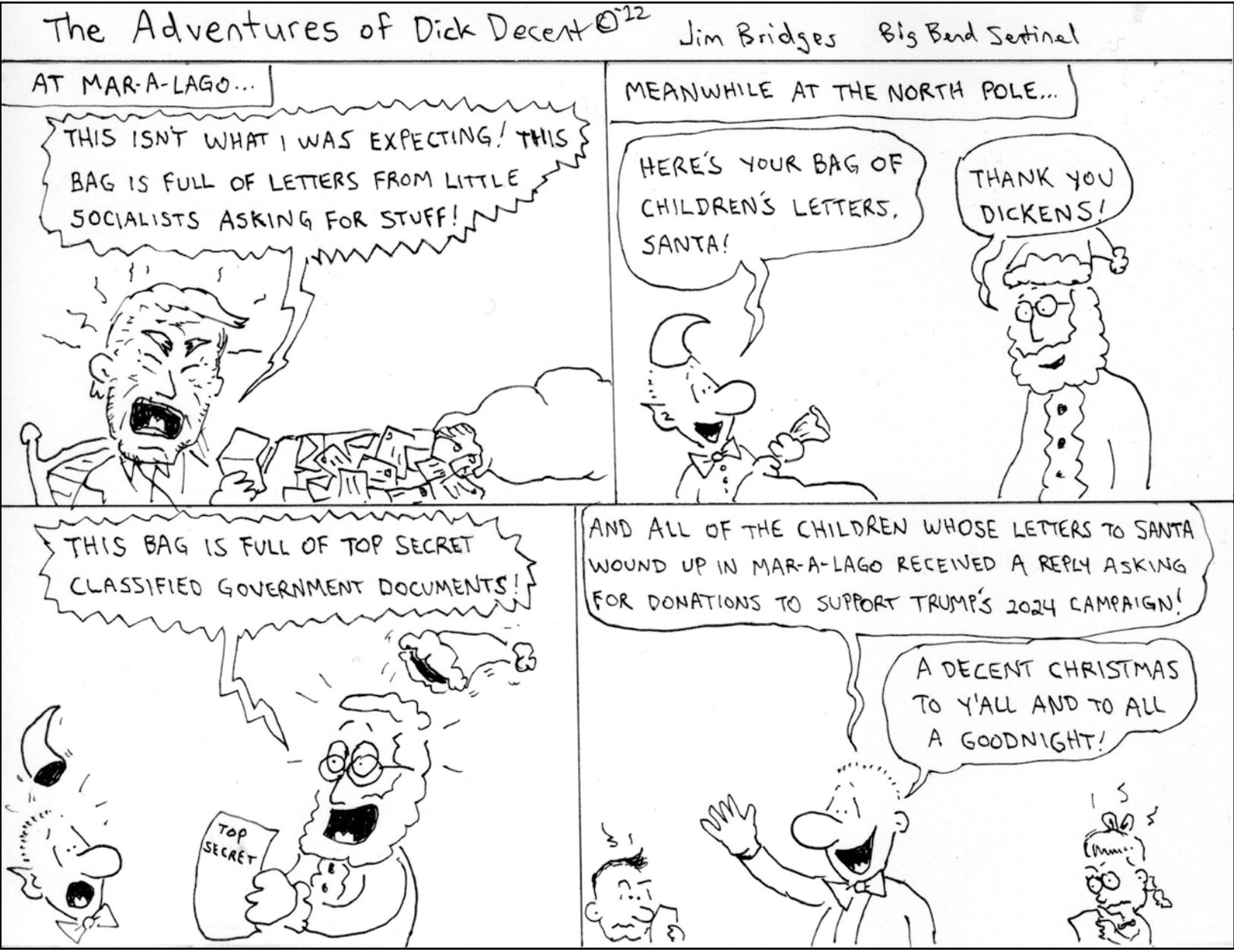
Cats always land on their feet: Nope, not always. Cats are very agile but can hurt themselves if they fall the wrong way.

Female cats should give birth before being spayed: The opposite is true. Spaying your furry friend is a good choice before she becomes a mom.

Cats will steal the breath of a baby: Of all the cat myths out there, this one borders on superstition, but it is a genuine concern for families with babies and small children because many cats will curl up near a human's head, neck, or chest. It's important to keep yours away from very young children during naptime

- What do we know for a fact about cats? Quite a lot, as it turns out:
- A house cat's genome is 95.6% tiger, and they share many behaviors with their jungle ancestors, including scent marking by scratching, prey play, prey stalking, pouncing, chinning, and urine marking.
 - Cats are believed to be the only mammals who don't taste sweetness.
 - Cats are nearsighted, but their peripheral and night vision are much better than ours.
 - White cats with blue eyes are prone to deafness.
 - Cats are supposed to have 18 toes (five on each front paw; four on each back paw).
 - Cats can jump up to six times their length.
 - Cats' claws all curve downward, so they can't climb down trees head-first. They have to back down the trunk.
 - Cats' rough tongues can lick a bone clean of every shred of meat.
 - Cats walk like camels and giraffes: They move both of their right feet first and then both of their left feet. No other animals walk this way.
 - Male cats are more likely to be left-pawed, while female cats are more likely to be right-pawed.
 - A cat's average lifespan increased by a year between 2002 and 2012, according to a study by Banfield Pet Hospital.
 - Cats are crepuscular, meaning they're most active at dawn and dusk.
 - Female cats can get pregnant when they are only four months old!
 - Kittens can be spayed or neutered when they are only eight weeks old.
 - Male cats who have been fixed need fewer calories to maintain their weight.
 - Spaying and neutering can extend a cat's life. The Banfield Pet Hospital study found that neutered males live an average of 62% longer than unneutered cats and spayed females live an average of 39% longer than unspayed cats.
 - If cats are fighting, the cat that's hissing is likely the more vulnerable one.
 - Meowing is a behavior that cats developed exclusively to communicate with people.
 - Cats are very fussy about their water bowls, and some prefer to drink from the sink faucet.
 - A green cat was born in Denmark in 1995. Some people believe that high levels of copper in the water pipes nearby may have given his fur a verdigris effect.
 - A cat's learning style is about the same as a 2- to 3-year-old child.
 - A house cat could beat superstar runner Usain Bolt in the 200-meter dash.
 - Cats don't have an incest taboo, so they may mate with their brothers and sisters.
 - Cats dream, just like people do.
 - Cats have contributed to the extinction of 33 different species.
 - Kittens in the same litter can have more than one father.
 - Some 700 million feral cats live in the United States.

Now you have some ammunition for those fun arguments or trivia games after Christmas dinner!



Save the Date!



return of the



BLACKWELL BLOCK PARTY

commemorate our history and celebrate our borderland heritage with music, food, loteria, performances, special guests, activities for all ages

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Blackwell School, Marfa



General Lines Agent: Yadira Renteria
Office Phone: (432) 360-1255
Cell. 432.360.6229
Office Cell: (432) 290- 4139
1400 W DICKINSON BLVD
FORT STOCKTON TX. 79735
AUTO + HOME + COMMERCIAL AUTO

READ ONLINE AT
BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM

Filth Mart

1214 W San Antonio



Hi Marfa! Filth Mart is a boutique & gift shop.

Open 12-5 Thurs-Sun for holiday hours.

Come check us out!

PARALLEVAR

...OR DINE-IN

and winter cocktail lounge behind the kitchen

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Pizza + Wings, Sandwiches and Salads
Frozen cocktails + Charcuterie party trays
Order online at marfaparallevar.com

la fundación the CHINATI foundation

Joy And Peace From Chinati

Chinati les desea alegría y paz

Happy 2023 To All

Feliz 2023 a todos

For special holiday hours visit chinati.org

Celebrate the New Year in El Paso

JOIN US

DEC 29 4:00 – 8:00 PM

AT EL PASO'S BIGGEST PEP RALLY!

FAN FIESTA

EL PASO CONVENTION CENTER

FREE TO ENJOY!

DEC 30 8:30 – 11:30 AM

TAILGATE

PRESENTED BY  **Visit EL PASO**

THEN RUN AND CATCH
A BOWL GAME AT THE

SUN BOWL

STADIUM | EL PASO, TX

KICK OFF IS AT NOON

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
SUNBOWL.ORG



Pitt

Ucla



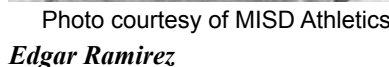
Fan Fiesta

PRESENTED BY 



By LINDA OJEDA

TEXAS - The Texas Girls Coaches Association has named Edgar Ramirez Cross-Country Coach of the Year for the 2022-2023 season. Ramirez was selected by TGCA committee members in the field of 1A through 4A candidates late last month with the announcement being made this week. Ramirez helped Marfa's cross-country team qualify for the state championship meet this year for the first time in school history and has also produced three state medalists in a two-year span and a seventh place team finish at the 2022 UIL State Meet in a field of 16 teams.



By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last month, students from Presidio High School planted a first round of trees in Presidio as part of a larger Big Bend Conservation Alliance (BBCA) initiative to increase tree equity in the Big Bend. Fifteen students spent a chilly Saturday driving around town to help neighbors plant important new additions to the local ecosystem.

Tree equity refers to the idea that everyone should have access to tree cover, regardless of race or income — tree cover has a wide array of benefits for humans and animals, not least of which are cooling shade, improved air quality and habitats for local and visiting species. The Big Bend region used to have more tree cover, but that declined historically as the region was settled. Research in Big Bend National Park suggests that that decline has accelerated in the past decade.

The BBCA's tree equity project is underway in Marfa, Alpine and Fort Davis. In Presidio, Rosalinda Peña of the Big Bend Community Action Committee helped sign up around 60 locals who were interested in the program. Last month's tree planting session fulfilled around a

third of that number, but is a positive sign that Presidians are excited about the project.

Beyond the eventual environmental benefits of the new trees, the students who participated in the project benefited from a day of volunteer service. Presidio High School doesn't have a formal community service requirement, but students hoping to make the cut for the National Honor Society have to complete 20 hours of volunteer work a year.

The students found the project rewarding in other ways, too. "I've always wanted to do something for my community and volunteer more," said sophomore Karla Valdivia. "It seemed like a really good chance to help out."

Last month's planting wasn't without its challenges — the Saturday the students slotted for the project happened to be the coldest day in Presidio this year, with a high in the mid-40s and a chilly wind. The students huddled together in one vehicle as they traveled from house to house.

The process of planting was relatively straightforward. The students would call each tree recipient to confirm that they still wanted their tree planted and get a rundown of exactly where they wanted the tree to be placed. Then they dug holes in the ground to stage the trees and filled the hole with mulch and fertilizer.

before watering the new trees for the first time.

Freshman Miara Luz Santo Domingo learned some gardening back home in the Philippines, where her family planted tomatoes, eggplants and other staples. The tree planting project in Presidio taught her a lot about her new hometown. “I learned that there’s a lot of different kinds of soil in Presidio — some of it would be hard and some of it would be soft,” she explained. “I also learned about [identifying] different types of trees.”

The students offered tree recipients a choice of chinquapin oak, mountain laurel and elm, chosen by the BBCA because of their hardiness and ability to survive the region's temperature extremes. Each family who signed up for the program was also provided with a care sheet, providing guidance for how to water and tend to their trees each season.

Everyone who participated was left inspired by the chance to serve their communities. Both Santo Domingo and Valdivia expressed that they were excited to seek out other volunteer opportunities — and use their newfound planting skills. “I learned that it takes some work, but it gets easier the more you do it and it gets more fun,” Valdivia said.

Downtown Terlingua Ghosttown

Sunday, January 1, 2023



2:30 pm ~ Start the year off with a bowl of "GOOD LUCK" for a \$10 or more donation.

Local Music & "Hot Date" Raffle

Proceeds will benefit continuing education scholarships for Terlingua School Graduates!



Judd Foundation offers direct engagement with Donald Judd's art and vision in the Chihuahuan Desert. These formerly private living and working spaces provide firsthand experience of his concept of permanent installation.

**La Mansana de Chinati/
The Block**
Every day except Wednesday
Guided visits begin at
the gated entrance at
400 West El Paso Street.

The Studios
Every day except Wednesday
Guided visits begin at
101 North Highland Avenue.

Advance reservations are required.

Visit juddfoundation.org
or call 432 729 4406 for more
information and to book
reservations.

JUDD

THANK YOU
JUDGE CANO!

For two years, **Judge Cano** has served as the Lead Chief Elected Official for Workforce Solutions Borderplex. Even before his official role as Lead, Judge Cano has been a highly committed, engaged, and supportive leader, connecting businesses, job seekers, and community organization to employment services. As the Lead CEO for our six-county service area, Judge Cano has been diligent in his review of our budget, challenged us with thought-provoking questions, and a staunch supporter of the unique rural county needs. Thank you for your leadership and service! We wish you the best of luck in your future!

The logo for Workforce Solutions Borderplex. It features the word "WORKFORCE" in a large, bold, italicized sans-serif font. Below it, the words "SOLUTIONS" and "BORDERPLEX" are written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font, separated by a stylized graphic element that resembles a swoosh or a bridge.

A proud partner of the
americanJobCenter
network

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individual with disabilities. Relay Texas: 711 (Voice) or 1-800-735-2989 (TTY). Igualdad de oportunidades de Empleo/Programas. Equipo auxiliar y servicios de apoyo están disponibles para personas con discapacidad al ser requeridos. Relay Texas: 711 (Voz) o 1-800-735-2989 (TTY). Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor/ITA WIOA Formula Grants and Wagner-Peyser, the Department of Health and Human Services TANF and Child Care Development Fund and the Food and Nutrition Service SNAP Employment & Training.

SRSU rodeo athletes earn top spots at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo

ALPINE — Two current and one former Sul Ross State University cowboys competed in the 2022 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas and showed the world that SRSU produces elite rodeo athletes.

In June of 2021, Tristen Hutchings celebrated winning the National Championship in the Bull Riding at the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming, Sul Ross State University’s first National Championship since the mid 1980s. In December 2022, on his first bull at his first WNFR, Hutchings scored 90.5 points on Party Animal to win first place in the round. He rode five of 10 bulls at the 2022 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. Hutchings won rounds 1, 5, 6 and 10 at his debut at WNFR and finished second in Round 9. His five head

total of 447 points was good enough to earn him fourth place in the National Finals Rodeo Bull Riding average. In fact, he added over \$252,000 to his winnings over the 10 rounds, capping off his first WNFR at third in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Bull Riding World standings. Hutchings, a senior at Sul Ross, finished the season with \$379,785 in season earnings.

Former Sul Ross rodeo bull riding standout, Australian Ky Hamilton, competed in his third WNFR. He finished fourth in the world in 2020 and 10th in 2021. Hamilton capped off another strong season in the PRCA by placing in six rounds at the 2022 National Finals Rodeo. His score of 510 points on six head earned him a third place finish in the National Finals Rodeo average race.

He still ended his year right behind Hutchings in fourth place in the PRCA World Standings. Hamilton finished the year with \$278,412 in earnings.

Cole Franks, who was the 2022 Reserve National Champion Bareback rider in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association and a senior at Sul Ross State from Clarendon, earned a score on all 10 of his draws. Franks was the 2020 College National Champion All-Around and Bareback Rider while attending Clarendon College. He placed in eight of the 10 rounds, finishing second in the average. He ended his 2022 professional season fourth place in the world standings. Franks finished the PRCA season with \$263,377 in earnings.

The three Sul Ross State University cowboys earned

a combined \$532,000 at the National Finals Rodeo, and all three finished in the top four in the PRCA world standings in their respective events.

“I’m proud of Tristen, Cole and Ky for their performance at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo this year, but I am also proud of the young men and their accomplishments outside of the arena,” said Sul Ross Rodeo Coach C.J. Aragon. “Their education at Sul Ross will remain with them through all the rodeos and beyond, and I am excited for what they have accomplished and looking forward to what they will accomplish next.”

Marfa Education Foundation College Scholarships available

MARFA — For the second year in a row, the Marfa Education Foundation has received a grant to support scholarships for recent Marfa ISD graduates who are attending college.

MISD graduates are eligible if currently attending an accredited university, college or community college, and if they are currently enrolled in their

sophomore, junior or senior year. A short application form can be downloaded from the website: www.marfaeducationfoundation.org.

Applications must be emailed no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. For more information, please visit the Marfa Education Foundation website.

OUT WEST FEED & SUPPLY

HOLIDAY SALES:

20% OFF ACCESSORIES

25% OFF BOOTS

12/15 TO 12/21

12/22 TO 12/28

Shop online or in-store!

outwestshopping.com

Out West Feed & Supply

2600 E HWY 90

Alpine, TX

END YOUR YEAR WITH A
BIG BANG
AND
BETTER
INTERNET

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 GIG x 1 GIG

FOR ONLY \$150!

RESIDENTIAL/HOME

Do you know what you can do with 1 GIG of fiber Internet?

▼ With 1 GIG of fiber Internet, you can enjoy streaming, gaming, and online shopping all at once - with absolutely no lag!

▼ Holiday season means new devices that require Internet connection. Upgrade your Internet speed to 1 GIG now - your family will thank you on Christmas morning!

CONTACT US AT 800-592-4781

SCAN HERE OR VISIT BIGBEND.COM/1GIG TO UPGRADE YOUR SPEED TO 1 GIG TODAY!

*THIS OFFER ENDS ON 1/31/23.

800.592.4781

808 North 5th Street

Alpine, TX 79830

HOLIDAYS AT

JETT'S

AT THE HISTORIC HOTEL PAISANO

Christmas Eve

Restaurant and Bar will close at 9:00 p.m.

Christmas Day

Brunch, 9:00-noon

No other restaurant services

New Year's Eve

Dinner Special and regular menu items

Dinner service until 10, Bar service until midnight

New Year's Day

Traditional New Year's Special and regular menu items

Jett's at the Hotel Paisano - 207 N Highland - Marfa, TX - 432-729-3838

THANK YOU LINDA!

Linda Nunez announces retirement after 30 years with MNB!

Linda Nunez will be retiring from the Marfa National Bank at the end of this year. She joined the bank on March 22, 1993. “I will definitely miss my coworkers and customers but it is time,” said Nunez. Linda literally worked alongside her sister Josie Martinez in the first and second teller spots for many years. Nunez is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren. Chip Love, President of the bank, said that Linda has always been a customer favorite and wishes her the best on her well-deserved retirement.

Please join us for the annual bank open house
Thursday, December 22 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Come by and greet Linda!

In rural Far West Texas, Justices of the Peace confront a death-investigation system that's failing unknown migrants

As migrant death toll rises, county officials, forensic laboratories and locals work with little governmental assistance to process, identify and repatriate the bodies

By Mary Cantrell
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

The skull and teeth of an unidentified migrant at Texas State’s Operation Identification lab. The lab stores the remains of unidentified migrants who die along the border with the intent of finding the families of the deceased through DNA matching and repatriating their remains.



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

OpID preserves the skeletal remains of deceased unidentified migrants in large cardboard boxes labeled with case numbers. The shelves which hold the boxes are full from floor to ceiling, representing around 300 people who have yet to be identified.

This article was published in partnership with Texas Monthly.

FAR WEST TEXAS — In 2015, shortly after Jeff Davis County Justice of the Peace Mary Ann Luedecke took office, the body of a 14-year-old Guatemalan boy was found in her jurisdiction. He was alone in the desert, in the vast 2,265 square miles of remote terrain that Luedecke oversees, with no identification. Luedecke, tasked with handling his remains, ordered an autopsy — the cause of death was “exposure,” it found — and set out to give the child a proper burial.

After rallying the local funeral home and cemetery to donate their services, she commissioned a constituent performing community service to fashion a headstone for the grave; it read simply, “The Guatemalan Kid,” and his date of death, the day on which he was found. But the man who made the headstone died before he could place it. To this day the grave remains unmarked, a purple silk flower the only indication of the child’s burial site.

“We lowered him, we prayed over him and we closed it up. That’s the best we had to offer. We still have him. We don’t know who he is,” said Luedecke. “A week later, we found three more.”

Those three unidentified migrants — adults Luedecke named West Pasture A, B and C — were transported to the only available county medical examiner on the Texas-Mexico border: Dr. Corinne Stern, located in Webb County, more than seven hours away. They were held there for a couple of years until the facility called Luedecke to let her know they were overwhelmed and could no longer store the bodies.

“I didn’t know what to do with them. No one knew what to do with them,” said Luedecke. “There’s no way to determine who they are.”

For Luedecke, it was a crash course on a grim reality of her job: caring for the bodies of unidentified migrants who perish on their journeys to enter the country illegally. The number of deaths was beginning to climb when Luedecke was elected — and the tri-county area, consisting of Brewster, Jeff Davis and Presidio counties, lacks the infrastructure to handle the increase. For justices of the peace, or JPs, all along the border, the critical task has long come without clear direction or sufficient resources. Congress

has passed legislation that aims to prevent migrant deaths, formalize identification processes and expand grant funding in an attempt to combat the humanitarian crisis. But the often underfunded and understaffed rural counties in far West Texas have yet to receive help in the form of funding or additional resources, and JPs vary widely in how they handle the bodies of deceased migrants.

Available burial plots are also scarce, and keeping track of where unidentified remains are interred is a recurring issue. In Presidio County, Marfa’s Cementerio de la Merced is at capacity. When former JP David Beebe buried two unidentified male migrants there during his tenure, it was thanks to a one-acre donation from a neighboring landowner. He recently installed metal crosses to ensure the plots were not re-sold by accident.

Luedecke has run up against these concerns in her county. “It got to the point where cemeteries can’t donate anymore; the funeral home isn’t going to donate their services anymore. Now this is becoming a real problem,” she said.

—

Migrant deaths along the border more than doubled between 2020 and 2021, with Customs and Border Protection reporting 557 deaths in 2021 compared to 247 in 2020. Fiscal year 2022 has proved to be the deadliest on record, with some national media outlets reporting upwards of 800 migrant deaths along the U.S.–Mexico border. CBP declined to share an exact number with The Big Bend Sentinel. Border Patrol Big Bend Sector, whose jurisdiction spans approximately one quarter of the Southwest Border of the United States, recorded a total of 39 deaths in 2021 and was aware of 31 deaths for fiscal year 2022, which ended September 30. Since many bodies are never found, available statistics are rough estimates and are likely undercounts.

There is no consolidated data for the state of Texas on what percentage of unidentified migrant remains end up being identified. Legally, each county is responsible for keeping its own inquest — or judicial death inquiry — records, though they are not always diligent about doing so, and a centralized public record system for counties to share data does

not exist. (Other border states — including New Mexico, California and Arizona — operate on combination medical examiner-coroners or state medical examiner systems, and so offer comprehensive statewide coverage for death investigations.)

Besides Dr. Stern in Webb County, there is only one other medical examiner on the Texas-Mexico border, in El Paso (which does not contract with any other counties and exclusively handles its own county’s cases). Due to a national shortage of board-certified forensic pathologists, professionals retiring from the field are becoming harder and harder to replace.

Stern, who announced her retirement more than a year ago, has yet to find a replacement. This shortage, and Texas’ mixed system for dealing with unidentified migrant deaths, contributes to an overreliance on JPs, who aren’t required to have any formal medical training.

Of Texas’ 254 counties, only 15 have a county-run medical examiner’s office (there are also a number of privately run facilities where autopsies are conducted). In Uvalde, it was a JP who was called upon to identify children’s bodies in the wake of the mass shooting at Robb Elementary in May.

Before becoming the sole JP for Jeff Davis County, Luedecke worked primarily as a rancher. Such a pivot is not unusual among justices, who come from eclectic backgrounds and undergo formal training at the Texas Justice Court Training Center for their varied duties once elected. Thea Whalen, executive director of the center, said while all JPs handle a similar breadth of responsibilities, those in rural counties “have to be able to be a jack of all trades,” due to having fewer resources than their urban counterparts have.

For the most part, said Whalen, the border counties most overwhelmed by the issue of unidentified migrant deaths are those with the fewest resources. (According to U.S. census data, counties along the border are the poorest in the state of Texas.)

Historically, justices have often buried the remains of unidentified migrants themselves — and in many counties along the U.S.–Mexico border, that remains the case. While the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure



Left: An emergency beacon shown in the rugged terrain somewhere within Big Bend Sector on March 24, 2022, in West Texas. Technology like this has been deployed across the entire Southwest Border to aid in locating and assisting migrants in need.
Photo by Greg L. Davis, Courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Right: Previous Justice of the Peace for Presidio County David Beebe, left, holds a metal cross in place while welder and fabricator Marc Declercq, who made the cross, shovels cement around it. The men recently placed crosses at the gravesites of two unidentified male migrants buried in Marfa's Cementerio De La Merced.
Staff photo by Mary Cantrell



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

The OpID lab is located within Texas State's Freeman Ranch Body Farm. Bodies of unidentified dead migrants that arrive at the facility undergo different treatment depending on the state of the remains; fully or partially-intact bodies decay outdoors in a fenced-in area in body bags for a natural decomposition process protected from pests.

urges those handling cases to gather DNA samples prior to burial, that measure is not always taken.

Coming into such a complex, disorganized system can be a learning curve for rural JPs who find themselves tasked with handling unidentified bodies for the first time. This was the case for Precinct 1 Justice of the Peace for Presidio County Dina Jo Losoya Marquez. On February 13, early in her tenure, she got a call from the sheriff's office notifying her a landowner had discovered a dead man at his property on Pinto Canyon. The man, who had been squatting alone in a small housing structure on the property, did not have any form of identification with him.

Marquez traveled more than an hour to the scene to declare the man dead. His body was found intact, facedown, outside of the structure. He was not wearing any shoes and appeared to have been holding a walking stick, said Marquez. His belongings included food, water and medications that suggested underlying health conditions may have contributed to his death.

Initially unsure how to proceed, Marquez said she wanted to be thorough: she contacted consulates and Border Patrol to figure out next steps, keeping the man's family members at the forefront of her mind. On a recommendation from the local funeral home, she sent the body to South Plains Forensic Pathology in Lubbock, almost five hours away, for an autopsy. Months later, the man was identified by his fingerprints to be Edy Pastor Ordoñez, a 35-year-old man from Guatemala. The consulate was able to make contact with his father, and his remains will be repatriated.

Months after the news of Ordoñez's identification, Marquez finally received the autopsy report — a lengthy process often further delayed by the medical examiner shortage. The report determined the cause of death to be a lack of insulin — Ordoñez was a diabetic — and dehydration. She intends to pass off the results to the Guatemalan consulate, which will translate them into Spanish and send them to his family.

Such closure is not always possible in these cases, but Marquez sees the effort as a fundamental part of her job. "A parent, a loved one, somebody goes missing — they don't stop. What if this was my brother or my son?"

said Marquez. "We're still going to treat them as if they were local."

The inquests JPs conduct to determine cause and manner of death are just a few of their myriad duties, which include presiding over local court proceedings for non-jailable offenses, hearing civil and eviction cases, setting bail, performing marriages, and managing a host of administrative and magistrate duties. The role is an on-call, 24/7 position — JPs must always be ready to assist local law enforcement and Border Patrol agents in retrieving and processing dead bodies in emergency situations.

"We have it all. We have missing persons information and unidentified persons information. We have DNA from the unidentified, we have DNA from the families, but we still can't make identifications. We have it all except the political will from the U.S. government."

"It doesn't matter if you're cooking supper or standing in the shower; your phone will ring," said Luedecke. "I've gotten up from the Thanksgiving dinner table to go do an inquest, and in fact, I got called out on Christmas Day on these migrants. Death does not recognize your personal life."

Luedecke estimates she's handled death cases for 25 to 30 migrants to date, the majority of whom were never identified, she said. Migrants can be



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Republican Mary Ann Luedecke, sole justice of the peace for Jeff Davis County, sits at her desk located on the second floor of the historic county courthouse in Fort Davis.

found without identification for a number of reasons — human smugglers may seize forms of identification, traveling groups may take a deceased individual's ID, or, in the case of found skeletal remains, an ID could have been strewn about with other belongings and lost. If only partial remains are discovered, collecting fingerprints or DNA samples can be more difficult, complicating the identification process.

The number of reported migrant deaths in the Big Bend region is relatively few compared to the numbers in other parts of the state. CBP data from 2020 shows only 15 out of a total of 247 migrant deaths occurred in the Big Bend Region, while South Texas areas like Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley experienced 50-plus migrant deaths. But the limited resources, broad expanse and low population density for the tri-county area lead officials to believe that many bodies are never found.

In the Big Bend, JPs get calls reporting dead migrants from cowboys, hunters and ranchers, who are sometimes tipped off to a body's location due to circling vultures. Unknown bodies often appear in remote, difficult-to-reach places. Once, while sweeping an area with Border Patrol, Luedecke watched an agent fall chest-deep into a coyote den that turned out to contain human remains and shoes. Luedecke carries body bags and tags in her personal truck so she can be ready to collect remains at any time and pass them off to the funeral home. She recalled once sitting with a dead body for seven hours while waiting for law enforcement to return with transportation. "Literally, I've hauled them in my own truck. I've hauled them in a four wheeler. I've sat there with them in my lap and hauled them out to the pavement because the funeral home can't get down there," said Luedecke.

That migrants opt to traverse treacherous desert landscapes is, in part, attributable to federal policy. Border Patrol's 1994 Strategic Plan, under President Bill Clinton, detailed an immigration enforcement strategy called "Prevention Through Deterrence," designed to increase Border Patrol presence along traditional entries and routes, which the agency acknowledged would force migrants into more "hostile terrain," placing

(Continued on page 10)

Unknown migrants

(Continued from page 9)

them in “mortal danger.”

“What is happening on the border in terms of people dying — they are not dying circumstantially, they are dying because of our policy, because of our strategy, because of our vision of the border, and because of complete disregard to the lives of immigrants and immigrant families,” said Fernando García, executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights, an immigration reform and human rights advocacy organization operating for the past 24 years out of El Paso.

García argued that because of Border Patrol’s policy to deviate migration flows into remote desert and mountainous terrain, a formal process for finding and identifying bodies needs to be developed, with each Border Patrol sector actively searching for missing people and working to identify bodies. But mass governmental reform would be required to institute such efforts, he said. “To identify remains, to look for remains, to process them, it will mean a major endeavor in Congress and this administration,” said García.

On the county level, without that federal assistance, Luedecke said she has reached a breaking point with the financial strain. Until recently, she was driving her own truck and paying for gas out of pocket while on unidentified migrant inquests. “Counties are strapped. There is no more money; there never was money,” said Luedecke. “Applications fall dead. Paperwork falls through the cracks. We still have people coming across by the hundreds. It doesn't matter if it's El Paso or Laredo, or some spans in between — we get no help.” Jeff Davis County, as well as neighboring Presidio and Brewster counties, allocate money for indigent burials, autopsies and inquests every year but do not have specific budget line items for unidentified migrant remains. According to the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, JPs are not required to order autopsies, but they may do so in order to “determine or confirm the nature and cause of death.” But the hefty price tag of an average autopsy and the shortage of nearby medical examiners make ordering an autopsy burdensome on county finances.

According to a 2020 report on migrant deaths conducted by the University of Texas at Austin’s Strauss Center for International Security and Law, costs “can reach more than \$13,100 per deceased individual, with counties paying \$2,000 on average just to remove the bodies from the scene and obtain an autopsy.” Luedecke said she will order an autopsy if needed,

but for the most part she rules the cause of death as exposure, especially if only skeletal remains are found. If foul play is suspected, the local sheriff’s department, police department or the Texas Rangers will take over the death investigation.

Luedecke’s only lifeline for the issue has come from her collaboration with Dr. Kate Spradley, of Texas State’s Operation Identification (OpID) program, a forensic laboratory that stores skeletal remains of unidentified migrants and retrieves DNA samples from the deceased, which Luedecke started working with in 2017. Information is uploaded to U.S. government databases CODIS and NamUS — the Combined DNA Index System and National Missing and Unidentified Persons System — with the intent that one day the decedents will be identified through DNA-matching technology and their remains repatriated to their families and countries of origin.

“What is happening on the border in terms of people dying — they are not dying circumstantially, they are dying because of our policy, because of our strategy, because of our vision of the border, and because of complete disregard to the lives of immigrants and immigrant families.”

OpID has been an invaluable solution for JPs like Luedecke, who can send remains at just the cost of transportation. Unlike a traditional burial, in which a body, if later identified, would need to be found and exhumed at the cost of the county, the consulate or a state-funded university program, OpID allows for a more straightforward repatriation process. In addition to the more practical aspects, a number of JPs said the

solution felt the most hopeful — and the most humane. “I thank God for Dr. Kate Spradley and the program that she has initiated, to give us a place to go with these people to hopefully bring some kind of closure to the families that are missing their loved ones,” said Luedecke. “And in the meantime, God bless them all. But I'm done with footing the bill for it.”

Spradley’s efforts are now being incorporated into JP training. With her help, the Texas Justice Court Training Center, out of Austin — where all new Texas JPs undergo 80 hours of training and existing JPs undergo 20 hours of training annually — is enhancing its focus on the processing of unidentified migrants’ bodies.

Because the current process of handling remains is spread across entities, once a body gets sent to a funeral home, an individual can easily become “lost in this bureaucratic shuffle,” said Spradley — something OpID and new JP training initiatives aim to amend. “It’s just crazy that there’s no real tracking system,” she said.

A 2021 law, House Bill 1419, made it compulsory for JPs or their designees to input missing persons into the publicly available NamUS in an effort to expedite identifications of unknown persons. Spradley said the law was a step in the right direction, but border counties experiencing the highest numbers of deceased and missing migrants often lack the knowledge and time to utilize the NamUS platform.

“Laws are merely suggestions until they’re enforced, and there's no enforcement of this,” said Spradley. (In April, Spradley helped lead a training workshop that instructed JPs on, among other things, inputting missing persons into NamUS.)

Spradley said that, nearly 10 years after its establishment, OpID seems to be handling higher numbers of recently deceased migrants found in counties across the Texas-Mexico border and working with more JPs who are requesting rapid identification and repatriation. OpID employs one full-time lab manager and one part-time Ph.D. student and relies heavily on the volunteer efforts of Spradley and students. Spradley said their team of one and a half has already received 78 migrants this year to date.

In order to properly manage bodies of unknown migrants — from discovery to identification and repatriation — a centralized facility with trained staff who oversee each case needs to be created, said Spradley.

“You can check all of those boxes,” she said. “You can get an autopsy, you can send a DNA sample, you can bury the remains, but you still may never get an identification if you're not managing that case, and if

you're not really seeing it through until the end, and that's too much to ask of [JPs].”

The Texas Code of Criminal Procedure requires that any collected DNA samples of unidentified human remains be sent to the Center for Human Identification at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, which performs forensic DNA testing, for placement into CODIS. At OpID, Spradley and her team often submit the right fifth metatarsal, a foot bone, for DNA analysis, because it is relatively non-invasive, keeping the skeletons looking fully intact. In order for unidentified migrants to be identified through DNA analysis, their families have to come forward and submit DNA samples.

For families inside of the U.S., samples have to be taken in the presence of law enforcement — a requirement that prohibits many undocumented residents within the U.S. from ever coming forward. Similarly, outside of the U.S., law enforcement or an official government agency has to be present for a DNA sample.

OpID works closely with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, an NGO which helps collect DNA from families in search of missing loved ones in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. To help facilitate identifications, the Argentine forensic group has agreements with Latin American federal governments to allow for the collection and sharing of DNA samples for comparison with samples collected by labs like OpID. Spradley said more than half of OpID’s identifications are a result of its partnerships with NGOs such as the Argentine forensic group.

The transnational collaboration through privately run DNA labs often leads to faster identifications compared to the federal system, said Spradley. The U.S. government does not currently allow for large-scale national genetic comparisons between unidentified missing persons in CODIS and the DNA collected from families by NGOs in other countries.

“We have it all. We have missing persons information and unidentified persons information. We have DNA from the unidentified, we have DNA from the families, but we still can't make identifications,” said Spradley. “We have it all except the political will from the U.S. government.”

In 2005, Adolfo Agramonte, who was born in the Dominican Republic, went missing in South Texas during an attempt to cross the U.S.–Mexico border. He had previously lived illegally in the United States, where he married a U.S. citizen and had a daughter, Christina. Despite having a family in the United States, Adolfo

NEW YEAR’S EVE

at

THE *Sentinel*

8:00pm-1:00am

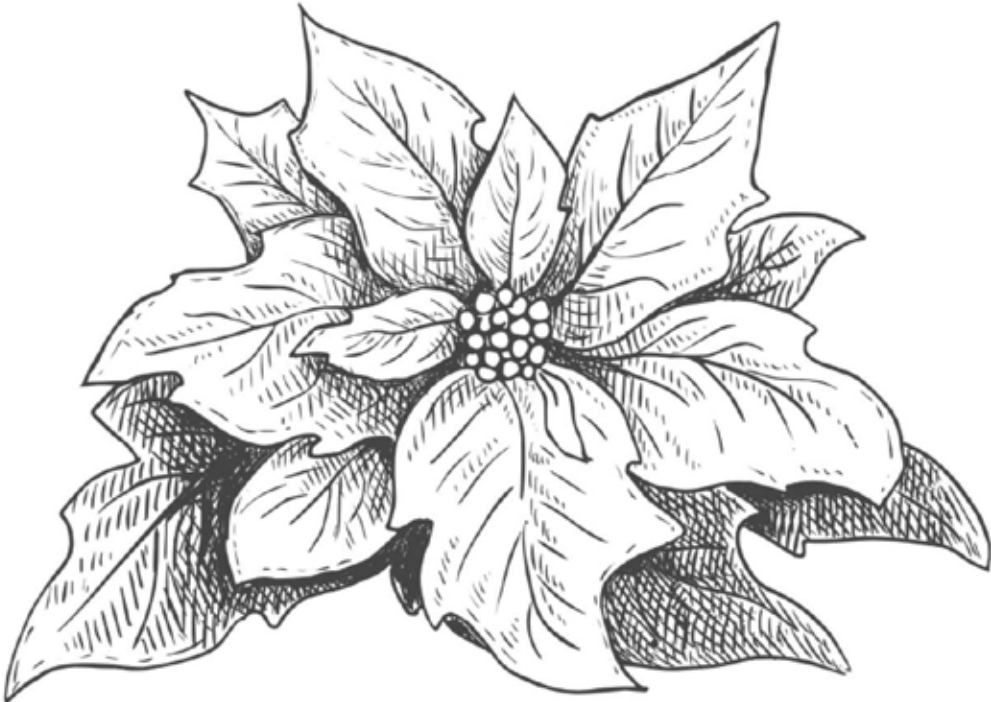
DJs.

Dance Party.

Specialty Cocktails.

New Year Toast.

Tis The Season



12 GAGE RESTAURANT

~ Join us to celebrate ~

CHRISTMAS EVE

Dinner ★ 5:30 pm - 10 pm

CHRISTMAS

Dinner ★ 5:30 pm - 10 pm

NEW YEAR’S EVE

Special Prix Fixe Menu ★ 5:30 pm- 10 pm

Seating is limited.

For reservations and more information, please call 432.386.4205.

102 NW HIGHWAY 90
MARATHON, TX 79842

G A G E
H O T E L

1-800-884-GAGE
WWW.GAGEHOTEL.COM

failed his green card interview and was deported. Christina, who was eight years old when her father went missing, remembers the uncertainty. Was he in jail, unable to contact anyone? Had he been killed or left for dead by the coyotes who led him across the border?

For the families of individuals who have gone missing or died crossing the border, the process of determining their loved one’s fate and laying them to rest is often one of overwhelming confusion and heartbreak. They encounter a disjointed system that requires them to seek answers from various entities and often leaves them with a flurry of unanswered phone calls and little resolution.

Christina felt she had no choice but to start investigating her father’s case on her own. She said many people she talked to, including law enforcement officers, urged her to move on and forget about her father’s fate. She was frustrated by what she felt was a lack of compassion and respect. “He’s illegal, but he’s still human,” she said.

In 2018, Christina submitted a DNA sample to see if any unknown deceased migrants could be Adolfo. Four years later, in the summer of 2022, she got a call from a woman she’d spoken with years prior from the Colibri Center for Human Rights — an organization that works with disappeared migrants’ families — offering her condolences. “I just broke down,” said Christina. She’d been waiting 17 years for the news, but its delivery was abrupt and from an unexpected source.

Adolfo had been found dead on a ranch in Falfurrias, Texas, about an hour north of the border, in July 2005 and was buried in an unmarked grave at Sacred Heart Burial Park. Spradley exhumed his body in 2017 with OpID. When Christina reached out in 2022, Spradley shared a helpful, if incomplete, case folder on Adolfo and let her know the DNA match had in fact happened three years earlier, but no one ever reached out to Christina or her mother to notify them. “That, to me, really shocked me. I was sick to my stomach. I said, ‘How can this even be possible?’” said Christina.

Spradley told Christina she’d been unsuccessful in obtaining a death certificate from the county or the autopsy report from the medical examiner’s office. The news of her father’s identification, which she long imagined would give her a sense of closure, left her feeling the opposite. “I have more questions than I’ve ever had in my whole entire life in regards to my father,” she said.

From the point at which his body was found in Brooks County in 2005, Adolfo passed through the Brooks County Sheriff’s Office and the Nueces County Medical Examiner’s Office, in Corpus Christi, before being buried back in Falfurrias, while a missing-persons report was filed with the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office.

His remains were exhumed by OpID and taken to San Marcos in 2017. He was given at least four different case numbers throughout the time period.

After Christina was notified of his death, Adolfo’s body was released to a funeral home in San Antonio. But Christina was unable to pay the thousands of dollars required to relocate him to Florida, where she and her mother live, so she chose to place his remains back into Spradley’s care for the time being. “I don’t have funds right now to bury him, sadly, and it hurts,” said Christina.

Christina said she’s left with the burden of knowing that her father died a “cruel death” — even if he died of natural causes — and that America’s immigration and Texas’ death investigation systems let her family down.

“If they die in the desert, they still died in the most inhumane way. They died of thirst, they died in the heat — I don’t know how you can find closure in that,” said Christina. “I don’t know how you can have closure when the system is one that failed in the first place.”

CBP, for its part, claims to be making strides toward reducing the number of migrant deaths occurring along the U.S.–Mexico Border. In 2017, the agency established the Missing Migrant Program (MMP), an initiative implemented across all nine Southwest border sectors, with each sector containing one main coordinator who may work with the local medical examiner or JP to help identify unknown deceased migrants. In the same Government Accountability Office report that recommended more comprehensive data collections for migrant deaths, officials also called for the establishment of a plan to review the MMP, which was lacking oversight.

Spradley said, in her experience, there appeared to be poor communication across Border Patrol sectors, which seem to vary in how they operate (CBP told The Big Bend Sentinel the MMP is run according to standard operating procedure). Luedecke told the Sentinel she was not aware of an MMP coordinator assigned to her jurisdiction; Marquez said she was working directly with Border Patrol.

Chief of Border Patrol Big Bend Sector Sean McGoffin told The Big Bend Sentinel counties typically handle interment and identification processes for deceased migrants, but Border Patrol may share information or help JPs coordinate with other entities.

Last summer, Border Patrol Big Bend Sector implemented a new program designed to assist distressed migrants by placing “rescue beacons” along remote routes and 9-1-1 placards in areas with a cell phone signal. There were 37 rescues in fiscal year 2022 as a result of the beacon deployment in the area, according to CBP.

Unlike in the Rio Grande Valley and states

such as Arizona, the Big Bend region does not currently have any active volunteer groups that go out in search of missing or deceased migrants. Fernando García, executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights, said his organization is in the early stages of assessing what such a program might look like for the Big Bend region. His staff has received more messages recently from families seeking information on their loved ones who they believed crossed the border into the tri-county area.

It’s not just the area’s remoteness that poses a challenge in responding to migrant deaths — the fact that many of those deaths occur on private land has also proven an obstacle to search-and-rescue missions. García said landowner cooperation, while difficult to achieve, would be paramount in implementing a volunteer program in the Big Bend region. He hopes to be able to work with ranchers to set up refillable water stations, for example, and urged bipartisan support to improve humanitarian efforts.

Spradley — along with the Forensic Border Coalition, of which she is a founder, and the South Texas Human Rights Center — was part of the team that worked for years to pass the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act of 2019, which said it would provide additional resources to CBP for migrant rescues and make more grant funding available to “improve the transportation, processing, identification, and reporting of missing persons and unidentified remains, including migrants.” Spradley said the bill was meaningful, in part, because it was the first acknowledgment of migrant deaths since Border Patrol’s prevention-through-deterrence strategy was implemented in the nineties.

Three years later, this past summer, funding from the Department of Justice was announced, with OpID one of two statewide agencies across the country selected this month to receive \$1 million worth of grant funding spread out over three years. OpID intends to use the funds to hire more employees and increase their capacity for intaking and storing unidentified migrant remains. The University of North Texas Center for Human Identification was also awarded \$1 million in federal funding.

Luedecke said she is grateful for those willing to take on the responsibility of ensuring the bodies of deceased migrants are handled with care and respect. She sees Spradley and OpID as her centralized facility — and a much-needed source of hope, providing some level of assurance that the bodies in the desert, otherwise forgotten, might be named and returned to their homes.

“Initially there were lots of sleepless nights. Because you see those faces, you see those people, and they haunt you,” said Luedecke. “There is some form of peace within when you place them.”

12 Days of Christmas

at the Hotel Paisano Gift Shop

Tuesday, December 13
“On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree.”
30% off any item with a bird on it!

Wednesday, December 14
“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas...”
30% off all Holiday Decor

Thursday, December 15
“Over the river and through the woods, to Grandmother’s house we go!”
30% off all travel items, luggage, totes, bags, etc.

Friday, December 16
“Chestnuts roasting on an open fire...”
30% off all kitchenware

Saturday, December 17
“Christmas is for children...”
30% off all children’s games, toys, books and clothing

Sunday, December 18
“Baby, it’s cold outside.”
30% off all gloves, hats, scarves, coats, jackets and winter wear

Monday, December 19
“Grandma got run over by a reindeer... she’d been drinking too much eggnog!”
30% off all barware and drinking games

Tuesday, December 20
“I’m dreaming of a white Christmas.”
30% off all ‘white’ items (paper goods not included)

Wednesday, December 21
“Oh, there’s no place like home for the holidays.”
30% off all items with MARFA or TEXAS or HOME on them

Thursday, December 22
“Santa Baby, I forgot one thing...a ring...”
30% off all jewelry

Friday, December 23
“Don we now our gay apparel, falala lalala la la la”
30% off all clothing

Saturday, December 24
“The holly and the ivy...”
30% off all red and green items

Sunday, December 25
CLOSED

Merry Christmas!

HOTEL PAISANO GIFT SHOP
Open 8-6 every day of the sale

HAPPIEST HOLIDAYS

Celebrate the season at
our annual
Open House
Thursday, December 22
from 10am - 2pm
at the bank’s
Community Room

Marfa National Bank will also be saying
goodbye to Linda Nunez who will be retiring at
the end of this year. Come by to greet her!



Holiday Schedule
Bank Lobby & Drive-through
December 26: Closed
January 2: Closed
Resume regular hours on
12/23 & 12/27
24-Hour ATM available



The staff and Directors of the Marfa National Bank, front row from left: Carla DeHoyos, Alejandra Hernandez, Linda Nunez, Rebeca Lozano, Yadira Torres, and Alma Rosa Baeza Back row from left: Chip Love, Elizabeth Gutierrez, Elizabeth Villanueva, Nohely Ramirez, Gabriela Munoz-Limas, Roxye Lara, Christy Madrid, Marci Wonsowski, Rose Mediano, Lyra Serrano
Not pictured: Jose Leyva, Clay Slack, Tom Wood, Ike Livingston

To our neighbors, customers, friends and associates here in
the community, thanks and best wishes for a happy, healthy
and wonderful holiday! We hope the season and the
New Year deliver everything your heart desires.
-Your friends at The Marfa National Bank-





Photo by Cody Bjornson
Liliana Zubia and Belen Soto with Marfa ISD's Ballet Folklorico perform last weekend in front of the county courthouse on Highland Street for the Marfa Holiday Bazaar.



Photo by Cody Bjornson
Emma Van Etten and Hadasa Salgado make their own felt ornaments with the help of the Chinati Foundation's education team at the Marfa Holiday Bazaar this past weekend.

Marfa Holiday Bazaar keeps winter wonder alive for local families

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — This past weekend, the local community took part in seasonal activities at the Marfa Holiday Bazaar, a three-day Christmas festival put on by the Marfa Chamber of Commerce at the county courthouse, which included a tree lighting ceremony, vendors, performances and a pet parade.

President of the Chamber Abby Boyd said the bazaar was a success, bringing in more vendors than the year prior as well as some unique first-time events, including a holiday lights parade, which drew sparse, but spirited, participation.

“We’re so grateful for the people who decorated their cars. It was really meaningful to see,” said Boyd. “We look forward to even more next year.”

At Friday night’s Christmas tree lighting ceremony, which helped kick off the weekend, Presidio County staff provided snacks, hot chocolate and stuffed animals, and the Marfa Children’s Choir performed

holiday songs.

“We had a lot of kids turn out, and of course they sang beautifully,” said Boyd. “It was super fun to light the tree with all of them there and get like a big scream out of all the kids when the lights came on.”

On Saturday, vendors lined the courthouse lawn and The Grinch posed for photos with local children. The Chinati Foundation’s education team provided materials and instruction for felt and shrinky dink ornaments inside of the Marfa Volunteer Fire Station.

Following a cheerful performance from the Big Bend Community Band, Santa rode in on a fire truck to greet and sit for photographs with Marfa citizens.

“Everyone who sat on Santa’s lap, he said, was on the good list. It is confirmed,” said Boyd. “Most of Marfa, with a few notable exceptions, are on Santa’s good list.”

Many showed up to support local makers, artisans and business owners, with the chamber organizing around 50 vendors for the bazaar. Boyd said it was refreshing to see all of the local talent in the community and attendees supporting small businesses.

“There were some people that I hadn’t met who make incredible things, some people that I have known for a long time that I didn’t realize made such special things,” said Boyd. “We just have such a creative community in every way, and their work deserves to be seen.”

Marfa Junior High and High School Principal Luane Porter said the junior class raised \$546 through their menudo sale at the holiday bazaar to go toward the annual prom.

“This is a great opportunity for our students to be a presence in our community and to practice skills such as planning and organizing events, money management skills and working with the public,” said Porter.

Porter said through both the choir and Ballet Folklorico performances the students were representing the school well in the community. “I am proud of our students when they are able to showcase their talents for our community,” she said. “We have talented students in a variety of areas, and I appreciate their enthusiasm to show off their Shorthorn spirit!”

Boyd said musical sets by local favorites Primo y

Beebe and Mariachi Santa Cruz were other highlights of the weekend. She also wishes to thank the Marfa Public Library, who held a bilingual storytime, the fire department, all of the volunteer elves that made the event possible, and Ballet Folklorico dancers, among others.

Sunday’s pet parade, held in honor of the work of Big Bend Pets, was “the absolute snow cap on the wintry event,” said Boyd, with many telling her it was their favorite part of the weekend.

The event was sponsored by the City of Marfa, PBFCM Attorneys at Law, Rule Gallery, Communitie, Viva Big Bend and The Marfa Store. The Marfa Holiday Lights competition is still underway, with the panel of judges to deliberate and choose a winning location this week.

For more information, visit <http://marfachamberofcommerce.org/marfa-holiday-bazaar-1> or follow @marfatxchamber on Instagram and Facebook.

MARFA PUBLIC LIBRARY
presents

NOON YEAR'S EVE PARTY
Thursday, December 29, 2022
11:30am-12:30pm
115 E. Oak St.

Tiny party patrons
ages 0 to 12 invited to
celebrate 2023 with
a balloon drop and
sparkling juice toast, plus
tunes, crafts, and a
temporary tattoo parlor

Kuper | Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Happy Holidays

It is in the spirit of the holidays that I extend a heartfelt thank you to all of those who have supported me and the best wishes for this upcoming year. Merry Christmas to you and your family. Here's hoping 2023 brings you health, happiness, and prosperity!

Lauren Meader Fowlkes

Your West Texas Realtor®
Serving Far West Texas Since 2013

Broker Associate
432.295.2849
lauren.meaderfowlkes@sothebysrealty.com
laurenmeaderfowlkes.kuperrealty.com

MARFA
VISTA

HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY AND A GREAT NEW YEAR!
FROM MARY AND LIZ

Specializing in Marfa real estate

MARY FARLEY
Broker/Sales
917.495.8823

LIZ SERLENGA
Sales
508.272.5699

marfavistarealty.com

Winter Hubbub to take place at the Marfa Coffee Company this weekend

MARFA — The Marfa Coffee Company, located at 317 W San Antonio St., will host a ‘Winter Hubbub’ this Saturday, December 17 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The event will be the second of its kind hosted by the coffee company, and will see an assortment of local vendors selling their wares.

“It’s a place for artists and makers to sell their goods, and you can support local businesses by buying handmade items for the holidays,” said Lesley Brandt of the Marfa Coffee Company.

Vendors include CMG knives, Damiana Handmade Jewelry, High Desert Dye, LaFortune Ceramics, Magic

Salve & chotskies, Sarah Vasquez photography, Lump Ware ceramics and Shy Gallery. Joe Salinas, Chris King and Sunday Denim will play holiday tunes and other music.

Burgers from Bad Larry Burger Club, out of Austin and Marfa, will be available for purchase.

The event will also act as a drop-off location for donations of nonperishable items for the Marfa Food Pantry. The coffee company has been collecting donations throughout the week, and will drop off all items at the food pantry after the hubbub.

MARFA PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS
A DONUT GRATITUDE EXTRAVAGANZA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2022
10AM TO 2PM
EVERYONE'S INVITED!

Please stop by the library for coffee and donuts as we celebrate our amazing volunteers and patrons. Special thanks to Frama Coffee, Joe Grajeda, Riley O'Bryan, and the Friends of the Marfa Public Library.



COMMUNITIE

MARFA



CHECK OFF YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST AT COMMUNITIE MARFA!

- ☐ DAD: STETSON COWBOY HAT
- ☐ MOM: CASHMERE BANDANA
- ☐ BROTHER: ROCKMOUNT PEARL SNAP SHIRT
- ☐ HUSBAND: FAHERTY QUILTED CPO JACKET
- ☐ DAUGHTER: B-SIDES VINTAGE LEVI'S
- ☐ BEST FRIEND: CHAN LUU GOLD HOOPS
- ☐ (YOU KNOW WHO): MILK & COOKIES

COMPLIMENTARY SHIPPING ANYWHERE IN THE U.S.
END OF SEASON SALE STARTS MONDAY DEC 26TH

122 N. Highland, Marfa

10% discount for locals, always!

Open every day 11am-5pm

Open Saturday December 17th, 12-4pm
Come have some Christmas cheer & do some shopping!



105 Front St. - old Masonic Lodge in Fort Davis, Texas
ART - BOOKS - SUPPLIES

"NEVER COMPLAIN, NEVER EXPLAIN" - Dorothy Parker

Bring a little joy to someone’s mailbox each week.
Give the gift of a subscription to



only \$50/year locally, and \$60/year outside the tri-county area

You can subscribe online at bigbendsentinel.com/subscribe or call (432) 729-4342 or email billing@bigbendsentinel.com.



LIVINGSTON

INSURANCE AGENCY

Happy Holidays

from Livingston Insurance

Closed on Monday, December 26 & Tuesday, December 27

Dan Platt Jr.
Home • Auto • Commercial
PROUDLY SERVING WEST TEXAS

903 West San Antonio Street • 432.729.4306
dan@marfainsurance.com • www.marfainsurance.com

Hotel Saint George

PRESENTS:

NEW YEAR'S EVE

JIMMIE DALE GILMORE

BUTCH HANCOCK

Special Guests:

THE MASTERSONS

THE WHITMORE SISTERS

ROSS CASHIOLA

SAINT GEORGE HALL - MARFA, TX

DEC 31

8 PM

FOR EVENT DETAILS AND TO RESERVE YOUR TICKETS
VISIT TICKETSTRIPE.COM/MARFANYE2022

Made with PosterMyWall.com

We are your local funeral home!



MOBILE MORTICIAN OF TEXAS
(432) 249-1333

Owned and operated in the Big Bend area by James Hall.

The funeral home that comes to you, no matter your budget

<https://www.facebook.com/MobileMorticianofTexas>
<https://www.instagram.com/mobilemorticianoftexas/>
<https://twitter.com/MofTexas>

43430 Hwy 17-s
P.O. Box 2174
Fort Davis, TX 79734

WTG Fuels, Inc.

Your Full Service Propane, Gasoline & Diesel Distributor for Brewster, Jeff Davis & Presidio Counties of West Texas



ALPINE OFFICE:
2411 East Highway 90
ph: 432-837-2518

MARATHON OFFICE:
Highway 385 South
ph: 432-386-4422

THE SENTINEL



• NEWSPAPER • COFFEE • COCKTAILS •

209 W EL PASO ST
MARFA, TX 79843

BREAKFAST FROM 7:30 AM - 3 PM
LUNCH FROM 11 AM - 3 PM
NO FOOD ON XMAS EVE OR NYE



Photo courtesy of the Frank Jimenez
Rebecca Jimenez and Randen Brandt exchanged wedding vows on October 15 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Pictured are Frank Jimenez (formerly from Marfa), Abigail Jimenez (formerly from Marfa), Rebecca Jimenez, Randen Brandt and Frances Jimenez.



Alexandra Rau, LCSW
Therapy for individuals and couples

www.alexandrarau.com
917.213.7449
alexandra@alexandrarau.com
Highland Avenue, Marfa

Marfa History Lives at the

Blackwell School

preserving a nationally significant, historically segregated, Mexican American schoolhouse

Holiday Hours
★ Saturdays December 24 and 31
12:00 to 4:00 p.m.
★ Christmas and New Year's Day
Closed



*Feliz Navidad
Merry Christmas*

from the stop light, two blocks west and three blocks south
theblackwellschool.org



FRONTIER SERVICES

HEATING & COOLING

New install, mini splits. We service all brands!
Free estimate, Call 432-386-7422 TACLB17870E



SEASON'S GREETINGS!



Holiday Hours
Closed Christmas Eve & Day 12/24 & 12/25
Closed New Year's Eve & Day 12/31 & 1/01

www.frontstreetbooks.com

121 E Holland Ave, Alpine

9:30 - 5:30 M-F
10-3 Sat, closed Sun

Find us on Facebook & Instagram

Marfa Realty



2023 Planning Calendars are here.
Stop by and pick one up for yourself and a friend.

123 N. Highland Ave.
(432) 729-3962
www.marfarealty.com

Kathleen Walstrom Owner/Broker
Melissa Bent Sales Agent & Christa Marquez Sales Agent

Come worship with us



First United Methodist Church

Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid,
for I am your God;
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

Sundays 9 am
Pastor Stephen White
110 W Washington Steet
Marfa 432-729-4534



DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Isaiah Ramos
9th Grade
Block Print

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

8	3	6	5		7		9	
	9		8	1	4		3	
	5			6				
9	8	1	3	4				7
3				8				5
2				9	6	1	8	3
				3			5	
	1		4	7	2		6	
2		6		9	7	1	8	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

3	7	2	4	9	8	6	1	5
9	8	1	7	5	6	3	2	4
4	6	5	1	2	3	9	7	8
2	1	8	9	4	7	5	3	6
7	5	9	6	3	1	8	4	2
6	3	4	2	8	5	7	9	1
5	2	3	8	7	4	1	6	9
1	9	7	5	6	2	4	8	3
8	4	6	3	1	9	2	5	7

DECEMBER	Thu, Dec 15	Fri, Dec 16	Mon, Dec 19	Tue, Dec 20	Wed, Dec 21
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST STRUDEL, CHEESE CUBES	CEREAL, POPTART	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
LUNCH	BREADED MOZARELLA STICKS, MARINARA SAUCE, GARDEN SALAD, PEARS	COLD CUT SANDWICH, CHIPS, BABY CARROTS, HUMMUS CUP, FRUIT	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
Menu courtesy of  Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net					

CELEBRATION LIQUOR MARFA

Mon - Thu 11:30 am - 9 pm
Fri - Sat 10 am - 9 pm
432-837-7479 • Marfa

Mon - Sat 10 am - 9 pm
432-729-4682 • Alpine

RAUL LARA CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Cell# 432-249-1189
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com

Post Office Box 787
432-729-4315 / fax 432-729-3158

CONVENIENCE WEST BBQ

Friday • Saturday
www.conveniencewest.com
Order in advance online
1411 W San Antonio/Hwy 90

PRESCRIPTION SHOP MARFA

A full-service pharmacy. Now accepting many insurance plans for service while you wait.
105 East Oak Street, next to Marfa Country Clinic
432.729.4244
rxshopmarfa@gmail.com



MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU - SAT, DEC 15- 18: HS Basketball Tournament at Sanderson
MON, DEC 19: HS Basketball vs Marathon
MON, DEC 19: JH Basketball vs Van Horn at Van Horn

YOUR AD HERE!
ONLY \$10 / WEEK
Contact
ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg December 12, 2022

ACROSS

1 Up to the task
5 Tax Day mo.
8 Types
13 "Ted Lasso" actor/writer Goldstein
15 Plan with a Roth variety
16 "A penny for your thoughts" or "a dime a dozen," e.g.
17 Cuatro + uno
18 Animal seen carrying a pizza slice into the NYC subway, in a 2015 viral video
19 Birds on Canadian dollars
20 Abandons arid areas?
23 Airport screening org.
24 Earthly paradise
25 Scribbles sports superlatives?
32 Hem and ____
33 ____ and aah
34 Volume with no volume?
35 Fixing typos, e.g.
38 Exude
40 ____ closet (sheets' spot)
41 Above, to a poet
42 Darn or hem, say
43 Consumes curated collections?
48 In a dead heat

49 Supermarket scanner's target, briefly
50 Remembers representative-removing referendums?
57 :
58 "That'll be the ____!"
59 Guy who wears his belt high up?
60 Elementary
61 "Let You Love Me" singer Rita
62 Allegro or adagio, e.g.
63 Whooping bird
64 All U.S. vice presidents until 2021
65 Forcefully emit

DOWN

1 Letters sung to the same tune as "Twinkle, twinkle"
2 Soft French cheese
3 Something to help you focus?
4 "I could go on," briefly
5 Broadcasts
6 Uttar ____ (India's most populous state)
7 Like many violent movies
8 Like a cell-phone during a concert, one hopes
9 Stench
10 Real hoot

11 Scads
12 Texting tech letters
14 Body's trunk
21 Egerton who played Elton John in "Rocketman"
22 Observe
25 Spokes, geometrically
26 Basketball Hall of Famer Patrick
27 Man's best friend, it's said
28 Kimono sash
29 Mocking tribute
30 Lavishes affection (on)
31 Distort
32 Cradled, perhaps
36 Capital of Texas?
37 Occurrence
38 Camping gear retailer
39 Verbally spar

41 "Seems likely ..."
44 Up to, informally
45 Rarely
46 Disney World attraction opened in 1982
47 Close calls
50 Crowd sound
51 "Frozen" queen
52 Chunk of cold, hard cash?
53 "You've Got Mail" star Meg
54 Walk with uneven strides
55 Walk with long strides
56 Winter coat?
57 "Schitt's Creek" network

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	A	L	T	E	G	A	D	F	A	D					
O	P	R	A	H	T	O	T	E	S	A	L	E			
G	O	O	D	A	S	H	E	L	L	P	I	S	A		
R	U	M	T	A	N	S	M	I	R	R	O	R			
E	T	A		S	K	I	M	O	N	E	T				
			D	I	S	C	O	T	I	N	F	E	R	N	O
A	T	B	A	T		U	N	T	O		I	A	M		
R	U	E	D		L	A	T	T	E		L	A	N	E	
A	T	E		F	O	R	D		C	O	L	O	N		
B	U	R	N	I	N	F	O	R	Y	O	U				
		B	O	N	G	S	E	O	N		Z	A	G		
S	T	E	R	E	O		K	I	K	I	A	C	L		
L	O	L	S		R	I	N	G	O	F	F	I	R	E	
I	D	L	E		I	N	O	N		E	E	R	I	E	
T	O	Y		A	N	T	S		R	E	E	D			

12/11 © 2022 Andrews McMeel Universal
www.upuzzles.com

12/12

Moving Stress by Micah Sommersmith

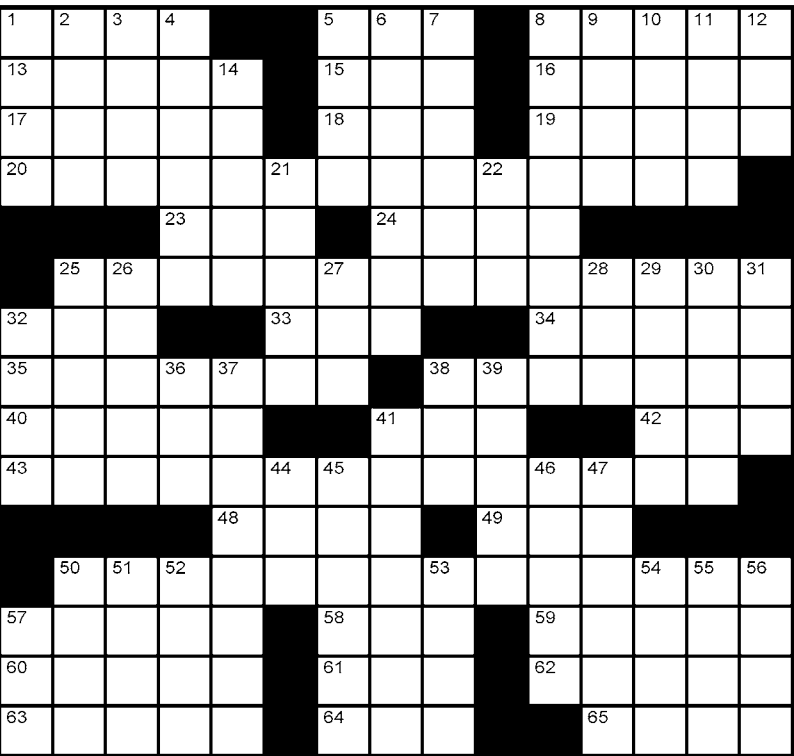




Photo courtesy of Honor Flight Austin

Longtime Marfa resident and Air Force veteran Ralph May was a guest on Honor Flight Austin to Washington D.C. for Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7. He and six other WWII veterans had a private tour of the White House. President Biden invited the group to join him in the Oval Office and personally thanked each veteran for their service.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thu
Dec
15

Alpine High School Holiday Concert
7:00pm at the Alpine High School Gym in Alpine
With performances by Jazz Ensembler, AHS Concert Band and AHS Color Guard

William Benton Reading
7:00pm at the Crowley Theatre in Marfa
William Benton will read from Light on the Water: New and Selected Poems, 1971-2022, with a reception to follow at 300 South Kelly Street.

Fri
Dec
16

City of Alpine Christmas Parade
5:00pm in Alpine
5:00pm lineup at City Hall, 5:30pm Start down Holland, 6:00pm Concert at Alpine Visitor Center and SANTA!

Sat
Dec
17

Winter Hubbub: Open Air Market & Food Drive
11:00am - 3:00pm at 317 W San Antonio in Marfa
Music! Food! Drinks! Collecting canned and non-perishable food items for The Marfa Food Pantry.

Sentinel Saturdays
7:00pm - Late at The Sentinel in Marfa
Specialty seasonal cocktails. Tacos and bites. See you there!

Sun
Dec
18

Christmas Carol Song
5:00pm at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Marfa
All kids are welcome to join the Christmas Caroling, if your kids are interested please inform Virgie, Virginia, Rosie and Cindy. There will be hot chocolate and all participants will be given a Santa Hat.

Wed
Dec
21

Donut Gratitude Extravaganza
10:00am - 2:00pm at the Marfa Public Library in Marfa
Please stop by the library for coffee and donuts as we celebrate our amazing volunteers and patrons. Everyone's invited!

Thu
Dec
29

Noon Year's Eve for Kids
11:30am - 12:30pm at the Marfa Public Library in Marfa
Tiny party patrons ages 0 - 12 are invited to celebrate 2023 with a balloon drop and sparkling juice toast, plus tunes, crafts, and a temporary tattoo parlor!

Sat
Dec
31

New Year's Eve at The Sentinel
8:00pm - 1:00am at The Sentinel in Marfa
DJs. Dance party. Specialty cocktails. New Year's toast! See you there!

Rolling Highway and The Hotel Saint George Present: New Year's Eve 2022
8:00pm at the Saint George Hall in Marfa
Butch Hancock, Jimmie Dale Gilmore with special guests The Mastersons, The Whitmore Sisters and Marfa's own, Ross Cashiola. Call 432-294-0120 for more info. Tickets at <https://ticketstripe.com/MarfaNYE2022>

Sun
Jan
1

32nd Annual Black-eyed Pea Off
2:00pm Turn in Time and 2:30pm Tasting time at Downtown Terlingua Ghostown
Start the year off with a bowl of "Good Luck" for a \$10 donation. Local music & "Hot Date" raffle. Proceeds will benefit continuing education scholarships for Terlingua School Graduates! \$10 entry fee.

Ongoing
Weekly
Events

Coffee, Snacks & Conversation at USO Hall for Veterans
Thursdays at 9am at the USO Building

Big Sky Yoga
Mondays & Wednesdays at 6pm, Fridays at 12:00pm, Saturdays at 10am at Saint George Hotel

Free Zumba Classes
Mondays & Wednesdays at 6:00pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Mysore Yoga Classes
Mondays, Thursdays & Saturdays at 9:00am at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes
Tuesdays at 6:00pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Intro to Ashtanga
Tuesdays at 9:00am at Marfa Public Library

Baby & Toddler Storytime
Wednesdays at 11:00am at Marfa Public Library

AA
Saturdays at 12:00pm at Marfa Public Library

The Magic Around Us Youth Drum Circle
Fridays at 4:30am at Marfa Public Library

The Alpine Farmers Market
Saturdays at 9:00am on historic Murphy Street in Alpine

Life Drawing with Model
Tuesdays from 7:00pm - 9:00pm at Talent Studios in Alpine
Join this vibrant artist community, make new friends and hone your drawing skills. Reserve your easel by texting 206.619.4699

Presented by...
YOUR BRAND HERE!
Email ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Have an upcoming or weekly event?

Please submit a two sentence maximum description of your weekly event including who, what, when, and where by Tuesday at 10 am to ads@bigbendsentinel.com

OBITUARY



Garcia

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved wife, mother and grammy, **Rosa Waters Garcia**, who went to be with her Lord and Savior on December 2, 2022.

Praying of the Most Holy Rosary and Mass were held on Saturday, December 10, at 9:30 a.m. with Mass of Christian Burial with officiant Father Pablo Matta.

Born July 16, 1953, in Alpine to the late Jesusita Waters and Mack O. Waters. She is preceded in death by grandfather Francisco Ramirez; uncles Domingo and Cornelio

Ramirez; aunt Elidora Billings; and sister-in-law, Tina Losoya.

She is survived by her husband of 46 years, Poncho Garcia; son Jason Garcia; daughter-in-law Isela Garcia; grandchildren Issa and Vincent Garcia; sister Sylvia Probasco; brothers Mack and Jack Waters; eight nephews and two nieces.

Rosa was a graduate of Alpine High School and received her Master of Education in 1975 from Sul Ross State University. She embarked on her teaching/coaching career in Alpine, before continuing to serve the communities of Presidio, Ft. Stockton and ultimately retiring in Fabens, Texas, in 2019.

Rosa was the epitome of grace and pure kindness. Her compassion and love for teaching allowed her to make a difference in the lives of those she knew. A woman of strong faith and love, who enjoyed nothing more than spending time with her family, especially her two grandchildren, and making lasting memories.

Services were entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home, in Alpine, Texas.

...



Murrah

Frank Webb Murrah of Quihi, passed away on December 6, 2022, in Castroville at the age of 49. He was born July 27, 1973, in Del Rio, Texas, to Thomas Watson "Watt" Murrah and Barbara Webb Murrah.

Frank graduated from Medina Valley High School in 1991. He was a skilled stone mason and founded his own company, Murrah Lathe and Plaster. He was an avid hunter and fisherman and loved the outdoors.

Survivors include his daughter, Madison Murrah of Rio Medina; mother, Barbara Murrah of Castroville; step-mother, Jackie

Murrah of Castroville; former step-father Gary Humphreys of Del Rio, sister and brother-in-law, Kate and Cliff Fowler of Devine; niece, Corinne Fowler; nephew, Owen Fowler; step-sister, Julie Ryzek and Al of Huntersville, North Carolina, step-brother, Steve Tedford and Denise of Castroville; his sweetheart, Julie Boehme Guinther of Castroville and his "bonus" kids, Hayden and Addie Guinther; as well as numerous cousins, other relatives, and friends.

Frank was preceded in death by his father, Watt Murrah; and his grandparents, Harold and Corinne Webb, and Jake and Elizabeth Murrah.

Visitation will be Thursday, December 15, 2022 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Tondre-Guinn Funeral Home with a Memorial Service at 6:00 p.m. Services will conclude at the funeral home.

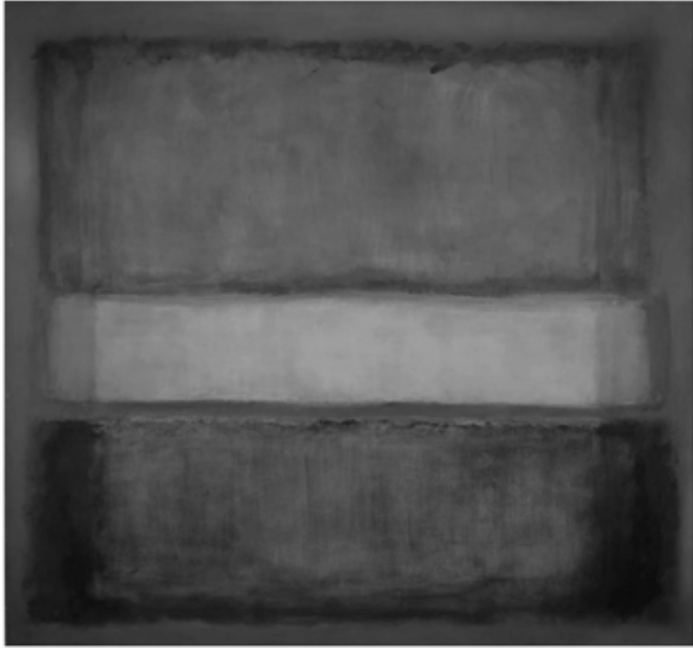
Memorials may be made in Frank's memory to Scottish Rite Hospital for Children or the charity of your choice.

Arrangements by Tondre-Guinn Funeral Home. Visit www.tondre-guinn.com

Alpine Memorial
FUNERAL HOME

CREMATIONS - PRENEED PLANS

Obituaries presented in partnership with
Alpine Memorial Funeral Home
209 West Sul Ross Ave | Alpine, TX 79830
alpinememorialfuneralhome.com | 432-837-2222



MODERN MASTERS:
A Tribute to
ANNE WINDFOHR MARION
October 23, 2022–January 8, 2023

MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH
3200 Darnell Street • Fort Worth, Texas 76107 • 817.738.9215
www.themodern.org

Modern Masters: A Tribute to Anne Windfohr Marion is made possible with the support of Vantage Bank.
Mark Rothko, White Band No. 27, 1954. Oil on canvas. 81¼ x 87 inches. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Gift of Anne Windfohr Marion. © Kate Rothko Pitzel and Christopher Rothko. Photograph by Eile Marie Bishop

Classifieds & public notices

JOBS

HELP WANTED

Heating and cooling tech. Will train.
Starting pay \$20 per hour
Ability to get licenced.
Call 432-386-0275

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

City of Marfa
Police Department
113 South Highland Ave.

In conjunction with the Marfa Independent School District, and in accordance with the Texas Education Code Sec. 37.081. the Marfa Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Applicants must be 21 years of age or older.
Requirements include High School Diploma or GED and must possess a Texas Peace Officer license issued by TCOLE.
Must have a Texas Driver's License.

Essential Job Duties:

- Must be able to perform the following essential job duties with or without reasonable accommodation.
- Preserves the peace of the Marfa Independent School District through mediation, investigation, intervention, assistance, documentation, and arrest; utilizes all lawful means to improve the quality of life by reducing the fear and incidence of crime, recognizing, and resolving problems, and meeting the public safety needs of the School District.
 - Patrols the Marfa ISD campuses to respond to Administration, Faculty and Students' requests for assistance, provide enhance security of both campuses, provide security for all afterschool sport extracurricular activities, enforce traffic regulations, detect crime, apprehend violators, look for unusual or suspicious activities or persons; interrogate and communicate with victims, witnesses, and suspects in cases; provides scene security and protection for Fire and Medical personnel, and assure public safety.
 - Enforces local, state, and Federal laws, and enforces compliance with local regulations and ordinances, according to Department policies, procedures, and regulations.
 - Investigates crimes and accidents occurring on campus; secures and processes crime and accident scenes and identifies and collects evidence within scope of authority.
 - Arrests law violators; transports and processes suspects, victims, and prisoners.
 - Completes detailed reports and required paperwork.
 - Maintains vehicle and equipment according to Department and School District standards.
 - Assists and coordinates with other emergency services personnel, outside organizations and businesses, and Federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations.
 - Presents education and information programs for school awareness projects; teaches and counsels Faculty and students on law enforcement activities and referral resources.
 - Maintains the integrity, professionalism, values, and goals of the Department and School District by assuring that all rules and regulations are followed, and that accountability and public trust are preserved.
 - Performs other duties as assigned or required by the Marfa School district.

Applications can be obtained from the City of Marfa web site, (<https://www.cityofmarfa.org>) or in person at the Marfa Police Department located at 113 S. Highland Ave, Marfa, Texas 79843.

City of Marfa Telephone (432)729-4315
Marfa Police Department Telephone (432)729-1841

Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

The City of Marfa is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PREVENTATIVE CARE HEALTH SERVICES JOB OPPORTUNITIES

•FULL STAFF ACCOUNTANT•

Bachelors required, Alpine Location

•FULL TIME OR PART TIME FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST•

Marfa Clinic

•FULL TIME IT SPECIFIC SOFTWARE TECH•

Preferably Medical Software

ALSO LOOKING FOR A CNA, CMA, DENTIST, MEDICAL DOCTOR, FNP, AND DENTAL HYGIENIST

Please call Sarah at 432-837-4812 for more information.

Applications may be picked up at 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy
Alpine, TX 79830 or call (432) 837-4555.

Please call first before arrival.

Family Health Service of Alpine • 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy

PUBLIC NOTICES

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:00pm in the Casner Room at City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

PRESIDIO COUNTY UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION FOR Water Well OPERATING Permit FOR NEW WELL

January 12, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. in the Jury Room
on the second floor of the Presidio County Courthouse
at 300 N. Highland, Marfa, Texas 79843

Notice is hereby given that the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District (District) will hold a public hearing on a permit application seeking authorization to operate a new, non-exempt well. If you would like to support or protest this application as a party to this hearing, you must: (1) attend the hearing and (2) qualify as a party by demonstrating at the January 12th hearing your justiciable interest related to a legal right, duty, privilege, power or economic interest that is within the District's regulatory authority that would be affected by the action proposed by the application. Any application that is contested will be subject to a hearing in accordance with the District's rules. If an application is uncontested, the application may be acted on by the District's Board without a formal contested hearing. Persons may submit written comments regarding any of the applications at the hearing, by mail to the District, P.O. Box 606, Marfa, Texas, 79843, or by email to info@pcuwcd.org, although these comments will not be considered evidence in the hearing on the application. The application subject to this hearing follows:

Applicant: Helios Operating, LLC
Three Riverway, Suite 1750
Houston, TX 77056

Well location: Chispa Road, Presidio County, TX 79854
Latitude: 30° 26' 41.37" N
Longitude: 104° 51' 48.18" W

The applicant requests authorization to operate a new well to annually withdraw 10 acre-feet from the Igneous aquifer for one year at an estimated rate of withdrawal of 147 gallons per minute. The groundwater would be used for oil and gas exploration/production.

To review this application or for additional information about this application or the District's rules, contact the District at 432-295-2568, by mail at P.O. Box 606, Marfa, Texas, 79843, or in person at 300 North Highland Avenue, 2nd Fl, Marfa, Texas.

FOR SALE

MOST UNIQUE ESTATE SALE EVER!

115 6th Street, Alpine TX.
Friday evening, December 16th, 6pm-9pm
Saturday - Sunday, Dececember 17th-18th 9am-3pm

Early American Antique furniture, blanket chests, sea chests, highboy, Windsor chairs, side tables, desk, lawyer bookcases, drop leaf table, and rope beds. Massive antique knife collection, native trade knives, penny knives, patch knives, bowie knives. Native American crook knives, lance blades, scrapers, trade axes, copper artifacts. Sterling silver bowls, service, goblets, candlesticks, tea sets, plates, so much silver. Antique medical instruments, bleeders, fleams, cupping, leech bowls, amputation kits, saws, forceps, trepanning devices, dental tools, tooth keys, pharmacy tools. Antique blackpowder horns, reloading, bullet molds.

Too much to list, a sale not to be missed,
perfect for those last minute Christmas gifts!

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF THE ESTATE OF AURIE MITCHELL WEST

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters Testamentary upon the Estate of Aurie Mitchell West, Deceased, were granted to Hayes Mitchell West, as Independent Executor on December 13, 2022, by the Probate Court of Presidio County, Texas in cause number 2005. ALL PERSONS having claims against said estate are hereby required to present same to said Executor, c/o Gina Fields, 5809 Acacia Circle, El Paso, Texas 79912, within the time prescribed by law.

Ainsa Hutson Hester & Crews, LLP
5809 Acacia Circle
El Paso, Texas 79912
Telephone: (915) 832-3507
Telecopier: (915) 845-7800

By: 
Gina Fields
State Bar No.: 11842750

Attorney for the Estate of
Aurie Mitchell West, Deceased

FINE
SPIRITS
BEER &
WINE

NATIVE
TREES
& PLANTS

LOCAL
PRODUCE
& WARES



**CACTUS
LIQUORS**

405 S Highland (432)729-7070
cactusliquors@gmail.com

SENTINEL SATURDAYS

DECEMBER 17, 7PM - LATE

SPECIALTY SEASONAL COCKTAILS

• • • • •

TACOS & BITES

209 W EL PASO ST • MARFA, TX 79843

Open Enrollment: November 1
Deadline: December 15
For Health Insurance
through the MarketPlace

Need an affordable
Health Insurance?
We Got You Covered!



Get Information at
Preventative Care Health Services

Formerly known as
Presidio County Health Services

For Information call Sarah Vasquez
Family Health Services of Alpine
1605 North Fort Davis Highway Ste. B
Alpine Texas
432-837-4812

For information in Marfa, call
Javier Flores 432-837-4812 X 501

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY
Judge Cinderela Guevara:
(432) 729-4452

CITY OF MARFA
Manny Baeza, City of Marfa Mayor
mayor@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048
Irma Salgado, Mayor Pro Tem
councilmembersalgado@cityofmarfa.com
Mark Cash
councilmembercash@cityofmarfa.com
Raúl Lara
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com
Eddie Pallarez
councilmemberpallarez@cityofmarfa.com

Presidio Mayor John Ferguson:
City Hall: (432) 229-3517
Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Eleazar Cano:
(432) 837-6200 x 124

Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY
Judge Curtis Evans: (432) 426-3968

FEDERAL:
U.S. Sen. John Cornyn:
(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)
U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:
(202) 224-5922 (D.C. office)



Maisie Crow
Max Kabat
Allegra Hobbs
Sam Karas
Mary Cantrell
Ariele Gentiles
Becca Foster
Mary Etherington
Maria Gerardo
Marisa Chacon
Evelyn Sanchez

Editor-in-Chief
Publisher
Managing Editor
Reporter
Reporter
Copy Editor
Designer / Advertising
Office Manager
Distribution
Distribution

Office: 209 1/2 W. El Paso St., Marfa, Texas
Mail: Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843
Telephone: 432.729.4342
Contact: editor@bigbendsentinel.com
Advertising Inquiries: ads@bigbendsentinel.com
www.bigbendsentinel.com

The Big Bend Sentinel (ISSN 1076-1004 USPS 055-800) is published weekly, on Thursdays, 50 times a year by West Texan Media Group LLC, Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843. Annual subscription rates are \$50 in Presidio, Brewster & Jeff Davis counties, and \$60 elsewhere in Texas and the United States. Special rates apply abroad. Periodicals class postage paid at Marfa, Texas 79843.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843.



800.520.0092



Fiber Internet Fits Any Family!

Save an average of 30% per month on your Internet with this special offer!

- Receive FREE installation and manage your Wi-Fi using our Whole Home or Whole Business App PLUS Command IQ (with Gigaspire access point).
- Pay your bill in seconds using our BBT eBill app. Our 24/7 Help Desk is always available and there are no data caps.

Receive 100 x 100 Mbps for Only \$80* each month!

BBT

800.592.4781 | www.bigbend.com