THE BIG BEND Sentinel

Vol. 91 No. 18 • July 27, 2023 Marfa, Presidio County, Texas www.bigbendsentinel.com • $1

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Cocaine concealed in cheese wheels seized at Presidio Port of Entry

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last Thursday, Customs and Border Protection officials intercepted a smuggler attempting to bring cocaine into the United States by concealing the drug in wheels of cheese. 17.8 pounds of the narcotic was recovered over the course of the search.

Before the search was initiated, a 22-year-old United States citizen was pulled over for secondary inspection after declaring four wheels of cheese. The cheese was run through an X-ray scanner which revealed "anomalies," per a Customs and Border Protection press release.

Presidio Port Director Daniel Mercado said that concealing narcotics inside of everyday items wasn't a new smuggling tactic. "The thorough and extensive inspections performed by CBP officers stopped this unusual drug load from reaching its intended destination," he said.

Big Bend Sector Spokesperson Roger Maier was less cavalier about the seizure. "I have been in my post for 30-plus years and do not recall a smuggling event involving drugs hidden in cheese before," he said.

A more common occurrence is the smuggling of unauthorized agricultural products into the United States, rather than using those products to conceal other materials. In October of 2022, 484 pounds of bologna and 285 pounds of cheese were intercepted at a port of entry in El Paso.

Crossing cheese in and of itself isn't a crime — it's the quantity that matters. In 2023, two high-profile cheese busts at ports of entry in New Mexico and Arizona led authorities to clarify that only "personal use" amounts of cheese may enter the United States, limited to around 10 pounds.

Maier explained that in this case, not only were the seized drugs sampled and destroyed — but the cheese had to be eliminated as well via incineration and industrial waste disposal. "It would be unfit/unsafe for consumption following an episode like the most recent one," he said.

2023 has been an unusually heavy year for cocaine trafficking, with a historic spike of over 29,000 pounds of cocaine seized in February 2023 alone.

A report from the United Nations attributes the uptick of seizures — in part — to the easing of border crossing restrictions after the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also estimates that around 30% of the world's cocaine users are North

(Continued on page 3)



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Calletana Vargas, Sam Salazar and Louise Culbertson lead a group of individuals marching for reproductive rights down Highland Avenue this week. READ MORE ON PAGE 7.

District in turmoil as teachers and parents raise concerns about key decisions by MISD leadership

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — At last week's school board meeting, outgoing third-through-fifth-grade math teacher Evalice Arguello publicly rescinded her application to stay with Marfa ISD, leaving the district with one more vacancy to fill before the impending school year. While the district has struggled to attract and retain staff over a lack of housing and low salaries, Arguello made clear her departure was due to far deeper, more systemic problems she had observed with district leadership.

Arguello, in a letter read directly to the board from a podium on July 17, accused its members of behaving unethically when making personnel decisions, fostering a hostile environment, and even hindering student progress with poor decision-making.

"The Marfa ISD School Board is operating unethically in their hiring and promoting decision-making processes while disregarding the best interests of the students and staff which is negatively going to impact their academic success and achievement," read Arguello.

In an interview with *The Big Bend Sentinel*, Arguello clarified that some of her issues with the district were personal — she had experienced conflict with Board President Teresa Nuñez, and claims the board had opted against rehiring her after an initial resignation due to retaliation on Nunez's part (the board has denied this, noting Nuñez is one of seven votes and that members had concerns about Arguello's "repeated resignations").

But she also raised concerns with the district that went beyond her own contract. Those concerns include the decision to promote teacher and coach Arturo Alferez to interim superintendent this spring — a role for which she claims he is underqualified — and a perceived lack of proactive leadership after the alarming arrests this summer of frequent MISD substitute teacher Sonya Murillo and girls softball league coach P.J. Serrano on child sex abuse material charges. (The league Serrano coached for is not affiliated with the school district).

Those concerns have been echoed by two other MISD teachers, one who requested anonymity

(Continued on page 2)

Border Network for Human Rights releases annual Abuse Documentation Campaign report

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

EL PASO — Last week, the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) released its annual Abuse Documentation Campaign detailing instances of alleged mistreatment at the hands of federal, state and local immigration authorities. The El Paso-based nonprofit serves as a watchdog for human rights abuses by law enforcement on the border and aims to empower border communities through connection and education.

For the first time since the program's origins two decades ago, Presidio was included in the Abuse Documentation Campaign. Last year, new BNHR offices in Presidio and Del Rio were unveiled, expanding the program's reach to smaller border communities downstream of El Paso.

The report breaks down 52 cases of alleged abuse reported to BNHR by the numbers, in hopes of reforming immigration policy at all levels of government. While the data is limited to cases collected by the nonprofit, the organization still believes that information is powerful. "We believe these cases reflect the systemic pattern of impunity under which law enforcement agencies interact with migrants, refugees, and border residents," the report reads.

Alleged abuse by law enforcement is broken down into 31 categories ranging from physical abuse and deprivation of necessities in detention to constitutional rights violations.

The aim of the report is to shed light on these issues to prevent what the organization calls "death by policy." Among the cases documented, four undocumented minors died in federal custody and one minor and three adults died while migrating. "[These cases] represent the aggravated systemic failure that disregards the rights and well-being of refugees and migrants," the report reads.

The report includes narrative accounts of a handful of the documented cases, ranging from an anonymous account of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents breaking up a house party with excessive force to a woman who felt that she had been patted down in a "very exaggerated" way — and worried that her child had also been touched inappropriately.

One of the cases that allegedly resulted in the death of a minor in federal custody received national media attention. In May, an 8-year-old

(Continued on page 3)

Federal protections proposed for rare species of Texas river mussels

By TRAVIS BUBENIK, Marfa Public Radio
travis@marfapublicradio.org

TEXAS — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing new federal protections for two rare species of river mussels found only in the Rio Grande in parts of West and South Texas.

The agency on Monday released a proposal to place the Salina mucket and Mexican fawnsfoot mussels on the endangered species list. The move would also designate more than 385 miles of the Rio Grande in Texas as critical habitat for the freshwater animals.

"Because the single existing populations of both species have low abundance, limited recruitment, and no ability to disperse into new areas, they are extremely vulnerable to extinction," Amy Lueders, regional director of the agency's Southwest office, said in a statement.

Both species of mussels were once found across a larger swath of the Rio Grande watershed but now only live in two stretches of the river, one downstream from Big Bend National Park and the other between Eagle Pass and San Ygnacio, Texas.

The proposal is the latest in a series of federal efforts to protect dwindling mussel populations in the U.S. that experts say are crucial for the health of rivers and streams. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, more than 70% of the 300 freshwater mussel species in the U.S. are currently considered endangered, threatened or "of special concern" due to their habitats being lost, fragmented or degraded.

Unlike invasive zebra mussels that continue to plague Central Texas lakes, native mussels are vital to the health of river ecosystems and aquatic life.

"They filter liters and liters of water, helping improve water quality, they help stabilize streambeds, they serve as a food resource for a number of animals," Matthew Johnson, a Texas-based biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service, said in an interview.

The agency is taking public comments on the proposal through Sept. 25 and could make a final decision on the endangered species listing within a year.

The portions of the Rio Grande that would be designated critical habitat under the proposal include parts of the river corridor in Big Bend National Park and multiple state-owned conservation areas, including the Black Gap

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE

NEWS P. 1 - 3
OPINION P. 4
COMMUNITY P. 6 - 9
CLASSIFIEDS P. 10

The West Texan Media Group, LLC

Presidio County woman pleads guilty to trafficking meth, fentanyl

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — On Friday, Cherakee Lee Perez, a Presidio County woman, pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and fentanyl. Her sentencing is set for October, where she faces 10 years to life in prison.

Fentanyl is a narcotic that in recent years has increasingly entered the supply of street narcotics, resulting in an epidemic of overdoses. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death among Americans under 50 and represented 67% of overdose deaths in 2021.

Perez was arrested on January 12 at the Presidio Port of Entry. At the initial checkpoint, she told the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer on duty that she had nothing to declare, and that she was headed to Oklahoma from Camargo, Chihuahua.

She was flagged for secondary inspection, where she reiterated that she had nothing to declare. A narcotics dog alerted on the bumper and center console of the car. Further investigation revealed 29 packages of meth weighing 4.5 kilograms and 13 packages of fentanyl weighing 7 kilograms.

Perez was arrested and gave a statement admitting to transporting narcotics, telling officers that she would get $7,000 for delivering the drugs to Oklahoma and that she had successfully smuggled drugs through the Presidio Port of Entry before.

Homeland Security Investigations Task Force Officer Michael McCall filed a criminal complaint alleging importation of methamphetamine and fentanyl from another country into the United States as well as possession with intent to distribute each drug.

Possession of 400 grams of methamphetamine or more than 500 grams of fentanyl carries a felony charge, carrying a minimum of 10 years prison time. Perez's northbound shipments included over 11 times the amount required for felony possession of methamphetamine and 14 times the amount of fentanyl.

Perez was detained without bond, and in February pleaded not guilty. On Friday, under the advice of counsel, she entered a guilty plea.

The large seizure comes on the heels of increased concern about the smuggling of fentanyl into the United States from Mexico.

In November of last year, Presidio County Chief Deputy Joel Nuñez gave a presentation about the dangers of fentanyl to parents at Presidio High School. At the time, he cautioned that fentanyl was near — but had not yet been detected in Presidio County.

Just a few weeks later, a driver was intercepted at the Presidio Port of Entry with 32 pounds of methamphetamine and two pounds of fentanyl. Perez's arrest just a few months later drastically escalated the scale of the drug moving through the port.

Though relatively young, the upward trend at the Presidio Port of Entry reflects patterns at other ports of entry along the United States-Mexico border. According to statistics from Customs and Border Protection, fentanyl seizures at the border are on track to double by weight from last year's numbers.

Perez's attorney did not return a request for comment by press time.

MISD leadership

(Continued from page 1)



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

In the lead up to the 2023-2024 school year, turmoil over staffing and recent criminal investigations is causing division among the school board and some faculty at Marfa ISD.

when speaking to The Big Bend Sentinel because they are currently employed by the district, and two parents whose children were interviewed by law enforcement regarding Murillo and Serrano around the time of the arrests. The Big Bend Sentinel is withholding the parents' names in order to protect the identities of the children involved.

"No response from the school was devastating"

In May, authorities arrested P.J. Serrano after uncovering multiple videos and photos consisting of child sex abuse material on his cellphone. Shortly after, Sonya Murillo, Serrano's former romantic partner and a substitute teacher for MISD, was arrested when authorities uncovered a video of Murillo performing a sex act on a young child. Murillo was indicted on four counts of production and one count of distribution of child sex abuse material. Serrano was indicted on one count of possession and one count of transportation of child sex abuse material.

Murillo was a frequent presence in the schools as an instructor. Serrano, though not affiliated with the district, coached some students with the Big Bend Amateur Softball Association. Both are Marfa ISD parents.

Teachers and parents alike said they have been disturbed by a lack of response from school leadership — particularly seeing as Murillo worked for the district as a substitute teacher herself. A teacher currently employed by MISD said there has been no district-wide communication regarding the arrest and ongoing investigation, and no guidance provided to instructors as to handling parent concerns.

"It would have been great for us to have a meeting — at least a mass email sent out — 'Let's talk this out and discuss our concerns and how we're going to move forward, how we would deal with kids or parents coming to us," that way we're on the same page," said the teacher.

Jackie Hernandez, an outgoing teacher with the district, said a parent reached out to her seeking counseling services for their child, who had been identified by investigators as a potential victim of Murillo's, and educators had to find help outside of the school community. (The school's student services coordinator, who acts as a part-time counselor, is no longer with the district and left the post at the end of June.)

Hernandez said she understood the confidential and sensitive nature of the situation, but more support should have been extended to families and clear directions to staff following the news.

"I felt like they could have done a lot more," said Hernandez. "It was like everyone knew, but it was still not talked about. [It was] very hush, hush."

The parent who contacted Hernandez received a call in mid-June from a Texas Department of Public Safety detective stating that their 11-year-old son who attends Marfa Elementary had been identified as a potential victim of Murillo's. The parent said Murillo met their son through the school and would drive him to sporting events and take him out to eat.

The child was interviewed by law enforcement, said the parent, but they have not received any communication from the school district.

The parent said they would have liked to see more resources and counseling offered by the district. They are now driving their son an hour and a half to Pecos once a week for therapy, and are considering pulling their child out of Marfa ISD.

"No response from the school was devastating, as they are there to protect our children," they said.

In early May, a 12-year-old girl who attends Marfa Junior and Senior High School was interviewed by School Resource Officer Ian Martinez after reporting an inappropriate verbal exchange with P.J. Serrano to then-student services coordinator Jessica Murphy. The girl's parent, in an interview with *The Big Bend Sentinel*, expressed frustration with what she saw as a lack of communication from law enforcement and school leaders in the aftermath.

"I had the feeling that the school didn't care much," they said. "I wish they would've offered my daughter more support and protection. I wish they would've talked to me as a parent to reassure [me] my daughter was safe going back to school."

The parent said they would like their daughter to receive counseling this coming school year, as the encounter with Serrano — which did not take place on school grounds — was traumatizing.

Arguello, who is also the parent of two sons who attended Marfa Elementary, said she would have liked to see a community meeting for parents called immediately to start to "rebuild that bridge of trust," considering Murillo was a district employee and educators maintain relationships with local families throughout summer break.

"We take care of these kids, something to show that support and care," said Arguello. "None of that has happened."

The district's muted response stands in sharp contrast to those following other local crises, both in the MISD community and in a neighboring district. In 2018, after the murder of MISD teacher Sophia Sullivan, then-Superintendent Oscar Aguero collaborated with the Region 18 Education Service Center to bring in teams of counselors from around the area to offer mental health support for students and staff.

"That was just something that was our standard practice when I was there. To say, 'Hey, let's make sure our kids are okay,'" said Aguero in a recent interview with *The Big Bend Sentinel*.

Last year, when longtime Valentine ISD teacher Albert Ackley was arrested and charged with one count production and one count distribution of child sex abuse material, Superintendent Debbie Engle was in regular contact with law enforcement. At the time, Engle told *The Big Bend Sentinel* authorities had searched the school's devices, counselors had interviewed staff and students and no victims associated with the school were found.

The Marfa school board and Interim Superintendent Alferez said they had been unaware of any students' involvement in the investigations. Alferez said the district remains committed to working with law enforcement, but to date no authorities had reached out. Board President Teresa Nuñez said that the district intends to take action to understand why they were unaware of students being questioned, and that they would have responded with supportive services had they been made aware.

Alferez said no concerns were raised about Murillo while she was a substitute with the district and that he is in contact with a counselor who is willing to provide services as needed for students and staff while the district searches for a permanent person to fill that position.

The school board said they currently have a "highly qualified" candidate for the now-vacant position of counselor that they hoped to onboard soon.

In a statement to *The Big Bend Sentinel*, the school board acknowledged the public's frustration about the lack of transparency regarding the ongoing investigations, that they shared that frustration, and that they will work to improve communication with the community.

"It would have been great for us to have a meeting — at least a mass email sent out — 'Let's talk this out and discuss our concerns and how we're going to move forward, how we would deal with kids or parents coming to us," that way we're on the same page."

Though Serrano, unlike Murillo, was not employed by the district, there was at least one attempt by district leaders to warn staff about his presence ahead of his arrest. An email viewed by *The Big Bend Sentinel* sent by former Junior High and High School Principal Luane Porter to staff on her campus on May 10 alerted faculty not to let Serrano in the building and included a photo of him. In an interview with the *Sentinel*, Porter declined to go into detail, but said she had sent the email in response to "an escalation of behavior" from Serrano.

The morning Serrano was arrested by authorities, May 11, the district adopted a shelter-in-place order upon the recommendation of law enforcement, according to former Superintendent Oscar Aguero. He said he understood the order was recommended because law enforcement agencies in the area were at Serrano's home located near the district campus. Aguero said parents were not notified about the shelter in place, as it was a brief occurrence.

The Texas Department of Public Safety and the Federal Bureau of Investigation declined to comment on the status of the ongoing investigations involving Murillo and Serrano and their communication with the school district. Both defendants are being held without bond. Both Murillo and Serrano's attorneys declined to comment for this story.

Appointment of Arturo Alferez as interim superintendent

Arguello and other teachers have taken issue with the appointment and leadership of Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez, an MISD teacher and coach who the school board voted unanimously to appoint following the resignation of Aguero in March. At the time of Murillo's arrest, Alferez was at the helm of the district.

The Marfa ISD Board of Trustees consisted of President Teresa Nuñez, Rene Gonzales, Lori Flores, Yolanda Jurado, Ruben Martinez and Ernie Villarreal at the time, and has since grown to include new member Stela Fuentez.

One of the school board's primary roles is to hire and evaluate the superintendent — the district's top administrator who receives a significant salary and subsidized housing in Marfa. Previous Superintendent Aguero, who was with the district for eight years serving in various capacities, earned an annual salary of $116,000 for the 2022-2023 school year, according to information made public by the Texas Education Agency.

Since Alferez's appointment, the board has not publicly announced whether it intends to conduct a search for a new full-time, permanent superintendent and has not posted the position. In response to a request for comment from *The Big Bend Sentinel*, the board confirmed it intends to onboard Alferez into the position permanently.

Alferez, who worked as a social studies teacher and coach before becoming interim superintendent at Marfa ISD, has previous administrative experience with Presidio ISD, including with career and technical education (CTE) programs, and holds a Master of Education in school administration from Sul Ross State University, but does not currently hold principal or superintendent certifications — qualifications earned through state programs and testing typically required for the role. While there is no time limit on how long an interim superintendent may hold the role before becoming a certified superintendent, Alferez and the school board said he is currently pursuing his superintendent certification through a program with Region 18.

Luane Porter, previous Marfa Junior High and High School principal who served as a principal in Fort Davis for many years before coming to MISD, said she expressed interest in the superintendent position when it became available. She looked into obtaining her superintendent certification and secured a mentor, but was never asked by the school board to submit a formal application, she said. She has accepted an assistant principal position at Fort Stockton High School, and formally resigned from Marfa ISD last week.

Former Superintendent Aguero told The Big Bend Sentinel that he recommended Porter for the job upon his resignation to the school board, but declined to comment further.

Porter declined to comment on whether her resignation was directly related to the appointment of Alferez as interim superintendent. "I have enjoyed working in Marfa. We have an outstanding group of teachers and students," said Porter. "An opportunity came up in Fort Stockton for me, and I just feel like that's something I need to do."

The school board said Porter was considered for the superintendent role, but they believed promoting Alferez, therefore adding him to the leadership team of which Porter was already a part of, would "maximize student outcomes." The board said there is "no definite date or plan" to hire a new superintendent and that they believe Alferez's appointment as interim superintendent is in the best interest of the district.

Arguello said she and fellow colleagues would have liked to see the board of trustees hire a professional consulting firm to conduct the search for the new superintendent as well as the solicitation of staff and community feedback to help inform their decision.

"We were not asked for our opinion at all," said Arguello. "Staff was not given a survey, parents were not given a survey, the community was not asked 'What do you need in a superintendent?'"

Arguello, Hernandez and the other teacher interviewed for this story said they felt that the school board overlooked Porter — who they said was a knowledgeable candidate who would help keep the district in compliance with the state — and Alferez's appointment didn't seem to be in the best interest of the district. The teacher currently with the district said the appointment seemed hasty, and would have benefited from a more thorough search.

"It was not a well-thought-out decision — not to post the job so we could have feelers and maybe hire a company to do that search so it's transparent," said the teacher currently with the district. "Someone from the outside would be more likely to make decisions based on qualifications."

"None of this had to happen this way, and we could be in great standing if different choices were made," they added.

Outgoing teachers reflect on district culture, leadership

With the start of a new school year mere weeks away, Marfa ISD is also seriously understaffed — around 30% of its positions remain vacant. Porter's Junior High and High School principal position, and other vital roles, including two math teachers for grades 6 through 12, cafeteria director and more are unfilled. Alferez said a history and a math teacher for the high school should be hired soon.

As outgoing instructors, both Arguello and Hernandez cited feeling overworked due to inadequate staffing — the school board voted last year to adopt a four-day instructional week for the coming year in order to give teachers more time for planning and mental health — as well as concerns with district leadership that had helped prompt their departures.

For one, Arguello and Hernandez expressed ethical concerns over the makeup of the school board itself — particularly over the continued presence of member Ernie Villarreal, brother of Board President Teresa Nuñez, who was put on administrative leave then resigned from his role as finance director at Valentine ISD when an audit revealed $165,000 of unauthorized transactions and instances of falsified documents, prompting a criminal investigation. Villarreal has not been charged with a crime.

The school board said Villarreal is an elected position and they will respect whatever outcome the community chooses when his seat is up for election in May 2025. (The past two school board elections, in May 2022 and May 2023, were canceled due to a lack of candidates vying for the positions.)

Then there are practical considerations plaguing the district, like substandard teacher pay. Hernandez said she is leaving the district for another teaching job in the state that will pay her around $20,000 more than Marfa ISD.

"A big part of why I'm leaving is financially, for one. Two, it's like the whole character, what the school is representing, I don't want to be a part of that," said Hernandez.

The school board said they intend to review employee salaries in their upcoming board meeting, and they were disappointed that the Texas Legislature has not approved significant funding for teacher salaries as anticipated in recent legislative sessions. The board said they remain focused on filling vacancies within the district, take hiring recommendations from the superintendent and hiring committees "very seriously" and will work to improve communication and any fissured relationships with faculty and the community.

"We want our parents, students and staff to know, to the fullest extent possible, what is happening and why," wrote board members in a statement to The Big Bend Sentinel. "In the coming year, we will be delivering messages to our community via several outlets to help build that trust that we are doing what is in the best interest of our students."

As it stands, Marfa ISD teachers are underpaid, stretched-thin and have a hard enough time meeting basic needs, said Arguello, meaning enrichment initiatives for students and community often fall by the wayside.

"If we're just trying to get through each school day, just surviving, how are we meeting the social emotional needs [of students]?" said Arguello. "How are we able to engage a community?"

Border Network for Human Rights

(Continued from page 1)

Panamanian girl died in a detention center in Harlingen, Texas, after being diagnosed with influenza. Her parents said that despite their repeated pleas for medical attention as their daughters' situation worsened, care was never given.

The rest of the cases are kept anonymous, in an effort to protect those whose incidents are still under investigation or who may risk retaliation or deportation if identified. These cases are broken down into statistics to help illustrate trends observed by the organization. Among the 52 cases and 177 alleged abuses, nearly 80% involved federal immigration authorities.

Presidio appeared to follow that trend. In the 10 months that the local center has been open, the group has documented three cases of alleged abuse, two by agents with Customs and Border Protection, and one specifically committed by Border Patrol, an agency within CBP.

The two cases implicating customs involved verbal or psychological abuse, violation of due process and damage to property. The Border Patrol case accused the agency of use of disproportionate force, deprivation of medical attention in custody and violation of due process.

The organization hopes that these numbers will lead to a number of policy changes: independent oversight of federal immigration authorities, the opening of welcoming centers at the border and preservation of the right to seek asylum.

The report also calls for the disbanding of Operation Lone Star, a program launched by the State of Texas to provide over four billion dollars of funding to local governments along the border. "State meddling in federal immigration enforcement through Operation Lone Star has exposed border residents, migrants, and refugees to overwhelming instances of human and civil rights abuses," the report reads.

Local CBP spokespeople said that they couldn't comment on the anonymous instances of abuse, but that their agencies encouraged formal reporting of abuse through official channels.

El Paso Sector Spokesman Roger Maier said that the agency worked with "stakeholders and non-governmental organizations" to help prevent and document abuse. "CBP constantly works to maintain the highest level of professional standards in their interactions with all individuals encountered," he said.

Maier said that the agency maintains an online portal in English and Spanish that can be used to report a number of potential crimes committed by both migrants and CBP employees. The portal can be found at https://help.cbp.gov/s/complaints?language=en_US.

Cocaine

(Continued from page 1)

American, explaining why such large quantities of the drug are seized at ports of entry into the United States.

The large number of seizures may also be due to increased efforts on the federal level to stem the flow of fentanyl and other narcotics into the United States. In March, the Biden Administration announced the launch of Operation Blue Lotus, aimed at increasing the number of inspections along the border. "Operation Blue Lotus is an example of how DHS surges resources and increases efficiency, prioritizing smart border security solutions, and working with federal, state, tribal and local partners," reads a Department of Homeland Security press release written in support of the program.

Texas river mussels

(Continued from page 1)

Wildlife Management Area.

Rick Gupman, the national park's acting superintendent, said the National Park Service "fully supports the move." A spokesperson for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said it is currently reviewing the federal proposal and plans to file formal comments on the matter.

According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the critical habitat designations for the stretches of river in West and South Texas would not lead to new restrictions for landowners or state agencies and would impose "no requirements on state or private actions on state or private lands where no federal funding, permits, or approvals are required."

Still, the agency's placement of another Texas mussel on the endangered species list in 2018 prompted some pushback in neighboring New Mexico and concerns about the listing's potential impact on property rights. It's unclear if the new proposal will lead to similar concerns in Texas.

Environmental groups applauded Monday's announcement but criticized the Fish and Wildlife Service for not acting sooner on the matter.

The Center for Biological Diversity, which sued to force the mussels protections in 2020, noted in a statement that the Salina mucket and Mexican fawnsfoot had been under consideration for an endangered species listing for more than a decade. As part of a recent settlement deal, the group dropped its legal claims related to the mussels after the Fish and Wildlife Service announced it was voluntarily pursuing the listing.

"It shouldn't take the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this long to protect such clearly imperiled species," Michael Robinson, an advocate with the group, said in a statement. "This agency is badly in need of new leadership and reform, and it's past time for the Biden administration to make that happen."

Both mussels species are already listed as threatened under Texas law. A spokesperson for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said the mussels are currently the subjects of various conservation efforts coordinated by the state and private landowners along the Rio Grande.

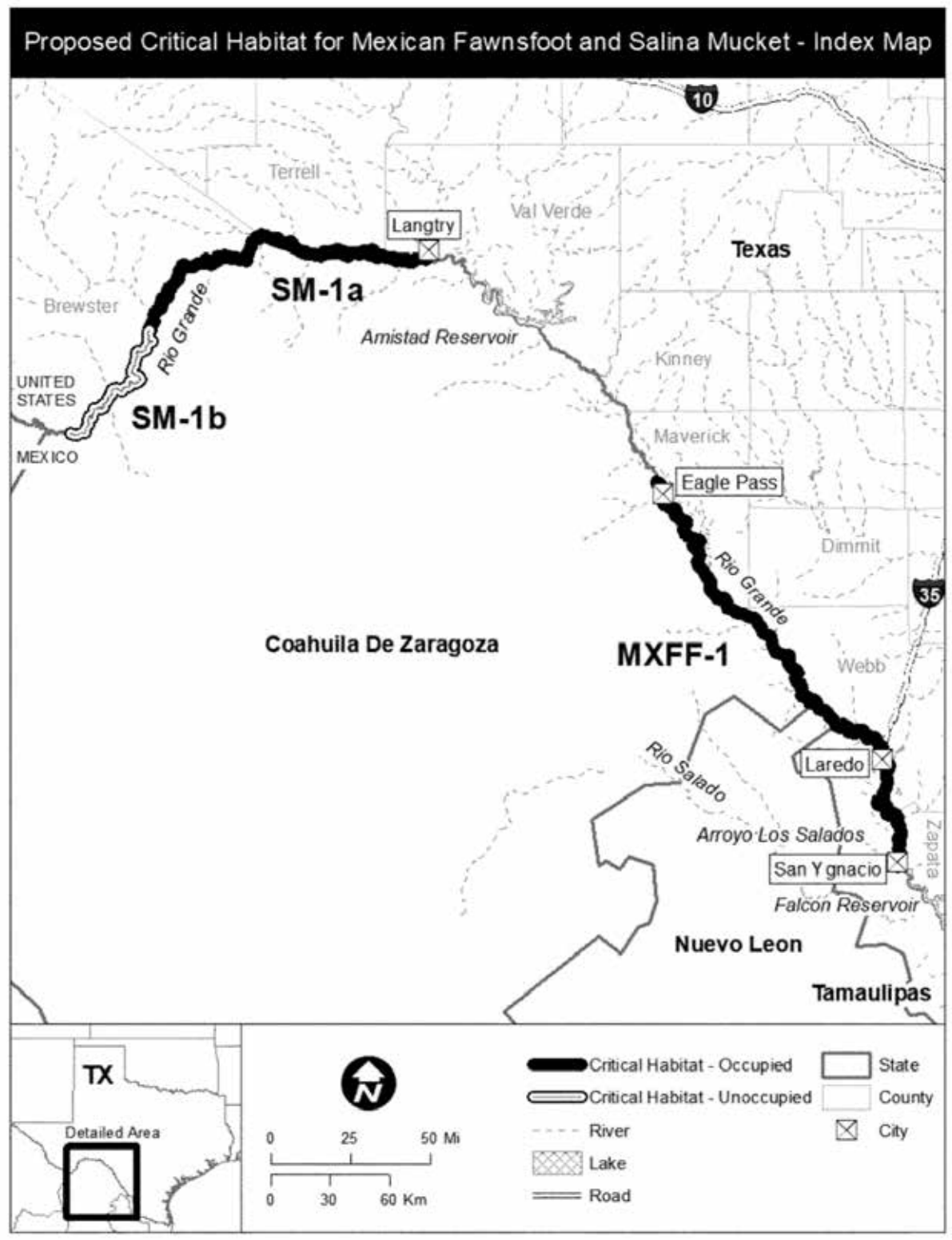
The environmental group WildEarth Guardians has also been involved in the push for mussels protections in Texas, stemming back to petitions the group filed on the matter about 15 years ago.

Joanna Zhang, a rivers advocate with the group, described the mussels' fate as intertwined with that of the river they call home.

"More of the Rio Grande is disconnected and drying up every year," she said. "The way we've been managing the Rio Grande has drained the river of its vitality, and it's encouraging to see the service proposing protections that would help safeguard a healthy and flowing river for these mussels and other species."

Johnson, the Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, said the Rio Grande mussels are worth protecting, small and relatively unknown to the broader public as they may be.

"The nature around us, the trees, the flora, the fauna, they help make a place what it is," he said. "So I think it's in our best interest to try to preserve everything that's out there that makes the place that we call home unique."



Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A map of the proposed critical habitat areas of the Rio Grande in West and South Texas.

Come worship with us



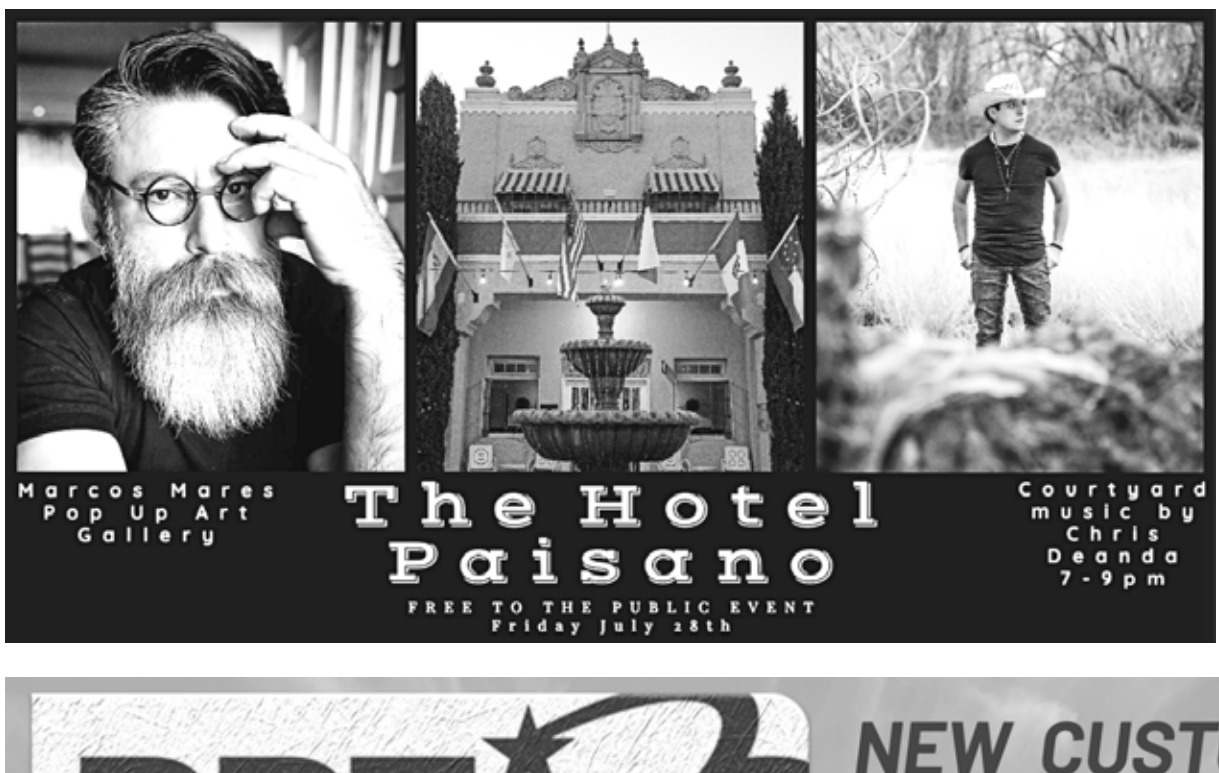
First United Methodist Church

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

FINDARANCH OUT WEST
SUPERIOR Land Network
Specializing in Texas Ranch and Rural Properties
Cleat L. Stephens, Broker
FindARanchOutWest.com

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



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER



Opinion

OUR WATER MATTERS

The Huhugam: Pioneers of desert agriculture

By TREY GERFERS
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

In a recent podcast called "Digging Up Ancient Desert Farming Practices," host Janice Person interviewed archeologists Wesley Miles and Kyle Woodson about their work in Arizona to uncover the extensive prehistoric canal system originally developed about 2,000 years ago by the Huhugam civilization. Also known as the Pima and the Maricopa, these native groups form the Gila River Indian Community.

Some of the first canal systems in the area were built along the Santa Cruz River near modern-day Tucson about 3,000 years ago. The archeological work in that region, including surveys and aerial imaging, has proven that these canals "were invented independently" of developments in Mexico and Peru, according to Miles. "There's nothing else like it in the U.S.," says Woodson. "It's one of the largest, if not the largest, prehistoric irrigation systems."

These canal builders eventually moved into the Gila and Salt river regions and began building larger-scale canals between 100 and 400 AD. These earthen canal systems were designed to take advantage of the rivers' two flood seasons: one in the spring when the snow melts at higher elevations and one in the summer with the monsoon rains. Water from the rivers was channeled into systems comprising at least one main canal with a series of "laterals" to irrigate various terraces. About 13 separate canal systems have been identified off the Gila River, all of which were constructed during the "Huhugam Millenium" between 400 AD and 1450 AD.

In more recent history, says Woodson, the Gila River Indian Reservation "was one of the first Indian reservations created in the United States" in 1859. The tribes settled there in villages where they shared the canals and built out farms that were understood as private property. Crops included the so-called "three sisters" (maize, beans and squash) as well as cotton. The Pima also adopted European crops, such as wheat. The Pima grew "literally tons and tons of wheat," according to Woodson, in this "phenomenally productive area for agriculture."

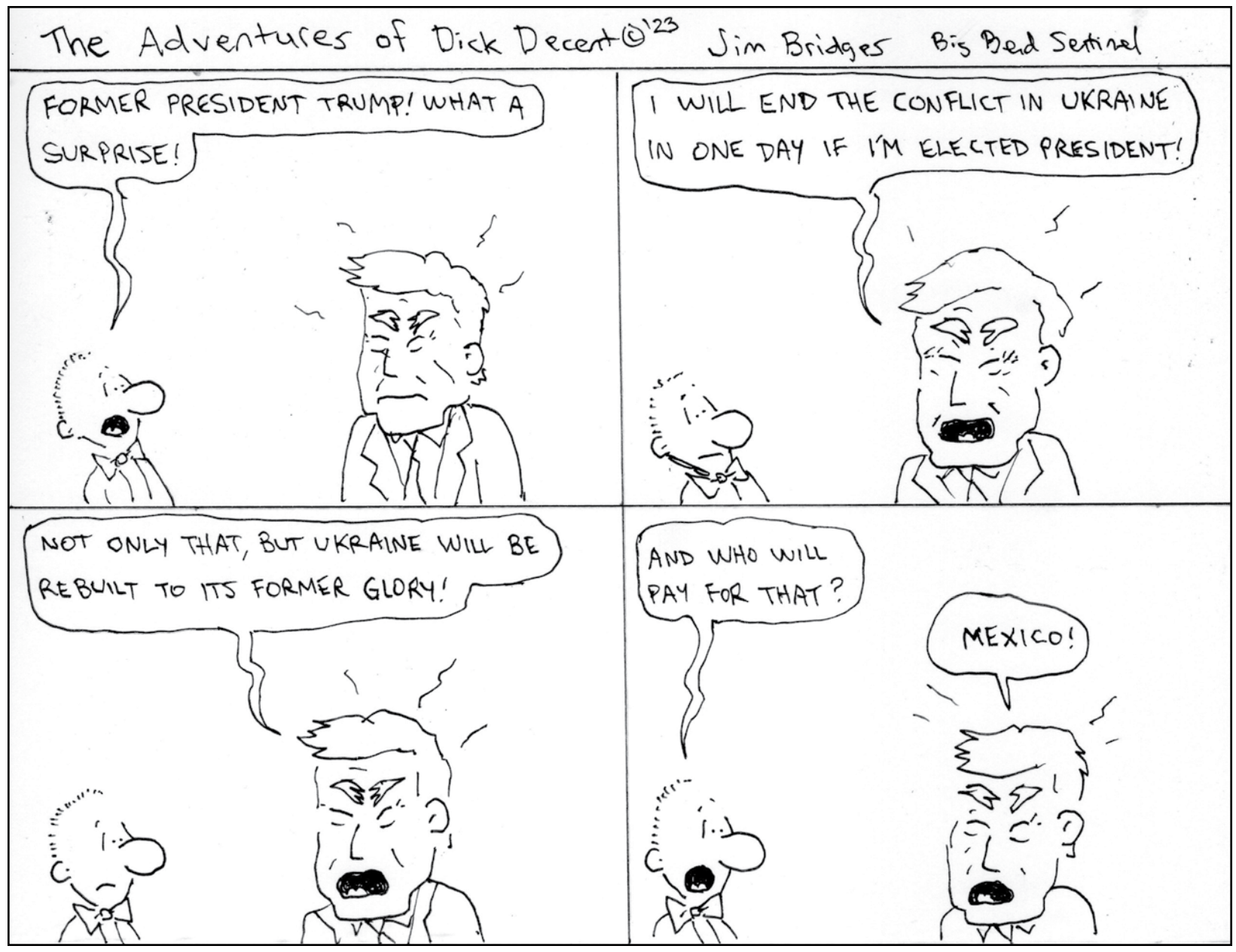
Grain production quadrupled between 1860 and 1864 with more than 14,000 acres in cultivation. The end of the Civil War saw an uptick in migration across the region from the east, and many of these migrants decided to stay in Arizona. The Desert Land Act of 1877 allowed American settlers to claim up to 640 acres that had to be "improved." Unfortunately, this usually involved the digging of canals to divert water from the Gila.

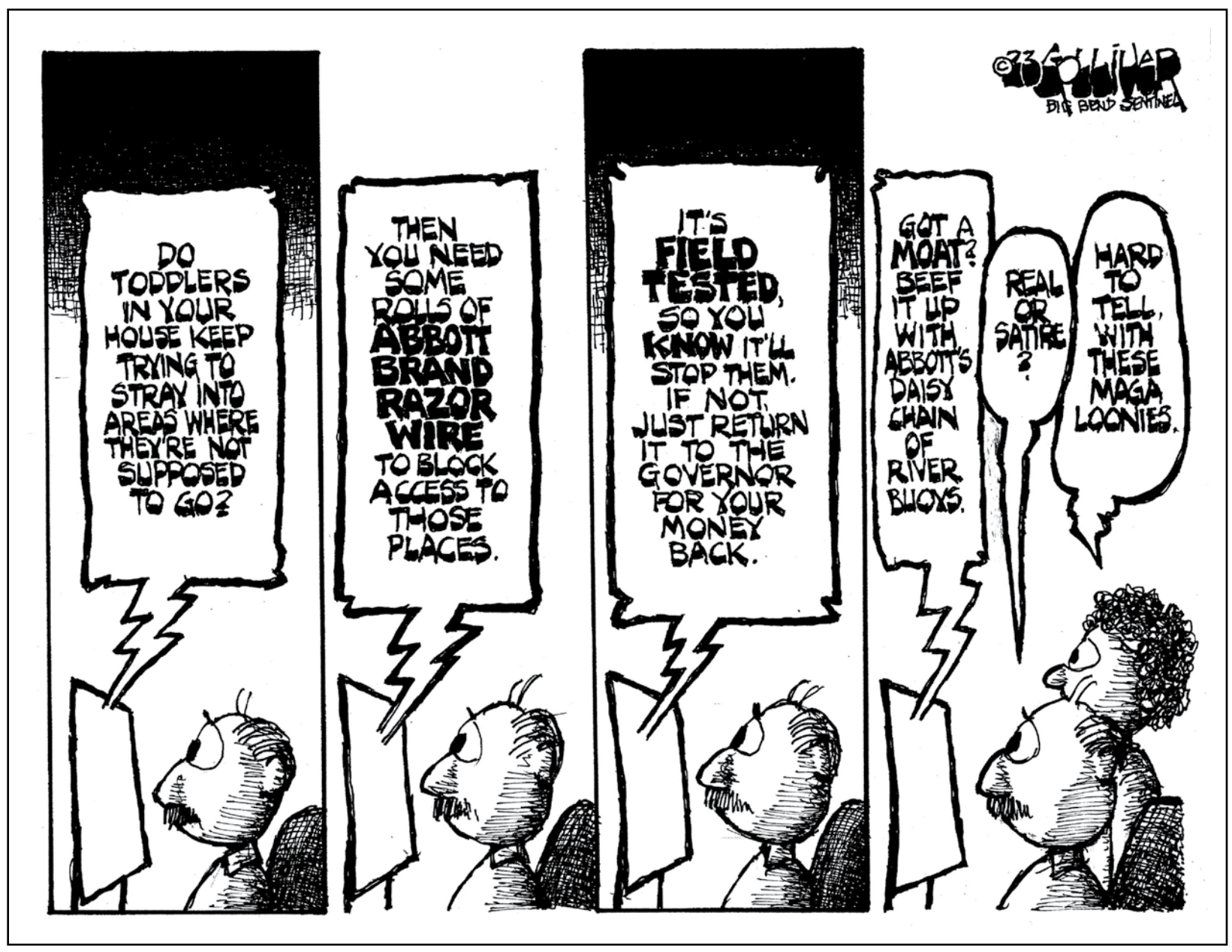
According to "Re-greening the Desert" by Jim Robbins in the March issue of Smithsonian Magazine, western water law stipulated that whoever first used water for beneficial purposes, such as agriculture, owned the permanent rights to that water under a principle known as "first in time, first in right" or "the doctrine of prior appropriation." This principle is applied in Texas, for example, when groundwater districts issue permits to landowners based on proof of their "historic use" of the groundwater. Despite their obvious claim of prior appropriation based on irrigation practices in use since "time immemorial," the Pima failed to file the necessary paperwork with the General Land Office. The resulting invisibility of their claim under the law would have dire consequences. By the late 1880s, the Gila River had largely ceased to flow, and the once verdant riparian forests along the river's shores were ultimately cut down and sold for firewood.

With the water gone, many of the Pima were displaced by the ensuing famine. It wasn't until the 1940s that the tribe had an opportunity to assert their historic claims before the Indian Claims Commission. After many decades of no progress, the tribe eventually funneled revenues from its casino operations into a substantial legal effort in the 1990s. Finally, in 2004, the Gila River Indian Community was granted an annual allotment of 653,500 acre-feet of water, the largest water settlement for an Indian tribe in American history.

A new 8.5-mile concrete canal has since been completed to bring water back to the reservation, and families are growing crops once again. According to Stephen Roe Lewis, the community's governor, "Respecting water is in our blood; being water protectors is in our DNA." Despite the brutal drought that is sweeping much of the Southwest, Lewis is hopeful that his people and their approach can be part of the solution. "We want to be Arizona's breadbasket again."

Trey Gerfers is a San Antonio native and serves as general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. He is also chairman of the Presidio County Water Infrastructure Steering Committee and president of the Marfa Parks and Recreation Board. Trey has lived in Marfa since 2013.





SR SUL ROSS THE FRONTIER UNIVERSITY of Texas
BORDERLANDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
CONSERVING THE LAST FRONTIER

Summer Scholarship Fundraiser!

100% of proceeds go to students of the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross

These students play a vital role in Trans-Pecos conservation, and scholarship funds are a critical piece of their success.

We're hopeful that through generous donations, we can hit our goal of **$50,000**.

Double your impact! The Permian Basin Area Foundation generously donated a $15,000 Challenge Grant!



Donate and receive a BRI gift!

Gifts include a BRI Cap, BRI Yeti Rambler, and BRI Yeti Hopper Flip 12

(while supplies last)

Browse items and donate securely online at https://one.bidpal.net/15years

Graduates of the Borderlands Research Institute are employed with state and federal resource agencies or with private consultants and ranches. They influence wildlife management decisions on over 31 million acres in Texas, some 20% of the state's acreage.

MARFA VISTA

Specializing in Marfa real estate

MARY FARLEY
Broker/Sales
917.495.8823

marfavistarealty.com

LIZ SERLENGA
Sales
508.272.5699

Bringing together buyers and sellers of ranches and unique properties throughout Texas

KING LAND & WATER

Protecting Clients. Conserving the Land.

Offices in Fort Davis and Austin
432-426-2024 www.KingLandWater.com
info@KingLandWater.com

la fundación the CHINATI foundation

Chinati is an artist foundation created by Donald Judd and opened to the public in 1986.

Open Wednesday through Sunday with self-guided and guided tour options. Tickets are required. Reservations are encouraged as capacity is limited.

Free entrance is available for residents of Presidio, Brewster, and Jeff Davis counties.

For details and reservations, please come to the Chinati Visitor Center at 1 Cavalry Row or go to chinati.org

Your BEST NIGHT EVER in El Paso

Milky Chance
July 31
Abraham Chavez Theatre





Late Night Drive Home
August 19
Plaza Theatre

Scan the QR code to plan your next outing in the Sun City.

EL PASO LIVE

Community

Viva Big Bend returns to the tri-county this weekend

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

TRI-COUNTY — This weekend, the popular summertime music festival Viva Big Bend will return to stages, lawns and patios around the region. Sixty-five shows will be played in 20 venues, spread across Marfa, Fort Davis, Alpine, Marathon, Terlingua and — for the first time — Presidio.

Venues included with the price of admission include the Railroad Blues in Alpine, which will host three shows a night beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. Planet Marfa will also host daily shows, featuring hometown favorites like the Grand Tourists, Scrappy Judd Newcomb and Primo y Beebe.

Other mainstage venues in Alpine and Marfa include the Spicewood Restaurant, Granada Theatre, Old Gringo and Marfa Spirit Company. Cibolo Creek Ranch, located about 30 miles south of Marfa, will also host sets on Thursday and Friday evenings.

The festival will feature a number of afternoon shows that are free and open to the public. Starting on Thursday at 1 p.m., the Holland Hotel in Alpine will host three acts. On Friday, the Gage Hotel in Marathon will move the party down the highway for a show kicked off by local star Butch Hancock at 1 p.m.

Saturday's free programming includes a kid-centric show at the Alpine Visitors Center starting at 11 a.m. Fort Davis's Kelly Pavilion will then host a full slate of musical acts starting at 12 p.m.

Free shows will also be held at Out West Feed Supply in Alpine, Chateau Wright in Fort Davis and the Marathon Motel and RV Park.

The biggest change to the lineup this year is a free show hosted at Daly Park in Presidio — the first time the border town has ever participated in the festival. Local rock outfit Zaun will open at 8 p.m., followed by Austin-based Selena cover band Bidi Bidi Banda at 9:30 p.m.

Presidio's place in the festival is the result of over a year and a half of discussion and organizing, including the combined efforts of the Presidio Municipal Development District and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In May of last year, Presidio's Daly Park was the recipient of a grant from the AARP to improve the accessibility of the space — including improvements to the gazebo, which serves as the backdrop for the dancefloor at numerous community events.

In February, formal negotiations began with Stewart Ramser, the organizer of Viva Big Bend. Ramser said that his goal was to shed light on all the area had to offer by expanding to even more of the region's communities. "We're excited to work with y'all — really wanted to work with y'all in the past," he said.

VIP tickets to the festival are currently sold out, but general admission tickets to paid shows are available online for $60 plus a $5 service fee. To purchase, visit: http://texasgifts.com/.

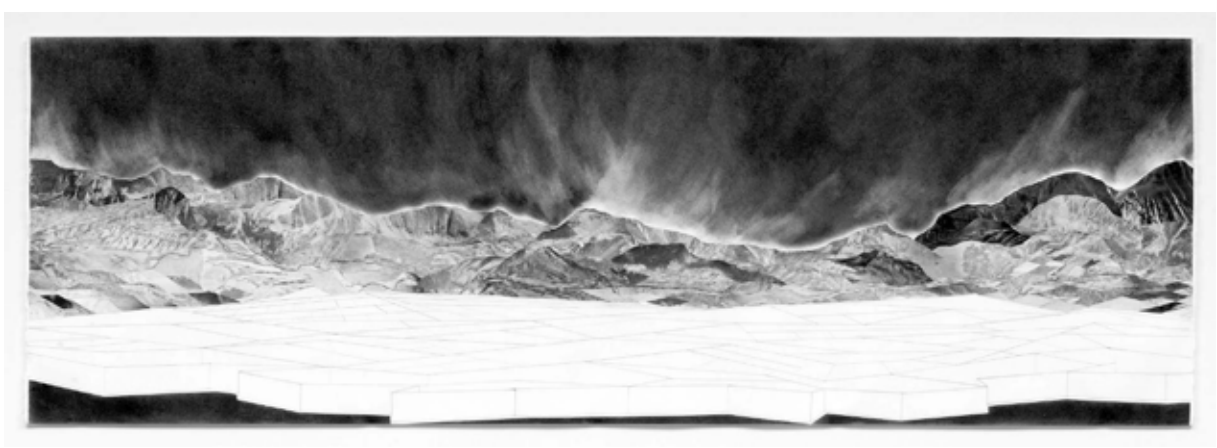
A full lineup of all paid shows and free events can be found online at: https://vivabigbend.com/faq/



Photo by Hannah Gentiles

Selena tribute group Bidi Bidi Banda performs at Planet Marfa for Viva Big Bend 2022.

'Weather Conditions' exhibition on view at RULE Gallery beginning July 29



Courtesy of RULE Gallery

Libby Barbee, "Constructed Mountainscape 3," collage and charcoal on paper, 25 x 59 inches, 2022

MARFA — RULE Gallery this weekend will debut a group exhibition titled Weather Conditions at its Marfa location. The show includes work by Nathan Abels, Libby Barbee, Sophia Poppy Ericksen, Jacob Feige, Jillian FitzMaurice, Martha Hughes, Jim Johnson, Aitor Lajarin-Encina, Margaret Neumann and Alexander Richard Wilson. Co-curated with Florence Blackwell, the exhibition will run from July 29 to September 23, 2023.

Weather is an ever-present occurrence, profoundly impacting our mood as much as our body, affecting our decisions and disrupting plans. Atmospheres are political, scientific, and sometimes, even with the highest technological expertise at hand, entirely unexpected. Weather is both internal and external. Its consequent seasons alter agriculture and migration, and its persistent force carves and shapes the land. Throughout history, it's also been a conduit for aesthetics and a theme depicted across countless works of art.

As chroniclers of the world's fluctuations, artists have long served as barometers, capturing the evolving circumstances around us. Technological advances in meteorology have improved the accuracy and accessibility of weather reports, making them available on every public and personal screen. The blurring of access to knowledge diminishes the separation between expert and amateur, granting artists full range to meditate on the environment from visceral to scientific to abstract matters.

The 10 artists in this exhibit evoke an understanding of the interdependencies between the human psyche and natural realms. By exploring the relationships between interior and exterior environments as well as the liminality of the in-between spaces we inhabit, the work in the show reveals narratives of ecosystems as felt through the weight of the air above us. While the atmosphere impacts us physically and emotionally, we reflect on how weather not only affects us but also resides within our imaginations, leaving a profound impact on our creative consciousness.

Sound of Freedom is a QAnon propaganda film.

Paid for by Marfa Film Shop.



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Angela Pastor and Lisa Kettyle prepare abortion rights and resources pamphlets at a post-Roe reproductive rights march held this week in Marfa.



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Fort Davis resident Dedie Taylor attended a reproductive rights march in Marfa this week to show support for bodily autonomy and safe abortion access.

Roe v. Wade anniversary march keeps locals engaged with reproductive rights

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — This week, a group of around 30 individuals turned out for a reproductive rights march down Highland Avenue led by local teenager Louise Culbertson, marking the one-year anniversary of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

Culbertson, 15, held a similar march in Marfa last year, and this summer organized "post-Roe action" marches throughout the state in cities including Houston, Austin, Dallas and El Paso to keep the fight for abortion rights on the forefront, she previously told *The Big Bend Sentinel*.

Attendees gathered at The Sentinel to hear brief speeches from Culbertson, Marfa resident Calletana Vargas and Big Bend Reproductive Coalition organizer Lisa Kettyle before taking up protest signs and marching to the Presidio County Courthouse.

"Living in an incredibly red state whilst *Roe v. Wade* is overturned has distorted my view of my childhood, my town, my fellow Texans, healthcare workers, and how I see this place as my home," said Culbertson addressing the gathered crowd. "We are witnessing a degradation of our rights, and I don't feel safe in my home anymore."

She went on to share statistics about the healthcare dangers presented by abortion restrictions and bans, and how maternal death rates have climbed in certain states. Vargas then related the ongoing fight for bodily autonomy to broader political issues in America, including border crises and gun violence, and encouraged people to both mobilize for meaningful change and take care of one another.

"It takes us coming together, building networks and communities that put our well-beings above the capitalistic culture we have been born and raised in," said Vargas. "Now is the time to come together and take action to tear down these fruitless, patriarchal, colonial, wasteful and fatal ways of thinking and living and come up with healthier, sustainable solutions."

Kettyle was the last to address the crowd and spoke about her experience organizing for reproductive rights in the area throughout the past year.

"As the only reproductive rights and access group in the Big Bend, the Big Bend Reproductive Coalition has heard from a lot of people across the region from Marfa, from Alpine, from Fort Davis, all the way down to Presidio, Terlingua, Marathon and Van Horn," said Kettyle. "The number one thing people tell us when they tell us they're pregnant and they want an abortion is that they think they are alone."

She said she recognized the reality was grim, but said there were "so many ways to fight," including contacting elected officials, protesting, volunteering, donating and more. BBRC will soon launch a community needs assessment — a multi-step, months-long bilingual process that will involve a series of town halls, surveys, and door-to-door canvassing across the region to discover what Big Bend residents need from a reproductive healthcare organization, helping inform their mission moving forward. Kettyle said anyone interested in participating or helping out with the study can contact the organization. She rounded out her address by thanking attendees and Culbertson for her efforts in organizing the speeches and post-Roe march.

"I think it's really important that someone like Louise, who is a teenager, who is of the youth, is being supported by all of you in this march," said Kettyle. "I think it's important that the youth know that they are powerful, and they can do a lot to make change."

COALICIÓN REPRODUCTIVA DEL BIG BEND REPRODUCTIVE COALITION

Reproductive Health Resources & Free Emergency Contraception (Plan B):

BIGBENDRC.ORG

BBRC is a grassroots mutual aid abortion advocacy group that provides educational materials, resources, & support for West Texans in the Big Bend.

Recursos de salud reproductiva y anticoncepción de emergencia gratuita (Plan B):

BIGBENDRC.ORG

La Coalición Reproductiva del Big Bend es un grupo de defensa del aborto de ayuda mutua que brinda materiales educativos, recursos, y apoyo para los habitantes del oeste de Texas en la region Big Bend.

BigBendRC.org • @BBReproductiveCoaltion



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

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

THE BIG BEND Sentinel

Judd Foundation launches updated digital resource for Donald Judd's library

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
allegra@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — On Wednesday, the Judd Foundation launched an updated version of a digital resource providing access to the library of late artist Donald Judd via the foundation's website. The project offers a searchable online catalog of books housed in the artist's central Marfa library, providing an interactive experience wherein users can explore the volumes by moving through photographs of the extensive collection.

The resource specifically focuses on Judd's north and south libraries located at La Mansana de Chinati/The Block in Marfa. The south library, Judd's original library, focuses on pre-20th century topics including classical art, architecture and history, while the north library, Judd's former print and drawing studio, focuses on 20th century topics spanning astronomy, philosophy, horticulture and more. The libraries remain organized as they were by Judd himself — the south library and parts of the north library are organized by region and country of origin, with art and architecture sections organized chronologically by birth date of the artist or architect.

On a floorplan of the library included in the resource, categories are color-coded for intuitive navigation across various subjects. While navigating the stacks through photos of the library, users receive the impression of shelves to their right and left, and can click in either direction to move from shelf to shelf.

"We wanted it to look graceful and beautiful and function with these basic building blocks of the floorplan," said Rainer Judd, daughter of Donald Judd, who was involved along with her brother Flavin in the development of the tool.

The project is a new-and-improved relaunch of a resource first launched in 2010, then went offline in 2016 — this one with a dynamic visual element that immerses users in the volumes that made up Judd's beloved collection of resources. The contents of the library provide a rare, vital and uniquely tangible glimpse into Judd's influences and interests, said Rainer.

"It makes accessible his influences, his travels, because you'll know just by looking at the books where he traveled to or where he wanted to travel to," she said.

"This is rare, that we get to see what someone cared about in the form of a library," she continued.

The library provides an exploratory tool for scholars and other interested readers to move through Judd's collection remotely and locate copies of the publications through the WorldCat cataloging system. The improved resource was funded by the Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation, and was developed by the CHIPS web design studio.



Photo © Matthew Millman / Courtesy of Judd Foundation

First Library, La Mansana de Chinati/The Block, Judd Foundation, Marfa, Texas.



Photo © Elizabeth Felicella / Courtesy Judd Foundation

First Library, La Mansana de Chinati/The Block, Judd Foundation, Marfa, Texas.

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.

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

7/11 © 2023 Andrews McMeel Syndication

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

7/5 © 2023 Andrews McMeel Syndication

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg July 24, 2023

ACROSS
1 Pulsates painfully
7 Trident-shaped Greek letter
10 Org. with a "What Can I Bring?" guide
13 "Woot!"
14 They're out standing in their field
15 "Rumor ___ it ..."
16 Some English assignments
17 "Then again," in a text
18 Aves. or blvds.
19 Like some binary questions
20 "Are not!" retort
21 Small green "Star Wars" character
22 Prada competitor
24 With no urgency
26 "Every Little Thing ___ Does Is Magic" (1981 hit)
28 "My attic's not the best, but it's up there," for one
29 Word after "green" or "club"
30 Speaker's platform
31 2010s Best Picture winner set in Iran
33 Trumpets and trombones, but not saxophones
35 "Plus ..."
36 Place for a sweater?
38 Small furry "Star Wars" character
39 Montreal subway
41 Blueprint detail
42 Delhi dress
43 Not even tipsy
45 "Gnarly!"
46 Santana's "___ Como Va"
47 Matador
48 Take place
50 Court order
51 Something to cram for
53 Lightly sprays
57 Wyo. neighbor
58 Tidied, as a bed
59 Crow relative
60 Number of Canadian provinces
61 Soul icon Redding
62 Announcement upon walking through the front door
63 HS prank players
64 "Wanna ___?"
65 Like unsweetened chocolate

DOWN
1 Those people
2 Hydrant attachment
3 "Friends" paleontologist
4 Citrusy palate cleanser
5 "Swamp People" setting
6 The "S" of GPS: Abbr.
7 Poker winnings
8 Nike logo
9 "Sorta"
10 Treats like garbage?
11 Horseback rider's woe
12 Analyze, as ore
14 Turning out great, or the words hidden backward in 4-, 11-, 21- and 26-Down?
20 Luxury Hondas
21 "I totally agree!"
23 IRS form pros
25 Easy throw
26 Document with price and delivery details
27 Ones who talk about old times
30 Beaver's project
32 Like a short play
34 Hit the slopes
37 "Thunderstruck" band
40 "___ the ramparts ..."
44 Go in circles
47 Doofuses
49 Savory taste
52 Revise
54 Set eyes on
55 What prisoners do
56 Psychic
58 Unruly group
59 Agent K's sci-fi franchise, for short

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

E	R	I	C	■	B	A	J	A	■	E	D	S	E	L
M	O	N	O	■	R	O	O	M	■	G	O	T	T	I
O	U	T	R	E	A	C	H	P	R	O	G	R	A	M
■	T	O	N	Y	■	■	N	S	A	■	M	I	S	O
■	■	■	F	R	O	S	■	■	S	P	A	N	■	■
M	O	V	I	E	S	C	R	I	P	T	■	G	N	U
S	H	O	E	■	L	O	I	N	■	A	C	T	O	N
N	A	C	L	■	O	R	G	A	N	■	O	R	E	S
B	R	A	D	Y	■	E	U	R	O	■	N	I	N	E
C	A	B	■	A	I	R	P	O	R	T	C	O	D	E
■	■	U	H	O	H	■	■	W	A	V	E	■	■	■
E	L	L	A	■	O	A	F	■	■	M	I	S	T	■
L	O	A	N	A	P	P	L	I	C	A	T	I	O	N
B	E	R	G	S	■	E	E	L	S	■	E	T	N	A
A	B	Y	S	S	■	D	E	L	I	■	D	E	E	P

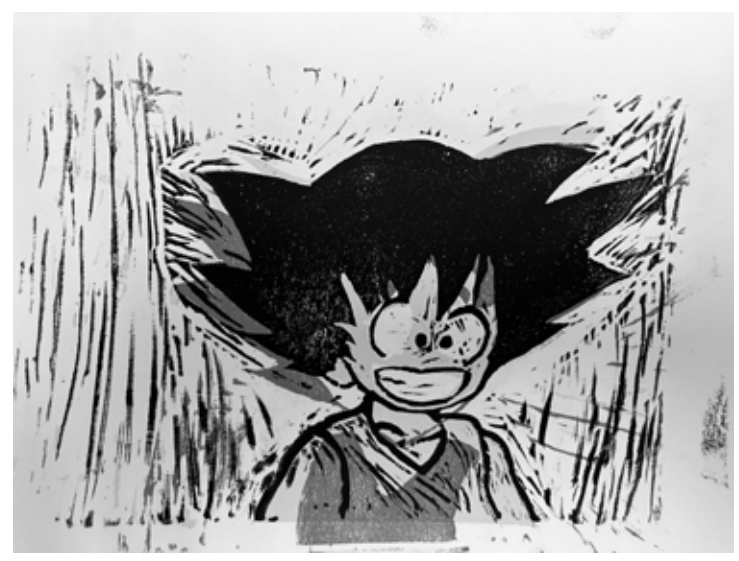
7/23 © 2023 Andrews McMeel Universal www.upuzzles.com

Climbing Plants *by Michele Govier*

7/24

1	2	3	4	5	6	■	■	7	8	9	■	10	11	12
13						■	14				■	15		
16						■	17				■	18		
19					■	20				■	21			
■	■	■	22		23			■	24	25				
■	26	27		■	28			■	29					■
30				■	31			32	■	33				34
35				■	36				37	■	38			
39				40	■	41				■	42			
■	43				44	■	45			■	46			■
47						■	48			49		■	■	■
50				■	51	52			■	53		54	55	56
57			■	58				■	59					
60			■	61				■	62					
63			■	64			■	■	65					

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Ashley Marquez
10th Grade
Reduction Print

FINE SPIRITS BEER & WINE
NATIVE TREES & PLANTS
LOCAL PRODUCE & WARES
Cactus Liquors
405 S Highland (432)729-7070
cactusliquors@gmail.com

COCHINEAL
MARFA
CASUAL FINE DINING IN FAR WEST TEXAS
107 West San Antonio Street
Marfa, Texas 79843
432 729 3300 - cochinealmarfa.com

Free school supplies and ice cream social to take place at St. Paul's Episcopal Church next week

MARFA — The annual School Supplies Give Away and Ice Cream Social will be at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Sunday, August 6, beginning at noon. Families are invited to come by St. Paul's, the rock church behind the Marfa Courthouse, to pick up brand-new backpacks with plenty of school supplies. Ice cream treats are available for everyone who stops by.

Those who would like to contribute toward purchasing school supplies are encouraged to visit www.stpaulsmarfa.org and click the DONATE button at the bottom of the page. Donations can also be left at the church.

Marfa students will benefit from the generosity of those who donate. Community members in need of supplies are encouraged to stop by, and those who don't need supplies are invited to come by anyway and cool off with an ice cream treat.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Presented by

ironwood INDUSTRIES
furniture | sculpture | hardware

Thu July 27

Viva Big Bend
7/26 - 7/30 in Alpine, Fort Davis, Marathon, Marfa, Terlingua, and Presidio
65+ Live music shows! For festival preview, see page 6. For ticket info and the entire schedule and lineup, including all free shows, visit: ***vivabigbend.com***

Viva Big Bend Free shows at the The Ritchey
4:00pm - 6:30pm at 102 E Murphy Street in Alpine
Calamity Creek String Band at 4pm and Marijuana Sweet Tooth at 5:15pm. These shows are free and open to the public!

Live Author Event at Front Street Books: Sid Balman, Jr.
6:00pm at 121 E Holland Ave in Alpine
Pulitzer-nominated was and national security correspondent and author of the Seventh Flag trilogy, Sid Balman, Jr. will discuss his upcoming and final book in the series. With special guest Kleo Gabrielle Belay, moderated by Marjie Scott.

Fri July 28

Viva Big Bend Free Event: BBT Barbeque & Tailgate Party
4:30pm - 7:00am on Murphy Street, between S. 4th and S. 5th in Alpine
BBT is hosting an appreciation party for current customers, employees, Viva Big Bend musicians and future BBT customers. In other words, everyone is welcome! Join BBT staff for great food and refreshments (while supplies last) and live music!

Alpine Public Library's Travel Talk
7:00pm at the AEP Foundation Multipurpose Room at Alpine Public Library in Alpine
Alexandra Moldovan and Dan Bennack will share their experiences of the land, people, and food of Romania.

Marcos Mares Pop Up Art Gallery & courtyard music by Chris Deanda at The Hotel Paisano
7:00pm - 9:00pm in Marfa
Free and open to the public!

Alpine Cowboys Baseball
7/28 - 7/30 at 7:00pm at Kokernot Field, 400 Loop Road in Alpine
The Alpine Cowboys wrap up the regular season with a 3-game series against the Austin Weirdos!

Viva Big Bend Free Show: Bidi Bidi Banda at Daly Park
8:00pm - 10:45pm at Daly Park in Presidio
Viva Big Bend is in Presidio! Bidi Bidi Banda will preform at Daly Park. This show is free and open to the public!

Sat July 29

Viva Big Bend Free Event: Cowboy Breakfast Pechanga
9:30am - 11:30am at Big Bend Saddlery, 2701 US-90 in Alpine
The Big Bend Saddlery will host a complimentary breakfast with live music. This event is free and open to the public!

Exhibition Opening: *Weather Conditions*
7/29 - 9/23 at RULE Gallery, 204 E San Antonio Street in Marfa
The show includes work by Nathan Abels, Libby Barbee, Sophia Poppy Ericksen, Jacob Feige, Jillian FitzMaurice, Martha Hughes, Jim Johnson, Aitor Lajarin-Encina, Margaret Neumann and Alexander Richard Wilson.

Viva Big Bend Free Kids' Show: Mr. Will
11:00am at the Alpine Visitor Center in Alpine
Viva Big Bend is in Presidio! Bidi Bidi Banda will preform at Daly Park. This show is free and open to the public!

Viva Big Bend Free Shows in Fort Davis
12:00pm - 6:15pm at the Kelly Outdoor Pavilion in Fort Davis
Doug Moreland kicks off the afternoon. Followed by Josh Baca & The Hot Tamales, Sour Bridges, and Morry Sochat & The Special 20's.

***DIG: Notes on Field and Family* Closing Reception**
5:00pm - 7:30pm at Do Right Hall in Marfa
Join us for a ranch waters and cervezas. Artist Sarah Wilson will talk about paleontology, art and family. DIG Books will be available for sale and signing. All events are free and open to the public.

Sun July 30

Viva Big Bend Free Show: Doug Moreland
2:00pm - 4:00pm at Chateau Wright, 125 Blue Mountain Trail in Fort Davis
Child and dog friendly with a food truck onsite. This event is free and open to the public.

Viva Big Bend Free Show: M.U.S.I.C. Acoustic Music Circle
4:00pm - 6:00pm at the Alpine Visitos Center in Alpine
Everyone is invited to come join M.U.S.I.C... Musicians Under the Sun in a Circle. Hosted by Dessert Debo and Her All Star Review local musicians gather regularly to play together and they welcome all musical talents and/or spectators. This event is free and open to the public.

Ongoing Weekly Events & Classes

Big Sky Yoga
Monday: Sculpt at 5:00pm, Vinyasa at 6:00pm
Tuesday: Hatha at 9:00am
Wednesday: Sculpt at 9:00am; Vinyasa at 6:00pm
Thursday: Yin Yoga at 6:00pm
Friday: Breathwork at 9:00am; Vinyasa & Core at 12:00pm
Saturday: Vinyasa at 10:00am
New location: 105 E Oak #4 (in the ally behind the Wrong Store)

Step it Up (Step Aerobics)
Tuesday at 6:00pm, Thursday at 9:00am & Saturday at 9:00am @ Big Sky Yoga
All fitness levels welcome. New location: 105 E Oak #4 (in the ally behind the Wrong Store)

Free Zumba Classes
Monday & Wednesday at 6:30pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes
Tuesday & Thursday at 6:00pm at Marfa Public Library

Life Drawing with Model
Saturday from 9:45am - 12:00pm 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

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

AA (online & sometimes in-person)
Saturday at 12:00pm at https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2 & sometimes in-person at Marfa Public Library

AA (in-person)
Monday & Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Saturday Farmer's Market
Saturdays at 9:30am at the pavillion behind the Visitors Center in Marfa

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

Note: Schedules are subject to change. Please call or visit business websites to confirm that event is happening.

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

COMMUNITIE
MARFA



SUMMER SALE HAPPENING NOW!

BIG MARKDOWNS ON
WOMEN'S DENIM
WOMEN'S TOPS
MEN'S SHIRTS

SEE Y'ALL SOON!

10% discount for locals, always!
122 N. Highland, Marfa Open every day 11am-5pm

Judd Foundation

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.

Advance reservations are required.

JUDD

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.

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



Alexandra Rau, LCSW
Therapy for individuals and couples

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

Marfa Realty

Our business is serving you!

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

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

WTG Fuels, Inc.

GASCARD™

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

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/MMofTexas

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

Classifieds & public notices

JOBS

PREVENTATIVE CARE HEALTH SERVICES JOB OPPORTUNITIES

LOOKING FOR A CNA, CMA, RN & LVN

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

VILLAGE FARMS - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY - FAST TRACK TO MANAGEMENT

Village Farms is seeking a detailed oriented individual to join our team as Shipping/Receiving Clerk for our Marfa 2 location.

Responsibilities include loading and unloading, forklift operation, preparation of shipping documents, verify deliveries, maintain warehouse and other general duties.

Requirements: Must be willing to work flexible hours including evenings, weekends and holidays, ability to work independently, verbal and written communication skills, working knowledge of computers and forklift experience preferred.

Opportunity to move to Supervisor level and pay within the first 6 months of employment. Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug screen.

Interested candidates should call (432)729-3071 Ext. 607 or fax resume to (432)375-6241. Applications are also available at Village Farms Security Stations 3 Miles N. Hwy 17 Marfa, TX or 3 Miles S. Hwy 17 FT. Davis, TX.

NOW HIRING

Village Farms

Human Resources/Admin Assistant- performs a range of administrative and clerical tasks to support management and the HR department.

Key Skill & Competencies

- Organization & planning
- Work management & prioritizing
- Verbal/written communication skills
- Attention to detail
- Reliability & Flexibility
- Strong MS Office skills
- Teamwork
- Bilingual (Spanish) is a must
- 2 yrs. relevant experience required

Full-time position with great benefits package which includes; paid vacation, health, vision, dental, life and STD insurance & 401k retirement plan

Submit resumes to aanderson@villagefarms.com applications @ Village Farms Security Stations 3 miles N. Hwy 17, Marfa or 3 miles S. Hwy 17, Fort Davis or call 682.647.1214 ext. 469 for more information.

EMAIL
ADS@BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM
FOR ADVERTISING RATES

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.

FREE SCRAP TIRE RECYCLING

Date: Saturday August 5, 2023
Time: 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Location: Marfa Recycling Center
1502 Golf Course Rd. Marfa, TX 79843

If you are unable to haul your scrap tires to Marfa's Recycling Center yourself, please call City Hall at (432)729-4315 to make arrangements for pick up.

RESIDENTIAL TIRES ACCEPTED UNTIL CONTAINER IS FULL. NO COMMERCIAL TIRES ACCEPTED.

Sponsored by the City of Marfa and funded by the Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG) Municipal Solid Waste Grant Program

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NO. 2004
Notice to All Persons Having Claims Against the Estate of MARIA DE LA LUZ BAEZA, Deceased. Notice is hereby given that the original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MARIA DE LA LUZ BAEZA were issued on April 24, 2023 in Cause 2004 pending in County Court of Presidio County, Texas, to: Russell Church as Independent Executor, whose mailing address is: Estate of MARIA DE LA LUZ BAEZA, c/o Nicholas A. Dupre, 2170 Buckthorne Pl. Ste 240, The Woodlands, TX 77380. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. Dated this 20th day of July, 2023. (s) Nicholas A. Dupre, State Bar No. 24059701, 2170 Buckthorne Pl. Ste 240, The Woodlands, TX 77380 Tel. 8324824622, Fax8324429238, TBN: 24059701

FOR SALE

TWO CEMETERY LOTS FOR SALE
MARFA CEMETERY

Lot Number 25, section No.1 new, space A and space B, in block No. 8, Survey No 158, G.H.& S.A. RY.Co.
Price $1500 for both.

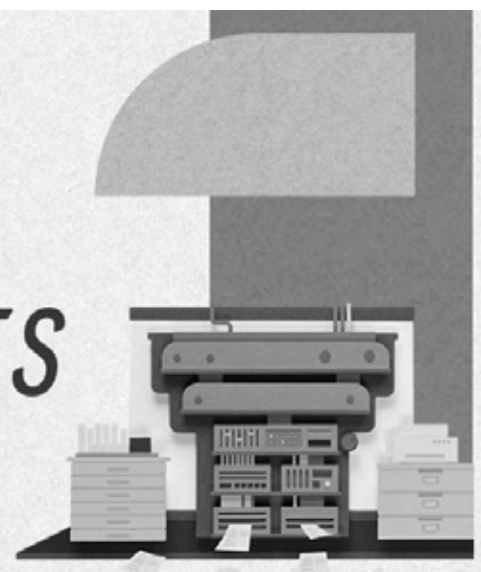
LOST/FOUND

LOST GLASSES

Black and white frames, prescription lenses.
I walk all over town, they could be anywhere.
432-729-4583

MNB
THE MARFA NATIONAL BANK
24 Hour ATM
Loans
Personal Banking
Business Banking
301 S. Highland Ave. - Marfa
432-729-4344 or 877-729-4344
Member FDIC
www.marfanb.com

SUBMIT PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES ONLINE.



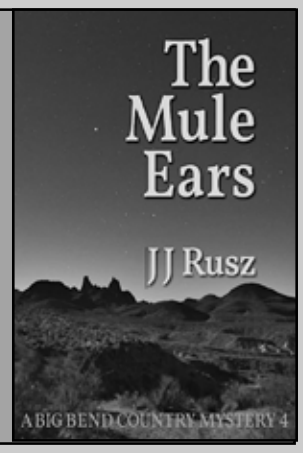
The Big Bend Sentinel has partnered with Column to offer an easier way to place notices with our publication.

Column

Save Time. Pay Online. Place 24/7
https://bigbendsentinel.column.us/place

THE SENTINEL
* NEWSPAPER * COFFEE *
* COCKTAILS *
209 W EL PASO ST
MARFA, TX 79843
OPEN EVERY DAY
7:30 AM
BREAKFAST FROM
7:30 AM - 3 PM
LUNCH FROM
11 AM - 3 PM

FRONT STREET BOOKS
THURSDAY,
August 10, @ 6 pm
local author
JJ Rusz
Now there are 4!
The creator of the Big Bend Country mystery series,
JJ Rusz will discuss & sign his latest book
121 E Holland Ave, Alpine
Find out more on Facebook & Instagram



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

JUST SAY NO TO EL COSMICO
Sponsored by Marfa Preservation Committee

Home Auto Commercial
LIVINGSTON INSURANCE AGENCY
Serving West Texas
Dan Platt, Jr.
903 West San Antonio Street • Marfa
432.729.4306 • dan@marfainsurance.com www.marfainsurance.com

FRONTIER SERVICES
HEATING & COOLING
New install, mini splits. We service all brands!
Free estimate, Call 432-386-7422 TACLB17870E

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY
Judge Jose Portillo:
(432) 729-4452

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

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

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Greg Henington:
(432) 837-2412

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)

THE BIG BEND Sentinel

Maisie Crow	Editor-in-Chief
Max Kabat	Publisher
Allegra Hobbs	Managing Editor
Sam Karas	Reporter
Mary Cantrell	Reporter
Ariele Gentiles	Copy Editor
Becca Foster	Designer / Advertising
Mary Etherington	Office Manager
Maria Gerardo	Distribution
Marisa Chacon	Distribution
Evelyn Sanchez	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.