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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES
by order of Presidio County

Marfa ISD likely adopting deficit budget for 2023-2024 school year

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — The Marfa ISD Board of Trustees is currently poised to adopt a 2023-2024 school year budget with a deficit of around $1 million or more.

The board met this week with Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez and Chief Financial Officer Rosela Rivera for the latest in a series of ongoing budget workshops where they discussed legislative updates, bond payments, salary structures for support staff and approved contracts for six new employees.

Board members Teresa Nuñez, Lori Flores, Stela Fuentez and Ruben Martinez were present. Members Yolanda Jurado, Rene Gonzales and Ernie Villarreal were absent.

The district, along with others across the state, is adjusting to recent legislative changes brought about by Senate Bill 2, an $18 billion school property tax relief bill passed during the second special legislative session this July. The largest property tax relief bill ever passed, it included an increase in homestead exemptions from $40,000 to $100,000 — which will go up for public vote as a constitutional amendment this coming fall before it can be finalized — and a 10.7 cent reduction for school district's M&O, or maintenance and operations, tax rates.

The changes will amount to an average savings of 42% over the next two years for Texas homeowners on their school property tax bills, according to a press release from Senator Paul Bettencourt, the bill's primary author.

As a result of the legislation, school districts will bring in less money this year from property taxes. Marfa ISD, for example, will be required to lower their tax rate by around 18 cents — the state average — from the previous year. While the state plans to make up for that loss with additional state aid, school district funding is stagnating, not increasing.

Legislators have yet to reach agreements on teacher pay raises or an increase in the per pupil allotment, changes public education advocates — including local Alpine ISD Superintendent Michelle Rinehart — have voiced strong support for in the wake of inflation and what they call a flawed school funding formula.

A public education and school

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Photo courtesy of the Fort Davis Fire Department

Scorched terrain in Jeff Davis County due to recent fires which are under investigation for possible arson by the state.

Series of fires in Jeff Davis County under investigation by Texas A&M Forest Service

By MARY CANTRELL
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JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — A series of four fires that occurred last week in Jeff Davis County with unknown causes are currently under investigation by the Texas A&M Forest Service.

The agency will determine whether or not the fires — all which were roadside starts, with two occurring last Wednesday and another two occurring Sunday — were accidental or arson.

Jim Fowler, a spokesperson for the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department, said the investigation was launched due to the fact that the fires occurred in close succession during times when weather conditions weren't particularly dangerous.

"Certainly four fires, without thunderstorms, on days without wind, are concerning — they may not be suspicious, but it's certainly concerning," said Fowler.

"It could be catalytic converters or somebody tossed a cigarette butt while parked on the side of the road, or any of those possible causes. But we are investigating because the number that we're seeing is quite large," he added.

The first two fires occurred last Wednesday, one near Madeira Canyon by the Lawrence E. Woods Roadside Park burned less than an acre, the other — coined the Rock Pile Fire — occurred on Highway 166 near Highway 118 burned around 180 acres of rugged terrain. The Texas A&M Forest Service was called in to assist with the Rock Pile Fire and no structures were threatened.

A few days later, on Sunday, two additional fires broke out near the Brewster-Jeff Davis county line on Hwy 118. Both were put out quickly and were confined to less than an acre. Assisting in the recent firefighting efforts in addition to the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department were local crews from the Davis Mountains Resort, Cherry Creek, McDonald's Observatory and the Alpine Fire Department.

Fowler said because the fires began on highway right of ways, which are state property, the Texas A&M Forest Service, a state agency, will conduct the investigation, assessing burn patterns and more. A timeline for when the investigation will conclude has not yet been provided, said Fowler.

If causes are ruled accidental, an educational

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Blackwell School Alliance seeks city support in transition to National Historic Site

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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MARFA — At last week's regular Marfa City Council meeting, representatives from the Blackwell School Alliance and the National Parks Service (NPS) provided updates on the Blackwell School as it moves towards its establishment as a National Historic Site, and made a request for support from the city in the process.

The adobe structure, which served as a segregated schoolhouse for Mexican American students from 1909 to 1965, was designated a National Historic Site in October of last year when President Biden signed the Blackwell School National Historic Site Act into law. It was a long-sought victory for members of the alliance, a group of alumni and supporters devoted to preserving the site and documenting its history.

But the site will not be officially established as a National Historic Site until the land is transferred from the Marfa Independent School District — which leases the site to the Blackwell School Alliance — to the federal government. That process, while inching forward, has been tangled in legal red tape, explained Martha Stafford, a representative of the alliance and the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

"The land transfer from the school is very complicated and is taking a lot longer than we had originally thought," said Stafford. "But their attorneys are working on it, so we know it will happen, it's just a matter of time."

In the meantime, the alliance has partnered with the NPS and the NPCA as it prepares for that transition — and is seeking the city's input as well.

The establishment of a National Historic Site in Marfa will likely draw more visitors to the area; it will inevitably have an impact on the city of Marfa, said Stafford, "in really positive ways." That being the case, the city's input on matters such as roads and traffic around the school could be instrumental.

"You also know Marfa, and I think that's important that we have people who have been here a really long time and they understand Marfa, they understand there are a lot of inner workings," said Stafford.

The alliance is seeking the city's involvement in a fairly informal capacity, she explained — maybe in the form of a panel to bounce ideas around and provide input on the site's development.

David Larson, superintendent for the Fort

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Mexican consulate launches anti-trafficking campaign

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — This Sunday, the Presidio branch of the Consulate of Mexico observed World Day of Trafficking in Persons, a United Nations-led initiative to raise awareness of human trafficking and forced labor around the world. The consulate hosted presentations and distributed informational materials in its hometown community of Presidio and on the road in Midland and Odessa.

The Corazón Azul, or "Blue Heart," campaign teaches folks how to identify and report trafficking cases. "Victims of trafficking are deprived of their liberty and forced to perform domestic labor, agricultural work or sex work," a campaign presentation explains. "It's a form of modern slavery."

Worldwide, activists and leaders have sounded the alarm as rates of trafficking-related crimes rise and detection rates drop. Trafficking cases that make it to a courtroom have risen by more than 84% over the past decade — but less than half of victims who escape on their own decide to report their experiences to the authorities.

The United Nations attributes some of these statistics to global migration and supply chain shifts in the wake of the pandemic. "The COVID-19 pandemic … changed the characteristics of trafficking, pushing it further underground and potentially increasing the dangers to victims by making the crime less likely to come to the attention of the authorities," reads a report launching the 2023 international Blue Heart initiative.

Government agencies and nonprofit organizations in Mexico have identified human trafficking as a particularly serious problem. Both Mexican citizens and migrants moving through or from Mexico into the United States are particularly vulnerable. Statistics show that the northern states of Baja California, Chihuahua and Nuevo Leon are hubs for the trafficking of individuals from Mexico into the United States.

The Citizens' Council for Security and Justice in Mexico City recently released their annual report on human trafficking, which found that these crimes primarily affect women and children — 50% of reported victims are minors, and 70% of them are female.

Echoing the findings of the UN report, the Citizens' Council found that the pandemic had pushed traffickers underground — and potentially online, where children were particularly vulnerable to exploitation. "The virtual world has distinguished itself as a risky space," the report reads. "Strengthening digital

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Three historic tri-county hotels are slated for renovation as tourism climbs

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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TRI-COUNTY — Three historic hotels in Alpine and Fort Davis could be undergoing major renovations under new ownership beginning later this year — a move to revitalize the roughly century-old structures, according to stakeholders, and to capitalize on a regional boom in tourism.

Local business groups in both cities, meanwhile, are hoping the improvement of lodging and amenity options will help revitalize the struggling downtowns.

Austin-based Byways Hospitality, which specializes in boutique hotels, is under contract to purchase the Holland Hotel and Maverick Inn in Alpine and the Hotel Limpia in Fort Davis from current owner Charles Mallory. The hospitality group is partnering with a team of architects, designers and restaurateurs — including Morgan Weber and Vincent Huynh of Marfa Spirit Co. — to carry out renovations, construct new amenities and overhaul the food and drink offerings at the sites. Post Oak Preservation has been contracted to oversee the preservation of the historic architecture.

Mallory — a Connecticut-based hotelier who has owned the properties for about a decade and plans to stay attached as a general partner — said he saw the project as an opportunity to actualize a long-term vision to improve the aging structures rather than simply preserve them.

"That's what I'm excited about — the potential to really make these hotels noteworthy and significant sort of landmarks in the communities," said Mallory. "This is really the moment to do it. We've preserved them and actually turned the lights back on in some cases, so I feel like I've brought them to this moment where they can really move forward."

Plans for the hotels are preliminary, and the team is currently in the phase of raising the necessary funds from investors. Byways co-founder Collin Bibb, who recently moved to Alpine himself, said the group is approaching local investors.

Under the current plan, which was presented to the Alpine Business Alliance at a public meeting last week, the Holland Hotel will undergo a renovation of its ballroom and lobby bar. The hotel's current restaurant, the Century Bar & Grill, will be converted into a coffee shop, while a new restaurant will be built on the other side of the hotel. The restaurant, per the presentation, will "provide an upscale take on Texas ranch cuisine," while the bar will boast an "expansive whiskey and cigar collection."

Bibb said the goal for the Holland is to provide updated furniture and fixtures that also feel true to the roots of the historic property. "These hotels have served Alpine and the Tri-County area for over 100 years, and we just want to enable it to serve tourists and the community for the next 100 years," said Bibb. "So [we're providing] updated furniture that kind of seems like it might fit West Texas in the 1930s and 40s."

The Maverick will undergo lighter improvements to its common spaces and rooms, and could be outfitted with an expanded pool deck. The team plans to buy the property behind the inn to add more units, said Bibb. Under the current plan, that property would potentially

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Fires

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campaign about fire danger, or other preventative measures, may need to be taken, said Fowler.

"We either need to work on fire prevention and notifying people not to park their cars on the right of way," said Fowler. "Or, if there are any other concerns, [we will have to] address those."

On Wednesday afternoon there was an additional brush fire located near the Solar Park, but crews from the observatory and Fort Davis were able to put out the flames quickly and determined the cause of the fire was electrical, likely due to power lines and the heavy storms in the area, according to Fowler.



Photo courtesy of the Fort Davis Fire Department

Sebastian Flores, wildland capitan for the Fort Davis Fire Department, walks Judge Curtis Evans through the process of assessing the origins of a fire and its spread. There have been four fires in Jeff Davis County in the past week without clear causes, prompting an investigation by the Texas A&M Forest Service.



Photo courtesy of the Fort Davis Fire Department

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Presidio ISD names new campus leadership

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At a special school board meeting on Saturday, Presidio ISD announced new leadership at the elementary, middle and high schools. Joe Andy Mendoza and Taro Gutierrez will lead as substitute administrators at the elementary school and middle school, respectively. Carmen Rubner, the current interim superintendent, will also serve as high school principal alongside substitute administrator Belinda Dolino. The district is still hiring for a permanent superintendent.

The decisions came on the heels of a season of major change within the district — Lucy Rede Franco Middle School Principal Rogelio Zubia resigned in May, and Superintendent Ray Vasquez resigned a few weeks later. Former Presidio High School Principal Hevila Ramos was reassigned to the role of curriculum coordinator.

The Presidio ISD School Board also saw unprecedented change: eight candidates ran for four seats during May's election, meaning that the new members make up the majority of the board. Iris Galindo was tapped as board president, Marco Lujan as vice president and Perla Natividad as secretary.

The new leadership announced on Saturday comes with a few caveats. The "substitute administrator" title means that the district is technically still hiring for the role and may replace the substitute with someone else — they indicate that each school leader still needs to wrap up formal principal certification with the state of Texas.

Joe Andy Mendoza, substitute administrator for Presidio Elementary School, started off his career with Presidio ISD with the right certification — Mendoza was certified in Arizona, where he earned his college degree. Arizona and Texas were "reciprocal" states when he was hired at Presidio ISD, meaning that he did not need to earn a separate principal certification in the state of Texas.

The rules changed post-pandemic. Mendoza has been frustrated with the process — he will likely have to travel across the state to retake the necessary exam. Still, he hoped that district parents wouldn't take the "substitute" title to mean that he was leaving the district. "It's a technicality," he said. "The school district goes by the book and follows the rules and is transparent — they're doing their job."

With the help of new Administrative Assistant Samuel Carrasco, Mendoza has a lot he wants to accomplish during the 2023-24 school year. He'd like to see — in his words — "better customer service," communicating more openly with the public and helping parents and staff members field their hopes and concerns with school leadership.

After the upheaval in the spring, Mendoza was relieved that the district had named new leadership and was looking forward to the future. "It was nerve-wracking in the middle of summer, but now summer is over and it's time to get back to business," he said. "Now we're asking, 'What is our mission as a district?' We want our students to feel safe and comfortable and to learn."

Taro Gutierrez, the new middle school substitute administrator, also saw his path to full certification thrown off by the pandemic. Gutierrez got his start with the district in 2002 teaching English language acquisition students — over time, he started teaching different levels of math and was encouraged to pursue his master's degree in educational leadership. "When COVID hit, I stopped working on the certification because health and safety was a priority," he said.

Gutierrez gained valuable experience last year, serving as assistant to Mendoza at Presidio Elementary. When the leadership position at Lucy Rede Franco Middle School opened, Mendoza and a few other colleagues encouraged him to apply. He saw an opportunity to be a part of a season of change for the district. "It was the best position for me to help the district," he said.

Over at the high school, students and teachers will also be led by familiar faces. Middle school teacher Belinda Dolino will assume an administrative role, helping Carmen Rubner fulfill her duties as Presidio High School principal.

Rubner served Presidio ISD for almost two decades as a teacher, coach, assistant principal and technology director. She moved back to her native Iowa in 2019, but was excited to return to the border and be a Blue Devil once again. "I've been saying, 'I was born in Iowa, but I was raised in Presidio,'" she said. "This is my home, and people have been so welcoming. I'm encouraged by all the excitement for this school year."

In the short term, Rubner will assume double-duty as high school principal and superintendent. A formal search will begin in November for the new superintendent, in hopes of making a decision by March or April of next year.

She hoped that the new district leader would assume their role with an appreciation for the unique culture, challenges and talents of Presidio ISD. "It's important that whoever comes into the superintendent role understands how much the community values education and the school district as a whole," she said.



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Tri-county hotels

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contain 20 shipping container units for additional guests. The space between the hotel and the additional units could serve as a courtyard and gathering space for programming, said Bibb.

Compared to the Holland Hotel and the Hotel Limpia, said Bibb, the Maverick Inn will provide a lower price-point option for travelers.

Changes to the Hotel Limpia in Fort Davis — which will also receive upgraded furniture and fixtures, renovated hotel rooms and the addition of ten new ones — center around a mission to provide enjoyable outdoor space for visitors, said Bibb, with an expanded courtyard, upgraded pool and outdoor seating for a new hotel restaurant. While the property is currently split in two by a road, Bibb said the team is hoping to make that road available to emergency vehicles only, allowing for a more cohesive outdoor space.

Byways is also under contract to buy the nearby Harvard Hotel, currently owned by Jeff Davis County Commissioner and Fire Marshal Roy Hurley, which they hope to use for additional rooms at a lower price point.

A timeline for construction on the projects is tentative, and dependent on the securing of funds, but Bibb said he's optimistic they can raise the remaining equity in the next two months, then hopefully break ground in October.

The prospect of entering the hotel business in the Big Bend region is, at the moment, an attractive one, said Bibb. Tourism in the region is climbing. The group's presentation notes that visitation to the National Park has grown 7% per year since 2012 and that total hotel spending has grown 12% per year during that same time.

"There's a lot of excitement surrounding the project, and I think it has a lot of interesting financial aspects too, which underwrites really well for investors just by nature of the fact that the Big Bend area in general, and the tri-county area, has had such solid growth, not only from a tourism perspective, but also from a hotel growth perspective," said Bibb.

Jim Street, president of the Alpine Business Alliance, is an enthusiastic supporter of the plan, hoping the revitalization and expansion of local hotels will in turn revitalize Alpine's ailing local economy, which was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and is still struggling to recover. Street said that in an earlier survey, the ABA counted 32 empty storefronts, but said that number has since grown.

"There's an entire half block, half of the 100 block of North Fifth Street, that's totally empty," he said.

Part of the problem, he acknowledged, is the high cost of rent — a problem that will not be solved by hotel renovations. But he believes the increased foot traffic will help Alpine get back on its feet.

"[The hotels] will attract visitors downtown, it absolutely will help," he continued. "Of course, the more people are downtown shopping, the more likely people will be to open shops and cater to that business."

"These hotels have served Alpine and the Tri-County area for over 100 years, and we just want to enable it to serve tourists and the community for the next 100 years."

Reagan Stone, executive director of the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, described Fort Davis as a place "on the up and up" since the pandemic.

"We have the highest occupancy rate that we've ever had — that means since COVID and before — so we have a lot of folks coming into town right now," said Stone.

Like Street, he sees the hotel properties targeted for upgrades as an opportunity to capitalize on that boom in visitation. "We want to have the amenities to be able to make sure that tourists and visitors have restaurants and other types of amenities to be able to have a pleasurable time while they're visiting," he said.

The planned renovations are part of a larger hotel boom in the region, as hoteliers move to harness the climbing visitation numbers. Liz Lambert is currently undertaking the relocation and expansion of El Cosmico. Hotelier Tim Crowley, operator of the Hotel Saint George, has plans to build two new hotels in or near Marfa and is looking to premiere 320-acre event space The High Frontier in Fort Davis next year.

"My view is really that if we want to take Fort Davis to the next level, it's going to be outside investment like [the Byways] possibility or The High Frontier as well," said Stone. "So we're really excited to see that."

Marfa ISD

(Continued from page 1)

voucher-centered legislative session is anticipated to take place this October. At the Marfa ISD board meeting this week, district leaders were hopeful the coming session would result in a sorely-needed influx of state money.

As it stands, the district will need to dip into its $3 million fund balance, or savings account, to cover the roughly $1 million-plus deficit. A final budget has yet to be adopted, and the district will hold a meeting in late August to pass the finalized budget and set a tax rate. For now, they are working to make cuts where possible — a new $375,000 school bus would likely need to be grant funded as opposed to being funded through a budget allocation.

CFO Rivera told the board that making smaller cuts to the budget here and there, to extracurriculars, etc., was only so impactful and that if the district continues down the route of unsustainable funding, salaries and personnel — which make up larger chunks of the budget — would have to be assessed.

"We take another hit like this next year, we're in big trouble. The only real place that you're going to bring down the budget is in salaries, that's what it comes down to," said Rivera. "Our fund balance depends on the surpluses that we have, and we don't have that much. It's very scary."

The district is also making its 2022-2023 school year recapture payments this month — money MISD is required to send back to the state because it is considered a "property rich" district by the state. The latest recapture payment for the last school year was up to $1.7 million dollars from just over $1 million the previous year, according to Rivera.

The strategies for paying off the district's remaining bonds was also discussed at length with Duane Westerman of SAMCO Capital, the district's bond advisor. The district has two remaining bonds totaling around $6.3 million to pay off from previous infrastructure projects. In addition to their annual payment of $432,000, the board is assessing options for paying off additional debt, a process referred to as defeasance.

The district leverages an I&S, or interest and sinking, 15 cent tax rate to pay off existing debt. They are looking at two options to pay off an additional $500,000 this year in addition to their annual payment, one which involves more interest savings, roughly $200,00 — which the board favored — and one which would totally pay off an existing 2013 bond.

So far, the district has made strides towards paying off its debt, with almost $1 million in principal paid off, totaling $440,000 in interest savings.

Switching up salary structures in order to create a more transparent, longevity-based system for the district's support staff, including aids, administrators and custodians, was also discussed. Included in the 2023-2024 budget will be a $910 stipend for all returning employees — money which is coming out of the remainder of the school's ESSER, or pandemic-era federal relief funds, that needs to be spent this year.

The board also voted to hire six new teacat the end of the meeting — a high school history teacher, a junior high math teacher, a special education paraprofessional, a paraprofessional and two other employees, one with the Industry Career Vocational Education program and another with the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

Anti-trafficking campaign

(Continued from page 1)

hygiene and cybersecurity is one of the challenges of institutions in eradicating modern slavery."

The Consulate of Mexico serves Mexican citizens living, working and traveling in the United States. The Presidio branch's presentations locally and in Midland-Odessa spoke to the unique needs of West Texas — namely, the risks posed to border communities and the heart of oil country.

Alejandro Alba traveled with the Consulado Móvil (Mobile Consulate) to Midland-Odessa this past weekend, where people lining up for consular services were also given information about human trafficking — and the opportunity to ask questions.

He was surprised by the amount of interest generated by the Corazón Azul campaign. Some Consulado Móvil attendees even shared their own experiences and those of friends and neighbors.

Alba helped detail the consular resources available to victims of human trafficking — and those trying to help them. "Sometimes people think that if they are Mexicans in the USA, they cannot call the police or other organizations," he said. "We explain to them that that's not the case."

The materials Alba distributed offered a few questions to help folks identify if they or someone they know is a victim of human trafficking: are your wages little or none? Are you free to go where you want? Are you permitted to communicate with your relatives and friends?

They also outlined some basic questions to ask before accepting work in the United States — something many consular clients are desperate for. "Find out all the details of your job, information about the company and look for references," one pamphlet reads. "Don't trust [an employer] if they promise you will make large amounts of money without many details."

At the presentation in Presidio, Celia Arzaga of the Border Network for Human Rights called for widespread education and awareness around the issue, especially among migrants. "We know that human trafficking exists, but we also know that not everyone has the same opportunities to get work," she said. "For that reason, migrants are vulnerable to becoming victims of criminal organizations."

She felt that working to eradicate human trafficking was right in line with her organization's mission — to protect border residents' liberty and humanity. "The Border Network focuses on educating the migrant community to change our society, so that it may be equitable and everyone can have the same dignity and respect," she said.

Blackwell School

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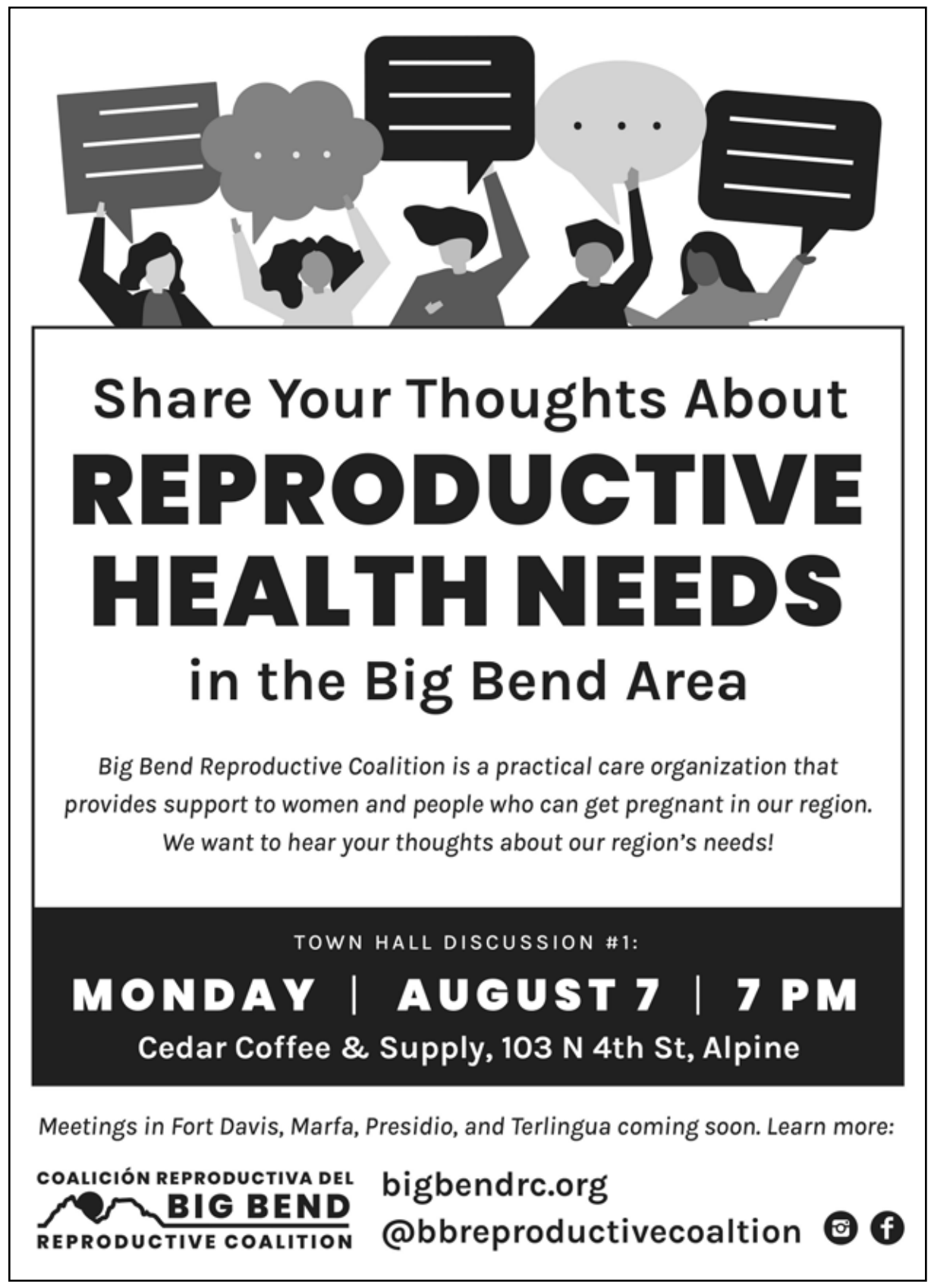
Davis National Historic Site, explained they are looking to set up bi-weekly calls to discuss next steps as the transition moves forward.

While council members expressed interest, the City Council agenda item was a discussion item only, so there was no vote as to a course of action.

More immediately, the Blackwell School will host two open houses, on August 10 and 17, both at 6 p.m. Alliance President Daniel Hernandez will be present to discuss next steps, as will NPS representatives.

As the property transfers ownership and falls under the purview of the federal government, the alliance will remain involved as a friends group, said Stafford. "The alliance isn't going away," she said.





Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the good people of Marfa, TX,

Like the guy said, it's deja vu all over again.

About six years or so ago I was on the school board, and it became necessary to hire a superintendent. I wanted to search for a candidate, interview and find the best person for the job.

It did not happen that way. I did get the board to advertise the job, and we received resumes from two well-respected educators with some strong recommendations. However, the rest of the board refused to interview either one. Mr. Aguero was hired. One board member made the comment we would lose Montessori if he wasn't hired. This is not an indictment against Mr. Aguero. I just thought we should look at all our options.

My point is we seem to be in the same situation. I do not understand why you would not want to find the best people for the job. Mr. Alferez may be the best person, but until you advertise, get candidates and interview, you will never know. If the board wanted to hire from within, why was the high school principal not asked to apply? I understand she did a very good job and had the certifications.

I do not understand why the board would not want to go outside the district to look for staff. Hiring from outside can bring new ideas, new styles and expose students to new things. Isn't that what a school is supposed to do, broaden student minds?

If a district doesn't hire from outside, it can get the reputation it is a closed system and sometimes good applicants won't apply.

I understand a good teacher resigned and she had a change of plans and wanted to stay. My understanding is, the building principal brought her name back to the board. The board failed to rehire her. What's going on there? In a district where housing, healthcare and long distances from major stores is an issue, why wouldn't you hire a certified teacher that wants to stay in the district? It's obvious the principal thought she did a good job or she wouldn't have brought her name back to the board. The question is will the district have a certified teacher in that position when school starts?

The way hiring works in almost all districts, the superintendent is hired by the board. The superintendent and a committee will interview building principals and recommend one to be hired. The principal and a committee will interview classroom teachers and recommend candidates to the board to hire. This way administration and teaching staff generally have the same teaching philosophy and work better together. I don't believe state policy has boards hiring at the classroom level.

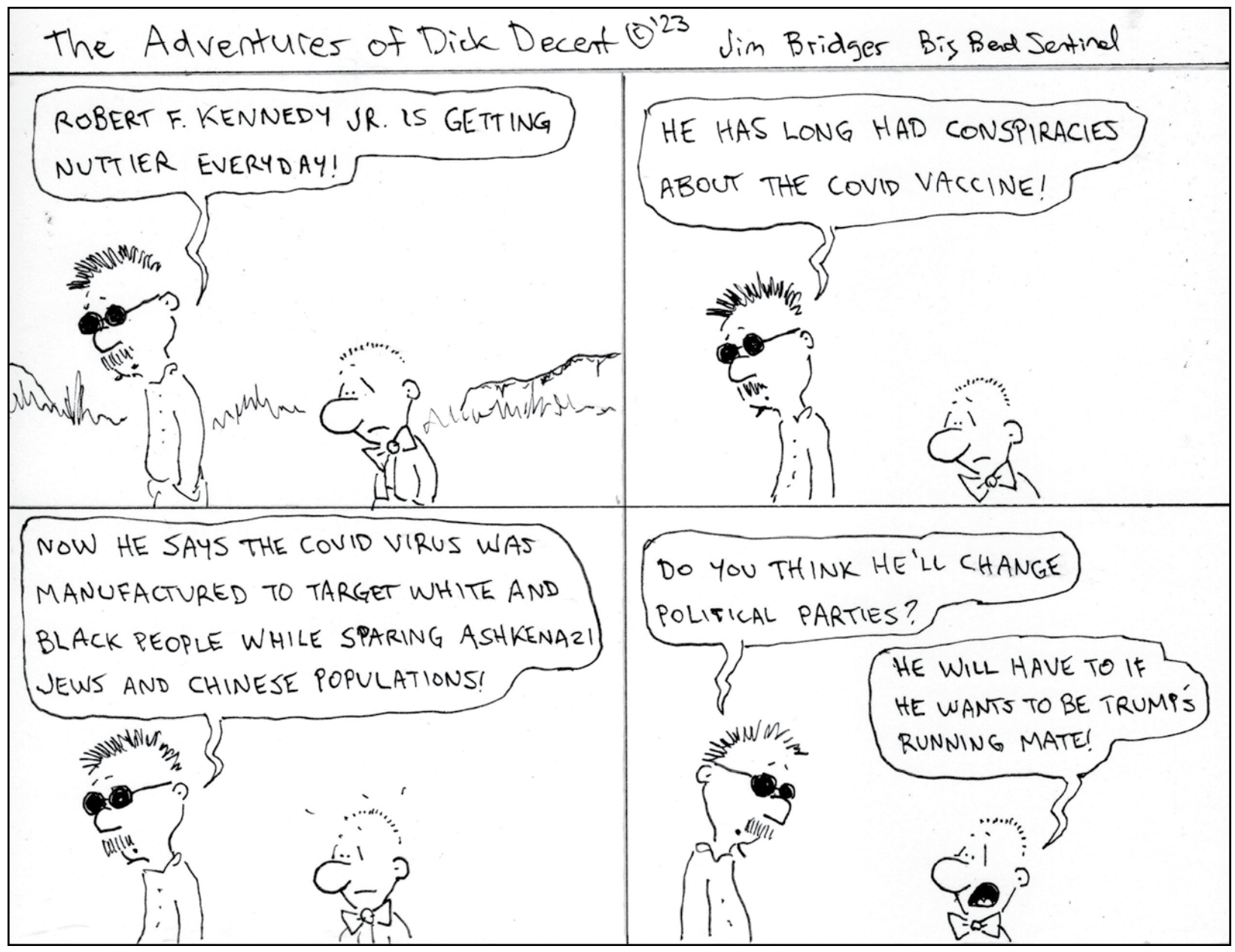
I can't speak very well to the child molestation issue as I don't know much about it. Having said that, it is the most important issue this board faces. Protecting our children is JOB #1. While these acts may not have happened at school, one of the alleged perpetrators worked at school.

I do know this: when a child is harmed, either physically or mentally, and needs help in a small town, the school is the place we go. The school usually has more resources than any other entity in the community.

Thank You,

Frank (Buddy) Knight

• • •



To the Editor and our Community,

Our Board and Interim Superintendent had prepared a detailed response to questions posed by a reporter for the paper. Unfortunately, the article that was published did not incorporate all of our comments and explanations. First and foremost, the Marfa Independent School District (MISD) Board of Trustees and Interim Superintendent would like to publicly apologize to the students and to the parents of those students who were directly impacted by the Serrano/Murillo cases currently under investigation. Our priority is to offer our immediate support directly to those families who may be affected. To our knowledge, no families or students had reported any issues with Ms. Murillo while she worked as a substitute or after she was arrested to District personnel. Our MISD Board Policies and State law provide and it is the responsibility of all MISD teachers and staff to immediately report any abuse, neglect or harassment involving a student. If it is determined that an employee was aware of any issues involving students and Ms. Murrillo that should have been reported and failed to follow the law, disciplinary actions would be warranted.

We want to remind all students and their families that the MISD family is here for you. Upon publication of Thursday's news story, our Interim Superintendent took immediate action to reach out to law enforcement to contact those families and offer MISD support. However, law enforcement has not provided us with the names of the individuals referred to in the article. We ask that if any students were impacted by these two individuals, to please come forward so that we can investigate further and provide support to you and your family immediately. The Interim Superintendent is working with off site counselors to provide support for all our students. Moving forward, the MISD board has agreed to visit its Crisis Communication Plan, working with the Region 18 Education Service Center, to ensure we execute all protocols set in place in a more timely manner.

Regarding the quotes from the two former employees that were published; it is their right to express their opinions of the board and MISD leadership. However, the MISD Board will retain its professional obligation to stick to the facts. The Board disagrees with the allegations made by Ms. Arguello that she was not rehired due to retaliation. The fact is that the checks and balances of the board set up by the Texas Association of School Boards and outlined in the Framework for School Board Development is to ensure that the sound direction of all 7 board members are on equal footing to prevent preference independent of personal matters, thus preventing any "unethical" behavior. The facts are that Ms. Arguello did seek re-employment but rescinded her application at the July 17 Board Meeting before the board's vote.

Regarding staffing shortage, last week's story stated that around 30% of its positions remain vacant. The district did start with seven open teaching positions, plus those of Student Services Coordinator, Junior High-High School Principal, Cafeteria Manager and mechanic. As of this week, the District has filled six positions. Remaining open positions include elementary teacher, Student Success Coordinator, Junior High-High School Principal, Cafeteria Manager, mechanic and substitute teacher. We are a District of Innovation which allows flexibility in staffing. We are in dire need of state funding to increase teacher and staff salaries, just like most rural school districts in our area. We are working diligently to seek the best solutions for our District when it comes to school finance and the limited funding available. But rest assured, we are more than ready and excited to welcome our students back for this coming school year!

Regarding the MISD Board's reasoning to hire Mr. Alferez instead of Ms. Porter as Interim Superintendent. The priority of the board is to ensure that those in leadership bring motivation and vision that will help our students succeed, well beyond post-secondary education. The board sees that motivation and vision in Mr. Alferez and soon our community will too. Ms. Porter was qualified and considered for the Interim Superintendent role. The board weighed heavily on this decision between both Porter and Alferez. It was a very hard decision that was not made lightly. Ms. Porter was already in a very strong position as principal and adding Mr. Alferez to this dynamic leadership team was the vision of the board to maximize student outcomes. On May 23, 2023, TEA approved Mr. Alferez's path to continue his certification as a Superintendent. Previously to Marfa, he was an Assistant Principal for Presidio High School before being promoted to Principal for Presidio High School / Early College High School CTE Texas State Technical College. Mr. Alferez served in that role for 5 years at Presidio ISD. He has a Master's Degree in School Administration from SRSU and has Superintendency coursework completed. He is seeking the Region 18 candidacy into their Superintendency program. At a future Board meeting and after careful review of Mr. Alferez's performance, the Board may consider extending Mr. Alferez to the full time position of Superintendent upon completion of his certification.

We are grateful that *The Big Bend Sentinel* brought to light all of our personnel matters in one fell swoop. We are going to take this spotlight and use it to share in all of the incredible gains we've made at MISD. We haven't done enough to tout the success of our coaches, teachers and students. We want you, the community of Marfa, to celebrate with us.

The MISD Board is prioritizing its communication and outreach to students, teachers, staff and the greater Marfa community. With new leadership and a unified board, we are confident that the community will see and feel the difference in how we communicate our efforts to make Marfa ISD the best it has ever been. Marfa ISD is the heartbeat of this town and we are going to make sure that our student body walks these halls with their heads up high, proud to be a Marfa Shorthorn. Can we get an "OH YEAH!"

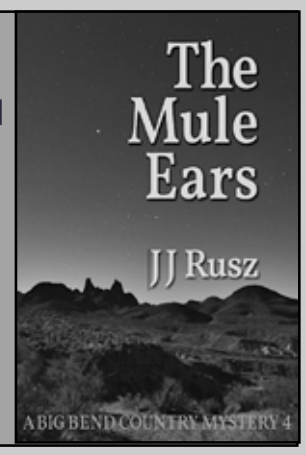
The Marta Independent School District (MISD) Board of Trustees and Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez

• • •

FRONT STREET BOOKS

THURSDAY, August 10, @ 6 pm
local author
JJ Rusz

Now there are 4!
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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.

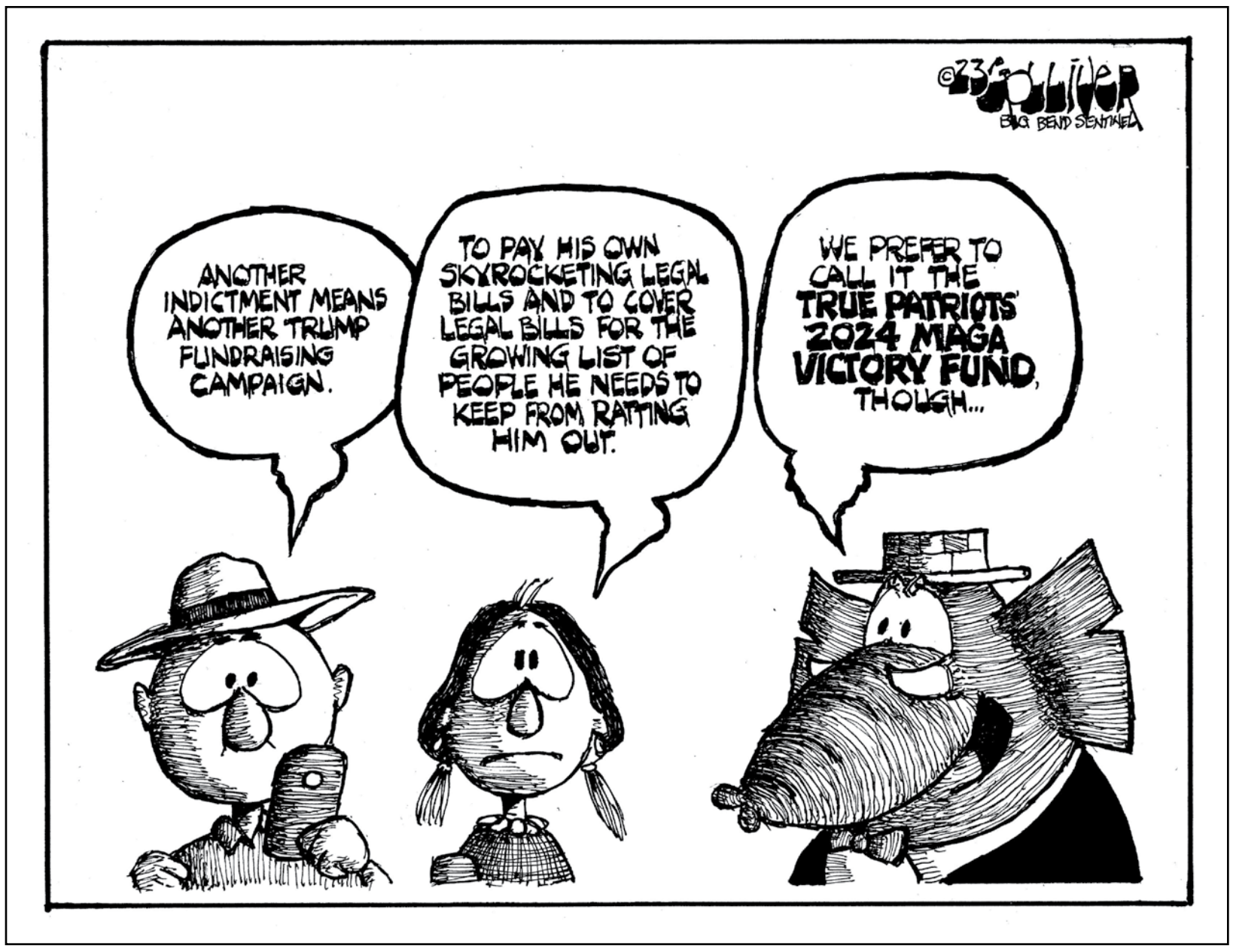
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JUDD

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER



Dear Editor,

Being a teacher at Marfa High School is the most fun and fulfilling job I've ever had. I laugh every day, and I am surrounded by colleagues who truly go above and beyond for the students we work with. Our small staff works hard to give students a great school experience, through extracurriculars and competitions, through a culture of caring fostered by small classes and our tightly knit community. We offer theater and robotics classes, teachers sacrifice weekends to pile kids in the Suburban to compete across Texas in golf or track, to travel to science fairs and the Visual Art Scholastic Event.

I know that I couldn't do my job as well in another school: MISD has given me a lot of freedom to develop the art, journalism, and yearbook classes into what I envision. My students are granted enormous journalistic freedom to report on happenings at MISD, and the administration has always been happy to grant walking field trip requests for my art students to see shows and artist studios around town, even at short notice. Moreover, the small class sizes and overwhelming support from staff makes teaching mostly fun and always rewarding. I have friends and colleagues who have worked in larger school districts and the overwhelming consensus is that kids from Marfa are uniquely kind and polite to each other and even to their teachers.

Being a teacher is undoubtedly hard, and harder when there's turnover or upheaval, as students and staff benefit from consistency. Marfa's recent hiring of very long-term staff to fill open positions, I think, shows that the board is aware of this. Since I moved to Marfa, in 2015, there have been five high school principals. The hiring of someone who has worked for the district for more than 10 years shows the board is looking to reestablish that consistency. And, while there are things that need to be fixed, like pay and housing availability, like burnout and teacher retention, my experience as a teacher at Marfa has been so warm and positive. Although I see the necessity in reporting on the school and its issues, last week's article felt unbalanced in its interviews and seemed to shoehorn in the disturbing allegations against Sonya Murillo with little nuance about what the school's role can and should be in such a delicate, sensitive time.

I look forward to reading more about the school district in the paper, and to seeing my students' journalism articles appear again once the school year starts.

Adele Powers
Art, Journalism & Yearbook Teacher at Marfa High

• • •

Dear Editor,

I read the MISD article in your July 27, 2023, issue and was "shocked"!

It seems the leadership is paralyzed by the total lack of effective communication. I've been in business for over 40 years, and the one thing that has always been a problem is "effective communication." This problem is also involved in daily life within a family environment.

MISD needs to get a grip, or consolidate with another school district in the best interest of the students!

Richard L. Stone
Austin
Long time BBS subscriber

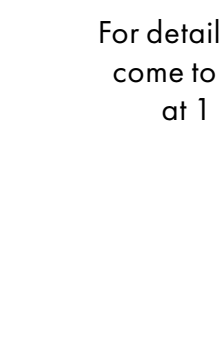
We want to hear from YOU!

- Letters to the editor should be sent to editor@bigbendsentinel.com, and must provide the writer's full name, city of residence and an email or phone number, so that we may follow up and verify information as needed.
- Your letters may be edited for clarity and brevity. While opinions of all kinds are welcome, when it comes to claims of fact, we strive to only publish what is verifiable.
- We have limited staff capacity to fact check unsubstantiated claims, so letters that include those may be held or remain unpublished if information is not easily verifiable.
- We may reach out to ask questions and verify the identity of the sender. We do not run letters anonymously unless the sender is privately identified and has a reasonable claim to anonymity.
- We reserve the right to hold or refrain from publishing a letter for any reason and we thank you for always sharing your letters with us.

- ***The Big Bend Sentinel Editorial Staff***

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chinati.org

Community

Selena tribute helps Presidio kick off its first year of Viva Big Bend

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — On Friday, Presidio celebrated an important milestone: its first year participating in Viva Big Bend, an annual music festival that draws big crowds to local venues. Local rock outfit Zauna started off the show, and veteran Viva act Bidi Bidi Banda, the original Selena tribute band, provided the soundtrack for the rest of the night.

Bidi Bidi Banda lead singer Stephanie Bergara said though her band travels around the country, they still felt the Presidio show was special. "We're always going to places we've never been before, but we felt very much at home," she said. "We were setting up the stage, and we could see Mexico in the distance. How cool is that?"

The band is the original Selena tribute in the state of Texas. They call themselves an "all-star" collective, but they've earned the title — all of the band's members have extensive experience playing Tejano music and perform in other acts besides their Selena-centric performances.

Still, they felt pressure to give the Presidio crowd an extra-special performance. "We really pride ourselves on being a tribute band from Texas and understanding that music in a different way," she said. "But it takes a really special kind of performer to be embraced by the folks way out west. For lack of better words, you can't fake the funk in West Texas."

For Bergara, performing Selena's music in front of crowds like the one in Presidio was an especially powerful experience. "She was the first person I saw on television who looked like she could be related to me," she said. "I'm only 37 years old — it's strange to think that it wasn't that long ago."

Selena was Bergara's idol growing up, and she was only eight years old when Selena was murdered by the president of her fan club, Yolanda Saldívar, in 1995. Bergara felt that these tragic events were overshadowed by all the massive changes the country faced in the new millennium — leaving only the singer's most die-hard fans to carry on her legacy. "I feel like it got hidden in history," she said.

As a result, she has deeply-held beliefs about how to honor the singer, who was only 24 when she passed away — leaving a lot of questions about how she would have carried on her career and grown as an artist.

Bergara feels that her job is to interpret the music, not to imitate Selena and freeze her in time. Unlike many other tribute acts, she doesn't dress in the singer's iconic outfits — no purple bodysuit, no bejeweled bustiers. "I only ever wanted to make the music, and I feel like that's what she would have wanted," Bergara said. "She would have wanted young Latina women to make their own way."

As a collective, Bidi Bidi Banda is crossing their fingers for an opportunity to return to Viva Big Bend next year. It's all a part of their greater mission to share the singer's singular music catalog and her fierce independent spirit with the world. "She was a person who impacted my universe," Bergara said. "Selena was so special, and she was part of a moment in time where Tejano music was the center of everything."



Photo by Hannah Gentiles

Stephanie Bergera & Rocky Reyna of Selena tribute band Bidi Bidi Banda perform at Daly Park in Presidio during Viva Big Bend.

Big Bend Reproductive Coalition launches community needs assessment

BIG BEND REGION — The Big Bend Reproductive Coalition is launching a community needs assessment to learn what the community wants and needs in regards to reproductive healthcare.

The community needs assessment will take place over the course of four months and will include a series of community town halls, anonymous surveys, and door-to-door canvassing across the region. Big Bend Reproductive Coalition hopes to learn about potential service gaps and what types of services and educational opportunities women and people that can get pregnant would like access to, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, funding, workshops, community events, and more. This information will help inform BBRC's services and strategy to best serve the community.

The coalition is currently seeking volunteers. Those interested are encouraged to reach out to morganneBconsulting@gmail.com.

The first town hall will take place on Monday, August 7, 2023 at 7 p.m. at Cedar Coffee and Supply in Alpine. Future town halls are being planned for Marfa, Fort Davis, Terlingua and Presidio. The town halls are free and open to all. There will be Spanish language translation available at each event.

For more information about the Big Bend Reproductive Coalition, visit www.bigbendrc.org.

Jeff Davis County Food Pantry announces fundraiser benefit hike

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County is excited to announce the return of the "Mount Livermore Hunger Challenge" on October 7, 2023.

The 2023 Mount Livermore Hunger Challenge is a fundraiser benefiting the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County. The hike up Mount Livermore, limited to 30 participants, will take place on October 7, 2023.

The Hunger Challenge provides a unique opportunity to gain access to the iconic Mount Livermore via Davis Mountains Preserve, which is managed by The Nature Conservancy. The event will offer a guided hike to the top of Mount Livermore, the highest peak in Jeff Davis County. For those not up for a climb to the summit, participants can also raise money for the food pantry by participating in one of the guided nature hikes.

The food pantry currently feeds approximately one-third of the residents of Jeff Davis County. Income guidelines to qualify for food pantry services are based on 185% of the federal poverty guidelines. Executive Director Vicki Gibson said, "We understand the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables to our clients' health. As such, we are one of only a handful of food pantries in Texas that purchase fresh produce from a wholesale grocer to offer our clients for free. Fresh produce makes up a significant portion of our budget, which is one reason for this fundraiser."

Gibson also referred to the fact that Jeff Davis County ranks #14 out of 254 counties in Texas for child food insecurity, with more than 57% of children in Jeff Davis County living in poverty. To address the issue of child food insecurity, the food pantry offers a pack-a-lunch program providing brown bag lunch ingredients to school-age food pantry clients, and a Kids Pantry at the Jeff Davis County Library open to any child regardless of income with no application required.

The Mount Livermore Hunger Challenge is the food pantry's first in-person fundraiser since COVID hit in 2020. The food pantry is looking for participants, event sponsors and volunteers to make this event successful. Anyone interested in participating can visit the food pantry website for more information. www.foodpantry-jdc.org/hunger-challenge-hike

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

FRI, AUG 4: 3rd Annual Coach Pancho Martinez Memorial Volleyball Scrimmage in Marfa, first game at 9:05am
SAT, AUG 5: Volleyball Scrimmage in Alpine, start time 8:00am

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.

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

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PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER

Universal Crossword

Edited by Adrian Johnson July 31, 2023

ACROSS
1 Mac rivals
4 Docs for tabbies
8 Lighthearted growl
12 "___! Humbug!"
13 However, in a text
14 Sign of a leader, supposedly?
16 The plumber's client wanted to add more spigots to the tub, which could only be seen as ...
19 Prepare to play, as a violin
20 "Go, team!"
21 Superfruit from a palm
23 Farm storage site
24 The client also demanded a change to their Jacuzzi's ...
27 Quaintly stylish
28 Cry of delight
29 Grunt heard on "Talk Like a Pirate Day"
30 Sgt., for one
31 Part of a dues-paying workplace
34 Soft-feathered duck
36 The plumber tried to contain his costs by setting a ...
39 Cheesy chip
42 Having ancient Germanic qualities
46 Alias letters
47 NYC airport code
50 Core muscles
51 Environmental prefix
52 Due to the stress, the plumber began losing sleep and having ...
55 Pop star Stefani
56 Home of Iowa State
57 Monopoly quartet: Abbr.
58 Not spicy
59 The client also demanded the most expensive countertops in a fit of ...
64 NBA great Shaquille
65 Get just right
66 Service charge
67 Brooklyn hoopsters
68 Abbr. after a list
69 Enjoy a meal

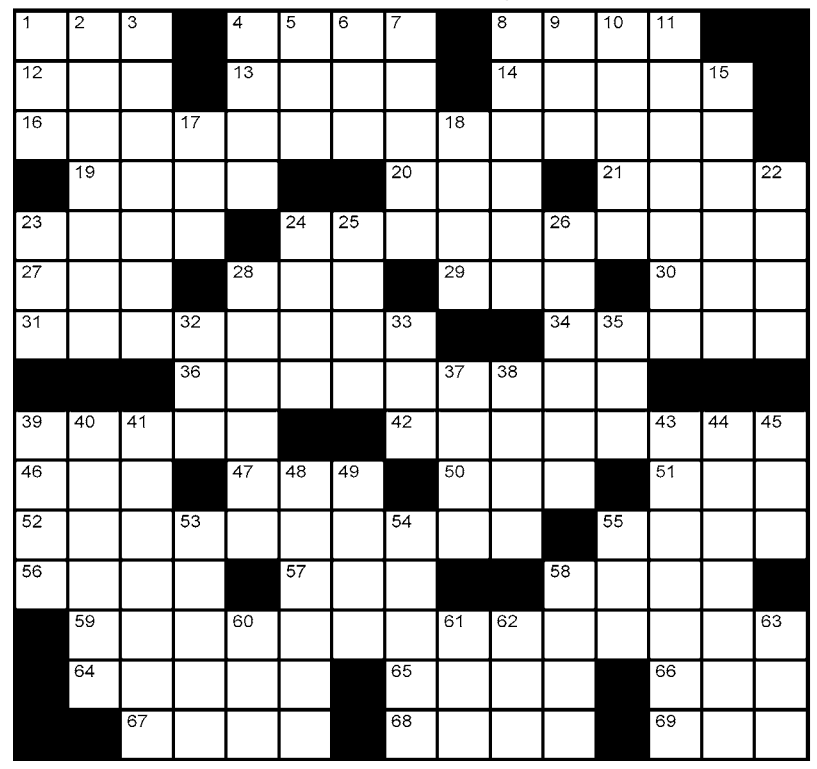
DOWN
1 "American Masters" network
2 Photo clarifier
3 "Is this a good idea?"
4 Election season entreaty
5 Sci-fi figures
6 Boatload
7 Concise
8 More impulsive
9 "___ you sure?"
10 Be victorious in
11 Take back
15 Spirited meeting?
17 Game with Reverse cards
18 Voyager program's org.
22 Composer Stravinsky
23 Mustangs' sch.
24 "___ Rabbit" (2019 Taika Waititi film)
25 DIYer's site
26 Rewards for heeling, say
28 In phone limbo
32 ___Kosh B'Gosh
33 Poker stake
35 Wall St. opening
37 500 sheets
38 Little bears
39 California wine valley
40 With hands on hips
41 Massachusetts peninsula
43 Second chance
44 Summertime brew
45 Trick
48 Vowelless 2022 Lizzo song title
49 Dynamic start?
53 ___ Lauder
54 Collectively
55 Rummy player's declaration
58 Shopper's venue
60 Deerstalker, e.g.
61 Yoga pad
62 By way of
63 "That said ..."

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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7/31 The Plumber's Lament *by Geoff Brown*



DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Juan Bautista
"View From Table"

Texas Broadband Development Office seeks community feedback through meetings and survey for Digital Opportunity Plan

FAR WEST TEXAS — The Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) is asking the public to attend a meeting regarding internet accessibility, affordability and usage. The BDO, administered by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, will accept feedback from this meeting to help develop the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan, which is required to draw down federal funding for connecting Texans to reliable, high-speed internet. The BDO expects to complete the plan this fall.

The BDO will be hosting two meetings in the Upper Rio Grande Region in August. The first meeting will be held on Monday, August 7, from 5 to 7 p.m. Mountain time, at the El Paso Community Foundation Room, 333 N. Oregon Street, El Paso.

The public is encouraged to register for the El Paso public meeting at https://bit.ly/3DmG7MS.

"This is important for all of us in El Paso to have our voices heard," said Eric Pearson, president/CEO of the El Paso Community Foundation. "The plan will help our region tap into our share of billions of dollars."

The second meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 8, from 5 to 7 p.m. Central time, at the Alpine Civic Center, 801 West Holland Avenue, Alpine.

"Presidio and Far West Texas have always been isolated from the rest of the world," said Arian Velazquez-Ornelas, Presidio city councilwoman and mayor pro-tem. "By providing affordable broadband for education, workforce needs, healthcare access, business growth and family entertainment, we can become a better place to live for all. Our voices can be heard by participating in these meetings and by completing the surveys to have our needs met. 'Juntos Podemos con Todo!'"

The public is encouraged to register for the Alpine public meeting at https://bit.ly/3rF8bIp.

The BDO is also asking the public to complete the Texas Digital Opportunity Public Survey to help inform the construction of a Digital Opportunity Plan. The survey takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete and can be found at qrco.de/txpublicsurvey.

La Oficina de Desarrollo de Banda Ancha de Texas busca comentarios de la comunidad a través de reuniones y encuestas para el Plan de Oportunidad Digital

LEJANO OESTE DE TEXAS - La Texas Broadband Development Office [Oficina de Desarrollo de la Banda Ancha de Texas], o BDO, invita al público a asistir a una reunión sobre la accesibilidad, asequibilidad y uso de Internet. La BDO, administrada por el Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts [Interventor de Cuentas Públicas de Texas], aceptará los comentarios de esta reunión para ayudar a desarrollar el Plan de Oportunidades Digitales de Texas, que es necesario para obtener fondos federales para conectar a los tejanos a una Internet fiable y de alta velocidad. La BDO espera completar el plan este otoño.

La BDO celebrará en agosto dos reuniones en la región del Alto Río Grande. La primera tendrá lugar el lunes, 7 de agosto, de 5 a 7 de la tarde (hora de la montaña), en la sala de la Fundación Comunitaria de El Paso (El Paso Community Foundation Room), 333 N. Oregon Street, El Paso.

Se anima al público a inscribirse en la reunión pública de El Paso en https://bit.ly/3DmG7MS

"Es importante que todos los habitantes de El Paso hagamos oír nuestra voz", declaró Eric Pearson, presidente y director general de la Fundación Comunitaria de El Paso. "El plan ayudará a nuestra región a aprovechar la parte que nos toca de los miles de millones de dólares".

La segunda reunión se celebrará el martes, 8 de agosto, de 5 a 7 de la tarde, hora central, en el Centro Cívico de Alpine, 801 West Holland Avenue, Alpine.

"Presidio y el Lejano Oeste de Texas siempre han estado aislados del resto del mundo", dijo Arian Velázquez-Ornelas, concejala de Presidio y alcaldesa provisional. "Al proporcionar banda ancha asequible para la educación, las necesidades de mano de obra, el acceso a la atención médica, el crecimiento empresarial y el entretenimiento familiar podemos convertirnos en un mejor lugar para vivir para todos. Nuestras voces pueden ser escuchadas participando en estas reuniones y completando las encuestas para que nuestras necesidades sean satisfechas. ¡Juntos podemos con todo!".

Se anima al público a inscribirse en la reunión pública de Alpine en https://bit.ly/3rF8bIp.

Se alienta al público a registrarse para la reunión pública alpina en https://bit.ly/3rF8bIp.

El BDO también está pidiendo al público que complete la Encuesta pública de oportunidades digitales de Texas para ayudar a informar la construcción de un Plan de oportunidades digitales. La encuesta tarda de 10 a 15 minutos en completarse y se puede encontrar en qrco.de/txpublicsurvey.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thu Aug 3

Alpine Cowboys Playoff Game
7:00pm at Kokernot Field, 400 Loop Road in Alpine
Alpine Cowboys take on the Trinidad Triggers in the first round of the Pecos League playoffs. For latest info on the playoff schedule, visit alpine.pecosleague.com

Fri Aug 4

Free Entrance to Fort Davis NHS
8:00am - 5:00pm at Fort Davis National Historic Site in Fort Davis
The date celebrates the anniversary of the Great American Outdoor Act - free entrance to the park!

A Conversation with Artist Miguel Valverde at glitch
6:00pm at glitch marfa, 108 E El Paso Street in Marfa
Join us to celebrate the arrival of Miguel's illuminated "Latido de Luz" peice to its permanent home in Marfa. A viewing will take place after the talk at Otherside (restaurant behind the gallery.) Enjoy free drinks and pizza by Big Buddha Bakery. All are welcome!

Presidio's 8th Annual Dark Skies Music Series: A Few 2 Many
7:00pm - 9:00pm at the American Legion in Presidio
Live music and food! Vendors every Friday in August. Free and open to the public!

Sat Aug 5

Fiesta 1888 featuring Augustin Ramirez
11:00am on Historic Murphy Street in Alpine
Come celebrate Alpine's Fiesta 1888: Fiesta Musical! This free concert and street festival on historic Murphy Street celebrates Alpine's history. Enjoy music from Grammy Award-winning Tejano Legend Augustin Ramirez! Puro Party All Starz starts at 8pm.

Summer Closing at MAINTENANT
6:00pm - 9:00am at 1900 Rabbits Rd in Marfa
With artists TJ Tambellini, Rob Mazurek, Natalie Melendez, Randy Sanchez, Diana Simard, Matt Scobey & Special Guest: Philippe Tourriol. More info on IG @MaintenantMarfa

Sun Aug 6

Free School Supplies & Ice Cream Social
12:00pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 101 E Washington Street in Marfa
Families are invited to come pick up brand-new backpacks with plenty of school supplies. Ice cream treats will also be available! Everyone is welcome. For info on donating, visit www.stpaulsmarfa.org.

Mon Aug 7

Big Bend Reproductive Coalition Town Hall Discussion
7:00pm at Cedar Coffee & Supply, 103 N 4th Street in Alpine
Share your thoughts about reproductive health needs in the Big Bend Area! BBRC is a practical care organization that privides support to women and people who get pregnant in our region. We want to hear you thoughts about our region's needs!

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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

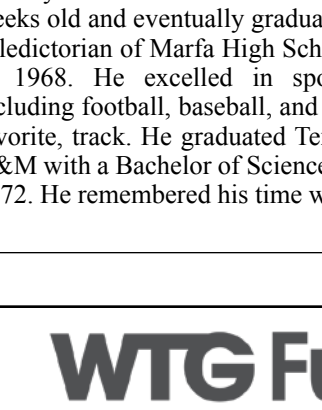
The Alpine Farmers Market
Saturday at 9:00am on historic Murphy Street in Alpine

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

OBITUARY



Shurley

Michael Bryant Shurley died on July 30, 2023, at the age of 73. He was surrounded by his beloved family in his home near Marfa, Texas. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Suzanne Parker Shurley, and his children: Katheryn Shurley, Bryant Shurley married to Christal Shurley, Emily Carter married to Josh Carter, and Ben Shurley. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Grant Shurley, Kherington Shurley, Brooklyn Shurley and Luke Carter; and his two sisters, Rachael Nixon and Patricia Shurley.

He was born February 13, 1950, in San Angelo, Texas, to Billy and Jane Shurley. He moved to Marfa at three weeks old and eventually graduated valedictorian of Marfa High School in 1968. He excelled in sports including football, baseball, and his favorite, track. He graduated Texas A&M with a Bachelor of Science in 1972. He remembered his time with the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets fondly and often told outlandish tall tales about his lifelong brothers in Squadron 11. He worked for IMCO Services, a division of Halliburton, in Farmington, New Mexico, and then worked abroad in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile. He was fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and loved any opportunity to speak them, even if no one else in the room did. He and Suzanne married in League City in 1975. They returned to the states in 1984 where he was self-employed. He was known to enjoy many different jobs and was always looking for new opportunities to learn and grow his knowledge as a jack-of-all-trades. Many referred to him as a Renaissance man.

He retired to the Shurley Ranch in May, 2014, where he knew every rock and cactus on the property. He had immense pride for the ranch, and welcomed anyone to come visit so he could show them around. He was a student of history and loved most to study the Bible. He spent 20 years studying the Bible with the late Larry Venné and Kent Gardner, where amazing knowledge was opened up to them. He will be remembered as a loving and funny husband, father and man of God.

He will be laid to rest on The Shurley Ranch, outside of Marfa, Texas, on August 5, 2023, at 11 a.m. All who would like to are welcome to attend.

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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.

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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.

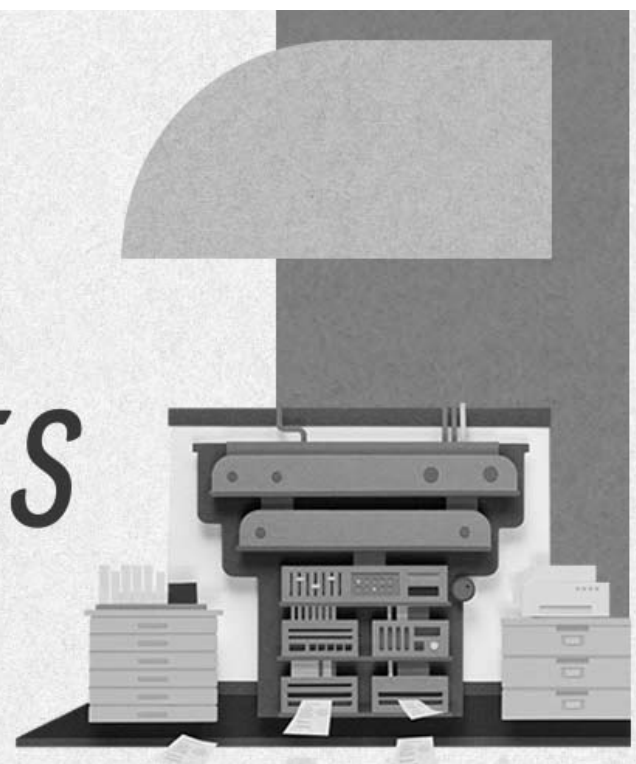


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PUBLIC NOTICES

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.

PUBLIC AUCTION

HUDSPETH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

8/12/23 10:00AM

@HUDSPETH COUNTY BARN

525 N. WILSON SIERRA BLANCA TX 79851

NO ITEMS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER 4 P.M. ON THURSDAY 8/10/23. ALL ITEMS TO BE SOLD IN THE AUCTION MUST BE IN PLACE BY 5 P.M. ON THURSDAY 8/10/23

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Presidio Mayor John Ferguson:
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Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us

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Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
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Judge Curtis Evans: *(432) 426-3968*

FEDERAL:
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(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)

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

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