

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

Impacts unclear as Marfa ISD adopts controversial, state-mandated school library policy

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Marfa ISD School Board members voted to approve a new school library policy this week relating to HB 900, a controversial bill signed into law this past legislative session aimed at preventing “sexually explicit” materials from entering Texas’ public school libraries and requiring parental consent for any “sexually relevant” materials.

The Big Bend Sentinel was unable to obtain a copy of the new library policy that school board members approved, leaving it unclear if any immediate changes will be made to how the school library operates.

The enforcement of the READER — Restricting Explicit and Adult Designated Educational Resources — act has been the subject of an ongoing lawsuit between several booksellers and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Booksellers sued over the bill’s requirement that they rate books for sexual content before selling them to schools, claiming the law was vague, impossible to enforce and could harm business.

On January 17, 2024, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the TEA cannot enforce the rating system for booksellers, siding with the sellers’ claims HB 900 violates their First Amendment rights, meaning that part of the law is effectively moot. What local districts across the state are now required to comply with is the remaining part of the law involving school libraries’ collection development policies and parental consent.

While Alpine and Fort Davis ISDs await a policy update from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) coming this summer to review the issue, Marfa ISD proceeded with adopting its policy — called “EFB local library materials” — this week.

Alpine ISD Superintendent Michelle Rinehart said she is anticipating the EFB local library materials policy being one of 10-12 policy updates TASB will present to school boards this summer. She said smaller districts without legal departments rely on TASB’s guidance when adopting new policies in order to stay in compliance, as the entity stays abreast of legislation and ongoing court cases.

“They’ll do a lot of the legwork of understanding what the Legislature means — working on how to

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE

NEWS P. 1 - 4

OPINION P. 5

COMMUNITY P. 6 - 9

CLASSIFIEDS P. 10

The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Photo by Hannah Gentiles

Blair Park (third from left) at a campaign event held at the Presidio Stockyards in January. On Tuesday night, Park was elected as the new Presidio County attorney and will take over for incumbent Rod Ponton in 2025.

Park beats Ponton by more than 2-to-1 margin in county attorney race

Presidio commissioner races head to runoffs, Arevalo wins tax office post

By ROB D’AMICO
rob@bigbendsentinel.com

Last week, County Attorney Rod Ponton began running ads on Ojinaga radio in Spanish proclaiming “No más Marfa” (“No more Marfa”) — perhaps as a response to his challenger, Marfa attorney Blair Park, who had been running a stream of Spanish ads there outlining her family’s history in the area and her desire to help the citizens of Presidio County. Reinforcing the idea that there is a division between Presidio and Marfa didn’t significantly help Ponton in the end, however, as he lost to Park 1,061-465 in Tuesday’s Democratic Primary election.

No Republicans ran in the primary for any county race, so Park will take the seat beginning in

January 2025. “Thank you Presidio County, and I’m honored to become your county attorney,” Park said after the election. She stressed that her primary goal will be “uniting different areas of the county” and not having any bias to anyone or area in the county.

When the early vote tally was announced at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Park had a commanding lead of 808 to 395. Only a smattering of voters hit the polls on election day, so her supporters instantly knew Ponton couldn’t make a comeback. Ponton did not return a request for comment.

The differences in county commissioner vote totals weren’t as stark. The push for county unity was especially pertinent to the Precinct 1 race that includes parts of Presidio and Marfa. Samuel Sanchez, who campaigned together with Park,

came in first with 41% of the vote, with Deirdre Hisler 10 points behind at 31%. The two will head to a runoff on May 28. Ruben Armendariz placed third with 28% of the vote.

“It was a great election, and we made a lot of good friends along the way,” Sanchez said. The Presidio resident and business owner also said he was behind county unity. “We wanted to get everybody together, no matter where they were from and unite everyone on one big team.”

Hisler said she thinks that most of the attention in this primary was on the Park-Ponton battle, so she’s hoping voters can do a “reset” and think about who will make the best county commissioner. “I have a big mountain to climb,” she said, citing her own relative lack of

(Continued on page 2)

Franklin Graham’s ‘God Loves You’ tour makes a stop in Presidio

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last Saturday afternoon, the world-famous evangelist Franklin Graham visited Presidio on the sixth leg of his “God Loves You” tour, following the U.S.-Mexico border from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Coast. Presidio was by far the smallest city along the route, which started in Brownsville on February 24 and will wrap up in Chula Vista, California, on Saturday.

Around 300 people attended the late afternoon service; one volunteer said they had given out over 500 packages of devotionals, magazines and donation forms throughout the day.

The Presidio show came hot on the heels of stops in Eagle Pass and Del Rio, which have seen their own influx of celebrities in recent months: Gov.

Greg Abbott, former President Donald Trump, tech scion Elon Musk. The two sleepy border towns have become a political battleground, pitting the state and federal governments against each other and sparking headlines around the world.

Despite the place and time — performing in some of the most embattled Texan border communities during a presidential primary — Graham insists that his event isn’t political. Instead, Graham says his preaching targets all who have been impacted by the militarization on the border: law enforcement, local residents, migrants and the churches caring for all of the above. To the ordinary people caught in the fray, politics is poison and Jesus is the antidote.

“People on both sides of the border are overwhelmed, they’re tired. They’re discouraged,”

he told The Big Bend Sentinel. “Ours is a spiritual message: we want people on the border to know that God has not forgotten them.”

The message is more literal in Presidio than most. From the window of Graham’s tour bus, you could see La Sierrita, the mountain where the devil came down to earth. As the story goes, when God cast Satan out of Heaven, he was sent to the Big Bend — finding Alpine too lush and green, the devil set his sights on Ojinaga, which reminded him more of hell.

Unlike Marfa, Presidio’s little sister to the north, people like Beyonce rarely stop by to pose for photos and mingle with locals. Indie country darling Zach Bryan filmed at the Presidio International Dragstrip a few months ago, but Bryan is a birthday candle compared to Graham’s

(Continued on page 3)

State, feds await Supreme Court response after judge blocks SB 4

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

AUSTIN — Last Thursday, Federal Judge David Ezra struck down SB 4, a controversial law that gives the state of Texas the power to make arrests and prosecute individuals accused of immigration-related offenses. The state swiftly filed an appeal, and on Saturday afternoon, the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a week-long stay; U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito extended the stay until Wednesday, March 13.

SB 4 was signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott in December, and it was originally set to take effect on Tuesday. The bill was a partisan flashpoint and passed both chambers of the Legislature without a single Democratic vote.

“We will not back down in our fight to protect our state — and our nation — from President Biden’s border crisis,” Abbott’s office wrote in a press release last Thursday.

Abbott’s comments cut to the heart of the controversy over SB 4, which divides the state and federal government over two very different interpretations of the Constitution. The Department of Justice argues that the law usurps the government’s power to enforce immigration law, but the state insists that the Biden administration has failed to enforce these laws, resulting in an “invasion” that the Constitution allows states to combat “without the consent of Congress.”

During oral arguments, Ezra expressed sympathy for the state of Texas, which has seen a large jump in migrant apprehensions since the

pandemic — but ultimately sided with the federal government, writing that the law is “antithetical to the Constitution” and “conflicts with key provisions of federal immigration law, to the detriment of the United States’ foreign relations and treaty obligations.”

Like clockwork, the law triggered a negative response from the Mexican government almost immediately after it was passed. “Mexico also expresses its concern regarding the package of legislative measures that will affect the human rights of the more than 10 million people of Mexican origin residing in Texas, by fostering hostile environments that may lead to hate acts or crimes against migrant communities,” the Office of the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretary of Foreign Relations) wrote in a press

(Continued on page 2)

Gaza ceasefire resolution hits a wall with Marfa City Council despite impassioned pleas from advocates

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — The Casner Room at City Hall was packed on Thursday night as 60-plus local citizens gathered to voice their support for a Gaza ceasefire resolution. Without enough seats to accommodate the crowd, supporters sat on the floor, wearing lime green “Marfa for ceasefire” stickers.

Organizers approached City Council officials with the ceasefire resolution in February, and had since gathered 505 signatures in support of the proclamation council members had on their council meeting agenda to discuss.

Kate Sterchi was the first of 10 citizens to address council members during public comment, stating the signatures — which organizers said were collected from a variety of individuals in town — were an expression of the impact a small town can have on a worldwide issue. She said passing the resolution would allow for “a record of our collective voice to be made.”

“Calling for a ceasefire from a small town within the Chihuahuan Desert is a local humanitarian gesture, but where else can we start but from where we are positioned within the world and with each other?” Sterchi said.

Other speakers, including local teacher Benjamin Pineda, said they took issue with their tax dollars being used to help fund the war, which was causing devastating, mass-scale death and destruction. Dr. Christie Alexander said she read a recent New York Times article that reported an estimated 30,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war began, likely an undercount.

The ceasefire resolution also acknowledged the deaths of 1,200 Israelis in the attack by Hamas and the ensuing war in Gaza in its call for a permanent ceasefire to “prevent further loss of life.”

“That is more than Alpine, Marfa, Van Horn, Presidio — wiped off the map. That’s not okay,” Alexander said. “This is not a resolution for foreign policy. It is a position statement saying we want ceasefire. That’s it. What side will you be on?”

Patrick Manian said his wife, who is from Lebanon, which is also being targeted by Israel, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder from bombings she experienced while living in the Middle East, and he didn’t understand why anyone would hesitate to support the ceasefire, arguing it was a meaningful action for local government.

“Imagine someone just randomly sending off a bomb 300 feet away and you didn’t know when the next one was coming,” Manian said. “This is what people are living through every day right now.”

Several speakers said they were not asking City Council members to act as foreign policy experts but to simply consider what they argued — the widespread support for the ceasefire locally.

The resolution presented to council reads, in part, “Whereas, the City of Marfa recognizes the importance of small cities and towns having their voices heard, and that while

(Continued on page 2)

Franklin Graham

(Continued from page 1)

Olympic torch.

In a town where the largest gatherings in recent memory include a UFO festival and the crowning of an Onion Queen, Graham is the closest thing to a rock star Presidians have seen this side of the river in a long time.

Between dual CEO roles at Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, founded by his father, and Samaritan’s Purse, a worldwide relief ministry, Graham nets around \$1 million a year. But his star power drives donations: his website estimates that he’s preached to over 570,000 people since he began regularly touring the country in 2016.

The giant screens encouraged those who had been saved to text a hotline; a message in Spanish revealed that God also uses Whatsapp.

If Graham is a rock star, “God Loves You” is his borderlands Burning Man. In a matter of hours, a team of forklifts and death-defying audio techs transformed the small-town high school stadium into a state-of-the-art sound stage, with speakers stacked two stories high and jumbotron screens perched strategically for all to see.

For the most part, the service stayed true to its apolitical roots. In contrast with recent Republican messaging on the influx of migrants on the border — “ground zero” for an invasion of criminals from a “failed narcostate” incapable of policing itself — not a single critical word was spoken of immigrants or of the United States’ southern neighbor.

Leading the congregation in songs that flipped between English and Spanish, musician Marcos Witt insisted that the bilingual service was a rehearsal for the afterlife. “God loves Mexico,” he said. “We’ll sing in Spanish in Heaven.”

Graham’s off-stage relationship with politics is more complex. His father, Billy Graham — arguably the most influential evangelical Christian of all time

— counseled every American president from Harry Truman to Barack Obama.

The elder Graham was a staunch proponent of the Civil Rights movement and a supporter of Martin Luther King Jr. “Evangelicals can't be closely identified with any particular party or person,” Graham declared in 1981. “We have to stand in the middle, to preach to all the people, right and left.”

Of course, the reality was more complex: Graham was fervently anti-communist and opposed the candidacy of John F. Kennedy on the grounds that he was Catholic. He had particularly knotty relationships with Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan that made some observers question his impartiality. “I haven't been faithful to my own advice in the past ... I will in the future,” he said.

His son has struggled to walk the same line. In the 2016 and 2020 elections, the younger Graham stumped for Trump. He announced last year that he would not endorse Trump in the 2024 primaries — but showed support in other ways, expressing displeasure when E. Jean Carroll, who accused the former president of sexually assaulting her, won an \$83.3 million settlement. “Simply put, Democrats are using the system & changing the law,” he tweeted.

On immigration, Graham’s views hit a few Republican talking points — chief among them, that federal immigration authorities are being hamstrung by an ineffective Biden administration. But his rhetoric lacks some of the racial dog whistles employed by the more extreme end of the bell curve. “Some people think everybody coming across is a bad person,” he told The Sentinel. “I don’t blame the people coming in. But [smugglers] take advantage of them and steal their money, and you hear these horrible stories, especially of things that have happened to women.”

Graham does not want to see the border shut down. He doesn’t want people to give up their languages and culture. He’d also like to see the economy bolstered by an easier and more efficient guest-worker program.

In 2019, Samaritan’s Purse — the relief nonprofit he leads — toured Texas along the Rio Grande, connecting asylum seekers with temporary housing and passing out hygiene kits and diapers. “People don't understand the border — so I'm gonna shed a little light and try to share God's love with as many people as I can,” he said.

To a secular audience, Graham’s messaging might seem wildly political. In the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association’s magazine, Decision — passed out by volunteers in green and blue vests at the event — the issues fall squarely on the right-hand side of the aisle. The magazine features a Q&A with former Vice President Mike Pence and makes a point to condemn anti-Zionism and “woke culture.” Another article



Photo by Hannah Gentiles for The Big Bend Sentinel

Those attending Franklin Graham’s “God Loves You Frontera Tour,” held at the Manuel O. Hernandez Memorial Stadium in Presidio on Saturday, sat on the football field for the event, which included musical guests and a sermon by Franklin Graham, seen on the stage here.

praises teachers fired for refusing to use students’ preferred gender pronouns and suggests conversion therapy might reduce the rate of suicide among LGBTQ people.

During his sermon, Graham addressed gender and sexuality more simply and explicitly. The message boomed from the speakers so loud that the sound seemed to echo between the Sierrita and the Sandhills — no one in town could avoid the message. “God made sex,” he reminded the crowd. “But sex has to be used the way God intended: in a marriage relationship between a man and a woman.”

Regardless of political bent, there is no fire and brimstone. Graham’s ultimate message is that anyone who turns their life over to Jesus can be forgiven for even the most serious spiritual offenses. “I’m sure that some of you out there tonight have had an abortion, and it’s bothered you every day since,” he said. “God will forgive you tonight. He’ll take that guilt, he’ll take that shame and he’ll set you free.”

At the end of the sermon, Graham invited anyone

seeking salvation to come forward and receive a blessing of absolution. Nearly half the audience approached the stage, the sinners ranging in age from those wheeled in strollers to those bent over walkers. Some wept, some knelt, some raised their hands to the sky. The collective feeling of relief was palpable, coinciding with a sunset that broke the heat of an unseasonably warm afternoon.

When the prayer was over, Graham left the stage and the musicians returned, playing upbeat music to temper the heaviness. Attendees danced it all off, drones whizzing overhead and cameras flashing in the background. The giant screens encouraged those who had been saved to text a hotline; a message in Spanish revealed that God also uses Whatsapp.

Throughout the event, he told the audience that God loves Presidio — and so does he, ever since he first rode through the Big Bend on a motorcycle five years ago. “There’s something about the beauty of the desert along with the mountains,” he told The Sentinel. “What I like about the border here is that it doesn't have fences and barbed wire — It’s like what it used to be.”

Library policy

(Continued from page 1)

translate that into the language of effective policy — that’s one of the reasons that we contract with them,” Rinehart said.

Marfa ISD Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez told school board members in a meeting on February 19, when the library policy was first considered, that they could wait to adopt it along with the other TASB updates. In a meeting Monday, he explained again it would be a part of their routine, upcoming legal updates, but several board members were under the impression the policy needed to be adopted now, and it was put up for a vote and passed.

All districts will eventually be required to adopt a new local library policy. What is unclear is exactly how the broad, new rules about excluding “sexually relevant” material from collections will be enforced locally at a time when Texas leads the nation in book bans, and books often targeted by bans include texts on LGBTQ+ experiences, sexuality and health.

Shirley Robinson, executive director of the nonprofit Texas Library Association, said, for now, her agency is recommending school librarians stick to their existing collection development policies, which all public school districts already have in place.

She said one of the main differences under HB 900 is the standardization of collection development language. The law seeks to prevent school libraries from carrying “sexually explicit material” which it defines as any written, illustration, photographic image, video or audio

material that “describes, depicts, or portrays sexual conduct” in a way that is “patently offensive.”

“Those collection development policies and selection guidelines were more generally based on locally accepted standards and meeting those community needs,” Robinson said. “Now everyone across the state of Texas will be subject to the same, very broad collection development policies.”

Another change brought about by HB 900 is the requirement that parental consent be obtained if a student wishes to check out a book deemed “sexually relevant.” The “sexually relevant” rating would have been determined by vendors, but now that that part of the law was struck down, it is unclear who will be making those determinations, Robinson said.

“It should not be the librarian, it should not be the school board, it should not be the school administrator — because of how subjective those definitions are,” Robinson said. “It could really open up all of those entities to a lot of risk and liability and would really end up spending a lot of taxpayer dollars on frivolous lawsuits.”

Robinson said because the school library policy is vague, it opens up the floor for broad interpretations of content, and her agency is already seeing books being pulled off of shelves by self-censoring librarians and disagreements amongst districts about which books are appropriate for which students.

“I think that in trying to legislate, we’re running into really complicated scenarios where one district’s

interpretation of sexually relevant might be something that is just completely benign and not even in that category to someone in another district,” Robinson said.

Two of the Top 10 books to be challenged in 2022 included Gender Queer and Flamer, autobiographical texts about the LGBTQ experience, according to the American Library Association. While a provision of the law prohibits the removal of material based solely on the “ideas contained in the material, personal background of the author or characters in the material,” Robinson said that’s “not what’s going to happen on the ground.”

“That language exists, but in practice, in reality, it’s definitely a concern,” Robinson said.

Calls for book bans across the state have increased significantly since October 2021, said Robinson, when Texas lawmaker Matt Krause released a list of 850 books — now coined the Krause list — that he said could make students feel uncomfortable. She said efforts to remove books from school libraries are often led by small, politically-motivated groups.

Parents’ involvement with their children’s education, and what they are reading, is important and needs to continue, Robinson said. Libraries have long served as a place for readers to find materials that speak to them and help “expand their worldview,” she said, but decisions about what is acceptable for a young reader should be made on an individual basis.

“We can talk to our children and help them choose

what is right or our family’s beliefs, but we can't choose those same books for someone else’s family,” Robinson said.

Marfa ISD Librarian Crawford Marginot was not present for either of the board meetings in which the school board members discussed adopting the new library policies. In an email to *The Big Bend Sentinel*, Marginot said she and Interim Superintendent Alferez had talked about whether the district’s library included any controversial books.

She said the past couple of years Scholastic, Inc., one of the district’s book vendors that hosts book fairs, implemented an automatic pop-up message in its cash registers that halts a purchase to make sure an elementary student isn’t purchasing a book “with content more appropriate for high school students” but the feature wasn’t really needed. “My observation is that our staff quickly gets attuned to parents’ wishes about which subjects are or are not appropriate for their children,” Marginot said.

Robinson said the new, difficult-to-enforce school library policies under HB 900 only make things more complicated for public educators in the state of Texas, who already have a lot on their plates. “Their jobs are immensely more difficult now in 2024 than they were even after the pandemic started, and by legislating and mandating these kinds of requirements and trying to navigate these different new laws, we’re taking our focus off of serving the students of Texas,” Robinson said.

CORRECTIONS: A February 29 article, "Presidio County groundwater district increases monitoring efforts to better understand status of aquifers," stated new water level monitoring equipment was recently installed in 18 wells across the county. Three wells have received the equipment, with plans for 15 more to soon join the program. The monitoring equipment will take measurements every hour, as opposed to every 12 hours. We regret the errors.



COMMUNITIE
MARFA

**END OF SEASON
CLEARANCE SALE
HAPPENING NOW!**

**50% OFF SELECT:
MEN'S JACKETS
MEN'S FLANNELS
WOMEN'S DENIM**

PLUS \$95 CASHMERE SWEATERS

10% discount for locals, always!

122 N. Highland, Marfa Open every day 11am-5pm



Glasstire
{Texas visual art online}

GLASSTIRE.COM





**Judd
Foundation**

Experience Donald Judd's art as installed within his former living and working spaces in downtown Marfa. These spaces, including his libraries and studios, allow visitors to consider his ideas for the permanent installation of art in historic buildings.

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

Judd Foundation is open Tuesday through Sunday and offers two distinct guided visits. For the current schedule and to book reservations please visit juddfoundation.org/marfa.

For more information please email our office at marfa@juddfoundation.org or call 432 729 4406.

JUDD



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

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

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



**Cactus
Liquors**

FINE SPIRITS
BEER & WINE

NATIVE TREES
& PLANTS

LOCAL
PRODUCE
& WARES

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

Marfa School Board seeks new member to fill vacancy

The deadline to apply is March 22

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — The Marfa ISD School Board is seeking letters of interest from community members willing to serve on the board after the resignation of previous Board Member Ernie Villarreal.

The school board officially accepted the resignation of Villarreal on Monday and moved to solicit letters of interest to fill the empty seat. Villarreal’s seat, Place 5, is

not up for election until May 2025, meaning an appointed board member will serve around a one-year unexpired term before the seat is up for election.

The board will accept letters of interest — expressing why you would like to serve — with a deadline of 4 p.m. on Friday, March 22. Board members plan on interviewing interested candidates and filling the vacancy at their regular March 25 meeting held at 6 p.m.

Letters of interest should be submitted to the board president, Teresa Nuñez, at P.O. Box T, Marfa, TX 79843.

To be eligible, school board candidates must have resided in the state of Texas for the past 12 months and resided within Marfa ISD’s district boundaries for the past six months. Other requirements include being an eligible voter, a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, and not having been declared mentally incapacitated or convicted of a felony.

The school board is currently made up of seven members — Nuñez, Lori Flores, Stela Fuentez, Rene Gonzales, Yolanda Jurado, Ruben Martinez and Interim

Superintendent Arturo Alferez — who typically meet once a month. School board members serve three-year terms and are volunteers.

On Monday, the school board also voted to cancel the May General Election because only incumbents — Fuentez, Gonzales and Jurado — filed to keep their seats. This is the third year in a row that the school board election has been canceled due to too few candidates vying for the seats.

TxDOT 2025-2028 projects to include Chinati Mountains State Natural Area access, upgrades to area roads

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

TRI-COUNTY — Throughout January and February, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) held town halls and solicited community feedback to set priorities for projects over the next four years. The agency will tackle several projects in the Big Bend, mostly by improving existing roads to park destinations.

Most notably, the project aims to cut an access road into the Chinati Mountains State Natural Area, set to become the area’s newest publicly-accessible

wilderness experience. In 2014, Marfa Public Radio announced that 39,000 acres had been donated to Texas Parks and Wildlife in the rugged and scenic Chinati Mountains.

Over the past 10 years, little progress has been publicly announced. Opening a new park involves a lot of planning and red tape: once funding is secured, surveys need to be conducted and public input has to be solicited. “Most of the process for finalizing the public use plan, including public input, is complete,” the park’s website explains. “TPWD leadership is currently taking a final look at the plan.”

TPWD did not return a request for comment about an opening date for the *The Big Bend Sentinel*, but TxDOT’s plans indicate that one could soon be on the horizon. The agency plans to spend around \$4.5 million to construct a public entrance into the park, including paved and unpaved roadways. The project is scheduled to go up for bid in 2025.

The new Chinati park isn’t the only Big Bend destination on TxDOT’s list. A road in Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, just east of Big Bend National Park, will be paved in some places and graded in others to improve access to the river. That project is

also set to go up for bid next year and is estimated to cost around \$1.2 million.

The Lajitas end of the Big Bend Ranch State Park river corridor will also get a facelift, with around \$200,000 worth of seal coating for park roads, parking lots and campsite pullouts.

Projects outside of the parks include bridge and roadway rehabilitation in north Brewster County and along Highway 118, as well as upgrades to Highway 67 between Presidio and Marfa. To view a full presentation on all of the projects coming to the area, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFnBS2LTiA>.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex opens new office in Presidio

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last Thursday, city leaders and regional representatives toasted the opening of a new Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) office in Presidio. The agency had previously been operating out of a portable at the Presidio ISD administration complex, but the new office is just steps from City Hall. “WSB has had a presence in Presidio for many years, but we are eager to move to a location that provides more visible and better access to the area's residents,” CEO Leila Melendez wrote in a press release.

WSB is one of 28 workforce development boards in the state of Texas, serving El Paso and surrounding rural

counties. The organization runs on a blend of state and federal grants and private stakeholders to help locals find employment and develop critical skills. “Our job is to empower individuals, employers, and our community with the tools, opportunities and resources to go back for school or training and to overcome any barriers to employment,” WSB Communications Director Kandolite Carson explained.

That empowerment can take on a lot of different forms: by helping servicemembers transition to civilian jobs, finding childcare for a stressed working parent or providing funding for cash-strapped small businesses to train their employees. A partnership with Microsoft has given WSB the resources to help struggling businesses get online and connect with

the wider world. “It's a grand scale of work from individuals all the way through employers, and all of it is at no cost,” Carson said.

Childcare is a major concern for working parents in the Big Bend, where very few licensed providers operate. In collaboration with the Rio Grande Council of Governments, WSB is working on a two-pronged project to help parents and combat unemployment: offering help with training, licensing and insuring home daycare services that benefit both families and caregivers. The program will also assist daycare operators with providing nutritious food and educational resources, in the hopes of helping kids get ready for kindergarten. “It's not just babysitting — it's early childhood education and investment,”

Carson said.

The goal of the new downtown office is to make the agency’s services more accessible and visible to the general public. Carson stressed that anyone can stop by and see if WSB can help them meet their goals. “It could be anybody: it could be someone who's retired and wants to reenter the workforce, it could be a teenager who is looking for career pathways or career readiness and internship,” she said. “It could be a single parent, it could be an employer, or even an entrepreneur who's looking to create a business.”

Presidio’s new WSB location can be found at 505-B West O’Reilly Street, and is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 432-837-9800.

It's not news that the journalism business is having its challenges. We've been using diversified revenue streams to help support journalism in our community since we took over five years ago. Why stop now?

We're taking a page out of a playbook that entities large (*Seattle Times*, *Charlotte Observer*, *Miami Herald*, *Sacramento Bee*) and small (*The Belleville News-Democrat*) are using. It's called fiscal sponsorship.

It allows you, the reader, to make a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible donation to *The Big Bend Sentinel* and help support the people who bring you the news each week. You keep supporting us, and we keep supporting you.

Since 1926, this paper has been about the community. Your support, however big or small, will help us carry on the tradition and build towards a successful future for the next 100 years.



From all of us at ***The Big Bend Sentinel***, we thank you.

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

We came in peace and left in conflict. We came with hope and left despondent. We came to be heard, and instead we were met with silence. It’s shocking to me that our City Council didn’t have the courage to at least have a conversation about the ceasefire resolution that was presented at the meeting last Thursday. The council could have used the time as an opportunity to teach community members about what is and isn’t in the purview of city government, about why the council wouldn’t or couldn’t vote for the resolution as presented — but instead they chose silence.

Our City Council was voted in to represent the citizens of Marfa. There were over 500 Marfa residents who signed the petition in favor of this resolution — one of whom sits on the council — and yet not one council member spoke up and made a motion for it. With that many Marfa residents in favor of the resolution, why not speak up and make a motion? Then explain why it’s not in the city’s purview to vote for a resolution like this, if that’s the case. Making a motion would have engaged community members in conversation. Maybe it was the wording of the resolution, maybe the council is under a state mandate not to vote for resolutions like this, maybe there’s something in the fine print of the City Council’s policies and procedures that preclude voting for it.

In any case, a conversation should have been had out of respect for the 500+ people that the council represents that signed the petition in favor of the resolution. The fact that our city leaders did not have the courage to have a conversation with us was, to me, the most disappointing part of this whole process. It is a glaring example of why our world is so divided.

It’s time for our leaders to have the hard conversations, conversations that bring us together despite our differences and beliefs rather than drive us further apart. You did not have to vote for the resolution, but you did have to show the citizens — many of whom voted for you — the respect and decency of having a dialogue about something that means so much to so many. That would have made all the difference in the world. Or in this case, Marfa.

Dr. Christie Alexander
Marfa

...

Dear Editor:

Transportation services for the elderly or those without vehicles are greatly needed in our area, and the TRAX program based in Marfa has been doing an outstanding job providing those services. In spite of the mess created by the previous Big Bend Community Action Agency chief executive officer and the chief financial officer, the TRAX program has successfully continued on under the professional supervision and leadership of Tita Nunez. She never gave up, and she never stopped working to keep the TRAX program rolling.

I find it a frivolous misuse of funds for an outside consultant to be called in for six months to “help improve efficiency and reliability” of the program. What a colossal waste of money — especially considering that Tita Nunez is the epitome of efficiency and reliability. Give her the respect she deserves.

Dawn Shannon
Marfa

...

Letter to the Editor,

During the Big Bend Community Action Committee Board of Directors meeting which I remotely attended on May 12, 2023, before my unexpected and immediate termination, I asked the auditor, Shelly Ruddock, point blank, "Have I provided you with all the financial data required from the financial department for the 2019 audit?" Her reply was a firm, "Yes." However, the chief executive officer did not provide Shelly with the additional data required to complete the 2019 audit. I had repeatedly urged him to provide the requested data to the auditor for well over two years, to no avail. The reason BBCAC lost the federal contracts was because of the chief executive's failure to provide the data to the auditor in order for the 2019 audit to be completed in a timely manner and the 2020 and 2021 audits could begin.

I was terminated "without cause." For your information, the chief executive officer was expecting to resign at the board of directors meeting he was terminated during. I was expecting to become the interim chief executive officer after the existing chief executive officer resigned. I was later told by the board of directors president, Judge Portillo, that I was terminated because the board "wanted to start fresh." That made no sense to me since two of the remaining employees in the Marfa office had been working at BBCAC for several years when I was employed there. In my 55-plus years of employment, I had never been terminated by any of my numerous employers.

The accounting at BBCAC was in good order when I was unexpectedly terminated. I had been working remotely with the approval of the chief executive officer for more than a year when I was unexpectedly terminated. If the article was referring to the filing of the supporting documents for the organization's accounting, that was performed by my assistant during the period of my remote employment and was beyond my control.

Respectfully,

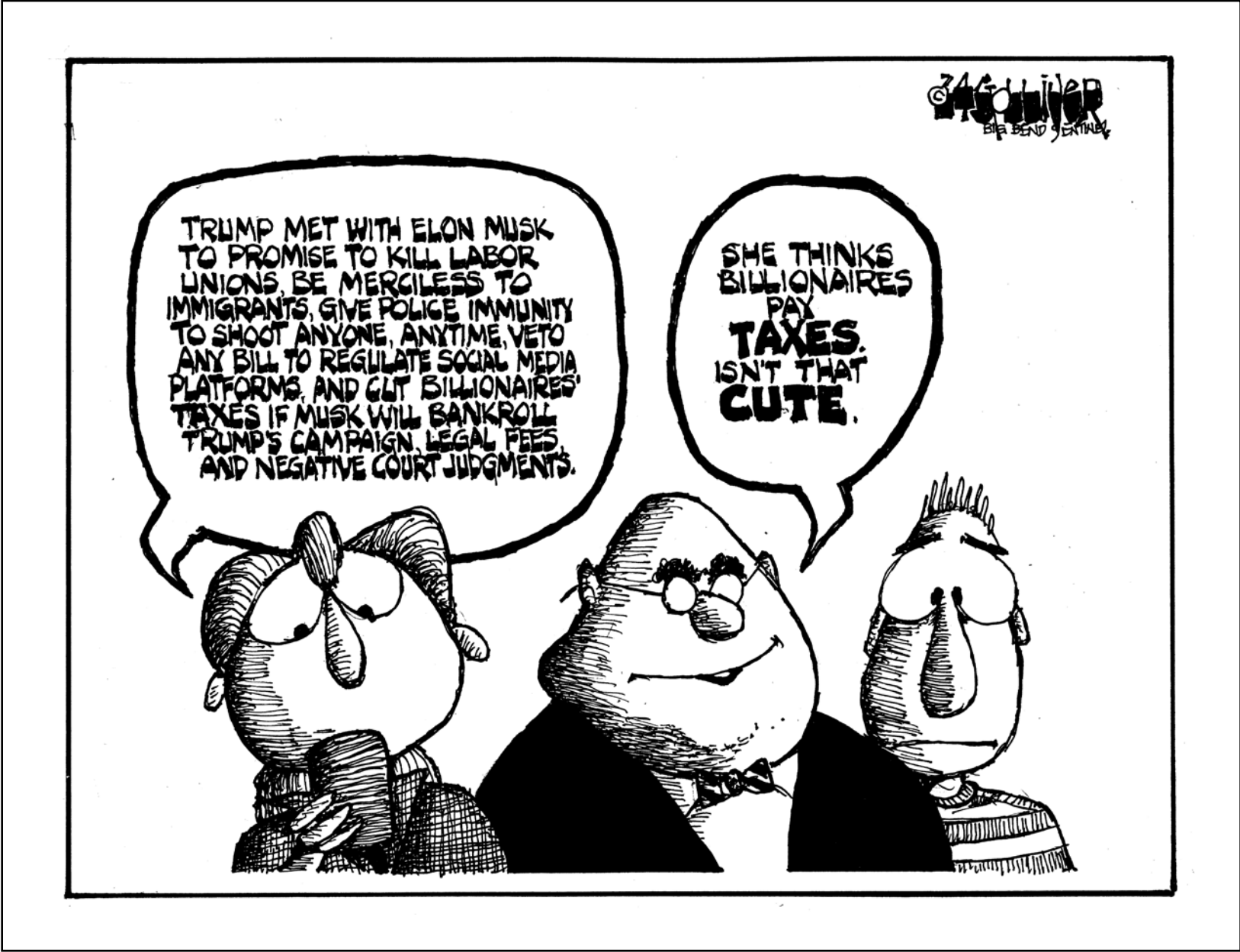
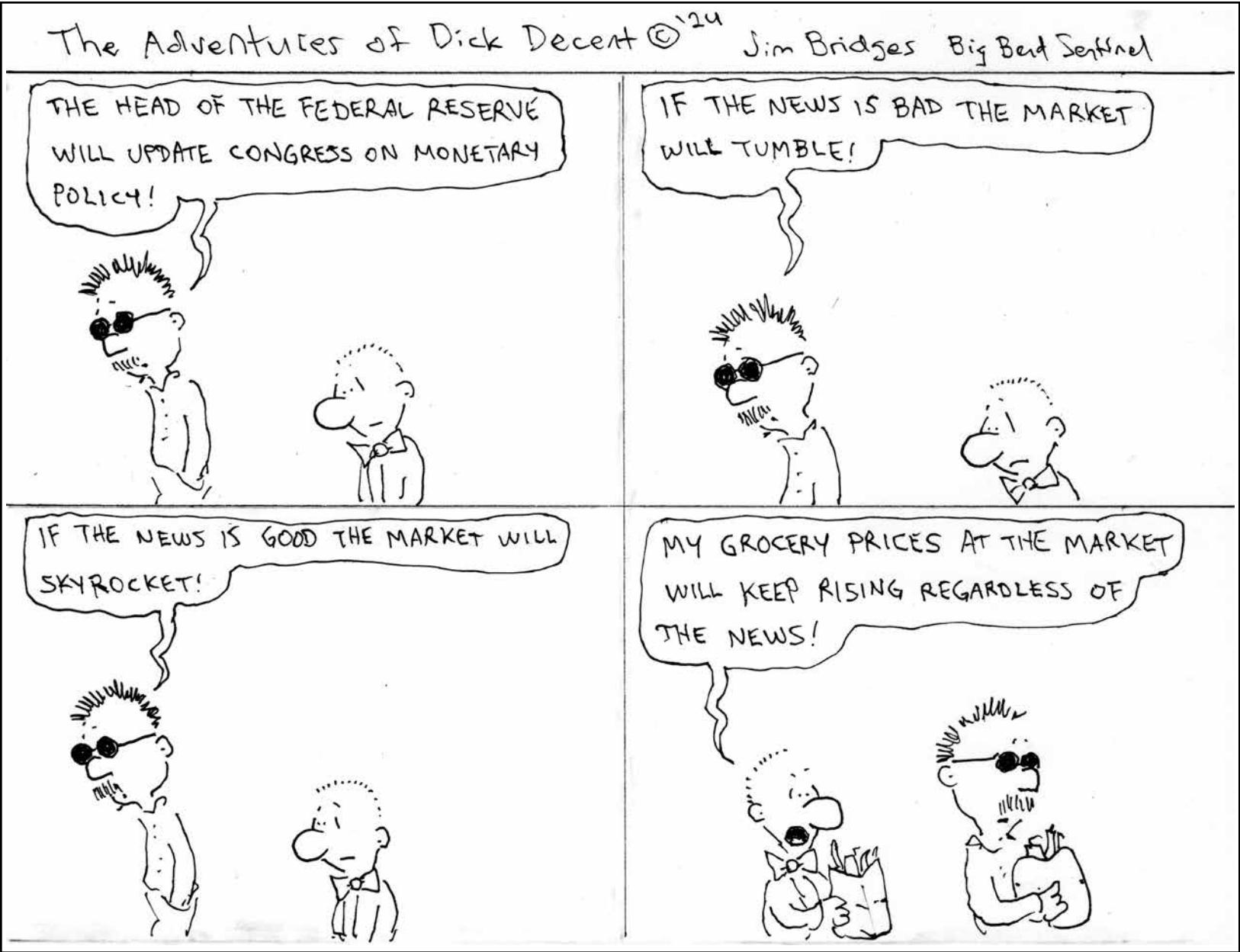
Bernie Zelazny
Former BBCAC Financial Officer for 11-plus years

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

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT
BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM



OUR WATER MATTERS

Texas’ water workforce

By TREY GERFERS
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

Water systems in Texas are facing a lot of well-publicized challenges, from leaking pipes and failing water mains to decreasing rainfall and catastrophic flooding. But a lesser-known issue confronting these same water systems is a lack of skilled workers. According to a 2023 survey prepared by the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) for the Texas Water Foundation, over 60% of respondents are currently having trouble finding enough staff to cover their operations, and 76% stated that there is a medium to high risk that their organizations will not be able to hire and retain qualified employees in the future.

State Senator César Blanco of El Paso, who represents the Big Bend region in the Texas Legislature, has been worried about this problem for a while. At the Water in the Desert conference at Sul Ross State University in January, Blanco lamented the lack of “competitive wages” to attract and retain the staff necessary to manage our water and wastewater systems. “[We] need to provide incentives, such as increasing pay, to attract skilled individuals,” said Blanco. “It’s not easy work,” with workers having to deal with all manner of extreme elements, from freezing cold conditions to boiling hot summer temperatures. He also expressed concern that these staffing shortages will be further exacerbated by the “aging out of our water workforce.” A 2018 Government Accountability Office report revealed that about 37% of water workers and 31% of wastewater workers will go into retirement by 2028.

Sen. Blanco told “Our Water Matters” that “the primary challenge in Far West Texas’ water workforce boils down to the absence of a robust pipeline of skilled workers. Currently, utility jobs come with low pay, limited upward advancement, demanding and irregular working hours, and can involve strenuous, potentially hazardous tasks.” He also stated that “Texas grapples with many retirement-eligible workers in water utilities, which will only worsen current operations and current shortages.”

In order to address these challenges, Blanco identified several partners,

including the Success Through Technology (STTE) Foundation and Western Technical College in El Paso. “They provide trainers, facilities, and equipment for training centers on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.” Other resources include the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), which is working with vocational schools to develop courses to help students become licensed water operators, and the Texas Water Utilities Association’s extensive training program with online classes and rotating regional in-person classes offered across Texas. “The Texas Rural Water Association and the Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT) also host an apprenticeship program for people with their high school diploma or GED [and the] Water Environment Association of Texas has a water operator apprenticeship program,” said Blanco.

“We need to expand training opportunities to improve the water workforce pipeline,” stated Blanco, such as “initiatives led by institutions like Texas A&M University-San Antonio, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and organizations like TAWWA” that are working to address “the workforce gap through education and specialized programs.” In his capacity as a member of the Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs, Blanco is working to find long-term solutions to our water workforce challenges “through partnerships between private companies, community colleges, vocational schools, and high schools to create work/study programs, apprenticeships, mentorships, and bridge programs.” Toward that end, he co-sponsored and helped pass HB 1845 in the last legislative session “to create a pathway through a provisional certification program for high school students to learn the knowledge and skills that [water] operators need.”

A water workforce program at the high school level in our region could be modeled on a similar program in Presidio that has already been successful in training new emergency medical technicians. When the City of Presidio identified a crucial lack of EMTs a couple of years ago, city leaders “said let’s grow our own,” according to Presidio County Judge Joe Portillo. In partnership with Workforce Solutions, which covered the training fee, six Presidio High School students were recruited and trained “while they were going to school,” said Portillo, who is very much in favor of these sorts of skilled training programs for young people. “We can get them certified in this [skill and] they can hit the ground running with this certification [after high School] ... That way they can stay in the community while providing a much-needed service to their neighbors.”

Trey Gerfers is a San Antonio native and serves as general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. He has lived in Marfa since 2013.

Community

Nina Dietzel opens photo exhibition ‘Borderlands’ at Garza Marfa

MARFA — Local photographer Nina Dietzel will have a series of eight photographs titled *Borderlands* on display at Garza Marfa, 124 Highland St., for three months starting this Saturday, March 9.

Borderlands is a series of thermal images that reframes the cultural understanding of borders as sites of surveillance by focusing instead on the intrinsic character of the landscapes along the U.S. and Mexico divide near Marfa, where Dietzel is based.

“I spend much time exploring the Big Bend and often find myself along the Rio Grande, our border with Mexico,” Dietzel said. “I have a deep appreciation for our stark desert landscape, where nature is as present as Border Patrol.”

Each image was created with a thermal camera, which detects temperature. Warmer colors reflect anything that produces heat, typically people or animals. Thermal technology is used by the U.S. Border Patrol and has visual associations with monitoring activity and capture. Reinforced by video games, movies and other visual media, we are conditioned to assume that what’s revealed in these types of images reads as a target meant to be caught.

As a result, even under less provocative circumstances — an amateur wildlife enthusiast hoping to catch a coyote wandering by, or a firefighter assessing the path of a growing wildfire — thermal images often evoke an uneasy quality, evidence that something is not quite right.

“Artists and photographers often process their experiences through their work,” Dietzel said. “When I learned that Border Patrol uses thermal cameras for surveillance, I thought why not hijack this very technology for a completely different effort: make art to emphasize and share my love for the landscape of the

borderlands instead.”

Subverting the surveillance purpose of this technology, Dietzel intentionally shifts the viewer’s attention to focus on objects in this borderlands environment that the camera wasn’t designed to pick up — and that we don’t expect to see: a pair of horses grazing in the sun, a looming water tower, the linear lines of train tracks, or the fan-like leaves of a desert yucca or agave plant.

“My hope is that this twist — ’stealing’ technology for something it wasn’t designed for in the first place — brings a smile to people, and lets them perhaps ‘see’ differently,” Dietzel said.

Rendered in bright, almost neon gradations of yellow, orange, red, blue and purple, these unimposing and still parts of the borderlands landscape ask us to consider a different viewpoint and explore the place without a finite, utilitarian, or human-prescribed purpose. Warmer tones aren’t only indicative of human activity but of other forms of life. If borders are human-imposed boundaries that anticipate disobedience, the objects, flora and fauna that surround them operate in a distinct reality; they aren’t political and have nothing to prove.

While Marfa is home to many creative interventions by well-known cultural producers and artists, Dietzel’s work reminds us there are always undiscovered or latent layers to understanding and experiencing a place — and that places are never what they seem on the surface.

One of the *Borderlands* series images of the John Chamberlain building in Marfa won the Grand Prize from an international open call “The Colors of the Commonplace,” New York Center for Photographic Art, last week.

For more information, visit ninadietzel.photofolio.com.



Photo by Nina Dietzel

“Chamberlain.” A series of images titled “Borderlands” by local photographer Nina Dietzel, shot with a thermal camera, will be on view at Garza Marfa throughout the spring.

Photographer and naturalist Roy Morey publishes groundbreaking guide to plants of BBRSP

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

TRI-COUNTY — Texas A&M University Press recently announced the publication of *The Other Side of Nowhere*, an exhaustive and detailed guide to the plants of Big Bend Ranch State Park. The book profiles 281 plant species, as well as their human names, uses and history.

Photographer and naturalist Roy Morey — who has lived all over the region — has been cataloging plants of the lower Big Bend for nearly 40 years. In 2008, he published *Little Big Bend*, a botanical celebration of “the overlooked small plants or inconspicuous tiny flowers of larger plants that so often go unnoticed” in the massive national park — which also happens to be the most biodiverse park in the national park system.

He shifted his base of operations from Terlingua to Lajitas after the book was published and set out to tackle a daunting new project — this time dedicated to the national park’s wilder younger sister, Big Bend Ranch State Park (BBRSP).

The book’s title takes its name from BBRSP’s unofficial motto, “The other side of nowhere.” At over 300,000 acres — over half of the total Texas State Park system — the “other” Big Bend park boasts its own dizzying array of landscapes and habitats.

Morey’s work is split among the six physiographic regions within BBRSP: La Cienaga, the Alamito-Terneros Lowlands, the Bofecillos Mountains, the Solitario, the Fresno-Contrabando Lowlands and the Rio Grande Corridor. Most of the park’s visitors visit the last two regions; the rest are intimidatingly inaccessible.

As best he could, Morey tried to get to know each corner of the park, strategically hiking and driving to try to find new species to document. One of his favorite stages of the project was driving along all 70 miles of the park’s challenging 4x4 trails, exploring places that few people have ever seen. “It was a lot of fun,” he said.

He also tackled as many of the 238 miles of marked trails as he could, but the excruciatingly slow work of stopping to look at each individual flower and bush filled most of the 11 years it took to collect material for the book. “I’m so amazed that people can run on the trails,” he said.

Though Morey boasts extensive self-training in botany, he leaves the lab science to other people. His approach is more macro than micro, providing an

overview that both scientists and laypeople can enjoy: each entry in the book includes common names, folk uses of the plants and a description of their geographic range.

Morey also includes “botanical notes” detailing where, when and by whom each plant was discovered. The result is a unique blend of human history and identifying information driven by his own interests. “I got a lot of advice, and I didn’t really take much of the advice — mostly I was being told that I was trying to cover too much,” he said. “Basically, I wrote a book that I would enjoy.”

One of the most rewarding parts of the process is finding plants in unexpected places. He was particularly tickled to find a date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) in a canyon that drains the Solitario. The plant was introduced by settlers to the Big Bend and still thrives at the BBNP hot springs, but typically doesn’t last long without dedicated care.

He found that tourists have also introduced their own species: Morey documented a watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) that took root beside a picnic table at the Grassy Banks Campground.

Morey hopes that his work will encourage others to slow down and appreciate the complexity of the landscape — which might in turn push people to defend the Big Bend’s wildness. “I think that anyone that starts paying attention to the plants will recognize their beauty and recognize the incredible diversity,” he said. “I think that makes you work to see that the plants are preserved, the diversity is preserved and that human-caused climate change is making a significant difference in their survival.”

The Other Side of Nowhere will be touring local bookstores and visitors centers over the next few weeks. A working schedule of book signings includes:

Saturday, March 9
Barton Warnock Center (21800 FM170, Lajitas), 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Thursday, March 14
Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute (43869 TX-118, Fort Davis) 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Saturday, March 16
Terlingua Trading Company (100 Ivey Rd, Terlingua, next to the Starlight) 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Saturday, March 23
Javelinas & Hollyhocks, (107 State St, Fort Davis) 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.



Courtesy of Lisa Gordon

The Chihuahuan Desert Research Center will hold its annual cactus sale — this year with three times as many cacti — Monday, March 11, and Tuesday, March 12.

CDRI’s cactus and succulent sale, March 11 and 12

FORT DAVIS — Beautiful golden barrel and claret cup cactus, Faxon yucca, sotol, Queen Victoria agave, and many other species totaling more than 1,000 plants, have arrived at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute in preparation for the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center cactus and succulent sale.

The sale kicks off on Monday, March 11, with the front gates open at 9 a.m. Having ordered about three times more plants than at past sales, the sale promises to be one for the record books.

All plants offered in the sale are native to the Chihuahuan Desert. Each plant was carefully sourced through reputable growers in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Pricing will range from \$5 to \$150.

The sale will take place on the porch of the Powell Visitor Center with CDRI’s knowledgeable Head Gardener, Faith Hille Dishron, and CDRI’s volunteers

to assist shoppers with their selections.

The Cactus and Succulent Sale is one of only two yearly CDRI fundraisers, the other being the BBQ and auction scheduled for August 10, 2024. CDRI invites you to come out and support your favorite area nature center and botanical gardens by finding that perfect cactus you’ll need for your home collection of distinctive cacti and succulents. Create a “win-win” opportunity as you support the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens — the “best rural nature center and botanical gardens in Texas.”

There are no early sales. The gates will open at 9 a.m., Monday, March 11. A complete plant listing can be found at cdri.org.

For additional information, call 432-364-2499.

la fundación the CHINATI foundation

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

Chinati is open Wednesday through Sunday. Office hours and guided tour times are seasonal. For details and reservations, please come to the Visitor Center (1 Cavalry Row) or go to chinati.org/visit.

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

121 E Holland Ave Alpine (next to Cedar Coffee & Supply)

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

We carry the best selection of regional Big Bend books, New Releases, Best Sellers, and Area Book Club selections

www.frontstreetbooks.com

432-837-3360 -- staff@fsbooks.com

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram

Shop us online - <https://bookshop.org/shop/frontstreetbooks>

SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM AT [THESENTINELMARFA.COM](http://thesentinelmarfa.com)



Courtesy of Adele Powers

Left to right: “Blue Piece” by Piper Donaldson received the highest score of 4 at the Regional Visual Art Scholastic Event (VASE). “Liberate” by Francisco Rosas received the highest score of 4 at the Regional Visual Art Scholastic Event (VASE). Art teacher Adele Powers, junior Francisco Rosas and sophomore Piper Donaldson at the regional Visual Art Scholastic Event (VASE) in Odessa last week.

Marfa ISD students Francisco Rosas and Piper Donaldson compete in regional art competition

ODESSA — Two Shorthorns competed in the Regional Visual Art Scholastic Event (VASE) on Saturday, March 2, at Permian High School in Odessa.

Junior Francisco Rosas entered a piece called “Liberate,” made primarily with white colored pencils on black paper, with hands that seem to reach out from his abdomen in a surprising pop of red. Sophomore Piper Donaldson entered two pieces, a portrait of her best friend — who is away studying abroad in Ireland this year — and a painted guitar.

Rosas’ piece is a representation of social anxiety disorder, and describes the difficulties of someone who is afraid of judgment, he said. “Expressing thoughts, opinions, ideas and emotions to other people can be really scary,” Rosas said. “So, someone with social

anxiety prefers to keep their feelings hidden from their friends, family or the general public.”

The piece depicts the artist sewing up a gaping chasm in his chest, “a reference to repressing thoughts and emotions that threaten to spill out,” Rosas explained. The three hands are red, symbolizing the internal color of the body. Each hand gesture represents an emotion: the top hand is cautious or wary behavior, the middle hand is anger, and the bottom hand represents fear.

Rosas’ piece received the highest score of 4 at regionals and will advance to state competitions.

Sophomore Piper Donaldson entered two pieces, one of a 2-D drawing on blue paper, the other of a guitar painted with imagery from her childhood: fields of strawberries and her grandmother’s house. “VASE was

cool,” said Donaldson. “The best part was the Chinese Buffet where I ate 200 crab rangoons.”

Food aside, Donaldson said she enjoyed the competition and the artists’ trading card activity — trading one of her mothman cards for another student’s pinup girl card. “VASE is cool because you get to see all the emo kids,” Donaldson said. “It’s a human zoo where the art kids finally dominate, so the opposite of usual high school.”

Piper’s mother, Elizabeth Donaldson, teaches science at Marfa ISD and accompanied the students and Adele Powers to Permian High School, where the hall was lined with artwork from all the participating schools in Region 18, schools from Andrews to Odessa to Presidio. “There were a lot of talented artists,” Mrs. Donaldson

said. “We saw a lot of cool work from kids from Region 18. I was super impressed with the creativity and passion and enthusiasm to make all these super-involved, interesting works.”

Piper’s pieces received a score of 3 for the guitar, and the highest score of 4 for the portrait of her friend.

“I’m over the moon to have a student advance to state VASE competition in San Marcos again this year! It’s such a cool competition, with artwork from the best young visual artists in the state,” Ms. Powers said. “It’s a huge testament to the talent of my students that a kid from a 1A school like Marfa can compete against kids who are in arts magnet schools or in schools with thousands of kids and multiple art teachers.”

Marfa ISD High School students compete in one-act play competition this week

MARFA — Marfa High School students will compete in the UIL one-act play district competitions against Fort Davis, Sierra Blanca, Balmorhea and Dell City this week. The top three highest-scoring performances will advance to the bi-district competition on March 27. This year, students are performing “Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon,” by D.D. Brooke.

The play is about three young people, Arthur, Warren and Junie Moon, who have each been tragically marked in life — one is a paraplegic, one has a neurological disease and the last is disfigured from acid. They decide to pool their meager resources and face the world together to get out of the hospital and have a chance at a normal life.

The three main characters are played by Liani Salcido, Luis Solis and Diego Jurado.

The original full-length play had to be cut down in order to be performed in 40 minutes or less, said Marfa ISD theater teacher Donel Lara. Despite the challenges that have come with shortening and putting together the production, the entire process has been “a great learning experience” for the students, she said.

“Cutting it down to create a 40-minute production under UIL rules for one-act has been challenging,” Lara said. “Not to mention the number of lines that the three main characters have had to learn and memorize.”

Read-throughs and rehearsals have been taking place since students returned from the Christmas holiday, Lara said. Participating students have also met on weekends as schedules allow.

The theater troupe is hopeful they will continue to advance in regional UIL competitions this spring, but no matter how they score, Lara said she is proud of her students for learning and rehearsing the difficult play.



Photo by Sam Martinez and Fernanda Rivera

Marfa ISD High School students rehearse a shortened version of the play “Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon,” by D.D. Brooke, which they will perform this week at the UIL one-act play district competition.

“In all reality, I would love to continue to advance from district, to bi-district, to area, and on,” Lara said. “However, no matter the outcome, I am already so proud of this group for tackling this play.”

Sam Dwyer presents ‘Eternal Rest’ at Marfa Studio of Arts

MARFA — Sam Dwyer presents ‘Eternal Rest,’ a sculptural installation by Sam Dwyer, questioning the role of dead artists in Marfa and imagining life after life, opens this week at Marfa Studio of Arts. Made with discarded fluorescent light fixtures and other choice elements from the recycling center and blended with Arthurian legend, this show is an electrified experience.

An opening party serving refreshments from the Marfa Spirit Co. and Miss Romi will be held at the Marfa Studio of Arts gallery at 6 p.m. Friday, March 8. All are welcome.

Statement from the artist:

Here in Marfa I am the coordinator for MSA’s “Studio in the Elementary School” (SITES) program, which means that I manage art teachers, purchase supplies and act as a primary point of contact and liaison for the program, all with the goal of teaching kids art. In my own teaching, I try to inspire the joy of creativity, autonomy, and technical skills that the kids of Marfa will need to become artists on their own.

This mission dovetails with many of the themes and ideas that are present in my sculpture show at MSA, although I do have to caveat that my work as an artist is not necessarily the position of our organization.

This installation, Sam Dwyer presents ‘Eternal Rest,’ uses pieces of Marfa to create an otherworld that challenges the concept and formation of Marfa as a funerary temple to dead artists. It is my contestation that the myths of the powers of the dead are being used to subjugate the living.

This is a systemic issue in the arts — of the 332 artists who will “participate” in the upcoming 2024 Venice Biennale, 52% are dead. As creators, we are being literally crowded by the incessant promotion of ghosts who really should be buried, but are kept animated in rite and ritual through patrimonial wealth.

Perhaps we need a stricter definition of contemporary art: it cannot be made by dead people. We certainly need a new value system; this systemic, mass consecration of the fallen is hostile to the living. What’s ironic is that this veneration of the dead would have been deeply unfashionable during the period at which most of the art under discussion here was being produced. The most “radical” part of radicalism is indifference to the past. But our modern culture demands servility to it.



Courtesy of Marfa Studio Arts

Sam Dwyer presents ‘Eternal Rest,’ a sculptural installation by Sam Dwyer, questioning the role of dead artists in Marfa and in contemporary art, opens at the Marfa Studio of Arts gallery at 6 p.m. Friday.

One of my enduring interests as an artist is in myth-making. A central component of this installation invokes the legend of King Arthur — the “true” king, magically determined to rule. I always enjoyed these stories as a child, but revisiting them as an adult I’ve uncovered a new dimension that I’d previously never considered — their use as propaganda legitimating and justifying various medieval English kings, and in turn, the feudal social order. I held a real sword in my hand for the first time yesterday and wondered if any of my antecedents had done so — are we so different, now?

Marfa & Presidio County Museum

SPRING BREAK BAKE SALE

Featuring treats from your
favorite local bakers

Wednesday, 3/13/24

10:00am until sold out

110 W San Antonio

All proceeds go directly to the museum.

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 www.marfanfb.com



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



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

COCHINEAL

MARFA

CASUAL FINE DINING IN FAR WEST TEXAS

107 West San Antonio Street

Marfa, Texas 79843

432 729 3300 - cochinealmarfa.com



Photo by Roxann Chavez / Pecos Enterprise
MISD eighth-grader Alberto Salgado competes in shot put at the Fightin' Buck Middle School Relays hosted by Alpine Middle School last Thursday.



MISD students visit El Paso Museum of Art with Chinati Foundation

By AUSTIN MILLIGAN

EL PASO — On February 15, Ms. Powers’ art classes were invited by the Chinati Foundation on a trip to the El Paso Museum of Art. The classes left at 8 a.m. with students divided between the spirit bus and a suburban for the long journey to El Paso. Around 10 a.m. El Paso time, the class arrived in booming downtown El Paso.

Mrs. Donaldson and Ms. Powers got stressed out parking downtown, but, after that, the two groups united with Chinati’s education team in the park with the alligator fountain. There, we took photos with different statues, and continued walking towards the museum. As we walked we passed news cameras documenting citizens holding signs protesting SB 4 (a Texas House bill about immigration), people on bicycles, people in idling cars, and people in coffee shops. The short walk to the museum made us all very aware we weren’t in Marfa any more!

When we entered the museum, we all met in the center circle reserved for school groups. The Chinati Education team told us our plans. They gave us a worksheet to go through and then set us free.

On the second floor, we were blown away by the marvelous exhibit dedicated to the legendary Texas singer Selena that opened up in the foyer. Farther inside the second floor gallery, we saw the EPMA’s permanent collection, and then continued onto the biennial. This reporter felt very connected to a work called “The Picture of Troy,” in the museum’s permanent collection, because we were wearing the same outfit. For about an hour, the class roamed around the top floor, looking at art from different eras and places and art made recently specifically for the Biennial.

“There’s this one piece, on the wall, it was kinda like a collage but also a print. It had all these different-colored shapes. And it had these prints of tree leaves and branches and boats. I just liked looking at it because it was pretty,” said Piper Donaldson, about a work in the show.

When I interviewed Mrs. Donaldson, who was the trip’s other chaperone, she said, about the trip, “I really enjoyed it, the work was really



Photos courtesy of Marfa ISD

Kiko, Kily and Austin discuss a work at the El Paso Museum of Art during a visit with the Chinati Foundation.

powerful.” When I asked Mrs. Donaldson which work she enjoyed the most, she said, “It was in a room all by itself, and it was a bunch of small, little ceramic hearts that were coming down, that were suspended from the ceiling, and each one was commemorating a female victim that had died of violence on the border. And it would have her name and her manner of death on it. And it was all suspended from the ceiling in this huge room. And then on the floor there was more hearts, but they were upside down, in a spiral that was all around the floor.”

Mrs. Donaldson was talking about a work by a local Marfa artist, Bettina Landgrebe, whose work was recently acquired by the El Paso

Museum of Art. I then asked Mrs. Donaldson, after hearing about her having a moving and personal experience with a piece of art, what she thinks the benefits of field trips that expose students to things like art museums are. She said, “It’s important to be able to look at art, to be able to describe how it makes you feel, and to interpret the artists’ feelings as well. It’s good practice, too, to visit museums, be it a history museum, a science museum, an art museum — it helps you grow as a person.”

After the trip to the museum, we went to Cielo Vista Mall. The Chinati Foundation gave each of us \$20 to buy food at the food court. Then, Ms. Powers and Mrs. Donaldson let us loose in the mall for an hour before we had to head home. It was an awesome field trip!

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Jose Munoz-Bueno
9th Grade
Batman Etching

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.

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg February 26, 2024

ACROSS

- Went by bike, say
- It holds a sail
- Pipe bend under a sink
- Monumental
- Type of saxophone
- Catherine who played Moira Rose
- What not to talk about, per a 1999 film (In this answer, note the first 2 letters + the last letter)
- Passover repast
- Glass or Gershwin
- Go on longer than
- Certain browser (... first letter + the last 6 letters)
- Revise, as a bylaw
- Many, many
- Infatuated
- “Deck the Halls” contraction
- Recorded, in the past
- One might be poached
- Frog-to-be (... first 2 letters + the last 2)
- Letters used when amused
- Spring or fall
- Contraception option, briefly
- Cashbox

- Ancient Greek garments
- Weasel-like animal
- Some alarm systems’ objective (... first 2 letters + the last 5)
- Washing machine contents
- Industrial container
- End of the Greek alphabet
- Pass the time lazily, or a theme hint
- Sire, in the Bible
- Bird on a Canadian dollar
- Muscat is its capital
- Dozer’s noise?
- Phoenix hoopsters
- Long narrative

- Under the (unnoticed)
- Greek war god
- Carburetor, e.g., for a car
- Stepped (on)
- Convinced to buy an add-on, perhaps
- Employees’ income
- Word after “spitting” or “mirror”
- “Loving” actress Ruth
- Approached a base in a cloud of dust
- End-of-life care program
- Leather worker
- Defendant’s excuse
- Arroz con
- Pompeo of “Grey’s Anatomy”

- Busy time for a roadie
- Remove from office
- Scorpion feature
- Ink on skin
- Pastoral poems
- “The Lion King” villain
- Tierra del
- Captain America portrayer Chris
- High throws
- End of a prayer
- Debtor’s letters
- Geological period
- Thurman of “Batman & Robin”
- Get on someone’s case
- Double-helix molecule

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

2/25 © 2024 Andrews McMeel Universal
www.upuzzles.com

Story Outline by Shmuel Schmeil

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

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

PLEASE
RECYCLE
THIS
PAPER

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MAR	Thu, Mar 7	Fri, Mar 8	Mon, Mar 11	Tue, Mar 12	Wed, Mar 13
BREAKFAST	PANCAKE WRAP, YOGURT	SHORTHORN SUCCESS DAY	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
LUNCH	ASIAN BOWL, EGG ROLL, BROCCOLI, CORN, MANDARIN ORANGES	SHORTHORN SUCCESS DAY	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK

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

RAUL LARA CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Cell# 432-249-1189
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com
Post Office Box 787
432-729-4315 / fax 432-729-3158

CONVENIENCE WEST BBQ

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

PRESCRIPTION SHOP MARFA

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



MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU, MAR 7: JH Track Meet at Balmorhea, 3:30pm 2400M Run, 3:45pm Field Events
THU, MAR 7: Boys Powerlifting at Brownfield, 1:00pm
FRI, MAR 8: HS Softball vs Fort Hancock at Marfa
FRI, MAR 8: HS Track Meet at Monahans, 9:00am

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



Courtesy of Ally Caple

The Chinati Foundation welcomes their latest artist in residence, Farah Al Qasimi, this week. Al Qasimi was born 1991 in Abu Dhabi, received her MFA from the Yale School of Art and currently lives and works in Brooklyn. Her mediums are photography, film and music. She is interested in the internet and its hierarchies of information and emotion. She also loves the complexity of storytelling and value- building in children's cartoons, and many of her video works include primary narrators who are anthropomorphized. She has a highly collaborative practice and has worked with hand-sewn puppets, falcons, African land snails, exorcists and, most recently, a Jack Sparrow impersonator.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Presented by



www.marfainsurance.com • 432-729-4306

Brisbin edges Elms in county judge's race

March 10, 1994

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Marfa Mayor Jake Brisbin Jr., by the slimmest of margins, defeated incumbent Monroe Elms in the race for Presidio County judge in Tuesday's Democratic Party primary election. Brisbin got 793 votes to Elms' 770 votes, a margin of 23 votes, or 51 percent.

"I've got 9 more months of work to do for the city of Marfa and it's time to get to it," Brisbin said Wednesday. "I'm looking forward to being able to promote the entire county and take our economic incentive and tax abatement policies and make it county-wide to take us all forward.

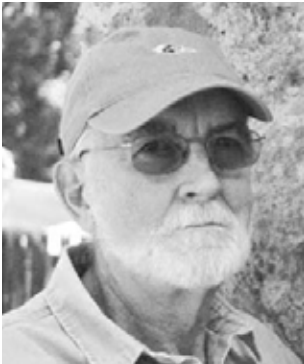
"It's my sincere hope that the local entities in Presidio County can work together and operate in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect," Brisbin said.

Elms said Wednesday he ran a good race and has no regrets. "I feel good about it," he said, "I'm just disappointed not as many people turned out to vote," Elms said. "I wish Jake the best of luck in managing the county's business," he said. "I hope the progressive ideas I've tried to implement will continue."

This year's county judge's race was a repeat of the 1990 election with a few new twists. Elms defeated Brisbin in the November 1990, election when Brisbin ran as a Republican. In that race, Elms polled 994 votes to Brisbin's 843 votes, a difference of 151 votes, or a 54 percent advantage. Tuesday's race saw Brisbin outpolling Elms on election day with Elms carrying the early vote. Three years ago, Brisbin took the early vote and Elms the election-day vote.

Brisbin and Elms are cousins.

OBITUARIES



McDonald

Together we mourn the loss of **William B. McDonald**, August 9, 1934 – February 14, 2024, our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, visionary architect, CopperWorks lighting designer, founder, avid gardener, animal lover, and devoted friend. Bill died quietly in his sleep at home on a health upswing, planning to visit his beloved Marfa in two days. Bill leaves a legacy of loyal friendships and a love for his work that knew no bounds.

Born at home near downtown San Antonio, Bill had an innate passion for architecture and design. High school years found him in Del Rio where his graduation tuxedo fit him throughout his life and his love for Mexico and the Trans-Pecos Far West Texas landscape and adventure began. Bill earned his architecture degree from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture after a hiatus to serve in the Marines for two years in Japan, a culture forever influencing his design aesthetic. Bill dedicated his over 50 years of architectural practice and distinctive style to the San Antonio and Trans-Pecos areas he loved, leaving an enduring impact on the many projects he touched across Texas. He was devoted to resolving difficult design challenges and incorporating native Texas materials into his projects. Whether with residential, commercial or healthcare clients, he always strove to work alongside the best craftsmen and artisans to achieve his most outstanding results for each client through his deep passion for the outcome to be as special as every one of them.

Bill had a limitless thirst for

knowledge, fascination with exploring other cultures and history, enthusiastic love for bamboo and moss, all things Japanese and Mexican, fishing, reading, more fishing, sketching and all the beauty the world had to offer. He devoured books and programs on gardening, cooking, native plants, Texas viticulture, art and design, then insatiably pursued it all. His hand-drawn architectural plans, hand-crafted copper light fixtures and furniture designs are amazing and precious works of art.

Bill was a vibrant and gentle soul with a dry sense of humor and quick wit with a bit of silliness for everyone he knew. One of his greatest attributes was his ability to forge deep and lasting friendships. July 4th architects' party, anyone? He cherished time spent reminiscing about life's events over a good strong margarita. What a special touch he had! The void remaining is deeply felt by his dear family and friends who will forever treasure the memories and love we shared. Bill is survived by his soulmate of 37 years, Dr. Janet F. Williams; his cherished daughters Melissa of Waco, Sandy (Andrew Ray) and beloved grandsons Fender and Asher of Houston, Willa of San Antonio; and his adoring sister, Suzanne. We miss him dearly and our hearts indelibly carry his spirit forever.

To honor Bill's dedication to minimalism and in lieu of flowers, the family requests tribute donations be made to: The Friends of the Marfa Public Library: <https://www.marfapubliclibrary.org/friends> or the new UT Health San Antonio MSRH Cancer Hospital: <https://makelivesbetter.uthscsa.edu/hospitalfund>

All are invited to share memories with the family during a celebration of life on Sunday, April 14, 2 - 4 p.m. at the Bishop Jones Center of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas in San Antonio and visit the Bill McDonald-designed pavilion perched above the Cathedral Park basin springs.

Arrangements are with Porter Loring Mortuary in San Antonio. You are invited to sign the guestbook at www.porterloring.com.

...



Ramirez

In loving memory of **Raymond Reza Ramirez**, August 17, 1962 – October 13, 2023.

You don't have to suffer to learn, but if you don't learn from suffering, then your life becomes truly meaningless. Meaning makes

a great many things enduring — perhaps everything. Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes because for those who love with their heart and soul there is no such thing as separation. Pray for me, as I did for you. May God bless all of you and bring us together again. Amen.

Funeral mass will be held Saturday, March 9, 2024, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marfa, Texas, with a visitation starting at 10 a.m. and Rosary at 10:30 a.m. Interment will follow at Merced Cemetery in Marfa, Texas.

Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas.

...

We are having a memorial service for **Patricia “Pat” Anne Renfro Miller** on Saturday, March 16, at 1:30 p.m. at the Fort Davis High School auditorium (instead of the First Presbyterian Church). It will be followed by a graveside committal service at Hillcrest Cemetery in Fort Davis. All are welcome to celebrate Mom's life with us. – Michele, Keesey, and Drew
An obituary for Patricia “Pat” Anne Renfro Miller ran in the December 21, 2023, issue of *The Big Bend Sentinel*.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thu
Mar
7

Hike with a Homeless Dog

10:00am - 11:00am at Davis Mountains State Park in Fort Davis
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail! Join our pack at the Interpretive Center and give a rescue dog from Grand Companions of Fort Davis a fun morning on the trail. Maybe you'll find your new forever friend! More info at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/davis-mountains/hike-with-a-homeless-dog/2024-01-18>

Science Seminar

3:30am - 4:30am at Lawrence Hall at Sul Ross State University in Alpine
Sul Ross State University is starting a Science Seminar Series where faculty and staff share their research with students, staff, and the general public. The series kicks off with Center for Big Bend Studies Director Dr. Bryon Schroeder. This lecture is FREE and there will be a mixer to follow so folks can meet and talk more with Sul Ross researchers.

Fri
Mar
8

Alpine Public Library Fish Fry

5:00pm - 7:00pm at the American Legion, 306 W Sul Ross Ave in Alpine
It's Fish Fry time! Your ticket purchases support Alpine Public Library's operations and you get a delicious catfish dinner prepared by the Alpine American Legion along with live music by the Swifts and A Few Too Many. Tickets are \$15 and available at Alpine Public Library or at the door.

Sam Dwyer presents 'Eternal Rest' Opening Party

6:00pm at Marfa Studio of Arts in Marfa
Opening party for Sam Dwyer's sculptural installation at MSA. All are welcome.

Sat
Mar
9

Desert Mindfulness Walk

2:00pm - 3:30pm at Davis Mountains State Park in Fort Davis
On this meditative nature walk, you will learn the 7 principles of mindfulness through the ecology of the Chihuahuan desert. Registration required. For more info and to register, visit: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/davis-mountains/desert-mindfulness/2024-03-09>

Mon
Mar
11

CDRI Annual Cactus & Succulent Sale

3/11 & 3/12 from 9:00am - 5:00pm at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens in Fort Davis
All plants offered in the sale are native to the Chihuahuan Desert. Each plant was carefully sourced through reputable growers in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Pricing will range from \$5 to \$150. More info at www.cdri.org

Presented by...

YOUR BRAND HERE!

Email ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Wed
Mar
13

Marfa & Presidio Museum Spring Break Bake Sale

10:00am until sold out at 110 W San Antonio in Marfa
Featuring treats from your favorite local bakers! All proceeds go directly to the museum.

Plan Ahead/
Upcoming
Events

Overland Trail Museum Spring Break Schedule

Open 3/14 - 16 & 3/21 - 23 from 1:00pm - 5:00pm at 511 Fort Street in Fort Davis
For group tours, contact Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce 432-426-3015. Suggested donation \$5 adults & \$2 children under 12.

Ongoing
Weekly
Events &
Classes

Free Zumba Classes

Monday & Wednesday at 6:30pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes

Tuesday & Thursday at 6:00pm at Marfa Public Library

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

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

Specializing in Texas Ranch and Rural Properties

Cleat L. Stephens, Broker

FindARanchOutWest.com

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

Classifieds & public notices

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.

MARFA ISD has a vacancy on the School Board

This vacancy for the unexpired term will be filled at a Special/ Regular meeting on March 25, 2024, at 6pm.

Interested in serving on the board? Please review the qualifications and submit a letter in writing to Mrs. Teresa Nunez, board president, expressing your interest in serving on the board. This letter must be received at the Superintendent's office no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, March 22, 2024.

You may wish to attend the meeting on March 25, 2024, in case the board decides to interview you.

Qualifications to be a Board Member:
To be eligible to be a candidate for, or elected or appointed to, the office of Board member, a person must:

1. Be a United States citizen.
2. Be 18 years of age or older on the first day of the term to be filled at the election or on the date of appointment, as applicable.
3. Have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be: Totally mental incapacitated and the person's mental capacity has not subsequently been completely restored by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction; or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote and person's guardianship has not been modified to include the right to vote or the person's mental capacity has not been completely restored by a subsequent final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction.
4. Have not been finally convicted of a felony for which the person has not been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities. Atty. Gen. Op. LO 96-114 (1996).
5. Be a resident of Texas and the District for the period of time described at CANDIDATE'S RESIDENCY TERM (This is a resident of the state of Texas for the past 12 months, a resident of the Marfa ISD six months).
6. A qualified voter

SUBMIT LETTER TO:
Mrs. Teresa Nunez
Marfa ISD Board of Trustees
P.O. Box T
Marfa, TX 79843

ESTATE SALES

FT. DAVIS OFF SITE MOVING/ESTATE SALE
408 CAVALRY - 3RD HOUSE ON THE RIGHT BEHIND PO
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 8 & 9

ANTIQUUE FURNITURE, LARGE DINING TABLE FOR 8, SMALL OCCASIONAL TABLES, ROCKERS, QUEEN SHABBY CHIC BEDROOM SET WITH OVERSIZE DRESSER, POTTING BENCH, GARDEN TOOLS

SORRY, NO SOFA OR APPLIANCES

Share Your Thoughts About
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NEEDS
in the Big Bend Area

REGIONAL SURVEY

Big Bend Reproductive Coalition wants to know your opinion about reproductive health needs in the Big Bend Region. Participation in this anonymous digital survey will help to inform the services that we provide to our communities. Your voice matters, and your experience matters to us.

Use the QR Code to right or follow the link below to access the **BBRC Community Needs Assessment Survey**:

bit.ly/BBRC-Survey



COALICIÓN REPRODUCTIVA DEL **BIG BEND** REPRODUCTIVE COALITION

bigbendrc.org
@bbreproductivecoalition

MARFA REALTY



Making Marfa Home

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

Kathleen Walstrom Broker
Melissa Bent Associate Broker **Christa Marquez** Sales

JOBS

VILLAGE FARMS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY SHIPPING / RECEIVING CLERK

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. 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.

Presidio County is looking for a responsible full-time maintenance worker to perform general repairs and maintenance of our beautiful Presidio County Courthouse, vehicles, equipment and other local facilities belonging to the County, in Marfa. It is important for this person to have excellent time-management skills, be reliable, honest, self-motivated and detail oriented. The ideal candidate should be focused on facilities' needs with repairs, maintenance and lawn care. They should have the physical endurance to climb stairs, ladders, do some heavy lifting and cover a large space by foot, as the building has 3 floors and a cupola. Some experience in electrical, plumbing, irrigation and general repairs is important.

Duties:

- Reports to assigned supervisor.
- Prepares the cupola and courtroom as needed.
- Experience using hand and electric tools and equipment to perform fixes and repairs. Check control panels and electrical wiring to identify any issues.
- Do all yard upkeep (mowing, watering, trash collection, etc.)
- Conduct maintenance and repair tasks such as, replacing light bulbs, knobs, locks, faucets, etc. Inspect and troubleshoot equipment and systems.
- Basic, minor HVAC, plumbing and electrical issue repairs.
- Collaborate with other professionals during any times of major repairs, upgrades or renovations. Notifies supervisor of unsafe conditions throughout.
- Vehicle general maintenance by taking to proper mechanic, stickers, wash.
- Follows safety rules.
- Adheres to Presidio County's policies and procedures.
- Other duties as assigned by Supervisor.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience as maintenance worker or similar role preferred.
- General knowledge of use and maintenance of equipment and appliances.
- Attention to detail and conscientious in their work.
- Have good physical stamina, dexterity and able to lift at least 50 lbs.
- High school diploma is preferred but not required.

This full-time job would be 40 hours per week, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Starting pay is \$15.50 per hour with retirement and health insurance benefits. Paid Holidays; sick leave and vacation time accrual.

Please go online at <http://www.co.presidio.tx.us> and print an application that can be found under the Forms tab. Applications may also be obtained and submitted in the Presidio County Judge's Office with Carina Nunez, 1st Floor, Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa. Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on March 22, 2024.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN – MCDONALD OBSERVATORY IS HIRING!

We currently have an Administrative Associate position open at one of the world's premier astronomical facilities located in the beautiful Jeff Davis Mountains.

Do you enjoy clerical work in a fast-paced and unique work environment? This position provides administrative support to several departments performing a wide variety of tasks, including but not limited to payroll, accounts payable and receivable, human resources, booking travel, inventory and vehicle tracking, and more. As an added perk, the office is located on the ground floor of a historic telescope dome, with beautiful mountain views right outside the window.

Salary starts at \$41,600.

For more details, or to apply, go to <https://utaustin.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/UTstaff> and search for job requisition number: R_0031083, or scan the QR Code below.



(The University of Texas at Austin offers competitive wages and a great State of Texas benefits package including full health insurance and retirement benefits. An Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Employer committed to diversity. These positions are security sensitive; conviction verification conducted on applicant selected.)

EMAIL ADS@BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM FOR ADVERTISING RATES

PREVENTATIVE CARE HEALTH SERVICES JOB OPPORTUNITIES
NURSING STAFF (MA, CNA) FULL TIME

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.

Residential Appraiser at Brewster County Appraisal District

Brewster County Appraisal District is accepting applications for the following positions:

- **Appraiser-RPA**

Please see Employment opportunities – Brewster County Appraisal District (brewstercotad.org) for additional information.

Responsibilities include office and field work associated with the appraisal of Real/Business Personal Property. Applicants must have a high school education or equivalent and have TDLR certification or be willing to complete requirements to obtain such certification.

Applicants must also possess good computer and people skills; have reliable transportation, and a valid Texas Driver License. Appraisal experience preferred.

Salary is contingent upon experience and qualifications. Applications and/or resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.

Qualifications: any real estate background or tax appraisal background, and mortgage industry as well. Experience in any related field may be substituted. Hours are Mon-Fri 8:30AM -5:00PM, Holiday pay with benefits. Salary depending on experience.

Send information to:
Raymond E. Herrera
Brewster County Appraisal District
107 W. Ave E. #2
Alpine, TX 79830
(432) 837-2558

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

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY Judge Jose Portillo: (432) 729-4452	Presidio Mayor John Ferguson: City Hall: (432) 229-3517 Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us
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 councilmembearcreman@cityofmarfa.com	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)



Maisie Crow Max Kabat Rob D'Amico Sam Karas Mary Cantrell Ariele Gentiles Tyler Sousa Becca Foster Mary Etherington Maria Gerardo Marisa Chacon	Editor-in-Chief Publisher Managing Editor Reporter Reporter Copy Editor Editorial Assistant Designer / Advertising Office Manager Distribution Distribution
---	---

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

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