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2 vie for top law officer in Jeff Davis County, one wants to be a 'constitutional sheriff'

By ROB D'AMICO
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JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — Two experienced law enforcement officers will face off in a May 28 sheriff's race runoff for the Republican Primary in Jeff Davis County. One contender, C.W. Stephens, is embracing a controversial philosophy of the "constitutional sheriff movement," which is based in the belief that sheriffs are the ultimate authority in constitutional matters and can override state and federal directives and law.

Stephens, a current deputy for the county, came in second in the March 5 Primary behind Victor Lopez, a former Jeff Davis County deputy and current Marfa Police Department officer who came out on top 245-195. Since neither achieved more than 50% of the vote, they head to the runoff, but with no Democratic contender in November, the winner will assume the post in January. Current Sheriff Bill Kitts is retiring and did not seek reelection.

"The sheriff should be the primary conservator of the peace," Stephens said. "And I also feel that where they can, [the sheriff should] try to protect the rights of the citizens in their jurisdiction. Our constitution just seems to go out the window pretty much these days."

Stephens defended his belief in constitutional sheriffs by saying he doesn't agree with recent criticism of the movement with reports on many of these sheriffs refusing to acknowledge federal laws or even judges' rulings — with examples of citizens left vulnerable to civil rights violations or corrupt local officials. He sees the movement as just the opposite and wants to protect "the rights of citizens" and make sure that some other agency "doesn't come in here and run roughshod over them."

Lopez, who served as a Hudspeth County Sheriff deputy for several years and four years in Jeff Davis County, now has the night shift on patrol in Marfa. When he decided to run for sheriff, he thought it would be best to take a position in Marfa during the campaign, especially since Deputy Stephens was running alongside him. "I just thought it'd be better for me to run my campaign from the outside looking in, instead of from the inside looking out," Lopez said.

Lopez said his eight kids — ranging in age from eight to 28 — inspired him to get into law enforcement. He

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Illustration by crowcrumbs

Schools play a vital role in student mental health but face several challenges meeting needs

By MARY CANTRELL
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TRI-COUNTY — The need for mental and behavioral health resources in schools has never been more dire, with rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal behavior among Texas students on the rise.

Nearly one in two youth felt sad and hopeless for a prolonged period in the past 12 months — a 16% increase from 2019 and a 53% increase from 2011 — and one in three youth reported persistently feeling stressed, anxious or depressed during the previous month, according to a Texas Education Agency (TEA) report on mental health in public schools published in 2023. Students of color and queer students are particularly at risk.

The COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about school safety — in the wake of the mass shooting at Robb Elementary in Uvalde — are often cited as reasons for the sharp decline in student mental health. Outside of the home, educators play a vital role in identifying students experiencing mental illness. (School staff are also required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect within 48 hours.)

Alpine ISD Superintendent Michelle Rinehart said part of the role of schools to produce productive members of society involves addressing mental and behavioral wellness in addition to academic achievement. "The school is given this opportunity to really play a pivotal role in helping kids learn skills and work through some challenges that they might be coming in with," Rinehart said.

But local school districts in the tri-county area face several challenges, including finding certified counselors, funding those positions and ensuring individuals in those roles have time to address students' mental health needs.

Districts vary widely in their systems of support for student mental health. Smaller districts like Fort Davis and Marfa ISDs do not have full-time counselors but work with "Student Success Coordinators," whose duties are similar to counselors and include testing, college and career readiness and scheduling.

According to the Texas Education Code, schools with fewer than 500 students are not required to employ a full-time, certified counselor, but may bring someone on part time or contract those services out when needed. Fort Davis ISD Superintendent Graydon Hicks said the district

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Marfa Saturday Market to open this weekend in new location

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — The Marfa Saturday Market, now in its 18th year, is slated to open this Saturday, May 4, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in its new location, the parking lot west of the Marfa Public Library on Oak Street. The market's season typically runs from April to November.

Marfa City Council voted last week to approve the market's use of the lot, which is city property. The lot includes the library's Book Barn, two handicapped parking spaces, and covered parking utilized by Marfa Country Clinic, Prescription Shop Marfa, Big Sky Yoga and library patrons.

The market's move from the U.S.O., or Marfa Visitor Center, pavilion to the parking lot comes after a conflict with the city over its venue rental policy at the facility, which last year caused the market to close three months early. Per city policy, if events are booked on Saturdays at the U.S.O., the market cannot utilize the space.

In a follow up interview with The Big Bend Sentinel, Roane said the U.S.O. was made available to the market with the understanding rental bookings would still occur, but they chose to go with the parking lot option instead. The city is currently working on adding outdoor bathrooms to the U.S.O. so that the pavilion can act as a standalone rental space, which would have alleviated some of the market conflict in cases when only the building was rented out.

Market vendor Bob Schwab, who also sits on the library's board of advisors, expressed gratitude to the City Council and city administration for the use of the U.S.O. for several years. "We're very grateful that we have had that, it's a perfect space, but it's not a great location. This is a less-than-perfect space but a great location," Schwab said.

He publicly apologized to City Manager Mandy Roane for previous statements he had made to her regarding the U.S.O. rental policy. He said he told her he thought it was a mistake when he "should have said it was a decision that I disagreed with."

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Marfa City Council hears from concerned citizens on zoning, awards HOT grants

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — Marfa City Council met last week for its second public hearing on six proposed changes to its zoning ordinance and to award hotel occupancy tax (HOT) grants.

The city has been in the process of amending its current zoning ordinance since this fall and is proposing six changes to the law based on recommendations from the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission.

The six changes — which are posted in detail on the city's website — include restricting the construction of more than one kitchen in houses within the R-1 single-family residential district, making allowable home occupations less restrictive, reducing setbacks for corner lots, clarifying buildable lot sizes to match the existing plats within the city, allowing residential use of properties zoned industrial, and allowing co-use of commercial properties as both businesses and residences.

The city held its first public hearing on April 22, with only Tony Georges — current City Council candidate and partner of Councilmember Travis Acreman — sharing views on the changes. Last week, Marfa resident Bob Schwab was the first to take to the podium to oppose the proposed ordinance changes, particularly the amendment regarding restricting the construction of two kitchens in homes in R-1 residential districts.

"It seems like the council in adopting this is going in the wrong direction, exactly opposite to what I feel you should do," Schwab said. He said he is concerned about the changes infringing on private property rights and making the city's lack of affordable housing even worse.

Initially, Schwab was concerned that the ordinance would not allow houses in the R-1 district, in which he lives, to have separate casitas with kitchens. He explained that he has an existing casita and would like to be free to use it however he sees fit — if his mother-in-law were to need to move in, for example.

"I think there ought to be the allowance of one additional auxiliary housing unit in R-1, it's a movement nationwide, it makes sense," Schwab said. "We have large residential lots in R-1. There's a lot of casitas, there's already a lot of

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Republican congressional run-off heats up in the Big Bend with local campaign stops

By SAM KARAS
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TRI-COUNTY — The contentious Republican run-off for Texas Congressional District 23 hit the Big Bend last week as dark horse challenger Brandon Herrera met with voters in Fort Davis, Alpine and Presidio. Herrera is running against incumbent Tony Gonzales, who is banking on his record of service — and large amounts of cash — to eke out a win in late May.

Herrera has made waves in the primary as a gun dealer and social media influencer popular with the younger fringe of the far right. He told The Big Bend Sentinel in December that he felt a moral calling to run for office, to oppose Gonzales' more moderate message and to give voice to border communities that felt abandoned in the media frenzy over immigration. (Herrera's campaign did not respond to multiple requests for comment for this article.)

Per reporting by Matt Stringer at the Texan News, Herrera offered the small-town crowds a glimpse of his "anti-woke" persona — joking to a Fort Davis audience that sprawling omnibus bills sneak in funding for frivolous causes such as "mak[ing] sure that kids in Pakistan know that they're gay" — but also promised constituents a higher degree of accessibility and transparency than his opponent.

Last Wednesday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott endorsed Gonzales in a press release urging voters across the vast border district to cast their votes in his favor. "Tony Gonzales is a fierce champion for bolstering border security measures in Congress," his office wrote. "He knows the dangerous consequences that President Joe Biden's reckless open border policies have on our state — and our nation. I know Tony will continue the fight in our nation's capital to designate Mexican drug cartels as terrorists, re-instate [sic] the Remain in Mexico policies, and deport people who illegally enter our country."

Abbott's endorsement came as a surprise to some, in the wake of Gonzales' censure by Republicans in the state Legislature for what many characterized as his weak stance on fighting gun control and gay marriage. However, around a month prior, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick voiced his support for the incumbent, writing simply that he was "proud to endorse" Gonzales.

On Tuesday afternoon, Gonzales held a press conference for media representatives across the country, boasting his track record on border security and a large war chest of donations. "The border is the thing that people want to talk about most," he said. "A couple years ago, no one knew where Eagle Pass was."

The congressman said that he had earned the support of the national Border Patrol Council, as well as over 140 smaller organizations within the sprawling border district. "I think the secret sauce is always at the local level," he said.

Gonzales criticized his opponent for what he thought was a late start to campaigning outside of San Antonio. He said that his campaign had also generated six figures to run an ad lambasting a joke that Herrera had cracked about veteran suicide — a joke that Herrera has since insisted was taken out of context. "It's a pattern that's just not Texas-23," he said of Herrera's acerbic sense of humor.

On a more upbeat note, Gonzales praised his constituents for the "contrarian" and "unique personalities" of the 29 mostly rural counties that he serves and promised that he would honor their many perspectives. "You either get stronger or you die politically," he said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Brush fire clouds Highway 90 with smoke

ALPINE — On Saturday at approximately 1 p.m., the Alpine Fire Department was notified of a "fast-moving brush fire" on West U.S. Hwy 90 near the roadside park on the westbound side, according to a department news release. Upon arrival at the scene, crews noted the fire had grown to significant size. The Texas A&M Forest Service and Marathon Volunteer Fire Department were both requested for additional resources, and fire growth was stopped quickly. The fire grew to encompass approximately 33 acres spanning rough terrain. Air assets were able to determine no other fires spurred from the main incident. Investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of the fire.

"Thank you to the immense community support, and a big thank you to Sunshine House, Inc. for donating ice for first responders' drinking water," the release stated. "Additionally a huge thank you to Texas Forestry Service, Marathon Volunteer Fire Department, TxDPS and Brewster County Sheriff's Office for your assistance."



Alpine Fire Department firefighters extinguish a brush fire Saturday on West U.S. Hwy 90 near the roadside park.

Target of Alpine shooting arrested on child indency charges

Fentanyl confirmed as cause of death in two overdoses

ALPINE — When a gunman opened fire on Justin Vega Lara, 37, of Alpine, and occupants in his truck on April 16 at the 1100 block of North 9th Street, Alpine Police Department officers briefly detained Lara for questioning about the incident. The alleged shooter, Juan Jose Tafoya, 30, of Alpine, turned himself in three days later and was taken to the Brewster County Jail on charges of aggravated assault with a $20,000 bond.

About a week later, on Wednesday, April 24, officers arrested Lara, who is now in Brewster County Jail on charges of indecency with a child with sexual contact with a $50,000 bond, according to jail records. Brewster County Sheriff Ronny Dodson was out of town after the arrest and could not be reached to provide additional details.

Justin Lara is the brother of Ismael Javier "I.J." Vega, 23, of Alpine, who died of a fentanyl overdose on February 15. Authorities in Sierra Blanca then arrested Vega's other brother, Willie "Sapo" Lara III, and two others on March 4 for possession of narcotics (including fentanyl) with intent to distribute. According to a complaint filed in federal court, those arrested said the plan was to sell the fentanyl in Alpine. On February 6, 34-year-old Daniel "Danny" Celaya of Alpine was found dead from a fentanyl overdose at Uncle's Convenience Store at 2411 E. Highway 90 in Alpine.

Previously, authorities stressed that the overdoses were suspected to be from fentanyl, but they couldn't be sure until toxicology reports came back from a medical examiner. Last Thursday, April 25, Brewster County Justice of the Peace Scott Wassermann said the reports came back, and he confirmed the overdoses were from fentanyl for Celaya and fentanyl and cocaine for Vega.

Local city council elections held Saturday

Voting for three open Marfa City Council places will be held Saturday from 7 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Casner Room in City Hall. Four candidates — including three incumbents — will be vying for three seats. Council members in Marfa are "at large" and do not serve specific seats, meaning voters will choose their top three candidates out of the four running.

The terms of council members Mark Morrison, Eddie Pallarez and Mark Cash are up in May, and all three have filed for reelection. Marfa resident Tony Georges has also filed for a city council seat.

Two city council spots are up for election in Alpine Saturday. In Ward 1, Jennifer Peel will face Reagan Stone; and in Ward 4, Lori A. Griffin will face Lucy E. Escovedo. Ward 2 candidate Eva L. Olivas is running unopposed, as is mayoral incumbent Catherine Eaves. Both have been declared elected. Voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 803 W. Holland.

The City of Presidio will not hold an election because three candidates filed for three seats: Steve "Nicky" Alvarez, Joe Andy Mendoza and John Razo. Alvarez and Mendoza filed to run again and will keep their seats. Cristian Montoya filed to run and will replace Razo.

Employees accuse gallery owner Nino Meir of skimminf money away from artists

At least four employees of gallery owner Nino Mier — who formerly had a project space in Marfa — have told an art-world news service that Mier misreported sales figures to the artists he represented so that he could take the money himself. TheArtNewspaper.com reported yesterday that statements "were issued to five artists and reflect a combined discrepancy of around $31,000 across 21 transactions. In one example, a 2019 invoice listed the final price for a Louise Bonnet painting as $35,000. The artist's statement told a different story: the sale price was recorded as $30,000 before a $3,000 discount."

Mier did not comment directly on the accusations, but his gallery released a statement saying the gallery "championed the work and careers of artists" and "has undertaken an independent review of its records and will subsequently take any corrective action necessary."

Mier, who now has galleries in Los Angeles, Brussels and New York, is a prominent figure in the art world and showcased several exhibitions in Marfa from 2021 to the summer of 2023.

Memorial ceremony for Big Bend Law Enforcement set for June 5

On Wednesday, June 5, Brewster County Sheriff Ronny Dodson will be hosting the Big Bend Area Law Enforcement Annual Memorial Ceremony to be held on the Sul Ross State University Campus at 10 a.m. The event pays tribute to area officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

This year's keynote speaker will be Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick. The guest speaker will be Sheriffs' Association of Texas Executive Director Skylor Hearn. The public is encouraged to attend.

Saturday market

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Now the market will begin anew. Roane said the library board and staff were supportive of the initiative. Library Director Nicki Ittner expressed her support for the market's move. "We think it would be good for the library because it would bring attention to us on Saturdays," Ittner said. "We're grateful for it."

Schwab said market organizers were grateful for the many people in the community who offered up their space for the vendors, but it was important that the city be involved in the market, and its new location may help raise funds for the library via the Book Barn. He said the market will continue to remain a valuable resource for both locals and visitors.

"This is a wonderful Marfa event that brings together lots of people from all over," Schwab said. "We have vendors that come from Valentine, Presidio, certainly Alpine, Fort Davis; they sell some great things."

In a follow up interview with The Sentinel, Schwab said market organizers hope to clean up the parking lot, filling the enormous potholes under the covered parking area and more. The plan is to put up signs and rope off the lot on Fridays. He said because the Marfa Country Clinic and Prescription Shop are closed on Saturdays the market will not impact their clients. Big Sky Yoga does host morning exercise classes on Saturdays, but Schwab said he has been in contact with owner Monika Bernstein who supports the market, and they will work to communicate with her clients about where else to park.

The market is recommending people park on Oak Street or Highland Blvd. The market also recommends patrons bring cash, as many vendors do not accept credit cards, and that all dogs be friendly and on leashes.

Schwab told council members that market organizers have also been in contact with the city's Parks and Recreation Board, which is exploring adding a structure to the east end of Sunset Park — across the street from the library — that the market may eventually be held in. "This moves us closer to what may be our final home," Schwab said.

The Marfa Saturday Market is currently seeking vendors for this season. Vendors must live within 100 miles of Marfa and sell locally-made or homegrown goods. No booth fees are charged.

For more information or to sign up as a vendor, email marfasatmarket@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of Malinda Beeman

The Marfa Saturday Market, now in its 18th season, opens this weekend in an all new location.

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Mental health

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would reach out to the Region 18 Education Service Center to bring in an outside counselor if students or staff experience a traumatic event.

After the murder of teacher Sophia Sullivan in 2018, Marfa ISD collaborated with Region 18 to bring in counselors from the surrounding area to help support grieving staff and students. Marfa ISD Student Success Coordinator David Natividad, who provides traditional counseling to students, said the district maintains that relationship with Region 18 and would reach out to them in the event of a tragedy.

Larger districts like Alpine and Presidio ISDs have several full-time counselors. Alpine ISD employs three full-time certified counselors, one on each campus, and contracts with a licensed professional counselor (LPC) who provides additional counseling to students one day a week.

Rinehart said that so far this year, the LPC has worked with around 50 students and 20 different families, but there is more "demand and need than time available." Alpine ISD has 900 students enrolled ranging in age from 5 to 18, meaning the mental health support students require varies widely, she said. "The mental wellness needs of students, just like adults in the community, are quite expansive," Rinehart said.

The American School Counselor Association recommends a maximum ratio of one counselor to every 250 students. That is essentially the ratio at Marfa ISD. Natividad, who is currently pursuing his counselor certification, said the fact that Marfa ISD is small plays to its advantage, allowing him to meet with more students one-on-one.

"Schools that have 1,500 students or 3,000 students, 14 counselors with hundreds of students each, it's a little bit easier here," Natividad said. "When we do have students dealing with issues, whether it be mental health issues, anxiety, depression, I get a chance to sit and talk with them and evaluate how they're doing."

The LPC Alpine ISD works with — which the district can pay for due to an Office of the Governor grant focused on trauma-informed counseling — is able to provide more therapeutic counseling services than the full-time counselors, Rinehart said. The district used to have a full-time LPC who was brought in with grant funds after a school shooting in 2016 in which a 14-year-old freshman killed herself and injured another student.

The district tried to hire another LPC in 2022 but was unsuccessful. Rinehart said LPCs are in short supply in the area as is, and school districts simply can't compete with salaries LPCs can earn in private practice.

School counselors themselves are hard to come by. Alpine ISD's high school counselor is retiring this summer after 18 years with the district and will need to be replaced, a situation Rinehart sees as a challenge due to the basically nonexistent applicant pool. "It's not: post a position and have 10 people certified, interested and willing," Rinehart said. "It's part of the statewide teacher shortage that we're seeing extended into the counselor space as well."

The district is working with Texas Tech's University Health Sciences Center to create pathways for school counselors to become LPCs, allowing them to earn the required 3,000 hours of training with district internships, in the hopes they will train up and retain counselors familiar with certain age groups of students. "It may allow them to specialize further in meeting the needs of those ages, in a way that someone in private practice in the community probably couldn't specialize in such a nuanced way," Rinehart said.

That LPC program expansion is included in a grant Alpine ISD recently won from the TEA. Alpine ISD was one of two districts in West Texas to receive the Stronger Connections grant — a $1 million boost for student wellness programs. The district plans to spend the money on hiring more LPCs, a snack program and $300,000 for capital improvements, primarily upgrades to its outdoor recreation spaces.

That money will quickly run out though, Rinehart said, without "significant funding or hardly any funding from the state to fund mental wellness resources at school districts on a continuing basis."

Rinehart understands the need for greater mental health resources for local children on a personal level. One of her two children was involved in a dog attack this past fall, and the family traveled all the way to Midland-Odessa to get the child counseling they needed after the traumatic event, an effort she acknowledged few have the resources to accomplish.

"What it takes to be able to do that — to go three hours away, to take off work, to have that flexibility and financial ability — versus having some of our systems locally that could provide that level of therapeutic counseling here," Rinehart said.

She sees the opportunity for Alpine ISD to become a center for mental healthcare in town, connecting "mental wellness resources to a pretty significant section of our community's population, through the students that are in public school and through their families," Rinehart said.

She sees the opportunity for Alpine ISD to become a center for mental healthcare in town, connecting "mental wellness resources to a pretty significant section of our community's population, through the students that are in public school and through their families," Rinehart said.

In addition to Natividad offering counseling services, Marfa ISD has a memorandum of understanding with PermiaCare, the local mental health authority, and will refer students to them when needed. Natividad said a few MISD students also take advantage of a program called Texas Child Health Access to Telemedicine (TCHAT), a free telehealth service connecting students to LPCs and psychiatrists offered through Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso.

But Marfa ISD's counseling programs have, at times, fallen short, according to the mother of a female 13-year-old Marfa ISD student — who wished to remain anonymous to protect her child's identity — dealing with ongoing mental health issues. The mother said her daughter was experiencing bullying and panic attacks at school, and the situation recently worsened, leading the family to pursue help in a city hours away.

Her daughter previously met with a local LPC last summer and this fall, but "didn't connect with him," and the family was not made aware of any other options for continued counseling. She said the school was aware of her daughter's mental health issues but didn't do enough to intervene. "I think they failed on that, just recognizing the signs of mental health within my daughter and not acting swiftly enough," the mother said.

She said she also had a hard time getting in touch with school officials.

The mother said the school nurse did offer support to her daughter, and school administrators were concerned about her daughter's situation, but said there wasn't much they could do without concrete evidence of bullying. Natividad and Superintendent Arturo Alferez declined to comment on the matter, citing an "ongoing investigation" and protecting the privacy of the student.

The mother said the students' "unmonitored" access to cell phones throughout the school day is a concern of hers, as is the lack of bullying prevention or awareness programs.

Natividad said the district does have mechanisms in place, including his counseling services and TCHAT, to prevent and address bullying. "There are things in place to definitely help both those who bully, try to help them to stop, and of course there's stuff in place to help and get resources to those who feel that they have been bullied," he said.

Alferez stressed that the district communicates at the beginning of the school year to all students that bullying will not be tolerated and offers instruction on how to report bullying of themselves or other students to administrators.

Natividad, who graduated from Marfa High School 30 years ago, agreed one of the main things that has changed in regards to youth mental health is their exposure to endless information through the internet and social media, where they may wind up negatively comparing themselves to others. "A lot of information is false. A lot of information is harmful," Natividad said. "This is the first generation of students who are not really experiencing life, they're watching others experience life through social media."

He said Marfa ISD has a solid support system for students, but more resources can always be sought out. "I think we have a great foundation here," Natividad said. "Great teachers are helping our students, but we're always ready to connect more with resources that can help our students, especially in the area of mental health."

In light of her daughter's recent mental health issues, the mother said she has felt support from other parents and students, which helped her realize their family is not alone in dealing with a teen in a mental health crisis. "A lot of people have just been suffering in the dark because there's not much awareness," she said.

Presidio ISD has made strides this past year regarding mental health training and services for staff and students. In addition to two full-time counselors — one who is certified with the other working on their certification — the district works with Victor Hernandez, an LPC who also serves as a clinical director at PermiaCare.

Hernandez, who previously served as a full-time counselor with the district, combined his knowledge of the schools and the healthcare system to standardize and streamline communication between parents, teachers and clinicians. School counselors will refer a student to a clinician if it is determined psychotherapy or medication is likely needed.

Hernandez said referrals previously lacked proper documentation of student's situations, requiring clinicians to start from scratch. His solution was to create a counselor referral form, which all teachers and administrators have access to, that is in compliance with medical privacy laws and able to be shared with outside agencies. "It's protected by HIPAA, by FERPA, but it also helps you to communicate with outside professionals," Hernandez said.

The paper trail provided by the counselor referral form also allows district staff to access historical information on a particular student's mental health. "In that system, everything's documented. Let's say you were in middle school and for some reason, you start to have suicidal ideations," Hernandez explained. "The counselor or the middle school [administrators] will read your history so they will know that in fourth grade your parents separated, you were seen by the counselor, then you stopped and now something's happening."

Hernandez has also worked to improve counselor follow-up when referrals are made to outside agencies. He noted that in the past, counselors would refer students to clinics like PermiaCare, but did not keep track of their treatment after that.

Presidio ISD is also conducting more mental health training for teachers that covers how to identify students with mental health needs, how to notice bullying and launch an investigation and improved disciplinary tactics. On each campus there are five administrators who have undergone even more extensive training and can be called upon in case of a mental health crisis. The district also has plans in place for a trauma-informed response in the unfortunate case of a school tragedy.

The district's counseling team is expanding mental health and wellness training for its students, raising awareness on how to ask for help, how to report bullying, and providing motivational speakers via frequent pep rallies. In January the district opened "zen rooms" on each campus, neutral, relaxing spaces designed to host individual and group counseling sessions. Hernandez said so far the zen rooms are being regularly utilized by students and staff.

Hernandez said Presidio ISD is also working to comply with SB 179, a law passed in 2021 that requires 80% of counselors' time be put towards counseling duties outlined in the Texas Education Code, rather than on testing administration. "The primary responsibility of a school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal, and social abilities," the code states.

Part of Hernandez's reasoning for leaving his full-time counselor position with the district in 2020 was due to the fact that student mental health was not a priority of the previous administration, which put greater emphasis on standardized testing, he said. "Most counselors in a lot of the schools, they're not used for counseling, they're used for testing and for administrative duties," Hernandez said.

He said implementing several mental health strategies on a district-wide level is challenging, requiring staff and administrator buy-in, and work still needs to be done, but the need among students is undeniable. "Anxiety, depression, suicide has been growing," Hernandez said.

The Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend presents on several mental-health-related topics including bullying, suicide, teen dating violence, sexual assault and healthy relationships to area high schools and middle schools. Community Educator and Client Advocate Virginia Sandoval visits with students in Alpine most often and also travels to Sanderson, Marathon, Fort Davis and Marfa to make presentations throughout the school year.

Sandoval said the center's approach is to raise awareness of common mental and behavioral health issues and prevent younger generations from perpetuating cycles of abuse. "We have been getting into the area schools, because these are huge problems that we've noticed and trying to get them to understand the significance of what is going on at an earlier age, I think, benefits the students," Sandoval said. "I think they're willing to listen."

She said the Family Crisis Center is working to lessen the stigma around sexual assault and other abuse, and she has had students come up to her after presentations who do open up about those experiences and ask her for help.

"We see generations of victims, of survivors. If this is what they're learning at home, they think that's normal to grow up in, in a home that can be abusive, violent," Sandoval said. "We want them to understand there's resources out there for them. There's the Family Crisis Center, there's PermiaCare, there's the school system, there's trusted adults they can turn to; we don't want them to think they're alone."

Sandoval arms students with information on where to find help, including the Family Crisis Center hotline at 1-800-834-0654, loveisrespect.org, thehotline.org, 988 Lifeline and the national sexual assault hotline RAINN at 1-800-656-4673.

"We want to be one of the resources people think about," Sandoval said. "We want to be involved because it takes a community."

This story is part of a series on mental health in the Big Bend funded by the Presidio County Community Foundation.

Marfa city council

(Continued from page 1)

that use already existing."

City Manager Mandy Roane clarified that the rule would not impact detached casitas, for it was designed to prevent the subdividing of a single home. "This is for each detached building. You cannot have two kitchens in one building," Roane explained. "You can't split your home into two and make a duplex with two kitchens, but each detached building can have its own kitchen."

Acreman said the lack of affordable housing is among the City Council and P&Z's concerns and helped drive the last two ordinance amendments which will legalize the use of commercial and industrially-zoned properties as residential spaces.

"The changes that we're pushing for would make it so that you could have a dwelling unit and a business on the same lot, even in the same building," Acreman said. "That's a way that we can steer higher density, more housing options, but steer into the place where we've heard from people that they want it most, which is in the downtown core, and not so much in the residential fringes."

Schwab said he was pleased to hear he would still be able to use his casita lawfully but still opposed the prevention of subdividing a home by including two kitchens. "I don't see why we'd be opposed to that," Schwab said. "I think, going forward, allowing for a single structure to be divided and have two kitchens, that will help solve some of our problems."

Next to speak on the zoning ordinance changes was Jim Mustard, current manager of the city's gas department, who used to serve as the city manager and a permitting specialist. He echoed Schwab's sentiments that the adoption of the ordinance changes didn't seem well thought out.

"You have a very complicated statute, and I don't think you all are ready to amend it," Mustard said. "I don't think you've considered all of the ramifications." "Some of these things are straightforward, and some of them aren't," he added.

Mustard's primary concern was also about the R-1 kitchen amendment. However, he disagreed with Schwab's point of view and felt it was "problematic" to allow people to subdivide their property and add additional units. "So if I have a 100, 120-foot lot, I can now put four houses in our R-1," Mustard said.

"I don't want my R-1 neighborhood turned into row after row of 25-foot lot houses," he added. "I bought a house in R-1 with the expectation that I would be able to maintain the neighborhood. These are the kind of things you need to consider."

With no other citizen comments, Roane said council was still awaiting a memo from their lawyer regarding additional ordinance changes that Councilmember Acreman requested, and they needed to table the item for further discussion at their next meeting before a vote.

Acreman noted they will also take Schwab and Mustard's public comments into consideration. "We've gotten things to consider from the community," he said. "This is actually the first time we've had some lively dissent and debate."

In a follow-up with The Big Bend Sentinel, Roane explained the council still had time to work on and potentially amend the ordinance, and proposed changes could even be kicked back to P&Z for review.

HOT grants

Council members also heard from various cultural event leaders on their HOT grant requests. A portion of taxes the city receives from hotels and short-term rentals is funneled into grant programs for arts and culture, historical and sporting events. Grants help support events and advertising reimbursements.

Two times a year City Council hears grant funding recommendations from the HOT committee, which reviews applications. The city's website states the HOT committee is made up of "representatives from local tourism, arts, and preservation fields, as well as Marfa citizens," but its members currently only include three people: Mayor Manny Baeza, Mayor Pro Tem Raul Lara and Tourism Director Jennifer Conners.

Several locals spoke to council about their upcoming events and said they hoped to earn their support via HOT funds.

Producer of the Viva Big Bend music festival Stewart Ramser said his event, which will take place across the region this summer from July 24-28, is in its 13th year and greatly benefits from the city's HOT grants. "Marfa's been a big part of that for all those years, especially with the help of the HOT funds," Ramser said. "That money really helps us have an expanded program here in Marfa. Nighttime shows are the biggest shows; we have almost 40% of those shows in Marfa."

The organizer of Marfa's Agave Festival, taking place June 6-9 this year, Tim Johnson, said HOT grants help him pay stipends to presenters traveling from Mexico and across the U.S. for the accessible event. "All of the nights have free food and drink, all the programs are free, and I think it's just a pretty incredible way to celebrate Marfa and the Chihuahuan Desert culture," Johnson said.

Alongside those long-established festivals were representatives from new events bringing more arts and culture programming to the region.

Tierras Sonidas, a new experimental sound art festival taking place May 24-26 in Marfa — with venues yet to be announced — was represented by local musician Andrew Stevens who said requested HOT funds would help house visiting musicians and artists performing in the festival.

Infinite Hellscape music festival organizer Shea Carley, whose event is taking place this weekend May 3-5 at venues across the region, said the festival aims to uplift underrepresented artists, and in particular "support local artists and foster connections between local talent and talent from Austin."

"We hope that the festival will encourage people to come back to the region time and time again, and we hope you will consider us for the HOT grant," Carley said.

Before announcing awards, Roane said the HOT committee had to make some tough decisions because more money was requested than available this grant cycle.

"What the committee seemed to lean a little bit more towards this time were the free events," Roane said. "We're helping out those events because those aren't generating any income on their own, as opposed to those events that do have tickets, wristbands and entry fees."

Council voted to approve $3,000 to Saint Mary's Church for its bazaar; $2,500 and the use of the U.S.O. to the Presidio County Golf Committee; $5,500 to Ballroom Marfa for a 2024 exhibition, Steady; $6,500 for this year's Viva Big Bend festival; $8,500 for this year's Agave Festival; $4,635 to Marfa Recording Studio for this year's Tierras Sonidas festival; $13,500 to the Marfa Chamber of Commerce for this fall's Marfa Lights Festival; $1,570 for this year's Infinite Hellscape festival; and $2,250 to the Marfa Municipal Alliance of Dead Country Folk Singers for a Fourth of July show.

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Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Last weekend I made a new friend. While I was out to dinner, a long-time resident of our town didn't allow our prior non-affiliation to get in the way of an introduction; she politely asked if she could join me for a minute, sat down and offered me something I was grateful to receive — a piece of her mind.

Apparently it was something I said.

There is currently an item being debated at Marfa City Hall about whether or not property owners in Marfa's "downtown" and industrial districts should be granted the right to use their property as both businesses and residences (example — having an apartment above a shop). I was advocating that the council adopt language that allows this to occur as a conforming use, and that this added incentive for investors of more modest means would allow old buildings to be used creatively in ways that add housing, thus allowing the taxing entities to raise more revenue from taxes and services. Because I presumed the mayor and council knew what I meant, since they pass the budget, I did not specify that I was speaking about raising tax revenue from NEW units, not raising anyone's current taxes.

I understand everyone's frustration with their higher property taxes. I recently served on Presidio County's Appraisal Review Board. One of the most troubling of the common occurrences I encountered during the board's tax hearings was listening to members of our community who could no longer afford to pay the taxes on property they and their families have owned here for generations.

There are two ways that the city can legally lower your taxes. First, the city can lower their expenses and pass the savings on to property owners via a lower tax rate (this is different from lowering your "taxable value." The appraisal district is not legally at liberty to lower your value as a matter of discretion). The second way to lower everyone's taxes is to generate new revenue in a targeted way that doesn't increase expenses, which would allow the city to operate by collecting fewer dollars from each taxpayer. This comes from the idea that, for example, we only have one city manager, and so her salary would not increase because of adding a few new housing units … adding new taxable units to our rolls will allow each of us to pay a little less.

As a hypothetical example, let's imagine the old Christopher's store on El Paso Street being developed into several units instead of one giant store … the building has two entrances, meaning one entrance could be the entrance to a commercial enterprise, such as a cafe or shop, and the other entrance could be street access to a few one- or two-bedroom apartments.

Currently, according to the district's latest numbers online, Christopher's has an assessed value of only $156,710 despite being over 6,000 square feet. If the building were developed into productive units, each one- or two-bedroom apartment would be taxed at rates higher than the entire tax roll currently being collected by this building. Our taxes fund our school, the hospital, and our county — so increasing the revenue generated in our city helps those entities as well. In addition to the new taxes, each unit will pay for trash, sewer and utilities, and this will lower the administrative costs of these services proportionately for everyone. With new revenue being generated "downtown," our local leaders can substantially lower our tax rate and give property owners some much needed relief.

Will this plan definitely work? It's hard to say, but I argue that the city has had their current policies in place for many years, and yet we have arrived at this period of discontentment where housing is outrageously unaffordable and local legacy families are withering on the vine. We know what we are doing now isn't working — it certainly won't harm anything to try something new for a while downtown and see how successful it is. It could be just the thing we need.

Tony Georges
Marfa

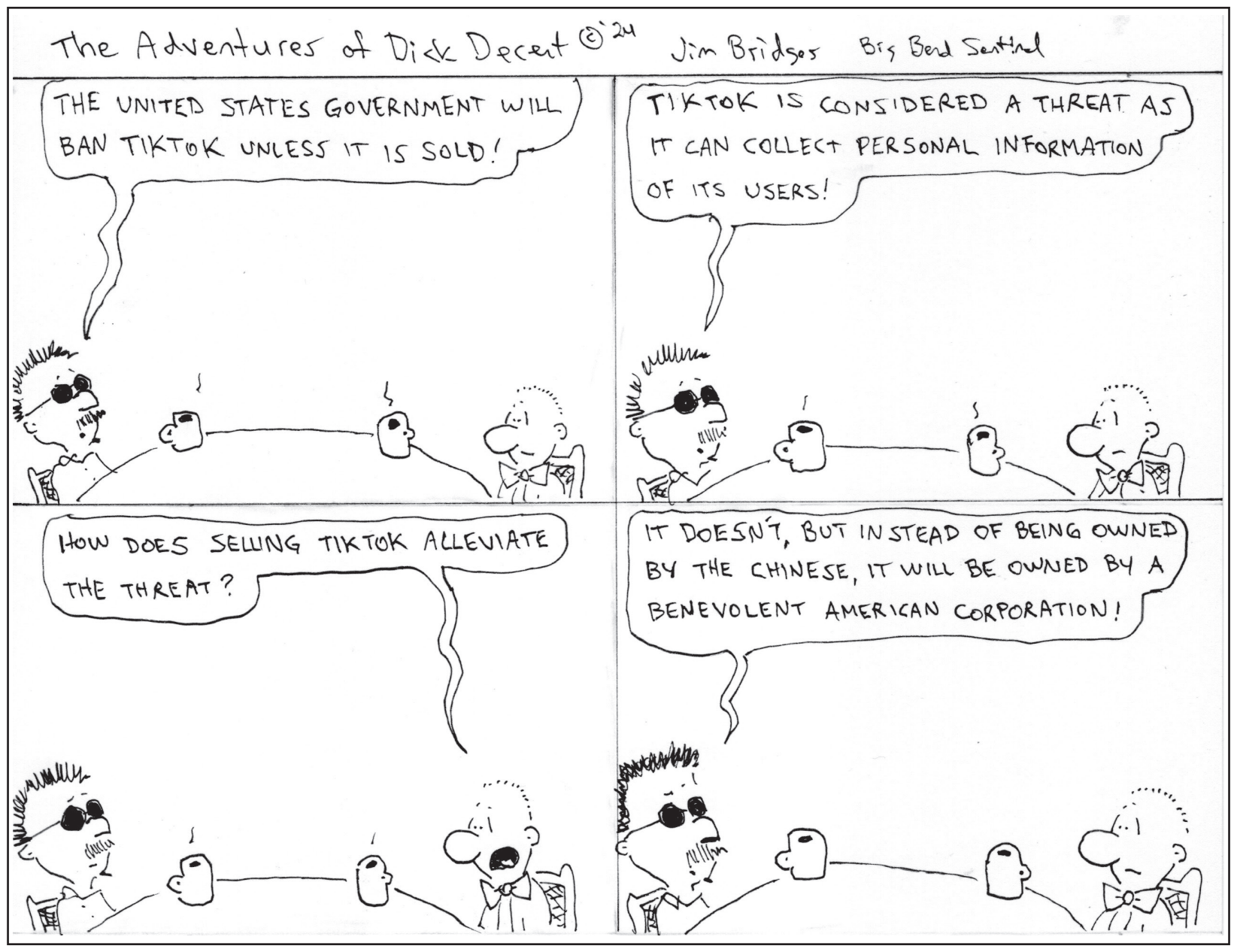
• • •

Editor:

The Marfa Saturday Market returns for its 18th consecutive year on Saturday, May 4, in a new location: 111 East Oak Street between the Marfa Country Clinic and the Marfa Public Library.

Regular vendors will be returning, new vendors will be participating, and we encourage more of both. When a change in City of Marfa policy midway through our last season made our previous location, the U.S.O. pavilion, irregular, the community responded: The Big Bend Sentinel, Cactus Liquors, Cochineal, Corte del Norte, El Cosmico, Larry's Burgers, Marfa Spirit Company, and The Lumber Yard recognized the value of this Marfa treasurer and offered space to ensure the market continued. The vendors collectively settled on the more central library parking lot for a variety of reasons, but we are eternally grateful for this show of community support.

Bob Schwab, Malinda Beeman
Marfa



To the Editor,

The Rio Grande:

There was a time of joyful people who came and went from both sides. They crossed the Rio as they pleased, no longer, now the Rio cries. The crossings are like jungles, with danger, deceit, and lies. People suffer, and many times die. Much sadness, so the Rio cries. The want for Yanqui Dollars will be mostly the reasons why. They live for "It," and die for "It." The almighty "It" is why the Rio cries. Many live in anger and frustration. Evil players profit as days go by. Others couldn't care less about it. How much longer must the Rio cry? Since January of 2021, many millions of illegal migrants crossed open U.S. borders. With them came a flood of illegal drugs. Thousands of Americans die each year from these drugs, and many U.S. politicians don't seem to care. There was a time when outlaws threatened Americans, like cartels do now, who made the mistake of crossing the Rio Grande to attack New Mexico. Thousands of U.S. troops were sent to Mexico which put an end to it. So why isn't this much worse state of affairs not being handled in the same way? Very much like the Mexican Federales, the U.S. federal government can also be seen as pathetically corrupt.

James R. Le Blanc
Fort Davis, Texas

• • •

Dear Editor,

The Rotary Club of Marfa would like to thank all of the sponsors, donors and golfers for their support of the 2024 Rotary Golf Tournament held on April 27. The event was a huge success raising more than $7,500 for scholarships for local students.

A big thank you goes out to Action Heating & Cooling, B2 Rock House Ranch, Barbara Love, Big Bend Coffee Roasters, Big Bend Sector MWR, Bill Bryant, Cactus Liquors, Carmen's Boutique Hotel, City of Marfa, Cristina and Hector Mendez, Diane and Steve Parker, Virgie and Eddie Pallarez, El Muerto Springs Ranches, Fowlkes Cattle Co, Francis and Eugenia Wright, International Woman's Foundation, Lilliana Fields, Livingston Insurance Agency, Livingston Ranch Supplies, Marfa Burrito, Marfa Chamber of Commerce, Marfa National Bank, Marfa Realty, Marfa Yards, Mary Baxter, Moonlight Gemstones, Planet Marfa, Hillary and Robert Summers, Skiles Properties, Susan Kirr, Rusty Martin, The Austinite Guest House, The Hotel Paisano, The Lincoln Marfa, Tom Jacobs, Vilis Inde, Trey Gerfers, Triangle Quarter Horses, Lajitas Golf Resort, Joe Williams, Virginia and Dan Platt, Para Llevar, Martha Bumpas, Mark Morrison, Patrick Daly, Dairy Queen, The Sentinel Marfa, Raba Marfa, Mona and Rudy Garcia, Marfa Rentools, Marjo and Larry Skiles, The Thunderbird Hotel, Margaret's in Marfa, Josie Martinez, Jim Martinez and Jim Fissel. Special thanks to Nelly and Ernest Villareal for being great hosts and the Marfa High School cheerleaders for providing great food on the course for the golfers.

Dan Platt
Rotary Club of Marfa

To the Editor:

On behalf of The Chinati Foundation/La Fundación Chinati, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to Community Day and the high school art show this past weekend. In particular, I would like to thank the 19 student artists who created and displayed work as part of this year's exhibition, I'd rather be in Marfa.

Congratulations to Ayden Alvarez, Antonio Borunda, Madison Cash, Esdras Flores, Tenessa Hinojos, Ximena Longoria, Eric Martinez, Samantha Martinez, Katana Melendez, Jose Muñoz-Bueno, Oscar Meraz, Austin Milligan, Kily Ortiz, Kiko Rosas, Andres Solis, Giselle Torres, Flavio Udave, Itzel Urrutia, and Asael Zubia. Thank you for sharing your work with us.

Thank you to Chinati's incredible education department: Michael Roch, Pearl Hesselden, and Emily Fule. And thank you to the Marfa ISD team whose collaboration makes this annual event possible: Arturo Alferez, Griselda Hinojos, Kevin Klock, Adele Powers, and Brian Salcido.

Chinati would like to thank the Marfa ISD Parent-Teacher Organization for preparing and serving a wonderful dinner, and D.J. Prepney432 for providing the accompanying music. Many thanks to Amber Hinojos, Tenessa Hinojos, Johnnie Gomez, Rachel Gomez, Bianca Gonzalez, Rosela Rivera, Arturo Daniel Santos, Vianney Sylvana Santos, Mayra Torres, and Amy White for your time and energy.

Community Day 2024 was generously supported by Ben E. Keith, El Cosmico, Glazers Beer & Beverage, Jenny Laird, and Marfa National Bank. Additional contributions were provided by Bordo, Duncan Disposal, and Joey Benton and Silla.

Chinati's educational and public programming is supported by the Prentice Farrar & Alline Ford Brown Foundation, the Cowles Charitable Trust, the Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation, the Warren Skaaren Charitable Trust, #startsmall, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Union Pacific Foundation.

Caring for and sharing Chinati would not be possible without the contributions of our staff and interns, who work hard all year and who worked incredibly hard to make this daylong celebration possible. A special thank you to Sandra Hinojos and our facilities team for their seamless planning and preparation. All of us at Chinati look forward to welcoming you back soon! Admission is always free to Brewster, Jeff Davis, and Presidio county residents.

With appreciation,
Caitlin Murray, Director

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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.

Community

OUR WATER MATTERS

Presidio County's geothermal future looks bright

by TREY GERFERS
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

Conventional geothermal energy is found in the form of steam and very hot water beneath the earth's surface at depths of several feet to a few miles. These reservoirs of liquid heat can be tapped and brought to the surface to generate electricity. Recent advances in drilling and recovery techniques pioneered for unconventional oil and gas extraction are paving the way to a future of unconventional geothermal energy production, also known as geothermal anywhere (GA), which involves mining the heat stored in the hot rock deep in the earth's subsurface. A 2023 report titled "The Future of Geothermal in Texas — Contemporary Prospects and Perspectives," included a map that highlighted Presidio County as one of the areas with some of the hottest rock in the state. Based on that report, the Presidio Municipal Development District (PMDD) hired Dr. Ken Wisian and his team at the Bureau of Economic Geology (BEG) at UT-Austin to conduct an assessment of the county's geothermal potential, which was recently completed.

GA involves the use of novel drilling methods to create a closed loop deep in the ground, through which a liquid (such as water or an engineered fluid) is then pumped. This liquid picks up heat from the surrounding formation and returns to the surface in the form of steam, where it drives turbines to generate electricity. The steam then condenses at the top of the system, where it is collected and pumped back into the subsurface to repeat the process again.

The assessment divides Presidio County into three zones: the "Border" zone (where known subsurface temperatures are hottest), the "Interior" zone (which surrounds Marfa and where known temperatures are not as hot as the border region, but remain above the worldwide subsurface average), and the "Big Bend" zone (where available data are sparsest). The authors combined several data sources to produce generalized models of the subsurface in each of the three zones. Based on an analysis of the available data, Presidio County's ace in the hole, so to speak, is the "basement" level of the subsurface in the Border zone, which occurs at around 8,000 feet and reaches temperatures of between ~300°F to 390°F, "indicating "a high-quality resource."

Beyond the potential for electricity generation, the authors emphasize that "it is critical also to explore the direct uses of heat, which can utilize more resources more efficiently than electricity generation." Direct heat from geothermal sources "can be used for heating and cooling, agriculture/aquaculture, and virtually any industrial process." If geothermal is additionally used to replace electricity for heating and cooling, this can greatly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with conventional power generation.

The authors ultimately suggest that combining geothermal uses into "cascading scenarios" that produce additional cumulative revenue streams could improve the overall economic benefits of investing in geothermal development. "After a geothermal resource has been used to generate electricity, the effluent output will still contain usable heat, which can be used for a secondary application requiring a lower temperature. The heat pattern can be continued in an efficiently designed system, with the effluent of one process cascading through lower and lower temperature applications."

Several such scenarios described in the assessment could involve food processing, high-value crop production, or a fresh-cut-flower growing hub near the Texas-Pacifico South Orient Rail Line in the Border zone near Presidio. Here, the heat would go into facilities for drying food or into greenhouses for optimal plant growth, and the generated electricity would be used for "running the pumps, fans, and other equipment required" to keep those facilities running at maximum efficiency. Another scenario involves geothermally-powered direct air capture of CO2 from the rocks that underlie in the Interior zone around Marfa and exporting the CO2 to the Permian Basin for use in enhanced oil recovery processes.

Perhaps the most fascinating scenario could involve siting geothermal electricity production to keep the existing molten sodium-sulfur battery system near the town of Presidio "fully charged and online" to supplement Presidio's existing solar voltaic facility. Additional battery systems and solar voltaic facilities could be constructed to improve the region's energy resilience as the statewide grid is likely to decline and fail more frequently. All of the leftover heat could then be fed into the cascade of wealth-creating processes described above, transforming Presidio County into an economic hotbed fueled by emission-free, renewable energy. The fact that all of southern Presidio County is designated by the state as an Economic Development Zone would qualify these projects for "substantial state supported subsidies (as well as federal subsidies from the Build-Back-Better and Inflation Reduction Act)," making our little corner of heaven out here a seriously attractive area for innovative investment.

Dr. Wisian will present his findings on Wednesday, May 8, at 5 p.m. at the PMDD offices at 608 W. O'Reilly St. in Presidio. Visit https://meet.google.com/rpu-ftcx-gfo to watch the presentation remotely.

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.

Jeff Davis County sheriff

(Continued from page 1)

said a lot of the programs he's championed in the past in Hudspeth County focus on getting area kids and families engaged with law enforcement — such as Red Ribbon Week, which encourages youth to live a healthy, drug-free life — are missing in Jeff Davis County. "I've always wanted to protect my kids, and take care of other kids, take care of all their families, take care of them just the way that law enforcement takes care of my family while I'm gone," Lopez said.

Lopez said he wants to be a sheriff who shows up at events and helps sponsor them so that the department is more in step with the community. "They don't do any of that at the schools now," Lopez said, "The sheriff's department is not involved." He said he enjoys moments like his involvement with the Thin Blue Line Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club that raises money for scholarships, which he helped hand out in Marfa ISD last spring.

"When I was in Hudspeth County, one of the biggest things that I did was being a school resource officer," Lopez said. "So I took care of all the say-no-to-drugs programs and stuff like that."

Lopez said in addition to being the school resource officer, who was responsible for active shooter drills, he also worked narcotic investigations and helped administratively in Hudspeth County, making him a well-rounded, experienced officer.

Stephens said he also has extensive experience after starting in law enforcement in Matagorda and Brazoria counties, serving on special investigative units and a SWAT team, before falling in love with Jeff Davis County and joining the sheriff's department there.

"I didn't have any political aspirations at all," he said of when he arrived. "I took a pay cut and ended up going from a 40-hour-a-week job to 60 plus. I noticed some things that I didn't think were the best way to run a sheriff's office and was hoping to make some changes."

"One thing is, I want to have an open-door policy," Stephens said. "Part of that is a lack-of-personnel problem, but there seems to be a barrier between the citizens and the sheriff's office, and I want to try to fix that and get the community more involved." He added that it wasn't just a metaphor for openness. "I've never actually seen a sheriff's office before where the front door was always locked," like it is in Fort Davis, he said.

Those goals will be more difficult if the deputies are overworked, he said. "I really believe we need a lot more deputies than what we have here. There's a sheriff, a chief deputy, and two street deputies right now. I'm one of them. And we're bigger than the state of Delaware." Stephens acknowledged that adding to the force would be tough for a county continually fighting budget deficits, but that he is ready to make the effort.

Lopez agreed more deputies are needed to avoid burnout, adding deputies should not act as purely patrol officers. It's hard to engage with the community when all you're doing is responding to calls, he said.

Lopez downplayed the importance of Stephens' stance on constitutional sheriffs, but he noted how it did differentiate him from his opponent. "You know, I'll be honest with you. I'm not big on politics and stuff like that. The way I look at it is if you're a good sheriff, if you're a good person and you're willing to do something good for the community, there's really no need to put labels on yourself." But Lopez also mentioned a community forum he attended where Stephens didn't give a good explanation of why he wanted the label.

The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) is the primary organization serving the movement, and Texas has a large contingent of sheriffs — some 50 as of last year, according to Texas Tribune reporting — that had participated in the association's training. Often association members are tied to election-denier groups, Second Amendment abolitionists refusing to follow any gun laws that may develop, anti-migrant organizations and, on the border, militia groups. Many in the group espouse the idea of nullification or interposition, legal theories that previously centered on states having the right to nullify federal law, with a history of its use as far back as the Civil War and through the decades of desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement. That theory spread to a more local level with ideas of "constitutional counties," with the sheriffs being the supreme elected officials at that level.

With some in the CSPOA forming ties with white nationalists and those supporting former President Donald Trump's actions to try and stop President Joe Biden from assuming office, criticism has also painted the organization as a threat to democracy.

Stephens said there will be "bad apples" in any organization, and his intent is only to preserve rights, not violate them. "I just don't have any intention of violating the civil rights of citizens," he said.

Both Lopez and Stephens pledged to be more open with the media, something they acknowledge local sheriffs aren't often keen to do. Stephens said he wants to send reports out on Facebook as the Presidio and Brewster county sheriffs do, with a goal of getting the community more involved with events his office would hold. Stephens said news reports can add to public safety and be a conversation starter. "I'd like to work with the media and with the citizens and hear their concerns," he said.

"A sheriff being able to talk to the media is very important to me," Lopez said. "Especially if it has to do with the community." He also plans to use social media in the effort and believes that criminal activity should be more publicized. "I would like to know if there's a person that's taking stuff from the neighborhood. And if I see him out there walking around, I would like to know who it is and if he's walking around my neck of the woods, and maybe he's not supposed to be there," Lopez said.



Photo by Soraya Matos

PUBLIC TALK AND COCHINEAL DYE WORKSHOP

WITH ARTIST PORFIRIO GUTIÉRREZ

CHARLA PÚBLICA Y TALLER DE PIGMENTAR CON COCHINILLA

CON EL ARTISTA PORFIRIO GUTIÉRREZ

PUBLIC TALK ON THE USE OF NATURAL DYES
Thursday, May 9, 6:00 p.m. at the Crowley Theater
The free public talk will be given in English. All are welcome.

TWO-DAY COCHINEAL DYE WORKSHOP AT CHINATI ART LAB
Saturday, May 11, and Sunday, May 12 | 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with 1 hour lunch
Enrollment is limited and will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis.
Email education@chinati.org or call 432.729.4362 x 225 to register. Advance registration is required. Translation of workshop techniques will be available for Spanish speakers.

CHARLA PÚBLICA SOBRE EL USO DE TINTES NATURALES
Jueves, 9 de Mayo, 18:00, al Crowley Theater
La charla pública gratuita se presentará en inglés. Todos serán bienvenidos.

TALLER DE DOS DÍAS DE PIGMENTAR CON COCHINILLA AL CHINATI ART LAB
Sábado, 11 de Mayo, y Domingo, 12 de Mayo | 10:00 a 16:00 con 1 hora de almuerzo
La inscripción es limitada y se determinará por orden de llegada.
Email education@chinati.org o llama a 432.729.4362 x 225 para registrarse. Es necesario registrarse con antelación. La traducción de las técnicas del taller estará disponible para hablantes de español.

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Chinati's educational and public programming is generously supported by the Prentice Farrar & Alline Ford Brown Foundation, the Cowles Charitable Trust, the Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation, the Warren Skaaren Charitable Trust, #startsmall, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Union Pacific Foundation.

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Marfa PUBLIC RADIO

Horns wrap up sports season with impressive showings

By LINDA OJEDA

MARFA — The official sports season comes to a close for the Shorthorns, with the high school softball, track and golf teams finishing up at the bi-district round and regional competitions the last two weeks of April.

The Lady Horns softball team fought back and forth with Menard Thursday evening in a seven-inning affair, with Marfa falling to the Yellow Jackets 7-13. Highlights for Marfa included sophomore Raven Martinez going 4 of 5 and scoring four times, along with Amaya Gomez getting on base at a perfect 3 of 3, with two hits, two RBIs, and one at-bat ending on an HP. The team brings back seven starters in 2025, four of which will be sophomores next year, and two pitchers in Martinez and Ava Flores who have shared the bulk of the pitching starts this season.

Marfa's JH Horns ended the track season at the district meet with the young team getting third place in the girls division and second place for the boys division.

Regional Track Meet representatives for Marfa last weekend were the women's 4x4, 8x2, and sprint relay teams consisting of Ava Flores, Madison Cash, Itzel Urrutia, and anchor, Maryfer Martinez, who has been running the Shorthorns best times this track season.

For the boys division, Ayden Alvarez competed in the discus throw, while Francisco Rosas competed in the 3200M and 1600M run. The Horns bring back all of these athletes next season and will be assisted with this year's current middle school standouts.



Photo courtesy of Linda Ojeda



Photo courtesy of Linda Ojeda



Photo courtesy of Linda Ojeda

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AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thu May 2

Hike w/ Homeless Dogs
9-10am at Interpretive Center
Meet some of the dogs from our local animal shelter and help take them on a short hike through the park.

Toddler Time
10:00am-11:00am at Alpine Public Library
Toddler Time is an early literacy program for children ages 0-5. Join us every Thursday morning from 10:00-11:30 am for learning centers, reading, songs, finger plays, and musical movement.

Fri May 3

First Friday Song Swap
6 pm - 9pm at Far West Guitars
First Friday song swap is at Far West Guitars Bring your guitar, a few songs, and let's just see what happens!

Infinite Hellscape Festival
5:00pm at French Co Grocer
Infinite Hellscape 2024 weekend of music across the Big Bend Region.

Sat May 4

Infinite Hellscape Festival
2:00pm - 12:00am at The Pony
Infinite Hellscape 2024 weekend of music across the Big Bend Region.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration!
11:00am - 11:00pm at Historic Murphy St.
Cinco de Mayo Celebration! Saturday May 4th on Historic Murphy Street!

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

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Sun May 5

Los Yonke Gallos vs. Los Chupacabras
11:00am at Vizcaino Park
Come support your favorite team in the Batalla De Tejas at the Vizcaino Park!

Infinite Hellscape Festival
11:00am at The Ritchey
Infinite Hellscape 2024 weekend of music across the Big Bend Region.

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

Free Boxing Practice
Sunday at 10:00am at MAINTENANT in Marfa - www.maintenantmarfa.com/boxingmarfa

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

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

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

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From the Archive

July 27, 1933

Depression era newspaper ads in The Big Bend Sentinel were a sign of the times.



Buy Before Prices Rise

Merchandise now in stock is priced according to our cost prices.

If you would save now is the time to buy hose, lingerie, shoes, ready-to-wear. They will soon cost you more.

Joe Soroker

For One Week

We will give the services listed below on—

MODEL A FORDS
CHEVROLET 4s & 6s
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GRIND VALVES
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Repairing Prices

In the Pre-Depression days people discarded perfectly good shoes for the whole family that needed only a half or whole sole.

In those days the cost of resoleing or reheeling shoes was not considered. In the past few years more and more people are considering new ways to economize.

With the present repairing costs it is the custom to save in everyway possible.

We are able to charge less until materials increase in cost.

Marfa Boot and Shoe Shop

Real Barbecue Extended Citizens By Fire Dep'm' Barbecue, Dance, Games Entertain 500 Guests

The Marfa Fire Department acted as gracious hosts to the business men and their families of the city, as well as friends of the Firemen, Wednesday evening, at a barbecue with all the trimmings, held at the Highland Fair Grounds. Close to five hundred guests gathered at seven o'clock to enjoy the hospitality of the Fire Department, and after appeasing their appetites with deliciously barbecued Highland Calves, salad, frijoles, "son-of-a-gun," bread, and hot coffee,

were entertained by games, a dance, and a short talk, all of which were greatly enjoyed as testified by the many expressions of approval extended the hosts.

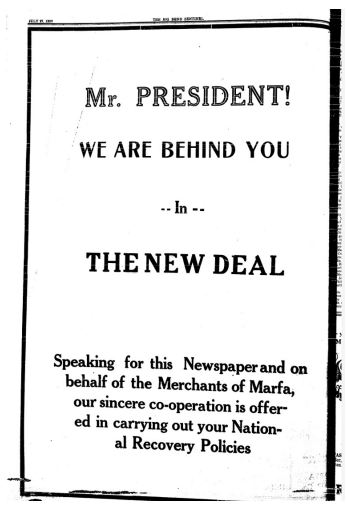
Conceived in the minds of the members of the local Fire Department several weeks ago, as a means of bringing the business men and citizens of the city together in a mutual good-will meeting for the purpose of explaining the aims and accomplishments of the Department, as well as soliciting their co-op-eration in maintaining the high efficiency rating held by the local fire boys, it was generally conceded Wednesday night that the barbecue had accomplished all that had been hoped for, and had been a success in every sense of the word.

Local Citizen is Optimistic Regarding Future of Marfa

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Block, and daughter, Betty, returned this week from a three week's visit with relatives and friends in California. Mr. Block in talking with the Sentinel reporter, stated that he took particular pains to investigate conditions prevailing in the territory outside of the Big Bend district, especially those in California.

According to Mr. Block, the economic situation in California, outside of Los Angeies, is deplorable, with little improvement seen or hoped for. Marfa and the Big Bend section, in Mr. Block's opinion, is weathering the storm in much better fashion than the California towns, and is, comparatively, in much better shape.

Mr. Block came back from the trip to the west very much more cheerful over our local conditions. They reported a most delightful trip, enjoying the many pleasures offered by the western states.



Mr. PRESIDENT!

WE ARE BEHIND YOU

-- In --

THE NEW DEAL

Speaking for this Newspaper and on behalf of the Merchants of Marfa, our sincere co-operation is offered in carrying out your National Recovery Policies

McDonald Observatory to host 'Dark Sky Week' May 7-11

TRI-COUNTY — Join McDonald Observatory May 7-11 for Dark Sky Week, a celebration of the famous night skies of Far West Texas. Event programming includes special access tours of two of the observatory's largest telescopes, astrophotography workshops, science lectures, a film screening of The Stars at Night and more.

Visit McDonaldObservatory.org for the full schedule and to book your passes. Residents of Brewster, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, Pecos, Reeves and Presidio counties get free passes using discount code BigBendSky at checkout.

McDonald Observatory collaborates with communities and businesses to preserve the region's dark skies. Learn about its Dark Skies Initiative – and how you can get involved – at McDonaldObservatory.org/DarkSkies.

Jeff Davis Democrats to hold garden gathering

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — The Jeff Davis County Precinct 1 Democrats will hold a "garden gathering" on Saturday, May 11, to share food, friendly conversation and mountain views in the mountains at Limpia Crossing near the foot of Blue Mountain.

The event is backyard casual, will provide refreshments and attendees are encouraged to bring binoculars and any snacks or drinks they'd like to share. Fun games will raise money for the Jeff Davis County Democratic Party. The gathering will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Cerro Colibri, 103 Cactus Drive, Limpia Crossing.

Native plant sale continues Saturday

ALPINE — The Native Plant Society's spring plant sale continues from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 4, behind Forever West Texas Realty at N. 8 th St. and Ave. E in Alpine.

A good selection of plants is available for those who missed the sale last weekend or those who shopped but want more. The sale is cash or check only.

Marfa High School junior Francisco Rosas competes in state art competition

SAN MARCOS — Marfa High School junior Francisco "Kiko" Rosas traveled to compete in the State Visual Arts Scholastic Event (VASE) competition in San Marcos this weekend.

Rosas was accompanied by Marfa High School senior Vinnie Quintana and art teacher Adele Powers. He advanced to state from regional competitions with his piece "Liberate," made primarily with white colored pencils on black paper that represents social anxiety disorder.

Rosas' work was assessed by jurors from across the United States on Friday, who awarded him the highest exemplary rating. He earned a state medallion and was named an All-State Artist by Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) and VASE.

Rosas said the experience of seeing other students' artwork from across the state inspired him to create more artwork for next year's competition. "The VASE art exhibit at San Marcos High School was honestly really great; the artwork that was there from around Texas was so nice, and full of deep meaning," Rosas said. "Many of the works represented the idea of growing up; the progression of the artist from childhood to maturity. Other pieces showed more cultural works from many countries like Mexico, China, Japan and India."

"I started thinking about what I'd like to create next year, and I have so many ideas now," he added.

In addition to the art competition, Rosas, Powers and Quintana enjoyed various activities around San Marcos, including the outlet mall, swimming at Rio Vista Park, a glow-in-the-dark kayak tour on the San Marcos River and dining at Ivar's River Pub. "It was jam-packed and really fun," Powers said.



Photo courtesy of Adele Powers

Marfa ISD junior Francisco Rosas competed in a state art competition this past weekend with his work "Liberate."

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DARK SKY WEEK

May 7-11, 2024

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- Science talks
- A special film screening
- Astrophotography workshops
- Solar viewings
- Star parties, and more!

VIEW THE SCHEDULE AND BOOK YOUR PASSES AT MCDONALDOBSERVATORY.ORG

McDonald Observatory collaborates with communities and businesses to preserve Far West Texas's famous night sky. Learn about our Dark Skies Initiative – and how you can get involved – at McDonaldObservatory.org/DarkSkies.

LIVE IN THE AREA?

Residents of Brewster, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, Pecos, Reeves, and Presidio counties get free passes for Dark Sky Week programs using discount code BigBendSky at checkout.

McDonald Observatory
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

DarkSky International hosted International Dark Sky Week April 2-8. Learn more at idsw.darksky.org.

Special thanks to Apache Corporation for their support and partnership to preserve the night skies over Far West Texas and to create the Preserving Dark Skies exhibit at the McDonald Observatory Frank N. Bash Visitors Center.



Past could be prologue for peace in Gaza

By SIDNEY BALMAN JR.

There often comes a moment in any armed conflict when, like two punch-drunk fighters, the bloodied combatants want only the relief of the bell. I experienced that moment, that brief respite between, in the Bosnian war, and I sense that it may have come in Gaza.

As a reporter hunkered behind a demolished tram with a group of Bosnian civilians in the heart of Sarajevo, Serb snipers in the hills above us waiting for a clean headshot, I could not conjure a path to ending a war and genocide that had killed at least 100,000 people and forced millions from their homes. But after 21 days in November 1995 at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the United States and its European allies orchestrated a 19-page peace agreement that ended the war. The alchemy that enabled such a seemingly impossible diplomatic tour de force rested on the shoulders of the late Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, under the guidance of the late Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former President Bill Clinton.

As the diplomatic and national correspondent for United Press International, the Bosnian war was not my first stint as a war correspondent or covering peace negotiations, nor would it be my last. But it was in the Balkans that I discovered the top-note of war was the sickening smell of burning human flesh, which hung over all of us during those 21 days of intense deal-making at the U.S. Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio.

The heart of the Dayton Accords involved painful compromises on all sides — Bosnians, Croats and Serbs — that preserved a multi-ethnic nation with a rotating presidency and separate sectors for the formerly warring factions. It was a sleepless, 21-day marathon for the small cadre of reporters allowed on the base as we attempted to sift through the backroom leaks of proposed maps and to interpret body language that at times had one party or another revving up their aircrafts on the tarmac and threatening to leave. With a pre-Putin Russia stumbling from the ashes of the former Soviet Union and largely out of the picture, Holbrooke, Christopher and Clinton delivered a master class in diplomatic hardball that ended a war and genocide.

Why, one may ask, is this relevant today? It is relevant because that conflict and the painful diplomatic conclusion could provide a blueprint for ending the war in Gaza.

It will exact painful concessions on both sides that shake the foundations of their raisons d'etre. And bringing it home will require the leadership of the United States, Europe, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Jordan and other players. In my view, having covered every American president since George H.W Bush, the opportunity for the type of leadership critical to forging a Gaza Accord may slip away come the November elections in the United States.

Granted, the devil is in the details, but the broad strokes of a peace agreement between Israel and Hamas seem rather obvious, and could be quite similar to the Bosnian Accords. The first step would be a ceasefire and exchange of prisoners. There are plenty of war crimes to be litigated later under the auspices of a United Nations War Crimes Tribunal. But that should be put off for another day, like many of the most divisive issues, such as the status of Jerusalem and the creation of a Palestinian nation. Even though a "two-state solution" has been at the heart of the conflict for decades, that formula does not seem relevant any longer in light of the current demographics of Israel and the geography of the Palestinians.

The starting point, as painful and controversial as it will be, should be that there will not be a Palestine, rather a multi-ethnic nation in which Israelis and Palestinians live under the same flag, perhaps a new flag. Like the Dayton Accords, which were no less painful or controversial, there should be a shared executive branch that has, for example, an Israeli head of government and a Palestinian head of state, and a quota of seats in Parliament for each side. Again, like the Dayton Accords, there should be sectors of Israel for both sides, with a robust multinational peacekeeping force under NATO command and a diverse contingent of troops from Arab and Muslim nations. Finally, the United States, as chief guarantor of the agreement, should host a donor's conference in which all nations pledge the billions of dollars it will take to rebuild Gaza. The rewards for Israel will be significant: diplomatic and territorial recognition from the entire Arab world, secure borders, open global trade, and for the first time since its establishment in 1948, peace.

Granted, a long and perilous road, but rife with opportunities for the United States, Russia and China to find common ground that could help them to overcome broader strategic differences that threaten the very existence of humankind.

Sidney Balman Jr. is a Pulitzer-nominated war correspondent, novelist, and writer in residence at Sul Ross State University. Sidbalman.com

Texas poet laureates featured at Fort Davis Library

FORT DAVIS — It is rare that a poet laureate visits the remote Big Bend, but two of them will be featured at the Jeff Davis County Library on Wednesday, May 8. Starting at 2 p.m., Karla K. Morton, a graduate of Texas A&M, will introduce her recent work which highlights national parks; a portion of the proceeds benefit the parks.

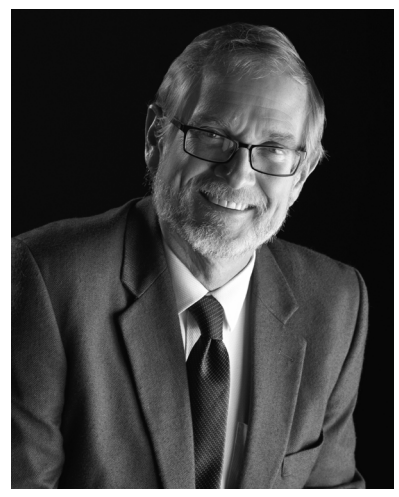
Morton has authored 16 poetry collections, is the recipient of several literary awards, is guest editor for TCU Press and was chosen for an E2C grant. She is published in many journals and was selected as Texas state laureate in 2010 — later collaborating with her husband, Alan Birkelbach, on The National Parks: A Century of Grace, the first book of poetry written in-situ by poets who have visited all 63 national parks.

Birkelbach became a Texas Poet Laureate in 2005 and is a Texas native who is also an award-winning writer. He compiled the anthology, 8 Voices of Contemporary Poetry from the American Southwest, which became part of the teaching curriculum for SMU in Dallas. Birkelbach is also published in numerous journals and will join his wife in a lively discussion regarding poetry at the library.

Light refreshments will be available. The program is free of charge and sponsored by Friends of the Library in Fort Davis.



Karla K. Morton



Alan Birkelbach



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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

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DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Dariela Muñoz
9th Grade

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

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

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

4/24

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

4/22

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Universal Crossword

Edited by Taylor Johnson May 13, 2024

ACROSS
1 Rocks in a cocktail
4 Alter ego of Bruce Wayne
10 Letters for your closest pal
13 Texter's "Much appreciated!"
14 Trapezist, e.g.
16 "___ said it!"
17 Cry from Homer Simpson
18 *Some coral reef explorers
20 Pied ___
22 "Quiet!"
23 *Converter that plugs into a certain PC port
26 Three-___ sloth
27 Wreck
28 Tupperware topper
29 Scatters, as seeds
30 Allow
31 Missing from a mil. base
33 Garden tool
34 *Fred Flintstone catchphrase
39 Condition causing repetitive behavior: Abbr.
40 Sound of a coin dropping into a fountain
41 ___-free (water bottle claim)
43 Jobs for musicians or freelancers
45 Playbill blurb
46 Flamenco cheers
47 Toy brick
48 *Hit the bar for happy hour, say
51 Not yet born
53 Tiny fly
54 Hit AMC crime drama starring Bryan Cranston ... and what the words in the starred clues' answers are doing, literally?
57 Ore. neighbor
59 "Correct"
60 Place confidence in
61 Mostly used-up pencil
62 Donkey
63 Appear to be
64 ETA predictor

DOWN
1 "___ be my pleasure!"
2 Chow mein alternative
3 First piece presented at a trial
4 Headquartered (in)
5 Capital of Ghana
6 Capote, familiarly
7 Rowdy crowd
8 Belittled
9 Lowest point
10 "Toodle-oo!"
11 Special ___ (military units)
12 Melted together
15 Up to, briefly
19 Nixed
21 Skillet, e.g.
23 Web address
24 Walk heavily
25 Fish popular in Filipino cuisine
29 Bathroom bar
31 Kindergarten basics
32 Bundle of cash
33 "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver" airer
35 Capital of Colombia
36 Lava lamp lump
37 Accommodating
38 Shared deep feelings
42 Inquire
43 Spotify categories
44 "Suppose so"
45 Charlotte, Emily or Anne of literature
46 Chicago airport code
47 Benghazi's land
48 Ear-to-ear smiles
49 Gather
50 Inflicted upon
52 ___ out a victory
55 Exam for some college srs.
56 Mooch, as a cigarette
58 Core group?

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

5/12

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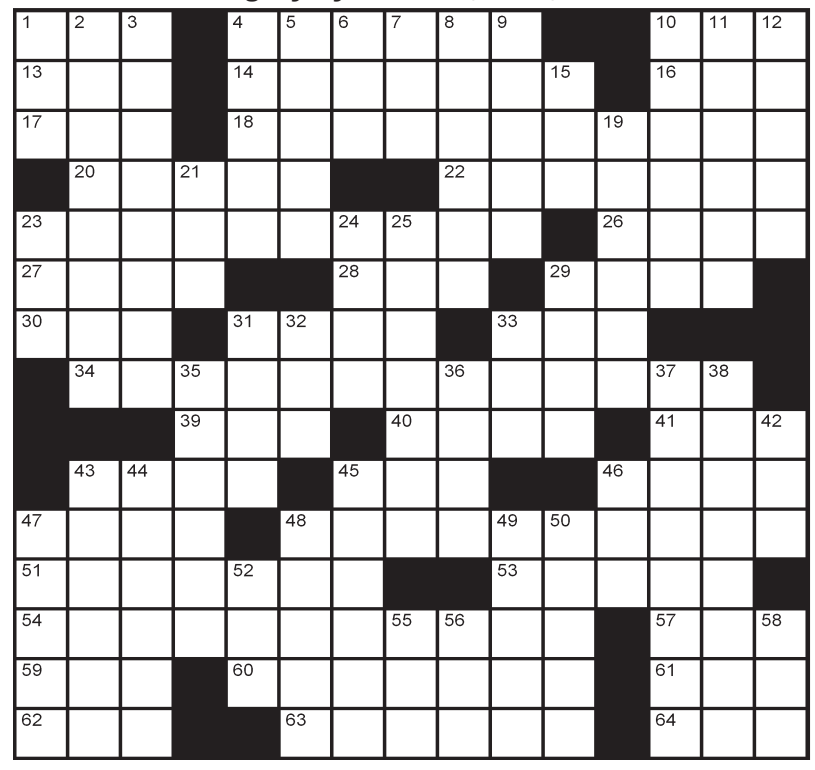
5/13

Naughty by Nature *by Jeffrey Lease*



☺MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU☺

APR	Thu, May 2	Fri, May 3	Mon, May 6	Tue, May 7	Wed, May 8
BREAKFAST	FRENCH TOAST, SAUSAGE, FRUIT	SHORTHORN SUCCESS DAY	BURRITO, HASH BROWN, FRUIT	CEREAL, TOAST, FRUIT	WAFFLES, BACON, FRUIT
LUNCH	PIZZA, CARROTS, GREEN BEANS, FRUIT, DESSERT	SHORTHORN SUCCESS DAY	MEATBALL SUB SANDWICH, GARDEN SALAD, GREEN BEANS, PEACHES, DESSERT	COUNTRY FRIED STEAK, GRAVY, POTATOES, CUCUMBERS, ROLL, STRAWBERRIES.	HOT DOG, CHIPS, TOMATO CUP, FRUIT.

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU, MAY 2 - 4: HS Track - Austin
MON, MAY 6 - 8: HS Golf Girls - State Tournament Austin

OBITUARY



Meredith

In the early morning hours of April 26, 2024, **Bennye Sims Meredith,** 93, quietly and peacefully walked into the waiting arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She did not waste one minute worrying about the future or what would happen next, she knew.

Born and raised in southern Arkansas, Bennye was the oldest of three children. She attended Camden High School where she played the trombone and taught herself to play tennis. While getting her degree at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, she was a cheerleader and sang and traveled extensively with the choir. An avid reader, Bennye also loved playing the piano and was especially accomplished at boogie-woogie jazz tunes. Before she could drive a car, Bennye earned her pilot's license at 16. She embarked on what she knew would be an extensive flying career, ending only after crashing her plane into a hangar during her first solo flight. Bennye wasn't injured, but the plane and hanger weren't so fortunate, and on to Plan B.

From an early age, Bennye was drawn to missions. She attended the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth where she was also drawn to an outgoing, soon-to-be ordained minister from Oklahoma named Hugh Meredith. They married and she took up the complicated role of preacher's wife, serving in churches in Oklahoma and Texas. Bennye and Hugh had four children — Molly, Jim, Jack and Ann. Bennye's strong belief in the power of education and desire to see them succeed gave her a judge, an assistant federal public defender, a school principal/rancher and a teacher/administrator at the renowned School for the Deaf in Austin. Bennye, the daughter of a watch repairman and seamstress, could not have been prouder or more supportive of them.

When her children left home to make their own way, Bennye and Hugh traveled the world — Europe, China and Japan to name a few. She taught junior English at the high school level, a subject she loved. Her students learned to appreciate the joys of grammar, punctuation and literature.

When the decision was made to move to Alpine, this child of the dense piney woods of Arkansas wasn't sure she was going to like it. And she didn't like it; she loved it. She loved the wide-open spaces, beautiful mountains and intoxicating desert views. She loved the independence of the people who lived there. She was home.

Bennye gave of herself and her money to many local organizations, regularly volunteering at The Sunshine House, delivering Meals on Wheels for many years. At the Alpine Library, she not only planted and regularly watered trees, but entered and won the library's annual talent show playing, of course, the trombone, accompanied on the piano by her good friend, Audrey Painter. Never interested in being the center of attention, Bennye was always ready with a beautiful smile, an extended hand and the desire to make someone else feel appreciated and seen. She grew especially attached to her little dog Frida, who was never far from her side.

Bennye Meredith is preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Gladys Sims; and her brother, Dennis Sims. She is survived by her four children, Molly Meredith Francis, Jim Meredith and wife Debbie, Jack Meredith and wife Erica David, Ann Meredith and husband David Escamilla; five grandchildren, Meredith and Morgan LeNoir, Lane Meredith Lakey and husband Wade, Kelli Meredith Cross and her husband Cameron, and Hector Meredith; five great-grandchildren, Hudson, Preston, Nolan, Jordan and Evan Lakey; and her brother Lewis and children Cindy, Stacey and Scott.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, May 11, at 10:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church of Alpine. In lieu of flowers, Bennye would without a doubt ask you to show an unsolicited and unexpected act of kindness to a person in need, pick up a piece of trash and put it in the trash can, participate wholeheartedly in a cause you believe in, and occasionally just look up at the sky and give a prayer of thanks that you live in this beautiful world.

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



Roman

A truly amazing man, **Rome Rene Roman Sr.** of Austin, Texas, passed away peacefully on April 25, 2024, in Round Rock, Texas, leaving a void that will never be filled. Rome Rene Roman Sr. was born on July 14, 1969, in Alpine, Texas, to parents George and Maria Roman.

Rome graduated from Del Valle High School in 1987, ranking in the Top 15% of his class. He played football and never let go of his football number "21," even calling himself "21." With his long hair, heavy metal, and rock and roll music blaring from his bedroom, and band posters plastered over his walls, he lived his life the way he wanted to. He was a concert-going fanatic of Van Halen and the Killer Dwarfs, where he made a lifelong friend with drummer, Darryl Miller. Rome enjoyed living his life to the fullest, from spending his summers at Lake Travis with his family and friends, cliff jumping, or in his case, performing his signature move, "The Frog," which was a 50-foot headfirst dive into the lake. He was the life of the party, and his bright smile and laugh was infectious. After finally settling down, he worked for EZ Pawn and Mustang Pawn alongside his father and brothers, before taking on a position, thanks to his best friend Tony T., with Centex Personnel, where he was The Man. His work ethic was undeniably pure dedication and resilience, and he was passionate about caring for the people who showed up to work. He made a commitment to ensure that everyone would have a job and money, taking pride in being a provider and caretaker.

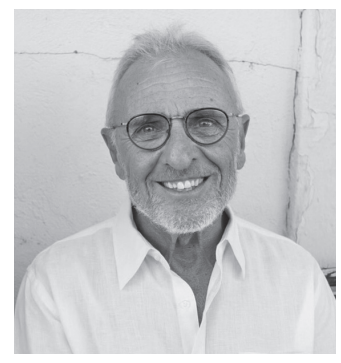
Rome enjoyed living near the lake with his wife and grandson, always making sure to feed his deer. His house was the go-to for all get-togethers — whether for birthdays, holidays, or Fantasy Football, it was the place to be. Every Sunday, his boys would come to watch the games. They would also watch The Masters, and he taught them how to play golf. His favorite teams were the Cowboys, Astros, and Spurs, and he loved taking his sons to any of the games he could. He loved Romy and Nico like no other, and the bond they had could never be broken. As long as he had his family, a cold beer, and his sports channels, he was a happy man. He also enjoyed watching "Jeopardy" and "Wheel of Fortune." He was a human calculator, a book of knowledge, and a walking encyclopedia of just about everything. He loved the Three Stooges, "Sopranos," "Seinfeld," and good movies, which in his case were the movies he said were good. He set the record at Furr's Family Dining for eating the most mashed potatoes, a title he was proud to hold. He didn't have opinions; he had facts and wasn't afraid to stick by them.

He was genuinely a good person, keeping in contact with many people, always remembering to message even the oldest of friends "Happy Birthday" or "What the heck is going on with the game?!" He always helped others when he could and never expected anything in return. If he hugged you, it was because he loved you, and if he gave you a nickname, you were in his circle. He was the most loyal person anyone could know and had such a huge heart. Life will never be the same without him. He was everyone's go-to person. He was the first person everyone would ask for or about. "Where is Rome?" "What does Rome say?" "Is Rome going?" With his last breath, he raised his arms up, giving us comfort knowing he would be okay. Even at the end, he still showed resilience. No one will ever understand what losing him is like for our family or his friends.

He is preceded in death by his sister, Romelia Roman, and father, George Roman Jr. Rome leaves behind his beloved wife, Rhonda "Baby" Roman; two sons, Rome "Romy" Rene Roman Jr., Nicolas "Nico" Santino Roman (Liz); and four grandchildren, Katalina, Arlette and Cecilia, who will never experience or know the kind, loving grandfather he was, and Arie, whom he loved dearly and was helping raise to be what he always said was "a good human and a good American." Rome also leaves behind his mother, Maria Yolanda Roman. He was her favorite, "Mijo" who could do no wrong in her eyes, earning him the nickname the "Golden Boy" from his siblings. He leaves behind his older brother, George "Ace" Roman III (Suzy); younger brother, Gabriel "Cat" Roman; and his sister, Regina "Han" Kimble (Robert), all of whom will dearly miss him. He also left behind many nieces and nephews: Rhiannon "Rizzo" Roman, Benjamin "Uncle Cousin Jackass" Roman, Dontae "Lay Lay" Harris, Jazmine "Jazzy Rae" Harris, Tylin "Laddy" Roman, Gianna "Gia" Roman, Rae "Baby" Kimble, Rocco "Rock O" Kimble, as well as many great nieces and nephews, his ex-wife, Shannon, whom he would help without hesitation, even if she liked to "bust his chops," as well as many great friends.

Rock on R.

A funeral Mass will be held May 10, 2024, in Marfa, Texas, at St. Mary's Catholic Church at 10 a.m., with a visitation prior at 9 a.m. and Rosary at 9:30 a.m. Interment will follow at Merced Cemetery in Marfa. Funeral services are entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas. Condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com



Pitlik

George Henry Pitlik, age 82, of Dunedin, Florida, and Alpine, Texas, passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 21, 2024. The cause of death was stage 4 lung cancer.

George was born on March 2, 1942, to Josephine Urso and George Pitlik in Chicago, Illinois. The eldest of two boys, he spent his childhood in the suburbs of Chicago, where his family lived close to extended family. Large family gatherings were prominent in George's childhood, and his Italian and Czech heritage was acquired through his aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. It was during this time that George developed his zeal for adventure and learning as he freely explored the world through the eyes of a curious young boy.

Upon graduation from high school in 1959, George enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served as an electronics mechanic until 1963. He trained specifically to work on the fire control systems weaponry of the B-52 bomber. During his service, he met Donna Lee Argenta, and they married on March 31, 1962. They resided in Enfield, Connecticut, where their family grew to include a son and two daughters. Upon discharge from the Air Force, George worked on jet engines at Pratt & Whitney while earning his undergraduate degree in education. He began a teaching career in Hartford, Connecticut, while remaining a committed father and husband throughout.

The family moved to Key West, Florida, in 1970, where George took a teaching job at Poinciana Elementary. George and Donna bought a 2-bedroom, 1-bath home several blocks from the ocean. For the next 10 years, the family enjoyed adventures including fishing, sailing, boating, exploring the mysteries of the ocean, organic gardening, self-sustainable living, bicycling the Florida Keys, and sharing life with other families that were on the same adventure in the Keys during the '70's. George taught himself how to make hammocks using fishing nylon and made sure everyone knew that each one took over 1,500 knots. He used the public library as a primary source of research for learning how to navigate the ocean channels, the value of seaweed and fish scraps in the garden, and about edible plants (all of which inevitably ended up on the family dinner table). George brought all of these experiences into the classroom, making him a highly effective and creative teacher. He also found time to drive to Miami three times a week, sleeping in the back of his pickup, to earn his master's degree in educational leadership. He discovered his happy place on that little island, and a piece of his soul will forever be connected to the Keys.

In 1980, he moved his family to The Woodlands, Texas, where he began the next chapter of his professional career as a teacher and supervisor with the Conroe Independent School District. George was an early adopter of instructional technology and served in a leadership position as a technology specialist. He procured computers for the district and educated teachers on how to use them. On one April Fools' Day, George directed all administrators and principals to eliminate vowels from their email messages in order to save internet bandwidth (and many complied!). On another occasion, he took to wearing his garage door opener on his belt, his way of showing the absurdity of constant connectivity.

George married Janet Stewart, the love of his life, on October 5, 1996, in Big Bend National Park and was blessed with two bonus daughters. He retired in 2001 at age 59 after 34 years in education. Acting on their common love for Far West Texas, George and Janet moved to Alpine in 2006. George became a Texas Master Naturalist, a morning announcer for Marfa Public Radio in its early days, and an avid bicyclist. He took great pride in his backyard fruit tree orchard, and his humorous essay in the Big Bend Gazette on raising chickens earned him the moniker of "Chicken George." For the next 27 years, he and Janet traveled the world on bicycling adventures, most notably, throughout the Yucatán Peninsula and the state of Michoacán in Mexico. They frequently visited Europe and more far-flung places such as China, Tanzania and Bali. Between trips, they visited their five children, ten grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren on what his family called "lightning visits."

During the last decade of his life, George and Janet were seasonal residents of Cedar Creek Community in Dunedin, Florida. He loved having the tidal creek and a 100-acre nature preserve in his backyard. The Pinellas rails-to-trails bicycle path bordered the community, and George used his bicycle for transportation to his weekly drum circles, exercise classes, and ukulele group. He volunteered as a pilot for Joy Rides, a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Dunedin providing rickshaw rides for seniors along the Pinellas Trail. It was around this time that George adopted his signature bright yellow tennis shoes and sunglasses with a rearview mirror.

George will be remembered for his witty charm, zeal for life and learning, exuberant family challenges, persistent encouragement of continuing education, neon colors, and vibrant character that was and is cherished by family and friends. He had the ability to make each of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren feel like they were his favorite. He possessed excellent communication skills, he knitted hats, he made handmade hammocks, and he gave eccentric gifts (including the infamous 10,000 tongue depressors). He argued endlessly for living simply, to the point of being able to enjoy watching an ant's shadow for long periods George planted a seed in everyone he met — a lifelong lesson, a quirky habit, or a mantra — that will be a legacy that honors this great man. He was a true shining light to everyone who knew him.

George is preceded in death by his parents, George and Josephine, and his former wife, Donna. He is survived by his wife, Janet Stewart, of Alpine, Texas; son Kenneth and wife Michelle Pitlik of Crystal Beach, Texas; daughter Sheila White and husband Gerhard Lieber of Flagstaff, Arizona; daughter Melissa and husband Frank Tydlacka of Belton, Texas; stepdaughter Nell and husband David Fry of Austin, Texas; stepdaughter Greer and husband John Crowley of Houston, Texas; his brother Ken and wife Nancy Carlysle, of Dunedin, Florida; sister-in-law Claudia and husband Morton Lane of Chicago; sister-in-law Sally and husband Greg Wilson of Austin, Texas. George is also survived by 12 grandchildren: Brittany and husband Justin Mower of Houston, Texas; Tami and husband Jason Gómez of Belton, Texas; Jennifer Pitlik of Houston, Texas; Kevin and wife Brittany Tydlacka of Argyle, Texas; Kristi and husband Phillip Jennings of Belton, Texas; Thomas Tydlacka of League City, Texas; Heather White of Homer, Alaska; Connor and wife Ashley Pitlik of Dallas, Texas; Ryan White of Flagstaff, Arizona; and Joshua, Ephraim and Jack Fry of Austin, Texas. George also has eight great-grandchildren: Jaiden, Felix, and Nico Gómez, Jett and Judah Jennings, Willow and Thea Tydlacka, and Miles Vaught. He is also survived by numerous cousins, step-nieces and step-nephews.

Memorial services will be held at a future date. Donations to your chosen charity in George's name will honor his memory.

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County Commissioner, Precinct 1
May 28th Runoff
Early Voting May 20th – 24th

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER

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.

REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS (RFP #2024-001)
FOR ROBINSON CAFETERIA HVAC REPLACEMENT PROJECT
MARFA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Marfa Independent School District ("MISD") is soliciting Competitive Sealed Proposals ("CSPs") for the Robinson Cafeteria HVAC Replacement Project, as specifically set forth in the CSP package and in Chapter 2269, Subchapter D, Texas Government Code. Interested parties must submit their submissions in person to the District Administration Building c/o Arturo Alferez at 400 W. Lincoln St, Marfa, TX 79843, no later than 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 23, 2024. Proposal packets may be picked up at the District Administration Building located at 400 W. Lincoln St, Marfa, TX 79843 or on the district website. Email and fax submissions will not be accepted. For any questions, please contact Arturo Alferez, Interim Superintendent at 432-729-5500.

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION AND POSTING OF NOTICE OF ESTRAY

THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF PRESIDIO CASE # 24-046

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared Sheriff Danny C. Dominguez, who after being by me duly sworn deposes and says:

After the herein described estrays were impounded, I made a diligent search of the register of recorded brands in the county where said estray was found. The search did not reveal the owner of said estray.

I did then advertise the impoundment of said estray in the BIG BEND SENTINEL NEWSPAPER. I also posted a copy of the **Notice of Estray** and the **Notice of Impoundment of Estray** on the public notice board of the courthouse of the county in which the estray was found.

Notice is hereby given that, if the ownership of said estray is not determined by the 11th of May 2024, said estrays will be sold at public auction/sheriff's sale at 10 a.m. at the Presidio County pens at Vizcaino Park in Marfa, TX 79843.

Said Estrays are described as the following:

1 horse, breed - grade, color - gray, sex - gelding, age- 3 years, brand/marks/identifying characteristics - headsnip, sock on left and right hind legs, no brand

1 horse, breed - grade, color - bay, sex - gelding, age - 4 years, brand/marks/identifying characteristics - coronet on left hind leg, no brand

1 horse, breed - grade, color - bay, sex - gelding, age - 5 years, brand/marks/identifying characteristics - head star, head snip, head stripe, sock on left forelimb, sock on left and right hind legs, no brand

1 horse, breed - grade, color - bay, sex - gelding, age - 8 years, brand/marks/identifying characteristics - head star, scar on cannon left hind leg, no brand

WITNESS my hand, this the 30th day of April, 2024

SHERIFF DANNY C. DOMINGUEZ
PRESIDIO COUNTY, TEXAS

SWORN to and subscribed before me by Sheriff Danny Dominguez this the 30th day of April, 2024.

Shanna Elmore
Notary Public, Presidio County, Texas

My commission expires: 03/03/2026

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



Come see us! We are open this Friday 1-5 & Saturday/Sunday 12-4

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"Sometimes what you're looking for is already there. - Aretha Franklin

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.

Retail for Rent

1,339 sf retail space with adjoining 349 sf office/storage for rent beginning Nov. 1. Building is located at 121 N. Highland Ave. in the middle of downtown Marfa.

Previous location of Esperanza Vintage.

For more information call or text Laszlo at (347) 880-2798

MARFA PUBLIC RADIO
Morning Edition host

The Morning Edition host at Marfa Public Radio is a permanent part-time position. The person in the role is responsible for hosting daily newscasts, airing local underwriting and public service announcements, and delivering local breaks to provide weather updates and other information for our audiences.

This is a part-time position with no benefits. Hourly Pay Rate: $30

Daily schedule: Monday through Friday, 5 to 9 a.m.

Please, visit marfapublicradio.org/careers to see a list of preferred skills and abilities and a breakdown of training the station would offer for the position.

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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.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT NEEDED AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ALPINE

This is a part-time 20 hour/week position. The hours are 10-12 and 1-3 Monday through Friday. Must have Microsoft Suite Experience along with the ability to learn church-related software. Organization is a must and strong communication skills are required.
Hourly pay is negotiable with experience.

Call 432-837-2487 or email pastor@fbcalpine.com for more information and application.

Jett's Grill at the Hotel Paisano is seeking applications for the following positions:

Restaurant Manager: Must have front of house and kitchen experience, exemplary customer service and leadership ability. Salary commensurate with experience.

Send resume to: manager@hotelpaisano.com
Completed application and references also required.

Bartender: experience preferred $10/hr + gratuities
Barback: will train $8.50/hr + gratuities
Servers: apply with experience or without $7.25/hr + gratuities
Line Cook/Grill Cook: experience preferred but will train $18/hr
Dishwasher: with or without experience $15/hr

Completed application and references required for all positions. Applications available at the front desk of the Hotel Paisano or email request for application to manager@hotelpaisano.com

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

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

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

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mayor@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048
Raúl Lara, Mayor Pro Tem
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com
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councilmembercash@cityofmarfa.com
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councilmembeacreman@cityofmarfa.com

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

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

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

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

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

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



The City of Marfa is hiring part-time temporary lifeguards and a pool manager for summer.

All applicants **MUST** be able to pass a lifeguard test. Lifeguards must be at least 16 years old. Pool manager must be at least 18 years old.

For more information, visit https://cityofmarfa.com/jobs or call City Manager Mandy Roane at 432.295.3323

Applications deadline is Friday, May 10, 2024.

The City of Marfa is accepting RFPs for upgrades and repairs to the Marfa Activity Center.

For more information, visit https://cityofmarfa.com/rfps.

Deadline for proposals is 5/31/2024.

For more information contact City Manager Mandy Roane at 432.295.3323

THE BIG BEND Sentinel

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