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Hospital district partners with new mobile mammography company

By MARY CANTRELL
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TRI-COUNTY — Board members of the Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD) voted last week to partner with a new mobile imaging company, Assured Imaging, for local mammography services.

Previous El Paso-based company Desert Imaging discontinued its 10-year-running “Mammos on the Move” program in August 2024, prompting local healthcare leaders to seek a new provider for the critical preventative care service. Without a local mammography option, women have to travel hours away to Midland-Odessa or El Paso for care.

The hospital district initially considered a proposal from the Big Bend Regional Medical Center — which involved a \$350,000 permanent mammogram machine for the hospital in addition to \$250,000 worth of X-ray room upgrades — but decided to move forward with another mobile mammography service for now.

BBRHD Executive Director Lynette Brehm explained that she and board members Valynda Henington and Angela Juett had recently met with Assured Imaging, a nation-wide company providing 3D mammograms, about coming to the Big Bend region.

The BBRHD will pay Assured Imaging a flat rate for coming out to the area, \$2,750, and aim to schedule a minimum of 30 mammograms at \$250 each per day the mobile unit is dispatched.

Henington said the company is able to accommodate up to 45 patients a day, and if there is higher demand they can stay in the area for an extra full or half day at no additional charge.

If a minimum of 30 appointments a day — or \$7,500 — is not met the hospital district will have to make up the difference in cost. Previous company Desert Imaging was charging the BBRHD \$6,100 quarterly for the service, and patients \$100 per mammogram. (Desert Imaging cited tighter state regulations and costs associated with dispatching mobile units as reasons for discontinuing the service in the region.)

Henington said she recognized that they’d be paying more with the new company, Assured Imaging, but “there is such a need” for mammograms it is worth trying out. While individuals enrolled in the county indigent care program with the hospital district receive the entire cost of their mammogram covered, board members also discussed ways to help subsidize the \$250 cost for other patients in need.

After some discussion about past demand for mammograms

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE

NEWS P. 1 - 8

OPINION P. 4

CLASSIFIEDS P. 8

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8 0 4 8 7 9 3 6 2 3 5 1 7



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Windblown trash from the City of Alpine landfill drifts onto a neighboring landowner’s property.

By MARY CANTRELL
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ALPINE — Rancher John McCarthy is considering taking legal action against the City of Alpine and Texas Disposal Systems (TDS) for the landfill operation that abuts his family property in every direction.

The City of Alpine landfill, an 80-acre site established in the early ‘90s, is located east of town just past the Highway 67 turn off, tucked back from the road. The remote area’s windy conditions cause trash to blow from the confines of the landfill onto the

McCarthy and Seale family ranch, which raises cattle and horses. Plastic bags and other refuse litter the land, catching on cholla and mesquite.

TDS workers pick up litter with pickers around the landfill’s edges, but McCarthy said farther flung trash gets deposited all across the ranch, traveling as far as three miles away where his family resides.

“Everything else continues to blow out hundreds of yards,” McCarthy said. “It continues to tumble until a bush grabs it — its final resting place ‘till it shreds up in the wind and becomes small

fragments of plastic blowing around the earth.”

“When you’re riding horseback through here, and [trash is] laying down on the ground everywhere, you’re like, how do you reverse this?” he added.

McCarthy said talks with TDS to address the litter issue have stretched on for years, and he feels like the company and the city are “kicking the can down the road” rather than resolving the problem, leading the family to consider a lawsuit. Also at the forefront of McCarthy’s concerns is potential groundwater contamination from the landfill.

TDS and the city told *The Big Bend Sentinel* they meet trash containment requirements and are in compliance with the state regarding landfill operations. *The Sentinel* filed records requests with the city and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to obtain regulatory reports.

The land for the dump was sold to the city by a previous mayor, William Sohl. The facility was initially run by Republic Services until TDS signed a contract with the city to take over the site’s operations in 2007. TDS leases the site from the city every year for a

(Continued on page 2)

Hundreds of criminal cases left unprosecuted with Ponton’s departure

Analysis shows most were old but included 69 DWIs

By ROB D’AMICO
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Former County Attorney Rod Ponton declined to prosecute 60 driving while intoxicated (DWI) cases and dismissed nine more as he was leaving his office this fall after losing his reelection bid to Blair Park, an analysis of court records showed.

The charges — part of 259 misdemeanor cases he declined to prosecute and another 50 he dismissed — were old, can’t be

legally prosecuted and needed to be removed from the county’s court system, Ponton said.

“My assistant and I were trying to make a final, meaningful, review of pending cases, some of which extended all the way back to John Fowlkes tenure as county attorney, and sometimes even earlier,” Ponton said. (Ponton took over for Fowlkes in 2016.) “It ends up, there were a lot of what you might call bad cases, cases that have not been prosecuted for various reasons, frequently due to lack of evidence or to non-availability of an arresting

officer,” he said.

Park, who took office as county attorney on January 1, said the large stack of unresolved cases put a stress on the county clerk’s office which is tasked with locating bond amounts and defendant addresses for return of bond money. Park said trying to find out what happened on all 309 charges would not be an effective use of her time, particularly if they were as old as Ponton said. “I have so many things on my plate right now,” she said. “I have to focus on rebuilding.”

The Big Bend Sentinel’s review

of records showed that most of the dismissed cases originated in 2023, although several were from early 2024. Misdemeanors have a two-year statute of limitations meaning the 2023 cases would have to have been dismissed sometime this year if they don’t move to a disposition in court.

The majority of dismissed cases — aside from the nine DWIs — were traffic citations, driving with an invalid license and a few other misdemeanors like criminal mischief and criminal trespassing.

(Continued on page 3)

Hospital district signs contract for innovative Terlingua ‘microclinic’

By SAM KARAS
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TERLINGUA — Last Thursday, the Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD) signed a contract with Hamilton Health Box to bring one of the company’s signature “microclinics” to Terlingua. Pending approval from the Brewster County Commissioners Court, that clinic will be open five days a week for a variety of hybrid in-person and telemedicine services — hopefully within a year and a half.

Since 2019, Hamilton Health Box has pioneered the use of

“microclinics” to fill big gaps in healthcare. The company originally started out making on-site clinics in blue collar workplaces — physically demanding jobs with long hours in a fixed location. Providing affordable healthcare onsite to workers and families ended up saving those employers more money than the cost of doing business with Hamilton. “It worked so well that we decided to go into the rural market,” explained President of Development Chris King.

The “box” in “Hamilton Health Box” refers to the actual, physical shape of the clinic — a prefabricated

structure that the company sets up and operates. The box includes a wide array of diagnostic equipment and the necessary tech for telemedicine calls with a remote physician. Each Health Box visit is staffed by a flesh-and-blood medical assistant or nurse who serves as a kind of ambassador to the community and can administer diagnostic tests while the patient visits with the virtual doctor.

King said that there can be a learning curve for some patients skeptical of telehealth, but that skepticism usually doesn’t last past the first appointment once folks

see how easy and accessible the service is — and that the patients themselves don’t need any tech savvy to get the services they need. “What we’ve seen is that people are hesitant the first time, and hesitation is human nature,” he said. “Because we’ve done this so many times already, we know how to overcome those barriers.”

The contract with Hamilton came on the heels of anxiety about the status of the existing fledgling clinic in Terlingua. In 2022, the BBRHD was awarded \$5.5 million by the federal government to grow

(Continued on page 3)

Brewster Ranch sale triggers cut for school district

MARATHON — The loss of tax revenue after the sale of the Brewster Ranch to the Texas General Land Office could force the Marathon Independent School District to make heart-breaking cuts, said Superintendent Ivonne Durant.

The Brewster Ranch is more than 353,000 acres containing multiple ranch leases that were taken off the tax rolls when it was sold to the Texas General Land Office on October 24. Because state land is tax exempt, its sale means a loss of revenue to all the taxing entities in Brewster County. Durant initially reported that it could see a loss of \$62,422 for MISD alone. That would be the largest loss of all the local governments, said County Judge Greg Henington.

While she is still waiting for a clear picture of the exact number, Durant agrees that the loss will hit her district the hardest among the taxing entities impacted, adding that it comes at a time when they are already operating on a tight budget and having to think creatively to solve problems.

“The state refuses to give us the money that is [needed by] all districts, not just Marathon, not just rural,” Durant said. “But as that goes away, as inflation goes up, I have to spend more money now on supplies ... I have to spend a lot more money on utilities.”

Marathon ISD is made up of two campuses, one housing pre-K and elementary grades, the other middle school and high school grade levels. It has 60 students and about 15 faculty members.

Having one class in the district taught by a husband and wife teaching team, with one teaching in the morning and the other in the afternoon, is one example of how they have had to be creative, she said.

While the district’s budget and funding are set for the remainder of the current school year, the loss could make cuts a necessity in the future. “I refuse to pass anything but a balanced budget,” Durant said.

Cuts could come to extracurricular programs, or even faculty. “We’re going to have to start looking at the student athletic program [for cuts],” Durant said, adding that the thought of it is sad. “Many kids, they come to school for that.”

Another option could be cutting a teacher position from the district, “which means teachers would have to double up on grade levels,” Durant said. “And that’s very taxing on them. I mean, that’s almost like a formula for failure.” Doubling up means that one teacher would be responsible for teaching two grade levels, including creating two sets of daily lesson plans and setting up for two different classes.

A GLO spokesperson said the agency is committed to making decisions that benefit Texas schoolchildren and that the ranch will be added to the state’s Permanent School Fund — an investment fund that allocates money each biennium to the school finance system. Grazing and hunting leases currently on the ranch and many potential, new revenue-generating options like hunting, eco-tourism, agriculture, mineral development, and soil carbon sequestration could help school districts, the agency said. However, aside from sales taxes that help pay for local school revenue, none of the ranch’s potential revenue would translate directly into more state funding for districts.

Henington said he was told about the sale of the ranch a few months prior to the close of the deal. He had hoped something similar to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program

(Continued on page 3)

Alpine landfill

(Continued from page 1)



Photo by John McCarthy

The northwest corner of the landfill with high fencing.



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Rancher John McCarthy is concerned about the environmental impacts the landfill may have on the area's groundwater.

varied price — most recently \$150,000. In exchange, 25% of the landfill’s monthly revenue — TDS is a for profit business and accepts waste from other commercial clients in addition to city residents — goes to the city, typically around \$10,000 to \$13,000 a month, “A decent amount of money,” City Manager Megan Antrim said.

Like the City of Presidio landfill and the Panther Junction landfill located in Big Bend National Park, the City of Alpine landfill holds an “arid exemption,” under the TCEQ, meaning it is not lined and is not subject to groundwater monitoring requirements. Arid exempt landfills exist across the state, mostly in rural, dry areas like South Texas, the Panhandle and West Texas. In order to qualify for an arid exemption a landfill must accept less than 20 tons per day, be located in an area with less than 25 inches of annual rainfall and serve “a community that has no practicable waste management alternative.”

The City of Alpine landfill accepts trash from Brewster, Presidio and Jeff Davis counties, and, depending on the year, trash from other nearby counties like Reeves, Terrell and Culbertson, according to annual reports from TCEQ. In 2006 the landfill’s original 1993 permit was altered to allow for two arid exempt units, each with a 20 tons per day limit, according to a spokesperson from TCEQ.

A few years ago McCarthy discovered a dead cow with “a big chunk of plastic bag” in her gut, a loss that spurred him to escalate discussions with TDS regarding the need to install high fencing around the landfill. At the time the only deterrent windblown trash met was a short wire fence that marked the facility’s boundaries.

McCarthy said the likely cause of the refuse-lodged rumen was that cows will graze around the bases of mesquite, where plastic bags are likely to catch, when grass is not available. The cow’s death was a significant economic hit considering the subsequent profit loss of several calving seasons, he said, and an emotional one, given the level of care that goes into raising animals.

“One thing that people don't realize about a lot of ranchers is that conservation is a huge part of our everyday deal. A lot of times they don't see us when we're out here, when it's freezing cold, taking a newborn calf, drying it off and making sure it's okay,” he added. “We're out here breaking water, pulling ice off, making sure our animals can drink.”

Sometime after the incident, in 2022, TDS installed a portion of high fencing on the northwest corner of the landfill at their expense.

McCarthy sought compensation for the dead cow but did not produce an autopsy from a veterinarian per TDS’s request. Brandon Smitheal, vice president of operations - offsite services for TDS, said while “there was no evidence to conclude that the cow died as a result of ingesting waste that came from the landfill,” TDS

agreed to purchase around \$13,700 worth of old utility poles from McCarthy, a goodwill gesture, that they used to put up the portion of high fencing.

Smitheal said when McCarthy first approached the company about litter concerns a couple of years ago they were in compliance according to their Site Operating Plan, a foundational document prepared by a licensed engineer on behalf of the city and approved by TCEQ. He pointed out that the city technically owns the facility, but said even then TDS has gone “above and beyond” their requirements to try and remedy the issue.

“We want to have good relationships with neighboring property owners, and we certainly understand that there are certain potentially undesirable elements of being next to a landfill,” Smitheal said. “We want to do everything we can to mitigate that.”

“The main concern is the water,” he added. “We’re running out of it out here”

TDS stationed an additional bulldozer and operator at the site, he said, to ensure trash was being compacted and covered quickly. They hired additional staff for the purpose of picking up escaped litter, he said, admitting the area’s strong winds pose a challenge. TDS also installed the portion of fencing on the northwest corner of the landfill where it was determined the “prevailing wind is that will catch the most,” Smitheal said.

But McCarthy was frustrated to learn that high netting was not being installed around the entire landfill perimeter, he said — a solution he and Jason Chopelas, another neighboring landowner, said they would still like to see pursued. The presence of rattlesnakes in nearby pastures that trash collectors traverse and extreme weather conditions they work in concerns him as well, McCarthy said.

“Whether it's 10 degrees or 105 they now are trying to push them to be out here and clean trash, because they know they're being scrutinized at this point,” McCarthy said.

“The ultimate goal is to not have [TDS] trespassing on our ranch every day. I don't like the liability of their people being on our ranch,” he added. “They don't seem to have a problem sacrificing human safety for the cost of a mesh fence.”

Smitheal said McCarthy has not expressed to him that TDS is not allowed on his property, and he was not aware of a trespassing issue. He said it wasn’t

“economically feasible” for TDS to put a fence around the entire property, and even if they did, “it doesn’t stop everything.” So they instead rely on the “strategy” of having their employees collect the litter, he said, on a daily or near daily basis.

“Our equipment operators get out and pick up litter,” Smitheal said. “Yesterday, my manager was out there picking up litter. Any drivers that we have, that the workload doesn't require them to be in a truck, we employ those guys picking up litter. We certainly don't limit it to the staff that are titled as landfill labor. We put all hands on deck.”

Antrim said the city was a part of past conversations with TDS regarding potential solutions to the landfill litter issue — another rancher, not McCarthy, raised the matter publicly with the City Council at some point — but as far as she was aware, the concerns had been addressed.

“The city did work back with TDS, and that's when part of the fence went up,” Antrim said. “We have addressed things when they're brought to our attention.”

“I think the fence was put up in the areas where, obviously, [it was] the most needed,” she added. “It is an expense.”

Antrim said she had not heard from McCarthy regarding his complaints, and as far as she is aware, TDS and the city are in compliance. She said TDS submits regulatory information to the city on a monthly basis regarding various aspects of the landfill operation — including a daily overall inspection of landfill cover, windblown waste, gates and more signed by the on-site manager — and city employees drive around for “random inspections” of the facility.

McCarthy, whose attorney obtained copies of some of the monthly inspection reports via a public records request, accused TDS staff of “pencil whipping” the documents because the activities do not match what he sees on the ground, he said. Smitheal said the landfill inspections are completed in accordance with TCEQ requirements. (The landfill was last inspected by TCEQ in 2022, at which time no violations were noted, according to a spokesperson from the agency.)

McCarthy said he found the city’s recent code enforcement crackdown on commercial businesses in town ironic considering the ongoing issues he’s had with the municipal landfill. He said the dumping ground is “out of sight, out of mind” for most and because it’s located in a rural area proper regulation is going by the wayside.

“I don't think if this was located around Midland or Odessa, where there was a higher density population around, this crap would be happening,” McCarthy said. “There'd be a fence up around the landfill like right now, but we're out here in podunk Alpine, which is the reason I love it out here. There's not many people, not much traffic or anything else; the landscape is beautiful.”

Both McCarthy and neighbor Chopelas, whose ranch lies northeast of the landfill, are either actively testing or plan to test their wells for potential groundwater contamination. Chemicals may leach into groundwater from landfills “by means of precipitation and surface runoff,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA.)

The City of Alpine landfill lacks a protective liner and a leachate — contaminated water — collection system, common safeguards in newer and non-arid exempt landfills.

“It's just not good being that they fall under the air exemption act or whatever, that they don't have to put a liner in,” Chopelas said. “If all that stuff is sitting on porous gravel, it's going to take the path of least resistance and flow ... All that nastiness is going to go somewhere.”

“The main concern is the water,” he added. “We’re running out of it out here.”

Because no groundwater monitoring is taking place at the site, according to TDS, potential groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out. Smitheal said nothing TDS has encountered has indicated that there’s “any problem with respect to water or groundwater,” and their staff are trained to screen prohibited waste from entering the landfill.

“We've got multiple layers of personnel that are trained to identify and prevent prohibited waste from getting into the landfill,” Smitheal said. “And being that there's such low amounts of rainfall out there, all of that together are the measures that we have in place to protect the groundwater there.”

A TCEQ spokesperson said that when the City of Alpine first applied for the landfill permit in 1993, information on the geology and groundwater resources in the area was considered.

But McCarthy remains concerned that illegal burying has taken place in the past and that previous fires at the landfill — which he claims have been subdued by large amounts of water — pose a groundwater contamination threat. The Chopelas helped TDS put out a fire at the landfill years ago, Jason said, in order to ensure it didn’t spread onto their property.

Smitheal said there have been no incidents of illegal disposal since the company took over the site in 2007. Regarding fire, he said there have been a couple of “very brief flare ups” in the past as a result of some stockpiled organic material that was left out to dry — refuse from Village Farms tomato greenhouses — getting too hot and igniting. But Village Farms has since altered the way they deliver materials to the landfill and TDS is taking greater precautions to avoid fires, he said.

“I know the neighbors were concerned about it, but we got it under control quickly, and we changed our practice in terms of how we were storing that material,” Smitheal said. “We stretched it out into smaller windrows so that it wouldn't have

the opportunity to get hot like that.”

Antrim said every fire that occurs at the landfill has to be reported to the city, but off the top of her head, she didn’t know exactly why they were starting or what frequency they had occurred. She said the Alpine Fire Department has always been responsive to the incidents, which she referred to as “spot fires.”

Smitheal said TDS works closely with the city to get water trucks out to the landfill as quickly as possible when they are needed in the event of a fire. “The distances are great in West Texas,” Smitheal said. “It's not like in the case of somewhere more urban, where you have better, closer access to water. But our practices are definitely in adherence with what we're required to do by our Site Operating Plan.”

While no groundwater monitoring takes place, TDS does perform quarterly methane tests, Smitheal said, utilizing a gas detection monitor and a probe placed at a depth of one to two feet every 200 feet to detect methane readings. He said TDS has never had any indication that methane is escaping buried waste. Those quarterly tests are not submitted to TCEQ, but are required to be kept on-site at the facility, Smitheal said. A spokesperson from TCEQ said landfill operators are required to notify the agency if landfill gas concentrations exceed established limits.

McCarthy said in the future he would like to see the city hire a third-party compliance group to conduct gas monitoring and groundwater testing around the landfill. Antrim said she is unable to make that determination and it would have to be a conversation with the City Council.

The City of Alpine landfill is projected to last 37 more years at its current performance, according to records from TCEQ. Antrim said while it has been casually mentioned in the past, there has yet to be a “full blown conversation on where the next facility will be located.” The city created a recycling program to try and divert as much waste as possible from the landfill in order to extend its life, she said.

McCarthy said he takes issue with the city and TDS profiting off of waste from commercial entities and other counties that occupy valuable space in the local landfill. He said he’s worried about the long-term impacts of the dump, and how the city will move forward with establishing yet another landfill, its third, in just 37 years time.

“When you think about sustainability and you think about nature and the course of where this place was, I'm patching water stations for my cattle that cowboys have etched their initials in and dates, and they're 100 years old. This isn't the first rodeo for cattle and livestock,” McCarthy said. “We live, we eat, we have to survive. We have to think about the bigger global picture sometimes.”

The Big Bend Sentinel will continue to cover this story as developments occur.

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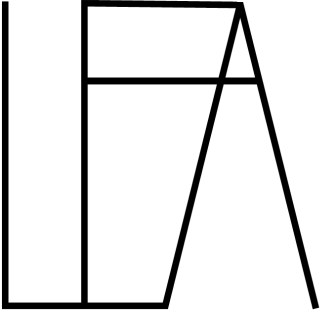


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Opinion

Dear Editor,

The last czar of Russia had Rasputin as an adviser — we all know how that went. Trump has Elon Musk as his advisor — ending to be determined. Hitler convinced the German people of the need for more territory for space and natural resources — We know how that turned out. Trump claims we need Canada, Greenland and the Panama Canal — ending to be determined. Trump promises massive tax cuts — his last tax return, 2014, showed a payment of \$400. Hardly seems fair. Looks like the next four years will be dangerous for our country.

**Hugh Johnson
Alpine**

Editor’s note: We could not find any information from Trump’s 2014 return, and overall, he has refused to release his tax returns. A New York Times investigation, however, obtained return information that his payments in 2016 and 2017 were \$750 each year.

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Dear Editor,

I know this letter is too long and too late, but it was cathartic for me to write and may give a little more insight into your former colleague and friend. It was only this week I learned that Gary Oliver died. I first encountered Gary one dark night in early 1978. I had been riding on a crowded bus across the Guatemalan/El Salvadoran frontier, thinking I was the only Gringo aboard. The bus was stopped on a dark highway by government or rebel forces and we were all ordered to dismount. I was directed at gun point to stand on the other side of the ditch on the passenger side of the bus while the other passengers — men, women and children — were put against both sides of the bus and searched. The passengers were then ordered back onto the bus. I was ordered to stay still while the armed men also boarded the bus and it drove off, leaving me in total darkness. Suddenly out of that darkness I heard a Texas accent demanding to know: “Did you sorry sons of bitches just drive off and leave me here.” That’s how I met Gary and how we began our travels for the next number of weeks. He eventually went south toward Costa Rica while I went into the mountains to cross the newly opened border with Honduras. Months later I saw him walking down a street in Panama City. I had previously told him I was determined to make my way to South America overland. When I met him in Panama he asked if I still intended to die in the Darién. I told him I did, so he offered to buy me my last meal. He then plied me with beer and when he believed I was vulnerable, asked if I would take him into the jungle.

The time was short. The boat we had to take into the jungle left on high tide and he didn’t have any gear or food. He was determined to go so we kitted him up and woke up the next morning on the muddy shore of a river in the Darién Gap. Crossing this stretch of jungle with a blind cartoonist from Texas was perhaps one of the most physically demanding things I have done in my life. It was much harder for him. Unable to see well with the shifting shadows, and wearing inadequate footwear, Gary seemed to fall over every root or slippery rock along the makeshift trail I tried to cut with my machete. Gary’s recollection of this trip was much clearer than mine — I contracted typhoid on the day we reached Turbo, Colombia, and it somewhat impaired my ability to process events — but I recall a couple of events that gave evidence to the man. We were wet, hot, starved, bedraggled, frightened and exhausted but we pushed on using a combination of sour humor and bitter silence. I would go on ahead, opening the trail and knocking down spiders Gary couldn’t see, then rest until he caught up. One time he never came.

Angrily, I extricated myself from my primitive backpack and stomped back down the trail to find him. He was sitting by a river, looking into the water. I demanded to know what the **** he was doing. “This is as far as I go,” he told me. “You have to go on alone.” I knew I didn’t have the will to make it out alive if he quit. I swore at him and he swore at me. We had a shouting match that culminated in him yelling at me: “Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up — listen!” I finally shut up. “Listen,” he repeated. I expected to hear him make an argument for why I should leave him. He looked at me and pointed down the river. We heard a rooster crow. Where there’s a rooster there are people. Without a word I walked down the trail until I found his pack, carried it back and helped him put it on and we kept going.

The other story that stands out was when we were camped on the side of a river on the Colombian side of the border. We had been surviving on pasta or rice flavored with packages of dehydrated soup — chicken and beef for me, eggshell for Gary, to accommodate his then vegetarianism. I absentmindedly read the ingredients on the packages and involuntarily gasped when I saw his was made with chicken. He demanded to know what I saw, but I refused to read it to him (it was too dark for him to see). He stopped eating the soup, sticking with just pasta and rice. “Would you eat yours if you read it had human hand in it?” he asked me. “Ya,” I said. “I’d eat it if it had MY human hand in it — or yours.” We made it out of The Darién with all four of our hands intact. I know Gary stuck with me in a dive hotel in Medellin while I fought through the feverish battle with typhoid, but soon after the Colombian government expelled him for failing to have the proper visa before he entered the country, and I lost touch with him until a few years ago when I was about to retire from my career writing for a newspaper.

I always wanted to visit him in Marfa, but after Trump was elected the first time, my wife balked at travelling in a country we no longer recognized. Then came covid. And then it was too late. There’s a painful lesson in this, of course, that while — as Einstein said — time is relative, it is also relentlessly indiscriminate. I was pleased to read on these pages the many tributes to this impressive man. I’m glad he got to live out his potential among people who appreciated him.

**Gerry Klein
Canada**

We want to hear from YOU!

Letters to the editor should be sent to editor@bigbendsentinel.com, and must provide the writer’s full name, city of residence and an email or phone number, so that we may follow up and verify information as needed.

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- The Big Bend Sentinel Editorial Staff



OUR WATER MATTERS

Holding the Railroad Commission accountable

By TREY GERFERS

The purpose of the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) has long been misunderstood by Texans. According to Commission Shift, a foremost authority on the RRC, “[T]he Railroad Commission of Texas has no authority over railroads. Instead, the agency oversees oil and gas development ... among other functions. Its mission is to serve Texas through stewardship of natural resources and the environment ... [But] [t]oo often, the Commission has promoted accelerated development of oil and gas over all other parts of its mission — to the detriment of natural resources and the environment, safety, and economic vitality.” Similarly, the nature of the oil and gas industry itself is also poorly understood. In his book Thirst for Power: Energy, Water, and Human Survival, author and professor Michael E. Webber reveals that “in the United States, about seven or more barrels of water are handled, produced, or injected for every barrel of oil that is produced. That means oil and gas companies are really water companies who happen to have high-value byproducts, namely, the oil and gas.” In order to raise awareness of this industry’s impact on the state’s natural resources, including water, and the role of the RRC, Commission Shift “is educating and organizing a wide array of Texans to build support for changes at the Railroad Commission of Texas that improve the agency’s function, transparency, and accountability to people and places impacted by the oil and gas industry,” according to its website.

Julie Range is a policy manager with Commission Shift. “After a brief stint as a full-time mom,” she says, “I pivoted to politics and policy. I initially focused on Railroad Commission [election] races because of their significant impact on energy and environmental issues here in Texas.” She earned a master’s degree in public affairs and built her “public service and policy skillset” while working in Austin as legislative director for state Rep. Vikki Goodwin. “My heart and expertise are in improving energy and environmental policy. I believe we are stewards of our earth, and I don’t want to leave messes for our children to clean up. But I do like A/C and ice cream; there’s a balance to be struck.”

Range got involved with Commission Shift through a project about orphaned wells that she completed for her degree. Commission Shift had published two comprehensive reports on orphaned wells, including “Eliminating Orphan Wells and Sites in Texas.” Orphaned wells are unplugged oil, gas, or injection wells “for which no viable responsible party can be located, or where the owner is known but bankrupt,” according to the report. Commission Shift also found that “oil and gas drillers use loopholes to avoid plugging their wells, like keeping wells barely active just to avoid

having to plug them.” In addition, the RRC routinely grants unlimited well-plugging extensions with little regard for the risks posed by orphaned and other unplugged wells.

And the risks are real, especially in the Permian Basin, where oilfield wastewater injected into the ground under extreme pressure can sometimes escape through these unplugged wells and form toxic lakes and geysers that threaten to contaminate the underlying groundwater. Instead of continuing its work to plug orphaned wells and enforce fees to fund this work, the Commission Shift report describes how the RRC “issued an order waiving plugging rules ... and certain fees and surcharges,” essentially saddling the taxpayers with more of the burden to address this urgent issue. According to Range, when the RRC grants unlimited extensions and other exceptions to a rule, “the rule essentially doesn’t exist.”

“We need our state leaders to do a better job so we stop reading stories about well blowouts in west Texas that leave the land scarred and barren”

“We’re also advocating to require companies [to] provide notice to landowners and groundwater conservation districts and allow them to monitor well-integrity H-5 and H-15 testing so other sets of eyes can keep operators accountable. There’s some indication that there may be cheating on these tests,” explains Range. “Ensuring [that] these wells aren’t leaking directly protects groundwater quality.”

The work of groups like Commission Shift is often an uphill battle. “Two-thirds of campaign contributions to the current Texas railroad commissioners come from the oil and gas industry ... [creating] conditions for conflicts of interest that could unduly influence the Commissioners’ decisions,” says Range. She remains optimistic, however, because of what’s already been achieved. “Many of the changes we advocated for in the Railroad Commission’s monitoring and enforcement plan for 2025 were adopted. We are making a difference, but there’s a lot of work ahead.” Visit commissionshift.org to learn more.

Trey Gerfers serves as general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. A San Antonio native, he has lived in Marfa since 2013 and can be reached at tgerfers@pcuwcwcd.org.

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Archie Part III: The Animal Chronicles



By MARY ETHERINGTON

Now with Archie restored to his happy, healthy status as Ida Mae’s sidekick, after the near death encounter with the paralysis tick, my employment radically and suddenly changed when I learned the owner had sold fake Georgia O’Keeffe drawings to a Kansas City museum. I resigned, gathered up the dogs and beat a quick retreat, repatriated to Marfa, and here we have stayed.

Dog and cat adjacent life continued along with feral cats appearing like clockwork and very comfortably domesticated dogs adjusting to each new presence. We moved into a very broken down, formally elegant old adobe where we camped in the backyard for the first six months while I, with the most awesome of dedicated and skilled friends, pulled the house back from the brink of neglect and moved in just as cold weather set in.

There we were, all living large in a quiet, happy Marfa way, when suddenly Ida Mae was a changed dog and began to fail. The end came quickly, and yet the dog she’d always been persisted until the very end, when she died with her pearls on, so to speak.

Her trek to me had been rather magical. One summer day in 2007, at work in the gallery on Martha’s Vineyard, son Harvey appeared in front of my desk, envelope in hand, breathless from running from the post office down the hill. He desired my witness as he opened a letter from the only boarding school he applied to. I watched the make or break moment as he silently read, then looked up at me and said, “You better get a puppy.” I laughed and assured him I’d be fine. In no time he was packed up and off to his first year in high school.

Somewhere along in that cold, gray, dank winter stretch of a New England February- March after his departure, I found myself online looking for a puppy to adopt. How could he have known that — wise child? At any rate I found a puppy in Tennessee, the blue heeler mother was found tied to a tree in the woods, starving and full on pregnant. They didn’t even have a proper shelter there, just a small group of volunteers who helped animals in extreme peril. The mother was beautiful, however already spoken for. One sweet puppy stood out and stole my heart. I sent her photo to Harvey at school with the caption, “I’m thinking of adopting this puppy.” He wrote back. “Her name is Ida.” Unbeknownst to him I had a much beloved, long deceased great aunt named Ida Mae back in Kansas. So that deal was sealed. Ida Mae came up on a transport from the south and she from her tiniest of puppy days was never anything shy of perfect, smart and funny.

Since she was at least half blue heeler, unknown father, I knew she would

need a job, so we trained her to herd the Canada geese on a friend’s waterfront property. Her job was to keep the geese away from the house and barn, to keep them down by the pond and beach, which she did with unflagging energy all summer long. She not only herded the geese away from the house and barn, she herded the geese into a pond and kept them at the far end for the entire day while swimming herself. These were her glory days for sure. She was solid muscle and supremely happy. Then much to her dismay I packed up and moved us to Marfa, to avoid all the tick-borne diseases I kept getting, as did she, living on that island.

So back to the actual story line, we are here in Marfa, and Ida Mae’s health fails suddenly in her 14th year as she passes on to larger life in the back of my Sprinter van with the vet and vet tech along with Archie and myself at her side. It was a rough adjustment for Archie and self. Archie had never spent a day away from her, let alone an hour, and was beside himself. My daughter in law wisely observed, “Ida Mae was the adult in that relationship.” Archie lost his great love and was clearly suffering.

I had thought not to get another dog, that was my plan once Ida Mae was gone. I grieved inwardly. Archie chose an alternate path and chewed all the fur off the lower half of his body that he could reach including his back. He was inconsolable and looked hideous and bloody. I seriously thought about having him euthanized because he was so miserable and could not stop this behavior. I didn’t want him seen in public, as it was upsetting to see a dog in this state. A friend walking with us one day out on Pinto Canyon road said, “Archie doesn’t have any pants on,” which was true and actually kind of funny. His pain was real, and I needed to do something drastic to actually help him, as nothing so far had worked.

Immediately after that walk there appeared a post on social media for free puppies nearby. The mother was a blue heeler mix and the dad, an over the fence kind of situation, was a yellow lab, or so I was told. I wasn’t at all ready for a puppy, however I had promised myself the next time I did get a dog, to meet the mother first, and here was that exact opportunity. I went over, met the beautiful mother dog, bonded with a sweet little guy (I know, I know, they are all sweet and adorable, don’t be deceived). I came home and wisely decided it was not time for a puppy and something else would have to help Archie. I soon relented, checked in with the puppy family and learned someone else had spoken for the puppy. A few days go by and I check in again, that adoption has fallen through. I drove over to a Dollar Store parking lot where one of the owners met me and handed off a 6-week-old puppy, the runt of the litter. He was soon named after Ida Mae’s brother in real life, my grandfather, A. Ray.

It’s five uneventful years later. I now have two male dogs with clearly no adult in the relationship. They trade off sidekick status. Archie deserves this chronicle while he’s still here as a reward for all his hard work of staying alive through immense challenges and remaining just a tad naughty in spite of lousy odds. Much to everyone’s relief his luxurious coat came back almost immediately with the arrival of the puppy. Albeit now quite white on his face, Archie now enters the last laps at life with all his rubber ducks in a row. (Except the one he ate the head off of.)

It’s two weeks since I wrote the third and last installment of Archie. Today he died from eating one too many toys, in spite of my determination to keep him from them. He has kissed us all goodbye one last time.

Bordo, Cochineal chefs nominated for James Beard award



Michael Anthony Serva and Hannah Bailey, co-owners of Bordo.

MARFA — Two Marfa chefs have been chosen as finalists for the James Beard Foundation’s Chef of the Year: Texas award.

The semifinalists are Michael Anthony Serva, the chef behind the creative Italian sandwiches and dishes at Bordo in Marfa, and Alexandra Gates, executive chef at Cochineal. Gates has been nominated for awards previously and was a semifinalist for the same award last year.

According to the foundation, “The James Beard Awards, considered to be among the nation’s most prestigious honors, recognize exceptional talent in the culinary and food media industries, as well as a demonstrated commitment to creating a culture where all can thrive. 2025 marks an incredible milestone: the 35th anniversary of the James Beard Awards.” Winners will be announced on April 2.

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

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

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg January 20, 2025

ACROSS

- 1 Missing from an AFB
5 Minor in astronomy?
9 Seer’s “skill,” for short
12 ^
14 Does perfectly
16 “Who am _____ argue?”
17 “Just when I’d seen everything!” (In this answer, note the first 2 letters + the last 4 letters)
19 Viscous substance
20 Very long time
21 Pub offerings
22 Moral guideline
24 Shiba Inu meme
26 Perfect partner (... first letter + the last 3 letters)
29 College, to Brits
31 Sound of shock
32 Chose
34 Bengali garment
36 Airport amenity
40 2024 or 2036, in the Chinese zodiac (... first 4 letters + the last letter)
43 Caroled or yodeled
44 Great Lake whose name is 75% vowels

- 45 “Challenge accepted!”
46 Store where you can get STUK
48 67-Across, e.g.
49 Baking apparatus for crispier crust (... first 2 letters + the last 2 letters)
55 Goes bad
58 Absolute
59 _____ positivity
61 Column’s counterpart
62 “Sure!”
63 Musical about aspiring Broadway dancers (... first 3 letters + the last letter)
67 Puss in Boots, e.g.
68 Lhasa’s land
69 “My _____” (feudal address)
70 60-min. intervals
71 “Golly gee!”
72 Subtle summons

DOWN

- 1 Didn’t just sit by
2 “Yay!”
3 Southeast Asian primate
4 “_____ it go!”
5 In need of nourishment
6 Employee motivator
7 Knight’s title
8 Ice Bucket Challenge letters
9 2 x 4

- 10 Emotionally unmoved
11 Doggo
13 Baggage inspection org.
15 Thorny parts of roses
18 Boxer Laila
23 Restaurant freebie
25 Hype up
27 Concur
28 _____ an egg (flopped)
30 Sentence said twice at a wedding (ideally)
32 Yiddish exclamations
33 Round vegetable in fried rice
34 Game plan, in esports lingo
35 Poke bowl fish
37 Posts viewable for only a day, familiarly

- 38 _____ Fighters
39 Holiday _____ Express
41 They may be waived
42 Tear
47 The “K” in 24K
49 “Tricked you!”
50 Lead-in to a rumor
51 Scrapes, as a lemon peel
52 Bassoon relatives
53 N, on a compass
54 End of Cornell’s URL
56 Salad bar utensil
57 “Nice!”
60 Designer bag monogram
64 Smoke, casually
65 “The White Lotus” airer
66 Sass

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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www.upuzzles.com

Long Division by CJ Tan

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13		14			15		16	
17					18						19	
20					21				22	23		
24			25		26			27	28			
		29		30			31					
32	33					34	35			36	37	38
											39	
40					41				42			
43					44				45			
				46	47				48			
49	50	51				52	53	54		55		56
58						59			60		61	
62					63	64	65			66		
67					68				69			
70						71				72		

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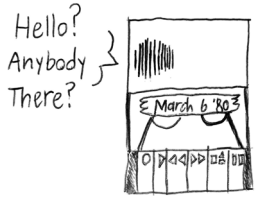
Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid,
for I am your God;
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

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

PLEASE
RECYCLE
THIS
NEWSPAPER

MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

MAY	Thu, Jan 30	Fri, Jan 31	Mon, Feb 3	Tue, Feb 4	Wed, Feb 5
BREAKFAST	DONUT, SAUSAGE, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	COOKIE, YOGURT, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	NO SCHOOL	DUTCH WAFFLE, SAUSAGE, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	PANCAKE WRAP, YOGURT, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK
LUNCH	CHICKEN ALFREDO, BREADSTICKS, SALAD, GREEN BEANS, FRUIT, DESSERT	MEATBALL SUB SANDWICH, SALAD, GREEN BEANS, PEACHES, DESSERT	NO SCHOOL	MEAT & CHEESE CHALUPAS, RICE, BEANS, CORN, SMILE ORANGES, PUDDING	CHICKEN NUGGETS, MAC AND CHEESE, CARROTS, CUCUMBERS, GRAPES



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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

30th: JH Basketball Tournament in Balmorhea
31st: Varsity Basketball in Sierra Blanca
1st: JH Basketball Tournament in Balmorhea

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Marfa band Baby Steps releases debut album



Photos by Rowdy Dugan

Members of the band Baby Steps release their debut LP this week. From left, JD Garcia, Chris Hillen, Mark Scott and Gory Smelley.

MARFA — The Marfa-based band Baby Steps announces the digital release of their debut LP, Palace Intrigue, this Friday, January 31, on Bandcamp and all streaming platforms with the vinyl release to follow. Featuring local residents Mark Scott and JD Garcia and former/sometimes resident Chris Hillen, the group formed in 2016 and began recording in 2019 a few months before the onset of the pandemic and finished the project in true long-distance style via file-sharing and email. The garage rock/fuzz pop offering features songs titled “Dark Skies Community,” “Naked at the Beach” and “Mitchy Poo.” Adam Bork directed

a music video for the album’s lead track, “Art Car.” The album, recorded locally at Marfa Recording Co. in collaboration with Gory Smelley, who also plays bass on the album, was mixed in Austin and mastered in Lockhart. The vinyl LP will make its way to Big Bend area outlets in March. Record release shows are to be announced, but will likely take place this spring in Marfa, El Paso and Austin. The digital pre-order sale will end at 11:59 p.m. Thursday, January 30, and is available at: babystepsmarfa.bandcamp.com/album/palace-intrigue.

Alpine ISD names interim athletic director

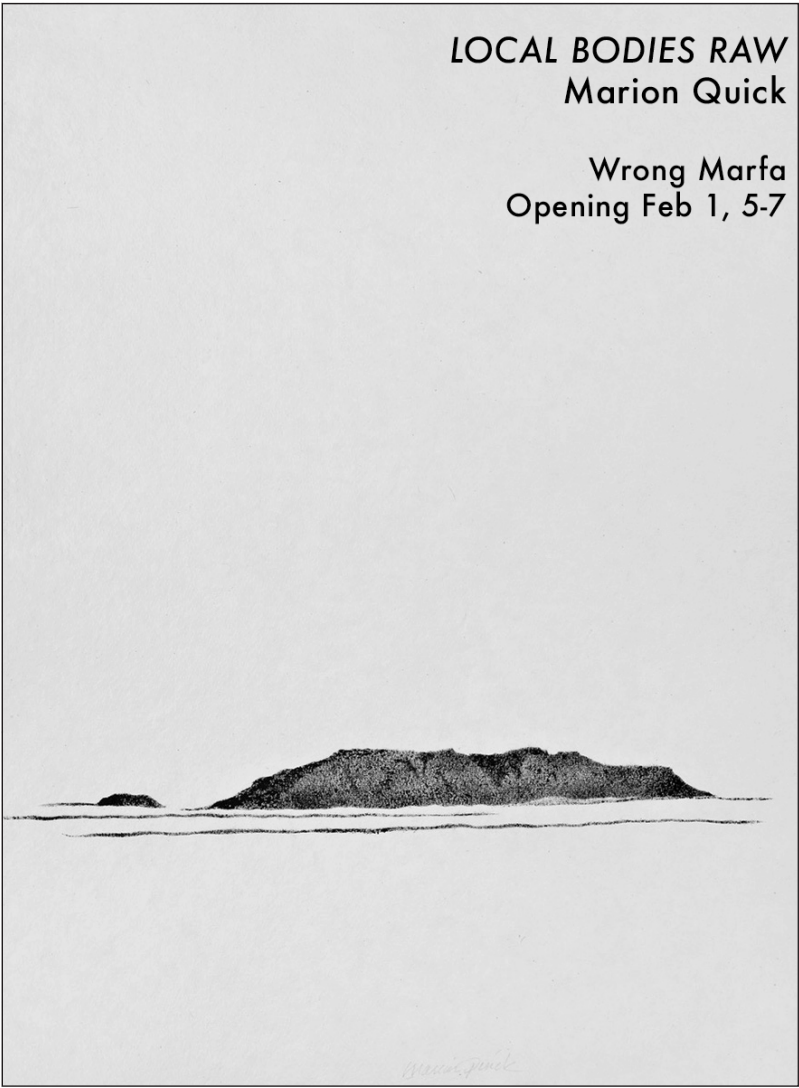
ALPINE — Alpine ISD has named Coach Jerry Dominguez to serve as the interim athletic director for the Fightin’ Bucks athletic program. Dominguez will step into the role following the upcoming departure of Coach Andy Smith, who was hired last week by London ISD to serve as their next athletic director and head football coach. Dominguez has served as a Fightin’ Buck teacher and coach for nine years. During this time, he has served as the assistant coach and defensive coordinator for the Fightin’ Bucks football program, head powerlifting coach, and assistant baseball and basketball coach. As defensive coordinator, Dominguez has helped the Fightin’ Bucks football team win five bi-district championships and two district championships. He is especially proud of former Alpine Buck football players who have continued their defensive football careers at the next level. As the head powerlifting coach, he has taken the Lady Bucks powerlifting team to Regionals

two years in a row, and has coached four Lady Bucks state qualifiers and one Lady Buck state champion in 2024. Dominguez previously served as the athletic director and head football coach in Charlotte ISD, where he led the Trojans to the playoffs in two consecutive seasons for the first time in 10 years. Coach Dominguez played four years of collegiate baseball, including two years at Sul Ross State University. He was a pitcher for the 1996 Conference Champion Lobos, while earning his Bachelors of Science degree in kinesiology with a minor in biology. Coach Dominguez currently serves as a special education teacher for Alpine High School and was nominated by fellow teachers as the 2023-2024 AHS Teacher of the Year. “We are excited to have Coach Jerry Dominguez build on the strong foundation set by Coach Smith over the past two years,” shared Alpine ISD Superintendent Dr. Michelle Rinehart. “Coach Dominguez is

known in our district and community as a man of integrity and excellence, who is constantly focused on loving all kids and helping them maximize their potential. He epitomizes what it means to be a Buck, and is an ideal candidate to lead the Fightin’ Bucks and Lady Bucks forward during this transition.” Smith will continue with the district through February 7. Smith and Dominguez will work together throughout the coming weeks to ensure a smooth transition for the Fightin’ Bucks and Lady Bucks. Over the coming months, Alpine ISD will engage in a search process to hire its next athletic director and head football coach. “I am excited and honored to be trusted with this leadership role to keep our program running smoothly for both our entire coaching staff and, first and foremost, the student athletes of Alpine ISD,” Dominguez said. “I have been part of this community for over 15 years, and I am completely committed to and invested in the continued success of our athletic programs.”

WRONG presents new work by Marion Quick

MARFA — Wrong is pleased to present LOCAL BODIES RAW, new work by artist Marion Quick, for the month of February. There will be an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, February 1. Wrong is located at 110 N Highland Ave. Everyone is welcome. Quick was raised in Marfa and is best known for his watercolor works of the area. LOCAL BODIES RAW is a different look at the same landscapes in a black and white reduction of the image. He omits color, vegetation and the footprint of mankind. Quick has long considered the depiction of local landmarks as a figurative endeavor. LOCAL BODIES RAW is the presentation of the image as a body; isolated, nude and out of context with the surrounding landscape — representing the visual “icons” of the area, El Capitan, Twin Peaks or the Haystacks, for example, as the “bodies” they have become to those who live here and to those passing through. The surrounding mountains resonate with the space and volume of the area. LOCAL BODIES RAW includes 30 large scale works of acrylic on Nujabi handmade paper. For more information, please contact Buck Johnston at 432-729-1976.



AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
Jan
30

Hike with Homeless Dogs

10am - 11am at Davis Mountains State Park
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail!

Calamity Creek

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Calamity Creek play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Social Dance Class

6pm - 10pm at Granada Theatre
Dance your way into the experience of a lifetime!
You are invited to the Granada Theatre for dances including salsa, merengue, cha-cha, waltz, swing and cumbia!

Fri
Jan
31

Alpine Wildlife Weekend 2025

Alpine, TX (visit visitalpinetx.com/wildlife/ for complete schedule)
Join us in Alpine, Texas January 31-February 2 for a weekend of activities, information and education on some of the most important and fascinating species in the state: BEARS, BATS & BIGHORN!

Travel Talk

7pm at Alpine Public Library
Free Travel Talk by Valerie Naylor entitled American Samoa: The United States South of the Equator.

Live Comedy

8pm - 10:15pm at Granada Theatre
Get ready for a night of laughs, libations, and adult humor! Join Wayne Morris and special guests Hugo Gonzales and Hunter Lane for a no-holds-barred comedy show

Ross Fleming

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Ross Fleming play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sat
Feb
1

Arts in the Park

2pm - 3:30pm at Davis Mountains State Park
Join us for an all-ages & all-ability levels arts & crafts workshop.

Red McAdam & Marley Hale

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Red McAdam & Marley Hale play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sun
Feb
2

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Weekly
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Free Zumba Classes

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

Yin Yoga

Tuesdays at 12pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes

Tuesday & Thursday at 6:00pm 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 - 12:00pm at Alpine Visitor Center

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

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OBITUARIES



CRITTENDON

Katherine Jane Crittendon was born November 9, 1927, in Marfa, Texas. She passed from this life on Sunday, January 26, 2025, at age 97. She is the daughter and second child of John Moore and Mozelle Jones Moore. Jane, as she is known to her family and friends, was a wife, mother, rancher, teacher and very active member of her community. Jane grew up on the John Moore Ranch outside of the community of Valentine, Texas, until as a teenager she moved to Austin where she graduated from

high school and the University of Texas. After graduating with a degree in education, she began her teaching career in the elementary school on White Sands Army Proving Grounds outside of Las Cruces, New Mexico. During this time, she and her sister Sue Jean enjoyed time on their father's ranch outside of Winston, NM, and Jane even earned her private pilot's license, which enabled her to make a cross-country flight to San Diego! It was at White Sands that Jane met her future husband Lynn H Crittendon, an ordinance officer onboard the post. They enjoyed dates in Las Cruces, El Paso and Juarez until Crit (as he is known to family and friends) received orders to Germany where he spent a year. Upon his return and discharge from the Army, Jane and Crit were married in Marfa on September 21, 1954, and enjoyed a wonderful honeymoon in Las Vegas.

After their honeymoon, the newlyweds moved to Duncan, Oklahoma, where Crit began his

work as a petroleum geologist with Halliburton. After training, Crit was assigned to Houston, Texas where they would welcome their first child in November of 1956. About a year later Crit would leave Halliburton and they would take over the family ranch in 1957. The couple would welcome their second son in September of 1962. Jane would eventually buy the ranch, and the couple would run the Moore Ranch into their mid-90s. Not long after leaving the ranch the couple would celebrate their 70th anniversary! Jane would not only partner with Crit in running the home ranch and a number of grazing leases over the years, but she would work as school district's tax collector for a couple of years, she would teach in Valentine Elementary School, she would serve as school board member and president of the board, and she would serve as a Federal Land Bank board member. She was also involved in many volunteer activities including the Kids and Kows education program

in El Paso.

Jane and Crit enjoyed travel and would get away at least once a year to enjoy the mountains of New Mexico, Colorado and Nevada. Jane also enjoyed a number of special trips with her mother and sisters to places such as Hawaii. She lived a full, active and exciting life. Jane was preceded in death by her parents, John Moore and Mozelle Moore, and her sisters Colleen and Patricia. She is survived by her husband, Crit; her sisters, Gail and Sue Jean; her sons, Bryan (wife Sherri) and Arthur (wife Angela); grandchildren Carl, William, Anna and Dustin; and great-grandchildren Harley, Bowen, Candace, Austin and Jack.

The Memorial Service will be at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, February 1, 2025, at Valentine Community Church in Valentine, Texas. Family and friends may share condolences and sign the online register book at www.harper-funeralhome.com.



NUNEZ

Frank Sotelo Nunez (Chiquitin), age 86 of Marfa, Texas, passed away at his residence on January

22, 2025. Chiquitin was born in Marfa to Juan Nunez Sr. and Genoveva S. Nunez on July 30, 1938.

Chiquitin attended school at the Blackwell School in Marfa. He then left and enlisted in the U.S. Army and was in the military police. Once discharged from the U.S. Army, he came home and started his career in construction where he was a construction supervisor for many years. He enjoyed fishing in his spare time and watching his favorite football team, the Dallas Cowboys. He also enjoyed spending time with his friends hanging out at Roy

Hartnett's Garage.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Juan Nunez Sr. and Genoveva S. Nunez; his brothers Juan Nunez Jr., Robert Lee Nunez; and sister Josephina Nunez Madrid. He is survived by his loving sister Helen Calderon and brother Mike Nunez. He is also survived by his children, Frank Nunez Jr., Joann Nunez Rincon, Carlos Nunez, Larry Nunez, Lisa Nunez Aguilera, Jacob Nunez and Michael Lee Nunez, and many beloved nieces, nephews, family members and friends. Chiquitin was also blessed to have 17 grandchildren and 22 great-

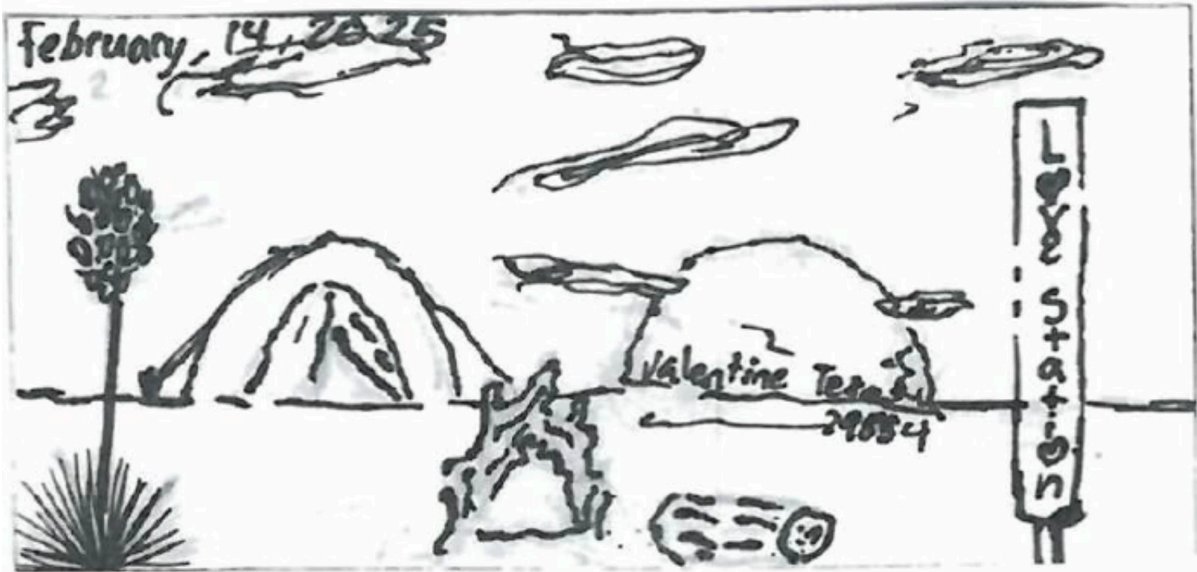
grandchildren.

Our family would like to thank our Tia Helen and her family for taking care of our father while he lived in Marfa. We would also like to thank everyone who would stop by to visit, bring food and spend time with our father.

Our family would like to invite you to join us in honoring our father at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marfa on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home. Condolences and gifts may be left by visiting www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

Valentine Post Office unveils 2025 Valentine's Day postmark



7th-grader Ellie Terrazo won the Valentine postmark art contest.

VALENTINE — The Valentine Post Office has revealed the winning entry that will adorn the envelopes of Valentines and greeting cards as the 2025 customized pictorial postmark.

For almost 35 years, the annual Valentine's Day postmark has been selected from an art contest among students of the Valentine Independent School District. This year's winning artist is 7th grader

Ellie Terrazo, a third generation Valentine resident. Inspired by fond memories of a campfire illuminating the night at her grandfather's house, Ellie drew a landscape with a campfire front and center. "Growing up, my grandfather always had a campfire going during our family outdoor events," Ellie said. She also remembers attending the "Valentines in Valentine" outdoor concert in her hometown and being

captivated by all of the campfire-style fire rings burning throughout the grounds. The warmth of these memories is what Ellie wanted to convey through her art and share on greeting cards and love letters this Valentine's Day.

The Valentine Post Office receives thousands of Valentines and greeting cards every year to be stamped with the unique postmark and mailed to loved ones all over the country

and around the world. Postmaster Ismelda Ornelas personally hand-cancels 10,000 to 12,000 envelopes, on average, every year, calling it a labor of love. "This will be my sixth Valentine's Day as postmaster, yet every year feels different; each brings a new experience, new artwork, new creativity. I truly enjoy stamping the Valentine postmark on every card and letter that comes through this post office and look forward to it every year," says Ornelas.

A mail-in request for the customized postmark is simple. Address a greeting card or cards to that special person(s), affix a First-Class Mail postage stamp to each, and place in a larger envelope, also with appropriate postage. Address the larger envelope to:

Valentine's Day Postmark
Postmaster
311 W California Ave
Valentine, TX 79854-9998

There is no charge for requests for up to 50 cancellations. Requests for more than 50 cancellations will be charged five cents for each additional cancellation. The cancellation is available until March 14, 2025.



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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, consider his ideas for the permanent installation of art within 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. Please visit our office, 104 South Highland Avenue, or website for the current schedule.

For more information and to book reservations please visit juddfoundation.org or call 432 729 4406.

JUDD

la fundación
the CHINATI
foundation

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

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

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



Classifieds & public notices

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March 14, 1985

City Commission discusses new landfill and city budget

The Marfa City Commission discussed the opening of a new city landfill and the response from Presidio County about the project at their regular meeting Tuesday morning.

The new facility is located on county-owned land and County Commissioners are asking the City of Marfa to sign a separate agreement including the maintenance of a 50-foot fire break around the perimeter of the area, a wind fence, picking up of refuse along the golf course road and a hold harmless agreement to the county.

Mayor Jane Shurley, said, "The County is just trying to get rid of another of their obligations in wanting the City to pick up trash along a road that is in the county. "Since the City serves county residents as well as those within the city limits, I am going to request that the County contribute 20 percent of the cost of the operation of the landfill. There are about 3,000 people in and around Marfa with approximately 2,500 of those living within the city. If we are going to service the other 500 that live outside the City Limits, I feel we should be reimbursed for the cost."

Jimmy Melvin met with the Commission in response to a complaint about him parking his Mack truck at the rear of his home on North Highland Ave. Melvin was advised that the area was not zoned commercial and therefore could not leave his truck parked there. "My truck is backed into the yard. It is not out in the street and besides it is only moved once a month. I don't store my tractor there.

Aren't these long gooseneck stock trailers that we see parked all about the residential area of Marfa considered equipment? My truck is kept clean and most of those stock trailers are not."

Mayor Shurley asked the question to be tabled until the Commission had a chance to discuss the matter with the Zoning Board. Another special meeting was called for 7 p.m. on March 26 to discuss the matter further.

Clean-up campaign
Pages 4, 5

Road race
Page 8

TV viewing
Pages 11, 12

**The Marfa
INDEPENDENT**
and The Big Bend Sentinel

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

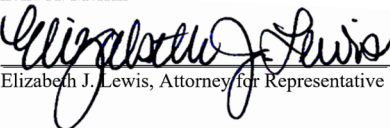
Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the **Estate of Lee Arthur Merrill, Deceased**, were issued on January 24, 2025, under Docket No. 2037, pending in the County Court of Presidio County, Texas, to **Raymond A. Merrill**.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the estate, addressed as follows:

Representative,
Estate of Lee Arthur Merrill, Deceased
c/o Elizabeth J. Lewis, Attorney at Law
LAW OFFICE OF ELIZABETH J. LEWIS, PLLC
P.O. Box 101
Marathon, Texas 79842

All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

DATED January 28, 2025.

Raymond A. Merrill
By: 
Elizabeth J. Lewis, Attorney for Representative

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE MARFA CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

A meeting of The Marfa Cemetery Association, Inc. is now scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 5:30 o'clock p.m. The meeting is scheduled to occur at the Marfa National Bank located at 301 S. Highland Ave., Marfa, Texas 79843.

At the meeting, the following matters will be discussed/acted upon:

1. Repeal of old Bylaws
2. Adoption of new Bylaws
3. Election of officers
4. Election of Directors
5. Acceptance and ratification of prior land sales
6. Fundraising
7. Clean up and restoration of cemetery
8. Hiring of personnel to work at cemetery
9. Care and maintenance of all three cemeteries, including sharing of expenses
10. Reimbursement/denial of payment of expenses paid by others
11. Approval/disapproval of expenses paid
12. Request for Section 501(c)(3) status
13. Requesting City of Marfa to supply water
14. Unfinished business
15. New business
16. Public discussion/comment
17. Executive session (if needed)

All interested persons are invited to attend.

The Marfa Cemetery Association, Inc. is a valid and existing Texas Non-Profit Corporation, and does not discriminate on the basis of: sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, origin, ethnicity, physical or intellectual characteristics, indigenous background, family, disability, religion, economic class or status or any other factor prohibited by applicable law.

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The Presidio County Auditor's Office is accepting applications for an assistant auditor. This is a full-time position with benefits. Basic bookkeeping, accounting, finance or closely related experience are preferred. Office, and computer skills, including experience with EXCEL, are required. High School or GED (required). Applications can be submitted to the Presidio County Auditor by email to countyauditor@co.presidio.tx.us, by hand delivery to the County Auditor's office. 3 rd floor, County Courthouse, Marfa Texas or by mail to PO BOX 423, Marfa, Texas 79843. Applications are available at <https://www.co.presidio.tx.us/page/presidio.County.Forms>.
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Judge Greg Henington:
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Manny Baeza, City of Marfa Mayor
mayor@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048

Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301

Raúl Lara, Mayor Pro Tem
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com

Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us

Mark Cash
councilmembercash@cityofmarfa.com

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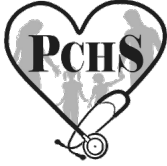
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Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:

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

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:

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Preventative Care Health Services, Inc.



Terlingua Clinic Hours of Operation

January 2025

Wednesday January 8th
10:00am - 3:00pm

Wednesday January 22nd
10:00am - 3:00pm

Wednesday January 29th
10:00am - 3:00pm

Our clinic is located at the EMS Building
23250, FM 170
Terlingua, TX 79852

For appointment call: (432) 837- 4555

Preventative Care Health Services, Inc. of Alpine, Marfa and Presidio

Is interested in renting a house in the Terlingua Ghost Town area to use as a Medical Clinic. We would need 2-3 Bedrooms, a Living Room, Kitchen and Bathroom. If you have this space available and would like to help us, please contact:
Diana Nunez at (432) 837-4812



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.

Davis Mountains Nut Company needs general help and a management trainee

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