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City Council talks open hours, PD X-ray scanner, water supply

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — Marfa City Council members met last week to discuss the possibility of new hours of operation for the Municipal Court department, to approve the purchase of an X-ray scanner for the Marfa Police Department and to throw support behind a county groundwater conservation district initiative.

City Manager Andrea Walter, who started in the role in early March, was present in addition to Mayor Manny Baeza, Mayor Pro Tem Raul Lara and council members Eddie Pallarez, Mark Morrison and Travis Acreman.

New hours for City Hall, school speed zone

Last month, the City Council voted to approve new hours of operation for City Hall, expanding hours to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday so that the facility is now open during lunch hour from noon to 1 p.m.

The move was a part of broader housekeeping updates, in addition to updating city job descriptions and more, brought by the new city manager. Last Thursday, council deliberated expanding open hours for the Municipal Court to five days a week — hours are currently Monday through Thursday.

Mayor Baeza told the council that he invited Municipal Court Clerk Cherry Torres, who had not been approached by Walter about the potential change to her department, to the meeting because he wanted her to be a part of the discussion. “What really alarmed me is she wasn’t notified that this was going to happen,” Baeza said. He said city staff were not notified of the new hours of operation for City Hall that council approved the prior meeting until after the fact.

Torres explained that the reason Municipal Court is closed on Fridays is to allow her time to perform her other administrative role as benefits coordinator for the city, an agreement she reached with a previous City Council. Baeza said there has been a history of city employees not utilizing their health insurance, and Torres has worked to improve employee health outcomes in her role as benefits coordinator.

Torres explained that Municipal Court is “extremely busy,” and she needs one day a week to perform her other job duties. “The phone is non-stop in Municipal Court,” Torres said. “I am on the phone 90% of my day.” Torres is also in charge of city employee payroll, which she said she works on during her lunch

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Photo courtesy of Elise Pepple

Elise Pepple, who is leaving Marfa Public Radio this month, reports from Alpine on Inauguration Day 2017.

Elise Pepple departs Marfa Public Radio after 8 1/2 years

By Sam Karas
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MARFA — On Monday, Marfa Public Radio closed a chapter of the venerated station’s history as longtime Director Elise Pepple celebrated her last day on the job. She served for eight and a half years, guiding the local media organization through two presidential administrations, a global pandemic and thousands of local stories big and small.

A number of important changes were implemented under her leadership: the nonprofit’s budget grew by 70%, allowing for a bigger and more diverse team. The station launched a podcast studio producing titles like Marfa for Beginners and So Far from Care, which have since been streamed around the world. The team won seven Murrow awards recognizing their journalism on a national scale and launched the “Desert Dispatch,” a fun and engaging multimedia newsletter that brings local voices to far-flung inboxes.

The news comes at a major

turning point for the station’s parent organization. Last Wednesday, Pepple traveled to D.C. to attend a hearing called by Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican congresswoman from Georgia. Over the past few weeks, Greene has urged the federal government to defund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides free programming to millions of Americans through the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR).

Greene insists that NPR — accessible to 99% of the country’s population through their radio tuner — is a biased organization, at best incapable of producing nonpartisan news and at worst pushing a harmful agenda of “brainwashing and transing [sic] children.” She told the House floor on Wednesday that most of her rural constituents get their news from other sources. “NPR and PBS have increasingly become radical, left-wing echo chambers for a narrow audience of mostly wealthy, white, urban liberals and progressives, who generally look down on and judge rural America,” the congresswoman

said in her opening remarks.

That NPR listeners “look down on and judge rural America” was news to Pepple, who managed one of the smallest and most remote stations in the country. While bigger stations in urban areas may be able to weather funding cuts, Marfa Public Radio takes a quarter of its budget from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, meaning that Greene’s efforts could be a death sentence for one of the Big Bend’s most prolific news outlets — and for dozens of others in rural communities across the country. “Access to information is something that everyone in this country deserves, no matter where they live,” Pepple said. “One of the pillars of our country is a free press.”

For now, she’s choosing to stay positive, predicting nothing but a bright future for the small and tenacious Far West Texas crew. “The motto of Marfa Public Radio is, ‘Radio for a wide range,’” she said. “Whether it’s serving Presidio or Marfa or Alpine or Midland or Odessa, it does really reflect a wide range, which I think is a pretty

remarkable thing.”

The Big Bend Sentinel sat down with Pepple to reflect on her time at the station.

When did you start your job at the station?

My first night was election night 2016. I literally arrived as the sun was setting in West Texas. I had never run a radio station, and with the new [Trump] administration, news was breaking at a speed that was — well, new. Both that night and my anniversary this past year, what that really does highlight to me is simply how important access to public media and reliable information is.

How did you first get acquainted with the station?

April 1st of that year I came to Marfa with a friend as a visitor. I’m not very good at being a tourist. It makes me uncomfortable. So I put on a live storytelling event with Marfa Public Radio when I came to visit, and one of the first people I met was

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Embattled superintendent says he disobeyed board to stay within the law

By Rob D’Amico
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FORT DAVIS — Graydon Hicks — Fort Davis ISD’s superintendent placed on paid administrative leave on March 9 — said Friday after a special school board meeting that the statement the board members gave for why they put him on leave violated the law by revealing information from the board’s executive sessions. He added that the focus of those closed meetings was the board asking him to do something illegal, and he refused.

After meeting in a Friday executive session — not open to the public — for about two and a half hours, school board members emerged and issued a statement, which they read out loud to members of the public at the meeting. The statement said board members had met with Hicks in closed meetings in the past in which he refused to follow board directives. “In two of those meetings, Mr. Hicks said he was resigning and walked out of one of the meetings,” the board’s statement said. “The

board wanted to meet again with Mr. Hicks on March 9, but instead of coming to the board and trying again to work through those issues, he insisted on having that conversation in open session. The board knew that any conversation with Mr. Hicks should have been open and frank and could also include discussion of other personnel and confidential information. Based on his continuing unwillingness to work in good faith with the board, we placed him on administrative leave.” The statement also said, “We want to be clear as well that at this time the board has no knowledge of any illegal activities.”

Hicks then asked to speak, but School Board President James Weaver told Hicks he should have made comments at the beginning of the meeting during the public comments time. The board then adjourned and went to a room behind the meeting and did not exit to the district administration building’s parking lot where about 20 parents, school staff and Fort Davis residents gathered to discuss what happened. Hicks said after the meeting that the

board members’ assertion that he did not follow their directives is correct, but he refused because it did not “follow district policy” and was not legal. “So, I can tell you I disagreed with what they were asking me to do because what they were asking me to do was not consistent with the law,” he said in the parking lot surrounded by supporters.

Hicks said he can’t be specific about what he disagreed with and what law it may violate because of executive session confidentiality and more broadly because the board told him he was not allowed to speak about the subject. “They have given me a written statement saying I cannot speak, and if I do, it will be grounds for termination,” Hicks said. The board, however, violated the law in Friday’s meeting with their statement, he said. “They just revealed closed session information about discussions with me in closed session,” he said.

Hicks has been in limbo for nearly three weeks on paid administrative leave. At the March 9 meeting, the board appointed Junior High and High School Principal Selena Martin



Staff photo by Maisie Crow

Fort Davis ISD Superintendent Graydon Hicks sits in his office in the summer of 2023

as the acting superintendent “during any time that the superintendent is on leave, or until further modification by the board.” The board had then declined to comment on the issue until its statement at Friday’s meeting. Hicks said because he was not

terminated, he can’t defend himself. If terminated, Texas law would allow him to have a hearing on the merits of the firing, and if he lost in that process, he could appeal to the Texas commissioner of education. If he lost

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Presidio County rejects funding for new district judge assistant

By Sam Karas
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PRESIDIO — Tension flared briefly at last Wednesday’s meeting of the Presidio County Commissioners Court over a proposal brought by 394th District Judge Monty Kimball requesting \$10,692.24 for a second assistant. Precinct 1 Commissioner Deirdre Hisler and Precinct 4 Commissioner David Beebe were vocally opposed to the proposal, which failed after Precinct 3 Commissioner Frankie Ortiz joined them in a “nay” vote.

Had the plan been successful, Presidio County would have joined in an interlocal agreement with the other counties represented by the court — Brewster, Jeff Davis, Culberson and Hudspeth — to split the cost of a new administrative assistant for the court according to a formula based on caseload per county. According to County Judge Joe Portillo, Kimball, who took office in January had approached each judge for help, feeling overwhelmed by the amount of administrative backlog left over from the transition. “He needs another assistant to help him accomplish his goals,” Portillo explained.

The 394th District Court hears felonies and civil suits from across the massive five-county area. Prior to running for judge, Kimball was a retired attorney of 32 years, but threw his hat in the ring for a chance to serve his community in a courtroom one last time. “I’ve still got a lot of gas left in the tank,” he told The Sentinel during last spring’s election season.

Even after years of ruthless budget negotiations, Presidio County still runs a deficit budget. The commissioners have worked together over the years to cut corners where necessary, but slow tax roll growth has limited the local government’s ability to balance their books.

A particularly sore subject has been employee pay. While the county wants to attract talent and reward loyal team members, the tight budget has meant that cost of living adjustments over the past few years have been bare bones, and offices without access to grant opportunities

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City Council updates

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hour Monday through Thursday.

Council, recognizing the move may require additional manpower, took no action on the item to expand Municipal Court hours to Friday. Walter said she would talk to Justice of the Peace Dina Jo Marquez, who also serves as the Municipal Court judge, about her overlap with court operations and continue to explore options.

In a follow up with *The Big Bend Sentinel*, Walter clarified that the initiative was an attempt to standardize open hours for those needing to pay city fines and tickets. "I believe in having everything open to the public as much as possible," she said.

Council did vote to approve a resolution updating the school zone speed limit hours for streets surrounding Marfa ISD. The new hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, reflective of the district's four-day school week. New signs notifying drivers of the change — and 15 mph speed limit — have arrived and will be posted soon.

Marfa PD updates: Impound lot, X-ray scanner

Council members heard from the Marfa Police Department about new initiatives to utilize the impound lot at the Marfa Airport and to purchase an X-ray scanner with border security grant funds.

Police Chief Gilberto Carrillo explained that he is seeking to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Presidio County Sheriff's Office regarding the county impound lot at the Marfa Airport. He said vehicles the P.D. seizes — either through traffic stops or because they are in city rights of way — without insurance or registration are picked up by Rio Grande Towing, with officers waiting up to 1.5 hours for towers to arrive, only for the vehicles to be taken down to Presidio where Rio Grande stores them.

He said under the new agreement with the sheriff's office, some vehicles would go to the Marfa Airport, and if they went unclaimed, as some are, could then be sold off with the sheriff's office and Marfa P.D. splitting the profits 60-40.

The sheriff's office will manage daily fees, paperwork and the auctions, he said.

Council voted to allow Carrillo to sign the MOU, with the only hesitation coming from the city contract accountant and previous mayor, Dan Dunlap, who warned the city could be entangling themselves by utilizing the ill-fated impound lot, which is technically in violation of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Next council heard from Rene Gonzales, who works as an administrative assistant for the Operation Stonegarden grant — a state border security grant Marfa P.D. receives annually, with the most recent award totaling \$194,187. Of that total, \$58,940 was budgeted for the X-ray scanner, \$120,247 for personnel — P.D. overtime — and \$15,000 for supplies.

Gonzales explained Marfa P.D. is looking to purchase an Viken X-ray machine for \$49,997 to assist with border security measures. The handheld device will allow officers to search vehicles — if probable cause is established — without having to tear up car doors or seats to search for concealed contraband, Carrillo explained in a follow up with *The Sentinel*.

As it stands now, the P.D. has to rely on cumbersome Border Patrol equipment that may not be available, and that takes a couple of hours to start up, Gonzales said. He said it will help officers easily find hidden firearms, drugs and currency, for example. "You have probable cause, you have search, you can just pull that thing out of your vehicle," Gonzales said. "An officer on duty can very easily deploy it and use it."

"There will have to be probable cause or consent," Baeza added. "This cannot just be used like, 'Hey I got a hunch.'"

Gonzales said the Viken security company will train up to 15 officers on the machine, and Marfa P.D. plans to share the resource with other area law enforcement. Council voted unanimously to approve the purchase.

Protecting the future of the county's water supply

A long-considered initiative to amend the enabling legislation of the Presidio

County Underground Water Conservation District (PCUWCD) is one step closer to being realized after Marfa City Council members voted in support of the change last week. The City of Presidio approved the measure earlier in March.

The item — brought forth by PCUWCD General Manager Trey Gerfers — involves filing local legislation to remove the "Midland exemption," a legal loophole that exempts municipalities with populations 130,000 and under from water use limits, including Marfa and Presidio.

The effort is an attempt to protect the municipal water supplies in Presidio County, which will now apply for and receive production permits from the PCUWCD, who will then be able to protect the municipalities from new users whose pumping may lead to the draw down of city wells.

"It's when new users come in, and new development comes in, that the permit holders are going to be glad that they have their permits because future permits will be subject to conditions where if the cities or the water supply corporations see their wells going down, then the new users will have to reduce their pumping," Gerfers explained in a follow up with *The Sentinel*.

City councils in Marfa and Presidio will each appoint a representative to the PCUWD board, he said, and production permits will not be restrictive. "It'll probably be something on the order of what they use currently," Gerfers said. "Plus some kind of a generous margin for growth."

"This really isn't going to change anything," he added. "No one's going to see their water prices go up. Nothing is really going to change as far as what the cities can do with their water. This is really just a proactive step to protecting the future of the water supply."

The PCUWCD enabling legislation change, which will take the form of a local bill, still has to make it past the Texas Legislature. Gerfers said it is unclear whether the bill will pass this session, but both Sen. César Blanco and Rep. Eddie Morales are in support of the measure.

Graydon Hicks

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the Texas Education Agency appeal, he would then have the option of a lawsuit.

"So, my options are very limited," Hicks said. "I can't talk. I can't tell you what they were asking me to do. I can't fight. I can't defend myself."

Hicks' supporters, however, did defend him in public comments and described him as someone who has given his life's work to the district, everything from "cleaning up vomit in the hallway" to watering sports fields to painting an elementary school's fence.

"I moved here in 1979, went to high school with Graydon, known him for a long, long time," Matt Blackman told the board. "Have I always gotten along with Graydon? No. Is he the kind of person I want to go hang out with? No. But I've never, ever not known him to have honesty and integrity. ... I've never seen him break the rules. So, whatever's going on here ... I think it's time that the community knows."

The hearsay in the community is damaging Hicks' reputation and that of board members, Blackman said. "Clarity is important, and it's time for everybody to come clean and tell us what's going on," he said.

Jason Corbin, a parent of past and present district students, told the board it was also important for people to realize another side of Hicks. "I'm just giving you character witness from my end," he said. "There was a time and a place when I believed in Mr. Hicks that vanished a long time ago last year with the way he treated my son and the way that he treated another student in the same situation."

Last week, Corbin provided *The Big Bend Sentinel* with a letter he sent to the board last spring detailing what he called the bullying of his son and

another student for having long hair at their graduation ceremonies. The letter states that Hicks "verbally assaulted" them with the intent to "dress down a couple of young men on their graduation day and steal this precious moment from them."

It's unclear whether the board took any action regarding his complaint, but Corbin said in his letter that after he confronted Hicks at the ceremony criticizing his actions, the next day, then- Jeff Davis County Deputy King Merritt showed up on his doorstep. Corbin wrote that the deputy said that Corbin would not be allowed on Fort Davis ISD property — other than to drop off or pick up his daughter — and would be arrested on criminal trespass charges if he did. That prohibition is no longer in effect, Corbin said.

"And that's the way that he's conducted himself with many staff members, parents and also students," Corbin told the board. "I'm sure many of us have heard about these things. If you haven't, you will. ... I understand Mr. Hicks has a lot of supporters, but I also want everyone to know you can't just paint a picture of this man that makes him glorious because he is not. My family has seen a very different side."

On Monday, Michelle Barron, the parent of the other child confronted about his long hair at graduation, confirmed Corbin's account of the incident with *The Sentinel*. "I was about to walk out of that school because of what he did to my son," she said.

Barron said her son is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and that she showed school officials proof of that status. "I gave the blue [nation registration] card to the school and let them know that he is a Native American," she said. "[Long hair] is part of his religion, his heritage. I'm not cutting my son's

hair. The school was perfectly fine with it. They had no problem with it."

In a phone call Saturday, Hicks said the students in question were violating the district dress code with their hair length and had been warned before. That code states: "Boys' hair may not extend below the eyebrows, may not extend below the collar of a shirt and may not wear hair in any type of ponytail or updo."

Hicks said he felt his actions toward the two boys were appropriate and that Corbin was not there to witness the conversation. Hick said he briefed board members on the incident. He confirmed that a trespassing notice was served by the sheriff's office and said it was a precaution because Corbin had threatened him by saying he would "take me down." The warning was lifted after last summer so that Corbin could pick up his child from school, Hicks said.

Corbin said he only asked the board to replace Hicks.

Weaver could not immediately be reached for comment, but he and other board members have declined to comment in the past citing the confidentiality required of actions around personnel issues. The board statement made in the meeting was not made available in writing by *The Sentinel* press time.

In the only other action item on the agenda, board members voted unanimously (Pene Ferguson was absent) to contract with J&P Advisory Group. Weaver said the consultant would assist with financial and policy issues for the district. No contract amount was stated before the vote, and no other information on the contract was available online.

The board's next regular meeting is scheduled for April 14.

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Elise Pepple departs MPR

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Lonn Taylor, [a historian whose show The Rambling Boy brought local and state history to life.] He was going to tell a story about history, but I told him it was actually personal stories. He wanted to know, “Well, why wouldn’t I tell a story about the history of Texas?” But then we started talking, and he was like, “Well, there was that one time I lived next to Janis Joplin...”

I remember walking into the station. I’m in the desert, I walk into the station, and I am just struck — this station is a lifeline. I had this vision — my background relates to interviewing people and making radio. I thought, what if this station could be an oral history center for the region? What if this station could produce podcasts about this place that reflect the stories that happen here, not from an outside perspective? It was all these “what ifs,” and less than six months later, I was running the radio station.

What are some of the meaningful moments that stick out to you from that time?

The team was really small when I got to the station. There were four people other than me. Half our team were interns and the people who had been reporters had just left. To arrive at this important moment in our country to a station with very few staff members and reporters and then ultimately that leading to many national Murrow awards is a pretty incredible thing to look back at.

I think one of the really special things about West Texas and Marfa Public Radio is that people are open to experimentation, and so being at the station and getting to celebrate love, honor the dead, host block parties, report when there’s a wildfire — times that feel most meaningful at the radio station is when it is a community service and when it is a literal lifeline.

Sometimes the simplest job the radio station has is to say, “We’re here with you.” There’s something about the spirit of West Texans that’s curious, “never met a stranger,” often up for a good time. That’s really meaningful to me.

I’m curious if you can tell me more about the station’s foray into podcasting.

It was one of the original goals that I had when I got to the station, but it was kind of like a crush — you see all the possibility and then you confront the reality. We didn’t have transmitters that were up to date or a generator, so we had to fix



Photo courtesy of Elise Pepple

Sally Beauvais, Carlos Morales, Diana Nguyen and Elise Pepple at a past Edward R. Murrow award ceremony.

that. And then we were in multiple crises. What was important was reporting. Three years ago, I finally got to invest in realizing this vision of creating

other ways to tell stories at the station. For me, the studio initiatives are kind of twofold, and one is that it’s not simply information that connects people to a place — it’s people’s lives. We keep a document that’s all the New York Times, Vogue, etcetera travel articles about Marfa. As a station, I feel like part of our job is to help shape the narratives about this place to reflect more of the realities.

It’s also on a different level strategic because it’s true that we live in a sparsely populated area. Something I’ve had to figure out every year is, how do we fundraise to support this station? Seeing that there’s an influx of people who visit West Texas — and there are people across Texas who really think of West Texas as part of the soul of the state — I wondered if there was a way to reach an audience beyond our immediate region.

What’s next for you?

Part of my decision was that it has been nonstop for eight and a half years, everyday. The radio station never closes, so it’s kind of like being on call every day for eight and a half years. Then getting to be a part of NPR’s board — that’s getting to look at the large scale.

What I’ve been thinking about is this time where I see a lot of polarization and how to shape media in ways that foster connection and belonging. What that looks like is a little TBD.

There is a book called The Decameron, and it was a fictional work that came out after the plague in Italy, and it was a story about people fleeing the city and telling stories for 10 days and 10 nights to laugh and make meaning and let loose a little bit. When I read about this during the pandemic, I thought, “Oh, we need a Decameron for our times.” Not to flee, but to face our times together.

I’m going to leave Marfa the way I came, and I’m going to host a live storytelling event that’s a pilot for this idea. I don’t know about you, but since the beginning of the pandemic, I feel like it’s been one long year. We didn’t have a funeral for the million lives lost. We didn’t have a dance party for three months to shake it off. There’s so much that went unwitnessed.

To me, it’s not a coincidence that those things happened and that we are where we are now as a country. Part of what I’m interested in the future is: how do we create experiences where we come together and connect in person with each other so that we can face living in our world together?

Presidio County rejects funding

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like Operation Lone Star have to make do with what they have.

At \$50,000, the proposed new district court assistant salary would have out-earned the vast majority of Presidio County employees, apart from the sheriff, the judge and the county attorney.

Commissioner Beebe didn’t understand why Kimball needed another assistant so urgently without demonstrating a significant uptick in caseload, pointing out that each county has a district clerk that helps shoulder some of the burden of the court’s work. He formerly served as a justice of the peace, making around \$34,000 a year to be on-call 24/7, and wondered

why anyone would run for office knowing the financial constraints of the five small, isolated counties that make up the court. “Maybe [Kimball] should have looked at the responsibilities of the job and realized that it’s really difficult,” he said.

County Judge Joe Portillo, who supported the proposition, said that \$50,000 a year was a significant lowball in the legal industry, where six figures and beyond are common. He felt that there might be some way to make it work for the county. “We have a healthy reserve,” he said.

Beebe told *The Sentinel* that he still didn’t think it was fair. “That rate

is far above what our salary schedule would permit, and I can’t face my people and say that’s okay,” he said. “[Kimball] has the right to decide what he wants to pay his people, but he also has to get approval from our commissioners court.”

Lori Holguin, 394th District Court coordinator, declined to comment on the matter while Kimball was recalibrating his request to the counties but said that she planned to have more information available in time for the next Presidio County Commissioners Court meeting.

Butterfield Overland Trail interpretation still rolling along

By Mary Cantrell
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FAR WEST TEXAS — Efforts spearheaded by the National Trails Office, a division of the National Park Service (NPS), to develop an interpretive trail along the historic Butterfield Overland mail route are still underway with a comprehensive plan draft set to be completed this July.

The circa 1857 trail begins in Tipton, Missouri, and stretches westward ending in San Francisco, California. A significant portion of the 3,292 mile trail cuts across Texas, including parts of Jeff Davis County. In January 2024 staff from the National Trails Office held a public meeting in Fort Davis — one of several held in the route’s seven states — to discuss the historic designation of the trail and potential partnership opportunities.

Local communities along the trail will work with the National Trails Office on trail marking, signage and archaeological preservation to ensure historically accurate, consistent information is presented across sites. Other National Historic Trails the office administers include the Pony Express and the Trail of Tears.

The Butterfield Overland Trail was established as a National Historic Trail by Congress in 2023, paving the way for the three-year planning process still underway by the National Trails Office.

Lead planner on the project, Jill Jensen, said the trail met historic-designation criteria because of its role in shaping the nation. “Our lives as a whole were changed by the ability to send mail from the East to the West and connect up with the gold fields and to make for that federal presence out in the West that had never been there before,” Jensen said. “It really shaped the culture. It shaped transportation networks. It shaped financial networks. It just had a huge influence on that westward expansion in the United States.”

Since the January 2024 public meeting in Fort Davis — which Jensen said had the highest turnout — trails office staff have been hard at work traveling across the Southwest



Photo courtesy of Jill Jensen

Pinery Butterfield Stage Station Ruins in Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

to identify the route and station remnants, utilizing tools like Lidar technology, Bureau of Land Management General Land Office (GLO) maps and more. “We have gone through

and looked at 147 station sites from the very beginning of the trail in Tipton all the way through San Francisco,” Jensen said.

Luckily NPS staff completed most of the travel required for the project before a travel ban and spending freeze went into effect under the Trump administration. Jensen said the project is still on track despite those issues and significant delays are not currently anticipated.

There are a total of 25 known “high potential” historic sites along the trail in Texas, including 10 stations, historic sites and landforms along the “lower road,” a portion of the trail that starts at Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River and dips down to Fort Davis, then winds back up to El Paso. Six historic sites were also located on the “upper road,” in Texas, which goes from Horsehead Crossing to Pinery Station in the Guadalupe Mountains and Hueco Tanks, also ending in El Paso.

National Trails Office staff are working with willing landowners, but are not actively reaching out to landowners along the trail or requiring participation of any kind. Some sites are located on public lands, like the stagecoach stop at the Fort Davis National Historic Site. Jensen said Fort Chadbourne, an old U.S. Army fort that is privately owned, has shown interest in participating in the interpretive trail in addition to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Jensen said the draft comprehensive plan will not include an in-depth evaluation of the high potential segments, and that work will take place at a later date starting in November 2025. The draft comprehensive plan will include a logo for the route so that interpretive design and signage can start to be developed, she said.

“The end goal for us right now is a comprehensive plan which guides interpretation, guides interaction with nonprofits, guides interaction with the federal government, and how they administer and manage the trail,” Jensen said. “It’s kind of a 30,000-foot view of this grand plan for the trail.”

For more information on the project, including maps and how to submit a public comment, visit parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=118557.

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Houston, Texas 2025
Part II November
14–15

Opinion

At what point does this paper actually start reporting facts rather than regurgitating gossip? This latest “article” about the White feud is filled with one-sided slander, and I, for one, am tired of reading it.

The Big Bend Sentinel is supposed to be a news source for the community — where we read about the school lunch menu, city council updates, local fundraisers, and sure, court hearing summaries attended by reporters. It’s not meant to be a gossip tabloid tearing the people of that community down.

Families on both sides of this dispute are under immense stress. If one side vents to a curious reporter, that doesn’t automatically make their statements true or virtuous. Same if the other side chooses to keep their thoughts out of the paper, it doesn’t make them villains or worthy of scorn.

Everyone knows that Mac White is a pillar of this community — someone we call when we need a helping hand. He’s loud because he can’t hear well. He is at the Spirit Co because he and his wife Julie are often out in the community supporting the local businesses and welcoming visitors to our beautiful town.

Trying to make these people look bad for clicks and paper sales is downright shameful. We deserve a better paper than that.

Marielle La Rue
Marfa

...

Dear Editor,

The obsessive, salivating coverage of the White family drama around the Brite Ranch needs to stop. I'm very aware of the historical significance of the Brite Ranch. However, its fate bears no relevance whatsoever to the life of the average reader of this paper. *The Sentinel* has presented to all and sundry every bit of dirty laundry it can dredge from a private family's sordid infighting. I was under the impression that we had a local newspaper that operated from a place of integrity. Instead, we appear to have a gossip rag. With every new "story" that appears, it becomes more and more obvious that *The Sentinel* has become a mouthpiece for someone in the family who wishes to influence the legal proceedings through popular opinion. It's pathetic to see our local paper feed upon this and regurgitate it for voyeuristic consumption. Have some class, *Big Bend Sentinel*.

Douglas Matus
Marfa

...

Editor’s note: *The Big Bend Sentinel’s* reporting on the Brite Ranch legal proceedings relies solely on public court records or statements made under oath in court. These are arguments of attorneys or sworn statements to the courts or others recounting events in court records.

We are following the Brite Ranch legal proceedings and believe it is of importance to our readers for a few reasons. First, we are a region surrounded by ranches — the outcome of this case may set legal precedent which could affect other area ranches. Second, the case is stressing our county’s court resources and likely will put a significant strain on our court clerks, jurors and judge if the case goes to a new trial — Presidio County residents have a right to know what is happening in their courts, which our local taxpayers fund. Third, the Brite Ranch is one of the most historically significant ranches in the Big Bend region.

...

Let us begin with the basic premise that the reporting on the struggles of the White Family in *The Big Bend Sentinel* has been extremely fair, and the reporters should be commended on remaining unbiased throughout this unfortunate saga. It is a hard story to tell.

Now, also let us also be clear though that this interfamily quarreling did not begin with the first filing of a lawsuit. The legal filings are simply the dissatisfaction of certain members of the White family boiling over into the public discourse. I spent many a month in my teenage years and early twenties as an employee of the ranch and two decades after as a guest of the family. I have unfortunately personally witnessed the interfamily disputes over the last 25 years, at one time a friend to all parties involved.

Beau and Mac White both left Brite Ranch on their own accord around 20 years ago for reasons which are their own. They both pursued their own careers outside of ranching, be it breeding Jack Russell terriers like Beau or welding like Mac, but also to support the careers of their wives. Many marriages make decisions not dissimilar to those. After leaving their residences on the ranch, they would come back periodically to assist in major ranch events like round up or join the family events such as Bloys Campmeeting or the West Texas Socials, and of course, the occasional family birthday party, wedding, or funeral.

After a few years of moving off the ranch, the participation in ranch activities became less and less and eventually nonexistent. All the while, they were very proud to claim their family heritage and boast of the beauty that exists amongst Capote Peak which belongs in part to them. Beau and his wife were more than happy to tell stories of Brite from the old days when they were at dinner parties in Austin amongst folks employed at the Capitol and within state agencies, but at the same time not returning to assist in the workings of the ranch. They still however accepted their payments from the profits of the ranch. They are of course named heirs in both of the trusts created from the Brite Ranch and thus is their birthright.

Neither Beau and his wife nor Mac and his wife had any children. As a result, and because of the design and intent of the trusts, with their passing would end their lineal ties to Brite. One can only speculate that these circumstances were motivating factors in their decision to want something more from the ranch now. Afterall, since they don’t have any children to receive an inheritance, maybe there is an argument that they deserve something while they remain alive. This is when the quarreling began.

Once it became apparent that there was not intention to deviate from the trusts, is when this story begins to take a turn that if Taylor Sheridan had written it into an episode of “Yellowstone” it would be scoffed at as a bridge too far to believe. Beau and Mac proposed to their siblings that they intended to consider adoption which would effectively dilute the inheritance of the remaindermen. That is to say that nieces and nephews would receive less land and share it with a family that was not their own. When their proposals with regards to their inheritance were not agreed to is when this epic takes a turn into left field. Why would two brothers randomly adopt the same 60-plus-year-old man whom they hardly knew who was the former secretary of state of Texas with intimate connections with the former governor of Texas, Rick Perry? The rational question is, “Did they do so for love or for leverage?”

At that point, the lawsuits began to fly, ranging from siblings to remaindermen to Texas Christian University whose divinity school, Brite Divinity School, is partially endowed by the trusts. Why file lawsuits that could potentially hurt multiple generations of the family legacy?

Recent court rulings have overturned much of the turmoil, with Jim White being restored as trustee, but many more court proceedings are to follow before the entire matter is settled. The trusts state that an individual trying to break it up can be permanently removed. One might suggest that since the latest rulings have not been in their favor, Beau and Mac should be grateful that, despite their transgressions against their siblings, nieces and nephews, nobody is calling for such an action.

The only winners have been the lawyers and the legal fees that they have accumulated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and maybe the readers of this fine periodical that got to learn that regardless of station, all families have drama. The solution to the ordeal is simple: return to the intent of the original trusts and live again as a family as they had before the lawsuits began. There are no “bad people” in this sad saga, only those that felt slighted at different times and reacted out of aggression as humans do. It is the hope of all parties involved that their better sensibilities would take hold and over time forgiveness will reign and heal the rifts over time.

Seth Alford
League City, Texas



Dear editor,

Regarding the deployment of military troops here in the Big Bend, I feel it should be a mandatory requirement for each soldier to watch the documentary The Ballad of Esequiel Hernandez; I also strongly urge each and every citizen of the region to watch this as well. I personally do not see any crisis here that the Border Patrol has not been able to handle, and I live 100 feet from the Rio Grande, safer than in any major city or town.

The Border Patrol agents I have spoken with are all highly competent and trained for their specific duties. Sending out military troops to the border is akin to hiring a plumber to do your electrical work — it's a serious misallocation of resources, and we're paying for it.

If the Border Patrol needs assistance, I feel it should be in the form of more agents and modernizing their equipment. I hope this saga wraps up quickly without incident. History has not shown this to be a wise decision.

Charlie Angell
Redford

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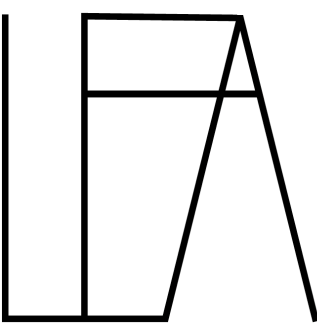


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Are you better off?

Recently, I’m finding it difficult to understand how the administration in Washington is making life better for the majority of Americans.

Will replacing our air traffic guidance system with Starlink make air travel any safer? We have seen how Starlink has been shut down in other parts of the world on a whim.

When tariffs kick in and the price of food, appliances, cars, gas and electricity goes up, will that help you and your family?

With layoffs at NOAA and the lack of a warning of impending bad weather, will you and your family be safer?

With the reduction of FEMA and the clean up from natural disasters such as fires, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes relegated to individual states where these events occur, will you and your family be better served?

If the U.S. Postal Service is privatized, will that help you and your family? We have already experienced the erratic service to remote locations by private companies when it affects their bottom line.

We are having our own struggle in Texas with our government wanting to siphon tax dollars to help rich people pay for private education for their children. How is that helping you and your family with the Department of Education shut down?

Are you and your family better off as our national parks are shut down because personnel have been fired? The lack of tourist dollars in the Big Bend area will be felt in all three Big Bend counties.

Will you and your family be better off as Medicaid and Medicare dollars dry up and our regional hospital could close for lack of funding?

Is it helping you and your family for our nation to be voting with Russia, China and North Korea against Ukraine at the United Nations?

Is it helping you and your family for the governments of the free world to be excluding us from meetings because they can no longer trust us with classified information?

I question how these changes are making the vast majority of Americans safer, healthier or happier.

L.P. Martin
Jeff Davis County Democrat

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Jeff Davis County Library hosts ‘West Texas History: Fact and Fiction’

FORT DAVIS — The Jeff Davis County Library will host “West Texas History: Fact and Fiction,” a forum featuring Jason Stone, author of The Beauty of the Days Gone By and Larry Francell, author of My Summer Vacation: The Victorio Campaign Journal of Robert Grierson 1880, from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday April 5.

The event, sponsored by the Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, will be moderated by Liz Rogers.

San Antonio-based author Jason Stone grew up in West Texas and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. His first novel, The Beauty of the Days Gone By has been acquired by Grove Atlantic and is currently in production for the summer of 2026.

Based on historical events that occurred in Comancheria, the region of West Texas and New Mexico controlled by the Comanche in the 18th and 19th centuries, The Beauty of the Days Gone By is an epic novel that weaves the reminiscences of the legendary plainsman Charles Goodnight, who is facing his mortality, against the backdrop of Reconstruction Texas and the haunting ordeals of a family torn

apart by a violent Indian depredation — two brothers hauled way into captivity and the father who searches for them.

Fort Davis-based author Larry Francell earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from Austin College and a Master of Arts in history from the University of Texas at Austin. He began a 50-year museum career at Fort Davis National Historic Site, where he still volunteers. A partner in FAE Worldwide, a museum and art services company, he sold his portion of the business so that he and his wife Beth, a landscape designer and artist, could return to Fort Davis in 1996 and restore the family home.

He has spent 20 years in county government as county commissioner, emergency management coordinator and county judge. He has written extensively on local history, including Fort Lancaster: Texas Frontier Sentinel, How Indian Emily Saved Fort Davis, What’s in a Name: Why Fort Davis was Named for Jefferson Davis and Why the Name Was Never Changed. His most recent work is My Summer Vacation: The Historic Campaign Journal of Robert Grierson, 1880.



Courtesy of Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Francisco Rosas
12th grade - Etching

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

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

Universal Crossword

Edited by Taylor Johnson March 31, 2025

ACROSS

- 1 Capture
4 Word after “knowledge” or “gender”
7 Web address
10 Safari subwindow
13 Obscene
15 “Doctor Odyssey” actress
16 Obama health law: Abbr.
17 Draft again, as an essay
18 Some comedy sketches
20 Schedule opening
21 ____ scenario
23 Foot part
25 Foot part
26 “U ____ Touch This” (MC Hammer song)
28 Japanese energy healing
30 Subj. for a native Hebrew speaker, perhaps
33 Spain, in Spain
35 Billions of years
37 Apt name for a landscaper?
39 Really sticks the landing, say
41 Say quickly
43 “Multiplcity” actress
44 Super nitpicky

- 46 Darth Vader’s given name
47 “Long ____ ...”
49 “To clarify ...”
51 Italian city famed for its tower
52 Admirer
54 Begins a meal
56 Microbrewery product
60 See 14-Down
62 Bleeps out
63 Advanced math class, informally
66 Gobble up
67 ____ King
68 Micronesia’s region
69 “Dr.” of hip-hop
70 Word before “boost” or “trip”
71 First bump
72 Obtain

DOWN

- 1 Network with the podcast “Up First”
2 Greek war god
3 *Reminder to visit an alley?
4 Horses’ paces
5 Picnic pest
6 Certain youth baseball league
7 Cold War inits.
8 *Desire to barbecue?
9 Mega Millions, e.g.
10 “Sharknado” actress
11 Gets an A+ on

- 12 Foundation
14 With 60-Across, largest part of the cerebral cortex
19 Slurpee alternative
22 Nickname hidden in “two-piece”
24 *Flex in the gym?
26 “Blockers” actor John Tree pose, e.g.
27 Some boxing wins: Abbr.
31 *Attractive lock of hair?
32 Jazz trumpeter
34 U.S. intel org.
36 Transgression
38 Italian volcano that erupted in July 2024
40 Scottish cap
42 Ingredient in boba pearls
45 Journalistic intro
48 Bake-____ (food competitions)
50 Apple earbud
53 Observe
55 Hypnotist’s command
56 Kept in the loop over email
57 “____ Window” (Hitchcock film)
58 Initial poker bet
59 This, in Spanish
61 “Night” author
64 Smart TV brand
65 Sphinx or Siamese pet

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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www.upuzzles.com

3/31

Droppin' Gs by Sam Cordes

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12
13				14				15				16		
17								18			19			
	20					21	22							
			23			24			25					
26	27				28			29			30	31	32	
33				34			35			36		37		38
39						40		41			42			
43				44			45		46					
	47		48		49			50			51			
			52	53			54			55				
56	57	58				59				60			61	
62								63	64					65
66					67			68						
69					70			71				72		

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4th - 5th: HS Softball in IRA

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First Presbyterian hosts ‘Street to Stations Exhibition’ for Lent

MARFA — First Presbyterian Church of Marfa is sponsoring an art installation town walk-through from April 7 to 21 to recognize Lent. This installation is entitled "Street to Stations Exhibition" and features art from Scott Erickson's reimaginings of "Stations of the Cross."

A map with locations and addresses of the art will be located at First Presbyterian as well as the Chamber of Commerce table at the USO. Also, on each art displayed will be a list of the other stations as well as a QR code explaining the artist viewpoint. Art will be installed at these 12 locations:

- #1 Marfa Presbyterian Church
- #2 Marfa Presbyterian Church
- #3 Marfa National Bank
- #4 Bitter Sugar
- #5 St. George
- #6 Para Llevar
- #7 Big Sandy
- #8 Marfa Reality
- #9 Conseulo’s Taxes
- #10 Cactus Liquors
- #11 Marfa Public Library

#12 Dairy Queen

“During Lent, art can serve as a powerful tool for spiritual reflection and contemplation, helping individuals connect with the themes of repentance, sacrifice, and hope, ultimately deepening their faith and preparing them for Easter,” says Erickson.

Erickson says by closely observing and pondering artwork, individuals can engage in "visio divina" (spiritual insight through art), allowing them to reflect on the transformation for which is called for Lent.

“Art provides a visual language to express and understand complex spiritual concepts, helping individuals connect with their faith in a tangible way,” he says. “During Lent, the focus on suffering and sacrifice can be expressed through art, allowing individuals to process their own struggles and find solace in the shared human experience of pain and redemption.”

The stations are a cross-section of elements, ideas and objects. “As you work through these stations, may you see that we are not troubled guests in this world ... that we are not forsaken,” Erickson says.

The Chinati Foundation hosts 7th symposium: ‘Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Middle Landscape’

MARFA — This coming weekend, April 4 through 6, a group of artists, architects, curators, writers, landscape architects and historians will gather in Marfa for Part I of a two-part symposium titled Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Middle Landscape. Since 1995, Chinati has organized six other symposia, including Art in the Landscape (1995) and Art and Architecture (1998), documenting each one in a publication with essays and edited transcripts of the lectures and conversations.

This seventh symposium, hosted collaboratively in two parts by The Chinati Foundation/La Fundación Chinati and Rice School of Architecture, is co-organized by Caitlin Murray, director of the Chinati Foundation; Stephen Martin, director of preservation and planning at the Chinati Foundation; and Troy Schaum, associate professor at Rice School of Architecture. As an architect, Schaum is engaged in ongoing preservation and restoration work at Chinati, including the recently completed restoration of the John Chamberlain Building in downtown Marfa.

Through a series of lectures, panels and talks, Part I participants will explore the relationship between art, architecture and land at Chinati by focusing on one of the most significant examples of their integration: the former artillery sheds that house Donald Judd’s 100 untitled works in mill aluminum (1982–1986). Considering the history of the buildings, one focus of the symposium will be on current efforts to restore the structures, preserve Judd’s architectural interventions, protect the art, and care for the surrounding landscape.

Keynote speakers include Carme Pigem, a member of the Pritzker Prize-winning architecturalfirm RCR Arquitectes; Alberto Kalach, the architect who



Photo by Alex Marks. Donald Judd Art © 2025 Judd Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Donald Judd, Artillery Sheds with 100 untitled works in mill aluminum, 1982-1986. Permanent collection, The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas.

designed the José Vasconcelos Library in Mexico City; and Tatiana Bilbao, who holds a recurring teaching position at Yale School of Architecture and,

with her eponymous firm, collaborates on projects such as the Mexican American Cultural Center in Austin. Additional participants include the artist Larry Bell, who presented the exhibition 6 x 6 An Improvisation at Chinati in 2014, and Christopher Wool, a former Chinati artist in residence whose presentation See Stop Run West Texas will be open for previews on Friday, April 4, and Saturday, April 5, from 12 – 6 p.m. at the Brite Building in downtown Marfa.

Though the symposium is sold out, Chinati will provide access to a livestream of the program at chinati.org/symposium2025. Accompanying public events include free self-guided viewing of Donald Judd’s 100 untitled works in mill aluminum on Saturday, April 5 from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. as well as an exhibition opening at the Locker Plant (130 East Oak Street) from 6 – 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 5. Also titled Art in Context, the exhibition brings together archival drawings and photographs of the former artillery sheds that house Donald Judd’s 100 untitled works in mill aluminum alongside models, drawings and construction details of restoration possibilities. It will remain open every Saturday in April (April 12, April 19, and April 26) from 1 to 5 p.m.

Generous support for the symposium has been provided by Lee and Mike Cohn and Lori and Alexandre Chemla as well as the City of Marfa. Part II will take place in Houston on November 14 and 15, 2025. The program will expand these conversations to address urgent challenges in contemporary art and architectural practice, coinciding with an exhibition, presented as part of Exhibitions at Rice, on view in the Hines Family Gallery and the Casbarian-Appel Gallery within William T. Cannady Hall at the Rice School of Architecture from September 4 through December 2, 2025.

Shorthorns slay state science fair



Piper Donaldson, Annaka Salcido, and Joangel Davila.

COLLEGE STATION — The weeks Marfa ISD High School students spent researching and developing objectives, testing hypotheses and procedures, and analyzing data and drawing conclusions came to a head this weekend as they traveled to Texas A&M University for the state Science and Engineering Fair.

In February, students competed in the Regional Science Fair in Odessa, with five out of six project teams advancing to state.

Science teacher Elizabeth Donaldson said even though no teams advanced to the national competition being held in Columbus, Ohio, this year, the Shorthorn’s projects were some of the best the state fair had to offer. “Each year the students impress me, but this year they blew me away,” Elizabeth said. “The best part



Ayven Pippen and Giselle Torres.

of the competition was watching the students’ ideas come to life and discover unexpected answers. Science is awesome, and so are these students!”

Giselle Torres and Ayven Pippen worked together on their project “Composting for Green Energy,” which involved analyzing whether heat produced from compost could power a steam turbine. “My favorite part was actually talking to the judges because it was the one time I was not anxious about anything and was confident,” Pippen said. “Our team was a great thing to be a part of.”

Mia Dominguez and Cassandra Garcia studied how to support agricultural life on Mars, where soil is not nutrient dense, by testing soils and substrate materials to produce their project, “The Effects of Additives on Substrate Composition for



Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Donaldson and science fair participants Amaya Gomez, Ava Flores, and Raven Martinez

Enhanced Plant Growth on Mars.”

“Something about our project that I enjoyed was me and Kassandra being able to watch the plants grow each day, little by little,” Dominguez said, adding that the judge’s feedback at state will help them improve future experiments.

Annaka Salcido, Piper Donaldson and Joangel Davila partnered to present “Predicting Water Quality Using Artificial Intelligence,” which involved using historical data and AI to create predictions in water quality along the Rio Grande.

“Our group project was so fun to create, and we had a ton of fun showcasing our work and seeing what others have done,” Piper said. “The fair really highlighted the power of collaboration and the endless possibilities of science and technology.”

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OBITUARIES



Estrada

Daniel R. Estrada Jr., 57, of Presidio, Texas, passed away on

Saturday, March 22, 2025.

Rosary/viewing was at 7 p.m. Friday, March 28, 2025, at Santa Teresa de Jesus Catholic Church. Funeral services were held at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 29, at St Teresa de Jesus Catholic Church with Father Mike Alcuino of St. Teresa de Jesus Church officiating. Burial will follow at Desert Hill Cemetery.

Arrangements are entrusted to Eternity Funeral Home. Daniel R. Estrada Jr. was born in Alpine, Texas, to Daniel T. Estrada and Refugio R. Estrada on November 5, 1967. He went to school and graduated from Presidio High

School. He worked as a bull hauler for Daniel Estradas Trucking all his life. He was involved in ranching, farming and roping. He received a buckle for all around best cowboy in Pecos, Texas, on the 4th of July.

Daniel R. Estrada Jr. is preceded in death by his father Daniel T. Estrada and grandparents Amador and Seferina T. Estrada.

Daniel R. Estrada Jr. is survived by: his children, Daniel J. Estrada III and wife Shannon Estrada; Diego J. Estrada and wife Justin Estrada; Dora Estrada and husband Fabian Viera; sister Velia E. Gilmer and husband Richard Gilmer; mother

Refugio R. Estrada; grandchildren, McKynlea Rea Estrada, Anthony Cai Estrada, Luis Manuel Estrada, Tomas Ivan Estrada, Cataleya Camila Viera; nephews, Roman Gilmer and wife Nahely Gilmer and Bobby Gilmer and wife Danyale Gilmer.

Pallbearers will be Daniel Estrada III, Roman Gilmer, Bobby Gilmer, Samuel Sanchez, Francisco Brito and Franky Alvarado. The family of Daniel R. Estrada Jr. wishes to extend our sincere thanks to everyone that helped put everything together from the food, funeral expenses and funeral transportation.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

September 1, 1960

Cities Seek To Keep Airline Ft. Stockton Draws Out of the Movement

In a surprise move Tuesday night Fort Stockton pulled out of a movement, instigated by Marfa, Alpine and Stockton, to keep Trans-Texas Airways flying in this area. Sound of the last flight overhead had barely faded into oblivion before it was announced that a petition will be sent to the Civil Aeronautics Board, within the week, asking that the board reconsider the recent directive suspending service here and at Ft. Stockton.

The group, which met in Fort Stockton Tuesday night, heard from an attorney E. H. Pickering of Fort Worth, who has been employed to fight the suspension. Coming out of the meeting was a telegram to CAB asking that suspension be reconsidered, at least until the group has had time to present its petition, which Pickering is drawing up at this time.

The withdrawal of Fort Stockton will greatly enhance chances of Marfa-Alpine to retain service, according to Pickering. He added, however, that chances are no better than 50-50 at this late date. The last flight of Trans-Texas winged over Marfa late Wednesday afternoon, headed from El Paso to San Angelo. Whether flights will be resumed today, as a result of the telegram asking a stay of action by the CAB, will not be known until time for the westbound flight to El Paso, at 1 p.m.

The local TTA office was unattended early Thursday morning. Harvy J. Hubbard, president of the Highland Chamber of Commerce, Inc., who represented Marfa at the Fort Stockton meeting, added that Pickering told representatives present that chances were very slim for a reversal of the CAB ruling.

However, he added that chances of renewed service were much better with the withdrawal of Fort Stockton. Stockton representatives stated that they could see no future increase in boardings, due mainly to discontinuance of use of the service by Firestone Tire Co., one of the principal users of the airline.

Pickering also stated that an effort will be made to get a hearing for Marfa-Alpine at the Southwestern Area local Service case hearings, which will be railed in the immediate future. These hearings have been set up by the CAB to review all airlines serving the vast Southwest.

‘Hands Off!’ demonstrations planned for the tri-county on Saturday

Activists organize local events as part of nationwide day of action

From The Big Bend Democrats

BIG BEND — Local Activists in Brewster, Jeff Davis and Presidio counties have planned peaceful demonstrations on Saturday, April 5, as part of a national movement to protest the elimination of federal jobs and services by the new Trump Administration and its unelected emissary Elon Musk.

According to www.handsoff2025.com: “Hands Off” is a nationwide mobilization to stop what organizers are calling “the most brazen power grab in modern history,” claiming that Trump, Musk, and their billionaire allies are orchestrating an assault on U.S. government institutions, economic vitality, and basic human rights. MAGA Republicans, the group said, “want to strip America for parts — shuttering Social Security offices, firing essential workers, eliminating consumer protections, and gutting Medicaid” in order to underwrite proposed tax cuts that only benefit the ultra-rich. The statement continues: “This is the moment where we say NO. No more looting, no more stealing, no more billionaires raiding our government while working people struggle to survive.”

Participants are reminded that “a core principle behind Hands Off! is a commitment to nonviolent action. We expect all participants to seek to de-escalate any potential confrontation with those who disagree with our values.”

These events are free and open to all. Participants are encouraged to bring homemade signage using messages that support the theme, as articulated by Ramon Rodriguez-Aranda, chair of the Presidio County Democratic Party: “Hands Off Medicaid – Hands Off Public Schools – Hands Off Public Land – Hands Off Our Bodies – Hands Off Social Security – Hands Off!”

All of the local Hands Off Events take place this Saturday, April 5: in Alpine, demonstrators should gather from noon to 2 p.m. at 100 North 13th Street. In Fort Davis, participants should meet at 10 a.m. at the office of the Jeff Davis Democratic Party at 103 State Street. The Marfa event will also take place from noon to 2 p.m. and demonstrators should meet at the Presidio County Courthouse and march to Planet Marfa.

Outside the tri-county area, interested parties can visit mobilize.us/handsoff to find similar events within their proximity.

‘See Stop Run’ on display Saturday at Brite Building

MARFA — See Stop Run West Texas, an exhibition of work by Christopher Wool curated by Anne Pontégnie, will be on display and open to the public on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from noon until 6 p.m. for a preview. The show will formally open on May 2.

This preview coincides with Chinati’s Art in Context symposium. On Sunday at 3 p.m., as part of Art In Context, Tim Johnson will moderate a

conversation between Wool and Pontégnie. The symposium itself is sold out, but Chinati will live stream all events from chinati.org.

You can learn more about See Stop Run West Texas and about the companion exhibition, See Stop Run which was on view at 101 Greenwich in New York last year, by visiting seestoprun.com.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
April
3

Hike with Homeless Dogs

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

Zakk Grandahl

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Zakk Grandahl play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Paint & Sip

6pm - 9pm at Alcove Social
Alcove Social hosts Paint and Sip night. Every Thursday at 6pm. No experience necessary – just relax, create, and enjoy some drinks while we guide you through a featured painting!

Fri
April
4

Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Middle Landscape (4th - 5th)

2pm - 3pm at Chinati Foundation
Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Middle Landscape is the latest in a series of symposia presented by The Chinati Foundation. Each one focused on a particular aspect of the museum’s mission or collection and documented in an accompanying publication that includes essays and edited transcriptions of lectures and conversations.

Jeremy Parsons

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Jeremy Parsons play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sat
April
5

The West Texas Archaeological Society

2pm - 4:30pm at Sanderson High School Auditorium
Tom Ashmore, president of the West Texas Archeological Society, will give a presentation of their three-year archeological project of Camp Meyers Spring, located 25 miles east of Sanderson.

Miles & Miles of Stars

9pm - 10pm at Davis Mountains State Park
Come join us as we appreciate some of the darkest skies in the U.S.

Nowhere Exhibition No. 0004

5pm - 9pm at 401 S. Highland Ave
Come join us for the opening exhibition for Desert. Earth. Sky with select photos by Liz Potter.

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Sun
April
6

Nico Westerlink

6pm - 8pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Nico Westerlink play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Wed
April
9

Pueblo Nuevo Park

5pm - 7pm at 1500 E Gallego St.
The City of Alpine is thrilled to invite the community to the grand opening of the Pueblo Nuevo Park. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you as we continue to make our parks more welcoming, safe, and enjoyable for all.

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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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Classifieds & public notices

Marfa JH girls track team clinches district championship, JH boys finish 3rd

By Linda Ojeda

MARFA — The Marfa Junior High Girls Track Team has claimed the district championship, and Head Coach Arron Luna couldn’t be more proud of their hard work and commitment to the program as the teams improved in times throughout the season. Luna emphasized that track practices have been grueling, but the athletes’ determination and teamwork paid off. He credited the increased participation this year to the athletes’ dedication, with a total of 24 athletes competing in the JH division.

Standout performances: The girls’ relay teams were dominant, with standout athletes such as

Jerika Rodriguez, Liliana Zubia, Alayna Vasquez, Lea Alvidrez, and Mia Rosas contributing to strong finishes in the 4x100m, 4x200m, and 4x400m relays. Lyla Luppino impressed with a second-place finish in both the 100m and 300m hurdles.

Liliana Zubia took first place in the high jump, while Alayna Vasquez finished in second. Jerika Rodriguez earned second place in both the triple jump and long jump, rounding out a solid performance by the team.

Boys track highlights: The boys team also put in impressive performances, finishing third overall at the district meet. Relay runners Alan Martinez, Mattheau Bejaran, Tayvian Valenzuela, and Miguel Rey helped propel the boys team to strong finishes. Axel Urrutia also earned second place in both the 110m and 300m hurdles.

The hard work, commitment, and athleticism displayed by all the participants have made this track season one to remember for Marfa Junior High.

Marfa High School softball team battles hard in doubleheader against Westbrook

The Marfa High School softball team put up an incredible fight Tuesday in their doubleheader against Westbrook, showing resilience and determination throughout both games.

In Game 1, the Lady Horns engaged in a back-and-forth battle, led by pitcher Ava Flores, who not only controlled the game from the mound but also hit two inside-the-park home runs. Shortstop Raven Martinez was perfect in the field, making 13 consecutive outs to slow down Westbrook’s offensive attack. At the



Photo courtesy of Linda Ojeda

Marfa ISD Junior High track teams have experienced recent success with the girls being named district champions and the boys placing third overall at the district meet.

plate, Gisselle Lujan contributed with a triple and went 2-for-4, helping drive Marfa’s offense. Defensively, Dariela Munoz had a standout performance with 4 putouts, showing strong presence in the field.

Despite nearly three hours of intense play, the Lady Horns fell short in the final inning, losing 11-12 and also dropped Game 2 of the doubleheader, 6-12.

Looking ahead, the Lady Horns will travel to Ira on Friday for a crucial doubleheader against the Lady Bulldogs set for 2 and 4:30 p.m. With playoff hopes on the line, it’s a must-win situation for Marfa to secure a spot in the 2025 UIL softball postseason.

Marfa’s Golf Team Hosts 2025 District Track Meet Tuesday, April 7

The Shorthorns host this year’s district tournament on Tuesday with hopes of advancing to the regional tournament. Teams tee off at 9 a.m.



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BIG BEND HEALTH

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Big Bend Regional Hospital District is requesting submissions to select a firm with demonstrated experience in providing professional architectural services for constructing a new facility in Presidio, TX to provide a multi-purpose office space for BBRHD employees, non-medical client services, classroom for educational and fitness purposes, telehealth rooms, and public use space. The facility will be located on approximately one-acre of land owned by the District. The selected firm must be licensed, have experience in buildings of a similar nature, must be able to complete work on time and within budget. **Submissions are due by April 17, 2025 at 3:00 PM CST.** For full details visit BigBendHealth.org.



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



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





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