

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

Borderlands Research Institute receives \$8M funding windfall

By Mary Cantrell
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ALPINE — Sul Ross State University’s Borderlands Research Institute (BRI), a 2007-established center dedicated to conserving the natural resources of the Chihuahuan Desert, received \$8 million dollars in funding over the next two years from a recent legislative appropriation.

The funding, \$4 million a year for the next two years, is a boon to BRI, one its leaders anticipate will help potentially double staff. The income will help cover the center’s expenses, which range from \$3 to \$5 million a year, according to BRI Founder and Director Louis Harveson. “It’s a huge boost, not just for the institute, but from a university standpoint,” he said.

“It’s going to help stabilize our operations at an institute that’s really been funded 90% on gifts and grants,” Harveson added. “It’s a game changer for us, and it allows us to expand our research, education and outreach activities here at the university.”

In addition to the \$8 million for BRI, Sul Ross will receive an additional \$5 million to grow degree programs in nursing, education, cybersecurity and more, a total of \$13 million in support from the state, according to a press release from Sen. César Blanco’s office.

“We need to preserve the natural beauty and economic potential of the Trans-Pecos,” Blanco wrote in a press release. “The Borderlands Research Institute is a West Texas treasure, training the next generation of conservation leaders and working with ranchers, landowners, and communities to protect wildlife and habitat that are vital to our tourism and agricultural economies.”

Harveson said the university is thankful to Sen. Blanco and Rep. Eddie Morales for championing Sul Ross and BRI. He said BRI was targeted to receive a legislative appropriation by university President Dr. Carlos Hernandez, who came on board in 2022.

The budgeting process for the additional funds is ongoing, he said, but the initial \$4 million should be available by September 2025. Harveson said the state investment goes beyond just higher education, affecting the whole region, where BRI works on various conservation projects on around 500-plus ranches a year.

“It’s obviously an investment in higher education, but it’s also an investment in natural resource conservation and really economic viability, because the wildlife and the natural resources that we have in this region are so unique,” Harveson said. “This region’s really turned into Texas’ playground. Texans come from all over to play, explore, learn and

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



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Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Big Bend, Sul Ross State University

The U.S. Army had a strong presence in the Big Bend during the Mexican Revolution, when these young servicemen were building an encampment a few miles from Santa Elena Canyon. Just over a hundred years later, the Army returned to the Big Bend as part of a massive deployment to the southern border ordered by President Trump.

Agave Fest presentation to feature Sentinel reporter on Santa Elena Canyon

Note: Agave Fest — a celebration and educational event for all things agave — starts today and runs through Sunday at numerous locations throughout the area. The festival includes tastings, lectures, hikes, art exhibits and film. For the full schedule, see agavemarfa.com.

By Rob D’Amico
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MARFA — Big Bend Sentinel reporter Sam Karas will speak on the human history of Santa Elena Canyon at an Agave Fest presentation today (Thursday, June 5) at the Crowley Theater, 98 South Austin Street, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Her talk will track historical explorations of the canyon and use them as a lens to explore topics like the militarization of the border and contentious water politics between

the U.S. and Mexico.

Karas, also a river guide, will recount the U.S. military expedition that mapped the southern border in the 1850s, some rather unusual early Border Patrol expeditions, her personal canyon hike during the drought, and what the future may hold for the canyon in an environment of militarization and international tensions. Some 560,000 people visited Big Bend National Park in 2024, and Santa Elena Canyon is one of the top attractions for visitors.

Can you briefly outline your history as a river guide and when you first went through the canyon? What were your impressions?

I saw Santa Elena Canyon for the first time while I was in grad school at the Michener Center for Writers at UT-Austin. I hiked upstream about a mile and a half on a park trail — the way the vast majority of people who see the canyon experience it. It quickly became one of my favorite places on earth.

In a boat, that world opens up.

You can go a few more miles upstream when the water’s low, and above a certain point you can boat downstream from Lajitas to just below the canyon’s mouth. I became a river guide during a sort of aimless period of my life where all I knew was that I wanted to be close to the parks.

I have a friend who’s been a river guide for decades who says that a one-day downstream trip in a raft through Santa Elena is the premiere Big Bend trip. It’s mesmerizing, but

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Big Bend reps call it a wrap on 2025 Legislative Session

By Sam Karas
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AUSTIN — On Monday, state legislators toasted the adjournment of the governing body’s “sine die” — the session’s end. Though this session was plenty contentious — school vouchers and THC dominated discussion and highlighted the party rift in the Lone Star State — the mood after this year’s last gavel strike is markedly different than in June 2023, when Gov. Greg Abbott called several overtime sessions that rivaled some of the longest and most intensive in state history.

The Big Bend is represented by Sen. César Blanco of El Paso and Rep. Eddie Morales of Eagle Pass,

both Democrats. While Blanco and Morales spoke out on the issues grabbing headlines around the state, much of their time was devoted to drafting and passing bills aimed at economic development in Far West Texas.

Blanco and Morales made big moves impacting Sul Ross State University — moves that they hope will keep hometown talent employed along the borderlands. Morales was one of a handful of authors on HB 1022, a bill signed by Gov. Abbott last week that made the university’s Eagle Pass campus eligible to offer four-year degrees alongside its Alpine hub.

Morales considered it a big win for the historically Hispanic-serving

institution and history-making for young folks in South Texas. “Our students deserve more than words — they deserve real investment and a path to earn their degrees close to home,” he posted on X in April. “A four-year university means jobs, growth, and opportunities that stay local.”

Blanco followed up with \$13 million for Sul Ross, with \$8 million going toward the Borderlands Research Institute. (See story, page one.)

One hyper-local economic development bill didn’t make the cut this session — HB 1039, a bill authored by Morales that would repeal a portion of state hotel occupancy tax (HOT) law in

Alpine. The law would have given the city more leeway in the way that it uses HOT funds generated from hotel stays. Currently, Alpine is the only city in the state required to use 50% of those funds on advertising. The Alpine-specific bill passed the House, but Blanco’s companion bill died in the Senate.

Border security didn’t gobble up as much of the spotlight as vouchers or the Ten Commandments this session, but one bill did raise some hackles — SB 8, which requires county sheriffs to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions, was sent to Gov. Abbott on Tuesday.

Blanco spoke out publicly against SB 8 in April. “SB 8 is an unfunded

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Fort Davis ISD negotiating resignation agreement with Hicks

By Rob D’Amico
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FORT DAVIS — The Fort Davis ISD School Board met Monday night and came to an agreement on its proposal for former Superintendent Graydon Hicks to resign from the district, according to Interim Superintendent Ralph Traynham.

Hicks said Tuesday that he did not attend the Monday board meeting, but that he had received a resignation proposal. He said he responded with a counter proposal but had not heard

back from the district as of Tuesday afternoon. Traynham said attorneys are now working through a final agreement. Since that agreement has not been finalized, it is not available to the public.

Hicks had been placed on paid administrative leave on March 9, with the board remaining silent on the specific reason for the move in the weeks that followed. Afterwards, the board said in a statement that Hicks was placed on leave for “his inability to work with the board in three closed sessions.” Hicks has said

that the board had asked him to do something illegal in those sessions.

The board statement denied that Hicks or the board had done anything illegal, nor did the board request Hicks do something illegal.

Monday’s agenda, however, did include a public hearing — required by Texas law — on additional compensation above Hicks’ contract.

Since being put on leave, Hicks continued to be paid for his \$126,500-a-year contract, which was set to expire on June 30. In January, the board had extended his contract

for another school year (2025-2026) starting July 1 — before the conflict with him began. On April 14, the board appointed Traynham as interim superintendent.

The district had hired a consultant, J&P Advisory Group, to recommend interim candidates, and Traynham was one of four candidates forwarded to the board for consideration. Traynham recently told *The Big Bend Sentinel* that his role would be to keep the district running smoothly and help shepherd it through a search for a permanent superintendent.

County appraisal district halfway through homestead tax exemption audit

By Mary Cantrell
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — The Presidio County Appraisal District (PCAD) is still in the process of completing a homestead tax exemption audit started in December 2024. The audit, which is required by the state to be completed every five years, is meant to ensure homeowners are not claiming school property tax exemptions on multiple properties, only their primary residence.

So far, the PCAD has scrutinized properties with owner last names A-M, with plans to tackle last names N-Z starting in December 2025. Chief Appraiser Cynthia Ramirez said there are a total of 2,000 homestead tax exemptions throughout the county, and the first round of audits focused on 1,000 accounts.

Homestead tax exemptions — currently \$100,000 and \$110,000 for seniors — are portions of a property’s value that cannot be taxed by the local school district. This legislative session lawmakers approved yet another increase in homestead exemptions, up to a \$140,000 baseline exemption and \$200,000 for the elderly and those with disabilities. The measure is pending the governor’s signature and voter approval in November.

The PCAD worked with company True Roll on the most recent audit, whose software flags property owners who may be deceased, may have multiple homestead exemptions or other discrepancies. “We were working off of their software, and that’s when we were coming to find out that there’s owners with multiple homesteads in other counties,” Ramirez said.

Properties in question were sent initial letters from the PCAD in December 2024 notifying them of the potential removal of their homestead exemption and requesting a copy of the home owner’s current driver’s license, to ensure addresses listed match their homesteaded address.

The PCAD then followed up with letters sent via certified mail — which are costly to send out. Seniors were given 60 and 30 day letters, and asked whether they still live at home or if they have moved into a nursing home or assisted living facility. Those who did not respond to the PCAD’s requests for updated information by April 2025 had their homestead exemptions removed.

“We had a really good response, except ... we had about maybe 200 to 300 that did not get returned,” Ramirez said. “So there was about 66 here in Marfa ISD, and then the rest are down south.”

The majority of residences in question ended up losing their homestead tax exemptions, Ramirez said, leading to some upset individuals. “We’ve already started our protests for this year, so we do have some individuals that are filing a protest because of that,” Ramirez said. “But I’m trying to settle those informally. They just need to submit their identification and the exemption will be put back on.”

Ramirez said there were cases where letters were repeatedly sent back from the post office, and, particularly in Presidio, cases of vacant homes and deceased homeowners. Determining whether someone is truly deceased can be difficult, she said, if an obituary from the local paper or funeral home

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Agave Fest

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it also includes some of the park’s most challenging rapids, including the Rock Slide, which can be a class 4 on a scale that goes to 6 in terms of trickiness and potential hazards.

Considering Brewster and Presidio counties have now gone from an “Extreme Drought” to an “Exceptional Drought” — the most severe level of drought according to the U.S. government — what’s the state of the river in general and the canyon?

I started running trips in 2020, which I consider to be a pivotal year for the river. The United States and Mexico signed a treaty in 1944 that allocates certain amounts of water from the Rio Conchos — the river that meets up with the Rio Grande in Ojinaga — which you might have seen mentioned on the news over the past year or so. The water debts come and go in five year cycles, and 2020 was the tail end of the last cycle.

I remember all of a sudden one day the water was up, and it stayed more or less the same (around 500 cfs, if that means anything to you) for a few months. Mexico was making its water payments from dams on the Conchos. Meanwhile, there were protests in OJ and all up and down the Conchos — the reservoirs had been very low and many people felt that the government was giving away water they couldn’t afford to lose.

Now we’re at the end of the next cycle. To attempt to save agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley, they’ve shifted the terms of the treaty a bit to allow water payments from different tributaries of the Rio Grande. We won’t see any of that.

There are canyons on the Rio Grande that I’ve seen hundreds of times, and I take basically any opportunity to float the river when it’s physically possible. Because of the drought I’ve seen Santa Elena top to bottom in a boat six times. It still feels mysterious and unknowable and challenging to me, and there’s some grief in there too — that I may never know it as well as some folks who called it their office every day for decades.

The canyon is awe-inspiring today, and it must have been a spectacle for the first expeditions that traversed its 20 miles in early times. Can you tell us a bit about some of those expeditions and how they fared?

Long river trips still feel like adventures in 2025, and that’s with self-inflating sleeping pads and Yeti coolers. I’ve been trying to get a sense of what these early folks used for gear and also about the world that they lived in — what was going on along the riverbanks while they traveled? The first attempt was in 1852 by M.T. Chandler of the United States Boundary Survey. In 1848, the United States set the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico at the Rio Grande in what we now call Texas, but

they had no idea what most of the Southwest looked like. I think more established historians would agree with my lay assessment that the U.S. Boundary Survey was a sh— show. At the end of it, Lt. William Emory — for whom Emory Peak is named — ordered all records beyond the final reports destroyed to try cut down on infighting and disputes down the line.

The Chandler party reached the entrance of Santa Elena Canyon and said, “No thanks.” They had heard about the Rock Slide — which they called “the falls of the Cañon of San Carlos” — from local people and decided to take a 20-mile side quest through Mexico to avoid it.

There was another survey by a Texas Ranger of the canyon in the 1880s, but most people who know about this topic at all probably know Robert T. Hill, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey who ran the canyon in a six-man party in 1899. The Hill party opted to carry their big wooden boats around the Rock Slide over the course of three days, a process so awful the spot is still called “Camp Misery” by boatmen today.

We know the canyon is one of the top spots for visitors at the park, with photos of the towering canyon walls shared across the globe. But how is it seen from the perspective of Mexicans?

The view of the mouth of Santa Elena Canyon as we know it from postcards and calendars is virtually inaccessible to Mexican citizens. It’s kind of ironic because their government has its version of a national park straddling the border, too — the Área Protegida de Santa Elena. You used to be able to cross the border at the village of Santa Elena, which is a few miles downstream from the canyon mouth.

The area near the canyon entrance is still home to farmers and ranchers. Almost every time I’ve done a river trip or hiked the canyon I’ve gotten to stop and chat with the people who work cattle over there. The canyon is much taller at the mouth than the entrance, but it’s still a really impressive and otherworldly place.

Big Bend National Park started out as “Texas Canyons State Park,” with Santa Elena as the crown jewel. The original boosters of the park wanted to see a cooperative international park run jointly by the Mexican and American governments — an idea that persisted until the late 20th century and has all but faded away. A lot of the park’s earliest leaders saw this idea as essential to its identity and I think would be mortified by how impossible that dream seems today.

There has always been political power in the image of two countries joined by this massive canyon. So many Texans experience the border for the first time in Big Bend, and instead of drones and concertina wire — which has been the reality of much of the border for decades — they see eagles and beavers and aoudad and an unimaginable variety of cactus.

“Where are they going to put the wall?” is a sentiment I hear from tourists all the time. It’s so massive that it makes our typical methods of border security seem silly.

The U.S. military recently arrived in the Big Bend — about 500 troops. What kinds of changes, if any, have you seen to the park and the reactions from local communities?

So far I’ve only seen military personnel on a handful of trips to the park. It has not had a major impact on my personal experience of using the park, but I do have a deep paranoia that sections of the river could become part of a “national defense area” that is slowly consuming the border and making it illegal for civilians to access the border itself. The park is in a moment of major transition, and I think local communities are having as difficult a time wrapping their heads around this deployment as the courts seem to be.

I’m sure you’d rather be in a canoe or raft in the canyon, but tell us about your recent excursion on foot, why you did it and what the experience was like. And do you see a future in hiking the canyon in times of drought?

It wasn’t as bad as I thought it was going to be! I had been curious about hiking the canyon all the way through for a few years but this was Charlie Gandy’s idea. Charlie is the fundraising brain behind the xTx trail, a thru-hiking route that will hopefully run east-west across Texas within the next few years.

Charlie was thinking about offering an alternate route through the park using the dry riverbed. I was immediately skeptical — flash floods are a constant concern, even in the middle of a drought — and even where the water is gone, nasty mud still persists for months after the river dries up. There are numerous historical accounts of people attempting to swim the canyon when the water’s high and they all make me break out in hives as a person who thinks a lot about whitewater safety.

Hiking from Lajitas to the canyon mouth, I was mostly surprised by how much water was still there. It had been a couple of weeks since measurable flow below the canyon had ceased, and there were super long lakey sections that still had very deep water. I ended up swimming about two of the seven miles — which was lucky because I lost one of my shoes in the mud just below the Rock Slide.

I haven’t really decided if I officially recommend that people do this hike — I still retain a healthy fear of the river’s ability to resurrect itself out of nowhere — but I can absolutely say that I learned new things about the canyon.

2025 Legislative Session

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mandate that forces local cops to do ICE’s job — draining millions from our communities, and making Texans less safe,” he said. “I’m proud to have voted no.”

Morales followed the lead of Texas reps on the national stage in asking for reimbursements for local communities forced to shoulder the financial and

logistical burden of border security. He fought for a \$2 million reimbursement for the city of Eagle Pass after Shelby Park, a municipal recreational space along the river, was closed to city residents in favor of serving as a staging ground for the state’s border security Operation Lone Star.

The move was devastating to local business after the city was forced to relocate a festival celebrating the extremely rare solar eclipse that left Del Rio and Eagle Pass in the path of totality. State leaders ultimately compromised on \$1 million. “I authored and supported Operation Lone Star because I believe our border

communities deserve help when the federal government fails to act,” Morales told Jose Landa of the Eagle Pass News Gram. “But the unilateral seizure of Shelby Park left Eagle Pass taxpayers holding the bag for a festival they could no longer host as planned. That was never right, and I fought to make it right.”

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Presented in partnership with Borderlands Research Institute and Rio Grande Joint Venture.

La Fundación Judd y Agave Festival Marfa invitan a todos a una serie de charlas sobre la importancia de construir resiliencia a las sequías mediante la restauración de la tierra y los ecosistemas de agua del Desierto de Chihuahua.

Se presenta en colaboración con Borderlands Research Institute y Rio Grande Joint Venture.

Thursday, June 5

3:00-5:45pm

The Crowley Theater

3:00-3:40pm

Native Plants and Community Resilience During Drought

3:45-4:20pm

Historic Conditions of Big Bend Streams

4:20-4:45pm

Stream Restoration within the Alamito Creek Watershed

5:15pm

Rain Simulator: Vegetation Influence on Runoff vs. Infiltration

Friday, June 6

9:00-11:30am

400 West El Paso Street

Volunteers are invited for coffee and breakfast treats, followed by hands-on riparian restoration of neighboring Mimm’s Creek. Boots and protective clothing recommended. Tools and water will be provided.

Jueves, 5 Junio

3:00-5:45pm

The Crowley Theater

3:00-3:40pm

Plantas Nativas y Resiliencia Comunitaria Durante Sequías

3:45-4:20pm

Condiciones Históricas de los Arroyos del Big Bend

4:20-4:45pm

Restauración del Arroyo en la cuenca del Alamito Creek

5:15pm

Simulador de Lluvia: La importancia de la Vegetación en Escorrentía vs. Infiltración

Viernes, 6 Junio

9:00-11:30am

400 West El Paso Street

Voluntarios son invitados a un café y desayuno ligero, seguido de una sesión de restauración riparia de Mimm’s Creek. Se recomienda usar botas y ropa protectora. Herramientas y agua seran proporcionadas.

JUDD

Homestead tax exemption

(Continued from page 1)

cannot be located — potentially due to an individual being buried in Mexico and the PCAD never being notified of their death.

If a homeowner is found to have two homestead exemptions — in different Texas counties or one in Texas and one in another state — their second one will be removed and they will be required to pay back taxes on the property that shouldn't have been receiving the homestead exemption. The PCAD also worked to correct instances where a married couple was claiming separate homestead exemptions on two properties, something that is not permitted. “If we came to find out that they had a homestead in another county for the past four years and we weren't aware of it, we'd remove it from here, and we would mail them out a new tax bill showing the homestead being removed

for the previous four years,” Ramirez said. The upside to the homestead tax exemption audit is that it should provide additional tax revenue for Marfa and Presidio ISDs. Ramirez said there are no exact estimates on the increased revenue yet, but it can add up quickly when considering there were 66 residents in Marfa that lost their homestead exemptions — resulting in roughly \$100,000-\$110,000 times 66 in new taxable value. The school districts should see the increased revenue in their 2025-26 budgets she said. But districts will have to go through their impending summer budget workshops knowing that homestead exemptions may increase in November. Ramirez said the PCAD will run two tax rolls for the schools, one with current

exemptions and one with increased exemptions pending voter approval. Marfa ISD Chief Financial Officer Rosela Rivera said MISD will craft its budget assuming that the increase in homestead tax exemptions is approved by the voters and goes into effect. It is unclear how the state will make up for the district’s loss in revenue. Rivera said revenue lost from the last homestead tax exemption, which passed in 2023 and increased exemptions from \$40,000 to \$100,000, was never recovered. *The PCAD can be reached online at presidiocad.org/, via email at info@presidiocad.org, via phone at (432) 729-3431 or (432) 229-3963 and in person. The Marfa office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.*

\$8M funding

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live, and really part of our job, beyond higher education, is to make sure that this is here for many generations from now.” Part of BRI’s mission, which will be bolstered by new state funds, is to perform government-incentivized, on-the-ground conservation projects in collaboration with landowners. “Federal agencies, state agencies, they have all sorts of cost share programs for landowners, and one of the challenges that they face is actually getting those dollars on the ground to fight brush or restore grasslands or

restore riparian habitats,” Harveson said. “That's really what our center does. They work with those state and federal agencies to help [achieve] that work on the ground.” In addition to potentially doubling its staff, which is currently made up of around 15 to 17 individuals, per Harveson, adding faculty with expertise in wetland conservation, for example, state funds may also be used for student scholarships and to help build out BRI’s Ph.D. program. Harveson attributes BRI’s success over the past few

years to support from university leadership, a strong advisory board, an ability to recognize and act on stakeholder priorities and a compelling mission. “It’s a special place that we live and I think everybody knows it,” Harveson said. “The more people understand it, the better they're going to conserve it. That's been our mantra for some time.” Around a year ago, Sul Ross announced the formation of a new water research center aimed at better understanding and conserving the region’s water resources. Harveson, who is acting as the informal interim director for the new

water center, which will be independent but fall under BRI, said the national search is still underway for a full time director to help lead the formation and direction of the program. He said locating the right candidate has been somewhat challenging due to the diverse skillset required. Negotiations regarding funding support for the new water center are ongoing, he said, but gaining momentum. *To learn more about Borderlands Research Institute, visit bri.sulross.edu.*

Legislature passes Public Information Act response bill, sends it to governor

From the Freedom of Information Foundation Texas

AUSTIN – The Texas Legislature has approved a measure requiring government agencies to respond to public information requestors or face consequences — an important step in making government more accountable. House Bill 4219, put forth by Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake, and Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, has been sent to the governor. It requires governments to issue a written response to requestors who seek records under the Texas Public Information Act, even if there are no responsive documents or a previous attorney general ruling allows withholding those records. “If enacted, this legislation will help ensure citizens aren’t ignored and that the Public Information Act works as it should. Currently, some information requestors don’t receive responses at all. That’s contrary to common sense and courtesy,” said Kelley Shannon, executive director of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. Gov. Greg Abbott has until June 22 to sign or veto bills. The legislative session's conclusion was Monday. Laura Prather, a First Amendment attorney and co-chair of the FOI Foundation’s legislative committee, noted the bill requires governments to cite the specific prior attorney general rulings if they rely on them to withhold information and to get more training if they don’t understand how the law works. “The passage of HB 4219 is just one example of good public policy

enhancing transparency and accountability,” she said. The legislation will benefit all Texans, said Arif Panju, a constitutional attorney and co-chair of the foundation’s legislative committee. “It should not require legislation in 2025 to force the government to respond to an open records request. But it did.” The required response bill was part of the legislative agenda of the broad-based Texas Sunshine Coalition, made up of 16 organizations. “The bipartisan Sunshine Coalition brings together groups from across the political spectrum who have a shared belief in the public’s right to know what their government is doing,” Prather said. In addition to Capriglione and Zaffirini, lawmakers who pressed for Sunshine Coalition transparency measures included Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi; Rep. John Smithee, R-Amarillo; Sen. Nathan Johnson, D-Dallas; Sen. Mayes Middleton, R-Galveston; Rep. Terry Canales, D-Edinburg; and Rep. John Bryant, D-Dallas.

Transparency bills that were not formally among the Sunshine Coalition's initial agenda but were backed by many coalition members also passed the Legislature and have been sent to the governor. Among those are: **HB 4214** by Rep. Pat Curry, R-Waco, requiring the Attorney General’s Office to maintain a publicly accessible database listing governments' current public information request addresses. **HB 3711** by Capriglione, expanding investigation options for Open Meetings

Act violations to include potential assistance by the AG's office and state law enforcement. **HB 2520** by Rep. Ann Johnson, D-Houston, to include in the Open Meetings Act school district boards of managers where there's been a state takeover. **HB 1522**, by Rep. Stan Gerdes, R-Smithville, requiring public meeting notices to be posted three business days in advance instead of 72 hours and requiring a copy of a budget with the posting if a budget is to be considered in the meeting. The Sunshine Coalition’s agenda included bills that would have allowed for recovery of attorneys’ fees in Public Information Act lawsuits; restored access to birthdates in public records to allow for accurate identification when people have common names; required open government training for outside attorneys hired by governments to handle open government matters; required release of records in searchable-sortable format; and required the continued operation of a state open government hotline. Several of these proposals passed the Texas House of Representatives but not the Senate. The Sunshine Coalition members are the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas; Texas Association of Broadcasters; Texas Press Association; Texas Public Policy Foundation; Institute for Justice; ACLU of Texas; Every Texan; Common Cause; Grassroots America; League of Women Voters of Texas; SMU School of Law First Amendment Clinic; Texas Appleseed; Texas Association of Licensed Investigators; Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom; Public Citizen; PublicData.com.

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Opinion

American Fascism?

In 2003, Laurence W. Britt, a retired international businessperson, writer and commentator, wrote an op-ed for Free Inquiry Magazine, called “Fascism Anyone?”

At the same time, Donald Trump was heavily involved in real estate having just completed construction on his Trump World Tower and was beginning his venture into his now fraudulent Trump University. It would be 10 more years before his intentions to enter the political arena manifest.

Britt took the fundamental characteristics of Hitler’s Nazi Germany, Mussolini’s Fascist Italy, Franco’s Spain, Salazar’s Portugal, Papadopoulos’ Greece, Pinochet’s Chile, and Suharto’s Indonesia and came up with a list of 14 common ideologies that linked these regimes to each other. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s gift shop sold a poster listing these early warning signs of fascism. Below is the list with my annotations relating to today’s Trump administration.

1. Powerful and Continuing Nationalism (Project 2025)
2. Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights (the separation of families & LGBTQ community)
3. Identification of Enemies/Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause (Immigrants)
4. Supremacy of the Military (Trump’s \$45 million military parade & birthday party)
5. Rampant Sexism (Jean Carrol, remarks of sexual exploitation)
6. Controlled Mass Media (continuous attacks on trusted news media)
7. Obsession with National Security (the Golden Dome & acquiring Greenland)
8. Religion and Government are Intertwined (obviously)
9. Corporate Power is Protected (support for Citizens United)
10. Labor Power is Suppressed (frequent criticism of unions and their leaders)
11. Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts (attacks on Harvard & takeover of the Kennedy Center)
12. Obsession with Crime and Punishment (was part of his running campaign)
13. Rampant Cronyism and Corruption (the Trump Cabinet & Jan. 6 pardons)
14. Fraudulent Elections (voter suppression & I guess we will have to wait and see)

Looking at this list one can say the writing is on the wall. It is quite evident the direction that our Nation is heading. Professor and leading expert on Fascism, Jason Stanley, has recently left his position at Yale University and accepted an appointment at the University of Toronto based on what he describes as the deteriorating political situation in the United States. If our Democracy can survive these next four years, we as a Nation of the People can protect what our Founders and Constitution created, but it is up to us to vote.

The last paragraph of Britt’s article leaves us with a haunting foreshadowing of our constitutional crisis we are experiencing today.

“Does any of this ring alarm bells? Of course not. After all, this is America, officially a democracy with the rule of law, a constitution, a free press, honest elections, and a well-informed public constantly being put on guard against evils. Historical comparisons like these are just exercises in verbal gymnastics. Maybe, maybe not.”

If you would like to read the full article, “Fascism Anyone?” by Lawrence W. Britt you can find it online at <https://secularhumanism.org/2003/03/fascism-anyone/>

David F. Long
Shafter

...

Help us build a community calendar for better business coordination

To Marfa businesses, hotels, STR management, event planners, We’re reaching out to invite you to collaborate on an initiative that could significantly benefit all of us — a shared Marfa Business Community Calendar for upcoming events and expected visitor surges in our area.

As small businesses, we thrive when we can plan ahead. Whether it’s ordering additional inventory, scheduling staff, or managing hours and logistics, knowing when large events or a high volume of guests are expected makes all the difference. Unfortunately, we often learn about major happenings — weddings, conferences, large private events — only after we’ve placed our weekly orders and we’re overwhelmed or unprepared.

To solve this, we’re proposing a centralized Marfa Business Community Calendar, where:

- Hotels and STRs can post general periods when they anticipate higher occupancy (no personal guest data needed).
- Event planners and venues can list large events, such as weddings or festivals.
- Local businesses can stay informed, plan accordingly, and even collaborate on promotions or services.
- Our goal is simple: better communication leads to better service and stronger local business.

We’re not asking for detailed or sensitive information — just high-level alerts like, “Expect 200+ guests arriving for a wedding on July 15th” or “Hotel X is at 90% occupancy the weekend of Sept 12th.” This small effort could help restaurants stock up, shops staff up, and the entire town make a great impression on visitors.

I have created a free online calendar and would love to have as many businesses involved as possible. Please contact planetmarfa@gmail.com or on Instagram @planetmarfa and I can send you a link to access the calendar. If we work together, this could become an invaluable tool for everyone.

Thank you for being such an important part of our community!

Warm regards,
Colby Martin
Planet Marfa

...

Dear Editor,

One of my favorite expressions is “Keep your side of the street clean.” I love this adage for both its literal and metaphorical meanings. On one hand, it reminds me to mind my business and check the mirror instead of casting stones. On the other hand, it is just wise to actually keep my side of the street clean.

The West Texas winds blow around all sorts of trash — receipts from Lowe’s, Dollar General bags and sometimes, mysteriously, trash from fast food joints we don’t even have. I walk my dog Trixie every day and notice all sorts of things: plastic bottle caps, Bud Light cans, and sometimes straight up cash.

We often traverse alleyways, which is where most of the trash seems to accumulate, especially in cacti. All sorts of straw wrappers, old socks and even illicit substances present themselves. What if, I wonder, at least one person per block decided to adopt their very own block to keep clean? When so much, globally, is out of our control, keeping things local feels so much more manageable and empowering.

Little acts of service, like keeping an alleyway clean, can have a ripple effect that we might not even see how far it goes. Like a homeopathic cure, sometimes small catalysts are exactly what’s needed.

With love,
Amanda Holstien
Marfa

PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS NEWSPAPER



Don’t close the Chisos Mountains at Big Bend National Park

Closing the Chisos Mountains and one of the most beautiful areas of Big Bend National Park for two years or more is a very big mistake. The National Park Service says that only the Chisos Basin area of the park will be affected during the construction of a new restaurant and that 800,000 acres remain to enjoy. Imagine going to Yellowstone and not seeing Old Faithful or going to the Grand Canyon and not seeing the South Rim.

Big Bend National Park is Texas' gift to the nation as the result of the state purchasing approximately 600,000 acres of land and then donating it to the federal government to establish the park. There must be better alternatives than spending over \$22 million dollars on a new restaurant and gift shop to justify closing one of the most scenic areas of the park at Green Gulch and the Chisos Basin, popular hiking trails and the most beautiful campground in Texas. The NPS says that the restaurant cannot be built in a safe way without closing the high elevation areas of the Chisos Mountains for two years or more. The NPS should be reminded that this is 2025 and that there are high tech engineers who know how to get things done. Over 30 years ago, new motel units were built in this same area and

this kind of drastic measure was not required.

What the National Park Service is planning is not in line with President Trump’s Common-Sense Revolution. Recently I spoke with several major business owners in the area just outside the park and all agreed that the NPS plan does not make any sense. In two or more years, local businesses are going to lose a big percentage of their profits, and many businesses may not survive at all.

As a former park ranger at the park and executive director of the Big Bend Natural History Association and a regular visitor and supporter of protecting the park for decades, I believe that we all need to speak out strongly against this plan while the project is still in the pre-bid stages. The Park Service is not required to respond to phone calls and emails, but each Texan and others across the nation can speak out in support of keeping the entire park open during the construction of the new restaurant by contacting their elected representatives including the president, while there is still time.

Rick LoBello
El Paso

Property tax relief that hits home

By State Sen. César J. Blanco

In West Texas, home is where we put down roots, raise our families, and make everlasting memories. But for homeowners across El Paso, the Big Bend, and the Permian Basin, the rising cost of property taxes has threatened to push that sense of security out of reach.

For many hardworking families, owning a home is part of the American Dream, but skyrocketing property taxes and valuations in Texas have made that dream seem out of reach. Every session, one of the top issues I hear from families is rising property taxes that have pushed families out of their homes. Seniors on fixed incomes are watching their tax bills rise while their incomes stay the same. Young families are making the tough choice between paying their property taxes or putting that money toward food, medicine, or their kids’ future.

That’s not how it should be — not in Texas.

That’s why this session, I was proud to joint-author a property tax relief package that delivers real and lasting relief, especially for those who need it most.

Senate Bill 4 and its companion resolution, SJR 2, raise the homestead exemption to \$140,000 for most homeowners, putting hundreds, even thousands, of dollars back in Texans’ pockets each

year. For seniors and Texans with disabilities, SB 23 and SJR 85 go even further, boosting their exemption to \$200,000. That targeted relief helps ensure our elders and most vulnerable neighbors can stay in the homes they’ve built their lives around.

These new measures build on the momentum of 2023’s historic property tax cut — the largest property tax reduction in U.S. history. With SB 4 and SB 23, we’re delivering a \$484 annual cut for 5.7 million homeowners and nearly \$938 per year for older adults and disabled Texans. Starting in 2025, more than 170,000 homeowners in West Texas will see property tax relief and nearly half of all homeowners could see their school property tax bills drop to zero. That’s a game-changer — especially for working families in rural counties, small towns, and border communities like ours.

This relief didn’t happen overnight. Over the past decade, Texas has steadily delivered on the promise of meaningful property tax relief. Since 2015, we’ve raised the homestead exemption from \$15,000 to \$140,000, saving Texas homeowners thousands of dollars and helping more West Texans stay in their homes.

And throughout it all, we made sure tax relief didn’t come at the cost of our public schools.

Families need relief, but not at the expense of

their kids’ schools. That’s why I was also proud to help secure \$2.7 billion in immediate state funding to hold school budgets harmless, along with long-term support through 2030.

That’s the Texas way: we keep our promises to homeowners, and we stand by our commitment to public schools.

Now, it's up to you — the voters! These property tax reforms require changes to the Texas Constitution, which means they’ll appear as two separate propositions on the November 2025 ballot. If approved, the tax cuts will be permanent, and Texans will feel the impact for years to come.

This is a big win for working families, keeping West Texans in their homes, grandparents in the neighborhoods they love, and kids in strong public schools.

But while SB 4 is a major step forward, more work is needed. I am committed to reforming Texas’ broken property tax system, fixing appraisal flaws, fully funding public schools and fighting for solutions that protect Texas homeowners.

In West Texas, we believe in hard work, fairness, and taking care of our own. That’s why I was proud to help deliver the relief that homeowners deserve. With your vote in support of these propositions this November, we can make this relief permanent and build a future where living comfortably in your home is a promise we keep.

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CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

Legislative session wraps up

The dust hasn’t quite settled on the 2025 Legislative Session, but here’s a sampling of bills already sent to Gov. Greg Abbott.

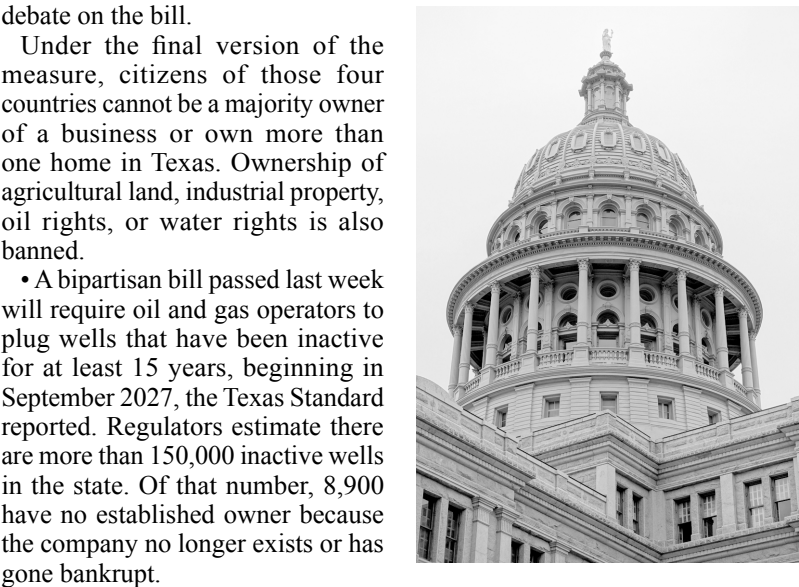
- A ban on clubs supporting gay teens in public schools won final legislative passage on Saturday. The measure sponsored by state Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, would prohibit schools from authorizing or sponsoring student clubs based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Several Democrats argued passionately against the bill, the Texas Tribune reported.
- “Getting silence in schools from the LGBTQ community, which is what this bill is designed to do, will not stop your kids from being gay,” state Rep. Erin Zwiener, D-Driftwood, said. “It will just make them afraid to come out.”
- Supporters of the bill said it solidifies parents’ rights to determine their child’s exposure to diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, including discussions about LGTBQ issues and gender identity.
- Depending on inevitable court challenges, every public-school classroom in Texas could be required to display the Ten Commandments. A similar law in Louisiana has been ruled unconstitutional by a federal court and is under appeal.
- Texas voters in November will be asked to approve raising the homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 for all homeowners and to \$200,000 for homeowners who are 65 and older or have a disability, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

“I’m looking forward to what I think will be a record turnout by the public,” said Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, the bills’ author. “This is great news, because these commitments — once they’re enshrined in the constitution — are going to be there forever.”

The increased property tax exemptions overwhelmingly passed both the House and Senate. If approved by voters, they will cost the state’s general revenue fund about \$3 billion. Another \$3.5 billion will reimburse public school districts for reduced local property tax revenue.

These exemptions are only for homesteads and don’t apply to rental or business properties. A separate bill increased the business personal property tax exemption from \$2,500 to \$125,000.

- Legislation banning non-citizens from China, North Korea, Iran and Russia from owning property in the state, except for a homestead, is headed to the governor’s desk, The Dallas Morning News reported.
- “Texas is not for sale. It is not for sale to our enemy countries,” Senate Bill 17’s author Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham, said during a news conference.
- Some Democratic legislators decried the bill as racist and creating obstacles to immigrants achieving economic success.
- “The danger of this type of legislation is that it is step-by-step repeating the same laws that were passed before we got to the Japanese internment almost 100 years ago,” Rep. Gene Wu, D-Houston, said during a House



debate on the bill.

Under the final version of the measure, citizens of those four countries cannot be a majority owner of a business or own more than one home in Texas. Ownership of agricultural land, industrial property, oil rights, or water rights is also banned.

- A bipartisan bill passed last week will require oil and gas operators to plug wells that have been inactive for at least 15 years, beginning in September 2027, the Texas Standard reported. Regulators estimate there are more than 150,000 inactive wells in the state. Of that number, 8,900 have no established owner because the company no longer exists or has gone bankrupt.
- At least eight of these so-called orphan wells have become conduits for water traveling beneath them and have burst since last October, costing the state millions of dollars to plug them. The Texas Oil and Gas Association applauded passage of the bill.
- The bill “recognizes that once a well has reached the end of its economic life and there is no useful purpose, the owner should be responsible for the plugging,” said Todd Staples, association president.
- The Texas Railroad Commission will be responsible for enforcing the new regulations.
- The Legislature has passed a statewide ban on all products containing TCH, the psychoactive ingredient in many products being legally sold in shops across the state. Now Gov. Gregg Abbott faces an onslaught of political pressure from business interests, veterans’ groups and others to veto the measure, which could wipe out the \$8 billion hemp industry.
- “This is to save an entire generation from being hooked on drugs,” Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said at a news conference.
- Abbott has not taken a position on the issue. He has the authority to either sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without his signature, or veto the measure.
- Many opponents of the ban said they are willing to place regulations on the consumable hemp industry. Currently there are no age limits or marketing rules in place. Stores that sell these products must register with the state, but only three employees with the Texas Department of State Health Services are responsible for inspecting more than 8,500 locations in Texas.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email:gborders@texaspress.com.

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg May 23, 2025

ACROSS
1 Name that's an anagram of "goal"
5 Evil bear in "Toy Story 3"
10 Tidbit from a color commentator
14 Goes out with
15 Sap-sucking garden pest
16 Thereabouts
17 Start of a link
18 "Mad TV" alum Jordan
19 Pinot ____ (wine)
20 Mules' fathers
22 "Science Guy" Bill
23 Mesoamerican language family
24 Stay the night
25 Person cheering from the sidelines
26 Oodles
27 Soda in Kendall Jenner's "Live for Now" commercial
28 Business name abbr.
29 Grayish-brown shade
31 Rap pioneers, for short
32 What the sky does before a storm
35 Largest union in the U.S.
36 Structure to fish from
38 ____ bun (unkempt hairstyle)

39 Mark for life
40 Complete
42 Broadway legend
Bernadette
44 Trap on all sides (In this answer, ignore letters 6-9)
48 Grand old time
51 Nat ____ Wild
52 Start a pickleball volley
56 Went first
57 Piece of the pie? (... letters 5-6)
60 Rower's need
61 Assert
63 Really bother
64 Dance performed to a mele
65 "Is this the right spot?"
66 Like noble gases
67 Grows older
68 Iditarod vehicle
69 Papa
70 Dole (out)
DOWN
1 Workplace watchdog org.
2 "We should start!"
3 Words before "Go!" (... letters 4-6)
4 "Quaking" trees
5 Once around the track
6 Where to roast chestnuts
7 Completely fails (... letters 2-4)

8 Shushes
9 Poem of homage
10 Piece with multiple movements
11 Defeat
handily (... letters 4-5)
12 Fruit used in bulgogi
13 Conflicted
21 Slip
sideways
23 Rolls in a yoga studio?
27 Sovereign of the Holy See
30 Corn units
33 Capital One competitor, briefly
34 Big Apple force
37 Fare at a barbecue joint
39 Eyelid woe
41 Campus military org.
43 It's right on the map!

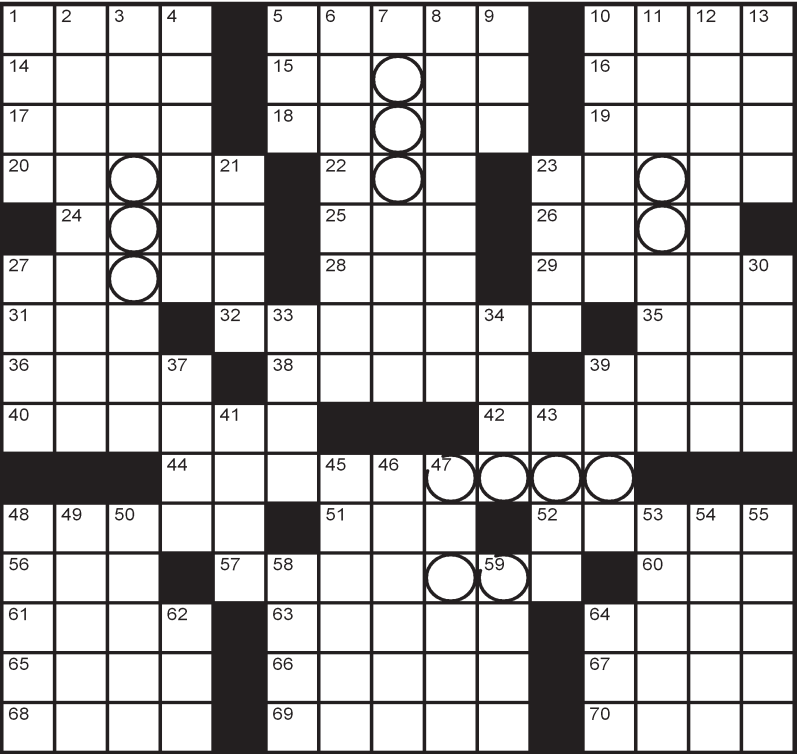
45 Large, herbivorous lizard
46 Fit together like matryoshka dolls
47 Give every last drop of effort
48 The ____ (ennui)
49 Like flat ground
50 Worship
53 Powdery cheek
cosmetic
54 Employee who works a lot?
55 Wipe clean
58 "Sharknado" actress Tara
59 ____-bitty
62 Joined in matrimony
64 Meat in a medianoche sandwich

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

5/22 © 2025 Andrews McMeel Universal
www.upuzzles.com

Needs No Introduction by Dylan Schiff



FOR SALE - 900 & 902 West El Paso

Price reduced on two (2) adobe homes on two lots in west central Marfa. Nicely updated main home with new paint, flooring, fixtures, lighting and windows. The other home is an older adobe and is structurally sound but has not been occupied in many years. This property offers many options. Motivated seller. Buyer's agents welcome. Asking \$225,000

FMI contact: Cleat Stephens
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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.

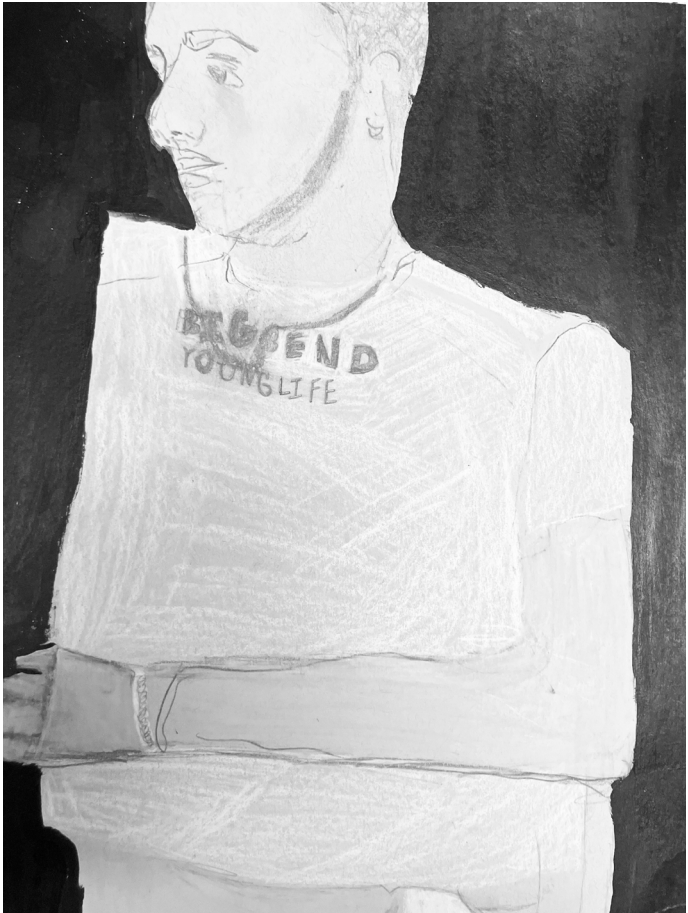
Judd Foundation is open Tuesday through Sunday and offers two distinct guided visits. Please visit our office, 104 South Highland Avenue, or website for the current schedule.

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

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

JUDD

DRAWING OF THE WEEK

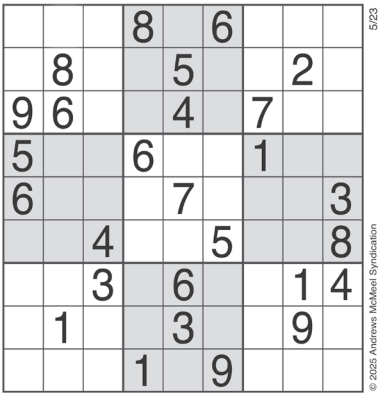


Darren Campos
11th grade - Pencil and Ink

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

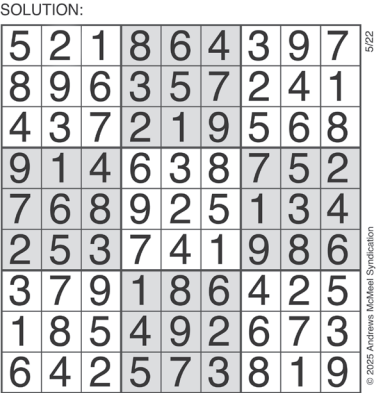
UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

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



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution from last week's puzzle:



☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MAY	Thu, May 22	Fri, May 23	Mon, May 26	Tue, May 27	Wed, May 28
BREAKFAST	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK
LUNCH	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK	SUMMER BREAK

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

SUMMER BREAK

EMAIL ADS@BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM FOR ADVERTISING RATES

‘Architectures of Agave’ opens at Do Right Hall



Photo courtesy of Christina Pierson

From ALRATITO studio, Mexico City | Los Angeles

MARFA — In the heart of the desert, the agave endures, a quiet force of beauty and resilience. This exhibition draws on its mythic symbolism, exploring themes of transformation, protection, and rebirth. Like the goddess Mayahuel, who reawakened as an agave plant, each piece channels evolution through form, texture, and color. With sculptural works that echo fibrous strength, the show invites reflection on cycles of growth and the power of patience. Versatile and vital, the agave becomes a lens for design that blurs the line between art and function.

Architectures of Agave: Shapes of Endurance will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., June 5-8 at Do Right Hall, 110 W Dallas Street.



Photo courtesy Marly Beyer

Participating artists & designers:

Astronauts (Athens, Greece)
Marly Beyer (Los Angeles, California)
Casa Textil (Chiapas, Mexico)
Angela Damman (Yucatán, Mexico)
Sona Gevorkyan (Los Angeles, California)
Jason Kriegler (Mexico City, Mexico)
Christina Pierson (Los Angeles, California)
Kevin Quale (New York, New York)
Monica Rezman (Yucatán, Mexico)
Michael Thompson (Los Angeles, California)
Michael Toolan (Mexico City, Mexico)
Marco Zelli (Zurich, Switzerland)



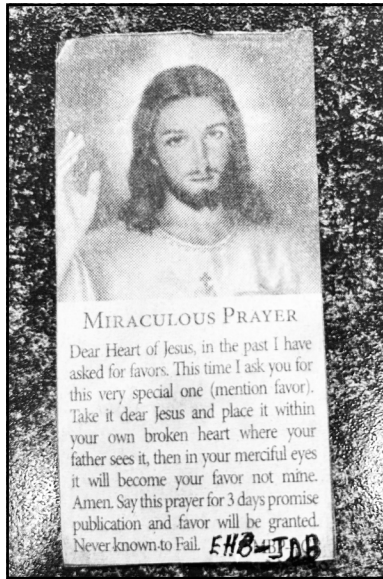
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*Palm Leaf Open Road Shown

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MIRACULOUS PRAYER

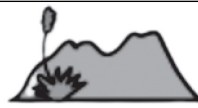
Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past I have asked for favors. This time I ask you for this very special one (mention favor). Take it dear Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your father sees it, then in your merciful eyes it will become your favor not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days promise publication and favor will be granted. Never known to Fail. **EH8-TDB**



BIG BEND HEALTH

Big Bend Regional Hospital District Medical Enhancement Grants

BBRHD is now accepting grant proposals for the Summer FY2025 Medical Enhancement Grant program. The deadline to apply for funding will be on June 13, 2025 for the summer grant cycle. Brewster and Presidio County entities providing healthcare or other related services, consistent with the mission and objectives of the Hospital District may be eligible to apply. The grant application package and additional information are available at www.bigbendhealth.org or call 432-837-7051.



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AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
June
5

Paint & Sip

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

Calamity Creek

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

Hike with Homeless Dogs

9am - 10am at Davis Mountains State Park
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail!

Let the Sunshine In Showcase Performance

11am at MISD Hibbits Gym (behind cafeteria)
Marfa Live Arts presents Let the Sunshine In, a student performance highlighting theater arts and singing skills honed over the week as part of MISD's annual Summer Shake Up. All are invited!

Fri
June
6

Artists' Reception "Animals Real and Imaginary"

5pm - 7pm at Big Bend Gallery
Big Bend Gallery invites everyone to join them on Friday, June 6th for the Artists' Reception of "Animals, Real and Imaginary"

Alpine Cowboys vs. Roswell Invades

6:30pm - 9:30pm at Kokernot Field
Roswell Invades are coming to Alpine for 2 games June 6th and 7th.

Indian Lodge Tour

4pm - 5pm at Davis Mountains State Park
Discover the history behind the ONLY hotel in the Texas State Park system.

Jacob Furr

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Jacob Furr play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sat
June
7

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION By Dharam Khalsa

7pm at 601 W San Antonio St
SEE MARFA LIGHTS GALLERY, free drinks until none.

JR B Day

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch JR B Day play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sun
June
8

AGAVE FEST

JUNE 5TH - 8TH
Agavemarfa.com

Open Mic On The Patio

4pm - 6pm at Alcove Social
Alcove Social hosts Open Mic every Sunday afternoon at 4pm on the patio! Come play or just sit back and enjoy the music.

Chris Beall

6pm - 8pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Chris Beall play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Looking to submit an event?

Scan our QR code here:



Ongoing Weekly Events & Classes

Xbox Monday

Mondays starting June 2nd 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

Free Boxing at MAINTENANT

Thursdays at 9am
Sundays at 10am

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

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Camp Bosworth and Sally Van Horn’s ‘Cucurrucucú’ opens at Wrong Marfa

Marfa — Wrong will host an opening for Cucurrucucú, a two-person exhibition on Thursday, June 5, from 5-7 p.m. at 110 N. Highland Ave. Wrong will be featuring work by local artist Camp Bosworth and Austin artist Sally Van Horn. Both artists create works pushing the boundaries of scale.

Artist Camp Bosworth, known for his wood carvings, will be showing his latest over-the-top fictional “tequila” bottles. All bottles are carved from a local pecan tree. Bosworth, with his partner Buck Johnston, is co-owner of Wrong and this is his first exhibition at Wrong. He has shown extensively throughout Texas and the Southwest.

Sally Van Horn is a self-taught artist based in Austin and works with ink and watercolor on a tiny scale. During the pandemic, Van Horn fell in love with painting the West Texas landscape. The practice of capturing the spirit of this place, a place that cracked open her imagination when she first moved to Texas a decade ago, remains a daily ritual. She recently stepped away from nine years as an elementary teacher to focus on her watercolor painting.

Within Wrong is the newly opened Wrong Bar. The Wrong Bar will be hosting agave spirit tastings throughout the Agave Festival weekend. Please check out wrongmarfa on Instagram for the latest updates.

MAINTENANT exhibit showcases land transformation from open-pit mines

MARFA — Through sculptures of marble, copper, and glass, Guadalajara-based artist Karian Amaya invites viewers to explore the profound relationship between mining, landscape and memory.

The works engage in a dialogue with the history and transformation of the land, drawing inspiration from Mexico’s open-pit mines. RUINAS DEL PAISAJE emerges from the interplay of materials, forms, and sounds that reflect the mining industry’s impact on both the natural environment and cultural identity. The exhibition will have an opening event at MAINTENANT on June 5 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Blown glass pieces, representing the elemental forces behind the formation of marble and copper, complement the installation. The glass forms — functioning as vessels

— symbolize air as the shaping force of these raw materials. Inside, fragments of marble and copper rest, illustrating the interaction between nature and human labor.

The exhibition also features a special collaboration between the Department of Projects, Innovation, and Cultural Policies of the Secretary of Culture of the State of Chihuahua and the National Fonoteca of Mexico, coordinated by Tito Rivas. This partnership contributes a series of sound pieces based on desert field recordings, enriching the sensory and conceptual depth of the experience. RUINAS DEL PAISAJE will be up until September 28, 2025 at MAINTENANT, 1825 Rabbits Rd, Marfa. The gallery’s summer hours are Thursday through Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and by appointment.



Glass forms function as vessels and air as the shaping force of raw materials.

‘Let the Sunshine In’ with Marfa Live Arts this week



Photo by Tina Rivera

Marfa Live Arts teaches “Let the Sunshine In” theater arts and singing camp this week to students as part of MISD’s annual Summer Shake Up. The community is invited to a showcase performance today in Hibbits Gym at 11 a.m.

By JD Garcia

MARFA – Marfa Live Arts, in partnership with Marfa ISD and other local area nonprofits, has teamed up once again for the 14th Annual Camp Summer Shake Up. This week Marfa Live Arts (MLA) is instructing a group of 20 third- through eighth-grade students in a dramatic arts and singing workshop that culminates today, Thursday, June 5, at 11 a.m. with a student showcase at Hibbits Gym on the Marfa ISD campus behind the school cafeteria.

According to third-year MLA Artistic Associate and Teaching Artist Rachel Tate, the program “continues integrating mindfulness and yoga into the elements of performance and other theatrical explorations.” She explained, “This year, we are focusing on adding musical elements, dance, and the continuation of a lot of play. It’s the first week of summer, and I want us to laugh and explore within the ensemble and see what we can make together.”

Under the theme of “Let the Sunshine In,” she added, “We have the students exploring 1970s

music and vibes with the help of Marfa Live Arts instructors Fatima Anaza, Nina Martin and Amanda Bloom also spending time with the group,” she said. “These three artists are brilliant creators and are so much fun. The kids are having a really good time! We all are.”

Anaza, who is also teaching the Summer Shake Up students for the third year, has been looking forward to once again working with the students. “I remember being asked by Tate to assist with the first year, and it’s become one of my favorite times of the year,” Anaza said. “It’s a real greeting to the summer to get to name and place emotions with the students and share my meditation practice.”

For Anaza, working with the students has given them a high appreciation of the program. “We prepare as good theater people do, but then we encounter the present moment and the spaces we have privilege to use,” she explained. “It’s incredible, zany at times, but overall one of the most enriching things I’ve ever done”

For Tate, the program offers her a chance to both get in touch with her inner child as well as see the creativity in Marfa’s youth. “I’m a big kid at heart, and any time I can be silly, play, and create something, I am a happy camper. This week always manages to be the best of all that,” Tate said. “Also, these kids are incredible and funny, and I like to see the way their brains work when we’re coming up with ideas. You really never know what’s going to come out of their thoughts, and then we run with it!”

For Tate, the program is not only an educational time for the children, but a boon for the community. “Every time we come together, I leave more assured of what a gift Marfa Live Arts is to Marfa. As a person who spent most of their life working in a theatrical setting, having this as a resource and creative home for me is a real blessing,” Tate said, adding that the community is invited to the showcase. “Come on out to our showcase on Thursday the 5th at 11 a.m. I would really like for the kids to have an audience to share their talents and creativity with.”

For more information on current and future programs, please visit www.marfalliearts.org.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

April 9, 1928

Famous Aviators Will Gather Here on Monday, July 9th

Marfa to Be Air Capital of the World for a Few Hours

Fifty Planes of Every Known Type and Description to Stop at Marfa Military Airdrome on 6000 Reliability Tour—Noted Flyers to Be in Line-Up—Eddie Stinson, Winner of Tour to Drive a Stinson Detroiter. Marfa Planning to Make Gala Day of Occasion—Surrounding Towns Invited.

The Fourth Annual Air Tour, sponsored by the Detroit Board of Commerce, with its fifty airplanes competing in the National Annual Air Tour, is scheduled to arrive at the Camp Marfa Military Airdrome at 11:45 A.M. Monday, July 9th, and to remain for several hours, during which time all visitors are invited to inspect the ships and to seek all desired information regarding them from Pilots or others in charge.

According to the Detroit Tour management, the tour, taking off from the Ford Airport, Detroit, Michigan, June 30th, will include every type of airplane from the huge tri-motored Ford Transport to small sport types, all competing for the much sought after Edsel Ford Silver Trophy, the Pilots meanwhile, competing individually, for many other endurance test awards. It is stated that among the interesting planes in the tour will be the New Ryan brougham, entered by Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, and piloted by his friend and former flying partner, Philip Love.

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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.



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OBITUARY



FISHER

With profound admiration, we celebrate the life of **Wanda Fisher**, a shining star in Sanderson, Texas, whose tireless volunteer work and charitable endeavors inspired countless lives.

She worked hard as an engineer. She cherished her community, her beloved animals, and her devoted family. As a grand marshal, Wanda illuminated many parades, especially

the Halloween festivities, where she transformed into "Wicked Wanda," educating children on safety during trick-or-treating. A gifted softball player and multi-medal Senior Olympian, Wanda's remarkable spirit continues to uplift and motivate.

Though she will be deeply missed by her family and the entire Sanderson community, her legacy of love, kindness, and generosity will

forever be etched in our hearts. Rest in peace, dear Wanda; your impact will never be forgotten.

Preceded in death by: Forrest Darwin Fisher

Survived by children Tammica Jane Fisher, Stacy Ann Fisher-Rodriguez and Kenneth Richard Fisher; and grandchildren Nadine Brooke Fisher and Elijah Lee Fisher.



YBARRA

Margarita "Maggie" P. Ybarra, a cherished member of the Alpine community, passed away peacefully on May 31, 2025, in her beloved hometown. Born on July 8, 1943, Margarita was a beacon of joy and warmth, leaving behind a legacy filled with love, laughter, and artistry.

Margarita devoted her career to serving others through various local establishments including Dairy Queen, the Alpine Community Center, Welsh's Grocery Store, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church,

and Perry's. Through her work, she became a familiar face in the community, known for her friendly smile and caring heart.

A woman of many passions, Margarita loved to sing and dance, often sharing her talents with her community. Her participation in the church choir brought joy not only to herself but also to many who had the privilege of hearing her beautiful voice. She was a dedicated lector and an active member of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Organization, and La Acci3n Cat3lica, demonstrating her unwavering faith and commitment to serving God and her community.

Margarita is survived by her daughter Amalia Razo; her son, Eugene Ybarra (Victoria); her daughter Estella Vega (Ricky); as well as her brothers, Peter Portillo and Gustavo Portillo, and her sisters Esiquia Flores (Blackie), Rosalia Liberman, Cora Muniz and Flory Leyva. Margarita's grandchildren are Abel Razo, Amanda Razo, Ruby (David) Pallanez, Pablo (Brandy) Ybarra, Crystal (Alberto) Cordew,

Bruno (Ashley) Ybarra, Joel Vega (Blanca), Gabriel (Jamie) Vega, Eugenio "Gino" (Sarah) Vega, Tomas (Jenn) Vega, Victor Vega, Miguel (Ale) Vega and Rikki Bea Vega. The love she poured into her family and friends will surely be felt for generations to come. Margarita was also honored to have 26 great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her loving husband, Eugenio Ybarra; her parents, Gustavo and Ysidra Portillo; and sisters Celia Coronado, Luciana Leyva and Hortensia Celaya. Their spirits will continue to be a source of comfort to those she left behind, as they reunite in eternal rest.

Margarita's warmth and vibrant spirit will be celebrated during a series of services held at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Alpine, Texas. Friends and family are welcome to join for visitation on June 4, 2025, starting at 6 p.m., followed by the praying of the Rosary at 7 p.m. A Mass will be held the next day, June 5, 2025, at

2 p.m., before she is laid to rest at Holy Angels Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be Miguel Angel Vega, Bruno Ybarra, Joey Celaya, Ricky Celaya, Jonathan Portillo and Danny Fuentes. Honorary pallbearers are Abel Razo, Pablo Ybarra, Joel Vega, Gabriel Albino Vega, Eugenio Emmanuel Vega, Tomas Eduardo Vega and Victor Alejandro Vega.

As we remember Margarita, we celebrate her life filled with music, family, and faith. She has left an indelible mark on the hearts of those who knew her, and she will be greatly missed.

Donations may be made in Margarita's honor to the following organizations: Angel's Care Hospice, Our Lady of Guadalupe Organization, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church or Alpine Sunshine House Senior Center.

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



MOLINAR

Auden Raul Molinar (Audie), 48,

of Alpine, Texas, went to be with the Lord on May 28, 2025, surrounded by his family.

Audie was born June 29, 1976, the son of Marcela (Espinoza) and Samuel Molinar. He attended Alpine High School and will forever be remembered admirably on both the football and baseball field. Audie was always able to light up a room and he certainly never met a stranger. He never stopped making us laugh. Something about him made you gravitate towards him. He held his friends close and always stood up for those around him.

Those preceded in death were his paternal grandparents Victorino and Mary Lou Molinar and his maternal grandparents Eraclio V. and Esperanza G. Espinoza.

Remaining to cherish Audie's memory are his parents, Marcela and Samuel Molinar; siblings Vicente Molinar, Jesse Victorino and Samantha George; significant other Amber Campbell; children Aubany R Molinar and Agee R (Sergio) Molinar; grandchildren Everick Austin, Nyla Austin, Reese Hinojos, Harper Hinojos, and Eliana Hinojos. In addition to those mentioned, there

are also many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Services for Auden are as follows: Visitation on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 9 a.m. at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church with the recitation of the Holy Rosary to begin at 10 a.m. The funeral Mass will follow at 10:30 a.m., also at Our Lady of Peace in Alpine, Texas.

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

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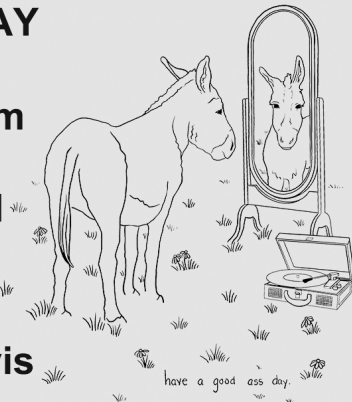
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THANK YOU TO THE CITY OF MARFA FOR SUPPORTING THIS SHOW.

City Hall ceremony



Photos courtesy of Kelly Perez

Mayor Manny Baeza and Councilmember Travis Acreman were officially sworn in at City Hall last week to continue their roles on city council. Both were incumbents who filed for reelection unopposed. Baeza has served three two-year terms as mayor, having first been elected to the position in 2019. Acreman was elected to his first City Council member term in 2023. Mayor Pro Tem Raul Lara will be sworn in this week. Baeza, Lara and Acreman will serve two-year terms which will expire in May 2027.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Donation drive underway for migrants in Mexico

TRI-COUNTY — A donation drive is underway for migrant families at the Ojinaga Migrant Center. The center is in need of blankets, pillows, board games, books and other shelter essentials for daily living.

Donations can be dropped off — by June 6 — in the blue bins at:

Marfa — The Beebe residence, 110 West Texas Street.

Presidio — The Rodriguez residence, 1400 E. O'Reilly.

The drive is sponsored by the Presidio County Democrats and the Big Bend Democrats.

Photography showing benefits the Ruidosa adobe church renovation

MARFA — On Tuesday, Sticks & Bones Desert Supply shop hosted an opening of photography on exhibit — with proceeds going to the Friends of the Ruidosa Church (FORC), a nonprofit restoring the historic adobe Church on the Rio Grande. Guests enjoyed food and drink while browsing the artistic works of several local photographers.

FORC is seeking funding to help “Raise the Bell,” which hung on the historic structure between two towers after the church's construction in 1916. The nonprofit recently has received grants for planning and reconstruction efforts, but with grant matches needed, it continues to ask for help from the community.

Photographs will be on display and for purchase until July 6 at 1309 W. San Antonio Street in Marfa.

Olympian from Ojinaga graces front cover of ‘ELLE Mexico’

OJINAGA, Chihuahua — The small border city of Ojinaga received a glamorous honor this week: Alegna Gonzalez, a hometown track star who took fifth at the Paris Olympics in race walking, graced the cover of ELLE Mexico on newsstands across the country. The covergirl appeared in an array of athletic and streetwear styles provided by Nike. “In a world where sport is linked to masculinity, Alegna González redefines the rules by being strong and feminine,” the magazine wrote of the young racing legend.

Chisos Mountain Lodge restaurant closes for renovations

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — The restaurant at the Chisos Mountain Lodge officially closed for renovations this week, marking the end of an era in a beloved meeting space for fans of Big Bend National Park’s sky island mountain range. In its place, concessionaire Aramark is offering a food truck for hungry hikers in the last weeks before the area shutters for good for a two-year period.

The long-awaited overhaul of facilities in the Chisos Basin has been subject to numerous delays. Originally slated to begin in May, park officials have not yet announced the selection of a contractor to complete the project and are instead projecting that ground will be broken in the fall.

The closure will not impact the rest of the park, nor will it totally close off the Chisos to visitation — visitors will still be able to seek alternate routes to enjoy the park’s alpine views and coolest temps.

The Rio Grande Council of Governments (RIOCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments formed under Texas law. This organization was initiated to further intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in the planning, development and delivery of governmental services. The RIOCOG serves seven counties in Far West Texas. They include Brewster, Culberson, Doña Ana, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio, and the Tribal Nation of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.

The RIOCOG is seeking nominations from the RIOCOG region to serve on the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) representing the disciplines of **Law Enforcement, Courts, Substance Abuse and Citizen-at-Large**. Stakeholders are encouraged to contribute their time, knowledge and experience to shaping the region’s goals and policies by volunteering to serve on this advisory board.

When applying for a vacancy, certain personal disclosures may be required to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. All applications will be reviewed by the RCJAC and approved by the RIOCOG Board of Directors. If interested, please contact Marisa Quintanilla, RIOCOG Regional Services Director at marisaq@riocog.org or at 915-533-0998 x 119.

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On to the future

Photos by Carlos Morales



Marfa High School seniors embrace during a graduation ceremony on Friday, May 30. The celebration took place at the Shorthorn Gym this year as Martin Field was wet from recent rains.



This year's valedictorian, Francisco Rosas, poses with friends and family following Friday's graduation ceremony. Rosas plans to attend Texas State University in San Marcos.

Sul Ross State University scientists attend Christmas Mountains Symposium

TERLINGUA — Scientists from around Texas attended the annual Christmas Mountains Symposium at the Terlingua Ranch Lodge in southern Brewster County May 18-20.

Faculty from Sul Ross State University and other members of the Texas State University System (TSUS) participated with presentations and field trips on the geology, biology and water

resources of the area. The Christmas Mountains are a small range next to Big Bend National Park.

The 9,270 acre tract is owned by the TSUS and is open to the public and to academic researchers. It is characterized largely by marine sedimentary rocks of Cretaceous age that have been intruded by much younger (40 to 44 million years) igneous

rocks forming a complex caldera system.

The area supports a desert grassland ecosystem comprising several distinctive plant community types. The symposium included presentations and field trips to view the geology, ecology and history of the property.



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The City of Marfa is hiring for a City Administrator. Marfa is a General Law Type-A City under the Mayor-Council form of government. The City Administrator will serve as the chief advisor to the Mayor and City Council in the overall strategic direction of the city and delivery of services. for a complete job description and list of qualifications, please visit: cityofmarfa.com/jobs applications will be accepted until June 27, 2025 at 3p.m. CST. the City of Marfa is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE)

NOTICE OF REQUESTS FOR SEALED BIDS TO LEASE COUNTY PROPERTY – RFP2025-01

The Presidio County Commissioners Court is accepting sealed bids until 10:00 A.M. on Friday, June 20, 2025, for the lease of the Bull Barn facility and associated acreage, being 10.6 acres, more or less. A detailed property legal description is available in the RFP2025-01 Information Packet, which can be obtained at the Presidio County Attorney's office 300 N. Highland Avenue – 2 nd Floor, Marfa, TX 79843, or by email at countyattorney@co.presidio.tx.us .

Sealed bids are to be addressed to the Presidio County Attorney, with “RFP2025-01” clearly marked on the outside of the envelope or package, and must be received at the Office of the Presidio County Attorney, either in person, by email to countyattorney@co.presidio.tx.us , or by mail to P.O BOX M, Marfa, TX 79843, before 10:00 A.M. on Friday, June 20, 2025. Bids received after that time will not be considered. Properly submitted bids will be presented to Commissioners Court at a special meeting on June 25, 2025. Presidio County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

Blair Park, County Attorney
Presidio County, Texas

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.

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