

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

Area tourism boards concerned about impact of military deployment on funding

By Sam Karas
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TRI-COUNTY — As the Big Bend enters its slow summer season, some folks are concerned that the presence of the U.S. Army in the region might mean even slimmer budgets for tourism programming in the months to come. Around 500 troops were deployed to Alpine and Presidio in the spring by the Trump administration, and in lieu of building temporary camps the Department of Defense has opted to house troops in local hotels.

While the guaranteed business through November has been a boon to local hotel operators, local governments aren’t seeing the benefits. The federal government is exempt from paying the majority of local taxes and fees, including hotel occupancy (HOT) taxes. By law, HOT funds can only be used to promote tourism — a restriction that’s proven controversial in places like Marfa and Brewster County, where tourism money is abundant but government funding for local necessities like road repair and healthcare are scarce.

That’s not quite the case for the Presidio Convention and Visitor’s Bureau (CVB), which typically has an annual budget in the low six figures. In Presidio, every dollar of HOT money counts in attempting to attract visitors to one of the region’s more underrated destinations — and the Army is currently occupying over half of the rooms in one of Presidio’s two hotels.

Presidio CVB Treasurer Irma Juarez started raising the alarm at public meetings last month. She estimates that the board will miss out on about \$56,000 this year because of the deployment. “For us, that’s a huge hit,” she explained. “I think we’re at a disadvantage, even if we welcome [the Army’s] presence here. There just has to be a better thought-out process.”

Juarez would like to start by beefing up the city’s efforts to track its visitation, keeping closer tabs with hotel owners to figure out what brings people to Presidio and how to encourage them to stay. It’s a science that officials across the state have been trying to perfect in order to make the best use of HOT money. “As treasurer, my recommendation is being more conservative,” she said. “Right now, we just don’t know what’s going to happen.”

The need for enhanced number crunching was echoed over in Brewster County, where their equivalent organization, Visit Big Bend, rakes in nearly \$2 million annually. On that side of Paisano Pass, the conversation has been more

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



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Photo by Cody Bjornson

Ballroom Marfa’s upcoming group exhibition *Los Encuentros*, opening this Friday, spilled out of the gallery and onto the street this week with the creation of a colorful mural on the building’s facade by artist Ozzie Juarez, who imagined a new deity and dedicated its spirit to the historic building. Read more on page 4.

Council pushes back on P&Z recommendation to deny AEP rezone

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — The air in the Casner Room at City Hall was tense Tuesday night as the public first heard the mayor and City Council’s reactions to the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission’s recommendation to deny a rezone request from American Electric Power (AEP).

AEP is requesting to rezone a residential lot on the east side of town to industrial in order to build a new substation. The four-acre lot is located at the corner of E. Oak and N. Aparejo streets just before the Alamito Creek bridge — roughly a block away from the preexisting substation that supplies

the City of Marfa with power.

P&Z Chairman Chick Rabourn — the only member of that commission present — took to the podium to formally present P&Z’s recommendation to deny the rezone, citing concerns that it could constitute an illegal spot zone, is not aligned with the city’s 2017 comprehensive plan to create more housing, and would degrade the residential neighborhood. The new \$7 to \$10 million substation is proposed to be triple the size and capacity of the existing substation, a decision AEP representatives have argued accommodates future growth.

While P&Z recommended that council deny AEP’s rezone request, council members’ initial reactions on

Tuesday indicated that they didn’t necessarily agree with the decision to deny, and detailed discussions are likely to continue in a forthcoming public hearing. Council Member Eddie Pallarez — who worked for AEP for 46 years before retiring — expressed support for the rezone, stating it needed to be done to keep up with the local demand for power.

“I know that there are 10 to 15, opposition people, folks who live in the neighborhood, but stop and think about [how] that’s a small portion of the Marfa residents,” Pallarez said. “Nobody wants that substation across the street. There’s no doubt about that. I don’t want it, but it’s what AEP needs to do either sooner or later.”

Council Member Mark Morrison pointed out a number of things missing from the P&Z report, among other things, a detailed analysis with appraisal district data about how the substation would decrease property values. “How much did y’all estimate it would decrease property values and drive disinvestment?” Morrison asked. “Are there any figures that y’all came up with, 10% to 30% decrease in value?”

Mayor Pro Tem Raul Lara and Council Member Travis Acreman remained mostly neutral. Council Member Mark Cash was absent.

While initially voiced by Acreman, all council members agreed that

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Big Bend Times publisher wrestled to ground in Jeff Davis County meeting

By Rob D’Amico
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JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — David Flash, the photographer behind the popular Big Bend Times Facebook page and website, was tackled by a deputy in a Jeff Davis Commissioners Court meeting Friday and detained and handcuffed for allegedly disrupting the court session, according to Flash, witness accounts and a video of the incident.

Flash was cited for disorderly conduct and detained for about 30 minutes in a chair in the justice of the peace’s office, where he got a “lecture” from Jeff Davis County

Sheriff Victor Lopez on proper behavior, Flash said in a phone interview Saturday. Deputies released Flash after issuing him a disorderly conduct citation.

The incident took place during an otherwise uneventful Jeff Davis County budget workshop. Flash had a livestream of the proceedings rolling from a device in the corner of the courtroom while he alternated between sitting and observing and moving around the room taking photographs with his camera.

Jeff Davis County Judge Curtis Evans said Saturday that Flash was “extremely disruptive” during the meeting as Flash tried to livestream

the meeting with one camera on a tripod and take photos with court attendees on another. “He was bouncing all over the courtroom, taking photographs during open court,” Evans said. “It was annoying, it was disruptive, and it was not something you do in court.”

Things escalated at two points, Evans said, when Flash put his phone in the face of Sheriff Lopez and then later did the same to Chief Deputy Adriana Ruiloba, who told him to “back off.”

Flash said he was not being disruptive, was quiet and that the sheriff thrust his hand out at his phone when he tried to photograph

him and that the chief deputy later did the same thing. “I tried to just snap the photo and, of course, you can’t take a good photo of somebody in their face,” Flash said. “But he actually said later that I tried to put my camera in his face. How the hell would I take a good photo [like that]?”

When Flash tried to similarly take a photo of the chief deputy, he said he got a more hostile reaction. “She started screaming at me to, ‘Get out of my face.’”

Flash’s accounts match — to a large degree — video he ended up taking

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Judge: White trial to stay in Presidio County

As trial nears, deadlines loom and a question of whether adopted son has joined the mix surfaces

By Rob D’Amico
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — *The Big Bend Sentinel* became the focus of a hearing last Thursday on whether the judge in the White family Brite Ranch legal battle should allow a change of venue because of extensive media coverage of the lawsuit.

The original lawsuit focused on whether Jim White breached his financial duties as trustee by not adequately providing distributions

to his siblings Beau (now deceased), Mac and Hester Ann — all heirs to the Jane White Trust that owns the ranch. In a summer of 2023 trial verdict, jurors agreed with that assessment and Jim was stripped from his duties as the trustee that ran the ranch and managed its finances. However, an 8th Court of Appeals ruling out of El Paso nullified that verdict, and a new trial has been set for August 18 at the Marfa Courthouse in Presidio County. At stake is whether legal decisions will lead to the sale of parts or the

entirety of the 65,000-acre Brite Ranch located in southwest Presidio County — something Jim and son, Cuatro, and other of his children have resisted..

Cuatro led the charge to move the trial, possibly to Brewster County or any county adjoining the 394th Judicial District, based on the assertion that numerous *Sentinel* articles and the family’s wide network of local friends and associates would make it impossible to find an impartial jury.

To bolster that claim, the petition

for a change of venue included affidavits from Presidio County Judge Joe Portillo, Constable Esteban “Steve” Marquez and Marfa City Council Member Mark Morrison — all agreeing with the difficulties of finding an impartial jury. A subsequent filing included excerpts of depositions from the three.

“By reporting on a party’s legal victories, that influences readers to have an opinion about the White

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Marfa ISD administrators named to new positions

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — This week Marfa ISD School Board trustees named Rosie Martinez, the elementary school principal, the principal of both campuses and named Linda Ojeda, the athletic director, the dean of students.

“These are two ladies that are well respected in this district, that teachers can look to for mentorship and for guidance,” Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez said of the decision. “They are invested in the district, invested in the community, invested in the students. You just can’t go wrong there.”

Martinez has served as the elementary school principal since last year, and before that worked at the district as a special education teacher for three years. Ojeda has been with the district for 18 years, having served as a coach, English teacher and Marfa ISD’s first-ever female athletic director.

Ojeda told *The Big Bend Sentinel* while her title is dean of students, she will be, in essence, serving as the junior high and high school principal, taking on the duties of initiating programs and overseeing student discipline and student activities. She said she requested the title be in place this year while she works towards earning her principal certification through a program at Sul Ross State University.

“I really didn’t feel comfortable being referred to as a principal when I’m still in the certification program, because I just started it,” Ojeda said.

Ojeda holds a master’s in education. This summer she’s embarking on the new principals academy, which she said has been useful for making connections with other area school administrators and learning about “the bigger picture” of running a school, including financial and legal aspects.

Two years ago when the junior high and high school principal position was vacant — before Candy Dominguez took on the role for one year — Ojeda stepped in to handle some of the duties, so she is familiar with what the principalship entails, she said.

Ojeda will likely remain involved with the athletics program, while delegating some duties to other coaches, she said. The role of the district counselor, or student success coordinator, remains vacant after the February resignation of David Natividad. Ojeda said she and other administrators are sharing the duties of that position for now and assessing the financial feasibility of hiring someone new.

As the seasoned coach and teacher moves into her new position, she said she wants the community to know, “We’re trying to, as a unit, as a team of educators, to really put out the best opportunities for our kids.” Ojeda said administrators are working to “give students a leg up no matter how much time that’s going to take” by pushing opportunities for college credit, Career Technical Education (CTE) and participating in the new BBRISE program.

Come the start of school in August, Ojeda said she will encourage junior high and high school parents to ask questions and get comfortable coming to her from the get go, realizing communication goes both ways, and administrators will be checking in with them about their students too.

“At the end of the day, I want us to be consistent. I want to be consistent with what we provide. I want to be consistent with — I hate to say — discipline,” Ojeda said. “I want to open up some lines of communications with parents or with guardians who may not feel comfortable coming in.”

Martinez said she’s optimistic about

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AEP rezone

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requesting a formal legal opinion on whether or not the zoning change would constitute a spot zone — which may occur when “a city changes zoning to allow a use that is incompatible to surrounding uses and does not respect the city’s comprehensive plan,” according to the city attorney — was the next course of action.

“Pretty much, we’re going to have to go with what the attorney tells us,” Pallarez said. “The attorney tells us we can’t rezone that, then we won’t rezone it.”

The validity of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan also came under scrutiny. Morrison said some of the land use numbers in the report seemed off, and Rabourn commented that there was both good and “boilerplate” stuff in the document. Acreman noted that the city is required to update that plan every 10 years, and 2027 would be here soon.

“We should start thinking about budgeting for that and the process,” Acreman said. “I’d like to see us [doing] that as much in-house and community-based as we can, rather than outside consultants.”

Given that Marfa is a small town and AEP employs many locals, there are several parties involved that have potential conflicts of interest, a subject that came up at the Tuesday meeting. Rabourn lives in the affected area, defined as 200 feet around the proposed substation site, and disclosed that at both public hearings P&Z held on the matter, per a recommendation from the city’s attorney. Mayor Manny Baeza currently works for AEP and Council Member Pallarez, who is now retired, previously worked for AEP.

The Tuesday meeting was the first time the issue has come in front of the City Council. Before Rabourn started his presentation, Mayor Baeza — who is legally required to recuse himself — got up from his seat at the council members’ table and went to sit in the audience. “I’ll be leaving here, and I’ll be a member of the audience,” he said. From there, he participated in the discussion about the project. In the past when any AEP-related matter is on the agenda, he has left the room entirely. Baeza sat next to George Salgado, the supervisor of AEP’s Marfa distribution system.

At some point during the discussion Morrison said he would have liked to

see the disclosure that Rabourn lives in the affected area in the P&Z report. Baeza asked Rabourn, “I’m recusing myself from this. So why didn’t you?”

Rabourn stated that he followed the city attorney’s advice to disclose, and he is just a volunteer. “I’m not on anyone’s payroll,” Rabourn said. “As a member of the community, if something affects me and I happen to be on P&Z, why does that disqualify me? That’s the whole reason I’m on P&Z.”

Then Marfa resident and former City Council member Buck Johnston, from the audience, asked why Pallarez hasn’t recused himself because he gets a pension from the company. “I was on City Council, and there is no way I would ever sit in your position and not recuse myself,” Johnston said. “I think it is absolutely ridiculous.”

Pallarez denied that he is still receiving income from the company. “I have no ties to AEP,” Pallarez said. “That pension has been severed from AEP.”

In a follow up with *The Big Bend Sentinel*, Pallarez elaborated further. “I did pull out all of the pension,” he said. “I pulled out all my 401K from AEP, and I invested it with an independent.”

Another point of contention came during Rabourn’s presentation when he explained that while it is not P&Z’s role to assess the viability of alternative sites for the new substation, and to only consider the rezone at hand, the fact that County Commissioner Deirdre Hisler and AEP External Affairs Manager Fred Guerrero were brainstorming sites outside of city limits was mentioned in the report. Baeza interrupted to ask, “So why add that into the report?”

Rabourn said it was included because the question of potential alternative sites will be brought up by the public in City Council’s planned public hearing about the rezone, as it was in P&Z’s hearings, and it seemed unfair for council to have to make such a high stakes decision without considering other options. “When you make a decision that’s going to negatively impact people’s houses and lives and properties, you want to know what some of those trade offs are and whether there’s any other possibilities because overall you have to take the whole town’s interest into account,” Rabourn said.

Two alternative sites outside of city limits have been located on the east side that meet AEP’s minimum acreage requirements and front Highway 90.

Pallarez and AEP’s George Salgado warned that any alternative sites will likely also have significant drawbacks. Essentially, they argued that the potential new site is conveniently located close to the existing substation, and placing a new substation further outside of town will only lead AEP to erect more equipment, infrastructure and poles. The new substation will tie into the Alamito Creek substation in Sal Si Puedes.

“You’re going to have a lot of other construction issues with 60-70 foot poles going from one side to the other,” Pallarez said. “If you go towards the east, yeah, you can, but that’s also going to lengthen the distribution line coming back towards this local station.”

“If we start looking outside of town, that’s going to drop the voltage in town, because we got to supply that voltage” Salgado said.

Although no data has ever been presented, AEP representatives have said that the existing substation is running over capacity and that is why it needs to be upgraded. Salgado warned that more growth is coming and AEP needs to be ready to meet the demand.

Pallarez added that if Marfa doesn’t accept this proposal AEP will likely opt to go elsewhere and spend their money on new substations in either Fort Davis or Alpine. “They can pick up this \$7 million, \$10 million expenditure and go spend it in Fort Davis,” Pallarez said.

But the reason for Marfa’s growth, Rabourn argued, is the preservation of its small town charm. He said it would be more beneficial for the entire community to focus on infill development that keeps town life centralized, rather than jeopardizing residential neighborhoods with industrial development and pushing people further out.

“It’s so elegant engineering wise, that I think sometimes it’s easy to sort of forget about the rest of the story, which is what’s generating the demand in the first place?” Rabourn asked.

“From the P&Z perspective, we want to encourage people to move, settle down, live, have friendly little neighborhoods and encourage growth within the city, and not have it all spill out into Antelope Hills,” Rabourn said. “That, to me, starts to suck away the lifeblood of a town.”

White trial

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family or the Brite Ranch in this litigation; it appears that they have formed opinions due to just reading what the filings have ended up being found by the Court and ruled on,” Council Member Morrison said in the deposition. “If the average Presidio County resident reads a Sentinel article, they are going to be influenced by that coverage; a Presidio County resident cannot read objective, factual reporting about this litigation without

being unduly influenced; it is unlikely that there are many residents of Presidio County that do not know at least one White family member ... I think it would be dubious if you could actually get a fully impartial jury, and some people have already formed opinions of it through reading the paper ended up being found by the Court and ruled on.”

Portillo stated in his deposition that “this litigation is

a topic of discussion; then everybody has an opinion ... I think it would be very difficult, very difficult to impanel a jury that could be fair.”

“I agree that it is unlikely that an impartial trial can be held in Presidio County that is fair to all parties,” stated Marquez in his deposition. “The case should be moved to another place where it could get a fair judgment; it would be better to have another jury from another area

that doesn’t know the family as well.”

One of Mac’s attorneys, Robert L. Soza, Jr., of Jackson Walker LLC, told the court that *the Sentinel* coverage didn’t matter for impaneling a jury, because he found no one stating “prejudice,” meaning an overall assessment that the coverage favored one side or another. Donovan Campbell, Cuatro’s attorney from Rader & Campbell

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Marfa ISD new positions

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next year’s outlook and the current team of administrators rallying around the district. “I really do believe that the administrative staff that we have, I think we all share, pretty much, a common goal,” Martinez said. “We’re all from the area or the community.”

“I think we’ve changed the culture a little bit so that the teachers know that we’re working with them and for

them to help them,” she added.

She said, “A lot of good things are happening,” among them the installation of a new computer lab at the elementary school where students will work on everything from keyboarding to media, including broadcasting and podcasting.

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Flash detained

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with the selfie stick camera that he alternately carried and propped up at the back of the courtroom. The video shows Flash starting to leave the courtroom when a budget workshop begins, and he asks in a whisper to the sheriff if he can take his photo. Sheriff Lopez responds, “Not now.” The audio is low and sometimes unintelligible, but you can hear someone use the word “disrupt.” The sheriff exits the courtroom, but Ruiloba turns her back to Flash at a close distance, blocking the video. When Flash tried to go behind her toward the door — a very narrow path between the back wall and seats — she tells him, “Do not come into my personal space. Back off.” Flash responds, “Ma’am, I’m trying to walk out the door.” She moves out of the way and points to the door. “Go, out the door,” she says. Flash leaves and goes into a long video narration in the courthouse hallways about how he couldn’t believe the deputy “screamed at him.” The video did not show her scream, and Flash himself was speaking in a low voice during the confrontation. Flash, who seemed on the verge of exiting the courthouse multiple times, says he really wants to get Ruiloba’s photo, so he goes back into the courtroom where she is standing inside the door. Flash goes to the back corner, props up his selfie-stick video camera, then heads up a few rows of seats from

the corner with his still camera and shoots a photo of Ruiloba at the back door. Ruiloba can then be seen on the video circling to where Flash stood, approaching him at a quick pace. Flash starts firing off snapshots from his camera, and Ruiloba takes a firm grip of his arm pushing him to the back wall. At that point, there is a crash — Flash calls it the “tackle” — but the video camera is pointed in the wrong direction and doesn’t show what happens next. Flash says, “Please, I’m not disrupting anything. I’m not trying to hurt anyone.” A deputy says, “Stop resisting.” Flash can be heard saying, “Please, I’m not disrupting anyone. I’m not resisting.” Ruiloba continues to shout, “Stop, stop.” Another deputy arrives and both Ruiloba and the deputy tell Flash to put his hands behind his back, followed by the clicks of handcuffs. “I’m not resisting at all,” Flash says, and then the published video ends. “Oh, [Ruiloba] said several times she didn’t tackle me. Whatever she wants to call it,” Flash said Saturday. Flash later went to an urgent care facility while on the road in Ector County where he was treated for minor injuries, and he documented a “laceration,” “fingernail marks” and “bruising,” including marks he hadn’t seen on his back that medical staff pointed out, he said. Flash sent *The Big Bend Sentinel* medical records of



Courtesy of Big Bend Times/David Flash Facebook, with permission

Screenshots of video as David Flash is grabbed and pulled to the back of the Jeff Davis County Courtroom.

that visit, and he showed his visible injuries in a Facebook video taken in the exam room. Some comments from Flash’s Big Bend Times Facebook posts on the incident laud him and criticize Fort Davis officials for attempting to silence a working journalist. Others make fun of Flash and call him a “leftist” and “liberal,” monikers that began surfacing after Flash repeatedly posted photos and memes proclaiming that President Trump’s — is not valid and that it’s still the “Gulf of Mexico.” Flash has posted dozens of stories to his Big Bend Times website railing

against those officials and claiming that their harassment forced him, in fear, to temporarily leave Fort Davis. But he’s been a constant presence — for better or worse — since the Big Bend Times’ launch in 2023, peppering them with numerous open records complaints, threats of lawsuits, phone calls that lead to him allegedly profanely arguing with a justice of the peace on the phone. “No one should have to deal with a phone call like that,” Evans said. (Many of Flash’s stories, particularly early on when Flash moved to Fort Davis in 2023 and began working in earnest on Big Bend Times, were accounts of supposed area residents who were

being harassed or filing complaints against officials, when in reality it was just him.) He also has pursued other stories in the community interest, such as what tipsters told him were a rash of car thefts and burglaries in Fort Davis, where the former Sheriff Bill Kitts did not respond to his request for information on them. He also queried surrounding counties for their Operation Lone Star expenditures, with some responding and others not, that were of the public interest. Flash currently is headed to trial, with no date set, on charges of electronic harassment of Jeff Davis County officials from separate incidents. He pleaded not guilty and was granted a change of venue this month to Fort Stockton, since none of the Fort Davis officials like County Attorney Glen Eisen could take part in the proceedings, having to recuse themselves for conflicts of interest over Flash’s other legal pursuits. Lawyers from the Texas Attorney General’s Office have stepped in as prosecutors while Flash is represented by attorney Shane O’Neal of Alpine. County Judge Evans said Friday’s minor citation is not the end of the story, calling Flash “crazy” and “not suitable for public settings.” He indicated that the county is likely to continue pursuing new charges against Flash. “Other charges are pending on that incident,” he said “There’s a two-year statute limitation on disrupting a public meeting, a



Photo courtesy of Big Bend Times/ David Flash, with permission

David Flash snaps a photo of Jeff Davis County Deputy Adriana Ruiloba as she advances toward him. Flash's selfie stick with a phone camera recording can be seen in the background.

Class B misdemeanor.” The disorderly conduct citation is a Class C misdemeanor, not usually a jailable offense and subject to a \$500 fine. A Class B misdemeanor is subject to fines usually up to \$2,000 and 180 days in jail. It’s unclear if Flash’s conditions of release on his harassment bond — which include a prohibition of being arrested — would include the detainment and citation, which could lead officials to revoke his current bond. Sheriff Lopez, County Attorney Eisen and Chief Deputy Ruiloba did not return requests for comment.

Tourism boards

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focused on the availability of hotel rooms, particularly for big annual events like the world-famous Cowboy Poetry Festival. “Our larger events are very concerned, but there’s a lack of information,” Chris Ruggia, the City of Alpine’s tourism director, said at last week’s board meeting. “They don’t know for sure what the potential impact on room availability is going to be.” Ruggia said that this year’s Spirits of the West festival in Alpine saw a big dip in attendance this spring because many attendees were unable to secure rooms in town and had to commute from Fort Stockton — a dangerous and unappealing prospect for an event centered around booze. (*The Sentinel* reached out to the event organizers but didn’t receive a response.)

Both Juarez and Ruggia brought up short-term rentals as a possible solution. In Presidio, the market is small and mostly unregulated; in Brewster County, it’s a booming multimillion dollar business. The Department of Defense (DOD) tends to contract with chain hotels, but beefing up short-term rental stock could be a region-wide solution to the temporary room shortage. Ruggia also wondered if local governments could set up an agreement with the DOD like the one Big Bend National Park has with Brewster County — PILTs, or “Payments in Lieu of Taxes,” are a way for the federal government to make up for the enormous gap in property taxes that would otherwise not exist if a non tax-exempt entity owned that land.

In Presidio, Mayor John Ferguson floated the idea of asking the DOD for help with projects around town — during past deployments, service members have taken on off-duty projects like road grading and building renovations. “I think they want to be involved, and basically we just need to find a way to let them do that,” he said at a city council meeting on June 3. Kendall Woodard, spokesperson for the DOD’s Joint Task Force Southern Border, said that the military was open to suggestions. “We welcome ideas for opportunities to educate and strengthen relationships with local communities and their members regarding our mission while we remain focused on our number one priority — achieving 100% operational control of the border,” she wrote in a statement to *The Sentinel*.

BALLROOM MARFA PRESENTS

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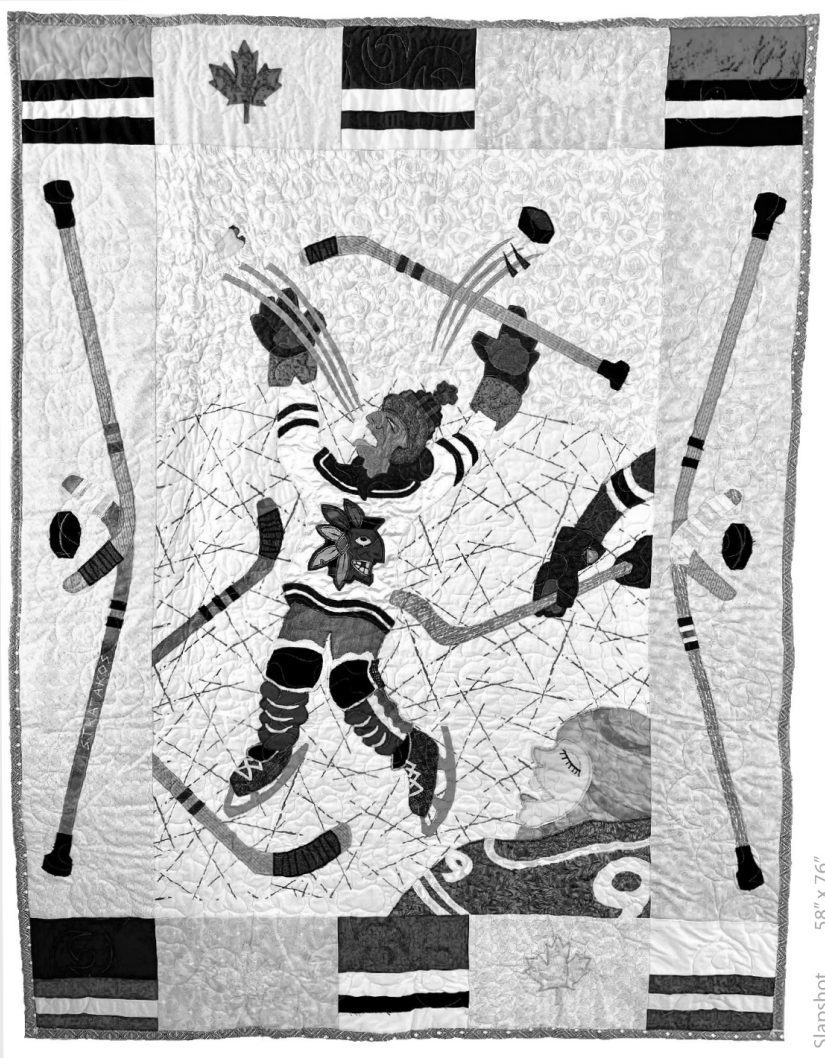
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Quilts by Steve Stratakos



Slapshot, 58" x 76"

Exhibition Opening
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Exhibit runs through August 22nd, 2025

White trial

(Continued from page 2)

PC, said prejudice was not required in the rules of civil procedure and the venue could be changed solely on a judgement that there would be no way to have an impartial trial.

Campbell also wanted to strike from evidence a report of the jury panel records from the 2023 trial. Soza said those records — which he displayed at the hearing, including all the jurors considered for a final jury — showed about two dozen potential jurors who stated they could be impartial, in addition to the final 12 chosen.

Soza’s argument was that even in a small community, there are plenty of people who would consider themselves unbiased. Campbell said that assessment was irrelevant, because *The Sentinel* had not written about the trial at that time, with 13 articles written since then.

Visiting District Judge Tryon Lewis denied the motion to strike the evidence and ultimately sided with Mac to deny the change of venue.

Not discussed in the change of venue motion was the state of the Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa, where the first trial was held for two weeks in the summer of 2023 with no air conditioning and sweltering heat in the courtroom. The courthouse still suffers from a continued lack of air

conditioning , as well as an unreliable courthouse elevator — needed for Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Will the adopted son step in?

Beau White died on Monday, June 23, three days before the hearing. The day of his death, attorneys filed an application with a Bastrop, Texas, court to make Geoffrey Scott Connor temporary administrator of his estate, which the judge approved. Connor is the Bastrop attorney adopted by both Mac and Beau three years ago at the age of 59. Cuatro and his siblings have called for the court to recognize his adoption as invalid for purposes of the lawsuit, a “sham adoption” meant to decrease their inheritance, since Mac and Beau had no children. An attorney for the two had previously threatened in an email that if they didn’t get a settlement in the case agreeable to them, that the siblings would adopt a child.

Since Connor is an adopted son, and an attorney who knew Beau and his late wife Kathleen well, it seems clear why he would handle Beau’s financial affairs after his death. However, the application for interim administrator also included: “There is an immediate necessity to appoint a temporary

administrator for the Decedent’s Estate due to pending lawsuits that require a personal representative to pursue claims against third parties and defend claims made against Decedent.” A recent petition for discovery from Mac to his sister Hester Ann then listed the plaintiffs as Mac and “Geoffrey Scott Connor, as temporary administrator of the estate of Beauregard Brite White and individually as trustee.” The original Brite Ranch trust documents state that should Beau die, Hester Ann would succeed him as trustee. With that language in place it’s likely that Jim and Cuatro’s attorneys will object to Connor trying to assume the role of a trustee and plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Conner has never appeared in any of the hearings associated with the lawsuit against Jim — even though Cuatro’s attorneys have tried to have him take the stand on his adoption. It’s uncertain now whether naming himself as a trustee — legal or not — will change that dynamic.

Time is running out for sorting through several complicated motions on the case with only one hearing currently pending for July 11. The parties also have less than a month, until August 1, to finish discovery and depositions — leaving them a scant two weeks to prepare for the August 18 trial.

Marfa ISD trustees take first look at 2025-26 budget

By Mary Cantrell
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — In the relative quiet of summer break and the conclusion of the most recent legislative session, school boards across Texas are busy tackling their 2025-26 school year budgets, factoring in lawmakers’ changes and discussing district priorities.

At a Marfa ISD School Board meeting on Monday, Chief Financial Officer Rosela Rivera explained to trustees that the state template the district utilizes to generate their budget — a highly-detailed Excel sheet with color-coded cells and seemingly endless tabs — is “always changing” to reflect legislative tweaks.

“There’s so much information that goes into the state template,” Rivera said.

While numbers are subject to change in the coming weeks, one thing was clear: increases to the basic allotment, safety allotment and teacher salary allotments approved by state legislators won’t bring Marfa ISD out of a years-long deficit budget. Even with increased state aid for those initiatives, the district is facing a roughly \$708,000 deficit.

“We’re seeing an increase in that state revenue,” Rivera said. “In the end, are we really getting more money? I don’t think that we are. We are going to have to pay these allotments, and they are very specific to what we can use the money for. We can’t just use the money for anything.”

When Rivera asked the board if there was anything different she could do to better-present the dense information at the next budget workshop, board member Rene Gonzales joked, “You can change all that red to black.”

Marfa ISD has adopted a deficit budget of around \$1 million for the past two years. This year the district’s “recapture” payment — funds the district sends to the state because it is considered to have “excess wealth” per student due to the combination of low enrollment and high property values — is currently estimated to be \$1.3 million, down from last year’s \$1.6 million, but Rivera said she expects it to increase. In the past, the district has dipped into its fund balance, or savings account, to cover the deficits. But how much money remains in the dwindling fund balance account has not yet been discussed. (The district was able to stash away around half a million dollars from the sale of the Blackwell School site last year.)

The budget the district is going off of factors in increased homestead exemptions — now up to \$140,000 and \$200,000 for the elderly and those with disabilities — pending voter approval in November. The district’s tax levy is around \$4 million, which, combined with other income, results in \$5 million in revenue.

One of the major topics of discussion this week was the immediate implementation of HB 2, a bill that requires raises for classroom teachers and support staff. Districts with 5,000 students or less are required to pay an

additional \$4,000 for each teacher with three to five years of experience and an additional \$8,000 for each teacher with five or more years of experience. Teachers do not have to be certified to qualify for the raises. The state minimum pay has also slightly increased. Rivera explained that Marfa ISD, which was previously paying above the state minimum, will have to update its salary schedule to reflect the new requirements.

Support staff, including counselors, nurses, librarians, teaching assistants, custodians, food service workers and bus drivers are to receive raises based on an annual allotment of \$45 per student based on average daily attendance. Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez said Marfa ISD employs around 20 support staff.

Board member Stela Fuentez asked district administrators for a temperature check on the teacher raises. “What’s been the overall response from teachers about this, is it enough?” she asked. “I feel like it's great, but it's not moving the needle for cost of living.”

Alpine ISD’s recent announcement that their board passed a balanced budget and approved “significant” raises — even higher than those imposed by HB 2 — was also brought up. Alpine ISD boosted certified teacher pay by \$4,500 for those with less than two years experience, \$7,000 for those with three to four years experience and \$11,000 for those with five-plus years of experience.

Fuentez asked if the pay increases could prompt Marfa teachers to seek employment in Alpine. Alferez said there are several factors to consider when comparing Alpine’s financial and staffing situations to Marfa’s, including the fact that Alpine has cut staff while Marfa has not.

“You have never come and asked me to cut down on positions,” Alferez said. “When we needed to cut, we never did. Two years ago, last year, when we were at a million dollar deficit, we never did, and that shows a lot. Our teachers know because they asked, ‘Am I on the chopping block? Do I have a job next year?’ I say, ‘As long as I’m here, as long as this administration is here, as long as this board is here, yes.’”

When reached for comment, Alpine ISD Superintendent Michelle Rinehart told The Big Bend Sentinel that the district is able to provide higher raises this year due to several cost-saving measures implemented over the past few years, one of which was “staffing consolidations based on changing enrollment.” Staff have been careful to stay on or under budget, she said, and grants are being aggressively pursued (\$740,000 of the district’s personnel costs in the 2025-26 budget will be offset with grant funds, according to Rinehart.)

“Over the past few years, Alpine ISD has practiced fiscal stewardship to live within our means, even while our 'means' were significantly underfunded by the state,” Rinehart said. “This leadership, which included thoughtful staffing consolidations and innovative revenue generation strategies,

positioned us to increase compensation for all staff above and beyond what HB 2 funded alone.”

Similarly, Marfa ISD is receiving grants and pursuing revenue generating programs, Alferez said. He also reminded board members that budget talks are in their early stages and there’s still time for the board to come up with an attractive offer for staff, preferably one that includes raises for early career teachers not included in the HB 2 allotment.

“We’re getting into the budget talks,” Alferez said. “We can go back to the table and ask, ‘What else can we provide our staff?’”

Dean of Students Linda Ojeda prompted trustees to define what recognition and retention methods they’d like district leaders to pursue. She thanked Marfa Education Foundation (MEF) for their work on teacher stipends and professional development and said administrators were also working hard to honor teachers’ accomplishments, nominating them for awards whenever possible. Ojeda said district leaders have also been in conversation regarding how to jumpstart the Teacher Incentive Allotment program, a state plan that rewards teachers based on performance currently in place in Alpine and Marathon ISDs.

MEF will contribute \$335,000 to Marfa ISD’s budget this year — up 79% from last year — to help support 30 different initiatives at the district from Career Technical Education (CTE) and scholarships to music and science programs.

The financial impact of Marfa’s early childhood education partnership program on the budget is not yet clear. In total, the district enrolled 48 kids from early childhood education centers the second semester of the past school year. The payment for that semester — which is split 50/50 with the partner schools — resulted in \$233,000 for Marfa ISD. But the payment has not yet been received, and it is likely that it will apply to last year’s budget, not the current budget.

Marfa ISD also contracted with Fort Davis ISD to kick off the program. That agreement involved 10% of the revenue going to FDISD in addition to an upfront fee of \$3,000 per partnership for up to five partnerships, and an hourly rate for work performed beyond that.

Alferez traveled to El Paso this week to recruit new centers. But he warned school board members that a bill — SB 2252 — which did not pass during the session, contained a provision that would require 90% of the profit from the partnerships to go to the centers for pre-K students, with only 10% going to the districts. The Legislature is set to meet later this month for a special session, though no education-related items are currently on the agenda.

“I’m not signing any contracts until I know for sure, but I just want to continue visiting those centers and see if we can establish any kind of partnership on that,” Alferez said. “We’re trying to see where we go from here with this bill.”

Ballroom Marfa transforms facade with new mural

MARFA — The stark white facade of Ballroom Marfa facing the town’s main thoroughfare was recently transformed thanks to a new mural by artist Ozzie Juarez. Juarez — who is from Compton, California — has been working on the project throughout the past week and is also a featured artist in the gallery’s forthcoming exhibition *Los Encuentros*.

Juarez explained his vision for the mural:

“For the mural project, I decided to imagine a new deity and dedicate his spirit to the Ballroom Marfa building. Coatzo­maki, whose name fuses "Coatl" (serpent) and "ozomatli" (Monkey). Coatzo­maki is a god born of convergence, a sacred fusion of serpent and monkey, embodying the dynamic balance between earth and sky, instinct and creativity, gravity and joy. His form coils and leaps simultaneously, reflecting the belief that

transformation is not chaos, but a sacred rhythm, a continual unfolding of the self.

With the serpent’s ancient wisdom and the monkey’s agile curiosity, Coatzo­maki becomes a living axis between grounded presence and spiritual ascent. He is not a god of trickery, but of purpose — guiding those in moments of change, healing, or awakening. His teachings live not in static doctrine but in movement itself: in dance, in ritual, in breath. Revered by artists, dancers, wanderers, and seekers, he blesses those who walk the edge of identity, those who shift, adapt, and grow while staying true to an inner thread of spirit. His temples are found in nature’s thresholds: jungle clearings, canyon passages, and the quiet space between thought and action.

This sacred duality makes Coatzo­maki the embodiment of *Los Encuentros* — the vital, generative meeting of opposites. He shows us that identity is not a fixed form but a layered being, built in collision and connection. Just as he binds together monkey and serpent, body and spirit, past and potential, so too does *Los Encuentros* speak to the possibility that emerges when distinct forces come into relation. In every spiral, every shedding of skin, every leap into uncertainty, there is a chance to create something new. Coatzo­maki’s presence reminds us that through movement, renewal, and openness to the in-between, we find our truest shape. He is not just a deity, but a mythic symbol of growth through union — proof that all encounters, when held with care, can become creation.”

You can see more of Juarez’s work on Instagram @ozziejuarez.

Ballroom presents ‘Los Encuentros’

From Ballroom Marfa

MARFA — Ballroom Marfa will present *Los Encuentros*, a group exhibition opening July 4, 2025. The exhibition brings together five leading Latinx artists: Justin Favela, Ozzie Juarez, Antonio Lechuga, Narsiso Martinez and Yvette Mayorga. The artists share an abiding interest in the elevation of materials from everyday life. *Los Encuentros* will feature work newly-commissioned by Ballroom Marfa.

The artists of *Los Encuentros* are dedicated to community collaboration and the representation of Latinx culture to confront the accessibility of art spaces, colonial art histories, the conditions of labor, and lived experience. Together, their works explore larger societal truths and complexities while responding to the experiences of the people and places they engage with and depict. Marfa’s proximity to Mexico and the borders — political, cultural, artistic — that intersect in a space like Ballroom Marfa provide a pivotal context for *Los Encuentros*.

The exhibition’s five artists work in converging visual languages, combining elements of painting, sculpture, and installation. This hybrid approach invites viewers to reconsider traditional artistic boundaries and engage with both historical and contemporary artistic practices. The artists’ welcoming and seductive materials create encounters that feel personal, inclusive and resonant with their own experiences while also challenging art world paradigms and confronting issues of class, borders, and culture head on with humor, reverence and pathos.

Joining Ballroom as guest curator for this project is Texas-based Maggie Adler, whose experience spans more than 30 exhibitions, artist-centered books, and site-specific commissions. Her previous collaborations with artists such as Gabriel Dawe, Mark Dion, Jean



Courtesy of the artist and Charlie James Gallery / Photo © 2024 Yubo Dong

Narsiso Martinez, “Then and Now, Hope and Dignity, 2024.” Acrylic, gouache, charcoal, collage, simple leaf on found produce boxes, 76.5 x 68 x 15.5 inches.

Shin, and Sandy Rodriguez have focused on fostering welcome and engagement in arts institutions. “I am delighted to bring new artists to Ballroom and to work again with artists whose practice centers on allowing a



broad range of community members to see themselves represented in art spaces,” says Adler. “It is a thrill to help facilitate new works coming to life in Marfa.”

“Ballroom Marfa is honored to collaborate with

Justin, Ozzie, Antonio, Narsiso, and Yvette, all of whom are reshaping the forms, as well as the norms, of contemporary art,” said Holly Harrison, Ballroom Marfa executive director. “Their work blurs boundaries, elevates everyday materials, and centers narratives that have too often been sidelined. Maggie's deep commitment to equity, her curatorial rigor, and her longstanding relationships with the artists provided inspirational leadership to the project. At Ballroom, we’re proud to present exhibitions that are both grounded and groundbreaking, and in *Los Encuentros* audiences will encounter work that asks us all to rethink not just what we see and who we see, but, more importantly, how we see others and ourselves.”

Schedule

Friday, July 4 from 6-8 p.m.
Opening Celebrations
Kick off *Los Encuentros* with drinks and community festivities.

Saturday, July 5 from 7-11 p.m.
Live Music at Capri: Los Juanos & Sultanes del Yonke
Two bands, one night! Enjoy back-to-back performances of vibrant cumbia and retro rock.

Sunday, July 6 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Vinyl Brunch at Capri
An analog brunch experience with regionally sourced ingredients, vinyl, and really good cocktails.

Ballroom Marfa is located at 108 E San Antonio St, Marfa, TX 79843. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Sundays 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.. Admission is free. Visit ballroommarfa.org to learn more.

Opinion

Another morning’s pet drama

A micro story

Early this year, I was away for three months at MD Anderson for a serious procedure. Friends in Terlingua kept my two doggos. Thunder (Malinois/Weimaraner) and Lily (Malinois/Staffordshire pit)

Since I left for Houston, this white tomcat had been sneaking in the cat door, beating up my little Levi kitty and eating his food (according to my pal who was cat sitting).

Levi is a runt, very small especially for a male, and neutered. The tomcat is normal size, male intact. The dogs were away, so ... opportunity presented.

Thunder has been trying to chase that white tom down on the regular since we got back. This morning at dawn, the white tom attacked Levi and had him pinned down in the yard.

So, I let Thunder out the screen door and he caught the white cat off guard ... tossed his punk ass 5 feet high and 8 or 10 feet yonder. Thunder gave a glance to Levi, then gave a futile half-hearted chase as the tomcat bolted through the hog wire fence. Levi was fine, he and Thunder trotted back to the house together.

A bit later, on the way back from morning café at Cedar, Thunder and Lily started their very boisterous wrestling in the overgrown vacant lot along the tracks, per usual.

But suddenly the sounds were different. Not fun. They were deep in the Johnson grass, where I couldn’t see them. But I knew something was wrong. I found them following the sounds of ruckus, with not a minute to spare.

Thunder’s tooth was caught in a belt hole of Lily’s collar and she had flipped over trying to escape, twisting the collar super tight around her neck. By the time I got to them she had already gone limp. Thunder whimpering, lying next to Lily, helpless to move. I got them unhooked and Lily started heaving. Thankfully, she came to quickly.

If not for recognizing the distinctive sound of distress, over rough play, it would be over the rainbow for poor Lily.

Another happy ending, but too close to tragedy. I was shaken all day.

Thom Thinn
Alpine, Texas.

...

This is an open letter to senators Cornyn and Cruz and Representative Gonzalez:

Last night I watched a video of the arrest of Narciso Barranco, an undocumented migrant who has lived in the U.S. for decades and fathered three United States Marines.

He was chased by masked, armed, plain clothes officers. They displayed no patches or other markings except on their back which Barranco would not have seen coming at him, so he swung a weed whacker he was carrying one time that I saw. He obviously did this in self defense, and I would have done the same.

AFTER he was on the ground with several officers on top of him, one of those officers struck him in the head several times with a closed fist. I speak as a Marine who served as a rifleman in Vietnam for 12 months and 29 days. I speak as a retired deputy sheriff who spent a career answering graveyard 911 calls.

That officer should be fired and charged. But that won't happen for two reasons. First is the apparent prevailing attitude and lack of discipline of the officers carrying out these raids. Second is the fact that HE CAN'T BE IDENTIFIED BECAUSE HE WAS MASKED! This video turned my stomach. It makes me sick to the heart. I heard Karoline Leavett or somebody say that they are masked for their protection. I wish I had known that when I was a deputy. I could have taken off my name tag, badge, and shoulder patch. I could have masked up and if someone asked my name and badge number I could have told them to "F off." I could have justified it all by saying it was for my "protection." Fact is, I did none of that, and I dealt with people far more dangerous than some tiny landscaper, father of three of my brothers, THREE UNITED STATES MARINES! Is America now the land of the free and the home of the secret police?

Bill Case
Fort Davis

...

To the Editor,

As the new executive director of Marfa Public Radio, and on behalf of our entire team, I want to express my sincerest gratitude to everyone in our community who donated and supported us during our recent Spring Membership Drive. This consistent commitment, month after month, is the bedrock of our operations. It's what allows us to plan for crucial needs and provide the highest quality programming for our listeners. Thank you for making our work possible.

For two decades, Marfa Public Radio has been a vital part of our vast region, from Midland and Odessa to Alpine and Marfa, Presidio and Fort Davis. We provide trusted journalism, local news, and critical emergency and weather updates. In just the last year, Marfa Public Radio has issued 73 extreme weather warnings. We are a lifeline, delivering crucial information even when other communications fail. This is the essential, always-on service we strive to provide 24/7.

Beyond emergencies, Marfa Public Radio is an essential source for rigorous, local reporting and the unique stories of West Texas — stories you simply won't find anywhere else. Unlike corporate broadcasters driven by advertisers, our focus is squarely on public service and addressing the specific needs of our neighbors. Our community of sustaining members and donors ensures we can continue to deliver this vital local content.

As we approach July 4th, we face a critical threat: an effort in Washington to eliminate federal funding for public radio. Just last week, on June 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee debated rescinding nearly \$1.1 billion in already-approved funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). For rural stations like ours, this funding isn't just helpful; it's indispensable.

It's important to understand how CPB funding works for us. Marfa Public Radio is a proud recipient of the CPB's Community Service Grant, recognizing our significant public service. To qualify, we meet rigorous annual standards for legal compliance, financial transparency, and community accountability. The fact that Marfa Public Radio meets this benchmark is a testament to the indispensable services we provide and your incredible belief in our mission. Federal funding then effectively matches this proven local impact, representing over \$450,000 for us — a sum incredibly difficult to replace.

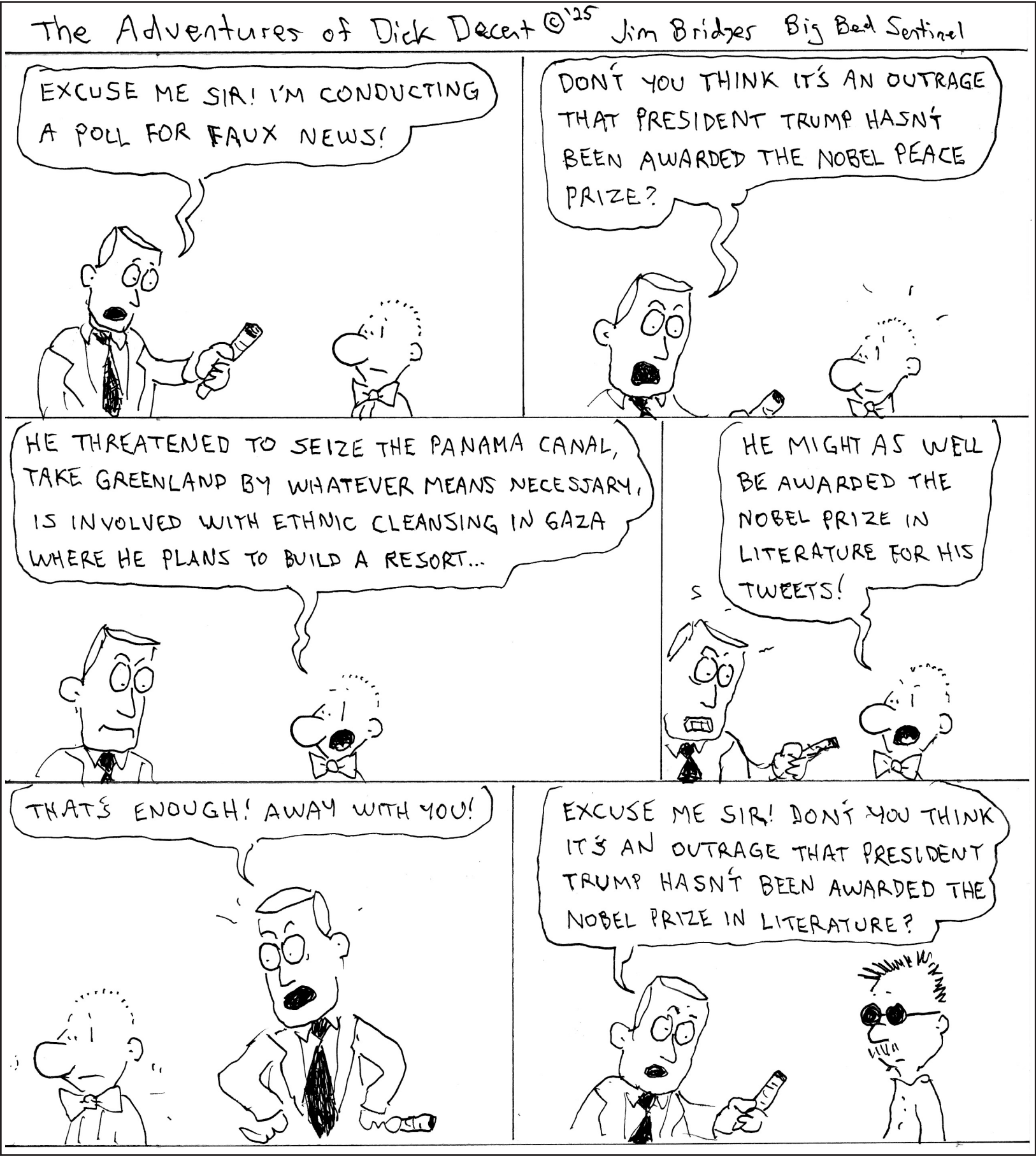
This week, we celebrate our nation's independence. What better way to uphold the principles of informed citizenship and community strength than by protecting the voice that serves us all? Your past support proves you value Marfa Public Radio. Now, we need your voice. Please call or email your senators today and urge them to protect vital federal funding for public radio.

Marfa Public Radio is your radio station in Marfa, Midland, Odessa, Alpine, Presidio, and Fort Davis. We cannot thank our community enough for its unwavering support. We will continue to do everything we can to serve you and deliver the programming you love and rely on.

Sincerely,
Anne E. Marozas, Executive Director, Marfa Public Radio

We want to hear from YOU!

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



May I salute you?

Thank you note to “National Park People”

Dear National Park People:

May I salute you? I know that this is a particularly challenging season of service for you, and while mine is certainly not the only voice crying in the wilderness to acknowledge that and may even ring a bit hollow in the short view, but the option of silence is just not viable to me. So here we are.

I’m a card-carrying property owner and cherish our parks, monuments, historic sites and recreation areas. Thank you for making them available to us. In fact, for decades it has been my practice to express my gratitude when I’ve either coincidentally met or deliberately sought you in our visits — all of you: law enforcement and interpretive rangers, maintenance and administrative personnel, volunteers and entry gate staff. Yes, I am indeed one of those geeky tourons that stare with dislocated jaws at The Canyon, geysers, hoodoos, mountain tops, caverns and battlefield cannons, but I swear I have never, ever asked you where the nearest bathroom was.

When I see the looks on the faces of the kids to whom you are leading in the Junior Ranger pledge, I cheer for you at least as much as I do for them. And, while I have been known to ask The Question you’ve known was coming during one of your excellent campfire talks, I assure you that I have never asked you a question that you knew I already knew the answer to. By the way, how is it that you are always able to act like I’m the first person who ever asked those things?

All that said, I do hope you remember the two things I’ve told you, even though I sort of joked about quizzing you on your memory if we were to meet again. First, THANK YOU. However poor a supplement to your “sunset pay” it is, please do remember my gratitude. Second, I really do feel like I am in fact a property owner and with that credential demand that you continue your worthy, noble, and often courageous work for the sake of our grandkids. We

are counting on you. Will you do that, please?

I’ve been gifted by the friendship of several of your deceased, active duty, and retired fellow National Park Service employees and volunteers. Through them I’ve learned that you protect the parks from the people, the people from the parks, and the people from each other. When I have had this conversation with your people over the years the collective response by several hundred of you looked like this: “Nobody has ever said that to me before.” Tears well up (theirs and mine). “I needed to hear that today. Well, this is what we do. It’s all about your grandkids. I love this place.”

Well, Ranger, these days I’m particularly reminded of the restorative power inherent in our wonderful national properties and you folks who serve us in them, and I believe confidently that we need them, need you, desperately perhaps. We need knowing that they are there on the map, whether or not we have immediate plans or ability to get to them in the flesh.

I confess to violating the rule about taking only photographs and leaving only footprints. The fact is, the memories, sights, sounds (or lack of them) and smells have gone home with me and have become part of the geography of my life. If walking off with those treasures is a crime, I suppose that you Park People are abettors. May I salute you for being partners in it?

Remember those two things I told you. OK?

Steve Scarano

An Eagle Scout and former Marine Corps officer, after retiring from a 30-year career as a police officer, Steve Scarano is starting his 19th season as a Trail Angel on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and is in his 20th year as a volunteer at a large San Diego area regional park. He writes from Vista, California.

la fundación the CHINATI foundation

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

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

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

Q&A with reporter Uriel García on migrant deaths outside El Paso

By Sam Karas
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

DOÑA ANA COUNTY, N.M. — Last month, the Texas Tribune published a landmark data-driven piece about a spike in migrant deaths in the desert outside of El Paso following the Star City’s entry into Operation Lone Star (see story page 7.) The piece was a team effort that crossed state lines, reported by Uriel García and Yuriko Schumacher at the Tribune and Patrick Lohmann of independent newsroom Source New Mexico.

The team piggybacked on the tireless efforts of nonprofit rescue groups along the border who help migrants in distress and recover human remains. Last year, the organization No Más Muertes (No More Deaths) put out a report alleging that CBP had been significantly underreporting migrant fatalities. (*The Big Bend Sentinel* reported on this study — and the agency’s response to accusations — in April of last year.)

Border policy is officially the domain of the federal government and “prevention through deterrence” has been the strategy since the mid-90s. “Setting up a visible line of Border Patrol agents at the border sent a message that was ultimately, ‘Don’t come into the country illegally,’” García — one of the Tribune reporters on this piece — explained. “That didn’t stop migrants. In fact, what they ended up doing was taking more dangerous routes around urban areas.”

In March 2021, the state of Texas implemented its own “prevention through deterrence” in the form of Operation Lone Star, which funneled billions of dollars into visible law enforcement presence along the border. Eligible counties and municipalities could tap into the funding by issuing local emergency declarations — Presidio County did so in July 2022, when former County Judge Cinderela Guevara proclaimed that the county was under “invasion” by migrants.

The city of El Paso joined Operation Lone Star at the tail end of 2022, and groups like No Más Muertes started seeing a jump in activity in the most remote reaches of southern New Mexico and Far West Texas almost immediately.

The Sentinel caught up with García to talk about the process of reporting the piece — and what might be next for the Texas borderlands.

I’m curious what sparked this piece — had y’all been tracking migrant deaths already or did a rescue group tip you off?

It was kind of about creating a story that was hiding in plain sight. Other people had written about this topic in the past — [migrant rescue group No Más Muertes] had done a whole report just last year, so we knew the numbers were going up. But one of the things that I think makes our story a little different is trying to answer and explore the question of why this was happening.

What stood out to me is that El Paso specifically had not been experiencing this amount of deaths. Sure, there are deaths all along the border and other places have higher numbers, but El Paso had not seen this before.

Can you tell me a little bit about the data-gathering process?

UG: I’d like to give credit where credit’s due, because I think that anyone who reports along the border wishes that they had this much detailed information — but what happened in this case was that No More Deaths had their own set of data, which they compared to the CBP data.

The federal government takes really long to process some of these records requests, particularly when it comes to immigration. So I talked to my co-reporter, [Yuriko], the data reporter on this piece, and I told her to analyze it and see what she found on her own. She came back with a whole bunch of findings that went beyond my gut check.

Did you feel like anything obvious got left out?

One of the things I wish we could have done was that we were trying

to get in touch with some of the families who lost someone in this part of the desert. That didn’t work out — it wasn’t for lack of trying. We were in touch with a couple families who seemed to want to talk, but ultimately decided not to, for different reasons. It came down to the fact that they didn’t want to put themselves in a very vulnerable position.

El Paso was a relatively late holdout on Operation Lone Star money. Can you remind me of what that looked like — what the political backdrop was and why they decided to join?

There’s a little bit of context here that didn’t get put in the story because it’s kind of getting lost in the weeds. But back in the fall of 2021 Abbott had issued an order to criminalize the transportation of migrants from the border to the interior, and the pretext that was used at the time was because they could potentially be spreading the Coronavirus. There was a lawsuit in federal court in El Paso.

Moving forward, when Governor Abbott needed some of the border counties to help out in Operation Lone Star — to be able to put up soldiers and state police — El Paso didn’t necessarily want to cooperate because of the conflict [over the transportation of migrants.] That translated into El Paso being among the last to join in December 2022, and the reason they ended up joining Operation Lone Star was because there were thousands of migrants being released and many of them were sleeping in the streets. It was a public safety concern.

Ultimately Abbott reversed his policy of not wanting migrants to be transported. The mayor needed buses to get the migrants transported out of El Paso, so he issued an emergency declaration and the state sent transportation resources — that’s how the city ended up joining.

What was going on with the border at the federal level at the time and how did that play into state and local policy?

There was a lot going on. Biden came into office, and even though he’s been accused of being pro-open borders and pro-illegal immigration, ultimately he wasn’t any of those things. That’s not a political statement. He continued some of Trump’s crackdown on the border [from his first term] and didn’t immediately reverse others. Even when he was proposing different policies that would have provided a pathway to legally enter the U.S., it was coupled with other restrictions on asylum law. This all coincided with a lot of people — particularly from Venezuela and other places in South America — coming to El Paso. I don’t think that El Paso was prepared for the number of people that were coming, and Biden had been changing and reversing and implementing his own immigration policies that caused a lot of confusion.

We’re pretty isolated out here, so we see a version of what’s happening in the bigger border cities, but it’s easy to feel disconnected. Is there anything happening on the border in El Paso that our readers should be paying attention to?

It’s hard to predict the future, but as of right now, the number of crossings at the border are historically low — a trend that started even before Biden was leaving office. I think your readers need to remember that immigration is just more complex than what the U.S. sometimes makes it out to seem. There are climate change effects that are causing natural disasters, affecting hundreds of thousands of people who depend on certain resources that were wiped out. There’s political instability. At the end of the day, people are seeking safety and jobs. Wherever can provide safety and jobs, that’s where migrants are going to go.

One of the Trump administration’s priorities is clamping down on immigration. I think it’s safe to say we don’t know what’s going to happen next, because it seems like the president is using immigration enforcement to keep pushing the boundaries of what a presidential administration can get away with.

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg June 10, 2025

ACROSS

- 1 ____ figure (mysterious person)
8 Pronoun duo
13 “Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup” subject
14 Dryer brand
15 Exercise named for a large mammal (In this answer, note the first letter + the last four letters)
16 Crinkle-cut fry feature
17 Paddle relative
18 Milk option
19 Run in neutral
20 ____ cook
22 “Seriously?” (... first letter + the last two letters)
26 Sharpton and Roker
29 Happy Meal item
30 Mined over matter?
31 ____ déjeuner (breakfast, in French)
33 “Mazel ____!”
34 Sets (down)
35 Occasion to play Candy Land (... first letter + the last four letters)
38 Deets
39 One lumen per square meter

- 40 Moscow’s state
41 “About Me” blurb
42 Aussie pop star
43 Sunbathe
44 Pic taken on Edge? (... first three letters + the last two letters)
48 Toothed whale in the Vancouver Canucks’ logo
52 Did karaoke
53 Shirts, e.g.
56 Outfielder’s asset
57 Four: Prefix
59 Boxing ref’s directive ... or a theme hint
61 “You ____ kidding!”
62 Trashed the place?
63 Analyze in language arts class
64 Fez features

DOWN

- 1 Social media button
2 That lady
3 Curved paths
4 “The ____ Side of the Moon”
5 Broadcast booth sign
6 Challenge from a talent judge
7 French fashion monogram
8 Barely

- 9 Actress Blunt
10 “Are you done?”
11 Dutch
12 financial giant
13 Fannie ____
15 Duct droplet
19 “That’s music to my ears!”
21 Outdoor dining area
23 Chemical building block
24 Prefix with -dontist
25 Adam of “Batman”
27 Tiny, briefly
28 Hair school activity
31 ____ button
32 “A Passage to India” author
33 Tariff, e.g.
34 “Maple Leaf Rag” instrument

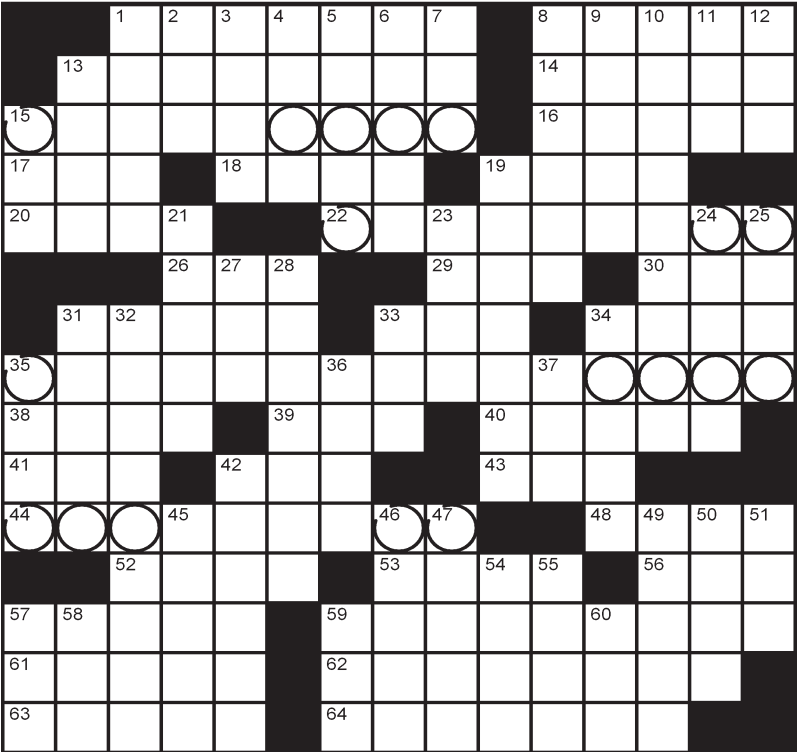
PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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www.upuzzles.com

6/10

Rifts by Daniel Hrynck



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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Dariela
10th grade - Marker and chalk

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

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JUDD

After El Paso joined Abbott’s border crackdown, the number of dead migrants in the New Mexico desert surged

Since El Paso joined Operation Lone Star in 2022, migrant remains discovered in the desert west of the city have increased every year, even as they have declined in every other border sector.

By Uriel J. Garcia, The Texas Tribune and Yuriko Schumacher, The Texas Tribune
Patrick Lohmann, Source New Mexico

SANTA TERESA, New Mexico — On a hot morning in September, after hours of trekking through the Chihuahuan desert, Abbey Carpenter and her partner James Holeman spotted a pile of scattered bones.

Near a yucca plant, a human jawbone lay partially buried in the sand. Around it were vertebrae, femurs and ribs. Next to the bones, they saw a woman’s purple underwear with two tiny hearts on the corner and a Salvadoran passport.

The bones were among six sets of human remains they found that month. Carpenter and Holeman founded a volunteer group in 2020 called Battalion Search and Rescue to search for migrant bodies in this patch of desert just west of El Paso. They took photos and recorded the coordinates on their cell phone. They tied a pink ribbon to a nearby branch.

Later, they mailed the passport to the Salvadoran consulate and reported the body to the Doña Ana County Sheriff’s Office in New Mexico — even though the sheriff sometimes doesn’t respond and has accused volunteers of planting bones in the desert.

Since September 2023, the group has found 27 sites with human remains in the desert, Holeman said.

“How did we get to this place as a country that we think so poorly of migrants?” Carpenter said during a recent search in the desert.

Historically, Border Patrol’s El Paso sector — which includes all 180 miles of New Mexico’s border with Mexico and 84 miles of El Paso and Hudspeth counties in West Texas — has had among the fewest migrant deaths across the southern border.

That changed in late December 2022, according to an investigation by The Texas Tribune and Source New Mexico, when the city of El Paso joined forces with Gov. Greg Abbott to participate in his signature border mission, called Operation Lone Star.

By 2024, the El Paso sector had become the deadliest place for migrants to cross along the entire U.S.-Mexico border.

From January 2023 to August 2024, 299 human remains were reported in the El Paso sector, the most of any sector along the southern border, according to the most recent data available from federal government data. That’s more than double the number of cases reported during the 20 months prior, when 122 remains were recorded before El Paso had adopted Operation Lone Star.

Since El Paso joined Texas’ border mission in 2022, migrant remains discovered in the El Paso sector have increased every year, even as they have declined in every other part of the border.

“We have people dying in New Mexico deserts because of Texas policies,” said New Mexico state Rep. Sarah Silva, a Democrat from nearby Las Cruces.

Though many factors determine where and when someone crosses an international border — including federal immigration policies, organized

crime and natural disasters — experts and advocates say any policy that pushes migrants into the desert will likely cost lives.

Immigrant rights groups and researchers say more migrants are taking deadlier routes to enter the country since Texas launched Operation Lone Star in 2021 — flooding the border with state troopers, National Guard and miles of razor wire — as the federal government’s ever-changing immigration policies have delayed or blocked migrants who want to claim asylum in the U.S.

“Any state lawmaker or local leader should be aware that these policies come at a human cost,” said Aimée Santillán, a policy analyst at the Hope Border Institute, an immigrant rights advocacy group in El Paso. “So anyone that decides to approach this type of enforcement is making a decision that they can live with these deaths.”

Meanwhile, bodies lie in the desert, unidentified, for months at a time. Eight months after Carpenter and Holeman’s group reported the set of six remains to authorities, many of the bones were still there. It remains unclear how New Mexico state and local officials intend to address the need for more resources to retrieve and identify the bodies.

The striking increase in deaths in the New Mexico and West Texas desert is part of a global surge in migration. According to United Nations statistics from 2024, the number of immigrants worldwide has doubled since 1990, with 304 million people living in a country other than the one in which they were born.

Last year was also the deadliest on record for migrants worldwide, according to the UN’s International Organization for Migration.

“The rise in deaths is terrible in and of itself, but the fact that thousands remain unidentified each year is even more tragic,” said Julia Black, coordinator of IOM’s Missing Migrants Project.

Neither the Trump administration nor elected officials from Texas or New Mexico have addressed the issue, even as the number of bodies discovered has skyrocketed.

Abbott’s office blamed former President Joe Biden’s “open-border policies” for the loss of life when asked for comment. “The heartbreaking increase in deaths is the direct result of the chaos President Biden unleashed on the border,” said Andrew Mahaleris, Abbott’s press secretary.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham also laid the blame on the federal government.

“While state officials are sometimes called upon to respond to emergencies, immigration remains a federal responsibility. Gov. Lujan Grisham has consistently called on every administration — Trump, Biden, and now Trump again — to fulfill federal obligations at the border and provide adequate resources for humanitarian and law enforcement efforts,” her spokesperson Jodi McGinnis Porter said in an email.

This piece was first published in The Texas Tribune on June 16, 2025. To read this piece in its entirety (or to hear an audio version), visit <https://www.texastribune.org/2025/06/16/texas-operation-lone-star-border-el-paso-deaths-migrants-new-mexico>.



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AROUND THE BIG BEND

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

Calamity Creek
6 - 9pm at The Ritchey
Enjoy live music from Calamity Creek, at The Ritchey. No cover.

Sun July 6

Analog Brunch
11am - 12:30pm at Capri Marfa
A Thai-inspired menu by Texas native chef Silvino Sanchez, formerly of Brúto Denver and beats on cassette by Big Stripes.w

Fri July 4

Opening Celebrations for Los Encuentros
6 - 8pm at Ballroom Marfa
Ballroom Marfa will present Los Encuentros, a group exhibition opening July 4, 2025. The exhibition brings together five leading Latinx artists: Justin Favela, Ozzie Juarez, Antonio Lechuga, Narsiso Martinez, and Yvette Mayorga.

July 4th Celebration - Alpine
10am - 11pm at Brewster County Courthouse
The annual gathering will once again be at the Brewster County Courthouse Lawn. It starts with a parade from Kokernot Park to the Courthouse, visit <https://visitalpinetx.com/event/july-4th-celebration> for more information.

Los Yonke Gallos VS Austin Ramblers
4pm at Vizcaino Field
Come enjoy BBQ by SlowBurn, buy a raffle ticket and watch some sandlot beisbol! Follow @losyonkegallosdemarfa & @eastAustin_ramblers

Cooldest 4th of July - Fort Davis
8am - 7pm at Multiple locations
Come join us for our annual July 4th celebration! July 4th - July 6th. For all events please visit <https://www.fortdavis.com/Cooldest4th>.

Sat July 5

Mini Astrology Readings w/Amanda Holstien
11am - 2pm at Bitter Sugar
Learn about your birth chart and get insight into your future according to the planets and stars.

Ongoing Weekly Events & Classes

Xbox Monday
Mondays (all day) at Marfa Public Library

Yin Yoga
Tuesdays at 12pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes
Tuesday & Thursday at 6pm at Marfa Public Library

AA (online & sometimes in-person)
Saturday at 12pm at <https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2> & sometimes in-person at Marfa Public Library

AA (in-person)
Monday & Wednesday at 6pm at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

The Alpine Farmers Market
Saturday at 9am - 12pm 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 the event is happening.

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‘Quilts’ by Steve Stratakos opens at Paisano’s Greasewood Gallery



Steve Stratakos hard at work on Quilts.

MARFA — The Paisano Hotel’s Greasewood Gallery will hold an opening exhibition of Steve Stratakos’ Quilts exhibition tonight, July 3, at 6 p.m. at 207 Highland in Marfa.

Stratakos was born in Chicago and earned a BFA in textiles from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1977. He has been making quilts ever since and has exhibited throughout the United States and in the U.K., Japan, Kenya and Spain. “My inspiration comes from the wide variety of colors and patterns that textiles offer,” he said. “My early exposure to textiles was from my grandmother, who had an entire cake bin full of embroidery thread. The threads’ bright colors inspired me to study fabric art.”

With jobs at the design departments of Chicago’s Brookfield Zoo and Texas Parks and Wildlife, Stratakos was involved in a whole different avenue for creating, from exhibit building to illustration and sign printing. In addition, through his wife, Helen Snook, he was exposed to Kenyan wildlife conservation work which led to the ongoing creative adventure of designing and installing wildlife panels in African national parks. The exhibit runs through August 22.



The Marfa Studio of Forts handiwork draws a lot of curiosity from passersby.

‘Honk if you like the fort!’ party at Marfa Studio Arts

From Marfa Studio Arts

MARFA — Denizens and transients rolling through Marfa over the month of June may have noticed that an ambitiously tall defensive structure has been erected in front of the radio station building at 106 San Antonio Street.

This building — a fort — has been the work of the Marfa School of Forts, an art and architectural project led by Sam Dwyer and Abel Rodgers, built largely by the children of Marfa ISD. This Summer Shake Up Program offered by the Marfa Studio of Arts was funded in part by the Texas Commission on the Arts: Art Respond Project

and the MSA program fund. A special materials grant was given to this program by the First Presbyterian Church of Marfa.

As Summer Shake-up has now concluded, so has the fort building program — and MSA is celebrating with a party. All program participants and fort enthusiasts from the community are invited to come view the fort and gallery art show documenting the construction process on Thursday July 3, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Ice cream and beverages will be served, and some folks will be holding signs while yelling at passing cars to “Honk if you like the fort!”

Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County fuels STEM Summer Camp at Fort Davis ISD



Photo courtesy of Fort Davis ISD

STEM Campers at Fort Davis ISD enjoying snacks from the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County.

FORT DAVIS — This summer, the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County is proud to announce its partnership with Fort Davis ISD to support young learners attending the STEM Summer Camp. The food pantry will provide all campers with a daily nutritious snack,

ensuring students remain energized and focused throughout the hands-on experiments and outdoor activities that the camp offers.

This collaboration aims to remove hunger as a barrier to learning, allowing campers to fully engage in the

exciting and educational opportunities offered by the STEM program. By supplying healthy snacks, the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County helps ensure every child has the fuel they need to explore, discover and learn.

‘Cinderella’ opens July 5 at Kokernot Outdoor Theatre

Photos courtesy of Sul Ross State University



Campbell Mace-Meador stars as Cinderella.

ALPINE — Theatre of the Big Bend celebrates its 60th anniversary of summer theatre when Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella, a musical of the classic fairytale, opens Saturday at the Kokernot Outdoor Theatre in Alpine.

Theatre of the Big Bend (ToBB) began producing outdoor summer shows in 1965 and was traditionally

a collaboration between Sul Ross faculty and students and volunteer members from the Alpine community. Over the last three years, ToBB has been transitioning into a professional summer repertory and training ground for Sul Ross theatre students. This year, in honor of ToBB’s history of community involvement, Cinderella includes community members, SRSU students and alumni, and professional actors and musicians.

“Cinderella is about making the impossible possible,” said Director and Associate Professor of Cinematic Arts Bret Scott. “We have so many alumni working in the cast and backstage that in some ways this 60th anniversary production feels like a reunion. I think audiences will love the music and humor of the show. It’s sweet, it’s funny, it’s magical, and you’ll go home humming the tunes.”

Campbell Mace-Meador stars as Cinderella, and Sul Ross graduate Justin Hinton stars as Prince Topher.

Cinderella opens July 5 and runs Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 8 p.m through July 20.



Sul Ross graduate Justin Hinton stars as Prince Topher.

Tickets are \$20 for general admission and \$15 for seniors (age 65 plus) and children (12 and under). Admission to all ToBB performances is free for U.S. veterans, active-duty military, and SRSU faculty, staff and students with valid ID.

To purchase tickets, visit www.bit.ly/sulross-theatre or www.theatrebigbend.org

Book sale bonanza at Fort Davis library

FORT DAVIS — Books galore! Some great books are in store for visitors to the festivities on Saturday, July 5. The Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library will host its annual book sale outside the library under the west awning in the shade. Running from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., the sale will have something for everyone, with most items selling in “Books for a Buck.” The

array is amazing. A special group of collectible books in Texana, history, and other topics will be offered starting at \$5 each. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Library which provides support to the library.

The big parade through the main street of Fort Davis starts Saturday at 10 a.m. and is always the highlight of the weekend, along with the 11 a.m. pet

pageant of Grand Companions, the pie contest to benefit the food pantry at 2 p.m., plus many vendors selling food and a variety of items starting at 10 a.m. on Friday, July 4. The Independence Day Family Barn Dance at the Kelly Pavilion starts at 7 p.m., and the fireworks extravaganza at 9:45 p.m. is planned for the Jeff Davis County Park.

Sal Perales appointed to FUMC's in Alpine and Marfa

TRI-COUNTY — Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut intends to appoint Pastor Salvador Perales to serve as the senior pastor of the First United Methodist churches in Alpine and Marfa, effective July 1. Pastor Perales is cur-

rently the associate pastor at Western Hills United Methodist Church in El Paso.

This announcement was made by Rev. Dr. Pamela Rowley, El Paso Dis-

trict superintendent, who called for prayer for Pastor Sal and his wife, Yadira Perales, and the churches of Alpine, Marfa and Western Hills UMC.

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OBITUARIES



WHITE

Beauregard Brite White was welcomed into Heaven on June 23, 2025. He had suffered from great stress over the last few years, the painful loss of his wife Kathleen last year, and finally the scourge of cancer. He is now with Jesus and at peace.

Beau was born on January 4, 1954 in Marfa, Texas to James White, Jr. and Jane Brite White. He grew up on his family's Brite Ranch with its stunning views and abundant wildlife. The Brite Ranch, then owned by his mother and her sister, Nancy Brite Lynch, boasted Capote Falls, the highest waterfall in Texas, and a famous herd of Hereford cattle established by his great-grandparents.

Beau took naturally to being a cowboy and was skilled with cattle, all domesticated animals, wildlife, and the many chores associated with ranching. Beau was popular in school and, while a good student, he was an exceptional athlete. In junior high, he played football as center on offense making a name for himself as tough and determined. In high school, Beau played football all four years for the Shorthorns achieving All District each year and All West Texas his final year. His jersey was #54, same as his birth year, and he was described by his classmates as a handsome and remarkably skilled football player. Beau took Spanish in high school, joined the Spanish club and remained fluent throughout his life. He excelled at high school golf, and was the campus "cool guy" driving his red Mustang. Beau graduated from Marfa High School in 1972.

Beau initially attended Sul Ross University in Alpine to be on the football team. But after one year, he transferred to Texas Christian

University where he pledged Phi Delta Theta fraternity, later becoming an officer and pledge trainer. He was popular on campus, always up for fun and sometimes mischief, and invariably surrounded by a large group of devoted friends. Beau graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He returned to Marfa to take charge of J.E. White and Sons' registered cattle herd at the Chispa Ranch which was near the Brite Ranch, but was separately owned by his mother. Beau thoroughly enjoyed the tough but fulfilling life of ranching. He told many exciting stories of hunting predators, including mountain lions, who often preyed on the calves of his family's cattle.

Beau became involved in ranching organizations including the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA), the American Hereford Breeders Association and the Texas Hereford Association. Always a leader, Beau was valued by other ranchers for his encyclopedic knowledge of cattle breeding. Beau became a director of the TSCRA in 1995 and became an honorary director after 2016. He became the president of the Texas Hereford Association in 1994. He served on the American Hereford Association (AHA) board of directors 2000-2003 and as board president in 2003. The AHA states that Beau's leadership "ushered in a golden era for the American Hereford Association." Beau advanced the Certified Hereford Beef brand, helped unify the Horned and Polled Hereford organizations, supported growing youth programs, and expanded the AHA's international footprint especially in Latin America and Australasia. Beau always made sure to make cattlemen gatherings fun for the children as well with educational programs geared to them and with plain fun activities like kite flying field shows and dog races with his own Jack Russell Terriers.

By his late 30's Beau was happy as a bachelor rancher and seemed destined to live out his life that way in West Texas. But everything changed when he was set up on a date with Kathleen Hartnett, a smart and beautiful lobbyist in Washington for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. They married in 1993

with Kathleen leaving the city and settling with Beau in a ranch house on the Chispa Ranch. Within a few years, however, Kathleen received a series of senior political appointments in Austin until finally she was named Chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) by Governor Perry. Beau and Kathleen found a farmhouse in Rosanky (Bastrop County) that was close to Austin and suitable for their growing hobby of raising Jack Russell Terriers. Beau worked several years for Bluebonnet Electric in Bastrop before devoting himself fully to raising dogs and supporting Kathleen's public service career. Additionally, Beau had his own part-time public service career when he was appointed to the board of directors of the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank, El Paso Branch from 1996-2001, and again later when Governor Perry appointed him to the Animal Health Commission in 2007.

For many years, Beau and Kathleen bred a nationally award-winning line of Jack Russell Terriers, under their registered kennel name, High Range. They attended regional terrier trials across the US, but always had dogs suitable to the national show of the Jack Russell Terrier Club of American (JRTCA) in Maryland. Their kennel became the "go to" place for people seeking top-performing dogs. Beau served on board of the JRTCA from 2010-2016 and was an expert on breeding, showing, training, doctoring and loving Jack Russell Terriers. Beau found a way to mix dogs and cattle when he began organizing terrier races at TSCRA cattle shows for the children's enjoyment. Together, Beau and Kathleen formed many deep friendships across Texas, the US and the UK with other dog lovers. Beau stopped breeding terriers after Kathleen's dementia limited her participation. Without her, Beau said it just wasn't fun anymore.

Beau loved fishing, hunting and the outdoors in general. He hunted many whitetail deer, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and mountain lion over the years. He was a superb guide, always taking good care of visiting hunters at the Brite Ranch. Beau was an excellent wing shot and even set up a great skeet range at High

Range to entertain the steady stream of visitors he and Kathleen always enjoyed. Beau was an authority on beef quality, and no one could grill a steak as perfectly as he could. He loved a mint julep, and he made them perfectly with his homegrown mint to be served in his monogrammed silver julep cups.

Beau was raised in the Christian Church and accepted Jesus Christ from an early age. He was descended from devoted Christian followers including his grandparents who endowed the Brite Divinity School of TCU. However, after marrying Kathleen, he faithfully went with her to Mass at the Catholic Church for over thirty years, especially to St. Mary of the Assumption in Bastrop County. He later became good friends with Fr. Jim Olnhausen of Ascension Catholic Church in Bastrop, and he enjoyed being referred to as an Honorary Catholic.

Beau was predeceased by his beloved Kathleen who died in 2024. He is also predeceased by his mother in 2010 and his father in 2013. He is survived by his adopted son, Geoff Connor, of Bastrop. He is also survived by his younger brother, McMin (Mac) White and his wife Julie of Marfa; his nephew, Jim O'Brien and wife Melanie of Nashville, and several cousins. The family is grateful for the people who loved and supported Beau in these last difficult years.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 3 at Ascension Catholic Church located at 804 Pine Street in Bastrop. A lunch reception will follow at the same address.

Honorary Pallbearers are Katharine Armstrong, Terri Batzer, Susan Combs, Nixon Dillard, Bobby Gilmore, Dr. Andy Gray, Bobby Gregory, Ron Helm, Clyde Howell, Kitty Howell, Ben Love, Alfred Gillette (Bodie) Means, Jon Means, John Schneider, Dawn Thompson, and Wade Wheatley.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Jack Russell Terrier Association of America at P.O. Box 4527 in Lutherville, MD 21094-4527, or to the Brite Divinity School/TCU at P.O. Box 298130 in Fort Worth, Texas 76129, or to a charity of your choice.

parents, Mr & Mrs. Jose B. Sanchez and brothers, Joe and Henry Sanchez.

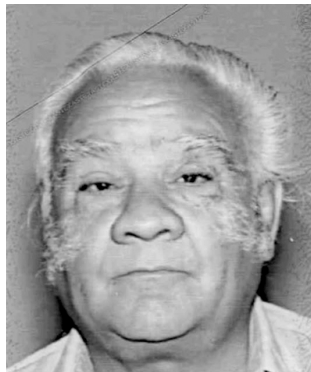
Those left behind to cherish his memory are his sisters; Ida Apodoca from CA, Rosa Bonilla from Marfa, Grace and husband Stephen Johann from San Antonio, and a brother Alfredo and wife Katie Sanchez from San Angelo.

Rosary is scheduled for Saturday June 28, at 10:00am at St. Mary Catholic Church, Mass will follow at 11:00am. Burial will follow at Marfa Cemetery.

and fulfilling career at Fort Davis National Park, Ramon served his country proudly in the Vietnam War from 1969-1971 as a member of the U.S. Army.

While Ramon never married and had no children of his own, he cherished his siblings dearly and was a constant source of love and support for them. Those who knew Ramon will remember him as a kind-hearted man with a warm smile and a generous spirit.

He was preceded in death by his



SANCHEZ

Ramon Pacheco Sanchez, left us peacefully on June 22, 2025, at the age of 76. Born on February 15, 1949, in Marfa, Texas, Ramon lived a full life marked by passion and commitment.

Ramon dedicated over 35 years of his life to Fort Davis National Park, where he became a beloved figure among his colleagues and visitors alike. His love for the outdoors was evident in everything he did, and he took great pride in protecting the beauty of the park. Before his long

One Tail at a Time opens adoption center, store in Marfa

MARFA — Pet Marfa, a project of One Tail at a Time-West Texas, will open its doors this weekend. The storefront space at 111 S. Dean will function as an adoption center and pet supply store. Marfa is the operational center of One Tail at a Time-West Texas, which is a nonprofit, all breed, foster-based, dog and cat rescue working with seven shelters (Alpine, Marfa, McCamey, Pecos, Presidio, Van Horn and Terrell County) and dozens of shelterless communities across West Texas. Marfa is also a community with limited retail options for pet supplies — both practical and indulgent.

While filling the need to provide local pet owners with an in-town retail option for pet supplies, the primary purpose of Pet Marfa is to advance the lifesaving capacity of One Tail at a Time-West Texas. Most West Texas shelters are insufficiently staffed to provide regular hours for public visitation, have no/limited online presence, and many are located in industrial areas that are hard to find or have restricted access.

"Dogs need to be seen to be saved, and by offering digital visibility to the 100+ pets we are advocating for on any given day will be a huge boon for adoptable pets who are otherwise invisible," said Heather Hall, director of OTAT-West Texas. "We plan to regularly have an adoptable pet at the shop. Adoptable dogs and cats are their own best advocates; we just need to make it possible for them to meet their people! We are so excited to talk about the great pets in our program and the shelters where we work."

Pet Marfa will provide practical and inspired pet supplies for dogs and cats, including an increasing number of locally made goods that highlight the unique grandeur and adventurous spirit of Marfa and the Big Bend region. OTAT-West Texas merchandise (T-shirts, hats, bags, drinkware, and stickers

to start) is also available. On the programming front, Pet Marfa will host adoption events, dog training resources, pet-friendly community events, and support for pet retention and spay-neuter efforts. Community feedback for Pet Marfa inventory and programs is explicitly solicited and appreciated.

"This is a community space for people to get involved with pet rescue by adopting, fostering or volunteering, for local pet guardians to learn about new products or buy supplies they regularly need, for people to connect around shared values of animal welfare, and for local makers to find an accessible retail partner. People save pets, and we are excited for Pet Marfa to make that possible in new ways," said Elizabeth Davis, Pet Marfa project manager.

"While OTAT-West Texas has been rescuing pets from our shelter for years, we are excited for Pet Marfa to be a resource for pet owners in our community and to shorten pets' length of stay in our shelter — getting all of our stray or unwanted dogs and cats into great homes is also the mission of Animal Control and the Marfa Police Department," said Marfa Police Chief Gilbert Carrillo.

Pet Marfa's programs and all sales support the mission of One at a Time-West Texas, which is to transform area shelters into places of hope by directly supporting their programs and increasing municipal investment in animal services, and to be a resource for the many pets in need in communities with no shelter at all. In 2025, OTAT-West Texas will support more than 400 pets in its programs and advocate for live outcomes for more than 1,000 dogs and cats in its service area. Pet Marfa's summer hours are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday through Saturday.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

July 2, 1953

Ducking Pool Among Show's New Features

Two new features will be added to the usual fun and festivities as the Lions club stages its annual carnival at the courthouse lawn Saturday, July 4, according to the announcements from the club this week. One is a new ride, the Kiddy Ride, built by Richard Gonzales and W. H. Thornburg and decorated by Frank O'Leary. Not high nor long, it still offers the little youngsters a swift little ride with a couple of humps good for gasps. At a nickel a ride, four youngsters at a time, the Lions expect to extract plenty of small change from daddies to add to their charity fund.

That ride will be put in operation Friday night before the carnival proper, if it can be completed in time. The other new feature is the ducking pond, wherein those good enough with their aim may trip the trigger with a thrown baseball and dunk somebody in the drink. Those "somebodies" are supposed to be members of the club taking their turn, and Walter Polsky, president, will be the first on the ducking stool, according to reports. Saturday festivities will open with the turtle race at 1:30, in which a total of \$10 in prizes will be offered. There will be four heats of 25 turtles each, with prizes of \$5, \$3 and \$2 in each heat.

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Seeking groundskeeper for large, historic KC Ranch in West Texas

We are looking for a motivated individual to help us maintain and improve a historic ranch property and home.

Primary responsibility will be based around a large ranch house and grounds used by ranch owners and guests. Duties include seasonal mowing, weed and brush control, irrigation system maintenance, care and maintenance of house exterior, maintenance of small equipment, maintenance of other ranch facilities. The ranch headquarters compound should be ready to receive guests at any time.

The workload around the headquarters varies seasonally, and though the primary focus of this position is stated above, this person will also help out with other ranch activities as time allows. High efficiency in completing your work may allow for an expanded role.

We are heavily focused on capital improvements and continued upgrade of ranch infrastructure. Attention to detail and pride in your work are a must.

Must be in good physical shape and able to work outdoors year-round. This is a full time, stable, long-term position with an excellent organization. You will be joining a great team.

Ranch is located west of Balmorhea, TX on the north slope of the Davis Mountains. This is a beautiful place to work. While we are unable to provide housing on the ranch at this time, should the right candidate want to relocate for this position, we will work with them on this matter.

Competitive pay, excellent benefits to include health/dental/vision insurance, paid time off, 401K matching, etc.

Please express interest and include resume via email to wrice@fmmep.com

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Classifieds & public notices

Smart meter pilot project delayed amid concerns

By Gina Vera
For The Big Bend Sentinel

ALPINE — A pilot project testing how well smart water meters would work for the city was put on hold until November after concerns regarding their integration with utility billing software and costs were presented to the Alpine City Council Tuesday night.

Both city administrators and the council are aware of residents’ frustrations with billing issues and want to move forward with the project, but there were some concerns, said Interim City Manager Geo Calderon.

One issue was the city’s new utility billing software scheduled to be installed in October. “We were concerned with conducting a pilot on the old software,” Calderon said. “We thought it would be premature when we’re launching new software. So, we should at least wait until November to kind of give a month after launch.”

The delay will also give city administrators and staff the opportunity to become more familiar with the project since it had been handled by former City Manager Megan Antrim, who recently resigned, Calderon said. They also intend to reach out to other vendors to ensure that the city is getting the most for its money.

The current cost for the pilot project is set at \$40,000 with the cost for transitioning the entire city to smart meters set at \$1.4 million.

The original pilot project called for a base station to be located at Sul Ross State University Hill and include 45 residential and eight commercial meters. However, 13 of those meters were not within the Sul Ross service area.

The council approved the pilot project in March. At that time, council members heard then City Manager Antrim describe the project as one that would update current meters with equipment that would link to a base station and allow city water users to access an online portal with information regarding their water usage. Antrim also told the council that funding for the project was available.

In other action, the council unanimously passed a resolution naming Geo Calderon as interim city manager, and following an extended executive session, named Mike Macia as utilities director.

While the council appointed Calderon interim city manager on June 10 following Antrim’s resignation, a formal resolution was required for him to have access to bank information.

Macia, who has worked for Alpines utilities, assumed leadership of the department after the departure of the former director and had the recommendation of Calderon.

July 4th events

July 4th Celebration — Alpine

Friday, 7/4, 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.

The annual gathering will once again be at the Brewster County Courthouse lawn. It starts with a parade from Kokernot Park to the courthouse, see the map of the route below and the detailed schedule of events. <https://visitalpinetx.com/event/july-4th-celebration/>

Coolest 4th of July — Fort Davis

Friday, 7/4

- 8 a.m.: Coolest 5K in Texas, Jeff Davis County Park
- 10 a.m. - 8p.m.: Vendors at the courthouse
- 9 a.m. sign up: G and G Cornhole Tournament, 10 a.m. play
- 11 a.m.: Live music on the lawn w/Bucket Of Bullets
- 2 p.m.: 5K race winner announcement by FD Education Foundation
- 3 p.m.: Live music on the lawn w/ Hall's Last Call
- 7 p.m.: Live music at Kelly Pavilion, Doug Moreland's Family Barn Dance (tickets required)

Saturday, 7/5

- 7:30 a.m.: Pancake breakfast at Church In The Mountains
- 10 a.m.: Hometown parade, winners announced at 1:30 p.m.
- 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.: Vendors at the courthouse
- 11 a.m.: Pet pageant by Grand Companions
- 11 a.m.: BBQ by JDC Livestock Association
- 12 p.m.: Live music on the lawn w/ Rick Ruiz and A Few Too Many
- 1:30 p.m.: Parade winners announced
- 2 p.m.: Tumbleweed Smith's "Outrageous Texans" at Fort Davis Chamber office
- 3 p.m.: Pie contest by Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County
- 4 p.m.: Live music on the lawn w/ Mariachi Santa Cruz
- 8 p.m.: Live music at Kelly Pavilion, Tejas Brothers
- 9:45 p.m.: Fireworks extravaganza at Jeff Davis County Park
- 10:30 p.m.: Live music at Kelly Pavilion, A-Train and the Mexicanos (tickets required)

Sunday, 7/6

- 2 p.m.: 1880s baseball game at Fort Davis National Historic Site
- 4 p.m.: Artillery demonstration at Fort Davis National Historic Site

See <https://www.fortdavis.com/Coolest4th> for more information.

Los Yonke Gallos VS Austin Ramblers — Marfa

Friday, 7/4, 4 p.m. at Vizcaino Field

Come enjoy BBQ by SlowBurn, buy a raffle ticket and watch some sandlot béisbol!

Follow [@losyonkegallosdemarfa](#) & [@eastaustin_ramblers](#)

Fundraiser Golf Tournament — Marfa

Saturday, 7/5, 10 a.m. at the Marfa Golf Course. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

Hosted by Thin Blue Line Charity

\$120 entry fee, two-person teams. Free hamburger lunch included with entry fee. Door prizes will be awarded. All proceeds go towards presents for Presidio County children at the 2025 Community Holiday Giveaway. To enter or for more information, call the Sheriff’s Office at 432-729-4309.

July 4th weekend — Marathon

Saturday, 7/5

On July 5 starting at 6 p.m., the Friends of the Post will host the annual 4th of July Dance at Post Park — a Marathon tradition for over 100 years. A full weekend of events is scheduled every July 4th weekend around the Dance at Post Park, including fireworks, a parade, chili cook-offs, all-school reunions, BBQs, and more! The Marathon Volunteer Fire Department and the Marathon Independent School District also hold annual fundraiser events throughout 4th of July Weekend.

July 4th activities — Presidio

Friday, 7/4, Free pool time!

The City of Presidio Aquatics Center will have free admission on July 4 and open until 10 p.m.

Saturday, 7/5, parade and fireworks starting at 7 p.m.

Parade begins at 7 p.m. at City Hall and ends at the city pool. There will be music, vendors, and fireworks (shows 10 p.m. to midnight). Bring your lawn chairs!

120th anniversary celebration — Sanderson

Friday 7/4, and Saturday 7/5

Terrell County is celebrating its 120th anniversary this week in high style with an array of family-friendly events across town. On Friday, the town will be hosting a street dance starring Craig Carter from 8 p.m. to midnight. Saturday will kick off with a parade (lineup begins at 10:30 a.m. at the bank), followed by an afternoon chock full of activities on the courthouse lawn. Another street dance will commence at 8 p.m. on Saturday with music by the Western Express.

Parade — Terlingua

Friday, 7/4, 6 p.m.

The parade will kick off at 6 p.m., with parade lineup beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Cottonwood grocery store, led by Grand Marshal Susan Martin. Chief Susan Martin is being honored for her service to the community. Following will be live music and food at the TFEMS building off Highway 170.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS CITY OF MARFA, TEXAS STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Separate sealed bids for the construction of **Street Improvements** will be received by the **City of Marfa, Texas**, until **2:00 PM**, on **July 29, 2025**, at **Marfa City Hall 113 S. Highland Ave., Marfa, TX 79843**, and then at said location publicly opened and read aloud. This project consists of the removal and replacement of approximately 5,755 LF of base material and road surface for five streets in the City of Marfa. Streets to be replaced include (1) Russell Street from US 90 north to Columbia Street (estimated 2,190 ft); (2) Mesa Street from US 90 north to Lincoln Street (estimated 1,210 ft); (3) North Gonzales Street from Columbia Street north to 3rd Street (estimated 1,010 ft); (4) East Galveston Street from US 67 east to South Dean Street (estimated 435 ft); (5) 3rd Street from SH 17 west to Austin Street (estimated 910 ft).

The Contract Documents, consisting of Advertisement for Bids, Information for Bidders, Bid Proposal, Bid Bond, Agreement, Performance and Payment Bonds, General Conditions, Notice of Award, Notice to Proceed, Plans, and Specifications, may be examined at the following location:

Jacob & Martin, LLC
3465 Curry Lane, Abilene, Texas 79606

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any or all bids. Bids may be held by the Owner for a period not to exceed 60 days from the date of bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the qualifications of Bidders prior to awarding of the contract.

Copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS must be ordered online at www.jacobmartin.com. Orders for CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may include hard copies for pick up, mail out or digital download via www.jacobmartin.com. Upon verification of online payment, hard copies may be picked up at Jacob & Martin, LLC, located at 3465 Curry Lane, Abilene, TX 79606. Cost for hard copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS will be **\$100.00** for 11x17 plans. Cost for digital download of CONTRACT DOCUMENTS will be **\$0.00**. Contractors must purchase a set of CONTRACT DOCUMENTS to be considered a registered plan holder eligible to bid the project.

Bid Bond: A certified check or bank draft, payable to the order of the **City of Marfa**, negotiable U.S. Government bonds (at par value) or a satisfactory Bid Bond executed by the Bidder and an acceptable surety in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the total bid shall be submitted with each bid.

City of Marfa
June 26th and July 3rd, 10th, 17th, 2025

JOB OPENING

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking a full-time Data Processor Clerk for our Marfa office. Bi-lingual preferred. Must be able to work M-F,

8:00 am- 5:00 pm. High School/GED required. Please submit applications/resume to the Presidio CAD Office, P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas 79843 or by email cramirez@presidiocad.org. All applications must be submitted by August 1, 2025. The Presidio CAD is an equal opportunity employer.

07/03,07/10,07/17,07/24-2025

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY Judge Jose Portillo: <i>(432) 729-4452</i>	Presidio Mayor John Ferguson: <i>City Hall: (432) 229-3517</i> <i>Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us</i>
CITY OF MARFA Manny Baeza, City of Marfa Mayor <i>mayor@cityofmarfa.com</i> <i>(432) 295-0048</i> Raúl Lara, Mayor Pro Tem <i>councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com</i> Mark Cash <i>councilmembercash@cityofmarfa.com</i> Eddie Pallarez <i>councilmemberpallarez@cityofmarfa.com</i> Mark Morrison <i>councilmembermorrison@cityofmarfa.com</i> Travis Acreman <i>councilmemberacremam@cityofmarfa.com</i>	BREWSTER COUNTY Main Number: 432-837-6200 Judge Greg Henington: <i>(432) 837-6200 Ext. 200</i> Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves: <i>City Hall: (432) 837-3301</i> <i>Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us</i>
	JEFF DAVIS COUNTY Judge Curtis Evans: (432) 426-3968
	FEDERAL: U.S. Sen. John Cornyn: <i>(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)</i> U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz: <i>(202) 224-5922 (D.C. office)</i>



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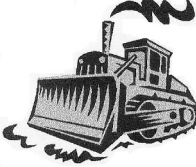
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Jarratt Dirt Work and Paving, Inc. is accepting applications for Class A CDL drivers. Drivers Must be able to pass a drug and alcohol screening. Duties to include driving belly dumps, haul trucks, water trucks and dump trucks, as well as being able to operate some heavy equipment. Work is located primarily in the Fort Davis, Alpine, Marfa, Texas area. Pay depends on experience. Health insurance and retirement package included after a trial basis. Please come by Fort Davis, Texas office between Tuesday – Friday 9 A.M. – 3 P.M. to pick up an application or call to plan if another time is needed. EEO

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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