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The ancestors are home again: Arian Velázquez-Ornelas of the People of La Junta for Preservation guides a team of helpers at Saturday’s ceremony, which officially returned seven sets of human remains from local archaeological sites from Sul Ross State University and private ranches to Presidio. *Photos by Sam Karas.*

Ancestral remains returned to the soil

In a moving ceremony Presidians reburied ancestors who lived 600-800 years ago

By Sam Karas

Presidio

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On Saturday morning, over 100 people gathered in Presidio to watch history in the making as seven sets of remains unearthed long ago by archaeologists were reinterred closer to home. The Big Bend Conservation Alliance (BBCA) and Indigenous-led organization the People of La Junta for Preservation hosted the ceremony, which featured representatives from Native groups across the state of Texas and invited the entire community to take part.

Five of the seven remains came from an archaeological site in Presidio known as the Millington Site, and two were repatriations from private landowners, one set from Jeff Fort of the Pinto Canyon Ranch and another who declined to be publicly recognized.

Saturday’s ceremony was a blend of traditions. Father Mike Alcuino of Santa Theresa Catholic Church was present to offer his blessing before a team of female pallbearers carried the remains to their final resting places. The night before, descendants gathered at the cemetery, praying and keeping watch while they wove mats from native grasses to cushion the deceased. Then the entire community came together to do the physical work of digging each grave and placing centinelas, or sentinel stones, over the top.

The return of the “Millington Five” is a story over two decades in the making. In 2003, a city works crew in Presidio accidentally unearthed part of a burial pit adjacent to the archaeological site while digging a trench. The Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross sprung into action, launch-

ing an investigation into the site in 2006. The remains from this pit and a number of funerary objects ended up in Alpine, where they remained in storage at the university until this year, when a lengthy federal legal process established Xoxi Nayapiltzin, an elder with the People of La Junta who had been advocating for their repatriation for two decades, as a lineal descendant.

Ramon Deanda, a professor at Sul Ross and the newest board member of the BBBCA, was a sophomore at Presidio High School when his biology teacher, Patt Sims, told the class that there were bodies being excavated down the street.

A full-circle moment

By “down the street,” Sims was of course referring to the Millington site, which is just a stone’s throw away from the high school. Deanda and his classmates shuffled by in a line as archaeologists worked in a trench to carefully unearth each fragment of bone. “As a kid, I didn’t realize the magnitude of what we were witnessing,” he said.

Deanda’s younger self was mostly just happy to have an excuse to get out of the classroom for a little while, but the experience stuck with him. Like many people who can trace their family back generations in the Big Bend, history books had little to tell him about what life was like for these early residents of Presidio. “Our ancestors had lived there forever,” Deanda said. “All we knew was that the Spanish came and claimed to civilize them.”

Almost exactly 20 years later, Deanda was invited to participate in the ceremony to return these remains to the earth, at El Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes, which was revamped and protected by members of the BBBCA and the Ornelas and Aguilar families over the past few years with the intention of setting aside a space for repatriated remains. “I’m living a full circle moment,” Deanda said.

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Courthouse debt flops at the polls

Only one local ballot choice was served up in Tuesday’s General Election, which featured 17 up or down nods to Texas constitutional amendments statewide. That ballot item was only for Presidio County voters—Measure A, which would authorize the county to issue certificates of obligations for up to \$5 million in debt, mostly for courthouse repairs in Marfa, but also for the county’s annex in Presidio as well as some new Road and Bridge Department equipment.

Measure A failed with 226 voting for and 593 against. The vote took on less meaning as a majority of the Commissioners Court have indicated they would not utilize the bonds even if they passed.

All 17 statewide amendments pass by large margins, as they did in Brewster and Jeff Davis counties. Presidio County voters turned down a handful of amendments (2: Capital gains tax ban, 3: Bail reform, 6: Securities tax ban, 9: Inventory and equipment tax exemption and 17: Property tax exemption for border security infrastructure).

You can see all results by county at bigbendsentinel.com.

INSIDE

To D.U.S.T. we return



Go west to a renegade arts fest Page 10.

Poor water quality continues to afflict West Texas town

Officials seek new solutions

By Mary Cantrell

MARFA PUBLIC RADIO

On the edge of the West Texas oilfield, people in the tiny town of Toyah are once again having to boil their water before drinking it. It’s nothing new for locals, who previously spent six years on a boil water notice before it was finally lifted in July 2024.

Longtime Toyah resident Elida “Angel” Machuca, who was initially skeptical that the water was safe, said her family actually started to feel comfortable using the water during the months-long period without the boil notice.

“We were using the water to take showers,” she said. “We were a little at ease. It wasn’t like before.”

But the town’s longstanding water issues resurfaced earlier this year, when a new boil water notice went into effect on May 10, the result of the City of Toyah no longer having a licensed water operator. The resignation of Brandie Baker—the city’s previous operator who strived for years to obtain the kind of license needed to run the water treatment plant—meant the water quality was again at risk.

Now, officials are seeking new solutions like a groundwater well to alleviate the ongoing problem.

The city is currently paying \$18,000 to \$23,000 a month from its rainy day fund to haul in treated water from Pecos, according to Mayor Misty Begay, who has been in office since May.

Toyah’s years-long struggle to provide clean water to its residents has led some locals to distrust city officials, and in 2022 prompted the Texas Attorney General’s Office to file a lawsuit against the city at the request of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The lawsuit is ongoing.

Toyah’s water system serves around 90 people, including two RV parks, according to an Oct. 31 investigative report from the TCEQ obtained by Marfa Public Radio. Last year, Toyah made national headlines when a geyser suddenly erupted from an abandoned oil and gas well.



MITCH BORDEN — MARFA PUBLIC RADIO

For years, Toyah’s population has dwindled leaving behind remnants of better days like its abandoned high school.

Machuca and Mira Monton, another resident who spoke to Marfa Public Radio, said the municipal water has recently appeared yellow-brown and at times has even smelled sulfuric. Monton, who has young children and recently moved to Toyah, said her family has taken to showering in Pecos at the gym or in hotels.

For years, Toyah’s population has dwindled, leaving behind remnants of better days like its abandoned high school.

“If push comes to shove—if we had to shower in Toyah in our RV—it was in and out real quick,” she said. Monton said her husband

is currently being treated for a rash on his back that they believe came from Toyah’s municipal water.

“The doctor, the first thing he asked him was if he had been in some dirty water or lake water, and my husband was like, ‘Just Toyah water,’” she said.

Mayor Begay said the reason the water appeared discolored recently was that the city was flushing the water lines, a routine procedure that had not been done in “some time.” According to the TCEQ, flushing helps keep disinfectants potent and removes accumulated sediment from water mains. Be

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Food pantries brace for SNAP cuts

SNAP benefits—federal assistance to low-income individuals for food purchases—will be cut in half for many tri-county residents and delayed for most, which has prompted area food pantries to prepare to assist additional clients.

Vicki Gibson, executive director of the Jeff Davis Food Pantry, said the cuts, along with many federal employees not getting paid due to the government shutdown, are leading the county’s residents to seek pantry help. “They’re calling to see if they can become food pantry clients,” she said. “We’ve already had several federal em-

ployees who have been signed up for assistance. So our enrollment numbers are definitely going up.”

On Monday, the Trump administration announced it would follow federal court rulings ordering that the SNAP program, which serves 42 million people nationwide, be funded with \$4.6 billion from a federal emergency account reserved for that purpose. However, that payment will only cover a portion of the \$9 billion needed, resulting in staggered and delayed payments that are, on average, about 50% of what participants usually get in monthly payments.

Some 3.5 million Texans get SNAP benefits. With a stalemate in Congress over the shutdown, it’s uncertain what will happen with December benefits.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s August figures show 1,872 tri-county residents eligible for benefits, with the following breakdown for those eligible and average payments: Presidio County 1,190 (\$312); Brewster County 586 (\$292); and Jeff Davis County 96 (\$282).

Area food pantry directors said it’s still too early to gauge the impacts of the cuts, but they said they

are readying for many more applications for assistance. The fact that nearly 1 in 5 Presidio County residents are eligible for assistance is not lost on Genevieve Bassham, who directs the Marfa Food Pantry, Saluvida, a nonprofit. “SNAP is very much needed here, and it’s sad to see what’s happening,” she said, adding that the “unknown” of what will happen next with SNAP creates extreme anxiety for working families. Marfa’s pantry, like all area pantries, uses a variety of sources to stock their food—local donations of non-perishables, and

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Saturday’s ceremony was primarily led by women, who helped prepare the remains for reburial and led a group of family members and the general public through a ceremony adapted from local Indigenous traditions.

Sentinel News Project



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Guitarist Hayden Pedigo to perform at the Bullroom

Ballroom Marfa is inviting music lovers to a special performance Friday, November 14, by the innovative instrumentalist Hayden Pedigo.

He will be joined by guests Jens Kuross and Nicolas Hurt.

Ballroom describes Pedigo as “man, myth, master of disguise, un-picker, finger-picker, absurdist, perfectionist.”

Pedigo is known as much for his absurdist sensibility as he is for his perfectionist approach to the guitar.

An Amarillo native, he has become an innovator within the instrumental genre, consistently challenging the stereotypical.

Pedigo will be showcasing his new album, I’ll Be Waving As You Drive Away, which he describes as more than a straightforward solo guitar record—calling it, in a sense, “a micro-dose psychedelic album.”

On this latest release, Pedigo is unafraid to push the parameters of American primitive guitar, creating a world where the music is, as Ballroom described, “fuzzed-up and glimmering.”

The Bullroom is located south of Vizcaino Park off of Golf Course Road. Tickets are \$40 and are available at ballroommarfa.org.



JACKIE LEE YOUNG

Hayden Pedigo’s music has been described as “fuzzy and glimmering.”

Center for Big Bend Studies sees change in leadership

Sul Ross State University in Alpine has announced a leadership transition at the Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) designed to strengthen operations and expand research capacity for one of the university’s longest-running research programs.

Bill Adams, Associate Director of Operations at the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI), has been named Interim Director of CBBS. Bryon Schroeder, who has served as CBBS Director since 2020, will continue with the center as Senior Research Scientist, allowing him to focus more fully on the archaeological fieldwork and scholarship that have defined his career. A national search for a permanent director is expected to launch before the end of the year.

“CBBS is a vital part of Sul Ross State University’s research portfolio, and this transition will ensure its continued strength and stability,” said Carlos Hernandez, president of Sul Ross State University. “Under Schroeder’s leadership, the center has made significant advances in archaeological research and expanded its reach across the Big Bend region,” he said. “Adams’ administrative experience will build on that momentum and position CBBS for even greater success in the years

ahead.”

Adams joined the Borderlands Research Institute in 2023 after more than two decades with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, where he oversaw wildlife research, habitat management and collaborative conservation initiatives across the state. His background in agency leadership and strategic planning complements the university’s efforts to align its research programs for greater efficiency and impact. “I’m honored to step in as interim director and support the exceptional team at CBBS,” Adams said.

“The center’s researchers are uncovering and interpreting the deep history of the Big Bend and beyond, and I look forward to helping ensure that their important work continues to thrive.”

Schroeder expressed optimism about the center’s direction and enthusiasm for his continued role in advancing its research mission.

“The Center for Big Bend Studies has the potential to be a world-class research institute, and I’m excited to contribute to that vision,” Schroeder said. “Stepping away from administrative duties will allow me to focus more deeply on research and fieldwork, which is where my passion lies. I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue

City Council still weighing city administrator position

By Rob D’Amico

The public got a chance to see and hear from a potential new Marfa city administrator at the council’s October 23 meeting, but the council took no action on hiring the candidate, and officials said Wednesday the situation remains the same with no changes in his status.

The candidate, Fabio Angell, is the director of Community and Economic Development in the city of Marshall, with a population of 24,000 in East Texas. Angell previously spent several years as the planner for Pharr on the Lower Rio Grande border, where he launched a 25-year “action plan” to rejuvenate the city’s downtown.

He joined the council meeting remotely, and the public heard council members ask him a variety of questions on his experience and what he felt were priorities for Marfa.

Angell said he has extensive ex-

perience managing employees and helping create effective budgets.

A question that should be foremost in budget planning is: “Does it reflect our values and comprehensive plan and action plans?” he said.

Angell also summed up his career by saying he has been known as a “fixer and troubleshooter.” He said he could be ready to steward Marfa in as soon as a month if hired. The city initially had three finalist candidates, but two withdrew their interest in the position.

The city has been without an administrator since April after it terminated Andrea Walter, who served a little more than a month on the job. Council members named City Secretary Kelly Perez as interim administrator, but she resigned on September 1. With two key positions empty, the council has contracted former Marfa City Attorney Teresa Todd to assist with administrative duties.

SPORTS



ROXYE LARA

Lady Horns leaving it all on the court at the Championship game in Brownfield.

Marfa Shorthorns heading to last game

By Roxye Lara

On October 30, the Marfa Shorthorns football teams hit the road to Garden City for one of their final matchups of the season. The Junior High team fought hard but came up short, and the Varsity squad followed, taking the field with determination but ultimately falling behind by halftime. Despite the score, the Shorthorns gave it their all and never stopped battling until the final whistle.

The Shorthorns will close out their season tonight, Thursday, November 6, at Martin Field against Buena Vista. Junior High kicks off first, followed by Senior Night festivities where we will recognize our senior football players and cheerleaders, with the Varsity kickoff afterward. For times, please check the Marfa Shorthorn Facebook page for updates.

The Marfa Athletic Booster Club will be serving up burgers and all the fan-favorite concession stand treats throughout the evening. The much-anticipated “Black-Out Pep Rally” will take place at 2:30 p.m. in the Marfa Shorthorn Gym, and the community is encouraged to come show their school spirit.

Marfa fans, let’s fill the stands one last time for the season under the Friday night lights!

Lady Horns end season after area championship battle

On Tuesday, November 4, the Marfa Lady Horns volleyball team was sent off in style, beginning with a community-wide send-off that started at MISD and ended with fans lining the streets to cheer them on as they headed to Brownfield to face the Miami Lady Warriors in the area championship.

The Lady Horns fought hard through four sets, ultimately falling 1–3 (19–25, 10–25, 25–23, 12–25), but not before putting up an inspiring performance that had us all on our feet.

In Set 1, Dariela Muñoz opened strong with the first kill of the game, while Adeline Marquez went up twice for big blocks and tipped the ball back over to get the points.

Raven Martinez added at least four kills and a diving dig to keep the rally alive.

In Set 2, Ava Flores showcased her smart serving, sneaking in a surprise set fake for a point. Flores, Marquez, and Muñoz each tallied a kill, while Martinez and Itzel Urrutia hustled on defense with several crucial digs.

The Lady Horns came alive in Set 3, winning with a score

of 25–23 behind strong net play from Flores and Liliana Zubia, who combined for two well-timed blocks. Urrutia and Martinez each added two kills, while Muñoz recorded three and Zoey Salgado contributed both an ace and a powerful kill to seal the win.

Though the Lady Horns came up short in Set 4, their teamwork and determination never wavered. Urrutia and Salgado each added a kill, Martinez tallied three more, and Flores delivered another clever fake set for a point along with an ace from the service line.

The loss marks the end of a memorable season for the Lady Horns, who played with heart and pride throughout. We are so proud of our Marfa Lady Horns—especially the seniors Amaya Gomez, Ava Flores, and Raven Martinez. It was an amazing season.

CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

Premiums rise as ACA open enrollment begins

The window for signing up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act is now open through January 15, with most Texans expected to pay considerably higher premiums, The Texas Tribune reported. Federal subsidies that reduced premium rates will expire at year’s end without congressional action.

The government shutdown is now entering its second month. Democrats say they will not vote to reopen the government unless the subsidies are extended. Republicans say they will not consider extending the subsidies until the government is reopened.

Nearly 4 million Texans signed up for ACA coverage during the last enrollment period, a number that health experts predict will drop by a much as one million if the subsidies end.

Most people who choose ACA are not able to obtain employer-sponsored insurance—the most common method—or they make too much money to qualify for Medicaid.

The nonprofit health policy group KFF projects Texans who now receive the ACA subsidies will see their premiums rise by 115%, or \$456 a year, if they are not extended.

TDI offers tips on buying a health plan

With open enrollment underway at HealthCare.gov, the Texas Department of Insurance is offering tips to find a health plan that fits one’s needs and budget. TDI notes new plans come out every year, so consider looking at other plans to make sure to get the best cover-

age for the price. Other factors to consider:

- Update your income every year to see if you qualify for a premium tax credit.
- Be sure each plan you are considering will allow you to use your current healthcare professionals.
- Know what you will have to pay in copays, deductibles and coinsurance.
- Ask the plan if a referral is needed to see a specialist.

You can access TDI’s health plan shopping checklist at this address: <https://tinyurl.com/384we9s7>.

Paxton sues Tylenol company over claims

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is suing the makers of Tylenol, accusing Johnson & Johnson of failing to warn women about the risk of taking acetaminophen while pregnant, claiming it is a possible cause of autism.

The Texas Standard reported the lawsuit is the first of its kind from a state government. It comes a few weeks after U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. discouraged pregnant women from taking the drug.

Paxton, who is running in the GOP primary against incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, said in a statement that “by holding Big Pharma accountable for poisoning our people, we will help Make America Healthy Again.”

There are conflicting medical studies concerning the effects of acetaminophen on pregnant women. Dr. Brian Lee, a Drexel University epidemiologist who headed one of the largest studies, said that while more research is needed, “the needle is pointing strongly toward there being no causal effect of acetaminophen use during pregnancy on autism.”

Poll: Most Texans oppose sending Texas soldiers to other states

A poll released last week shows most Texans oppose Gov. Greg Abbott’s deployment of National Guard soldiers stationed in Texas to cities outside the state, the Houston Chronicle reported.

The University of Texas at Austin’s Texas Politics Project found 51% oppose the deployment with 43% strongly opposed. Only 41% support the move, with 24% strongly supporting it.

Abbott last month agreed to send 200 Texas troops to Chicago at Trump’s request. However, a judge blocked that deployment, and the troops remain stationed outside the city.

‘Financial literacy’ class required in high school

Texas is now the 30th state to offer financial literacy classes, with a half-credit to be offered starting with the graduating class of 2029, according to The Dallas Morning News. The Texas Education Agency plans to send school districts a list of companies that will offer free curriculum.

John Pelletier, director of the Center for Financial Literacy in Vermont, says the extra classes address what he terms “financial fragility.”

He notes lack of proper money management is a key reason only half of Americans could come up with \$2,000 in an emergency.

He added that the pandemic showed how unemployment levels could jump almost overnight, leaving people who have not saved or are in serious debt at greater risk of financial catastrophe.

Court: Texas judges not required to perform same-sex weddings

In a comment added to the state’s judicial conduct code, the Texas Supreme Court said that Texas judges who decline to perform a wedding ceremony based on a “sincerely held religious belief” are not violating the state’s rules on judicial impartiality, keranews.org reported. This could have statewide implications for gay marriage and possibly factor in a federal lawsuit attempting to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage in 2015.

Texas Supreme Court clerk Blake Hawthorne said the court cannot comment on the rule change. “The order speaks for itself, and the Court cannot comment on its connection to pending litigation,” Hawthorne said.

Hundreds of ‘zombie’ wells found in one county

Researchers at the University of Houston have identified more than 600 non-operating oil wells in Reeves County that are either actively leaking or are at high risk of doing so, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Two related problems—uncapped orphan wells and plugged wells that leak—pose a serious threat to Texas groundwater, as oil, salty wastewater and other fluids can contaminate aquifers.

With hundreds of thousands of wells across Texas, the potential for leaking wells is high. The researchers hope to pair machine learning—a subfield of artificial intelligence—with satellite imagery, wastewater injection data, and wellbore data to identify which wells pose the highest risks.

PRESIDIO INTERNATIONAL

Restos ancestrales devueltos a la tierra

‘Con su regreso, nuestro pueblo se siente completo’

Por Sam Karas

Presidio

El sábado por la mañana, más de 100 personas se reunieron en Presidio para presenciar un momento histórico: la repatriación de siete conjuntos de restos desenterrados hace mucho tiempo por arqueólogos, cerca de su lugar de origen. La

Alianza para la Conservación de Big Bend (BBCA por sus siglas en inglés) y la organización indígena Pueblo de La Junta para la Preservación organizaron la ceremonia, que contó con la presencia de representantes de grupos indígenas de todo el estado de Texas e invitó a toda la comunidad a participar.

Cinco de los siete restos provenían de un sitio arqueológico en Presidio conocido como el Sitio Millington, y dos fueron repatriados de propietarios privados: uno de Jeff Fort del Rancho Pinto Canyon

y otro de una persona que prefirió permanecer en el anonimato.

La ceremonia del sábado fue una fusión de tradiciones. El padre Mike Alcuino, de la Iglesia Católica de Santa Teresa, estuvo presente para ofrecer su bendición antes de que un grupo de mujeres portadoras llevara los restos a su última morada. La noche anterior, los descendientes se reunieron en el cementerio, rezando y velando mientras tejían esteras con hierbas autóctonas para proteger a los difuntos. Luego, toda la comunidad

se unió para realizar el trabajo físico de cavar cada tumba y colocar centinelas, o piedras centinelas, sobre ellas.

El regreso de los “Cinco de Millington” es una historia que se ha gestado durante más de dos décadas. En 2003, un equipo de obras públicas de Presidio desenterró accidentalmente parte de una fosa común adyacente al sitio arqueológico mientras excavaban una zanja. El Centro de Estudios de Big Bend en Sul Ross se puso en marcha, iniciando una investigación en el sitio en 2006. Los restos de esta fosa y varios objetos funerarios terminaron en Alpine, donde permanecieron almacenados en la universidad hasta este año, cuando un largo proceso legal federal estableció a Xoxi Nayapiltzin, un anciano del Pueblo de La Junta que había abogado por su repatriación durante dos décadas, como descendiente directo. Ramón Deanda, profesor en Sul Ross y el miembro más reciente de la junta directiva de la BBKA, era estudiante de segundo año en la preparatoria Presidio cuando su profesora de biología, Patt Sims, les contó a los alumnos que estaban excavando cuerpos en la calle.

Con “en la calle”, Sims se refería, por supuesto, al sitio arqueológico de Millington, que está a tiro de piedra de la preparatoria. Deanda y sus compañeros pasaron en fila mientras los arqueólogos trabajaban en una zanja, desenterrando cuidadosamente cada fragmento de hueso. “De niño, no me daba cuenta de la magnitud de lo que estábamos presenciando”, dijo.

Deanda, en su juventud, simplemente estaba contento de tener una excusa para salir un rato del aula, pero la experiencia lo marcó. Como a muchas personas que pueden rastrear a su familia por generaciones en la región de Big Bend, los libros de historia le contaban poco sobre cómo era la vida para los primeros habitantes de Presidio. “Nuestros ancestros habían vivido allí desde siempre”, dijo Deanda. “Lo único que sabíamos era que los españoles llegaron y afirmaron haberlos civilizado”. Casi exactamente 20 años después, Deanda fue invitada a participar en la ceremonia de repatriación de estos restos al Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes, el cual fue remodelado y protegido por miembros de la BBKA y las familias Ornelas y Aguilar durante los últimos años con la intención de reservar un espacio para los restos repatriados. “Estoy viviendo un momento muy especial”, dijo Deanda.

“La arqueología empieza a tener sentido”. Si bien muchos giros y vueltas de la historia son propios de Presidio, las personas sepultadas el sábado por la mañana forman parte de un ajuste de cuentas nacional más amplio. Los grupos indígenas en Estados Unidos se han opuesto

vehementemente a la recolección y almacenamiento de restos humanos por parte de universidades y museos para siempre, pero no fue sino hasta finales del siglo XX que el gobierno comenzó a tomarlos en serio. La repatriación de restos indígenas se convirtió en un tema político candente en la década de 1970, cuando el Movimiento Indio Americano interrumpió excavaciones en sitios arqueológicos para protestar contra lo que consideraban una profanación avallada por el Estado. Los arqueólogos—provenientes de un campo, especialmente en aquel entonces, dominado por anglosajones—se opusieron, argumentando muchos que los restos perdían su valor para la investigación al ser devueltos a la tierra.

La Ley de Protección y Repatriación de Tumbas de Nativos Americanos (NAGPRA por sus siglas en inglés) se aprobó en 1990, exigiendo que todas las instituciones que recibían fondos federales completaran inventarios de restos humanos y objetos funerarios en sus colecciones antes de 1995, con la esperanza de devolverlos a sus descendientes directos. Ese plazo resultó demasiado ajustado para muchas instituciones, algunas de las cuales—como la Universidad de California en Berkeley y el Museo Americano de Historia Natural—tenían en su poder miles de personas y objetos. Se concedieron prórrogas individuales, que se extendieron indefinidamente, lo que significó que, cuando el tema resurgió en la prensa en la década de 2020, muchas universidades y museos aún albergaban restos indígenas.

En 2023, ProPublica informó que aproximadamente la mitad de los 210 000 restos catalogados a través de la NAGPRA aún no habían sido devueltos. Los datos recopilados por ProPublica sugieren que, al menos a nivel local, la devolución de los “Cinco de Millington” es un buen comienzo, pero hay muchos más ancestros de Big Bend esperando regresar a casa desde colecciones en todo el país.

El Museo de Big Bend, a pocos

pasos del Centro de Estudios de Big Bend, aún conserva 30 conjuntos de restos en su colección. Los cuerpos de indígenas de la región de los tres condados han terminado en lugares tan lejanos como la Universidad de Harvard y el condado de Nassau, Florida. El Laboratorio de Investigación Arqueológica de Texas en la Universidad de Texas en Austin también posee varios restos locales, incluyendo 18 conjuntos del condado de Presidio que no han sido puestos a disposición para su devolución bajo la Ley de Protección y Repatriación de Tumbas de Nativos Americanos (NAGPRA).

El exdirector del Centro de Estudios de Big Bend, Bryon Schroeder, trabajó estrechamente con la antropóloga y experta en ADN Meradeth Snow de la Universidad de Montana durante varios años para establecer el vínculo físico entre los restos y los miembros vivos de la comunidad. “Siento que es nuestra responsabilidad”, dijo Schroeder. “Es gratificante saber que lo logramos”.

Las regulaciones de la NAGPRA favorecen en gran medida a las tribus reconocidas federalmente, lo que deja a muchas comunidades fronterizas —cuyos ancestros fueron colonizados primero por los españoles, no por los estadounidenses— en una situación difícil. El arduo trabajo del grupo finalmente dio frutos. Días después de la ceremonia, Schroeder aún asimilaba la noticia. “Soy arqueólogo, y las cosas en mi campo son bastante abstractas”, dijo. “Pero luego existe una comunidad descendiente viva a la que se pueden vincular estas abstracciones, y la arqueología adquiere un significado completamente distinto”. Christina Hernández, directora ejecutiva de la BBKA, celebró el regreso de los restos a Presidio desde Sul Ross.

“Este nuevo entierro es un testimonio de lo que se puede lograr cuando la comunidad actúa con corazón, humildad y respeto por lo sagrado”, escribió. “Los ancestros están de vuelta en casa, y con su regreso, nuestro pueblo se siente completo”.



Las personas que asistieron a la ceremonia del sábado llamaron a las siete direcciones con una caracola

Bancos de alimentos siguen de cerca los recortes en SNAP

For English, see page

Los beneficios del SNAP—ayuda federal para personas de bajos ingresos destinada a la compra de alimentos—se reducirán a la mitad para muchos residentes de los tres condados y se retrasarán para la mayoría, lo que ha impulsado a los bancos de alimentos de la zona a prepararse para atender a más personas. Vicki Gibson, directora ejecutiva del Banco de Alimentos Jeff Davis, afirmó que los recortes, sumados a la falta de pago de muchos empleados federales debido al cierre del gobierno, están llevando a los residentes del condado a buscar ayuda en los bancos de alimentos. «Llaman para ver si pueden recibir ayuda», dijo. «Ya tenemos varios empleados federales inscritos para recibir asistencia. Así que nuestras inscripciones están aumentando considerablemente».

El lunes, la administración Trump anunció que acataría las sentencias de los tribunales federales que ordenan que el programa SNAP, que beneficia a 42 millones de personas en todo el país, se financie con 4.600 millones de dólares de una cuenta federal de emergencia reservada para tal fin. Sin embargo, ese pago solo cubrirá una parte de los \$9 mil millones necesarios, lo que resultará en pagos escalonados y retrasados que, en promedio, representan alrededor del 50% de lo que los participantes suelen recibir mensualmente.

Unos 3.5 millones de tejanos reciben beneficios del SNAP. Debido al estancamiento en el Congreso por el cierre del gobierno, no se sabe con certeza qué sucederá con los beneficios de diciembre. Las cifras de agosto de la Comisión de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Texas muestran que 1,872 residentes de los tres condados son elegibles para recibir beneficios, con el siguiente desglose de los elegibles y los pagos promedio: Condado de Presidio: 1,190 (\$312); Condado de Brewster: 586 (\$292); y Condado de Jeff Davis: 96 (\$282).

Los directores de los bancos de alimentos de la zona indicaron que aún es muy pronto para

evaluar el impacto de los recortes, pero afirmaron estar preparándose para recibir muchas más solicitudes de asistencia. Genevieve Bassham, directora del Banco de Alimentos de Marfa, Saluvida, una organización sin fines de lucro, es consciente de que casi uno de cada cinco residentes del Condado de Presidio es elegible para recibir asistencia. “El programa SNAP es muy necesario aquí, y es triste ver lo que está pasando”, dijo, añadiendo que la incertidumbre sobre el futuro de SNAP genera mucha ansiedad entre las familias trabajadoras. La despensa de Marfa, como todas las de la zona, se abastece de alimentos de diversas fuentes: donaciones locales de productos no perecederos y donaciones del Banco de Alimentos del Oeste de Texas en Odessa que apoyan la compra de alimentos, especialmente perecederos. Atiende a unos 180 residentes de la zona con distribuciones mensuales.

Chris Patriarca, miembro de la junta directiva de la despensa de alimentos sin fines de lucro de Alpine, comentó que la despensa aún está evaluando los posibles impactos y ahora pregunta a sus usuarios sobre SNAP.

“Creo que atendimos a unos 100 usuarios la semana pasada y les hicimos una encuesta para saber cuántos recibían beneficios de SNAP; aproximadamente el 30% estaban inscritos”, dijo. “Dicho esto, no tuvimos una afluencia inusual”. El alcalde de Presidio, John Ferguson, declaró que la ciudad suele recibir una distribución móvil mensual del Banco de Alimentos del Oeste de Texas, y que aún no

se sabe si la demanda aumentará repentinamente, pero que está preparado para hacer lo necesario para atender a los residentes. “Como alcalde, quiero tomar la iniciativa y asegurarme de que la gente sepa que estamos monitoreando la situación”, afirmó. “Como gobierno municipal, no nos quedaremos de brazos cruzados. Estaremos listos en caso de que la situación requiera asistencia”.

"Hemos notado un aumento en la demanda", comentó Mike Drinkard, coordinador de la distribución de alimentos del Centro de Crisis Familiar de Big Bend en Terlingua, probablemente debido al cierre del gobierno. "Creo que el programa SNAP está empezando a tener un impacto, así que publicamos en Facebook que si alguien no recibe la ayuda que necesita, puede venir y le haremos una distribución adicional". Todos los responsables de los bancos de alimentos afirmaron que las donaciones de alimentos no perecederos siempre son bienvenidas, pero que las donaciones en efectivo también son cruciales, ya que permiten ahorrar mucho dinero al comprar alimentos con descuento. «Las donaciones en efectivo son muy útiles porque puedo comprar cuatro cajas de cereal por el precio de una sola caja en una tienda», dijo Gibson. «También necesitamos voluntarios para ayudarnos con la distribución quincenal que realizamos aquí en Fort Davis». Los demás responsables de los bancos de alimentos coincidieron en la necesidad de voluntarios.

Para obtener más información



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Sentinel is changing, but before moving too far, we want to hear from you. What are we doing right or wrong? What do you want to read and see in the paper? Let us know!

–Roger Black
Email:
publisher@bigbendsentinel.com

Sentinel

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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CROSSWORD

Edited by David Steinberg November 6, 2025

ACROSS

1 Particle whose name means “indivisible”

5 Interprets, as palms

10 House, in Rosario

14 “Whip It” band

15 Nixon’s No. 2

16 What an aspiring judge takes: Abbr.

17 “Broncos” home

18 *Unite

20 Certain window treatments “Believer” (Monkees hit)

23 Roth or SEP plan

24 Something not quite right

25 Quick looks

27 **Erases

30 **Infantry unit

31 Game with Skip and Reverse cards

32 Nobelist Wiesel

33 General on a Chinese menu

34 Comforter filler, often Simple

36 Instrument

38 Omega’s predecessors heard at spas

44 Maker of Caramel Churro ice cream

46 De Armas of “Knives Out”

47 ***Gas grill fuel

50 ***Feeding (on)

52 Workers

54 Discontinued Apple product

55 Train station fig.

56 Kitchen utensil brand

57 Like some Fridays at work

59 ****Monetary gift

62 ***Grinned

64 Mexican spread, for short

65 “Chip” or “brew” lead-in

66 Long time spans

67 Crafty marketplace

68 Taters

69 Author list ender, for short

DOWN

1 Calculate a sum

2 Prepared to drive?

3 ___ room (extra space at an event)

4 Team spirit

5 Strides with speed

6 Barriers to teamwork

7 Massachusetts cape

8 New Jersey team whose name sounds wicked

9 Hindu title that becomes a sentence when its last letter is made first

10 NFL rival of Cin.

11 Birthplace of St. Francis

12 Like a tabernacle

13 Relaxed

19 Baby ewes and rams

21 Book part

25 Oldsters

26 Hold (up)

27 Total bust

28 Electronica pioneer Brian

29 Madre’s sister

33 Instrumental learning aids?

35 Smallest 54-Across

37 Poem that rhymes with “flowed”

39 Spoke volumes

40 Traveler’s stop

41 Droop

43 Egret, for example

45 Uses up, as energy

47 Potential sorority member

48 Tell on

49 Malia and Sasha

50 Suggestion from an expert

51 “Let me explain ...”

53 They may be final

57 Mother-child connection

58 “Game of Thrones” actress

Headley

60 Unfriendly

61 Hosp. area

63 Home www hookup, maybe

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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11/6

Swing States by Dario Salvucci

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AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thursday November 6

Boxing at Maintenant
9 am-10:30 am
Maintenant, 1825 Rabbits Rd., Marfa,

Game Night
6:00 pm-8:00 pm
Magical Warehouse, 113 E Holland Ave, Alpine

Life Drawing
6:45 pm-9:30 pm
Create Space, 102 N 8th, Alpine

Friday November 7

Master Naturalist Hike
10:00 am-11:30 am
Davis Mountains State Park
Fort Davis

JH / HS Football vs Buena Vista in Marfa
5:00 pm-9:30 pm
Marfa

Christopher Cody Meacham
6:00 pm-9:00 pm
The Ritchey, 102 East Murphy Ave, Alpine

Saturday November 8

Open Mic Night: Comedy
8:00 pm-10:00 pm
Alcove Social
211 E Holland Ave
Alpine

Sunday November 9

Sunday Slow Stretch with Bailey
4:00 pm-5:00 pm
La Sala Studio, Studio, 207 E Holland Ave
Alpine
(432) 294-5793

Open Mic Night: Music
4:00 pm-7:00 pm
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave
Alpine

Boxing at Maintenant
10:00 am-11:30 am
1825 Rabbits Rd., Marfa

Weekly events

Free Zumba Classes
Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm Marfa Public Library

Yin Yoga
Tuesdays at 12 pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:00 pm
Marfa Public Library

AA (online)
Saturdays at 12:00 pm
https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2
Sometimes in-person, Marfa Public Library

AA (in-person)
Monday and Wednesday at 6:00 pm
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

The Alpine Farmers Market
Saturday at 9:00 am-12:00 pm
Alpine Visitor Center. Schedules subject to change. Visit Marfa Farmstand on Facebook.

DRAWING OF THE WEEK

zaelynn baeza,
sharpie & watercolor

SUDUKO

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

11/6

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

SOLUTION:

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4	3	1	7	9	2	5	8	6
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NOTICES

The Marfa Parks Board is seeking applicants for the position of Board Member. The term is for two years, and will begin January 1, 2026. The Marfa Parks Board is a Type B community development corporation of the City of Marfa. Applicants must reside within the city of Marfa and demonstrate a commitment to community recreational development. Applicants should submit their letter of interest with any supporting documentation marfaparksboard@gmail.com. Applications will be accepted until Nov 19th, 2025. The Parks Board will consider this item at its upcoming meeting on November 20, 2025. All applicants are welcome to apply. The Marfa Parks Board is an equal opportunity organization.

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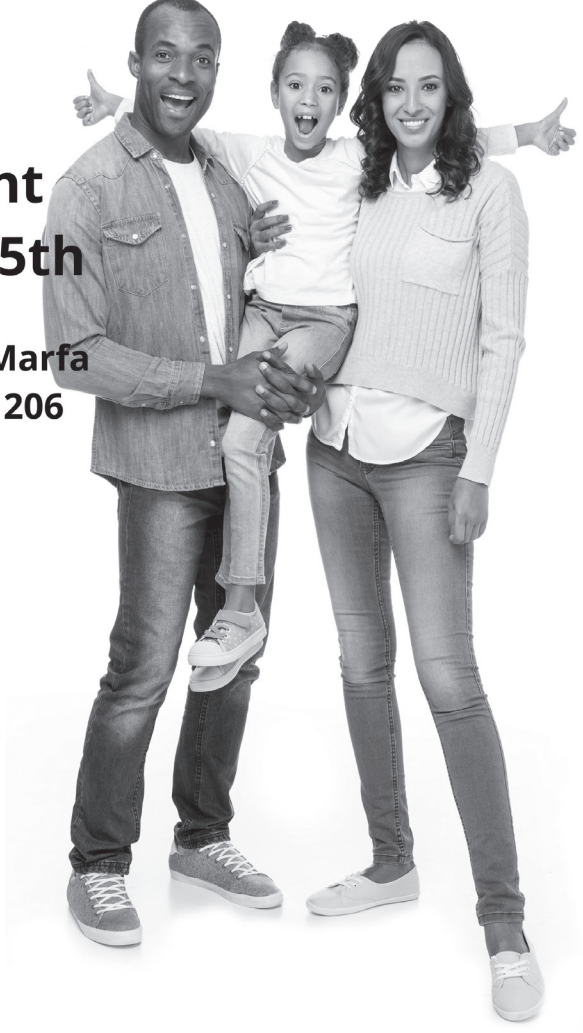
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ASPECTOS DESTACADOS DE LA CAPITAL

Las primas aumentan al comenzar el período de inscripción abierta de la ACA

El plazo para inscribirse en el seguro médico a través de la Ley de Cuidado de la Salud a Bajo Precio (ACA por sus siglas en inglés) está abierto hasta el 15 de enero, y se espera que la mayoría de los tejanos paguen primas considerablemente más altas, según informó The Texas Tribune. Los subsidios federales que reducían las primas expirarán a fin de año si el Congreso no toma medidas.

El cierre del gobierno entra en su segundo mes. Los demócratas afirman que no votarán a favor de la reapertura del gobierno a menos que se extiendan los subsidios. Los republicanos dicen que no considerarán extender los subsidios hasta que se reabra el gobierno.

Casi 4 millones de tejanos se inscribieron en la cobertura de la ACA durante el último período de inscripción, una cifra que los expertos en salud predicen que disminuirá hasta en un millón si terminan los subsidios.

La mayoría de las personas que eligen la ACA no pueden obtener un seguro patrocinado por el empleador —el método más común— o ganan demasiado para calificar para Medicaid. La organización sin fines de lucro KFF, dedicada a la política sanitaria, proyecta que los texanos que actualmente reciben subsidios de la Ley de Cuidado de la Salud a Bajo Precio (ACA, por sus siglas en inglés) verán un aumento del 115% en sus primas, o \$456 al año, si no se extienden.

Clases de finanzas ahora obligatorias en la educación

Texas se convierte en el trigésimo estado en ofrecer clases de educación financiera, con un valor de medio crédito, según The Dallas Morning News. La Agencia de Educación de Texas planea enviar a los distritos escolares una lista de empresas que ofrecerán programas de estudio gratuitos. John Pelletier, director del Centro para la Alfabetización Financiera, afirma que las clases adicionales abordan lo que él denomina “fragilidad financiera”. Señala que la falta de una gestión financiera adecuada es una razón clave por la que solo la mitad de los estadounidenses podría reunir 2000 dólares en caso de emergencia.

Añadió que la pandemia demostró cómo los niveles de desempleo pueden dispararse casi de la noche a la mañana, dejando a las personas que no han ahorrado o que tienen deudas importantes en mayor riesgo de una catástrofe financiera.

Rechaza propuesta para financiar reparaciones del juzgado

En las elecciones generales del martes, solo se presentó una opción local en la boleta electoral, mientras que en todo el estado se votaron 17 enmiendas constitucionales de Texas. Esta propuesta, la Medida A, estaba dirigida exclusivamente a los votantes del condado de Presidio y autorizaba al condado a emitir certificados de obligación por hasta \$5 millones de dólares, principalmente para reparaciones del juzgado en Marfa, pero también para el anexo del condado en Presidio y para adquirir nuevo equipo del Departamento de Caminos y Puentes.

La Medida A fue rechazada con 226 votos a favor y 593 en contra. El resultado perdió relevancia dado que la mayoría de la Corte de Comisionados indicó que no utilizaría los bonos incluso si se hubieran aprobado.

Las 17 enmiendas estatales fueron aprobadas por amplios márgenes, al igual que en los condados de Brewster y Jeff Davis. Los votantes del condado de Presidio rechazaron varias enmiendas (2: Prohibición del impuesto sobre las ganancias de capital, 3: Reforma del sistema de fianzas, 6: Prohibición del impuesto sobre valores, 9: Exención del impuesto sobre inventarios y equipos y 17: Exención del impuesto sobre la propiedad para infraestructura de seguridad fronteriza).

Puede consultar todos los resultados por condado en bigbendsentinel.com.

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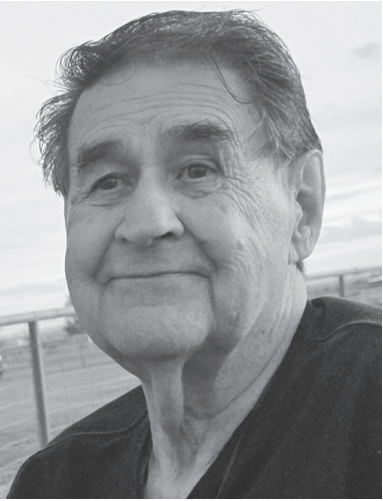


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OBITUARIES

Marfa native was a well-respected electrician with a large, loving family



Lawrence Patrick Connors

Lawrence “Larry” Patrick Connors passed away peacefully on October 14, 2025, in El Paso, Texas, at the age of 82.

Born on January 8, 1943, in Marfa, Texas, Larry lived a life defined by dedication, kindness, and service.

In his younger years, he answered the call to serve his country during the Vietnam War, carrying out his duty with courage and quiet strength.

Though he never spoke much about his service, those who knew him understood the depth of his sacrifice and the pride he quietly carried. After returning home from Vietnam, Larry became a well-respected electrician, known throughout his community for his hard work, reliability, and helping spirit.

Larry was the last surviving member of the original Connors family of Marfa.

He was welcomed into eternal rest by his parents, John F. and Frances M. Connors; his five brothers—John C., Eddie, James, Mike, and Ernest; and his two sisters—Francis “Sissy” Garcia and Dorothy Connors.

Larry was a loving devoted father and leaves behind a loving family who will forever carry his memory: three daughters, Diane, Arlene, and Andrea Jean (husband Gustavo); six grandchildren, Danna Rae Macias, Jerram Rojo, Brianna (husband Havier) Vargas, Raelynn Macias, Marisa Hernandez, and Sofia Guzman; four great-grandchildren, Jace and Javon Rojo, Amaris and Anayah Vargas; as well as many cherished nieces and nephews. Larry’s presence, wisdom and quiet strength will live on in each of them. The family is deeply grateful for the kind words, prayers, and support shared during this time.

A memorial service will be held at a later date to honor and celebrate Larry’s life.

“Forever in our hearts, gone but not forgotten.”

May his memory be a source of comfort and peace to all who knew and loved him.

We love you Dad!

A natural learner who lived a full life in rodeo and law

In El Paso, Texas, on July 19, 1942, Theodore Thomas “Ted” Hollen III was born to Emma Katurah “Cheta” Weatherford and Theodore Thomas “Tom” Hollen Jr. A brother, William Wallace “Skipper,” arrived soon after. The brothers were adventurous and bold. Two younger sisters, Patricia Hazel and Nancy Lee, were a few years behind them. Ted was protective of his sisters and enjoyed being a big brother. Ted’s father, Tom, was engaged in farming in the lower valley of El Paso where Ted started school at White Elementary. He kept in touch with friends in El Paso all his life. The family moved to Pecos, where Ted and Skipper graduated from high school. Ted was involved in 4-H and Future Farmers of America, raised and showed Southdown sheep, won the livestock judging award, competed in roping and riding in rodeos, played basketball on one of the first integrated teams in Texas, starred in the school play, and made lifelong friends. He attended class reunions and was looking forward to the next one in a few weeks. Sul Ross State University was next in his colorful career. There he rode more rough stock, mostly bareback broncs, on the rodeo team, shot out street lights, was confined to his dorm for the semester in which he

made all As, worked as a bartender, sought justice for friends whom he believed had been mistreated by law enforcement, and made a D in physics. He had wanted to study veterinary medicine, but the D put the quietus to that. He loved to say that one could still go to law school with a D in physics. He studied accounting and statistics, which served him very well. He seldom resorted to pencil, much less calculator, to resolve math questions.

After graduation in 1966, rodeo became his focus. Advice from an older rodeo cowboy led Ted to believe law school had a certain amount of appeal. When his proud father showed Ted his acceptance letter to the University of Texas Law School, he said that was very nice of them because he was going anyway. He did not understand why other students sought his opinion on class discussions; only later did he learn that his LSAT score was very high. He rodeoed constantly, studying class notes as he traveled. Ted claimed never to have taken notes; he did not seek to make high grades, just high enough. Anything else was a waste of time and over-studying. He passed the bar exam in 1969, but did not complete his Doctorate of Jurisprudence until 2003.

Ted married Judy Couser in 1969 shortly before moving to El Paso where he joined the law firm of Pearson and Pearson. Their daughter Lin Anne was born in El Paso. Ted worked for the Republican Party and the election of John Tower to the United States Senate. This interest led to moving his family to Austin where sons Theodore Thomas “Cuatro” Hollen IV and Jason were born. Continuing his work for Senator Tower, including frequent trips to Washington, D.C., Ted also opened his sole practitioner law firm. Ted always helped family, friends, and acquaintances in need of his expertise. Many a parent never knew of a youngster’s misadventures; Ted’s lips were sealed. He was compassionate and wise.

He received the 50-years recognition from the State Bar of Texas while practicing in Lago Vista. In April 2025, he closed that office and moved to Marfa, Texas. When asked if was going to retire from work, he answered, “I quit working when I got my law license!”

Ever the athlete, Ted learned to play golf at the urging of one of his horse friends, Dale Robertson. Horses, on the track or on his farm, were always a pleasure and avocation. Golf was to become more important as he played many well-

known courses with pals and with celebrities. On any Friday, he was easily identified by his pink shirt!

Preceding Ted homeward-bound were his parents, Tom and Cheta; as well as siblings Skipper and Nancy. His three children and seven grandchildren survive to cherish his memory and to try to emulate his style. They are Lin Anne and Eric McFarland with Casen Thomas, Emma Catherine and Libby Nicole of Cypress, Texas; Cuatro Hollen and Julie Bennett with Hailey Rose Hollen, Jackson, Ashton, Aisley and Jett Bennett of Austin, Texas; Jason and Spring Hollen with twins Damon Cole and Madeline Joy and Carson Jadon Hollen of Liberty Hill, Texas. Ted’s wonderful sister Patty and her husband Glen Moreland live in Fort Davis and were an important part of Ted’s life. For Ted, life was a dance, literally, at every opportunity he danced and sang. He and his dance partner, Hester Ann White of Marfa, delighted in 23 years of happiness, laughing at the world and each other every day, all the way. In fact, they went to a party and dance on Saturday, October 11.

In El Paso, Texas, on October 13, 2025, Ted Hollen came full circle. He died after a very brief illness. A memorial to this remarkable man will be held in Marfa, at the church



Theodore Thomas Hollen III

he attended, First Presbyterian, on Saturday, November 15, 2025. This service will begin at 11 a.m. to be followed by a lunch featuring Ted’s favorites. All his friends and family are most welcome. A Celebration of Life will be hosted by his children in Fredericksburg on November 29, at the Lady Bird Golf Course from 1 to 5 p.m.

Commemorative gifts will be appreciated by: American Quarter Horse Foundation, P. O. Box 32111, Amarillo, Texas 79120 Bloys Campmeeting Association, 6200 FM 307, Midland, Texas 79706

Big Bend adventures drew stewardess back to Texas

Nancy Jean Wood, loving mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and confidant to many, left this earth on October 27th, 2025, in Austin, Texas. Nancy was born on November 27, 1948, in Fort Davis, Texas to Tom and Elta Redford. The youngest of four children, Nancy spent her childhood on ranches across Far West Texas and in Hamilton, Texas, where she attended high school. She lovingly doted on her nieces and nephew during her childhood years and spent most of her time outside helping her father with ranching chores or inside helping her mother cook and clean for their large family. During her youth, Nancy developed a love for horses; she loved their majestic beauty and their mischievous but loyal spirits. Nancy’s childhood instilled strong family and agricultural values that she maintained with pride for her entire life. Nancy started college at Howard Payne University where she was crowned Miss Congeniality in the Miss Howard Payne pageant. In search of new opportunities and experiences, she decided to transfer to a bigger pond after driving to Lubbock and seeing Texas Tech University. Although she hated the wind and dust, Nancy truly enjoyed her time at Texas Tech.

After college, Nancy became a stewardess for Braniff International Airways based out of Dallas, Texas. She enjoyed the glamour of the then-elite sisterhood of stewardesses who were taught perfect posture, poise and eloquence while donning Italian-designed Emilio Pucci uniforms and travelling across the world. Eventually, her love and passion for Texas grew too strong, and she decided to move back to her

roots in Far West Texas.

Nancy met a witty, larger than life rancher named Tommy D. Wood at the Thunderbird Restaurant in Marfa and knew immediately that she had met the love of her life. In 1988, their daughter Karen was born. Nancy was the greatest mother, always helping Karen with whatever grand scheme she came up with. Even though Nancy was not fond of games herself, she adored her daughter and always agreed to play whatever elaborate game Karen desired for hours on end.

Nancy enjoyed taking care of Karen and Tommy D. and loved their life in Marfa. She was drawn to the uniqueness of Marfa, the beauty of Far West Texas, and what seemed like the last frontier. She often accompanied her sister, June, in her photography adventures of the Big Bend area and those times together created some of Nancy’s fondest memories and stories that will be told for years to come.

She lovingly cared for Tommy D. until his death in 2013. In more recent years, she was often seen around Marfa walking her beautiful white Australian Shepherd and friend, Coffey. In 2019, Nancy’s first grandson, Thomas, was born. Jack and Samuel came shortly thereafter, and she could not have been prouder of those three boys.

Nancy moved to Austin for the last year of her life and fought a courageous battle against cancer. During this year she spent valuable time with all whom she loved. Although the year was not easy, it was a blessing for everyone to be together. It is difficult to express the loss we feel upon Nancy’s passing. She was the most loving



Nancy Jean Wood

mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend. She will be remembered for her kind nature, unique humor, lover of all things beautiful, and devotion to her family.

Nancy was preceded in death by her husband, Tommy D. Wood, her parents, Tom and Elta Redford, and her brothers Tommy and Sam Redford.

Nancy leaves behind her daughter Karen, her son-in-law Alec, grandsons Thomas, Jack and Samuel, her sister June and husband Larry, her beloved nieces and nephew who were by her side during this last year Kathy, Sandy, Cindy, Debbi, Clay, and many more nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, November 22 at the Caswell House, located at 1404 West Ave, Austin, Texas. Everyone is invited to attend and share their memories of Nancy. A reception will follow at the same address. Nancy will be buried in Marfa on Monday, November 24 at 10 a.m. at the Marfa Cemetery.

40-year teacher urged critical thinking

Perrie Lee Little Whalen went to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on the 28th day of October 2025. She was born on October 15, 1947, in Tucumcari, New Mexico, to E.M. “Red” Little and Eva Bea Little.

The family moved to Midland, Texas, where she grew up. Perrie graduated from Midland High School and then attended Lindenwood College in St. Charles, Missouri. She then transferred to Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and finally transferred to the University of Texas at Austin where she graduated in 1969 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education.

She later earned a Master of Arts degree from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

Her first teaching experience was in Roswell, New Mexico at Sierra Middle School. This was where she met her future husband, Tim Whalen, Jr. Perrie and Tim were married on December 18, 1971, at St. Peter’s Catholic Church in Roswell, New Mexico. After 2 years of teaching in Roswell, the couple moved to Odessa, Texas, and then to Midland, Texas. Perrie’s teaching career included time in Odessa, Midland, and Greenwood. Perrie ended her 40-year career in education as a consultant at the Region 18 Educational Service Center.

Perrie’s focus was for her students to be able to read, write, and



Perrie Lee Little Whalen

think critically. She encouraged them to think outside conventional guidelines and be themselves. Being an avid reader, she also had reading certifications and tutored students who needed help.

Perrie’s brilliant spirit, radiant smile, and compassionate heart captivated everyone who had the chance to know her. Perrie is survived by her husband of almost 54 years, Tim Whalen, Jr., her sister Katie Hobbs and husband Tom of Justin, Texas, and her brother Ed Little and his wife Kay of Roswell, New Mexico. There will be a graveside memorial service at a later date in Roswell, and a notice will be made public.

Condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneral-home.com

Half the bennefits and significant delays expected

Continued from page 1

donations that support food purchases, particularly of perishable items, from the West Texas Food Bank in Odessa. It serves about 180 area residents with distributions once a month.

Chris Patriarca, a Food Pantry of Alpine nonprofit board member, said the pantry is still assessing potential impacts and is now asking clients about SNAP. “I think we had approximately 100 clients come through [last week], and we surveyed them to see how many were getting SNAP benefits, and approximately 30% were enrolled in SNAP,” he said. “But having



MARY CANTRELL

A volunteer gets food ready at the Jeff Davis County Food Pantry.

State environmental regulators are monitoring the issue

Continued from page 1

gay said the delay in flushing was, in part, due to limited staffing resources. “We finally had some help, some physical help with flushing, and commenced to flush the water lines,” she said. “[TCEQ] suggested that we do this once a month, once every other month if needed, just to keep the water circulated and fresh in those lines and properly chlorinated.”

On October 24, TCEQ visited Toyah unannounced to investigate a complaint they had received days prior about the poor water quality, according to the recent report. The agency documented that water coming from a faucet at the Methodist Church in town was yellowish with “visible white suspended solids.” Agency staffers spoke to Begay, who told them flushing was initiated due to the fact that a recent coliform test—which detects bacteria—had failed for the second month in a row. A log provided by the city to TCEQ showed around 80,800 gallons of water was flushed between October 19 and 26.

The city has 64 active violations which have been referred to the attorney general, according to the recent investigative report from

the TCEQ. The Texas Attorney General’s Office did not respond to a request for comment about the status of the lawsuit, but the city could face fines or other regulatory actions as a result.

Begay said she recently met with TCEQ officials to try and foster a better relationship with the state moving forward.

“I wanted to let them know that I intend to be proactive and want to do everything that we can to be in compliance to the best of our abilities,” she said.

TCEQ representatives are “actively working with the city to help them obtain a licensed operator and provide educational and technical assistance,” an agency spokesperson said. The city is seeking to hire a new water operator and is also in talks with environmental consultants who could potentially provide those services, Begay said.

Begay is also in contact with Reeves County officials about locating land to drill a well—at “little to no cost” to the city, she said—that could provide Toyah with groundwater in the future. Unlike the majority of West Texas cities, Toyah’s water supply comes from a lake in the Davis Mountains rather than a well.

“We’re in a lot of prayer, and we’re very hopeful that these talks and planning that we’re doing to work towards a groundwater well will be fruitful,” Begay said.

The mayor said the local groundwater operator the town needs would require less qualifications than the surface water operator. The water treatment plant, she said, has been an undue burden on the city, which struggles to attract and keep qualified water operators.

“Because of the package plant that we have that was put in way back in about 2002, we’re still required to have the same operators that a larger entity like Pecos or Odessa-Midland, even Dallas-Fort Worth would have, and that’s very hard for a small community like ours,” Begay said.

The nature of the previous water operator’s departure is the latest in a string of mismanagement concerns expressed by some citizens that keep a close eye on city hall.

Baker told Marfa Public Radio that she resigned because the city was supposed to be deducting childcare payments from her paycheck and sending them to the state, a common practice referred to as wage withholding. But Baker claims \$16,000 worth of payments

OPINION



OP-ED



Ice agents question a man on his immigration status.

Texas is a testing ground for Trump’s response to an ‘invasion’

By Artem Kolisnichenko

AS OF October 29, 2025, Texas is no longer just a “border state”—it has become the main testing ground for Trump’s “plan to protect the American people against invasion.” Operation Lone Star, launched by Gov. Greg Abbott in March 2021 as a response to the migration crisis during the Biden administration, expanded sharply in 2025. Now, there are not only barriers and patrols on the Rio Grande, but also arrests inside the state—in Austin, Dallas, Houston, hundreds of miles from the border.

According to official data from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), from January to September 2025, more than 3,100 arrests of undocumented immigrants were made across Texas under the operations. More than 6,500 people arrested had felony warrants for crimes such as murders, sex crimes and human

smuggling.

Arrests this year have grown by 35% compared to 2024. The National Guard and DPS strike teams work together with ICE, which is embedded in operations based on an MOU with CBP. Arrests are not under the stiff state law SB 4, which was blocked by the 5th Circuit in July 2025. The apprehensions are made under state charges—trespassing, state warrants. And then the suspects are transferred to ICE and deportation.

The effect on the border is impressive: for 2025, only 238,000 apprehensions were recorded along the entire southern border—the lowest since 1970, a drop of 84% from 2024.

In Eagle Pass, migrant shelters are empty, and locals say “it’s all over.”

But inside the state, there have been serious impacts. Immigrants have stopped going to church, markets and doctors for fear of being grabbed. Sales in Hispanic ar-

reas have fallen by 12%, according to the Texas Tribune. About 1.6 million undocumented migrants make up 8% of Texas’ workforce and bring 4.9 billion dollars in taxes to the state budget each year. Remittances to Mexico fell by 15%. Businesses in agriculture and construction complain about labor shortages.

Economic losses are noticeable. If raids and labor outflow continue at the current level, job growth in Texas will slow to 1.2% in 2026, according to the Dallas Fed (October 2025).

This is the lowest since the pandemic. The average rate was 2.5% from 2015 to 2023. Construction and agriculture lose 40% of job applications due to absenteeism. Without work permits or TPS, the state risks recession in sectors where immigrants are irreplaceable labor.

A UH-TSU poll conducted in October 2025 showed: 54% of Texans support local police involvement in immigration control,

but 47% expect the economy to weaken due to raids.

SB 4, which allows police to arrest for illegal entry and turn a federal violation into a state felony, remains blocked. However, arrests continue under other charges.

Federal lawsuits against Texas were dropped in March 2025—the DOJ under Trump stopped prosecution.

Texas has proven: state-level enforcement works. The border is under control, crime is falling. But the price is increased fear, labor outflow and falling sales. Without work permits, TPS, or federal coordination, the state risks losing growth: economists predict a 0.75% GDP drop with an exodus of workers.

Operation Lone Star 2.0 is a success in security but a challenge for Texas’ future.

Artem Kolisnichenko is a journalist and analyst specializing in immigration policy and judicial decisions, covering the American South and Southwest.

LETTERS

Preserve healthcare subsidies, stop pandering to donors

We have had the Affordable Care Act for 15 years. Fifteen years of not being denied coverage for preexisting conditions, no lifetime payment caps on coverage and 15 years of free cancer screenings. And in those 15 years, Republicans tried taking our healthcare coverage away more than 70 times, with no alternative plan ever offered.

Now, they are fighting to protect huge tax breaks for billionaires and multimillionaires, which will result in health insurance premiums increases of 30-70%.

It is time for President Trump, Speaker Mike Johnson, Ted Cruz, John Cornyn and other Republicans to protect our health care programs and stop pandering to their rich donors.

David Marwitz
Marfa

Dozens made the Ruidosa Church Community Day a success

On behalf of the Friends of the Ruidosa Church, I would like to acknowledge those that contributed to a very successful Community Day at the Ruidosa Church Saturday. Primo Y Beebe, who donated three hours of wonderful music at the event. Tim and Rob Crowley hosted our art talk at the Crowley Theater. Yvonamoor Palix for moderating our art discussion and documentary with artist Romain Froquet.

Gamaliel Bustillo at the Presidio Mexican Consulate who coordinated the beautiful Dia de los Muertos altar. Juanita Bishop, who designed and constructed the altar.

Liz Rohana, who coordinated the cross-border artist canvas transaction.

Abby Marshall for her management assistance. Clara Bensen for providing Marfa lodging for artist Romain Froquet and family. Tom and Kathleen Griffith for providing lodging near Ruidosa.

Jeff Fort and the Chinati Hot Springs, who also provided lodging. Joey Benton and Faith Gay at Cactus Liquors, who generously

donated beverages to the Crowley Theater and Community Day event.

Buck Johnson and Camp Bosworth provided space at the Do Right Hall for a showing of the artist’s work.

Alliance Francaise of Houston for covering some of the expenses for Romain and family to travel to West Texas.

Board members Jordan Martinelli, Martha Stafford, Rob D’Amico, Terry Bishop, Joe Williams and Tom Griffith—and all the volunteers who helped things run smoothly.

Finally, artist Romain Froquet and family for donating their time and creative energy to the artistic creation that perfectly complemented the simple beauty of the Ruidosa Church.

Mike Green
President, Friends of the Ruidosa Church

Volunteers needed for archeological investigation

The public is invited to assist archeologist David Keller with archeological investigations of the Ruidosa Church (El Corazon Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesus) to take place November 14-17.

The project is being conducted as part of a Historic Structures Report funded by the Texas Preservation Trust Fund as a critical component of the larger restoration project by the Friends of the Ruidosa Church.

Volunteers are needed to assist in excavation, screening, artifact collection and documentation. Experience in archeological techniques is preferred but not required.

Expect inclement weather, abundant sunshine, wind, and lots of dust.

Bring proper attire, including hats, gloves, long-sleeve shirts, pants and work boots.

On-site camping and housing will be provided for those who wish to stay overnight, although space is limited.

Water, electricity and an indoor kitchen will be available, but volunteers will need to bring their own food.

Register by emailing David Keller at dkellerconsulting@gmail.com.

BIG BEND
Sentinel

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D.U.S.T. is an unstable acronym



Adam Bork shows Chris Marks a piece he made: a found slide enlarged and mounted on a light box. Photos by Sam Karas.

By **SAM KARAS** *Culberson County*

Adam Bork bought a place in Lobo because he has too many cars. Thirty cars, to be exact—or maybe a few more, he can’t remember. The cars became a problem when he was living full time in Marfa, always requiring shuffling to one friend’s empty driveway or another. “You can’t have them on the street,” Bork explained, “or they’ll put those nasty bright orange or green stickers on the window.”

JANUARY 2020 turned out not to be a bad time to start building a compound near the Culberson-Jeff Davis county line, though one new neighbor initially misunderstood Bork’s living situation as a harebrained attempt to sell used cars in the middle of nowhere. It’s where he keeps the “Ghost of Food Shark”—the remains of the popular food trailer from Marfa’s pre-pandemic cultural heyday—and numerous mounds of metal objects he sorts into piles to watch them oxidize. Lobo is just a few miles from the border or a few miles from Valentine or a few miles from Van Horn, but it feels a world apart from any of these places, home to a handful of misfits renegade even by Big Bend standards. “Keep the lonely places lonely,” an often-Instagrammed sign implores from the side of the road.

It’s a place few of the hundreds of thousands of people who cruise Highway 90 each year stop, except to toss something in the TxDOT trash barrel or take a picture of the town’s sign. But for more than 100 years, Lobo has been a place that has drawn a very small and specific handful of people to hang their hats.

Over the years, many people have tried to make something out of Lobo. According to the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), a townsite was laid out in 1909 and quickly became the subject of a land scam where advertisers attempted to lure buyers out to Far West Texas with the promise of artesian wells and a large hotel. (The developers were eventually forced through legal action to deliver on their promises.)

This early 20th century boom was short-lived, and after Lobo lost a bid against Van Horn for the designation as the Culberson County seat, things gradually declined. Lobo caught a second wind in the 1950s as large-scale irrigation and cotton production took hold, but the ensuing drop in the water table dashed dreams of taking on bigger markets.

Lobo was put on the market as an intact ghost town for the first time in 1988, after the owner-operator of a



You won’t find D.U.S.T. on your own, but there are a few signposts along the way.

Adam Bork’s rusty toys pile, located next to a pile of bullets found in the desert.



roadside store encountered problems with “drugs and crime” that the fine people of the TSHA declined to elaborate on in their online almanac of Texas towns.

Enter German duo Axel Roessler and Alexander Bardorff, passers-through who saw its potential. They bought the ghost town in 2001, and over the course of the next 20 years hosted a series of festivals and gatherings at the space, including Desert Dust Cinema, a multi-day nonprofit film festival that drew attendees from all over the world.

When Roessler and Bardorff decided to sell, they wanted it to go to likeminded folks who would carry on its legacy. Bork crossed paths with Wini Hunton-Chan, an enterprising young creative and part-time Californian who was also interested in making something out of Lobo. The two teamed up for the purposes of a potential real estate transaction, but when the Germans passed on their offer, they tried to look on the bright side. “It was a blessing in disguise,” Hunton-Chan said, and one that prompted her to buy a permanent place of her own down the road from Bork.

It turned out that being a few miles off the highway created a peaceful and more generative environment. “When the big rigs go by [on 90] it’s deafening, you can’t even carry a conversation,” she explained. “Lobo was a magical property, but it wasn’t right for where I wanted to live.”

Bork and Hunton-Chan are now trying to carry on the desert rat tradition of making something from nothing via D.U.S.T, their semiannual festival that defies description. The name itself is meaningless. “D.U.S.T. is an unstable acronym,” their website insists, generating hundreds of new meanings per visit to the page (think “Delirious Unplanned Sonic Travels” or “Dreams Under Strange Trees”), which also directs the curious toward Hunton-Chan for “most questions” and Bork for queries specifically about “sound and music and explosions.”



Security is tight at D.U.S.T.

THIS ANARCHIC approach to collaborative art and outdoor recreation drew a crowd of about 75 to May’s iteration of the festival. Last weekend’s edition was a little more low-key, with around two dozen folks filtering in and out over the course of three days to create and share in a place with few neighbors to bother with noise, fireworks and general wackiness.

There is some order in all the chaos: Hunton-Chan instituted a sign-up board system this time around, letting guests know at least a few of the things the day might hold in store. A generator-powered three-sided barn is the go-to music venue to keep out of the wind and sun, but spontaneous acoustic sets are also welcome around the campfire. Out in the pasture, a fragment of a cinderblock wall juts up like a tooth, inviting visiting visual artists to hang up or project their work.

The mascot of D.U.S.T. is Dolly, a permanent installation by Hunton-Chan of a child’s toy from a bygone era. You can usually find Dolly in her room, watching a series of VHS tapes from the ‘90s from a pile of blankets on the shag carpet. More than a straightforward testament to elder millennial nostalgia, the festival revolves around her—VIP guests sometimes stay in Dolly’s room but are discouraged from interrupting her television time.

Most of the campers were sprawled out around a double-wide mobile home that serves as the center of activities, but Bork also made his land available as an “introvert’s campground,” offering silence and solitude for the overstimulated. (One guest who came all the way from Philadelphia reported that Bork’s open-air composting toilet with 360-degree mountain views made the long trip worth it.)

For now, the duo welcomes anyone who comes out to the desert prepared for off-grid living and spontaneous fun. “I want it to always be free,” Hunton-Chan said. “I feel like that’s what [the film festival] was at the ghost town—it was a community event, and it was a very inclusive definition of community.”

“I feel like the point is that we are the resource for each other,” she continued. “We make D.U.S.T. together.”



GEOFF WINNINGHAM

Library features ‘Mexican Fiestas’

If you missed Houston photographe Geoff Winninham’s retrospective at the Marfa and Presidio museum, you can now see the photographs at the Jeff Davis County Library. “Mexican Fiestas,” from November 3 through December 12, in collaboration with Humanities Texas. The the photos showcase Mexico’s rich cultural heritage. The images span decades of Winningham’s work, documenting festivals, art and dance. Included is *Atotonilco* (above), a Day of the Dead image.

The exhibit is free of charge and may be seen during regular library hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesdays from noon to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The library will be closed on Tuesday, November 11, Veterans Day. For questions, phone 432-426-3802.

Presidio students show Day of the Dead art at museum

Alpine Presidio ISD’s art program celebrated a milestone last Wednesday with the debut of a special Day of the Dead at the Museum of the Big Bend—the first time that students from the border city have been featured in the award-winning Alpine museum’s exhibition spaces.

Paintings by high school students adorned the walls surrounding an ofrenda, or altar featured in Day of the Dead celebrations across Mexico. Traditional ofrendas include pictures of deceased loved ones as well as physical offerings of things the departed enjoyed during their lifetime, like sweets or shots of tequila. The ofrenda on display through the month of



Art students from Presido High School. A painting by Magloire Rodriguez

November features a number of delectable treats, but none of them are edible. Art teacher Tamara Carrasco decided to experiment with papier-mache and sculpture to allow younger students from across the district to help bring the tradition to life in a museum-friendly way.

Draped over the ofrenda is a net of delicate origami flowers made by elementary school students, who wrote notes to their deceased loved ones before learning how to fold paper into shapes. “On the Day of the Dead, the dead come here and they eat, and then they go back to their realm,” Carrasco explained.

Carrasco found that encouraging students to make artwork about the holiday helped them learn about their roots.

“Before they started working on this, I encouraged them to investigate and look up information on Day of the Dead, because even though it’s ingrained in the culture they might not understand the reasons why,” she said. “The natives from Mexico thought that death was not the end of life, but part of a cycle. The kids started investigating that, and then tried to portray what that meant to them.” That as-



signment came naturally to 11th grader Magloire Rodriguez, who is fascinated by the Nahuatl, or Aztec, language and mythology.

Rodriguez’s piece, *Del Altar a la Tumba* (“From the Altar to the Grave”), is a richly-textured work in watercolor and colored pencil that depicts the Aztec god and goddess of the underworld, Mictlantecuhtli and his wife Mictecacihuatl, who hold a jade heart between their intertwined limbs.

Surrounding the skeletal pair, Rodriguez put symbols that represent other deities

in the Nahuatl cosmology. “In Aztec tradition, when a loved one died, they would put jade in their mouth to serve as currency to go through the Aztec underworld, which is called the Mictlan,” Rodriguez explained. “The Mictlan has nine levels, and it takes you four years to g-et through all of them. But if you’re able to do that, you’re worthy to finally rest.”

The students’ work will be on view at the Museum of the Big Bend in Alpineat Sul Ross State University, through the third week of November.

—Sam Karas

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SIXTH-SENSE

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