

BIG BEND Sentinel

Vol. 93 No. 36 • November 27, 2025

Combined with the PRESIDIO INTERNATIONAL

Marfa, Texas • \$1



ANITA SNOW—PUENTE

Victoria Mendoza-Cardena, a student volunteer, serves breakfast in the dining room of the Catholic-run nonprofit Kino Border Initiative in Nogales.

Pro-immigrant teachings motivate the faithful

‘This isn’t about being Republican or Democrat. This is about justice.’

Lea esta historia en español en bigbendsentinel.com

By ANITA SNOW, ANGELA KOCHERGA, ALYDA MUELA, and DIANNE SOLIS
PUENTE NEWS COLLABORATIVE

THIS WEEK

Chihuahua City artist Michael Valverde, shows new work at the Museum of the Big Bend, Alpine. Page 8



SUL ROSS MUSEUM

Michael Valverde, “Canon del Peguis”

Catholic parishioners rushed to deliver food boxes to migrants too terrified to leave their homes in the California city of Coachella after federal immigration agents swept through Hispanic neighborhoods during the summer.

Just south of Arizona’s border in Nogales, Mexico, Catholic nuns, lay people and volunteers at the Kino Border Initiative, despite rising threats against aid workers, cook and serve two meals daily for migrants who have been deported or lost their chances at U.S. asylum in President Donald Trump’s crackdown.

And in El Paso, about three dozen people from an interfaith group routinely gather outside a federal building to pray for im-

migrant families. The volunteers monitor immigration court hearings held inside. If their cases are denied, as most are, many immigrants face detention by U.S. immigration agents waiting in adjacent hallways.

“Catholic social teaching is on the side of the immigrant,” explained the Rev. Raymond Riding, a Catholic missionary in Tucson, Arizona, who has been ministering to relatives of detained immigrants.

U.S. cities along the southwest border offer lessons to cities like Chicago, Portland and New York City on how to respond to the immigration dragnet by supporting immigrant families and protecting against what Pope Leo XIV, a Chicago native, called “inhuman” treatment of migrants. Pope Leo, who was elected in May to succeed Francis, has said migrants should be treated with dignity and respect and has called mass deportations “a major crisis.”

Across the country, faith groups have formed a defense team for migrants, at a time of rising pressures to remove them from the U.S. Faith organization have essentially created an underground railroad of help to uphold church teachings. Some of these rapid response teams are very public. Others are not, noting the sharp risks, even dangers faced, over protecting immigrants. Some priests have been celebrating mass online for migrants too scared to leave homes.

Many were shocked by video that surfaced in early October that showed a Presbyterian pastor hit by a pepper ball in the head while protesting outside an ICE facility in a Chicago suburb. The incident involving Rev. David Black stoked further drama when DHS defended the action by calling protestors “agitators” who blocked an ICE vehicle, impeding operations.

ICE ‘doing God’s work’

Asked on CNN’s State of The Union Sunday program this month about the aggressive incident targeting the pastor, a journalist and residents, U.S. Rep. Jim

Continued on page XX

Presidio school staff rewarded with bonus

Concerns over low pay persist

By KATE BUBACZ

The Presidio ISD School Board met last Wednesday and voted unanimously to approve a \$500 incentive bonus for staff. The one-time payment is in line with recent years and will be paid out in mid-December. “Some Christmas cheer,” Board President Perla Natividad said to the sparsely attended meeting as she recorded the votes to approve the measure.

Wages for educators are under continuous scrutiny. Jocelyn Lopez, a special needs aide in the school district, took the microphone during the public forum to request that the board consider better aligning pay with the cost of living. Speaking quietly and reading from a script, she carefully outlined how increases in rent and groceries have outpaced the standard 2% raise. The suggestion was met with silence. By its own rules, the board does not respond to comments made in open forum.

Currently, a special needs aide with five years of experience makes \$12.45 an hour in the school district. This is nearly \$4 an hour less than the advertised starting pay at the McDonald’s in Alpine. Recently, Elon Musk made headlines with an eye-popping pay package from Tesla that is worth the combined income of all elementary school teachers in the country.

The teachers at Presidio ISD certainly earn their pay. Hevila Ramos, the head of special

Continued on page 5

ICE POWERS ARE EXPANDING IN TEXAS

No county agencies in the Big Bend have signed on

By ARTEM KOLISNICHENKO

In November 2025, the 287(g) program, which has become a mechanism for delegating immigration control powers to local law enforcement agencies, is experiencing unprecedented growth in Texas.

Under the program, local law enforcement officers can identify and process individuals with pending or active criminal charges who are subject to removal as undocumented individuals. The program, based on the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), also allows delegating and training local officers to identify illegal migrants.

It effectively turns local officials into ICE agents, creating a “force multiplier,” meaning that it expands the personnel and reach of ICE.

Under the program, there are three different models: the Jail Enforcement Model (enforcing immigration law for those detained locally), the Task Force Model (a more aggressive approach enforcing law in the field) and Warrant Service Officer program (a more limited approach that allows local law enforcement to serve ICE administrative warrants).

The latest ICE reports confirm significant expansion, including 22 law enforcement agencies in East Texas, covering key rural counties along trafficking corridors. The sheriff’s office in Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties have not signed on to the program, at least yet. Presidio

County Sheriff Danny Dominguez said he still needs to look into the program more thoroughly. Brewster County Sheriff Ronny Dodson said he plans to implement the jail enforcement provisions. Jeff Davis County Sheriff Victor Lopez did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

All this is a direct consequence of Trump’s January 20 executive order, which maximally expanded 287(g) “to protect against invasion” and Texas’ SB 8, requiring sheriff departments with populations over 100,000 to cooperate with ICE, which overall changes the rhetoric of local sheriff appointments, turning them into a force multiplier for federal enforcement. According to the DHS analysis, growth of agreements in such counties has really increased up to 25%.

In 2025, Texas became the leader in Department of Homeland Security memoranda in cooperation. From September 17, the number of cooperating agencies nationwide grew by over 620%, from 135 to more than 1,000, of which approximately 75 are in Texas.

Check on street, not in jails

Unlike the Jail Enforcement Model dominant in urban counties, the 22 East Texas agencies operate almost exclusively under the Task Force Model, meaning immigration checks happen during street patrols and traffic stops rather than inside jails. Sheriffs in these counties now run immigration status checks on felony and Class B misdemeanor stops along highways like I-20, U.S. 59, and U.S. 69. Local defense attorneys report that Task Force arrests in the region stem from traffic violations with no additional criminal

Continued on page 6



BREWSTER COUNTY SHERIFF

Undocumented immigrants given water after stopped by county deputies.

Marfa approves HOT grants

On October 23, the Marfa City Council approved grants to local organizations from revenue generated by hotel occupancy taxes (HOT). Nonprofits apply for the grants twice a year—usually for events, and they can also apply for accompanying money to advertise the events.

The HOT tax revenue—generated by taxes on hotel rooms and short-term rentals—can only be used for programs that promote the city and attract tourism.

The latest grants went to six organizations and eight events:

- Marfa 100 \$5,000/\$3,500 advertising
- Marfa Museum \$10,000/\$3,500 advertising
- Chinati Weekend \$10,000/\$3,500 advertising
- Chinati Lectures \$2,500/\$3,500 advertising
- Maintenant \$6,000/\$3,500 advertising
- Club Nowhere event No.1 \$2,500
- Club Nowhere event No. 2 \$2,500
- Meet Me in Marfa (\$4,000).

IN PERSON/HYBRID SCHEDULE

Become a Certified Medical Assistant

Starting
Spring
2026

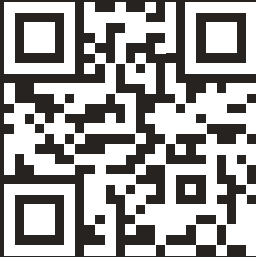
Big Bend Regional
Medical Center
2600 TX-118, Alpine, TX 79830

Questions?

jacqueline.goodship@borderplexjobs.com
432-335-6580

This training is
completely free
for students!

Scan QR Code or
type in the link
to apply
bit.ly/CMA-rural



Health Insurance Marketplace

MarketPlace now
open for enrollment
Nov. 1st thru Jan 15th

For Assistance in Alpine or Marfa
call Sarah at 432-837-4812 X 206
In Presidio, call Viri at
432-229-3030 X 436



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about coverage through the Marketplace or your benefits and protections under the health care law, visit HealthCare.gov or call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596. TTY users can call 1-855-889-4325.

Health Insurance Marketplace
Health Insurance Marketplace® is a registered service mark of
the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.



HealthCare.gov

Alpine ISD teacher receives most outstanding science teacher

ALPINE ISD

The West Texas Geology Foundation (WTGF) has named Tracy Hyatt, seventh-grade science and math teacher at Alpine Middle School, as one of nine recipients of its 2024-2025 Most Outstanding Science Teacher (MOST) award. The award recognizes exceptional science educators across the Region 18 service area of West Texas.

At a ceremony last week at Alpine Middle School, Hyatt received a plaque and a \$5,000 award in recognition of her exemplary science instruction.

WTGF, a nonprofit dedicated

to growing the geoscience community in the Permian Basin, orchestrates their annual MOST awards to honor West Texas teachers who inspire students through passionate and effective science education.

Hyatt exemplifies these qualities daily in her classroom, where she engages students in hands-on, inquiry-based lessons that closely mirror the real and practical work of scientists.

Beyond instruction, Hyatt is known for building a positive, inclusive classroom where every student feels known, seen, and valued.

Her use of an in-class house system fosters teamwork and belonging, and her emphasis on building strong relationships helps students grow both academically and personally.

She also serves as a mentor to new teachers, develops STEM curriculum, and represents Alpine ISD on multiple leadership committees.

"Mrs. Hyatt is an exceptional math and science teacher and an incredible advocate for the sciences and for our kids," said Alpine ISD Superintendent Dr. Michelle Rinehart in her award recommendation.



West Texas Geology Foundation award winner, Tracy Hyatt with other celebrants

Move over to protect roadside workers

TEXAS DOT
Austin

Roadside workers, law enforcement and other first responders risk their lives every day, and drivers can help keep them safe by always moving over or slowing down.

To mark Crash Responder Safety Week shared its "Be Safe. Drive Smart" campaign to call on all Texans to be kind, courteous and safe to protect roadway responders.

Texas law requires motorists to move over an entire lane or slow to 20 mph below the posted speed limit when approaching law enforcement, tow trucks, utility vehicles, municipal waste trucks, emergency responders and TxDOT vehicles with activated overhead lights on the side of the road.

Since Sept. 1, 2025, the law has been expanded to include vehicles driven by animal control officers and parking enforcement employees.

Failure to follow the Move Over or Slow Down law can result in a fine of up to \$1,250 for a first offense.

Tips for drivers

Be alert when approaching roadside law enforcement, tow trucks, service vehicles with flashing lights on.

When possible, move out of the lane closest to these vehicles.

Slow down to 20 mph below the posted speed limit if safely switching lanes is not possible/

See DriveLikeATexan.com.

Big Bend: This year's blue and brown Santas

Marfa Police Department

The Marfa Police Department's Blue Santa is accepting new, unopened gifts at its police station at 113 S. Highland and at the Marfa Dairy Queen and Dollar General.

Presidio County Sheriff's Office

The Presidio County Sheriff's Office is collecting donations for Community Holiday Celebration.

Presidio Police Department

The Presidio Police Department is kicking off their first Operation Blue Santa event. Gifts or donations by check

or money order can be dropped off at the Police Department or City Hall. For questions please contact Chief Pugi Covos at chiefcovos@presidiopd.org.

Brewster County Sheriff's Office and Alpine Police Department

Sheriff Ronny Dodson and the sheriff's office are accepting new, unwrapped toys to be presented to Brewster County children before Christmas. Bring your donations by the office, or be on the lookout for the donation barrels at local businesses. The Brown Santa Program is dependent upon generous donations.

Jeff Davis County Sheriff's Office

There are families among us who may be struggling this year, and together, we can help lift their spirits. We're asking our neighbors, friends, and local businesses to join us in spreading Christmas joy by donating new, unwrapped toys for children in need." Donations can be dropped off at the Jeff Davis County Sheriff's Office. Message their Facebook page to add families to the gifting list, or stop by the office in person.



Jeff Davis County Sheriff Victor Lopez offers Manny Dutchover and Poco Mexico Restaurant for the generous donation to Operation Blue Santa.



MARFA VISTA
SPECIALIZING IN MARFA PROPERTIES

432.295.3301 MARFAVISTA.COM



Expanding Across West Texas

BBT is proud to have received \$4.89 million in funding through the BOOT (Broadband Opportunity Outreach and Technology) Grant Program. With this support, we are expanding our fiber network to reach over 500 homes in Fort Davis, Limpia Crossing, Iraan, Marathon, and Alpine.

This initiative is part of our ongoing mission to close the digital divide by building reliable, future-ready internet infrastructure in rural West Texas.

Please note: Some areas included in this expansion are pending final agreements related to AEP pole contracts.

We remain committed to transparency and will continue working closely with local partners to complete these projects as efficiently as possible. Stay informed at bigbend.com

MAC SEPTIC PORTA POTTIES

Rick McIvor
Owner / Operator

325-812-5541
RickMcIvor7@gmail.com
P.O. Box 640, Fort Davis, TX 79734



Specializing in Texas Ranch and Rural Properties

Cleat L. Stephens, Broker

FindARanchOutWest.com



Protecting Clients. Conserving the Land.



THE MARFA NATIONAL BANK

24 Hour ATM Personal Banking
Loans Business Banking

301 S. Highland Ave. - Marfa
432-729-4344 or 877-729-4344 www.marfanb.com

COCHINEAL
MARFA

CASUAL FINE DINING IN FAR WEST TEXAS

107 West San Antonio Street
Marfa, Texas 79843
432 729 3300 - cochinealmarfa.com

MOONLIGHT GEMSTONES

Paul Graybeal, Owner
Ben Toro, Associate
432-729-4526
pgagates@gmail.com
moonlightgemstones.com



P.O. Box 1220
1001 W. San Antonio St.
Marfa, Texas 79843
Mon-Sat, 10-5pm
Sunday by Appt

Lapidary • Silversmith • Custom Jewelry • Rocks • Fossils • Minerals



IRAM MARQUEZ

903 W SAN ANTONIO-PO BOX 965-MARFA, TX 79843
OFFICE - (432) 729-4306 FAX - (432) 729-4305
Iram@MarfaInsurance.com
www.marfainsurance.com

NOTICES

Información de concienciación pública sobre el gas natural
La ciudad de Marfa opera un sistema de distribución de gas natural Las tuberías de gas se encuentran bajo tierra en las calles y callejones de la ciudad.

Consejos de seguridad para el gas natural

- Dar servicio a los aparatos de gas natural periódicamente
- No use una estufa de gas para calentar una habitación
- Mantenga los litros y los productos inflamables alejados de los calentadores de agua a gas
- Evite el envenenamiento por monóxido de carbono mediante la instalación, el mantenimiento y el uso adecuados de los electrodomésticos.
- Enseñe a su familia a reconocer el olor del gas natural

emergencias
Para información adicional llame o escriba a:
Departamento de Gas de la Ciudad de Marfa
113 S Highland Avenue
P.O. Box 787
Marfa, Texas 79843
432-729-1998

Public awareness information on Natural Gas
The City of Marfa operates a natural gas distribution system. The gas pipes are located underground in the City's streets and alleys.

- Natural Gas Safety Tips:**
- Service Natural Gas appliances periodically
 - Don't use a gas range to heat a room
 - Keep litter and flammables away from gas hot water heaters
 - Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by proper appliance installation, maintenance and use
 - Teach your family to recognize the smell of natural gas

- You can recognize a gas leak by:**
- Dead or dying vegetation
 - Unusual changes to soil
 - Dry, blowing dirt
 - Bubbling water
 - Corrosion or physical damage
 - Insect swarms or dead flies
 - Smell of odorized gas
 - Hissing sound

- Natural Gas Hazards**
- Natural Gas is flammable and can ignite when it comes into contact with an ignition source
 - In confined spaces, exposure can cause dizziness, asphyxiation and may be toxic, if inhaled at high concentrations
 - Natural gas may contain H2S
 - May cause asphyxiation, burns, bodily injury, fatality, and property damage

- Natural Gas Facts**
- Natural Gas is a clean, economical, and efficient fuel
 - Natural gas is very safe when used and handled properly
 - Natural gas is non-toxic and non-poisonous
 - Natural gas has excellent safety record

- If you suspect a gas leak:**
- Leave the area immediately
 - Do not operate electrical appliances
 - Do not operate electrical switches
 - Call the gas department for help on a phone away from a leak
 - Eliminate ignition sources and secure leak area
 - Do not operate motor vehicles near leak area and provide traffic control as needed

- Report Gas leaks by calling:**
432-729-1998, 432-295-3050 or 911
- Remember to stop before you dig!
 - Law requires you to call 811 48 hours before any excavation project begins so gas and other lines can be located in advance.
 - Call 811 before excavation begins Wait required time (48 hours) Respect the marks and city's underground gas lines marked in yellow
 - Dig with care.
 - The leading causes of pipeline incidents is third party digging without proper notification to 811.

The City of Marfa Gas Department is committed to the safety of our community as well as the safety of the environment.

- Priorities in the event of emergencies:**
- Protection of life
 - Protection of property
 - This would include the following programs: Damage Prevention and Emergency Response

For additional information call or write to:
City of Marfa Gas Department
113 S Highland Ave
Po Box 787
Marfa, Texas 79843
432-729-1998

CROSSWORD

Edited by David Steinberg November 27, 2025

ACROSS

1 Iraqi or Qatari
5 Like heat rash
10 Puts chips on red, say
14 Bagel or bialy
15 Western lake home to Emerald Bay
16 Jane of Gothic fiction
17 *Easy opponents in the boxing ring
19 Show to a table
20 Secret hoard
21 Things shown at the airport or bar
22 PCs introduced in 1981
23 *Video game featuring Lara Croft
27 Mono alternative
29 Difficult conditions
32 Footed the bill
33 West African nation known for desert blues
36 Stitch together
37 And so forth: Abbr.
38 *River through Washington, D.C.
40 Miracle-
41 Capital trashed by Godzilla
43 Dance part

44 "Cool!"
45 Moves furtively
47 Horrifices
49 *Comic strip hero with a skull ring
52 Exec's helper
54 F- or K+
55 Like 2024, in comparison to 2025
58 Cracker brand that collaborated with Oreo
59 *Absolute lowest point
63 Helpful hint
64 Disappear into the
65 Classroom helper
66 Drink brand with a two-lizard logo
67 Alone in a cockpit
68 One may hold a B.S.

11 Cosmetic product for shaping arches
12 Melbourne transport
13 Theater backdrops
18 Hammer-throwing god
24 Note from the boss
25 Bathtub toys
26 Frisbee's shape
27 Kept under wraps
28 Concert souvenir
30 Out in the sticks
31 What adult jaguars have that adult pumas don't
32 Furry adoptees
34 Real estate parcel
35 "To clarify ..."
38 "Don't _____ the bear"

39 Date with a doc
42 Game played with five dice
44 Sticker worn at meet and greets
46 What rises from a cathedral roof
48 Sport with ponies
50 Owl noises
51 Dried poblano pepper
52 Story trajectories
53 Grain storage tower
56 Move a spoon in circles
57 Dr Pepper or Pibb Xtra
60 "Game Shakers" star Mitchell
61 Frat house address
62 _____ student (aspiring doc)

DOWN

1 Creative pursuits
2 Dig like a pig
3 _____ mater
4 Criticized severely
5 Figure skater Midori
6 Tic-____-toe
7 Committee leader
8 Odyssey creator
9 Polite response to the boss, perhaps
10 Overwhelm with requests

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

11/20 © 2025 Andrews McMeel Universal www.upuzzles.com

11/27

Turkey Trot by Zhouqin Burnikel

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

SUDUKO

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

11/27

© 2025 Andrews McMeel Syndication

SOLUTION:

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

11/20

© 2025 Andrews McMeel Syndication



Roads are blocked in Marathon ordered to isolate horses at risk

EHV-1 outbreak forces road closures

Texas is experiencing an outbreak of EHV-1-virus, an extremely contagious virus that affects horses.

It spreads quickly and can cause death, with over 20 horses in the state already dying from the virus. This strain is particularly aggressive. SRSU is working with Ag Commissioner Sid Miller and the Texas Vet Board on biosecurity recommendations to keep our university horses and student horses safe.

To help with prevention of any infection from horses that may be trailered into Alpine, we will close Paseo del Norte Road, which runs through the Turner Range Animal Science (RAS) campus from just south of the academic building to the Old Marathon Highway. Gate 1 and Gate 2, as labeled in the attached map, will be closed until further notice, and the public will not have access to the S.A.L.E. Arena until the outbreak is controlled.

Continued from page 1

Force patrols now produce regular immigration arrests. All this is also motivated by an increased salary rate for officers, as well as quarterly bonuses for successful deportation. The effectiveness as a force multiplier in counties has grown, and arrests of “criminal illegals”—as the administration calls them—has risen by about 30%. Federal funding has also reduced the burden on local budgets, and the DHS memorandum lifted restrictions on enforcement in sensitive zones. The downsides are critical. The ACLU records numerous complaints of racial profiling.

By December, Texas will top a hundred 287(g) agreements.

Zoe Nicole Stein, a sweet and deeply loved daughter, sister, and friend, left us on November 19, 2025, at just 11 years old in Conroe, Texas. Born on August 25, 2014, in Lubbock, Texas, Zoe was a bright and joyful girl whose smile could light up any room. She loved her family with her whole heart and had a way of making everyone around her feel special. At Bozman Intermediate and Greenwood Elementary, she was known for her giggles in the hallways and the excitement she brought to every new day.

Zoe was endlessly curious and full of imagination. She enjoyed roller skating, biking, and going on little adventures with the people she loved.

She adored animals—especially capybaras—and she liked cheering on the amazing challenges of Ninja Warrior. With a sketchbook always nearby, Zoe filled page after page with drawings of the magical worlds she dreamed up.

She leaves behind a family who loves her more than words can say: her father, Kenneth “Adrian” Stein; her mother, Cynthia Montes; her stepdad, Peter Montes; her sister, Liana Stein; and her stepsiblings, Alexandra and Aidan Montes. Her grandparents—Esther and Ernesto Martinez, and David Stein—will always carry her laughter in their hearts.

Zoe is also remembered with love by her aunts and uncles, Lisa and Mark Sanchez; her cousins, Michael, Kaleb, and Uri Sanchez; and many great aunts and great



Zoe Nicole Stein

collaboration.

“Water in the Desert has become a trusted forum for real conversations about West Texas water,” said Billy Tarrant, interim director of the WTWRC.

“We’re looking forward to bringing everyone back together to share new science, strengthen partnerships, and keep the momentum going.”

Highlights will include panels on groundwater and surface-water science, a regional legislative outlook, landowner perspectives, and the unveiling of draft priorities for the new West Texas Water Research Center. Speakers and detailed program information will be announced soon.

Registration is open! Early bird rates are available through Jan. 2

uncles. Even though Zoe’s time here was short, the happiness she gave to her family and friends will live on forever. Her spirit will continue to shine through the memories, stories, and love shared by everyone who knew her. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, November 25, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Alpine Memorial Funeral Home Chapel, located at 209 W. Sul Ross Ave, Alpine, Texas 79830. A Rosary will begin at 7:00 PM.

A Funeral Mass took place on Wednesday, November 26, 2025, at 10:00 AM at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Fort Davis, Texas. Burial followed at St. Joseph’s Catholic Cemetery in Fort Davis, Texas.

In honor of Zoe and her love for animals, donations may be made to Grand Companions in Fort Davis, Texas: <https://www.grandcompanions.org/tribute-donation.html>. Services are entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas.

Condolences may be left at: alpinememorialfuneralhome.com

A joyful heart and creative soul



THE LINCOLN HOTEL



Chose one of our 14 Marfa-style courtyard homes in the heart of town. Full kitchens. The Lincoln Hotel. 105 West Lincoln Street. Marfa, Texas 79843. Book on our site  thelincolnmarfa.com for the best rate.



WEBB'S FAIR & SQUARE

FORT DAVIS • TEXAS

Please join us Saturday, Nov 29th 1-4pm for

BIRD CALLS

paintings by Adam Young
goodtimes, art & music

105 N.Front St. - Historic Lodge Hall - Fort Davis
webbartgallery.com

PRESCRIPTION SHOP MARFA

A full-service pharmacy. Now accepting many insurance plans for service while you wait.

105 East Oak Street,
next to Marfa Country Clinic
432.729.4244
rxshopmarfa@gmail.com



ClearPoint WELLNESS

Feel Like Yourself Again

Lisa Hastings, DC
Dr. of Chiropractic, Multisensory Functional Integration
In Marfa by appt. 432.214.2031 www.clearpointwellness.com

Now. A plumber you can trust.

Serving all three Big Bend counties. For leak repair, drain cleaning, water heaters, fixtures, filtration system, gas (natural and propane), and new construction.



Dependable • Local • Veteran • Insured • Licensed M-46345 (432) 538-8039

MARFA HARDWARE COMPANY

313 EAST SAN ANTONIO ST
MARFA, TEXAS 79843
marfahardware.com

Celebrating OUR FIRST YEAR NOW OPEN UNTIL 7:00 ON WEEKDAYS

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.

The real horror of the Epstein story isn’t the crime

It’s the indifference

By AMBER ERCEG

AS SOMEONE who was subjected to childhood sexual abuse for years, I have a complicated relationship to the Epstein story (as I expect most people in my position do). It is deeply important to me personally to bear witness to the stories of victims. I know how critical feeling seen, heard, and believed is to healing from this type of abuse. And I also know that these victims are victimized in part because so few people in their lives do see and hear them. Being able to sit with them in their testimony, even if only from a great distance, is a support I feel truly privileged to provide (and is the driving force behind my series of drawings of children who survived abuse).

But while I feel empowered by reading books like Virginia Giuffre’s *Nobody’s Girl*, detailing the abuses perpetrated upon her, first by her father and later by Epstein and his associates, reading some of the emails that have been released has been triggering. Not because I am not prepared to hear of the abuse—nothing I’ve read of their actions has at all surprised me—but because of the flippancy with which they speak of their crimes and the wholesale lack of recognition of their victims as people.

Children who suffer sexual abuse are forever changed, their brains literally physically altered by their experiences. Regardless of the path their lives take, they will always feel the effects of their abuse.

Every day for the rest of their lives the ramifications of the harm they suffered will impact their opportunities, their choices, their relationships, their health, and their ability to move through the world. Regardless of the resources available to them or the support they may someday receive, the effects of abuse are forever lurking beneath the surface, silently guiding them. They will never be wholly free.

Meanwhile, the many, many men (and women) who abused them will feel no impact. Even outside of legal justice (which the vast majority of predators will never face), they are free to remain empowered and confident, with the impact they’ve had on others’ lives never even considered, much less atoned for. They are so unburdened by their crimes that they joke with each other about them.

Send gifts winking at them. And conspire on how best to discredit their victims should they find the strength to speak. These men are evil for the crimes they committed, but they are equally monstrous for the flippancy with which they regard them. After reading Virginia Giuffre’s book,

I told Mike, my partner, that I believed there would be nuclear-



“When It Started” is a series of ball point pen drawings of survivors at the age their abuse began.

level fallout if the Epstein files were ever released. I still believe that. But it remains to be seen whether that fallout takes the form of a reckoning where victims are believed and perpetrators are held to account, or if we instead find ourselves publicly accepting once and for all that girls’ bodies belong to men.



MBER ERCEG

Amber Erceg is an artist, writer, and a mother with a day job living in the Houston area.

This article was first published Texas Outlaw Writers, a newsletter. Join at texasoutlawwriters.com.

“Your Church walks with you and supports you”

Continued from page 1

Jordan, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, largely defended the moves. His committee oversees immigration policy among other issues.

“We’ll look into all this,” the Ohio Republican said. “But I think the ICE agents are doing the Lord’s work.”

Some Catholics, notably Vice President JD Vance, support the immigration crackdown and have condemned U.S. bishops for not backing the administration’s enforcement actions.

The pope has held his ground. Recently, the pontiff said during a meeting with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that he wished the bishops were “stronger in their voice.”

El Paso Bishop Mark Seitz, the chairman of the Committee on Migration within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has long been an outspoken critic.

The pope was moved when Seitz presented him letters and a video that captured the anxieties of people facing deportation, according to members of an El Paso delegation following the meeting in early October at the Vatican.

“It’s so important that we as a church give a message of hope in the midst of these horrible struggles, what’s going on in so many cities in the United States right now. At least the church cannot be silent,” the pope told the El Paso delegation, according to a video of the meeting provided by the Hope Border Institute whose leader attended the meeting.

Days after meeting with the pope, Seitz stood before union leaders, immigrant advocates, aid groups, political leaders, students and called on churches and non-profit groups along the border to stand up for the poor and immigrants.

“What has happened to our heart?” he asked. “Today in the country and the world, I wonder whether we can even recognize our country, because we were founded on these principles and our Lady of Liberty has stood where so many of our immigrants have entered as a sign of hope, as a place of justice.”



CORRIE BOUDREAUX/PU—ENTE

Interfaith religious leaders lead the “Vigilia Aquí Estamos” march and prayer service in El Paso, Texas

Parish pain

Roman Catholicism remains the largest faith among U.S. Latinos, the largest minority group targeted by immigration agents. The deportation crisis has hit immigrants with force, traumatizing children and parents alike all along the heavily Latino U.S. borderlands and beyond.

“In some cases, it’s fear,” says Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller in San Antonio. “In many cases, it’s terror.”

About 1.4 million immigrants have left the U.S. since President Donald Trump returned to power, according to a new study from the Pew Research Center. The decline contrasts starkly with immigrant population increases over five decades.

The dragnet first hit the Los Angeles region, sparking panic and protests. After immigrants were detained outside two parish churches in his diocese east of Los Angeles, San Bernardino Bishop Alberto Rojas spoke out.

“I say once again to our immigrant communities who are bearing the trauma and injustice of these tactics that your Church

walks with you and supports you,” Rojas said in a June 23 letter. “We join you in carrying this very difficult cross.”

Rojas has temporarily allowed people to skip Sunday Mass because they’re afraid to go out. Some are living their faith in other ways.

At Our Lady of Soledad parish in the southern California city of Coachella parishioners and a community nonprofit continue to make deliveries to immigrants wary of wandering outside.

“There are still a lot of people who aren’t leaving home to buy groceries, they aren’t sending their children to school,” said Francisco Gómez, the parish priest. “The kids don’t want to go to school because they are afraid they’ll come home and mom and dad won’t be there.”

In San Diego, Bishop Michael M. Pham signaled his support in June by leading other clergy to local immigration courts. The first Vietnamese-American U.S. bishop, Pham fled Vietnam as a 13-year-old refugee and was only recently named to his post by Pope Leo XIV.

Dozens of clergy members and laity from several faith traditions have since shown up to attend court hearings as witnesses.

From court monitoring to suicide prevention

In Nogales, Mexico, which shares the border with an Arizona city of the same name, Catholic nuns, lay people and volunteers serve meals to migrants at the Catholic-run Kino Border Initiative, which also has a shelter and legal and other services.

Other faiths have joined the effort, of course.

In El Paso, Rev. Marta Pumroy with the Tres Rios Presbyterian Border Foundation recently led dozens of people outside the federal building in song and prayer during an interfaith vigil. Some of the group then went inside to monitor immigration court proceedings.

“Having people speak about it and watch it and witness it, [to] share those stories starts restoring and building that humanity,” Pumroy said.

One of them, Bonnie Daniels, said she attends the court hear-

ings three or four times a week. She recently witnessed a man facing return to his native Venezuela who asked how to reach the top of the seven-story court building. He wanted to jump, she said.

“Thankfully the nuns talked him out of it,” Daniels said.

One of those nuns was Leticia Gutierrez-Balderrama, director of the El Paso Diocese’ Migrant Hospitality Ministry. While desperation is rife, many with court hearings find strength in their faith, Gutierrez said.

“People don’t lose their faith,” she said. “On the contrary. They ask God to be with them as they make their court appearances.”

Along with spiritual support, the nuns and other volunteers provide practical help to prepare families for what could happen. They ensure that relatives have the immigrants’ contacts and relevant documents and know how to find them if they are detained, Gutierrez said.

Another volunteer, Dee Anne Croucher, has witnessed the arrest of mothers with children.

“Even when the mom breaks down crying and they’re taking

her away and the children are all marching by her side,” Croucher said. “I don’t think they really understand what’s happening.”

St. Toribio Romo, protector?

El Paso First Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Celino recently stood under the high arches of St. Patrick’s Cathedral reading aloud scripture about welcoming the stranger.

“As people of faith we are facing this and similar dire situations caused by racism that has penetrated our culture and our public policies,” Celino told the gathering, incense thick in the air. “It’s as if our country is at war against the poor and the refugees. We cannot remain silent.”

As the service ended, people were given cards, written in English and Spanish, explaining the constitutional rights of immigrants and how to respond to immigration agents if questioned.

“We have a duty to notify law enforcement of who we are, but that’s easy, just tell them your name,” said Imelda Maynard, from the Catholic nonprofit Estrella del Paso. “Beyond that we have the right to remain silent.”

In downtown Dallas, at the National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the rector, Rev. Jesus Belmontes, said he’s often asked now from parishioners for letters attesting to the good character of migrants held in detention. He said there’s nothing political about his support of immigrants. “This isn’t about being Republican or Democratic. This is justice.”

In the cathedral gift shop, among the many prayer cards for sale are some featuring St. Toribio Romo, a Mexican priest who died in 1928 and is revered as a patron saint of migrants.

Some believe the priest can render immigrants invisible to U.S. agents.

This story was co-published with Puente News Collaborative.

Anita Snow reported from Tucson. Angela Kocherga and Alyda Muela reported from El Paso, and Dianne Solis from Dallas.

OPINION



Hunger should not result from politics

By Sen. César J. Blanco

WHEN the longest federal shutdown brought the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to a standstill, it exposed a truth we cannot afford to ignore: hunger doesn't wait for politicians to settle their disagreements. And when government grinds to a halt, it's hard-working families and the most vulnerable who feel the impact first and most painfully.

Here in Texas, food insecurity is a daily reality for millions of our neighbors.

Texas now has the highest number of food-insecure residents in the nation, with 5.3 million people struggling to afford enough to eat.

In just one year, our food insecurity rate jumped from 16.4% to 17.6%. Today, one in six Texas households is food insecure. These are hardworking families, doing everything right, yet still unable to consistently put food on the table.

In moments like these, programs like SNAP are lifelines. SNAP remains one of the most effective tools we have to reduce hunger and stabilize families. That is why, in the Texas Senate, I've worked to make sure families can access these benefits without outdated rules or unnecessary obstacles standing in their way.

During the 88th Legislative Session, I successfully sponsored and passed House Bill 1287 to update Texas's outdated Vehicle Asset Test. For years, families were denied food assistance simply because they owned a modest used car. A car they needed to get to work, take their children to school or drive a loved one to the doctor.

Those limits hadn't been updated in two decades. HB 1287 finally brought those values in line with today's market realities

so families wouldn't lose access to food just because the price of a used car went up.

It was common sense, bipartisan, and it made a meaningful difference for families across El Paso, West Texas and the entire state. But protecting access to SNAP means more than updating outdated rules. It means fixing the systems families rely on every day. That's why, during the 89th Session, I filed Senate Bill 1031 to confront the growing backlog of SNAP applications at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Today, too many Texans wait weeks or even months for the help they qualify for, while food banks strain under record demand trying to fill the gap. SB 1031 laid out a clear, proven path forward that would have streamlined the approval process, reduced red tape, and adopted a federal-quality control model already used successfully in 45 other states.

The bill didn't pass last session, but the problem hasn't disappeared.

If anything, it has taken on new urgency with the federal government's recent announcement that all current SNAP recipients may soon be required to reapply under a new eligibility verification system. For families already navigating delays, adding another layer of bureaucracy could make an already fragile situation even worse. If a family qualifies for help, they shouldn't be trapped in bureaucratic limbo while their pantry sits empty. No child should have to go without dinner because a state agency is understaffed. No parent should have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries while their application sits untouched. Hunger doesn't wait, and neither should the systems designed to prevent it.

Policy matters, but so does community. That's why I remain committed to helping families not only through legislation but through direct action.

Each year, my office hosts a

Thanksgiving Turkey Drive so families can sit down to a holiday meal with less financial stress. This year marks our 11th annual drive, where we'll donate more than 250 turkeys to families across our community. It's a small gesture, but one that reflects who we are as Texans: people who show up for one another.

At its core, this is about who we want to be as a state. I believe in a Texas where every family has the security and opportunity they deserve, no matter their ZIP code or income. And I'll keep fighting to modernize our food assistance systems and eliminate needless delays, not just during shutdowns and emergencies, but every single day.

In the wealthiest country in the world, hunger should never be the result of politics, bureaucracy, or partisanship; it should never be the lived reality for a child in Texas, and for as long as I have the privilege to serve, I'll work to ensure it never is.



State Sen. César J. Blanco loads up to head to Montana Vista for a turkey giveaway in Montana Vista

LETTERS

Fair delivers books to students

Many thanks to the individuals and groups who helped raise funds for the MISD library during the recent Scholastic Book Fair.

Marfa PTO, Bianca Gonzalez, and Officers Lugo and Fuentes played an especially important role in helping the library reach its goal.

Because of our community's support, more than 130 new books are ready for our library shelves, teachers' classrooms, and—best of all—into the hands of our students.

And even more titles are on the way. My motto remains: Reading is dreaming with your eyes open.

CRAWFORD MARGINOT
Marfa Schools Librarian



MARY CANTRELL

Vecinos ayudando vecinos

This holiday season we want all to know that we care deeply about our neighbors. *Está temporada, nosotros queremos que sepan que estamos allí con todos nuestros vecinos y estamos listos para ayudarlos.* Each member of our community matters and deserves our very best efforts.

The Jeff Davis Food Pantry is requesting boxes of cereal for kids and adults, and the Jeff Davis County Democratic Party will match donations of cereal at \$5 per box up to \$500 for milk and other essentials. El banco de alimentos Jeff Davis

solicita cajas de cereales para niños y adultos. Please deliver boxes of cereal to the following convenient locations by Saturday, December 6. Por favor, entregue las cajas de cereales en los siguientes lugares convenientes antes del sábado 6 de diciembre.

In Fort Davis: 205 Circle D Ave; In Valentine: 114 Texas Ave; In DMR: 103 Yellow Knife Trail

MIKE RAWLINS
Chair, Davis County Democratic Party

Questionable searches erode trust

What is going on with our local policing? Minor traffic stops are getting out of hand. A burned-out light over a license plate—still visible from 50 feet away—should not justify pulling someone over.

Yes, officers can issue citations for equipment failures, but common sense and courtesy suggest a warning would be more appropriate. Even more troubling is the reliance on patrol dogs that appear inadequately trained. When a dog fails to detect drugs, yet an officer insists otherwise, it undermines public trust. These practices do not pass the “smell test.”

The motto “To Serve and Protect” seems to have been replaced with “Stop everyone for the smallest infraction and take them to the cleaners.” This is not the Marfa many of us grew up in—a town where neighbors looked out for one another, doors could be left unlocked, and crime was nearly unheard of.

The landscape has not changed; sadly, the people and practices have. Marfa's small-town charm is eroding under unnecessary policing tactics. I urge our community leaders and law enforcement to reconsider their approach. Respectful, proportionate enforcement builds trust. Heavy-handed stops and questionable searches do the opposite.

JESS MARTINEZ
Ex Shorthorn, Class of '67

BIG BEND Sentinel

Editor	Rob D'Amico rob@bigbendsentinel.com
Reporter	Sam Karas sam@bigbendsentinel.com
Contributor, Manager	Mary Etherington mary@bigbendsentinel.com
Copy Editor	Ariele Gentiles arielle@bigbendsentinel.com
Designer, Advertising	Andrew Siegfried designer@bigbendsentinel.com
Sports Reporter	Roxy Lara
Distribution	Gilberto Carrillo
Distribution	Rene Gonzales

Sentinel News Project

www.bigbendsentinel.com

Published weekly on Thursdays 50 times a year
by Sentinel News Project,
A Texas non-profit organization.

President and Publisher	Roger Black roger@bigbendsentinel.com
Director	Don Gardner
Director	Gonzalo Garcia Barcha

Office	209½ W. El Paso St., Marfa
Mailing address	Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843
Telephone	(432) 729-4342
Contact	editor@bigbendsentinel.com
Advertising	ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Annual subscription rates are \$50 in Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties, and \$60 elsewhere in and the United States. Special rates apply abroad. Periodicals class postage paid at Marfa, Texas 79843. Postmaster: Send address changes to Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843

ART
Sentinel

Mexico cannot be defined by a single color, nor by a single identity. It holds as many as its living world—as its plants and animals, its legends and music, its silences and its boundless biodiversity. To recognize what the North embodies is to rediscover love and pride for the land where we were born, the land we behold through *Desierto Peregrino*.

—RICARDO FLORES MARTÍNEZ



Michael Valverde, “Canon del Peguis”

Desert pilgrim

MIGUEL VALVERDE of Chihuahua City has more than two decades of experience devoted to the exploration of color, identity, and cultural symbolism. His work spans muralism, sculpture, and graphic art, blending traditional techniques with a contemporary aesthetic that creates a dialogue between Mexico and Europe.

Valverde has participated in solo and group exhibitions in museums and galleries across Mexico, the United States, and Europe. His work is distinguished by the integration of desert imagery, *lucha*

libre (Mexican wrestling), nature, and the duality between life and death, offering a profound reflection on heritage and collective memory.

Big Bend residents and visitors can now see his work close up with “Desierto Peregrino” at the Museum of the Big Bend on the Sul Ross State University Campus, starting with a reception on Friday December 5 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Admission is \$10 for the general public, free for museum members. (A closing reception will be held on February 28, 2026.) Visit museumofthebigbend.com/exhibits to purchase tickets.

In the words of Ricardo Flores Martínez, manager of the Museum of Tequila and Mezcal in Mexico City:

“Through his art, Miguel Valverde dares to reveal to us the essence of northern Mexico—unfolding a vision that reaches deep into its landscapes, alive with color, flora, and fauna. The climates themselves are painted through color: vast scenes stretching from the Baja California Peninsula to the deserts of Sonora and Chihuahua, where temperatures swing from the searing—48°C—to the biting—14°C—lands that know nothing of half measures.”

Terlingua community theater starts a new season

Nights are getting cold in the high desert—even down in Terlingua—but plucky hometown theatre company Last Minute Low Budget Productions has a winter lineup to keep South Brewster County warm. The theatre, which has run shows since 1989, got its start behind the Terlingua Store, putting on high-caliber productions with makeshift sets that had to be disassembled each year in time for the Tolbert Chili Cookoff. Enthusiasm led to the company’s move in 2011 to the Cinnabar Theatre (right), thanks to the volunteer fire department.

The lights went dark during the pandemic, but mpw Last Minute Low Budget is rumbling back to

life. Last year, the board sorted through a shipping container filled with NASA and space- artifacts, passed on from Terlingua CISD. With online auctions, the theater was able to raise enough cash to raise the curtains this year.

Here are the next two events:

Friday, November 28, 6 pm—Filmmaker and part-time Terlinguan Aaron Brown screens a new feature, **Home Free**, a “bold coming-of-age college comedy—Dazed & Confused

meets Superbad,” says producer Lenny Barszap. “Imagine a Trojan horse social impact film focused on one of the most pervasive problems across America—homelessness.”

Friday and Saturday, December 5-6, and 19-20, 7 pm—**Terlingua Burlesque** returns with four nights of raunchy reverie Shows are open to the public 18-plus. They almost always sell out, so arrive on the early side if you want to be sure to get a seat.—SAM KARAS



Dreams and poems



Poet Mathias Svalina is in residence in Marfa over the next few weeks and is seeking volunteers to record their dreams on the night of Monday, November 24, through the morning of Tuesday, November 25. “

The goal of the archive is to keep a record of the dreams dreamt in the city on one night,” he explained in an Instagram post. Svalina is a dream archivist, launching “Dream Delivery Service” in Denver in 2014. He’s taken the project to cities as big as Seattle and as sma ll as Fruita, Colorado.

The premise is simple: Local subscribers receive a personalized dream-poem delivered by bike every morning, and far-away participants can receive theirs by mail.

His Marfa project is more community-oriented, inviting the public to take part in plumbing the collective subconscious. Marfans can record and send their dreams via email, text, voice message, voicemail, or more creative means to mathias.svalina@gmail.com or to 718-986-8295—or they can come by Coyote Coffee on the morning of the 25th to recount their dreams in person.

Over the next few weeks, Svalina will make a hand-bound book of the dreams to be donated to the Marfa Public Library, with online edition.—SK