

Sheriff's office to receive grant

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

The Brewster County Commissioners Court held a special meeting on Thursday, December 28 after the return from the Christmas holiday. The regular meeting that was scheduled for Tuesday, December 26 was canceled due to lack of quorum. There were two items up for discussion and decision during the Thursday meeting. First, the court considered the ratification of the salary increase for the Brewster County sheriff's office, required by Senate Bill 22.

Senate Bill 22 relates to establishing grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's offices, constable's offices, and prosecutor's offices in rural counties and was passed on June 7, effective September 1. This

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Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

2024.0.00"
January.0.00"



Burn Ban ON

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PLEASE REMEMBER TO
THANK A VETERAN,
A MEMBER OF THE
ARMED FORCES,
OR A LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICER EVERY DAY.



Big ticket items discussed for Alpine ISD

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine ISD (AISD) Board of Trustees met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, December 20. On the agenda were two big-ticket items that the board will be looking at and discussing at length after the holidays.

The first big item on the list was Kokernot Field. One of the prime issues currently facing the historic ballpark is the grounds situation. Many years

of play and weather have created leveling issues between the outfield and infield, creating a hazard for players. This past week, Dr. Michelle Rinehart and Athletic Director Andy Smith met with officials at Sul Ross, including their Athletic Director Amanda Workman, her assistant Clayton Garcia, and Troy Canaba who is in charge of operations and facilities. This meeting was two-fold in that they discussed



Dr. Michelle Rinehart

the maintenance and upgrades to the facility as well as setting up a new lease agreement between the AISD who owns the field and Sul Ross who utilizes the field and has historically been in charge of main-

tenance, including the grounds. AISD, as part of their contribution to the dirt work that has already been scheduled and will begin next month, will utilize a portion of the \$10,000 that the Alpine Cowboys pay

the district to use the field each summer, along with some local HOT funds the district was awarded to pay for this work. The cost of the labor and materials is about \$25,000 and will be split between AISD and Sul Ross, with AISD spending around \$8,000 from the HOT funds and around \$8,000 of the money paid by the Alpine Cowboys with Sul Ross picking up the remainder.

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New Year's Luck



Terlinguans and visitors line up to partake in a "bowl of good luck" at the annual Terlingua Pea-Off held each New Year's Day in the ghosttown.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

Stokes announces she will step down from council

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

The Alpine City Council held its first regularly scheduled meeting of the new year in which council member Judy Stokes of Ward 1 announced that she would be stepping down from serving on the council.

"After much deliberation, I have made the decision to step down, by May 2024, as Ward 1 Councilor for the City of Alpine due to personal and health reasons. I feel privileged to have served this community that I love for the past two and a half years. I know I have accomplished good things for our city and hope that you all continue to support the sitting council. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you," said Stokes.

The other members of the council expressed their appreciation for Stokes and thanked her for her service.

Mayor Catherine Eaves said, "We respect your decision and of course, we are going to miss you tremendously."

To this, Stokes said that she would still be in the meetings, just out in the audience. In related news, council member Chris Rodriguez Ward 2, said, "Just a reminder that positions two and four are up for election this year." January 16 is the first day to file and the last day to file is February 17. Those who are interested

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The members of the Alpine City Council commemorate the first meeting of 2024 outside the council chambers. Pictured here, from left to right, are City Secretary Geo Calderon, Mayor Catherine Eaves, council members Judy Stokes, Ward 1 and Rick Stephens, Ward 5, City Manager Megan Antrim, and council member Chris Rodriguez, Ward 2.

Photo by Joh Covington

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OBITUARIES

Shirley Bellier

Shirley Bellier passed away peacefully at home on December 22. Shirley Ann Bellier was born in Wichita Falls on September 1, 1944, to Albert Kelley and Ruby Davis. She was preceded in death by her father, Albert Kelley, mother, Ruby Mae Davis, and son-in-law Mark Cole.

She is survived by her siblings: brothers Mike (Linda) Kelly, and Nathan (Shelley) Kelly, and sister Angela Davis. Daughters: Rhonda Cole, Debbie



(Jerry) Mercer, Sharon (Dennis) Wren. Grandchildren: Miranda Davis, Ronnie (Rachel) Davis. A great-granddaughter, Marley Roberts. And five nieces and two nephews.

The door was always open at Shirley's house; you could walk into her

house at any time of day. If you were lucky enough to stop by when she was home, you were warmly welcomed with a solid hug and a greeting of "Get in this house, Hun," and you left with a pocket full of snickers. She would move mountains for anyone.

Shirley was one of the strongest women I have ever known. At 79, she ran circles around most people, engaging in many projects that others would shy away from. She and her daughter, Rhonda, ran a two-woman con-

struction team that I lovingly dubbed "The Dream Team" because if they dreamt it up, they would make it happen. She did most of the art framing for the tri-county area. There was not a task that she could not accomplish.

Shirley lived a vibrant, full life and had unique life experiences, including living in Japan as a young girl and working as a long-haul truck driver in the 1970s. After moving to Alpine, she worked at the Alpine Country Club. For the last 18 years she ran a successful fram-

ing business out of her home. Shirley advocated for many local artists and cheered their success.

Her tenacity and generosity were boundless. She was a silent volunteer for so many events in Alpine and added something special to each one; the pecan pies and many delicious desserts at the Kiwanis spaghetti supper and the silent auctions at the FC-CBB Annual Dance and at the Big Bend Shooting Foundation banquet are a

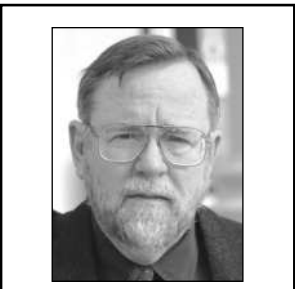
couple that come to mind. She fiercely loved her family and her community. She loved to dance and laugh; there was NEVER a dull moment with Shirley.

A memorial service for Shirley celebrating a life well lived will be announced at a later date. Donations and memorials can be made in her name to the Family Crisis Center, PO Box 1470, Alpine, TX 79831 or to a charity of your choice.

The chaplain service in the old army, Part II

With the reorganization of the U.S. Army in 1866 after the Civil War, the Chaplain Service, to the extent there was one, was also reorganized. Initially, a chaplain was assigned to each regiment, the largest field grade unit in the army at that time. However, responsible for the protection of the entire West, as well as coastal defense, the regiments were always fragmented, often among many different posts. In 1880 the 10th Cavalry was scattered between Forts Concho, Stockton, and Davis. Some regiments were even more scattered.

Eventually, Congress attempted to solve the problem by assigning chaplains to the various posts, but they only authorized thirty-four for the entire army, thirty of whom were assigned specific posts. This was at a time when there were one hundred forts and garrisons. The exception was the assignment of individual chaplains to each of the four African American regiments, the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 24th and 25th Infantry.



FIDDLER'S GREEN

by Larry Francell

Chaplains were required to be ordained with the recommendations of at least five ministers of the denomination they represented. They were commissioned as officers but listed "without command." Their rank was equivalent to captain, but they were paid as lieutenants and appeared on the rolls as staff but were expected to make their own way within the military structure of the day.


Chaplains were expected to hold services on Sunday, officiate at military funerals, and make monthly reports on the morale of the troops, but little guidance was given on determining the latter. General Wil-

liam Sherman, commander of the Army and professed skeptic wrote, "The whole system is a farce." He suggested that if Congress was truly interested in religion in the military, it would allow the commanding officer of each post to hire and pay a minister, as they did with surgeons. While most posts did not have a dedicated building, Fort Davis did have a chapel. Not to sit vacant six days a week, it was also used as the school, library, and where military courts were held.

Some forts without a chaplain were lucky enough to have a community nearby and ministers who would serve the garrison as needed. Fort Davis was one such community. Evidently, the Presbyterian Minister William Bloys, who also started the annual Bloys Campmeeting, would preach at the Fort Davis Chapel. Bloys and the Post Surgeon Dr. John Lauderdale became friends, and Lauderdale once wrote in his journal, April 7, 1889, "We have been over to the chapel where we listened to the

Rev. Bloys on the text owe no man anything but Love one another. He gave us a plain practical discourse abounding in a good many practical hints on daily conduct and intercourse with our neighbors. There was a good number of people out to get the benefit of the excellent council." This was only one of several occasions where Bloys preached with Lauderdale in attendance.

While thirty of the chaplains allowed by Congress were stationed at specific locations, the other four were assigned to the four Buffalo soldier regiments. Considered staff, they therefore generally served at the location of regimental headquarters. In addition to their role of providing spiritual guidance, they were also assigned the task of providing "instruction of enlisted men in the common English branches of education." While true of any group in general, these were men of various abilities, but several were exceptional. About them next time.



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Delivering good luck



Contestants for the annual Terlingua Pea-Off drop off their pots of black-eyed peas for locals and visitors to sample. This year's event boasted almost 30 competitors for this New Year's Day competition.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS ALPINE ISD'S STATE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATING

Alpine ISD will hold a public meeting at 5:00 P.M. on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 in the Alpine High School Band Hall located at 300 East Hendryx, Alpine, Texas. Entrance to the Band Hall is located on Fighting Buck Avenue.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Alpine ISD's rating on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST Report), the State's Financial Accountability System.

Sul Ross' Archives welcomes new collections

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Archives of the Big Bend, located in Sul Ross' Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library will be showcasing three new collections available for viewing and research beginning in this spring semester. The collections include donations from the Fort Davis National Historic Site, the John Gage Ketzle Collection, and the Don Burgess Collection.

Thanks to the efforts and time of FDNHS volunteer Al

Gonzales, the Archives have safely received and stored the entire microfilm collection from the fort. The collection includes almost 300 rolls of microfilm from their library. These films include census records from 1850-1930 along with muster rolls, military reports and journals, and even supply and medical records. Items included that are of special note are scrapbooks from Dr. John Vance Lauderdale (1838-1931), correspondence and personal papers of Col. Benjamin H Grierson (1826-

1911), and records on the service of Lt. Henry O. Flipper (1856-1940) as well as other Buffalo Soldiers who were stationed at Fort Davis.

The John Gage Ketzle Collection was donated by his son, Dale Ketzle. The collection includes 179 Kodachrome transparency slides depicting the landscape and the flora, and fauna of Big Bend National Park.

Ketzle was one of the first surveyors, who took outstanding photos of the park, his survey work, and his family until

his death in 1953.

The Don Burgess Collection, a lifetime of photographs, research, and publications of his life in Alpine and of the Rarámuri (a.k.a. Tarahumara) people of Chihuahua will be housed alongside his father's (Glen Burgess) longtime photography collection in the Archives of the Big Bend. Thanks to the efforts of his family, specifically Dr. Lisa Maria Burgess and Bryan Burgess, the Burgess Collection also includes Alpine High School memorabilia, thou-

sands of photographs spanning a timeline from the 1950s until his last visit to Alpine in 2021, as well as artwork, maps, oral histories, and Burgess' research manuscripts on the Tarahumara, their language, and folklore dating back to 1900.

"These collections are a goldmine of beauty and knowledge for visitors and researchers of all fields, especially history, anthropology, geology, biology, and photography," said Victoria Contreras, archivist.

Guided hikes scheduled for the public

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

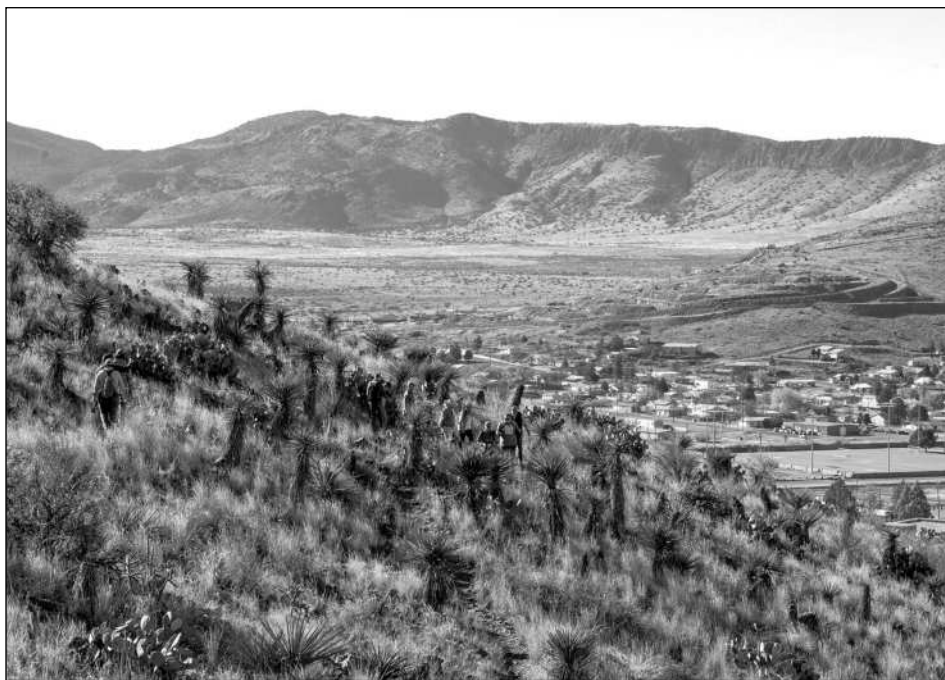
Sul Ross' Hancock Hill will soon feature guided hikes led by researchers and faculty from the university. Beginning this month, Sul Ross will host monthly hikes that will include a theme along with the hike leader who serves as the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for the hike.

These guided hikes will feature a new theme each month with a variety of topics that include everything from birds to plants to geology, and anthropology. Hike participants will learn about the history of Alpine and Sul Ross and the natural history of Hancock Hill while taking in stunning views.

The hike itself is moderately strenuous and is just under 2 miles. These hikes will begin at 9 a.m. and last around two hours.

The first four hike dates have been scheduled for January 13, February 3, March 9, and April 20.

The January hike's theme is what the hiking guides term a "general hike," and will be led by Alex Hettena, Bill Adams, and Maureen Frank from the Borderlands Re-



A group of Subject Matter Experts (SME) hiked Hancock Hill last month.

search Institute (BRI).

February's hike will focus on "Big Game," and is being led by Justin French, big game specialist for BRI.

The March hike is titled "Tracks and Scat," and will be led by Alex Hettena, a GIS specialist with BRI, and the April hike will focus on "Birds," and will be led by David Tønnessen, a graduate student with BRI.

All hikes are a collaborative effort among several Sul Ross entities including the Borderlands Research Institute, the Center for Big Bend

Studies, the Rio Grande Research Center, and the Department of Geology.

With the assistance of staff and faculty from Sul Ross, and the Big Bend Trails Alliance, Dr. Kevin Urbanczyk began adding to the trail system on Hancock Hill in 2000. "The hikes are a real backcountry experience," said Dr. Urbanczyk. "you're out there in the thick of it with someone who can tell you more about the natural history of the area, the flora and fauna, and the geology. Many fascinating features can be seen on the trail or off in the

distance. You can hike with someone who will point this stuff out and teach you from an expert point of view."

All hikes are free and open to the public although the number of hikers will be capped at 12. The dates for May through September will be announced shortly and reservations for the hikes can be made online at the Sul Ross website.

Ring in the New Year



The Late Comers performed Sunday night at the Hotel Ritchey and ushered in the new year as the closing act. From left, Ross Fleming on mandolin, Neil Trammell on guitar and vocals, Todd Elrod on harmonica, and Tony Curry on cajón.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

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BRI partners with Apache for restoration project

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Apache Corporation announced on December 11 that they would be partnering with the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) at Sul Ross State University to conduct a well pad restoration project. This project will span multiple years, and BRI along with Texas Native Seeds, a project of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M Kingsville, plans to investigate methods to improve habitat restoration efforts in the Permian Basin; the goal being to publish a science-backed, best practices reclamation document to be shared with other operators in the Permian Basin oil field.

"We are honored to partner with the Borderlands Research Institute on this important effort, which aligns with our mission to meet the growing demand for energy and to do so in a cleaner, more sustainable way," said Jessica Jackson, Apache's vice president of environment, health and safety. "For many years, Apache has worked to restore well pads to

their habitat potential. To further our efforts to continuously improve, Apache is supporting scientific research at sites in the Permian Basin to study the efficacy of methods for habitat restoration."

BRI's project intends to inform oil and gas operators in the Permian Basin about how changes in the industry's collective approach to restoring their end-of-service well pads can have broader benefits. Such benefits can include local biodiversity as well as the reuniting of fragmented habitats. The project plans to assess differences in vegetation, soil humidity, carbon retention, insect diversity, and the eco-

nomics of different restoration methods.

"We all depend on the energy produced in the Permian Basin to power our lives, and we look forward to bringing valuable science to the table to support enhanced restoration practices in the energy industry," said Dr. Louis Harveson, Director of the Borderlands Research Institute.

Desert ecosystems remain one of the world's most imperiled and while restoration studies have been performed in other locations, there remains much that is unknown about the Chihuahuan Desert and habitat restoration under a study.

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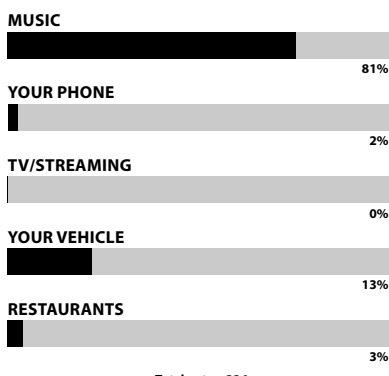
Opinions

ONLINE POLL

RESULTS

WHICH OF THESE WOULD BE THE HARDEST TO LIVE WITHOUT?

RESULTS



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

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- Friends and Family
- Work Relationships
- Relaxation/Alone Time
- Household Projects
- Community Events/Meetings

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Please include your name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only your name and city will be published.

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Send your letters to kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com by noon Monday for consideration.

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Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation will be corrected when such occurs in this newspaper and is brought to the publisher's attention.



The promise of a new year

New Year's is one of my favorite times of the year. It's an opportunity to reflect on all that we accomplished in the past 12 months while looking ahead with hope, optimism, and expectation for what we will create together in the year ahead. The new year is always full of so much promise.

We, as a community and its school district, accomplished so much together in 2023.

We increased staff compensation despite being one of the lowest funded districts in the state of Texas, and with a near-balanced budget. We did this by bringing in new grant funding, increasing attendance rates, optimizing staffing levels, and continuing to advocate for school finance reform at the state level.

We received over \$3.2M in first-time grant funding to provide new opportunities aligned with Alpine ISD's goals and objectives. These grants provided critical opportunities, from childcare to curriculum to college readi-



DR. MICHELLE RINEHART
Superintendent,
Alpine ISD

ness to teacher advancement, that we otherwise could not afford.

We launched the Alpine Public Education Fund in partnership with the Permian Basin Area Foundation in April, resulting in \$270,000 plus in donations from more than 50 entities for eight new projects, with a return on investment of \$7.50 for every Alpine ISD dollar invested in these projects. These projects resulted in a renovated library at Alpine Elementary, youth summer camps, meal assistance, staff appreciation events, school supplies for every student, new reading programs, and new laptops for every teacher.

We built strong relationships with Texas legislators to advocate for much-needed legislative solutions to address school funding inequities across the state. The Alpine ISD Board of Trustees passed legislative priorities and a bold "Resolution in Response to State Underfunding of Rural Schools" to push our state leaders to lead on behalf of

Texas public schools.

We received state-level media coverage of the great things happening in Alpine ISD and the unique challenges facing rural public schools like ours.

We helped solve Alpine's childcare shortage (with the launch of the Alpine Child Development Center in August), implemented more rigorous math and reading curricula in grades K-5, enjoyed countless amazing extracurricular performances, graduated a new Class of Fightin' Bucks into the world, welcomed in our next generation of Alpine Bucks, and so much more.

But we're nowhere near done. The new year is an opportunity for dreaming, goal setting and envisioning our next level of success. Continuing the tradition of excellence, you expect from Alpine ISD, we have even bigger goals for 2024.

We will continue our focus on academic excellence, improving curriculum, instruction, and student outcomes across the district.

We will continue our focus on expanding students' college, career, and military readiness, making sure every

Alpine ISD student graduates with skills, knowledge, and choices for their future.

We will continue to build a school district culture that promotes learning, high expectations, and academic rigor, while also developing our children's character and sense of community.

We will continue our state-wide advocacy leadership to increase state funding for underfunded rural schools.

New projects for 2024 include a district-wide student wellness program, much-needed facility improvements at our campuses and extracurricular venues, additional teacher advancement opportunities, and values-based character education programs that reinforce what makes a Buck a Buck.

This new year, 2024, will undoubtedly hold challenges for us, but we will face them together. Alpine has never backed down from a challenge. We have never been scared to dream big and then work hard to actualize our aspirations for our children.

I cannot wait to see what we do together, as a community and as a school system, in 2024. Happy New Year and Go Bucks!

Go out and play in 2024

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Looking back is part of the fun of writing a weekly column for decades. Something I'm trying to do more of at the beginning of every new year. Revisiting dreams. Laughing at resolutions. Reflecting on what was worthy of writing about at different times.

"What is a resolution," she asked. She could barely see above the tabletop where I sat writing a column. A young visiting family member, watching me work at the 1950s chrome dinette that occupies my breakfast room. A seat offering the most incredible view of the sunrise, my neighborhood, and that stop sign across the street at which no one ever stops.

"It's making life plans for a new year as the old one fades away," I offered my young visitor as small talk. "So, have you made a plan for living the story of your life next year?"

She smiled politely. But she didn't have a clue. I could tell by the look on her face. It was the same look I often see in the mirror while finalizing plans that included a little more flash than enjoying the fireworks.

New Year's Day, for me, always comes with the pros-

pect of celebrating another birthday in January. If I'm blessed. And, regardless of one's personal reaction to birthdays, I'm still holding to the opinion that continuing to have them is the best plan.

I used to note specific birthdays as "landmarks." You know, ones that end with a zero. This is not one of those years. These days, however, every birthday is a landmark. Deserving of particular contemplation. And I'm still trying to look beyond the usual resolutions list. Lose weight. Save more money. Learn something new. Be a nicer person. Return all my overdue library books.

But in recent years, dominating my mind is something I fear most about aging. Not using my imagination. Failing to be creative. Forgetting to play more.

"Can I go out and play," my young observer asked.

"Ask your mother," I encouraged her. "Personally, I think it's a great idea. But I don't want to create a family tiff while y'all are here visiting."

We all played as children, using imagination to become cowboys rounding up the bad guys. Movie stars in the Hollywood spotlight.



LEON ALDRIDGE
Guest Columnist

Airplane pilots flying high above the earth. But there's just something about this adulting thing that makes us think growing up is mandatory. Quit acting like a kid. Take on more responsibility.

And what happens? We forget how to play.

Playing is important. Truthfully, a fine line exists between a child's play and an adult's imagination. Both require using the mind to discover what's hidden in the heart. Spending life going, doing, looking, documenting, and collecting is one thing. And to be sure, a modicum of that activity motivates us to figure out what our life story is about.

But it's occurred to me in recent years that the real story of life lies in the journey. A curiosity about the world we're passing through. A daydream about the way we want the story to go. Scripting the life we desire instead of just existing another year. We should, you know. After all, it's our life, and the best part is we get to write the story ourselves.

Going confidently in the direction of our dreams, like we did as a child, without fearing mistakes. Perfection comes not by avoiding mistakes but by learning from them. Playing as a child

meant sometimes falling off our stick horse. But we wiped away the tears and got back on it. Because if we didn't, the bad guys would have escaped.

The best thing about our life story is that it is never too late to start. Best sellers are not written in chronological order. Look behind the scenes of any "overnight success," and there is usually much hard work and failure.

"A resolution," I told my inquisitive young visitor, "is a plan. And my plan for this year is one more time, a return to playing more. Using my imagination to live out the stories of life we all dream of as kids. So once again, I'm resolving to play during the journey. Dream every day. Be the person I want the people around me to be. And let that adulting stuff magically take care of itself."

She looked at me with that same look. She smiled, but she didn't have a clue. I could tell by the look on her face.

"Come on," I said, taking her hand. "Let's go outside and play. Maybe even set off some fireworks. Then we'll both be in trouble. But it will be lots of fun!"

Happy New Year! Watch a sunrise. Dream more often. Ignore some of those stop signs that pretending to be an adult often creates. Go out and play in 2024.

Heard on the STREET

What was your favorite memory of 2023?



David Baker: I got to travel out of the country for the first time this year. My favorite thing was sitting in the first restaurant and really realizing that I was finally doing something that I had always wanted to do.



John Williamson: This year was my first Father's Day and our newborn's first everything else.



Delaney Fox: Oh, that's tough. It was a rough year, but I think my favorite memory was my brother's birthday because it was like a family reunion and so much fun.



Carrie Jordan: Easy. My wedding day was the best.



Irene Harrow: I got to go on a Caribbean cruise for my 40th wedding anniversary. Forty very good years made better with some tropical relaxation.

Send your community events to kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 13 SRSU Guided and Informative Hike, 9 a.m. A guided hike open to the public up Hancock Hill will be themed "general hike" led by Alex Hettena, Bill Adams, and Maureen Frank from the Borderlands Research Institute.

Feb. 3 SRSU Guided and Informative Hike, 9 a.m. A guided hike open to the public up Hancock Hill themed "Big Game" will be led by Justin French, Big Game Specialist for the Borderlands Research Institute.

Feb. 10 Valentine's Day PJ



Story Time, 6 p.m. for ages 4-12 at the Alpine Public Library.

ONGOING EVENTS

Alcoholics Anonymous, 502

E. Lockhart Ave. Schedules are available on the front door. For more information, call 915-562-4081 or aa-intergroup.org.

Alpine Lions Club meeting, noon Tuesdays at the BBT conference room, 5th St. and Brown St.

American Legion Post 79 meeting, 6:30 p.m., second Monday each month, Legion Hall, 306 W. Sul Ross Ave. Dinner provided.

American Legion Auxiliary meeting, 4 p.m., third Monday each month, Legion Hall, 306 W. Sul Ross Ave.

Amigo Run Club at Alpine City Place, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 101 W. Ave E. Weekly running club to walk/run 1-3 miles. Meet

at the Amigo garage and finish at Amigo. Call 432-837-4012 for more information.

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., second Tuesday each month, Frontier Masonic Lodge #766, 2300 Highway 118 North.

Big Bend Community Choral rehearsals, on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. in the Sul Ross Fine Arts Building, Room 200. All are welcome, but first contact Andrew Alegria at Andrew.alegria@sulross.edu, call 432-837-8216, or visit bbchorale.wixsite.com/bbcc.

Celebrate Recovery, at Big Bend Cowboy Church on Monday evenings 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information contact CW at

432-386-3628 or Stacey at 432-386-2979.

Citizenship Classes, at Alpine Public Library by appointment only, 805 W. Ave. E. 432-837-2621

ESL Tutoring, at Alpine Public Library, 805 W. Ave. E. Call 432-837-2621 to make an appointment.

GED tutoring, at Alpine Public Library, 805 W. Ave. E. Call 432-837-2621 to make an appointment.

Kiwanis Club of Alpine, noon, Wednesdays at the Sul Ross University Center, room 210

Late Night Game Night, 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. every Thursday night at Amigo, 101 W. Ave E.



Winter graduates

Sul Ross held its winter graduation ceremony last month at the Pete P. Gallego Center. Sul Ross graduated 141 students from the Alpine campus.

Photo by Joh Covington

Dan Platt, Jr.

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PET OF THE WEEK

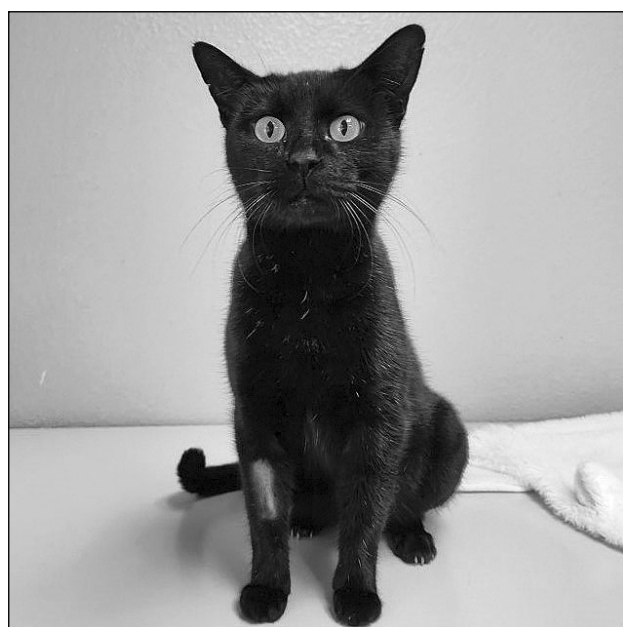
Alpine Humane Society Pet of the Week is Ellie. Ellie is a year-old female cat. She is the all-around Zen kitty. She appears to be very secure and adaptable and is a bit quiet. Her authentic personality will show itself in your home after she has adapted. If you already have a cat in your home, Ellie will prefer to spend gentle time with them. Although still young, Ellie is a calm cat who wants to be in your presence.

Kitten season will be here before we know it. Alpine Humane Society annually fosters or assists 50 to 100 orphan kittens and mama cats. This is a costly program involving many volunteer foster homes. Your financial

support helps us buy the kitten milk replacement, vaccines, and medicines vital to caring for these animals. Shopping from our wish lists will also help us keep our supply stocks sufficient. We post those lists on Facebook often. Be a hero to an orphan and help support our efforts.

Pet promotions are courtesy of the Alpine Humane Society. Alpine Animal Services handles pet adoptions at the city shelter, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at 2900 E. Old Marathon Highway. For information about shelter pet adoptions, cremation services, or lost/found pets, call the Shelter at 432-837-9030.

The Alpine Humane Society Thrift Store and Cattery is at 706 N. 5th Street in Alpine, open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The Pet Pantry is at 600 N. 5th Street. The AHS Helpline is 432-837-2532. To view adoptable pets, visit PetFinder.com or www.alpinehumane-society.org, and check us out on Facebook and Instagram.



With a lifetime of public health experience, Barnett Cline, MD, traveled most of the globe as a ship's surgeon

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Thursday, January 11 at 6 pm.

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BREWSTER COUNTY GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATIONS FOR GROUNDWATER PRODUCTION PERMIT NOS. GPP-010

Notice is hereby given that on Thursday, January 25, 2024 commencing at eight o'clock (8:00 a.m. CD1), the Brewster County Groundwater Conservation District ("District") will conduct a public hearing and possibly take action on the following pending application, which has been deemed administratively complete:

(1) Application by Willow Creek Camping Co., LLC, for a Groundwater Production Permit ("GPP"), assigned No. GPP- 010, which would authorize the applicant to produce groundwater in the District from unconfirmed minor aquifers in an amount not to exceed 1.5 acre-feet annually for commercial/municipal use.

The General Manager of the District, Robbyn Hill ("General Manager"), has proposed issuance of a Groundwater Production Permit Nos. GPP-010, and the draft permits are available for public inspection by emailing bcgwcd@gmail.com. For a hard copy of the proposed permits, please contact Robbyn Hill (432) 244-6030.

The District will conduct a PUBLIC HEARING pursuant to its authority under Chapter 8827 of the Texas Special District Local Laws Code, Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, and the District's Rules to consider action on Application No. GPP-010, and to provide interested members of the public an opportunity to appear and provide oral or written comments to the District regarding the proposed permit. The public hearing will be at the following location at the indicated date and time:

Location: Val Clark Beard County Office Building
203 N. 7th St
Alpine, Texas

Date and Time: Thursday, January 25, 2024 at eight o'clock (8:00 a.m.)

The General Manager will recommend to the District's Board that it consider approving Application No. GPP-010 for 1.5 acre-feet of production annually from unconfirmed minor aquifers under the terms and conditions set forth in the draft Groundwater Production Permit No. GPP-010.

Applicants and affected persons may request a contested case hearing on Application No. GPP-010 by submitting a request for contested case hearing in writing to the District. The request must be delivered to the District no later than 5:00 p.m.

CDT on January 11, 2024, by email to bcgwcd@gmail.com, by USPS to PO BOX 465, Alpine, Texas or by scheduling hand delivery to the District Office by calling (432) 244-6030.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend the district hearing and who may need auxiliary aids or services, such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print, or braille, are requested to contact the General Manager, at (432) 244-6030, at least five (5) work days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Persons who desire the assistance of an interpreter in conjunction with their oral presentation at this meeting are also requested to contact General Manager at least five (5) days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

A New Year's hot spot at the hot springs

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

Most locals in the area know to avoid going out into our favorite locations during the holiday season, as people from all over the world come to the Big Bend to benefit from what we enjoy every day, however, sometimes that unspoken rule is forgotten, and they brave the crowds of visitors.

This New Year's weekend, Big Bend National Park was the place to be, and the number of visitors made it obvious. The weather was cool and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, making it the perfect weather to enjoy the usually sweltering desert terrain.

The two-mile gravel road descends down a rough, narrow wash to the Hot Springs Historic District and trailhead area, but once you get there it's a Sunday walk. The walking distance to the hot springs themselves is quite easy, and you pass several very interesting and historic old buildings that have been preserved by the park. You can see the old post office and store as well as the hotel where back in the day people could have a room for a dollar a day or the discounted



The hot springs and its trail are located along the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park.

price of six dollars for the week.

From the trailhead, the hot spring is a 0.5-mile round trip. A one-mile loop trail continues from the hot spring around the bluff above the Rio Grande, returning to the trailhead area.

Visitors pass by some ancient palm trees still thriving in the arid atmosphere and even older signs of the people who were here before in the form of rock art left behind on the limestone cliffs, picture farms of corn, squash, and beans along the river's floodplain. It's easy to imagine what it would have been like to meet at the Hot Springs Post Office in the early 1900s to collect your mail.

The Hot Springs Historic District preserves a rich history of human occupation from thousands of years ago to the not-so-distant past.

J.O. Langford's impressive bathhouse is long gone; today the spring is contained by the foundation remains of the bathhouse, on the north bank of the Rio Grande. It's a primitive bathing experience while enjoying the view. The temperature of the hot springs stays the same, somewhere between a bath and a hot tub.

According to the park, the hot spring water is considered old water, fossil water, ancient and irreplaceable. Heated by geothermal processes and emerging at 105°

F., the water carries dissolved mineral salts reputed to have healing powers. The therapeutic value of heat has long been touted as a remedy for both body and soul. J.O. Lanford and the people who came before him knew what was good for them, and now, everyone else does too.

This year, the Rio Grande has been low, and this weekend was no exception. The river itself was about thigh-deep in most places. But the hot spring itself is always flowing, the only issue is if there's enough room to sit.

Whether you are from near or far, the natural beauty of the area is a treasure to be respected and shared wisely.

Photo by Joh Covington

All-around athleticism

Kody Hawkins proudly exhibits her mule deer buck she harvested recently, proving that not only does she excel in school sports, but also the sport of hunting. Hawkins is pictured here with her dad T.C. Hawkins, her younger sister Kaci Hawkins, and her younger brother Trevor Hawkins.



SHERIFF • FROM 1

grant will be applied for in January of 2024, and the county has set aside a fund in the amount of \$250,000 dollars which the state is set to meet to help offset the increase in salary for jailors and deputy sheriffs.

The bill requires that the annual salary of jailors and deputy sheriffs be increased to \$40,000 and \$45,000 respectively. After these wage minimums have been met, other salaries within the sheriff's office law enforcement personnel can be increased to reflect competitive hiring and reten-

tion, then any leftover funds can be used to purchase safety equipment related to law enforcement. Earlier this fall Brewster County Sheriff, Ronny Dodson's salary was increased to its new required minimum of \$75,000 and the county has already purchased new tasers, so the approximate \$80,000 leftover in the fund may be used to purchase body cameras for the department. The court approved the ratification of the increases in salary for the sheriff's office law enforcement officers.

Next, the court extensively discussed the approval of three new members who have volunteered to join the Brewster County Emergency Services District No. 1. There were four people interested in the three soon-to-be-open positions on the emergency services board. Sharon Clark, Jeanette Hall, and Carlos Mendoza's terms are set to expire soon.

Kristen Horin, who was recommended by the board, was approved for a two-year term. Linda Walker and Jeanette

Hall were also approved to serve on the board for two-year terms. And Jim Hines renewed for one year to fill the expiring position. Sara Colando, Commissioner Precinct 2, said, "It's an unusual position that we actually have more candidates than positions to fill. That is fantastic." The court considered delaying the decision in order to get more feedback from the board, however, the positions had to be appointed by the first of the year. The next regular commissioner's court is scheduled for Tuesday, January 9.

STOKES • FROM 1

can contact Geo Calderon, the city secretary, for more information.

During the scheduled business of the meeting, Eaves delivered the mayor's report, reminding everyone that the city has an official YouTube channel where citizens can watch the council meetings as well as a live Zoom meeting for those who cannot attend in person. Next, in the city manager report, Megan Antrim shared that the recycling center's mulcher is currently unusable and that they will not be excepting brush, to avoid a fire hazard build-up. Previously, the mulcher was going to receive a new part to fix

it, however, it was discovered that it is past repair, and the city will look for a replacement moving forward.

In other business, up for discussion during this meeting were the workshops in which the council is considering possible changes to the city charter, which hasn't been updated to reflect legislative changes since 2005. The city will also be considering the creation of a policy to be used for non-profit donations using city funds. They may also be updating the tax abatement grants for historic renovations.

In other news, the council approved all items on the consent agenda. This

included the appointment of Guy Fielder to the Place 4 position on the planning and zoning commission and the appointment of Larry Hood to the Place 2 position on the parks and recreation board.

After much deliberation in several previous meetings, the council majority voted to pass the final reading of the amended ordinance regarding zoning. The amendment repealed the requirement that beauty salons are not an acceptable use in a residential area by approved special use permit. Now, people can apply for a special use permit to have a beauty salon in a residential area but will

be fined a penalty of up to \$500 if they violate the ordinance.

The council also approved the final reading of an ordinance amending the city's fiscal year 2023-2024 budget, which "provides repealing and severability clauses; a Texas Open Meetings Act clause; and providing an effective date." According to Antrim, this amendment is to reflect the appropriate amount of revenue coming in for property tax.

In closing, Eaves said, "Thank you for your service to this city." The next regular meeting of the Alpine City Council is scheduled for January 16.

AISD • FROM 1

In her discussions with Sul Ross, some of the items on the list for needing significant upgrades and repairs were the restrooms, the parking lots, and their historic gates on the north side of the ballpark, and due to Sul Ross becoming a Division II school, the outfield wall must be padded according to NCAA regulations. One of the big items Sul Ross brought to the table was the lights at the field, as this was one of the main items on their list that needed to be upgraded.

The other big-ticket item on the agenda was the condition of the turf at Buck Stadium. Turf fields have a lifespan of around 10 years, and the field at Buck Stadium is in year 12. AISD reached out to Hellas Construction to get an idea of how much the district would be looking at to replace the field. Although the board must get three different quotes before any purchasing occurs, Rinehart thought it best to bring a ballpark figure to the board so they were aware of what kind of money they would have to spend. "After Hellas did their assessment, their estimate was that AISD is looking at anywhere from \$900,000 to \$1.2 million to replace the turf on the field. As you know, every year we go through and sew it up where it is torn and repair what we can, but this is something that we will need to look at replacing really soon," said Rinehart.

She gave several different options and ideas for the board to think about as far as being able to pay for the replacement such as a 10-year loan, where an annual payment of \$100,000 would be made, and after 10 years the turf would be replaced again.

Rinehart explained it as more of a lease-to-own option. She also mentioned a bond, which she knows nobody wants to

entertain, using the fund balance which she also knew was not the ideal option, and also a capital campaign similar to what the charter schools in Midland and Odessa were working towards. "Since they are charter schools, they don't have access to taxpayer money, so to fund their sports stadiums and fields that are utilizing a capital campaign, and I will reach out to those schools and see how they're going about this," Rinehart added. She also told the board that there may even be a combination of any of the options she mentioned and that this was something the board would need to think about.

In other news, the board discussed local policies on graduation and student ranking, and the addition of a new section to the 588 Co-Op agreement due to Fort Davis having reached out about servicing some of their students that fall under the special ed program. Since their public-private partnership agreements with private schools were in effect, some of these students enrolled at FDISD were actually in the El Paso area. The 588 Co-Op already services 12 different area school districts, so their board which is made up of the 12 superintendents for the Co-Op added a section to the contract stating that only students that fall within the geographic area of the 12 districts may be serviced by the Co-Op. No virtual services would be available to those residing outside the geographic area that the Co-Op currently services even if they are enrolled at one of the 12 districts that are currently covered.

The next regular meeting for the Alpine ISD Board of Trustees is set for January 17 in the Alpine High School cafeteria.

Restaurant Guide

\$6 a week gets you a spot in our restaurant guide
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REATA RESTAURANT

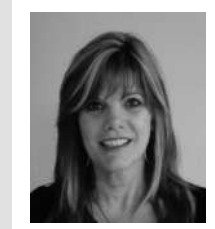
COCINERO: Beef • Chicken • Shrimp
STARTERS: Tortilla Soup Bowl • Jalapeno and Cilantro Soup • Bacon Wrapped Shrimp with Onion Jam and Pico de Gallo • Bacon Wrapped Asparagus • Tumbleweed Onion Rings with Spicy Serrano Ketchup • Alpine Black Bean & Chicken Nachos

CF Burger with Aged Cheddar Cheese on a Kaiser Roll • Fried Chile Relleno stuffed with Cream Cheese, Corn and Peppers • Carne Asada with Reata's Cheese Enchiladas • Chicken Caesar Wrap with Hand Cut Fries • Tenderloin Tacos with Sundried Tomato Cream Sauce • Grilled Chicken Breast topped with Mango Chutney

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LOOKING BACK

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Alpine Avalanche

December 29, 1944

The last issue of the Avalanche for 1944 wishes its readers a very Happy New Year. In the front-page letter, the newspaper says that the world could and should be a better place in which to live, that we must not only be neighbors to each other but good neighbors, and that there is no problem without a solution.

NINETEEN FORTY-FIVE
The New Year is yours to make what you will of it. It opens up to you new responsibilities, new opportunities, and perhaps new sorrows.

To him who possesses vision, 1945 comes on the highest, the mightiest tide that has ever come flowing into our port of hope. There are those who will look mournfully into the face of the New Year. There are those who will say that the world is still in the midst of a terrifying dream. But they are the unfortunates without vision.

In our own hearts, each of us knows that the world could and should be a better place in which to live. We know that war has no place in a good world. But we know, too, that tyranny, injustice and hatred always lead to war. It is part of our job to see that those forces of evil are forever stamped out.

America is a mighty nation, and America is no more than a multiplication of our own, community. Each of us must have the vision to live understandingly with our neighbors. We must not only be neighbors, we must be good neighbors. Then the insidious forces which lead to violence have no soil in which to grow. They are as seed cast upon the rock.

Our own community is proud of its past achievements. The past three years have taught us that we can do what we will in our own minds. The job we have done in the past gives us the courage and fortitude to face the future unafraid. We know that no problem is without a solution.

So it is with a spirit of genuine hope, a feeling of humility and a prayer of thanks that this newspaper wishes each of you
A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

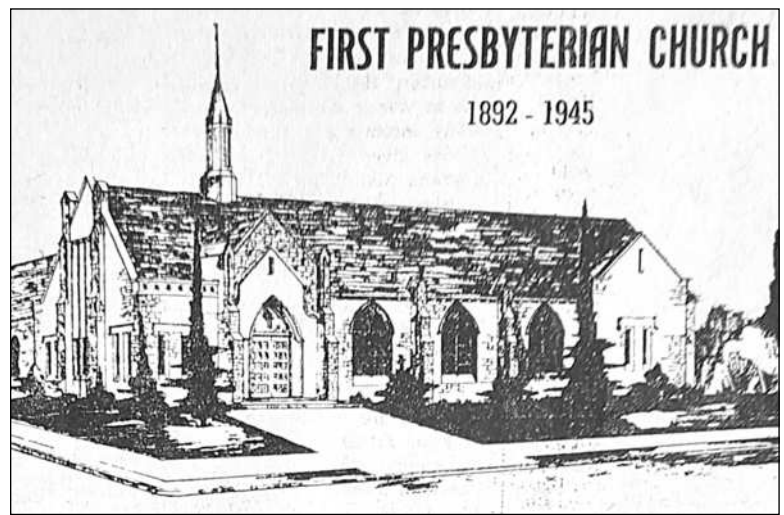


December 29, 1944

The folks at the Alpine Lumber Co. reflect in gratitude on the heritage of freedom in America and thank those who have helped gain that freedom.

December 8, 1944

Pictured here, Doyle Lee Jobe and Lane Dixon are young members of one of three 4-H teams that were tasked with studying the importance of organic matter in the soil. They demonstrated that when this matter, like manure, weeds, and decaying plants is added to the soil it retains water and supports growth much better.



December 29, 1944

Fred S. Rodgers shares that the new First Presbyterian Church building will begin construction in the New Year. The previous church building was destroyed in a fire in April 1943.

Cedar pollen is the likely allergy culprit

Dear Neil: My wife and I are having discussions about whether I should remove a native cedar tree from our landscape. She tests positive for allergies to cedar pollen, and this time of year her miseries begin for a couple of months. She wants me to remove the tree, but we both think it's very pretty if it weren't for the pollen. Even its blue berries are attractive, and I notice the birds love them. My contention is that there are dozens of other cedars nearby and that even if I take our one tree out, she will still be hit with the pollen from other trees around us. Do you have any advice?

My wife and I could have written the same letter. We have eastern redcedar junipers on the 11 acres that surround our house. They are starting to turn bronze now, an indication that the pollen is about to fly. We were pretty sure of the cause of her troubles when she visited an older allergist in his last year before retirement. I wrote the name *Juniperus virginiana* on a piece of paper

GARDENER'S MAILBAG
by neil sperry

for her, and she told him she thought that was the culprit. After her tests, he chuckled and said she was the first person who had ever come in with the scientific name of the offending plant written out on a sheet of paper.

She started her nasal spray prescription a couple of weeks ago, just as she has for 15 or 20 years. It makes a huge difference for her. An allergist can prescribe one for your wife. I vote on your side in this case. Juniper pollen, like oak and pecan, is carried hundreds of miles. It starts as South Texas species

come into bloom in December and January. Prevailing south winds carry the pollen north to unwitting victims. Even if you were to remove the one plant, there are thousands of others ready to contribute their pollen waiting in the wings. If you're the one who isn't allergic, thump one of those bronze branches on a still, dry day with a broom handle and you'll see the quantities of pollen that's out there. Let the doctor advise her and prescribe the best remedy. You can't chop your way out of this forest.

Dear Neil: We had a terrible problem with the nutgrass on our lawn last summer. Will a pre-emergent weed-killer stop it this year? If so, which one, and when should it be applied?



The weed you have is not a true grass, but a sedge instead. You can always distinguish the sedges from true grasses by rolling the plant's stem between your thumb and index finger. Grasses will have round stems. Sedges will be triangular. And the other fact you'll need to remember is that sedges are perennials — they come back from their roots. Pre-emergents only work on annual weeds as their seeds try to germinate. So, if nutgrass is your biggest con-

cern, you would be wasting the pre-emergent. You'll want to use either Image or Sedgehammer after the nutgrass is up and growing actively. That's generally mid-May through mid-September.

Dear Neil: I have a Texas Everbearing fig tree. When should I feed it, and with what and how much?

Easy answer: Texas A&M fruit specialists recommend that we not do any major pruning of, or feeding to, our figs. Both encourage strong

vegetative growth. That would come at the expense of fruit production. It also makes the plants more susceptible to freeze damage. We've seen enough of that in recent years anyway. Your plant will get enough nutrients from the soil, especially if plants near it are being fed.

Have a question you'd like Neil to consider? E-mail him at mailbag@sperrygardens.com. Neil regrets that he cannot reply to questions individually.

- ACROSS**
- 1 this Meharg was first female Texas Secretary of State
 - 5 Mineola's county
 - 6 Jackson County seat
 - 7 TX Charley Pride tune: "Just Me"
 - 8 money machine
 - 9 TXism: "exciting as a fire at _____ office"
 - 15 TXism: "phoo-water" (perfume)
 - 16 TXism: "hot enough _____ a horny toad"
 - 19 a blimp, e.g.
 - 21 TX Jimmy Webb wrote "By the _____ Get to Phoenix" in Anderson County on U.S. 287
 - 27 _____ weevil came to U.S. thru Texas
 - 28 TXism: "cut _____ slack"
 - 29 married woman in Mexico
 - 30 1960's protests
 - 32 this Palmer won the Texas Open three times (init.)
 - 33 TXism: "he _____ with the facts" (liar)
 - 36 Gulf shrimp catchers
 - 37 this conven. was in Houston in 1928
 - 38 a _____ pizza is a small one
 - 39 Fair Park is on the _____ of Dallas

- 41 "let the _____ settle"
 - 42 Odessa's county
 - 45 king toppers in cards
 - 46 Cowboy Jake Ferguson position (abbr.)
 - 47 needed in a drought
 - 48 TXism: "just a _____" (small amount)
 - 49 more intelligent
 - 52 Cheryl of film "Wilson" with TX Harrelson
 - 53 comfy room at home
- DOWN**
- 1 female sheep
 - 2 a car modification, e.g. (abbr.)
 - 3 Wood County newspaper
 - 4 TX Robert _____ was U.S. Secretary of Commerce (1989-92)
 - 8 Corey Seager got this to end a no-hitter in game 5 of the 2023 World Series (2 wds.)
 - 9 TXism: "plain as the _____ chart"
 - 10 TX Simmons who developed the "leveraged buyout" (init.)
 - 11 org. in Europe
 - 12 I-20 that runs across Texas
 - 13 Corey Seager had 6 of these in the 2023 World Series
 - 14 Japanese wrestling
 - 15 heaven
 - 16 _____-A-Whirl rides are built in Plainview
 - 17 returns a case to a lower court
 - 18 UT has 1st photo ever taken, by this French inventor
 - 20 sharpen, like skills
 - 22 former Cowboy star, Emmitt (init.)
 - 23 modern lights
 - 24 "half hitch," e.g.
 - 25 did 20-down
 - 26 avid paintings collector? (2 wds.)
 - 28 welcome rugs
 - 31 "don't _____ out your welcome"
 - 34 Texas pest: fire _____
 - 35 this Nellie was in limo with JFK (init.)
 - 37 passed away
 - 40 wound reminder
 - 43 TXism: "_____ on the barrel head"
 - 44 TXism: "_____ a whipped pup"
 - 50 Texans have to _____ car registration annually
 - 51 TXism: "dot the i's and cross the _____"

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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Sports

Bucks win three of four tourney games

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

The Alpine Fightin' Bucks took the fight to the competitive Lubbock Caprock Tournament just after Christmas. "This was a tough tournament and the biggest of all the tournaments we have had all season. We played well defensively and are continuing to evolve and get better on that side of the ball," said Aaron Hardwick, head basketball coach for the Bucks basketball team.

On December 28, the Bucks secured a win against the Hawley Bearcats. On December 29, the Bucks fell to the Lubbock Christian Eagles but favorably triumphed in the following game with the Tulia Hornets that same day. On the final day of the tournament, December 30, the Bucks succeeded in their last game against the Stanton Buffaloes, bringing home that win.

In the first game of the tournament, the Bucks outmaneuvered their opponent with a final score of 71-54 over the Bearcats. The Bucks outshot the Hawley team by 16-13 in the first quarter of the game and tied 16-16 in the second quarter. Alpine then furthered their lead with six more



The Fightin' Bucks posed for a celebratory photo during the Lubbock Caprock Tournament last week.

Courtesy photo

Sports Schedule

FIGHTIN' BUCK BASKETBALL
Jan. 5 Alpine vs Tornillo* JV Purple 5 p.m. 9th Gold and Varsity 8 p.m.
Jan. 9 Kermit* @ Alpine JV Purple 5 p.m. 9th Gold. 6:30 p.m. Varsity 8 p.m.

LADY BUCK BASKETBALL
Jan. 5 Alpine vs Tornillo* JV 5 p.m. Varsity 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 9 Kermit* @ Alpine JV 5 p.m. Varsity 6:30 p.m.
**Denotes District Game*

points in the third quarter, leading 19-13, and secured their win with 22 points to the Bearcats 16 in the fourth.

According to Hardwick, Hawley is a solid 2A basketball team that is patient and physical. In this game with the

Bearcats, Evren Martinez led the Alpine team with 21 points from eight field goals, five three-point shots, and three rebounds. Daedrick Hardwick and Ferris Daley were also scoreboard leaders, with 16 and 11 points gained respectively from a combination of field goals and free throws. "It took us a while to get going but once we settled in, we were able to do some good things on both ends of the court," said Hardwick.

The following day, the Bucks were outplayed in their first game with the Eagles, falling behind 42-57 but rebounded in the following game

against the Hornets, winning 72-58. Tulia was a good bounce-back game for them. Their style of play is similar to the Bucks, which allows them to get out in the open court and make plays offensively.

"Lubbock Christian was a hard, tough ball game for us. We didn't really get going until the second half, but against a solid state-ranked opponent, you have to play four quarters of good basketball and we were just unable to do that. Credit Lubbock Christian, they had a good game plan and they executed it well," Hardwick said.

See BUCKS • 9

Lady Lobos fall to the Bulldogs on the road

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Sul Ross Lady Lobos met up with Texas Lutheran University's Bulldogs on Thursday, December 21 before they broke for the holidays. Although Sul Ross is used to seeing multiple players put up double-digit field goals in their games, this was not the case in Seguin.

Marley Rokas was the only player to hit double-digits against the Bulldogs, with 15 for the game. While they were unable to meet the same mark, Emily Bunger, Kayley Diaz, and Victoria Aguayo helped put the Lobos on the board with eight, seven, and six points respectively on the day.

The Bulldogs would lead off with an 8-0 run against the Lobos in the first half, before Rokas drew a foul and put Sul Ross on the board with a free throw. Bunger would follow up with a jumper to cut the Bulldog's lead to five, but Texas Lutheran would follow that up with three free throws to end the first quarter and extend their lead by eight.

The Bulldogs outshot the Lobos in the first, 17 to nine, but the second quarter would see

the Lobos rally a bit. Although they would trail at one point by as much as 17, they capitalized on a 10-0 run that would cut their deficit to seven. Although the second would have the Lobos closer, with a difference of only four points in that quarter, a three-pointer by Texas Lutheran with just seconds left in the second quarter would put them up by 12 at the break.

The third quarter was yet another struggle for the ladies of Sul Ross, as they were outshot 25 to 14, increasing the lead for the Bulldogs to 23.

A fourth-quarter rally by Sul Ross with an 8-0 run would close the gap to 17 points, but the Bulldogs would continue to dominate the game on offense and extend their lead with just over a minute left in the game. The last quarter had both teams tied with points for that quarter, but the Bulldogs' domination of the earlier quarters would see the Lobos fall 58-81.

Sul Ross is now 4-9 and travels to Marshall today for a 5:30 p.m. tip-off against East Texas Baptist followed by a trip to Longview on Saturday, January 6 to face LeTourneau University for a 1 p.m. game at the Solheim Arena.

Lady Bucks return home from Lubbock tourney

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

After Christmas, the Lady Bucks made the trip to Lubbock for the Lubbock Caprock Tournament and faced several strong competitors. "This type of tournament is vital to the rest of our season. It gives us the opportunity to play against high-level competition, win or lose, and to get better in every game. It is exactly what you should want for your team as a coach, to play better teams to make you better. The timing of this tournament works out great as we are just coming off a mandatory UIL break, and it helps us get our feet back under us," said Christopher Virdell, head basketball coach for the Lady Bucks.

On December 28, Alpine played the Borden County Coyotes. On December 29, they faced the Dimmitt Bobcats and the Happy Cowboys. On December 30, their last game was against the Seymour Panthers. "Every game we played was against high-level competition," said Virdell.

The first game against Borden County was the toughest on the scoreboard for the Lady Bucks, as they lost the game 28-79. In the first quarter, the Coyotes outscored Alpine 12-21, 8-17 in the second, 6-20 in the third, and 2-21 in the fourth.

Hope Dominguez, a junior, led the team in scoring points, gaining 10 out of the 28-point total. Dominguez made five field goals, seven offensive rebounds, four defensive



The Lady Bucks posed with their coach while in Lubbock just after Christmas.

Courtesy photo

rebounds, and one steal, with six turnovers. Senior Novah Carrasco pounded the offense, attempting 19 field goals and four three-point shots. Carrasco added nine points for the team with three successful field goals, one three-point shot, two free throws, six rebounds, three assists, and 11 turnovers. Karolina Castillo, a sophomore, made three field goals, had one steal, and one turnover, adding her own six points to the game's final score. Neveah Carrasco, a junior, had a successful field goal and free throw as well as a defensive rebound and turnover. "We struggled in our first game against a Borden County team that was very accurate from the floor. They did not miss many shots and they moved the ball well, but we were able to work on our defensive

side, especially our man defense," Virdell added.

In the next day's game against the Dimmitt Bobcats, the Lady Bucks fared better but still fell to the opposing team in a low-scoring game, 23-35. The Lady Bucks and the Bobcats tied it up in the first quarter 10-10, but Dimmitt outplayed Alpine 3-12 in the second. The Lady Bucks gained traction in the third with nine points to the Bobcat's six, but ultimately fell to Dimmitt 1-7 in the deciding fourth quarter.

"Even though we played a few smaller schools they were the top team in their regions and usually make deep playoff runs. We came up against a size difference in almost all the games, which happens a lot for us. But it allowed us to work on a weakness in our defense and a chance

to try different schemes," Virdell said.

Following that game, Alpine then played the Cowboys of Happy. During this game, the Lady Bucks steadily improved their defense and offense. Despite this, the team was still outmatched by the Cowboys, falling behind 35-54. The Cowboys dominated the first quarter 6-17 and the second 10-22. The Lady Bucks outpaced the other team in the third quarter with 12 field goals to the Cowboy's seven and the fourth quarter was a close shooting match, with Alpine adding another seven points to their total, but were just edged out by Happy by a single point, bringing the last quarter total to 7-8.

"The other games we played defense well, but

See LADY BUCKS • 9

Monday-Funday at the Sun Bowl



Alpine locals Letty and Patrick Carrillo and family enjoyed their New Year's Day in El Paso at the Sun Bowl, to cheer on Notre Dame.

Courtesy photo

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

COLETTE FOWLKES

Colette led the Bucks in rebounds against Stanton and played a vital role in the district win at home on Tuesday.

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BUCKS • FROM 8

Against the Lubbock Christian Eagles, the Bucks steadily added to their score each quarter but still fell by 18 points. In the first quarter, the Bucks gained six points while the Eagles collected seven. The Eagles outscored the Bucks by seven points in the second and third quarters. Alpine jumped 13 points in the fourth quarter, and although the Eagles only gained nine extra points, it was enough to secure their win over the Bucks.

The Fightin' Bucks crushed their last tournament challenge 60-28, defeating the Stanton Buffaloes. "Against Stanton, I felt like our team was ready to go and locked in. We understood that Stanton was a district opponent, and we would need to do our best to set the tone early in how we wanted to play. Ultimately, we were able to

establish ourselves well on both ends of the court early, which led to the eventual outcome of the ball game," Harwick said.

In the Buck's final game against Stanton, they started out very strong with a 21-2-point lead in the first quarter and a 27-12 lead in the second. In the final third and fourth quarters the Buffaloes gained 14 extra points and the Bucks only added 12 points to the scoreboard but were still able to come away with the win. Canaba and Hardwick were leaders in this game, with their six individual field goals, Canaba's two three-point shots, and seven free throws from them both.

After the tournament, the Fightin' Bucks continued their district play with a home game against Stanton again on Tuesday, January 2. Alpine's second match-up against

Stanton resulted in another Buck victory. The Bucks toppled the Buffaloes 58-41. Hardwick said that coming off of that previous game against Stanton recently, that they will have to reset mentally. "Stanton is going to come over here with one thing on their mind, which is a 'win at all costs mentality'. We will have to match their intensity, physicality, and desperation," said Hardwick.

Next up for the Bucks, is a district away game against the Tornillo Coyotes tomorrow.

"Tornillo is not the same Tornillo of old, a year ago they had five graduating seniors; however, they play extremely well at home. They are young but they are hungry and are a well-coached team. We must set the tone defensively and not allow them to get comfortable in their gym," said Hardwick.

LADY BUCKS • FROM 8

we struggled to hit shots and finish in transition. We are getting the looks we want on the offensive side. We just need to be more consistent in our shooting," Virdell said.

According to Virdell, this kind of tournament challenge is better than having two weeks of practice. It's four games of the girls having to compete, fight hard, and remain mentally tough. And it is a tremendous attribute to lead them into the rest of the district season.

The following day, and the final day of the tournament, the Lady Bucks played the Seymour Panthers, losing 37-58. In the first quarter, Alpine would outscore the Panthers 6-11,

4-15 in the second, and 11-19 in the third, but would rally back by outplaying the opposing team in the last exhausting quarter with 16 points on the board to Seymour's 13. "We went into the tournament with three main focuses, to get better defensively, to box out and rebound, and to try to play more up-tempo. I was very pleased with our play overall, the girls started taking pride in our defensive schemes and we were able to control our turnover ratio for the better," Virdell said.

On January 2, after the tournament, the Alpine team returned home for their fourth district game of the season against Stan-

ton. Alpine was able to pull off a win against Stanton, toppling the Buffaloes 43-31. The Lady Bucks' next game is scheduled for tomorrow against the Tornillo Coyotes in a district away game.

"I expect Tornillo to be really scrappy, they usually are. It is always tough to play in Tornillo, simply because of the long drive and the atmosphere of the gym. It will be a game in which the girls are going to have to create energy and remain focused. We are looking forward to battling out the remainder of the season and giving ourselves the chance to be in the mix at the end," Virdell concluded.

Public Meeting Announcement for the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail

The National Park Service (NPS) is conducting a public meeting on January 10, 2024, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Jeff Davis County Courthouse.

The NPS is kicking off the planning process for the newly designated Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail. An important first step in this process is meeting with people that live and work along the trail to build partnerships, get ideas for how to promote and develop the trail, and to answer any questions on what it means to have a Congressionally designated National Historic Trail.

The Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail (NHT) was added to the National Trails System on January 5, 2023. The NHT is 3,382 miles long, crosses seven states, and was designated to commemorate the impact the Butterfield Overland Mail service had on the shaping of the nation. The NHT is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), National Trails office Regions 6, 7 & 8 (NTIR). NTIR would like to invite you to join in developing the comprehensive plan for this newly designated NHT.

The comprehensive plan will provide a framework for the administration of the trail and a vision to be fulfilled through future, more specific resource studies and development plans which will be created with individual sites and communities that are interested in seeing the trail promoted.

A total of eighteen public meetings will be held across the seven trail states. Meetings will be held in communities from Missouri to California. The meeting for West Texas will occur at the Jeff Davis County Courthouse on January 10, 2024, from 11 am to 1 pm.

This is an exciting opportunity to provide input into the development, protection, and promotion of a new national historic trail. The NPS encourages participation and welcomes the input of everyone along the route that has knowledge of the sites, stories, and possibilities this trail holds. National historic trails are by nature partnership driven. Your participation is important, and the NPS urges you get involved in helping to administer the trail.

Links for additional information:

[ParkPlanning - Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail Comprehensive Plan \(nps.gov\)](#)

[National Park Service - PEPC - Meeting Notices \(nps.gov\)](#)

Meeting venue:

January 10, 2024
11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Jeff Davis County Courthouse
100 Court Ave. Fort Davis, Texas

For more information, please contact NTIR employee Jill Jensen at jill_jensen@nps.gov

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Let's talk strategy



The Alpine Fightin' Bucks listen intently to Coach Hardwick as he goes over plays and strategy during a recent game.

Photo by Shawn Yorks



SENIOR Spotlight
JOAQUIN ESPARZA

In what activities did you participate in high school?
I participated in the band where I've had loads of fun experiences and learned things that I'll never forget. I was also in one act for two years which was also really fun.

Who was your favorite teacher/coach, and why?
Definitely Mr. Wilson. He was always very kind and helpful towards each one of his students, and even those who didn't participate in the band. He made every single band trip that much more fun and memorable. He is also really funny and has great taste in cars.

What was your favorite moment in the last four years?
My favorite moment is really many moments. It's always been being with my friends and around people that I love. Hanging out and having fun, having experiences we'll never forget. None of the people I have met I will ever forget, and hopefully, I can stay in contact with every one of them for the rest of my life.

What are your plans after high school?
I plan to attend college and get degrees in engineering and design, where hopefully I can use what I've learned and apply it to designing, manufacturing, and selling cars. Hopefully, even start a business. And even more, hopefully, make advances in automotive technology and break all kinds of automotive records.

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Devotional Page Pride Kills

BY PHILIP FRANK
Redeemer Lutheran Church

"I'm proud of you!" We say this to loved ones who accomplish something. Whether it be a child who scored a goal or a spouse who earned a promotion. That's not the pride that kills. No, that phrase goes something more like: "I'm proud of me!" That's the pride that kills, killing relationships, opportunities, and your own heart.

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud." (Proverbs 16:18-19 NIV)

Throughout our lives – especially for Christians – the most dangerous time is when we are successful, and everything seems to be going the way we want it to. That is when the temptation of pride strolls up beside us, elevates our impressions of ourselves, and whispers lies of grandeur to us.

When someone challenges what we have believed to be correct for so long, we dig our heels in, raise our clenched fists, and are ready to die for it. Even if we are proven wrong, we tend to think: "When have I been wrong about this?" or "It feels good to always be right."

That's the pride that kills.

We are the enemies of God when we break His Law, which is written on our hearts and revealed to us through His Word. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23 ESV). How could we ever be able to hold our

pride on our shoulders without breaking our own necks in the process? Without Christ, there is no end to our pride; it will only grow. Pride blinds us to our own arrogance, allowing us to butcher relationships and opportunities along the way until we have a dead, hardened heart.

But the destructive power that pride holds over us is NOT absolute. Jesus humbled Himself by stepping down from His throne in heaven, all to die on the cross and rise to new life. He did this to defeat sin, death, and the devil once, and for ALL. Jesus gave His life for you. He took on the penalty for all that you've done wrong. He offers His forgiveness to you. Those who believe and receive it, receive His righteousness. If you reject it, then you will be judged for your pride.

Turn to Him in humility. "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up." (James 4:10 NIV). Daily repent of your sins, especially pride, and be grateful that whenever we are weak, Christ is strong; and that whenever we are faithless, Jesus remains faithful.

May God grant us His gift of humility and keep us close to Him, keeping our hearts from becoming conceited. Let's instead remain lowly, always trusting in Christ alone and not ourselves. Be careful following your heart; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick." (Jeremiah 17:9a ESV). Follow Jesus; His heart is always perfect and pure and brings ongoing healing to our hearts.

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Quesabirria tacos

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Tacos are a big deal. People across the globe have added their own twist to a corn or flour tortilla and called it a taco. And while I'm a purist and only believe tacos come in the form of stuffed corn tortillas, some folks may argue that logic. They won't however argue with just how good an order of quesabirria tacos is.

Over the years, I have eaten a lot of tacos, and one can't really go wrong with having them for a meal. They're good any time of the day or night and you can put anything you can imagine inside them. Generally, they consist of some type of protein, cheese, and perhaps lettuce, tomato, and onion if so desired, or sometimes cabbage in place of the lettuce.

So, why are quesabirria tacos any better than any other type of taco? Well frankly, to be honest, I'm not exactly sure why they are so much better, but they are.

Perhaps it's the slow roasting of the meat, perhaps it's the unique spices, or perhaps it is all of them put together, but make no mistake, once you've had the opportu-



Quesabirria Tacos

But that is where you are wrong. These tacos just have a few pounds of meat, onion, garlic cumin, oregano, bay leaves, chili powder, a cinnamon stick, salt and pepper, and beef broth.

Photo by Kara Gerbert
The ingredients are simple, but they produce out-of-this-world flavor. These tacos are the best way to bring that shock and awe dinner to your family table. If you want to cut down on cooking

time, use an electric pressure cooker to shorten the roasting time of the meat. The pressure cooker will also help to tenderize the meat and lock in all those wonderful spices and fla-

vors quesabirria tacos are famous for.

When you're ready for some out-of-this-world tacos, look no further than this recipe to make everyone in the family happy.

Quesabirria tacos

Ingredients:
2 lbs beef chuck roast or brisket, cut into 1-inch cubes.
1 white onion roughly chopped.
5 garlic cloves
2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon cumin
1 tablespoon oregano,
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 cinnamon stick
Salt and pepper to taste
Beef broth or water
Corn or flour tortillas

Directions:
Season the cubed beef with salt, pepper, cumin, oregano, chili powder, garlic, onions, and bay leaves.
Add just enough beef broth or water to cover the meat.
Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 2-3 hours until beef is very tender.
Remove meat from the liquid and shred it with two forks. Reserve

liquid.
Dip tortillas in hot beef liquid to soften. Fill with shredded beef and any other desired taco toppings. Optionally, dip assembled tacos in the beef liquid before serving for extra flavor and you can also top with fresh chopped onion and cilantro for additional flavor.

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Photo by Joh Covington

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