

Water in the Desert conference a success

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

Last month's Water in the Desert conference, held on the campus of Sul Ross State University was a big success according to Dr. Louis Harveson, founder and director of the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI).

Officials at Sul Ross are working to enhance the university's influence on issues regarding water in West Texas. This inaugural conference for the region brought in over 260 attendees, including members of the Texas House and Senate as well as local groundwater conservation district leaders, scientists, and perhaps the most important member of them all, Texas landowners.

Dr. Carlos Hernandez, President of Sul Ross State University commented on the conference. "Our university, in the Chihuahuan Desert, in the Big Bend, is perhaps the most appropriate

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INSIDE



FEATURED

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Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

20240.38"
February0.13"



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.



West Texas lizard not listed as endangered

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

According to recent information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), a lizard species that was once thought to be on the verge of extinction, has been found to have several thriving populations across its historical range in the Edwards Plateau region of Central and West Texas.

Recent research into the Plateau spot-tailed earless lizard by the USFWS announced that the lizard species would not be listed under the Endangered Species Act. "We are excited to share positive news that this lizard that was thought to be in

major decline, has been found to have a healthy population and won't require protection under the ESA," said Jeff Fleming, the USFWS' acting Southwest Regional Director. "This outcome is a direct result of the dedicated efforts of researchers and conservation partners who have worked tirelessly to gather crucial data on the species. Their work enabled USFWS to make informed decisions about the lizard's conservation status."

In-depth scientific research from the collaborative efforts of federal agencies, states, Tribes, and private landowners, species such as the Plains



Plateau spot-tailed earless lizard
Courtesy photo

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Chasing 1,000



Sul Ross Lady Lobo Marley Rokas (32) chases after a loose ball during a home game at the Gallego Center earlier this season against Western New Mexico College. Rokas, a junior, is just five points shy of a career 1,000 points in her three years playing for Sul Ross. She will get her chance to become a part of the 1,000-point club this coming Saturday in their season finale in Brownwood against Howard Payne.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

Movie scenes for 'Due West' shot in Alpine

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer

City locals driving through town recently may have noticed a little more traffic than usual and a few new faces behind cameras and sound equipment on East Holland Ave.

Alpine was one of the locations in the area that was able to offer its natural and rural West Texas small-town scenery as a backdrop for the film crew shooting a movie aptly named Due West.

"I fell in love with Far West Texas on a road trip with my (now) wife, which led us to get married here, and make an annual pilgrimage to the magical and unique region," said Evan Miller, director, and co-writer of Due West.

The film has been shooting in the region, with locations in Alpine, Marfa, and Marathon, this past month. Helmed by director Evan Miller, it stars Adrienne Palicki who has made appearances in familiar works such as Friday Night Lights, John Wick, and The Orville, among others.

One spot used in Alpine was a room attached to the Sazzon restaurant. The space was transformed into a small pharmacy for one of the scenes filmed in town. During filming, down the street, some officers from the Alpine Police Department were present for traffic control, guiding vehicles around the crew during some of the scenes.



Part of the Due West filming crew follows the actor while shooting a scene in Alpine.

Photo by Joh Covington

While the complete plot will have to be discovered by future filmmakers, according to a statement from the company, Due West is an honest attempt to showcase the beauty and the struggles of daily life in areas like West Texas.

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OBITUARIES

Homer Ferguson Mills

Homer Ferguson Mills, a native of Alpine passed away on Monday, February 5, in Houston, after many months battling Acute Myeloid Leukemia. He was a rancher, conservationist, wildlife enthusiast, and a loving husband, father, and grandfather.



the next 48 years. They welcomed their son, Kenneth, in 1981.

Homer was born on April 1, 1952, and grew up on the family ranch in the Glass Mountains. Ranch life and work were a passion from a young age. Even after the family moved into Alpine for the children to attend school, Homer spent every summer at the ranch working alongside the cowboys. Homer was an active member of 4-H and FFA, raising sheep and participating in wool and livestock judging. At Alpine High School he was Student Council President, FFA President, Football All-District and Super All-West Texas team member, and Boys State delegate.

Homer attended Texas A&M University in College Station. He was a proud member of the Corps of Cadets and served as First Sergeant of Company G2, Adjunct Officer of Second Battalion, and Executive Officer of the Ross Volunteers. Homer graduated in 1974 with a degree in Agriculture Economics.

While attending Texas A&M, Homer met his wife, Druanne, and the two were married in 1975. They twirled across the dance floor in love for

Homer worked as a manager at L&H Packing and Luby's Cafeterias but his passion for West Texas called him back home. Alongside helping with the family ranch, he worked as a fencing contractor, ranch manager, ranch consultant, real estate developer, and County Appraiser. Homer and his fence crews built many hundreds of miles of fence up and down the rocky Chihuahuan Desert mountains. For one individual he managed a dozen ranches.

Eventually, Homer would get the opportunity to combine his passions with his work, and for the next 25 years he managed the O2 Ranch, one of the largest ranches in the Trans-Pecos, for Lykes Brothers Inc. By partnering on research projects with Sul Ross and the Center for Big Bend Studies he helped advance conservation and archeological studies and educate the next generation.

Homer also gave back to the community by serving as President of the Alpine Cemetery As-

sociation, as a Boy Scout leader, and as a member of the School Board, Appraisal Review Board, Texas Wildlife Association, and Texas Cattle Raisers Association among many others.

Preserving the century-long legacy of the Ferguson and Mills families' ranching in the Glass Mountains was his strongest passion. He had an affection for hunting arrowheads, finding the most beautiful agate, and constantly improving the property. Homer also treasured being able to share that special place with family and friends, especially with kids. He hosted many father-son hunts and cherished time at the ranch with his son Kenneth and later as Papaw to Olin, Austin, and granddaughter Evie.

Homer leaves behind his wife, Druanne Mills; his son, Kenneth Mills; his daughter-in-law, Jamie Mills; his granddaughter, Evelyn Mills; his sister and brother-in-law, Max and Marsha Stabel; great-nephew Brandon Parr and two special loves, Olin and Austin Welch, as well as many other beloved relatives.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father, Eva Jeanne and George Mills, sister Carol Ann Dacus, and niece Amber Dawn Parr.

Homer's funeral was held Saturday, February 10 at First Christian Church in Alpine with burial following at Elm Grove Cemetery. In

lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Friends of the Center of Big Bend Studies, Box C-71, Alpine, TX 79832, the Museum of the Big Bend, Box C-101 Alpine, TX 79832, or a beloved charity of your choosing.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS ALPINE ISD'S TEXAS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT

Alpine ISD will hold a public meeting at 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 to discuss Alpine ISD's rating on the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR).

The meeting will be held in the Board Room of the Alpine ISD Administration Building, located at 704 W. Sul Ross Avenue, Alpine, Texas.

Tuning up for Cowboy Poetry



Musicians rehearse for the 2023 Saturday night show at the Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Alpine.

Photo by Jessica Brandi Lifland

We have a winner!

Alpine High School freshman Rode Babb participated in the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo annual calf scramble and placed second across the line with his calf. Along with his second-place finish, Babb received a \$1500 scholarship towards a breeding animal of his choice.



Courtesy photo



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Coach Canaba, next generation

BY JOH COVINGTON
Staff Writer



Annika Canaba

Born and raised in Alpine, Annika Canaba is an athlete who has made the community and her family proud repeatedly throughout her high school and college career. As she has chosen to remain local and further her career as a coach at Sul Ross State University, the area's investment in her has returned tenfold. Her skills that have been nurtured here are being put to good use.

The new coach was a standout for the Lobo volleyball and softball teams while she pursued her master's degree in sports administration. Canaba began this new and exciting chapter after a five-year illustrious all-time leader in volleyball kills and after earning first-team ASC honors for the fourth time in her career.

This past season, Canaba was an assistant volleyball coach and will now be transitioning into softball.

In an interview with the Avalanche, Canaba shared that her family has played a huge part in her impressive trajectory, reminiscing about attending Sul Ross athletic events with her family while growing up.

"I have very vivid memories of attending games in the Gallego Center, at Jackson Field, at the Lobo Softball field, and at Kokernot. Even

then, I don't think I realized how much this university would mean to me," said Canaba.

Canaba was one of the most impressive dual-sport players to come out of Sul Ross recently and according to her, playing the opportunity to have both of the sports that she loved for Sul Ross was a huge blessing and an experience that will not be soon forgotten.

"I've grown as a person and learned so much about myself and life. Having coaches and staff that have impacted me is something I will always be grateful for, but also something that motivates me to have a positive impact on the players that I will coach," Canaba said.

For her first softball season on this side of the dugout, they have quite a few returners, many freshmen coming in, and a lot of talent on the team according to the coach.

Canaba will be coaching quite a few of her previous teammates this season which she says has been a weird yet fun

adjustment.

"I think that because we have played together and have built a good relationship, the trust that usually might take time to build has already been built. Having that time playing with them has allowed me to learn the best ways to motivate them, to push them, and to communicate with them, which I feel is very helpful as a coach," Canaba replied.

Those relationships aren't limited to former teammates either, Canaba is now co-working with faculty that were her guides as a student-athlete.

"It has been a lot of fun and extremely helpful to work with familiar faces," said Canaba.

One of the most familiar faces is Canaba's father, Troy Canaba, who coached her all five years that Canaba played for Sul Ross. Now, they get to work alongside each other, which according to the new coach is a huge blessing and a lot of fun.

"Overall, though, the staff here in the athletic department is really special in the sense that it's very family-like, so they have all been like family to me and have supported me through this transition from player to coach," said Canaba.

When asked if there are any techniques that she is planning to instill in her coaching, Canaba shared

that encouraging a strong identity as a person and a player has a huge effect on the athlete. According to the new coach, one of the biggest things that she wants to have is effective communication, maintaining a trusting relationship with the players, and encouraging their confidence as both a player and a person.

"A lot of the time we get so caught up in the pressure of the game and start to question ourselves if we aren't succeeding at the time, so just letting them know that a bad game or a few doesn't define who you are as a person and that they just have to continue to grow and learn," remarked Canaba.

Win or lose, the players are sure to know that Canaba is in their corner.

"They've been working hard in practice, so I am excited to see what these girls will do this season," said Canaba.

The tradition continues with Annika but is sure to continue with the entire family as well. Her brother, Jayden, is currently a sophomore on the Lobo men's basketball team while her younger brother, Jace, is a senior and multisport standout for the Alpine High School.

With the never-ending support from her father and fellow athlete brothers, Canaba's transition to coach has been a bright one for them and the community.

USBP traffic stop results in drug seizure

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor



Marijuana bundles seized in vehicle stop.

Photo courtesy of USBP

According to information received from the U.S. Border Patrol Big Bend Sector, a routine welfare check on a vehicle resulted in the seizure of more than 530 pounds of marijuana.

On February 4, U.S. Border Patrol agents conducted a check on a vehicle that had stopped and pulled off onto the shoulder of the road about a mile south of the USBP checkpoint on Highway 385.

The two Alpine agents conducting the vehicle check questioned the driver who was a Cuban national. The agents noticed suspicious-looking bundles that were covered by a blanket in the back of the vehicle. Upon further investigation, a Border Patrol canine unit indicated the presence of narcotics and the bundles tested positive for marijuana.

The driver of the vehicle was arrested for possession of marijuana.

A total of 19 bundles weighing in at over 530 pounds with an estimated street value of \$424,232.00 were con-

fiscated by agents.

"The vigilance of our Border Patrol agents from Alpine resulted in a significant seizure of illegal narcotics," said Big Bend Sector Chief Patrol Agent Walter N. Slosar. "Our agents, as part of their border security mission, interdict illegal narcotics being transported across the border intended for the interior of the country. The work they do to disrupt Transnational Criminal Organization's drug smuggling operations is vital to protecting our citizens from these illegal substances."

According to USBP officials, the case along with the narcotics has been turned over to the Drug Enforcement Agency for further investigation and prosecution.

Terlingua robotics team shines in El Paso

The Purobots #11720, the robotics team from the Terlingua Big Bend High School competed last Saturday in El Paso on the UTEP campus at the First Tech Challenge League Tournament. Out of 21 schools, the Purobots placed sixth while also earning the Connect Award. This award is given to the team that most connects with their local science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) community. The team that wins the Connect Award ac-

tively seeks and recruits engineers and explores the opportunities that are available in the world of engineering, science, and technology. The Purobots are coached by Brad Anthenat, who was selected for the Compass Award. The Compass Award is given to and recognizes an adult coach or mentor who has provided outstanding guidance and support to a team throughout the year and demonstrates to the team what it means to be a professional.



Terlingua Big Bend High School robotics team includes Ervey Sotelo, Zachary Noll, Luna Barrett, and Brooke Jenks. Pictured in the back are Anael Armendariz, Severino Alday, Coach Brad Anthenat, Maria Ramirez, and Jennyfer Orozco.

Practice makes perfect



The United States Border Patrol conducted classroom and tactical training last week on the Sul Ross Campus. Students were told at the beginning of the week to not be alarmed if they saw them with tactical gear around Fletcher Hall and at the Mountainside dormitory.

Photo by Joh Covington

New graduate program slated for fall semester

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) at Sul Ross has announced the creation of a new graduate program in Anthropology. The creation of the Master of Arts in Anthropology took months to develop but represents a new direction for students at Sul Ross as well as research at CBBS.

This program is comprised of 36 credit hours as a thesis-based degree plan that includes 24 hours in the Anthropology core curriculum and 12 elective credits, six of which must be in Anthropology. All required courses will

be routinely offered on a one- or two-year rotation, with an expected two-year completion. Coursework will include hands-on training that will aid students in the application of different methods and technologies for the appropriate settings.

"We project admitting six students each fall semester to maintain small cohort sizes and low student-to-professor ratios," said CBBS Director Bryon Schroeder.

The development of the graduate program coincided with the re-establishment of the Anthropology minor, which according to Schroeder has occurred at an optimal time to meet

the growing demand for archaeologists. Student anthropological work will be conducted in collaboration with CBBS to produce world-class archaeological research.

"We are excited to offer this new opportunity to our students," said University Executive Vice-President and Provost Dr. Bernie Cantens. "The creation of an Anthropology graduate program complements the current focus on conservation and habitat management at Sul Ross, producing students who are better informed to meet the diverse challenges of implementing effective natural and cultural resource programs."

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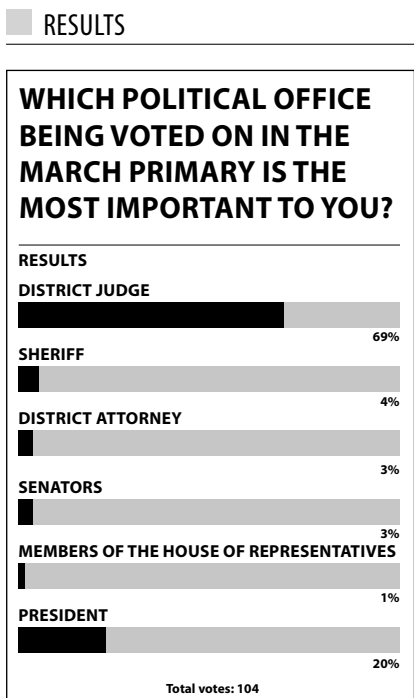
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Opinions

ONLINE POLL



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

Now the Avalanche asks:

Which political office being voted on in the March primary is the most important to you?

- President
- Senators
- Members of the House of Representatives
- District Judge
- District Attorney
- Sheriff

Vote for this week's poll online at: www.AlpineAvalanche.com

LETTERS

Send us your letters. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only your name and city will be published. Letters should be no more than 300 words. Letters become the property of the Alpine Avalanche and may be edited prior to publication for spelling and grammatical errors, clarity and length. Ad hominem attacks will not be accepted. Letters that include profanity or libel will not be printed. 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.



Elections: An important part of local success

2023 was a great year in Alpine. This is in no small part due to the team of city council members that we elect to represent us. We entrust the city council to provide good governance to the citizens of Alpine, and that is not a small task. City council members must make difficult decisions and try their best to mitigate issues while making their constituents happy. They are a critical part of a process by which solutions to complex problems may



GEO CALDERON
Secretary, City of Alpine

be fully realized and executed. City council members are selfless public servants, and there is not a day that passes that I do not admire council members for their dedicated volunteer service to our community. I look forward to the leadership that the council will provide in 2024, and I have no doubt that they will continue working tirelessly to ensure that Alpine is the most vibrant and prosperous community in the Far West Texas desert.

That being said, I want to remind community members that you too can make a difference in city government. Every year members of our community can choose to run for local office and to be part of a group of people helping Alpine move forward. This year, the citizens of Alpine will elect members to the Alpine City Council for Ward 2, and Ward 4, along with the mayor. Additionally, Council Member Judy Stokes announced her planned resignation by May 2024. This also provides an opportunity for individuals in Ward 1 to represent

the residents of Ward 1 on the city council. I earnestly hope our community members will consider running for these local offices. Residents interested in running for Ward 2, Ward 4, and the mayor must apply by Friday, February 16, by 5 p.m. Residents interested in running for Ward 1 must apply by Monday, March 4, by 5 p.m. Questions may be directed to the city secretary at (432) 837-3301, option 1, or by email to city.secretary@cityofalpine.com. For more information, please visit www.cityofalpine.com/elections.

I remember wanting him to make it stop

*"Long as I remember
The rain been comin'
down."
— 'Who'll Stop the Rain'
song lyrics by John Fogerty.*

The idea early Sunday was to thread some thoughts together for this week's column. The sunrise through the breakfast room window was cloudy. A welcome improvement, however, from Saturday's most-of-the-day deluge.

Dashing out the door for church a couple of hours later, things had changed. Dark skies were serving monsoon-sized showers blended with notes of hail.

"Looks like I'll be late this morning," I thought. Dashing back inside to escape the weather.

Honestly, waiting for a reprieve in the weather just seemed like another chapter in the recent week's string of plagues.

"What next," someone asked one day last week. "No electricity one week, no gas the next. Then an arctic freeze followed by early Spring weather and floods."

"I reckon the only thing left is locust," I offered. Blank stare.

"Locust," I repeated. "You know, in the Bible." Blank stare.

"Never mind. I'll simply settle for no tornadoes."

I don't like tornadoes. Not that anyone does. But I don't even like "conditions favorable for tornados," as the weather prophets foretell.

Maybe it's related to my childhood. I remember standing behind my father in a doorway of darkness framed by bursts of near-

constant lightning flashes and popping power lines and piercing sideways torrents of rain.

We braved the elements together at the top of the concrete steps with safety in the dank storm cellar below.

Watching as the black funnel danced across the other side of the small West Texas town of Seymour. Just blocks away. Snapping utility poles and threatening a steel suspension bridge across the Salt Fork of the Brazos River.

I remember wanting my father to make it stop.

Memories of watching the twister gyrate through the night, leaving what daylight revealed as a path of destruction, have endured since the mid-1950s.

In my third-grade mind, my father was invincible. With him one step ahead of me, I was fearless. However, the image of the weather's wild side illuminated by the storm that spawned it plays vividly in my mind every time one of nature's most violent forms of wrath comes to life.

That was not the only night my parents spent racing through the rain and darkness with kids in tow, seeking shelter in the storm cellar. The underground shelters were a way of life in West Texas.

They were also excellent places for storing canned vegetables or garden-fresh onions and potatoes in the summer. And cool places for kids to play. Literally.

Playing changed to pray-



LEON ALDRIDGE
Guest Columnist

ing during nights spent waiting out the weather. Trying to sleep on an army surplus cot. Scary at any age.

Storm-watching was not limited to my childhood. I watched that tornado go across the west side of Oklahoma City some 30 or more years ago. The good news is I was on the east side of the city. Ready at the drop of a tornado-tossed hat to hastily retreat, if needed.

News of twisters close to home always gets my attention. And you can define close as 100 miles. Roughly.

Without a West Texas-style storm cellar, I have no place to hide. But in my forty-plus years living in Center, the only tornado I recall blew through sometime in the mid-1980s. I didn't see that one, but the TV weather reported it as a tornado.

What I did witness was its fury.

Lacking was today's on-the-spot reporting that "a tornado has been sighted in Podunk County, 2.375 miles away southeast of Toadhop, traveling north-northeast at 25.782 miles per hour, expected to be at the intersection of 78 and 281 in 14.34 minutes." It was still obvious though, that something bad was looming. Like dark skies at midday.

"You have a phone call," Lois Cooper summoned me.

"We're scared," housekeeper and babysitter, Mae, said. "The plaster is coming off the wall in Robin's room. When I got there, insulation and wall studs were punch-

ing through sheetrock. Braving wind and rain to investigate outside, I saw it. Tallest pine tree in my yard. One to have caused even mythical lumberjack, Paul Bunyon, to run and hide. Trunk measuring more than five feet in diameter and the top fading into the clouds. It was working its way out of the ground with the wind whipping it against the house.

"Go," I commanded, grabbing Mae and the children as I ran out the door.

The alleged tornado not only took out seven trees and damaged my house but also cleaned off my patio. Took metal table and chairs, plus a plethora of potted plants, and deposited pieces down the street.

Other damage reports included the Rio Theatre sign, the elementary school roof two blocks away, and several houses.

"So, what about those locusts," my friend interrupted. Jerking me out of my recollections of storms past. Back to 2024.

"Oh, you know," I said. The Biblical account of the plagues in the book of Exodus. Disasters inflicted on Egypt by God to convince the Pharaoh of his wrongdoings. Darkness. Hail. And locust.

Blank stare.

"Did I ever tell you," I continued, "that I still don't like tornadoes? Especially since I don't have my father to stand behind."

"I always thought he could make the rain and storms stop," you know?

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Heard on the STREET

What is your favorite animal-related fun fact?



Peter Bernstein:

I have a few favorite facts, and most of them are about the platypus. They lay eggs, they don't have a stomach, and they have venom that is being used in studies for diabetes treatment.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 16 Fish Fry, 5:30 to 7 p.m. American Legion

Feb. 24 Desert Mindfulness Walks and Talks, 2 p.m. at Davis Mountains State Park. Contact the park for registration.

March 1 Fish Fry, Knights of Columbus at Our Lady of Peace parish hall.

March 9 Desert Mindfulness Walks and Talks, 2 p.m. at Davis Mountains State Park. Contact the park for registration.

March 16 Desert Mindfulness Walks and Talks, 2 p.m. at Davis Mountains State Park. Contact the park for registration.

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 Chorale 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.

wixsite.com/bbcc.

Celebrate Recovery, at Big Bend Cowboy Church on Thursday evenings from 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.

Exercise Classes, at Sunshine House, 402 E. Holland Ave. Tuesdays-yoga and balance, Thursdays-strength and conditioning. 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free to all. Contact Cindy at 512-423-2409 for more details.

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

Hike with Homeless Dogs, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. every Thursday at Davis Mountains State Park in collaboration with Grand Companions. For more information contact Charlie Ewing at 432-246-3337 x 301.

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.

JOAQUIN MARTINEZ

In what activities did you participate in high school?
I was part of the Alpine High football and baseball teams.

Who was your favorite teacher/coach, and why?
By far my favorite coach is Coach Dominguez. No matter how much I was struggling, if I was in trouble, or if I just didn't feel like me, he was always there to keep my feet moving and stay successful.

What was your favorite moment of the last four years?
My favorite moment in the last four years was winning our Bi-district football game in Ozona against Brady in double overtime.

What are your plans after high school?
I want to pursue financial stability in the trade industry (certified bag chaser).

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AHS golf team keeps improving



The AHS boy's golf team hit the links in Pecos last weekend. David Baca was the only member of the team to medal. He placed third, while the rest of the team improved their overall game by 27 strokes from day one to day two. From left are Colt Hale, Mateo Solis, Riley Killingsworth, David Baca, and Levi Garcia.

Courtesy photo

PET OF THE WEEK

Alpine Humane Society Pet of the Week is Finn. Finn and his brother Baxter came into the shelter on January 11, having been found near the city limits. We are still getting to know the pair, but from what we have gathered, they are pretty typical puppies.

Finn, although a little shyer than his brother, is very welcoming and excited to see you once he has been introduced to you.

Finn is still learning the leash but gets better every day. While in intake, he kept his kennel clean too, so not much house training is needed for this young man. Finn

loves toys and treats and is ready for a new playmate and a home.

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.



Mary Stephens:

How smart crows are. They like trinkets, can remember faces, and hold grudges



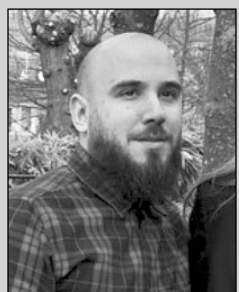
Violet Hoi:

Otters hold hands while they sleep so they don't float away.



Gabriel Hernandez:

Seals, or maybe it might be sea lions, wedge themselves between rocks to sleep underwater.



Brian Thompson:

Koalas can sleep for 22 hours. I wish I was a koala.

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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

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SADDLE PACK COMBINATION:
(Your choice of any two items)
Cup of Tortilla Soup • Cup of Jalapeno and Cilantro Soup
Cup of Daily Soup • 1/2 Reata Club or Steak Sandwich
1/2 BLT Sandwich with Peppercorn Bacon

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN BY THE CITY OF ALPINE THAT A CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD AT 5:30 P.M. ON **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024** REGARDING THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONED ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE 2024-02-02: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX C – ZONING, ARTICLE I – BASIC ORDINANCE TO THE ALPINE CODE OF ORDINANCES; AMENDING THE CITY ZONING ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR REGULATIONS IN THE M-1 – INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT ZONE; PROVIDING THE 4 OF 5 ESTABLISHMENT OF UP TO A \$500 PENALTY PER OCCURRENCE FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE ORDINANCE. THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION HAS RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF THIS ORDINANCE.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD ON **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.** IN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 803 WEST HOLLAND AVENUE TO HEAR CITIZENS VIEWS AND COMMENTS CONCERNING THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE.

COPIES OF THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE ARE AVAILABLE AT CITY HALL LOCATED AT 100 N. 13TH STREET BETWEEN 8:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M. AND 1:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. COPIES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE BY EMAIL REQUEST TO CITY.SECRETARY@CITYOFALPINE.COM. QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE CITY SECRETARY AT (432) 837-3301, OPTION 1.

WATER • FROM 1

ate location for teachers, researchers, legislators, and landowners, along with conservationists and innovators to meet and share information and ideas about our most important resource,” Dr. Hernandez said. “We were pleased to see the immense interest in this important topic, and we hope this will be the first of many years of partnership with the Water in the Desert conference.”

This conference was funded by state-wide organizations that included the Dixon Water Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, Horizon Foundation, King Land and Water, Lyda Hill Philanthropies, Shield Ranch, Still Water Foundation, and the Texas Wellspring Fund. Partners in the conference included BRI, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Rio Grande Research Center, and Rio Grande Joint Venture.

During the most recent 2023 legislative session, Texas lawmakers created the Texas Water Caucus, a new legislative group dedicated to water policy. They also approved



Senator Charles Perry looks on as Senator Cesar Blanco addresses the audience at the Water in the Desert Conference held last month at Sul Ross State University.

the creation of a \$1 billion Texas Water Fund to help finance water projects across the state, subject to approval by voters. The bill was approved by 77% of voters in the November 2023 election and the fund has been earmarked at 75% for funding aging infrastructure and 25% for developing new sources of water such as desalination plants that are as-

sociated with West Texas oil fields. “Water is not sexy. It’s long-term and expensive,” noted Senator Charles Perry during panel discussions at the conference.

“Sul Ross is uniquely positioned to become a research hub and an area-wide water resource for the greater Big Bend region,” said Dr. Harveson. “The Water in the Desert conference has injected new energy and interest

in enhancing university resources devoted to this critical issue. As drought deepens, cities spread, and pumping increases, the pressure on this most precious desert resource will only grow.”

Courtesy photo

DUE WEST • FROM 1

The gritty drama will showcase a woman trying to keep her life on track after unexpected turns affect both her health and finances, which is a true portrayal of the struggles many folks across modern and present-day America often face.

Set in a small town, those behind the film were thrilled to get the opportunity to shoot in the region that it represents. The director and co-writer, Miller, was born and raised in the panhandle town of Pampa and shared his commitment to seeing true regional and rural stories told on screen. “It was on one of those trips that I conceived this film, mixing it with my background of growing up in the panhandle to the issues of today both for rural communities and through the great state of Texas,” said Miller.

“Making this film anywhere else was not an option and I’m proud to say we are a Texas-made production through and through.”

— Evan Miller, director, and co-writer of *Due West*

Miller believes deeply that such stories are often ignored, and therefore is passionate about bringing them to the forefront.

The mostly Austin-based crew began production on January 23 and wrapped up filming on February 8 before returning to central Texas.

“Making this film anywhere else was not an option and I’m proud to say we are a Texas-made production through and through,” Miller said.

Alpine band students make All-Region

Four of the Alpine Fightin’ Buck band students were named to the All-Region concert and symphonic bands recently. Representing Alpine in the All-Region symphonic band were Alyssa Barrón and Zöe Arredondo on saxophone and for the concert band Ryanna Pineada on trumpet and Megan Struthers on clarinet.

Courtesy photo



AMS Band students selected for All-Region, Honor bands



Band students from Alpine Middle School recently competed against hundreds of other students from 12 other school districts and were selected for the Honor Band and All-Region Symphonic Band. Under the direction of Mrs. Marina Azar, Lauren Furr was selected to the Honor Band on flute, Juan Longino Jr for clarinet, and Zane Perkins for tuba. Students selected for the All-Region Symphonic Band included Elisia Markin for Symphonic flute, Emilie Le Blanc for trombone, Jake Vega for clarinet, and Maximus Cramer for baritone.

Courtesy photo

LIZARD • FROM 1

spotted skunk and the dessert massasauga (rattlesnake) in Texas along with 58 other species of fish, wildlife, and plants across the Southwest have avoided an ESA listing, by catalyzing conservation efforts to help protect these at-risk species and their habitats.

Thanks to the Texas Comptroller’s Office and Texas Parks and Wildlife, several years of funding were obtained to enable university researchers to conduct this study. The study revealed that despite the various stressors the species and its habitat faced, the lizard has been able to maintain multiple resilient populations across an area comparable to its native range. Also, during this study, researchers discovered that the Plateau spot-tailed earless lizard and the Tamaulipan spot-tailed earless lizard, which were previously considered subspecies of one another, are two distinct species. Thanks to this research, USFWS has determined that the Tamaulipan sp. will be

evaluated on a 12-month finding and has been added to the USFWS fis-

cal year 2023-2027 National Domestic Listing Workplan.

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ATTENTION PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners have certain rights that may reduce their property tax burden.

HOMEOWNERS

Persons who own their residence may claim their home as a residential homestead. The filing of this document is only necessary if the homeowner has changed homesteads, the appraisal district has requested an updated application, or the owner has become eligible for additional exemptions since last year. A copy of a current driver’s license must accompany the application. Persons who purchase their home during 2024 and the home purchased does not have an existing homestead exemption from the prior owner, the new owner may receive a prorated homestead. The proration is from the date the homeowner qualifies. Details may be obtained from your local appraisal district. Homeowners may also defer the portion of the tax on their residence homestead if the value of the home was raised more than 5% above the previous year. Although the tax collection is deferred, interest continues to run on the unpaid portion of tax at a rate of 8% per annum and the deferred tax remains a lien on the property. To apply for the deferral, the owner should contact the appraisal district which appraised the property in question and complete an application.

DISABLED PERSONS

Persons who are disabled under Social Security law are entitled to additional exemptions on their residential homestead. Disabled applicants must apply with the appraisal district and furnish a determination letter from Social Security. Disabled persons receive all benefits on their home that are available to over 65 persons (see below).

PERSONS WHO ARE OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE- EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERRAL

Persons who are over 65 years of age or disabled persons may file for additional exemptions and a ceiling on school taxes for their residential homestead if they became 65 during 2023 or will be 65 during 2024. Over-65 persons should apply for this exemption at the appraisal district office in their county. Over-65 persons are also eligible to defer paying the tax on their residential homestead if they wish. The taxes continue to accrue during the deferral plus interest, but no attempt will be made to force payment during the deferral. Details and an application may be obtained from any appraisal district or the State Comptroller.

DISABLED VETERANS

Persons who have been declared disabled by the Veteran’s Administration are eligible for additional exemptions on property they own. The declaration letter from VA is mailed annually, but the appraisal district only needs a copy in the first year of eligibility or if the percentage of disability changes. In certain situations where the disabled vet is 100% disabled, unemployable and receiving 100% disability compensation, their homestead may be completely exempt. An annual reapplication for the 100% exemption may be required by the Chief Appraiser.

FARM AND RANCH OWNERS

Farmers and ranchers may be entitled to receive an alternate method of appraisal determined by the farm income to the property. This method is available to farms and ranches commercially raising crops or livestock or which are used as a wildlife habitat under State guidelines. An application for agricultural use value and additional information is available from your appraisal district. Re-filing is only necessary if requested to do so by the Chief Appraiser

EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS

Exemption applications for all property tax exemptions including total exemptions for charitable, religious, and other total exemptions may be obtained from an appraisal district nearest you or through the State Comptroller’s Office at 1/800-252-9121 or from their website at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/02-forms.html>

BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY OWNERS

State law **requires** the filing of a rendition declaring what types of business personal property that a person or company owns. Failure to file the rendition will result in a 10% penalty. If a fraudulent rendition is filed, a 50% penalty is mandated. A rendition can be obtained from the appraisal district office where the property is located. Deadline-April 15. A 30-day filing extension is available by written request.

PROTESTING PROPERTY VALUE

Taxpayers whose property value increases by at least \$1000 will be mailed a reappraisal notice stating the proposed value. The taxpayer may file a protest of the value change by completing the protest form that will be included in the notice. An informal hearing will be available to taxpayers, and if not satisfied, the taxpayer may have a formal hearing before the Bee County Appraisal Review Board.

If you have questions about any of these topics, please contact the Brewster County Appraisal District at (432) 837-2332 or come by our office at 107 W Ave E. Alpine, Texas. Other information may also be available on the Comptroller’s website at comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/

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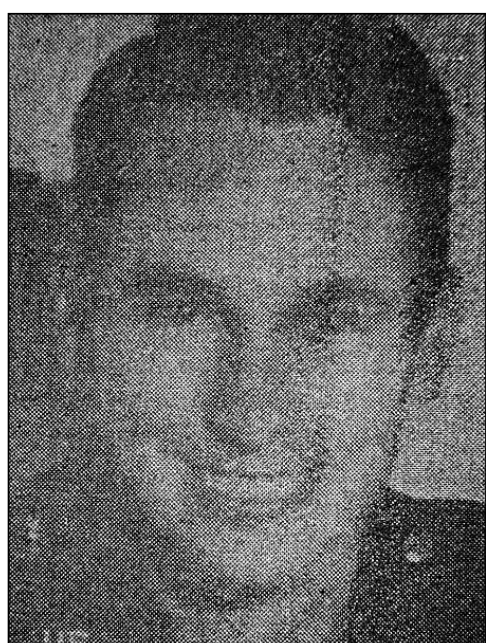


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LOOKING BACK

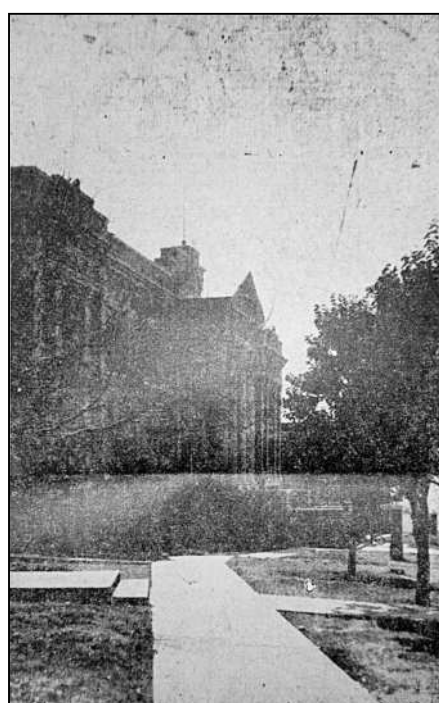
SERVING THE BIG BEND AND DAVIS MOUNTAINS COUNTRY

Alpine Avalanche



August 4, 1944

Captain Vick Winter of Alpine will be honored during the exercises held at the airbase tomorrow. Winters is a missing AAF pilot who will receive notice for extraordinary achievement and heroism in aerial combat.



August 28, 1953

Some things never change on the Sul Ross campus. Pictured here, is the front side view of the Morelock academic building in 1953.



August 28, 1953

The 1953-54 Alpine High School student council has been elected for the school year. School officials have been encouraging the development of student-based governments to encourage students to nurture responsibility and prepare them for their future.



August 30, 1947

Students in Shanghai gather at the railroad station to send off the non-partisan peace delegation. Their banner that says, "U.S. Army - Go back your sweet home" is a part of their anti-civil war movement.

Improper pruning of oaks can lead to fungal disease

Dear Neil: I need a crash course in oak wilt. What types of oaks are most likely to be affected? How can I know if my trees are in danger? What precautions can I take and who should I hire? When can I have them pruned?

Those are excellent questions for anyone who loves oak trees. This fungal disease (*Bretziella fagacearum*) was first identified in the Upper Midwest in 1942. It has since been confirmed in more than two dozen states from New England to Texas (eastern U.S.), and less than one year ago it was confirmed in Ontario. The roughly 800 species of oaks are broken into two major categories. The red oak group (pointed lobes) is by far the more susceptible to this disease. Infected red oaks will not recover and are usually lost within a couple of months. The white oak group (rounded lobes) is more resistant. They are less likely to die. In fact, some do recover. But oak wilt is still of great concern just because they are still oaks. Live oaks are in between. They are certainly susceptible, and oak wilt has done very significant damage to our magnificent live oak population across much of our state.

There is a strong partnership between the Texas A&M

GARDENER'S MAILBAG
by neil sperry

Forest Service and the Forest Health Protection Branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. The discoloration of leaves as conducting tissues are damaged is characteristic. They are evidence that it is time to call in the help of an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist to confirm the diagnosis. Several other problems, including gas leaks, herbicide damage, and normal late-winter leaf drop of live oaks (going on now) can resemble oak wilt's effects, and a Certified Arborist will know the proper steps to take.

Every gardener thinks of pruning their oak trees at some point. However, the timing of that trimming is critical in your dealing with oak wilt. The fungal mats that form beneath the bark of

infected trees are produced in spring and early summer. Pruning must not be done between February 1 and July 15. The acceptable pruning time runs from mid-summer through fall, and all of winter until Valentine's Day.

The reason for that timing: bark beetles that are involved with those mats can carry the fungus to exposed wounds on otherwise healthy trees. Take all precautions not to gouge oak trunks as you mow and trim grass and coat all cuts larger than your thumb with some type of paint or pruning sealant immediately after you finish pruning.

There are two other noteworthy precautions. Remove infected dead or dying oak timber as quickly as possible so that it cannot serve as a source of spread to healthy trees. Do not leave it stacked as firewood. And, if your trees are growing close together, talk to your arborist about whether root grafting could be a concern. It may be necessary to cut trenches between the trees

that could be merging their roots so that the fungal infection won't be able to spread underground.

Photo: This is an example of a terrible pruning technique on several levels. Cuts were made against trunks without regard to branch collars. The result was much more surface left exposed. Too much top growth was removed at one time. Cuts were not sealed to protect against the spread of oak wilt. Cuts were made Easter weekend - right in the middle of the spring "Do not trim" season for all types of oaks. Photo by Neil Sperry.

Dear Neil: I have these two types of weeds every year. I put pre-emergents down in late winter and 90

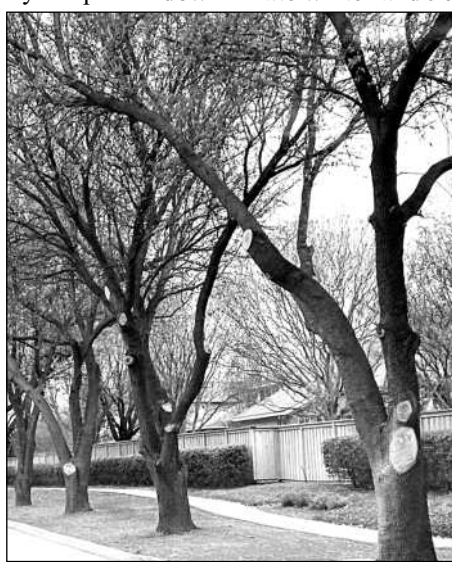
days later, then again in the fall, yet I still get these. Is there something I can put down that won't kill my St. Augustine?

The coarser grass is rescuegrass. A fall pre-emergent applied the first week of September should prevent its germination. You didn't specify when your fall treatment was made, so perhaps it was after that time. The materials Dimension, Halts, or Balan should work on it. This past fall, along with fall 2022, were both very hot and very dry at that early September time. I suspect that some of the effectiveness of the pre-emergents was diminished by all the watering we had to do while it was still too hot for

the weeds to be sprouting.

Your other weed appears to be annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*). The same three pre-emergents are labeled for its control, but there is research from several southern ag schools saying that it is more difficult to control and that it appears to be developing some level of resistance. All I can suggest there is that you "stay tuned." We can hope that a new product will come into the market that will offer better prevention.

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.



TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

1 Fort Worth theater: _____ Manana

5 TXism: "got knocked down _____ or two"

6 XIT Ranch covered _____ counties

7 Anthony: "Leap _____ Capital of the World"

8 month of Texas Poetry Day (abbr.)

9 Halloween "treat" opposite (2 wds.)

15 TXism: "never sign anything by the glow of a _____ light"

17 TXism: "could talk _____ of a ditch"

21 Texas "Pretty Paper" singer, Orbison (init.)

22 TX George Jones' "The Race _____"

23 George H.W. illness on 1992 Tokyo trip

24 TXism: "_____ wet hen" (angry)

30 old series: "Texas John _____"

34 Davy's state (abbr.)

35 TXism: "restless as _____ church"

36 Alpine, TX is named for these mountains

37 TX comedian/actor, Foxx

39 Texas boomtown hotel: "a cross between _____ a flophouse"

43 TXism: "scared the dickens out _____"

44 "The Lone _____"

45 ex-Mav. Alex (init.)

46 greenish-blue color

DOWN

1 Palo Duro

2 TXism: "just down the road _____"

3 Cruz & Cornyn

4 Texas sun sometimes?

9 Ozona High class

10 Cannonsnap Creek was misnamed for this in 1837 (2 wds.)

11 prickly heat

12 TXism: "_____ sheared like a spring lamb" (swindled)

13 Texas bluebonnet: "El _____"

14 ex-Cowboy LB Norton (init.)

16 Texas pitching legend (2 wds.)

18 TXism: "pick _____ the litter"

19 TX Cindy Garner book: "The _____ Jokebook About Men"

20 TX Tommy who won ten Tony Awards

24 "_____ Ferguson: first female governor also known as (abbr.)

25 TXism: "shin _____ (big event)"

27 loved

28 Texas forage crop

29 TXism: "he's all show _____ go"

40 Texas singer, Gilley (init)

41 that is (abbr.)

42 female church leader

47 Yo _____ Digo Creek

50 Texas or Iowa town

52 Texas traditional knowledge

53 TX Jules Bledsoe's "Old _____ River"

58 SeaWorld San Antonio has this in its "Orca Encounter"

59 TXism: "got a heart as _____ Texas" (kind)

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Sports

AHS girls run well in first meet of the season

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine High School girls' track team descended upon El Paso this past Friday to compete at their first meet of the season. These girls performed well overall and will be a force in district and area competitions this season.

Coach Cory Cason heads up the girls' team, and while there are a few newcomers to the team, there are still solid performers from last season on her roster.

"Our seniors, including Valeria Crespo, Mia Morris, Novah Carrasco, Ali Maroney, and Sierra Ruckman will definitely spotlight this year. They are a group of dedicated young women who love competition and challenge, and who have ambitions of competing at the college level," said Cason.

Last year, the girls' team had a strong anchor in Vanessa Rice, who graduated and signed with a college in Nebraska. Cason says her contribution will be missed, but that



The Alpine High School girls' track team did well at the El Paso Parkland Invitational this past weekend. These runners all placed in the top 10 in all but one race. Pictured are Kylie Maroney, Sophie Janis, Molly Garrett, Abby Bruttomesso, Danica Mulholland, and Valeria Crespo.

this year's seniors combined with some of the younger, experienced runners make for a solid threat in the district.

"We have some experienced cross-country runners who will be competing in all events, especially the longer races. Emy Hernandez, Hope Dominguez, Molly Garrett, and Collette Fowlkes can be counted on to compete well this season," Cason added.

On top of these runners who have experience at the high school level, Cason is also the head coach for the girls' middle school track

and field team, so her work with this year's freshman team members such as Kylie Maroney, Sophie Janis, Abby Bruttomesso, and Ailea Fiero is already established. She believes these young ladies will only continue to improve their numbers and work hard to earn the points needed for Alpine's fourth district and area titles.

Although, there is a lot of promise in this year's team, Cason doesn't take for granted the areas that need improvement and what she can do to help her team become better competitors.

Sports Schedule	
FIGHTIN' BUCK BASKETBALL Feb. 19-20 Bi-District Feb. 22-24 Area	LADY BUCK SOFTBALL Feb. 15-17 Tx Lead off Tourney @ College Station TBA Pecos JV Tournament @ Pecos TBA Feb. 20 Alpine vs Andrews JV 5 p.m. Varsity 7 p.m.
FIGHTIN' BUCK POWERLIFTING Feb. 15 Wink GLQ Feb. 22 Pecos BLQ	TENNIS Feb. 16 RCHS Winter Invitational @ Regan County Feb. 23 Fort Stockton Invitational @ Fort Stockton
FIGHTIN' BUCK TRACK & FIELD Feb. 16 Queen City Relays Del Rio Feb. 24 Comanche Relays Fort Stockton	BOYS GOLF Feb. 16-17 Fort Stockton Tournament Feb. 27 Iraan JV
BUCK BASEBALL Feb. 16 Alpine vs Monahans (scrimmage) JV 4:30 p.m. Varsity 7 p.m. Feb. 19 Pecos vs. Alpine JV 4:30 p.m. Varsity 7 p.m.	

"Our distance numbers still need improvement. The 3200m race requires a certain type of runner, and while our distance runners from the fall cross-country mostly run other events, it will be a challenge to fill the three spots needed for this race," Cason replied. "We also need to increase our thrower numbers, but we are planning ahead as we train our middle school athletes."

Overall, Cason knows that her biggest challenge in coaching these young athletes is to help them develop

mental toughness and resilience. "Developing mental toughness and resilience is one of the more difficult aspects of being an athlete that we focus on besides fundamentals. These are two things, that when established can take a good athlete and make them a great athlete," said Cason.

This past weekend at the Parkland Invitational, runners Valeria Crespo, Danica Mulholland, and Khristal Soto showed the strength of this year's team while younger runners Kylie Maroney, So-

phie Janis, and Abby Bruttomesso added their own toughness to the team's dynamics.

In the varsity events, which included the 100m, and 200m, Crespo took first place in both events, followed by Mulholland who placed fourth and fifth respectively, and Soto who placed 10th and 11th respectively.

The other events Alpine placed in included the 100m Open, 200m Open, 800m Open, and the 1600m Open.

In the 100m Open, Maroney placed second followed by Janis in fifth place. In the 200m Open, Maroney took third place followed by Janis in seventh.

The 800m Open and 1600m Open showcased Bruttomesso and Garrett. Bruttomesso placed third in the 800m followed by Garrett in fourth place and in the 1600m, Garrett placed fourth and Bruttomesso placed ninth.

Next up for the Alpine girls are the Queen City Relays to be held tomorrow in Del Rio.

Rokas tallies double-doubles, career-high 34 points while chasing 1,000

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Sul Ross Lady Lobos have faced a series of struggles lately on the basketball court. Despite some outstanding performances by key players, these ladies have failed to triumph in their last several games.

Although the defeats are heartbreaking, the Lady Lobos never quit and fight to the end.

Sul Ross recently hosted Hardin-Simmons, the nationally ranked team from Abilene. Down by four early on in the first quarter, Marley Rokas would tally a layup for the Lobos followed by a jumper by Victoria Aguayo to tie the score.

Hardin-Simmons pulled ahead by six until Rokas on an assist by Ariana Escalante cut it back to four. Hardin-Simmons would take a nine-point lead with just over four minutes left in the quarter when Cheyenne Bonilla hit a three-pointer to cut the deficit back to six.

Another nine-point lead by Hardin-Simmons would be followed by a 5-0 run by the Lobos to close the gap to four with another three-pointer made by Escalante and a layup by Jema Padilla.

The second quarter began with Emily Bunger going two-for-two on a 6-0 run along with a jumper in the paint from Diaz. Despite the valiant effort, the Lobos would trail by 13 at the half.

In the first half of the third quarter, Hardin-Simmons would lead by as much as 17 points when Sul Ross' Diaz and Bonilla cut the deficit to 11. Another three-pointer, this one from Diaz, with just over six minutes left brought the Lobos to within 10. Hardin Simmons would go up again by 17 when they'd finish the quarter on a 4-0 run.

Despite their best efforts, Sul Ross would see defeat 71-82.

In their second home game of that same week, the Lady Lobos took on the War Hawks from McMurray, and would just fall short of the win in the final quarter. Rokas would complete her fourth-straight double-dou-

ble on the season against the War Hawks.

Sul Ross began the contest on a high note, leading by as much as 11 in the first quarter. A 6-0 run led by Aguayo followed by a 10-0 run by the Lady Lobos would put them up 16-5. The quarter would end with a 5-0 run by the War Hawks, but they would trail by six at the top of the second.

The second quarter saw efforts from Bonilla, Diaz, and Aguayo contribute to a 6-0 run for the Lobos, leaving McMurry to trail by 12, followed by a 7-0 run that cut McMurray's deficit to five followed by a 4-0 run to cut it to three.

The Lobos lead by seven with just over a minute and a half left before the break. McMurray would bounce back with a couple of three-pointers to cut the Lobos' lead down to one at the half.

Between the two teams, they would tie up the game five different times in the third quarter. Thanks to a jumper from Bunger, the Lobos tied the score at 49-all at the end of the third.

The final quarter had three different lead changes, with the Lobos down by four before Rokas and Bonilla would tie it up 53-all. Both teams would battle back and forth until Bonilla on a clutch three with just over a minute and a half left in the contest put the Lobos on the board to within one. A foul would send the War Hawks to the free-throw line, where they'd hit 1 for 2.

Rokas would once again tie up the game at 65-all with a pair of free throws with under 30 seconds remaining before the buzzer when Sul Ross would gain a foul, putting McMurray at the free throw line once again, landing three of them to take the lead at the buzzer, defeating the Lobos 65-68.

Next up for the Lady Lobos was a trip to Belton to take on the Crusaders of Mary Hardin-Baylor in their second match-up of the season. Sul Ross fell to the Crusaders at home on December 16, 55-74. Unfortunately, they would not see a win against UMHB the second time around.

Rokas would have a career-high game against the nationally-ranked team, scoring 34 points against the Crusaders despite the Lobos' loss of 74-90.

Sul Ross' next contest was on Saturday, February 3 to face the Tornados of Concordia. The Lady Lobos defeated the Tornados back in December, 74-69. Saturday's contest was a bit closer, yet the Lady Lobos pulled off a win, defeating the Tornados once again, 64-61.

Next up the Lady Lobos took another shot at LeTourneau and East Texas Baptist in their final homestand of the season. Last Thursday would see Sul Ross pull off another defeat of Le Tourneau at home, 74-62, followed by a loss to ETB on Saturday, 58-63. Before the start of these two games, Rokas was just 47 points away from joining the 1,000-point club. In her three-year career at Sul Ross, Rokas has scored 953 points prior to these last home games and sits eighth on the program's all-time scoring leaders list.

At the completion of these two last home games of the season, Rokas needs only five points to hit that 1,000-point mark, which

should be easy for the double-digit scorer at the Lady Lobos final game against Howard Payne on Saturday in Brownwood.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

GUILLERMO BUSEY

Guillermo Busey is the ultimate teammate and team player. Over the last 3 games he has shot 50% from the field including a game winning basket in overtime, on the road against Kermit.

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Election Q&A



BREWSTER COUNTY COMMISSIONER PCT. 3

Editor's note: In the contested race for County Commissioner Precinct 3 in Brewster County for the March 5 Republican and Democratic primaries, we asked the candidates a two-part question: *What qualifications do you have for this position, and why do you think you are the best person for the job?* Here are the responses we received.



Joe Portillo
Candidate for County Commissioner Pct. 3

What qualifications do you have for this position?
Having served as a city councilman and currently on the Alpine ISD school board, I have experience working with the public and those who elected me to those positions. Looking forward to working with the County Judge and fellow commissioners for the betterment of Pct. 3 and Brewster County.

Why do you think you are the best person for the job?
I am an open-minded individual who will listen to my constituents and will have an open-door policy! I am willing to work with the citizens of Marathon and Pct. 3 constituents in Alpine as well as the people in South Brewster County.

83RD DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Editor's note: In the contested race for 83rd District Court District Attorney for the March 5 Republican and Democratic primaries, we asked the candidates several questions. Below are the responses we received.

Jesse Gonzales, Jr.
Candidate for 83rd District Attorney



Why are you seeking office or re-election and what experience do you have that qualifies you for the District Attorney's position?

I am running for District Attorney because I feel as though my diverse experience makes me the best candidate. I am committed to working together with law enforcement to prosecute offenders who commit crimes in our counties and to protect the border region from drug and human traffickers.

I have been practicing law for 27 years, all in this area and predominantly in criminal law. I have served as District Attorney (2009-2012) and fully understand the re-

sponsibilities of the position. I maintain a very good relationship with the law enforcement agencies in the region.

What are the most pressing is-

sues you see facing the office you're seeking?

Staffing and budget. I will begin reviewing budgets after the election and formulate what I feel will be a staffing model that fits the budget.

Dockets. When appropriate, I will request a copy of the pending cases and begin working on a plan to "hit the ground running" on January 1, 2025.

What are your goals for the office?

Establishing a District Attorney's office that is tough but fair. One that is available to provide assistance to law enforcement so that cases are prosecuted in a timely manner, avoiding delays in the administration of justice.

What do you plan to accomplish in

your first 30 days? In your first 90 days?

In my first 30 days, I will meet the Sheriff's, Chiefs of Police, and other law enforcement agency heads to offer whatever assistance my office can provide and to introduce myself and the staff to them. I will also meet with the District Clerks and Judges for the purpose of understanding their policies and procedures for maintaining the criminal dockets.

In the first 90 days, my goal will be to have set cases for either jury or bench trials. I will work diligently at moving cases so that victims' rights are protected, and justice is administered in a timely manner.

What do you think is the most important skill to being a good district attorney?

Hard to rank because this position requires multiple traits and skills. While being a competent attorney is certainly an important skill, as the District Attorney, the ability to lead and trust the professionals that I hire is equally important.

What distinguishes you from other candidates?

I have served in multiple capacities in public service for over 30 years and fully understand the demands of public service. I have worked in law enforcement, and I have also worked in municipal government, preparing budgets and supervising employees at all levels (including overseeing a police department). I am capable of making tough decisions and not placing the burden on my staff.

How would you pick your staff?

I will recruit my staff. I will not rule out offering some current employees a position in my administration.

How can the District Attorney have an impact on the drug issues and immigration facing the region?

The obvious answer is to be vigilant in prosecuting these cases. The fact is, we live in an area that has long been known as a hotbed for traffickers. I will be active with the Border Prosecution Unit and utilize the resources provided by the Governor's Office to directly fight the criminal organizations involved. These very issues are a big reason I have decided to run for District Attorney.

394TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT JUDGE

Editor's note: In the contested race for the 394th Judicial District Judge position in the March 5 Republican and Democratic primaries, we asked the candidates several questions. Below are the responses we received.

Monty Kimball
Candidate for 394th District Judge



What made you decide to run for the 394th District Judge position?

Since I retired from the United States Attorney's Office, several persons have mentioned that I should seek a judicial position. While I have continued to practice and continued to try cases, I was ready for a new challenge. I know I have the experience and ability to continue to serve the West Texas communities and my experience in representing a great variety of clients in all sorts of litigation make this role a natural fit for me.

What is your judicial philosophy?

I favor judicial restraint as opposed to judicial activism. A judge should defer legislative intent, including the settled rules of legislative interpretation, and binding precedent rather than interpreting the law to favor some preconceived outcome.

What qualifications do you possess besides being an attorney that makes you a suitable candidate for 394th District Judge?

My primary qualifications are my life experiences both inside and outside the practice of law. I grew up on a ranch and operated a retail business prior to entering law, so I have practical life experiences in the real world that give me a different perception than someone who went straight from law school into practice. I have tried over 100 jury trials and

mediated several hundred cases, both civil and criminal. I have tried cases before approximately 25 different judges, both state and federal, and watched how they handled their dockets and trials. I have appeared before many more judges in various matters. I have extensive experience in civil law and criminal law, having started my career in El Paso trying civil cases in a high tower law firm, to a private practice with clients such as Exxon Mobil, to a career as a federal prosecutor in the same 5 counties that make up the 394th judicial district. Since leaving the United States Attorney's Office I continued in private practice and continued to try cases. I have tried many types of civil cases including negligence, product liability, medical malpractice, fraud, malicious prosecution, breach of fiduciary duty, family law, guardian law, breach of contract, and commercial cases. I have tried cases in the criminal arena both as a prosecutor and a defense attorney. This broad range of experience makes me the most qualified for this job.

Have you ever been sanctioned, or found in contempt by a judge or the State Bar?

No.

What, if any, are the biggest changes you intend to make if you take the bench?

I will follow the established ways of conducting business until I have a full chance to evaluate what changes need to be made. I do anticipate more in-person hearings.

What do you believe are the biggest problems currently facing the West Texas justice system?

The 394th covers a large geographical area with a long border with Mexico. Dealing with the border issues is a constant challenge that I dealt with as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Pecos Division, covering these five counties as well as five others. The court should ensure all five counties are adequately served, including meeting and conferring with county officials regard-

ing their concerns, balanced against the proper administration of justice. I intend to conduct remote hearings, when possible, but will not hesitate to require in-person hearings when needed.

What is your strategy in regard to dealing with cases involving methamphetamines, both child welfare cases and criminal cases?

Every case will be evaluated on its own facts. We as a society and especially in judicial proceedings must protect our children, but at the same time, we must fully value the family unit. Those factors require a balance of weighing the evidence and the risk of harm, both to the child and the family, that will just have to be decided on the facts as shown in each individual case. Criminal cases will also be fact-specific, taking into consideration such factors as criminal history, the amount and purity of the drug, if the transaction or crime contained a risk of physical harm or death to the

defendant and others, personal use or trafficking, role in the offense and so on. Other factors are to the extent which the public needs to be protected from the individual and whether the imposition of a certain level of punishment will act as a deterrent to others. These and other sentencing factors are well-known and established, but each case will have to be evaluated on its own.

While you are running as a Republican in a historically Democratic area, how will your personal politics influence your decisions as a judge?

They will not. District judges in Texas generally run under a party designation, but once elected, the judge should apply the law evenly and fairly, without regard to party affiliation. I have appeared before enough judges to know how to rule on the law without inserting any personal bias into the mix, just as Judge Ferguson and Judge DeHart did as Democrats.

Bill Parham
Candidate for 394th District Judge



What made you decide to run for the 394th District Judge position?

When I returned as a prosecutor in the 394th Court in October 2021, I was asked by a couple of individuals if I would run against Judge Roy Ferguson. My answer was: no, I would not run against Judge Ferguson. About a year and a half later, now in August 2023, I was asked again if I would consider running for Judge. My answer was, "No, I will not run against you." I was asked that question again, and it took a minute to realize he was not going to run for reelection. I talked to my wife about it, said more than a few prayers, then, made my decision to run. To me, being the District Judge will be the pinnacle of my legal career. Being a judge, I have always considered to be the highest honor a lawyer could ever achieve. I have the experience, impartiality, and independence to be the Judge. I have practiced in 34 counties in Texas. Six of my 18 years as a prosecutor have been in the 394th District Court. Now is my opportunity to be the District Judge in the same court. I was not born here in West Texas, but Alpine is my home. This is why I am asking the voters of the five counties for their votes to be the next 394th Judicial District Judge. It is an unmeasurable honor for me. So, I ask, "MAY I HAVE YOUR VOTE TO BE YOUR JUDGE?"

What is your judicial philosophy?

I believe in the 3-1's; Integrity, Impartiality, and, Independence. "I will ensure a fair and just court where all litigants and defendants are treated the same and with respect." The Texas Code of Judicial Conduct Canon 1 states "An independent and honorable judiciary is indispensable to justice in our society." Canon 2 A states "A judge shall comply with the law and should act at all times in a manner that promotes confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary." These are guidelines for the Court's conduct. I am a believer in accountability. I will also consider compassion, but only when the facts of the case merit it. Every case will be judged on its own evidence. I will follow the four words engraved above the steps to the United States Supreme Court: "EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW."

What qualifications do you possess besides being an attorney that makes you a suitable candidate for the 394th District Judge?

During my legal career, I have taught ethics, criminal, and family law at Angelina College. I have also taught the Texas penal code, criminal procedure, arrest, search and seizure, and courtroom procedure at the Police Academy at Sul Ross State University.

Prior to law school, I worked in the marketing department of American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). I was the first in my family to attend college. I graduated with a Bachelor of Sci-

ence in Business Administration. I know what it means to run a business. I have done so in my law practice. Even today, I put in long hours as a prosecutor. It is not every day, but it is more than seldom. As a judge, I see long hours ahead. Being the judge will not be a retirement-in-place job. It will require the willingness and devotion to do the job. My training, continuing legal education, and actual life experiences will serve to enhance my qualifications to be the next District Court Judge.

Have you ever been sanctioned, or found in contempt by a judge or the State Bar?

NO

What, if any, are the biggest changes you intend to make if you take the bench?

I do not want to change the use of Zoom where appropriate. I will not expect a litigant to pay travel time for an out-of-town lawyer to appear in person for a 10-minute status conference and charge the client hundreds of dollars for

travel. I am considering criminal pleas to be in person. If you come here and get arrested and indicted for a crime, if you decide to plea or have a trial, you will do so in person.

The biggest change I want to make is to hire a full-time court reporter. Currently, we use an out-of-state transcriber service. There are lengthy delays in receiving transcriptions of court proceedings. Delays cost money and create setbacks.

I also plan to be able to take pleas anytime. If there is an agreement between the State and the defense to enter a plea, I don't want to wait until docket day next month to dispose of the case. Let's enter a plea when ready. This will save time and money and eliminate delays.

The same thing goes for probation compliance. I plan to have regular status conferences. The idea is to help probationers successfully complete their probation. There will not be a revolving door to the courtroom.

What do you believe are the biggest problems facing the West Texas justice system?

The biggest problems are money and lack of growth. I would love to have the funding for a Veterans Court. I have worked as a prosecutor in a county that has a Veterans Court program. It addresses PTSD, suicide, and illegal drug usage among the veterans. It is very strict, but it is successful. Just like the Veterans Court, we need a Drug Court program to address addiction. We do not have the businesses to provide the services nor a sustained source of fund-

ing to pay the service providers. We are also lacking in jury participation for trials. We have had occasions to cancel jury trials due to a lack of participation by the communities to serve for jury trials.

What is your strategy regarding dealing with cases involving methamphetamines, both child welfare cases and criminal cases?

This question creates many scenarios to address in answering. My strategy will encompass help and accountability: Help if there is an addiction issue and accountability to follow the help provided. My first concern as the judge in a case brought before me involving a child and meth will be what is in the best interest of the child. Illegal narcotics are just that: illegal. My first concern is the protection of the child and then how to deal with the offender. The facts and circumstances of each will be the guide to the disposition of the case. Every case will be decided on its own merits.

While running as a Republican in a historically Democratic area, how will your personal politics influence your decisions as a judge?

My personal politics will not influence my decisions as a judge. I will never be an activist from the bench. There is no place for politics in a courtroom. The law is the law. When I put on the robe and take the bench, my decisions about a case shall be based solely on the evidence and not upon my personal thoughts, opinions, or any other personal influences.

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for

394th District Judge

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- ✓ Graduate of the Marine Military Academy
- ✓ Graduate of Sul Ross State University
- ✓ Graduate of Texas Tech School of Law
- ✓ 32 years practice of law in West Texas courtrooms
- ✓ Founding member of the Big Bend Ranch Rodeo
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NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. YOU MAY EMPLOY AN ATTORNEY. IF YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY DO NOT FILE A WRITTEN ANSWER WITH THE CLERK WHO ISSUED THIS CITATION BY 10:00 A.M. ON THE MONDAY NEXT FOLLOWING THE EXPIRATION OF FORTY-TWO (42) DAYS AFTER YOU WERE SERVED THIS CITATION STATED THIS 16 DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023, AND FIRST AMENDED PETITION, A DEFAULT JUDGMENT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU.

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the petition of plaintiff at or before 10 o'clock a.m. of the Monday next after the expiration of forty-two days, after the date of service of this citation stated this 16 day of November, 2023, before the Honorable Roy B. Ferguson, 394th Judicial District Court of Brewster County, Texas, at the courthouse in the city of Alpine, Texas.

Said petition was filed in said court, on the 27th day of September, 2023, in cause number CVB23243 on the docket of said court and styled:

JAMES R. JACKSON
vs.
GERONIMO Q. MON; JANUARIA J. MON; AND VICTOR C. MON

The nature of this cause is to wit: CLAIMS FOR ADVERSE POSSESSION AND QUITE TITLE OF THE REAL PROPERTY MORE FULLY AND PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS THE FOLLOWING: BLK 214, SEC 25 NE/4 TSTL (PROPERTY ID 13832) containing 160 acres, AND BLK 214, AND SEC 25 SE/4 TSTL (PROPERTY ID 13834) containing 160 acres, AND FOR A DECLARATION OF A FEE SIMPLE TITLE IN PLAINTIFF AS IS MORE FULLY SHOWN BY PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION ON FILE IN THIS SUIT.

The officer executing this citation shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and mandates thereof, and make due return as the law directs.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said court at Alpine, Brewster County, Texas this the 16 day of November, 2023.

ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF:
CASSIE GRESHAM
14101 HWY 290 W, BLDG 1300
AUSTIN, TX 78737

Sarah Fellows Martinez, District Clerk
203 N. 7th Street
Alpine, Texas 79830

By: *Joanna Felice* (Seal)



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Devotional Page Exclusivity of Christ

BY SCOTT HUCKABY
Big Bend Bible Fellowship

Is Jesus Christ the only way to heaven? He clearly said so in John 14:6. But this idea is offensive to those who insist that since God is love, He would surely accept other ways of salvation. This rationalization seems fair from a human perspective but does not align with God's revelation to us in His Word. Ultimately, God's love is exclusive to those who trust in His provision for eternal life: Jesus Christ (Psalm 5:4-5).

The erroneous idea that there must be multiple ways to heaven is a symptom of not knowing who Jesus Christ really is. Jesus isn't just a man; He is God who took on a human body. Religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy and sought to kill Him because He claimed to be the Son of God in John 10:31-39. They understood the term "Son of God" to mean "same as God" apparently not believing their own scriptures on the deity of the Messiah (e.g. Isaiah 9:6). The Bible reveals God as a tri-unity of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the doctrine of the Trinity).

The fact that God provided only one way of salvation becomes more apparent when you realize that He humbled Himself to become one of us in order to pay the penalty of our selfishness. God's Law demanded blood sacrifice to pay for sin and Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for us. To think there must be another

way to heaven diminishes the amazing sacrifice He made.

As wonderful as the good news of God Himself paying the penalty for our sins, it gets even better: Jesus did not stay dead. His mortal body was transformed into a glorified body that will never die. Jesus is the first fruit of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20) and thus is the prototype of what we can look forward to when our mortal bodies fail us.

Those seeking their own way to heaven apart from God's provision might rationalize that the sacrifice of Jesus must surely apply to all. His sacrifice was indeed a free gift offered to all, but this gift is only realized when we respond by trusting in His provision alone for our salvation. Jesus said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The person trusting in multiple ways to heaven will often cite all the religions that people sincerely follow thinking the Creator will surely honor them. But any religion based on something other than God's revealed word is false. Biblical Christianity is the only religion where you cannot earn God's favor for salvation; we are saved by God's grace through faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8-9). All the other world's religions advocate salvation-by-works.

So, what way of salvation will you choose, your own way to heaven, or God's way? Choose wisely, eternity is forever.

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