

Former Valentine ISD employee arrested for theft

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

Former Valentine Independent School District (VISD) employee Ernesto Villarreal, 42, of Marfa was arrested on criminal charges related to his alleged scheme to misappropriate school district funds for personal expenses fraudulently.

According to information received from the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Western District of Texas U.S. Attorney Jaime Esparza, Villarreal was alleged to have misused credit cards issued by VISD that were only intended for authorized purchases. Villarreal was the business manager and tax assessor/collector.

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Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

2024 4.22"
July 0.0"



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.



EMS Board appoints Fire Chief

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine Emergency Services Board (AESB) met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 27 at 5:30 p.m. Board members not in attendance were Stacey Wood and Aaron Rodriguez. Alpine Volunteer Fire Department members Jeremiah Pearce, Colby Nunn, and Alex Montemayor were also present. Also present was AVFD firefighter and

Brewster County Emergency Management Coordinator James Etchison. The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chairman Paul Loeffler. After establishing that there was a quorum, the meeting proceeded. The first item of business was the approval of the minutes from the regular board meeting on May 28 and also the approval of the minutes from the special meeting held via Teams on June 11. A motion was made by Albert Benitez with



**James Etchison-EMC/
AVFD Chief**

a second from Loeffler. The consent items were approved.

Succeeding the consent agenda was a report from the chairman. Loeffler presented to the board and those in attendance information about the special meeting that was called on June 11. That meeting, which was held in executive session resulted in the termination of Andrew Pierce, the then-current AVFD Fire Chief, along with Assistant Fire Chief Charles Worden, and First Captain Julie Worden. Their subsequent removal also resulted in the removal of

their monthly stipends of \$400. This action was approved unanimously by the board and took effect June 30. As part of the action resulting in the removal of the previous personnel from their positions within the AVFD, the board unanimously approved the appointment of EMC James Etchison as the new AVFD Fire Chief, effective July 1. As part of his new appointment, Etchison will have full

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Outdoor activities a large part of VBS



Kids attending last week's Vacation Bible School at the First Baptist Church listen and watch attentively for instructions on how to play the game they're engaged in. Outdoor activities are included each day for those in attendance.

Photo by Emily Hendrxy

AgriLife, BRI partner to aid landowners

BY DR. LOUIS HARVESON
Director of BRI

A new partnership in West Texas will provide additional resources to area landowners seeking assistance in conserving rangelands for both livestock and wildlife. The Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University in Alpine has partnered with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to fund a new position that is a joint appointment for both organizations. Dr. Silverio Avila has been selected for the role and will serve as Assistant Professor and

Extension Range Specialist, embedded with the Borderlands Research Institute team at Sul Ross. "This partnership is a direct result of the longstanding productive collaboration that the Borderlands Research Institute has with Texas A&M," said Dr. Louis Harveson, who is the Dan Allen Hughes, Jr., Endowed Director of the Borderlands Research Institute. "Dr. Silverio Avila is a perfect fit for this position and has hit the ground running to develop new resources that will benefit West Texas landowners across the Trans-Pecos



Dr. Silverio Avila
Photo courtesy of Texas A&M AgriLife

region." In this new role, Dr. Avila will help plan, conduct, and evaluate educational programs in rangeland management and will develop research programs in rangeland restoration, soil-plant communities,

and plant community response to grazing. He will also support and provide technical expertise to Extension Service agents in West Texas. He is on the faculty of both universities and will serve as a mentor on graduate student committees and undergraduate research projects. "Dr. Avila's joint appointment with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Sul Ross State University's Borderlands Research Institute is a testament to the critical importance of collaboration in advancing rangeland conservation and management," said

Dr. Roel Lopez, head of the Texas A&M Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and director of Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute. "Through our collective expertise in research, teaching, and extension, this partnership aims to provide land and ranch managers with the latest science-based information and resources needed to steward the Trans-Pecos." Dr. Avila obtained his B.S. in Forestry from Universidad Autonoma

See AGRILIFE • 6

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OBITUARIES

Carolyn Marie Perdue

Carolyn Marie Perdue, 77, of Alpine went to be with her Lord and Savior on the morning of June 17 in San Antonio after a lengthy illness. Carolyn was a loving mother and wore many hats. She managed several businesses during her working career for local businesses including J.C. Penney, Western Auto, Foxworth Lumber Co., and the Army Surplus Store. She also volunteered for the Women's



Hospital Auxiliary for many years at the Alpine Hospital.

Carolyn loved to garden while at home. She loved music and watch-

ing the Kentucky Derby, Triple Crown races every year. She never missed a race! She was dedicated to her family and close friends and was always willing to help others. Carolyn was a compassionate woman. Those who knew her well knew where they stood with her.

Carolyn was preceded in death by her parents, one brother, and a nephew. She is survived by three sisters and one brother, her sons Jimmie

Ray (Cyndi) Perdue, and Dean Perdue, both of Alpine, and one daughter, Angela Yvonne Perdue of Lytle. Five grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren. There will be no service.

*"I Am Free"
Don't grieve for me,
for I'm now free,
I'm following paths
God made for me
I took his hand I
heard him call
Then turned and bid
farewell to all.
I could not stay an-*

*other day
To laugh, to love, to
sing, to play
Tasks left undone must
stay that way
I found my peace...at
close of play.
And if my parting left
a void
Then fill it with re-
membered joy
A friendship shared, a
laugh, a kiss
Ah yes, these things I
too will miss.
Be not burdened...
deep with sorrow
I wish you sunshine of*

*tomorrow
My life's been full I've
savoured much
Good friends, good
times
A loved one's touch.
Perhaps my time
seemed all too brief
Don't lengthen it now
with grief
Lift up your hearts
and share with me,
God wants me now....
He set me free.
Anonymous
"Mom, you are
cherished and will be
missed."*

Joe Luis Natera, Sr.

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Joe Luis Natera, Sr., on June 29 after a courageous battle with illness. He was born in Alpine on March 4, 1951, to the late Saturnino Natera, Sr. and Victoria Natera. He was a graduate of New Mexico Military Institute, a dedi-



cated auto mechanic, and a long-term employee of Sul Ross State University. His hobbies included softball, auto repair and restoration, house painting, construction, and spending time with family and friends.

He is survived by his spouse Enedina Natera, son Jose Luis Natera, Jr., daughters Selina Natera Fuentes

(and children) and Yvette Natera (and children), his stepchildren Rudy Perez (Ester and children), Melinda Redford (Ron and children), brother Saturnino Natera, Jr. (Cynthia and children) Edmundo Natera (Yolanda and children), sisters Gracie Natera Navarrete (Eddie and children) and Arlene Natera Gonzales

(Chayo and children). Public visitation will take place at the Alpine Memorial Funeral Home Chapel located at 209 W. Sul Ross Avenue on Friday, July 5 from 9 -10 a.m. The praying of the most Holy Rosary will take place at 10 a.m., also at the funeral home chapel. Visitation at the funeral home chapel will continue

after the Rosary from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The funeral Mass will take place at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Alpine at 2 p.m. with interment at Holy Angels Cemetery.

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home.

Fiddler's Green-Soap Suds Row

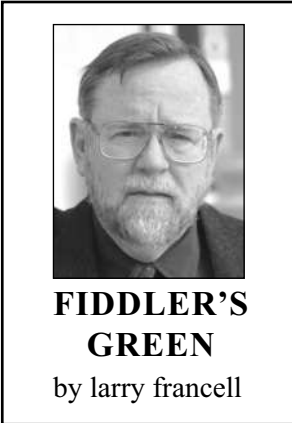
When I was researching the history of Fort Lancaster (1855-1861) for Texas Parks & Wildlife, one of the original sources was the inspection of the post in 1860 by Joesph Mansfield, the Inspector General of the Army. The report included an excellent map. Fort Lancaster was one of the most isolated posts in Texas, and no civilian settlement existed. It was located on the Overland Trail between San Antonio and El Paso and built close to good water sources, Live Oak Creek and the Pecos River.

The other two far West Texas posts, Fort Davis (1854-1861) and Fort Stockton (1859-1861) were also constructed to protect the overland trail. Minimal civilian settlements grew up around both. With minimal civilian presence, there is still one commonality. In Inspector-General Mansfield's report and maps there is the presence of

laundresses, an integral part of the Army. Even after the Civil War, laundresses on, or near, posts would continue until the 20th Century.

At Fort Lancaster, in this period there were quarters for eight laundresses, but Mansfield reported there were only four that served the garrison of fifty. All were located on the south side of the post behind the four barracks. The Fort Stockton map showed quarters for four laundresses also located behind the barracks. Fort Davis had quarters for five and they were scattered up the canyon some distance from the barracks but in proximity to the officer's quarters.

Fort Davis and Fort



FIDDLER'S GREEN

by Larry Francell

Stockton were re-commissioned after the Civil War, but Fort Lancaster was not. When Fort Davis was re-established, the laundress quarters were mostly located north of the post along the overland trail. While laundresses were an official part of the Army, shelter was not supplied. Construction assistance and location were decided by the post commander, so quarters were inconsistent at best and consisted of anything from tents to hand-built huts. Laundresses could travel with the regiment, could draw rations from the quartermaster, and were paid a standard fee for service.

To keep quartermaster

and rations costs down, the Army allowed one laundress for each 19½ soldiers. Pay varied greatly, often depending on location, but a laundress could often make more than the average enlisted man, to whom they were often married.

Dirty laundry was collected on Saturday after the weekly general inspection. It was returned clean the next Saturday after an arduous week's work. The process included sorting white cotton, colored cotton, light wool, and finally the heavy woolen uniforms, the bulk of the work. Because the uniforms would shrink, they, plus other woolen items, could not be washed in hot water.

Agitating, wringing, and drying were heavy work when the only tools available were washboards and a manual hand wringer called a "mangle." Multiple clotheslines were required, and often wet clothes were draped over

shrubs or small trees to dry. The days of making soap had been replaced with commercial soaps, but if not available the ancient process of rendering fat and lye was necessary and time-consuming.

While hard work, being an army laundress was a way towards financial

independence, in an age when this was difficult for women. Napoleon was purported to say that an army marched on its stomach. In the same manner, one might say that the survival and success of the frontier army was due to their unsung heroes, the army laundress.

Jeff Davis County Historical Commission to commemorate neighborhood

The historic neighborhood known as "Newtown" in Fort Davis is being commemorated with a unique wayside exhibit sign to be unveiled on Sunday, July 7 at 2 p.m. This outdoor sign was designed by the Jeff Davis County Historical Commission and will be dedicated outside the L.B. Caruthers house located on Garrison Street, one block east of the highway property that was the former Porter's. The event will celebrate our local history and honor Rosie and Tony Gutierrez with a certificate of excellence for the restoration of their historic adobe home after many years and phases of repair.

Newtown began in 1866 when the state of Texas patented land to Luis Fuentes and his heirs. In November 1882, Lt. Mason Marion Maxon and Chief Musician George A. Brenner of the 10th U.S. Cavalry purchased 320 acres of the Fuentes survey. Hoping to make a fortune by selling

lots across from the Fort, the enterprising officers laid out 20 residential blocks in the Maxon-Brenner addition. This subdivision became known as Newtown, so called because it was north of the large settlement of "Chihuahuaita" or

Little Chihuahua near the Pioneer Cemetery south of town.

The Caruthers House was named for Sgt. L.B. Caruthers of the Texas Rangers Company E. He arrived in June 1880 to pursue the Jesse Evans

gang and in 1883 built this home. The Gutierrez couple inherited the house and will be recognized by the Jeff Davis County Historical Commission for their restoration. The public is invited to attend the ceremony.

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Late July launch date announced for regional hospitality academy

July 22 is the proposed launch date of Mountain View Hospitality Academy, the newest initiative of the nonprofit outreach program Mobile Comunidad, with a mission to offer professional training to area adults and those over age 16 in all aspects of the hospitality industry.

The academy operates at Mountain View Lodge, located on Highway 118, just one mile south of Fort Davis. Through partnerships with the eCornell program of Cornell University of Ithaca, NY, Saira Hospitality of London, UK, and other organizations, learners can complete their chosen courses and obtain certificates from the eCornell Program. The academy incorporates courses with a typical value of more than \$7,000 per student, offered to learners in Fort Davis for less than \$2,000 through the support of eCornell's Social Impact Program.

Cornell University is one of the world's premier hospitality education institutions. Saira Hospitality is recognized for its world-class international pop-up hospitality education programs in the UK, Central America, Africa, and beyond.

The academy will incorporate hands-on training and work-study opportunities. Training areas include all aspects of restaurant management, including kitchen management, front and back-of-house, culinary arts, catering, and bar management. Also available are hotel/motel operations courses relating to front desk operations, housekeeping, business management, maintenance, camping and glamping, marketing, and guest experience management.

Limited financial assistance and on-site housing will be available to select students. Courses will be presented in the classroom at the Lodge,

with visiting professors and instructors. Following the coursework, learners can gain paid internships in their chosen areas of interest at the Lodge, which continues to operate as a commercial lodging and dining facility, or at other area hospitality businesses, guided by on-site professionals. Graduates will also be included in arranged interviews with area employers.

The academy will also educate those already employed in area restaurants, hotels, and motels to expand their skills and explore new aspects of hospitality. A survey of local hospitality businesses revealed that hiring and retaining skilled workers is their main challenge. The academy will work with area employers to tailor courses to their workforce. Tourism is the main economic driver in Jeff Davis County and in many communities in the greater Trans Pecos and

Big Bend region. With dozens of new hotel rooms and eateries planned for these communities, learners who complete their education at the academy will have the skills to gain satisfying careers in this region or anywhere in the world.

"This education is ideal not only for recent high school graduates but also for area adults of any age who are unemployed or under-employed," said Jeanine Bishop, Co-Founder of Mobile Comunidad. Careers in hospitality often do not require a college degree so those graduating from the academy may gain career-path employment following the approximately seven weeks of education, Bishop added.

More information and a brief learner application can be found at mobilecomunidad.org in the programs section of the website. The academy is also still seeking one or more

trainers. The position is paid, part-time, with flexible hours. Train the trainer sessions begin immediately. Candidates can contact Jeanine Bishop at jeanine@mobilecomunidad.org.

Funding for the academy is provided by the lodging operations of Mountain View Lodge, as well as grants from foundations, including the Anonymous Fund of the Southwest Community Foundation. Tax-deductible contributions to support the academy can be made through the website or by contacting Mobile Comunidad at 432-756-5522.

Mobile Comunidad, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, continues to expand outreach in education, nutrition, health, literacy, and social services. In short, Mobile Comunidad's mission is feeding minds and bodies.

FSA seeking nominations to serve on local county committees

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

Information received from the USDA Farm Service Agency would like to notify local farmers and ranchers that nominations are now being accepted to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees.

These committees are tasked with making important decisions on how

federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for this year's election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office no later than August 1.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for these FSA committees either in a single county or in multi-county jurisdictions and may include LAAs focused on either an urban

or suburban area.

Agriculture producers are eligible to be nominated for the county committee if they have participated or cooperated in a USDA program and reside in the LAA that is up for this election year.

A cooperating producer is an individual who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to the FSA, even if they have not applied for or received program benefits. These

individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate eligible candidates. Minorities, women, urban, and beginning farmers or ranchers are encouraged to nominate, vote, and hold office.

Customers as well as candidates can locate their LAA online at fsa.usda.gov/elections and they may determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office.

Producers should contact their local FSA office to register as well as find out how to become involved in their county's election. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an FSA-669A nomination form. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in November.

"Serving on a Farm Service Agency county committee is your chance to ensure that other producers who share your

interests, your production practices, and your perspective are represented. County committee service is a unique opportunity in the federal government for citizen stakeholders to participate in the implementation of policy and programs at the local level," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "Nominations are now open, and elections will begin in November; don't miss this chance to help FSA serve all producers."

BBQ cookoff exceeds last year's donation amount to area VFDs

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The smoke has cleared in downtown Fort Davis after another successful Smoke in the Mountains BBQ cookoff ended. This year, the cookoff added a Kids-Que competition where kids from ages 5-11 and 12-18 were able to join in on the fun.

Once again, teams from all over the state descended on the Jeff Davis County courthouse lawn to compete in numerous categories including best ribeye, best brisket, best ribs, best chicken, best cabri-

to, and more. The grand champion team from Pleasanton was Kyotee Kookers while the Reserve Grand Champion prize was claimed by Backward Jacks of LaVernia.

The Kids-Que competition was based on hamburgers for both age groups and judges from these categories claimed, "they were some of the best hamburgers they'd ever had."

Brenda Vargas, one of the board members and organizers said, "This year we raised \$55,000 to donate to area volunteer fire departments.

This money will be distributed between the Fort Davis VFD, the Davis Mountain Resort VFD, Valentine VFD, Cherry Creek VFD, and Mountain Medics. These donations would not be possible without the support of our gracious sponsors, donors, board members, and countless volunteers."

Vargas said that the event organizers are well on their way to making plans for 2025.

"The board would like to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to the entire community for being supportive of this event," Vargas added.



The Kids-Que competitors in the ages 5-11 group posed for a picture after their hamburger competition at this year's Smoke in the Mountains BBQ and Ribeye Shootout.

Photo by Carolyn Nored Miller

AHS students get to see the world



A group of young ladies from Alpine High School have been selected to participate in the First Stamp Program. This organization offers a fully funded international travel experience for high school girls who reside in rural areas across the United States. The girls left Alpine last Wednesday to begin their journey.

Courtesy photo

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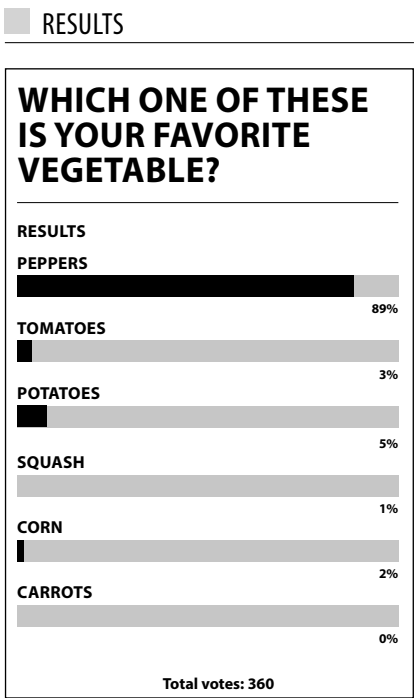
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Opinions

ONLINE POLL



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- Ketchup
- Mayonnaise
- Mustard
- BBQ Sauce
- Salsa/Hot Sauce

Vote for this week's poll online at:
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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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State Park Chronicles: A mile-high mountain treasure

BY CHARLIE EWING
 Davis Mountains State Park Interpretive Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator

The Davis Mountains of Far West Texas occupy a special place in the hearts of many. Maybe it's those cool mornings during the late summer monsoon season or endless expanses of clear blue summer skies. It could be the Ponderosa pines perfuming the air along the upper mountainsides of the vast Davis Mountains Preserve, or the awe-inspiring dark skies. Maybe it's the refreshing spring-fed waters of nearby Balmorhea State Park or the multitude of bird species migrating through. It's probably all of these things and a few more.

One of the main attractions is Davis Mountains State Park, including the Indian Lodge and Black Bear Restaurant. Serving as the park interpreter and volunteer coordinator, I frequently hear guests proclaim, "This is my favorite state park!" Nowhere else in Texas will you find a state park offering mile-high

hiking trails, or a full-service hotel with its own restaurant and pool.

We also offer a wide variety of programs, appealing to young and old. The Hike with Homeless Dogs is a weekly collaboration with Grand Companions, a Fort Davis animal shelter. The Dark Sky Tour occurs during weeks when the moon is minimal, offering guests a constellation tour with storytelling. Our Interpretive Center contains an indoor bird blind equipped with speakers piping in sounds from outside.

Originally built by the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933-1935, the Indian Lodge was built in the Pueblo revival style, mirroring the design motifs of northern New Mexico pueblos. Echoing a trend established at national parks, this style was selected to blend into the natural environment and reference the indigenous culture of the area (though the pueblos of New Mexico are an 8-hour drive away). Wooden lentils line casement

windows and pine log vigas support high ceilings, and Rio Grande River cane provides the unique ceiling material. The Lodge walls and roofs form long, horizontal lines broken by sections of stacked rock wall, referencing the Arts and Crafts movement popular during this time.

The attention to detail given and the physical labor required to create this landmark is a testament to the hard-working boys of the CCC, a government program that earned unanimous support during its time. The CCC was enacted during the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency to provide men, aged 18-23, job opportunities across the nation during the Great Depression. Organized into companies like the military, these men planted trees in ecologically fragile areas, built dams and bridges, and constructed the original section of our beloved Indian Lodge. They also carved the winding path we now call Skyline Drive with hand-powered tools. The CCC helped build 31 state parks across

Texas. Walking through this multi-tiered structure, one can marvel at the handiwork of a long-gone era.

But if you want to stay at the Indian Lodge, please give us a few more months before you make the long trek. Approaching its 90th birthday, this 39-room hotel closed in January 2023 for much-needed renovations. We're hoping for a fall 2024 reopen. Thanks to funding provided via a proposition supported by most Texans, the Lodge has a revamped water system, new doors and windows, and a resurfaced swimming pool. Additional pergolas will provide shade outside the rooms, and outdoor lounge spaces will take advantage of the incredible mountain views. New hires will ensure that the restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner seven days a week. Keep up to date with park news by following us on Facebook, Instagram, or at our park website. When you visit the park, come and say hi. You can usually catch me at the Interpretive Center.

Inspirational quotes for the over-50 realist

Recently, I was getting a haircut and teasing my long-term stylist about the lack of inspirational quote décor in her salon station compared to the one next to hers. Of course, she knows that teasing her is how I show my love and appreciation to her for not re-sculpting my earlobes with her straight razor or making my hair look like it was styled with a package of firecrackers.



JASE GRAVES
 Guest Columnist

Our discussion had us both laughing about how corny and unrealistic some inspirational quotes can seem, especially for those of us who are 50 or older. Take this one, for example, which is attributed to Oscar Wilde:

"With age comes wisdom." Now, I know what Oscar was getting at, but as I've aged, I've come to believe that a more accurate quote would be along these lines:

"With age comes wisdom – if you can remember where

you put it." Below are some other inspirational quotes for the over-fifty realist. (Feel free to decorate your workspace with them.)

We'll start with a few quotes related to the over-50 anatomy, what's left of it, anyway:

"Seizing the day will probably require Tylenol tomorrow."

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, and if I bend down too fast to pick them up, I'll throw out my back."

"Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man yawny, grouchy, and tired."

"There is a difference between listening and hearing, and you can't do either if you don't take a hedge trimmer to all of that disgusting hair in your ears."

"You are what you eat, but if you want a six-pack stomach, it had better be bottled water—and it probably still

won't work."

"Follow your dreams – just not the one about suddenly discovering that you're naked in public."

"Play like a champion every day, which often means being on the injured reserves with a hernia."

"Count your blessings, not the number of times you have to get up to go to the bathroom each night."

And more bathroom inspiration,

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself – and the aftermath of too much Tex-Mex."

How about some inspiration from our children?

"Children are a gift – until they reach puberty. Then they're more like that weird bump that came up right in the middle of your back."

"She believed she could, so she did (right after she borrowed her dad's credit card)."

"The best things in life are free – except for children, pets, Tex-Mex, a decent mattress, air conditioning, com-

fortable underwear . . ."

And while we're on the subject of non-free things,

"Home is where the heart is. It's also where appliance repairs will cost you at least \$300."

We'll close with some inspirational randomness:

"If at first you don't succeed, try a different screwdriver."

"It's always darkest before the dawn, especially during Daylight Savings Time."

"Teamwork makes the dream work because you're the one who does all the work and everyone else on the team is a doofus."

And my favorite, "Believe in yourself – even when your wife points out that you've put on your expensive, comfortable underwear inside out and backward."

I hope you've gained some inspiration from these quotes, but if you think they're "cringey" or "mid," I hope you're enjoying your dad's credit card.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bluebonnet Girls State
 We had wonderful learning experiences attending Bluebonnet Girls State in our State Capital Austin, thanks to the American Legion Auxiliary who sent us there. Lolly Lockhart, a "citizen" from Alpine in 1956, returned in 1957 as a counselor and, after completing her RN, as a camp nurse in the early 60's. Mary

Bell Lockhart was a citizen in 1966 and our older sister, Joyce Lockhart Wildenthal, was a citizen in 1954. Our experience was much like the one described in a recent Avalanche for the 2024 Boys State; the high point was being able to "occupy" the Texas Capitol building and practice being legislators in the Senate and House chambers and hear

speeches by the current elected State legislators. Apparently, that is not the experience of today's Girls State citizens. Bluebonnet Girls State has been moved to Texas Lutheran University, a private religious university in Seguin, Texas, an hour away from Austin. It is underfunded and current legislators are not speakers as they are for Boys State. Those who

think that Girls State should be restored to its former home in the State Capital should join Vikki Goodwin, an Austin area Legislator, who is working to get that changed. She can be reached at Vikki.Goodwin@house.texas.gov | 512-463-0652 | P.O. Box 2910, Austin, Texas 78768.

Lolly Lockhart, Austin Texas
 Mary Bell Lockhart, Alpine Texas

Heard on the STREET

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?



Mireya Hernandez:
I'd go to Paris, France.



Suzie Gonzales:
I'd have to say Mexico City.



Aaron Garza: If I could go anywhere in the world, it would be Greece. There's just such cool history there.



Robert Alvarez: I'd have to say Hawaii. I love beaches and have always wanted to go there.



Micaela Ritchie:
Australia. For the hunting and sightseeing.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4 Hike with Homeless Dogs, 9 a.m. each Thursday at Davis Mountains State Park. Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail.

July 4 What Was That?, 7 p.m. at the Davis Mountains State Park, find out which critters have been visiting your campsite.

July 4 Alpine High School Class Reunion, 10 a.m. to Noon at the Brewster County Courthouse. Former students from the 1970s will meet and catch up with old friends and then organize a meeting place to gather for fireworks later that evening.

July 4 Diamond Painting, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Alpine Public Library. Hosted weekly each Thursday, supplies are provided and teens and adults are welcome.

July 5-6 Overland Trail Museum, The museum will have extended hours on Friday and Sat-



urday. On Friday the hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday, they will open after the parade and will close at 5 p.m. Visitors are invited to come enjoy a tour, cold water, or lemonade and air conditioning. Donations are appreciated.

July 5 TinkerCad Open Lab, 10 a.m. to Noon each Friday at the Alpine Public Library. Come learn the basics of 3D design and make models of your ideas.

July 6 Fort Davis N.H.S. Summer Program Series, 6 p.m. Join an evening with interpreters from the Fort Davis

National Historic Site on a variety of topics.

July 9-August 2 (Tuesdays) Summer Reading Program, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Alpine Public Library for ages 6-12. Each session begins with 30 minutes of playful exercise followed by a popsicle break followed by themed reading and activities.

July 8-12 Alpine Summer Music School: Music of the Middle Ages, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Kids 7-12, teens 13-17. For more information visit <https://www.alpineschoolofmusic.com/summer-school-i>

July 27 Viva Big Bend Kid's Show with Mr. Will, 11 a.m. at the Alpine Visitor's Center. All ages are welcome. Free show.

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 bbcchorale.wixsite.com/bbcc.

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, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. every Thursday at the Davis Mountains State Park Interpretive Center in collaboration with Grand Companions. For more information contact Charlie Ewing at 432-246-3337 x 301.

Kiwanis Club of Alpine, noon to 1 p.m., first and third Wednesdays at the American Legion.

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

Big Bend Sector conducted safety event



U.S. Border Patrol Agents trained as Emergency Medical Technicians demonstrate medical and rescue equipment to show how they provide care to migrants found in distress in the deserts and mountains of West Texas during the Big Bend Sector safety event held last week.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Border Patrol

Artists find support during fundraiser



A large crowd turned out this past Saturday evening at the American Legion to support the silent auction and fajita dinner fundraiser benefitting the artists who lost their work in the recent downtown fire.

Courtesy photo

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Pixie! This little sweetheart came into the shelter after being found in an air duct with her siblings. She is super sweet and friendly. She loves playing with her three brothers and wants to snuggle with you.

She had a rough start in life, but it is not holding her back. Come make this baby your new companion.

Some people believe that black cats

are unlucky, but many cultures believe the opposite. In France, crossing paths with a black cat is thought to mean something magical is about to happen. In Scotland, it is considered a sign of prosperity if a black cat appears on your doorstep or porch. In ancient Egypt, black cats were held in the highest esteem because they resembled Bastet, the cat-like Egyptian goddess of home, fertility, and protection.

Before committing to becoming a cat owner, consider the fact that they can live 15 to 20 years and you will be their caretaker and companion for a long time.

Please spay and neuter your pets and keep them responsibly contained in your environment.

Consider volunteering to walk dogs or give play time to the puppies or cats at the shelter.

Meet us at our next Meow Hour at Alcove Social (the Old Saddle Club) on Tuesday, July 30, from 4 to 8 p.m. We receive a portion of beverage sales during that time.

Look for us at the courthouse square on July 4th! Remember to keep your pets indoors and secure gates and doors for the holiday. Statistically, more pets get lost during the 4th of July than many other holidays. Prevention is key.

Call 432-837-2532 to donate, foster, or volunteer.

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 p.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week at 2900 E. Old Marathon Highway. For informa-

tion about shelter pet adoptions, cremation services, or lost/found pets, call the shelter at 432-837-9030. If you find a stray or injured pet, call the Alpine Police Department at 432-837-3486 to dispatch an Animal Control Officer.

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Restaurant Guide

\$6 a week gets you a spot in our restaurant guide
www.alpineavalanche.com

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

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

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CHIEF • FROM 1

authority to designate all command and administrative positions within the fire department.

Loeffler also mentioned that the board had yet to receive documents from the previous administration that had been requested, including AVFD updated bylaws as well as banking documents.

As a matter of record, Loeffler called for a motion to officially appoint James Etchison as the new AVFD Fire Chief. A motion was made by board secretary Rusty Moore with a second from Benitez. The motion was approved unanimously.

Loeffler's report continued, stating that Etchison had been contacted by the Motorola Corpora-

tion about an outstanding invoice from 2022 for \$3,825 for nine pagers for the department. Etchison would be contacting the county treasurer to try and track down the invoice or to see if one was ever received.

In other news, an invoice was presented to Brewster County from Big Bend Materials, LLC for heavy equipment services and concrete trucks full of water to complete the extinguishing of the May 26 fire. The invoice in question was addressed to the City of Alpine but had been given to Brewster County Judge Greg Henington. Loeffler was going to investigate further to determine how to proceed, as he stated "I was under the impression from Ward 5 City Councilman Rick Stephens that

this was a service he was providing with his construction company and as part of Big Bend Materials, LLC. Now there is an invoice, so I will look into this more to determine how to move forward."

A brief discussion on the finances occurred, with Loeffler explaining to the new chief how the QuickBooks document was laid out and what the balance was currently. As the treasurer was not present due to a work emergency, there was no in-depth discussion.

Moore did not have a report for the board, but did want to comment saying, "I am really excited about James taking over the leadership role of the AVFD. I believe he will do a great job leading the department. I also want to thank the members of the

AVFD who are here and have been attending our meetings."

In other information, Etchison told the board that all of the brush trucks were back and were good to go after repairs. "We want to turn 2025 into the year of preventive maintenance and not one of repairs," Etchison stated.

Etchison also reported that he was currently working on four different grants for the department for multiple things such as exercise equipment and workout plans along with other needed equipment or funding for replacement of equipment.

Five of the AVFD firefighters will be attending fire school at Texas A&M in College Station the second week of July. In addition to this, Etchison had a contact in Port

Neches, roughly an hour away whom he coordinated additional training for the five members. This training would include propane, flashover, and live fire structure.

Loeffler took the opportunity to report that the Big Bend Fire Academy in Terlingua had been going well. The participants were to be in Terlingua this weekend, to which Etchison stated, "We will have two days of live fires and full gear, and it will be hot. I opted for us to spend the night after that last day, because after all day in the heat and with the extra heat, everyone will be exhausted and it is safer to not drive back after all that exertion."

Loeffler told the new chief that all keys, social media credentials, and all outstanding items that had

been previously requested needed to be tracked down and obtained from the previous administration. Etchison assured the board that this would all begin on his official first day of July 1.

In closing, Loeffler also discussed with the board the need to address the board's bylaws and meeting absences, whether excused, not excused or just no-shows. Moore agreed that this was something that needed to occur soon.

As there was no other business, the board set the date for the next regular meeting to be held on July 16. A motion to adjourn was called for and answered by Benitez with a second from Loeffler and the board adjourned its regular meeting at 7:22 p.m.



Local musicians turn out to raise funds for fire victims

Ross Fleming and Tony Curry perform on stage at the Granada Theatre Friday evening as one of the many acts contributing to the fundraiser being held for victims of the downtown Alpine fire back in May.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

Shackelford donates time and music to fundraiser



Local musician Gil Shackelford donated his time and music to this past Friday's music fundraiser benefitting the victims of the Alpine fire.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

THEFT • FROM 1

An investigation alleged that Villarreal used the credit cards for hundreds of personal purchases, including but not limited to purchases for travel, lodging, home improvements, hardware store purchases, personal cell phone bills, fuel, oil changes, convenience store purchases, university tuition payments, and various other unauthorized purchases.

Villarreal is also alleged to have accessed payroll information for several employees and former employees of the

district to create fraudulent payroll payments which he then sent to his personal bank account. The indictment alleges that Villarreal changed the direct deposit information for employees and former employees and replaced it with information for his own bank account's direct deposit information.

Villarreal is charged with one count of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds and eight counts of wire fraud. If convicted, he faces up to 10 years in prison for count one and up to 20 years in prison for each wire

fraud count. A federal district judge will determine any sentence after considering U.S. Sentencing Guidelines along with other statutory factors.

Investigating the case is the FBI along with assistance from the Texas Rangers, the Department of Education, and the Office of the Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Greenbaum is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

AGRILIFE • FROM 1

Agraria Antonio Narro in Saltillo, Mexico, where he learned about the ecology, business, and management of forest and rangeland ecosystems. He obtained an M.S. in Range and Wildlife and a Ph.D.

in Wildlife and Rangeland Sciences from Texas A&M University-Kingsville with the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute.

"I am thrilled to be part of the team at Borderlands Research Institute and help serve

the landowners in West Texas with educational resources to help them meet their land stewardship goals," said Dr. Avila. "This partnership is a great opportunity to combine forces to benefit landowners across the region."



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Sports



The Alpine Cowboys stand with hands over hearts during the National Anthem that kicked off the “Cantaloupe Classic” at Panther Stadium in Fort Stockton. Photo by Tristian Barragan

Alpine Cowboys dominate “Cantaloupe Classic” and continue winning streak

BY TRISTIAN BARRAGAN
Contributor

The Alpine Cowboys, a powerhouse of the Pecos League Mountain South Division Professional Baseball, solidified their position as a dominant force with a commanding 16-4

victory over the Pecos Bills in the “Cantaloupe Classic” game held at Panther Stadium on June 26. The Cowboys showcased their exceptional talent, overwhelming the Bills with a relentless offensive onslaught and unwavering pitching prowess.

The Cowboys’ bats were on fire, igniting a spectacular display of power hitting. Seven home runs soared through the air, captivating the crowd and leaving the Bills scrambling for answers. Taylor Darden emerged as a standout performer, smashing a crucial home

run with runners on base and accumulating an impressive four RBIs. The offensive explosion continued with additional home runs from AJ Folds, Trever Tripoli, Johnny Medina, Drake Angeron, and Hunter Reid, who also showcased his versatility by delivering a stel-

lar pitching performance, lasting six innings and securing the win for the Cowboys.

Alpine Head Coach Sean Persky commended the team’s offensive prowess, highlighting

See COWBOYS • 8

Alpine 7on7 shines on the field in College Station

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine 7on7 football team took to the road last week to compete at the State 7on7 Championships in College Station. Despite weather delays, the team still brought home the wins.

On Thursday, Alpine met up in their first game against Hearne in Pool H play, where they decimated the competition with a score of 20 -6.

Next up for Alpine was their game against Jacksboro. Once again, in a hard-fought game, Alpine brought in the win 34-33 in overtime.

Alpine’s third game against Santa Rosa was delayed until 8 a.m. Friday morning due to rain, after a starting score of 7-0 over Santa Rosa.

Friday’s Division III Texas 7on7 Finals matched Alpine against Pool D Harmony. Alpine brought home another

win, beating the competition 7-6.

In the last game they completed in on Friday, Alpine lost a heartbreaker to defending State Champions the Miles Bulldogs 13-14. This kind of competitive play looks to be a promising start for the fall Alpine Bucks football.

The Avalanche spoke with Alpine Athletic Director Andy Smith about how these student-athletes performed and what

their accomplishments in this summer football program mean for the fall season.

Smith praised the work of Felipe Fierro and coaches Derek and Danny Rojo for all the work they put in with these athletes. He also praised Angie Smith for helping organize the various fundraisers that allowed these players to travel to the champi-

See 7 ON 7 • 8

Alpine Sports Summer Training Schedule

GRADES 7-12

AHS FIELD HOUSE WEIGHT ROOM

Week four: July 15-18

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Week five: July 24-25

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Week six: July 29-Aug. 1

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

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Sul Ross summer basketball campers pose for a photo on their final day of camp.

Photo by SRSU Sports Information

SRSU basketball camp a success

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

This past week, Sul Ross women’s head basketball coach E.J. Smith held the summer basketball camp from Monday, June 24 through Thurs-

day, June 27.

Coach Smith said of the camp, “Our basketball day camp was successful. The campers learned the fundamentals of basketball and enjoyed several games. We also appreciate the parents

who sent these awesome kids to our camp.”

Smith also thanked the numerous donors who sponsored the camp t-shirts. “We also appreciate the sponsors who allowed us to give the campers their t-shirts.

Without the generosity of all of these businesses both locally and in Marathon and Fort Davis, this would not have been possible,” Smith added.

This was the second year that Smith has held the basketball camp.

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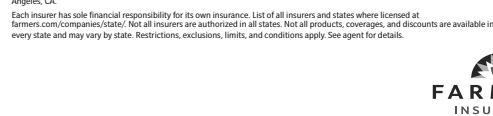
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Proud/Alpine Bucks Sponsors:

Alpine Cowboys baseball camp slated for mid-July

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine Cowboys have scheduled this year's baseball camp for Tuesday, July 16.

Interested parties may sign up via the link on the event page or they may sign up the day of the event at Kokernot Field. Camp will begin at 10 a.m. for ages six and up

and the cost is \$25 per person. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate in a day of learning the baseball basics with the Cowboys team. Participants will be

divided into age groups both younger and older where they will receive personalized coaching on skills such as batting, fielding, and throwing and catching.

Following the training session, there will be a balloon fight involving both the players and the participants and the camp will conclude with a lunch of hot

dogs, chips, and a drink at around 11:45 a.m. The event concludes at noon. For more information or concerns or questions, contact Katie at 512-644-6397.

AMS Cheer reaches for the stars



The Alpine Middle School cheerleaders worked on building pyramids during their recent cheer camp at Alpine High School.

Courtesy photo

Rain or shine we'll work for those bucks



A little rain did not dampen the spirits of the Alpine 7on7 players who hosted a burger fundraiser at the American Legion Post #79 to earn money for their recent trip to College Station. Players here are in the parking lot sporting their Alpine colors on their umbrella as they take orders from contributors.

Courtesy photo

COWBOYS • FROM 7

their ability to capitalize on opportunities and dismantle even the most formidable pitchers. "Anytime the offense could get going against a solid arm is always a good sign," Persky remarked. "It's a great way to start off a road trip." He further emphasized the pivotal role played by Taylor Darden's home run in the top of the fifth, which served as a catalyst for the team's momentum and set the tone for the rest of the game. Persky also added thoughts on Fort Stockton's Panther Stadium: "It's an awesome playing surface, can never argue with a turf complex... beautiful place wouldn't mind coming back."

The Cowboys' relentless pursuit of victory didn't stop there. They carried their momentum

to Santa Fe, where they continued their winning streak, dominating the Fuego in two consecutive games. On June 27, the Cowboys overwhelmed the Fuego with a 28-4 triumph, led by Trevor Tripoli's exceptional performance, going 5-5 with two home runs. Drake Angerer also made significant contributions, adding two hits to the team's offensive onslaught. The Cowboys maintained their dominance in the second game on June 28, defeating the Fuego 19-4 in another impressive display of skill and teamwork.

With their current record standing at a remarkable 25-1 as of June 29, the Alpine Cowboys have firmly established themselves as a force to be reckoned with. Their abil-

ity to consistently deliver both offensively and defensively has earned them the respect and admiration of fans and rivals alike. The team's success is a testament to their dedication, hard work, and unwavering determination to achieve greatness.

As the Cowboys gear up for their highly anticipated Fourth of July game against the Austin Weirdos at Kokernot Field in Alpine, fans can expect an electrifying atmosphere filled with excitement and anticipation. The game, followed by the City of Alpine Fireworks Show, promises to be a memorable event for all who attend.

Coach Persky expressed his confidence in the team's ability to maintain their winning streak, stating, "A lot of the rookies

that we have... understand that every time that they set foot out here, it could be their last... and seeing that happen today was a very good thing to see." The rookies' enthusiasm and drive to make the most of every opportunity have undoubtedly contributed to the team's overall success.

The Alpine Cowboys' remarkable journey continues, and they show no signs of slowing down. With their unwavering spirit, explosive offense, and formidable pitching, they are poised to make a lasting impact on the professional independent baseball scene. As they take the field on the Fourth of July, the Cowboys are ready to deliver another unforgettable performance and further solidify their reputation as a powerhouse team



The Alpine 7on7 football team comes off the field after defeating Harmony in College Station during last week's State 7on7 Finals.

Photo courtesy of Felipe Fierro

7 ON 7 • FROM 7

onship. "These folks fundraised for our kids to participate in these tournaments along with spending countless hours coaching our players on their own, taking time out of their weekend to travel to College Station with these young men. Their success in 7on7 is because Felipe, Derek, Danny, and Angie took the time and effort to make this possible," Smith said.

Besides praising the efforts of the 7on7 coaching and support team, Smith said that these passing, throwing, and catching skills are paramount to the fall season. "Working on these coverage skills, with their passing, throwing, and catching works in our favor for the upcoming fall season. We will see numerous spread offenses, and by playing 7on7, we were able to gain valuable experience. Furthermore, this competition brings out the best in everyone, allowing our athletes to compete

against some of the top programs in the state," Smith remarked.

Smith said that last year, the Bucks defense that Jerry Dominguez led forced 36 turnovers and 16 of these were passes intercepted by the defense. The skills that 7on7 focuses on will allow these players to hone their coverage skills and work on techniques that will be beneficial in the fall.

"Defense wins championships, and we feel that we will have an opportunity to compete for championships in the fall. We have a long way to go, and 7on7 is the first step to having a great season. We will have a lot of work ahead of us in July and August to be where we need to be in time for the district play, but our 7on7 players played very hard and displayed great class, heart, pride, and integrity at all their tournaments and we're looking forward to seeing the results of these skills in the fall," Smith concluded.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

DAE HARDWICK

Dae Hardwick is starting to hit his stride, after overcoming some injuries sustained during the football season. In his last outing vs Tornillo, Dae was 3 assists shy of a triple double 15 points, 10 rebounds, 7 assists.

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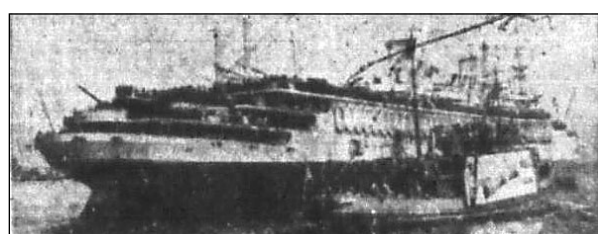
July 4, 1945
Lloyd P. Bloodworth has been selected as the new Executive Manager of the Alpine Chamber of Commerce at a recent gathering of the chamber. Bloodworth has predicted that there is a bright future ahead for Alpine and the area.

Many Turn Out To Greet CC Manager

NEW EXECUTIVE PREDICTS A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR ALPINE AND AREA



LLOYD P. BLOODWORTH



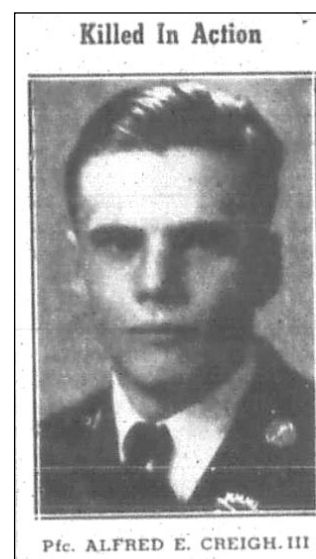
July 13, 1945

A U.S. Army tugboat escorts the U.S.S. Wakefield, an Army transport ship loaded with 5,000 GIs returning from the European war theatre into Boston Harbor.

July 20, 1945
Major Charles Benton Adams of Alpine, perished in a plane crash on June 5 in Luzon. Details of his death were contained in a letter from Captain Sam Pratt, a surviving member of his squadron. The letter was sent to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dom Adams.



MAJOR ADAMS



Killed In Action
Pfc. ALFRED E. CREIGH III

July 13, 1945
Pfc. Alfred E. Creigh III was killed in action in the European war theater. Creigh is one of the local men to have perished due to the war.

Photos are courtesy of the Archives of the Big Bend at the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library

Nodules on roots are beneficial bacteria

Dear Neil: A friend has not had much success with her peppers, tomatoes, or beans. She recently sent me this photo of her beans' roots and my first thought was "nematodes." If not, what are they?

They look like the nodules of nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Those are the rich benefits of plants in the legume family. They're able to convert nitrogen from the air (in the soil air spaces) into nutrition the plants can utilize. As they die and break down, they release the nutrients and enrich the soil. I worry a lot more about that embankment of what appears to be nut-sedge (a.k.a. "nutgrass") on which your friend has laid the plant sample for the photo. That's massive.

Dear Neil: Is it a good idea to use fertilizer in the summer with all the heat?

That depends on the plant species involved and the vigor of the specimen you're growing. Many types of southwestern plants do their very best growing when it's really hot. Plants like

GARDENER'S MAILBAG
by neil sperry

lantana, bermudagrass, and Boston ferns, just to cite three that many of us have in our landscapes, thrive in the heat. If we water them up to standards, they will quickly use up available nutrients. That doesn't mean that we should over-feed them, but it just means that when we begin to notice that their growth is slowing and leaf color is turning less than rich green, then it's probably time to consider feeding them. Of course, that is tempered by other factors. Plants that have been planted or transplanted recently may need time to get adjusted. Water curtailments may mean that we don't want to encour-

age vigorous new growth at the moment. Common sense needs to prevail.

Dear Neil: I have some property in rural Oklahoma. It's covered in bois d'arc and black locust trees. I'd like to get some mesquite trees started, but no one sells them. Do you have any suggestions?

Check with the Native Plant Societies of Texas and Oklahoma to see if they have a source. You can also do it the old-fashioned way: collect seeds this fall and sow them into moist draws where they can get started. It will take them a while to gain much size, but you wouldn't be getting very large plants in containers, either.

Dear Neil: I believe a faulty sprinkler system was responsible for my backyard having many bare or thin spots in the bermuda. I have repaired the sprinklers and filled in the trenches. Should I seed? I don't think I'll be able to till since the sprinkler heads would be in the way.

You must rototill before you sow seeds or plant

sod. Buy wire flags at the hardware store and mark where the heads are. You only have to rototill two inches deep. Avoid the areas right around the heads. Hopefully, your pipes are considerably deeper than that. Use a garden rake turned upside-down to smooth the tilled soil, then sow the bermuda seed at the rate of two to four pounds per 1,000 square feet. Water for five minutes morning and evening for two weeks. Once the seedlings are up and growing you can gradually water daily, then every couple of days, but longer at a time.

All of that said, I worry that your original grass might have thinned out, not because of drought, but because of shade. I get literally hundreds of questions each year on thin turf, and better than 90 percent of them end up being due to excessive shade. Before you go to all that trouble, be sure that St. Augustine (from sod) or a shade-tolerant groundcover like mondo-grass might not be a better alternative.



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ACROSS

- 1 "got a ___ in my throat" (emotional)
- 5 TX Roy Orbison hit "It's ___" (1964)
- 6 home of Baylor
- 7 film ___ (scam)
- 8 commercials, e.g.
- 9 Clay Allison epitaph: "He never killed ___ ___ did not need killing"
- 16 pekoe and green in Bandera, "Dixie ___" for city slickers
- 21 ___ Campo, Texas
- 22 Maureen O' ___ of film "Rio Grande"
- 23 TXism: "his facts ___ elastic" (liar)
- 24 TXism: "it ___ poke in the eye with a sharp stick"
- 30 TX-based Sunoco once was " ___ Company"
- 34 TXism: "bend ___ elbow" (drink)
- 35 record companies
- 36 TX Roy Bean's court ___ was in his Langtry saloon petty quarrels
- 39 ___ Court is last resort for civil appeals
- 43 TX Gene Tierney 1945 film: "Leave ___ Heaven"
- 44 delicious melon: "Pecos Can ___"
- 45 WBAP ___/FM
- 46 "it's ___ better days"

DOWN

- 1 Texas Registered Longhorn Beef is this (2 wds.)
- 2 birth town of TX McConaughey
- 3 TXism: " ___ su casa" (neighborly)
- 4 seniors dance
- 9 just one of 8-across
- 10 this Ali took TX Foreman's title in 1974 "Rumble"
- 11 TX singer Meat Loaf was born Marvin Lee ___
- 12 noted fictional detective, Wolfe
- 13 thin, ghostly figure
- 14 laugh word
- 15 TXism: "plain as the ears ___ mule"
- 17 7-Eleven slushies
- 19 Texas Nokona baseball gloves are hand ___
- 20 this Josh was Aggie offensive line coach (2019-22)
- 24 great NFL and UT quarterback, Bobby (init.)
- 25 enjoy fried okra
- 26 you can make ___ at Lone Star Park
- 27 Bank in East Texas
- 28 Olympic ski race
- 29 TXism: " ___ as a baby's backside"
- 31 neither's sidekick (init.)
- 32 abortion case that's been overturned " ___ v. Wade"
- 33 hides out (2 wds.)
- 38 in Duval County on U.S. 59
- 40 ___ Ross State University in Alpine
- 41 once a rival to the AP news agency
- 42 "E" of "EMT"
- 48 ___ Ward, Texas in Hale County
- 50 TX Kenny sang you gotta know when to hold 'em and when to ___ 'em
- 51 OJ's judge, Lance
- 56 four-bagger by an Astro or Ranger
- 57 make ecstatic

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Music raises funds for fire victims



The sister venue of the Granada Theatre, Alcove Social had a good crowd show up for local artists such as Gil Shackelford to raise money for the victims of the Alpine downtown fire.

Photo by Kara Gerbert



ALYSSA BARRON

SENIOR Spotlight


In what activities did you participate in high school?
In high school, I participated in one act, art, band, academic UIL, student council, and National Honor Society.

Who was your favorite teacher/coach, and why?
My favorite teacher was Mrs. Golden. She uplifted me on my bad days, provided a safe space to be myself, and made my good days even better than they already were.

What was your favorite moment in the last four years?
My favorite moment in the last four years was when we created our band Tiger's Eyes in my sophomore year and performed for the Reproductive Coalition in Marfa that summer.

What are your plans after high school?
My plans after high school are to pursue a career in psychology. My tentative college choice is Texas State where I can adventure into the surrounding cities in Central Texas.

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Devotional Page

Reflections on Independence Day

BY REV. WYATT BOUTWELL
Holy Cross Anglican Church

The American Book of Common Prayer includes a couple of days in the Prayer Book that are particularly devoted to events in American history. Both are a celebration of God's goodness. Thanksgiving commemorates the goodness of God in blessing the efforts of the farmer and rancher shown through the abundance of food; Independence Day is a celebration of the goodness of God in gifting us with unprecedented liberties. The collect prayer for Independence Day: "O ETERNAL God, through whose mighty power our fathers won their liberties of old; Grant, we beseech thee, that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." The Declaration of Independence which was issued on this day declared this nation to be founded on the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. God has granted us, through the instrument of our nation, a tremendous endowment of security of person, unprecedented personal freedoms along with the right to pursue happiness. Many find the latter promise confusing - are we guaranteed happiness objectively? Are we promised conditions in which our personal happiness is possible? For the founders, the pursuit of happiness was not a quest to feel good but a lifelong commitment to virtue - being good. We have the liberties won in our

Independence for the purpose of becoming more virtuous. Civic virtues are important, but the Christian was redeemed for a greater purpose.

In recent weeks, during Sunday School, our parish has been studying the book of Exodus. For many, the most important part of the story is freedom- freedom from slavery. Yet, Israel was released from slavery so that they may be freed for service to the Lord - understanding of His Law and proper worship according to those commands. Truly, Israel was saved from oppression so that the nation may offer proper service, proper obedience, and indeed God-prescribed virtue as a light to the nations around her. This is how the Christian is to understand his/her liberty on this Independence Day. The appointed readings for Independence Day are Deuteronomy Chapter 10 and Matthew Chapter 5. The common theme shared by both these readings is the duty of love. Love for the stranger in Deuteronomy because Israel was a stranger in Egypt before God delivered them. He brought them out of bondage so that they might serve him and worship Him; In Matthew 5, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, expands concern for the weak, the stranger in Deuteronomy and applies love for one's enemies by doing good unto them even as they abuse us. Blessing them and praying for them; reflecting the abundance of God's goodness to all creation. So, on this Independence Day, let us commit anew to using our liberties to the glory of God, in the truest service to His eternal Kingdom.

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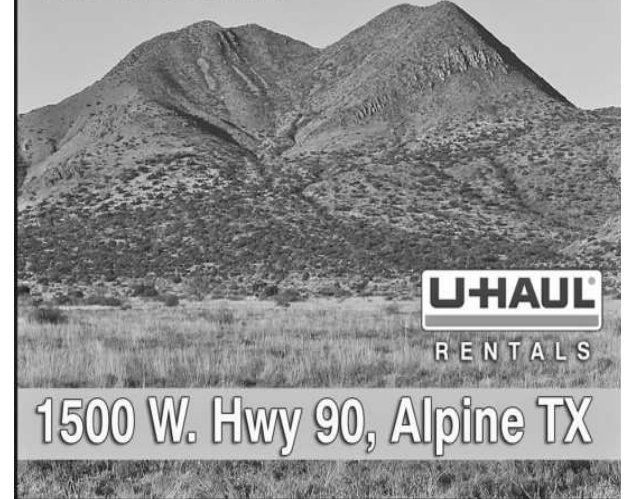
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Bring the elegance of French onion soup to chicken



Have you ever had a delicious bowl of French onion soup? We're not talking about the Lipton add water and heat kind. We're talking about the chopping 10 pounds of onions and caramelizing them down, adding beef broth and red wine that is topped with crunchy croutons and gooey Gruyere cheese kind. While relatively simple, it tastes anything but.

Now think about bringing that taste to chicken. This is what French onion chicken is all about.

Using the breast portion of the chicken, this main course is simmered in a savory, homemade onion sauce and then topped with the tasty, melted Gruyere, thus bringing a fine-dining level dish to your very own kitchen table.

Because this dish, like the soup, requires the on-

ions to caramelize, this allows you plenty of time to work on different side dishes that you might pair with this showstopper. A few that come to mind are the always-welcome mashed potatoes and green beans. And if impressing the family with one's culinary genius is what is on the docket, use fresh green beans that can be easily sauteed in a skillet with garlic and perhaps

a few almonds as well. You know, to "class things up" a bit. Even broccoli, asparagus, or even bright, green, summer snap peas make for a photo-worthy dinner plate.

And the taste, well, that's just pure comfort food at its finest. It sits right under Southern fried chicken and a Texas-sized chicken fried steak on the comfort food scale.

This dish, with the ingredients below, will serve a family of four and it takes around an hour and a half from start to finish.

So, the next time you're scratching your head to come up with something to feed the family, try out this simple, yet elegant main dish that is certain to win you an award even from your biggest critics.

FRENCH ONION CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds chicken breast, boneless and skinless, split in half lengthwise
- 1 teaspoon of salt, plus more, to taste
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, plus more, to taste
- 4 large yellow onions, sliced ¼ inch thick
- 4 garlic cloves, finely minced.
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot starch
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- ½ teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped, plus more, to taste and for garnish
- 8 ounces of Gruyere cheese, shredded

DIRECTIONS

- On the stovetop over medium-high heat, place a large oven-safe braising pan with a lid.
- Add the olive oil to the heated pan and allow it to become hot.
- On a large platter, add the chicken breast halves and generously season them using 1 teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of black pepper.
- Add the seasoned chicken breast halves to the heated oil and cook until they are golden brown and reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees, about 4-5 minutes per side.
- Transfer the cooked chicken breast halves to a clean plate and cover to keep warm.

- Lower the stovetop heat to medium-low. In the same pan, add the onions.
- Cover the pan and cook the onions, while stirring about every five minutes, until golden brown, about 20-30 minutes.
- Add the garlic and cook, while stirring frequently, until it is fragrant, about 1 minute.
- Evenly sprinkle the arrowroot starch over the onion mixture and stir until well combined.
- Add the chicken broth, ½ teaspoon of thyme, the extra salt, and the extra black pepper to the onion mixture and stir well until combined.
- Raise the stovetop to medium-high heat. Bring the onion mixture to a simmer, uncovered, and cook until thickened slightly, around 35 minutes.
- Preheat the broiler.
- Transfer the onion mixture from the stovetop to a wire rack.
- Add the cooked chicken breast halves to the onion mixture and evenly spoon the onion mixture over each of the chicken breasts.
- Sprinkle the chicken breast mixture with the Gruyere cheese.
- Broil until the cheese is melted, about two minutes.
- Serve garnished with extra thyme.







French Onion Chicken

Courtesy photo

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