

THC holds sparsely attended public meeting

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) held a public meeting last Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Alpine City Council chambers to update property owners on the significance of nominating the Alpine Downtown Historic District for the National Registry.

Besides the presenters, Vasken Markarian, historian, and Bonnie Tipton, National Register coordinator from THC, only five members of the Alpine community attended. The meeting was poorly timed and poorly advertised, Tipton admitted, with attending property owners remarking that they'd only received notice that their property was part of the nomination for the National Historic Registry and about the meeting that same day.

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INSIDE



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Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

20258.76"
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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.



Museum welcomes new director

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

With enthusiasm and anticipation, the Museum of the Big Bend announces Dr. Emily Wilkinson as its new director.

Dr. John Klingemann, who briefly served as Director of the MoBB, has transitioned to a higher-level administrative position at Sul Ross. Dr. Emily Wilkinson, his successor, brings a wealth of experience to the director's post.

Since February 2014, Wilkinson has served as Director of the Public Art Program for the Texas Tech University System. Prior to that, she spent eight years as the Education Director for the National Ranching Heritage Center, and she's worked in museum education for the Museum of Texas Tech, Lubbock Lake Landmark, and Science Spectrum.



See MUSEUM • 8 Dr. Emily Wilkinson

Merry Grinchmas



The Grinch showed up in town this weekend to prepare for all his Christmas shenanigans, but he may have to find alternate transportation for his duties with our warmer temperatures this week.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

AISSD renames gym, approves audit, accepts donations

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Alpine ISD Board of Trustees met on Wednesday, December 17, at 5:30 p.m. for its regularly scheduled meeting. Trustees Haley Babb and Nicki Ahrens were absent.

After the meeting was called to order, President Eddie Natera invited Orlando Flores of Fabens to speak during the public comment portion of the evening. Flores spoke to the board about growing up in Alpine as a young child and then eventually settling in Fabens, where he had the opportunity to work with Rosa Garcia, whom the district plans to name the AHS gym after.

Flores said that Garcia made all the young ladies she coached and taught into women, and that when Fabens lost their volleyball coach, Garcia, although

retired, volunteered her time to coach those young ladies through the remainder of their season. "There are just not enough words to relay what an outstanding person, coach, and teacher she was. This honor couldn't have gone to a better person," Flores said.

After Flores allotted time to speak to the board was complete, Natera asked the board, in the interest of timing, if they had any issues moving agenda items 13, 14, and 15 to the next items addressed. With no objections, the board voted unanimously to move those items up on the agenda.

Item 13 was introduced and elaborated on a bit by AISD Superintendent Dr. Michelle Rinehart. Rinehart reminded the board that this was the sec-



Dr. Michelle Rinehart

AISSD superintendent

ond time they had heard the accolades from community members and the committee's recommendation that the AHS Gym be renamed in honor of Rosa Garcia.

Trustee Joe Portillo commented, "This is long overdue and finally getting done." A motion to approve renaming the AHS Gym in honor of Rosa Garcia was made by trustee Jimmy Morris and seconded by Portillo. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda item 14 was the consideration and possible action of selecting an independent design representative for architectural and engineering services for a design-build project for the turf project at Buck Stadium.

"As you all know, we are in year 13 of our football field, which is three years past stan-

dard life on a turf field. At the recommendation of our legal team, we were encouraged to hire a design representative to develop and engineer the project before we went out for competitive bids," Rinehart told the board.

The board then heard from Jeff Bresee, a civil engineer with CEI via Zoom, who has overseen hundreds of turf field projects, including the transformation of Sul Ross' grass field to its current turf field.

After Bresee spoke to the board, Natera asked if there were any turf products that were exceeding the 10-year lifespan. Bresee replied, "No, but so long as there is regular maintenance, and depending on how often the field is used, they can extend beyond the 10 years."

See AISD • 8

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OBITUARIES

MARTHA THERESA "TITA" DYER

April 18, 1961 – September 9, 2025



Tita's smile beamed like the sun and warmed everyone who had the pleasure to meet her. She could see the Christ in every soul, and treated people that way, no matter where they came from. She was an athlete and natural health guru, a student of astrology and higher human consciousness, and an accomplished oil painter.

derful boys and travelled all over the world. Then for many years she gave up most of her social life and personal time, and returned home to care for her ailing parents, Alfredo and Carol Keith Zabroky, for her beloved sister, Chrissy, and for their fam-

ily home in Kerrville, Texas. She thought she would finish life there.

However, in 2019 she met Stephen Wesley Dyer, who fell crazy, mad in love with her. Between a full-time job at Fredericksburg Hospital and caring for her sick mother, Tita didn't have any time to even have lunch or go for a walk with him, so Stevie followed her around the Kerrville HEB on Saturdays helping her shop. That's how they initially dated.

Shortly after Carol passed away in 2020, they were married, ran away to a farm in the mountains of Alpine, Texas, had a storybook romance, and lived

happily ever after.

Tita loved advising people on natural health at the Blue Water Grocery Store. "Food is Medicine!" she would always say. She quickly became a celebrated member of the Big Bend Arts Council and achieved a lifelong dream of being a professional artist, painting and selling her prints to the international tourist crowd.

One of the happiest days of Tita's life was when she and Stevie bought Shirley's Framing, an Alpine home and regional picture framing business. Martha's Framing became a central gathering place for the most talented artists in the Big Bend, a hub of

fascinating conversations, and their living room was a rotating gallery of some of the finest art in the world. She thrived playing her role in this amazing artist community, and she loved every one of you.

A 19-year-old-boy in a stolen car, was running from the police when he ran a stop sign in Van Horn, Texas at over a hundred miles per hour. Tita was just passing by when her Earthly life was ended. But she would forgive him. That's just the way she rolled.

Tita is survived by her husband, Stevie; her sons, Zackary Aaron Ridge, Beau Ryan Ridge, Landon Madison Ridge; step-

daughters Sarah Elaine "Ellie" Coleman and Martha Anne Howland Dyer; sister Christina Rose Zabroky; sister Suzanne Carol (Zabroky) Stoepel and husband Gerry Stoepel; brother, Robert Zabroky, and many nieces and nephews in the USA and the Zabroky Family in Mexico. She loved all of you so very much.

A celebration of Tita's life will be held on her birthday, April 18, 2026, in Alpine, Texas. Email Steve Dyer for more details: stevie3249@gmail.com or call him at: 432-294-4138.

Please make donations to: BigBendArtsCouncil.org, or Beverly Hall at: Soul.org

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Maria Castillo Granado

Maria Granado, a beloved wife, daughter, mother, and cherished friend, departed this world on December 16, 2025, in Odessa, Texas, at the age of 94. She was born on November 11, 1931, in Rincon de Romos, Aguas Calientes, Mexico. Maria's life was a tapestry woven with her love for family, dedication to education, and her diverse interests that brought joy to those around her.

Her career as a state employee at Sul Ross State University in Alpine exemplified her commitment to the community. Maria was not only dedicated to her work but also to nurturing the minds of the younger generations. She took immense pride in teaching her grandchildren and neighborhood children Spanish, sharing with them the beauty and richness of her language and culture. Her love for children was evident in her interactions,



and her patient, caring spirit influenced many lives.

Education was a lifelong pursuit for Maria. She completed her high school equivalency before successfully completing over 100 semester credit hours of college at Sul Ross State University. This achievement, alongside her passion for singing in the university choir, reflected her belief in the transformative power of learning and artistic expression.

Above all, Maria was known for her friendly and caring personality. She loved visiting and engaging in heartfelt conversations, leaving a lasting impression on everyone she met. Her warmth and kindness extended to her pets, who were also a source of joy throughout her life, and she had a special affinity

for tending to her flowers, creating a vibrant and welcoming home.

Maria leaves behind a loving family who will forever cherish her memory. She is survived by her daughters: Leticia G. Reyes, married to David Reyes, and Laura Slight, married to David Slight; and Lilia G. Nañez, married to Ignacio; as well as her son, Manuel C. Granado, married to Lydia. Maria also leaves behind seven grandchildren. They are Phillip and Stephen Reyes, Xavier and Michael Nañez, and Jasmine, Jeremy, and Jaclyn Granado, and great-grandchildren, Evelina Nañez, Luka Isaiah Granado, Alicia Quiroz, and Daniel Granado.

She is reunited in spirit with her beloved husband, Manuel V. Granado; her father, Jesus R. Castillo; her mother, Maria A. Castillo; her sister, Agapita C. Candia; and her son, Gerald C. Granado.

In honor of Maria's life, visitation will be held at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Alpine on December 26, 2025, from 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.,

followed by the recitation of the Most Holy Rosary, culminating with a Mass starting at noon. The interment will take place at Holy Angels Cemetery, where she will be laid to rest, surrounded by those who love her.

As we remember Maria's legacy, we celebrate her kindness, her devotion to her family, and her unwavering belief in the power of love and education. She left an indelible mark on all who knew her, and her spirit will continue to inspire generations to come.

The family would like to thank the staff at Courtyards Memory Care and Heart to Heart Hospice for the support and wonderful care they provided to our mother.

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, and gifts and condolences may be left by visiting www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com. Donations in Maria's memory may be made to the Alpine Humane Society or to the Fine Arts Department at Sul Ross State University.

Notice of Filing Preliminary Replat Application

A preliminary replat was filed on 12.18.2025 in the office of Brewster County Clerk.

1. The proposed subdivision is generally located at 111, 121, 131 YUCCA LANE and 25 SALT CEDAR PATH off Las Montanas Road near FM 170 in the unincorporated area of Lajitas, Texas in the Las Montanas Subdivision behind the Comanche Mesa Subdivision.

2. A legal description of the area included in the proposed plat is Lot 42, Lot 43, Lot 44, and CA4, Block 1 of Las Montanas Subdivision (the "Subdivision") of the Unincorporated Community of Lajitas, Texas, per Plat recorded in Plat Envelope 311b, of the Brewster County Real Property Records.

The number of lots for the proposed subdivision is 4. The smallest lot in the proposed subdivision is 2.484 acres. The largest lot in the proposed subdivision is 3.230 acres.

The four lots are being combined into 1 lot of 11.704 acres.

The preliminary plat may be reviewed in the Brewster County Clerk's office from 9:00 – 12:00 am., 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Comments regarding the plat may be made in writing to Brewster County, Box 1630, Alpine, Texas, by contacting any County Commissioner directly or by appearance at the Commissioners Court meeting at which the Preliminary Plan is scheduled to be reviewed and acted upon. For information concerning meeting dates of Brewster County Court, call 837-2412. No subdivision plat may receive final approval until it has been on file at least 30 days.

Christmas Eve service at Hillside

The folks at Hillside Baptist Church in Alpine, Texas, cordially invite the public to share in their annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 at 7 p.m. Traditional Christmas carols sung by

the congregation, interspersed with scriptures telling of the birth of Christ, will help all to remember the reason for this beautiful season of love, life, and giving. Hillside is located at 205 Church Road on the

east end of Alpine. Take a left on Highway 90 [drive onto the dirt road after crossing the cattle guard] just across the street from Holiday Inn Express. For more information, please call 432-386-3071.

Solicitation to bid for Fine Arts Facilities Expansion
 Sul Ross State University Alpine, Texas

Construction Bid Package

General Contractor: Benchmark Houston Builders, L.P.

Phone Number: (713) 921-2500

Email address: srsubids@benchmarkhouston.com

Project: Fine Arts Facilities Expansion Sul Ross State University
 Alpine, Texas

Project # 758-26-07021

Project Location: 101 E Sul Ross Ave. Alpine, TX 79830

For project information, virtual bid conference link, and to request participation in this bidding process, please send an email to srsubids@benchmarkhouston.com. Please make sure to include your company name, company contact, phone number, and email address.

All proposals are due on or before 01/05/2026 12:00 PM (CST).

Culling the herd



This beautiful photo titled “Cut ‘em Out” was taken by none other than local photographer Tim McKenna. McKenna also submitted this year’s winning A Mountain award photo.

Photo courtesy of Visit Alpine, Texas

Santa visits Museum of the Big Bend



James and Pearl Boyd spent time with Santa this past Saturday at the Museum of the Big Bend’s Big Bend Jingle Mingle.

Photo by Heather Yadon

Texas Capital Highlights

ERCOT: Little chance of blackouts this winter

Winter has officially arrived, and officials with the Electric Reliability Council of Texas say the Texas power grid is expected to hold up through most weather conditions, the Houston Chronicle reported. However, the boom in data centers across the state increases the risk of rolling brownouts to 1% to 2% through February.

Pablo Vegas, ERCOT’s CEO, said the power grid it oversees, which covers about 90% of the state’s electric load, added 11 gigawatts of new capacity since last winter, enough power for nearly 2.8 million homes.

“2025 is going to represent a year with tremendous supply growth on the ERCOT grid,” Vegas said at a quarterly board meeting last week.

However, if the state experiences a winter storm similar to the one in 2021, power demand could exceed capacity, necessitating rolling blackouts. ERCOT notes the probability of that happening is “well under one percent.”

Texas legislators passed a law this year that gives ERCOT the power to shut off “non-critical” energy users, including data centers, when rotating outages are ordered.

Paxton sues energy company linked to state’s largest wildfire

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is suing Xcel Energy, the power company whose two decayed utility poles sparked the Smokehouse Creek fire in 2024. That became the largest wildfire in state history, burning more than 1 million acres in West Texas, killing three people and thousands of livestock and causing more than \$1 billion in damages, according to The Texas Tribune.

Paxton is seeking monetary damages and restitution, claiming the Minnesota-based company knew one of the poles was defective but decided not to replace it.

“Xcel ignored the warning and chose to place marginal profits — amounting to only a few thousand dollars — above the safety and well-being of Texans, the State’s property, and the natural resources enjoyed by all People,” the lawsuit read.

The company confirmed in 2024 that it owned the utility poles that caused the

Smokehouse Creek fire, but has denied negligence allegations.

Texas Democrats fill every state, federal race on ballot

For the first time in modern state history, a Democrat is running in every state and federal race on the Texas ballot in 2026 — a feat neither party had previously accomplished, The Tribune reported. A network of the state’s top Democratic politicians and groups recruited 104 candidates to fill every congressional, state House, and state Senate seat, as well as statewide judicial and State Board of Education races.

“No Republican gets a free ride in Texas,” Texas Democratic Party Chair Kendall Scudder said in an interview. “If you are a Republican and you want to hold public office in this state, you’re going to have to fight us for it.”

Longtime Republican strategist Dave Carney said the Democrats’ slate was “just a gimmick, if they don’t back it up with serious resources.” Carney is Gov. Greg Abbott’s chief strategist. Abbott has vowed to use his considerable campaign resources in a bid to flip Harris County red, recruiting Republicans to run in every state House in that county.

Analysis sheds light on latest migration patterns

Texas and Florida continue to lead the nation in attracting the most new residents. An analysis of 18 million national moves provides more data on migration patterns, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

- Some migration statistics:
- Annual Texas moves from outside and inside the state: 1,403,786 people
 - Annual Texas population gain from other states: 265,112 people
 - Average monthly Texas population gain from other states: 22,092 people
 - Average daily Texas population gain from other states: 726 people

Despite those numbers, Texas ranked 19th for net migration, gaining 14.1 more residents per 10,000 than it lost. Leading the nation in net migration per 10,000 was South Carolina at 95.08.

The Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington area had the largest population growth, adding more than half a million new residents. The figures were compiled between June 2024 and May 2025.

Black bear population on the rise in West Texas

Sightings of black bears in West Texas have jumped from nearly 80 in 2020 to at least 130 this year, the Texas Standard reported. That has caused some challenges and concern as bears visit neighborhoods in search of food and pose a threat to livestock and pets.

“I don’t mind the bears coming back, we don’t want them wiped out, that’s for sure,” said Pam Clouse, who lives in Alpine, an area that’s seen a number of bear encounters in recent years. “You know, they were almost extinct.”

Wildlife biologists emphasize removing food and anything that might attract a hungry bear. As they prepare to find a den in which to hibernate, bears go through great effort to consume 20,000 calories daily.

“They have a great sense of smell, much better than our own,” said Raymond Skiles, former wildlife biologist at Big Bend National Park in West Texas. “So, number one, they can smell food when you and I would never have a clue.”

As the bear population in Big Bend increases and the park reaches what is called “carrying capacity,” they are heading north in search of food.

“And when you’re over carrying capacity, there’s not [enough] resources on the natural landscape for those animals,” explained Krysta Demere, a wildlife biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. “So, then they begin to move out and search for new food sources.”



PUBLIC NOTICE

FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE MIDLAND/ODESSA, TEXAS

The current term of the office of U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald C. Griffin is due to expire on August 12, 2026. The U.S. District Court is required by law to establish a panel of citizens to consider the reappointment of U.S. Magistrate Judge Griffin to a new eight-year term.

Comments are invited from members of the bar and the public as to whether U.S. Magistrate Judge Griffin should be recommended by the panel for reappointment by the Court.

A full public notice is posted on our web site at: <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/>

Comments must be received no later than January 23, 2026.

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Opinions

ONLINE POLL

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

Now the Avalanche asks:

If your life had a theme song, what would it sound like?

- A dramatic movie score
- A comedy jingle
- A slow romantic ballad
- Heavy metal chaos

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

RESULTS

IF YOUR LIFE HAD A THEME SONG, WHAT WOULD IT SOUND LIKE?

RESULTS

A DRAMATIC MOVIE SCORE



A COMEDY JINGLE



A SLOW ROMANTIC BALLAD



HEAVY METAL CHAOS



Winter and Pets

The winter months are upon us, and as most of you know, Alpine temperatures change constantly, and it has been known to drop to single-digit temperatures. It is important to protect your pets from the elements while they are outside. Alpine Animal Services recommends that all pets be allowed inside when temperatures are below freezing, and if they have to go outside, make sure it is not for long periods of time and that they have access to sufficient shelter and water. Here are some tips for keeping your pet safe in the winter:

Make sure that your dog

has a well-insulated, waterproof doghouse. If you have outdoor cats, make sure they have one too. Shelters should be big enough for them to move around comfortably. Shelters should be elevated and have some type of bedding. Never leave pets outside during an ice or snowstorm.

Always have identification on your pet, whether it be a tag or a microchip. If your pet gets loose for any reason, they may not be able to find their way home in the snow.



JENNIFER STEWART
Animal Services Supervisor

After a walk, wipe down paws and fur. Rock salts and other chemicals can irritate the skin and the pads of the feet. It can also be potentially poisonous if ingested and irritate the mouth. Call your veterinarian immediately if your pet ingests any potentially harmful chemicals.

Bang on the hood of your vehicle before starting it. Smaller animals such as cats and wildlife may have used your car for a safe, warm place to curl up for the night. Without a warning, an ani-

mal may not be able to get out in time and could be injured when you turn on your vehicle.

Avoid shaving animals down. Their fur will protect them from the weather. If needed, trim longer-haired animals to avoid ice balls accumulating on them when they are outside.

Keep them well hydrated, make sure that water bowls do not freeze, and that the water is changed often.

Lastly, if you see an animal that needs help, or maybe you just want us to do a welfare check to make sure they're ok, don't hesitate to call us and report it at 432-837-3486. It is better to be safe than sorry.

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.

Christmas magic becomes Christmas memories

"There is an angel close to you this day. Merry Christmas, and I wish you well."

—Paul Crume (1912–1975), Dallas Morning News columnist who wrote a front-page column every day for 24 years

As I sit crafting one more Christmas column, I do it relishing in the blessing of memories and personal traditions. Which means one more time, I'll read my favorite Christmas columns from the work of long-time Dallas Morning News editor Paul Crume.

One, entitled "Christmas Fires," I will still read this year, despite un-Christmas-like 70-degree weather forecasts. The other, "To Touch an Angel," was first published on Christmas Day of 1967 and is still published every Christmas in the Morning News as "Angels Among Us."

I believe Angels are among us all the time. At Christmas, we're reminded with seasonal cherubs atop many Christmas trees. This year, the angel gets a vacation while my tree top sports a gnome. But I know angels are still around.

Christmas feels like a magical time as well. Special times steeped in the comfort of family and loved ones gathering. Sharing a meal. Laughing. Being thankful to our Creator.

Times like the Christmas living on the lake when Santa brought us all bicycles. My kids and I enjoyed Christmas morning peddling cheer along county roads around Lake Murvaul.

Then there's the time we spent a snowy family Christmas in the mountains of Taos, New Mexico. Skiing days and enjoying a tiny tree with gifts, celebrating in our room at the lodge. Magically, Santa still found us.

And how many times have I smiled, recalling the Christmas when my incredibly artistic daughter, Robin, gathered up empty boxes and crumpled paper after gifts were opened, taking it all to her room. It was a while before I discovered she had left new toys under the Christmas tree while replicating Elvis's Graceland home from the scavenged materials.

It was another 1980s Christmas Eve in Center when I used on my own children, an admonition that my grandmother once used on me. "You'd better go to sleep before Santa comes."

Assuming my children were deep in dreams of the Jolly Old Elf, I tackled boxes bearing "Some Assembly Required." Thinking, "This won't take long."



LEON ALDRIDGE
Guest Columnist

Pushing midnight, the Little Homemaker play kitchen was done, inserting the last tab A into slot 4 and securing with one #6 bolt and one #9 nut. Then came the tricycle, the doll stroller, and stocking stuffers. Just in time to experience the magic of an early Christmas morning sunrise.

Watching my children experience Christmas morning always reminded me of Christmas dawning in Mount Pleasant one 1960s Yule season when I heard a soft voice at my bedroom door. "You think he's come?"

As the elder sibling, realizing that Santa was more than mere magic, my trust became helping preserve the mystery for my younger sisters.

"I don't know," I told my youngest sister, Sylvia. "Let's go see." With middle sister Leslie also up and curious, we peeked into the living room. Changing colors projected Christmas magic onto the shiny aluminum tree. Under it, a collection of unwrapped gifts glittered in the early morning light.

"I think so," I said. And, about that Christmas Eve warning, I borrowed from my grandmother. As a child, Christmas was a time

of anticipation. The excruciating wait for Christmas to finally get here. Then waking up Christmas morning, excited to see what St. Nick had left.

We moved a lot back then. Perry Brothers' five-and-dime store managers were relocated more often than Methodist ministers. Four times by the time I was in fifth grade. Traveling to East Texas for Christmas made updating forwarding addresses for Santa a full-time job.

There was magic in my grandmother's bedtime stories on Christmas Eve with her frequent reminders that, "You better go to sleep before 'ol Santy comes."

If her stories didn't put me to sleep fast enough, she typically turned off the bedside lamp, pretending to hear reindeer on the roof. And I pretended to be asleep, still wishing it were Christmas morning.

My wish for each of you is the same as every year. That you are blessed with the wonderful magic of Christmas, both making memories and reminiscing about them.

In the company of angels among us.

Contact Aldridge at leonaldridge@gmail.com. Other Aldridge columns are archived at leonaldridge.com

STAFF



J.T. Maroney

Publisher

publisher@alpineavalanche.com

Kara Gerbert

Managing Editor

kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com

Kerry Laird

Sports Editor

laird@alpineavalanche.com

Shelley Maroney

Office Manager

shelley.maroney@alpineavalanche.com

432-837-3334

www.AlpineAvalanche.com

Facebook: Alpine Avalanche

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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.

Tribute to Tony Lujan

My friend, I find myself at a loss for words. It's like trying to express my feelings through words and rhymes, but the music is nowhere to be found. There are so many things I want to say to you and about you, but only two words say it best, as you always said when it comes to guitar, less is best. So, I will express my feelings with these two most simple yet powerful words, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

Yes, my friend, there will definitely

ly be a river of amazing music and beautiful stories celebrating you today. Some will bring joy and laughter, and sadly, some will bring sorrow and tears. As for me, I will be listening for that one brave, hymn-loving halo head, "Angel," in the heavens, who will utter in awe, "Damn, did you all hear that? Who is that?" and that's just while you are tuning up. I can't even imagine what will happen when you actually start playing, lol. I've never liked "goodbye"; I've always preferred the word "soon."

Yes, "soon" is the right word for I will see you soon.

And to the wonderful town and people of Alpine, since heaven is my "10", you most definitely are my "9". I leave you with this: the next time there is thunder in Sunny Glen, listen closely, for it will resonate through the canyon walls with the sweetest touch of reverb, tremolo, and delay. Go rest, MY FRIEND. I will miss you, but again, SOON.

Sincerely,
John Joe Cadena



Rodeo Scholar



Torrance Thedford shared this great black and white photo titled "Between Spurs and Scholars," which made the finalist list in this year's Alpine Photo Contest.

Photo courtesy of Visit Alpine, Texas



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

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 27 Alpine Farmer's Market, 9 a.m. to noon at Alpine Visitor Center

January 6 Alpine City Council Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Council Chambers

January 21 City of Alpine Town Hall meeting for EMS Task Force, 6 p.m. at Alpine Civic Center, to discuss ambulance ground transportation services.

January 24 Alpine Comic Con
January 25 City of Alpine Town Hall meeting for EMS Task Force, 6 p.m. at Sul Ross Ballroom, to discuss ambulance ground transportation services.

January 30-February 1 Alpine Wildlife Weekend

January 31 City of Alpine Town Hall meeting for EMS Task Force, 6 p.m., tentatively in Marathon, to discuss ambulance ground transportation services.

February 11-13 Water in the Desert Conference, Registration is now open at bri.sulross.edu/events/water-in-the-desert-2026.



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 Alpine Food Bank, 933 East Gallego Street. Meeting room faces east.

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.

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 bbccchorale.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.

First Friday Song Swap, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Far West Guitars, 114 N. 6th Street, the first Friday of each month.

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.

VFW Post 7207, 6 p.m., third Tuesday of each month at 605 E. Ave F. All members are welcome.

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

Feliz Navidad at Alpine Elementary



Alpine Elementary students presented a Christmas Fiesta celebration last week under the direction of Mrs. Vogel.

Courtesy photo

BBT Expanding Across West Texas

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

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

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

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

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Dr. Joshua Pass - Optometrist

Dr. Brian Cherry - Optometrist

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ART OF THE OPEN WEST

MUSEUM OF THE BIG BEND

Tom Lea (July 11, 1907 to January 29, 2001) was an American muralist and artist who created a series of works titled Western Beef Cattle: A Series of Paintings by Tom Lea Depicting the Origin and Development of the Western Range Animal, currently on display at the Museum of the Big Bend in the Emmett and Miriam McCoy building. This work, titled Unloading the First Cattle in North America, Vera Cruz, 1521, shows cattle being unloaded in Vera Cruz from Santo Domingo by Don Gregorio de Villalobos in 1521. The description of the piece notes that the harbor in Vera Cruz was too shallow for ships to dock, so livestock were either pushed overboard to swim to shore or hoisted into a flat-bottom barge and carried to the beach. Lea surmised that the cattle had been on the vessel for weeks, exposed to weather, badly fed, watered, and beaten up due to the rocking of the ship, and were likely in a fragile state, so the hoist system (shown here) helped alleviate the loss of cattle. Lea depicted two types of cattle, the black cattle, which possessed bull fighting lineages and were prized by Spaniards, and a mottled roan, common for its supply of beef, milk, and were common on unimproved ranches in Mexico, and called Corriente. The landing of the first cattle in the New World held great historical significance.

Pea Off to be held New Year's Day

The 35th Annual Black-Eyed Pea Off (cook-off) will be held in the Terlingua Ghosttown on Thursday, January 1, 2026. Participants need to bring their best Black-eyed Peas for judging and to share with spectators. Award and prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place. Turn-in time is 2 p.m. sharp with a \$10 entry fee. Peas may be cooked onsite or off. Spectators can start the year off with a bowl of "Good Luck" peas for a \$10 (or more) donation - includes bowl, spoon, and combread until it runs out. There will be local music and a raffle for several "Hot Dates" (Room & Dinner). All proceeds will benefit continuing education scholarships for Terlingua School Graduates.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Freya

She came into the shelter after being found running loose in the city of Alpine in mid-September. She went unclaimed at the shelter, and upon starting her veterinary care, it was discovered that she was positive for heartworm disease. She started treatment immediately and had several months of confinement and restricted activity while undergoing her treatment. She is now heartworm-free and ready for adoption.

Freya has not been able to attend play groups while completing her treatment, but she approaches other dogs calmly, is friendly toward human visitors, and walks well on a leash. She keeps her kennel clean and waits for her turn in the yard. She also responds to the "sit" command and will give you her paw. The staff loves how gentle, sweet, and intelligent Freya is. They also say she is very under-



standing and a good listener. She sounds like the perfect friend!

German Shepherds are known for their intelligence and loyalty. Like most dogs, they will do best in a household with structure and routine, regular exercise to prevent boredom, and your pet included in household activities.

Meet Freya today at the Alpine Animal Services Shelter, 2900 Old Marathon Hwy, or call 432-837-9030.

End this year on a good note by helping our community. Contact Alpine Animal Services to volunteer to walk dogs, play with puppies in the yard, or interact with the cats.

Thirty minutes of your day can make a huge difference to the shelter and the animals.

Call 432-837-2532 to donate, foster, or volunteer for the Alpine Humane Society. Support the Alpine Humane Society Thrift Store and Cattery with donated furnishings, décor, and household goods.

Alpine Animal Services is a city entity, and Alpine Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) that works together to make Alpine a better place for people and pets.

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 information 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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|---|---|---|

35th Annual Black-eyed Pea Off

Downtown Terlingua Ghosttown Thursday, January 1, 2026

12pm~Local Music, Vegas Games & "Hot Date" Raffle Sales

2:00 pm ~ Turn-in time
(\$10 Entry Fee ~ Cook onsite or off)

2:30 pm ~ Start the year off with a bowl of "GOOD LUCK" ~ \$10 donation.

Proceeds will benefit continuing education scholarships for Terlingua School Graduates!



Sports

Skeleton crew struggles in Monahans

Bucks battle it out, fighting illness and injuries

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

Illness left the Alpine varsity Bucks with a skeleton crew of players to take on 3A, 4A, and 5A challengers on the hardwood in Monahans last week. The loss to Greenwood had the Bucks settling into tournament play at 6-4 before they faced Odessa High, Presidio, Del Rio, and El Paso Austin.

Cohesion, accuracy, and rebounds challenged the crew as they struggled to keep up without typical substitutions. Tae and Dae Hardwick, Clegg Fowlkes, and Conner Talley were out with illness, leaving some strong gaps to fill. And it is still unknown how Dae is faring after his recent injury.

The boys hit the hardwood on Thursday morning early to take on 5A contenders Odessa High



Thaddeus Prieto launches the ball towards the basket in Friday's match-up against El Paso Austin during the Monahans tournament.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

School (12-5). The missing players had an obvious effect on the Bucks, as they struggled against the Broncos, putting up only 19 points against OHS's 76. The Bucks struggled with assists and accuracy at the

net, as well as rebounds (29 to 57), but were nearly neck-and-neck in steals, putting up 10 to the Broncos' 12.

The Bucks' next faced District rivals, the Presidio Blue Devils (9-6), later

Thursday afternoon. Presidio toppled Alpine in all areas, shooting 51% to Alpine's 28%, and doubling the 3-point percentage at 50%. Once again, accuracy

See BUCKS BB • 7

FIGHTIN' BUCK & LADY BUCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

FIGHTIN' BUCK BASKETBALL

December 29-31 Caprock Tourney | TBD

January 2: Monahans vs Alpine | JV: 5 p.m. • V: 6:30 p.m.

January 6: Buena Vista vs Alpine | V: 7:30 p.m.

January 9: Alpine vs Pecos | JV: 6:30 p.m. • V: 8 p.m.

LADY BUCK BASKETBALL

December 29-31: Caprock Tourney | TBD

January 6: Fort Stockton vs Alpine | JV: 4:30 p.m. • V: 6 p.m.

January 9: Kermit vs Alpine | JV: 5 p.m. • V: 6:30 p.m.

January 16: Tornillo vs Alpine | V: 6:30 p.m.

SUL ROSS LOBOS SPORTS

SRSU MEN'S BASKETBALL

January 2: ENMU vs Sul Ross | 7:30 p.m.

January 4: WTX A&M vs Sul Ross | 3 p.m.

January 8: SRSU @ Dallas Baptist | 7 p.m.

SRSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

January 2: ENMU vs Sul Ross | 5:30 p.m.

January 4: WTX A&M vs Sul Ross | 1 p.m.

January 8: Sul Ross @ Texas Woman's | 6 p.m.

Sul Ross women fall to Dallas, Central Oklahoma



Sul Ross' Itzel Caro vehemently fights for possession of the ball during the Lobos match-up a week ago against UT Dallas.

Photo courtesy of Sul Ross Sports

BY RYAN RASBURY AND MICHAEL BOND
Contributors

Sul Ross State University Women's Basketball (1-7, LSC 0-3) continued to take positive steps Thursday evening, competing with toughness and discipline in a 43-55 Lone Star Conference matchup against the University of Texas at Dallas (4-5, LSC 1-2) at the Pete P. Gallego Center. The Lobos defended with purpose, played physical on the glass, and stayed connected throughout the contest, showing continued growth in their execution and effort as they build consistency and identity through conference play.

Ariana Escalante led the Lobos with a game-high 18 points, consistently attacking the basket, finishing through contact, and setting the tone offensively with her aggressive play. Sophi-

ya Bustillos added nine points and continued to battle on both ends, providing energy, ball pressure, and toughness throughout the contest. Victoria Aguayo rounded out the Lobo leaders with a physical two-way performance, recording eight points, a team-high 10 rebounds, and three steals as Sul Ross leaned on defensive effort and resilience in the Lone Star Conference matchup.

On Saturday, the women's team (1-8) lost 75-62 to Central Oklahoma (4-7) at the Pete P. Gallego Center.

For the first period, Sul Ross State and Central Oklahoma battled on even terms the whole way. There were seven lead changes and six ties. Junior Leslie Mojica dropped one in from the beaches of Hawaii. That put the Lobos up 21-18 as the period ended.

The second period was more of the same, with four

lead changes and five ties. Freshman Breanna Morrison hit two free throws.

That tied the game at 35-35 with 1:57 left. Over the next six minutes, UCO went on a 15-2 run to effectively seal the game 50-37.

The Lobos were sizzling from 3-point range, hitting 50% while holding UCO to 28% from behind the arc.

For Sul Ross State, sophomore Sophiya Bustillos had 17 points while shooting 7-of-11 from the floor with three triples, and Morrison added 12 points. Mojica had eight points, six assists, and four steals, and senior Victoria Aguayo had eight points and 11 rebounds.

For Central Oklahoma, Jerney Bennett had 16 points with five blocks.

Sul Ross State returns home, Friday, January 2, taking on Eastern New Mexico. The game is scheduled to start at 5:30 p.m.



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Bucks battle in Monahans



Thaddeus Prieto battles to keep control of the ball and keep it away from El Paso Austin's Carson Collins.

Photo by Kara Gerbert

Lobos fall to Comets

BY MICHAEL BOND
 Contributor

Four players scored in double-figures as the Sul Ross State University men's basketball team (0-3 Lone Star Conference, 2-6) lost 91-80 to UT Dallas (1-2 LSC, 1-9), Thursday night at the Pete P. Gallego Center.

For the first five minutes, Sul Ross State and UT Dallas battled on even terms. Up 16-11 at the 14:49 mark, the Comets began a run.

UTD pushed the lead to 15, 32-17, with nine minutes to go. The Lobos dug in and fought back.

Junior Antwonnie Holmes hit two free throws with 27 seconds left to end a 23-10 run. That closed it to 42-40 at halftime.

SRSU and UT Dallas battled back and forth in

the second half. Junior Camren Roper knocked down a tough shot in the paint. That made it 63-63 at the 9:17 mark. Over the next six minutes, the Comets went on a 16-7 run to take control.

The Lobos did a strong job on the defensive boards, pulling down 21 to just six offensive for UTD.

For Sul Ross State, junior Keagan Moncrief scored 19 points, Holmes had 13 points and four steals, Roper had 12 points, six assists, and two steals, and senior Chianti Clay had 11 points and nine rebounds.

For UT Dallas, Jaden Jefferson scored 22 points.

Sul Ross State returns home, Friday, January 2, when they play Eastern New Mexico. The game is scheduled to start at 7:30 p.m.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



ANDYNNIE RAMIREZ

Andynne is an advanced three-point shooter who shows off her skills on both ends of the court. She is a top point producer for the Lady Bucks.

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BUCKS BB • FROM 6

and rebounds haunted the Bucks as they fell 34-83.

The Bucks' matchup on Friday morning of the tournament ended much the same as the Presidio game, as they took on Del Rio (17-6). The first quarter had Del Rio's shooting double that of Alpine's, allowing them to push ahead of the Bucks and remain in control. The final quarter saw Alpine gritting out with improved shot attempts, but the Rams took the win 84-34.

On Friday afternoon, the Bucks faced their final opponent, El Paso Austin (5-11). This game was a battle from tip-off to the final buzzer. The Bucks were able to tip the scale on the Panthers in the first quarter for just a moment, thanks to a lay-up from Isaiah Jimenez that had Alpine

leading 13-12 in the first minutes of the game.

Their lead was short-lived, however, after a goal by the Panthers' Carson Collins (#5), who put El Paso up by two at the start of the second quarter. Collins continued to plague the Bucks throughout the contest, hitting jumpers, threes, and free throws with uncanny accuracy, and was a speed demon on the court. His ability to flow through traffic kept the Bucks on their heels.

By halftime, the Panthers led the Bucks 30-16. The third quarter would see Alpine put some points on the board thanks to great efforts from Thaddeus Prieto, Isiah Jimenez, and Dominic Rodriguez.

Alec Ramos and Kelton

Tarrant would add to the Bucks' numbers, hitting outside shots that helped keep Alpine in the game. By the end of the third period, Alpine was within range of tying things up, but El Paso was leading 36-25 going into the final quarter.

At the 3:55 mark in the fourth, Alpine was just down by three (35-38), but El Paso would rally back, pushing their lead repeatedly after every Alpine success. The Bucks ended the day with a 42-51 loss to El Paso and would not compete on the final day of the tournament due to a lack of players. Alpine ended the tournament with a 6-6 overall record.

The Bucks battled Crane on Monday night at Wilson-Stice court be-

fore enjoying some time off for Christmas. They would then head to Lubbock to join the Lady Bucks at the Caprock Tournament December 29-31.



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Military Monday - All Active, Retired Local Leos and Border Patrol Homeland Security 10% off 10% OFF

Tequila Tuesday - All Tequilas size 750 or larger 10% off

Whiskey Wednesday - this includes Scotch, Bourbon and Whiskey except Fireball size 750 or larger 10% off

Thirsty Thursday - Managers Choice! Gotta come see what's up!

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MUSEUM • FROM 1

"I've spent the last several years in public art and have enjoyed working in this field; however, my first love has always been working in museums," Wilkinson says. Wilkinson has visited the MoBB many times over the years and is excited to get back to working in a primarily indoor space. "The MoBB is one of my favorite places to visit. I love the variety of the collection, the amazing gift shop, and the beautiful new addition." Wilkinson believes her first challenge in the new position will be to fully understand the museum's collection and to get to know the staff. "They will all have a better idea than I will at this point regarding what

needs to be implemented. I want to make sure that what we're doing is mission-focused, but also a new way to tell the story of the Big Bend region." Wilkinson will begin her new duties as museum director on January 5, with her first big event the opening of the new map room. "I am excited to see this project completed and how it will allow more use of the map collection. I have really enjoyed learning about this extensive collection and look forward to learning even more about it, as well as other items in the collection," says Wilkinson. She also plans to learn about the entire collection so that she can iden-

tify any gaps that may be filled in the future. Wilkinson says she wants to meet people where they are. "In order to engage underserved and new audiences, you have to meet people where they are, both physically and culturally. This could include building partnerships with students, community organizations, and even cultural groups to co-create programs that reflect the varied stories and interests of the area. I want the museum to feel welcoming and relevant, like a space you belong to." Wilkinson would also like to build genuine, lasting relationships with the community. "I look forward to meeting com-

munity leaders, educators, and local organizations to understand needs and interests, and then work with them to develop programming that feels meaningful and relevant. I view outreach as a continual dialogue, using feedback and data to constantly adjust our approach so the museum remains accessible, trusted, and connected to Alpine and the surrounding region." Wilkinson says she's excited to connect people to the museum in new, meaningful, and exciting ways. "Being a part of a space that brings people together, encourages exploration, and strengthens community connections makes this new role exciting for me, and I'm ready to get started."

Strugglin' with snow



Santa struggled with the snow during this year's Christmas parade held on Saturday night. *Courtesy photo*

HISTORICAL • FROM 1

In July 2024, the Alpine City Council heard from Post Oak Preservation Solutions (POPS), based in Austin, about what creating a historic district in Alpine entails and the process of adding it to the National Register. Abbey Branch, Director of Historic Alpine, appeared before the council on July 2, 2024, to request Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds to cover the research legwork POPS would need to submit Alpine as a National Register nominee. The council did not act, but instead turned it over to the HOT committee for deliberation, and Branch was scheduled to return in August. The total cost for the project was \$31,250, plus an additional \$8,000 for Kokernot Field. At the time this was brought to the public's attention, Historic Alpine had received only a handful of

letters of support for the creation of the historic district. On August 8, 2024, the Alpine City Council unanimously passed a resolution allocating \$39,250 from the HOT funds to Post Oak to conduct a study for submission to the National Register of Historic Places. In Tuesday's meeting, Markarian presented the national registry process to the minute crowd in a slideshow. Currently, Alpine is in step four of the process, after completing an eligibility determination by the THC, preparing a draft nomination, and undergoing a staff review. Currently, Alpine is scheduled to be placed on a State Board Review Agenda. The meeting will be held on January 17 at the Baker Center, 3908 Avenue B, in Austin. If the nomination makes the agenda, a presentation of the nomi-

nation will be made to the review board, and a final edit will be completed before submission to the National Park Service, which is the entity responsible for National Register listings. At the conclusion of the presentation, audience members asked about regulations involved in their properties being listed on the register, to which Tipton replied, "There are no stipulations or restrictions if a property is placed on the National Register unless they choose to take advantage of the available tax credits. There are federal and state tax credits available, with the federal rehabilitation tax credit program offering a 20% income tax credit for historic income-producing buildings. Personal dwellings are not eligible. There is also a Texas Historic Preservation tax credit program that of-

fers a 25% tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing, or non-profit-use buildings. This tax credit can be sold and may be used against the Texas Business Franchise Tax or the Texas Insurance Premium Tax." Tipton encouraged audience members to reach out to the THC for any questions regarding the process, and said that anyone who wished to protest against being listed should send a notarized letter of objection, and that there are still a few months in which they may be sent. For more information, property owners may visit <https://www.thc.texas.gov/sbrmeeting> or contact Tipton or Markarian at bonnie.tipton@thc.texas.gov or vasken.markarian@thc.texas.gov.

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AISD • FROM 1

Rinehart told Bresee and the board that they had the company that did the first turf project come in every summer to repair and clean the field, to which Bresee said, "This is why you all have been able to get 13 years out of the field. This maintenance is important." Both Rinehart and Bresee explained to the board that the company (CEI) would not only design the project but would also help the district with the bidding and follow it through to the final punch list for whichever company was chosen to complete the project. Trustee Adrian Billings motioned to approve CEI as the design company for the football field turf project. It received a second from Morris and was unanimously approved. The next agenda item also addressed the turf project, specifically the delivery method for construction services. A motion to approve was made by Billings with a second from Portillo. The motion passed unanimously. The board then returned to the regular agenda order, where they unanimously passed the 2024-2025 audit they reviewed in the November meeting, but the vote to approve was recommended to wait until AISD's auditors, Singleton and Clark, received the federal paperwork they were awaiting. Finally, the board approved with gratitude a donation from the AHS

Class of 1975 towards the Angel Meals fund, along with additional donations collected locally totaling just around \$4,000, bringing all outstanding meal accounts current and paid in full. The board also approved a donation of \$5,113.60 from the Alpine Buck Booster for junior high and high school tennis uniforms, as well as a mounted mule deer with vegetation to be displayed at Alpine High School. The mule deer display was donated by Rene Ybarra and Y-Barr-

A Outfitters (Rene, Sonia, and Evelyn), with help from Yardbirds Taxidermy, Aaron Custer and Family, Sheriff Ronny Dodson, T.C. and Julie Hawkins, JRP Electric, Ryan and Vanessa Kinkade, Wes Tex Community Credit Union, Big Bend Telecom, Philip and Jena Carey, and Ali and Kylie Maroney and family. The next regular meeting of the Alpine ISD Board of Trustees is scheduled for January 21 at 5:30 p.m. at Alpine High School.

KAROLINA CASTILLO

In what activities did you participate in high school?
In high school, I was involved in different activities that helped shape me into the person I am. I play volleyball, which taught me teamwork and discipline. I also play basketball, where I built leadership skills and learned how to handle both wins and losses with maturity. Cheer gave me confidence and allowed me to express school spirit while being on a team. Alongside sports, I am also a member of the National Honor Society, which encourages me to focus on academics, leadership, and service.

Who was your favorite teacher/coach, and why?
My favorite teacher is Ms. Owen, because she makes learning feel exciting and meaningful. She explains things in a way that is easy to understand and never makes me feel embarrassed to ask questions. She cares about all of her students beyond the classroom, always checking in how we're doing personally. It is her job to care for people, and that's exactly what she does. Her patience and kindness make the classroom a

comfortable place to learn. I love how passionate she is about her job.

What was your favorite moment in the last four years?
My favorite moment in the last four years was Senior Sunrise. It was special because all my classmates came together to celebrate the start of our final year. It was peaceful but also exciting knowing we're gonna be the graduates this year. I was surrounded by my friends, sharing the moment with people I grew up with. Everyone was talking, smiling, taking pics, and enjoying the atmosphere.

What are your plans after high school?
My plans after high school are to go to college and then continue to nursing school. I want to pursue a career in the healthcare field because I enjoy helping people and making a difference in their lives. Nursing school will challenge me, but it will also prepare me for a career I am passionate about. My goal is to become a nurse who is caring, hardworking, and dedicated. I know it will take me my time and effort, but I am ready for this journey.

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December 25, 1958

Photos from the Alpine Avalanche Archives at Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Portal of Texas.

Check your facts; Don't throw me under the bus

Dear Neil, Regarding waxleaf ligustrums – I read your column today. I hope you will be more grudging in recommending them. Birds spread the seeds to waterways, and the plants crowd out our native species.

Before you throw me under the bus, be sure you're quoting me correctly. Waxleaf ligustrum, as commonly referred to in the nursery industry, is the sterile plant that grows to 8 to 10 ft. tall. It produces fruit, but they do not germinate. For decades, it was used as a prime foundation plant across Texas. That's until cold winters in the 70s prompted people to seek more winter-hardy alternatives, generally hollies. The two ligustrums that are horrifically invasive are Japanese ligustrum and privet. Japanese ligustrum is commonly confused with waxleaf ligustrum, even by plant taxonomists. It has much larger leaves and grows to 20 ft. tall. It bears very large clusters of purple fruit that birds devour and

GARDENER'S MAILBAG
 by neil sperry



then "plant" all over their neighborhoods. The various privets were used for decades as hedges between houses. Their leaves are much smaller as are the berries. However, the birds are drawn to it like almost no other fruit, and they have spread both it and the Japanese ligustrum through wetlands and woodlands across the eastern third of the state. But waxleaf ligustrum is an innocent bystander surrounded by bad actors. Don't blame it for being invasive. It is not.

Dear Neil, Thank you for addressing my problem of rabbits eating my dwarf Burford hollies. I had actually considered

using chicken wire to discourage them. But you did not answer my question about whether the damaged plants will grow back or whether I will need to replace them.

I'm sorry I didn't address it. I really have no way of knowing. If they were eaten badly, it's possible they could have been so disfigured by the rabbits that they would have no vigor to regrow. As you may recall, our son's plants were attacked as well. All but one of his rebounded quite well, but one was lost in the process. You'll know by March or early April. If you don't want to wait until then, you can find nice replacements

even through the winter. It's a nursery staple item 12 months a year.

Dear Neil, My Texas mountain laurel has been dying back trunk by trunk. I'm wondering if it's due to the deep freeze a few years ago or to the drought. It seems to be spreading. Should I prune out the dying trunks?

A disease infected the trunks of my own mountain laurel 25 years ago. I believe it might have been Ganoderma gall. I remember small conks extending out from the trunk. My tree went down pretty much all at one time.

Your plant looks like it could have verticillium wilt. It gets into the vascular system of mountain laurels and kills stems one by one. There is obvious decay in that old stalk that's embedded in the dying trunk.

It looks like the plant still has good vigor in some of its trunks. I would suggest you send samples of the declining tissues (including the old stem) as well as your photos and questions to the

Plant Disease Clinic at Texas A&M so they can culture the wood to determine exactly which pathogen is involved and provide you with their very expert advice. You can find their sampling and mailing information on their website. Wait until after the holidays to send samples.

Dear Neil, My Meyer lemon is covered in black mold. It does not get direct sunlight, but it does get good air circulation. Can it be saved?

What you're seeing is commonly called black sooty mold. It's a secondary invader that shows up after a sticky honeydew residue is left behind by aphids, scale, or (commonly in the case of

citrus) whiteflies. It is primarily aesthetic. It doesn't kill the lemon. It just makes it look ugly. To get rid of it, you must first use an insecticide or other means of getting rid of the pest that left the honeydew. I usually take a soft cotton rag or a couple of soft sponges, rubbing alcohol, and wipe the mess off the leaves. That usually controls it. You could also find a houseplant insecticide and spray the plant on a shaded patio or beneath a tree before bringing it back indoors.

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 in Hays County off I-35
- 5 TXism: "got knocked down ___ or two"
- 6 ex-Cowboy coach Campo (2000-02)
- 7 TXism: "nip ___ the bud"
- 8 a capitol open-air rotunda in the extension building (2 wds.)
- 17 TXism: "___-horse town"
- 18 TX Hagman TV film: "Getting ___ All" (1972)
- 21 Longhorn univ.
- 22 NM & CO tribe
- 23 parent company of Denton Peterbilt
- 24 TX McFarland was one as "Spanky"
- 29 TXism: "hits the ___" (satisfying)
- 30 TXism: "chew the fat"
- 31 21st governor: ___ Culberson (1895-99)
- 32 French actor in "Texas Across the River" (2 wds.)
- 34 Texas singer/actor Kristofferson
- 35 battery terminal (abbr.)
- 36 TXism: "cute as a ___"
- 37 police subduer: ___ gun
- 38 foot part
- 39 TXism: "hot as ___"

DOWN

- 1 TXism: "want it so ___" (desire)
- 2 TXism: "hard as putting ___ in a windstorm"
- 3 in Medina County off I-35
- 4 LBJ's last words were to a secret service ___
- 9 tattletale (2 wds.)
- 10 TXism: "smells like ___ dog"
- 11 ___ Colinas, TX
- 12 Astro Verlander won the "___ Young Award" in 2022
- 13 TXism: "house ___" (a gym)
- 14 "Permian Basin" was named after area in the Russian ___
- 15 "Enchanted ___" in Gillespie County
- 16 cable movie net.
- 19 TX Shelby worked for this Lee at Ford & Chrysler
- 20 vandalizes
- 22 TXism: "put ___"
- 24 TX oil well firefighter "Red" (init.)
- 25 Ranger/Astro leag.
- 26 San ___, TX
- 27 El Paso neighbor: ___ Juarez
- 28 San ___, TX
- 29 bed support
- 30 film: "___ Grit"
- 33 equal opport.
- 34 Fort Worth TV

ACROSS

- 41 Jim Wells County seat
- 42 TXism "windy" (2 wds.)
- 43 TXism: "that dog won't ___" (bad idea)
- 44 savory smells
- 45 TXism: "___ the i's and cross the t's"
- 46 ___ Houston cruiser was sunk in WWII
- 47 actress Dickinson in Dallas: R.L. ___ Freeway
- 48 in Dallas: R.L. ___ Freeway
- 50 crook in "Oliver Twist"
- 51 TX Foreman win, e.g. (abbr.)
- 52 TXism: "no flies on ___" (attractive)
- 53 Astro pitcher stat.

DOWN

- 1 TXism: "have to ___ my mouth to spit" (thirsty)
- 37 TX Farris' group: "___ Pioneers"
- 38 "Lone Ranger's" companion wore ___ cloth
- 40 slang for "buttocks"
- 41 gas in fluorescent lighting
- 44 against
- 47 Texas has a lot of these mohair goats
- 49 leaf collector

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Notice is given that letters testamentary were granted to Patricia Gene Revera Chopelas, as Independent Executor of the Estate of George A. Chopelas, deceased, on December 9, 2025 by the County Court of Brewster County, Texas in Cause No. PR03226. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present their claims within the time prescribed by law to the executor c/o Robert Paul Maddox with the law firm of Kemp Smith LLP, 221 N. Kansas St., Suite 1700, El Paso, Texas 79901-1401.

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Qualifications: Education/Certification High School diploma or High School equivalent (GED)

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- Effective technology skills
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Contact:
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 jmilam@svisd.com
 Ph: 432-244-3131

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HEAD OVER MEALS
by j.t. maroney



Meatballs have long been a Sunday and holiday staple in Italian households, and this recipe ranks among the very best. While it may seem ambitious at first, it's far more approachable than it appears ... just be sure to keep a generous bottle of red wine nearby for both the cook and their companion.

Cook the bacon in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Once the bacon is crisp, remove it from the pan to a paper towel-lined

plate and set aside. Add the onions and cook until softened and translucent, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and crushed red pepper and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the tomato paste and cook until it begins to brown, about 2 minutes. Add the diced tomatoes and crushed tomatoes. Season the sauce with the basil, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally.

In a small bowl, soak the bread in the evaporated milk. Once all of the milk has been absorbed, use a fork to mash the bread into a paste. Place the bread and the remaining ingredients, except spaghetti, in a large mixing bowl. Mix together just until combined. Form meatballs by rolling the meat mixture into 2 tablespoon-sized balls. Place meatballs on a plate as they are formed. (Hint: If your hands are slightly damp, the meatballs will roll more easily

without sticking.) Place the balls into the simmering sauce one at a time. Allow the sauce to return to a simmer, and cook, partially covered. Let the meatballs rest undisturbed for 25 minutes before stirring. When the meatballs rise to the top, stir gently. Simmer, partially covered, for an additional hour, stirring occasionally to prevent the sauce from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Remove the sauce from the heat and serve immediately over cooked spaghetti.

- EMERIL LAGASSE MEATBALLS**
- INGREDIENTS**
- 3 slices thick-cut bacon
 - 1 cup diced onions
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped garlic
 - 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
 - 2 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
 - 1 (15-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
 - 1/2 teaspoon dried basil leaves
 - 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - 2 slices of white bread
 - 4 ounces evaporated milk
 - 12 ounces ground chuck
 - 8 ounces ground pork sausage
 - 2 tablespoons red wine
 - 1 large egg, lightly beaten
 - 1/2 cup minced green onions, white parts only
 - 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves
 - 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan
 - 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon Emeril's Original Essence
 - 1 pound spaghetti, cooked, drained, and tossed with olive oil

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Devotional Page

Preparing for Christ's coming, again

BY PASTOR SAL PERALES JR.
First UMC-Alpine, Marfa, Fort Davis

Christmas Eve is a night filled with anticipation. Homes glow with lights, families gather, and familiar songs remind us of a story we know by heart, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. For many, Christmas is about remembering that holy night long ago when God came into the world as a child. But the Christian season of Advent invites us to prepare for more than a memory. It calls us to prepare for a promise still unfolding.

In the Bible, Jesus is often described as a rock, strong, steady, and dependable. Isaiah urges God's people to "look to the rock from which you were hewn" (Isaiah 51:1), reminding them that their identity and hope are rooted in God's faithfulness. Centuries later, the apostle Paul would say that the spiritual Rock that sustained God's people in the wilderness "was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). From beginning to end, Scrip-

ture presents Jesus as the foundation on which life is meant to be built.

That image matters at Christmas because the baby born in the manger is also the eternal Christ. The child wrapped in swaddling clothes is the same one who teaches, heals, forgives, and ultimately promises to come again. Advent, the season leading up to Christmas, is not only about looking backward to Christ's birth, but also looking forward to His return.

Jesus himself speaks about preparation. In one of his teachings, he compares life to a house. Storms come to every house, he says, rain, floods, and wind, but only the house built on solid rock stands firm (Matthew 7:24 -27). The storms represent the challenges we all face: loss, uncertainty, fear, and change. The rock represents a life grounded in trust, faith, and obedience to God.

Christmas Eve invites us to ask a simple but important question: What

are we building our lives on? Traditions are meaningful. Celebrations matter. But Scripture suggests that true preparation goes deeper than decorations or schedules. It involves shaping our lives around what lasts: love, faithfulness, justice, and hope.

The Bible also reminds us that God is still building. In the New Testament, believers are described as "living stones," joined together to form a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). This means faith is not only personal but communal. Families, neighbors, and communities are shaped by the foundations they share. When Christ is at the center, homes and towns can become places of welcome, compassion, and resilience.

Christmas Eve is a moment when

heaven and earth seem close. We remember God coming near in Jesus, entering the world not with power and force, but with humility and grace. At the same time, we are reminded that God is not finished yet. Christians believe Christ will come again, not as a child, but as the one who brings justice, healing, and peace to completion.

So tonight, as candles are lit and carols are sung, Advent invites us to prepare in two directions: to celebrate Christ's birth, and to live ready for His return. May we build our lives on the Rock of Ages, steady in uncertain times, hopeful in a waiting world, and ready for the One who came, who comes, and who will come again.

"For thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy redeemer the Holy One of Isreal; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." Isaiah 54:5

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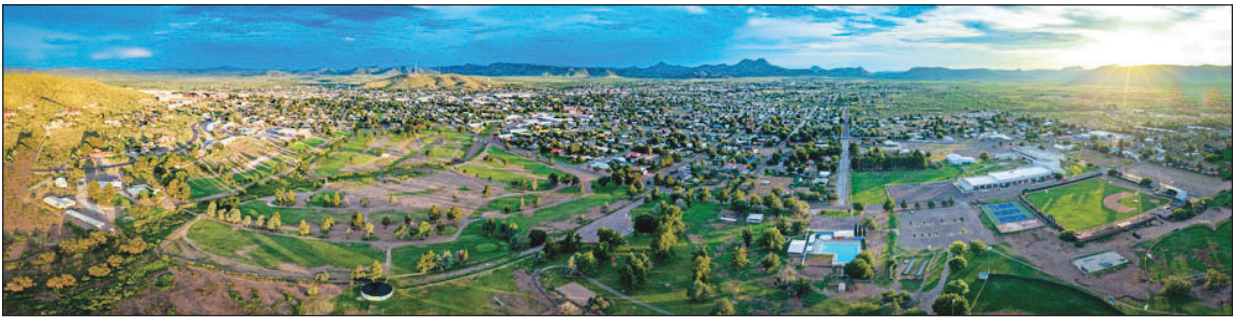


Many houses in Alpine have dressed themselves up with festive lights and blow-up characters to usher in the holiday. Alpine's seemingly ever-present wind had its way with some of the characters.

Photos by Kara Gerbert



A view of home



Alpine Photo Contest finalist Andy Grunberger took this lovely panoramic shot of Alpine, titled "Looking Home."

Photo courtesy of Visit Alpine, Texas

M

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Alpine Photo Contest finalist Larry Petterborg caught this great shot of local cowboy Chet Dove getting ready to catch a calf in his photo titled "You're Next."

Photo courtesy of Visit Alpine, Texas

Picture perfect



This Alpine Photo Contest finalist Corey Williamson shows just how spectacular our West Texas skies can be, as he exhibited here in "Take a Look."

Photo courtesy of Visit Alpine, Texas