

New leadership planned for Visit SPI

By DIANTÉ MARIGNY
editor@portisabelsouthpadre.com

At a special city council meeting this week, members discussed several key items regarding tourism initiatives and leadership for Visit South Padre Island.

Council members began by thanking participants for the success of the recent Night Out program and promoted upcoming events aimed at drawing visitors to the Island.

The council then approved a contract with Search Wide Grow Global to conduct an executive search for a new executive director of Visit South Padre Island. The contract is set with a budget of up to \$53,750. Previously, the

Teens to learn money skills

By JACQI LEYVA-HILL
Special to the PRESS

A new Teen Financial Literacy program has been approved by Laguna Vista City Manager, Victor Treviño, and is now officially on the calendar, starting October 18th. Teens will be able to learn essential money skills by playing a fun board game originally inspired by Monopoly®.

The need for hands-on financial education is clear. According to the Council for Economic Education (CEE) 2024 Survey of the States, 35 states now require a personal finance course for high school graduation, sharp increase from just 21 in 2022—but access still varies by district. Now, teens in Laguna Vista and surrounding areas will have access to a fun financial education experience on a monthly basis—free of charge.

The monthly meetups will be facilitated by J.R. See **TEENS**, Page 7

Questions arise over inactive advisory board

By JACQI LEYVA-HILL
Special to the PRESS

In a community where pets are a valued part of the family, volunteers at the local Port Isabel animal shelter are asking why the city's Animal Advisory Board—created to provide oversight for the municipal animal shelter—has not met officially in almost ten years.

According to the City of Port Isabel's official website, myportisabel.com/AgendaCenter, the last entry under "Animal Advisory Board" in the city's Agenda Center is a Regular Meeting Agenda dated August 18, 2016. No subsequent agendas are listed, and the site shows no minutes or media files attached to that meeting or any others. While the board's information page states that "Agendas are available prior to the meetings. Minutes are available following approval," none are posted beyond 2016.

By state law, under the Texas Health & Safety Code §823.005(c), animal shelter advisory committees are required to meet at least three times a year. The law, passed in 1989, ensures that local shelters remain accountable through input from city officials, veterinarians, and community members. Without regular meetings, the city

risks falling out of compliance with state law—and leaving gaps in how animal welfare policies are monitored.

When asked whether the Animal Advisory Board has met since 2016, City Manager Jared Hockema said, "We are not aware of any meetings, but we are checking."

He added that while the city's general practice is to post advisory committee agendas, it is not a legal requirement. "We are not aware that they have met since then, but I would note that as an advisory committee, agendas would not be required to be posted, although it is our general practice to do so," Hockema said.

Regarding why meetings have not occurred, Hockema cited difficulty in reaching quorum. "We experienced difficulty in reaching quorum due to illnesses from some committee members and turnover in one of the positions," he explained.

Hockema said the city is taking steps to bring the board back into compliance. "We will be asking the city commission to appoint new members, and I have asked the department head to ensure that regular meetings are held," he said.

The Animal Advisory Board is a local committee established by the City of Port Isabel to oversee the



(Courtesy photo)

city's animal shelter operations. The board is made up of a licensed veterinarian, a city official responsible for animal control, a shelter staff member, and at least one community representative. Members of the Animal Advisory Board review shelter policies and procedures, ensure animals are cared for humanely and safely, provide community input on animal welfare issues, and advise city leaders on improvements and needs.

The advisory board's members play important roles, and volunteers want answers. Volunteers who work with local rescues say the lack of visible oversight raises questions about transparency. "The community wants to know that someone is keeping watch," said one volunteer who wished to remain anonymous. "It's about the welfare of the animals as well as trust and accountability."

For nearly a decade, one of Port Isabel's smallest

boards has been silent—and residents are beginning to ask why, and whether the board has met at all since then.

Regular meetings are meant to safeguard not only animals in the shelter but also public safety and community confidence.

Until answers are given, the silence of the Animal Advisory Board remains a concern—and a reminder that even small boards play a big role in community life.

Second Causeway inches closer to reality

By JACQI LEYVA-HILL
Special to the PRESS

After decades of discussion, plans for a second causeway connecting South Padre Island to the mainland are once again moving forward, though construction remains years away and city officials have not yet provided public comment on the project's progress.

Environmental clearance is expected by 2026, and if approvals and funding align, construction could begin as early as 2029. The project will require coordination among multiple agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In December 2023, the Texas Transportation Commission officially designated the proposed bridge route as State Highway 104 (SH 104). The change allows the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) to continue environmental studies and



(Courtesy photo/Cameron County)

pursue new funding opportunities for the long-awaited second access point to the Island.

The proposed 11-mile route would include an eight-mile bridge spanning the Laguna Madre, linking FM 106 on the mainland to Park Road 100 on South Padre Island, roughly three to four miles north of the existing Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge. Officials say the project is essential for hurricane evacuation, emergency access, and reducing heavy

traffic during peak tourism periods.

CCRMA Executive Director Pete Sepulveda Jr. called the project "the most environmentally complex task in the nation" in a 2017 Port Isabel-South Padre Press article outlining earlier design changes. The description highlights the project's scale and the sensitive ecosystems it will cross.

The estimated cost ranges from \$700 million to \$1 billion, according to the City of Brownsville's 2024 Civic

Alerts and industry reports from Associated Construction Publications – Texas Contractor (ACPP Construction News). ACPP is part of a national trade network that routinely covers major TxDOT projects, including the South Padre Island Second Access / SH 104 Causeway.

For now, residents and visitors must continue relying on the Queen Isabella Causeway as planners work toward building what could become the Island's long-awaited second lifeline.

Candidate Forum set October 13

By DIANTÉ MARIGNY
editor@portisabelsouthpadre.com

Voters will have the chance to hear directly from local candidates when the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce hosts its City Council Candidate Forum on Monday, October 13, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at 7355 Padre Blvd.

The forum will feature candidates running for Place 1 and Place 2 on the South Padre Island City Council.

For Place 1, Ken Medders and Joe Praster will face off.

For Place 2, Esteban Flores, Aarin Hartwell, and Kerry Schwartz are vying for the seat.

Hosted each election season, the Chamber's forum gives residents an opportunity to hear each candidate's perspective on the Island's most

See **CANDIDATE**, Page 7



Offense struggles

Port Isabel's offense struggles versus Roma's defense.

(Courtesy photo/Constancio Martinez, Jr.)

Tarpons on losing streak

By **CONSTANCIO MARTINEZ, JR.**
Special to the PRESS

This past Friday night, the (2-3) Port Isabel Tarpons hosted the (3-2) Roma Gladiators in a non-district matchup. The game featured two relics of a bygone era of football — a time when nearly every team ran the ball 95% of the time.

In a battle of identical offensive schemes, it came down to who controlled the trenches, and that advantage went to Roma. The Gladiators' physical play up front proved too much for the young, inexperienced PI offensive line. By the time the clock hit zero, Roma had racked up 297 rushing yards while Port Isabel was held to 157.

The Tarpons' offense took the field first and tried to catch the Gladiators off guard with a deep ball on first down. PI quarterback Bryan Martinez hit his receiver in stride, but the pass was dropped. On the next play, running back Luis



Pregame entrance

Port Isabel's pregame entrance during PI vs Roma football game.

(Courtesy photo/Constancio Martinez, Jr.)

Ramos' number was called on a toss. He took the hand-off, turned the corner, outran several defenders, and sprinted down the sideline for a 61-yard touchdown run. The Tarpons took an early 7-0 lead with 11:28 showing in the first quarter.

On the Gladiators' ensuing drive, Roma began moving the ball downfield on a series of runs by RB

Ruben Garcia Jr. and RB Rafael Ruiz. The Gladiators reached the Tarpons' 9-yard line but were pushed back after a pair of false starts. That's when PI's defense rose to the occasion, as DE Jerry Troncoso and DT Alvaro Rocha teamed up to sack the Roma quarterback for a 6-yard loss. Another key stop by the "Seawall Defense" on the

next play forced a turnover on downs.

The game turned into a defensive battle for the next few possessions until Roma mounted an 8-play scoring drive capped by a 6-yard TD keeper from QB Jorge Tamayo. The Tarpons hurt themselves on that drive with three costly penalties, and Tamayo took advantage, picking up most

of the yardage on keepers. After the touchdown, PI's defense stopped the two-point attempt, and the Tarpons took a 7-6 lead into halftime.

As the second half began, Roma picked up right where it left off, methodically marching downfield. Fourteen plays later, the Gladiators punched it in from one yard out. A successful two-point conversion gave Roma a 14-7 lead with 5:13 left in the third quarter.

With about eight minutes remaining in the fourth, the Tarpons began a promising drive. After reaching the Gladiators' 28-yard line, Ramos once again broke free for what appeared to be a 28-yard touchdown run — but a blindside block penalty on PI negated the score. The drive ended on the next play with an interception.

As time wound down, it seemed Roma had the game secured. But with just 38 seconds left, the Gladiators fumbled, and PI recovered. Starting at Roma's 36-yard

line, QB Bryan Martinez rolled out to pass, but was sacked for a 7-yard loss. On the next play, Martinez connected with TE Logan Bennett for a 15-yard gain. With only seconds remaining, the Tarpons rushed to the line to spike the ball and stop the clock. They managed one final play, but the pass bounced off the receiver's chest — incomplete. Roma held on to win, 14-7.

Other notable scores: Kingsville King defeated Valley View 34-7; La Feria fell to Brownsville St. Joseph 66-42; and La Grulla edged Hidalgo 28-20. In other regional action, a pair of state-ranked 4A teams traveled to the RGV to face two 6A programs: No. 5 Cuero beat Harlingen 35-27, and No. 1 Carthage rolled past San Benito 41-3.

Up next for the (2-4) Port Isabel Tarpons is another non-district matchup against the (2-4) Brownsville St. Joseph Bloodhounds on Thursday, Oct. 9, at Tarpon Stadium. Kick-off is set for 7 p.m.

Volleyball ladies shutout Gators, 3-0

By **CONSTANCIO MARTINEZ, JR.**
Special to the PRESS

Last week, the Lady Tarpons volleyball team won its first district match of the season, sweeping the visiting La Grulla Lady Gators in three sets.

The first set started off competitive, but midway

through, the Lady Tarpons pulled away and eventually took the set, 25-15.

In the second set, La Grulla got off to a good start, jumping out to an early 3-1 lead. After a couple of early rallies, PI battled back as Nadia Flaig's hard spike tied the set at 3-3.

The Lady Gators retook the lead and went on

a short run to go up 10-5. Upon regaining possession, the Lady Tarpons answered with a small run of their own, forcing La Grulla to call a timeout with their lead cut to 10-8.

Coming out of the break, PI's Escarlet Urrutia continued to serve. After some strong teamwork and several aces by Urrutia, the Lady Tarpons regained control and led 15-10.

La Grulla fought back to make it a 19-18 game. With PI still holding the lead, the Lady Tarpons

called a timeout.

The set continued to go back and forth, with the Lady Gators tying things up at 19-19 and again at 21-21, but PI never gave up the lead. Holding game point at 24-23, La Grulla tried to return the ball but fell just short, giving PI the

25-23 win.

Up two sets to none, the Lady Tarpons came out firing on all cylinders in the third set, jumping out to a 9-1 lead. With Arianna Garcia serving, PI extended its lead to 18-1 before La Grulla finally regained possession.

Port Isabel continued its dominance on the court, cruising to a 25-7 win to close out the best-of-five series, 3-0.

The Lady Tarpons will host La Feria in a crucial district matchup on Friday, Oct. 10, with first serve at 7 p.m.



During post game

Port Isabel Lady Tarpons take a post game team picture after sweeping La Grulla.

(Courtesy photo/PIECHS)

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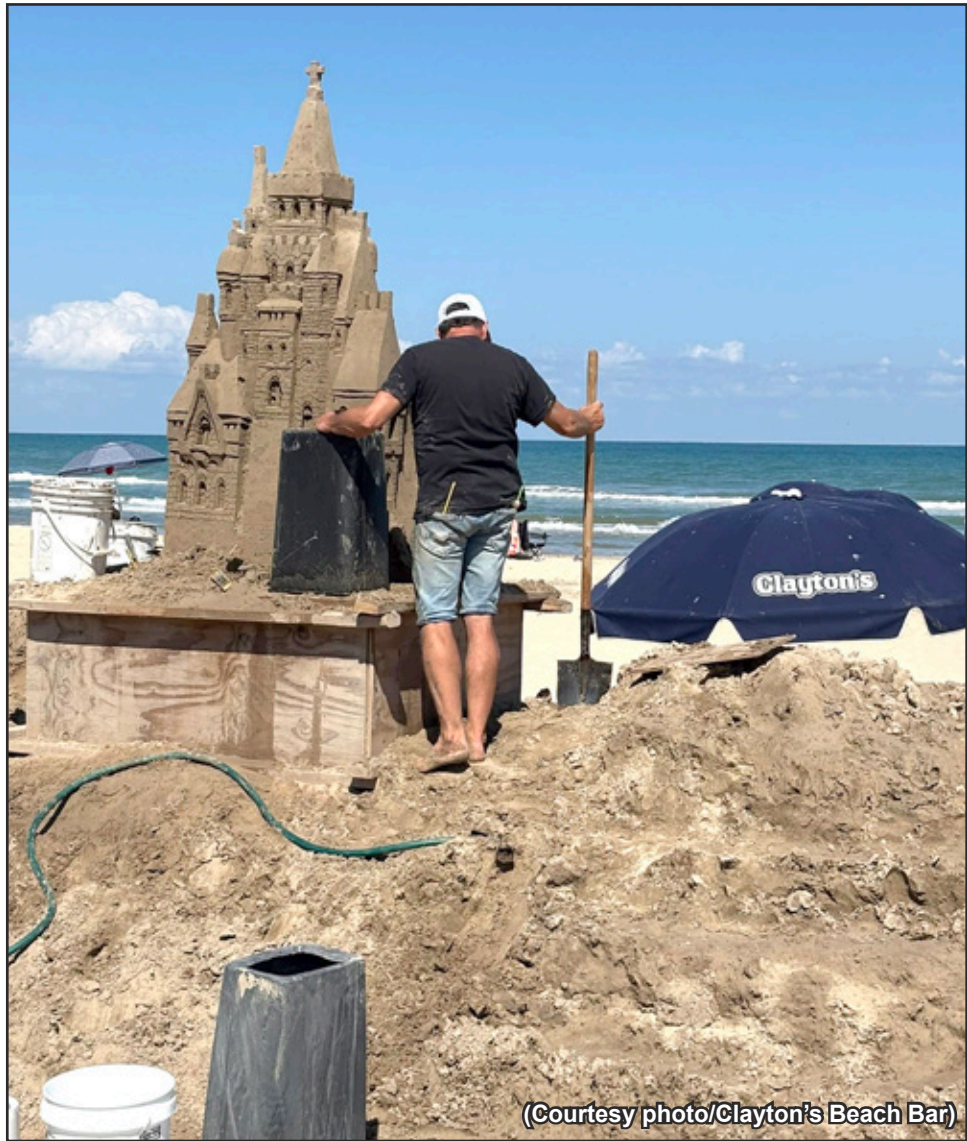
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(Courtesy photo/Clayton's Beach Bar)

SANDCASTLE DAYS

Sandblown masterpieces came to life at Clayton's Beach Bar on South Padre Island during the Annual Sandcastle Days event, a gathering that draws skilled sculptors from around the globe. For days, artists transformed simple beach sand into intricate castles, creatures and fine art structures, battling skies, tides and the clock to create their temporary masterworks. Organizers say the festival began more than 30 years ago to showcase the unique properties of South Padre sand and has since grown into a free, international-caliber event that also offers live music, workshops and family-friendly fun. While the winner and award details were still to be confirmed, the photos on this spread capture the imaginative energy and seaside beauty that defines Sandcastle Days.



(Courtesy photo/Clayton's Beach Bar)



(Courtesy photo/Clayton's Beach Bar)

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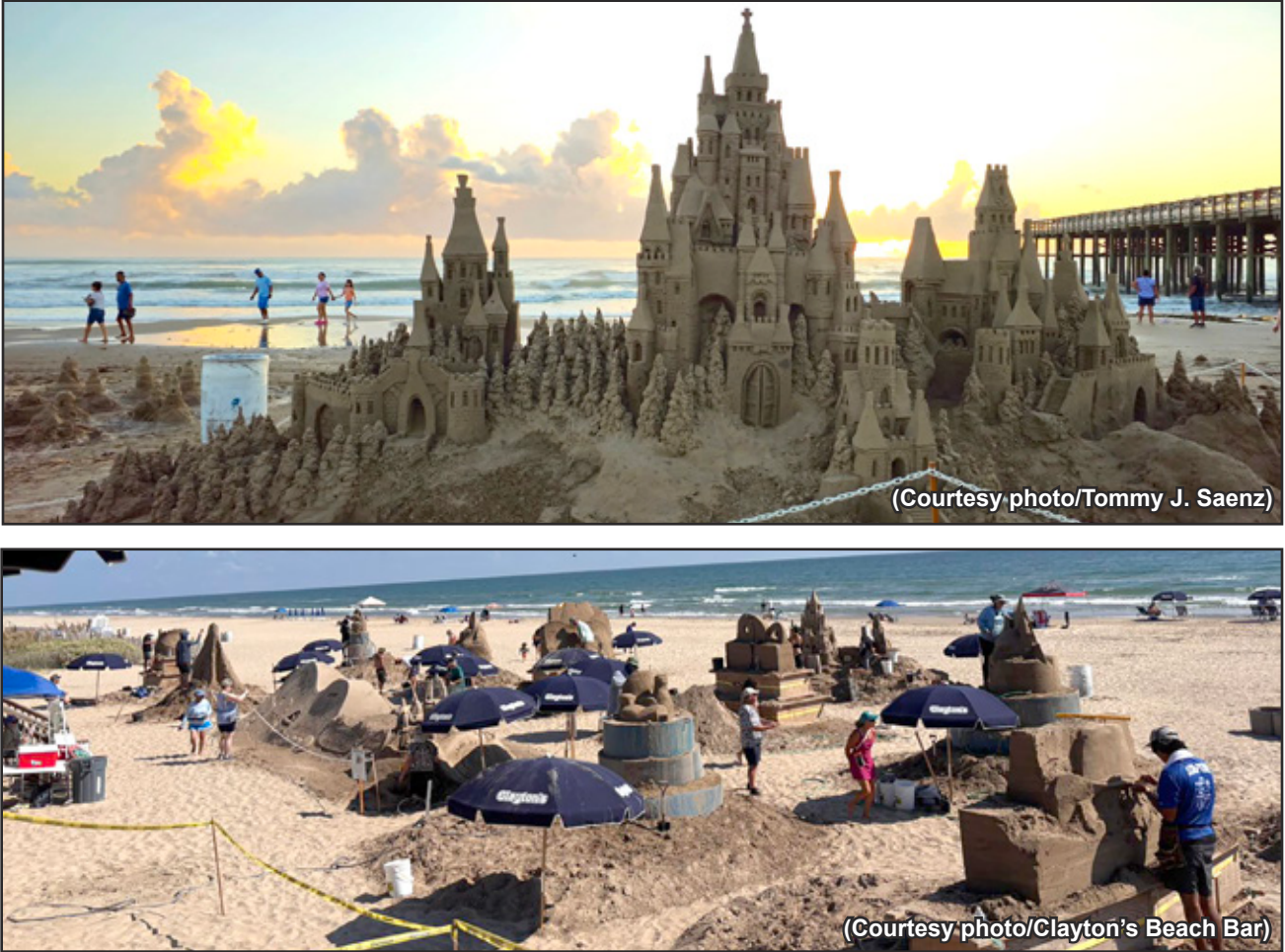
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(Courtesy photo/Tommy J. Saenz)



(Courtesy photo/Clayton's Beach Bar)

CALENDAR

WHO: SPI Birding Nature & Alligator Sanctuary
WHAT: Gator Talks
WHEN: Daily, 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m.
WHERE: 6801 Padre Blvd, SPI
MORE INFO: (956) 761-6801

WHO: Walk for Women
WHAT: Walk for Breast Cancer
WHEN: October 12
WHERE: SPI Convention Center
MORE INFO: (956) 371-2074

WHO: South Padre Island
WHAT: Candidate Forum
WHEN: October 13, 5:30-7 p.m.
WHERE: SPI Convention Center
MORE INFO: jeanette@spichamber.com

WHO: Walk for Women
WHAT: Casino Night Fundraiser
WHEN: October 10
WHERE: Louie's Backyard
MORE INFO: (956) 371-2074

WHO: Isla Grand Beach Resort
WHAT: Crab Races
WHEN: Wednesday's 7 p.m.
WHERE: 500 Padre Blvd. SPI
MORE INFO: (956) 761-6511

WHO: Port Isabel
WHAT: Antique & Flea Market
WHEN: November 2, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
WHERE: 203 W Queen Isabella Blvd, PI
MORE INFO: (956) 433-1015

WHO: SPI Birding Nature & Alligator Sanctuary
WHAT: Birds and Butterflies Garden Party
WHEN: October 11, 6-9 p.m.
WHERE: 6801 Padre Blvd, SPI
MORE INFO: (956) 761-6801

WHO: The City of Port Isabel
WHAT: Port Isabel Pachanga 2025
WHEN: October 11-13
WHERE: 302 2nd Street Park
MORE INFO: (956) 433-

1015

WHO: Island Children's Market
WHAT: Kid Entrepreneurs Market
WHEN: October 18, 2-4 p.m.
WHERE: 4501 Padre Blvd, SPI
MORE INFO: Facebook: Island Children's Market

WHO: AMV Fishing Club
WHAT: Cast & Catch Basics
WHEN: October 18, 4-6 p.m.
WHERE: 6860 State Park Rd 100, SPI
MORE INFO: wrldtek.com/fishingacademy

WHO: Sea Turtle Inc.
WHAT: Spooky Saturday
WHEN: October 25, 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.
WHERE: 6617 Padre Blvd. SPI
MORE INFO: (956) 761-4511

WHO: Walk for Women
WHAT: Survivor & Awareness Walk
WHEN: October 12, 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: SPI Convention Center
MORE INFO: givebutter.com/ggmkkqy

WHO: SPI Birding Nature & Alligator Sanctuary
WHAT: HalloWings:

Monarch Migration Celebration
WHEN: October 26, 12-6 p.m.
WHERE: 6801 Padre Blvd, SPI
MORE INFO: (956) 761-6801

WHO: RAV Run Adventures
WHAT: SPI Half Marathon Weekend
WHEN: November 7-9
WHERE: 7000 Padre Blvd., SPI
MORE INFO: ravrunning.com





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APPLE PIE CINNAMON ROLL BUBBLE UP

Ingredients

2 (8 ounce) cans refrigerated cinnamon rolls, such as Grands! cinnamon rolls

1/4 cup heavy cream

1 cup apple pie filling

4 tablespoons melted butter

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup quick oats

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cut cinnamon rolls into quarters.

Pour heavy cream into a pie dish and add cinnamon rolls on top.

Add apple pie filling over the top of cinnamon rolls.

In a small mixing bowl, combine melted butter, flour, brown sugar, and oats together until mixture is dry and crumbly. Crumble evenly on top of apple pie filling.

Bake in the preheated



(Courtesy photo)

APPLE PIE CINNAMON ROLL BUBBLE UP

oven until lightly golden, puffed, and bubbly, 45 to 50 minutes.

Drizzle with icing from cinnamon rolls can before serving.

GRILLED JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR MEATBALLS

Ingredients

2 lbs. ground beef

1/2 cup tortilla chips, crushed

3/4 cup milk

3 fresh jalapeños, seeded and finely diced

8 oz. block of cheddar cheese, finely diced

1 Tbsp. paprika

2 tsp. garlic powder

2 tsp. Kosher salt

Instructions

Place the crushed tortilla chips in a large bowl, then add the milk and allow to soften the chips for about 10 minutes.

After the mixture is soft and has absorbed all the milk, add the ground beef, jalapeño, cheese, paprika, garlic, and salt. Mix well to combine all ingredients,

then scoop approximately 1/3-1/2 cup of the mixture and form a meatball, repeat until all the mixture has been formed into balls.

Place the meatballs on a plate or tray and refrigerate them for 30 minutes to firm.

Light a grill for two zone cooking. For charcoal: light coals and pile them all on one side, creating a hot and cool zone. For propane: light the very end burner on the left or right side, but no other burners. It's recommended you place a piece of foil under the side without heat to

catch any melting cheese for easy cleanup. The grill should be at medium temperature, about 350-375°F.

Place the meatballs on the cool side of the grill (away from the coals or the lit burner) and close the grill lid. Grill for about 25-35 minutes, or until they reach 165°F internal temperature on a meat thermometer.

Remove the meatballs from the grill and allow to cool slightly before serving.

Cooking Tip: Serve with Mexican rice, beans, or a side salad.



(Courtesy photo)

GRILLED JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR MEATBALLS

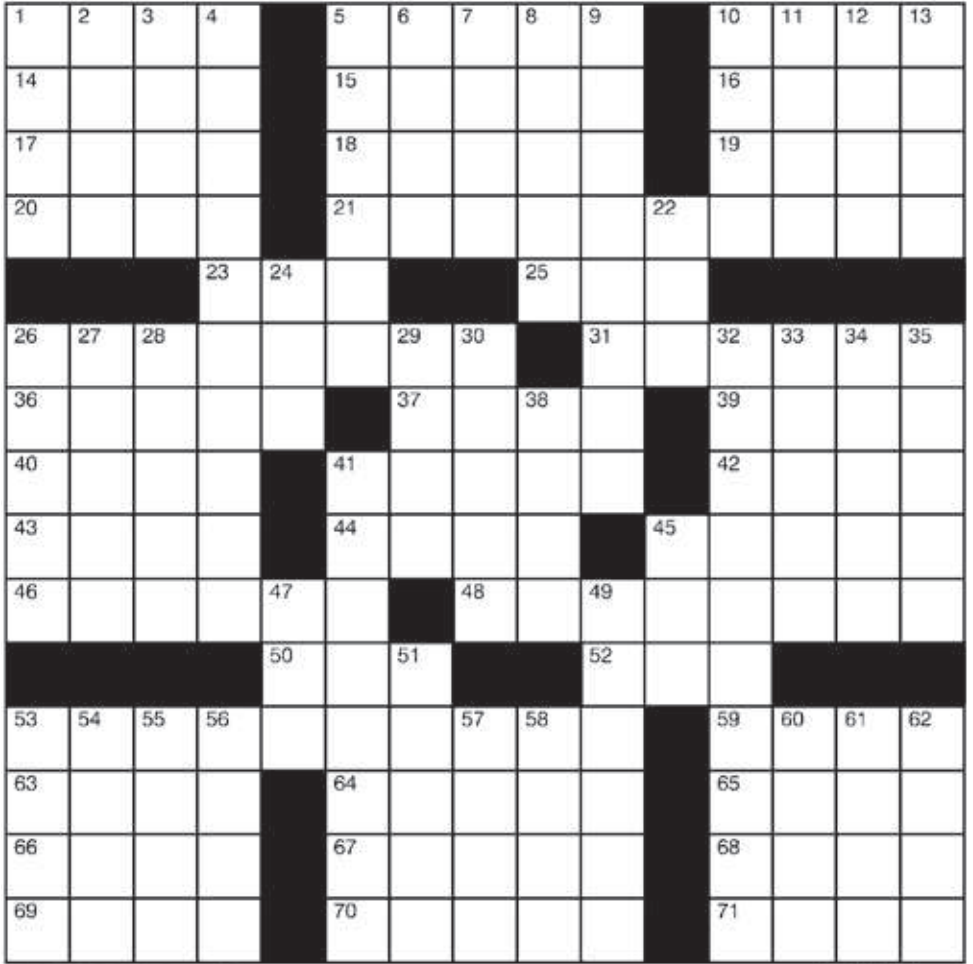
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By Neil R. Manassa

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The Season of Scales reminds us that one thing a scale does — it slides. And in the sliding, all is balanced, all fits into the equation, and mountains and molecules somehow are the same. A day is a hologram of a life. How you treat a stranger in a passing moment has the same weight as big life choices. Held in the hours are the same structures that build the arching story of a lifetime. The Libra solar journey levels all.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Confidence isn't thinking you're perfect — it's just trusting yourself. An ambitious plan is a form of confidence, too. It's trust in future you. That person will be imperfect just like current you, and yet future you really is the smartest, wisest, strongest iteration of you yet, so this trust will be very well placed.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If you've done your best and you've done your worst, and both felt about the same in the doing, that's only evidence of your total immersion in the action of the moment. When you're doing, not judging, it's a beautifully unselfconscious flow that you can't help but improve from.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). This week, you'll play your time like an instrument. Freedom through structure is the theme of your beautiful music. Planning won't restrict you; it will give you more choices, set you up for a smoother operation, and keep you out of reactive mode. A detailed schedule means never wondering, "What should I be doing right now?"

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You may feel inclined to skip the task that brings up feelings. Emotional avoidance is natural, but just know that any trepidation or negativity you have will be immediately and completely overridden by the momentum that follows action. So do the hard stuff

and do it first. To live the dream, you must also live the conjuring.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you want to change, you change. When you don't want to change, you change. Change is the constant in the equation of life. Resistance is futile. You know it's true, but on weeks like this you really feel it more vividly. Participation in the change will be fun. To guide, shape and surf the change will bring preferred outcomes.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A small moment — a smile, a bird crossing your path, a lucky coincidence — will be meaningful because of the little sweetness itself, and even more so because of your capacity to notice it. Being attentive and perceptive is a gift — a special talent that not everyone has — and it makes life beautiful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). In his poem "Auguries of Innocence," William Blake distills a whole worldview into one sentence: "To see a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wildflower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour." This is the feeling you reach more than once this week. It's always there for you, and this week, you just take it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Secrets are foundational to human relationships. They create boundaries, intimacy and group identity. People sometimes exaggerate the exclusivity of what they know to give their words more weight. It's a performance of importance you'll be audience to this week. What's shared says a lot about the person sharing it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A playful mood prevails, and it's not frivolous in the least. You will echo the ethos of your fellow Sagittarian Johan Huizinga, the Dutch historian who proposed in his famous work "Homo

Ludens" ("Man the Player") that playfulness is the true foundation of civilization. Your playfulness will be tremendously productive, inventive and helpful to all.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What you put in the world will be noticed and valued. And though you make an unforgettable impact and stellar impression all around, you probably won't be told directly. The admiration is unspoken, or perhaps just not spoken to you. Move forward as though you're taking in the applause. It's happening, it's just on "mute."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The lessons of the week are morally very straightforward. Goodness feels good. Badness feels bad. You're like your signmate Abraham Lincoln, who reportedly once told a clergyman, "When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That is my religion." Your inner peace will radiate outward, changing places and people for the better.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It's funny how a fleeting moment can have long resonance. This week brings the kinds of experiences that seem small in real time but lodge in memory, nonetheless. Maybe there's some symbolism at work, or the echo of recognition. Maybe it's about surprise or longing. You'll put the details into poetic or practical use.

Write Holiday Mathis at HolidayMathis.com.

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ANSWERS



FISHING GUIDES & CHARTERS

1. **Captain Paco Hinojosa** – Fish Killer Charters (SPI)
(956) 792-1316 (spifishkillercharters.com)

2. **Captain Darryl Adams** – Darryl Adams Outdoors (Port Isabel/SPI)
(956) 546 4868 or (956) 346-3700 (fishspi.com)

3. **Captain Craig Woolly** – SPI4Fish (Port Isabel/SPI)
(956) 984-9730 (fishspi.com)

4. **DeWitt Thomas** – Custom Sport Fishing (Port Isabel/SPI)
(956) 943-3332 or (956) 551-1965 (fishspi.com)

5. **Blast to Cast Guide Service** (Captain Mike

Knox) (SPI)
(956) 243-0039 (blasttocast.com)

6. **Capt. Lee Alvarez** – South Padre Island Fishing Trips (SPI)
(956) 330-8654 (southpadreislandfishingtrips.com)

7. **Capt. Eddie Curry** (Port Isabel/SPI)
(956) 433-1179 (texasguidefishing.com)

8. **Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures** (SPI Offshore)
(956) 433-6469 (texasguidefishing.com)

9. **Captain Big John** – Big Johns Fishing Guide Service (Port Isabel)
(956) 266-2102 (piratespier.com)

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Salinas – Thumbs Up Charters (Port Isabel)
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11. **Reel Therapy Charter Service** – Captain Jaime De La Fuente (Port Isabel)
956 793 0149 (piratespier.com)

12. **Captain Walter Bode** – Bode’s Bay Fishing (Port Isabel/SPI)
(956) 832-3761 (piratespier.com)

13. **Captain Rudy B** – Capt Rudy B’s Fishing (Port Isabel)
(956) 551-9472 (piratespier.com)

14. **Danny B Bay Fishing Charters** (SPI)
(956) 761-1389 (riograndelocal.com)

Bonus:

• **Captain Murphy’s Fishing** (SPI)
(956) 761 2764 (pirentals.com)

• **Captain Randy’s Charters** (SPI)
(956) 761-1663 (pirentals.com)

Water Sports & Eco-Tours

1. ****South Padre Island Water Sports, LLC****
– Rentals (kayak, SUP, surf, kiteboard, more) + lessons
5709 A Padre Blvd, SPI
(956) 299-9463 (southpadreislandwatersports.com)

2. **SPI Excursions (at Lobo Del Mar docks, SPI)**
– Parasailing, jet ski,

banana boat, snorkel, dolphin & fireworks cruises + bay fishing
(888) 709-8283 (business.spichamber.com)

3. **Breakaway Cruises (Sea Ranch Marina, SPI)**
– Dolphin watching, eco tours, fireworks, bay & deep sea fishing
(956) 761 2212 (business.spichamber.com)

4. **Isla Tours (Sea Ranch Marina, SPI)**
– Dolphin tours, bay fishing, fireworks cruises, Port of Brownsville tours, eco tours
(956) 761-4752 (business.spichamber.com)

5. ****Dolphin Docks** (Port Isabel)**
– Dolphin tours, bay fishing, eco cruises, sun-

set trips
(956) 943-3185 (business.spichamber.com)

6. ****Osprey Cruises** (Port Isabel)**
– Dolphin/eco/sunset/wildlife tours
(956) 943-6283 (business.spichamber.com)

Tips for Guide Selection
 - Bay trips typically last 4–5 hours; tackle and bait usually provided.
 - Many guides welcome families and beginners.
 - Offshore charters offer deep-sea species (snapper, mahi-mahi, tuna, billfish).
 - Book early—summer spots fill up fast!
- Teens
- From “Teens,” page 1
- Hill, a junior at Port Isabel Early College High School who aspires to earn a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree after graduation. When he was 13 years old, he was introduced to the CASHFLOW® board game and enjoyed playing it with neighborhood friends in his hometown of San Antonio. Now that he lives in Laguna Vista and is preparing for college, he wants to share this fun, educational board game with his new community.

The game was created by investor and author Robert Kiyosaki to teach real-world financial concepts through play. “The purpose of CASH-
- FLOW® is to change the way people think about money,” Kiyosaki explained in an interview about the game’s design. “The more you play, the richer you become in financial intelligence—long before you ever risk a dollar in real life” (Rich Dad Company Media Kit, “Robert Kiyosaki on the Creation of CASHFLOW®,” RichDad.com, 2019).

Unlike traditional lectures, CASHFLOW® places players inside a miniature economy where they juggle a paycheck, track an income statement and balance sheet, buy assets that generate passive income, and make trade-offs un-
- der uncertainty. Teens have the opportunity to learn the difference between assets—things that put money in your pocket—and liabilities—things that take it out. Players practice budgeting under pressure and discover how small, consistent choices compound over time. By recording each move on simplified financial statements, teens strengthen a habit many adults lack: writing numbers down, reading what they mean, and deciding the next best step. The game also surfaces behavioral lessons—how the fear of missing out (FOMO) can sabotage a budget, why emergency funds matter, and when
- it’s wiser to say “not yet.”

Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF), a national nonprofit tracking financial education, reports that only 26.3 percent of U.S. public school students are currently guaranteed to take a stand-alone course, though that share is projected to reach 53 percent by 2030 as new mandates take effect (NGPF State of Financial Education Report 2023).

Internationally, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Program for International Student Assessment (PISA 2022) found that only 13.5 percent of U.S. students were top performers in financial literacy, while many others lacked a foundational understanding. Adult trends mirror those gaps: the Financial
- Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Foundation’s National Financial Capability Study 2021 found that just 27 percent of adults answered at least five of seven basic financial questions correctly.

Basic financial resilience is another concern. The Federal Reserve Board’s 2023 Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households revealed that only 63 percent of adults could cover a \$400 emergency expense with cash or its equivalent, leaving more than one-third needing to borrow or sell something.

The CASHFLOW® board game turns those statistics into teachable moments. When a player lands on an unexpected car repair, the “emergency fund” isn’t ab-
- stract—it’s the difference between selling an asset, going into debt, or staying on track. When an investment card appears, teens compare expected cash flow to price, weigh risk, and decide whether it fits their long-term plan—exactly the kind of critical thinking they’ll need in adulthood.

By pairing a motivated teen leader with an interactive financial tool, the Laguna Vista Public Library is doing more than hosting a monthly game meetup. It’s giving young people a safe place to practice smart money decisions before the stakes are high—so when opportunity or surprise comes in adulthood, they’ll already know how to read the numbers and make confident, informed choices.
- Candidate
- From “Candidate,” page 1
- pressing issues—ranging from infrastructure and tourism to beach management and long-term community planning. The event aims to promote civic engagement and transparency by al-
- lowing voters to compare candidates’ priorities side by side.

Questions for the forum were accepted in advance and will be presented by a moderator during the discussion.
- With two open seats and several familiar faces on the ballot, the upcoming election is expected to draw strong community interest as voters help shape the Island’s direction in the years ahead.
- Letters
- From “Letters,” page 1
- However, what raises red flags for me — and should for all of us — is the proposal to hire a firm to also serve in an interim capacity. If this interim firm is focused solely on boosting tourism, increasing events, and growing HOT tax revenues, then I understand the value.

But if they’re being positioned to influence decisions about the Convention Center Expansion, that’s where I draw the line.

With the ongoing concerns about mismanagement, lack of transparency, and questionable financial decisions tied to the expansion project, this is not the time to hand more control over to outside contractors. We need oversight, accountability, and a full
- audit of how funds have been allocated so far.

Let’s not forget: The current Council (minus one member) voted to approve the \$120 million convention center expansion.

They voted (minus one member) to move forward with this concept despite crucial environmental impacts and without County approval, our actual landlord.

They spent \$3 million in taxpayer funds before even securing those permissions — and still owe money to contractors.

One councilman will also now run on the platform of building an eco-district out of the center so to greenwash the entire spend.
- Now, there’s talk of continuing down this same road, and that means more spending, more debt, and potentially a bond that impacts every SPI resident.

So I’ll ask you this: Should we allow more public funds to be poured into this expansion before we’ve had a chance to audit and review?

Shouldn’t the community have a public vote before any more major decisions are made on this project?

We deserve transparency. We deserve accountability. And we deserve to have a voice in decisions that will shape the future — and finances — of our city.

Aarin Hartwell,
South Padre Island
- Leadership
- From “Leadership,” page 1
- firm charged 33% of an executive’s salary for such searches; under the new agreement, the fee will be 25%.

In addition, the council approved a \$60,000 budget to bring on Brett Odin of Odin Alchemy as interim CEO for Vis-
- it South Padre Island. Odin will focus on organizational assessments and leadership, reporting directly to Randy Smith and participating in weekly meetings to ensure continuity during the executive search process.
- City leaders emphasized that these steps are aimed at strengthening the organization’s leadership and ensuring that South Padre Island continues to attract visitors while maintaining strong tourism operations.
- 





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Ruben Vela Jr: 9:30 - 11:00p
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PERSONALS

DEAR HEART OF JESUS,

in the past I have asked for favors. This time I ask you this very special one (mention favor). Take it, dear Jesus, and place it within your own heart where your father sees it. Then in your merciful eyes it will become your favor, not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favor will be granted. Never known to fail.
M.P.B.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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CITY OF SAN BENITO

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City of San Benito Planning & Zoning Commission will conduct a Regular Meeting to consider the following items in a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 5:45 p.m. In addition, the San Benito City Commission will consider the same items, in a Public Hearing on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the City San Benito Municipal Building (Cesar Gonzalez Meeting Hall) located at 401 N. Sam Houston Boulevard to receive comments on the following requests:

Conditional Use Permits:

Public Hearing: To solicit input regarding a request for a Conditional Use Permit to place a Storage Building greater than 200 square feet at a property located at 1510 FM 732 zoned SF-1 “Single Family One” bearing a Legal Description of: Lot Two (2), Honey Bee Subdivision, San Benito, Cameron County, Texas, according to the Map or Plat thereof recorded in Cabinet 1, Page 4633, Cameron County, Texas. Applicant: Orlando Garza.

Public Hearing: To solicit input regarding a request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow an Event Center (Dance Reception) with alcohol at a property located at 2480 W. Business 77 zoned C-2 “Commercial General Retail Business”, bearing a Legal Description of Being 2.01 acres of land out of Lot 9, Block 147, San Benito Land and Water Company Subdivision, Cameron County, Texas, recorded in Volume 1, Page 6, Map Records of Cameron County, Texas, being compromised of the tracts of land described in Volume 23355, Page 193, Official Records of Cameron County, Texas. Applicant: Romel Orlando Puente.

Rezones:

Public Hearing: To solicit input regarding a request to rezone a property located at 24987 Pennsylvania Ave. bearing a Legal Description: Being a 1.00 acre tract of land, out of Block Thirty-One (31), of the San Benito Land and Water Company Subdivision, in the Concepcion de Carricitos Grant, as recorded in Volume 1, Page 6 of the Map Records, Cameron County, Texas. Applicant: Felipe Esquivel & Diana Gonzalez.

Public Hearing: To solicit input regarding a request to rezone a property located on Schneider Rd. bearing a Legal Description: Being 10.60 acres of land out of Lots 27, 31, 34 and 37, Rose Suburban Subdivision, Cameron County, Texas recorded in Volume 2, Page 17, Map Records of Cameron County, Texas. Applicant: Emiliano Rosel.

The public is hereby invited to attend and express their support or opposition to the request. You may also file a written notice supporting or protesting this action. For more information, please call the Planning Department at (956) 361-3800 Ext. 405.

El publico esta invitado a atender y expresar su apoyo o oposicion para la solicitud. Si desea información en español, por favor de llamar al Departamento de Planificación de la ciudad de San Benito a (956) 361-3800 Ext. 405.

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

CLERK OF THE COURT
SYLVIA GARZA-PEREZ
974 E. HARRISON STREET
BROWNSVILLE, TX 78520

ATTORNEY OF PERSON FILING THE CAUSE
JAMES EDWARD SOTO
2925 RICHMOND AVENUE STE 1560
HOUSTON TX 77098

THE STATE OF TEXAS

In the Probate Court 1 of Cameron County, Texas.

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS, IF ANY OF JASON JAY VILLARREAL. ALSO KNOWN AS JASON VILLARREAL, DECEASED.

GREETINGS:
You are commanded to appear and answer to the Application to Declare Heirship, filed by Lilitiana Elizardo Villarreal, at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of the first Monday after the expiration of 10 days from the date of service of this citation, before the Honorable Probate Court 1 of Cameron County, at the Courthouse in Brownsville, Texas, Said Application For Decedents' Estates-Independent Administration was filed on July 28, 2025.

The file number of said Matter being No. 2025-CPC-00243 Probate Court 1.

The Style being: IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: JASON JAY VILLARREAL. ALSO KNOWN AS JASON VILLARREAL, DECEASED.

The nature of said proceeding being substantially as follows, to wit:

Determine who the heirs and only heirs of decedent are and their respective shares and interests in this estate; that no appraisers be appointed; and for all other relief to which applicant may be entitled.

Issued on this the 5th day of August, 2025.

Given under my hand and seal of said Court at Office in the City of Brownsville, Texas on this the 5th day of August, 2025.

Sylvia Garza-Perez, County Clerk
Cameron County, Texas

By: /s/ Casandra Vera, Deputy
(10-10-25)

PUBLIC NOTICES

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CITY OF SAN BENITO

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City of San Benito Zoning Board of Adjustments will conduct a Regular Meeting to consider the following item in a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the City of San Benito Municipal Building (Cesar Gonzalez Meeting Hall) located at 401 N. Sam Houston Boulevard to receive comments on the following request:

Variance Request:
Public Hearing on a petition for a variance to allow an encroachment of a Prefabricated Carport within the required front and side setback on a property located at 478 Pintail Street, bearing a Legal Description of: All of Lot Twenty-Five (25), in Block Four (4), Sunnyside Subdivision, in the City of San Benito, Cameron County, Texas, according to the map thereof in Map Cabinet 1, Slot 21-A, Map Records of Cameron County, Texas. Applicant: Carlos Quintanilla.

The public is hereby invited to attend and express their support or opposition to the request. You may also file a written notice supporting or protesting this action. For more information, please call the Planning Department at (956) 361-3800 Ext. 405.

El publico esta invitado a atender y expresar su apoyo o oposicion para la solicitud. Si desea información en español, por favor de llamar al Departamento de Planificación de la ciudad de San Benito a (956) 361-3800 Ext. 405.

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CREATURES AMONG US

Yellow Warblers arrive early on SPI

Flitting among clusters of huisache and lead tree leaves, a tiny yellow warbler danced in hide-and-seek behind the South Padre Island Convention Center at noon-time on a baking, late summer day, apparently averse to my taking its photo.

A very early fall migrant, this almost solidly yellow bird, the yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), stops off on South Padre Island and thereabouts for refueling as early as late July on its path to winter farther south. The male is an easy-to-distinguish Crayola-yellow bird with prominently dark eyes and varying degrees of chestnut-colored streaks, which are indistinct or lacking in the female.

This migrant breeds in willow-dominated, deciduous wetlands in much of Canada and the northern portion of the U.S., as well as a strip of our Southwest and Mexico. Seemingly less particular when not breeding, it may also winter in pastures, scrub, forest edges and mangroves. Though it usually journeys over the Gulf in springtime, its autumn route is often over land.

One of this bird’s 43 or so subspecies, however—the mangrove warbler, the male distinctive for his chestnut-colored head—breeds and thrives year-round in the expanding mangrove forests of South Padre Island. Javier Gonzalez, Naturalist Educator at the South Padre Island Birding Nature & Alligator Sanctuary, said, “Mangrove warblers hadn’t been recorded in Texas un-

til just a couple of decades ago,” but they, along with local mangroves, have “expanded their range.” Also, the South Padre Island vicinity, for now, is their sole home in Texas. Gonzalez says that “the easiest place” for viewing them “would be the birding center during the winter or early spring when the males start to sing from exposed snags sticking out above the top of the mangroves.” Eventually, the mangrove warbler may become its own species. Another subspecies is the golden warbler, which lives year-round in Florida.

Yellow warblers, like all wood warblers, feed mainly on insects and other invertebrates. They hover at twig tips, sally out and snatch prey from the air or glean their catch from foliage or the ground. In wintertime, they may also eat berries and other fruits.

Usually monogamous, yellow warblers engage in a variety of courtship displays, including chases. Only the female broods, but the male helps feed the chicks, and sometimes, his mate. The mangrove subspecies “nest right in the big stands of black mangrove trees,” says Gonzalez, who expects their nesting range may eventually spread to the Upper Laguna Madre. Other yellow warblers create their deep cup nests in upright trees or in forks of bushes. A nest includes two or three layers. Its base includes nettles, and the frame, if present, grasses. The liner consists of hair, feathers and fibers.

Yellow warbler nests are often parasitized by



(Courtesy photos/Charles Lorenz)

brown-headed cowbirds, which—not building nests themselves—lay their own eggs in nests of other birds. In turn, these unsuspecting parents, often much smaller, end up raising large cowbird chicks at the expense of their own. In some locations, cowbirds have lain eggs in over 20% of warbler nests.

Still, yellow warblers resist. A warbler’s cry of “seet”, one of several defensive calls, appears to alert its fellows, including other birds, to the presence of cowbirds. One study revealed that 20 out of 22 “seet” calls specifically warned of these intruders.

Also, a yellow warbler aware that its nest contains cowbird eggs, if she doesn’t desert, builds another nest layer, burying those eggs, but also sometimes some of her own. Some nests have as many as six or seven layers containing buried eggs. Apparently, she is most likely to act if a cowbird egg appears prior to her own eggs or early in her lay-



(Courtesy photos/Charles Lorenz)

ing. Some warbler young from parasitized nests do survive despite their mothers spending great energy caring for larger cowbird chicks. Out of 255 warbler eggs in 58 parasitized nests in Manitoba, 95 of the warbler chicks hatched, and 39 survived.

Yellow warblers have a broad repertoire of complex vocalizations, including those for defense, mating and nesting, “Sweet sweet sweet I’m so sweet” being a common translation of one common song. Researchers have classified the males’ elaborate songs as Type I and Type II, the latter including those they sing to one another. The

mangrove warbler tends to sing longer, lower-pitched songs than those of other yellow warblers.

Typically, this warbler flies fast and erratically, not only for hunting but for communication. A circle flight, or one from its perch to a designated boundary, defines its territory. It may fan its tail and spread its wings during both courtship and conflict. Yellow warblers sometimes pick fights with other warblers, as well as red-winged blackbirds. Yet one observer has watched a male redstart help with young at a warbler nest, displacing the male. Some have witnessed yellow

warblers pretending to fall from a tree, floating, fluttering along and doing a “broken-wing display” to dissuade predators.

Populations of yellow warblers seem to be holding steady despite declines due to habitation loss, pesticides, droughts, collisions and predation by brown-headed cowbirds. These early migrants do not so often collide with towers as do other warblers, perhaps because of decreased numbers of fellow migrants when they travel. Also, yellow warblers face predation by, among others, hawks, raccoons, snakes and domestic cats.

DINING GUIDE

- AMERICAN Bayside Café**
707 Santa Isabel Blvd, Laguna Vista (956) 943-3330
- Breaking Bread**
2601 Laguna Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 772-7066
- Burger Shack & Beer Garden**
413 E Maxan St, Port Isabel, (956) 433-5370
- Cafe On The Beach**
3616 Gulf Blvd, South Padre Island (956) 761-2703
- Coco Beach Cafe and Bar**
2612 Gulf Blvd. SPI, 956-370-7755
- Davey Jones Ice Cream Locker**
116 N Garcia St, Port Isabel, (956) 943-7447
- Denny’s**
1100 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 761-1887
- F&B**
3109 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 772-8114
- Grapevine Café**
100 Swordfish St, South Padre Island, (956) 761-8463
- Jake’s Restaurant & Bar**
2001 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island (956) 761-5012
- Johnny Rockets**
410 Plaza Blvd, Suite 108, South Padre Island (956) 433-5504
- Josephine’s Kitchen**

- 3409 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 299-4910
- Josephine’s Kitchen and Coffee Shop**
110 Tamava St Port Isabel , (956) 524-4447
- Krispy Krunchy Chicken**
501 E Maxan St, Port Isabel, (956) 943-3883

- Lobo Del Mar Cafe**
204 Palm St, South Padre Island, (956) 772-7256
- Louie’s Backyard**
2305 Laguna Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 761-6406
- See **DINING**, Page 10

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Rustic Rose→

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Dining

From “Dining,” page 9

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- Palms Cafe**
3616 Gulf Blvd, South Padre Island, (956) 761-2703
- Sputnik Grill**
5902 Padre Blvd South Padre Island , (956) 433-5143
- SPI Wine Bar**
4000 Padre Blvd South Padre Island, (956) 230-6899
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