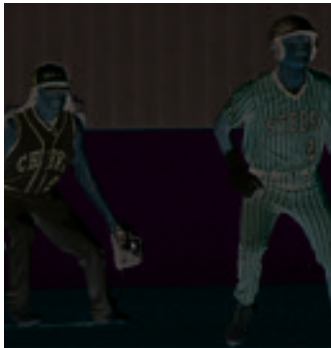
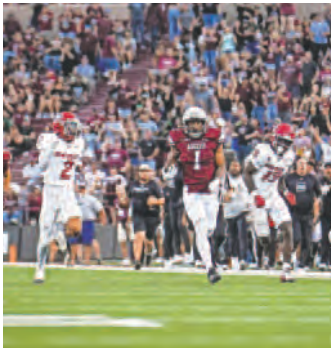


Small-school
baseball stars
shine
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Aggie schedule
announced
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Miyagishima
calls to decline
trial lawyer
contributions
SEE PAGE A4



Carlsbad Current-Argus

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Animals by Jean Prominski is on display, May 28, 2025 at the Carlsbad Museum.

‘Cooking in my head’

Locals show their work at Carlsbad annual art show

Photos and Story by
Adrian Hedden
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See Page A3 for more
photos from the exhibit

The rolling hills and ranchlands of Texas Hill Country spread out for miles before Daina Taylor’s windshield as she made the 12-hour drive several times a year to see her son in Houston.

She marvels at the lush, green landscapes that differ dramatically from the high desert of Carlsbad, which Taylor has called home since 1989.

En route to frequent visits with her 41-year-old son Chris Chi, who works in information technology in the large city along Texas’s Gulf Coast, the 68-year-old retired

second-grade teacher also found inspiration on the road.

“We always try to travel through the countryside. It’s just so interesting compared to the desert in Carlsbad,” Taylor said. “I see the hay; it’s a story that grows in my mind. How does the hay get there? All the hard work the farmers and ranchers put in.”

That’s what led to her Best of Show award at this year’s local art exhibition hosted by the Carlsbad Area Art Association at the Carlsbad Museum. The winning entry was Taylor’s dry needle felting titled “Hay,” which depicts the Texas countryside, and a cotton farm with several bails of hay rolled up and lying in a field to be harvested.

The annual show, on display until June 13, features local artists – members and non-members of the



Daina Taylor with her dry needle felting piece titled “Hay” won Best of Show in the Carlsbad Area Art Association’s annual contest held at the Carlsbad Museum.

association – in a variety of mediums.

A contest is held and judged by a panel of association members, crowning first-, second- and third-place awards in a ceremony this year on May 24, along with honorable mentions. Categories included oil paintings, ceramics, pottery, watercolors, mixed media, acrylics and photography.

Although Taylor’s work looks like a painting from a

distance, with vivid shades of green for the grass and shading to show how the sun glints off the bails, it is made entirely of wool teased into the intricate design.

Taylor said she’s been perfecting the technique for about two years, with a vision to depict the beloved landscapes on the road to her son.

COOKING,
Continued on A2

Airline vote delayed by council

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City Councilors questioned the transparency of the process for choosing a new airline to run flights out of the Cavern City Air Terminal, delaying a decision on a new contract as proposed at their May 27 meeting.



ADRIAN HEDDEN |
CURRENT-ARGUS
Carlsbad City Councilor Karla Niemeier listens to a discussion on air service during a meeting, May 27, 2025 at Carlsbad City Council Chambers.

Tennessee-based Contour Airlines was recommended by a five-person committee the city convened earlier this year to evaluate proposals from several airlines and make a recommendation to the council. Under the two-year contract recommended by the committee, Contour would run the flights on 30-seat jets and would shift flights to Dallas that are currently routed to Phoenix.

The Air Terminal also offers flights to Albuquerque, along with Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix, which serves as a “hub” for connections.

The return of the Dallas flights was a key concern of city councilors throughout the request for proposal process as Contour and four other airlines made their pitches for the two-year contract.

But despite the recommendation of the committee, which was made up of local government and business leaders, Ward 3 City Councilor Karla Niemeier said she was not given adequate information to vote on the contract, including full details of each proposal. She said she felt “slighted” and questioned why a committee was needed to choose the airline.

“I’m not understanding why I didn’t get all that paperwork,” Niemeier said. “We’re going to give it to a committee who had all the information, but I didn’t get all the information. I

AIRLINE,
Continued on A2

Drought remains despite Carlsbad’s rains

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Heavy rain and thunderstorms pounded Carlsbad last week but did little to allay perilous drought conditions impacting southeast New Mexico.

As of Friday, Carlsbad had received 1.99 inches of rain in 2025, compared with about 0.33 through the end of May last year, according to the National Weather Service.

In May alone, Carlsbad had 0.11 inches this year, compared with 0.01 inches for the month in 2024.

But while there was more rain so far this year than last, the area was still well below the average of 2.89 inches of rain, according to

Meteorologist Kenny Greening at the Weather Service’s Midland-Odessa office.

Carlsbad was still struggling with “extreme drought,” he said, and in need of significantly more rainfall to get out of it.

“We’re getting a bit more than last year, but it’s hard to get out of drought once you get into it, especially in West Texas and southeast New Mexico,” Greening said. “Carlsbad is in extreme drought. Compared to last year, it’s about the same.”

The storms Eddy County experienced throughout May, both in Carlsbad and further south near the Loving area, were driven by a series of “drylines” or boundaries between moist and dry air masses moving

into the area, Greening said.

Thunderstorms tend to form along drylines, he said, when the dry and moist air masses collide, giving the lift needed for thunderstorms to form. That, combined with a recent cold front and southeastern winds bringing moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, was behind the isolated storms reported in recent weeks, he said.

“That difference in air mass is what creates the lift for those storms,” Greening said. “I believe it is more than normal.”

‘Extreme’ drought ongoing

Despite the increased moisture, the U.S. Drought Monitor continued to list Eddy County mostly in “extreme drought,” the third worst

of four drought classes reported by the monitor, as of May 29.

Extreme drought, only less concerning than “exceptional drought,” means fire danger is extreme, irrigation allotments are reduced, and livestock are suffering while native vegetation dies out, according to the Drought Monitor’s legend.

About 97.5% of Eddy County was in extreme drought, according to the monitor, compared with 47% of the state. To the west, Otero County was at about 100% extreme drought compared with about 37% of Lincoln County.

“These are certainly beneficial rains,” Greening said. “But I can’t say it’s taken us out of drought.”

And as the drought appeared

to be continuing into the warmer summer months, when wildfires are more likely to break out, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on May 28 declared a state of emergency.

That meant issuing an executive order to convene the state’s Drought Task Force – a combination of agencies called upon to disseminate information to the public about drought conditions, develop short-term plans to mitigate drought and wildfire risks and identify funding for local communities and Indigenous groups to

RAINS,
Continued on A2



Police blotter

Information taken from Carlsbad Police Department arrest records. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

June 2
Diego Ivan Garcia Diaz, 36, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol at National Parks Highway and Farris Street.

June 1
Gabriel Louise Betts, 23, was arrested for aggravated driving while intoxicated and driving without a license in the 1400 block of West Pierce Street.

May 31
Nicholas Macario Gutierrez, 34, was arrested for concealing identity and a municipal warrant at West Lea and South Maple streets.
Joseph Fidel Follette, 25, was arrested for battery against a household member in the 400 block of West Fox Street.

May 30
Michael George Valdez, 39, was arrested for auto burglary and larceny in the 1100 block of South Canyon Street.

Samuel Aguilar, 41, was arrested for shoplifting in the 2000 block of West Pierce Street.

Dewayne Milton Snow, 59, was arrested for a municipal warrant in the 200 block of North Main Street.

Ryan Yanez, 41, was arrested for aggravated driving while intoxicated, and failing to give notice of an accident at Pate Street and Mountainview Drive.

Little Argus

The Carlsbad Current-Argus offers the Little Argus as a complimentary service to nonprofits and community organizations for the purpose of running public service announcements and/or publicizing community activities.

Little Argus submissions may be sent to news@currentargus.com at least 24 hours in advance of the first day the announcement is desired to run. Submissions should be kept to 50 words or less and include crucial information such as time, date, location and contact information. This is a free service and space is limited, therefore submissions will be printed on a rotation, meaning announcements are not guaranteed to run every day.

Questions or concerns? Email Managing Editor Adrian Hedden at achedden@currentargus.com.

Today
Comprehensive plan: The City of Carlsbad will host and update on its Comprehensive Plan to guide city priorities for the next five years. The meeting will be at 7 p.m., June 3 at the City Council Chambers, 114 S. Halagueno St.

Computer Help: The Alejandro Ruiz Senior Center is offering free help for individuals 40 years and older. One-on-one Computer Lessons are based on what you need to learn and the time that you need.

Minor computer repair and other help is also available. For more information, call the Center at 575-885-1402. The program is on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Lodgers’ Tax Advisory Board: From 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., first Tuesday of the month at the City Hall Planning Room, 101 N. Halagueno St.

Toddler Time: This class introduces toddlers to the love of books, songs, rhymes, fingerplays, movement, and sign language. Toddlers must come with an adult who takes care of them. The class is from 11 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and 10 to 11 a.m. on Fridays at the Carlsbad Public Library. Pre-registration required. Call Breanna Voorhis 575-885-6776.

Wednesday
LEGO Time: Kids of all ages are invited for open Lego play from 2 to 2:30 p.m. Wednesdays at the Carlsbad Public Library.

Elementary Tech Time: Students can participate in a variety of fun, educational and hands-on activities, including building challenges, science experiments and fun with various STEM toys from 4 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays at the Carlsbad Public Library.

Preschool story time: Every Wednesday at 10 a.m., join us for Preschool Story Time at Carlsbad Public Library. Your 3 to 5 year old will enjoy facilitated play to encourage the development of pre-reading skills through stories, songs, rhymes, and narrative!

Community survey: The City of Carlsbad’s community survey are available online at <https://www.cityofcarlsbadnm.com/carlsbad-community-surveys>. The city is seeking input on airport service and its Comprehensive Plan, which will guide the city’s priorities for the next five years.

Thursday
CrimeStoppers rewards: Please submit anonymous tips to Crimestoppers regarding felony crimes and vandalism. Tips may be submitted to Crimestoppers by visiting eddycountycrimestoppers.com website, using toll free number 844-7867227, or using the mobile app “P3Tips.com.” Call today and become a Crimestoppers.

Tennis lessons: Signups will be taken at Rio Pecos Tennis Shop (700 Park Drive). For further information, contact Charlie Jurva at 575-361-3728 or email at cjurva@valornet.com. This year’s classes will run from June 2 to June 27, Monday through Friday. Children 10 and older will be 8 to 9 a.m., and ages five to nine will be 9 to 10 a.m. The cost is \$50 for the first family member and \$30 for each family member after. Participants must bring a racket and will receive a t-shirt. Adult lessons are 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from June 3 to June 26.

Signups will be taken at Rio Pecos Tennis Shop (700 Park Drive). For further information, contact Charlie Jurva at 575-361-3728 or email at cjurva@valornet.com

Cooking,

Continued from A1

She said it proved difficult at first, but through countless hours she was able to make an image as realistic as it is textured with the fine wool fabric.

“This piece was cooking in my head for two years,” she said proudly, gazing at the work framed on the wall during a visit to the museum. “I always ask myself what message I want to convey. I always try to think outside

the box.”

As a member of the art association, Taylor said, she hopes her work and success in the contest will inspire other budding artists in the local community to bring their visions to life and share them publicly.

“My goal is really to promote art education in Carlsbad,” she said. “The younger generation ... I’m just really happy to see more new artists.”

It’s a mission shared by the Carlsbad Museum staff.

Cassie Parks, the museum’s co-director, said the show and contest differ every year in the kinds of entries presented. There was a heavy presence in the ceramics and pottery section this year, she said, amid the typical array of paintings.

“We never know what to expect. That’s kind of the exciting thing about it,” she said. “It gives us a good opportunity to show what we’ve been working on.”

Parks entered a watercolor painting titled “Teeth Fairies.”

The mostly pink hues of the painting surround a group of four winged human teeth, one with a large, single eye looking out at the viewer.

She said she was inspired by a lifelong fascination with teeth, and a procedure Parks had as a child to remove a unique wisdom tooth, which she kept.

“It’s so interesting that as kids, we lose our teeth and more come in,” she said. “It’s a wild process, and there’s so much folklore with teeth.”

Many of the art pieces on display appeared to depict such personal stories. Parks said it can be stressful to share artwork with others as the works reflect the artists – their skill levels and often their lives and personalities.

“I think it’s scary to be vulnerable to share your artwork,” she said. “It’s something you keep working at.”

Managing Editor Adrian Hedden can be reached at 575-628-5516, or @AdrianHedden on the social media platform X.

Rains,

Continued from A1

address the issue.
“Despite some spring precipitation, almost all of New Mexico remains in conditions that threaten water supplies and elevate fire danger,” Lujan Grisham said in a statement.
‘Cautiously optimistic’

Coley Burgess, manager of the Carlsbad Irrigation District, is just happy to get more rain than last year.

The co-op provides water

through a canal system fed by the Pecos River to about 500 farmers and ranchers in southern Eddy County. Burgess said he got more rain in the last month than all last year, meaning it’s been flowing well through the canals and delivered to members of the district.

Allotments of water are provided to customers of the district based on how many acres they have to water, measured in acre feet. An acre foot refers to the amount needed to cover an acre in a foot of water.

The recent rains allowed the

district to raise its current allotment to 2.75 acre feet per customer, compared to the 2.4 allotment the district ended at last year.

Burgess owns about 20 acres of pecan groves near Loving, which he also uses to graze cattle and sheep. He got more rain in the last month than he had all last year, Burgess said.

“The rains over the last three weeks have been tremendous,” he said. “These rains put quite a bit of water into our river system.”

That’s because the summer

months are typically known for heavy “monsoon” downpours, which provide moisture needed for the drier winter months. Heavy rains in the spring could provide the moisture needed to combine with the monsoons for a productive near, Burgess said.

“For this year, we’re set up pretty good. If we get a little more rain, people will be able to pull some of their land out of fallow,” he said.

Fallowing land is the process of abandoning portions of a rancher’s property – in some

cases up to 30% – so that the rest of the land can be properly watered. Burgess said many of the district’s members had no choice but to fallow large portions due to last year’s limited moisture.

But if the rains continue, he said, the abandoned properties could be brought back to life.

“People had to make some tough decisions,” he said. “I’m cautiously optimistic.”

Managing Editor Adrian Hedden can be reached at 575-628-5516, or @AdrianHedden on the social media platform X.

Airline,

Continued from A1

feel slighted as a councilor.”

City Councilor Mary Garwood, who also represents Ward 3, said results of a survey the city conducted this year to gauge local preference for the airport’s destinations were never publicized.

“Who decided what and when? Who wants Dallas? Who wants Denver? I think we need to be transparent and get those (survey results) out to the public,” she said.

The airport is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Essential Air Service program. Under the program, local governing bodies vote to recommend an air service company to the transportation department, which then awards the funds to the recommended provider.

Mayor Rick Lopez said the City Council can request a 30-day extension of the federal selection process while councilors fully study the various proposals. Councilors voted to do so, and the proposed contract will be considered again at the council’s June 24 meeting.

“I think it’s important that we get those questions out and have them answered,” Lopez said. “That (the committee proposal) was just a recommendation. I think right now, we have more questions than answers.”

City Administrator Wendy Austin said the recommendation for Contour was grounded in the airline’s plans to resume Dallas flights, along with larger seating and storage capacity afforded by the 30-seat jets.

Contour proposed 12 flights per week, while Boutique Airlines and current contractor Advanced Air would run 19 flights on smaller, eight-seat planes.

“The consensus between the EAS committee members is that Contour Airlines is preferred because they offer a larger-sized jet with more seating capacity, including an onboard restroom, lower-priced tickets, additional space for storage of larger items, and the preferred destination of Dallas Fort Worth International Airport,” Austin said.

The city chose Advance Air over Boutique in 2023, signing the California-based company to a two-year, \$11 million contract, which expires in November.

A key component of the selected contract was a shift of flights going to Dallas to instead go to Phoenix. That decision stirred some opposition from city councilors and local business travelers, arguing flights related to the oil and gas industry were lost.

Advanced Air presented its plan for continued service at the council’s Feb. 11 meeting, noting that it could shift the Phoenix flights to Dallas at the city’s discretion. Similar options were described in presentations given May 13 by Boutique Air, Contour Airlines and SkyWest Airlines as they each hoped to be awarded the next contract.

During the May 27 meeting, Boutique Air Vice President of Commerce Eitan Spiegel said the airline could offer Dallas flights and has experience operating out of Carlsbad.

He touted Boutique’s ability to schedule day trips to Albuquerque, flying out in the morning and back in the evening, to allow Carlsbad residents to attend to doctor’s appointments and visit relatives.

“We have served this community well for several years before we were passed over for Advance Air,” Spiegel said. “We have had

operational problems in the past. We have limitations with our aircraft just like everybody else. We have built a tremendous system around ourselves.”

Other business

Councilors voted to hire local promotion company Carlsbad Live, run by Curtis McKinney, to lead events and promotion at the Walter Gerrells Performing Arts Center on National Parks Highway. The one-year, \$100,000 contract includes three renewal options.

A \$395,000 contract was awarded by the city to Colorado-based Statistical Research Inc. to evaluate, test and excavate potential historic artifacts on five parcels of land the city is planning to purchase from the Bureau of Land Management.

Milton’s Brewing received approval to serve alcohol at the Carlsbad Museum for a STEM summit reception hosted by the Cal Ripken Jr. Foundation on June 16.

Managing Editor Adrian Hedden can be reached at 575-628-5516, or @AdrianHedden on the social media platform X.

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Celebrating local art

Photos by Adrian Hedden

The Carlsbad Area Art Association hosted the annual local art show from May 17

to June 13 at the Carlsbad Museum. The Association promotes art in the Cavern City, an operated the Artist Gallery co-op on Canyon Street since the 1970s.

The Artist Gallery is New Mexico’s longest-running co-op art gallery, offering for sales works created by local community members.

The co-op also offers the Robert S. Light art room to members, a space where they can create new works and connect with other artists.



“Teeth Fairies” by Cassie Parks is on display at the Carlsbad Museum.



“In the Pasture” by Janice Clay at the Carlsbad Museum.



Local artists are exhibiting their work via the Carlsbad Area Art Association until June 13 at the Carlsbad Museum.



“Salute” by Mike Campos.



“Hand of God” by Myka Char.



“Orange Turban” by Angela Parker.

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