

T 1325.6 H537 55:11

AL! Golden Grasses & Lost Maples

RED RIVER RAMBLE ■ DISCOVER COLUMBUS ■ SABINAL CANYON

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS

H I G H W A Y S

NOVEMBER 2008

www.texashighways.com

OPEN RANGE

\$3.95

1 1 >



0 71896 47399 5

ROBERT M. STENE/TxDOT



Hurricane Ike decimated the Balinese Room, seen here in a past that seems impossibly serene. In spite of the overwhelming destruction to the upper coast, we'll hope for the day we can once again stroll Seawall Boulevard.

WHEN I think about hurricanes, I always remember Gary Cartwright's bone-chilling and horrifying description of the 1900 storm that swept over Galveston. After reading his book, *Galveston: A History of the Island*, I believe the only scenario more completely soul-shattering than experiencing a major hurricane's brutality would be witnessing in person the resulting devastation once the next day dawned.

As we're sending this issue of *Texas Highways* to the printer, the upper coast—and really much of the state—suffers the mind-numbing loss and absolute grief caused by Hurricane Ike. With such down-to-the-ground pain in the present moment, it seems almost frivolous to talk about the historic perspective. How could there be a future when the present looks so hopeless?

But our mission requires that we look beyond the gloomy present, and we decided to keep the **Beaumont** feature in the magazine. We felt the original title for the article, "*Bon Temps* in Beaumont," should change because the aftermath of the hurricane brought on anything but "good times." But then, Beaumont is a resilient town, and we can look forward to the revival of life and livelihood in that quirky and diverse area of Southeast Texas. And maybe a canoe trip through the Piney Woods down Village Creek.

As we finally wrapped up production on this issue, we were even concerned that farther inland, **Columbus**, featured on page 46, might have sustained damage from Ike's outer bands. But our fears were not justified, as that area pulled through the storm with only minor damage. This feature will make you want to include Columbus (even the horses seem happy there) in an itinerary before long.

And one hard-to-miss but often-overlooked component of our Texas landscape—the grasslands—plays a starring role in the photography feature we called "**Splendor in the Grass**," which starts on page 36. Photographer **Arthur Meyerson** traveled more than 2,000 miles to visit Texas' ecological regions and create spectacular images of the state's various grasslands, from the Coastal Prairie, up to East Texas grasslands, and out on the open range of West Texas.

Don't fence me in!

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, our scouts seek the most interesting Texas apparel and gifts, then they create a knockout catalog to make those items easy to collect. This year, they found the ideal Texas setting for the catalog on the **Wildcatter Ranch** near **Graham**. Turn to page 17 and get an idea of their handiwork in the all-new *Texas Highways* catalog.

GOVERNOR OF TEXAS
RICK PERRY

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
DEIRDRE DELISI Chair
TED HOUGHTON, JR. Commissioner
NED S. HOLMES Commissioner
FRED UNDERWOOD Commissioner
WILLIAM MEADOWS Commissioner
AMADEO SAENZ Executive Director

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
TRAVEL INFORMATION DIVISION

Division Director DORIS HOWDESHELL

Publisher KATHY MURPHY
Editor CHARLES J. LOHRMANN
Managing Editor JILL LAWLESS

Senior Editors:
NOLA McKEY, LORI MOFFATT
Associate Editor MARTY LANGE
Photography Editor KEVIN VANDIVIER
Photography Intern MARC TOBIN
Web Editor LOIS M. RODRIGUEZ

Art Director JANE WU
Associate Art Directors:
KIRSTI HARMS, JANE SHARPE
Editorial Assistant CINDY NEWSOM

Editorial Interns:
LAUREN OAKLEY, CAITLIN SULLIVAN
Marketing Manager CINDY LEFFINGWELL
Circulation Manager CYNTHIA KOSEL
Business Manager LUCIA CORDOVA
Ancillary Products Manager BEVERLY WEST

Administrative Assistants:
ANA ALVAREZ, LUPE VALDEZ

Texas Highways (ISSN 0040-4349) is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, 150 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704. The official travel magazine of Texas encourages recreational travel within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world.
© Texas Department of Transportation 2008. All rights reserved.



The editorial office of *Texas Highways* is at 150 East Riverside Drive in Austin. Call 512/486-5858; fax 512/486-5879.

Internet Sites: www.texashighways.com
www.traveltex.com and www.txdot.gov

Send queries about manuscripts or photographs to Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. We are not responsible for unsolicited materials.

Subscriptions to *Texas Highways* are \$19.95 annually (\$29.95 foreign). Call 800/839-4997. (Call 386/597-4297 outside the U.S.) Copies of current and back issues are available for purchase. Please call 512/486-5823 for pricing and availability.

For subscription services, write to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Box 51564, Boulder, CO 80322-1564, or call 800/839-4997. To be removed from mailing list sales, write to *Texas Highways* Marketing, Mailing Lists, Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009.

For advertising information: AJR & Associates, 25132 Oakhurst Dr., Ste. 201, Spring, TX 77386; 800/383-7677; fax 713/942-0277.

Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Box 51564, Boulder, CO 80322-1564.



NOVEMBER 2008

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 TALK TO TH** Readers sound off
- 6 FOR THE ROAD**
Top picks and places
- 11 SPEAKING OF TEXAS**
History with a travel twist
- 12 SPOTLIGHT ON ...**
Brownwood and beyond
- 14 TOP TABLES**
Cap'n Roy's/South Padre Island
- 62 JUST PASSING THROUGH**
Fort Griffin
- 67 TH TRAVELER**
A roundup of November activities
- 72 READERS RECOMMEND**
Travel tips from TH readers
- 73 WINDOW ON TEXAS**
Turkey Feathers/San Saba County

FEATURES

- 20 SABINAL CANYON** Brilliant fall color, a spring-fed river, and a tiny town by the name of Utopia draw visitors to this stretch of Southwest Texas.
BY MAXINE MAYES, PHOTOGRAPHS BY WYMAN MEINZER
- 30 RED RIVER RAMBLE** Fannin County abounds with history and other attractions; explorations here lead to fall fun along the Texas-Oklahoma border.
BY LOU ANN DEAN, PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUIS DELUCA
- 36 SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS** From the Gulf Coast to the Blackland Prairie to the High Plains open range, experience the beauty of fall grasses.
STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR MEYERSON
- 46 HELLO, COLUMBUS** On a weekend getaway to Columbus and nearby Cat Spring, five adventurers discover historic buildings, laid-back lodging, quirky shops, sumptuous food, and new friends.
BY KATHLEEN KASKA, PHOTOGRAPHS BY SKEETER HAGLER
- 54 A BAYOU RENDEZVOUS** A study in contrasts, Beaumont offers nature preserves within sight of unlikely neighbors. Visitors will also find more than a dozen museums and a beautiful basilica.
BY SHERMAKAYE BASS, PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM WILLIAMSON

■ **PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS AVAILABLE** Some images in this issue are available as prints in two distinctive formats. For more information, call toll-free 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

ABOUT OUR COVERS FRONT: Golden grasses dominate this Davis Mountains scene off Texas 166, between Fort Davis and Valentine. Photo © Arthur Meyerson. BACK: Seven-year-old Mallory Spear celebrates the Fourth of July in the Fannin County town of Windom. Photo © Louis DeLuca. (To order a print of either of these photographs, see instructions at left.)

PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE: © TOM WILLIAMSON; © WYMAN MEINZER; © SKEETER HAGLER

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

FEB 01 2009

Depository
Dallas Public Library



What a Tangled Web!

DEAR TH-ERS—We experienced an e-mail glitch in August and part of September, so if you tried to send us a message, we most likely didn't receive it. Please try again. Send your feedback to letters05@texashighways.com, or through our Web site (www.texashighways.com; click on "Contact Us" and "Talk to TH"). We want to hear from you!

High on Lake Travis

I WAS piloting the balloon pictured on the back cover of the August issue. The Lake Travis flight is one of the most beautiful flights many ballooners experience. Many in the ballooning community have read articles about our sport over the years, and most of the stories leave us wondering where the information came from. Thanks for Madeline Irvine's accurate article that most folks can understand and enjoy.

BRETT MILLER
Austin



The plane! The plane! We would like to thank Coyote Flight Centers of Amarillo for providing Photography Editor Kevin Vandivier with a bird's-eye view of Palo Duro Canyon for September's Seven Wonders story. For more on CFC's aerial sightseeing tours, go to www.iflycfc.com.

Sinking Feeling

I KNOW there are lots of things in Texas I'll never see, because the state is so large. But after reading Melissa Gaskill's story on Devil's Sinkhole [August] and seeing where it is, I realize I've traveled within miles of it and never knew it. It sounds like a fascinating place.

Thanks for showing us new sights.

JEAN CROWDER
Sulphur Springs

Winery Finds

I WAS born in Electra and raised in the area around Wichita Falls. Although I have lived in

EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT TEXAS



FREE FISHING IN STATE PARKS

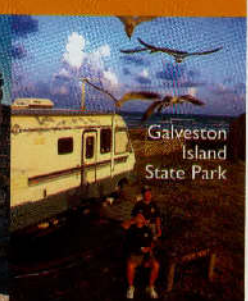
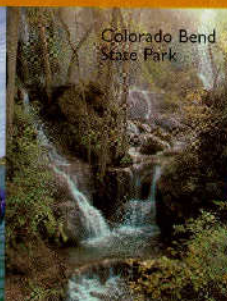
No fishing license required to fish in Texas State Parks.

STILL ONLY
\$60
PER CARD MEMBERSHIP
OR JUST
\$75
FOR 2-CARD MEMBERSHIP

With the Texas State Parks Pass, you get unlimited visits to more than 90 state parks for 12 months for you and your carload of guests. That's all the hiking, fishing, camping, bird watching, relaxing and a host of other park activities that you can do for a year, all with no entrance fee. All in some of the most scenic and uniquely historic places in the Southwest.

Pick up your Texas State Parks Pass on site at any state park. Or call today to order, or find out more on our Web site.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/parkpass
(512) 389-8900



LIVING
LIKE IT USED TO BE.

What actually made the good old days so great? Time to talk. Time to think. Time to relax. *Time to live.*

The good old days are still good, just not so old. Alive and well in the Texas Hill Country. Low taxes. Low land costs, and year-round golfing weather. Kerrville is a unique place. Fine arts. Excellent universities and world-class health care. Why are people so friendly? Why wouldn't they be? *It's all good.*



KerrvilleLife.com




COMANCHE TRACE


INTEGRITY
GROUP TEXAS

Palacios
del Guadalupe

Alabama since 1960, I am still a Texan (my license plate says "NATVTXN"). I always look for the articles about North Texas in *TH*—I was not aware of the wineries in the area ["North Texas Uncorked," August].

MARY NELL STRANGE BROWN
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

UT vs. A&M

THANKS for your great work on the recent issues of *Texas Highways*. I write to inflict a bit of teasing from a grumpy old man, but also to reveal an "unconscious error" in the opening sentence of the interesting "The University of Texas A&M?" article [Speaking of Texas, August]. I write from a perspective including degrees [in order] from the University of Texas, Texas A&M University, as well as other universities, and a life devoted to communication and information. Tommi Ivey wrote of the rivalry between "the University of Texas and Texas A&M University" to open a good article. Should not the listing be reversed for both alphabetical and chrono-

logical reasons? Texas A&M opened in 1876. UT offered classes apparently in 1882 and opened formally in 1883. I note also, with a twinkle in my eyes, that "t" precedes "u" in our alphabet, as in "Texas" and "University." Thanks, and keep up your good work.

HENRY L. ALSMEYER
Brenham

ED. NOTE: *You got us, Mr. Alsmeyer. Could it be that the Editor is a T-Sipper?*

Gotta Guadalupe

I AM writing a note from England, after reading the June issue. You may ask why someone would be reading your magazine 6,000 miles or so east of Dallas. The story begins on a winter cruise when my wife and I had the good fortune to meet James and Danna Smith from Graford, Texas. We have visited the USA on many occasions, but never Texas. The Smiths' enthusiasm and pride for the state have persuaded us to visit in 2009. As the state is more than three times larger than England, the trip is going to take some planning. Still, with the help of our Texan friends and *Texas Highways*, planning is going to be a part of the fun. And back to the June issue, the Guadalupe Mountains are at

the top of the list. Thanks for the magazine, and thanks to the Smiths for sending it to us.

HARRY GILROY
Great Britain

Soar Spots

LAST YEAR, I was given a subscription to *TH* by Lewis Robinson, a Texas friend I met in Marfa while flying my glider with friends who meet there annually. *TH* has been a wonderful way to keep my recollections of Texas alive, and I never fail to see something in each issue to remind me of some happy occasion, whether I was flying my glider in some part of Texas, or just passing through. I want to commend you for publishing such an interesting magazine. If I had never been to Texas, I think *TH* would motivate me to get down there to see it for myself!

TOM HARDY
Columbus, Mississippi

WRITE OR E-MAIL: Talk to *TH*, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879; e-mail: letters05@texashighways.com. Web site: www.texashighways.com. Though we are unable to print every letter, we just might select yours to appear in the magazine—whether you send us kudos or criticism. We reserve the right to edit letters.

PLEASE PASS THIS MAGAZINE ALONG
PRINTED IN TEXAS ON RECYCLED PAPER



Visit for a Day

or Stay a Lifetime



Branded 1867
re-established daily.



www.gocleburne.com
www.cleburnechamber.com
817.645.2455
toll free 888.525.3287
info@cleburnechamber.com

N M E X I C O O Z A R K D I S T R I C T T E X A S



Up ahead, scenic landscapes provide a backdrop for oil boomtowns, frontier forts, steam trains and historic courthouses. Off to the side, cultural and heritage festivals make the perfect weekend getaway. And close behind are stories of the people who made Texas great. So get in the car. Get on the trail. Take a look around — you can see your history from here.



Order free heritage trail brochures at www.thc.state.tx.us/travel, or call 866/276-6219.

Watch for new travel guides for Texas Pecos Trail Region (www.texaspecostrail.com) and Texas Hill Country Trail Region (www.txhillcountrytrail.com).



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

Photo courtesy Texas State Library & Archives Commission



FOR THE ROAD

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS AND PLACES

Brave New World

WITH MORE THAN 200 WINERIES OPERATING in Texas these days, and consumers becoming more knowledgeable by the sip, wine is a big deal in the Lone Star state. After all, what other delicious thing lends itself so beautifully to observations of geology, geography, meteorology, agriculture, history, and language? On November 4-9, the **San Antonio New World Wine & Food Festival** marries cuisine from across the state to wine from around the world. Let's all toast to that!

Six days of classes, workshops, seminars, and tastings mean you'll have ample opportunities to learn more about pairing wine with food; cooking regional specialties from Mexico, France, and America's Pacific Northwest; and eating locally



San Antonio's New World Wine & Food Festival's Totally Tejas event brings a cowboy out of the cantina.

(wherever you live). If you're interested in growing grapes on your own patch of land, a seminar on sustainable viticulture may help you decide to ditch your day job and take up farming. For many festival-goers, the most anticipated event is the New World Grand Tasting, held this year downtown, in the native-stone "Grotto" adjacent to the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center. At this event, more than 30 local chefs pair offerings (Goat cheese and fig canapés! Mushroom-and-basil ravioli! Grilled shrimp-tomatillo tostadas!) with their favorite food-friendly wines.

On November 9, cocktail attire makes way for blue jeans at an all-ages event called Totally Tejas, which takes place at Rio Cibolo Ranch, a Western-themed special-events center about 25 minutes northeast of downtown San Antonio. With golden hay bales and stately Longhorns as a backdrop, guests can sample wines and foods; enjoy live music; shop for locally made crafts, food items, and housewares; and even learn a few tricks with a lasso. (Trust us: It's harder than it looks.)

Advance tickets range from \$45 (Totally Tejas) to \$80 (Grand Tasting). Call 210/822-9555; www.nwwff.org. —L.M.

BEST LITTLE ART CENTER IN TEXAS

WHEN POTTER ROGER ALLEN AND TWO other artists purchased an abandoned chicken farm on the outskirts of San Angelo in 1971, they hoped to build a supportive community where artists could live and work. Allen's original partners have moved on, but over the past



The Christmas Capital of Texas!

There's no better place to spend Christmas

than in the Christmas Capital of Texas – Grapevine! With tree lightings, parades, millions of lights and much, much more, why go anywhere else!

- North Pole Express – Ride the Grapevine Vintage Railroad to your Christmas dreams!
- ICE! at the Gaylord Texan Resort – It's a winter wonderland of ice monuments, ice slides, special lighting effects and more!
- The Magic of Christmas – A spectacular Christmas production which celebrates all of the warm and cozy sights and sounds of holiday wishes and memories.
- Great Christmas shopping for everyone on your list.



Visit our web site for more details.
GrapevineTexasUSA.com
 800-457-6338



**Downtown Brenham Christmas Stroll
& Lighted Parade — December 5-6**
979-337-7374



**Tour Country Homes
of Chappell Hill — December 13**
979-836-6033



**Barrington
Living History Farm**
936-878-2214

Brenham Washington County



**Heritage Home Tour &
Trunk Show Nov. 22-23**
979-836-1690



**Best Western Inn
of Brenham**
979-251-7791



FOR A FREE VISITOR'S GUIDE, CALL 1-800-509-1752
WWW.BRENHAMTEXAS.COM

BRENHAM · BURTON · CHAPPELL HILL · INDEPENDENCE · WASHINGTON
Halfway between Houston and Austin on Hwy. 290



Windy Hill Winery
Texas Legend Finest Wines
979-836-3252



Texas Ranch Life
Open year-round
979-885-8338



Must Be Heaven
A Brenham Tradition!
979-830-8536



**BlissWood
Bed & Breakfast**
713-301-3235

For THE ROAD

30 years, the grizzled visionary—with more than a little help from his friends—has transformed the three-acre site into a lovely, rambling compound that includes 15 artists' studios, two galleries, a B&B, and a small, topflight restaurant.

Allen says the main objective of the **Chicken Farm Art Center** has always been “sharing the wonderful world of art.” The center’s monthly First Saturday celebrations feature the work of a local artist and include live music, demonstrations by resident artists (a.k.a. Chicken Farmers), and art activities. First Thursday yard concerts spotlight local singer-songwriters. Annual events include an April ceramics weekend (in conjunction with the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts’ national show), a Blacksmith and Blues affair in May, and the three-day Thanksgiving Open House, a 35-year-old tradition that attracts more than a thousand visitors.

Held on the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday after Thanksgiving, the Open House reflects the generous, laid-back spirit that pervades the Chicken Farm. Peruse pottery, paintings, sculpture, jewelry, fiber arts, and mosaics by some 50 artists from across the state, listen to live music, take in demonstrations from blacksmithing to stone carving, have a massage, and enjoy free refreshments. Call 325/653-4936; www.chickenfarmartcenter.com. —N.M.

SCREEN IMAGES

THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, THE **GRACE Museum** in **Abilene** showcases a cutting-edge collection of film posters representing almost a century of independent African-American cinema. *Imaging Blackness, 1915-2002: Film Posters from the Indiana University Black Film Center/Archive* includes 43 posters that explore the development of African-American roles in cinema. For example, the black-and-white poster for Richard Norman’s 1926 film, *The Flying Ace*, touts the movie’s “All Colored Cast,” “Six Smashing Reels,” and “Thrills! Action! Punch!” Norman, a filmmaker from Florida, sought to counter stereotypes of the day with positive film roles.

Compare the graphics for *The Flying Ace* with the poster for the 1972 “blaxploitation” film *Superfly*—with its stylized font and “stick-it-to-the-man” tagline. Then study the contrast between the somber graphics in the poster of 1985’s *The Color Purple*, which explored the life of a young African-American woman in the early 1900s, and



www.visitbigbend.com
www.odessatcvb.com
www.visitfortstockton.com
www.drchamber.com
www.alpinetexas.com

Big Sky,
with lots of
elbow room for
exploration and
relaxation, where
adventure can be tough,
soft, or in between. Where
you come for the great scenery...

**Big Bend and
Texas Mountain Country**

...but what you will remember most is the
warm West Texas hospitality.

Chisos Mountains, Big Bend National Park
 Rio Grande
 Guadalupe Mtns National Park
 El Paso
 Van Horn
 Fort Stockton
 Midland
 Odessa
 Alpine
 Marathon
 Maria
 Fort Davis
 Big Bend Ranch State Park
 Big Bend National Park
 Presidio
 Del Rio
 Amistad National Recreation Area

Shopping & Galleries - Alpine
 Presidential Museum - Odessa
 Paisano Pete - Fort Stockton
 Houseboating - Lake Amistad

the image on the 1991 poster for Spike Lee's film *Jungle Fever*, which examined the thorny issues of inner-city racial stereotypes. Viewed together, the posters display the emergence of thriving African-American cinema.

The Grace Museum encompasses three museums in the 1909 Grace Hotel building, including The Art Museum, The History Museum, and The Children's Museum. Call 325/673-4587; www.thegracemuseum.org. —L.M.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLACK FILM CENTER/ARCHIVE



Lena Horne stars in 1938's *The Bronze Venus*. See this poster and 42 others at The Grace Museum.

A TEXAS TIME MACHINE

ANOTHER ELECTION YEAR IS UPON US, and many people are caught up in political debate. But November 8-9, at Henkel Square, a site established as an authentic representation of culture and life in 19th-Century Round Top, folks will be anticipating the results of a different election—by telegraph—during the 1860 Living History event.

For two days, visitors to Henkel Square will get a glimpse of the everyday lives of Round Top citizens in November 1860, as living-history reenactors work, speak, and interact like they would have in the 19th Century. While portraying various residents (expect to see a doctor, a merchant, a telegraph operator, and more), the actors will demonstrate daily activities of the

Texas Renaissance Festival

1974

Adventure

A new adventure every weekend!

2008

Marriage

Magic

Saturdays, Sundays
and
Thanksgiving Friday

Romance

October 11th - November 30th

Special Discount Tickets

Adult \$18.00 Child (5-12) \$8.00 (under 4 free)
 Tickets at the gate - Adult \$21.00 Child \$10.00

Discount Tickets available at

www.texrenfest.com

Celebrate Christmas in Jefferson!

Nov. 28
 Christmas Lighting Ceremony at Lion's Park

Dec. 4-6 & Dec. 11-13
 26th Annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes®

Nov. 28 - Jan. 1
 Holiday Trail of Lights

JEFFERSON, TEXAS

1-888-GO-RELAX • www.jefferson-texas.com

For THE ROAD

time, including washing clothes, sewing, cooking, and banjo playing. You might witness fervent discussions of the 1860 presidential election, which raised questions of slavery and states' rights and helped set the stage for the Civil War.

Visitors can explore the 11 historic buildings on site, including several wooden houses (the

Henkel and Zapp-Von Rosenberg homes are in their original locations), a general store, a church, and a post office, all of which are filled with period furnishings. While wandering the grounds, visitors are welcome to fully interact with the "residents" and ask them about their daily lives. Don't be shy about knocking on doors and entering homes, sending telegrams, and checking for mail at the post office. You may even be approached by a curious newspaper reporter asking your opinion about Abraham Lincoln's win at the polls. Call 979/249-3308; www.geocities.com/txcwcivilian/henkel.
—CAITLIN SULLIVAN

CRANBERRIES COME LATER

THE 41ST CAPITAL ONE BANK DALLAS YMCA Turkey Trot, held in Big D on Thursday morning, November 27, is one of the largest events of its kind in the nation. From humble beginnings 40 years ago, this holiday fun-and-fitness fete now welcomes thousands of participants and onlookers, as well as competitive runners from around the country and the world.

The Trot's long history began with an eight-mile race in 1968 at the city's White Rock Lake. Back then, entrants were instructed to run along the lake's shores "to the big oak tree and back." In 1979, the Thanksgiving tradition relocated to downtown Dallas to showcase the city's many attractions.

There are plenty of noted Dallas landmarks to see over the course's current eight-mile route: architect I.M. Pei's Dallas City Hall (the Trot's start and finish); sculptor Henry Moore's *The Dallas Piece* at City Hall Plaza; the Dallas Farmers Market; the Deep Ellum arts and entertainment district; the West End restaurant and entertainment district; the Sixth Floor Museum; Reunion Tower; the Houston Street Viaduct; the Trinity River; Lake Cliff Park; and the historic Jefferson Street Bridge connecting Oak Cliff to downtown Dallas.

Don't have an eight-mile run in your exercise repertoire? Enjoy the Trot's three-mile fun run/walk. Dogs and strollers are welcome. Or, just come watch and partake of the event's buzz and good vibes. There are fun activities for everyone: a family tent, a petting zoo, clowns, pony rides, bounce houses, live music, and much more. The Trot supports a good cause—programming at the Dallas YMCA. Call 214/954-0500; www.thetrot.com.
—M.L.

MANET TO MIRÓ

THROUGH DECEMBER 2, THE MEADOWS Museum in Dallas presents *From Manet to Miró: Modern Drawings from the Abelló Collection*, an exhibit of 64 drawings by some of the most important artists of the past two centuries. Chosen from the private collection of Spanish art collectors Juan Abelló and his wife, Anna Gamazo, the show includes pieces by Manet, Degas, Dalí, Miró, Goya, Pissarro, Renoir, and other artists. "I believe drawing to be the most immediate and spontaneous form of artistic expression," Juan Abelló told Dr. Mark Roglán, the Meadows' director. "It always astonishes me to see how a blank page can be transformed by a single line, the result of a rapid gesture that ... gives birth to an idea, and by extension, the artist's imaginative world." Call 214/768-2516; www.meadowsmuseumdallas.org.
—L.M.



PEARLAND

In the middle of it all...



35th Annual Christmas Gift Alley
First United Methodist Church
November 9-10

- ❄ More than 100 vendors with unique gifts
- ❄ Sugar Plum Tea Room
- ❄ Live Music
- ❄ Fun activities for the whole family



Hometown Christmas Festival
Pearland Town Center
December 5-31

- ❄ Holiday Entertainment
- ❄ Live Concerts, Movie Nights, Snow, Giveaways, Promotions, Ice Skating, Radio Disney
- ❄ And Much More!

www.VisitPearland.com

Pearland Convention & Visitors Bureau
3501 Liberty Drive
Pearland, TX 77581
(281) 485-3634



VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.texashighways.com

A SADDLE STORY

For lifelong cowgirl and trailblazer Connie Douglas Reeves, living life to the fullest meant you had to “saddle your own horse.” Reeves was born in Eagle Pass in 1901. At age five, she received her first horse from her maternal grandfather and quickly became a devoted rider.

Reeves graduated with a degree in speech from Texas Women’s University and enrolled in the University of Texas School of Law in Austin. She never finished, as the Great Depression forced her to withdraw and take a teaching job to help out her family.

While teaching at Main Avenue High School in San Antonio, Reeves organized one of the state’s first pep squads. When that school closed, she taught at the city’s newly opened Thomas Jefferson High School, where she formed a Western-themed pep squad, “The Lassos,” whose signature moves were intricate twirling and rope tricks.

For extra income, Reeves worked as a riding instructor at a local stable. Soon, she was renowned in the area for her horsemanship, and in 1936, she was asked to join the equestrian program at Camp Waldemar, an all-girls camp in nearby Hunt, where she taught riding for 67 years. “She was really tough, but in a good way,” says Liz Pohl, the camp’s present equine director. “She taught the girls so much about horses and life. I met her at age 78, and she was so strong. And when she was 100, I could still barely keep up with her.”

At Waldemar, Reeves met her future husband, Jack, the camp’s head wrangler and a former rodeo participant. They married in 1942, and during their 43-year marriage, the pair managed a



In this photo taken around 1910, young Connie Reeves looks poised to take the wrangling world by storm.

10,000-acre sheep and cattle ranch when camp was not in session.

Reeves found herself a role model for generations of young women, students, campers, and even Waldemar’s wranglers. Until the 1980s, only men worked the camp’s horses, but Reeves

believed that women had a gentler way of handling and connecting with horses, so she persuaded the camp to switch to female wranglers.

In 1997, the National Cowgirl Museum in Fort Worth recognized Reeves’ legacy by inducting her into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, an honor bestowed upon women whose lives exemplify the ideals of self-reliance and independence that helped

**In the 67 years
Reeves taught at Camp
Waldemar, she shared her
love of riding with more
than 30,000 girls.**

shape the American West. The following year, she became the first woman to receive the Chester A. Reynolds Award from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City for perpetuating the history and heritage of the West.

In 2002, at age 100, Reeves rode in a parade celebrating the grand opening of the National Cowgirl Museum’s new building in Fort Worth.

The next year, a few weeks shy of her 102nd birthday, Reeves went riding with a friend at Camp Waldemar and was thrown from her favorite horse, a 28-year-old paint named Dr Pepper. She passed away several days later.

—Caitlin Sullivan

SADDLE UP and head on over to the **National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame in Fort Worth**, where Reeves’ saying, “Always saddle your own horse,” is an unofficial motto. You can read more about Reeves’ legacy and view photographs of her and more than 180 other Hall of Fame honorees at two interactive kiosks in the museum.

Children can explore the different aspects of ranch life in the Connie Reeves Discovery Corral and read Western stories inside a faux tipi; dress up in boots, chaps, and hats; and pretend to eat dinner from a fireside chuck wagon. Throughout the museum, you can see photos, Western wear, and cowgirl gear that celebrate the

independent spirit that helped forge the American West. Don’t miss the popular bucking-bronc simulator, where you can record a video clip of yourself “bronc-riding,” then e-mail it to friends and family. The museum is at 1720 Gendy St., in Fort Worth’s cultural district. Call 800/476-3263; www.cowgirl.net.

Spotlight

on BROWNWOOD AND BEYOND

My Way-Out Weekend

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE I'M HUNGRY. AFTER ALL, I had just spent a long weekend exploring wineries in the northern reaches of the Texas Hill Country, and among the indulgences I chose, delicious food ranked high. In restaurants both plebeian and posh all around **Brownwood**, I savored country-fried chicken; rare steak with wild-mushroom risotto; three different flavors of Italian gelato; even a basket of puckery, fried dill pickles served with buttermilk ranch dressing.

But here we are, my husband, Randy, and I, driving through San Saba on our way back to Austin, and my lunch light is blinking. A tip from a video-store clerk on the courthouse square leads us to the Double-G Pit Stop, where plumes of mesquite smoke pour from a covered barbecue pit out front. Randy pushes open the squeaky front door, cradling



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

On a serene wooden deck overlooking a koi pond, Deb Morelock teaches yoga to guests of the Star of Texas B&B. Resident kitty Night-Night supervises.

a case of wine in his arms like a newborn baby. The manager stops him, raising an eyebrow. "You gonna drink that in here?"

As I dig into my chopped beef sandwich, I hear my husband explain that we don't plan to drink the wine on-premises, but we've been visiting wineries all weekend and we don't want the bottles to get hot in the car. Could we please just keep them in the air-conditioning while we eat?

"You've been doing what?" asked the manager incredulously as he allows our wine into the A/C. "Drivin' around to wineries? In Texas?"

Well, actually, yes.

And if our lovely weekend is any indication, we won't be the last couple cruising through town with a backseat full of Texas wine.

The five wineries we chose to visit are part of a loosely knit group (eight in all) extending from Lampasas to Granbury. Together, they call themselves the Way Out Wineries, which describes both their off-the-beaten-path locations and their approach to making wine. (A few produce Viognier, for example, from a French grape that grows well in this region; and others create wines with Mediterranean varietals such

CONCAN • GARNER STATE PARK • REAGAN WELLS • SABINAL • UTOPIA • UVALDE

Relax
in the
River Region

Unwind from the pressures of life at one of our hillside cabins. Indulge yourself at the Spa at Mountain Valley or enjoy a round of golf. If you are fishing for adventure, try one or all of our crystal clear rivers stocked with Rainbow trout.

Check out the special winter rates at www.THCR.com or call 800-210-0380

Texas Hill Country River Region

A Vacation Reason for Every Season

CONCAN • GARNER STATE PARK • REAGAN WELLS • SABINAL • UTOPIA • UVALDE

as Tempranillo and Sangiovese.) We'd be staying for two nights in Brownwood, the midway point on a self-guided wine trail. There, in a railroad town whose initial heyday ended a half-century ago, we found surprises at nearly every turn.

Consider our lodging, to start: Chain hotels are available in Brownwood, but we had booked a stone cottage at a wooded, rambling compound called the Star of Texas B&B, where owners Deb and Don Morelock offer five cottages, a large tipi, and a restored 1955 Spartan camper to overnight guests. The couple greeted us with a bottle of chilled Viognier from Brennan Vineyards of nearby Comanche, and

as we sipped the boldly perfumed wine while lounging in low-slung chairs on the porch, I sensed trouble—a conundrum exacerbated by the nearby hammock, hot tub, koi pond, ping-pong table, and scenic hiking trail: How were we going to tear ourselves away to explore the area? Turns out I'm not the only guest to have had such thoughts. "When people come here from the city," says Deb, who teaches yoga on the B&B's wooden

I wondered: How were we going to tear ourselves away from the peaceful porch to explore the area?

boardwalks, "and they finally get a breath of fresh air, I can see them start to relax, to sink into a slower pace."

"We need to warn you about Biscuit, our resident llama," adds Deb. "You'll probably see him when you hike the trail. Just let him approach you, and he'll breathe you in, then leave you alone." Sure enough, the next morning as we clambered across the rough trail, admiring the whimsical land-art collages of marbles, wrought-iron creations, and other curios that mark the way, we heard a rustling, and there was Biscuit, his fuzzy nostrils flaring, inches from my face. But llamas don't linger. His olfactory memory established, Biscuit soon ambled off into the woods.

Our winery visits the day prior—to Texas Legato and Pillar Bluff Vineyards in Lampasas and to the fine Alamosa Wine Cellars in Bend—had provided us with knowledge we could use as we further explored the other WOW Wineries. At Texas Legato, for example, vintner Bill Bledsoe taught us that Malbec, a grape best-known as an Argentinean varietal, *(continued on page 18)*

Waxahachie

for the
Picture Perfect
Holiday Season

UPCOMING EVENTS

Candlelight Home Tour & Downtown Victorian Christmas Festival
Nov. 28-30, Dec. 6-7 & 13-14

Bethlehem Revisited
Dec. 5-7 & 12-14

Enchanted Pines E-Z Glide Ice Skating Rink
Opens Thanksgiving Weekend

For more information on upcoming events and attractions call
(972) 937-2390
www.waxahachiechamber.com

Deck Denton.

17th annual
DENTON HOLIDAY LIGHTING FESTIVAL

Denton's Historic Courthouse Square
110 W. Hickory
December 4th
5:30-9:00 pm

DENTON
and all that jazz!

Denton Convention & Visitors Bureau ⁸⁰⁰381-1818
www.discoverdenton.com

Event Hotline: 1 (866) DENTONTX

TOP Tables

NOTEWORTHY CULINARY JOURNEYS

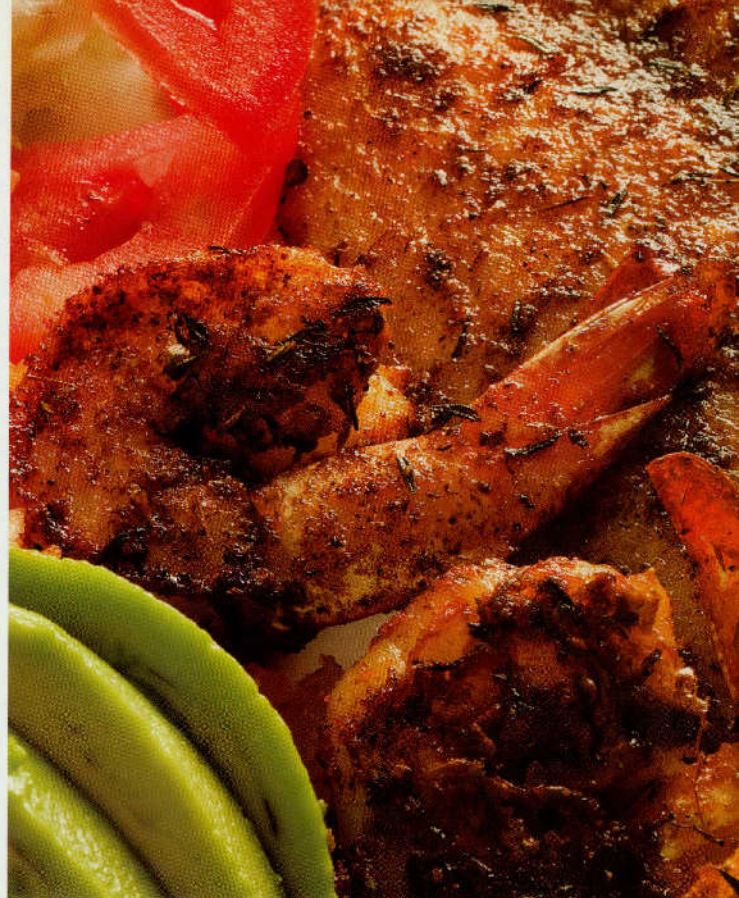
BY HELEN BRYANT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Ahoy, Cap'n Roy's!

LEE ROY SUMMERLIN has been a pool shark, a real estate salesman, a fishing guide, a pier manager, a poet, and a guitar picker. So when he had the chance to open a restaurant on South Padre Island a couple of years ago, he was game. "It ain't brain surgery," says Summerlin, the cap'n at Cap'n Roy's.

Maybe not, but it's far from easy keeping a restaurant alive on the island. Many an eatery has fallen victim to the tourist trade's two dead zones: early fall, before the Winter Texans arrive from the Midwest, and late spring, after the college students and Easter vacationers leave. After two years of serving Veracruz-style seafood and Mexican food, Cap'n Roy's looks like a keeper.



Chiles, tomatoes, citrus, and a liberal use of spices characterize Veracruz-style seafood dishes. On South Padre Island, Cap'n Roy's serves the real deal.

IN THE HEART OF TEXAS BETWEEN SAN ANTONIO AND AUSTIN

SHOPPING FUN THAT'S ONLY LIMITED BY TRUNK SPACE

Great selection, variety and unparalleled savings make shopping at our outlet malls a limitless experience. What you can fit in your trunk—well, that is another story.



Shop. San Marcos, Texas. Come see our many charms.

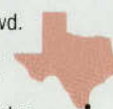
SAN MARCOS
A TEXAS NATURAL

888-200-5620 • www.toursanmarcos.com

You need to get to lunch or supper early if you want to score one of the dozen tables in the inside room or on a smaller, unadorned patio overlooking Padre Boulevard, the island's main drag.

But you'll be glad you made the effort. The fish tacos—grilled, fried, or blackened

CAP'N ROY'S is at 1313 Padre Blvd. on South Padre Island. Hours: 11 a.m. until 9 or 10 p.m. (whenever the place empties out). Beer and wine. Call 956/761-9990.



fish smothered in cabbage and mango-chipotle sauce and wrapped inside soft, locally made corn tortillas—are sublime. The spicy Veracruz-style shrimp also has a lot of fans, as does the Caldo Mariscos, a chile-infused stock full of fresh shrimp and fish.

And a little dish called Camaronitas Diabolitas (little devil shrimp) won first place in 2006 in neighboring Port Isabel's World Shrimp Cook-Off. "Yes, they're spicy little devils," says Summerlin, who says they're made by marinating shrimp in a secret sauce, rubbing them with spices, wrapping them in bacon, along with a hunk of pineapple, cream cheese, and a

jalapeño, and then applying a special glaze.

But don't ask Summerlin what's in the marinade, rub, or glaze. "I can't go public with that," he says. "People say I should bottle that stuff and sell it."

The cap'n will get the kitchen to cook your catch to order, if you wish, and serve it with fries and fumi salad (a crunchy, vinegary slaw). But you don't have to like seafood to enjoy Cap'n Roy's: The chulupas, made with hearty tortillas that can stand up to the pile of refried beans, spiced

Pasta Poblano, a hefty pile of vermicelli with butter, garlic, and poblano sauce, topped with a grilled or blackened chicken breast or shrimp.

"We have a nice, diverse menu, and it's family-friendly," he says. It's a casual place, too, with blue tablecloths on the tables and the walls decorated with photos of customers and the fish they caught. Most of the entrées cost less than \$10.

Summerlin comes up with a few menu ideas, but he makes this perfectly clear: He's

You need to get to lunch or supper early to score one of the dozen tables in the inside room or on a simple patio overlooking busy Padre Boulevard.

beef, delicate shreds of lettuce, and grated cheese, are winners, too, as are the enchiladas, tacos, and carne guisada. Cap'n Roy's menu also includes appetizers such as fried calamari and guacamole, as well as salads, sandwiches (yes, the obligatory hamburger is there), and pastas.

In fact, one of Summerlin's own favorite dishes is something called El Kapitan

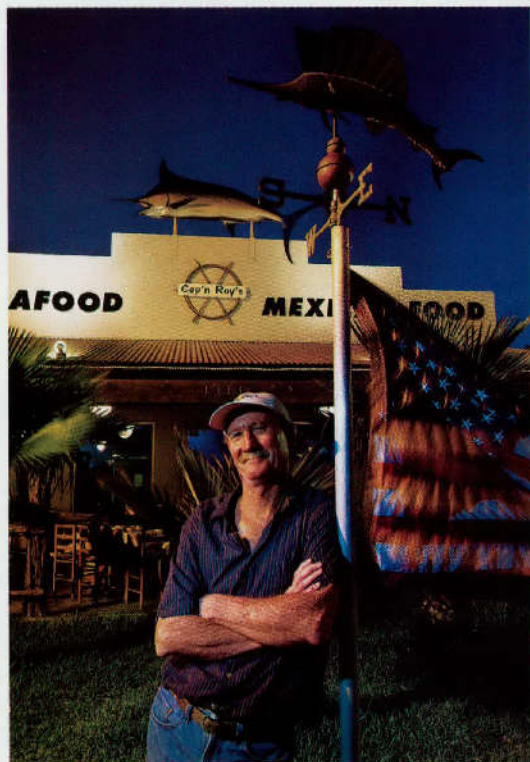
the owner, not a cook. His kitchen staff is composed of Mexican-Americans, hence the authentic preparations of coastal specialties.

Summerlin, a native of Azle, came to the island in the '70s on a lark. He'd been making a good bit of money playing pool, but he was in the mood for a change. He arrived on South Padre and "discovered surfing and the surfing lifestyle." He never left.

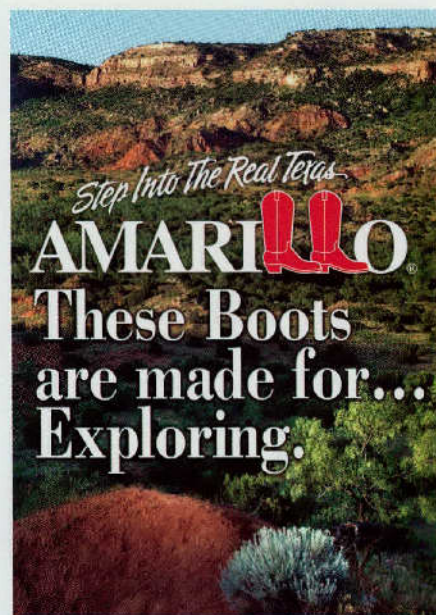
Riding the waves is a hard way to make a living, though, so Summerlin tried a few other things. He worked at a car rental agency. He sold burgers out of a little stand outside the Radisson Hotel. Then he took real estate courses at Texas Southmost College in nearby Brownsville, got his license, and started trying to sell houses.

In 1980, he found a good fit when he became manager of Jim's Pier, a fishing and water sports outfitter on the island. He kept that post for 26 years. In 1983, he added the job of fishing guide, taking folks out on bay charters in search of redfish and trout.

Then in 2005, a friend came to Summerlin and said his barbecue business just wasn't doing as well as he'd like. Would Summerlin like to take over the place and try seafood? Well, yes, he would. And that's how



Lee Roy Summerlin, a.k.a. Cap'n Roy, visited South Padre Island in the 1970s and never left. That's a good thing for fans of Mexican-style seafood.



Songs have been written, stories told and movies made, and yet, they have barely scratched the surface.



www.visitamarilloTX.us
800-692-1338
Free Visitor Guide



HUNTSVILLE

Journey Through Bethlehem



December 5th-7th, 2008
Walker County Fairgrounds

Home of Sam Houston



www.huntsvilletexas.com 800-289-0389

Cap'n Roy reeled in his own restaurant.

At first, he says, the people who came by were mostly friends. "Because of Jim's Pier, I know just about everybody," he says. "I may have an enemy, but I don't know him." His friends dropped by to be nice. They came back for the food. Then the tourists discovered Cap'n Roy's and kept coming back.

Summerlin sometimes offers diners a little something extra. He writes poetry, and he's not shy about reciting it in the dining room.

He's a songwriter, too, and he plays the slide guitar pretty well. But he draws the line at playing and singing for his guests.

"The fire's burning," he says, "but I'm not ready yet."

Maybe someday.

HELEN BRYANT, a serious seafood fan, eats at Cap'n Roy's every time she visits South Padre Island.

Staff photographer J. GRIFFIS SMITH doesn't normally eat meat of any kind, but he couldn't resist Cap'n Roy's excellent blackened-shrimp tacos.

More Beachy-Keen Tables

Blackbeard's, 103 E Saturn Ln., South Padre Island. Huge portions of fresh seafood dishes. Try the Shrimp Three Ways (fried, grilled, blackened). Great for big groups; they're happy to do separate checks. Call 956/761-2962.

Coconuts, 2301 Laguna Dr., South Padre Island. Thatched bayside hut serves good ceviche as well as burgers. Call 956/761-4218.

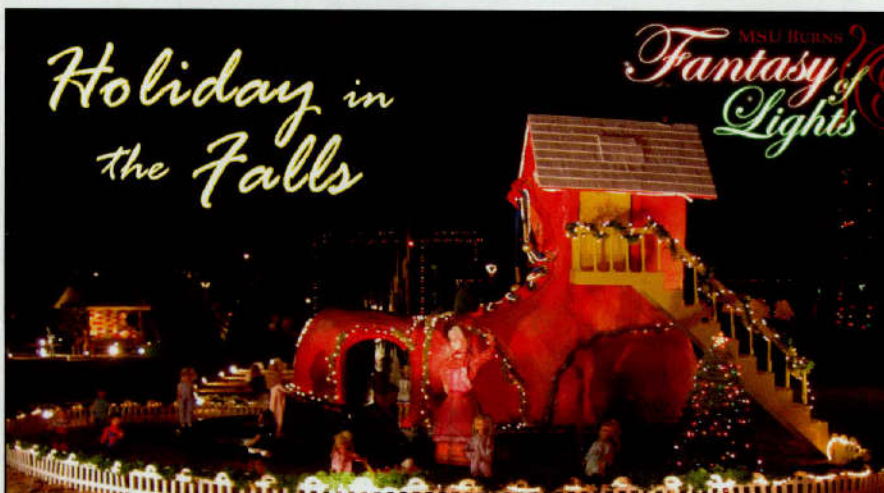
D'Pizza Joint, 2413 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island. Topnotch pizza, crisp and cheesy. Call 956/761-7995.

Kohnami, 410 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island. Delicious and beautifully presented sushi as well as teriyaki and tempura dishes. Call 956/761-4847.

Lost Galleon, 202 E. Queen Isabella Blvd., Port Isabel. All the fried flounder you can eat, plus two sides and a piece of Texas toast: \$8.95. Call 956/943-4400.

Pirate's Landing, 110 N. Garcia St., Port Isabel. Big, kitschy room overlooking the bay; good seafood. Try the grouper sandwich with waffle fries. Call 956/943-3663

Scampi's, 206 W Aries Dr., South Padre Island. This bayside favorite—remodeled after Hurricane Dolly—serves creative dishes such as peanut butter shrimp. Dine (or drink) on the deck for a perfect view of the sunset. Call 956/761-1755. —HELEN BRYANT



Holiday in the Falls

MSU Burns Fantasy of Lights

An Amazing Array of Holiday Sights & Events!

Fantasy of Lights on MSU Campus
34 storybook displays & thousands of lights!

Live Musicals & Theatrical Productions

ElectriCrittters at River Bend Nature Center
150 lighted silhouettes with sound effects!

The Christmas Train running display of
model trains that fill an entire art gallery!

Candlelight Home Tours * Santa House

Holiday Bazaars * Arts & Crafts Show

Dazzling Neighborhoods to Tour

Visit our web site
for all events plus
hotel specials
or call to receive a
tourist packet



WICHITA FALLS
Convention & Visitors Bureau

800-799-6732

www.wichitafalls.org

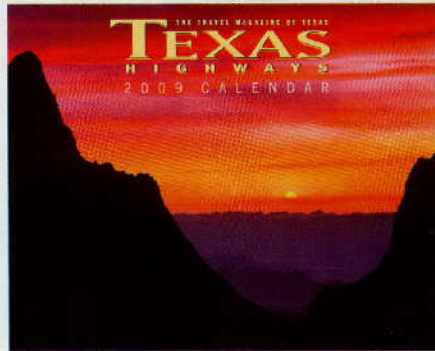
A Texas Tradition



A Texas Christmas 2008 Ornament

Texas artist Pattilu Bowsby's hand-painted globe ornament—featuring a gift-filled mailbox—will add sparkle and shine to your tree.

Hand-painted in Texas
Diameter: 2 5/8"
39108.....\$14.50



Texas Highways 2009 Calendar

13 breathtaking scenic images from around the Lone Star State.

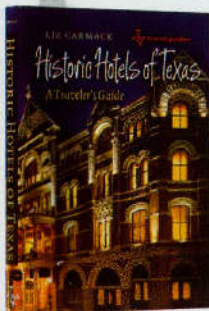
Size: 13 1/2" x 10 3/4" Opens to: 13 1/2" x 21 1/2"
33149.....\$13.95



Travel Jacket

You'll be ready for the weather in this navy and khaki jacket with front zipper, pockets and adjustable cuffs. The front left chest is embroidered with Texas and a star. It's essential wherever life takes you. Imported.

100% polyester: shell and lining
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL
48100.....\$29.99



Historic Hotels of Texas A Traveler's Guide

Liz Carmack details 64 hotels that are at least 50 years old and are still open today. Included are fascinating historical nuggets and a special focus on characteristics that create the unique ambiance of each.

2007, 243 pages, 6" x 8 1/2", color photographs, flex-back
36341.....\$23.00



Suede-Bill Cap

Navy six-panel cap is embroidered with Texas and an oval Texas flag design.

Adjustable buckle in back
Color: Navy
38720.....\$16.95

78LCAT

VIEW OUR ENTIRE PRODUCT LINE AT

www.texashighways.com

TO ORDER, CALL 1-800-839-4997 (386-597-4297 from outside the U.S.)

fallartfestivals.com

fallartfestivals®
san antonio texas



SA♥ARTS

www.SAHEARTS.com

BROWNWOOD AND BEYOND

(continued from page 13)

grows in Texas, too. And at the rustic tasting room of Alamosa Wine Cellars, vintners Jim and Karen Johnson allowed us to sneak a sample of their still-maturing 2008 Viognier from a cask; Jim observed that the wine needed more acid, which he described as a “zing” that gives a wine liveliness and texture.

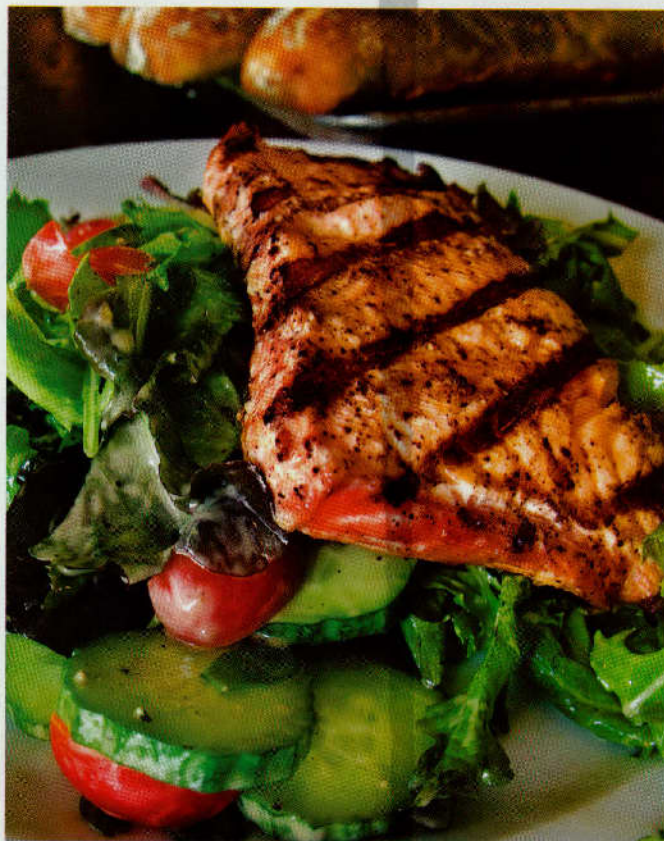
It was hard to tear ourselves away from our little cabin—the cozy bed piled high with pillows, the picture window looking out into the woods, the leisurely breakfast of quiche with basil pesto. But we soon stumbled across yet another interesting diversion in Brownwood that kept us from our mission.

We dropped by the Brownwood Visitor’s Center to pick up a map; I thought we’d be in and out. But, we learned, the center occupies part of the former Brownwood

Harvey House, a Prairie-style structure built in 1914 to serve customers on the Santa Fe Railroad. Soon, we found ourselves wandering along the railroad tracks, taking photos of the enormous grain silos sidled up to the station, and imagining what it must have been like during World War II, when a dozen passenger trains came through the station daily, bringing soldiers, visitors, and prisoners of war to nearby Camp Bowie.

Then we spied an old caboose and sleek rail car outside a gleaming, modern building; we had stumbled upon the Martin & Francis Lehnis Railroad Museum, which opened last September. “The Lehnises,” says railroad historian Mary Irving, the museum’s curator, “collected thousands of items relating to the railroad, and they agreed to donate their collection if the city would build a museum.” The museum literally buzzed (and whistled and clattered) with activity: Docents fired up model trains; pol-

ished cases of signal lights, photographs, and rare dining-car china; gave tours of a rare 1927 Santa Fe Railroad business car and caboose; and explained items of interest to a handful of train enthusiasts. In his early years as a career railroader, Mary told us, Martin Lehnis worked as a pumper—the guy who pumped water from



J. GRIFIN SMITH

The menu changes daily at The Turtle Restaurant in Brownwood. Here, grilled salmon stars with a salad of field greens, cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes.

a creek or well into the water tank for steam engines. One day, so the story goes, he saw a diesel locomotive pass by, and he knew it was time to change his job, so he began working on the tracks as a welder.

Next, we set off for Comanche’s Brennan Vineyards, where we met winemaker Pat Brennan, who changed *his* career from nephrologist to vintner after purchasing some of the most historic property in Comanche County. In fact, his tasting room, where we sampled a crisp Viognier and a succulent, slightly sweet Muscat, occupies the 1879 McCrary House, home to some of Comanche’s first Anglo settlers. Perhaps the McCrarys’ pioneering spirit has influenced Pat and his wife, Trelise, as they experiment with such traditionally hard-to-grow varietals as Viognier and Syrah. “Viognier in particular has been an excellent performer for us,” says Pat. “It’s not a wine that is familiar to most people, like Chardonnay, but it sells itself once you taste it.”

Brennan Vineyards also serves as the contact point for the Way Out Wineries' five annual "Road Trip Weekends," when wine enthusiasts enjoy food-and-wine pairings and live entertainment at each WOW winery. The next one, the winery group's Holiday Road Trip, will take place Nov. 7-9. "It's a fun way to see the wineries," says Pat, "but it's a 300-mile road trip. It takes two days."

Or more than that if you're a slowpoke. We had run out of time, and after a lovely drive through the greening pastures of North Central Texas to try the wines of one more spot in Rising Star, we returned to our cottage in Brownwood. We had dinner reservations that night at The Turtle Restaurant and Gelateria, a restaurant in downtown Brownwood that specializes in locally grown ingredients.

Down the street from The Turtle, the 1940s Hotel Brownwood stands vacant, and a few women's clothing stores and gift shops do business among empty storefronts; around the corner, a small deli serves sandwiches and other lunch items. Here, amid signs of both progress and decline, The Turtle's chef de cuisine, Morgan Robinson, offers an ever-changing menu of such items as roasted rack of lamb with cherry-and-Parmesan crust; samosas with honey-curry sauce, and field-green salad with walnuts and shaved onions. At press time, you could bring your own wine (and the Turtle would waive the corkage fee if you brought a WOW wine), but that's about to change. "We're opening a wine bar soon," says co-owner Mary Stanley, "and we'll have more than 20 different wines by the glass."

Why the name The Turtle? "Well," says Stanley, "The snail was already taken as a symbol of the Slow Food movement, so we needed another slow animal. And the turtle is a symbol of longevity and perseverance."

And *that*—perseverance—is what will help people like Mary Stanley, Deb and Don Morelock, Mary Irving, and the founders of local wineries as they strive to bring yet another heyday to the town of Brownwood.

—LORI MOFFATT

FOR MORE ON Brownwood museums, lodging, and restaurants, call 325/646-9535; www.visitbrownwood.com.

Way Out Wineries, 325/356/9100; www.wayoutwineries.org.

Star of Texas B&B; 800/850-2003; www.star-of-texas.com

Martin & Frances Lehnis Railroad Museum; 325/643-6376.

The Turtle Restaurant, 325/646-8200; www.theturtlerestaurant.com. Closed Jan. 1-24.





Sabinal Canyon

STUNNING FALL COLOR AND A TOWN CALLED
UTOPIA ENRICH THE STREAM OF SOLITUDE.

By Maxine Mayes • Photographs by Wyman Meinzer







THE SABINAL RIVER issues forth as springs trickling from crevices in the canyon walls of Lost Maples State Natural Area in northwest Bandera County. It tumbles through gorges and glides through lowlands in a 60-mile journey toward its union with the Frio River south of Sabinal. Sometimes it narrows to a playful ribbon, running clear and cold over jumbles of rocks; at other times it flows wide, deeply mysterious, shadowed by crowds of towering cypress. And, in places, the river hides for a time, disappearing beneath the limestone floor.

At Vanderpool, the Sabinal courses under Ranch-to-Market-Road 337, the serpentine, scenic route that begins at Medina and ends at Camp Wood. In Utopia, the river intersects RM 1050, which threads through stunning mountain vistas on its way to Garner State Park. But the Sabinal's primary asphalt companion is RM 187, and the two run parallel, within calling distance of each other for long stretches before going their separate ways.

Spanish explorers in the late 16th Century called the river Arroyo de la Soledad, which means "stream of solitude." The Sabinal River Canyon does seem to wear a cloak of quietude. Vast, un-

spoiled landscapes, once roamed by people of the Apache, Lipan Apache, Tawokini, Taovaya, and Comanche tribes, have been preserved by heirs of pioneer ranching families who have resisted the temptation to sell to developers.

Such serene settings do invite tension-shedding hours spent daydreaming in a hammock or mesmerized by fireflies and starry skies. But ample stress-busting activities await the less sedentary: swimming, hiking, backpacking, biking, kayaking, mountain climbing. What you won't find in the canyon is a mall or a traffic light. And, you won't find crowds of people, except during the fall, when hordes of leaf-seekers descend

Lost Maples

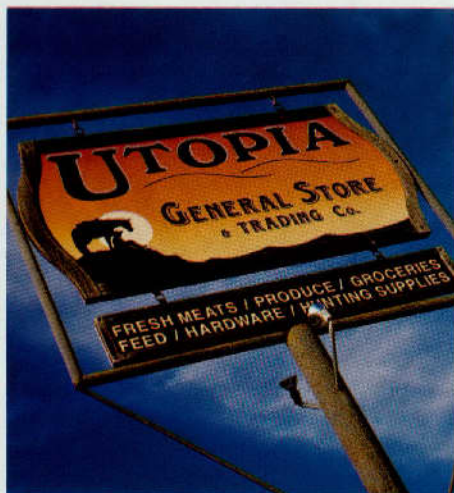
IS THE CROWN OF THE CANYON. THE SHADY ENVIRONS OF THE PARK NURTURE A STAND OF BIGTOOTH MAPLES, DESCENDANTS OF TREES THAT MIGRATED SOUTHWARD DURING THE ICE AGE.

PREVIOUS PAGE AND ABOVE: A placid stretch of the Sabinal River reflects autumn scenes between Lost Maples State Natural Area and Utopia. FACING PAGE: The park's bigtooth maples—also known as the Uvalde bigtooth and canyon maple—blaze with fall's palette.





Among the cleanest rivers in the state, the spring-fed Sabinal runs clear and cold from northwest Bandera County to its rendezvous with the Frio River 60 miles south.



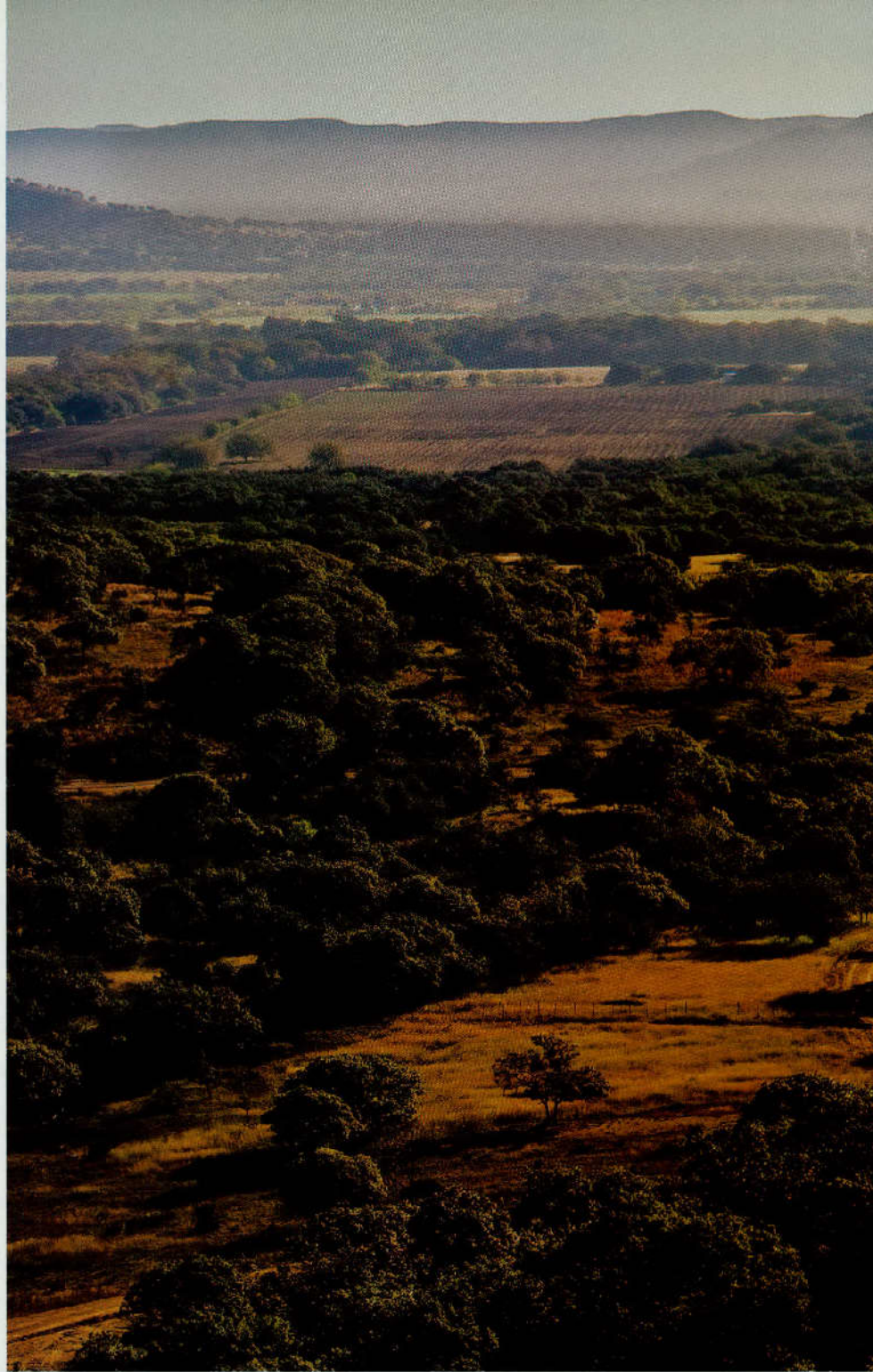
LEFT: The Utopia General Store lives up to its name with an array of items for sale. RIGHT: A northeastward view of the Sabinal Valley shows the river's west prong and drainage basin.

upon Lost Maples State Natural Area.

Lost Maples is the crown of the Canyon, both figuratively and geographically. The park covers more than 2,000 acres of diverse terrain: soaring limestone bluffs, ridges ruled by junipers, grassy meadows, and hardwood groves. The shady environs of the park nurture a stand of big-tooth maples, descendants of trees that migrated southward during the Ice Age. Between mid-October and mid-November, upwards of 70,000 visitors come to Lost Maples, hoping to catch the maples wearing vibrant reds and golds.

Weather-related factors—heat, cold, and rain—determine when the leaves will turn and the brilliance of the color. Because of this year's unusually hot and dry summer, Park Superintendent John Stuart predicts spectacular fall color. "The maples usually peak by the second week of November," he explains. "By Thanksgiving the maple leaves are all on the ground. That's when the red oaks and lacey oaks begin to turn." Leaves drift from the trees like confetti, carpeting the trails in shades of scarlet, orange, maroon, and gold.

Lost Maples offers more than 11 miles of trails with several degrees of difficulty. The Maple Trail, which skirts the river, is the easiest and most popular, especially with day-trippers. Seasoned backpackers who tackle the steeper climbs to the pinnacles are rewarded with dramatic overlooks. But all of the trails present awe-



inspiring scenes. A waterfall spills over a limestone ledge into a clear, rock-bottomed pool stirred by a school of small bass. Delicate maidenhair ferns sprout from holes in huge honeycomb rocks, and hardy vines sprawl unhindered. A tumble of boulders the size of cars overlooks a placid pond shaded by tall trees.

Marla Burns, an adventure therapist and a backpacking instructor at Texas

State University, takes groups to Lost Maples seven or eight times a year. A favorite "Lost Maples Moment" for her was "sitting high on a cliff ledge as the sun was beginning to set, watching the water flow far below ... and being surprised by two large crows flying between the canyon walls like fighter jets." Marla often follows the creeks to explore new territory.



LOST MAPLES is but one of the reasons to visit Sabinal Canyon. At the Lone Star Motorcycle Museum and Ace Cafe, one mile south of the park, former road racer Allan Johncock displays his collection of about 60 vintage bikes, among them a rare 1917 Indian Model O and a 1955 Vincent Black Knight. In a workshop clearly visible through large plate-glass windows, Allan restores the

A favorite “LOST MAPLES MOMENT”
WAS “SITTING HIGH ON A CLIFF LEDGE AS THE SUN
WAS BEGINNING TO SET, WATCHING THE WATER
FLOW FAR BELOW ... AND BEING SURPRISED BY
TWO LARGE CROWS FLYING BETWEEN THE CANYON
WALLS LIKE FIGHTER JETS.”



Join some
OLD-TIMERS FOR A 6 A.M.
COFFEE JOLT AT THE
GENERAL STORE, OR GRAB
A CUP OF FREE TRADE,
ORGANICALLY-GROWN BREW
AND SURF THE WEB AT
UTOPIA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE.

bikes to their prior glory. "I'm the welder, the painter, the tuner," he says. Which bike is his favorite? Allan points to a Velocette bike introduced at the 1953 London Motorcycle Show. "Not very exotic," he says, "but so much fun to ride."

The cafe specializes in "Aussie" pies, pastries with a variety of savory meat fillings. I like the "Aussie-Mex" stuffed with ground chuck, roasted poblanos, cilantro, and cheddar, but I'm curious about the chicken curry version. Allan's wife, Debbie, makes the pastry from a secret recipe Allan got from his hometown of Adelaide in South Australia. "As 'keeper of the cookbook,'" Allan says, "it's my sacred duty to serve good pies."

GOOD EATS are also served in Utopia, a paragon of traditional small-town charm with a surprising touch of trendy. Chow down on a burger and onion rings at the Lost Maples Café, a rustic landmark famous for its cream pies topped with mile-high meringue. Or, relish a bowl of tomato-basil soup and a gourmet sandwich on ciabatta at the Hicks House. Join some old-timers for a 6 a.m. coffee jolt at the General Store, or grab a cup of free trade, organically-grown brew and surf the Web at Utopia Joe's Coffee House.

While you're in town, prowl the aisles of the Utopia General Store, where you'll find everything from jeans to jerky, baby

Lost Maples Café, on Utopia's Main Street (RM 187), draws a regular crowd for its down-home cooking, and the pies—from coconut meringue to buttermilk—are the crowning touch.



household goods, tools, photos, and documents of the area's pioneer families. Antique farming and ranching tools and period furnishings fill the back room, which is paneled with wood from the original Utopia post office. Of special note is an old oxen yoke that once belonged to Captain William Ware, who founded the nearby Waresville settlement in 1852; the town later became Utopia. An 1888 hand-cranked washing machine numbers among the earliest artifacts in the museum, and a glass case displays World War II mementos from area veterans.

If you come to the canyon, especially during "leaf season," be aware that overnight accommodations at Lost Maples are limited to 30 water and electric sites and 50 hike-in, primitive camping spots. However, numerous heavenly hideaways are scattered throughout the area. If I were celebrating a romantic occasion, I'd book the Sweetheart Suite at the Lodges at Lost Maples with its king bed, cathedral ceiling, and Jacuzzi. Breakfast includes homemade baked goods like white chocolate-apricot scones. Foxfire Cabins features seven log cabins clustered near a deep swimming hole on the Sabinal, and assorted accommodations at other locations. If you prefer more seclusion, I recommend the solitary St. Clare's Cabin, tucked into one of the most picturesque valleys on RM 337. Pillowcases embroidered with the message "Sweet Dreams," intricate hand-stitched quilts, and other handiwork of owner Vicki Pannone create a cozy, homey ambiance. But my favorite amenities at St. Clare's Cabin are the Texas Cowboy Cookies. A Mason jar left on the kitchen counter contains the already-measured dry ingredients. Guests just add eggs, butter, and vanilla (all provided), and bake. Munching those cookies and sipping hot chocolate made me want to hole up there for the winter.

Come to think of it, holing up in Sabinal Canyon is an appealing prospect—in *any* season. ★

Sisterdale writer MAXINE MAYES loved a dawn hike at Lost Maples right after a midweek rain.

Wyman Meinzer has been shooting the state's natural treasures for *TH* for more than 25 years. His latest book, *Inspiration Texas Style*, will be out this fall. Go to www.wymanmeinzer.com.

bottles to batteries. Take time to admire fine French country antiques, including several enamel stoves, Provencal pottery, and Texas/Southwest home décor at Main Street Utopia. Recently, I was thrilled to find a realistic Texas horned lizard there for someone on my Christmas gift list.

For a special souvenir from the canyon, I suggest a photograph by Whitney Boyce or a painting by Margie Botkin. Boyce's images of beautiful canyon scenery, like autumn in Lost Maples, are available at Main Street Utopia and the General Store, which also carry Botkin's carefully researched renderings of Utopia landmarks like the 1892 Methodist Church and the 1873 Old Rock Store, now a lumber supply.

Botkin's works can also be found at the Sabinal Canyon Museum, which traces the history of the canyon through geological displays, Indian artifacts, and

essentials SABINAL CANYON

THE SABINAL is a "non-supported" river, meaning it is not maintained. For the safest enjoyment of the river, take advantage of the many campgrounds and cabins with river access, or visit **Utopia City Park**, at the intersection of RM 1050 and RM 187. Swim, picnic, and camp at this oak- and cypress-studded paradise at the dam on the Sabinal River. Call 830/966-3643.

Following are sites mentioned in the story. Hours vary; call ahead.

ATTRACTIONS

VANDERPOOL **Lost Maples State Natural Area** is in Bandera County, about 70 miles west of San Antonio, on RM 187, 5 miles north of Vanderpool. Call 830/966-3413 for information; 512/389-8900 for rates and reservations; www.tpwd.state.tx.us. Fall color updates each Wed. on Web site, or call 800/792-1112.

Because of heavy weekend traffic during the fall, weekday visits are encouraged.

Lone Star Motorcycle Museum & Ace Cafe is at 36517 RM 187 N., 830/966-6103; www.lonestarmotorcyclemuseum.com.

UTOPIA **Sabinal Canyon Museum**, RM 187 (Main St.), 830/966-2100.

Utopia General Store, 406 N. Main St., 830/966-3444.

Main Street Utopia, 282 Main St., 830/966-5544.

RESTAURANTS

UTOPIA **Lost Maples Café**, RM 187/Main St., 830/966-2221.

Hicks House Café, 128 W. Lee St., 830/966-2345.

Utopia Joe's Coffee House, 655 Main St., 830/966-5656; www.utopiajoes.com.

LODGING

The Lodges at Lost Maples are on RM 337, 4 miles west of Vanderpool, 877/216-5627; www.LostMaplesCabins.com.

Foxfire Cabins, 4 miles north of Vanderpool, 830/966-2200 or 877/966-8200; www.foxfirecabins.com.

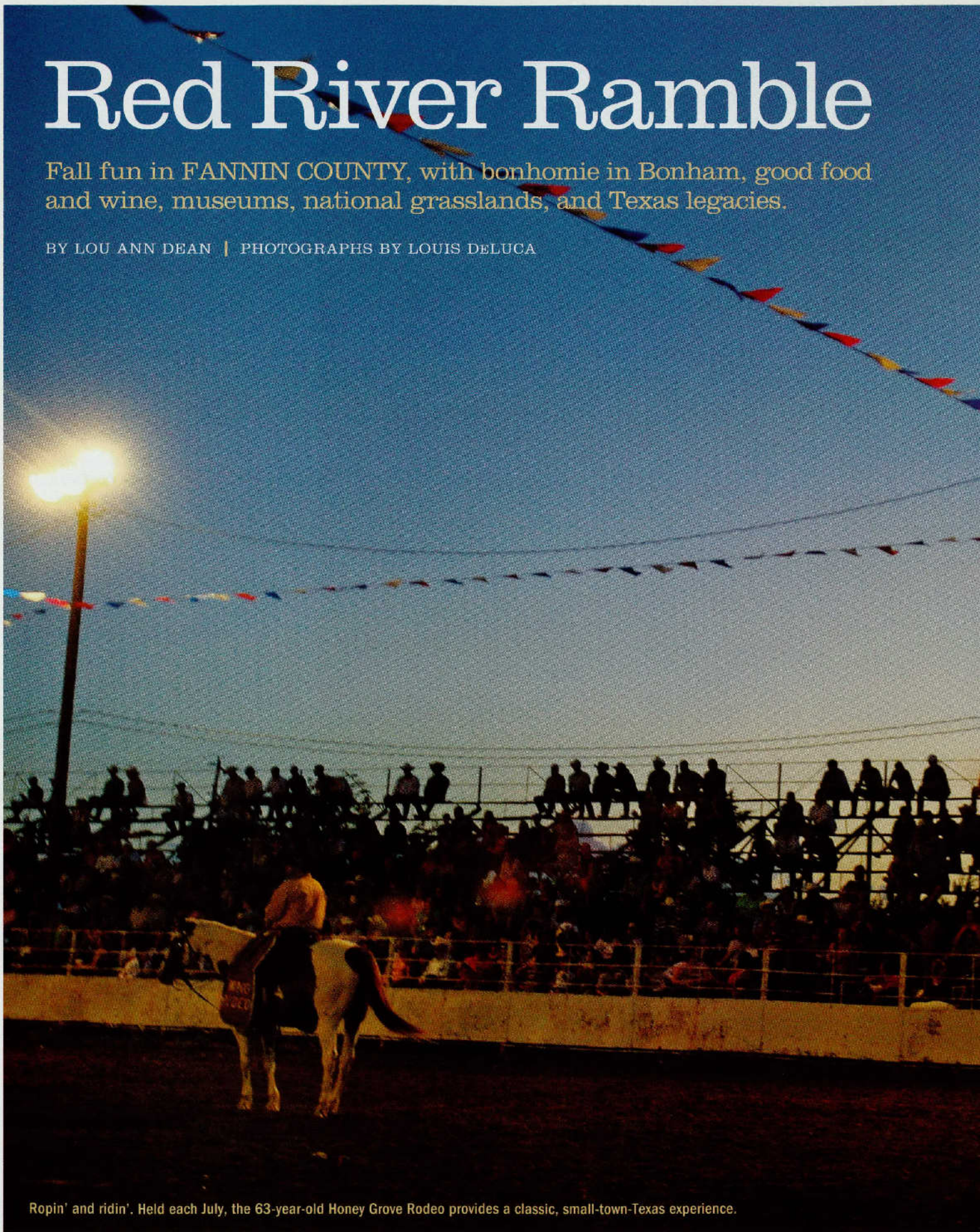
St. Clare's Cabin, on RM 337 between Leakey and Vanderpool, 361/549-4719 or 361/993-1071; www.stclarescabin.com.



Red River Ramble

Fall fun in FANNIN COUNTY, with bonhomie in Bonham, good food and wine, museums, national grasslands, and Texas legacies.

BY LOU ANN DEAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUIS DELUCA



Ropin' and ridin'. Held each July, the 63-year-old Honey Grove Rodeo provides a classic, small-town-Texas experience.





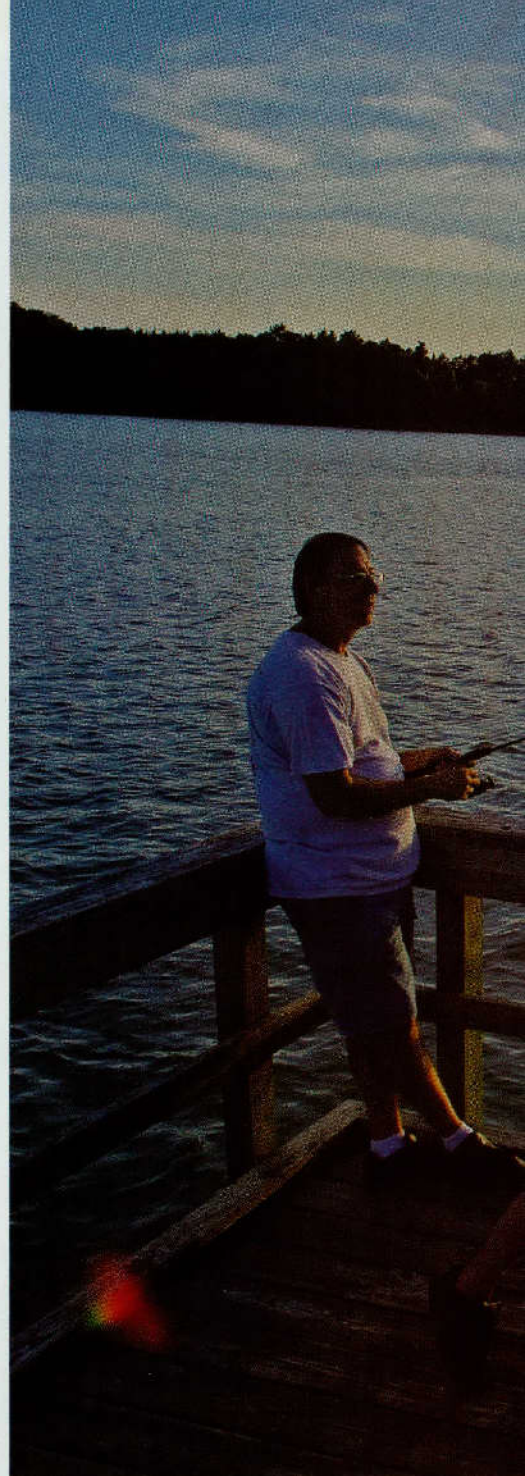
There's a little bit of Davy Crockett's curiosity, wanderlust, and zest for life in all of us. He once proclaimed northeast Texas "the richest country in the world" and praised a campsite here as "a honey grove." And while the local legacy of this native Tennessean first beckoned me to Fannin County, music, history, nature, art, food, wine, and kind-hearted folks will keep me coming back.

Texas 56 and US 82 bisect Fannin County, with Bonham, the county seat, situated at its center. Formed during the early years of the Republic of Texas, the county is named for Colonel James Fannin, who died at the Battle of Goliad in 1836. Bonham, as you might guess, is named for Alamo defender James Bonham, and you can see a statue of this Lone Star legend on the courthouse square.

A variety of specialty shops and eateries border the square, as does the Bonham Chamber of Commerce, which is inside the 1890 First National Bank building. Here, I grabbed some informative brochures, including a county map and a walking tour of the historic downtown.

"Tyler Dow Bryant is playing the Grove Music Hall in Honey Grove on Saturday night," a local informed me. "You won't want to miss him." I'd heard about this teen blues sensation from another guitar prodigy, Nacogdoches musician Alex Hunter, so I made plans to see him the following evening.

Continuing my explorations, I headed a block south to the restored 1900 Texas and Pacific Railway depot, which houses the Fannin County Museum of History. In its heyday, the railroad fed Bonham's economy, and



numerous area Victorian homes and churches reflect those boom days. The museum itself showcases the works of Bonham photographer Erwin E. Smith, whose famous images depict the cowboy and ranching life of early 20th-Century Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. It also includes an exhibit on the origination of the *bois d'arc*, a monster-sized pumpkin, and the actual fire engine used to extinguish a 1915 fire that nearly destroyed the courthouse. However, the most note-

ABOVE: Folks in Windom gather for a 4th of July celebration at Community Park. RIGHT: Randy Bass, and his son, Caleb, fish at the Bonham State Park Lake, southeast of Bonham.



worthy exhibit, *Bonham in the War*, re-creates a section of the nearby Jones Field WWII pilot-training base and includes a restored Fairchild PT-19 airplane.

The Creative Arts Center on West Fifth Street is also worth examining for its variety of content (sculpture, painting, photography, pottery, textiles, and jewelry), collective spirit, and ongoing support of the county's artists and their work.

Back on the road, I headed west on Texas 56. My first stop was the Sam

Rayburn Library and Museum, featuring white Georgian marble columns, maple trees lining the drive, a field of wildflowers spread about

the broad front lawn, and a prominent statue of Congressman Rayburn.

Designed by Mr. Sam himself, this landmark includes the white marble rostrum he

Though you could spend an entire weekend in Bonham, I wanted to experience some of Fannin County's outlying attractions as well.

used during his distinguished political career as Speaker of the House. A Porfirio Salinas bluebonnet landscape also graces the room, which is next to a replica of the



Shay Navia of Bogota pets her dog, Gabby, while enjoying the action at the Honey Grove Rodeo.

Speaker's office that contains a magnificent former White House chandelier. You can also see the original 1830s fireplace from the House of Representatives, pre-

Davy Crockett once claimed northeast Texas "the richest country in the world," and praised a campsite here as "a honey grove."

sented to Rayburn as a gift when the House was remodeled. For additional historical perspective, you can actually hear old radio recordings of the former Speaker. An outdoor garden, dedicated to Rayburn's sister and confidant, "Miss Lou," adds grace and beauty to the grounds.

With the afternoon waning, it was time to check into my accommodations, the Carleton House B&B, located north of the square. On this classic Victorian home's landscaped half-acre, mature pecan trees surrounded by English ivy create a lush garden setting.

Named for its second owner, Bonham doctor James C. Carleton, this National Register home was expertly restored and

decorated by current owners Steve and Karen Halbrook. The home features a large entrance hall, a bar with a 12-foot back-splash, a formal dining room with a ceiling mural, an informal breakfast area just off the kitchen, and two floors of guest rooms, each with its own bathroom and clawfoot tub. My favorite room is the music room, with its period pianos and red fringe embellishing the entranceway. I almost expected Scott Joplin to show up and play "Maple Leaf Rag" or "The Entertainer." Fortunately, Steve not only wows guests with his own mastery of the keys, but he also plays Cajun fiddle.

Another good choice for a night's stay is Granny Lou's B&B. It's a beautifully restored, three-story, 19th-Century Victorian, just two blocks from downtown near the Rayburn library.

For dinner, I headed to Shumardii's Steakhouse Restaurant and Bar, a popular eatery located west on Texas 121. In

the fall, red oaks on the lawn make their seasonal change from green to deep red. Inside, aromas of Shumardii's legendary honey-wheat bread fill the dining area. All the meals come with this hot, succulent staple, along with yummy honey butter.

The wood-smoked petite filet mignon, paired with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon, plus a baked sweet potato, made for a tasty meal. Dessert—a smooth, creamy cheesecake, topped with strawberries and a drizzle of white chocolate—was a slice of heaven.

The following day, I headed west past Shumardii's to visit Mr. Sam's homeplace, the Sam Rayburn House Museum. This 12-room clapboard structure dates to 1916. Operated by the Texas Historical Commission, the museum, replete with memorabilia of Rayburn's civilian life and half-century political career, reminds visitors why he said, "When I get away from Washington, I don't want to go anywhere else in the world but home." You can visit this famous Texan's final resting place inside the Willow Wild Cemetery on Texas 121.

Though you could spend an entire weekend in Bonham, I wanted to experience some of the county's outlying attractions, lakes, and countryside, as well. I enjoyed driving through 261-acre-Bonham State Park, two miles southeast of town. It includes a 65-acre lake for watercraft enthusiasts and a mountain trail for bikers. One-half mile from the recreational area, inside a big, red tin building, Joan Kelton's Country Music Hoe-Down offers a variety of music most weekends.

My next destination, Lake Fannin, due north on Texas 78, near the Red River, is within the Caddo National Grasslands. Peace and serenity reign supreme here. Several timber-and-stone cabins on the west shore of the picture-perfect lake date to the 1930s, when the Rural Resettlement Administration (RRA) spearheaded the park's development. Once the cabins were completed, thousands flocked to this area, taking advantage of its recreational opportunities.

When the lake closed in 1955, structures fell into ruin until the Lake Fannin Park Volunteers took (*continued on page 65*)

Fireworks make for a colorful 4th of July celebration in Windom's town square.





splendor IN THE GRASS

ARTHUR MEYERSON EXPLORES THE DIVERSE
BEAUTY OF THE TEXAS GRASSLANDS.

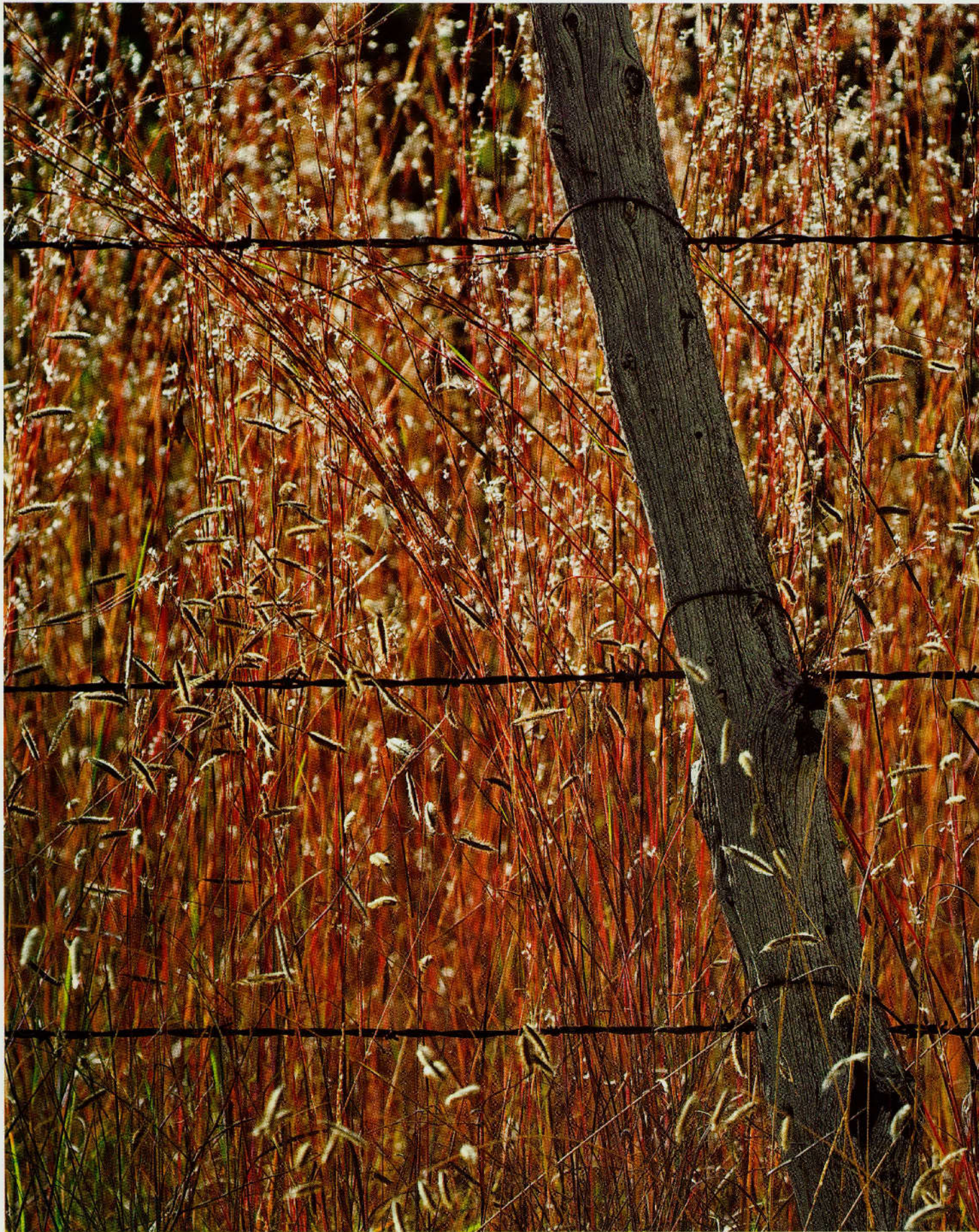




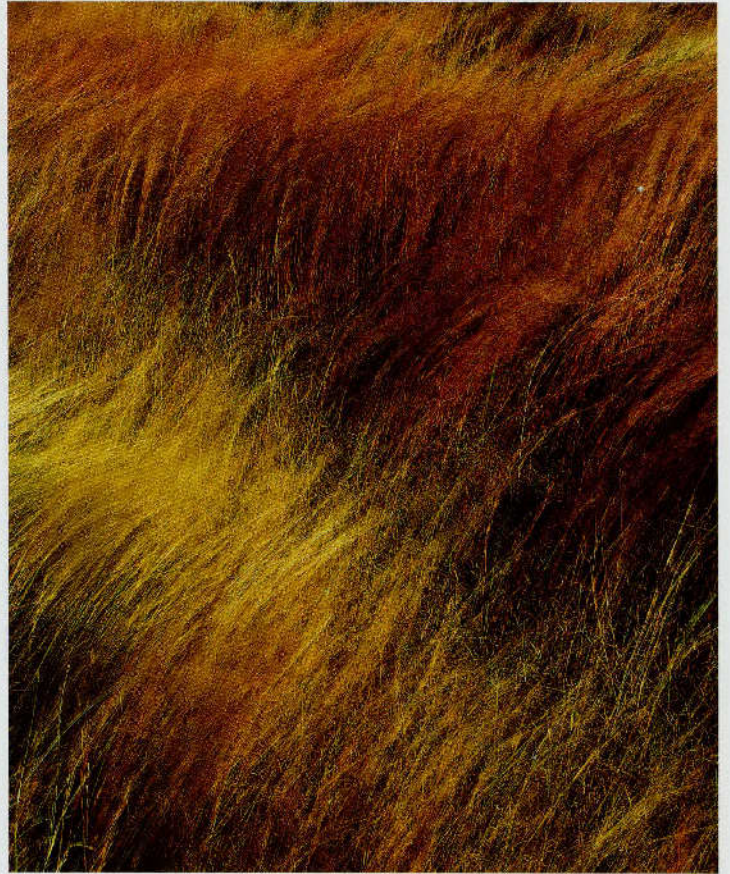


ONE OF THE INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER is that you have the opportunity to learn a little bit about a lot of things. As soon as I accepted this assignment to photograph the fall grasses of Texas, I realized that the extent of my knowledge about “grass” was limited to that stuff that grows in our yards and has to be mowed or watered more often than not. * As I began to research the Texas grasslands, the first thing I discovered was that they cover a lot more territory than I had anticipated ... an area that spans from the Gulf Coast to the Blackland Prairie, from the Hill Country to the High Plains and into the desert and mountains of West Texas. This was going to be a major road trip. And, with this much land to cover and information to absorb, I decided to adopt the law of the Old West: “Shoot first and ask questions later.” * Along the coast, the grasses sprang up out of the bays and wetlands and looked like miniature islands creating habitats for spoonbills, egrets, and other wildlife. Predominantly green and gold in color, the grasses provided images of impressionistic reflections and spiky silhouettes. So far, so good, but I was just getting started. * Like most Texas grasslands, the Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands north and east of Dallas are being used primarily for cattle grazing, wildlife, and a variety of public recreation. Upon arrival in Caddo I got pounded by a thunderstorm that dissolved as quickly as it evolved, leaving all the grasses filled with raindrops that glistened in the late afternoon light. I took advantage of the opportunity and photographed till sunset. The next day brought a different look to this rolling landscape and I saw a wider variety of vegetation mixed with more color

PREVIOUS SPREAD: WEST TEXAS BUNCHGRASS BOWS GOLDEN BEFORE A PRAIRIE BREEZE, ON TEXAS 166 NOT FAR FROM FORT DAVIS. FACING PAGE: ON FM 409 IN THE CADDO NATIONAL GRASSLANDS, ABOUT 70 MILES NORTHEAST OF DALLAS, NEAR BONHAM. ABOVE: A GRASSY SILHOUETTE REFLECTION ON ATKINSON ISLAND IN GALVESTON BAY.



splendor IN THE GRASS



LEFT: INTERPLAY OF COLOR AND LIGHT IN THE LBJ NATIONAL GRASSLANDS, ON CR 2560 IN WISE COUNTY, NORTH OF FORT WORTH AND NEAR DECATUR. ABOVE: IN THE HILL COUNTRY, US 290 NEAR DRIPPING SPRINGS.

ranging from pastels to earth tones. I also noticed how the light and time of day affected those colors. ✱ Toward the northwest corner of the Panhandle I drove into the Rita Blanca Grasslands. Here, antelope roamed among grazing cattle, and the only noise was that of the ever-present wind—an endless landscape. Along paved roads, I began to see tapestries of color unlike any I'd seen before. Fall colors were literally “falling into place.” ✱ In the desert/mountain area that epitomizes West Texas, the grasses turned golden and swayed in the breeze like upsidedown Hawaiian grass skirts against majestic mountain landscapes. Could it get any better than this? ✱ On my final day, I circled back to the Hill Country and got the exclamation point I'd been looking for. Rust, amber, and lime green combined to make tall waves of color across rolling hills. ✱ Photographically, fall has always been my favorite time of the year in Texas. Now, after six days and 2,400 miles, I look at grass in a whole different light and have one more reason to love autumn. ✱

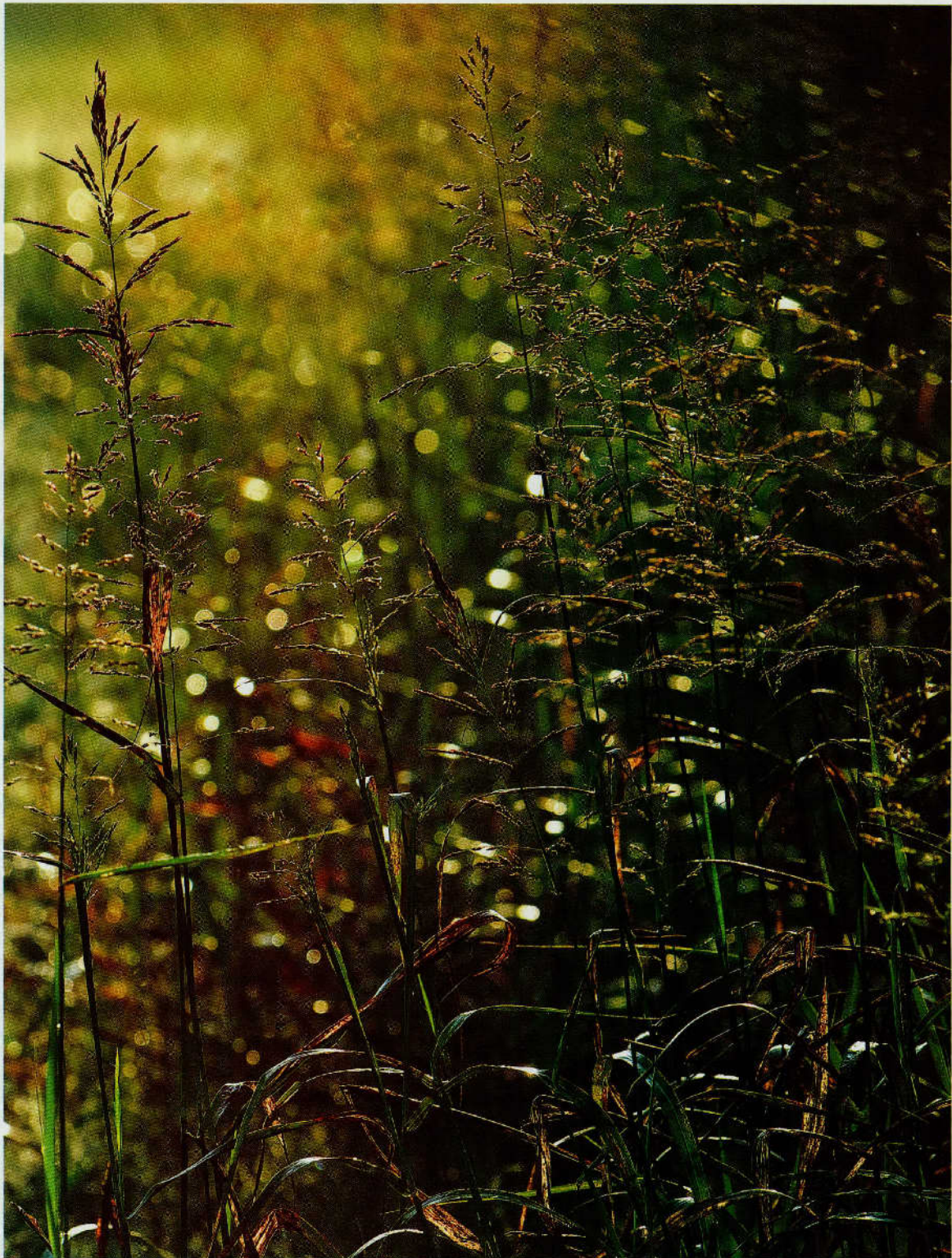
Internationally known photographer ARTHUR MEYERSON says, “As a photographer, I have always tried to follow the path of the short story writer ... to say the most with the least.”





splendor

IN THE GRASS



PREVIOUS SPREAD: TAPESTRY OF COLOR AND TEXTURE IN THE LBJ NATIONAL GRASSLANDS, IN THE DECATUR VICINITY NORTH OF FORT WORTH. ABOVE: RAINDROPS GLISTEN AND CLING TO GRASS STEMS IN THE CADDO NATIONAL GRASSLANDS, NORTHEAST OF DALLAS. FACING PAGE: RITA BLANCA NATIONAL GRASSLANDS IN THE FAR NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE PANHANDLE.





Hello, Columbus

Five weekend adventurers
head to Colorado County
and discover a cozy
country restaurant and
a poignant cemetery tour.

By Kathleen Kaska
Photographs by Skeeter Hagler



Whenever

I receive e-mails from my sisters in Houston laden with phrases like “stressed-out,” “fed-up,” and “can’t sleep,” I know we’re due for a weekend getaway. This time I invite my friend Ruth along, and the two of us head southeast from Austin for the historic town of Columbus, where we’ve arranged to meet my three sisters. With galleries and shops to peruse, restaurants to try, and an unusual cemetery tour awaiting us, we get an early start on Friday morning.

As Ruth and I roll into town, my cell-phone chirps. It’s one of my sisters, reporting that they’ve arrived at the (laughter) country club.

“What country club?” I ask. More laughter. I order them to stay out of trouble, and Ruth and I set off to find this mysterious country

club. Following my sisters’ sketchy directions, we wind through the beautiful Colorado River farmland. Twenty miles northeast of Columbus, at the junction of FM 949 and FM 1094, we spot the Cross Road Tavern, a.k.a. “the Cat Spring Country Club,” where my sisters have detoured. A modest, white clapboard building with a tin roof, it looks like an old-fashioned country store, complete with gas pumps out front.

Ruth and I pass through the double screen doors and join the wanderers at the wooden bar, where they’ve had burgers and beers and are now entertaining owner Bonnie Hegemeyer. My sisters are in fine form, and we could easily kick back with Bonnie all afternoon, but we’re due to check in at our B&B, so we say goodbye, promising to return that evening for the tavern’s weekly fish fry.

Luckily, BlissWood B&B, on the Lehmann Legacy Ranch, is just down the road

and across the railroad tracks. From the ranch entrance, we drive down a tree-lined lane to the century-old Lehmann House, one of 11 lodgings on the property. Tucked away in a grove of live oaks, this two-story, bright blue house is furnished with everything we’ll need, from sheets and pillowcases to pots and pans. The five of us claim our respective bedrooms and then retire to the front-porch rockers to soak up some country atmosphere.

We line out our plans for the afternoon and head into Columbus. Our first stop is the Stafford Opera House, designed by Galveston architect Nicholas J. Clayton. Built in 1886 by local rancher and banker Robert Stafford, the restored structure is the showpiece of the town square. Originally, the building housed the Stafford

Bank on the first floor, and had a theater on the second floor. Today, local repertory groups stage monthly dinner shows in the original theater

space from October to June. If you’re in town between performances, you can always visit the Opera House Museum on the first floor, where you’ll find the bank’s original vault and photographs of Columbus that date to 1869.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau is adjacent to the museum, so we pick up brochures and maps, including one for the Walking Heritage Tour, which leads us to the Colorado County Courthouse across the street. Designed in 1891 by architect Eugene Heiner, the courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A spectacular, stained-glass dome in the ceiling of the second-floor district courtroom makes this structure one of the most impressive courthouses in the state.

A block away, on Washington Street, we discover the Mary Elizabeth Hopkins Santa Claus Museum. Hopkins collected more than 2,000 pieces of Santa memorabilia before her death in 1990, and

Local artist Ken Turner is known for his paintings of historical events; his art hangs in collections worldwide.

Ken Turner paints in his studio/gallery, where he welcomes visitors—and conversation—as he works. His paintings include *The Light of Freedom*, which shows George Washington signing the constitution.







today, her treasures delight visitors year round. Among the displays are Thomas Nast's Santa prints, which were published in *Harper's Weekly* between 1861 and 1886; historians credit Nast's designs with establishing the image we associate with Santa Claus.

We stroll to the Turner-Chapman Gallery—a 150-year-old building that once housed Fehrenkamp Grocery—and find artist Ken Turner chatting with visitors. As a couple of my sisters browse, the artist and father of seven talks about balancing career and family. “I learned to paint between changing diapers and telling the kids what to do,” says Ken, who is known for his depictions of historical events like *Out of the Ashes*, a moving painting displaying rescuers raising a United States flag at the former site of the World Trade Center. His art hangs in collections worldwide.

A few doors down, Pat Johnson greets us at the Live Oak Art Center, which is in the 1891 Brunson Building, originally a saloon. Pointing

out a permanent collection of paintings and sculptures by local artists, the director says, “Our goal is to show young and underserved artists, and to expose the community to great contemporary art.”

The day ends quickly, and with a promise to keep, we hit the road. Finding the Cross Road Tavern in the dark is surprisingly easy; cars line the road and the aroma of fried catfish fills the air. Famished, we fall into the buffet line and fill our plates with light, crispy catfish, crunchy coleslaw, and pinto

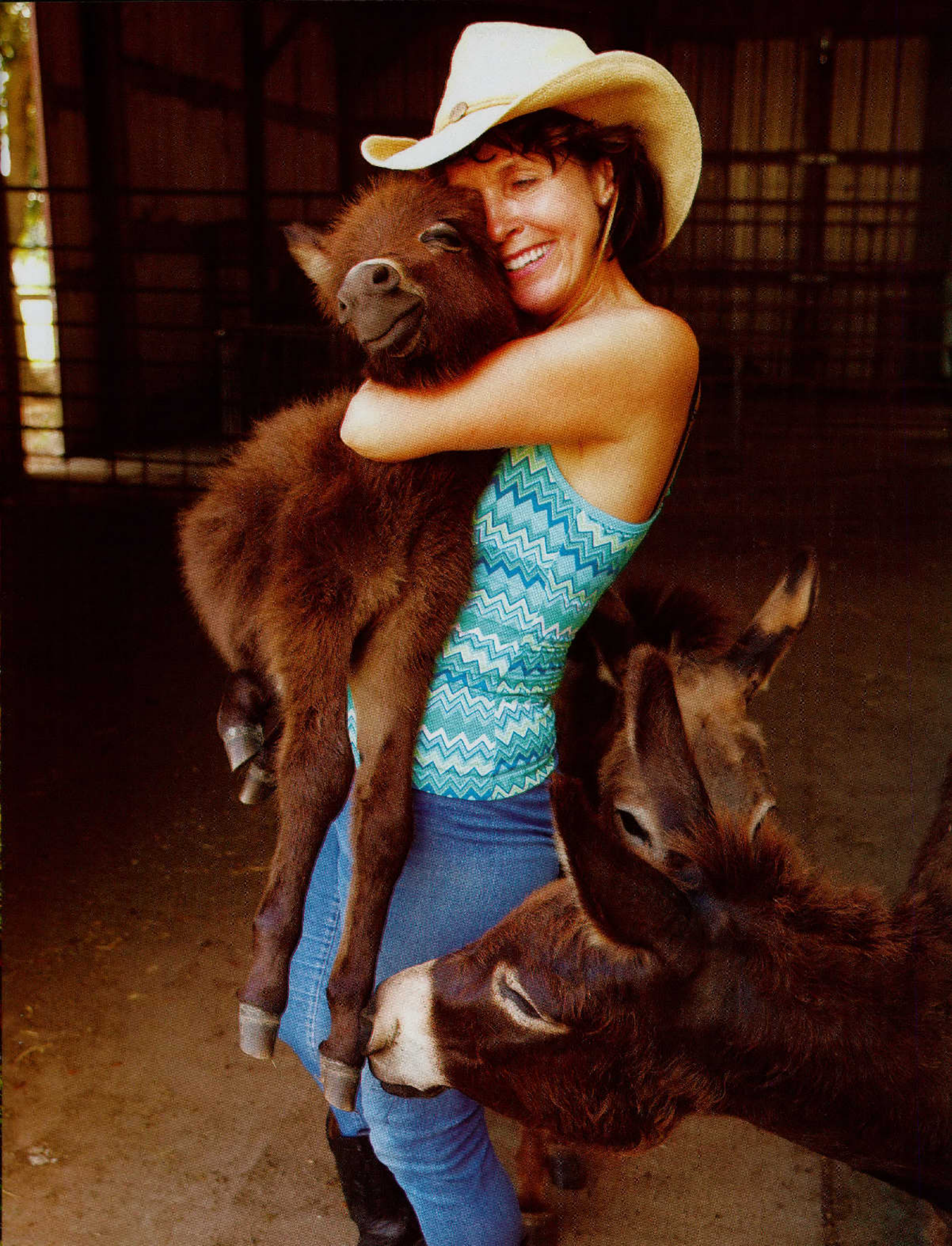
Columbus' town square includes the original water tower, which houses the 1883 Confederate Memorial Museum.

beans. Bonnie Hegemeyer's husband, Bill, does the frying, and on a typical Friday night, the establishment serves 200 people.

On Saturday morning, while we're sipping coffee on the front porch, ranch owner, B&B operator, and restaurateur Carol Davis arrives on a golf cart with three dogs aboard, ready to give us a mini-tour of the 650-acre spread. We collect two more carts (and two more dogs) and begin. Carol started purchasing the acreage 14 years ago, and since then has skillfully melded a working ranch and a B&B.

She shows us her 10 other restored farmhouses, with names like Writer's Cab-

ABOVE: A view from the 1886 Stafford Opera House shows Columbus' historic town square, with the city's original water tower on the right. Columbus promotes its heritage with a number of guided group tours, as well as a do-it-yourself walking tour. FACING PAGE: B&B operator and restaurateur Carol Davis hugs one of the miniature donkeys she raises on her Lehmann Legacy Ranch. She also raises horses, goats, fallow deer, bison, alpaca, and antelope.



in, Texas Farmhouse, and Dog Trot. We visit her menagerie of exotic wildlife (fallow deer, bison, alpaca, and antelope), the horses she uses for trail rides, her pet donkeys and goats, and Willie the camel. We roll by the Frisbee-golf course, a dry creekbed, the catfish pond, and the show barn, now used for wedding receptions and corporate retreats. After returning to the house, we while away the rest of the morning, chatting under the wisteria-covered gazebo. Finally, Carol announces she has chores to attend to before getting gussied up and going to her restaurant (Carol's at Cat Spring), where she'll greet and seat customers.

We drive back to Columbus for another afternoon of exploration. It's around noon, and we set our sights on a local establishment known for its home-style cooking and lunchtime buffet—Schobel's Restaurant. The unassuming eatery is packed but worth the wait. We chow down on chicken-fried steak, fried chicken, buttered corn, mashed potatoes, and cream gravy, sighing with delight. Not knowing when to quit, we finish with buttermilk pie and carrot cake, vowing to walk off the calories later.

Back at the town square, we visit Over the Rainbow, an antiques consignment shop; Keyser's Meat Market, where Kenny and Jo Ann Venghaus sell chopped beef sandwiches for \$2.50 each; and a charming toy store called A-Trains Hobby Store. Birdie Fantz, co-owner of the toy store, invites us to play with any of the toys. "How do you know you're going to like it," she asks, "if you can't play with it first?" Birdie and her brother, Lemoine Fantz, both

former teachers, opened the store nine years ago. Ruth and I find ourselves mesmerized by the electric trains, while my sisters ogle the classic Barbies.

Down the street we find Calico Hens, a gift shop housed in the 1867 Montgomery House. Owner Gayle Coble has expanded her 25-year-old business from a small needlework shop to a handsome home decor/gift store. After adding to our

purchases—my sister finds a set of ceramic roosters for her kitchen, and I pick up a wrought-iron planter—we drive out to Odd Fellows Rest Cemetery for the Live Oaks for Dead Folks Cemetery Tour.

Bill Stein, the creator of this unusual attraction, has a talent for delving into the community's past. "My goal is to promote Colorado County's history, and the cemetery tour is a unique way of doing



June bride Abby Terral and bridesmaid Jenn Campbell, both of Katy, succumb to giddiness at the final fitting of Terral's gown at The Brides House (979/732-5850) in Columbus.

that,” he says. The tour, in which citizens from the past “come alive to tell their stories,” has become an annual event the first weekend of November. We join a cluster of people at the entrance, where guides greet us with flashlights, divide us into small groups, and then lead us through the cemetery. We

stop at a dozen or more gravesites, and at each one, we’re introduced to the resident “ghost,” who then begins his or her tale.

Eighth-grader Allison Jones, representing her ancestor Matilda Tait, a Columbus pioneer, tells how tragedy struck the family in the late 1800s. “In six years, we had 10 bodies in the parlor,” she says, wiping tears from her eyes. We tear up also as we listen to her describe how disease and accidents took the lives of several of her children and other relatives. Another resident impersonates Colonel J.W.E. Wallace and tells of leading a band of men to Gonzales, where they fought in the first battle of the Texas Revolution.

With plenty of fodder for dinner conversation, we head to Carol’s restaurant. While we wait on our orders—filet mi-

gnon with blue cheese crumbles, grilled chicken with bison sausage, and pasta Red Duke (a heart-healthy fettuccine with sun-dried tomatoes, pecans, and bison tenderloin or chicken) —Carol’s New Orleans-trained chef, Jaime Pena, brings out a tantalizing appetizer called seafood strudel. With a soft crust, chunks of seafood, and a

creamy, delectable sauce, each bite dissolves immediately, leaving a lingering taste of sweet Gulf shrimp.

On Sunday morning, I start the coffee brewing and step out on the back porch. I find Christie, one of the ranch dogs, lounging under a tree. I want to do the same, and at that moment, I began planning my return trip to Columbus and Cat Spring. ★

Austin writer KATHLEEN KASKA looks for every opportunity to spend time in small-town Texas. What she likes best about Columbus are “the friendly folks who love to stop and chat about their historic town.”

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer SKEETER HAGLER, who has traveled the world on assignments, says until this shoot, he’d never heard of Columbus or Cat Spring. After a three-day visit, he’s now ready to call the area his second home. “It’s all about the people,” he says.

Family-friendly Cross Road Tavern serves up burgers and beers at its long, wooden bar.



New parents Billy and Lindsay Lindley enjoy an evening at the Cross Road Tavern, near Cat Spring. It was their first night out since the birth of their son, Bradyn.

essentials

COLUMBUS AND CAT SPRING

COLUMBUS is about halfway between San Antonio and Houston, on Texas 71, off I-10. **Cat Spring** is about 15 miles northeast of Columbus, on FM 949. Contact the Columbus CVB at 425 Spring St., 979/732-8385; www.columbus-texas.org. All sites are in Columbus unless otherwise listed.

LODGING

BlissWood B&B at Lehmann Legacy Ranch, 13300 Lehmann Legacy Ln., near Cat Spring, 713/301-3235; www.blisswood.net.

DINING

Cross Road Tavern, at the junction of FM 1094 and FM 949, about 21 miles northeast of Columbus, 979/357-4808. Fish fry each Fri. night.

Keyser’s Meat Market, 1116 Milam St., 979/732-2658.

Schobel’s Restaurant, 2020 Milam St., 979/732-2385. *Reservations recommended.*

Carol’s at Cat Spring Restaurant, 10745 FM 949 in Cat Spring, 979/865-1100; www.blisswood.net/hillcountryrestaurant. Three miles from BlissWood B&B. *Reservations recommended.*

ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Stafford Opera House and Museum, 425 Spring St., 979/732-5135.

Colorado County Courthouse, on the town square, 979/732-5135.

Turner/Chapman Gallery, 1038 Milam St., 979/733-0400; www.turnerchampanygallery.com.

Live Oak Art Center, 1014 Milam St., 979/732-8398.

Mary Elizabeth Hopkins Santa Claus Museum, 604 Washington St., 979/732-5135.

Live Oaks for Dead Folks Cemetery Tour. Contact the Nesbitt Memorial Library, 529 Washington St., 979/732-3392; www.columbus-texas.net/library.

SHOPPING

Over the Rainbow, 1034 Milam St., 979/732-9181.

A-Trains Hobby Store, 1124 Milam St., 979/733-0392.

Calico Hens, at 1419 Milam St., 979/732-8348; www.calicohens.com.





A Bayou Rendezvous

Outdoor adventures, museums aplenty, and creative cuisine underscore Beaumont's resilient spirit.

BY SHERMAKAYE BASS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM WILLIAMSON

Shortly before we went to press in mid-September, Hurricane Ike barreled into the Texas Gulf Coast, leaving Beaumont down, but not out. Cleanup began immediately. Here, a kayaker enjoys an afternoon on Baird's Bayou.



Slicing through the clear waters

of Village Creek in a canoe, I feel like I'm miles from civilization. At the helm is my guide for the next two hours, naturalist David Martin, owner of Piney Woods Outfitter. The diversity of life on this quiet, narrow creek astounds me. Under the canopy of willow, bald cypress, and tupelo, we hear the peep of a scarlet cardinal, the swoosh and splash of a kingfisher diving for dinner. Suddenly, Martin pauses, back-paddling to slow us down. "Look, an otter slide," he says, pointing to a steep, barren patch on the bank to our left. "Otters and beavers have been making a comeback here in the Big Thicket area."

It's primordial here, I think.

In reality, though, we're 10 miles north of Beaumont, a bustling little city best known for its oil refineries.

As Martin talked about the region's terrain, and how Native Americans have always revered the area for its fishing and hunting, it hit me: Here I was on the periphery of Petrol Central, but also within spitting distance of the wildest, woolliest woodlands in the state.

Relatively few people realize that Beaumont, founded in 1835 on the Neches River as a trapper's paradise, is neighbor to one of the most pristine preserves in

Texas: the Big Thicket National Preserve, 97,000 acres of dense pines, hardwoods, and swampland. Parts of the preserve adjoin Village Creek, which has been ranked among America's best canoeing destinations by magazines like *National Geographic Adventure*. Also surprising to Interstate-10 passersby is that this is big-time birding country: Audubon types flock here to see warblers, woodpeckers, water thrushes, sparrows, buntings, kingfishers, kites, vireos, owls, and water fowl from loons to terns. Who knew?

Surprises abound in Beaumont, which was transformed in 1901 with the discovery of oil at the famous Spindletop salt dome south of town. Life here now revolves as much around cuisine and culture as it does the oil industry.

I'd always heard that Beaumont was a study in contrasts. After all, it is home to Spindletop, the gusher that transformed this timber and farming settlement into an oil-fueled boomtown in 1901. But driving from Austin the evening before my canoe trip, I had to wonder just how beautiful the heart of Texas oil refining could be. I also wondered what might keep an avowed urbanite like myself happily distracted for

an entire weekend in a city of 115,000.

Upon checking into the nine-story MCM Elegante Hotel, I felt optimistic. My suite (it *was* elegant) included a sitting room, wet bar, and extremely comfy king-size bed. There was even an Aveda day-spa downstairs, in case I wanted a massage or manicure in a moment of leisure.

Relaxation would have to wait, though: I had arranged to meet people for happy hour at Easys Tapas & Martinis on Calder Street, the main artery going east from I-10 toward downtown. The hip

bistro buzzed, with hardly a place to sit on a Friday evening—understandable, considering what emerged from the kitchen: delicately fried artichokes; a tantalizing mix of crab, shrimp, and fish in a rich butter sauce; and savory bits of steak and mushrooms—with a tart Apple-tini on the side.

For dinner, we relocated to Suga's Deep South Cuisine & Jazz Bar on Crockett Street, where a resident ivory-tickler played name-that-tune with his audience. Beautifully arranged plates rolled out—crab cakes on a bed of fried green tomatoes, a lovely and tender buffalo *osso bucco*, succulent grilled beef tenderloin. Afterwards, we shared a luscious chocolate dessert and ... the next thing I knew, I was in a satisfied food coma back in my room.

Early Saturday en route to the creek, I hit Rao's Bakery, a staple in Beaumont since 1941. Rao's is particularly famous for its specialty cakes, cookies, and cinnamon rolls (the latter gooey, pecan-coated bites of paradise). Sated, I headed up US 96 to meet Martin. We put in around 8:30 a.m., so I'd make landfall in time for a late lunch at Willy Ray's Bar-B-Q Co., then have a look-see at some historic sites downtown. (*Esquire* and *The New York Times* have given a nod to Willy Ray's slow-smoked brisket and ribs; my nod: carrot soufflé to die for.)



ABOVE: An expansive wine and cocktail menu, plus a wide range of culinary offerings (honey-saffron tilapia and ceviche shown here) draw a loyal crowd at Easys Tapas & Martinis. RIGHT: At the Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum, you can view a replica of the famous 1901 gusher at Spindletop.





More than a dozen museums in Beaumont delve into art, music, sports, natural science, energy, and cultural history. A 24-foot-tall “fire hydrant” marks the entrance to the city’s compelling Fire Museum of Texas.

That’s the odd thing about Beaumont—the good, odd thing. The contrast between oil town and the lush landscapes that surround it is almost jolting. But contrasts abound here: Barbecue and carrot soufflé, refineries and nature preserves, alligators and armadillos, Louisiana chutzpah sidled up to Texas pride.

“When people come here and explore the region, they usually go away with a different perspective,” says internationally known photojournalist Keith Carter, a native who still calls Beaumont home. “The region has had the reputation of being just an oil refining area. That’s unfortunate, because Beaumont has a *vibe* to it.”

The city itself is a surprise to many visitors, including me.

My Saturday afternoon was packed. After lunch, I toured the 1905-06 McFaddin-Ward House, home to early civic leader W.P.H. McFaddin and his wife, Ida. A fine example of Beaux-Arts Colonial opulence, the manor showcases many of McFaddin’s personal effects, plus a vast collection of tableware and period furnishings. The garden is lovely, but my favorite aspect was the



Contrasts are common here: Barbecue and carrot soufflé, refineries and nature preserves, alligators and armadillos, Louisiana chutzpah sidled up to Texas pride.

store replica (complete with coffee mill and chick incubator), Broussard's Livery Stable (you can still smell horse's sweat on the leather items), and the restored Gladys City Drug building, which contains an antique apothecary case stocked with curios, tonics, and potions.

The jewel of my afternoon was St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica, which was

modeled after the early 12th-Century Basilica di San Clemente in Rome. From the outside, only the restored copper dome indicates the splendor of what lies inside this spiritual and architectural gem—from its gilt pavilion above the main altar and the marble colonnades leading up to the presbytery, to the apse mural, where the towering figures of 11 Apostles and the Virgin Mary



A Big Hello to Big Al

I wasn't surprised to hear of an alligator park outside of Beaumont—it's a swampy region, after all. I was surprised to find a lot of fun, even conservation, at Gator Country, a 16-acre park set on a former alligator farm, with seven nicely murky ponds interlinked by piers, elevated walkways, and designated paths.

Co-owner Gary Saurage, a reformed alligator hunter, and his gator-handlers lead tours of the place, feeding mature gators and venturing into the adolescents' habitat to illustrate their "strike zone." Myself, I fell in love with a baby gator, which visitors are allowed to handle under supervision.

Throughout, a conservationist message is clear: This ancient species is critical to wetlands and swamplands and needs our protection. The handlers focus on education, discussing gator breeding habits, habitat, even their history. And it's obvious they're fond of their charges.

There's a bunch of 'em: 140-plus gators, plus

a healthy population of crocs, several endangered snapping turtles, and a python named Banana. Daily shows include feedings and gator-handler interaction. The indisputable star attraction here is Big Al, a 70-year-old, 13-foot-plus gator topping 1,000 pounds. Everyone who deals with Big Al is extremely well trained—and wary.

Still, I did fear for a young handler's fingers when he reached over a fence to tap the big kahuna's snout. Al snapped at him, then returned to sunning.

It is, after all, gator country.—SHERMAKAYE BASS

webextra

See www.texashighways.com for a Q&A with former alligator hunter Gary Saurage, the conservationist behind Beaumont's snappiest attraction.

Gator Country Adventure Park is at 21159 FM 365. Hours: Daily 10-9. Admission: \$7, \$5 age 12 and younger. Call 409/794-9453; www.gatorcountry.net.

first-floor parlor, with its card-table nook and handsome Brunswick billiards table.

Beaumont excels at showcasing the city's cultural history. For example, the Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum nicely re-creates the community that grew around the mighty 1901 gusher. Here, you can view a replica of an oil gusher (which erupts on special occasions with faux "black gold"), along with an old-timey photography studio, a general



Beaumont's beautiful St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica opens to the public, free of charge. It was modeled after the 12th-Century Basilica di San Clemente in Rome.

preside over the clergy. Constructed in the early 1900s, and not colossal as “basilica” might imply, St. Anthony’s is intimate and breathtaking in its beauty. Pope Benedict XVI declared it a basilica in 2006, making it one of four “minor basilicas” in Texas.

Later that evening, I convened with local friends at Bryan’s 797, a chic restaurant in a historic home. The service was outstanding, and the food practically flawless—

perfect sea scallops, lump crab cakes, delectable lamb chops, and an award-winning wine list and inventive cocktail menu.

Next day, I meandered around town, which has a number of museums, including the Edison Museum (a local had collected Edison’s inventions, now exhibited); the fascinatingly relevant Texas Energy Museum (kids and adults will enjoy learning how oil is created—and ultimately extracted); the Babe

Didrikson Zaharias Museum (honoring a Beaumont native and one of the best American athletes of all time); and the official Fire Museum of Texas (which boasts a 24-foot-tall, Dalmatian-spotted fire hydrant).

Yet the classic Texan braggadocio—traditional claims of having the “biggest” this or that—didn’t surface much in this welcoming city, where you can enjoy the famous barbecue crabs at Sartin’s, hear Keith Carter’s rock/roots/blues band play at Logon Café some Saturday



The jewel of my afternoon was St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica. Constructed in the early 1900s, and not colossal as "basilica" might imply, St. Anthony's is intimate and breathtaking in its beauty.

"Beaumont itself, I think, is one of the greener places on the planet—green, as in the flora and fauna. 'Course we were greener before we got whacked sideways by the hurricanes," he says, adding that things are getting back to normal. "I always feel comforted in some way when I hit that Piney Woods corridor and everything changes. This area is one of the best-kept secrets in the state."

I agree with Carter. And for a moment, in my mind I am back on Village Creek, caught in its primeval spell. ★

Writer SHERMAKAYE BASS had a blast in Beaumont. "The food is amazing, and the basilica truly magnificent," she says. "And I especially loved canoeing in Village Creek."

Austin photographer TOM WILLIAMSON enjoyed experiencing Beaumont's "flawless mix of the cultures of Texas and Louisiana."

essentials LET THE BON TEMPS ROLL

BEAUMONT is off Interstate 10, about 85 miles east of Houston. For information about attractions, lodging, and restaurants, call the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800/392-4401; www.beaumontcvb.com. Following are sites listed in the story.

ACCOMMODATIONS

MCM Elegante Hotel, 2355 I-10 South. Call 409/842-3600.

OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS

Village Creek State Park, main office at 1101 Alma Dr., Lumberton. Call 409/755-7322; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Piney Woods Outfitter, 921 S. Main St., Lumberton. Call 409/751-0911; www.canoe.texas.com/pineywoods.htm.

Big Thicket National Preserve, 6044 FM 420, Kountze. Call 409/951-6802; www.bigthicketdirectory.com/index.html and nps.gov/bith.

Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife_trails/coastal.

MUSEUMS AND OTHER SITES

St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica, 700 Jefferson St. Call 409/833-6433; www.stanthonycathedral.org.

Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum, 1750 I-10 East. Call 409/833-4622; www.babedidriksonzaharias.org/museum.cfm.

Edison Museum, 350 Pine St. at Edison Plaza. Call 409/981-3089; www.edisonmuseum.org.

Fire Museum of Texas, 400 Walnut St. Call 409/880-3927; www.firemuseumoftexas.org.

Lamar University (houses the Dishman Art Museum), 4400 Martin Luther King Blvd. Call 409/880-7011; www.lamar.edu.

McFaddin-Ward House Museum, 1906 Calder

St. Call 409/832-2134; www.mcfaddin-ward.org.

Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum, US 69 at University Dr. Call 409/835-0823; www.spindletop.org.

Texas Energy Museum, 600 Main St. Call 409/833-5100; www.texasenergymuseum.org.

RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS

Bryan's 797, 797 North 5th St. Call 409/832-3900; www.bryans797.com.

Easys Tapas & Martinis, 2325 Calder St. Call 409/832-2699; www.easysonline.com.

Logon Café, 3805 Calder St. Call 409/832-1529; www.logoncafe.net.

Rao's Bakery, 2596 Calder St. (plus 4 other locations). Call 409/832-4342; www.raosbakery.com.

Sartin's West, 6680 Calder St. Call 409/861-3474.

Suga's Deep South Cuisine & Jazz Bar, 461 Bowie St. Call 409/813-1808; www.sugasdeepsouth.com.

Willy Ray's Bar-B-Q Co., 145 I-10 North at Laurel St. Call 409/832-7770; www.willyraysbbq.com.



nights, or take a guided tour through Blue Elbow Swamp near the Louisiana border.

"There's a lot happening in Beaumont right now," observed Jake Tortoise, owner of Rao's Bakery. "You've got a major push to revitalize downtown. Lamar University is bringing back its football program and marching band. ... And we've got more birds down here than we know what to do with."

As for Carter, his hometown turf is like a tonic when he returns from travel, no matter how exotic those destinations might have been.

Just PASSING Through

BY CHARLES LOHRMANN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Fort Griffin

ON MOST DAYS, the sketchy ruins of stone buildings at old Fort Griffin will not offer many details of 19th-Century life in this rugged and hilly country 15 miles north of Albany. But on a recent late-summer afternoon, uncharacteristically overcast skies and an unusual misting rain cloaked the landscape in foggy mystery and muffled all sound, so that even the occasional passing of a truck on US 283 in the valley below the site registered as only a low whirl. And in that silence so complete that even my own footsteps echoed slightly, the solemn, stolid buildings seemed willing to reveal their secrets.

In my imagination, the stones of the administration building replayed the brittle tension of sharp commands given, the scuff of boot leather on rough wood, and the thump of holstered sidearm against chair and table. A few yards away from the administration building, the bakery, one of the few Ft. Griffin buildings with a roof intact, exudes the heat of wood-fired stone ovens and the comforting aroma of the 800 loaves baking that day (and

every day, according to the stories). And the powder magazine—thick-walled and windowless—stands alone, warning of the explosive danger it guards.

Across the parade ground, I can imagine a flurry of activity as wagons are loaded and horsemen sally forth to transfer supplies to troops operating in Palo Duro Canyon country, several days' hard travel to the northwest.

Opposite the bakery, along one border

of the parade grounds and 100 yards from the remnants of the administration building, a couple of forlorn single-room barracks await my inspection. These are just two examples of the dozens of wood-built barracks that once stood nearby, each offering a small, shallow, and crude stone fireplace for warmth. It's clear that these single-walled boxes could not offer 19th-



A glimpse of the Fort Griffin administration building ruins from a window of the Army post's bakery. A few fort structures are slated for restoration, or at least stabilization.

ninth Annual
Texas Furniture Makers Show®
October 23 – December 6, 2008

Texas King Size Bed
A. D. Tonnessen, Austin, TX

French Writing Desk
Alton Bowman
Flower Mound, TX

From Storm to Treasure
Frank Strazza, Waco, TX

Kerr Arts and Cultural Center
228 Earl Garrett Street
Kerrville, Texas 78028

Hours
(during Furniture Show only)
Monday - Saturday
10am - 4pm
Sunday - 1 - 4pm

830-895-2911

Sponsored by KACC, Woodcraft, Otto Dukes Machinery Co. www.kacc Kerrville.com

YOU'LL FIND Fort Griffin State Historic Site on Park Road 58, which turns off of US 283 about 15 miles north of Albany, and about the same distance south of Throckmorton. Across US 283 from, and less than a mile north of, the historic site, on Park Road 54, you'll find the campground, with its campsites, nature trail, picnic tables, and playground. For more information about Fort Griffin, visit the Texas Historical Commission Web site at www.thc.state.tx.us and review the historic properties. For more on the **Fort Griffin Fandangle**, visit www.fortgriffinfandangle.org. For more about Albany, including the Old Jail Art Center, visit www.albanytexas.com and www.theoldjailartcenter.org.

Century enlisted men much warmth or comfort. But they did keep the howling winds and driving rain and sleet at bay more effectively than did the canvas tents.

First established in 1867, Fort Griffin prospered for less than 15 years as a supply post to serve other frontier Texas forts and to support the commercial hunters and cattlemen driving their herds on the Western Trail north. While the Army post occupied the high ground overlooking the Clear Fork of the Brazos, the hard-drinking, rough-hewn town known as The Flat (among other names) sprang up on the

the Fort Griffin Army Post in its bygone days enlivens my quiet stroll through the grounds, I'm as interested in learning a little more about the current activities at the site and check in with Site Manager Mitch Baird. He tells me that the Texas Historical Commission, the agency that now operates the site, has commissioned a major effort to restore the original grassland at Fort Griffin by removing invasive mesquite and prickly pear from about 75 acres surrounding the historic ruins.

Baird explains that the grassland restoration will not only return the site to its true

Fort Griffin is one of eight sites that encourage history buffs to make the 650-mile-long drive called the Texas Forts Trail.

level river valley below. Legend has it that this town, organized as Fort Griffin in 1874, earned a notorious reputation for its walk-on-the-wild-side ways and for the visitation of characters such as Wyatt Earp, Big Nose Kate, Bat Masterson, and Doc Holliday. A few relics of the town—including a Sharps Rifle originally purchased at Conrad and Rath Merchandise—are on display at the Old Jail Art Center in Albany.

Even though the imaginary activity of

1870s appearance, but also that the work will enhance wildlife habitat. White-tailed deer, turkey, and quail inhabit the park, and there's an occasional mountain lion sighting in the area. And on this quiet afternoon, I glimpse a dozen or so white-tailed deer gliding along the landscape and disappearing into a stand of oaks.

And, no doubt the enhanced grassland will be welcome for the State Longhorn Herd, now about 75 animals strong, that also rambles at Fort Griffin. The herd, typical of the cattle making up the 19th-Century trail drives through this region, came into being in the late 1930s through the efforts of Fort Worth oilman Sid Richardson, who recruited writer J. Frank Dobie to track down enough animals to start an official herd. Ultimately, Fort Griffin was chosen as home for the Longhorns, and that decision was made official in 1948. These days, the cattle graze around the park and 15 or 20 animals play starring roles in the annual Fort Griffin Fandangle, an outdoor Western-themed musical staged each June in nearby Albany.

In addition to grassland restoration, the Historical Commission also has plans to stabilize the original military structures at the site, including the hand-dug, rock-lined cistern,



This 1936 Texas Centennial plaque commemorates the 19th-Century importance of Texas forts, like Fort Griffin, to the cattle-and-land-based economy of the state.

BEAUMONT
T • E • X • A • S

'tis the season for
Merry Markets
Santa-sized
FUN!

BEAUMONT is all a flurry this holiday season! Don't miss the Downtown Christmas Festival complete with an outdoor ice-skating rink and unique shopping venues. Sip eggnog at the historic McFaddin-Ward House as you step back in time amongst the dazzling decor.

1-866-822-0245
BeaumontCVB.com

Fort Davis,
★ Texas ★

Named a 2008 Dozen Distinctive Destination®, by the National Trust for Historic Preservation®

Featuring:
Fort Davis National Historic Site
Davis Mountains State Park
Historic Indian Lodge
McDonald Observatory
Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens.

Call:
800-524-3015
or visit:
www.fortdavis.com
For more information.



Buildings of locally quarried limestone define the edge of the Fort Griffin parade ground, where the solitary flagpole emphasizes the site's quiet remoteness.

in which water was stored for the post. Within the year, a local friends-of-the-park organization plans to take the first steps toward adding a roof to the powder magazine and stabilizing that building's structure. That will be a big step for Fort Griffin,

Baird explains, adding that "I always tell people that this was more of a supply fort, particularly when you compare it to Fort Concho in San Angelo, which was a much more substantial fort." Both sites date to the years after the Civil War, when westward U.S. expansion in Texas required military support from a chain of military forts that commandeered the landscape from the Red River to the Rio Grande. Today, eight sites (including Concho and Griffin), along with the communities that support them, encourage history buffs to make the 650-mile-long drive called the Texas Forts Trail.

But Fort Griffin is not just for history enthusiasts. A 50-acre campground adjoins the Clear Fork of the Brazos and invites relaxed exploration with three easy trails that meander over the riparian landscape.

TH Editor CHARLES LOHRMANN recommends that a midweek visit to Fort Griffin include a walk from the historic site's overlook, down the Mountain Trail to the Mill Creek Nature Trail.

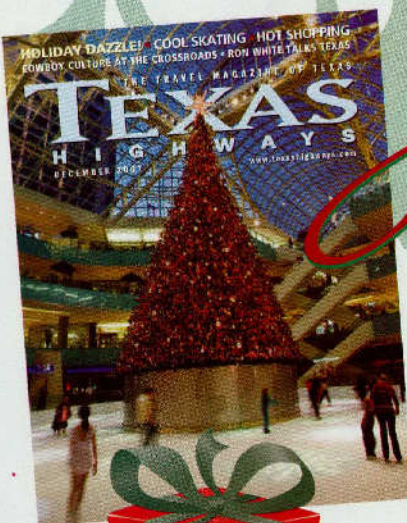
Photographer GRIFF SMITH visited Ft. Griffin when late-summer rains created an uncharacteristically green landscape for the historic site.

TEXAS HIGHWAYS READER SERVICE GUIDE TO ADVERTISERS

For information from our advertisers, use the forms in this issue, or go to www.texashighways.com.
(Reader service numbers are in red.)

1. Alpine Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 8
2. Amarillo Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 15
3. Bandera Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 70
4. Baytown Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 71
5. Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 63
6. Brenham/Washington County, pg. 7
7. Bryan-College Station Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 68
8. Cedar Park Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 65
9. Cleburne Chamber of Commerce, pg. 4 and pg. 68
10. Del Rio Chamber of Commerce, pg. 8
11. Denton Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 13
12. Fall Art Festivals San Antonio, pg. 18
13. Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, pg. 63
14. Fort Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 8
15. Glen Rose Visitor Center, pg. 65
16. Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 6
17. Historic Granbury Merchants Association, pg. 71
18. Huntsville Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 16
19. City of Jefferson, pg. 9
20. Kerr Arts and Cultural Center, pg. 12
21. Kerrville Life.com, pg. 3
Comanche Trace, Kerrville
Integrity Group Texas, Kerrville
Palacios del Guadalupe, Kerrville
22. Lake Conroe Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 69
23. McKinney Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 19
24. Moody Gardens, pg. 19
25. Odessa Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 8
26. Pearland Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 10
27. San Marcos Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 14
28. Texas Hill Country River Region, pg. 12
29. Texas Historical Commission, pg. 5
30. Texas Parks & Wildlife, pg. 2
31. Texas Renaissance Festival, pg. 9
32. Village of Salado, pg. 67
33. Visit Big Bend Tourism Council, pg. 8
34. Visit Lubbock, pg. 70
35. Waxahachie Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 13
36. Wichita Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 16

SPREAD HOLIDAY



Joy

All Year Long
with
Texas Highways

Just \$19.95

for a 1-year U.S. subscription

\$17.95 for each additional U.S. gift if ordered at the same time. International subscriptions are just \$29.95.

1-800-839-4997

(386-597-4297 from outside the U.S.)
and mention source code 78LTHM

www.texashighways.com

Click on *Subscribe* and then click on *Give/Renew Gift*.

New subscriptions start with the January issue. A card announcing your gift will be sent directly to the recipient in November or December.

78LTHM

Red River Ramble

(continued from page 34)

charge. Much like the RRA recruits before them, these hard-working individuals put untold time and effort into renovating the cabins and improving the property.

An underrated jewel, this appealing retreat also features a mountain-bike trail around the lake, complete with trellis-style bridges and challenging jumps, offering cross-country cyclists quite a ride.

My outdoor escapist yearnings satisfied, it felt like a good time to relax and enjoy some wine. Homestead Vineyard & Winery, a few miles south of Lake Fannin, near Ivanhoe, continues a family tradition on a 100-year-old farm. With well-known chemist Dr. Roy Mitchell wielding his magic, owners Gabe and Barbara Parker produce award-winning wines, including the best-

selling *Rose of Ivanhoe*, a full-bodied, sweet wine, and my favorite, the sweet, nutty *Crema del Sol*, Texas' only solera-made sherry. By late afternoon, I headed east on Texas 56 toward Honey Grove—but not before a stop in Windom for some tasty fried fish. Just 15 miles from Bonham, the Feed Sack's all-you-can-eat fried fish attracts an enthusiastic clientele. This former warehouse features a menu that includes lip-smacking corn fritters.

Proceeding a few miles farther east to Honey Grove, the city so-named by Davy Crockett himself, I took in its historic square. While driving around town, I marveled at the numerous, tastefully painted Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, and Second Empire structures. I found myself imagining the clop-clop of horse hooves, as carriages filled with ornately dressed men and women went by on their way to the opera house. And although musical entertainment was on my agenda, it was vestiges of Davy Crockett I sought.

"I can show you Crockett's actual footprints for a mere \$500." I was inside the Grove Music Hall, and owner Mark McDaniel had given me an offer I couldn't refuse. Reaching into my jeans pocket, I pulled out some small change, and a Chinese fortune saying, "You will get an offer that will be hard to turn down."

Of course, there is no Crockett footprint. "Let me show you this instead," McDaniel said, and he led me through the renovated movie theater. I learned more



As this youngster in Windom enjoys running along with a sparkler, so, too, will you find sparks of discovery in Fannin County.

about Tyler Dow Bryant, the local musician friends had told me not to miss.

Bryant, a 2008 high school graduate, began playing guitar as a child and was "discovered" at age 10 and mentored by Paris bluesman Roosevelt Twitty. Photos highlighting Bryant's previous 16 years smile back at me, and I felt like I was looking at an Elvis shrine. Bryant makes his hometown proud.

The music hall features Saturday-night family entertainment from a variety of musicians, and Bryant's popularity ensures a packed crowd. Opting for an acoustic set, Bryant, along with bassist Ben Alsup, crooned and strummed tunes reminiscent of blues legend Robert Johnson. Soon Dallas teen songstress Kayla Reeves joined in with her Janis Joplinesque voice, and the place really started hopping.

At the close of the performance, with a signed poster by all three performers in hand, I marveled at a full harvest moon. With its reflection in my rearview mirror and a smile on my face, I broke into—what else?—"Shine On, Harvest Moon" as I drove back to Bonham.

Of course, there's much more to see and do

CEDAR PARK

Where Families Come For Fun!
All year round!



- The Tree Lighting: Dec 5th
- Santa's Workshop: Dec 13th
- Holiday Themed Rides Aboard the Austin Steam Train




www.cedarparkfun.com

Stay at one of our
three area hotels







Cedar Park Convention and Visitors Bureau
600 North Bell Boulevard
Cedar Park, Texas 78613
512.401.5000

Escape To The Wilds Of Glen Rose

"Dinosaur Capital of Texas"



- Barnard Mill Art Museum
 - Brazos & Paluxy Rivers
 - Creation Evidence Museum
 - Dinosaur Valley State Park
 - Fossil Rim Wildlife Center
 - The Promise
 - Somervell County Museum
- And Much More!!

Named America's
Dream Town for 2004

For More Information
1-888-346-6282
www.glenrosetexas.net

TEXAS
BOOK
FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 1 & 2, 2008
STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS
BENEFITTING TEXAS PUBLIC LIBRARIES

★ FEATURING ★

Babar writer Laurent de Brunhoff

Christopher Buckley

Andre Dubus III

Mike Farrell

Alexandra Fuller

Xavier Garza

Paris Review editor Philip Gourevitch

Kadir Nelson

Susan Orlean

T. Boone Pickens

Goosebumps author R.L. Stine

and many, many more!

★ FESTIVAL FUN ★

Author Panels & Presentations

Children's Chapter

Bon Appetit Cooking Tent

Live Music & Great Food

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO
TEXASBOOKFESTIVAL.ORG



FESTIVAL UNDERWRITER

Texas Monthly

John R. Anderson

BARBERS & BIBLE

HEB

TUCKER

THE WILSONS FOUNDATION

ILLI TROTT



FRONTSIERES

SPRING HILL

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS



in Fannin County, though for now, my adventures here were near an end. Nestled in my well-appointed room at the Carleton House, I planned for my next visit—trawling for fossils on the Sulphur River and horseback riding in the Caddo National Grasslands. But first, a long soak in my clawfoot tub.★

LOU ANN DEAN keeps a bottle of Crema del Sol in reserve for the inauguration of the restored Fannin County Courthouse.

Photographer LOUIS DELUCA enjoyed his trek through Fannin County, except for receiving a speeding ticket just outside of Bonham. Nevertheless, the DPS officer recommended an excellent place to eat in town.

essentials FANNIN COUNTY FUN

FANNIN COUNTY is in north-east Texas, south of the Red River, on the Texas/Oklahoma border, between Lamar and Grayson counties. The county seat, Bonham, is 70 miles northeast of Dallas, 27 miles east of Sherman/Denison, and 35 miles west of Paris.

For more information, contact the Bonham Chamber of Commerce, 327 N. Main St., Bonham 75418, 903/583-4811; www.bonhamchamber.com.

Following are sites mentioned in the story. Hours vary; call ahead.

ATTRACTIONS

BONHAM The Fannin County Museum of History is at 1 Main St., 3 blocks south of the courthouse square, 903/583-8042, (for group tours, 903/583-5558).

The Creative Arts Center is at 200 W. Fifth St., 940/640-2196; www.creativeartscenter.us.

The Sam Rayburn Library and Museum is on TX 56 at 800 W. Sam Rayburn Dr., 903/583-2455; www.cah.utexas.edu/museums/rayburn.php.

Sam Rayburn's home (The Sam Rayburn House Museum) is approximately 1½ miles west of the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum at 890 W. TX 56. Open to the public Tue-Sat. Call 903/583-5558 for hours or to schedule tours; www.thestate.tx.us.

Bonham State Park is southeast of Bonham, off FM 271, on State Park Rd. 24, 903/583-5022; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Willow Wild Cemetery is on TX 121 North.

The Fannin County Fair (Fannin County Multi-Purpose Complex, at TX 56 West and FM 87) takes place the 2nd weekend of Oct., 903/583-8454; http://fannincountyfair.com.

The annual Autumn in Bonham Bike Rally & Expo is in late Sep., 903/583-4811; www.bonhamchamber.com.



Bonham Trade Days is on the Sat. after the first Mon. of every month, rain or shine. The event spans Thu-Sun at Fort English, which is at the intersection of TX 121 and TX 56, 903/421-4322; www.bonhamchamber.com/tradedays.htm.

FANNIN COUNTY Joan Kelton's Country Music Hoe-Down is ½ mile from the Lake Bonham Recreational Area, east of the spillway, 903/583-4731.

Grove Music Hall is at 495 S. 5th St. in downtown Honey Grove at the intersection of US 82 and FM 100, 903/378-2880; www.thegrovemusichall.com.

Davy Crockett Day in Honey Grove is held on the first Sat. of Oct., 903/378-7211.

Homestead Vineyard & Winery in Ivanhoe is off FM 273, just north of Bonham. 903/583-4281; www.homesteadwinery.com.

45-acre Lake Fannin is within the Caddo National Grasslands, about 15 mi. north of Bonham. Call the USDA Forest Service District Ranger office at 940/627-5475.

LODGING

The Carleton House Bed & Breakfast is at 803 N. Main St. in Bonham. Call 903/583-2779 or 800/382-8033; www.carletonhouse.com.

Granny Lou's B&B, is at 317 W. Sam Rayburn Dr. in Bonham. Call 903/583-7912 or 800/997-7912; www.grannylou.com.

DINING

BONHAM Shumardii's Steakhouse Restaurant and Bar is at 226 S. TX 121, 903/640-0900.

Cappy's Cafe is at 109 W. Sam Rayburn Dr., 903/583-5841.

Luna Azul Mexican Cafe is at 318 N. Main St., 903/640-4808.

The Bonham Road House Family Diner is at 413 N. Main St., 903/583-4858.

The Feed Sack is at 414 Main St. in Windom. Call 903/623-3013.

TH TRAVELER: NOVEMBER Events



COURTESY KING RANCH

Good Morning

FOUNDED IN 1853, SOUTH TEXAS' WORLD-FAMOUS King Ranch, near **Kingsville**, is a whopping 825,000 acres, one of the largest spreads in the world. The ranch welcomes all cowboys, cowgirls, and wannabes to its **Ranch Hand Breakfast, November 22**. Enjoy an authentic cowboy breakfast of eggs, biscuits and gravy, tortillas, sausage, refried beans, juice, and gallons of hot coffee. There are live country and mariachi music, storytellers, cowboy poets, team-roping demonstrations, and an old-time cow camp set up around a King Ranch chuck wagon. Not an old cowhand from the Rio Grande? Perhaps you'd like to pretend for just one day. For more information, visit www.king-ranch.com or www.kingsville.texas.com, or call 361/221-0116 or 800/333-5032.

More from TH Traveler—

BIG BEND COUNTRY

EL PASO: Six Courses of Bach November 1. Cellist Zuili Bailey performs the complete J.S. Bach suites. Special El Paso Pro Musica gala event. www.elpasopro.musica.org 915/833-9400

EL PASO: FirstLight Federal Credit Union Sun Bowl Parade November 27. Traditional Thanksgiving Day event with colorful floats, marching bands, and more. www.sunbowl.org 915/533-4416 or 800/915-BOWL

EL PASO: Ballet Folklórico Paso del Norte November 28-30. Annual gala presentation depicts the art, history, and sounds of México through dance and music at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday. Theatre at Chamizal National Memorial. 915/588-5743

EL PASO: J.S. Bach's Cello Suites 1, 3, 5 November 29. Cellist Zuili Bailey performs Bach's 1st, 3rd, and 5th cello suites at the Church of Saint Clement. www.elpasopromusica.org 915/833-9400

FORT DAVIS: Arts & Crafts Fair November 29. St. Joseph Parish Hall. 432/426-3284

MIDLAND: Christmas at the Mansion November 25-December 30. The historic Turner Mansion and art galleries welcome the Christmas season. 1705 W. Missouri Ave. www.museumsw.org 432/683-2882

ODESSA: Winnie the Pooh November 7-9, 14-16. Permian Playhouse, 310 W. 42nd St. 432/550-5456

ODESSA: West Texas Winds Chamber Music Series November 22. UTPB's Center for Energy and Economic Diversification, TX 191 and FM 1788. www.mosc.org 432/563-0921

PRESIDIO: Fall Cattle Drive November 6-8. Experience life on a working ranch by going out on horseback and driving the Longhorn herd to ranch headquarters. Big Bend Ranch State Park. 432/358-4444

GULF COAST

DICKINSON: Festival of Lights November 29-December 31. Stroll along the banks of Dickinson Bayou through a spectacular wonderland of lights. Visit with Santa, ride the train, listen to holiday music, and more. Paul Hopkins Park. www.dickinsonfestivaloflights.org 281/337-2795

EDNA: Texana Chili Spill/Veterans Celebration November 7-8. Patriotic music, Texana Community Band, live entertainment, and flag presentation. Brackenridge Plantation Park & Campground, 891 Brackenridge Parkway. www.brackenridgepark.com 361/782-5456

GALVESTON: Seaside Treasure Festival November 21-22. Features arts & crafts vendors, silent auction, live entertainment, and more. Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church, 2803 53rd St. www.moody.org/stf 409/744-4526, ext. 783

GALVESTON: Itzhak Perlman November 22. This legendary violinist is accompanied by pianist Rohan De

Silva. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

GALVESTON: Oliver! November 29. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

HARLINGEN: Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival November 5-9. Offers expert-led field trips, seminars, and the exciting Birding Bazaar. The premier birding festival in South Texas is set in Harlingen for a simple reason—great birds! www.rgvbirdfest.com 800/531-7346

HOUSTON: Cavalleria Rusticana & Pagliacci November 1. Houston Grand Opera. Brown Theater. www.houstongrandopera.org 713/228-6737

HOUSTON: Houston es Música Festival November 2. Reliant Park. www.houstonesmusica.com 713/437-5233

HOUSTON: 19th Annual Texas Championship Powwow November 8-9. Includes colorful tribal dance contests, artist and traders' arts & crafts tent, teepees,

Salado 2008 Christmas Stroll & Historic Homes Tour



Stroll - Dec. 5, 6 & 7 **Dec. 12, 13 & 14**
Homes Tour Fri. Dec. 5 - 6 to 8pm
Sat. Dec. 6, 10am to 5pm, Sun. Dec. 7, 1 to 5pm

* Christmas Parade Dec. 4 * Live Nativity *
* Tablerock Amphitheater -
Dickens' - "A Christmas Carol" * Silver Spur Theater -
"Jingle Bell Broadcast" *
* Late Night Shopping with strolling carolers *

45 min north of Austin on IH35

Salado Chamber of Commerce 254-947-5040 or salado.com

honor ceremonies, singing, and much more. Several hundred Native Americans, representing dozens of tribes from across the United States, take part in this celebration of culture and heritage. Traders Village, 7979 N. Eldridge Road. www.tradersvillage.com 281/890-5500

HOUSTON: San Jacinto Veterans Day Celebration November 11-16. The San Jacinto Monument & Museum of History celebrates Veterans Day with free admission for military personnel and their families. Ride the famous 489-foot elevator to the top of the monument. View the Battle of San Jacinto site, the Houston Ship Channel, and much more. See the digital presentation *Texas Forever! The Battle of San Jacinto* and *Developing Houston: Photographic Treasures*. And, be sure to visit the history museum's collection of art, culture, and artifacts. www.sanjacinto-museum.org 281/479-2421

HOUSTON: Houston Championship Chili Cook Off November 15. Champion chili cooking teams from across Southeast Texas compete for the title of Houston's Best Chili. Presented by the General Go Texan Committee of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Traders Village, 7979 N. Eldridge Road. www.tradersvillage.com 281/890-5500

HOUSTON: Madonna November 16. The Material Girl's 2008 World Tour makes a stop at Minute Maid Park. www.ticketmaster.com 713/629-3700

HOUSTON: A Christmas Carol November 21-December 28. Charles Dickens' classic story follows Ebenezer Scrooge's journey with the three ghosts that visit him on

Christmas Eve. Alley Theatre. www.alleytheatre.org 713/220-5700

HOUSTON: Uptown Holiday Lighting November 27. www.uptown-houston.com 713/621-2504

HOUSTON: The Nutcracker November 28-December 28. This time-honored production of fascinating story, dance, and music offers a dazzling spectacle of holiday excitement. Presented by the Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center. www.houstonballet.org 713/227-2787 800/828-2787

KEMAH: 9th Annual Beat the Heat November 15. See dragsters and other high-powered race cars displayed throughout the Kemah Boardwalk. www.kemahboardwalk.com 877/285-3624

KINGSVILLE: South Texas Wildlife & Birding Festival November 20-23. Come to bird watch on the King Ranch and throughout the surrounding area. Many life birds are seen each year. Enjoy four days of birding and wildlife tours, speakers, and exhibits. Methodist Life Center. www.kingsvilletexas.com 361/592-8516

ORANGE: A Ride with Bob November 14-15. Touring stage production celebrates the life and music of Western Swing originator Bob Wills. 7:30 p.m. Lutch Theater. www.lutch.org 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535

ORANGE: 100 Years of Hollywood November 21. 7:30 p.m. Lutch Theater. www.lutch.org 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535

PASADENA: Owl Prowl November 15. Join a moonlit walk through the woods looking for owls and listening for fascinating night sounds. 8 p.m. Armand Bayou Nature Center. www.abnc.org 281/474-2551

PORT ARANSAS: Fallback Festival November 1. Celebrates the Daylight Savings Time change with food and music. Pelican's Landing. 361/749-6405

PORT ISABEL: World Championship Shrimp Cook Off November 2. Pits amateur and professional chefs against each other as they prepare more than one ton of fresh Gulf shrimp. Includes a shrimp-eating contest, rides for the kids, sandcastle building, folkloric dancing, and live music. www.portisabel.org 956/943-2262

PORT LAVACA: Arts-Crafts-Antiques Festival by the Bay November 1-2. Bauer Community Center. 361/552-6070 or 361/575-2561

ROCKPORT: Rockport Film Festival November 6-8. Rockport Center for the Arts/Main Street Arts www.rockportfilmfest.com 361/729-5519

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: South Padre Island Kite Festival November 1-2. 956/761-7028

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: South Padre Island Invitational College Basketball Tournament November 28-29. Texas A&M, Illinois, Tulsa, Kent State, UNC Wilmington, TAMU-Corpus Christi, Jackson State, and North Carolina Central compete at the SPI Convention Centre. www.sopadre.com 888/774-8587

TEXAS CITY: Model Train Festival November 8-9. Features model railroad, modular exhibits, interactive kids layout, food, refreshments, and more. Texas City Museum, 409 6th St. N. www.texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5799

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: Texas Book Festival November 1-2. Honors noted authors, promotes the joy of reading, and benefits the state's public libraries. Hear guest speakers, Q&A sessions, panel discussions, live readings, attend signings with favorite authors, visit the children's chapter tent, enjoy live music, and partake in a variety of food and refreshments. Texas State Capitol and surrounding venues. www.texasbookfestival.org 512/477-4055

BANDERA: Harvest Fest November 22. Margaret Alkek Pavilion, Bandera Boys & Girls Club. www.banderacowboycapital.com 830/796-4447

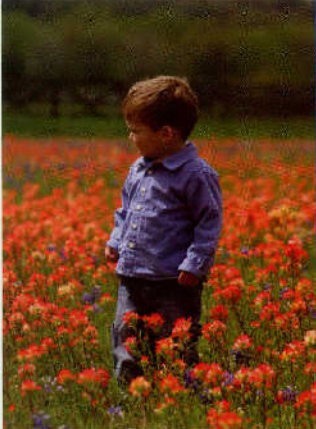
BOERNE: Dickens on Main November 28-29. Includes food and drink booths, costumed shop keepers, was-sail, arts & crafts, caroling. Santa, biergarten, live entertainment, and more. Downtown Boerne, Main Street. www.BoerneDickensOnMain.com 830/249-2766

COTTONWOOD SHORES: Driving Miss Daisy November 13-23. Pulitzer-prize winning drama affectionately covers the 25-year relationship between a wealthy, strong-willed Southern matron and her equally indomitable black chauffeur. Hill Country Community Theatre. www.hcct.org 830/798-8944 or 830/693-2474

GRUENE: 25th Annual Tour de Gruene Bicycle Classic November 1-2. Participants enjoy a leisurely ride through the Texas Hill Country along the banks of the Guadalupe River or competitive individual and team time trials. Special family tour route, too. Celebrity slow race and an antique & classic bicycle show round out the schedule of events. www.tourdegruene.com 210/828-6856

KERRVILLE: Original Team Roping November 14-15. Kerr County Youth Exhibit Center, Texas 27 E. www.otrc.net 830/896-9016

MARBLE FALLS: Walkway of Lights November 21-January 3. More than 1 million lights transform



Work, Play, & Raise a Family

cleburne

this is texas



Branded 1867
re-established daily.

www.ci.cleburne.tx.us
www.cleburnechamber.com
817.645.2455

Upscale Downhome

A place where "Howdy" is more than a greeting...
it's a genuine spirit no one forgets!

The Museum at the George Bush Presidential Library • Fine Dining
Historic Downtown Bryan • Texas A&M University
Messina Hof Winery & Resort • Art Galleries • Coffee Shops
Golf and Recreation • Unique Shopping • Easy Access

BRYAN COLLEGE STATION
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

For Information Take a Trip To: www.visitaggieland.com or Call: 800.777.8292



Cultural Collective CELEBRATE THE BRAZOS VALLEY WORLDVEST IN historic downtown **Bryan** on **November 22**. Promoting the international diversity and heritage of the Bryan/College Station metro area, this festive event offers multiple stages of live entertainment, cuisine from around the world, displays, demonstrations, arts & crafts, souvenir passports, storytelling, strolling performers, and more. See www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org, or call 979/862-6700.

Lakeside Park into a holiday wonderland. Hours: 6-10 p.m. (weather permitting), with weekend appearances by Santa. www.marblefalls.org 830/693-2815

MARBLE FALLS: Monte Montgomery November 29. Uptown Marble Theater. www.uptownmarble.com 830/693-9996

ROUND ROCK: Fossil Fest November 8-9. Old Settlers Park, U.S. 79. 3 miles east of I-35, next to Dell Diamond. www.texaspaleo.com/psa/index.html 512/657-7581.

SAN MARCOS: Veterans Day Celebration November 11. Hays County Veterans Parade begins at 9 a.m. Downtown. www.tourсанmarcos.com 512/393-5900 or 888/200-5620

VANDERPOOL: Lost Maples Tree Tour November 6, 13, 20. Learn about the maple trees and their unique niche in the Texas Hill Country. Guided walk along Maple Trail. Lost Maples State Natural Area. www.tpwd.state.tx.us 830/966-3413

WIMBERLEY: Holiday Home Tour November 14-15. Visit six lovely homes decorated for the holiday season. Sponsored by the Wimberley Civic Club. www.wimberley.org 512/847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Wimberley Players Present Christmas Belles November 28-December 14. The squabbling Futrell sisters of Fayro, Texas, attempt to pull together a church Christmas program. Everything that can go wrong does—from hot flashes to a surly Santa and vengeful sheep. Wimberley Playhouse, 450 Old Kyle Road. www.wimberleyplayers.org 512/847-1592

WIMBERLEY: EmilyAnn Tree Lighting & Trail of Lights November 29-January 1. This outdoor theatre becomes a holiday fantasy with more than 100 lighted displays over six acres. Enjoy nightly entertainment

and refreshments around Ye Olde Yule Log. The EmilyAnn Theatre, 1101 FM 2325. www.emilyann.org 512/847-6969

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: The Nutcracker November 21-23. Abilene's regional ballet company along with guest artists perform this holiday classic. Paramount Theatre. www.abileneballettheatre.org 325/675-0303 or 325/676-9609

AMARILLO: WRCA World Championship Ranch Rodeo November 13-16. Twenty ranch teams from across the United States and Canada vie for the title of world champion. Competitors are real cowboys and cowgirls dedicated to their affinity for horses and the Western way of life. Amarillo Civic Center. www.wrca.org 806/374-9722 or 806/387-3096

BROWNWOOD: Arts & Crafts Fair November 8-9. Brownwood Coliseum, 500 E. Baker. www.brownwoodchamber.org 325/646-9535

COLORADO CITY: Railhead Trade Days November 15-16. Railhead Building. www.coloradocitychamberofcommerce.com 325/728-3403

PINEY WOODS

GLADEWATER: Christmas Tyme in Gusherville November 8. Christmas parade on December 2. Breakfast with Santa and tour of homes on December 6. www.gladewaterchamber.com 903/845-5501 or 800/627-0315

HENDERSON: Heritage Syrup Festival November 8. Includes folk artists, arts & crafts, live music, antique cars and tractors, children's activities, and syrup making at the Depot Museum. www.depotmuseum.com 903/657-4303 or 866/650-5529

HUNTSVILLE: Rocky Raccoon 50K/25K Trail Runs

November 8. The second largest trail running event in Texas. Huntsville State Park. www.hillcountrytrailrunners.com/raceRocky50K.html 903/894-3788 or 936/295-5644

HUNTSVILLE: Huntsville Adventure Race November 22. USARA event includes mountain biking (10 miles), flat water paddle (5 miles), trekking/orienteering (5 miles), and team challenges. Huntsville State Park. www.solemracing.com 936/295-5644

LIBERTY: Country Legends Show November 1. Liberty Opry, 1816 Sam Houston Avenue www.libertyopry.com 877/729-9103

LONGVIEW: Doc Severinsen November 8. Pop and jazz trumpeter and bandleader plays the Belcher Performance Center. www.belchercenter.com 903/233-3080

LONGVIEW: 100 Years of Broadway November 22. A musical revue of Broadway's most celebrated shows features a dazzling cast of five Broadway stars accompanied by an all-star New York band. Belcher Performance Center. www.belchercenter.com 903/233-3080

MARSHALL: Wonderland of Lights November 26-December 31. Spectacular Christmas event with a parade, home tours, carriage rides, outdoor ice skating, live entertainment, visits with Santa, historic church tours, and impressive display of holiday lights. Downtown Marshall. www.marshallchamber.com 903/935-7868 or 903/938-8140

NACOGDOCHES: Tour de Nac November 15. Ride through the brick streets of downtown and see the Oldest Town in Texas. Routes are 7.8 miles and 53 miles. Begins and ends in downtown Nacogdoches. www.nineflagsfestival.com 888/653-3788

The Best Place

to get lost



Lake Conroe Area
LAKE, LINKS & LONE STAR

877-4-CONROE

www.lakeconroetx.org

Heavenly Music

THE ANNUAL JAZZ AT ST. JAMES Festival, November 14-16, in Austin, will feature 3 days of excellent live jazz programming, including trumpet player **Jeff Lofton** (right), legendary trombonist Curtis Fuller with saxophonist David "Fathead" Newman, pianist James Polk, and vocalist Pamela Hart. Sunday jazz masses feature the Leah Zeger Trio, Newman and Fuller, Buscando El Monte, and The Jeff Lofton Quintet. For additional details, check <http://jazzatstjames.org> or www.stjamesaustin.org; or call 512/926-6339.



NACOGDOCHES: Nine Flags Festival November 15-December 6. www.nineflagsfestival.com 888/653-3788

NACOGDOCHES: Fall Foliage Trail November 16-30. www.visitnacogdoches.org 888/653-3788

TEXARKANA: Texarkana Symphony Orchestra—Salute to Veterans November 18. Program of Key, Copland, and Beethoven. Historic Perot Theatre. www.texarkanasymphony.org 903/792-4992

TYLER: Chicago November 1. The hit Broadway musical comes to UT-Tyler's Cowan Center. www.cowancenter.org 903/566-7424

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: The 500 Inc. Winefest November 1. Enjoy samplings of food and wine from upscale restaurants and international wineries. Addison Conference Center. www.addisontexas.net 800/233-4766

ANDERSON: Holiday in Historic Anderson November 29. 936/825-7055

ATHENS: 11th Annual Turkey Trot November 27. Cain Center, 915 S. Palestine. 903/677-2001

BASTROP: Harvest Art Fest November 28-29. Celebrates local artists. 1308 Chestnut St. www.bastropassociationforthearts.org 512/303-9599

BRENNHAM: Poinsettia Celebration November 22-23. Ellison's Greenhouses, 2107 E. Stone St. www.ellisonsgreenhouses.com 979/836-6011

CANTON: First Monday Trade Days November 27-30. Shop for antiques, home decor, arts & crafts, tools, plants, and more. Original First Monday Airlines/Canton Civic Center. www.firstmondaycanton.com 903/567-6556

DALLAS: Dallas Symphony Orchestra November 6-9, 13-15. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.dallasymphony.com 214/692-0203

DALLAS: Texas Stampede November 7-9. Wrangler ProRodeo Tour Championship at the American Airlines Center. Live concerts by the Randy Rogers Band, Miranda Lambert, and Blake Shelton. www.texasstampede.org 214/222-3687

DALLAS: Chile Pepperama November 9. Old Town Shopping Center, Lovers Lane and Greenville Avenue. www.chilepepperama.net 972/943-4624

DALLAS: Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal November 14-15. SMU's McFarlin Auditorium. www.titas.org 214/528-5576

Take In The Local Color!

Lubbock's Artist Studio Tour November 8th & 9th

806.744.ARTS VisitLubbock.org **LUBBOCK**™

DALLAS: B.B. King November 16. Blues original plays at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.DallasSymphony.com 214/692-0203

DALLAS: Smokey Robinson November 21-22. Legendary soul/R&B vocalist performs as part of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Pops Series. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.dallassymphony.com 214/692-0203

DENTON: 48th Annual 'One O'Clock Lab Band' Fall Concert November 25. Winspear Hall. University of North Texas Murchison Center. www.unt.edu 940/565-3742

FORT WORTH: Dia de los Muertos Festival November 1. Artes de la Rosa presents folkloric music, dance, pan de muertos, ofrendas, and a large puppet procession from Marine Park to Rose Marine Plaza led by a group of musicians. Rose Marine Theater. www.rosemarinetheater.com 817/624-8333

FORT WORTH: NASCAR Dickies 500 November 2. Texas Motor Speedway. www.texasmotorspeedway.com 817/215-8500

FORT WORTH: k.d. lang November 5. Bass Performance Hall. www.basshall.com 817/212-4280 or 877/212-4280

FORT WORTH: 2008 Lone Star International Film Festival November 12-16. A five day celebration of cinema at Sundance Square. www.lisiff.com 817/924-6000

GRAND PRAIRIE: Celtic Thunder November 21. NOKIA Theatre. www.NOKIATheatreDFW.com 214/373-8000 or 972/647-5700

GRAPEVINE: Lone Star Christmas November 14-January 3. Gaylord Texan Resort. www.gaylordtexas.com 817/778-1000.

GRAPEVINE: North Pole Express November 28-30, December 5-7, 12-14, 19-21. Head down the tracks aboard the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. The ride is complete with carols, stories, and an enchanting encounter with Santa Claus. Cotton Belt Depot. www.grapevine-texasusa.com 817/410-3185 or 800/457-6338

IRVING: Irving Symphony Orchestra November 8. Program of Schwanter, Mozart, and Dvorak. Carpenter Performance Hall. www.irvingsymphony.com 972/252-ARTS

NAVASOTA: Holiday in the Garden November 21. Martha's Bloomers. www.marthasbloomers.com 936/825-7400

SALADO: Gathering of the Clans November 7-9. Scottish cultural festival features world-class bagpipe and drumming competition for individuals and bands; dancing competition in the Highland fling, sword dancing and lift; Highland Games with caber toss, 56-pound weight toss, hammer throw, sheaf toss, and more; Texas tattoo traditional musical interlude; ceilidh; vendor tents with all things Celtic. www.ctam-salado.org 254/947-5232

SAN FELIPE: Novemberfest November 8. Willow River Farms. 979/885-4121

WACO: ABBA: The Hits November 6. Waterloo, a tribute band, performs songs by ABBA with the Waco Symphony Orchestra. Waco Hall, Baylor University. www.WacoSymphony.com 254/752-0851

WACO: Vienna Boys Choir November 15. Jones Hall, Baylor University. www.WacoSymphony.com 254/754-0851

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EAGLE PASS: Christmas/Festival de Luces November 30. San Juan Plaza. 830/773-4343

GEORGE WEST: Storyfest November 1. Live Oak County Courthouse Square. www.georgeweststoryfest.org 361/449-2481

GOLIAD: Fall Flotilla November 1. Follows the 6.4-mile Goliad Paddling Trail from U.S. 59 just west of downtown Goliad to the state park. Hours: 9 a.m.-noon. Pre-registration required. Goliad State Park. 830/780-3249 or 361/645-3405

SAN ANTONIO: New World Wine & Food Festival November 4-9. Various locations throughout metro San Antonio. www.nwfff.org 210/822-9555

SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony November 7-8. The Majestic Theatre. 210/224-9600

SAN ANTONIO: Tuna Does Vegas November 11-16. The Majestic Theatre. 210/224-9600

SAN ANTONIO: George Lopez November 15. AT&T Center. 210/224-9600.

SAN ANTONIO: Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Marathon & 1/2 Marathon November 16. Start at Lions Field. Finish at Alamodome. The route passes many of San Antonio's signature attractions: The Alamo, San Pedro Park, the King William District, Southtown Arts District, Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Mission Espada, and the Tower of the Americas. www.mrsa.com 800/311-1255

SAN ANTONIO: The Blind Boys of Alabama and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band November 22. The Majestic Theatre. 210/224-9600

SAN ANTONIO: Andrea Bocelli November 25-26. Municipal Auditorium. 210/224-9600

SAN ANTONIO: Holiday River Parade & Lighting Ceremony November 28. Along the River Walk. www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com 210/227-4262

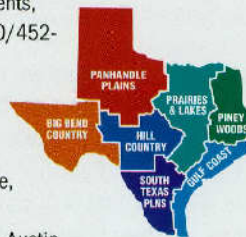
WESLACO: Family Fall Nature Day November 15. Valley Nature Center, 301 S. Border. www.valleynaturecenter.org 956/969-2475

Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at www.texashighways.com.

FOR A FREE PRINTED COPY of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to **Texas Events Calendar**, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. Or, call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 Central.

FOR TEXAS TRAVEL QUESTIONS, call 800/452-9292 to reach a TxDOT Travel Information Center, where a professional travel counselor will provide routing assistance, advise you of any emergency road conditions, and send brochures (including the official *Texas State Travel Guide* and map, accommodations guide, and quarterly *Texas Events Calendar*).

SEND FUTURE EVENT INFORMATION TO: *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax: 512/486-5879; e-mail: tv-tec@dot.state.tx.us. Listing deadlines: Spring (Mar, Apr, May) Dec 1; Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) Mar 1; Fall (Sep, Oct, Nov) Jun 1; Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) Sep 1.



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN GRANBURY
Where Texas History Lives & Fun Begins!

- ★ 32 Unique Shops
- ★ 10 Restaurants
- ★ 3 Live Shows
- ★ 4 Art Galleries
- ★ 18 Lodging Accommodations
- ★ 1 Riverboat
- ★ 5 Museums
- ★ Historic Homes
- ★ 35.5 Mile Lake Granbury
- ★ Parks & Bike Trails

Shop & Dine Close to Home!

Granbury is Just Minutes Away! (I-20 West to Hwy. 377 South)

GRANBURY

DISCOVER Baytown
A FUN PLACE TO BE

discover Baytown

BAYTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU **281-422-8359**

WWW.BAYTOWNCHAMBER.COM

Readers RECOMMEND...

TIPS FROM OUR READERS

KEVIN VANDIVIER

WE THOUGHT you would enjoy hearing about **Harry T's** in **Pipe Creek**, smack dab in the middle of the Hill Country. This cozy restaurant is filled with antiques, and everything is for sale. Salads with crisp greens and ancho vinaigrette begin our meal. Next come the most delicious pepper-coated steaks, complete with three types of sauce and Winnemucca cheddar mashed potatoes. Bread pudding with Jack Daniel's vanilla-cream sauce is the grand finale.

SHERILL AND BILL HARRIS, *San Antonio*
Harry T's Steak House is at 167 Panther Ridge; 830/535-6900; www.harytsteakhouse.com.

IN A CITY where there are many fine Mexican restaurants (**San Antonio**), **Del Sol** is perhaps the best. The food is excellent, the dining room is light and airy (well-shaded patio dining is also available), the wait staff is friendly and expert, and the prices are astonishingly reasonable. The chipotle enchiladas are great, but the fajitas will knock your socks off!

MARGUERITE KOWNSLAR, *San Antonio*
Del Sol is at 2267 N. Military Hwy; 210/525-8150.

WE TRIED the **Texas Cheese House** in **Lorena**. What a find! Scott Simon, chef and owner, serves homemade artisan cheeses from all around Texas. He offers a limited menu of a cheese basket or a grilled-cheese sandwich [along with a cheese fold-over and mac-and-cheese]. But don't be fooled! The cheese basket comes with your choice of cheese, a serving of summer sausage, a mini loaf of fresh-baked bread, homemade mustard, and fruit. Stop in—you won't regret it.

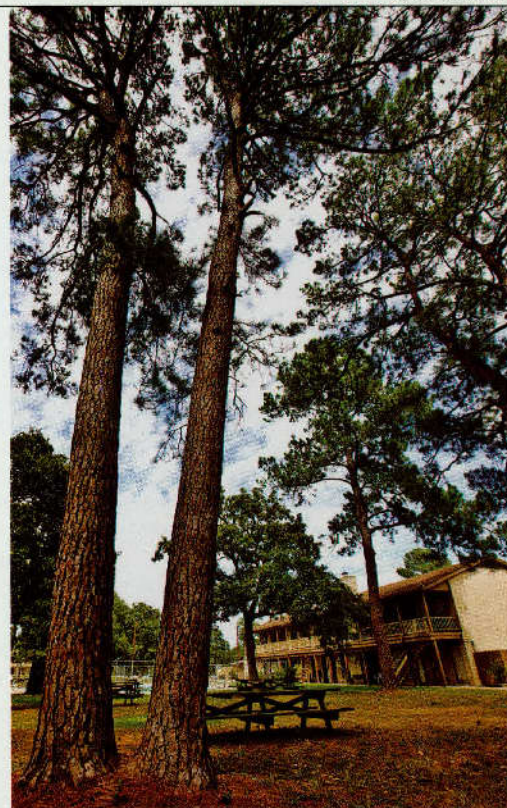
ZOE JACOBIE, *Dallas*
Texas Cheese House is at 102 E. Center St.; 254/655-4217; www.texascheesehouse.com.

WE ARE lucky to live just a few miles from one of the best catfish places in the Lone Star State: the **Brazos River Catfish Cafe** in **Millsap**. Almost as soon as you are seated, the server brings a bowl of the best pinto beans I've ever tasted. The salads, coleslaw, and baked and fried potatoes are out-of-this-world good. In season, they might even be serving fried green tomatoes. No matter how full you are, never leave without having a piece of their homemade pie.

I HAD the pleasure of spending a peaceful and wonderful weekend at **Loblolly Pines Village** in **Bastrop**. The place has 38 acres of beautiful, swaying pines, 30 comfortable, clean rooms, and campsites available. Two big hospitality rooms are available for any festive occasion. There's also a great café with good country cooking. Owners John and Beverly Hayes welcome you with open arms and smiling faces. Stop in and stay awhile.

CHERRY KUDER, *League City*
Loblolly Pines Village is at 1128 Texas 21 E.; 512/321-2499; www.loblollypines.com.

A stay at Loblolly Pines Village in Bastrop can include hiking wooded trails, playing golf, tennis, and volleyball, or just enjoying the peaceful simplicity.



BERNICE MADDUX, *Weatherford*
Brazos River Catfish Cafe is at 10771 W. I-20; 817/596-2994.

MY HUSBAND and I took a motorcycle trip to East Texas and stopped by the **Pickett House Restaurant** in **Woodville**. This is some of the best down-home Southern cooking I have had in years! They serve one full meal per day, family-style and all you can eat. They even had watermelon-rind pickles, just like Granny used to make. We ate so much fried chicken and dumplings we could hardly get back on the bike!

TERRI L. MCCULLOCH, *Panorama Village*
Pickett House Restaurant is on US 190 W.; 409/283-3371 or 800/323-0389; www.heritage-village.org.

BECAUSE of Larry McMurtry's **Booked Up, Inc.**, in **Archer City** is a great side trip for book lovers. I recommend watching the two movies filmed here based on his books, *The Last Picture Show* and *Texasville*, before visiting. Make sure you visit the **Royal Theater** downtown also. I once walked out of the Dairy Queen and saw McMurtry himself sitting in his car. Archer City is a great weekend trip from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

DANNY ATCHLEY, *Mineral Wells*
Booked Up, Inc. is at 216 S. Center St.; 940/574-2511; www.bookedupac.com.

The Royal Theater is at 101 N. Center St.; 940/574-2489; www.royaltheater.org.

ANYONE traveling through **Columbus** on Texas 71 should stop for lunch or dinner at **Los Cabos Mexican Grill**. The menu is extensive and portions are large in comparison to the price, so much so that my husband and I always end up asking for a to-go box. The atmosphere and service are excellent. You will not be disappointed if you enjoy really good Mexican food.

BARB TERRAZAS, *Ledbetter*
Los Cabos Mexican Grill is at 2543 Texas 71 S.; 979/732-9744.

IF YOU KNOW OF A NOTEWORTHY LONE STAR ATTRACTION, RESTAURANT, EVENT, OR PRODUCT, WRITE OR E-MAIL: Readers Recommend, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. E-mail: letters05@texashighways.com. Space constraints prevent us from publishing every suggestion we receive. We reserve the right to edit items. Because we're unable to check out every item, and because hours vary and details can change, please call ahead for more information.

Next month... Plan your Yuletide travel itinerary here, with December's feature on **holiday getaways**, from **rafting trips** on the **Rio Grande** to **South Padre's lighted boat parade**. We'll talk **shopping** in the **Rio Grande Valley**, and show **El Paso** aglow in lights and luminarias. 'Tis the season!



© THOMAS J. AVERY

TURKEY FEATHERS During a recent hunting trip to High Lonesome Ranch in San Saba County, Houston-based photographer Thomas J. Avery took this close-up of turkey feathers reflecting their true colors in the light of a fall afternoon.

■ To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

window on
TEXAS

