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# Texas Highways

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS



**PLUS »**

**Tres Leches Cakewalk** PAGE 14 «

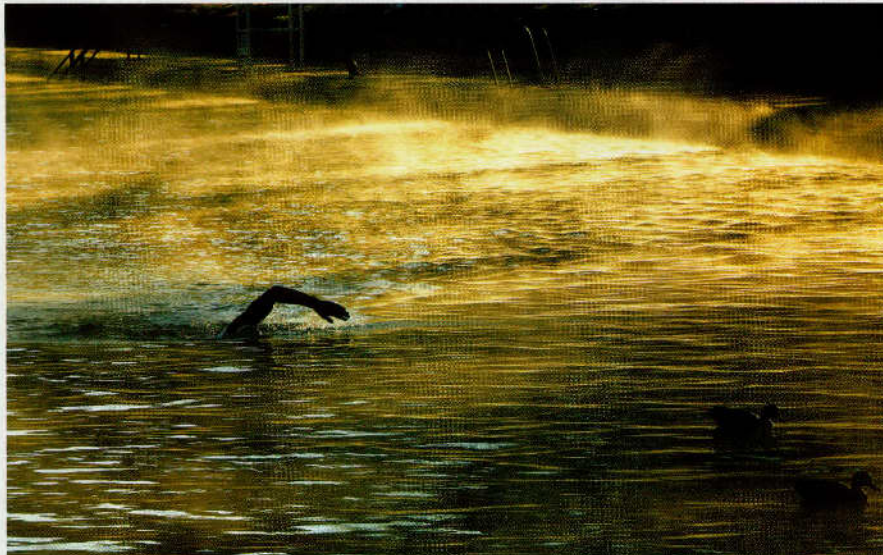
**Another Side of Sam Houston** PAGE 64 «

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© ERICH SCHLEGEL

Austin's Barton Springs as I love it most: early on a cool, dry morning when the mist rises from the tranquil pool to reach the warming light and create a sense of mystery. That's not my arm in the photo, but it could be.

## Wild About Springs

**W**HETHER IT'S A PISCAN INFLUENCE or just an essential appreciation of natural bodies of water, I religiously seek out springs and spring-fed streams—for swimming or just sitting and relaxing. One person who could be more dedicated than I am about this pursuit of springs is Joe Nick Patoski, who wrote “Springs Odyssey” (page 24). I've had the good fortune to share a few springs adventures with Joe Nick over the years, and as you read this essay, you'll feel you're traipsing along with him to some of his favorite springs destinations.

In fact, one of my first dates with my wife, Helen (who has the same birthday as Joe Nick), included a night visit to Jacob's Well near Wimberley. There was no moon, and the stars in the velvety black sky seemed close enough to touch. An equally memorable part of the evening was getting lost—with no flashlight—on the short walk back to our friends' house nearby. That was David Baker's house, and he's now the Executive Director of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, which owns Jacob's Well. (For more information, go to [www.visitwimberley.com](http://www.visitwimberley.com).)

“The Well” has had its ups and downs in the intervening years and your support is welcome. Fortunately, the Blue Hole, downstream and fed by Jacob's Well, is open to the public. Take that plunge whenever you can.

And of course, we need to remember the larger importance of springs to our state's water sustainability. I checked with Cindy Loeffler, Water Resources Branch Chief at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and she reminded me that, “Springs are important not only from an historical or water-supply perspective but also from a natural heritage perspective. Of the 281 major and historically significant springs documented in Texas, at least 63 have failed. We are losing more springs today due to drought, development, and groundwater pumping. What we lose we will not get back.”

As we enjoy the cool water this summer, we need to be aware of the significance of springs, not just to our lifestyles, but to our lives.

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

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COVER  
STORY

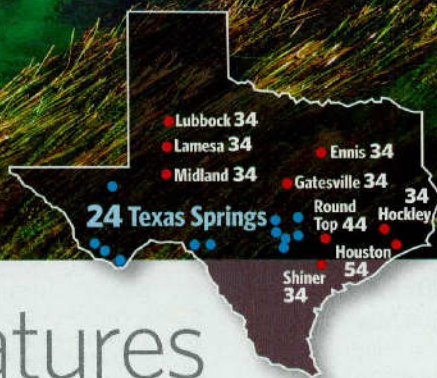
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## Springs Odyssey

Springs have both soothed and energized humans for centuries. We'll take you to a dozen destinations across the state where they still do.

Text by **JOE NICK PATOSKI**

Photographs by **ERICH SCHLEGEL**



## features

**34 | Fields of Screens**  
Family-friendly drive-in theaters are making a comeback across Texas. Look for new and updated outdoor cinemas from Hockley to Lubbock.

Text by **MARY O. PARKER**  
Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**44 | Setting the Stage**  
Thousands of music lovers flock to the Round Top Festival Institute, enchanted by its scenic beauty, as well as the magnificent concert hall and first-rate performers.

Text by **HEATHER BRAND SCHATZ**  
Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**54 | Houston Play-Date**  
Kid-oriented adventures abound in Houston—and they'll please parents, too. One family's explorations yield fun, education, and multigenerational bonding.

Text by **KITTY CRIDER**  
Photographs by **ANDY SHARP**

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**Triple Delight**  
A great counterpart to spicy foods, *pastel de tres*

*lech*s stars on Latin American menus. Who knew this delectable cake is also easy to make?

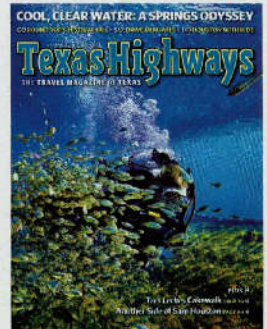
**19 | Weekender**  
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With such far-ranging interests as phrenology and clairvoyance, preeminent Texan Sam

Houston was full of surprises. A Huntsville festival celebrates his legacy each spring.

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**73 | Window on Texas**  
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A serene space at Lake Austin Spa Resort seems right in sync with its Hill Country setting.



### About Our Covers

**FRONT:** A scuba diver mingles with flashy fish in the spring-fed, 25-foot-deep, 1.75-acre swimming pool at Balmorhea State Park. With a constant temperature of 72 to 76 degrees, the pool opens for year-round scuba diving, snorkeling, and swimming. **Photo © Erich Schlegel**

**BACK:** A honeybee forages for nectar and pollen in the McAshan Herb Gardens, on the campus of the Round Top Festival Institute. **Photo by J. Griffis Smith**

### Photographic Prints Available

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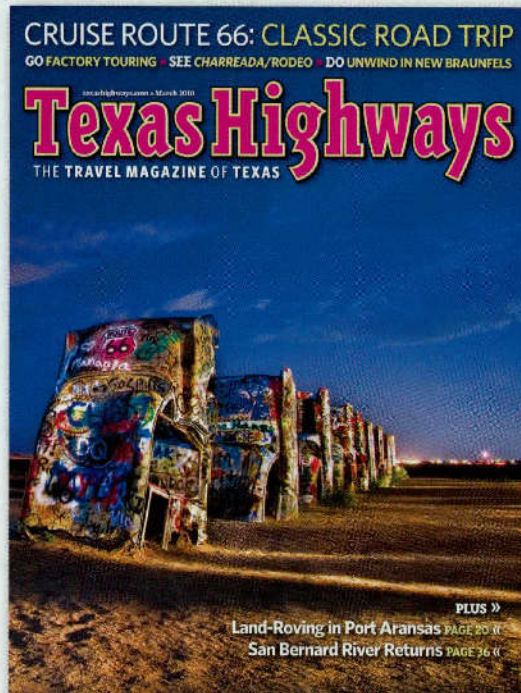
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"TH shows me beautiful places in this great state that I have not seen yet, but hope to soon."

—RUTH DUNNAM,  
TH Facebook Fan

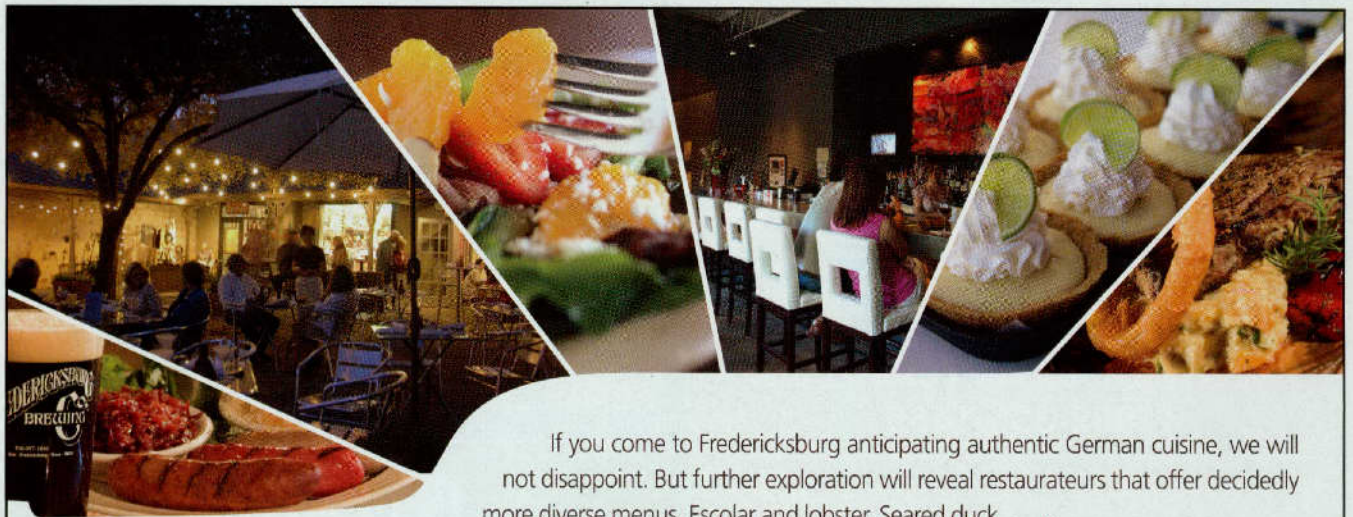


**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the February issue's feature "Driving 170," Editor Charles Lohrmann recommended a hard-to-find Presidio restaurant named Escondida. On a recent trip back to the Big Bend region, he learned that Escondida has closed. Even though this is disappointing news, we did learn that one of the cooks from Escondida moved to another local family-owned restaurant—The Enlightened Bean, at 201 W. O'Reilly; 432/229-3131.

### Pepper and Port A

When did the Dr Pepper company eliminate the period after "Dr"? The photograph of one of their bottle caps in the March issue ["Made in Texas"] clearly shows the period.

On another note, being a permanent resident of Port Aransas, I want to compliment the magazine and Melissa Gaskill, who wrote the article on [continued on page 6]



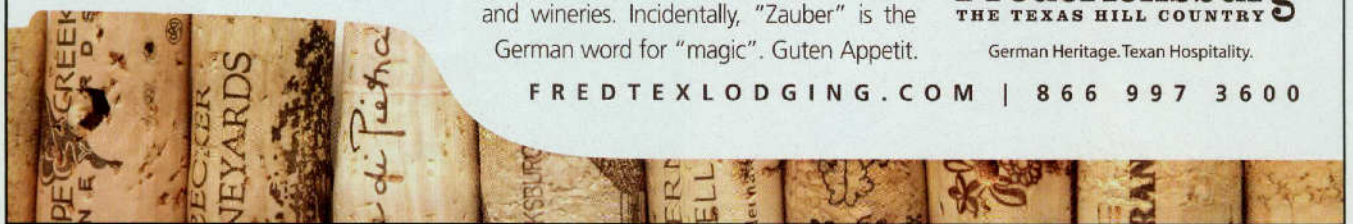
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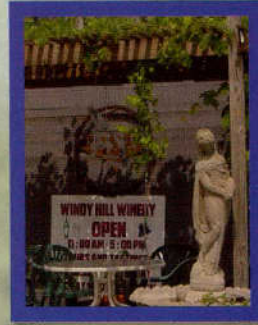
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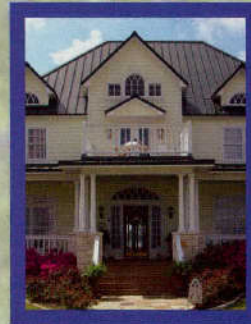
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**TH READER RECOMMENDATION**

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*Events Coordinator for Dublin Dr Pepper, sent the following information from The Changing Signatures of Dr Pepper Company: "To simplify the trademark, and reduce costs, a new design was presented [in 1950]. With [the new] style of lettering, the 'r' was a down-stroke with a detached ball at the top. When the name was written with the period following the 'r' in 'Dr.' the name appeared, visually, to be 'Di:' as the dot at the top of the 'r' lined up vertically with the following period. It was decided that since the Company was not related to the medical field, they would drop the period. This accomplished, the period vanished from the trademark."*

at the counter and gab with other guys from camp who happened to be there. I served him a lot of coffee.

I must say this picture flatters him. He was a short guy and wore a "go-to-hell cap" [the standard-issue Army cap set at an angle on the back of the head]. But most of all, he was a good fiddler and singer.

I've been a TH subscriber for decades, and I enjoy every issue.

**ANNA BELLE CAVES**  
*DeSoto*

our island paradise in that issue. Well done!

**JACK DRESSEN**  
*Port Aransas*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Lori Dodd, *Special*

### Where There's A Will

I was a waitress at French's Café in Gainesville during World War II. Bob Wills [February 2010, back cover], who was stationed at nearby Camp Howze then, would come in and drink coffee

**CONTACT TH**

**We want to hear from you! Send feedback and recommendations to:** Texas Highways, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. E-mail: letters05@texashighways.com. We reserve the right to edit items. Because we're unable to check out every recommendation, and because hours vary and details can change, please call ahead for more information.

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# Postcards

INSIDE: TRES LECHES TAKES THE CAKE...14 DINING, B&B (AND ART) AT SAN ANGELO ART CENTER...19



See!

Find Attwater's prairie-chicken sites: [www.texashighways.com/postcards](http://www.texashighways.com/postcards)

## Attwater's Prairie-Chickens

*Scientists join forces to bring these endangered birds back from the brink of extinction* Text by **MARGARET SHAKESPEARE**

**A**N HOUR'S DRIVE DUE WEST OF downtown Houston, on Interstate 10, the suburbs finally begin to give way to open space. At the Sealy exit, I turn off onto Texas 36, then onto Farm Road 3013, where tractors slow traffic to a country pace. I take a deep breath of rural air and wonder what it must have been like more than a century ago when all this land was still wild coastal prairie.

Before the cows, before the plows, before the fields of cotton and corn, this flat land of switchgrass, yellow Indian grass, little bluestem, and big bluestem laced with streams, marshes, and ponds was the domain of Attwater's prairie-chickens. From the Louisiana coast to west of Corpus Christi, up to a million of these birds, a subspecies of the extinct heath hen, once thrived on a diet of insects and seeds,

brooded in shallow ground nests—and filled the vast prairie with loud booming. Booming?

Well, I had done a little research before setting out, asking Houston Zoo birdkeeper Mollie Coym to explain this peculiar trait.

**The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge protects more than 10,000 acres of coastal prairie habitat.**

“During mating season, from late January to April, males hold their head and tail feathers up, inflate the air sacs on the sides of their necks, and stomp their feet really fast,” she says. “It’s a mating dance to attract a female. And the sound—kind of like blowing across the top of a Coke bottle—goes on for hours, all of them booming at the same time. The females can be very standoffish, but once they choose a mate the sound gets even louder.”

I try to imagine the chorus of a million “booming” chickens as I arrive at my destination, the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, near Eagle Lake. The refuge, which spreads across more than 10,000 acres of coastal prairie habitat, is home to more than 400 species of animals, including the largest extant wild Attwater’s population—today a mere 50 individuals. (Some 40 other birds live wild at the Texas City Prairie Preserve and on private property near Goliad.) The Attwater’s prairie-chicken (APC)



Fewer than 100 Attwater’s prairie-chickens exist in the wild, but captive breeding programs offer hope for the species’ survival.

Predation—mostly by owls, hawks, and skunks—also affects populations, but red imported fire ants are probably the biggest threat.”

Rossignol, APC Recovery Team Leader since 1996, sets protocol under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

guidelines, coordinating captive breeding programs at the Houston Zoo, the Abilene Zoo, the Caldwell Zoo in Tyler, the San Antonio Zoo, SeaWorld San Antonio, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, and Texas A&M University. The refuge also works to

is one of Texas’ most endangered birds. I ask refuge manager Terry Rossignol what happened. “We’ve lost 99 percent of the original coastal prairie due to conversion to cropland, urbanization, and invasive plant species,” he says. “That’s the primary reason for the birds’ decline.

service guidelines, coordinating captive breeding programs at the Houston Zoo, the Abilene Zoo, the Caldwell Zoo in Tyler, the San Antonio Zoo, SeaWorld San Antonio, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, and Texas A&M University. The refuge also works to [continued on page 10]

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## The Gruene Scene

*The Gruene National Historic District celebrates 35 years*

**THE CENTRAL TEXAS HAMLET OF GRUENE**—first settled in the mid-1840s and now a vibrant tourist destination—celebrates year round, as anyone who wanders into its famous 1880s dance hall or tubes its lazy stretch of the Guadalupe River can attest.

But 2010 is a special year for Gruene, as it marks the 35th anniversary of its transformation from ghost town to Shindig Central. For after a successful run as a cotton community in the late 1800s and early 20th Century, the Great Depression and the boll weevil spelled economic disaster for Gruene, and most of the businesses closed. In 1975, though, businessman Pat Molak purchased and restored the historic dance hall, and that same year, the entire Gruene Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. More than 90 percent of the original buildings are still standing, and today operate as restaurants, bars, tea rooms, coffee houses, boutiques, antiques shops, artists' studios, and other enticements for visitors.

"May will be the big month for celebrating the 35-year milestone," says Molak, "since that's the anniversary month of the first



big dance we had at Gruene Hall." Scheduled acts at Gruene Hall include Jerry Jeff Walker (May 13), the Joe Ely Band (May 15), Asleep at the Wheel (May 22), and Aaron Watson (May 30). See [www.gruenetexas.com](http://www.gruenetexas.com).

**Gruene's got it going on—shopping, dancing, drinking, eating, and history.**

—Lori Moffatt

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continued from page 91 heighten public awareness of the birds, hosting guided van tours and hikes as part of its annual Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival in April. And visitors can look for birds year round on two hiking trails and a five-mile driving loop. "It has been gratifying to see the Attwater's population slowly increase," he says.

I am itching to be outside; if it's my lucky day, maybe I will spot one of these rare birds. But first I linger in the refuge visitor center to watch videos of the courtship ritual and of chicks hatching. In the wild, hens incubate eggs for 26 days and then keep the chicks close and warm for up to six weeks, until they are old enough to fend for themselves. Now, most chicks are hatched in captivity, nurtured into early adulthood, and then released.

The first successful captive breeding in Texas took place in the early 1990s at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. Janet Johnson, Fossil Rim's avian supervisor, tells me, "We released 104 chicks to the wild last year, and we have 23 breeding pairs in residence this year. Our education staff leads

behind-the-scenes tours of the chick-rearing facility, where guests can see the avian staff working with the chicks. These birds are so endearing, and we really want them to make it.”

At the Houston Zoo, I accompany bird curator Hannah Bailey for a behind-the-scenes prairie-chicken tour. “As soon as the eggs are laid, we collect them for incubation,” says Bailey. “Incubation is part science, part art. We candle the eggs [examine them in front of a light] several times to be sure they are staying healthy. When they hatch, the chicks go into brooder boxes,

During mating season, the male birds display a flamboyant courtship ritual called “booming.”

which simulate being under the mother. As they grow, they are moved to larger cages, until they’re ready to be released to one of the three ‘wild’ locations in Texas. With a 20 percent survival rate year-to-year, we blow other [species] release programs out of the water.”

The Attwater’s prairie-chickens—and their fragile hold on existence—engender the affection of many, from schoolchildren who “adopt” birds with their ice-cream money to private landowners who clear out invasive plant species to create more native habitat. To astronauts.

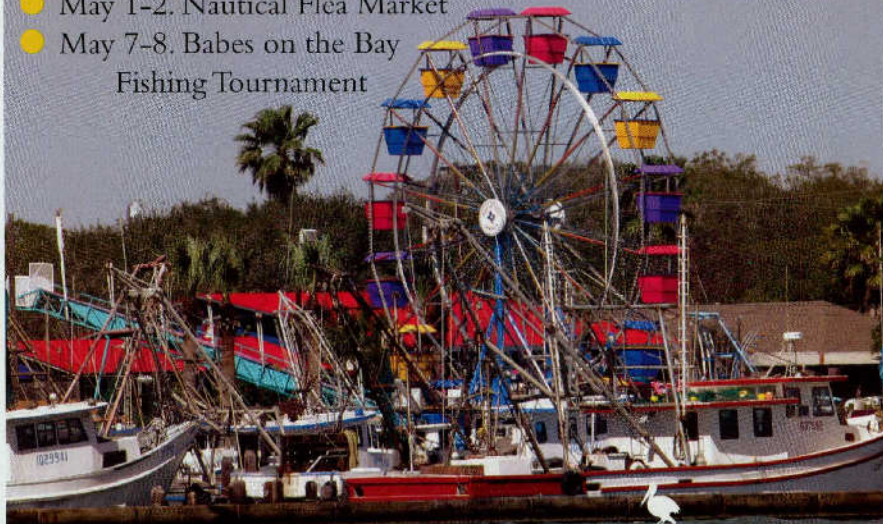
Astronauts and prairie-chickens?

Space, which can be scarce on Earth, is crucial to the birds’ survival. Ideally, they need a large unobstructed area to flush (take flight suddenly) without hurting themselves. This explains why zoos can have a hard time keeping them on public exhibit, and why the Houston Zoo keeps its breeding colony on part of a 200-acre patch of prairie at NASA’s Johnson Space

## Do it all...or just do nothing at all.

Relax to the tempo of lapping waves or pick up the pace in a place where celebrations are always in season. Coming up:

- April 3. Rockport Herb Festival
- May 1-2. Nautical Flea Market
- May 7-8. Babes on the Bay Fishing Tournament



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Photography by Diane Loyd

# Rockport Fulton

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## Postcards



Center campus, where I join a public tour. NASA environmental specialist Sandra Parker leads the way to two rows of soft-meshed 20'x40' pens, home to 23 birds, and explains: "A mission of JSC is protection of the home planet. The zoo needed

### Astronauts and prairie-chickens?

appropriate space for their breeding colony, and we were able to help." Parker tells me that astronaut Steve Frick visited during booming season and said how cool it was that they take care of the birds. "Of course," she says, "he goes into space, and we think that's pretty cool, too."

Close up, I can see the herringbone feather pattern that provides camouflage. We watch them quietly peck in the sand and rest under clumps of grass as Parker explains the phenomenon of chicken "Boomtown." Suddenly, right on cue, a yellowish bulge the size of a small orange appears on the neck of a male, and he stomps around, his air sacs making an ethereal sound as they deflate.

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As I walk the Pipit and Sycamore trails that day at the national wildlife refuge, I see (and smell)

At the prairie-chicken refuge near Eagle Lake, hiking trails and a driving loop cross both prairie and wetlands habitats.

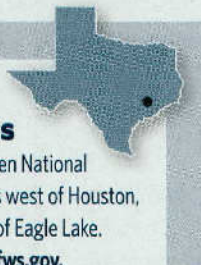
charred remains of prescribed burns, which help renew the habitat and remove nonnative species. I give wide berth to the cattle, whose grazing helps create pathways for chicks. I drive slowly, trying not to startle snowy egrets and white-faced ibis wading in Pintail Marsh. Then without warning, a force stronger than the breeze rustles tall roadside grasses ... and, in seconds, not one but three Attwater's prairie-chickens emerge, flush, and vanish.

Turns out, it is my lucky day. And I depart, hoping to leave behind a little luck for these precious few prairie-chickens. **TH**

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## Triple Delight

*Pastel de tres leches es simplemente delicioso!*

Text by **LOIS M. RODRIGUEZ**

*Pastel de tres leches* (three milks cake), a dense, yet light, spongy vanilla cake sopped in sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and cream, is rivetingly delicious



**See!**

Panaderia treats at [texashighways.com/thtaste](http://texashighways.com/thtaste)

**G**ROWING UP, I WATCHED THE WOMEN IN MY FAMILY labor over homemade tortillas every morning, and during the holiday season, they took cooking to a whole other level with the tedious process of making tamales. So, why was it that no one in my family ever made *pastel de tres leches* (three milks cake), the delicate vanilla cake sopped in sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and cream? I assumed tres leches cake must really be difficult to make since the only ones we ever enjoyed were purchased. I never ventured to try, until now.

These days, I'm a lot more adventurous in my baking. One of my specialties, which I sold at a local restaurant, even earned me a "Best of Austin Critics Pick Award" from the *Austin Chronicle*. I feel ready to tackle tres leches.

Tres leches, usually topped with whipped cream or a light meringue, is as uncomplicated as it gets. It's rivetingly delicious in all its simplicity, yet easily adaptable for

Austin's Zocalo Café serves a perfect *pastel de tres leches*—a delicious vanilla cake with three milks, whipped cream, toasted coconut flakes, and strawberries.



presentation and flavor variations. I focus here, though, on the original version.

While no one can pinpoint the exact origin of tres leches, it likely originated in Latin America (Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Guatemala have all claimed credit). The Nestlé Corporation included a recipe for tres leches on the labels of the evaporated and sweetened condensed milk cans sold in Mexico in the late 1800s. This dessert serves as a great counterpart to spicy Latin American foods.

The best version I've had comes from chef Michael Cordua's kitchen at Américas restaurant in uptown Houston. Just the thought of it evokes an afterglow—sitting amid mesmerizing tile mosaics with my tres leches plated so stylishly. There's a certain comfort built into that simple flavor. It's like ice cream, minus the brain freeze, as one friend says. Américas' cake also stands my test of texture—firm, spongy, and moist, but not soggy.

In Austin, I've found a delicious representation at Zocalo Café, the modern-styled taqueria billed as a "little piece of Mexico City." The bright green and crisp white colors of this hideout offer a welcoming environment in which to enjoy the restaurant's tres leches, an understated cake with a comforting vanilla cream flavor, topped with fresh strawberries and toasted coconut, resting in a shallow pool of the three-milk sauce.

Habana Restaurant and Bar, on Austin's South Congress Avenue, offers Cuban and Caribbean fare, including a mouth-watering tres leches served unadorned except for a sprinkling of cinnamon. Habana serves a chocolate version, too.

With these stellar examples in mind, I set out to make my own—from scratch—and discover that my misgivings were unwarranted. Tres leches cake is actually easy to make.

I consulted sources that I thought would know tres leches best, including friends who shared family recipes. I used my judgment where there were differences

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While no one can pinpoint the exact origin of tres leches, it likely originated in Latin America (Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Guatemala have all claimed credit).



and came up with an amalgamated recipe that I would follow. (See recipe on the facing page.)

Making it easier, still, I had all the basic ingredients at home—flour, baking powder, eggs, salt, sugar, milk, vanilla, evaporated milk, and sweetened condensed milk. I only had to buy cream and fresh fruit to further embellish my cake creation.

I easily achieved a successful batter by incorporating the blend of beaten egg yolks, sugar, milk, and vanilla into the dry ingredients. To that, I folded in the egg whites and sugar, beaten to soft peaks. Three bowls involved, but still, as they say, “a piece of cake.”

Some tips: Let the baked cake cool, then slowly and evenly pour about a cup of the milk mixture over the cake—careful to make sure all of it gets covered—especially the sides. Give it a little time to absorb before spreading on the topping. If you’re

For a “little piece of Mexico City” in Austin’s Clarksville neighborhood, Zocalo Café offers its splendid version of tres leches cake.

An advertisement for Amarillo, Texas. The top left shows a tall, layered rock formation. The main text reads "Cowboys Canyons &amp; KICKS" in a stylized font, with a "ROUTE 66" shield logo. Below this is a photograph of the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame &amp; Museum, featuring a large bronze statue of a cowboy on a horse. Text on the museum sign reads "AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE HALL OF FAME &amp; MUSEUM". At the bottom, it says "Step Into The Real Texas. AMARILLO" with a red cowboy boot logo. Contact information includes "800-692-1338" and "www.visitAmarilloTX.com".

PHOTO: RANDALL MAXWELL

## Tres Leches Cake

1 ½ c. flour  
1 ½ tsp. baking powder  
¼ tsp. salt  
5 whole eggs (separated)  
1 ½ c. sugar (divided)  
1 tsp. vanilla  
½ c. milk  
1 can evaporated milk  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
1 c. heavy cream

Place flour, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Set aside. In another bowl, beat 5 egg yolks with 1 c. of sugar. Add the vanilla and milk into yolk mixture and mix together. Fold into flour mixture.

In a separate bowl, beat egg whites and ¼ c. sugar until the mixture forms peaks. Gently fold egg whites into the batter.

Pour batter into a 9"x13" buttered pan and bake for about 40 minutes at 350°, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Allow cake to cool somewhat. Use a fork to poke holes throughout the top of the cake.

Combine evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and ⅓ c. cream to create a milk syrup. Slowly pour 1 c. of the mixture over the cake to allow the cake to soak it up evenly. Use additional milk syrup as desired to adjust cake moisture or to add to plates when serving.

Cake topping: Whip remaining cream with ¼ c. of sugar until firm. Spread evenly over the cake.

not in a hurry, let it chill in the refrigerator awhile before frosting it.

And there you have it—complete with whipped topping. Tres leches cake—delicious, plain and simple—but you can top it with assorted fruits, like strawberries, mangoes, kiwis, pineapple, and others. I styled mine with strawberry and mango slices and a dusting of cinnamon. ☺



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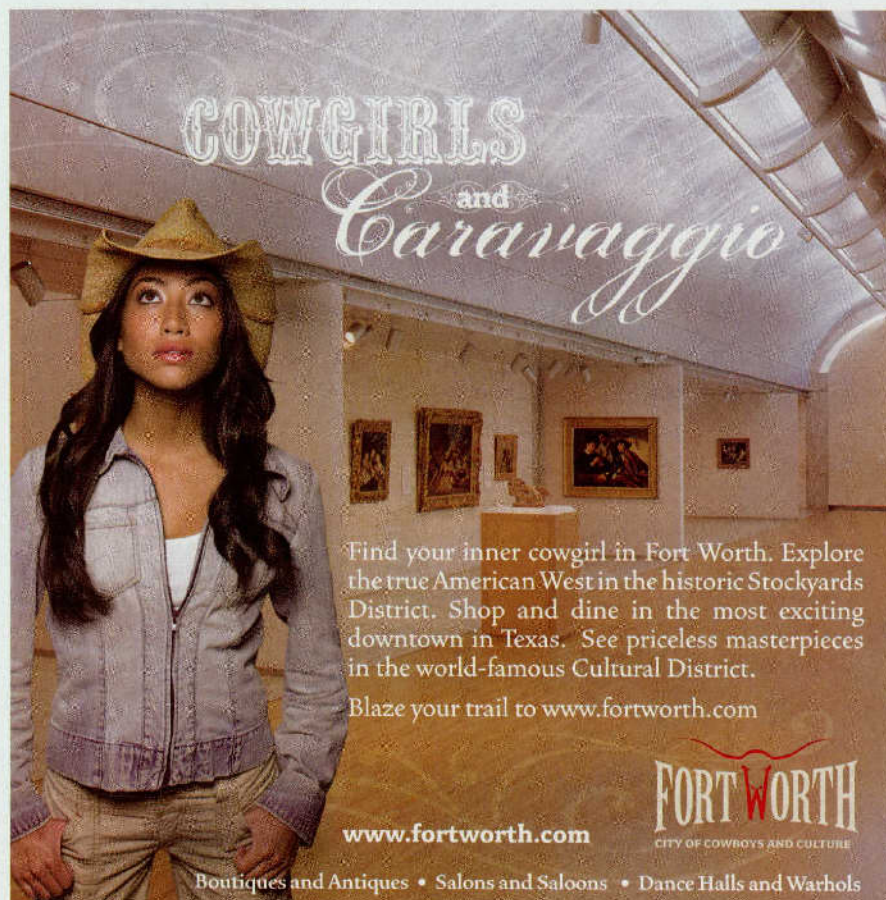
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## Taste

After purchasing tres leches servings from around town, I invited three friends to sample them (mine secretly in the mix) and let them do a taste test. I was pleased when two of the three friends tagged my cake as their favorite.

Amaretto, rum, Irish cream, and Frangelico (or similar non-alcoholic flavorings) can add flavor to the milk mixture. I tried some of the variations with the remain-

It's like ice cream,  
minus the brain freeze.

ing milk mixture I had, and they were all splendid, though I particularly enjoyed the sweet almond enhancement of Amaretto. You can also replace the sweetened condensed milk with cream of coconut, and top the cake with coconut flakes.

Some bakeries and restaurants offer *cuatro leches* (four milks) cake—a classic tres leches cake topped with the milk-based caramel sauce known as *dulce de leche* or *cajeta*. Américas incorporates several of those deviations with their dessert called *Bocadito del Cielo* (a little taste of heaven, it is!). This remains one of my all-time favorite desserts, a mini tres leches cake (with Bailey's Irish cream added) filled with cajeta and served with berries.

Now you have the basics. Go forth and conquer tres leches. *Buen Provecho!* **TH**

### Tres Leches Trifecta

Américas, 1800 Post Oak Blvd., Houston,  
713/961-1492; [www.cordua.com](http://www.cordua.com).

Zocalo Café, 1110 West Lynn, Austin,  
512/472-TACO; [www.zocalocafe.com](http://www.zocalocafe.com).

Habana Restaurant & Bar, 2728 S. Congress  
Ave., Austin, 512/443-4253; and 709 E. 6th  
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FUN FINDS ALONG THE ROAD



Artists sometimes refer to the time they spend at the art center as "Chicken-Farm time," an affectionate nod to the special ambiance they feel pervades the complex.

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## Artful Escape

*San Angelo's Chicken Farm Art Center nurtures the spirit*

Text by **NOLA McKEY**

**I**T'S A GOOD BET THAT THE FORMER RESIDENTS OF THE THREE-ACRE site at Martin Luther King Drive and West 25th Street in San Angelo wouldn't recognize their old scratching grounds. After all, this onetime chicken farm now features artists' studios, a gallery, a sculpture garden, a cozy B&B, and an outstanding restaurant run by two chefs who trained at the Culinary Institute of America in New York.

"When I bought this property with two friends in 1971, the plan was to provide a spot where artists could live and work," says Roger Allen, master potter and director of the Chicken Farm Art Center. "There wasn't much here, except for a few chicken coops and some rundown, old buildings. It was pretty desolate. With the help of a lot of people, we turned the chicken coops into studios, and, little by little, fixed up the other buildings. Forty years of hard labor has transformed this place," he says with a wry grin.

My friend Cheryl Stephenson has joined me from Lubbock on this trip. We're staying at the Inn at the Art Center, the on-site B&B, which is modest, but furnished with comfortable beds and original art. I'm up early to talk to some of the 15 artists with studios here, who refer to themselves as "Chicken Farmers."

Walking the short distance between the B&B and the artists' studios one Saturday morning, I find it difficult to imagine that this rambling retreat ever looked desolate. It reminds me of Santa Fe, or perhaps how Santa Fe might have looked before it was crowded with tourists. Flowering plants abound, and a songbird warbles overhead in one

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## Weekender

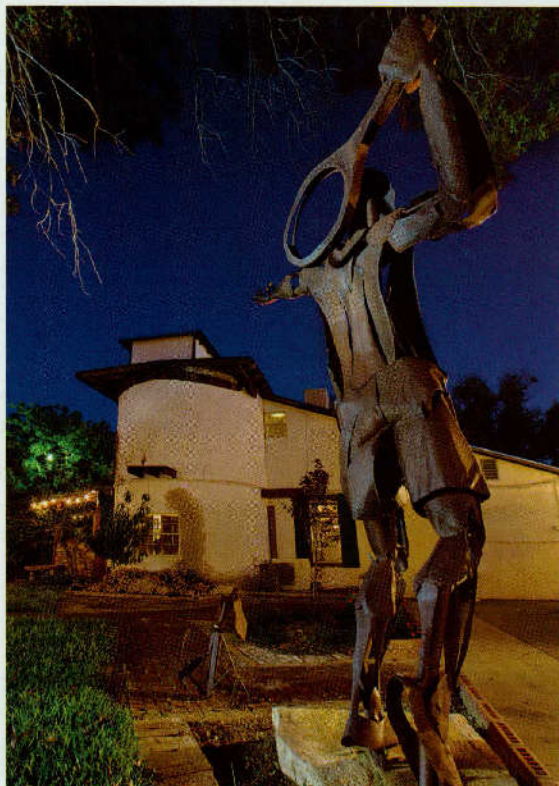
of the big red oaks scattered throughout the grounds.

An eclectic collection of sculptures ranging from two feet to eight feet tall beckons me to Stone Dog Studio, where I meet stone-carver Oscar Latham. His works include totem pole-like structures and abstract representations of animals and humans in limestone, marble, alabaster, and onyx. How does he decide what to carve? "I just follow the stone," he says, "and the shapes come out."

At Joe Morgan's studio next door, I learn a little about horsehair pottery, Morgan's specialty. The alabaster-looking pots owe their distinctive, fine-lined appearance to real horsehair that's introduced immediately after the pots are taken out of the kiln, he tells me. Holding a pot with tongs, he carefully places horsehair on the hot surface; the horsehair curls and burns in unpredictable ways, leaving random patterns. A high school art teacher, Morgan also creates face mugs, each one with a different personality, and whimsical fish. "I'm not a production potter," says Morgan. "I like to make pieces one at a time."

Talking to people who are passionate about their work always energizes me, and soon, I'm hungry as well. When I return to the room, I find that B&B co-owner Susan Warnell has stopped by to tell us that brunch awaits in the breakfast nook next door.

Cheryl and I decide to eat in, so I walk over and pick up our food—blueberry scones and Devonshire cream, prepared by the inn's chef, Jerry Warnell. Jerry, a glass artist, and Susan, an iconographer, used to operate the Silo House restaurant, where we'll dine tonight. For now, we discover the delights of dunking the corners of the fruit-laden, almost cake-like scones



into small bowls of sweet cream.

Cheryl joins me now in strolling the grounds. We stop at Studio BB3 and talk with glass and fiber artist Janet Moran. One of Moran's specialties is making glass beads. "Would you like a demonstration?" she asks. Absolutely, we say.

Moran fires up her lampwork torch and begins "laying a footprint" for the bead by winding molten glass around a steel rod called a mandrel. She deftly adds the finishing touches, and then places the mandrel—with the bead still attached—in a small kiln. The bead will release after it's annealed (tempered). Fascinated by the process, Cheryl buys several pink, magenta, and green beads that resemble stylized rosebuds, which Moran threads onto a thin wire with a simple clasp. One necklace, ready to go.

We then visit with batik artist Gary Norman, who creates large abstracts through a complex process of applying hot wax and

**The Silo House restaurant shares space with the B&B's Artist Loft (accessible via a spiral staircase).**

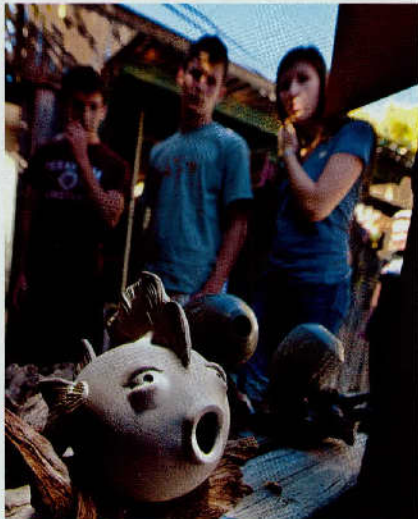
fiber-reactive dyes onto fabric. He uses custom-made tools from Indonesia to produce distinctive textures and patterns. "I use a combination of watercolor techniques to apply the dyes," he says, "sometimes painting them on drop by drop."

Crossing to the other side of the compound, we stop in at Tony Dosiek's metal studio. After working with metal in the commercial roofing industry for decades, Dosiek says he began fabricating interior design elements from light fixtures to fountains. "I went from making right angles to creating domes and curves," he adds.

"There's a wonderful collaborative energy at the Chicken Farm," says Dosiek. "You can feel it as soon as you walk in the gate."

Howard Taylor, the director of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, agrees. "There are other artist-run facilities across the country," he says, "but the Chicken Farm stands out not only because of its size and the richness of its offerings, but also because of its community outreach. There's a genuine giving spirit there."

When we catch up with Allen at the StarKeeper Gallery, where he exhibits his own work—colorful, jewel-toned dinnerware and other ceramics with Native American themes—he sums up the center's philosophy. "Our motto is 'Sharing the Art Spirit,' and that's always been the



Visitors eye a greenware version of potter Joe Morgan's whimsical fish; Morgan fires them in a raku kiln.

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City leaders expect the new honor to bring national exposure, and with it, increased tourism. If you haven't been to Bastrop lately, now's a good time to visit. A number of businesses and restaurants have recently opened downtown, including Cripple Creek & Company (Texas wines, specialty foods, works by local artists); Spoiled Sisters (jewelry, handbags, bedazzled T-shirts); Loblolly General Store (lamps and light fixtures, antiques, jewelry, works by regional artists); The Book Basket (new and used books, titles by local artists); Tanalee's Tea Room & Patisserie (sandwiches, scones, tea, coffee, desserts); Hasler Brothers Steakhouse (fine dining, extraordinary hors d'oeuvres); and Tommy Gunn's ("well-dressed sandwiches," organic fare). Call 512/303-0904; [www.visitbastrop.org](http://www.visitbastrop.org).

—Nola McKey

main objective of the Chicken Farm," he says. "Now, we share it not just among ourselves, but with the community, through events like our three-day Thanksgiving Open House, which takes place the weekend after Thanksgiving. It's our biggest gathering and always includes lots of artists, good food, and live music."

The Chicken Farm also hosts monthly First Saturdays—family-oriented events that attract hundreds of art lovers. All of the Chicken Farmers open their studios for visitors, and 20 to 25 invited artists also come and display their work. Many of the artists offer demonstrations. Children can take part in painting and clay activities, and the Silo House serves wood-fired pizzas in the courtyard.

Over the years, First Saturdays have evolved to include blacksmith demonstrations and live music by the Chicken Pickers and other acoustic music groups. The blacksmiths now have an annual event at the Chicken Farm the first weekend in May—Blacksmiths and Blues—which includes a metal workshop and a blues music contest.

The main event for us this evening is dinner at the Silo House, which is on the ground floor of a renovated grain silo near the center of the compound. Illuminated by candlelight and large, vibrant paintings on the walls, the dining room holds 10 tables and opens only for dinner Thursday through Saturday. Chefs/hosts JR and Liz Matthews, who trained at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park,

**Do!**

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New York, offer a prix fixe menu—by reservation only—of five courses with a salad, a choice of two appetizers, two soups, four to five entrées, and three desserts. Dinner runs around \$40 per person; diners can bring their own wine or cocktails.

With much deliberation, we make our first choices: portabella salsa with grilled pita chips, to start, for both of us, then creamy grilled asparagus soup for Cheryl and roasted Hatch chile posole for me.

After waiter Tamara Rossini-Laney delivers our salads—spring greens tossed with a blue cheese vinaigrette and topped with walnuts and sliced apples and pears—she reappears with a guitar and begins singing a ballad with a Mexican tempo. The unaffected contralto serenade seems perfectly natural in this setting, and we're charmed, as are other diners when their turn comes. We later learn that our server is one of six women in a bluesy, folk-rock band called The Divas.

Our entrées arrive—chicken picatta for me and mojo Cubano pork tenderloin for Cheryl—each accompanied by grilled vegetables and the Silo House version of potatoes au gratin. My chicken picatta—a sautéed chicken breast topped with butter, garlic, lemon juice, white wine, and capers—is sublime. After tasting the magnificent combination of flavors, I decide that the other dishes I've eaten with this name were imposters.

After dessert—crème brûlée and peach cobbler à la mode—we walk back to the B&B, and I reflect on the gifts of the day: We've seen beautiful art, eaten great food, and met interesting people, all in a setting that celebrates the spirit of sharing. A special memory to share with a good friend. **TH**

### Chicken Farm Art Center

is at 2505 Martin Luther King Dr. in San Angelo. Call 325/653-4936; [www.chickenfarmartcenter.com](http://www.chickenfarmartcenter.com). The Silo House restaurant opens Thu-Sat evenings by reservation; call 325/658-3333. For more on Inn at the Art Center (2503 Martin Luther King Dr.), call 325/659-3836; [www.innattheartcenter.com](http://www.innattheartcenter.com).

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A photograph of a lake at sunset. The water is dark blue with golden reflections from the setting sun on the right. In the foreground, a metal railing with a handrail leads down into the water. In the background, there are silhouettes of trees and a city skyline with a crane and a tall building.

# Springs Odyssey

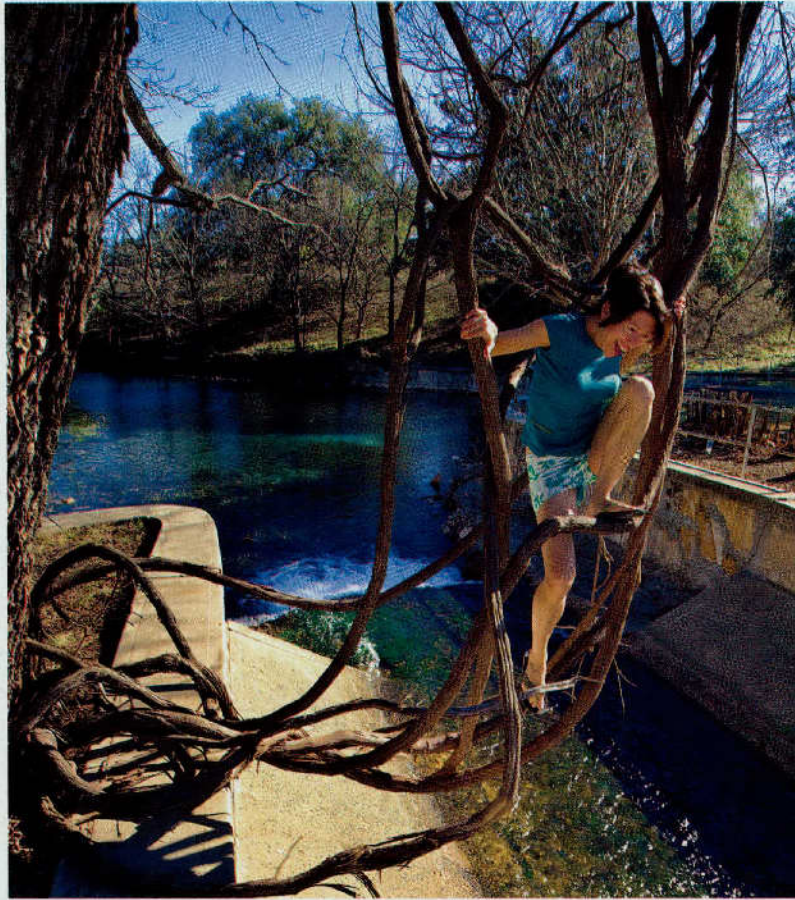
*Whether your favorite spring feeds a public swimming hole or a clear Hill Country stream, or trickles warm water into the Rio Grande, the reward is worth the journey.*

*Text by* **JOE NICK PATOSKI** *Photographs by* **ERICH SCHLEGEL**



Just across Lady Bird Lake from downtown Austin, Barton Springs lures swimmers year round with its 68-degree water. On cool, dry days, the mist creates the illusion of steam rising.

To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).

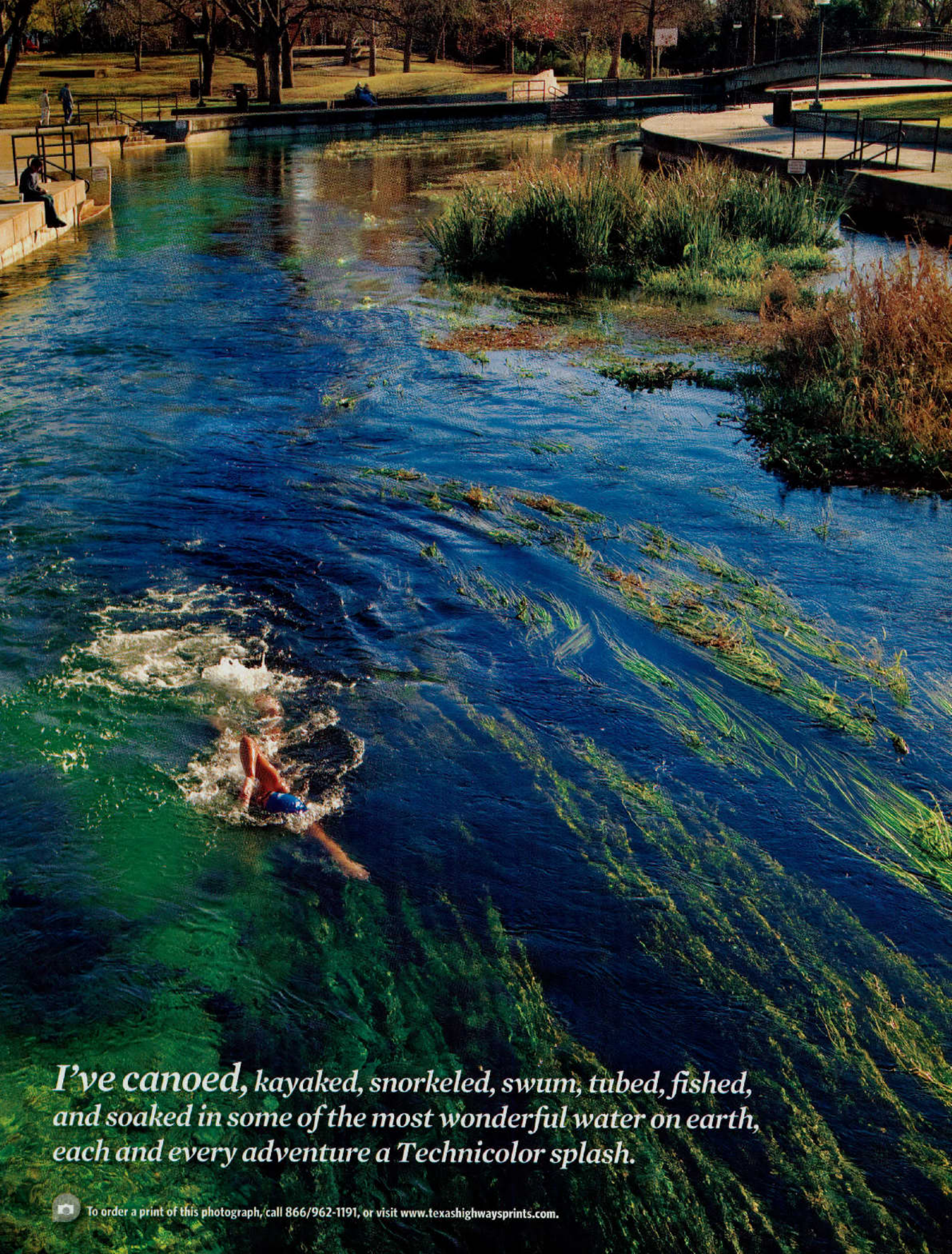


LEFT: Las Moras Springs, considered the ninth largest in Texas, supplies the water for the swimming pool at Fort Clark (Fort Clark Springs), on US 90 in Brackettville.

**S**PRINGS FEED THE LIFE FORCE FOR HUMANS (and other living things) throughout Texas, and have done so ever since ... well, ever since there have been humans in Texas. Archeologists point to evidence that shows people were hanging around some of Texas' largest springs more than 10,000 years ago. That's a long time, especially in a region historically regarded as too harsh and hellishly hot in the summer to support large numbers of people. At least until air conditioning came along.

Prehistoric human presence at Texas springs is indicated by tangible evidence such as flint Clovis dart points unearthed near San Marcos Springs. For more evidence, consider the extensive rock art adorning the walls of shelters and overhangs throughout the region west of Del Rio defined by the confluence of the Devils and Pecos rivers with the Rio Grande. Other traces of early human activity include grind

RIGHT: The San Marcos River, downstream from the Aquarena Center, is fed by San Marcos Springs. The river draws swimmers and is the only home of the endangered perennial grass known as Texas Wild Rice.



*I've canoed, kayaked, snorkeled, swum, tubed, fished,  
and soaked in some of the most wonderful water on earth,  
each and every adventure a Technicolor splash.*

 To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).

holes for acorns, mesquite beans, and other seeds. The more lighthearted modern-day equivalent of those prehistoric clues might be today's symbols of time spent near springs: inner tubes, fly rods, swimsuits, kayaks, and paddles.

Prehistoric and contemporary evidence both pretty much speak to the same truth: When the heat is on, Texans seek out springs. Springs make the summer worth anticipating and pretty up the landscape by nourishing plants and animals—even during the driest and hottest years. And, just as importantly, springs simply *feel* good. Immersion in cool, pristine waters forced up to the surface from the depths

of an underground aquifer beats air conditioning any day. In my book at least.

Truth be known, springs make their particular pieces of Texas a pleasure any time of the year, because of the way they bring sustenance to vegetation, to wildlife, and to the entire natural world—humans included.

All the springs of Texas together produce 117,000 liters of water *per second*, according to the late Gunnar Brune, a geologist for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and the Texas Water Development Board. Brune's landmark book *The Springs of Texas* is regarded as the Bible of Texas Springs because it's the only source of detailed research and information on

the subject. Originally published in 1981 as a privately printed labor of love, the book was revised by geologist Helen Besse and published by Texas A&M Press in 2002.

Brune tempered his passion for springs with a prophetic observation in his writing: Numerous springs were failing or had gone dry while the underground aquifers that fed them were being drawn down. Increased human and agricultural use, the spread of impervious cover through development, and a climate trending toward less rainfall were the main culprits.

The considerable number of communities, schools, churches, and other places across Texas with the phrase springs or



San Solomon Springs supplies the swimming pool at Balmorhea State Park, not far from Fort Davis. The pool draws visitors every day of the year.

## *Balmorhea remains my favorite swimming place in all of Texas—except for a few secret locations, which I’ll never reveal.*

chilly waters are fed by Roaring Springs. Next, I experienced Aquarena Springs in San Marcos, a water-oriented tourist attraction inspired by Weeki Wachee Springs in Florida. At Aquarena Springs, the star attractions included Ralph the Diving Pig, underwater mermaids, Glurpo the Clown, and a ride over Spring Lake in a glass-bottom boat. I can still remember being fascinated by one springs complex named Cream of Wheat, whose puddles of bubbles vividly illustrated how perfectly its name fit.

As an adult, my girlfriend turned me on to swimming at Barton Springs in Zilker Park, just across the Colorado River (now Lady Bird Lake) from downtown Austin. It took a few weeks to adjust to the instant chill whenever I hit the water, but once I did, I was hooked. Soon, I was swimming a mile a day on all but the coldest days of the year (on those days, the constant-temperature spring water actually felt warm). I proudly wore my Barton

Spring T-shirt that bragged the water temperature was 68 degrees year round.

Barton Springs led me to quit cement ponds (traditional swimming pools), swear off chlorine and lap lanes, and search for more springs. On my odyssey, I sought out the wholly charming Krause Springs in Spicewood, visually dazzling Hamilton Pool in western Travis County, Blue Hole and Jacob’s Well in Wimberley, the natural swimming pool fed by Comal Springs in New Braunfels’ Landa Park, and back to San Marcos. At Aquarena, the swimming pigs are gone and the tourist attraction has transformed into Aquarena Center, home of the Texas River Center and the Texas Rivers Systems Institute, both part of Texas State University—San Marcos.

As I continued my quest, I discovered Las Moras Springs, which supply Fort Clark in Brackettville, San

Aquarena Center offers kayaking tours of Spring Lake, fed by San Marcos Springs.

spring affixed to them, particularly along the 98th Meridian where the rocky limestone hills meet the blackland prairie and coastal plains, attest to the value Texans have placed on springs for many generations. During periods of extreme drought, like the summer of 2009, springs often become a widespread public obsession—a keystone indicator of the state’s need for water.

Then there are those of us who pay tribute by simply jumping in.

**m**Y OWN PERSONAL SPRINGS odyssey began as a child, first at Burger’s Lake on the far west side of Fort Worth, a public swimming lake whose





*All the springs of Texas together produce  
117,000 liters of water per second.*

 To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).



Felipe Springs in Del Rio, the spring-charged Devils River (arguably the most pristine waterway in Texas), an unnamed spring that fed a long stretch of the west fork of the Nueces River, and the desert *ciénega*, or springs, known as Independence Creek, south of Sheffield. Further explorations in far West Texas took me to Rio Grande Hot Springs in Big Bend National Park, Chinati Hot Springs, seven miles north of Ruidosa, (which is about 50 miles west of Presidio), Indian Hot Springs south of Sierra Blanca, and San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park.

Of all these spring-fed destinations, Balmorhea remains my favorite swimming place in all of Texas—except for a few secret swimming holes, the locations of which I’ll never reveal.

**S**PRINGS HAVE INSPIRED MY writing over the years, and research into the dynamics of springs (as well as the politics associated with water rights) has led me to better understand these unique environments. While on the quest, I have been privileged to witness artesian springs literally gushing out from the ground from a “honey hole” in Kinney County and (only a few weeks ago) a spring roaring out of a jumble of rocks at the bottom of a limestone cliff on the banks of the Blanco River.

Springs are not limited to the western half of Texas. One of the most unexpected springs I’ve visited are those near Bayview and Port Isabel where General Zachary Taylor’s troops refreshed themselves on their journey to the Mexican War in 1846.

The streams that springs feed draw me in just as strongly as their sources do. I’ve lazed under and around waterfalls on the Devils River, including Dolan Falls, which lies at the juncture of Dolan Creek and the Devils River; at Krause Springs along the Pedernales; in Hamilton Pool; at Gorman Falls, created by spring-fed Gorman Creek near the Colorado River in Colorado Bend State

San Felipe Springs in Del Rio is a collection of more than 10 springs that still provide water for people and animals, as they have for centuries.

Park; Mexicana Falls in Big Bend Ranch State Park; Cottonwood Falls in Big Bend



National Park; and other unnamed (but not unappreciated) falls. I’ve canoed, kayaked, snorkeled, swum, tubed, fished, and soaked in some of the most wonderful water on earth, each and every adventure a Technicolor splash.

I have swum alongside thousands of endangered pupfish and with hundreds of other piscine species, as well as scores of red-eared sliders and Texas spiny softshell turtles. More than a few great blue herons have shared the view with me on other occasions and in other spring-fed settings.

Believe me when I say the view of the undersides of ducks and geese floating on the surface of some of the clearest waters this side of the Caribbean—including the crystalline spring-fed pool at Balmorhea State Park and in Barton Springs—is strange and wonderfully exotic. So, especially, is the sight of scuba divers from across West Texas, New Mexico, western Oklahoma, and Kansas converging around the headwaters of Balmorhea. As the divers navigate the water 20 feet below, I’m skimming along the surface and watching their antics through swim goggles.

Those kinds of experiences have led me to believe that maybe Texas has the best springs on earth.

Turns out there’s more than a little truth to that perception.

Texas is blessed with an abundance of springs—more than 2,900 springs in 183 Texas counties had been documented by Gunnar Brune over the course of his life; Helen Besse is researching and recording springs in the 71 other counties of the state, and they’ll be in the next book.

Beginning in the 16th Century, explorers mapped out trails and subsequently trade routes that were linked by springs. When the railroads came to Texas in the 19th Century, springs often played a role in where the tracks were laid; without them, steam locomotives could not quench their prodigious thirst. The second transcontinental railroad, which passed through Houston, San Antonio, and El Paso, included stops near San Pedro Springs, Las

The brisk water from Comal Springs, the state’s largest springs, attracts water enthusiasts to New Braunfels.

## Recommended Reading

*The Springs of Texas*, by Gunnar Brune, is published by Texas A&M University Press. Call 800/826-8911; [www.tamu.edu/upress/BOOKS/2002/brune.htm](http://www.tamu.edu/upress/BOOKS/2002/brune.htm).



Moras Springs, San Felipe Springs, and the artesian springs that once flourished around Van Horn. When US 90 was constructed west of San Antonio in the early 20th Century, it passed near these same springs.

**T**HE LARGEST CONCENTRATION of Texas springs bubbles to the surface in the Hill Country, in a region roughly bounded by Austin, San Antonio, Del Rio, and Junction. Here, the famous 1,100 springs—once touted by commercials for Texas-brewed Pearl Beer—push water up from limestone beds to feed creeks,

streams, and the Frio, Llano, Colorado, Pedernales, Nueces, Blanco, Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Medina rivers.

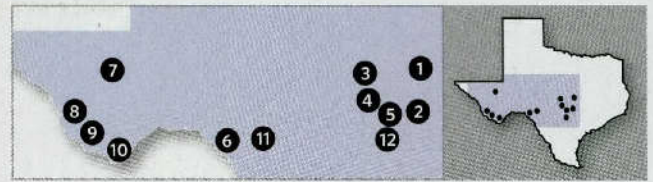
The largest cluster of springs in Texas finds the surface at the base of the Balcones Fault at Comal Springs in Landa Park in New Braunfels. The next largest springs complex emerges at San Marcos Springs, 20 miles north of New Braunfels in San Marcos.

On the banks of Spring Lake, fed by San Marcos Springs, Aquarena Center features an aquarium exhibit that explains the unique freshwater ecosystem of the headwaters here, as well as the

importance of aquifers, rivers, and aquatic systems. Nearby, tanks house live specimens of some of the eight endangered or threatened species that depend on the springs for their survival. In Austin's Zilker Park, in the bathhouse building next to Barton Springs pool, you'll find an educational exhibit called Splash!, which takes visitors on an underground multimedia and interactive trip into the Edwards Aquifer.

No matter where they are, or whether they have been civilized with dams, stone walls, ladders, or diving boards, or if they are same as they ever were in

## → TH ESSENTIALS



## Texas Springs

FOLLOWING is contact information for some of the springs mentioned in the story. Hours of operation vary with season and day of the week, so call or go online to confirm details.

**1 Barton Springs.** 2101 Barton Springs Rd. (in Zilker Park), Austin, 512/476-9044; [www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/bartonsprings.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/bartonsprings.htm).

**2 Aquarena Center (San Marcos Springs),** 921 Aquarena Springs Dr., San Marcos, 512/245-7570; [www.aquarena.txstate.edu](http://www.aquarena.txstate.edu).

**3 Krause Springs** is approximately 30 miles west of Austin, off Texas 71. Take Texas Spur 191 to County Road 404, 830/693-4181; [www.krausesprings.net](http://www.krausesprings.net).

**4 Hamilton Pool Nature Preserve** is a Travis County park approximately 30 miles southwest of Austin off Texas 71. Take Hamilton Pool Rd. Call 512/264-2740; [www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/parks/hamilton\\_pool.asp](http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/parks/hamilton_pool.asp).

**5 Jacob's Well,** which feeds Cypress Creek and the Blue Hole swimming area, is now owned by the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, [www.visitwimberley.com/water/index.php](http://www.visitwimberley.com/water/index.php).

**6 San Felipe Springs,** Texas' fourth largest, is a group of 10 or more springs that extend for about a mile along San Felipe Creek in Del Rio. There's a swimming hole in Horseshoe Park near US 90; [www.edwardsaquifer.net/sanfelip.html](http://www.edwardsaquifer.net/sanfelip.html).

**7 San Solomon Springs** feeds the swimming pool in Balmorhea State Park, which is on Texas 17, seven miles south of I-10 and approximately 50 miles west of Fort Stockton. Call 432/375-2370; [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/balmorhea/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/balmorhea/).

**8 Chinati Hot Springs** offers limited accommodations, with access to the hot springs. It is seven miles north of Ruidosa. Take the Hot Springs Rd. north of FM 170. Note that Hot Springs Rd. also intersects the Pinto Canyon Rd. (Take FM 2810 south from Marfa.) Always confirm road conditions. Call 432/229-4165; [www.chinatihotsprings.com](http://www.chinatihotsprings.com).

**9 Big Bend National Park** is accessible from FM 170, Texas 118, US 385, and US 90. Call 432/477-2251; [www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm).

**10 Big Bend Ranch State Park** is accessible from FM 170 between Lajitas and Presidio. Call 432/424-3327 or 432/358-4444; [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/big\\_bend\\_ranch](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/big_bend_ranch).

**11 Fort Clark Springs** is on US 90 in Brackettville, 830/563-2493; [www.fortclark.com/fortclarksprings/index.htm](http://www.fortclark.com/fortclarksprings/index.htm).

**12 Comal Springs** is in Landa Park Aquatic Complex, 350 Aquatic Circle, New Braunfels, 830/221-4350; [www.nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=390](http://www.nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=390).



their wild natural state, springs are destinations of choice for millions of Texans for all the right reasons: to look at, to immerse in, to play around, to appreciate, to savor, and to marvel over. Nowhere but Texas is there water like this.

Last one in is a rotten egg! **TH**

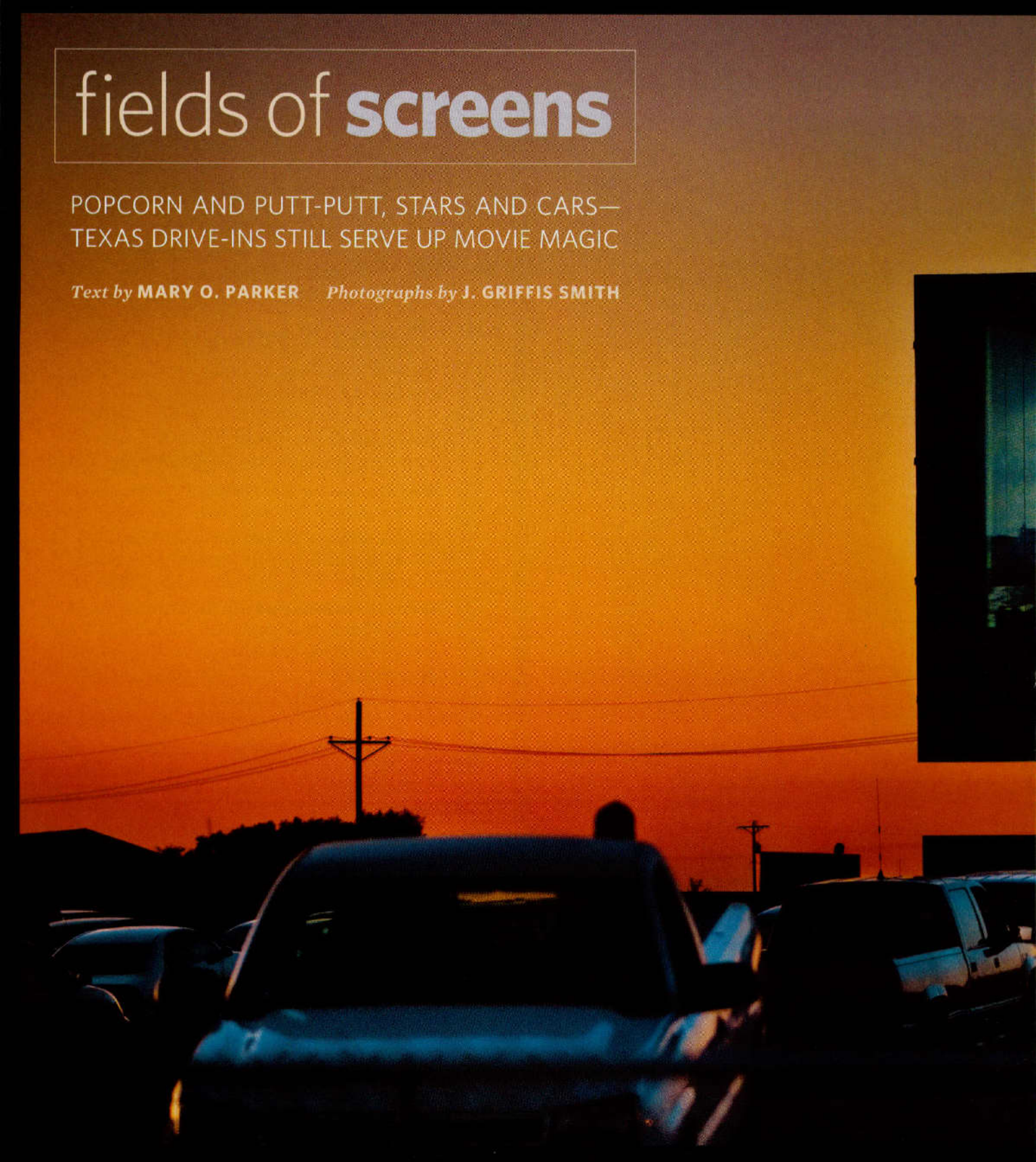
*In addition to writing about Texas' natural wonders, **JOE NICK PATOSKI** has authored several books, including a recent biography of Willie Nelson and an upcoming history of the Dallas Cowboys. Photographer **ERICH SCHLEGEL** particularly enjoys shooting photographs underwater, as evidenced by this issue's cover image.*

You'll find nearly three dozen springs on the 115-acre Krause Springs property. The privately owned park, 30 miles west of Austin, is a popular destination for swimming and camping.

# fields of **screens**

POPCORN AND PUTT-PUTT, STARS AND CARS—  
TEXAS DRIVE-INS STILL SERVE UP MOVIE MAGIC

*Text by* **MARY O. PARKER**    *Photographs by* **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

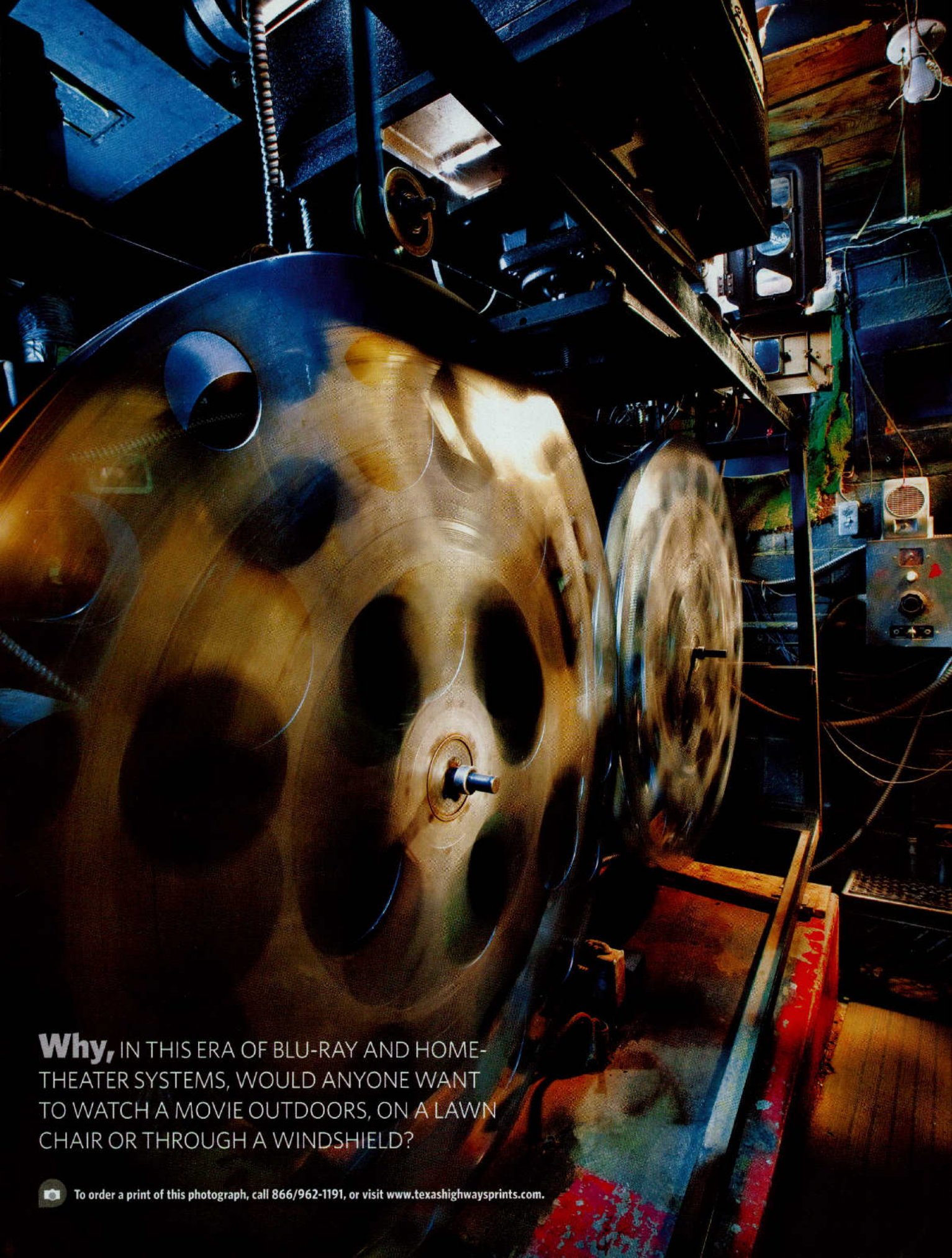


**a**nticipation fills the air as movie-goers at Midland's Big Sky Drive-In Theatre wait for the sun to go down and the screen to light up. Two teenagers sit on a couch in the bed of a red pickup truck, texting and talking.



Nearby, a group of four plays cards on the tailgate of another truck and munches on crunchy jalapeño poppers. In the back of a minivan next to them, a little boy in Spiderman pajamas snuggles in between his parents,

West Texans make tracks for Lubbock's Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre, providing wide-screen Hollywood entertainment on the South Plains.



**Why,** IN THIS ERA OF BLU-RAY AND HOME-THEATER SYSTEMS, WOULD ANYONE WANT TO WATCH A MOVIE OUTDOORS, ON A LAWN CHAIR OR THROUGH A WINDSHIELD?

 To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).



asking his mother, for the hundredth time, “When’s it going to start?” That little boy’s question lingers on everyone’s mind. She looks west toward the fading silhouette of a pump jack and answers, “Soon.”

**In less than a decade,** Texas has gained five family-friendly drive-ins, and now offers 16, testament to a trend toward a retro-nostalgic, community-inspired, movie-going experience that the United Drive-In Theatre Owners Association says began in the 1990s. It’s a far cry from the all-time high of 388 in 1954, but there’s no denying that the drive-in is making a comeback in Texas. The question is: Why, in this era of Blu-Ray and home-theater systems, would anyone want to watch a movie outdoors, on a lawn chair or through a windshield?

At the Showboat Drive In Theater in Hockley, just west of Tomball, Chris Rumfolo (co-owner along with her husband, Johnny) can answer that. “For the older generations, it’s a flashback. But families make up our biggest clientele, because not only is going to the drive-in economical entertainment, but parents get to enjoy something just as much as the kids.” She chuckles and adds, “Then, there are the teenagers who think this is something brand new.”

Big Sky’s general manager Lamont Furlow sums it up, saying simply, “It’s about being together.”

And, speaking of togetherness, Gene Palmer, owner of Gatesville’s Last Drive In Picture Show, says that drive-ins are still great places for romance. “One of our regulars asked if it would be okay to propose to his girlfriend on the screen, so we made him a film clip that said, Jennifer, will you marry me?” Everybody in the theater got into it and people kept coming up to the snack bar all night asking, “Well, did she say yes?” It really made the night special, especially since she did say yes.”

Now it’s your turn to say, “Yes”—to a drive-in movie, that is! Grab some popcorn, unfold a lawn chair, put on your PJ’s, and get ready to enjoy the show.



For a list of Texas’  
16 drive-in movie  
theaters, go to [www.texashighways.com/  
webextra](http://www.texashighways.com/webextra).

LEFT: The projectors at the Sky-Vue Drive In Theatre in Lamesa have been spinning away for more than a half century.

ABOVE: A couple in a classic Ford Mustang convertible has chosen a prime viewing spot at the popular Galaxy Drive-In Theatre, just north of Ennis.



**One** OF TEXAS' NEWER DRIVE-INS,  
THE STARS & STRIPES GLIMMERS,  
ESPECIALLY INSIDE, WHERE RETRO '50S  
MEETS MODERN MOVIE-GOING.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).



## Crossroads Drive-In, **Shiner**

From the live oaks framing the sunset to the fresh scent of wet grass in fields nearby, the setting at the Crossroads Drive-In invites relaxation. As soon as you drive through the gate and receive warm greetings from co-owner Mike Viets, you'll leave hustle and bustle behind.



Instead of a canned recording, Viets' Texas twang comes over the sound system throughout the night. First, he suggests, "Y'all head to the snack bar for your made-from-scratch pizza." When he tells the crowd, "Come on and get yourself some not-chos, or a pick-ul," you can't help but be charmed by this aspect of Shiner's quintessential Texas small-town setting.

As the last of the sun fades, you'll hear his voice again when he says, "Y'all take a look at that moon tonight!" With that, he flips a switch, and—pop!—the digital music on CD over the PA system changes to the movie projector's audio track, and you hear the wondrous sound that announces the movie's beginning. But, no matter where your imagination takes you, don't lose your ticket stub. Viets holds a drawing for modest prizes during intermission, handing out "pick-uls, not-chos," free passes, glow sticks, and promotional items from the movie studios.

For a real treat, peek through the window into the projection booth near the concession stand. There, you'll see a 1942 Simplex projector, its 2 1/2-foot-diameter spools shimmering as they catch the light, and Viets (who's also the projectionist) finessing the film. He spends hours reloading the reels every couple of weeks because, he says, "I've got lots of regulars, so even though it's real hard to get first-run films if you're not a big theater or a chain, I like to program new movies as often as I can."

## Galaxy Drive-In Theatre, **Ennis**

With four screens and room for 1,000 cars, the Galaxy is the state's largest drive-in. Its atmosphere leaves you wondering if you're at a drive-in theater or a carnival. The moment you arrive you notice the Galaxy's delightfully campy setting.



As darkness comes, bright, LED-lit palm trees illuminate the two Park & Putt miniature golf courses, where a five-foot-tall fiberglass model of SpongeBob SquarePants watches over every stroke with a grin. Throughout the grounds, you'll find that SpongeBob has company in the form of metal-sign buddies such as Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl.



LEFT: Big sky. Big clouds. Big screen. Make a trip to the Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre in Lubbock. ABOVE: Part of the drive-in thrill is a trip to the concession stand, like this one at the Showboat in Hockley, just west of Tomball. BELOW: Alexia Rojas lines up a putt at one of the Galaxy Drive-In's Park & Putt miniature golf courses near Ennis.





To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).

The sweet smell of cotton candy rides on the breeze, eliciting the sort of feelings that come with Ferris wheel fun. Near the cotton candy/funnel cake/Dippin' Dots ice cream booth, patrons vie for a chance to eat at tables that resemble giant, Disneyland-like teacups. The main concession stand offers an extensive menu of burgers and fries, grilled chicken sandwiches, fresh salads, hot dogs, corn dogs, tamales, pizza, popcorn, nachos, soft drinks, coffee, cappuccino, cocoa, and more.

Antique metal speakers deliver sounds of the show, even though the Galaxy just opened in 2004. Use the speakers, or tune in with your car stereo. Or, better yet, use both as you listen to the dialogue of the first-run movies offered here.

The Last Drive In Picture Show, **Gatesville**  
Because the Last Drive In Picture Show has kept its screen continuously lit since October 4, 1950, it's not technically part

of the recent resurgence (while others have shut down for awhile and reopened, the Last Drive In Picture Show has never gone dark). But this granddaddy of Texas' theaters deserves recognition, as does its original Century projector—still in service after an amazing six decades.



Not only is the Last Drive In Picture Show one of the oldest in the nation, but it's also the last of a handful of "MoPeds," theaters that cater to both walk-in and drive-in crowds. While its original metal speakers stopped working long ago, owner Gene Palmer says he left them in place "both for nostalgia and to help guide folks with their parking."

When the light fades, be sure to pay homage to Palmer's pride and joy: a neon sign reminiscent of the glory days of drive-in theaters. It's a beauty. In 2003, Palmer restored the classic sign, which was originally built in 1948 for the Tem-Bel

Drive In in Temple. He also added “Last” and “Picture Show” to what had once read only “Drive In.” “I think I spent more on that marquee than just about anything else here!” he quips. “But it was worth it.”

### Sky-Vue Drive In Theatre, **Lamesa**

The phrase “Chihuahua—What a Sandwich” painted on the side of the Sky-Vue’s concession stand announces that you’ve arrived at the birthplace of this famous South Plains movie fare. Made with two corn tortillas (made locally by Pedroza’s Mexican Restaurant), pimiento cheese, shredded cabbage, and chili, this popular “sandwich” remains the house specialty.



Skeet Noret, the original owner of the Sky-Vue, and his father, Edward Albert Noret (who created the sandwich), came up with the catchy name for the menu item.

Inside the concession stand, newspaper articles featuring local Lamesa residents paper the walls. The theater’s choice of wallpaper attests to the role it plays in the community. “Those are articles about students who worked here, FFA news, thank-yous from schoolkids,” explains owner Sam Kirkland, “and our granddaughters’ tumbling stuff is up there, too.”

Kirkland says, “Parents thank us all the time because they can bring their kids here to play on the same playground they once did.” With its old-fashioned metal merry-go-round, slide, and swing set, the area is reminiscent of playyards before plastic. Kirkland says that he, too, once played here. “This theater’s been a big part of my life for nearly 50 years. In fact, I started my first job here when I was 11.” That’s one of the main



ABOVE: Load up on snacks at Lubbock’s Stars & Stripes Drive-In, which also offers dinner specialties. RIGHT: Opened in 1948, Lamesa’s Sky-Vue is one of Texas’ oldest drive-ins.





reasons he reopened the local landmark in the 1980s after it had sat dark one summer.

### Showboat Drive In Theater, **Hockley**

The celebratory vibe at the Showboat Drive In, from the smiling hamburger and happy hot dog painted on the side of the snack bar to the '70s music playing over the sound system, lends this place an air of escapist delight. You get the impression that even when the show hasn't yet begun, guests have already been transported by the magic of movieland.

You'll find lots to do here besides seeing a movie. Check out the RCA-Brenkert projectors with legendary Strong "Mighty 90" carbon arc lamps (mid-20th-Century classics) that sit smack-dab in the middle of the concession stand. (While the Showboat doesn't use them to project its films,



they do still work.) You can also play arcade games, tetherball, or watch kids rally a soccer ball.

Kids, says Rumfolo, are a big reason she likes this business. "It's so fun to see how excited they get!" she adds. She recounts one child's breathless question: "How do you turn on that big TV when you start the movie?"

### Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre, **Lubbock**

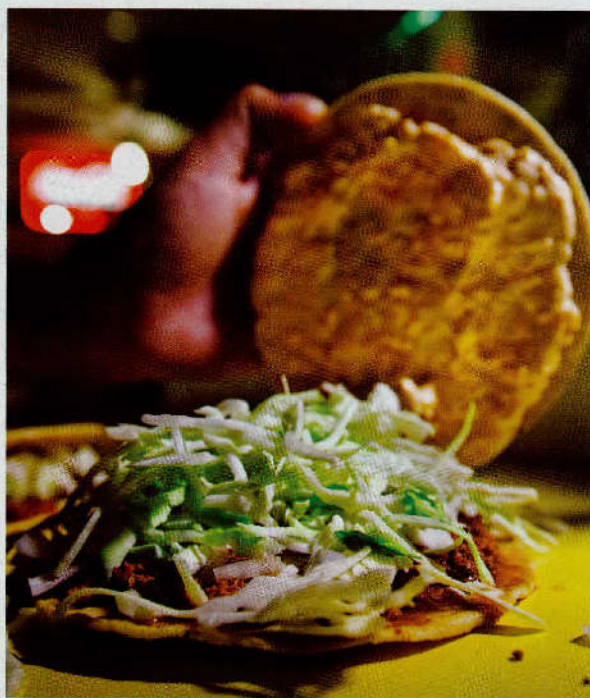
Considering how those West Texas stars shine on you here, the Stars & Stripes Drive-In couldn't be more aptly named. Glance up every now and then and appreciate the constellations as you watch a first-run double-feature on one of the theater's three screens.

You can catch both dinner and a movie at the Stars & Stripes. Owner Ryan Smith offers an extensive menu that includes specialties such as corn fritters with honey, Black





LEFT: You can eat before, during, or after the show at the Showboat in Hockley. ABOVE: The famous Chihuahua sandwich should be part of your plan at the Sky-Vue in Lamesa or the Stars & Stripes in Lubbock.



Angus beef burgers, and the famous Chihuahua sandwich. There are even fried Twinkies for dessert! And, on those cold Panhandle evenings, warm up with a giant cup of hot cocoa.

One of Texas' newer drive-ins, the Stars & Stripes glimmers, especially inside, where retro '50s meets modern movie-going. Chrome stools sit atop the checkered black-and-white flooring while classic movie posters hang above point-of-sale computers and previews for new movies on LCD screens. "Oh, and we have air conditioning in the café," Smith says with a smile. "They didn't have that at the drive-ins in the '50s and '60s!"

No surprise this theater is especially well run. The movie business runs in the family. Smith's great-grandfather was the originator of the Chihuahua sandwich and West Texas theater icon Skeet Noret is his grandfather. **TH**

*"I'd forgotten just how fun the drive-in is!" says writer MARY O. PARKER. "I hadn't been since I was a teen, but now my husband and I do double-feature dates on a regular basis." During his youth, Photo Editor GRIFF SMITH worked at the movie and drive-in theaters in Caldwell.*

www.texashighways.com

#### → TH ESSENTIALS

## Drive-In Theaters

**Big Sky Drive-In Theatre**, 6200 W. US 80, Midland. Call 432/617-3001; [www.bigskytheatre.com](http://www.bigskytheatre.com).

**Crossroads Drive-In**, 58 FM 531, Shiner. Call 361/649-6811, 361/594-2257, or 361/594-2247; [www.crossroadsdrivein.com](http://www.crossroadsdrivein.com).

**Galaxy Drive-In Theatre**, off I-45 at FM 879 (exit 255), near Ennis. Call 972/875-5505; [www.galaxydriveintheatre.com](http://www.galaxydriveintheatre.com).

**The Last Drive In Picture Show**, 2912 S. Texas 36, Gatesville. Call 254/865-8445.

**Sky-Vue Drive In Theatre** (home of the famous Chihuahua sandwich), US 87 (S. Big Spring Hwy.) and E. South 15th St., Lamesa. Call 806/872-7004; [www.skyvuelamesa.com](http://www.skyvuelamesa.com).

**The Showboat Drive In Theater** is at 22422 FM 2920 in Hockley, just west of Tomball. Call 281/351-5224; [www.theshowboatdrivein.com](http://www.theshowboatdrivein.com).

**Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre**, 5101 Clovis Hwy., Lubbock. Call 806/749-SHOW; [www.driveinusa.com](http://www.driveinusa.com).

# SETTING THE STAGE

*On its pastoral, 210-acre  
celebrates its 40th season*



campus in Round Top, the Festival Institute  
of music and the performing arts.

Text by **HEATHER BRAND SCHATZ**

Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**



The elaborately carved woodwork throughout the Festival Institute's three-level concert hall enhances not only the venue's beauty, but also its acoustics. One visiting group from Brazil called the hall "a temple to music."

# SETTING THE STAGE

*Round Top's Festival Institute*



*The Festival Institute*  
now attracts some 35,000  
visitors each year with its  
scenic beauty, astonishing  
concert hall, nationally  
known performers, and  
sheer diversity of offerings.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).





In the fertile, rolling hills southwest of Brenham, the village of Round Top (pop. 77) possesses the reliable charms of many small Texas towns, including family-owned restaurants that specialize in pies and pastries, cozy B&Bs, and plentiful shopping. Well-known by antiques-lovers for the spring and fall antiques markets that swell the population a hundredfold, Round Top also offers a surprise for connoisseurs of the performing arts. Rising above the oaks and pines off Jaster Road, a towering cupola caps the metal roof and gabled windows of an elegant, 1,000-seat concert hall surrounded by gurgling fountains and lush landscaping. Amid this bucolic setting, a sign near the entrance announces the Round Top Festival Institute—an internationally acclaimed, 210-acre campus that draws performers and audiences from around the world.

LEFT: Chamber concerts and organ recitals take place in the restored 1883 Edythe Bates Old Chapel, which once served a congregation in La Grange. ABOVE: Walking trails skirt a placid pond and wend through the property's many gardens.

# SETTING THE STAGE

## Round Top's Festival Institute

Here, on any given weekend, visitors attend not only concerts but also film screenings, dance performances, and arts-related symposiums, or merely stroll about the well-tended grounds, which are open to the public year round. In the spring, guitar enthusiasts congregate here for an annual guitar festival, gardeners drive in from around the state to attend a forum on herbs, and others come to hear respected poets read their works during the Institute's yearly poetry weekend. In the summer, accomplished young musicians from around the world arrive in Round Top to take part in the Institute's prestigious classical-music academy and give performances to audiences from near and far.

### **Construction on the concert hall began in 1981. For more than a decade, local craftsmen labored to embellish practically every inch of its interior with ornate woodwork.**

At the center of the activity is the main concert hall, which represents a kind of musical "field of dreams" for the Festival Institute's founder, James Dick. A Kansas native, Dick received his training at the University of Texas at Austin before launching an international career as a concert pianist. The Festival Institute, which celebrates its 40th anniversary season this year, got its start in 1971, when Dick, inspired by his love of teaching, initiated a summer program for budding pianists to

hone their skills amid the scenic backdrop of Fayette County.

What started as a 10-day series of master classes for a small number of pianists now spans six weeks, from June through mid-July, and accommodates more than 80 international students (average age: 21) who specialize in piano, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The Institute grants full scholarships to participants, who must audition for a coveted spot in the program, and when accepted, train under six different conductors and a renowned faculty. Throughout the summer weeks, visitors can hear strains of classical music wafting across the grounds as the musicians rehearse for the popular weekend concerts, many of which are free to the public.

After the students leave, the Institute hosts an eclectic lineup of public performances and events known as the August-to-April Series. The 2009–2010 season offered such diverse acts as the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin, the Synergy Brass Quintet, the International Guitar Festival, the Texas Medical Center Orchestra, and the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. (The 2010–2011 calendar comes out in late April.)

In the early days, before the hall was built, the Institute held concerts by students, teachers, and visiting orchestras in an open field, with the musicians performing on a massive mobile stage. Audience members sat on bales of hay or brought their own folding chairs. Ivy Geiger, a longtime supporter of the Institute, recalls how she and her late husband lounged on blankets under the stars with Brie and champagne—waiting for the music to crescendo before daring to pop the cork.

"People loved it. It was very pastoral," Dick recalls. Yet the summer heat wreaked havoc on the instruments and wearied the musicians, who endured rehearsals in blistering temperatures. Sudden downpours and the rumble of passing cars sometimes interrupted the concerts. Eventually, Dick decided to build an indoor venue.

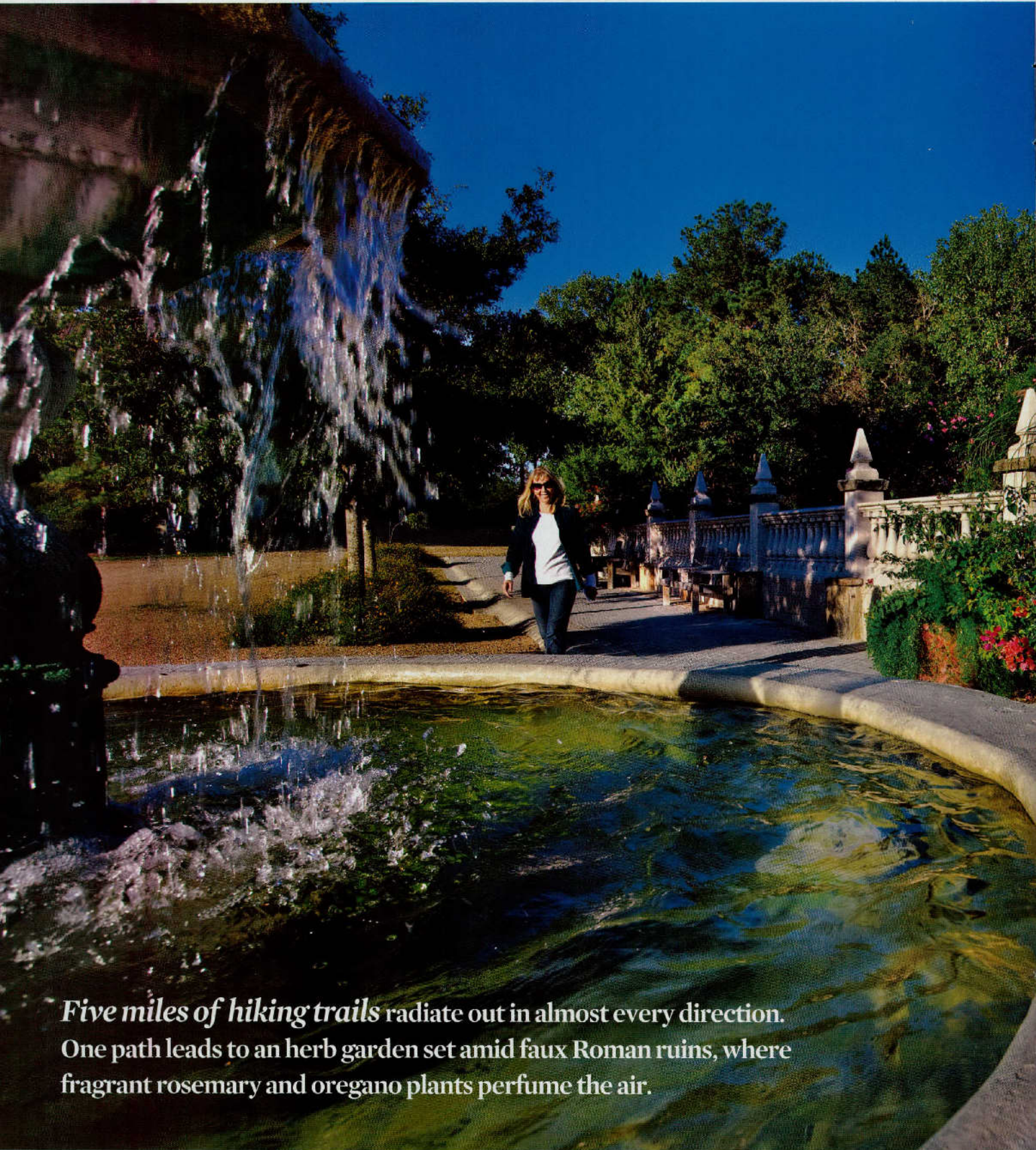
Docents lead guided tours of the Festival Institute's concert hall and adjoining salons, including the Oxehufwud Museum Room. RIGHT: Moved to Round Top from Hempstead in 1978, the ornate Menke House serves as a faculty residence and teaching center.





# SETTING THE STAGE

*Round Top's Festival Institute*



*Five miles of hiking trails* radiate out in almost every direction. One path leads to an herb garden set amid faux Roman ruins, where fragrant rosemary and oregano plants perfume the air.



Read about Round Top's antiques scene at [texashighways.com/webextra](http://texashighways.com/webextra).

Construction on the Institute's concert hall began in 1981. For more than a decade, local craftsmen labored to embellish practically every inch of its interior with ornate woodwork. Daylight streaming in from the high windows

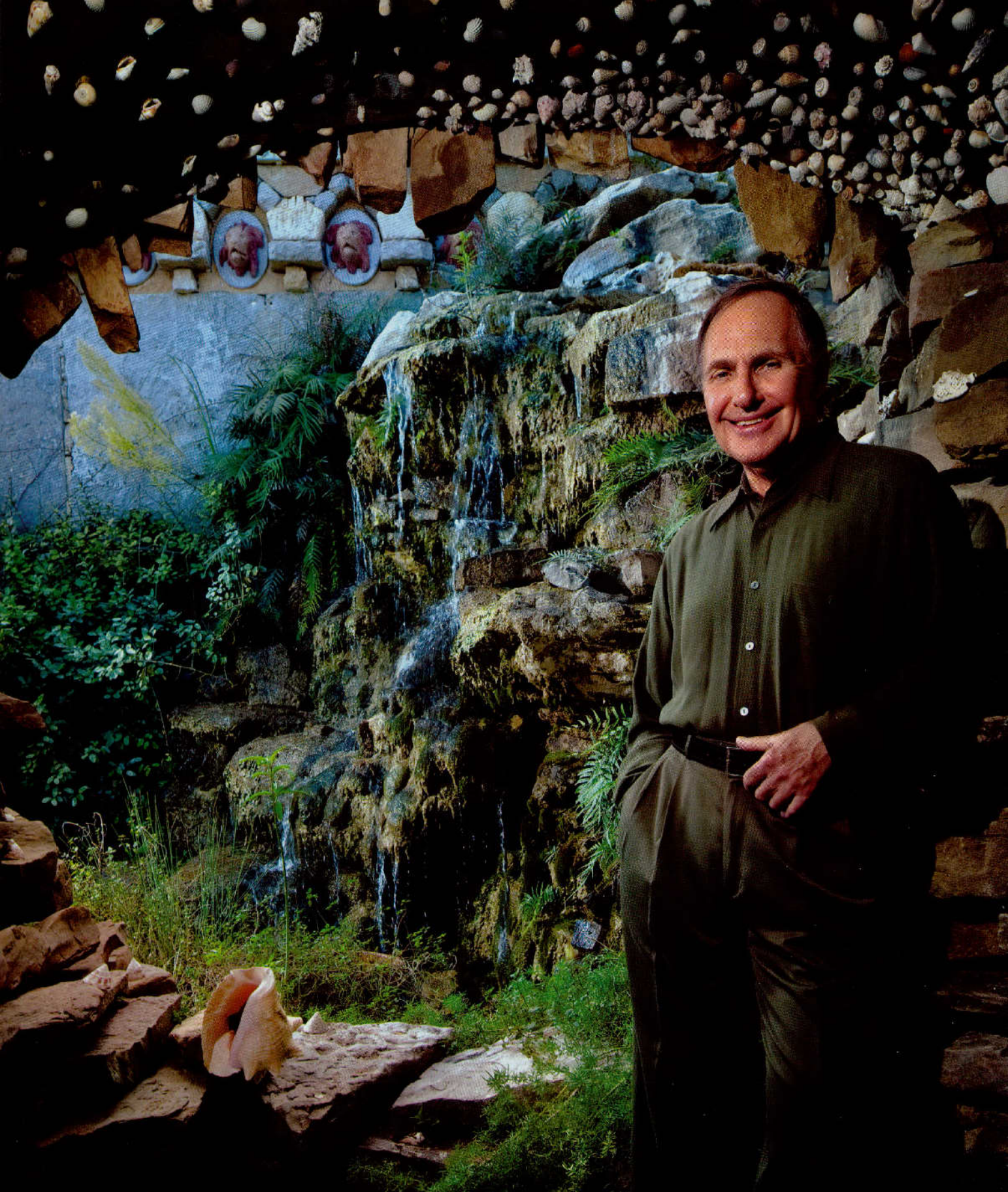
illuminates the theater's red silk-upholstered seats, and four wood-and-glass chandeliers glitter overhead. After performing here in 2004, members of the Quaternaglia Guitar Quartet from Brazil proclaimed the hall "a temple to music." Indeed, the building's inspired Gothic design perfectly underscores the spiritual power of music to uplift the soul.

Over the past four decades, the Institute has gradually expanded from six acres

to 210 and now encompasses nearly 20 buildings, which are used as practice rooms, performance and reception spaces, and accommodations for students, performers, and conductors.

Gardens and fountains contribute a European vibe to the 210-acre campus. Below: Niches in the walls surrounding the Edythe Bates Old Chapel pay homage to Bach (shown here), Beethoven, and others composers.





*At the center of the activity* is the main concert hall, which represents a kind of musical “field of dreams” for the Festival Institute’s founder, James Dick.

Inspired by his love of teaching, pianist James Dick founded the Festival Institute in 1971.

Across the street from the concert hall, the Menke House, a two-story Victorian with gingerbread trim, houses a reception parlor, guest rooms, and a dining hall for the staff and visiting musicians. (Except during the summer session, lodgings on campus are available to the public attending events, too.) Nearby, the 1883 Edythe Bates Old Chapel, brought here from La Grange and restored, serves as an intimate setting for chamber music, organ recitals, lectures, and film screenings. Behind it, a stone archway leads downstairs to the Institute's coffee shop, Kafe Kaffeine, which serves coffee and wine after some performances. Butterflies flit among the beds of colorful flowers that frame the chapel's expansive plaza.

For visitors who want to explore the grounds, five miles of hiking trails connect the campus' various buildings and meander through the tree-covered countryside, where stone bridges arch across shallow ravines and rustic wooden benches and stone sculptures punctuate the landscape. One path leads to an herb garden set amid faux Roman ruins, where fragrant rosemary and oregano plants perfume the air. Another leads to the raised beds of a medicinal garden, arranged by country of origin. Here, visitors can revel in the enticing aromas of lemon verbena, lime balm, and licorice, or marvel at exotic species such as the Australian emu bush, prized by Aboriginal tribes for its healing properties.

The Festival Institute now attracts some 35,000 visitors each year with its scenic beauty, astonishing concert hall, nationally known performers, and sheer diversity of offerings. While music remains the main draw for most visitors, the Festival Institute has grown to embrace other aspects of the arts and humanities, organizing annual forums on theater, poetry, herbs, and museums and amassing a collection of rare books, audio recordings, and artifacts related to music, Texas history, gardening, and decorative arts. Two museum galleries flank the hall's reception area—one featuring objects from the estate of the Texas-born composer David Guion, and the other devoted to the heirlooms of the Oxehufwud family, Swedish immigrants who settled in La Grange.

And still, the Festival Institute is not yet complete. On one side of the concert hall, concrete blocks and exposed rebar indicate an addition in the works, and Dick admits that he would like to add writers, painters, and composers to the mix of visiting artists. Dick keeps his sights set on the future. "You don't count the years," he insists. "You make the years count." **TH**

One of two pipe organs in the Edythe Bates Old Chapel, this 19th-Century organ came to Round Top from Connecticut.

Houston writer **HEATHER BRAND SCHATZ** plays the cello, ukulele, and theremin, but currently prefers the banjo. Photography Editor **J. GRIFFIS SMITH** says the acoustics at Festival Institute performance hall are amazing—"I'd love to play my Dobro there," he says.

**TH ESSENTIALS**



## Round Top Festival Institute

THE ROUND TOP FESTIVAL INSTITUTE is at 248 Jaster Rd. in Round Top. Grounds open to visitors year round. The 2010-2011 40th anniversary season kicks off in June. Student concerts take place June-July, followed by the annual August-to-April Series of professional performances. Find schedule and ticket prices at [www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org).

The **9th annual Poetry at Round Top Festival**, featuring Naomi Shihab Nye, Poet Laureate Ted Kooser, and other notable poets, takes place Apr. 30-May 2.

For more information, as well as details about Festival Hill's **herbal forums, Guitar Festival**, and **facility rentals** for weddings, conferences, and other events, call 979/249-3129; [www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org).



# HOUSTON Play- Date

Text by **KITTY CRIDER** Photographs by **ANDY SHARP**

A FAMILY'S EXPLORATIONS INCLUDE WALKING THROUGH A 10-FOOT-TALL FAUX BRAIN, RIDING THE METRO, AND TOURING MISSION CONTROL



**COVERING MORE THAN 600** square miles, Houston is so large that it could hold New York City, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Miami simultaneously inside its boundaries. And with more than two million people, it ranks as the nation's fourth most populous city. It's also a port city, a medical city, a space city, and an oil city. Not only that, but it has an abundance of child-friendly attractions.

That's why we chose Houston for our annual multigenerational Crider family weekend, when my son and his family join my husband and me in exploring an interesting destination, focusing on activities that enlighten both kids and adults.

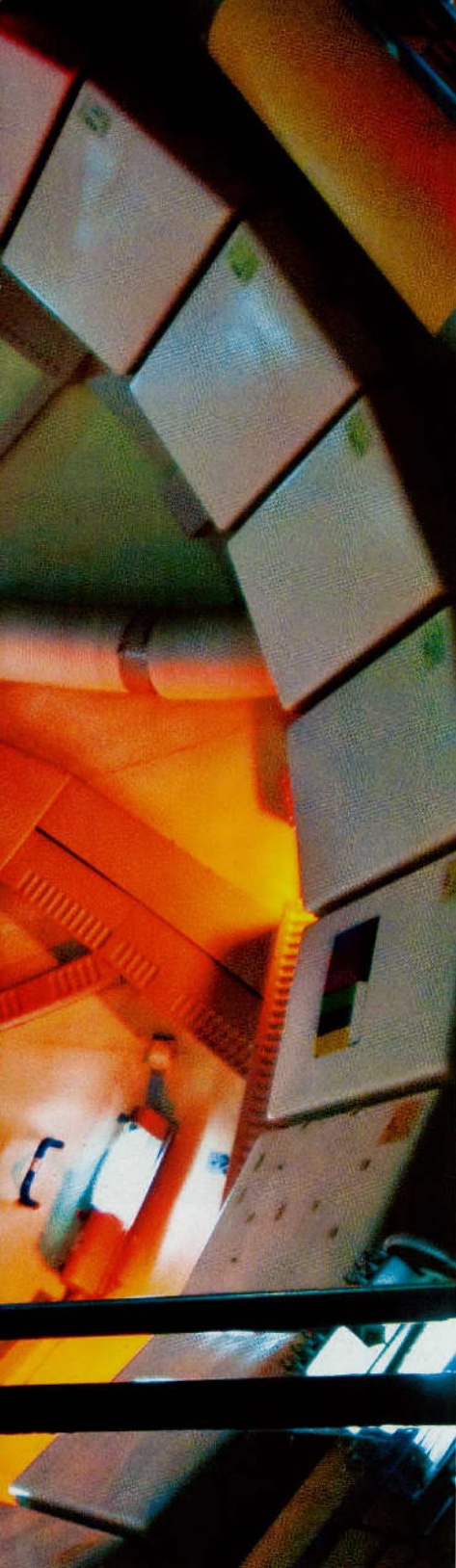
ABOVE: A smiling face next to the Health Museum's Amazing Body Pavilion offers visitors a preview of the exhibit. RIGHT: The FlowWorks exhibit at the Children's Museum of Houston encourages water play as a means of learning about energy.







BIG, BOLD, AND BUSTLING, HOUSTON OFFERS TRAVELERS VARIETY AND ADVENTURE. IT'S ALSO A GREAT PLACE FOR A FAMILY GETAWAY.



At Space Center Houston, you can see a full-scale Skylab mockup that was once used for astronaut training. The floating mannequin represents astronaut Jack Lousma of the Skylab 2 crew.

## **"LOOKS LIKE DALLAS,"**

observed my seven-year-old grandson, Ryan, as he gazed up at the sleek skyscrapers along the 610 Loop. Granted, his personal big-city-skyline database is somewhat limited. One of the purposes of this trip was to show him and his 10-year-old brother, Garrett, that Houston offers very different diversions than Dallas and other Texas cities.

And Houston delivered. We gazed in awe through the window of an auditorium at Mission Control in the Johnson Space Center. We spent hours at Kidtropolis (a pretend kid city) and other exhibits at the Children's Museum. We hesitantly petted brown stingrays at Kemah Boardwalk. We doubled over with laughter at "computer-aged" photos of ourselves at The Health Museum. We rode trains, launched rockets and planes, and boarded a Ferris wheel. Here are the highlights.

### **CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON**

**H**ouston has a terrific Museum District with more than a dozen offerings. Tops on our list, though: the Children's Museum. In 2009, it doubled in size to 90,000 square feet, adding seven permanent exhibits. By summer, it had won the "best museum in Houston" accolade in Nickelodeon's Parents Picks Awards.

When our family of six arrived at opening time, the three-story, indoor Power Play—a playscape where kids can crawl and climb from disc to disc—already resembled a beehive, so we visited this giant cage of activity first. Garrett and Ryan quickly took off their shoes and hopped in, dodging other kids' hands and feet as they climbed from top to bottom and back again.

Around the corner, Kidtropolis, a pretend child-run city offered such attractions as a news station, city hall, bank, EMS, diner, grocer, and vet's office. Garrett chose the news station, where he wrote a breaking story—"Giant Bug Eats Mayor"—on a computer and then switched to the broadcast media area to record a weather forecast.



Both kids and adults enjoy eating at Pappas Burgers, which has two locations in Houston.

The real weather for the day was hot, one reason the museum was jumping. "We're from Seattle," said Jennifer Antonia, visiting with Jake, 6, and Luke, 9. "It's hot here. Kids want to be inside."

A 16-foot-tall robot made of 600 old telephones caught our attention in the How Does It Work? area, along with an exhibit showing the mechanics of a bass guitar. My son Bart observed that the guitar exhibit, along with one on radio frequencies, seemed geared to older children, around age 12 or 13. But our group found plenty to do. At Invention Convention, we built rockets and planes, launching them in a 14-foot metal cage outfitted with bull's eyes and meter markings. At this site, it was hard to tell who was having more fun—the kids or the adults. We lingered here, ignoring a dozen other hands-on activities from making jewelry to racing LEGO cars.

Outside, Flow Works bubbled with water, boats, buckets, and a crowd of happy little tykes. Wet fun for a hot day.

### THE HEALTH MUSEUM

Behind the Children's Museum stands The Health Museum, also known as the John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science. One of Trip Advisor's top 2009 family-friendly picks, it stars as the country's only interactive science center focusing on health, medicine, and life sciences.

Refreshingly uncrowded on the day we visited, the one-level building houses a 4-D theater and the Amazing Body Pavilion, with more than 60 interactive video and audio kiosks. In learning about the body, Ryan sat on a giant tooth, helped a skeleton pedal a bicycle, and walked through a 10-foot-tall faux brain, while I pulled and pulled a 27-foot rope that illustrates the length of an adult intestine.

At the Age-O-Matic machine, Garrett posed for a photo, and then pushed a button to see how his features would mature. "I look really weird at 70," he said. "I want to see me at 16." Sorry, no 16, but you could



The Kidropolis exhibit in the Children's Museum promotes civic engagement and financial literacy through role-playing in some two dozen areas, including the Diner, (above). To young visitors, it just seems like fun.

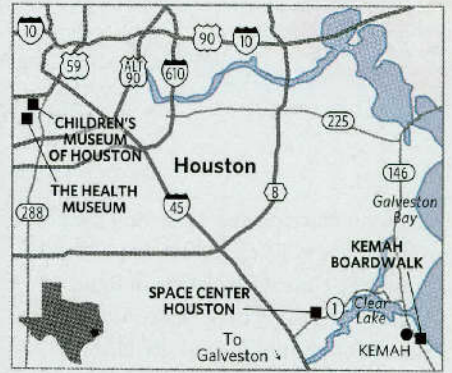
push buttons for factors that affect appearance as we age: obesity, tanning, and smoking. We dissolved with laughter and also grimaced with horror at the results.

"I'm not going to smoke and get a lot of sun," announced Garrett. Thank you, Health Museum.

We then strolled to the Challenge Gallery, where we tried activities that flexed both our physical and mental muscles, including a fascinating interactive game called "Mindball," in which two players try to move a ball with their brain waves. The more relaxed player controls the ball.

### METRORAIL

Houston's 7.5-mile METRORail track includes a stop in the Museum District. Wanting to expose the kids to light-rail, we rode from



## Exploring Houston With Kids

FOR HOUSTON TOURISM INFORMATION, call the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau at 713/437-5200 or 800/4-Houston; [www.visithoustontexas.com](http://www.visithoustontexas.com). For details about attractions mentioned in the story, including hours, admission fees, and parking, contact information follows.

**Children's Museum of Houston**, 1500 Binz St., 713/522-1138; [www.cmhouston.org](http://www.cmhouston.org).

**The Health Museum**, 1515 Hermann Dr., 713/521-1515; [www.thehealthmuseum.org](http://www.thehealthmuseum.org).

**Space Center Houston**, 1601 NASA Pkwy. (about 25 miles south of downtown Houston), 281/244-2100; [www.spacecenter.org](http://www.spacecenter.org).

For details about **METRORail**, Houston's light-rail system, call 713/635-4000; [www.ridemetro.org](http://www.ridemetro.org).

**Kemah Boardwalk**, Kemah, 281/535-8100; [www.kemahboardwalk.com](http://www.kemahboardwalk.com).



the museum to Reliant Park, home of the rodeo and NFL games. The ride took us past scenic Hermann Park, several of the city's famous hospitals, and the zoo. We found the trains fast, clean, and frequent.

### KEMAH BOARDWALK

The drive to Kemah reminded us that Texas remains a big oil state. As we passed refineries and storage tanks en route to Kemah, the stately pines and colonial homes of Houston gave way to palm trees and houses on stilts. We soon spotted a Ferris wheel and a roller coaster, signs that the boardwalk, located along the channel that connects Clear Lake with Galveston Bay, had to be close.

Developed by Landry's Restaurants corporation in 1997, Kemah Boardwalk has been named one of the 10 best boardwalks

in the country by the Forbes Traveler Web site. Its well-kept 40 acres include a dozen or so rides, arcades, souvenir/candy shops, and 11 eateries—several with waterfront views.

"A nice mix of family-friendly restaurants," commented my daughter-in-law Kim. We noted that the sushi restaurant had a kid's menu that included PBJ rolls.

A red mini train circled the boardwalk, and provided a nice tour, complete with tunnels that encouraged loud yelling from the kids on board. Ryan and I joined right in. The Ferris wheel was a first-time experience for both grandsons and, from the top, offered a good view of the boardwalk and waterfront. The Stingray Reef offered

A Houston institution, the Hermann Park train has operated for more than 50 years, providing a scenic tour of the 445-acre park.

a chance to feed and pet the strange-looking sea creatures. Garrett was hot to do this until the stingrays began jumping up the sides of the tank to eat the little fish tucked between his knuckles. Finally, he and I found the courage to touch their velvety brown skin.

### SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

Considered by many the top Houston tourist attraction, the Space Center lies in the NASA/Clear Lake area, about 25 miles from downtown Houston or 10 minutes from Kemah Boardwalk. It's the official visitor's center for NASA's Johnson Space Center, home of

"I'M NOT GOING TO SMOKE AND GET A LOT OF SUN," ANNOUNCED GARRETT. THANK YOU, HEALTH MUSEUM.

astronaut training and Mission Control.

To reduce waiting in line, we arrived at opening time with tickets in hand (\$82.20 for the six of us, discounted 25 percent online). Board the NASA trams first before they fill up, we had been advised. Tram excursions offered a choice of three different destinations: Mission Control, the astronaut-training facility, and the neutral-buoyancy laboratory. Plus, each tram went to the Saturn V rocket facility. We opted for the blue, four-car, covered tram to Mission Control.

As we rode through the Johnson Space Center, we listened to a recording that gave a synopsis of the space program's history and pointed out buildings of interest. At Building 30, we sat in an auditorium and looked through a large window at Shuttle

Mission Control, one of several control rooms in the facility. We could see U.S. astronauts in the space station talking on what looked like a giant TV and a large map showing the location of the station above the earth, as well as rows of consoles used to control various aspects of the mission.

"We tell the astronauts when to wake up, when to exercise, when to go to bed," said a guide. He recounted with pride and passion the various missions, not only successes but also the failures when astronauts were lost, during the Apollo 1, Challenger, and Columbia missions. "We still consider them to be on mission," he said. Later, we saw the Memorial Tree Grove, a group of 40 trees outside the Johnson Space Center, most of them planted in memory of deceased astronauts.

The tram also [continued on page 72]

# Texas Highways

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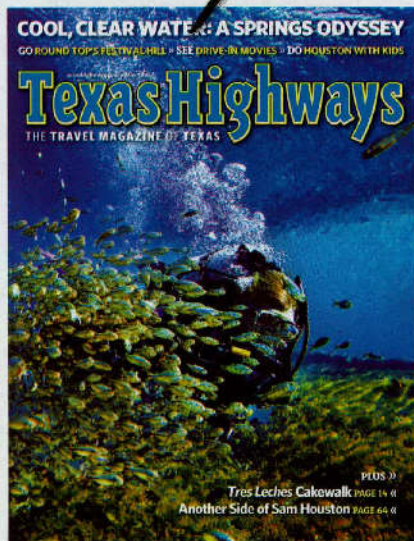
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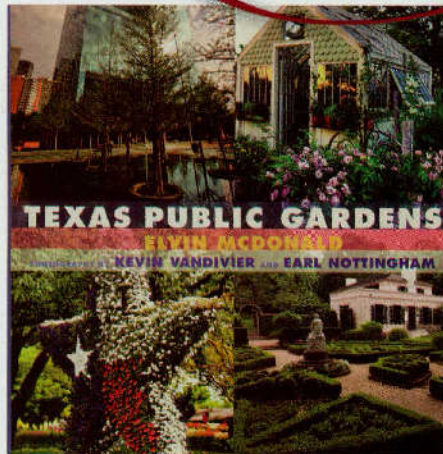
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### 1936 Daughters of the Republic Map

Four hundred years of Texas history are illustrated in this reproduction of the Official Centennial Map of Texas. Important trails, battlegrounds, explorations and settlements are included along with the people who made it possible. Printed on high-quality gloss paper; 18" X 24"

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## Character Study

*The idiosyncrasies of statesman Sam Houston*

Text by **GENE FOWLER**



**See!**

The Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville.

Houston explored popular 19th-Century psychology movements, including mesmerism, phrenology, and clairvoyance.

**T**HE TEXAS LEGACY OF SAM HOUSTON (1793-1863) IS ROOTED IN AN undeniable string of accomplishments and successes. On April 21, 1836, as the commander-in-chief of the Texian army, Houston led some 700 to 900 ragtag soldiers to an improbable victory over Santa Anna's larger and better-trained Mexican forces in the Texas Revolution's decisive Battle of San Jacinto.

In time, Houston served the republic and state of Texas as president, senator, and governor. Supporters of the National Union Party boosted him in 1860 as a candidate for president of the United States. The only American to serve as governor of two states (Texas and Tennessee), he defied easy political categorization, and—despite the fact that he never considered himself a Unionist—resigned as Texas governor in 1861 in objection to secession.

Despite Houston's long career, both amateur and academic historians have long debated his abilities and intentions. Was he simply lucky at San Jacinto? Or was he an astute (if inscrutable) strategist? Most people who read about his dramatic and colorful

The General Sam Houston Folk Festival, held each spring in Huntsville, showcases 19th-Century skills and crafts.

## The Raven, a name bestowed upon Houston by the Cherokee, was also something of a frontier fashionista.

life, however, agree on one thing. Sam Houston was a pistol.

Compared to his contemporaries, Houston could even be seen as a 19th-Century version of a New Ager. His views on Native Americans, formed during two extended residencies with the Cherokee, were far more enlightened than those held by such leaders as Mirabeau B. Lamar, who followed Houston as the second president of the Republic of Texas. Houston also explored such popular 19th-



Century psychology movements as mesmerism, phrenology, and clairvoyance.

In early 1849, Senator Houston attended a lecture on mesmerism (a therapy that treated disease with hypnotism) in Washington, D.C. "It is indeed wonderful," he wrote to his third wife, Margaret, back in Texas, "and its curative powers great."

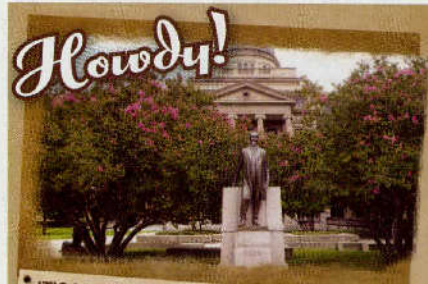
Learn more about Sam Houston at the San Jacinto Museum of History in La Porte.

The senator also attended a performance by a boy psychic, reporting to Margaret that the psychic, "in a Clairvoyant state," described the Houstons' home in Nacogdoches with uncanny accuracy. "If you please," wrote Sam to his wife, "don't think I am crazy, and so sure as we live to meet, I will satisfy you of the art."

But Houston received mixed messages from a blind phrenologist. Phrenology, sometimes called bumpology, held that the brain consisted of some 37 separate physical organs, and that each organ was responsible for a different mental faculty or propensity. Phrenologists believed that the shape of a person's head held clues to the individual's character and health.

Unaware that the noggin he was complimenting belonged to Senator Houston, the phrenologist remarked in passing that the hero of San Jacinto was "one of the most perfect reprobates and rowdies" he had ever heard of. After he learned Houston's identity, all present enjoyed a good laugh. The bumpologist, he wrote to Margaret back home, "fell quite in love with me, and sought my society whenever he could obtain it. So my Love, I am happy to learn, that I improve upon acquaintance."

The Raven, a name bestowed upon Houston by the Cherokee, was also something of a frontier fashionista. An observer of Houston's successful 1827 campaign for governor of Tennessee saw the candidate dandied up in a "shining black beaver hat ... ruffled shirt, black satin vest, shining black silk pants ... and a gorgeous ... many-colored gown or Indian hunting shirt ... a huge red sash covered with fancy bead work, with an immense silver buckle, embroidered silk



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# Speaking of Texas

## Story of Sam

NO CITY IN TEXAS HONORS THE MEMORY AND LEGACY OF SAM HOUSTON MORE than Huntsville, where Houston spent his final years. At the **Sam Houston Memorial Museum Complex**, visitors can tour a dogtrot-style wooden cabin known as the "Woodland Home," where Houston and his third wife, Margaret, lived in the late 1840s and 50s; the Steamboat House, where Houston died of pneumonia in 1863; and a museum that showcases such items as Houston's hat, cane, and furnishings typical to the period.

The annual **General Sam Houston Folk Festival** takes place on the museum grounds April 31-May 2, featuring living-history reenactments, storytelling, regional craft exhibits and demon-



strations, live music and dance, dozens of food booths, a petting zoo and other attractions for children, and docent-led museum tours. Call 936/294-1832; [www.samhouston.memorial.museum](http://www.samhouston.memorial.museum).

Sculptor David Adickes, a Huntsville native, dedicated his 67-foot, concrete-and-steel statue of Sam Houston to the city in 1994. You can see it at the Sam Houston Statue Visitor Center, at 7600 Texas 75 South. For details about the statue and activities, lodging, and dining in Huntsville, call 800/289-0389; [www.huntsvilletexas.com](http://www.huntsvilletexas.com). —Lori Moffatt

Costumed historical characters recreate the 1850s at the General Sam Houston Folk Festival, held in Huntsville each spring.

stockings, and pumps with large silver buckles." Other ensembles mixed-and-matched elements of Mexican and Arabian costume. For one portrait painter, Houston posed in a Roman toga.

The Raven's leopard-skin vest is on display at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville. "It's actually jaguar skin," explains the museum's curator of education, Michael Sproat. "But Houston called it leopard skin because he liked to say that a leopard never changes its spots."

In any get-up, Sam Houston made a strong impression, and his memory stirs folks' emotions still today. Historian James L. Haley, who spent 15 years researching and writing his 2002 biography *Sam Houston*, experienced that phenomenon at book signings. "People would come up and grill me about whether I'd

said anything bad about him before they'd even look at the book," he recalls.

Many of the admirers Haley met shared stories passed down through the generations. Former Texas Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby told him one tale that revealed Sam's sense of humor, intact even on his deathbed. "When Hobby's father, former Texas Governor William Pettus Hobby, was a young newspaperman, he met a journalist who had been present during Houston's last illness in Huntsville," says Haley. "This journalist had witnessed two reporters—both of whom had written stories criticizing Houston—be summoned to the General's side. They went in, and Houston asked one to stand on his right, one on his left. 'Well boys,' cracked Houston, 'I've always wanted to die like Christ, flanked by two thieves.'" **TH**

Go!

Visit Sam Houston's gravesite in Huntsville

EVENTS » HAPPENINGS

## Botanical Spectacle

**THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON** Wildflower Center in Austin, in conjunction with *Texas Highways* and Canon, presents *The Serendipity of Wildflowers 2010*, a colorful, contemporary exhibit of exceptional wildflower photography at the Center's McDermott Learning Center, May 3-9. The show includes the work of Richard Reynolds, Tim Fitzharris, Joe Lowery, and many other distinguished photographers. Call 512/232-0100; [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org).

**Do!**

The Wildflower Center's Gardens on Tour, May 8.



## May Events

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**DEL RIO:** **George Paul Memorial Bull Riding** May 1-2. Val Verde County Fairgrounds. 830/775-9595

**EL PASO:** **Guided Birding Tour** May 15. Reservations required. Hueco Tanks State Historic Site. 915/849-6684

**MIDLAND:** **Memorial Day Celebration** May 31. CAF Headquarters & Airpower Museum, 9600 Wright Drive. [www.commemorativeairforce.org](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org) 432/563-1000

**ODESSA:** **Fiesta West Texas** May 7-9. Ector County Coliseum. 432/580-8112

**SHEFFIELD:** **Western Frontier Days** May 21-22. Fort Lancaster State Historic Site. [www.visitfortlancaster.com](http://www.visitfortlancaster.com) 432/836-4391

**VAN HORN:** **Cinco de Mayo Celebration** May 1. City Park. [www.vanhorn-texas.org](http://www.vanhorn-texas.org) 432/283-2682

### GULF COAST

**BEAUMONT:** **The Gusher Marathon, Half Marathon & 5K** May 1. [www.thegusher-marathon.com](http://www.thegusher-marathon.com) 409/781-2932

**BEAUMONT:** **Cinco de Mayo Celebration** May 5. Riverfront Park. 409/728-0625

**BEAUMONT:** **Boomtown Film & Music Festival** May 14-15. [www.boomtownfestival.com](http://www.boomtownfestival.com) 409/223-8732

**BISHOP:** **Centennial Celebration** May 14-16. City Park. [www.bishoptx100.org](http://www.bishoptx100.org) 361/584-2214

**BRAZORIA:** **River's End VFD Barbecue Cookoff** May 1-2. [www.revfd.com](http://www.revfd.com) 979/235-0010 or 979/964-4028

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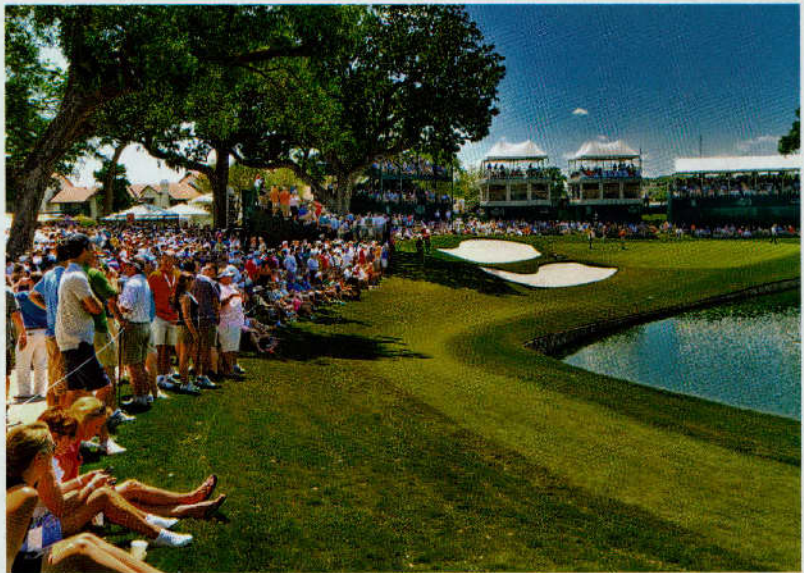


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# Traveler



➔ TH SPOTLIGHT

## Tee to Green

THE PGA TOUR MAKES ITS HOME IN TEXAS during the month of May, shortly after the **Shell Houston Open** got the ball rolling at Redstone in **Humble**, April 1-4. The venerable **Valero Texas Open** takes place May 13-16, at the TPC in **San Antonio**. The **HP Byron Nelson Championship**, honoring one of the game's all-time greats, runs from May 20-23, at the TPC Four Seasons Resort in **Irving**. And, the prestigious **Crowne Plaza Invitational** at Colonial (above) in **Fort Worth** (home course of the late, legendary Ben Hogan) is May 27-30. Visit [www.pgatour.com](http://www.pgatour.com).

**BROWNSVILLE: Battle of Palo Alto Anniversary** May 8. Palo Alto Battlefield NHP. [www.nps.gov/paal](http://www.nps.gov/paal) 956/541-2785

**CORPUS CHRISTI: Aviv Quartet** May 1. Chamber music at Wolfe Recital Hall, Del Mar College. [www.corpuschristi-chambermusic.org](http://www.corpuschristi-chambermusic.org) 361/884-5775 or 361/855-0264

**CORPUS CHRISTI: Beach-to-Bay Relay Marathon** May 15. [www.beachtobayrelay.com](http://www.beachtobayrelay.com) 361/881-6166

**CORPUS CHRISTI: Art in the Gardens** May 29-30. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. [www.stxbot.org](http://www.stxbot.org) 361/852-2100

**GALVESTON: Historic Homes Tour** May 1-2, 8-9. [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org) 409/765-7834

**GALVESTON: "Get in the Swim" Galveston Island Beach Revue** May 14-15. On the shoreline in front of the historic Hotel Galvez and Spa at 20th Street and Seawall Boulevard. [www.galvestonbeachrevue.com](http://www.galvestonbeachrevue.com) 409/770-7360

**GALVESTON: Money, Marbles & Chalk: An Affectionate Sketch of Ann Richards** May 14-16. Starring Emmy Award-winning actress Holland Taylor. The Grand 1894 Opera House. [www.TheGrand.com](http://www.TheGrand.com) 409/765-1894

**HOUSTON: Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps** April 16-May 9. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. [www.alleytheatre.org](http://www.alleytheatre.org) 713/228-9341

**HOUSTON: Little House on the Prairie** April 28-May 9. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. [www.tuts.com](http://www.tuts.com) 713/558-TUTS or 888/558-3882

**HOUSTON: Cinco de Mayo Celebration** May 1. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive. [www.milleroutdoortheatre.com](http://www.milleroutdoortheatre.com) 713/695-5980

**HOUSTON: Dragon Boat Festival** May 1. Buffalo Bayou at Allen's Landing, 1113 Vine St. [www.texasdragonboat.com](http://www.texasdragonboat.com) 281/381-7154

**HOUSTON: Dominic Walsh Dance Theater** May 6-8. Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. [www.dwdt.org](http://www.dwdt.org) 713/652-3938

**HOUSTON: Houston Symphony** May 7-9, 13, 15-16, 21-23. Jones Hall. [www.houstonsymphony.org](http://www.houstonsymphony.org) 713/224-7575

**HOUSTON: Houston Masterworks Chorus** May 15. Morris Cultural Arts Center, Houston Baptist University. [www.houstonmasterworks.org](http://www.houstonmasterworks.org) 713/529-8900

**HOUSTON: Houston Scottish Highland Games & Celtic Festival** May 15-16. Farm & Ranch Club. [www.houstonhighlandgames.com](http://www.houstonhighlandgames.com) 713/871-0061

**HOUSTON: GTO Car Show** May 16. Traders Village. [www.tradersvillage.com](http://www.tradersvillage.com) 281/890-5500

**HOUSTON: Pecos** May 27, 29-30, June 4-6. Wortham Theater Center. [www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org) 713/227-2787

**KEMAH: Bay Day** May 15. The Galveston Bay Foundation presents a day of ecosystem awareness. Kemah Boardwalk. [www.kemahboardwalk.com](http://www.kemahboardwalk.com) 281/334-9880

**LEAGUE CITY: Texas Music Festival, Village Fair & Barbecue Cookoff** April 30-May 2. Walter Hall Park. [www.lcvillagefair.com](http://www.lcvillagefair.com) 281/332-5005

**ORANGE: Texas Cajun Heritage Festival & Speckled Trout USA Fishing Tournament** May 15-16. 1000 Simmons Drive. [www.orangetexas.org](http://www.orangetexas.org) 409/883-1011

**PASADENA: Strawberry Festival** May 14-16. [www.strawberryfest.org](http://www.strawberryfest.org) 281/991-9500

**PEARLAND: Southdown Park Concert Series** May 7, 14, 21, 28. [www.pearlandparks.com](http://www.pearlandparks.com) 281/652-1673

**PORT ARTHUR: S.A.L.T. Fishing Rodeo** May 29-30. Pleasure Island. 409/963-0433

**PORT NECHES: River Fest** April 29-May 2. Riverfront Park. [www.portnecheschamber.com](http://www.portnecheschamber.com) 409/722-9154

**ROCKPORT: Festival of Wines** May 22-23. Texas Maritime Museum, 1202 Navigation Circle. [www.texasmaritimemuseum.org](http://www.texasmaritimemuseum.org) 361/729-1271

**SEABROOK: Keels & Wheels Concours d' Elegance** May 1-2. Collection of classic cars and wooden boats on display. Lakewood Yacht Club, 2425 NASA Parkway. [www.keels-wheels.com](http://www.keels-wheels.com) 713/521-0105 or 281/474-2511

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Pedal to Padre** May 1. Bicycle tour. [www.riverrockets.com](http://www.riverrockets.com) 956/541-9712

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Memorial Day Weekend Fireworks** May 29. Laguna Madre Bay. 956/761-6433

**WEBSTER: Greek Festival** May 7-9. 202 N. Walnut St. [www.clearlakegreekfestival.com](http://www.clearlakegreekfestival.com) 281/554-7223

**WHARTON: Steel Magnolias** April 16-May 2. Plaza Theatre. [www.whartonplazatheatre.org](http://www.whartonplazatheatre.org) 800/838-3006

## HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN: Old Pecan Street Spring Arts Festival** May 1-2. East Sixth Street. [www.oldpecanstreetfestival.com](http://www.oldpecanstreetfestival.com) 512/469-6060

**AUSTIN: Rick Braun & Richard Elliot** May 14. Contemporary jazz stars at One World Theatre. [www.oneworldtheatre.org](http://www.oneworldtheatre.org) 512/329-6753

**AUSTIN: Larry Carlton** May 21. Acclaimed guitarist at One World Theatre. [www.oneworldtheatre.org](http://www.oneworldtheatre.org) 512/329-6753

**BANDERA: Cowboy Capital Pro Rodeo** May 28-30. Mansfield Park Rodeo Arena. [www.banderarodeo.com](http://www.banderarodeo.com) 830/796-7207

**BANDERA: Funtier Day Parade** May 29. Main Street. [www.banderatex.com](http://www.banderatex.com) 800/364-3833

**BOERNE: Abendkonzerte** May 25. Boerne Village Band. Main Plaza. 830/249-7277

**BURNET: Barbecue Cookoff & Fiddlers Festival** May 14-15. Burnet County Fairgrounds. [www.burnetcookoff.com](http://www.burnetcookoff.com) 512/756-4297

**CEDAR PARK: Smucker's Stars on Ice Tour** May 12. Cedar Park Center. [www.cedarparkcenter.com](http://www.cedarparkcenter.com) 800/745-3000

**FREDERICKSBURG: Founders Day Festival** May 8. Pioneer Museum. [www.pioneermuseum.net](http://www.pioneermuseum.net) 830/997-2835

**FREDERICKSBURG: Crawfish Festival** May 28-29. Downtown—Market Square. [www.tex-fest.com](http://www.tex-fest.com) 866/839-3378

**GRUENE: KNBT Americana Music Jam** May 16. Historic Gruene Hall. [www.gruenehall.com](http://www.gruenehall.com) 830/629-5077

**KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival** May 27-June 13. Quiet Valley Ranch. [www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com](http://www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com) 830/257-3600

**KERRVILLE: Texas State Arts & Crafts Fair** May 29-31. River Star Arts & Events Center, 4000 Riverside Drive. [www.tacef.org](http://www.tacef.org) 830/896-5711 or 888/335-1455

**LUCKENBACH: Memorial Day Weekend/161st Birthday** May 29-31. 412 Luckenbach Town Loop. [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com) 830/997-3224 or 888/311-8990

**MARBLE FALLS: CASI Howdy Roo Chili Cookoff/Lone Star Barbecue Cookoff** May 1. Johnson Park. 281/615-2408 or 830/613-8666

**MARBLE FALLS: MayFest** May 6-9. Johnson Park. [www.marblefalls.org](http://www.marblefalls.org) 830/693-2815

**SAN MARCOS: Viva! Cinco de Mayo** May 1. Hays County Civic Center. [www.vivacincodemayo.org](http://www.vivacincodemayo.org) 512/353-VIVA

**SAN MARCOS: Texas Natural & Western Swing Festival** May 15. San Marcos Plaza Park. 512/393-8430

**SONORA: Viva Sonora—Cinco de Mayo Celebration** May 1. Sutton County Fairgrounds. [www.vivasonora.org](http://www.vivasonora.org) 325/387-2880 or 888/387-2880

**TAYLOR: Zest Fest** May 1. Historic Downtown District, Main Street. [www.ci.taylor.tx.us](http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us) 512/352-3675

**UVALDE: Arts in the Heart of Uvalde** May 1. Outdoor art festival at downtown plaza. 830/278-4184

**WIMBERLEY: Grease** May 28-June 20. The EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens. [www.emilyann.org](http://www.emilyann.org) 512/847-6969

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE: Big Country AirFest** May 1. Dyess Air Force Base. 325/677-7755

**ABILENE: Western Heritage Classic** May 6-8 Taylor County Expo Center. [www.westernheritageclassic.com](http://www.westernheritageclassic.com) 325/677-4376

**AMARILLO: Art of the Western Saddle** May 1-July 31. Sixteen fascinating examples of the saddle maker's art. American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum. [www.aqha.com/foundation/halloffame/index.html](http://www.aqha.com/foundation/halloffame/index.html) 806/376-5181

**BANGS: Mayfest Festival** May 1. City Park. [www.bangsbusinessassociation.org](http://www.bangsbusinessassociation.org) 325/752-7149

**BRONTE: Fort Chadbourne Days Living History Event** May 1. [www.fortchadbourne.org](http://www.fortchadbourne.org) 325/743-2555

**CANADIAN: Canadian River Music Festival** May 8. Jones Pavilion. [www.canadiantx.com](http://www.canadiantx.com) 806/323-6234

**COLORADO CITY: Lake Colorado City Bike Tour** May 1. Railhead Building, First and Elm. 325/728-3403

**EARLY: Lone Star Rib Fest** May 21-22. [www.heartlandmall.net](http://www.heartlandmall.net) 325/646-8531

**ELECTRA: Electra Goat Barbecue** May 7-8. City Fairgrounds. [www.electratexas.org](http://www.electratexas.org) 940/495-3577

**FLOMOT: Washington Cattle Co. Bluegrass Festival** May 13-15. 806/269-1578

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TH SPOTLIGHT

## Keepin' up with Jones

**INTERNATIONAL POP MUSIC** star. Jazz chanteuse. Pianist. Guitarist. Songwriter. Actress. Raised in metro Dallas, **Norah Jones'** current worldwide tour promoting her latest CD, *The Fall*, comes to Texas April 29 (Plaza Theatre, **El Paso**), May 1-2 (Stubb's, **Austin**), May 4 (Music Hall at Fair Park, **Dallas**), and May 5 (Verizon Wireless Theater, **Houston**). For additional information, see [www.norahjones.com](http://www.norahjones.com).

**LUBBOCK: Gem & Mineral Show** May 1-2. Lubbock Civic Center, 1501 Mac Davis Lane. [www.lgmstx.org](http://www.lgmstx.org) 806/894-1584

**SAN ANGELO: San Angelo Food & Wine Festival** May 1. [www.sanangelofaarts.com](http://www.sanangelofaarts.com) 325/653-6793

**SAN ANGELO: West Texas Jazz Orchestra** May 9. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. [www.samfa.org](http://www.samfa.org) 325/653-3333

**SANTA ANNA: Funtier Days & World Championship Bison Cookoff** May 14-15. Old Armory Civic Center and City Park. [www.santaannatex.org](http://www.santaannatex.org) 325/348-3826

**THROCKMORTON: World Championship Rocky Mountain Oyster Festival & Barbecue** May 21-22. Frank Rhoades Memorial Rodeo Arena. [www.worldchampionshiprockymountainoysters.com](http://www.worldchampionshiprockymountainoysters.com) 940/849-3170

**VERNON: Santa Rosa Roundup PRCA Rodeo & Parade** May 12-15. Santa Rosa Rodeo Grounds. [www.santarosaroundup.com](http://www.santarosaroundup.com) 940/552-7236 or 940/552-2564

### PINEY WOODS

**CENTER: Fly-In** May 1. Center Municipal Airport, 387 FM 1656. [www.shelbycountychamber.com](http://www.shelbycountychamber.com) 936/598-3682

**CONROE: Texas Woodland & Wildlife Expo** April 30-May 2. Lone Star Convention Center. 936/273-2261

**CROCKETT: Pam Tillis** May 14. Country music star performs at the Civic Center. [www.pwfaa.org](http://www.pwfaa.org) 936/544-4276

**HENDERSON: Wildflower Trail—Driving Tour** April 15-May 31. [www.hendersontx.us](http://www.hendersontx.us) 903/657-6551

**HUNTSVILLE: Airing of the Quilts** May 1. Downtown square. 936/295-8322

**JACKSONVILLE: Duck Race** May 1. Lake Jacksonville. 903/586-9918

**JASPER: Jasper Lions Club Rodeo** May 5-8. [www.jasperlionsrodeo.com](http://www.jasperlionsrodeo.com) 409/384-2234

**JEFFERSON: Fly-In** May 29. Cypress River Airport. [www.jeffersonflyin.com](http://www.jeffersonflyin.com) 903/665-7311

**LONGVIEW: Longview Symphony Orchestra** May 1. [www.longviewsymphony.org](http://www.longviewsymphony.org) 903/236-9739

**MARSHALL: Cajun Celebration** May 22. Convention Center. [www.marshallartscouncil.org](http://www.marshallartscouncil.org) 903/935-4484

**MINEOLA: May Days** May 6-8. Civic Center. [www.mineolachamber.org](http://www.mineolachamber.org) 903/569-2087

**RUSK: Fair on the Square** May 29. Downtown. [www.RuskChamber.com](http://www.RuskChamber.com) 903/683-5315

**THE WOODLANDS: Van Morrison** May 1. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. [www.woodlandscenter.org](http://www.woodlandscenter.org) 281/363-3300

**THE WOODLANDS: Jimmy Buffett & The Coral Reefer Band** May 20. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. [www.woodlandscenter.org](http://www.woodlandscenter.org) 281/363-3300

### PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**ADDISON: Taste Addison** May 21-23. Addison Circle Park. [www.addisontexas.net](http://www.addisontexas.net) 800/233-4766

**ATHENS: Music Festival** May 29. Cain Center. 903/677-2001

**BEN WHEELER: Ben Wheeler Birthday Bash** May 22. [www.benwheeler.com](http://www.benwheeler.com) 903/833-1070

**BRENHAM: 120th Annual Maifest** May 7-8. Downtown. [www.maifest.org](http://www.maifest.org) 888/273-6426

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**BRIDGEPORT: Butterfield Stage Days Festival & PRCR Rodeo** May 6-8. [www.bridgeportchamber.org](http://www.bridgeportchamber.org) 940/683-2076

**COLUMBUS: Rolling Hills Challenge Bicycle Ride** May 8. Beasons Park. [www.columbuslionsclub.org](http://www.columbuslionsclub.org) 979/732-8385

**CORSICANA: Air Show** May 8. C. David Campbell Field, Corsicana Municipal Airport. [www.coyotesquadron.org](http://www.coyotesquadron.org) 877/648-2688

**DALLAS: African Unity Festival** May 1-15. [www.dfwinternational.org/AfricanUnity](http://www.dfwinternational.org/AfricanUnity) 972/661-2764

**DALLAS: Dallas Symphony Orchestra** May 6-9, 13-16, 20-23. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. [www.dallas-symphony.com](http://www.dallas-symphony.com) 214/692-0203

**DALLAS: Madame Butterfly** May 7, 9, 12, 15-16, 23. Winspear Opera House. [www.dallasopera.org](http://www.dallasopera.org) 214/880-0202

**DALLAS: Wicked** May 26-June 27. Music Hall at Fair Park. [www.liveatthemusic-hall.com](http://www.liveatthemusic-hall.com) 214/565-1116

**DENTON: Concerts on the Square** May 5, 12, 19, 26. Historic Denton County Courthouse. [www.dentonmainstreet.org](http://www.dentonmainstreet.org) 940/349-8289

**DUBLIN: A Night on the Town** May 1. Downtown. [www.dublinfoxchamber.com](http://www.dublinfoxchamber.com) 254/445-3422

**EMORY: Founders Day** April 30-May 1. Rains County Fairgrounds. 903/473-3913

**ENNIS: National Polka Festival** May 28-30. [www.nationalpolkafestival.com](http://www.nationalpolkafestival.com) 972/878-4748

**FARMERS BRANCH: Liberty Fest** May 28-29. 972/919-2620

**FORT WORTH: Texas Frontier Forts Days** May 7-8. Stockyards National Historic District. [www.stockyardsstation.com](http://www.stockyardsstation.com) 817/625-9715

**FORT WORTH: Sarah Chang with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra** May 7-9. Bass Performance Hall. [www.fwsymphony.org](http://www.fwsymphony.org) 817/665-6000

**FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Opera Festival** May 22-June 6. Bass Performance Hall. [www.fwopera.org](http://www.fwopera.org) 877/396-7372

**GARLAND: Funny Girl** May 1-2, 6-8. Granville Arts Center. [www.garlandcivictheatre.org](http://www.garlandcivictheatre.org) 972/205-2790

**GIDDINGS: Lee County Fair & Rodeo** May 7-8, 14-15. Lee County Sheriff's Posse Arena and Firemen's Park. [www.GiddingsTexas.com](http://www.GiddingsTexas.com) 979/542-3455

**GRAND PRAIRIE: Big Mamou Cajun Festival** May 1-2. Traders Village. [www.tradersvillage.com](http://www.tradersvillage.com) 972/647-2331

**GRAPEVINE: Main Street Days** May 21-23. Historic Downtown Grapevine. [www.grapevintexasusa.com](http://www.grapevintexasusa.com) 800/457-6338

**GUSTINE: Homecoming** May 28-31. Downtown. [www.GustineHomecoming.com](http://www.GustineHomecoming.com) 325/667-7417

**HICO: Texas Steak Cookoff** May 15. [www.texassteak-cookoff.com](http://www.texassteak-cookoff.com) 254/485-2020

**IRVING: Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra** May 8. Carpenter Performance Hall. [www.irvingartscenter.com](http://www.irvingartscenter.com) 972/252-2787.

**ITASCA: Chamber Barbecue** May 21-22. Downtown. 254/687-2331

**LA GRANGE: May Fest** May 16. Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center. [www.czechtexas.org](http://www.czechtexas.org) 888/785-4500

**LOCKHART: Cinco de Mayo** May 1-2. Caldwell County Courthouse Square. [www.lockhartchamber.com](http://www.lockhartchamber.com) 512/398-9600

**McKINNEY: ArtWalk** May 22. Historic Downtown McKinney [www.downtownmckinney.com](http://www.downtownmckinney.com) 972/547-2660

**MESQUITE: A Texas Romance** May 6-8, 12-15. Black Box Theater. [www.mesquiteartscenter.org](http://www.mesquiteartscenter.org) 972/216-6444

**RICHARDSON: Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival** May 14-16. Galatyn Park. [www.wildflowerfestival.com](http://www.wildflowerfestival.com) 972/744-4580

**SEGUIN: May Fest** May 8. Sebastopol House State Historic Site. [www.visitseguin.com](http://www.visitseguin.com) 830/379-4833

**WAXAHACHIE: Cinco de Mayo Festival** May 1. Historic Downtown Waxahachie. 214/336-5314

**WEIMAR: Gedenke German Festival** May 7-8. [www.weimartx.org](http://www.weimartx.org) 979/725-9511

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**BEEVILLE: Oklahoma!** April 29-May 2. Jones Auditorium, Coastal Bend College. 361/354-2303

**EAGLE PASS: Memorial Day Ceremony** May 30. Maverick County Lake. 830/773-4528

**GOLIAD: Cinco de Mayo** April 30-May 1. Goliad Fairgrounds. [www.goliadcc.org](http://www.goliadcc.org) 361/645-8364

**SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony** May 1. Majestic Theatre. [www.sasymphony.org](http://www.sasymphony.org) 210/554-1010

**SAN ANTONIO: New World Wine & Food Festival** May 12-16. [www.nwwff.org](http://www.nwwff.org) 210/822-9555

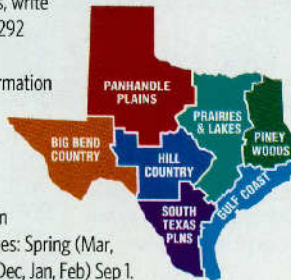
**WESLACO: Dragonfly Days** May 14-16. Estero Llano Grande State Park. 956/565-3919

## Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at [www.texashighways.com](http://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: [trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:trv-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.



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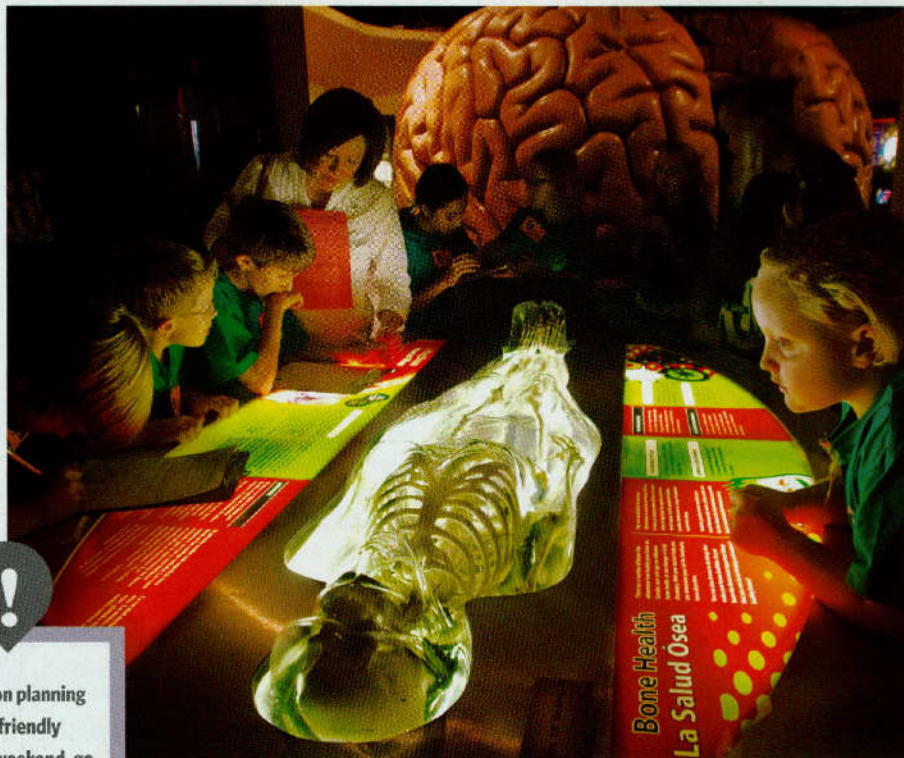
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© continued from page 60] stopped at the Saturn V, the world's largest and most powerful rocket, which took the first man to the moon in 1969. Longer than a football field, it was exhibited on its side in a hangar so visitors could view its various sections.

"See that black ring? That's the Instrument Unit. I helped work on that," said my husband, Chester. His stories about his experience in the '60s as a rookie IBM engineer based in Huntsville, Alabama, the home of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, helped make the tour very personal to our grandsons.

Back at the Space Center, we toured a mock-up shuttle, pulling out drawers and viewing their space-secured contents (freeze-dried mac 'n cheese, strawberries, spinach, floss) and gawking at a space toilet with levers and hoses.



For tips on planning a kid-friendly Houston weekend, go to [www.texashighways.com/webextra](http://www.texashighways.com/webextra).

We viewed the 25-minute film *To Be an Astronaut* on a giant screen, and

Garrett weighed himself on Earth, Neptune, Jupiter, and Mars (he was lightest on Mars).

The Bone Room in the Amazing Body Pavilion at the Health Museum displays a cast of an actual skeleton and interactive games related to the skeletal system.

While the adults visited the astronaut gallery, which offers a collection of spacesuits and photos of every United States astronaut who has flown in space, Ryan climbed and threw balls in the five-story Kids Space Place, an enclosed playscape that seemed to be one of the most popular features at the center. Then we refueled on pizza, wraps, grilled cheese sandwiches, and salad at the Zero-G Diner, a massive, food-court style restaurant.

Afterwards, the boys decided that Houston is not like Dallas. It has its own identity. "Those oil things," said Garrett. "And rockets," said Ryan. As for the adults, we found a Houston we had never seen on our grown-up visits. **TH**

Austin writer **KITTY CRIDER**, who had never petted a stingray until she visited the Kemah Boardwalk, has already started planning the next Crider family exploration. Cowtown, anyone? Taylor photographer **ANDY SHARP** felt like a 50-something-year-old kid in a candy store while shooting photos at Space Center Houston. "To be that close to all that history was amazing," he says.

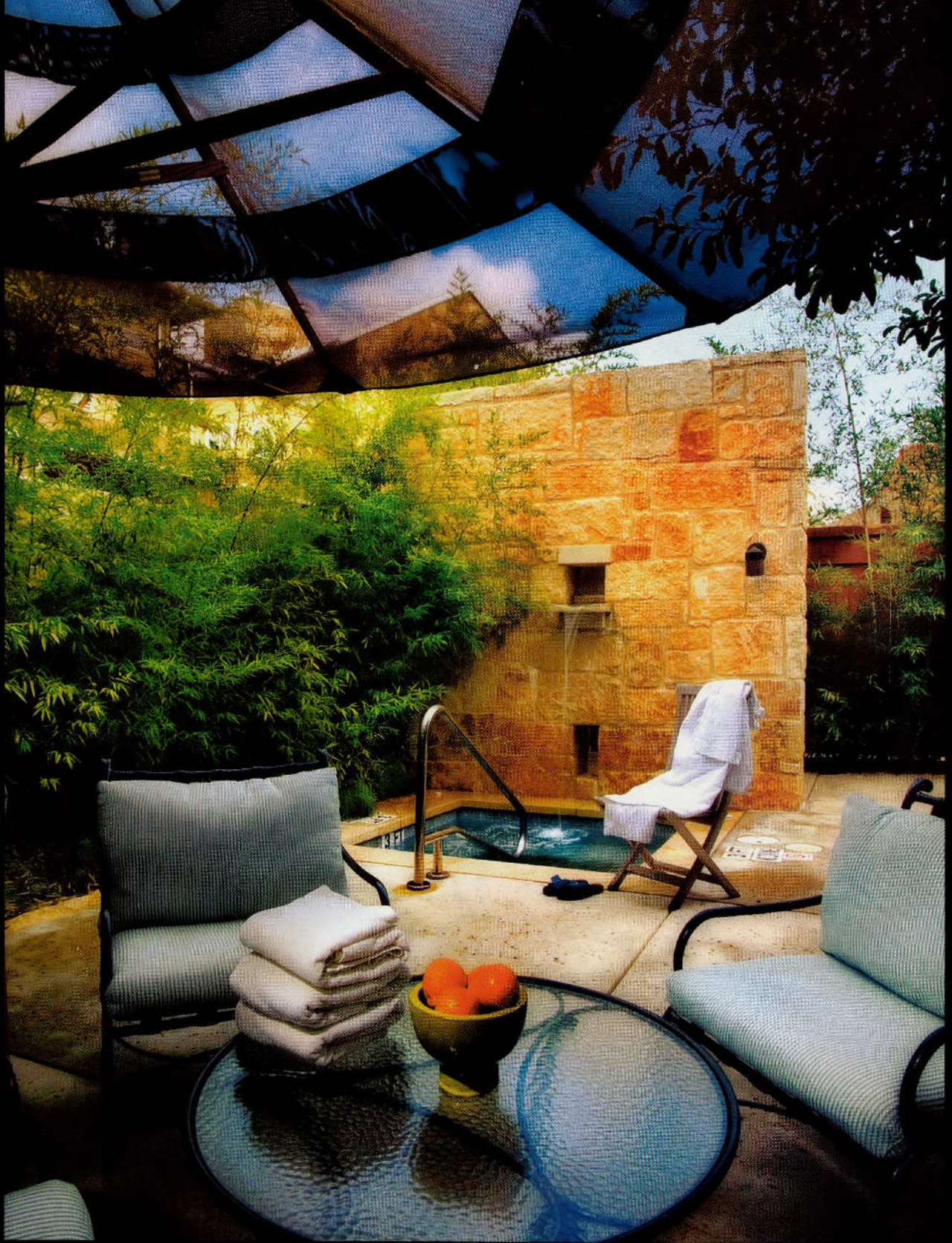
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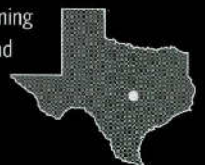




## Window on Texas

Photograph by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

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