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COWTOWN'S FINER DINER • VIVA JERRY JEFF

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

# TEXAS

## HIGHWAYS

JANUARY 2009



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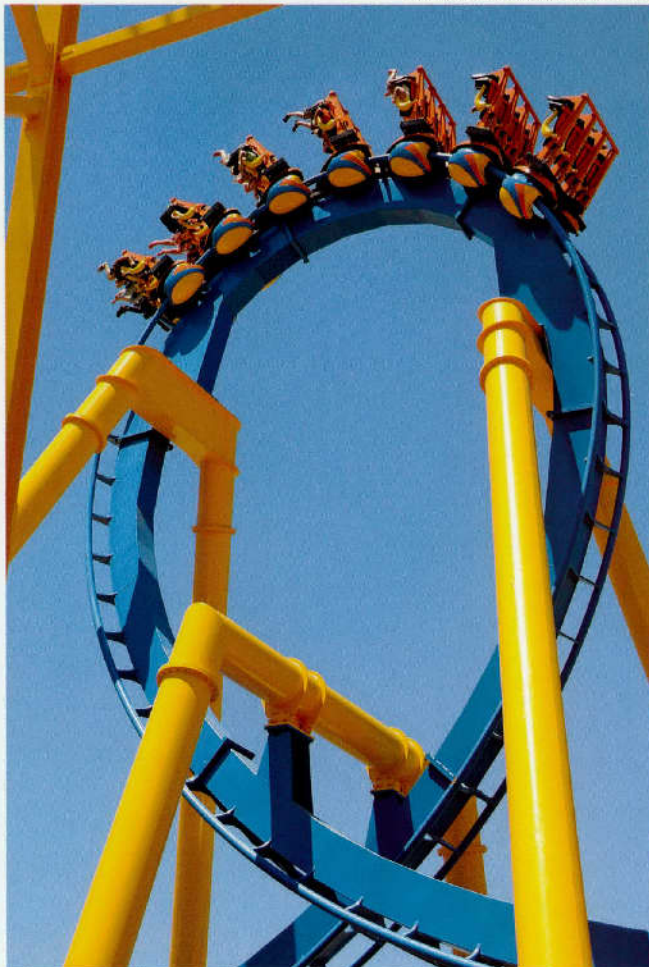
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**W**E'VE HEARD THE term "roller coaster ride" an amazing number of times lately. It's the phrase chosen to describe a jumble of events that roared into our lives during 2008. Pundits regularly observed that the economy was on a roller coaster ride, caused in part by the rise and fall of oil prices that whooshed us through a memorable up-then-down-then-up-again thrill ride. The two-years-long election process engaged candidates—and voters—in that same kind of climb-then-drop. We all shared in this recent history. But isn't it odd that so many people use this one phrase to describe all these events? With the tumult of 2008 in mind, "roller coaster ride" is my candidate for most over-used phrase this year.

But now it's time to consider the question: "How long has it been since you actually rode a roller coaster?" For me, it's been a while. Since I missed the premier ride for the new *Goliath* at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio earlier this year, I decided it's time to confirm whether I could compare the economy, the election, or the shocking ups and downs of gas prices to South Texas' newest coaster. I called Roxanne Kearns at Six Flags and learned that the park is open on weekends through January 4. Since I'm the perennial off-season traveler who visits the beach in winter, Six Flags in the holiday season sounds perfect.

And, it was a wild ride. As *TH* Senior Editor Lori Moffatt pointed out, how many times can you yell your head off without anyone thinking you're crazy? As expected, the real ride is nothing like listening to Jack Cramer scream about the economy on MSNBC. The next time someone drones on about how one of life's dramas took them on an emotional roller coaster, suggest it's time to go for a real ride. Make it a New Year's Resolution. Life's too short to miss the real roller coaster ride. And believe me, it's a lot more exhilarating than any of the events to which it's compared.



COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

Folks compare all kinds of events to a roller coaster ride. But do you experience gasoline price swings the same way you experience Six Flags' *Goliath*?

*Charles J. Lohrmann*

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS  
**TEXAS**  
HIGHWAYS

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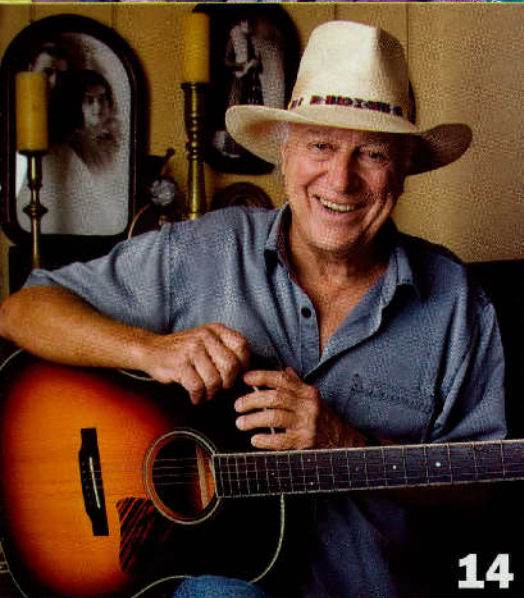
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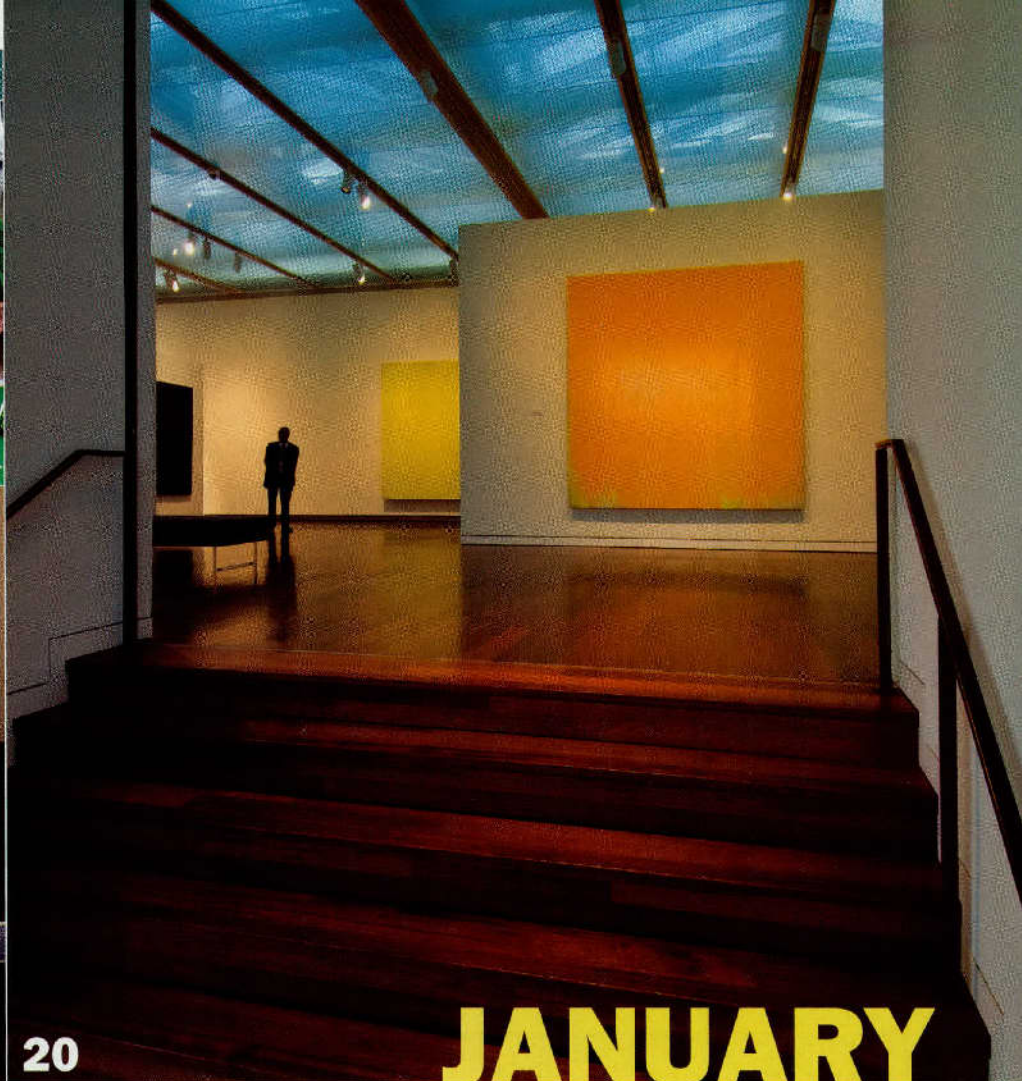
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JANUARY  
2009

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

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BY NOLA McKEY

**ABOUT OUR COVERS** FRONT: With determination etched into his face, three-time PRCA world champion bareback rider Will Lowe competes at Dallas' Texas Stampede. For more rodeo images that take you into the thick of the action, turn to page 30. © Skeeter Hagler. BACK: *Portrait of a Lady* by Sir Anthony van Dyck, one of the most important Flemish painters of the 17th Century, hangs in the El Paso Museum of Art. A sampling of other iconic artworks from around the state starts on page 20. Photo by J. Griffis Smith. (To order a print of either of these photographs, see instructions at left.)

PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE: KEVIN STILLMAN; J. GRIFFIS SMITH; © RICK PATRICK

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## Columbus Discovery

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed "Hello, Columbus" by Kathleen Kaska [November]. Skeeter Hagler's photography is particularly stunning, especially Lehmann Legacy Ranch operator Carol Davis hugging what might be the most adorable animal [miniature donkey] I've ever seen! Visitors to Columbus should also

pick up homemade kolaches at The Little Bakery (1233 Fannin St.). Go early—they open at 5 a.m. and close by noon (Tuesday to Saturday).

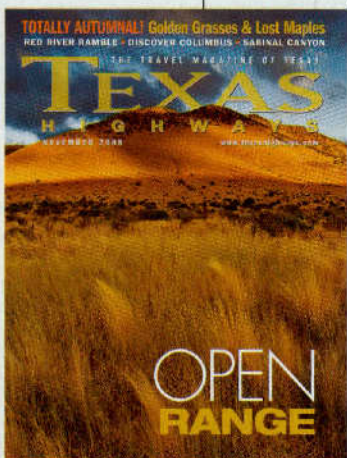
JOHN A. NECHMAN  
Houston

I READ the Columbus article and had to find out when the next cemetery tour was. I had

never heard of anything like this, and being a huge genealogy and history buff, I wanted to experience it for myself. I attended the Friday-night tour, and it was absolutely awesome! And I enjoyed my day in Columbus tremendously! Thank you for letting me know about

this wonderful historic town—I can't wait for next year's tour!

LISA FRANKLIN  
Houston



## Dean and DeLuca Duo

THANKS to Lou Ann Dean and Louis DeLuca for the great article on Fannin County [November]. Can't beat the food at the Feed Sack in Windom.

JO ANN DANNER  
Bonham

## Glorious Grass

WHAT A beautiful photo essay—"Splendor in the Grass"—by Arthur Meyerson [November]! Grasslands or rangelands cover 59 percent of Texas and approximately 50 percent of the world's land mass. Our rangelands are often overlooked by the public, but they are the

primary landuse that covers our watersheds. They furnish the purest, cleanest runoff for our municipal water supplies. As president of the Texas Section Society for Range Management (TSSRM), I solicit your continued interest in Texas rangelands. Check out our professional society at <http://texas.rangelands.org>.

JERRY L. PAYNE  
Henrietta

HAVING made three or four round trips from Houston to Groves since Hurricane Ike, when I saw the article on Texas grasslands, I immediately thought of the mountains of blackened marsh grasses scraped off FM 365 and Texas 73 by bulldozers.

I cannot get the grim images I've been seeing out of my mind. It is frightening to think of the massive surge of tidal power that sheared off the marshes like a gigantic lawnmower and left dead vegetation and animal carcasses deposited several miles inland. Until Ike tore through that area, I could only see the main water channels, not the network of waterways now visible. My heart aches for the once lovely bayous inhabited by so many birds and animals.

I was hoping for a photograph or two of the coastal plains, but the other Texas grasslands are lovely. Thank you for the beautiful photos of peaceful places.

JO MERRILY KING  
Houston

## Sticky Subject

GREAT magazine! I enjoy TH very much, but couldn't help but notice on the November cover the "Open Range" coverline on a photo that includes a barbed-wire fence. An open range is not fenced.

LEE KRAMER  
Hewitt

ED. NOTE: *Good point, Mr. Kramer! The Editor has been flogged for this oversight.*

## Colorado Follow-up

I WAS very interested in Kathleen Kaska's article on the Upper Colorado [October], especially the part about the Regency Suspension Bridge. I never knew there was but one story about the bridge collapsing in 1924, which was told to me by my mother, aunts, and uncles many times. Raymond Jernigan was one of my mother's brothers, and was only nine years old when he was killed in the accident. Raymond's oldest brother wanted to participate in a play on the last day of school, so Raymond convinced my grandmother to let him skip the last day and help his father

# The Art of Discovery



The Museum of Western Art

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Watch for new travel guides for Texas Pecos Trail Region ([www.texaspecostrail.com](http://www.texaspecostrail.com)) and Texas Hill Country Trail Region ([www.txhillcountrytrail.com](http://www.txhillcountrytrail.com)).



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Photo courtesy Texas State Library & Archives Commission





and another brother drive the cattle back home. When they started driving the cattle across the bridge, a car came on to the bridge from the opposite side and caused the cattle to bunch up in the middle of the bridge. The concentrated weight of the cattle, horses, and riders, and the car, caused the bridge to collapse.

DELL RENFRO  
Glasgow, Kentucky

## Photographic Memories

WITHOUT a doubt, the best photographers work for TH! Most pictures are so "real," I can almost feel the wind off the grass or touch the bark of a tree or hear the squeak of a saddle. Awesome. Many thanks, and keep it up.

H. ALLAN BURSON  
Harleton

I HAVE been a loyal subscriber to TH since the summer of 1979. I was somewhat disappointed to see only one picture depicting Texas' beautiful fall foliage in the October and November issues. This is my favorite time of the year,

and I always look forward to seeing your beautiful pictures. Otherwise, keep up the good work!

DAVID MITCHELL  
Franklin

ED. NOTE: *Thanks for the feedback, Mr. Mitchell. Stay tuned for our fall-foliage roundup later this year!*

## Top Choice

WE TRAVELED to Fredericksburg and ate at the Hill Top Cafe, as recommended by Dick Holland in "Thrill on the Hill" [Top Tables, October 2008]. We loved the food and the atmosphere. Everyone was so friendly and lots of fun. We ordered the shrimp gumbo, crab cakes, and stuffed shrimp. Yum! The best was the blackberry pie. The friends we were with are Winter Texans from Wyoming, and they loved the experience of Cajun food and rustic flair.

ANN AND DAN FRENCH  
Lake Kiowa

## Winter Texan Wonderland

THANK YOU so very much for keeping me in touch with Texas, my second home. I truly love this huge state. I have been spending most winters in Corpus Christi and now at Sea Breeze

RV Park in Portland since 1969. My wonderful friends in this area are like family.

Otto and Dora Schuster have provided me with TH for many years. It is interesting and educational; the stories inspire me to travel the backroads and simply meander. God willing, I will be able to spend many more winters in my chosen second home, and many more years reading TH.

BETTY SMITH  
Port Lambton, Ontario  
Canada


CORRECTION: *We published an incorrect Web address for Gator Country Adventure Park in November's story on Beaumont. The correct address is [www.gatorcountrytx.net](http://www.gatorcountrytx.net). And be sure to check out our Web Extra interview with Gator Country co-owner Gary Saurage at [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).*

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

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Jack Sammon — Australia  
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[www.cowboy-poetry.org](http://www.cowboy-poetry.org)  
*photos: Barbara Richardson*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>January 2009</b>	BIG BEND LIVESTOCK SHOW
<b>February 2009</b>	TEXAS COWBOY POETRY GATHERING
<b>March 2009</b>	TRAPPING OF TEXAS
<b>April 2009</b>	BIG BEND GEM & MINERAL SHOW
<b>May 2009</b>	CINCO DE MAYO
<b>June 2009</b>	FIESTA DEL SOL
<b>August 2009</b>	BIG BEND RANCH RODEO WAY OUT WEST TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL
<b>September 2009</b>	BIG BEND BALLOON BASH BULLRUN CHALLENGE

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## JESSE HOLMAN JONES, MR. HOUSTON

When the economy stumbled last fall, older Americans who remembered the Great Depression might have thought, “What this country needs is another Texan like Jesse Jones.” As chairman of President Roosevelt’s Reconstruction Finance Corporation from 1933 to 1939,

Jones—a believer in capitalism for the common good—helped many of the country’s banks, farms, and other businesses avoid economic ruin. FDR’s New Deal program “saved Capitalism in America,” writes historian James S. Olsen. “And Jesse Jones was the key player in that salvation.”

Remembered today for his philanthropy as well as his business acumen, Jones was born on a Tennessee tobacco farm in 1874. The family moved to Dallas in 1891, where Jesse completed an abbreviated formal education. He came to Houston in 1898 as executor of his wealthy uncle’s estate, and he soon oversaw lumberyards, timberland, and sawmills throughout East Texas and Louisiana.

Opening his own lumberyards and expanding into banking and construction, Jones built Houston’s then-tallest skyscrapers during the national economic crisis of 1907. He became publisher of the *Houston Chronicle* and convinced local bankers to help finance the Houston Ship Channel, raising half of the funds himself. By the time that World War I broke out, folks were affectionately calling Mr. Jones “Mr. Houston.”

During the war he served as Director of Military Relief for the American Red Cross, which dubbed him “Big Brother to four million men in khaki.”



COURTESY HOUSTON ENDOWMENT

Among the many architectural marvels championed by Houston’s Jesse Holman Jones, the 36-story Gulf Building, now known as the JP Morgan Chase Building, is one of the nation’s finest Art Deco skyscrapers. The lobby is open to the public.

Returning to Houston after the war, he married Mary Gibbs of Mexia and continued building major edifices in Houston, Fort Worth, and New York. In 1928, he engineered the selection of Houston as the site of the National Democratic Convention.

With the Depression in full swing by 1931, Jones mobilized business leaders to prevent Houston banks from failing. Called to Washington by presidents Hoover and Roosevelt, he became one of the most powerful men in the country. As chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Jones invested \$50 billion in programs to benefit the American people and worked to ensure that the money was wisely spent.

After World War II, during which he served as Secretary of Commerce, Jones returned to Texas to concentrate on his philanthropic organization, Houston Endowment. Projects funded by the agency included the San Jacinto Museum of History (“There could be no United States, as we know it, without San Jacinto,” Jones proclaimed), as well as numerous arts and environmental organizations, human services efforts, and thousands of college scholarships, including grants to scores of women and minority students.

“He never lost sight of the individual in the mass of humanity,” said Bishop A. Frank Smith at Jones’ funeral in 1956. “Though he rose to heights, he never lost the human touch.”

—Gene Fowler

**VISITORS CAN SEE THE** spectacular, restored Art Deco lobby of the **1929 Gulf Building**, now known as the **JP Morgan Chase Building**, Monday through Friday, 9-5. With a six-story base and a 30-story tower arranged in a “stepped-profile” design, the Gulf Building—listed in the National Register of Historic

Places—was the tallest skyscraper in Houston until 1963, when the Exxon Building surpassed it in height.

**Greater Houston Preservation Alliance** maintains its offices near the Main Street entrance, where you can pick up a brochure about the building. Among the details to take in:

the restored green-and-gray terrazzo and inlaid-marble floors, the original decorative polished-nickel fixtures, the eight frescoes illustrating the history of Texas and Houston, and the doors with ornate Art-Deco reliefs. The Gulf Building is at 712 Main Street. Call 713/216-5000; [www.houstondeco.org/1920s/gulf.html](http://www.houstondeco.org/1920s/gulf.html).



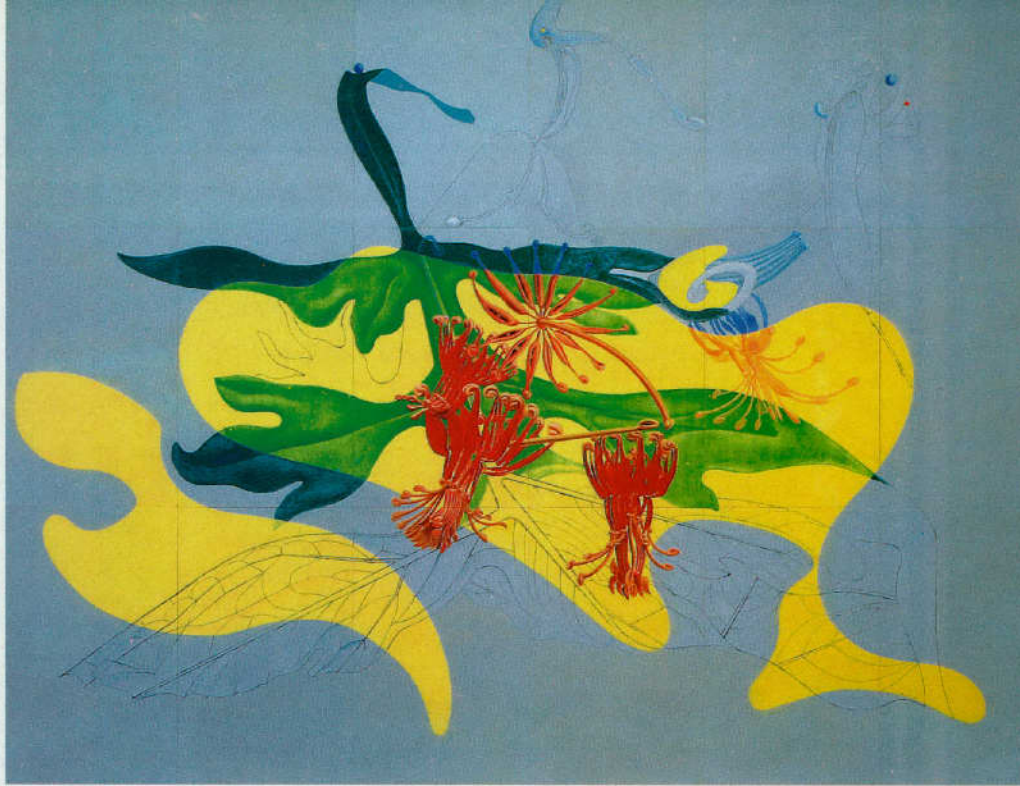
# For THE ROAD

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS AND PLACES

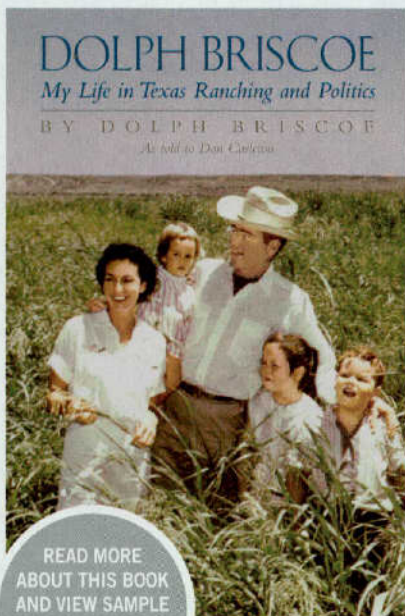
## Nature, Re-envisioned

IT WOULD BE HARD TO THINK OF A more unforgiving environment for a painting than the Dancing Mascotte, the bar of the smoky Corso Theatre in Zürich, a nightspot frequented in the 1930s by often-raucous Surrealist artists, musicians, dancers, and hangers-on. But that is where German painter Max Ernst—on commission from the club's famous architect, Alvar Aalto—created his mural *Pétales et jardin de la nymphe Ancolie*.

Recently restored by conservators at the Kunsthaus Zürich, the mural is the only surviving wall painting by an artist known for his tension-filled interpretations of nature. It is the centerpiece of an 80-piece Max Ernst retrospective called **Max Ernst: In the Garden of Nymph Ancolie**, which appears at the **Menil Collection in Houston** through February 15.



After a painstaking restoration, Max Ernst's *Pétales et jardin de la nymphe Ancolie*—created in 1934 for a Zürich nightclub—appears at the Menil Collection in Houston. © KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH, 2008 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY



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From The Center for American History

## Dolph Briscoe: My Life in Texas Ranching and Politics

By Dolph Briscoe | As told to Don Carleton | \$29.95

*"If you puzzle over what makes Texas tick, read this quietly appealing book by a pioneering southwest Texas rancher who served as the state's governor from 1973 to 1979. You don't just read this book. You listen."*

Rich Opper, *The Austin American-Statesman*

Dolph Briscoe, governor of Texas from 1973 until 1979, is the largest individual landowner and rancher in a state famous for its huge ranches. He is one of the most respected businessmen in Texas, with a portfolio that includes banks, agribusinesses, cattle, and oil and gas properties. Don Carleton, executive director of the Center for American History, conducted a series of lengthy oral history interviews with Governor Briscoe to produce this book.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



"The mural is a fascinating piece," says the Menil Collection's director, Josef Helfenstein. "It was only after the conservators had removed the many layers of overpainting that they realized how much damage had been done to the original work. Restoration was complicated and demanding. They used probes to analyze the paint, did historical research. They even managed to find the man responsible for taking it down from the nightclub in 1960. Putting it all together was really like a thriller story.

"The results are wonderful," he continues. "The colors are really beautiful, with a bluish-gray background and this strange, hovering bird-like creature dancing in the sky. What makes the mural especially meaningful to us is that it was painted the same year Dominique and John de Menil met Max Ernst. It was the same year he painted Dominique's portrait, which you should not miss in the exhibition. It's a realistic portrait, but the head and neck float in the painting, separated from the rest of her body, surrounded by shells, which are associated mythologically with Venus.

"And be sure to take a look at *The Fragrant Forest*. Ernst painted it in 1933, and it's sort of a dark, daunting painting, with a disc-like sun in the back. To me, it looks like a premonition of what was going on in the world. It was the year that Hitler came into power."

In many of Ernst's works, technology wars with nature, and nature wins. As you study these curious, incongruous visions of plants and birds, forests and mountains, sea and skies, it's interesting to wonder: What did the artist mean by it all? Call 713/525-9400; [www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org). —L.M.

#### LISTENING IN LA GRANGE

IF YOU ENJOY LIVE MUSIC, YOU'LL FIND an intriguing alternative to loud clubs or huge concert venues in a listening room called **The Bugle Boy**, in **La Grange**, some 60 miles east of Austin. The Bugle Boy is housed in a former World War II barracks and named after the Andrews Sisters' 1941 hit song. A prominent sign on the front of the building proclaims, "Quiet Please. Loose Lips Sink Ships!"

Don't let the retro vibe fool you; the music presented here ranges from jazz and blues to rock and country. The common denominator: The musicians all write and perform their own songs. Thanks to the skills of a professional sound engineer and a house rule that prohibits talking during sets, the acoustics here are outstanding.

Owner Lane Gosnay opened The Bugle Boy four years ago to present established entertainers as well as nurture local talent. Besides weekly

Friday and Saturday shows, she holds a monthly Sunday Showcase in which 12 artists perform for a panel of judges and a supportive audience. The winners perform at The Bugle Boy's anniversary party each January (January 17, 2009).

"Going to the Bugle Boy is habit-forming," says Bastrop resident Mac McCracken, who, along with his wife, Janet, usually takes in a show every week. "When you listen to music in a setting like this, you really get entwined with the musicians and forget about everything else."

And while the experience is magical for the 80-plus audience members, it's also special for

the performers. Austin-based Elizabeth Wills, who's known for her acoustic pop-folk music, says it's one of her favorite venues. "There's nothing else like it in Texas," she adds. "The audience interaction is wonderful—it feels like you're in someone's living room and on stage at the same time. It's a positive, creative environment ... I think it makes the music better." Call 800/838-3006 to purchase tickets (\$5-\$15). Coffee, espresso, milkshakes, wine, and beer are available.

Call 979/968-9944; [www.thebugleboy.com](http://www.thebugleboy.com).

—N.M.



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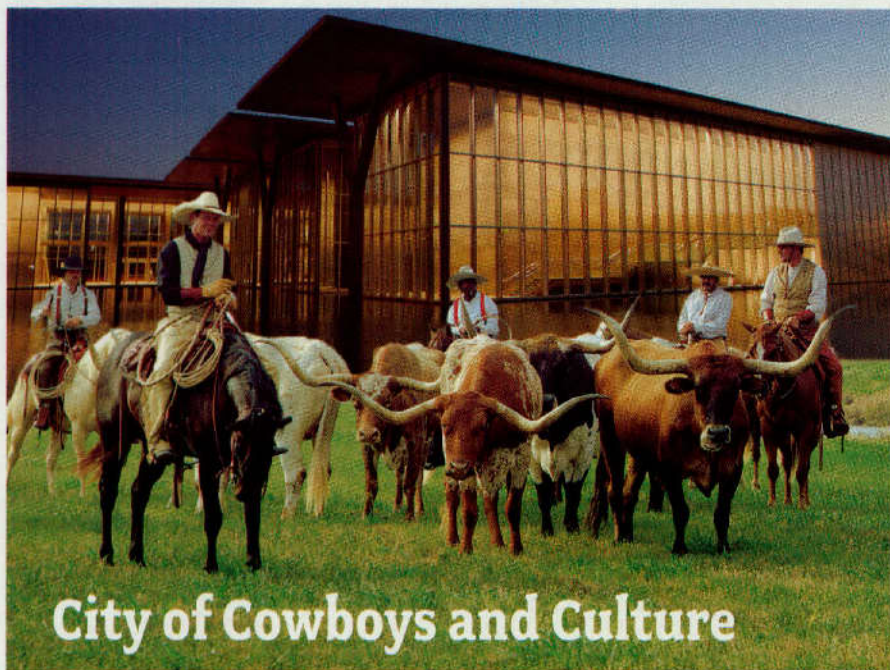
## City on Stilts

WHEN THE GALVESTON COUNTY Historical Museum received a gift of some 340 photos in 2006 documenting Galveston's rebuilding after the disastrous 1900 storm, Director Jodi Wright-Gidley and Curator Jennifer Marines knew they had a treasure on their hands. **Arcadia Press**, a small publisher of local history, proposed a book, and **Galveston: A City on Stilts** began to take shape. And when Hurricane Ike ravaged the island once again this past September, the project took on special significance.

The images, taken between 1902 and 1912 by Galveston photographer Zeva B. Edworthy, record a period of growth and change for the wounded but still ambitious port city. Arcadia will donate proceeds to the Galveston Historical Foundation, which is working to help restore the city in Ike's aftermath. See [www.arcadiapublishing.com-ghf](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com-ghf). —L.M.



Publisher's proceeds from the book *Galveston: A City on Stilts* (Arcadia Publishing, \$26.99) benefit the Galveston Historical Foundation, which supports post-Ike reconstruction efforts on the island. The GHF is one of America's largest local preservation organizations.



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## SKY HIGH

ATTENTION, SKY PILOTS: IT'S TIME AGAIN for the annual **SPI Kite Fest**, held January 31-February 1 on **South Padre Island's** Laguna Madre flats, just north of the Convention Centre. You'll be able to look into the wild blue yonder and see flying birds and butterflies, cats and dogs, geckos, lobsters, fish, and octopi—all kites, of course. The free, two-day event includes professional kite-flying demonstrations, kite-flying lessons, and dozens of vendors selling kites and accessories.

Among the featured flyers: quad-line and dual-line kite champion John Barresi from Portland, Oregon; Doug and Linda LaRock from Yakima, Washington, who'll air out their beautiful 28- and 40-foot delta kites and 90-foot spinsock; and Oregon's Phil and Barb Burks, who thrill crowds with their one-of-a-kind, 150-foot, rainbow-colored octopus kite. Local kite-flying teams and a host of amateur kite-flyers will take to the wind, too, showcasing their aerial derring-do to various musical scores. It's more than a day at the beach. It's two! Don't forget to register for a free kite giveaway. For information, drop by B&S Kites at 2812-B Padre Blvd., or call 956/761-1248; [www.bs-kites.com](http://www.bs-kites.com). —M.L.



## GET YOUR GAME ON

IF YOU'RE A FAN OF WINTER SPORTS LIKE ice skating and ice hockey, you may have heard that ticket sales to the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver are already surpassing expectations. For organizers of the **Winter Games of Texas**, a series of sports events sponsored by the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation and held this year in **Frisco**, January 17-18, that's a great indicator of success for their own Olympic-style games.

More than 4,000 athletes, ranging in age from 6 to 70, compete in 14 sports—including crowd-pleasers like soccer, wrestling, fencing, figure-skating, table tennis, and ice hockey—at venues across Frisco. Some athletes, says event manager Chaney Muench, go on to college sports or to vie for medals in future Olympic Games. "Lots of people have never witnessed these sports in person," says Muench. "And it's so cool to see them live."

For spectators and competitors, an event called the **Celebration of Athletes**, held January 17, promises more fun. Here's your chance to meet past Olympic winners and talk sports with amateurs and pros alike, test your downhill skiing and dance moves on Nintendo Wii games, and enjoy such reliable festival fare as face-painting, food vendors, and carnival activities. Call 877/GOFRISCO; [www.visitfrisco.com](http://www.visitfrisco.com) and [taaf.com](http://taaf.com). —L.M.

## SEE ART, SHOP, DINE, REPEAT

WITH THE OPENING OF THE NEW **Blanton Museum of Art** building in 2006, **Austin** received praise from the public and the art world alike, with critics awash in superlatives about the building's abundance of natural light, the sudden accessibility of the museum's collection, and the creativity of the Blanton's programming. In November, the Blanton took yet another step forward with the opening of its **Blanton Café**, **Museum Shop**, and **299-seat auditorium**, all housed in the new Edgar A. Smith Building, which echoes the main museum building's architecture. Think cream-colored limestone floors and effused light—plus fun shopping opportunities and an Alice Waters-meets-Austin approach to cuisine. (The "Minimalist"—a panini made with balsamic-glazed, roasted vegetables and goat cheese—might prove a tasteful match to the upcoming exhibition *Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Midcentury*, which opens February 22.) See [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org). —L.M.

## TAKE YOUR TIME

DANISH ARTIST OLAFUR ELIASSON TAKES art-making to a new dimension, immersing viewers in light, wind, heat, and water, all the while

playing with the sense of visual perception. At the **Dallas Museum of Art** through March 15, you can see—and experience—approximately 20 works that *The New York Times* called "enchanting, spacious, evanescent, and intellectually stimulating." *The Wall Street Journal* called Eliasson "one of the most ingenious artists working today." The exhibition, *Take Your Time*, organized by the San Francisco Museum of Art, includes installations, large-scale immersive environments, freestanding sculpture, and photography. Standouts include such innovative Eliasson creations as *Beauty* (1993), a curtain of mist that reveals a rainbow to viewers;

*Moss wall* (1994), a solid wall of living Icelandic moss; and *360° room for all colours* (2002), which immerses viewers in a wash of colors projected in looped sequence by 24 spotlights. And what to make of the title? Explains organizing curator María de Corral, "*Take Your Time* refers to 'the time the viewer decides to invest in looking at the work of art, and the time that the work of art engages the viewer and makes him stay to experience it.'" Call 214/922-1200; [www.dallasmuseumofart.org](http://www.dallasmuseumofart.org). —L.M.

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# Spotlight on ABILENE

## Looking West

I LOVE GIFTS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS, but I love the experience of travel even more. For a celebration this past October, my husband, Randy, and I headed west from Austin for Abilene, which promised a restored, 100-year-old downtown to explore and a 1930s bungalow to call home for the weekend.

Whenever I travel in Texas, I like to imagine what the land looked like centuries ago. In the case of the plains that surround Abilene, the vistas were often defined by buffalo—hundreds of thousands of them. By the time the Texas and Pacific Railroad arrived in Abilene in 1881 and town boosters declared it “the Future Great City of West Texas,” though, the buffalo had been eradicated and the Southern Plains tribes that depended on them had been driven out. As banking and retail commerce flourished, it wasn't long before the wooden buildings in the downtown business district gave way to permanent structures made of brick.

“When the railroad invested in the Grace Hotel in 1909,” says Dr. Donald Frazier, a professor of history at McMurry University, one of three Abilene universities, “it symbolized inves-



Impossible to resist: When you touch the electronically wired, wooden pads of Edward Weiss' interactive sculpture *Grace Notes*, you can make music.

tors' faith that Abilene was here to stay. Think of it: The town was only 30 years old, and they built this big brick hotel.”

Today, that big brick hotel—a Mission Revival-style structure that was once the most impressive lodging between Fort Worth and El Paso—houses the Grace Museum, a four-story anchor to the rest of Abilene's historic downtown. And this year, to celebrate the building's centennial, the museum hosts an imaginative variety of programs and exhibitions, including a multimedia show by Texas artist James Surls this summer and, beginning in September, an exhibition highlighting 100 years of Texas art.

In the lobby, I was dancing “The Bump” on Edward Weiss' *Grace Notes* sound sculpture—making music as I touched each section of the wall with my hip—when I met art curator Judy Deaton. “Sometimes when people come into museums, they feel a little uptight,” she told me, smiling. “The sound sculpture makes everybody relax and sets the tone for the rest of the museum.” On the ground floor, displays recount the building's early history and its rebirth in 1985 as a museum housing art, exhibits of local history, and interactive attractions for children.

Deaton directed us to the galleries, where



The master bedroom of the Sayles Ranch's Falling Star Lodge features original 1938 shiplap paneling, a massive bed crafted in Mineral Wells, and century-old Navajo rugs used as wall hangings.

artworks from the Grace's permanent collection rotate with traveling exhibits selected from museums across the nation. In the history section upstairs, I was drawn to a boot-shop re-creation, with authentic supplies and machinery—immense stitching machines! rows of wooden boot forms! strips of leather and disheveled piles of tools!—donated by the Mallouf family, which gave the items to the museum when they closed their bootmaking business. And while I'm well past the target demographic of such kid-friendly exhibits as a faux tornado, holographic dance-screens, and a pretend ambulance, I found it hard to tear myself away from the children's section. I'm eager to see what inventive programming Deaton and her team bring to the museum in its second 100 years.

About the same time the Grace Hotel welcomed

**FOR MORE ON** Abilene, including restaurants and attractions, call the **Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau** at 800/727-7704; [www.abilenevisitors.com](http://www.abilenevisitors.com). Stay tuned for a full feature on Abilene in September 2009.

**The Sayles Ranch** offers four vacation homes for rent. Call 325/669-6856; [www.saylesranch.com](http://www.saylesranch.com).

**The Grace Museum**, 102 Cypress St. Call 325/673-4587; [www.thegracemuseum.org](http://www.thegracemuseum.org).







PHOTOS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

its first guests downtown, Abilene's up-and-coming merchants, bankers, and ranchers began building homes a few miles south in what is now called the Sayles Historic District. Our lodging for the weekend, one of four vacation homes collectively called the "Sayles Ranch," lies on the outskirts of the neighborhood. Wide streets and a mix of Tudor, Craftsman, Prairie-style, Mediterranean, and Mid-Century Modern homes make it an interesting walking neighborhood. Randy and I had rented owner Terry Browder's three-bedroom Falling Star Lodge, thus named because a meteorite—about the size of a cell phone—landed in the lawn in 2006.

Browder, an inveterate antiquer, has decorated the homes with a diverse collection of treasures, including Navajo rugs purchased from the estate of flamboyant West Texas oilman Jack Grimm, a front door purportedly from Conrad Hilton's first hotel in Cisco, stained-glass windows from a church in Giddings, massive mesquite-log beds crafted in nearby Mineral Wells, plus leather sofas, antique quilts, and pottery from across the Southwest. The effect resembles that of a well-designed, contemporary Western-movie set.

On our last evening in Abilene, we sat on rattan rockers on the back porch not far from where the meteorite had struck the lawn. And we thought: We've barely scratched the surface of this great West Texas city. We'll need to make tracks here again.

—LORI MOFFATT

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# TOP Tables

NOTEWORTHY CULINARY JOURNEYS

BY JUNE NAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPH BY LOUIS DELUCA

## Fred's Texas Cafe

TERRY CHANDLER is definitely ready for his close-up. And not a moment too soon, either, as Hollywood comes calling this month. Chandler, whose tongue-in-cheek nickname is “the Outlaw Chef,” owns a Fort Worth landmark called Fred's Texas Cafe, where taping begins very soon for the Food Network program called *Diners*,

*Drive-Ins and Dives*. The producers of the show couldn't have picked a better place, as Fred's may well be the most beloved of all of Cowtown's divey diners.

Chandler was not quite a teenager when his folks founded the little watering hole some 30 years ago, naming it for the family dog, Fred. Today the little ramshackle building still sits tucked away in what was for many decades a relatively quiet industrial area off Seventh Street, but is now blossoming into a white-hot quarter of boutiques, fancy restaurants, and upscale condos. Most remarkable about Fred's is that as this momentous transformation takes place all around it, the low-key café remains a comfy hangout with very cold beer, ball games on TV, a particularly carefree attitude, and an exceptional menu that includes goodies such as smoked-chicken tacos, New Mexico-style green-chile stew, calf fries with chipotle gravy, and brunch migas with ranchero sauce.

For years, regulars knew it as the place to take the date who merited the litmus test: If he or she could warm up to the spirit of Fred's, you'd found a keeper. There were devotees who fretted when a fire prompted a remodeling of the place a couple of years ago. The loyal clientele worried that Fred's might lose some of its signature run-down character, but Chandler was quick to reassure, “It's still Fred's, but with a face-lift.”



Fort Worth's “Outlaw Chef” Terry Chandler, owner of Fred's Texas Cafe (above) says, “I make the food I'm doing on my [chuck-] wagon translate to Fred's, and the spirit is the same.”

Sure enough, the café's famously eccentric essence prevails, but there are signs that Fred's—which Chandler now co-owns with his wife, Jennifer—has adopted a smidge of sophistication: There's actually a printed menu these days; you can now order wine, not just beer (a full liquor license in the works); credit cards are finally accepted; and there's no smoking indoors.

The patio area remains the place to grab a table or picnic bench, listen to live music, and even pitch washers with your kids. Inside, you'll still find the sparkly gold-vinyl booths and a handful of barstools, but the back wall is now covered with a cowboy-campfire mural, which is a nod to Chandler's second career as a cowboy cook. Just last summer he worked for five weeks as the official chuck-wagon chef on the legendary 6666 Ranch at Guthrie.

Chandler loves to share stories about his ancestors, including a great-uncle who was a renowned West Texas chuck-wagon cook and who would whip up vittles at get-togethers at the family ranch on the

Caprock. As a boy, Chandler was hooked on this cowboy life. Back in Fort Worth, he washed dishes and learned to cook at Fred's, all the while busting broncs in local rodeos. During his Marine Corps stint, Chandler fell in love with street food in far-flung places around the world, then went on to work as a gypsy chef at places such as a North Carolina seafood restaurant

and a guest ranch in southern Colorado.

Over the years, Chandler has successfully combined classic cooking techniques with his own chuck-wagon experience. Adding to his distinctive appeal, Chandler dresses in trail-era costume, with his signature knee-high boots complementing the long braid hanging down his back, whether he's working at Fred's or catering a party from his chuck wagon.

When Chandler became bored with flipping the mighty fine burgers at Fred's, he began to expand the menu. He launched Hot Night on Friday evenings, making specials like New Mexico-style lamb green chile, rib-eye steaks in chipotle brown but-

FRED'S TEXAS CAFE is at  
915 Currie St., Fort Worth;  
817/332-0083; www.freds  
texascafe.com. Closed Mon.





ter, and shrimp tacos with mango-habanero salsa. On Saturday night he might offer an order of butter-seared quail with a chile de arbol-and-red wine reduction or buffalo tenderloin with his fire-roasted tomatillo sauce. From his smoker, you get the smoked chicken for those amazing tacos, while the fryer produces some of the best buttermilk-battered chicken-fried steak you've ever tasted, which is always good with green chile hominy on the side.

Among newer kitchen revelations has been the Sunday brunch, a remarkably simple but satisfying experience. Tops is the plate of quail with eggs your way, in which the

grilled, meaty birds get even better with a spoonful of rich, roasted-tomato salsa, spiked with fresh jalapeño.

Yet, in spite of the gussied-up chuck-wagon offerings, Fred's burgers remain the most popular menu item. If you're made of tough stuff, the one to order is the Diablo Burger, in which Chandler packs bits of his smoked jalapeños into the patty and tops it with spicy mustard. For an extra kick, add a few drops of the "rooster sauce," the Asian chile condiment sitting next to the bottle of ketchup on your table.

A couple of minor changes lie ahead at Fred's. The kitchen, which was built to feed a crowd of 40 people at a time, strains to turn out food for more than 200 on a busy evening, and Chandler's seven cooks struggle to find working space, so he's planning to enlarge it somewhat. And, the patio will be partially enclosed for year-round seating.

But nobody should worry. It's still Fred's, just with improved packaging. And right in time for a shot at fame.

Fort Worth-based JUNE NAYLOR believes that the Diablo Burger can cure anything that ails you.

Photographer LOUIS DELUCA also recommends Fred's Diablo Burger, and the Steak and Enchilada plate, as long as they are not eaten at the same sitting.



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# Contrary to Ordinary

Of all the vaunted singer-songwriters who serenaded the Lone Star State with a rock-tinged country-and-folk sound when Austin was putting down its Live-Music-Capital-of-the-World roots in the 1970s, it is Jerry Jeff Walker who perhaps best wears the mantel of troubadour. Part Jack Kerouac, part Woody Guthrie, and part French Quarter busker, he is a music-poet in the truest sense. Even though he performs less frequently these days, a cocksure Jerry Jeff still tells stories and sings songs that interpret the human condition with insight and soul. He reminds us why life is worth living.

As we sit down to talk, I realize that even Walker's age—66—connotes one of America's fabled roads. Although the once-notorious rowdy has mellowed considerably in recent years, he doesn't seem far removed from the Jerry Jeff who in 1969 penned *Driftin' Way of Life*, the first of more than a dozen classics. From Greenwich Village, to Austin, to Coconut Grove, to Haight-Ashbury and finally back to Austin, few musicians have so astutely chronicled life on the road and the characters who travel them as has Ronald Clyde Crosby, aka Jerry Jeff Walker.

Jerry Jeff is best-known for the 1968 pop smash, *Mr. Bojangles*, about a tap-dancing, street character he met in a drunk tank in New Orleans. But Walker has proved a resilient and prolific artist with a lengthy discography that numbers more than 30 albums, including the iconic *Viva Terlingua*, which was recorded in 1973 in the Luckenbach Dance Hall.

Walker first skidded into the state capital in an oversized Mercury in 1965, planning a brief stay before hitting the road again. By 1971, he was back in town with an MCA record deal under his Stetson and the cracker-jack Lost Gonzo Band, which included Gary P. Nunn, who would go on

Surrounded by portraits of family and friends along with memorabilia from his years in music, Jerry Jeff Walker shows off his Austin-made Collings guitar (see page 45).







to record the Austin City Limits theme song, *London Homesick Blues*. Despite his onstage antics, which sometimes included showing up too inebriated to finish a set, Walker gained an equally boisterous following.

Writer Jan Reid, in his recently rereleased book, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (University of Texas Press), explains, "Just when [Willie] Nelson or [Michael Martin] Murphey released a new album that seemed to establish them as the leaders of Austin music, Walker came out with another funky one and turned everybody around."

*Viva Terlingua* was one of those albums, and it ultimately went gold.

Walker settled down a little when he married his wife, Susan, in 1974 in Luckenbach. The Walker family grew to include Jessie Jane in 1978 and son Django in 1981. Django followed in the family tradition and is a noted singer-songwriter in his own right. When not at home in West Austin, the Walkers travel between homes in Belize and New Orleans.

In 1986, the Walkers decided they could do better on their own than with record companies and established Tried & True Music. One of Tried & True's first projects, a powerful 90-minute recording called *Gypsy Songman*, contains JJW originals such as *Charlie Dunn* and *Railroad Lady* (cowritten with running buddy Jimmy Buffett), along with tender ballads dedicated to his wife and children. The company continues to prosper with a growing Internet presence.

Each March, legions of Walker's fans from throughout the United States travel to Austin to help him celebrate his birthday with performances at the historic Paramount Theater and Gruene Hall. The day before the 2008 Paramount show, dubbed the Texas Bash, I had a chance to renew my acquaintance with Jerry Jeff and talk to the Texas music legend. Dressed casually, and with his thinning, gray hair combed back, Jerry Jeff sat down in his music room, surrounded by several Martin guitars, crates of albums, sheet music, and photos of fellow musicians, including Ramblin' Jack Elliott.



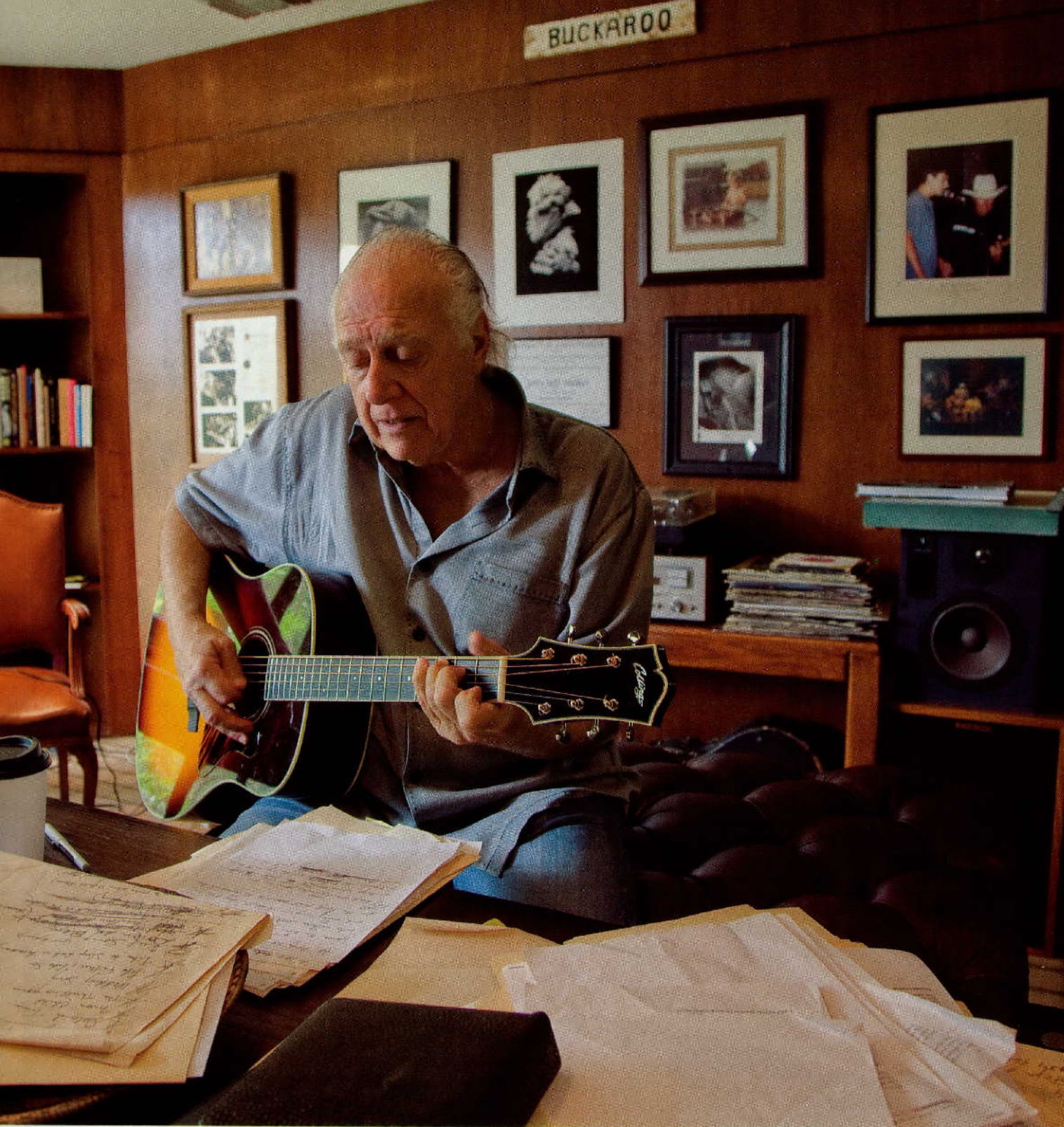
ABOVE: Jerry Jeff Walker, accompanied by son Django celebrates his birthday with the March 2008 Texas Bash in Austin's Paramount Theater. OPPOSITE: Walker working on a song in his West Austin home.



**TH:** You were born in upstate New York and first visited Austin in the 1960s, right?

**JERRY JEFF:** The first long junket was from upstate New York to New Orleans. I did street singing for about three years. One day, I saw a sign in a coffeehouse about sharing a ride to California, and I got in a car with a bunch of people and we





drove through Texas. I was on a quest to see America, and you don't see America without going through Texas.

**TH: What enticed you to return to Austin?**

**JERRY JEFF:** Because I knew about the music scene. I had a feel for it. I actually went out to Key West, but there was no music

scene. There were a lot of smugglers and wasters and I got in with those guys. I knew I was going to get into a lot of trouble, and I did. In fact, the town board came to me and advised me to go somewhere else. I got arrested about 10 times there. I decided to use that as an incentive to get on with making music the way I wanted to. I

wanted to get in with people who felt like me, played like me—mixing folk music, country music, and a little bit of rock.

**TH: There's a popular bumper sticker that says "I wasn't born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could." Does that resonate with you?**



**JERRY JEFF:** Everybody in my immediate family was born here except me. Susan says I'm a quintessential Texan. I take two parking spots with my Cadillac. You know, I really think I took advantage of Austin during the good times. I was out all the time. Now, there are too many of us, so I stay home. It's been a lot of fun.

**TH: What does a being a Texan mean to you?**

**JERRY JEFF:** Texans have pride and are straightforward. We like what we like and we do what we do. I think the Hill Country, where I live, is perfect for my disposition. With the university, schools, books, and theater. Another thing about being Texan is we like our lives told in a story, poem, or a song.

**TH: How about the Austin music scene, the business of music, how has it changed in the past 10 years?**

**JERRY JEFF:** What I see is there are more musicians here, but I don't see things organized any better than they've ever been. The bands coming in want to live in a musical community. There are three or four big musical communities in the country. One is Minneapolis, and Austin, San Francisco and, well, New York. It's an important part of the culture.

**TH: Weren't you one of the first Texas musicians to bail out on the major record labels and start your own company, Tried & True Music?**

**JERRY JEFF:** When I came to Austin in 1971 I had an independent deal with MCA Records, and later, Elektra. I'd been dormant for six months because I couldn't find people I wanted to record with. I didn't want to go into the studio and make another studio record. There was a lull in the music business from '81 to '85. And then, everything was going to CD. That's why I put out that long cassette—*Gypsy Songman*—to fill the gap for my audience. That album went out of print, so I was going out and

doing shows. Then, we started making CDs. We decided why not just do the whole thing. I'd done 10 years of independent production, so all I had to figure out was how to get the music out. There were independent distributors handling indie records going into record stores. Rykodisc starting snapping up old LPs. Once they did one or two, we figured we could make a CD. It wasn't mysterious anymore.

**TH: What do you believe is the most important piece of advice that you've given your son Django about the music business and having a music career?**

**JERRY JEFF:** Write a good song. Writing a good song is the foundation of a lot to keep you going. Guy Clark's advice to young people was "Don't stand too long on one foot." But we all did, which gave us back problems.

**TH: What similarities and differences do you see with the new, growing Texas music scene like the one Django's a part of versus the cosmic cowboy generation back in the '70s?**

**JERRY JEFF:** The difference is we were trying to prove that music was viable—a way to have a career. Now, they take it for granted. They get their impetus to pursue because it's not as scary for them doing it their own way instead of waiting around for someone to say 'I'll make your record.' They start learning how to do the Internet and stir up stuff.

**TH: How do Texas audiences compare to crowds elsewhere?**

**JERRY JEFF:** Not so much different, though maybe in Texas the images may be a little closer to them. You know, the *Charlie Dums*, *Desperadoes Waiting for a Train*, *Women in Texas*—those songs probably mean just a bit more.

**TH: Has life in Belize affected your music?**

"Another thing about being Texan is we like our lives told in a story, poem, or song," muses Jerry Jeff Walker as he considers why he's known as the quintessential Texas songwriter.







**JERRY JEFF:** What I like about Belizeans is that they're laid back, and the country is not too crowded. The people know why they're there. They fly off to Houston to buy supplies, so they know what U.S. culture is like. But they scurry back home where they say, 'This is fine. I like this.' There's something special about being in a place where all the people like it for the same reason.

**TH: What do you miss most about Texas when you're touring elsewhere?**

**JERRY JEFF:** I miss my home. It helps remind me when I'm really annoyed about how crowded Austin is getting, and have just gotten back from Chicago or New York, or Atlanta, and realize, whew, this isn't so bad. I think relative to everything else, we're doing just fine.

**TH: You've developed an international following like a number of Texas musicians. In what country or countries do you have the strongest fan base and why?**

**JERRY JEFF:** I would say probably in Europe, though I haven't gone as much as I've been invited to go. They call it roots music and like to tap into the stories we tell, but I still feel like I'm sort of on display as a Texan.

**TH: Are there any regular Texas gigs that you will continue to play?**

**JERRY JEFF:** There's always the Cattle Baron's Ball. And Gruene Hall at Christmas and in the spring. There's always the Paramount, and now and then, a state fair. I do a lot of special events, too.

**TH: After some 40 years, what's the future hold for the Gypsy Songman?**

**JERRY JEFF:** I think I'll just play my music and tell my stories. **TH**

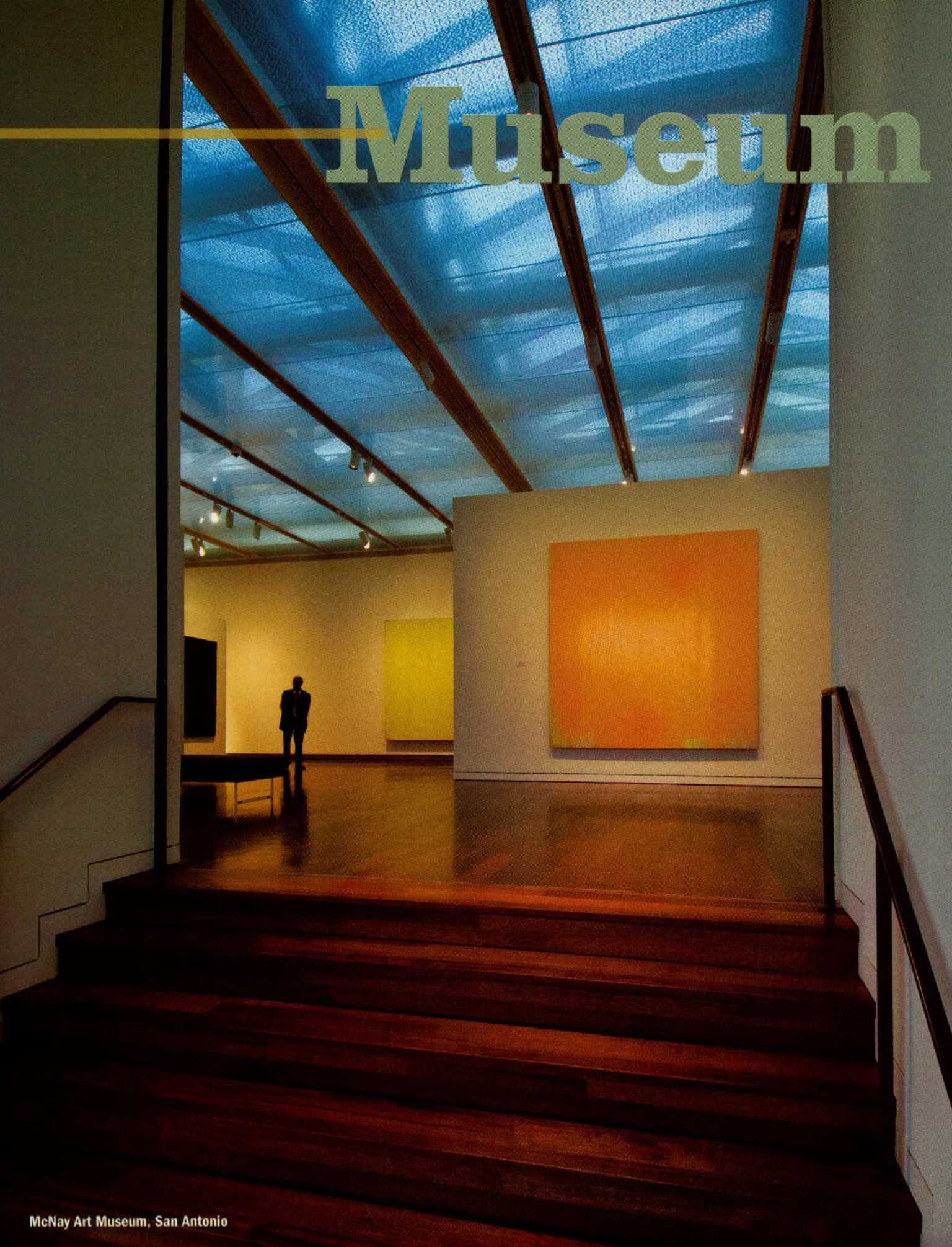
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ROB McCORKLE writes about Texas music because it gives him the chance to kick up his heels and celebrate what's right about the Lone Star State.

Photographer RICK PATRICK listened to his original copy of Jerry Jeff's *Viva Terlingua* record so many times he wore it out.



# Museum





# masterpieces

Museums in the Lone Star State offer an incredible range of works that perplex, please, provoke, intrigue, engage, and inspire. *Where to begin?* We offer a quick guide.

By Marty Lange Photographs by J. Griffis Smith

**The idea** for this story sprang from an abbreviated stop I made at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The National Gallery is an overwhelming collection of paintings, sculpture, photography, and decorative arts, covering more than 1 million square feet and containing some 117,000 total works. I only had an hour: How could I give this singular American treasure the attention it deserved?

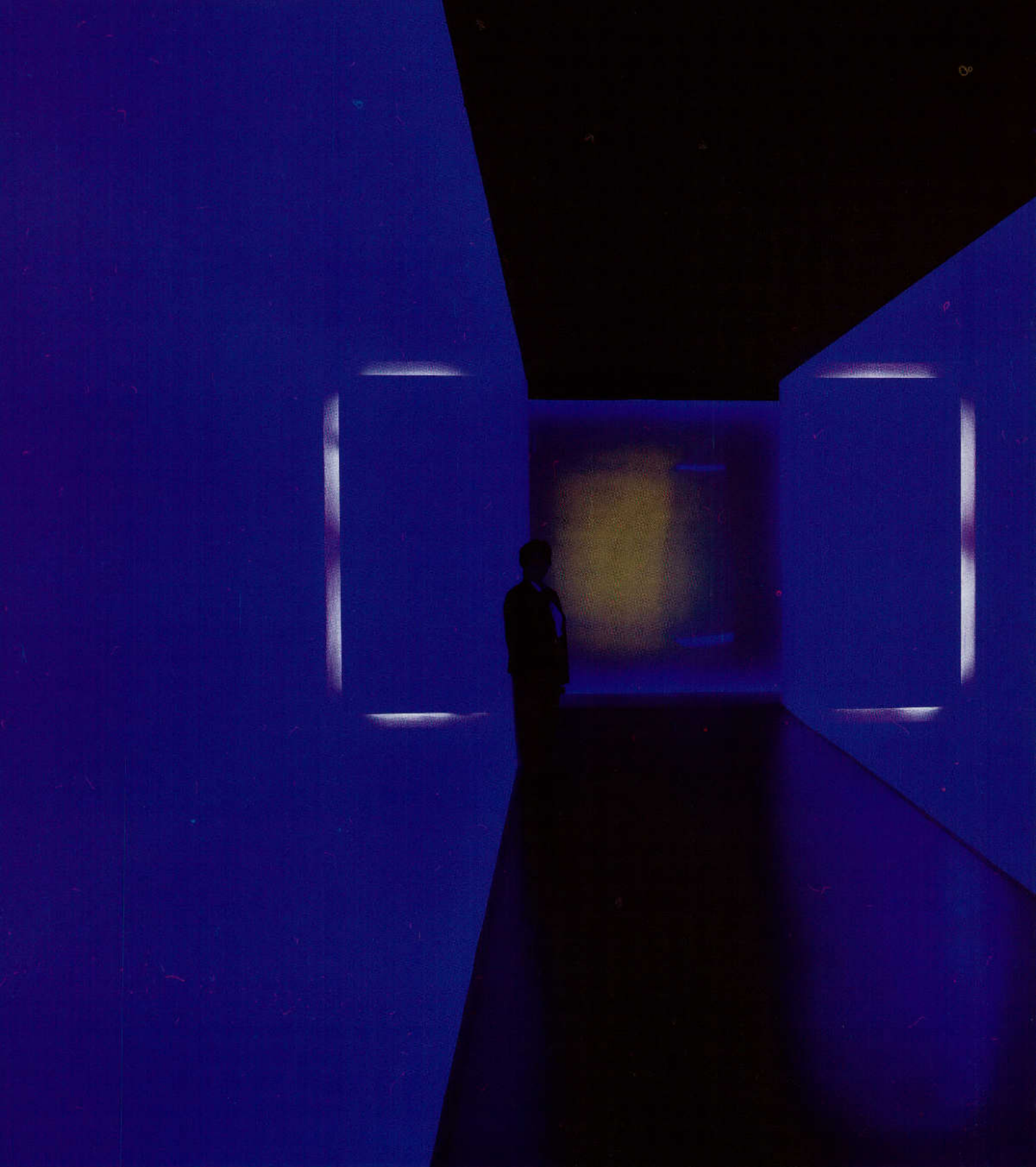
I asked a friendly docent at the entrance if the museum offered a short list of its most prized and noteworthy works—a *CliffsNotes* version of the gallery. She said that such a guide once existed, but had been discontinued. However, she happened to have the out-of-print edition in her attaché case, and she made me a copy. *Voilà!* For my compressed schedule that day, the must-see highlights were just the ticket—a stunning Vermeer here, a signature Modigliani there. Appetite whetted, curiosity engaged, I returned to savor the gallery's vast holdings in their entirety on my next visit.



**“Monument to the Last Horse,** 1991, by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, is a striking sculpture that has ties to the cavalry history of the former Fort D.A. Russell, where the Chinati Foundation is located. The work is successful on many levels, and is a great example of Donald Judd’s interest in preservation and the history of the land.”  
—Ann Marie Nafziger, **The Chinati Foundation, Marfa**

**Claes Oldenburg/Coosje van Bruggen, Monument to the Last Horse, 1991.** Aluminum and polyurethane foam painted with polyurethane enamel, 19’ 8” x 17’ x 12’ 4”. Permanent collection, The Chinati Foundation, Marfa.







**Thus,** we present this glimpse of exceptional art in Texas museums. Photographer Griff Smith documents some of the most famous, most popular, and most fascinating works at eight of the state's authoritative arbiters of art, and museum representatives explain why they find these pieces particularly inspiring or essential.

Art is life. So, live it up. As noted American painter Robert Henri once proclaimed, "Art appreciation, like love, cannot be done by proxy." Along the way, we're sure you'll find favorites of your very own.

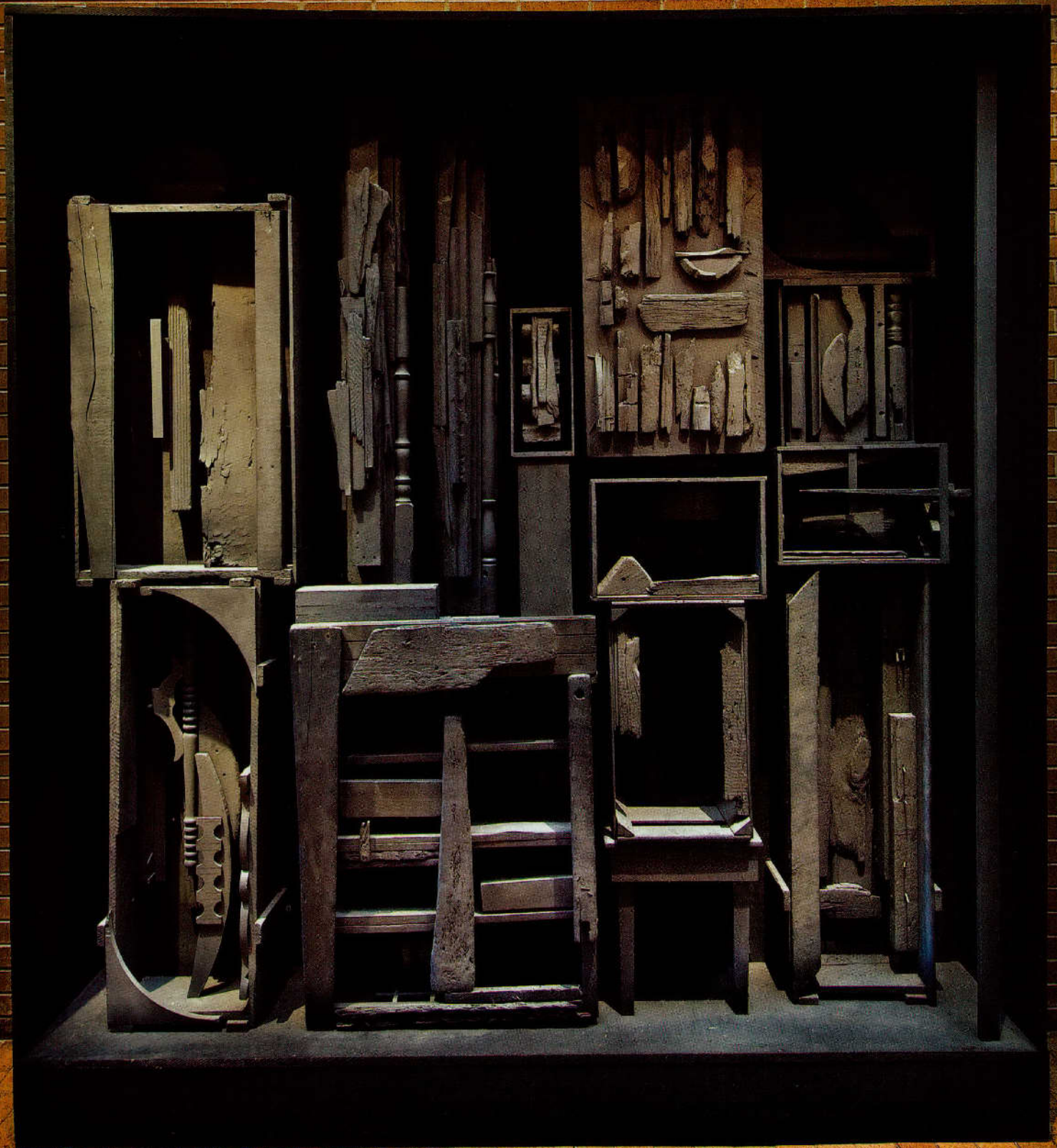
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### **Of the myriad impressive**

holdings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the MFAH's communications staff suggested three different standouts: A recent acquisition, Albert Bierstadt's oil on canvas *Indians Spear Fishing* (1862); *Head of Poseidon/Antigonos Dason*, a Greek/Hellenistic bronze dating to 200 BC; and the permanent neon light-tunnel installation, James Turrell's *The Light Inside*, connecting the two main buildings of the MFAH.  
—Communications Office, **MFAH, Houston**

**James Turrell** (born 1943), *The Light Inside*, 1999. Site-specific installation with neon light, gypsum board, plaster, and glass. Various dimensions. MFAH commission, gift of Isabel B. and Wallace S. Wilson.







## “Louise Nevelson was one of

America’s most prominent and innovative 20th-Century sculptors,” says Graziella Marchicelli. “The sculptures for which she is best known were made of cast off wood parts—street throwaways—transformed with monochromatic spray paint. Born in Russia, Nevelson has a special connection to Amarillo and the rest of the Texas Panhandle because of the drive of a single Texan art impresario, Dord Fitz.

“In the early 1950s,” she continues, “Fitz brought American vanguard movements and artists to the Southwest. By 1959, Fitz’ Area Arts Foundation purchased its first work of art, Nevelson’s massive wall sculpture *Moon Garden*. Nevelson rose to fame in 1967 with a major retrospective at the Whitney in New York, and today her work is in important museum collections worldwide.” —Graziella Marchicelli, *Executive Director/Chief Curator, Amarillo Museum of Art*

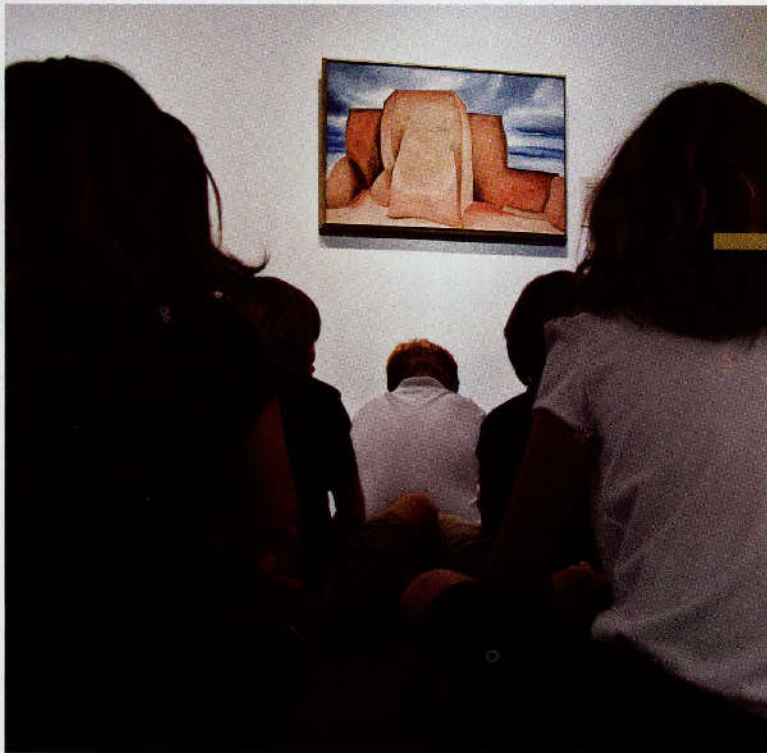
**Louise Nevelson** (1899-1988), *Moon Garden*, 1959. Black-painted wood assemblage. Gift of the Area Arts Foundation in honor of Dord Fitz. © Estate of Louise Nevelson/Artists Rights Society, New York.



## Art & Architecture

Many of Texas’ museums are known not only for their impressive contents, but also for their architecture—architect Renzo Piano’s elegant Menil Collection in Houston; Philip Johnson’s gleaming, white original, and Ricardo Legorreta’s pointedly pyramidal addition to, the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi; the frontier-inspired, covered wagon/saddle-like Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer’s San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts; the terrific Fort Worth trifecta of Louis Kahn’s Kimbell Art Museum, Tadao Ando’s Modern, and Philip Johnson’s Amon Carter; and Jean Paul Viguier’s striking new Stieren Center at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio. All of these buildings thrill in their own distinctive fashion before you even step inside.

ABOVE: **Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi**



## “O’Keeffe’s Ranchos Church,

*New Mexico*, is, I think, a small and exquisite masterpiece. The quality of O’Keeffe’s brushwork is what I find truly marvelous about the picture. It is evident that she was captivated by the church’s sculptural qualities, but in the touch of her brush, she seems to be literally crafting the church itself; and in that diligent act, I sense, lies the mystery of the painting.” —Rebecca E. Lawton, *Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth*

**Georgia O’Keeffe** (1887-1986), *Ranchos Church, New Mexico*, 1930-31. Oil on canvas. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth.





### **Among the Kimbell Art Museum's**

distinguished and widely varied collection, PR staffer Stefanie Ball Piwetz suggests that you check out Caravaggio's *The Cardsharps*. This masterful Italian Baroque-era moment remains timeless. After all, more than 400 years later, we've got *The World Series of Poker* from Las Vegas on ESPN.

—Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

**Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio** (1571-1610), *The Cardsharps*, c. 1594. Oil on canvas. © Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.





### “The four works of native Texan

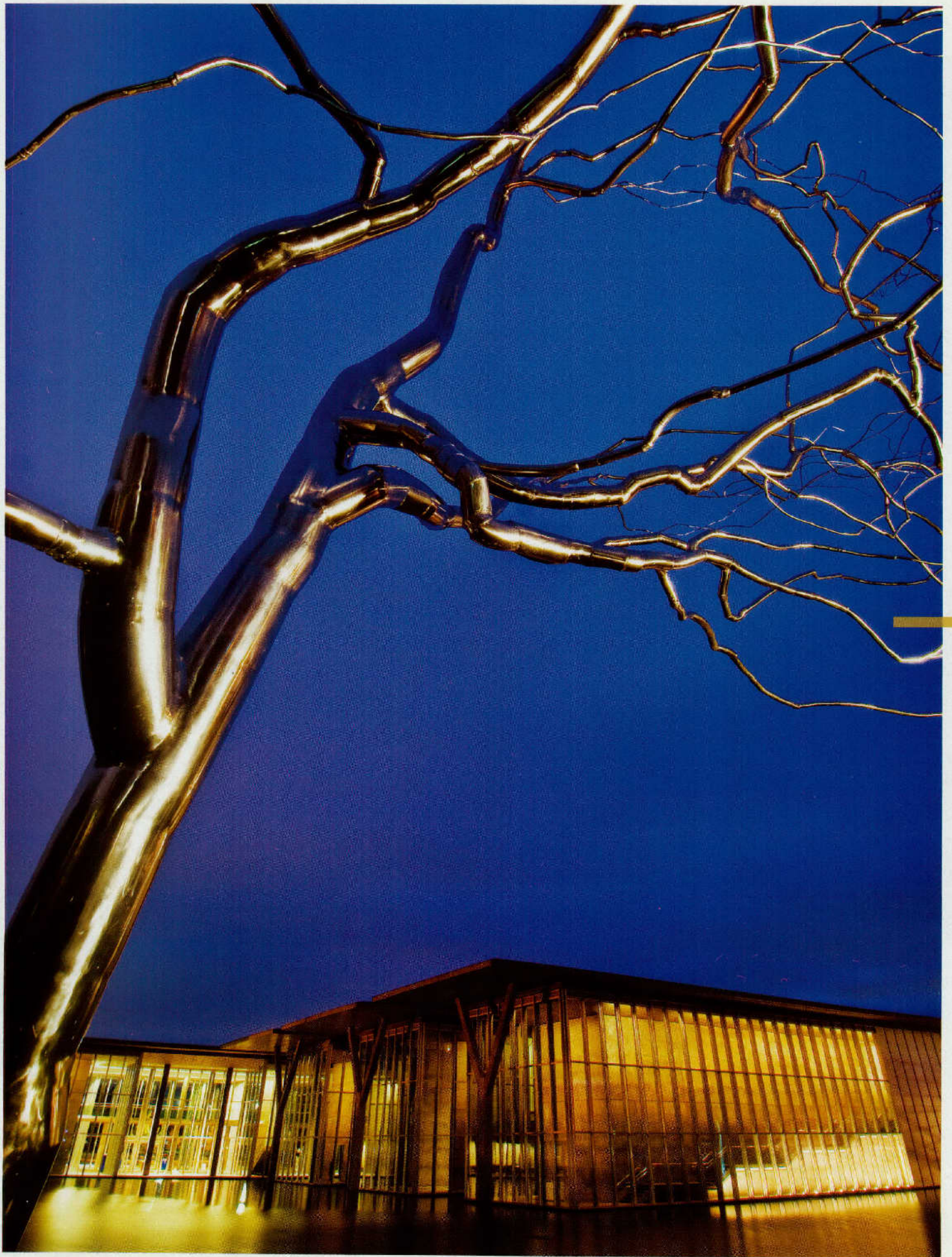
James Surls shown here cover the years 1985-1999 and demonstrate many of the dualities from which Surls' work is best known: 2D versus 3D; abstraction versus representation; nature versus culture; and masculine versus feminine.”

—Christian Gerstheimer, *Curator, El Paso Museum of Art*

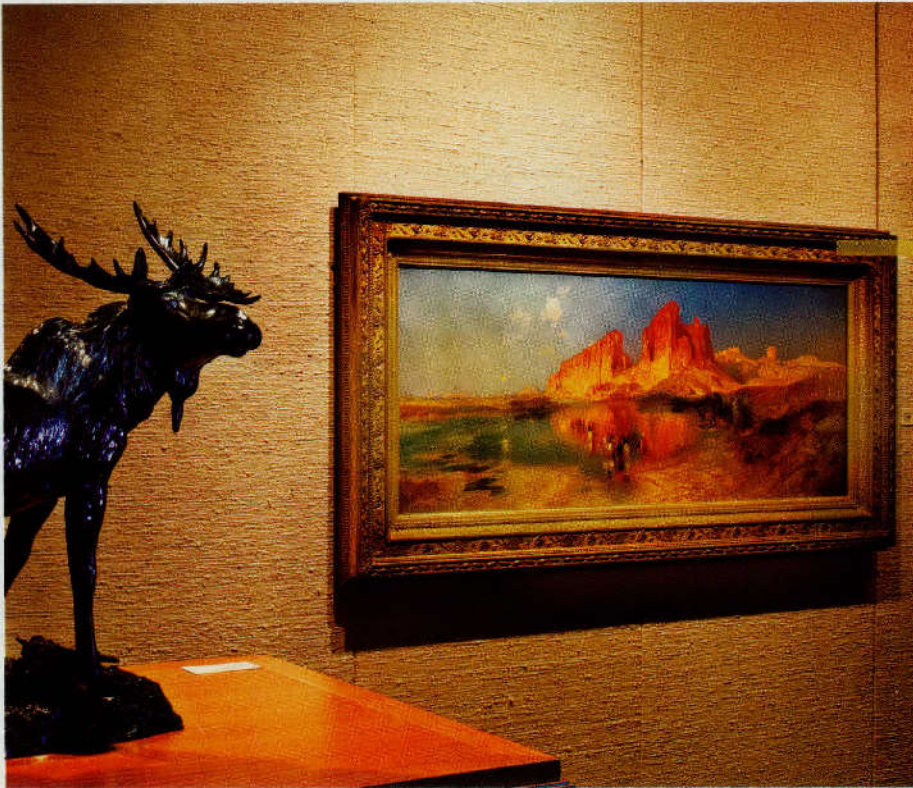
**James Surls** (born 1943), from left to right: *Angel and the Blades*, 1988. Oak, pine, and steel. Gift of Donald and Barbara Zale in honor of George and Julie Tabolowsky; *Outdoor Walking Flower*, 1986. Oak and steel. Gift of Dr. Mark Parker; *Me as Walking Eye*, 1985. Oak, pine, and steel. Gift of Jean W. Bush in memory of Gerald W. Bush; *Me, Knife, Diamond and Flower*, 1999. Pine, poplar, and steel. Gift of John Alexander.











**“The cliffs of Green River,**

Wyoming Territory, inspired Thomas Moran’s dramatic painting *The Mirage*, one of the masterworks at the Stark Museum of Art in Orange. ... *The Mirage*, painted in 1879, presents one of Moran’s boldest and most romantic views. ... he presented an idealized and glorious West, a concept that continues to affect perceptions today.” —Sarah E. Boehme, *Director, Stark Museum of Art, Orange*

**Thomas Moran** (1837-1926), *The Mirage*, 1879. Oil on canvas, 25 1/8" x 62 3/8". Stark Museum of Art, Orange.

**Roxy Paine’s *Conjoined*, described**

by the sculptor as "... nature that could potentially live forever ...," frames a view of the stunning Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

"The monumental sculpture *Conjoined* by New York artist Roxy Paine is a 40-foot-by-45-foot stainless-steel installation of two trees whose branches cantilever in space to connect in midair. Paine's longtime interest in the juxtaposition of nature and industrialization is evident in his extensive body of work ... he continues to explore the relationship of the natural to the unnatural. Through work that meshes the organic with the manufactured, Paine questions our position between the man-made world we control and nature's world we cannot." —Michael Auping, *Chief Curator, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth*

**Roxy Paine** (born 1966), *Conjoined*, 2007. Stainless steel. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Associate Editor MARTY LANGE believes the state's art museums are among Texas' most valuable attractions, and encourages you to go see for yourself.

Photographer GRIFF SMITH has fond memories of shooting at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa and the Stark Museum of Art in Orange.

essentials

ART DEEP IN THE HEART

Amarillo Museum of Art; 806/371-5050; [www.amarilloart.org](http://www.amarilloart.org).

Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi; 361/825-3500; [www.stia.org](http://www.stia.org).

Dallas Museum of Art; 214/922-1200; <http://dallasmuseumofart.org>.

El Paso Museum of Art; 915/532-1707; [www.elpasoartmuseum.org](http://www.elpasoartmuseum.org).

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; 817/738-1933; [www.cartermuseum.org](http://www.cartermuseum.org).

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; 817/332-8451; [www.kimbellart.org](http://www.kimbellart.org).

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; 817/738-9215; [www.themodern.org](http://www.themodern.org).

MFAH, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; 713/639-7300; [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org).

The Menil Collection, Houston; 713/525-9400; [www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org).

The Chinati Foundation, Marfa; 432/729-4362; [www.chinati.org](http://www.chinati.org).

Stark Museum of Art, Orange; 409/886-ARTS; [www.starkmuseum.org](http://www.starkmuseum.org).

San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts; 325/653-3333; [www.samfa.org](http://www.samfa.org).

McNay Art Museum, San Antonio; 210/824-5368; [www.mcnayart.org](http://www.mcnayart.org).

San Antonio Museum of Art; 210/978-8100; [www.samuseum.org](http://www.samuseum.org).



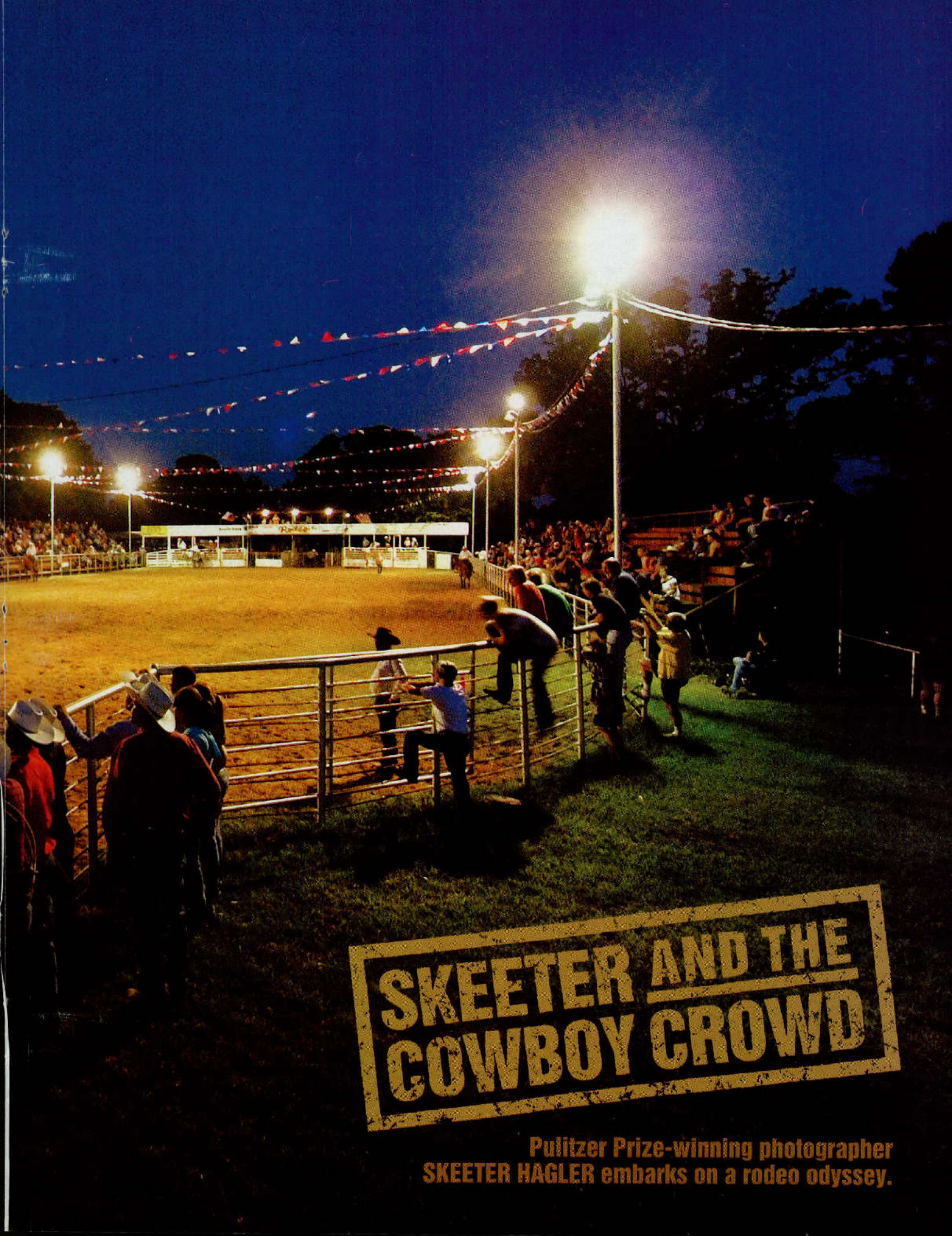




Tension builds at a CPRA rodeo in Grand Saline as onlookers anticipate the clank of the gate.

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





# **SKEETER AND THE COWBOY CROWD**

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer  
**SKEETER HAGLER** embarks on a rodeo odyssey.





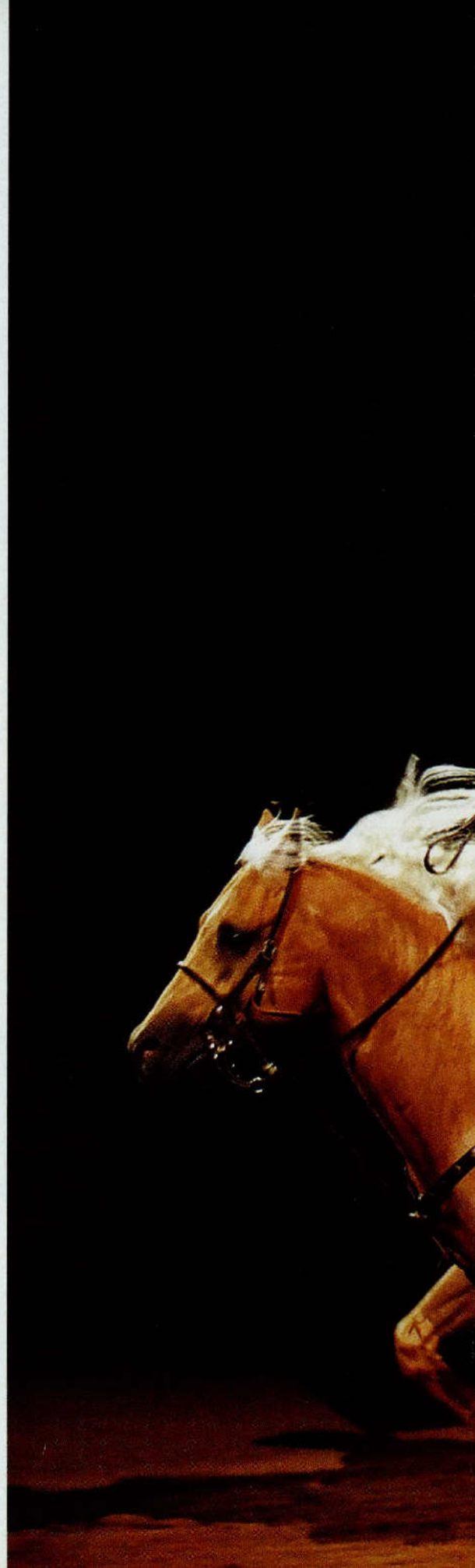
STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY SKEETER HAGLER

**Cowboys, horses, cattle, dirt.** Sweat, blood, guts, and glory. All of these words seem to go together when talking about a rodeo. And as the legend of the cowboy is so closely linked to Texas, so, too, is the rodeo tradition.

But in spite of its pop-culture perception as a Western creation, rodeo's roots extend back centuries to *vaqueros* on Spanish-Mexican ranches, where competitions were a mixture of cattle-wrangling and bullfighting. (The Spanish word *rodeo* means "roundup.") The American rodeo developed informally in the late 19th Century with cowboys celebrating the completion of cattle drives across hundreds of miles of vast, open land to various stockyards across the country. Cowboys from different ranches would challenge each other to see who was best at cutting cattle, throwing a rope, or riding a bull. Most likely, drinking and fighting were part of these early competitions, too. Spectators would inevitably gather, and the modern-day rodeo was born. The town of Pecos claims "the [world's] first public cowboy contest," held in 1883, and the West of the Pecos Rodeo is still held there every summer.

ABOVE: A wild ride ensues at the Texas Stampede, in Dallas' American Airlines Center. RIGHT: Horse-trainer Robbie Boyce gallantly dashes through the arena during the Stampede's patriotic show-opener.

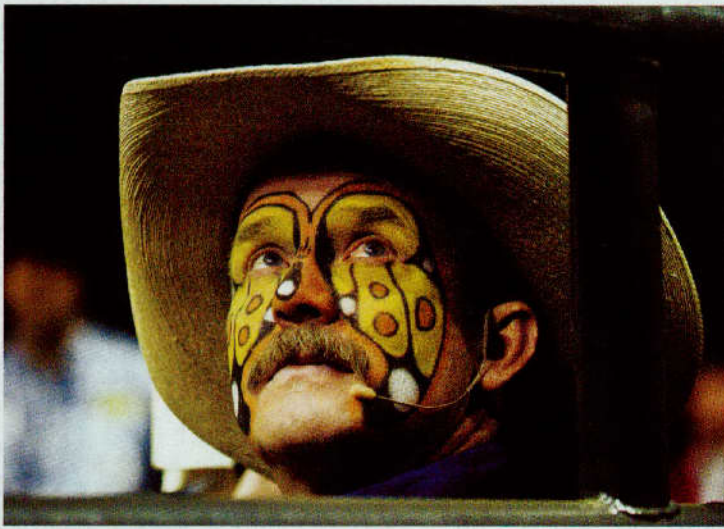
■ To order a print of the photograph on the right, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).











As a young-pup photographer, one of my first “real” assignments was to cover the Texas Prison Rodeo in Huntsville. What an indoctrination to rodeo this was: Hardened criminals, given a taste of freedom, if just for eight seconds—with nothing to lose, and sometimes a stay in the comforts of the infirmary to gain—put their all into each event. Under the ever-watchful eyes of guards, the cowboy convicts didn’t just compete in events, they attacked them with wild abandon.

**Big rodeos and small rodeos are essentially the same. Men and women pitted against—and in partnership with—animals.**

From then on, I was hooked. Even though the rodeos I’ve seen since have proven somewhat tamer than the prison rodeo, they still embody everything American, everything Texan.

Big rodeos, like the Texas Stampede in Dallas, held every fall at the American Airlines Center, and small rodeos, like the one

held almost every weekend in Grand Saline, are essentially the same. Men and women with a passion for animals. Men and women pitted against—and in partnership with—animals.

But it’s the human drama that prevails. Photographing these rodeos across the state, I saw things that will stick with me forever: Two tough-as-nails cowboys holding hands, praying for safety before a bull ride. A wannabe bareback champion sleeping in the bed of his pickup with his young wife and baby because he couldn’t afford a motel room. A cowboy straight out of a Western (*continued on page 39*)

ABOVE: No bull. A brave rodeo clown keeps tabs on the action at Houston’s Livestock Show and Rodeo, slated for March 3-22, 2009. RIGHT: At the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo (January 16-February 8, 2009), a bronc-buster endures a white-knuckled ride.











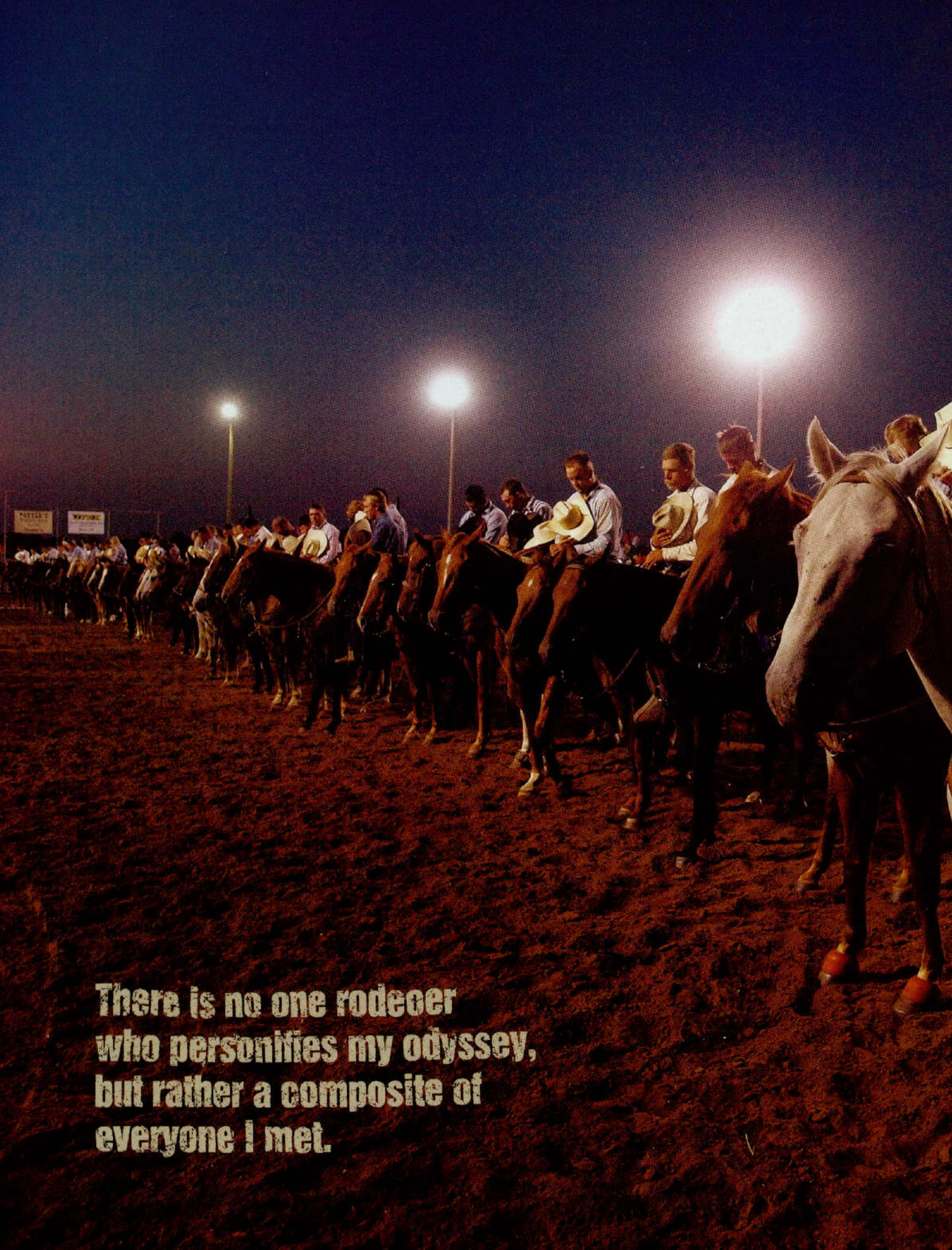
FRANKS & CO  
BILL BLAST '77  
-STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR 1977-  
-WARRANTY SERVICE CENTER  
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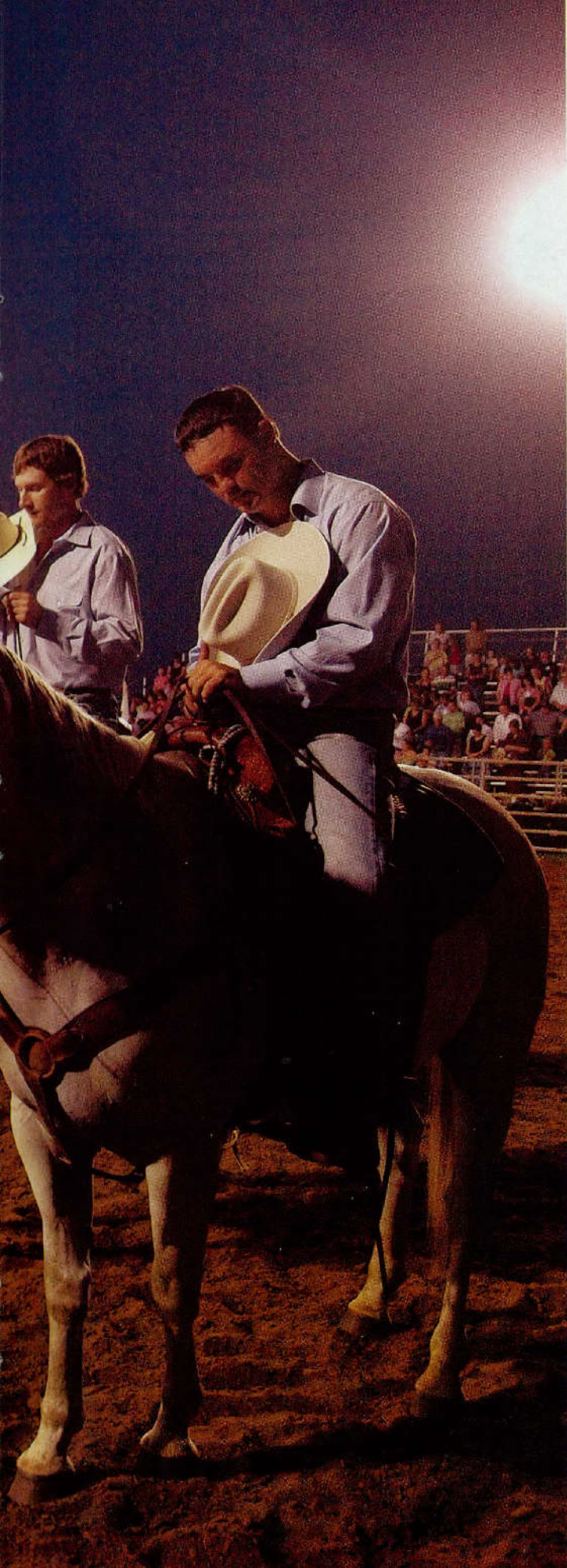
**Norm Marks travels the rodeo circuit repairing saddles, chaps, and protective vests for the cowboys—all at no charge, simply because he loves the sport and the cowboys.**





**There is no one rodeoer  
who personifies my odyssey,  
but rather a composite of  
everyone I met.**





(continued from page 34) movie sitting alone by his horse trailer, crying like a baby because of a bad ride and no money.

There's Norm Marks, a leather artist with hands aching from years of working and eyesight that is slowly leaving him, who travels from rodeo to rodeo in his well-worn trailer repairing saddles, chaps, and protective vests for the cowboys—all at no charge, simply because he loves the sport and the cowboys.

There's also Cameron Keeton, who bills himself as a politically incorrect rodeo clown and barrel man. He's drawn to the smallest of rodeos, like the one in his hometown of Whitesboro, where he considers it a good night if he saves one cowboy from serious injury.

There is no one rodeoer who personifies my odyssey, but rather a composite of everyone I met. They are humble, passionate, and polite people, and all have a strange sense of humor. They say "yes sir" and "yes ma'am" and take off their hats at just the right times. It must be the way they were "brung up."

These images and memories will be etched in my mind forever. I feel humbled and honored to have stood beside, if just for a moment, these modern-day knights of the saddle. **TH**

Red Oak-based photographer SKEETER HAGLER won the Pulitzer Prize in 1980 for his documentary on the West Texas cowboy. Find more of Skeeter's work at [www.skeeterhagler.net](http://www.skeeterhagler.net).

**\*webextra**

For more on Cameron Keeton's rodeo-clown adventures, see [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).



ABOVE: Cody Davis keeps up with the cowboy crowd at the North Texas High School Rodeo Association arena in Saginaw. LEFT: Hats over hearts during a prayer at the Colorado County Fair and Rodeo in Columbus.



# Quilter Heroes





Lone Star luthiers  
bring joy to the world,  
strings attached



BY LORI MOFFATT PHOTOGRAPHS BY STAN WILLIAMS

**Y**ou could argue that without the guitar, fiddle, banjo, or their many stringed cousins, Texas would have been an awfully somber place. Quiet, for sure: Think of a campfire without the guitar or a barn dance without the fiddle—the scenarios don't seem possible. And while Texans didn't invent the first stringed instrument, we've certainly made our mark on the craft. According to the Texas Governor's Music Office, more than 160 businesses statewide specialize in the repair or fabrication of stringed instruments, though far fewer call themselves luthiers.

**Luthier:** (loo'tē ar), n. one who makes or repairs stringed instruments. From French *luth*, lute.

Like many luthiers, Stephen Kinnaird believes that handcrafted instruments reflect the personalities of their makers. Here, Kinnaird (background) works on the fretboard of a customer's steel-string guitar, while his assistant, Ryan Middlebrook, uses a spokeshave to carve walnut for a neck. Above, an inlaid headstock detail.





CHUCK LEE



STEPHEN MARCHIONE

**P**hotographer and guitarist Stan Williams—whose images appear on these pages—recalls the first notes he heard from an Austin-made Collings guitar. “Every note spoke with clarity of voice, a ringing sustain, and perfect intonation,” Williams says. “I was in love. I wondered, ‘How many other guitar-makers are there in Texas that I don’t know about?’”

He found plenty. As Williams searched the Internet and followed leads from musician friends, he arrived at six luthiers whose works, he says, “are a good representation of the different types of stringed instruments in Texas.” Their backgrounds are as different as wildflowers and asphalt. One luthier, for example, ended a 30-year career as a plumber to build banjos, while another has a Master’s degree in classical-guitar performance and toured with jazz guitarist Al Di Meola. But one thing they have in common is pride of craftsmanship—the difference, according to banjo-maker Chuck Lee of Ovilla, “between an instrument made in a small shop in Texas and an instrument made in a factory overseas.”

**\*webextra**

What strikes a chord for photographer Stan Williams? See [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).





GLENN STEVENS



CHRIS CARRINGTON

**GLENN STEVENS** Fredericksburg luthier Glenn Stevens plies his craft at Fredericksburg's Hill Country Music, a retail store specializing in sheet music and instruments of all types. He built a career making and repairing instruments in Gatlinburg and Nashville before returning to Texas to be close to family. "I like to jump back and forth between building an instrument and restoration," says Stevens. "The thrill for me is when customers bring me something that's close to their hearts, be it a \$100,000 guitar or Grandpa's fiddle. Maybe someone used it to tell stories, maybe it was played in a honky-tonk. Or they're bringing you a memory of their father or grandfather. So

**"You could give a roomful of luthiers the same pieces of beautiful wood, and our instruments would all sound different. Maybe the difference comes through our hands."**

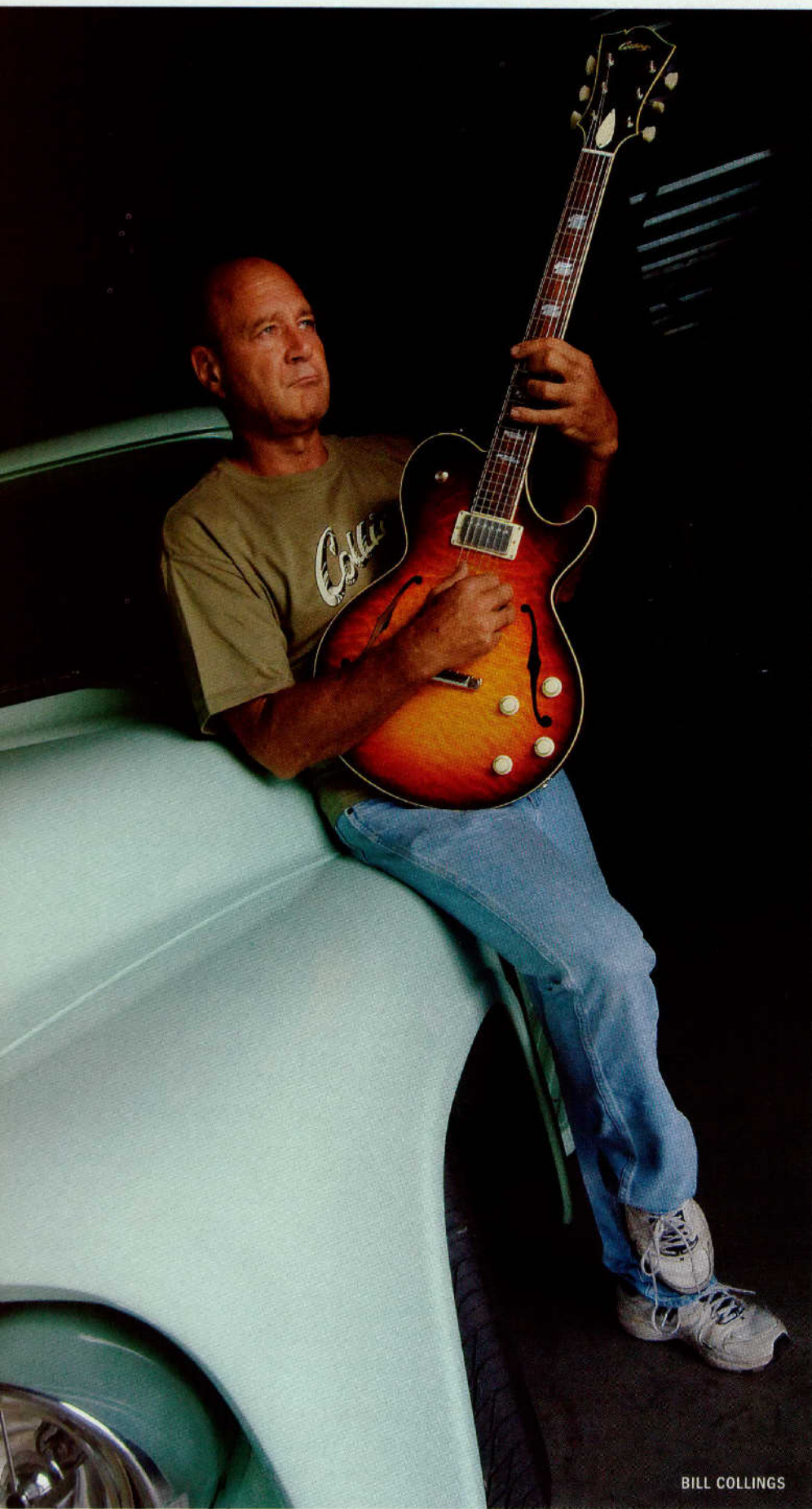
I make it play, first, and then I restore its beauty and elegance.

"People come in with an instrument thinking they're going to display it," Stevens continues. "But then they think, 'Maybe I can learn to play.' That's when it's really satisfying, because an instrument dies a slow death if it's not played. The wood be-

comes rigid, just as it was when it was part of a tree. Playing brings an instrument back to life and gives it a soul."

**STEPHEN MARCHIONE** Houston **I**n the small workshop behind his home in Houston's Montrose District, luthier Stephen Marchione





BILL COLLINGS

crafts guitars for such players as Sting, Mark Knopfler, Paul Simon, and jazz player Mark Whitfield. "My shop resembles a high-end Italian violin-maker's shop," says Marchione. "I use a lot of the same tools used 400 years ago in Italy—rasps and scrapers, handplanes, and even finer hand tools for detailed woodworking."

**\*webextra**

Stephen Marchione reveals how he makes a guitar at [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).

What is it about guitar-making that brings him such satisfaction? Marchione pauses only a moment to think. "Two things," he says. "First, finishing a design I've worked on. Even more than that, though—having the design go out into the world and make music. For an instrument is not serving its purpose until it's making music."

**CHRIS CARRINGTON** Rockwall

"I relate to the guitar primarily as a player," says luthier Chris Carrington, who for seven years toured with Al Di Meola and now specializes in making classical guitars in his workshop on the outskirts of Dallas. "I started building guitars for myself—guitars I could amplify on stage, at large concert halls and venues like the Blue Note in Japan," he says. "I am a very high-level player, so I know that if my guitars meet my own standards, they'll be concert-grade instruments." Carrington's guitars—like all handmade instruments—don't come cheap: Traditional classical guitars start at \$3,000. But players like Andy Summers and Al Di Meola don't seem to mind.

**CHUCK LEE** Ovilla

**P**lumber-turned-luthier Chuck Lee, whose banjos are now popular with the likes of Bela Fleck and Texan Dan Gibson, describes how banjos struck a chord with him. "After playing banjos for almost a decade," he says, "I had a special one on order. But when two years passed and it hadn't been built, I realized there was a niche market. And so, with my wife's encouragement, I started making banjos.

"At first," he continues, "I had a 'Hall of Shame'; I hung up all of the mistakes—



## "An instrument dies a slow death if it's not played. Playing brings an instrument back to life and gives it a soul."

slipped tools, incorrect neck cuts—to remind me to be careful. After a few years, the mistakes didn't come as often.

"A banjo is a happy instrument," says Lee. "It's really hard to play something sad on a banjo. But when I've made a banjo, I can't say I've accomplished what I wanted until the musician plays it and brings joy to himself and to the listener."

### STEPHEN T. KINNAIRD Nacogdoches

**A**nother self-taught luthier, Stephen Kinnaird first visited with a guitar-maker in Atlanta in the early 1970s. "Until then," says Kinnaird, "I thought all guitars came out of a factory. It seemed fascinating and rewarding to build one with my own hands."

Kinnaird "eased into" building guitars by crafting dulcimers, an instrument he describes as more rustic and more forgiving. But ultimately, he was drawn to building guitars. "I love working with woods like tiger myrtle, bubinga, and bloodwood. I like the depth of the grain patterns, the luster, even the aroma," he says. And,

Kinnaird believes, the wood's personality merges with the luthier's to create each instrument's unique sound. "I don't know what it is," says Kinnaird, "but you could give a roomful of luthiers the same pieces of beautiful wood, and our instruments would all sound different. Maybe the difference comes through our hands."

### BILL COLLINGS Austin

**B**y far the biggest shop in this bunch, the Collings Guitar Shop, started by luthier Bill Collings in 1989, employs more than 80 people and fashions a dozen or so mandolins and guitars daily, shipping them to customers worldwide. Lyle Lovett and Jerry Jeff Walker (see page 14) are two of Collings' most famous Texas clients, and other big names like Keith Richards, Pete Townshend, and Joni Mitchell also play Collings' instruments. (You can, too: Basic guitars start at \$3,000, with custom jobs exceeding \$10,000.)

Every Friday at 3:30, the shop opens to visitors for a free two-hour tour, when you can observe nearly every step of produc-

tion. "We'll take you from raw materials to finished product," says longtime employee Angela Thomas. "People are always amazed, first, when they see these big logs of mahogany, and then later, when we show them how the inlays are done."

"Oh, we love the tours," says luthier-in-chief Bill Collings. "The bigger, the better. It's very satisfying to show people how we work. After all, we make every guitar the best we can. And," he says modestly, "we're getting pretty good at it." **TH**

Staff Photographer (and singer-songwriter) STAN WILLIAMS plays everything from country to jazz on a flat-top steel-string Gibson guitar.

Senior Editor LORI MOFFATT once played rhythm guitar in a garage-pop band in Austin.

## essentials

### IN TUNE WITH LUTHIERS



**FOR AN** extensive list of music-related businesses in Texas, see the Web site of the Governor's Music Office: <http://governor.state.tx.us/music>.

**Glenn R. Stevens** works in the front of **Hill Country Music** (151 E. Main in Fredericksburg), where he welcomes visitors. Hours: Mon-Thu 10-5, Fri-Sat 10-5:30. Call 830/997-0900; [www.hill-country-music.com](http://www.hill-country-music.com).

**Stephen Marchione** ([www.marchione.com](http://www.marchione.com)) makes instruments in a small workshop in central **Houston**. "I love it when people come visit," he says, "though please call ahead." Call 713/522-7221.

**Chris Carrington** ([www.chriscarrington.com](http://www.chriscarrington.com)) of **Rockwall** specializes in nylon-stringed, classical guitars. His shop is not open to the public.

**Chuck Lee** ([www.leebanjos.com](http://www.leebanjos.com)) welcomes visitors by appointment to his home studio in **Ovilla**. Call 972/617-5576.

**Stephen Kinnaird** ([www.stephenkinnaird.com](http://www.stephenkinnaird.com)) welcomes visitors by appointment to his studio in **Nacogdoches**. Call 936/560-5342.

**Collings Guitars** in **Austin** offers free tours of its 2,200-square-foot shop every Friday at 3:30. Call 512/288-7776; [www.collingsguitars.com](http://www.collingsguitars.com).



STEPHEN T. KINNAIRD



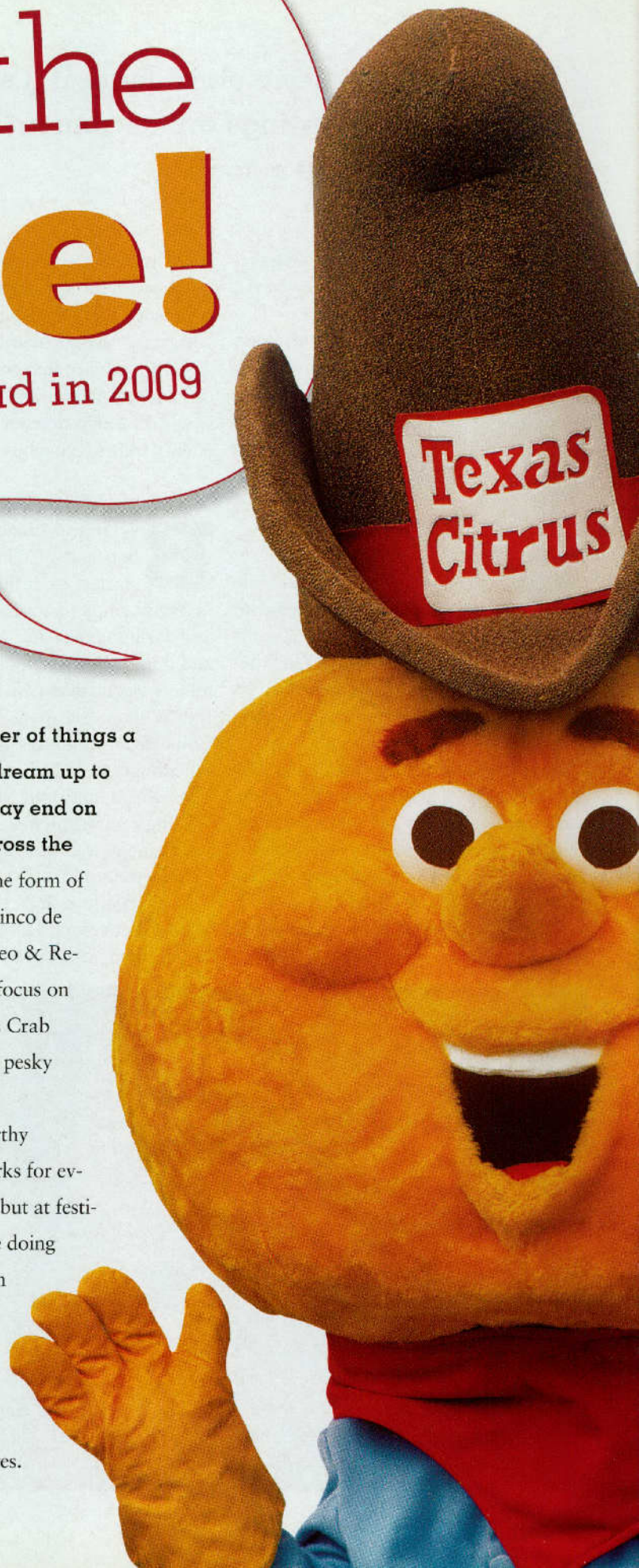
# Save the Date!

Festival **FUN** Ahead in 2009

BY NOLA McKEY

**T**here's no limit to the number of things a group of motivated Texans can dream up to celebrate. The holiday season may end on January 1, but in small towns across the state, celebrations continue throughout the year, in the form of festivals. Themes range from ethnic heritage (Viva! Cinco de Mayo in San Marcos) to ranching heritage (XIT Rodeo & Reunion in Dalhart). Some of these homegrown events focus on regional foods (Texas Citrus Fiesta in Mission, Texas Crab Festival in Crystal Beach), while at least one plays up pesky bugs (Great Texas Mosquito Festival in Clute).

The common denominator: a desire to support worthy causes while having some old-fashioned fun. This works for everyone, organizers and participants alike—where else but at festivals can you enjoy food-on-a-stick and feel like you're doing your civic duty? For visitors, festivals also represent an opportunity to savor a slice of small-town Texas, each one with a special flavor all its own. We've gathered a sampling of the best upcoming festivals to help with the scheduling, so unwrap that brand-new calendar, grab a pen, and start filling in some dates.







**TEXAS CITRUS FIESTA, MISSION**, Jan. 29-31, 2009. While some people are still putting away their holiday decorations, the folks in Mission are already celebrating the new year's citrus harvest. The lineup for the upcoming Texas Citrus Fiesta, an extravaganza that began in 1932, includes a queen's coronation, a fun fair with live entertainment, a *vaquero's* cook-off, a fun run, and a golf tournament. But the biggest draws are the Product Costume Style Show, which features intriguing garments made of oranges and other citrus, and the Parade of Oranges. Some 100,000 spectators turn out for the elaborate, nighttime parade and marvel at floats adorned with oranges, grapefruit, and other products grown in the Rio Grande Valley. "Many of the floats are covered with juicy slices of red grapefruit, and they look good enough to eat," says festival director Berta Filut. Most activities take place downtown. Call 956/585-9724; [www.texascitrusfiesta.net](http://www.texascitrusfiesta.net).



**TEXAS COWBOY POETRY GATHERING, ALPINE**, Feb. 27-Mar. 1, 2009. The Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering should be a required event for anyone who ever dreamed of being a cowboy. And while it does attract many wannabes, you'll find plenty of real cowboys (and cowgirls) both on the stage and in the audience. The celebration began in 1987 as a way of "preserving the traditions of the American West in words and music." Cowboy poetry is its mainstay, but cowboy music and storytelling play close seconds. Chuck-wagon breakfasts, a dance, and a cowboy church service are also part of the mix. This year's headliners hail from New Mexico, California, Canada, and Australia. Expect a nominal fee for the nightly stage performances, but the daytime sessions are free. All activities are held on the campus of Sul Ross State University. Call 432/837-2326; [www.cowboy-poetry.org](http://www.cowboy-poetry.org).



A participant in the Texas Citrus Fiesta held in Mission each January, the congenial cowboy at left symbolizes not only citrus, but the spirit that pervades small-town festivals across the state. Above, Dublin's St. Patrick's Day Festival features four-leaf-clover cuties and fun for the whole family.







**Festival themes** range from ethnic heritage to ranching heritage. Some celebrations focus on foods, while others play up pesky bugs. The common denominator: a worthy cause and old-fashioned fun.

STAN WILLIAMS

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY FESTIVAL,**

DUBLIN, Mar. 21, 2009.

Everyone's Irish on St. Paddy's Day, and as a result, the tiny town of Dublin swells with some 3,000-5,000 visitors during its annual St. Patrick's Day Festival. A Celtic parade downtown (leprechaun and four-leaf clover costumes abound) kicks off the celebration, followed by a full slate of other activities at Dublin City Park: Highland athletic games, a carnival, a square-dance exhibition and other entertainment, Red-Headed Person and other contests, children's games, a softball tournament, an Irish Stew cook-off, and the introduction of Miss Dublin and her court. Arts and crafts booths and food vendors will also be on hand. The Dublin Historical Museum and Dublin Rodeo Heritage Museum (both free that day) will be open, as will the Dublin Dr Pepper Museum. Call 254/445-3422; [www.dublintonxchamber.com](http://www.dublintonxchamber.com).



**WILDFLOWER TRAILS OF TEXAS FESTIVAL, LINDEN, HUGHES SPRINGS, AND AVINGER,** Apr. 24-26, 2009.

In 1971, a group of people from three small towns in Cass County—Linden, Hughes Spring, and Avinger—banded together to help preserve the county's natural beauty and to promote tourism through wildflower tours. The result is the Wildflower Trails of Texas Festival, during which droves of nature lovers in search of spring's best displays wander the three highways (Texas 49, 155, and 11) that form a triangle connecting these towns, as well as other scenic backroads. All three towns have parades



(scheduled at non-competing times) and they join forces to present a regional art show, but other activities vary from town to town. This year's lineup features a trail ride, a treasure hunt, a Miss Wildflower Trails of Texas Pageant, a carnival, exhibit and craft booths, an antique auto show, a quilt show, a street dance, a fish fry, a crawfish boil, live entertainment, a softball tournament, gospel singing, a rodeo, a wildflower display and interpretation, and a photography contest. For details about individual events in Linden, Hughes Springs, and Avinger, respectively, call 903/796-3003 ([www.lindenwildflowertrails.com](http://www.lindenwildflowertrails.com)); 903/639-7519 ([www.hughesspringstx.net](http://www.hughesspringstx.net)); and 903/562-1112. For a brochure about the overall festival, which includes a map, call one of the preceding numbers one to two months before the event.

LEFT: Each May, San Marcos celebrates Mexican heritage with its Viva! Cinco de Mayo festival. The lineup includes dance performances, live entertainment by Tejano artists, and the State Menudo Cook-Off. ABOVE: Anything goes at the Bandera RiverFest's zany Great Hill Country Anything That Floats Regatta.

**FESTIVALS 101**

**SCHEDULES** sometimes change, especially for events several months out. Call and check dates before making a trip. By the same token, you may find that new activities have been added that we couldn't confirm at press time.

**ACCOMMODATIONS** in small towns can fill up quickly, so make your reservations early if you plan to stay overnight. If you have trouble finding a room, call the local chamber of commerce; the staff may be able to direct you to lodging in nearby towns.

**DON'T FORGET the obvious:** Wear comfortable shoes, apply sunscreen at outdoor events, and if the weather's hot, take along a hat or umbrella and extra water. A lightweight folding chair or a blanket you can spread on the ground also comes in handy, especially at parades.

**ENJOY the festival fare,** but check out nearby restaurants, too; you may discover a real gem.

**SEE SOME local sights** while you're in the area; it's a great way to make the most of your travel dollars. Check the *TH* Web site ([www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)) for ideas.



## Where else but at festivals can you enjoy food-on-a-stick and feel like you're doing your civic duty?



The racetrack for one of the most popular events at the Texas Crab Festival will be rebuilt in time for Crystal Beach's annual May celebration. Other events on tap include the Crab Cookoff and the Crab Legs contest. Expect to find a wealth of crab dishes, too.

### VIVA! CINCO DE MAYO, SAN MARCOS, May 1-2, 2009.

An annual event since 1974, this celebration marks the victory of the Mexican Army over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, a date that has become a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism. The most anticipated aspect of the festival is the State Menudo Cook-Off, which attracts menudo teams from across Texas. The teams are judged on showmanship as well as their stew. Other highlights include the downtown parade, which features floats and marching bands, Miss Cinco de Mayo and Little Miss Cinco de Mayo pageants, performances by young folklórico dancers, live entertainment by Tejano artists, and a carnival. Activities take place at the Hays County Civic Center. Call 512/353-8482 or 877/847-4906; [www.vivacincohemayo.org](http://www.vivacincohemayo.org).



### TEXAS CRAB FESTIVAL, CRYSTAL BEACH, May 9, 2009.

Crystal Beach was hit hard by Hurricane Ike, but the organizers of this popular annual event say the Texas Crab Festival will go on this year, although it will probably just last one day instead of three. "We lost every piece of equipment we had," says festival organizer Anne Willis, "but we'll regroup and start over." The festival's big draw—the Crab Races—will take place, as will the Crab Cookoff. "You'll still be able to get crabs in every form imaginable—crab legs, crab cakes, soft-shell crabs, crab gumbo, crab étouffée, you name it," says Willis. "We'll also have the Crab Legs Contest, as well as a treasure hunt, live entertainment, and a carnival." Check the Bolivar Chamber of Commerce Web site for updates, [www.bolivarchamber.org](http://www.bolivarchamber.org), or call 409/684-5940 or 800/FUN-SUN3.



### TOM TOM FESTIVAL, YOAKUM,

June 4-6, 2009. This 81-year-old festival gets its name from the fact that Yoakum was once a hotbed of tomato production. You can still find fresh tomatoes at the festival's farmers market, but the focus of the celebration has shifted to barbecue, with contests for best brisket, boneless chicken breasts, and pork ribs, as well as beans and salsa. Other highlights include a parade downtown, followed by a calf scramble and CPRA rodeo. A carnival, children's games, horseshoe and volleyball tournaments, a dachshund race (billed as the "Star Wieners Race—Revenge of the Short Legs"), car and motorcycle shows, polka dancing, a country music concert, a dance, arts and crafts booths, and food vendors round out the offerings. Most activities take place at Yoakum City Park. Call 361/293-2309; [www.yoakumareachamber.com](http://www.yoakumareachamber.com).



### BANDERA RIVERFEST, BANDERA, June 27, 2009.

If hanging out on the banks of the cool, clear Medina River sounds good to you, the Bandera RiverFest is your kind of event. There are plenty of activities to watch from the sidelines, but wear your swimsuit and bring an inner tube, so that you can participate, too. The fun includes a River Rodeo, with tube roping and bronc riding. (The "brons" are highly unsteady inner tubes whose sides have been duct-taped together to form a saddle of sorts.) Other activities include tube volleyball, kayak races, a watermelon-eating contest, sack races, and other games. You can even sign up your dog for the water-fetching contest. A brisket-cooking contest, arts and crafts booths, an open car show, and a Bandera Idol singing competition also add to the fun. The Great Hill Country Anything That Floats Regatta caps off the afternoon, with prizes for the creative entries that float down the beautiful river. Call 830/796-4447; [www.banderariverfest.com](http://www.banderariverfest.com).





### **WATERMELON THUMP, LULING,**

June 25-29, 2009. Watermelon-eating and seed-spitting contests take center stage at the Watermelon Thump (the Guinness Book of Records keeps track of the seed-spitters), but this classic small-town festival is rife with other fun, too. Events include an hourlong parade that takes place rain or shine; a Watermelon Queen pageant; a biggest-melon contest; a melon auction; a classic car show; a carnival; arts and crafts booths; a strolling balloon maker, magician, and juggler; entertainment on three stages; and a concert/dance every night. Most activities take place downtown at the Thump Pavilion. Call 830/875-3214, ext. 2; [www.watermelonthump.com](http://www.watermelonthump.com).



### **FREEDOM FIESTA, SEGUIN,**

Jul. 3-4, 2009. Seguin celebrates the Fourth downtown in Central Park with two days of festivities that include a carnival, a washer-pitching tournament, and live entertainment; a street dance is held each evening. A parade billed as the “Biggest Fourth of July Parade in Texas” takes place on Saturday and features floats and marching bands from Seguin and area towns. At sundown, crowds gather to watch a spectacular fireworks show at Starcke Park. Call 830/379-6382; [www.freedomfiesta.com](http://www.freedomfiesta.com).



### **GREAT TEXAS MOSQUITO FESTIVAL, CLUTE,**

July 23-25, 2009. This zany celebration features a 26-foot-tall “Texas” mosquito—Willie Man-Chew—an inflated character who sports a cowboy hat and boots, as well as a big stinger. A natural for photo-ops, Willie sets a lighthearted tone for activities at Clute Municipal Park that include Dodge Ball Sting, a Mosquito Chase 5-K Run, Mr. and Mrs. Mosquito Legs and Mosquito-Calling contests. However, the barbecue and fajita cook-offs and horseshoe and washer-pitching tournaments take center stage. Other fun includes a carnival, a petting zoo, and live entertainment. Call 979/265-8392 or 800/



KEVIN STILLMAN

Like many community celebrations, Yoakum’s Tom Tom Festival, which takes place each June, boasts an elaborate parade with floats from area towns, such as this one from nearby Flatonia representing that community’s Czhillspiel festival, held each September.

371-2971; [www.mosquitofestival.com](http://www.mosquitofestival.com).

### **XIT RODEO & REUNION, DALHART,**

Aug. 6-8, 2009. Some 15,000 to 20,000 people turn out each year for the XIT Rodeo & Reunion, a Texas-size celebration that boasts three “free feeds,” including the “World’s Largest Free Barbecue.” Besides a top-flight rodeo, events include a themed parade (different each year) with more than 75 entries, a rodeo queen’s contest



and coronation, a fiddlers’ contest, an antique tractor show and pull, a kids’ clown contest, open house at the XIT Museum, and dances featuring well-known entertainers. Call 806/244-5646; [www.xit-rodeo.com](http://www.xit-rodeo.com). **TH**

Senior Editor NOLA McKEY covered the Watermelon Thump in our June 2004 story on Luling. Her favorite events are the children’s watermelon-eating contests, but she cautions against standing too close during the judging. “Getting splattered with flying watermelon is a real possibility,” she says.



# Just PASSING Through

BY MELISSA GASKILL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HUGH LIECK

## Brownsville's Wild Side

The picturesque, covered entrance on Ringgold Street in Brownsville gives little hint of the lush, subtropical expanse inside, or the more than 1,600 animals that call this special enclave home. Welcome to the 31-acre Gladys Porter Zoo, completely planned, built, and stocked by the Earl C. Sams Foundation, and then donated to the City of Brownsville in 1971.

Gladys Porter, one of Sams' daughters, envisioned a zoo specializing in endangered species, and worked diligently with the facility until her death in 1980. Known for its success in breeding endangered species,

the zoo is also one of the Rio Grande Valley's most inviting natural areas.

Visitors often remark on the abundance of natural water here. A resaca, or oxbow lake, created when the nearby Rio Grande changed course, meanders through the property. When this source of water was channeled, islands, ponds, and other features within the zoo's landscape took shape. These bodies of water not only serve to physically divide different areas of the zoo, they also create natural exhibits all their own, populated by turtles, fish, prawns, and other denizens of South Texas waterways. The water habitat also attracts wild birds, including chachalacas, egrets, red-crowned parrots, kiskadees, kingfishers, and woodpeckers.

"We are a must-stop for birders, with many natives and migrants here," says Director Dr. Patrick Burchfield. "In fact, the zoo is identified as a birding-trail site by the state of Texas."

A zoo-beautification plan currently underway includes up-

grading the resaca and adding features such as waterfalls. Three new waterfalls are already in place, with two more underway. One of those beautifies the pygmy hippo exhibit, offering the hippos a chance to lumber in and out of the water, and another is in the bongo antelope enclosure.

"Not only are they beautiful, their pleasant sound adds to the experience," says docent president Wilda DuBose. The waterfalls also serve to aerate and improve the quality of the water.

Burchfield points out that the zoo is also



The zoo's whimsical, safari hut-like entrance tips visitors off to the fun they'll have inside this vibrant oasis.



Contemplative primate. Moja, a Western lowland gorilla, fathered all of the baby gorillas currently on exhibit at the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville.

a botanical garden, featuring native plants as well as rare specimens such as colorful Hong Kong orchids, Royal Poinciana, and aptly-named shaving brush trees. Beautification plans also include expanding the zoo's plantscape. Staff have

### Camp Lula Sams

**GLADYS PORTER ZOO** Director Dr. Patrick Burchfield started work at the zoo in 1970, first as reptile supervisor, then as curator of herpetology, general curator, and deputy director. In 2007, he assumed the post of director. In his nearly 40 years here, Burchfield has been involved in a number of research and conservation efforts, including the three-decades-old binational project to save endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles. Burchfield also leads nature tours at Camp Lula Sams, a former Girl Scout camp in the middle of Brownsville. The wooded acres are now a teaching camp/wildlife refuge that offers birding and other classes for schoolchildren, as well as a few cabins for rent to birdwatchers. "Eventually, we hope to make the camp available to more people," Burchfield says, "including other nature lovers and photographers." Stay tuned.





and track offspring worldwide. One of Gladys Porter Zoo's SSPs is for Western lowland gorillas. The zoo's original pair, Lamydoc and Katanga, were the last legally caught-in-the-wild gorillas to come to the U.S. "Lamydoc, the male, and Katanga, the female, were brought in as six- and five-year olds," says Burchfield. "We hoped they would impart behavior learned in normal socialized groups on their offspring, of which they've produced 15. There had been a problem in breeding gorillas, because animals taken as infants and raised in human households had no knowledge of normal gorilla social behavior."

The long-term hope with Species Survival Plans is that someday, given the right conditions, some animals can return to the wild. Realistically, safe wild habitat will never again exist for many animals, but accredited zoos continue to carefully manage genetics and maintain normal social situations. The more intelligent the animal and complex the behaviors, the more difficult it is to re-introduce it to the wild, Burchfield explains, so he and his staff strive to main-

tain natural conditions as much as possible. already installed more than two dozen palm trees on the grounds and are in the midst of an ambitious botanical florascap project, which will include a booklet describing the zoo's native and exotic plants. "Ultimately, the book will have a section on plants native to the four surrounding counties, and a section on plants found outside our area," says Burchfield.

Of course, people expect to see exotic animals in a zoo, and this one doesn't disappoint. In addition to four geographic areas representing Asia, Africa, Tropical America, and Indo-Australia, the Gladys Porter Zoo has a herpetarium that houses snakes, lizards, turtles, and crocodiles. A free-flight aviary, currently under renovation, will have spectacular new birds when it opens this summer. Already, brightly feathered blue-and-yellow and military macaws, crested caracaras, and stately king vultures inhabit Macaw Canyon, a replica of a real canyon in Tamaulipas, Mexico. Many of these birds were rescued from smugglers at the U.S.-Mexico border, just a few blocks from the zoo.

Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums in 1978, the zoo participates in more than 40 Species Survival Plans, which help match potential mates

**BROWNSVILLE's** 31-acre Gladys Porter Zoo, at 500 Ringgold St., opens daily 9 a.m.-sundown. Admission: \$9, \$6 ages 2-13, \$7.50 age 65 and older. Call 956/546-2177; [www.gpz.org](http://www.gpz.org). Contact the zoo for more information on **Camp Lula Sams**.



The Gladys Porter Zoo and Camp Lula Sams are stops 46 and 45, respectively, on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's **Lower Texas Coast Wildlife Trail**. Find information at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

An area favorite, **The Vermillion Restaurant and Watering Hole**, at 115 Paredes Line Rd., has served Brownsville since 1934. Call 956/542-9893; [www.thevermillion.com](http://www.thevermillion.com).



Brownsville offers a wide variety of lodging. Call the **Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau** for more information at 800/626-2639; [www.brownsville.org](http://www.brownsville.org).


The Gladys Porter Zoo's gorillas live in a family group, just as they would in the wild, with 12 gorillas representing three generations. "If you want to see lots of gorillas, come see them here," Burchfield says. "We have mothers with babies, teenagers, and

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**Lion King.** The Gladys Porter Zoo rescued Mario, one of the preserve's African lions, from an exotic-pet owner.

adults." Visitors can also still see Katanga and Lamydoc in their adjacent quarters. Burchfield calls the patriarch Lamydoc "the most magnificent male gorilla any of us had ever seen." He says, "Gorillas have different facial characteristics, just like humans, and he's a handsome guy."

Last summer, six tiger cubs (four of them white), likely bound for the entertainment industry in Mexico, were confiscated and eventually signed over to the zoo. They originally appeared in the Small World exhibit, which features baby animals, miniature creatures, and tame livestock. However, the tigers have outgrown those quarters and will soon move to the zoo's regular tiger exhibit, where the public can watch them mature into adults.

The zoo's new, 6,000-square-foot Russell Aquatic Ecology Exhibit is scheduled to open in 2011. It will include a shark encounter, a Southern and Atlantic stingray touch pool, native salt and freshwater fish displays, and mangrove, grassbed, and jetty habitats, along with the diverse and fascinating species that reside in them. Between visiting the zoo animals and observing the lush plants that grow here, the Gladys Porter Zoo is a perfect place to go wild.

MELISSA GASKILL also interviewed Gladys Porter Zoo staff for an upcoming *TH* article on sea turtles.

Photographer HUGH LIECK is a Brownsville native and a wildlife sciences graduate of Texas A&M.

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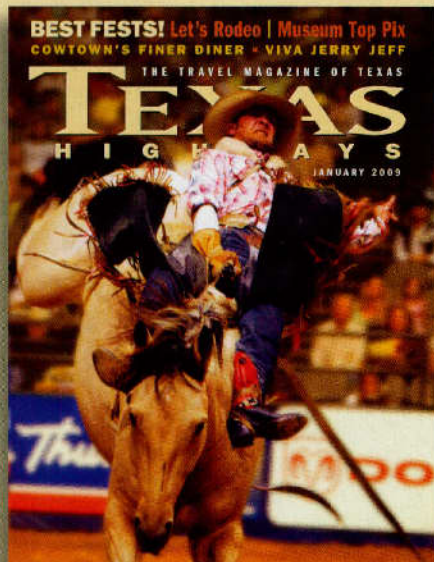
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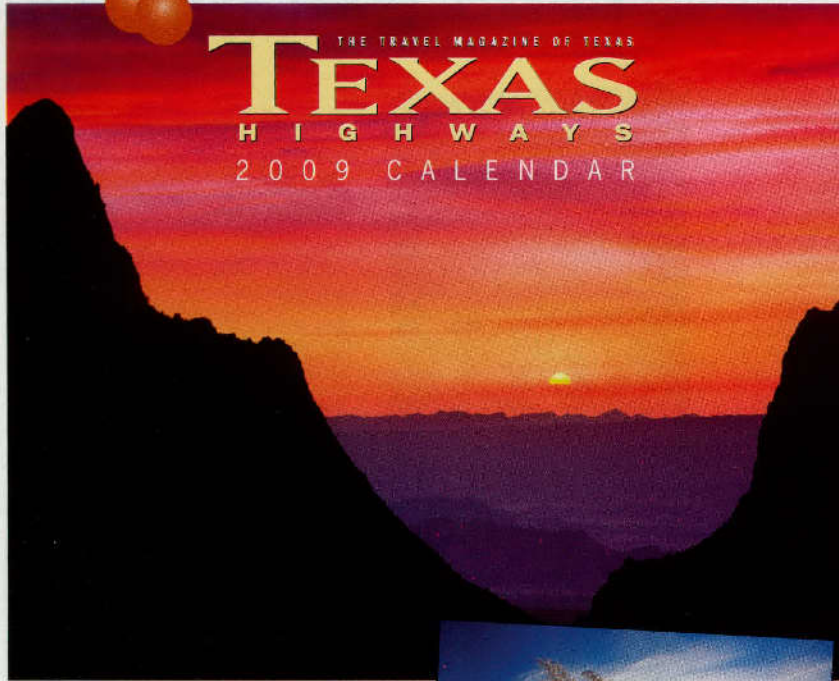
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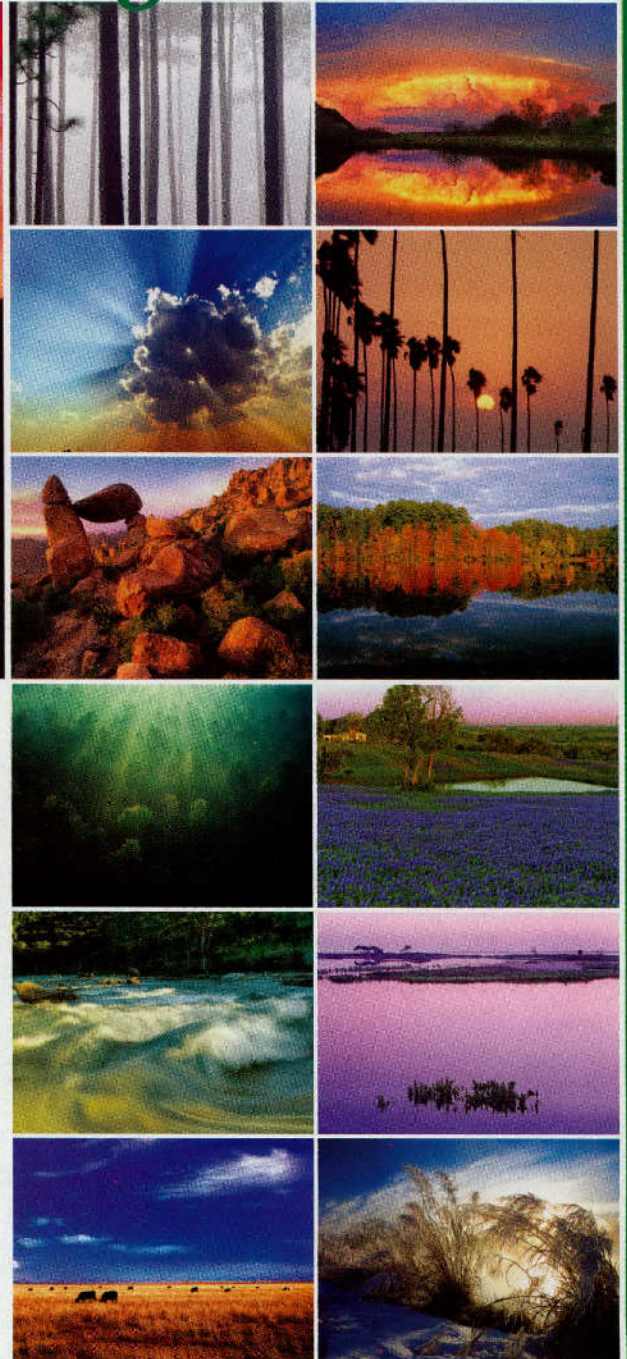
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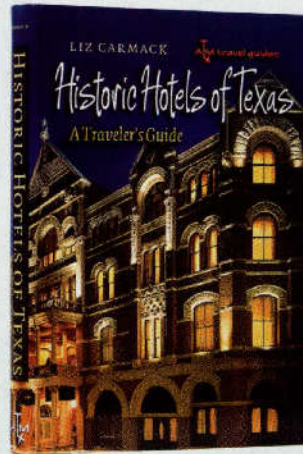
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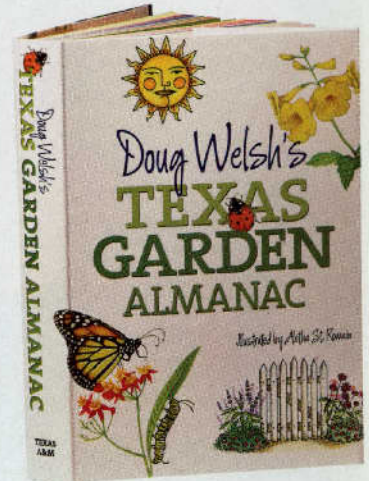
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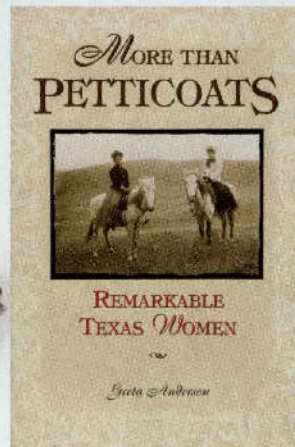
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2005, 272 pages, 8½" x 10¾", full-color, hardcover

36137.....\$24.95

## State of Mind Cap

This unique design features an embossed State Seal of Texas.

100% heavy cotton twill, low profile, pre-curved visor

Adjustable Velcro strap closure

38719.....\$16.95

## The Lone Star Mug

Designed by Charley and Holly Pritchard of Luling Icehouse Pottery. Each mug is hand-made and embellished with the Texas Lone Star.

Made in Texas

Holds 14 ounces, Microwave- and dishwasher-safe

37325.....\$13.95

## The Best Of Travelin' Texas CD

This collection of Texas classics is jam-packed with 20 tunes, so you'll be singing down the road for miles with the likes of Billy Joe Shaver, Robert Earl Keen, The Flatlanders, Terri Hendrix, Joe Ely, Jerry Jeff Walker and more! Proceeds from the sale of this CD benefit the Center for Texas Music History.

37602.....\$15.95

View our entire collection at  
[www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)

## Starring Texas Puzzle

This 1000-piece puzzle showcases nearly 200 stars from marquis and monuments from across the state to a starfish on the sandy Gulf Coast. Take home this stellar challenge.

1,000 Pieces

Size: 30" height x 24" width

37522.....\$17.95



# TH TRAVELER: JANUARY Events

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## Fair Weather Fan

A GATEWAY TO BIG BEND AND THE Cactus Capital of Texas, the panoramic West Texas outpost of **Sanderson** invites you to the **Terrell County Fair, January 30-31**. They're planning their biggest celebration in a century. Enjoy the purest water in Texas and pick up your *Welcome to Sanderson Visitors' Guide* for some tips on the area's scenic walk/drive nature trails. For more information, see [www.sandersonchamberofcommerce.info](http://www.sandersonchamberofcommerce.info); or call 432/345-2509.

## More from TH Traveler—

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**EL PASO: El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Music Festival** January 7-February 1. Multiple venues. [www.elpasopromusica.org](http://www.elpasopromusica.org) 915/833-9400

**EL PASO: Man of La Mancha** January 23-25. Musical version of the tale of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Theatre at Chamizal National Memorial. 915/780-1100

**ODESSA: SandHills Indoor Rodeo** January 2-10. Ector County Coliseum. [www.sandhillsstockshowandrodeo.com](http://www.sandhillsstockshowandrodeo.com) 432/366-3951

### GULF COAST

**BAYTOWN: Chili When It's Chilly Barbecue Cookoff** January 9-10. San Jacinto Mall. [www.baytownchamber.com](http://www.baytownchamber.com) 281/422-8359

**CORPUS CHRISTI: Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival** January 10-11. Ancient Renaissance festival celebrates the Epiphany. First Christian Church. 361/854-3044

**GALVESTON: Jerry Jeff Walker** January 3. The Grand 1894 Opera House. [www.thegrand.com](http://www.thegrand.com) 409/765-1894

**HOUSTON: Houston International Boat, Sport & Travel Show** January 2-11. Reliant Center. [www.houstonboatshows.com](http://www.houstonboatshows.com) 713/526-6361

**HOUSTON: Celine Dion** January 9. Toyota Center. [www.houstontoyotacenter.com](http://www.houstontoyotacenter.com) 713/629-3700

**HOUSTON: A Midsummer Night's Dream** January 23, 25, 31. Houston Grand Opera in co-production with the Canadian Opera Company. Brown Theater. [www.houstongrandopera.org](http://www.houstongrandopera.org) 713/228-6737

**HOUSTON: Eurydice** January 30-March 1. Alley Theatre. [www.alleytheatre.org](http://www.alleytheatre.org) 713/220-5700

**LAKE JACKSON: Diane Schuur with the Brazosport Jazz Orchestra** January 24. The Clarion. [www.clarion.brazosport.edu](http://www.clarion.brazosport.edu) 979/230-3156

**ORANGE: DrumLine Live** January 14-15. Lutcher Theater. [www.lutcher.org](http://www.lutcher.org) 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535

**PEARLAND: Winterfest** January 10. Independence Park, 3919 Liberty Drive. [www.pearlandparks.com](http://www.pearlandparks.com) 281/652-1673

**PORT ARTHUR: CavOILcade Parade** January 17. Downtown. 409/983-1009 or 409/983-4034

**PORT ISABEL: Longest Causeway Run & Fitness Walk** January 10. 10K crosses the 2.6-mile Queen Isabella Causeway. [www.portisabel.org](http://www.portisabel.org) 956/943-2262

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Polar Bear Dip** January 1. Boomerang Billy's Beach Bar/Surf Motel, 2612 Gulf Blvd. 956/761-6853

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: KiteFest** January 31-February 1. Kite enthusiasts flock to the island for this event. Laguna Madre flats, north of the SPI Convention Centre, 7355 Padre Blvd. [www.bskskites.com](http://www.bskskites.com) 956/761-1248

### HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN: Jerry Jeff Walker** January 9. Iconic Texas singer/songwriter performs 2 shows at One World Theatre. [www.oneworldtheatre.org](http://www.oneworldtheatre.org) 512/329-6753

**AUSTIN: DrumLine Live** January 11. Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts. [www.TheLongCenter.org](http://www.TheLongCenter.org) 512/474-5664

**AUSTIN: Carnaval Brasileiro** January 31. Traditional Brazilian celebration features samba music, elaborate costumes, dancing, and uninhibited revelry. Palmer Events Center. [www.sambaparty.com](http://www.sambaparty.com)

**BANDERA: 100K Ultra-Marathon** January 10. Hill Country State Natural Area. [www.tejatrail.com/bandera.html](http://www.tejatrail.com/bandera.html) 830/796-4413 or 210/687-4347

**BANDERA: Cowgirl Roundup & Show-deo** January 3. Hill Country State Natural Area. [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) 830/796-4413

**CONCAN: Trout Days** January 9-11. Gamer State Park. [www.thocr.com](http://www.thocr.com) 800/210-0380

**KERRVILLE: DrumLine Live** January 16-17. Cailloux Theater, 910 Main St. [www.kpas.org](http://www.kpas.org) 830/896-9393

**KERRVILLE: Tartuffe** January 22-25, 29-February 1. Playhouse 2000 at Cailloux Theater, 910 Main St. [www.caillouxtheatre.org](http://www.caillouxtheatre.org) 830/896-9393

**LUCKENBACH: Blues Festival** January 31. [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com) 830/997-3324

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## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE: Abilene Philharmonic** January 31. Abilene Civic Center. 325/677-6710 or 800/460-0610

**AMARILLO: Amarillo Symphony** January 23-24. Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts. [www.amarillosymphony.org](http://www.amarillosymphony.org) 806/376-8782

**SAN ANGELO: Circus Gatti** January 16-18. 325/657-4450

**WICHITA FALLS: Centennial Ball** January 17. Part of the Kell House Museum's 100th birthday celebration. 900 Bluff St. [www.wichitaheritage.org](http://www.wichitaheritage.org) 940/723-2712

## PINEY WOODS

**JEFFERSON: Quilts on the Bayou** January 23-25 Jeffersonian Institute. [www.jeffersonquiltshow.com](http://www.jeffersonquiltshow.com) 903/665-7311

**LIBERTY: Liberty Opry** January 10, 17, 24, 31. 1816 Sam Houston Ave. [www.libertyopry.com](http://www.libertyopry.com) 877/729-9103

**LONGVIEW: East Texas Boat, RV & Camping Expo** January 23-25. Maude Cobb Activity Complex. [www.ci.longview.tx.us](http://www.ci.longview.tx.us) 903/237-4000

**NACOGDOCHES: Swingin' Axes & Swingin' Aces** January 25. Stephen F. Austin State University's Cole Concert Hall. [www.visitnacogdoches.org](http://www.visitnacogdoches.org) 888/240-ARTS

**TEXARKANA: Texarkana Symphony Orchestra** January 13. Historic Perot Theatre. [www.texarkanasymphony.org](http://www.texarkanasymphony.org) 903/792-4992 or 870/773-4301

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**DALLAS: AT&T Cotton Bowl Classic** January 2. Cotton Bowl at Fair Park hosts postseason college football game. [www.attcottonbowl.com](http://www.attcottonbowl.com) 214/943-2893

**DALLAS: Celine Dion** January 5. American Airlines Center. [www.americanairlinescenter.com](http://www.americanairlinescenter.com) 214/373-8000

**DALLAS: Dallas Symphony Orchestra** January 8-11, 15-17, 22-25, 29-February 1. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. [www.dallassymphony.com](http://www.dallassymphony.com) 214/692-0203

**DALLAS: Marcia Ball** January 9. Granada Theater. [www.granadatheater.com](http://www.granadatheater.com) 214/824-9933

**DALLAS: Winter Boat Show** January 30-February 8. Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N. Stemmons Freeway. [www.dallasboatshow.net](http://www.dallasboatshow.net) 469/549-0673

**DENISON: Snowball Classic** January 23-25. Adult softball tournament at Culpepper Field. [www.denison.texas.us](http://www.denison.texas.us) 903/463-5116

**FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra** January 9-11. An all-orchestral program featuring Brahms, Mozart and Wagner. Bass Performance Hall. [www.fwsymphony.org](http://www.fwsymphony.org) 817/665-6000

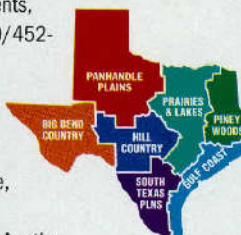
**FORT WORTH: Laughter & Reflection with Carol Burnett** January 12. Bass Performance Hall. [www.basshall.com](http://www.basshall.com) 817/212-4280

## 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.



**FORT WORTH: Southwestern Exposition Livestock Show & Rodeo** January 16-February 8. The nation's oldest livestock show. Will Rogers Memorial Center. [www.fwssr.com](http://www.fwssr.com) 817/877-2400

**GORDONVILLE: Eagle Quest** January 24-25. Features boat excursions on Lake Texoma to see bald eagles, educational seminars and much more. Cedar Mills Marina and Resort. [www.texomawestend.org](http://www.texomawestend.org) 903/523-5982

**HALLETTSVILLE: Antique Tractor Show & Pull** January 16-18. Expo Center. [www.hallettsville.com](http://www.hallettsville.com) 361/798-2662

**HALLETTSVILLE: State Championship Domino Tournament** January 25. KC Hall. [www.hallettsville.com](http://www.hallettsville.com) 361/798-2662

**IRVING: Le Festival de Musique** January 17. Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra. Irving Arts Center. [www.lascollinassymphony.org](http://www.lascollinassymphony.org) 972/252-4800

**LANCASTER: Martin Luther King Jr. Parade & Battle of the Bands** January 17. [www.LancasterMLK.org](http://www.LancasterMLK.org) 972/227-2579

**MCKINNEY: Musical Arts Society Chamber Music** January 31. Heard-Craig Performance Hall. [www.mckinneymusicalarts.org](http://www.mckinneymusicalarts.org) 214/544-4630

**ROUND TOP: The Synergy Brass Quintet** January 31. International Festival-Institute at Round Top. [www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org) 979/249-3129 or 979/249-4042

**WACO: Texas Circuit Finals Rodeo** January 1-3. Heart o' Texas Fair Complex, 4601 Bosque Blvd. [www.hotfair.com](http://www.hotfair.com) 254/776-1660

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**LAREDO: Washington's Birthday Celebration** January 22-February 22. Main weekend of events: February 20-22. [www.wbcalaredo.org](http://www.wbcalaredo.org) 956/722-0589

**LAREDO: Laredo International Sister Cities Festival** January 23-25. 800/361-3360

**SAN ANTONIO: Celine Dion** January 7. AT&T Center. [www.attcenter.com](http://www.attcenter.com) 210/224-9600

**SAN ANTONIO: Johnny Mathis** January 8. The Majestic Theatre. [www.majesticempire.com](http://www.majesticempire.com) 210/224-9600

**SAN ANTONIO: Frank Callendo** January 9. Comedian and star of the TBS show, *Frank TV*, plays The Majestic Theatre. [www.majesticempire.com](http://www.majesticempire.com) 210/224-9600

**SAN ANTONIO: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration** January 19. [www.sanantonio.gov/mlk](http://www.sanantonio.gov/mlk) 210/207-7224

**SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony** January 23-24. Program of Elgar, Schumann, and Shostakovich at The Majestic Theatre. [www.sasymphony.org](http://www.sasymphony.org) 210/224-9600

**SAN ANTONIO: Asian Festival** January 31. UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures. [www.texancultures.com](http://www.texancultures.com) 210/458-2329

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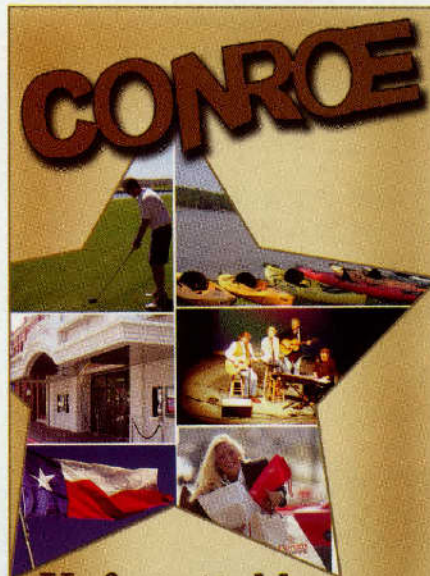


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# Readers RECOMMEND...

TIPS FROM OUR READERS

TH READERS will want to know about **Ginger Brown's Old Tyme Restaurant and Bakery** in Lake Worth. They have the most delicious home-style meals ever—real chicken-fried steak, meatloaf, chicken and dumplings, pot roast, and chicken potpie (to name a few)—served with traditional vegetables and from-scratch mashed potatoes and rolls. You will also be served one of Ginger's "made daily" cinnamon rolls with your meal, or you might want to try one of the scrumptious homemade pies (coconut, chocolate, and many more). They have old-time prices, enjoyable décor, and a staff that goes above and beyond to make you feel welcome.

JOYCE BELL, Fort Worth

*Ginger Brown's Old Tyme Restaurant and Bakery is at 6312 Jacksboro Hwy.; 817/237-2114.*

**DOC'S Fish Camp & Grill** in Marble Falls should be recognized as one of the best steak and seafood restaurants in the Hill Country, if not the state. The restaurant has been around for 15 years and has an interesting story about its conception and rebirth.

DEBBIE SMITH

*Doc's Fish Camp & Grill is at 900 FM 1431 West; 830/693-2245; www.docsfishcamp.com.*

**TWO AMIGOS Taqueria** is a little café two blocks west of the Waxahachie courthouse. The authentic Mexican food is fabulous! Try the nachos with everything on them or a soft taco made with corn tortillas, seasoned

WHILE driving around **Bulverde**, we found a great restaurant (with great views) called **Cowcatchers Steaks**. The food is delicious (especially the rib-eye), pricing is reasonable, and the service and venue outstanding. Kids will enjoy the Longhorns and horses

in the front and the space to run around. This is the perfect place to take your family for a special occasion that calls for steak.

MARCO BARROS, San Antonio

*Cowcatchers Steaks is at 1100 Bulverde Rd.; 830/980-6080; www.cowcatchers.net.*



An 1890s International-brand chuck wagon suspended from the ceiling adds to the rustic ambiance of Cowcatchers Steaks' dining room.

chicken, grilled onions, and cilantro. Need more? The tortilla soup is to-die-for and served in generous portions. Prices are reasonable, and the menu has something for everyone. Some days the café observes a lunch schedule only, but later in the week they stay open through the evening. It's a real treat!

TANA DIXON, Odessa

*Two Amigos Taqueria is at 212 W. Jefferson St.; 972/923-3305.*

I RECOMMEND **The Moosehead Cafe** in **Crockett**. Not only is the food great, the people there are the nicest!

JESSICA AND BILLY MCRAE, Crockett

*The Moosehead Cafe (think burgers, Philly*

*cheese steaks, chicken-fried steaks, and rib-eye sandwiches) is at 412 E. Houston Ave.; 936/544-5278; www.themooseheadcafe.com.*

WE STOPPED at the **Longhorn Ranch Store and Grill** in Whitesboro for lunch. It was a great experience. Best rib-eye sandwiches that we ever had. Great food and nice Western furnishings and accessories!

OTTIS AND BARBARA MURDOCK, Benbrook  
*Longhorn Ranch Store and Grill is at 12265 E. US 82; 903/564-4818; www.longhornranchgrill.com.*

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

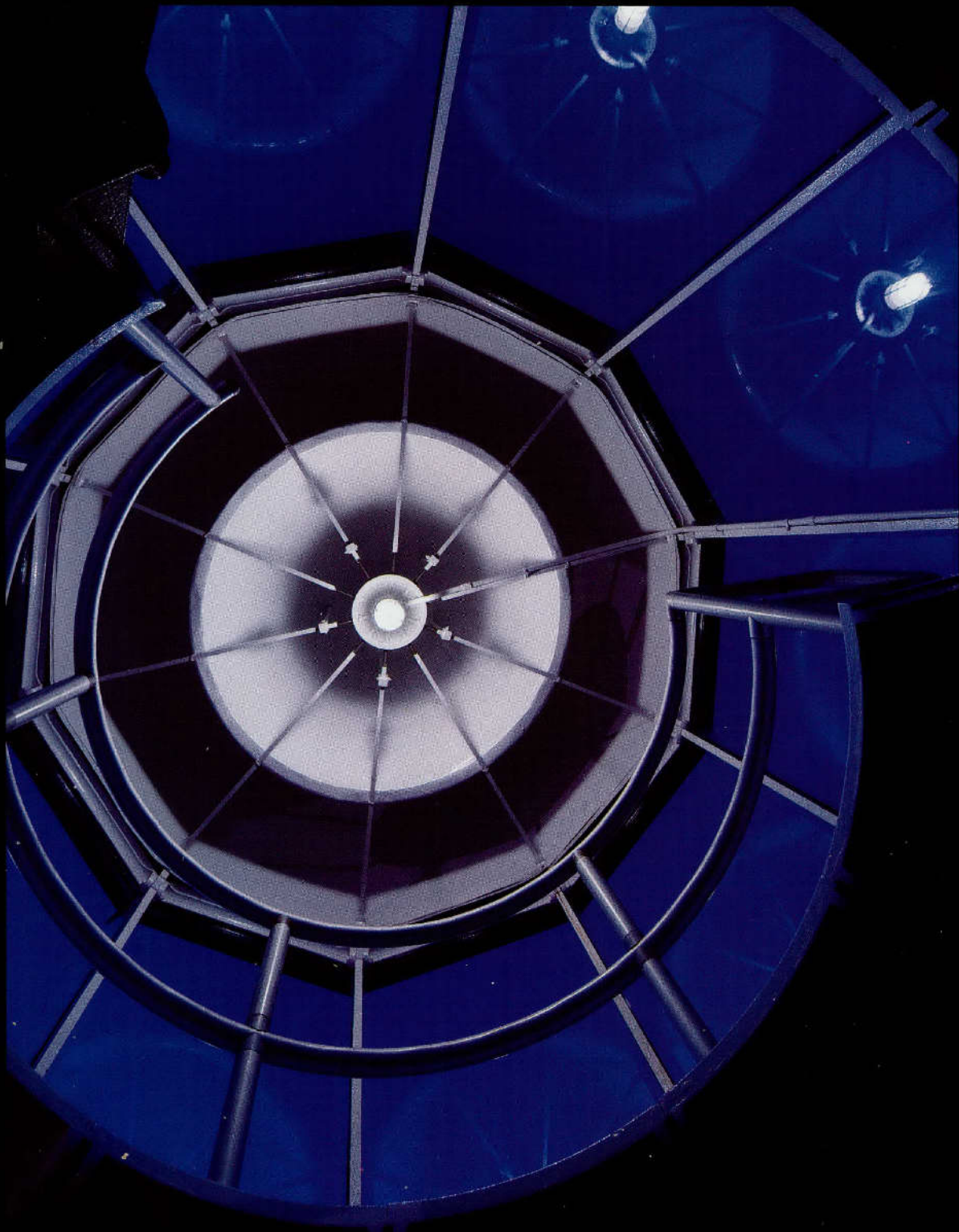
**Next month...** Our West Texas special features the adventures of a writer and her young son in **Marfa** and along Fort Davis' **Madera Canyon Trail**; then the Wolfman explores nighttime skies and other natural wonders at **Big Bend Ranch**. We'll go wild at the **Great Texas Birding Classic**, and Western with a look at **cowboy hats**. Join us!

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J. GRIFFIS SMITH

**SEE THE LIGHT** To capture this geometric image, Griff Smith pointed his lens skyward from the top of the Port Isabel Lighthouse. Completed in 1853, the lighthouse once steered mariners east of South Padre Island and through Brazos Santiago Pass to today's Port Isabel. For more information, go to [www.portisabel.org](http://www.portisabel.org).

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

window on  
**TEXAS**





Portrait of a woman in a dark dress and large white ruff collar, displayed in an ornate, dark, carved frame.

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Baroque