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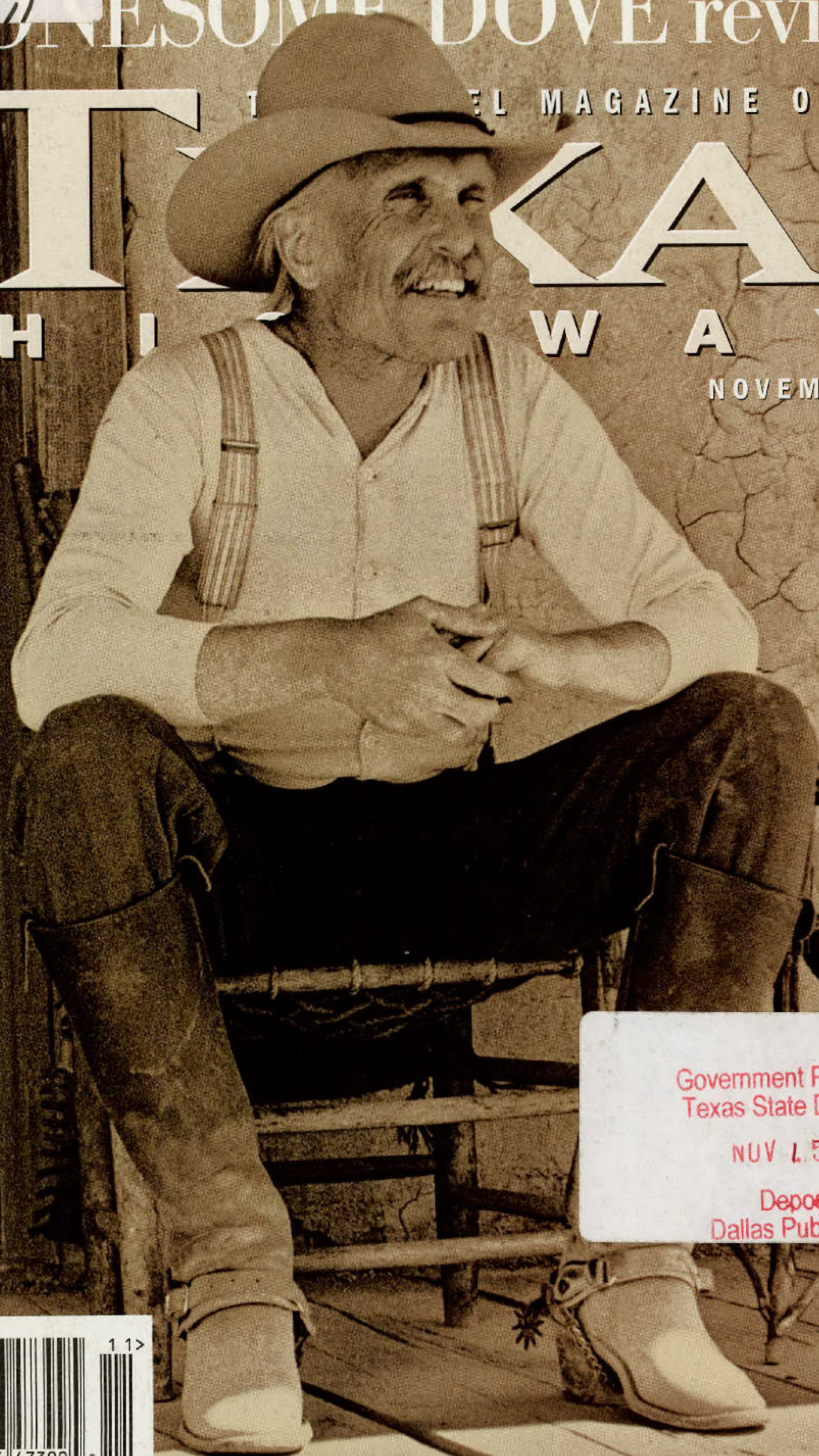
LONESOME DOVE revisited

TEXAS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

HIGHWAYS

NOVEMBER 2007



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KEVIN VANDIVIER

Partnership makes perfect: The Colorado River and the Lower Colorado River Authority's McKinney Roughs Nature Park lure thousands of visitors each year to the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort near Bastrop.

EVEN THOUGH the word “partnership” gets tossed around lightly these days, it’s a word that I use seriously—particularly when it applies to the projects we undertake at *Texas Highways*. On page 17 of this issue, you’ll find the newest edition of the *Texas Highways* catalog, which demands a look, not only because of the books, prints, and Texas-themed gifts it features, but also for where it was photographed. Catalog queen Beverly West collared photographer Griff Smith, and they photographed the entire catalog at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort near Bastrop.

The folks at Lost Pines couldn’t have been better partners in the project. They gave the *TH* catalog team the run of the place. After hearing the talk about Lost Pines floating around the office, Associate Editor Marty Lange made a side trip into the resort. “It’s like driving into a national park,” he reported in his description of the curvaceous ride through the pine forest—at the prescribed 19 mph speed limit.

In fact, Lost Pines is a park, because of the resort’s partnership with the Lower Colorado River Authority, which operates the adjacent 1,100-acre McKinney Roughs Nature Park. The two properties are stitched together seamlessly by a network of trails for hiking and horseback riding. The McKinney Roughs canoe livery also is accessible from Lost Pines. I checked in with LCRA General Manager Joe Beal to ask about the partnership with Hyatt Lost Pines. “We are working with the resort to introduce thousands of people to the Colorado River each year,” he explains, “because we believe that the more people know about the river, the more they will want to protect it.”

That’s a message we like to hear: a partnership that helps preserve the state’s natural resources and build environmental awareness.

And one more relationship that helps *Texas Highways* tell the story of Texas is the magazine’s partnership with the University of Texas Press. You can see the results starting on page 32—where we’ve reproduced a few of Bill Wittliff’s amazing photographs from the beloved *Lonesome Dove* project and its cattle drive to Montana. Now that’s a true Texas road trip.

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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IN MEMORIAM: JACK LOWRY (1951-2006)

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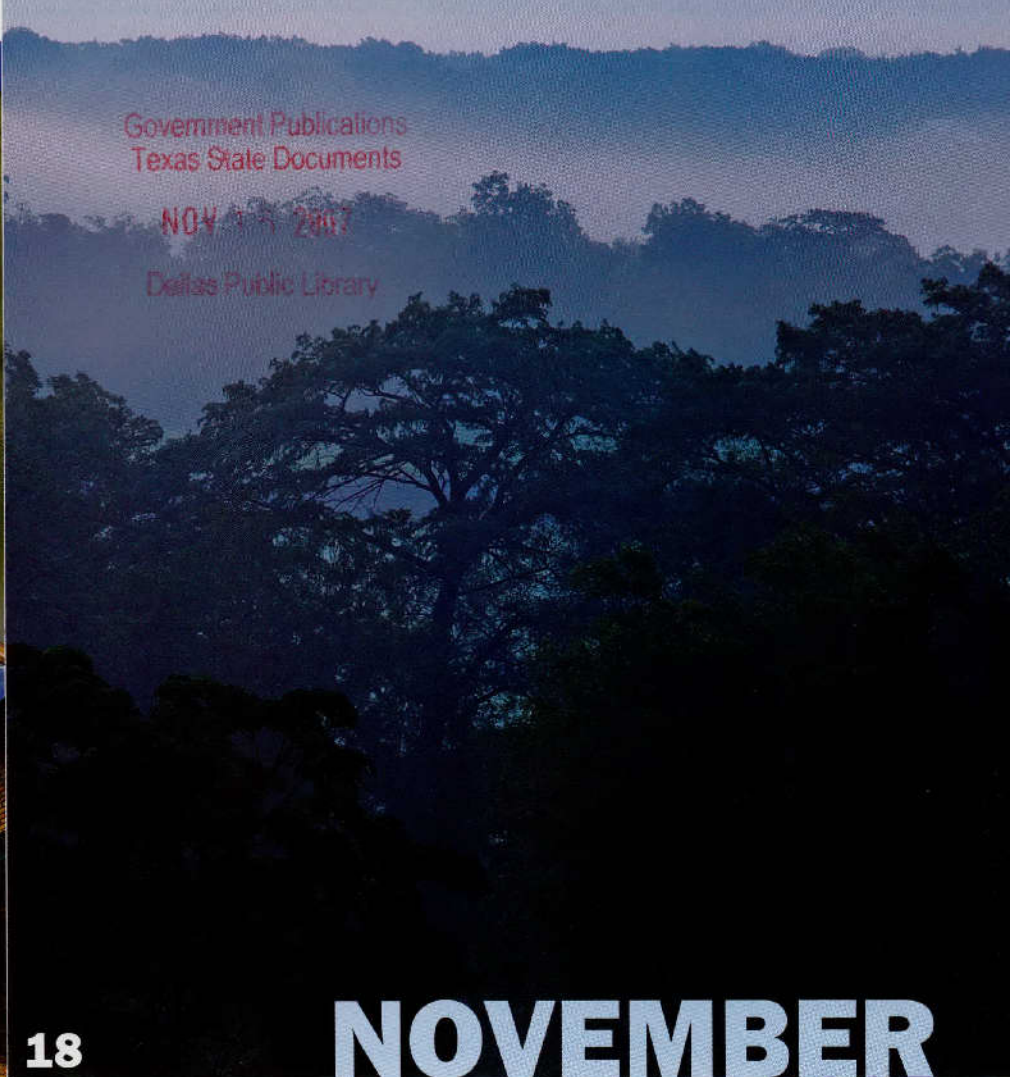
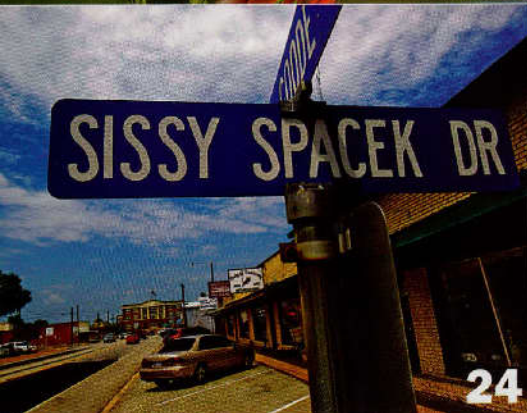
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ABOUT OUR COVER Bill Wittliff's photo "Gus on Porch" captures *Lonesome Dove*'s Gus McCrae as portrayed by Robert Duvall. Photo courtesy of The Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern & Mexican Photography at Texas State University in San Marcos. Image from *A Book of Photographs from Lonesome Dove* by Bill Wittliff, published by The University of Texas Press, 2007.

PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE:
© LARRY DITTO; © LAURENCE PARENT; © NATALIE CAUDILL

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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.

September Splendor

THE SEPTEMBER "Off the Beaten Path" special was excellent. It made me want to visit every place mentioned. If my typing were half as good as the issue, I could fill this page with compliments.

AUSTIN J. SIX
Irving

THE SPECIAL issue was great. [I like to] travel away from the "big places" and fast pace and see the little-known [attractions] along the backroads. I enjoyed Randy Mallory's Piney Woods route, as my late husband was from the area. I still attend the family reunion in Joaquin. Thanks for the backroads traveling.

DOTTIE SETTLE
Red Oak

BACKROADS TIP: When traveling to Lubbock, we often go through Gail and Post. Last spring,



the buffalo clover was truly outstanding in southern Garza County. It reminded me of the Hill Country's bluebonnets.

ROGER RIDGWAY
Big Spring

Fun on the Frio

I ENJOYED Gene Fowler's feature, "The Road to Utopia" [Sep-

tember], which brought back happy memories of summer camping trips to Garner State Park and Magers Camp, and endless days of shooting the rapids on the Frio River. Your beautiful cover shot is actually on the Frio just below Garner [at Magers Crossing]. I've stood at that very spot many times and sure wish I were there now!

ELAINE HELLMUND
Arlington

ED. NOTE: *You're absolutely right, Elaine. Thanks to you and to reader Pat Bowers, who called about the crossing correction.*

Don't Mess With Fido

I WAS sorry to read Robert Goodman's criticism [in September's Talk to TH] of the article on traveling with your dog [July]. He may be missing the best part of life on earth, having unconditional love and caring companionship. The dogs I have shared life with through the years have brought so much joy to me and my family that I can't imagine life without a "best friend."

SUE HOOKER
Henderson, Kentucky

I WONDER why Mr. Goodman even read the article about dogs. Probably like other subscribers, I will skip an article that does not catch my interest. But I do not try to deprive others of subjects of their interests. His letter went on to state that he will not go or stay any place where dogs are allowed.

God bless America, where we all have the right to go or not go anywhere we want. I am sure that the dogs feel better when he is not there, as well.

WAYNE SUTHERLAND
Tyler

U.S. Utopias

TEXAS isn't the only state with a town named Utopia; there is one in (continued on page 4)



ARTWALK 2007

Alpine's Gallery Night

November 16 & 17



Burro Lady by Honored Artist James H. Evans



- Alpine Avalanche
- Big Bend Regional Medical Center
- Fort Davis State Bank
- The Maxwell Company
- McCoy's Building Supply

FALL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2007

October 31– November 3 CHILI COOK-OFF – Terlingua
(210) 887-8827 www.chili.org

November 11 VETERAN'S DAY – Celebrations Area-Wide
www.alpinetexas.com, www.fortdavis.com,
www.marathontexas.com, www.marfacc.com

November 16-17 GALLERY NIGHT – Alpine
(432) 837-3067 www.alpinegallerynight.com

December 2007

TBA FRONTIER CHRISTMAS – Fort Davis
www.fortdavis.com

TBA COWBOY CHRISTMAS BALL – Alpine
(432) 837-8240 www.sulross.edu

December 7-9 SUL ROSS STUDIO THEATRE – Alpine
www.sulross.edu

December 8 & 15 CHRISTMAS TREE HUNT – Davis Mountains Preserve
www.fortdavis.com

December 15 ROBERT EARL KEEN – Ballroom Marfa
www.marfacc.com

December 15-16 47th DAVIS MTNS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
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TALK to TH

(continued from page 2)

Ohio, too, on the Ohio River. I think the picture of the Frio River [by Richard Reynolds] on page 41 is one of the best ever in your magazine.

ELMER GOLDEN
Cincinnati, Ohio

Remembering Lady Bird

EDITOR Charles Lohrmann's comments on Lady Bird Johnson in Up Front [September] were right on target. She will be missed...and never forgotten.

CHRIS CULIFER

KEYVIN STILLMAN



Our apologies to Hollis Wayne and her horse KC's Choice, whom we misidentified in September's story on "The Long, Unwinding Road." Hollis and her husband, Beau Graham, run the Happy Horse Hotel (www.happyhorsehotel.com), near McKinney Roughs Nature Park.

Happy and Not Anonymous

I READ the "Angry and Anonymous" letter in Talk to TH [September]. I consider anything that comes without a name to be trash. I think TH does a super job of telling about our great state—including all of the good places to eat and visit. Thank you for a beautiful magazine.

PATSY PORTER
Baytown

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

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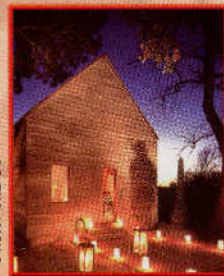


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Photo: TxDOT



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For THE ROAD

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS AND PLACES

HOLIDAY HOOPS

BASKETBALL FANS, TAKE NOTE: MAKE A fast break for **South Padre Island** this November, and score points with family and friends. Consider the fun of opening the basketball season with the **South Padre Island Invitational Basketball Tournament**, featuring teams from Vanderbilt, Bradley, Iowa, Utah State, Valparaiso, Austin Peay, Florida Gulf Coast, and Maryland-Eastern Shore at the SPI Convention Centre, November 23-24. This popular Gulf of Mexico vacation destination is a lot closer than Maui or the Virgin Islands (home to similar Thanksgiving holiday tournaments) and substantially more appealing than a cold turkey sandwich, don't you think?



COURTESY SOUTH PADRE ISLAND CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

A boardwalk behind the South Padre Island Convention Centre leads to fine sunset-viewing. Catch the South Padre Island Invitational Basketball Tournament at the center November 23-24.

Several of the participating schools bring programs of longstanding achievement and tradition, with Nashville's Vanderbilt Commodores fresh off an NCAA Sweet 16 appearance. And, before and after the games (or anytime, all year, for that

matter), you can enjoy the beach, the sunsets, the waves, and other South Padre pleasures. Whether you're staying at the Casa de Siesta, the Sheraton, the Brown Pelican Inn B&B, or any of the island's other fine accommodations, give yourself a late-November holiday treat. For more information and tournament tickets, contact the SPI Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800/SO-PADRE; www.sopadre.com. —M.L.

The Art of Discovery



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ROLE PLAYING

IN AUSTIN, WHEN STUDENTS AT THE University of Texas leave town for the holidays, the campus starts to resemble a playground with hilly parks, interesting architecture, and superlative libraries, theaters, and museums—not to mention convenient parking places (a rare treat!). It's the perfect time to check out exhibitions at the **Harry Ransom Center** and the **Blanton Museum of Art**.

Through December 30, the Harry Ransom Center presents *Rehearsing the American Dream: Arthur Miller's Theater*, the first exhibition drawn from the playwright's archive, much of which was acquired shortly before Miller's death in 2005. Published works, scripts-in-progress, photographs, and playbills illustrate the breadth of Miller's career, but it is his personal correspondence—to and from friends, publishers, supporters, and enemies—that sheds light on his tenacity and sense of honor. Don't miss the eloquent letter to movie magnate Spyros P. Skouras, in which Miller explains his refusal to name Communist-party members before the

House Un-American Activities Committee. (The paragraph about his wife, Marilyn Monroe, reveals volumes about their romance.)

A few blocks away, the Blanton Museum of Art takes a seven-league step away from the mainstream with *Mike's World: Michael Smith & Joshua White (and Other Collaborators)*, a contemporary show guaranteed to make you question what art is all about. Is art imagination? Craft? Is it the medium *and* the message?

See what you think: Suspend your disbelief and explore the world of a character named Mike, a persona brought to "life" over the past three decades. Video, set design, performance art, drawings, and found art help create Mike's alternative universe. For example, in one astoundingly realistic theatrical set, you can explore Mike's bankrupt theatrical lighting company, complete with a meticulously disheveled disco-light show-room. Puzzled and amused? That's a good thing in Mike's world. Call 512/471-7324; www.blantonmuseum.org. —L.M.

IN LOCAL COLOR

EVER SINCE BUDDY HOLLY BLAZED HIS way to the top of the music charts in the 1950s, inquiring minds have wondered: Why do so many people in the Lubbock area turn to creative outlets like music and art? Painter Carol C. Howell, whose studio will be on the 11th annual **Local Color Studio Tour** on November 10-11, thinks they do it to stay sane. "Without art," she says with a laugh, "what would we do with all this energy?"

This year's tour highlights nine studios across town, where 50 Lubbock-area artists show off their work and demonstrate how they make art. Some sculpt, paint, weld, or create mixed-media pieces that defy easy description; others work exclusively with textiles, jewelry, glass, photography, metal, and wood. Some studios will host live music and offer food and beverages, and all promise a convivial environment that fosters creativity. "Sometimes it's intimidating to go to a gallery," says Carol. "But when you walk into someone's messy studio, and you can ask about materials and see how they work, art becomes accessible."

This year, tour-goers can take advantage of bus service between galleries (buses run every 20 minutes). Call the Lubbock Art Alliance at 806/744-2787; www.lubbockarts.org. —L.M.

FOR THE LOVE OF CHOCOLATE

IF YOU BREAK FOR CHOCOLATE, HERE'S some breaking news: One of the state's premier chocolatiers, Frans Hendriks of **ROSCAR Chocolates**, has opened a small tasting room in his pristine production facility in **Bastrop**. Retail sales used to be limited to the Internet, but now connoisseurs of fine European chocolate can come to the source and buy (and sample) from glass display cases on site.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH ABELES



Playwright Arthur Miller and his wife, Marilyn Monroe, pose with Miller's parents in 1956. The Harry Ransom Center presents an exhibition drawn from Miller's archive through December 30.

Before deciding on your purchase, admire Frans' hand-crafted bonbons—miniature works of art in flavors like brandy and passionfruit—and peruse his Texas Country Truffles, including Kahlúa and espresso, rum and lemon curd, and one called "pure soul." ROSCAR also offers some new products, including what has to be the most extravagant delight ever—velvety-smooth ganache in a jar, in four flavors. It even comes with a spoon. The tasting room is currently open on weekends, but will expand hours after December 1. Call 512/303-1500; www.roscar.com.

—N.M.

UNCORKED

IF YOU'RE A WINE-DRINKER, NOVEMBER is a great month to tour a Texas winery. Vintners are taking it easy—well, easier—in these cooler days between harvest and planting, and they'll likely have time to show you the ropes. Check out www.gotexaswine.org for details on almost 90 wineries statewide, but here's one to visit next time you're looking for an adventure: **Brushy Creek Vineyards** in **Alvord**, where winemaker Les Constable experiments with grapes from around the world in his quest for spectacular wine. "My wine comes from 100 percent Texas grapes, and about 85 percent of them are grown locally," says Les. "Wine

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For THE ROAD

tastes different depending on where the grapes are grown, and I wanted to make Texas wine in a Texas winery."

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ON THE BAYOU

ON THE WEST SIDE OF GALVESTON BAY, only minutes from the sprawling NASA suburbs of Pasadena, river otters, American alligators, egrets, osprey, and dozens of other creatures thrive in the wetland and marsh habitats of Armand Bayou Nature Center. "One of the biggest surprises for most people," says stewardship coordinator Mark Kramer, "is that Armand Bayou is a relatively pristine wilderness located in the midst of one of the largest urban areas in the United States."

You can visit Armand Bayou any day to explore five miles of hiking trails, or bring your bike and pedal a nine-mile path around the preserve's perimeter. But to get an insider's look at the preserve, make a reservation to take a guided pontoon tour, a 1½-hour adventure led by expert naturalists. Tours take place most Saturdays. "The boats are electric, so they're very quiet," says Mark, "and wildlife-viewing is the real focus of the trip. The boats float right through the heart of the preserve."

If you'd like a more intimate connection with the shallow backwaters of the bayou, guided canoe tours launch every other weekend. "Because the canoe groups tend to get scattered, it's difficult for one person to give an interpretive tour," says Mark. "But you have more freedom to explore the grassy shorelines." That's where numerous deer, reptiles, and birds start their day. And where you can, too. Call 866/417-3818; www.abnc.org. —L.M.

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COME ON DOWN!

You may remember his voice from his disc-jockey days, when he hosted radio shows such as *Hotline in Dallas*, where his liberal positions on controversial topics often brought calls from Ku Klux Klan members. But most likely you'll remember Robert Ray Roddy for his flashy silk suits and his enthusiastic call to excited contestants on the game show *The Price Is Right* to "Come on down!"

Rod Roddy, as he was known, was born in Fort Worth in 1937. After graduating from Texas Christian University, he started his career in radio, working at stations in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. He eventually moved on to television, where a four-season stint (1977-81) as narrator on the comedy series *Soap* opened the doors to becoming a game-show announcer. After time spent on *Press Your Luck* and *Love Connection*, he joined Bob Barker, the longtime host of *The Price Is Right*, as the show's announcer.

When he joined the show in the mid-1980s, Rod started wearing flamboyant suits, which became his trademark. As the official ambassador of the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand, Rod visited the country several times a year and, while there, would select fabrics and have the suits custom made, often embellished with sequins and feathers.

In 2001, after a lifetime of nearly perfect health (he had a tonsillectomy at age eight), Rod was diagnosed with late stage colon cancer. While doctors prepped him for emergency surgery on September 11 of that year, he watched a live report of the 9/11 attacks unfold on television. His doctors denied his request to postpone the operation, since he was bleeding internally. His illness, combined with the shocking news, made a strong impact on him, and over



CBS/LANDOV

Fort Worth native Rod Roddy (1937-2003), a longtime announcer on *The Price Is Right*, was known for his energetic presence and loud suits.

the next two years, he became an advocate for early detection of colon cancer. However, cancer caught up with him in October 2003; he died at age 66. In a message to his fans on the CBS Web site, Rod Roddy cautioned, "Don't ignore your health. Even if you think you're healthy, don't ignore it."

—Jennifer Lee, Austin

BIG, BAD BRADBURN? PERHAPS NOT.

The more we learn about the conflicts that shaped the state of Texas, the more complex that history appears. Many Tejanos—some of whom had fought alongside Texians in the 1830s revolution against Mexico—chose to live north of the Rio Grande after Texas won its independence and achieved statehood.

Likewise, many Anglo-Americans remained citizens of Mexico.

One such person who lived south of the border was John "Juan" Davis Bradburn, a Virginia native who came to Texas around 1812 with the filibuster expeditions that sought to end Spanish rule in the region. For several years, he served noted anti-royalists, such as Vicente Ramón Guerrero and Agustín de Iturbide. After Mexico won its independence in 1821, Bradburn married heiress María Josefa Hurtado de Mendoza and remained in the Mexican army as a lieutenant colonel.

Placed in charge of the Mexican customs house at Anahuac in the early 1830s, Bradburn clashed with settlers over tariffs and other regulations. In fact, he arrested future Alamo martyr William B. Travis and other Texian leaders. But after Colonel José de las Piedras arrived with reinforcements, the rebels still outnumbered the Mexicans, and the Texians were released. Bradburn was relieved of command and, fearing for his life, returned to Mexico.

In 1836, living in retirement near Matamoros, he was ordered (against his will) by Santa Anna to report to the Mexican army at the Texas port of Copano to join a force led by José de Urrea.

In his 1841 book, *Texas and the Texans*, Henry Stuart Foote described Bradburn as "an evil spirit, hovering, with gloomy and malignant aspect, in the rear of Santa Anna's army." But 141 years later, historian Margaret Swett Henson rehabilitated Bradburn's image in *Juan Davis Bradburn: A Reappraisal of the Mexican Commander of Anahuac* (1982). Mining previously unexamined Bradburn papers, Henson concluded that her subject "was only acting to uphold the laws of his chosen nation."

Bradburn died the year after Foote's book was released. *Puertas Verdes*, his Hidalgo County ranch, later became the site of La Lomita Mission.

—Gene Fowler, Austin

Spotlight

ON A SAN ANTONIO WEEKEND

© AL RENDON

The Alameda Revisited

MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, I ATTENDED A festive El Día de los Muertos party at San Antonio's Alameda Theater, as part of a celebration of the city's Mexican-American heritage. As Monterrey-born artist Jesse Treviño signed posters of his 1980 painting *El Alameda*, we toasted the theater's planned restoration with margaritas and toured the spectacular building with wide eyes. Its 90-foot marquee winked in pink, aqua, and green neon. Etched-



The Museo Alameda brings a new look to San Antonio's famous Market Square.

glass partitions and curved walls, vibrant tiles, elegant chandeliers, and phosphorescent murals made the place seem magical. I could only imagine what it was like in its heyday in the 1950s, when El Teatro Alameda was San Antonio's premiere Spanish-language movie palace.

The restoration architects hope to reopen

the 2,400-seat theater by its 60th anniversary in 2009. Stay tuned. But in the meantime, visitors to San Antonio can marvel at the fabulous new Museo Alameda, a museum in Market Square that tells the theater's story, along with that of Latino contributions throughout the United States.

In May, eager to share the Alameda with my husband, I decided to book a hotel and make a weekend out of it. And when we decided to do the trip on the cheap, we discovered yet another restoration success story San Antonio can be proud of: the River Walk Drury Plaza Hotel, housed in the 1929 Alamo National Bank Building.

From the hotel, a five-minute walk takes you to the Museo Alameda. Hot-pink stucco walls and sharp, contemporary angles collide joyfully with the hustle-bustle of El Mercado, where hundreds of vendors sell everything from wooden train sets, bottles of Mexican vanilla, Taxco-made jewelry, metal citrus juicers, and multicolored blankets.

The museum's intricately carved metal façade sparkles like a punched-tin luminaria. Curvy tiled benches look into an outdoor sculpture garden shaded by palms, and keen eyes will spy authentic lava-rock *molcajetes* (used to grind corn and spices) cemented into the exterior walls. Inside, spacious galleries host permanent and temporary exhibitions of artwork related to Latin-American culture, including a display of over-the-top 1950s movie posters.

The museum's gift shop rivals some of the best folk-art stores in town. Here, you'll find books on Mexican film stars, mastering Spanish slang, *lucha libre* (stylized Mexican wrestling), and cooking; jewelry made of silver, ceramic, and plastic; textiles woven in Oaxaca and Guatemala; posters and note cards representing both pop and traditional culture; and imaginative trinkets galore.

You can easily walk from the museum to enjoy a good meal, too. If you've never been to Mi Tierra, the popular, 24-hour Mexican restaurant

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that has operated since 1941 in Market Square, go. Forget the lines: They move fast. Forget the tourists: Many of them are locals playing tourist for the day. Mi Tierra is a San Antonio institution for a reason. Don't miss the carved wooden bar, the year-round Christmas lights, *los trovadores* (strolling musicians), and the long glass case stacked with trays of chewy Mexican candies and multicolored pastries.

But we wanted a more low-key experience. I had practiced my Spanish and enjoyed a toothsome cheese-enchilada plate at the nearby, no-frills Commerce Café during a prior visit,

PHOTO BY NARCY STUDIOS, CUBA, COURTESY OF OMER-PARDILLO CID



Through April 27, 2008, the Museo Alameda hosts *Azúcar! The Life and Music of Celia Cruz*. Here, Celia poses with La Sonora Matancera.

but it had closed for the day by the time we moseyed over for a late lunch. We asked for recommendations at the shoe shop next door, though, and a salesman told us about Arizona, a breakfast-and-lunch spot a few blocks away. It was still open.

We ordered *came guisada* and giant iced teas from a menu written on a dry-erase board, drizzled tongue-searing salsa onto thick, salty tortilla chips, and smiled. My stew—made of hand-cut beef in a delicately spicy gravy—was tender and delicious. In October, Arizona owner Linda Bocanegra opened another eatery called the Café Alameda directly across the street from the museum. It focuses on healthy, low-fat Mexican dishes using natural meats, whole grains, and fresh vegetables and fruit.

Back at the hotel, we explored the historic property. The movers-and-shakers of the Drury corporation, I learned, have made numer-

ous restoration efforts across the United States, and for this San Antonio project, they spared little expense. They restored the gold-leaf trim throughout the lobby, the bronze-and-glass entry doors, the glossy-white travertine floors, and a 40-foot stained-glass window. They even found and rehung six of the lobby's original, massive chandeliers, which had been sold in the 1970s to a convent in Boerne.

In the basement, you can see the bank's original vaults, and on the walls, dozens of photographs from the 1940s and 1950s depict typical banking activities. And on the upper floors,

where businessmen once had their offices, pleasant rooms now comfort travelers. Many of the doors are originals; some still have their antique mail slots.

With all this history come the conveniences of a chain hotel—a complimentary breakfast in the morning (cereal, fruit, bacon and eggs, and unremarkable coffee that sufficed to wake us up), happy hour in the afternoons (with pretzels and nuts and basic-yet-potent cocktails), and even a rooftop pool and hot tub, which were full of teenagers. (Room rates average

about \$140 per night, but the hotel honors all sorts of discount programs, making it a popular place for families.)

That evening, we abandoned the three-cocktail (!) happy hour at the Drury in favor of carefully made concoctions elsewhere. First, we walked over to *Azúcar*, a lively bar and restaurant next to the elegant Hotel Valencia. We sidled up to the gleaming glass-tiled bar, ordered trendy mojitos, and sipped blissfully

intoxicating mixtures of fruit, mint, and rum as we watched the evening's well-heeled party traffic pick up. Then we ventured down the street to a lounge called Drink, where we perused a menu full

of wines, beers, and some 50 specialty martinis before settling on blueberry-infused vodka gimlets concocted just for us. If you go after midnight, I learned, all open bottles of wine sell for \$5 a glass—a tip I'll remember for next time. Because I'll definitely be back. —LORI MOFFATT

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TOP Tables

BY NOLA McKEY

NOTEWORTHY CULINARY JOURNEYS

SYLVIA'S ENCHILADA KITCHEN

Enchiladas y Mas, Mas, Mas!

SHOW ME a Mexican-food menu, and I'll go for the enchiladas every time. So it is no surprise that I was drawn to Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen, a restaurant on Houston's West Side that serves 18 kinds of enchiladas, each representing a different region of Texas or Mexico.

I'm not sure when my fascination with enchiladas began, but I know it wasn't in my childhood. My only exposure to enchiladas back then was the canned version my father sometimes heated up on occasional forays into the kitchen. As a result, I grew up in southeast Texas thinking I didn't like Mexican food.

Once I discovered the real thing, I was hooked, especially when it came to the succulent, sauce-covered bundles on the ubiquitous combination plate. Check out the menu at Sylvia's; I guarantee you'll find a fix with your name on it.



ALL PHOTOS © KIM COFFMAN

With enchiladas representing cities from Lubbock (beef with a chile gravy) to Tampico, Mexico (shrimp and cheese with a Spanish-style sauce), Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen has an entrée to delight every enchilada-lover. Other Mexican favorites are on the menu, too.

The enchilada lineup at this bustling, fashionable restaurant is so extensive that it's divided into sections—Tex-Mex, New Tex-Mex, and Mexican Style—with individual entrées named for towns like

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My favorite? I'm still deciding, but the Sarita enchiladas (*enchiladas de calabacitas*) are definitely in the running.

Donna and San Miguel de Allende. The Donna—beef enchiladas topped with Sylvia's signature chile gravy—evokes images of the Rio Grande Valley, while the San Miguel is an enticing version of *enchiladas suizas*, the interior-Mexican dish that pairs chicken with a creamy tomatillo sauce.

My favorite? I'm still deciding, but the Sarita enchiladas (*enchiladas de calabacitas*) are definitely in the running. These combine queso with squash, corn, tomatoes, onions, and garlic—vegetables found in the traditional Mexican dish *calabacitas*—and have a light cream sauce with a hint of cilantro.

If you're watching your diet, try the Crystal City enchiladas. With a filling of fresh spinach sautéed with onion and garlic and topped with a mildly spicy toma-



Sylvia's hands-on owner, Sylvia Casares-Copeland, teaches cooking classes in the restaurant's spacious party room some weekends.

and chocolate. Like everything else at Sylvia's, the desserts are made fresh daily. "Fresh" is a word you hear a lot at

Sylvia's. Owner Sylvia Casares-Copeland, who grew up cooking Tex-Mex dishes in her native Brownsville and later earned a degree in home economics from the University of Texas at Austin, takes pride in making her food "the old-fashioned way, just like my grandmother." She says, "At the restaurant, we don't take any shortcuts—we start each dish with fresh ingredients, including all of our gravies and sauces. Some of them take 12 hours to prepare, but making them every day is the only way to assure that they have the full, authentic flavor."

Sylvia's border heritage influences the restaurant in other ways, too. "The Tex-Mex of the Valley is a simpler style of cooking," she says. "For example, many Mexican restaurants smother their food with cheese, which overpowers the other flavors. We don't use as much cheese; for us, it's more like a garnish."

The restaurateur does subscribe to one departure from her culinary roots: She doesn't cook with lard. "Some people think you have to use lard or bacon drippings in refried beans," she (*continued on page 57*)

SYLVIA'S ENCHILADA KITCHEN is at 12637 Westheimer, #140 (just west of the intersection of Westheimer and Dairy Ashford), in Houston. The menu features 18 kinds of enchiladas, plus a full range of other Mexican-food specialties. Hours: Mon-Thu 11-9, Fri 11-10, Sat 8 a.m.-10 p.m., and Sun 8-3. Breakfast served 8-noon on weekends. *Reservations recommended for weekend evenings, especially for large groups.* Call 281/679-8300; www.sylviasenchiladakitchen.com. Full-service catering also available; call 281/546-9403.



tillo sauce, they're low-fat but still luscious. When I dined at Sylvia's recently, one of my friends ordered these and pronounced them out-of-this-world. "You'd never know they're low-fat," she said. "The sauce has such a full, rich flavor."

Although enchiladas are the main draw here, other house favorites include carne guisada, chiles rellenos, fajitas, and flautas, plus killer guacamole that comes three ways (try the *pica mole*, if you like jalapeños). No matter which entrée you choose, keep dessert in mind. I recommend the flan (the warm caramel sauce complements the silky custard perfectly), but don't discount Sylvia's tres leches, which comes in two versions: original



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ON **Tech** and TEXAS

AN INTERVIEW with
the perspicacious
Tech head coach can
go anywhere and
everywhere.

I never thought I would save a cocktail napkin.

Yet there it is tacked to my bulletin board, a four-inch-by-four-inch paper square full of X's and O's. The first game of tic-tac-toe I ever played with my child? No, good guess. These X's and O's represent football players. I will not soon forget the warm spring night when Mike Leach designed the unstoppable play.

Mike Leach has been coaching football for 20 years, ever since he finished law school. Armed with a law degree from Pepperdine University, he might have become an attorney for the defense. But Mike chose the unconventional path and became a coach of offense, proving to be among the most innovative in all of college football. In his seven previous years at Texas Tech, the Red Raiders have led the Big 12 in total offense six times. And Tech is the only school in the conference to have qualified for a bowl game in every year of the Big 12's existence. Seven of those bowl appearances have been under the guidance of Mike Leach.

An interview with the perspicacious Tech head coach can go anywhere and everywhere, from the potential evils of society without a middle class to the colors of the Caribbean. He loves rock 'n' roll, pirates, and steak. He can find two of those three in abundant supply in his adopted hometown—Lubbock, Texas.

CROUCHING TIGER: TEXAS TECH HEAD FOOTBALL COACH MIKE LEACH CONTEMPLATES GAME ACTION FROM THE RED RAIDER SIDELINE.



JOHN: What do you like best about living in Lubbock?

MIKE: The weather is great. I like that there is very little traffic. It's about the perfect size. The people are incredibly friendly. And it has some of the best steaks in America.

JOHN: Where does one go for steak here?

MIKE: Well, there are three places I like: Cagle Steaks, which is rustic, and looks like the set of *Rio Bravo*; The 50 Yard Line, which kind of reminds me of the Touchdown Club from the old TV show *Coach*; and then the Double Nickel, which is a big-city, fancy, dress-up place that's kind of a unique version of Del Frisco's.

ARMED with a law degree from Pepperdine, Leach might have become an attorney for the defense.

JOHN: The implication is that Lubbock is not a big city. There are plenty of West Texas towns that would beg to differ.

MIKE: Well, we have the best of both worlds because we're a big college town. We're the second-biggest city in the Big 12. We have more than 200,000 people, and yet, with that said, it feels like a small town. It's still a college town, with everybody wearing the double T's and Red Raider hats and all that stuff. It feels like a college town with all of the benefits of a big city.

JOHN: With your stature, you could be a rock star here. Do you go places in Lubbock? Do you mingle?

MIKE: Yeah, I can't sing, or anything



COACH LEACH, HERE WITH TECH WIDE RECEIVER EDWARD BRITTON, ENJOYS A NUMBER OF ENTERTAINING TEXAS ESCAPES WHEN HE'S AWAY FROM THE GAME.

like that, but I go wherever I want. There are all kinds of friendly folks and good people here.

JOHN: What does a West Texan like yourself do with his leisure time?

MIKE: We've got a great movie theater. Of course, the kids are involved with stuff, like baseball. They've got really good Little League programs here. They actually have two leagues. My son plays in two leagues every year. The kids will keep you occupied with some activity.

Then, there are some pretty cool ranches. You go out there and play some cards and ride the horses and hunt a bit.

JOHN: I hear the hunting is good out here.

MIKE: There is really good turkey hunting...and pigs. Quail, dove, and pheasant are really good, too.

JOHN: Do you vacation in Texas?

MIKE: I'll tell you a good place to go, a place that I really like—Corpus Christi. There's great seafood, great Mexican food, and really good fishing. You go do Snoopy's Pier. Now that is really good seafood.

JOHN: How did you discover Corpus?

MIKE: Like everywhere else—through recruiting. People say the weather there is hot. Well, all of Texas is hot. But, usually there's a breeze on the coast, so it's not so bad. You can get *(continued on page 56)*

A Texas Tradition



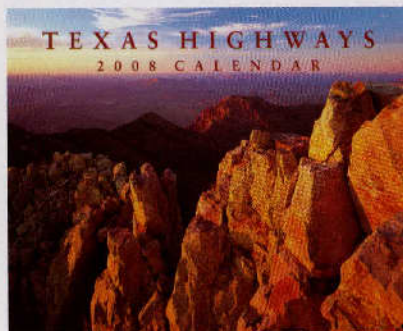
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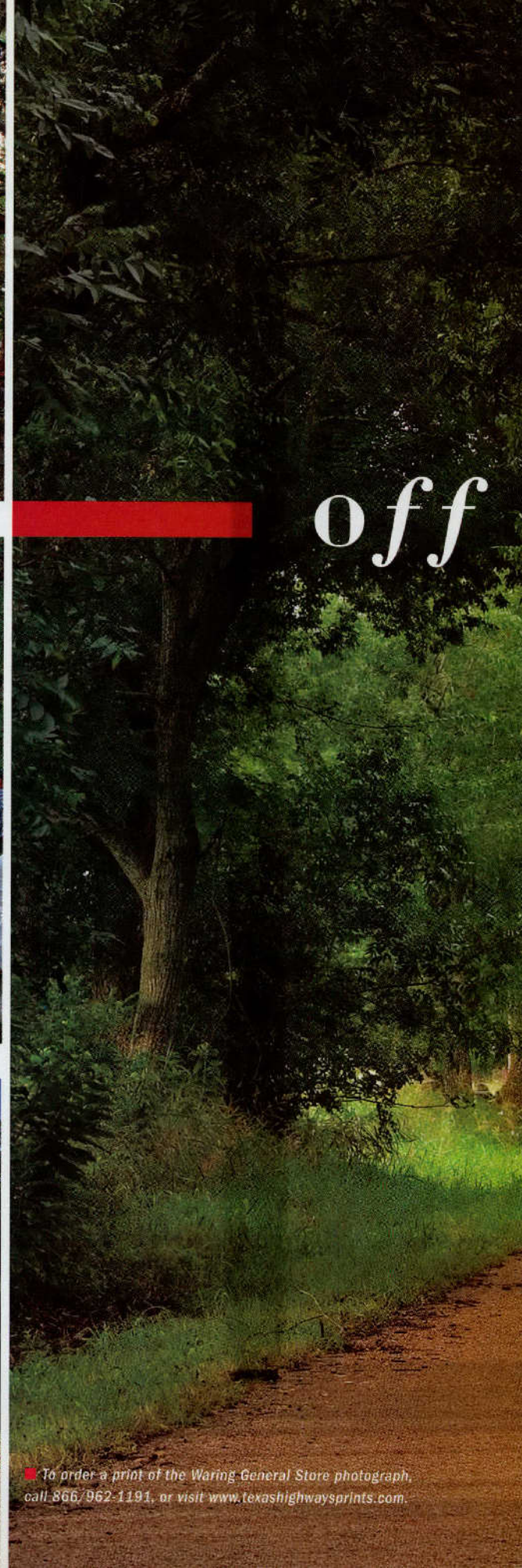
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THE BEATEN PAST



**BY JEFFERSON MORGENTHALER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT**

Adventurous travelers can still drive a historic, scenic, and little-known stretch of Highway Number 9 through the Hill Country.

FACING PAGE, FROM TOP: Long ago supplanted by bigger and faster freeways, Old # 9 still wends through some of Texas' prettiest countryside. Block Creek Natural Area caters to nature photographers, offering lodging in a restored caboos (www.blockcreeknaturalarea.com). Summertime visitors to Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area wait for a spectacular bat emergence. The Waring General Store's quiet countenance changes during the Wednesday-night Steak Nites, when live music and hearty steak dinners bring in some 300 people.



The route winds through tangled stands of oaks that open suddenly into bright green meadows rimmed with split-rail fences and low stone walls.

IN June 1917, the Texas State Highway Department put its vision of the future on paper, tracing 26 highways traversing the state and reaching beyond. Each highway was named and numbered, and perhaps the most ambitious was Number 9: the Puget Sound-Gulf Highway. As it turned out, though, Highway 9 reached only as far as Amarillo before being melded into other roads.

The adventurous traveler can still drive a historic, scenic, and little-known stretch of Old #9 through the Texas Hill Country. This excursion begins about seven miles north of Boerne, at Exit 533 on Interstate 10 West. Leaving the interstate,

follow FM 289 a short distance into Nelson City, where the 1929 Nelson City Dance Hall and the legendary Po Po Restaurant have elevated two-stepping and fried chicken to an art form.

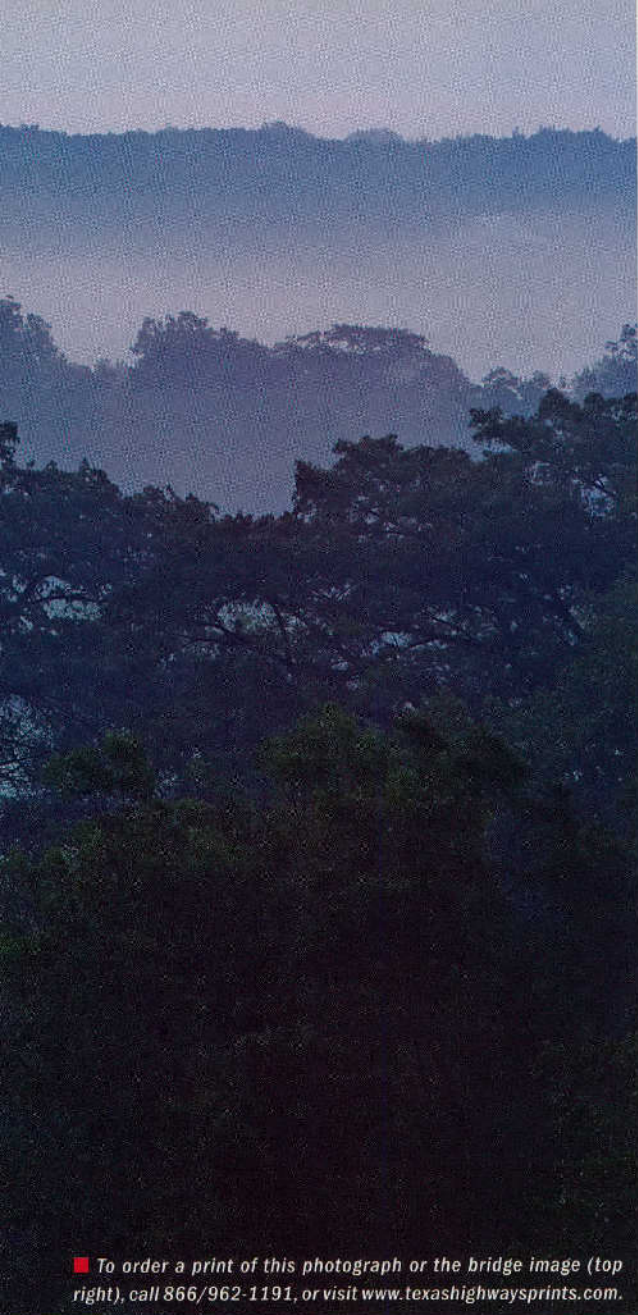
FM 289 turns to the left at Nelson City, but you will take the other fork, the Waring-Welfare Road, which dips downhill to the right. Yucca, purple-flowering cenizo, and native grasses dot the rolling terrain. Soon, you'll see the first gate of the Don Strange Ranch, a 125-acre collection of historic Texas architecture that hosts elaborate Texas-themed events, complete with gigantic-but-gentle Longhorn cattle.

As you pass the gate, keep your eyes peeled for a historic marker on the right;

it commemorates Nicolaus Zink, a remarkable German immigrant who in 1844-45 shepherded 500 colonists from windswept Matagorda Bay to the lush valley that would become New Braunfels. That's his cabin in the pasture, nestled against the oaks.

The erstwhile highway continues north through Welfare, which consists almost entirely of the Welfare Café, where owner-chef Gaby McCormick serves gourmet German fare. On cool evenings, diners linger beneath vine-covered outdoor arbors where friendly dogs curl up at their feet and the occasional turkey pecks for morsels.

Just over a mile beyond Welfare, the road dips to cross Joshua Creek. On the



■ To order a print of this photograph or the bridge image (top right), call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

other bank is a sign marking the turnoff to Joshua Creek Ranch, a popular wing-shooting ranch set on high, oak-laced bluffs above the creek. In the autumn, guests hunt quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge, and pheasant, but summer—when rates are lowest—lends itself to activities like fishing, floating, kayaking, and hiking.

Two miles farther, the Waring-Welfare Road ends at the handful of buildings that comprise downtown Waring, where the Waring General Store hosts family-friendly live music and steak dinners to large crowds at its popular Wednesday

Steak Nites. To continue the path of Old Number 9, turn right onto FM 1621, and drive toward FM 473.

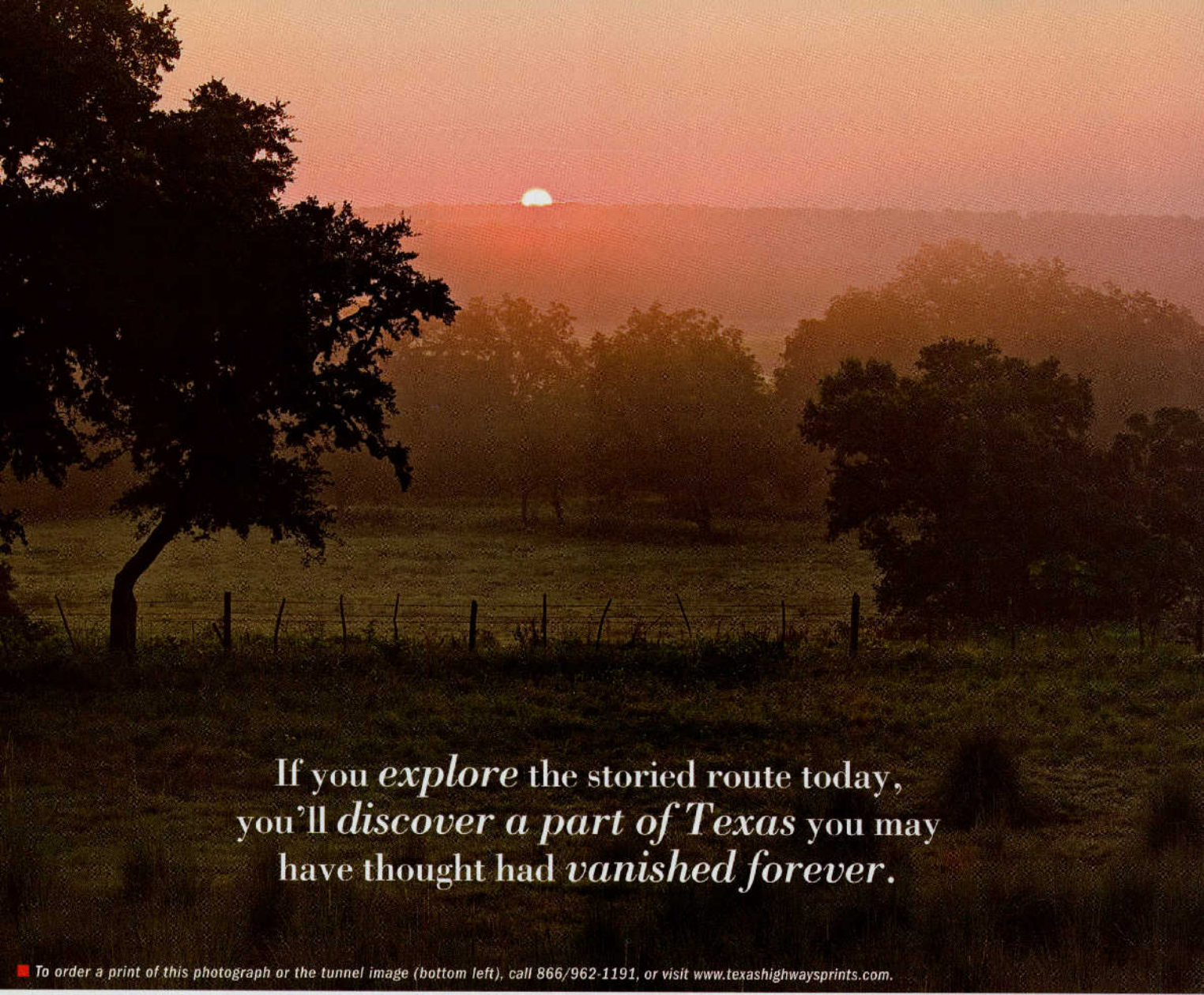
You'll see the soaring cypress trees along the Guadalupe River just before the road turns sharply to the left to make a low-water crossing. Their branches cast shadows along the riverbanks, making this one of the most tranquil and picturesque spots in the Hill Country.

Three miles farther, FM 473's T intersection seems to cut off the path of Old Number 9, but the vintage highway lingers undetected nearby. Turn left, taking

473 toward Comfort. You're now following the ancient Pinta Trail, a path used by Jumanos, Apaches, and Comanches, then later by Spanish explorers and German colonists. The trail eventually stretched to El Paso, and was known as the Upper Military Road. And from today's FM 473 to Fredericksburg, it was Old Number 9.

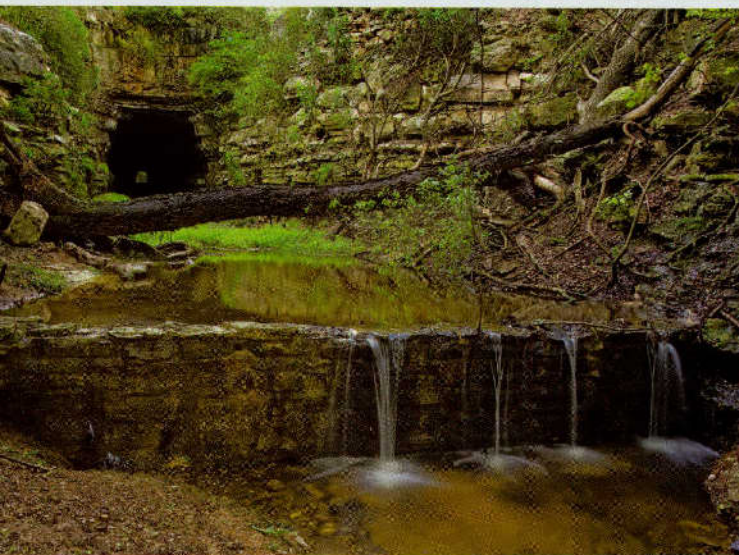
A mile west, just across the low-water bridge at Block Creek, FM 473 encounters a stop sign at another intersection, and turns hard to the left. Sharp-eyed drivers will note the battered green street sign at the corner, pointing to the

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Dawn imbues the rolling hills of Kendall County with ethereal purple. This abandoned bridge over the Guadalupe River once served the San Antonio, Fredericksburg & Northern Railway. The stone farmstead of German settler Ferdinand Hohenberger boasts a Texas Historical Commission marker.



If you *explore* the storied route today,
you'll *discover* a part of Texas you may
have thought had *vanished forever*.

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CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP: A new day brings new discoveries on Old #9. Through parts of Kendall County, the road is known as Old San Antonio Road. The 920-foot-long tunnel of the San Antonio, Fredericksburg & Northern Railway, which was abandoned in 1942, now houses millions of Mexican free-tailed bats from April through October. The Alamo Springs Café, famous for its juicy cheeseburgers, hosts live music on Friday nights.

right and marking Old Number 9. Turning right onto this stretch of the historic road, you follow Block Creek upstream. High, flat berms remain from the long-abandoned San Antonio, Fredericksburg & Northern Railway, with yawning gaps where wooden trestles once stood. The route winds through tangled stands of oaks that open suddenly into bright green meadows rimmed with split-rail fences and low stone walls.

AFTER about five miles, the highway rises to top a ridge, drops, and then begins a winding ascent up Big Hill. Trees and brush conceal a railroad tunnel, which was bored for \$134,000 in 1913—a 920-foot-long shortcut that cost as much as five miles of track. Contrary to local legend, it is neither the only nor the first railroad tunnel in Texas, but it was a challenging project, taking five months and threatening the railroad with bankruptcy.

Today, the passage is the centerpiece of the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area. Three million Mexican free-tailed bats roost in the tunnel from spring through fall, before migrating to Mexico. From benches set into the hillside, visitors can watch swarms of bats emerge in the late evening to hunt for insects.

On Alamo Road, around the corner from the Old Tunnel, is the Alamo Springs Café, a modest roadhouse with a covered deck and weathered wooden tables. A slogan painted on the outside wall counters Luckenbach's "where everybody's somebody" motto with the funky reality of Alamo Springs, "where nobody is anybody."

When the Alamo Springs Café opened in 2004, its hand-formed hamburgers and cheeseburgers won rave reviews. Today, the menu extends from grilled quail to a chipotle chicken sandwich, but you'd be crazy if you didn't order the cheeseburger with grilled onions, on a jalapeño-cheese bun.

Descending Big Hill, Old Number 9 enters the Grape Creek basin, where stone barns and log houses chinked with burnt-lime mortar remain from German-Texan pioneer efforts. Black-headed Dorper sheep and white, red-headed Boer goats

scatter across pastures. At Billy and Susan Johnson's LLL Farms, purple lavender grows in fields surrounding an old stone ranch house, and a B&B provides a great place to watch the sunset and unwind.

Farther along the road, Ferdinand Hohenberger's stone homestead is distinguished by a Texas Historical Commission marker. Beginning in 1871, the Hohenbergers farmed this choice piece of the Hill Country, retaining the property in the family for almost 50 years. Just down the road is the 1860 August Ebers homestead, now a private residence. You can see that the house was built in two stages: In 1880, Ebers added a two-story stone addition to the original, smaller farmhouse. His stone barn has narrow slit openings that may have been gun ports for frontier defense. Both homesteads were part of a now-gone German farming community that was unnamed until 1913, when it became a railroad whistle-stop dubbed "Bankersmith" after Temple Doswell Smith, the railroad's banker.

Today, the principal evidence of Bankersmith is the gaily painted folk-art house of Maggie Montgomery—artist, musician, and mother of legendary Texas acoustic guitarist Monte Montgomery. Occasionally, Maggie opens her home as a concert venue.

Rising out of the Grape Creek basin, Old Number 9 passes Grapetown, another farm community that once was. The Grapetown schoolhouse still stands, as does its old stone hotel.

Above Grapetown, Old Number 9 rises to a plateau that terminates in a ridge. As it passes a disused stone service station on the left, the road opens onto a sudden panorama of the valley ahead. As you make your way toward US 290, the old

essentials ON THE TRAIL OF OLD NO. 9

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Welfare Café. Call 830/ 557-3700; www.welfaretxas.com.

Joshua Creek Ranch. Call 830/ 537-5090; www.joshuacreek.com.

Waring General Store. Call 210/434-2332; www.steaknite.com.

Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area. Call 866/978-2287; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Alamo Springs Café. Call 830/990-8004.

LLL Farms. Call 830/997-8575; www.lllfarms.com.



road offers views of the hills and valleys surrounding Fredericksburg. When you finally reach US 290, you can choose between the shops and restaurants of Fredericksburg to the left, or the offerings of Becker Vineyards to the right.

The decline of Old Number 9 began in the 1920s, when the Old Spanish Trail Association, promoting a tourist highway from Florida to California, chose undeveloped roads to the west as their preferred route. That insult became injury in 1932, when US 87 between Boerne and Fredericksburg bypassed and effectively replaced Old Number 9. In 1942, when the Fredericksburg & Northern abandoned its route and sold its rails for scrap, Old Number 9 broke into scattered, renamed fragments. And the final blow came in 1971, when I-37 was completed in Corpus Christi; the last section of Number 9 was soon cancelled. But if you explore the storied route today, you'll discover a part of Texas you may have thought had vanished forever.★

In October, JEFFERSON MORGENTHALER released his book *The History of the German Settlement of the Texas Hill Country* (www.mockingbirdbooks.com). He lives in Boerne, in a home built by German settlers in 1852.

Photographer LAURENCE PARENT enjoyed the fried chicken at Po Po Restaurant. A former engineer, he has published dozens of books, including *Big Bend National Park* (UT Press) with writer Joe Nick Patoski.



QUITMAN TIME

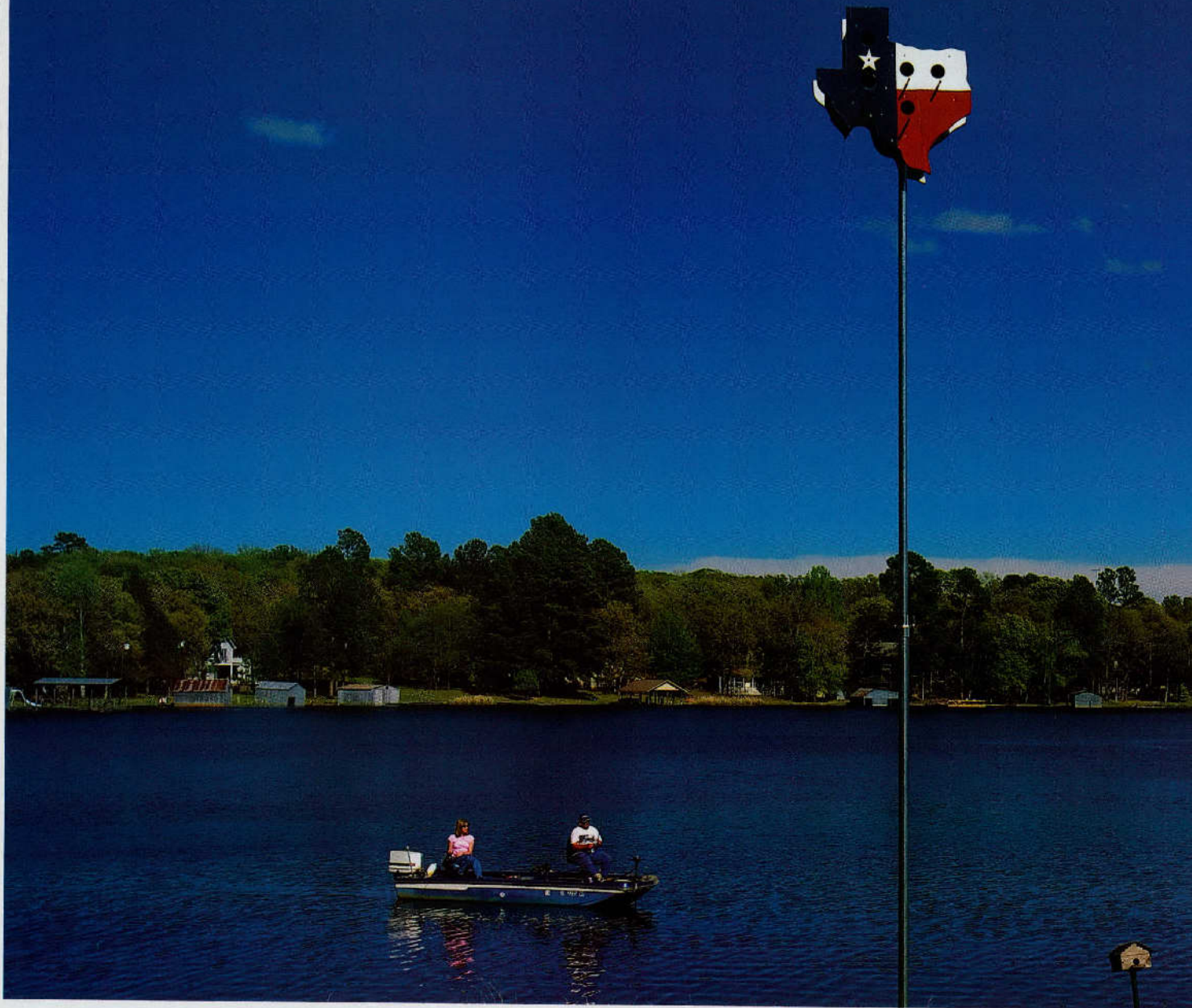
Set among three lakes against a backdrop of tall pines, this East Texas town lures nature lovers who treasure the community's quiet charm.

Story and Photographs by NATALIE CAUDILL



TRAFFIC WHIRS BY THE 1925 WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, DESIGNED BY C.H. LEINBACH.

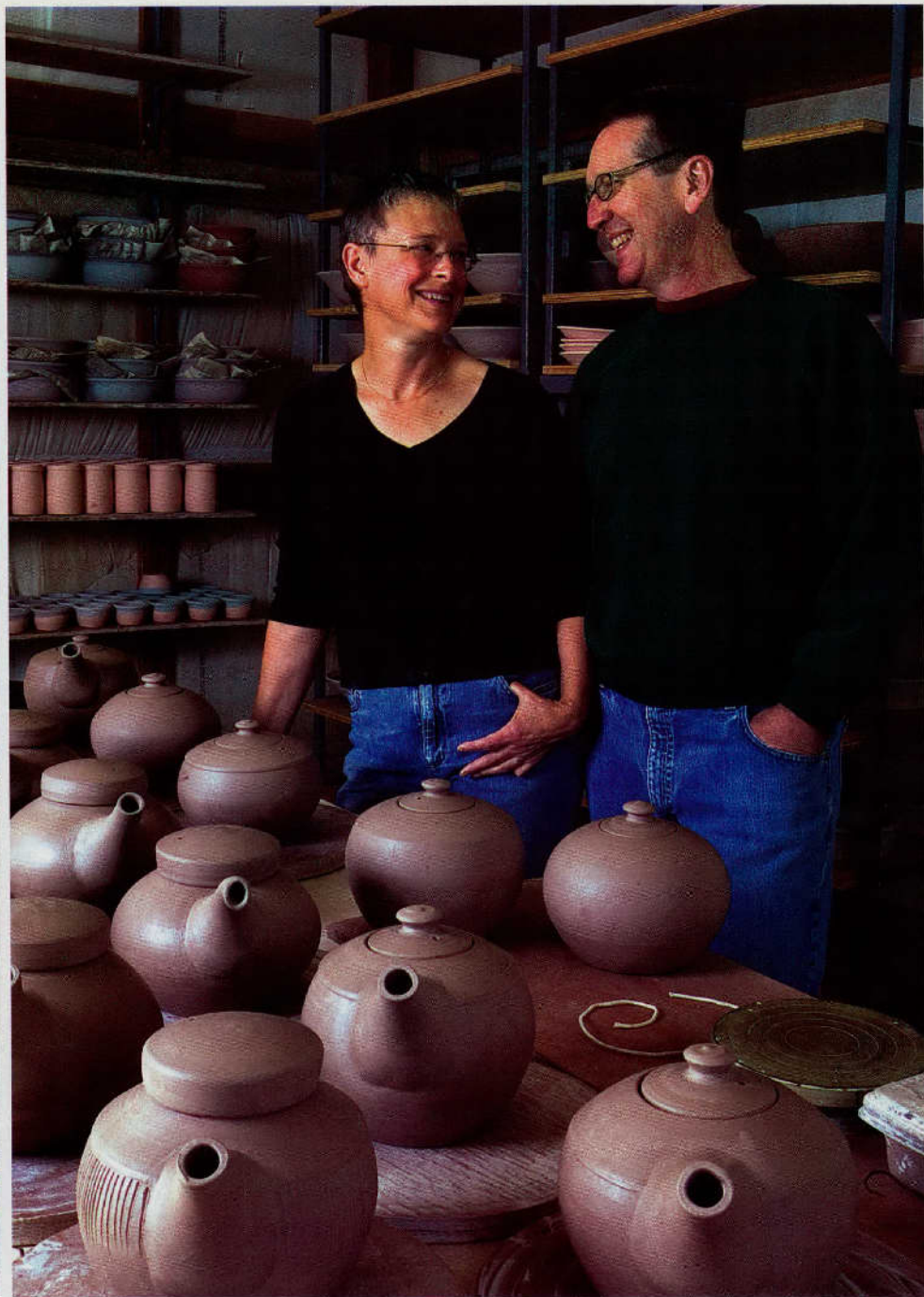
QUITMAN TIME



A nature-loving colleague in Dallas first brought the town of Quitman to my attention several years ago. She would often slip away to this East Texas community, and afterward describe her forays. While her husband and son fished, she searched neighboring towns for antiques, admired native pond plants, and lounged lakeside in a hammock, relishing the restful beauty of her secret getaways.

So I made a trip to see this place where my friend glimpsed delightful birds, collected turtle shells, and planted water irises.

At first glance, I thought downtown could be “Small-Town Anywhere,” with its stand of historic brick buildings and a packed parking lot at the Dairy Queen. Home



to a modest population of 2,000, Quitman serves as the Wood County seat, with a 1925 Classic-Revival courthouse crowning the town square.

I soon found Quitman's natural treasures, in the form of three area lakes. Lake Lydia is a fishing community comprised of wood-frame cabins, whose occupants embellish them with quaint signs naming their hideaways, such as "Holiday Lynn" or "Frog Hollow." Lake Fork, known for its record-breaking bass, hosted the Toyota Texas Bass Classic tournament this past spring, luring champion anglers nationwide. And Lake Quitman is popular with families looking to picnic or water ski.

I later discovered nearby Governor Jim Hogg City Park, a 28-acre site with historic structures and memorabilia related to native son Jim Hogg (the state's first Texas-

FROM LEFT: TONI AND ROCKY ROBINSON AWAIT THE DAY'S CATCH ON LAKE LYDIA. DAPHNE AND GARY HATCHER PERFORM FEATS OF CLAY AT PINE MILLS POTTERY, 10 MILES SOUTHEAST OF QUITMAN.

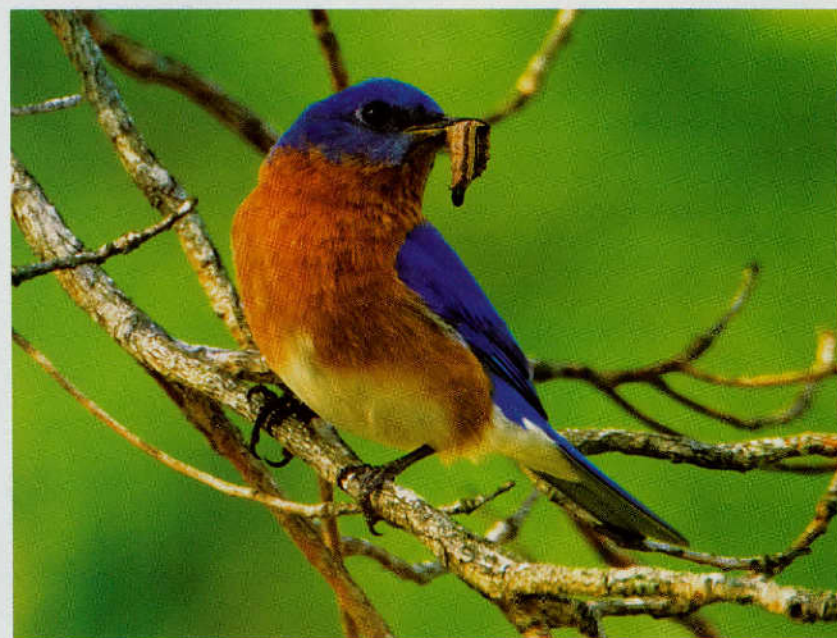
QUITMAN TIME



born governor, from 1891-1895); a half-mile nature trail; and a turn-of-the-20th-Century iron bridge. Another museum on the grounds honors the legendary Light Crust Doughboys, the Western Swing band formed in Fort Worth in 1931.

Arguably the town's biggest claim to fame is as the birthplace of actress Sissy Spacek, who was once the Homecoming Queen of Quitman High School. Locals have named a street for her. But to a city dweller like me, the sights that stay with me are the tall pines towering above the red earth, the delicate ferns sprouting alongside the undulating roads, and the azure dots of darting Eastern Bluebirds.

Many artists have made this tranquil area their home. Nature writer Liz Soutendijk



ABOVE LEFT: SERENITY NOW!...AT A CABIN IN THE FISHING COMMUNITY ALONG LAKE LYDIA. FROM TOP RIGHT: MAKAYLA GABY WARMS UP BEFORE THE FIDDLERS' CONTEST AT THE ANNUAL OLD SETTLERS REUNION, HELD AT GOVERNOR JIM HOGG CITY PARK. IN THE WORDS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, "THE BLUEBIRD CARRIES THE SKY ON ITS BACK"—AND THIS ONE, A CATERPILLAR IN ITS MOUTH. TERRY HLAVATOVIC AND HER HUSBAND, MIKE, OWNERS OF ALLIANCE MINIATURES, RECENTLY MOVED THEIR EQUINE OPERATION TO QUITMAN.

■ To order a print of the Bluebird photograph (right, center), call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

QUITMAN TIME





MARY ELIZABETH (BETTER KNOWN AS SISSY) SPACEK WAS BORN IN QUITMAN ON DECEMBER 25, 1949.

and her artist husband, Bart, purchased land in Quitman after scouring the countryside for a place that spoke to their hearts. “It looked like people came here to connect with nature, as they seemed to disturb only the landscape surrounding their homes, and left the natural areas alone,” she explains. As a master naturalist, Liz says the native pitcher plants, Mexican plums, dogwoods, and sassafras initially drew her to the area. She can hear the spring peepers calling from her pond.

Ceramic artists Daphne and Gary Hatcher moved here from Dallas and opened Pine Mills Pottery. Daphne takes daily walks in the woods near her home, where pileated woodpeckers feast in the trees, and her dog, a Rhodesian Ridgeback named Maya, likes to hunt for large sticks. She incorporates various aspects of nature she sees around her in her best-selling platters, bowls, and teapots.

Like others, I found myself connecting to the ponds, with reflections of blue sky and puffy clouds, the clear air, and the wildflowers dotting the landscape, and concluded that nature here calmed my soul, indeed, and left me feeling renewed.★

For information on Quitman, contact the Greater Quitman Area Chamber of Commerce, 903/763-4411; www.quitman.com.



NATALIE CAUDILL thanks Mariana Greene, her “Quitman connection” and Home editor and Garden columnist for the *Dallas Morning News*, for enhancing her knowledge and appreciation of Texas flora and fauna.

FACING PAGE: PROFESSIONAL BASS-FISHING GUIDE LANCE VICK SHOWS SON LOGAN THE ROPES AT LAKE FORK.



Photographs from
LONESOME DOVE

by Bill Wittliff



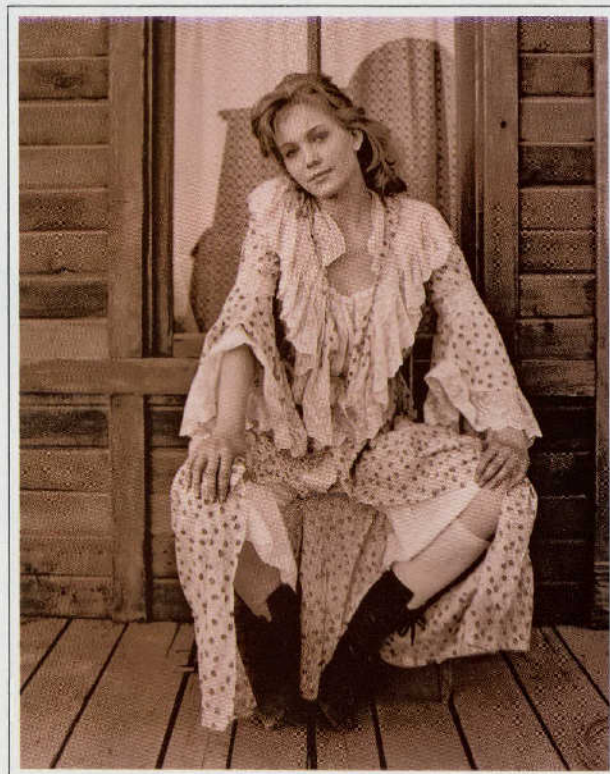


WORD OF GUS'S DEATH

March 17, 1888. For me the actual production of *Lonesome Dove* began in an old warehouse in Austin where our director, Simon Wincer, shot the first film tests of Tommy Lee and Bobby in costume. I noticed then that everybody seemed unusually quiet, talking in hushed voices or not at all—just sort of turned into themselves. It was strange. Looking back on that day I think we all sensed we were about to be off on a grand adventure, that we had a chance to really do something special with this one . . . and it occurs to me, too, that maybe we were quiet because we weren't quite sure if we were up to the job.—B.W.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: ON TO MONTANA

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE WITTLIFF GALLERY OF SOUTHWESTERN & MEXICAN PHOTOGRAPHY AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY IN SAN MARCOS. TEXT AND IMAGES FROM A BOOK OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM *LONESOME DOVE* BY BILL WITTLIFF, PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2007

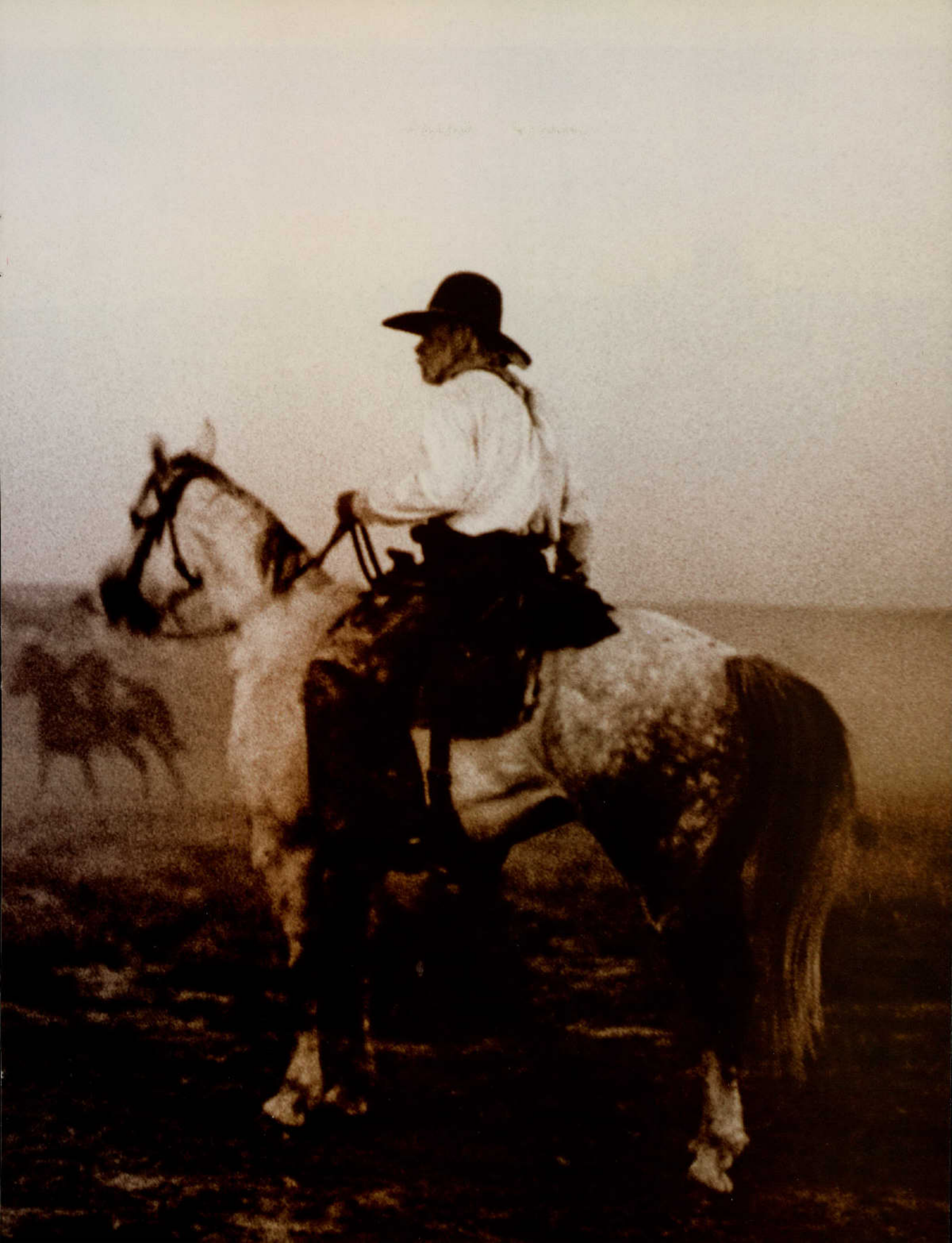


LORIE DARLING



DRY BEAN







COMANCHEROS

Usually people work on movies for the most personal of reasons—some for money, some for love or camaraderie, some for ego, some just to get out of town . . . *Lonesome Dove*, was, I believe, unique in this respect: People wanted to work on it not so much for what they thought they could get out of it, but rather just simply to be a part of it. It was a testament to how much they loved Larry's novel.—B.W.



TO FLY









OVERLOOK





SWEETHEARTS



DEETS



BEN RAINEY, JASPER & ALLAN O'BRIEN

VISIT LONESOME DOVE

THROUGH March 30, 2008: Sixty photographs from *Lonesome Dove* will be on view in the Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern and Mexican Photography in Texas State University's Alkek Library, 601 University Dr., Texas State University-San Marcos. 512/ 245-2313. www.library.txstate.edu/swwc/wg/index.html.

txstate.edu/swwc/ld/ldexhibit.html.

The 2007 Texas Book Festival (Nov. 3-4 at the State Capitol in Austin) has chosen as its signature image Wittliff's *Crossing the Rio Grande* (shown below). Poster and festival information are at www.texasbookfestival.org.

Go online to the Southwestern Writers Collection Web site and explore "A Behind the Scenes Look at the Making of a Modern Classic." www.library.





IT'S NOT

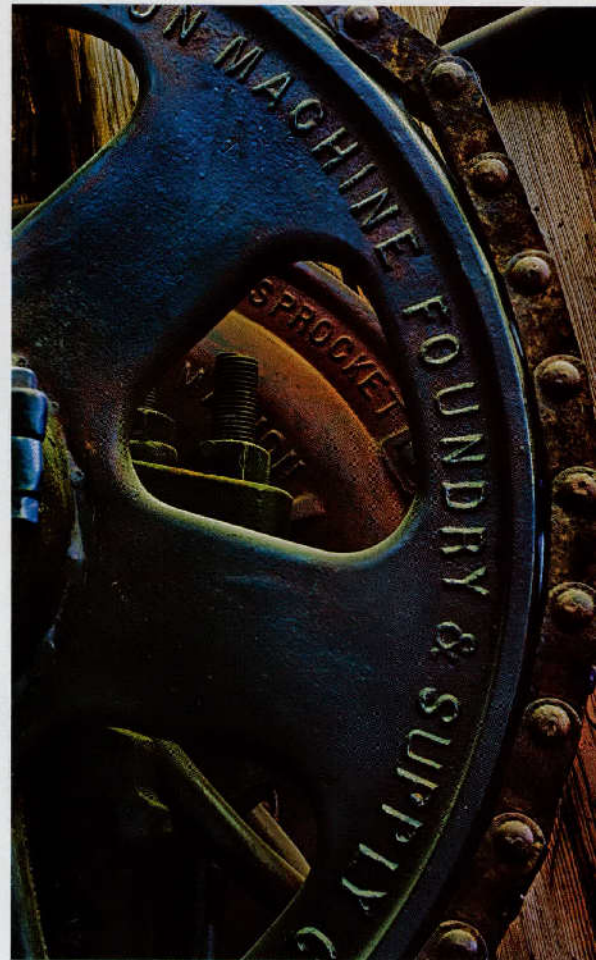
Big.

IT'S

Large.



© MARY ANN MELTON



THE TEXAS PANHANDLE is a big place, and it takes the **largest history museum in the state** to tell its story.

Like a time machine, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon takes visitors on a fantastic journey through the evolution of the great Texas plains.

The museum is “the Smithsonian of Texas,” says executive director Guy C. Vanderpool. “Within these walls you can go from prehistoric crustaceans to 20th-Century art in a short walk.”

A visit through the galleries combines trekking along a timeline developed over thousands of years and rummaging through an attic of treasures. The museum connects the people of the plains to their tools and toys—starting with the dinosaurs and proceeding to the 19th Century, when barbed wire, the windmill, and the railroad conspired to change the landscape of what was then a sea of grass. Some believe that Spanish conquistadors called the vast, treeless prairie the *Llano Estacado*, or staked plains, because the only

By **Gerald E. McLeod**
 Photographs by **J. Griffis Smith**

CLOCKWISE, FROM FACING PAGE: Come on in for a fantastic account of the Texas Panhandle Plains. Imagine what it was like to drive a 1903 Ford Model A Runabout. Examine the rancher’s puzzle of constructing a giant windmill. The wheels of industry turned mightily in transforming the Plains economy.



landmarks were the wooden stakes they used to mark their route and tether their horses. The story continues with the discovery of oil and gas deposits during the 1930s, and documents the accelerated changes of today's world.

A young history professor, Hattie Anderson, arrived in the Panhandle from Missouri in 1920 to teach at West Texas State Normal College (now West Texas A&M University) in what was then called Canyon City. She quickly realized that the culture of the High Plains was changing rapidly, and within a year, she helped organize the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, which founded the museum in 1933. The original association included educators, writers, artists, and entrepreneurs.

A rough inventory of the museum's holdings includes more than a half-mile of shelved archival material, more than 33,000 photos, hundreds of oral-history recordings, 14,000 printed volumes,

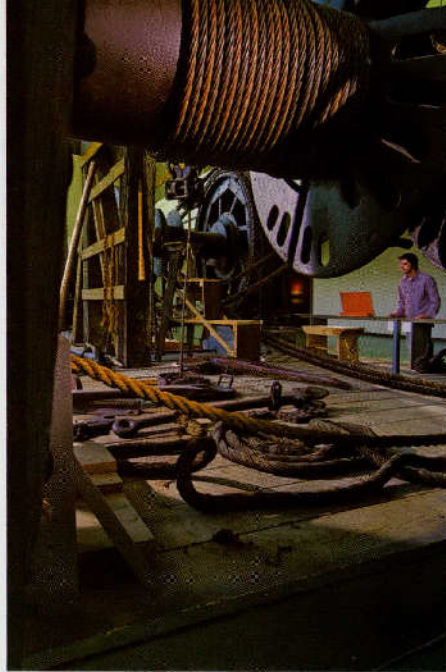
A ROUGH INVENTORY of the museum's **material**, more than 33,000 photos, hundreds pieces of film and video media, thousands of



nearly 1,000 pieces of film and video media, thousands of government records, and a lock of George Washington's hair. It ranks among the most visited research facilities in Texas.

In the exhibition halls, reconstructed log cabins and homes demonstrate how pioneers lived. A recreated kitchen includes typical period implements, like a cast-iron, coal-burning range.

The museum's collection of vintage automobiles includes a rare 1903 Ford Model A Runabout, with serial number 28, one of the oldest American cars. Most visitors won't recognize the rare 1910 Zimmerman automobile in the downstairs gallery. By modern standards it looks small and boxy.



The Texas Plains have a long tradition of inspiring the imagination of its residents. One of Georgia O'Keeffe's biographers wrote that she had just about given up on a career as an artist until she came to the Texas Panhandle as a schoolteacher. The vastness of the High Plains and the grandeur of its colorful canyons ignited her creativity. O'Keeffe moved to Canyon in 1916 and taught art at the college before moving on to the mountains of New Mexico, the urban canyons of New York City, and international recognition. O'Keeffe gained fame for her watercolors, but the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum owns one of only four oil paintings she produced while in Canyon.



© MARY ANN MELTON

holdings includes more than a half-mile of shelved archival of oral-history recordings, 14,000 printed volumes, nearly 1,000 government records, and a lock of George Washington's hair.

Louis Davault of Canyon bought the Zimmerman new from the factory because the car was built in his hometown of Auburn, Indiana. The car ran for several years until the lack of spare parts finally silenced the two-cylinder motor. Without a power source the car became a toy for the Davault children to push around their neighborhood. Discovered in a local barn in 1933, it was the first car donated to the museum.

Among other treasures here, you'll find spurs, bits, and bridles—implements that demonstrate the art and accoutrements of horsemanship. Nearby, an extensive display of firearms, some

of which date to the 1600s, includes a Springfield, the first American-made rifle; several versions of the lever-action Winchester, the rifle that won the West; and Charles Goodnight's 1854 Percussion Plains rifle with *Matthew 6:33* inscribed on the barrel.

The museum staff constantly devises new ways of telling the Panhandle's story. Temporary exhibits have showcased the continuing legacy of the legendary JA Ranch that Goodnight started with his Irish partner, John Adair, prehistoric skeletons of beasts that once wandered the plains, and the geology of nearby Lake Meredith's 200-foot canyon walls.

Two separate galleries in the museum chronicle the careers of Texas artists Frank Reaugh of Dallas and H.D. Bugbee of Clarendon, with the largest collections of their work. Both artists captured, in drawings and paintings, the beauty of the native prairie and the cowboy way of life. The exhibit hall also preserves Bugbee's home studio just as he left it when he died in 1963, down to an unfinished painting on his easel.

On the second floor, three galleries represent decades of artistic expression. "We have the largest collection of Texas and Southwestern fine art on permanent display in the state," says the museum's Andrea Porter. The art collection includes

CLOCKWISE, FROM FACING PAGE, TOP: The museum's many galleries contain an impressive array of art. An oil rig informs visitors about the region's petroleum past and present. Visitors enjoyed the museum's recent *Sitting Pretty* chair exhibit. Dinosaurs roamed the range near Canyon.

ONE OF GEORGIA O'KEEFFE'S biographers wrote that she up on a career as an artist until she came to the Texas Panhandle of the High Plains and the grandeur of its colorful canyons ignited



a perfect complement to a museum visit.

A model of the canyon's Lighthouse rock formation in the museum's geology section explains how the colorful cliff walls were formed as the flat plains drop off into the rolling hills of Central Texas. Through the fossilized shells of giant turtles, the bones of saber-toothed cats, and the skeletons of giant mastodons, the exhibit traces the area back to a time in which a shallow sea covered much of the state.

In historic times, Palo Duro Canyon was the site of the last major battle with the Comanche Nation. Visitors to the museum can see Comanche chief Quanah Parker's war bonnet, feel the curly fur of a bison, and see handcrafted Native American weavings, pottery, and bead work.

Wide-open spaces and abundant ground water first made the Panhandle region attractive to ranchers and farmers, and it became more so with improved breeds of cattle and the advent of windmills. But another resource under the prairie made millionaires of lucky landowners. "Petroleum is still a large part of the Panhandle landscape," says Guy, "and

Southwestern subjects by N.C. Wyeth, W. Herbert Dunton, and other national and international artists.

The museum's Texas Gallery encompasses varied styles of artistic expression from wildflowers to the abstract. Alexander Hogue, Otis Dozier, and Jerry Bywaters, all of whom participated in the U.S. Post Office mural project of the 1930s, have work displayed here. "This is the heart of Texas art," says Guy Vanderpool.

One of the most inspiring natural areas in Texas, Palo Duro Canyon is located just 20 miles east of Canyon. Opened to the public on July 4, 1934, the canyon is 120 miles long, 20 miles at its widest point, and approximately 1,000 feet at its deepest. With its scenic views, multilayered rock walls, and rich history, the "Grand Canyon of Texas" is



the museum tells the story of its growth into a major industry." The exhibits give insights into the tools and methods used to extract crude from the ground. Just off

ABOVE: H.D. Bugbee's studio, as it appeared when he died in 1963, offers keen insight into the artist's creative environment. Inset: Bugbee's *A Rope Full* gives evidence of his Western sensibilities. FACING PAGE: One of the museum's crazy quilts celebrates this decorative heirloom tradition.

had just about given as a teacher. The vastness her creativity.

© MARY ANN MELTON



the grand entrance hall is a two-story, 1930s wooden oil-drilling rig like the ones that transformed the Texas plains into a mighty energy producer.

In 2008, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a year filled with special events. The staff plans to feature a series of “greatest hits” by reprising some of the most popular exhibits from the past. The museum is already broadcasting blogs, and has produced two podcasts of JA Ranch cowboy diaries, as well as other Web-based features that bring a little bit of Texas home to countless admirers around the world. ★

GERALD MCLEOD loves the museum, the town of Canyon, and Palo Duro. When traveling through the Panhandle, he can't help but think of Chief Quanah Parker, Charles Goodnight, and all the pioneers who crossed this beautiful land.

Staff photographer GRIFF SMITH was particularly impressed with the museum's front doors.

essentials A MUST-SEE MUSEUM (AND MORE)

CANYON, the seat of Randall County, is off of Interstate 27, about 16 miles south of Amarillo. The area code is 806. For more information, contact the Canyon Chamber of Commerce, 655-7815 or 800/999-9481; www.canyonchamber.org.

The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum is on the campus of West Texas A&M University, 2503 4th Ave., in Canyon. Exhibits follow the evolution of the region—the dinosaurs to the Plains Indians to the oil patch. Three galleries display fine art that was inspired by the Southwest and Texas. Hours: Sep-May, Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-6; Jun-Aug, Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 1-6. Closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. 651-2244; www.panhandleplains.org. Podcasts about its collections can be downloaded at www.panhandleplains.org/visit/podcasts.php.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park, 20 miles east of Canyon at the end of TX 217, is the 26,200-acre “Grand Canyon of Texas.” The orange, red, lavender, gray, brown, and yellow striped walls of the canyon extend 600-1,000 feet from the flat Caprock to the valley of the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River. Visitors can stay in one of four cabins built by the Civil Conservation Corps in the 1930s, or camp among the cottonwood trees. More than 20 miles of trails welcome hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders. Call the park at 488-2227 or 512/389-8900 for reservations; www.tpwd.state.tx.us or www.palodurocanyon.com.

The live musical drama *TEXAS*, in Palo Duro Canyon State Park's Pioneer Amphitheatre, portrays frontier life on the plains of the Texas Panhandle with galloping horses, dancing cowgirls, and cowboys—using the canyon itself as a backdrop. Secure reservations for a place in the 1,724-seat outdoor venue, and bring a light jacket for the evening performances. Held Tue-Sat from the second weekend of June to the third weekend of Aug. 655-2181; www.texas-show.com.

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Management Area, outside of Umbarger about 20 miles southwest of Canyon, protects some of the region's remaining shortgrass prairies. The 7,664 acres include riparian woods and marshland that are vital for migrating and resident wildlife. It's not uncommon to see flocks of ducks and



wild turkey in and around the ponds and playa lakes. The area is also home to resident white-tailed deer, prairie dogs, bobcats, coyotes, quail, and rabbits. The site was once a natural spring that had been dammed to create a reservoir for municipal and irrigation water. The embankment was removed because it had become unsafe, and the result was

reclaimed land for wildlife. Besides birding blinds, the park offers a driving tour with signs explaining the natural features of the land, a picnic area, and a tree-shaded campground. From US 60 in Umbarger, take FM 168 to the entrance of the park. Entrance fee: \$2 per day, per vehicle. 499-3382; www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/buffalo.html.

DINING

Ranch House Cafe, 810 23rd St., serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Like any good diner in the Texas Panhandle, the Ranch House offers great steaks, but the chiles rellenos are a house specialty. Pies are made from scratch, and mighty good. 655-8785.

Feldman's Wrong Way Diner, 1701 5th Ave., gives a good-natured nod to the fictitious “Wrong Way” Feldman—and to anyone who has ever taken a wrong turn. But, you won't go wrong with the eatery's Italian food, steaks, or chicken dishes. A model train circles the dining room on a track suspended from the rafters. 655-2700; www.feldmansdiner.com.

Pepito's Mexican Restaurante, 408 23rd St., is a reliable outpost of Tex-Mex cuisine, along with steaks. The DeLaO (yes, it has a capital O) family spices up the menu with chiles rellenos, stuffed jalapeños, and Texas Toothpicks—batter-fried strips of onion and jalapeños served with ranch dressing. For dessert, try the fried ice cream. 655-4736.

Fat Boy's BBQ, 104 23rd St., is what happens when a college student gets sidetracked before graduation—he opens a restaurant. The brisket is slow-cooked to smoky perfection, and basic side dishes round out the dining experience. 655-7363.

Stop at the **Rock-&-Roll Soda Shoppe**, 414 15th St., for classic soda-fountain treats. 655-3381.

Least Grebe



Fine Feathered Friends



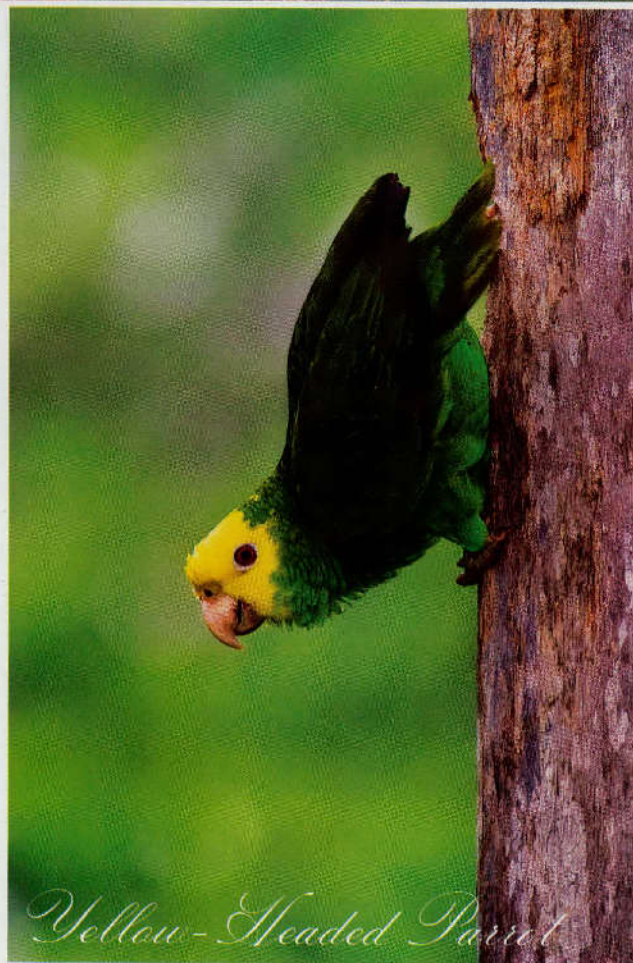
Cooper's Hawk

Northern Cardinal and Pyrrhuloxia



BY EILEEN MATTEI PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY DITTO

November, 5:30 a.m., 76 degrees. Sleepy birdwatchers toting binoculars and mugs of coffee climb aboard a dozen buses bound for Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, South Padre Island, King Ranch, and Falcon Dam. Over a five-day span, the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival (November 7–11, 2007) in Harlingen sends birders and naturalists from all over the world to 17 destinations in South Texas.



Yellow-Headed Parrot

FOR 13 YEARS, THE FESTIVAL has attracted birders to see the Valley's remarkable birds—parrots, parakeets, paraques, chachalacas, kiskadees, and green jays, to name some of the loudest and most visible of the nearly 300 semitropical and migratory species spotted last November.

The wealth of birds is matched by the abundance of birding experts leading festival excursions. It's not unusual that a trip leader turns out to be the writer of the field guide tucked in your pocket. When the Weslaco field trip group arrives at Estero Llano Grande State Park at sunrise, about 45 of us—backyard birdwatchers and veteran birders alike—amble to Grebe Pond with our four noteworthy guides.

“Look behind that submerged retama tree—a pied-billed grebe,” says guide/nature writer Jeff Gordon. In unison, we swing our binoculars to the small swimming bird. A minute later Jeff directs our attention to a leggy, chestnut and yellow bird that seems to be walking on water. A rare Texas visitor, the jacana has toes nearly as long as its legs, letting it walk across floating vegetation. This habitat of marsh, seasonal wetlands, and open country means we spot whistling ducks, peregrine falcons, and avocets in rapid succession. Birders who have been lugging large, high-power spotting scopes set them up and invite us all to have close-up looks that reveal details about feathers and eye colors.

On a marsh boardwalk, we get clear views of three soras perched on cattails. “If you hear noise from resident birds such as titmice, wait. Migrant birds come and see what’s making the noise, just like people do,” says Jeff. He demonstrates by “pishing,” making a squeaking sound against his fingers, which brings a chirping orange-crowned warbler to a songbird flock.

With butterflies thick as leaves back on shore, we stop to ogle dramatically striped zebra heliconians. Birders appreciate nature in its many forms.

Weslaco's Valley Nature Center, with its native-plant nursery and trails that wander through five midtown acres, demonstrates the fact that when given food, water, and shelter, birds will come.



A Rio Grande canoe trip below Falcon Dam gives festival participants the opportunity to see South Texas residents like red-billed pigeon, muskovy duck, and three species of kingfisher.

“I never dreamed I’d see this many new birds. This has been an outstanding festival,” says Betty Robertson of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, excited at seeing birds not found farther north.

Between field trips, the festival provides bird-banding demonstrations, workshops, and the Birders’ Bazaar, a treasure-trove of bird-themed books, hats, feeders, trip brochures, and native plants. With the combination of early-morning starts, days filled with fresh air and excitement, fol-

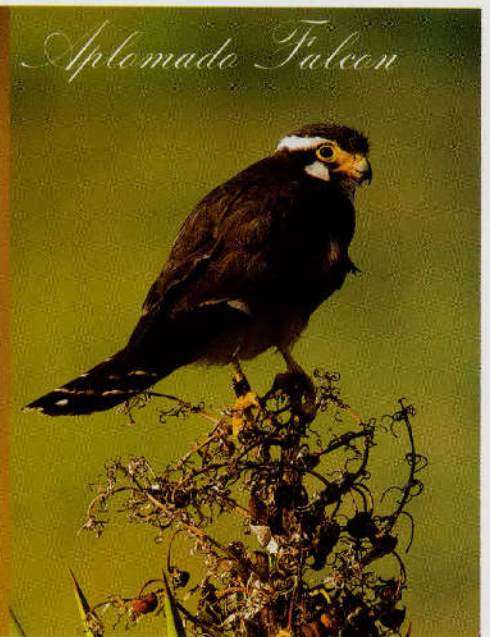
lowed by numerous afternoon and evening lectures, this five-day birding bonanza packs a full agenda.

Father Tom Pincelli, the festival’s co-founder and its guiding spirit, directs parking with the volunteer crew at 5:30 a.m. the next day while our bus fills up for a tour of the Valley Salt Lakes and Edinburg Scenic Wetlands. An avid birder (now board chairman of the American Birding Association), Father Tom has helped the RGV Festival become one of the top events of its

Green Jay

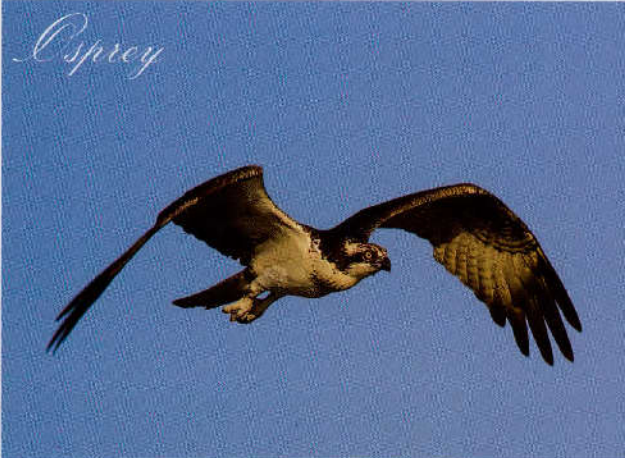


Splomado Falcon



BACKYARD BIRDWATCHERS AND VETERAN BIRDERS ALIKE CAN SPOT NEARLY 300

Osprey



Ringed Kingfisher



SEMITROPICAL AND MIGRATORY SPECIES AT THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL.

Green Parakeet



Brown Jay



THE VALLEY'S HABITAT OF MARSH, SEASONAL WETLANDS, AND OPEN COUNTRY MEANS



WE SPOT WHISTLING DUCKS, PEREGRINE FALCONS, AND AVOCETS IN RAPID SUCCESSION.

© LEFTY RAY CHAPA



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Boat tours on the Rio Grande allow birders to cover several miles of the international boundary below Mission. Here, a tour boat passes Chimney Park RV Resort on the U.S. side of the river. Budding naturalist Rachel Wood peers back at an eagle owl, one of the birds rehabilitated by The Raptor Project, an organization founded by her parents, Jonathan and Susan Wood. Birders scope out their "prey" at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge.

kind in the nation. “The distinctive birds of the Rio Grande Valley are always the major factor,” says Father Tom, but he credits the enthusiastic volunteer force and strong community support for turning the festival into an unforgettable experience.

At La Sal del Rey, a Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge tract just west of Raymondville, sandhill cranes fly overhead and stand around the ancient salt lake, which lacks its typical white crust because of recent rains. Curved-bill thrashers jump from bush to cactus while turkey vultures cruise above the thorn scrub. A javelina trots from the brush, adding zoological scope to our nature experience.

“We all have fun getting outdoors. It’s a great trip for the family,” says Alice McWilliams, showing off the owl earrings she found at the Birders’ Bazaar. She has come again from Houston with her mother, brother, and sister-in-law, seeking familiar Valley birds like the Altamira oriole and the rarities that turn up each year.

Along the trail, we discover a small western diamondback rattlesnake and keep our distance. A blue-gray gnatcatcher flits into sight across the savanna, and then a gorgeous black-throated sparrow appears, so close the spotting scopes can’t focus.

Our next stop is the Edinburg Wetlands, set on the city reservoir, which features extensive butterfly gardens, plus a dragonfly pond. “Anhinga in the scope,” exclaims a birder, and we line up for an up-close view of birds perched with wings spread to catch the sun. The morning trip brings us sightings of nearly 100 species of birds.

A local wildscaping tour led by botanist Christina Mild and master naturalist Diann Ballesteros takes us traipsing through backyards to look at ways native plants have been used to attract a profusion of birds and butterflies. At the first stop, James Matz’s yard along the Arroyo

essentials THE BIRD’S THE WORD

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL takes place Nov. 7-11. For information, schedule, and registration, visit www.rgvbirdfest.com, or call the Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce at 423-5440 or 800/531-7346; www.harlingen.com. The area code is 956.

LODGING

Casa Rama B&B is a beautifully restored, historic Mediterranean-style mansion at 1102 E. Taylor St. Call 440-1552; www.casaramabedandbreakfast.com.

Howard Johnson. 6779 W. Expwy. 83 (US 83), 425-7070.

Vieh’s B&B. A birder-friendly country setting. 18413 Landrum Park Rd. (FM 675), San Benito, 425-4651; www.vieh.com.

EATS

Jerusalem Café. Middle Eastern delicious. 2224 S. US 77 Sunshine Strip, 412-5281.

Azafrán. Marvelous Euro/Mediterranean entrées with a hint of Latin influence. 1116 S. Commerce, 425-4566.



Harlingen lodging choices include Casa Rama B&B.

Los Asados. Popular Mexican fare. 210 N. US 77 Sunshine Strip, 421-3074.

ATTRACTIONS

Harlingen Mural Trail. Pick up a self-guided tour brochure at the chamber (311 E. Tyler Ave.).

Iwo Jima Monument and Memorial Museum, Marine Military Academy, 320 Iwo Jima Blvd. Mon-Sat 10-4, Sun 1-4. Call 412-2207.

Ramsey Park, on Loop 499, one-quarter mile south of FM 106.



Colorado, the retired foreign service officer introduces us to Texas torchwood with its citrusy smell, native dewberry used as ground cover, and the wonderfully named snake-eyes bush. His advice is heartening: “Pull up the guinea grass, water the area, and the natives come up,” he says, simple as that. Around him, native white plumbago, pigeonberry, and heliotrope prove his point.

Barbara Collins has come from Maine twice, just for the festival. “I’ve seen so many life-list birds here, I couldn’t keep track of them,” she reports. Chalk up one more satisfied birder for Father Tom and the festival crew. ★

Backyard birder EILEEN MATTEI volunteered at the RGV Birding Festival for many years. Nature photographer LARRY DITTO has conducted photo workshops at the festival in past years.



FROM LEFT: The Raptor Project’s flight demonstrations (a gyrfalcon shown here) thrill festival onlookers. Birders crave sightings of crested caracaras, like this pair shown feeding with a common turkey vulture.

A TEXAS HIGHWAYS MOMENT
WITH MIKE LEACH

(continued from page 16)

around in Corpus real easy. And, of course, you've got Padre Island there, too.

JOHN: Where else have you vacationed in Texas?

MIKE: Well, San Antonio several times. Austin. Driving around the Hill Country. I need to float the river (Guadalupe). I've listened to my all-time favorite, Rusty Weir. Rusty plays in and around Austin on a fairly regular basis. I saw him at Gruene Hall last time. So I've been all around the Guadalupe, and one of these days I need to float down the river like everybody else.

JOHN: Any other vacation favorites?

MIKE: Skiing. That's another great thing



about Lubbock. You can get to Taos in 6 hours. I like Crested Butte, too. That's about nine-and-a-half hours. I usually drive, just because I figure out I'm going at the last minute. There are more Texans in Crested Butte than there are people from Colorado or anywhere else.

JOHN: All in all, it seems like you really enjoy Lubbock and life on the High Plains.

MIKE: We love it here. And, if we need to get away, we have a great airport. You can leave

the house an hour before your flight and make it in plenty of time. It's modern, but you don't have to fight crowds. Really, this is a great place to raise a family. ★

JOHN RHADIGAN is an award-winning broadcaster for FSN (Fox Sports Net) Southwest.

View more of Lubbock photographer ARTIE LIMMER's work at www.artielimmer.com.

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

READER SERVICE GUIDE TO ADVERTISERS

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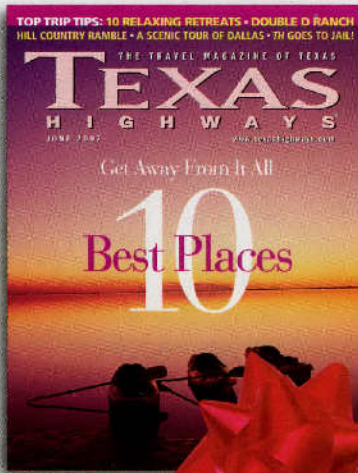
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X5M72

TOP Tables

(continued from page 13)

says, “but we use vegetable oil in all our dishes, except for tamales. You need lard in the masa, or it just doesn’t have the right texture.”

Sylvia’s remarks reflect not just her heritage but years of experience in the food industry. She worked in the test kitchens of Uncle Ben’s Rice for more than a decade and spent eight years in industrial food sales before becoming intrigued with the restaurant business.

Enchiladas are the main draw here, but don’t overlook the carne guisada, chiles rellenos, and fajitas.

“When I opened my first location in 1998, there were probably 800 Mexican restaurants in Houston,” says Sylvia. “I chose the enchilada approach partly to make mine different from all the rest. Plus, I liked to eat enchiladas, and I knew they were difficult to make unless you really knew what you were doing.”

The biggest difficulty for Sylvia proved to be customers not being able to find her restaurant, which was even farther out on Westheimer than the current location at Westheimer and Dairy Ashford. She finally rented a billboard across from the site and asked her brother Oscar Casares (UT professor, author, and former creative director of Austin’s GSD&M) to help her come up with the right copy. The result: a huge arrow pointing to the restaurant and the words “The best enchiladas in Houston are also the hardest to find.” It wasn’t long before customers began arriving and the restaurant’s troubles were over, at least until the clientele outgrew the building.

Sylvia’s Enchilada Kitchen moved into



Sylvia’s Cooking Classes

Sylvia began offering cooking classes at her restaurant in late 2005. Upcoming classes include **South Texas Sweets & Holiday Desserts**, Nov. 3; **Chiles Rellenos**, Nov. 17; **Tamales 101** (a series of 5 classes), Dec. 1, 4, 8, 11, and 15. (Several enchilada classes will be offered in 2008.) Most classes take place on Sat., last 3 hours, involve hands-on preparation, and cost \$50-\$65. All include a full meal at the end of the class. Contact the restaurant for details, or to make reservations. (Some classes fill up fast.)

The first in a series of cooking DVDs, *Sylvia’s Enchilada Kitchen Presents: Hot Tamales*, is available at the restaurant, through its Web site, and at Central Market in Houston. The DVD, which includes an attractive recipe booklet, sells for \$19.95, plus tax.

its current setting—a vibrant, inviting space in a busy shopping center—six years ago. Sylvia’s husband, contractor Jones Copeland, chose the colors for the walls—pink, cornflower blue, mango—and installed cheerful Mexican tile throughout the restaurant. Wide archways make the interior feel spacious and relaxing. Sylvia’s collections of colorful dishes, antique

bowls, and Mexican tea sets fill shelves and adorn *nichos*. Family members’ portraits hang on the walls of the main dining area, while images of aristocratic-looking ancestors are displayed in the party room, where Sylvia teaches cooking classes on the weekend—everything from South Texas sweets to chiles rellenos.

Woman does not live by enchiladas alone, so I signed up for Sylvia’s chiles rellenos class. It was great fun, but the hands-on experience convinced me that chiles rellenos in a good restaurant are worth every penny. My classmate Stuart Umlauf of Livingston, however, was truly inspired. “I had tried to make chiles rellenos many times and ruined more poblanos than I’d eaten,” he says, “but since the class, I’ve made them twice for friends, and they were a big hit.”

Sylvia’s business continues to grow, and the momentum has generated opportunities. The restaurant was recently featured on Food Network, and Sylvia has just released a cooking DVD titled *Sylvia’s Enchilada Kitchen Presents: Hot Tamales*. “I did this one first,” she says, “because people were clamoring for it; they wanted to be able to make tamales for Christmas.”

What’s next for Sylvia and her restaurant? Expect Sylvia to make more TV appearances and DVDs, but don’t be surprised if she also adds another enchilada to the menu. I’m thinking the Victoria...or the Uvalde.... With all of Texas and Mexico as inspiration, the possibilities are endless.

If you want to learn how to make a dynamite chile relleno, senior editor NOLA McKEY recommends Sylvia’s upcoming chiles rellenos class.

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Saints' Roost

WHEN settlers began pushing into the Texas Panhandle in the late 1870s, the town of Clarendon was not like most Western frontier villages. It had no saloons, gambling dens, or bawdy houses, but rather, was populated by farmers and businessmen recruited by a Methodist minister. The county seat of Donley County was nicknamed "Saints' Roost" by the cowboys and frontiersmen who passed through. These days, the moniker remains a source of pride to many of the area residents.

So does the stately 117-year-old Donley County Courthouse, with its Romanesque-Revival style, red-brick exterior accented by carved white-limestone trim. The interior walls, painted a forest green, highlight the natural longleaf pine of the staircases and molding. A conical turret with a "witch's hat" roof tops the building. "No two outside walls are the same," says County Judge Jack Hall. "We've never been able to find a plan or architectural drawing of the building."

The landmark wasn't always so grand. Prior to renovations that began in 2000, the courthouse had fallen into disrepair. "We had bats nesting in the building and water leaks in the roof," says Jack. The conditions got so bad that by 1999, the remaining county offices were moved, and a chain-link fence surrounded the building. What was once "The Jewel of the Plains"

waited silently for either the wrecking ball or a knight in shining armor. Fortunately, the Texas Historical Commission stepped in with the help of private donors, and the rural county raised \$2.8 million to rescue the Panhandle's oldest hall of justice.

One of the county commissioners at the time work originally began on the courthouse was Col. Charles Goodnight, the managing partner of the fabled JA Ranch. In partnership with John G. Adair, Goodnight built their cattle operation to ultimately cover approximately a million acres of grassland with its eastern fence coming nearly to

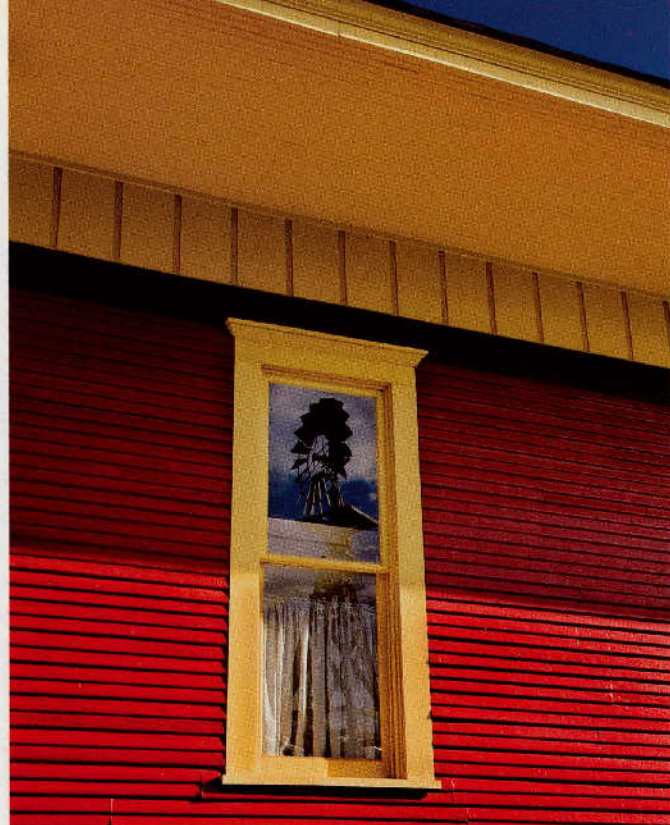
Clarendon. Goodnight, Adair, and other area ranchers appreciated a supply station that didn't contribute to drunken gunfights and hangovers.

To this day, Clarendon still doesn't have a single saloon and the phonebook lists more than a dozen churches, sev-

eral of which trace their roots to the colony. The Church of St. John the Baptist (Episcopal), built in 1893, is one of the oldest church buildings in the region.

Although he was not much of a churchgoer, Goodnight generally supported the establishment of the Christian colony. For many years, Clarendon benefited from its location as the closest railroad depot to the JA Ranch headquarters. In 1910, Cornelia Wadsworth Adair, John Adair's widow, built a hospital for her cowhands and the town overlooking the rolling hills. The hospital operated for 61 years, closing in 1971.

"In its day, it was the most advanced medical facility west of Fort Worth," says Jan Altman, a tour guide at the Saints' Roost Museum, which acquired the former hospital building in 1981. Current



Reflections of history. Built in 1887, Clarendon's Fort Worth and Denver Railroad Depot was moved to the grounds of the Saints' Roost Museum in 1996. The structure recently underwent renovations.

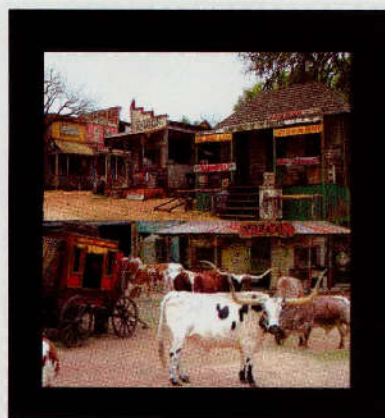
CLARENDON is 60 miles southeast of Amarillo at the intersection of US 287 and Texas 70, and 17 miles south of Interstate 40. Contact the Clarendon Chamber of Commerce at 318 S. Kearney St., 806/874-2421; www.clarendonedc.org.



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Like the rolling plains in the southwestern corner of the Panhandle, there is more to Clarendon than meets the eye.



The 1890 Donley County Courthouse (left) resembles a cattle baron's castle more than a public institution. Offerings at the Bar H Dude Ranch run the gamut, from ranch work to simply watching the sun set.

If you're lucky enough to be in Clarendon in the morning, don't miss out on a Panhandle treat at Our Donuts. Once bakery owners Mickey and Patty Dipprey open the doors at 5 a.m., it doesn't take long for their cinnamon rolls, croissants, and breakfast burritos to sell out. And once the goods are gone, so are the proprietors.

exhibits focus on local culture, ranch life, early businesses, Native Americans, and the legendary Goodnight. A bunkhouse, the Clarendon railroad depot, and an iron jail cell also sit on the grounds.

Goodnight would be proud that Clarendon is still in cattle country, both on the range and on the dinner plate. The town has two steakhouses: J.D.'s Steakout and Clarendon Steakhouse, both of which serve a good sirloin. J.D.'s is popular with the local supper crowd, while many favor Clarendon Steakhouse for its lunch specials.

Another popular spot is the Sandell Drive-In movie theater. Named for the original owner's daughters, Sandra and Adele Barnhill, the theater first flickered to life in 1955. When Gary Barnhill retired after nearly 30 years, the silver screen sat dark for almost two decades until John Earl Morrow, who had frequented the theater as a boy, reopened it in 2002. The snack bar serves tasty hamburgers made of locally raised beef.

No Beer Here

The vast prairies of North Texas were the domain of the Comanches and buffalo until 1874, when the Red River Indian War sent the Native American tribes to reservations. Travelers on horseback or in wagons had to journey long, empty miles to reach Tascosa or Mobeetie, the only settlements in the Panhandle at the time. Frequented by outlaws, drifters, and gamblers, both towns were the kind of places that gave the Wild West its name.

In 1878, the Rev. Lewis H. Carhart and his brother-in-law, W.A. Allen, envisioned establishing a "Christian Temperance Colony" that would become the "Athens of the Panhandle." They sold the idea from the pulpits of northern churches. It's believed the town was either named after

Clara Carhart (Rev. Carhart's wife), or for the Clarendon Land Investment and Agency Company of Clarendon, England, a venture-capital firm and Carhart's partner in what he called his "sobriety settlement," for it would contain no saloons.

It didn't take long for the settlement to attract Methodist farmers looking for a new start and inexpensive land. Within several years, the colony contained nearly 200 homes and organized six churches. The town's prospects changed in 1887, when the railroad passed six miles south. In response, the town picked up and moved closer to the tracks. The railroad brought great opportunity; an opera house, bank, college, and courthouse soon appeared, helping Clarendon move toward becoming the cultural center that its founders envisioned.

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Just PASSING Through

Another survivor from a bygone era is James Owens Leather Goods, a custom-boot shop. Jim Owens inherited the business from his dad. During World War II, a saddle maker and two boot makers labored under the pressed-tin ceiling making leather goods for the area's cowboys.

These days, Jim works alone in back of the leather shop, crafting 30 to 50 pairs of custom boots annually and repairing store-bought footwear. A collection of old boots, ranch tools, hats, and cowboy art covers the walls. You might even recognize the place as the backdrop for advertisements for GUESS jeans, Chevrolet, and several other national outfits.

Besides good boots, cowboys need a reliable water source, because rain is scarce on the High Plains. In the 1960s, the community dammed the Red River, creating the approximately 2,000-acre Greenbelt Lake, a good place for catching bass, catfish, and wall-eye. On summer weekends, locals gather at

Sandy Beach Park on the dam's north side.

Before using the lake's RV hookups, boat ramps, and campsites, visitors must check in at the marina. The lake is on a major migratory flyway, so the tree-shaded area offers excellent bird watching.

Another good birding spot is the Bar H Dude Ranch on the outskirts of town. Trail riders at the 5,500-acre ranch

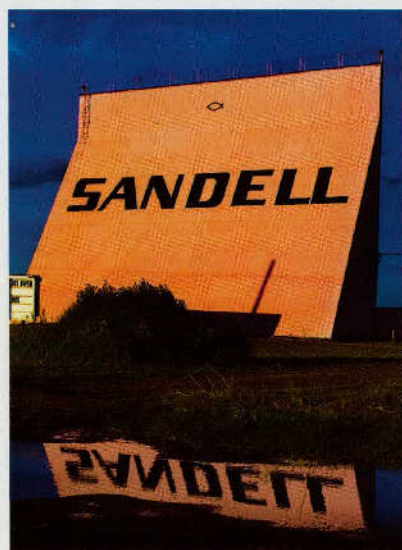
will also see bison, prairie dogs, and other wildlife. Bar H has been in Frank Hommel's family since his grandfather arrived in the Panhandle in the 1930s.

The ranch is a popular place for family reunions, with some clans returning year after year. Guests can stay in a one-room cabin, a bunkhouse, or in the foreman's house on the hill. The ranch offers a wide variety of ac-

tivities, from lazing around the swimming pool to helping with ranch work.

Like the rolling plains in the southwestern corner of the Panhandle, there is more to Clarendon than meets the eye. For the traveler, the town serves as a welcome respite for food, lodging, and supplies. For the explorer, plenty of treasures await discovery.

GERALD E. McLEOD also enjoyed Henson's store in downtown Clarendon, which sells everything from porcelain gifts to hydraulic hoses.



Think pink. The 300-car Sandell Drive-In shows first-run movies on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Texas 70; 874-3650 for general information, 874-5111 for the marina.

Sandell Drive-in, US 287 and Texas 70 N.; 874-0685. Open Fridays and Saturdays.

James Owens Leather Goods, 112 S. Kearney St.; 874-9812.

FOOD Clarendon Steakhouse, 118 S. Kearney St.; 874-0565.

J.D.'s Steakout, 210 W. 2nd St.; 874-7777.

Our Donuts, 401 E. 2nd St.; 874-1704.

LODGING Bar H Dude Ranch, 3 miles west of Clarendon off of US 287; 800/627-9871; www.barhduderanch.com.

WHEN IN CLARENDON The area code is 806, unless otherwise noted.

ATTRACTIONS Donley County Courthouse, 300 S. Sully St.; 874-3625.

Saints' Roost Museum, 610 E. Harrington St.; 874-2746; www.saintsroost.org. On the 4th Sat. in Sep., the museum pays tribute to Col. Charles Goodnight during its Col. Charles Goodnight Chuckwagon Cookoff. Cooks are judged for their steaks, biscuits, and fruit cobblers, as well as chuckwagon authenticity.

Church of St. John the Baptist, W. 3rd and Park streets; 874-2348.

Greenbelt Lake, 4 miles north of Clarendon on

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Brad Paisley's Bonfires & Amplifiers Tour comes to San Antonio and The Woodlands in early November.

TEXAS Events CALENDAR

November



WELCOME TO THIS MONTH's sampling of events from throughout the Lone Star State.

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

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

BECAUSE OF SPACE LIMITATIONS, we can't list every event we receive. Please note that dates sometimes change after we go to press. You may want to confirm a particular event by calling the number listed with the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce or convention and visitors bureau.

FOR INFORMATION ON ANY DESTINATION IN TEXAS: Call 800/452-9292 toll-free from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central Time. A professional travel counselor at one of the Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Information Centers will answer your Texas travel questions, provide routing assistance, send brochures (including the official *Texas State Travel Guide* and map), and advise you of any emergency road conditions.



FOR A QUARTERLY, MORE DETAILED SCHEDULE OF events, write for a free copy of the *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. For an online listing of events, go to www.texashighways.com.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

2

TERLINGUA

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www.golfterlingua.com

2-3

EL PASO

Noche Flamenca
915/845-7015

Stomp
915/544-8444

3

TERLINGUA

International Chili Championship
210/887-8827
www.chili.org

4

MARATHON

Cowboy Social
432/386-4500
www.marathon-texas.net

10

EL PASO

Moscow Ballet
The Nutcracker
915/534-0600

ODESSA

Masterworks Concert
432/563-0921

19-Dec 31

MIDLAND

Christmas at the Mansion
432/683-2882
www.museumsw.org

22

EL PASO

71st FirstLight
Federal Credit Union
Sun Bowl Parade
915/533-4416 or
800/915-BOWL
www.sunbowl.org

24

FORT DAVIS

Arts & Crafts Fair
432/426-3284

30

ODESSA

Holiday Pops
432/563-0921

GULF COAST

2

HOUSTON

(began Oct 19)
A Masked Ball
713/228-6737
www.houstongrandopera.org

2-3

PALACIOS

Texas Fishermen's
Seafood Festival
800/611-4567
www.texasfishermensfestival.com

2-4

CLEAR LAKE AREA

Ballunar Liffot
Festival
281/488-7676 or
800/844-5253
www.ballunarfestival.com

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

International Music
Festival
800/767-2373
www.spimusicfest.com

2-10

VICTORIA

Rounding Third
361/578-6277
www.theatrevictoria.org

3-4

PORT LAVACA

Arts-Crafts-Antiques
Festival by the Bay
361/552-6070

3, 6, 9

HOUSTON

The Daughter of the Regiment
713/228-6737
www.houstongrandopera.org

4

BEAUMONT

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Shrimp Cookoff
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6-7

BEAUMONT

Flower Power
www.magnoliagardenclub.org

7-11

HARLINGEN

Rio Grande Valley
Birding Festival
800/531-7346
www.rgvbirdfest.com

9

LAKE JACKSON

Chanticleer
979/230-3156
www.clarion.brazosport.edu

9-11

BEAUMONT

Spindletop
Lamar University
Film Festival
409/880-8490
www.lamar.edu

10

GALVESTON

The Smothers Brothers
& Judy Collins
409/765-1894 or
800/821-1894
www.thegrand.com

10-11

HOUSTON

Texas Championship Powwow
281/890-5500
www.tradersvillage.com

11

ARANSAS PASS

May Be Hot, Maybe Not
Bike Ride
www.aransaspass.org

SPRING

Holiday Homes Tour
281/430-4303

16-19

KINGSVILLE

South Texas
Wildlife & Birding Festival
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www.kingsvilletexas.com

17

BEAUMONT

Symphony
of Southeast Texas
409/892-2257
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GALVESTON

Seaside Treasure
Festival
409/763-2830
www.moody.org/stf

KINGSVILLE

Ranch Hand Breakfast
361/592-8516
www.kingsvilletexas.com

17-Jan 5

GALVESTON

Moody Gardens
Festival of Lights
409/744-4673 or
www.moodygardens.org

18

EL CAMPO

Polka Expo
979/543-3303
www.kulpradio.com

23-24

HOUSTON

The Nutcracker
713/227-2787
www.houstonballet.org

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

College Basketball
Tournament
888/774-8587

24-25

WHARTON

Cowboy Christmas Festival
979/532-8840
www.whartoncowboychristmas.com

24-Dec 31

DICKINSON

Festival of Lights
281/337-2795
www.dickinsonfestivalofflights.org

30-Dec 1

ANGLETON

Christmas on the Square
979/849-6443
www.angletonchamber.org

30-Dec 16

DICKINSON

A Christmas Carol
281/337-7468
www.harbourplayhouse.com

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TEXAS Events | November

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www.beaumontcvb.com

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HILL COUNTRY

2-11
NEW BRAUNFELS
Wurstfest
800/221-4369
www.wurstfest.com

3
UTOPIA
Fall Fair
830/966-5569

3-4
AUSTIN
Texas Book Festival
512/477-4055
www.texasbookfestival.org

GRUENE
Tour de Gruene
210/828-6856
www.gruenetexas.com

9
AUSTIN
Joe Ely
888/512-7469
www.anton.es.net

11
SAN MARCOS
Veterans Day Celebration
888/200-5620
www.sanmarcoscharms.com

16-17
AUSTIN
Austin Symphony
512/476-6064
www.austinsymphony.org

16-18
BIG LAKE
Texas State Sheep & Cattle Dog Finals
325/884-2980
www.biglaketx.com

16-Jan 1
MARBLE FALLS
Walkway of Lights
800/759-8178
www.marblefalls.org

17
BANDERA
Harvest Fest
830/796-4447
www.banderaowboycapital.com

UVALDE
Turkey Trot
830/278-4115

VANDERPOOL
St. Mary's Catholic Church Fall Festival
830/966-6102

18
AUSTIN
A. Mozart Fest Piano Concert
512/371-7217
www.amozartfest.org

23
GRUENE
Charlie Robison
830/629-5077
www.gruenehall.com

23-Jan 1
FREDERICKSBURG
Texas Hill Country Regional Christmas Lighting Trail
866/839-3378
www.tex-fest.com

JOHNSON CITY
Lights Spectacular
830/868-7684
www.lbjcountry.com

30-Dec 2
FREDERICKSBURG
Weihnachten
888/997-3600
www.tex-fest.com

NEW BRAUNFELS
Weihnachtsmarkt
830/629-1572
www.sophienburg.com

PANHANDLE PLAINS

2-4, 23-25
POST
Old Mill Trade Days
806/495-3529

3
SAN ANGELO
San Angelo Symphony
325/658-5877

6
ABILENE
Ring of Fire:
The Music of Johnny Cash
800/585-3737

8-11
AMARILLO
WRCA World Championship Ranch Rodeo
806/374-9722
www.wrca.org

10-11
BROWNWOOD
Arts & Crafts Fair
325/646-9535
www.brownwoodchamber.org

LUBBOCK
Take in the Local Color!
Artists' Studios Tour
806/744-2787
www.lubbockarts.org

16-18
ABILENE
The Nutcracker
325/675-0303

18-Dec 31
PAMPA
Celebration of Lights
806/669-3241

23-Dec 31
CHILDRESS
Lighting of Fair Park
940/937-2567
www.childressstexas.net

27-29
AMARILLO
Farm & Ranch Show
800/827-8007
www.farmshows.com

PINEY WOODS

3
HUNTSVILLE
Rocky Raccoon 50-K/25-K Trail Run
903/894-3788 or 936/295-5644
www.hillcountrytrailrunners.com/raceRocky50K.html

MINEOLA
Iron Horse Fall Fest
903/569-2087
www.mineolachamber.org

10
HENDERSON
Heritage Syrup Festival
903/547-5528 or 866/650-5529
www.depotmuseum.com

17
NACOGDOCHES
Nine Flags Lighting Ceremony
936/564-7351
www.nineflagsfestival.com

Tour de Nac
936/564-7351
www.nineflagsfestival.com

TYLER
East Texas Symphony Orchestra
903/526-ETSO
www.etso.org

17-Dec 8
NACOGDOCHES
Nine Flags Festival
888/653-3788

18-30
NACOGDOCHES
Fall Foliage Trail
888/653-3788
www.visitnacogdoches.org

21-Dec 31
MARSHALL
Wonderland of Lights
903/935-7868
www.marshalltxchamber.com

23
JEFFERSON
Christmas Lighting Ceremony
903/665-2672
www.jefferson-texas.com

29-Dec 1
JEFFERSON
Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes
903/665-7064
www.historicjeffersonfoundation.com

30
WOODVILLE
Lighting of the Square & Twilight Parade
409/283-2632
www.tylercountychamber.org

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

1-4
FORT WORTH
Race Week at Texas Motor Speedway
817/215-8500
www.texasmotorspeedway.com

1-4, 29-Dec 2
CANTON
First Monday Trade Days
903/567-5445
www.oldmillmarketplace.com

1-4, 8-11, 29-Dec 2
DALLAS
(began Oct 18)
Dallas Symphony Orchestra Beethoven Festival
214/692-0203
www.dallassymphony.com

2-4
ROUND TOP
Theatre Forum
979/249-3129
www.festivalhill.org

3-4
DENISON
Fall Art Tour
903/465-1551
www.smalltownbigart.com

SAN FELIPE
Father of Texas Birthday Celebration
979/885-3043

7-12
FORT WORTH
Lone Star International Film Festival
817/735-1117
www.lisiff.com

9-11
DALLAS
Texas Stamped
214/373-8000
www.texasstamped.org

10
EDGEWOOD
Heritage Festival
903/896-4358
www.edgewoodheritagefestival.com

IRVING
Irving Symphony Orchestra
972/252-ARTS

10-11
FLOWER MOUND
Artists' Studio Tour
972/317-2481
www.crosstimbersarts.com

SALADO
Gathering of the Scottish Clans
254/947-5232
www.ctam-salado.org

WORTHAM
AMA Texas Motocross State Championship
903/599-1888
www.freestonemx.com

10-Jan 1
ATHENS
Christmas Park Land of Lights
903/675-7469

11
DALLAS
Chile Pepperama
972/943-4624
www.chilepepperama.net

DENISON
Veterans Day Celebration
903/465-8908

GAINESVILLE
Veterans Day Celebration
940/668-4530

PRAHA
Veterans Day Service
361/865-3920
www.flatonachamber.com

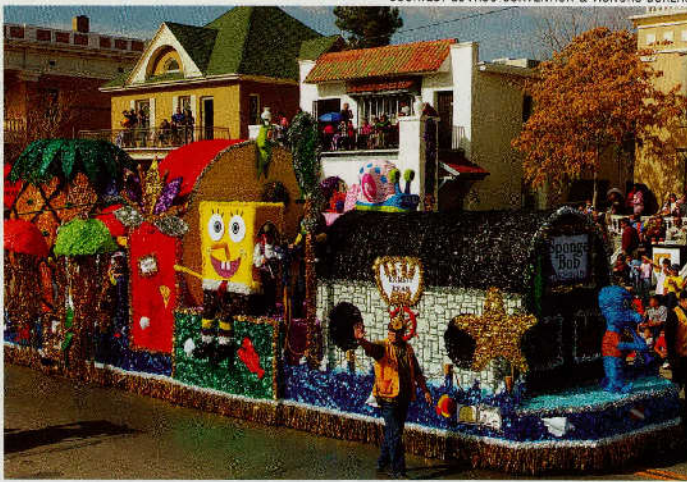
SHINER
Historic Homes Tour
361/594-3999
www.shiner-oldtown.org

15-Dec 31
GRAPEVINE
Ice at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Conference Center
817/410-3185
www.grapevinetexasusa.com

17
BRYAN
Brazos Valley Worldfest
979/862-6700
www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org

17-18
BRENHAM
Poinsettia Celebration
979/836-6011
www.elisongreenhouses.com

17-Jan 1
DALLAS
Trains at NorthPark
214/631-7354
www.rhmdallas.com/trains



It's an El Paso Thanksgiving Day tradition—the 71st Annual FirstLight Federal Credit Union Sun Bowl Parade. This year's theme is "Childhood Memories."

19
CUERO
 Lighted Christmas Parade
 361/275-8178
 www.cuerodc.com

19-Jan 1
CUERO
 Christmas in the Park
 361/275-8178

22
ATHENS
 Turkey Trot
 903/677-2000

DALLAS
 YMCA Turkey Trot
 214/954-0500

22-Dec 31
CLEBURNE
 Whistle Stop Christmas
 817/645-2455
 www.whistlestopchristmas.com

GRAND PRAIRIE
 Prairie Lights
 972/237-8100
 www.gptx.org

23
DALLAS
 Galleria Holiday Kick-Off
 & Grand Tree Lighting
 972/702-7100

GRANBURY
 Country Christmas Celebration
 817/573-5299
 www.hgma.com

HIGHLAND PARK
 Highland Park Village
 Tree Lighting Ceremony
 214/559-2740
 www.hpvillage.com

23-24
BASTROP
 Harvest Art Fest
 512/303-9599
 www.bastropassociationforthearts.org

DE LEON
 Arts & Crafts Show
 254/893-2634
 www.deleontexas.com/chamber

23-25
FORT WORTH
 Home for the Holidays
 817/665-6000
 www.fwsymphony.org

MCKINNEY
 Dickens of a Christmas
 972/547-2660
 www.downtownmckinney.com

23-25
WACO
 Homestead Craft
 & Children's Fair
 254/754-9600
 www.homesteadheritage.com

WAXAHACHIE
 Candlelight Christmas
 Homes Tour
 972/937-2390
 www.waxahachiechamber.com

Victorian Christmas
 Celebration
 972/937-2390
 www.waxahachiechamber.com

23-Dec 31
BASTROP
 River of Lights
 512/303-0558
 512/321-2419
 www.bastropchamber.com

23-Jan 1
FRISCO
 Christmas in the Square
 972/292-5000
 www.friscosquare.com

23-Jan 4
WACO
 International
 Christmas Tree Exhibit
 254/710-1110
 www.maybormuseum.com

24-25
HALLETTSVILLE
 Festival of Lights
 361/798-2662
 www.hallettsville.com

24, 30
SULPHUR SPRINGS
 Christmas in the Park
 903/885-2387
 www.sulphursprings-tx.com/visitor

24-Dec 23
DALLAS
 The Nutcracker
 214/978-0110
 www.dct.org

24-Dec 29
DENISON
 Holiday Tour of Lights
 903/465-1551
 www.denisonetexas.us

26
GRAPEVINE
 Carol of Lights
 817/410-3185
 www.grapevintexasusa.com

26-Dec 8
LA GRANGE
 Trail of Lights
 979/968-5658

29
DENTON
 Holiday Lighting Festival
 940/349-8529

GRAPEVINE
 Parade of Lights
 817/410-3185
 www.grapevintexasusa.com

29-30
SEGUIN
 Main Street
 Holiday Parade & Stroll
 800/580-7322

29-Dec 16
ARLINGTON
 A Christmas Story
 817/275-7661
 www.theatrearlington.org

30
CLIFTON
 Lighted Parade
 254/675-3720
 www.cliffontexas.org

30-Dec 1
BELLVILLE
 Small Town Christmas
 979/865-3407
 www.bellville.com

BRENNHAM
 Holiday Stroll
 979/836-3339
 www.downtownbrennham.com

LOCKHART
 Lighted Christmas Parade
 512/398-2818
 www.lockhartchamber.com

SALADO
 A Christmas Carol
 254/947-9205

SULPHUR SPRINGS
 Christmas Festival
 on Heritage Square
 888/300-6623
 www.sulphursprings-tx.com/visitor

30-Dec 2
GRAPEVINE
 North Pole Express
 817/410-3185
 www.grapevintexasusa.com

SALADO
 Christmas Stroll
 254/947-5040
 www.salado.com

30-Dec 16
FORT WORTH
 The Nutcracker
 877/828-9200
 www.texasballettheater.org

30-Dec 31
COLUMBUS
 Christmas on the Colorado
 979/732-8385
 www.columbus-texas.org

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

2-3
HEBBRONVILLE
 Jim Hogg County
 Vaquero Festival
 361/527-4461

3
GEORGE WEST
 Storyfest
 361/449-2481 or
 888/600-3121
 www.georgeweststoryfest.org

WESLACO
 Family
 Fall Nature Day
 956/969-2475
 www.valleynaturecenter.org

9-11
THREE RIVERS
 Choke Canyon
 Birding Festival
 888/600-3115
 www.threeriverstx.org

10
EAGLE PASS
 Veterans Day Parade
 830/773-2528 or
 888/355-3224

FLORESVILLE
 Fall Fest
 830/393-0074

PHARR
 Veterans Parade
 956/787-1481
 www.pharrchamber.com

11
McALLEN
 RGV Old Car Festival
 956/381-0404

18
EAGLE PASS
 Feast of Sharing
 Thanksgiving Dinner
 830/773-3224 or
 888/355-3224

20
SAN ANTONIO
 The Police
 210/224-9600

23
SAN ANTONIO
 Holiday River Parade
 210/227-4262

26
THREE RIVERS
 Christmas
 on the Square
 361/786-4330
 www.threeriverstx.org

27
ALICE
 Christmas Parade &
 Downtown Lighting
 361/664-3454
 www.alicetx.org

30-Dec 2
SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta de las Luminarias
 210/227-4262

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 30th • Holiday Stroll in Central Park
 30th-2nd • Christmas Vespers

DECEMBER

1st • Alamo La Bahia Corridor
 Pony Express Arrival
 1-2nd • Heritage Tour of Homes
 2nd • Yulefest Arts & Crafts Sale
 8-9th • Christmas Under the Stars
 9th • Mid-Texas Symphony Concert
 14-16th • Country Christmas
 16th • Las Posadas

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 www.visitsequin.com

Readers RECOMMEND...

TIPS FROM OUR READERS

ON ONE of our recent RVing jaunts, we stopped in **Longview** to visit our daughter. She took us to **Joey's Seafood and Grill**, which serves amazing seafood. We each tried a different dish, and not one was a disappointment. You have to try it—it's wonderful!

SHIRLEY AND ARNOLD ARESON, *Brazoria*
Joey's Seafood and Grill is at 2609 Judson Rd.; 903/753-4442; www.joeyseafood.com. Menu items include Asian sesame salmon, fish and chips, and Malibu coconut-shrimp salad.

TALK about a neat, neighborhood trattoria. Try **Covino's in Plano**. The pizza and calzones are terrific, and the fried calamari is to die for. The signature pasta dishes are delicate, tender, and always al dente. There are usually several specials, including pork, beef, and seafood. The dishes are gourmet class!

BRUCE ANTHONY, *Plano*
Covino's is at 3265 Independence Pkwy.; 972/519-0345. Because it's located near a school, the restaurant doesn't have an alcoholic-beverage license, but feel free to bring your own bottle, as wine glasses are provided (\$2 corkage fee).

WE HAVE been spending winters in the Rio Grande Valley for several years and discovered a wonderful restaurant in **McAllen** called **Republic of the Rio Grande Grill and Cantina**. The ambiance and decor are wonderful, and the menu has great variety and innovation. The food is delicious, flavorful, and beautifully presented. Steaks, melt-in-your-mouth fajitas, tortilla soup, and seafood are just some of the

WE VISITED **Fredericksburg** and discovered **RockBox Theater**. It's brand new with a resident cast of incredibly gifted musicians performing the best music from the '50s, '60s, and '70s. The comedy sketches by Mo and Bro had us roaring with laughter, and the tribute to the military brought tears to our eyes. It is a "funtabulous" addition to the town, and we will be returning again and again. Go see for yourself; you'll be absolutely delighted!

ED CREEKMORE AND BELINDA LUSK, *Austin*
RockBox Theater is at 109 N. Llano St.; 866/349-6688; www.rockboxtheater.com. Previous concerts held at this 392-seat, family-friendly theater include tributes to such Texas notables as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Bob Wills, ZZ Top, and Buddy Holly.



The beat goes on. Carey Dyer and Wendy Hearn (aka Sonny and Cher) belt out tunes every weekend at RockBox Theater.

things we enjoyed. We keep going back, and have never been disappointed.

PAT MARCOTTE, *Michigan*
Republic of the Rio Grande Grill and Cantina is at 1411 S. 10th St., 956/994-8385; www.republicriogrande.com.

I WAS on my way to South Texas and stopped in **Crystal City**. If you're ever in that neck of the woods, stop by **Miguelito's Mexican Grill**. It's a great place to eat, the staff is friendly, and the food is wonderful.

EILEEN HANEY, *Big Spring*
Miguelito's Mexican Grill is at 1023 Veterans Ave.; 830/374-3461.

I JUST returned from **Eola School Restaurant, Brewery, & Lodge**, which is owned and operated by Mark Cannon. It's such a neat place; the

beer is great (and cold!) and the chopped-beef sandwiches can't be beat. Mark has done so much with the property, and if you have time, he'll share with you his story and tell you about Bright Beer, his own creation. It's great that someone has been able to restore and preserve such an authentic place. It's definitely worth the trip.

MEGAN MERCER, *Independence, Missouri*
Eola School Restaurant, Brewery, & Lodge is at 12119 FM 381; 325/469-3314; www.eolaschool.com. Housed inside what was once a school, the restaurant serves Bright Beer, which is brewed on-site.

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.

Texas Highways Travel Blog

FOLLOW noted travel writer **June Naylor** on her treks across Texas.

SHARE your comments on June's travels, or chime in with your own favorite haunts and jaunts.

Join us at www.texashighways.com

Next month... We'll ring in the holidays with a **Galleria** shop-off in **Dallas** and **Houston**, and stories on **Hidalgo's** dazzling **Christmas lights**, **Big D's** historic (and beautifully illuminated) **Highland Park tree**, and **ice-skating rinks** across Texas. Stay tuned, too, for our annual **Looking Back** year in review, and a preview of **El Vaquero Real**, a new book from **Bright Sky Press**.



© ERIC MEOLA

window on
TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER Eric Meola captured Seguin's Texas Theatre in a blaze of neon. Designed by architect W. Scott Dunne in 1931, the theater today is available only for special events. Meola is currently working on a new book about India. More of his work can be seen at www.ericmeola.com.

