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JULY 1977

PLANS CONTINUE APACE for the 23rd Annual *Texas Travel Counselors Conference* to be held next year on *South Padre Island*. Officially co-hosting the 1978 conference are the *Harlingen CofC* and the *South Padre Tourist Development Bureau* with assistance from the *Brownsville, Valley and McAllen CofCs*. All five organizations joined in hosting the poolside luncheon in *Kerrville* that garnered compliments from *TTCC* gourmets and gourmands.

WITH TEXAS RANKING NUMBER THREE in the national tourism picture, *The Texas Gulf Coast* area is planning to help keep the state in that position. **Ralph Thompson**, executive VP of the *South Padre Tourist Development Bureau*, says, "We are considered the new sun destination for the winter visitor. Florida has become overcrowded and expensive. We are a new area and still have that true Southern hospitality."

THE FORMER NUMBER THREE STATE IN TOURISM has proposed a 1977-78 budget that is six times more than was spent on tourism during the previous fiscal year. The \$4.3 million will be spent

in eight categories to lead the *New York* drive for the nation's tourists. More than half the money will go to promote upstate *New York* vacations and *New York City* weekends. Nearly \$1 million will go into the production of collateral and merchandising materials. The budget proposal received strong backing from the governor and legislative leaders.

SUNTOURS, WHICH "BROKE THE ICE" in bringing *Canadian* tourists to the *Valley* by air, has announced an expansion of the program for 1977-78. *Harlingen CofC* President **David Alex** said 5,500 came last year and 11,000 have been confirmed for this year. He said the *Canadian* tour program could reach a peak of 50,000 in five years — depending on the availability of hotel-motel rooms. **Alex** added, "The *Canadian* tourist market by air is in the embryo stage as far as the *Valley* is concerned."

THE UNITED STATES TRAVEL SERVICE came under fire as Sen. **Daniel Inouye** grilled the then-nominee **Fabian Chavez** (later confirmed) on the agency's workings and financial relationships with *DATO*. The *Hawaiian* solon warned the prospective *USTS* chief that he would be watching his performance carefully for signs of wasteful spending and whether *USTS* was carrying out the intent of Congress. In what some experts regard as only Round One, **Inouye** told **Chavez**, "...I hope you will utilize the tax dollars in the best way possible...It's not easy to get funds for the *USTS* program. You (the agency) have critics, influential critics." **Inouye** also asked for a cost accounting of *USTS*'s financial contribution to the May 1977 travel mart in *Phoenix* that was cosponsored by *DATO*. Following the hearings, a top *USTS* official said the agency would re-evaluate its financial participation.

HOUSTON CHRONICLE TRAVEL EDITOR Joel Nash wrote about the paper's new section devoted to travel. **Nash** said the standard-size section in the Sunday edition would enable the paper to "devote more space to a vital industry to *Texas*." The section will include weekly articles on travel within *Texas* in addition to material on national and international travel.

THE EL PASO TIMES EDITORIAL WRITER reviewed tourism figures and wrote, "Gasoline may be expensive but as the summer travel season builds toward its peak there is every indication that 1977 will be a record year for tourism both here and abroad." He noted that the industry was difficult to define because of its many facets but that it is the country's fastest growing industry.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE OFFICIALS expect the newly opened *Lake Livingston State Recreation Area* to relieve the pressure on *Martin Dies Jr. State Park*. **Bob Hauser**, head of the *P&WL* operations and maintenance section, says, "We anticipate the new park (it opened July 1) will be highly visited by drawing from the populous *Gulf Coast* area." **Hauser** said the \$3.9-million development project was excellently equipped for visitors. Among the 214 camping and picnic sites is a 50-site area for group travel trailers which is expected to attract travel trailer clubs. With three boat ramps, the park is also expected to draw fishing folk because of *Lake Livingston*'s fishing reputation. Ten permanent *P&WL* employees will staff the recreation area.

BILL NAUMANN, SOUTHERN LIVING REGIONAL MANAGER, has announced that **Les Thomas** is the magazine's new travel editor. **Thomas**, who grew up in the *Fort Worth* area, is the former state editor of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Travel Editor **Thomas**, based in *Birmingham*, will be responsible for stories in the 15 states covered by *Southern Living*.

PLANS TO BUILD A TARRANT COUNTY Museum of Western Transportation never got off the ground — which was 15 acres of vacant property at *Fort Worth's Meacham Field*. County commissioners took the advice of **Milton Royles**, museum chairman of the board, and voted to cancel a lease with the *City of Fort Worth*. The action was an inevitable result, **Royles** said, of an unsuccessful bid for a \$500,000 federal grant. The museum was to have been part of a redevelopment program for the city's *Stockyards* area.

MIKE BENTON, DIRECTOR OF THE IRVING Convention and Tourist Bureau, has announced that **Barbara Brown** has been named assistant to the director. The personable young woman from *San Antonio* has been with the *S.A. Convention Bureau*.

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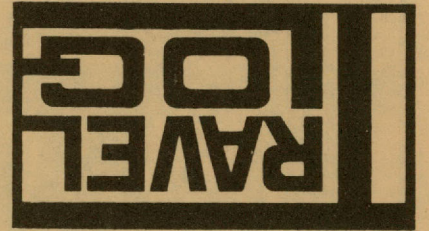
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DHT'S DIRECTOR OF TRAVEL SERVICES Willis Albarado has been elected chairman of the *Texas Chapter of the Travel Research Association*. DTA President **Jim Battersby** is a newly elected member of the association's board of directors. Also elected as chapter officers for 1977-78 were **Charlene Coppinger**, *Six Flags Over Texas*, and Dr. **Charles Zlatkovich**, *Bureau of Business Research at UT, Austin*. **Coppinger** was elected vice chairman and **Zlatkovich** was named secretary-treasurer.

ENERGY CHIEF JAMES SCHLESINGER used the threat of gasoline rationing to sell Congress on the **Carter** administration's energy program. The administration backed up **Schlesinger** last month by announcing that plans were being made for a back-up rationing plan that could be put into effect at a moment's notice. A columnist in the *Hotel & Motel Management* magazine noted in conjunction with the report that a travel industry committee on energy believes that even if **Carter's** proposed gas tax clears Congress (which seems unlikely) major changes in travel patterns would not result.

RECENTLY NAMED EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT of the *East Texas Chamber of Commerce* is **James F. McAuley**. **McAuley** moves up from the position of assistant general manager in charge of public affairs to succeed the late **Alf Jernigan**. Prior to beginning his work with the *ETCofC*, **McAuley** was with the *Longview* and *McKinney CofCs*.

ORANGE BLOSSOM TOURS offer a look at *Orange* that is "most interesting — not humdrum," according to **Peggy Diephuis**. The guided tours start at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., and guests are picked up at their hotel, motel, etc., by **Peggy**. Showing more than 25 points of interest, the tour tickets cost \$4.50 for adults and \$2.25 for children, with youngsters under 4 free. **Peggy** says, "I discount rates for families since many are on a vacation budget." And she adds, "Once visitors have taken the guided tour they have a far different idea about the Orange area." More information can be gotten by calling her at 713/883-0071.

AROUND THE BUREAUS — *Judge Roy Bean Tourist Bureau* Supervisor **Jack Skiles** received a vote of appreciation from the *Val Verde County Historical Society* for the article and pictures he prepared for the *July Texas Highways*. **Jack** modestly accepted our praise when we called him but he stopped to chuckle again about the tourist couple that had just left the bureau. He'd overheard the woman tell her husband, "The rest room here is so clean I wish I had to use it again." **Don Hunter** in *Laredo* said the summer vacation traffic through the area was "about a week later than usual." **Don** attributed the delay to the colder winter and schools closing in some of the nation's northern areas. Commenting on the 2 per cent decrease in vacationers served by the bureau, **Don** attributed the decline largely to the psychological impact on travelers of the devaluation of the *Mexican peso*. **Jim Garner** at the *Capitol Bureau* reports a new fashion fad — to the single-strap T-shirt. Commenting on the very casual, very thin shirts with the narrow strap over one shoulder, *Capitol Counselor Alice Flores* said, "The hard part about wearing them is explaining to your mother how to wear them." Up in *Denison*, Supervisor **Eddie Mathews** said the number of out-of-state travelers pausing there for assistance was running ahead of last year. **Eddie** said, "We feel that a greater percentage of the travelers is taking advantage of the assistance of the bureau."

SCOREBOARD — June totals for visitors at Tourist Information Centers edged past 1976 totals. The scant increase has been attributed to late school closings in some areas in the Northeast and North Central where the hard, cold winter had caused disruption of schedules. The totals through the first six months of 1977 continued to show an increase.

Bureau	Visitors	Variation*	Visitors***	Variation**	Bureau	Visitors	Variation*	Visitors***	Variation**
Amarillo	15,915	- 0.2%	61,797	+ 5.1%	Laredo	10,299	- 6.3%	57,021	- 2.9%
Anthony	22,683	- 6.2%	144,591	+ 3.7%	Orange	36,834	- 0.3%	158,259	- 6.1%
Capitol	19,935	+24.9%	117,090	+54.4%	Texarkana	21,972	- 3.6%	105,855	- 6.9%
Denison	12,561	+ 3.3%	57,384	+ 8.0%	Waskom	30,516	+ 0.2%	122,490	+ 4.6%
Gainesville	15,294	+ 5.7%	79,038	+ 4.8%	Wichita Falls	17,241	+ 6.6%	74,832	+ 4.2%
Langtry	9,762	- 9.4%	48,756	- 7.3%	Bureau Totals	213,012	+ 1.0%	1,027,113	+ 4.3%
Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins)						18,807	+14.8%	161,793	+14.2%

* Compared to 1976 month *** 1977 Total
** Compared to 1976