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TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, Austin, Texas

December

Travel & Information Division, 11th & Brazos, Austin, Texas 78701 512/463-8595

1987

A WELL-TRAVELED VISITOR told counselor *Reva Keltner* at our Texas Tourist Bureau in Gainesville that one of our bumper stickers helped locate a lost suitcase in the Bahamas. She described the lost piece to the baggage agent as a green suitcase. "Lady, I've got 10 green suitcases," he responded. "Well, it has a 'Don't Mess With Texas' sticker," she said. "Oh, *that one*," he laughed — and immediately produced the luggage.

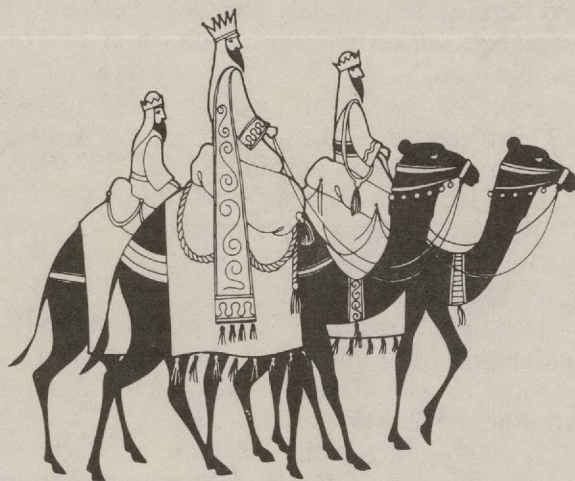
THERE WAS A BRIEF PANIC in the rest rooms at our Valley Tourist Bureau in Harlingen when the city power supply failed for about 15 minutes recently. But armed with candles and matches, our resourceful counselors soon led the visitors to the main area. "For a while, we were counseling by flashlight," laughed counselor *Denise Sanchez*.

ODDS 'N ENDS AROUND THE BUREAUS *Marie H. Blood* of Pinehurst, NC, a niece of the great *Houdini*, recently visited our Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center at Langtry. She was en route to California to appear in a television special about the legendary escape artist *Jim Felts*, a long-retired department photographer, recently visited our Texas Tourist Bureau in Anthony and pointed out several photos on display — pictures he took more than a quarter-century ago!

IT LOOKS LIKE WINTER TEXANS, arriving in droves, may exceed last year's total if early counts are any indication. The Tourism Division of the Texas Department of Commerce reports that last winter's visitors pumped some \$154 million into the Valley's economy. And *Chuck Snyder* of the McAllen chamber says, "Winter Texans are arriving earlier than last year and in sizeable numbers."

Our Texas Tourist Bureaus at Laredo and Harlingen report serving the winter visitors at a virtually nonstop pace.

TEXAS TRIVIA: Where was the oldest ranch in Texas?



WHEN SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS devoted a mid-November weekend to "General Motors Day" and distributed some 80,000 tickets to GM employees, our Texas Tourist Bureau at Gainesville was swamped with Arlington-bound visitors, reports counselor *Rhonda Hillis*. "I don't know how many carloads we served," she said, "but there were 20 charter busloads that just passed on by on the Interstate when they saw our lot was full. Even the rainstorms and tornados in the area didn't faze them!"

A NEW STATE RECREATION AREA IS OPEN on the shores of Lake Bob Sandlin 12 miles south of Mount Pleasant off FM 21. The 640-acre park offers a full range of day use and overnight camping facilities, including picnic sites, screened shelters, trails, boat ramp and fishing pier. The 9,400-acre lake offers good fishing for bass, crappie and catfish.



MEANWHILE, VISITORS MAY WANT to enjoy one of the special, mostly free, Christmas observances at several state parks and historical sites, including:

— Dec. 10-11, 7-9 p.m. **Fulton Mansion** at Rockport hosts a Christmas open house featuring Victorian decorations and music. 512/729-0386.

— Dec. 11, 4-9 p.m. **Landmark Inn**, Castroville, will feature musical performances, including Alsatian-costumed entertainers, during open house. 512/538-2133.

— Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. The annual Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass will be celebrated in the reconstructed Espiritu Santo Church at **Goliad State Park**. 512/645-3405.

— Dec. 13, 6-9 p.m. **LBJ State Park** near Stonewall is where *Lady Bird Johnson* will preside at a tree lighting ceremony; also traditional German Christmas at the **Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm**. 512/644-2252.

— Dec. 13, 1-4 p.m. **Sam Bell Maxey House** at Paris features Victorian Christmas decorations and chamber music at an open house. *Nominal admission*. 214/785-5716.



VISITORS IN OUR TEXAS TOURIST BUREAU at Waskom did a double take when a large golden retriever wandered behind the service counter, placed his front paws on the counter, and grinned at the patrons — until counselor *Donna Watson* and manager *Melissa Heard* shooed him out! “He was friendly enough,” chuckled counselor *Darlene Jones*, “but I’m not sure how good he would have been at giving directions!”

SIXTEEN BLUEGRASS CLOGGERS from Kentucky stopped by our Texas Tourist Bureau at Texarkana en route to Dallas to appear in the half-time program of the Cowboys’ Thanksgiving Day game. After having their picture taken with counselor *Judy Stewart* at the Texas state line marker, the cloggers gave a sprightly demonstration of their dancing skills. “Does the Tourist Bureau always provide entertainment?” quipped a visitor!

FOR THE FIRST TIME, Padre Island National Seashore near Corpus Christi has begun charging fees for the popular Gulf Coast recreation destination. Under the new fee structure, a seven-day pass is \$1 per person up to a maximum of \$3 per car or truck; a day charge for walkers, bus riders, or bike riders is \$1 per person; a one-calendar-year pass is \$10; and a Golden Eagle pass that admits bearer to any national park is \$25. The fees are part of a plan to generate additional revenue for national parks.

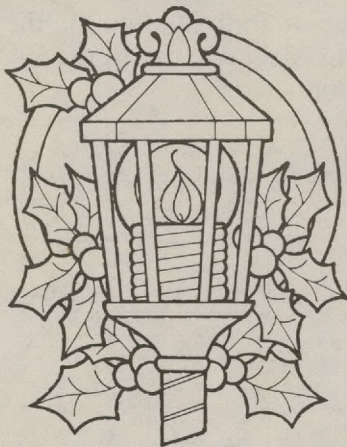


“**HARK!**” — an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and bas-relief sculpture depicting both well- and lesser-known angels — is on display at the Biblical Arts Center in Dallas now through January 10, 1988. The works, by Canadian artist *Margaret Losinski*, are the result of intensive research on angels in Christian and other religious traditions. Tuesday through Saturday 10-5, Sunday 1-5. Free admission. Call the Center at 214/691-4661 for details.

A FULL-SIZED REPLICA of what might well have been the world's first powered flying machine, the Ezekiel Airship, has been completed and is now on view as a prime tourist attraction in Pittsburg, Texas. Designed in the late 1800s and completed in 1902, it flew briefly a year before the Wright brothers' first flight. The original was destroyed in a storm; the 26-ft. replica is on display at Warrick's Restaurant in Pittsburg during normal business hours.

A LAVISH SCENIC TOUR of the Lone Star State with never-before-published photos of Texas in all seasons is featured in the January issue of *Texas Highways* magazine. Learn how Texans prepare their daily bread as you explore a Fort Worth flour mill. Discover the many facets of the witch hazel plant, and brush up on your Texas lingo. Now at your local newsstand for only \$2. An even bigger bargain is a 12-month subscription delivered to your door for only \$10.

GOT A SWEET TOOTH? Visitors are welcome at the kitchens of the Fredericksburg Fudge Company to watch their skilled confectioners turn out a variety of tasty candies by hand, using time-honored, old-fashioned recipes. On Main Street in downtown Fredericksburg, it's open 9-5 Monday through Friday. It's a good idea to call ahead (512/997-2133).



CHRISTMAS AT SOUTHFORK RANCH is sure to delight visitors with more than 100,000 Christmas lights, a living nativity scene, and a display of "A Texas Night Before Christmas." Set in a Western atmosphere with area choirs and hand bell performances, Southfork Ranch will be open from 9 a.m. — dusk during the month of December. A call to 214/442-6536 will get you all the facts.

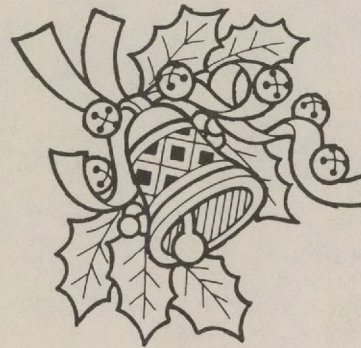
SECOND NOTICE!

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MORE BITS 'N PIECES On a busman's holiday, counselor *Terri Doyle* of our Texas Tourist Bureau at Orange spent a day examining our Valley Tourist Bureau at Harlingen Groups of visitors from the East and the West are using our Texas Tourist Bureau at Amarillo as a convenient rendezvous, reports bureau manager *Rosemary Montes*. "We get 'em coming and going," she chortled A grandson of Belle Starr, notorious outlaw queen of Indian Territory in the mid-1800s, recently visited our Texas Tourist Bureau at Denison, where counselor *Nancy Hodges* is also a distant relative of the bandit.

A NEW VACATION DIVISION for Sea World of Texas is now open for business, offering a variety of tour package options for Texas travelers. Although most Sea World Vacations packages include both San Antonio and the attraction, due to open May 28, other packages let the traveler design his own itinerary. For details, call senior tourist development representative *Sandra Sarate* toll-free at 1-800-442-SWTX.





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TEXAS TRAVEL LOG



LEST YOU FORGET . . . Don't let holiday activities delay your submitting listings for the Spring (March-May) *Texas Events Calendar!* Event listings are due in our Austin office by *December 31.*

TEXAS TRIVIA ANSWER: Probably the oldest ranch in Texas was the land grant ranch of Andes Hernandez in present Karnes and Wilson counties. The grant, dated April 12, 1758, is the oldest on record in the Spanish archives of the General Land Office in Austin.

Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	6,594	- 4.7	122,784	- 2.5	Orange	31,284	+ 4.8	390,651	- 7.6
Anthony	13,146	-12.8	169,581	- 7.1	Texarkana	20,784	- 9.4	237,504	- 28.4
Denison	17,985	-15.3	214,461	- 25.7	Valley	20,847	- 10.8	300,156	- 17.2
Gainesville	15,813	- 3.0	211,824	- 4.6	Waskom	27,138	+ 1.2	308,901	- 5.8
Langtry	6,678	- 2.5	91,242	- 4.2	Wichita Falls	11,334	+ 6.2	165,852	+ 1.6
Laredo	16,764	-14.0	228,834	+ 7.0	Bureau Totals	222,909	- 9.9	2,992,230	- 10.7
Capitol	34,542	-28.1	550,440	- 10.7	Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins)	15,425	+ 67.4	262,810	+ 4.5

*Compared to last year

NOVEMBER BOX SCORE: Here's a complete bureau-by-bureau tabulation for the month of November. With only 7,770 to go, it appears that December 1st will see the 3 millionth visitor pass through one of our 12 Texas Tourist Bureaus.