

{ BACK TO THE BEACH }

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Texas Highways

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Your Texas Highways

What do Texas Highways readers think are the state's coolest small towns? The answer to that question and other reader favorites will be revealed in the upcoming September special issue. Reader feedback has always shaped the pages of TH, and that will certainly hold true with our redesign, which premieres that month. It's not too late: Tell us your favorite town (and why) by June 15. And let us know what you'd like to see more (or less) of in your TH anytime.

This month, we're beach-bound in two features starting on page 30, with Helen Bryant's three itineraries for South Padre Island (try them all!) and Ramona Flume's grand Galveston

Island getaway.

TH Facebook

fans recently posted props for these coastal escapes, and sang the praises of Corpus Christi, Padre Island, and Port Aransas, as well. Vanessa Weingart Heck and Pam Muth added that they're partial to Surfside: "It's the first Texas beach we went to with family when our daughter was a baby; many great memories and photographs!" said Vanessa.

While traveling on the Texas coast or elsewhere this summer, you're likely to spot some of the new Don't Mess With Texas trash cans. TxDOT's iconic anti-litter program launched a new "CANpaign" this spring, including 300 red, white, and blue trash barrels located at Texas Travel Information Centers and attractions across the state. The clever cans sport reminders to put waste in its place, including "Don't Trash Where We Splash" at SeaWorld San Antonio, "I'm Pumped About Trash" at Midland's Petroleum Museum, and "I Like My Trash Rare, Medium, or Well Done" at Amarillo's Big Texan Steak Ranch. Find more details at www.dontmesswithtexas.org.

In the words of the catchy new campaign song, "If you don't mess with Texas, then Texas is gonna be the best." Until next time, find us online, and happy travels!

Jill Lawless, Editor

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PHOTO: TxDOT



PHOTO: J. GRIFFIS SMITH

TRIP TIP: INSIDE HOUSTON

To contrast with the numerous outdoor activities featured this month, TH Art Director Jane Wu puts the spotlight on venturing inside Houston's Museum District. The area includes 19 museums, with collections and interests ranging from The John C. Freeman Weather Museum to the Museum of Fine Arts, all within a 1.5-mile radius, a rarity in this sprawling city. Jane, a Houston native, admits "I haven't been to most of the smaller ones, but hope to explore a few this summer, like the Center for Contemporary Craft." Jane also suggests checking out the Museum District website for free admission days. Some, such as The Menil Collection, are always free. Go to <http://houstonmuseumdistrict.org/free-admission-times>.

IN TOUCH WITH TH

Send suggestions and recommendations to letters05@texashighways.com or Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. Find us on Facebook and Twitter, too!

SNEAK PEEK: EVEN MORE SUMMER FUN...

Next month, we'll explore historic Clifton and the bounty of surrounding Bosque County, take a walking tour of downtown San Antonio, and escape to FoxFire Cabins on the Sabinal River. Plus, three locals put their spin on Austin. Summer's in full swing!



PHOTO: J. GRIFFIS SMITH





features

COVER STORY

38

3 Island Itineraries

Whether you're visiting for a family vacation, a romantic getaway, or an outdoors adventure, South Padre Island packs in Gulf Coast fun for travelers of all stripes. Check out our tips for three different flavors of SPI trips—and then make tracks to the beach.

Text by HELEN BRYANT



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➔ Check out www.texashighways.com for more travel information

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 It's hard to find a destination that serves up such a lively blend of culture, history, and recreation as Galveston. The city has weathered many a hurricane only to emerge stronger and more interesting than before.

Text by **RAMONA FLUME**
 Photographs by **JAKE MEHARG**

46 | **Follow the Frio**
 The Frio Canyon has a magnetic quality that draws visitors back, be they Mexican free-tailed bats that make their seasonal home in Frio Cave or the generations of Texans who return annually to recharge in the Frio River.

Text by **MATT JOYCE**
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52 | **Fandangle!**
 This month, Albany celebrates the 75th annual staging of its sweeping outdoor musical production *Fort Griffin Fandangle*. It's an ideal time to experience Albany's welcoming spirit of community and the arts.

Text by **JUNE NAYLOR**
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 Flowers, art, and painted churches

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 An awe-inspiring science museum and innovative park infuse downtown Dallas with new energy and attractions. *Plus:* *Faded Glory* highlights historic military sites; a new exhibit's artistic spin on the JFK assassination; North Texas airports renovate for the future; and Waco's Mayborn examines fear.

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 Three Texas regional airports that are definitely worthy of a lay-over—or lunch. *Plus:* Sway's tasty

Thai cuisine in Austin; and La India Tasting Room Café in Laredo.

23 | Weekender
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 A visit to Schulenburg reveals some of the finest aspects of our state's German and Czech heritage, including magnificent painted churches, a museum dedicated to polka, and a classic dance hall. *Plus:* The new George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas.

58 | Speaking of Texas
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 Dallas' Deep Ellum is the rare neighborhood with enough personality to inspire a classic blues song. Luckily, Deep Ellum retains the same cultural spirit today.

62 | TH Traveler
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73 | Window on Texas
Liquid Light
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About Our Covers
FRONT: The sun rises over the Gulf of Mexico at South Padre Island. **Photo © Erich Schlegel**
BACK: Visitors take in the underwater view at Moody Gardens' Aquarium Pyramid in Galveston. **Photo © Jake Meharg**

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EVENTS

June 1-July 18 Alpine Cowboys Baseball - **Alpine**
June 7 & 21 Hot Summer Nights Concerts - **Odessa**
June 7 & 21 Blue Moon at the Park - **Ft. Stockton**
June 7-8 Mex-Tex Family Fiesta - **Midland**
June 11 Summer off the Patio - **Ft. Stockton**
June 19 Juneteenth Celebration - **Odessa**
June 26-29 West of the Pecos Rodeo - **Pecos**

July 3-4 Toro Diablo Bull Riding - **Pecos**
July 4-7 Coolest 4th Celebration - **Fort Davis**
July 25-28 Viva Big Bend Music Festival - **Marfa**
July 26-27 Tall City Blues Fest - **Midland**
Aug 9-10 Big Bend Ranch Rodeo - **Alpine**
Aug 30-Sep 1 Marfa Lights Festival - **Marfa**
Sep 28-29 Donkey Daze - **Fort Davis**



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LOOK
JUST
BENEATH
THE
SURFACE



MEMORIES MADE HERE
MEMORIES MADE HERE

Everyone enjoys the beaches and bays of Corpus Christi/Upper Padre Island. But if you look a little deeper you will come face-to-fin with dolphins and stingrays. You can touch and feel exotic plants, jet down a tube of water, or take a step back into World War II. So in between swimming, surfing, fishing and sunbathing, take in all the experiences we have to offer. Dine on fried shrimp, shop in a unique boutique or just lay back and watch the sunset. There are countless memories waiting to go home with someone, which ones will be yours?



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Flower Power

I had to tell you how wonderful it was to receive my April issue. It was so joyous (it was still winter in Maine at the time) that I had to call my sister, who gifts me a subscription each year. I have used TH many times to teach people here in northern Maine that Texas is not at all a desert, but a true delight.

SHARON M. JOHNSON,
TH Facebook Fan

Nasher Spirit

Thank you for Barbara Rodriguez's and Will van Overbeek's lovely article and photos on Dallas' Nasher Sculpture Center [March]. I was an art-history graduate student when I first discovered the Nasher in 2002. I was intrigued by the beautiful outside before entering. Mr. Nasher was at the front door, greeting everyone as if it were his own home; in many ways, it was.

He escorted me through parts of the building, pointing out architectural details, and told tales of how some of the sculptors came to place their art objects, how the sites were dug up, and what visual considerations were made at the time.

April TH:
"Get ready for
the greatest show
on earth!"

—REBECCA McNAIR,
TH Facebook Fan



More on
the State Fair's
"Big Tex" and a bask-
ing donkey at www.texashighways.com/talk

He was delighted with this adventure of his, and he passed along that delight to me as he made sure I got just the right photograph with my new digital camera.

His personal hospitality led me to write him a thank-you note and send him some of the photographs that I had taken. In return, he sent me a personal thank-you note.

Although he and his wife are now deceased, it is encouraging to see this beautiful spread in *Texas Highways*, and I hope others who take the time to stop there receive the spirit in which the Nashers shared their love of sculpture with the rest of us.

CATHERINE FOLEY, PH.D.,
Taylor Lake Village

Behold!

TH Facebook fans respond to our recent coverage of St. Mary's painted church in High Hill with their own recommendations for churches worth traveling to see. (Be sure to check ahead for details on access.)

St. Louis Catholic Church in Castroville is a beautiful church worth a visit.

—ROBYN KINSALL LARABEE

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Windthorst, and St. Boniface Catholic Church in Scotland, both in Archer County.

—LINDA MELTON

St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica in Beaumont—not only gorgeous, but one of only a few in Texas.

—STEPHANIE DOLLAR MOLINA

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Umbarger in the Texas Panhandle. The church frescos and paintings were done by Italian POWs who were being held near Hereford during WWII.

—PAUL BRAUN

Oslo Lutheran Church (18 miles northwest of Gruver) in northwest Hansford County.

—RONNIE TRAMMELL

St. Francis on the Brazos in Waco.

—SHEILA GRIMES

All of the painted churches in Texas are worth a visit.

—VICKI GIBSON

TH READER RECOMMENDATION

Now Brewing in San Saba

BAR-D BREWHOUSE in San Saba is wonderful. Owners Larry and Jerilyn Davis opened the brewery and restaurant two years ago. The beer is very good, the decor is rustic, and the service is friendly. Besides delicious sandwiches, burgers, and appetizers, there are Friday and Saturday all-you-can-eat specials. We like the Brew Sampler (with nine, 4-oz. samples); it is fun and a great opportunity to choose a favorite brew. Did I mention Jerilyn's homemade pies and cakes? They don't last for long, as the locals are on watch for them.

DALENA CLARK AND JOHN HOLLOWAY, San Saba

Bar-D Brewhouse is at 213 N. High; 325/372-6100.

CONTACT TH

We want to hear from you! Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: letters05@texashighways.com.

Please pass this magazine along!

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Postcards

INSIDE: FLY AND DINE AT AIRPORT CAFÉS...17 SCHULENBURG'S PAINTED PAST... 23

Dallas Reinvented

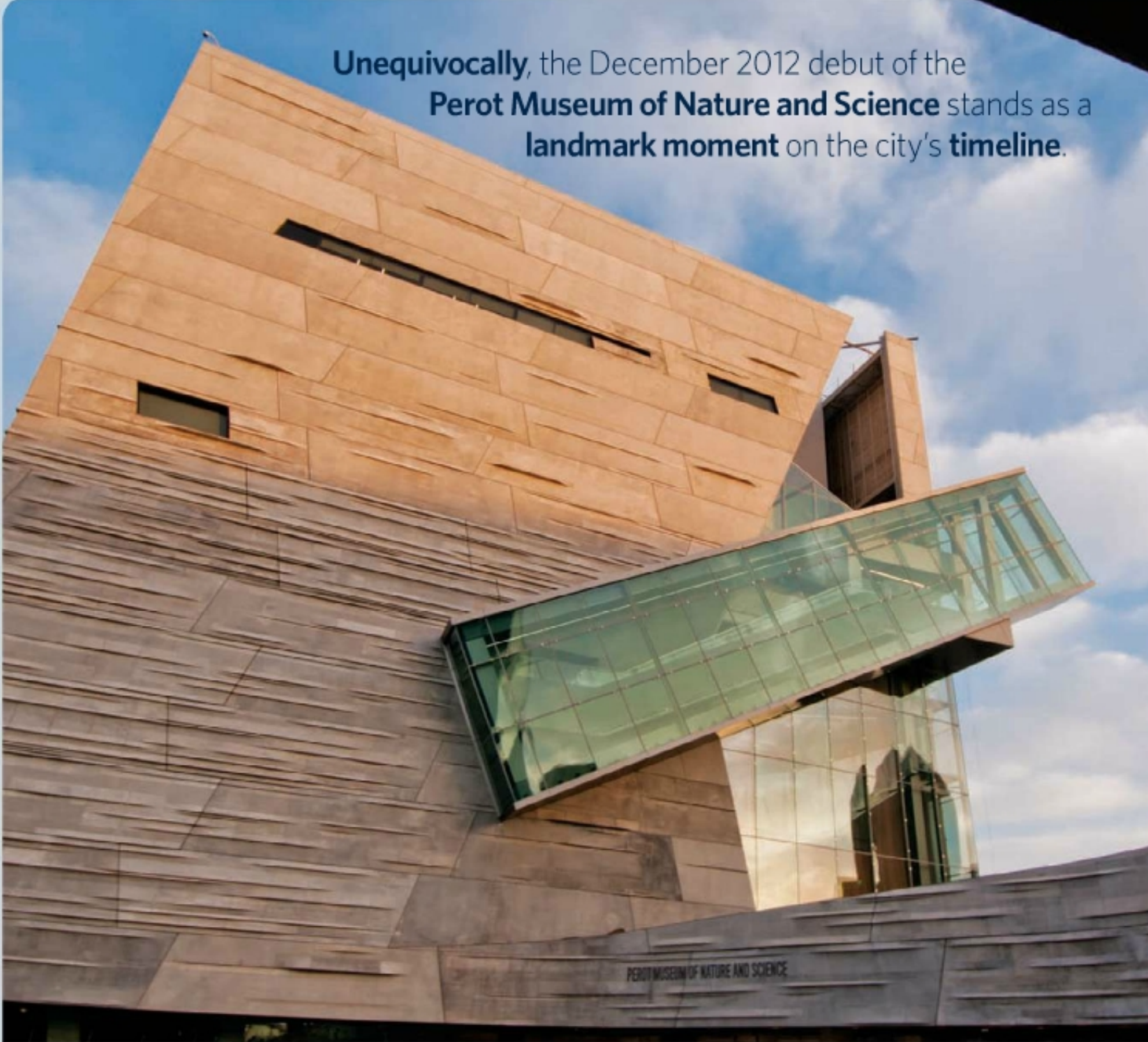
Downtown gets a facelift Text by JUNE NAYLOR



The NYLO Dallas South Side hotel rooftop provides a northwest view of the skyline.

PHOTO: MICHAEL AMADOR

Postcards



Unequivocally, the December 2012 debut of the **Perot Museum of Nature and Science** stands as a **landmark moment** on the city's **timeline**.

HAVING GROWN UP IN DALLAS, I RARELY THOUGHT of the city as a getaway destination, even though I've lived my adult life just 40 miles to the west in Fort Worth. Recently, however, Big D has grown into a place I hardly recognize, with its most exciting metamorphosis happening downtown. Today, the city center holds new discoveries I'm itching to explore whenever I find a spare moment.

Not long ago, I decided to spend a weekend immersing myself in new adventures unfolding across downtown Dallas and the adjacent Arts District. The escape was ideal for my party of two, but most of the indulgences lend themselves to families, as well. Here's the lowdown on Dallas as a new urban retreat.

Unequivocally, the December 2012 debut of the Perot Museum of Nature



Dinosaur fossils and virtual paleo-habitats greet visitors in the T. Boone Pickens Life Then and Now Hall at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science.

PHOTOS: MICHAEL AMADOR

and Science—made possible in part by a \$50 million donation by Dallas' Ross Perot family—stands as a landmark moment on the city's timeline. With five floors of public spaces filled with 11 exhibit halls, the Perot deserves mention with the nation's best science museums. Among thrills in the Being Human Hall, for instance, we used our brain waves to launch a pingpong ball. In the Expanding Universe Hall, we

toured the solar system in an animated journey. In the T. Boone Pickens Life Then and Now Hall, we gaped at skeletons of dinosaurs that once lived near where we stood. A 3-D film in the Hogland Foundation Theater, *Sea Monsters*, crept us out in a delightful way with exquisite imagery of ocean creatures of the dinosaur age.

Filled with natural light pouring through a multitude of windows, the

museum building mesmerizes with its design, accomplished by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects. Fashioned as a giant cube floating over a landscaped base, the building features a 54-foot-long escalator encased by a 150-foot-long glass rectangle on the museum's south face. Riding up the escalator, we gained a fine view of the

Faded Glory

Book highlights historic Texas military sites

WAR SHAPED TEXAS FROM ITS INCEPTION, AND A RECENT book by two historians sheds light on little-known military sites that contributed to the state's development—and what's left of them for visitors to see now.

In *Faded Glory: A Century of Forgotten Texas Military Sites, Then and Now*, Thomas E. Alexander and Dan K. Utley introduce Texas' military history starting with the prelude to the Mexican-American War in 1845 and continuing through the end of World War II in 1945. Alexander is vice chairman of the Texas Historical Commission; Utley is a professor at Texas State University and former chief historian for the Historical Commission.

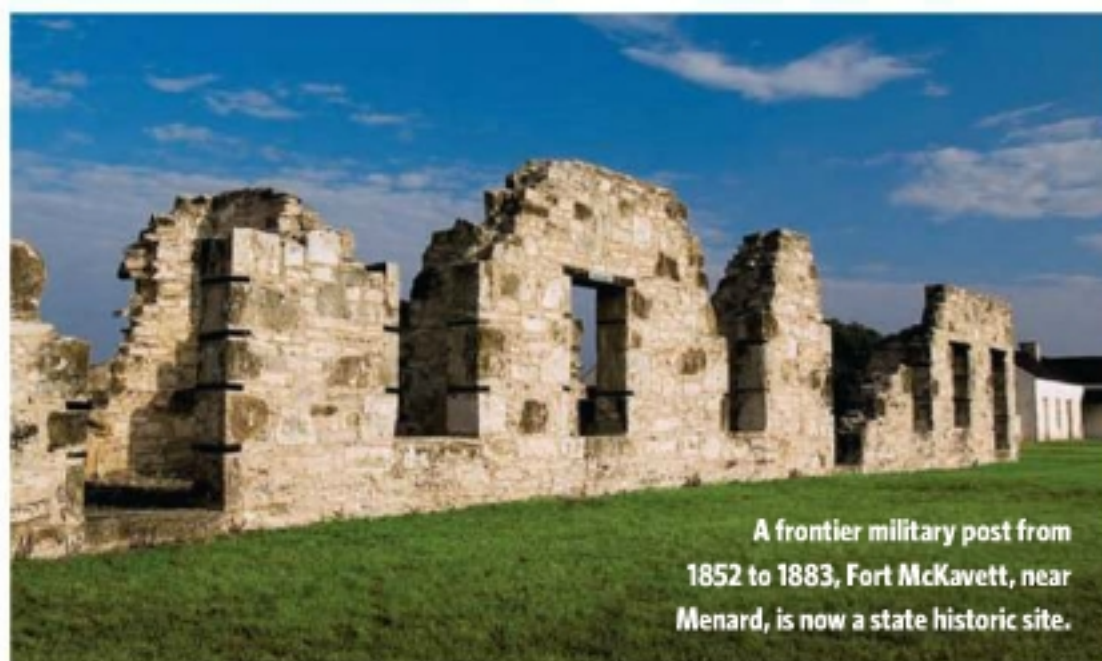
For those interested in military history and heritage tourism, *Faded Glory* provides interesting and easily digestible background stories of a diverse set of historic military sites. In addition to locales significant to the Mexican-American War and World War II, the book also covers sites from the Indian Wars, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the Mexican Revolution, and World War I.

In some cases, the sites provide rich tourism opportunities. For example, the commanding officer's home at Fort Clark—where the Army's last cavalry unit trained before deployment to Europe in the early 1940s—looks much as it did when it was built in 1857. In other cases, the remnants of the sites are long gone, and therefore the authors' historical synopses help bring their relevance to life. For example, the site where General Zachary Taylor camped in 1845 on Corpus Christi beach with about 4,000 American troops is completely covered by a seawall and modern development. "Then-and-now" images help illustrate the effects of time.

Alexander says the authors hope the book will spur recognition of Texas' extensive military history. "We are trying to focus some attention of the public on those old sites and hopefully generate some interest in doing more to preserve them," he says, noting that a second volume is in the works.

For more information, visit www.tamupress.com.

—Matt Joyce



A frontier military post from 1852 to 1883, Fort McKavett, near Menard, is now a state historic site.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



museum's rooftop landscaping, an acre's worth of rolling terrain comprising rock and drought-resistant grasses that characterize the natural Texas countryside. On the large plaza by the main entrance, we sat in the sun watching kids (and grown-ups) playing on frog sculptures emerging from the ground.

Wandering across the street and east a couple of blocks, we found ourselves in downtown Dallas' most innovative urban green space. The 5.2-acre Klyde Warren Park sits atop the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, which separates downtown and the Arts District from the adjacent Uptown neighborhood. Now the center of connectivity between the Perot Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art (which recently reintroduced free admission), the park turned out to be the ideal place for us to relax in the fresh air before continuing our cultural tour.

Walking the perimeter of the park—about a half-mile stroll—we watched families frolicking with kids, urbanites playing with their leashed dogs (bulldogs clearly being the favorite breed these days), and



The splash pad at Dallas' new Klyde Warren Park is a big draw for children.

Founded and curated by local fashion scribe Brittany Cobb, the Flea brings together some 75 Texas vendors of art, furniture, home decor, jewelry, and clothing in the former Sears building now

flea market that happens quarterly in the redeveloping South Lamar district, immediately south of downtown.

called South Side on Lamar. We spent a few hours browsing through tables laden with items like stationery, artsy dog collars, vintage chairs, and handmade earrings. Eventually, we gave in to our hunger and set our sights on supper.

Fascinated with the idea of crafting our own cocktails before dinner, we made tracks to the new Cook Hall, a gastropub that opened last fall [continued on page 13]

Klyde Warren Park turned out to be the **ideal place to relax** before continuing our **cultural tour**.

young couples canoodling on the lawn. Children and grandparents played chess on tables positioned on the park's north side, next to a reading area that includes periodicals on wooden racks. On this Saturday, a yoga class took place at the park's west end in a space also dedicated to Pilates and boot-camp exercise sessions. Park programming is free and includes a calendar full of activities like knitting, mahjong, and poetry, as well as concerts and plays. Food trucks around the park offer anything from Vietnamese fare to barbecue sandwiches to cupcakes. Late this summer, a new restaurant called Savor is scheduled to open with sit-down and take-out dining.

Luck was with us as our visit coincided with The Dallas Flea, the boho-chic

PHOTO: MICHAEL AMADOR

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Henry Moore's *Three Points* and Charles M. Russell's *Lost in a Snowstorm—We Are Friends* are among the featured works.

Artistic Moment

Exhibit showcases artworks from Kennedys' Fort Worth hotel room

TWO NORTH TEXAS ART MUSEUMS are memorializing the 50th anniversary of the JFK assassination by emphasizing a little-known artistic aspect of the historic moment.

Staged at the Dallas Museum of Art and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, *Hotel Texas: An Art Exhibition for the President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy* brings together 13 of the 16 paintings and sculptures that were assembled to spruce up Suite 850 of the Hotel Texas in Fort Worth. The Kennedys stayed in the suite on November 21, 1963—the night before the tragedy.

"It was a one-night exhibition for two people, which is quite amazing," says Olivier Meslay of the Dallas Museum of Art, the exhibition curator. "It's a very interesting slice of art for the period. It's very thoughtful—even though (the collectors) picked it very quickly—from Western art like Charles Russell to abstract expressionism. They made a perfect selection of the wide tastes of the time." Meslay spent more than two years tracking down the artworks, some of which had changed hands since 1963. Artists represented in the exhibition include Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Eros Pellini, Thomas Eakins, and others.

The story goes that days before the Kennedys' trip to Texas, a local art critic voiced concern about the suitability of the first couple's accommodations. In response, members of the Fort Worth art community and collectors, such as Samuel Benton Cantey III and Ruth Carter Stevenson, scrambled to compile a collection that they hoped would please the Kennedys, who were known for their appreciation and support for the arts.

The exhibit also includes contextual information about the Kennedys' trip to Texas. It opens May 26 and runs through September 15 at the Dallas Museum of Art and then shows October 12 through January 12 in Fort Worth at the Amon Carter Museum. More information at www.dma.org and www.cartermuseum.org.

—Matt Joyce



President Kennedy addresses a crowd outside of the Hotel Texas (now the Hilton Fort Worth), on November 22, 1963.



Stephan Pyles' newest restaurant, **Stampede 66** represents his **homage** to **Lone Star** cuisine.

☉ continued from page 11] at the W Dallas Victory Hotel. This warm and inviting spot within the über-modern hotel brings affordable, casual dining that's perfect before or after a game or concert across the street at the American Airlines Center. The fun gimmick here is a do-it-yourself drinks kit, presented in a basket with a decanter of your preferred liquor. We had vodka, plus juice and soda mixers, herbs, citrus wedges, and extracts, as well as guidance from recipe notes left in a handy journal by other patrons. To eat with those libations, we tucked into appetizers of sumptuous pork belly sliders on crusty buns, along with a plate of deviled eggs and oysters on the half-shell.

Another night, we joined the throng at chef Stephan Pyles' newest restaurant, Stampede 66, just a couple of blocks east of the Perot Museum. Stampede 66 represents Pyles' homage to Lone Star

Dallasites have been flocking to Stampede 66 since it opened last fall.

We adored the honey-fried chicken and buttermilk biscuits, as well as the smoked pork chop with green-chile hominy. A bite into the butterscotch pudding, we were reverently quiet for a moment—until we realized we

cuisine and his humble roots—the West Texas town of Big Spring and his parents' truck stop.

were ignoring our slice of equally divine coconut layer cake.

For Sunday brunch, we found lots to love at Café des Artistes, newly opened in One Arts Plaza, a few steps from the AT&T Performing Arts Center, a 10-acre complex within the Arts District that is home to the Winspear Opera House and the Wyly Theatre. A classic bistro, with marble-top tables, brass chandeliers, velvet



KERRVILLE, TEXAS

small town **BIG EVENTS**



Artist:
Judy Richie

Kerrville Folk Festival
May 23rd - June 9th
www.kerrville-music.com
800-435-8429

Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show
May 23rd - Jun. 23rd
Kerr Arts & Cultural Center
www.kackkerrville.com
830-895-2911

"Snow White, the untold story"
Jun. 14th - 29th
The Point Theatre
www.hcaf.com
830-367-5120

"9 to 5, the musical"
Jul. 12th - 27th, 830-367-5120
The Point Theatre
www.hcaf.com

"The King and I"
Jul. 26th - Aug. 10th, 830-896-9393
Playhouse 2000
www.caillouxtheater.com

"Don't Dress for Dinner"
Aug. 9th - 24th, 830-367-5120
The Point Theatre
www.hcaf.com

Kerrville Wine & Music Festival
Aug. 30th - Sep. 1st, 800-435-8429
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Legends of Western Swing Music Festival

June 19-22



Deer Fest

August 3



Texas Ranch Roundup

August 16-17

See!

Radio host Ira Glass at the Winspear Opera House on June 1.

draperies, and cushy red mohair banquettes, the setting proved ideal for enjoying short-rib hash topped with poached eggs and a plate of salmon Benedict, followed by beignets with raspberry sauce for dessert.

We realized the **NYLO** wasn't just another hotel: A grand piano covered in graffiti faced the front desk.

For our visit, we booked a room at the city's newest stylish lodging, NYLO Dallas South Side, within a renovated five-story, century-old office building near The Dallas Flea, opposite Interstate 30 from downtown. One foot inside, we realized the NYLO wasn't just another hotel: A grand piano covered in graffiti faced the front desk, and at the other end of the lobby, a pool table and ample seating for the bar crowd brought together a fashionable group for socializing. Upstairs, our room—with its exposed brick walls, cement floors, and industrial vibe softened by colorful throw pillows, blankets, and a plush bed—provided a good night's sleep.

But before we were ready to drift off, we headed to the rooftop swimming pool deck. Up there, we snagged cocktails at the poolside bar. Under a canopy of stars, we made a toast to the most magnificent view of downtown Dallas, our new favorite getaway destination. **TH**



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Airports Ascending

North Texas airports getting a makeover

THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH AREA'S TWO MAJOR airports are undergoing significant renovations, resulting in noticeable changes for those who fly throughout Texas.

Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport broke ground in 2011 on the \$2.3 billion Terminal Renewal and Improvement Program. Across town, Dallas Love Field is in the midst of a \$519 million project to replace its main terminal.

The DFW Airport project is an overhaul of the four original terminals that first opened in 1974. Along with utility upgrades, the project includes rebuilding the ticketing areas, security checkpoints, concourses, and concessions areas, says airport spokesman David Magaña.

DFW opened eight renovated Terminal A gates this spring. The project is scheduled for completion in 2017. Meanwhile, the airport is also building a light-rail station for the arrival of a Dallas Area Rapid Transit line to the airport by December 2014.

At Love Field, the City of Dallas and Southwest Airlines this spring opened the first 11 new gates of a four-year project to



The DFW Airport renovation includes a new children's play area in Terminal A.

rebuild the airport's main terminal with a new 20-gate concourse (including expanded concessions), new ticket hall, and new baggage claim area.

The Love Field Modernization Program is scheduled for completion by October 2014, coinciding with the expiration of the Wright Amendment, a 1979 federal law that placed restrictions on Southwest Airlines' nonstop flying from Love Field. When the law ends, Southwest will be able to fly direct to all U.S. destinations from Love Field.

—Matt Joyce

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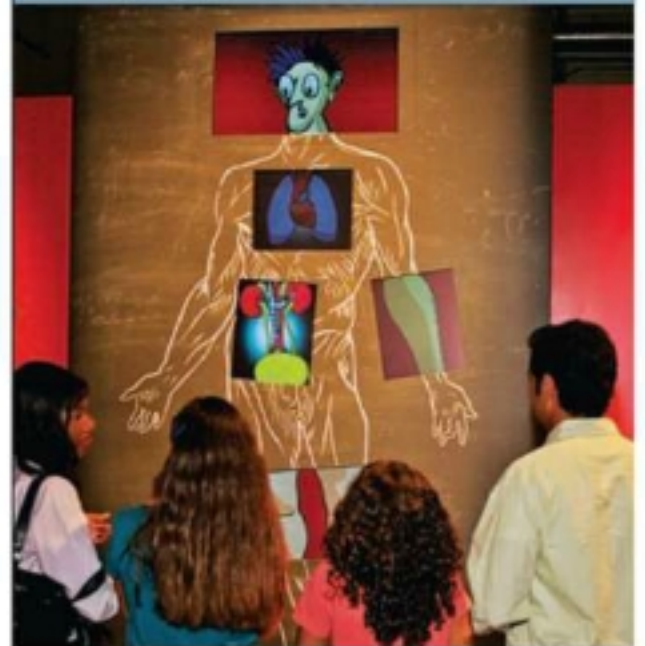


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Postcards



Goose Bumps!

*Mayborn exhibit invokes
fear and science*

SNAKES, HEIGHTS, GHOSTS, flying—we all have something that freaks us out and accelerates our heartbeat. *Goose Bumps! The Science of Fear*, a new exhibit at the Mayborn Museum at Baylor University in Waco, explores the science behind fear and our bodies' reaction to a good scare.

Developed by the California Science Center in Los Angeles, the traveling exhibit visits the Mayborn from May 25 to September 2. Visitors will encounter interactive challenges designed to induce fear and measure their responses, as well as an analysis of terrified facial expressions, animals' instinctive fear in the wild, and people's changing phobias over their lifetimes.

"As a museum we want people to learn, but also have fun, and this exhibit is going to help people do that," says Rebecca Tucker Nall, the Mayborn's changing exhibits manager.

Visitors can test themselves in the exhibit's "Fear Challenge Course," with scary—and completely safe—scenarios like reaching their hand into a container with spiders, or feeling the sensation of falling.

More information at www.baylor.edu/mayborn and www.fearexhibit.org.

—Matt Joyce

The Mr. Goose Bumps display shows the interaction between brain and body in scary situations.

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Airport Dining Takes Off

"\$100 Hamburgers" at Texas regional airports

Text by **ANTHONY HEAD**

In Fredericksburg, the Hangar Hotel's Airport Diner offers breakfast and lunch items, including burgers, salads, and blue-plate specials—plus views of the adjacent runway.



Brenham's Southern Flyer Diner reinterprets the "\$100 hamburger" with chiles and cheese. Actual price: about \$8.

Make it!
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Dreamliners and 747s, feature independently owned restaurants. Best of all, these fly-in destinations are open to the non-flying public. An added perk is that you can watch planes land and take off while dining. Kids, especially, love it.

Take the Southern Flyer Diner, located at the Brenham Municipal Airport. Open daily for lunch, the Southern Flyer offers a large outdoor patio for customers to watch the runways while dining. Inside, the interior harks back to cafés from the 1950s, complete with black-and-white checkered floors and red-and-white booths with Formica tabletops. The servers dress in poodle skirts and can sometimes be caught tapping their saddle shoes to the '50s hits playing on the jukebox.

Southern Flyer serves Southern comfort food. "We make almost everything from scratch," said my server, Lizzie Hill, with a smile as I inquired about dishes on the menu. Chicken-fried steak, grilled catfish with okra and tomatoes, squash casserole, chili with cornbread—they're all made to order in the kitchen with fresh ingredients.

In aviation circles, pilots often joke about dining on "\$100 hamburgers," a term that reflects the cost of gassing up and flying a plane to an out-of-town restaurant for lunch. At Southern Flyer, the hamburgers are no joke. They're huge, and they come topped with bacon, mushrooms, jalapeños—and just about anything else you can think of. And while the diner serves beer and wine, perhaps the most appropriate beverage choice for a \$100 hamburger (which really costs about \$8) would be a Southern Flyer milkshake made with Brenham's own Blue Bell Ice Cream.

Of course, if you're like me and enjoy breakfast fare at any time, the Hangar Hotel's Airport Diner, located at the Gillespie County Airport in Fredericksburg, is a great destination. The last time I visited, I dug into what I'll call "\$100 huevos rancheros" along with pancakes

LET'S MEET AT THE AIRPORT FOR LUNCH." THAT'S NOT a suggestion that I've ever heard, nor one that I've ever made, and for good reason. Although major airports continue to woo celebrity chefs and trendy restaurant chains to set up shop in busy terminals across the country, the catch is that you have to buy a plane ticket in order to get to them—not to mention wait in long lines and endure security pat-downs.

I'm not a pilot, but people like me who are hungry for a unique dining experience have options for airport dining by thinking small. In fact, some regional airports serving Cessnas and Pipers, rather than

and home-fried potatoes. The diner also serves biscuits and gravy, Belgian waffles, and other sunrise specialties all day, while offering a handful of salads, 10 different sandwiches and burgers, plus specialties like meatloaf and chicken flautas.

Recreational pilot Dick Estenson, who owns the Hangar Hotel, explained, "When you fly into some small airports, you might only find a machine to buy some crackers and a Coke. I wanted to create a true destination for pilots and their families."

Estenson designed his restaurant to resemble the railcar diners that were common in the Northeast throughout the 1940s. There are black granite countertops, terrazzo floors, a soda fountain behind the lunch counter, and mahogany-colored bar stools in front. Whether you're eating at the counter or in a booth, there's not a bad seat in the house for watching the adjacent runways.

"A lot of the guys from Fort Hood

fly here for lunch while doing military training," Estenson said. "It never gets old seeing a Black Hawk [helicopter] land and take off."

On a recent trip to Surfside Beach, I stopped by the Crosswind Café, located at the Texas Gulf Coast

Regional Airport in Angleton, just 20 minutes from the water. Retro tourism posters hang on the walls alongside blown-up photographs of vintage and modern airplanes. I noticed, too, that, although there were several families dining, not one kid was playing on an iPad or smartphone: They were all transfixed by the small planes practicing take-offs and landings right out-



Fly in or drive in. The Airport Diner in Fredericksburg welcomes all.

side the diner's floor-to-ceiling windows.

Crosswind's menu is impressive, especially for seafood lovers. Being so close to the Gulf, the most popular dishes here include grilled shrimp, blackened catfish, and fried oysters. Other best-selling items include the club sandwich, chicken-fried chicken with mashed potatoes, pan-seared salmon, and the Southwestern salad. (Of the latter dish, I can attest



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that it's delicious, hearty, and satisfying.)

I visited briefly with a pilot named Steve, who had flown in from Houston in his Cessna 172 SP. He told me he likes spending weekends logging air miles from one small airport to another, but he has a real affinity for Crosswind: "I'm a regular here. They usually have my ice tea waiting for me by the time I sit down."

Pilots joke about dining on "**\$100 hamburgers**," which reflects **the cost** of **flying a plane to lunch**.

Steve also regularly visits the airport restaurants in Brenham and Fredericksburg, as well as others around the state, and he had nothing but praise for his dining experiences. "The food has to be good for a pilot to fly in. It's basically a \$100 hamburger," he said with a knowing smile. After he finished lunch and paid his tab, Steve walked no more than 40 yards to his plane—and then he flew away into the wild blue yonder.

As far as I'm concerned, as long as I'm allowed to drive to these terrific airport restaurants, I'm just as happy to keep my feet on the ground. **TH**

Airport Diners

The **Southern Flyer Diner** is at 3001 Aviation Way in **Brenham**. Hours: Daily 11-3. Call 979/836-5462; www.brenhammunicipalairport.com.

The **Hangar Hotel Airport Diner** is at 155 Airport Rd. in **Fredericksburg**. Hours: Wed-Fri 11-2, Sat 8-4, Sun 8-2. Call 830/997-4999; www.hangarhotel.com.

Crosswind Café is at 7915 Airport Way in **Angleton**. Hours: Mon 11-3, Tue-Thu 11-8, Fri-Sat 11-9, Sun 11-3. Call 979/849-5995.



Swooning for Sway

Thai-ing one on in Austin

IN A RECENT CONVERSATION ABOUT VIETNAMESE fare with Austin restaurateur Larry McGuire, whose Elizabeth Street Café wins raves for its fresh interpretation of a cuisine steeped in history, he noted that the foods of southeast Asia—light yet satisfying, with variety in spice, texture, and temperature—are well-matched to both Austin's climate and palate. Now, with the opening of Sway—directly across the street from Elizabeth Street—Austinites have yet another opportunity to explore the cooking (and culture) of the region.

Helmed by Chef Rene Ortiz, whose 2nd Street District restaurant La Condesa takes an uptown approach to interior Mexican fare, Sway knocked us out on recent visits. Among the dishes we sampled over several visits, our favorites include the Prawn Miange appetizer (prawns with toasted coconut, Fresno chile, cashew, and lime—served on a heart-shaped betel leaf; \$10), the Jungle Curry (Texas Wagyu beef with chile, eggplant, peppercorns, and coconut cream; \$19) and the deceptively simple Kai Yaang (Thai-style rotisserie chicken; \$15).



"Oh, yes, the chicken," says Chef Ortiz. "It has something like 63 different ingredients in it. I like to get it to go; it's even tastier the next day."

Dishes are meant for sharing at Sway, a new Thai restaurant in Austin.

Desserts are equally as inventive, created by pastry chef Laura Sawicki, named by *Food & Wine* magazine in 2012 as one of the U.S.'s five best new pastry chefs.

Call 512/326-1999; www.swayaustin.com. —Lori Moffatt

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Taste



Spice of Life

Laredo's La India Tasting Room Café

A FEW MINUTES' DRIVE FROM Laredo's La Posada Hotel and main shopping drag of San Bernardo Street, La India Packing Company has been providing restaurants and homes with spices since 1924. But here's perhaps the best-kept secret in town: La India also has a café, serving delicately spiced sandwiches, soups, salads, light Mexican fare, and some of the best Mexican hot chocolate this side of the Rio Grande.

"I grew up in the spice business," says manager Elsa Rodriguez Arguindegui, whose grandparents started the company. "It's still in the same place; I lived upstairs until I was 11 and probably smelled like cumin and pepper throughout my entire childhood." Elsa opened the Tasting Room Café a decade ago as a way to show customers how to use the spices. "People come in, try our mole or our curried chicken, and they want to make it at home. But our menudo and chorizo mixes, based on my grandfather's recipes, are still our most popular products."

The Tasting Room Café opens 11-4 Monday through Friday. Call 956/723-3772; www.laindiaherbsandspices.com.
 —Lori Moffatt

Elsa Rodriguez Arguindegui shows off La India's pastries and hot chocolate.

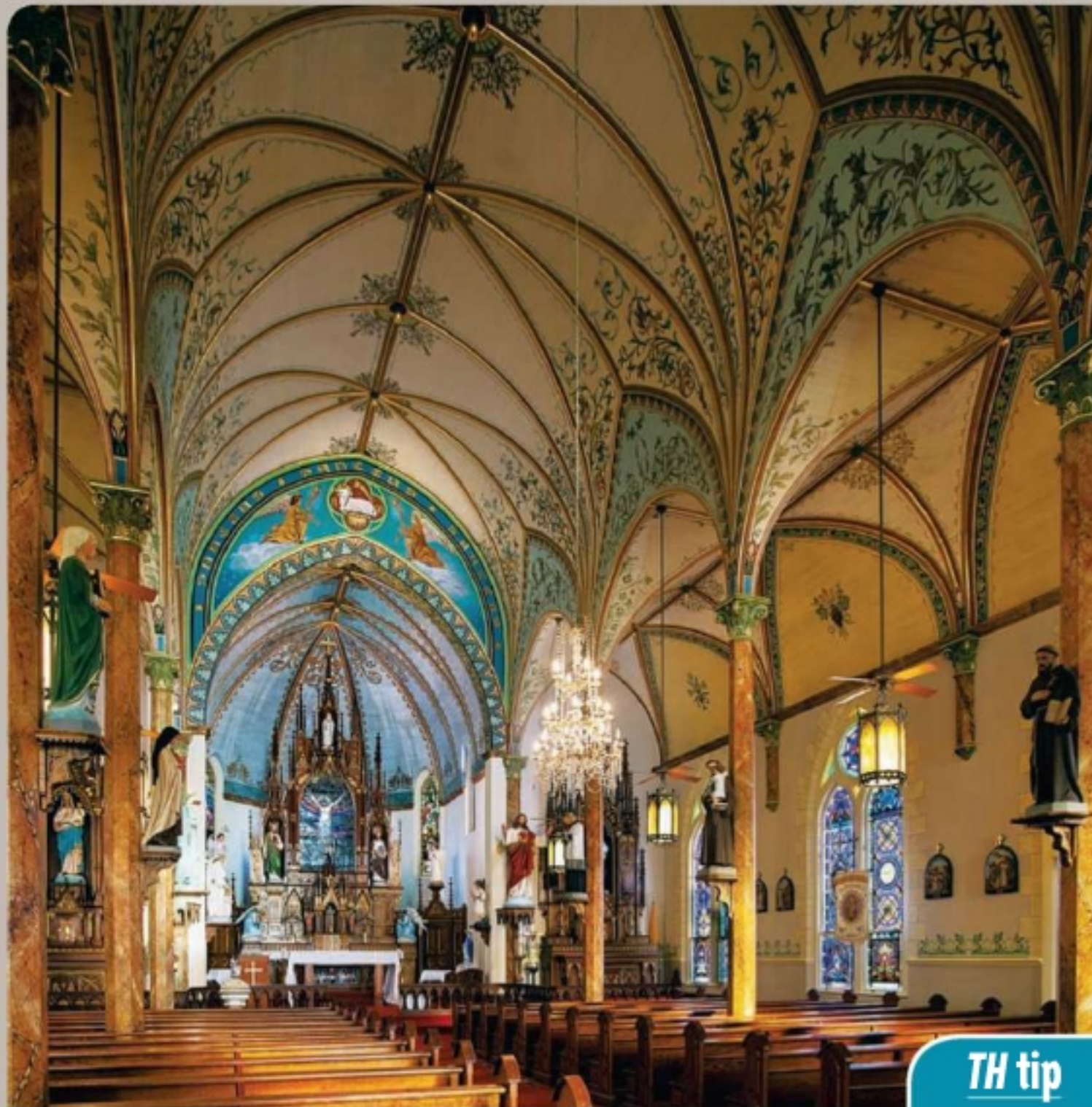
Sure Things in Schulenburg

A historic dance hall, opulent painted churches, and polka form a trifecta of fun

Text by **ANTHONY HEAD**



The Original Kountry Bakery, on Kessler Avenue about a mile south of Interstate 10 in Schulenburg, opened in 1979. Known for pies, cakes, and kolaches, the bakery also makes burgers, sandwiches, and other savory items.



feel inside, with hardwood floors and arched doorways, and, of course, the comforting aroma of just-baked cinnamon rolls. As we stood in front of the bakery case, trying to decide between donuts, coffee cake, poppyseed kolaches, and other sweet treats, the woman behind the counter told us that the building used to be a family house that was expanded over the years to accommodate the business.

The bakery also prepares savory items like egg-salad sandwiches and burgers, but we opted for strawberry kolaches and the best-selling “pigs in the blanket,” which we enjoyed on the front porch.

A very short drive brought us to Main Street. Like many small Texas towns, Schulenburg is struggling through a challenging economy.

TH tip
Plan at least a half day to see Fayette County's painted churches.

Main Street is three blocks long, and many of the stores have closed; others operate with abbreviated business hours. But most of them are locally owned and worth checking out for unexpected discoveries. The Baumgarten-Matula store, for instance, is a paint and hardware shop that also sells handmade furniture, antiques, and Christmas items; and The Flower Box offers an assortment of stationery, toys,

St. Mary's Catholic Church, in the community of High Hill, boasts 18 stained-glass windows.

I'VE GROWN QUITE FOND OF SCHULENBURG. DURING the past 12 months, in fact, I've visited this bucolic Texas hamlet three times, bringing my parents from Indiana, a buddy from Austin who's a photographer, and, on this latest trip in January, my wife, her sister, and my young niece and nephew.

What brings me back so often are the area's painted churches—the elaborately decorated interiors of century-old church buildings built by Germans and Czechs who settled throughout Texas in the 1800s. The state boasts about 20 painted churches, but the area around Schulenburg offers the most concentrated cluster, which is why the Texas

Legislature designated Schulenburg the “Official Home of the Painted Churches” in 2005.

On this most recent trip, however, we started the day with breakfast at the Original Kountry Bakery on North Kessler (US 77), about a mile south of Interstate 10. This brightly painted, red-and-white bakery has a homey

boxed chocolates, and floral decorations.

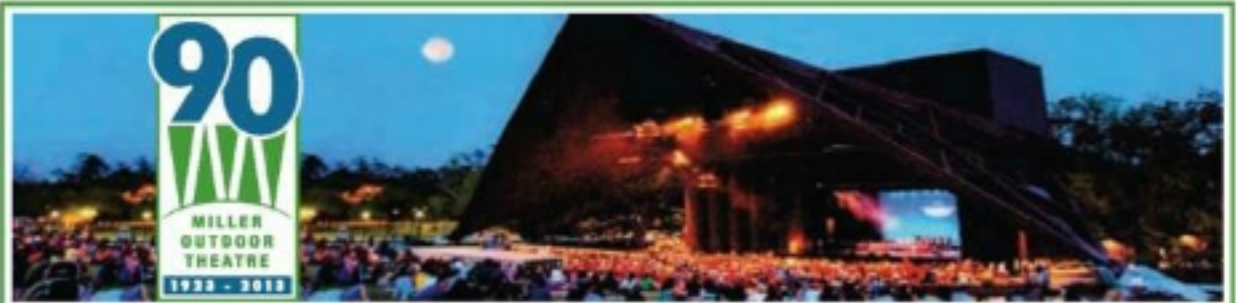
While strolling Main Street, we suddenly heard playful “oom-pah-oom-pah-pah” music. After looking around to find no parade, I discovered the source of the music—the Texas Polka Music Museum—so I kicked up my heels and literally danced right in. This delightful storefront venue opened in April 2010 to preserve the history of the Czech, German, and Polish polka bands that once dominated the regional music scene.

Texas boasts about **20 painted churches**, but the area around **Schulenburg** offers the **most concentrated** cluster.

Behind the counter, Schulenburg native Helen Ohnheiser, the museum’s operator, told me that she grew up going to see polka bands in town and in the surrounding communities. “I fit right in with the museum,” she said. “I know all the bands.”

Clearly a labor of love, the museum makes good use of its limited space, covering nearly every inch of the walls with records, newspaper and magazine clippings, and concert posters spanning more than a century of Texas polka history. The display cases hold clarinets, accordions, colorful vests and polka hats, and hand-written sheet music.

While I browsed 1902 photos of the Lone Star Brass Band and shots of Frank Moucka taken in his heyday in the late 1920s, Helen explained that Texas polka is far from being relegated to history. “A lot of these bands are newer bands,” she said, pointing out a selection of CDs for sale. “There are now younger musicians



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who are the sons and grandsons of the musicians who played around here for years and years."

The Texas Polka Music Museum sits across the street from the Chamber of Commerce, which offers maps to the nearby painted churches and recommendations for other things to experience during a day trip to Schulenburg. Armed with information, we left downtown and drove out to the countryside.

Hearing "oom-pah-oom-pah-pah" sounds, I kicked up my heels and literally danced right into the Texas Polka Music Museum.

The Schulenburg area, which sits in the topographical region known as the Blackland Prairie, is striking for its beautiful oak and pecan trees, wildflowers in the spring, and fertile rolling hills. The countryside views are part of the fun while touring the historic painted churches. Since they're all within easy driving distance from each other, visiting them only takes a couple of hours. Each church has its own character and history, but many consider St. Mary's Catholic Church, in the German settlement of High Hill, to be the prettiest. Constructed in traditional gothic style in 1906, St. Mary's boasts exquisite stained-glass windows with scarlet quatrefoils and blue edelweiss flowers, a 1906 pipe organ in the choir balcony, and an elaborately carved wooden altar that resembles those found in churches throughout Germany and the Czech Republic.

We continued our trip with a scenic drive south of Schulenburg along winding Farm-to-Market 957 to visit one of

Texas' newest wineries. The Moravia Vineyard & Winery opened to the public in summer 2012, and as owner and winemaker Luca Suschitz told me when we sat down inside the new tasting room, "Wine-lovers are starting to find us."

While the kids enjoyed a plate of cheese and fresh fruit, the grownups tasted chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, and a flight of three vintages of Black Spanish wine. Each taste of this traditional Texas red varietal showed how Moravia Vineyard's wines have developed more character and complexity with each year.

As the afternoon wore on, we headed back into town for lunch at Sengelmann Hall, which dates to 1894 and still dominates its block of Main Street. Inside the building, which was renovated in 2005, carved marble pillars connect original plank flooring to the pressed tin ceilings. There's an outdoor biergarten, and the upstairs dance hall still welcomes polka bands to the stage.



In the late 1800s, polka bands performed at Schulenburg's Sengelmann Hall—and they still do today.

Sengelmann Hall is also the second home of a popular local restaurant called Momma's. (The original restaurant, Momma's Pizza Kitchen, is a couple of blocks away.) The expanded menu at Sengelmann includes Angus burgers, salads, sandwiches, and traditional

German-Czech dishes like bratwurst and sauerkraut, but we filled up on the delicious handmade pizza and tender chicken-fried steak.

Our next stop was to be the Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum, which I have enjoyed on previous trips. The museum

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traces the lives of brothers Victor and Joe Stanzel, the Schulenburg natives who, beginning in 1929, directed their passion for aviation into a successful national company producing model airplane kits, toy rockets, and even flight-themed carnival rides. The company operated from the 1930s to 2001. Admission includes a tour of the adjacent factory, where the brothers created and developed dozens of their hobby products.

The Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum preserves the legacy of toymakers Victor and Joe Stanzel.

Like I said, the Stanzel Museum was going to be our next stop, but the kids were tuckered out from the day. So I pointed the car for home, popped in a CD I bought at the Polka Museum, and started planning yet another trip. **TH**

Schulenburg

is in Fayette County, just south of Interstate 10 between San Antonio and Houston. For information about lodging, restaurants, and attractions—including tours of the area's painted churches, call the Greater Schulenburg Chamber of Commerce, 979/743-4514; www.schulenburgchamber.org.



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Hail to the Chief

George W. Bush Presidential Library opens in Dallas

THE BULLHORN ITSELF LOOKS UNREMARKABLE.

Like many others just like it, it is mostly white, other than a few black scuffs around the outside of its light-weight, fragile shell. This particular bullhorn, however, is the one that President George W. Bush used to address first responders after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Along with thousands of other significant items and artifacts from Bush's presidency, the bullhorn will be on display when the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum opens on the campus of Dallas' Southern Methodist University on May 1. Visitors can also examine personal effects of the President and First Family, as well as gifts from foreign leaders and dignitaries.

Other exhibits include a full-scale reproduction of the Oval Office, a replica of the Rose Garden, and the Decision Points Theater, an interactive experience where visitors can make choices about real situations that President Bush faced during his political career.

Director Alan C. Lowe hopes people will leave the Library and



Museum with a better sense of what it means to be America's commander in chief. "I want [people] to come away with a clearer understanding of the awesome responsibilities of the President, and how all occupants of that office must make very hard choices," he says.

The Library and Museum is part of the George W. Bush Presidential Center at SMU. Call 214/346-1557; www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu.
—Michael Marks

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PHOTO: JEFF BUEHNER FOR THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

Galveston's

The "Playground of the South" is back



Next Wave

Text by **Ramona Flume** Photographs by **Jake Meharg**



Reopened in May 2012, Galveston's Historic Pleasure Pier offers rides, restaurants, a midway, and shops—much as the island's Pleasure Pier did in the 1940s.

To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



I've always loved Galveston,

and now I have a local connection. My boyfriend's grandmother, Alba Collins, grew up in a tiny house underneath the island's first wooden rollercoaster in the 1930s. And we visit her every so often, spending sunny, summer weekends soaking our toes in the Gulf waters as we listen to her stories about Galveston in earlier days.

To me, the history of Galveston Island is as alluring as the area's scenic beauty. I love learning about places like the Balinese Room, which attracted celebrities such as Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra in the 1940s; the first International Pageant of Pulchritude of 1926, which drew 150,000 people to the island to witness a bathing-beauty revue; and the nation's longest Pleasure Pier, where sightseers boarded a glittering Ferris wheel to witness panoramic views of the harbor. Galveston, known as the "Playground of the South," had everything: bathhouses, water parks, vaudeville shows, carnivals, and seaside resorts and casinos attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.



Above left, at 22nd and Strand, Old Galveston Square houses shops and an ice-cream parlor. Across the street, at Saengerfest Park, you'll find an oversized, alfresco chess set. At Pleasure Pier, riders on the exhilarating Gulf Glider enjoy panoramic views of the Gulf of Mexico.

And now, the spotlight is shining on Galveston once again, what with a \$65 million reconstruction of the Seawall's historic Pleasure Pier; a booming cruise ship port attracting 1.5 million visitors annually; thriving restaurants, art galleries, and boutiques; world-renowned botanical gardens; and theaters and other entertainment venues housed in some of the city's most historic structures.

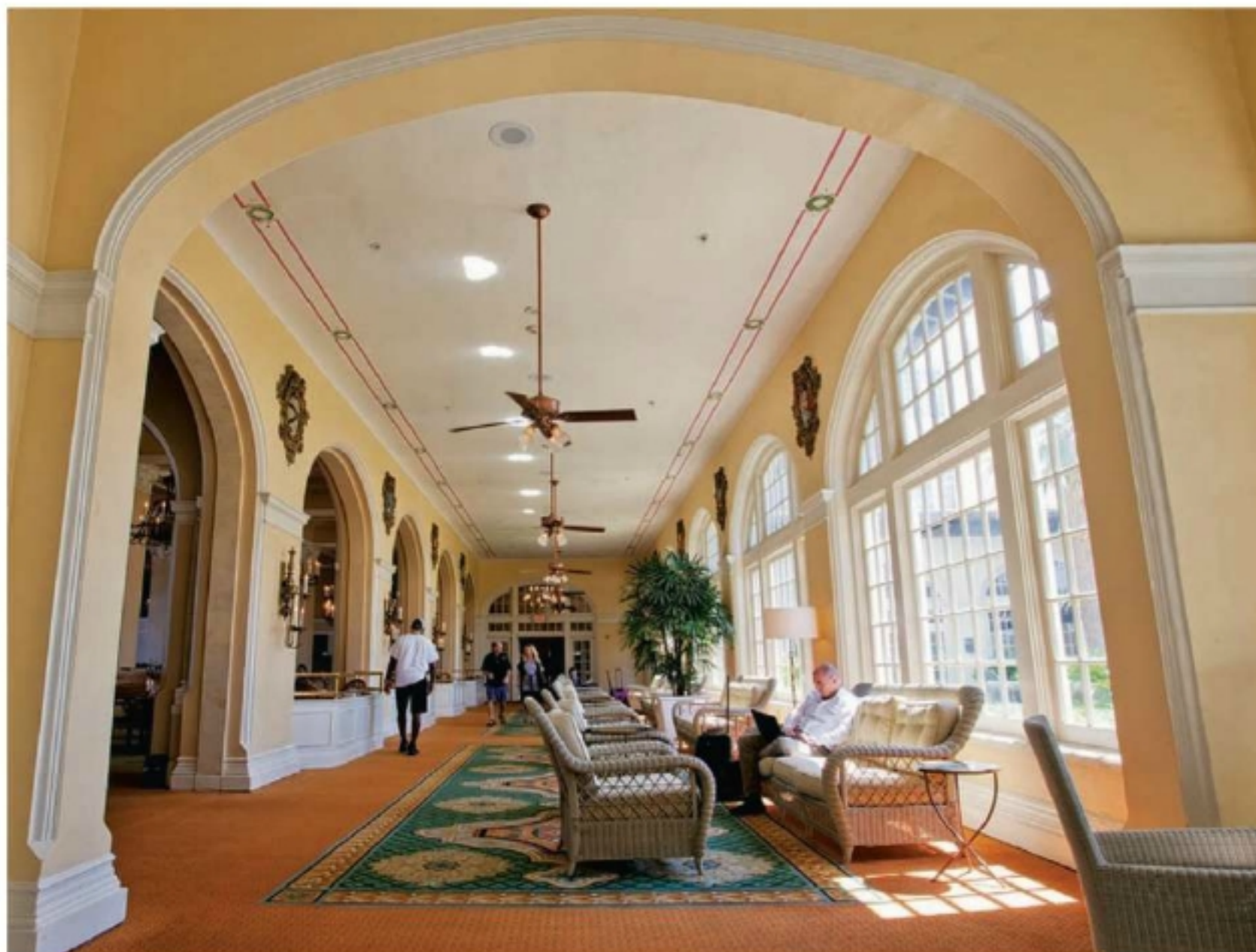
I recently revisited Galveston to spend a weekend



celebrating the city's iconic institutions. Fittingly, I started by driving up a palm-lined driveway to check in to the historic Hotel Galvez, which opened in 1911 as a symbol of the island's survival after the disastrous 1900 hurricane. The hotel celebrated its 100-year anniversary two years ago with an \$11 million renovation. The eight-story stucco exterior looks much the same as it did a century ago, but the interiors, including the guest rooms, the spa, lobby bar, dining area, and

sun-dappled sitting areas, have been redesigned with modern relaxation in mind. For instance, the first floor's window-lined loggias feature original marble columns with restored bronze capitals and commodious wicker lounge chairs—perfect for sunset viewing. Another highlight is the tropically landscaped swimming pool, complete with a swim-up bar, Jacuzzi, and lounge chairs nestled beneath shady, vine-covered pergolas.

Downstairs in the basement, I discovered a small but



informative exhibit about the hotel and the city's past. While perusing the information and images (reprinted from the rich archives of the nearby Rosenberg Library), Galvez guest ambassador Bobby Lee Hilton introduced himself and shared memories of Galveston in the 1940s and '50s. Now in his seventies, Hilton started serving coffee at the Galvez when he was a

teenager, and he clearly knows the island's history, ranging from Galveston's place in the mid-19th-Century as

ABOVE: The Hotel Galvez dates to 1911. BELOW: Learn about Galveston's role in the oil and gas industry at the *Ocean Star* Offshore Drilling Rig & Museum.



Texas' financial capital to recent restoration in the aftermath of 2008's Hurricane Ike. Despite devastating natural disasters, Bobby told me, the island and its residents have rebuilt and restarted when other coastal communities have withered away. "The people are different here," said Bobby. "Everyone thought we'd be like Indianola, just down the coast, which was wiped out by hurricanes in the 1800s. But there's staying power here."

Even the dead don't like to leave, apparently. Bobby told me the most requested room by far in the Galvez is Room 501, where, according to legend, a young woman spent her last night before hanging herself on the roof, believing her fiancé's ship was lost at sea. Guests have reported seeing a shadowy figure floating through the room, and others say that a white apparition appears in the negatives of their photos.

In the nearby Pier 21 District, which houses new and old attractions like the Harbor House hotel, the *Ocean Star* Offshore Drilling Rig & Museum, and the Olympia Grill, the Texas Seaport Museum provides an in-depth look into Galveston's role as a major port city. The museum offers self-guided tours of the 1877 Tall Ship *ELISSA*, as well as sightseeing tours aboard the *Seagull II*, which allow guests to spot dolphins and learn more about the waterfront's

A man and a young boy are looking into a large, curved underwater tunnel exhibit. The man, wearing a plaid shirt and shorts, is pointing towards the water. The boy, wearing a yellow shirt and shorts, is looking at the exhibit with interest. The tunnel is filled with various marine life, including several large sharks swimming in the water. The background is a deep blue, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting the exhibits and the visitors.

AN UNDERWATER TUNNEL

in Moody Gardens' Aquarium

*Pyramid simulates what
life in a giant fishbowl
might be like.*

GALVESTON ISLAND'S *history is as alluring as the area's scenic beauty.*



Designed in part to protect the beaches from erosion, Galveston's rock jetties also provide anglers with convenient spots to cast a line.

history. I learned that in 1951, the Port of Galveston set the national record for exports of such commodities as copper, cotton, oil, and sulfur; and that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it served as a major immigration portal. The Seaport Museum's onsite Immigration Database allows visitors to look through the passenger manifests for relatives.

Nowadays, Galveston doesn't admit citizens into the country, but, as the fifth busiest cruise port in the continental U.S., it still hosts 1.5 million visitors every year.

One of the first sights visitors see when they cross the causeway to Galveston Island from the mainland is Moody Gardens' three shimmering glass pyramids. Moody Gardens opened in the 1990s, but following flood damage from Hurricane Ike in 2008, the gardens enhanced their popular Rainforest Pyramid as part of a \$25 million restoration effort. Unveiled in May 2011,

the 10-story ecological preserve now showcases more than 1,000 species of plants and animals, including fruit bats, cotton-top tamarins, and saki monkeys. It's an endless wonder to wander along an ipe-wood walkway through the canopy as animals scamper amid the baobab, rubber, and palm trees.

Perhaps the best place to

observe the local "wildlife" is the Strand Historic District, the island's epicenter of shopping and people-watching. Most of the buildings here—elegant Victorian, Greek Revival, and Italianate brownstones, some dating to the 1870s—now house shops, galleries, restaurants, and bars. Many boast historical markers, and it's interesting to look for "hurricane markers" indicating the waterlines of past storms. There are walking tours



More on Galveston's art scene at www.texashighways.com/webextra.

throughout the area, but on this visit I explored the Strand's many boutiques and souvenir shops, including the famous Col. Bubbie's military surplus store, Somewhere in Time (where I was tempted by vintage hats and opera glasses), and LaFitte's Beat (which offers Galveston souvenirs, island-wear for pets, and pirate-themed tchotchkes like eye patches and skull flags).

Shops like La King's Confectionery—which makes saltwater taffy, chocolate, and other candies—and casual eateries, like the Black Pearl Oyster Bar & Grille (try the oyster sampler), make it easy to refuel. Despite having explored the Strand many times in the past, I'd never dined at Rudy and Paco, a popular South American-style restaurant on Post Office Street, so I met my boyfriend there for dinner. When we arrived for our 7:30 reservation, the dining room bustled with



Military gear from around the world draws shoppers and tourists to Col. Bubbie's.

men and women dressed to the nines—cowboy hats and denim mixing with sequins and stilettos—hurrying to finish their cocktails and pay their bills. What was the rush on a Monday night? Turns out that next door at The Grand 1894 Opera House, there was a star-studded show featuring Lyle Lovett and Robert Earl Keen. “Just another lively night on the island,” our waiter said.

After a lovely dinner of ceviche and Chilean sea bass, we took a stroll on the beach, stopping to feel the periwinkle clams wriggle beneath our feet as the tide rolled out. The wind was starting to whip up from the water, and we noticed small clusters of sea gulls huddling near the jetties for protection. As the sky darkened, we could see twinkling lights in the distance—the Pleasure Pier, with brilliant LED lights shining out from the 100-foot Ferris wheel and dizzying aerial swings. The mist from the tide blended the bright lights into an ethereal glow, and we kicked off our shoes and raced toward it in the hopes it wasn't a mirage. **TH**

Look for writer **RAMONA FLUME**'s story on Galveston Island's historic Pleasure Pier, including memories from longtime resident Alba Collins, in the July issue. Photographer **JAKE MEHARG** grew up in La Porte. He currently freelances from his home in Austin.

TH ESSENTIALS

Galveston

FOR INFORMATION about accommodations, restaurants, and attractions on Galveston Island, call the **Galveston Island Convention and Visitors Bureau** at 888/GAL-ISLE; www.galveston.com.

Sites in the story include:

Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier. Call 855/789-7437; www.pleasurepier.com.

Hotel Galvez. Call 409/765-7721; www.wyndham.com.

Rosenberg Library. Call 409/763-8854; www.rosenberg-library.org.

Pier 21 attractions, including the Harbor House hotel, the Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig & Museum, the Olympia Grill, and Texas Seaport Museum. See www.pier21galveston.com.

Moody Gardens. Call 800/582-4673; www.moodygardens.com.

Rudy & Paco Restaurant & Bar. Call 409/762-3696; www.rudyandpaco.com.

3 *Island Itineraries*

SAND AND SURF FOR ALL ON SOUTH PADRE ISLAND





TEXT BY *Helen Bryant*

In summer, the Gulf of Mexico turns a vibrant blue-green at South Padre Island. On the shoreline, squealing children splash each other alongside hand-holding couples, and surfers tug their boards out to catch a wave.

South Padre offers a wealth of attractions, both along the Gulf beaches and on the bay side of the island, the shoreline of the Laguna Madre, part of the Intracoastal Waterway. Whether you're after family fun, heart-thumping thrills, or simple relaxation, South Padre Island can sate your appetite. We've crafted a few itineraries on the following pages. →

Mild or wild, solo or family-style. No matter your travel preferences, there's a South Padre itinerary for you.

To order a print of the beach photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

PHOTO © LAURENCE PARENT; INSETS: © ERICH SCHLEGEL

1 FAMILY TRIP

Ride the **Black Dragon** pirate ship, where pirates engage the kids in treasure hunts, water pistol and sword battles, and other activities that will have them shouting "Arrrrrrr!" long into the night.





Find information on dolphin-watching and other nature tours around the island at www.sopadre.com.

Lucinda Wierenga offers sand-sculpting lessons on South Padre and also creates custom wedding and proposal sculptures on the beach.

Stay Schlitterbahn Beach Resort. This resort was built from the remains of a hotel badly damaged in 2008 by Hurricane Dolly and features loblolly pine boards from burned forests near Bastrop in Central Texas. Comfortable rooms (with furniture from the same pines) provide downtime when you're not enjoying the discounts to Schlitterbahn water park, which the hotel adjoins. You can walk out the back door, plop yourself in a tube, and float into the wonders of indoor-outdoor Schlitterbahn, including 70-foot tube slides, an uphill river, wave pools, and kids' play areas.

Do After exploring Schlitterbahn, buy a colorful box kite—or perhaps one shaped like a shark—at B&S Kites and fly it on the beach. Then, consider taking a sand castle-building lesson from Lucinda Wierenga, known locally as Sandy Feet. A worldwide sand-sculpture competitor, she delights in teaching her craft to children.

At sunset, take a ride on the *Black Dragon* pirate ship, which cruises the Laguna Madre while onboard pirates engage the kids in treasure hunts, face painting, water pistol and sword battles, and other activities that will have them shouting "Arrrrrr!" long into the night. The



cruise serves as a dolphin watch as well. You're almost certain to see the creatures frolicking as the boat turns near the tip of the island.

Eat Family-friendly Cap'n Roy's Restaurant pleases parents with its seafood and Mexican dishes (specialties: shrimp and fish Veracruz, bathed in a spicy, chunky tomato sauce), and kids' plates feature hot dogs, Mexican fare, and fried shrimp.

Nightlife Take a flashlight down to the beach and hunt for sand crabs. The nocturnal creatures, often called ghost crabs because their tiny, pale bodies seem almost translucent, are too little to eat, so catch and release them.

Families **SPITINERARY**

Schlitterbahn Waterpark and Beach Resort, 33261 Park Road 100, 956/772-7873; www.schlitterbahn.com/spi.

B&S Kites, 2812 Padre Blvd., 956/761-1248; www.bskites.com.

Sandy Feet sand sculpting lessons, 956/459-2928; www.sandyfeet.com.

Black Dragon pirate ship, docked at Pirate's Landing, 501 Maxan St., Port Isabel, across the causeway on the mainland, 956/943-6283; <http://ospreycruises.com/the-black-dragon-pirate-ship>.

Cap'n Roy's Restaurant, 1313 Padre Blvd., 956/761-9990; www.capnroys.com.

**COUPLES'
GETAWAY**

2

Hop aboard the *Southern Wave* catamaran for a sunset dinner cruise. You'll see the island from a completely new perspective, and when the sun sets, the entire bay takes on an orange glow.





Dolphin Cove, in Isla Blanca Park, on the southern tip of the island.

Stay Pearl South Padre, which sits on the beach on the southern end of the island. Its 251 rooms and condos offer plush bedding and contemporary furnishings along with balconies overlooking the Gulf. Enjoy the pool and swim-up bar, hands-down the island's most romantic waterscape.

Do Walk the boardwalk at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center hand-in-hand, spotting roseate spoonbills, great blue herons, and other shore birds at the edge of the Laguna Madre.

Then head for the secluded north end of South Padre Island's beach, where you can trek over the dunes, then stroll along a high-rise-free beach where you might find a few unshattered shells to take home.

Complete your relaxation with a couple's massage at the Sapphire Spa right next to the Pearl. The Two If By Sea, 80-minute treatment offers side-by-side massages, followed by a dip in a private infinity tub infused with your choice of aromatherapy scent. Try the lavender to relax and the peppermint to revitalize.

Eat Join other couples aboard the *Southern Wave* catamaran for a sunset dinner cruise in the



Laguna Madre. A chef grills plump, fresh shrimp and tender chicken and beef fajitas to enjoy as you cruise serenely along, serenaded by a local musician. The crew provides soft drinks and water, and will chill the wine you bring. You'll see the island from a completely new perspective, and when the sun sets, the entire bay takes on an orange glow.

Nightlife Dance the night away at the Padre Sunset Club—there's a sports bar upstairs and a dance club downstairs—or Casablanca Lounge at the Suites at Sunchase. On weekends, talented island musicians will keep you on your feet at both clubs.

Spot roseate spoonbills year-round at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, which frequently offers guided nature walks (check the schedule at www.spibirding.com).

Couples SPITINERARY

Pearl South Padre, 310 Padre Blvd., 956/761-6551; www.pearlsouthpadre.com.

South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, 6801 Padre Blvd., 956/243-8179; www.spibirding.com.

Sapphire Spa, 310A Padre Blvd., 956/389-8888; www.spisapphire.com.

Southern Wave sunset cruise leaves from 2401 Laguna Blvd. between Louie's Backyard and Laguna Bob, 956/772-7245; www.sailsipi.com.

Padre Sunset Club, 5908 Padre Blvd., 956/761-1219; www.padresunset.com.

Casablanca Lounge, Suites at Sunchase, 1004 Padre Blvd., 956/761-7711.



The South Padre Surf Company *will have you up on the board in no time with lessons at Isla Blanca Park, near the jetties at the tip of the island—home of the island's best wave action.*

**FOR THE
ADVENTUROUS**



For more information on South Padre Island, contact the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800/767-2373; www.sopadre.com.

A former water tank houses the South Padre Island KOA condos, which sleep up to four and offer views of either the swimming pool or the Laguna Madre.



Stay Hotel room, schmotel room: Stay in a water tank. KOA campground will rent you one of three condos inside a round structure that was one of the island's original water tanks. The other tank houses an exercise room, TV, and pool table. (KOA also rents cottages, some overlooking the bay, that sleep four to six people.)

Do It's time to learn to surf. Rachel and Gene Gore, owners of South Padre Surf Company, will have you up on the board in no time with their lessons at Isla Blanca Park, near the jetties at the tip of the island—home of the island's best wave action. From the safety of the sand, the Gores will teach you how to paddle out and, in one fluid motion, hop atop the board. Within an hour, you'll likely be hanging ten.

Then, head over to the bay side to go parasailing with Coast Guard Capt. George Lopez, who will pick you up next to Coconuts Bar and Grill. You'll take off from (and land on) his boat, sailing aloft 600 feet, eye-to-eye with the pelicans. It's a heady feeling.

Too tame for the likes of you? Okay, then: Go skydiving. If you've never done it before, you'll jump tethered to an instructor. Free fall for 60 seconds at up to 150 mph, then open your chute and float down for about five minutes from 5,500 feet.

Or, if you'd prefer, spend five-plus hours about 20 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, deep-sea fishing with the Captain Murphy gang—a

third-generation fishing business—reeling in red snapper and perhaps ling, amberjack, grouper, and more (depending on what's biting that day).

Eat Blackbeards'—probably the best-known restaurant on the island—will happily cook your catch and sell you the sides (don't miss the creamy coleslaw) to go with it. Didn't catch anything? The menu offers a variety of freshly caught fish—typically flounder or grouper, depending on the season—along with shrimp and oysters, all in hearty portion sizes. This restaurant prides itself on handling big groups, so round up your entire adventurous crew for a big feed.

Nightlife Drop by Louie's Backyard and trade stories with other adventurers over a beer. Then get a little sleep—you've earned it—and set your alarm to rouse in time for one of the most spectacular beach sunrises you'll ever witness.

Whether you're at South Padre Island to relax with friends, frolic with the kids, or spoon under the June moon, leave plenty of time to hang out on the island's broad beach and enjoy the waves. Ride them, splash in them, or simply stick your toes in them: They're South Padre's star attraction. **TH**

HELEN BRYANT spends many weeks on South Padre Island every year and always enjoys favorite haunts and new finds.

Adventurers SPITINERARY

KOA campground, 1 Padre Blvd., 956/761-5665; www.koa.com/campgrounds/south-padre/.

South Padre Surf Company, Isla Blanca Park, 956/772-7272; www.southpadresurfcompany.com.

Parasailing, 2301 Laguna Blvd., 956/761-4218; www.exploresouthpadreisland.com/parasail.htm.

Skydiving, 6900 Padre Blvd., 956/744-5867; www.southpadreiskydiving.com.

Captain Murphy's fishing, Sea Ranch Marina, 1 Padre Blvd., 956/761-2764; www.captmurphys.com.

Blackbeards', 103 E. Saturn Ln., 956/761-2962; www.blackbeardsspi.com.

Louie's Backyard, 2305 Laguna Blvd., 956/761-6406; www.lbyspi.com.



follow the

Text by **MATT JOYCE**

Photographs by
WILL VAN OVERBEEK

As I climbed down from the Quarter Horse, it occurred to me that the Hill Country trail ride had been the perfect way to ease into my visit to the Frio Canyon area.

After navigating hectic traffic to depart Austin and skirt San Antonio, the horseback stroll, atop a gentle bay named “Grandpa,” had reset my tempo and allowed me to down-




Frio

*Swim, hike, and dance your troubles away in the **Frio Canyon** and **Garner State Park***

shift to a more relaxed perspective on the world. I had come to the western Hill Country to explore the rough canyonlands, pristine Frio River, and laid-back culture that have made this a regular getaway for generations of visitors. Thanks to Grandpa, I was ready.

Neal's Lodges offers Hill Country horseback rides on its ranch property south of Concan.

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a man and a woman in the foreground, looking up at a twilight sky filled with hundreds of Mexican free-tailed bats in flight. The man is on the left, wearing a baseball cap, and the woman is on the right, holding a camera to her eye. The sky transitions from a pale orange near the horizon to a deep blue at the top.

The 11 million Mexican free-tailed bats that live in Frio Cave during the spring and summer migrate to Mexico and points south during the winter.

My host for the trail ride was Neal's Lodges, the 87-year-old Concan riverside resort. We gathered at the company's new ranch property, about 1½ miles south of the Concan lodge, for a 50-minute ride that traversed roughly 140 acres of gently undulating Hill Country prairieland dotted with live oak, cedar, mesquite, and prickly pear cactus. A blazing afternoon sun illuminated the pale blue sky. In every direction, green-gray hills and mesas broke the horizon.

Neal's Lodges reintroduced horseback riding to its offerings last year. "We're real big on trying to maintain the traditional feel at Neal's," says Cody Davenport, a co-owner in the group that acquired Neal's in 2011. "One of the traditions the guests asked about regularly was horseback riding, because it was so deep-rooted in the families that have been vacationing here for generations."

The new activities at Neal's Lodges—which also include evening hayrides, Joe Jimmy's dance hall, and an arcade—complement the resort's spring-fed Frio River swimming hole, which has

continued to provide consistent refreshment throughout recent drought conditions.

"The swimming hole stays full and continues running due to our springs, but we're kind of hit and miss on the floating right now. Last year, the rains were timely, and we were able to tube the entire summer, but the summer before that, we weren't," Cody says. "The good news is that the drought has forced us to be creative. When the drought breaks, we'll still have all these things."

After chatting with Cody, I stopped by my riverside cabin. The duplex cabin's interior is simple—two beds, white cinder-block walls, a tile floor, and a tiled bathroom with shower—but its large windows, porch, and picnic table draw attention to the main attraction: a hillside overview of the sparkling Frio River. The cabins are also equipped with appliances and supplies for visitors who want to cook their own meals, including a full-size refrigerator, an oven with a four-burner stove, a kitchen sink, dishes, a microwave, a coffee maker, and a barbecue grill.

An excited murmur

rose from the crowd, and spectators gathered at the rope barrier to watch bats skim just over their heads.



But dinner would have to wait as the day was drawing to a close and the main attractions at my next destination operate on their own schedule. So I hustled about six miles southeast to the Frio Cave on the Annandale Ranch, home to roughly 11 million Mexican free-tailed bats from March through October. Bain Walker, owner of the Frio Cave Bat Flight tour company, meets visitors here nightly to lead them to the cavern. We congregated at a ranch entrance on Farm Road 2690 and then caravanned down two miles of dirt road to the parking lot, where a 75-yard uphill walking trail took us to the mouth of the cave.

We took our seats in a rustic amphitheater of limestone blocks, with an expansive view of the surrounding Hill Country and a prime vantage point of the limestone cave's craggy opening. A gentle evening breeze cooled the hillside as the sun dropped slowly behind the western horizon. As we waited for the bats to emerge, Bain gave a description of the bats and the history of the cave.

The Frio Cave is well suited to the maternity colony, whose

females give birth to their pups in mid-June. With an opening on only one end, no running water, a relatively shallow depth of 100 feet, and a temperature of 120 degrees, the cavern "basically acts like a giant incubator," Bain explains. The region also has plenty for the bats to eat, particularly the corn earworm moth and cotton bollworm moth that pester the farms to the southeast, and the nearby river provides water.

"A quick disclaimer," Bain adds. "As the bats are coming out, it may 'rain'—even though there aren't any clouds. So don't look up and open your mouth at the same time."

Of course, Bain was alluding to bat guano. Inside the cave, the guano averages a depth of 10 feet. The nutrient-rich byproduct has been attracting humans since at least 1790, when the Spanish first made record of sending Frio Cave guano to Europe for fertilizer. The Confederacy also extracted the guano for use in gunpowder. These days, a company mines the guano with a skid loader to sell for agricultural fertilizer, but its lease is limited to the winter months, when the bats are in Mexico.

And then it happened. About 15 minutes after sunset, the first bats exploded out of the cave and fluttered into the dusk sky. An excited murmur rose from the crowd, and spectators gathered at the rope barrier to watch bats skim just over their heads. The bats' wings appeared translucent as they darted haphazardly from the cave opening. Within moments they found their bearings and veered to the right, forming a smoky column that faded to the southeast. The bats would continue to emerge for another few hours, and would return throughout the night and into the next day—except for the unlucky few that fell prey to the opportunistic red-tailed hawks soaring overhead.

On the topic of sustenance, it's fair to say that restaurant options are limited in the area (many visitors bring their own food), but I found good eats at Neal's Dining Room in Concan, where I enjoyed a deliciously crispy and thick chicken-fried steak for dinner, and a filling bacon-and-egg taco for breakfast. I also followed a tip to Mama Chole's, a tiny Mexican food joint in Leakey. The pepper steak—a half-pound beef patty stuffed with slices of jalapeño and smothered in queso sauce—was a Tex-Mex comfort-food revelation.



Roasted marshmallows make a fine dessert—or snack at any time of day—during a campout at Garner State Park.



The aforementioned meals took place within a couple of days, so it's for the best that I also made time to explore Garner State Park and its range of outdoor activities. Garner spans about 1,420 acres, including 10 acres of Frio riverfront. The park provides one of the public's best opportunities to venture into the rocky hills and canyons on the edge of the Edwards Plateau.

During my March visit, the campsites were busy with families barbecuing, lounging in the shade of live oaks, and playing pickup ballgames. The riverside was also crowded with sunbathers and picnickers with radios booming country and conjunto music. Kayaks and paddleboats navigated the river pools, taking care to avoid the swimmers who jumped from a series of rope swings along the bank. Though the river was too low for a tubing trip, a swim in the 70-degree spring-fed waters was a refreshing jolt.

To get my bearings in the park, I joined one of the

regular hikes led by Frank Roberts, the park's interpretive specialist. We met at the park pavilion, where Frank explained how the Civilian Conservation Corps carved out the park's original roads and trails, and chiseled its limestone structures during the Great Depression. The park takes its name from the late John Nance Garner, from nearby Uvalde, who served as vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Cactus Jack," as Garner was known, actually opposed the park when local constituents proposed it, but his wife, Ettie, liked the idea and helped make it happen.

Our three-hour hike covered four miles, ascending from an elevation of 1,300 feet to one of the park's 1,900-foot hilltops. Along the way, Frank pointed out the plants and animals that characterize the region and shared interesting stories about the park's development. We admired the purple petals of the mountain laurel flower, smelled the medicinal scent of the damianita plant, and learned how Native Americans cooked the root of the spiky sotol plant for food. A



Learn more about the geology of the Garner State Park area at texashighways.com/webextra.



The Frio River swimming hole at Neal's Lodges is deep and cold, even during drought conditions, because of the onsite springs.

golden-cheeked warbler sang out from a Lacey Oak shading the trail. We also saw a striking example of a Texas madrone tree, whose old-fashioned nickname of “lady’s leg” made sense after seeing its smooth reddish limbs.

As we ventured up the Old Entrance Road trail, we stopped at an overlook to take in the view of a wide spot in the Frio River valley. Frank explained that in the late 1800s, the valley below was a spur of the Chisholm Trail. A natural entertainer who’s apt to break into song, Frank took the opportunity to demonstrate his singing yodel.

“I try to give visitors a personal view, because it’s like my backyard,” Frank said as we finished up our tour. “It’s my way of helping you feel ownership of the park; you learn the small nuances. There’s a lot more to Garner State Park than swimming in the river and going to the dance.”

Oh yes, the dance.

No story about Garner State Park would be complete without mention of the dance. On summer nights since the ’40s, and on special occasions such as spring break and Thanksgiving, participants gather at sunset at the park pavilion, under the canopy of a sprawling live oak tree, for a

dance that lasts until 11 p.m. Ask around and you’ll hear tales of first dances, teenage crushes, and even marriages that originated on the pavilion’s concrete slab.

On this evening, a crowd formed around the pavilion’s perimeter as families gathered to dance and watch their children frolic. Moms taught their young sons to two-step. Grandfathers whirled their granddaughters around the floor. It was a casual affair, although there was a segment of the teenage population that was dressed to impress—boys in cowboy hats and jeans, girls in boots and cut-off shorts. The music, fueled by a steady stream of quarters in the jukebox, was mostly pop-country hits, interspersed with a few enduring local favorites like “Rockin’ Robin,” and “Amarillo by Morning.”

Overhead, constellations burst with light from the black sky, untempered by the sliver of a crescent moon. When the jukebox played a version of Houston crooner B.J. Thomas’ ode to summer love at Garner, it was easy to understand his sentiment: “Everything’s great after dark, when you’re at Garner State Park.” TH



Line dances are popular at the nightly summer dances at Garner State Park pavilion.

TH ESSENTIALS

Frio River

THE BULK of Frio River tourism activities are found between Leakey and Concan in the vicinity of US 83. Garner State Park sits just east of US 83 on Ranch Road 1050, about nine miles north of Concan and nine miles south of Leakey. For tourist information, visit the **Frio Canyon Chamber of Commerce** at 830/232-5222

or www.friocanyonchamber.com. Here’s contact information for sites mentioned in the story:

Neal’s Lodges, 20970 US 127, 830/232-6118, www.nealslodges.com.

Frio Cave Bat Flight (Mar-Oct), meet on FM 2690 about one-third of a mile south of Texas 127, 888/502-9387, www.friobatflight.com. Call or see website for tour schedule.

Neal’s Dining Room, located at Neal’s Lodges, 830/232-5813, www.nealsdiningroom.com.

Mama Chole’s Mexican Restaurant, US 83 in downtown Leakey, 830/232-6111.

Garner State Park, 234 Ranch Road 1050, 830/232-6132, www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/garner.



TH Associate Editor **MATT JOYCE** recommends approaching the Frio Canyon area from the west-northwest, because of the dramatic Hill Country scenery. Photographer **WILL VAN OVERBEEK** was awed by the beauty and history of the Frio Cave bats. “The history of the cave, and the Confederacy’s use of the guano for gunpowder, was interesting,” he says.



fundango!

THE TOWN MUSICAL'S
75TH ANNIVERSARY PUTS THE
SPOTLIGHT ON AMIABLE ALBANY

Text by JUNE NAYLOR

Photographs by ROBERT HART



The people of Albany are presenting *Fandangle*—an outdoor musical that reflects the spirit of the Texas frontier—for the 75th consecutive year this June.



EACH TIME I VISIT THE West Texas town of Albany, it seems that the locals mistake me for a resident. I've

finally realized that the historic frontier ranching town, just a two-hour drive west of my home in Fort Worth, is renowned for a welcoming atmosphere that envelops even folks stopping in just for the weekend.

And when Albany debuts the 75th anniversary edition of *Fort Griffin Fandangle*—its well-known annual pageant—this June, first-time visitors will experience the same thing. At any time of year, though, visitors dropping in to see what makes Albany such a tourist favorite likely feel that they've instantly made several hundred new best friends out in a prairie wilderness once guarded by cavalry posts.

Unsurprisingly, that's the disposition at the heart of *Fandangle* itself: The message coursing through the production's script, music, and elaborate staging resonates with the theme of overcoming hardships in a spirit of warmth, survival, and togetherness. And there are a lot of laughs thrown in for good measure.

Fandangle tells the story of Fort Griffin, a government outpost established on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River in 1867 to protect newcomers in the un-

Fandangle casts members of the Albany community to portray the pioneers that settled the area.



settled territory. Albany native Robert Nail wrote the musical and directed its debut in 1938. (The production claims to be Texas' oldest outdoor musical.) *Fandangle*, which is performed over the last two weekends in June, hasn't changed much in its 75-year history, except for the occasional addition of new songs and updated details.

The annual production is a community-wide effort. Hundreds of volunteer townsfolk handle every detail of the extravaganza, large and small. Preparations begin

months in advance, with projects ranging from costume upkeep to maintenance of sets and equipment—including horse-drawn wagons, a stagecoach, a train, and a calliope—used in the *Fandangle* amphitheater.

Planning and organization ramp up throughout the spring, with committees devoted to preparing for the elaborate parade that takes place on the first Saturday of *Fandangle* weekend and putting on the barbecue dinner offered nightly during the show's run. As preparations began for this year's big anniversary show, community excitement heightened noticeably.

"We have more volunteers than ever," says Betsy Parsons, who has directed the production for 19 years. "When you're doing something for the good of the community, everyone shows up. It's like a family reunion."

THE ANNUAL PRODUCTION IS A COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT. HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS HANDLE EVERY DETAIL OF THE EXTRAVAGANZA, LARGE AND SMALL.



ABOVE: Livestock, including Longhorns, play an important part in *Fandangle*. LEFT: Melissa Williams, an owner of the Icehouse Restaurant, serves biscuits at a cowboy breakfast during *Fandangle* weekend.

Parsons typifies the cast and crewmembers that produce *Fandangle*. She first volunteered as a fifth-grader for the job of folding programs and progressed over the years to various roles that have included cancan dancer and assistant director. She notes that Albany-area natives want their children and grandchildren to be involved, even if they've moved away. "People want to be a part of history, and people want to share that history with kids and grandkids," Betsy says. "It's an inheritance and a legacy."

Everyone involved in *Fandangle* knows the show by heart—even the Longhorns. As I watched a dress rehearsal, I noticed that the Longhorn herd entering the stage from a hilly path seemed well-trained in their part. "Yes, the Longhorns are seasoned performers and know their cue," Parsons says. "I joke that even if nobody else showed up, the Longhorns

would come in when they hear their music."

Set about a mile north of the Albany town square, the one-acre *Fandangle* amphitheater is carved out of rolling prairie brushland. Spectators sit on metal folding chairs for a production that appeals to audience members of all ages. The lively singing and dancing under the West Texas night sky brings to life the settling of the American frontier and the familiar themes of family, faith, and hardship.

The Longhorns come from the "official state herd" that lives about a dozen miles north of Albany at Fort Griffin State Historic Site, a worthy destination for anyone interested in the heritage of Texas. One in a series of defensive forts stretching across West Texas, Fort Griffin's partially restored rock structures include a mess hall, barracks, officers' quarters, bakery, and hand-dug well. When the weather's nice, camping



Sculptor Joe Barrington creates monumental metal sculptures—some of them reflecting Texas themes like fishing, roadrunners, and Longhorns—at Red Star Studio II in Albany.



The Old Jail Art Center houses a remarkable collection of international artworks and provides a solid foundation for Albany's art scene. Admission is free.

PERHAPS ALBANY'S GREATEST ATTRACTION REMAINS THE OLD JAIL ART CENTER. THE TOWN'S LOVE OF ART EXTENDS TO WELCOMING WORKING ARTISTS WHO HAVE MADE ALBANY THEIR HOME.

brings families in droves, as does the chance to catch catfish in the Brazos River and hike on riverside trails. The park offers tours, as well.

In the fall, Albany residents rally for an annual fundraiser benefiting the restoration of fort buildings. The Friends of Fort Griffin stage the weekend-long party, which includes a barbecue dinner, chuckwagon breakfast, and a dance.

EVEN WHEN NO SPECIAL events fill the calendar, I find Fort Griffin and Albany the perfect destination when I'm searching for a simple getaway. At night, the stars sparkle brightly in the black sky over the fort. And in town, I'm always taken with something or another that the community shares with its characteristic pride.

The restored Aztec Theater, sitting near the courthouse square, exemplifies the collaborative spirit of Albany's residents.

Fastidiously renovated about 20 years ago with locally raised funds, the vintage movie house with a stucco facade and Spanish tile roof now hosts plays, musicals, and community gatherings. At the center of the square, the beautiful Shackelford

County Courthouse—designed in Second Empire style with a clock tower, intricate roof details, and wooden interior—shines as another renovation success.

Perhaps Albany's greatest attraction, however, remains the Old Jail Art Center, which I consider to be one of the finest small art museums in the nation. The museum opened 33 years ago in the former Shackelford County jail, an 1878 building designed by Fort Worth architect



John Thomas and built by Scottish stonemasons who carved their initials into the building's large limestone blocks. Over the years, the museum has expanded to 15,000 square feet and multiple galleries.

Saved from demolition in 1940 by the same Robert Nail who penned and directed *Fandangle*, the building became a national historic site in 1976 and found new life as an art museum in 1980. Nail's nephew, Reilly Nail, and his cousin, artist Bill Bomar, pooled their modern art collections along with their family's Asian artworks to found the permanent collection. Today, the collection counts close to 2,700 works, including pieces by Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, Henry Moore, John Marin, and Grant Wood. Works by contemporary British artists are included, as are works in exhibitions by emerging American artists. Of special interest to history buffs, the Sallie Reynolds Matthews Room and the Watt Matthews Ranching Collection showcase saddles, rifles, and furniture belonging to one of the region's most noted ranching families. The room is designed to look like a family gathering room at the Matthews' historic Lambshead Ranch.

Albany's love of art extends also to welcoming working artists who have made the town their home. One, Abilene native Randy Bacon, moved to Albany nearly three years ago from Fort Worth, where he had lived for 30 years.

"I always liked Albany," Bacon explains. "When I had a show at the Old Jail Art Center in 2009, I saw a corner

lot for sale and liked the idea of having my favorite courthouse for a front yard. Albany felt right."

Bacon's studio is open to visitors, and he also co-owns Biscuit, a café on the courthouse square with loads of Southern charm. Serving soups, salads, and comfort dishes like meatloaf and roasted chicken with cheese grits, Biscuit has become a big hit in the small town.

Biscuit is among several good dining options in town.

For more than 30 years, locals and visitors have congregated at a Western-themed restaurant and bar called Fort Griffin General Merchandise Restaurant and Beehive Saloon—or just the Beehive, for short. The Beehive's two original sections were imported from nearby Fort Griffin, including the historic general store and saloon. The Beehive stands as a dependable place for a great chicken-fried steak and a beautiful aged rib eye, as well as a good glass of wine or margarita.

At the Icehouse Restaurant near the square, I'm often entertained by the locals sorting out the world's problems over lunch plates of chicken enchiladas. This hangout was one of the places where I first came to understand how Albany makes visitors feel like regulars just by stopping to sit for a spell.

Such is the spirit of a town that can "Fandangle" for 75 years. As artist Randy Bacon told me, "Albany has a vibrant can-do energy most little towns lack; citizens know how to work together to make good things happen." **TH**

Fort Worth writer JUNE NAYLOR looks forward to chatting with the locals over a slice of pie at the Biscuit café on her next Albany escape. After passing through Albany for years, ROBERT HART of Fort Worth says photographing this story confirmed his admiration for the town's civic pride and philanthropy. "It's a very well cared for little town," he says.

TH ESSENTIALS

Albany

ALBANY is 35 miles northeast of Abilene at the intersection of Texas 6 and US 283. For visitor information, including lodging options, contact the **Albany Chamber of Commerce**, 2 Railroad St., 325/762-2525; www.albanytexas.com. Here's contact information for sites in the story.

Fort Griffin Fandangle's ticket office is at the Chamber of Commerce office, 325/762-3838; www.fortgriffinfandangle.org.

Fort Griffin State Historic Site, 1701 N. US 283, 325/762-3592; www.visitfortgriffin.com, www.friendsoffortgriffin.com.

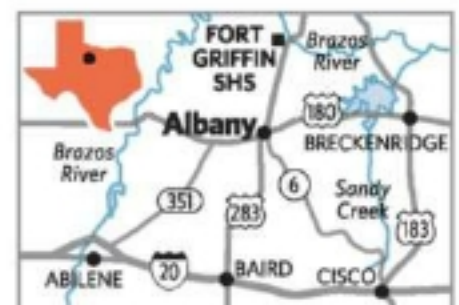
Old Jail Art Center, 201 S. Second St., 325/762-2269; www.theoldjailartcenter.org.

Biscuit, 300 S. Second St., 325/762-3535.

Fort Griffin General Merchandise and Beehive Saloon, 517 US 180 West, 325/762-3034; www.beehive-saloon.com.

Icehouse Restaurant, 200 S. Second St.; 325/762-3287.

Red Star Studio II, 218 S. Main, 940/862-3023; www.redstarstudio.com.





Deep Ellum's Enduring Spirit

"Oh sweet mama, daddy's got them Deep Ellum blues"

Text by **GENE FOWLER**

IN THE 1920S AND '30S, MUSIC FILLED THE STREETS, THEATERS, joints, and churches of Deep Ellum, an area just east of downtown Dallas that thrived as an African-American mecca of culture and commerce before construction of Central Expressway altered the neighborhood's character after World War II. Named for the languid, southern pronunciation of Elm Street, the district was mythologized by "Deep Ellum Blues," a 1930s folk tune about backstabbing women, backsliding preachers, and cops on the take.

That walk-on-the-wild-side atmosphere remains an aspect of the Deep Ellum allure today. Since the 1980s, the historic district has enjoyed an on-going revival as a hip enclave of live music venues, art galleries, theaters, bistros, and shops. As John Slate, archivist for the City of Dallas, puts it, "What I like most about Deep Ellum is that it resists excessive change. No amount of scrubbing or deep-pocketed investors will keep it from being a slightly sketchy part of town. Not as tender as the Tenderloin, not as skidding as Skid Row, but always lively and interesting."

Itinerant musicians made their way to Dallas in the 1920s after the owner of a Deep Ellum shoe-shine parlor and record shop discovered country bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson performing on the streets and got him signed to Paramount Records.

At the Double Wide, a bar and live music venue on the edge of Deep Ellum, the name says it all.

The district was mythologized by “Deep Ellum Blues,” a 1930s folk tune about backstabbing women, backsliding preachers, and cops on the take.

Other famous musicians who performed in Deep Ellum include the blues singer and instrumentalist Lead Belly, barrel-house blues pianist Alex Moore, and the gospel singers Arizona Dranes and Blind Willie Johnson. As a teenager in the 1920s, future guitar great T-Bone Walker performed with one of the many medicine shows that played the streets of the storied district.

Though the neighborhood remained primarily African American, with the exception of Jewish pawnbrokers—who were sometimes the only businesses willing to extend credit to black Dallasites—the music attracted a small but enthusiastic multicultural fan base. Bill Neely, a white singer in the Jimmie Rodgers style who hitchhiked to Deep Ellum while growing up in McKinney in the 1930s, remembered “all kinds of people: cowboys, Mexicans,

blacks, and down-and-out farmers.”

A similarly diverse audience frequents Club Dada, Trees, Allgood Cafe, and other live music venues in Deep Ellum today. One of the most unusual venues, the Sons of Hermann Hall has occupied the same building at the corner of Elm and Exposition since 1911. Named for the German folk hero Hermann the Cherusker (he led the overthrow of the Roman Army in the Battle of Teutoberg Forest in 9 A.D.), the Order of the Sons is reportedly the oldest fraternal organization in the U.S.

Along with a “who’s who” of Texas artists, the Hall has presented acts ranging from the Red Elvises to Zen Bubba. Veteran Austin honky-tonker Cornell Hurd calls the Hall “an amazingly hip venue,” and recalls “magical nights” playing to a packed house of folks who know and love the country-western canon.



The Freeloaders play Tuesdays and some weekends at The Free Man Cajun Cafe on Commerce Street.

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Speaking of Texas

Music lovers know they've found the night-club Double Wide when they see the spinning tornado sculpture on the roof. "Our design theme is homey and kitschy," explains club owner Kim Finch. "People say the wood paneling, velvet paintings, and taxidermy displays remind them of grandma's house." A stuffed javelina greets Double Wide patrons, along with the heads of deer, a boar, and a ram. Finch continues the theme with house specialty drinks like the Yoo Hoo Yee Haw (white Russian), the Hurritang (hurricane), and the Twisted Tang (margarita). The club's diverse clientele—like Deep Ellum itself—reflects its range of bands, which play blues, country, rock, punk, and whatever else.

"Whatever" might be the proper category for one Deep Ellum attraction—the

The Eight-Track Museum showcases thousands of its namesake tapes, as well as other formats of recorded sound.



world's first museum devoted to the eight-track tape. Curator Bucks Burnett proclaims that he elevated the short-lived music medium to collector's item status 20 years ago when he sold a Sex Pistols eight-track tape for \$100. He

"Whatever" might be the proper category for one Deep Ellum attraction—the world's first museum devoted to the eight-track tape.

opened the Eight-Track Museum in 2010 to showcase his collection of thousands of the tapes. "After visiting my museum, people see the eight-track as a valuable and historic artifact," he explains. The museum, which is open by appointment only, also displays examples of some 50 formats of recorded sound, starting with Thomas Edison's wax cylinder recordings.

Music is not the only art form that thrives in the historic neighborhood. The cutting-edge dramas presented by Undermain Theatre in its subterranean space on Main range from an original musical about Jimmie Rodgers to an adaptation of Homer's *Iliad*, while the



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Photo taken at Kuhl Yogurt

45-seat Ochre House presents original, experimental gems. The district's many galleries display all sorts of visual creations, including challenging contemporary work by Texas artists at Barry Whistler Gallery. On Exposition Street, 500X Gallery is one of the state's oldest co-op art spaces, and a University of Dallas-sponsored artist residency and gallery project called CentralTrak presents edgy new art in a former post office building.

Deep Ellum dining also caters to eclectic tastes. You can find chicken-fried steak and burger joints, as well as sushi, Tex-Mex, pizza stands, and barbecue—all within a few square blocks. The district's shops continue the theme. Lula B's Antiques, for instance, has won local readers' choice awards for "Best Scavenger Hunt" and "Best Oldies But Goodies" for its collection of vintage jewelry, clothes, toys, odds-and-ends, and retro knickknacks.

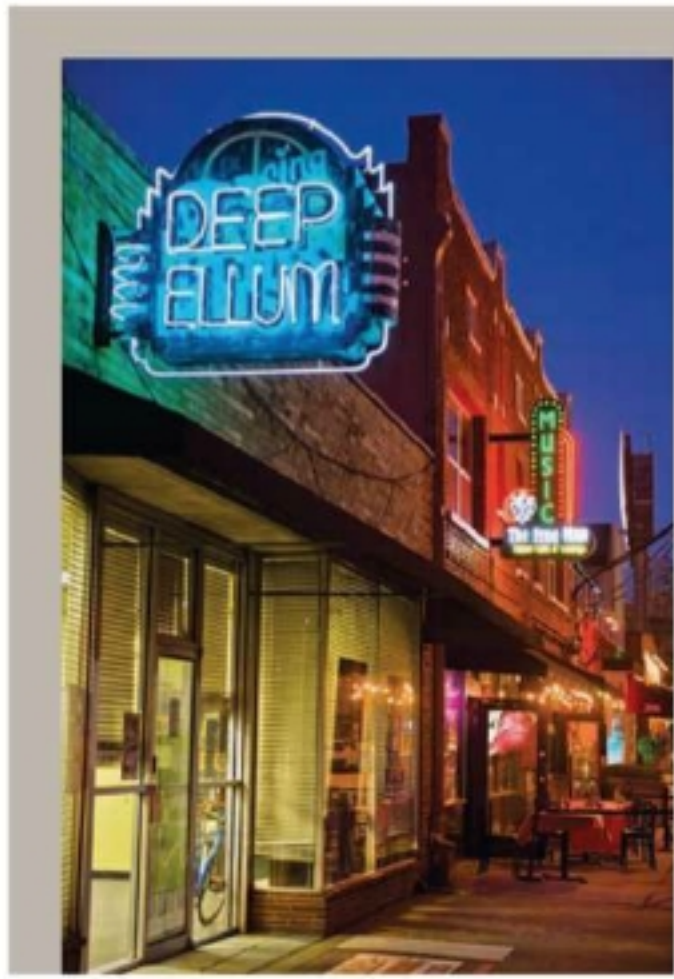
Afoot in Deep Ellum, you'll notice plaques that commemorate historic sites, sponsored by the Deep Ellum

Association and researched and written by Alan Govenar, coauthor with Jay Brakefield of the forthcoming book *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*. Govenar says that, like its history, the revival of Deep Ellum ebbs and flows. "I'm optimistic about the potential for responsible, meaningful redevelopment and growth," he adds, pointing out one historic structure in particular—the 1916 neo-classical Grand Lodge of the Colored Knights of Pythias on Elm Street—that cries out for rescue and restoration.

Designed by black architect William Sidney Pittman, the four-story building stands empty today. Its ballroom once hosted concerts by famous gospel artists, lectures by black war heroes, and a demonstration of sweet-potato products by George Washington Carver.

Whatever the future holds for the historic district, the soulful neighborhood is unlikely to lose its essence as identified by Govenar. "Deep Ellum," says the folklorist and historian, "is a state of mind." **TH**

See!
The bridge pillar murals at Deep Ellum Art Park



Doing Deep Ellum

DEEP ELLUM IS A vibrant entertainment, dining, shopping, and urban living area just east of downtown Dallas. Also an important historic district, the area once hosted performances by legendary African-American musicians like Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lead Belly. Deep Ellum is mostly walkable, and the DART light rail Green Line runs through the area with stops at Deep Ellum Station and Baylor Station. For more information on the sites mentioned in the story and other Deep Ellum attractions, visit the Deep Ellum Community Association website, www.deepellumtexas.com.

TH tip

Texas Folklife is releasing a CD of the 2012 show

Squeezebox Royalty

THE ACCORDION HAS LONG BEEN A FIXTURE in traditional music like conjunto, zydeco, and polka, and on June 1, the bellows-driven instrument will take center stage at the **Accordion Kings & Queens** concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre in **Houston**.

Texas Folklife, an Austin-based nonprofit dedicated to preserving and showcasing Lone Star culture, puts on the free, family-friendly show, which is now in its 24th year. Rosie Ledet & the Zydeco Playboys, Texas polka band Czechaholics, and Lubbock-based Tejano-conjunto band The Hometown Boys headline this year's show.

The concert also features the championship round of "The Big Squeeze," an annual state-wide youth accordion competition that began in February with a field of 33 contestants. More information at www.texasfolklife.org.



2012 Big Squeeze winner Peter Anzaldúa, second from left, jams with accordion greats Mingo Saldivar, Flaco Jiménez, and David Farias at last year's Accordion Kings & Queens concert in Houston.

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June Events

BIG BEND COUNTRY

EL PASO: Downtown Street Festival June 28-29. Downtown. www.klag.com

MARFA: Marfa Film Festival June 26-30. Various locations. www.marfafilmfestival.org

MIDLAND: Summer Sunday Lawn Concerts June 23, 30. www.museumsw.org 432/683-2882

ODESSA: Hot Summer Nights Concerts June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.mainstreetodessa.com 432/335-4682

PECOS: The West of the Pecos Rodeo June 26-29. Buck Jackson Arena. 432/445-2406

SANDERSON: Snake Days June 7-9. Sanderson Civic Center. www.snakedays.com 210/646-6619

VAN HORN: Frontier Days and Ranch Rodeo June 14-15. www.vanhornchamber.com 432/283-2049

GULF COAST

ARANSAS PASS: Shrimporee June 14-16. www.aransaspass.org 361/758-2750 or 800/633-3028

BEAUMONT: Spindletop Spin Bicycle Rides June 1. www.spindletopspin.com 409/839-2332

BEAUMONT: Bill Pickett Zydeco Festival, Trail Ride and Rodeo June 14-16. Ford Park Barn. 832/398-1425

EAST BERNARD: Czech Kolache Klobase Festival June 8. Riverside Hall. www.kkfest.com 979/335-7907

GALVESTON: AIA Sandcastle Competition June 1. East Beach. www.aiasandcastle.com 713/520-0155

GALVESTON: ArtWalk June 1. Various locations. www.galveston.com/artwalk 800/821-1894

GALVESTON: Party on the Pier June 15. Pier 21. 409/762-0062

HOUSTON: Buffalo Bayou Kayak Trip June 1. www.buffalobayou.org 713/752-0314

HOUSTON: Ctrl + P June 1-September 8. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. www.crafthouston.org

HOUSTON: Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop June 2-August 25. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: Houston Wine and Food Week June 3-9. Various venues. www.wineandfoodweek.com 713/557-5732

HOUSTON: Juneteenth Summer Celebration June 19. www.texasblackexpo.com/events/summer-celebration.html 832/200-0540

HOUSTON: Pride Houston Festival and Parade June 22. Along Westheimer Road. www.pridehouston.org

KEMAH: Bay Day June 1. Kemah Boardwalk. www.kemahboardwalk.com 877/285-3624

KEMAH/SEABROOK: Texas Outlaw Challenge Annual Poker Run June 20-23. www.texasoutlawchallenge.com

LAKE JACKSON: Youth Fishing Day June 1. Sea Center Texas. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seacenter 979/292-0100

NASSAU BAY: Texas Police Games June 10-14. Various locations. www.texaspolicegames.org 512/670-9581

ORANGE: Wild Beauty: The New Mexico Setting June 1-8. Stark Museum of Art. www.starkmuseum.org 409/886-2787

PORT ARANSAS: CCA Take A Kid Fishing Tournament June 1. www.woodysonline.com 361/749-5252

PORT LAVACA: Port Lavaca Market Days June 1. www.portlavacamarketdays.org 361/552-2959

SAN BENITO: Market Days June 15. Plaza de San Benito. www.cityofsanbenito.com 956/399-5321

VICTORIA: Winning the West: Firearms in the Texas Coastal Bend June 1-August 30. Museum of the Coastal Bend. www.museumofthecoastalbend.org 361/582-2511

VICTORIA: Victoria Bach Festival June 4-8. Various locations. www.victoriabachfestival.org 361/570-5788

VICTORIA: Dig our History Days June 14-17. Downtown. www.museumofthecoastalbend.org 361/582-2511

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: ATX Television Festival June 7-9. www.atxfestival.com

AUSTIN: Literature and Sport Exhibit June 11-August 4. Harry Ransom Center. www.hrc.utexas.edu

AUSTIN: Republic of Texas Biker Rally June 13-16. www.rotrally.com 214/904-8456

AUSTIN: Central Texas Juneteenth Celebration June 19. Various locations. www.juneteenthcentraltexas.com

AUSTIN: Keep Austin Weird Fest and 5K June 22. Long Center. www.KeepAustinWeirdFest.com

BOERNE: Second Saturday Art and Wine June 8. www.secondsaturdayartandwine.com 877/833-0621

BOERNE: Berges Fest June 14-16. Main Plaza. www.bergesfest.com 830/428-8778

BROWNWOOD: Brown County Rodeo June 6-8. www.browncountyfairandrodeo.com 325/647-8930

BURNET: Burnet County Fair and Rodeo June 14-15. Burnet County Fairgrounds. 512/798-4018

CASTROVILLE: Market Trail Day June 8. Houston Park. www.castroville.com 830/538-3142

FREDERICKSBURG: Oil Painters of America National Show June 1-17. www.insightgallery.com 830/997-9920

FREDERICKSBURG: Tractor and Engine Club Show June 7-8. www.rustyiron.org 830/889-9348

FREDERICKSBURG: Trade Days June 14-16. 355 Sunday Farms Lane. www.fbgradedays.com 830/990-4900

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days June 15-16. Gruene Historic District. www.gruenemarketdays.com 830/832-1721

GRUENE: Come and Taste It June 20. Grapevine Texas Wine Bar. www.grapevineingruene.com 830/606-0093

HARPER: Harper Sesquicentennial Celebration June 15. Harper Community Park. 830/864-4416 or 830/739-8512

INGRAM: Hard Ware National Ceramics Exhibit June 1-22. The Gallery at the Point. www.hcaf.com 830/367-5120

JOHNSON CITY: Antique Engine and Tractor Pull June 29. Blanco County Fairgrounds. www.bcfra.org

JUNCTION: Hill Country Fair, Rodeo and Dance June 1. Fairgrounds Rodeo Arena. www.junctiontexas.com

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival June 1-9. Quiet Valley Ranch. www.kerrville-music.com 830/257-3600

KERRVILLE: Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show June 1-23. www.kackkerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days June 22. Courthouse Square. www.kermarketdays.org 830/895-7524

LLANO: Llano Open Pro Rodeo and Parade June 7-8. www.llanochamber.org 325/247-5354

MARBLE FALLS: Marble Falls Soapbox Classic June 14-16. www.adultsoapboxderby.com 830/385-9289

SAN MARCOS: Texas Water Safari June 8-12. Begins at Aquarena Center. www.texaswatersafari.org

SAN MARCOS: Juneteenth Celebrations June 14-15. San Marcos Park Plaza. 512/738-2583

SAN MARCOS: BIGFest Music Festival June 28-30. www.bigfestmusic.com 512/353-3777

SONORA: Sonora Outlaw Pro Rodeo and Sutton County Days June 28-29. www.sonorataxas.org 888/387-2880

STONEWALL: Fishing Day at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site June 1. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson 830/644-2252

STONEWALL: Stonewall Peach Jamboree and Rodeo June 20-22. www.stonewalltexas.com 830/644-2735

UVALDE: National Fish Hatchery Youth Fishing Derby June 1. National Fish Hatchery. 830/278-2419


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UVALDE: Uvalde County Market Days June 22. Downtown Plaza. www.uvaldemarketdays.com 210/844-8193

WIMBERLEY: Market Day June 1. Lions Pavilion. www.shopmarketdays.com 512/847-2201

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: ArtWalk June 13. Historic Downtown. 325/677-8389

ABILENE: Children's Art and Literacy Festival June 13-16. Various locations. www.abilenecac.org/calf 325/677-1161

ALBANY: Cell Series Artist: Brad Tucker June 1-September 15. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: Fort Griffin Fandangle June 20-22, 27-29. Prairie Theater. www.fortgriffinandangle.org 325/762-3838

AMARILLO: First Friday Art Walk June 7. www.amarilloartists.com 806/353-5700

AMARILLO: Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo June 7-8. Tri-State Fairgrounds. www.coorscowboyclub.com 806/376-7767

AMARILLO: Kwahadi Dancers Present "Song of the Eagle" June 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30. www.kwahadi.com 806/335-3175

BUFFALO GAP: Chautauqua Learning Series June 8. Buffalo Gap Historic Village. 325/572-3365

CANYON: All Aboard! Luggage from the Permanent Collection June 1-October 5. www.panhandleplains.org

CANYON: TEXAS June 1-2, 4-9, 11-16, 18-23, 25-30. Palo Duro Canyon State Park. www.texas-show.com 806/655-2181

CHILDRESS: RanchFest Texas Country Music Festival June 29. www.rememberthepalace.com 940/585-6251

COLEMAN: PRCA Rodeo and Parade June 13-15. Coleman Rodeo Grounds. www.colemanrodeo.com 325/625-2163

CROSS PLAINS: Robert E. Howard Days June 7-8. Robert E. Howard Museum. www.rehupa.com 254/725-4993

GRAHAM: Possum Pedal Bike Ride June 29. www.possumpedal.com 940/549-3355

HAMLIN: Runnin the Buff 5K Run/Walk June 8. Starting line is at Hamlin High School. 325/576-3501

HENRIETTA/NEW BOSTON/QUANAH: US 82/287 Yard Sale June 7-8. Follows a 450-mile route through North Texas. www.hccchamber.org 940/538-5261

LUBBOCK: National Trails Day June 1. Lubbock Lake Landmark State Historical Park. 806/742-1116

LUBBOCK: Silent Wings Museum D-Day Events June 6. At 6202 I-27. www.silentwingsmuseum.com 806/775-2047

LUBBOCK: Wine and Clay Festival June 8-9. Llano Estacado Winery. www.llanowine.com 806/745-2258

POST: Post City Trade Day June 1. Main Street. www.postcitytexas.com 806/559-0835

QUANAH: Ranch Rodeo June 28-29. Quanah Riding Club Arena. 940/663-5916

SAN ANGELO: First Saturday at the Chicken Farm Art Center June 1. www.chickenfarmartcenter.com 325/653-4936

[continued on page 68]

Texas Highways

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

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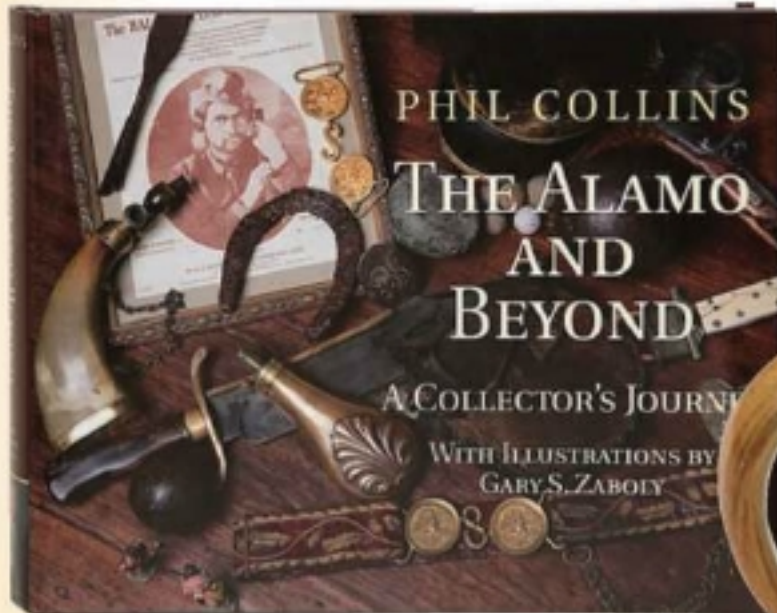
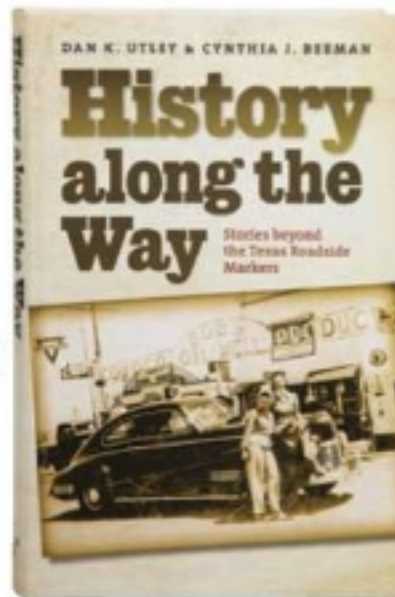
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Collins turns his gifted pen to telling the story of the Texas Revolution through a magnificent presentation of artifacts and documents from his private collection. A beautifully designed color book

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By Dan K. Utley and Cynthia J. Beeman
Little-known facts behind and beyond more than 100 Texas roadside markers, as well as colorful characters in history and stories about historic structures, will inform, amuse and intrigue you. 335 pages, color, 6 x 9 1/4 inches, soft cover.

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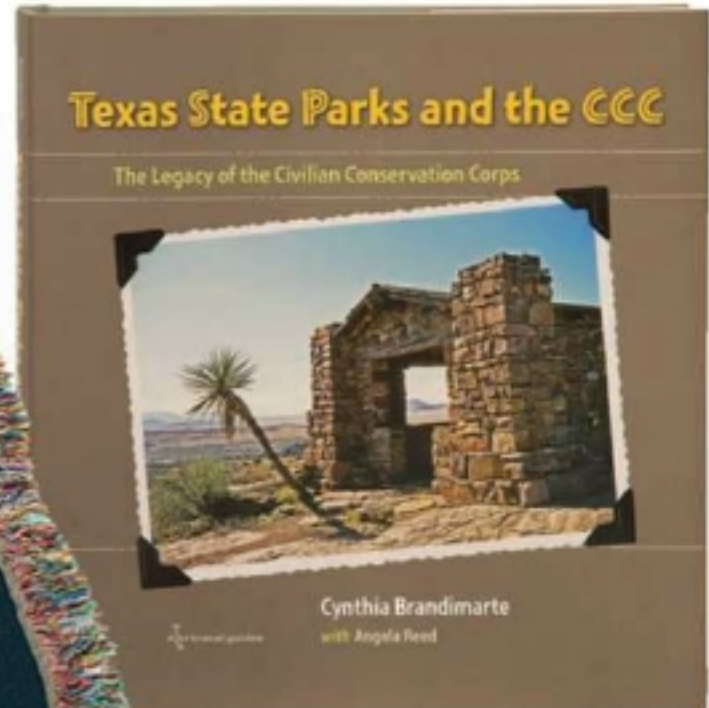
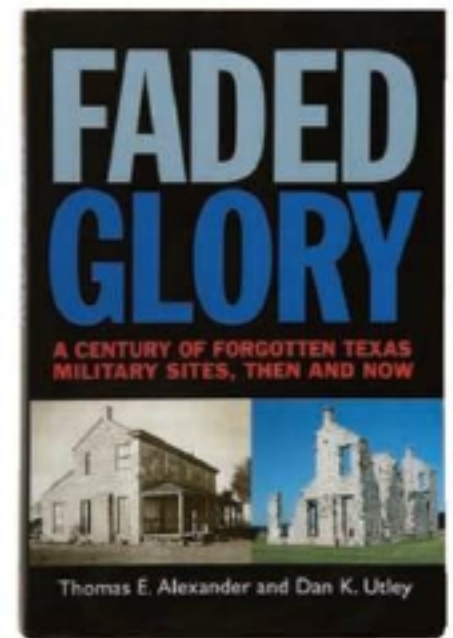
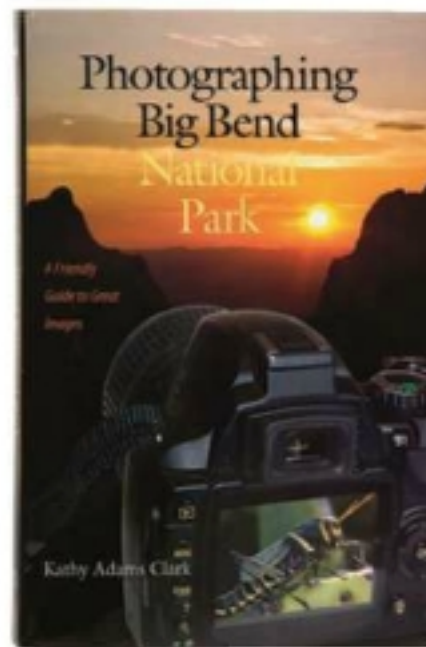
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By Kathy Adams Clark

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A Century of Forgotten Texas Military Sites, Then and Now

By Thomas E. Alexander and Dan K. Utley

A colorful trip through Texas military history presented by two of great storytellers, the authors visit once-proud sites that have faded by time. 224 pages, color, 6 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches, soft cover

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Texas State Parks and the CCC **The Legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps**

By Cynthia Brandimarte

From Palo Duro Canyon to Lake Corpus Christi, the state parks of Texas are home to natural beauty and historic structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) during the 1930s. A rich visual record of how the New Deal program left an indelible stamp on many of the parks we still enjoy today. 167 pages, color, 10 1/4 x 10 1/4 inches, hard cover.

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Welcome to Texas Puzzle

Take dad on a trip around Texas when he puts this colorful puzzle together. Shaped like the state, it features dozens of themes and locations throughout Texas. 1000 pieces will make this one a challenge for the most experienced puzzler. Completed size: 32 x 25 1/2 inches.

Item 37528 \$21.95

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TH SPOTLIGHT

Celebrate Freedom

ON JUNE 19, 1865, U.S. officials arrived in Galveston to notify Texans of the freedom of all slaves, more than two months after the Civil War ended and more than two years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Communities large and small across Texas celebrate the liberating event every year with Juneteenth parades, fairs, dances, and more.

In Galveston, 10 days of activities include a June 19th reading of the Emancipation Proclamation at Ashton Villa and a procession that follows the route of the first documented celebration of emancipation in Texas. In Elgin, girls ages 6 to 18 will compete in Miss Juneteenth pageants on June 6, followed by a parade, fair, and street dance at Veterans Memorial Park on June 8. "We've been commemorating our heritage with a Juneteenth celebration ever since we found out we were actually free," says Bettye Lofton, president of Elgin Juneteenth. More information at www.galveston.com/juneteenth and www.facebook.com/pages/Elgin-Juneteenth-Organization.



TH tip

Zydeco artist C.J. Chenier performs at Houston Juneteenth.

SAN ANGELO: *San Jose Tiles from the Collection of Susan Toomey Frost* June 1-23. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Showdown in San Angelo Drag Boat Races* June 21-23. www.visitsanangelo.org 325/655-4136

SEMINOLE: *Trade Days* June 21-23. www.seminoletradedays.com 432/758-0807

STANTON: *Old Sorehead Trade Days* June 8-9. www.stantontex.com 432/756-2006

WICHITA FALLS: *Legends of Western Swing Music Festival* June 19-22. www.legendsofwesternswing.net 318/792-3303

PINEY WOODS

CENTER: *Shelby County Sheriff's Posse PRCA Rodeo* June 7-8. Shelby County Expo Center. www.shelbycounty-chamber.com 936/598-8453

COLDSRING: *Trade Day* June 22. Courthouse square. www.coldspringtexas.org 936/653-2332

GLADEWATER: *Round-Up Rodeo* June 5-8. Gladewater Rodeo Arena. www.gladewaterrodeo.com 903/845-5126

JACKSONVILLE: *Tomato Festival* June 8. Downtown. jacksonvilletexas.com/pages/TomatoFest

KILGORE: *Texas Shakespeare Festival* June 27-July 28. Kilgore College. www.texasshakespeare.com 903/983-8601

MAGNOLIA: *Love Bug Fest* June 7-9. Unity Park. www.magnoliacommunityfoundation.org 281/356-2266

NACOGDOCHES: *Texas Blueberry Festival* June 8. Downtown. www.texasblueberryfestival.com 888/653-3788

TYLER: *Smith County Master Gardener Home Garden Tour* June 1. www.txmg.org/smith 903/590-2980

TYLER: *Super Ride XI: International Festival of the Equestrian Arts* June 18-22. Texas Rose Horse Park. www.superride.us 972/679-0770

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ALLEN: **Classic Cars and Charity** June 15. Watters Creek Shopping Center. www.morningmaniacs.com

ATHENS: **Old Fiddlers' Contest and Reunion** June 1. Courthouse square. www.athens.tx.org/things-to-do/athens-old-fiddlers-reunion 888/294-2847

BASTROP: **Pine Street Market Day** June 8. Downtown. www.bastropbusinesswomen.com 512/303-6233

BASTROP: **Juneteenth Celebration** June 15. 512/629-2859

BELLVILLE: **Market Day on the Square** June 1. Downtown. www.bellville.com 979/865-3407

BELLVILLE: **Summer Music Fest and Blowout** June 22. www.austincountyfair.com 979/865-5995

BOGATA: **Rodeo and Frontier Days** June 27-29. 903/632-1586

BONHAM/PARIS: **US 82/287 Yard Sale** June 7-8. www.visitbonham.com 903/583-9830

BOWIE: **Jim Bowie Days Rodeo and Festival** June 23-29. Pelham Park. www.jimbowedays.com 940/872-1173

BREMOND: **Polski Dzień (Polish Day) Festival** June 21-22. Main Street. www.bremontexas.org 254/746-7771

BRENHAM: **Summer Antiques and Garden Show** June 8-9. www.ruraltexasantiques.com 979/865-5618

CANTON: **First Monday Trade Days** June 1-2, 27-30. www.visitcantontx.com 877/462-7467

CARROLLTON: **Carrollton Centennial Celebration** June 15. Downtown square. 214/483-6000

CAT SPRING: **Cat Spring Agricultural Society June Fest** June 2. www.catspringagsociety.org 979/865-1313

CLARKSVILLE: **Historic Clarksville Square Fine Art Festival** June 1. www.clarksvilleartfest.com 903/219-1215

CLEBURNE: **Johnson County Sheriff's Posse PRCA Rodeo** June 12-15. www.sheriffsposse.com 817/556-9910

CORSICANA: **The Great Must Fall as Well as the Small: The Battle of Chancellorsville** June 1-30. Pearce Museum at Navarro College. www.pearcecollections.us 903/875-7642

CORSICANA: **Boots 'n' Brews** June 8. Downtown. www.corsicanamainstreet.org 877/648-6248

DALLAS: **Loren Mozley: Structural Integrity** June 1-30. Dallas Museum of Art. www.dm-art.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: **Featured Artist Series** June 1-July 6. Kittrell/Riffkind Art Glass. www.kittrellriffkind.com 888/865-2228

DALLAS: **Impressions of Europe: 19th-Century Vistas by Martin Rico** June 1-July 7. Meadows Museum. www.meadowsmuseumdallas.org

DALLAS: **Sightings: Nathan Mabry** June 1-July 7. Nasher Sculpture Center. www.nashersculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: **Living-History Series: Ernest McMillan** June 8. Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. 214/747-6660

DALLAS: **Fathers' Day African Safari Family Overnight** June 15. Reservations required. Dallas Zoo. www.dallaszoo.com 469/554-7500

DALLAS: **Fangs! A Family Festival of Herpetological Proportions** June 22. Texas Discovery Gardens. 214/428-7476

DECATUR: **W.C. Challenger PBR Bull Riding Event** June 8. Wise County Sheriff's Posse Arena. www.wc-challenger.org

DENISON: **TQHA Rodeo** June 14-15. Texoma Quarterhorse Arena. 903/465-2720

DENTON: **Dog Days of Denton** June 1. Quakertown Park. www.dogdaysdenton.com 940/349-8529

DENTON: **Denton Airshow** June 15. Denton Municipal Airport. www.denton.schultzairshows.com 940/484-1603

DETROIT: **Car Show** June 15. Downtown. 903/491-9570

ELGIN: **Western Days** June 18-22. Elgin Memorial Park. www.elgintxchamber.com 512/285-4515

FAIRFIELD: **Freestone County Fair and Rodeo** June 10-15. Moody Reunion Fairgrounds. www.fairfieldtexas.com

FORT WORTH: **Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey** June 1-August 11. www.cartermuseum.org

FORT WORTH: **Firestone 500 Nascar/Indy Race** June 6-8. www.texasmotorspeedway.com 817/215-8500

FORT WORTH: **Wari: Lords of the Ancient Andes** June 16-September 7. www.kimbellart.org 817/332-8451

FORT WORTH: **Juneteenth Celebration** June 19. Downtown and in Sundance Square. www.juneteenth.com



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TH tip

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TH SPOTLIGHT

Texas Folks

THE ARRAY OF CULTURES THAT MAKE UP THE Lone Star State will be on display June 7-9 at the **Texas Folklife Festival**, a celebration of our diverse heritage now in its 42nd year. Groups from around the state representing cultures such as Native American, Czech, Colombian, Filipino, Lebanese, and Polish will meet at the 23-acre festival grounds at the Institute of Texan Cultures in **San Antonio**. Along with food booths, craft demonstrations, and a carnival, the festival also features eight stages for music and dance. Director Jo Ann Andera says it's difficult for ethnic groups to maintain their traditional cultures when younger generations lose interest, and the festival provides a venue for those committed to their heritage. "We've got six or seven participants who have been with us all 42 years, and we have some that started last year—and they all love it," Jo Ann says. More information at www.texancultures.com/festivals_events/tff_home.



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FRISCO: Texas Dream Cruise June 29. FC Dallas Stadium. www.texasdreamcruise.com

GLEN ROSE: World's Richest Ranch Rodeo June 6-8. www.glenrosetexas.net 254/897-3081

GRANBURY: Last Saturday Gallery Night and Art Walk June 29. www.granburytx.com 817/579-7733

GRAND PRAIRIE: Rock and Pop Weekend at Traders Village June 15-16. www.tradersvillage.com

GRAPEVINE: SummerFest at the Gaylord Texan Resort June 1-September 6. www.gaylordtexan.com 817/722-9423

GRAPEVINE: Dairy Day at Nash Farm June 22. Nash Farm. www.nashfarm.org 817/410-3185

IRVING: USA Judo Junior Olympic National Championships June 28-29. www.irvingconventioncenter.com 972/252-7476

JUSTIN: Justin Fun Day June 8. City Park. E-mail: police@cityofjustin.com 940/648-9217

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup June 13-15. www.chisholmtrailroundup.com 512/398-2818

LULING: Watermelon Thump June 27-30. www.watermelonthump.com 830/875-3214 ext. 2

MCKINNEY: Killis Melton Ice Cream Crank-Off June 8. www.chestnutsquare.org 972/562-8790

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days June 14-16. www.tmttd.com 972/562-5466

MESQUITE: Devil's Bowl Speedway Racing June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. www.devilsbowl.com 972/222-2421

MESQUITE: Michael Tichansky Exhibit June 3-July 7. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Father's Day Classic Car Show June 16. www.towneastmall.com 972/270-2363

MESQUITE: Quilt Show June 21-22. Rutherford Recreation Center. www.mesquitequiltguildinc.com 972/216-7790

MIDLOTHIAN: Pancake Breakfast Fly-In June 1. www.mid-wayregional.com 972/923-0080

MOUNT VERNON: HI Yo Silver Amateur Movie Competition June 21. Email: franklincountyarts@gmail.com 903/434-9130

NOCONA: Chisholm Trail Round-Up Rodeo and Parade June 7-8. www.noconachamber.org 940/825-3526

PLANO: HamCom Amateur Radio Gathering June 7-8. Plano Centre. www.hamcom.org 469/964-2814

ROUND TOP: Round Top Music Festival June 5-July 13. Festival Hill Concert Hall. www.festivalhill.org 979/249-3129

ROUND TOP: Shakespeare at Winedale June 18-21. www.shakespeare-winedale.org 512/471-4726

ROUND TOP: The Original Round Top Antiques Fair June 21-22. www.roundtoptexasantiques.com 512/237-4747

SEALY: Sealy KC Summer Music Fest June 22-23. K.C. Hall. www.visitsealy.com 979/885-6786

SHERMAN: Dino Days Exhibit June 4-August 3. www.theshermanmuseum.org 903/893-7623

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Hopkins County Dairy Festival and Texas State Champion Homemade Ice Cream Freeze-Off June 7-16. www.hopkinscountydairyfestival.com 903/885-8071

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Independence Celebration June 29. www.visitsulphurspringsbc.org 888/300-6623

WACO: Goosebumps! The Science of Fear June 1-September 2. www.maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1187

WAXAHACHIE: Trade Days of Waxahachie June 8-9. www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com 214/202-1788

WAXAHACHIE: Juneteenth Parade and Celebration June 19. Penn Park. 972/938-8662

WEATHERFORD: Frontier Days PRCA Rodeo June 12-15. www.parkercountysheriffsposse.com

WESTMINSTER: Cars for Heroes Car and Truck Show June 1. In front of Big Slick's Bar and Grille. 972/838-8222

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

BEEVILLE: Changes: Works by Crystal Farris June 1-July 18. Beeville Art Museum. www.bamtexas.org

SAN ANTONIO: The America of Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton June 1-September 8. www.mcnavart.org 210/824-5368

SAN ANTONIO: Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera June 5-September 1. www.mcnavart.org 210/824-5368

SAN ANTONIO: Juneteenth Celebrations June 19. Various locations. www.juneteenth-sanantonio.com

SAN ANTONIO: Mesquite Art and Furniture Show June 28-30. www.mesquiteartshow.com 210/508-9844

WESLACO: Alfresco Weslaco June 20. Texas Boulevard. www.weslacoedc.com 956/969-0838

Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at www.texashighways.com.

For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to Texas Highways Events Calendar subscriptions, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. Or, call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 Central.

For Texas travel questions, call 800/452-9292 to reach a TxDOT Travel Information Center, where a professional travel counselor will provide routing assistance, advise you of any emergency road conditions, and send brochures (including the official Texas State Travel Guide and map, accommodations guide, and quarterly Texas Highways Events Calendar).

To submit event information: www.texashighways.com and go to Events, Submit Event Listing; e-mail: texasevents@txdot.gov; or mail: Texas Events Calendar, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Listing deadlines: Spring (Mar, Apr, May) Dec 1; Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) Mar 1; Fall (Sep, Oct, Nov) Jun 1; Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) Sep 1.



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CHET GARNER is the host of *The Daytripper™* travel show on PBS; www.thedaytripper.com.

Go for Launch: Bay Area Houston

HOW DO YOU spend a single day exploring one of the largest cities in the United States? Simple, you pick one part and stick to it. I decided to spend my day exploring “Bay Area Houston,” part of the southeast Houston area nestled against the waters of Galveston Bay.



9:00 a.m. I started the day at **Space Center Houston**, the official visitor center for NASA’s **Johnson Space Center**. The center is on the outskirts of Houston, but it felt like I had ventured to the outer limits of our solar system. I walked among artifacts taken to the moon and back, visited Historic Mission Control, and even observed astronauts in action at the NASA training facility where scientists prepare for missions to the International Space Station and future Orion missions. I even walked beside a 363-foot-tall Saturn V rocket identical to those used to send men to the moon. By the end of the tour, I was ready to volunteer for the first manned mission to Mars.

11:30 a.m. Realizing I was a couple of academic degrees short of that goal, I decided to simply eat like an astronaut. So, I headed to **Kemah’s Hoagie Ranch**, a local sandwich shop covered with antiques, knickknacks, and autographed photos of the astronauts who’ve visited for an out-of-this-world

hoagie. I feasted on a 12-inch “Kemah Hoagie” with two layers of salami and two layers of provolone that sent my taste buds to the moon.

12:30 p.m. Before this area was home to astronauts and physicists, true Texas Longhorns and pastureland dominated the scene. I stopped into League City’s **Butler Longhorn Museum** to learn how the Butlers and five other area families helped save the Texas Longhorn breed from disappearing after decades of careless breeding. The museum was full of artifacts, including more than 200 Longhorn skulls suspended from the ceiling!

2:00 p.m. Ready to see some living animals, I headed to the **Armand Bayou Nature Center**, one of the largest urban wilderness areas in the United States, comprised of more than 2,500 acres of marshland, woodland, and coastal prairie. As I hiked a

portion of the center’s five miles of trails, the din of the city streets faded into the sounds of chirping birds and croaking frogs. It was crazy to think I was still surrounded by urban development, and I made plans to return for a guided canoe trip.

4:00 p.m. I set off in search of a different kind of animal—the painted pelican sculptures of Seabrook’s **Pelican Path Project**—scat-

tered across town and dressed as everything from a scuba diver to a hippie. A map from the visitor center helped me hunt down every last bird and left me standing in front of the

Seabrook Waffle Company, where I enjoyed an authentic Belgian waffle smothered in strawberries, bananas, and whipped cream.

6:00 p.m. For a meal to go with my dessert, I stopped at **Tookie’s Hamburgers & More**, a local favorite

-serving up monstrous burgers and hand-battered onion rings. I ordered some stuffed-jalapeño “pelican eggs” and a “squealer” cheeseburger with bacon blended into the patty. One bite revealed why Tookie’s has been around more than 35 years.

7:00 p.m. To cap off the day, I crossed the bridge to the **Kemah Boardwalk**, an entertainment complex with everything a classic boardwalk needs: rides, games, music, corn dogs, and funnel cakes. I explored the shops, rode the rides (including the “Boardwalk Bullet” wooden roller coaster), and then headed to the top floor of the parking garage for the best view of the Friday night fireworks!

AS THE COLORS exploded over Galveston Bay, it occurred to me that to consider the Houston region as one giant mass is to miss the true flavor of the “Bayou City.” Each area is distinctive, and well worth its own trip. So, whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **TH**

Contact the **Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 281/474-9700 or 866/611-4688; www.visitbayareahouston.com.



Click!

TH video on photographing liquids at texashighways.com/windowontexas

Window on Texas

Photograph by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

LIQUID LIGHT While touring the Garrison Brothers Distillery in Hye, visitors walk through the barrel barn where the distillery ages its bourbon before bottling.

The conditions in the barrel barn are favorable for the production of bourbon, but not as conducive to photographing the bottled product. In the dim lighting, the liquid may wind up looking flat or the bottle might look dark.

On assignment for an upcoming *Texas Highways* article about bourbon tours, Photo Editor Griff Smith employed special techniques to make the liquid stand out and imbue the bottle with a distinctive glow.

In his photo tips video at www.texashighways.com, Griff shows how he used a white card and lighting to help a bottle of bourbon shine among the aging barrels. "Otherwise, it would look dark and lifeless," Griff said.

Garrison Brothers Distillery is at 1827 Hye Albert Road in Hye. See www.garrisonbros.com.

Look for our story on bourbon tours in July's TH Taste.



