

E X A S

Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

COMING UP

In 1993 **Galveston's Moody Gardens** opened Rainforest Pyramid, a breathtaking tribute to the world's rapidly vanishing rain forests. This month the Moody debuted Discovery Pyramid, where aliens, astronomers and Martian meteorites collide with the imagination. A splashy tribute to the world's oceans will complete the glass trilogy in 1999. A spectacular, 13-story **Aquarium Pyramid** will showcase the waters of the South Atlantic, Alaska, the Indo-Pacific and the Caribbean. A flock of tuxedoed penguins will rule at the South Atlantic region. Guests will encounter a surging tidal pool filled with colorful anemones and urchins on their journey to Alaska. Due west lies the Indo-Pacific, where schooling fish will share the shallow coral reefs with marine turtles and exotic, leafy sea dragons. In a one-million-gallon tank, the wonders of the Caribbean will surround visitors as they navigate a transparent tunnel connected to the ocean floor. Moody Gardens is open daily at One Hope Boulevard. For details, call 1-800-582-4673.

of **The New Americans** magazine. NIF representative **Angela Kelley** said Houston was selected based on its significant migrational population, tremendous diversity and boundless dynamism—a place where ordinary people have come to view diversity not as a problem but as a source of great strength. The magazine will focus on constructive community programs that offer practical solutions to local issues. The NIF hopes to spark additional creative approaches that will further America's evolution as a strong and proud multiethnic society. For more information, call 202/544-0004, extension 19.

On April 12, 1961, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit Earth. Four years ago, **Nassau Bay**, just across NASA Road One from Space Center Houston, became the sister city of **Zvyozdny Gorodok** (Star City), Russia, headquarters for the Russian manned space-flight program. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Nassau Bay is honoring Russia's space-faring past with **First In Space**, a 199-item exhibition, on view at City Hall through July 13.

Memorabilia, borrowed from the cosmonaut museum, includes photographs, medals, Russian space suits, and dirt from the site where Gagarin died in a plane crash. Open daily at 1800 NASA Road One; \$5; group discounts available. Call 281/333-4211 for details. Or zoom into cyberspace at <http://www.cosmonaut.com>.

Summer visitors to the **USS Lexington in Corpus Christi** will find exciting new additions aboard the floating naval museum on the bay. A new tour leads guests from the flight deck to the starboard aft gun tub for an up-close look at Quad 40 millimeter antiaircraft guns, one of the *Lexington's* primary defense weapons during World War II. The tour continues into one of the Arresting Gear Rooms, where huge mechanisms used for recovering aircraft on the flight deck are on display. An exhibit honoring service men and women held captive during America's wars opens June 13. Displays include a Japanese flag that flew over a POW camp near Nagasaki. Beginning July 1, the Mine Warfare Command, headquartered at Naval Station Ingleside,

will sponsor an exhibit featuring mines from WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the present day. Open daily at 2914 N. Shoreline Boulevard, next to the Texas State Aquarium. Call 512/888-4873 for details.

Floral displays at **The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden** will take visitors on a world tour, June 7 through September 1. **A Walk On the Wild Side** directs guests to the seven continents, featuring displays of native animal topiaries surrounded by native plants of the seven great divisions of the globe. An interactive educational discovery station shows visitors how animals use their senses to survive and thrive. Open daily at 8617 Garland Road. Call the Wild Side Hotline at 214/327-4901.

Judy Everett Ramos, director of communications for the **Arlington C&VB**, FAXed us updates just in time for the printing of this newsletter. The Family Golf Center at 1301 Green Oaks Boulevard has changed its name to **Green Oaks Golf Practice Center**. The recreational and instructional facility

PLACES

The National Immigration Forum (NIF) based in Washington, D.C., draws its strength from its belief in America's newcomers, whose contributions and enthusiasm keep our country in a continual state of rebirth and rejuvenation. On May 8, **Houston** was looked to as one of the nation's most notable gateway cities when the forum released its inaugural issue



PLANNING STAGES One of the most prestigious architectural commissions of the decade was awarded to Japanese architect Tadao Ando for the design of a new building for the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Plans call for 230,000 square feet consisting of six concrete-and-glass pavilions with galleries, offices and public spaces. Museum officials estimate the new Modern, to be built across the street from the Kimbell Art Museum, will cost \$70 million and will open within four to five years.

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TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

features practice driving ranges, sand bunkers, classes, miniature golf courses and a video arcade. **Le Theatre de Marionette** near Arlington's arts district has closed. And the **Fielder Museum** that changed its name to the Texas State Museum of History a few years ago has been re-renamed (to guess what) the Fielder Museum. Judy also reminds us that the **Arlington Visitor Center** will move in August to its new location adjacent to The Ballpark in Arlington. Their address will become 1905 E. Randol Mill Road. For more information, call 1-800-433-5374.

Four new landmark water slides premiered this season at **Arlington's Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** (formerly Arlington Wet 'n Wild). **Sea Wolf** carries fun-lovers aboard the longest and tallest water raft ride of its kind in the nation! In an untamed adventure, visitors navigate through more than 830 feet of high-speed banks and heart-stopping drops in a toboggan raft large enough for the entire family. **Blue Raider** carries passengers through a dark, flooded tunnel and turbulent twisting slides filled with hair-raising drops and turns. **Caribbean Chaos** and **Atlantic Panic** are a splashy pair of twisting, turning flumes

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

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Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Jane McNally, John Russell, Mike Talley

Layout: Jane Yansky Design

GAINESVILLE TIC Tyler Bechtel called for routing assistance through Texas before his upcoming journey from Portland, Oregon, to Sarasota, Florida. The young man will travel cross-country on his unicycle, entering Texas through the Panhandle, then on through Amarillo, Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin and Houston before crossing the Texas-Louisiana state line. He said the trip wouldn't be bad, but the logistics were a killer. Whatever you say, young man.

propelled by 1,500 gallons of water at a rate of 17 feet per second. The new water slide complex marks the largest water ride expansion in the park's 14-year history. For more info, call 817/265-3356.

If you saw "Michael," you'll remember the resplendent archangel scootin' his booties across the floor of an old honky-tonk called "Joe's." 'Course it wasn't really Michael, but John Travolta. And it wasn't really Joe's, but **Gruene Hall**, Texas' oldest dance hall in **New Braunfels**. Just thought you'd want to know.

In spite of a wonderfully wet spring season, most folks in Texas won't soon forget 1996, the year that left water recreational regions high and dry. Last summer, the **New Braunfels C&VB** bought \$65,000 worth of radio and newsprint advertising to offset negative publicity. A water fact sheet was sent to more than 60 media organizations statewide on a weekly basis. It worked so well, the folks in New Braunfels have teamed up to do it again. "The perception is that we are out of the drought, but many negative images persist with potential visitors," C&VB board

ORANGE TIC It was May 1971. Alvin and Doris Baron had just crossed the Sabine River bridge from Louisiana into Texas when they looked back to see those familiar flashing lights from the car of a DPS State Trooper. "Oh, great," they thought. Great indeed! During a recent visit to the Orange center, the Barons recounted that day with pleasure and delight. Instead of writing out a ticket, the patrolman declared the Barons as occupants of the one million five hundred thousandth vehicle to cross the Sabine

River bridge. They were treated to two weeks of fun in the Central Texas area, met Texas Governor Preston Smith and remembered with fondness such names as Gene Phillips and Happy Shahan.

WASKOM TIC Workers are clearing the grounds to make way for a brand-new TIC. Counselor Donna Watson said everyone is thrilled to finally see some progress on their new center. "It's going to be so big," Donna said, "I'll probably need a map to get around."

chair **Barry Shea** said. Funds have been set aside "just in case" and the board has agreed to implement the water fact sheet and the 1-800 water hot line again this year. For details, call 1-800-572-2626.

The **Texas Hill Country Tourism Association**, based in **Kerrville**, was dissolved as a nonprofit association effective April 30. Executive director **Arde Dixon** said the regional organization will be restructured

and operated as a private sector endeavor sometime in the future.

F A C E S

Dan Sanborn, an early pioneer in the Texas travel industry, passed away May 19. Most people knew Dan as the brains behind Sanborn's Viva Tours, Inc., a Texas-based international travel agency that sells insurance to vehicles entering Mexico. In

LASTING NOTES **Mirador de la Flor**, a life-size bronze sculpture honoring the memory of **Selena Quintanilla Perez**, was unveiled in **Corpus Christi**. The memorial on **North Shoreline Boulevard** complements the original eight **miradors** lining the marina. **Engraved bricks with names and messages of loyal followers line the mirador's floor. A garden scene of mosaic tile roses made by schoolchildren covers the entire waterside walkway wall known as Paseo de la Flor. Call 512/880-3102.**



the early 1950s, Dan decided to direct his efforts toward the increasing number of tourists in South Texas. He opened a small shop in McAllen where motorists heading into Mexico could buy fresh orange juice, curios and vehicle insurance. Within a few short years, Dan opened Sanborn's offices in other border cities, building a vast enterprise that today writes more Mexican insurance in the U.S. than all agencies combined. By building a business based on the highest possible standards of customer service, Dan helped set the pace for the Texas travel industry today.

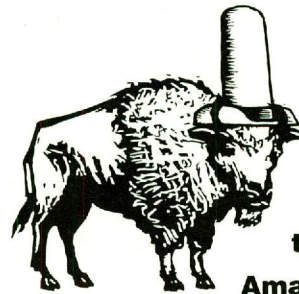
HISTORY

"The New Handbook of Texas," published last year by the **Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)**, is now in its second printing. Managing editor **Doug Barnett** said factual errors corrected in the new printing will soon be available in hard copy and on TSHA web site <http://www.dla.utexas.edu/texhist/>. Subsequent printings will include corrections as well, since the handbook has become an ongoing endeavor. The TSHA executive council recently approved development of a one-volume version of the New Handbook, which will be targeted to the general, book-buying public who might not care to invest in the entire six-volume set. For more information, call 512/471-1525.

MUSEUMS

Insects towering over humans and grass the size of trees give visitors a bug's-eye view at **Backyard Monsters: The World of Insects**, on exhibit at the **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History** through September 30. Giant robotic creatures, interactive

learning displays and one of the world's largest private specimen collections dramatically demonstrate the importance of insects in our lives. A praying mantis, scorpion, unicorn beetle and black widow spider, at 96 times their normal size, commune within their natural settings among blades of grass 12 feet high. The courtship dance of the scorpion and the world's largest beetles and bugs can be seen amidst more than 1,000 exotic insects and arachnids from around the world. Visitors can discover the truth about insect preservation, social relationships, camouflage and anatomy in a special educational display. Open daily in Bayfront Arts



RANGE ROVERS The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has received donation of a herd of some 50 wild bison from the historic JA Ranch near Amarillo. The herd has ranged on the ranch since the ranch's inception in the 1870s, when pioneer rancher and trail-blazer Charles Goodnight nurtured a few calves from the last of the Great Southern Bison Herd. Though a home for the bison has not been selected, officials say it will be in the Panhandle/Rolling Plains area, close to their present location.

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Why did Texas give up its status as an independent nation to join the union?

When Texas became an independent republic in 1836, there was confusion over land titles and money was scarce, leaving many families destitute. Texans voted overwhelmingly to accept the Constitution of the Republic of Texas, patterned after that of the United States, and to seek annexation. During nearly ten years of independence, the young nation suffered epidemics, financial crises and volatile clashes with Mexico and Native American tribes. But reluctance of the U.S. Congress to admit another slave state delayed acceptance of Texas. When a compromise was finally reached and Congress offered an annexation agreement, Texans voted to accept the agreement, 4,245 to 257. On December 29, 1845, Texas was legally annexed as the 28th state, leaving us the luxury of a romanticized past, a past which in reality was bleaker and more chaotic than we dare remember.

TEXAS TRIVIA

and Sciences Park at 1900 N. Chaparral. For details, call 512/883-2862.

A blockbuster exhibition of jewels, costumes, paintings, icons and religious artifacts is on view through July 20 at the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Jewels of the Romanovs: Treasures of the Russian Imperial Court** features approximately 200 objects from five major Russian collections. The opulence of the Romanov dynasty from 1613 to its end in 1917 is highlighted by 70 jewels and uncut gems, a collection normally kept under tight security in a special gallery beneath the Kremlin armory. Open Tuesday through Sunday at 1001 Bissonnet. For more information, call 713/639-7300. For info in Spanish, call 713/639-7379.

EVENTS

The bounty of the sea meets the fruit of the land at the **Rockport Festival of Wines** on June 14. Sponsored by the

Texas Maritime Museum, this first-ever feast for the senses will showcase Texas wines on the grounds of the museum. Wine-lovers will receive a commemorative wine glass, wine tasting tickets, free samplings of Texas food specialties and live entertainment by top-notch South Texas bands. For more information and a free brochure, call 1-800-242-0071. Or just head for the coast on June 14 and "sea for yourself."

Don't be surprised if later this month, when you're pedaling down Texas' roadways, you have to pass a caravan of more than 100 pre-WWII cars. **The Great Race** leaves Sonoma, California, on June 21 for a cross-country trek to Jacksonville, Florida. The rolling street festival will stop in more than 40 cities and towns and cover more than 4,000 miles. In Texas, Post and Decatur have been picked for pit stops, Sweetwater and Gainesville for lunch stops and Granbury for an overnight stay. For route information, call event director Ms. **Sam McRae** at 214/358-3738.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	14,715	-0.04	66,348	+7.68
Anthony	12,963	-2.94	68,583	-13.83
Denison	23,550	+36.38	92,268	+16.86
Gainesville	30,312	-2.22	135,714	-2.36
Langtry	7,266	-25.68	44,649	-20.89
Laredo	9,156	-19.71	33,189	-51.82
Orange	45,918	-30.90	197,859	-35.52
Texarkana	38,091	-30.67	162,648	-29.86
Valley	20,133	-2.74	213,561	+2.93
Waskom	76,221	+45.97	279,465	+14.36
Wichita Falls	18,744	-0.05	80,811	-1.71
Capitol Complex	12,828	+24.41	51,072	+10.69
1-800 Phone Center	7,926	-34.29	44,082	-32.94
CENTER TOTALS	317,823	-4.55	1,470,249	-11.92

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	125,943	629,034
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	53	
Addresses offered	138,823	
Addresses transmitted	57,046	
Addresses transmitted		271,516

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily)
Internet address: <http://traveltex.com>

Data as of May 31, 1997
*Compared to last year

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