

## KUDOS

**T**exas *Highways* and *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazines claimed a handful of awards at the International Regional Magazine Association's 23rd annual competition. Among the honors given Aug. 27 in Wintergreen, Va., was *Texas Parks and Wildlife's* prestigious designation as "Magazine of the Year."

*Texas Highways'* nature feature "The Enduring, Endearing Armadillo" (December 2002) and an illustration associated with the feature "Dona Maria: Rancher of Las Cabras" (August 2002) merited the TxDOT publication silver awards. The magazine also received bronze honors in the categories of essay, art direction and feature photography.

*Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine's July 2002 issue, which received a gold award for its special focus on Texas' water issues, was especially responsible for many of the awards, including the feature "Rio Grande No Mas?" (gold for public issues and silver for feature photography and photojournalism); "The Hidden Lake" (bronze for environmental feature); and "God's Swamp" (silver for essay).

The October 2002 feature "Solitario Solamente" brought in two gold awards for travel feature and art direction and the September 2002 issue received the top honor for its cover.

Awards were also given for reader service article (silver), photographic essay (bronze and Award of Merit) and overall art direction (silver).

For more information, visit [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) and [www.tpwmagazine.com](http://www.tpwmagazine.com).

**T**hree industry professionals were honored as champions in the state's tourism industry during Texas Travel Industry Association's annual Summit meeting Sept. 7-10 in San Antonio.

The recipients — individuals who show a strong commitment to travel and tourism and help influence and change the face of the industry on local, regional and statewide levels — are:

### Lifetime Achievement

- ◆ **David Alex**, partner of Alex & Associates International in Harlingen. He retired as president of

## TOPS IN TOURISM Bryan-College

**Station CVB** received the Grand Prize for overall excellence during the Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus annual conference held Aug. 5-8 in Waco.

Other awards were given in various categories broken down according to three budget levels — \$350,000 and under, \$350,000-\$999,000 and \$1 million-plus.

In ascending budget levels, Denton, Bay Area Houston and El Paso CVBs took first place wins for advertising. Brenham/Washington County, Midland and Amarillo CVBs each won first place in convention promotion.

Huntsville, Bryan/College Station and Austin CVBs were each selected as first-place winners for local awareness; and Denton, Bay Area Houston and Grapevine CVBs were first in cooperative marketing.

Brenham/Washington County, Bay Area Houston and Bryan-College Station (tie), and Grapevine CVBs received first-place awards for tourism promotion while Bryan-College Station and Austin CVBs were recognized as tops in operations.

Odessa CVB won first place for its Web site and Denton won for its promotional video.



the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce after 35 years and has served on numerous boards, including the Texas Chamber of Commerce. He also has served in a number of governor-appointed roles.

### Tall In Texas award

- ◆ **Doug Harman**, president and CEO of the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau for 14 years. He also served on a number of boards including the International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, TTIA and Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus.
- ◆ **Carmen Tidwell**, owner of Public Relations and Marketing Association. She developed the Dallas/Fort Worth Area Tourism Council, on which she served as executive director for 11 years. The DFWATC became a model for many regional groups across the state.

"I think all three were incredibly deserving of the recognition that the industry has given them. They have each contributed in so many ways to making their communities and Texas, as a whole, a stronger, more welcome place to visit," said TTIA President and CEO Paul Serff.

Next year's Summit meeting will take place at South Padre Island.

## TxDOT

**J**ust as we celebrate rites of spring, autumn comes with its share of rejoicing and festivals. The 2003 Fall Texas Events Calendar is packed with festivities like the Texas Renaissance Festival in Plantersville, Oktoberfest in Fredericksburg and Wurstfest in New Braunfels. TxDOT's Travel Division produces this free publication and distributes it through its

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12 Travel Information Centers. You may also obtain copies by calling (800) 452-9292.

To be included in the spring issue (March–May events), submit listings by fax: (512) 486-5879, e-mail: [trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us) or write: P.O. Box 141009 Austin, TX 78714-1009. For questions, call editor Julie Welsh at (512) 486-5876.

**TRAVEL NEWS**

**W**ichita Falls is in for a ride — a water park ride, that is. Work on the \$5.5 million **Castaway Cove Waterpark** is under way with plans for it to make a splash by next spring. The project — privately funded by 22 investors — will create a considerable draw for the area with its 15 acres of rides, attractions and a pavilion overlooking the skyline.

“The park we have designed will be the best water park of its size ever built,” lead investor Louis Wilson told Wichita Falls’ *Times Record News*.

The design, created with assistance from Schlitterbahn developers, will include the Master Blaster, a 575-foot, watercoaster with a 50-foot high tower. There also is a 40-foot-high body slide complex, open and enclosed tube slides, three-lane race slides, a tidal wave pool, “Lazy River” tube floating stream, waterwalk agility courses, and a children’s theme pool area with slides, tunnels and interactive features.

Wilson says the park will benefit the city’s economy with an expected 100,000 to 125,000 guests in its first year and an estimated local economic impact of \$2 million.

**TEXAS TRAVEL LOG**

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For more details, visit [www.castawaycovewaterpark.com](http://www.castawaycovewaterpark.com).

**G**illey’s — originally a Pasadena roadhouse made popular in the film “Urban Cowboy” — kicks off its **official grand opening in south Dallas’ Cedars neighborhood on Oct. 15**, years after the return to Texas was first announced. Gilley’s Dallas will be a more upscale version of its first location but will include a nightclub with “El Toro,” the original mechanical bull. There also will be a 2,000-seat showroom, restaurants, shops and more than 15,000 square feet of group and convention meeting rooms with high speed internet access. Plans are to eventually build out the entire 91,000 square-foot former Schepps building.

The Charlie Daniels Band will perform grand opening night, and other performers like the Oak Ridge Boys will keep the party going throughout the week. General manager Doug Keller told *The Dallas Morning News* that even though Gilley’s roots are country, it won’t be just about country.

For more information, call (888) GILLEYS or visit [www.gilleysdallas.com](http://www.gilleysdallas.com).

**A**ccording to *Travel Weekly*, **more travelers took Amtrak trains in July** (2,223,358 passengers) than during **any other month in the rail line’s 32-year history**.

Compared to last year’s figures, July’s ridership rose dramatically for its long-distance trains.

The Texas Eagle numbers were up 50 percent; the Sunset Limited was up 39 percent; the Silver Meteor up 31 percent; the City of New Orleans up 21 percent; and the Auto Train up 19 percent.

Amtrak, which has 32 of its stations in Texas, says July follows a strong second quarter in passenger numbers. The rail line carried 2,098,901 passengers in April, 2,104,916 in May and 2,129,697 passengers in June.

**A** new **brochure from the Texas Historical Commission** about the 31-county **Texas Lakes Trail Region** will be **unveiled on Oct. 10 in Granbury**. Morning carriage tours through downtown precede an 11 a.m. program featuring legislators, officials, performances by Granbury Live and the unveiling of the brochure. After the launch, there will be trolley rides to the Granbury Rose Paddlewheel for lunch.

Mini-launches are scheduled to

showcase other cities in the region, including Corsicana (Oct. 11) Denison (Oct. 16), Pilot Point (Oct. 17) and Fort Worth (Oct. 25).

THC also offers guides to the state’s Independence Trail, Forts Trail and Forest Trail regions, as well as the Chisholm Trail and Los Caminos del Rio.

For more information, call (512) 463-6100 or visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).

**MUSEUMS**

**H**olocaust Museum **Houston** debuted a rare artifacts exhibit, “**Questionable Issue: Currency of the Holocaust**” on Aug. 28. The various pieces of worthless currency (scrip) — printed by the Nazi regime to show it was paying workers — were originally issued at 13 Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald and the Warsaw Ghetto. The exhibit showcases 85 rare items — a fraction of the more than 400 pieces that collector Charlton E. Meyer Jr., along with his wife Gloria, donated to the museum in 2002.

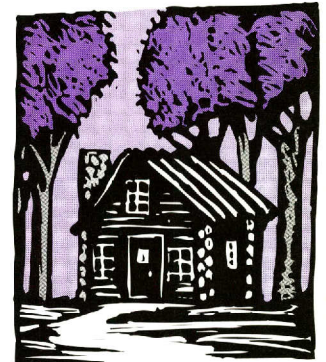
“This is the most comprehensive collection of Holocaust scrip that exists in the United States,”

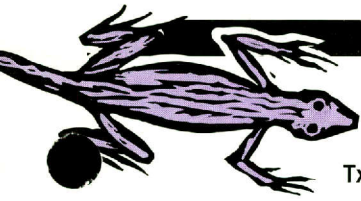
**THROUGH THE AGES** **Buffalo Gap Historic Village** visitors are getting more immersed in the old days with the **new weekend living history program** reflective of three different time periods. Through the program, interpreters guide guests through 1883, 1905 and 1925 on alternating weekends (beginning Sept. 6). For 1883, the living history activities occur around the courthouse and log cabin. The 1905 events converge in the railroad depot area. The filling station, school and bank are the key locations for the next period, 1925. The schedule is then repeated.

“The whole program is designed to throw the visitor back to one of the three time periods the Village interpreters to give them a unique experience at learning history. The visitor will have to play along by asking questions related to the period,” says Kevin Young, site manager.

Also, a special daylong event is slated for Oct. 18 to mark the 120th anniversary of the removal of the county seat. There, visitors will help recreate the historic fight between Abilene and Buffalo Gap by voting for their county seat choice.

For more details, call (915) 572-5449 or visit [www.buffalogap.com](http://www.buffalogap.com).





**GREAT GECKO HUNT**

In Texas, travelers are learning to look for the hidden geckos thanks to TxDOT Bridge Division graphic designer Michael Ford. While he's not the only one making highway art for the sides of ramps and overpasses, his stand out because of an identifying mark — the gecko, which he lovingly places in each of his creations. His whimsical notion is now earning him much attention as people start to catch on to the novelty of finding the little treasures (in areas with low speed limits).

In response to feedback and a recent feature in the *Austin-American Statesman*, Ford says, "I always hoped people would get as much enjoyment out of these projects as I have had in the creation process. But I will admit that I am surprised at all the positive and glowing comments and letters. It's great."

Some of his works can be spotted in Harlingen at Palm Cord Drive at U.S. Highway 83, Spur 54 at U.S. Highway 77 northbound, and Dixieland at U.S. Highway 83. He also created a prickly pear cactus pad in concrete on a retaining wall near Sea World in San Antonio, and Lubbock's new East-West Freeway will have a gargoyle carved by Ford.

says Collin Keel, the museum's director of changing exhibits. "Some of the artifacts in the collection are extremely rare, and one piece in particular, from the Natzweiler camp in France, is the only known piece in the world."

The museum also features "Women of Ravensbruck: Portraits of Courage," a detailed exhibit on the largest Nazi concentration camp for women.

Both exhibits run through Nov. 9. For more information on the exhibits call (713) 942-8000 or visit [www.hmh.org](http://www.hmh.org).

**Fort Worth's Museum of Science and History is the first stop** on the national traveling tour of "September 11: Bearing Witness to History."

The Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History — the official repository for Sept. 11, 2001, artifacts — displayed the objects, images and personal stories from Sept. 11, 2002, through July 6, 2003. Now Fort Worth, which opened the exhibit on Sept. 11, 2003, will have the display through Jan. 4, 2004.

Items on display recall and recount the historic day and its impact on the nation. Photos, video, twisted steel from the World Trade Center, damaged items from the Pentagon and memorials from the crash site in Pennsylvania are on exhibit, as well as many everyday items like clothing, rescue tools and office furniture that take on new meaning.

The collection of more than 140 items may also be viewed online. Web site visitors may leave comments and stories, which will become a permanent part of the site.

To view the items and for more details, visit [www.americanhistory.si.edu/september11](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/september11).

**IN THE PRESS**

The town of McLean makes *USA Today's* list of 10 great places in the nation worth slowing down to visit. The report says, "Give yourself a treat and visit this old Route 66 town where time has almost stopped. The Devil's Rope Museum is a must-see, with a fascinating history of the manufacture and use of barbed wire. It's also attached to The Texas Old Route 66 Museum featuring a replica 1950s restaurant."

For more information, call (806) 779-2225 or visit [www.barbedwiremuseum.com](http://www.barbedwiremuseum.com).

In its Aug. 29 issue, *The New York Times* gave its readers a glimpse of "36 hours in Galveston." The travel feature on the "achingly beautiful port city of Galveston" touches on many of the island's characteristic places. Among them, the Strand National Historic Landmark District with its 19th-century structures and the seawall where the "gulf breeze reminds you of Galveston's complicated and romantic relationship with the sea."

**FACES**

The following are among the new (and promoted) faces on the travel industry forefront:

- ◆ **Charles G. "Gil" Langley**, former president of The Langley Group Inc. in Kansas City, is the new president and CEO of the Galveston Island Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- ◆ **Ty Pearson** is the new Director of Visitor Services for the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau. Pearson was previously the assistant manager of the Austin Visitor Center.
- ◆ **Sandra Turner and Joanna Callahan-Amaya** join the Austin Visitor Center staff.

**Peter Holt**, principal owner of the San Antonio Spurs, has been named to serve on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. Gov. Rick Perry made the appointment following the departure of former Commission Chairwoman Katharine Armstrong. Holt, who is also owner and chief executive officer of Holt CAT Caterpillar distributorship, will serve out the remainder of Armstrong's term, which expires on Feb. 1, 2005.

Ernesto Angelo, whose term as vice-chairman had expired, was appointed to serve as interim chairman until Perry names a replacement.

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

**What philanthropist helped save the Alamo and remains the heart and soul of the recently restored Laguna Gloria museum in Austin?**

In 1903, Clara Driscoll (1881-1945) discovered the battered Alamo stood at the site of a planned hotel. Driven to preserve historic sites, she worked with the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to acquire the Alamo — using her own money to pay the bulk of the purchase price. Driscoll moved to Austin in 1914. While there, she had her home — Laguna Gloria — built. The well-traveled Driscoll described the 1916 Italianate mansion as "a retreat to which it is always a joy to come back." It was here that her husband, Henry Hulme Sevier, established the daily newspaper, *Austin American* (later the *Austin-American Statesman*). Beginning in 1922, Driscoll served an unprecedented 16 years as the Democratic party's national chairwoman for Texas.

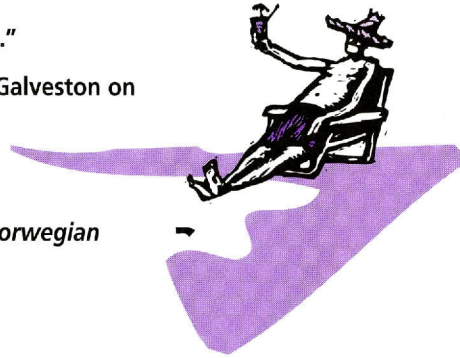
Driscoll later gifted Laguna Gloria to the Texas Fine Arts Association to be used as a museum. Major renovations to the facility were completed in late August. The \$3.5 million project brought the villa back to its original grandeur while modernizing it with air conditioning and wheelchair accessibility. Exhibits and classes have resumed.

For more information, call (512) 458-8191 or visit [www.alamo.org](http://www.alamo.org).

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

**SMOOTH SAILING** Texas has produced 102,433 more cruise passengers over last year, based on first quarter comparisons, according to the *Cruise Weekly* newsletter. The report attributes some of the success to the influence of homeporting — bringing ships closer to major population centers. That 75 percent increase was “by far the largest percentage increase for the states and Canadian provinces,” the report says, adding that more growth is expected. “With further expansion on the horizon, look for Texans to account for an even larger chunk of the cruising market.”

Currently, passengers can leave from Galveston on Carnival's *Jubilee* and *Celebration* cruises or Royal Caribbean's *Rhapsody of the Seas* cruise. In November, Norwegian's *Norwegian Sea* will be homeported in Houston.



NUMBERS as of August 31, 2003		
TRAVEL CENTER	Visitors Month	Visitors Year-to-Date
AMARILLO	12,765	87,401
ANTHONY	11,213	101,715
CAPITOL	8,558	67,412
DENISON	36,019	271,230
GAINESVILLE	21,006	215,823
LANGTRY	4,585	51,151
LAREDO	10,906	79,913
ORANGE	60,745	412,590
TEXARKANA	37,747	368,085
VALLEY	11,308	145,814
WASKOM	47,793	399,795
WICHITA FALLS	17,066	132,444
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	<b>279,711</b>	<b>2,333,373</b>

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.–6 p.m. daily, Central Time)  
[www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com) • [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) • [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

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