

T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

COMING UP

A project to extend **Galveston** beaches to 50 yards out from the seawall began last month. The **Beach Renourishment Project** was approved by local voters as a \$4.8-million bond issue financed by an 1/8-cent addition to the city sales tax. According to *Houston Life* magazine, through a slurry technique, sand mixed with water is being piped from offshore Big Reef, where it's silting up the ship channel, to the pocket beaches between the rock groins. Proceeding beach by beach from Stewart Beach west, it should reach 61st Street by August. The predicted life span of the pumped-up beaches is 15 years.

Phase I construction at **Sea Center Texas** in **Lake Jackson** is now 20 percent complete. When open in October 1995, the \$11-million marine development, aquarium, and educational center will include rearing ponds, a saltwater marsh demonstration project, a 20,000-square-foot hatchery building, touch tanks, wall displays, giant aquariums, and a 15,000-square-foot visitors center. The 75-acre project is sponsored by Dow North America, the Gulf Coast Conservation Association, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. TP&WD will operate the facility upon completion. The center will accommodate up to 300 visitors per hour and is expected to attract up to 250,000 visitors a year. There will be no charge for admission.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the **George Bush Gallery of the Pacific War** and **Hall of**

Presidents were held May 21 at the **Admiral Nimitz Museum** in **Fredericksburg**. The ceremony marked the beginning of construction on the estimated \$6-million gallery that should provide a significant boost to the local economy. Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. officials said the new addition should double the number of annual visitors from the current 100,000, and estimate the total economic impact of the finished facility will reach about \$3 million per year. President Bush is likely the last in an unbroken line of 10 presidents who served in World War II, stretching back to Franklin Roosevelt. A restored TEM Avenger torpedo bomber, the same type Bush flew in combat, will be featured in the Hall of Presidents gallery. John Kennedy's WWII experience will be punctuated by the display of one of four surviving PT boats, similar to the one commanded by Kennedy. The target date for opening the first phase of the gallery is September 1995, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of hostilities in World War II.

Visitors to **Fort Worth** soon can ride the rails to D/FW International

al Airport and Dallas, step on board the *Tarantula* steam excursion train, or catch an in-town shuttle from a single location — the **Intermodal Transportation Center**. The historic Texas & Pacific Terminal in downtown Fort Worth will become the hub where a variety of transportation modes will interface. Amtrak passenger trains begin service from ITC as early as this year.

PLACES

The giant **Pompano** offshore drilling jacket, second in size only to the *Bull Winkle* built in Ingleside, will make its way from Harbor Island, across the ship channel from **Port Aransas**, to Louisiana between June 14 and 17. **Barbara Sheppard**, public relations director for Fisherman's Wharf and a member of the Board of Directors for the Port Aransas Chamber, said the *Pompano* will hook up to the world's biggest barge on June 4 or 5, after which it will take some 10 days to rig for launching. Nine tugboats will help tow the magnificent structure to its final destination off the Louisiana

coast. During the move, all traffic in the ship channel will cease, including operation of TxDOT's ferries. The *Pompano* was built at McDermott Yard (formerly Brown and Root) by British Petroleum.

A paddle wheel steamboat once again plies the waters of **Caddo Lake** at **Uncertain**, near the Texas/Louisiana state line. **Graceful Ghost** carries up to ten passengers on a 90-minute cruise to the 19th Century, and into parts of Caddo where outboards and pontoons can't go. Partners **Lexie Palmore** and **Jim McMillan** hope to revive a sense of the lake's past by leading weekend excursions on the authentic 50-foot long, steam-powered boat. Bookings are required at least a day in advance. Departure time is Saturdays, around 6 p.m. Call 903/789-3978 or 665-7372 to reserve your space.

By popular demand, **Six Flags Over Texas** in **Arlington** will continue running the **Judge Roy Scream** wooden roller coaster backwards through the end of the 1994 season. Original plans called for the Judge to revert to its forward self at the end of the



TIME FLIES This year marks the 20th anniversary of the **Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport**, the second busiest airport in the world. Now serving more than 50 million passengers annually, it's expected to soon surpass **Chicago O'Hare**. Some 2,000 daily flights with service to 200 destinations make **D/FW Airport** a major gateway to America.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

the spring season (see March 1994 *Texas Travel Log*). But demand for the ride in its new mode caused park management to reverse their decision. Six Flags president **Bob Bennett** said ridership on the backward coaster has been extremely high. "So far this season," Bennett said, "the Judge, running backwards, has carried twice as many park guests as it did during the spring of its inaugural year, 1980. That many people can't be wrong." Daily summer schedule began May 14. For ticket information, call 817/640-8900.

The City of **South Padre Island** signed a contract to sponsor the **Miss USA Pageant** for another two years. Local officials agree it will take time to assess the beneficial impact on the area's economy resulting from last February's pageant. However, because of the superb job by the Convention Centre, SPI has already landed other top-draw events. And, reports the Texas Employment Commission, out of Texas' 26 major metropolitan areas, only Cameron County experienced a drop in unemployment during the month of February. Pageant officials said the island was chosen for 1994 because of its "beachfront nature." The Miss USA Pageant was founded in 1952 by Catalina Swimwear originally to sell swimsuits.

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel and Information Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to Texas Travel Log, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009. (512) 483-3727, FAX (512) 483-3793. Deadline for each newsletter is the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Marty Lange, Jane McNally, Mike Talley

ANTHONY TIC As many as 18 different groups, from Colorado to California, gathered with telescopes and cameras on May 10 to watch the well-publicized solar eclipse. Manager Skip Birkner said astronomers had reported that El Paso was in the most perfect line for viewing the phenomenon, and that the eclipse passed almost directly over the center. "There were as many people taking pictures of the sidewalk as the eclipse," laughed Skip, "while others were hurriedly passing out Mylar viewers."

Operating hours at two of **Corpus Christi's** most popular attractions have been extended to help meet demands of summer visitors. New hours at the **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History** are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, 1 to 6 p.m. **The Columbus Fleet** is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The extended hours remain in effect through Labor Day. **Rick Stryker**, museum director and president of the Fleet Association, said, "The extended operating hours will provide enhanced service to our local and out-of-town visitors. We are pleased that we can make our educational resources more accessible." More details? Call 512/883-2862.

The **Regional Arts Center in Texarkana** now houses three high-security galleries for touring exhibitions, making way for classic works by Rembrandt, Picasso, Salvadore Dali, Georgia O'Keeffe, and George Catlin. The Arts Center, in the restored 1909 U.S. District Courthouse, features ornate plaster and one of only three copper caged elevators remaining in the U.S. The beautiful Grand Hall, once an opulent courtroom, now sets the mood for

chamber music performances, receptions, and lectures. For a list of exhibits and events, call 903/792-8681. Open Tuesday through Saturday at the corner of Fourth Street and Texas Boulevard.

JUDGE ROY BEAN TIC Wedding bells rang out once again at the Jersey Lilly Saloon in Langtry, where counselors witnessed the union of Mark Pravel and Cecelia Heath on March 26. Justice of the Peace Felix Barrera of Del Rio presided.

TEXARKANA TIC Counselor Camille Carpenter takes to the skies for a two-week stay in Germany with her mother, who is stationed there. They plan on visiting France and Italy, as well.

VALLEY TIC Joey Sermino was recently elected president of the Harlingen Jaycees, a non-profit community service organization. Jungle Larry from Mutual of Omaha's "Wild Kingdom" autographed a brochure for Jungle Joey (Sermino), on a visit to the Harlingen center.

are invited to experience the city's history and heritage with tours of historic homes, an historical monument, the Outdoor Oil Equipment Museum, and more. The folks who sponsor the event have now purchased their own bus, so groups can arrange for tours at any time. Each Friday and Saturday, a 30-minute video highlights life during the oil boom, presents a brief history of early pioneers, and includes clips from the movie "Boomtown." Headquartered at the restored Katy Depot on W. Third Street. For reservations, call 817/569-0460.

HISTORY

Trails and Tales of Boomtown U.S.A. in Burkburnett begins another exciting season this month with narrated bus tours spotlighting the oil boom days of the 1920s. Every Saturday through October, visitors

FOR THE BIRDS With three-fourths of all American birds represented in our state, birders have been flocking to Texas for years. Now, with the help of Penfeather Tours, bird-watchers can zoom in on all the hot spots year round. The Houston-based business offers everything from half-day trips to two-week excursions in prime birding areas. For tour information, call 713/445-1187.



The Austin History Center and **The Heritage Society of Austin** present **Lost Victorian Austin**, through August 19, at the History Center. The exhibit focuses on some of the Victorian buildings that were lost due to urban development, thoughtlessness, or a lack of appreciation. Case studies of three noted lost landmarks serve to fill in gaps by demonstrating styles, details, and craftsmanship no longer found in the city. Guest curator **Martha Hartzog** said, "In some cases entire neighborhoods are gone. We hope this exhibit will help us visualize the magnitude of our loss." Open daily at Ninth and Guadalupe; 512/499-7480 for more info.

W I L D L I F E

Did you know the **Dallas Zoo** is one of only about 20 research zoos in the nation? Zoologist **Cynthia Bennett** said research there is directed toward conservation at zoos and wildlife preserves worldwide. Currently, there are around 30 ongoing projects, most behavioral in nature. Concerns lie not only in research and protection of endangered species, but in the comfort of animals, as well. You'll no longer find bears, much less polar bears, at the Dallas Zoo. They were sent to zoos with more receptive climates in the U.S.

H O T E L S

More and more hotels, ranging from the swank Four Seasons to the more humble Motel 6, are deciding that being kind to animals makes good business sense. According to *The Dallas Morning News*, more than 40 million people travel with their pets. This niche market includes everyone from wealthy entrepreneurs to families with dogs they can't bear to leave at the kennel. Some hotels now walk dogs, and offer

foam pillows, silver dog bowls, and home-baked dog biscuits.

The 517-room **Radisson Plaza Hotel** in **Fort Worth** completed the second phase of its ongoing renovation project. The 72-year-old former Hotel Texas now sports a lighter, more open feel and look.

M U S E U M S

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, presents **Classical Taste in America, 1800-1840**. The exhibition explores America's fascination with the ideals of Greece and Rome. More than 250 objects represent the first comprehensive effort to examine the influence of the classical world on early America, and illustrate how American interest in classical antiquity was not limited to paintings, sculptures, and the decorative arts, but permeated the entire culture during the Empire period. On display are

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Which Texas town was once capital of another state?

In 1860, because of Civil War arguments, the capital of Missouri was moved to Marshall, Texas, which included construction of a capitol and governor's mansion. As refugees from Missouri, Governor Claiborne Jackson and staff moved to Marshall to conduct affairs of state. After the fall of Vicksburg, Marshall also became the seat of civil authority west of the Mississippi River, and headquarters of the Trans-Mississippi Postal Department.

TEXAS TRIVIA



IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK

Galveston's historic 1859

Ashton Villa, Bishop's

Palace, and the Moody

Mansion and Museum will offer

special discount packages through

Labor Day that allow visitors to tour

all three "Broadway Beauties" for just \$12, a

\$2 savings. These mansions reflect the opu-

lent life-styles enjoyed by Galveston's wealth-

iest families from before the Civil War into the

early 20th Century. For more information, call

the Strand Visitors Center at 409/765-7834.

furniture, paintings, silver, sculptures, base metals, ceramics, textiles, and printed materials. On view through July 24 at 1001 Bissonnet; 713/639-7300.

An exhibition at the **Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio** will celebrate the lives, talent, and commitment of Texas' master folk artists, July 10 through September 25. **Pass It On: Photographic Portraits of Master Texas Folk Artists** is an outgrowth of the Apprenticeships in the Folks Arts program sponsored by Texas Folklife Resources and photographed by former Institute intern Jane Levine. Three of the featured artists, Lady Pearl Johnson, Eva Ybarra, and Valerie Ryals Morris, will perform at the Institute on July 10, in a special event entitled **Sound Tracks of Culture: Blues, Boleros and Breakdowns — Women in Traditional Music**. The exhibit and event are both free. Call 210/558-2257 for more details.

E V E N T S

Some of the nation's top jazz talents will perform at the

34th Annual Texas Jazz Festival in Corpus Christi, July 29-31. The rhythm of ragtime and blues will echo from two outdoor stages on the bayfront. A Friday evening jazz cruise on the *Flagship* paddle wheeler headlines Carolyn Blanchard with Charles Reinhart and the Jazz Affair out of Houston. A jazz mass on Sunday morning in Memorial Coliseum is followed by jazz, jazz, and more jazz on both stages and in local clubs. For a complete schedule, contact the C&VB at 1-800-678-6232.

The **Comanche Breaks Heritage Foundation** and **Copper Breaks State Park** present **"The Summer of the Wild Plum Moon,"** each Friday and Saturday night, June 10-25. The outdoor musical by Jerry Ayers traces the history of the area and retells the story of Quanah and Cynthia Ann Parker. Local myths and legends shed new light on Texas' early days. Tickets are available at the Quanah, Crowell, and Chillicothe Chambers of Commerce, and from the Comanche Breaks Heritage Foundation in Crowell. Call the Foundation at 817/684-1485 for more details.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	15,825	+15.60	63,627	+12.42
Anthony	17,913	+20.72	102,630	+12.47
Denison	Under Construction			
Gainesville	44,526	+8.57	198,894	+5.40
Langtry	9,033	+4.37	50,523	+12.25
Laredo	12,651	+16.65	62,064	-3.41
Orange	51,663	+7.15	234,360	+6.97
Texarkana	51,558	+33.49	214,911	+33.76
Valley	15,684	+9.05	182,829	+15.44
Waskom	47,256	+9.30	211,116	+21.08
Wichita Falls	19,851	+19.44	79,929	+10.95
Capitol Complex	11,298	+3666.00	60,006	-40.66
1-800 Phone Center	12,210	-34.57	67,986	+13.59
CENTER TOTALS	309,468	+14.96	1,528,875	+7.28

Data as of May 31, 1994

*Compared to last year

MAIL SERVICES Austin Office	This Mo.	This Yr.
TxDOT	16,503	59,663
TDOC	153,503	715,919
Total year-to-date		775,582

SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY	This Mo.	Y-T-D
TxDOT TRAX System		
Subscriber inquiries	60	
Addresses offered	279,929	
Addresses transmitted	88,456	
Addresses transmitted		482,760

OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Texas Highways print run		
This month		410,706
This month last year		458,588
This year-to-date		2,099,840
Last year-to-date		2,228,085

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