

T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

COMING UP

Old City Park in Dallas is going high tech, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. **Linda Burns**, the park's new executive director, said plans could include adding audio recordings to supply background information to make the surroundings seem more real. In addition, bank robberies and other surprises will help make history come to life. Burns estimates that the park, surrounded by a city of one million people, had about 60,000 visitors last year, half of them tourists. She said that "these days, it's very hard to separate education and entertainment." She believes the key to enticing children to appreciate the past may be high technology. "Think of virtual reality," Burns said. "Think of the idea of time travel, of going back to 1840, 1910. It has various exciting possibilities."

The whole **Peanuts** gang is coming to **Space Center Houston in *Around the Moon and Home Again: A Tribute to the Art of Charles M. Schulz***, beginning July 1. The exhibit will pay tribute to Schulz for his contributions to American culture, and will include reproductions of the entire series of *Peanuts* astronaut strips, personal memorabilia from Schulz's archives, several original strips, and a Silver Snoopy/NASA safety program display. Schulz often included NASA and America's manned space flight program in his story lines. In return, NASA named two spacecrafts after his characters, Snoopy and Charlie Brown. The exhibit will run through September 17. Call 1-800-972-0369 for details.

A giant birthday party honoring 150 years of **Denton County** history is slated for 1996, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. **Mike Cochran**, a local historian who's heading up the project, said the centerpiece of the yearlong celebration will be an Old-Time Settlers Reunion, featuring an old-fashioned picnic, and special ceremonies honoring families who have been in Denton County 100 years or more. Historians hope the gathering will yield historic documents and photographs for the county archives, Cochran said. Other events will include a salute to the Texas governors' wives, a band concert featuring a John Philip Sousa march written for TWU women, a literary festival, and a parade.

PLACES

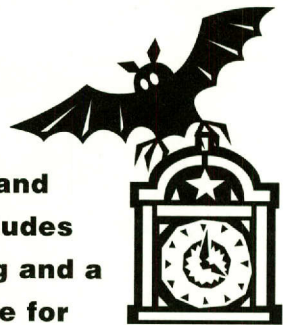
Southwest Texas State University plans to recast **Aquarena Springs in San Marcos** from theme park to environmental interpretative center, according to *The Dallas Morning News*. The university

bought the 40-year-old park last year from a family corporation for \$7 million. **Bill Nance**, vice president for finance and support at the school, said the only additional costs have been about \$200,000 for aquariums housing the endangered species exhibits, the Edwards Aquifer exhibit, renovation of the conference center, and marketing costs. Plans call for adding cultural and historical exhibits exploring the Spanish and Texas colonial eras, and exhibits interpreting the geological and ecological wonders of Central Texas. A new exhibit celebrates the long history of American Indian culture along the banks of San Marcos Spring. Opening this month is the Natural Aquarium of Texas, featuring specially designed tanks to hold the five endangered animal and plant species unique to the area. "What we are doing is transforming the park into the premier educational center in this country," marketing director **Ron Coley** said. "We're here to preserve and protect, tell the unique cultural and environmental story that's here, and let folks have a little

fun in the process. This was the original theme park in Texas. We're just changing the theme."

The **City of Galveston** is gearing up for its third summer of **alcohol-free beaches**, in an attempt to keep the island safe and fun. For the summer of 1993, the city council tried out an ordinance prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on all beaches from 16-Mile Road to San Luis Pass from June 1 through September 30. Because of a marked increase in the number of families visiting Galveston and a decrease in the number of arrests, they voted to keep the ordinance in effect year round. In a similar action, the Galveston Park Board of Trustees banned alcohol consumption from its Stewart Beach Park, with the exception of licensed concession areas. The park board sponsors family-oriented entertainment, such as volleyball tournaments, sand castle competitions, and concerts. For more info, contact the Galveston Island C&VB at 1-800-351-4236 in Texas, or 1-800-351-4237 outside Texas.

SAME BAT TIME The largest bat exhibit in the Southwest opened at Moody Gardens in Galveston on May 27. The Bat Cave is home to 60 live Old and New World bats native to Africa and South America. The 250-square-foot exhibit includes 20 feet of half-inch plate glass for public viewing and a reversed light cycle to ensure the bats are active for visitors during "real" daytime hours. The Bat Cave, open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., is included as part of a visit to the Rainforest Pyramid. Call 1-800-582-4673 for the latest bat scoop.



TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

Real-life astronauts helped "test-drive" the **Right Stuff Mach 1 Adventure**, the newest ride at **Six Flags Over Texas** in **Arlington**. **Alan Shepard, Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, and Wally Schirra** introduced the supersonic aviation adventure at a special press conference in April, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. The astronauts and other guests entered the 10,000-square-foot studio made to look like an aircraft hangar, and took off on a simulated flight at the speed of sound. The astronauts said they hoped the ride would encourage young people to become pilots or explore outer space as a career. To learn more about Mach 1 or for ticket information, call 817/640-8900.

A 69-year-old girls camp "deep in the heart of Texas" now operates as a bed and breakfast from September to May. **Waldemar**, near **Hunt**, was established in 1926 by Ora Johnson and is now recognized as one of the most sought-after summer camps for young girls in the nation. Charming old buildings made of native stone, lush cool waters of the Guadalupe River, and the rugged beauty of the Texas Hill Country help make the 500-acre camp the perfect setting for recreation and relaxation. The facility

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

Layout: Jane Yansky Design

GAINESVILLE TIC One afternoon last month, around 4:30 p.m., a commercial bus line pulled out of the center heading south for Laredo, leaving behind one of its Spanish-speaking passengers. Manager Dale Sowder immediately got on the phone to counselor Joe Paz, at the Laredo TIC, who talked with the visitor, determined his needs, and helped arrange for transportation by bus from Gainesville to Laredo. "Joe was still hard at it after 6:30 trying to help this guy out," said Dale. "I just want him to know how

also includes six tennis courts, a putting green, swimming and canoeing, sports activities, and hiking and jogging trails. Owners Marsha and Dale Elmore said besides bed and breakfast, Waldemar doubles as a resort and conference center. The dining hall, complete with three grand fireplaces, can serve up to 400 guests. And outdoor and indoor meeting areas can accommodate anywhere from 60 to 400. For reservations or information, call 210/238-4821.

Greg Farmer, U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, officially reopened the **Austin C&VB Visitor Information Center** last month during National Tourism Week. The center underwent a face-lifting at its location at 201 E. Second Street, adjacent to the Convention Center's parking garage. Stop by, or call 512/478-0098. Open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.

INTERNET

With the launch of capsule museum programs on the Internet, audiences worldwide can now

much we appreciate his help."

Veteran counselor Rhonda Hillis said for years she's been watching bus loads of tourists leave the center on their way to the piney-woods of East Texas. So when she and her husband were planning their vacation, she was determined to head east to check it out for herself. "We did the whole tourist bit," said Rhonda. "We hit all the major attractions in Jefferson and the towns all around. It was beautiful and the shopping was great!" But where Rhonda

got in trouble was at Marshall Pottery. "I went wild — all that beautiful pottery. It was either buy more pottery or stay one more night. Needless to say our vacation was cut short by a day."

WICHITA FALLS TIC Counselors Penny King and Lisa Stephens brought daughters Misty and Mandy to the center on "Bring Your Daughter to Work Day." One of the girls commented, "Gee, y'all don't do much here." But by the end of the day, they knew "the rest of story."

access the **Contemporary Arts Museum** in **Houston**. This link between the art of our time and contemporary technology was developed by members of the museum staff in collaboration with Rice University's Humanities Electronic Studio Project. CAM's Home Page features an introduction to the museum's exhibitions and programs, including a listing of 1995 exhibitions and resources for teachers and students. Future plans include other virtual exhibitions to accompany museum exhibi-

tions, special artists' projects, and a complete exhibition history of the museum. CAM director **Marti Mayo** said, "As a museum that explores the art of today and tomorrow, rather than yesterday, it is especially appropriate that the Contemporary Arts Museum utilize new developments in communication and technology to deliver information to our audiences in Houston and beyond." CAM's Internet address is <http://riceinfo.rice.edu/projects/cam/>. For more info, call 713/526-3129.

CAST YOUR 'NET The **Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Database**, the first-ever animal science information database on the Internet, is one of the most widely accessible wildlife educational resources designed exclusively for teachers and students. The "read only" program is available on World Wide Web site:

<http://www.bev.net/education/SeaWorld/homepage.html>.

For details, call Sea World of Texas in San Antonio at 210/523-3630.



F A C E S

Welcome **Mitzi Kucera**, newly appointed manager of the **Duncanville C&VB**. She replaces Ann Reagan, who recently retired. Kucera said the C&VB is no longer a part of the chamber of commerce, but now works under the authority of the city. Drop her a line at their new address: P. O. Box 380280, Duncanville 75138-0280. Or call 214/780-5099.

P U B L I C A T I O N S

The latest edition of the **Texas Events Calendar** came off the press sporting a brand-new look. Calendar editor **Marty Lange** said the *Texas Events Calendar* was designed to complement the *Texas State Travel Guide*. "We wanted our major publications to have a similar look so the public would know immediately that the literature was produced by TxDOT," he said. "But that confused folks. At a glance, they couldn't tell the difference between the calendar and the guide." Inside you'll find the same great information — a unique blend of hundreds of fairs, festivals, and family fetes that help make Texas the perfect destination. For the most complete listing of fun things to do this summer pick up your free *Texas Events Calendar* at any of the 12 Texas Travel Information Centers. Or call 1-800-452-9292.

The **Austin C&VB** and the **Austin American-Statesman** have teamed up to produce **Experience Austin**, a quarterly guide for tourists and conventioners. The magazine, which was begun by the *American-Statesman* in 1992, will now become the official publication of the visitors bureau. Each issue will include a calendar of events for the Austin area, and information on restaurants, clubs, and

attractions. With an annual distribution of 520,000, *Experience Austin* will be distributed at more than 170 locations, including the Austin Visitor Information Center, hotels, tourist attractions, and through TxDOT's 12 Texas Travel Information Centers.

S T A T E P A R K S

The recreational park at **O.C. Fisher Reservoir** near **San Angelo** changed hands from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on May 1. The new 7,063-acre **San Angelo State Park** already offers boat ramps, picnicking, camping, fishing, and boating. Officials say the move should increase efficiency and lessen public confusion over fees and services. Eventually, it could mean enhanced recreational opportunities and increased economic development for the San Angelo area. For more info, call the TP&WD regional office in Kerrville at 210/896-1167.

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Which June holiday is unique to Texas?

Juneenth, specifically June 19, is observed every year to commemorate the date in 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army landed in Galveston and issued a general order declaring that "in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free." Though the holiday's real name is Emancipation Day, everyone in Texas calls it Juneenth. In 1979, the 66th Legislature declared Juneenth an official Texas holiday.

TEXAS TRIVIA



ROAD SHOWS The Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio offers traveling exhibits to schools and colleges, community organizations, and businesses.

You can bring the exhibits to your hometown by simply paying a rental fee plus shipping charges. Each exhibit comes with complete assembly instructions, and most include 100 brochures. For information on booking availability, contact the Traveling Exhibits Coordinator at 1-800-776-7651.

H I S T O R Y

With passage of an official resolution, the 74th Legislature of the State of Texas endorsed their support for festivities honoring **Texas' annexation** to the United States 150 years ago. The first major event occurs June 16 in the Texas House of Representatives chamber, where officials will unveil a commemorative postage stamp honoring the sesquicentennial event. Events will conclude on February 19, 1996, marking the final step in Texas' passage to statehood, the relinquishment of authority by President Jones to Governor James P. Henderson, and the raising of the Union flag at a ceremony in Austin. Watch your local newspaper for other sesquicentennial events.

M U S E U M S

A major exhibition featuring the work of **Joseph Henry Sharp** (1859-1953) is on view through November at the **Stark Museum of Art in Orange**. **A Symphony in Silence** includes more than 70 works by

the man who, as a result of an accident, was rendered totally deaf at an early age. Sharp is probably best known for his commitment to understanding and respecting Native Americans. Because of this interest, critics say he possessed the greatest accuracy in painting the various tribes, revealing exact facial structures, costumes, artifacts, and ceremonies. Open Wednesday through Sunday at 712 Green Avenue. For group tour information and reservations, call 409/883-6661. Admission free.

E V E N T S

For the second year in a row, the **South Padre Island Convention Centre** will host the **Miss Texas USA Pageant**, Tuesday, June 27. More than 100 Texas beauties will compete for the title in front of an estimated statewide viewing audience of six million. Miss Texas USA 1995 Chelsi Smith was recently crowned the new Miss USA, also at South Padre Island. Contact the C&VB at 1-800-343-2368 for details.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	11,199	-29.23	51,936	-18.37
Anthony	14,475	-19.19	82,824	-19.30
Denison	23,844	**	106,827	**
Gainesville	38,529	-13.47	168,231	-15.42
Langtry	11,136	+23.28	57,426	+13.66
Laredo	10,983	-13.18	51,939	-16.31
Orange	59,052	+14.30	238,665	+1.84
Texarkana	55,308	+7.27	259,098	+20.56
Valley	20,037	+27.75	185,547	+1.49
Waskom	50,388	+6.63	235,833	+11.71
Wichita Falls	20,439	+2.96	84,033	+5.13
Capitol Complex	12,687	+12.29	59,193	-1.35
1-800 Phone Center	17,823	+45.97	95,838	+40.97
CENTER TOTALS	345,900	+11.66	1,677,390	+9.61

Data as of May 31, 1995

*Compared to last year

** The Denison TIC was temporarily closed in 1990 due to highway construction; resumed operation September 13, 1994.

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	418,836	785,292
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	48	
Addresses offered	521,614	
Addresses transmitted	87,889	
Addresses transmitted		374,729
OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE		
Texas Highways print run		
This month		369,978
This month last year		410,729
This year-to-date		1,846,537
Last year-to-date		2,100,170

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-9 p.m. daily)

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED