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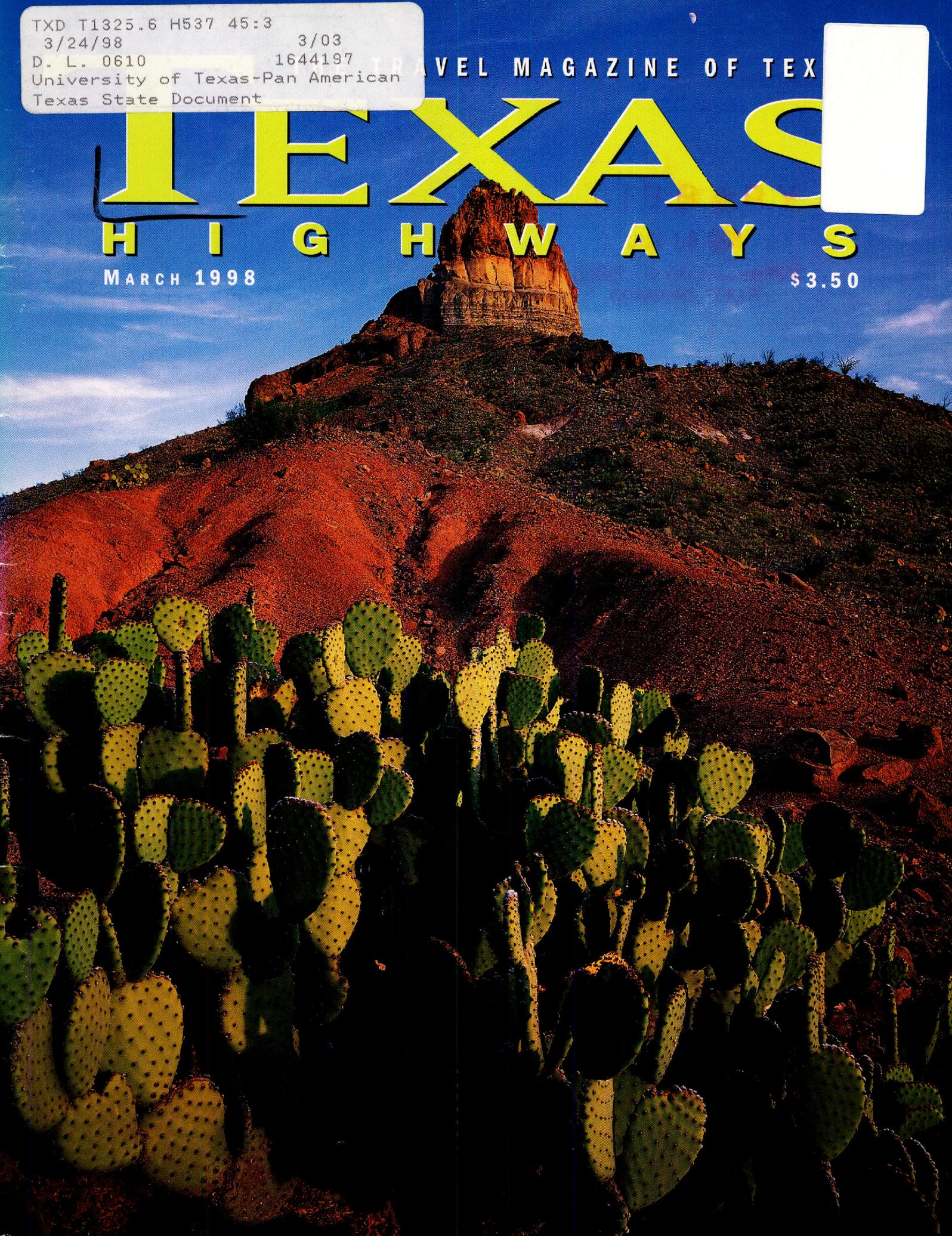
TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS

HIGHWAYS

MARCH 1998

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Congratulations to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the state's park system this year. To mark the event, the department plans celebrations throughout 1998, including a major Texas Independence Day dedication at the newly refurbished **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park** on February 28 and March 1. The park unveils its new Visitor Services Complex, which includes computerized interactive exhibits, displays of historic documents and toys, a gift shop, and a restaurant. See the TexCetera page in this issue for details on the celebration.

This month, East Texas writers **Howard Peacock** and **Diane Morey Sitton** take us to **Brazos Bend State Park**, one of the most popular units within the state park system. The Brazos River forms the eastern boundary of the 5,000-acre enclave, which includes 15 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails and the George Observatory. Brazos Bend, one of the gems in the Texas state parks system, offers recreational opportunities, a wildlife haven, and an educational resource, all within easy access of Houston and the Brazosport area.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department worked together with Dow Chemical Company Texas Operations and the Coastal Conservation Association to make **Sea Center Texas** in Lake Jackson a reality in 1996. As the story and photographs of Sea Center by **Patricia Caperton Parent** and **Laurence Parent** show, the center is a fish hatchery and educational center, where visitors can learn about the Texas coastal environment, from salt marsh to deep Gulf.

On behalf of our photography editor, **Michael A. Murphy**, we would like to thank **Julian Read** and **Ben Fluche** of Read-Poland Associates for their assistance in finding old **HemisFair '68 photos**. Julian handled public relations for the fair, and had a plethora of images left over. Thanks to Ben's tenacity in

digging the photos out of deep storage, we were able to publish old scenes for **Chuck Hamilton's** story on Texas' world's fair of 1968.

I'm sad to report the death of **Bess Whitehead Scott**, our oldest contributor, on December 27, 1997, two weeks after her 107th birthday. Bess was a journalism trailblazer who became the first woman news reporter in Houston when she joined the *Houston Post* in 1915. Two years later, she went to Hollywood to write screenplays for silent movies. Bess may also have been the country's oldest screenwriter at the time of her death.

Bess first wrote for *Texas Highways* more than a decade ago, when she was in her early nineties. Not one to ever think of retiring, Bess contributed historical pieces to *Texas Highways*, taught creative writing in Austin, and had her memoir, *You Meet Such Interesting People*, published by Texas A&M University Press in 1989 when she was 98 years old. On her 100th birthday, the Austin Writers' League established a scholarship in her name for upper-level journalism students at Baylor and Texas A&M universities. Contributions can be sent to the BWS Journalism Scholarship Fund, Austin Writers' League, 1501 West 5th Street, Suite E-2, Austin 78703.

Bess' most recent feature contribution to *Texas Highways* came in April 1994, when she and senior editor **Ann Gallaway** collaborated on a story on the Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village on the Baylor University campus in Waco. Appropriately, the village re-created life in the 1890s, the decade Bess was born. We'll miss Bess, her steadfast example, and her contributions to *Texas Highways* and to young journalists.



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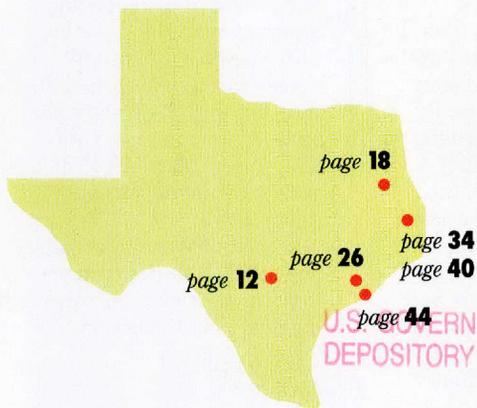
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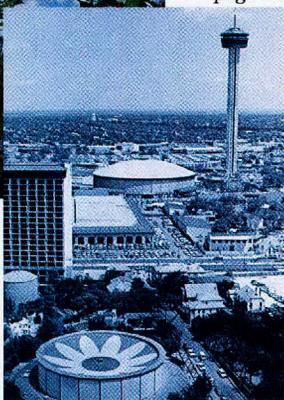
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ABOUT OUR COVERS

FRONT—A stand of blind pear thrives in the rocky soil below Cerro Castellan in Big Bend National Park. Endless blue sky, this well-known peak, and the ubiquitous cactus form a quintessential Texas landscape. *Photo © Richard Reynolds*

BACK—A longleaf pine's rough bark provides sharp contrast with a delicate water droplet clinging to a pine needle. For more forest treasures and Jasper's pleasures, turn to page 34. *Photo © Joe Lowery*

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Readers: We now know the name of the cowboy pictured on page 14 of the December issue. He is Jeff Gore, a singer and songwriter who lives in Austin and performs around Texas and the Southwest. In 1997, the Academy of Western Artists voted Jeff male vocalist of the year.

So Far, So Good

I just opened my February issue and read the letters concerning the December cover. My opinion? That has got to be one of the all-time great photos ever. It was riveting, and I applaud the photographer!

DIANNE LEWIS, via email

I can only say that [December's] is the most outstanding cover that you have ever had. I have been receiving *Texas Highways* in some form or fashion for nearly 30 years, and it is clearly the most unusual photo...ever. Anyone can take a picture of a beautiful sunset and/or landscape, but you have to be in the right place at the right time to take a photograph such as this. The only thing that I do not like about the picture is that I did not take it. Keep the wonder of Texas going with photos such as this.

RONNIE O. McMANUS
Garland

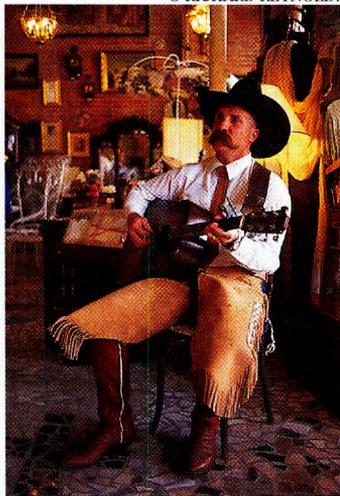
I cannot think of a more appropriate or outstanding cover than the one featured. For one thing, snow doesn't hang around for long in Benjamin. Then...the precise timing required to film the owl is remarkable. This is a work of art, and I commend you.

TOM ISBELL
Anson, via email

College Station Clarification

Your November issue carried a very nice article about Bryan-College Station, including information about Texas A&M University and other attractions in our area. One thing does need clarifying, however. In the When...Where...How section under "Theatrical Entertainment," the statement was made that much of [the entertainment] takes place in the

© RICHARD REYNOLDS



Cowboy singer and songwriter Jeff Gore was pictured in December's story on San Angelo.

2,500-seat Rudder Auditorium in A&M's Memorial Student Center. For your information, in 1973 an 11-story conference tower and three-auditorium complex (including the one with a capacity of 2,500) was named in memory of Earl Rudder, and is designated the J. Earl Rudder Center. This is adjacent to the Memorial Student Center, but is not a part of it.

MARGARET RUDDER
Bryan

Caddo Correction

Your October article on Caddo Lake and Uncertain was outstanding. Randy Malory did an exceptional job of researching the people and places in the area. Please note a correction in the When...Where...How section. Caddo Canoe Rentals and Pontoon Boat Tours is listed as "not wheelchair accessible." We are very wheelchair accessible, as are the other facilities in Caddo Lake State Park.

DAVE LOMAX
CADDO CANOE RENTALS AND
PONTON BOAT TOURS
Karnack

If you would like to write to *Texas Highways*, the editors would enjoy hearing from you. Though we are unable to print every letter, we just might select yours to appear in the magazine—whether you send us kudos or criticism. We reserve the right to edit letters we print. Write to Letters Editor, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009, or fax 512/483-3672. Email: editors@texashighways.com

Oldies, But Goodies

As a faithful subscriber, I have enjoyed many of the recipes you have published. The one that has certainly changed my way of grilling steak is the Perini Ranch Steak Rub featured in the June 1997 issue. I have used it on chicken, pork, and some vegetables as well, with delicious results. I hope to visit Buffalo Gap and will surely stay long enough to eat at the Perini Ranch Steakhouse.

BETTY PRASATIK
Sugar Land

Balmorhea State Park [featured in July 1997] has to be the best-kept secret in Texas. Last August, my family held a reunion there. Family members from Massachusetts to Washington State (and in between) and from age two to 77 (me) had a wonderful time. All of the people who work there did everything to make our stay as pleasant as possible.

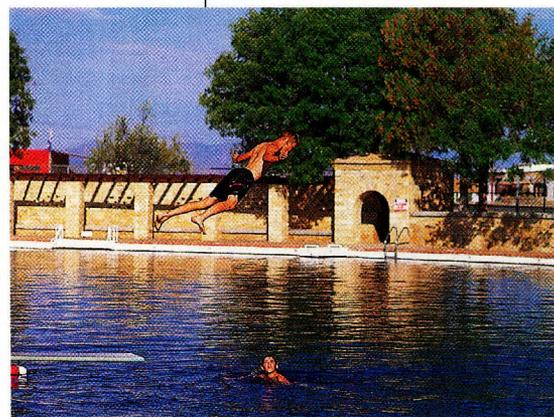
CATHERINE R. KENNEDY
El Paso

A hearty Texas-size "Thank You" for the spectacular "Window to the West" article in the August 1997 magazine. In eight glorious pages, you captured the essence of the Fort Davis area as well as could have been done in many more. A visitor there for 16 straight years for amateur astronomy enclaves, I've roamed the area thoroughly, afoot and by vehicle. It has something no other area of Texas can claim: a thin-

ner veneer of mankind and its trappings. Thus, the historic region's nature still comes through for tuned-in visitors, with goose-bumping force. Unfortunately, your and others' "discovery" means such may not be true very much longer.

I will visit West Texas again and again...storing many more memories of the mystical, magical Fort Davis region.

JOHN WEST
Brenham



© STEPHAN MYERS

Last July, we "Beat the Heat" at Balmorhea State Park.

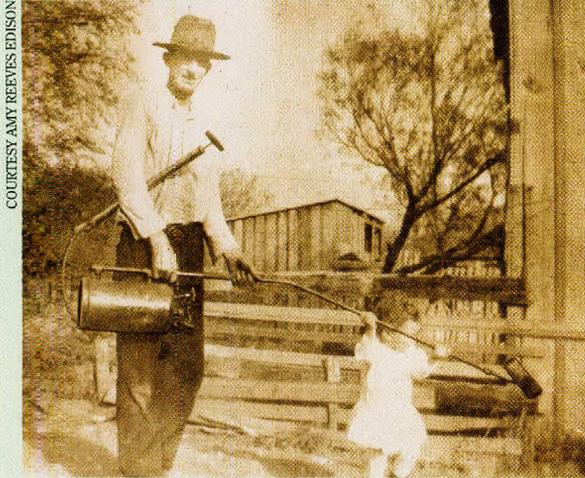
I thoroughly enjoyed every word in the September 1997 special issue on nostalgia. A special thanks to Ann Gallaway for reminding me of stirring the tiny packages of orange coloring into white oleo. Thanks for a lot of special memories.

IMOGENE WHITFORD
Lubbock

Reveille "Fur"vor

No doubt you will receive other letters regarding Reveille, mentioned in January Letters. I attended A&M four years (1928-32), and the dog definitely came there during one of those years, probably 1931. The 1932 annual has a picture on page 186, and the following caption: "Her royal highness, Reveille. This dog has more privileges [than] any ten people, and takes advantage of every one of them."

JOHN M. WINSLOW SR.
Menard, via email



In 1914, Bunyan Blackwell (pictured here with his son Loyd in 1918) produced the Blackwell Pear Burner, which singed the thorns off prickly pear cactus. In arid lands where prickly pear flourished and cattle feed could prove scarce, cactus burners became lifesavers to animals and ranchers alike.

friend. His hand-held burner singed the thorns from cactus, thereby making it edible by cattle when feed was scarce. According to Bunyan's son Loyd of De Kalb, "Cattle love

hot cactus as if it were a chocolate bar."

Born in 1882 in Mississippi's piney woods, Blackwell probably saw no prickly pear cactus until his family moved to Texas in 1889. By 1906, he was living in Moore, in the heart of Texas cactus-and-cattle country. In 1914, while working at his father's cleaning and pressing shop in San Antonio, he produced the first Texas Pear Burner. Slow at first, sales picked up quickly as word of the new burner spread among Texas ranchers. (The state's driest year on record—1917, with only 14.80 inches of rain on average—doubtless also helped sales.)

"The cattle soon learned that the roar of those burners meant food," observed rancher Robert Kuykendall of Tilden in 1964. "They'd come running, so hungry they'd eat the cactus as hot as they could stand it."

In the early days, the burners sold for \$12.50, the same price as a cow, says Loyd, who worked for the family business for 31 years. Eventually, the Aeroil Company of New Jersey bought out the Blackwell Company. (Aeroil no longer makes the machines, but Reeves Roofing Equipment Company in Helotes makes propane weed burners and pear burners under the Reeves Company name.)

A man of many interests, Blackwell became an ordained Baptist minister at age 60. He established new churches and missions, wrote several books, and became co-chaplain of the Texas Trail Drivers Association. In 1954, he also

started a small museum in Bigfoot to honor Bigfoot Wallace, the famous scout of Texas' frontier days. The two men had met while living in South Texas. The Bigfoot Wallace Museum (see "Western Museums," January 1995), whose building replicates the frontiersman's last log cabin, displays some of Wallace's personal possessions, as well as several of Blackwell's early pear burners.

Since prickly pear cactus, a native of the Western Hemisphere, spread several centuries ago to many other countries, pear burners still prove useful not only in Texas but around the world.

—Dot Ferguson Hatfield, Medina

Writing in a simple narrative style that appealed to children and adults alike, John Crittenden Duval (1816-1897) contributed three valuable books to the body of early Texas literature. For *The Adventures of Big-Foot Wallace*, *Early Times in Texas*, and *The Young Explorers*, historian J. Frank Dobie termed Duval the "first Texas man of letters."

In 1835, at age 19, Duval left college in his native Kentucky to fight in the Texas Revolution. On Palm Sunday of 1836, he found himself facing Mexican muskets at what became known as the Goliad Massacre. He escaped by means of luck, common sense, and "hog-knowledge" (instinctive sense of direction, he explained). After the revolution, Duval completed his education at the University of Virginia, then returned to Texas. He joined the Texas Rangers (where he met Bigfoot), fought in the Mexican War, and served in the Confederate Army. In civilian life, he worked as a surveyor on the Texas frontier.

In 1864, Duval started writing. Within six years, he had penned six books. Referring to *Early Times in Texas*, essayist William Corner wrote in the first *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* (1897): "Some day this will be a Texas classic, and it will be a joy of every Texas boy's heart to possess a copy." Today's readers can still find Duval's books on library shelves.

—Mary Beth Olson, Texarkana, Arkansas

William Goodrich Jones (1860-1950), who became a successful banker and business leader in Temple, holds the title "Father of Texas Forestry." As a teenager, Jones hiked with his father through Germany's Black Forest, where he observed the careful cutting, rotation, and continuous planting of trees to conserve nature's bounty. Later, during repeated trips to East Texas, he was shocked to see that the large-scale lumbering industry, with no thought of conservation, had reduced the great East Texas pines to stumps. Acres of virgin forest land resembled a battlefield.

Jones went to the state and federal governments with plans for reforestation and regulated cutting. His creed became, For every tree cut, plant a tree. At Jones' urging, Temple citizens began to plant trees, until the town looked like "a green oasis in a sea of black plowed land." Jones soon acquired the nicknames "Hackberry Jones," "the tree crank," and sometimes "Dr. Jones," because of his knowledge of tree diseases.

Jones gained national recognition for his conservation and reforestation efforts. Jones State Forest, one of Texas' five state forests, was named for this tireless conservationist.

—Elizabeth W. Lewis, Houston

With his invention of the Blackwell Pear Burner in 1914, John Bunyan Blackwell helped change prickly pear cactus from foe to

"CACTUS JACK" WOULD BE PROUD.

Future U.S. vice president John Nance Garner earned his nickname in the Texas Legislature back in 1901, when lawmakers were bandying about suggestions for the official Texas state flower. Garner spoke in favor of adopting the prickly pear bloom. Cactus Jack's fellow lawmakers settled instead on the bluebonnet, but 94 years later, the cactus earned due respect when legislators designated prickly pear as Texas' official state plant.

**THE PREVALENT PRICKLY PEAR HAS HELD
PRACTICAL APPEAL FOR CENTURIES**

A
Cactus
A M O N G U S

Sponsored by Representative Richard Raymond of Benavides, the 1995 prickly pear bill honors the plant's "numerous contributions to the landscape, cuisine, and character of the Lone Star State." A native of South Texas, Richard says he grew up eating cactus, both the flat, fleshy pads called *nopales* and the fruit, known as cactus pears, or tunas. "I have a photo of both my grandmothers, taken when I was eight years old, that shows them cleaning the spines off *nopalitos* [the young, tender pads]."

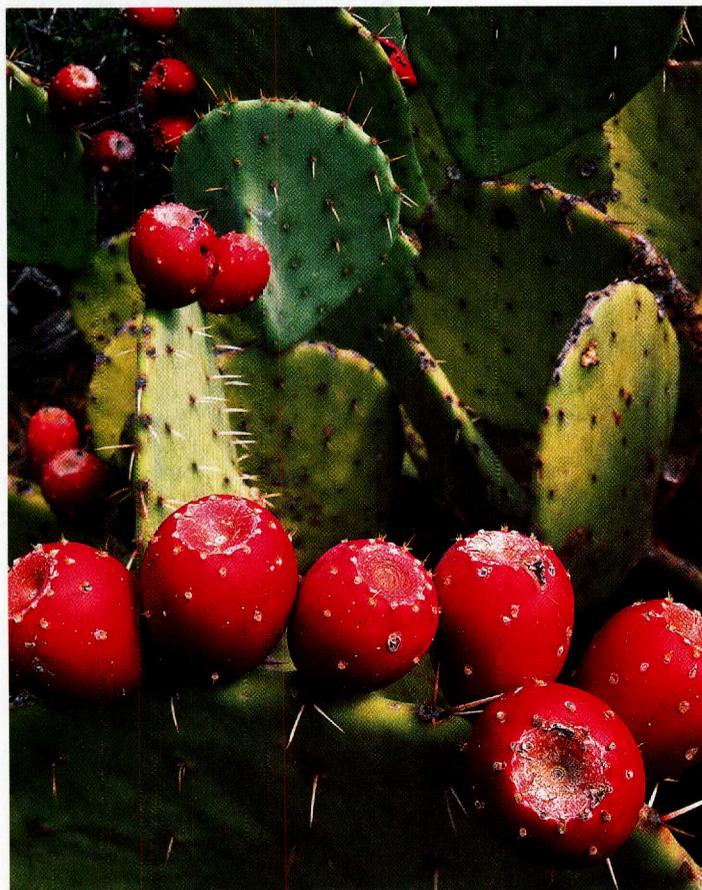
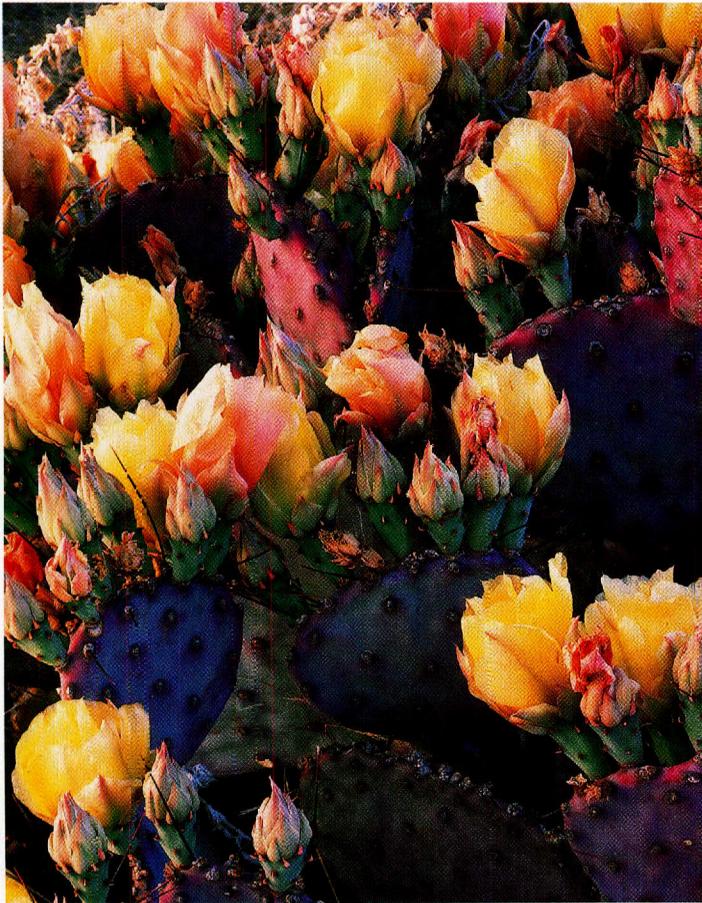
Representative Raymond learned of Cactus Jack's quest during the 1995 session. "It added a lot of credibility to the bill and brought a lot of people on board," he says. "Prickly pear is so prevalent in Texas, people sometimes take it for granted until they learn more about its history and use." The plant grows wild in most parts of Texas, but as Cactus Jack's accomplice says, "You can cultivate prickly pear anywhere in the state. It's a perfect symbol for Texas."



BY GENE FOWLER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD REYNOLDS



The much-maligned prickly pear gained new respect in 1995 when it was designated the official state plant. Several species grow wild in Texas, including brown-spined prickly pear, which, as shown here, can be as pretty as it is prickly.



A lot of folks agree with Representative Raymond. The legislative designation comes after about 15 years of increasing interest in the ubiquitous cactus and its potential as medicine, human food, and cattle feed. Two organizations—the Texas Prickly Pear Council and the Professional Association for Cactus Development—promote the often-overlooked resource, and a festival and convention celebrate its practical and esthetic appeal. Researchers at Texas A&M–Kingsville help growers develop varieties that perform even better in Texas soil and climate than the natives. In some cases, landowners who once fought to eradicate prickly pear now cultivate it.

NATIVE-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC TEXANS HONOR CENTURIES of their heritage when they sing the praises of the humble plant. According to legend, the Aztecs founded Tenochtitlán, which became Mexico City, in 1325, on the strength of a prophecy that predicted the sighting of an eagle perched on a prickly pear plant. An illustration from the *Codex Mendoza*, a chronicle of 16th-Century life, shows the event, and the national seal of Mexico also depicts the scene.

IN SOME CASES, LANDOWNERS WHO ONCE FOUGHT TO ERADICATE PRICKLY PEAR NOW CULTIVATE IT.

When Christopher Columbus returned to Spain, he took back dried tunas, which he called Indian figs, as evidence that he had discovered a western route to India. A generation later, the first Europeans in Texas—Cabeza de Vaca and a handful of fellow shipwreck survivors—lived for seven years with Indians who depended greatly on the tunas for survival.

Each fall, the Indians journeyed from the pecan tree-lined “River of Nuts” (which some historians think was the Nueces River) to a vast region of prickly pear, where they remained for two or three months, eating nothing but tunas. “To allay our thirst we drank the juice of the fruit...,” wrote Cabeza de Vaca. “The juice is sweet, and has the color of must [new wine].”

Spaniards in Mexico around the same time, such as Hernán Cortés, who entered Tlaxcala in 1519, also found the fruits and pads a common food. Military lore from the early 19th-Century Mexican wars for independence maintains that cactus hastened the defeat of the Spanish Crown, as the tunas kept the freedom fighters from starving, and inch-thick nopales fed their horses.

Nineteenth-century Texans—who called the plant “flapjack cactus” and “mission cactus”—adopted cactus medicine from

[TOP] In the case of prickly pear, beauty is definitely in the eye (not the touch) of the beholder. Laden with blossoms, this patch of purple prickly pear offers colorful testimony to spring.

[LEFT] Native Americans were eating cactus pears, or tunas, long before Columbus arrived. Contemporary chefs have rediscovered the bright red fruits and use them in everything from sauces to sorbets.



This stand of blind pear, a native species of spineless prickly pear that grows two to six feet tall, graces a vista in Big Bend National Park. Cactus farmers cultivate a thornless variety called the "1308," which can reach heights of 12 feet.

Mexico. The *Badianus Manuscript*, an Aztec herbal of 1552, included a prickly pear illustration and a burn-ointment prescription that mixed nopal juice, honey, and egg yolk.

Texas Ranger Bigfoot Wallace probably never read the Aztec volume, but after a battle in the 1850s with Comanches near present-day Cotulla, he slapped prickly pear poultices on the wounds of his men. Back at Fort Inge (near present-day Uvalde), the post surgeon removed the cactus, and the men worsened. When Bigfoot returned with them to the Ranger camp, he once again applied prickly pear. "He continued to poultice with prickly pears," wrote Wallace biographer A.J. Sowell, "which he says kept out all fever, and was the best for a wound of anything ever tried. His men at once began to improve, and rapidly recovered."

After 1874, Bigfoot could have applied "store-bought" cactus medicine. The Morley Brothers Drug Company, with a retail store on Austin's Pecan (now Sixth) Street, manufactured 187 products in its so-called "Cactus Line." Consumers of Morley's Prickly-Pear Salve were directed to "rub on freely." The company offered a "money-back" guarantee "if not highly pleased and

enthusiastic after using this marvelous healing salve for athlete's foot, boils, burns, bruises, cuts, insect bites, itch, itching piles, pimples, ringworm, sore feet, swellings or any other affections [sic] of the skin."

Composed of cactus, boric acid, phenol, sulphur, zinc oxide, and oil of eucalyptus, the product sported a label that came in both English-Spanish and English-German versions. "Although this is purely a healing salve...", the label read, "many say if they could have only one beauty aid, they would choose Morley's Prickly-Pear Salve."

Charles Goodnight recommended that riders chew a slice of dethorned cactus while trekking through dry country. "It keeps the mouth moist and agreeable longer than anything else we ever found," stated the trail driver and rancher. In his short story "The Caballero's Way," the writer O. Henry, who spent part of the 1880s and '90s in the rugged South Texas chaparral, describes a landscape filled with the plant's prickly beauty.

"More weird and lonesome than the journey of an Amazonian explorer," the author wrote, "is the ride of one through a Texas



© STEPHAN MYERS

Ricardo farmers Ernest Bippert (right) and his nephew Robert Wagner own Wagonwheel Farms, which markets cactus pickles and cactus salsa made from prickly pear pads.

pear flat. With dismal monotony and startling variety the uncanny and multiform shapes of the cacti lift their twisted trunks and fat, bristly hands to encumber the way.” O. Henry’s next line evokes Goodnight’s prescription for dry mouth: “The demon plant, appearing to live without soil or rain, seems to taunt the parched traveler with its lush gray greenness.”

A DEPT AT STORING WATER IN ITS FLESHY PADS, THE CACTUS eventually appealed to ranchers as stock feed during times of drought. Agricultural investigator David Griffiths wrote in a 1908 USDA pamphlet that the first American attempts to cultivate prickly pear as food for stock took place in the San Antonio vicinity in 1905. “...The time is not far distant,” he noted, “when use can be found for a crop like this that can withstand a protracted drought of two or three months without artificial irrigation.”

Horned toads and javelinas munch on cactus, spines and all, and coyotes, at least in legends, brush the barbs from tunas with their tails before consumption—but cattle require their prickly pear *sans* spines. Fortunately, enterprising inventors early in this century developed torch-like “pear burners” to singe off the thorns (see *Speaking of Texas*), so prickly pear could be used for cattle feed.

The image of livestock dining on nopalitos received a national TV audience during the 1996 NFC championship game between the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys. After a commercial break, the network aired some footage of Texas cows placidly munching prickly pear. “Did you see that?” exclaimed football commentator John Madden. “Those cattle are eatin’ *cactus!*”

Human consumers of the plant prepare it in a great variety of ways. The chopped pads live up a salad or serve nicely as a solo vegetable. Some folks pickle prickly pear, stir-fry it, stew it, or bake it in casseroles. Texas Prickly Pear Council president Joe Martínez of Pharr especially loves a cactus pie made by Margaret Hinojosa of Benavides (see recipe on facing page). “I call it Mexican apple pie,” says Joe.

Many cactus-lovers whip up dishes like those Ellen Schulz described in her 1930 book, *Texas Cacti*. “The joints [pads], when young and tender, are cooked and served with dressing and pepper,” she wrote. “They are also used for making candy, the flavor suggesting watermelon. Good syrup is made by boiling ripe fruit and straining [it] to remove the seeds, which are stony and annoying. *Queso de tuna* (tuna cheese) is made by making a pulp of seed fruit and after evaporation, making it into small masses resembling cheeses.”

Chef Jay McCarthy of San Antonio, crowned the reigning “Cactus King” by some pear promoters, likes to experiment with the seeds. “I dry them, grind them up, and sift them finely to dust on scallops or shrimp. It produces a chocolaty-cumin smell like *mole*,” he says. President and executive chef of Jay’s Mesteña restaurant in San Antonio, Jay also prepares cactus fries, nopal lasagna, tuna sauces, and other non-prickly delights.

“Indians used to sew the pads together with fibers from century plants to make something like pita pockets,” says the chef. “Though I don’t actually sew the pockets together, I create the same effect, and stuff them with quail or *barbacoa*.” At a 1994 culinary convention, he served renowned chef Julia Child two cactus dishes—scallops dusted with ground cactus seeds and a prickly pear sorbet. “She loved them,” says Jay.

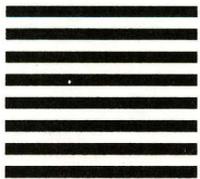


J. GRIFFITHS SMITH, FOOD STYLING BY FRANK DECOUX GERLING, PHOTOS COURTESY CLARKE SMITH POTTERY, AUSTIN

Curious about cactus cuisine? Try Josie’s Cactus Salad, Nopalito Pie, or Cactus Fries (see recipes on facing page). When preparing cactus, remember that tunas and even spineless prickly pear pads can have tiny, painful sticklers. Wear heavy gloves or use tongs to avoid barbs.



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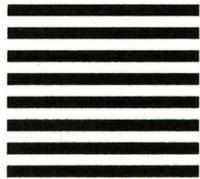
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JOSIE'S CACTUS SALAD

This recipe from Josie Slonaker of Corpus Christi was judged Best of Show at the Texas Prickly Pear Council's 1992 festival cookoff. It appears in Cookin' with Cactus (see When... Where... How for ordering information).

- 3 large tomatoes, diced
 - 1 large red or sweet onion, diced
 - 4 large nopalitos with thorns and "eyes" removed, diced
 - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 - 1-2 serrano peppers, chopped
 - ½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
 - 2 (15-oz.) cans ranch-style beans, drained
 - 1 (16-oz.) bottle Catalina dressing
 - 1 (14 ½-oz.) bag nacho cheese-flavored tortilla chips
- Combine all ingredients except chips, and chill at least 2 hours. To serve, place salad in a large bowl set on a platter, and arrange chips around bowl. Use chips to scoop up salad. Yield: 10 cups.

CACTUS FRIES

Jay McCarthy, president and executive chef of Jay's Mesteña in San Antonio, often serves these fries as a side dish with shrimp or scallops, or as an appetizer with habanero-laced ketchup.

- 2 lbs. nopalitos
 - 3 T. cornstarch
 - 2 T. achiote paste (look for it in the Mexican specialty-foods section)
 - ⅔ c. flour
 - 1 tsp. baking powder
 - 1 egg white
 - about ¾ c. ice water
 - peanut oil
- Remove thorns (if any) and "eyes" from cactus, and trim edges of pads. Cook cactus, covered, for 2 minutes in enough boiling salted water to cover; drain. Cut cactus in 3- to 4-inch strips similar to French fries; set aside.
- Combine cornstarch and achiote paste in a blender or food processor, and pulse until smooth. In a medium-size bowl, combine flour and baking powder, add cornstarch mixture, and blend well.
- In another bowl, beat egg white until stiff peaks form. Fold into flour mixture, alternating with enough ice water to

make batter the consistency of unbeaten egg white. Chill batter.

Dredge cactus strips in batter, and fry in deep hot oil (375°) 2-3 minutes, or until crisp and golden. Drain well. Yield: 3-5 servings.

CACTUS SHRIMP WITH CACTUS-LIME-BUTTER SAUCE

This spectacular dish from Jay's Mesteña (offered in the restaurant as a special) features a brilliant fuschia sauce with a sweet-tart, creamy taste. Although the tunas aren't available in March (look for them in stores from midsummer to late fall), we couldn't resist including the recipe. Try it this summer.

- 5 prickly pear tunas, dethorned (if necessary) and peeled
 - 1 (8-oz.) box tempura mix (some will be left over)
 - 1 T. achiote paste
 - ½ lb. large or medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
 - ¼ c. cornstarch
 - peanut oil
- Pulse tunas briefly in a food processor or blender; strain. Set aside 1 cup puréed tunas, and reserve remaining ¼ c. for Cactus-Lime-Butter Sauce.
- Combine 1 c. tempura mix and the achiote paste in a blender or food processor, and pulse until smooth. Place mixture in a medium-size bowl, add 1 c. puréed tunas, and mix well. Chill.
- Dust shrimp with cornstarch. Dip each shrimp individually into tempura-tuna batter, and fry in hot oil (375°) until golden brown, frying only 3-4 at a time. Drain well. Serve with Cactus-Lime-Butter Sauce. Yield: 3-4 appetizer servings or 2 main-dish servings.

CACTUS-LIME-BUTTER SAUCE

- ¼ c. white wine
- ½ bunch cilantro, stems removed
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 lime
- ¼ c. heavy cream
- ¼ lb. unsalted butter at room temperature
- ¼ c. prickly pear tuna purée (reserved earlier)

Combine wine, cilantro, and shallot in a heavy 2-qt. saucepan. Cook over medium heat until wine is almost gone.

While the wine is reducing, zest the lime; set zest aside. Juice the lime; set juice aside.

When the wine has reduced to almost nothing, add lime zest, lime juice, and heavy cream, stirring constantly with a whisk. Lower heat, and simmer for 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat for about 5 minutes.

While the pot is still hot, slowly begin whisking in the butter, a tablespoon at a time, until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve. *Keep sauce warm—if it becomes too cold or too hot, the sauce will separate, and you'll have to begin the process again.* Fold in the cactus purée. Yield: Enough sauce for Cactus Shrimp.

NOPALITO PIE

Margarita C. Hinojosa of Benavides is famous among Rio Grande Valley residents for her Nopalito Pie, which some think tastes like apple pie, especially if served warm and topped with ice cream.

- 8 nopalitos with thorns and "eyes" removed, diced
 - pastry for double-crust 9-inch pie
 - 1 c. sugar
 - 3 T. flour
 - ¾ tsp. cinnamon
 - 1 T. butter or margarine
 - slice of prickly pear tuna (optional)
- Cook cactus, covered, for 3 minutes in enough boiling, lightly salted water to cover; drain. Rinse under running water; drain well.
- Roll half of pastry to ⅛-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface. Place in a 9-inch pie plate; trim off excess pastry along edges. Set aside.
- In a mixing bowl, combine nopalitos and remaining ingredients except butter; mix well by hand. Spoon filling evenly into pastry shell, and dot with butter.
- Roll remaining pastry to ⅛-inch thickness; cut into ½-inch strips. Arrange strips, lattice fashion, across top of pie. Trim strips even with edges; fold edges under and flute. Bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes. Garnish with slice of tuna, if desired.



Almost every part of the prickly pear plant has a practical use. For example, these bright yellow blossoms attract bees, which use the nectar to make a flavorful honey. Creative cooks also use the blossoms in salads.

Jay began studying up on the diverse plant about six years ago after he received a call from a representative of the Texas Department of Agriculture. “We were selling cactus margaritas at Zuni Grill,” says Jay, “using about a thousand pounds of tunas a week. They said, ‘We want to know what you’re doing with prickly pear—you’re the biggest consumer in the state.’ Ever since then, I’ve been learning about it. It’s an amazing plant, very low-fat and high in vitamin C.”

CACTUS GROWERS LIKE ERNEST BIPPERT AND HIS PARTNER and nephew, Robert Wagner of Ricardo, also stress the plant’s health benefits. Primarily cotton and grain farmers, Ernest and Robert got into prickly pear (so to speak) five years ago. They grow cactus on about 18 acres and use a secret recipe to transform the plants into cactus pickles and cactus salsa, which they sell under the Wagonwheel Farms label. Ernest’s sister Evelyn Bippert cooked the first batch of pickles. “She was canning dill pickles, and I dropped in a hunk of nopalito to see what would happen,” says Ernest. “Cactus pickles are similar to dill pickles, but they’re a little crispier and have a different flavor. Some people say they taste like green beans or bell pepper.”

Wagonwheel Farms markets its pickles through the King Ranch Saddle Shop and El Jardin Restaurant in Kingsville, the Corpus Christi airport, and other outlets. Noting that cactus has been more of a Mexican-American dish, traditionally eaten during Lent, Ernest sees a future for increased production of the plant as a healthy food source for everyone. Jay McCarthy agrees. “The main thing is just finding ways to get people to try it,” says Jay.

Dennis and Cynde Oye of O’Coy Cactus Farm in Helotes tempt palates with 11 varieties of prickly pear jams, sauces, spreads, and pickles, including Dilled Tunas, which won an award at the December 1997 Chile Pepper Fiery Food Challenge. Unlike most jam producers, Dennis and Cynde use the pads instead of the tunas. “I showed my jam to a grower from Mexico,

who’s been in business for 25 years. He was flabbergasted and insisted I must have used tunas. But it’s all cactus [pads].”

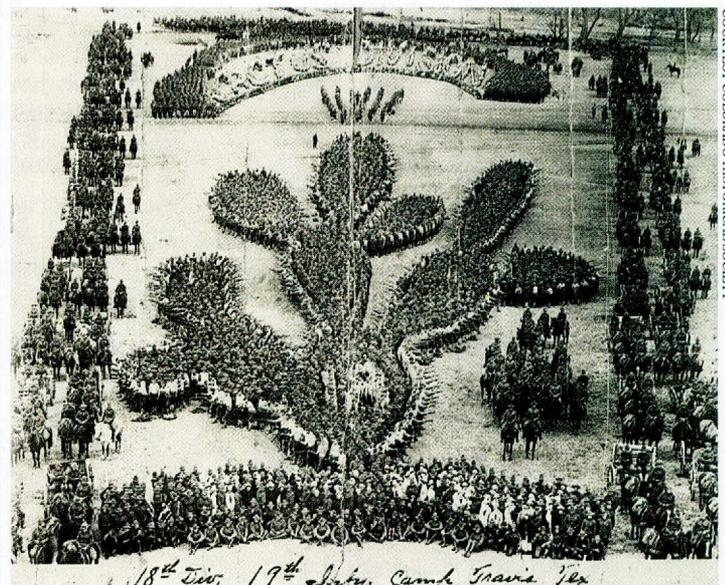
Dennis and Cynde grow cactus on five acres of rocky Hill Country soil, which they say can produce as much as 200,000 pounds of nopalitos per acre per year. Some they sell directly to farmers for stock feed. Their packaged products are available at their farm, at Whole Foods and Farm-to-Market stores in San Antonio, and at Sun Harvest stores in San Antonio, El Paso, and McAllen, as well as at various gift and antique shops.

“YOU CAN CULTIVATE PRICKLY PEAR ANYWHERE IN THE STATE. IT’S A PERFECT SYMBOL FOR TEXAS.”

Both the Oyes and Ernest Bippert grow a thornless variety (the unprickly pear?) called the “1308,” imported from San Luis Potosí, Mexico. Though it can shoot up as tall as 12 feet, the 1308’s thin skin can make it susceptible to frost. Addressing this and other problems, a research program at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University–Kingsville works to develop hardier cacti.

“We’re studying 130 varieties,” says the program’s director, Dr. Peter Felker. “We look for three main features—a high sugar content in tunas, cold-weather hardiness, and increased production yield. Recently, we selected 10 varieties that we’re releasing to growers who are looking for larger cactus pears. They’re producing not only red fruit, but purple, green, and orange as well.”

A former U.S. Army agricultural advisor to Vietnamese rice farmers, Peter became a cactus convert in 1983, when a South



An unidentified photographer shot this scene of the 19th Infantry Regiment, 18th “Cactus” Division, in formation at Camp Travis in San Antonio circa 1918. The unit was demobilized in February 1919 following the end of World War I the previous year.

Prickly Matters

Dr. Peter Felker of Texas A&M-Kingsville leads the university's cactus research program, which works with growers to develop improved varieties of prickly pear for cultivation.

American airline served him a tuna with his meal. "It was so delicious, I had to ask what it was. I was a little surprised to learn it was prickly pear."

He remembered learning in college of the superb water efficiency of cactus, and not long after that tuna-tasting flight,

he developed the Kingsville research program. In September 1995, Peter, Jay McCarthy, and other experts met at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens (and other Alamo City locations) for the first convention of the Professional Association for Cactus Development (PACD). Its international membership shares cactus data by computer. The group draws together chefs, researchers, physicians, and prickly pear growers with the common goal of popularizing a useful, renewable resource. PACD will return to San Antonio in September for its 1998 convention.

The first PACD meeting included reports by researchers at the University of Texas at San Antonio Health Science Center on the use of cactus for controlling diabetes. According to the group's newsletter, studies indicate that patients who consumed cactus "had significantly lower blood glucose levels" than those who did not. Other reports at the meeting stated that "traditional-use surveys in the Rio Grande Valley...found that nopales were the most common plant used for controlling diabetes."

While scientists study the medical potential of prickly pear, cactus folk-cures persist as well. Some recommend tuna tea as a cure for gallstones and a remedy for bedwetting. Folklorist O.T. Baker of Austin, who serves sun-dried tunas at San Antonio's Texas Folklife Festival, says the "gluey pulp" in the pads "has a lot of the benefits of aloe vera" (for more on aloe vera, see *Texas Highways*, January 1998).

To further its mission of promoting the use of prickly pear, the Texas Prickly Pear Council sponsors a cactus festival each spring in Kingsville (April 17-19, 1998). (A local environmental group, El S.O.L. [Save Our Landscape] will co-sponsor the festival this year.) The event features demonstrations, live music, cookoff competitions, an arts and crafts show, and children's activities. "Some of the artists make their works from dried nopalitos," says council president Joe Martínez. The cookoff presents cash awards for several categories, including main dish, beverage, dessert, traditional, and miscellaneous. Cactus King Jay McCarthy and other prickly pear experts have served as judges.

Chances are, some of the cookoff entrants get just as excited about prickly pear as Cactus Jack Garner and Richard Raymond. Or H.C. Crawford of Del Rio. A 1934 Associated Press

If you'd like to find out more about the official state plant, join cactus converts at the **Texas Cactus Festival**, sponsored by the Texas Prickly Pear Council and El S.O.L. (Save Our Landscape), a local environmental group, Apr. 17-19 in Kingsville. The event will feature cooking and planting demonstrations, live music, a cactus cookoff, and other activities. Write to the Kingsville Convention & Visitors Bureau, Box 1562, Kingsville 78364; 512/592-8516 or 800/333-5032.

For general information about prickly pears, write to J.T. Garcia, Council Secretary, **Texas Prickly Pear Council**, Box 423, Benavides 78341; 512/256-3571. To order a copy of the council cookbook, *Cookin' with Cactus* (\$10 plus \$2 shipping and handling), write to Lydia Canales, Box 340, Benavides 78341; 512/256-3378.

Jay's Mesteña restaurant, at 7959 Broadway, San Antonio (78209), serves a cactus-chili sauce with some entrées and features several cactus dishes as specials, usually on weekends. Hours: Mon-Thu 11-10, Fri-Sat 11-10:30, Sun 10-3 and 6-9. Wheelchair accessible. Call 210/822-7733.

The **O'Coy Cactus Farm** sells prickly pear jams, sauces, pickles, and spreads, and

offers free tours of the farm, at 16339-1 Scenic Loop Rd., Helotes (78023). Call or fax 210/695-6035. Web site: www.discover-texas.com/cactus. Email: ocoycfi@aol.com. Large groups with reservations receive cactus refreshments such as cactus cakes, pies, cookies, and bread. Hours: Mon-Fri 8-4. Not wheelchair accessible.

Wagonwheel Farms offers 3 cactus items: Kosher Dill Cactus Pickles, Sweet & Hot Cactus Pickles, and Salsa Nopales (Cactus Salsa), plus a 3-jar gift pack. You can find the products at many Texas outlets, or order them directly. Write to RR1, Box 521-W, Kingsville 78363; 800/884-6395 (fax 972-783-0705). Web site: www.wagonwheelfarms.com.

For information on the **Center for Semiarid Forest Resources' cactus research program** (directed toward farmers, ranchers, and other commercial cactus growers), write to Dr. Peter Felker, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M Univ. Campus, Box 218, Kingsville 78363; 512/593-3966. For information on subscribing to the **Cactus Email Network**, contact Dr. Felker via email: kfpf000@tamuk.edu.

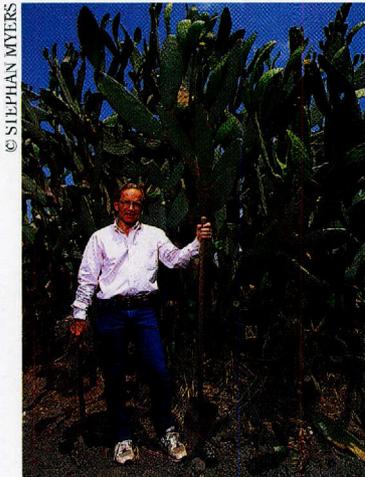
story dubbed H.C. the "Cactus King on the Rio Grande." H.C., who counted 40 varieties of prickly pear among his 7,000 cactus plants, attributed his own well-being to the therapeutic benefits of the desert and prairie flora. "Cactus cultivation," opined the King, "will cure the worst case of shattered nerves."

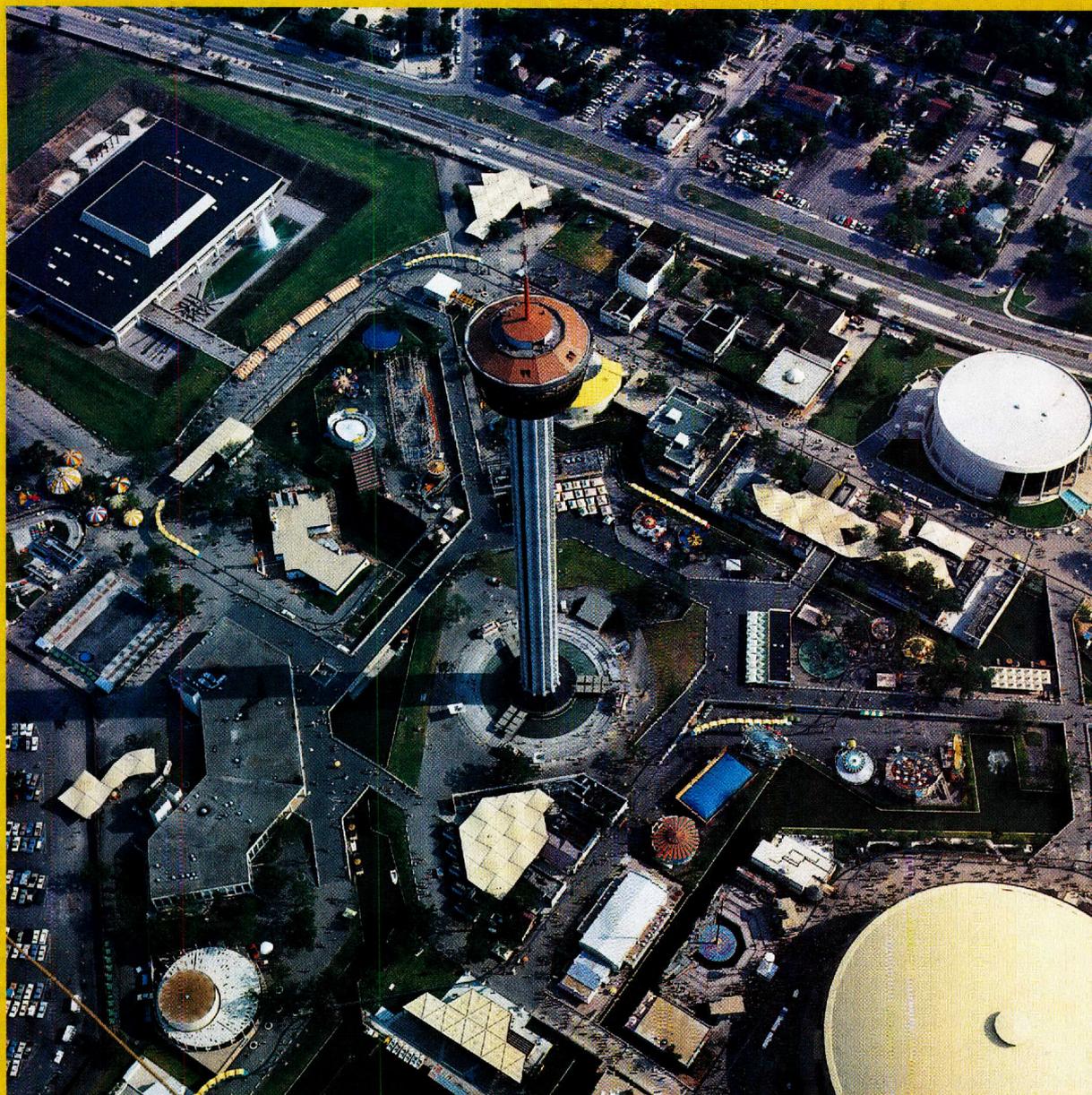
To 1930s cactus dealer Charles M. Fitzpatrick, who tended 9 million plants downriver in Edinburg, H.C. would have rated no higher than a minor earl. Asked why he admired prickly pear and other species, the dealer spoke sagely. "Cactus is tougher than a goat. It has real character. It gets along."

Cactus Jack Garner couldn't have said it better. ★

Austin writer GENE FOWLER prefers the sculptural surprises of roadside prickly pear to the works of the Abstract Expressionist masters.

Look for Austin freelance photographer RICHARD REYNOLDS' photo feature on agave this summer.





ZINGRAF COLLECTION, INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES, SAN ANTONIO

HemisFair is a splashy six-month celebration of San Antonio's 250th birthday. It will astonish no one if the aftermath of the party is the business and cultural flowering of one of America's most gently beautiful old cities.

Look magazine, May 28, 1968

FOR A CITY THAT LOVES CELEBRATIONS, SAN ANTONIO TRULY OUTDID ITSELF in 1968. It threw a birthday bash and invited the world. HemisFair '68, the Southwest's first world's fair, exposed more than 6 million visitors to the culture, cuisine, and history of more than 30 countries. As the festivities unfolded, fairgoers walked through scores of international and corporate exhibits, glided above the grounds on a Swiss Skyride and mini-monorail trains, bought giant crepe-paper yellow roses and Alamo figurines, wolfed down everything from hot dogs to duck à l'orange, and enjoyed puppet shows, experimental films and multimedia shows, marching bands, art exhibits, "Wild West" gunfights, and singers and dancers from almost every corner of the globe.

Veteran comics Bob Hope and Jack Benny drew many a chuckle with their timeless routines. Louis Armstrong wowed the crowds with his hot trumpet and singular vocal style. Country stars Roy Clark and Homer & Jethro hosted special road-show performances of *The Grand Ole Opry*. Russia's acclaimed Bolshoi Ballet made several appearances, rare in the United States. Saddle pals Roy Rogers and Dale Evans rode in from out West, and *Man of La Mancha* and *Fiddler on the Roof* brought the best of Broadway to the new Convention Center and Arena. Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus even turned the arena into its own "big top."

But HemisFair also offered plenty of entertainment that didn't feature marquee names. Rainbo Bread's puppet theater starred Argyle the Snake, a hand puppet that delighted in hurling good-natured insults at fairgoers. ("Did you buy that outfit in the dark?" he'd ask unsuspecting passersby.) At the Bavarian Beer Garden, a band from Munich filled the air with the oompah-pahs of polka music, at times quitting the bandstand to lead impromptu parades around the grounds. Mariachis held forth on a small stage near Mexico's pavilion, and HemisFair's own marching band strutted and tooted all over the place. At various sites, the Potpourri Players, a U.S. theatrical troupe, performed everything from Shakespeare to melodrama.

After hours of walking, visitors could enjoy a glass of wine at the sidewalk cafe of a French-style bistro, take in the water-ski show from the rooftop deck of the Lone Star Beer pavilion, or relax on the tree-covered patio of the House of Sir John Falstaff (a favorite hangout for off-duty fair employees). Tired feet notwithstanding, thousands stood in line for the 43-second elevator ride to the observation deck of HemisFair's imposing central structure, the 750-foot Tower of the Americas.

For many, the tower's revolving restaurant, with its sweeping views of the city and beyond, became a major stop on a culinary tour that could have gone on for weeks without repeating a meal. At a time when ethnic fare in Texas usually meant Tex-Mex or pizza, HemisFair seemed like an epicurean United Nations. You could try authentic Tandoori chicken at Tandoor of India, order a bowl of cheesy French onion soup at Pierre's Interlude, sit down to an interior-Mexico dinner at La Fonda Santa Anita (which brought its staff from Mexico City), or enjoy Philippine-style spareribs and a frosty San Miguel beer at Casa San Miguel. Sur Le Pouce, a Swiss bakery, gave many fairgoers their first taste of quiche Lorraine, and a pink stucco eatery called Don Pan Dulce introduced legions of non-Texans to cinnamon-y Mexican pastries.

happy birthday

HemisFair

BY CHUCK HAMILTON

[FACING PAGE] On April 6, 1968, the city of San Antonio kicked off the Southwest's first world's fair, a six-month salute to the "Confluence of Cultures in the Americas," dubbed HemisFair. Some 30 countries participated, lending their talents in theater, dance, music, circus, film, art, comedy, and cuisine. By the time HemisFair closed on October 6, it had widened the horizons of some 6 million visitors and had planted the seeds for San Antonio's growth into a first-class tourist destination.

Yet those with more traditional palates could easily find hamburgers, hot dogs, and fried chicken, not to mention Tex-Mex and pizza, at one of the fair's several food plazas—a concept that would later turn up in shopping malls across the country.

Talk of holding a world exposition in San Antonio had begun in the late 1950s, when the city's business community started looking for ways to boost trade and tourism. In 1959, local merchant Jerome Harris Sr. wrote to the editor of the *San Antonio News*, proposing a "fair of the Americas" and suggesting the name "HemisFair." Newly elected Congressman Henry B. González got the ball rolling in the early '60s by asking local businessman Bill Sinkin to call together a group of community leaders to explore the possibility of a world's fair. By 1963, HemisFair had moved from the talking to the planning stage. Planners chose the theme, "The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas," and scheduled HemisFair to run the same year as the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City. By the time the fair opened in April, the U.S. Travel Service had declared the event the year's top attraction for overseas visitors.

For a site, the leaders picked a 92.6-acre tract on Alamo Street, across from La Villita (the Little Village), a historic district that dates to the 1700s. Once a thriving neighborhood of residences and small businesses, the area had fallen on hard times. Instead of leveling the entire site, HemisFair renovated and restored some

22 structures, mostly old homes, which found new life as restaurants, boutiques, and commercial pavilions. "It will be the first time a world's fair has had any old buildings to show off," boasted the *San Antonio Express* in 1967.

"They [the older buildings] gave the fair an architectural integrity and character that delighted people from all over," recalls R. Jay Casell of San Antonio, who served as executive producer of three shows at the fair. One of the shows, a multimedia production called *Laterna Magika*, occupied the restored Beethoven Hall, built in 1895 by one of the city's popular German singing societies.

Some 20 companies and organizations came to HemisFair, sponsoring everything from magic shows and travel advice to counseling services. General Electric staged a two-act musical, set in an all-electric kitchen. Coca-Cola offered *Kaleidoscope*, a free puppet show produced by Sid and Marty Krofft, which introduced the character H.R. Pufnstuf. The Kroffts also produced *Les Poupées de Paris*, a Las Vegas-style revue that shocked some fairgoers when topless puppets appeared onstage.

Frito-Lay/Pepsi-Cola brought in *Los Voladores de Papantla* (the Flying Indians), an acrobatic troupe from Papantla, Mexico. Perched on a platform 114 feet above the crowd, the group staged a centuries-old tribal ceremony involving dancing, music, and daring head-over-heels descents while tethered by colorful ropes. Lone Star Beer's pavilion included a Texas-themed wax museum with lifelike figures of William B. Travis, Sam Houston, Jean Lafitte, and Theodore Roosevelt (shown recruiting Rough Riders in San Antonio). And IBM gave visitors a peek into a future with a computer-controlled Jacquard loom that allowed visitors to weave small swatches of custom-designed cloth.

Films appeared at HemisFair in a number of incarnations. Ford Motor Company told its story on a 360-degree screen, while the Czechoslovakian comedy *Kino-Automat* let the audience vote on plot development five times, offering multiple story possibilities. *Laterna Magika*, also from Czechoslovakia, presented the same actors on stage and on film and was timed so the cast sometimes appeared to be leaping from

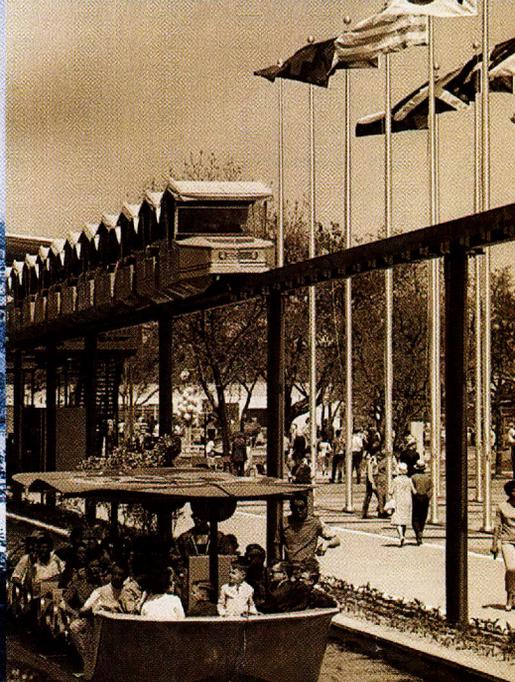
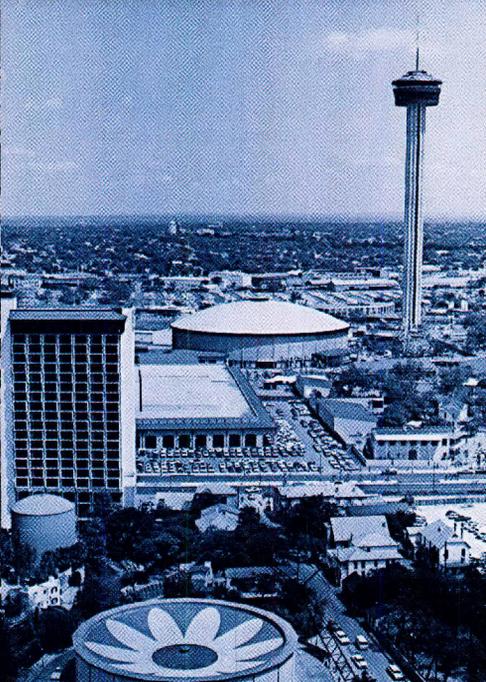
“HemisFair was a ‘boutique’ exposition as opposed to [Montreal’s] Expo ’67, which was a ‘superstore’ exposition,” recalls R. Jay Casell. “At HemisFair, you got the same impact, but the feeling was more intimate.”

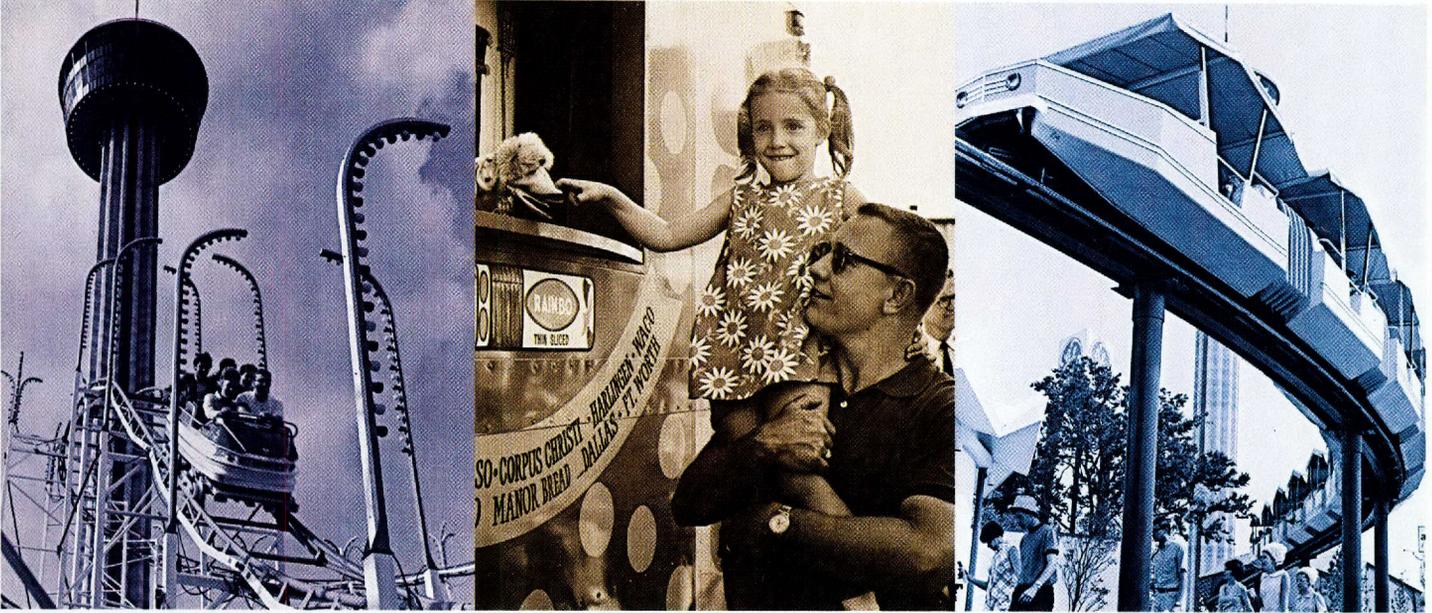
[FACING PAGE, TOP ROW] Art, theater, and culture aside, HemisFair also offered action-packed entertainment such as water-ski shows and graceful, daredevil performances by Mexico's *Los Voladores de Papantla* (the Flying Indians).

[MIDDLE ROW] Savvy corporations touted their businesses by sponsoring entertainment ranging from music to museum exhibits. Frito-Lay/Pepsi-Cola brought in authentic mariachi musicians, and famous puppeteers Sid and Marty Krofft produced several shows courtesy of Coca-Cola.

[BOTTOM ROW] The new “food court” concept—which would transform shopping-mall cuisine in later years—allowed parents with finicky eaters the luxury of variety. HemisFair's accessible size (only 92 acres) and relatively low price (once you entered the gate, most events were free) especially appealed to families. If you didn't want to walk, you could navigate the fairgrounds by gondola, skyride, mini-monorail, and tram.

TOP ROW, LEFT: SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS; TOP ROW, RIGHT: READ-POLAND ASSOCIATES; MIDDLE ROW, LEFT: TEXAS DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION; MIDDLE ROW, RIGHT: SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS, INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES; BOTTOM ROW, LEFT AND CENTER: TEXAS DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION; BOTTOM ROW, RIGHT: SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS, INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES





[ABOVE, LEFT] If you kept your eyes open, the view from the crest of the coaster could reveal your next destination: Would it be the multimedia Czechoslovakian film *Kino-Automat*, or a power-lifting show by The World's Strongest Man? From the observation deck of the Tower of the Americas (or from its revolving restaurant), you could enjoy a panoramic view of San Antonio and beyond.

[MIDDLE] Adults and children alike experienced the magic of HemisFair. For several hours, longtime *Texas Highways* photographer Jack Lewis followed this father-daughter team as they explored the grounds, capturing their smiles for posterity.

[RIGHT] With the state-of-the-art Tower of the Americas jutting skyward and mini-monorail trains zipping above historic buildings, HemisFair '68 offered a look into the future, as well as a salute to the past. "It will be the first time a world's fair has had any old buildings to show off," boasted the *San Antonio Express* in 1967.

the stage onto the screen. At the U.S. pavilion's Confluence Theater (now the Federal Courthouse), visitors filed into three adjacent auditoriums to see the historical film *US*. Partway through the story, the house went dark momentarily, the dividing curtains raised, and the three screens merged into a single backdrop that afforded the audience a 180-degree panoramic view.

Though conceived as a "fair of the Americas," HemisFair evolved into a true world exposition. In Las Plazas del Mundo, the international exhibit area, fairgoers could view a 14-foot Canadian waterwheel, a reproduction of a typical Thai building, a model of the Panama Canal, suits of armor from Spain, and an extensive art collection from Mexico. Texas' pavilion, the new Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), told the story of Texas through the eyes of the many ethnic groups that settled the state. The institute's main exhibit floor still stretches the length of a football field.

At the fair's onset, Frank X. Tolbert of *The Dallas Morning News* observed that "The air of the [ITC] pavilion is to destroy the old cliché notions that this state simply evolved after a hell-raising era of cowboy and Indian fights, into a great cattle range and oil patch."

For those who associated Texas with bigness and wide-open spaces, HemisFair's relatively small size offered a surprise. The fair's 92 acres covered about a tenth of the area of Montreal's Expo '67. "HemisFair was a 'boutique' exposition as opposed to Expo '67, which was a 'superstore' exposition," recalls R. Jay Casell. "At HemisFair, you got the same impact, but the feeling was more intimate."

If the fair's historic buildings gave visitors a glimpse into the city's past, its placement downtown gave visitors a closer look at the city itself. "It brought people to San Antonio who didn't know what San Antonio was," recalls local restaurateur Jim Hasslocher, whose company operated several of HemisFair's food and beverage concessions. "They thought it was some burg out in West Texas. Then they discovered the beauty of the city and the River Walk."

Still true today, you could walk from HemisFair Park across Alamo Street to historic La Villita, or stroll a couple of blocks north to the Alamo. The nearby River Walk, once deemed so unsafe that it was declared off-limits to military personnel, began to flourish during the exposition. Two new hotels, the Hilton Palacio del Río and La Mansión del Río, opened to serve fairgoers, and restaurants and clubs began to appear. (Even

HemisFair Revisited

HemisFair Park is bounded by E. Durango Blvd. and S. Alamo, Market, and Bowie streets, west of Interstate 37 in downtown San Antonio. An excellent children's playground lies inside the main gate on Alamo St., with limited free parking. (Other parking is available at lots and garages accessible from Market, Bowie, and Durango. Metered parking available on Durango.) Structures remaining from HemisFair '68 include the convention center, Beethoven Hall, the Tower of the Americas, the Institute of Texan Cultures, and the Mexican Cultural Institute. **San Antonio's area code is 210.**

The **Henry B. González Convention Center** is currently undergoing expansion, and the park is seeing some changes, too. When the project is completed in April 1999, the River Walk will extend all the way to the Tower of the Americas. Until then, the park's fountains won't operate, and some of the paths are subject to detour.

For general information about the park, write to the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Dept., 202 E. Nueva, 78205; 207-8522.

Beethoven Hall, 420 S. Alamo (78205), home of *Laterna Magika* during the fair, is now the home of the Magik Children's Theatre of San Antonio. Wheelchair accessible. Call 227-2751 for a performance schedule.

The **Tower of the Americas** serves lunch, dinner, and cocktails, as well as panoramic views of San Antonio and beyond. Observation deck hours: Sun-Thu 9 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri-Sat 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Admission: \$3, \$2 age 55 and older, \$1 ages 4-11, free age 3 and younger. The **Tower Restaurant**

(which rotates a full 360 degrees every hour) opens daily for lunch and dinner. The lounge, one floor above the restaurant, opens at 11 a.m. daily. All wheelchair accessible. Parking is available at the large lot off Bowie (the \$5 fee will be deducted from your food or drink tab). Call 223-3101.

The **Institute of Texan Cultures**, 801 S. Bowie (78205), features temporary and permanent exhibits, events, programs, and an excellent library and Texana gift shop. (The Texas Folklife Festival, celebrating the state's numerous ethnic groups, takes place on the grounds each August.) Hours: Tue-Sun 9-5. Admission: \$4, \$2 ages 3-12 and age 65 and older, free age 2 and



younger. Wheelchair accessible. Park in the lot off Durango; you'll get 2 hours free with admission. Call 458-2300.

The **Mexican Cultural Institute**, 600 HemisFair Plaza (78205), displays works by Mexican artists and sponsors cultural activities. Hours: Tue-Fri 9:30-5, Sat-Sun 11-5. Admission: Free. The downstairs galleries are wheelchair accessible. Call 227-0123.

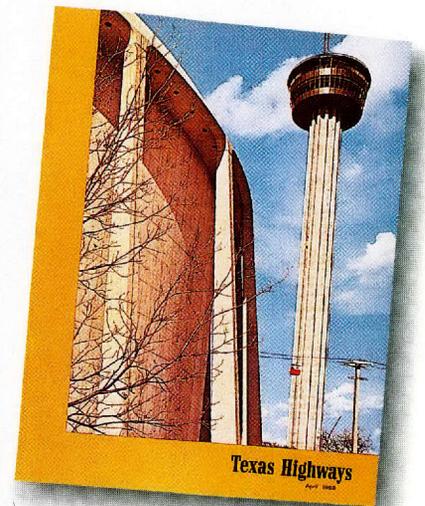
Two hotels, **La Mansión del Río** (112 College; 225-2581 or 800/292-7300) and the **Hilton Palacio del Río** (200 S. Alamo; 222-1400 or 800/445-8667) were built to serve fairgoers. For more information about San Antonio attractions, restaurants, and other lodging, drop by the Visitor Information Center at 317 Alamo Plaza. Hours: Daily 8:30-6, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's days. Write to Box 2277, San Antonio 78298; 270-8700 or 800/447-3372. Web site: www.SanAntonioCVB.com.

today, guides on the riverboat tours explain how huge cranes set in place each of the Hilton's rooms, already fully furnished down to the lamps and chairs.)

Although it came close, HemisFair didn't draw the 7 million people it had hoped to attract, and like almost every world's fair, it lost money (civic leaders covered the shortfall). "What's important is what it did for the city," says Sharon Eason, retired director of visitor marketing for the San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau. "It brought the national spotlight to San Antonio. Just look at what's happened since then—the expansion of the River Walk, Rivercenter Mall, Sea World, Fiesta Texas, the Alamodome. If HemisFair hadn't happened, the city might not have become the world-class tourist destination it is now."

Today in the Alamo City, the physical legacy of San Antonio's world's fair lives on in HemisFair Park, the Tower of the Americas, the Institute of Texan Cultures, the Mexican Cultural Institute, the ever-expanding convention center, and the shops, restaurants, hotels, and historic structures that still remain. Yet for those who attended, it left behind much more: the memory of a magic time when a still-insular Texas opened its doors and invited the world in. Fortunately for us, the world liked what it saw and still comes back for more. ★

Freelance writer CHUCK HAMILTON of Austin experienced the magic of HemisFair '68 firsthand. During his summer break from college, he sold postcards near the fair's main gate on Alamo Street. This is his first story for *Texas Highways*.



In April 1968, *Texas Highways* (then still an employee publication for the Texas Highway Department) featured several stories about Texas' World's Fair. One writer (authors didn't receive bylines back then) noted that "Governor John Connally has called the site 'the most exciting 92 acres in Texas.'"



S F A A R B O R E T U M

Perennial FAVORITE

A S P R I N G T I M E stroll through the Stephen F. Austin State University Arboretum in Nacogdoches enlivens the senses. Besides the heady fragrances of wisteria and roses wafting through an old-fashioned garden, visitors encounter chartreuse-colored pitcher plants that stand like sentinels in a bog environment, green-and-white-striped ornamental grasses that decorate a sun-baked slope, a world-class collection of daylilies in hues from pale pink to burgundy, and herbs with soft, velvety foliage that beg to be touched.

In all, more than 3,000 kinds of plants in more than 20 diverse theme gardens enchant visitors with their colors, textures, shapes, and fragrances.

[ABOVE] Red blossoms of Jacob Cline (*Monarda didyma*) mix dramatically with purple flowers of wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*). These two species of horsemint grow in the Perennial Border garden of the SFA Arboretum in Nacogdoches.

[FACING PAGE] A formal planting occupies the center of the Shrub and Color Garden, one of almost two dozen themed gardens that comprise the university's 10-acre arboretum.



But don't expect to find an arboretum with a logical design. This serendipitous, 10-acre display began in 1985 as a small landscaping project assigned to

horticulture students. From its beginnings at the Agriculture Building, near the southeastern corner of the 400-acre campus, the garden expanded, encompassing parking lots, roads, classroom buildings, terraced embankments, and bottomland of nearby LaNana Creek.

The ever-expanding collection of flora lures some 20,000 people here each year, who come to stroll the paths, find soli-

tude on a garden bench, or learn about rare, unusual, and even endangered plants.

A special family-oriented event, Garden Gala Day, takes place each May (May 23, 1998). The Fabulous Fall Festival, a similar event, occurs in October (October 4, 1998). Guided tours, educational booths, and lectures by noted horticulturists provide opportunities for learning and fun.

Plant sales at both events attract green-thumbers who know to arrive early for the best selection. Besides popular offerings from specialty vendors, the array includes unusual choices from the arboretum's Plants with Promise program: a variety of camphor tree able to withstand cold temperatures (*Cinnamomum chekiangensis*), a cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata* 'Atrosanguinea') with red flowers—the native variety has yellow-and-burgundy blooms—and *Cuphea* x 'David Verity', an everblooming form of cigar plant, among others.



“The plants in this program have been standout performers over many years,” says Dr. Dave Creech, a professor of horticulture and director of the SFA Arboretum. “They have survived drought, temperatures of zero degrees Fahrenheit in 1989, and floods that have pushed our normally docile LaNana Creek out of her banks and into the gardens.

“This arboretum doesn’t pamper plants,” Dave continues. “We are looking for Texas-tough plants, season-long attractiveness, and plants that show the most promise for Texas landscapes.”

The SFA Arboretum is one of the few arboretums in the southern United States that acquires, evaluates, propagates, distributes, and promotes rare and unusual species and cultivars of plants. Standouts include topnotch collections of magnolias, hollies, and

conifers, and more than 80 varieties of Japanese maple, “the aristocrat among small trees for the South,” according to Dave. Many of the acquisitions have come from other arboretums, including Raleigh’s highly acclaimed Raulston Arboretum, Boston’s Arnold Arboretum, and the United States National Arboretum in Washington.

“In general, the gardening public demands a sea of annual colors—marigolds and petunias in mass,” says Dave. “As a result, many arboretums become first-rate display gardens, and the ‘testing of new plants’ philosophy gets lost in the shuffle. While we manage an exciting color show most of the year, the SFA Arboretum’s most important contributions are plant-evaluation research in the South and serving as a terrific living laboratory for our students.”

In the Texas Heritage Garden, Dr. Dave Creech takes a moment from his duties as the arboretum’s director.

Most visitors to the arboretum begin their explorations in the Shrub and Color Garden, adjacent to the Agriculture Building on Wilson Drive. The mailbox at the trailhead contains a stack of maps useful to casual strollers. Devoted plant fans, however, savor the helpful *Plant Location Map Book*, available for check-out in the ag building’s main office. With it, they can locate and identify nearly every plant that grows in the arboretum. One favorite in this garden is a rare, 10-foot monkey puzzle tree from Chile.

The Texas Heritage Garden, next on the path, showcases plants of history. Here, salvias and nicotianas fill the zigzags of a split-rail fence, antique roses

drip from a hand-hewn arbor, and hollyhocks form a floral wall. In all, nearly 60 varieties represent East Texas cottage gardens of the 1830s, at the time of Texas' independence from Mexico. A number of heirloom naturalizing bulbs dot the area in early spring, including snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivum*), fragrant narcissus (*Narcissus tazetta* 'Grand Primo'), and sweet-smelling jonquils (*Narcissus x odoratus*). Collected from old East Texas homesites, all trace their origins to the East Coast and ultimately to their homeland in Europe.

"It was common for pioneers to put plants to work," says Greg Grant, co-author (with William C. Welch) of *The Southern Heirloom Garden* and a new faculty member at SFA. "In spring, the cedar rose arbor flaunts the blooms of six different antique, thornless climbers." Greg points out that pioneers used roses for shade (on arbors), fragrance, fencing, medicine, and cooking, as well as for beauty.

Chastetree (*Vitex agnus-castus*), valued for its aromatic lilac flowers that scent the

surroundings, merits examination by history buffs, too. "This chastetree grew from a sucker taken from a tree planted in 1848 along what is now Highway 21 near Alto," says Greg.

Farther on, the delightful fragrances, fascinating forms, and colorful blooms of more than 50 useful plants draw visitors to the Herb Garden, a cooperative project of the arboretum and the Herb Society of Deep East Texas. Benches brushed by the pungent foliage of scented geraniums and rosemary provide places to linger and to observe a terraced rock garden. The latter is filled with Texas sage, mealy-cup sage, lantana, and

"This arboretum doesn't pamper plants. We are looking for Texas-tough plants, season-long attractiveness, and plants that show the most promise for Texas landscapes."

other West Texas "tough guy" species accustomed to hot, sunny locales.

Drifts of purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), wild bergamot (*Morinda fistulosa*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and other Texas native herbs fringe the steps leading to the Perennial Border, a patchwork of new and unusual plants that cuts a colorful swath between a parking lot and one of two woodland glens.

"We've taken an Old World gardening style—the perennial border—and adapted it to East Texas by using heat-loving exotics, ornamental grasses, and some of the showiest native plants," says Rachel Emrick, a SFA horticulture student and a volunteer curator.

Gardens in the fertile LaNana Creek bottomland—reached by a path near the Perennial Border—await folks hankering to sample shade-loving fare. Ferns, both native and exotic, thrive under the canopy of colossal pines, ponderous oaks, and immense sweetgums.

"In 1997, the Hardy Fern Foundation in Washington awarded SFA Arboretum status as one of two Texas gardens, and one of 12 in the nation, for evaluating hardy, rare, and unusual ferns," says Dave Creech. The test varieties share the moist glen with more than three dozen eye-catching beauties, including cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), log fern (*Dryopteris celsa*), and shaggy shield fern (*Dryopteris atrata*). Native violets and a half-dozen varieties of pitcher plants, including the red top pitcher plant (*Sarracenia leucophylla*) and the parrot pitcher plant (*S. psittacina*), add to the allure of this sylvan setting.

From the network of catwalks, bridges,



Carrie Hixon (left) and Elizabeth Collre check out the pungent odor of artemisia (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) in the Herb Garden. Elizabeth's school, Garrett Primary in Lufkin, made a field trip to the arboretum last spring.

and paths that meander through the mixed forest, spring visitors might detect the sweet fragrance of Piedmont azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*), one of a collection of native, Southeastern deciduous azaleas, or they might spy the delicate white, five-petaled blooms of silky camellia (*Stewartia malacodendron*).

“Although it grows in several southern states, in Texas the silky camellia is known to exist only in two isolated sites along the sandy banks of a Piney Woods creek,” says Dave. “We are working to develop a small population of this beautiful native shrub.”

Don't expect to find an arboretum with a logical design. This serendipitous, 10-acre display began in 1985 as a small landscaping project assigned to horticulture students.

Other rare and threatened species of East Texas await inspection in the Endangered Plants Garden, a one-acre haven dedicated to the “three R’s” of the arboretum’s endangered-plants program: rescue, research, and reintroduction.

“Texas is botanically diverse, with about 5,500 plant species,” says Dave. “The Piney Woods of East Texas is home to about 2,300 plant species, and about 50 of these are threatened or endangered. In East Texas alone, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists four plant species as globally endangered.

“Texas trailing phlox [*Phlox nivalis* ssp. *texensis*] is one of the rarest globally endangered phloxes,” Dave continues. “At one time, it existed in 17 sites scattered through Hardin, Polk, and Tyler counties. Now it exists in three.”

In summer, this “diminutive treasure of the pinelands of East Texas” sports five-petaled, pink-lavender blooms from a ground-hugging mat of green foliage—

an easy gem for most visitors to recognize.

The Neches River rose mallow (*Hibiscus dasycalyx*), a federally endangered plant whose remaining population consists of three tiny colonies in East Texas, also grows in the Endangered Plants Garden, attracting camera buffs from summer through fall with its three-inch-wide ivory blooms.

(continued on page 24)



Esperanza (*Tecoma stans*) blooms beside an obelisk near the university's art building. SFA art students routinely exhibit their works on the arboretum grounds.

RETRACING HISTORY ON LaNana CREEK TRAIL

JUST PAST EL Camino Real Park on Texas 21 in Nacogdoches, the LaNana Creek Trail branches west through thickets of paw-paw, dogwood, and scarlet-blooming buckeye. As it edges high past a pond—actually an old oxbow carved by LaNana Creek—massive cottonwood, magnolia, and black walnut trees come into view. Red-shouldered hawks favor the primeval locale, along with raccoons and other creatures of the Piney Woods.

Besides its rustic beauty, the site charms hikers with its heritage. Ahead, halfway up the steep red bank, two springs seeping cool water hold a miraculous legacy tracing to the early 1700s.

“The Nacogdoche Indians, a farming tribe of the Caddo Confederacy, settled between Banita Creek and LaNana Creek in the area now known as Nacogdoches,” says Dr. Francis E. Abernethy, well-known Texas folklorist and chairman of the LaNana Creek Trail committee. “According to legend, in 1718, a severe drought drove Friar Antonio de Margil de Jesús, a Spanish priest, to the bank of LaNana Creek, where he knelt in prayer all night. At sunrise, he touched the bank with his staff twice, and two springs bubbled from the red earth.”

The springs garnered the name *Los Ojos de Padre Margil* (“the Springs of Father Margil”). They were lost for more than half a century before Abernethy and other volunteers rediscovered the traditional site of the springs in 1995 while working on the 2.5-mile hike-and-bike path.

For history buffs and nature-lovers, the mystical locale provides just one stop on this old Indian footpath, which today weaves through pristine forests, a city park, and



SFA students Matt Welch of Santa Fe (Texas) and Lizzie Horn of Garland pause along LaNana Creek Trail, which winds for 2.5 miles through historic Nacogdoches.

the Stephen F. Austin State University Arboretum. Various branches of the trail offer access to nearby historic attractions.

For many visitors, explorations begin at El Camino Real Park, the southern trailhead. The park sits beside its namesake, the famed El Camino Real, one of the oldest trans-Texas trails. The Cisco Feed and Seed Store, built about 1940 and later remodeled for use as a community center named Liberty Hall, helps identify the park.

“Volunteers began developing LaNana Creek Trail in 1985 as a Texas Sesquicentennial project,” explains Dr. Abernethy. “Initially, the creek bottom was choked with privet hedge, laurel, and hackberry, tied together with all the vines and briars that East Texas had to offer.”

Now, once visitors descend into the heavily wooded flood plain, the creek-hugging course makes its way from bird-filled thickets to clearings canopied with massive trees, some hung with muscadine grapevines as thick as a man’s arm.

Farther ahead, near the Martinsville Street crossing, LaNana’s banks stretch upward 50 feet or more from the flowing water. A wooden overlook furnishes a place to pause and soak in the panoramic view.

Hikers carrying sack lunches often seek a picnic table or a shaded bench at Pecan Acres Park, the next attraction on the trail. About 280 pecan trees planted in 1923 by Nacogdoches farmer Henry D. Rusche dot this city-owned greenspace, with its playground, kite-flying field, and 18-hole Frisbee-golf course.

After dipping under the Starr Avenue bridge and skirting the SFA intramural field, strollers enter the university arboretum. Here, herbs, daylilies, cacti, bog specimens, and scores of native plants fill the gardens, providing a leafy classroom for students and a verdant retreat for plant-enthusiasts.

Deer tracks, nearly as prevalent in spring as the many wildflowers that blanket the forest floor, testify to the wildlife that abounds in the 40-acre campus treasure called Tucker Woods, the last stop on the trail before it ends at Jimmy Hinds Park, the northern trailhead on East Austin Street. Contemplating the giant oaks, sweetgums, shagbark hickories, beeches, and pines that populate Tucker Woods makes it easy to imagine Nacogdoche Indians hunting across the fertile flood plain or fishing in the life-giving creek.

“Nacogdoches city has filled the campground between Banita Creek and LaNana Creek,” says Dr. Abernethy. “But even though it has grown far beyond those two arms, the creeks still offer sustenance. The flowing water and the quiet, grassy banks here refresh the soul.”

What more could a hiker want?

—Diane Morey Sitton

Nearby, in an area dubbed the Lines of Vines, about 80 varieties of climbing plants drape beauty and blooms from nine-foot-tall wooden posts. Strollers with an eye for color enjoy the lantanas underneath—mounds of blooms in gold, pink, red, and combinations of hues. In all, students test more than two dozen lantana varieties here, in cooperation with Texas A&M University's Extension Service.

Other niches of learning and promise await discovery in the arboretum's northwest corner. The Dry Garden explores the landscape potential of species from Mexico and West Texas. The Vending Building Garden (tucked between the university's physical plant and its vending facility) showcases rare camellias and rhododendrons; the Art Alley Garden, sandwiched between high walls along a narrow sweep of ground, boasts kurume azaleas and uncommon shade-loving plants.

The SFA Arboretum is one of the few arboretums in the southern United States that acquires, evaluates, propagates, distributes, and promotes rare and unusual species and cultivars of plants.

Even LaNana Creek Trail (see sidebar, page 23), a 2.5-mile path meandering alongside its namesake waterway through historic Nacogdoches and the eastern flanks of the SFA Arboretum, provides planting pockets where students and volunteers test unique natives and showy cultivars.

As for the arboretum's future, Dave Creech waxes enthusiastic. "Two developments this year promise to be traffic-stoppers," he says. One is a Children's Garden, at the north end of the arboretum, the other, the beginnings of an eight-acre azalea garden that will include more than 4,000 evergreen and deciduous azaleas and companion plants in a sunlit pine-oak-pecan woodland. An outdoor education pavilion, the central feature of the Children's Garden, will be dedicated during the spring Garden Gala. Other plans include a butterfly



Nationally known author Bill Welch, an extension landscape horticulturist at Texas A&M University, explains "hot" plants—that is, new and popular, rather than heat-tolerant—during the SFA Arboretum's spring 1997 Garden Gala. This year's gala takes place May 23.

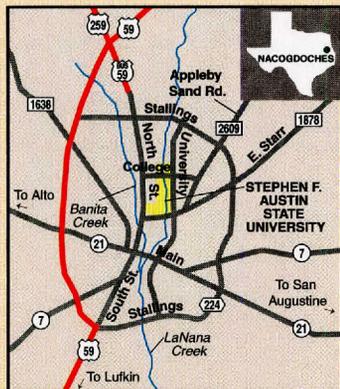
SFA Arboretum and LaNana Creek Trail

Stephen F. Austin State University lies in the heart of Nacogdoches, seat of Nacogdoches County. The **SFA Arboretum** is on Wilson Dr., between College Ave. and Starr Ave., on the eastern edge of the campus.

Enter the campus on College Ave. from Business Hwy. 59 (North St.). Proceed east on College, then turn right (south) on Wilson Dr. A wooden sign on the left, just past the Agriculture Bldg., marks the arboretum entrance. Visitor parking is available behind the building.

Grounds hours: Daily dawn to dusk. Admission: Free. Check out the informative *Arboretum Plant Location Map Book* from the Horticulture Dept. office inside the Agriculture Bldg. (Mon-Fri 8-5). *Trails are designed for walking only and are not wheelchair accessible.* Comfortable footwear recommended. Picnicking permitted; pets on leashes allowed.

Events include a **Garden Gala** each May (May 23, 1998) and a **Fabulous Fall Festival** each Oct. (Oct. 4, 1998). Both events are free and run from 9 a.m. until late afternoon and feature plant sales, guided tours, refreshments, lectures in the garden, and educational booths. Proceeds benefit the Arboretum Volunteer Corps Organization and the SFA Horticulture Club, organizers of the events.



The SFA Arboretum relies heavily on gifts, grants, and a "Friends of the SFA Arboretum" support group for the development of new gardens. For a donation of \$25 or more, contributors receive a "Friends" newsletter and notices of arboretum events.

To schedule group tours, to obtain information on becoming a volunteer, or to make a donation, write to Box 13000, Nacogdoches 75962; 409/468-4343; fax 409/468-4047. Web site: www.sfasu.edu/ag/arboretum.

The **LaNana Creek Trail** parallels LaNana Creek for 2½ miles through old Nacogdoches. Enter the trail from the south at El Camino Real Park on Main St. (Texas 21) west of University Dr. Other access points are at Pecan Acres Park, SFA Arboretum, trail branches leading to the Fredonia Hotel/Convention Center and Raquet St., and city streets intersecting the trail. The trail is partially wheelchair accessible.

For a map and information, write to the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, Box 631918, Nacogdoches 75963; 409/564-7351 or 888/564-7351. The CVB is at 513 North St.

University Attractions

The **Stone Fort Museum** contains artifacts reflecting the history of East Texas and Nacogdoches before 1900, with special emphasis on the period 1690-1836. The 2-story structure is a 1936 replica (using some of the original stones) of a house built ca. 1788 by Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, the founder of present-day Nacogdoches. In the original building, Mexican authorities administered the oath of allegiance to James Bowie, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, and other Texas heroes. Texas' first newspaper was typeset in the original house. Hours: Tue-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5. Closed Mon. and holidays. Admission: Free. Guided tours by reservation. Wheelchair accessible downstairs. Upstairs exhibit available in alternative format. Write to Box 6075, SFASU, Nacogdoches 75962-6075; 409/468-2408 (weekdays).

The **SFA Planetarium** offers programs on comets, constellation identification, Mars, Voyager spacecraft missions, and other solar system topics. Call for program schedule. Admission: \$2, \$1 age 12 and younger. Wheelchair accessible. Write to the Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Box 13044, SFA Station, Nacogdoches 75962-3044; 409/468-3001 (Mon-Fri 8:30-5) or 409/468-3009 (24-hour Planetary Information Line).

Historical Attractions Accessible from LaNana Creek Trail

The **Adolphus Sterne House**, 211 S. LaNana St. (3 blocks southwest of El Camino Real Park), was built in 1830 by Nicholas Adolphus Sterne, state representative and senator. It is the oldest dwelling in Texas still on its original site. Features include a parlor frequented by Sam Houston and Davy Crockett, a stone wine cellar, and mid-19th-Century pioneer Texas artifacts. Hours: Mon-Sat 9-noon and 2-5. Closed Sun. and major holidays. Admission: Free. Large groups by special arrangement. Wheelchair accessible. Write to 211 S. LaNana St., Nacogdoches 75961; 409/560-5426.

Pecan Acres Park, at 826 Starr Ave. (across from SFA intramural field), offers a picnic and recreation area set amid an old pecan orchard. Wheelchair accessible. For information, call the Nacogdoches Parks and Recreation Dept. at 409/564-3708 (Mon-Thu 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri 8-5).

Oak Grove Cemetery, at the intersection of E. Hospital St. and N. LaNana St., is the final resting place of four signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and other prominent local figures. Wheelchair accessible. Write to the City of Nacogdoches, Engineering Dept., Box 630648, Nacogdoches 75963; 409/564-4693 (Mon-Fri 8-5).

and hummingbird garden, an aquatic garden, a wildlife-habitat garden, and a vegetable and flower garden.

Clearly, the SFA Arboretum offers myriad reasons to stroll its paths, and just as many to come back often. For some visitors, simply entering this tree-studded campus returns them to a heritage of natural beauty and learning. Many of the stately trees, including loblolly, longleaf, and shortleaf pines,

were wild saplings when the "University Among the Pines" opened its doors in 1923. It's fitting somehow that these old patriarchs have taken their places, along with recent acquisitions, on the arboretum's new computer-generated maps—the result of a horticulture student's two-year campus-ecology study.

"We now have the data that describe and locate all the trees that make up this beautiful campus forest," says Dave

Creech. "By studying the past, and by planning and planting in a cooperative environment, we can keep our Piney Woods tradition alive.

"Mother nature did a fine job with the original landscaping. Now, it's up to us."★

DIANE MOREY SITTON of Colmesneil collaborated with Howard Peacock on this month's story about Brazos Bend State Park. RANDY MALLORY, a frequent contributor to *Texas Highways*, lives in Tyler.

Where Alligators Roar and Astronomers Soar

BRAZOS BEND

© LAURENCE PARENT

Before the sun comes up, it's quiet in the woods and marshes. But once the morning light clears the tree-tops, the noise builds up to a clamor. The red-winged blackbirds—thousands of 'em—start calling, and the herons and egrets join in. You might hear alligators bellowing, plus all the squeaks, croaks, and chirpings that frogs make. Green frogs, leopard frogs, bull frogs... their voices form a kind of cadence. The sounds in the park are as rich as the sights."

So Jerry Bartel, manager of Brazos Bend State Park, describes daybreak at Elm Lake, one of many bodies of water punctuating the park.

Visitors agree. They arrive half a million strong each year to enjoy the early-morning medley, along with the sunlit stirrings of roseate spoonbills and tricolored herons breakfasting in the park's reflective waters. White-tailed deer browse under moss-draped oaks, alligators sun on fallen logs, and butterflies flash their colors among drifts of wildflowers.

"The difference between this state park and some others is that Brazos Bend is set up for wildlife as much as it is for people," says park naturalist David Heinicke. It came as no surprise to regular visitors when *National Geographic Traveler* magazine in 1994 included Brazos Bend on its list of America's "Top 10" state parks. Not long after, CBS briefly highlighted the park on its *This Morning* show.

Brazos Bend State Park occupies almost 5,000 acres of rich Brazos River flood plain, 45 miles southwest of Houston's skyscrapers. The unusual alliance of sights and sounds lures birdwatchers, hikers, bicyclists, campers, picnickers, shutterbugs, and stargazers.



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By Howard Peacock and Diane Morey Sitton

STATE PARK



© LAURENCE PARENT

[ABOVE] Dozens of marshes, creeks, lakes, and swamps lend Brazos Bend State Park great diversity in both flora and fauna. Ferns adorn many of the park's huge oak trees.

[LEFT] The placid waters of Forty Acre Lake support nearly two dozen migratory and resident duck species, as well as some of the park's 300 or so American alligators, who lay their eggs along the banks.

[INSET, TOP LEFT] Come courtin' time in spring, amorous gators often roar like lions. That impressive "double chin" is pure muscle, so leave your swimsuit at home.

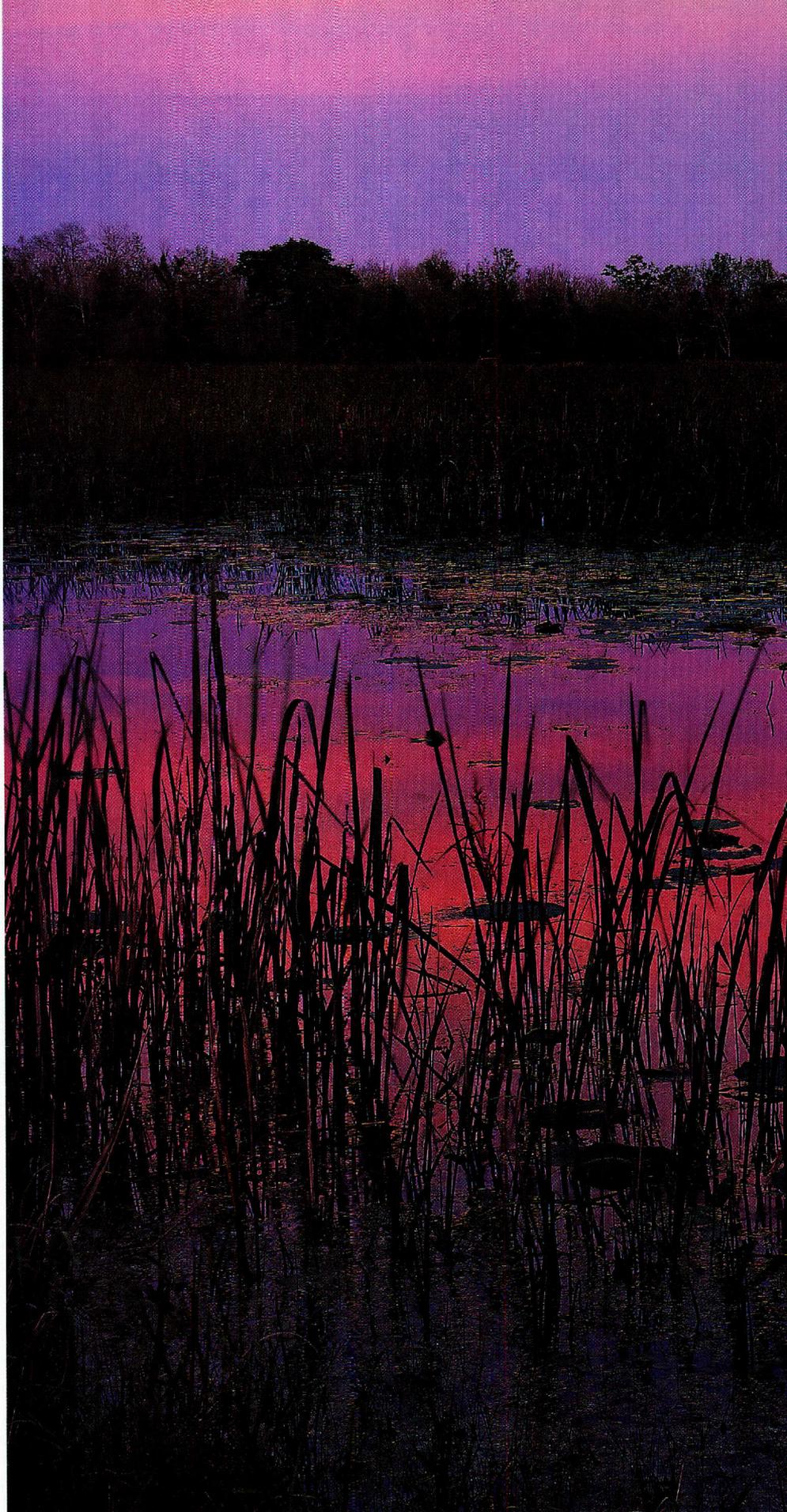
Brazos Bend State Park occupies almost 5,000 acres of rich Brazos River flood plain, 45 miles southwest of Houston's skyscrapers. The unusual alliance of sights and sounds lures birdwatchers, hikers, bicyclists, campers, picnickers, shutterbugs, and stargazers both novice and experienced. On Saturday nights, aided by telescopes at the park's George Observatory, attention shifts to heavenly sights, including moonscapes, constellations, even meteor showers. In midsummer, an ever-increasing number of butterfly-spotters gather at the park to identify, tally, and admire the species attracted to the wildflowers.

"On our last count, we spotted 464 individual butterflies representing 38 species," says P.D. Hulce, president of the Houston Audubon Society. P.D. helps lead the Brazos Bend Fourth of July Butterfly Count, a one-day survey hosted by the society in conjunction with the North American Butterfly Association.

Thanks in part to the volunteer butterfly-counters, Brazos Bend's checklist now boasts 50 species of the delicate creatures. Besides large populations of black swallowtails, pearl crescents, and hackberry emperors that delight visitors of all ages, keen observers might spy the iridescent silver-and-black patch of a gemmed satyr or see the subtle markings on the red-banded hairstreak. Other favorites include the whirlabout, the southern cloudywing, and the great purple hairstreak.

Butterflies aren't the only winged creatures that attract attention in this nature-lover's retreat. Resident and migratory birds numbering 277 species (nearly half of the state's species) draw birdwatchers, many of whom travel here in hopes of adding the rare masked duck—more commonly seen in the West Indies and the American tropics—to their life lists.

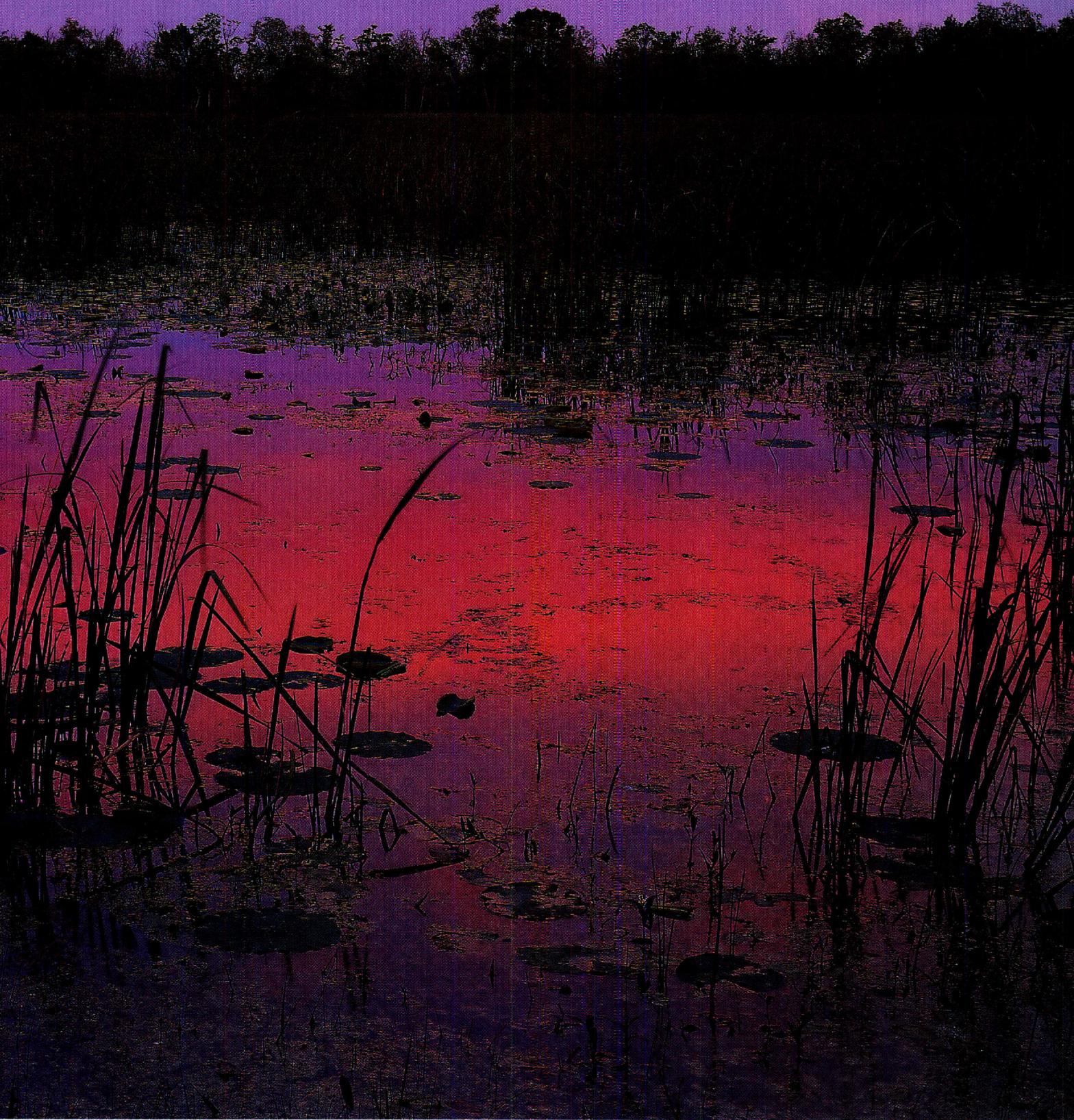
Modern-day Monets may find inspiration in the reflective waters of Brazos Bend State Park's lily pad-strewn marshes. Early-morning hours greet visitors with the music of an awakening world—the calls of herons and egrets, the croaking and squeaking of frogs, the rustling of foraging white-tailed deer.



© LAURENCE PARENT

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ights and sounds here seem only to intensify as the sun dips deeper on the horizon.



The small, cinnamon-colored bird created quite a stir five years ago. "After the masked duck was seen here in December 1992, birdwatchers flew in from all over the country," says Jerry Bartel.

Most sightings of this rare bird occur from December through mid-March near the reeds on a 600-acre marshland known as Pilant Lake. "Masked ducks feed in the shallows near the shoreline," says Peter Gottschling, who's in charge of the Houston Audubon Society's "Texas Rare Bird Alert" hotline. "Look for a low-floating duck with black head feathers and a stiff, upright tail."

Besides abundant birdlife, dozens of mammal species and hundreds of plant species also thrive within the park's boundaries. "In one day, visitors can walk through a tall-grass prairie, a hardwood river-bottom forest, and a variety of aquatic communities while observing plant and animal life typical of each habitat," says Jerry. The park's extensive hike-and-bike trails make exploration easy.

In spring, the vast park prairie attracts flower-lovers (and butterflies) with vibrant blooms of coral bean, evening primrose, Venus looking glass, coreopsis, sawtoothed frog fruit, and meadow pink. In fall, native grasses dominate—Indian grass, switchgrass, bushy blue-stem, and Gulf Coast muhly.

The heavy gumbo soil of the Brazos River bottomlands nurtures burr oaks, water oaks, cedar elms, and live oaks, which dominate the park's largest ecosystem, the hardwood river-bottom forest. Some of the live oaks here, estimated to be 200 years old or more, have canopies stretching 100 feet across. Transitional zones between the forest and prairie attract wildlife-watchers, who sometimes glimpse bobcats, gray foxes, coyotes, and other elusive mammals that leave the woods to hunt in open grasslands.

Abundant water in the park means added diversity of fauna and flora. Besides the Brazos River, which defines the park's eastern border, lakes, creeks, swamps, and marshes attract and sustain turtles, frogs, nutria, and numerous

species of waterfowl. And after years of absence, river otters began returning here four years ago.

"If you're lucky, you may spot them in winter months when the vegetation is thin," says David Heinicke. "But you need plenty of patience to wait for them to show up."

A vigorous population of American alligators—more than 300 adults measuring five feet or longer—adds to the drama of wildlife-watching. The craggy reptiles account for the no-swimming and no-boating rules within park boundaries.

"In April and May, during courtship, the alligators roar as loud as lions," says Peter Gottschling. "You can hear them all through the park. They puff up with air, and when they roar, the water vibrates and bounces around them."

If you visit on a weekend or holiday, before you head out to spot the gators, make a stop at the oak-shaded Visitor Center (two-and-a-half miles past park

headquarters on Park Road 72). Here, recordings, photos, and other exhibits provide a preview of the park's natural environments. A table laden with bird nests, tortoise shells, and other curiosities of nature always attracts children, who are encouraged to touch and study the objects. Young adventurers especially enjoy peering into exhibits of live snakes, turtles, baby alligators, and other reptiles found along trails and shorelines here. Outside, an extensive butterfly garden—similar to one outside park headquarters—blooms with dozens of plants that butterflies (and hummingbirds) find irresistible.

Inside the park proper, trails unfold in all directions. Trailblazers of all ages and physical abilities savor the Creekfield Lake Interpretive Trail, a half-mile paved loop through a species-rich wetland. An audio tour, available for check-out at the Visitor Center on weekends and holidays and at park headquarters

© CLIFF BEITTEL



[ABOVE] Mammals at the park range from elusive river otters to common (and quite tame) white-tailed deer. The photographer caught this fawn snoozing peacefully just a few feet from the main road.

[FACING PAGE] Brazos Bend's some 5,000 acres encompass prairies, hardwood forests, and abundant aquatic communities. Here, a lush forest vista reveals Turk's cap and frostweed blooming beneath moss-festooned oak trees.



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ome of the live oaks here, estimated to be 200 years old or more, have canopies stretching 100 feet across.

every day, helps you identify the bird calls you'll hear, including the squabbling sounds of the common moorhen, the "tea-kettle, tea-kettle" song of the Carolina wren, and the delicate chirp of the spring peeper. Benches on an observation deck near the lakeshore provide a place to linger. From here, on breezy days, you can hear the wind swish through stands of southern wildrice, an indigenous plant often mistaken for cattails.

"In early summer, little plumes develop on top of the tall stalks," says David Heinicke. "Native Americans har-

spread, favor the tall trees at lake's edge.

From Elm Lake, yet another trail leads to the park's observation tower and to Forty Acre Lake, also a favorite spot for picnicking and observing wildlife. In spring, besides flamboyant purple gallinules and other wading birds that catch the eye, visitors on this trail may spot warblers, orioles, tanagers, and other small migratory species.

Occasionally, fall visitors observe a surprising drama of nature. "Alligators lay their eggs in twiggy nests on low banks," says David Heinicke. "Around Labor Day, the babies begin picking holes

in their shells. When the mother hears them chirping, she goes to the nest, grabs an egg with her mouth, carries it to the water, and gently crushes the eggshell. When she opens her mouth, the baby gushes out.

"Alligators can have 30 eggs or more in their nests," David con-

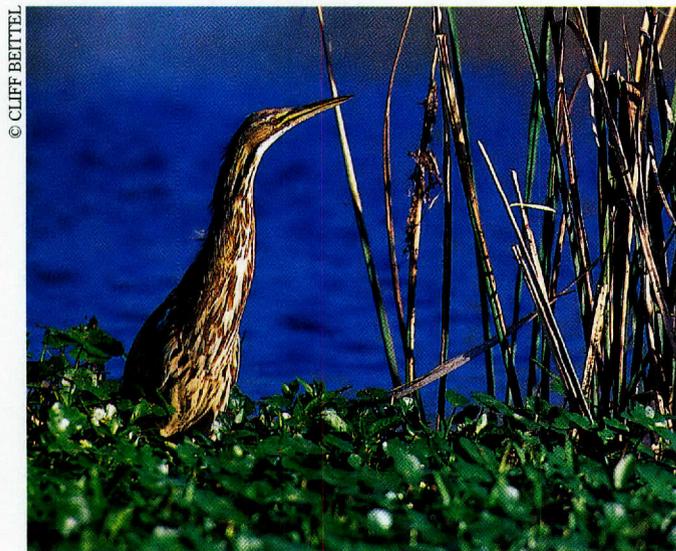
tinues. "Sometimes, the mother works all day and all night to get them hatched." When such dramas occur, viewing stations are set up to aid observation and photography.

Like most of the lakes and marshlands in the park, Forty Acre Lake also boasts a namesake trail, a 1.2-mile hike-and-bike path that hugs the lake's banks. Birdwatchers recommend it for spying the park's nearly two dozen resident and migratory species of ducks.

"The first of the migrant ducks arrive in September, but November through March provides the best viewing of northern pintails, cinnamon teals, northern shovelers, and ruddy ducks," says David.

At the east edge of the park, ruby-throated hummingbirds delight springtime hikers on the rugged Red Buckeye Trail (named for the showy native shrub that thrives here), one of several "unimproved" trails that wind through the park. The two-mile loop passes some of the largest and oldest cottonwoods, water oaks, and sycamores in the flood plain.

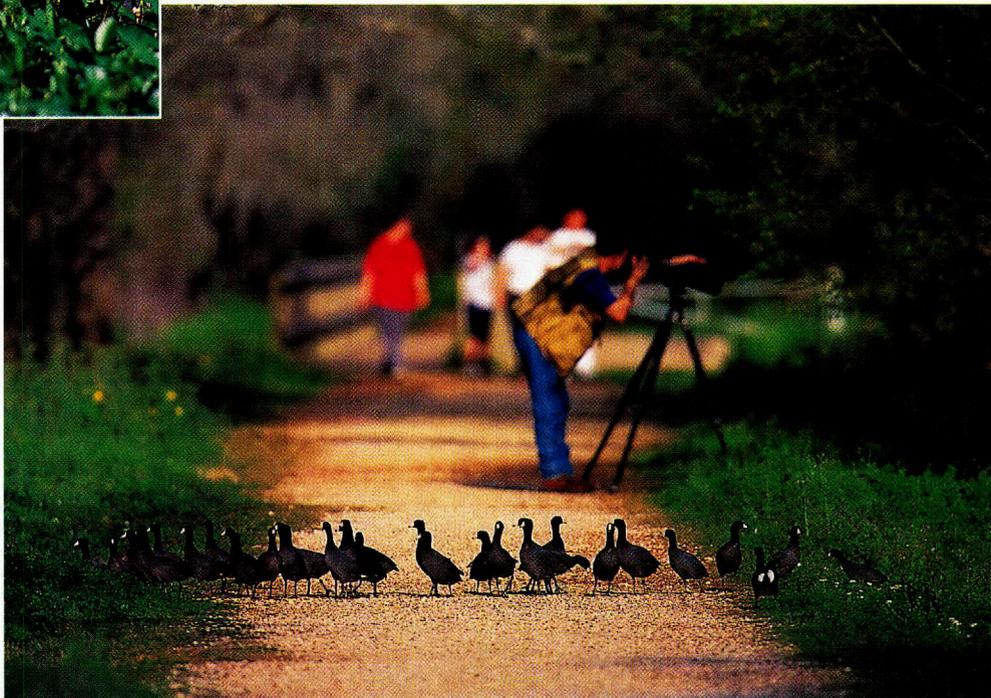
These trees may have been saplings in the early 1800s, when the park acreage



vested the rice by paddling up alongside the stalks, then walloping the stems with a stick until the kernels fell into their canoes."

Nearby, the Elm Lake Loop, a 1.7-mile trek marked with seven observation platforms, showcases roseate spoonbills, great blue herons, and snowy egrets. Experts also advise birdwatchers to look for vermilion flycatchers along the northwest corner of Elm Lake during winter and early spring, when they often perch on dead snags protruding from the water.

The park's largest picnic area, a shady haven of live oaks and pecan trees bordering Elm Lake's north shore, provides opportunities to observe red-shouldered hawks and great horned owls. Pileated woodpeckers, also known as the "Godamighty bird" for its two-foot wing-



[ABOVE, LEFT] Usually known for their secrecy, American bitterns often feed in the open at Brazos Bend, where they spend the winter. Their calls resemble the sound of someone blowing into an empty bottle.

[ABOVE] Birdwatchers rightfully rank Brazos Bend State Park as a top Texas spot to pursue their hobby. Here, a flock of American coots crosses one of the park's many walking trails.

Brazos Bend State Park

formed part of a land grant held by Abner Harris and William Barrett, two of Stephen F. Austin's "Original 300." By 1845, cotton plantations dotted the region, and a strip of Brazos River frontage may have been used as a riverboat landing. For many years after cotton prices fell, cattle ranchers used the fertile prairie to graze their stock. In 1976, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department bought the land, and in spring of 1984, Brazos Bend State Park opened to visitors.

Sights and sounds here seem only to intensify as the sun dips deeper on the horizon. As the stars emerge from an inky sky, the park provides yet one more good reason to visit.

On Saturday evenings, the George Observatory draws astronomy buffs and greenhorn star-spotters alike to scrutinize the heavens. The triple-domed facility, operated by the Houston Museum of Natural Science, attracts 34,000 visitors yearly to enjoy its observation deck, education building, gift shop, and many telescopes. On clear nights, using the scope with the 36-inch mirror, you can see objects on the moon as small as a half-mile wide. "You get the impression of flying over the moon in a spaceship," says Barbara Wilson, the staff astronomer. "You see mountain ranges and craters with their stark shadows."

Like their earthly counterparts at Brazos Bend, the heavenly attractions vary according to the season. Spring skies reveal the constellations Virgo and Leo. Summer nights show off the Milky Way, while fall brings into view the constellation Andromeda and Saturn's beautiful rings.

So what'll it be? Gazing at starry galaxies or spotting mama alligators? Tracking masked ducks or counting butterflies? For these and any of a dozen other ventures into nature's diverse realms, Brazos Bend State Park offers prime possibilities. ★

Longtime contributor HOWARD PEACOCK of Woodville spends some of his time counseling beginning writers. DIANE MOREY SUTTON of Colmesneil photographs and writes about nature, gardening, and crafts.

Brazos Bend State Park is in Fort Bend County on the west side of the Brazos River, less than an hour's drive from Houston. To reach the park from Houston, take US 59 south to the FM 2759 exit (Crabb River Rd.). Follow the signs to park headquarters. The Visitor Center and the George Observatory lie inside the park, on Park Rd. 72. Bring binoculars and mosquito repellent.

Hours: Mon-Thu 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri-Sun 7 a.m.-10 p.m. (Gates close when park fills to capacity; on holidays, arrive early.) Admission: \$3 per person, free age 12 and younger. Write to 21901 FM 762, Needville 77461; 409/553-5101.

Most of the park is wheelchair accessible, including the headquarters building, Visitor Center, Creekfield Lake Interpretive Trail, George Observatory, fishing piers, picnic grounds, and restrooms.

Maps, information, and restrooms are available at headquarters, as are T-shirts, caps, gifts, and books (including *Birds of Brazos Bend State Park—A Field Checklist*). Visitors may check out the audio tour for the Creekfield Trail here (daily) and at the Visitor Center (Sat-Sun and holidays). Headquarters hours: Mon-Thu 8-5, Fri-Sat 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Sun 7-5.

You can watch a short orientation video at the volunteer-staffed Visitor Center. Other features include a *Habitats and Niches* exhibit, with text in Braille and large print, and the Volunteer Gift Shop, which stocks ice, firewood, snacks, T-shirts, caps, books, and gifts. Ask for a schedule of free guided hikes, slide shows, and wildlife programs. Visitor Center hours: Sat-Sun and holidays 9-5.

Picnicking and Camping

Day-use facilities include 110 picnic tables, as well as playgrounds, restrooms, and open areas for softball, volleyball, and football.

The park offers 77 multiuse campsites with water and electricity (\$12 per night), 14 screened shelters with tables and grills (\$18 per night), and primitive sites for groups (\$15 for 16 people, \$30 for 32). Other facilities include group picnic areas (\$20-\$35 per day) and a group dining hall (\$75 per day). For reservations, call 512/389-8900 (Mon-Fri 8-5), or for infor-

mation, 800/792-1112. Web site: www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Butterfly Count

The Brazos Bend Fourth of July Butterfly Count is tentatively scheduled for June 20 or 27. Beginners are grouped with experienced spotters. Bring a hat, sunscreen, close-focusing binoculars, and mosquito repellent. Write to 339 W. 23rd St., Houston

77008, or call 713/863-1142. Butterfly guidebooks are helpful, including John and Gloria Tveten's *Butterflies of Houston and Southeast Texas* (Univ. of Texas Press, 1996) and Geyata Ajilvsgi's *Butterfly Gardening for the South* (Taylor Publishing Co., 1990).

Rare Birds

The Texas Rare Bird Alert carries updates on rare bird sightings in Texas. For a taped report, call 281/992-2757.

Alligator Etiquette

Brazos Bend State Park is one of best places in Texas to see alligators in a natural setting. Visitors must follow the precautions and strict safety rules printed on the park map. *Because of the alligators, fishing is the only watersport allowed at the park.*

George Observatory

The George Observatory is across from the Visitor Center parking lot. Passes for using the 36-inch telescope (\$2, \$1 age 12 and younger) are sold at the Observatory Gift Shop starting at 5 p.m. each Sat. Use of other scopes is free. A short orientation precedes the stargazing, which begins at dusk. Gift shop hours: Sat. 3-10.

Night-sky slide shows and telescope viewing are available to groups by reservation on Fri. night (\$5.50 per person). During the week, astronomy classes, educational programs, and the Challenger Learning Center (a simulated spacecraft and Mission Control Center) are available to school groups. Call 713/639-4629.

Note: The observation deck is *always* open for general skywatching, but the public can only use the facilities (telescopes, restrooms, etc.) on Sat. 3-10 and by aforementioned reservation.

For general information, write to the park (see address above) or to the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr., Houston 77039-1799, or call 409/553-3400 or 281/242-3055.



an East Texas town with plenty of spirit

Jasper the friendly



By Janet R. Edwards • Photographs by Stephan Myers

RISING FROM SOILS RICH AND RUDDY WITH IRON, soaring spires of trees by the thousands fill the air with the scent of pine and the sight of evergreen needles sparkling in the sun. It's springtime in East Texas, and the forests beam with brilliant white dogwood blossoms, lime-green foliage of fringe trees, and woodland streams awash in the honey-sweet scent of wild azaleas.

Folks who visit Jasper feel welcome, greeted by people of genuine warmth and a downtown setting as captivating as an old picture postcard.

Nestled near the heart of these towering timberlands, the community of Jasper—at first encounter—looks much like any East Texas small town: streetlights, strip centers, and fast-food restaurants. But if you take the time to travel off the major highways transecting the area, you'll find a treasury of shopping and good eating, along with historical and recreational attractions. Folks who visit Jasper feel welcome, greeted by people of genuine warmth and a downtown setting as captivating as an old picture postcard.

Jasper owes its origins to an intrepid farmer named John Bevil. The region's first Anglo settler, Bevil built a home and farm in 1824 along the east bank of the Angelina River, about nine miles west of Jasper's current location. Under his leadership, the site became a Mexican municipality known as Bevilport, a busy center for barge and riverboat traffic, business enterprise, and civil justice.

At Bevil's request, the community soon changed its name to Jasper, to honor the Revolutionary War hero and flag rescuer Sergeant William Jasper. Chafing under the tyranny of Santa Anna's Mexican rule over the region, Bevil joined the fight for Texas independence in 1836. After the war, he and his family moved to higher elevations along Sandy Creek, possibly to

It's time to appreciate the 1900-era Jasper County Courthouse and its four-faced clock tower, rebuilt in 1993. The tower chimes on the hour.



Words can scarcely describe Jasper in spring-time, when red-hued azaleas, violet wisteria garlands, and snow-white branches of bridal wreath blaze along its quiet streets.



[TOP] A landscaper's dream, Jasper's colorful, fragrant azaleas are worthy of their own spring trail, March 15-31, 1998. However, a warm, wet winter may produce an earlier peak season.

[ABOVE] You'd have to buy the biggest box of Crayolas to match these subtle shades of Jasper azaleas.

[TOP, RIGHT] Blooming East Texas dogwoods signal the arrival of spring.

[FACING PAGE] The forest within Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, 12 miles west of Jasper, provides a peaceful, sylvan retreat.

escape flooding and mosquito-transmitted diseases. Many other settlers followed suit.

Jasper, county seat of Jasper County, and home to some 8,700 people, radiates outward from a charming and recently revitalized town square. The regal, 1900-era courthouse—furnished with stained-glass windows and a four-faced clock tower that chimes on the hour—dominates the scene. Though working perfectly today, at one time, the original clock, installed in 1891, often displayed four different times (all of them wrong). To top it off, the tower's 1,000-pound bronze bell, which could be heard for miles, sometimes struck dozens of times in a row, keeping folks awake at night and scaring off wild game. Torn down in 1957, the clock tower was rebuilt in 1993 with its original bell, a computerized internal mechanism, and new clock faces.

Rows of turn-of-the-century buildings, adorned with ornamental facades and lofty, pressed-tin ceilings, frame the streets around the square. Here, you'll find shops filled with antique furnishings, gifts, gadgets, gourmet items, floral arrangements, and clothing.



Lake Sam Rayburn, known as “Big Sam,” is the largest freshwater lake wholly within the state, and it offers some of the best bass catchin’ around.

IF YOUR TOURING TIME IS SHORT, don’t miss the P.N. Ashy Store, opened in 1938. This shop must be seen to be believed. First-time visitors to the small building are easy to spot: Their mouths are hanging open in surprise. Like the walls of a maze, stacks of plastic-wrapped coats, shirts, dresses, skirts, pants, and boots for men, women, and children rise in piles five feet from the floor. But never fear. Simply tell owner Mary Ashy, a longtime Jasper resident renowned for her kindness and community spirit, what you’re looking for, and chances are, those narrow aisles will yield exactly the size, color, style, and name brand you need.

Farther along on Houston Street, The Heart of Things welcomes browsers looking for that special gift or souvenir. The boutique offers a charming collection of antiques, handcrafts, and potpourri. Nearby, on Main Street, you’ll note The Swann Hotel, a lovely, two-story, sky blue-and-white Victorian bed and breakfast operated by Katrina and Dave Henegar.

Downtown Jasper also harbors the 17-room Belle-Jim Hotel. Built in 1910 by Mamie Patten, a widow with four children to support, the Belle-Jim offered more comfortable accommodations than were available at a nearby boardinghouse she had run for several years. Named for her daughters Belle and,

yes, Jim, this landmark, neoclassic edifice promises travelers good food and

warm hospitality. One of the state’s few surviving wooden hotels, the Belle-Jim offers some of the region’s best bed-and-breakfast comforts, including a downstairs dining area (open to the public for lunch), where delicious, moderately priced luncheon plates, sandwiches, and salads are served daily.

For another glimpse of life in Jasper’s early days, take a walking tour of the Beaty-Orton House, which perches behind a prim picket fence on nearby South Main Street. This elegant structure presents a proper tribute to the Victorian architecture admired by state senator John Thomas Beaty. Beaty built the one-story residence in 1888, and added a second floor and gingerbread trim in 1902, making the home a showplace for political gatherings. Remodeled in the 1940s and renovated in the 1980s, the Beaty-Orton House, now owned by the city, hosts small private parties.

On North Main Street, another historic community treasure, the grand old Debney Home, presides as the only remaining pre-Civil War structure of its kind in the region. The privately owned Greek Revival home, with its sprawling front porch, was built in 1853 with hand-hewn cypress sills, wooden pegs, square nails, and wide, smooth timbers of virgin pine.

To find out more about Jasper’s past and present life, read the *Jasper NewsBoy*—the oldest, continually published weekly newspaper in the state. Founded by Captain E.I. Kellie, a firebrand Confederate veteran of the Civil War, the *NewsBoy* first hit the stands in July 1865, brandishing the motto “We bend our knee to



Ann Thomasson-Wilson, two-time world champion Bass'n Gal angler and the proprietor of Ann's Tackle Shop, proudly displays the trophy large-mouth bass she caught at Lake Sam Rayburn.



"Big Sam" offers outdoor recreational rewards both big and small. At normal capacity, the lake covers well over 100,000 acres.

none but God." Present editor and publisher Willis Webb continues the tradition.

But whether printed or spoken, words can scarcely describe Jasper in springtime, when pink, fuchsia, salmon, and red azaleas, accented by garlands of violet wisteria and snow-white branches of bridal wreath, blaze from parkways and private gardens along the town's quiet streets. Justly proud of this fabulous floral display, the town plays host to the annual Jasper Azalea Trail (March 15-31, 1998). Using hand-held maps and easy-to-read signposts along the route, visitors can take this

self-guided auto tour in 30 minutes, driving past homes both modest and magnificent, each dwelling landscaped with gobs of glorious color.

The 9th annual Azalea Festival (March 28, 1998) will feature booths on the courthouse square with arts, crafts, antiques, and home-cooked concoctions. The day's festivities also include an Easter parade, a hilly, four-distances bike race (10, 25, 50, and 65-or-more miles), and the Threads and Thimbles Needlework Show, along with live entertainment, a petting zoo, a photo show, and horse-drawn carriage rides.

Fun IN THE Forest

DURING SPRING AND SUMMER, the shouts of gleeful swimmers resonate across the rippling surface of Lake Sam Rayburn, in chorus with the sounds of boaters in hot pursuit of large-mouth bass. Thousands of watersports enthusiasts—from fishermen and jet skiers to tube floaters and canoers—flock to this 114,500-acre lake in the warmer months. Recreation has been the reservoir's most visible use since its construction in 1965 on the

Angelina River. Yet, shimmering Lake Sam Rayburn, located 15 minutes north of Jasper, also affords the region flood control, hydroelectric power, and water conservation.

Sporting a scenic, 560-mile shoreline, embroidered with 155,618 acres of pine, oak, and sweetgum, the lake known as "Big Sam" provides nearly two dozen public and private parks, some with amenities such as boat ramps, fishing piers, hunting grounds, trails for hiking and horseback riding, sites for primitive and RV camping, and picnic areas.

The lake tenders generous

quantities of submerged timber and aquatic vegetation, which serve as prime habitat for bass (often weighing between eight and 12 pounds), as well as sweet-tasting crappie and monster-size catfish.

Some 15 miles from "Big Sam" (30 minutes northwest of Jasper), you can also enjoy one of the state's few remaining longleaf pine forests at Boykin Springs Recreation Area, inside 154,000-acre Angelina National Forest. This U.S. Forest Service campground offers a beautiful backdrop for biking, nature watching, hiking, and camping.

As you travel toward this forest retreat, shafts of dappled light illuminate Forest Service Road 313, a blacktop route shoehorned into a corridor of towering evergreens that lead to the main parking area. As you depart your vehicle, the melodious rush and tumble of water draws you to a series of falls spilling into a streambed. Framed by delicate moss and chain ferns, the sparkling cascade soothes the spirit.

Taking a short path upstream to higher ground, you'll find Boykin Springs Lake, a serene lagoon that invites visitors to enjoy its calm waters, soak up the sun, or spread a picnic lunch along its sandy margins. Created by springs emerging at elevations above the lake, these waters overflow and spill downstream over a series of falls, mingling with numerous other artesian springs located throughout the park.

A trail paralleling the stream leads back to the main parking area. The path crosses a wooden bridge graced by slender branches of wild azaleas bejeweled

in spring with blooms of pink and white. As the flowers' alluring fragrance envelops the creekbed, butterflies flutter in for sips of nectar, adding bits of color to the delicate foliage.

Magnificent magnolia trees rise above the trail, while in the shadows below, the parasol-shaped leaves of May apples shelter bouquets of two-inch, white blossoms nourished by abundant spring showers.

When rain caresses these and other sylvan sanctuaries near Jasper, the lakes flourish, and the woodland streams flow freely, bringing life and unparalleled beauty to the region's rolling hills. Whether you enjoy these salubrious environs for a few days or abide here throughout the year, you'll be pleased you came.

—Janet R. Edwards

Though Jasper's spring plethora of blooming plants offers plenty of persuasion to venture outdoors, an excursion to Ann's Tackle Shop is sure to set your fishhook.

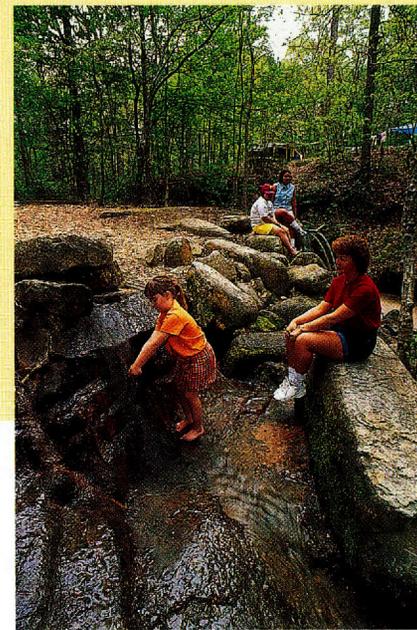
"People often come to Jasper for just one reason—to fish Lake Sam Rayburn," says Ann Thomasson-Wilson, a two-time world champion Bass'n Gal angler. "Rayburn is the largest freshwater lake wholly within the state, and it offers some of the best bass catchin' around. Every year, we host dozens of fishing tournaments here, including several of national caliber." A fishing guide when she's not minding the store, Ann stocks everything from rubber tadpoles to high-tech rods and reels.

[RIGHT] In the foreground, Brooke Courtney and her mother, Rhonda, of Diboll, soak up the tranquil ambiance of Boykin Springs.

[FACING PAGE] As one environmental bumper sticker proclaims, "We all live downstream." Certainly, nature's gifts, like Boykin Springs, are worthy of our most fervent conservation efforts.

The beauty of the lake, and of the nearby forests, also profoundly influences the minds and hearts of Jasper's thriving art community.

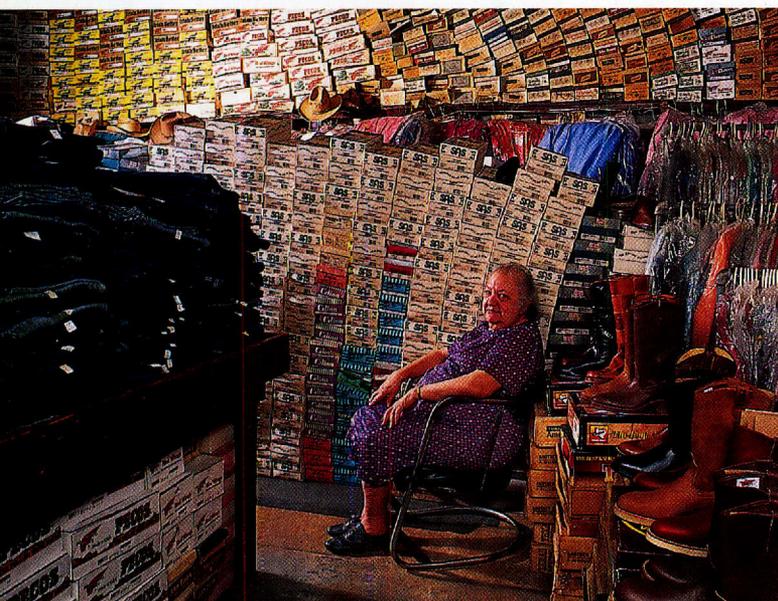
"I love the woods," says Sidney Oliphant, who displays his award-winning watercolor and acrylic paintings in his studio.







© KYLE WOOD



[TOP] Angelina National Forest's popular Old Sawmill Trail follows the Neches River through the woods to the Old Aldridge Sawmill site.

[ABOVE] Mary Ashy holds court over peculiar piles of marvelous merchandise at Jasper's P.N. Ashy Store, opened in 1938 by her father, Paul Ashy.

"The big oaks, pines, swamps, and flowers, they're all part of me and inspire my work."

Local artists Sherry and Rod Barger would agree. The swirling shapes of wild grapevines grace the curves of their giant ceramic urns. Likewise, their whimsical lily pad tiles, fanciful frog sculptures, and abstract, tabletop waterfalls take inspiration from nature.

WHEN YOUR TASTE BUDS say its time to sample nature's goodness with more than an appreciative eye, take a drive out to Orchard Creek Farm, about a mile and a half east of Jasper on US 190. Here, Harvey and Regina Gaskamp raise scrumptious crops of mayhaws (a tart fruit similar to crabapples), blueberries, blackberries, and peaches. In Antiques & Arts Showcase, a small shop on the square, you can sample these luscious fruits fresh or preserved as jams, jellies, and syrups. Depending on the season, you can drive to the orchard to purchase fresh fruit, small fruit trees for planting, or live Christmas trees grown on the premises.

But if the hungries really grab you, set out on an epicurean adventure at Patrick's Steakhouse, owned by Patrick and Bonita Lam. This first-class restaurant, whose elegant decor and ambrosial menu belie its prosaic name, offers Old World hospitality, perfected over Patrick's many years as maitre d'hotel on Holland America cruise ships and as chef for several fine restaurants in New York. Customers converge from miles around to sample Patrick's châteaubriand, tender filet mignon, rack of lamb, fish, chicken, savory fried shrimp, Caesar salad, crepes, and a banana pudding so delicious that even the bashful ask for second helpings.

With your culinary appetite satisfied, thoughts may return to the forests surrounding Jasper. As springtime wanes, the azaleas and dogwoods lose their petals to lawns and woodland floors. Lime-colored leaves soon give way to a deep forest-green. Delicate wood ferns carpet the understory, yielding a luxuriant, summer opulence to this peaceful setting. But whatever season you choose to make a jaunt to Jasper, you'll find it easy to believe that here, the trees are taller, the bass bigger, and the folks friendlier than just about anyplace else on earth. ★

JAN EDWARDS enjoyed the Jasper/Lake Sam Rayburn area so much while researching this story, she now calls it home.

STEPHAN MYERS lent his creative eye for last month's photos of "Dazzling Dunes."

Jasper and "Big Sam" Lake

Jasper lies about 75 miles north of Beaumont via US 96. Helpful publications available from the Jasper Chamber of Commerce include the *Official Map—East Texas Heritage Trail*, a map of Jasper, and the comprehensive *East Texas Vacation Guide*. The *All Roads Lead to Jasper* brochure describes pick-your-own-fruit farms, area recreation, accommodations, restaurants, historical sites, specialty shops, and includes an events calendar. *For all sites listed, please call ahead regarding wheelchair accessibility.* Write to the chamber at 246 E. Milam, Jasper; 384-2762. **The area code is 409. Jasper's zip code is 75951.**

Lodging

The **Belle-Jim Hotel Bed and Breakfast** is at 160 N. Austin, on the northeast corner of the courthouse square. Call 384-6923.

The **Swann Hotel Bed and Breakfast** is at 250 N. Main. Call 384-2341 or 888/776-SWAN.

Dining

Mickey's Place is downtown on the square. Menu includes grilled steak sandwiches, homemade chili, and daily specials. Hours: 11-2. Call 384-5506.

Patrick's Steakhouse, on US 96 North, serves a variety of gourmet selections including chateaubriand, rack of lamb, crepes, seafood, chicken, and steaks. Call 384-8861.

Arts, Shopping, and History

Write to artist **Sidney Oliphant** at 2573 N. Wheeler; 384-9580 or 283-3528. Write to artists **Sherry and Rod Barger** at Rt. 4, Box 198; 384-4046.

The **P.N. Ashy Store** is at 137 E. Houston. Hours: Mon-Sat 8:30-5; 384-4332.

Antiques & Arts Showplace is at 121 W. Houston. Hours: Tue-Sat 10-5:30; 384-6961.

The **Beaty-Orton House**, at 200 S. Main, offers tours (\$2) Mon-Fri from 8-12 and 1-5; 383-6138. The **Debney Home**, at 668 N. Main, offers free tours by appt.; 384-7505.

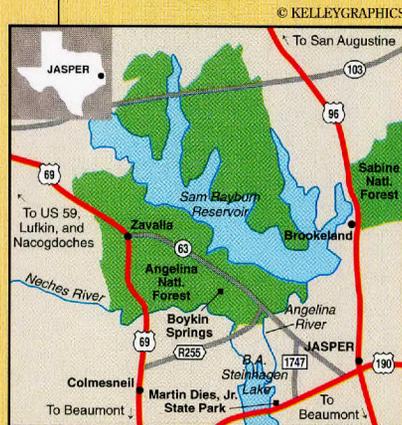
The **Jasper NewsBoy** office is at 302 N. Wheeler (Box 1419); 384-3441.

Outdoor Attractions

For information on fishing, visit **Ann's Tackle Shop** at 924 N. Wheeler (US 96 North); 384-7685.

Write to **Gaskamp's Orchard Creek Farm** at Rt. 1, Box 229, US 190 East; 384-4820.

For an outdoor frolic, sally over to pleasant **Sandy Creek City Park**, near the heart of town. A children's playground and basketball and volleyball courts complement walking trails connected by scenic stone bridges built during the Depression and lined with dogwoods, crepe myrtle, and weeping willows.



Lake Sam Rayburn

To reach the dam at **Lake Sam Rayburn** from Jasper, take US 96 north for 9 miles, then turn left (west) on Recreational Road 255 for about 5 miles. Twin Dikes Marina and Campgrounds, 2 miles east of the dam on R255, offers waterfront rooms, cabins and apartments, RV and tent campsites with water and electricity (some with full hookups), a group pavilion, a lighted fishing pier and fish-cleaning station, shower facilities, a laundromat, and other conveniences. Office/store hours: Daily 8-5. *Reservations recommended.* Write to Twin Dikes Marina and Campgrounds, Rt. 1, Box 750, Brookeland 75931; 698-2696. Boat and jet ski rentals are available year round at the Pine Wood Center (698-2472) and from spring through summer at Performance Watercraft (698-2247). Both businesses are on R255 near the marina.

To reach **Boykin Springs Recreation Area**, travel 23 miles on Texas 63 west from Jasper, then turn left (south) on Forest

Service Road 313 for 2 1/2 miles. From Zavalla (an alternate route), travel 11 miles east on Texas 63, turn right (south) on Forest Service Road 313 for 2 1/2 miles. Watch for signs on Texas 63 for the Boykin Springs Campground.

The campground has 30 campsites for RVs and 4 tent sites, each with picnic table, level pad, and campfire ring; day-use picnic tables; and a large, covered pavilion (with fireplace) for groups of up to 50.

The **Old Sawmill Trail**, perhaps the most popular of the Angelina National Forest's pathways, stretches along the Neches River for about 5 miles through forests of longleaf and loblolly pines, bald cypresses, and mixed hardwoods. More than 200 species of birds, including the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, thrive here, along with armadillos, raccoons, white-tailed deer, green anole lizards, and box turtles, all of which are most often seen early mornings and evenings.

For more information on Lake Sam Rayburn and Boykin Springs Recreation Area, write to the District Ranger, Angelina National Forest, 701 N. First St., Lufkin 75901; 639-8620. Other sources of information about facilities and accommodations around Lake Sam Rayburn include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Rt. 3, Box 320, Jasper; 800/284-2267) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife—Inland Fisheries Field Office (Rt. 2, Box 535, Jasper; 384-2763).

Nearby Sites

Martin Dies, Jr. State Park: On B.A. Steinhagen Lake, 12 miles west of Jasper on US 190. Entry fee: \$2 per day, age 13 and older. \$12 RV and \$9 tent campsites, \$17 screened shelters. The park has one group facility, boat ramps, hiking trails, swimming, fishing, canoeing, and birding. Open daily year round. Write to the Park Supt., Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, Rt. 4, Box 274, Jasper; 384-5231 (headquarters office open daily 8-5).

Angelina National Forest: North of Jasper via Texas 63 or US 96. Camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, four-wheeling, horseback riding, canoeing, backpacking, swimming, and picnicking. Parks

include Caney Creek (two wheelchair-accessible campsites with bathrooms), Harvey Creek, and Sandy Creek Recreation Area (as well as Boykin Springs). Forest entry is free; \$2 to park car and picnic. Camping fees vary. Contact the national forest at the address and phone number listed previously.

Angelina-Neches Dam "B" Wildlife Management Area:

12 miles west of Jasper on US 190. Primitive camping, hunting (with \$40 annual permit), fishing, bird- and alligator-watching. Free camping permit required, plus requisite state licenses. Write to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Town Bluff Project, 890 FM 92, Woodville 75979; 429-3491.

Wild Azalea Canyon Trail:

From Newton (15 miles east of Jasper on US 190), take Texas 87 north 1/2-mile to FM 1414, then 6.7 miles east on FM 1414, then 1.8 miles east on unpaved roads. Free entry. Trail open year round. Write to the Newton Co. Chamber of Commerce, Box 66, Newton 75966; 379-5527.

Sabine National Forest—Trail Between the Lakes:

North of Jasper on US 96; 28 miles of hiking trails (from Lakeview Recreation Area of Toledo Bend Reservoir to US 96 within sight of the eastern point of Sam Rayburn Reservoir). Primitive camping only; 14-day limit. No fee or registration. Write to the District Ranger, USDA Forest Service, Box 227, Hemphill 75948; 787-3870.

Big Thicket National Preserve:

The 84,550-acre preserve consists of several distinct geographic areas set aside for the preservation of East Texas wildlife. No camping facilities or overnight accommodations. Minimum-impact back-country camping allowed in designated zones of some units and on the sandbars of the Neches River (permits free, but required). Hikers must carry all gear in and out. Portable restrooms at trailheads. Check in at information station 2 1/2 miles east of US 69/287 on FM 420 in the Turkey Creek Unit. Write to the Supt., Big Thicket Natl. Preserve, 3785 Milam, Beaumont 77701. For program information and reservations, call 246-2337.

BY PATRICIA
CAPERTON PARENT

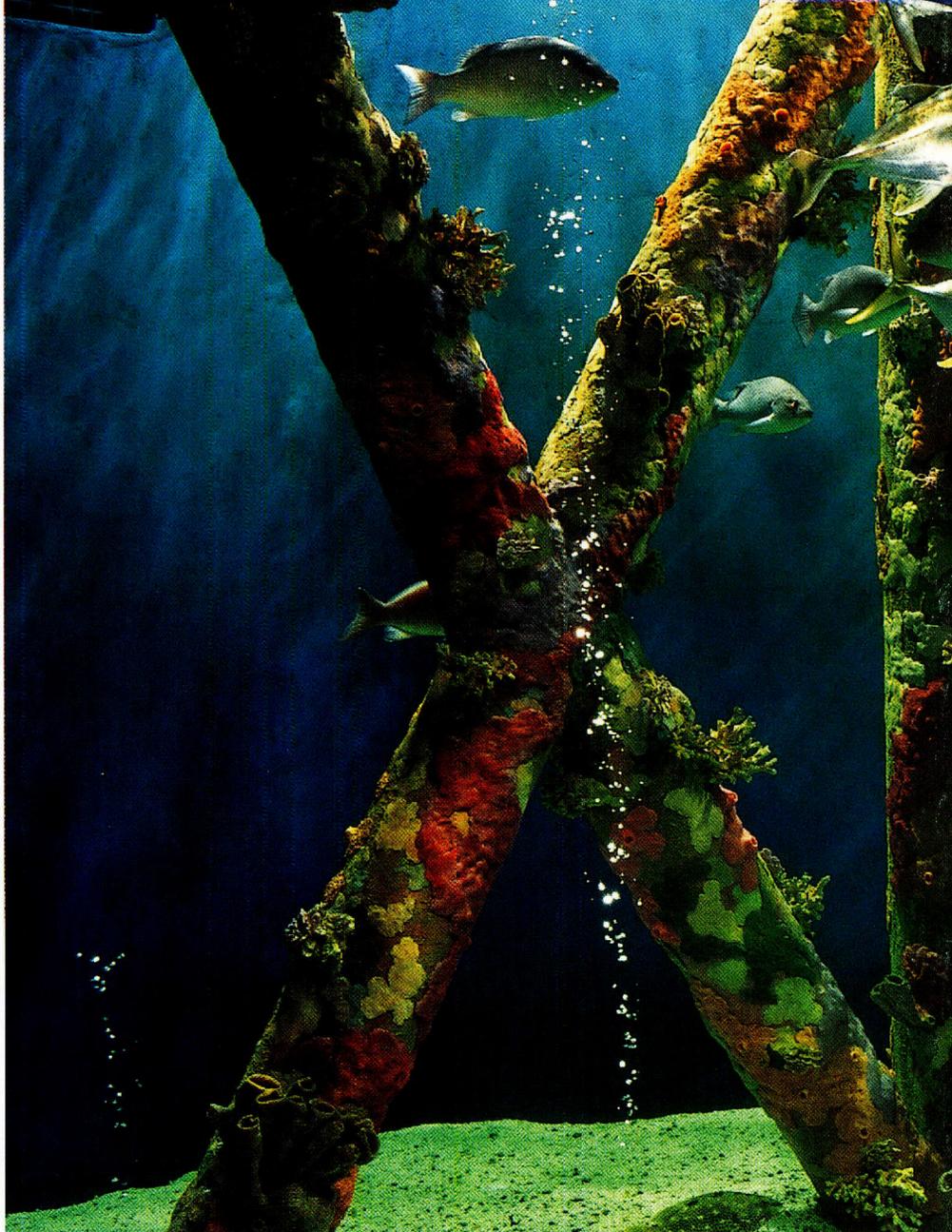
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
LAURENCE PARENT

*their
eyes*

filled with wonder, children cluster around the touch tank, reaching

out to feel scampering hermit crabs, placid starfish, and tenacious hard-shelled clams. Some kids laugh, some squeal, and some smile quietly as they hold the sea creatures. A helpful Sea Center volunteer tells the group about the animals and encourages even the most hesitant children to reach out and touch.

Located in Lake Jackson, Sea Center Texas is both fish hatchery and educational center. Formed and sustained through an unusual partnership of government, industry, an environmental group, and community volunteers, the \$13 million facility supplies about 20 million redfish (red drum) and speckled



LAKE JACKSON'S
NEW FISH HATCHERY
AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER IS

Some

trout (spotted seatrout) annually for Texas coastal waters from Beaumont to Brownsville. About 250,000 people toured the visitor center and hatchery during Sea Center's first year in 1996. They left with a greater respect for Texas Gulf Coast marine life.

Visitors become aware of Sea Center Texas' commitment to education and a

healthy fishing environment even as they approach the front door. On a pedestal outside, Eric Kaposta's sculpture *A Fish Story* depicts a young boy proudly showing off his catch to his father.

As you enter the center's gleaming, modern building, a cheerful volunteer smiles a greeting. Inside, an art gallery features paintings of Texas Gulf Coast

scenes by well-known Texas artists. Attractive photographs of sea creatures illustrate informative graphic displays, which describe habitats and organisms that might be present in each ecosystem.

Most visitors quickly head to the waist-high, 12-foot-long touch tank. Filled with creatures commonly seen on Texas



thing to Sea

beaches, the tank mirrors the Gulf of Mexico's tidal environment. Sea urchins and sand dollars rest on the sandy bottom. If you're feeling brave, pick up a baby sting ray. (Don't worry—the stinger has been removed!) While this is easily the

At Lake Jackson's Sea Center Texas, exhibits and a fish hatchery bring Gulf life to light. Silhouetted against the 5,000-gallon near-shore aquarium, a visitor views red snappers and other fish gliding around a colorful sponge- and coral-covered "reef."

center's most popular feature, many more displays await just around the corner.

Five aquariums here, designed to represent the journey from salt marsh to deep water, hold indigenous Gulf species. Walk up to the glass and take a look.

The first aquarium, a 1,000-gallon tank with a 14-foot-long window, introduces you to a coastal salt-marsh environment. Marsh grass gives way to a muddy bottom sprinkled with clam and oyster shells. Fiddler crabs, shrimp, and killifish skitter about their murky home.

The next aquarium serves as home to bay species such as red drum, spotted

seatrout, and southern flounder. This 2,200-gallon tank mimics the native bay environment of oyster reefs and seagrass beds.

In the center's jetty display, a 5,000-gallon tank holds faux granite blocks and barnacle-encrusted wooden pilings, among which sheepshead, Atlantic spadefish, eels, and sergeant majors drift silently. Despite being man-made, granite-block jetties have become an important feature of the Texas Gulf Coast's marine environment. Usually extending into the surf in pairs bordering a ship channel, jetties provide rich surroundings for crabs, barnacles, and periwinkles. Center director Camilo Chavez says the display is a popular attraction, because "a lot of people go out to the jetties, but they don't really know what the breakwaters look like below the surface. Of course," he adds, "everybody likes the eels—the way they



"A LOT OF THESE KIDS GO OUT TO THE BEACH AND SEE ALL THESE CRITTERS THEY SEE US PICK UP AND HOLD THE LITTLE CRABS IN OUR HANDS, AND

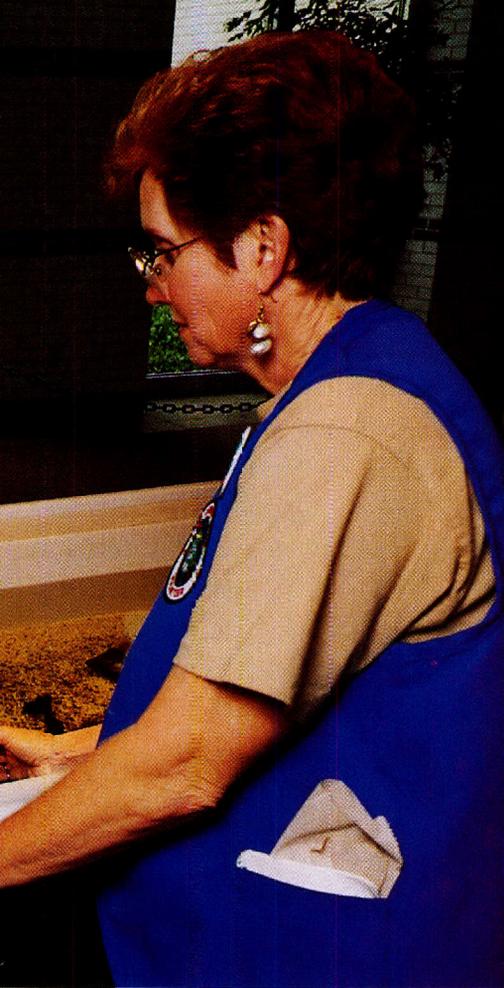


A quarter of a million people visited Sea Center's \$13 million facility during its first year of operation in 1996. Near the building's entrance, a sculpture by Eric Kaposta portrays a boy showing a prize catch to his father.

swim and open their mouths wide to breathe. They come in various colors and patterns of spots. Most people don't realize that we have lots of different species of eels along the Texas coast."

Another 5,000-gallon aquarium houses the near-shore exhibit. This display re-creates the artificial reef environment formed by offshore oil rigs and sunken ships. Large fish such as tarpon, pompano, red snapper, and grouper cruise around the brightly colored sponges and coral that grow on the reef structure.

The center's most dramatic exhibit, the 52,000-gallon offshore Gulf of Mexico aquarium, stretches eight feet tall and 29 feet long. Here, spinner, bull, and blacktip sharks circle the tank along with crevalle jacks and blue runners.



Bringing new meaning to the term “creature comforts,” the 12-foot-long touch tank gives folks a real feel for crabs, clams, starfish, and other sea critters.

nurse shark often rests beside him. According to resident biologist Fred Garza, “The science community doesn’t recognize such behavior—their ‘bond’ is probably more of a human interpretation of animal behavior. We tend to project human feeling onto animals.” Still, you’ll enjoy watching the “odd couple.”

Gordon, who is 12, will likely be around for many years to come. According to director Chavez, groupers live for 50 to 60 years and can grow to 1,200 pounds.

While the aquariums educate visitors about the nearby Gulf environment, Sea Center Texas’ primary mission is restocking Texas coastal fisheries. Pollution and overfishing, as well as natural events such as freezes, take their toll on the state’s multimillion-dollar fishing

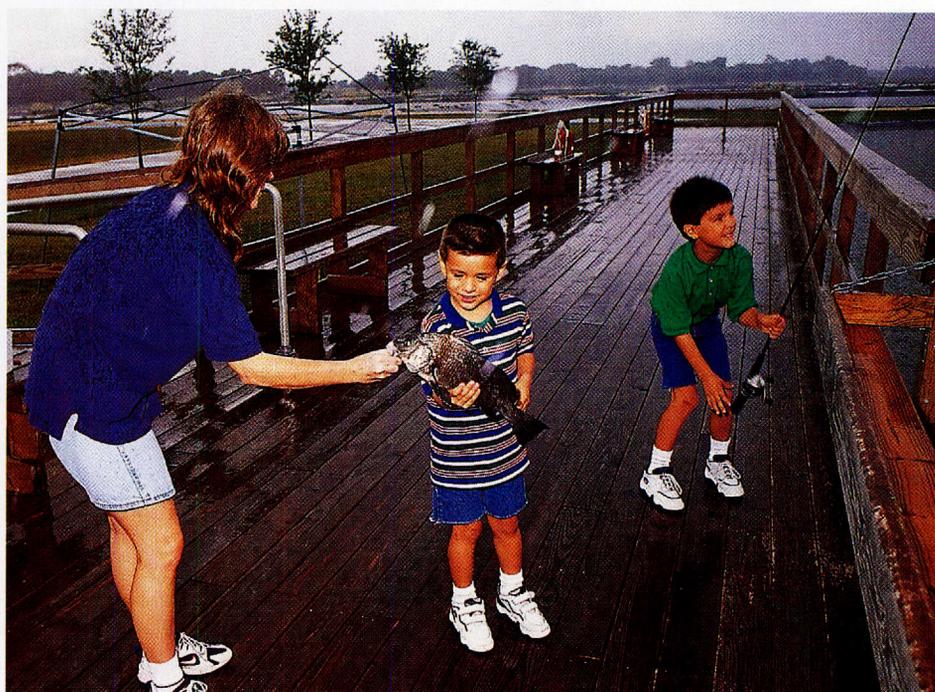
industry. With the world’s largest red drum hatchery, Sea Center goes a long way in protecting Texas commercial and sport fishing.

With advance permission, groups may venture beyond the visitor center and into the clean, ultramodern hatchery. The hatching process starts in the spawning room, where 16 gray fiberglass tanks, resembling giant cooking pots, house mature broodfish, which are caught in the wild to preserve their genetic diversity. An array of overhead pipes connects the tanks, giving the room a futuristic look. Peek through one of the portholes (the fish require 13 hours of darkness to spawn), and you’ll see several large redfish or speckled trout swimming peacefully. They stay at

AND ARE SCARED OF THEM. BUT WHEN THEY SEE THE AQUARIUMS, AND WHEN THEY GET TO HOLD THEM, TOO, IT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.”

With a flapping motion, Atlantic sting-rays propel their flat bodies through the water. Just inside the glass is Gordon, Sea Center’s star attraction, a five-and-a-half-foot, 350-pound grouper. Kids stand awestruck as Gordon eyes them and occasionally opens his cavernous mouth.

Given to the San Antonio Zoo by a pet shop when he grew too big for his aquarium, Gordon came to Sea Center after the zoo’s marine aquarium closed in 1995. Gordon seems to share a bond with a nurse shark who accompanied him from the zoo. When he was released into his Sea Center tank, Gordon immediately swam to her. Even now, as he hovers in his favorite corner, not allowing any other fish to come near, the



Young anglers dangle a line in the fishing pond. Every year, Sea Center holds a number of special fishing events for children. Kidfish, in particular, draws youngsters from urban areas.

WHILE THE AQUARIUMS EDUCATE VISITORS ABOUT THE NEARBY GULF ENVIRONMENT, ERIES. POLLUTION AND OVERFISHING, AS WELL AS NATURAL EVENTS SUCH AS FREEZES,

Sea Center Texas for three or four years before being released.

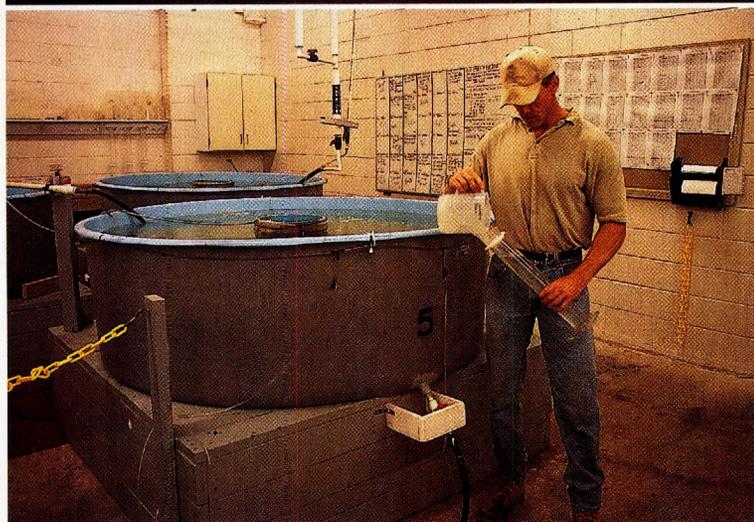
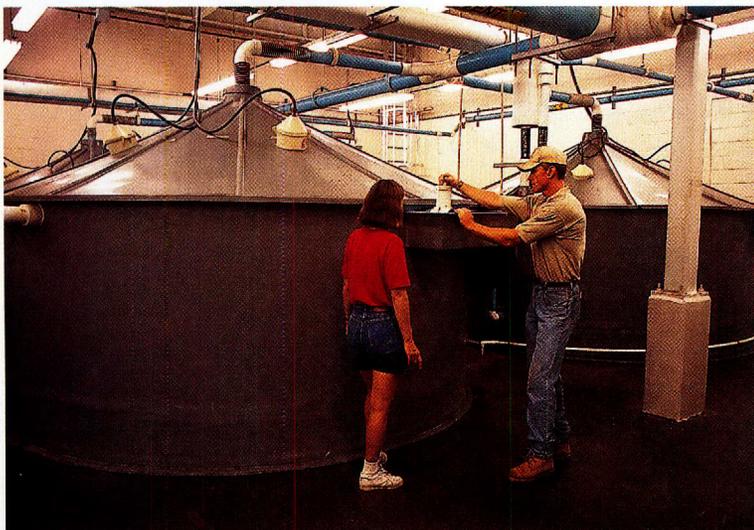
By manipulating temperature and light, the biologists here can compress the mating cycles of the two males and three females in each tank to 150 days from 365. This allows the scientists to use four groups of red drum for a constant supply of eggs without harming the fish. When the fertilized eggs are expelled, they float naturally to the top and into a trough on the side of the tank.

Workers scoop the eggs out of the spawning tanks and place them in 450-gallon incubation tanks, where they grow into small fish (fry) within 72 hours. The fry are then moved to one of the center's 35 one-acre grow-out ponds. After about 30 days in a pond, the fry have grown into one-and-a-half- to two-inch fish called fingerlings.

At this point, they're ready for life in the Gulf. Workers drain the ponds, place the fingerlings in special hauling tanks,

and release them along the coast where need is greatest.

Tours of the aquariums and hatchery aren't the only activities for visitors. Right next to the visitor center, a fishing pond can be reserved for schoolchildren and other youth groups. Kidfish, held two or three times a year at the center, gives children from urban areas a chance to cast a line. An outdoor wetlands area, scheduled for completion this spring, will let visitors hike through



The center's hatchery provides 20 million redfish and speckled trout annually to Texas coastal waters. In the spawning room (top left), which holds 16 fiberglass tanks, Patricia Parent and biologist Dale Lyon examine a trough filled with fertilized eggs. The eggs grow into small fish, or fry, in the incubation room's 450-gallon tanks (bottom left). The fry are placed in grow-out ponds, where they mature into two-inch fingerlings (above right), which biologists then release into the Gulf.

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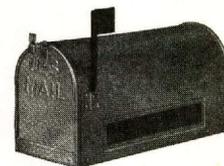
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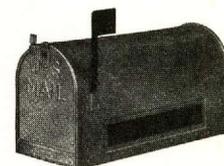


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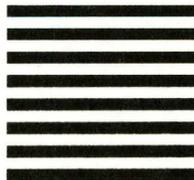
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SEA CENTER TEXAS' PRIMARY MISSION IS RESTOCKING TEXAS COASTAL FISH-TAKE THEIR TOLL ON THE STATE'S MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR FISHING INDUSTRY.

native coastal woodlands and view salt-water and freshwater wetlands.

In addition to its primary roles of contributing stock for Texas waters and educating visitors, Sea Center Texas provides an example of citizen cooperation. A collaborative effort by government, private industry, and an environmental group brought Sea Center into being in 1996. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Dow Chemical Company Texas Operations, and the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) worked together to make the center a reality. Before then, TPWD (at the CCA's urging) had been raising redfish and speckled trout fingerlings in abandoned ponds inside Dow's plant in Freeport since 1985.

Eventually, Dow donated 75 acres of land, and the CCA raised one million dollars through private and corporate contributions to begin construction. The combination of land and cash enabled Sea Center to receive federal matching funds. Today, Dow helps promote Sea Center and provides seawater for the hatchery through a five-mile pipeline; the CCA offers ongoing financial support; and TPWD runs the facility.

Faye Beard and Tracie Copeland of Dow Chemical public relations, who work with the Sea Center staff, believe the combination works well for everyone. "Sea Center Texas shows the beauty of how a conservation group, industry, and a state agency can brainstorm together and make things happen," says Tracie. "All of us came into this with varying backgrounds and different expertise, but together we've built a great facility."

Unpaid volunteers—160 strong—also provide a crucial link in the Sea Center

partnership. Volunteers, many of whom are retirees from the local community, manage the gift shop, touch tank, and aquarium exhibits. According to Camilo Chavez, "People were so enthusiastic that initially we had to limit the number of volunteers. They get such pleasure out of working with kids, they just glow." Volunteer Frank Bartolomeo agrees. "It's great to see people learn about the Gulf, particularly the younger kids who've never seen the fish we have," he says.

While Sea Center Texas relies heavily on knowledgeable volunteers, only professional divers can swim in the huge tanks among the fish to perform routine maintenance and conduct behavioral studies. This is a good thing, because, warns Camilo, "Sometimes Gordon bites!" Divers work in the tanks two or three times a week, so if you spot them, give them a wave.

Besides restocking Texas waters, the fish hatchery also works with highly prized Gulf sport fish such as the once-plentiful tarpon. "Right now, we're trying to get the tarpon to spawn," says Camilo. "We're applying research done in Colombia and Florida to work with breeding cycles and the salinity of water. Currently, nobody else is trying to hatch tarpon."

Most important, employees and volunteers here hope to encourage environmental stewardship. Camilo believes that begins with children. "A lot of these kids go out to the beach and see all these critters and are scared of them," he says. "But when they see the aquariums, and they see us pick up and hold the little crabs in our hands, and when they get to hold them, too, it makes a world of difference." If you'd like to acquire a heightened appreciation of Texas' Gulf Coast environment, visit Sea Center Texas soon. ★

Austin writer PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT makes many a trip to Lake Jackson, where she grew up, to visit her parents, James and Pat Caperton.

LAURENCE PARENT's latest book, the *Official Guide to Texas State Parks*, was released last summer.

WHEN...WHERE...HOW

See Sea Center Texas

Sea Center Texas lies about 50 miles south of Houston. From Houston, take Texas 288 south to Lake Jackson, where Texas 288 merges with Texas 332. Continue south on Texas 332 for 2 miles to Plantation Dr., and turn right. A short drive brings you to Sea Center.

Visitor center hours: Tue-Fri 9-4, Sat 10-5, Sun 1-4. No reservations necessary. Admission: Free; donations accepted. Wheelchair accessible.

Tours of the hatchery are limited to groups of 15 people, so it's best to call ahead for reservations. Guided tours (45 minutes long) are offered Tue-Fri at 9, 11, 1, and 3 and Sat. at 11 and 3. Wheelchair accessible.

Sea Center Texas hosts special fishing events for children a few times a year. The fishing pond can be reserved for organized children's groups. Call for specific information.

Write to Sea Center Texas, 300 Medical Dr., Lake Jackson 77566; 409/292-0100.



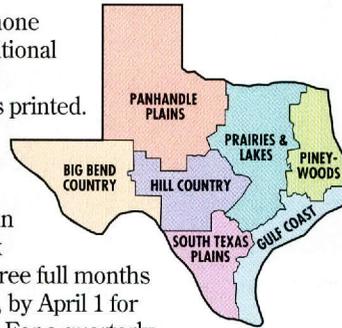
Fun Forecast

April 1998

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

In Fun Forecast, we provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

Sometimes dates change after the magazine is printed. Before you drive miles to an event, confirm the date by calling the number listed next to the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce. If you wish to submit an event for Fun



Forecast, please send the information to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/483-3672. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by April 1 for July festivities). Space is limited, so we may not be able to print every event. For a quarterly, more detailed schedule of events, write for a free Texas Events Calendar, Box 5064, Austin 78763-5064, or fax 512/483-3672.

Texas Highways' Web site (www.texashighways.com) includes an expanded Fun Forecast that gives descriptions of the events.

For free routing assistance or details on any destination in Texas, call 800/452-9292 toll-free from anywhere in the United States and Canada, any day between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central Time. A travel counselor at one of the state's travel information centers will be on the line to provide travel information, send brochures, and advise you of any emergency road conditions.

Panhandle Plains

2-5 SNYDER Western Texas Intercollegiate Rodeo 915/573-8511
2-5, 9-11, 16-18 SAN ANGELO <i>Is There a Comic in the House?</i> 915/949-4400
3-5 BUFFALO GAP Art Festival 915/572-3339
LUBBOCK Rodeo 806/763-4665
POST Old Mill Trade Days 806/495-3529
WICHITA FALLS Horse Show 940/586-1994
3-4, 9-11 WICHITA FALLS <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> 940/322-5000
4 ELECTRA City-Wide Garage Sale 940/495-3577
OLNEY City-Wide Garage Sale 940/564-5445
WICHITA FALLS Attic Affair 940/720-3428

4 WICHITA FALLS <i>The Princess & the Pea</i> 940/692-5005
4, 11, 18, 25 WICHITA FALLS Country Music Show 940/723-9037
10-11 SWEETWATER Jr Rodeo 800/658-6757
11 ABERNATHY Bluegrass Show & Banquet 806/298-2546
CLARENDON Saints' Roost Jamboree 806/874-3942
ELECTRA Easter Egg Hunt 940/495-3577
HASKELL Easter Egg Hunt 940/864-2477
MEADOW Bluegrass & Gospel Music 806/539-2266
11-12 ABILENE Gem & Mineral Show 915/692-1525
BRECKENRIDGE Bass Tournament 254/559-2801
16-17 LUBBOCK Cotton Gin Convention 512/476-8388

17-18 SAN ANGELO Texas Wine & Brew Festival 915/653-6793
17-19 LUBBOCK Arts Festival 806/744-2787
SNYDER Jr Rodeo 915/573-8511
WICHITA FALLS Quarter Horse Show 940/766-5352
18 ALBANY Discover Albany 915/762-2525
Polo on the Prairie at Musselman Ranch 915/762-2525
CLAUDE David Asbury, Classical Guitar 806/226-2080
LUBBOCK Jose Feliciano with the Lubbock Symphony 806/767-2241
MERKEL Windmill Cookoff & City-Wide Garage Sale 915/928-5722
18-19 OLNEY Trade Days 940/564-5445

18-19 WICHITA FALLS Arts & Crafts Show 940/691-2738
24-25 QUANAH Jr Rodeo 940/663-2248
25 MINERAL WELLS Bluebonnet Arts Festival 940/325-5114
SLATON Opry 806/828-6238
TURKEY Bob Wills Day 806/423-1033
25-26 BALLINGER Texas State Festival of Ethnic Cultures 915/365-5333
CISCO 25th Cisco Folklife Festival 817/442-2057
WICHITA FALLS Spring Fling 940/692-0923
Prairies and Lakes
1-3 ARLINGTON UTA International Festival 817/272-2011

1-4 ADDISON (began Mar 19) <i>Marvin's Room</i> 972/450-6220
ARLINGTON (began Mar 5) <i>Blood Brothers</i> 817/275-7661
SHELBY Antique Show 281/873-9977
1-5 BEDFORD <i>Harvey</i> 817/354-6444
WARRENTON Bluebonnet Antique Show & Sale 409/249-3980
1-11 GREENVILLE (began Mar 20) Mary of Puddin Hill Bunny Hop Tour 903/455-2651 or 800/545-8889
1-12 DALLAS (began Mar 7) Dallas Blooms 214/327-8263
1-15 HEARNE Dogwood Trails 409/279-2351
1-30 CUERO Wildflower Tours 512/275-9942

2 DALLAS Katherine Anne Porter Tribute 214/922-1219
2-4 WACO Porcelain Art Convention 254/840-3498
2-5 COLLEGE STATION <i>Blue Suede Shoes</i> 409/845-1234
DALLAS Violinist Cho-Liang Lin with Dallas Symphony 214/670-3600
DENTON (began Mar 26) <i>Guns and Dolls</i> 940/382-1915
2-19 GARLAND <i>Barefoot in the Park</i> 972/205-2780
3 DALLAS Northwood Woman's Club Homes Tour 972/931-1061
GRAPEVINE Concert at the Palace 817/481-0454
SEGUIN The Oak Tree Players 830/372-8020

3-5 WEATHERFORD Trade Days 817/594-3801
3-11 ARLINGTON <i>Adventures of Peter Cottontail</i> 817/861-2287
3-26 GRANBURY <i>Rolling in Dough</i> 817/573-9191
4 ARLINGTON Bargain Barn 817/465-6661
BELLVILLE Market Day 409/865-3407
DALLAS Jason Vieux, Classical Guitarist 214/922-1229
DUNCANVILLE Garden Show 972/780-5086
FORT WORTH Coca-Cola 300 NASCAR Auto Race 817/215-8500
HICO Billy the Kid Day 254/796-2686
HILLSBORO Confederate History Symposium 254/582-2481
KAUFMAN Special Olympics 972/932-3717

4 LULING Roughneck Chili & Barbecue Cookoff 830/375-3214
MOULTON Spring Market Day 512/596-7204
5-K Fun Run/Walk 512/596-4473
PLANO Herb Market 972/423-5121
SEGUIN Breakfast with the Easter Bunny 830/379-2411
WACO Symphony Orchestra Concert 254/754-0851
4-5 DALLAS Custom Car Show 214/750-0670
Pepsi Jazzoo Weekend 214/942-3678
GONZALES American Legion Spring Jamboree 830/672-6532
GRAND PRAIRIE Prairie Dog Chili Cookoff 972/647-2331
PALESTINE (began Mar 21) Dogwood Trails Festival 903/729-6066
SALADO Quilt Show 254/947-5982
4, 11, 18, 25 ARLINGTON River Legacy Park Nature Hike 817/860-6752
COLUMBUS Columbus Opry 409/732-9210
STEPHENVILLE Cross Timbers Country Opry 254/965-4132
4, 25 McKINNEY Bird Walk 972/562-5566
5 FORT WORTH Texas 500 NASCAR Auto Race 817/215-8500

5 SOUTHLAKE Masterworks Concert 817/283-3406
6 DALLAS Texas Bound: Anything Can Happen 214/922-1219
SEGUIN Valerie & Eric Hall Classical Piano Concert 830/372-8020
6-11 DECATUR Wise Co Youth Fair 940/627-3341
7 DALLAS Georgian State Dance Company 214/670-3600
DENTON UNT Lab Band Spring Concert 940/565-3743
NORTH RICHLAND HILLS Masterworks Concert 817/283-3406
7-12 DALLAS <i>Chicago</i> 214/421-5678
7-18 FORT WORTH Nat'l Cutting Horse Assn Super Stakes 817/871-8150
7-9, 15-18 WACO <i>The Difficulty of Crossing Field</i> 254/710-1865
8, 29 DALLAS Literary Cafe at Club Dada 214/922-1219
9 DALLAS Turtle Creek Chorale 214/526-3214
10-11 DALLAS Robert Guillaume with the Dallas Symphony 214/670-3600

11 BOWIE Antique Lamp Show 940/872-4717	17 WEIMAR Garden Club Flower Show 409/263-5669	18 CLEBURNE Johnson Co Iris Show 817/645-7748	22 ARLINGTON Life & Works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman 817/273-3131	25 BELLVILLE Country Livin' Festival 409/865-3407	27 LOCKHART Lockhart Opry 512/601-2154	1-12 NEWTON (began Mar 20) Wild Azalea Canyon Trails 409/379-5527	11 DAINGERFIELD Easter Egg Hunt 903/645-2646	18-19 HENDERSON Rural Heritage Weekend 903/567-5528
COMANCHE Trade Day 915/356-3233	17-18 CANTON Bluegrass Kickoff 903/885-7063	Layland Museum Home Tour 817/645-0940	GRANBURY Celia Thaxter Visual Arts Conference 800/332-3214	DALLAS Fine Arts Chamber Players 214/520-2219	27-28 WACO Baylor Showtime 254/710-3991	1-19 TYLER (began Mar 21) Four Winds Renaissance Faire 903/842-2932	LIVINGSTON Bluegrass 409/327-3381	KILGORE Celtic Heritage Festival 903/759-9017
HICO State Motorcycle Rally 254/796-2424	LA GRANGE Quilt Show 409/968-4405	Springfest 817/645-2455	23 HURST MasterWorks Concert 817/283-3406	FORNEY Civic Auction 972/564-2233	27-May 1 ARLINGTON Semana de Cultura 817/272-2009	3-4 NACOGDOCHES Chili Cookoff 409/568-3289	TEXARKANA <i>The Goodbye Girl</i> 903/792-4992	TYLER Gem & Mineral Show 903/592-6177
LANCASTER Second Saturday on the Square 972/218-1101	WEATHERFORD Murder Mystery on Castle Hill 817/594-4465	COLUMBUS <i>Forever Plaid</i> 409/732-8385	RICHARDSON 10-K Volksmarch 972/604-8013	28 ARLINGTON UTA Orchestra Concert 817/272-8471	28 TEMPLE Bell Co Storytellers 254/778-4123	3-5 NACOGDOCHES (began Mar 27) <i>East Texas Remembers</i> 409/564-8300	17-18 TYLER Apache Belles Spring Show 903/510-2249	19 CONROE Art on the Square 409/756-3637
McKINNEY Flower Walk 972/562-5566	WILLS POINT Bluebird Festival 800/WP-BLUBIRD	DENTON Walk, Run, Skate for MS 214/373-1400	23-26 DALLAS Dallas Symphony with Tenor Gary Lakes 214/670-3600	IOLA Spring Daze Family Festival 409/394-2203	28-29 COLLEGE STATION <i>Tap Dogs</i> 409/845-1234	17-19 HUNTSVILLE General Sam Houston Folklife Festival 409/294-1832	19 MONTGOMERY Montgomery Trek Arts & Crafts Show 409/597-4899	CONROE Art on the Square 409/756-3637
12 MOULTON Easter Picnic 512/596-4674	17-19 COLLEGE STATION A&M Singing Cadets Spring Concert 409/845-2811	ROUND TOP Klemperer Trio 409/249-3129	HALLETTSVILLE Texas State Championship Fiddlers' Frolics 512/798-2311	WACO Brazos River 5-K Fun Run 254/753-5166	29 RICHARDSON Community Band Concert 972/851-9784	KIRBYVILLE Magnolia Festival 409/423-5827	WASKOM Armadillo Daze Festival 903/687-3154	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644
SAN FELIPE Easter Sunrise Service at SFA State Park 409/885-2020	DENISON Texoma Lake Fest Regatta 903/465-1551	SHINER Trade Fair 512/594-4343	23, 30 LANCASTER Musicfest Concerts 972/227-1112	YORKTOWN Sesquicentennial Celebration 512/564-2661	29 RICHARDSON Community Band Concert 972/851-9784	NEW WAVERLY Texas Woodlands Trail Walks 210/651-6838	WASKOM Armadillo Daze Festival 903/687-3154	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644
13 SEGUIN Orchestral Strings 830/372-8020	ENNIS Bluebonnet Trails Festival 888/366-4748	TERRELL Heritage Jubilee Fiddlers' Contest 972/563-5703	24 FAIRFIELD Talent Show 903/389-4902	FORT WORTH Cinco de Mayo Celebration 817/834-4711	29 RICHARDSON Community Band Concert 972/851-9784	3-6 TYLER Art & Bloom 903/595-1001	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
14-26 FORT WORTH <i>Deathtrap</i> 817/332-2272	ANTIQUE SHOW 972/875-8825	WACO Rockin' Heart Ranch Dance & Party 254/722-5611	24 FAIRFIELD Talent Show 903/389-4902	GOZUALES Homes Tour 830/672-6532	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11 CONROE <i>Lend Me a Tenor</i> 409/469-6621	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
15 BRYAN Home & Garden Tour 409/846-9740	GRANBURY Great Race Texas 817/573-5548 or 800/950-2212	WEATHERFORD Shaw-Kemp Log Cabin & Ranch House Tour 817/594-3801	WACO Cotton Palace Pageant 800/922-6386	GRANBURY Antique Show 817/573-3800	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
16-18 GRAPEVINE Texas New Vintage Wine & Food Festival 800/457-6338	GROESBECK Trade Days 254/729-3616	WHITEWRIGHT Opry 903/364-2539	24-25 ROUND TOP Shakespeare at Winedale 512/471-4726	GREENVILLE Home & Garden Show 903/455-4220	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
16-19 FORT WORTH Main St Arts Festival 817/336-ARTS	McKINNEY Native Plant Festival 972/562-5566	18-19 DALLAS Antique Market 405/478-4050	24-26 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 800/229-2314	MUENSTER 10-K Walk 214/240-2544	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
16-23 DALLAS USA Film Festival 214/821-NEWS	PLANO U.S. Fencing Assn Tournament 214/969-2919	DALLAS Antique Market 405/478-4050	24-26 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 800/229-2314	WACO Brazos River Festival 817/753-5166 or 800/922-6386	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
16-May 16 ARLINGTON <i>Funny Money</i> 817/275-7661	GREENVILLE Flea Market 903/455-6109	BREWERS FESTIVAL 512/462-1855	24-26 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 800/229-2314	WACO Brazos River Festival 817/753-5166 or 800/922-6386	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
17 DALLAS An Evening with Wendy Wasserstein 214/922-1219	17-18, 24-26 RICHARDSON Wildflower Arts & Music Festival 972/680-9567	NATURE CENTER WALK 972/723-6536	24-26 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 800/229-2314	WACO Brazos River Festival 817/753-5166 or 800/922-6386	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	18 ARLINGTON Toy Show 817/465-6661	HEMPSTEAD Old South Festival 409/826-4400	DALLAS Shrine Circus 214/240-6624	GREENVILLE Home & Garden Show 903/455-4220	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BOWIE Rodeo 940/872-3082	SHERMAN Weekend Walk Through Sherman's History 903/892-4189	DENTON Arts & Jazz Festival 940/565-0931	MUENSTER Germanfest 940/759-2227	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	SHINER Volksmarch 512/594-3304	EULESS Arbor Daze 817/685-1669	FRYDEK St Mary's Grotto Celebration 409/885-3131	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	TERRELL Heritage Jubilee 972/563-5703	MUENSTER Germanfest 940/759-2227	WEIMAR St Michael's Spring Festival 409/725-6714	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
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WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25 HUGHES SPRINGS Passion Play 903/639-3581
WACO 1776 800/701-2787	BRYAN Wine & Roses Festival 409/778-9463	25 ARLINGTON Raise the Roof 5-K 817/275-4600	26 COLLEGE STATION <i>The Magic School Bus</i> 409/845-1234	WAXAHACHIE Scarborough Faire 214/938-1888	30-May 3 ARLINGTON <i>The Little Foxes</i> 817/272-2761	3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 LIBERTY Opry on the Square 800/248-8918	22-25 LUFKIN Rodeo 409/634-6644	23-25

Gulf Coast

1, 8, 15, 22, 29
PORT ARANSAS
 Birding on the Boardwalk
 512/749-4158

1-30
HOUSTON
Victor/Victoria
 713/622-1626

2-4
BEAUMONT
Passion Play
 409/838-3435 or 800/782-3081

2-5
ORANGE
 Crawfish & Crab Festival
 409/883-9990

2-12
HARLINGEN
Early One Evening at the Rainbow Bar & Grill
 956/412-7529

2-3, 9-10
GALVESTON
 Historic Homes Tour
 409/765-7894

3
PORT ARANSAS
 Go Native
 Wildflower Walk
 512/749-4158

Music in the Park
 512/749-4158

3-4
HOUSTON
Moodrunk
 Chamber Music/Dance Theater
 713/524-7601

3-5
HOUSTON
 Joel Grey
 713/224-7575

4
BEAUMONT
 Walk America
 409/835-7880

BELLAIRE
 Arts & Crafts Festival
 713/666-1521

GALVESTON
Cinderella
 409/765-1894

Grahd KIDS Festival
 409/765-1894

ROBSTOWN
 Easter Egg Hunt
 512/387-5904

SEABROOK
 Crawfish Festival
 281/488-7676

4-5
NASSAU BAY
 Russian Festival
 281/333-4211

5
EL CAMPO
 KC
 Palm Sunday Picnic
 409/543-5495

GALVESTON
 "Spin Me a Yarn"
 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

WHARTON
 County Museum Easter Egg Hunt
 409/532-2600

5-12
SOUTH PADRE ISLAND
 Semana Santa (Holy Week)
 956/761-6433

7-19
GALVESTON
Red, White, & Teena
 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

11
HARLINGEN
 State Jazz Band Festival
 956/427-3687

11-12
SEABROOK
 Back Bay Market
 713/474-3869

12
LEAGUE CITY
 Star Gazer Yacht Cruise
 281/334-4692

RICHMOND
 Victorian Easter Egg Hunt
 281/343-0218

14
HOUSTON
 Morton Feldman & The Menil Collection
 713/524-7601

16
HOUSTON
 Twyla Tharp
 713/227-7977

16-19
KINGSVILLE
 A&M-Kingsville International Young Performers' Competition
 512/592-8516 or 800/333-5032

16-25
WHARTON
 Youth Fair
 409/677-3350

16-19, 23-26
GALVESTON
To Kill A Mockingbird
 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

17
HOUSTON
Arabella
 713/546-0246

VICTORIA
 Country Opry
 512/552-9347

17-18
BEAUMONT
 Relay for Life
 409/899-9164

17-19
HARLINGEN
 RioFest
 956/412-ARTS

HOUSTON
 Maritime Festival
 713/672-0511

KINGSVILLE
 King Ranch Wild Game Lunch/Texas Cactus Festival
 512/592-8516 or 800/333-5032

MAURICEVILLE
 Crawfish Festival
 409/745-1202

PORT LAVACA
The Glass Menagerie
 512/552-4082

17-25
HITCHCOCK
 Galveston Co Fair & Rodeo
 409/986-6010

17-26
HOUSTON
 Houston International Festival
 713/654-8808

17-May10
DICKINSON
Harvey
 281/337-SHOW

18
BEAUMONT
 Charlie Pruitt's Country Music Show
 409/832-6649

Cookoff
 409/832-3486

GALVESTON
 ArtWalk
 409/763-2403

LEAGUE CITY
 Bluegrass
 281/893-9541

RICHMOND
 Lone Star Romp at George Ranch
 281/342-6478

18
WEST COLUMBIA
 San Jacinto Festival & Shrimp Boil
 409/345-3921

19
BEAUMONT
 Spring Round-Up at McFaddin-Ward
 409/832-1906

20-27
PORT ARANSAS
 Earth Day Celebration
 512/749-4158

21
EL CAMPO
 Crawfish Boil
 409/543-2713

GALVESTON
Arnold's Favorite Field Trip
 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894

HOUSTON
 Emerson String Quartet
 713/285-5400

21-May 2
BEAUMONT
 Neches River Festival
 409/835-2546

23
BEAUMONT
 Lobster Fest
 409/838-6581

23-28
BEAUMONT
Tartuffe
 409/880-2250

23-May 2
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Buccaneer Days
 512/882-3242

24
PORT ARANSAS
 Beachwalk Adventure
 512/749-4158

24-25
ORANGE
 Orange Co Livestock Show
 409/882-7010

24-26
PORT ARTHUR
 Pleasure Island Music Festival
 409/962-6200 or 800/235-7822

TEXAS CITY
 Trade Days
 409/643-5902

24, 26, 29, May 2
HOUSTON
The Marriage of Figaro
 713/546-0246 or 800/346-4462

25
BAYTOWN
 3-Farm Open Llana Barn
 281/421-2695

BEAUMONT
 Rubber Ducky Derby
 409/838-6568

BISHOP
 Olde Tyme Faire
 512/584-2214

GALVESTON
 Adopt-a-Beach Clean-Up
 409/762-3363

LA PORTE
 Sylvan Beach Festival
 281/471-1123

ROCKPORT
 Adopt-a-Beach Clean-Up
 512/729-6445

25-26
BEAUMONT
 Spring Flower Show
 409/842-3135

GALVESTON
 Spirit of Flight Air Show & Walkabout
 409/740-7722 or 888/354-4488

HOUSTON
 Chili Cookoff
 281/847-2451

Japan Festival
 713/863-9994

ROCKPORT
 Tour of Homes
 512/729-5519

25-May 3
BEAUMONT
 Great Birding Classic
 800/392-4401

HARLINGEN
 Intl Gulf Coast Birding Festival
 512/389-4800

28
BEAUMONT
 Lamarissimo!
 409/880-8144

29-May 2
BEAUMONT
 Rodeo
 409/832-9991

29-May 3
HOUSTON
Blue Suede Shoes
 713/227-1911

30
ORANGE
 Great Movie Songs Vocal Concert
 409/886-5535

30-May 3
LAKE JACKSON
 Migration Celebration
 409/265-2505

South Texas Plains

1-18
SAN ANTONIO
 (began Mar 20)
To Kill a Mockingbird
 210/227-2751

1-25
SAN ANTONIO
 (began Mar 27)
Amadeus
 210/408-0116

1-May 5
SAN ANTONIO
 Oddest Laugh in Texas Contest
 210/224-9299

3
SAN ANTONIO
 First Friday in Southtown
 210/224-2448

3-5
CARRIZO SPRINGS
 Fiesta Nopalitos
 830/876-3240

McALLEN
 Rio Grande Valley Home Show
 956/682-0711

POTEET
 Strawberry Festival
 830/742-8144

4
SAN ANTONIO
 San Antonio College Book Fair
 210/733-2147

WESLACO
 Onion Pest Celebration
 956/968-2102

4-5
SAN ANTONIO
 Starving Artists Art Show
 210/226-3593

Misa Flamenca
 210/822-2453

5
CATARINA
 El Camino Real Festival
 830/999-3345

SAN ANTONIO
 Lowrider Car Show
 210/432-1896

7
THREE RIVERS
 Brush Country Jamboree
 512/449-1349

7-8
SAN ANTONIO
 Tejano Music Awards & Pan Fair
 210/224-9600

8
SAN ANTONIO
Pinochio
 210/340-4060

8-May 9
SAN ANTONIO
The Rainmaker
 210/221-5953

9
SAN ANTONIO
 Georgian State Dance Company
 210/207-2234

10
SAN ANTONIO
 Passion Play
 210/227-1297

11
BIGFOOT
 Big Foot Wallace Birthday Party
 830/663-5054

GOLIAD
 Market Day
 512/645-3563 or 800/848-8674

13
McALLEN
The Goodbye Girl
 956/631-2545

14
SAN ANTONIO
 Jon Nakamatsu Classical Piano Concert
 210/226-2891

16-19
McALLEN
 Texas Tropics Nature Festival
 800/250-2591

17
EAGLE PASS
 Dennis Carrizales Piano Concert
 830/773-8570

17-18
SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta Oyster Bake
 210/436-3324

17-26
SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta San Antonio
 210/227-5191 or 800/447-3372

18
PEARSALL
 Frio Pioneer Days Celebration
 830/334-9414

SAN ANTONIO
 Texas Children's Festival
 210/458-2300

19, 26
SAN ANTONIO
 Day in Old Mexico & Charreada
 210/554-4575

21-24
SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta Mariachi Festival
 210/227-4262

22-26
EDINBURG
The Game of Love & Chance
 956/381-3581

23
SAN ANTONIO
The Magic School Bus
 210/340-4060

23-25
SAN ANTONIO
 Cactus & Xerophyte Show
 210/655-8959

The Return of the Chili Queens
 210/229-9905

24-25
McALLEN
 International Spring Fiesta
 956/682-3103

26
SAN ANTONIO
 Bowie Street Blues
 210/458-2300

28-May 30
SAN ANTONIO
The Wind in the Willows
 210/227-2751

29
SAN ANTONIO
Mark Twain Tonight
 210/226-2891

30-May 3
SAN ANTONIO
 Team Roping
 210/698-3300

Hill Country

1-30
MASON
 Country Lanes Bluebonnet Drives
 915/347-5758

2-5
AUSTIN
 Texas Hill Country Wine and Food Festival
 512/329-0770

3-5
BIG LAKE
 Bluegrass Festival
 915/884-2041

4
AUSTIN
 UT Longhorn Band Concert
 512/471-4093

DEVINE
The Best of Broadway
 830/663-2739

GEORGETOWN
 Saddle Series
 512/259-4161

HONDO
 Hootenanny
 830/426-3438

LAMPASAS
 Bluebonnet Fair & Farm Heritage Day
 512/556-5172

WIMBERLEY
 Market Day at Lions Field
 512/847-2201

4-5
AUSTIN
Annie
 512/472-5470

NEW BRAUNFELS
 Historic Homes Tour
 830/609-4569

ROUND ROCK
 Quilt & Cloth Doll Show
 512/218-8402

SAN MARCOS
 Bluebonnet Kite Festival
 512/393-5900 or 800/782-7653

TAYLOR
 Fishing Tournament
 512/352-6311

4-5, 11-12
HIGHLAND LAKES
 Bluebonnet Trail Arts & Crafts
 915/388-6211

KINGSLAND
 Bluebonnet Trail Arts & Crafts
 915/388-4582

4-5, 11-12, 18-19, 25-26
STONEWALL
 Wildflowers & Wine Trail
 830/644-2681

9-19 AUSTIN Theatre Week 512/320-7168	11 GRUENE 10-K Run 210/930-3148	14-25 SAN MARCOS <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> 512/393-5900	18 BOERNE Antique Tractor & Steam Engine Show 830/249-8000	18 WIMBERLEY Cypress Creek Crawfish Boil 512/847-2515	19 SAN MARCOS <i>An Afternoon on Broadway</i> 512/393-5900	25-26 AUSTIN Nature Center Safari 512/451-3003	Big Bend Country	17-18 ODESSA American Heritage Days 915/332-7123
10-12 BURNET Bluebonnet Festival 512/756-4297	JUNCTION Easter Pageant 915/446-3190	17 ROUND ROCK <i>A Murder is Announced</i> 512/244-0440	COMFORT Heritage Foundation Homes Tour 830/995-3933	18-19 AUSTIN Antiques & Collectibles Sale 512/441-2828	19-25 AUSTIN Big Stinkin' Improv & Sketch Comedy Festival 512/912-7837	GEORGETOWN Viking Fest 972/484-4562	1, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 25, 29	17-18, 23-25
KERRVILLE Easter Hill Country Bike Tour 830/792-3535	KERRVILLE Easter Festival 830/792-3535	17-18 AUSTIN Alicia de Larrocha with the Austin Symphony 512/476-6064	KERRVILLE Baltimore Consort 830/896-5727	Record Convention 512/288-7288	24-26 NEW BRAUNFELS Central Texas Golf Fest 830/379-6382	26 SAN MARCOS SWT Presidential Concert 512/393-5900	FORT STOCKTON St. Genevieve Winery Tour 915/336-8052	ODESSA <i>Hamlet</i> 915/332-1586
10-11, 17-18 GEORGETOWN <i>The Old Lady's Guide to Survival</i> 512/863-8979	TOW Wildflowers & Wine Trail 512/476-4477	17-19 FREDERICKSBURG Spring Herb Festival 830/997-8615	NEW BRAUNFELS Model Train Show 830/625-2656	Wildflower Days Festival 512/292-4200	WIMBERLEY Community Chorus Concert 512/847-2372	UVALDE El Progreso Homes Tour 830/278-2017	3-5, 24-26 LAJITAS Gourmet Raft Trip 210/821-5600	18 MIDLAND Hoopla 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament 915/683-3381 or 800/624-6435
11 CASTROVILLE Market Trail Day 830/931-2331	WIMBERLEY Easter Egg Hunt 512/847-9466	18 AUSTIN Paddle Fest 512/453-7378	Heart Walk 830/606-9622	FREDERICKSBURG Antique Show 830/995-2884	25 AUSTIN Eyeyore's Birthday Party 512/448-5160	30 AUSTIN Hurtin' and Cheatin' Songs 512/320-0022	4 EL PASO <i>After Sorrow (Viet Nam)</i> 915/541-4481	19 EL PASO Arts El Paso Arts & Letters Awards Gala 915/565-0500
FREDERICKSBURG Easter Fires Pageant 830/997-6523	YANCEY Market Trail Day 830/426-8654	18 BOERNE Garden Festival 830/249-4616	Homes Tour 830/609-5562	GRUENE Market Days 830/629-6441	25 AUSTIN Birthdays Party 512/448-5160	EL PASO Arts El Paso Arts & Letters Awards Gala 915/565-0500	MIDLAND Symphony 915/563-0921	MIDLAND Opera in the Park 915/684-8244
FREDERICKSBURG Easter Fires Pageant 830/997-6523	11-12 BURNET Confederate Air Force Bluebonnet Air Show 512/756-2226	18 STONEWALL Wildflower Day 830/644-2252	SAN MARCOS Wildflower 10-K Walk 512/396-4463	18-25 GOLDTHWAITE Texas Friendship Wagon Train 915/648-3356	25 BULVERDE Craft Show 830/438-7439	30-May 2 KERRVILLE The Senior Games 830/896-4263	16-18 ODESSA Toast to Odessa 915/362-2329	23 EL PASO Festival of Dance 915/544-8130
GEORGETOWN Grand Ole Opry 512/869-7469	GEORGETOWN Easter Pageant 512/930-4649	WIMBERLEY Celebration of the Arts 512/847-2201	STONWALL Wildflower Day 830/644-2252	19 AUSTIN Schlotzsky's Bun Run/Walk 512/472-3254	GOLDTHWAITE Grand Central Texas Cabrito Cookoff 915/648-2556	SAN MARCOS Viva! Cinco de Mayo 512/396-2495	17-18 EL PASO El Paso Chorale 915/532-4661	24-26 EL PASO Quadracentennial 400th Thanksgiving Celebration 915/534-0677 or 800/351-6024
Market Day 512/863-6101	NEW BRAUNFELS Arts & Crafts Show 830/698-0811	WIMBERLEY Community Chorale Concert 830/907-2991	WIMBERLEY Country Fair 512/847-2201	NEW BRAUNFELS Community Chorale Concert 830/907-2991	LAGO VISTA Chili Cookoff and Funstival 512/267-1161 or 800/288-1882			

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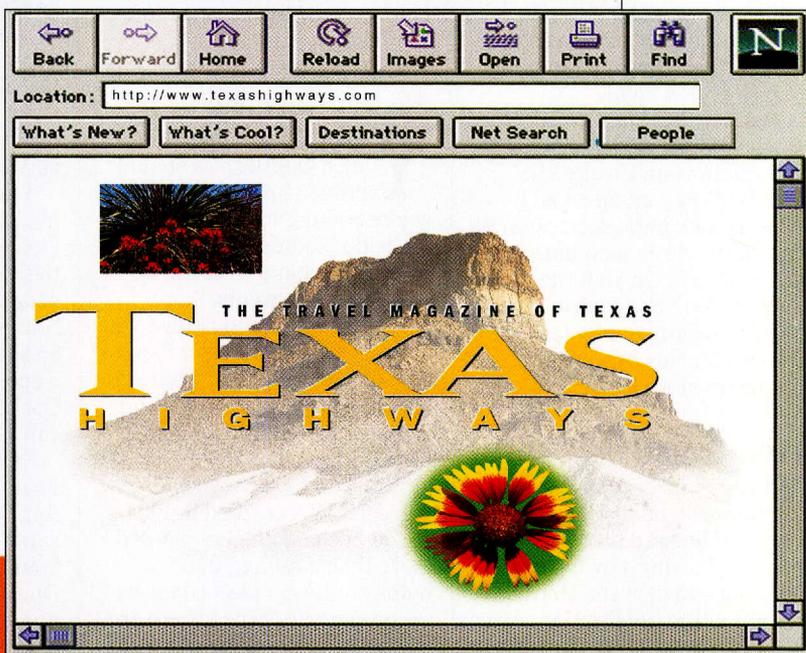
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Buñuelo Bravura

As San Antonio friends Tony Specia and David Carter watched their city transform itself in preparation for the 1968 World's Fair, they knew they'd like to take part in the historic event. Tony and his wife, Mary Ellen, had long enjoyed the crispy Mexican pastries called buñuelos, made from a recipe handed down by Mary Ellen's great-grandmother. So when Tony and David set up a buñuelo booth near the U.S. pavilion, they expected to have a hit, but they never dreamed they'd still be in business 30 years later.

Today, three full-time employees at HemisFair Original Buñuelos make thousands of the cinnamon-and-sugar-dusted delicacies a day, selling them to hotels, restaurants, and shops across San Antonio. The treats have traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Smithsonian Institution's folklife festival, sweetened the smile of former President Gerald Ford, and stolen the show at many a fiesta, holiday party, and wedding (where they're rumored to bring good luck).

Buñuelo boosters can drop by the downtown factory (at 108 Auditorium Circle; 210/223-3424) to pick up a batch (the six-inch buñuelos cost \$7.95 for 25, the three-inch ones cost \$8.50 for 50). Or, visit the north store at 5917 San Pedro; 210/341-6143. Out-of-town fans can order buñuelos by mail; call the north store for details.

Folk Traditions

If you're in Corpus Christi the weekend of March 28-29, you'll be hard-pressed to find a more pleasing way to spend your days than at the Heritage Park Folklife Celebration. After all, you'll have a warming spring sun, the scent of the ocean in the air, jaunty accordions or reedy Andean flutes making

melodies, and exotic snacks on your lunch menu. That's not to mention crafts and talents to admire, dances to be done, and songs to be sung.

Each day, thousands of fest-goers can watch devotees practice more than 20 folk traditions ranging from piñata making to folk medicine, enjoy live performances from groups as diverse as Panamanian folklórico dancers and Scottish bagpipers, and learn about the folkways of the world's many cultures.

Admission is free. Write to the Corpus Christi Multicultural Center, 1581 N. Chaparral, Corpus Christi 78401, or call 512/883-0639.



A participant at Corpus Christi's 1997 Heritage Park Folklife Celebration demonstrates Indian hand-painting.

Secret Gardens

Yes, it's true. The spring 1998 wildflowers should prove topnotch. While you're waiting for those first roadside blooms, celebrate spring's harbingers at the following flower events.

In Gladewater, don't miss the once-a-year explosion of blooms at Mrs. Lee's Garden, where 20 acres of dazzling daffodils and an acre of jonquils draw admirers from far and wide. After her husband, oil baron and developer T.W. Lee, died in 1954, Helen Lee and helpers planted more than a million daffodil bulbs on the couple's Gladewater property. Because there are no paved roads and the flowers bloom on their own schedule, be sure to verify road and flower conditions in advance. Mrs.



Texas-born photographer Erwin Smith captured the nuances of range life in this century's early decades. See some 100 of his finest prints, including *Odd Jobs in Camp* (1910), at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth through May 10.

Lee's Garden usually welcomes visitors mid-February through mid-March, and admission is free. (Bring a picnic!) Write to the Helen Lee Foundation, 21600 C.R. 3103, Gladewater 75647, or call 903/845-5780.

During *Dallas Blooms 1998: A World of Flowers* (Mar. 7-Apr. 12) at the 66-acre Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, flower-lovers can swoon to nearly a million azaleas, as well as daffodils, magnolias, poppies, dogwoods, tulips, cherry blossoms, and exotic plants from Mexico, Turkey, and the Near East.

The brainchild of 1930s community leader Everette Lee DeGoyer, the arboretum boasts the largest public collection of azaleas in the United States. Admission: \$6, \$3 ages 6-12, \$5 age 65 and older, free age 5 and younger. Write to 8617 Garland Rd., Dallas 75218, or call 214/327-4901 or 327-8263.

Palestine's Dogwood Trails Festival (Mar. 20-22, 27-29, and Apr. 3-5) celebrates the area's snow-white blossoms with a bounty of activities in Davey Dogwood Park. In 1944, Palestine oilman M.A. Davey purchased a large tract and deeded it as park land to the city. Today, almost six miles of trails wind through the park, where

thousands of dogwood trees bloom profusely in early spring. Besides walking and driving tours of the gorgeous dogwoods, the festival also features carnivals, craft and food booths, bazaars, dances, courthouse tours, dogwood tree giveaways, parades, and live music. Most events are free. Write to Box 1346, Palestine 75802, or call 903/723-3014 or 729-6066.

A Range Life

Introduced to ranch life as a young boy, Texas-born photographer Erwin Evans Smith had made sketches of cowhands and Indians long before he secured his first camera. As a teenager, and after studying sculpture in Chicago as a young adult, he worked as a regular cowhand, but it must have been a strange sight: Toting his camera as well as his lariat, he documented everything he saw, acutely aware that the range life he loved was fast disappearing.

At the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth through May 10, *Imagining the Open Range: Erwin E. Smith, Cowboy Photographer* presents nearly 100 of Smith's finest black-and-white photographs, taken between 1905-1912. As he photographed on ranches throughout the

Southwest, Smith captured legendary ranch owners, trail bosses, bronc-busters, and cutting horses. He documented the full scope of ranch life, including daily chores, recreation, meals, and fall and spring roundups. Not only does his work convey the factual details of the period (he encouraged his subjects to remain faithful to reality, i.e., remaining unshaven or muddy), but it also evokes the romance Smith felt for the open range.

The Amon Carter Museum, at 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. in Fort Worth (76107) opens Tue-Sat 10-5 and Sun noon-5. Admission is free. Wheelchair accessible. Call 817/738-1933. Web site: www.cartermuseum.org.

By the Way...

Kingsville's annual **South Texas Ranching Heritage Festival** (Mar. 6-8 this year) has celebrated traditional cowboy and ranching skills since 1993. Held mostly on the Conner Museum grounds and in Dick Kleberg Park, the event highlights horsehair braiders, blacksmiths, saddlemakers, and other artisans; cowboy poets, musicians, historians, storytellers, and cooks; demonstrations of livestock penning, roping, and cutting; plus an exhibit at the Conner of the late Ace Reid's *Cowpokes* cartoons.... call 512/593-2810 or 593-2146.

The **McAllen International Museum** presents the whimsical exhibit **HELLO AGAIN: Recycled Art &**

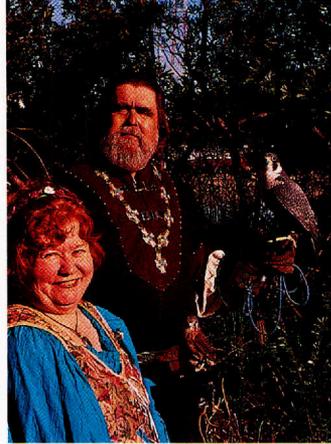
Design through May 17. The hundreds of items on display range from purely-for-fun conversation pieces (shoes made from kitchen supplies, a chaise lounge fashioned from aluminum cans) to practical examples of reinvention (a purse woven from telephone wire, a hibachi made of Mexican license plates, and a dinette set made from discarded rubber).... call 956/682-1564.

In 1967, 20-year-old Jann Wener published the first issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine, a music-oriented biweekly that would, in the coming decades, chronicle pop culture of all forms. **The Rolling Stone Covers Tour**, which comes to Austin's Texas Union Ballroom (on the UT campus) March 3-5, showcases 30 years of the magazine's history and includes correspondence from contributing writers and photographers, as well as memorabilia from Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.... call 512/475-6630.

To enjoy spring's wildflowers in style, climb aboard the **Austin Steam Train Association's Hill Country Flyer**, which makes round-trip excursions from Cedar Park to Burnet on weekends beginning March 14 through December. Getting there—enjoying the view, strolling from car to car—is half the fun. Once in Burnet, you'll find diversions well worth the three-hour stay, including a dozen restaurants, 40 or so shops, a park with playscape and duck pond, and

even an Old West shootout as an "all aboard" summons. Spring and summer trips depart at 10 a.m. and return about 5:30; adult tickets range from \$24 to \$38.... call 512/477-8468. (Ask about the *Twilight Flyer* and the Austin-based *River City Flyer*, too.)

DALLAS MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



Falconers Ann and Pierre Bradshaw show off their avocation at the Dallas Museum of Natural History's falcon show.

From March 29 to May 17 at the Dallas Museum of Art, **Monet: A Turning Point** highlights some 30 works painted by the artist, some during a personally tumultuous period between 1878 and 1881. Reacting to the illness of his first wife, Camille (who died in 1882), Monet experimented with moody, recurring themes (such as in his Vétheuil winter scenes series) and the ways light fell upon landscapes.... call 214/922-1200.

On March 2, amid the historical structures in downtown Houston's Sam Houston Park, some 40 Texas Army members dressed in period clothing will reenact the 1836 meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos that led to the signing of the **Texas Declaration of Independence**. The modern-day Texas Army dates to 1969, when Governor Preston Smith reactivated the organization as a ceremonial group dedicated to perpetuating the memory of early Texas heroes.... call 713/527-0568.

For information on emergency road conditions in Texas, call 800/452-9292.

Clogging, a dance form with roots in Appalachian folk dancing, boasts Texas devotees of all ages who enjoy it for camaraderie, exercise, and low-key competition. At the **19th Annual Texas Cloggers Rally** on March 6-7 in Waco, dancers of all skill levels can learn everything from beginning steps to intricate routines. You can show off your fancy footwork at a dance on Friday evening and enjoy a 30-team exhibition on Saturday.... call 512/312-0201.

With some 50 dioramas depicting Texas animals and their habitats, an open-to-the-public paleontology lab, a live-insect collection, and extensive scientific bird and mammal collections, the **Dallas Museum of Natural History** deserves a spot on your Dallas itinerary. Through May 24, **Falcons: Back From the Brink... at 200 MPH!** tells the story of a species that was once dangerously close to extinction. Photos, interactive displays, mounted specimens, artwork, videos, and live birds show why falcons have been revered for centuries.... call 214/421-3466. Web site: www.dallasdino.org.

Through March 31, more than 70 galleries in Houston host photographic exhibits as part of **FotoFest '98: Discoveries & Collaborations: A City-wide Celebration of Photography**. (See "Picture This," March 1996.) Most venues are concentrated in the Market Square and Rice University areas. Visitors will see work by artists from countries as far-flung as South Africa, Mexico, Peru, and Vietnam, as well as the United States. Throughout the month, artists' discussions, art and architecture tours, and outdoor concerts also take place.... call 713/529-9140. Web site: www.fotofest.org.



MUSEO THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA, MADRID

Claude Monet painted *The Débauche at Vétheuil* in 1880. See many of the artist's works from this period at the Dallas Museum of Art, March 29-May 17.

TEXCETERA brings you readers' tips and timely travel tidbits. Because we're unable to check out every item in "Readers Recommend," and because details can change, we encourage you to call ahead for more information. When we mention new places, products, or publications, we try to include only those with promise; keep in mind, however, that problems can occur with start-up businesses.

If you run across a noteworthy Lone Star attraction, restaurant, event, or product, we'd love to hear about it. Write to Readers Recommend, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: editors@texashighways.com. Remember that space constraints prevent us from running every suggestion we receive. We reserve the right to edit items.

READERS RECOMMEND...

I agree that Stubbs [in Austin], mentioned in November's For the Road, is great for barbecue and music on a Sunday. But for a Saturday evening, I recommend **El Sol Y La Luna** restaurant on South Congress Avenue for great Tex-Mex cuisine and a unique offering of Latin American music by the band Centzontle.

Agnes G. Maddux, San Antonio
El Sol Y La Luna is at 1224 South Congress Avenue in Austin; call 512/444-7770 for performance dates and times for Centzontle and other bands.

Folks traveling US 377, US 67, or just off of I-20 will want to stop by the beautiful **Stephenville Museum** (a complex of 11 historic structures dating to 1867), nestled on the banks of the Bosque River. Docents are on the grounds Friday through Sunday from 2-5, or you can arrange a tour at other times.

Lavinia Lohrmann, Stephenville
The Stephenville Museum is at 525 East Washington Street in Stephenville; 254/965-5880 or 968-4729.

ENCHANTING CHANDOR

Closed to the public for more than 20 years, **Chandor Gardens** in **Weatherford** once again welcomes visitors. The showplace once belonged to internationally acclaimed English portraitist Douglas Granville Chandor, who, in the mid-1930s, came to Texas with his second wife,

Ina K. Hill, a Weatherford native. On the family's four-acre estate in Weatherford, Chandor created a living masterpiece in tribute to Ina.

The gardens, restored over the last three years by new owners Melody and Chuck Bradford, are laid out in 18th-Century English style. Stone pathways line an English lawn bowling green; climbing roses ascend a lofty pergola. Feast your senses on a 40-foot waterfall, made of stones weighing up to 15 tons, and on the brightly blooming meditation "garden room." Chinese sculptural motifs—like Kuan-Yin, the goddess of peace, who watches over the rose garden—enrich the sylvan setting.

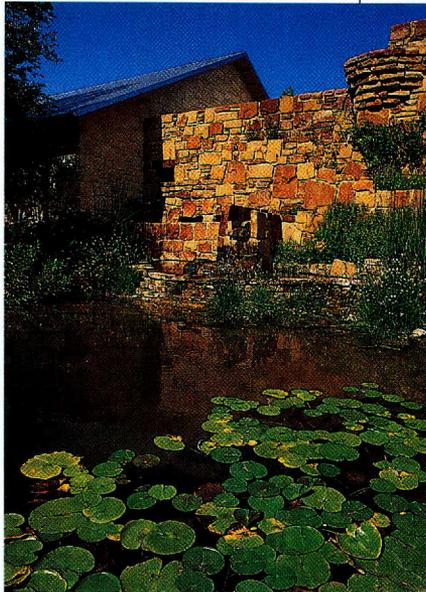
Public tours of the gardens are on Sundays from 1-5 (March through November). Visitors must park at the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce, where transportation to and from the gardens is provided every 30 minutes. Tickets cost \$6, \$4 for children 12 and younger. Private group tours on weekdays are available by appointment. Write to Box 218, Weatherford 76086; 817/613-1700 or 594-3801.

NOAH'S STILL AFLOAT

Noah's Land Wildlife Park near **Gonzales** has reopened, and, two by two (and then some), the animals have returned. See elephants, rhinos, giraffes, lions, tigers, capuchin monkeys, kudus, cougars, and more. At press time, new owner Cheryl

Morgan said a baby giraffe was on its way to the park. You can drive through some 275 acres, walk through a zoo, or get up close and personal in the petting zoo. The RV park has reopened, too. Write to Rt. 1, Box 209, Harwood 78632; 800/725-NOAH.

MICHAEL A. MURPHY



On March 29, the National Wildflower Research Center in Austin will officially change its name to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

MARCH GOINGS-ON

Fresh from a \$6 million makeover, **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park**, between Brenham and Navasota, will host its annual **Texas Independence Day Celebration** on February 28 and March 1. The activity-packed weekend includes a dedication ceremony and tours of the new visitor center, living history programs, live music, and crafts. The afternoon of March 1, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock gives the keynote address before event-goers eat up a Texas-size cake. *Childhood in Texas*, a new exhibit at the Star of the Republic Museum, showcases antique dolls and toys. Write to the park at Box 305, Washington 77880;

409/878-2214. You can call the museum at 409/878-2461.

On March 29, the **National Wildflower Research Center** in Austin will become the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**. The name change "...honors our founder and leader, whose profound vision is vitally important

to the future of our country, our continent, and, indeed, our world," says Ellen Temple, president of the center's board of directors. Write to 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin 78739; 512/292-4200.

NATIONAL NEWS

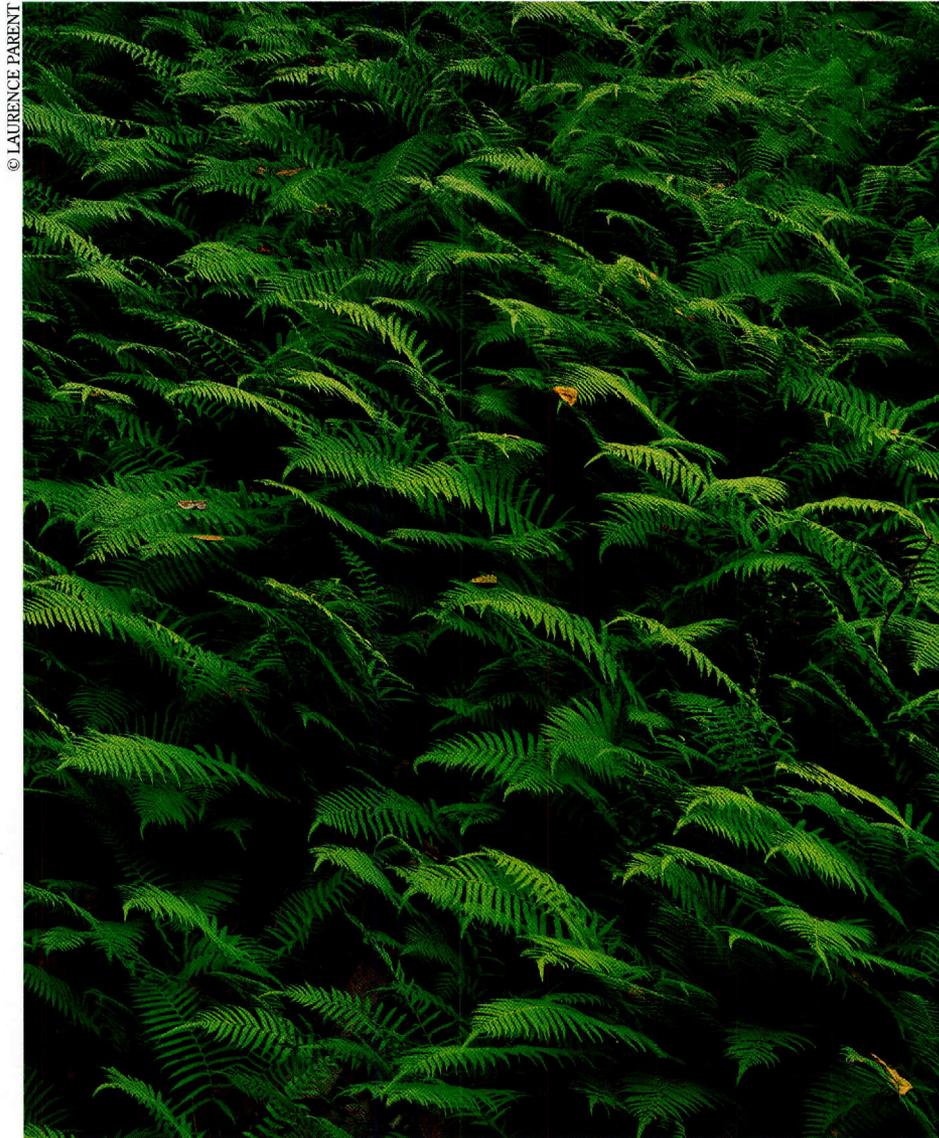
Bastrop State Park in Bastrop County (512/321-2101) and **Palmito Ranch Battlefield** in Cameron County (956/546-3721) number among 21 sites across the nation recently designated as National Historic Landmarks by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Arlington is among three U.S. cities recently chosen as permanent exhibit sites for the **Smithsonian Institution** outside Washington, D.C., and New York. Scheduled to open within six years, the \$60-\$80 million Arlington branch, funded by private donations, will be known as the Origins of the Southwest museum.

Down the Road

The April issue will overflow with 18 pages of flowery photos as well as tips from experts on wildflower photography. We'll go straight to the source with a story on Wildseed Farms, and then tout the arts in Lubbock. And by the way, do you know where the first Thanksgiving was held? Stay tuned....

WINDOW ON TEXAS



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Spring renews the rich green of Southern shield ferns, which proliferate at Davis Hill State Park north of Liberty in East Texas. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department acquired the as-yet-undeveloped park in 1985. Groups may visit by prior arrangement only, through the TPWD Region 4 office (281/471-3200).

