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TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

# TEXAS

## HIGHWAYS

DECEMBER 2000

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Congratulations to **Jennifer Salo** of Plano for winning our **Where in Texas Are You?** contest, announced in the September 2000 Special Issue. Jennifer and her husband, **Ed Salo**, are equally responsible for correctly identifying the **Tejas Warrior**, dedicated at the Texas Hall of State in Dallas' Fair Park for the 1936 Texas Centennial.

Although Jennifer and Ed are new to Texas (they moved from Nashville to Plano in June), they knew the answer because they had visited Fair Park shortly after they arrived here. When they received the September issue, they recognized the scene immediately. Plus, they had purchased some old copies of *Texas Highways* from the Plano library, and one of those was the December 1995 issue with the warrior on the cover. They found all the details there.

Thanks to the **Fredericksburg Convention & Visitor Bureau**, First Class Bed & Breakfast Reservation Service, The Plateau Café, Fredericksburg Winery, Wildseed Farms, the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Pioneer Museum Complex, and the Fredericksburg Herb Farm, Jennifer and Ed should have a wonderful stay in Fredericksburg.

"If we can wait that long," Jennifer said, "we want to go to Fredericksburg in the spring, when the wildflowers are blooming. We had planned to visit the Hill Country then."

Jennifer and Ed both have master's degrees in history from Middle Tennessee State University. They moved to Plano so that Ed could take a job as a historian with the Cultural Resources Department of Geo-Marine, Inc., an engineering and environmental services company.

The couple likes to travel. "We try to go somewhere in Texas every week-

end, especially since it's cooler now," said Jennifer. "We especially like historical sites and museums. Ed and I are so excited about winning this weekend in Fredericksburg..."

Have you noticed cows cropping up in strange places? Like some of our urban areas? See the item on page 46 about **WaCows: A Mooving Experience**, a fundraising project for the **Art Center of Waco**. The Waco herd consists of life-size cows made of a reinforced fiberglass-polyester material that have been painted and decorated by Texas artists. Bob "Daddy-O" Wade of Austin, for instance, designed a two-headed beast named Neck and Neck. Other cows boast names like *Mooving Pictures*, *Cowfish*, *Día de los Mooertos*, and *Holy Cow*. Between May and September, the city of Plainview also rounded up painted cows—41 of them—to celebrate its **Plainview Cattle Drive** on September 16.

Where did this beastly public art originate? If you rule out notable early versions like the cave paintings at Altamira and Lascaux, and the infamous golden calf of the Israelites, the cow craze came to Chicago two years ago from Zurich, Switzerland, and has since engendered New York City's *CowParade*, Toronto's *Moose in the City*, and Cincinnati's *Big Pig Gig*. Now there's talk of Albuquerque being overrun with dinosaurs, and we have heard rumors of a profusion of Pegasuses in Dallas. Where will the moo-mania end? Stay tuned. I have a feeling that Texas has not seen the end of the critter craze....

Happy Holidays!



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Cowtown's legendary Longhorns have come home—a cattle drive now takes place twice daily in the Stockyards National Historic District

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### TWINKLE! TWINKLE!

Drive-through holiday-lights parks are taking light shows to new levels. Check out the offerings in your area and start a new family tradition

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### ROUNDING UP HISTORY AT GEORGE RANCH HISTORICAL PARK

Owned by four generations of the same family, the George Ranch, near Richmond, has a rich heritage. A 480-acre living-history museum at its center offers daily activities and holiday events

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One of President Lyndon Johnson's legacies is the community Christmas party at the LBJ State and National Historical Parks. The event has expanded over the years, but the warmth remains

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Designed almost 90 years ago, the first River Walk proves elusive today. But Alamo City aficionados will find rediscovering its treasures well worth the challenge

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Whether you're looking for a story or a special recipe, our annual index makes the search a snap

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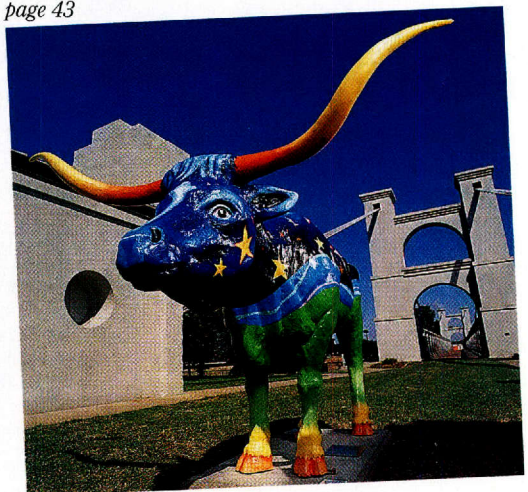
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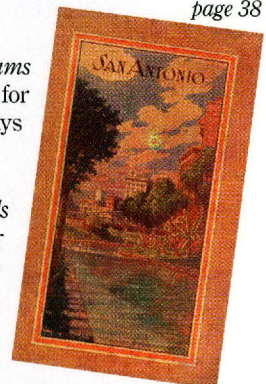
57 WINDOW ON TEXAS



© GEORGE HOSEK



Candles illuminate an 1830s holiday scene at the George Ranch Historical Park during Campfire Christmas. The event also features cowboys in an 1890s chuck-wagon setting. (See story, page 16.)



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### ABOUT OUR COVERS

**FRONT**—Independence Hall, at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park, glows during the park's annual Candlelight Christmas. For more holiday scenes from state parks across Texas, see our story on page 28. *Photo by J. Griffis Smith*

**BACK**—In 1999, Amber Killian (left) and Debra Fry of the George Ranch Historical Park inspected the tree that would grace the Davis House during Campfire Christmas. To learn more, turn to page 16. *Photo © George Hosek*

## Hurricane Hero

The article about the 1900 Galveston Storm [August issue] reminded me of a book called *The Last Stitch* by William L. Crosthwait, M.D. (my husband's great-grandfather), and Ernest G. Fischer. When the hurricane struck, Dr. Crosthwait, a native Texan, was in the northeastern U.S.; however, he immediately found a way to be a part of the rescue team. Entrusted with a check for \$50,000 from William Randolph Hearst, he headed south. [The book includes] his account of the destruction that he found in Galveston and the effect it had on him. I am proud to say that I am related to someone who came to the aid of a destroyed community.

CAROLINE BENNETT  
Hewitt

## A Capitol Concert

Our family has greatly enjoyed the free holiday harp concert held annually in the State Capitol rotunda. The 20 harpists, ages seven to 18, [comprise] the Young Texas Harp Ensemble, directed by Delaine Fedson and sponsored by the office of Senator Gonzalo Barrientos and the Clairmont Retirement Community. This year's concert will be held at noon on December 21. The spectacle of these young musicians with their beautiful instruments ringing through the halls of our great capitol is an event every Texan should enjoy.

LAURA HANSEN  
Austin, via email

## Regimental Wake-up Call

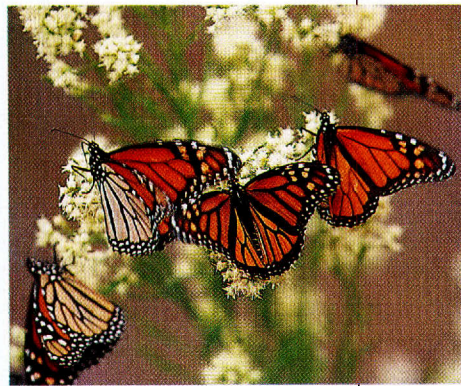
Some statements in [November's Speaking of Texas] regarding the famous Buffalo Soldiers—while not specifically wrong—need a little “policing-up,” as we used to say in the Old Marine Corps. There were actually four Buffalo Soldier regiments in the United States Army after the Civil War. They were not “divisions,” but regiments, which are components of divisions. (The postwar Army would have been strained to produce *one* tactical division.)

All four regiments served on the [Texas] frontier, as well as in the Spanish-American War. The mounted regiments—as you stated—were the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry, and the foot regiments were the 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry.

These exemplary soldiers were a credit to the U.S. Army and their country, and they deserve more accurate treatment in the press. But your story on the frontier forts was great! Keep up the good work.

KIRK MCCORD  
Round Rock, via email

Ed. Note: *Thanks for “policing-up” the details, Mr. McCord. We appreciate your help in honoring the legacy of these remarkable soldiers.*



MICHAEL A. MURPHY

**No masquerading monarchs here—these beauties are the real deal. But you won't see many in Texas during December—monarchs winter in Mexico.**

## All That Flutters...

Here I am, totally immersed in the October issue, wishing I lived near the Big Bend country so I could ride the Rio Grande. By the time I get to page 39, my armchair travels are lulling me into a warm, fuzzy feeling. Then, bingo! There at the top is [a photo of] one of my favorite Lepidoptera species: *Agraulis vanillae*, better known as the Gulf fritillary, a resident

species of the Southern U.S. and very common in our butterfly garden. [It has] no resemblance whatsoever to the monarch, as the caption would have us believe.

HARVEY IMPLON  
Marshall, via email

I enjoyed “Road Trip Weekend” [October issue]. The photograph of a “migrating monarch” explains why San Antonians have seen few monarchs this fall. These clever butterflies are traveling incognito as Gulf fritillaries.

AGNES G. MADDUX  
San Antonio

Ed. Note: *Our fritillary flub caught the attention of many butterfly-lovers. Thanks to all of you who wrote to help us get our Lepidoptera in order.*

## County News

In “Comanche at Heart” [October Speaking of Texas], Randy Mallory states that Cynthia Ann Parker was captured in Navasota County and that the reconstructed fort stands on the site of Cynthia

Ann's capture. The fort [see photo, page 45] is in Limestone County, not Navasota County. However, the site is close to the Navasota River; maybe that is what the author meant.

My grandfather Charles Randolph Best was with the fort maintenance crew in the late '50s and early '60s. I recall as a child seeing the trailers that the convicts stayed in while they were reconstructing the fort.

GARY BEST  
Granbury

Ed. Note: *You're right, Mr. Best, but it wasn't the author who*

*added a new county to the 254 Texas already has. It was strictly an editing error.*

## Mesquite Memories

Your July article on mesquite brought back so many fond memories. Although I have not lived in Texas for 34 years, I, of course, still consider myself a Texan. I was born in Weslaco and lived in many other South Texas towns. I now live in another beautiful part of the country—Santa Fe, New Mexico. But for some reason, the awesome snows in the winter, the beautiful, red-breasted robin that wakes me in the morning, and the smell of the pines do not quench my longing for the sounds of the Gulf of Mexico, the serenade of the mockingbird, and a picnic and nap on “carpet grass” under the rustling leaves of a majestic mesquite tree. Thank you.

JAN CLEMENTS  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

## What's in a Name?

I read with great interest the Speaking of Texas item “Can It” in your June issue. When I was born in 1923, my mother, Sarah Wheeler, named me Edna Merle. The “Edna” was for Mrs. Edna Westbrook Trigg, the home demonstration agent in Denton County, where we lived. I never liked the name Edna Merle, especially the “Edna” part. I always asked my mother why she gave me such an ugly name. She would tell me that if I knew Mrs. Trigg and what a lovely lady she was, I would like my name. In just a few days, I will be 77 years old, and finally, thanks to your article, I have learned something about the lady for whom I was named. Thank you.

MRS. B.C. (MERLE) FOGLE  
San Angelo

## Dude Ranch Update

Readers: *We have just learned that one of the dude ranches featured in our June issue, the Bald Eagle Ranch in Bandera, closed shortly after we went to press with that issue.*

**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. Write to Letters Editor, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009, or fax 512/486-5879. Email: editors@texashighways.com.**

## Crème de la Crème Brulay

**S**outheast of Brownsville along FM 1419 stands the entrance to what was one of the most prosperous and innovative plantations in 19th-Century Texas: Rio Grande Plantation, founded by Frenchman George Brulay.

In 1853, Brulay left his native Paris and headed overseas. After spending time in South America, he eventually arrived in Matamoros, Mexico, where he and his brother Arthur set up a delivery service for hauling goods by mule between Matamoros and Monterrey. (The brothers also shipped goods by sailboat, and on one voyage, Arthur was lost at sea.) By 1870, Brulay had accumulated enough money to buy land. For \$2,000, he bought several hundred acres of the *Agostadero del Espiritu* tract, on the Rio Grande, nine miles downriver from Brownsville.

Brulay's business partner in Matamoros, Pierre Boesch, had a beautiful sister named Eugenia, who had come to Texas from Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. George fell in love with her immediately, and, over Pierre's objections, the couple married in March 1876 and settled in a one-room cabin on the plantation.

If living accommodations proved primitive for a time, plantation operations were more advanced. After receiving one of the first permits issued for irrigation from the river, Brulay had canals built from the Rio Grande to water his fields. He was the first in the area to plant cotton. As his cotton venture prospered, he expanded the cabin to accommodate his growing family and diversified his crops to include sugarcane, which he and a partner refined and made into the Mexican confection *piloncillo*.

A great lover of innovations, Brulay installed the area's first steam-pump irrigation system, built a small railroad for transporting sugarcane from the fields to his refinery, and imported Egyptian date palms to plant along the homestead's entry drive.

**E**steemed Texas naturalist Gideon Lincecum (1793-1874) is buried in the State Cemetery in Austin.

COURTESY CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, UT AUSTIN

Over the years, the Brulays had five children. In 1891, the family moved to Brownsville and built a three-story, French-style mansion that had running water and the city's first telephone. (George had the phone connected to the local theater so he and Eugenia could listen to the opera when they couldn't attend in person.)

Brulay employed hundreds of laborers to keep his farm running, and in its heyday, Rio Grande Plantation boasted a store, brick kiln, bakery, blacksmith shop, and schoolhouse. George Brulay Jr. ran the sugarcane plantation for several years after George Sr.'s death in 1905.

—Sally Spencer,  
*Holly Springs, Mississippi*

## Rugged Riders

**C**ircuit riders did most of the preaching in Texas' early days. On sturdy horses, they crisscrossed the frontier to take the gospel to those who might not have heard it otherwise. To carry out their mission, they braved horse thieves, sudden storms, wild animals, swollen streams, quicksand, powerful winds, and saddle sores. Exposure to insects, impure water, and the sick made them susceptible to malaria, cholera, and typhoid fever. They ate what was offered, slept where they could, and preached to whoever would listen.

By necessity, circuit riders traveled light. Standard equipment in saddlebags included a Bible, a hymnal, writing materials, and a few clothes and toiletries. Behind the saddle, they carried a blanket or buffalo robe. Most also carried a rifle, pistol, and Bowie knife.

One of the last circuit riders in Texas, B.J. Forbes, preached for almost 60 years, riding the circuit (on his beloved mount, "Old Ollie") for almost three of those six decades. Forbes (1872-1954), who also taught school and served for seven years as a state legislator, is buried in Parker County.

—Bernice Maddux,  
*Weatherford*

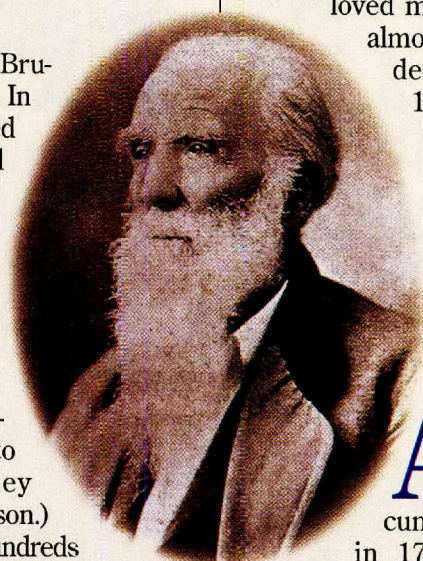
## Gideon's Gifts

**A** passionate lover of nature from childhood, Gideon Lincecum was born in Georgia in 1793. His connection with Texas began with a six-month exploration in 1835; in 1848, he settled his large family in Washington County. From there, he traveled about the state collecting grasses, insects, minerals, fossils, and Indian artifacts, which he sent to scientists and institutions all over the world, including the Smithsonian and the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris.

Of particular interest to Lincecum was the study of ants. His was the first intensive work on the Texas agricultural ant (probably what is today called the red harvester ant, *Pogonomyrmex* sp.). Although some scientists disputed his claims for years, and academicians deplored the self-taught naturalist's lack of scientific language, the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences unanimously elected him a Corresponding Member, an unusual honor for an amateur. Among his myriad pursuits, Lincecum also had a successful botanical medical practice.

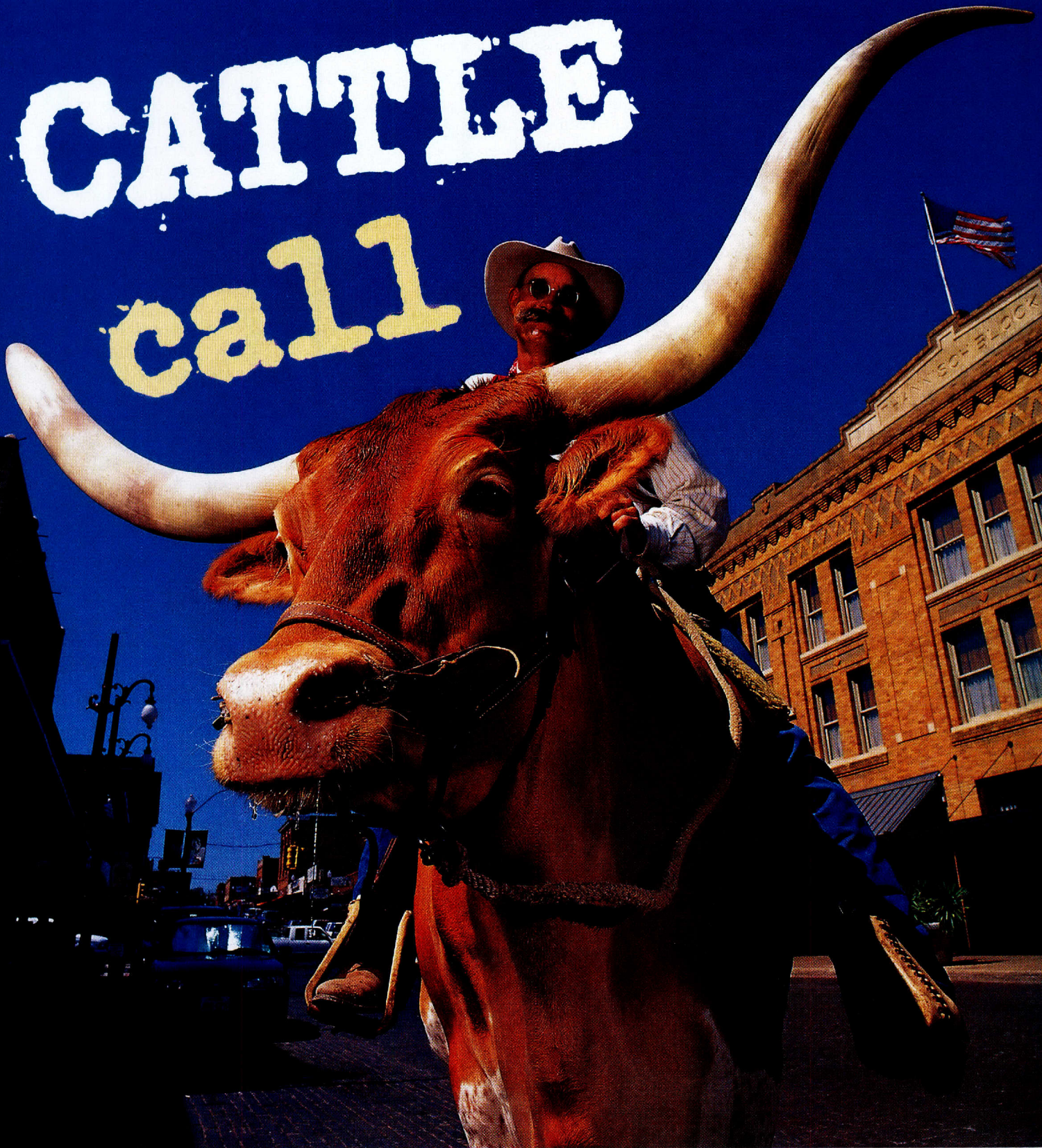
Highly respected by many eminent scientists, naturalists, and physicians, Lincecum exhibited a keen appreciation of all living creatures. He liked to remark, "How little people see of the things they are daily trampling over."

—Elizabeth W. Lewis, *Houston*



THE FORT WORTH HERD

# CATTLE call



By CANDACE LESLIE • Photographs by J. GRIFFIS SMITH

**M**IDMORNING at the Stockyards National Historic District in Fort Worth. A crowd gathers along Exchange Avenue. Ron Sitton, a seasoned cowboy in boots and broad-brimmed hat, hitches his pet Longhorn, Shiloh, to a shade tree and invites youngsters to climb up on the patient animal's back. Parents snap photos. Other cowhands lean down from their saddles and chat with folks in the crowd.

Suddenly, a piercing whistle announces the imminent arrival of the historic *Tarantula* train from Grapevine. The cowhands head back across the track to round up their herd of corralled cattle. The engine pulls its string of open-air cars into the Stockyards Station, and several hundred passengers climb down and join the growing crowd. They're about to witness living history, for as soon as the train pulls out, 15 Texas Longhorns will lumber down Exchange Avenue—just like in the old days.

"These are the best-kept steers in Texas," says top hand Chester Stidham. He should know. He has dealt with cattle just about all his life.

These Longhorns certainly enjoy easy work and reasonable hours. Around 11:30 every morning of the week, weather permitting, the Herd moseys down the main street of Fort Worth's Stockyards National Historic District to the Running FW Ranch, east of the Exchange Building, which has a convenient observation deck. At 4:00 in the afternoon, the cowhands round them up again and drive them back to the original corral. The twice-a-day parade delights folks of all ages, from old-time ranchers enjoying a bit of nostalgia to youngsters who have never seen a cow.

It is the only daily urban cattle drive in the world.

[FACING PAGE] Welcome to Cowtown! Ron Sitton rides his pet Texas Longhorn, Shiloh, in front of the Stockyards Hotel.

[RIGHT] The famous Fort Worth Herd takes one of its twice-daily strolls in the Stockyards National Historic District.

**T**he twice-a-day parade delights folks of all ages, from old-time ranchers enjoying a bit of nostalgia to youngsters who have never seen a cow.





[ABOVE] The Herd's top hand, Chester Stidham, provides the panache of a true Wild West cowboy.  
 [BELOW] Here they come, walking down the street. They get the funniest looks from everyone they meet.

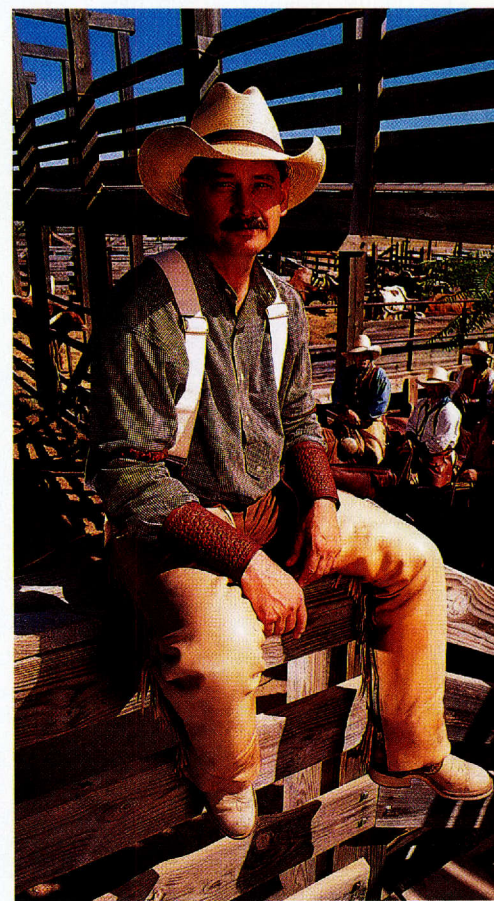


**A**LTHOUGH Fort Worth began a century-and-a-half ago as a military outpost along the Trinity River in North Texas, its real roots lie deep in the cattle industry. The city's "Cowtown" image took shape after the Civil War, when cattle were driven through North Texas along the Chisholm Trail to railroad shipping points in Kansas. Here, drivers picked up their final supplies and indulged in some last-minute socializing before setting out on the long, rough journey through untamed wilderness. When shipping by railroad supplanted the drives, cattle still had to come through Fort Worth to meet the trains north of town. Cowboys needed a place to pen the herds until they loaded them onto the cattle cars. So, in

1889, the Fort Worth Union Stock Yards were born. Meatpackers set up giant plants in town, and livestock shows and rodeos became an integral part of this prosperous "Wall Street of the West."

"Fifty million head came through the Fort Worth Stockyards over a 75-year period [1890-1965]," explains cattleman Tom B. Saunders, whose family has ranched in Texas as long as Fort Worth has been in existence. "In its heyday, Stockyard holding pens covered 250 acres."

By the middle of the 20th Century, though, the cattle boom had begun its slow decline. Eventually, the Stockyards, with their colorful history and distinct architecture, seemed doomed to become a place of memories only. Fortunately, Fort Worth folks aren't inclined to let valuable legacies die. In the mid-1970s, the city established the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District. Old cattle-industry buildings took on new lives as hotels, restaurants, shops, and museums. Tourists





came, seeking the romance of the Old West. They found it, all nicely gussied up, but two things were missing: the cowboys and the cattle.

**T**HE CITY finally filled that gap, too. On June 12, 1999, as part of Fort Worth's 150th birthday celebration, the entire cast of tried-and-true cowhands drove the city's first modern herd of Longhorns through the Stockyards District down to the banks of the Trinity River.

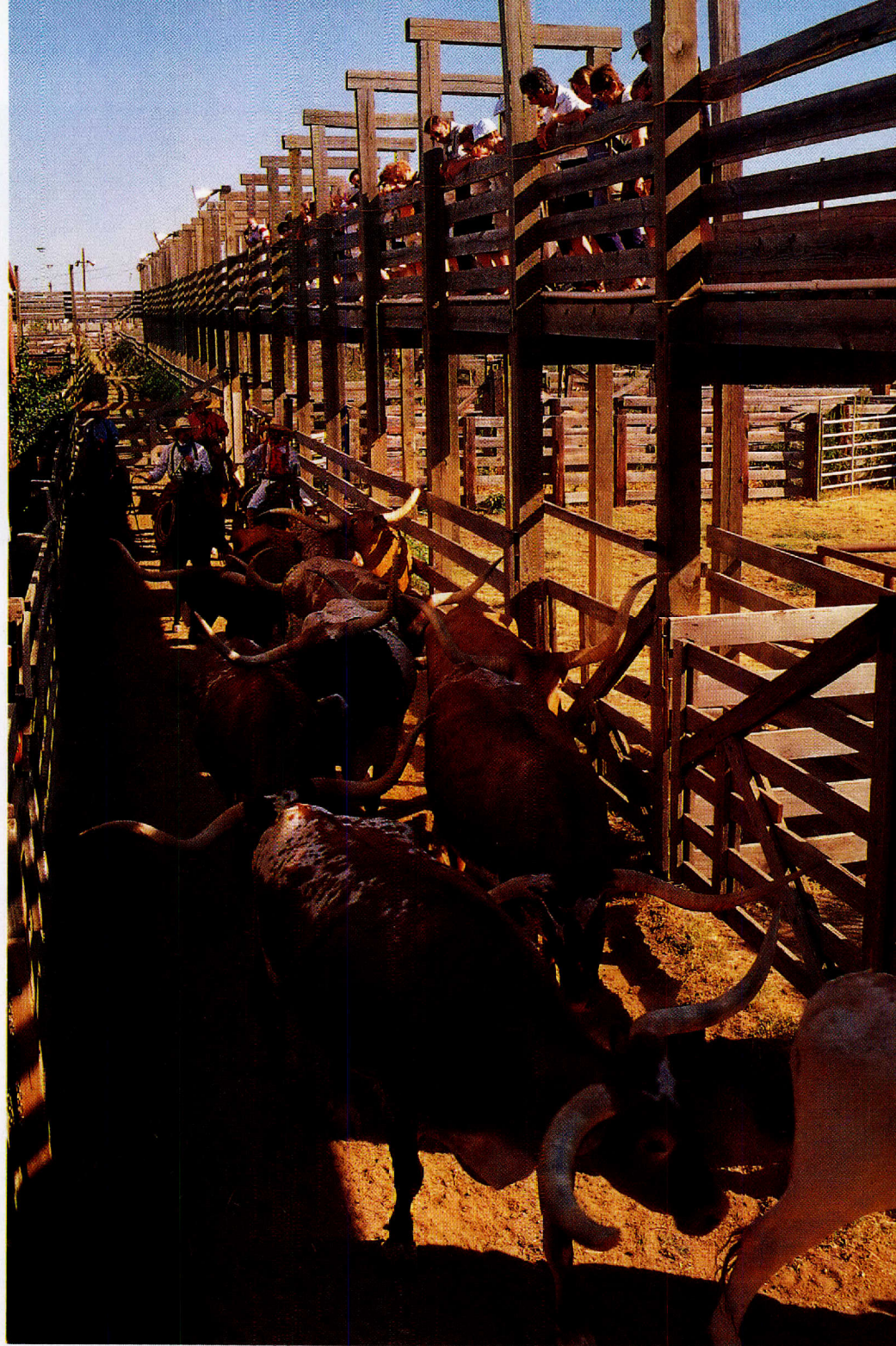
Tom Saunders, who as curator for the Herd is responsible for maintaining the authenticity of the program, delights in the public's response. "It is very dear to me, being able to bring the cattle back," he says. "People expect it of Fort Worth. It's the image of what Texas really is."

Each member of the prestigious core of cowhands exhibits stellar abilities with cattle, and, equally important, with people. The roster includes seven full-time professional cowpokes (one trail boss, two top hands, and four drovers) and six

part-time. They often meander around the Stockyards area, talk with visitors, explain their gear, and tell about the life of the cowhand. Some may even perform a rope trick or two or invite a youngster to pet a horse for the very first time.

These cowhands not only drive cattle, they also serve as teachers keeping alive the story of the American West. They're a fair representation of the genuine cowboy population: Hispanic, black, white, and Native American, as well as male and female. Each member's distinctive

**With his capable crew of professional cowhands in the background, trail boss Charlie Jones pauses at the Stockyards holding pens.**



**Stockyards visitors look down on the Herd from a convenient viewing walkway as cowboys head 'em up and drive 'em through.**

dress and individual personality adds to the color and authenticity of the twice-daily drives.

"I am so proud of this crew," says Dennis Merrell, the drive's first trail boss. "All little boys grow up wanting to be cowboys," he believes, reflecting on his own life journey. After years in a va-

riety of careers, from flying as a demo pilot to working as head wrangler for a youth camp, he found this job his most satisfying. "It definitely has the biggest challenges," he says, "and the biggest rewards."

African-American cowboy Chester Stidham enjoys explaining the important

history of black cowboys to youngsters, especially those who are surprised to find him on a horse. He, along with other members of the crew, look forward to the educational programs and special appearances the cowhands present for school groups. "There is so much heartache out there among children these days," Chester says. "I think as a group we can do so much." Dennis agrees, saying, "Tourism is very nice, but education is the most valuable thing we do."



**Tom Saunders, Herd historian and curator, says, "People expect [this] of Fort Worth."**

**J**ust as the cowhands have great credentials, so do the Longhorns they work with. Most of the animals were donated to the city of Fort Worth for this project. Each has a name—Curley, Carrot Top, Rosillo, Blue Gunsmoke—and each has a distinctive personality. Weeks of training between

**A horse is a horse, of course, of course. Cora Jones pets a cowhand's mount, which makes for a memorable moment during the Stockyards Cattle Drive.**



cowhands and cows assure a smooth drive. "We had to make sure they wouldn't spook at anything," Dennis explains. "When the Herd got into the city, we introduced every imaginable crisis that might happen, from sudden sirens and loud noises to unpredictable people. It ended up that we couldn't find *anything* to bother them.

"Each Longhorn weighs between 1,700 and 2,000 pounds and has a horn span of four to six feet. We have to make sure they are ready every day," Dennis continues. "We learn their thoughts and are always a step ahead. For some people, it's just natural, knowing how to read a cow. A kind of 'cow-ology.'"

When it comes time for the drive, every cowhand's full attention turns to the cattle. Their eyes never leave the huge beasts for a second.

"I knew this would work," Dennis proclaims. "Before we got here, folks would always ask, 'Where are the cowboys? Where are the cows?' It was a problem. Fort Worth solved it—royally!"

So far, more than a quarter of a million

people have lined Exchange Avenue to experience a real cattle drive, to watch the cowhands at work, and to meet eye-to-eye with this herd of topnotch Texas Longhorns. ★

CANDACE LESLIE of Bryan wrote the Quarter Horse feature that appeared in the October issue. She loves to go to Fort Worth, "because there's always new stuff there."

Staff photographer GRIFF SMITH shot October's story on Gonzales.

## WHEN...WHERE...HOW

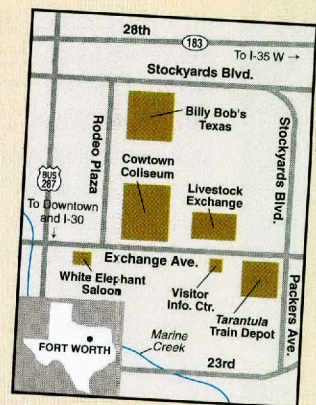
### Have You Herd?

**T**he Fort Worth Longhorn Herd is driven twice daily (at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., weather permitting) down Exchange Ave. in the Fort Worth Stockyards Natl. Historic District. There is no fee. For information on the drives, call 817/336-4373. Web site: [www.fortworthherd.com](http://www.fortworthherd.com).

Drives are coordinated with the arrival of the *Tarantula* train from Grapevine. Fares range from \$7 (ages 3-12, one way) to \$20 (ages 13-54, round trip). For a complete train schedule, call 817/625-RAIL.

For details on the Stockyards and other Fort Worth attractions, write to the Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau, 415 Throckmorton, Fort Worth 76102-7410; 800/433-5747. Web site: [www.fortworth.com](http://www.fortworth.com).

To learn more about ranch life, ranch history, and the law's ongoing battle with cattle rustlers, head down to the Cattle Raisers Museum, at 1301 W. 7th St. Call 817/332-8551.



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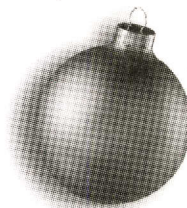
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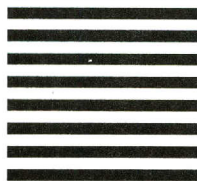
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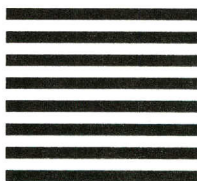
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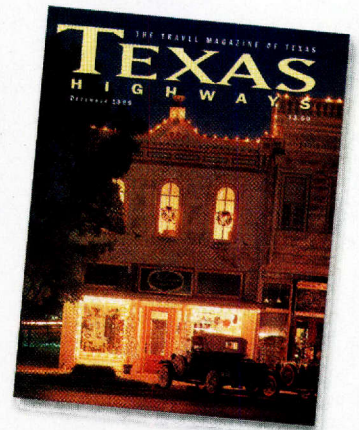
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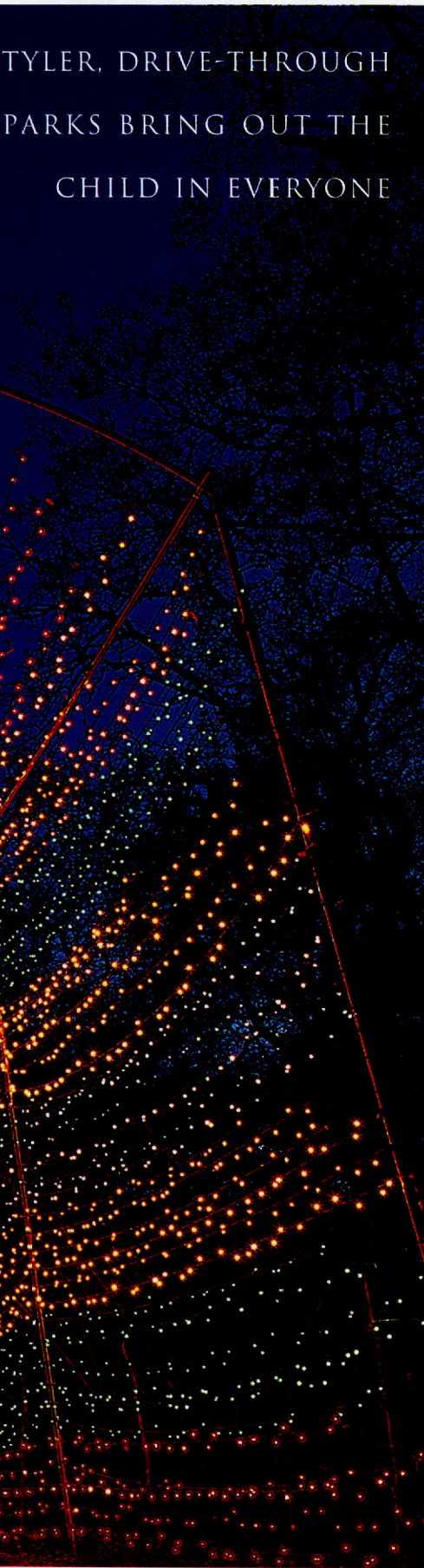
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*Twinkle!*  
*Twinkle!*

FROM AMARILLO TO  
HOLIDAY-LIGHTS





TYLER, DRIVE-THROUGH  
PARKS BRING OUT THE  
CHILD IN EVERYONE

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY RANDY MALLORY

For decades, Texas families have bundled up in their cars at Yuletide and driven through town, windows down, to “look at the lights.” Whole neighborhoods sparkled with multicolored bulbs and spotlighted displays of Santa and the Nativity. They still do.

In recent years, a new “look at the lights” tradition has switched on at lighted, drive-through holiday parks across the state. Each park offers a similar format: For a fee or donation, you travel down a narrow lane through a wonderland of lights. Elaborate displays depict secular and religious scenes composed of lights, painted plywood cutouts, and even three-dimensional structures with costumed mannequins.

Like good theater, such twinkling extravaganzas dramatize the excitement and joy of the holiday season. From light-laden forests in the eastern half of the state to electrified prairies and plains in the west, these shining spectaculars inspire wide-eyed delight.

#### ENCHANTED FORESTS

At dusk, Mother Nature’s stagelights dim in the forests of East Texas. Against the darkening backdrop, some 2 million lights begin to glow across the 24 acres of **Santa Land**, near **Tyler**. Snug and warm in their cars, visitors drive beneath a 25-foot-high wreath, then ease between two rows of 16-foot Christmas trees made of lights. As they enter the tunnel of lights, thousands of colored, computer-controlled bulbs flash in synchronized waves flowing along the tunnel’s 250-foot length.

Santa Land’s one-mile lane meanders through hills of pines and hardwoods mantled in glittering lights. At “Santa’s Village,” a juniper as tall as a five-story building serves as the resident Christmas tree, surrounded by plywood cutouts of giant packages and busy elves. Reindeer (outlined in white lights and mounted on curved metal rods above the lane) flash in sequence so they appear to leap over your head. At another automated display called “Elf Land, Texas,” a herd of cattle seems to swirl around a tornado made of green tube-lighting. The drive ends with a Nativity scene and camel-mounted wise men in a starry night.

Santa Land, which opened in 1995, welcomed some 75,000 visitors last

year...and that’s not counting the pets. “It’s amazing how many bring their pets,” says co-owner Pat Palmer, who runs the park with her husband, Dwight. “We’ve had cats and dogs, a parrot, even a pot-bellied pig!” The Palmers are happy to please pets, but it’s youngsters they have in mind.

Pat tells the story of one excited child who, at the sight of Santa (who bears an uncanny resemblance to Dwight), became momentarily tongue-tied then blurted out, “I’m so up-sided!” Now, “up-sided” has grown into a motto of sorts. As Pat and Dwight build new scenes in the park, they find themselves proclaiming, “We’re so up-sided!”

Can’t get enough of that Christmas spirit? Head some 15 miles west, where folks are equally “up-sided” at **Wonderland by Night**, which lies on wooded land along Interstate 20 near **Van**.

One night, a private pilot flew over the park en route to Tyler. Impressed by the view from above, he rented a car and came straight back to see it at ground level. Another fellow thought Wonderland’s fairy-tale ambiance might set the mood for romance, so he placed a “Will You Marry Me” placard along the one-mile route as a novel way of proposing to his girlfriend. She accepted.

**Bedazzled.** Some 250 feet of flashing lights draw visitors into the fun at Santa Land park, near Tyler.



LIKE GOOD THEATER,  
SUCH TWINKLING EXTRAVAGANZAS DRAMATIZE  
THE EXCITEMENT AND JOY OF  
THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

Wonderland by Night has plenty of elves, reindeer, and Texas-size toys—including an animated merry-go-round that's 20 feet in diameter and a 40-foot steamboat. There's even a lifelike Santa whose recorded voice greets kids as they pass.

But religious scenes, which comprise half of the some 100 displays, take the stage front-and-center here. From Noah's Ark to Jesus walking on water, the park recounts some of the most memorable stories of the Bible. Just one of several new scenes this year will be a life-size animated Jesus and the 12 disciples at "The Last Supper."

Opened in 1996 by seven business partners, Wonderland by Night grows each year, thanks to the team's creativity. Joyce and Bud Stanley, Linda and James Henry, Lynda and Burley Kinsel, and Walter Moffett make all the displays and string every strand themselves.

"It's a big job," says Joyce, "but visitors tell us they feel happy here. That's what Christmas is all about."

Another timbered holiday-lights park, a festive feat of illumination called **Santa's Wonderland**, lies in the post-oak region of Central Texas near **College Station**.

"We've learned that for Christmas lights in Texas, bigger is better," says

Scott Medlin, who designs and operates the one-mile drive-through trail with his wife, Lou; his parents, Phil and Ann Medlin; and friends Rodney and Janie Craig. "When people come here, we want them to say 'Wow!'"

Since the park's opening in 1998, Scott and crew have unmistakably wowed visitors by covering their lane with more than a million lights, along with cutouts centered around several themes. "Dickensville" has Victorian homes, an animated horse and buggy, and characters from *A Christmas Carol*. The "Land of Sugar and Spice" serves up mammoth cutout ice cream cones, cookies, and gin-

**Beside an illuminated pond at Wonderland by Night, in Van, this Christmas scene includes two lounging frogs.**



[RIGHT] Wonderland by Night features a full-size Nativity scene made of painted wooden cutouts and lights.

[BELOW, RIGHT] Jack Gressett of College Station takes in the spectacle of Santa's Wonderland with granddaughter Amanda White.



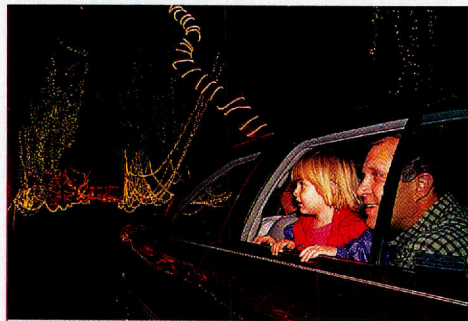
gerbread men. Everywhere, tiny cutout elves stay busy harvesting candy canes in the "Candy Cane Forest," feeding Dasher and company at the "North Pole," and sorting wish-lists at "Santa's Post Office."

Visitors to Santa's Wonderland won't forget they're in College Station, home of Texas A&M University. A maroon-and-white archway, new this year, measuring 44 feet wide and 25 feet high, spells out "Aggie Country." Also new this year is "Tombstone, Texas," an Old West town at the entrance where visitors can warm up on hot chocolate and apple cider and where large groups can begin their lighted trek by taking a hayride.

Of course, bigger isn't *always* better, especially if a display has charm to spare, as does the homespun **Laneville Christmas Lights Display** in Rusk County. In 1986, farmer Troy Arnold and his wife, Carol, invited a few neighbors to join in on their kids' impromptu "hayride with Santa." Today, thousands of people climb aboard open-air trailer beds to tour the 20-acre display, enjoying lights, skits, carols, Christmas scenes, a memorial to lost loved ones...and the stars. "On those cold, clear December nights," says partner John Ben Terry, "you can see millions of stars. I once counted nine falling stars in one night." He pauses. "I don't have any hair, but if I did, it would have been standing straight up. I took it as a sign. It's a beautiful thing out here."

#### LIGHTED PLAINS AND PRAIRIES

Scant of trees to decorate, most lighted holiday parks on Texas' plains and prairies turn to an Indiana-based company called Midwest Display, Inc.,



for their razzle-dazzle. Midwest's Texas partners include nonprofit organizations in Amarillo, Fort Hood (Belton), Grand Prairie, Allen, and El Paso. "We've turned down a lot of bigger cities," says company president Mike Howard, "but this is a good group of people. That means a lot to me."

With two teams of builders (one in Marion, Indiana, and one in Alvarado, Texas), the company turns out dozens of new displays each year. Employees exhibit an unusual mix of artistry and technical skills, something viewers understand as they watch a glittering team of reindeer "leaping" over an illuminated building. "The movement is all done with the lights," says Mike. "It's like cartoon animation. We build many frames of each character, then program the lights to simulate motion."



Grand Prairie's Prairie Lights brightens the season with 550 displays along the banks of Joe Pool Lake.

At **Nites of Lites** in Amarillo, this technology creates a variety of illusions. Santa waters a poinsettia, which grows before your very eyes. Carousel horses canter merrily. A 19-piece, 100-foot-long Nativity scene, outlined in clear lights, appears to be three-dimensional. Santa skis by a flowing waterfall, and nearby, the famous Clydesdales pull a beer wagon trimmed in holiday finery.

Seventy-five of Nites of Lites' 100-plus



Along with 120 lighted displays, Fort Hood's Nature in Lights includes arts and crafts vendors and a congenial Santa.

© JAMIE WILLIAMS

MICHAEL AMADOR



**Santa Land's forested setting near Tyler offers plenty of places for strings of lights, including the park's 35-foot, live Christmas tree.**

displays are sponsored by area businesses, says Dusty McGuire, coordinator of Keep Amarillo Beautiful, the nonprofit group that established the drive-through in 1998 to beautify parks. Already, proceeds have funded the addition of 100 trees and a 1,000-square-foot gazebo to the event site, John Stiff Park.

Over in **Grand Prairie**, 46 community groups and the local chamber of commerce benefit from the city's **Prairie Lights**, a three-mile trail at Joe Pool Lake. The suburban drive-through has 550 displays, including an extensive Victorian village. Success during **Prairie Lights'** inaugural year (1999) spawned a sister drive-through at **Allen** to serve the northern part of the Metroplex. **Northern Prairie Lights** packs 250 displays along a one-mile drive, including "Frosty's Winter Olympics," which features animated characters figure-skating, snowboarding, and running with the torch.

Drive-throughs have proved so popular that a Central Texas military post has even joined the act. In 1997, **Belton's** Fort Hood sponsored the first **Nature in Lights**, now a 5.5-mile drive past 120 lighted displays at Belton Lake Outdoor

Recreation Area. As if the animated, enormous Christmas creations weren't enough, the event also features arts and crafts vendors and a photogenic Santa.

One West Texas lights park—**Celebration Park**, near **Abilene**—makes its own displays...and has battled rough terrain to do it. In addition to installing 100 freestanding scenes, owners Royce



**You can't miss the Aggie spirit at Santa's Wonderland, near College Station.**

and Rebecca Rampy removed thorns from 1,500 prickly mesquite trees in order to wrap them in lights. "We've battled mesquite thorns and rattlesnakes to make Celebration Park a reality," says Rebecca, "but when we see what a family tradition it has become, it's all worthwhile."

\* \* \* \* \*

*A*t lighted, drive-through holiday parks across Texas, Santa remains a right jolly old elf, and the Nativity keeps the faith for a better tomorrow. And, as in decades past, kids of all ages find visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads.

So, bring on the show! ★

Photojournalist **RANDY MALLORY** of Tyler covered Canton Trade Days in the November issue.



© WYMAN MEINZER

**Near Abilene, Celebration Park features 100 Christmas scenes, as well as Christmas karaoke, an indoor music and laser light show, and photographs with Santa.**

# Holiday Lights Galore

Load up the family and “look at the lights” at the following drive-through holiday parks. Drive time varies from 20 minutes to an hour or so, depending on traffic. To avoid long waits, go early in the season or early on any given night. Some parks offer hayrides, gift shops, a live Santa, refreshments, and caroling. Call for details.

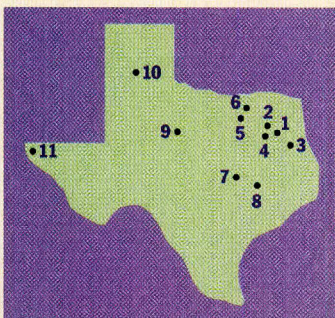
## East Texas

Approximately 90 miles east of Dallas, between Tyler and Lindale, **Santa Land** is on the north service road of I-20 at exit 557 (Jim Hogg Rd.). Hours: Nightly 6-10:30 Nov. 1-Jan. 4. Fee: \$12 for family vehicles, \$25 for commercial vans. New this year are open-air trailer rides (by reservation only, \$5 per person for groups of 25-50), a gift shop, and sales of live Christmas trees. Write to 11455 I-20 W., Tyler 75706; 903/882-1518. Web site: [www.santalandinc.com](http://www.santalandinc.com).

Fifteen miles west of Santa Land is **Wonderland by Night**, located at Van on the north service road of I-20 between exits 540 and 544. Hours: Nightly 6-10:30 Nov. 1-Jan. 3. Fee: \$12 minimum for family vehicles; \$2 per person for commercial vehicles. Tour buses welcome. Open-air tram rides are available for groups of 25 or more (\$5 per person; by reservation only). Write to Box 1669, Van 75790; 903/963-8828.

In the community of Laneville (Rusk Co.), take a mile-long tractor-drawn or horse-drawn hayride through 20 acres at the **Laneville Christmas Lights Display**. The show offers animated, lighted displays, plus religious and secular scenes featuring live music and skits performed by area volunteers. From Henderson, take US 79 west one mi. to FM 225, go south (left) 10 mi. to CR 4174, then go east (left) one mi. to the entrance. Hours: 7-9 Dec. 1-3 and Dec. 8-24. Donations accepted. Write to the Henderson Area Chamber of Commerce, 201 N. Main, Henderson 75652; 903/657-5528 or 863-5375.

In Athens, drive the one-mile trail of **Christmas Park, Land of Lights** on N. Loop 317 (Jed Robinson Loop) between US 175 and Texas 31. Fee: \$10 for cars, \$12 for vans, \$2 per person for larger vehi-



- 1 **Santa Land**, between Tyler and Lindale
- 2 **Wonderland by Night**, Van
- 3 **Laneville Christmas Lights Display**, Laneville
- 4 **Christmas Park, Land of Lights**, Athens
- 5 **Prairie Lights**, Grand Prairie
- 6 **Northern Prairie Lights**, Allen
- 7 **Nature in Lights**, Belton
- 8 **Santa's Wonderland**, College Station
- 9 **Celebration Park**, near Abilene
- 10 **Nites of Lights**, Amarillo
- 11 **Ascarate Park Lights Display**, El Paso

cles. Hours: Nightly 6-10:30 Nov. 18-Jan. 1. Write to 610 W. Corsicana St., Athens 75751; 903/675-7469.

## North Texas

Grand Prairie's **Prairie Lights** is at Lynn Creek Park on Joe Pool Lake. Take I-20 to Great Southwest Pkwy. (exit 454), and go south 2 mi. to the park entrance. Hours: Nightly 6-10 Nov. 17-Jan. 1. Fee: \$10 for family vehicles, \$15 for commercial vehicles, \$30 for mini-motorcoaches, \$60 for motorcoaches. Write to the Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce, 900 Conover Dr., Grand Prairie 75051; 972/264-1558. Also visible from the Prairie Lights display on Dec. 9 is the 10th annual lighted boat parade sponsored by Lynn Creek Marina (817/640-4200; approximately 6-9 p.m.).

Prairie Lights' sister park is in Allen (between Dallas and McKinney). **Northern Prairie Lights** is on the west service road of US 75 at exit 36 (Exchange Pkwy.). Hours and fees are the same as at Prairie Lights. Write to the Allen Chamber of Commerce,

210 W. McDermott, Allen 75013; 972/727-5585.

## Central Texas

Near Belton, Fort Hood sponsors **Nature in Lights** at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area. From I-35, take US 190 West to Loop 121. Turn north (right), and go to Sparta Rd., then turn west (left) to the park entrance. Hours: Nightly 5:30-11 Nov. 10-Jan. 2. Fee: \$5 for family vehicles (call ahead for 12-passenger or larger vehicles). Haywagon rides (Fri-Sun only) leave every 15 min. Fee: \$6, \$3 age 10 and younger. Write to III Corps & Fort Hood, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program, Box X, Fort Hood 76544; 254/287-2007 or 287-2523. Web site: [www.hoodmnr.com](http://www.hoodmnr.com).

To reach **Santa's Wonderland** from College Station, go south on Texas 6, take the Texas World Speedway exit, and stay on the service road for one mi. to the entrance. Hours: Nightly Nov. 1-

Web site: [santas-wonderland.com](http://santas-wonderland.com). Call the number given for rental of “Tombstone, Texas” year round, or check its Web site: [www.tombstonetexas.com](http://www.tombstonetexas.com).

## West Texas/Panhandle

**Celebration Park** is on the south service road of I-20 between exits 294 and 297, approximately 3 miles east of Abilene. Hours: Nightly 6:30-10 Nov. 11-Dec. 30. Fee: \$10 for family vehicles, \$15 for larger vehicles. New attractions include photos with Santa, Christmas karaoke, and an indoor music and laser light show (additional fee). Write to Box 7388, Abilene 79608; 915/691-1034. Web site: [www.celebrationpark.com](http://www.celebrationpark.com).

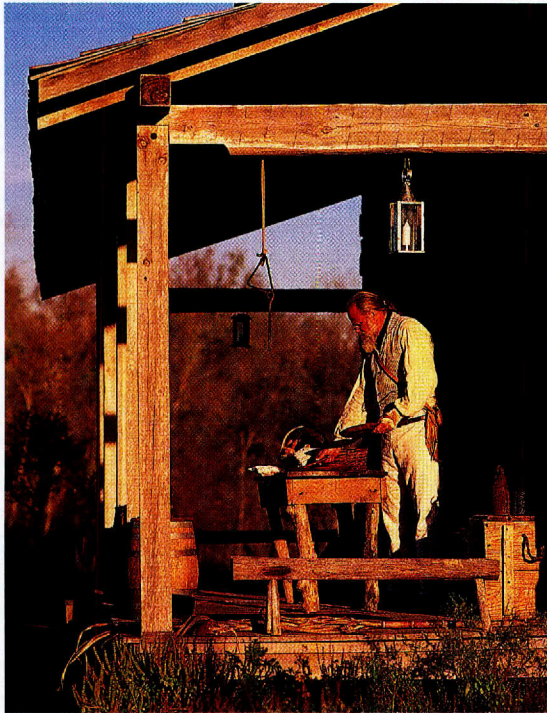
Amarillo's **Nites of Lites** is at John Stiff Park. Take I-40 to Coulter St., go south on Coulter 2 mi. to 45th, turn east, and go one mi. to the park entrance. Hours: Nightly 6-11 Nov. 24-Jan. 1. Donations accepted. Write to Keep Amarillo Beautiful, 6016 Dreyfuss, Amarillo 79106; 806/378-9305.



On December 2, folks in Richardson illuminate the pecan tree at City Hall, an event that coincides with the debut of **Santa's Village** (open Dec. 2-3, 7-10, and 14-17). Visitors can talk with Santa, enjoy live music and plays, and bask in the lights. Call 972/744-4300.

Jan. 5; Sun-Thu 6-11, Fri-Sat 6-midnight. Fee: \$11 for family vehicles (up to 10 people); \$21 for larger vehicles (up to 15); call ahead for more than 15. Hayrides are available for groups of 15 or more (reservation only), except in inclement weather. Fee: \$6, \$4 age 12 and younger. Write to 18898 Hwy. 6 South, Box 10151, College Station 77842; 979/690-7212.

El Paso County is sponsoring its first annual **Ascarate Park Lights Display** nightly dusk to midnight, Nov. 26-Jan. 1. Take I-10 to Trowbridge Dr., go south 2.5 mi. to Delta Dr., turn west, and drive 3/4 mi. to the park. Fee: \$1 per vehicle. Write to the El Paso Co. Parks & Recreation Dept., 6900 Delta Dr., El Paso 79905; 915/772-5605. Web site: [www.co.el-paso.tx.us](http://www.co.el-paso.tx.us).



## GEORGE RANCH HISTORICAL PARK

**W**hen 10-year-old Jordan Pinson of Wharton talks, other kids listen, at least when it comes to gleaning Jordan's tips on shelling corn.

"Put your thumb behind a row of kernels," he tells fellow visitors, picking up an ear of dried corn from a corncrib at the George Ranch Historical Park. "Then push hard toward the next row, like this, until the kernels pop off," says Jordan, shelling the corn into a bucket. Pioneering skills are starting to come naturally to Jordan. After all, this is his third visit.

But sampling pioneer life is only one of the diversions that draw more than 100,000 folks each year to this 480-acre living-history museum near Richmond, some 25 miles southwest of Houston. At the center of a working cattle ranch that stretches across 23,000 acres of coastal

prairie, the park gives visitors a chance to see cowboys riding, roping, and working cattle. They can also explore a century of Texas ranching heritage through exhibits, reenactments, and tours of such structures as a working 19th-Century blacksmith shop, an African-American sharecropper's cabin, a Victorian mansion, and a 1938 horse barn. Depending on the season, park-goers can help split wooden shingles, harvest vegetables, gin cotton, brand cattle (simulated), and cook over a campfire.

"The property known today as the George Ranch was owned by four generations of one family until 1971," says the park's executive director, Michael Moore. "Beginning with Henry Jones, who was one of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred settlers, and his wife, Nancy, it descended through the daughters, so the



name changed with each generation."

Today, exhibits at the Visitor Center, along with three separate complexes—the 1830s Jones Stock Farm, the 1890s Davis Mansion and sharecropper's farm, and the 1930s George Ranch House and cattle-working area—offer a walk through history and make the family's heritage come alive. A tractor-pulled tram connects the different areas, making "time-travel" from era to era easy.

BY DIANE MOREY SITTON • PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE HOSEK



**Beginning with Henry Jones, one of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred settlers, four generations of the same family owned the property known today as the George Ranch.**

The best place to begin is at the Visitor Center, about a half-mile inside the entrance. Here, a seven-minute video and exhibits of clothing, furnishings, photographs, documents, tools, and other artifacts depict the ranch's evolution from

1824 to its 1930s heyday. Two standouts: a Mexican gourd-horn saddletree (an old saddle frame with a gourd-shaped saddlehorn) and a collection of 19th-Century barbed wire. Some displays feature African-American cowboys, a promi-

A one-mile loop in the George Ranch Historical Park features a replicated 1830s dogtrot cabin (facing page) on the Henry Jones Stock Farm, where Ed Gearke portrays the site's original Texian owner. The next stop on the tour, the Davis House complex (above), includes a magnificent, multi-chimneyed Victorian mansion.

nent presence in George Ranch history.

"The ranch originated when slavery was common in Texas," says Michael Moore. "Some slaves became proficient

in riding horses, tending cattle, and other ranch work. This marked the beginning of the ranch's African-American-cowboy legacy. In the late 19th Century, virtually all the cowboys on the ranch were African American. They were renowned for breaking horses and herding cattle."

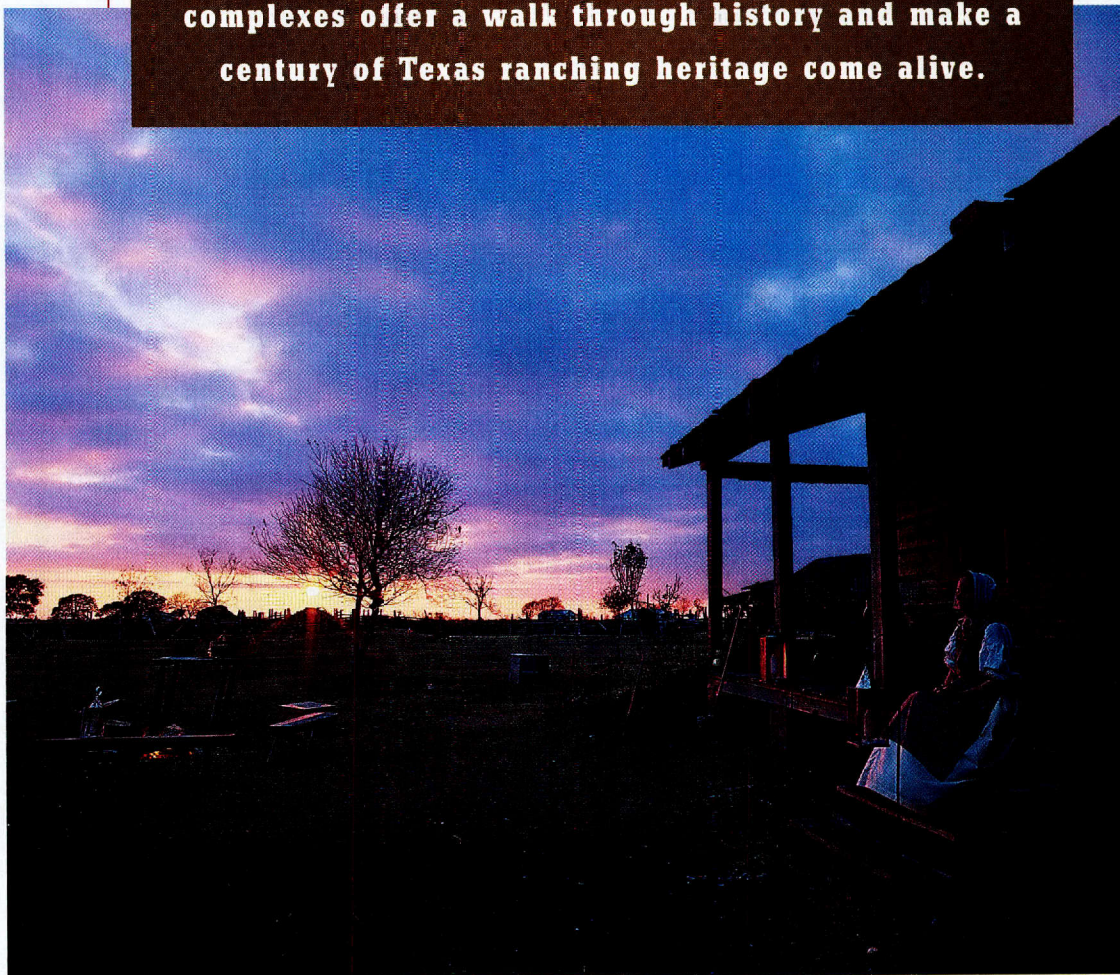
Before leaving the Visitor Center for firsthand explorations, most sightseers pick up a map and a schedule of tours and demonstrations. (The park offers an impressive number of daily activities. Special events often highlight a single aspect of the ranch or a particular holiday.) Some park-goers prefer to amble the roads connecting the complexes; others ride the tram, which completes the one-mile loop of the park about every 30 minutes.

At the first stop, a replicated dogtrot cabin at the Jones Stock Farm, visitors encounter the original Texian owner of the ranch, Henry Jones (portrayed by seasoned interpreter Ed Gearke). Depending on the season, Henry performs chores like splitting cedar shingles with a hammer and froe (a wedge-shaped tool), or plowing with Thomas and Jeremiah (a.k.a. Tom and Jerry), his massive, Mississippi-bred oxen. Onlookers frequently ask Ed about the workings of the pit-saw frame, an unusual oak structure behind the cabin. Three long timbers form a ramp that leads to a rectangular platform built over a pit five feet deep. "Two men roll a log up the ramp to the platform," says Ed. "Then, with a man on each end of the seven-foot-long saw [one on the platform and another in the pit], we cut the log into boards.

"The fellow on the platform, called the tiller man, has the good job. The man in the pit gets showered with sawdust." Ed thinks that the expression "That's the pits" may have originated with this primitive sawmill.



**Visitor Center exhibits and three separate complexes offer a walk through history and make a century of Texas ranching heritage come alive.**



[TOP] The final stop on the tour is the 1930s George Ranch House, where visitors are invited into the family parlor. Mamie and Albert George also used it as a music room.

[ABOVE] With sunset comes a rare moment of relaxation for pioneer wife Nancy Jones.

## CAMPFIRE CHRISTMAS

Young visitors, like 11-year-old Jessica Swann of Houston, enjoy helping Henry's wife, Nancy (portrayed by Debbie Long), toss grain to the chickens and gather eggs in the tool barn. But it's the 300-pound hogs, called Brazos River rooters, in the pigpen that fire their imagination. "Look at their mohawks," says Jessica, pointing to the creatures' bristly manes.

In contrast to the primitive trappings at the Stock Farm, the beautiful, two-story Davis House at the next stop exudes Victorian grandeur. Susan Elizabeth Ryon (Henry and Nancy's granddaughter) and her husband, J.H.P. "Judge" Davis, occupied the house in the late 1800s. Judge and his second wife, Belle, lived there after Susan Elizabeth died in 1884. (The house was moved here in 1977 from its original location in Richmond and restored.)

The cypress and white-pine mansion features five chimneys, two wraparound galleries, and intricately stenciled cornices. Inside, Louisiana longleaf curly pine wainscoting adorns the wide hallways.

When the tour reaches the dining room, Judge's silver mustache cup, a Christmas gift from his children in 1893, draws puzzled looks or "ahs" of appreciation. The cup sits on the dining table, lavishly set with Haviland china. "Gentlemen used wax to contour their handlebar mustaches," explains historical interpreter Alma Slawinski. "The cup's guard [a flat piece inside, just below the rim] kept the hot drink from contacting the wax and melting it into the liquid."

In the ladies' parlor, a porcelain canary in a wicker birdcage also depicts Victorian fastidiousness. "By caging an artificial bird, ladies had elegance without messy cleanups," says 15-year-old volunteer Kristen Jackson.

Outside in the blacksmith shop, Kristen's older brother, Joe Jackson, hammers metal into hinges, hangers, fireplace tools, and other useful items with mesmerizing cadence. "The iron is ready to shape when its color changes from dull red to orange, then to the same light yellow as the sun," Joe tells onlookers. "When the iron reaches that shade—that luminous yellow—it's like taffy."

**A** plethora of special events at the George Ranch Historical Park keep this southeast Texas living-history museum...well, lively. This month, more than 1,000 visitors will attend the three-hour Campfire Christmas (December 8-10 and 15-17). In 1997, *The New York Times Magazine* touted the evenings of re-enactments, cowboy singers and musicians, and Christmas carol sing-alongs as "truly Texas."

First, celebrants gather in a lantern-lit barn to relish roast turkey and other holiday fare while listening to cowboy songsters like Wiley Pat Gavin and his Buckaroo Band. For kids, the highlight of the evening is the visit from Cowboy Claus. Clad in red long johns, overalls, and a cowboy hat, he passes out candy canes to all the little cowpokes.

Next, sightseers board a mule-drawn hay wagon for the short ride to the 1830s Jones Stock Farm. Here, they are urged to imagine themselves as way-faring pioneers. Pretending is easy, as Texian Henry Jones appears at the gate with a robust greeting.

Inside Henry's cabin, candies illuminate a hand-hewn table spilling with oranges, yams, cornbread, pecans, venison jerky, and other bounty. Henry's wife, Nancy, stokes the coals in the kitchen hearth.

Outside, visitors sit around a crackling fire while Henry extols life in Spanish Texas. "If a man has a mind to make his fortune, this is the place," says Henry, eager to recruit new settlers. When a fiddler arrives from a neighboring farm, toe-tapping rhythms replace talk of colonization.

After bidding farewell to Henry and Nancy, folks ride the wagon across the

*Arroyo Seco* (Dry Creek) bridge, where chuck-wagon cooks welcome them to an 1890s cowboy campsite with fresh-baked sweets, hot coffee, and apple cider. Once trail-rider reenactors arrive on horseback, guitar-strumming local singer Grady Lee captivates listeners with cowboy melodies and a repertoire of holiday tunes.



After chuck-wagon cooks Herb and Sheri Boykin serve sweets and hot drinks, guitar-strumming Grady Lee leads holiday guests in a sing-along.

A short walk away, the glow from the windows of a beautifully restored Victorian mansion beckons. Henry and Nancy Jones' granddaughter, Susan Elizabeth Ryon, and her husband, J.H.P. "Judge" Davis, lived here during the latter part of the 19th Century. Inside the festively decorated house, visitors mingle with historical performers. A look inside the servants' cabin behind the main house completes the Campfire Christmas tour, and celebrants return home with a feeling that they've just visited several eras of Christmas past.

—Diane Morey Sitton

*Note: The park hosts other special events throughout the year. See When... Where... How, page 21.*

Nearby, at the African-American sharecropper's farm, visitors find Sam Ryon (portrayed by Ian Campbell) planting cotton, constructing a corncrib, or performing other tasks common in 1895. He shares a frame cabin with his wife, Hester, and their two children. (Sam, a former slave of Henry Jones' daughter Polly and her husband, William Ryon, took the couple's name after Emancipation.)

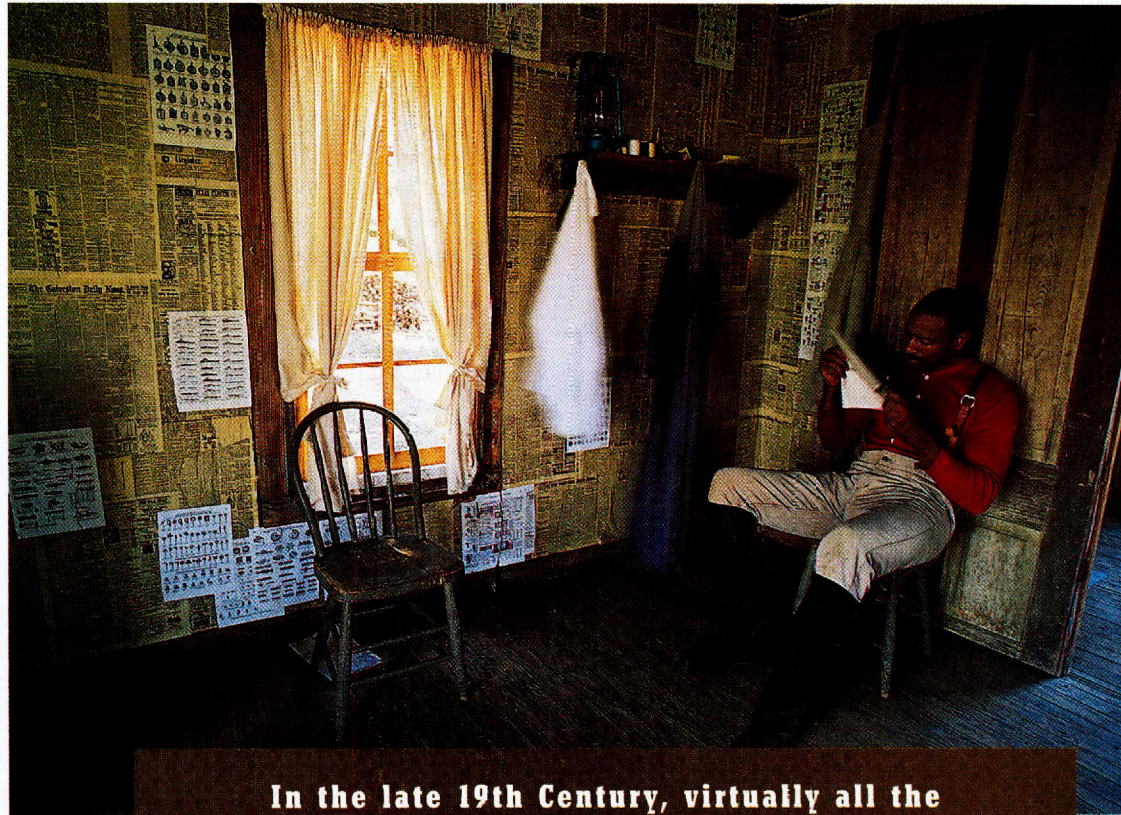
Inspection of the restored two-room house reveals interior walls covered with newspaper. "Newspaper insulated the cabin, and it was cheaper than wallpaper," explains Ian. "Sharecroppers' children learned to read by looking at the words on the walls."

Visitors at the Davis House complex also explore the greenhouse, carriage house, and family cemetery before going on to the George Ranch House.

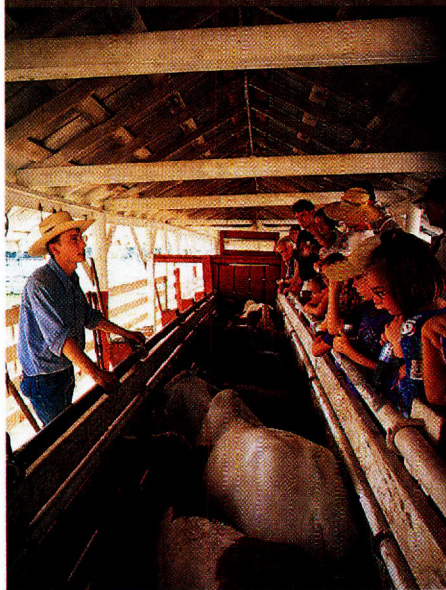
On tours of the 16-room house (furnished as if it were 1938), visitors learn that Susan Elizabeth and J.H.P. Davis' daughter, Mamie, was from the fourth and last generation of the family to own the ranch. Mamie and her husband, rancher A.P. George, built the house soon after their marriage in 1896. Mamie survived her husband, and lived there until her death in 1971.

The George Foundation, formed in 1945 to manage the George estate and to provide charitable grants benefiting Fort Bend County, began restoring the house in 1984. The two-story residence and surrounding barns formed the hub of A.P. and Mamie's ranching empire.

In the master bedroom, sightseers discover photos of A.P.'s award-winning, purebred Shorthorn cattle, part of the stock used to create his Brahorn cattle, a unique Brahman-Shorthorn cross. In the hall, a century-old "lunar clock" from Germany displays both the time and the phase of the moon. Upstairs, cattle brands decorate a rug hooked by "Miss Mamie," as she was always called.



**In the late 19th Century, virtually all the cowboys on the ranch were African American. They were renowned for their ability to break horses and herd cattle.**



[TOP] Ian Campbell portrays Sam Ryon, a sharecropper who lived in a frame cabin on the ranch in the 1890s.

[ABOVE] A ranch hand explains to a group of visitors that the chute between them funnels cows to one of the last remaining dipping vats in Texas.

"The cattle brands on Miss Mamie's rug were those of extended family on neighboring ranches, as well as brands from the family's history," says historical interpreter Shirley Horak. "The George Ranch brand is a circle, which isn't depicted on the rug. A.P. may have chosen the circle to symbolize the continuity of the family-owned lands, but cowhands joked that he simply wanted to make sure they didn't apply his brand upside down."

Outside, children enjoy climbing the wooden stairs that spiral upwards to a treehouse, a replica of one built in the 1930s. The steps and the huge aerie wrap around the massive trunk of an oak planted by Nancy Jones in 1824.

Other nearby discoveries include a cistern house where butter and cheese were made and the Bachelors' House, the cowboys' sparsely furnished, two-room "hangout." Today, folks sometimes linger here to play dominoes or to scruti-

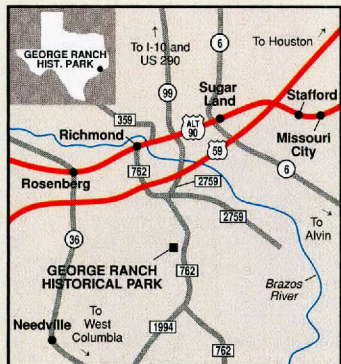


## George Ranch Historical Park

**G**eorge Ranch Historical Park is in Fort Bend County, about 9 miles southeast of Richmond and 25 miles southwest of Houston. To reach the park from US 59, exit on FM 2759 (Crabb River Rd.), drive south about 1.5 miles to FM 762, and go south about 4.5 miles to the park entrance.

The Fort Bend Museum Assn. operates the park in partnership with The George Foundation. Hours: Daily 9-5 (closed Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 24-25, and Dec. 31-Jan. 1). Admission: \$7.50, \$6.50 age 55 and older, \$4 ages 3-12, free age 2 and younger. *Group tours by reservation only; call for special rates.* School tours available by reservation Feb-mid-Dec. *All facilities in the Visitor Center are wheelchair accessible; the rest of the park is partially wheelchair accessible (call for details).* Write to Box 1248, Richmond 77406-1248; 281/545-9212 or 343-0218. Web site: [www.georgeranch.org](http://www.georgeranch.org).

The **Visitor Center** features artifacts, photographs, and documents related to ranch history, including its African-American-cowboy legacy. A 7-minute video orients visitors to the park. Maps and daily activity schedules are available at the desk. The free, tractor-pulled tram boards here every 30 minutes. (Restrooms here and near the blacksmith shop, all wheelchair accessible.)



The **Dry Creek General Store**, in the Visitor Center, sells postcards, T-shirts, regional history books, and other merchandise. The **Dinner Belle Cafe**, also in the Visitor Center, offers a varied lunch menu. Cafe hours: Mon-Fri 10:30-2, Sat-Sun 10-4:30. Other amenities include picnic tables and facilities for group rentals (from small family to large convention groups).

**Daily activities** include an impressive lineup of first-person portrayals, demonstrations, and hands-on activities. Costumed interpreters conduct tours of the Davis House and the George Ranch House (allow 40 minutes for each tour).

### Events

During **Campfire Christmas** (Dec. 8-10 and 15-17, 2000), reenactors present 19th-Century holiday vignettes. This 3-hour

evening event begins with a buffet holiday dinner and musical entertainment, followed by a mule-drawn-hay-wagon tour of the lantern-lit park. *Reservations required; call the park at either number listed previously.* Admission: \$30, \$27.50 age 60 and older, \$25 age 12 and younger. Most of the event takes place outdoors; dress warmly.

The annual **Juneteenth Celebration** (June 16, 2001) commemorates the emancipation of Texas' slaves in 1865. Activities include a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, gospel music and dance, storytelling, children's games, and a traditional African-American "jumping the broom" wedding ceremony.

**Texian Market Days** (Oct. 20-21, 2001), a living-history festival, features a Civil War encampment and reenactments, cowboy demonstrations, hands-on activities at the 1830s Jones Stock Farm, an arts and crafts fair, Native American dances and craft market, antique vendors, food, and entertainment (fiddle-playing, square dancing, and clogging). Hours: Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Admission: \$8, \$4 ages 3-15, free age 2 and younger; advance-purchase tickets \$1 off.

Other annual events include the **Lone Star Stomp** (Apr. 21, 2001), **Runaway Scrape Reenactment** (held in Apr.), a **Memorial Day**

event (May 28, 2001), and a **July 4th event**. Call for details.

### Nearby Attractions

For a **self-guided tour** of Richmond, pick up the flyer *Historical Tour of Richmond* at the Fort Bend Museum (see below). For details, call the Rosenberg/Richmond Chamber of Commerce at 281/342-5464.

The **Fort Bend Museum complex** (includes the Fort Bend Museum and 2 historic homes), at 500 Houston St. in Richmond, sits in the city's Historic District. Hours: Tue-Fri 9-5, Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5 (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's days). Admission (includes all sites): \$3, \$2.50 age 55 and older, \$2 ages 3-12, free age 2 and younger. Wheelchair accessible. Write to Drawer 460, Richmond 77406-0406; 281/342-6478. Web site: [www.fortbendmuseum.org](http://www.fortbendmuseum.org).

**Holiday activities at the museum complex** include the **Candlelight Tour** (Dec. 1-2, 2000), which features historic homes with period decorations. Hours: Fri 6-8 p.m., Sat 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Admission: \$5, \$3 ages 3-12, free age 2 and younger. The **Family Holiday Event** (Dec. 3, 2000) includes historic-homes tours, carriage rides, Christmas sing-alongs, and ornament-making. Hours: Noon-5 p.m. Admission: Call the museum for details.

nize the cowboys' "wish lists" hanging on the walls. These early-1900s ads from Sears and Roebuck catalogs show saddles, bits, and other coveted items.

A few steps away, visitors can observe ranch hands roping cattle, feeding horses, and stacking hay in restored pens and the original cypress barns. A stroll through the tack barn reveals rawhide ropes, leather chaps, and two 1930s-vintage saddles. Pointing to an Amarillo Low Roper saddle, foreman Jim Hodges remarks, "That's a real piece of history." Herman Heiser, revered by cowboys as

one of the best saddlemakers of all times, handcrafted the saddle, still in mint condition, in Denver in 1936.

Discovering pieces of history—and learning from them—is what the George Ranch Historical Park is all about. "Henry Jones and his descendants are touchstones to a common history," says Michael Moore. "By looking at their lives, first as pioneers, then as farmers and cattle ranchers, we can understand a great deal about Southern rural traditions of the 1800s and early 1900s."

Whether they're experiencing the

nubby texture of a dried corncob, the bristly mane of a Brazos River rooster, or the sparks flying from a blacksmith's hammer, visitors agree: The George Ranch legacy not only illuminates four generations of Texas heritage, it makes exploring history fun. ★

Freelancer DIANE MOREY SITTON of Colmeinel wrote the story on the Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens that ran in March.

Houston freelance photographer GEORGE HOSEK's images also graced Diane's story on the Mercer.

# CHRISTMAS IN

© LAURENCE PARENT



## LBJ COUNTRY

BY ROSEMARY WILLIAMS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Sometimes it takes a president—or a former president—to plan a party. At least that’s what happened 30 years ago, when former President Lyndon Johnson proposed a Christmas celebration in the newly opened LBJ State and National Historical Parks, near Stonewall. He had nothing fancy in mind, just a gathering of Hill Country neighbors, park employees, and visitors, and a small ceremony that would honor the true meaning of Christmas and entertain the children.

“The President was especially eager for the children of the community to have a party,” says Evelyn Woods, wife of the late Harold Woods, the state park’s first superintendent. “He said, ‘Children ought to have parties and a Christmas tree and Santa Claus at Christmastime.’”

“The first celebration was very simple,” says Evelyn, who has attended every ceremony since the first one, on December 23, 1970. “The community really got involved. There was a reading of the Christmas story. Then, toddler Lyndon Nugent, President Johnson’s first grandchild, lit a tree that had been cut and decorated for the event. Santa Claus handed out candies to the children, and we served homemade cookies, coffee, and punch,” she says. The following year, the Johnsons, the com-

munity, and park officials continued the party. Thus, a Hill Country tradition was born.

Since that original Christmas party at the park, festivities have expanded to include bus tours of the LBJ Ranch and the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm and its 1915-era “Christmas on the Farm.” But the ceremonies always center on the telling of the Christmas story and the lighting of the tree. And they always include members of the family of President Johnson, who died in 1973.

“The Stonewall Christmas-tree lighting marks the beginning of Christmas for our family,” says Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of the late president. “It’s a way to stop life’s merry-go-round, gather together with neighbors, and celebrate the love of the season.”

The Johnson family’s participation complements a community-wide effort to ensure a fun and festive celebration. “Today, as in past years, the Johnsons, and many of our neighbors from Stonewall, Johnson City, Fredericksburg, Albert, and Hye join with employees of the state and national parks to make this holiday event the magical evening that it is,” says Donnie Schuch (pronounced *shoe*), superintendent of the state park.

Children from the Stonewall School sing carols, a community band from Fredericksburg plays holiday tunes, ministers from



**Virginia Grona lights candles on the tree at the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm, near Stonewall. Following a gathering with members of Lyndon Johnson's family, bus tours take visitors here and to other Christmas-y sites in the Lyndon B. Johnson State and National Parks.**

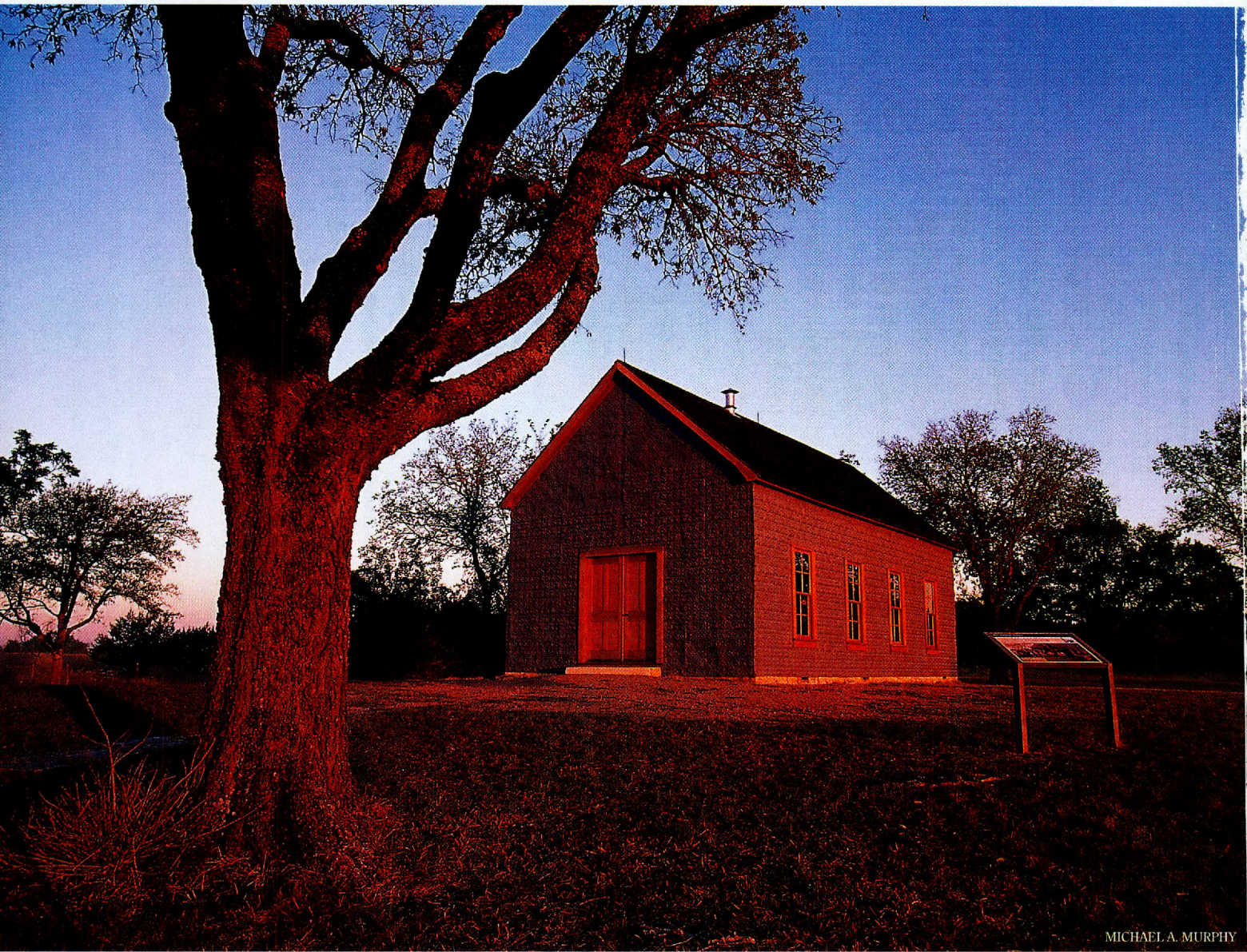
the Baptist, Catholic, and Lutheran churches help out, and youngsters from the local Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) present a beautiful living Nativity. "Also, women from the area contribute delicious homemade cookies. It takes many volunteers to make these festivities a success," says Donnie.

The Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Program, as it's officially known, takes place this year on December 17. The simple ceremony, coupled with the bus tour of the ranch and farm, provide a "be of good cheer" antidote to today's all-too-prevalent "buy, buy, buy" holiday hype. Families who attend the evening's event experience a plethora of Yuletide pleasures, along with a giant helping of Hill Country hospitality.

Arrive a little early so that you can explore the park in the waning daylight before you join the line of folks awaiting passes for the free bus tours. Walk a short distance eastward from the Visitor Center down a well-marked trail to a wildlife area where you can view white-tailed deer, Longhorn steers, and an occasional buffalo in a large, fenced-off field.

At the dogtrot-style Behrens Cabin near the Center, take a look at the two rooms furnished to resemble Hill Country living quarters in the 1870s. Within the Center, you can examine exhibits of memorabilia from Lyndon Johnson's childhood, pictures from his presidential years, and items outlining the history of the surrounding Hill Country. You can also spend

**Visitors on the bus tours pass this one-room schoolhouse, where Lyndon Johnson began his education at the age of four. Years later, as president, he signed a major education bill here, with his first teacher by his side.**



MICHAEL A. MURPHY

The mellow light of lanterns and candles, the fragrant scent of decorative cedar boughs, and the warm welcome of the "farm folk" intertwine with the soft singing

some time browsing in the Center's excellent gift and book shop.

As the park begins to fill with visitors, strains of holiday tunes and familiar carols—punctuated by the distinctive *oompah, oompah* of a tuba—ring out from the Polka Dot Community Band of Fredericksburg, led by Horst Klauser. Meanwhile, youngsters from the CYO begin forming the living Nativity about an hour before the lighting of the tree. The manger scene features the Holy Family, surrounded by angels, wise men, and shepherds, whose “flock” may consist of a nanny goat, her kid, a sheep, a steer, and a donkey.

“A few years ago, we had a rambunctious young steer that took off down through the woods,” says Donnie Schuch, “and

we didn't catch him until later that evening. Now, we choose the tamest animals we can find, whatever they might be,” he says.

Just before 6 p.m., Lady Bird Johnson and members of her family enter the park and walk toward an area in the Center's courtyard, greeting neighbors, friends, and visitors as the band plays the cheerful “Winter Wonderland.” (Lady Bird attends the ceremony, a favorite of hers, if at all possible. So far, she has attended all 30 ceremonies.)

After a few appropriate introductions and invocations, a reading of the Christmas story, and the touching singing of the hymn “Away in a Manger” by the Stonewall School children, Luci Baines Johnson welcomes everyone on behalf of the Johnson family.

**Volunteers at the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm prepare Christmas treats for guests on the tours. Below right, Ricky Weinheimer, Bruce Thiele, and Bill Coakley cut up sausage. The farm replicates activities typical of the Hill Country in 1915.**



of “Silent Night” to evoke a reflective, almost reverent mood among the visitors.

"I've been asked to speak *for* my mother, but nobody speaks better *than* my mother," she says, as she asks Mrs. Johnson to stand. Lady Bird calls out "Hello, everybody!" to the delighted crowd.

Luci talks briefly about her late father's love of the Texas Hill Country, the holidays, and the tree-lighting ceremony. Within minutes, the Johnsons move toward the celebration's centerpiece, a giant Christmas tree. A family member, usually a grandchild or great-grandchild of Lady Bird and the late president, switches on the several strands of lights, illuminating the 20-foot cedar. "Ahhhh," murmurs the gathered throng.

The tree-lighting signals the imminent arrival of Santa Claus, who sweeps in, with candy treats for the kids, to the tune of "Here Comes Santa Claus."

As Evelyn Woods and volunteers serve cookies, coffee, and punch in the Visitor Center, the band plays more rousing renditions of Yuletide tunes. Folks chat and linger beside the park exhibits while awaiting the call to their designated buses.

Aboard the comfortable buses, taped Christmas music amplifies the holiday spirit. Driver Dave Schafer, one of several National Park Service rangers, eases the bus into motion and begins relating the history of the park, the LBJ ranch, and Lyndon Johnson's life. Occasionally, Dave plays comments and anecdotes recorded by the late president.

Dave stops the bus briefly at the brightly lit Junction School, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1910, where Lyndon Johnson began his education at the age of four. The "schoolmarm" (played by volunteer Marilyn Taylor), in period costume, steps out of the wreath-adorned school door, rings a large hand bell, and waves at the bus' occupants.

"Lyndon Johnson's first school teacher was Miss Katie Deadrich," says Dave. "Lyndon was living in a little house just a couple hundred yards from this school, and he could hear the schoolkids playing in the schoolyard. Lyndon Johnson was one of those people who had to be around other people, in the action. He kept running away from home to be with those kids. So, his mother, Rebekah Baines Johnson, asked Miss Deadrich if Lyndon could enroll early, and the teacher allowed him to do that."

Dave continues: "Many years later, in 1965, President Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act at that schoolhouse, an act that put more than \$1 billion of federal money into impoverished schools. Guess who sat beside him when he signed it into law? Miss Katie Deadrich."

The tour also drives by the late president's reconstructed birthplace, all alight and festooned with garlands of greenery, and it passes the small, tree-shaded cemetery where he lies buried.

Farther down the road, Dave stops the bus near a lone figure silhouetted by a flickering campfire. "Here's a fellow who's been out tending to cattle underneath the Texas sky," says Dave. He opens the bus doors so everyone can hear the "cowpoke" (played by Roy Betzer) sing the haunting "O, Holy Night."

Twinkling lights and garlands and wreaths of cedar outline the fence and grounds of the rambling LBJ ranch house, the next stop. "Lyndon Johnson was a U.S. senator in the 1950s when he purchased this house from his aunt, Frank Martin," Dave says. "As a little boy, he visited this house. Here, the extended family often gathered at the Christmas holiday season. Perhaps little Lyndon dreamed of someday owning the house—and that's exactly what happened.

"For the better part of the 1960s," Dave continues, "Americans knew this house as 'the Texas White House.' Many world leaders have been here over the years."

Dave also explains that the house is not open for public tours, since Lady Bird lives here part of the year.

Down the road, at the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm (located within the state park), another treat awaits. After Dave has parked the bus, visitors alight for a taste of yesteryear—holidays as they were in the Texas Hill Country on a 1915 farm.

The farm, its fence and gate festooned with cedar boughs, glows in the subdued light of kerosene lamps and tallow candles. A bewhiskered farmer, clad in "Sunday clothes" that bespeak the early 20th Century, welcomes everyone. On the porch, the choir of Trinity Lutheran Church from Stonewall



**Lady Bird Johnson (far left) and her family carry on a traditional Christmas celebration begun by President Johnson in 1970. On behalf of her mother and other family members, Luci Baines Johnson (center) greets guests who gather at Stonewall for the event.**

## A Hill Country Christmas

sings "Joy to the World." As guests enter the narrow hallway, men and women dressed in the practical and subdued fashion of the early 1900s greet everyone with a hearty and heartfelt "Merry Christmas!"

Visitors can walk slowly through the rooms to admire antique furnishings such as an ornate, antique wall clock, hand-carved rocking chairs, and sturdy, wood-frame beds draped with handmade quilts.

The focus of the farm folk's holiday celebration—the Christmas tree—resides regally in the parlor. Perched on a table, the five-foot, popcorn-star-crowned cedar (Ashe juniper) flickers and glows in all its candlelit glory. In 1915, selecting, cutting, and decorating the tree formed an exciting and essential part of the holidays.

Usually, the farm's menfolk would cut the tree just before Christmas Day. If crops had been good that year, perhaps Father would buy apples and oranges to hang from the branches along with homemade decorations of cookies and popcorn, possibly a store-bought ornament or two, and a few strands of tinsel. Candles provided the tree's only light. Though the tree was not decorated until the night before Christmas—and then by only the parents—preparations for decorating it had begun days before.

In those days, the objects hanging *on* the tree proved as intriguing as the few gifts lying *under* it. Boys and girls seldom received more than a ball or a whistle or a small doll from "Santa Claus."

Tonight, volunteer guide Jeanette Beckmann welcomes visitors to the parlor and the twinkling tree, hung with fruit, popcorn, and cookies. Jeanette's husband, Melvin Beckmann, is the grandson of Emil and Emma Beckmann, who acquired the farm in 1900 from Johann and Christine Sauer. "There are a lot of memories for Melvin in this home," says Jeanette.

In the kitchen, treats of oatmeal and sugar cookies, slices of stollen (a sweet holiday bread), homemade bread, cooked cheese, and pungent pieces of smoked and dried sausage line the tables, along with freshly churned butter and homemade preserves. Visitors help themselves to small samples of these tasty goodies, lovingly prepared by the men and women who work as the farm's living-history interpreters.

Outside, the stillness belies the presence of the farm's horses, hogs, cows, chickens, and guineas, who have bedded down for the night. Barely visible in the lantern light near the barn glimmer the leafy shapes of Swiss chard and cabbage growing in the

Lyndon B. Johnson State and National Historical Parks lie on the north side of US 290, 14 miles west of

Johnson City and 16 miles east of Fredericksburg; enter the parks on Park Rd. 52. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. oversees 730 acres of parkland south of the Pedernales (pronounced per-duh-NAH-lis) River that include the Visitor Center, the wildlife area, and the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm. The National Park Service (NPS) supervises about 500 acres north of the river, including part of the 2,778-acre LBJ Ranch. (Another unit of the natl. park is in Johnson City.)

The tree-lighting ceremony—this year on Dec. 17—begins about 6 p.m. "The show goes on regardless of the weather," says state park supt. Donnie Schuch. The NPS starts dispensing passes for the free bus tours at 5 p.m. Tours last from 45 min. to an hour. Buses run from just after the tree-lighting until all visitors have taken the tour (usually ending by 10 p.m.). You can explore the park and its exhibits throughout the day of the ceremony, but the Sauer-Beckmann Farm closes at 4:30 that day so the park can prepare for the evening tours. All Dec. 17 activities are free. No private vehicles are allowed on Park Rd. 49, which leads to the LBJ Birthplace.

A gift shop, operated by the nonprofit Southwest Parks & Monuments Assn. in the Visitor Center, sells books, LBJ

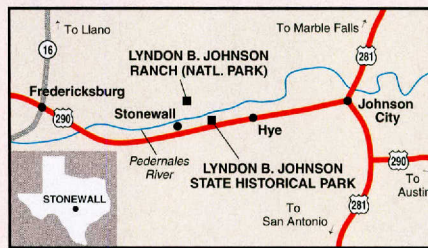
memorabilia, and Hill Country mementos.

Throughout the year, the LBJ State and National Historical Parks open 8-5 daily (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,

and New Year's days). The Visitor Center opens 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m. Bus tours, each lasting about 1¼ hours, operate from 10-4. Cost: \$3 age 7 and older, free age 6 and younger; tickets sold in the Visitor Center. Most areas and the bus tours are wheelchair accessible.

Write to the Lyndon B. Johnson State Historical Park, Box 238, Stonewall 78671; 830/644-2252. Web site: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lbj/lbj.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lbj/lbj.htm). Or write to the Lyndon B. Johnson Natl. Historical Park, Box 329, Johnson City 78636; 830/868-7128. Web site: [www.nps.gov/lyjo/home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/lyjo/home.htm).

Lodging, dining, and shopping are available in nearby Johnson City and Fredericksburg. Write to the Johnson City Visitor & Tourism Bureau, Box 485, Johnson City 78636; 830/868-7684. Web site: [www.lbjcountry.com](http://www.lbjcountry.com). Or write to the Fredericksburg Convention & Visitors Bureau, 106 N. Adams, Fredericksburg 78624; 888/997-3600. Web site: [www.fredericksburg-texas.com](http://www.fredericksburg-texas.com).



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garden. At the front of the house, a working windmill chirps and whirs when an occasional gust of wind tickles its blades.

The mellow light of lanterns and candles, the fragrant scent of the decorative cedar boughs, and the warm welcome of the "farm folk" intertwine with the soft singing of "Silent Night" to evoke a reflective, almost reverent mood among the visitors.

As they board the bus to return to the park's Visitor Center, most folks agree that the evening has brought them closer to the real meaning of Christmas. Lyndon Johnson would be mighty proud. ★

Freelance writer ROSEMARY WILLIAMS of Austin enjoys celebrating the holidays at fun and fanciful festivities such as those in the state parks. Staff photographer J. GRIFFIS SMITH shot October's story on Gonzales.



Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, Goliad



Magoffin Home  
State Historical  
Park, El Paso

KEVIN B. STILLMAN



## SPARKLE APLENTY AT THE STATE PARKS!

**REV UP YOUR YULETIDE SPIRITS** at special seasonal events in state parks throughout Texas. In addition to the Christmas ceremonies in LBJ State and National Historical Parks at Stonewall, here are some park festivities that promise interesting holiday fare for the family. For more information, call the individual parks, or visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Web site: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us). *(Note: Last-minute changes in scheduling can occur. Please check with the individual park before you drive to any event listed.)* All sites are wheelchair accessible unless otherwise noted.

J. GRIFFIS SMITH



Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park,  
Washington

© GEORGE HOSEK



Sebastopol State Historical Park, Seguin

KEVIN B. STILLMAN



Fort Leaton State Historical Park,  
Presidio

## BIG BEND COUNTRY

**Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center (Big Bend Ranch State Park), Lajitas, Christmas in the Gardens**, Dec. 16, 7-9 p.m. Stroll along garden paths lit by luminarias while listening to holiday music sung in English and Spanish. Then, sip hot cocoa and nibble on cookies, as Santa Claus distributes small gifts and fruit to the children. Free. Call 915/424-3327.

**Fort Leaton State Historical Park, Presidio, La Posada**, Dec. 16. A piñata, mariachis and folkloric dancers from Presidio High School, free food, and 400 luminarias combine to light up this traditional religious procession and celebration. Call 915/229-3613.

**Magoffin Home State Historical Park, El Paso, Christmas Tea**, Dec. 3, two seatings, at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Enjoy "high tea," with sweets and savories, at the 1875 Magoffin homestead. Fee: \$10 per person; *reservations required*. Call 915/533-5147.

## GULF COAST

**Fulton Mansion State Historical Park, Fulton, Caroling at the Mansion**, Dec. 9, 6:30-8 p.m. On this special holiday evening, the grounds of the lovely 1877 Fulton Mansion are the setting for the singing of traditional Christmas carols by candlelight. Free. Call 361/729-0386.

**Lake Texana State Park, Edna, Caroling in the Park**, Dec. 16, 7-8 p.m. PHASE, a local women's choral ensemble,

performs holiday music, followed by snacks of hot chocolate, cider, coffee, and cookies. Free. Call 361/782-5718.

**Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park, West Columbia, Candlelight Christmas**, Dec. 2-3 and 9-10, 5-8 p.m. Costumed docents guide visitors through the seasonally decorated Greek Revival plantation house, built in the 1830s. Tours interpret the history of the site and describe the Christmas celebrations that took place here. Victorian-era clad volunteers serve cookies and wassail. Fee: \$4, \$2 students with ID. Reservations available, but not required. Ground floor wheelchair accessible. Call 979/345-4656.

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Canyon, Christmas in the Canyon**, Dec. 16, 2-5 p.m. At the park's Visitor Center, which will be decorated in holiday finery, participate in arts and crafts activities and partake of refreshments. Fee: \$3, free age 12 and younger. Call 806/488-2227, ext. 49.

## PINEY WOODS

**Governor Hogg Shrine State Historical Park & Gov. Jim Hogg City Park, Quitman, Christmas Open House**, Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Visitors can view Christmas decorations, period furnishings, and Hogg family memorabilia at the Miss Ima Hogg Museum; at the honeymoon cottage of James S. and Sarah Ann Hogg (cottage not wheelchair accessible); and at the Stinson House (the restored home of Ima Hogg's grandparents). Enjoy punch and cookies in the museum. Free. Call 903/763-2701.

**Mission Tejas State Historical Park, Weches, Christmas in the Park**, Dec. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Artisans demonstrate basketry, soap-making, and candle-making,

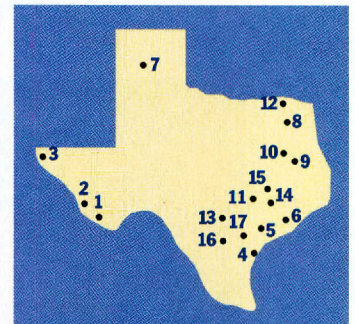
while the Davy Crockett Dulcimer Society plays Christmas music at the historic Rice family log cabin. Admission: Usual park entrance fees. Not wheelchair accessible. Call 936/687-2394.

**Texas State Railroad State Historical Park, Palestine, Victorian Christmas Train**, Dec. 2, 9, and 16, 4-6 p.m. An antique steam engine pulls vintage coaches that carry passengers on a nostalgic, 25-mile round-trip journey from Palestine. During the ride, women costumed in turn-of-the-century clothes serve refreshments. Carolers entertain in the depot and on the train, and passengers vie for prizes for best Victorian costume. The Palestine depot lies 4 miles east of Palestine on US 84. Fee: \$25, \$10 ages 5-18. *Reservations required. Call ahead regarding wheelchair access.* Call 903/723-3014 or 800/659-3484.

J. GRIFFIS SMITH



Texas State Railroad State Historical Park, Palestine-Rusk



- 1 Barton Warnock Environmental Education Ctr. (Big Bend Ranch State Park), Lajitas
- 2 Fort Leaton State Park, Presidio
- 3 Magoffin Home, El Paso
- 4 Fulton Mansion, Fulton
- 5 Lake Texana State Park, Edna
- 6 Varner-Hogg Plantation, West Columbia
- 7 Palo Duro Canyon, Canyon
- 8 Gov. Hogg Shrine & Gov. Jim Hogg City Park, Quitman
- 9 Mission Tejas, Weches
- 10 Texas State Railroad, Palestine
- 11 Monument Hill & Kreishe Brewery, La Grange
- 12 Sam Bell Maxey House, Paris
- 13 Sebastopol State Park, Seguin
- 14 Stephen F. Austin State Park, San Felipe
- 15 Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park, Washington
- 16 Choke Canyon State Park, Calliham
- 17 Gollad State Park, Gollad



Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery State Historical Parks, La Grange

#### PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery State Historical Parks, La Grange, *Trail of Lights***, Dec. 2, 9, and 15-16, 6-8 p.m. Follow a trail glimmering with holiday lights through a wooded area to the 3-story, 1850s home of Heinrich Kreische. Christmas cookies and punch await inside, where Santa and Mrs. Claus greet visitors, and musicians such as bellringers, dulcimer players, and choral groups add to the festive mood. Costumed docents relate the history of the house. Fee: \$2.50, 50¢ age 12 and younger. Partially wheelchair accessible. Call 979/968-5658.

Also at the **Kreische House, *Early German Christmas***. On selected nights during Dec., groups of 25 to 50 can take a *reservations-only* tour of the Kreische House and enjoy a special interpretation of the traditional German Christmas celebration that includes German holiday foods. Hours: 6-10 p.m. Fee: \$10 per person. Partially wheelchair accessible.

*Reservation and deposit required; these tours sell out quickly.* Call 979/968-5658.

**Sam Bell Maxey House State Historical Park, Paris, *Christmas Celebration at the Maxey House***, Dec. 3, 1-5 p.m. In the parlor of the 1868 Sam Bell Maxey House, visitors delight in a variety of musical interludes by a pianist, string quartet, and chorale. The presentation is part of the Paris Council of Garden Clubs' annual Christmas Tour of Homes. Enjoy punch and cookies in the gift shop. Fee: \$2, \$1 ages 6-12, free to Texas Conservation Passport holders and to members of Friends of the Maxey House. Downstairs is wheelchair accessible. Call 903/785-5716.

**Sebastopol State Historical Park, Seguin, *Christmas at Sebastopol—Parents' Day Out***, Dec. 23. To help out parents who have last-minute holiday tasks, the park will hold a 6-hour 19th-Century Christmas event for kids. *Registration required.* Call 830/379-4833.

**Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park, San Felipe, *Pancakes with Santa***, Dec. 9, 8:30-10:30 a.m. Enjoy delicious flapjacks and a visit with Santa. Fee: \$3 per plate, plus a canned food item per person as a donation to the area food bank. Also on Dec. 9, 6-8 p.m., ***Christmas Caroling and Hayride***. Join other merrymakers and carolers on a fun hayride through the park. Fee: One canned food item per person. Not wheelchair accessible. Call 979/885-3613.

**Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park, Washington, *Candlelight Christmas***, Dec. 9 and 16, 6-9 p.m. Experience Christmas as it was in the 1850s at Barrington, the home of Anson Jones, last president of the Republic of Texas. Listen to the sweet strains of a dulcimer, and learn historical dances, led by a caller, to the toe-tapping tunes of fiddle music. Children's activities include parlor games and seasonal crafts. Refreshments consist of cider, cookies,

and other goodies. Fee: \$6, \$3 students, free age 6 and younger. Call 936/878-2214.

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**  
**Choke Canyon State Park, Calliham Unit, Calliham, *Calliham Christmas***, Dec. 20, 7 p.m. The park welcomes the public to a holiday presentation that includes photos with Santa and small treats for the children. Free. On Dec. 22 at 5:30 p.m., there will be caroling, followed at 6 p.m. by a special Christmas movie and free popcorn in the park's gymnasium. Free. Call 361/786-3868.

**Goliad State Historical Park, Goliad, *Christmas Concert***, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. Coastal Bend College of Beeville presents a choral concert of Yuletide music in the chapel of Mission Espiritu Santo. Luminarias line the walkways, and some 14,000 twinkling lights outline the mission. Fee: \$2, \$1 age 12 and younger. Call 361/645-3405.

—Rosemary Williams



THE WHOOPING CRANES'

BY JANET R. EDWARDS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN MYERS

**D**EEP IN a desolate Texas coastal marsh, dozens of miles from civilization, people stand in silence on a two-story observation platform, eagerly scanning the horizon. Other folks, afloat in chartered boats near shore, do the same. A brisk November wind chills them to the bone, yet they feel warm with hope, having anticipated for months the arrival of the airborne visitors they trust will return.



“Look!” cries a man, pointing toward the sky. All eyes strain to catch a flash of brilliant white, a sign the spectators have trained themselves to recognize. Sure enough, a pair of birds appears, moving slowly in a wide circle, searching for a place to alight. Selecting a suitable spot, the travelers pause, then lower long, black legs for a soft Earth landing. The whooping cranes have returned to Texas.

Members of the last remaining, breeding flock of migrating whoopers in the world, these exquisite birds, known scientifically as *Grus americana*, have once again survived the 2,400-mile, four- to six-week journey from their summer home, Canada’s Wood Buffalo National Park, to their winter abode, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, along the southern coast of Texas. Each year, when these stately creatures glide down to the shallow marsh, bird-lovers everywhere can once again breathe a sigh of relief. On the verge of extinction for decades, this embattled species nevertheless still beats its wings.

“Whooping cranes probably numbered around 10,000 during the period when the first Europeans settled in America,” says Tom Stehn, whooping crane coordinator for the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). “But by 1941, only 21 birds—15 in the ANWR flock—could be accounted for in North



## WINTER PILGRIMAGE

**NATURE-LOVERS** may understandably whoop and holler over the safe return of these endangered birds to Texas. However, such enthusiasm can't compare with the whooping crane's own vocal hallelujah, a shrill, haunting call that can reverberate some two miles across open marsh.

America, even though people had begun serious efforts to try to save them by the early 1930s.

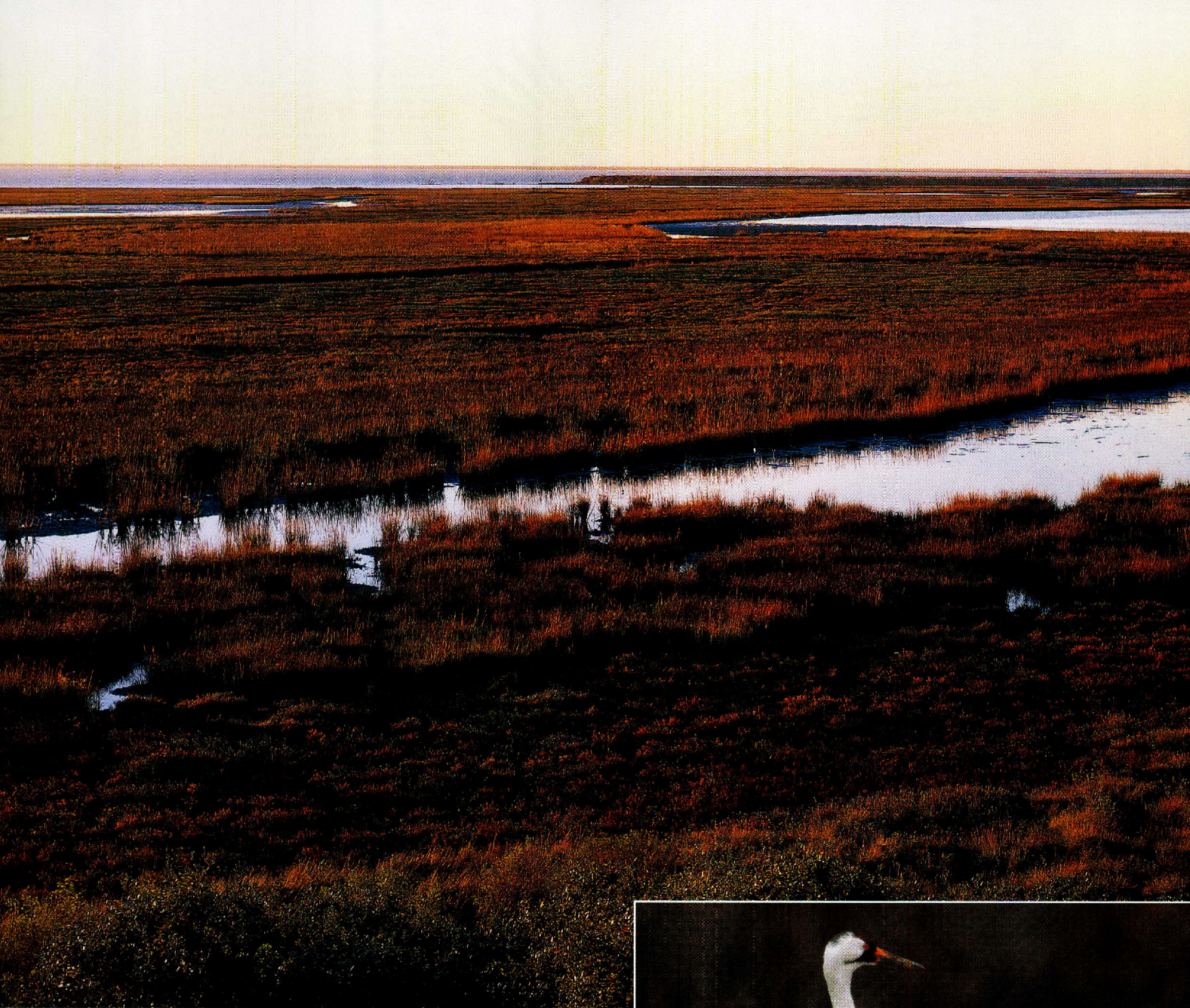
"Today, we're pleased to say we have 187 whoopers in the Aransas flock," Tom continues, "with 145 others in protective, captive breeding facilities: two in a nonbreeding flock in New Mexico, and 78 in a nonmigrating flock in Florida. People should understand, however, that the whooping cranes' survival, short- or long-term, can't be guaranteed."

The ANWR, along the Intracoastal Waterway just north of Rockport, was created in 1937 as the Aransas Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. The refuge now encompasses some 59,000 acres of Blackjack Peninsula, named for the prevalent blackjack oak, a wilderness partially protected from the Gulf of Mexico by a ribbon of barrier islands. (Additional refuge acreage lies west of the peninsula, as well as on Matagorda Island to the east.) The sanctuary has had a crucial role in saving these elegant birds.

The refuge's brackish and saltwater wetlands offer their sumptuous banquet of crabs, clams, snakes, worms, and fish to the whooping cranes and to some 390 other species of hungry migrant and resident water birds, including roseate spoonbills, egrets, pelicans, herons, geese, and ducks. Of equal delight for visitors are the alligators, often visible only as a pair of beady eyes peeking up from the sanctuary's calm ponds and sloughs. Farther inland, javelinas, opossums, white-tailed deer, colorful migrant songbirds like painted

[FACING PAGE] Birders from around the world visit Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to view the majestic flight of migrating whooping cranes.

TOP PHOTO © EDA ROGERS



The 40-foot observation tower offers expansive views like this one of the wetlands at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

buntings and warblers, and bobcats populate grasslands, oak mottes, and thickets of evergreen redbay trees.

**T** **○ SEE THESE WILD** creatures for yourself, head for the Texas coast between the months of November (when the whoopers arrive) and March (when they return to Canada). The refuge's 40-foot observation tower, equipped with two telescopes, at times offers views of a whooping crane family known to feed in the area. However, charter tour boats, able to traverse some 60 miles of wetland bays and marshes along Blackjack Peninsula, Matagorda Island, and San Jose Island, provide the most efficient, comfortable, and memorable way to watch the whoopers in their natural habitat.



© JOJIN INGRAM

Whooping cranes arrive in Texas after a 2,400-mile flight from Canada that takes four to six weeks. The bird on the right is a juvenile.



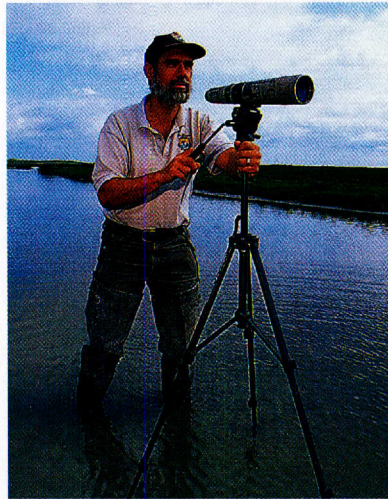
**"TODAY, we're pleased to say we have 187 whoopers in the Aransas flock, with 145 others in protective, captive breeding facilities. People should understand, however, that the whooping cranes' survival, short- or long-term, can't be guaranteed."**

"People love to go with us to see water birds, especially the whooping cranes," says Captain Ted Appell, owner of the M.V. *Skimmer*. The boat's stable design, double observation decks, glassed-in and heated cabin, shallow draft, and comfy seating—along with the fact-filled, narrated tours—provide an ideal way to watch all types of water birds, sometimes at very close range. "In fact," Ted says, "one time, we even had a young whooper hop aboard and take an extended 'peeping tom' tour of the boat—a nice, long visit that made our passengers very happy."

Nature-lovers may understandably whoop and holler over the safe return of these endangered birds to Texas. However, such enthusiasm can't compare with the whooping crane's own vocal hallelujah, a shrill, haunting

call that can reverberate some two miles across open marsh. It is the bird's long, narrow trachea, coiled inside its breastbone, that enables it to produce the sound. And with food and potential mates in fairly limited supply, not to mention hungry coyotes nearby, having such an "in your ear" attention-getter can be helpful in carrying on the business of courtship rituals, defending territorial boundaries from rival birds, and keeping predators at bay.

I'll never forget the first time I laid eyes on a whooping crane. She was an adult, slender and statuesque, nearly five feet tall. Wispy, snow-white feathers the color of pure snow adorned her entire body, except for her head, which showed mask-like, red-and-black markings. Black primary feathers and a distinctive outstretched neck help identify these birds in flight. Scanning the shallow marsh for food, she seemed to float above the water, her long tail feathers billowing around her legs like a ballerina's scarves. Suddenly, she stabbed at the water with her narrow, sword-shaped beak and hauled in a big, juicy blue crab,



**Tom Stehn, whooping crane coordinator for the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, takes a continuous bird census from land, water, and air during the Texas whooper season.**

while her taller mate kept watch a few feet away.

Later, the couple took flight for other nearby marshes, their seven-and-a-half-foot wingspans and speeds of 35 to 45 mph taking them quickly out of sight. If food supplies in the marshes run scarce, because of saltwater inflows or drought, the whoopers will move farther inland (during the day) to feed on berries and on toasted acorns left exposed by the regular, controlled burns conduct-

ed along the margins of the ANWR's oak woodlands.

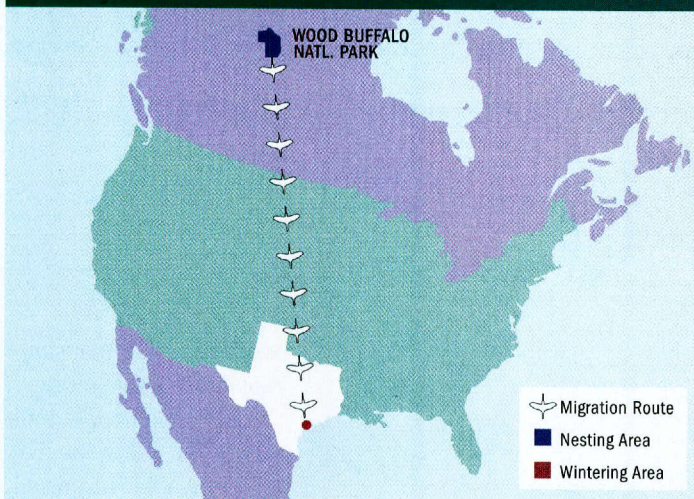
In late winter, visitors are privy to the cranes' exotic courtship rituals, marked by exuberant whooping, head-bowing, spectacular leaping, and vigorous wing-flapping by either or both sexes. These displays help seal mate-selection (which lasts for life) or strengthen existing partnerships.

By late March or early April, the whooper's call trumpets the signal to return to the flock's summer nesting grounds. Over the next few weeks, pairs and trios, including some yearling birds, spread their wings, lean into the wind with necks outstretched, sprint a few steps forward, and soar upward in dramatic, ever-widening spirals. With their white feathers sparkling in the sun, they hitch a ride on thermal updrafts and begin the arduous journey to Canada.

The breeding pairs that make it back to Wood Buffalo National Park (which straddles the border between Alberta and the Northwest Territories) quickly reestablish territorial boundaries and build nests in small, shallow ponds covered with cattails, bulrushes, and sedges. The park's tall, dense, wetland vegetation offers not only food, but also a barrier to prowling wolves and bears, predators that pose a constant threat, especially at night.

Both parents assist with incubating a pair of eggs, which usually hatch in about four weeks. At birth, these spunky little critters tumble about the nest like small, reddish, mud-streaked wads of

## RANGE OF THE WHOOPING CRANE



cotton; they carry this superlative camouflage into young adulthood. Fiercely protected by their doting parents, the chicks (one of which will probably perish in its first few weeks, due to sibling competition) soon begin to wander about. By autumn, barely four months old and having reached about two-thirds of their adult size (they'll reach maturity in another 10 months), the surviving youngsters will have already learned to fly (at age three months) and are ready to accompany their parents to Texas.

**S**CIENTISTS BELIEVE whoopers first appeared during the Pleistocene period, some 500,000 years ago, when inland seas and shallow wetlands moistened vast, grassland prairies. At peak populations, the whooper's range may have extended from central Mexico to the Arctic, and from coast to coast across North America. But as the water table subsided, forests overtook the grasslands, and whooping crane numbers greatly diminished. Perhaps extinction—the fate of any species unable to adapt to a changing environment—would have threatened the whooping crane even if North America had never been extensively colonized. But there's little doubt that today the whoopers find themselves enveloped by a host of unfavorable and potentially deadly conditions, some the result of natural evolution, but many more clearly caused and/or exacerbated by man.

“Numerous factors have contributed to the decline of whooping crane populations,” says the ANWR's Tom Stehn. “In the early 1900s, extensive hunting and indiscriminate sport-shooting severely reduced their numbers. However, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty of 1916 [which made it illegal to shoot birds not given a declared hunting season], followed by the Endangered Species Act of 1967 [which helps protect habitats of threatened and endangered animals], along with an intensive public education campaign, helped curtail these activities. Even so, whoopers are still occasionally mistaken for legal game birds such as snow geese, swans, or sandhill cranes.”

Stehn says that a more pervasive problem is the disappearance of wilderness feeding areas along whooping crane migration routes caused by drainage of wetlands for farms, homes, and industries. Other dangers include accidental, in-flight collision with electric power lines and microwave cell tower support cables (especially in bad weather); loss of freshwater inflows as a result of drought; diversion of river flows; water pollution; natural predation by coyotes and bobcats; and diseases like avian tuberculosis and cholera.

“But of all the challenges facing the whooping crane,” Stehn continues, “I'm most concerned about global warming, a phenomenon that will bring about a gradual rise in sea level that will destroy many acres of shallow-water grasses in the ANWR. Continued drought conditions in Texas coastal areas will also certainly lead to increased salinity of wetland water, which may decimate blue crab populations, an important source of food for whooping cranes. To make things even



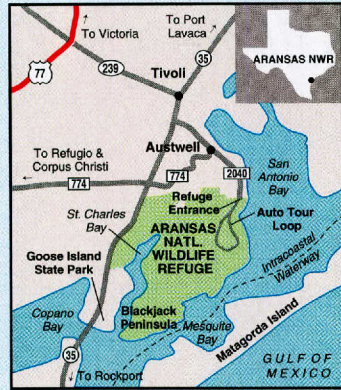
“The... pleasure of the game is from afar to view the flight.” —Matthew Prior (1664-1721)



## Whooping Cranes in Texas

Some 185 of the world's remaining whooping cranes winter at the Aransas Natl. Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), on Blackjack Peninsula, about 30 miles north of Rockport. In addition to the whoopers, the refuge is home to almost 400 species of other birds and some three dozen species of mammals. To reach the ANWR from Rockport, take Texas 35 north 20 mi. to FM 774, and turn right. Drive 9 mi. to Austwell, and take FM 2040, which leads to the refuge entrance. From Port Lavaca, drive 35 mi. south on Texas 35 past Tivoli to Texas 239, turn left, and drive 5 mi. to Austwell. At Austwell, take FM 2040 for 7 mi. to the refuge. Refuge hours: Daily from sunrise to sunset. Admission: \$3; \$5 per vehicle. Visitors must register.

The Visitor Center, near the entrance, opens daily 8:30-4:30 (closed Thanksgiving and Christmas days). The Center offers exhibits on the history of the refuge, the region's biological communities, and a variety of environmental and natural history topics, including the whooping crane, alligators, javelinas, raccoons, and gulls.



The refuge offers a 16-mile, paved driving loop, 6 walking trails, two picnic areas, and a 40-foot observation tower with telescopes. The Visitor Center, the observation tower, and some of the trails are wheelchair accessible. *Note:* The closest place to buy food and gas is Tivoli (none available in the refuge). Write to the Aransas Natl. Wildlife Refuge, Box 100, Austwell 77950; 361/286-3559. Web site: [southwest.fws.gov/refuges/texas/aransas.html](http://southwest.fws.gov/refuges/texas/aransas.html).

Just south of the refuge, the Rockport-Fulton area offers some of the best birdwatching in the

nation. For information about personalized birding tours, guides, and charter service, write to the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, 404 Broadway, Rockport 78382; 361/729-6445, 800/242-0071 (Texas), or 800/826-6441 (U.S.). Web site: [www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org).

The M.V. *Skimmer*, Capt. Ted Appell's specially designed Whooping Crane Tour Boat, takes visitors on a 60-mile round trip Wed-Mon Nov. 1- Apr. 30. Tours depart from the Sandollar Pavilion in Fulton. Morning tours leave at 6:45 a.m. and return around 11 a.m. Afternoon tours leave at 12:45 and return around 4. Rates: \$33 per person; group rates available. *Reservations are "a must."* Limited handicapped accessibility.

The tours traverse shallow bays and wetlands at and near San Jose Island, Matagorda Island, and Blackjack Peninsula, offering close, seasonal views of dozens of water birds, including roseate spoonbills, American white and brown pelicans, spotted sandpipers, and piping plovers. A birding map and checklist, binoculars,

a continental breakfast, comfortable seating, big windows, roomy decks, clean restrooms, and detailed interpretive and bird identification information from Capt. Ted make these trips truly pleasurable and educational for all ages.

Capt. Ted's Rookery Island Tours, offered on weekends in Apr. (or during the week by reservation), are leisurely excursions of avian nursery areas that thrive in and around the bays, reefs, and islands near Rockport-Fulton. Call for rates.

Write to Captain Ted's Whooping Crane Tours, HCO 1, Box 225J, Rockport 78382; 361/729-9589 or 800/338-4551.

The nearest campground is at Goose Island State Park, about 30 miles south of the refuge entrance. Camping is not allowed at ANWR (except for special-provision, free trailer hookups for volunteers who work 30 hours per week in the Visitor Center or who assist in other ways around the refuge). For applications or additional information, contact the ANWR. Meals, gas, and lodging are readily available in both Rockport and Fulton.

worse, a warmer climate trend could also generate an extended hurricane season, creating potential disaster for whooping cranes caught in a storm during or after their fall migration to the ANWR. But, because global warming is a problem experienced worldwide, we're also quite worried about the possibility of altered patterns of precipitation in Canada. Even a loss of as little as one inch of annual rainfall in the whooping cranes' summer nesting and feeding habitat could cause the species to slide into extinction."

And thus, by sheer good fortune and the tireless, cooperative efforts of state and federal agencies, local citizens, and private environmental groups, the whooping cranes survive. But because this glorious bird's toehold on life is tenuous, some 95,000 people travel each year from distant cities, states, and nations to see the whoopers in their winter habitat in Texas. And there's no time to waste: Even a cursory glance at the map tells you that the ANWR—as wild and well-preserved a natural sanctuary as you'll find almost anywhere—is highly vulnerable to the disastrous effects of an oil spill

or other toxic chemical release from the thousands of boats and barges along the Intracoastal Waterway.

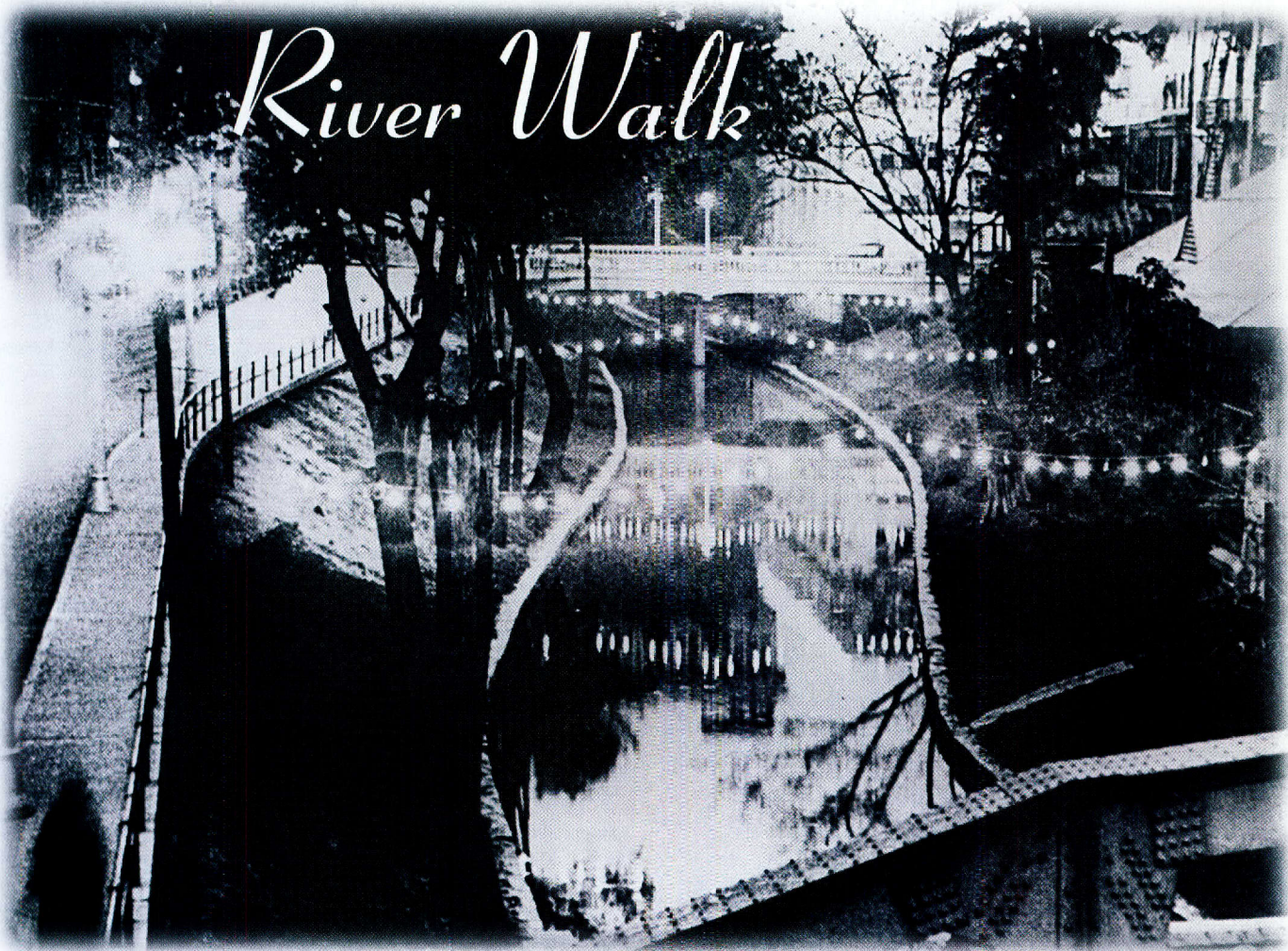
Add to these dangers the wave action generated by 24-hour, motorized traffic along this narrow channel, and you've got serious erosion along the entire span of the refuge's southern boundary, a process that has already eaten away some 120 acres of whooper habitat. A piece of good news in this constant, but hopeful struggle: The recent completion of a weather-worthy shield of interwoven cement blocks, constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has brought the erosion (which had been occurring at a rate of two acres per year) under control.

Poignantly symbolic of every creature's struggle to survive, the whooping crane miraculously remains with us. For now, birders and nature-lovers who patiently wait and listen, barely breathing, find their reward as a pair, then a trio, of these winsome Winter Texans appears on the horizon, answering the siren song that hurries them south for the winter. ★

East Texans JAN EDWARDS and STEPHAN MYERS rafted the Rio Grande's Colorado Canyon for our October issue.

## SAN ANTONIO'S ORIGINAL

# River Walk



BY LEWIS F. FISHER



PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
JOHN DAVENPORT

**S**AN ANTONIO'S MODERN-DAY RIVER WALK TURNED 59 THIS YEAR. As with many great beauties dealing with the passage of time, however, there's a little more to the story. A few out-of-the-way wrinkles and age lines hint at the underlying truth: We may think she's approaching her seventh decade, but the two-mile River Walk through downtown San Antonio, in fact, turned 86 this year. In other words, she's well on her way to entering her *tenth* decade.

Lifting the veil to find reminders of San Antonio's first River Walk means going back to the earliest years of the 20th Century.

San Antonio's citizens had long chafed over neglect of the river that had nurtured their city's birth, in 1718. For nearly 200 years, the waterway had kept the growing town supplied with water for drinking, bathing, and irrigation. Yet as early as 1887, one disenfranchised citizen had written presciently that if its banks were landscaped and its waters allowed to carry boats for tourists, the San Antonio River could someday become "the crown jewel of Texas."

[TOP] In 1914, San Antonio mayor Clinton Brown switched on lights strung above the new River Walk, designed by River Commissioner George Surkey. TOP PHOTO COURTESY LEWIS F. FISHER

[ABOVE] The North St. Mary's Street bridge, built shortly after the 1914 River Walk dedication, still has its original quatrefoils, ecclesiastically appropriate to the nearby Ursuline Academy (now the Southwest School of Art & Craft).



[ABOVE] Today's River Walk dresses up for the holidays with more than 120,000 twinkling lights. This year, the lights will shine from November 24 (the switch is thrown at 7:02 p.m.) through the first day of the new year.

[RIGHT] Soon after the opening of the 1914 River Walk, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce moved the usual front-cover image of the Alamo to the back of its promotion booklet and put this drawing of the new river park in its place.



By 1900, a steadily lowering water table had reduced the rushing flow into little more than “a sluggish trickle through slime and silt.” Residents rose up to demand the river’s beautification downtown.

A citizen march on City Hall in 1904 brought new trees and grass to the river’s banks. The next spring, the masked King of Fiesta paraded for the first time on the river. A steady blast of trumpets punctuated by the crackle of fireworks heralded the royal fleet’s arrival at Tobin Terrace, a narrow strip below Crockett Street that had been cleaned up and planted under the direction of Fire Chief William Tobin.

(Tobin Terrace still exists, but nobody calls it that anymore. Until recently, it was simply a bed of ferns—across from La Mansión del Río hotel—backed by a wall of arches designed by Robert H.H. Hugman, who led the river’s redesign of 1941. Now, the arches are being punched through as entrances to corridors under Crockett Street into the

basement of the former Aztec Theater. With access to the River Walk, the basement will become a network of shops.)

In 1912, with citizen dissatisfaction over the state of the river increasing, election of a municipal reform slate that included a new mayor, Augustus Jones, brought a flurry of proposals for river walks and beautification. “Firefly lights” in the trees

**In the 1920s, limestone blocks from the 1855 French Building were used to help build river walls from Travis Street north to the new Municipal Auditorium.**

would twinkle for gondola-men in the garb of Aztec Indians, who would pole loads of tourists to picturesque landings for dinner. Somehow, it was all to look like Venice, with echoes of Mexico.

Less than two weeks after the election, Mayor Jones named Atlee B. Ayres, a rising young architect, as chairman of the City Plan Committee. Ayres at once made beautification of the river a top priority and assigned the job to River Commissioner George Surkey. An erstwhile railroad engineer and roundhouse foreman, Surkey had served as a city councilman before going into real estate and then joining the city staff.

Surkey designed a uniform river channel lined with low, concrete-covered rock walls. Locals quickly dubbed the project the “Surkey Sea Walls.” When Surkey ran out of rocks, he scrounged more from the rubble of buildings being ripped apart for the widening of Commerce Street.

The project extended along the horseshoe-shaped Great Bend (see map, page 42), and on north past Houston Street almost to Lexington Avenue and the site of today’s Municipal Auditorium (the approximate extent of today’s River Walk). Workers seeded the route with grass and planted cypresses and palms along the riverbanks. In the northern section, using





At the southeast corner of Houston Street at the river, an Oriental-style balcony, built in 1918 as part of the old Riverside Cafe, is the oldest surviving structure built to take advantage of George Surkey's River Walk.

fare. Though the walkway did enhance the vista for bistros above, the River Walk could be used only for strolling, because the danger of flooding discouraged the building of river-level businesses. North of the Houston Street bridge, a place named Jazz-Land offered dancing and refreshments from a terrace jutting over the new river park: The new Texas Venice had a touch of New Orleans.

Across Houston Street, at what was once the Riverside Cafe, diners seated on a vaguely Oriental-style balcony (built of

**D**ESPITE MAJOR COSMETIC CHANGES, HINTS REMAIN OF WHAT CAME BEFORE, THOUGH YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TO FIND THEM.

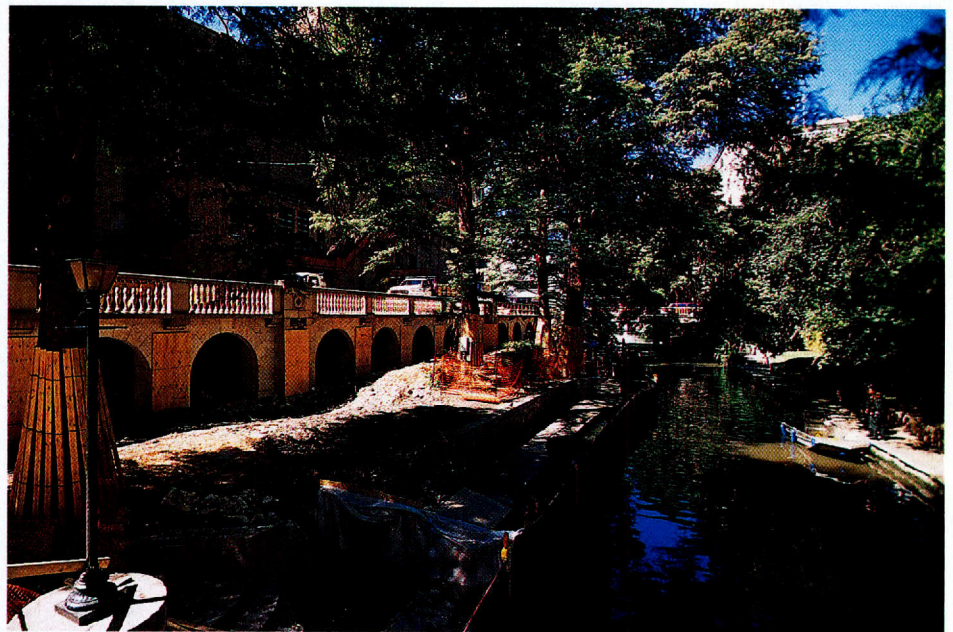
rocks from old landmarks, they built 20-foot walls that reached up to street level. Many of these walls remain today.

On the night of November 21, 1914, the dedication for both the beautified river and the newly widened Commerce Street was held on the new Commerce Street bridge. Thousands cheered as the new mayor, Clinton Brown (Augustus Jones had died suddenly in office), recognized the work of George Surkey and flipped a switch to light the river.

Noted sculptor and San Antonio resident Pompeo Coppini had designed the street-level alcoves on the new Commerce Street bridge. One of the alcoves still displays a faux-granite Indian (by Coppini's student Waldine Tauch) holding two dishes, one in each hand, which were fountains. The opposite alcove, earmarked for a statue of Augustus Jones, was never completed. (The empty alcove now provides stairway access and a fine view of the River Walk's 1941 facelift.) Below the street, at river level, visitors can still see Coppini's concrete reliefs of torches and other classical motifs designed to beautify the new river park.

Although parts of the "Surkey Sea Walls" were topped with flagstones, the only paved riverside walkway extended a short distance south of Houston Street, then San Antonio's busiest thorough-

concrete in 1918) could look out over the river. That long-vacant landmark, its painted-over windows blocking any view of the river, is the oldest surviving commercial building designed specifically for the



This narrow bank of the river below Crockett Street (today opposite La Mansión del Río hotel) was known at the turn of the 20th Century as Tobin Terrace. In 1905, a fleet bearing Fiesta's ruler, King Selamat ("tamales" spelled backwards), floated for the first time on the river and landed at Tobin Terrace. Architect Robert H.H. Hugman designed the arches many years later.



In 1929, Robert Hugman presented the city with a redesign of Surkey's River Walk. Hugman's project, which straightened this bend (shown here in 1930), finally began in 1939, finished in 1941, and earned him the title "Father of the River Walk." PHOTO COURTESY LEWIS F. FISHER

original River Walk. It is to be incorporated in the design of a new hotel complex.

Within a few months of the 1914 dedication, the Chamber of Commerce had begun boosting the new river park with a colored drawing on the cover of a booklet that outlined the city's charms. The long-promoted image of the Alamo, perhaps for the first time, was moved to the back. Such promotions worked. Soon, even *Architectural Record* was praising

San Antonio's city council for regarding the river "as something more than part of a drainage system."

For 25 years, George Surkey's River Walk was the path visitors to the Alamo City could enjoy. Over the years, local residents—recognizing the river's potential as a magnet for the city, and also fearing the river's fierce floods—continued to press for changes. In 1939, City Hall finally accepted landscape architect

Robert H.H. Hugman's vision that the River Walk could be more. Federal Depression-era financial aid kicked in, and a two-year remake brought a gala dedication during Fiesta Week in 1941. Mayor Maury Maverick presided on the reviewing stand as the first Texas Cavaliers River Parade floated past.

With boosts from HemisFair in 1968 and the tourism boom in general, the River Walk eventually blossomed into what is now, by some measures, Texas' top visitor attraction. Sheltered from the bustle of streets 20 feet above, shops, restaurants, and hotels have sprung up along the landscaped riverbanks. The aroma of Mexican food blends with the fragrance of semitropical flowers, and towering cypresses and leafy jasmine creeping up graying limestone walls muffle the chatter of tourists and the hum of passenger barges. Jazz still wafts on the air, from The Landing, longtime home of Jim Cullum's Jazz Band.

The River Walk's earlier, awkward adolescence has long since slipped from memory—having given way to a River Walk far beyond even the wild dreams of early visionaries. Yet despite major cosmetic changes, hints remain of what came before, though you have to know what you're looking for to find them.

The 1941 River Walk of Robert Hugman may have replaced George Surkey's evenly spaced concrete channel walls with irregular walls of mellow limestone. Flood-control measures may now make it possible for the likes of the Riverside Cafe to be truly at riverside. And project markers placed by Depression-era Works Progress Administration builders may seem to nail down the birthdate.

But if you know where to look, San Antonio's River Walk will, ever so discreetly, suggest her true age. ★

LEWIS F. FISHER is the author of *Crown Jewel of Texas: The Story of San Antonio's River* and other books on the Alamo City. This is his first article for *Texas Highways*.

JOHN DAVENPORT is a staff photographer at the *San Antonio Express-News* and a longtime contributor to *Texas Highways*.

# The Original River Walk

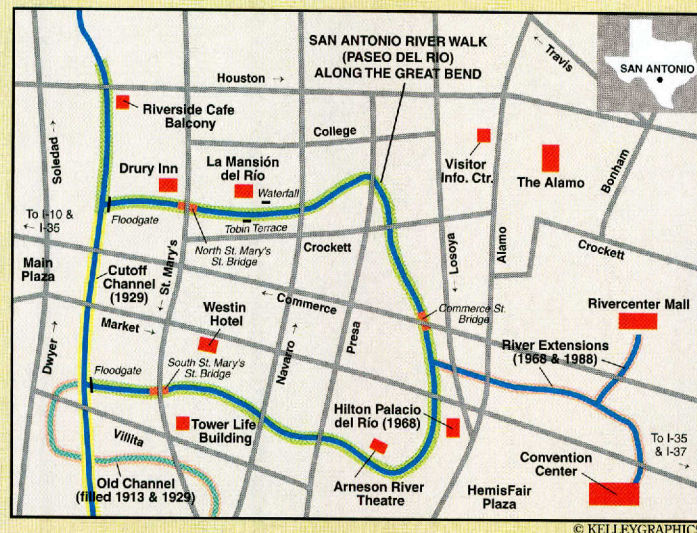
Without straying from the path of today's River Walk, you can still see a few features designed for San Antonio's first River Walk and park of 1914. Starting from the north, they include:

- **River walls**, from Richmond Ave. toward Houston St. Many of the 20-foot walls on either side of the landscaped river channel are of limestone blocks salvaged from buildings during the widening of Commerce St. in 1914. Some walls near Municipal Auditorium are of rock from Main Plaza's 1855 French Building, perhaps the city's first "modern" office building (razed in the mid-1920s during flood-control work).

- **North St. Mary's St. bridge**, below the former Ursuline Academy (now the Southwest School of Art & Craft). Built shortly after the 1914 river project, its ecclesiastical quatrefoil designs were duplicated on the outside of the bridge railings so passersby could also enjoy them from river level.

- **Riverside Cafe balcony**, southeast corner of Houston St. and the river. The oldest surviving structure built to take advantage of the 1914 River Walk, this unusually designed addition juts over the channel, since the danger of flooding prevented its being built lower. It is to be refurbished as part of a new hotel complex.

- **Riverside balconies** on the Drury Inn & Suites, northwest corner of the Great Bend and North St. Mary's St. Patterned reliefs to be seen from the original



river park were incorporated on these faux balconies when the structure was built in 1921 as the Petroleum Commerce Bldg.

- **Tobin Terrace**, south side of the Great Bend, across from La Mansion del Rio hotel. Later a bed of ferns, framed by an arched retaining wall designed by Robert Hugman for the 1941 project, this was the site of riverside ceremonies as early as 1905.

- **Waterfall**, north side of the Great Bend, just east of La Mansion del Rio hotel (once St. Mary's College). A cascade at this point, added to the original river park in the 1920s by a St. Mary's alum, was reworked in the 1941 project.

- **Commerce St. bridge**, mid-way around the Great Bend. Built in 1914 and dedicated that year

along with the first river park, the bridge's river-level portions include concrete reliefs designed by sculptor Pompeo Coppini.

- **South St. Mary's St. bridge**, near the southern terminus of the Great Bend. This bridge was built in 1915 with bond-issue funds, which paid for sculpted garlands on the sides of the bridge facing both the street and the new river park.

### Events

*Note: It's always wise to arrive early for any River Walk event.*

Events take place along the vibrant 2.5-mile River Walk throughout the year, including folkloric dance and song at the Arneson River Theatre during springtime's **Fiesta San Antonio** and during the summer-long **Fiesta Noche del Rio**. Christmastime, when the trees are lit with thousands of lights, is especially beautiful. This year, the **Holiday River Parade & Lighting Ceremony** takes place Nov. 24 at 7 p.m. (most people view for free from the bridges; reserved seats at river level, \$10-\$15). **Boat Caroling** takes place nightly Nov. 25-Dec. 17, 6:30-9:45. **Fiesta de las Luminarias** takes place Dec. 1-3, 8-10, and 15-17. The **Holiday Art Fair** takes place Dec. 8-10. For details on any of these events, write to the Paseo del Rio Assn., 454 Soledad, Ste. 2, San Antonio 78205; 210/227-4262.

Web site: [www.thesanantonio-riverwalk.com](http://www.thesanantonio-riverwalk.com).

The **Rivercenter Christmas Pageant** takes place Dec. 1-3, 7-9, and 15-17. Call the Rivercenter at 210/225-0000.

The San Antonio Conservation Society presents the annual candlelit procession, **Las Posadas**, commemorating Mary and Joseph's search for lodging, on Dec. 10 beginning at 6 p.m. Call the SACS at 210/224-6163.

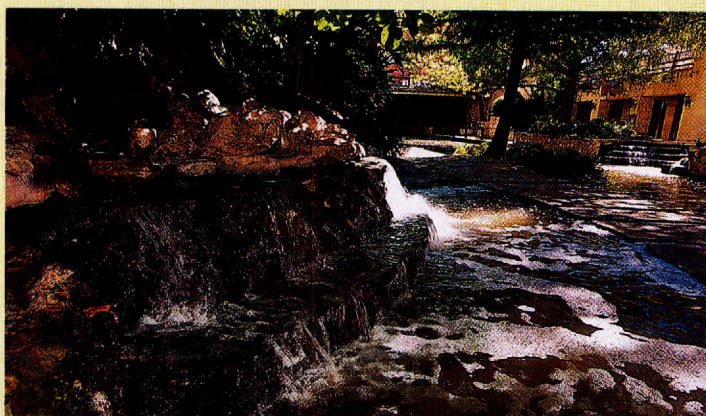
From Nov. 18, 2000-Mar. 31, 2001, an exhibit at the **Witte Museum** titled **Life Along the San Antonio River** brings together paintings and historical photographs highlighting the river's beauty and centuries of history, from Native American campsites to present-day residents on the River Walk. Included are works by such Texas artists as Robert Onderdonk and Ida Hadra from private collections and from the museum's renowned



On the Commerce Street bridge, a figure of an Indian holding "two fountains of bubbling water" represented the gift of the river below.

Texas Art Collection. Hours: Mon 10-5, Tue 10-9 (free 3-9), Wed-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5. Admission: \$5.95, \$4.95 age 65 and older, \$3.95 ages 4-11, free age 3 and younger. Wheelchair accessible. Write to The Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway, San Antonio 78209-6396; 210/357-1900. Web site: [www.wittemuseum.org](http://www.wittemuseum.org).

For information about events, lodging, and dining in the Alamo City, write to the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau, Box 2277, San Antonio 78298-2277; 210/207-6700 or 800/447-3372. Web site: [www.SanAntonioCVB.com](http://www.SanAntonioCVB.com).



Just east of La Mansion del Rio hotel, a waterfall built in the 1920s for Surkey's original river park was expanded under Hugman's plan.

Looking Back at

# 2000

BY JACK LOWRY



JACK LEWIS

## MIGHTY CASEY

**JIM CASEY**, a professional wrestler, died in Dickinson January 2 at age 87. Before Jim and his brothers Tom and Steve came to America in the 1930s, the seven Casey brothers were champion rowers and sports heroes in their native Ireland. "Thunderbolt" Casey went on to rule the Texas and West Coast wrestling circuits with holds like the "Killarney whip," but when he sensed that too much gimmickry and choreography were beginning to taint the sport, he retired. Casey later owned a kennel in Dickinson and served as a rowing instructor for NASA astronauts.

## TURTLE LADY

Where would the turtles be without her? **ILA LOETSCHER** (1904-2000), better known as the Turtle Lady, died January 4. Ila dedicated her life to educating the public about and saving sea turtles. In 1978, Ila established Sea Turtle, Inc., an organization aimed at protecting endangered marine turtles. Until 1997, she held

twice weekly Turtle Talks behind her beach house on South Padre Island, during which she would hold turtles in her arms and

talk about their history, behavior, habitat, and plight in an increasingly hazardous world. Although the number of Kemp's ridley sea turtles is drastically reduced from their populations in the 1940s and '50s, thanks to the efforts of Sea Turtle, Inc., HEART (Help Endangered Animals—Ridley Turtles), the Sea Turtle Restoration Project, and the Center for Marine Conservation, the marine reptiles are making a comeback.

## PATRON OF THE ARTS

**EDWIN SINGER**, a Corpus Christi businessman, rancher, and philanthropist, died February 12. He collected modern art, helped establish the Art Museum of South Texas (now the South Texas Institute for the Arts), and donated land and gave his support to other Corpus Christi bay-front institutions, including the Museum of Science and

History and the Harbor Playhouse. Singer was 85.

## DAREDEVIL

**S**tunt motorcyclist **ROBBIE KNieVEL** jumped a chugging 1917 steam engine at the Texas State Railroad State Historical Park during a prime-time national broadcast on February 23. The park regularly leases its historic railroad equipment to movie production companies, although this one proved to be more sensational than most. Knievel timed his jump to clear a wooden ramp that the locomotive destroyed a split second after the biker went airborne.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

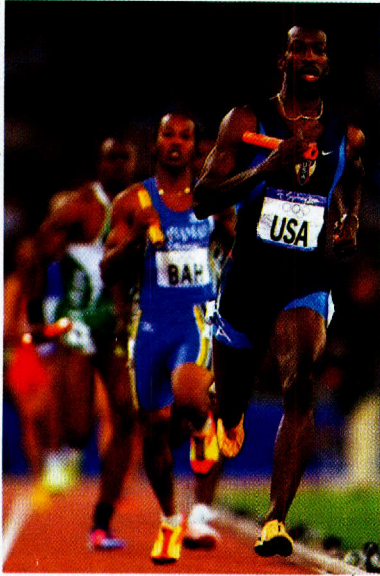
Robbie soared through the air about 200 feet and landed safely on a ramp on the other side of the train.

## TICS WITH A VIEW

**T**he **ORANGE TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER** opened in May with more room, a new video-viewing area, and a 650-foot boardwalk that allows visitors to get out over 3,100-acre **BLUE ELBOW SWAMP WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA** (below). The refuge includes sweetgum and cypress trees, as well as thickets, bottoms, and pine ridges that are feeding areas for painted buntings, Carolina chickadees, brown-headed nuthatches, red-bellied woodpeckers, prairie warblers, pine warblers, and Eastern bluebirds. The Texas Department of Transportation also



MICHAEL AMADOR



Dallas native Michael Johnson, in the 4x400-meter relay at the Summer Olympics in Sydney, runs for one of his two gold medals this year.

inaugurated five other TICs with new video-viewing areas, additional space, and new designs this year—in **ANTHONY, LAREDO, TEXARKANA, the VALLEY** (Harlingen), and **WASKOM**.

### SO LONG, FOLKS

**JIM LOWE**, longtime voice of the State Fair's Big Tex, died on May 28 at 73. A popular Dallas radio announcer and disc jockey, Jim was Big Tex from 1953 to 1981, and again from 1988 through 1998. Jim's signature, "Howdy, folks. This is Big Tex. Welcome to the State Fair of Texas," became as important an ingredient as the fair's livestock shows and corny dogs. In 1999, Dan Alexander, a singer, replaced Jim as the voice of Big Tex.



TxDOT PHOTO, 1953

### COOLER FESTIVAL

**T**he 29th annual **TEXAS FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL** in San Antonio drew record numbers, thanks in part to cooler temperatures. Traditionally held in August, this year the festival was held June 1-4. With temperatures 10 to 20 degrees cooler than in August 1999, attendance grew by more than 10,000 visitors. The festival's 30th anniversary celebration is scheduled for June 7-10, 2001. The

Texas Folklife Festival, produced by the Institute of Texan Cultures in HemisFair Park, celebrates the cultural diversity of Texas. This year, the festival featured 43 cultural groups from 99 cities and 64 Texas counties.

### MADE FOR SHADE

**T**here was a time when flower-lovers with shaded gardens were out of luck. **CLAUDE HOPE** (1907-2000), a native of Sweetwater, changed that after he noticed a spindly flowering "weed" growing wild in a shady spot

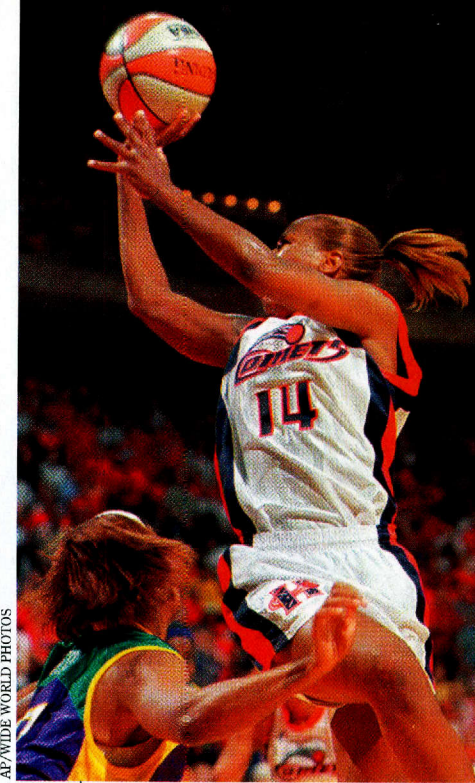
in Costa Rica. Over the years, through trial and error at his Costa Rican farm, Linda Vista, he developed many of the world's favorite impatiens hybrids. Hope was hailed as the world's leading flower breeder and seed producer. Today, there are some 900 species of impatiens, and the impatiens is America's number one bedding plant. Hope, who died July 14, is also known for his petunia hybrids.

### TRIAL BY FIRE

**T**he **NEWTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE** was damaged in a blaze caused by faulty wiring the night of August 4. Fire ravaged the building's interior and damaged numerous county records. The building, a Texas Historic Landmark and State Archeological Landmark, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. County officials plan to restore the courthouse. To contribute to the Newton County Courthouse Restoration Fund, call the First National Bank: 409/379-8587; mention account number 035386.

### QUAKES SHAKE AMARILLO

**I**n August, a cluster of **EARTHQUAKES ROCKED AMARILLO**. The National Earthquake Information Center in Denver registered a tremor that measured 3.9 on the Richter scale at 8:08 p.m. on August 17. Not since 1925 had the area seen such seismic activity. Some 35 earthquakes have been



Cynthia Cooper led the Houston Comets to a fourth straight WNBA title in August.

recorded in the area since 1907. Now you know: The Panhandle rocks.

### MERCHANT PRINCE

**D**allas retailer **LEON A. HARRIS JR.** died August 17. An executive of A. Harris & Co., later Sanger-Harris, and now Foley's, Harris began writing in 1951 after he fired an advertising writer. He wrote 16 books for children and adults, wrote dozens of magazine articles, and was a contributing editor for *Town & Country* magazine. Harris published *The Night Before Christmas—in Texas, That Is*, a parody of the Clement Clarke Moore poem, in 1951. He achieved renown for books such as *The Fine Art of Political Wit*; *Upton Sinclair, American Rebel*; and *Merchant Princes: An Intimate History of Jewish Families Who Built Great Department Stores*. Harris was a patron of the arts in



Dallas, Boston, and New York. Stanley Marcus, chairman emeritus of Neiman Marcus, called Harris "a very independent spirit."

## SWING MAN

**B**ob Wills may be more famous, but among the musicians who invented and popularized Western Swing, **CLIFF BRUNER** (1915-2000) was the fiddling king. Cliff Bruner died August 25. A job offer in 1934 to play with Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies was his ticket to the big time. He cut close to 50 songs with the group. After Brown died following a car wreck on the Jacksboro Highway in 1936, Bruner started his own group, Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers (which evolved into Cliff Bruner's Show Boys). Included among the group's roster were the honky-tonk pianist Aubrey "Moon" Mullican and Bob Dunn, creator of the amplified steel guitar. Bruner could not pursue greater stardom because of the illness of his first wife, Ruth, so he went into the insurance business and put his stage life on hold. When Western Swing resurfaced in the 1970s, Bruner returned to the stage and the studio after an absence of more than two decades, playing on Johnny Gimble's 1980 LP, *Texas Swing Pioneers*.

## FOURMIDABLE!

**T**he **HOUSTON COMETS** have made it four in a row—four WNBA titles in the four years the league has existed. On August 26, the

Comets defeated the New York Liberty 79-73 to remain the young league's only champions. Superstars Cynthia Cooper, named Most Valuable Player of the finals, and Sheryl Swoopes, the regular season MVP, combined for 56 of the Comets' points. The down side? Cooper had already announced her retirement, making a five-year win-streak less probable.

## A FULL LIFE

**JACK MAGUIRE** (1920-2000), journalist and former director of the Institute of Texan Cultures, died on August 27. The former Associated Press reporter and author of 10 books (below) may be remembered by many *Texas Highways* readers as a Speaking of Texas contributor, a column he wrote exclusively from July 1985 through December 1987, when the column reverted to multiple writers. Jack served as executive director of the Texas Ex-Students' Association and as director for 10 years of the Institute of Texan Cultures, home of the Texas Folklife Festival.



AUSTIN AMERICANS/STATESMAN



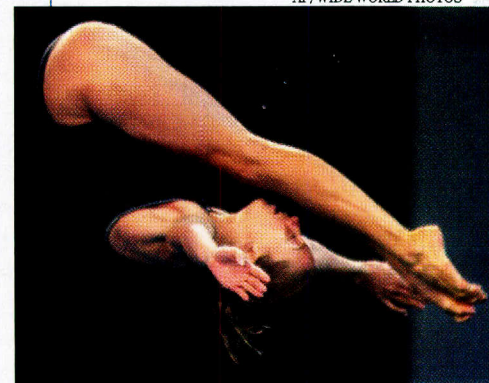
TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

## PARKS TRANSFERRED

**T**he Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission voted at the end of August to turn over three **TEXAS HISTORICAL PARKS** to local entities. The Parks & Wildlife Department earmarked more than \$1 million in funding to help ease the park transfers of **JIM HOGG** in Rusk, **LUBBOCK LAKE LANDMARK** in Lubbock, and **OLD FORT PARKER** (above) in Limestone County. The 178-acre Jim Hogg park site pays tribute to Texas' first native-born governor. Lubbock Lake Landmark, now called Lubbock Lake National Historic Landmark, is now owned and operated by Texas Tech University. The 336-acre archeological site contains remnants of all the cultures known to have existed on the Southern Plains during the last 12,000 years. Limestone County and the cities of Groesbeck and Mexia now operate and maintain 37.5-acre Old Fort Parker. The site is the place where in 1836 Comanches kidnapped Cynthia Ann Parker. She later gave birth to one of the tribe's most famous chiefs, Quanah Parker. In the past two years, Texas Parks & Wildlife has reduced the number of state

parks under its purview from 123 to 119. In November 1998, the City of Quitman took over the day-to-day operation and maintenance of **GOVERNOR HOGG SHRINE STATE HISTORICAL PARK**.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Laura Wilkinson of The Woodlands upset the favored Chinese divers to bring home Olympic gold in 10-meter platform diving.

## WOMEN'S MUSEUM

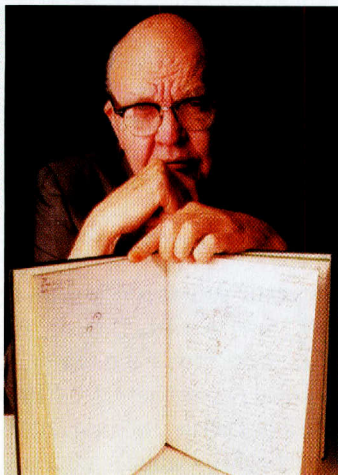
**T**HE **WOMEN'S MUSEUM: AN INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE** opened September 29 at Fair Park in Dallas. The first comprehensive women's museum in the nation, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, uses interactive exhibits, cutting-edge technology, and quotes and stories to highlight the contributions of American women to society. You'll meet suffragists and abolitionists, inventors and scientists, comedians and athletes—women from all careers and walks of

life. Hours: Tue-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5; closed Mon. Phone: 214/915-0860; Web site: www.thewomensmuseum.org.

### CRUISING THE GULF

**O**n September 30, the Port of Galveston inaugurated its first year-round cruises since the 1930s. The maiden voyage of the **CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE's Celebration** took it to New Orleans, rather than Cancún, Mexico, because of Hurricane Keith, but passengers gave both the ship and their alternate destination rave reviews. Carnival plans to operate 72 four- and five-day cruises to Mexico from the **TEXAS CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL ON GALVESTON ISLAND** at Pier 25. Next year, **ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL** will sail on nine seven-day cruises from Galveston to Mexico and the Cayman Islands.

COURTESY TEXAS INSTRUMENTS



The Nobel Prize Committee recognized Dallasite Jack Kilby for inventing the integrated circuit. He holds the lab book he took notes in during the summer of 1958.

### LONE STAR OLYMPIANS

**C**ongratulations to all of the Texas and Texas-college athletes who brought home medals from



KEVIN B. STILLMAN

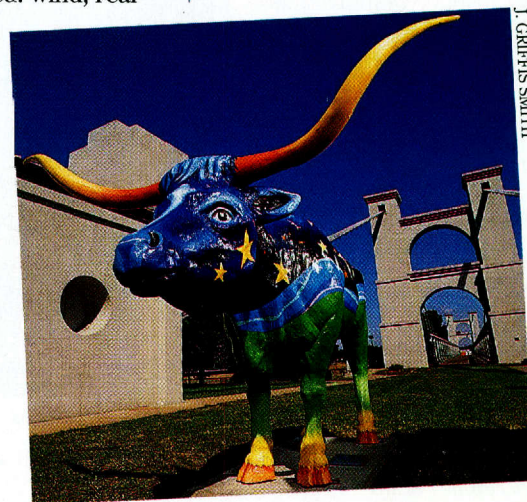
the Summer Olympics, held in September in Sydney: Archery, Silver: **VIC WUNDERLE**; Baseball, Gold: **KURT AINSWORTH, JOHN COTTON, CHRIS GEORGE**; Basketball, Gold: **TIM HARDAWAY, SHERYL SWOOPES**; Boxing, Silver: **RICARDO JUAREZ**; Cycling, Bronze: **LANCE ARMSTRONG**; Diving, Gold: **LAURA WILKINSON**; Modern Pentathlon, Silver: **EMILY DE RIEL**; Rowing, Bronze: **MISSY RYAN**; Sailing, Silver: **PAULA FOERSTER**; Soccer, Silver: **MIA HAMM, CARLA OVERBECK**; Softball, Gold: **JENNIFER MCFALLS, CHRISTA WILLIAMS**; Swimming, Gold: **B.J. BEDFORD, ERIN PHENIX**; Swimming, Silver: **JOSH DAVIS, NATE DUSING, SCOTT GOLDBLATT, JAMIE RAUCH, NEIL WALKER**; Taekwondo, Gold: **STEVEN LOPEZ**; Track and Field, Gold: **JON DRUMMOND, CHRYSTE GAINES, MICHAEL JOHNSON** (2 golds), **BRIAN LEWIS, TIM MONTGOMERY**; Track and Field, Bronze: **NANCEEN PERRY**; Wrestling, Gold: **BRANDON SLAY**.

Congratulations, as well, to the more than 30 other Texans who participated in the Olympic Games.

### DREAM FIELD

**T**he **HOUSTON ASTROS** finished their first season at state-of-the-art **ENRON FIELD**. The facility features a 9,000-ton retractable roof that can open or close in just 12 minutes. Although the Astros fared poorly this year, the downtown ballpark is a hit with fans, who rave about the retro styling, up-close seating, and sliding roof. The spectacular stadium, which opened in March, is built adjacent to Union Station, and incorporates part of the old railroad depot as a cornerstone. A locomotive chugs across a track above the left-field wall to celebrate game highlights. The Astros players had to spend part of the season adjusting to some natural realities that their former home, the enclosed Astrodome, never presented: wind, real grass, sunshine, and shadows.

"Starry, Starry Night" Longhorn by Eugenie Kamrath Mygdal, Waco



J. CRIPPE'S SMITH

### NOBEL ACCOLADES

**C**an one man revolutionize the world? **JACK KILBY's** invention of the integrated circuit in 1958 opened the doors to an age of compact computer hard drives, cellular phones, digital music players, and untold electronic products yet to come. On October 10, 42 years after his invention of the semiconductor chip in a lab at the Texas Instruments campus in Dallas, Kilby (photo, far left) was recognized with the Nobel Prize for physics.

### STAMPEDE!

**B**rightly colored bovines began appearing in Waco in August. Their numbers grew until the psychedelic herd of cows, Longhorns, and three calves appeared at the Open Door Arts Fest in October. On December 9, the cows will be publicly auctioned at the Heart O' Texas Fair Complex and on the Internet. **WACOWS: A MOVING EXPERIENCE** is the fundraising brainchild of the **ART CENTER OF WACO**, which is bringing public art to Waco, as well as raising money for its programs and much-anticipated move downtown. For information about WaCows, call 254/752-4371, or visit [www.wacows.com](http://www.wacows.com).

January 2001						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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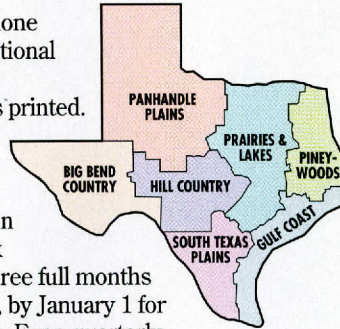
In Fun Forecast, we provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

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 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by January 1 for April 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 149249, Austin 78714-9249.

*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.



27	IRVING Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra 972/580-1566	26	TEXARKANA <i>Chicago, The Musical</i> 903/843-4992
<b>Pineywoods</b>		27	GILMER Upshur Co Chili Cookoff 903/843-1413
1-2	TYLER (began Dec 1) Santa Land 903/882-1518	<b>Quitman</b> Bluegrass Show 903/967-2502	
<b>Gulf Coast</b>		5-6	ROCKPORT Gospel Music Festival 361/790-1105
1-3	MINEOLA (began Dec 1) Christmas Winter Wonderland 903/569-2087	5-7	BROWNSVILLE <i>The Golden Age of Mexico</i> 956/542-8900
5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-27	LIBERTY Opry on the Square 409/336-1079 or 800/248-8918	WINNIE Trade Days 409/892-4000 or 296-3300	
6	TYLER Rose Gala 903/597-3130	6	GALVESTON Jerry Jeff Walker 409/821-1894 or 800/765-1894
11	TEXARKANA Rhythm & Brass 903/792-4992	6-7	HOUSTON Cy-Fair Go Texan Barbecue Cookoff 281/890-5500
12	MOUNT PLEASANT Branson Music Show 903/572-7920 or 575-4190	6-9	LAKE JACKSON Auto Show 409/297-8001
12-14	LIVINGSTON Trade Days 409/327-3656	7	TEXAS CITY Heritage Homes Tour 409/948-0993
13	KIRBYVILLE Country Music Show 409/423-5744	8	LAKE JACKSON Brazosport Run for the Arts 979/265-7661
13-14	TYLER The Empire Brass Quintet 903/592-1427	8-14	GALVESTON <i>A Tuna Christmas</i> 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894
15	DALLAS Kimberly McCarver in Concert 214/363-0044	10	BEAUMONT Spindletop Oil Gusher 409/830-2977
19-21	NACOGDOCHES Trade Days 936/564-2150		
20	TYLER Trade Days 903/595-2223		
20-21	19-27		
20-21	TYLER <i>On Golden Pond</i> 903/592-0561		
21	GRAND PRAIRIE Duathlon 817/355-1279 or 214/821-0909		
22	LOCKHART Opry 512/601-2154		
23-28	FORT WORTH <i>Footloose</i> 817/332-2272		
25	PLANO Dr Martin Luther King Jr Celebration 972/941-7000		
25-27	DALLAS <i>Ninja</i> 214/953-1055		
26	DALLAS Kimberly McCarver in Concert 214/363-0044		
27	DALLAS Stars on Ice 214/939-2800		
	20		
	ROUND TOP Festival-Institute Concert 979/249-3129		
	20-21		
	EMORY Eagle Fest 800/561-1182		
	27		
	PLANO Train Show 817/249-4965		

<b>Panhandle Plains</b>	
1	ABILENE (began Dec 1) Celebration Park 915/691-1034
	WICHITA FALLS (began Dec 1) Fantasy of Lights 940/397-4352
11	ABILENE Artwalk 915/677-8389
12-14	PAMPA Top o' Texas Livestock Show 806/665-5700
	WICHITA FALLS Motor Sports Spectacular 940/683-4742
13	ABILENE West Texas Rehab Telethon 915/793-3400
	BIG SPRING Chili Cookoff 915/263-2322
13, 26-27	QUANAH Livestock Show 940/663-6301
19	BIG SPRING Heritage Museum Watercolor Exhibit 915/267-8255

20	WICHITA FALLS Wichita West Bullfest 903/564-3731
25	LUBBOCK Five O'Clock People Concert 806/742-3621
26-27	PAMPA Gray Co Livestock Show 806/669-8033
27	ABILENE Philharmonic 915/677-6710 or 800/460-0610
	BRECKENRIDGE Chili & Barbecue Cookoff 254/559-2301
30	LUBBOCK <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> 806/742-3621
<b>Prairies and Lakes</b>	
1	DALLAS (began Dec 1) Galleria Holiday Festivities 972/702-7100
	Southwestern Bell Cotton Bowl Classic 214/638-BOWL

1	FORT WORTH (began Dec 1) The Christmas Star 817/255-9300
	GATESVILLE (began Dec 1) Christmas in the Park 254/865-2617
	GRANBURY (began Dec 1) Lone Star Lights 817/573-5548 or 800/950-2212
	WACO (began Dec 29) Texas Circuit Finals Rodeo 254/776-1660
1-2	FORT HOOD (began Dec 1) Nature in Lights 254/287-2523
1-3	VAN (began Dec 1) Wonderland by Night 903/963-8828
1-7	FORT WORTH (began Dec 1) Black Nativity 817/338-4411
5	DALLAS Don Edwards 214/363-0044
5-7	DALLAS Patti LuPone 214/692-0203

6-7	FORT WORTH Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival 817/926-6631
6, 13, 20, 27	STEPHENVILLE Cross Timbers Country Opry 254/965-4132
9	YOAKUM Country Music USA 361/293-2309
11, 14, 17, 20	DALLAS <i>Stegfried</i> 214/443-1000
11-13, 18-21, 25-28	DALLAS Dallas Symphony Orchestra 214/692-0203
12	DALLAS The Kennedys in Concert 210/363-0044
12-14	CORSICANA Battle of Hodge Oaks Plantation 903/345-2223
	McKINNEY Trade Days 972/562-5466 or 888/649-8499
12-15	FORT WORTH Dr Martin Celebration 817/336-8791

12-15	SEGUIN Dr Martin Luther King Jr Celebration 800/580-7322
12-28	GRANBURY <i>Sylvia</i> 817/572-0881
12-13, 19, 26-28	DENTON <i>The Member of the Wedding</i> 940/382-1915
13	GATESVILLE Coryell Co Youth Fair/ Horse Show 254/865-5766
	LANCASTER Second Saturday on the Square 972/227-2579
13-14	BELTON Arts & Crafts Show 512/441-7133 or 888/441-7133
	BRENNHAM Antiques Show 979/251-9455 or 888/273-6426
15	DENTON Handel's <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 940/369-7802
	FORT WORTH Tony Bennett 888/597-7827

17-Feb 11	DALLAS <i>The Night of the Iguana</i> 214/522-8499
	DALLAS <i>Wit</i> 214/526-8210
18-20	SEGUIN Guadalupe Co Youth Livestock & Homemakers Show 800/580-7322
19	DALLAS Christine Lavin 214/363-0044
19-20	DALLAS A Dallas Dance Gathering 972/925-1243
19-Feb 4	FORT WORTH Southwestern Exposition & Livestock Show & Rodeo 817/877-2400 or 877-2420
20	ROUND TOP Festival-Institute Concert 979/249-3129
20-21	EMORY Eagle Fest 800/561-1182
	PLANO Train Show 817/249-4965

20-21	POTTSBORO Orienteering 214/369-1823
21	GRAND PRAIRIE Duathlon 817/355-1279 or 214/821-0909
22	LOCKHART Opry 512/601-2154
23-28	FORT WORTH <i>Footloose</i> 817/332-2272
25	PLANO Dr Martin Luther King Jr Celebration 972/941-7000
25-27	DALLAS <i>Ninja</i> 214/953-1055
26	DALLAS Kimberly McCarver in Concert 214/363-0044
	RICHARDSON David "Fathead" Newman, Jazz Saxophone 972/883-2787
27	DALLAS Stars on Ice 214/939-2800



2001 begins with a college football tradition, the Cotton Bowl Classic in Dallas, on January 1.

<b>11, 18, 25</b> <b>LAKE JACKSON</b> Brazosport Planetarium Show 409/265-3376
<b>13</b> <b>PORT ARANSAS</b> Shallow Water Roundup & Seafood Extravaganza 361/749-6339
<b>PORT ARTHUR</b> Cajun Dance 409/989-5222
<b>RIO HONDO</b> Fly-In/ Waffle Breakfast 956/748-2112
<b>VICTORIA</b> A Sagebrush Symphony with Michael Martin Murphey 361/576-4500
<b>WEST COLUMBIA</b> Bluegrass Show 979/345-3123
<b>16</b> <b>HARLINGEN</b> Cristiana Pegoraro, Concert Pianist 956/399-7699
<b>17</b> <b>FREESPORT</b> Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade 409/238-4342
<b>18</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>Born Yesterday</i> 713/467-4497
<b>19</b> <b>ORANGE</b> <i>Jekyll &amp; Hyde</i> 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535

<b>19</b> <b>STAFFORD</b> Civic Center Bransor Music Show 713/777-6830
<b>19-Feb 11</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>Old Wicked Songs</i> 713/527-8243
<b>19, 21,</b> <b>24, 27, 30</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>Così fan tutte</i> 713/227-ARTS or 800/828-ARTS
<b>20</b> <b>BAY CITY</b> Market Day on the Square 979/245-8333
<b>BEAUMONT</b> Symphony of Southeast Texas 409/892-0117
<b>GALVESTON</b> <i>Jekyll &amp; Hyde</i> 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894
<b>PORT ARANSAS</b> Casino Nignt & Fish Fry 361/749-5919 or 800/452-6278
<b>PORT ARTHUR</b> Janis Joplin Birthday Bash 409/722-3699 or 800/235-7822
<b>VICTORIA</b> The Spencers: Theatre of Illusion 361/572-2787
<b>20-21</b> <b>CORPUS CHRISTI</b> Introduction to Coastal Birds Seminar/Field Trip 361/852-2100

<b>20-21</b> <b>PORT ARTHUR</b> Trade Days 409/982-4950
<b>TEXAS CITY</b> Trade Days 409/949-9273
<b>22</b> <b>HARLINGEN</b> <i>Jekyll &amp; Hyde</i> 956/430-6699
<b>23</b> <b>LAKE JACKSON</b> Brazosport Symphony Orchestra 409/265-7731
<b>23-28</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> 713/622-7469
<b>26</b> <b>ORANGE</b> Cab Calloway's Hi-De-Ho Orchestra 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535
<b>26-28</b> <b>HARLINGEN</b> <i>On Golden Pond</i> 956/412-7529
<b>26, 28, 31</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>Prince Igor</i> 713/227-ARTS or 800/828-ARTS
<b>27</b> <b>BROWNSVILLE</b> Joe & Mindy Barcelona/ Michael Quantz Concert 956/544-8247

<b>27-28</b> <b>GALVESTON</b> Cab Calloway's Hi-De-Ho Orchestra 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894	
<b>27-Mar 3</b> <b>HOUSTON</b> <i>The Courage of Mandy Kate Brown</i> 713/527-0220	
<b>29</b> <b>LAKE JACKSON</b> Brazosport Senior Fest 409/297-8001	
<b>South Texas Plains</b>	
<b>1-27</b> <b>SAN ANTONIO</b> (began Dec 1) <i>Oliver!</i> 210/734-4646	
<b>1-28</b> <b>SAN ANTONIO</b> (began Dec 8) <i>Scooge</i> 210/733-7258	
<b>3</b> <b>MCALLEN</b> Ballet Folklórico de Jalisco 956/682-2871	
<b>7</b> <b>MCALLEN</b> Street Market 956/682-2871	
<b>12-13</b> <b>MCALLEN</b> Rio Grande Valley Woodcarvers Show 956/519-8209	

<b>13-14</b> <b>SAN ANTONIO</b> Team Roping 210/698-3300
<b>18</b> <b>WESLACO</b> Return to the Rio Winter Texan Extravaganza 956/968-2102
<b>22-28</b> <b>MERCEDES</b> Rally on the Rio Woodcarving Show 956/687-2533
<b>26-28</b> <b>LAREDO</b> <i>Alcanzando Sueño</i> 956/723-1342
<i>La Mala Onda de Johnny</i> 956/723-1342
<b>27</b> <b>EDINBURG</b> Edinburg on Wheels Bicycle Trail 956/383-4974
<b>McALLEN</b> Al Ragusin & His Dancing Horses 956/682-2871
<b>27-28</b> <b>PEARSALL</b> Frio Co Jr Livestock Show 830/334-9414
<b>29-Feb 3</b> <b>BEEVILLE</b> Bee Co Jr Livestock & Homemakers Show 512/362-3280

<b>Hill Country</b>	
<b>1</b> <b>FREDERICKSBURG</b> (began Dec 1) Hill Country Regional Lighting Trail 830/997-8515	<b>13-14</b> <b>LAMPASAS</b> Treasure Chest Antique Fair 512/556-5172
<b>JOHNSON CITY</b> (began Dec 1) Lights Spectacular, Hill Country Style 830/868-7684	<b>14</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> RunTex 30-K 512/472-3254
<b>TAYLOR</b> (began Dec 1) Heritage Square Christmas Lights & Lake Drive Trail of Lights 512/352-6364	<b>18</b> <b>WIMBERLEY</b> SWT Opera Highlights 512/847-2585 or 847-5787
(began Dec 1) Lights of the Blackland 512/365-8485	<b>2-7</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> <i>A Tuna Christmas</i> 512/472-5470
<b>6</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> McCoy Tyner 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW	<b>6</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> McCoy Tyner 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW
<b>7</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Yellow Jacket 10-K 512/472-3254	<b>18-20</b> <b>GOLDTHWAITE</b> Mills Co Youth Fair & Livestock Show 915/648-2650
<b>BOERNE</b> Kendall Co Jr Livestock Show 830/249-3427	<b>19</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Tibetan Monks 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW
<b>KERRVILLE</b> First Presbyterian Church Organ Concert Series 830/864-4438	<b>19-20</b> <b>BURNET</b> Sam Bass Treasure Hunt/ Mystery Game 512/756-4680

<b>11-13</b> <b>BURNET</b> Burnet Co Livestock Show 512/756-4297
<b>FREDERICKSBURG</b> Gillespie Co 4-H/FFA Livestock Show 830/997-3452
<b>12</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> The Sounds of Silents: <i>Robin Hood</i> 512/472-5470
<b>12-14</b> <b>ROUND ROCK</b> <i>Nobody Knows I'm a Dog</i> 512/244-0440
<b>12-15</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> <i>Cold Sassy Tree</i> 512/472-5927 or 800/316-7372
<b>13</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Dukes of Dixieland 512/472-5470
<b>BOERNE</b> Kendall Co Jr Livestock Show 830/249-3427
<b>GEORGETOWN</b> Opry 512/834-2319
<b>26</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Richie Havens 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW
<b>27</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Violet Crown Garden Club Show 512/477-8672
<b>28</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Cancer Hero Run 512/472-3254
<b>30-Feb 11</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> <i>Oklahoma!</i> 512/472-5470
<b>1</b> <b>FORT DAVIS</b> (began Dec 20) Prude Ranch Family Christmas Holidays 915/426-3202 or 800/458-6262
<b>1-3</b> <b>EL PASO</b> (began Dec 26) West Texas Birding Excursion 281/445-1187
<b>1-6</b> <b>ODESSA</b> (began Dec 28) Sandhills Stock Show & Rodeo 915/366-3951

<b>20</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Earl Klugh 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW	
<b>20-21</b> <b>BUCHANAN DAM</b> Bald Eagles & Hill Country Vistas 281/445-1187	
<b>FREDERICKSBURG</b> Gem & Mineral Show 830/669-2639	
<b>21</b> <b>KERRVILLE</b> Chanticleer 830/896-5727	
<b>23-28</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> <i>Rent</i> 512/471-6060 or 800/731-7469	
<b>25-27</b> <b>KERRVILLE</b> Hill Country Jr Livestock Show 830/792-6262	
<b>26</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Richie Havens 512/329-6753 or 469-SHOW	
<b>27</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Violet Crown Garden Club Show 512/477-8672	
<b>28</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> Cancer Hero Run 512/472-3254	
<b>30-Feb 11</b> <b>AUSTIN</b> <i>Oklahoma!</i> 512/472-5470	
<b>Big Bend Country</b>	
<b>1</b> <b>FORT DAVIS</b> (began Dec 20) Prude Ranch Family Christmas Holidays 915/426-3202 or 800/458-6262	
<b>1-3</b> <b>EL PASO</b> (began Dec 26) West Texas Birding Excursion 281/445-1187	
<b>1-6</b> <b>ODESSA</b> (began Dec 28) Sandhills Stock Show & Rodeo 915/366-3951	

<b>6</b> <b>EL PASO</b> Belly Dance Extravaganza 915/544-0364
<b>ODESSA</b> Brand New Opree 915/332-1586
<b>7-8</b> <b>ALPINE</b> Big Bend Livestock Show & Homemaking Fair 915/837-2265
<b>11-13</b> <b>PECOS</b> Reeves-Loving Co Jr Livestock Show 915/445-2406
<b>12-13</b> <b>ODESSA</b> Bull Riding 417/887-9400
<b>12-14</b> <b>FORT STOCKTON</b> Pecos Co Livestock Show 915/395-2445 or 395-2482
<b>12-21</b> <b>EL PASO</b> Chamber Music Festival 915/833-9400
<b>15</b> <b>EL PASO</b> A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 915/566-2407
<b>19-20</b> <b>MIDLAND</b> National Young Artists Music Competition 915/563-0921
<b>20</b> <b>ODESSA</b> Roping 806/622-9450
<b>26-27</b> <b>EL PASO</b> Symphony & Chorale 915/532-3776
<b>27</b> <b>ODESSA</b> Midland/Odessa Symphony 915/563-0921
<b>31-Feb 1</b> <b>EL PASO</b> Flashdance 2001 915/533-3311

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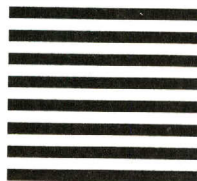
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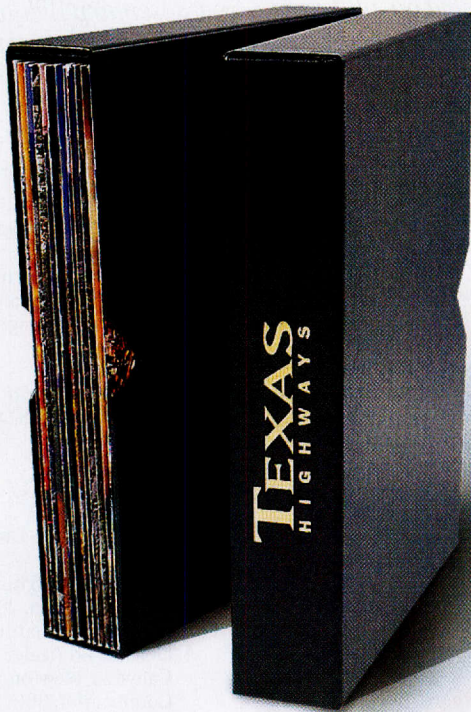
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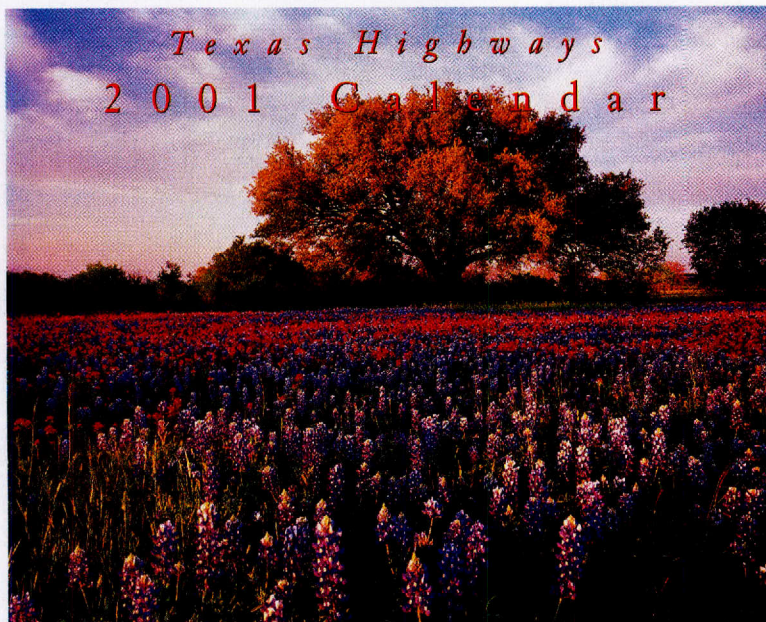
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# 2000 Texas Highways Index

Volume 47, Numbers 1 through 12

Compiled by Jill Lawless and Rosemary Williams

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).			

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**Wills Point throws a Christmas party on December 2-3 that rivals its springtime bluebird celebration. After hours, downtown's brick streets still sparkle.**

devastating hurricane of September 8, 1900, created a stir across the nation as newspapers and magazines shone new light on the disaster. (If you missed *Texas Highways'*

86 black-and-white images accompany the text. Find this book at your local bookstore (\$27.95 paper, \$60 hardback), or, to order, call 800/252-3206. Web site: [www.utexas.edu/utpress](http://www.utexas.edu/utpress).

And, as we segue shamelessly into a lighter topic, Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' book *Texas Old-Time Restaurants and Cafes* (Republic of Texas Press) aims to make your stomach growl—while serving up the histories and prized recipes of hundreds of restaurants statewide. From the scoop on Harden's Dairy Bar (which has served ice cream in Lake Jackson since 1956) to the skinny on Sarah's Cafe in Fort Stockton (which serves a mean Mexican plate for only a modicum more than its 1929 prices), Sheryl can tell you where to eat in Texas. Find this title in your local bookstore (\$18.95 paper), or, to order, call 800/229-4949. Web site: [www.wordware.com](http://www.wordware.com).

So, speaking of food, how's this haiku from colorful Big Thicket writer Howard Peacock to introduce a clever, food-themed, pocket-size book of verse? *Hot fat cream gravy, / Pepper streaking, cheese reeking. / Run, yellow yolk, run!* A play on the phrase "haute cuisine," the book's title, *Haiku Sine: 217 Tiny Food Poems by Texans Who Love to Eat & Feed Their Heads* (Lazywood Press), says it all. Good things come in small bites. Order this title (\$9.95 paper) from Lazywood Press; 713/468-3913. Web site: [www.lazywoodpress.com](http://www.lazywoodpress.com).

## Fort Worth Exclusive

**W**hile Paris' Musée de l'Orangerie undergoes extensive renovation, admirers of French painting can see some of the museum's collection at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth. **From Renoir to Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie** (Nov. 12-Feb. 25) highlights the Walter-Guillaume Collection, a group of 81 works assembled by leading art dealer Paul Guillaume, whose widow donated the collection to the French national museums in the Fifties and Sixties.

If the brilliant paintings on display by Matisse, Cézanne, Modigliani, Rousseau, Derain, and others recall similar paintings exhibited in the blockbuster Barnes Collection show at the Kimbell in 1994, that's no coincidence: Dr. Barnes was Guillaume's most famous client. After the exhibit closes in Fort Worth (its only U.S. venue), it travels to Australia.

The Kimbell Art Museum, at 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd. in Fort Worth (76107), opens Tue-Sat 10-5 (Fri until 8), Sun 12-5. Admission to this show: \$10, \$6 ages 6-11, \$8 age 65 and older and students, with half-price tickets available on Tue. when

purchased at the museum for that day. Call 817/332-8451. Web site: [www.kimbellart.org](http://www.kimbellart.org).

## New on the Shelves

**W**hen the holidays roll around, we like to pick a few titles that we admire for their clever writing, informative travel insights, stunning photography, or riveting history. So, steal an afternoon and settle in for an armchair adventure. Here's our handful for 2000.

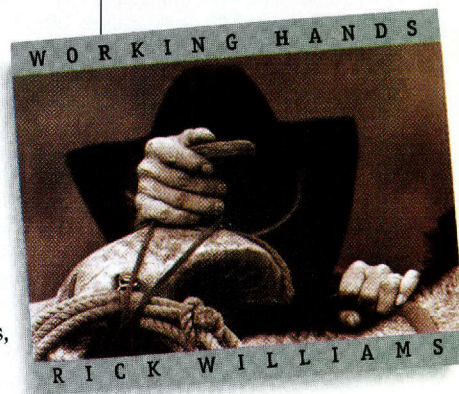
In 1980, Austin photographer Rick Williams began a project that focused on the commonality between Texas cowboys and oil-field roughnecks. Like a lot of good ideas, this one grew—in this case, into a full-fledged photography book with an expanded focus. Whereas cattle and oil once formed the background of the state's economy, high-tech is now king, and *Working Hands* (Texas A&M Univ. Press) widens the net to include this latest wave of pioneers. Eighty images capture Texas in transition, focusing on Texans at work, whether in a stockyard, oil field, or clean room. Look for it in local bookstores (\$45 hardcover), or, to order, call 800/826-8911. Web site: [www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress).

The centennial of Galveston's

story on the storm, see the August 2000 issue.) Thanks to the extensive collections of Galveston's Rosenberg Library (a destination well worth a visit for genealogists and other historians), two recent books explore the hurricane and its aftermath.

*Through a Night of Horrors: Voices from the 1900 Galveston Storm* (Texas A&M Univ. Press) presents survivor accounts—most never before published—from the Rosenberg archives, some recorded soon after the storm, some many years later. Fascinating and horrifying, these accounts capture a city on the verge of a new century, as well as a population facing a disaster of epic proportions. Look for the book in local bookstores (\$24.95), or, to order, call 800/826-8911. Web site: [www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress).

*Galveston and the 1900 Storm*, a large-format title by historians Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner (UT Press), also follows the storm and its consequences, and in the process delves deeply into such topics as public health reforms, women's rights, race relations, and the politics of the era. Some



## By the Way...

**A**t the African American Museum in Dallas through January 14, Bank of America presents the exhibit *Celebration and Vision: The Hewitt Collection of African-American Art*. New Yorkers John and Vivian Hewitt spent half a century collecting these 55 pieces, which they gave each other on holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries. Viewers of the show will see one of the most important collections of 20th-Century African-American art in existence....call 214/565-9026.

**F**rom December 1-3 at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, the 14th annual *Hecho a Mano/Made by Hand* arts and crafts market features the handicrafts of artisans from across the country. Here's your chance to explore San Antonio's whimsically tiled Guadalupe Theater, which was a hub of the city's Mexican-American community in the '40s and '50s, and to find unusual holiday gifts for family and friends. While you're there, check out the theater's upcoming schedule, as 2001 promises a gamut of literary events, music, art, dance, and theater. ...call 210/271-3151 or 351-7787. Web site: [www.guadalupeculturalarts.org](http://www.guadalupeculturalarts.org).

**A**ustin's Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center promises new discoveries any time you stroll through the grounds; the flowers enchant, to be sure—but don't forget the patterned insects, intriguing seed pods, fuzzy bumblebees, and symphony of sounds. On December 7-9, the center invites folks to its annual *Blumenarias* event, when more than 4,000 luminarias glow along the winding gravel pathways. Listen to the crunch of your steps mingling with the sounds of carolers, and revel in the fresh smells and fascinating shapes of winter's foliage. Food and craft vendors will be on hand, too....call 512/292-4200. Web site: [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org).

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**I**f you and your family want to cut your own Christmas tree this year, it's time to plan an excursion to one of Texas' **Christmas tree farms**. About 150 exist statewide, and many offer amenities like hayrides, petting zoos, picnic areas, playgrounds, and visits with Santa. For a list of nearby farms, call 817/831-0595. Web site: [www.texaschristmastrees.com](http://www.texaschristmastrees.com).

**T**he Children's Museum of Houston celebrates its annual **Festivals of Light** through January 7, hosting exhibitions and programs honoring seven holiday traditions from around the globe. Kids and adults can explore Ramadan, Las Posadas, Diwali, Santa Lucia, Chanukah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa through live performances, song, dance, craft activities, workshops, and displays....call 713/522-1138. Web site: [www.cmhouston.org](http://www.cmhouston.org).

**F**olks heading east to Marshall's justifiably famous lighting display this season may want to stop in **Wills Point**, the warm-weather bluebird mecca that also holds a topnotch Christmas party. **Spirit of Christmas**, held this year December 2-3, features an illuminated evening parade; an all-day street festival with bell choirs, holiday crafts booths, and other entertainment; and a Nativity show with more than 200 scenes—from tabletop dioramas to knitted wall hangings.

The Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth presents *From Renoir to Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie* through February 25. André Derain's *Harlequin and Pierrot* (1924) numbers among the 81 paintings.

Also, some 30 businesses along Wills Point's downtown brick streets host an old-fashioned window-decorating contest....call 903/873-4449 or 873-3111.

**N**onagenarian Lucile Bryan of Robert Lee, who with her husband, Wilson, decorates the family's six-acre farm for Christmas every year, tells us that "this year will be better than ever. In fact," she confided in October, "Wilson is out wedding something for it right now." Open every night in December from 6-10 p.m., the display—dubbed **Bryan's Barn** (see story, Dec. 1997)—welcomes thousands of visitors, who come from near and far to admire the lights and imaginative Christmas vignettes, and to toast the event's 10th anniversary....call 915/453-2692 or 453-2764.

**T**he Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm in Austin holds its **Christmas Candlelight Tours** on December 8-9 and 15-20. The tours, which begin by hayride and then proceed to several of the farm's structures by shank's mare, present 19th-Century holiday traditions with caroling, musical performances, dancing, storytelling, and old-fashioned treats. Participants can see the farm's wood-burning stoves in action, listen to the restored pump organ, and make Victorian-era holiday decorations, as well as linger along the illuminated trails and take in the starry sky. By reservation only....call 512/837-1215.

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

**T**he Corpus Christi Bayfront glitters on December 2 for the 20th anniversary of its **Harbor Lights Festival**. The event includes a children's parade; daylong performances by local choirs and musical groups; an appearance by Santa Claus; and the simultaneous lighting of a 75-foot tree of lights, downtown buildings, the U.S.S. *Lexington*, and the Texas State Aquarium. In the marina, too, boats of every size sparkle with lights and decorations, creating grand reflections in the water. As if that weren't enough, a laser light show and fireworks extend the glitter to the skies....call 361/985-1555.

**E**ver caroled in a cave? That's the idea behind Natural Bridge Caverns' 2nd annual **Caroling in the Caverns** in New Braunfels, held the evenings of December 1-2, 8-9, and 15-16. Christmas lights will brighten the caverns' visitors' center and grounds, and choirs will sing in several of the underground rooms—an ethereal effect that only enhances the cave's delicate, crystalline formations. The tours, which last about an hour, leave every 15 minutes; enjoy a barbecue dinner before (or after) in the visitors' center....call 210/651-6101.

**O**n December 10, the Fort Bliss Museum celebrates the season during the 4th annual **Star Spangled Holiday at Old Fort Bliss**, which takes visitors back to 1857, when the fort was still accessible only by wagon train. Visitors can take self-guided, lantern-lit tours of the museum's three buildings, where costumed interpreters will describe the fort's history. Also, enjoy horse-drawn wagon rides, carolers, an appearance by Father Christmas, and shopping at the Sutler's Store....call 915/568-3137.

**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...

**F**or people visiting Pedernales Falls State Park, Johnson City, or Blanco [or the Lyndon B. Johnson State and National Parks], we suggest **A Room With a View**. This marvelous B&B boasts two beautifully decorated rooms, a superb breakfast, and an outstanding view from the comfortable front porch. Friendly, caring host Heather Anderson is very knowledgeable about nearby attractions and restaurants.

**Curt and Ruth Holleman, Dallas**  
*A Room With a View is on RR 3232, 2 miles south of Pedernales Falls State Park; 830/868-7668 or 888/588-VIEW. Web site: www.moment.net/~heather/.*

**W**hile touring the [1877 Tall Ship] *Elissa* in Galveston, we asked a guide to name his favorite Mexican restaurant. He told us about **La Mixteca** on Mechanic St., in the Strand Historic District. Ignoring the less-than-upscale surroundings, we walked into one of the best surprises of our trip. Owned by the Ramirez family, La Mixteca offers topnotch service, superb food, and an extensive menu that includes *mole* [and Mexican seafood].

**Jim and Stella Greer, Keller, via email**  
*La Mixteca is at 1818 Mechanic St.; 409/762-2235.*

**I**n Arlington, I discovered the **Frontier Gallery of Western Art**, an unusual store off the beaten path that sells interesting West-

ern objects, including framed Texas Ranger badge replicas that are licensed by [Waco's] Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. Owners Mel and Dee Reichert have put together an eclectic store that offers something for the cowboy in all of us.

**Kathleen Godwin, Midlothian, via email**  
*Frontier Gallery of Western Art is at 615 E. Abram St., Ste. A.; 817/795-0964. Web site: www.imagin.net/~deer/. It is the only site other than the museum in Waco licensed to sell Texas Ranger badge replicas. Proceeds from sales go to the museum's renovation project. The gallery also sells Western art and collectibles and one-of-a-kind Texas gifts.*

**A**fter an August morning of roaming the lovely **Frio Canyon** in the Hill Country, we were hungry for something cool and light. The bright, airy restaurant at **Frio Canyon Lodge** in downtown Leakey was heaven-sent. Delicious big-bowl salads, fresh vegetables, yummy desserts! We wanted to take it back to South Texas with us.

**Dauris J. Granberry, Robstown**  
*The recently restored Frio Canyon Lodge is at US 83 and RM 337; 830/232-6800. Web site: www.friocanyonlodge.com.*

## DINOSAURS RULE

**P**lans for **Paluxy Summit**, an \$80 million entertainment and retail complex at **Glen Rose**, focus on the area's most famous former residents: dinosaurs. A

dinosaur theme park and museum, together with a water park, miniature golf course, restaurant, and other tourist facilities, will occupy some 43 acres along the Paluxy River at the intersection of US 67 and Texas 144.

The site's **Texas Dinosaur Museum**, complete with robotic dinosaurs, fossils, and sculptures of dinosaurs that once roamed the area, will serve as an introduction to the dinosaur fossil tracks in nearby **Dinosaur Valley State Park**. Construction is scheduled to begin in January, with completion in late 2001. Call the Glen Rose Convention and Visitors Bureau, 888/346-6282. Web site: www.tourtexas.com/glenrose.

J. GRIFFIS SMITH



*Expansion of Dallas' Sixth Floor Museum should not interfere with interim visits.*

## SEVENTH FLOOR, PLEASE

**T**he **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza** in Dallas is about to take on the seventh—floor, that is. Construction began in October to double exhibition space in the historical museum, which chronicles the life, death, and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. The facility is housed on the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly took aim and shot the president. New exhibits on the seventh

floor will focus on the U.S. presidency, rather than on events surrounding the assassination.

Work should be complete in the coming summer. The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza is at 411 Elm St.; 214/747-6660. Web site: www.jfk.org.

## ART OF OCEANIA

**A**boriginal bark paintings, ceremonial masks, war clubs and other weapons, and a *calabash* bowl once owned by the Hawaiian royal family number among items of Oceanic Art now on permanent display at the **San Antonio Museum of Art's** new fourth-floor **Gallery of Oceanic Art**.

The items, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, represent cultures from Oceania, an area in the Pacific Ocean that extends roughly from Australia to Hawaii and includes the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Exhibits allow visitors to learn the background of important objects, such as why the islanders of New Guinea treasure a *teket*, a wooden orator's pulpit, and why Easter Islanders carve the *moai kavakava*, or male ancestor figure. The collection is primarily the gift of longtime museum trustee Gilbert M. Denman Jr.

The San Antonio Museum of Art is at 200 W. Jones Ave.; 210/978-8100. Web site: www.sa-museum.org.

## Down the Road

**B**egin the New Year with us as we explore from west to east—Marathon in the Big Bend and Beaumont in East Texas. Read about Texas' first oil gusher and boomtown, at Spindletop/Gladys City, and Beaumont's many museums. We'll also soar with the eagles. Come fly with us!

# W I N D O W   O N   T E X A S

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KEVIN B. STILLMAN



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**P**aisano Pete's holiday garb gives travelers in Fort Stockton one more reason to pause for a photo moment at this roadside monument honoring the roadrunner.

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