

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

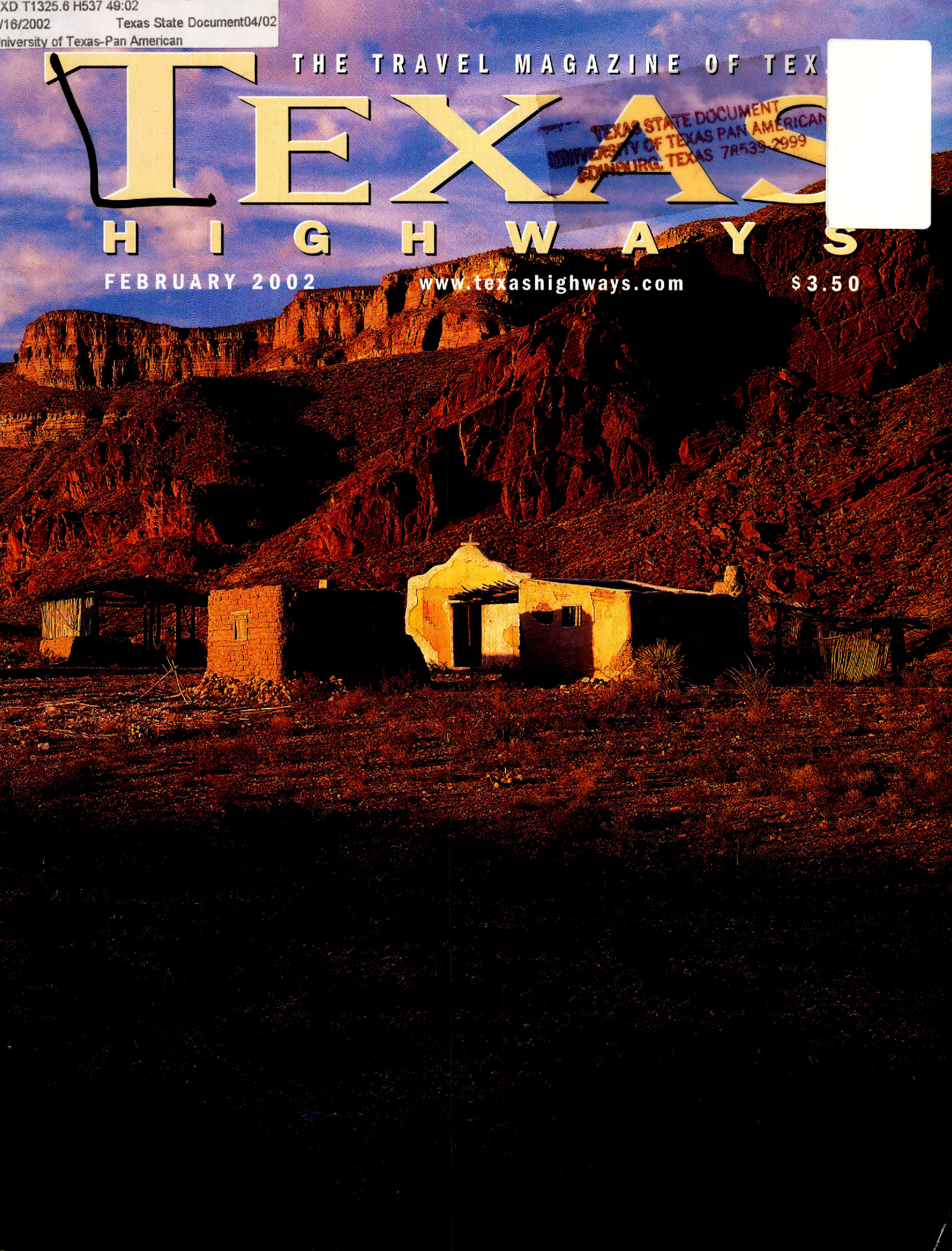
TEXAS H I G H W A Y S

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February brings a mixed bag—everything from barbecue pits and Asian culture festivals to stories about Graham, Richmond, and Rosenberg.

In addition, **Candace Leslie** covers the newly expanded and reopened **Amon Carter Museum** in Fort Worth. Publisher, oilman, and philanthropist Amon G. Carter Sr. (1879-1955) established the groundwork for his museum in 1945. Renowned architect Philip Johnson designed a “jewel box” that opened in 1961 to hold Carter’s original collection of 400 paintings, drawings, and sculptures by Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell—the single-most important collection of works by these artists. Since its opening, the museum has broadened its scope by

COURTESY TEXAS CAMEL CORP



Randy Mallory looks like a seasoned cameleer atop Richard, his mount during a two-day trek through Big Bend Ranch State Park with the Texas Camel Corps. Richard is a four-year-old in training. Shortly after he stood up with Randy on his back, he decided to sit back down and roll over on his side. You never saw a gear-bound photojournalist move so fast to tap-dance out of harm’s way.

adding other outstanding works of 19th- and 20th-Century American art. In fact, its holdings now number some 250,000 artworks, including a superb photography collection.

I have always enjoyed visiting the Amon Carter, but I would find myself disappointed that visitors could see so few of its topnotch holdings at one time. Now, with tripled

MICHAEL A. MURPHY



Frequent contributor Gene Fowler (center) logged many a mile and savored a ton of mouth-watering barbecue while researching the story on barbecue pits. What he relished most, though, was jawing with fun-loving folks about their incredible assortment of pits.

exhibition space, viewing possibilities have expanded considerably. As Candace writes, the jewel box that architect Philip Johnson originally designed, and came back to enhance, has been transformed into a genuine treasure chest.

And an added bonus? The Carter still charges no admission.

Randy Mallory got a kick out of his camel trek at Big Bend Ranch State Park for this month’s **Adventure Tour**. I rode a camel in North Africa a few years ago. Like Randy, I found that riding a camel can be fairly comfortable, once you get used to its gait. But others disagree. On a 1962 visit to India, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy reported that “a camel makes an elephant feel like a jet plane.” And famous British automobile designer Sir Alec Issigonis found camels ungainly in every respect: “A camel is a horse designed by committee,” he said.

Whether you take in West Texas from a camel’s back or relish a Gulf Coast sunrise while lying on your back, sample the uncommon marvels of the Lone Star State.

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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Editor JACK LOWRY

Managing Editor JILL LAWLESS

Senior Editor ANN GALLAWAY

Associate Editor NOLA McKEY

Associate Editor LORI MOFFATT

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Photography Editor MICHAEL A. MURPHY

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Amon Carter Museum, page 4
J. GRIFFIS SMITH

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

FEATURES

4 Amon Carter Museum

Forty years after its opening, one of the Southwest's preeminent art museums welcomes the public to its expanded quarters. A Fort Worth treasure, the Amon Carter showcases 19th- and 20th-Century American art. BY CANDACE LESLIE, PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

12 West Meets East: Texas' Asian Cultural Festivals

Bringing together many nationalities with rich individual traditions, Asian festivals across the state bustle like multicultural bazaars. Two celebrate the lunar New Year, which occurs this month. STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY MALLORY

20 It's the Pits

From backyard bashes to championship cookoffs, Texans tout their over-the-top barbecue pits. The creative culinary contraptions include pits housed in former tractors and old washing machines, as well as deluxe rigs with chrome smokestacks. BY GENE FOWLER, PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL A. MURPHY

28 Red Rock Ranch

Visitors to Red Rock Ranch fall in love with this West Texas gem faster than you can say "Precambrian sandstone," the rust-red geological feature that distinguishes the stunning landscape. Driving tours and hikes offer access to Indian petroglyphs and panoramic views. BY PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT, PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT

36 Graham: Drop by S'more!

With its colorful frontier history, a smattering of century-old homes, and three lakes nearby, Graham offers visitors plenty of reasons to not only drop by, but to stay a while. Come March, the town earns its designation as the "Daffodil Capital of Texas." BY MIKE COX, PHOTOGRAPHS BY WYMAN MEINZER

42 Adventure Tour: Trekking by Camel in the Big Bend

More than 100 years after Jefferson Davis' unusual experiment, camels have returned to Texas. A Valley Mills outfit allows tourists to test these "ships of the desert" for themselves. STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY MALLORY

44 R & R in Richmond and Rosenberg

Sightseers in the sister cities of Richmond and Rosenberg find plenty to explore, from historical museums and a lively theater scene to nature trails and a bass-stocked lake. Think small-town pleasures times two. BY DIANE MOREY SITTON, PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN B. STILLMAN

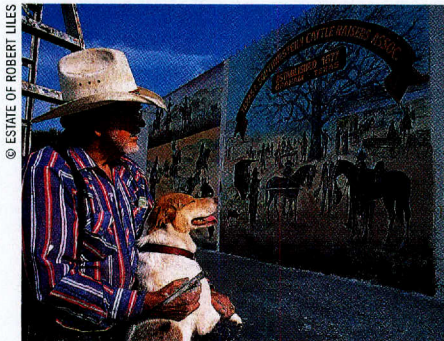
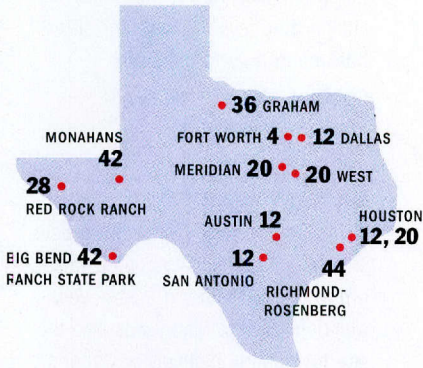
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About Our Cover

An abandoned Western movie set looks right at home at Red Rock Ranch, a site near Van Horn replete with panoramic views and made-for-Technicolor hues. For more images from the ranch, turn to page 28. Photo © Laurence Parent

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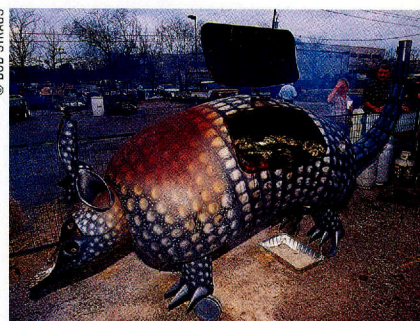


Richmond-Rosenberg, page 44



Asian Cultural Festivals, page 12

© BOB STRAUS



BBQ Pits, page 20

A SHINER NICKEL

The October article on Shiner brought fond memories of my hometown in the late '20s and early '30s. We lived a short way from the Shiner Brewery, and often, on an errand to the store, I would meet Mr. Kosmos Spoetzl. We would converse in German, and he always would have "ein buffalo," a nickel, handy to buy candy.

VIC MEYER
Honolulu, Hawaii

TWELVE TOWNS

I enjoyed the article in December on the "Twelve Towns of Christmas." The photography was outstanding. If you want to view a photographers' bonanza, you need to visit the Christmas Boat Parade on Clear Lake, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. This was my ninth year as a participant, and it still gives me the spirit of Christmas and sharing.

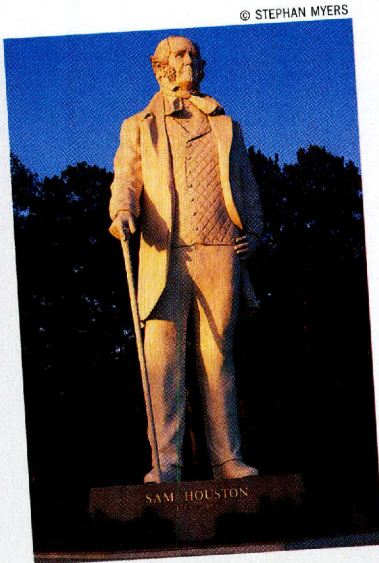
CAPTAIN (FOR A NIGHT)
BILL CLITHEROE
Bellaire

You Asked for It...

Okay, why all the secrecy? Last year, driving north out of Houston on Interstate 45, I encountered a huge Sam Houston statue standing apparently in the middle of the highway. The road curved before we got to the statue, but he stood there, all 40 or so feet of him. I asked my Texan friends about it, and they all drew a blank. I assumed it would appear soon on the pages of your magazine, but it has been a year now, and nothing. What gives?

P.O. ABBOTT
Pueblo, Colorado

Ed. Note: No secrets here. We first covered the Sam Houston statue (shown above) in our April 1995 story on Huntsville. Located south of Huntsville on I-45, the stupendous statue, sculpted by David Adickes, actually soars to 77 feet. A visitor center lies at the base, beneath Sam's Volkswagen-size feet. Call 936/291-9726.



© STEPHAN MYERS

LA VIDA Y LA MUERTE

Please tell me how a dead coyote [December issue, page 23] represents a "good view" of Big Bend? ¿Qué es buena en esta vista? JANICE OSTEEN

Ed. Note: Thanks for writing, Janice. Photographer Frank Armstrong had this to say about the photo: "One of the recurring themes in my work is the influence of man on the natural world. While I can't say for sure that the coyote died from something man did, I could strongly suggest that the paths of man and this animal crossed."

"I find much beauty in the more primal aspect of this image. Look beyond the coyote at the location—the creosote bush, rocky ground, and the great Sierra del Carmen ridge somewhat shrouded in sunrise clouds. This is a very austere moment in the natural world. I equate what is natural and truthful with what is good, and in that sense, this is a very good view of Big Bend."

MISSED THE BOOT

The December article on bootmakers was beautiful, though I believe you left out a most important area of bootmaking—the Rio Grande Valley. Rios of Mercedes Handmade Boots [956/565-2634] has been making boots since 1853. There are many other bootmakers in Mercedes; their efforts should have been recognized.

RAY TATE
Mercedes

You missed one of the really good bootmakers: Ronald Crow, owner of Ye Olde Leather Boot [409/787-1233] in Hemphill. You ought to see some of the fantastic custom boots he has made.

PAM HOUSE
Hockley

One famous Texas bootmaker was not included in the article: Rocky Carroll [R.J.'s Boot Co.; 888/RJ-BOOTS] in Houston. He makes boots for U.S. presidents. He made white diamond boots for Liz Taylor when she premiered her White Diamonds perfume line. Patrick Swayze wears Carroll boots, as do the Houston Mounted Police and many, many others. He's a true Texas character and bootmaker to the stars.

ANNE MOODY
College Station

TALKIN' TRASH

Just a note to say how much I like TH. I was raised in Texas and have been in the military the last 28 years. I have missed being home, but your magazine has brought home to me many times. As I read through last July's issue and saw the letters on Texans' love of trucks, it reminded me of a slogan

for a litter campaign I thought would be catchy. How about a bumper sticker that says, "Texans and litter both need a good pickup"?

COLONEL GEORGE W. PEASE
Soon to be in Helotes

MILITARY MIGHT

I just finished the November article on the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin. Very well done! Camp Mabry was also the site for training highway patrolmen for a long time. I was in the last class to graduate from there. We were the 21st replacement class, and we finished in December of 1954.

AARON B. CASSITY
Dallas

I am saddened that you did not include a reference to the 112th and 124th Cavalry units. No information was given about these fine Texas National Guard units, which fought in the Southwest Pacific area of operations and the China-Burma-India Theater, respectively, in World War II. You also did not mention that the TMFM houses a section devoted to the story of the 112th Cavalry (one of the last U.S. Army mounted horse units in the Pacific Theater) or that the 112th and 124th have pages dedicated to their story on the museum's Web site (www.kwanah.com/txmilmus). Please do not let their story go untold to your readers.

STEVE SUMMERS

Ed. Note: The TMFM has asked us to remind folks that Camp Mabry is still under heightened security, so please call the museum before visiting. Note the new telephone numbers: 512/782-5659 (Tue-Fri); 782-6967 (Sat-Sun); closed Mon.

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 Talk to TH, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009, or fax 512/486-5879. Email: editors@texashighways.com. Web site: www.texashighways.com.

We Shall Overcome

The Fight Is On!” With this slogan, civil rights organizer Juanita Shanks Craft publicized her struggle for the rights of African Americans, as she helped organize NAACP chapters around the state.

Born in Round Rock in 1902, Juanita, the granddaughter of slaves, graduated from high school in Austin and received a certificate in dressmaking and millinery from Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College in 1921.

She moved to Dallas in 1925, where she worked as a maid in the Adolphus Hotel, joined the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1935, and married Johnny Craft in 1937. Together with Lulu Belle White of Houston, and at great personal risk, Juanita organized 182 NAACP branches in Texas in 11 years.

In 1955, when North Texas State College in Denton refused to admit Joe Atkins, a member of the NAACP Youth Council, Juanita played a leading role in a suit filed against the college that resulted in its desegregation. The same year, members of the Youth Council, for which Juanita served as advisor for 30 years, picketed the State Fair of Texas in Dallas because of its policy of admitting blacks only on Negro Achievement Day. (Dallas would redeem itself in 1969 by honoring Craft with its highest civic award, the Linz Award.)

Unflagging in her efforts, Juanita organized and led sit-ins and picket lines to protest “whites only” sections at restaurants, movie theaters, and transportation companies. (In her book *Black Texas Women, 150 Years of Trial and Triumph*, author Ruthe



Juanita Jewel Shanks Craft (1902-1985) gave her life to the struggle for fair treatment of African Americans and other minority groups. President Jimmy Carter called her “a living treasure.”

COURTESY JUANITA J. CRAFT
CIVIL RIGHTS HOUSE

Winegarten calls Craft an “organizing genius.”) In the 1970s, some years after passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, she served two terms on the Dallas City Council, winning her first term 2-to-1 at the age of 73. She also served as a member of numerous local, state, and national service organizations.

Juanita Craft won many awards for her courageous work, including the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award for public service, in 1984, and recognition the following year from the NAACP for her 50 years of service.

Donated by Mrs. Craft to the City of Dallas, her home (2618 Warren Ave.; open by appt.; 214/670-8637) is operated today by Black Dallas Remembered, Inc., an organization dedicated to preserving the city’s African-American history and broadening public awareness of it. The Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House is on the National Register’s “We Shall Overcome” travel itinerary of Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement.

—Ann Galloway

Sarah, Tough and Tall

Of the hundreds of camp followers who accompanied General Zachary Taylor through Texas and Mexico during the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48), none attracted more attention than Sarah Bowman (also known as Sarah Borginnis, Bourget, and Davis, among other names). The six-foot, two-inch Sarah and her soldier husband joined the encampment of the U.S. 8th Infantry at Corpus Christi in the winter of 1845. There, someone dubbed her “the Great Western,” probably for a large steamship of the same name. The title stuck, and the Great Western earned a reputation as one of the toughest women on the border.

Officially a laundress for the Army (wives of enlisted men could accompany their husbands as laundresses or cooks), Sarah is said to have volunteered to cross the Rio Grande at Arroyo Colorado—where the first skirmish of the Mexican War occurred, on March 20, 1846—and whip the enemy singlehandedly. During the shelling of Fort Brown, opposite Matamoros, she refused to take shelter and continued to cook for the soldiers for a week, despite taking a shot through her sunbonnet. Thus, she earned another nickname, “the Heroine of Fort Brown.” During the decisive Battle of Buena Vista, which took place near Saltillo toward the end of the war, she proved her mettle once again, loading cartridges, dressing wounds, and carrying wounded men off the field.

After the war, Sarah opened a hotel and restaurant in El Paso that became a popular stopping place for adventurers on their way to the California gold fields. Later, she ran a saloon in Fort Yuma. The Great Western died in 1866 and was buried at Fort Yuma, Arizona, with full military honors.

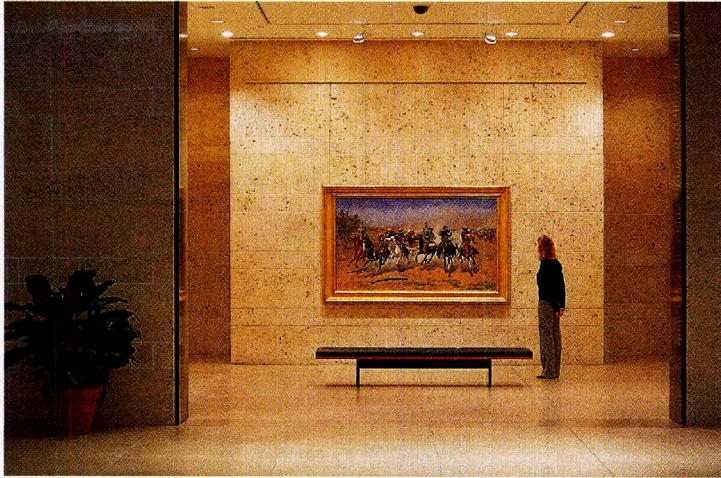
—Cindi Myers, Bailey, Colorado



A M O N C A R T E R

Fresh from a two-year, \$39 million expansion and renovation, a Fort Worth

By Candace Leslie • Photographs by J. Griffis Smith



MUSEUM

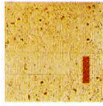
treasure has tripled its exhibition space and grandly enhanced its offerings.

You can almost hear the cracking of rifle shots and the pounding of hoofbeats as the horses gallop straight toward you from the canvas, nostrils flaring, eyes wide with fear. A band of Apaches emerges from a cloud of dust, gaining on the desperate cowboys who head for the trees. As action-packed as a newsreel, yet more vibrant than

[CLOCKWISE FROM FACING PAGE] A sundown shot of Fort Worth's Amon Carter Museum shows off architect Philip Johnson's original 1960 façade and a portion of his recent additions. *A Dash for the Timber*, the Frederic Remington painting that thrust Amon Carter Sr. into the world of serious art collectors, hangs just off the new atrium. Saint-Gaudens' 1899 work *Diana of the Tower* is a smaller version of an 18-foot statue that once crowned the tower of Madison Square Garden, for a time forming the highest point in New York City.

any camera could ever have captured, *A Dash for the Timber* exemplifies artist Frederic Remington's work at its grandest.

This remarkable painting also catapulted Fort Worth publisher and philanthropist Amon G. Carter Sr. into the world of serious art collectors. The man who dubbed Fort Worth the place "where the West begins" had long admired and collected the



In less than a half-century, the Amon Carter Museum's collection

works of noted Western artists such as Remington and Charles M. Russell. Carter had already established the city's first radio station, become publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, struck oil in New Mexico, and encouraged oilmen to move into a city where skyscrapers had begun defining the horizon.

In 1945, the same year he purchased *A Dash for the Timber*, Carter established a foundation to build and support a museum to house his core collection of some 400 works.



The warmth of gilded frames and sumptuously colored walls sets off equally opulent paintings, such as the 1867 work in the foreground, *Still Life of Flowers or Fruit With a River Landscape in the Distance* by Severin Roesen.

Sadly, he didn't live to see the completion of his gift to the city he loved. The Amon Carter Museum opened its doors in 1961, six years after his death. (His daughter Ruth Carter Stevenson, the museum's founding board president, directed the building of the original Amon Carter Museum and still serves as president of the board of directors.)

The Carter grew quickly, and its collections of paintings, sculptures, works on

of 19th- and 20th-Century works has grown from 400 to more than 250,000.



Frederic Remington's *Coming Through the Rye* has returned home to the Carter after several years on loan to the Sid Richardson Collection of Western Art, on Main Street in downtown Fort Worth.

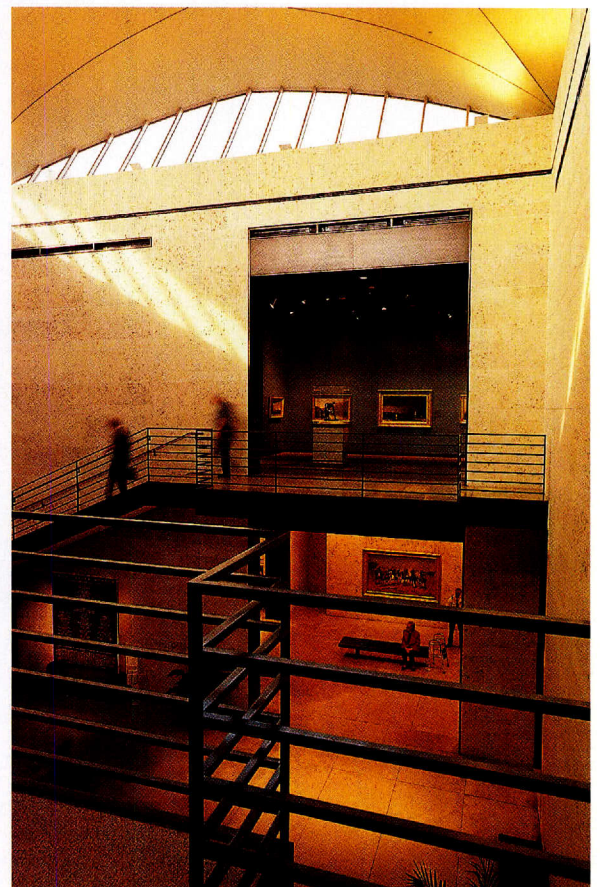
major renovation and expansion. When it reopened this past October, its gallery space had tripled; up to 800 of its quarter-million-plus works can now be displayed at one time. Plans to rotate exhibits four times a year will allow frequently-returning visitors to experience a greater part of the museum's splendid 19th- and 20th-Century holdings.

While its collection grew spectacularly, the museum also expanded its focus far beyond its original Western theme. Masterpieces here depict a broad range of American life and expression, from the 1840s to the present day.

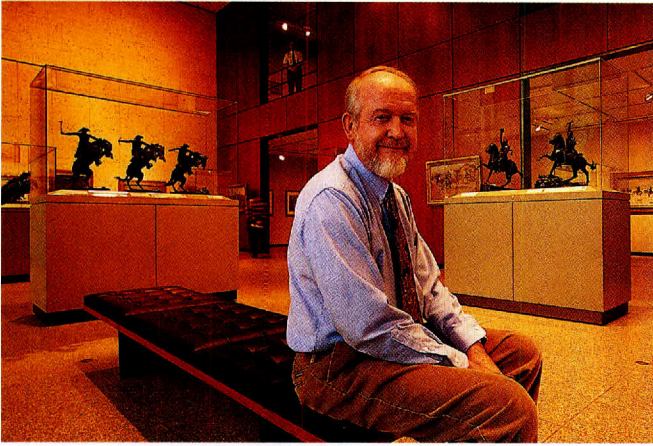
Director Rick Stewart, who has been with the museum since 1987, emphatically dispels any myth that the Carter is simply a museum of Western art, or that it limits itself solely to works of regional artists. "We hold what are the stepping stones of American art, in all media, that offer not only a history of styles and techniques, but of American culture as well," says Rick. "The Carter is a true treasure-trove."

The photography collection alone is one of the nation's most outstanding. Almost 4,000 square feet of exhibition space is devoted to photography, with

paper, and photographs soon expanded beyond its modest space. For years, visitors could view only a small portion of the ever-growing holdings. To remedy the situation, in the fall of 1999, the museum temporarily closed its doors to the public in preparation for a



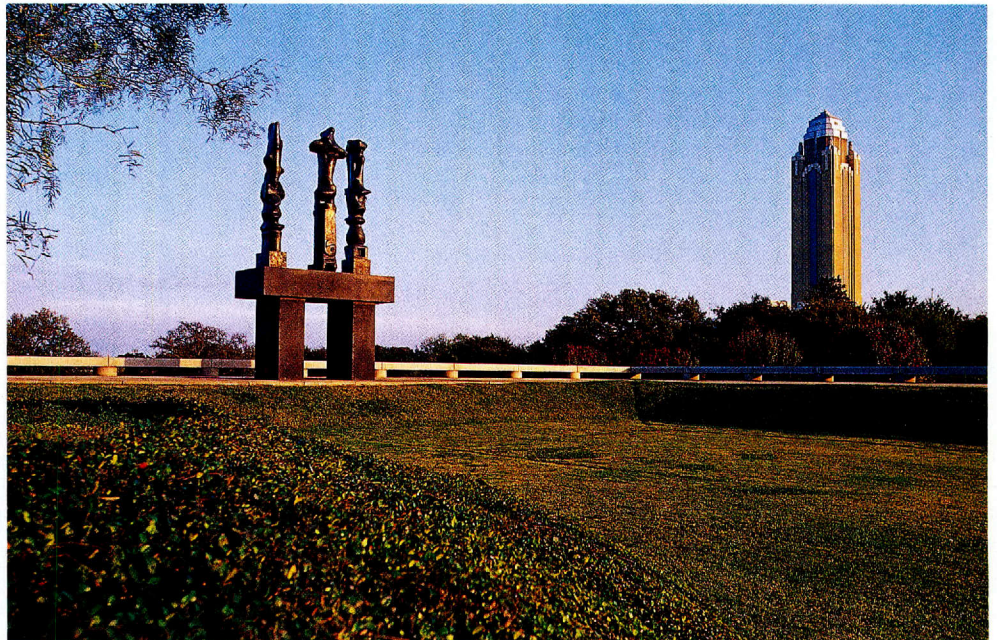
Philip Johnson's addition to the Carter, which includes the vaulted lantern dome and atrium seen here, made possible greatly expanded gallery space and brought in additional natural light. The dome is visible from many points in the city.



“Not many architects are able to come back and work on their original buildings,” museum director Rick Stewart (shown here in the Main Gallery) notes with pride. “And with Philip Johnson, we have had someone who cares about how the art works with the architecture.” Johnson, now 95, was 55 when the Carter opened.

works by such American masters as Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Edward S. Curtis, Edward Weston, and Richard Avedon. This collection has three components: the fine art collection, historical collections, and artists’ archives. A number of photographers, including Nell Dorr, Laura Gilpin, and Eliot Porter, bequeathed to the museum their entire archives of negatives, work prints, and transparencies.

Paintings here range from the landscapes of Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, and Thomas Cole (the latter a founder of the Hudson River School) to the bright, bold abstractions of Stuart Davis, whose works prefigured the pop-art era, and Georgia O’Keeffe. In 1946, Amon G. Carter Sr. acquired the only complete set of Charles Russell bronzes now known. Today, the expanded sculpture collection chronicles the history of 19th-Century bronze casting, as well as the development of modern techniques, such as Alexander Calder’s stunning use of cut metal and Louise Nevelson’s creation of whole room environments from “found” materials. Drawings and watercolors include rare field studies of the



Henry Moore’s *Upright Motives* sits on the museum grounds, with the echoing verticality of the Will Rogers Memorial Center tower in the background.

American frontier, as well as works by major modernists. Nineteenth-Century prints chronicle frontier imagery from the Adirondacks to the far West, as well as city views, landscapes, and field sketches from the Mexican War.

“The museum’s high acquisition standards make it easy to educate people,” says Rick Stewart. “With anything we exhibit, we can always point to it and say, ‘This is one of the greatest of its kind because....’”



The Carter Museum's splendid photography collection, one of the finest in the nation, includes works by such renowned photographers as Richard Avedon, Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston, Alfred Stieglitz, Eliot Porter, and Laura Gilpin. The large works seen here are by Avedon.

The building housing the Carter is itself one of the artworks. Renowned architect Philip Johnson, whose ideas continue to transform urban design, conceived of "a work of art to house art," a building that would take Fort Worth far beyond its popular "Cowtown" image. The museum's expansive shell-stone portico, broad arches with graceful tapered columns, and warm teakwood interior walls drew praise from critics across the country when it opened in the 1960s. Set in a landscape designed to be at one with the building, Johnson placed the museum on "a noble slope overlooking the city's center."

Johnson (with his firm, Philip Johnson/Alan Ritchie Architects Inc. New York) returned to design the expansion. "It has been the building of my career," Johnson, now in his nineties, says of the magnificent "new" Amon Carter Museum. "It is by far the best building plan we have ever done."

At first glance, returning visitors who climb the gentle incline and enter the museum from the spacious front portico will find a familiar welcome. The great two-story glass

front still opens onto a fine view of the Fort Worth skyline. The scattered scalloped imprints in the shellstone walls invite the brief touch of a finger. The teakwood panels still shine, though now more richly than ever. Johnson's affinity for blending building and surroundings remains. Appropriately, the first-floor galleries of the 1961 building display Amon G. Carter Sr.'s original superb collection of Russells and Remingtons. Nothing

While its collection grew spectacularly, the museum also expanded

of what Johnson once called the "jewel box" memorial to Carter has been sacrificed.

Beyond the confines of this beloved treasure chest, the "new" museum's polished Najran granite walls enclose three stories of expanded galleries, environmentally controlled storage vaults, teaching space, a conservation laboratory, and archives and study rooms for visiting scholars from around the world. A teak-paneled library reading room with an array of art publications is open to everyone (by prior arrangement).

In the spacious atrium, a vaulted lantern dome draws eyes upward with its distinctive



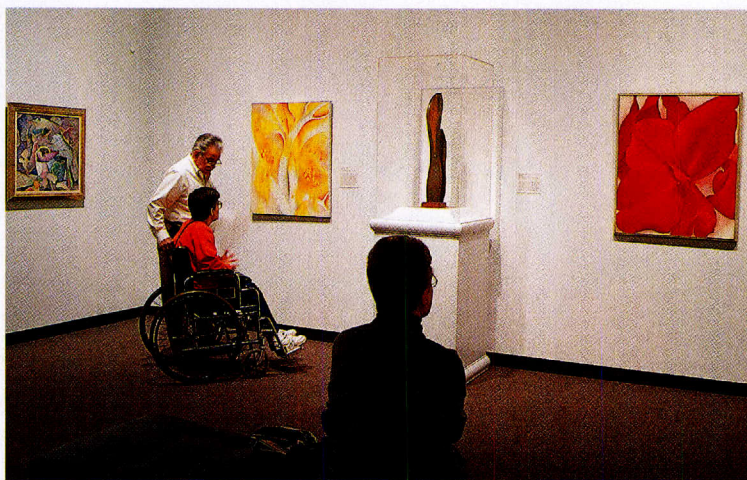
Music, anyone? Noted American sculptor Elie Nadelman carved his *Chef d'Orchestre* from cherrywood around 1919.

design, which will surely become as much a trademark of the museum as the original colonnaded portico. (*A Dash for the Timber*, the vibrant painting that thrust Carter into the world of respected collectors, hangs in a prominent place just off the atrium.)

Education has always played an important role in the Carter's mission, and opportunities for learning have also expanded significantly. In the new 160-seat

its focus far beyond its original Western theme.

auditorium, visitors can watch videos on demand, selecting from such titles as *Reframing an American Masterpiece*, the story of the museum's dramatic expansion, and videos about works by such artists as Martin Johnson Heade, Thomas Cole, and Thomas Eakins. A hand-held



Two Georgia O'Keeffe paintings, *Red Cannas* and *White Birch*, sit on either side of sculptor Robert Laurent's sinuous *Plant Form*. At far left is *Italian Fruit Dish*, an oil painting from 1931 by Hugh Breckenridge.

Acoustiguide audio-tour highlights especially outstanding works. Activity kits help children focus on works of special interest to them. As always, the museum provides guides for teachers, programs for the public, and an impressive array of publications. In addition, new computer programs, teleconferencing and distance-learning equipment, and Internet access promise to enrich the lives even of those who can't come in person.

Humorist Will Rogers, so the story goes, first introduced Amon G. Carter Sr. to Western art. Clearly, it was love at first sight. "The Amon Carter Museum is one of only five museums nationwide that integrate a Western collection with other American art," says Rick Stewart. "Now, with the new building, it's wonderful to have so many works available for people to see. This makes everything so much more fun." ★

Longtime *Texas Highways* contributor CANDACE LESLIE wrote about the Fort Worth Zoo's new *Texas Wild!* exhibit in the August issue.

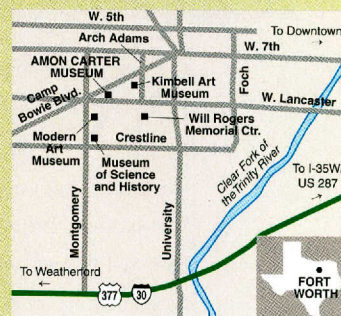
Staff photographer GRIFF SMITH shot last month's stories on enchiladas and the El Paso Museum of Art.

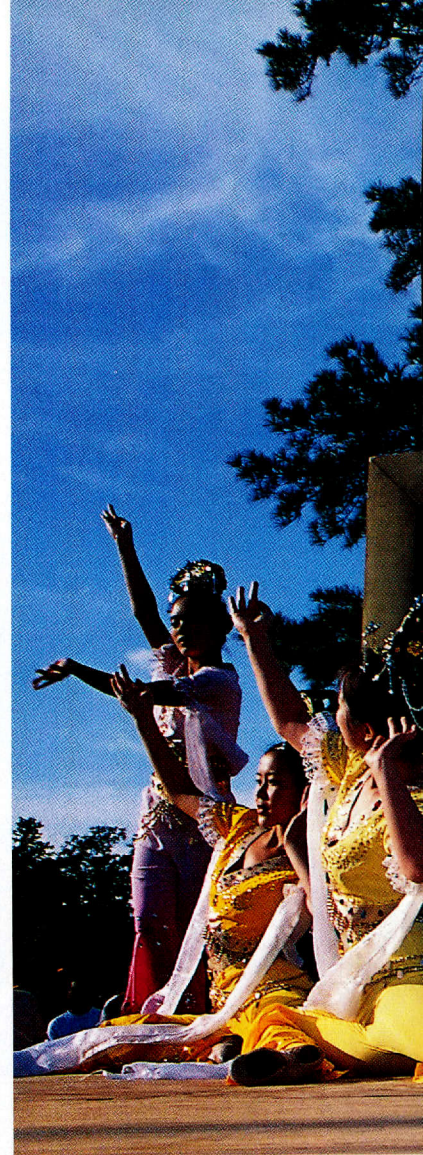
ESSENTIALS Amon Carter Museum

THE AMON CARTER MUSEUM is at 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. (76107) in Fort Worth's Cultural District; 817/738-1933; www.cartermuseum.org. Hours: Tue-Wed and Fri-Sat 10-5, Thu 10-8, Sun 12-5; closed Mon. and major holidays. Admission: Free. Wheelchair accessible.

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS *Masterworks of American Photography* (ongoing; new rotations every 5-6 months); *Laura Gilpin and Eliot Porter in New Mexico* (through Mar. 31, 2002); *Avedon's American West* (through Mar. 31); *Common Ground: Settling Colorado* (through Mar. 31); *The Artist and the American West: A Century of Western Art* (through May 26).

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS
The Stamp of Impulse: Abstract Expressionist Prints (Mar. 2-May 12, 2002); *Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings from the National Portrait Gallery* (May 25-Aug. 25, 2002); *Celebrating America: Masterworks from Texas Collections* (Sep. 14-Nov. 17, 2002).





[LEFT] A striking statue in Houston's Hermann Park makes a fitting backdrop for the Korean Farm Dance Group, which performed during the city's Asian American Festival last October.

[ABOVE] At the same festival, members of the Mitsi Shen Dance Company (from left, Jesddica Chan and Jessica Wang in foreground) portray a Chinese legend in which female figures depicted on cave walls come to life.

[FAR RIGHT] Sinthuja Devarajan of the Anjali Center for Indian Performing Arts interprets a traditional dance from India, the "Natanam Aadinaar," the dance of Shiva-Nataraja, Lord of the Dance.

TEXAS

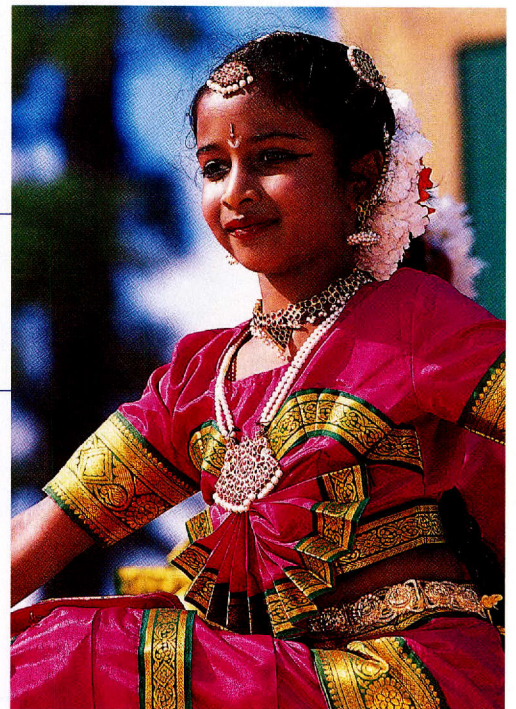
W

ith bodies gracefully poised on stage, 16 smiling dancers seem frozen in time if not in space. The dancers' performance, at Houston's Asian American Festival in Hermann Park, recounts an ancient Chinese legend. The young women represent beautiful female images depicted on cave walls near Tunhuang, a village in northwest China. "The sculptures long to leave the walls and visit the mortal world," says dance director Mitsi Shen, "so they come to life and dance to show their happiness and freedom."



ASIAN CULTURAL FESTIVALS

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY MALLORY





Master Shi Xing Ying of Houston's Shaolin Temple hams it up during warmups before kung fu performances with his young students at last year's Asian American Festival in Houston.

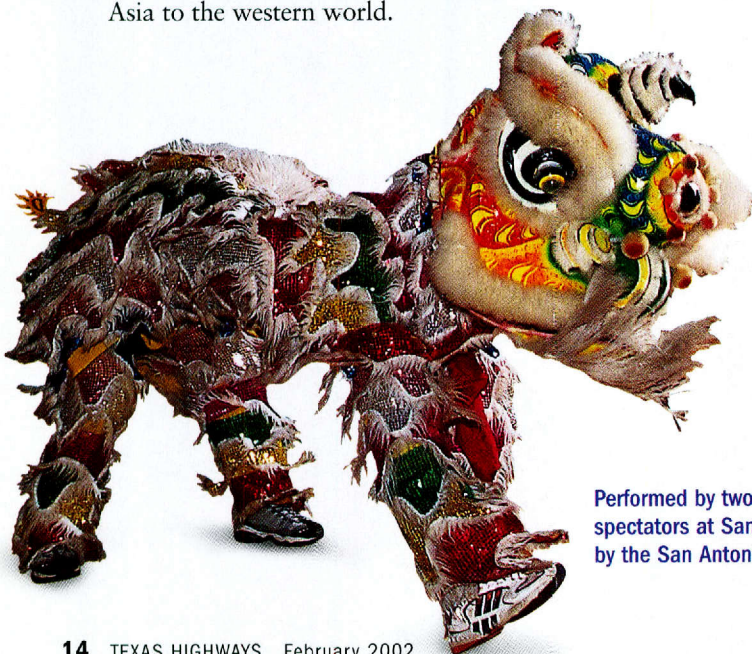
As the troupe, dressed in lustrous garments of tangerine, jade, turquoise, and pink, “comes to life” in slow and elegant movements, the Baycu City momentarily seems transformed into a stop along the Silk Road, the ancient route that linked Asia to the western world.

The dancers’ symbolic search for happiness and freedom, I realize later, could represent more than age-old legend. It could also suggest the journey of recent Asian immigrants to a new life in Texas.

Demographics tell their tale.

Since the mid-1960s, changes in U.S. laws have allowed unprecedented immigration of Asians seeking economic opportunity and freedom in America. The tide surged during the 1990s, especially in Texas, where more than 257,000 Asians and Pacific Islanders immigrated. Now numbering more than 562,000, they comprise 2.7 percent of the state’s population, ranking Texas fourth in total Asian-American population—behind California, New York, and Hawaii. The largest Asian-Texan groups are, in order, Vietnamese, Indian, and Chinese—with sizable numbers of Filipinos, Koreans, and Japanese.

The 2000 census shows that almost half of all Asian-Texans



Performed by two martial artists inside a “lion skin,” the spirited Chinese Lion Dance delights spectators at San Antonio’s Asian New Year Festival. The 2,000-year-old dance, presented here by the San Antonio Lion Dance Association, is said to bring good luck and long life.

live in the Houston area, with substantial numbers in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, Travis, and Bexar counties.

With their countries of origin half a world away, Asian-Texans, like other immigrants, find that festivals provide a vital link to their cultural traditions, especially for their American-born children, says

Glenda Joe, Houston's Asian American Festival coordinator.

Many Asian festivals spotlight a single culture. But half a dozen in Texas do what few such festivals in the world

attempt—to showcase a variety of Asian cultures in the same event. The celebrations are usually organized by first- or second-generation “hyphenated Texans” from Vietnam, India, China, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Hawaii, or the Pacific Islands.

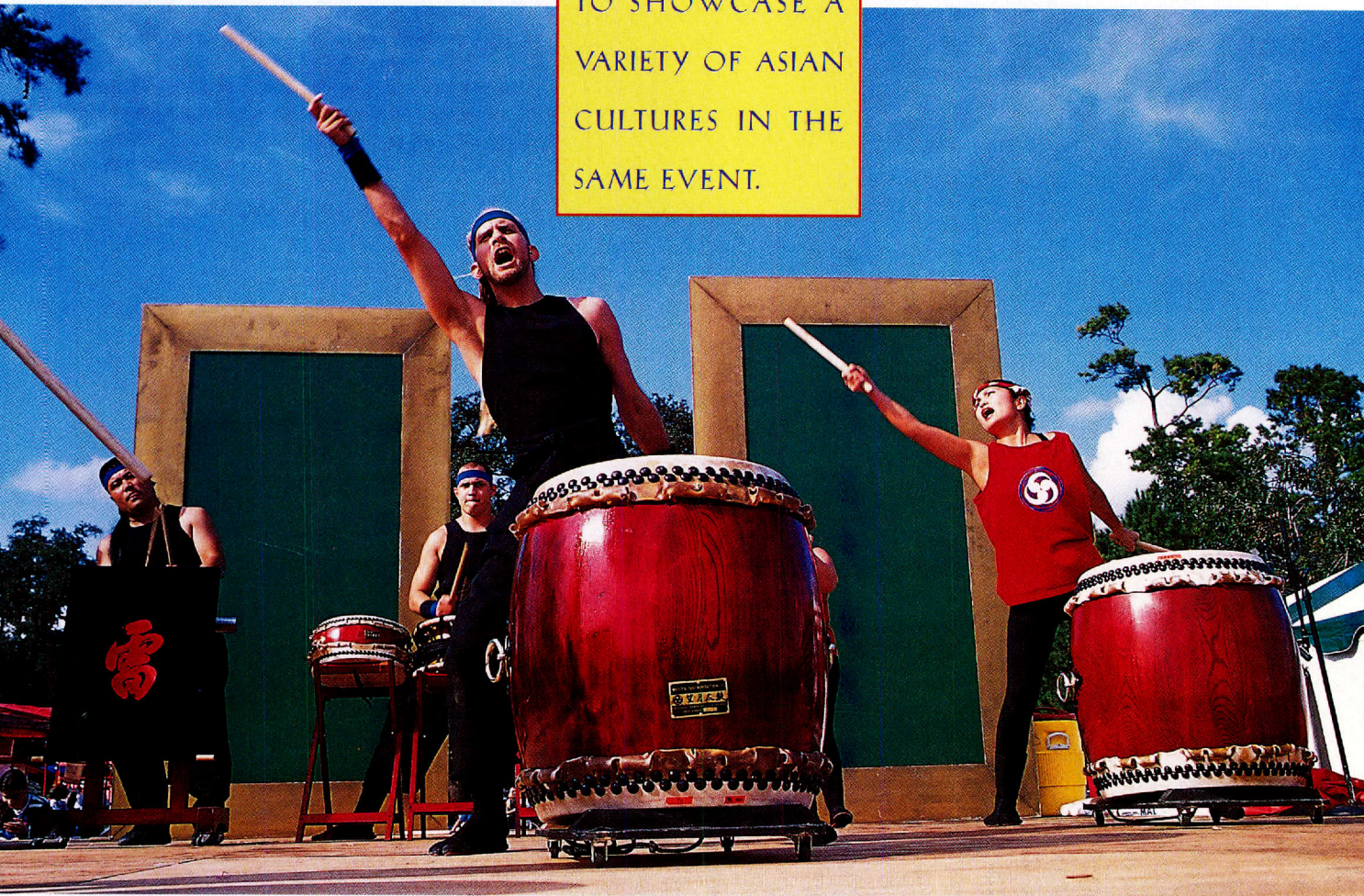
Like other ethnic fests, these events—which take place during the lunar New Year (in February this year), Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May), and October—feature traditional dance, music, games, crafts, and native cuisine, not to mention educational displays, martial arts, and puppetry. By bringing together diverse cultures, the gatherings also serve a higher calling: “Some of our native lands don’t historically get along so well. But here, we’re all together,” says May Lam, founder of San Antonio’s Asian New Year Festival. “We don’t let politics or religious differences keep us from sharing our cultures with each other and the public.”



© NANCY FRANKLIN

Colorful costumes and spirited acts mark Houston's Asian American Festival. Above, a group of Thai dancers appears onstage. Below, drummers from the group Kaminari Taiko of Houston combine choreography and rhythm in a high-energy show.

MANY ASIAN FESTIVALS SPOTLIGHT A SINGLE CULTURE. BUT HALF A DOZEN IN TEXAS DO WHAT FEW SUCH FESTIVALS IN THE WORLD ATTEMPT—TO SHOWCASE A VARIETY OF ASIAN CULTURES IN THE SAME EVENT.



Indian dancers at Houston's Asian American Festival perform both classical and folk dances.

LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVALS

San Antonio's Asian festival began in 1987, when May, a trustee and longtime supporter of the San Antonio Museum of Art, produced a cultural show to celebrate the opening of the museum's new Asian art gallery. The show proved a hit and became an annual favorite, held around the lunar New Year. (In the Asian lunar calendar, New Year's falls between late January and mid-February. This year, it falls on February 12.)

In 2000, the festival relocated to larger grounds, at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio, site of the grand Texas Folklife Festival, which spotlights all of Texas' ethnic groups each summer. This month, the New Year event (February 16, 2002) reprises what resembles a mini-Folklife Festival, Asian-style.

Chaired for the past 10 years by Evelyn Crow, a former Peace Corps worker born in the Philippines, the festival now involves 500 to 600 volunteers who represent about 14 nationalities. "When we start meeting in the fall to prepare for the event, it's like a reunion for us," says Evelyn. "We all enjoy sharing our cultures with each other, the public, and especially our children. If they can't go to Asia, at least we can expose them to Asia in San Antonio."

Of course, San Antonio is a military town, so many people who attend the event have lived in Asia. "For them," says Evelyn, "the festival is like a nostalgic journey."

From Tai Chi exercises to a Korean fashion show, from Asian-cooking demonstrations to a Japanese tea ceremony, myriad activities turn the Institute into a cultural bazaar.

On the first floor, wedged among the Institute's permanent exhibits, booths of more than a dozen Asian groups offer educational displays. Near the entrance, Lourdes Dato-on Stevens

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shows off baskets and other traditional crafts from her native Philippines. Nearby, a Chinese-Texan teenager holds both ends of a long string, on which he spins a barbell-shaped Chinese yo-yo so fast that it roars.

Upstairs, visitors marvel at bonsai trees (potted plants dwarfed and trained to an artistic shape) and play mah-jong (a rummy-like Chinese game using tiles rather than cards). Not far away, someone strikes a Buddhist temple bell, its soulful ring echoing throughout the hall.

On the outside patio, martial-arts students demonstrate their whirling, punching, self-defense techniques. Close by, food booths, with enticing aromas emanating from various Asian foods, lure knots of colorfully dressed

visitors. A woman dressed in an Indian sari samples Chinese fried rice, while someone wrapped in a Japanese kimono queues up for Lao-Thai chicken kabobs.

Traditional dance and music draw enthusiastic audiences at the dome stage. As the Hula Halau Ohana Elikapeka group pumps up its spirited dancing, wide-eyed youngsters edge close to the stage. "We promote traditions of Hawaii, Polynesia, and the Pacific Islands," says the group's director, Renée Park, who also co-chairs the festival. Adds fellow dancer Joseph Laa, "We want to bring a little bit of Hawaiian *aloha* to Texas." (*Aloha*, used as a greeting or farewell, is a word for "love.")



Students from Houston's J&L Dance School, Melanie Zhang, Joyce Hu, and Judy Chan (left to right) perform traditional Chinese dances at the Asian American Festival.



Members of the Hula Halau Ohana Elikapeka dance group (from left, Keola Calavera, Aluli'ke Laa, and Manu Park) present a Tahitian dance at San Antonio's Asian New Year Festival.

The festival's finale spotlights the San Antonio Lion Dance Association, a group founded by Dr. C.K. Tan, a scientist of Chinese descent who immigrated to San Antonio from Malaysia 20 years ago.

As drums pound, two "lions" saunter across the stage. Hidden beneath each lion's "skin"—brightly colored, sequined cloth trimmed in white fur—two martial artists form the body and

legs. Moving in unison, they animate the creatures through gyrations and high kicks. The dance recalls a Chinese legend in which a lion saves a village from a monster. "The dance is supposed to drive away evil and bring luck," explains Dr. Tan.

Indeed, in Asian communities worldwide, arrival of the lunar New Year encourages people to "say goodbye to the old and welcome the new," says Amy Wong Mok, director of Austin's Asian American Cultural Center. The center pays homage to the event by hosting an annual Asian Food and Culture Spring Festival (January 26, 2002), complete with lion dance, martial arts, children's dances, and a variety of symbolic foods such as dumplings (prosperity) and noodles (longevity).

ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH EVENTS

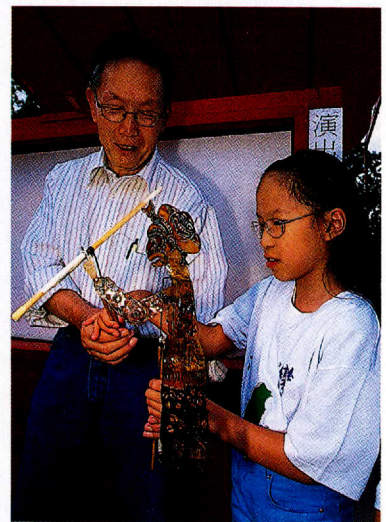
Besides the lunar New Year, Austin's Asian center celebrates Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, observed nationwide each May. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter initiated the observance as a weeklong tribute. In 1990, President George Bush expanded it to a month.

The center kicks off its celebration early with a Dragon Boat Festival (April 27, 2002). Along the banks of the Colorado River, local Asian organizations present games, crafts, martial arts, and food. The main event is a river race of 40-foot boats decorated as dragons, with crews of 20 or so paddling to the beat of on-board drummers.

In May, the center co-sponsors (with the Austin

Children's Museum) "Several Enchanted Evenings," in which displays and performances from a different Asian culture are offered each Wednesday.

Houston's Heritage Month celebration kicks off with a parade and festival (May 4, 2002) on the city's southwest side in Bellaire's Chinatown. Involving more than 30 nationalities, the event features more than 16 performance groups. Other May events in Houston include a golf tournament, an art exhibit, a culinary night (this year's event showcases food from Indonesia), and a Dragon Boat Festival (May 5, 2002).



Dr. Chen-An Chin of Houston, who performs shadow puppetry at festivals around the state, shows Jackie Lin of Sugar Land a Lanchow shadow puppet made from donkey hide.



Austin's Asian-American Cultural Center celebrates the lunar New Year with its Asian Food and Culture Spring Festival. Above, dancers demonstrate Korean fan dancing.

The grand finale, a gala dinner and fund-raiser, takes place at the end of the month.

Dallas struts its Asian-American cultural stuff during the 12th annual Asian Festival (May 11, 2002). The event, which highlights more than a dozen cultures, is truly homespun, says festival coordinator Jennifer Nguyen. "Some of our cultural groups don't have official organizations yet, so individuals just get together to keep traditions alive. For example, we have a Japanese drum group made up of housewives who prepare for the festival by practicing their drumming in each others' homes."

A VENERABLE OCTOBER FESTIVAL

Texas' oldest multicultural Asian event is Houston's Asian American Festival (October 19-20, 2002). Started in 1980, it fills two open-air stages at Hermann Park with performances by more than two dozen musical, dance, and martial arts groups. The acts give students of the area's many private teachers of Asian performing and martial arts the chance to

demonstrate their talent and simultaneously show pride in their roots.

Perhaps the loudest and most energetic of these performances is by the group Kami-nari Taiko of Houston (in Japanese, *kami-nari* means "thunder god" and *taiko* means "drum"). Think of taiko drumming as a marriage of drumming and martial arts.

Dressed in black and red costumes, half a dozen men and women leap and shout in choreographed movements as they pound wooden drums measuring up to three feet in diameter. Deep booms of the big drums blend with higher tones of several smaller ones. "The ensemble mixes taiko sounds to create harmony," says taiko-drumming instructor Jay Mochizuki.

The frenetic "yang" of taiko drumming is balanced at another festival performance by the relaxing "yin" of Dr. Chen-An Chin's

Shadow Puppet show.

Dr. Chin, now 79, has performed shadow puppetry since his boyhood days in the Lanchow region of northern China. The Houston resident even wrote a book on the 1,200-year-old tradition and presents the art form on special occasions.

One show depicts the *Mountain of Fiery Tongue* legend. The audience can't see Dr. Chin, who crouches behind a translucent screen. Over his shoulder, a bright light shines on one of his silhouette-like puppets, casting its shadow onto the screen. The puppet, made from strips of donkey hide, comes alive as Dr. Chin



[LEFT TO RIGHT] Lourdes Dato-on Stevens displays traditional Filipino crafts at one of many educational booths at San Antonio's Asian New Year Festival. A food booth at Austin's Dragon Boat Festival offers favorites like egg rolls and chont (also known as "Chinese rice tamales").

controls it by moving two thin wooden dowels attached to it.

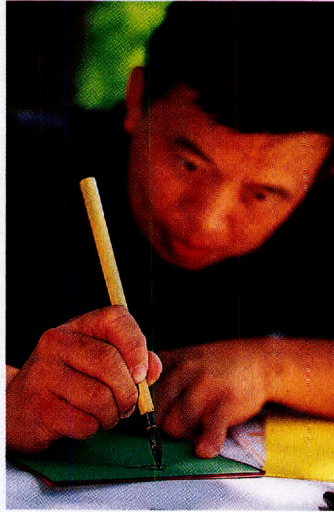
Dr. Chin coordinates the movements with a recorded narration, deftly changing from puppet to puppet. The story tells of a Chinese monk who journeys westward to India to find the sacred Buddhist scriptures. In his path lie many obstacles, including a fiery volcano and treacherous supernatural characters. After many adventures, the renowned Chinese Monkey King helps the monk reach his goal.

Following a classical Indian dance performance by members of the Anjali Center for Indian Performing Arts, I step backstage. There I bump into Houstonians Jan Snell and Joe Sousa, who are watching the taiko-drumming ensemble cinch up their outfits and roll out their drums before going onstage.

"I saw the drummers last year and wouldn't miss them for the world," says Jan. We talk about other performances we liked—the young kung fu practitioners, dressed in bright orange

garb, from Houston's Shaolin Temple, and the kimono-clad members of the Sakura Japanese Dance Company, with their slow-moving grace—plus the event's general pageantry and scrumptious Asian food.

© JOEL SALCIDO



Using the India ink brush-writing technique, William Chang writes names and phrases in Chinese for spectators at Austin's Dragon Boat Festival.

Noticing the camera dangling over my shoulder, Joe says, "You know, a good photo caption for this festival would be 'Unity in America.' It's great to see all the different cultures mixed together...and with such energy and color."

Joe's comment reminds me of the symbolism I saw earlier between the colorful dancers' search for happiness and freedom and the journey of Asian immigrants to Texas. By sharing their roots with their new neighbors through these colorful festivals, members of the state's Asian-American communities demonstrate that they have reached their journey's end. ★

Tyler photojournalist RANDY MALLORY enjoyed learning more about Asian cultures. He says, "I've only touched the tip of a large and intriguing iceberg."

ESSENTIALS Asian Samplers

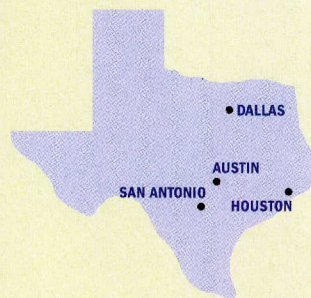
YOU can sample—through dance, music, crafts, martial arts, and food—many diverse Asian cultures at a half-dozen Asian-American festivals held across Texas in winter, spring, and fall. Call for details.

JANUARY OR FEBRUARY (LUNAR NEW YEAR) *Note: The lunar New Year falls on Feb. 12 this year; however, celebration dates vary.*

Austin: The Asian Food and Culture Spring Festival takes place Jan. 26, 2002, at the Asian-American Cultural Center, 11713 Jollyville Rd.; 512/336-5069; www.asianamericanc.com.

The center's Tea Room (serving the traditional Asian teas Mon-Fri 10-6), its sunken sand garden, and a meditation space are open year round.

San Antonio: The 15th annual Asian New Year Festival takes place Feb. 16, 2002, at the Institute of Texan Cultures, 801 S. Bowie St. Call 210/458-2300.



MAY (ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH)

Austin: The Asian-American Cultural Center (see earlier entry for contact information) kicks off heritage month early with its annual Dragon Boat Festival, Apr. 27, 2002, from 10-3 at Festival Beach (I-35 and Town Lake). Each Wed. in May, the center hosts "Several Enchanted Evenings" (music and educational displays) from 5-8 p.m. at the Austin Children's Museum, 201 Colorado St. The center also holds a Moon Festival in the fall and a Kimono Show in the winter.

Dallas: The 12th annual Asian Festival is May 11, 2002, at Annette Strauss Artist Square (1800 Leonard St.), a park in Dallas's Arts District next to Meyerson Symphony Hall. Call the Greater Dallas Asian American Chamber of Commerce at 972/241-8250; www.gdaacc.com.

While in the Arts District, visit the Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2010 Flora St.; 214/979-6430; www.crowcollection.com.

Houston: The Asian/Pacific American Heritage Assn. (APAHA) kicks off Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month on May 4, 2002, with the Heritage Parade (2 p.m., along Bellaire Blvd. from Turtlewood Dr. to S. Kirkwood Rd.) and Heritage Festival (2-7 p.m. at the Alief Community Park, 11903 Bellaire Blvd.). Other APAHA-sponsored events in May include an art exhibit, an Indonesian Culinary Night, and a Heritage Gala (dinner and fund-raiser). Call 713/784-1112; www.apaha.org.

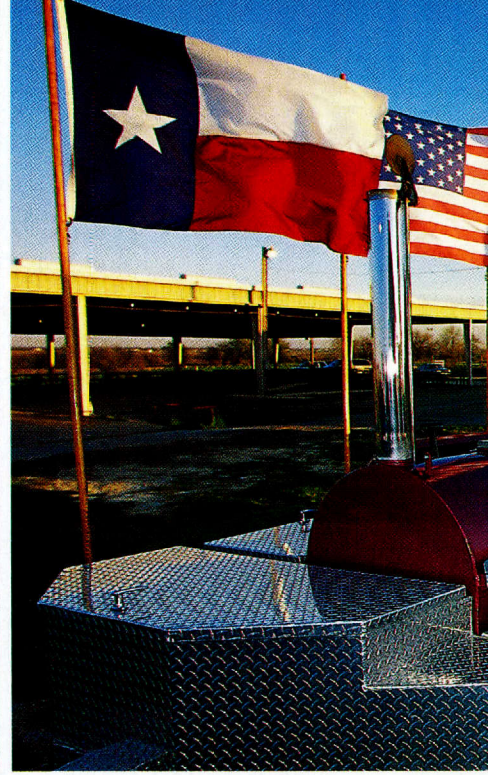
On May 5, the Houston Dragon Boat Festival features dragon-boat racing, plus pan-Asian entertainment and cuisine. Call Caroline Long, Houston Chinese American Lions Club, at 713/582-4436; www.houstondragonboat.com.

OCTOBER

Houston: Houston's 23rd annual Asian American Festival takes place the 3rd weekend of Oct. (Oct. 19-20, 2002) in Hermann Park at the Miller Outdoor Theatre, off Fannin and Hermann Dr. Call Houston's Asian American Festival Assn. at 713/861-8270.

While in Hermann Park, also visit the Japanese Garden, 1513 N. MacGregor Dr. Call 713/284-8300.

OTHER EVENTS Corpus Christi's Asian Cultures Museum and Educational Center holds several Asian cultural events and exhibits (featuring individual cultures) throughout the year. Call 361/882-2641.



TO EYEBALL SOME UNCOMMON BARBECUE PITS, MAKE THE MANY COOKOFFS HELD ACROSS THE STATE.



IT'S THE

Pits

BY GENE FOWLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL A. MURPHY

WHEN IT COMES TO THE ART AND SCIENCE OF BARBECUE-ODOLOGY, TEXANS CAN GO A LITTLE LOCO.

OK, IF THERE'S an award for Biggest Understatement in Recorded History, I'll take it now. But seriously, folks, barbecue-tarians approach every aspect of their obsession with reverence, passion, and creativity. The barbecue sauce or marinade, the type of wood or other fuel, the meat itself—every element of the barbecue experience is critically important. From cooking to consumption, the rite transcends mere nourishment of the body. For many folks, savoring the smoky aroma and sumptuous flavor is...well, kind of a spiritual thing.

Of course, the barbecue pit plays a crucial role. Like the alchemists of old, barbecuers work their esoteric magic in these sacred chambers of fire and smoke. For many Texans, affection for their barbecue pits—often called “smokers” or “rigs”—rivals their devotion to their pickup trucks. A Glen Rose barbecue artiste named “Belly,” for instance, calls his rig “Pretty Baby” and refers to it as a “sweet young thang.”

[TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT] The barbecue cookoffs that abound in Texas have at least one thing in common: bodacious pits. In Meridian, Milton Boone (at right) of Lampasas returns some chicken to his pit, a former Allis-Chalmers tractor. In West, a local group, the Hide N Seek Cookers, pitches washers while waiting for things to get cookin'.

[BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT] The World's Largest Transportable Smoker, from Texas Lil's Dude Ranch in Justin, weighs about 18 tons and has 625 square feet of cooking area. Another rig at West, the Red Hot 'N Rollin' pit, sports fire engine-red paint and dual chrome smokestacks.



TRACKS FOR ONE OF



Ready for action. Pit-builder and barbecue-promoter extraordinaire David Klose of Houston takes a seat on one of his smaller mobile smokers, holding an 18-inch Bowie knife he took to a barbecue event in Ireland.

SOME PITS double as sculptural icons. Custom creations shaped like giant steel pistols, bullets, armadillos, and jackalopes contain smokers. Scale-model choo-choo trains, garbage trucks, airliners, and Model Ts have also been spotted equipped with pits. Even recycled stuff goes to the pits—old washing machines, hot water heaters, air compressors, used oil-field pipe. At least one patriotic pit has been welded in the shape of the Lone Star State and painted red, white, and blue.

To eyeball some uncommon pits, make tracks for one of the many barbecue cookoffs held across the state. Cookoffs are oases of unabashed Texana, tribal gatherings where folks from all walks of life can let their hair down (in a generally civilized manner, of course) and offer tribute to the gods of barbecue-dom. Some of the most flavorful meats in all creation—beef, chicken, pork, turkey, cabrito—bear witness to the cooks' fervent quests for

FOR MANY TEXANS,
AFFECTION FOR THEIR
BARBECUE PITS RIVALS
THEIR DEVOTION TO
THEIR PICKUP TRUCKS.

the ultimate pleasures of the palate.

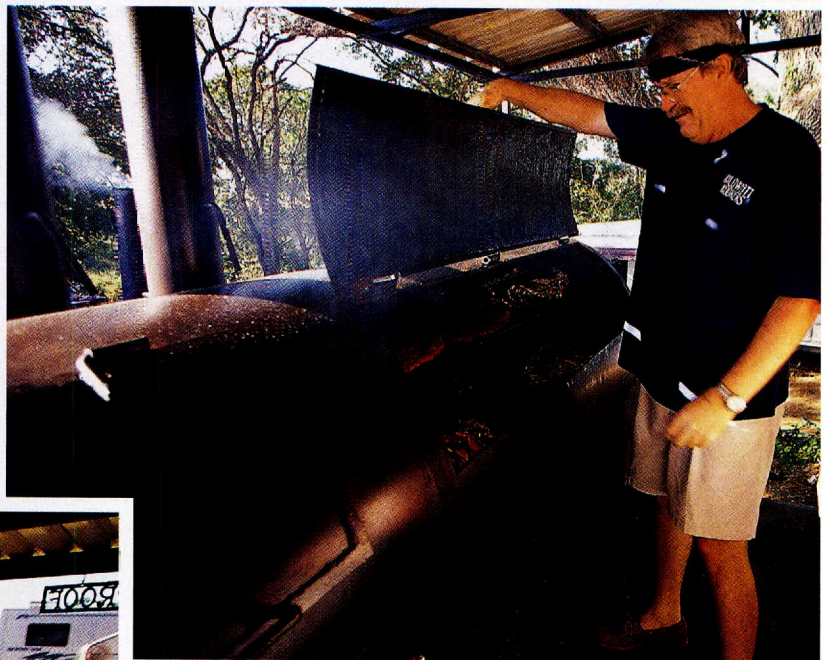
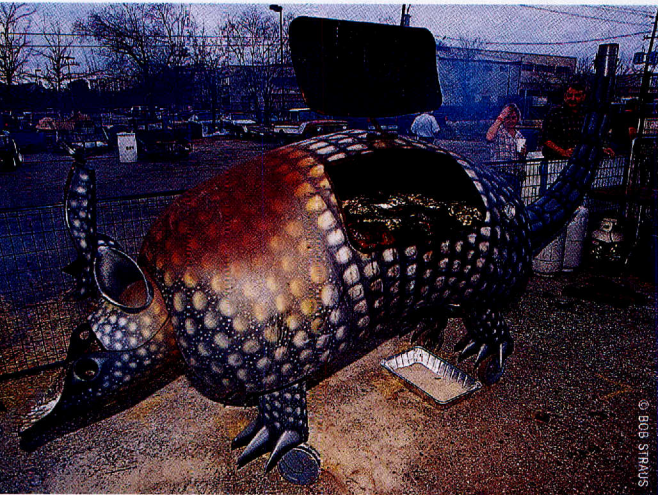
I bellied up to the pit at three recent cookoffs: the National Championship Barbecue Cookoff in Meridian, the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and the West Volunteer Fire Department BBQ Cookoff in, uh, West.

A Lampasas cookoff team called the Tractor Cookers brought their rig to Meridian. "It's a 1944 Allis Chalmers WD45,"

said Milton Boone of his farm equipment-turned-meat smoker. "The freeze of '83 busted the block, and then about five years ago, it just struck me—"That tractor would make a great barbecue pit."

Nearby, at a lone-wolf outfit called Gaff's Redneck BBQ, James Gafford tended his locomotive smoker. "The cooking chamber is half of an old 120-gallon propane tank," explained James. "I used a three-eighths-inch metal plate for the firebox, and the water under the tank keeps the meat moist." Asked to cite the most unusual pit he's ever seen, James recalled a New York cooker who attended the Fire Ant Festival one year in Marshall. "He had an undertaker theme," said James, "and his rig was a black box that looked like a coffin."

The James Wood Motors Cooking Team of Decatur hauled its bull-shaped pit to Meridian. "We're cookin' beef," explained pit-master Blair Stewart, "so we figured we might as well have a rig that looked like it.



[CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT] Cookoffs in Meridian, West, and Houston feature similar scenes. Kemah Blair of the Katy Kookers tends to various sauces, including one with vermouth, another with a different white wine. Bill Ritter of Arlington perches on the Mudcreek BBQ Co. pit. Randy Ingersoll of Pasadena's TCT team checks the goods on the team's pit, which features rotating racks. This Continental "jet" turns out perfectly smoked brisket. Steve Cox of Clifton's Bullet Proof team checks the meat from his bullet-shaped pit. An armadillo pit catches many an eye.



"IT'S GOT A STEREO SYSTEM, A VENT-A-HOOD, AND HOT AND COLD RUNNING WATER."



Leo and Becky Makovy of Eddy (top) pose with their Model T-replica pit at the West cookoff. Leo says he spent "six months of nights and weekends" building the car pit. The Stone Cold team's pit, shown here at the Meridian event, features a stainless steel firebox, brass smokestacks, and a small sink.

Juice drips out the nostrils, like he's snortin'." Blair and the Lloyd brothers, Goober and Weldon, decorated their patch of cookoff turf in a tropical-beach theme inspired by *Survivor*, the popular TV "reality" show. "We were down in Port Mansfield, and all this stuff washed up on shore," explained Blair. "It's borderline eccentric," Weldon admitted.

Lifelong friends (and brothers-in-law) Jesse Pospisil and Jerry Tallas of Taylor brought along their 1968 washing-machine pit. "New washing-machine pits don't last," counseled Jerry. "My dad started this.

He was the shop foreman in an International Harvester dealership that also sold appliances, and when he'd deliver a new washing machine, he'd get the old one. All my uncles had washing-machine pits."

Another pit, the Rolling Stone, outta Springtown, exemplifies the style of custom pits that have been painted and glazed like a speckled sports car. "The body is an old 300-gallon propane tank," said Bill Stone. "It took me 10 months to build it, and I don't want to know how much it cost."

Many cookoff rigs are mounted on their own trailers for easy transport. Brad Har-

well's pit—which rivals the Rolling Stone for painted beauty—made its debut in West last spring. Its lavender coating and chrome wind vane in the shape of a turkey caught folks' attention. "People on the road would stop to let us through," said Brad.

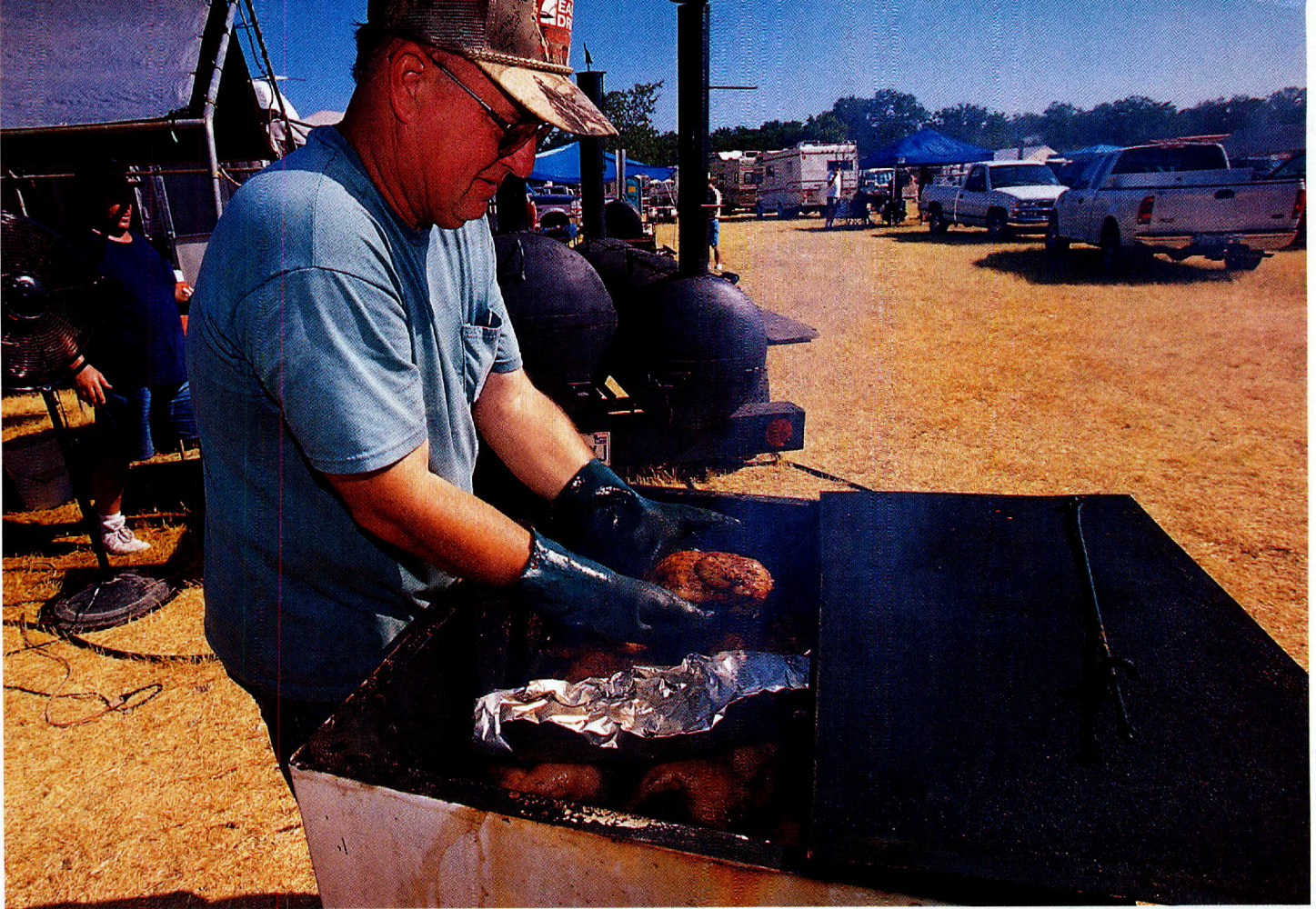
Leo Makovy of Eddy also unveiled his new smoker in West—a replicated Model T. "My boss at Larry Gomez Sheet Metal in Temple made one for an oil company about 20 years ago," said Leo. A silver skull makes a unique radiator cap for the old-timey auto pit. Another sheet-metal shop, in West, produced an artistic set-up for the Hide N Seek Cookers: The pit environs featured a star sculpture with artwork depicting a cow's skull, a rodeo clown, and a cowboy driving cattle.

MI ANY COOKOFF teams have names and themes that sizzle with country-western spice. (Some go all-out decorating their patch of cookoff territory, creating temporary saloons or Wild West cafes.) For example, Tommy Tubbs of Bluff Dale brought his Coyote Ranch team to Meridian. Between his tall tales about the origin of various animal skins on display, Tommy offered a taste of his specialty, jalapeño peppers stuffed with cream cheese, wrapped in bacon, and fried in a wok. The Kountry Bumpkins BBQ Team, from the Rattlesnake Inn, between Florence and Georgetown, made folks wonder if the bumpkins were smokin' slabs of sidewinder. (They weren't.)

At the world's championship in Houston, both the Planet Texas and the

[FACING PAGE] The Coyote Ranch team of Bluff Dale hoped their coyote theme would strike a chord with the judges in the showmanship category at the West cookoff.





[ABOVE] Jesse Pospisil of Taylor prepares chicken on the washing-machine pit he and his brother-in-law, Jerry Tallas, use. According to Jerry, one of the other teams at the Meridian cookoff complimented the men on their "Cajun microwave."
 [RIGHT] At the event in West, the Hillbilly BBQ team erected a rustic cabin.

Gasoline Alley teams worked their meaty mojo behind facades of the Alamo. The Bayou City cookoff also hosted teams with handles like Buns & Roses, Los Pistoleros, Asleep at the Grill, Holy Cow Cookers, Hot Czech Express, Pirates of the Nueces Saloon, Road Kill BBQ Company, Texas Mind Erasers, Karnes County Polish Smokers, Cayenne Social Club, Hoo Kares Kookers, Beefwatch, and the Always Able But Confused Cookers.

A Spindletop-themed outfit from Beaumont wildcatted some dandy venison boudin beneath a wooden derrick. As if to inspire tidiness in cookoff attendees, a crew from BFI Waste Systems smoked barbecue in an exact one-third-scale model garbage-truck pit. BFI's Ray Bell pointed out that the smoker's carriage is a former race-car trailer. "We took the side out and made the nose of the trailer a walk-in cooler,"



explained Ray. "It's got a stereo system, a Vent-A-Hood, and hot and cold running water." The garbage-truck pit has been a cookoff hit from Amarillo to the Rio Grande Valley.

Houston cooker Kenneth Johnson displayed his "one-of-a-kind" pig pit. "It cooks a lotta pork," deadpanned Kenneth. Hubert Green and the Sweet Meat Cooking Team came down from Euless, where they oper-

ate the North Main BBQ eatery. Hubert sweetens beef in an armadillo-shaped smoker. "It's a Texas critter, and Texas is noted for armadillos," he explained when asked the dumb question of where he got the idea. "People slow down on the highway and take photos."

Steve Clark of Van Vleck presided over a smoker that he crafted in the familiar shape of the state of Texas. "I was a single



At an unidentified pit in Meridian, three pairs of eyes ensure the brisket is cooked just right.

parent, looking for activities to enjoy with my daughter, when I got into cookoffs,” said Steve. “My pit has a butterfly damper down around Brownsville, and up in the Panhandle, there’s a pull-out sausage rack. A shape-of-Texas pit gets more heat out of the wood. I use about one-third of the wood other pits use.”

THE LONGHORN Desperados cooked in mega-Tex style in the World’s Largest Transportable Smoker, a rolling rig owned by Texas Lil’s Dude Ranch of Justin. “It’s 57 feet long and has 90,000 square inches of cooking space,” said Desperado Ed Sadberry, who designed the pit. “There’s less than 10 degrees difference [in temperature] from one end to the other.”

Renowned pontiff of pits David Klose helped create the WLTS. His Houston company, BBQ Pits by Klose, offers rigs in fabricated tractors, fire hydrants, trains, and giant beer bottles, in addition to a wide variety of traditional styles. In his “most satisfying” masterpiece, David installed a pit in a 100-year-old baby carriage. Recently, the so-called “International Ambassador of Barbecue” attended the First World BBQ Competition in Switzerland. “I saw a few other cowboy hats there,” said the smoker swami, “but I was the only one wearing holsters, six-guns, spurs, and Bowie knives.”

Pitt’s & Spitt’s, another Houston pit factory, now owned by Paul Syracuse, began when the oil biz went to h-e-double-hockey-

sticks in the 1980s. “We had our workers making pits from used oil-field pipe just to keep busy. Now they use new steel,” said former owner Wayne Whitworth. The Pitt’s & Spitt’s rigs operate on the same principle as the Franklin Stove. Baffles contain the heat inside the firebox and circulate it for even cooking. NFL football commentator John Madden bought a smoker from Pitt’s & Spitt’s, and former President George Bush owns two. “We gave President Bush our secret recipe for ‘beer-can chicken,’” added Wayne. (The recipe in-

volves placing a dressed chicken over an open can of beer that sits inside the pit.)

In Lubbock, Custom Pits of Texas produces smokers with the owners’ names welded onto the handles. At Texas Eco Bar-B-Que Pits in Alvin, Mark and Shelly Tacquard sell hot water-heater pits. The couple “went to the pits” about five years ago to make up for slow summer business at their sewing-machine and vacuum-cleaner-repair shop. “The hot water heaters are lined with porcelain,” explains Shelly. “They conduct heat like heavy pipe, but you can raise and lower the temperature easier with the porcelain. Plus, the recycling keeps the heaters out of landfills.”

Ain’t no doubt about it, folks. If it’ll hold a fire and conduct heat, sooner or later, some Texan will homestead a barbecue pit in it. We’ve even heard tell of one guy who installed a rig in his Pontiac Bonneville. Sssa-mo-kin’....! ★

Frequent contributor GENE FOWLER enjoyed hanging out at the pits while researching this story. He says he would eat barbecue even if it weren’t required by state law.

Photography editor MIKE MURPHY cooks with a group called the Hamilton Pool Jalapeño Squeezers. The team’s skills with a mobile smoker haven’t garnered any prizes, but their efforts have yielded hours of fun and smoke.

ESSENTIALS

Texas Barbecue Rigs (and Where to Find 'Em)

THE BEST PLACES TO SPOT unusual barbecue pits are the many barbecue cookoffs that take place in Texas annually; information about the three events mentioned in the story follows.

The **29th Annual World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Contest** at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo takes place Feb. 7-9, 2002. Write to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Box 20070, Houston 77225-0070; www.hlsr.com.

The **West Volunteer Fire Department BBQ Cookoff** takes place in West (just north of Waco on I-35) the 3rd weekend in Mar. (Mar. 15-16, 2002). Write to Cody Dragoo, 2235 Cottonwood Rd., West 76691; 254/826-3570.

The **National Championship Barbecue Cookoff in Meridian** (on Texas 22, about 30 miles northwest of Waco) takes place the 4th weekend in Aug. (Aug. 30-31, 2002). Write to the Natl. Championship Barbecue Cookoff,

Box 699, Meridian 76665; 254/435-6113; <http://bbq.htcomp.net>.

BARBECUE PIT COMPANIES

Texas Eco Bar-B-Que Pits, 2424 S. Gordon, Alvin 77511; 281/331-4336.

Pitt’s & Spitt’s, 14221 Eastex Frwy., Houston 77032; 281/987-3474 or 800/521-2947; www.pittsandspitts.net.

Custom Pits of Texas, Box 53923, Lubbock 79453; 800/280-5797; <http://members.tripod.com/custompits>.

BBQ Pits by Klose, 2216 W. 34th St., Houston 77081; 713/686-8720; www.bbqpits.com.

Texas Smoker, 106 Goldbeck St., Uvalde 78801; 830/278-1921.

The **World’s Largest Transportable Smoker** can be rented for parties, fund-raisers, and other events. Write to Texas Lil’s Dude Ranch, Box 656, Justin 76247; 800/545-8455; www.texaslils.com.

By Patricia Caperton Parent
Photographs by Laurence Parent

**GEOLOGIC WONDERS
AND AWESOME VISTAS
IN WEST TEXAS**

RED

AS the sun settles into the western sky, golden light illuminates strangely shaped water- and wind-carved rock formations and vast expanses

ROCK

of rust-red sandstone. Red, gold, and purple hues color limestone bluffs rising above. A narrow, twisting slot canyon slices across

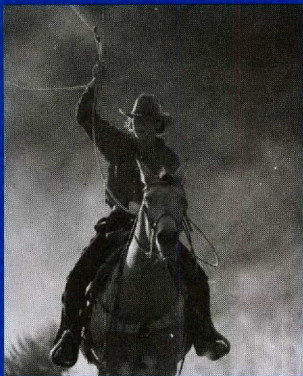
RANCH

the landscape, sheltering a small, intermittent creek. Utah? Colorado? No, guess again. This scenic gem, Red Rock Ranch, lies just outside Van Horn in West Texas.

Wind-carved sandstone formations number in the hundreds at Red Rock Ranch. Here, the Beach Mountains rise in the background.



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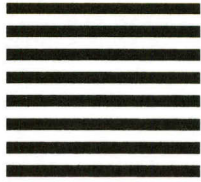
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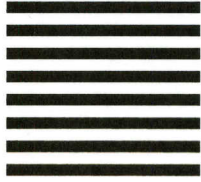
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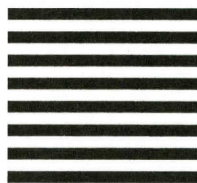
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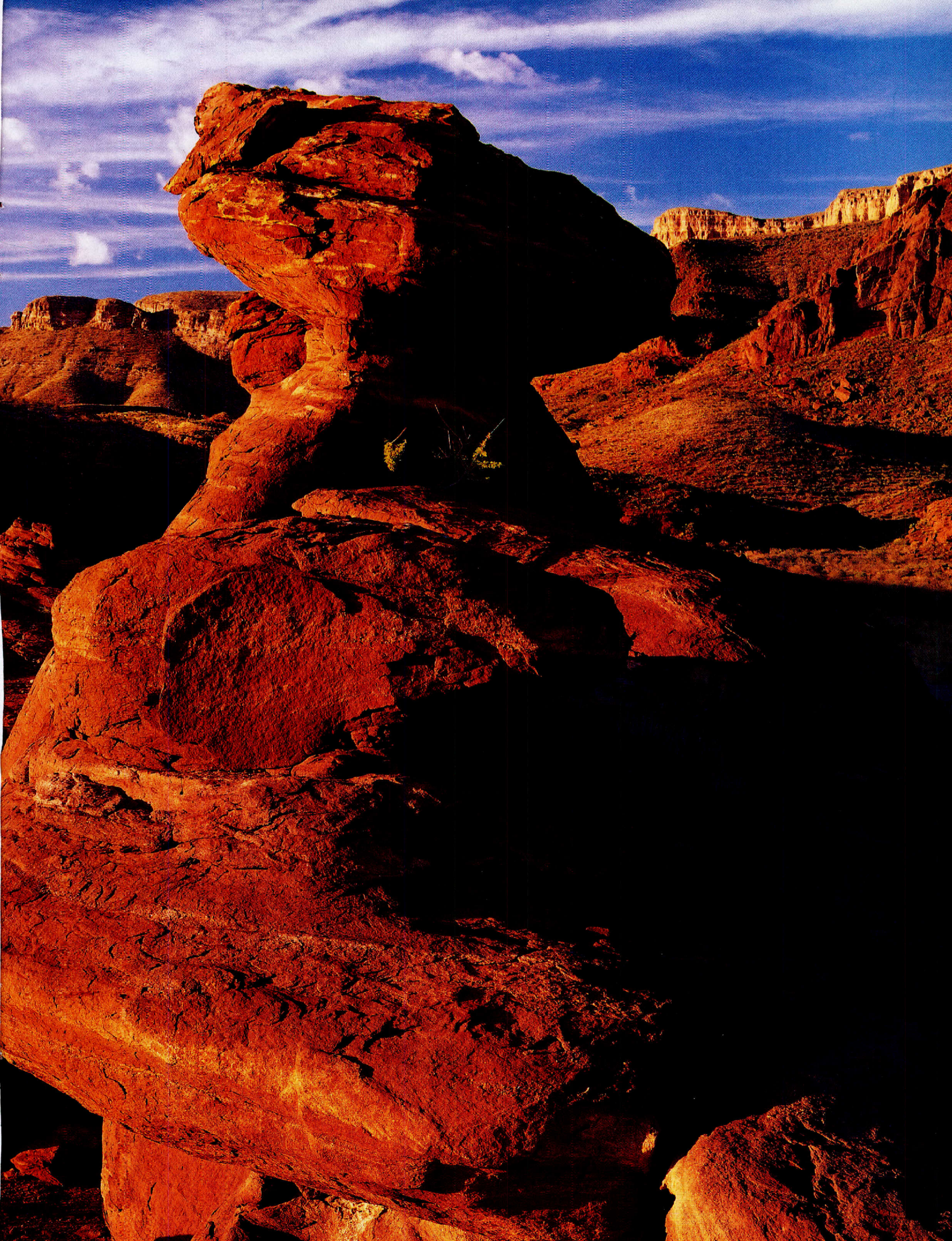
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Hackberry Creek snakes its way through the ranch's expanses of Precambrian sandstone, which formed 570 million to 4.5 billion years ago. Only a few spots in North America feature natural Precambrian exposure such as this.



Tourists, amateur rockhounds, and serious students of geology relish Red Rock Ranch's driving tours. Darice McVay, part owner of the ranch, is happy to oblige, pointing left and right as she maneuvers her Suburban along the unpaved ranch roads. Her guided tour combines a crash course in basic geology and West Texas history with the stunning scenery. Every prominent formation has an evocative name, from a peak called Six Mile (six miles from Van Horn and looking like a miniature El Capitan Peak) to Boot Rock, Camel Ridge, Easter Island, the Submarine, Clam Rock, Anvil Point, and Doorknob Rock.

Geologists arrive from near and far. Dr. Daniel Womochel, a geology professor at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin in Odessa, often brings his students to do field research. "You can't go anywhere else in the world and see what

you can see in West Texas," says Dr. Womochel. "Together, all of this geology makes this area the best outdoor classroom in North America for studying the principles of geology. This is world-class geology."

Darice isn't a geologist, but she knows the land well. "Geologists have been coming to the ranch for years and years, even before we began offering tours," she says. "Through them, I learned a lot and became interested in the subject." She eagerly shows visitors "worm hole" trace fossils, where tiny prehistoric worms called polychaetes carved Swiss-cheese-like holes in what

was then shifting, intertidal beach sand. "These fossils are from a formation named the Bliss Sandstone," says Dr. Womochel. "They're uncommon, because wave action in the ancient seas usually washed these sediments and the worm burrows away."

The Red Rock Ranch's geology looks different from most of the rest of West Texas because it is

**EVEN IF
YOU'RE NOT A
GEOLOGY ENTHUSIAST,
RED ROCK RANCH
OFFERS AWE-INSPIRING
VIEWS AND A SLICE OF
FRONTIER TEXAS.**



On a driving tour of the Red Rock, you'll stop at Anton Chico, a movie set created in 1995 for *Dead Man's Walk*, part of the prequel to *Lonesome Dove*.



[FACING PAGE] Geologic forces pushed the Precambrian layer to the surface. Then, wind and water exposed the rock, occasionally carving it into precariously balanced pinnacles.

composed of naturally exposed Precambrian sandstone, along with igneous, metamorphic, and other sedimentary rock outcroppings. The Precambrian-era rocks formed 570 million to 4.5 billion years ago, long before the dinosaurs arrived. Because these rocks are so old, they're usually found deep within the earth. Sometimes, human activity such as road-building reveals them; other times, geologic forces push them up from the earth's depths.

On Red Rock Ranch, the Precambrian sandstone formed from silt deposited in an ancient seabed along what was once the North American continent's edge. As the years went by, the seas came and went, creating multiple sediment layers. Burial, heating, and compression slowly turned the sediment into rock. Over millions of years, geologic forces lifted the Precambrian layer toward the surface. Eventually, weathering exposed the Precambrian rocks as younger rock layers covering them were stripped off by erosion. Only a few sites in North America feature such natural Precambrian exposure; even fewer feature Precambrian exposures combined with younger Permian rock outcroppings.



[ABOVE, LEFT AND RIGHT] Using plant dyes and mud, Indians painted this deer some 300 years ago on the ceiling of a rock overhang. Ocotillo, ferns, and prickly pear cacti grow in a watery crevice.

Stopping beside a small stream, Darice points out the contrasts between the smooth curves of water-eroded rocks and the angular lines of wind-etched rock columns. Wind and rain erosion have created bizarre features like a large spaceship-shaped rock, and the "Guardian Alien," which perches on a narrow column.

Even if you're not a geology enthusiast, Red Rock Ranch offers awe-inspiring views and a slice of frontier Texas. Located in the Beach Mountains, the ranch offers vistas of the more desert-like Wylie Mountains to the southeast and the towering Sierra Diablo to the north. Anywhere you look, rugged bluffs and peaks dot the horizon.

One of the best views is from the Tumbledown Talc Mine, an active mine situated on the side of prickly-pear-covered Tumbledown Mountain. Darice leads guests up to the mine, where heavy equipment cuts the powdery gray rock from the earth. Although visitors can't re-

"YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN SEE IN WEST TEXAS."

move rocks from other parts of the ranch, Darice encourages guests to take a small talc sample home as a souvenir. From this vantage point, you can see Dallas Canyon below and the distant Eagle Mountains to the south-

west. "I like to say you can see two counties and two countries from here," says Darice, pointing toward Mexico.

Observant visitors may notice a tall, dark structure piercing the horizon to the west. This is a timber headframe from the abandoned Black Shaft silver mine, one of the few silver mines in Texas. About a half-dozen such mines operated in the area from the 1850s to the 1940s. All the silver veins proved marginal, but the Hazel mine, whose ruins lie north of the Tumbledown Mine on another ranch, proved the most prolific; in its heyday, miners extracted





Six Mile, a peak in the Beach Mountain range, sits six miles from the town of Van Horn. A seasonal lake lies in the foreground.

silver, copper, platinum, and gold. Eventually, operating costs became too high, and now the abandoned mine deteriorates slowly under the desert sun.

Before the miners arrived, bands of Apache and Comanche Indians freely roamed the area, hunting abundant game and camping along creeks. Today, rocky areas near running water reveal numerous smoothly worn indentations, where Indians grinding their grain with stones wore hollows in the rocks. In a shallow rock-shelter, they drew a beautiful pictograph of a deer on the ceiling, using mud combined with plant dyes. Multiple petroglyphs (figures carved into rock) also provide evidence of the once-thriving native popula-

tion. Just 20 miles to the south, on the privately owned Lobo Ranch, more than 100 such carvings dot the rocks and cliffs. (If you'd like to see them, Darice can arrange a tour.)

In 1880, J.H. "Hab" Beach, a Van Horn businessman whose family gave the Red Rock's mountain range its name, saw ranching potential here. He developed the ranch and built a homestead, nestling the house between red bluffs along Hackberry Creek. The dwelling still stands, and Darice brings visitors to explore the grounds. Shady oaks and hackberries grow around the house, and an old windmill surrounded by corrals creaks in the wind.

On Darice's hiking tour, you can trek

from the homestead along Hackberry Creek (usually dry). High, colorful sandstone bluffs shelter the vegetation, providing relief from the West Texas wind and sun. As you move upstream, the banks become narrower and rockier as the vegetation thins. Eventually, the creek reveals a bit of water, evidence of natural springs.

From the top of the rocky banks, you'll be treated to views of smooth, rust-red sandstone as far as the eye can see. (If you didn't know better, you'd swear you were in Utah.) Here, the creek bed tapers to just a few feet wide, forming a slot canyon. Little sunlight can penetrate the space, but water can, and it dribbles through tiny channels or gathers in erosion-carved depressions.

ESSENTIALS Red Rock Ranch

Today, no cattle graze on Red Rock Ranch. The McVays removed them in 2000, after several years of drought. Now, only deer, javelina, and a few wily wild burros nibble away. Without grazing pressure, native plants flourish. Desert willows, with their purple, orchid-like blooms, thrive near drainages. Agarita, catclaw, and sage grow abundantly. Yucca, greasewood, cholla, and lechuguilla dot the slopes. In some areas, hackberries, junipers, cottonwoods, and live oaks produce deep, cool shade. Shy bobcats and mountain lions pass through, carefully avoiding humans but occasionally leaving a paw print near a water hole.

Birds also thrive here. Several types of indigenous swallows frequent the ranch, and visitors often spot brown and red-tailed hawks. Around the talc mine, golden eagles soar above Tumbledown Mountain, searching for an unlucky rabbit or mouse. In May, live oaks near Hackberry Creek turn black as scores of turkey vultures settle in to rest on their northward migration.

Tourists, hikers, and wildlife enthusiasts aren't the only ones who find the ranch inspiring. If a Red Rock landmark looks

familiar to you, it may be because you saw it on television or the big screen. Moviemakers filmed *Dead Man's Walk* (part of the prequel to *Lonesome Dove*) here in 1995. The set, called Anton Chico, looks just like a scruffy Southwestern outpost. With a Polaroid camera, Darice snaps visitors' pictures on the set and places them in a paper frame captioned "I was SHOT at Anton Chico."

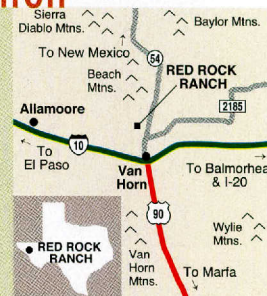
Blue Sky (1990), a movie set in the 1950s and starring Tommy Lee Jones and Jessica Lange, featured the old Beach homestead and corrals in several scenes. Ozarka drinkin' water filmed a commercial here, too.

"We got our big movie break when Tony Richardson, the director of *Blue Sky*, was on a flight to El Paso," says Darice. "He looked down and saw the 1880 Beach homestead and said, 'I want that house.' Then Michael Charskey, with the Texas

RED ROCK RANCH is on Texas 54, 3 miles north of Van Horn, which lies 120 miles east of El Paso on I-10. There are no accommodations on the ranch, but lodging is easy to find in Van Horn. For more information, go to www.vanhorn.tx.com.

Visitors to the ranch can arrange driving, hiking, and petroglyph-viewing tours. Wear practical, comfortable clothes and tennis or hiking shoes. Driving tours last about 3 hours. Hikers can arrange 2- or 4-hour guided tours or can book an entire morning or afternoon; hikers should be in good physical condition. Due to their remote locations, the Red Rock's Indian pictographs and petroglyphs can be seen only on hikes. Petroglyph enthusiasts can arrange a driving tour to nearby Lobo Ranch, where the carvings are more accessible.

Cost: Driving tours, 2-3 people, \$25 each; 4-7 people, \$20 each. Hiking tours, \$30-\$50, depending on length. Call Darice McVay at 915/283-7800 or 800/735-6911; email: vhredrock@telstar1.com.



Film Commission, worked on Dad till he finally agreed to let them film."

The Red Rock's transition from active ranch to movie set and tourist attraction began when Darice's father, the late Bill McVay, bought the property from struggling ranchers in 1967. The Red Rock had less grazing land than other nearby spreads, and running livestock proved a challenge. Many people thought Bill was crazy, but he had a vision, and he told his children, "The only thing worth anything in the future will be natural space. This land will make you a living at the turn of the century."

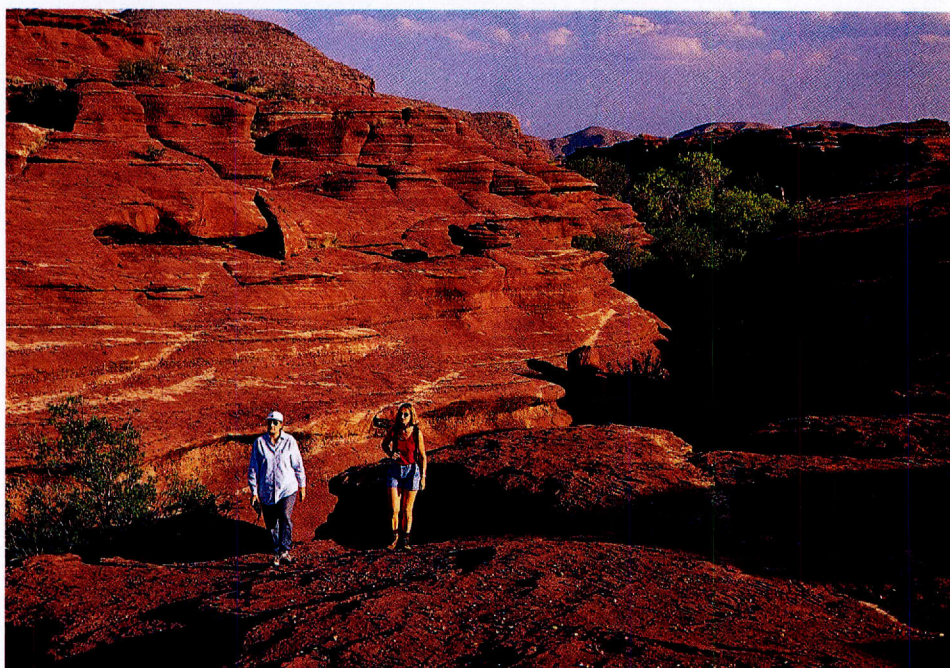
In 1994, Darice quit her longtime music-business job in Austin and moved back to her hometown of Van Horn so her parents could retire and travel. When she realized tourists might like what they saw, she began offering tours.

For Darice, her father's words proved prophetic. "I love sharing the ranch's beauty," she says. "When people see our colorful landscapes, they leave with a new respect for the land and nature."

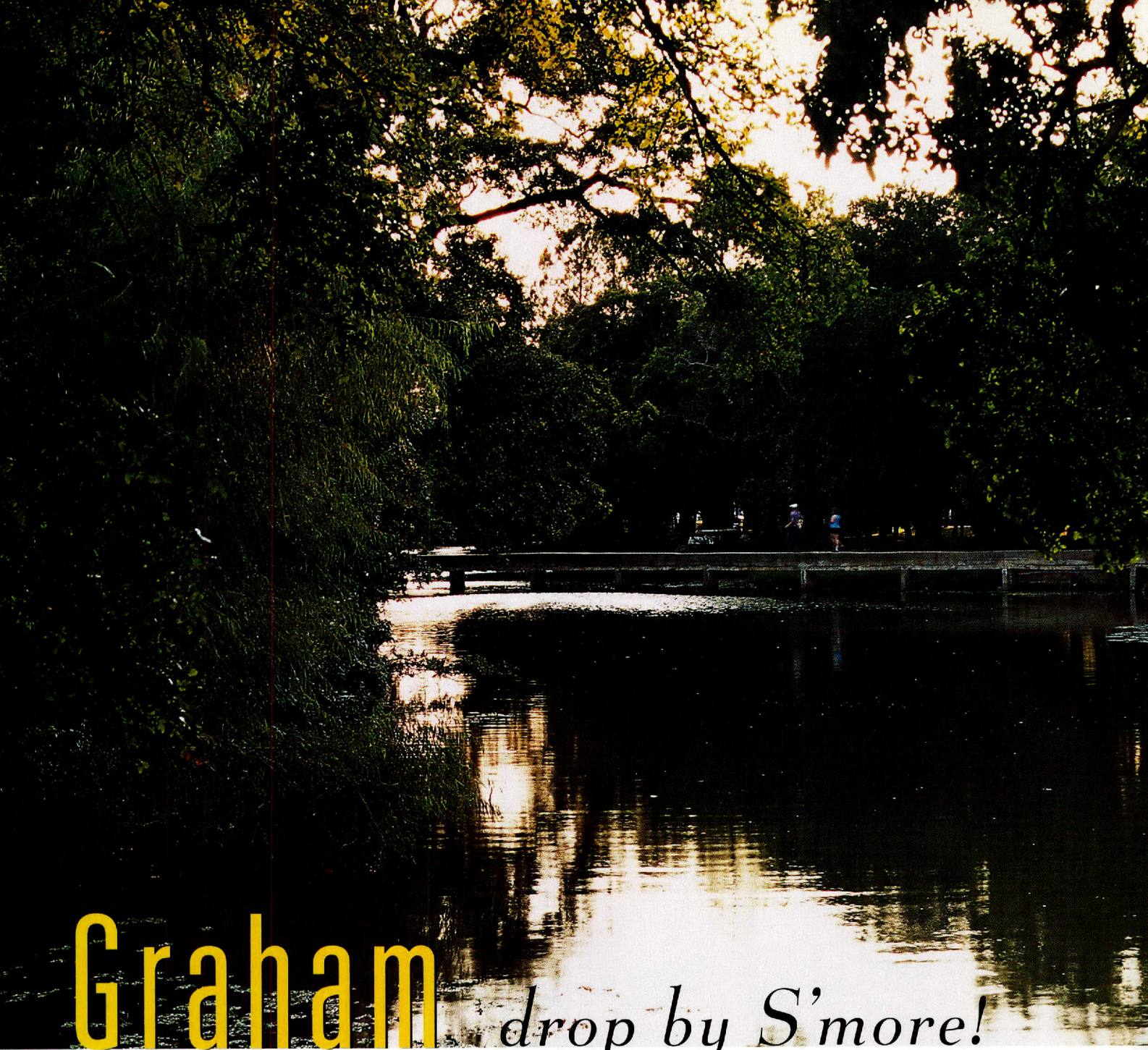
And you will, too. ★

PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT loves to visit West Texas during breaks from teaching at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos.

LAURENCE PARENT took many of these photographs while working on his latest book, *Texas Mountains*, published by UT Press, with text by Joe Nick Patoski.



Hikers explore the geologic splendor of Red Rock Ranch. Visitors can choose from driving, hiking, and petroglyph-viewing tours.



Graham *drop by S'more!*

JACK LEWIS



Three years ago, Roy Robinson, who had been to Texas only once before, took the job he'd been offered as publisher of the 135-year-old *Graham Leader*. Near the end of their 760-mile drive to Graham from Fort Morgan in northeast Colorado, Roy and his wife, Carol Lee, had found themselves growing uneasy. "Some of the places we drove through were not particularly inviting," Roy recalls. "We were beginning to wonder what we were getting into. But then we got to Graham. We saw big trees, wide streets, beautiful houses. It looked healthy and progressive."



BY MIKE COX • PHOTOGRAPHS BY WYMAN MEINZER

the impoundment on the Brazos River stretches for 65 miles through three counties in the heart of the Cross Timbers region. Three-and-a-half miles across at its widest, PK has 310 miles of shoreline. Lakes Graham and Eddleman, even closer to Graham, add to the recreational offerings here.

The area saw its share of visitors long before it had lakes or other attractions. The Butterfield Overland Mail, a stagecoach line that carried passengers and mail between St. Louis and California, cut across the county before the Civil War. After the war, cowboys pushing their herds to market blazed the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail through the area. Today, Graham has much to offer visitors besides PK, from a nearby restored frontier fort to the Graham Drive-In (one of a handful of American outdoor movie theaters still in business), not to mention antiques, four bed-and-breakfast inns, specialty shops,

19th-Century homes and other historic sites, and annual events like Art Splash on the Square (May 18, 2002), Red, White & You (July 4, 2002), and a lighted Christmas parade and stroll called Starlight Extravaganza.

It all started in 1872 with salty water. That was the year E.S. Graham and his brother G.A. came to Young County to operate a saltworks. They built a frame house, drilled a well, and installed boilers to distill salt from the well's sodium chloride-laden water. The smokestack they put up could be seen eight miles away.

"We are slowly but surely rising in our crowning greatness," E.S. wrote to his wife in Kentucky with an air of magnificence.

To attract settlers to their newly platted town site, the brothers gave away lots to anyone who would "build upon them good frame, stone or brick buildings and business houses, and will have them occupied and in use." The Grahams particularly

[FACING PAGE, TOP AND BOTTOM] Salt Creek, on its way to the Brazos River, passes through Fireman's Park, a popular gathering spot that reflects Graham's relaxed pace. Room to bloom—the mellow, yellow daffodil makes its presence felt by the thousands every March in this North Texas community.

[ABOVE] Linda and Red Foster live in the 1876 A.P. McCormick House, one of Graham's many restored historic homes.

After talking to people and looking around, the Robinsons decided to stay. These days, he and Carol Lee have no plans to leave the heart of what local folks call the Lake Country, a watery, hilly, wooded corner of North Texas, 90 miles west of Fort Worth.

Only 9,000 people live in Graham, but nearly 3 million visitors a year come to nearby Possum Kingdom Lake, and many of them mosey in to Graham. Just 17 miles southeast of town, the lake, known locally as PK, is one of the most scenic bodies of water in Texas. With steep limestone cliffs,



Only 9,000 people live in Graham, but nearly 3 million visitors a year come to nearby

encouraged millers, druggists, blacksmiths, tanners, tinnners, shoemakers, and “any other branch deemed desirable to a town, gambling and drinking houses excepted.” In planning their town, the brothers thought big: wide streets and a public square seven-eighths of a mile across. Because of that, Graham today claims the largest courthouse square in America (670 feet by 890 feet). Unlike many other squares, and thanks in part to the city’s 1994 designation as a Texas Main Street City, Graham’s is lined with 120 mostly locally-owned businesses, including Rozella Pratt’s used- and rare-book store.

“I started out with a children’s clothing store in 1977,” says Rozella, “but I like

books better than clothes. For the last 12 years, I’ve sold books only.”

Rozella, who grew up in Young County, left for a while, but she and her husband, Preston, came back 43 years ago.

“This is the best part of the whole world,” she says. “Trees, lakes, wonderful churches, schools, and families. We have all the things you need. Graham’s always been a solid town. Like the little tortoise, it just keeps going.”

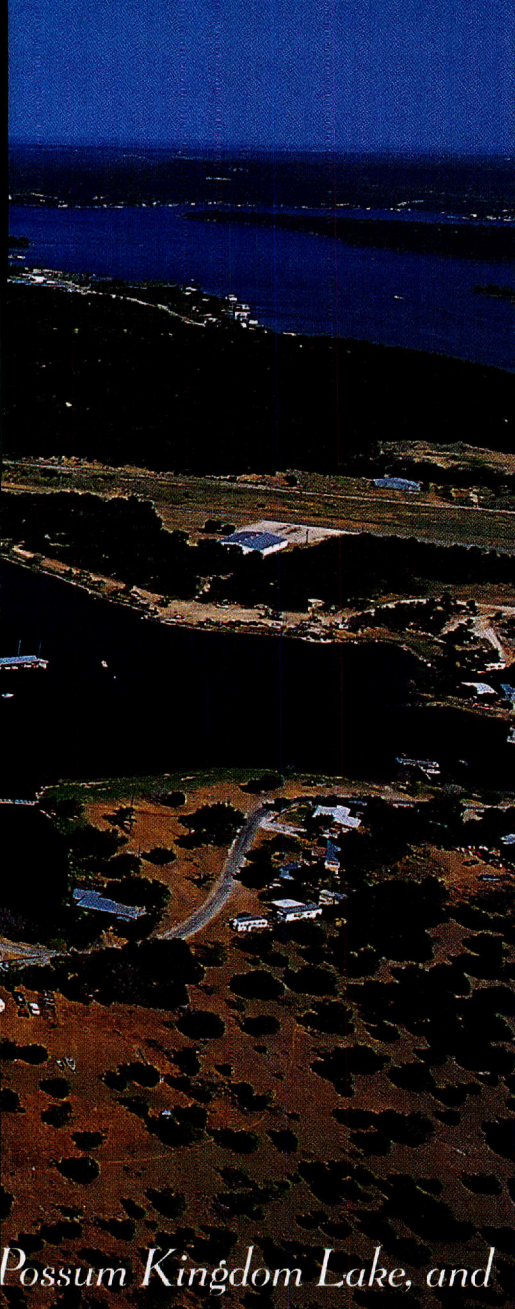
An avid reader, Rozella is well versed in Graham’s colorful history.

Cattle ranching drove the early local economy. Under a big live oak just off the square, a group of cattlemen concerned

about rustling organized the famous Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in 1877. The tree is gone, victim of a severe storm, but the spot is marked by a historical plaque, and the association born there continues in operation, in Fort Worth. Another big boost to Graham’s economy came during World War I, when oil derricks sprouted throughout northwest Texas.

For a town its size, Graham has an unusual number of elegant old homes, one of them the 94-year-old charmer built by Ed Hinson’s grandfather. Ed was born in the house and still lives in it. Owner of a local title company, Ed was elected to the

Possum Kingdom Lake welcomes boaters, anglers, water-skiers, and divers to its beautifully wide expanse of water, some 20 miles south of Graham.



Possum Kingdom Lake, and

© ESTATE OF ROBERT LILES



A cowboy and his pal visit the Graham mural by Bowie artist M.H. Henry. The mural was commissioned to mark the 120th anniversary of the gathering that became today's Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.



Built in the Thirties, the restored National Theater on downtown's square shows movies year round.

many of them mosey in to Graham.

Graham city council in 1985 and served as the city's mayor from 1988 to 1994. If there's a "Mr. Graham, Texas," it's Ed. He spearheaded several projects that helped revitalize Graham after the oil bust of the early 1980s, including an idea born over a cup of coffee in a downtown drugstore.

Cooked up with city manager Larry Fields, Ed's idea was for the City of Graham to offer a \$5,000 reward for anyone whose efforts resulted in a new industry coming to town. While the project did not net a stampede of new businesses, it generated publicity for Graham that money couldn't buy. Newspapers across Texas and the nation carried stories on the \$5,000 offer and on Graham.

But Ed does not want anyone to think

he's the only one who has worked to improve Graham. "It's the people who make this town what it is," he says. "We've got some deep-rooted, benevolent families. And it's a great place to raise kids."

And don't forget the daffodils. Every March, Graham explodes in yellow when a quarter-million daffodils bloom. The Young County Historical Commission had the idea of turning Graham into the "Daffodil Capital of Texas" in 1992. During a four-day period that year, working with the local chamber of commerce, the commission distributed more than 50,000 narcissus daffodil bulbs to home and business owners. The number of bulbs planted has grown each year since then, and bulbs already in the ground continue to propagate.

Those with an interest in frontier history can explore the site of an old fort dating to the days of the Indian wars. Fort Belknap, 11 miles northwest of Graham, was established on the Salt Fork of the Brazos in 1851 by General William G. Belknap and Captain Randolph B. Marcy. Rank having its privilege, the fort was named in Belknap's honor. The general and Marcy moved on, leaving Captain Carter L. Stevenson of the Fifth Infantry in charge. His first order of business was to sink a well. The first hole came up dry. After the second hole failed to turn up water, the military relocated to the fort's present location, where springs were judged sufficient to meet the garrison's needs. Soldiers eventually brought in a water well at the new



A historical marker and an old sandstone arch preserve the memory of Young County's third courthouse.

Magee, is five wall-size glass etchings depicting the town's history. The library is dedicated to the memory of Anna Bertha Graham Street, daughter of town founder E.S. Graham, and her philosophy—"Brighten the Corner Where You Are."

Library director Sherrie Gibson, who came to Graham 28 years ago from Midland, calls the town "an amazing community." One of the things that sets it apart, she says, is the generous nature of numerous residents. "We have families that just keep giving to the city," she says. For instance, the Graham-based Southern Bleacher Co., owned by the Sherrill Pettus family, has contributed greatly. Among other projects, the company built a local

Visitors can stroll *on the largest courthouse square in America, and those with an interest in frontier history can explore Fort Belknap, which dates to the days of the Indian wars.*

site, but in 1859, citing continuing water problems, the Army abandoned the fort.

U.S. troops periodically returned to Fort Belknap until the beginning of the Civil War, when Confederate soldiers took it over. After the war, cavalry troopers briefly reoccupied the post, but the military abandoned it for good in 1867, when Fort Richardson was established in Jack County.

In 1935, with Texas' Centennial celebration approaching, State Senator Ben G. O'Neal, whose district included Graham, pushed through legislation that provided funds for restoring the fort. Today, some 12,000 people visit the site annually. The old commissary building houses a museum, and the grounds are available for family reunions and other gatherings.

Visitors on the trail of genealogical information will find ample resources at the \$5 million, 14,000-square-foot Library of Graham. A gift to the people of Graham from a local philanthropic organization called the Bertha Foundation, the library opened to the public in January 1994 and



Fort Belknap, 11 miles northwest of Graham on FM 61, dates to the mid-19th Century. The former military post is part of the Texas Forts Trail.

now has more than 45,000 titles, including an extensive local and family history collection. An unusual feature of the building, designed by Fort Worth architect Alan

baseball field used by schools from all over the region, and they've also helped Graham realize a new \$1.9 million events center.

And plans are underway for another

addition to the Young County seat. When the U.S. Postal Service vacated its limestone post office on the courthouse square in 1992, the Graham Art Council started seeking grant money to transform the



The recently completed Veterans Memorial, on the east side of the courthouse square, attracts visitors daily.

building into a city museum and arts center. The Bertha Foundation set up a \$100,000 challenge grant as members of the council went to work to put together the \$495,000 funding package needed to accomplish its goal.

The art council's board hired Conover Hunt, project director for The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas, to prepare a master plan, and Houston architect Mark Stewart drew up the specifications for renovating the building, which will keep its 1930s façade and its famous 1939 Alexander Hogue mural of the oil fields. Target date for the new attraction's opening is during this May's Art Splash on the Square.

"Quality of life is an important issue facing all communities," says former Art Council board president Mark Dunagan. "We all share in the same excitement that the City of Graham is truly a great place to live."

And a great place to visit. ★

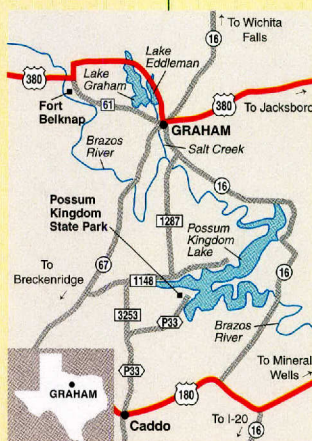
Austin writer MIKE COX is working on his 12th book, a history of the Texas Rangers.

Benjamin photographer WYMAN MEINZER contributed three snowy images to last month's "Texas-Style Chilly!"

A trove of genealogical information, Graham's library also has five unusual wall-size glass etchings depicting the town's history.

ESSENTIALS Graham

THE SEAT of Young Co., Graham is 60 miles south of Wichita Falls, 75 miles north of Abilene, and 90 miles northwest of Fort Worth, at the intersection of US 380, Texas 16, and Texas 67. For more information on Graham, Young Co., and the Lake Country, write to the **Graham Area Chamber of Commerce**, Box 299, Graham 76450; 940/549-3355 or 800/256-4844; www.visitgraham.com. The area code is 940. Call for hours, admission prices, and details on wheelchair accessibility.



America's largest courthouse square lies in the heart of Graham. Check out the old stone arch, all that remains of the third Young County courthouse; a historical marker puts the arch in perspective.

The **Library of Graham**, 910 Cherry St.; 549-0600.

Graham Drive-In Theater, 1519 E. Fourth St.; open Fri-Sun nights, Memorial Day to Labor Day; 549-8478.

Graham has one of the best used- and rare-book shops in small-town Texas in **Pratt's Books**, 502 Oak St.; 549-5341.

The **National Theater**, 522 Oak St., shows movies year round. Winner of a National Historic Preservation Award in 1992, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the theater has a sandwich shop/soda fountain called The Big Chill, and pizza at The Last Pizza Show; 549-2077.

March is **daffodil time** in Graham, with some 250,000 blooms brightening the city each spring

(largest concentrations in Shawnee Springs Park, adjacent to the library).

Historic homes: Four of Graham's most striking old homes are the 1878 Beckham-Bell Home, 710 Grove St.; the 1876 A.P. McCormick House, 710 Cherry St.; and the 1878 and 1904 S.B. Street homes, at 800 and 804 Third St.

Commemorative Air Force-Robert E. Richeson Memorial Museum, US 380 bypass and Jacksboro Hwy. *Tours by appt. only.* Call 549-3355.

Graham has 12 **antique stores** and/or antique malls. The Chamber of Commerce offers a brochure listing them.

Like to prowl **old cemeteries**? Young Co. has more than 60. Contact the Chamber of Commerce for details.

The Graham chamber can connect you with **fishing guides** and marinas and locations for **hunting**. The state-record striped bass, a 53-pounder, came out of **Possum Kingdom Lake** below Morris Sheppard Dam in 1999. **The Cliffs Resort** (779-4040 or 888/843-2543; www.thecliffsresort.com) on Possum Kingdom offers nice accommodations, fine dining, and a highly rated golf course. For more information on the lake, write to the Possum Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, 362 N. FM 2353, Possum Kingdom Lake/Graford 76449; 779-2424 or 888/779-8330; www.possumkingdomlake.com.

Fort Belknap is 11 miles northwest of Graham on FM 61. RV facilities and camping available. To arrange a tour, call 846-3222.



Over the Hump: Trekking by Camel in the Big Bend

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY MALLORY

As our caravan crosses the Chihuahuan Desert of Big Bend Ranch State Park, I see why Jefferson Davis liked camels. In 1855, Secretary of War Davis—soon to be president of the Confederacy—formed an experimental camel corps to explore the desert Southwest, gained from Mexico as a result of the 1846-48 U.S.-Mexican War. Davis shipped 74 camels from North Africa to Texas. During their few years of service, headquartered at Camp Verde near Kerrville, the surefooted, hardy beasts made three major expeditions, two to Big Bend and one to California.

Surefooted? “Oh, yeah,” I think, as my mount lopes easily down a rocky slope. Hardy? “Ditto,” I muse, guzzling water from my canteen under a sweltering sun. Unlike me and the rest of my kind, my camel, named Richard, and his ilk can go a week without water or food.

The outbreak of the Civil War quashed Davis’ camel campaign, but some 140 years later, camels are back...thanks to former zookeeper Doug Baum.

For years, Doug dreamed of teaching people about camels and their Southwestern legacy. In 1995, he began training dromedaries culled from feral herds in Australia to form the Texas Camel Corps, based in Valley Mills, near Waco. With a current herd of six gelded, one-humped camels, Doug entertains and educates folks at schools, churches, frontier forts, and private events; leases them for movies and commercials; and even uses them in an at-risk youth program in Arizona called VisionQuest.

[ABOVE] A man and his camel. Doug Baum, owner of the Texas Camel Corps, poses with Brutus, the camel herd’s patriarch.

[RIGHT] Camel-raderie. Guide Steven Evans of Uvalde (sitting at left) and cameleers Jay McGranahan and Phil Jensen make their way to Cinco Tinajas, five pools of water hidden in a canyon.



In 1999, Doug also began offering camel treks across this ruggedly beautiful, 280,000-acre state park. It's the same terrain traversed in 1859-60 by Jefferson Davis' U.S. Camel Corps, led by Lieutenants William Echols and Edward Hartz and their intrepid cameleers.

"Intrepid" is hardly the word I'd use for me and my fellow greenhorn cameleers today, as we bobble across this surface-of-the-moon landscape with cactus. Our group consists of Phil Jensen, a rancher in East Texas; Andrée Richmond, an artist from Tucson; Jay McGranahan, a Central Texas social-service professional; and Sue Kubacki and her 16-year-old son, Andrew, who flew out here from Detroit, Michigan.

Sue rides the lead camel, Chewbacca, named for the *Star Wars* character. That makes her lead guinea pig, first among us to mount a prone camel. "Get on! Hang on!" shouts Doug with a grin, as Chewbacca's derrière jolts skyward, and his front unfolds like a spring-loaded jack-knife. Needless to say, Sue hangs on!

Though we may tend to think of them as having Eastern Hemisphere roots, camels originated in North America 40 million years ago, then migrated across the Bering Sea land bridge to Asia, Arabia, and North Africa. Some of the beasts may spit and bite, but ours seem adorable.

I'm convinced that my eight-foot-high camelback perch is the way to experience this prickly landscape.

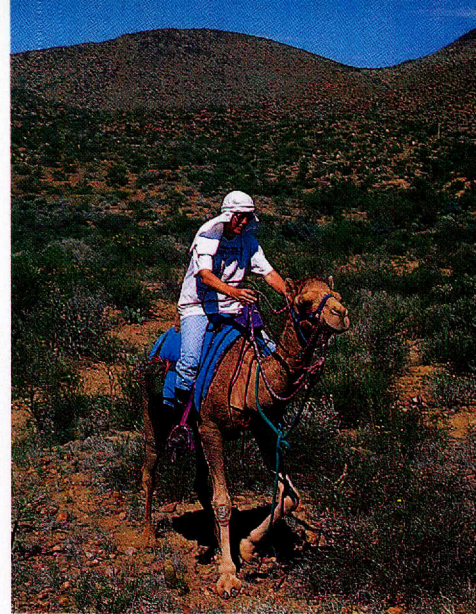
They eat apples from our hands and nuzzle us like 2,000-pound puppies. And their gait (right feet step together, then left feet step together) rocks us like ships at sea—hence the nickname, "ship of the desert." Besides, they wear an apparently permanent silly smile. In any event, I'm convinced that my eight-foot-high camelback perch is *the way* to experience this prickly landscape.

Throughout our two-day, 11-mile trek, Doug and fellow guide Steven Evans talk about the park's ranching heritage, geology, and wildlife. We saunter past creosote bushes, ocotillo, and lechuguilla. We stir up mule deer and javelinas. During lunch, we hike to Leyva Canyon's *tinajas* (water pools) and Spanish-era Indian pictographs.

Our overnight camp is an idyllic, dreamlike setting called *Papalotito Colorado* ("little red windmill"), the site of a working wooden windmill from the 1920s. As the sun sets and a full moon rises, we devour chicken fajitas, guacamole, stuffed jalapeños, and Dutch-oven cobbler. Then, around a roaring campfire, Steven on fiddle and Doug on guitar serenade us with Texas tunes, Irish jigs, and even Sixties-era Motown sounds, in honor of "Motor City" Sue.

Sue says she'll cherish her Texas camel adventure. I concur.

I'll remember the camel's sway, the cameleers' camaraderie, the fiddle's melody, and Doug's propensity to kiss his camels and call them "sweetie." And I'll remember the enduring image of camel and rider, once again silhouetted against the Big Bend sky. ★



Andrée Richmond, an artist from Tucson, rides three-year-old Cinco, who is in training for the camel treks.

ESSENTIALS Camel Ho!

EACH SPRING AND AUTUMN, the Texas Camel Corps offers 2-day camel treks across Big Bend Ranch State Park, adjacent to Big Bend Natl. Park. **Spring 2002** treks take place Mar. 9-10, 11-12, 14-15, 16-17, and 19-20; call for autumn 2002 dates. Fee: \$650, \$325 age 12 and younger. Call 254/675-HUMP; www.texascamelcorps.com.

MAR. 22-23, the Texas Camel Corps hosts "Dinner in the Dunes" at Monahans Sandhills State Park, 30 mi. west of Odessa (see "The Sandhills Are Alive!" Nov. 2001). The Saharan dinner experience features short camel rides and Middle Eastern cuisine and entertainment under a tent on the dunes. Safari attire encouraged. Fee: \$75 per person (includes park admission). Reservations required. Call the Monahans Chamber of Commerce at 915/943-2187.



Frequent *Texas Highways* contributor RANDY MALLORY also wrote the story on Asian cultural festivals in this issue.



R & R *in* Richmond *and* Rosenberg



© ROBIN GREEN



A stroll through Richmond's shade-dappled streets reveals a striking copper-crowned courthouse, a century-old jail, and numerous century-old houses. Richmond and its sister city, Rosenberg, also entice visitors with historical museums, an antiques district, an Art Deco theater, and restaurant fare ranging from mouthwatering barbecue to superb enchiladas. Nature trails attract bird-watchers; a bass-stocked lake lures anglers. Plays, outdoor concerts, and festivals celebrating the cities' heritage number among year-round events.

But it's the colorful cast of characters that gives Richmond and Rosenberg their historic punch.

Close your eyes and imagine Jane Long, the "Mother of Texas," welcoming guests to her boardinghouse shortly after moving to Richmond in 1837, the year the town garnered its charter from the Republic of Texas. Or envision Mirabeau B. Lamar, the "Father of Texas Education," penning poetry at his Richmond plantation. Imagine temperance crusader Carry Nation raising her eyebrows here, a decade before she moved to Kansas. Or picture Sam Houston's famed scout, Erastus "Deaf" Smith, strolling the streets in the days after San Jacinto. Smith died in Richmond in 1837, and friends reportedly buried him standing up.

*By Diane Morey Sitton
Photographs by Kevin B. Stillman*

[ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT] A statue of Republic of Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar stands in front of the Fort Bend County Courthouse, in Richmond. Also in Richmond, the 1882 McFarlane House contains the offices of the Fort Bend Museum Association, which works hard to preserve the county's history.

[FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] Richmond mayor and rancher Hilmar Moore, in office since 1949, is the longest-tenured mayor in Texas. Barber A.D. Eversole cuts hair and spins yarns in the old-fashioned Richmond Barber Shop. In downtown Rosenberg, 3rd Street draws shoppers, live-theater lovers, and festival-goers.

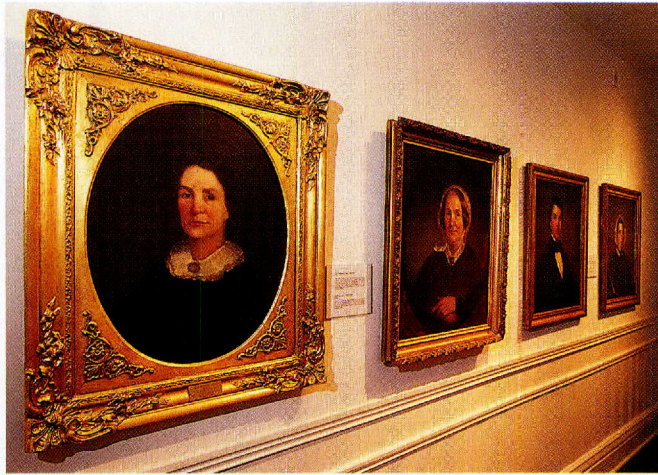
Today, Richmond's mayor, Hilmar Moore, embodies these neighboring communities' penchant for colorful personalities. Besides being the longest-tenured mayor in Texas—he's held the office since 1949—this candid cattle-industry leader is a fifth-generation Fort Bend County rancher.

"My ancestors settled here with Stephen F. Austin's 'Old 300' colony," says Hilmar. "I raise cattle on land that has been in my family since 1824."

Richmond's story begins, in fact, with those intrepid first colonists in Spanish Texas. In 1822, members of Austin's "Old 300" colony built a log cabin—later called Fort Bend—beside a bow of the Brazos River. In 1837, investors Robert Handy and William Lusk mapped the ensuing settlement into the town of Richmond (named for Richmond, Virginia, William's hometown).

As the county seat, Richmond had grown into a bustling trade center for cotton, sugarcane, and cattle by 1883, the year the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway came through the area. Instead of crossing at Richmond, though, the GC&SF created a junction nearby. Railway officials dubbed the new junction Rosenberg after the company's first president. Rosenberg city leaders incorporated the town in 1909.

Visitors can learn more about the region's early settlers and its history at the Fort Bend Museum Complex, the nucleus of the 36-block Richmond Historic District. Here, you'll find the Fort Bend Museum, which depicts life in Fort Bend County from 1822 to the 1940s. The complex includes the furnished 1883 home of John M. Moore (Hilmar's grandfather) and the Long-Smith Cottage, which features a rope bed, other primitive furnishings, and Erastus "Deaf" Smith's tombstone, displayed near the front door (his grave site has long since been lost). Southeast of town, the museum's George Ranch Historical Park interprets



The 1883 John M. Moore Home (right), part of Richmond's Fort Bend Museum Complex, contains portraits of the county's earliest settlers, including Jane Long (above, far left), who opened a boardinghouse here some 16 years after her husband, James, fought at La Bahía.

Texas history with interactive programs.

"Of the almost 300 land grants issued to Stephen F. Austin's first group of settlers, 56 were in present Fort Bend County," says collections curator Janz Hallmark Smith. A rawhide-covered document chest, a brass surveyor's compass, and a flintlock rifle number among artifacts on display in the main museum building.

At an interactive exhibit called *Lost Voices: WPA Slave Narratives*, you



Tours of the 1896 Fort Bend County Jail building, now the home of the Richmond Police Department, reveal the third-floor gallows and cells constructed of iron lattice.



Successful rancher and Congressman John Moore built his luxurious home as a wedding present for his wife, Lottie Dyer. He imported the yellow-pine lumber for the house from New Orleans.

can gain insight into the “peculiar institution” that fueled much of the South’s economy in the days before the Civil War. Slavery was very much present in Fort Bend County, and that part of history receives a thoughtful review at the museum. For more than a decade beginning in 1936, photographers and reporters with the federal Works Progress Administration traveled throughout the Southwest, interviewing former slaves about their experiences. You can read their stories at the *Lost Voices* computer kiosk. “By 1860, slaves living in Fort Bend County outnumbered Anglo-Americans more than two to one,” says Jana.

When the museum was constructed in the 1970s, it was built around the brick-lined water well of the stately Moore Home, which still sits next door. Kids, especially, enjoy peering down through

the Plexiglas cover into the illuminated, 35-foot shaft of the well.

On guided tours of the Moore Home (listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a Texas Historic Landmark), visitors learn that Congressman John M. and Lottie Dyer Moore commissioned the two-story house in 1883. After Moore died in 1940, his son, Judge John M. Moore Jr. and his wife, Dorethea, remodeled and moved into the Southern Colonial-style mansion. Their son, current mayor Hilmar Moore, lived there briefly after serving in World War II.

The blue grasscloth covering the dining room walls, the ration books and war bonds on the kitchen counter, and other furnishings and personal mementos in the home reflect the three generations of Moores that have lived there.

Nearby, the six-room Long-Smith Cottage illustrates middle-class life in the mid-19th Century. Built on property once owned by Jane Long (Jane probably never lived there), the two-story house later belonged to Goliad Massacre-survivor and blacksmith Thomas Jefferson Smith. He later served as county sheriff.

The living room contains a hand-hewn secretary and a spinning wheel; Long’s piano and sewing table decorate the parlor. “Look close,” says museum guide Pete Shifflett. “The sofa and chairs in the parlor are upholstered with finely-woven horsehair, which was common then.”

Another attraction, the three-story Fort Bend County Jail (built in 1896), sits five blocks north of the museum. On pre-arranged tours of the imposing red brick-and-limestone building, visitors can see the third-floor gallows and the old cells constructed of iron lattice. The Richmond Police Department occupies the building now, and believe it or not, this Texas Historic Landmark still houses a working jail.

Sightseers also enjoy exploring Morton Cemetery, the site of the oldest Masonic monument west of the Mississippi River. In shade cast by oak and magnolia trees, gravel roads wind past the resting places of Jane Long, Mirabeau B. Lamar, Thomas

Let’s Eat!

You won’t go hungry in Richmond-Rosenberg. Among Richmond’s choices are **Barker House** (continental), 214 Morton St., 281/633-0211; **Italian Maid Cafe** (homemade pasta), 300 Morton St., 281/232-6129; **Sandi McGee’s Restaurant** (salads, sandwiches), 314 Morton St., 281/344-9393. (Try the Rosenberg location, too, at 1207 6th, 281/341-9151.)

Popular eateries in Rosenberg are the **BackStreet Barbeque** (owner Gilbert Lemos’ “famous ribs”), Ave. G. at 2nd, 281/232-7328; **Camino Real** (“the best enchiladas you ever tasted”), 4511 Ave. H (US 90A), 281/341-1900. For a blast to the past, try **Another Time Antique Shoppe & Soda Fountain**, 800 3rd St., for malts, shakes, sundaes, floats, and phosphates; 281/232-2999.



Brazos Bend State Park, some 20 miles southeast of Richmond-Rosenberg, offers nature trails galore, as well as wetland areas teeming with waterfowl and alligators.

Jefferson Smith, and William Kinchen Davis, among others.

“Davis was wounded and taken prisoner during the 1842 Mier Expedition,” says local history buff Lou Payton, whose wife,

Martha, is Davis’ great-great-granddaughter. “By order of Santa Anna, the prisoners were forced to draw beans. A white bean promised life; a black bean meant death. Davis drew a white bean. He had grown up on a farm, and he knew by the feel of the beans which one to pick.”

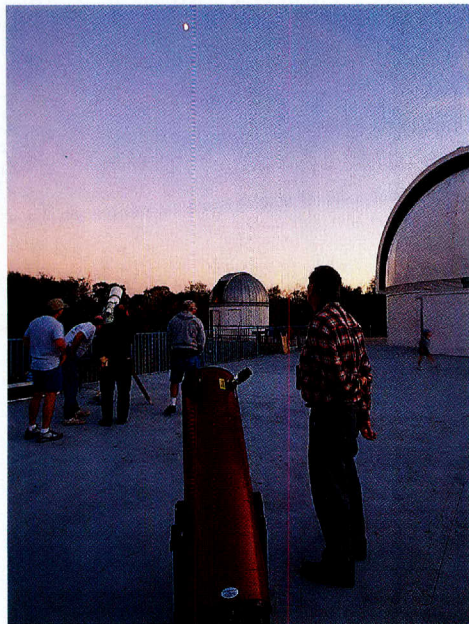
Morton Cemetery is among more than 20 points of interest listed on the Fort Bend Museum Association’s *Historic Richmond Walking Tour* (brochures are available at the Museum Complex gift shop). Also on the tour: the site of Carry Nation’s National Hotel (the hatchet-wielding temperance crusader operated the inn for some 10 years before moving to Kansas), the 1908 Fort Bend County Courthouse, and the 1901 Southern Pacific Railroad Depot.

Richmond Barber Shop, in business since the 1880s,

On Avenue G downtown, known as “antique row,” you’ll find a dozen or so shops specializing in treasures from the past, including Hawkins Furniture Company, where owner William Hawkins crafts rustic furniture using wood (*continued on page 50*)

occupies the Historic District, too. Inside, proprietor A.D. Eversole gives \$12 haircuts and works on his tall tales. Hundreds of photographs of local folks, Texas politicians, and celebrities—a collection A.D. started in 1975—paper the walls. “There’s a story behind every photo,” he says, “and I love telling ’em.” The shop serves as a gathering spot of sorts for the locals, and recently, film crews have discovered the shop, making use of its 1947 furnishings for such productions as the 1997 remake of *Lolita*.

Rosenberg, too, has its claims to fame.



A Saturday-night star party at the George Observatory. Most telescope owners are willing to share their view, but if you want to gaze through the observatory’s 36-inch scope, make a reservation!

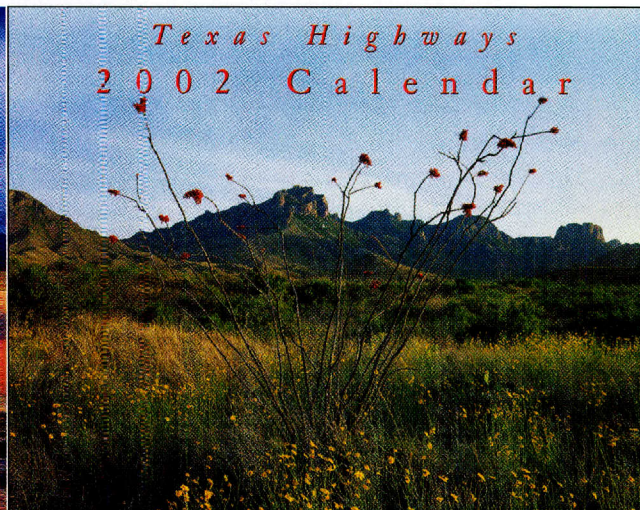
Getting Out of Town

At George Ranch Historical Park, a 480-acre living-history park at 10215 FM 762 (about 9 miles southeast of Richmond), first-person portrayals, demonstrations, and hands-on activities illustrate Texas history back to the 1830s. Attractions here include a visitor center/museum, an 1830s pioneer farm, an 1890s sharecropper’s farm, a Victorian mansion, and a 1930s-era ranch house. Call 281/545-9212 or 343-0218; www.georgeranch.org.

Brazos Bend State Park lies 20 miles southeast of Richmond-Rosenberg, at 21901 FM 762, some 10 miles east of Needville. Amenities include wetland areas, nature trails, camping and picnicking sites, a gift shop, and a visitor center. At the George Observatory on Sat., 3-10 p.m., visitors can stargaze through telescopes (passes required to use the 36-inch telescope). Call 979/553-5101; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Imperial Sugar Company, Texas’ only cane-sugar refinery (in Sugar Land, 13 miles north of Richmond), offers free tours Mon-Fri at 10 and 2. Call 800/727-8427 for reservations.

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5A21

ESSENTIALS Richmond-Rosenberg

from old dance halls and barns. In a 10,000-square-foot complex that old-timers remember as Vogelsang General Merchandise, Linda Rulau's Vogelsang Antique Emporium offers browsers and buyers an eclectic mix of primitive furniture, glassware, and collectibles. Thirty-six dealers fill the space, which means you're as likely to find an 1870 blue-velvet parlor set as you are an early-1900s Texas pie safe or an aqua kitchen-canister set from the 1950s.

At the second-floor community playhouse—reached by twin staircases or a 1910 rope-pulled elevator—Cast Theatrical entertains theater buffs with four yearly productions, plus a holiday show.

On 3rd Street, fans of live music, theater, and classic movies—not to mention uptown Art Deco architecture—discover great fun at the Liberty-Cole Theater. Built in 1919 and now restored to its 1937 appearance, it's the nation's second-oldest movie theater. Such stars as Mae West, Tex Ritter, Bob Wills, and Tom Mix made appearances here.

Nearby, volunteers and workmen are putting the finishing touches on the Rosenberg Railroad Museum, slated to open this spring. Inside the replicated 1883 Union Depot, exhibits, artifacts, and memorabilia will illustrate the county's railroading history.

“Fort Bend County had 10 rail lines belonging to eight different railroad com-

RICHMOND AND ROSENBERG

lie 20 miles southwest of Houston, in Fort Bend County. Write to the Rosenberg/Richmond Area Chamber of Commerce, 4120 Ave. H, Rosenberg 77471; 281/342-5464; www.rosrichchamber.com. The Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce (281/491-0800; www.visitfortbend.com) also provides information.

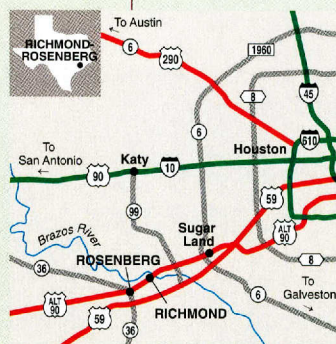
The area code is 281, unless noted. Call ahead regarding hours, admission prices, and wheelchair accessibility.

RICHMOND ATTRACTIONS The Fort Bend Museum Complex, 500 Houston St. (77469), includes the Fort Bend Museum, the adjacent 1883 John M. Moore Home, and the Long-Smith Cottage (ca. 1840). The museum's Old Magnolia Gift Shop sells American folk toys, old-fashioned candy, T-shirts, and history-related posters and books. Pick up the free brochure *Historic Richmond Walking Tour* here, too. Call 342-6478; www.fortbendmuseum.org.

The Historic Fort Bend County Jail, 600 Preston St., offers free tours *by appt. only*. Call 342-2849.

Morton Cemetery is on 2nd St. north of Jackson St. (US 90A). A brochure with a map is available at the Fort Bend Museum (see above). Call 342-2857 or 342-1256.

The Richmond Barber Shop is at 315 Morton St. Call 232-2387.



ROSENBERG

ATTRACTIONS Hawkins Furniture Co. is at 1811 Ave. G. Call 341-0479; www.hawkinsfurniture.com.

The Vogelsang Antique Emporium is at 1909 Ave. G. Call 342-6804; www.vogelsangantiques.com.

Cast Theatrical Company presents 4 plays

a year, plus a holiday production, at its 62-seat theater in The Vogelsang Antique Emporium. *Reservations required*. Call 238-0978; www.casttheatrical.com.

The Liberty-Cole Theater, 930 3rd St., hosts live theater and live music, as well as occasional classic films. Call 341-7899; www.kfp@kingfeature.com.

A directory of antique shops, compiled by the **Antique Dealers of Rosenberg**, is available at member shops and on the Web at www.ador.net.

Watch for the spring opening of the **Rosenberg Railroad Museum**, at 1921 Ave. F. Write to Box 607, Rosenberg 77471; email: rrm@texas.net, or call 342-4664 and ask for Linda.

Seabourne Creek Park, 3827 Hwy. 36 S. (behind Rosenberg Civic and Convention Center), offers hike-and-bike trails, a lake with fishing platforms, a boardwalk, a wetland basin, picnic tables, and restrooms. Call 832/595-3520; www.rosenbergtourism.com.



Linda Rulau shows off the hand-pulled elevator at Vogelsang Antique Emporium in Rosenberg.

panies during the late 1800s and early 1900s,” says museum historian Ken Stavinoha. “After the highways came, Rosenberg was called the ‘hub of the Gulf Coast’—a slogan that could have been used in the railroading days. Rosenberg was an important stop on the trade route leading to Galveston and Houston.”

For outdoor recreation, eight city parks in Rosenberg entice families who want to picnic, swim, or play tennis. Seabourne Creek Park, a 164-acre nature park on the town's south side, has some two miles of hike-and-bike trails, a wetland basin, and a stocked lake for fishing. But whether your visit focuses on a family event, museum tour, search for antiques, historic-district jaunt, or a Texian-cemetery stroll, the sister cities' heritage and fascinating cast of characters seem close at hand.

“Richmond was a vibrant town of the young Republic of Texas,” says Fort Bend Museum Association executive director Michael Moore. “While it's true that no single, defining historical event occurred here, Richmond and its neighbors were witness to many dynamic events that shaped early Texas history.

“If you listen carefully, you can almost hear the footsteps of Jane Long, Mirabeau Lamar, and other legendary Texians echoing in Fort Bend County.” ★

While researching her December 2000 story on the George Ranch Historical Park, writer DIANE SITTON became fascinated with the history of Richmond and Rosenberg.

Staff photographer KEVIN STILLMAN particularly enjoyed stargazing at the nearby Brazos Bend State Park observatory.

2
LUCKENBACH
 Texas Independence Day
 830/997-3224

ROUND ROCK
 Daffodil Festival
 512/218-4655

Three-Legged Willie Classic
 512/218-5540

2-3
BOERNE
 Antiques Show
 830/995-3670

STONEWALL
 Quilt Show
 830/644-2252

3
AUSTIN
 Zilker Park Kite Festival
 512/583-1235

KERRVILLE
 SWT Chorale
 830/896-5727

NEW BRAUNFELS
 Houston Metropolitan
 Dance Company
 830/609-1369

7
AUSTIN
 Mary Black
 512/469-SHOW

7-10
FREDERICKSBURG
 Comanchero Days
 830/685-3464 or
 800/722-8564

8
KERRVILLE
 Arts & Cultural Center Gala
 830/895-2911

8-9
BRACKETTVILLE
 Fort Clark Springs Festival
 830/563-2137

8-10
MARBLE FALLS
 Becoming an Outdoors Woman
 800/792-1112

ROUND ROCK
 Express
 College Baseball Classic
 512/255-2255

8-17
AUSTIN
 South by Southwest
 Conferences & Festivals
 512/467-7979

9
CASTROVILLE
 Market Trail Day
 830/741-3841

SAN MARCOS
 Daffodil Days
 888/200-5620

9-10
BOERNE
 Market Days
 830/249-5530

9-16
FREDERICKSBURG
 Hill Country Bicycle Tour
 830/685-3464

13-14
AUSTIN
 Zilker Garden Festival
 512/477-8672

15-17
AUSTIN
 Ballet Austin
 512/476-2163

16
MARBLE FALLS
 Main Street Market Day
 830/693-2815

16-17
GEORGETOWN
 Quilt & Stitchery Show
 512/869-1812

GRUENE
 Old Gruene Market Days
 830/629-6441

20
AUSTIN
 The Flying Karamazov Brothers
 512/469-SHOW

21-24
BRACKETTVILLE
 Alamo Village/
 Shahan HV Ranch
 Trail Ride & Cattle Drive
 830/563-2580

22-24
NEW BRAUNFELS
 Spring Fling
 830/629-1572

23
BOERNE
 Shrimpfest
 830/249-8000

FORT MCKAVETT
 West Texas Heritage Days
 915/396-2358

23-24
ROUND ROCK
 Arts & Crafts Festival
 512/441-7133

24
AUSTIN
 Peter Pan
 512/472-5470

29-30
NATALIA
 Bluebonnet Festival
 830/665-3703
 or 663-2926

29-31
KERRVILLE
 Easter Hill Country Bike Tour
 830/792-3535

30
BURNET
 Lawn & Garden Show
 512/756-5463

JUNCTION
 Easter Pageant
 915/446-3190

KINGSLAND
 Easter Egg Hunt
 915/388-6211

SONORA
 Easter Egg Hunt
 915/387-2880

31
WIMBERLEY
 Pancake Breakfast
 512/847-5381

PANHANDLE PLAINS

1
SAN ANGELO
 Cactus Jazz Series
 915/653-6793

Marvin's Room
 915/942-2146

1-3
SWEETWATER
 Cutting Horse Show
 915/235-3484

1-3, 29-30
POST
 Old Mill Trade Days
 806/495-3529

2
SAN ANGELO
 Symphony & Chorale
 915/658-5877

SNYDER
 Car Show
 915/573-8309

2-3
BIG SPRING
 Gem & Mineral Show
 915/263-3340

SAN ANGELO
 Quarter Horse Show
 915/653-7785

WICHITA FALLS
 Arts & Crafts Show
 915/263-7690

4
SAN ANGELO
 Cutting Horse Show
 915/653-7785

5
WICHITA FALLS
 Taste of the Town
 940/322-8686

6-10
SAN ANGELO
 Stock Show & Rodeo
 915/653-7785

7-9
WICHITA FALLS
 Junior Livestock Show
 940/851-8518

7-11
AMARILLO
 National Antique
 Tractor Pull
 806/376-7767

8-10
MINERAL WELLS
 Palo Pinto County
 Livestock Show & Fair
 800/252-6989

9
CANYON
 Palo Duro Canyon
 State Park
 History Hike
 806/488-2227

11
ABILENE
My Fair Lady
 915/676-6361

14
GRAHAM
 Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra
 940/549-2296

16
ABERNATHY
 Country Jamboree
 806/298-2531

CANYON
 Stargazing
 806/488-2227

HASKELL
 VFD Car Show
 940/864-3694

JACKSBORO
 Home & Garden Show
 940/567-2132

16-17
ABILENE
 Arts & Crafts Festival
 915/676-6211

COLORADO CITY
 Railhead Trade Days
 915/728-3403

21-30
SAN ANGELO
*A Funny Thing Happened
 on the Way to the Forum*
 915/949-4400

22-24
MINERAL WELLS
 Antique Auto Swap Meet
 940/325-3253 or
 800/252-6989

23
AMARILLO
The Marriage of Figaro
 806/378-3096

23, 30
CANYON
 Palo Duro Pioneers
 806/488-2227

24
SAN ANGELO
 Angelo State University
 Faculty & Friends Concert
 915/653-3333

30
ELECTRA
 Easter Egg Hunt
 940/495-3577

GRAHAM
 Easter Egg Hunt
 800/256-4844

MINERAL WELLS
 High School
 All-Star Basketball Classic
 800/252-6989

31
CANYON
 Palo Duro Canyon State Park
 Wildflower Safari
 806/488-2227

PINEY WOODS

2
HUNTSVILLE
 General Sam Houston's
 Birthday &
 Texas Independence
 Celebration
 936/294-1832

Outdoor Adventure Challenge
 940/256-0769 or
 936/295-5644

2-3
LONGVIEW
 Model Train Show
 903/753-9512

7-10
HENDERSON
Camelot
 903/657-2968

9
BUNA
 30th Redbud Festival
 409/994-5586

CONROE
 Bass Tournament
 936/582-1677

Entergy
 Young Texas Artists Competition
 Concert
 936/588-6645

WILLIS
 Chili Cookoff
 936/856-5224

15-17
CONROE
 Montgomery County Rodeo
 936/760-3247

LIVINGSTON
 Trade Days
 936/327-3656

NACOGDOCHES
 Trade Days
 936/564-2150 or
 888/564-7351

TYLER
 Azalea Quilt Show
 903/825-2150

15-24
CONROE
 Montgomery County Fair
 936/760-3247

16
JASPER
 Azalea Festival
 409/384-2762

16-17
TYLER
 Edom Art Fair
 903/595-1001

16-31
JASPER
 Azalea Trail
 409/384-2762

17
PORTER
 Golf Tournament
 281/348-1531

19
MARSHALL
 Taste of the Arts
 903/935-4484

21-23
TYLER
 Smith County
 Jr Livestock Show & Exposition
 903/597-2501

22-23
CONROE
 Montgomery County
 Barbecue Cookoff
 936/760-3247

22-APR 7
TYLER
 Azalea & Spring Flower Trail
 903/592-1661 or
 800/235-5712

23
THE WOODLANDS
 Jones State Forest Birding Trip
 281/445-1187

23
TYLER
 Tyler Museum of Art
 30th Anniversary Gala
 903/595-1001

29-APR 6
HUNTSVILLE
 Walker County Fair,
 Rodeo, and Barbecue Cookoff
 936/291-8763

30
JASPER
 Floating the Forks
 409/384-5231

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

1-3, 29-31
CANTON
 Trade Days
 903/567-2991

WEATHERFORD
 Trade Days
 817/598-4351

1-31
FLATONIA
 Parade of Quilts
 361/865-3920

2
ANDERSON
 Grimes County Courthouse
 Rededication Open House
 936/873-3135

COPPERAS COVE
 Cove Country Opry
 254/547-5966

GONZALES
 Country Music Show
 830/672-6532

POINT
 National Farmers Union
 Centennial Celebration
 903/598-3296

SEGUIN
 Toast to Texas
 830/379-4833

2-3
BELTON
 Arts & Crafts Show
 512/441-7133

WACO
 Ceramic Show
 254/776-1660

WASHINGTON
 Texas Independence Day
 Celebration
 936/878-2461
 or 878-2214

2, 30
IRVING
 Las Colinas
 Symphony Orchestra
 972/580-1566

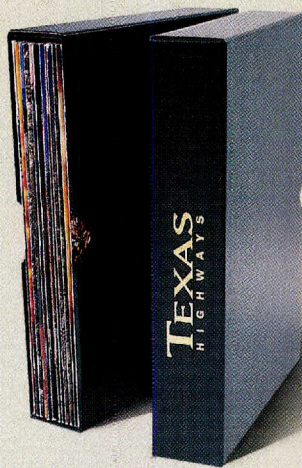
3
DALLAS
 Tosca
 214/443-1000

3-4
MOULTON
 FFA/4-H Livestock Show
 361/596-7056
 or 596-4609

5
DENTON
 Alexandria's Ragtime Band
 940/898-2500

THIS MONTH On the Web

TRAVEL NEWS Discover six great driving tours, the best place in the state to fly a kite, Texas' newest State Park, and more.



EVENTS Search our database by region and month, and use the events links for even more information.

GIFT SHOP Get organized for the New Year with this month's featured product—the *Texas Highways* slipcase.

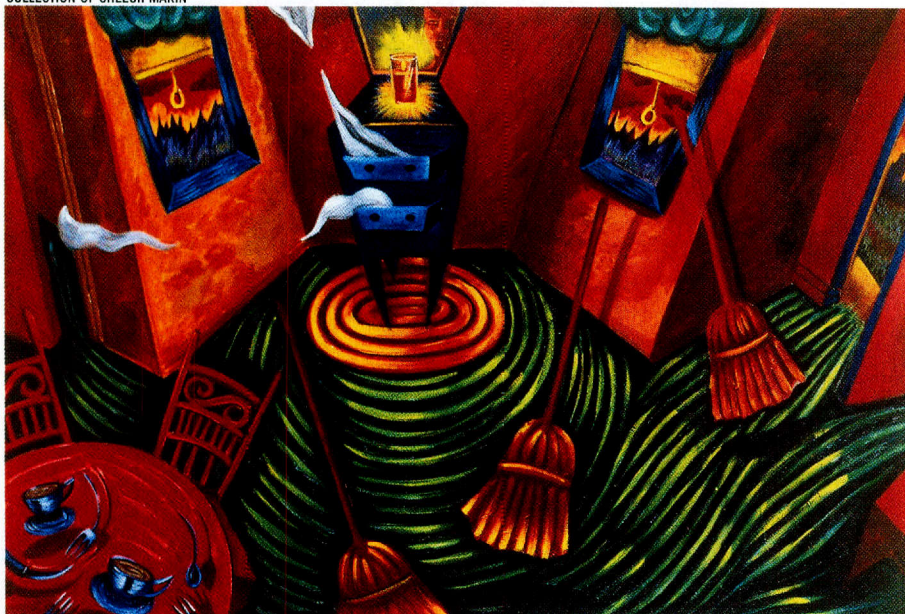
RECIPES Find your next hit in the kitchen with delicious Catfish Parmesan, featured this month on the Web.

WWW.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM

5 FORT WORTH Cliburn Piano Concerts Presents Lang Lang 817/335-9000	14-16 DUBLIN St. Patrick Celebration 254/445-3422 or 800/938-2546	22-24, 28-31 SHERMAN <i>The Boxcar Children</i> 903/893-8818
7-9 TEMPLE Temple College Jazz Festival 254/298-8554	RICHARDSON African Violet Show 972/278-0389	22-24, 29-31 PALESTINE Dogwood Trails Festival 903/723-3014 or 800/659-3484
7-10, 14-16 ATHENS <i>The Curious Savage</i> 903/675-3908	15-17 WACO RV, Boat & Sports Show 254/754-3511	22-APR 21 GRANBURY <i>Sabrina Fair</i> 817/573-9191 or 866/572-0881
8 DALLAS Arts & Letters Live: Michael Chabon 214/922-1220	15-17, 22-24 CLEBURNE <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> 817/641-0183	23 DALLAS Dallas Bach Society Passion/Easter Program 214/320-8700
8-9 IRVING Dallas Divas 972/252-2787	16 BELTON Texas Western Swing Fiddling Showcase 254/933-5353	DENISON Arts & Wine Renaissance 903/465-1551
MADISONVILLE Rodeo 936/348-3591	WACO Symphony 254/754-0851	FORT WORTH Cliburn Concerts Presents Audra McDonald, Soprano 817/335-9000
8-10 FORT WORTH Tuff Hedeman Championship Bull Riding 817/871-8150	WEST Barbecue Cookoff 254/826-5442	GLEN ROSE Cheetah Challenge 5-K Run 254/897-2960
9 ATHENS YMCA Triathlon 903/675-9154	16-17 MEXIA Living History Days 254/562-5751	MIDLOTHIAN Easter Parade 972/723-8600
COLUMBUS <i>Oil City Symphony</i> 877/444-7339	WACO Coin & Stamp Show 254/750-5810 or 800/321-9226	SAN FELIPE Texas Colonial Heritage Festival 979/885-3613
COMANCHE Old Cora Trade Day 915/356-3233	WEST Old West Trade Days 254/826-3188 or 866/826-3189	23-24 GRANBURY General Granbury's Birthday Party 817/573-1622
JEWETT Home & Garden Show 903/626-4202	17 FORT WORTH Cowtown Goes Green 817/626-7921	PALESTINE Flower Show 903/478-3264
ROUND TOP Winedale Spring Symposium 979/278-3530	MOULTON Polka/Waltz Celebration 361/596-7609	ROUND TOP Winedale Spring Festival/ Texas Crafts Exhibition 979/278-3530
SEGUIN Noche de Gala 830/303-7147 or 401-0232	WACO <i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i> 254/752-9797 or 800/701-ARTS	23-29 SHERMAN Texoma Exposition Livestock Show 903/813-4206
9-10 FORT WORTH Antique Show 254/622-2858	18 COOPER Kelly Miller Circus 903/395-4314	24 GRAND PRAIRIE Low Rider Show 972/647-2331
GRAPEVINE Metroplex Glass Show 817/275-6342 or 410-3459	HAMILTON Spring Fling 254/386-3216	26-31 FORT WORTH <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> 817/332-2272
9-APR 14 DALLAS Dallas Blooms Festival 214/327-4901 or 327-8263	19-20 COLLEGE STATION <i>Porgy and Bess</i> 979/845-1234 or 888/890-5667	28-31 PALESTINE Old Time Music & Dulcimer Festival 713/432-1058
12-16 CLEBURNE Junior Livestock Show & Youth Fair 817/866-2368	21 FLATONIA 4-H/FFA Livestock Show 361/865-3920	29-APR 7 ROUND TOP Antique Show 405/390-1333
KAUFMAN Junior Livestock Show & County Fair 972/932-3118	22-23 DENTON African Violet Show 940/382-6465	30 FORT WORTH Easter Celebration 817/625-9715
MADISONVILLE Madison County Fair 936/348-3591	22-24, 29-30 WACO <i>The Mousetrap</i> 254/776-1591	McKINNEY Easter Bonnet Parade 972/562-6880

30 NOCOMA Easter Egg Hunt 940/825-3150	2-30 SAN ANTONIO <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> 210/408-0116	15-17 SAN ANTONIO Alamo Irish Festival 210/938-5931
SEGUIN Main Street Trade Days 830/401-2448	3 SAN ANTONIO KLRN Fine Wine & Cuisine Tasting 210/270-9000	16 SAN ANTONIO St. Patrick's Day Parade 210/497-8435
31 MOULTON Easter Picnic 361/596-4674 or 596-4947	4 WESLACO Quilt Show 956/968-9142	16-17 SAN ANTONIO Dyeing of the River Green 210/227-4262
SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS	5 THREE RIVERS Brush Country Music Jamboree 361/786-3334	Spring Fest 210/207-8600
1-2 SAN ANTONIO <i>The Servant of Two Masters</i> 210/829-3800	6 SAN ANTONIO Dawn at the Alamo 210/279-4973 or 494-7165	19-24 SAN ANTONIO <i>Cinderella</i> 210/226-3333
1-3 SAN ANTONIO Disney on Ice 210/207-3663	7-9 FALFURRIAS Funfest 361/325-3333	22 SAN ANTONIO <i>The Merry Widow</i> 210/207-7211
<i>Sweet Nothing in My Ear</i> 210/733-2715	7, 9, 29-30 SAN ANTONIO Symphony 210/554-1010	22-24 SAN ANTONIO Gem & Mineral Show 210/674-4050
1-3, 8-9 SAN ANTONIO <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> 210/271-7791	8-10 SAN ANTONIO National Cheerleading Competition 210/207-3663	23-24 GOLIAD Goliad Massacre/Fort Defiance Living History Program 361/645-3752
1-3, 8-10, 15-16 SAN ANTONIO <i>Amadeus</i> 210/733-7258	13-17 MERCEDES Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show 956/565-2456	SAN ANTONIO Danzas de Mexico 210/923-5362
2 SAN ANTONIO NHRA Drag Racing Championship Texas 210/927-5892	14-17 GOLIAD Goliad County Fair & Rodeo 361/645-2492	29 SAN ANTONIO San Fernando Cathedral Passion Play 210/227-1297
San Antonio College Folk Dance Festival 210/342-2905	29-31 SAN ANTONIO NCAA Women's Basketball Championship Final Four 210/207-3663	

COLLECTION OF CHEECH MARIN



Artist Patssi Valdez began painting as a high school student in East Los Angeles. She recently won a \$25,000 Durfee Artist Fellowship, thanks to works such as 1993's *Room on the Verge*.

listen to traditional Spanish love songs, experience the interactive photo album of Vietnam

San Antonio through April 7 and April 15, respectively. Call the San Antonio Museum of Art, 210/978-8100, www.samuseum.org; or log onto www.chicano-art-life.com. Both venues close on Mondays.

SECRET GARDEN

There may be nothing like it: walking along a meandering pathway, surrounded by hundreds of beautiful butterflies, singing birds, and flowering native plants. Move slowly! And shhhh! Did you hear that? Did you see that?

The **Valley Nature Center**, a five-acre urban park in **Weslaco**, provides year-round opportunities to get to know the region's flora and fauna. The center boasts the largest butterfly garden in the Valley (ask for the superb checklist), not to mention habitat for some 160 species of birds. It also has an impressive bog pond (complete with lilies and bullfrogs), a cactus garden (look for the Texas tortoises), and even a native-plant nursery,

CHICANO VISIONS

Perhaps best known as one-half of the comedy duo Cheech and Chong, whose 1978 movie *Up in Smoke* made them counterculture heroes, Robert "Cheech" Marin is also an avid and respected collector of art. Who would've thunk it? Cheech's collection—a colorful and far-reaching assemblage of art by painters with Chicano heritage—comprises the bulk of a new exhibit at the **San Antonio Museum of Art**. *Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge* is the nucleus of a two-venue exhibition in the Alamo City dubbed *Chicano*.

Texans should brim with pride at the number of homegrown artists represented here—at least a third have ties to the Lone Star State. More than 80 paintings by such artists as Carlos Almaraz of Mexico City, David Botello of East L.A., El Paso's Gaspar Enríquez, Kingsville native Carmen Lomas Garza, Laredo-born César Martínez, and San Antonio's Jesse Treviño demonstrate the wide range of the country's Chicano and Chicana artists.

Within San Antonio's historic

Kress building, 311 E. Houston, *Chicano's* interactive, multimedia segment unfolds. *Chicano Now: American Expressions* explores themes of the border, family, work, style, and identity. Among the many hands-on activities here, visitors can ride in a simulated lowrider,

veteran and Medal of Honor hero Roy Benavidez, and watch a video performance by Culture Clash, a comedy troupe featured on the PBS *Great Performance* series.

Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge and *Chicano Now: American Expressions* will remain in

Healing Landscapes

When she died in 1998 of breast cancer, artist and writer Jeanne Norsworthy had devoted some 16 years to preserving the magic of the Big Thicket and Big Bend. She relates her awakening to the power of wilderness—stirred by a resplendent sunset in Houston, of all places—in the book's introduction:

"Although I have always been aware of the healing power of nature, that day in my backyard confirmed that I did not have to take a trip to get to nature. We live in it; we are part of it. The DNA in our bodies is also in every living tree, grass, flower, and animal, only the coding varies. We are all one."

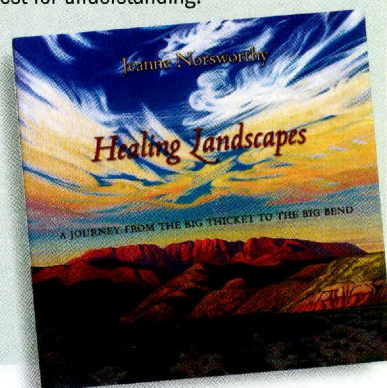
And there the journey began, first to the Big Thicket and then to the Big Bend, where Jeanne painted, wrote, observed. And healed, and eventually died.

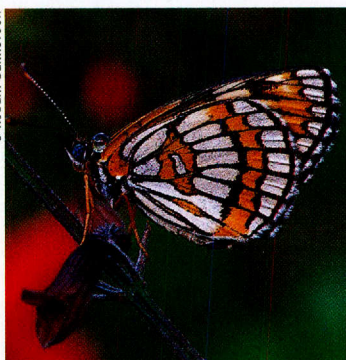
Healing Landscapes: A Journey from the Big Thicket to the Big Bend (Texas A&M University Press) preserves the stories and images that sustained Jeanne through her quest for understanding.

The paintings—magnolia blossoms, desert scenes, cypress swamps, palmetto forests—convey a breathtaking and visceral connection between the inner and outer worlds. And the words? Read on....

"What is permanent and lasting to us is merely the transient state in the long reach of time. Fretwork of tiny saplings and vines, lattice of small decisions, construction of skyscrapers, apartments. Bondings, joinings of families, marriages, fights, divorces, wrenching departures. All nature is in the same state of flux."

Find *Healing Landscapes* at your library or bookstore (\$29.95 hardcover), or call 800/826-8911 to order.





You can spy *Theona* Checkerspots and many other butterflies at the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco.

which opens to the public to encourage wildscaping. Indoors, an exhibit hall further explores the region's habitats and inhabitants, and a topnotch gift shop offers South Texas field guides and a large selection of other books on nature.

Join the staff of the Valley Nature Center for **Saturdays in the Park**, a monthly series of naturalist-led talks and tours focusing on butterflies (the first Sat. of the month), birds (the second Sat.), and plants (the third), beginning at 10 a.m.

After an introduction and a lesson on improving your observation skills, you'll head to the trails, where you'll likely see butterfly varieties like Malachites, Guava Skippers, and Red-bordered Pixies, and birds such as Altamira Orioles, Chachalacas, and Great Kiskadees. (And you'll know why experts say you'll hear the kiskadees before you see them—"keeeeeeee! keeeeeeee!")

Can't make it to the Valley? Explore the center on the Web at www.valleynaturecenter.org, and don't forget to investigate the links to such related organizations as the Rio Bravo Nature Center in Eagle Pass, the Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, and the Native Plant Project, a Lower Rio Grande Valley group that promotes native plants.

The Valley Nature Center is at 301 S. Border St. in Weslaco (78599). Call 956/969-2475. Closed Mondays.

By the Way...

On February 28, the **National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature** in **Abilene** opens a new exhibit of works by Betsy Lewin and Ted Lewin. The couple, both of whom are illustrators, have each won Caldecott honors. In what has become a tradition at the NCCIL, the artists will make personal appearances (through March 2), signing books, presenting free gallery talks for adults, and leading hands-on art demonstrations for kids. You'll get to see the fantastic 1920s building, too....call 915/673-4586; www.nccil.org.

Each November, hundreds of endangered whooping cranes—members of the last breeding flock of migrating whoopers in the world—make a 2,400-mile trek from Canada to their winter home at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. See them while you can—they'll begin returning north in March. On February 22-24, birders by the hundreds converge upon **Port Aransas** for the annual **Celebration of Whooping Cranes and Other Birds**. The event includes a juried, nature-related arts fair, speakers from Operation Migration (the group that successfully helped whoopers migrate from Wisconsin to Florida in 2001), boat trips to view some 180 whoopers at the refuge, and workshops on topics ranging from birdwatching to photography....call 800/45-COAST; www.portaransas.org.

The nation's first and longest-running Latino film and video festival, the **Guadalupe Cultural Art Center's CineFest** celebrates its 25th anniversary February 19-24 at theaters throughout **San Antonio**. Last year, some 10,000 film enthusiasts showed up to view movies made throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This year's fest, with the theme "Cada Cabeza, Un Mundo: The Trans-cultural Traveler" (translated as "each mind, a world unto itself"), will feature more than 100 premiere releases, plus independent films, videos, and classics from the last 25 years....call 210/271-3151; www.guadalupeculturalarts.org.

Kerrville's **Cowboy Artists of America Museum** takes on the topics of courtship, love, and marriage in the Old West with its exhibition **Romancing the West**, on view through April 7. The exhibit includes letters, photographs, collectibles, and clothing from settlers heading west. Keep in mind that finding love on the frontier could be daunting, as women were scarce west of the Mississippi (that's one reason why mail-order brides and the bawdy houses of cow towns and gold fields proved so popular). The courtship and wedding customs of Native Americans also receive attention; you'll see examples of courting robes, love medicines, and flutes used for musical seduction. Isn't it romantic?....call 830/896-2553; www.caamuseum.com.

The **Houston Museum of Natural Science's** fabulous **Cockrell Butterfly Center** celebrates its **7th Annual Hug-A-Bug Festival** February 14-17, with ladybugs as the stars. Come on, who doesn't love a ladybug? Not only are they cute and brilliantly colored, but with their voracious appetite for plant juice-sucking aphids, they're a gardener's best friend. During the fest, every child who visits the center receives a free vial of ladybugs to release inside the Cockrell's rainforest to help control plant pests. (With the right plaintive look, adults just might receive a vial, too.) As the song goes, luck be a lady....call 713/639-4629; www.hmns.org.

On February 15 in **San Antonio**, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas host their 11th **Texas History Forum** at Alamo Hall. The theme, *Early Texas: Missions and Indians*, addresses the missions as architectural artifacts, the Catholic church's activity concurrent with mission endeavors, and the relationship between the missions and the Apache and Comanche. Speakers include Dr. Jacinto Quirarte, a specialist in pre-Columbian and Latin American arts; religious historian Father Bob Wright; Comanche-culture historian Dr. Dan Gelo; and author Dr. Elizabeth John, who writes about Indian and Hispanic borderlands topics....call 210/225-1071, or email drtl@drtl.org.

In the Richmond-Rosenberg story (see page 44), we mention a site in the National Register of Historic Places that serves as a jail. In **Albany**, there's a former jail in the National Register that serves as an art museum. In an 1878 building made of limestone blocks, **The Old Jail Art Center** houses works by such masters as Picasso, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Modigliani, to name a few. Through February 10, the museum showcases paintings by Murray Bewley and James Blake, two Fort Worth artists influenced by their residencies in France; beginning Feb. 23, the museum highlights paintings from Venice....call 915/762-2269; see the link at www.albanytexas.com.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.texashighways.com



Some 180 whooping cranes spend the winter at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

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

NEW HOME ON THE RANGE

Sometime this spring, restaurant-goers in Fort Worth will welcome the return of tasty cowboy cuisine, including cream of jalapeño and cilantro soup and pan-seared, pepper-crusted tenderloin, from Cowtown's popular **Reata Restaurant**, still in **Sundance Square**, but at a new location. In February 2001, the restaurant vacated the former Bank One Tower, damaged by the March 2000 tornado that swept through downtown Fort Worth.

Reata will open as **Reata at Sundance** at 312 Houston St., the former site of **Caravan of Dreams** nightclub, which closed last September. Reata at Sundance will occupy three levels of the building, including its celebrated rooftop, while Caravan Theater will operate on the second floor as host to film festivals and an improvisational comedy group.

For updates, call Sundance Square, 817/339-7777, www.sundancesquare.com; or Reata, 817/336-1009, www.reata.net.

BUSH BOYHOOD HOME

Plans are under way in **Midland** to renovate the childhood home of **President George W. Bush**. President Bush, who was born on July 6, 1946, in New Haven, Connecticut, lived in the house at 1412 W. Ohio in Midland from 1952 to 1956. (From there, the family moved to another Midland residence.)

Presently in the early stages of fund-raising and research, the project is scheduled for completion

DOWN THE ROAD

In March, we'll stop and smell the roses at the **Antique Rose Emporium** in Independence; explore the **Presidential Corridor** between Austin and College Station; take a spin with windmills at Lubbock's **American Wind Power Center**; and chow down on that Texas favorite—**steak!**

Readers Recommend...



Laurie and John Mueller serve up delicious barbecue from a renovated storefront on Manor Road in Austin.

My family had a wonderful time at the **Dallas World Aquarium & Zoological Garden**. We really enjoyed the rainforest, exotic birds and animals, and intriguing fish. We also had a terrific chicken-fried steak at

or simply scrumptious barbecued brisket, pork, and sausage and all the trimmings, take a short detour off I-35 in **Austin** to **John Mueller's B-B-Q**. Open only since last October, this down-home place will soon be on

Mac's Bar & Grille in **Arlington**. RICH JONES, *Amarillo*

The **Dallas World Aquarium** is at 1801 N. Griffin St., Dallas; 214/720-2224; www.dwazoo.com. **Mac's Bar & Grille** is at 6077 W. I-20, Arlington; 817/572-0541.

barbecue aficionados' short lists. MIKE MURPHY, *Dripping Springs*
John Mueller's B-B-Q is about two blocks off I-35, at 1917 Manor Rd.; 512/236-0283.

Due to an article in the May 2001 *TH*, we visited **Breckenridge** and **Possum Kingdom Lake**. The highlight of our trip was our stay at **The Keeping Room Bed and Breakfast**, owned by LaVerle and Brady Tension. We particularly enjoyed the wonderful breakfast and the fellowship around the big table. ESTHER and BOB TISSING, *Canyon Lake*

The Keeping Room is at 900 W. Walker, Breckenridge; 254/559-8368.

in late summer 2003. Dealey Herndon, who directed the Texas Capitol Preservation and Extension Project in Austin, has begun research on the home's interior. Call the Midland CVB, 915/683-3381; www.visitmidlandtx.com.

FROM CONFEDERATE TO COMMEMORATIVE

An update to December's *TexCetera*: Members of the **Confederate Air Force**, a Texas-based group that restores and flies airplanes from the World War II era, changed the name of their organization to the **Commemorative Air Force**, effective Jan. 1. CAF, founded in 1957, oversees more than 140 vintage planes, many of which are piloted by members in airshows throughout the nation.

An impressive array of CAF planes

resides at the organization's headquarters in Midland, at the **American Airpower Heritage Museum**, Midland International Airport, I-20 Business Route; 915/563-1000; www.commemorativeairforce.org and www.airpowermuseum.org.

AS BIG AS TEXAS!

Planning your Texas vacation just became a whole lot easier—and more fun, to boot. The recently released 2002 edition of the 264-page **Texas State Travel Guide** sports a brand new design, dozens of updated photographs, and regionalized sections that make the free book a traveler's delight. The guide proves a great complement to the "Rediscover Texas" campaign launched by the Texas Economic Development agency to encourage

Texans to explore the Lone Star State. Brimming with information, the guide describes hundreds of cities, towns, parks, sites, and attractions, and places them logically and handily within seven distinctive regions of the state. Happily, the regions coincide with the areas shown in "Fun Forecast" (page 51). Furthermore, a feature article introduces each region and presents fun facets and fascinating facts for each of the seven areas.

For a free copy of the guide, call 800/8888-TEX; order one at www.TravelTex.com (where you can also learn about on-line "Trip Savers Coupons," which offer discounts to select Texas destinations); or stop by one of the 12 Travel Information Centers operated by the Texas Department of Transportation.

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. For more *TexCetera* items, see our Web site: www.texashighways.com.

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.



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Window on Texas

BIG BEND BLUEBONNETS (*Lupinus havardii*) arrive earlier, and grow taller, than their cousins found elsewhere in the state. These were photographed near Panther Junction in Big Bend National Park early last spring.

