

TXD T1325.6 H537 49:05

6/10/2002

Texas State Document 6/07

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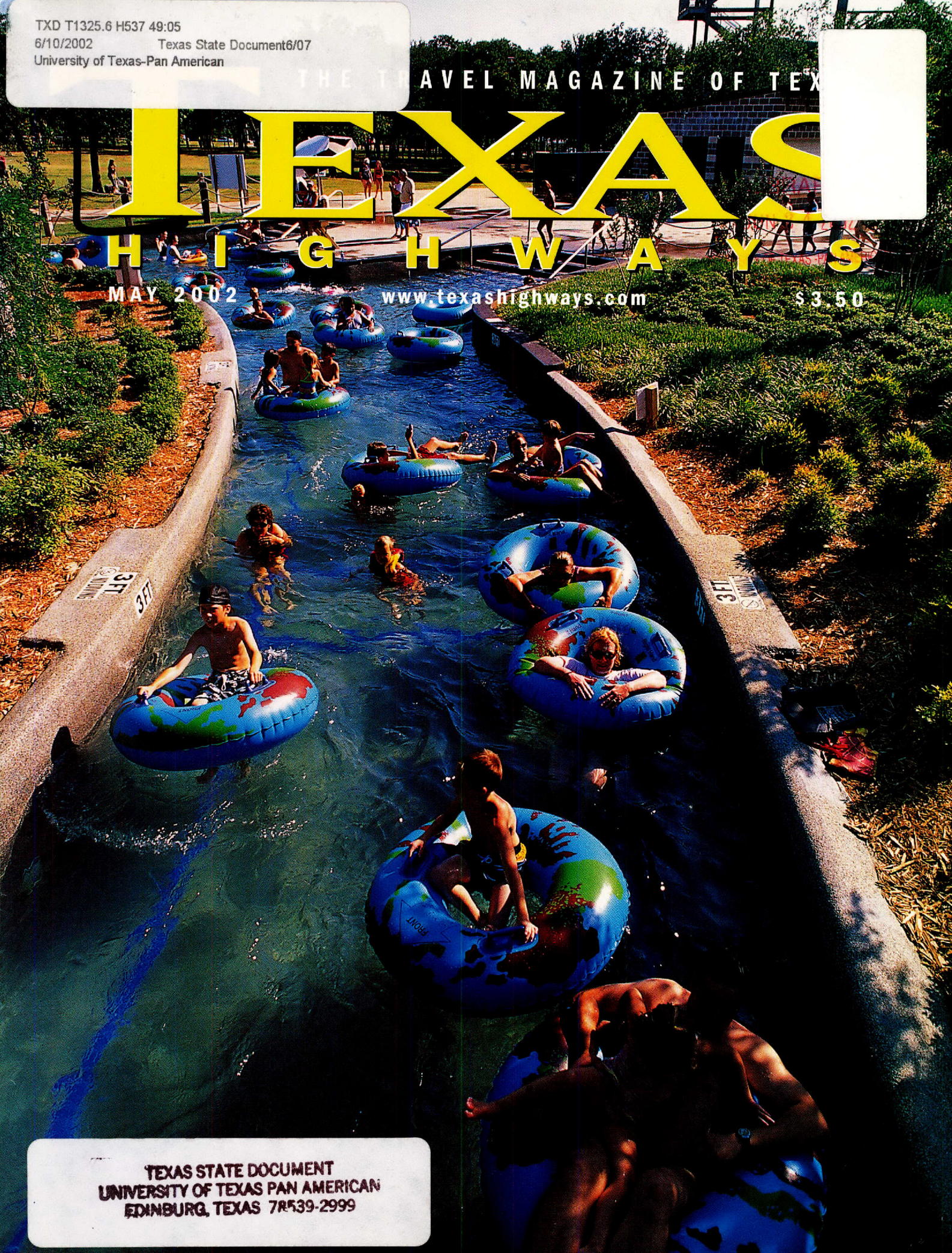
THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

MAY 2002

www.texashighways.com

\$3.50



TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539-2999

You may recall that in January's UpFront column I mentioned that we would like to hear from you regarding the origins of **Enchilada Wednesdays** in **San Antonio's** schools. We shared several of your responses in the March issue. As luck would have it, there's more. **Diane Hernandez** of the Texas Education Agency passed along the following information from **Susan Hildebrand** of the same agency. Susan explained why Wednesdays, and sometimes Thursdays, are enchilada days.

School cafeterias receive frozen ground beef in bulk. The beef can't be thawed in the fridge over the weekend when no staff are at school; if you had a power outage, the meat would spoil and have to be replaced. So the beef is thawed on Monday and Tuesday, while staff are at school.

Enchiladas take time to make. As Susan says, "Any menu item that is high prep—like baked chicken or enchiladas—is served on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

"You also never serve a high-prep item on Monday, because of prepaids, such as elementary students who pay for the whole week on Monday. The prepaids require extra time and paperwork, so the manager has extra duties and wouldn't be available to help 'roll' the enchiladas. And yes, they make the enchiladas by hand."

So there you have it, another installment in the enchilada saga, and some food for thought about cafeteria management....

But there's more. We heard from a number of other readers after publishing our enchilada story in January. **Sherry Ray** of Lake Jackson wrote, "We visited one of the suggested restaurants and found that while



J. GRIFFIS SMITH; FOOD STYLING BY FRAN DECOUX GERLING; PROPS COURTESY BREED & CO. HARDWARE, AUSTIN

We featured *enchiladas con crema*, Tex-Mex enchiladas, and West Texas/New Mexico-style enchiladas in the January issue.

the enchiladas were good, they did not compare to the enchiladas of our favorite Mexican restaurant in our area. I suggest that you make a stop at **El Toro's** in **Clute**. You'll find not only their enchiladas (in ANY variety) delicious, but ALL of their food superb."

And **Barbara Barnes Behal** of Seguin wrote, "I attended Ben Franklin Elementary School in San Antonio in the early 1950s. The only day I would eat at school was Wednesday. My menu every Wednesday was two enchiladas, rice, beans, chocolate cake, and orange drink, all for 25 cents. I always chose the same thing week after week and loved it. My favorite food is still Mexican. I could eat it seven days a week."

So could we, Ms. Behal. Thanks to all of you for writing.

Jack Lowry

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- PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
TRAVEL DIVISION
- Division Director DORIS HOWDESHELL
Publisher KATHY MURPHY
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Texas Highways (ISSN 0040-4349) is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, 150 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704. The official travel magazine of Texas encourages recreational travel within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world.
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The editorial office of *Texas Highways* is at 150 East Riverside Drive in Austin. Call 512/486-5858; fax 512/486-5879.

Internet Sites: www.texashighways.com
www.traveltex.com and www.dot.state.tx.us

Send queries about manuscripts or photographs to Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. We are not responsible for unsolicited materials.

Subscriptions to *Texas Highways* are \$17.50 annually (\$25.50 foreign). Call 800/839-4997. (Call 850/683-1394 outside the U.S.) Single copies/back issues: current issue, \$3.50; back issues, \$5, plus shipping & handling. Call 512/486-5823.

For subscription services, write to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Box 149233, Austin, TX 78714-9233, or call 800/839-4997. To be removed from mailing list sales, write to *Texas Highways* Marketing, Mailing Lists, Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009.

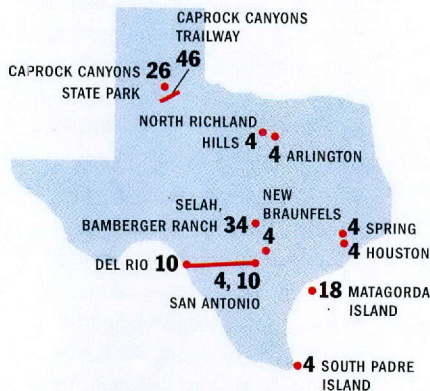
Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Box 149233, Austin, TX 78714-9233.

IRMA MEMBER, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL
MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION

PRINTED IN U.S.A. ON RECYCLED PAPER



SITES IN THIS ISSUE

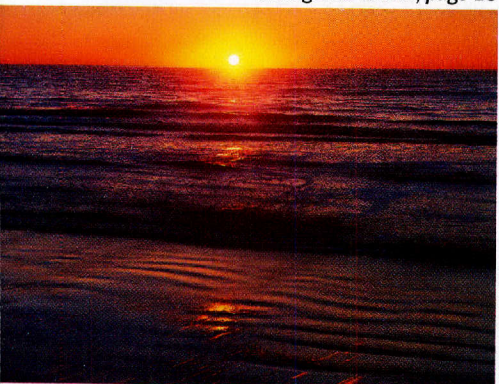


Hill Country Heaven, page 34



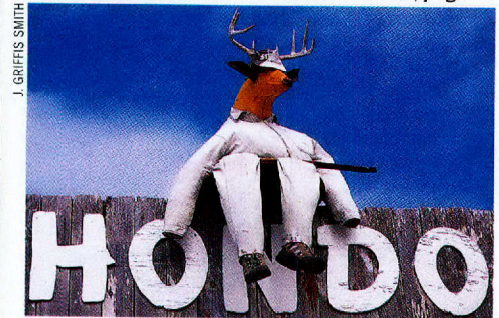
MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Matagorda Island, page 18



© LAURENCE PARENT

Border Break, page 10



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

FEATURES

4 Get Wet? You Bet!

From Schlitterbahn to Hurricane Harbor, water parks across the state offer relief from Texas heat—not to mention watery thrills and spills. Not up for the Master Blaster or the Green Extreme? Take a lazy-river ride, and float your troubles away.

BY MELISSA GASKILL, PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

10 Heading West on Highway 90: Border Break

Ready for a road trip? If you like your vistas spiced with history and romance, make the trek from San Antonio to Del Rio. But make it slowly, so you can enjoy the small towns and surprises along the way.

BY GENE FOWLER, PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

18 Matagorda Island: Coast Away!

Accessible only by boat, Matagorda Island State Park remains pristine and primed for discriminating visitors. Pastimes here include beach-combing, birding, fishing, and, above all, communing with nature.

BY GENE FOWLER, PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT

26 Caprock Canyons State Park: Mountains Beneath the Plains

A Panhandle paradise that boasts picturesque badlands, colorful canyon walls, and striking formations, Caprock Canyons offers travelers a place to retreat from civilization.

BY HENRY CHAPPELL

34 Hill Country Heaven

Once described as the “sorriest piece of land in Blanco County,” Selah, Bamberger Ranch, now resembles the lush terrain early settlers found. The ranch’s owners offer field days, tours, and workshops to help others replicate their success. STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL A. MURPHY

42 Mayhaws: The Funny Fruit with the Funky Name

In East Texas, it’s mayhaw season, and that means it’s time to harvest the cranberry-size fruit that flavors jams, jellies, pies, and other concoctions. Look for mayhaw products for sale along roadsides northeast of Houston, but look quickly—they disappear fast.

BY JANET R. EDWARDS, PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN MYERS

46 Adventure Tour: Mountain Biking Caprock Canyons Trailway

With sandstone canyons, juniper-covered slopes, creeks, and gullies, a 64-mile stretch of abandoned railroad bed in the Panhandle delights and challenges mountain bikers. Hikers and horse-back riders share the wealth. BY PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT, PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT



© STEPHAN MYERS

Mayhaws, page 42

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About Our Covers

[FRONT] When the heat’s on, bathers head to Texas water parks like NRH20, near Fort Worth, where the Endless River offers sweet refreshment. Turn to page 4 to find out about other hot spots to be cool this summer. Photo by J. Griffis Smith

[BACK] Basketflowers greet mountain bikers on the Caprock Canyons Trailway in spring and summer. To learn more about this railroad-bed-turned-recreational-route, turn to page 46. Photo © Laurence Parent

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OVER THE HUMP

Brutus was no brute! He was a true gentleman. Well, as much as a camel can be, I guess. I am one of those folks crazy and fortunate enough to have gone on the camel trek that Randy Mallory wrote about in the February issue. Being single and 30-something, I have adopted less-than-traditional means to celebrate my birthdays. Last year, I traveled solo deep into the desert of Big Bend Ranch State Park along 40 miles of dirt road with no signs of civilization for what seemed to be hours. But lo and behold, I came to the park headquarters where I have never been so happy to see people, or camels, for that matter. The trip was a life's adventure; my advice to anyone remotely interested... "Just do it."

JAY McGRANAHAN

HERE'S THE BEEF

I enjoyed John Lumpkin's article in March on the best steakhouses in Texas. As with any "best of" story, there will be people like me who say, "What about *this* place?" Well, here I go. If you are ever in Lubbock, you owe it to yourself to eat at the 50 Yard Line [806/745-3991] and at Cagle Steaks [806/795-3879]. Cagle's is my personal favorite; I have been told by many out-of-towners that it serves the best steak they have ever had.

DALE SOMERS

Ed. Note: *Thanks, Dale. We've heard from several folks steak-ing a claim on their own favorite eateries, including McBride's Land & Cattle Steaks (940/322-2516) in Wichita Falls, Reata (915/837-9232) in Alpine, and the Leona General Store and Steak House in Leona (903/344-2202).*

GRAHAM BACKER

How excited I was to get my February issue and see Mike Cox's article about Graham. I was

J. GRIFFIS SMITH



It's Smithville! Thanks to everyone who wrote to let us know that we misidentified this photo in March's story on the Presidential Corridor.

than a watermelon cooled under a tow sack

kept wet by a dripping faucet?

CHARLES E. PORTER
Ocala, Florida

PETAL PUSHERS

We have just received the April issue of *TH*, and the flowers are beautiful. Our most memorable wildflower sight was after a rainstorm in the Hill Country, on Texas 71 between Llano and Austin. A rainbow appeared, and the colors from it blended in a mist with the colors of the wildflowers on the road.

RUTH AND WORTH HELTON
Andrews

My favorite Texas wildflower memory is of the last trip I took with my father, Manuel Mata, in May of 1989. The trip from Austin to Laredo, which normally would have taken four hours, took us six hours, because we stopped every few miles to take photographs of the beautiful Texas wildflowers growing along Interstate 35. I still have those photos, and I treasure them and the memory.

GLORIA MATA PENNINGTON
Austin

THE VOTES ARE IN

About once a month for several years now, three of my sisters-in-law, a dear family friend, and I have been striking out to seek

born and grew up there, and remember well Ed Hinson's beautiful home and the others you mentioned. What fond memories of being a teenager and cruising the square on Saturday nights before taking in a movie at the National Theater. My dad, R.C. Reese, who managed the Piggly Wiggly grocery store on 4th Street, woke me up one night to say, "The picture show is burning." We drove to the square and watched with much dismay as our beloved theater burned.

I also remember well the first rain that began to fill Possum Kingdom Lake. We drove on a small road that simply ended by going into the lake. We could see houses and a church steeple partially submerged. It was exciting, but also sad to see a little town being swallowed up.

PAT REESE REED
Irving

BIG WHEEL KEEP ON TURNIN'

The March article "Winds of Change," on the American Wind Power Center in Lubbock, was great. I grew up with the "squeek/squaawwk" of windmills and sure do miss it.

NELSON POWERS

Until I was 17, there was a windmill at the corner of my granddad's house in Colorado City. Many are the nights that I went to sleep listening to the sounds of those vanes creaking in the wind and the rods pumping water into an elevated tank. And what was more delicious

"challenges for the mind, balm for the spirit, and lots of good food for the body," as so aptly put by Rosemary Williams in her very interesting article on the Presidential Corridor in March. (J. Griffis Smith's photos were perfect, as usual.) Many of the historical sites she described have been memory-makers for us.

I homed in on the part about St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin. My husband is half Wendish, and his ancestors were among the some 600 Wends who fled Lusatia in 1854 and sailed to America. There are still many proud Texas Wends about!

MAXINE E. KNIPPA
Bertram

I was excited to see the article on the Presidential Corridor. Smithville is not on the direct route between Austin and College Station, but just 12 miles east of Bastrop on Texas 71. We have much to offer visitors, including two highly recognized barbecue establishments (not to mention other very good restaurants), and our Main Street, a haven for the antique-lover.

I bring this to your attention only because I was so disappointed to see the caption on page 10 as "Main Street, Bastrop," when in fact it is a picture of Main Street, Smithville.

RENEE D. BLASCHKE
Mayor of Smithville

Ed. Note: *We apologize for the error, Mayor Blaschke. Smithville (see photo above) is indeed a neat town.*

CORRECTIONS: *The "Texas Steak-Out" story in the March issue includes a couple of "mistakes." The correct number for the Ranchman's Cafe in Ponder is 940/479-2221; the price of a 24-ounce T-bone is \$26.95.*

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.

Queen of the Confederacy

Lucy Petway Holcombe moved with her family to Marshall, Texas, from Tennessee in 1850, when she was 17. Her beauty and personality soon captured the hearts of many Texans, but this early feminist refused to accept Victorian notions of male domination. Desiring recognition for her

intelligence, Lucy gave political speeches and championed the cause of a Cuba free from Spanish rule. Lucy's lover was killed in a free-Cuba expedition, and the young woman, saddened but not dejected, wrote a historical novel titled *The Free Flag of Cuba, or The Martyrdom of Lopez*.

The book and her numerous published poems met with literary success, but Lucy was not satisfied. She longed to be a part of the political milieu of Washington. In August of 1857 in Virginia, she met Francis Wilkinson Pickens, a wealthy senator from South Carolina. Pickens soon proposed to Lucy, and the couple married in April 1858 at Wyalusing, the Holcombe family plantation in Marshall.

Lucy had accepted Pickens' offer of marriage on condition that he gain an important U.S. government position. Mad with love for her, he accepted an appointment from President Buchanan as American minister to the Imperial Court of Russia. For two years abroad, the new Mrs. Pickens dazzled members of the Russian court ("Mine has not been a position free from incidents," Lucy wrote to her sister, Anna) and captured the hearts of Tsar Alexander II and Tsarina Maria Alexandrovna.

With the Civil War looming, the Pickenses and their young daughter (Eugenia Frances Dorothea Olga Neva, born at the Imperial Palace, her last two names bestowed by the Tsarina) returned to America, where, by action of the state



As intelligent as she was beautiful, this 19th-Century Southern belle charmed her way around the world, from Texas to Russia to South Carolina. *Queen of the Confederacy: The Innocent Deceits of Lucy Holcombe Pickens*, written by longtime Speaking of Texas contributor Elizabeth W. Lewis of Houston, comes out this month from the University of North Texas Press (800/826-8911).

COURTESY DAVIS/LITTLE COLLECTION

legislature, Francis became governor of South Carolina, the first state to secede from the Union.

As "the uncrowned Queen of the Confederacy," Lucy devoted her time, talent, and money to the "Cause." The South returned the favor by engraving her image on Confederate Treasury Bills, the only woman of her time so honored. Although she spent her remaining years in South Carolina, Lucy frequently visited Texas, which she had once described as her "home in the prairied [sic] west," where "Nature inspires in place of Champagne."

—Elizabeth W. Lewis, Houston

Laffites of Daring

On May 20, 1856, the body of James Campbell washed ashore on the Texas mainland across from Galveston Island. Campbell, a veteran seaman, was on his way to New Orleans on business when a violent storm blew up that washed him overboard. Death at sea seemed appropriate for this man, who had served as Jean Laffite's right-hand man before giving up the life of a privateer to become a farmer.

Born in 1786 in County Derry, Ireland, Jim immigrated at an early age with his parents to Baltimore, Maryland. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age 21 and served on the U.S.S. *Constitution*. During the War of 1812, he held the post of gunner during the famous battle with the *Guerriere* that weakened the British navy and earned the *Constitution* the nickname "Old Ironsides."

After his tour of duty ended in 1814, Jim joined Jean Laffite, who commanded a fleet of privateers, based in Galveston, that preyed on Spanish ships. (According to T.R. Fehrenbach in *Lone Star*, Laffite, who disliked his nickname, "Pirate of the Gulf," "continually professed that the United States was his adopted country," and stated that his privateers were under orders to pursue only Spanish, never U.S., ships.)

Jim Campbell first served in an administrative capacity, but in 1818, Laffite gave him command of the *Concord*, a 120-ton schooner with five guns and 175 men. Campbell quickly captured five Spanish ships, along with cargo and gold and silver treasure. Although Jim pursued his Spanish prey vigorously and confiscated the booty, he was a fair man who treated captives mercifully.

Praised as one of Laffite's most trusted lieutenants, Jim continued as a buccaneer until 1821, when the U.S. government sent Lieutenant Lawrence Kearny with the frigate *Enterprise* to remove Laffite and his band from Galveston Island. Although Laffite invited Jim to leave with him, Campbell and his wife, Mary Chabineaux, whom he had married five years earlier, chose to remain in Texas, eventually settling in what later became known as Texas City.

According to Campbell family lore, Laffite gave his lieutenant a telescope, perhaps as a parting gift. Today, it hangs in the Moore Memorial Public Library in Texas City, a gift to the library from James Campbell's many descendants who still live in the area.

—Beryllyn Bazzoon, Santa Fe, Texas

Slip, n, Slide Across Texas Get wet?

WATER—lots of it—is the only real relief from Texas summer heat. Thankfully, our sunny state is home to some splashing good entertainment. Hurtle down a near-sheer drop, fly through watery darkness, or drift lazily along a flowing river, fingers and toes cooled by refreshing water while your body is warmed by the sun. Sound good? Grab your sunscreen, a towel, and this guide to Texas water parks, and have a refreshing summer.

Blastenhoff is the section of the park for adrenaline junkies who favor the extreme, with a rowdy wave river (The Torrent), the Black Knight (an opaque, black fiberglass flume), and the infamous, six-story-high Master Blaster, an uphill water roller-coaster with 45-degree drops and rises that proves even moms can still scream. Loudly. The park's Surfenburg has a lazy river, tube slides, children's play areas, and a bodyboarding wave (fun to watch). Schlitterbahn's huge layout is user-friendly, but even so, doing it all takes more than one day. Fortunately, for those who can't get enough, there's an on-site resort.

SCHLITTERBAHN NEW BRAUNFELS

Huge live oak trees shade Schlitterbahn's original 40-acre section, The Bahn, strung along the Comal River. Famous for fun since 1979, three miles of tubing rides, including seven chutes carved into the hillside, make Schlitterbahn the world's largest tubing park. Some 10,000 black inner tubes keep everyone floating—not counting colored tubes used on the rides that have chlorinated water! The wide selection of body slides ranges from mildly exciting to darn near heart-stopping, and several toss you into a river-water lagoon tailor-made for hangin' out once you make your big splash. Tots have access to their own play areas and pools.

SCHLITTERBAHN BEACH WATERPARK SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

Opened in 2001, this southern cousin of the New Braunfels original features four water coasters, two tube chutes, Boogie Bahn (the world's largest man-made surfing ride, capable of creating an eight-foot "pipeline"), a wave lagoon, the five-story Sand Castle fun house, and a "Transportainment" river system called Rio Aventura that simulates the flow patterns of natural rivers and carries guests between several attractions via water rather than sidewalks. Along with



[LEFT] A real rush. The Master Blaster at NRH2O, in North Richland Hills in suburban Fort Worth.
[FACING PAGE] When a plain old pool just doesn't provide enough cool, surf's up at New Braunfels' Schlitterbahn.



you bet!





an adjacent food, shopping, and entertainment complex called Rio Village, the park also offers a nightly theatrical, special-effects-driven show called “Celebration of Water.”

SIX FLAGS SPLASHTOWN SPRING

One of Texas’ largest parks, Splashtown has more than 35 rides, from body slides that drop you 10 feet into the water to winding, twisting drops that get you briefly airborne (more opportunity to work on that scream!). This Houston-area attraction also boasts a wave pool, a fun lagoon, and kid-friendly play areas that include a multilevel playhouse with a wide variety of methods for soaking oneself and passersby. (A giant water-spilling bucket tops the list.) The Big Spin shoots you into a funnel to spiral downward before getting dumped headfirst into the pool (gravity wins every time—heads are heavier than feet). And don’t forget Thunder Run, the three-passenger aqua speedway, and the enclosed Space Rapids, complete with cosmic fog.

SIX FLAGS WATERWORLD HOUSTON

A section of Six Flags AstroWorld, this water park (15 acres) has all the basics: Hurricane Bay wave pool, half a dozen tube slides, a circular river, Big Kahuna raft ride, a mat slide, and one of those incredibly steep body slides that is scream-worthy if you can work up the nerve to give it a try. Hook’s Lagoon, a five-story interactive water treehouse, is divided into two sections, one mild, the other more challenging, with the latter entertaining enough even for a teenager.

ADVENTURE BAY HOUSTON

“A” Bay has three thrilling tube slides, three mat slides, a wave pool, a not-quite-so-lazy river, another of those sheer drop-offs, a double, headfirst mat slide, and two children’s play areas for the

More Moisturized Mirth

Small parks prove you don’t have to be big to offer plenty of watery fun. At **Hero’s WaterWorld** in Odessa, the wave pool and shaded picnic tables create a modern-day oasis. Dual luge slides, a tube ride, dual high-speed slides, and an activity pool provide thrills. At **Austin’s Volente Beach**, swim in Lake Travis and play in the sand, then give your scream a workout on the one-of-a-kind Sidewinder (down and up and down again). Body slides, a pool, a kids’ play area, and sand volleyball courts add to the experience. **Texas Water Rampage** in Lubbock is another oasis of slides and wave pools, including children’s and toddlers’ play areas, sand volleyball courts, horseshoes, and picnic areas.

With this much waterlogged entertainment around the state, if you don’t get wet and wild this summer, you just aren’t trying.

—Melissa Gaskill

young and younger. Ramps instead of stairs provide a nice change, and lush landscaping makes for a pleasant environment.

SPLASHTOWN SAN ANTONIO

Head for the giant wave pool, gentle enough that you can put a lounge chair in the shallow end and dream you’re at the beach (but no jellyfish). The Siesta Del Rio is long and gentle, and there is a tot-size river in the Kid’s Kove, which has slides and lots of spraying water. For older kids, there’s Crystal Falls, and a double, headfirst mat slide. Sand volleyball, too. Splashtown is well laid out, minimizing walking.

SIX FLAGS HURRICANE HARBOR ARLINGTON

Spread over 47 acres, Hurricane Harbor’s impressive, Texas-size collection of rides includes everything from enclosed body slides to headfirst mat rides; 12-foot drops (hang on to your bikini!); and single, double, and triple tube slides—some dark and scream-inducing, some leisurely.

[FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] Six Flags WaterWorld’s wave pool in Houston. The super-steep slide at Six Flags Splashtown in Spring, and below, the park’s large wave pool. Riding the crest at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Arlington. A frog and friends at Adventure Bay in Houston.

The wave pool is rough-and-tumble, as is the boogie-board ride. The requisite flowing river fills with teenagers hoping to see and be seen. For those who prefer to stay dry, raised and covered seating areas afford good views of the entire park, the better to get your bearings. Sometimes kids just want to play in the water, and there is a big, shallow pool to accommodate them. The Hook's Lagoon play area has a giant bucket, as well as 150 varieties of water-spraying implements!

Too Cool

Some water parks come with other attractions, in case you feel the need to be dry for a while.

Lost Lagoon, tucked inside **SeaWorld San Antonio**, features a wave pool with real sand and palms. Topnotch slides. Beach tunes and an alligator swamp (with real gators) add atmosphere. Two kids' play areas offer the requisite levers, sprays, and giant drenching bucket. Keep your swimsuit on all day, and you won't even care when Shamu drenches you.

You don't find many plain old parks any more, especially minutes from downtown **Houston**. With shade trees, picnic tables, and a 20-acre, 40-foot-deep lake, **The Reef** is a great place to bring a picnic and make your own fun. No lines, no stairs! Jump off the docks, splash on the shore, rent a kayak or paddleboat, snorkel in the clear water (fish and turtles at no extra charge). Scuba-diving classes on weekends visit submerged boats, a school bus, and an underwater platform.

After all the screaming and hurtling downhill, relax at **Galveston's Moody Gardens**. Palm Beach here has pristine Florida sand, clean water, palm trees, cold drinks, and bathrooms—the perfect beach! Play in the sand, watch the kids slide on the yellow submarine, sit in one of the waterfalls, or play volleyball. Moody Gardens' Rainforest is a great diversion, and at the 1.5 million-gallon aquarium, you can just LOOK at water for a change.

—Melissa Gaskill



Water parks in Texas run from the mod to the old-fashioned. A scene at **The Reef**, a 20-acre, 40-foot-deep lake in south Houston, resembles **Thomas Eakins'** famous 19th-Century painting *Swimming*.

NRH₂O NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

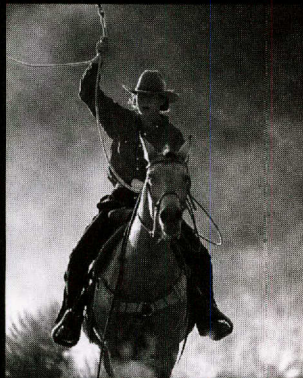
At the entrance, a spraying fountain draws kids like a magnet, and creates a water sidewalk that eventually lures them to the wave pool. Float in the Endless River. Plummet down one of five water slides, including the Purplepalooza. Tots will love the Tadpole Train Station. Try the seven-story Green Extreme uphill water

coaster. Trees, grass, and a relaxed atmosphere make NRH₂O a popular place to play. Water you waiting for? ★

MELISSA GASKILL fell in love with the curvy blue slide in her Port Arthur neighborhood pool at age 3. When she grew up, she was happy to discover that even pool slides are bigger in Texas.

During this assignment, staff photographer J. GRIFFIS SMITH imagined what it would be like shooting the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue.

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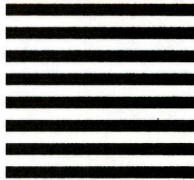
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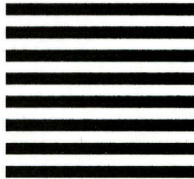
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ESSENTIALS Catch This Wave: Texas Water Parks

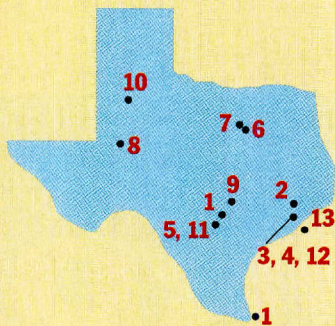
WATER PARK TIPS Water parks have lots of stairs, so be prepared for a workout. If ice chests are allowed, they will be checked for glass and alcohol (both no-nos, although many parks serve beer). Water shoes are a must for hot pavement and bathrooms. Goggles are a good idea, as are one-piece bathing suits for women and girls.

Every park has locker rentals, but if you wear a small fanny pack for your keys, cash, and credit cards (which can all get wet), you can leave the rest of the valuables in the car and you may not need a locker. All parks require (and sell) swim diapers. All offer season passes and group rates, and most can accommodate private parties and offer birthday packages.

Call ahead regarding hours and wheelchair accessibility.

1 SCHLITTERBAHN opens weekends in May, then daily through the summer, and again on weekends from late Aug. to mid-Sep. Admission: \$29.99 (tax included), \$24.84 ages 3-11, free age 2 and younger. Free parking, tubes, and life vests. Free shuttles between the parks. Outside food and drinks allowed. *Reservations recommended for the resort, motel, cottages, apartments, and duplexes.* At 305 W. Austin St., New Braunfels 78130; 830/625-2351; www.schlitterbahn.com. (Admission, tax included, for the new tropically flavored **Schlitterbahn Beach Waterpark** on **South Padre Island**: \$28.16, \$23.32 ages 3-11, free age 2 and younger; 956/772-SURF.)

2 SIX FLAGS SPLASHTOWN opens from late Apr. until the end of Sep. No coolers allowed, but a shaded picnic area lies just outside the entrance. Limited food selection inside. Parking: \$6. Admission: \$24.99, \$17.99 kids under 48 inches tall, free age 2 and younger. At 21300 I-45 N.,



Spring 77373; 281/355-3300; www.sixflags.com.

3 SIX FLAGS WATERWORLD has free life jackets and free tubes for rides that require them, although renting one cuts down on lines and is the only way to tube the moat. Parking: \$6. Admission to WaterWorld is included with an AstroWorld ticket: \$37.99 plus tax, \$26.99 plus tax age 55 and older, \$22.99 plus tax kids under 48 inches, free age 2 and younger. Open late Apr. through Labor Day. At Reliant Park, Houston (on Loop 610 across from the Astrodome); 713/799-1234; www.sixflags.com.

4 ADVENTURE BAY has free parking and allows picnics. Rent tubes, or wait in line for free ones. Admission: \$16.99, \$13.99 kids under 42 inches, free age 2 and younger. Open weekends in May, daily from Jun. 1-Aug. 12, then weekends again through Sep. 9. At 13602 Beechnut, Houston 77083; 281/530-5979; www.adventurebay.com.

5 SPLASHTOWN SAN ANTONIO opens weekends in Apr., May, and Sep. and daily June-Aug. Free tubes and parking, outside picnic area (food and ice chests not allowed inside). This park had the most reasonable food prices. Admission: \$21.99, \$16.99 kids under 4 feet. At 3600 I-35 N., San Antonio 78219; 210/227-1100; www.splashtownsa.com.

6 SIX FLAGS HURRICANE HARBOR opens weekends at the end of May, and daily June through Labor Day weekend. Admission:

\$27.99 plus tax, \$17.99 plus tax for kids under 48 inches, free age 2 and younger. Parking: \$7 per car. Coolers allowed. At 1800 E. Lamar, Arlington 76006; 817/265-3356; www.sixflags.com.

7 NRH20 opens May 18 through Sep. 8, 2002. Admission: \$13.45, \$11.45 kids under 48 inches. Season passes start at \$59.95. Free tubes and parking. At 9001 Grapevine Hwy., North Richland Hills 76180 (just northeast of downtown Fort Worth); 817/427-6500; www.nrh20.com.

8 HERO'S WATERWORLD opens Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Free parking; ice chests allowed. Call for prices. At 12300 E. Bus. Loop 20 (US 80 West) Odessa 79765; 915/563-1933; www.heroswaterworld.com.

9 VOLENTE BEACH on Lake Travis opens weekends beginning in Apr., daily from late May through mid-Aug., and weekends through Sep. Parking: \$3, with free shuttle. Admission: \$14.95, \$11.95 kids under 42 inches, free age 2 and younger. At 16107 FM 2769, Leander 78641; 512/258-5109; www.volentebeach.com.

10 TEXAS WATER RAMPAGE opens weekends in mid-May, daily from end of May through Aug. Admission: \$12.98 plus tax, \$5.50 plus tax kids under 4 feet and age 62 and older. Season passes, group rates, and birthday packages. Free parking. Coolers allowed for \$5. At 6602 Brownfield Hwy., Lubbock 79407; 806/796-0701.

11 LOST LAGOON, SEAWORLD SAN ANTONIO opens Mar. 9-Sep. 15 (closed Fri. from Apr. 5-May 17). Admission is included in SeaWorld admission: \$36.99, \$26.99 ages 3-11, free age 2 and younger. Tubes and life jackets free. SeaWorld is on Westover Hills Blvd.; exit Texas 151 West off US 90. Parking: \$7. For more infor-

mation, call 210/523-3611, or go online at www.seaworld.com to purchase tickets, season passes, and gift certificates.

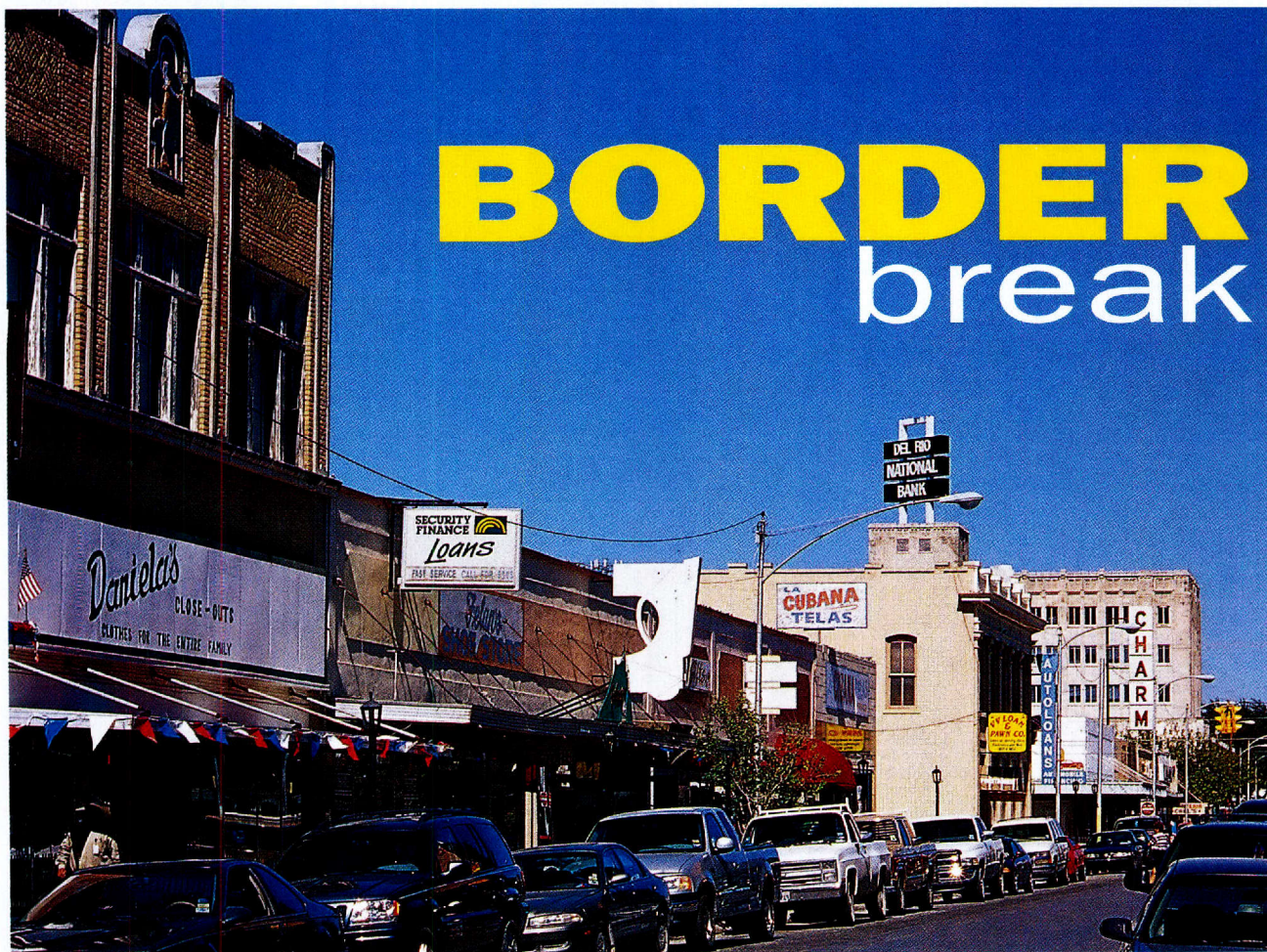
12 THE REEF opens daily Memorial Day-Labor Day. Call regarding dates open during off-season. Lifeguard on weekends only. Admission: \$8.50, \$7.50 ages 13-18 and seniors, \$6.50 ages 6-12, free age 5 and younger. Scuba divers \$20. Group rates. At 4800 Schurmier Rd., Houston 77275-3224. Information 713/812-3501; park number 713/991-3483; www.atthereef.com.

13 PALM BEACH, MOODY GARDENS in Galveston opens daily in summer, along with other attractions. One-day admission to Moody Gardens is \$29.95, 2 days \$39.95. Palm Beach admission (only): \$7.95. The hotel pool is practically a water park itself. At One Hope Blvd.; 800/582-4673; www.moodygardens.com.

WHERE TO STAY Hitting several Houston-area parks in one trip? Stay downtown. The **Crowne Plaza Houston—Downtown** (713/739-8800) is conveniently located, and when you're ready for some dry entertainment, a free shuttle takes you anywhere in the downtown area. Ask about weekend parking rates at nearby garages.

Lexington Hotel Suites, 1607 N. Watson Rd., Arlington (817/640-4444), is only minutes from Six Flags Hurricane Harbor and NRH20. The hotel offers a free full breakfast to fuel up for a day at the water park. Refrigerators and microwaves in the rooms mean you can whip up an easy supper for your pooped waterpuppies.

Accommodation choices abound near **San Antonio** water parks. Contact the San Antonio CVB at 800/447-3372; www.sanantoniocvb.com.



BY GENE FOWLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Hitting the trail on a Texas highway always spurs a sense of discovery.

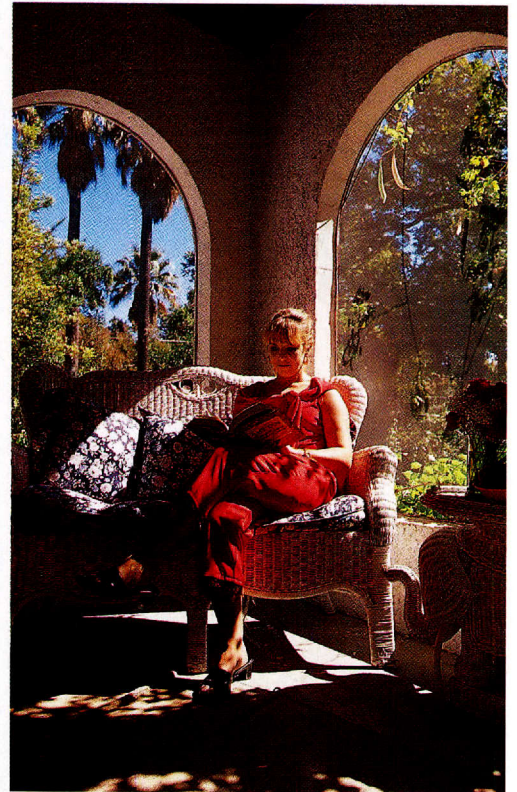
The roads we travel are more than surfaces to convey our horseless carriages from point A to point B. In a larger context, they are vital arteries of our collective life.

One of my favorite pathways is the stretch of US 90 between San Antonio and Del Rio. Many a morn I have turned off Loop 410 in the Alamo City and headed west to the border, at first to research the high-powered American “outlaw” radio stations that once broadcast from just across the Rio Grande, and later to attend events for the book I coauthored on the radio industry’s colorful past.

Once, I accompanied a party of BBC Radio folks on the trek. They were doing a documentary on Doc Brinkley, the Del Rio border-radio magnate and originator of the Goat Gland Transplant, an early agricultural version of Viagra. At every Old West vista and ghostly rock-house ruin, the British gents would exclaim, “Look at *that!*” And ya know, even after umpteen sojourns down this road, I still feel much the same sense of discovery.

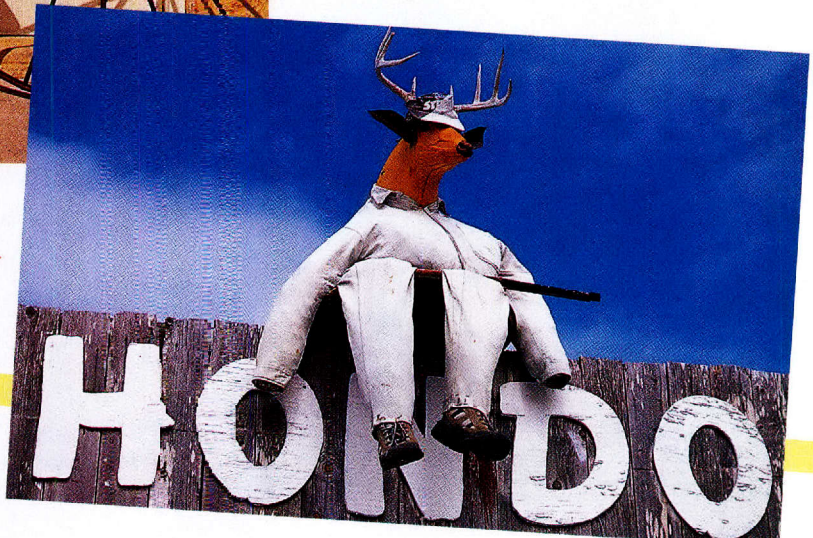


From old-fashioned to offbeat, eye-catching signs are a Hondo hallmark. The one at right features "Leroy" and advertises Hondo Taxidermy, a few miles east of town.



Housed in the 1887 Mason-Foster home, the enchanting Villa Del Rio B&B embodies Del Rio's oasis-in-the-desert spirit. Above, visitor Kimbra Purse enjoys some quiet time on a sun porch.

Del Rio, the "Queen City of the Rio Grande," lies some 150 miles west of San Antonio on US 90. Many travelers find the border trek filled with fascinating discoveries.





◀ A view of downtown D'Hanis showcases the town's trademark brick. The recently restored 1906 Koch Hotel B&B lies just east of downtown.

▶ Despite southwest Texas' semiarid climate, Del Rio-bound travelers on US 90 cross several rivers, including the beautiful Sabinal.

The best way to make any such trip, of course, is to leave plenty of time for exploring—and just plain piddling—along the route.

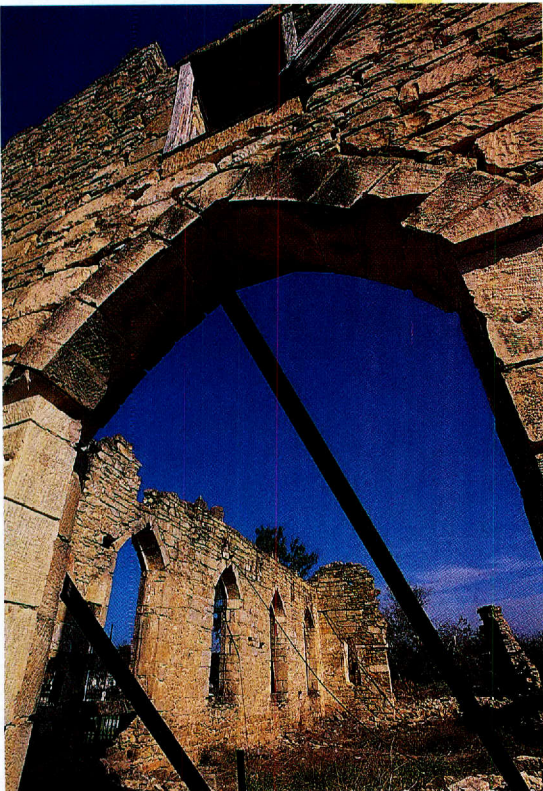
For example, it's almost criminal not to stop and savor the Old World aura of **Castroville**, "Little Alsace of Texas," founded in 1844 by Henri Castro (see "Willkomme zu Castroville!" August 2001). For a good diet-busting stop (hey, you're on vacation), try Haby's Alsatian Bakery, on the highway, just before the Medina River bridge.

If you like vintage country-western music, tune in **Hondo** station KCWM, at 1460 on the AM dial, as you leave the Medina Valley behind. And if the tunes get you in the mood for some countrified pastimes, stop off at Hondo Catfish Lake. The 90-acre site offers catfish-

and bass-fishing, dove-hunting, an RV park, and taxidermy. If your palate runs to the wild side, critter-wrangler Bob Horton will sell you a fat rattler or a feral hog. Bob's also the man to see to get that porcupine stuffed. "Most taxidermists won't do a porcupine," he says.

That music has often inspired me to stop in Hondo and shop for a new snap-button shirt at Graff's, in the row of old-timey stone buildings that front the railroad tracks and the highway. On a visit earlier this year, though, I learned that changing times had caused proprietor Fred Graff to turn his classic Western-wear store into an antiques-and-real estate business.

Like many residents, Fred has deep roots in the area. "My great-grandfather Louis Graff was one of the original settlers in Castro's colony," Fred explains. "He later became a Texas Ranger and, at one point, hauled freight from San Antonio to Del Rio." Before the coming of the railroad, the route along today's US 90 was a well-trod leg of a wagon trail between San Antonio and El Paso.



◀ A detour to Old D'Hanis reveals the limestone ruins of St. Dominic's Church, which dates to 1853. Visitors wonder about the services... the weddings... the funerals... that took place here.





In Sabinal, the arch of a late-1800s structure—perhaps a stagecoach waiting station—frames the 1903 Sabinal National Bank, now home to a pharmacy with an old-timey-style soda fountain.

San Felipe Creek, which flows through Del Rio, offers abundant recreation opportunities, including swimming and waterfowl-watching at Blue Hole in Horseshoe Park.

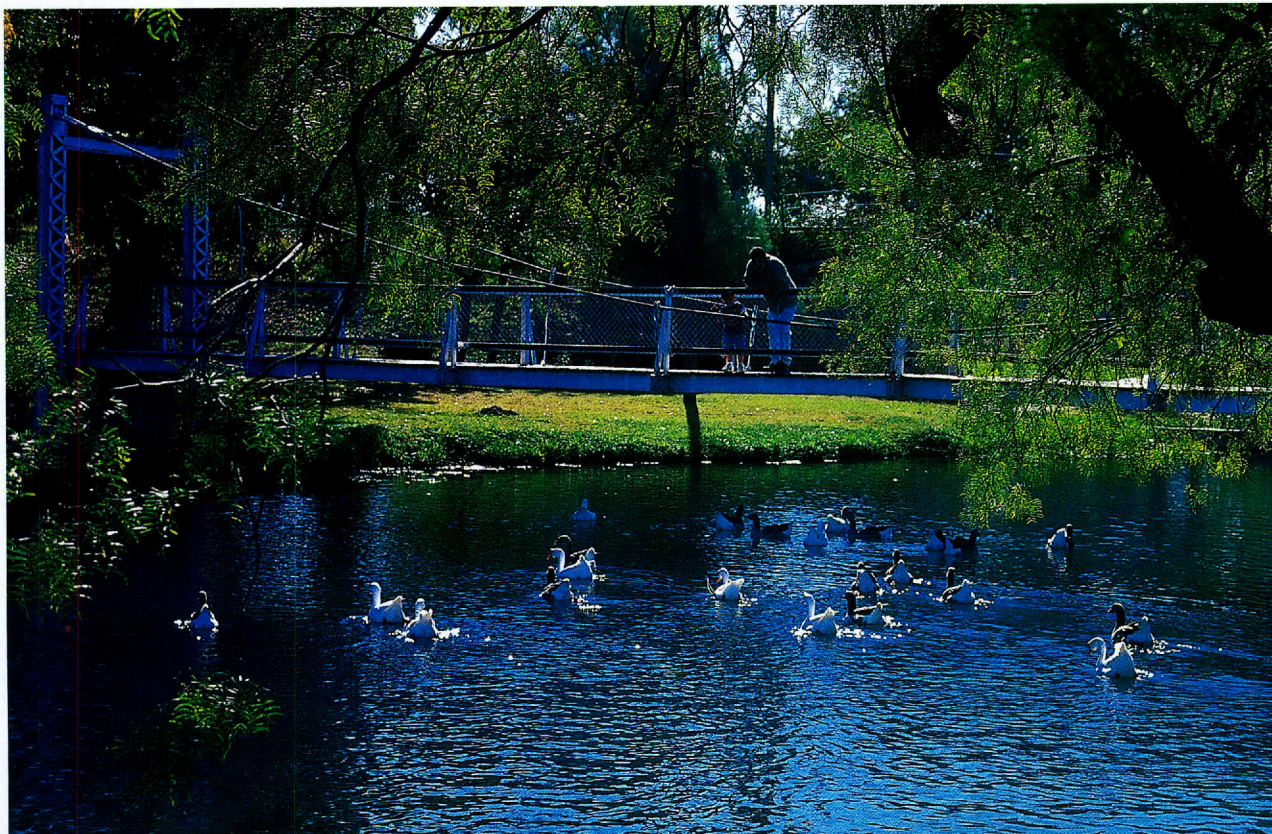
West of Hondo on 90, another Castro colony settlement, **D’Hanis**, became Old D’Hanis when the town moved a bit farther west. I always pause in Old D’Hanis to gaze upon the limestone ruins of St. Dominic’s Church (built in 1853 and expanded in the late 1860s) and the unique grave markers in the adjacent cemetery. The fragile shell of the old sanctuary is a powerful vision for those who like to ponder days gone by.

If you’ve a mind to linger along this stretch of the road, check into the 1906 Koch Hotel—now a B&B—in “New” D’Hanis. Innkeepers Candy and Hilo Del Bosque offer five antique-filled rooms with private baths. And if you arrive too late for breakfast, step down the street to J&M Country Mart for a plug of homemade jerky.

“Whoa! You’re here!” hollers a sign at Red Wagon Antiques in **Sabinal**, the next town on the trail. Built in 1938 as a gas station-restaurant-dance hall by area rancher M.E. Glasscock, the Red Wagon captures travelers’ attention with colorful exterior tile. “It was made by Emma Harris’ Mission Tile company, which was housed in the granary of the San José Mission in San Antonio,” says Les Barber, who, along with his wife, Kathi, owns the Red Wagon.

The building’s interior features are just as eye-catching. “This floor has seen a lotta boot-scootin’,” says Les as he points out the terrazzo sunburst design on the floor of the old ballroom. Dancers were surrounded by a colorful mural depicting the building and the Glasscock Ranch on all four walls. (It’s still there.) “They hung mohair towels from the ceiling to improve the acoustics,” he adds.

Old-timers have told Les that John Wayne caroused here while filming *The Alamo* in Brackettville. Fittingly, the Red Wagon displays several Duke portraits in its mix of old and





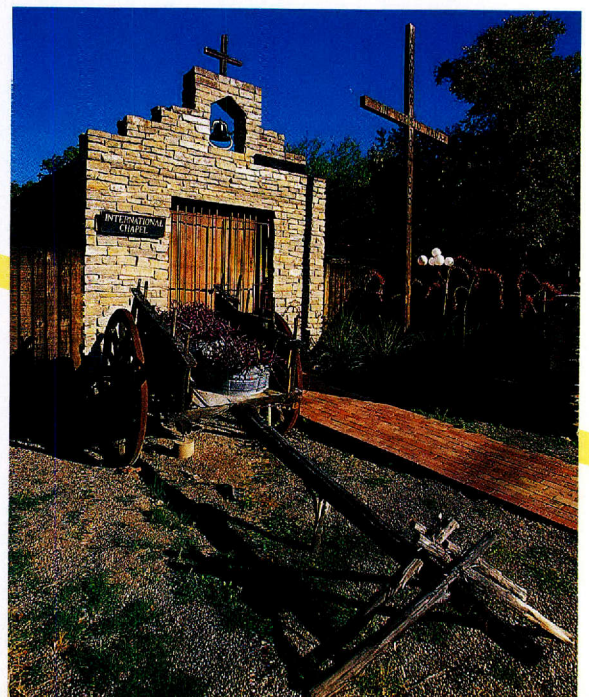
new Texas-abilia. “We call our furniture the Ranch House brand, because that was the name of the restaurant,” explains Les. “We build new stuff or redo old stuff and then cowboy it out, westernize it.”

In the next town, **Uvalde** (see “Uvalde, The Genuine Article,” June 2001), the Market Square Antiques mall makes a dandy spot for stretching the legs. So do the 1891 Uvalde Grand Opera House nearby and the small local-history museum called the Briscoe Visitor Center downstairs. I’ve enjoyed at least three visits to the Uvalde home-museum of John Nance “Cactus Jack” Garner, the delightfully ornery 1930s vice president, who was as skilled at whiskey-drinking and poker-playing as he was at politics.

The US 90 route served as an important 19th-Century military road, and Uvalde was founded near the U.S. Cavalry post Fort Ingalls. The next town on the trail, **Brackettville**, sprang up at Fort Clark, one of Texas’ most visitor-friendly vintage forts, offering a restaurant and accommodations in historic buildings. And seldom do I travel 90 without looping through Brackettville to admire its old rock buildings, both those restored and those that have aged gracefully to a dignified state of ruin.

▶ Talk about an imposing structure of justice. The 1910 Kinney County Courthouse, designed by Dallas architect L.L. Thurman, remains one of Brackettville’s most distinguished buildings.

▶ A two-and-a-half-acre frontier village dedicated to the history of Val Verde County, the Whitehead Memorial Museum in Del Rio comprises 14 buildings, including a small chapel often used for weddings.





The 17-foot bronze sculpture at Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site depicts a shaman-like figure, an image often seen in the pictographs found in the park.

From Brackettville, it's about half an hour to the Rio Grande—and maybe it's a psychological effect, but the land seems to turn a bit wilder somehow, the arroyos and sagebrush imbued with a bit more mystery and romance. On a recent trip, I followed 90's right turn at **Del Rio** and headed about half an hour northwest to Laguna Diablo Resort. The only resort on the Devils River arm of Lake Amistad, Laguna Diablo houses its guests in very comfortable rock duplexes, in starkly beautiful country three miles from the lake's Rough Canyon Marina. Dr. Joe Sanders (whose father, Dr. H.B. Ross, attended Judge Roy Bean on his deathbed) bought the "devil lagoon" land in 1941 and began creating a desert dude ranch before his death in a car crash in 1947. Still a family affair, Laguna Diablo today is operated by Dr. Sanders' granddaughter, Sarah Maxwell, and her husband, Allen.

The next morning, I headed for the prehistoric rock art at Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site, on US 90 between **Comstock** and Judge Roy Bean's "Law West of the Pecos" courtroom-saloon at **Langtry**. It is an awesome experience to hike down into Seminole Canyon (named for the Seminole-Negro Indian scouts who skirmished with Apaches in the area) and view the abstract figures on the walls of the rock shelters, cave-like overhangs that afforded some protection from the elements.

"The earliest paintings here were done about 4,000 years ago," explains park interpretive specialist Billie Foster. "Some of the figures represent shamans, who functioned as medicine men or high priests." Billie's tour, combined with dioramas and exhibits in the park's visitor center, gives a vivid picture of these prehistoric hunter-gatherers' lives.

I fell asleep that night to visions of shamans dancing on ancient rock walls, my head on a pillow at one of Del Rio's newest-yet-oldest addresses, the Villa Del Rio B&B, in the 1887 Mason-Foster home. Innkeeper Jay Johnson, an Oregon-born/Alaska-grown globetrotter

BROWN PLAZA

The flood that roared down San Felipe Creek in Del Rio in 1998 took not only lives and homes, it also ravaged a community symbol—Brown Plaza. Dedicated on Cinco de Mayo in 1908, the plaza hosted many a fiesta and political gathering.

"We've restored the gazebo," says Brown Plaza Association president Tina Martinez, "and we'll have some great bands for this year's Cinco de Mayo celebration." Completely rebuilt, the plaza's Casa de la Cultura (302 Cantu St., Del Rio 78840; 830/774-8742) offers art exhibits and classes.

The restored gazebo in Del Rio's Brown Plaza awaits the Cinco de Mayo celebration. A six-panel mural nearby depicts the city's heritage.



who has lived in Europe and Mexico, settled in the “Queen City of the Rio Grande” for both its natural and cultural attractions. “Del Rio is an oasis in the middle of a desert,” he explains. “We get our water from San Felipe Springs, which flows about 90 million gallons a day.” The old canals, or *acequias*, irrigate the villa’s century-old magnolia, palm, and pecan trees.

Original features of the inn include hand-painted Italian floor tile, Mediterranean cypress ceiling beams, and alcove murals of Southwest scenes painted by Mary Foster, the great-grandmother of country singer (and Del Rio native) Radney Foster. Jay ponders

the idea of reopening the deep well on the back of the property that once furnished sulphur water for medicinal drinks and baths. “A University of Texas chemistry professor published an analysis of the water in the late 1800s,” he says. “He noted that it was the best sulphur water found in the United States and probably equal to any found in the world.”

The “self-appointed ambassador for Del Rio” recently led a successful effort to have the Val Verde County seat proclaimed a “Main Street City.” As such, it will receive the benefits of a state program that helps preserve and redevelop historic downtowns. “Del Rio will be Texas’ next ‘destination city,’” Jay enthuses.

After a breakfast of fruit, crêpes with a jalapeño jelly-cream cheese filling, and a thick slice of country ham grilled in maple syrup, I reluctantly prepare to see Del Rio recede in my rearview mirror. Jay’s vivacious mom, Kitty Johnson, smiles and says, “Well, I’m glad to see you go.” And then comes the oft-repeated punchline: “So you can come back soon.” ★

Austin writer GENE FOWLER agrees with the late Dr. John R. Brinkley that Del Rio is “the center of romance in America.”

Versatile staff photographer GRIFF SMITH also shot the story on water parks that appears in this issue.

ESSENTIALS US 90 Road Trip

CASTROVILLE is on US 90, about 25 mi. west of San Antonio. Write to the Castroville Area Chamber of Commerce, Box 572, 78009; 830/538-3142 or 800/778-6775; www.castroville.com.

Haby's Alsatian Bakery is at 207 US 90 East; 830/931-2118.

HONDO is about 15 mi. farther west. Write to the Hondo Area Chamber of Commerce, 1802 Ave. M, 78861; 830/426-3037; www.hondotex.com. **Hondo Catfish Lake** and **Hondo Taxidermy** are a few miles east of Hondo on US 90; 830/741-5845. **Graff's Real Estate, Cattle Company, & Antiques** is at 1116 18th St.; 830/426-2341. The **Medina County Museum**, visible from US 90, is on the west side of Hondo; call the chamber.

D'HANIS is a few miles west of Hondo. Watch for the sign in **Old D'Hanis to St. Dominic's Church**. The **Koch Hotel B&B** faces the highway in D'Hanis; 830/363-7500 or 877/248-4096; www.kochhotel.com. The **J&M Country Mart** is in downtown D'Hanis; 830/363-7286.

SABINAL is 11 mi. west of D'Hanis. Write to the Sabinal Chamber of Commerce, Box 55, 78881; 830/988-2010. **Red Wagon Antiques** is at 201 E. Fisher St. (US 90 West); 830/988-2527. The **Sabinal Wild Hog Festival and Craft Fair** takes place in Mar.; call the chamber.

UVALDE is another 22 miles farther. Write to the Uvalde CVB, 300 E. Main St., 78801; 830/278-4115 or 800/588-2533; www.ualdecvb.org. The **Market Square Antiques mall** is at 301 N. West St.; 830/278-1294 or 877/407-6898. The **Uvalde Grand Opera House** is at 100 W. North St. (the **Briscoe Visitor Center** is on the ground floor); call the CVB. The **Garner Memorial Museum and Vice Presidential Library** is at 333 N. Park St.; 830/278-5018.



- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 1 San Antonio | 5 Sabinal | 9 Comstock |
| 2 Castroville | 6 Uvalde | 10 Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site |
| 3 Hondo | 7 Brackettville | |
| 4 D'Hanis | 8 Del Rio | 11 Langtry |

FORT CLARK AND BRACKETTVILLE are 40 miles west of Uvalde. Write to the Kinney Co. Chamber of Commerce, Box 386, Brackettville 78832 (830/563-2493; www.brackettville.com), or to the Fort Clark Springs Assn., Box 345, Brackettville 78832 (830/563-2495 or 800/937-1590; www.fortclark.com).

DEL RIO is about 30 miles west of Brackettville. Write to the Del Rio Chamber of Commerce, 1915 Ave. F, 78840; 800/889-8149; www.drchamber.com. The **Villa Del Rio B&B** is at 123 Hudson Dr.; 830/768-1100 or 800/995-1887; www.villadelrio.com. The **Whitehead Memorial Museum** is at 1308 S. Main St.; 830/774-7568. For information on **Laguna Diablo Resort**, write to HCR1, Box 4RC, Del Rio 78840; 830/774-2422 or 866/227-7082; www.lagunadiablo.com.

SEMINOLE CANYON STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE is about 45 miles northwest of Del Rio on US 90. Write to Box 820, Comstock 78837; 915/292-4464; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

BOOKS Look in your local library or bookstore for a revised edition of *Border Radio: Quacks, Yodelers, Pitchmen, Psychics, and Other Amazing Broadcasters of the American Airwaves* by Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford (Univ. of Texas Press, 2002), as well as *Val Verde County* by Douglas Lee Braudaway and the Val Verde County Historical Commission (Arcadia Publishing, 1999).

*Accessible only by boat, a barrier island
in Calhoun County offers a taste of true wilderness*

MATAGORDA ISLAND:

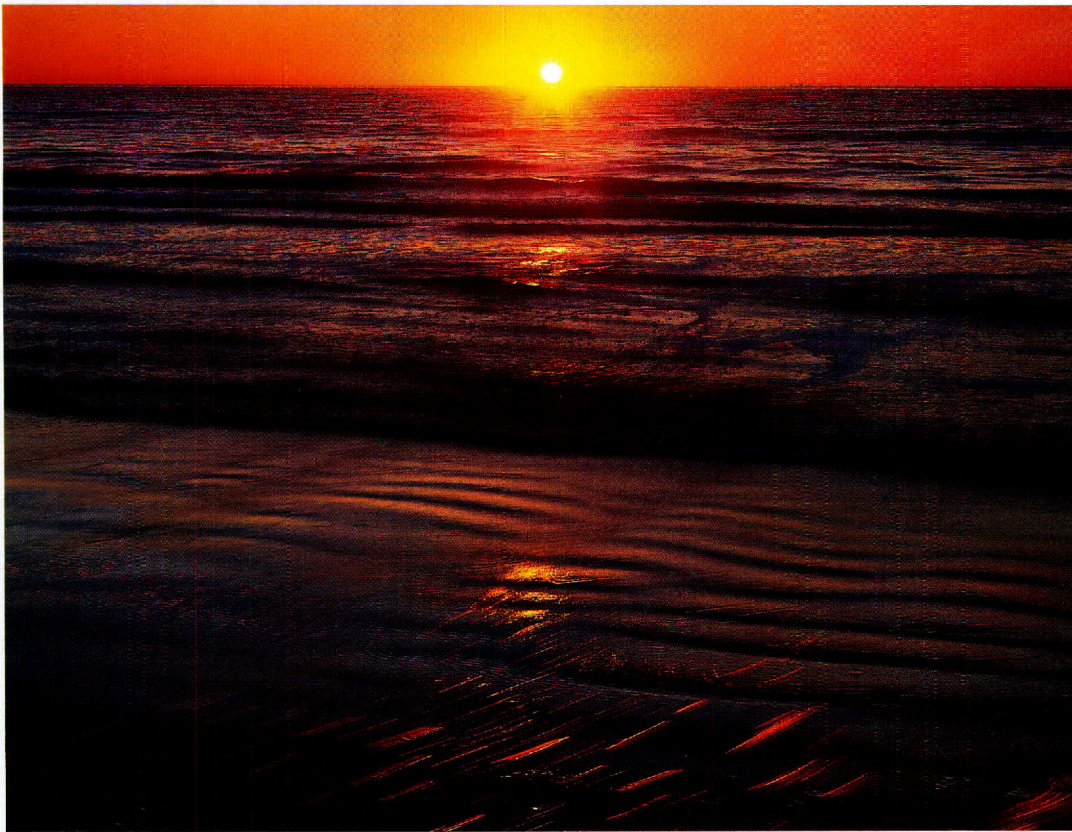




COAST AWAY!

*By Gene Fowler
Photographs by Laurence Parent*

On Matagorda Island, the stillness of a salt marsh at last light can carry visitors back to a time when all of Texas' barrier islands were pristine. Matagorda remains unspoiled, a spectacular haven for birds—more than 300 species—and other wildlife.



The eternal sound of waves lapping the beach greets a sunrise over the Gulf of Mexico.

One fall morning in 1982, the wildlife on Matagorda Island must have regarded the humans' activity with bewilderment. "Crazy Texans," said the alligator to the coyote. "That giant metal bird has no wings," wisecracked the whooping crane to the laughing gull. "That's a bird?" puzzled the horned lizard.

On the southern tip of the windswept strip of sand, engineers and aeronautics wizards checked all systems as investors and media reps watched nearby. A roar commenced, the ground rumbled, and with a blast of exhaust, the *Conestoga I* lifted off, ascended into outer space, and then fell to earth as planned in the Gulf of Mexico.

Tragically, and ironically, one of the major investors in this private-enterprise rocket test, Dallas oilman Toddie Lee Wynne—who at that time owned the southern part of Matagorda Island—was not at the launch site. Having departed his

earthly vessel that morning, the eternal portion of Mr. Wynne was perhaps following the rocket ship as it soared into the near-heavens.

owned by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of Texas.

You'll rate yourself an accomplished minor mariner just getting here. The only

WAYNE'S WORLD

"It was love at first sight" says Dr. Wayne McAlister of the time he first laid eyes on Matagorda Island, in the early 1970s. In 1993, when the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service needed a resident environmental educator for its facility at the old Wynne Ranch, on the southern part of the island, Wayne retired from 30 years of teaching biology at Victoria College and moved into one of the ranch's bungalows with his wife, Martha, who also fell in love with the isolated island.

Today, Wayne teaches environmental mini-courses in the ranch's cowboy bunkhouse to high school classes, teacher workshops, Elderhostelers, nature clubs, and youth groups, who travel to the island's southern end via a charter boat that departs from Goose Island State Park.

"I'm most interested in the island's natural history," enthuses Wayne, "especially the invertebrates and other weird little creatures along the coast. Not long ago, for instance, we discovered giant blue land crabs thriving here that were previously thought to live no farther north than Padre Island."

Wayne revels in the island's solitude. For kicks, he says, "I get in my pickup in the morning, drive around to make sure no wildlife is in trouble, and then I flip on the radio and listen to Houston traffic reports.... Remember that line, 'Stop the world, I want to get off'? This is where you get off."

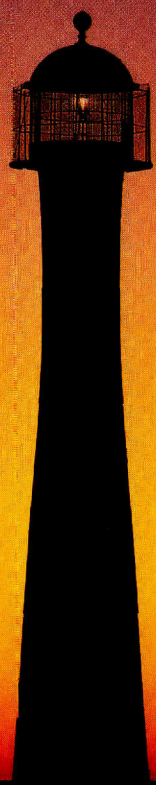
—Gene Fowler

[FACING PAGE] The island's name comes from the Spanish *mata gorda*, meaning "thick brush," alluding, according to *The Handbook of Texas*, to canebrakes that once lined the shore.

"MATAGORDA is the only barrier island on the Texas coast that is wholly owned by the public and has no commercial development. Visitors say it's wonderful that most of the island looks the way it would have hundreds of years ago."



MORE THAN *anything, isle-eyed pilgrims come to commune with the wild and primitive spirit*



of the earth, sea, and sky.

way to reach Matagorda Island is by boat—float your own or take the park ferry. Once a day on Thursday and Friday, and three times daily on weekends, Texas Parks & Wildlife's 50-foot craft, the *McBride*, sets out from Port O'Connor for a 45-minute cruise through Espiritu Santo Bay to the island, with as many as 49 isle-eyed pilgrims aboard. They come to camp and fish, birdwatch and view other wildlife, ponder Matagorda history while marveling at its 1852 lighthouse, and—more than anything—commune with the wild and primitive spirit of the earth, sea, and sky.

"Beachcombers have found things like eastern murex shells, lightning whelks, even million-year-old sharks' teeth," says John. "They find things here they won't find anywhere else on the coast, because most beaches are so picked over." The park offers beachcombing and shelling tours (the next scheduled for May 4 and 18), allowing combers to hunt for sand dollars and other treasures. A guide identifies your finds, and a park vehicle follows along. "If you get pooped," John explains, "you can ride in the truck."

Upcoming migratory-bird tours (May 5 and 12) provide assisted observation of buntings, warblers, and tanagers returning from winter in South America. Dr. Wayne McAlister (see sidebar, page 20), author of the 1993 book *Matagorda Island, A Naturalist's Guide*, says the island hosts "an extravagance of birds, especially during the fall and spring migrations." Watchers of the winged may behold more than 300 species. The island shelters 12 endangered or threatened bird species,

such as the piping plover and the brown pelican. Rare whooping cranes can usually be spotted in the marshes from mid-October to April. "We saw a greater flamingo on the shoreline last year," adds Wayne.

Seven other endangered or threatened species here include the Ridley sea turtle, the American alligator, and the horned lizard. Nighttime wildlife tours (May 11 and 25) aid overnight campers in the successful eyeballing of island critters. "On a recent tour," says John, "we saw 30 deer, seven gators, coyotes, a feral hog, black-tailed jackrabbits, armadillos, and rattlesnakes. We use a spotlight to see the animals." Wild turkeys have also been spotted on the island.

Dewey Stringer of Houston rates Matagorda redfish- and trout-fishing as "some of the best in the world." Dewey's dad introduced him to the island as a boy about 50 years ago. "We usually fished the bay side, but we'd occasionally get brave and go offshore. That was back in the days before GPS," he says, referring to Global Positioning Systems.



Turkey trot! Wild turkeys have plenty of company on the island, which also supports deer, jackrabbits, armadillos, coyotes, feral hogs, rattlesnakes, alligators, lizards, and sea turtles.

Some visitors even gain the satisfaction of helping improve the park. "We have two volunteer beach cleanups a year," says John. "Because of the currents, about 90 percent of the trash that lands on

Matagorda Island Lighthouse, built in 1852 of cast iron, is in the initial stages of restoration, thanks to a cooperative effort by several different entities, and much to the delight of Texans and lighthouse-lovers everywhere. The last lighthouse keeper left in 1956. The beacon was relit during a special ceremony celebrating the new millennium.

Texas beaches washes up here or within 100 miles of this beach. We've found computer monitors, refrigerators, and enough lumber to build a lot of houses. A bottle with a message inside washed up in 1993 from a Chinese workboat in the Pacific Ocean." (The message said the note-writer was en route from Hawaii to China.)

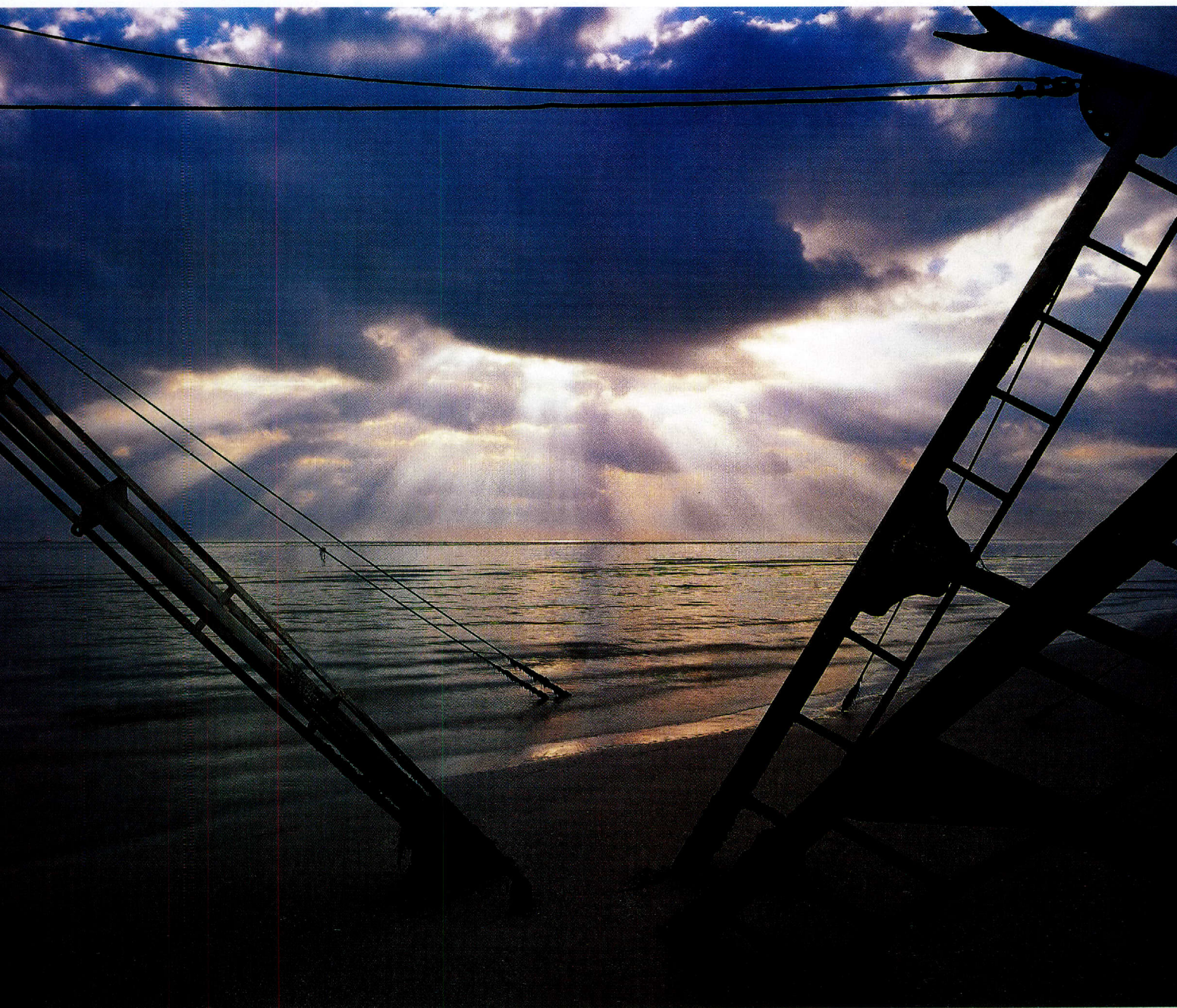
Despite the tide of modern debris, the beach can induce an exhilarating reverie, sustained by the ebbing sound of the surf. The island's very name, *Matagorda*, suggests

an antique tapestry of swashbuckling sailors, bold explorers, and lusty buccaneers. Occasional guided history tours of the park (the next set for May 4) deepen visitors' understanding of the island's storied past.

When I took the tour last year, former park assistant manager Cathleen Veatch told the dozen of us bouncing along in the park's vintage schoolbus about the island's geological beginnings. The beach, sand dunes, prairie grassland, salt marshes, mud flats, and oyster reefs that comprise the

38-mile-long barrier island were formed about 5,000 years ago, after the last Ice Age.

Karankawa Indians, their bodies smeared with mud and alligator grease as a mosquito repellent, greeted La Salle when the explorer led a party of French colonists into the area in 1685. It is believed that the Frenchmen explored part of the island after their supply ship, *L'Aimable*, ran aground and broke apart while attempting to enter Matagorda Bay through Pass Cavallo, the treacherous



A shipwreck speaks eloquently of the power of sea and storm. Among other ships to meet this fate, La Salle's *L'Aimable* sank nearby in 1685.



Besides anglers, Matagorda Island lures campers, hikers, birdwatchers, and bicyclists. Guided tours acquaint the adventurous and timid alike with the island's splendors.

coastal passageway that divides Matagorda Island on the south and Matagorda Peninsula on the north.

In time, especially after a lighthouse was erected on the island in 1852, vessels carrying thousands of Texas immigrants would enter the pass, heading for the bustling port of Indianola, just north of today's Port O'Connor. Tour-takers get a closeup look at the beacon and a quick sketch of its history, from the first lighting, on New Year's Eve 1852, by Captain James E. Cummings. Historian Linda Wolff notes in her 1999 book, *Indianola and Matagorda Island, 1837-1887*, that the "Matagorda Island Lighthouse was the first to be lit on the Texas Gulf Coast."

During the Civil War, Confederates buried the lighthouse's Fresnel lens in the sand, to prevent Union invaders from utilizing its light. Although that lens was never found, the beautiful, prism-like glass from 1873 can be seen in the Calhoun County Museum in Port Lavaca. Relit for the new millennium on New Year's Eve 1999, the lighthouse is presently in the initial stages of restoration, with funds provided through a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) grant and supplemented with funds raised by the Matagorda Island Foundation. "One of the most amazing things about it," says the foundation's vice president, Judge Arlene Marshall, "is the way so many entities—Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Texas Historical Commission,

the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Coast Guard, Calhoun County, TxDOT, and the public—have all worked together to save this Texas treasure."

The tour also highlights the once-thriving, now-vanished island town of Saluria; Civil War trenches (still visible, especially from the air), dug when Union forces attacked the island's now-submerged Fort Esperanza; and

the island's service, from 1939 to the 1970s, as an Army Air Corps and, later, Air Force base and practice-bombing field. Small ceme-

teries offer perhaps the most powerful reminder of the island's past. "Gone but not forgotten," reads the inscription on the tombstone of Saluria cofounder Hugh W. Hawes.

"Matagorda Island is a special place," testifies foundation president and longtime visitor Dewey Stringer. "When you are on Matagorda Island," writes naturalist Richard C. Bartlett in his 1995 book, *Saving the Best of Texas*, "you have a sense of isolation, an otherworldly feeling that will stir your conservation ethic. You'll sense, more than see, hear, and smell, that you have gone way back in time..." And that, in 2002, is a rare and wondrous thing. ★

GENE FOWLER wrote about Davy Crockett in the March issue.

LAURENCE PARENT also photographed the Caprock Canyons Trailway story in this issue.

ESSENTIALS Matagorda Island

MATAGORDA ISLAND,

in Calhoun County, lies along the coastal bend of Texas, about 9 miles from Port O'Connor and 48 miles from Victoria. Headquarters of Matagorda Island State Park and Natl. Wildlife Refuge are in Port O'Connor; the park store sells nature books, posters, T-shirts, keychains, and the like.

The only way to reach the park is by sea. Texas Parks & Wildlife (TPWD) operates a year-round ferry service out of Port O'Connor for passengers only (no vehicles except bicycles) 4 days a week, with one departure each day Thu-Fri, 3 departures each day Sat-Sun (no service Thanksgiving and Christmas days). On the island, a shuttle takes campers to Beach Campground (primitive camping, covered picnic tables, cold-water shower, 2 group barracks; restrooms and hot showers in Visitor Center, where the ferry docks; water on island is nonpotable). Hiking, mountain biking, and bicycling allowed on 32 mi. of shell-paved roadway. *Reservations required for the ferry, camping, and guided tours; fees for each (subject to change). The island has no electricity, drinking water, phone, concession, or lifeguards; bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and plenty of water.* For reservations, call 512/389-8900; TPWD



Park Information line is 800/792-1112. Write to Matagorda Island State Park, Box 117, Port O'Connor 77982; 361/983-2215; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Beachcombing tours take place May 4 and 18, a **guided history tour** May 4, **migratory-bird tours** May 5 and 12, **nighttime wildlife tours** May 11 and 25; call regarding fees, details, and other tours.

For information on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service **environmental education program** (reservations required) on the island's southern end, call the reservation desk at 361/972-2559, or write to Dr. Wayne McAlister, Aransas Natl. Wildlife Refuge, Box 100, Austwell 75990.

For information on the **Matagorda Island Foundation**, write to Judge Arlene Marshall, 211 S. Ann St., Ste. 304, Port Lavaca 77979 (361/553-4600), or to Dewey Stringer, 5858 Westheimer, Ste. 400, Houston 77057 (713/974-5550).

Look in your bookstore or library for *Indianola and Matagorda Island, 1837-1887* by Linda Wolff (Eakin Press, 1999) and *Matagorda Island, A Naturalist's Guide* by Wayne McAlister (Univ. of Texas Press, 1993).



© LANCE VARNELL

CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK

Scores of cliff swallows billow out of the canyon, forming a swirling, 100-foot column above the rim. Just beyond the tips of my hiking boots, the blood-red canyon wall, bathed in late-afternoon light, drops 160 feet to the broken string of shallow pools that make up Holmes Creek.

Every spring, I'm drawn by these remote, labyrinthine canyons that change color and character as the sun moves across the sky—dark red in early morning, brightening to rose and ochre toward midday, then deepening again as the sun drops toward the western horizon.

MOUNTAINS

BY HENRY CHAPPELL

BENEATH
THE

PLAINS



© WYMAN MEINZER

The park's trails wend through grassland and along wooded stream terraces, and switchback up canyon walls to the High Plains Caprock. Most days, circling birds of prey outnumber hikers. I come here in search of solitude, wildness, and a sense of Southern Plains history; I've never been disappointed.

I'm tempted to linger at Holmes Creek, but the yuccas cast long shadows. Caprock Canyons State Park's 3.5-mile Canyon Rim Trail leads me through mesquite and midgrass prairie. Indian blanket, prickly pear, toadflax, ground cherry, yucca, and countless other wildflowers, emboldened by recent spring rain, color the little bluestem grass with shades of red, yellow, violet, and brilliant white. Westward, gentle prairie gives way to a broken, juniper-studded badland. Beyond that a mile or so, the Caprock Escarpment abruptly rises some 700 feet, marking the transition from the Rolling Plains ecological region to the High Plains.

A few hours later, in the park's Honey Flat Camping Area, I warm my tired feet by my campfire and gaze at a night sky unpolluted by artificial light.

[TOP AND ABOVE] Yuccas and grasses abound at Caprock Canyons State Park, which encompasses roughly 14,000 acres near Quitaque. The oldest exposed rocks in the park date back more than 250 million years and were probably deposited by seasonal desert streams called wadis.

[FACING PAGE] A Spanish explorer was so impressed with the canyon's ruddy coloration that he called it *Sangre de Cristo*, or blood of Christ.





Everywhere you turn, you see the forces of nature at work. Water, gravity, and wind continue to carve



gullies and ravines into the deeper canyons.

More than 30 miles of hiking trails, 22 miles of bike trails, and nearly 20 miles of equestrian trails wind through the canyons and across the plains and badlands, leading to the park's remotest reaches, country little changed since the days when the Comanche and Kiowa hunted here with bow and lance.

CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK shows its wild side right up front. Driving into the park from Quitaque on FM 1065, visitors are often treated to the sight of the Texas State Bison Herd grazing the 300-acre pasture just east of the road. The massive fence says it all; these aren't your standard domestic relics. Ranger C.L. Hawkins oversees the herd. "You don't handle these bison like cattle," he says. "You let them decide when and where they want to go. These are wild animals."

And these beasts have regal roots—all are descendants of the famous Charlie Goodnight bison herd preserved by the cattleman in the late 19th Century. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department plans to use these animals (about 40 at present) as the foundation for a much larger, sustainable herd that will eventually be spread over numerous other parks.

Immediately beyond park headquarters, 120-acre Lake Theo (named for the lake's former owner, Theo Geisler) offers shaded picnic areas and campsites, as well as excellent fishing for bass, bream, crappie, and catfish.

Just across the Lake Theo dam, an interpretive building overlooks the rust-colored breaks. Inside, display cases house examples of Paleolithic and Neolithic flint work and other artifacts from the park's rich history.

About 9,000 years ago, hunters of the Folsom culture, armed with spears tipped with large, fluted chert heads, pursued now-extinct giant bison and other large game. In time, the canyonlands became



A hiker pauses to take in a breathtaking view of the canyon country.

more arid, and the giant game disappeared. Adaptable hunter-gatherers of the Archaic period then dominated the region, from about 8,000 to 2,000 years ago. Beginning about A.D. 200, Neo-Indians inhabited the canyonlands, making pottery and cultivating beans, corn, and squash.

In 1541, the Spanish explorer Coronado traveled through the region. By the early 1600s, the Spanish had established colonies in New Mexico, and vigorous trade ensued between the New Mexicans and the Plains Indians. The Plains Apaches acquired Spanish horses and ruled the canyonlands until the early 1700s, when the Comanches drove them southward.

The fierce, buffalo-hunting Comanche and Kiowa reigned over the South Plains until the U.S. Army drove the last bands onto the reservation in the mid-1870s.

In 1880, legendary cattleman Charles Goodnight established the sprawling JA Ranch for Englishman John G. Adair on land now within the park. Texas purchased the parkland in 1975, and, much to the delight of hikers, canyon rats, and other nature-lovers, Caprock Canyons State Park opened in 1982.

BYOND the interpretive building, the park road winds its way east, then northwest, across South Prong Creek and on to the North and South Prong trailheads. Mornings and late afternoons, the soft light gives depth and texture to the towering red scarps. Along the way, several displays explain the park's wildlife and geology. On a spring afternoon, a billowing, anvil-shaped thunderhead towering above the distant Caprock, together with the scent of rain and new grass on a cool, gusting wind, heightens the sense of remoteness.

"I never get tired of looking at these canyons," says park manager Geoff Hulse.

[FACING PAGE] Striking pinnacles and spires within the juniper-studded canyons are the solid remains of less-resistant rock that has been worn away gradually through the ages.





© CL. EDMISTON III

When the sun strikes the canyon walls, the rock radiates with intense, changing tints and textures.

"I've worked other places, and I'd always get a hankering to move, but I never feel that way here."

A drive through the park provides only a foretaste of the scenery and solitude that await hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders. More than 30 miles of hiking trails, 22 miles of bike trails, and nearly 20 miles of equestrian trails wind through the canyons and across the plains and badlands, leading to the park's remotest reaches, country little changed since the days when the Comanche and Kiowa hunted here with bow and lance.

Next morning, I lace my hiking boots in the South Prong parking lot and head up the Upper Canyon Trail, a seven-mile loop through canyons cut by the north and south prongs of the Little Red River. The trail begins in a gently rolling, mesquite-and-

juniper woodland near the canyon's mouth. The rising sun lights the canyon walls; scrub jays, rufous-crowned sparrows, mockingbirds, and flocks of garrulous lark buntings flit about in the vegetation. Bobwhite cocks whistle their mating call from the bluestem grass and prickly pear. Red sandstone spires rise 80 feet above the dark green juniper on the canyon floor. Mourning doves coo from the ledges, and ever-present turkey vultures drift on the thermals.

On my right, the towering, stratified canyon wall looms close. I lay my hands on the cool, shaded, brick-red mudstone of the Quartermaster formation, the base rock of the Southern Plains, deposited between 286 million and 246 million years ago, primarily during the Permian Period. White, horizontal veins of gypsum—a form of salt deposited by the advance and retreat of a shallow sea—stripe the Permian stratum.

Around the two-mile point, the trail turns sharply upward, and I gain about 100 feet of elevation. Here, the colors change from Permian rust to the tan and greenish-gray of sandstone and shale laid down from 245 million to 208 million years ago by streams washing eastward from the ancestral Rocky Mountains. At the upper reaches, I've stepped into the Triassic Period. The talus-littered slopes, hoodoos, and tenaciously clinging juniper bear testament to constant wind and water erosion.

The trail climbs another 300 feet, and the canyon rim comes into view. I clamber up a layer of hard, white rimrock. This is the High Plains "caprock," a caliche layer formed during the past 5 million years, when subsurface moisture containing calcium bicarbonate evaporated, leaving a mineralized crust.

On top, the trail splits. One fork wends through cedar and shortgrass to Haynes Ridge Overlook and an eastward view of the park's buttes and badlands; the other fork descends the North Prong. I take a short side-trail to Fern Cave, where I soak my feet in a clear pool, munch an apple, and down a quart of water beneath the giant overhang. Bushel-basket-size ferns cling to the ledges of the mineral-

© WYMAN MEINZER



Horseback riders enjoy nearly 20 miles of riding trails, as well as an equestrian camping area with corrals and water troughs.



Lake Theo reflects the multihued Panhandle sky. The 120-acre impoundment offers picnic areas, campsites, no-wake boating, and excellent fishing.

stained walls. I doze for a while in the cool breeze, then go down the North Prong, hiking through the geologic periods and epochs, back to the Permian clay at the parking lot.

WILDLIFE abounds in the park. Mule deer, white-tailed deer, and aoudad sheep—the latter imported from North Africa in the 1950s—are common along all of the trails. Native pronghorn antelope often graze the open prairie just inside the park entrance.

Birders, take note: The park harbors more than 200 species of resident and migrant birds. Golden eagles have nested in the park; mountain bluebirds delight wintertime visitors; canyon wrens and rock wrens await hikers.

The park offers something to campers of every stripe—from manicured campsites complete with water, electricity, picnic tables, and shelters to primitive backpacker sites along the Canyon Loop and South Prong trails. The Wild Horse Camping Area offers campsites, corrals, and water troughs.

Planning is underway for a 5,000-square-foot visitor center along the rim of Holmes Creek Canyon that will have classrooms, interpretive displays, and a splendid view of the canyon. A small portion of the bison herd will roam an adjacent pasture.

Park interpreter Deanna Oberheims

up the canyonlands' appeal: "I love being here because you can get away from everything. You feel like you're a thousand miles from civilization."

Look in any direction, and you'll also feel you've stepped a thousand years into the past. ★

For Plano writer HENRY CHAPPELL, May isn't complete without a weekend of camping and hiking at Caprock Canyons State Park.



© WMAN MEINZER

Just inside the park entrance, about 40 bison graze a 300-acre pasture.

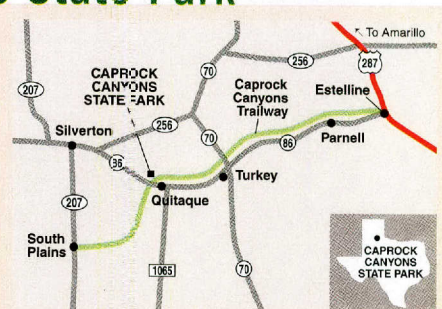
ESSENTIALS Caprock Canyons State Park

CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK lies in the Texas Panhandle, 3.5 miles north of Texas 86 in Quitaque via FM 1065. The park opens 365 days a year. Hours: Sun–Thu 8-5, Fri–Sat 8-8. Entrance fee: \$2 per day age 13 and older, free age 12 and younger. Write to the Park Manager, Caprock Canyons State Park, Box 204, Quitaque 79255; 806/455-1492. www.tpwd.state.tx.us. For reservations, call TPWD at 800/792-1112. Park staff occasionally lead birding and bison tours; call the park for more information.

CAMPING Campsites range from \$7/night for primitive backpacker sites to \$12/night for sites with water and electricity. Wheelchair-accessible restrooms, picnic areas, and campsites are available.

RENTALS Quitaque Riding Stables offers guided and unsupervised horse tours and tack rental. Call 806/455-1208.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS Spring and fall are the best seasons for hiking in the park; summertime temperatures can be dangerously



high. All hikers should carry at least 1 gallon of water in the summer season. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS Caprock Canyons Trailway, 806/455-1492 (see page 46); Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, 806/651-2244; Palo Duro Canyon State Park, 806/488-2227.

For more information about area attractions, lodging, and restaurants, call the Quitaque Chamber of Commerce, 806/455-1225.



Once the "sorriest piece of land in Blanco County," Selah is now a

Hill Country



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Heaven

Visitors driving into Selah, Bamberger Ranch, cross the headwaters of Miller Creek. An eight-foot dam, which serves as the low-water crossing, forms a small, unnamed lake. The ranch didn't have any water, period, when purchased as a restoration project in 1969.



[ABOVE] A scarred, but still-prospering Texas madrone stands despite damage inflicted by tornadic winds in 1997 and an ice storm in 2000. The winds swept through the canyon nearby, damaging 125 other trees. Despite wind, ice, and drought, thousands of trees planted on the ranch thrive.

[FACING PAGE] A two-mile nature trail, with interpretive signs for a quarter mile, starts at Madrone Lake, and here crosses another tributary to Miller Creek via a footbridge built in 1989. The trail will soon be extended to 3.5 miles.

EARLY ACCOUNTS of the Texas Hill Country described a landscape of rolling hills, covered with grass belly-high to a horse, accentuated with big oaks and spring-fed creeks and seeps. This lush landscape drew settlers from the piney woods and coastal parts of the state, which by the 1850s had begun to “fill” with folks seeking a better life. The state’s total population in 1850 was around 200,000; the unsettled Hill Country, still a frontier, beckoned.

“A trap baited with grass,” is how author Robert Caro has described the Hill Country of that time, because on the surface, the grass-covered hills seemed the answer to the new settlers’ dreams. Underneath, though, lay a fragile land. What nature took centuries to achieve, man undid much more rapidly.

Years of overgrazing, overuse, control of natural fires, and sometimes torrential Texas rainstorms conspired to strip away the area’s now-unprotected thin topsoil. This made it easy for “invading” plants to multiply and difficult for the native vegetation to recover, and started a downward cycle for plant habitat that became all too

apparent. Once-lush meadows soon hosted Ashe juniper (cedar), prickly pear, limestone, and little more. Spring flow ebbed, then dried up. Much of the region shared some part of this fate.

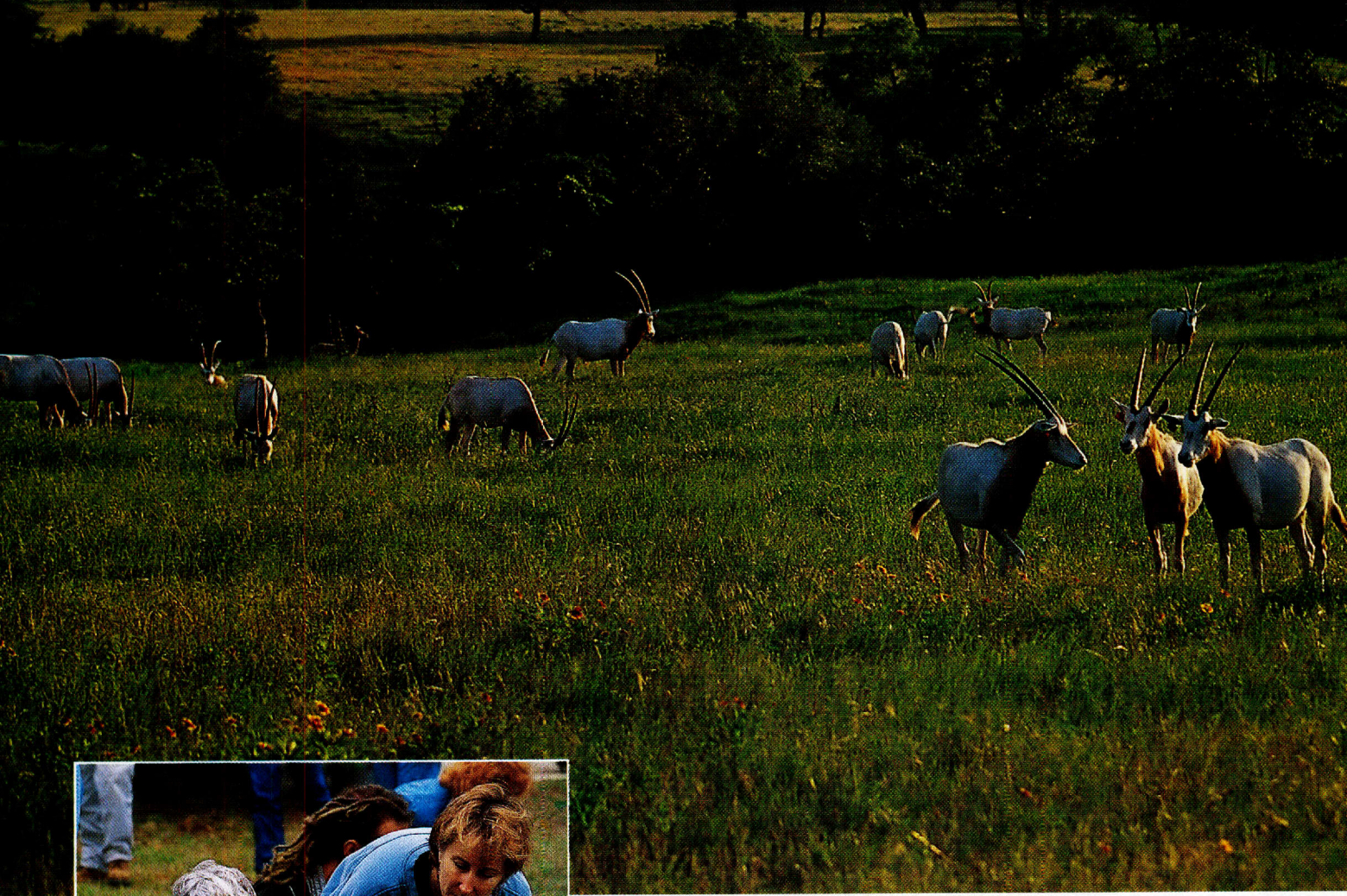
Fast-forward to the 1960s, when entrepreneur J. David Bamberger found, south of Johnson City, what he was convinced would be a Hill Country heaven—with his help. Described at the time by the local extension agent as “the sorriest piece of land in Blanco County,” the 5,500-acre ranch, now known as Selah, Bamberger Ranch, once again resembles the lush terrain early settlers found. This remarkable restoration came about only because David decided to focus his considerable energies, and finances, on rescuing a piece of Texas.

“You’re doing one of the best possible

“Water? There’s not one functioning well. We rely on spring-fed water on gravity flow for the houses.”



"You're doing one of the best possible things you can for Mother Nature by being a good steward."



things you can for Mother Nature by being a good steward," says David, explaining his reason for devoting the past 33 of his 74 years to Selah. He hopes visitors will agree the ranch is a beautiful Hill Country place for one to pause and reflect on nature and our role on this planet. He adopted the name Selah from its use, 71 times, in the Psalms. "To me, Selah is like Walden was to Thoreau," he notes.

Margaret Bamberger shows a participant in a grass workshop the distinguishing characteristics of little bluestem.

When David bought the property in 1969, it consisted largely of cedar scrub-brush-filled pastures, and had no water. Plants, besides cedar and other undesirable species, were scarce and voraciously competed for by undernourished white-tailed deer. Bird species sighted totaled 48; and it took 41 acres to support a single cow and calf.

Today, native grasses abound—little bluestem, big bluestem, sideoats grama, switchgrass, Indiangrass, and 61 others form a rich carpet over most of the ranch. This restored layer of grasses transformed the way rainfall works, too, allowing water to slowly seep into underground aquifers, rather than rapidly running off and carrying precious soil with it.



More than 100 endangered scimitar horned oryx thrive on Selah, in a pasture appropriately named Sahara.

Recharged aquifers mean that the springs flow again, and once-dry creeks run year around, most years.

The renewed habitat improved animal life, too. Now, 160 species of birds, including the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo, have been sighted. Now, it takes only 18 acres to support a cow and calf. White-tailed deer, less numerous, are bigger and healthier, and bring in revenue from hunting leases.

The habitat turnaround bore a price, though. David says he has spent hundreds



David shares tree-planting knowledge he has learned over the past 33 years on Selah with students in a Trees & Shrubs workshop last May.

TREE-PLANTING 101: Putting Down Roots

When he's not "people ranching" or cattle ranching, or cutting cedar, or firing off Bambergerisrrs, odds are good J. David Bamberger is planting and nurturing trees. Over the past 33 years, he has planted thousands, including bur, shin, Monterrey, and Lacey oaks; American elm; bigtooth maple; Texas ash; native pecan; and many, many other species. Along the way, he has learned a few things, which he shares freely at his Trees & Shrubs workshops.

When he began restoring the ranch, David turned to some experts for help, including, as David affectionately calls him, "my tree Aggie," who advised, "First, dig a square hole."

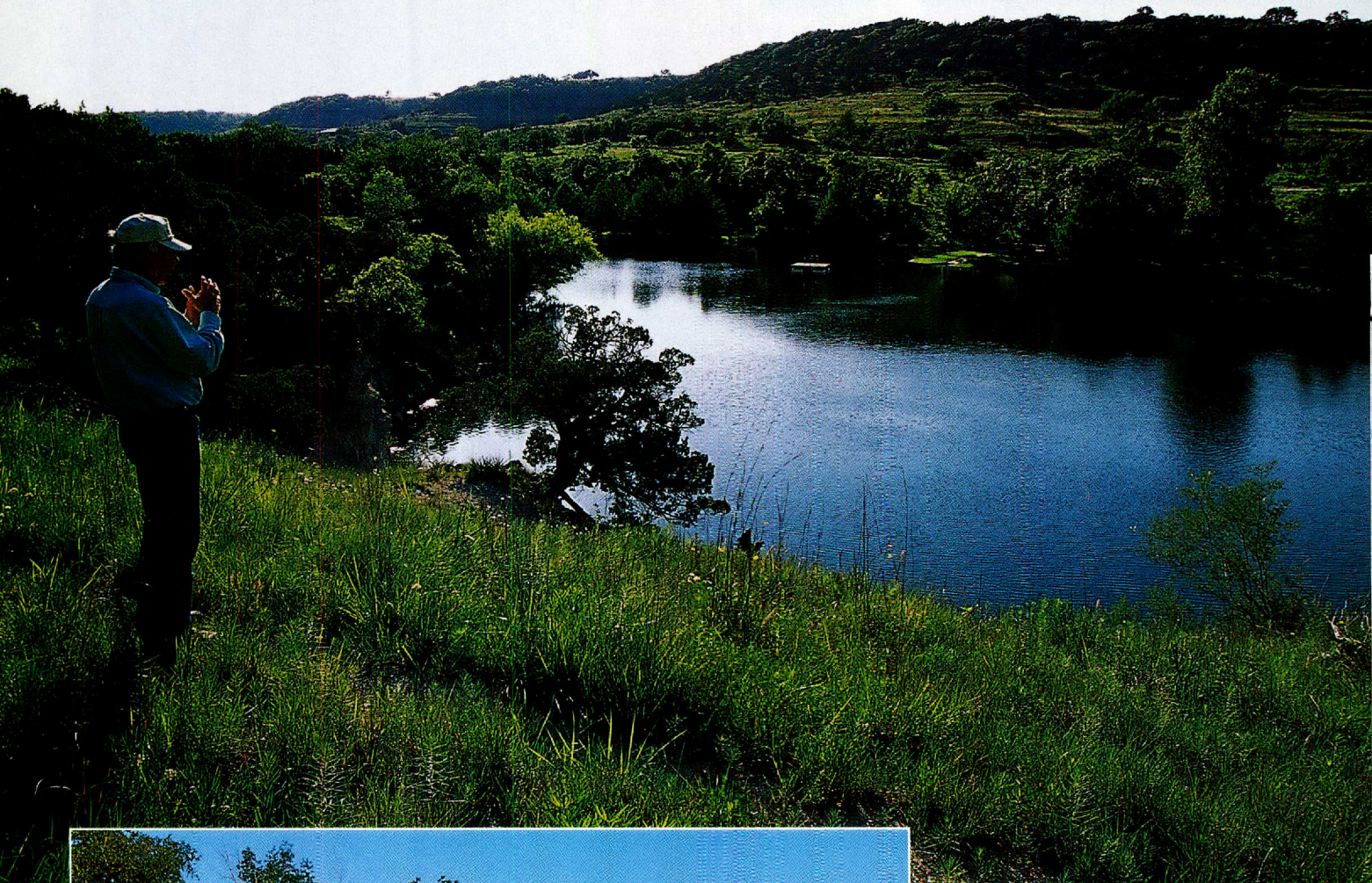
The reason, I learned at last May's workshop, is that a square hole's four corners give the fledgling tree's roots a greater opportunity to escape and make their way into the soil surrounding the planted area. A circular hole, with its sometimes smooth-glazed walls, makes it more difficult for the roots to spread out. (A plant coming out of a circular container already has roots growing in a circular pattern.)

I also learned that my usual method of planting trees on our family's Hill Country ranch is not the best way. "When you dig a hole in some rock, then plant your tree in the hole, all you've done is transfer your plant from a plastic container to a stone container," David kindly told me. He says, "We always want to put a tree where we'd like it to be, but we really ought to put the tree where it wants to be. This one thing sure increases your success."

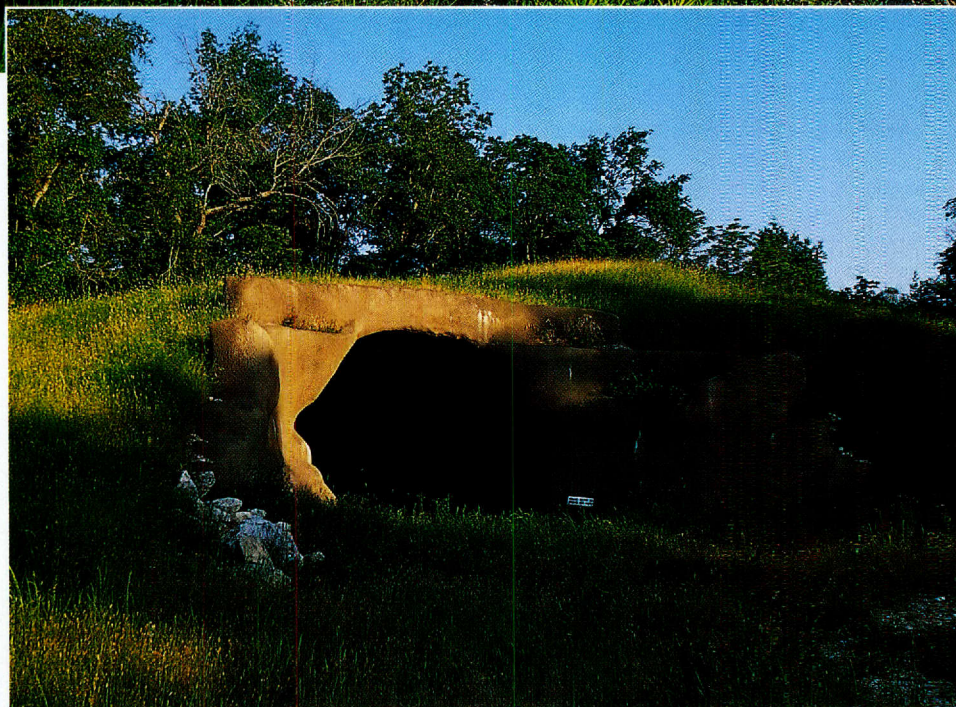
Other tips covered the best time for planting (November to March, with earlier being better); soil (use the soil the tree will be growing in); fertilizer (don't use it because it will likely hurt rather than help); water (plan on watering through the first summer, even if it means hauling the water); and caging (a mini-fence around the tree protects it from deer and other critters that love feasting on young trees' leaves). "I've had a 100 percent failure rate when I didn't cage," says David.

David told the story of when tree Aggie Jim Rickades first walked him through the process of proper tree-planting, carefully demonstrating each step. After they'd finished, Jim leaned over, gingerly smoothed the dirt, and spoke softly to the tree. David said he asked what that was about, and Jim replied this was what he told all the trees he planted—that they were "free at last."

—Michael A. Murphy



[ABOVE] On a trail above Madrone Lake, David pauses to contemplate the future of the educational programs at Selah. His goal is to achieve a foundation of sufficient size to continue them in perpetuity.



[LEFT] The world's largest artificial bat cave, or chiroptorium, was finished in 1998 to find out if man-made habitat of significant proportion could mitigate damage from development.

of thousands of dollars, and untold man-hours of labor, to clear, reseed, and plant. Control of cedar and management of habitat require ongoing efforts, too. "Do not initiate any action you're not prepared to sustain," he says, quipping that

this is one of his many "Bambergerisms." David, his wife, Margaret, and a small crew of longtime helpers all acknowledge the process is a long-term one—as David notes, "You have to have at least a 20-year time frame."

An important component of the activities at Selah is educating others in the successful land practices employed on the ranch. David, Margaret, and the crew organize and conduct daylong workshops on such topics as trees and shrubs, grasses, wildflowers, water, grassland range management, and birding. The workshops feature authoritative discussion from subject experts, plus hands-on experience on the ranch. Public tours are available, too, for folks just wanting to see this special place.

Educators and scholars also visit the ranch, for lengthier periods of study. David built a conference center in the 1980s to accommodate large groups of guests inter-



[ABOVE, LEFT] The Rainfall Machine, as it's known on the ranch, simulates the difference in rain falling on grass-covered land versus cedar scrub-covered land. Water falling on the grass slowly soaks into the "aquifers" below, with little runoff. Conversely, most rain falling on the cedar habitat runs off without recharging the aquifer.



[ABOVE, RIGHT] David built this "historic grave marker" in 1973. The tombstone states: "In Memory of Man, 2,000,000 B.C. - A.D. 20___. He Who Once Dominated the Earth Destroyed It With His Wastes, His Poisons, And His Own Numbers."

ested in learning about environmental conservation. Up to 48 persons can spend one or more nights in the center's two large dorm rooms.

David calls what he's now doing "people ranching," because the success at Selah has attracted the interest of others trying to expand their knowledge of land stewardship. In 2001, more than 6,000 visitors came for workshops, tours, and educational events.

Even though David's at an age when most folks contemplate slowing down, he sees a bright future for Selah. He has established a foundation, the Bamberger Ranch Preserve, with a goal of building an endowment sufficient to cover the costs of staff, equipment, and facilities needed to continue operating the ranch and its invaluable educational programs.

Whether you visit the ranch on a several-hour tour, or spend a day learning the nitty-gritty of rhizomes, spikelets, and stolon in a grass workshop, you'll come away nodding in agreement with David that Selah, Bamberger Ranch is in fact a perfect place to pause and reflect on nature's glory in the Texas Hill Country. ★

Photography editor MICHAEL A. MURPHY left Selah inspired, and better equipped, to be a more knowledgeable land steward. He's working now to make his own family ranch, *Los Madrones*, another Hill Country heaven.

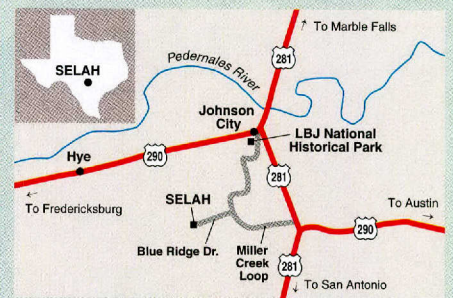
ESSENTIALS Selah

SELAH, BAMBERGER RANCH is about 6 miles south of Johnson City. From the intersection of Ave. F and US 290 in Johnson City, go south on Ave. F, which becomes County Road 203 and is named Miller Creek Loop. Drive for 5.1 miles, and turn right (west) onto Blue Ridge Dr. The ranch entry is 0.7 mile, on the left. **Ranch visitation is solely by reservation:** public tours \$10, field days \$15, and workshops starting at \$90 per person. Write to 2341 Blue Ridge Dr., Johnson City 78636; 830/868-7303; www.bambergerranch.org. The Conference Center may be reserved by groups for one or more days (\$250 per night minimum); Hes' Country Store, a replica of a rustic Texas country store (also a E&B) may be reserved by families of up to 6 (\$175 per night). Group camping (primitive) may be reserved, too, for \$10 per person (\$100 minimum).

FIELD DAYS, TOURS, & WORKSHOPS

The ranch offers events every spring and fall—a complete schedule is available on the Web site. The following events occur over the next few weeks: On April 27, a **Birding Field Day**, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. On May 4, a **Wildflowers Field Day**, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. On May 11, the **Ranching 101 Workshop**, where novice cattlemen get a handle on the basics, 8:30-4:30. On May 18, a **Trees & Shrubs Workshop**, 8:30-4:30. On May 25, a **Water Workshop**, 8:30-4:30.

BOOKS To learn more about restoring your patch of Texas, look for *Saving the Best of Texas* by Richard C. Bartlett (Univ. of Texas Press, 1995); *Pleasant Valley* by Louis Bromfield



(The Wooster Book Co., 1997; first published in 1945); *Texas Range Plants* by Stephan Hatch and Jennifer Pluhar (Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1993); and *Texas Trees, A Friendly Guide* by Paul W. Cox and Patty Leslie (Corona Publishing Co., 1988).

ORGANIZATIONS FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANCE

Holistic Resource Management of Texas, Inc., offers educational seminars and conferences and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Write to 2100 Creek Rd., Dripping Springs 78620; 512/858-2761; email: hrmofTX@earthlink.net.

The Native Plant Society of Texas, Box 891, Georgetown 78627-0891; www.npsot.org.

The Native Prairies Assn. of Texas, Box 210, Georgetown 78627-0210; 512/292-4200, ext. 103; www.texasprairie.org.

Texas Parks & Wildlife, Private Lands & Habitat Program, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin 78744; 512/389-4395; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/conserve/.



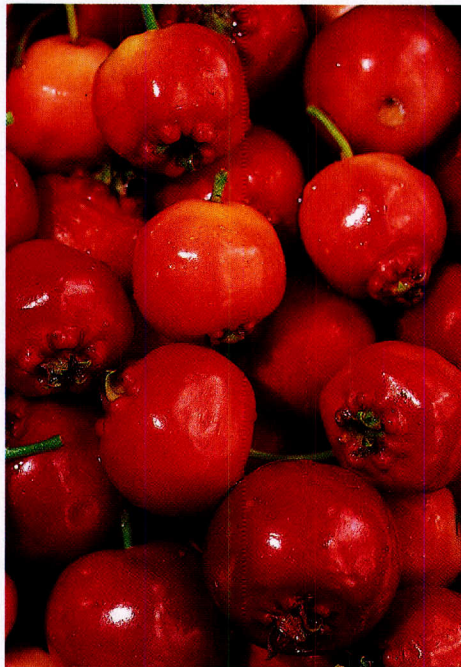
The funny fruit with the funky name

MAYHAW

BY JANET R. EDWARDS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN MYERS

THE FRIENDLY FOLKS of East Texas pride themselves in plentiful acres of pine trees, dogwoods, red maples, ferns, and a curious little fruit called mayhaw. But Texans living beyond the Piney Woods would probably scratch their heads in bewilderment if you asked them to describe a mayhaw. Even sophisticated city folk from Houston (which has a foot planted on the edge of East Texas) are apt to be a bit puzzled at “Mayhaw Jelly” signs, which pop up along roadsides northeast of the metropolis each spring. But simply twirl your tongue around any concoction made from the mayhaw’s tart little fruit, be it jelly, jam, juice, wine, syrup, butter, topping, or pie, and you’ll swallow away with a smile on your face, making note of a new favorite flavor in the realm of sweet-tasting comestibles.

The small tree that produces mayhaw fruit is actually a hawthorn (most cultivars are thorny), a distant relative of crabapples, plums, apricots, apples, and other members of the rose family. Indigenous to the southern United States, the mayhaw tree is found primarily in the easternmost part of our state. The trees produce thousands of delicate white blooms in early spring, which soon yield tiny pomes of lime green that quickly turn to shades of pink, red, orange, or yellow. The cranberry-



In all its glistening, crimson glory, the marble-size mayhaw is a distant relative of the apple.

size fruits are picked at their peak of ripeness, from mid-April to early May (hence the name, mayhaw), and must be immediately processed (or frozen), an event that makes music in the mouths of people willing to give them a try.

Though not available in grocery stores, mayhaw products turn up for sale along roadsides and highways north and east

of Houston, especially on US 59; just watch for big, hand-lettered signs. Many hotels, restaurants, and gift shops in the Jasper/Woodville/Nacogdoches area also carry mayhaw jelly. But don’t wait too long, for the jars are gobbled up before customers can say, “Yeehaw, where’s my mayhaw?”

Historical records mention that early Texas settlers harvested mayhaws, also called thorn apples, from wild trees in East Texas forests as far back as the mid-1880s. Folks with deep family roots in East Texas report using mayhaw butter or jelly recipes handed down over several generations. Mayhaws still flourish in moist, sandy, protected soils near creek and river bottoms of the Big Thicket, well adapted to this habitat’s fluctuating wet and dry periods.

Although most mayhaws end up in syrups, jams, and jellies, they’re occasionally used to make wine, pies, cookies, and barbecue sauce. They’re even believed by some to have medicinal properties. Seeding, drying, and powdering the fruit yields a tangy seasoning that tastes a bit like cinnamon, while drying and grinding the leaves produces a potent, sassafras-flavored filé seasoning for gumbo. The dried leaves or a mixture of green leaves and flowers can also be used to make a delicious tea.

[FACING PAGE] May means mayhaw time in Deep East Texas, where creative cooks turn the tiny, tart fruit into sweet-tasting jelly, butter, pie-filling, syrup, juice, wine, and even barbecue sauce.



© WILLIAM D. ADAMS



[TOP AND ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT] Mayhaw blossoms closely resemble those of the pear tree (and they bloom at the same time). Regina Gaskamp inspects the ripening fruit at her orchard in Jasper, while her son-in-law and stepdaughter, Tracy and Ginger Hillebrandt, sort the berries and remove leaves, insects, and bad fruit. Sara Rutledge makes mayhaw jelly in her kitchen at Rutledge Farms; she says a good mayhaw jelly is deep pink and clear.

Over time, consumer demand for these and dozens of other products made from the scrumptious fruit stimulated interest in domestic and commercial mayhaw production through grafting of wild branches onto other specimens of hawthorn. Their cold-hardiness, notable resistance to insects and disease, and pleasing shape make the mayhaw tree an ever-more-popular landscape choice, even in drier regions of the state.

AS ANY EAST TEXAN will tell you, mayhaw is not an “eat-out-of-hand” kind of fruit. It’s tart, in the most lip-wrestling sense of the word. Never mind that. Many folks in the know simply won’t eat their biscuits or toast without it, believing mayhaw jelly to be the best jelly in the world. Indeed, when blended with just the

right amount of sugar (and sometimes, with other fruits like blueberries and blackberries), the mayhaw’s luscious, light pink to bright red color, delightful aroma, and wild, fruity flavor will make you think it came from some place closer to heaven than earth.

“Of all the different jams, syrups, and jellies we make, mayhaw jelly is probably our family favorite,” says Sara Rutledge of Magnolia Springs. With her husband, Steve, and two sons, Paul and Chris, Sara owns and operates a small, thriving, commercial fruit-canning business from their farm. “Mayhaws have a flavor that’s so delicate and deliciously different, it’s hard to describe. The best way to understand why people love it so much is to taste it yourself.”

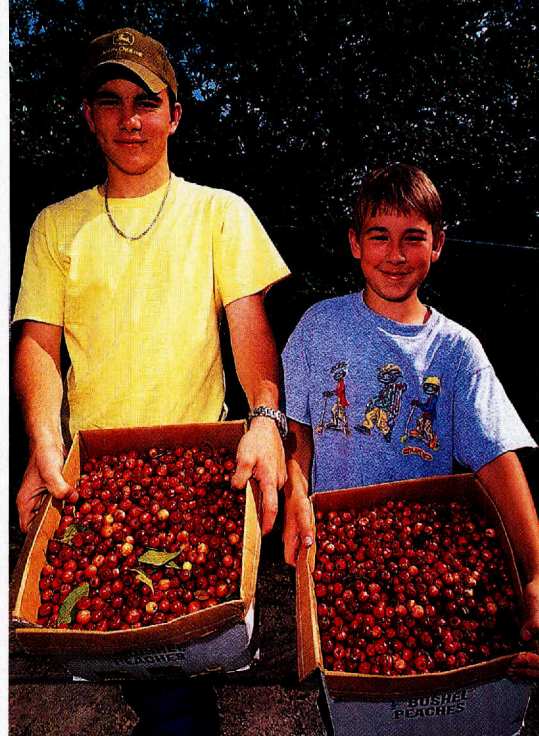
Throughout the year, and especially during late spring, Sara makes sure her avid

customers, family, and friends have plenty of mayhaw confections to savor with butter on warm pastries, not to mention mayhaw syrup for fluffy pancakes and desserts. Come mid-May, the floors of Sara’s country kitchen, dining room, and living area are lined with rows of small boxes holding thousands of fresh, ripe mayhaws glistening like red rubies. Harvest season means many weeks of afternoons and evenings spent collecting, processing, and canning, with the fruit’s sweet fragrance filling the house. The daily schedule during mayhaw season keeps everyone busy.

“After school, our sons come with Steve and me to the Gaskamp Orchard [a fruit farm in Jasper where much of their fruit is grown]. They’re a big help to me gathering mayhaws,” says Sara. “For me, this is not



Suspending netting from the trees has proven the most efficient way to harvest mayhaws—it not only reduces collecting time, but also minimizes bruising of the fruit. Above, Paul and Chr's Rutledge gather mayhaws and display the fruits of their labor.



work, it's fun. In fact, the whole family doesn't mind pitching in when they can. You do, of course, need to have a passion for mayhaws and love making good things to eat from them, which we certainly do."

Folks who've taken the opportunity to investigate the mayhaw tree quickly discover that sharp thorns grow throughout its densely woven branches, a fact that necessitates a safer and more efficient way to collect the berries than plucking them by hand. (Several new cultivars being grown commercially are thornless.) Large nets, suspended directly beneath rows of mature mayhaws (which can reach 10 to 15 feet in height), catch the fruits as they ripen and fall, keeping them away from the often wet soil, where they would quickly spoil. Narrow openings located at specific points in the outer folds of the net allow Paul and Chris to scoot small cardboard boxes just beneath these holes, so that when the net is gently lifted around its edges, the mayhaws neatly tumble into the containers.

Once the collecting is done, the Rutledges load the boxes into the pickup truck and take them home. There, they remove twigs and leaves, wash the berries thoroughly, and briefly soak them before refrigerating or cooking.

"I like to cook them right away, so they're absolutely fresh," says Sara. "It takes about

two gallons of berries to produce one gallon of juice. To get clear juice—which produces a deep-pink jelly that glows when held up to a light—you have to cook the fruit until it's soft, then carefully strain out the skins, seeds, and pulp. Four cups of pure juice, five cups of sugar, and one-third cup of pectin make a near-perfect jar of jelly.

"Some people like to use the pulp to make mayhaw jam, which is opaque, dark pink in color, and has a thicker consistency than the jelly," Sara adds. "Any extra juice or pulp you have can be frozen for making more jelly, jam, or syrup at a later time, so very little of the fruit goes to waste."

It's no surprise that the Rutledge Farm, which encompasses some 175 acres, boasts a few of its own native mayhaws, mature trees that have borne fruit for the family for two generations. Rows of recently planted young trees offer the promise of bountiful harvest in some five to six years, forming part of the family's dream that also includes one day having a gristmill, a pumpkin field, a strawberry patch, and maybe even a country store, where folks can experience, firsthand, the slower

pace and simple delights of East Texas rural life.

"We like the old style of making things from scratch," says Sara. "The pleasure I feel when I see people of all ages enjoying the efforts of my labor is tremendous. I plan to work with mayhaws as long as the Lord lets me, which will hopefully be for many years to come." ★

Ever the outdoors-lovers, JAN EDWARDS and STEPHAN MYERS collaborated on last month's story on Wildseed Farms, near Fredericksburg.

ESSENTIALS Yeehaw for Mayhaws!

MAYHAW juice, jams, jellies, syrups, and other delicious comestibles can be mail-ordered from Sara Rutledge of Rutledge Farms by calling 409/423-4562 or emailing rutledge@jas.net. Mayhaw products purchased from commercial sources proudly carry colorful labels documenting the name, address, and phone number of the maker (some have the date of preparation) on the top and sides of each container.

For information on mayhaw varieties and growing tips, go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/fruit/mayhaw/mayhaw.html>. You can also learn more from the Mayhaw Research Center in Orange; call 409/886-3112.

You can buy mayhaw trees from McInnis Orchard, at 2301 FM 365 in Port Arthur. The company also sells the trees by mail-order, as well as a cookbook called *101 Ways to Cook With Mayhaws* (\$12.95, plus shipping). Call 409/727-0044.

For a list of other mayhaw nurseries in Texas, go to the TH Web site, www.texashighways.com, and click on "Web Extra."



Mountain Biking Caprock Canyons Trailway

BY PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT

As I strapped on my bike gloves and adjusted my helmet, the rising sun cast growing streaks of light across the tops of the tall grain elevators in the tiny community of South Plains. Before me stretched the Caprock Canyons Trailway, a 64-mile-long abandoned railroad bed now converted to a trail for mountain bikers, hikers, and horseback riders.

I cheerily waved goodbye to Roland Hamilton, our obliging shuttle driver, and, along with my husband, pedaled my mountain bike east toward the sunrise. Ahead, the trail stretched across the top of flat farmland all the way to the horizon. (The eastern end of the trail is in Estelline.)

After a mile or so of easy riding, the country suddenly changed. As the eastern edge of the High Plains abruptly ended at the Caprock Escarpment, cultivated fields and level topography gave way

After walking her bike through the 742-foot-long Clarity Tunnel, home to thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats, author Patricia Parent continues her ride along the Caprock Canyons Trailway.

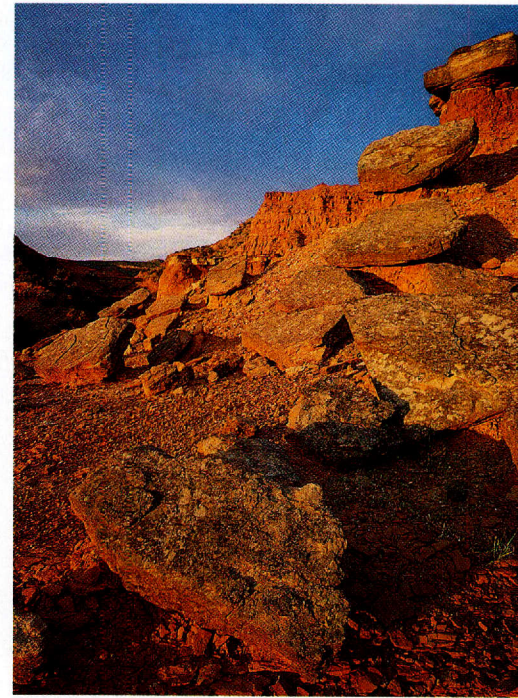


to sandstone canyons cut by creeks and gullies. Juniper trees graced the slopes, and cottonwoods lined the drainages below.

As the morning sun climbed in the sky, we stopped at the old John Farris Station to refill our water bottles and take a break under a shady mesquite. During the Fort Worth and Denver Railway's heyday, this station stayed constantly busy as ranchers loaded cattle bound for the Fort Worth stockyards. Only a cylindrical concrete structure, an old phone booth, gives testament to those busier days.

As we continued on our way, Quitaque Canyon deepened, and the hackberry, oak, and juniper trees got larger, some arching over the Trailway. Road cuts exposed multiple layers of colorful sandstone. Swaths of purple basketflowers adorned the edge of the path and the fields beyond.

About three miles past the John Farris Station, we pedaled onto the Emerson Creek Bridge, the highest bridge on the Trailway, rising about 60 feet above the creek bed. I stopped my bike and ventured a look at the channel's sandy bottom, then walked along the bridge, enjoying the view and the cooling Panhandle breeze.



The day's early light shines on the eroded red sandstone of the Quartermaster Formation.

Cultivated fields and level topography gave way to sandstone canyons cut by creeks and gullies. Juniper trees graced the slopes, and cottonwoods lined the drainages below.

With a steady wind at our back, we rode on, crossing more bridges as the old railroad grade descended off the Caprock. Just past a slight bend, the Trailway entered the Clarity Tunnel, a 742-foot-long passage. We hopped off our bikes and checked out the dark entrance. Inside the tunnel, thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats hang from the ceiling during summer days. Since we were upwind, we couldn't smell the bats, but from what a park ranger had told us, we

knew they were there. We briskly walked our bikes into the darkness; if you ride, you risk spinning out and falling down into the accumulated guano. At first, this seemed unnecessary, but as we neared the opposite end, the guano got thicker, and we could hear the bats squeaking above us. We moved quietly, trying not to stir up too much dust or disturb the bats. If we had camped at the primitive campsite near the tunnel, we could have watched the bats stream out at dusk, but for this ride we were day-trippers.

Hikers and bikers exploring the Trailway find varied terrain, from craggy sandstone expanses to lush vegetation.





High and dry. The longest span on the Trailway, the concrete Los Lingos Bridge once ensured a safe creek-crossing for trains on the Fort Worth and Denver Railway.

Beyond the tunnel, we saw more vistas of red sandstone canyons dotted with trees and wildflowers. After crossing a couple more bridges, we noticed four tall concrete towers across the valley to the east. They seemed strangely out of place in the pristine countryside. During construction of the railroad in 1927-28, tons of sand and gravel were washed in these towers, then used for the railroad bed.

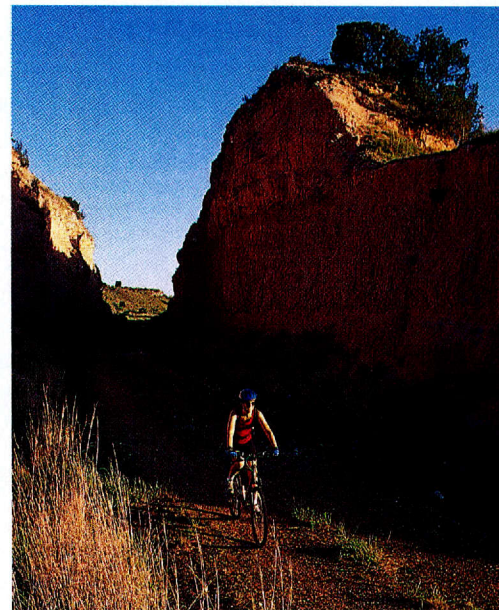
About three miles farther on, the canyon began to open up, and we hit Monk's Crossing, where the trail crosses a county road, the first access point in 17 miles. The Quitaque Canyon Trail section of the Trailway ends here; we could have arranged for a shuttle to pick us up, but we wanted to explore the next five miles, a section called the Los Lingos Trail.

By this point, we had left the Caprock behind and were cycling out across the Rolling Plains. Riding on Los Lingos Bridge, the longest span on the Trailway, our tires glided smoothly and quietly over the concrete, a bit of a relief after the miles of gravel trail. Below us, tall cottonwoods lined Los Lingos Creek's wide drainage.

All along, we'd been gradually descending, but past the bridge, the trail inclines slightly, gently rising in a razor-straight line toward the horizon through sand, sage, and bluestem grasses. To the west, the Valley of Tears, once dominated by fierce Comanches and Comanchero traders, opened up under the vast Panhandle sky. Although I felt my legs working a little harder as we moved uphill, the trail still wasn't very strenuous.

As we headed toward Quitaque, cotton and peanut fields appeared. Surprised grasshoppers popped up all around us. In the distance, the town's water tower grew gradually larger as we pedaled closer. With the sun now high in the sky, water seemed like a good idea, so we stopped and finished off our supply. Although we could have biked for 42 more miles, we were satisfied with 22! We exited onto Quitaque's main street, ready for a big lunch at the Caprock Cafe. ★

Husband and wife LAURENCE PARENT and PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT frequently team up for stories. So far this year, they have climbed, canoed, and cycled for the *Texas Highways Adventure Tour* series.



Patricia Parent cruises through a road cut along the canyon path.

ESSENTIALS Caprock Canyons Trailway

ABOUT 2 HOURS NORTHEAST OF LUBBOCK or southeast of Amarillo by car, **Caprock Canyons Trailway** stretches 64 miles between South Plains and Estelline. The section from South Plains to Monk's Crossing is probably the most scenic. If you bike the entire route, you can camp overnight: at primitive campsites along the trail (see map, page 33).

Walk your bike quickly, carefully, and quietly through **Clarity Tunnel**, which lies about 4.5 miles west of Monk's Crossing. Human noises can disturb the bats, and breathing bat guano dust can cause the fungal infection called histoplasmosis.

Parts of the Trailway are very remote. Bike with a friend instead of pedaling alone. There are no access points for 17 miles between South Plains and Monk's Crossing. Bring plenty of water, as availability along the trail varies.

For maps and general information on the Trailway, including **horseback riding** and **camping**, call Caprock Canyons State Park, 806/455-1432; www.tpwd.state.tx.us. For **bike rentals** and **shuttle service**, call Roland Hamilton at the Caprock Home Center, 806/455-1193.

For those who want to see the Trailway but don't want to hike or bike the distance, **Queen of the Valley Tours** offers interpretive journeys from Quitaque to South Plains by **van or bus**. Call 806/983-3639, or see *For the Road* for more information.

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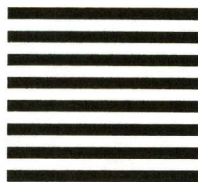
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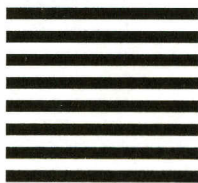
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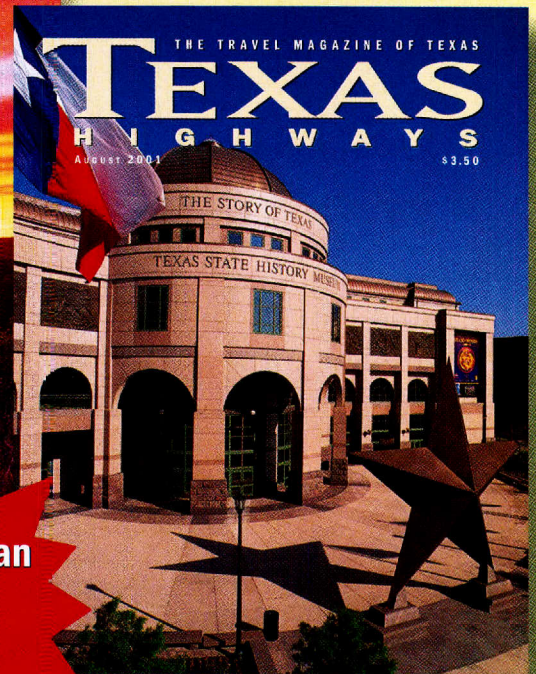
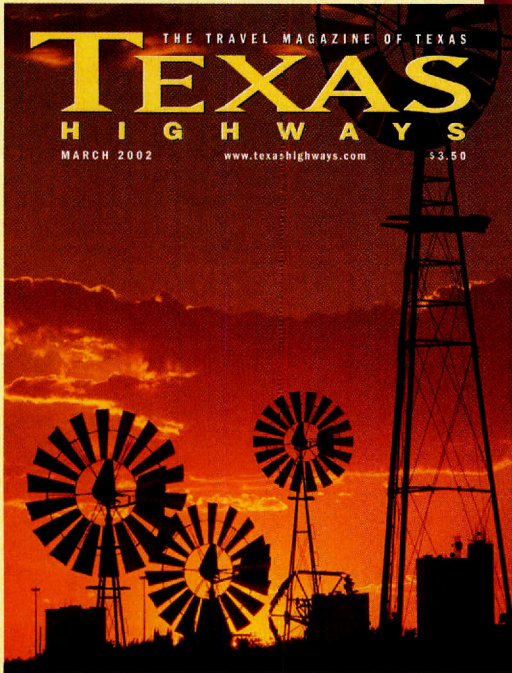
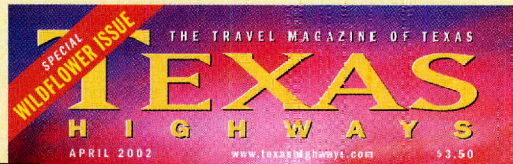


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A roundup of next month's events

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30						

BIG BEND COUNTRY

- 1**
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(began May 31)
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915/570-9824
- 1-AUG 24**
EL PASO
(began May 30)
Viva! El Paso
915/755-2000 or 544-8444
- 2**
EL PASO
Noche Ranchera
915/541-4481
- 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**
MIDLAND
Museum of the Southwest
Sunday Concerts
915/683-2882
- 7-8**
EL PASO
Nuestras Tradiciones
915/566-8016
- WINK**
Roy Orbison Festival
915/527-3980 or 527-3441
- 7-9**
BALMORHEA
Trade Days
915/375-0296
- 8**
EL PASO
Stories of Spirits
915/533-5147
- MIDLAND
Midland City Limits Concert
915/683-2882
- 13**
EL PASO
St. Anthony's Day Celebration
915/859-7913
- 14-15**
EL PASO
Ballet Folklórico
Tierra del Sol
915/778-7858
- 16**
EL PASO
Hueco Tanks Birding Tour
915/849-6684 or 857-1135
Music Under the Stars
915/541-4481 or 541-4356
- 21-22**
EL PASO
Ballet Folklórico
Churuhui
915/598-6840

- 23**
EL PASO
Portuguese/African/Brazilian Music
915/541-4481
- 27-30**
EL PASO
Zarzuela
915/747-7799
- 29**
PECOS
Night in Old Pecos/
Cantaloupe Festival
915/445-2406

GULF COAST

- 1**
ANGLETON
Barn Bash
979/849-2447
- PORT O'CONNOR**
Matagorda History Tour
361/983-2215
- 1-2**
ALVIN
Tour de Braz
Bicycle Ride & Race
281/756-3747
- HOUSTON**
Houston Ballet
713/227-ARTS or
800/828-ARTS
- 3**
HOUSTON
Arts & Letters Live: Texas Bound
713/228-8421
- 5-15**
GALVESTON
Swingtime Canteen
409/737-1744 or
800/547-4697
- 6-23**
HOUSTON
Some Like It Hot
713/558-8887 or
888/558-3882
- 6-30**
HOUSTON
L'il Abner
713/524-6706
- 7**
PORT LAVACA
Johnny Dee & the Rocket '88s
361/552-2959
- 7-8**
PORT LAVACA
Bay Days Festival
361/552-2959
- PORT O'CONNOR**
Pescado Grande
Fishing Tournament
361/552-1982
- 7-9**
BAYTOWN
ASA Pixie Girls
State Softball Tournament
281/420-6597
- 8**
CORPUS CHRISTI
25th C-101 C-Sculptures
361/289-0111
- DACOSTA**
VFD Barbecue & Auction
361/575-4959

- 8**
EAST BERNARD
Czech Kolache
Klobase Festival
979/335-4827
or 335-7907
- KEMAH**
Classic Car Show
281/334-9880 or
877/285-3624
- WEST COLUMBIA**
Brazoria County Bluegrass
979/265-4757
- 13-15**
FREEPORT
Watermelon Open
Fishing Tournament
979/233-2101
- 15**
BAY CITY
Market Day
on the Square
800/806-8333
- BROWNSVILLE**
Arts & Crafts Fair
956/504-6550
- EDNA**
Flag Day Ceremony
361/782-5718
- GALVESTON**
Star Party
800/582-4673
- 15-16**
KEMAH
Shrimp Festival
281/334-9880 or
877/285-3624
- 17-23**
VICTORIA
Bach Festival
361/570-5788
- 19**
HOUSTON
Juneteenth Celebration
713/284-8350
- PORT ARTHUR**
Juneteenth Celebration
409/982-8040
or 983-2667
- 19-29**
GALVESTON
No, No, Nanette!
409/737-1744 or
800/547-4697
- 21**
VICTORIA
Country Opry
361/552-9347
- 21-22**
PORT O'CONNOR
La Chica Pesca
Fishing Tournament
361/553-6189
- 22**
BROWNSVILLE
Juneteenth Celebration
& Barbecue Cookoff
956/682-1955
- La Frontera
Blessing of the Fleet
& Shrimp Fiesta
956/541-6000
- SWEENEY**
Trade Day
979/548-3249

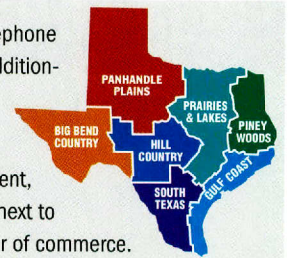
IN FUN FORECAST, we provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

SOMETIMES DATES CHANGE after the magazine is printed. Before you drive miles to an event, confirm the date by calling the number listed next to the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce.

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

IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT AN EVENT for Fun Forecast, please send the information to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by June 1 for September festivities). Space is limited, so we may not be able to print every event. For a quarterly, more detailed schedule of events, write for a free *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249.

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



- 22-23**
NURSERY
Watermelon Festival
& Founders Day
361/578-8484
- 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**
BLANCO
Hill Country Lavender
830/833-5008
- 1, 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28-29**
BANDERA
Twin Elm
Guest Ranch Rodeo
830/796-3628
- 4, 18**
BOERNE
Abendkonzerte
830/249-3543
- 4, 11, 18, 25**
BANDERA
Mansfield Park Rodeo
830/796-3045
- 6**
WIMBERLEY
Texas String Drive
512/842-2648
- 6, 13, 20, 27**
SAN MARCOS
Summer in the Park
Concert Series
888/200-5620
- 6-29**
INGRAM
Meet Me in St. Louis
830/367-5121
- KERRVILLE**
Godspell
830/896-9393
- 7**
AUSTIN
Al Di Meola World Sinfonia
512/329-6753
- 7-9**
AUSTIN
Classic '55-'57 Chevy Show
512/219-7807
or 441-5656
- 7, 14, 21, 28**
LAMPASAS
Music on the Square
512/556-2760
- 8**
AUSTIN
Jazz Artists & Composers
Concert
512/276-7481
- CASTROVILLE**
Market Trail Day
830/741-5887
- COMFORT**
VFD Dance & Barbecue
830/995-2124
- FREDERICKSBURG**
Volkssporting
Walk & Swim
830/997-8056
- KERRVILLE**
Second Saturday
Art Trail
830/896-5530
or 895-5184
- SAN MARCOS**
Texas Water Safari
888/200-5620
- 8-9**
BOERNE
Market Days
830/249-5530
- LAMPASAS**
Sulfur Creek Car Cruise
512/556-5172

8, 22
GEORGETOWN
Saddle Series
Riding Competition
512/259-4161 or
254/698-6825

9
AUSTIN
Zapolski String Quartet
512/329-6753

GRUENE
Gospel Brunch
with a Texas Twist
830/606-1601
or 629-5077

KERRVILLE
Second Sunday
Summer Serenade
830/257-0809

12
NEW BRAUNFELS
Comal Country Music Show
830/629-4547

13-15
MENARD
Song of Silver
915/396-2365

SAN MARCOS
Juneteenth Celebration
888/200-5620

14-15
AUSTIN
A Taste of Texas Barbecue
662/915-5993

14-16
MENARD
Jim Bowie Days
915/396-2365

UTOPIA
150 Years in Sabinal Canyon
830/966-2320 or
866/839-3378

15
BLANCO
Market Day
830/833-0260

BOERNE
Berges Fest Parade
830/249-4773

INGRAM
Y.O. Picnic
830/367-4322

SABINAL
Cypress Day Celebration
830/988-2588
or 988-2995

15-16
AUSTIN
Pond Tour
512/896-6377

Historic Hyde Park
Homes Tour
512/452-3103
or 452-3850

GRUENE
Old Gruene Market Days
830/629-6441

JOHNSON CITY
Market Days
830/868-7800

17
ROUND ROCK
Texas League All-Star Game
512/255-BALL

18
THRALL
Stiles Farm Field Day
512/898-2214

18-20
SONORA
Wool Show
915/387-3101

19
AUSTIN
Juneteenth
512/928-1989 or
800/926-2282

20-22
MARBLE FALLS
Junior Rodeo
830/693-3548

SAN SABA
Rodeo
915/372-5141

20-23
BRACKETVILLE
The Glory Road
830/563-9229

21
AUSTIN
Miriam Makeba
512/329-6753

21-22
OZONA
World Championship
Goat Roping
915/392-2411

STONEWALL
Peach Jamboree & Rodeo
830/644-2735

22
FLORENCE
Friendship Day
254/793-2961

JOHNSON CITY
Captain Perry
Texas Ranger
Living History Picnic
830/868-7684

27-30
BURNET
Fair & Rodeo
512/756-5463

27-JUL 14
AUSTIN
Hysteria
512/448-8484

29-30
NEW BRAUNFELS
Arts & Crafts Show
210/698-0811

STONEWALL
Antique Tractor
& Engine Show
830/995-3343
or 997-4522

PANHANDLE PLAINS

1
ALBANY
Old Jail Art Center
Western Swing Party
915/762-2269

BORGER
World's Largest Fish Fry
806/274-2211

1
GRAHAM
Concert on the Square
940/549-8730

QUANAH
National Trails Day
940/839-4331

QUITAQUE
National Trails Day
806/455-1446

RANGER
Old Time Country Festival
254/647-5353

SAN ANGELO
Fort Concho Frontier Day
915/657-4441

Railfair
915/949-5888

1-2
MIAMI
National Cow Calling Contest
& Celebration
806/868-3291

2-4
VERNON
Rodeo
940/552-5474

3
SWEETWATER
Big Country Dance
915/235-5488 or
800/658-6757

5-8
DUMAS
Dogie Days
806/935-2123

SNYDER
West Texas
Western Swing Music Festival
915/573-3558

WICHITA FALLS
Red River Rodeo
940/592-2156

6-8
JACKSBORO
Jack County Sheriff's Posse
Rodeo & Parade
940/567-2422
or 567-2827

6-9
ABILENE
Friends of the Public Library
Book Sale
915/692-3721
or 698-9894

BOYS RANCH
Youth Cowboy Poetry
Gathering
806/372-2341 or
800/687-3722

6-AUG 17
CANYON
Texas
806/655-2181
or 488-2227

7-8
CROSS PLAINS
Robert E. Howard Days
254/725-7432
or 725-6498

SAN ANGELO
Relay for Life
915/944-2509

8
ABILENE
Karate Tournament
915/676-6211

COLORADO CITY
Bass Fishing Tournament
915/728-3403

EASTLAND
Barbecue
254/629-2332

HAMLIN
5-K Fun Run/Walk
915/576-3501

8-9
BAIRD
Antiques Market/Trade Days
915/854-2003

LUBBOCK
Llano Wine & Clay Festival
806/748-9337
or 745-2258

STANTON
Old Sorehead Trade Days
915/756-2006

VERNON
Youth Rodeo
940/552-5474

8-15
WICHITA FALLS
Tennis Tournament
940/767-6321

9-15
ABILENE
Texas High School
Rodeo Association
State Finals
915/677-4376

12-AUG 18
AMARILLO
Lone Star Rising
806/274-9050

13
ABILENE
Swing Dance Party
915/676-3128

14-15
CANADIAN
Relay for Life
806/323-8680

SAN ANGELO
Quilt Show
915/944-8861

14-16
SAN ANGELO
Fiesta
915/658-8083

15
ABERNATHY
Country Jamboree
806/298-2397
or 777-3300

CROSBYTON
Cowboy Gathering
806/675-2261

LIPSCOMB
Ranch Dance
806/862-2900

SAN ANGELO
Campfire Concert
915/657-4444

SWEETWATER
Paint Horse Show
915/235-3484

15-16
ABILENE
Arts & Crafts Festival
915/676-6211

16
MINERAL WELLS
Father's Day
at Clark Gardens
940/682-4856

16-AUG 21
SNYDER
Harley-Davidson & Indian
Motorcycle Exhibit
915/573-8511

17
SWEETWATER
Cross Country Antique Car Race
915/235-5488

18
SAN ANGELO
Community Band Concert
915/942-2085

20
SEAGRAVES
Celebrate Seagraves
866/201-3111

WICHITA FALLS
Oil Bowl Basketball Classic
940/692-9390

20-22
ARCHER CITY
Archer County Rodeo
940/574-4319

20-23
ABILENE
Quarter Horse Show
915/677-4376

20-22, 27-29
ABILENE
Rumors
915/673-7082

ALBANY
Fort Griffin Fandangle
915/762-3642
or 762-3838

21-22
JACKSBORO
Summerfest
940/567-2588

21-22, 28-30
POST
Charlotte's Web
806/495-4005

22
BRONTE
Fort Chadbourne Days
915/743-2555

LUBBOCK
Ranch Dance
806/747-8734

MINERAL WELLS
Cowboy Campfire
940/328-1171

WICHITA FALLS
Oil Bowl Football Classic
940/692-9390

24-26
ANDREWS
Tennis Tournament
915/523-2695

27-JUL 1
SWEETWATER
Cutting Horse Show
915/235-3484

28-29
MORTON
Rodeo & Trail Drive
806/266-5484

SAN ANGELO
All-Girl Rodeo
915/651-1982

28-30
POST
Old Mill Trade Days
806/495-3529

29
BALLINGER
Fireworks
915/365-2333
or 365-5611

PINEY WOODS

1
EASTON
(began May 31)
Turnip Green Festival
903/643-7819

JASPER
Kids Fish Flop
409/384-5231

LUFKIN
Neches River
Rendezvous
936/634-6305

RUSK
Texas State Railroad
State Park
Shop Tour
903/683-2561 or
800/442-8951

1, 7-9, 14-15
CONROE
(began May 31)
The Boyfriend
936/756-1274

5-8
MOUNT PLEASANT
Rodeo
903/572-5946

NACOGDOCHES
Heritage Festival
936/568-3165 or
888/564-7351

7-8
CROCKETT
World Championship
Fiddlers Festival
936/544-2359

OVERTON
Bluegrass & Gospel Music
Festival
903/834-3171

7, 9
LONGVIEW
Carmen
903/234-1300

7-9
NACOGDOCHES
Texas Blueberry
Festival
936/560-5533 or
888/564-7351

Fun Forecast

A roundup of next month's events

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

<p>7-9, 14-15 CONROE <i>The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas</i> 936/441-SHOW</p> <p>8 JACKSONVILLE Tomato Festival 800/376-2217</p> <p>MARSHALL Starr Home Croquet Tournament 903/935-2121</p> <p>9 JAMESTOWN Farrs Chapel Homecoming 409/755-4687</p> <p>14-16 LIVINGSTON Trade Days 936/327-3656</p> <p>NACOGDOCHES Trade Days 888/564-7351</p> <p>15 HUNTSVILLE Juneteenth Celebration 936/294-0676</p> <p>JASPER Floating the Forks 409/384-5231</p> <p>MOUNT PLEASANT Barbecue Cookoff 903/575-4190</p> <p>NOONDAY Onion Festival 903/561-3351</p> <p>15-16 TYLER Juneteenth Celebration 903/535-4817</p> <p>16 NACOGDOCHES Cadena Rodeo 936/564-7351 or 888/564-7351</p> <p>21-23 CONROE Treasure Hunt Antique Show 281/364-8819</p> <p>22 HUNTSVILLE Genealogy & Family History Fair 936/295-5551</p> <p>29 CONROE Symphony's Star Spangled Spectacular 936/760-2144</p> <p>JASPER Independence Day Celebration 409/384-2626</p> <p>30 MOUNT PLEASANT Happy Birthday USA 903/572-1959</p>	<p>1 BELLVILLE Market Day on the Square 979/865-3407</p> <p>COLUMBUS Dinner Theatre 877/444-7339</p> <p>COPPERAS COVE Cove Country Opry 254/547-5966</p> <p>FARMERS BRANCH Concert in the Park 972/919-2620</p> <p>GATESVILLE Scamper Fun Run 254/865-2617</p> <p>GONZALES Country Music Show 830/672-6532</p> <p>GRAPEVINE Fabulous Fifties Jukebox Show 817/481-8733</p> <p>McKINNEY Home & Garden Tour 972/562-3628</p> <p>MERIDIAN John A. Lomax Gathering 254/435-6182</p> <p>SNOOK Snook Fest 979/272-3732</p> <p>SULPHUR SPRINGS Kids Fishing Day 903/395-3100 or 945-5256</p> <p>TEAGUE Barbecue Cookoff 254/739-2061</p> <p>WAXAHACHIE Pancake Breakfast Fly-In 972/923-0080</p> <p>1-2 ARLINGTON Gem & Mineral Show 817/346-0197</p> <p><i>Six Degrees of Separation</i> 817/261-9628</p> <p>GAINESVILLE Civil War Reenactment 940/665-5594 or 668-2065</p> <p>MESQUITE Antique Tractor & Engine Show 214/341-4539 or 349-6311</p> <p>WAXAHACHIE Gingerbread Trail Historic Homes Tour 972/937-0681</p> <p>LEWISVILLE (began May 1) Scarborough Faire Renaissance Festival 972/938-3247</p> <p>1-9 NAVASOTA Grimes County Fair 936/394-6831</p> <p>1-2, 6-9 TEMPLE <i>Father of the Bride</i> 254/778-4751</p> <p>1, 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28-29 MESQUITE Championship Rodeo 972/285-8777</p>	<p>1, 8, 15, 22, 29 STEPHENVILLE Cross Timbers Country Opry 254/965-4132</p> <p>1-2, 28-30 CANTON (began May 31) First Monday Trade Days 903/567-2991</p> <p>WEATHERFORD (began May 31) First Monday Trade Days 817/598-4124</p> <p>1-OCT 27 GLEN ROSE <i>The Promise</i> 254/897-4341 or 800/687-2661</p> <p>2 FLATONIA Sacred Heart Catholic Church Picnic 361/865-3920</p> <p>2-8 DUBLIN Dr Pepper 111th Birthday Celebration 254/445-3939 or 888/398-1024</p> <p>2, 9, 16, 23 SEGUIN Main Street Concerts in the Park 830/401-2448</p> <p>3 GIDDINGS Country Music Monday 979/542-2932</p> <p>3-8 FORT WORTH Van Cleeburn Foundation International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs 817/738-6536</p> <p>MABANK Western Week 903/887-0010</p> <p>4-8 CLEBURNE Johnson County Sheriff's Posse PRCA Rodeo 817/556-9910</p> <p>4-16 DALLAS Contact 214/691-7200</p> <p>4, 11, 18, 25 LEWISVILLE Summer Music Concert Series 972/219-3550</p> <p>MESQUITE Jazz on the Plaza 972/216-6444</p> <p>5 DALLAS Art Talk 214/953-1MAC</p> <p>6-8 FORT WORTH Indy Racing League & NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Races 817/215-8500</p>	<p>6-9 IRVING Friends of the Library Book Sale 972/721-2628</p> <p>LOCKHART Chisholm Trail Roundup & Rodeo 512/398-2818</p> <p>6, 13, 20 DUNCANVILLE Summer Music Fest Concert Series 972/780-5090</p> <p>6, 13, 20, 27 LANCASTER Music Fest Concerts 972/227-1112</p> <p>SHERMAN Hot Summer Nights Municipal Lawn Concerts 903/893-1184</p> <p>6, 13, 20, 28 WACO Indian Spring Park Summer Sounds Concerts 254/772-1428</p> <p>7 CUERO Downtown Gazebo Concert 361/275-2112</p> <p>7-9 ARLINGTON Texas Scottish Festival & Highland Games 817/654-2293</p> <p>GAINESVILLE Fly-In 940/668-4565</p> <p>7-22 MESQUITE Rumors 972/216-8126</p> <p>7-9, 13-16, 20-23, 27-29 SHERMAN <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i> 903/892-8818</p> <p>8 BASTROP Pine Street Market Day 512/303-6233</p> <p>CEDAR HILL Lone Star Legacy Trail Ride 972/291-6505 or 291-3900</p> <p>DALLAS Nelda Washington & Gospel Band 214/939-2787</p> <p>FRYDEK VFD Barbecue 979/885-2586</p> <p>GATESVILLE Fire Ant 100-K Bicycle Tour 254/865-1212</p> <p>HALLETTSVILLE Tri-County Summerfest Concert 361/798-2311</p> <p>LANCASTER Second Saturday on the Square 972/277-2579</p> <p>LEWISVILLE Summer Blast Festival 214/728-9098</p>	<p>8 McKINNEY Collin County Bike Classic 972/578-5719</p> <p>NOCONA Golf Tournament 940/825-3526</p> <p>SULPHUR SPRINGS Homemade Ice Cream Contest 888/300-6623</p> <p>8-9 BRENNAM Antiques Show 979/251-9455</p> <p>8-30 DALLAS The New Works Festival 214/953-1055</p> <p>8, 13-15, 18, 20-22, 27-30 ROUND TOP International Festival-Institute Concerts 979/249-3129</p> <p>9 CALDWELL 4-H Wrangler Rodeo 979/567-2308</p> <p>10 EULESS Terikas Polynesia Musical Dance Review 817/283-3406</p> <p>10-15 FAIRFIELD Freestone County Fair 903/389-3434</p> <p>11-16 FORT WORTH Arabian Horse Show 817/871-8150</p> <p>12 WATAUGA Storybook Theatre 817/283-3406</p> <p>12-16, 19-23 GLEN ROSE Hunter/Jumper Blue Ribbon Summer Festival 972/724-0146</p> <p>12, 19, 25 DALLAS Dallas Symphony Orchestra 214/692-0203</p> <p>13-16 WEATHERFORD Frontier Days Celebration Livestock Show & Rodeo 817/596-3801</p> <p>14 GRAPEVINE Flag Day Train 817/625-RAIL</p> <p>Palace Theatre Classical Music Concert 817/410-3100</p> <p>LA GRANGE Flag Day Ceremony 979/968-8701</p> <p>14-15 CLIFTON Barbecue Cookoff 254/675-8782</p>	<p>14-15 NOCONA Chisholm Trail Rodeo 940/825-3526</p> <p>14-16 GRAPEVINE Coin Show 817/410-3459</p> <p>McKINNEY Invitational Soccer Tournament 972/562-1554</p> <p>Trade Days 972/562-5466</p> <p>WAXAHACHIE Hot Air Balloon Classic 817/988-1028</p> <p>14-16, 20-23 GARLAND <i>Grease</i> 972/205-2790</p> <p>14-16, 21-23 GATESVILLE <i>Guys and Dolls</i> 512/768-3325</p> <p>14-16, 28-30 STEPHENVILLE Chicken House Flea Market 254/968-0888</p> <p>15 BONHAM <i>A Tribute to Will Rogers</i> 903/583-5558</p> <p>CHRISMAM Music Jam 979/567-0573</p> <p>CLEBURNE Juneteenth Parade & Festival 817/641-6201</p> <p>DALLAS Quamon Fowler Jazz Band 214/939-2787</p> <p>ELGIN Juneteenth Festival 512/281-5724</p> <p>FORT WORTH Sidewalk Astronomers Free Telescope Observing 817/488-9089</p> <p>LA GRANGE Juneteenth Parade 979/968-9116</p> <p>Market Day 979/968-8701</p> <p>McKINNEY Summer Sounds Concert 972/547-7482</p> <p>15-16 DALLAS International Festival 972/458-7007</p> <p>16 DENTON Juneteenth Celebration 940/349-7275</p> <p>GRAPEVINE Bluegrass Concert 817/410-3185</p> <p>18 DALLAS Olympic Champions on Ice Tour 214/373-8000</p> <p>18-22 CANTON Bluegrass Festival 936/336-3309</p>
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18-23
GIDDINGS
 Youth Rodeo Finals
 979/542-3455

18-30
DALLAS
The Wizard of Oz
 214/691-7200

19
FORT WORTH
 Juneteenth Celebration
 817/336-8791

20
FARMERSVILLE
 Audie Murphy Day
 972/784-8107
 or 782-6533

20-27
FORT WORTH
 Q Cinema
 Gay & Lesbian
 Film Festival
 817/462-3368

20-23, 27-30
DENTON
The Fantasticks
 940/382-7014

20-JUL 14
ARLINGTON
Dangerous Liaisons
 817/261-9628

21
DALLAS
 Jammin' at the
 South Dallas Cultural Center
 214/939-2787
Soul of Stax
 214/939-2787

21-22
DENTON
Made in America
 940/381-3562

DUBLIN
 Barbecue Cookoff
 254/445-3422

MESQUITE
 Quilt Show
 972/216-7790

21-23
BELTON
 Horse Expo
 254/848-4656

22
BELLVILLE
 Summer Music Fest
 979/865-5995

BREMOND
Polski Dzień (Polish Day)
 254/746-7118

CUERO
 Shakespeare in the Country
 361/275-2112

FORT WORTH
 Chisholm Trail Round-Up/
 Chief Quanah Parker
 Comanche Indian Powwow
 817/625-7005

HAMILTON
 Pasture Party Music Festival
 254/386-4419

WAXAHACHIE
 Cow Creek Country Classic
 Bicycle Rally
 972/937-2390

22-23
ARLINGTON
 Classic Car Swap Meet
 254/751-7958

SEALY
 Polka Fest
 979/885-6786

23-JUL 6
FORT WORTH
 Paint Horse
 World Championship Show
 817/871-8150

24
LOCKHART
 Country Music Show
 512/601-2154

27-30
FORT WORTH
 Ballet Concerto
 817/738-7915

LULING
 Watermelon Thump
 830/875-3214

27-JUL 2
DUNCANVILLE
 Shakespeare in the Park
 972/780-5070

28
WACO
 Zoobilee
 254/750-8400

28-29
CLIFTON
 Freedomfest
 800/344-3720

DE LEON
 Quilt Show
 254/893-4360

GLEN ROSE
 Buz Post Barrel Race
 254/874-5998

ITASCA
 Barbecue Cookoff
 254/687-2331

MEXIA
 Rodeo
 254/562-5569

NAVASOTA
 Blues Festival
 800/252-6642

28-30
CLEBURNE
 Carnegie Players
 Summer Musical
 817/558-7197

29
BENBROOK
 Summerfest at
 Benbrook Lake
 817/249-4451

BOWIE
 Antique Tractor Show
 940/872-2766

DALLAS
 Jazz Legends Festival
 214/939-2787

LULING
 Icehouse Art & Music
 Festival
 830/875-6282

McKINNEY
 Car Show/Chili Cookoff
 214/544-0500

29
NOCONA
 Golf Tournament
 940/825-3526

SEALY
 Sealybration
 979/885-3222

SULPHUR SPRINGS
 Independence Day Celebration
 888/300-6623

VENUS
 Old-Fashioned
 Homecoming
 972/366-3110

29-30
BELTON
 Arts & Crafts Show
 512/441-7133

30
BELTON
 God & Country Concert
 254/939-3551

SNOOK
 Fourth of July Celebration
 979/272-3732
 or 272-3132

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

1
SAN ANTONIO
 Symphony
 210/554-1010

1-2
SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta de Verano
 210/271-3151

2
SAN ANTONIO
 La Feria
 de las Flores
 210/822-3247

4
THREE RIVERS
 Brush Country Music
 Jamboree
 361/786-3334

6-7
SAN ANTONIO
The Stinky Cheese Man
 210/340-4060

US Team Roping
 210/698-3300

6-9
SAN ANTONIO
 Texas Folklife
 Festival
 210/458-2390
 or 458-2300

6-29
SAN ANTONIO
Pinocchio
 210/408-0116

7
SAN ANTONIO
 Gemini Ink
 First Friday Reading Series
 210/734-9673

7-30
SAN ANTONIO
Don't Dress for Dinner
 210/408-0116

8
GOLIAD
 Market Day
 361/645-3563

9
SAN ANTONIO
 St. Anthony Day Anniversary
 Charreada
 210/554-4575

14-15
STOCKDALE
 Watermelon Jubilee
 830/996-3586
 or 996-3866

14, 16
SAN ANTONIO
Tosca
 210/225-5972

14-16, 21-23
SAN ANTONIO
 Young Tongues
 Performance Festival
 210/227-5867

18-23
SAN ANTONIO
Beauty and the Beast
 210/226-3333

19-22
SAN ANTONIO
 Juneteenth Freedom Fair
 210/533-4383

20
SAN ANTONIO
 Concert Under the Stars
 210/829-5100

21
SAN ANTONIO
 Gartenkonzert
 210/222-1521
 or 408-0004

22-23
BEEVILLE
 Cactus Classic
 Quarter Horse Show
 361/362-3290

28-30
SAN ANTONIO
 Freedom Fest
 210/207-8600

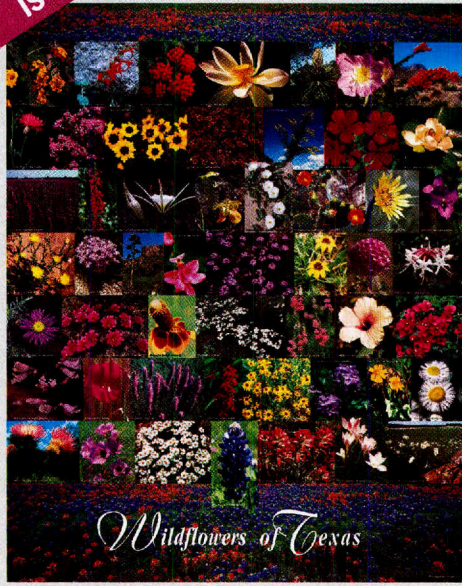
28-JUL 20
SAN ANTONIO
Godspell
 210/271-7791

THIS MONTH **On the Web**

MOTHER'S DAY IS MAY 12!

THERE'S ALWAYS MORE ONLINE.

GIFT SHOP Find great Texas-themed products at our online gift shop.



Wildflowers of Texas Puzzle
 #37105 \$16.95

Online Gift Shop? It's just one of many items, including T-shirts, posters, tote bags, and note cards, your mother is sure to love. If you prefer to order by phone, call 1-800-839-4997.

TEFF

WWW.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM

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Quitaque residents Joe and Virginia Taylor take visitors on motor tours of the scenic Caprock Canyons Trailway, accessible otherwise only by foot, bicycle, or horseback.

GETAWAY TO QUITAQUE

Virginia Taylor, whose family settled near Quitaque Creek in 1888, has called the red canyons of the Llano Estacado her home for nearly six decades. She and her husband, Joe, know the legends, lore, and history of the Caprock like Bob Wills (who grew up in nearby Turkey) knew the notes on his fiddle.

For non-bikers and non-hikers who want to see the beautiful and remote **Caprock Canyons Trailway**, laid down on the rail bed of the defunct Fort Worth and Denver Railway (see story, page 46), Virginia and Joe offer a perfect solution: a tour by van or bus. Their **Queen of the Valley Tours** takes sightseers along what Virginia calls "the Trailway's most scenic portion"—from **Quitaque** (pronounced KIT-uh-kway) to **South Plains**.

On the two- to three-hour excursion, you'll have ample opportunities to stop and take pictures, and the

Taylor will point out aspects of the trail you might not notice on your own. Interested in the bats? The history of the railroad? The Valley of Tears? Ask Joe or Virginia.

The van, which seats 10 people, goes out for a flat rate of \$100 per tour; the Taylors take out the school-bus for \$300. Call 806/983-3639 for more details.

Also in Quitaque, on June 1, **Queen of the Valley Tours** and the Quitaque Chamber of Commerce host the 10th annual **National Trail Day**, which kicks off with a

pancake breakfast and continues with Trailway tours, a chuck-wagon meal, a bake sale, a parade, and music on Main Street. Here's your chance to try your luck at washer-pitching, racing lawnmowers, and predicting bovine poop-precision in a heated game of cow-patty bingo. Call 806/455-1225 or 455-1456 for more information.

YOU'VE GOT THE MUSIC IN YOU

When the warmer months roll around, Texans head to outdoor stages and dance halls to whirl and sway to our favorite tunes—whatever types of music we adore.

We like the sound of the following:

From May 8-12, **San Antonio's Tejar o Conjunto Festival** celebrates 21

years of accordion madness at its shady digs at Rosedale Park. More than 25 bands—ranging from traditional conjunto ensembles to progressive Tejano groups—take the stage. An informal attitude permeates this fete, where the generations mingle freely on the packed dance floor, and people-watching proves half the fun. Local organizations provide authentic concessions—enormous *aguas frescas* and *cervezas* pair up nicely with *picadillo* tacos. One-day adult tickets cost \$7. Call 210/271-3151; www.guadalupeculturalarts.org.

For fans of Western Swing, May in Texas means it's time to shake out the snap-button shirts and A-line skirts and review those trademark Bob Wills "aaaaa-haaa's." On May 18 in **San Marcos**, the **Texas Natural and Western Swing Festival** highlights made-in-Texas wares *plus* made-in-Texas music. During the day, check out a raucous tribute to the fiddle and a Texas Playboys reunion on the courthouse square. Dozens of vendors sell crafts and produce here, and you can watch demonstrations of skills like Dutch-oven cooking and ropemaking. At night, the event moves to the banks of the San Marcos River, where the

Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame Show features more than 20 performers from 7:30 to midnight. Bring a lawn chair; admission is free. Call 512/393-8430 or 888/200-5620; www.sanmarcostexas.com.

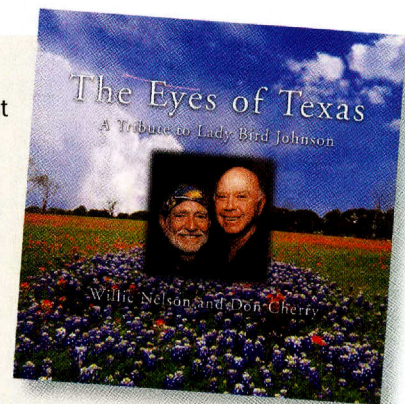
In **Wichita Falls**, the 15th annual **Legends of Western Swing Festival** on May 23-25 adopts a slightly more structured atmosphere, with performances taking place inside the air-conditioned MPEC hall from 10 a.m. to midnight. Swing fans come from as far as Japan to dance to topnotch performers like Bob Wills' Texas Playboys and Johnny Bush. Founder Gloria Miers says she's "proud that there's no alcohol, no smoking, no drugs at the festival. The ladies don't like their nice dresses to get sloshed in beer." Tickets cost \$20 per day, \$12 after 6 p.m. Call 318/792-3303 or 800/799-6732.

Next up, the 36th annual **National Polka Festival** descends upon **Ennis** May 24-26. This is a big event—four dance halls, 14 bands, dance and costume contests, a photography competition, a parade, and a children's play area keep more than 30,000 polka enthusiasts entertained. Between polkas, you can visit Ennis' Czech Museum,

Willie Sing for Us?

When Willie Nelson's Pedernales Records approached the folks at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center about the idea of recording an album to benefit the Center's programs, the Center couldn't resist. Willie? Texas songs? Wildflowers? What's not to love?

The result, **The Eyes of Texas**, a 12-song collection of classic Texas tunes sung by Willie and fellow Texan Don Cherry, includes such titles as *Waltz Across Texas*, *Streets of Laredo*, *Amarillo By Morning*, *Red River Valley*, and *San Antonio Rose*. The disc costs \$15.95, and all proceeds benefit the educational programs and environmental work at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Call 512/292-4300 or 877/WILDFLR; www.wildflower.org.



compete in 1-K and 5-K races, and even attend a Sunday polka Mass. All-access admission to the halls costs \$6-\$10. Call 972/87-VISIT or 888/366-4748; www.visitennis.org.

Lastly, we can't forget the ever-popular **Kerrville Folk Festival**, which takes place May 23-June 9 at Quiet Valley Ranch, some 9 miles south of town. Since its beginnings in 1972, the event has highlighted artists like Steve Earle and Lucinda Williams, and has grown to encompass 18 days of evening concerts, into-the-wee-hours singalongs, and overnight camping. In this magazine in 1996, writer Gene Fowler called the event "part gypsy convention, part tribal gathering." Single-day advance tickets range from \$12-\$22. Call 830/257-3600 or 800/435-8429; www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com.

WATER LOG

In Chandra Moira Beal's *Splash Across Texas: The Definitive Guide to Swimming in Central Texas* (La Luna Publishing, \$16.95 at bookstores, or see www.beal-net.com/laluna to order), the author takes the plunge at two parks not included in our page 4 feature: First up is the **Seguin Wave Pool**. You'll find few frills at this family-friendly park, but computer-generated waves keep things exciting, tubes are free for the asking, and a concession stand sells treats like corn dogs and Frito pie. Surf's up beginning May 25. Call 830/401-2480 or, after May 25, 379-POOL.

Situated on the banks of the Leon River, the 4 1/2-acre **Summerfun USA** in **Belton** features a trio of 40-foot slides, plus fountains, swinging hoops, a "lazy river," a kiddie pool, and a sand volleyball court. When it's time to reapply sunscreen, take a break and people-watch from a shaded deck overlooking the river. Cocoa butter and ketchup never smelled so good. The season starts May 25. Call 254/939-0366; www.summerfunUSA.com.

By the Way...

Through September 22, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in **Canyon** presents *Heels and Toes and Everything Goes: The Cowboy Boot as Art*, which focuses on cowboy boots from the 1890s through the 1950s. The dozens of pairs on display include boots worn by L.B.J., Gene Autry, Mary Pickford, and Roy Rogers. Check out the changes in boot design and decoration over the years, and receive a primer in cowboy-boot history, too....call 806/651-2244; www.panhandleplains.org.

Through July 31 on the 4th floor of the Flawn Academic Center in **Austin**, the **Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center** presents *John Steinbeck in His Time: A Centennial Exhibition*. Highlighting manuscripts, books, film stills, and correspondence, plus photographs by Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, and others, the exhibition places Steinbeck's writings in the context of the real world in which he worked... call 512/471-8944; www.hrc.utexas.edu.

In the early 1970s, historian Joe B. Frantz invited screenwriter/photographer Bill Wittliff to visit a ranch in northern Mexico, where he could take pictures of the vaqueros who worked and lived there. *Vaqueros: A Vanishing Tradition*, at the **National Ranching Heritage Center** in **Lubbock** May 3-January 5, 2003, presents some 70 of Bill's best images, along with spurs, knives, saddles, and other materials dating from the late 1600s forward....call 806/742-0498; www.ttu.edu/ranchingheritagecenter.

Texans still have a month or so to enjoy crawfish season. Relax—you don't have to cook 'em yourself. At the 16th annual **Texas Crawfish & Music Festival** in **Spring** (May 3-5 and May 10-12), you can munch mudbugs to your heart's delight. Enjoy live music on three stages (40 bands in all), and kids will like the pony rides, petting zoo, and carnival....call 281/353-9310, 713/220-2000, code "craw," or 800/OLD-TOWN.

Over at **Crystal Beach**, feeling crabby is a good thing May 10-12, when the Bolivar Peninsula hamlet hosts the 17th annual **Texas Crab Festival**. A crab cookoff and food booths galore mean you won't go hungry. When it's time to loosen your belt, head for the entertainment areas, where live music ranges from zydeco to country, and entering a "crab legs" contest might prove your ticket to fame....call 409/684-5940 or 800/FUN-SUN3; www.bolivarchamber.org.

For fans of Creole cuisine, New Orleans' famed Commander's Palace is a gustatory nirvana. But really, you don't have to go that far. The Palace's sister restaurant, **Brennan's of Houston**, takes classic Louisiana fare and works a little Texas magic. Brennan's chef Carl Walker recently released the restaurant's first cookbook, *Brennan's of Houston in Your Kitchen*. With helpful chef's tips and hundreds of recipes, the book alone will make your mouth water....\$24.95 at bookstores, at the restaurant (713/522-9711), or at www.brennanshouston.com.

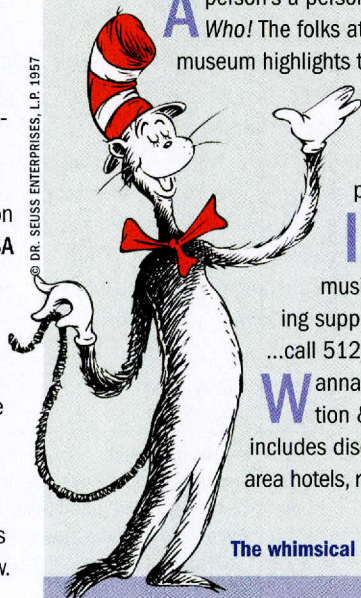
"A person's a person, no matter how small," goes a classic line from Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who!* The folks at the **Children's Museum of Houston** couldn't agree more. Through June 9, the museum highlights the whimsical writings and artwork of Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel in the exhibit *Seuss!* Life-size scenes and hands-on activities bring to life such works as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *Horton Hatches the Egg*. Reproductions of Geisel's artwork and photographs shed light on his creative process....call 713/522-1138; www.cmhouston.org.

In **Austin**, the 227-acre **Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve** hosts its 4th annual **Spring Arts, Music, and Native Plant Festival** May 10-12. Local artisans and musicians provide entertainment, and you can shop for native plants and gardening supplies while receiving advice from the pros. It's beautiful here in springtime! ...call 512/327-7622; www.wildbasin.org.

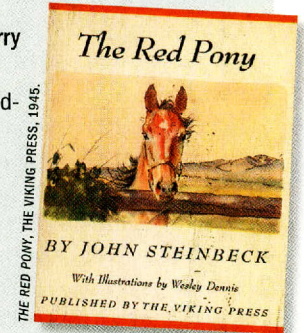
Want to save money on your next trip to **San Antonio**? Call the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau to request a **free** copy of the **S.A.V.E. coupon book**, which includes discount offers for SeaWorld San Antonio, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Splashtown, 36 area hotels, rental cars, and other tourist attractions....call 800/447-3372; www.sasave.com.

The whimsical characters of Dr. Seuss come alive at the Children's Museum of Houston.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.texashighways.com



© DR. SEUSS ENTERPRISES, L.P. 1957



Learn more about John Steinbeck on the UT campus in Austin.

B&B BEST

Coppersmith Inn Bed & Breakfast in Galveston garnered first place for “Best Breakfast Conversation” in *Arrington’s Bed & Breakfast Journal’s 2002 Book of Lists*, in which inn-goers from across the nation cast votes recognizing favorite inns in 50 categories.

Karen and Patrick Geary, owners and operators of the distinctive B&B (at 1914 Ave. M), surround guests with warmth and friendliness in the charming 1887 Queen Anne Victorian-style house. Their hospitality includes serving a hearty country breakfast family-style.

Coppersmith Inn offers five bedrooms with private baths and boasts antique furnishings and accessories. The B&B derives its name from its second owner, Paul Shean, an Irish coppersmith who came to Galveston in the mid-1800s. Call 800/515-7444 or 409/763-7004; www.coppersmithinn.com.

NEW PARK AT OLD FORT BOGGY

Amidst wooded terrain and rolling hills, **Fort Boggy State Park** opened its gates to visitors this past fall. Parklands lie near the site where once stood old Fort Boggy, a palisade fortress that helped protect settlers from Indians in the 1840s.

The new 1,847-acre park, about four miles south of **Centerville** on Texas 75, offers day-use facilities and a 15-acre lake for swimming, fishing, and boating (for small craft). Call 512/389-8900; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortboggy.

DOWN THE ROAD

Join us in June for a lip-smacking story on **barbecue**, and Arthur Meyerson’s beautiful photos of Texas **beaches**. We’ll sample the fine fare and funky atmosphere of some **unusual Dallas restaurants**, and travel to two swell small towns—**Belton** and **Lockhart**.

Readers Recommend...



© LAURENCE PARENT

During my travels, while dining at numerous types of restaurants, I’ve developed a passion for a good cheeseburger. Recently, I found just that—in my own community of **Refugio**. **Maria’s Gypsy Ice** diner is home to one of the best burgers I’ve ever eaten. It boasts a large, lightly seasoned patty grilled to perfection and topped with fresh veggies. Maria’s

Make the most of a meal on the coast at Rockport’s **AransaZu** restaurant, co-owned by Kristi and Jay Moore.

Gypsy Ice offers other great items, including a daily plate lunch, good taco salads, and banana pudding.

CHRIS A. BROCK, *Refugio*

Maria’s Gypsy Ice is at 101 Dunbar; 361/526-1948.

The succulent food at **Elijah’s Cafe** in Jasper surprised and delighted me!

I love veggies, and the 10 vegetable dishes listed on the cafe’s expansive menu were available and had never seen the inside of a can. Light-as-air cornbread that accompanies each meal makes you think you’ve died and gone to (cornbread) heaven! JANICE DYER, *San Antonio*
Elijah’s Cafe is at 201 W. Gibson; 409/384-9000.

Our birding club dined at **AransaZu** in Rockport while there to take a whooping crane boat tour. The superb food included oyster-stuffed shrimp, crab cakes, pecan-encrusted fish, and scrumptious desserts—especially the bread pudding. The varied menu also offers sandwiches at lunch and dinner. The restaurant has a fine wine list, as well. Jay Moore (former executive chef at Hudson’s on the Bend in Austin and coauthor of *Cooking Fearlessly*) and his wife, Kristi, co-own AransaZu. We can hardly wait for Rockport’s hummingbird festival [in September] so we’ll have an excuse to dine there again! JERRY HALL, *Wimberley*

AransaZu is at 2841 Texas 35 North; 361/727-1105. For more on Rockport, call the Rockport/Fulton Chamber of Commerce at 800/826-6441; www.rockport-fulton.org.

WINDFLOWER SPA

The popular **Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort** in **San Antonio** has added **The Windflower—The Hill Country Spa** to its exciting repertoire of guest amenities. The spa offers 21 rooms with customized treatments that incorporate hydrotherapy and aromatherapy while utilizing indigenous herbs and botanicals.

Signature treatments include the Texas Tea Wrap, Peach-Pecan Body Scrub, and Yellow Rose of Texas facial. Outdoor facilities, such as a secluded 20-meter lap pool, a shaded fountain courtyard, and herb and rose gardens, lend themselves

to relaxation and quiet meditation.

The resort (9800 Hyatt Resort Dr.) is about 20 minutes west of downtown San Antonio. Call 210/647-1234; www.hyatt.com.

PAMPA REMEMBERS WOODY

Folk troubadour and songwriter **Woody Guthrie**, a legend in American music, began writing songs while working in a **Pampa** drugstore in the 1930s, or so the story goes. Today, local devotees hope to turn that very store—Harris Drug Store, at 320 S. Cuyler—into the **Woody Guthrie Folk Music Center**.

Guthrie, who wrote such resonant

American folk songs as *This Land Is Your Land* and *So Long, It’s Been Good to Know You*, lived in Pampa from 1929 to 1937. Several area residents, including Thelma Bray, who edited the recent book *Reflections: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie*, plan to renovate the drugstore and establish it as a center that will house Guthrie memorabilia and serve as a venue for visiting musicians.

Planners forecast that the center, whose completion depends on donated funds, will open sometime in 2003. Call the Greater Pampa Chamber of Commerce, 806/669-3241; www.coc.pampa.com.

Because we’re unable to check out every item in “Readers Recommend,” and because details can change, please 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 “Travel News” on 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 publishing every suggestion we receive. We reserve the right to edit items.



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Window on Texas

EARLY MORNING sunshine pierces stubborn fog hanging low over a Corpus Christi marina.

