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TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

FEBRUARY 1999

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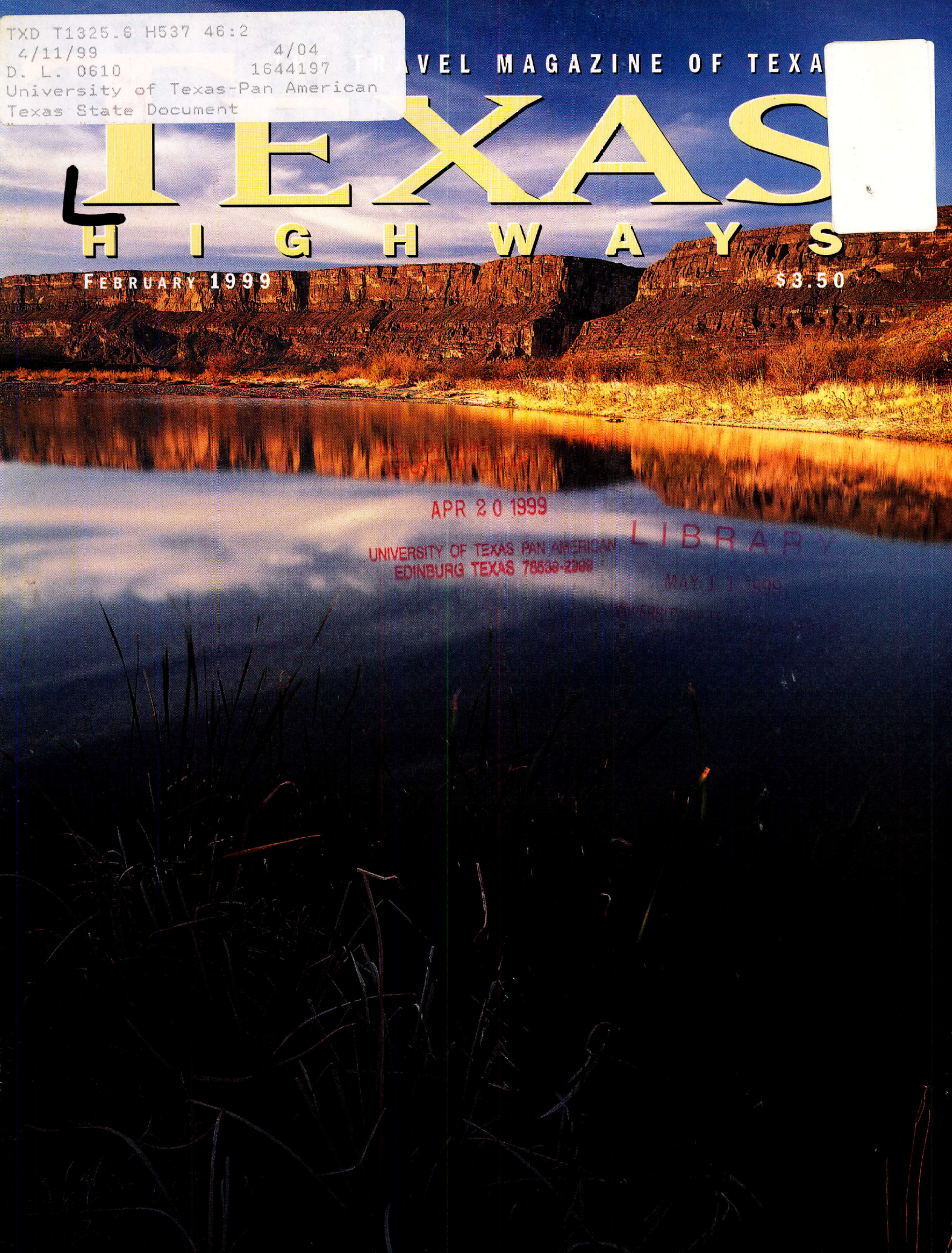
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This month, in addition to our selection of colorful destination stories and the final, romantic installment of our Readers' Choice results, we have a distinctive black-and-white offering. Last fall, we asked **Dr. Don Carleton**, the director of The University of Texas at Austin's Center for American History, to write an essay to accompany a portfolio of **R.C. Hickman's** photographs. You'll find this feature on page 20.

From the Forties through the Sixties, Hickman documented the exceptional and disturbing events of life in black Dallas: picketers protesting racial segregation, a single-parent family evicted from their apartment, and the signs of racial injustice so common in the South. R.C. also covered African-American luminaries when they came to town. His portfolio includes candid shots of musicians Count Basie, Ruth Brown, Nat King Cole, Billy Eckstine, Ella Fitzgerald, and Lionel Hampton; athletes Joe Louis and Ernie Banks; and civil rights leaders Roy Wilkins, Dr. Ralph Bunche, and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Hickman enjoyed meeting the celebrities, but his real passion was covering members of his own community at their everyday tasks: working, playing, celebrating. His images of his neighbors' lives chronicle a group of American citizens who were routinely ignored and dismissed by their white brethren. As Hickman put it, "We did everything the white folks did. We died, got born, we got married, we went to school and got degrees, but no one was recording it." No one but R.C. Hickman, that is. Fortunately for us, the *Dallas Express* and the *Dallas Star Post*, African-American newspapers aimed at the city's large black middle class, were printing his work. So were national African-American magazines like *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Sepia*.

Through Hickman's work we catch telling moments in the lives of black Dallasites in the decades following

World War II. As R.C. has pointed out, "We were [viewed as] second-class citizens, and we had to prove that we were not." When activist African-American organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) stepped up their fight against social and economic discrimination, R.C. Hickman captured their activities on film.

"The *Star Post* knew that the white press was not going to cover our demonstrations and picketing for equal rights," Hickman has said of the civil rights campaigns. "We wanted to be sure that the blacks knew what was going on. The only way they were going to really know it was to put it in [our] newspaper."

Thankfully, R.C. Hickman took as much care in preserving his negatives and prints as he did in taking his photographs. Don Carleton had learned in 1984 of Hickman's work from University of Texas doctoral candidate Michael Gillette, who had just completed his dissertation about the NAACP in Texas. That summer, Don and Michael paid R.C. a visit and pored over thousands of images from the photographer's rich collection. Don realized that Hickman's work was an incredible resource for the people of Texas, and, auspiciously, Hickman agreed to donate his work to the Center for American History. It is archived there today, along with the personal archives of acclaimed documentary photographer Russell Lee and Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist David Hume Kennerly....

Remember, readers, 1999 marks ***Texas Highways'* 25th anniversary**. We thank you for your continued support of the magazine and hope to bring you many more years of the best of Texas.



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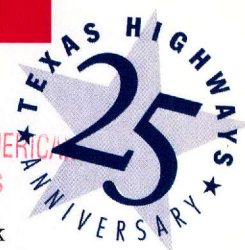
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ABOUT OUR COVERS

FRONT—Tranquil Terlingua Creek reflects the mouth of Santa Elena Canyon in Big Bend National Park. The Big Bend region receives coverage in two stories this month; see pages 28 and 38. *Photo © Laurence Parent*

BACK—The Buu Mon Buddhist Temple in Port Arthur has served as both a Baptist and a Catholic church. The four-tiered, wooden pagoda tower that now tops the building symbolizes tenets of the Buddhist faith. For more on Port Arthur, turn to page 12. *Photo by J. Griffis Smith*



MAY 1 1 1999
FEATURES
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FIFTY YEARS OF DUST AND DREAMS

by Maxine Mayes
 Ridin' and ropin' form only part of the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo's half-century of history. First-class entertainers and fancied-up animals also get in on the act

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PORT ARTHUR: TOAST OF THE COAST

by Gene Fowler
 The other Port A, this Texas city attracts tourists, too, just like its neighbor down the coast. Port Arthur's charms include music and museums, festivals and food

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DALLAS IN BLACK AND WHITE

by Don E. Carleton
 R.C. Hickman's sensitive photographs of African Americans in Dallas during the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties record an important era in our history. Hickman captured images of celebrities and locals alike

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ONE LAND... MANY WORLDS

by Janet R. Edwards
 Big Bend National Park's 801,000 acres harbor myriad forms of life and landscape. From the lowlands of the Chihuahuan Desert to the forested slopes of the Chisos Mountains, a driving tour reveals an unexpected variety of fauna and flora

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I ♥ TEXAS

by Ann Galloway
 In the mood for romance? Our recent Readers' Choice poll snagged a slew of Lone Star sites that help capture that lovin' feeling. We present the top 10 vote-getters, along with dozens of details to help you plan a getaway

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FOR THE BIRDS

by John and Gloria Tveten
 When the Kenedy Ranch opened a portion of its vast range for natural-history tours in 1996, birders found an exciting new world to explore. The historical setting adds to the lure

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Llan-uh-oh

The “Tops in Texas” article in your December issue was quite informative. I was pleased to see Llano County’s Enchanted Rock listed in a couple of categories and particularly that it was Number One under “Most Unusual Sight or Site.” Then, I was devastated to find the caption on page 30 saying that Enchanted Rock is in Gillespie County. Every square inch of Enchanted Rock is in Llano County, and 95 percent of the [state park’s] 1,643 acres rests in Llano County. We have enough trouble claiming our half of the Highland Lakes—Buchanan, Inks, and LBJ. You above all publications should be thoroughly familiar with Texas geography, so in future issues, please let us have our Enchanted Rock back.

JIM INKS
Llano

Ed. Note: *It’s all yours, Mr. Inks. Please forgive us.*

King Connection

The legend of King Fisher (December issue) isn’t complete without mentioning my great-great-grandfather John Benton Boatright, who was the Uvalde sheriff in 1883. He gave Fisher the chance to move from the wrong side to the right side of the law by appointing him deputy. Sheriff Boatright, born in Illinois in 1835, as remembered by a cousin who met him in the 1920s, considered himself a cut above the dusty ruffian ranchers of the Nueces Strip, and may have felt a kinship with the dandyish, well-dressed Fisher. Boatright’s snobbery and his association with outlaw Fisher must have earned him some enemies, because shortly after his election as sheriff, one J.D. Langford alleged that Boatright “willfully ... refused” to arrest several men for illegal card games in a saloon. An indictment, arrest, and trial followed, but Boatright was acquitted. He eventually fled to the more civilized haven of San Francisco, returning to Texas only after the great San Francisco earthquake. He is

© WYMAN MEINZER



Pictured in December’s “Flat Is Where It’s At,” Colorado City’s KVMC microphone appeared on billboards throughout England.

buried in the Civil War Veterans section at the [State Cemetery] in Austin.

CINDY FUNKHOUSER
San Diego, California, via email

Radio Raves

We made the big time! A Wyman Meinzer photograph of our KVMC microphone in *Texas Highways* (December, page 22). This structure is perhaps the most photographed landmark in Colorado City. Several years ago, pictures of it appeared on billboards throughout England with the banner, “Good Morning Texas, Welcome to Marlboro Country.” The top of the ad stated, “Colorado City, Mitchell County.”

The microphone replica was built many years ago by the late KVMC engineer Porter Richardson, who had his 15 minutes of fame in 1995 when he won the Texas Lottery. At the time, Porter said, “It’s only money,” and he meant it. Unfortunately, he died just 100 days

after becoming a millionaire. Believe me, Porter would have been prouder to see the photo in *Texas Highways* than he was to win the lottery.

JIM BAUM,
OWNER OF KVMC-KAUM RADIO
Colorado City

Speaking of Speaking

In November’s Speaking of Texas, you wrote about gun-toting preacher Andrew Jackson Potter. I read this section almost with disbelief, then with joy—the identical story is told in my family concerning my grandfather, the Reverend H.S. Anglin. His story told of cowboys [coming] in off the trail, bent on causing trouble at a revival. Grandpa carried a little black bag, similar to those used by early-day doctors, in which he carried his Bible, pencils, papers, and other stuff. At this particular revival, he took his Bible out, set it on the podium, and said, “I see we have several cowboys worshiping with us tonight.” Then, he placed his six-shooter beside the Bible and began to preach. My sister Floy Anglin Nelms (who, by the way, was in the first full graduating class from Texas Tech in 1929), in relating this story to me, repeated that Grandpa said, “You know, Floy, those cowboys behaved like perfect gentlemen,” and his blue eyes twinkled brightly.

ROY W. ANGLIN
Hixson, Tennessee

In the November Speaking of Texas item on Leo Windercker’s work with [the Stealth bomber prototype], you said that Representative George Mahon was from Midland. Not true. Prior to and during his long Congressional service, Mahon’s legal residence was in Colorado City, in a two-story, beige stucco home across Chestnut Street from the old

high school football field. It was only at the time of his retirement that he and his family moved to Lubbock.

CHARLES E. PORTER
Ocala, Florida

Ed. Note: *You’re right, Mr. Porter. In addition, The New Handbook of Texas says that besides Colorado City, Rep. Mahon “also claimed Lubbock as his hometown.” Thanks for keeping us flying right.*

Long-Ago Love

I just wanted to thank you for the beautiful magazines you publish. My “Old Flame,” Charlie W. Johnson, sends them to me every year as a Christmas present. I do enjoy reading them and gazing at the pictures. Charlie and I were born in dear old Texas and raised in the State Orphans Home in Corsicana. We learned so many songs and poems about our state—wish I could live there again.

JUANITA CAMERON
Hemet, California

Ed. Note: *Nice to hear from you, Ms. Cameron. We pictured Charlie Johnson and some of his friends at the State Orphans Home in the September 1997 “Nostalgia” issue, on page 43.*

Big Bend Road Trip

The November Window on Texas picture of Gilberto Luna’s jacal brought back memories. In 1951, another Sul Ross freshman, Bill Leifeste of Mason, and I left Alpine in my Chevy coupe for a one-day adventure to Big Bend. We stopped at Sr. Luna’s jacal before continuing to Santa Elena Canyon, Castolon, and the Basin. On our return, we stopped and scaled the Lost Mine Trail—to the very top. What a view!

I drove the Old Maverick Road again in 1969, this time in a station wagon with my [family]. The jacal was still there. I’m glad that it’s been repaired and is apparently being maintained.

RALPH L. BRIGHTWELL
Henderson

If you would like to write to *Texas Highways*, the editors would enjoy hearing from you. Though we are unable to print every letter, we just might select yours to appear in the magazine—whether you send us kudos or criticism. We reserve the right to edit letters. Write to Letters Editor, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009, or fax 512/486-5879. Email: editors@texashighways.com.

Although best known as the founder of the King Ranch in South Texas, Richard King actually came to Texas to pilot government steamboats on the Rio Grande. He had discovered ships as an 11-year-old, when he stowed away and ended up in Alabama.

Born in New York City in 1824, King earned his steamboat pilot's license as a teenager. In 1847, he landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande and worked as a pilot on the river during the Mexican War. After the war, he bought the *Colonel Cross* at public sale for only \$750 and began transporting merchandise and passengers along 250 miles of the Rio Grande's length. As a partner with his old friend Mifflin Kenedy and two other men, King helped design two boats that transformed trade on the river. The firm of M. Kenedy & Co., and later, King, Kenedy and Company, dominated commercial transportation on the Rio Grande for more than two decades.

One day in February 1850, as he steamed into Brownsville, King found the old steamboat *Whiteville*, the temporary home and church of the town's new Presbyterian preacher, docked in his favorite slip. Furious, the captain began cursing loudly until he saw a pretty young woman standing on the *Whiteville's* deck. When the Reverend Hiram Chamberlain's daughter Henrietta angrily confronted King, he became speechless—and smitten. Before long, he was attending prayer meetings and church socials to be near her; Henrietta, too, fell deeply in love. Her father eventually approved the union of his cultured daughter and the rough-edged boatman and married the couple in December 1854. They soon moved 120 miles north of Brownsville, to the ranch King had founded a year or so before the marriage.

The Kings had five children and

The blissful union of riverboat captain Richard King (below) and brown-eyed Henrietta Chamberlain King endured in the wilds of South Texas' brush country, where the captain established his famous ranch in the 1850s.

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enjoyed what Henrietta described as a blissful union. By the time of Richard's death, in San Antonio's Menger Hotel in April 1885, the King Ranch had grown to more than 600,000 acres. Henrietta outlived her husband almost 40 years, during which time the ranch's holdings increased to more than a million acres. She died at the ranch in March 1925.

—Janis Dulaney Russell, *Fredericksburg*

Hundreds of bedraggled Union prisoners of war awoke the morning of May 15, 1865, in a daze ... and unguarded. The gates of their difficult home—Camp Ford, near Tyler—stood open. With the end of the Civil War, freedom had finally arrived.

Camp Ford, named for Texas Ranger Colonel John S. "Rip" Ford, was the largest Confederate POW camp west of the Mississippi. Established in 1862 as a Confederate conscript training camp, as the war progressed it began housing Federals captured off the Texas coast and in Louisiana. Ultimately, the camp covered 10 acres and housed some 6,000 prisoners from all but two of the Northern states, as well as a few Confederate deserters and Union sympathizers.

Life at the camp was not easy. The men had to cook their own food and provide their own shelter. Thus, a collection of brush arbors, blanket tents, log huts, and burrows sheltered by brush, called shebangs, arose within the stockade walls. Despite the hardships, the men stayed busy, constructing a hospital, distributing several camp newspapers, and holding dances, concerts, and wrestling matches. According to one account, the first baseball game in Texas

was played here. About a tenth of the prisoners successfully escaped and managed to travel the 300 miles that took them to the nearest Union lines.

One of the Camp Ford POWs destroyed nearly all of the compound's official Confederate records after his release, and Federal troops destroyed the camp itself in 1865. Nevertheless, some records survived, and an archaeological dig has yielded more-recent evidence of the camp's layout (see *Tex-Cetera*). A historical marker two miles north of Tyler on US 271 denotes the Camp Ford site.

—Cindi Myers, *Wimberley*, and Randy Mallory, *Tyler*

In 1992, the fun-loving folks of Lajitas pronounced a spotted Spanish goat their mayor. No ordinary goat, Mayor Clay Henry Jr. displayed a capacity for beer that would have put any serious swiller to shame. Junior, as he was known, tended to civic affairs from the Lajitas Trading Post, where, like his daddy, Clay Henry Sr. (who was killed at age 23 in a fight over a doe), he chug-alugged Lone Star beers to the amazement of townsfolk and tourists.

The TV show *A Current Affair* aired Junior's act several times, and his celebrity grew. He appeared on Sally Jessy Raphael's show and guzzled suds in the Kenny Rogers movie *Gambler V*. Letters and phone calls poured in to Junior's owner, Roger Gibson of Terlingua. "He is the most famous goat in the world," Gibson declared modestly.

When then-Governor Ann Richards campaigned in Lajitas for reelection, she inadvertently ignored the popular mayor. The clamor over her breach of protocol brought Junior an apology and an invitation to lunch on the Governor's Mansion lawn in Austin. (Junior decided against a trip to the big city.)

On the night of November 30, 1998, after a short illness, Junior died at the ripe old age (for a goat) of 12. Although his death ended his political and showbiz careers, he left Clay Henry III to follow in his hoofsteps.

—Mary Beth Olson, *Edmond, Oklahoma*



**THE SAN
ANTONIO**

Stock Show

& Rodeo



FIFTY YEARS

OF

dust

BY MAXINE MAYES • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN DAVENPORT

"HE'S GONE COUNTRY, LOOK AT THEM BOOTS," SINGS THE RANGY ALAN JACKSON from a revolving stage smack-dab in the middle of the dirt-covered floor. "Gone country, back to his roots," Alan drawls, grinning as the fans join in. Their voices resonate from every section of the Joe and Harry Freeman Coliseum, an exuberant, impromptu backup for the coun-

try music star's performance at last year's San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo. To the crowds in the arena and the throngs strolling the grounds outside, going country means getting back to their farming and ranching roots. As if on pilgrimage, people congregate here each February to commemorate their agricultural heritage—and have a mighty fine time to boot.

A quarter of a million showed up for the inaugural run in 1950. The 49th staging, last year, which lasted 16 days, toppled all attendance records, with more than 890,000 people pushing through the turnstiles. This year, one million are expected to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the extravaganza, which takes place February 6-21, 1999.



& dreams

In the early 1940s, Joe Freeman, a San Antonio businessman and philanthropist, fancied a facility in his city dedicated to livestock expositions, mainly for children. Following World War II, Joe, his brother, Harry, and other members of the Farm and Ranch Committee of the city's chamber of commerce spearheaded a drive to build a coliseum in a pasture two miles east of the city. At the debut of the San Antonio Livestock Exhibition on February 17, 1950, in what was then called the Bexar County Coliseum, someone asked Joe whom the coliseum belonged to. Eyes twinkling and

[FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP] One hand in the air, grasping a small handle with the other, competitors in the bareback bronc-riding event must remain on their bucking mounts for a full eight seconds. Over at the Chuck Wagon Gathering, Allen Hatfield whips up a Dutch oven full of cowboy stew—free for the tasting. Hundreds of die-hard Western aficionados trek to the rodeo each year via horseback and covered wagon.

[ABOVE] Fans of the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo come in all shapes and sizes—and species.

For rhinestone cowboys, **OLD COWHANDS,** **BETWEEN, THE SAN ANTONIO STOCK** promises exhilarating surprises.

lips clamping his trademark cigar, the slim man with the big dreams responded, "To the kids."

Freeman's legacy "to the kids" still thrives, and in ways he could never have foreseen. Since 1984, the San Antonio Livestock Exposition (or S.A.L.E., the nonprofit entity that produces the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo) has awarded \$11 million in scholarships to almost 1,100 young people, turning dreams of college into reality. According to executive director Keith Martin, the bulk of each year's net proceeds goes to scholarships.

Altruism notwithstanding, the crowds come for the entertainment. After all, where else can you munch crusty Dutch-oven biscuits at a Chuck Wagon Gathering; watch border collies corralling sheep; laugh at the antics of armadillo puppets; learn

jazz, or brave the wildest ride at the carnival.

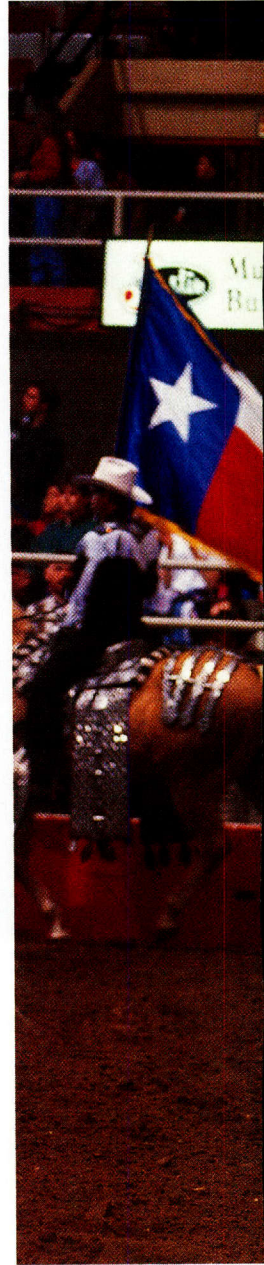
Of all the attractions, however, top billing goes to the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo: The packed coliseum makes that clear. In 1950, fans cheered 191 cowboys in the rodeo competitions; in 1998, more than 1,000 cowboys roped, rode, and wrestled for a share of the \$475,000 purse.

The Jack Sellers Bexar County Palomino Patrol (appearing for the 49th time this year) and the U.S. Marshals Posse launch the Grand Entry, galloping into the arena and thrilling spectators with precision rid-

ing at perilous speeds. During the patriotic windup, Palomino Patrol rider Linda Ebest circles the coliseum, bearing Old Glory high as rodeo announcer Hadley Barrett sings "God Bless America Again."

After Mark Jones belts out the last note of the national anthem (see sidebar, page 8), a gate clangs, and a bronc bolting from a chute signals the beginning of the bareback riding competition, the first of six sanctioned pro rodeo events. Timed events, such as calf roping, steer wrestling, and team roping, alternate with rough-stock events—saddle and bareback bronc riding and bull riding. During lulls in the bull riding, outlandishly clad rodeo clowns entertain with zany capers, always taking care to protect the dismounting cowboys.

The All-Around Cowboy award goes to the contestant



The Family Fair area features fishing demonstrations, pony rides, hands-on agriculture exhibits, a replica of a Wild West town, the rodeo's Hall of Fame exhibit, the Arts and Crafts Hall, and two petting zoos.

bass fishing from the pros; master the basics of butterfly gardening; and saddle up for an Appaloosa riding clinic? Even those who equate pastoral with passé can marvel at the energy of a high-steppin' jump-rope team, swing to the sound of Dixieland

CITY SLICKERS, AND EVERYONE IN SHOW AND RODEO'S golden anniversary



who garners the most prize money competing in at least two events. Last year, 52-year-old Butch Meyers of Athens, Texas, whupped all the young whippersnappers (including his 28-year-old son, Rope), collected his winnings, and rode off into the sunset in his brand-new pickup truck—compliments of the local rodeo committee.

The calf scramble, barrel racing, and mutton-bustin' round out the rodeo excitement. In the mutton-bustin' competition, a popular event at weekend performances, spunky helmeted

The glitzy, choreographed performance of the Jack Sellers Bexar County Palomino Patrol dazzles audiences during the Grand Entry. Twenty-seven gorgeous horses and their highly skilled riders star in the show's opener.

youngsters between the ages of four and seven try to cling to the back of a sheep for six-second rides.

A crowd-pleasing concert caps each rodeo. In the Fifties, crooning cowboy heroes like Gene Autry and Rex Allen (who appeared a record 11 times) captivated spectators. The Sixties saw regional talents like Charlie Walker and national television

TAKING BEHIND THE SCENES



Eight seconds seems like eternity when you're on the back of a bucking bull.

THE RODEO BAND

When Jean Sarli, a former show-band director in New York and St. Louis, agreed to orchestrate music for the Grand Entry and other rodeo events in 1952, little did he know the gig would become a family tradition. In 1958, Jean passed the baton to his son, Don, who has conducted the band in the balcony ever since. "We don't need the rehearsals," says Don, "but the horses do!" Don's son, Joe, will take over when his 88-year-old father retires.

THE NATIONAL

ANTHEM At many public gatherings, the singing of the national anthem merely kicks off the real event. But at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, it's

almost worth the price of a rodeo ticket to hear Mark Jones' a cappella version of "The Star Spangled Banner." Jones' sterling rendition of the song at the 1993 rodeo so impressed audiences that requests poured into the marketing office to bring him back. So return he did. Jones, a marriage and family counselor in San Antonio, now sings the song before most of the rodeo performances.

COWBOY CHURCH

Church at the rodeo? Yep. Worship services for the cowboys who follow the rodeo circuit (visitors are welcome, too) take place Sunday mornings, and are led by folks like Susie Luchsinger, a gospel music recording artist and sister of Reba McEntire; Susie's husband, Paul, a steer wrestler; or Faye Yates of San Antonio and her Texas Heart & Soul Band. The congregation stays comfortable in denim and boots. Sometimes, poet Jimbo Humphries, from Dickens, ambles over from the Chuck Wagon Gathering to read inspirational cowboy poetry.

RODEO CLOWNS

"Fightin' bulls is not near as hard as being funny." So says rodeo clown and barrel-man Leon Coffee (right), despite 100 broken bones and having been "reconstructed a time or two." Back this year for his 17th consecutive appearance at the San Antonio Rodeo, Leon began riding bucking horses in rodeos at age nine. In high school, he competed in bull riding and made it all the way to the high school finals. While stationed at Ft. Hood, Leon substituted for a no-show clown at a rodeo in Georgetown... and he

hasn't looked back since. In his early years as a clown, Leon practiced by trying to keep Longhorn cows separated from their calves. To master the art of comedy, he studied Red Skelton's pantomime and Bill Cosby's facial expressions.

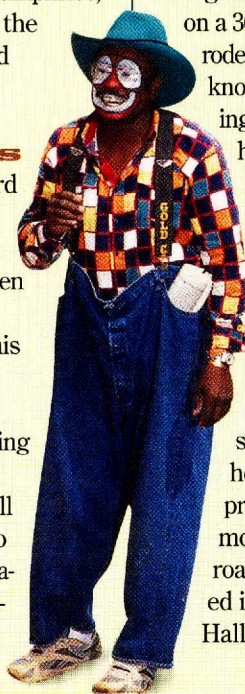
When asked if it take guts to face a bull again after an injury, Leon says, "There's a thin line between guts and stupidity. I've crossed that line a time or two." Does he ever wish he made a living some other way? Leon answers with a quote attributed to legendary cowboy Larry Mahan: "I wouldn't take a million dollars for what I've done, but I wouldn't give you a dollar to do it all over again."

MADAM CHAIRMAN

Though there is no "typical" volunteer at the San Antonio Livestock Exposition (S.A.L.E.), one of the more visible is Mary Nan West, who often cruises the grounds in a golf cart tagged "Boss Lady." Raised on a 36,000-acre spread in South Texas, the rodeo's first female board chairman knows the rigors and rewards of ranching life. Mary Nan's grandfather, who had no sons, groomed his only grandchild to be his top cowhand. "I didn't get these hands pouring tea," she says. "I was my grandmother's despair. She was a Victorian lady and didn't think that I should ride horseback with the men, rounding up cattle."

Mary Nan has fostered the stock show for more than 30 years and helped initiate S.A.L.E.'s scholarship program. The 73-year-old grandmother, who still runs her ranch and roams the range, was recently inducted into the National Cowgirl Museum Hall of Fame in Fort Worth.

—Maxine Mayes



stars like Sky King and Penny. Actor Ken Curtis, who played Festus, Marshal Dillon's deputy on *Gunsmoke*, surprised the 1973 crowd with his splendid baritone voice. Few in the audience knew he had once sung with the Sons of the Pioneers and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra.

The slate of singers since the Seventies reads like a future

Country Music Hall of Fame: Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Wynonna, Brooks and Dunn, Reba McEntire, Clint Black...and the list goes on. In recent years, such pop, rock, and Tejano groups like The Beach Boys, La Tropa F, and the Pointer Sisters have attracted new audiences. This year's lineup includes such musical acts as Brooks and Dunn, Reba McEntire, David Lee Garza y

Los Musicales, and Tony Bennett—certainly a diverse mix!

A sprinkling of specialty acts, both in and outside the arena, has enhanced the entertainment lineup through the years. Fifty years ago, Faye Blesing of California described her trick riding as “easy.” “All one has to do,” the blonde beauty explained, “is practice several years, have a good horse, forget past falls and bruises, and think not of the danger.” In 1962, Ann Marston amazed audiences with her prowess in archery. The former Miss Michigan won 11 national championships, earning the nickname “The Sweetheart of the Bow and Arrow.”

Animals—besides the exhibition and rodeo stock—also get into the act. America’s favorite dog, Lassie, appeared in 1963, re-creating tricks from television episodes. One year, a four-pound spider monkey saddled up for rollicking rides on border collies. Nowadays, the Budweiser Clydesdales prance into the arena between rodeo events, hooves clip-clopping and harness bells jingling.

If you love the Clydesdales, check out the horse-barn schedules. Noble Arabians, Appaloosas, and paints lope, canter, and trot through their paces during daily shows. Llamas, valuable as beasts of burden, sources of wool, and as sentries for flocks of sheep, compete in a pack race. And for action as spirited as any rodeo event, watch the cutting-horse and team-penning competitions and the sheepdog trials.

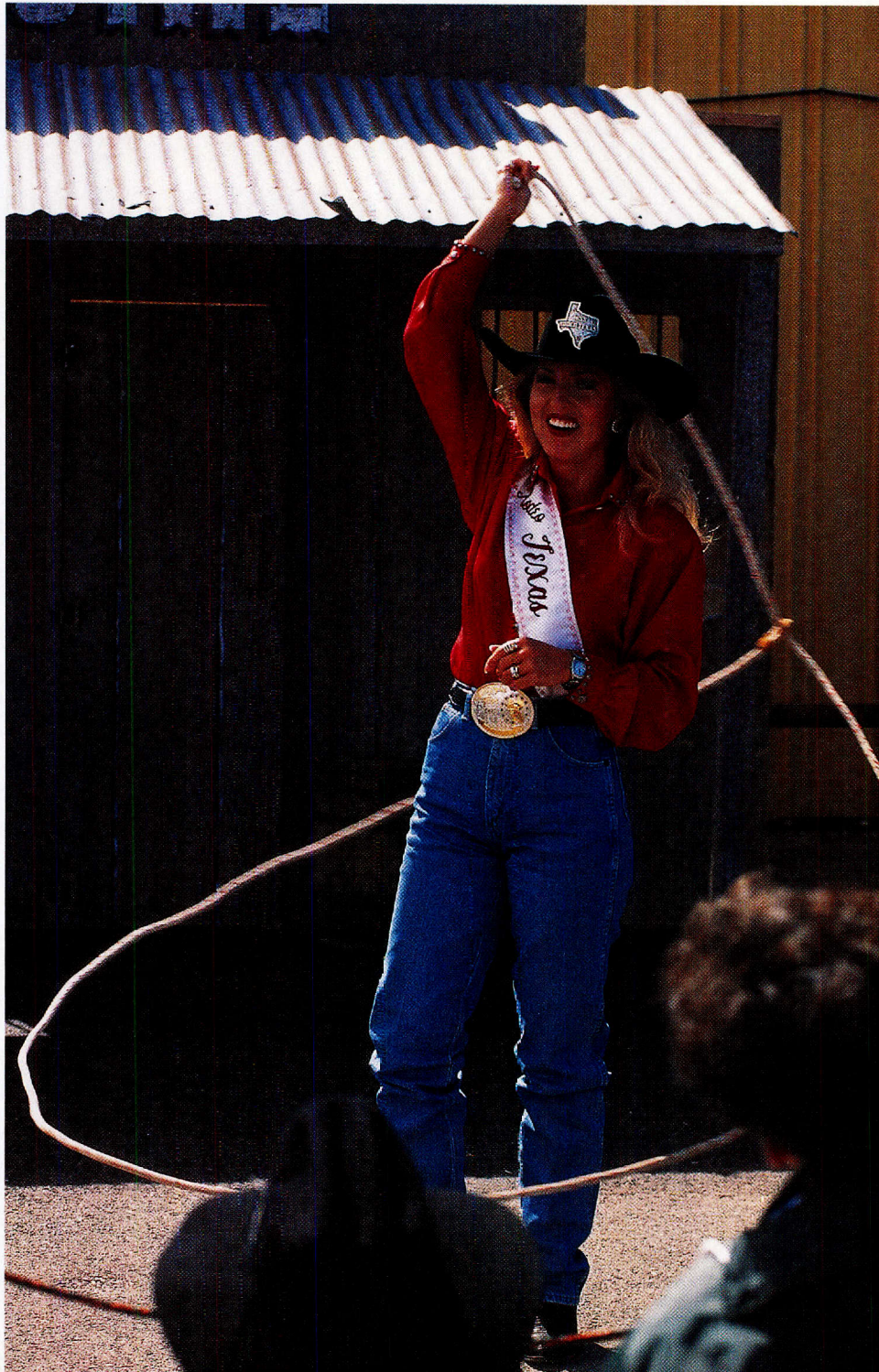
Dogs and sheep match wits and wills at the sheepdog trials, when border collies have five minutes to herd a trio of sheep across the arena and into a narrow chute and pen. Spectators remain respectfully silent as the dogs creep, crouching low to the ground, or dart quickly to deflect the sheep’s movement in the wrong direction. Oblivious to barks from a dog outside the arena or coughs from the bleachers, the nimble dogs stay focused on their mission and their masters’ verbal and whistled commands.

Over at the Children’s Barnyard, it’s love at first sight—or maybe at first bite—as the lambs, goats, llamas, miniature donkeys, and other gentle beasts nuzzle little hands, hunting the nibbles of food they’ve come to expect.

In the poultry center, a toddler in coveralls presses his nose and chubby cheeks against the glass of the hatchery, entranced by the clusters of downy yellow chicks. Freshly incubated, they nap under heat lamps, heads turned at 90-degree angles, bills resting atop each other.

“They peck at their shells for 12 to 18 hours before they hatch,” explains Allison Boone, an agricultural science intern from Sam Houston State University. “That’s why they sleep so much—they’re exhausted.”

Shauna Ware of Weatherford, 1998’s Miss Rodeo Texas, demonstrates the rope tricks that helped her win the title.



Follow your nose to the Chuck Wagon Gathering, where smoke from a half-dozen campfires drifts through the air. Cast-iron and enamelware pots squat on iron tripods and grates over open mesquite flames. Inside these campfire ovens, such treats as traditional cowboy chili, beans, beef stew, Dutch-oven bis-

The Budweiser Clydesdales, known as the "Gentle Giants," make an impressive departure from the rodeo arena. Each of the eight horses eats 25 to 30 quarts of feed and 50 pounds of hay per day.

cuits, pot roast, and even peach cobbler cook to perfection. Best of all, you can sample, free of charge, to your heart's content.

Horace and Sarah Hatfield, from the Rainy Valley Ranch near Baird, are authentic cowboy cooks who participate nearly every year. "Our wagon," explains Horace, "is probably over a hundred years old and still has its original paint. We built the chuck box from studying the design that Charles Goodnight used for the first chuck wagon."

According to the Hatfields, chuck wagons had almost vanished by the early 1960s, when pickups started delivering meals to the cowhands, but many ranches are reviving the tradition.

"It's just more fun," says Horace. "The old-timers missed it, and the young cowboys liked the new experience. There's an atmosphere around a wagon late in the evenings that can't be duplicated with a pickup truck."

Like the Chuck Wagon Gathering, the World of Agriculture offers insights for a populace far removed from its agricultural roots. Hold a cotton boll in your hand, and visualize the 738 men's dress shirts, 850 women's blouses, 371 pairs of jeans, or 266 full-size sheets that a 480-pound bale of cotton can produce. By the way, even most toothpaste contains a cotton by-product (a pure form of cellulose used as a thickening agent).

If you think a Chianina is an Italian wine and a Boer someone who makes you yawn, a ramble through the livestock exhibitions provides a crash course in animal husbandry. Drama unfolds daily on the dirt stages of the mammoth barns where 4-H and FFA members camp out with their animals. In the maze of stalls, kids blow-dry, brush, and braid their blue-ribbon hopefuls, pampering them like stars on a movie set. Winners wind up in the auction barn, where whoops and hollers erupt from the grandstands as the



bids crawl upward. It's a bittersweet time for the young exhibitors, euphoric over the staggering sums, yet grieved over the looming separation. (By the way, a Chianina is a breed of cattle that originated in Italy; a Boer is a type of goat.)

Bidding on a grand-champion steer is not for the average pocket-book (last year's prizewinner sold for \$75,000), but if you simply want some striking—and affordable—accents for your Western duds, head on over to the Arts and Crafts Hall. At the Maverick Trading Post, you'll find such accessories as belts braided from horsehair and wristbands made of rattlesnake skin. Or, select a glitzy outfit from one of many stalls featuring studded, sequined, and fringed vests, skirts, and blouses. If you'd like a cowboy hat to match that ensemble, pick a color—from teal and lavender to standard black and white—from one of the hat vendors.

For rhinestone cowboys, old cowhands, city slickers, and everyone in between, the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo's golden anniversary promises exhilarating surprises. A new Rodeo Hall of Fame exhibit showcases 50 years of rodeo memorabilia. Laser light shows will spark up this year's rodeo performances, and the Houston Street Stampede, a Longhorn cattle drive down Houston Street (at 10 a.m. on February 9), will replace the traditional Western parade kickoff.

But some things will stay the same. A new crop of schoolkids will watch the milking demonstrations in the dairy barn and express amazement that milk doesn't originate in plastic bottles. Youngsters who've never known otherwise will realize that groceries don't grow on supermarket shelves. And the most-requested item at the Joe and Harry Freeman Coliseum first-aid station will always be Band-Aids, for the blistered heels of greenhorns breaking in new boots.

So mosey on down for a grand shindig. Just lock up the store and hang a sign on the door: Gone Country. ★

Freelance writer MAXINE MAYES first attended the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo in the mid-1980s, and she has attended nearly every year since.

JOHN DAVENPORT is a staff photographer for the *San Antonio Express-News*. John's photo of lovers on the River Walk appears on page 38.



Yonis Rutledge of Roswell, New Mexico, and his niece, Cheyenne Rice, take in the rodeo's *Dinosaurs in Motion* exhibit.

WHEN...WHERE...HOW

San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

The San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo runs February 6-21 at the Joe and Harry Freeman Coliseum, 3201 E. Houston St., 2 miles east of downtown. From Interstate 35, exit on Coliseum Rd. The Joe and Harry Freeman complex is at the corner of Houston St. and Coliseum Rd. Follow the signs to the public parking areas. Parking: \$5. Admission to the grounds only: \$5, \$3 age 60 and older, \$2 age 11 and younger. Rodeo



ticket prices for all ages (includes admission to the grounds and the after-rodeo concert): \$17 balcony rows 1-14, \$12 rows 15-16.

This year's musical lineup is as follows: Brooks and Dunn (Feb. 6-7), Hank Williams Jr. (Feb. 8), Alabama (Feb. 9), John Michael Montgomery (Feb. 10), Tony Bennett (Feb. 11), Tracy Byrd (Feb. 12), Terri Clark (Feb. 13), Sammy Kershaw (Feb. 13), Michael Salgado (Feb. 14), David Lee Garza y Los Musicales (Feb. 14), Reba McEntire (Feb. 15-16), Alan Jackson (Feb. 17-18), Robert Earl Keen (Feb. 19), Clay Walker (Feb. 20), and Neal McCoy (Feb. 21).

To charge tickets by phone, call 210/225-4237 or 224-9600. The coliseum, exhibition barns, and public facilities are all wheelchair accessible. For information, write to Box 200230, San Antonio 78220-0230; 210/225-5851. Web site: www.sarodeo.com.

"Great Cities Are Not Accidents!" proclaimed an 1897 advertisement for the infant burg of Port Arthur, Texas, in the *Kansas City Star*. "It's not chance about Port Arthur—When nature, enterprising men, capital, and commerce all get together, success is bound to come."

In the case of the inland port city founded by and named for railroad builder and town promoter Arthur E. Stilwell, supernatural forces also played a role. Port Arthur, wrote Stilwell years later, "may not be the only city ever located and built under direction of the spirit world, but it is undoubtedly the only one...so recognized and acknowledged."

In the mid-1890s, Stilwell was building his Kansas City, Pittsburg, and Gulf Railroad (KCPG) from Kansas City to the Gulf of Mexico by way of Pittsburg, Kansas. He intended to end the line at Sabine Pass, a small community (south of Lake Sabine) perched on a thin body of water also called Sabine

Pass, which separates Texas and Louisiana. But as he wrote in his 1921 book, *Live and Grow Young*, spirits he called "Brownies" advised him in a dream to "locate your terminal on the north shore of Sabine Lake....And there occurred to me a picture of a city...here in this landlocked harbor, safe from the most devastating storms, [where] we could create a port."

In other writings, the visionary developer described the advice of his psychic friends as simple "hunches." In his 1971 biography of Stilwell, Keith L. Bryant Jr. cites a more plausible explanation for the location of Arthur's port: Two broth-

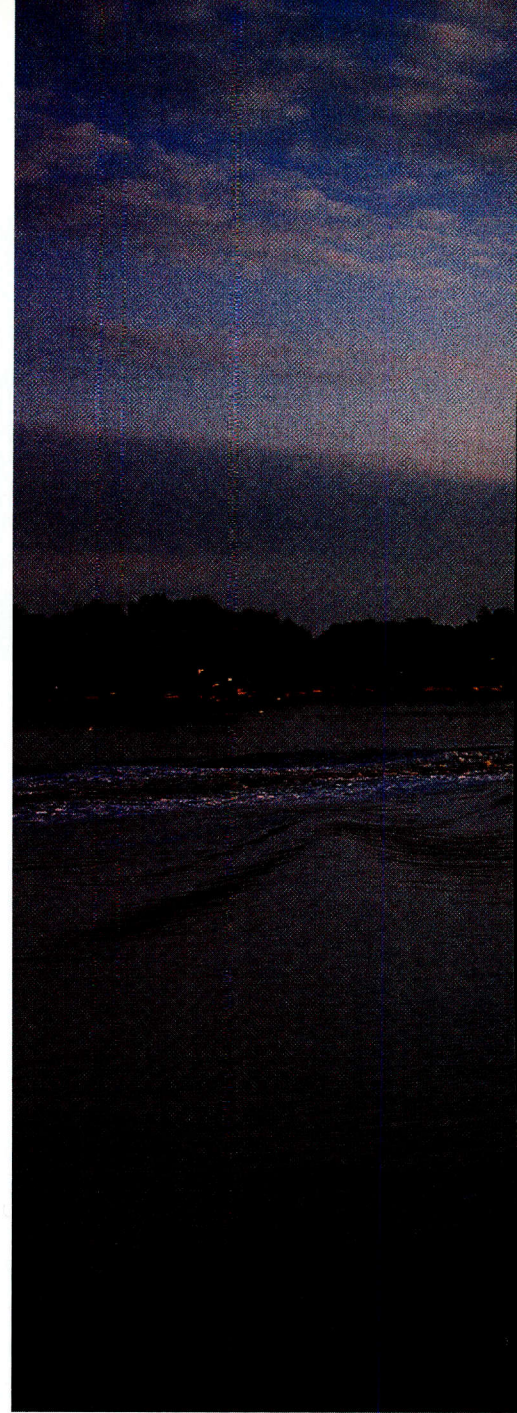
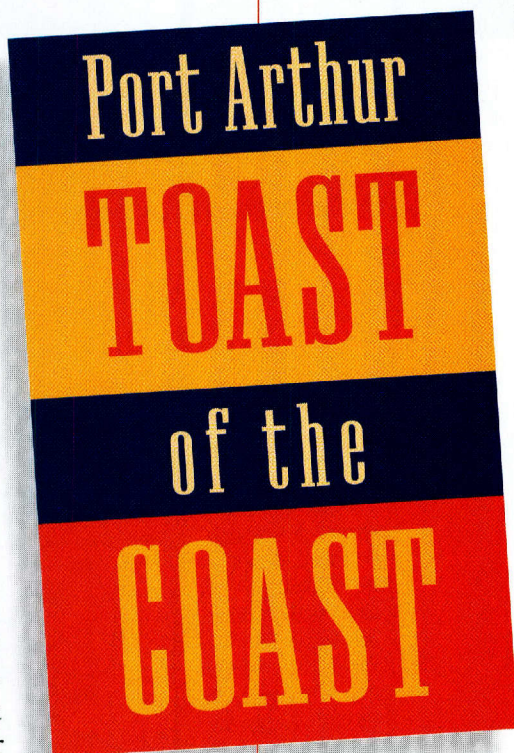
ers named Kountze, who owned the town of Sabine Pass and 40,000 acres around it, refused to make a deal with the mystical promoter.

However Stilwell chose the site of his namesake city, Port Arthur arose on the

shores of Lake Sabine, described by the late Port Arthurian Edith Huber-Logsdon as a 98-square-mile tidal lagoon. After the KCPG Railroad connected the "Magic City by the Lake" with Kansas City in 1897, special excursion trains brought Midwesterners to see firsthand the "tropical paradise" that so enchanted Stilwell. He also sought investors for the rail line in Holland,

and many Dutch families moved to the coastal frontier. By 1900, these immigrants had their own town, Nederland, just north of Port Arthur.

As he developed the city and connected it by rail with the wider world, Stilwell also worked to link his port with the Gulf by creating a ship-worthy channel between Port Arthur and the deep water beyond Sabine Pass. Formal ceremonies in March 1899 marked the opening of the canal, and that August the *St. Oswald* of Britain became the first oceangoing vessel to ply the channel's waters.



That same year, however, financial problems forced the KCPG into receivership. Control of the railway, renamed the Kansas City Southern, fell into the hands of investor John W. "Bet-a-Million" Gates. The financial titan had already made Texas history in the 1870s when he visited San Antonio on a barbed wire-selling trip and convinced skeptical cattle barons to purchase the newfangled fencing by setting up a demonstration corral on Military Plaza. Gates earned his nickname with his penchant for wagering hefty stakes on virtually any-



thing—for example, a race between two raindrops on the window of a train.

Gates' biographers, Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, have written that the moneyed Easterners who dealt with the barbed-wire and steel tycoon perceived him as "a gross, uncouth Westerner who ate peas with his knife and whose belch could be heard through the Waldorf's Peacock Alley."

His lack of polish notwithstanding,

Gates saw his gambler's luck pay off early in 1901, when oil gushed at the Spindletop field on Beaumont's southern edge. Refineries sprang up in Port Arthur, fed by pipelines from the boom. Soon, Gates owned a large hunk of stock in the Texas Company (Texaco), and the town earned the slogan it later adopted, "Port Arthur Oils the World."

In 1906, Arthur Stilwell's dream city became an official U.S. port of entry.

Over the next two years, the Sabine-Neches Canal was extended along the city's shoreline to become part of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Silt and mud dredged from the lake bottom and piled up on the canal's eastern side created a body of land named Pleasure Island. By 1909, Port Arthur ranked as the 12th-busiest port in the United States.

"Some Port Arthurans view Gates as wearing a black hat for taking over

A tugboat chugs through the Intracoastal Waterway on its way to Port Arthur. In addition to shipping, Port Arthur's wealth was built on commercial fishing, lumber, oil refining, and petrochemicals.



The entrance to Pompeii Villa features the original tile floor. In 1900, barbed-wire baron Isaac Ellwood built the pink structure as a winter “cottage.” The striking home includes a peristyle, or three-sided Roman courtyard, which gives direct access to each room in the house.

Stilwell’s railroad,” says local historian W.M. Timmerman Jr., “but he did a lot for the city.” Gates’ local interests eventually included the elegant Plaza Hotel (now demolished) and Port Arthur College, known today as Lamar University–Port Arthur. The campus includes the majestic Gates Memorial Library, built by John’s widow, Mary Dellora Gates, after her husband’s death in 1911.

Though John Gates’ 20-room, Virginia-Colonial mansion, built in 1900, fell to the wrecking bar in 1960, other examples of the town’s early wealth still stand. The pink Pompeii Villa, built by barbed-wire

magnate Isaac Ellwood as a winter home in 1900, is open to the public as a house-museum on Port Arthur’s historic Lakeshore Drive. The home replicates a villa of Pompeii in 79 A.D., the year Vesuvius buried the Roman city. Shortly after the villa’s completion, Ellwood sold it to another northern tycoon, Diamond Match Company president James Hopkins.

Soon after the purchase, Mrs. James Hopkins disembarked from the Kansas City Southern to inspect the home, but she took such offense to the mosquitoes, muggy heat, and muddy streets of early Port Arthur that she refused to get out of the buggy. Her husband then sold the

home to George Craig, who had plotted Port Arthur’s streets for Stilwell in 1895, for either \$10,000 or Craig’s Texas Company stock, which amounted to 10 percent of the oil giant. Craig lived in the unique home until his death in 1950. After its next owners, Captain Arne Pedersen and his wife, both died in 1969, the villa stood vacant for several years until the Port Arthur Historical Society, led by its late president Sydalise Fredeman, bought and restored it.

“When Port Arthur interior decorator Charles Martin went to Pompeii to do research for the restoration,” says docent Sylvia Williams, “he learned Ellwood’s architect had indeed re-created a Pompeii villa.” Its 10 rooms form a U shape around a traditional Roman peristyle, with each room opening onto the column-lined courtyard. Many original details still grace the villa, such as the black-and-white tile in the entryway and the pine flooring through most of the home.

The historical society refurbished the villa with antiques that reflect the high style of a turn-of-the-century tycoon. The living room features an 1830 American empire sofa, a circa-1790 George Hepplewhite chest, and a crystal chandelier donated by former Texas governor (and Port Arthur resident) Allan Shivers. A Louis XVI parlor set adorns the parlor, along with an 18th-Century French diamond-dust mirror. A portrait of Bet-a-Million Gates with his dog Blondie catches the eye in the dining room; looking down, guests admire a rare French Savannerie rug. The villa’s pink exterior and the colors of its rooms—cerulean blue, bright red, ivory, grey, almond green, peach, and apricot—were recommended by Charles Martin on the basis of his research at Pompeii.

Pompeii Villa offers an exotic setting for private parties and historical

Pompeii Villa, White Haven, and other historic homes such as Rose Hill Manor and the Vuylsteke House offer a glimpse of the high life in old Port Arthur.



White Haven, originally built as a New England Colonial-style mansion in 1915, was transformed into the Southern Greek Revival style when the second owners added large verandas and columns. Today, the home welcomes guests with Victorian-era furniture, a screen that belonged to Empress Carlota of Mexico, and candelabras that once provided light for the Shah of Persia.

society fund-raisers. In the 1970s, Sydalise Fredeman hosted a “voodoo dinner” in the peristyle, complete with a “voodoo queen” imported from New Iberia, Louisiana.

White Haven, a slightly younger manse on Lakeshore Drive, opens its doors to tour groups as well as overnight guests. Recently donated to Lamar University–Port Arthur by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the 1915 home was built in the New England Colonial style for Dr. H.D. Morris, an early Port Arthur physician who served as British consul, and his wife. White Haven’s next owners, the Clarence Booz family, modified the home with large verandas and columns in the Southern Greek Revival style.

Stella White, who later owned White Haven with her husband, Carl, left the home to the DAR after her death in 1985. White Haven displays Victorian-era furniture, 18th- and 19th-Century porcelain, and delicate Wedgwood, German, and French china. Visitors also see a French screen from the dressing room of Empress Carlota of Mexico and candelabras that once provided light for the Shah of Persia.

Hostess Sissy Wood, who grew up two doors down from White Haven, enjoys taking visitors onto the second-floor

balcony, where they can gaze at ocean-going ships on the Intracoastal Waterway. “It was always so exciting to wave at

the ships,” says Sissy. “And the foreign ships that came in were surprised to suddenly see a residential area.”

White Haven, Pompeïian Villa, and other historic homes, such as Rose Hill Manor and the Vuylsteke House—the latter built for the Dutch consul—offer a glimpse of life in old Port Arthur. Downtown, the Museum of the Gulf Coast (see story, July 1996) takes visitors back to prehistoric times in the neighborhood of Lake Sabine. When the museum opened in 1994, its interpretive exhibits of ancient area life surprised even long-time residents. “I’d always thought of Port Arthur as a fairly new city,” says Dr. Sam Monroe, president of Lamar University–Port Arthur, “but the human thread goes back much farther in time. There’s a two-mile stretch of McFaddin Beach where more Clovis projectile points have been discovered than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere.”

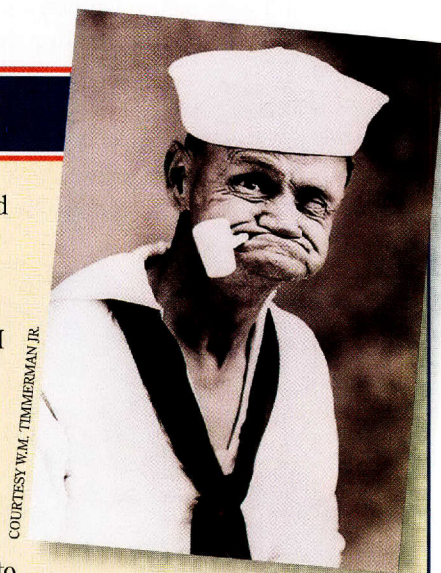
Port Arthur's POPEYE

In 1906, Lawrence P. Arnold, a 13-year-old orphan, stowed away on a ship bound for America from his native England. After a stormy crossing, he arrived in Port Arthur. “This is it,” he announced. “This is where I stay.” Taken in by a local family, he served as a marsh guide for Bet-a-Million Gates and friends on hunting parties. In 1915, he went to work for the Gulf Oil refinery.

After Arnold had all his teeth pulled, a co-worker told him he resembled the cartoon mariner, Popeye. Flattered, he began to mimic the spinach-eating seaman and to call his wife Olive Oyl. Arnold often performed the role to the delight of Port Arthur kiddos at the downtown Kress store, and he was a longtime fixture in parades. The pipe-puffing sailor appeared at the 1936 Texas Centennial celebration in Dallas as “Gulf Oil’s own original Popeye.” The next year, he was on deck in Crystal City for the unveiling of the Popeye statue in the “spinach capital of the world.” He made his final appearance in a Christmas parade in the early 1960s.

Arnold’s son Neal also caught the show-biz bug, playing guitar for the likes of Tex Ritter, Cliff Bruner, and Moon Mullican.

—Gene Fowler



COURTESY W.M. TIMMERMAN JR.

A 125-foot-long mural draws visitors' eyes at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Along with prehistoric-era exhibits, the museum honors modern-day legends.

The largest indoor mural in the state occupies one wall of the museum. Painted by Kerrville artist Travis Keese, the work presents a panorama of area life, from the days when residents lived in huts on the shores of Lake Sabine and hunted mastodons, all the way to modern times. The exhibits here reflect that breadth of history. Visitors learn about the natural world of the region's plants, animals, and weather conditions, as well as the story of Stilwell's man-made port.

The museum's many gems include an original copy of the 1845 resolution that admitted Texas to the Union, which, according to museum signage, is one of only three known to exist. KCPG Railroad artifacts share space with a 1901 prospectus map of the Port Arthur Land Company and a kitchen-spice box used to hold ballots for the 1898 election that incorporated the city.

Displays also cover the early days of important area businesses, such as commercial fishing, timbering, shipping, and the petrochemical industry. Museum volunteer Ed Guidry points out Old Betsy, an 1830 artillery piece that sat in front of his Gulf Oil refinery

office for 35 years. "In 1903, the story goes," says Ed, "they used Old Betsy to try to knock a hole in a burning storage tank, to let the oil seep out so there'd be less chance of an explosion. But the cannonball passed right through the tank and then set another tank on fire, without affecting the first fire at all."

Upstairs galleries celebrate Port Arthur's contributions to sports and music. Jimmy Johnson, Tim McKyer, and Joe Washington number among the football greats who once played on Port Arthur's high school gridirons. Johnson, who coached the Dallas Cowboys to two Super Bowl wins in recent years, even has a local boulevard named for him. Asked if the honor embarrassed him, the man with the passion for pigskin says, "Oh no, I go out and drive up and down it every time I come home."

Harry Choates, the "godfather of Cajun music," moved to Port Arthur from Louisiana at age eight; in 1946, he recorded "Jole Blon," the song regarded as the Cajun national anthem. The fiddling godfather's other songs included "Le Gran Mamou" and the "Port Arthur Waltz." Another musician and Louisiana native, the late Clifton Chenier, "king of zydeco" during his illustrious career of more than 40 years, arrived in the 1940s to work in the refineries. Before long, the accordion master

had gained fame for his mixture of Cajun sounds with rhythm-and-blues.

The museum displays a 45-rpm recording of "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do," a 1959 hit for the Port Arthur-born Jivin' Gene Bourgeois. "Running Bear," a 1960 smash for another local, Johnny Preston Courville, was penned by J.P. Richardson, aka The Big Bopper, a Sabine Pass native who died in the 1959 plane crash that killed Buddy Holly. (The song tells the East Texas legend of Kisselpoo, an Atakapan Indian princess who eloped by canoe across Lake Sabine with an Indian of another tribe. Unhappy medicine men called down the wrath of the gods, and the young lovers perished in a storm.) Colorful stage outfits worn by George Jones and Tex Ritter pay tribute to the area's country musicians.

The "psychedelic" era's favorite rockin' blues belter, Janis Joplin, was also born in Arthur Stilwell's dream city. Museum visitors can see paintings by Janis, her concert attire, album covers, her high school annual, and a note from 14-year-old Janis inviting her mom to a birthday dinner at Luby's Cafeteria. Dr. Sam Monroe, who went to school with the singer, remembers the beatnik-style poetry readings held by Janis and her friends around Pleasure Island bonfires, before she found fame and fortune in the hippie mecca of San Francisco.

The museum also displays work by yet another Port Arthur native, world-renowned artist Robert Rauschenberg. In a recent BBC documentary, childhood friend Dr. Fenwick Watts of Port Arthur displays one of the artist's earliest surviving works, a self-portrait in pencil, sent to Fenwick in a letter after Rauschenberg joined the Navy in 1944.

The bronzes here of Janis, The Big Bopper, and Bet-a-Million Gates are the work of Port Arthur sculptor Doug Clark. A former rice farmer from Edna,



The Janis Joplin collection at the Museum of the Gulf Coast includes her paintings, high school annual, album covers, a replica of her psychedelic Porsche convertible, and this sculpture by local artist Doug Clark.



A mammoth mural inside the Museum of the Gulf Coast depicts the region's history, from dinosaurs rising out of the shark-infested waters to the commotion caused by the oil-spewing gusher at Spindletop. Museum exhibits in the foreground tell the area's natural and human history.

Doug lives and works in a converted laundry building across Procter Street from the museum. "This is a great town for what we do," he says, explaining that affordable space for his foundry would be harder to find in a larger city. Doug's statue of Sam Houston stands proudly in the Lions Club Park in Sabine Pass.

Doug and his fellow artists work in the relative peace and quiet of downtown Port Arthur. As they did in many Texas towns, most local businesses moved in the 1960s and '70s to suburban malls and strip centers. Many historic downtown buildings sit empty, awaiting new life. Accepted in 1997 into the Main Street program, administered by the Texas Historical Commission, Port Arthur is committed to revitalization of the old commercial and entertainment district. "I'd like to see downtown Port Arthur have the life and activity it had when I was younger," says program director Sandy Riley. "I have fond memories of coming

downtown and getting ice cream at Kress, shopping at Bluestein's, and going to the Sabine Theater."

Texas' first lady, Laura Bush, visited Port Arthur's main street—named Procter Street—last spring. "She cut the ribbon for two downtown businesses that my sister, Pearlanna Carron, and I started in restored historic buildings," says Andrea Jackson. "At Kizzy Konnection, we offer custom sewing and sell imported African art, jewelry, and fabrics." The second business, called The Junction, functions as a youth ministry and has game rooms and a skating rink.

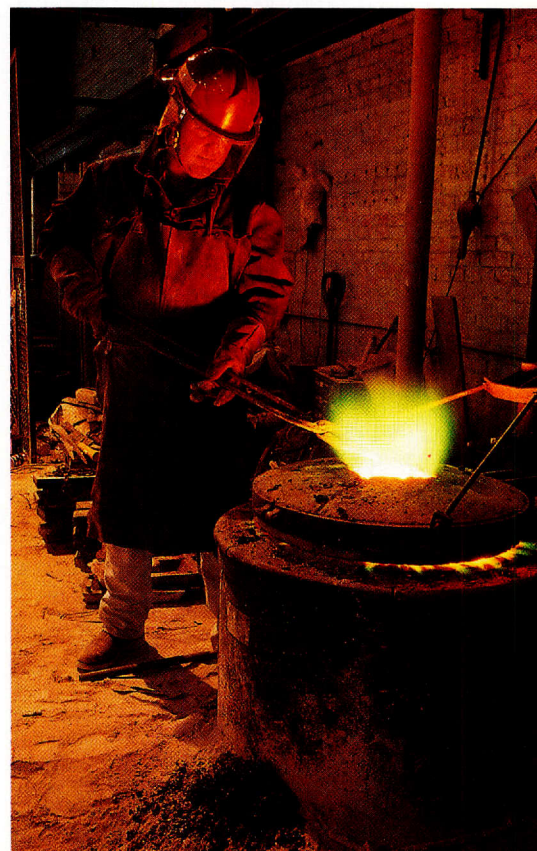
A new cafe, Anna Mae's, has also opened up downtown, joining longtime

Former rice farmer Doug Clark creates bronzes in a converted laundry building. In addition to his sculpture of Janis Joplin, Doug created The Big Bopper and Bet-a-Million Gates for the Museum of the Gulf Coast, and a statue of Sam Houston that stands in the Lions Club Park in Sabine Pass.

lunch spot Jackson & Company, which features historic Port Arthur photos in its window. Another downtown institution, The Foc'sle, makes a great spot for sipping a brew, with its lively mix of Irish and seagoing themes. Port Arthur pathologist Dr. Ronald Buchanan also plans to open downtown museums to showcase his collections of butterflies and antique cars.

One area business moved into a strip mall in a big way about 20 years ago. Snooper's Paradise, in Groves, a community on Port Arthur's northeastern edge, occupies a former supermarket, dime store, and pharmacy. You can "snoop" through 57 rooms of custom furniture, fine antiques, and architectural ornamentation. "People are surprised when they come in," says Snooper's owner, Jon Hampton. "They don't expect this in a little town." Browsers can get lost in the store's 26,000 square feet. "People sometimes holler when we turn the lights out," adds Jon.

Some of those snoopers might be hollering because their taste buds yearn for some great Port Arthur seafood. Larry Judice owns Larry's French Market, which offers an all-you-can-eat buffet of spicy jambalaya, boudin, étouffée, and other Cajun dishes. On Wednesday





A pier stretches from Pleasure Island over Sabine Lake. The port's founder, Arthur Stilwell, always envisioned Pleasure Island as a tourist destination. Today, the island boasts everything from a hotel, a marina, and condominiums to charter fishing boats, hiking and biking trails, and lakeside dining.

and Saturday nights, the place hops with live Cajun music and dancing. Larry's brother Al owns Judice's French Market & Deli, where you can get carry-out live crawfish, boudin sausage, and "the world's best hamburgers."

At Esther's Seafood and Oyster Bar, Cajun specialties include Captain John's Seafood Fettuccine and Fish Ponchartrain. When owner Esther Benoit found the building that houses her restaurant in 1987, it was in Cameron, Louisiana. Beholding a double rainbow from its porch, Esther announced to her husband, John, "This building is coming home with us." Cut in two for a barge trip on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, the restaurant today is at the foot of Rainbow Bridge, which connects Port Arthur and Orange.

At Pleasure Island Restaurant, diners can watch sailboats glide in the wind on Lake Sabine, or moonlight glimmer on its waves. A more-traditional seafood restaurant, The Schooner, offers a less Cajun-influenced menu. In Sabine Pass, Channel Inn serves tasty marine chow to travelers, locals, and workers from the giant offshore oil rigs berthed in the ship channel for repairs.

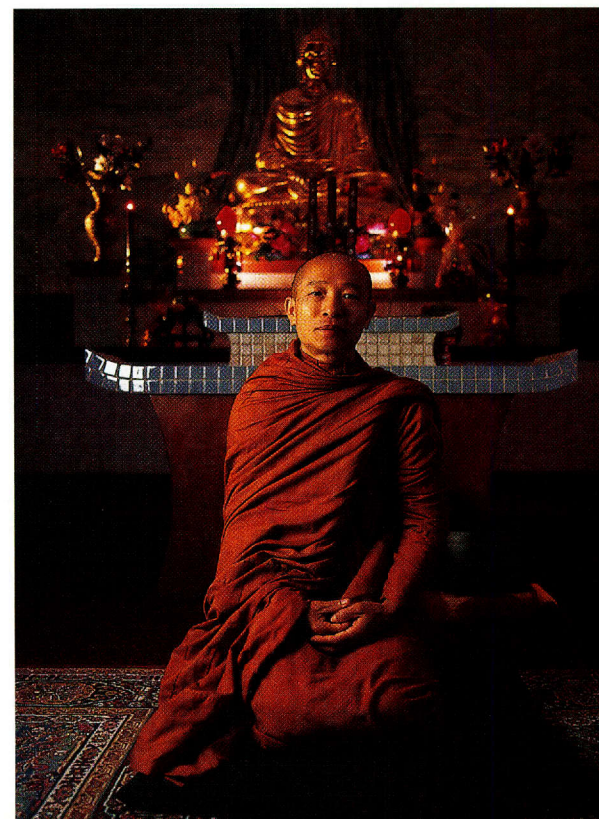
Groovin' with the gumbo just naturally puts folks in the mood for a party. Port Arthurans like to *laissez les bons temps roulez*—let the good times roll—as much as Bet-a-Million Gates liked to gamble. The Janis Joplin Birthday Bash, held each year on the Saturday closest to Janis' January 19 birthday, celebrates her life with concerts and look-alike contests. February brings the Southeast Texas Mardi Gras (February 11-14, 1999), featuring parades with colorful floats, more than a dozen bands, fireworks, and balls. "Port Arthur's Mardi Gras is a family affair," says Faye Liss of the Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The Pleasure Island Music Festival comes to the island's music park in April (April 23-25, 1999), while Juneteenth festivities (June 16-19, 1999) include a ball and a torchlight parade. September brings the Mexican

The Reverend Thich Huyen Viet serves as abbot of Port Arthur's Buu Mon Buddhist Temple. The monk enjoys planting and photographing lotuses.

Fiesta (September 10-12, 1999) and Shrimpfest (September 17-19, 1999), as well as Dick Dowling Days (September 11, 1999). This last event reenacts a Civil War battle that took place at Sabine Pass. From an earthen parapet, 47 Confederates with a handful of small cannons repelled a force of 5,000 Yankees in gunboats. As participant (and director of the Museum of the Gulf Coast) Danny Sessums explains, reenactors don't skimp on details. "Eating the same food, and only the same amount, as the soldiers did, can give you a real sense of what it was like," says Danny. "So can wearing the wool uniform in the September heat and marching in the crude shoes available then. We force observers to cross the time threshold, and we educate through entertainment." Union gunboats in the pass are represented by plywood-sided craft painted black, and the Confederates on shore fire blanks. "One year," adds Danny with a chuckle, "a Russian tanker was coming into the pass just as we began firing. The captain at first thought those crazy Texans might be starting a real war."

In October, the CavOILcade festival (October 23, 1999) pays homage to the role played by black gold in southeast Texas history. And for Christmas, all Port Arthur sparkles. At the Queen of



Port Arthur

Port Arthur is in the southeastern corner of Texas, about 20 miles south of Beaumont. To receive a complete visitor information packet, write to the Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau, 3401 Cultural Center Dr., Port Arthur 77642; 409/985-7822 or 800/235-7822. The area code is 409. All sites are wheelchair accessible unless otherwise noted.

Pompeiiian Villa hours: Mon-Fri 10-2, or by appt. Admission: \$2. For information, write to the Port Arthur Historical Society at Pompeiiian Villa, 1953 Lakeshore Dr., Port Arthur 77640; 983-5977.

White Haven hours: By appt. Admission: Free. Write to White Haven, 2545 Lakeshore Dr., Port Arthur 77640; 982-3068.

Rose Hill Manor hours: By appt. Admission: \$2. Write to Rose Hill Manor, 100 Woodworth, Port Arthur 77640; 985-7292.

Vuyksteke House hours: By appt. Admission: Free. Not wheelchair accessible. Write to the Vuyksteke Dutch Home, 1831 Lakeshore Dr., Port Arthur 77640; 983-4921.

Peace Shrine and Gardens, which has a large statue of the Virgin Mary, 700,000 lights depict scenes from the Bible. The shrine was built by parishioners of Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church in gratitude for a safe escape to America and for peace in their new home. A block south on 9th Avenue, visitors can find Vietnamese shops and eateries.

As many as 5,000 Vietnamese live in Port Arthur. While most are Catholic, many worship at the Buu Mon Buddhist Temple. "We call it the Baptist-Catholic-Buddhist church," says temple abbot

The Museum of the Gulf Coast hours: Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5. Admission: \$3.50, \$3 age 65 and older, \$1.50 ages 6-18, 50¢ age 5 and younger. Tour groups of 30

or more, \$2 per person. Write to the Museum of the Gulf Coast, 700 Procter St., Port Arthur 77640; 982-7000.

Many of the exhibits and programs at the **Texas Artists Museum** feature work by south-

east Texas artists. Hours: Tue-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-2. Admission: By donation. Write to the Texas Artists Museum, 3601 Cultural Center Dr., Port Arthur 77642; 983-4881.

For information on **Doug Clark's sculpture**, write to Doug Clark, Art Foundry of the Gulf Coast, 719 Procter, Port Arthur 77640; 983-5232.

Snooper's Paradise hours: Mon-Sat 9:30-5:30. Write to Snooper's Paradise, 5509 E. Parkway, Groves 77619; 962-8427.

The **Queen of Peace Shrine and Gardens** is at 801 9th Ave., 7 blocks south of Gulfway Dr. (Texas 87). Always open. Admission: Free. Call 983-7676.

Buu Mon Buddhist Temple hours: By appt. For information, write to the Buu Mon Buddhist Temple, 2701 Procter, Port Arthur 77640; 982-9319.

For information on the **Port Arthur Main Street Program**, write to Sandy Riley, 441 Austin Ave., Port Arthur 77640; 985-6800. **Kizzy Konnection** is at 448 Procter; 982-2874. Hours: Tue-Sat 1-5. **The Junction** is at 301 Procter; 982-4000. School-year hours: Fri 6 p.m.-midnight, Sat 2 p.m.-11 p.m. Summer hours: Mon-Sat 2-11. **Port Arthur Trade Days**, an antique and collectibles sale, takes place the 3rd weekend of each month in the 200-500 blocks of Procter.

Restaurants

Anna Mae's is at 501 Fifth St.; 982-6302. **Jackson & Company** is at 532 Fifth St.; 985-5100. **Larry's French Market** is at 3701 Pure Atlantic Hwy. (FM 366); 962-3381. **Judice's French Market & Deli** is at 3005 Seventh St.; 982-3522. **The Foc'sle** is at 416 Procter; 983-5050. **Esther's Seafood and Oyster Bar** is at the foot of the Rainbow Bridge, between Port Arthur and Orange; 962-6268. **The Schooner** is at 1507 Texas 69, in Nederland; 722-2323. **Channel Inn** is on Texas 87, at 5157 S. Gulfway in Sabine Pass; 971-2400. **Pleasure Island Restaurant** is at 600 Pleasure Pier Blvd.; 982-2911.

Festivals

The **Janis Joplin Birthday Bash** takes place on the Sat. closest to her Jan. 19 birthday (Jan. 16, 1999; Jan. 15, 2000). **Southeast Texas Mardi Gras** is on the 2nd weekend in Feb. (Feb. 11-14, 1999). **Pleasure Island Music Festival** takes place on the last full weekend in Apr. (Apr. 23-25, 1999). **Juneteenth** is always celebrated on and several days before June 19 (June 16-19, 1999). The **Mexican Fiesta** takes place the 2nd weekend of Sep. (Sep. 10-12, 1999), followed by **Shrimpfest** (Sep. 17-19, 1999). **Dick Dowling Days** takes place the 1st weekend after Sep. 8, date of the historic battle (Sep. 11, 1999). Oct. brings **CavOILcade** (Oct. 23, 1999).

Books

Look in your library for *Arthur E. Stilwell, Promoter With a Hunch* by Keith L. Bryant Jr. (Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1971) and *Bet a Million! The Story of John W. Gates* by Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan (Arno Press, 1948). *The Port Arthur Centennial History*, a 2-volume set, costs \$65 per single volume, and \$120 for both volumes (plus \$5 per book for shipping). Send a check to Port Arthur Centennial History, Box 1897, Port Arthur 77641; 800/207-6004. VISA, Mastercard, and Discover card orders accepted.

Reverend Thich Huyen Viet, in reference to the building's previous incarnations. "I love the cowboy-and-Western culture of Texas," he adds. "The people here are very friendly."

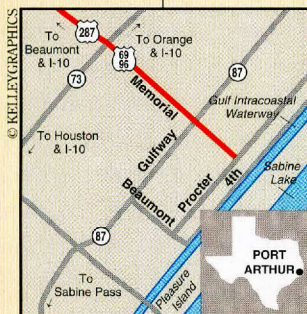
Recalling the strife in his native land, the monk turns serious. "We came from a poor country, and very few of us are lucky enough to be here. The top spiritual leader in Vietnam is still in jail. And we appreciate the American people accepting us as refugees and allowing us to live in a place with fundamental human rights and freedom of religion.

We are proud to be in a country that accepts all faiths."

Hearing the Buddhist's heartfelt expression, you can't help but think that Arthur Stilwell—whether guided by "Brownies" or not—would also be proud of his "magic city by the lake" as it begins its second hundred years. Great cities are not accidents, indeed. ★

GENE FOWLER hopes his old friend Laura Joplin will see this article about her hometown.

Staff photographer GRIFF SMITH was impressed with the number of 20th-Century music legends who came from the Port Arthur area.



Photographer R.C. Hickman documented black Dallas during a transitional period in the city's social history

Dallas

Black

and

White

in

I first met R.C. Hickman on a late summer day in 1984. In my capacity as director of the Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin, I was eager to find and preserve photographs documenting the African-American historical experience, especially in Texas. The center has a major photographic collection, which makes available for research the visual

evidence of events, places, and people that have helped to shape and define the American experience. I had traveled to Mr. Hickman's home in the South Oak Cliff section of Dallas hoping that he had saved some of his work and that we might be able to make it available for research and teaching.

I was not disappointed by Mr. Hickman or his photographs, the negatives of which he had carefully filed in labeled envelopes and stored in several small boxes.

I spent much of that first day fascinated by the hundreds of images documenting events large and small, happy and tragic, public and private, that marked the lives of ordinary people as they worked and played and yearned for their own fair share of the American dream. I was equally impressed by Mr. Hickman, whose generous spirit, good humor, and strength of character were immediately apparent.

R.C. Hickman began his career as a photojournalist and portrait photographer in Dallas in the Forties—at a time when white-owned newspapers rarely acknowledged in print the activities of African Americans, except as they related to crime or poverty.

As a result, African Americans depended on black-owned newspapers for information about life in their communities and for photographic evidence of their accomplishments and struggles. Focusing his 4x5 Speed Graphic camera on a wide range of subjects during a career that stretched into the mid-1960s, R.C. Hickman worked hard to meet his community's demand for visual documentation. In providing this service and by carefully preserving his work, Hickman also created an invaluable historical record of an important segment of Texas society during a time of fundamental transformation.

Born in Mineola in 1922, Hickman moved with his family to Dallas in the early 1930s. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in 1937, R.C. (Rufus Cornelius) completed two years of study at Tillotson College in Austin. The U.S. declaration of war on Japan, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, interrupted his studies. In early 1942, he was drafted into the Army and served most of his time in the Pacific.

While stationed in Saipan in the Mariana Islands, Hickman discovered photography when he watched a fellow soldier develop pictures of military combat. Hickman learned all he could from his colleague and devoted himself to taking photographs and developing them in his spare time. He learned rapidly, and soon became an official military photographer.

By Don E. Carleton



[ABOVE] Service station owner Annie Carr Mercer checks under the hood of a shiny Chevy in 1955. Following World War II, the number of African-American entrepreneurs in Dallas grew, and R.C. Hickman was there to photograph them at their places of business.

[RIGHT] R.C. proudly holds his trusty Speed Graphic camera in 1949. He says, "The boys now have all kinds of lighting equipment to take their pictures. I had one light, but I could take it off the camera and hold it where I wanted to give the effect I needed for that photograph."







After the war, Hickman returned to Dallas, where he used his GI benefits to get formal training at the Southwest School of Photography. He shot photographs for the black-owned *Dallas Express* and the *Kansas City Call*, which he promoted and sold in North Texas. In 1952, Hickman joined the staff of the *Dallas Star Post*, another black newspaper, as the photographer and circulation and advertising manager. He also freelanced for *Jet* magazine and several newspapers in the East, as well as for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Hickman's work as a freelancer gave him the opportunity to photograph notables such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., civil rights lawyer and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, singer Ella Fitzgerald, U.N. Ambassador and Nobelist Ralph Bunche, heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt when they visited Dallas.

As an NAACP photographer, Hickman preserved the visual evidence of racial segregation in North Texas and the struggle to end it. His photographs of public demonstrations against segregation are especially valuable, because Dallas' major news media generally refused to report these events. "The publisher of the *Dallas Star Post* knew that the white press was not going to cover our... picketing for equal rights," Hickman has said. "We wanted to be sure that the blacks knew what was going on."

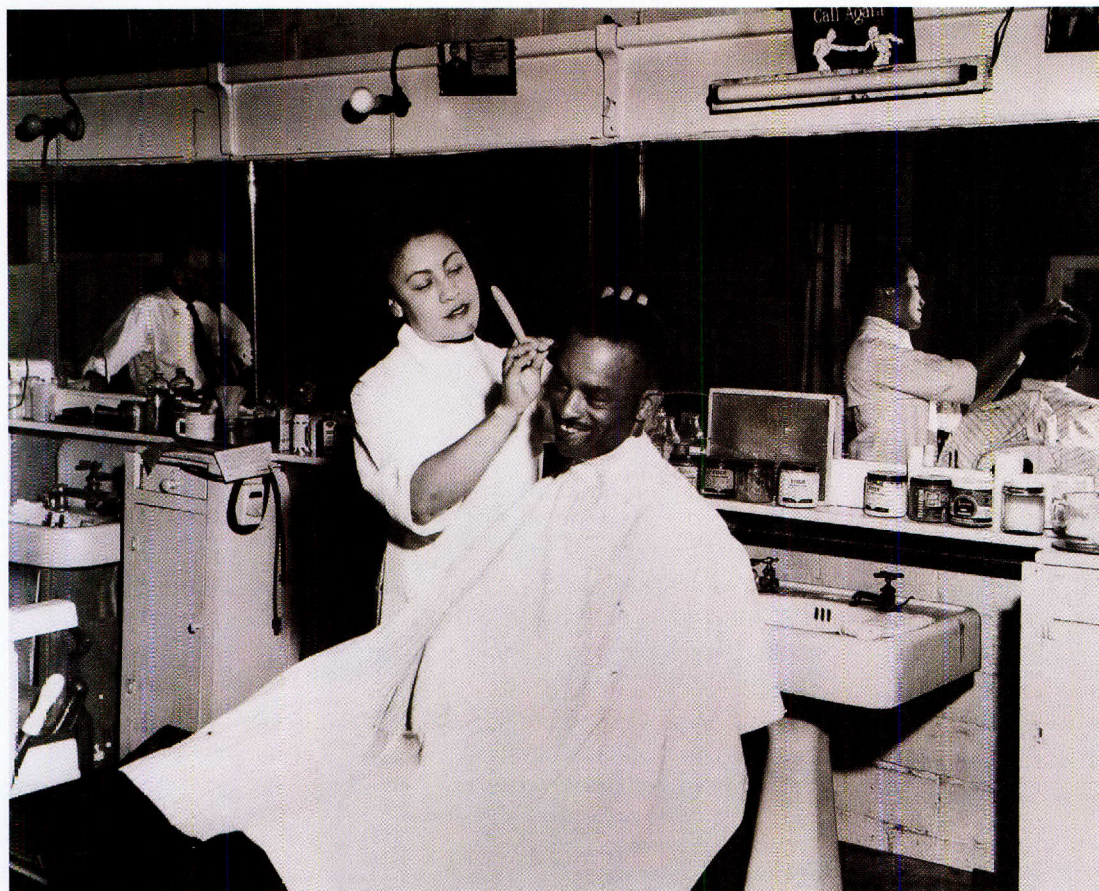
Hickman often worked under hostile, even dangerous, conditions. Many times, the photographer later recalled, "I stood with

[FACING PAGE, TOP] When he shot "An evening at Dr. Hughes's house, 1954," Hickman recalls, "I was there as a guest, but I had my camera. I always had my camera."

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] Photographing "Mrs. Murray's son flies home, 1954" brought back R.C.'s memories of World War II. "I was in the service between 1942 and 1945, and the Army at that time was segregated," R.C. recalls. "There were no white guys in my battalion except, of course, the officers."

[ABOVE] Hickman liked photographing groups of people, such as these boys and men in front of the *Dallas Star Post* office in 1958. The weekly was owned by local black leaders, including W.J. Durham, the NAACP's key Texas attorney.





one foot on the running board of a Buick and one on the ground. I had my camera cocked and the engine running.”

Hickman also served as the unofficial photographer for Dallas’ African-American community throughout the 1950s. For social historians, Hickman’s images of ordinary people experiencing everyday life may prove to be the most valuable part of his work. His camera ranged widely throughout the community: children dressed up for Halloween, a Navy son coming home to his delighted family, workers at a local gas station, a young boy gazing in awe at his baseball hero, friends gathered around a piano singing Christmas carols, a high school student receiving a scholarship. Together, these photographs of routine events help reveal the fabric of life in one urban African-American community in Texas during the transitional years following World War II.

It was this social fabric that originally drew me to Hickman’s work. As a native of Dallas who had grown up during the years Mr. Hickman was working as a photographer, I was keenly interested in viewing images of people living in a community only a few miles distant from the neighborhood of my childhood. In those days of institutionalized racial segregation, Mr. Hickman’s community and mine might as well have been on opposite sides of the earth.

I grew up in Dallas with little awareness of my fellow citizens who happened to be African American. Although the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled racially segregated public schools uncon-

[FACING PAGE, TOP] Three girls pose in front of a car in 1958. “I just saw them and thought it would make a nice picture,” Hickman says. “My paper thought so, too, and they ran it.”

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] Joe Johnson and his band perform at the Empire Room in 1954. “Howard Lewis [the owner] was the big promoter for black bands in the Dallas-Fort Worth area,” Hickman remembers. “He would only promote black bands, black musicians, artists, or celebrities.”

[ABOVE] R.C. photographed a woman barber and her customer in 1955. Hickman says, “Many times, there was no reporter sent with me on assignment. My picture had to tell the story.”



[TOP LEFT] The sign at the Starlite Theater in 1953 indicates that drive-in theaters were segregated, too. R.C. says, "The Starlite was the first drive-in movie opened in [Dallas'] black community."

[TOP RIGHT] Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at the Good Street Baptist Church in 1956. "I just happened to get there at the right time," says Hickman. "I was in a hurry. I took just one shot."

[ABOVE] Swimmers finally get a chance to enjoy a cool dip at Exline Park in 1955. "This was really news," recalls Hickman. "It was the first summer blacks could swim in a Dallas city pool. The kids were thrilled to death. Before this, blacks could not swim in public pools. We were not part of the public."



stitutional when I was a first grader in the Dallas Independent School District, I spent 12 years in racially segregated public schools. I lived for 18 years in a segregated neighborhood and read and watched local newspapers and television that gave no hint of life in black Dallas, other than its tragic and sensational aspects. As a result, my interest in R.C. Hickman's photographs was as personal in nature as it was professional.

Mr. Hickman and I soon agreed to work together to preserve and make more widely known his remarkable visual history of black Dallas. A few months after our first meeting, the Center for American History organized the R.C. Hickman archive, which consists of more than 3,000 of his photographic negatives and prints. Exhibitions of and conferences about R.C. Hickman's work followed, and his photographs finally began appearing in Dallas newspapers and in other publications.

In 1994, Mr. Hickman's photographs reached a wider audience when the Texas State Historical Association published more than 100 of his images in *Behold the People*, a book that provides a tangible and permanent record of the dedicated work of this remarkable and delightful human being. R.C. Hickman still lives in Dallas, and he continues to serve his community as a mentor to aspiring young photographers and as a role model for others. ★

DON CARLETON is the director of the Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin.

A protestor pickets Sanger-Harris department store in 1961. "[Black] ladies couldn't try on anything they wanted to buy," Hickman remembers. "They had to just look at it and say, 'This is my size.'"

WHEN... WHERE... HOW

R.C. Hickman Resources

The Center for American History, which houses 3,000 R.C. Hickman photographs, is in the Sid Richardson Hall complex, adjacent to the Lyndon E. Johnson Library, on Red River St. on the east side of the University of Texas campus in Austin. Hours: Mor-Sat 9-5, except for holidays, university intermissions, and special events. Write to the Center for American History, SRH 2.101, The University of Texas, Austin 78713; 512/495-4515.

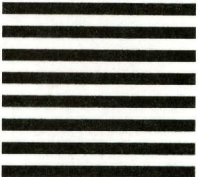
Behold the People: R.C. Hickman's Photographs of Black Dallas, 1949-1961 is available at libraries and bookstores (\$29.95). For ordering information, write to Texas A&M Univ. Press Consortium, John H. Lindsey Bldg., Lewis St., 4354 TAMUS, College Station 77843-4354; 409/845-1436 or 800/826-8911 (U.S. orders only). Web site: www.tamu.edu/upress.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BIG BEND

One Band... The



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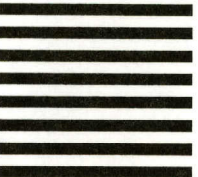
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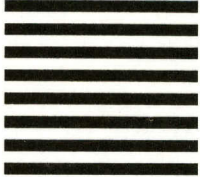


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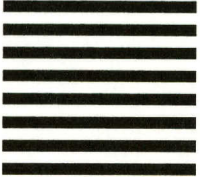
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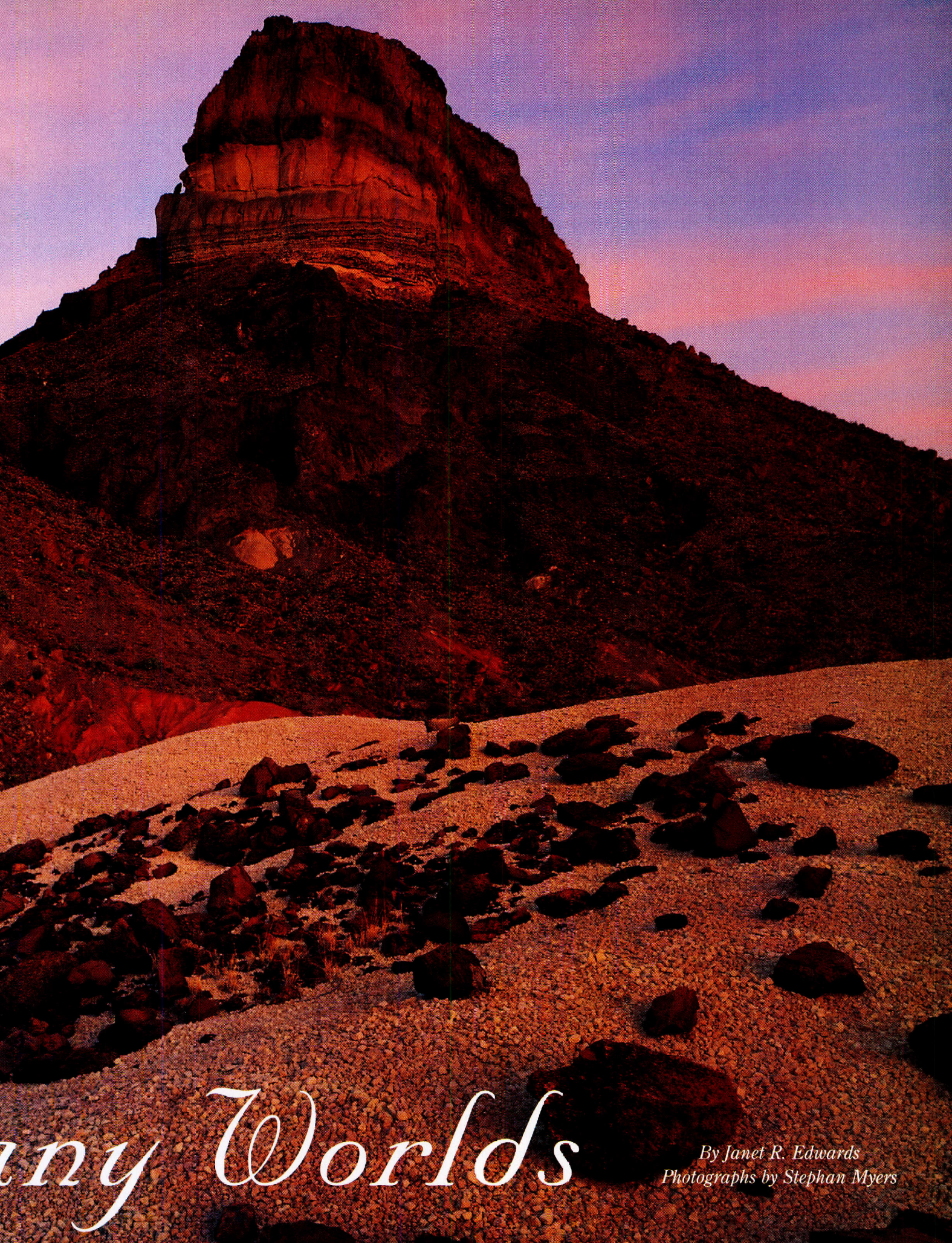
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any Worlds

*By Janet R. Edwards
Photographs by Stephan Myers*



[PRECEDING PAGES] Along Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive in Big Bend National Park, ash and lava deposits from ancient volcanic eruptions create an almost lunar landscape at Cerro Castellan.

[ABOVE] The muddy waters of the Rio Grande have carved a steep-walled corridor through ancient limestone at Santa Elena Canyon.

[RIGHT] Also known as century plant or maguey, the agave can live up to 20 years. In its last year of life, the plant produces a towering flower stalk.



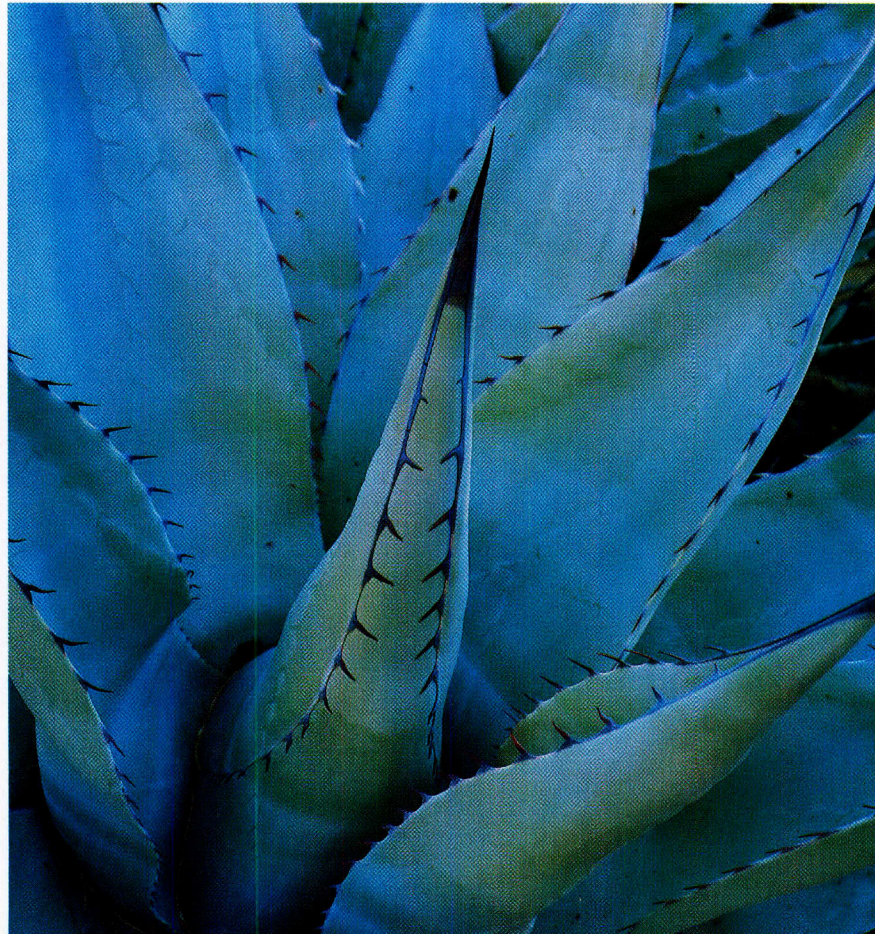
© LAURENCE PARENT

FERVID FIELDS OF CHALKY, PEA-SIZE GRAVEL ROAST BENEATH the midday sun. Igneous rocks, scattered about like fiery coals, appear to smolder in shades of burnt umber. Surreal as it seems, this site could be the surface of the moon. Yet life abounds here in the desert lowlands of Big Bend National Park. For between piles of volcanic debris, needle-sharp leaves of the lechuguilla grow in bold rosettes. Farther on, the pads of a brown-spined prickly pear bristle, and bony-fingered branches of ocotillo reach toward the sky. Even small critters of the reptilian, arachnid, and insect persuasions thrive beneath the rocks or below ground, scurrying about in the cool of evening.

Along the far horizon to the northeast, deep shades of green hint of an oasis that hovers only a few thousand feet above the desert. Generous rains in the upland reaches of the Chisos Mountains nurture clumps of hearty grasses and verdant stands of gray oak, Texas madrone, and Mexican piñon. Though their prickly cousins in the desert below are water-wise enough to endure summer temperatures that often soar above 110 degrees, these larger, upland plants, and the animal life they harbor, are specially adapted to flourish in a cooler, wetter environment.

These significantly different biological zones represent only two of several remarkable habitats that exist in the Big Bend, contrasting communities of plants and animals defined by differences in elevation, soil type, temperature, degree of sun exposure, and wind velocity.

The simplest way to quickly identify these regions as you travel is to watch for telltale species of plants that may indicate a change in elevation. These, in turn, hint at variations in annual rainfall, as well as the types of animals you might encounter.





M

MUCH OF THE BIG BEND COUNTRY, which sprawls across a large portion of the state's western elbow, lies far beyond the roads that allow motorized access to the national park's 801,163 acres. Begin your journey by driving from the arid, creosote- and prickly pear-covered lowlands of the Chihuahuan Desert up through the sotol grasslands of the foothills, and beyond to the pine-, agave-, oak-, and juniper-covered upper reaches of the Chisos Mountains.

To enjoy the most superlative scenery and most provocative variety, head south down the winding road known as Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive until it terminates at Santa Elena Canyon. Arriving at dawn, explore by foot the mouth of the canyon. For here, at one of the park's lowest points (elevation 1,900 feet), flows the Rio Grande, a narrow ribbon of muddy water whose abrasive sands have scoured a deep passage through the colossal limestone cliffs over millions of years.

Along the river's margins, in the loose, fertile soils of the Rio Grande flood plain, dense thickets of giant reeds compete for available water with thirsty rows of black willow, salt cedar, and honey mesquite. Among their branches swoop summer tanagers and vermilion flycatchers, while at ground level, sandpipers and killdeer scurry along gravel channels.

Paw prints in the mud, some four-toed and as large as a human palm, bear witness to nighttime visitors such as mountain lion, raccoon, skunk, and even beaver. A few hundred yards beyond the canyon's lush, riparian habitat, the road heads southeast, rising to an elevation of some 2,100 feet. Before you lies the great Chihuahuan Desert. Quintessential hallmark of the Big Bend, this extremely arid region—

[ABOVE] Resplendent blooms of the cenizo frequently appear along the grassland foothills after heavy rains.

[BELOW] The pink-skinned Texas madrone makes a vibrant contribution to the woodlands in the park's so-called Green Gulch.





At the top of Sotol Vista, along Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive, soaring stalks of sotal stand sentry over the foothills. Native Americans relied heavily on these shrubs for food and fiber.

annual rainfall totals less than 10 inches—may seem devoid of life. But take a closer look.

After a spring or summer shower, bees buzz around the yellow blooms of seemingly countless creosote bushes. The tar-scented shrubs, renowned for their tolerance to heat and drought, march in widely spaced, orderly progression to the far horizon. Among them spiral the thorn-studded, buggy-whip stalks of ocotillo, whose eight- to 10-foot limbs may sprout tiny green leaves after a soaking rain, and clusters of fiery red flowers in spring.

Early mornings, lizards and beetles scurry about, looking for a meal in the mosaic of multicolored stones covering the desert floor. As the sun bears down and the cicadas begin to sing, many of these well-adapted denizens of the desert burrow into cooler soils around the roots of prickly pear.

A few miles north, beyond the Burro Mesa Pouroff, Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive meanders into the western foothills of the Chisos. More grasses appear, and the creosote and prickly pear thin out. Large numbers of sotols, adorned with long, serrated leaves and bloom stalks that can soar to 20 feet, flourish in the cooler, wetter elevations of so-called Sotol Vista.

A

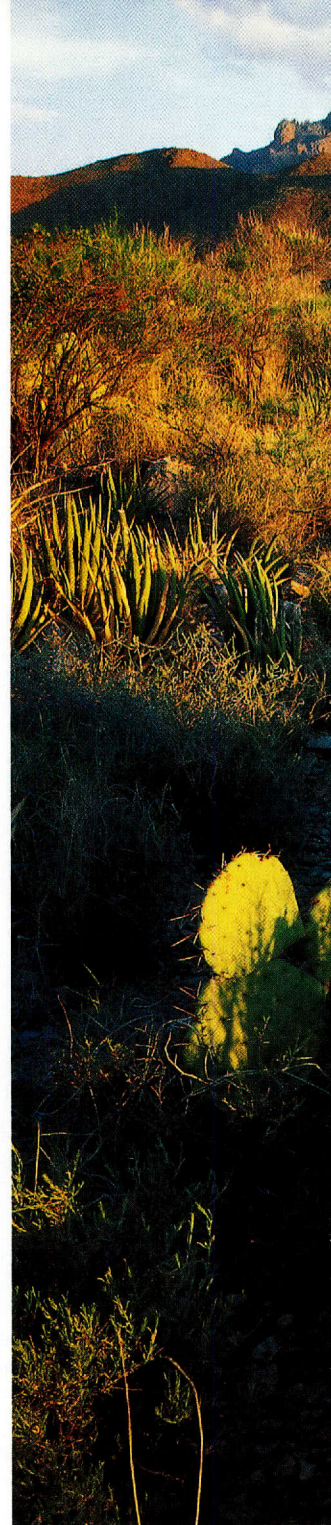
T MILE MARKER 7, THE ROAD DESCENDS YET AGAIN TO the lowland desert, then heads north to intersect with Panther Junction/Study Butte Road, where you'll turn east. The road winds through a transition zone—from lowland desert to grassland foothills—in which representative species of both regions commingle.

At the Basin turnoff, head south and up toward the Chisos Mountains. Along the way, you'll encounter another cluster of foothills (elevation 4,000 feet). Shrubs and bushes grow taller and farther apart here, leaving space for a plethora of hardy grasses, including one species that looks like a head-full of unkempt hair.

As you climb upwards, watch carefully for signs of a dramatic and rapid transformation. Havard agave appears, which displays needle-sharp rosettes of large, fleshy leaves, and, in June or July, often boasts flower stalks heavily laden with yellow blooms. By Mile Marker 3 (elevation 4,500 feet), shrubs and small trees—beebrush, evergreen sumac, and Apache plume—begin to crowd the roadsides, set against a sudden backdrop of rugged peaks and eroded cliffs.

Soon, junipers, oaks, and piñon pines appear, along with Texas madrone. The woodlands of the Chisos Mountains, populated by relicts of plant species that during the last ice age dominated the entire Big Bend region, flourish here. Blessed with rainfall double that falling on the desert below, these mountains harbor a great diversity of plant life and provide prime habitat for black bear and mountain lions.

Drive slowly as you negotiate the hairpin switchbacks of Panther Pass, noting that some plants prefer exposed, sunny slopes, while others grow best in cooler, shady areas. Evergreens and broad-leaved trees, skirted in some places by pockets of mosses and ferns, dominate the scenery on north-facing mountain slopes, while





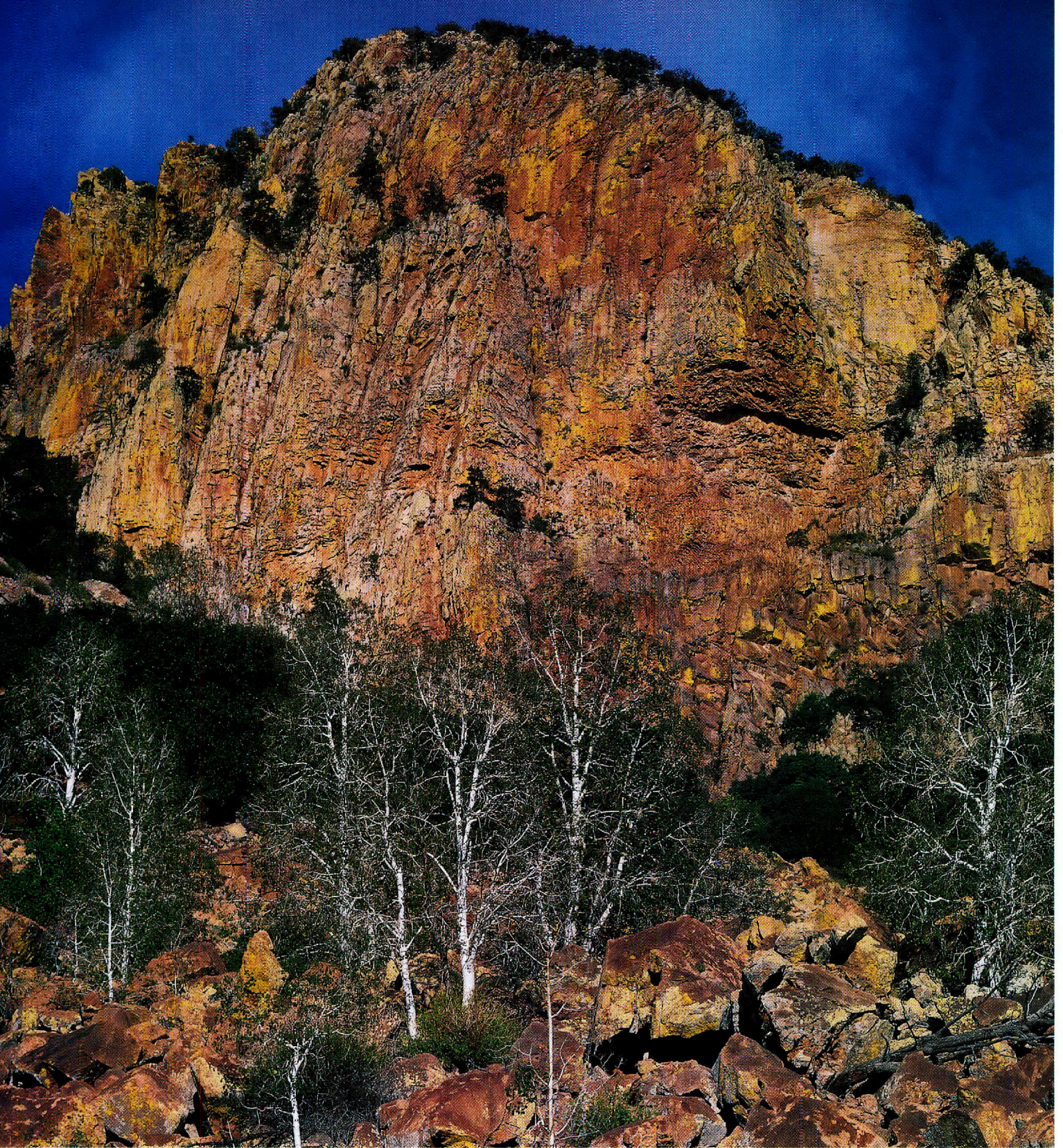
[ABOVE] In this transition zone, on Panther Junction/Study Butte Road near its intersection with Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive, slightly higher rainfall and cooler temperatures allow grasses to intersperse with desert lowland species such as prickly pear.

[LEFT] The cool, wet woodlands of the upper Chisos Mountains yield an unexpected, luxuriant plant community of ferns and lichens.

sotols, prickly pear, ocotillo, lechuguilla, and Havard agaves often intermingle with grasses on opposite, south-facing slopes.

At the foot of Lost Mine Trail, you've reached the highest point on the auto tour (elevation 5,679 feet). As you gaze heavenward from the parking lot, watch for peregrine falcons, which sometimes soar among the gnarled spires and towering cliffs. From here, the road dips down several hundred feet into the Basin.

Just behind Basin Headquarters, you can begin a hike that leads to the South Rim Trail (an all-day trek, in and back). This challenging route, which traverses some of



A few hundred feet below the tip of Emory Peak—the Chisos' tallest mountain—sits a cluster of quaking aspens. These white-skinned trees can be found along slopes above 7,000 feet in Texas' Guadalupe, Davis, and Chisos mountains.

the highest points in the Chisos Mountains, trekkers through mixed forests of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, big-tooth maple, and oak at elevations higher than 7,000 feet.

If you prefer a less demanding stroll, let your senses absorb the beguiling beauty of the Basin. In this protected woodland, formed by erosion and ringed by a series of volcanic peaks, Sierra del Carmen white-tailed deer browse.

Natural History of the Big Bend

In addition to excellent road tours, Big Bend National Park offers unparalleled hiking, horseback riding, birdwatching, river fishing (catfish), and river running (by canoe and raft). For safety, plan your activities carefully before leaving home. Upon arrival, check with park rangers for details about park conditions. Park entrance fee: \$10 per car (good for 7 days).

Because distances are vast here, plan your arrival and departure to coordinate with availability of facilities in the towns and cities within a day's driving distance: Marfa, Alpine, Marathon, and Presidio. (No public transportation travels to or through the park.) Three highways provide access to the park: US 385 from

Marathon, Texas 118 from Alpine, and FM 170 from Presidio.

Water and gasoline are available at Panther Junction (park headquarters) and a few other widely separated points in and around the park. For safety, you must carry your own drinking water on even the shortest of hikes.

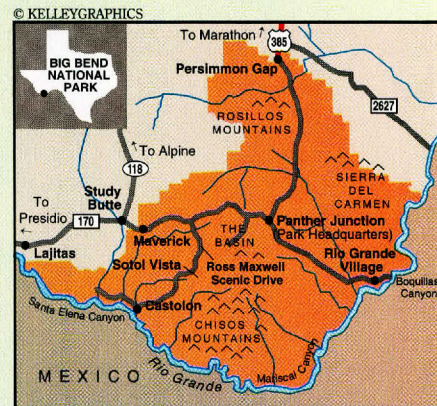
For groceries, camping supplies, cold drinks, and film, visit concession-operated stores in the Chisos Basin and at Rio Grande Village, Castolon, and Panther Junction.

Overnight lodging options include the Chisos Mountains Lodge in the Basin (call 915/477-2291 for reservations). For a rustic experience, stay at the park-operated campgrounds in the Basin,

Rio Grande Village, and Castolon (community water supply, no hookups). Fee: \$8 per night on a first-come, first-served basis. Rio Grande Village RV park (concession-operated; first come, first served) offers trailer camping with water, sewage, and electrical hookups. Call the Chisos Mountains Lodge (number listed previously) for fee information. Primitive camping is also available, with free park permits.

Check park headquarters for schedules of interpretive programs and activities. Publications sold here include road guides, topographic maps,

as A&M Univ. Press, 1980); *Big Bend: Official National Park Handbook 119* (Nat'l. Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1983); *A Road Guide to the Geology of*



In the summertime, the bright blooms of yellow trumpet-flower announce themselves to passersby on Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive.



books on natural history, and hikers' guides. Also at headquarters, be sure to visit Panther Path, a self-guided nature trail that features native plants found in the park. Rio Grande Village also has a self-guided nature trail.

For more information about the park, write to the Superintendent, Big Bend National Park 79834; 915/477-2251.

Resources

Look in your library or bookstore for *Naturalist's Big Bend* by Roland H. Wauer (Tex-

Big Bend National Park by Kerri Nelson (Big Bend Natural History Assn., 1992); *The Big Bend of the Rio Grande: A Guide to the Rocks, Landscape, Geologic History, and Settlers of the Area of Big Bend National Park* by Ross A. Maxwell (Bureau of Economic Geology, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1990).

Big Bend: Story Behind the Scenery by Carol E. Sperling (KC Publications, Inc., 1995) is available at Big Bend National Park headquarters and at other national parks. For a catalog of maps, books, and illustrative material on the Big Bend, write to the Big Bend Natural History Assn., Box 196, Big Bend National Park 79834; 915/477-2236. The association also holds seminars about the region.

By all means, take the Window View Trail, an easy walk through a grassy meadow seasonally afloat in the fragrances of flowering shrubs. From an overlook along the path, gaze through the V-shaped "window," formed by mountain profiles to the west, and see the basin's rocky pinnacles fall away to foothills that lead on to the vast, arid flatlands of the Chihuahuan Desert. Despite its many and varied natural communities, all the world before you now seems as one, sewn together in the glorious hues of the setting sun. ★

Look for JAN EDWARDS and STEPHAN MYERS' upcoming story on dinosaurs, scheduled for the April issue.



Readers choose Texas' most romantic places

A FEW YEARS AGO, in a secluded garden in Italy, I chanced upon a small terra-cotta plaque that read, *C'è vita soltanto dove c'è amore*. Life exists only where there is love...

You and your beloved are cruising a narrow, lushly planted waterway enclosed by old stone walls. The heady fragrance of huge white, trumpet-shaped datura blossoms drifts on the breeze. At one end of the small boat, a guitarist plays “Bésame Mucho”; at the other end, the two of you enjoy champagne and delicious appetizers. Later, you step from the launch, and, before retiring to your room overlooking the river, you indulge each other with one last gift—a long-stemmed red rose. A flower vendor, his sixth sense finely tuned in these matters, has strolled by at exactly the right moment.

No, it's not Venice. In Texas, you could only be on San Antonio's *Paseo del Rio*. Last April, we asked you to vote on the state's most romantic spot. In our Readers' Choice poll, more than one third of respondents chose the River Walk. Together with second choice, San Antonio, the Alamo City captured almost half your votes—and hearts.

With the exception of Fredericksburg and Jefferson, every one of the top choices has a strong association with water (Austin's Mount Bonnell rises dramatically above the Colorado River, and even at its driest, the Big Bend is defined on the south by the Rio Grande).

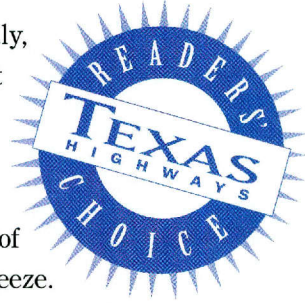
What is it about water that evokes romance? Perhaps it's the way delicate water can sound: the trickle of a fountain in a plaza, the lap of waves on shore, their arrhythmic slap against a gently rocking boat. Perhaps it's the way water reflects light, especially at night, when it softens reality: golden columns here, silvery moon there, perhaps multicolored splotches like the beginnings of an Impressionist painting. Like love, water affirms and ensures life.

But where romance is concerned, Texas' hills and mountains also entice you. Not only Mount Bonnell and Fredericksburg, but also the Hill Country in general (#14). In West Texas, you chose the mountainous Big Bend, the nearby Davis Mountains (#12), and Indian Lodge (#13), which nestles in the Davis range.

Like beauty, romance exists in the heart of the beholder. To one of our staff members, for instance, “just being in any of these places is romantic.” Some of you voted for entire cities (Houston, Victoria, San Marcos), others for vast regions (Big Bend, Rio Grande Valley); some chose particular spots at particular times (the streets of Smithville at night). Also among your many choices: Waco's Cameron Park, Kemah's waterfront, tiny Round Top, Palmetto State Park, San Angelo's Santa Fe Park, Caddo Lake, Port Aransas, the view of El Paso from Mount Franklin, McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains, and, appropriately, Love's Lookout, in Cherokee County.

Clearly, *c'è amore*—love exists—everywhere.

—Ann Galloway



I ♥ Texas



[ABOVE] Love among the lights,
Paseo del Rio, San Antonio

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] Mission Concepción



River Walk, San Antonio



RICHARD REYNOLDS, TNDOT



San Antonio

© LAURENCE PARENT





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 Galveston

RICHARD REYNOLDS, TxDOT



 South Padre Island

© ROBERT MIHOVIL



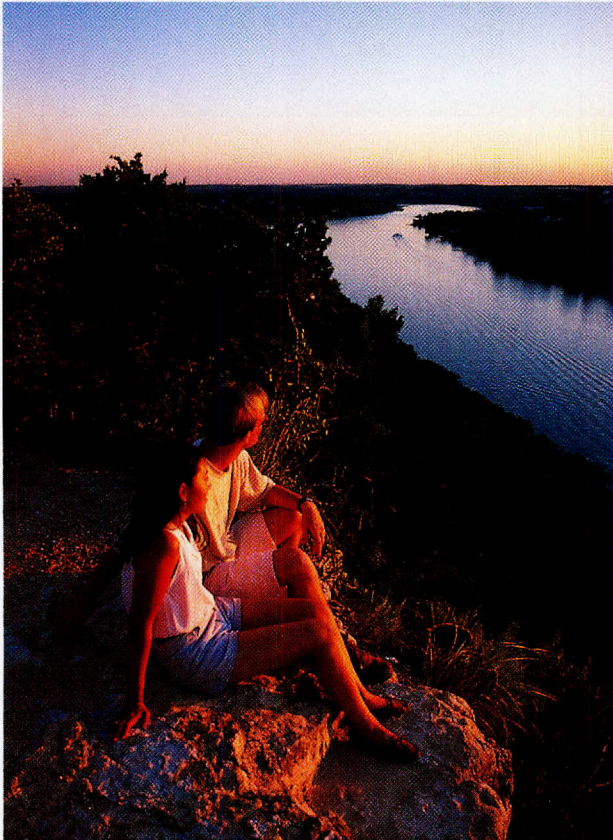
5 The Beach

6 Padre Island



© JOHN ELK III

© LAURENCE PARENT



7 Mount Bonnell, Austin





© LAURENCE PARENT

8 Corpus Christi

9 *lie:* Fredericksburg



MICHAEL A. MURPHY

J. GRIFFIS SMITH



9 *lie: Jefferson*



10 *Big Bend*

© STEPHAN MYERS



I'll Take Romance

Texas offers myriad ways to celebrate love; we offer here only a few suggestions.

River Walk, San Antonio:

Yanaguana Cruises, the company operating the riverboats, has begun offering a variety of specialty river tours, including a 1-hour Moonlit Cruise, available between 8:30 p.m. and 1:30 a.m., that costs \$250 and includes champagne, "exotic appetizers," and a violinist or guitarist. A Wedding Cruise, with the ceremony taking place on "wedding island," costs \$750 for 20 people. A 1-hour Jazz Cruise, with music by the Jim Cullum Jazz Band, departs at 10:30 p.m. and costs \$16.50 per person. There are also botanical, architectural, heritage, and culinary cruises, among others. Reserve a cruise 10-14 days in advance; call Jane Story-Stock, director of sales and marketing, at 210/244-5700 or 800/417-4139. To reserve by email: reserve@sarivercruise.com.

Yanaguana has also begun a Rio Trans River Shuttle service, with stops every 20 minutes at 9 points. Ticket prices: One-way, \$3.50; all-day pass, \$10; 3-day pass, \$25; tickets are sold at businesses near the stops. Shuttle service hours: Sun-Thu 10-9, Fri-Sat 10-10. Write to Yanaguana Cruises, Inc., 315 E. Commerce St., Ste. 202, San Antonio 78205; 210/244-5700 or 800/417-4139. Web site: www.sarivercruise.com.

More than 3 dozen restaurants lie along the River Walk, as do several hotels, including the Hilton, two Marriotts, Holiday Inn, Adam's Mark, and La Mansion. Be sure to ask about special package deals and off-peak room rates. For a real splurge, try the Honeymoon Suite (sitting room downstairs, loft bedroom and whirlpool-appointed bath upstairs; \$600 per night) in the newly renovated Havana Riverwalk Inn, at 1015 Navarro (78205; 210/222-2008 or 888/224-2008). With Caribbean-style décor—ironwork bedsteads, gauzy draperies, louvered shutters, ceiling fans, potted palms—gathered from locales around the globe, this 23-room, 1914 gem epitomizes the concept "small, luxury hotel." The on-site Azucena restaurant, scheduled to



San José Mission, one of four 18th-Century compounds making up San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, is a popular spot for weddings and romantic photos.

open this month, will serve chef Michael Flores' imaginative cuisine.

Other, more economical River Walk suggestions: Strolling vendors sell long-stemmed roses for \$5 to \$6 each. At Pica d'Italia restaurant, a Rossini (a delicious mix of slushy ice, crushed strawberries, rosé wine, and Asti spumante) costs \$2.75. A leisurely, hand-in-hand walk beneath the stately cypress trees has the best price tag of all.

San Antonio: General suggestions, other than the River Walk: Enjoy a wine, bread, and cheese picnic at Brackenridge Park; take a carriage ride through downtown/Alamo Plaza or the historic King William District; have breakfast or brunch at the Guenther House (205 E. Guenther; 210/227-1061), once home to the founder of Pioneer Flour Mills; stroll free through the Japanese Tea Gardens (in Brackenridge Park, next to the zoo); wander the grounds of the city's five 18th-Century Spanish missions (210/675-7275).

For general information, write to the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau, Box 2277, San

Antonio 78298-2277; 210/207-6700 or 800/447-3372. Web site: www.SanAntonioCVB.com.

Galveston: This island getaway offers sunrise and sunset strolls, as well as pedal cars, along the Seawall; horse-drawn-carriage rides in The Strand Historic District; trolley rides from the Seawall to The Strand; and performances at the beautifully restored and intimate Grand 1894 Opera House (2020 Postoffice St., 77550; 800/821-1894; see story, October 1994).

Dining choices include seafood at Gaido's (3800 Seawall Blvd.; 409/762-9625; no reservations), voted the state's Number One Restaurant by *Texas Highways* readers in our 1998 poll; breakfast on the patio of the Phoenix Bakery (2228 Ship's Mecharic Row; 409/763-3764); Continental cuisine at the Wentletrap (2331 Strand; 409/765-5545; dinner only); Fisherman's Wharf (Pier 22; 409/765-5708; ask for a table with a view of three-masted *Elissa*, Texas' 1877 Tall Ship); and Italian cuisine at Luigi's (2328 Strand; 409/763-6500).

Try a room at the elegant old (and recently renovated) Hotel Galvez (2024 Seawall Blvd., 77550; 409/765-7721 or 800/392-4285), or a Victorian-decorated room at the luxurious Tremont House (2300 Ship's Mechanic Row; 409/763-0300 or 800/874-2300). High tea, which costs \$9.69 per person and is served daily in the Tremont's palm-appointed lobby, is an elegant and less-expensive way to enjoy the hotel (call in advance for groups of 4 or more).

Unusual Galveston attractions include tours of *Elissa* (409/765-1877), and the tropical, butterfly-filled, glass pyramid at Moody Gardens (One Hope Blvd.; 800/582-4673). Evening dinner-and-dancing cruises on the 150-foot

paddlewheeler *The Colonel* depart 2 to 3 times a month from Moody Gardens (\$27.50 per person; 409/740-7797; reservations required; wheelchair accessible).

For general information, write to the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2106 Seawall Blvd., Galveston 77550; 409/763-4311 or 888/GAL-ISLE. Web site: www.galvestontourism.com.

South Padre Island: Especially appealing during the off-peak autumn and winter months, South Padre offers the delicious pleasures of the beach: sunrise and sunset strolls, seashelling, swimming, luxuriant lolling. Build a sand castle, enjoy a picnic, make angel wings in the sand, climb the dunes. Rent horses at the Island Equestrian Ctr. (800/761-HOSS), and lope along the shoreline. North of town, you can drive up the beach for miles and get away from everything except the gentle tinkle of shells as the waves ebb.

For information (including how to rent one of the plentiful beach condos), write to the South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, 600 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island 78597; 800/SOPADRE. Web sites: www.sopadre.com and www.southpadre-island.com.

Across Queen Isabella Causeway, in nearby Port Isabel, the 1853 Port Isabel Lighthouse (800/527-6102) will emerge from renovation this summer. Also in Port Isabel, 6 blocks before the causeway, turn north onto Yturria St., and drive 2 blocks to the 1926 Yacht Club Hotel & Restaurant, known for its seafood and prime rib. On Mon. and Wed., the restaurant offers all-you-can-eat shrimp (fried or grilled) and oysters for \$15.95; a daily sunset menu (5:30-6:45) offers 7 entrées for \$7.95-\$11.95. Hours: Open daily 5:30 p.m.; weekdays, closes around 8 p.m.; weekends, closes around 10 p.m. Wheelchair accessible. Write to 700 Yturria St., Port Isabel 78578; 956/943-1301.

Padre Island National Seashore: Padre lies 26 miles southeast of Corpus Christi.

The Malaquite Beach Visitors Center Complex (open daily, except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) provides a wealth of information, and rangers can answer questions and help you plan your visit. Entrance fee: \$10 per vehicle, good for 7 days. Call 512/949-8068 or 937-2621. The Corpus Christi Visitor Information Ctr. (see below) can also help.

Mount Bonnell: Overlooking a spectacular stretch of the Colorado River, Mount Bonnell rises to 735 feet in central Austin, about 3 miles west of Interstate 35, and about 1 mile west of Loop 1 (Mopac Expwy.). From Loop 1, take 35th St. west for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, turn right on Balcones Dr., and wind through the neighborhood another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile or so to the first stop sign. Turn left, onto Mt. Bonnell Dr., which soon dead-ends at Mt. Bonnell Rd. Turn left; parking and the stone staircase are about a block away. There are a few picnic tables on the mountaintop. *Note:* Getting to the view requires a climb of some 100 steps. Park curfew is from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Write to the Austin Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Information Dept., 200 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin 78704.

Corpus Christi: In the "Sparkling City by the Sea," one of *Texas Highways* readers' favorite vacation destinations, much bayfront activity originates at the Peoples Street T-Head, where Peoples meets Shoreline Dr. You can charter fishing boats here, rent paddleboats in summer, and arrange for narrated day and evening boat tours of the Texas State Aquarium, the Columbus Fleet, and other harbor attractions. Along the seawall, the 8 Miradores del Mar (with the Selena Memorial) are popular settings for weddings.

To arrange for sunset/supper cruises (\$55 per person; 4-person minimum), or to charter a sailboat (captained or bareboat), write to the Corpus Christi Sailing Center, Inc., 200 S. Shoreline, Corpus Christi 78401; 512/881-8503.

For more information, write to the Corpus Christi Visitor Information Ctr., Box 2664, Corpus Christi 78403; 800/678-6232. The Visitor Ctr. is at 1823 N. Chaparral.

Also see story, May 1998 issue of *Texas Highways*.

Fredericksburg: Chosen by *Texas Highways* readers as one of the state's friendliest towns, as well as one of the best sites for viewing spring wildflowers, Fredericksburg boasts more B&Bs—more than 300 at last count—than it had original German settlers in 1846. The town has several B&B reservation services, including Gastehaus Schmidt (830/997-5612), Be My Guest (830/997-7227), and B&B of Fredericksburg (830/997-4712). The C&VB brochure (see below) lists these and other accommodations. One B&B, The Cook's Cottage (703 W. Austin; 210/493-5101 or 800/997-6422; Web site: www.aisi.net/patsysplace.com), was recently selected by *Travel & Leisure* magazine as one of the 25 most romantic places in the nation.

Fredericksburg Carriage Co. (830/997-2211; reserve in advance) offers tours of historic downtown. Fredericksburg Fudge (105 N. Llano; 830/997-0533) offers that classic fuel for romance, chocolate. At the Fredericksburg Herb Farm (402 Whitney; 830/997-8615; see story, April 1996), try lunch in the tearoom, a stroll through the gardens, and a massage.

If a stroll through wildflower-fields-forever appeals to you, spring is an especially good time to visit Wildseed Farms (see "Wildseed Indeed!" April 1998), which is 7 miles east of Fredericksburg on US 290. You can even cut your own bouquets during blooming season. Write to Box 3000, Fredericksburg 78624-3000; 830/990-1393.

The Fredericksburg Convention & Visitors Bureau offers a free, helpful brochure, with map, that lists restaurants, lodgings, and attractions. Write to 106 N. Adams, Fredericksburg 78624; 830/997-6523.

Jefferson: This small East Texas town, which readers chose as a favorite for its B&Bs/historic inns, offers a plethora of charming accommodations. (*Texas Highways*' September 1998 special issue includes articles covering some of

the town's dining and lodging venues.) Reservation services include Book-A-Bed Ahead (800/468-2627), AAA Reservation Service (800/299-1593), Sunset Reservations (800/533-0532), and Jefferson's Concierge Service (903/665-9776). The 6-room 1850s McKay House (306 E. Delta St.; 903/665-7322) was chosen by *Vacation* magazine in 1991 as one of the most romantic B&Bs in the nation.

Several of Jefferson's historic homes open for tours. You can also enjoy narrated tours of the town by mule-drawn wagon or trolley (call the chamber at the number given below, or call Tour Headquarters at 903/665-1665). A 1-hour, narrated cruise on the *Bayou Queen* costs \$5.50 per adult (903/665-2222; the chamber will also make cruise reservations). Auntie Skinner's Riverboat Club (107 W. Austin; 903/665-7121) specializes in down-home Texas cooking and offers live music ("everything but country") and dancing Fri. and Sat. nights.

For more information, write to the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, 118 N. Vale, Jefferson 75846; 903/665-2672.

Big Bend: For many people, nothing can beat the panoramic views and relative isolation of the Big Bend—a true Texas getaway—not to mention the stars at night, which, you betcha, are big and bright. Crumpets Restaurant of San Antonio, together with Far

Flung Adventures (915/371-2489) of Terlingua, offers 3-day Rio Grande rafting trips, with a classical guitarist and gourmet meals prepared by François Maeder, the restaurant's chef-owner. Upcoming trips (\$650 per person) take place Feb. 26-28, Mar. 12-14, Apr. 9-11, and Apr. 30-May 2. Write to Crumpets Restaurant, 3920 Harry Wurzbach, San Antonio 78209; 210/821-5600.

Near Big Bend Natl. Park, you can drive the spectacular 70 miles of the *Camino del Rio*, FM 170, between Presidio and Study Butte. Within Big Bend Natl. Park, you can drive (see story, page 28), ride, hike, camp, or stay in the park's Chisos Mountains Lodge (915/477-2291). For park information, write to the Supt., Big Bend Natl. Park 79834; 915/477-2251.

Big Bend Ranch State Park (see "The Wild, Beguiling West," February 1997) offers primitive camping, and also lodging and meals at La Saucedo, the ranch headquarters, in a dormitory-style lodge and in the ranch's lovely, Spanish-style Big House. The park offers naturalist-led bus tours twice a month, seminars and workshops, trail rides through the rugged, spectacular scenery, and, at times, even survival training (to *really* test your love). Write to the Supt., Box 1180, Presidio 79845; 915/229-3416, 424-3327, or 229-3613. Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. Web site: www.tpwd.state.tx.us.



RICHARD REYNOLDS, TNDOT

A couple strolls the shore at Port Aransas. *Texas Highways* readers named "the beach" as the state's fifth most romantic spot, with Padre Island beaches coming in fourth and sixth.

FANS OF FEATHERED CREATURES FLOCK TO KENEDY RANCH

f o r t h e

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN AND GLORIA TVETEN

COLORFUL GREEN JAYS HURL AVIAN INSULTS FROM A THORNY THICKET, AND A CACTUS WREN CHORTLES away from a nearby fence post. High overhead, a white-tailed hawk soars effortlessly on the late-afternoon thermals, joining a kettle of black and turkey vultures and a pair of Harris's hawks in a sweeping aerial ballet.

Then, from a distant oak motte, come the calls of a ferruginous pygmy-owl. We whistle an imitation of the tiny bird's repeated notes, and an olive sparrow pops out of the underbrush to investigate. Startled by the sight of a dozen birders, the sparrow darts quickly back to cover. A long-billed thrasher also appears, answering the whistled calls with a tentative song.

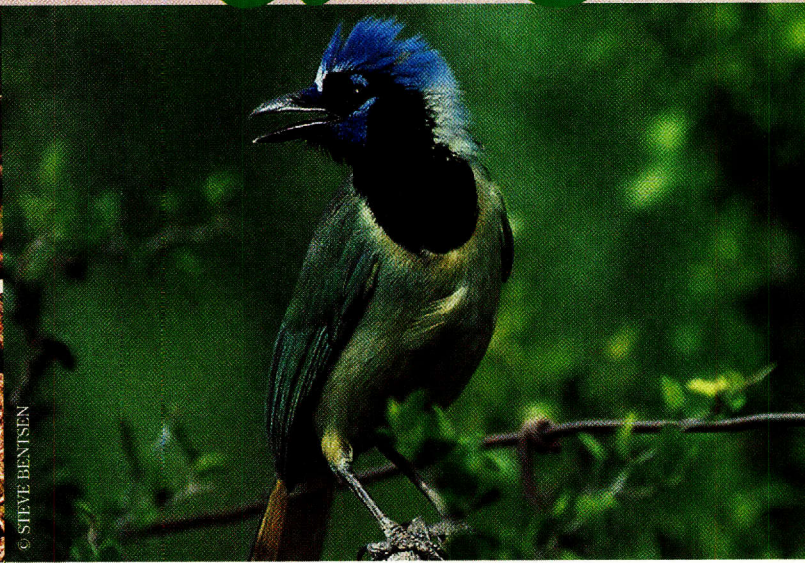
Within an hour, we see several more species of subtropical birds that seldom range northward from the Rio Grande Valley. As the sun settles slowly toward a rolling sea of prairie grasses, we retrace our steps to camp, delighted with our brief introduction to the riches of wildlife at South Texas' Kenedy Ranch.



Virtually unexplored by naturalists until recently, a huge tract of the ranch constitutes one of the most magnificent birding destinations in the United States. The Kenedy Memorial Foundation, which administers the property, opened it in 1996 to organized natural-history excursions led by qualified guides. It goes without saying that the ranch has an immense potential for ecotourism.

THE COLORFUL HISTORY OF THE RANCH ADDS TO THE APPEAL OF AN OUTING HERE. AFTER HELPING FELLOW riverboat captain Richard King found the mammoth King Ranch, Mifflin Kenedy dissolved their partnership in 1868 and established an empire of his own in South Texas. The Kenedy Ranch sprawled across 435,000 acres of what was sometimes

Birds



called the Wild Horse Desert. Still ranking among the largest and most famous ranches in the United States, the King and Kenedy spreads have a long history of enlightened wildlife-management practices.

With the formation of his huge domain, which stretches across native prairie, coastal marshes, and typical South Texas brushlands, Kenedy, together with a partner, built the first railroad in that portion of the state. He also installed a narrow-gauge track to move construction materials and supplies from a wharf on nearby Baffin Bay to his headquarters.

Years later, in 1921, Sarita Kenedy East, Mifflin Kenedy's granddaughter, built a 25,000-square-foot stucco mansion on the site of the first ranch house. The original home, a two-story cypress structure built around 1888, had been pulled a short distance away by 200 mules to provide room for the new building, which sits on the land's highest point.

Three stories tall, and with a full basement, the new mansion had outside walls 18 inches thick to fortify it and to help ward off the steaming Texas heat. Tunnels leading from the basement to outlying buildings offered avenues of escape in case of attack

[TOP, LEFT AND RIGHT] The Kenedy Ranch features a range of habitats, including native prairies and sand dunes, all managed with conservation in mind.

[ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT] Birders find the diversity of the terrain ideal for spotting a wealth of species, including the rare ferruginous pygmy-owl; the pyrrhuloxia, a relative of the common cardinal; and the green jay, one of the more colorful denizens of South Texas.

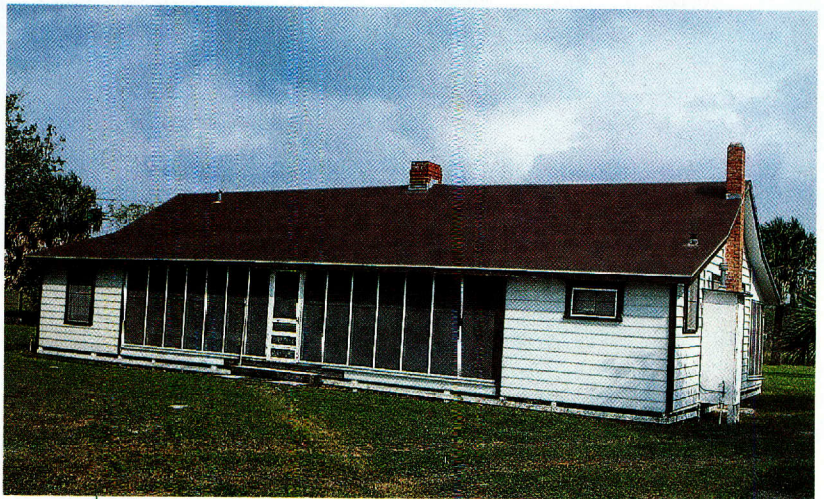


[ABOVE] Birders search an oak motte in the first light of dawn, hoping to see an avian prize they can add to their life lists.

[RIGHT] A former stage stop, San Pedro Camp serves as headquarters for the birding tours. The camp's main house (shown here) is built of thick cypress planks and dates to the 1830s.

by Mexican *bandidos*, and a lookout tower atop the mansion was equipped with a Gatling gun, which Sarita East installed to fend off marauders. In the evening, this gutsy ranch woman often made her way to the gun tower, where, it is said, she sat alone, sipping scotch, surveying her domain, and sometimes yodeling country-and-western tunes. The formidable weapon still commanded the view as late as the 1940s, but it was removed sometime during World War II, when the house underwent repairs.

Today, the mansion forms the centerpiece of the Kenedy Ranch's La Parra Division, which lies east of Sarita, the Kenedy County seat. Owned and maintained by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the building (now called Lebh Shomea House of Prayers) is used for religious retreats. Barn swallows now swirl through the tower where Sarita sat resolutely by her gun.



The Kenedy Memorial Foundation, established to preserve Mrs. East's property, controls 235,000 acres; income from cattle grazing, oil, gas, hunting leases, and nature tours goes to religious, charitable, and educational programs. The John G. Kenedy Jr. Charitable Trust, an independent entity that leases its lands for grazing only, manages the remaining 200,000 acres of Mifflin Kenedy's original ranch.

A group of three one-story wooden structures at the San Pedro Camp, on the southern portion of the ranch, comprise the base of operations for birding tours. Surrounded by dense live oak mottes, the historic site served as a stop on the Brownsville-to-San Antonio stage route and as headquarters for a Mexican ranch before Kenedy purchased it. Both the main house (a family residence until the early 1920s) and the kitchen-dining building (where the cowboys often ate) were built in the 1830s of thick cypress planks. The guest quarters, which the Kenedys used as servant quarters, date to the 1940s.

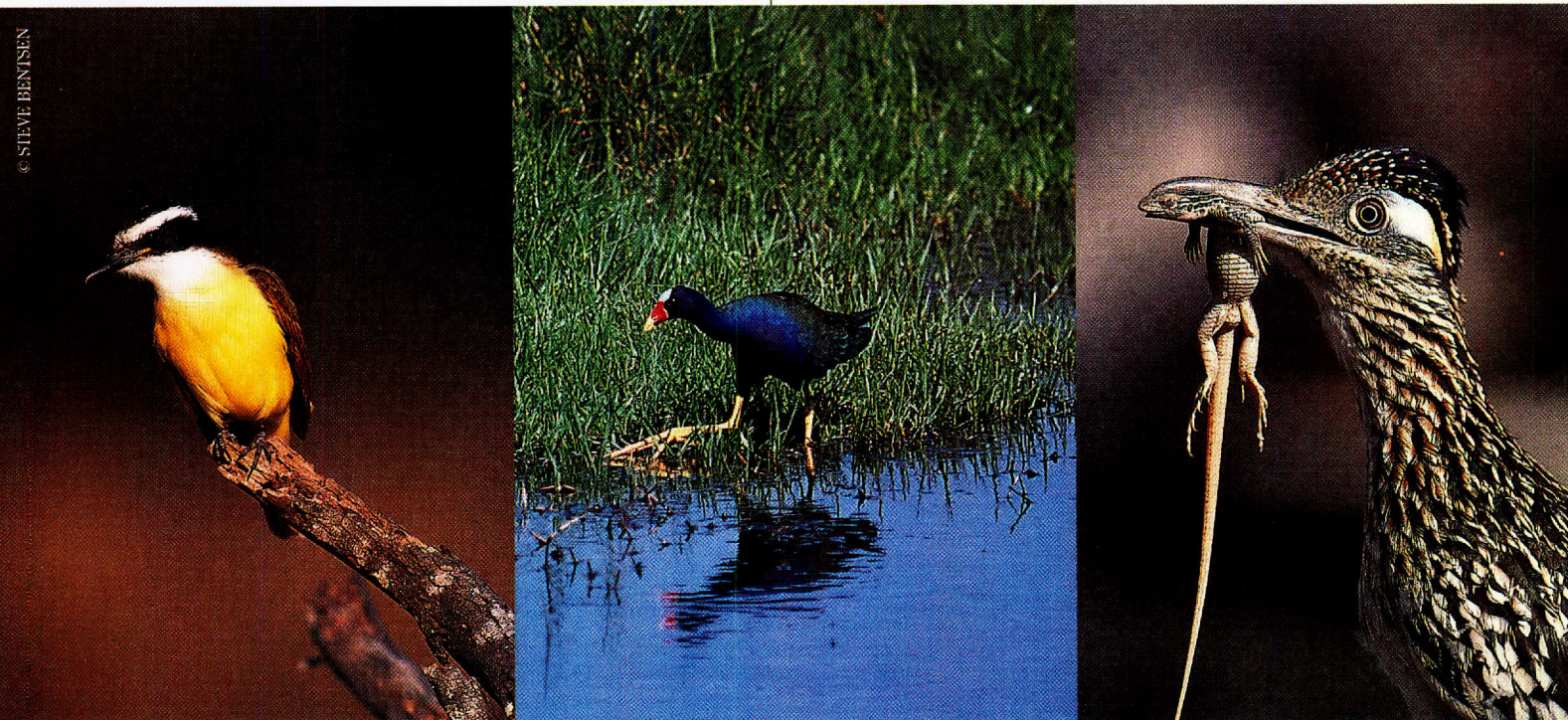
DURING OUR STAY, WE OCCUPY A ROOM IN THE MAIN HOUSE, WHERE A WOOD-burning stove warms us through a chilly night. Coyotes and great horned owls serenade the rising moon, while the monotonous calls of a pauraque lull us to sleep.

Up before dawn, our group joins land manager and avid birder Joe Keepers and his assistant, range expert Sotero Ramírez, for a day of birding on land that was once home to the last tribe of Karankawa Indians. Herds of white-tailed deer pause and watch alertly as we drive past; flocks of wild turkeys strut and display in the warming rays of the rising sun. Small groups of nilgai, descendants of five animals introduced in South Texas in the 1930s, roam the ranch with the deer and cattle. These giant antelope, native to India and Pakistan, now number more than 8,000 here.

When we stop to walk through lovely live-oak mottes, we spot an Audubon's oriole, a rare avian treasure of deep South Texas. Here, too, we follow the low, whistled calls of the ferruginous pygmy-owl to their source and stand looking up at this feathered gem, perched on a branch overhead. Little more than six inches long, the pygmy-owl occurs in the United States only in extreme southern Arizona and Texas. Before its recent discovery on the Kenedy and King ranches and some neighboring areas, this rare owl had been recorded primarily in remnant tracts of mesquite and ebony along the Rio Grande. Proposed for designation as endangered, the species is much sought out by birders from around the world.

As we continue, new birds appear at every stop. Common ground-doves flush along fence rows of barbless woven wire; great kiskadees and vivid vermilion flycatchers hawk insects over small ponds fed by bubbling artesian wells that dot the ranch. Some of the ponds contain flocks of waterfowl and an occasional least grebe, while herons, egrets, gallinules, and rails prowl the marshes. Grassy fields produce a host of sparrow species that normally can be frustratingly difficult to find elsewhere.

Our list for the weekend totals 133 bird species, and we add several more on subsequent trips back to the ranch for one-day tours with other groups. Many of these species are South Texas specialties found nowhere else in North America. Their future is linked to the few remnants of such pristine environments that still lie within our state.



[LEFT TO RIGHT] A great kiskadee takes a break from foraging for insects, while a purple gallinule continues the search for a meal. Triumphant, a greater roadrunner shows off its catch of the day, a delectable lizard.

Birding on the Kenedy Ranch



Though normally a resident of deep South Texas, the great southern white butterfly occasionally moves northward along the coast in summer.

Ever conscious of these vital wildlife habitats, Joe Keepers and his staff have developed a long-term land-management program, which includes conservative cattle-stocking rates, to improve the land. Waist-high Indian grass, several types of bluestem, and other native grasses cover the coastal prairie, and wildflowers bloom across the meadows and along the woodland edges, providing colorful accents against the golden grasses. Groves of live oaks punctuate the landscape, the trees' rugged limbs adorned with ball moss and a larger, related bromeliad whose purple blooms spring from beneath pinkish bracts.

Towering sand dunes, one of the ranch's more spectacular and photogenic features, cover 3,000 acres. Migrating inexorably across the prairie, the shifting sands provide an unusual habitat for Padre Island kangaroo rats and keeled earless lizards, both of which live only in the dune systems of the lower Texas coast. Crested caracaras and several other birds of prey search the sands for food.

We discover a Texas tortoise lumbering slowly along a sandy road and stop to admire a large western diamondback rattlesnake coiled beneath a sprawling mesquite.

Swarms of colorful butterflies—queens, tiny red-bordered metalmarks, large orange sulphurs, and great southern whites—swirl among the wildflowers. We also see pretty macaira skippers,

The Kenedy Foundation Ranch, the 200,000-acre portion of the original ranch that recently opened for natural-history tours, lies in Kenedy County, south of Corpus Christi. The nearby town of Sarita (founded around 1904) was named for Sarita Kenedy East. The San Pedro Camp, 23 miles southeast of Sarita, serves as headquarters for the tours, which are available Feb-May. *Tours are open only to organized groups of 10 to 30 people.*

Accommodations (described as rustic with modern facilities) consist of 3 rooms in the main house and 8 rooms in the guest quarters. Each room has 2 full beds and 1 twin bed, plus a private bath. Guests eat in the adjacent kitchen-dining building. None of the buildings are wheelchair accessible.

Reservations should be made well in advance of the group's proposed dates (*at least 90 days' notice is required*). A trained guide will be assigned to accompany the group while on ranch property. Cost depends on the length of the tour and the facilities required, but ranges from \$30 per

person for half-day tours to \$150 per person for 2-night stays. In addition, guide fees are \$150-\$175 per day. Birding groups may also

make special arrangements to tour Sarita Kenedy East's 3-story mansion. (The 1888 ranch house is owned and maintained by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word; no tours are offered.) Write to land manager Joe Keepers, Kenedy Memorial Foundation, Box 70, Sarita 78385; 512/294-5227.

Several commercial tour companies visit the Kenedy Ranch as

part of longer Texas birding trips. These include **Field Guides**, Box 160723, Austin 78716 (800/728-4953), and **Wings**, 1643 N. Alvernon Way, Ste. 105, Tucson, AZ 85712 (520/320-9868).

Books

Look for these books in your bookstore or library: *The Birds of Texas* by John L. Tveten (Shearer Publishing, 1993); *Saving the Best of Texas: A Partnership Approach to Conservation* by Richard C. Bartlett (Univ. of Texas Press, 1995); and *Vanishing Texas Wildlife* by John and Gloria Tveten (Endangered Species Media Project, 1998).



white peacocks, long-tailed skippers, bordered patches, and the delicate anymone. Like the birds, many of these exotic butterflies range no farther north than Texas' southern tip.

Although tours of the ranch have thus far concentrated on the wealth of subtropical birds, opportunities abound for other types of natural-history studies. At a time when urban and industrial expansion and agricultural development carve slowly away at our natural lands, the Kenedy Ranch preserves a treasure-trove of enormous biodiversity.

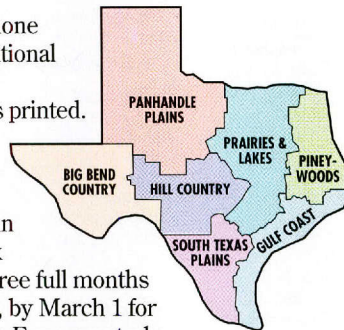
The future of Texas conservation may well depend on such innovative programs. Clearly, we can no longer hope to sustain our native wildlife on public lands alone. Ecotours like those offered by the Kenedy Ranch provide a rewarding outdoor experience, and at the same time preserve vital habitat for the myriad creatures that call Texas home. ★

Houston photojournalists JOHN and GLORIA TVETEN have published several natural-history books and write a weekly column for the *Houston Chronicle* called "Nature Trails."

March 1999						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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

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



Forecast, please send the information to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by March 1 for June 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, or fax 512/486-5944.

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

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

6-7 CLEBURNE Age of Elegance Glass Show 972/780-0198	11, 25 DALLAS Arts & Letters Live 214/922-1220
DALLAS North Texas Irish Festival 214/821-4173	12 DALLAS Pete & Maura Kennedy Concert 214/363-0044
WACO Ceramic Show 254/776-1660	GRAPEVINE Regal Opera 817/283-3406
6-8 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 800/229-2314	12-13 FORT WORTH Tarrant Co Jr Livestock Show 817/871-8150
6, 13, 20, 27 COLUMBUS Opry 409/732-9210	12-14, 18-21, 25-28 BRENNAM <i>The Miracle Worker</i> 409/830-8358
6-Apr 11 DALLAS Dallas Blooms 214/327-4901	12-28 DALLAS <i>Shakespeare: Out of Pocket</i> 214/978-0110
7 SOUTHLAKE Jazz at Bicentennial Park 817/283-3406	13 CALDWELL Old Theater Peddlers Market 409/272-3404
7-13 WEATHERFORD Pythian Home Week 817/594-4465	CLEBURNE Gen Pat Cleburne Birthday Celebration 817/645-0018
9 YOAKUM Country Music USA 512/293-2309	DALLAS St Patrick's Day Parade 214/821-4174
9-14 DALLAS <i>Red, White and Tuna</i> 972/298-1217	LANCASTER Second Saturday 972/218-2287
10 EAGLE LAKE Birding Tour 281/445-1187	PALESTINE Bike Tour 800/659-3484
11 DALLAS Distinguished Writers: Tim O'Brien 214/922-1219	RICHARDSON Symphony 972/234-4195
11-13 RICHARDSON African Violet Show 972/617-1186	ROUND TOP Festival Hill Concert 409/249-3129
11-14 DUBLIN St Patrick's Festival 254/445-3422	Winedale Spring Festival & Texas Crafts Exhibition 409/278-3530
6-7 BELTON Arts & Crafts Affaire 888/441-7133	WACO Dr Pepper Memorabilia Swap Meet 214/520-5777
6-7 DALLAS Fort Worth/Dallas Ballet 214/369-5200	WALNUT SPRINGS Trades Day 254/797-2176

Panhandle Plains

1-7 LUBBOCK A Night of Mamet 806/742-3603
1-21 ALBANY The Philadelphia Ten 915/762-2269
2 WICHITA FALLS Taste of the Town 940/322-8686
4 ABILENE Orchestra at the Paramount 915/677-1161
4-6 ABILENE <i>A World of Their Own</i> 915/670-1405
4-6, 11-13, 19-20 ABILENE <i>Funny Money</i> 915/673-6271
5 CLAUDE The Worthington Asbury Duo 806/226-2451
SAN ANGELO Cactus Jazz Series 915/653-6793
5-7 LUBBOCK Symphony 806/762-1688

5-7 SWEETWATER Cutting Horse Competition 915/235-3484
6 ABILENE A Celtic Festival 915/672-8033 or 677-4237
SAN ANGELO Macey's Ridge Hike 915/949-4757
SILVERTON Caprock Jamboree 806/823-2524
WICHITA FALLS Symphony 940/692-2255
6-7 BIG SPRING Gem & Mineral Show 915/263-3340
WICHITA FALLS Arts & Crafts Show 972/772-3816
6-14 SAN ANGELO Stock Show & Rodeo 915/653-7785
9-12 PLAINVIEW Theatre Festival 806/291-5054
11 ABILENE Artwalk 915/677-8389

11-13 MINERAL WELLS Palo Pinto Co Livestock Show & Fair 800/252-MWTX
12 WICHITA FALLS Jr Livestock Show 940/855-3711
VERNON U.S. Navy Band Concert 800/687-3137
13 WICHITA FALLS <i>The Hungry Wolf</i> 940/692-5005
13-14 ABILENE Arts & Crafts Show 915/676-6211
WICHITA FALLS Arts & Crafts Festival 915/263-7690
13-21 ABILENE Cutting Horse Show 915/677-4376
19-21 MINERAL WELLS Ranch Rodeo & Cowboy Gathering 940/328-1201
PLAINVIEW Old Tractor Show 806/296-7431
SHAMROCK St Patrick's Celebration 806/256-2501

19-21 WICHITA FALLS Barrel Race 940/538-4327
20 HASKELL VFD Car Show 940/864-3694
SAN ANGELO Petroglyph Tour 915/949-4757
20-21 COLORADO CITY Railhead Trade Days 915/728-3403
25-28 ARCHER CITY <i>Butterflies Are Free</i> 940/574-2505
26-28 MINERAL WELLS Antique Auto Swap Meet 940/325-9354
27 GRAHAM Possum Pedal 100 Bike Ride 940/549-3355 or 800/256-4844
SAN ANGELO Dinosaur Walk 915/949-4757
Symphony Concert 915/658-5877
SLATON Opry 806/828-6238
27-28 PAMPA Art Show 806/665-5050

Prairies and Lakes

1 FORT WORTH <i>Shakespeare: Out of Pocket</i> 817/246-9775
SEGUIN U.S. Navy Band Concert 800/580-7322
1-7 DALLAS <i>Waiting for Godot</i> 214/953-1955
1-20 FORT WORTH (began Feb 26) <i>Angels in America Part Two: Perestroika</i> 817/784-9378
1-21 DALLAS (began Feb 24) <i>Alice: Tales of a Curious Girl</i> 214/522-8499
1-Apr 30 BRENNAM Bluebonnet Trails/ Wildflower Tours 409/836-3695 or 888/273-6426
LA GRANGE Wildflower & Bluebonnet Trails 800/LA-GRANG
YOAKUM Wildflower Trail 512/293-2278

3 SEGUIN Texas Lutheran University Band Concert 800/580-7322
3-6 ARLINGTON <i>Picnic</i> 817/515-3599
3-7 DALLAS Tri-Delta Charity Antiques Show 214/939-2700
4 DALLAS "Comedy! An Evening with David Sedaris" 214/922-1219
WACO Symphony 254/754-0851
4-Apr 3 ARLINGTON <i>Bedroom Farce</i> 817/275-7661
5 DALLAS Blues Under the Dome 214/565-9026
Erica Wheeler Concert 214/363-0044
5-7 DALLAS Fort Worth/Dallas Ballet 214/369-5200

5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-27 FORT WORTH Stockyards Championship Rodeo 817/625-1025
5-28 GRANBURY <i>Driving Miss Daisy</i> 817/573-9191
6 BELLVILLE Market Day 409/865-3407
DALLAS Alamo Memorial Service 214/426-2121
Road to Texas Independence 214/426-2121
DENTON Redbud Day Festival 940/349-8537
HALLETTSVILLE State Championship Domino Tournament 512/798-2662
SEGUIN Noche Gala Mariachi Competition 800/580-7322
WALLIS Czech Spring Fest 409/478-6362

13-14
FORT WORTH
 Dolly Johnson
 Antique Show
 254/622-2858

14
DALLAS
 10-K Walk
 972/723-6536
 St Patrick's Day
 Downtown Parade
 972/991-6677

MOULTON
 Polka/Waltz
 Festival
 512/596-7609

WACO
Brigadoon
 800/701-ARTS

15, 29
DALLAS
 Texas Bound
 Literary Series
 214/922-1219

17
DALLAS
 Turtle Creek
 Chorale
 214/526-3214

FORT WORTH
 Cowtown Goes
 Green
 817/626-7921

17-20
CLEBURNE
 Johnson Co
 Livestock Show
 817/517-2004

HILLSBORO
 Hill Co Fair
 254/582-2481

18
FLATONIA
 4-H/FFA
 Livestock Show
 512/865-3920

18-20
KAUFMAN
 Kaufman Co Fair
 972/932-3118

18-21
DALLAS
*The Dallas
 Morning News*
 Classical Music
 Series
 214/670-3600

18-31
DALLAS
*Three Days
 of Rain*
 972/450-6232

19-20
DENTON
 African Violet
 Show
 940/382-6465

19-21
NAVASOTA
 Trade Days
 409/825-8490

19-21
SEGUIN
 Quarter Horse
 Show
 800/580-7322

**19-21, 26-28,
 Apr 2-4**
PALESTINE
 Dogwood Trails
 Festival
 800/659-3484

20
BELTON
 Western Swing
 Fiddling Showcase
 254/939-8390

COLUMBUS
Always...
Patsy Cline
 409/732-5135

DALLAS
 Chanticleer
 214/528-5576

DENISON
 Art & Wine
 Renaissance
 903/464-4452

ENNIS
 Arts & Crafts Fair
 972/878-4748

GAINESVILLE
 Cooke Co
 Sesquicentennial
 940/665-5546

GARLAND
 Bluegrass Show
 972/276-3197

NAVASOTA
 Herb Day
 409/825-3527

20-21
BELLVILLE
 Antique Show
 409/865-5618

GARLAND
*The Velvet
 Rabbit*
 214/349-1331

GRANBURY
 Hood Co
 Jr Livestock Show
 & Fair
 800/950-2212

ROUND TOP
 Winedale Spring
 Festival
 & Texas Crafts
 Exhibition
 409/278-3530

WACO
 State Garden Show
 800/727-9020

20-26
SHERMAN
 Grayson Co
 Jr Livestock Show
 903/813-4206

22
LOCKHART
 Opry
 512/601-2154

23-28
DALLAS
Victor/Victoria
 214/565-1116

24-25
GRANBURY
 Antique Fair
 817/573-5548

25
HURST
 Masterworks
 Music Series
 817/283-3406

25-26
GARLAND
 Carson & Barnes
 Circus
 972/272-0964

25-27
CAMERON
 Festival
 254/697-4979

25-28
DALLAS
 Video Festival
 214/999-8999

26
DALLAS
 Women of Kerrville
 Folk Fest
 214/363-0044

GARLAND
 Symphony
 972/205-2790

26-27
FORT WORTH
 Race Fest
 817/336-2787

26-Apr 3
ARLINGTON
*The Three
 Little Pigs*
 817/265-8512

26-Apr 4
WARRENTON
 Bluebonnet
 Antique Show
 409/249-3980

27
BRYAN
 Cattle Barons Ball
 409/778-9463

Easter Egg Hunt
 409/764-3624

DALLAS
 Downtown Tour
 214/421-9500

FORT WORTH
 Busch
 Grand National
 Series Race
 817/215-8500

LANCASTER
 Easter Egg Hunt
 972/227-1112

McKINNEY
 Texas Chamber
 Music Ensemble
 972/562-6554

27
MESQUITE
 All-Star Rodeo
 214/373-1400

ROUND TOP
 Herb Festival
 409/249-5888

SAN FELIPE
 Austin Co
 Heritage Festival
 409/885-3222

YOAKUM
 Arts & Crafts Fair
 512/293-2309

27-28
GRANBURY
 Gen Granbury's
 Birthday
 Celebration
 817/573-5548

HALLETTSVILLE
 Polka & Sausage
 Fest
 512/798-2311

NAVASOTA
 Trade Days
 409/825-8490

WACO
 Coin & Stamp
 Show
 254/776-6655

28
FORT WORTH
 NASCAR
 Winston Cup Race
 817/215-8500

GRAND PRAIRIE
 Low Rider Show
 972/647-2331

29
DALLAS
 Tribute to
 Duke Ellington
 214/692-0203

30
DENTON
 UNT Lab Band
 Concert
 940/565-3743

PARIS
 A Taste of Paris
 800/727-4789

31
DALLAS
 Santa Fe Quartet
 214/528-3733

Pineywoods

1-15
GLADEWATER
 (began Feb 13)
 Helen Lee
 Daffodil Gardens
 Tour
 800/627-0315

2
CONROE
Cougirls
 409/441-2787

2
NACOGDOCHES
 John Philip Sousa
 Concert
 409/468-6407

3
NACOGDOCHES
 Jazz Concert
 409/468-6407

5-7
LONGVIEW
 Antique Show
 903/643-7188

**5-6, 12-13,
 19-20, 26-27**
LIBERTY
 Opry on the Square
 800/248-8918

6
HENDERSON
 Youth Rodeo
 903/657-2161

TYLER
 Jazz Festival
 903/510-2200

11
NACOGDOCHES
 Stone Fort
 Wind Quartet
 409/468-6407

11-14, 18-21
HENDERSON
Mame
 903/657-2968

12-13
HENDERSON
 Rodeo
 903/657-2161

12-14
NACOGDOCHES
 Millard's
 Flea Market
 409/564-4490

13
CROCKETT
 Orchestra of
 the Pines
 409/544-4276

JASPER
 Cowboy Campfire
 409/384-5231

LIVINGSTON
 Bluegrass
 409/327-3381

15-31
JASPER
 Azalea Trail
 409/384-2762

18-20
SAN AUGUSTINE
 Jr Livestock Show
 & Fair
 409/275-3644

19-20
NACOGDOCHES
 Chili Cookoff
 409/569-9469

2
TYLER
 Quilt Show
 903/825-2720

19-21
NACOGDOCHES
 Trade Days
 409/564-2150

TYLER
 Arts & Crafts Show
 903/531-1212

Trade Days
 903/595-2223

19-28
CONROE
 Montgomery Co
 Fair
 409/760-3247

19-Apr 4
TYLER
 Azalea &
 Spring Flower
 Trail
 800/235-5712

20
COLDSRING
 Chili Cookoff
 409/653-2184

**20-21, 27-28,
 Apr 3-4**
WOODVILLE
 Tyler Co
 Dogwood Festival
 409/283-2632

21
NACOGDOCHES
 Chamber
 Ensemble
 409/468-6407

22-27
CROCKETT
 Houston Co Fair
 409/544-8823

25-27
NACOGDOCHES
 SFA Opera
 409/468-6407

TYLER
 Art Show
 903/592-8519

26
TYLER
 Heritage
 Candlelight
 Tour & Party
 903/595-1960

26-27
CONROE
*The Sunshine
 Boys*
 409/441-2787

LIBERTY
 Jubilee
 409/336-3684

TYLER
 Antique Show
 903/592-3538

26-Apr 3
HUNTSVILLE
 Walker Co
 Fair & Rodeo
 409/291-2423

27
COLDSRING
 Trades Day
 409/653-2009

27
JASPER
 Arts & Crafts
 Festival
 409/384-2762

TYLER
 Azalea 10-K
 & Fun Run
 903/592-1661

27-28
GILMER
 Treasure Hunt
 903/843-5555

TYLER
 Heritage Tour
 903/595-1960

Porcelain Show
 903/596-6328

29-Apr 3
TYLER
 Easter Pageant
 903/566-2080

Gulf Coast

1-7
HOUSTON
 (began Feb 19)
 Livestock Show
 & Rodeo
 713/791-9000

1-31
**SOUTH PADRE
 ISLAND**
 Spring Break
 800/343-2368

4-7
KINGSVILLE
*By the Sea,
 By the
 Beautiful Sea*
 512/593-3401

4-28
GALVESTON
 USO Radio Hour
 409/763-4591

5-6
BEAUMONT
 Shrine Circus
 409/724-6210

5-7
BEAUMONT
HMS Pinafore
 409/880-8144

FULTON
 Oysterfest
 800/826-6441

HARLINGEN
Anything Goes
 956/412-PLAY

5-8
BROWNSVILLE
 Intl Art Show
 956/542-0911

5-14
BAY CITY
 Matagorda Co
 Fair & Rodeo
 409/245-2454

5-6, 12-13, 19-20
BEAUMONT
*The 1940s
 Radio Hour*
 409/842-4664

**5-6, 12-13,
 19-20, 26-27**
MANVEL
 Opry
 281/489-1717

6
BEAUMONT
 Wild Game Cookoff
 409/832-3432

BRAZORIA
 Birding Tour
 281/445-1187

GALVESTON
 Artwalk
 409/763-2403

Duke Ellington
 Tribute
 800/821-1894

HUMBLE
 Rodeo Parade
 281/446-2128

RAYMONDVILLE
 Jack Schultz
 Orchestra
 956/689-6658

6-7
BROWNSVILLE
 CAF Air Fiesta
 956/541-8585

EL CAMPO
 Craft Fair
 409/543-2713

ROBSTOWN
 Fiesta Mexicana
 512/387-2774

6-7, 13-14
HOUSTON
 River Oaks
 Azalea Trail
 713/523-2483

6-8, 13-15, 27-29
HOUSTON
 Symphony
 713/224-7575

7
BEAUMONT
 Lauren Pelon:
 "The Roots
 of Music"
 800/821-1894

LA PORTE
 Classic Car Picnic
 281/479-2431

9
HOUSTON
 St Lawrence
 String Quartet
 713/524-5050

11-14
VICTORIA
 Livestock Show
 512/576-4300

12-13
BEAUMONT
Cinderella
 800/782-3081

12-13
KINGSVILLE
 Youth Rodeo
 512/595-8591

12-14
HOUSTON
Orfeo
 713/227-ARTS

Postcard Show
 281/589-1873

13
GALVESTON
 Christopher
 Parkening with
 Jubilant Sykes
 800/821-1894

HARLINGEN
Brigadoon
 956/430-6690

13-14
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Arts & Crafts Show
 512/991-8438

Quilt Show
 512/776-3028

14
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Powwow
 512/884-5533

HARLINGEN
 Jack Schultz
 Orchestra
 956/428-4414

PORT ARTHUR
 Second Sunday
 at Texas Artists
 Museum
 409/983-4881

18-21
HOUSTON
 Johnny Mathis
 713/227-ARTS

19
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Chanticleer
 512/888-7444

19-21
FREEPORT
 Joy Ride Rod Run
 409/233-4434

GALVESTON
 Home & Garden
 Show
 409/744-7848

20
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Czech Heritage
 Festival
 512/882-9226

GALVESTON
 A Conversation
 with Gregory Peck
 800/821-1894

20-21
HOUSTON
 Camera Show
 713/868-9606

PORT ARTHUR
 Trade Days
 409/982-4950

20-21
TEXAS CITY
 Trade Days
 409/643-5707

VICTORIA
 Arts & Crafts Show
 512/767-9333

20-23
BAYTOWN
 NHRA
 Slick 50 Nationals
 Drag Racing
 281/883-2666

23
ORANGE
The Jungle Book
 800/828-5535

25
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Amati
 String Quartet
 512/855-0264

HARLINGEN
The Jungle Book
 956/430-6690

25-27
BEAUMONT
 Passion Play
 800/782-3081

25-28
LEAGUE CITY
 Cookoff & Carnival
 281/559-2000

26
HOUSTON
 Sonny Rollins
 713/524-5050

26-27
KINGSVILLE
 A&M-Kingsville
 Jazz Festival
 512/593-2803

26-28
BEAUMONT
 Rod Run
 409/769-5259

ORANGEFIELD
 Crawfish & Crab
 Festival
 409/735-4152

27
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Ballet
 512/854-7969

Symphony
 512/883-6683

ROBSTOWN
 Egg-Citing Event
 512/837-5904

ROCKPORT
 Coastal Classic
 Auto Show
 800/826-6441

27-28
HARLINGEN
 Flower Show
 956/423-3210

HOUSTON
 Art Festival
 713/521-0138

28
CORPUS CHRISTI
 Easter Egg Hunt
 512/883-0639

29
SEABROOK
 Spring Market
 281/474-3869

South Texas Plains

1-28
EAGLE PASS
 Fort Duncan
 Sesquicentennial
 Celebration
 830/773-3224

2
THREE RIVERS
 Brush Country
 Music Jamboree
 512/449-2636

2-Apr 10
SAN ANTONIO
*The Velveteen
 Rabbit*
 210/227-2751

5-7
FALFURRIAS
 Springfest
 512/325-3333

SAN ANTONIO
Anything Goes
 210/554-1010

6
FLORESVILLE
 Rancho de
 Las Cabras Tour
 210/932-1001

SAN ANTONIO
 Dawn at the Alamo
 Commemoration
 210/650-3343

6-7
SAN ANTONIO
 Remembering
 the Alamo
 210/650-3340

**6-7, 13-14,
 20-21, 27-28**
SAN ANTONIO
 Rivercenter
 Entertainment
 Series
 210/225-0000

7
MISSION
 Jack Schultz
 Orchestra
 956/585-4833

11-12
SAN ANTONIO
 The Spirit
 of Ireland
 210/226-2891

12
EAGLE PASS
 Hasty Pudding
 Puppet Co
 830/773-8570

12, 14
SAN ANTONIO
 Irish Festival
 210/344-4317

13
BIGFOOT
 Market Trail Day
 830/665-5054

SAN ANTONIO
 St Patrick's Day
 Parade
 210/497-8435

St Patrick's Day
 Run/Walk
 210/490-1661

Volkssport
 10-K Walk
 210/525-8574

14
SAN ANTONIO
 Dyeing o' the
 River Green
 210/227-4262

17
SAN ANTONIO
 Alamo
 St Patrick's Day
 Ceremony
 210/497-8435

17-20
LAREDO
 International Fair
 & Exposition
 800/361-3360

St Patrick's Day
 Celebration
 800/361-3360

17-21
MERCEDES
 Rio Grande Valley
 Livestock Show
 956/565-2456

18-21
GOLIAD
 Goliad Co
 Fair & Rodeo
 512/645-3563

19
EDINBURG
 Jack Schultz
 Orchestra
 956/383-7931

19-20
SAN ANTONIO
 Tejano
 Music Awards
 Fanfair & Festival
 800/500-8470

20
GOLIAD
 Battle of
 Coleto Creek
 Reenactment
 512/645-2020

SAN ANTONIO
 El Gran Baile
 del Denzon
 210/822-2453

Run for
 Brainpower
 210/829-6001

21
SAN ANTONIO
Messiah
 210/737-0097

24-28
EAGLE PASS
 International
 Friendship
 Festival
 830/773-3224 or
 888/355-3224

26-27
LAREDO
 Home & Garden
 Show
 956/795-2200 or
 800/361-3360

SAN ANTONIO
 Symphony
 210/554-1010

26-28
EAGLE PASS
 Arts & Crafts Fair
 830/773-3224

SAN ANTONIO
 Fiesta of Gems
 210/824-3413
 or 695-8090

26-Apr 18
SAN ANTONIO
*To Kill a
 Mockingbird*
 210/227-2751

26-May 8
SAN ANTONIO
*Man of
 La Mancha*
 210/733-7258

27
LAREDO
 Tommy Dorsey
 Orchestra
 956/795-2200 or
 800/361-3360

WESLACO
 Young Artist Day
 888/968-2102

27-28
GOLIAD
 Goliad Massacre/
 Fort Defiance
 Living History
 512/645-3752

27-Apr 17
SAN ANTONIO
The Odd Couple
 210/408-0116

Hill Country

1-6
ROUND ROCK
 (began Feb 19)
*The Taming
 of the Shrew*
 512/244-0440

2-7
AUSTIN
Stomp
 512/478-3603

5-8
AUSTIN
Tosca
 512/472-5992 or
 800/316-7372

6
HONDO
 Hootenanny
 830/426-3438

ROUND ROCK
 A Little Dab
 of Texas
 512/244-3375

Daffodil Day
 Festival
 512/218-5499
 or 218-5540

SAN SABA
 Peddlers Day
 915/372-5141

6-7
BOERNE
 Antique Show
 210/995-2884 or
 800/995-3670

LLANO
 Team Roping
 915/247-5354

7
STONEWALL
 St Francis Xavier
 Church Festival
 830/644-2218

10-13
NEW BRAUNFELS
 Comal Co
 Jr Livestock Show
 830/629-2334

12
GEORGETOWN
 Pop Goes the Jazz
 512/869-7469

12-13
AUSTIN
 Symphony
 512/476-6064

12-21
AUSTIN
 Austin/Travis Co
 Livestock Show
 & Rodeo
 512/467-9811

South by
 Southwest
 Music & Media
 Conference
 512/467-7979

13
CASTROVILLE
 Market Trail Day
 830/931-2331

St Louis
 Wild Game Dinner
 830/538-2267

GEORGETOWN
 Market Day
 512/930-5302

Opry
 512/869-7469

14
AUSTIN
 Zilker Park
 Kite Festival
 512/328-5731

14-15
NEW BRAUNFELS
 Classic Cars
 at Wursthalle
 210/495-4777

18-21, 25-28
GEORGETOWN
Deathtrap!
 512/869-7469

20-21
AUSTIN
 City-Wide
 Garage Sale
 512/441-2828 or
 888/441-7133

GEORGETOWN
 Quilt & Stitchery
 Show
 512/869-1812 or
 800/436-8696

21-22
NEW BRAUNFELS
 Old Gruene
 Market Days
 830/629-6441

23
AUSTIN
 Gypsy Caravan
 512/471-1444 or
 800/687-6010

25-27
NATALIA
 Bluebonnet
 Festival
 830/665-3703
 or 665-5439

26-27
AUSTIN
 Ballet Austin
 512/476-9051

26-29
FREDERICKSBURG
 Country Peddler
 Show
 830/997-2774

27
MARBLE FALLS
 Market Day
 800/759-8178

PFLUGERVILLE
 Heritage Park
 Easter Festival
 512/251-5082

27-28, Apr 3-4
**HIGHLAND LAKES
 AREA**
 Bluebonnet Trail
 512/793-2803

28
AUSTIN
The Jungle Book
 512/472-5470

30
AUSTIN
 Lincoln Center
 Jazz Orchestra
 with Wynton Marsalis
 512/471-1444 or
 800/687-6010

31-Apr 3
AUSTIN
 Texas Relays
 512/471-7437

Big Bend Country

1-6
EL PASO
 (began Feb 26)
 Siglo de Oro
 Drama Festival
 915/532-7273

5-21
EL PASO
Anastasia
 915/532-3799

9-14
ODESSA
 Shrine Carnival
 915/366-3541

12-27
MIDLAND
The Dresser
 915/682-4111

16
EL PASO
 Transmountain
 20-K Run
 915/833-1231

17
LAJITAS
 Stargazing at
 Barton Warnock
 Center
 915/424-3327

19-20
ODESSA
 Bull Riding
 915/567-9899

19-21
MIDLAND
Charlotte's Web
 915/682-4111

20
MIDLAND
 Gourmet Gala
 915/689-6693

20-21
ODESSA
 Gem & Mineral
 Show
 915/362-3282
 or 362-4453

21
EL PASO
 Malena Cano
 915/772-3905

24
LAJITAS
 Big Bend Geology
 915/424-3327

25-27
ODESSA
 College Rodeo
 915/335-6854

26-27
EL PASO
 Symphony
 915/532-3776

ODESSA
*Picasso at the
 Lapin Agile*
 915/362-2329

27
EL PASO
 Limon Dance Co
 915/541-4481

27-28
ODESSA
 Car Show
 915/366-3541

28
EL PASO
 Lincoln Center
 Jazz Orchestra
 with Wynton
 Marsalis
 915/532-3776

ODESSA
 Lone Star
 Brass Quintet
 915/563-0921

**Travel
 Texas
 Highways
 on the
 Web.**

**http://www.
 texashighways.
 com**

Land of Leather Days

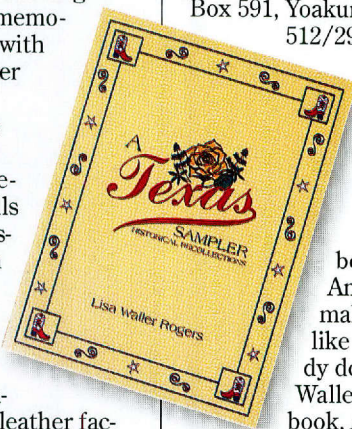
About 100 miles east of San Antonio, where one of Texas' oldest rodeos takes place this month (see story, page 4), the little town of Yoakum stirs up some dust of its own. On February 26-28, the self-proclaimed "Leather Capital of the World"—about one third of all U.S. horse-related leather goods originate here—commemorates its heritage with the Land of Leather Days festival.

Last year, more than 8,000 people attended the three-day fete, which fills the downtown business district with a carnival, arts and crafts, antique shows, tours of the Yoakum Heritage Museum and nearby leather factories, performances by cloggers and other dancers, Texas' third-largest CASI chili cook-off (100 teams compete), live music, leather-goods shopping, and even a re-created Western street complete with gunfights and saloon brawls. After all, in its early-20th-Century heyday as a cattle town (after the railroad's arrival led to packing houses, which led to tanneries, which led to jobs galore), Yoakum enjoyed a reputation as a wild-and-wooly Texas town.

Yoakum's no slouch even today—a fact never clearer than at the Latigo Bullride Classic on Sunday afternoon. Here, brave souls ride for an interminable eight seconds atop snorting, bucking bulls—vying for prizes

ranging from leather trophies to cold cash. Two into-the-wee-hours dances (Fri. and Sat.) offer opportunities to show off fancy footwork of a different sort.

The Land of Leather Days festival is free, except for the bull-riding competition (admission cost about \$8 last year). Write to the Yoakum Area Chamber of Commerce, Box 591, Yoakum 77995, or call 512/293-2309.

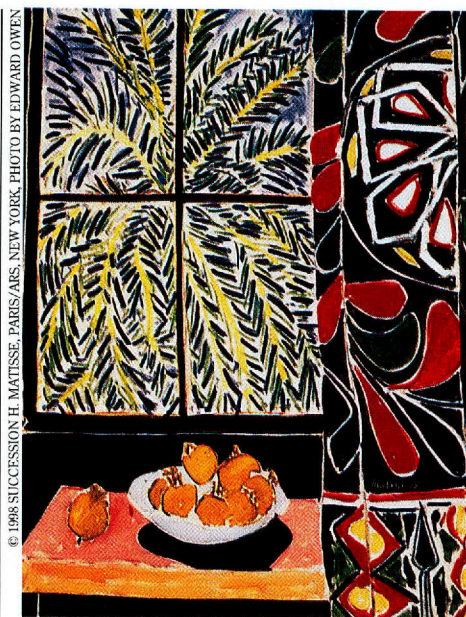


A Texas Sampler

Sure, it looks like a box of candy. And yes, it'll make you smile like a box of candy does. But Lisa Waller Rogers' new book, *A Texas Sampler: Historical Recollections*, is no guilty pleasure, even if it will remain with you long after you put it down.

A teacher in Austin since 1978, Rogers began work some four years ago to create what she calls "a little book of Texas stories and period art." "Texas history stirs the blood," she says, "and I wanted to create a people's history rather than a dull record of dead-men-and-dates."

With that in mind, Rogers chose 32 topics—ranging from



© 1988 SUCCESSION H. MATISSE, PARIS/ARS, NEW YORK. PHOTO BY EDWARD OWEN

The Kimbell Art Museum focuses on the friendly rivalry of Matisse and Picasso through May 2. *Interior with Egyptian Curtain* (1948) was painted by Matisse—but Picasso touches abound.

American holiday." Since the first celebration a century ago, the event has grown to 15 days, during which parades, the carnival, balls and dances, food galore, and elaborate costumes still take center stage. In

Indians and pirates to wild mustangs and the nature of frontier cuisine—and brings them to life using excerpts from diaries, letters, and memoirs, as well as color reproductions of period paintings and engravings.

Among the book's many fine moments: Through the words of blacksmith Noah Smithwick, you'll learn what it was like to journey to Texas in 1827 via stagecoach and flatboat. Excerpts from an 1843 issue of the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* reveal the atmosphere of an East Texas fandango. And thanks to the last letter written by Alamo hero Davy Crockett (to his son and daughter in 1836), you'll read how Texas appeared to many settlers of the time: "Texas [is] the garden spot of the world."

Find *A Texas Sampler* at your library or bookstore (\$14.95 paperback, \$8.95 school workbook), or order it from Texas Tech University Press by calling 800/832-4042.

Border Party

On February 6-21, join citizens from both sides of the Rio Grande in Laredo for the annual Washington's Birthday Celebration, begun in 1898 to toast a "purely

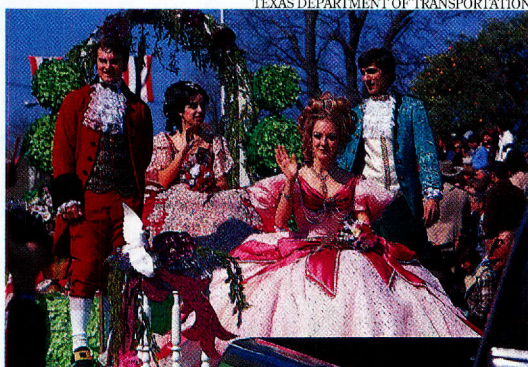
1990, in fact, one woman's dress boasted a bejeweled train so heavy she had to wear a harness under her costume in order to stand up straight.

The carnival (Feb. 11-21), with rides, games, and entertainers; the Jalapeño Festival (Feb. 19-20), in which contestants run relay races wearing swim flippers and consume copious amounts of capsaicin; the fireworks display (Feb. 14); and the grand Washington's Birthday Parade (Feb. 20), featuring some 100 floats and marching bands, remain perennial favorites. Don't miss it: This time-honored birthday bash fosters patriotism, allegiance between *los dos Laredos*, and an unsurpassed spirit of camaraderie for locals and visitors alike.

For a schedule of events or more information, write to the Washington's Birthday Celebration, 1819 E. Hillside Road, Laredo 78041; 956/722-0589. Web site: www.wbcaldo.com.

Dueling Paintbrushes

The gray days of winter got you down? The Kimbell has the cure. From January 31-May 2, Fort Worth's award-winning Kimbell Art Museum features more



Folks who attend Laredo's century-old Washington's Birthday Celebration (Feb. 6-21 this year) love the grand parade (Feb. 20), which features hundreds of floats and marching bands.

than 100 works by Matisse and Picasso—artists known for their love of color—in the exhibit *Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry*.

By focusing on the artists' relationship from 1930 until Matisse's death in 1954, the exhibit traces their exchange of ideas and techniques, similarities of styles and subjects, and competitive friendship. In a barter of ideas often compared to a game of chess, Picasso and the older Matisse alluded to each other's works in their own paintings, tried to anticipate each other's inspirations, and often directly borrowed elements from each other's works.

The Kimbell Art Museum opens Tue-Thu 10-5, Fri noon-8, Sat 10-5, and Sun noon-5. Admission is free. Wheelchair accessible. Write to 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth 76107-2792; 817/332-8451. Web site: www.kimbellart.org.

By the Way...

Through February 28, Dallas' African-American Museum zooms in on the Negro Baseball Leagues with its multimedia exhibit *Triumph over Diversity: The Center for Negro Leagues Baseball Collection*. With some 75 photographs, plus dozens of uniforms, bats, balls, broadsides, and ticket stubs, the exhibit traces the history of black players from post-Civil War days to 1947, when Jackie Robinson broke the major-league color barrier. Cutouts of such players as Leroy "Satchel" Paige and Texas native Andrew "Rube" Foster, as well as quotes from sportswriters and fans of the day, fill out the exhibit.... call 214/565-9026.

February is rodeo month in Texas. If you just can't get enough in San Antonio and Yoakum, the **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo** kicks off February 19 and lasts through March 7. Houston's event features the world's largest stock show, performances by big stars (LeAnn Rimes,

COURTESY THE NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, COOPERSTOWN



Painter William Sidney Mount gained fame in the mid-1800s depicting the everyday lives of Americans. See his work in Fort Worth February 5-April 4.

Luther Vandross, and Lynyrd Skynyrd, to name but three), a parade, carnival, barbecue cookoff, and down-and-dirty rodeo action—all at the historic Astrodome, the world's first air-conditioned domed stadium.... call 713/791-9000. Web site: www.hlsr.com.

Here's even more bull: Fort Worth's **Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show**, which wraps up February 7 (after beginning January 22), features the longest all-horse-drawn parade in the United States, a six-acre mid-way carnival, a stock show with amateur and pro breeders, and all the other usual suspects.... call 817/877-2400. Web site: www.fwssr.com.

At the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, February 5-April 4, **William Sidney Mount: Painter of American Life** brings some 60 of the artist's works into view. Well-known in the mid-1800s for his depictions of everyday life, Mount made a name for himself in both America and in Europe, where his paintings often introduced Europeans to their first glimpses of the United States.... call 817/738-1933. Web site: www.cartermuseum.org.

A glimpse at the index to *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* reveals more than 720 references to "love." Needless to say, there are a lot of ways to say "I love you" (see page 44). Wanna see how some folks said it in the 1940s? If

you find yourself in Pecos this month, check out the **West of the Pecos Museum's** exhibit of some three dozen antique valentines on display through February 28. Some of these missives have pop-up or movable parts, and one card even sports a lock of real hair.... call 915/445-5076.

Using hard-to-come-by geographical information obtained from French and Portuguese explorers, Italian mapmaker Vincenzo Coronelli revolutionized the world of cartography in 1688. One of Coronelli's rare 1688 globes—restored and preserved behind glass—stars in the exhibit *The World of Coronelli*, February 1-August 2 at the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The exhibit also contains hand-colored maps from the 16th Century, three unused gores (globe sections) from 1688, an engraving of Coronelli's 1693 celestial globe showing the heavens, and dozens of related materials.... call 806/742-3749.

Before next month's presentation of the Academy Awards, wouldn't it be fun to know a few tricks of the trade? How exactly *did* they do that? Visit Irving's **Studios at Las**

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

Colinas, where you can tour movie sound stages, see costumes worn by stars like Judy Garland and Tom Hanks, create tornadoes or volcanoes in a special-effects lab, and learn about film, radio, and TV history at the adjacent National Museum of Communications.... call 972/869-FILM. Web site: www.studiosatlascolinas.com.

And you thought rock-'n'-roll was something you heard on the radio. At the Austin Museum of Art (both the downtown and Laguna Gloria locations) from January 30-April 3, you'll see how some 100 artists understand the term *visually*.

It's Only Rock and Roll: Rock and Roll Currents in Contemporary Art features nearly 150 works in many media, illustrating how this 20th-Century music affected typography, photography, painting, collage, advertising, and sculpture of the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies.... call 512/495-9224 or 458-8191.



Through April 3, the Austin Museum of Art shows how rock-'n'-roll made its presence known in the visual art world. This painting by Cuban-born Luis Cruz Azaceta numbers among the works on display.

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

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

READERS RECOMMEND...

On every trip to Central Texas, we look for good barbecue. For the last [several] years, we have always stopped for lunch at **Trailblazers** in **Malakoff**. Trailblazers consistently has the perfect barbecued beef sandwich: sliced beef, great sauce, and a lot to eat at a good price. Someday, we will try some of their other barbecue—I bet it's just as good. The staff are friendly and helpful, too.

Pat and Mary Freeman, White Hall, Arkansas

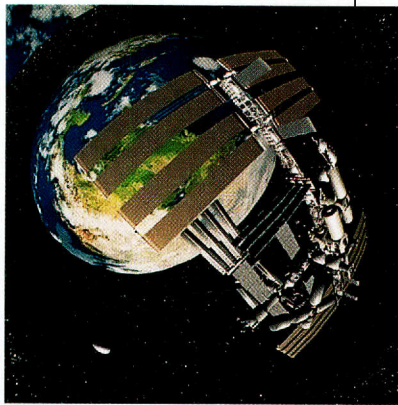
Trailblazers is at 416 West Royal Boulevard in Malakoff; 903/489-2979.

CAMP FORD UNCOVERED

The East Texas Historical Association recently published **Camp Ford: Tyler, Texas, C.S.A.**, by Dr. Robert W. Glover, reprised largely from an early-1960s book by Glover and the late F. Lee Lawrence. The new monograph highlights a historic site two miles north of **Tyler** on US 271, which served during the Civil War as the Confederacy's largest prisoner-of-war camp west of the Mississippi River (see *Speaking of Texas*). The book is available for \$8.75 (shipping included) from the East Texas Historical Association, Box 6223, Nacogdoches 75962-6223; 409/468-2407.

A 1997 dig by Dr. Alston Thoms, director of the Center for Ecological Archeology at

Texas A&M University, located Camp Ford's stockade walls, hearths, refuse dumps, and dwellings called shebangs. Tentatively scheduled to open this month, Phase One of the **Camp Ford Historical Site** features an interpretive kiosk and descriptive walking trails. Write to the Smith County Historical Society, 125 S. College Avenue, Tyler 75702 (903/592-5993), or call Dr. Robert Glover at 903/561-4604.



COURTESY SKRISMAN

The revamped Burke Baker Planetarium showcases spectacular space images, like this rendering of the International Space Station.

GOOD HEAVENS

For a moving, out-of-this-world experience, visit the recently reopened **Burke Baker Planetarium** at the **Houston Museum of Natural Science**. The newly designed facility will hurl into a black hole any preconceived notions you may have about planetariums and their static star fields.

Thanks to a high-resolution

video projection system called SkyVision, Burke Baker-goers—seated in the dark with their chairs tilted back—zoom through the cosmos at 150 megabytes per second, past full-color moving planets, stars, meteors, solar systems, and galaxies. See amazing space images both rendered and real, such as the Eagle Nebula, with columns of gas and dust that stretch 6 trillion miles. Write to One Hermann Circle Drive, Houston 77030-1799; 713/639-4629. Web site: www.hmns.org.

UT COUP

The **Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art** on the University of Texas campus in **Austin** recently announced the acquisition of one of the world's largest private collections of Renaissance and Baroque paintings, drawings, and sculpture. Valued at \$35 million, the **Suida-Manning Collection** holds some 700 works—spanning the 14th through the 18th centuries—by such masters as Boucher, Crespino, Lorrain, Rubens, Poussin, and Veronese. In the early 1900s, noted art historian William Suida started the collection, later expanded by his daughter, Bertina Suida Manning, and her husband, Robert Manning.

And where do you put such an assemblage?

Scheduled for completion in 2002, a new 100,000-square-foot building, at Martin Luther King Boulevard and Speedway, will unite for the first time all of the Blanton's collections, exhibitions, and programs. In the meantime, at the Blanton's permanent-collection galleries, in the Harry Ransom Center at 21st and Guadalupe, a public unveiling of the Suida-Manning Collection will be held March 6. Write to 23rd and San Jacinto, Austin 78712-1205; 512/471-7324.

SMALL WORLD

Joe and Bonnie Red of **Fredericksburg** like all things small. At their new museum, **A World of Miniatures** (at 109 North Adams Street), the Reds share their 20-year collection of exquisitely detailed, one-inch-to-one-foot-scale structures. The teensy treasures include replicas of Fredericksburg's Vereins Kirche, Dickensian London scenes, and Harry S. Truman's home. The couple designed, built, and furnished some of the 42 displays, and bought or commissioned others from internationally known craftspeople. Write to 109 North Adams, Fredericksburg 78624; 830/990-8833.

JUST BEAKAUSE

New Braunfels has a new attraction for the birds (and other creatures) called **Clear Springs Aviaries and Zoological Gardens**. The walk-through park, which opened last May at 5686 Interstate 35 South, welcomes nature-lovers to stroll seven acres, on which more than 2,000 species of tropical and native plants flourish (seasonally). Among the park's 300 exotic and endangered birds, folks can spot "everything from toucans to cranes," says co-owner Pat Otten. In addition to the winged wonders, you'll see gators, deer, foxes, monkeys, and Arabian oryx. Write to 5686 I-35 South, New Braunfels 78132; 830/606-6029.

Down the Road

We emerge from winter's grip next month with stories on the Dallas Arboretum and the Roy E. Larsen Sandylan Sanctuary. We also remember Texas Independence Day with a look at two crucial sites: Presidio La Bahía and Washington-on-the-Brazos.

© NELSON GUDA



A juvenile red-eared slider pauses on its slow, steady traverse of Bee Creek's crystalline waters in western Travis County. About the size of a silver dollar when young, these turtles grow to 10 or 11 inches when mature. Found in and along streams, lakes, and ponds, they commonly congregate on logs or other debris—and sometimes on each other—to enjoy the sun's warm rays.

