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MAY 22 1995

TEXAS Travel Log

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

LOOK UP!

Texas Highways Magazine takes to the skies in May with another high-flying issue, chock-full of colorful photographs of mystical Texas skies. While your head's in the clouds, read about the Texas Star Party in the Davis Mountains, and take a look-see at Austin's famous moonlit towers. You can even catch a bird's-eye view of Lone Star landscapes with a story on artist Georgia O'Keeffe. Look up the May issue at a newsstand near you. Or better yet, call 1-800-839-4997 and subscribe today for just \$12.50 a year. It's still the best deal!

COMING UP

On June 9, **Space Center Houston** will unveil a dynamic exhibit corresponding with the premiere of Ron Howard's film, "Apollo 13." Spokeswoman **Jennifer Casey** said the exhibit will include set props, principal actors' space suits, prints from the feature film, and actual Apollo 13 spaceflight hardware. **Apollo 13**, which will run through the summer, is included in the cost of admission. Open daily on NASA Road One, 20 miles southeast of downtown Houston. Call 1-800-972-0369 for the latest space scoop.

PLACES

The **National Wildflower Research Center** in Austin moved the first of this month to a 42-acre site in the heart of the Texas Hill Country. The beautiful new grounds are home to more than 500 species of wild-

flowers, native grasses, trees, and shrubs. Highlighted are 23 themed gardens, which include a petting garden, emphasizing plants with special textures for the visually impaired, a garden to attract butterflies, and Native American, rock, and sage gardens. The \$9.5-million facility includes a 240-seat auditorium and five classroom-sized meeting areas. The center was founded in 1982 by **Lady Bird Johnson**, who started the beautification program in the 1960s when her husband was president. In southwest Austin at 4801 La Crosse Avenue. Call 512/292-4200 for all the details.

Charles Duggan, executive producer of the long-running comedy "**Greater Tuna**," has turned the former Mistral disco, in the Loews Anatole Hotel in **Dallas**, into the **Tuna Little Theatre**, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. Duggan hopes to duplicate "Tuna's" success in San Francisco, where it ran for seven years. The renovated 300-seat theater will run nothing but "Tuna" and "Tuna" by-products. Co-stars and co-creators **Joe Sears** and **Jaston Williams** were in Dallas last month pro-

moting the theater's opening. They returned to star in the show that was their first success, and which lasted more than 13 years. The two have trained many of the actors who will take over in Dallas after they leave. Sears and Williams will perform in Dallas through April 16. At 2201 Stemmons Freeway. Call 214/651-8400 for more info.

Wet 'n Wild Inc. is closing its water park in **Garland** and is nearing a deal to sell its **Arlington** facility to **Six Flags**, according to *The Dallas Morning News*. Officials said the Garland park fell victim to the ever-growing school year, which forced the park to shorten its season to 99 days from 110 days a few years back. The acquisition of the Arlington park would give Six Flags Theme Parks Inc. three water parks nationwide.

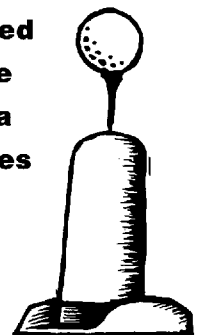
More than 5,000 travel agents from across the country will converge at the **Fort Worth/Tarrant County Convention Center**, April 20-22, for the **American Airlines Fly AAWay Vacations Supermarket**, one of the largest travel shows in the nation. Agents will experience

the Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival, the charm of Sundance Square, renowned museums in the Cultural District, and a bit of the Old West in the Stockyards National Historic District. This is the first year for Fort Worth to host the event, providing a prime opportunity to showcase the city as an exciting visitor destination.

NATURE TOURISM

The **State Task Force on Texas Nature Tourism** released its final report on the ways the state can capitalize on the growing popularity of nature tourism, the fastest growing segment of Texas' \$23-billion travel industry. The report predicts the number of Texas tourists involved in nature study should hit 18 million by the year 2000, a 17 percent jump from 1990. Nature tourism, also referred to as eco-tourism, has averaged a 30 percent increase worldwide since 1987, setting a trend for future years. The report was compiled after a year-long study by the task force, which includes representatives from urban and rural communities, private landholders,

FITS TO A TEE La Cantera Development Company signed a three-year contract to become the title sponsor of the **Texas Open**. The tournament will be held at La Cantera Golf Club, named one of the nation's top 10 public courses by *Golf Magazine*, in San Antonio during October 16-22. The Texas Open, one of the oldest tournaments on the PGA tour, attracts top golfers from throughout the world. For more information, call 1-800-446-5387.



TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

state agencies, conservationists, marketers, and businesses. The group recommended action in the areas of conservation, education, legislation, and promotion. For updates on the nature tourism program, mail a card with your name and address to Madge Lindsay, TP&WD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin 78744.

W I L D L I F E

The **Dallas Zoo** and **Dallas Aquarium** teamed up to offer a new series of programs and classes for 1995. "**Windows on Wildlife**" presents once-a-month Saturday classes for families and week-long summer day camps for children ages five through ten. Kids can learn about the basic needs of animals, and their characteristics and behaviors, and about the wonders of the aquatic world. Saturday classes include information on endangered animals, the "Wilds of Africa," misunderstood reptiles, and the bizarre behaviors and hilarious habits of whales, dolphins, sharks, and sea turtles. The Dallas Zoo is at 621 E. Clarendon; the Aquarium is located in Fair Park at First Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard. Call the Dallas Zoo Education Department at 214/670-7531.

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel and Information Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to Texas Travel Log, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009. (512) 483-3727, FAX (512) 483-3793. Deadline for each newsletter is the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Marty Lange, Jane McNally, Mike Talley

Layout: Jane Yansky Design

DENISON The center grounds tower was christened the Tower Chapel after counselors witnessed their second wedding in three months. Counselor Devon Armstrong said a Texas gentleman was determined to turn his bride, who was from Oklahoma, into a "legal Texas citizen." The couple was in their 80s.

ORANGE TIC Foosball World Champion Ted Scott recently stopped in for some travel literature, reports counselor Dan

Perrine. The semipro champ said foosball, a form of table soccer, is gaining worldwide popularity and that he hopes to go pro within a year. He admits his job in a game room probably hasn't hurt one bit.

VALLEY TIC Counselor Lucia Weaver and husband Joe took part in inaugural festivities of the first city government of Los Indios, the recently incorporated border town along the historic Los Caminos del Rio corridor. With Joe being a fourth genera-

tion Valley resident, Lucia said they were surrounded by Judge Weavers and other dignitaries who were in some way blood kin.

WICHITA FALLS TIC

Counselor Becki Boyd completed training to become a Certified Volunteer Child Advocate. When children are removed from their homes by the Child Protective Services, these volunteers appear in court on each child's behalf to recommend whether or not to place the child back into his home.

A total of **363 verified mountain lion sightings** were reported in 122 Texas counties in 1994, a new state high. **Bill Russ, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** biologist, said the sightings occurred in all ecological regions of Texas with the highest numbers reported in the Edwards Plateau, South Texas, and the Trans-Pecos. The department depends on the public to help keep track of the state's population of mountain lions and other wildlife. Those sighting or killing a mountain lion are encouraged to report it to local wildlife personnel or a game warden. Or they can call TP&WD at 1-800-792-1112.

H I S T O R Y

A new gateway will soon lead visitors into **Amarillo's Route 66-Sixth Street National Historic District**, reports *The Country Register* news. The gateway will feature a welcome sign, historical markers, brick walkways, benches, and antique street lamps. Wayne Smith writes, "The advent of automobile travel brought one of the nation's first transcontinental highways and perhaps the best known one — Route 66 — through the heart of this section of Amarillo in 1926.

Fortunately, when businesses vacated the area in the mid-'50s due to changing the highway's route, the area remained frozen in time until the district was rediscovered in the '80s." Buildings that were once drugstores, cafes, and service stations now house a nostalgic blend of antique, craft, and specialty shops.

A W A R D S

The **Corpus Christi C&VB** was a first place winner in the **Golden Bell Awards** for their efforts in promoting their city.

The prestigious award, sponsored by Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, recognizes excellence in the application of public relations practices in the travel industry. The winning entry was a creative mix of print and broadcast media, and outdoor advertising. This year's Golden Bell Awards drew more than 1,500 entries from more than 45 countries worldwide!

The **Hill Country Golf Club** at the **Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort** in **San Antonio** was named a winner of the **1995 Golden Links**

STRIKE UP THE BAND The **Texas Capitol Restoration Celebration in Austin, April 19-22**, will bring back former members of the **Texas Senate and House of Representatives** for Texas-style entertainment, a symphony concert, and a grand parade down **Congress Avenue**. The **Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House** will officially **rededicate the building**. To learn more, call **512/463-5495**.



Award by *Corporate Meetings & Incentives*, a trade publication for corporate meeting planners. The award is presented annually to the top 100 golf resorts in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. An advisory panel of 16 golf experts ranks resorts on the overall quality of the property, its meeting rooms, guest rooms, and food service. The \$100-million Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort opened in February 1993 and features 500 rooms and suites, an 18-hole championship golf course, first-class restaurants, extensive meeting room facilities, two swimming pools, and a 950-foot-long Ramblin' River water experience. For reservations, call 1-800-233-1234.

P U B L I C A T I O N S

San Patricio County communities are working together to lure more visitors, reports the *Corpus Christi Caller Times*. Tourism officials began promoting their area as **A Bright Spot on the Horizon** in a colorful new brochure. The brochure includes such points of interest as the Corpus Christi Abbey near Mathis, Indian Point Pier and Bird Watching Park in Portland, the old San Patricio Museum on FM 666, and the Welder Wildlife Refuge in Sinton. Also listed are numerous RV parks, hotels, restaurants, specialty shops, and marinas. For more information or a copy of the *Bright Spot* brochure, call 512/643-4744.

Look for **"Rafting the Rio"** in the March/April issue of **National Geographic Traveler**. The attractive and expansive feature article reflects the magic appeal of Big Bend.

The **Dallas Official Visitors Guide** features a brand-new look and expanded information. The guide includes information about major events, sights and attrac-

tions, arts and entertainment, sports and recreation, transportation, accommodations, dining, nightlife, and shopping. Helpful maps show exact locations for many major attractions, while "Regional Highlights" provides an expanded review of places to go and things to do. It's free at any of the Dallas C&VB visitor information centers. Or call, 214/746-6677.

M U S E U M S

Back in 1957, the **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History** was founded as the Corpus Christi Junior Museum. Over the years the name changed as the mission changed, first to the Corpus Christi Museum and then to its present name. Now new developments have prompted the Museum Advisory Committee to ask once again if



Where in Texas was the first public display of the horseless carriage?

On April 20, 1897, a special train from Montgomery Ward & Company pulled into Dallas carrying a mobile display of the company's latest offerings. Among the items was a carriage powered by a small electric motor, marking Texas' first public display of the automobile. In an attempt to spur interest and sales, skeptical spectators were given free rides around the courthouse in the strange contraption without a horse. Not a single person placed an order that day. It would be two years before any Texan would actually own a car.



DOUBLE-BARRELED ENTERTAINMENT

Staged gunfights, train robberies, trick ropers, and

snake handlers set the stage for nonstop fun, food, and games at the first-ever Texas Badland Days Festival in Uvalde, April 21-22. Top-notch tejano and country/ Western entertainers, cloggers, Indian dancers, a cowboy balladeer, petting zoo, and carnival rides round out the fun-for-all event at the Uvalde Fairgrounds. Call the chamber at 210/278-3361.

it's time for another change. Expansion includes the recent affiliation of the Las Carabelas Columbus Fleet Association. The *Seeds of Change* exhibit, which opens in May, will refocus the history wing on the impact of Columbus' voyage. The Xeriscape Learning Center and Design Center, adjacent to the museum, will open for tours sometime this summer. The advisory committee is expected to make a recommendation to the city council sometime this month. At 1900 N. Chaparral in Bayfront Arts and Sciences Park. Call 512/883-2862 for details.

A stunning exhibition highlighting the glory and history of French art is on view through August 20 at the **San Antonio Museum of Art. Five Hundred Years of French Art** is comprised of more than 200 paintings, sculptures, and graphic works. Museum director **Douglas Hyland** said, "This show brings together 500 years of exclusively French art in one place for the first time in South Texas. A number of Texas collectors have never before

agreed to loan their works for an exhibition. Many of the Impressionist and Post-impressionist pieces in this show have not been on display anywhere in the world for several generations." Open daily at 200 West Jones Avenue in the original Lone Star Brewery. For more information, call 210/978-8100. For group tickets, call 210/978-8151.

E V E N T S

A first-of-its-kind festival celebrating the decade of 1911-1920 is slated for February through April 1996 in **Tarrant County. RetroFest '96** is a collaborative effort of Fort Worth and Tarrant County's cultural and educational organizations. Throughout the festival, more than 50 museums, performing arts groups, and local historical, educational and other organizations will focus on promoting the decade known for its revolution of expression. For more info, call the Fort Worth C&VB at 1-800-433-5747, or the RetroFest office at 817/924-0492.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	12,177	-19.06	31,161	-9.32
Anthony	21,180	-21.19	53,013	-14.22
Denison	25,101	**	60,636	**
Gainesville	41,133	-13.62	98,742	-13.62
Langtry	15,354	+9.97	33,183	+6.20
Laredo	13,194	-16.47	31,119	-16.06
Orange	52,617	+1.74	132,144	-2.41
Texarkana	59,376	+18.51	150,888	+25.02
Valley	47,208	+10.72	145,476	-.67
Waskom	60,192	+19.29	134,649	+17.25
Wichita Falls	20,094	+10.89	47,061	+9.58
Capitol Complex	14,862	-12.26	33,840	-7.44
1-800 Phone Center	25,344	+162.12	61,950	+35.96
CENTER TOTALS	407,832	+13.53	1,013,862	+9.94

Data as of March 31, 1995

*Compared to last year

** The Denison TIC was temporarily closed in 1990 due to highway construction; resumed operation September 13, 1994.

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	160,312	233,608
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	65	
Addresses offered	216,350	
Addresses transmitted	100,653	
Addresses transmitted		146,759
OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE		
Texas Highways print run		
This month		374,774
This month last year		421,675
This year-to-date		1,100,444
Last year-to-date		1,269,771

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