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T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

T x D O T

Texas Highways Magazine staffers came home toting seven prestigious awards, presented at the **International Regional Magazine Association's** annual conference, held last month in Annapolis, Maryland. The mag took the Gold Award in the Illustrated Feature category for "The TeX Files," a fun-filled article on flying saucers, mysterious lights and the Mutual UFO Network in Seguin. The September '97 edition, spotlighting 65 pages of Pure Nostalgia, earned the Silver Award for Special Issue. Editorial and photo essays, nature and environmental features, and the *Texas Highways* wall calendar were honored with Silver and Bronze Awards and Awards of Merit. Our talented team of editors, photographers, artists and designers are hard at work for a repeat performance next year.

COMING UP

When **RiverBarge Excursions** sets sail this winter, the New Orleans-based cruise line will make a stop at **Port Isabel** as part of its South of the Border tour. Officials say they will feature the area with onboard and off-board activities similar to a motor coach tour. In the meantime, the Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District will spend \$4.3 million to renovate an existing dock and build two docks specifically for tourist vessels. Ferryboats eventually will use the dock to continue service to Central America and other destinations. Port Isabel officials also expect Valley Gaming Inc. to announce plans for offshore gambling operations.

In 1881, **Albert Friedrich** opened the **Buckhorn Saloon and Museum** on Houston Street in **San Antonio**. By 1956, the collection of mounted wildlife was world renowned and was bought by Lone Star Brewery and moved to the brewery's grounds at 600 Lone Star Boulevard. Now **Mary Rogers**, Albert Friedrich's great-granddaughter, has bought the museum and will return the collection to Houston Street in September, when it will become the anchor attraction of a revitalization project. The Buckhorn Saloon, Hall of Horns, Hall of Fins, Hall of Feathers and Hall of Texas History will remain intact. The arcade will be expanded to include an Old-West shooting gallery. Nationally known authors of Old-West books will make special appearances. And trick ropers, card cheats and cowboy poets will offer daily entertainment. Call 210/270-9467 for more info.

For six years the Austin & Texas Central (A&TC) Railroad's **Hill Country Flyer** has carried

passengers through 33 miles of scenic countryside from Cedar Park to Burnet. Along the way, folks can catch a glimpse of the charming Hill Country town of **Bertram**, where A&TC volunteers are renovating an authentic **Southern Pacific station**. Originally built at Orange Grove, the station was relocated trackside at the same site where the original Bertram station stood. When complete, the historic depot will serve as a visitor center operated by the Bertram Chamber of Commerce. For more information or reservations, call the Austin Steam Train Association at 512/477-8468.

Progress continues on the **Ballpark at Union Station** in downtown **Houston**. The new 42,000-seat baseball stadium, with retractable roof, will become home to the Houston Astros when it opens in 2000. For updates, call the Greater Houston C&VB at 1-800-365-7575.

Since winning a bond vote in January, the **Arena Group**, a

partnership between the **Dallas Mavericks and Stars**, has been reviewing proposals from architects from around the world for a new arena. The final selection will be announced sometime next month. The arena will seat between 19,000 and 21,000 fans, and include shops, restaurants and public plazas. An abandoned industrial area between Stemmons Freeway and Continental Avenue will become the site of the sports facility.

Travel and tour planners from around the globe will converge in **Dallas** for **Pow Wow 2000**, the largest international travel show in the United States. More than 2,300 international tour operators and 300 international media members will be introduced to the tourist opportunities in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, as well as attractions throughout the state. For more information, contact the C&VB at 214/746-6677.

Plans for the \$20-million **Nasher Sculpture Garden** in **Dallas** made progress with a prelimi-



TOTALLY AUSSIE Koalas will make their Texas debut at the Fort Worth Zoo with the opening of **Koala Outback** on July 3. With the exhibit's premiere, the Fort Worth Zoo will become one of ten zoos in the U.S. and the only zoo in Texas to display koalas. The adorable animals will share their home with red kangaroos and yellow-footed rock wallabies. Visitors can view the Australian marsupials from a partially covered boardwalk that overlooks indoor and outdoor areas.

Open daily at 1989 Colonial Parkway. For more info, call 817/871-7050. Or visit the zoo's Web site at www.fortworthzoo.com.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

nary agreement toward acquisition of land. *The Dallas Morning News* reports once the transfer is made, the Nasher Foundation will finalize a long-term lease with the Dallas Museum of Art, which owns the remaining property needed for the 2.4-acre garden. The garden will feature rotating exhibits from the modern sculpture collection of North Park developer **Raymond D. Nasher**. Exhibits will be drawn from a pool of 66 sculptures worth \$50 million. Plans include construction of a small building for indoor sculptures and facilities for lectures and other educational activities. The Nasher Foundation will provide \$700,000 a year for operations and conservation. Opening is scheduled for 2000.

PLACES

A new **Beluga Interaction Program at SeaWorld of Texas in San Antonio** offers face-to-face encounters with beluga whales. The two-hour program invites guests to enter the underwater world of these gentle and graceful creatures for a rare, hands-on experience. Participants meet early in the morning for an educational presentation before slipping into wet suits and wading waist-deep into 62-degree water. Interactions

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

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Ann Kelton, Editor

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Layout: Jane Yansky Design

AMARILLO TIC A pack of leather-clad cyclists roared up to the center on their Harleys, with the word "Desperados" clearly visible on their black leather vests. When the bikers dismounted, counselors asked, "How're y'all?" "Quoi?" was their reply. Hmmm. Didn't sound like these folks were from around here. The 20 or so men and women, ages 20 to 50, had shipped their

include touching and feeding the belugas, and communicating with the animals through hand signals. The \$115 cost (\$95 for season pass members) includes same-day admission to SeaWorld. Guests must be age 10 or older and at least 52 inches tall. To register, call 210/523-3900.

We've known all along that Texas has it all. So it came as no surprise when we read for the first time about the **Toilet Seat Art Museum in San Antonio**. Proprietor **Barney Smith** has decorated and painted more than 400 lids, which he proudly displays in his garage. About a third of the paintings are based on his journeys to various corners of the world. The museum is open when the artist is home, so you'll need to call ahead for directions and hours. Smith does this for fun, so he's happy for you to view his artwork for free. To find out more, call 210/824-7791.

The **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** was honored last month for its contributions to Austin's \$1.4 billion tourism industry. The **Austin C&VB** presented the second annual **Austin Tourism Award** at special ceremonies during National Tourism Week. With annual visitation at more than 100,000, the Center is now

Harleys from France and were traveling from Miami to L.A. A professional videographer was along for the ride to document the U. S. tour.

TEXARKANA TIC A large colony of honeybees settled in a tree overlooking the picnic area on the center grounds. Counselor Dawn Bartholomew said the tourists were "terrorized" each

time the gentle creatures swept down to check out the intruders with the strange accents and funny looking license plates. Counselors were at wit's end. Delbert Rachael at TxDOT's Atlanta District was delighted. When he's not maintaining highways, he's working beehives of his own. He climbed the tree, rescued the bees and gave them a new home.

considered an anchor attraction in the Austin area.

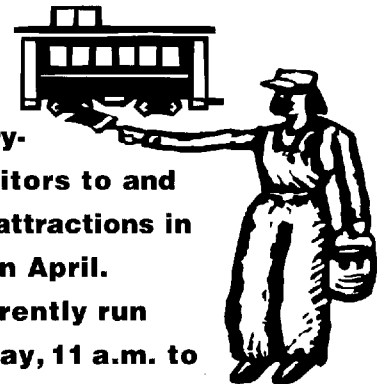
The **Arlington C&VB**, in cooperation with **Dan Dipert Vacations**, has created a promotional package that allows visitors the ease of one-stop shopping when planning their vacation. The **Family Getaway Packages** offer customers a selection of summer-fun options on accommodations, attractions, restaurants, shopping and tickets to special events. Visitors can choose from an assortment of Metroplex attractions, ranging from Six Flags Over Texas and Texas Rangers Baseball to the

Fort Worth Zoo and the Sixth Floor Museum. Call 1-800-433-5335.

In a special summertime event for children of all ages, **The Dallas Arboretum** presents **Storybook Playhouses**, delightful creations straight from the pages of time-tested books and fairy tales. Kids can explore the magic of "The Old Woman in the Shoe," "The Three Little Pigs," "Swiss Family Robinson," "Hansel and Gretel," "Jack and the Bean Stalk," "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table," "Sleeping Beauty" and "The Legend of Bluebonnet." Each weekend, professional

CLANG, CLANG, CLANG Bright red streetcars began carry-

ing residents and visitors to and from businesses and attractions in downtown Houston in April. The free trolleys currently run Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Service will soon expand to afternoons and evenings, offering free transportation in the city's theater district. For more info, call the Greater Houston C&VB at 1-800-365-7575.



storytellers bring to life these stories and other well-loved classics. On the grounds of the Arboretum through September 7. Open daily at 8525 Garland Road. Call 214/327-4901 for details.

F A C E S

Bobby Lee, co-owner of the Big Texan Steak Ranch in Amarillo, was named chairman of the **Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council**. As such, he will also serve on the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee. Lee has long been a leader in the Texas travel and tourism industry, serving on various council committees, and taking part in the work of the Panhandle Hotel and Motel Association and the Panhandle Tourism and Marketing Council. He also is a past member of the state Tourism Advisory Council for the Texas Department of Economic Development. Bobby Lee now joins a winning team of tourism professionals who work hard to bring their share of Texas travelers into the region. For information, call 806/374-1497.

W I L D L I F E

At least five pairs of **Aplomado falcons**, nearly extinct since the end of World War II, are now nesting at the 46,000-acre **Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge** near **Rio Hondo**. Until 1993, no Aplomado falcon had been hatched in the wild in the U.S. for more than 40 years. The *San Antonio Express-News* reports the return of the gray raptor to a native habitat has been a delicate effort among farmers, ranchers, big business and conservationists, who earlier were at odds over pesticides, grazing and development. Pesticides and gradual loss of habitat nearly drove the

birds to extinction. Then in 1986 the Peregrine Fund began a breeding program using captives from Mexico. In an effort to reestablish the falcons in their natural environment, more than 100 of these birds were released at the South Texas refuge. With continued efforts, Aplomado falcons could join more than 400 bird species as permanent Valley dwellers.

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Which Texas heroine was a key advocate in transforming child welfare in the U.S.?

In the early 1900s, while Sam Gladney was building his business, his wife Edna began a personal crusade to clean up the Grayson County poor farm. Distressed by the treatment of children, she arranged to have them transferred to the Texas Children's Home and Aid Society in Fort Worth. By 1910 Edna Gladney had joined the society's board of directors and dedicated herself to caring for homeless and underprivileged children. When the Gladneys moved to Fort Worth in 1924, Edna devoted her time to the Texas Children's Home, and by 1927 was named superintendent. She expanded the society's activities to focus on the care of unmarried mothers and an adoption service for their babies. She successfully lobbied the Texas legislature to have the word "illegitimate" kept off birth certificates and urged passage of legislation to give adopted children the same inheritance rights as others. By the early 50s, the Texas Children's Home had been transformed from an orphan's home and adoption agency into a facility bringing together all parties in the adoption process. The Gladney Center, as it is now called, has become the oldest, largest and most comprehensive maternity and adoption agency in the U.S.

TEXAS TRIVIA



THINGS ARE LOOKING UP
Discover the mysteries of the night sky on June 26, when Galveston's Moody Gardens hosts a Star Party behind the Discovery Pyramid from 7 to 10 p.m. Visitors can gaze into the heavens with experts from the Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society, learn how to manipulate a high-tech telescope and identify stars and other celestial wonders. For a magical evening that's out of this world, call 1-800-582-4673.

T P & W D

The **Lone Star Legacy Campaign**, believed to be the first of its kind in the nation, will set up an endowment fund for state parks and other properties operated by the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department**. The program will benefit all 123 state parks, natural areas and historical sites, 50 wildlife management areas and eight fish hatcheries. The campaign is a partnership between TP&WD and the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas, Inc., a private, nonprofit foundation. Donations may be made to a particular state park or to the general fund. All gifts are tax deductible. For more information, call 512/389-4415.

More than one million reservations have been booked through the State Parks Central Reservation Center (CRC) since its inception four years ago. Now the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** is working on a plan to give campers the option of reserving their space over the **Internet**. Visitors will pay a convenience charge of \$6 to \$10. But instead of calling the CRC

between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, park customers can access the reservation system 24 hours a day. Texas will become the second state, after New York, to offer Internet reservation service. For more information, call 1-800-792-1112. Or key in www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

M U S E U M S

A significant survey of 18th-Century French genre paintings opened May 31 at **The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France** captures the cultural and social issues from the age of the Enlightenment with works by the finest French painters of the time. Intimate in scale, the 45 scenes of everyday life are portrayed by such greats as Jean-Antoine Watteau, Jean-François de Troy, François Boucher, Jean-Siméon Chardin, Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Jean-Baptiste Greuze. The exhibition is accompanied by more than 25 engravings by the leading French printmakers of the period. On view through August 23 at 1001 Bissonnet. For information, call 713/639-7300.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	14,601	-7.77	50,091	-24.50
Anthony	11,049	-14.77	65,844	-3.99
Denison	22,206	-5.71	90,531	-1.88
Gainesville	31,212	+2.97	142,146	+4.74
Langtry	9,456	+30.14	52,428	+17.42
Laredo	9,045	-1.21	66,750	+101.12
Orange	51,684	+12.56	223,965	+13.19
Texarkana	36,963	-2.96	161,421	-7.75
Valley	19,758	-1.86	186,543	-12.65
Waskom	56,337	-26.09	224,895	-19.53
Wichita Falls	21,426	+14.31	80,583	-2.28
Capitol Complex	9,564	-25.44	47,622	-6.76
1-800 Phone Center	0	-100.00	2,589	-94.13
CENTER TOTALS	293,301	-7.72	1,395,408	-5.09

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	98,228	485,424

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Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily)
Internet address: <http://traveltex.com>
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Data as of May 31, 1998
*Compared to last year

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