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T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

LAST CHANCE!

Look for the final notice on the back page of this newsletter. You have one more chance to renew your free subscription to *Texas Travel Log*.

COMING UP

Officials from the **Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport** approved establishment of a new winery and wine-tasting shop, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. The **La Bodega Winery**, which will operate out of a Terminal 2E newsstand, will sell wine from various Texas wine-makers, and eventually will have its own fermentation vats. The winery still needs approval from federal and state officials, including the go-ahead for a 40-square-foot bonded area for the wine-making equipment. Proprietor **Gina Puente** projects sales of \$800,000 during the first year.

Space Center Houston and **LEGO Systems, Inc.** unveiled an exciting national model design and building contest for children. The contest, which will be launched from Space Center Houston on July 20, is designed to challenge and stimulate young minds, increase children's interest in science, and encourage today's youth to become the explorers, scientists, and astronauts of tomorrow. The program invites kids, ages 5 through 12, to develop, design, and construct their vision of space stations, shuttles, satellites, or space-themed inventions out of LEGO bricks. The Grand Prize includes a trip for four to a shuttle launch at Kennedy

Space Center in Florida. After the launch, the group will be whisked back to Space Center Houston, where they will participate in a live uplink from Mission Status Center to the shuttle crew in orbit. Every child who enters the competition will receive a Certificate of Achievement signed by astronauts, plus a LEGO Value Coupon. Entry forms will be available in toy stores across the country, and must be received by December 31, 1995. For details, call 713/244-2140.

Johnnie High's Country Music Revue moves to the newly restored **Arlington Music Hall**, April 1. Johnnie High, who's performed with his troupe in Tarrant County since 1974, said he's had his eye on the old Arlington movie theater for years. When the 1,200-seat facility became available, High said he jumped at the chance to bring his show to Arlington. "It's a beautiful theater," said High. "Anyone who enjoys live music, stand-up comedy, and singing will enjoy an evening with us." He added that the Music Hall is similar to theaters seen in Branson, Missouri. In

a room adjacent to the theater, High plans to showcase memorabilia from Gary Morris, Linda Davis, John Anderson, and other country music greats who got their start with the revue. Friday evening shows will spotlight gospel groups. Saturday afternoons and evenings will feature two variety shows, highlighting singers, comedians, and musicians performing about 20 separate numbers. Tickets are \$9 for balcony seats, and \$10 for floor seats; group rates available. For more info, call 1-800-540-5127.

For a down-home Texas experience head for **Quiet Hill Ranch**, in the beautiful Hill Country west of **Fredericksburg** between Harper and Doss. The new family-run facility begins welcoming guests on April 15. Owners **Cindy and Jim Whatley** hope to provide a comfortable family setting, where visitors can relax on the front porch of a rustic log cabin (with modern conveniences!), observe native wildlife from family-sized blinds, or take a hike into the isolated woods. The more energetic can choose from biking trails, a swimming pool, sand-pit volleyball, basketball,

horseshoes, archery, washer pitching, and old-fashioned games. For a taste of the country life, kids are invited to gather eggs, milk the goats, feed the animals, and scratch the pigs. Entertainment will include music, roping demonstrations, and campfire sing-alongs. To top it all off, visitors will be treated to delicious Southwestern cuisine, cooked from scratch. Rates are \$70 a day per adult and \$45 a day for each child. Only three families are allowed at a time, so call 210/669-2253 to book your space.

PLACES

The **Irving C&VB** was handed the **Gold Service Award** by *Meetings and Conventions Magazine* for the second year in a row. **Lori Cloffi**, the magazine's editor in chief, said, "What makes this award so prestigious is the fact it is selected solely by the readers of our magazine. That means the Irving C&VB is certainly serving the needs of its clients." The award program is the meeting industry's highest recognition of excellence.



MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN The first Mad Dogs pub outside of Hong Kong opened last month in San Antonio along the River Walk at the base of the Hyatt Regency San Antonio hotel. Hyatt owner B.K. Johnson and Laura McAllister, founder of Mad Dogs International, joined forces to open the 5,500-square-foot British-style pub. The pub opened near a cluster of other entertainment spots and restaurants at the River Walk's South Bank east of the Navarro Street Bridge.

F A C E S

Ronald R. Switzer, superintendent at the **Big Thicket National Preserve**, transferred last month to Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky. As Travel and Tourism Coordinator for National Parks - Texas and Chairman of the Federal Agency Tourism Council, Ron worked closely with TxDOT's Travel and Information Division administration and staffers. He became an important force in the Texas tourist industry, contributing his time and expertise at Texas Travel Counselors Conferences and Travel Summits. As part of his new duties, Ron will become state director for the national parks in Kentucky, which include responsibilities for tourism. We salute him and wish him well.

T O U R I S M U P

As **Texas tourism** continues to thrive as the state's third largest industry, we consistently receive press releases and special reports that remind us of the vitality of a business that's not just a passing trend. From **The Dallas Arboretum**: "The Dallas Arboretum ended 1994 with the most successful year

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Ann Kelton, Editor
 Contributing Editors: Marty Lange, Jane McNally, Mike Talley
 Layout: Jane Yansky Design

T R A V E L T A L E S O V E R H E A R D

AMARILLO TIC Kudos to counselor Lucia Cordova, who received an associate degree in business from Amarillo College this past December. She's already working towards her bachelor's in accounting at West Texas State A&M University in nearby Canyon.

CAPITOL COMPLEX TIC Mary Ulrich exchanged marriage vows with Bob Jackson on February 8. Since both the bride and groom work for TxDOT,

the church overflowed with lots of familiar faces. Thanks Mary and Bob for a most memorable and beautiful day.

1-800 PHONE TIC Welcome Juan Barrientos, who came on board January 23 as manager of the phone center and Capitol Complex TIC. Juan previously worked in the Governor's Office, where he headed up telephone communications as manager of the Support Services Division. The Eagle Pass native said

his great passion is movies and film. Juan said he loves working in customer service, and can't wait to meet everyone at TTCC.

ORANGE TIC Counselor Sonda Landry bid her farewell February 28 to join her family's business. "I've had some great times and will truly miss everyone," said Sonda. "But the benefits of being the boss's wife were just too good to pass up." All the best, Sonda. Keep in touch.

in its ten year history, with more than 288,000 people visiting the 66-acre botanical garden and arboretum." From the **Arlington C&VB**: "Tourism spending is up by 13 percent (from 1991 to 1994), making tourism in Arlington a \$1-billion-a-year industry." From the **Fredericksburg C&VB**: "Probably the best indicator of the growth of tourism are the Motel Occupancy Tax receipts. In 1988, total tax receipts were \$125,000. In 1995, the C&VB projects the occupancy tax will exceed \$325,000." And as indicated in the January issue of *Texas Travel Log*, TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers served 3,759,972 visitors in 1994, up 9.08 percent from 1993. Tourism and travel expenditures in Texas have grown to \$22.85 billion annually, with travelers contributing \$871.2 million in state taxes and \$642.5 million in local taxes. The Texas travel industry provides more than 422,000 jobs! So, now you know.

O U T W E S T

The Old West lives on in **Big Bend Country**, where 200 Hollywood crew members are now shooting "**Streets of**

Laredo," the miniseries sequel to Larry McMurtry's "Lonesome Dove." *The Dallas Morning News* reports that the postcard vistas of Lajitas, Alpine, and Marfa form the backdrop for the area's largest production, starring, among others, James Garner and Texas' own Sissy Spacek. Coproducer Frank Dobbs, who's been making pictures in the Big Bend for more than 20 years, asks, "How many locations are there where you can shoot 360 degrees? Santa Fe is used up. Sedona is used up. The word is out. This is the next place." Dobbs

acknowledges that some old-timers wonder about the recent invasion. But for the most part, he said, residents express nothing but delight to be doing peak-season business during the off-season. Shooting wraps up at the old "Lonesome Dove" sets in Del Rio the middle of this month. The series is scheduled to air on CBS this fall.

S T A T E P A R K S

Luis Armendariz, park superintendent at **Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area**, is laying

SOLE SALVATION
Neiman Marcus
designer buses
began circulating



through downtown Dallas last month, connecting eight hotels to 14 of the central city's top entertainment and shopping areas. The new service, called Dallasites, offers an easy way for tourists and conventioners to take advantage of downtown attractions. Dallasites operates Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

the groundwork for a six-year plan to increase public access to the 269,000-acre site. The state natural area, just west of Big Bend National Park, was purchased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1988, but the public had only limited access until last May. Now Armendariz and a staff of 14 are busy improving roads, picking locations for primitive campsites and mountain bike trails, and organizing weekly bus tours and workshops on desert survival and nature photography. They're even planning a cattle drive, "City Slickers" style, for people who want to spend a vacation on horseback, riding fence. The ranch now offers 14 primitive campsites, and four marked hiking trails through the Chihuahuan Desert. Visitors seeking a bit more comfort can rent sleeping space in the Saucedo Big House, the original ranch home, or the bunkhouse. For more info, call Big Bend Ranch headquarters at 915/229-3416.

HISTORY

Spectacular museum replicas of 10 flags from the glory days of the Republic of Texas are available at the **Gallery of the Republic in Austin**. The historical banners, which were thoroughly researched for authenticity, are handmade from fine silks and cottons by a company in France that specializes in recreating old master paintings onto tapestries. Once in Austin, burns, tears, stains, and frayed edges are added to reflect the struggle for independence in 1836 and the birth of a sovereign nation. The flags are framed under glass in gold-leaf molding and measure 46 by 31 inches. The historical significance of each is detailed on a descriptive plaque. In the Four Seasons Hotel at First and San Jacinto Streets. Call 1-800-531-5008 for all the details.

MUSEUMS

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, presents *The Art of John Biggers: View From the Upper Room*, April 2 through September 3. The exhibition is the first to focus exclusively on an African-American artist whose development is tied to the southern United States and who has strong aesthetic links with Africa. Guest curator **Alvia J. Wardlaw** said, "While many African-American artists of his generation traveled to Europe for inspiration, John Biggers went to Africa to immerse himself in his cultural heritage. In the ensuing years, the work of Dr. Biggers has emerged as a fundamental chapter in the history of African-American art." The show will trace the development of Biggers' work over five decades and will feature 127 drawings, prints, sculptures, and paintings, including four large-scale murals. Open Tuesday through Sunday at 1001 Bissonnet. Call 713/639-7300 for details.



What Texas county courthouse was torn down to settle a bet about the nesting site of a goose?

In 1858, the Grayson County Courthouse in Sherman was torn down to settle a bet as to whether or not a gray goose was nesting under the building. The sheriff was forced to dig the door out from under the debris to post legal notices.



TAKE ROOT The Dr. Eugene Clark Library in Lockhart, Texas' oldest continually operating library, has added the Automated Archives, Inc. CD ROM Genealogy System. This incredible system was compiled in part from the Family History Department of Salt Lake City; Lineages, a professional research organization; and many county courthouse records. For more information, call 512/398-3223.

The Creative Mind of Pattillo Higgins opened March 1 at the **Texas Energy Museum in Beaumont**. The exhibition includes personal artifacts, original drawings, hand-drawn maps, and printed materials from the family collections of Pattillo Higgins, the man who pinpointed the famous Spindletop Oil Field. Although best known as an amateur geologist, he was also a creative cartographer, city designer, horticulturist, illustrator, brick maker, inventor, publisher, and philosopher. While the exhibit includes logbooks and personal notes from Higgins' oil explorations, the bulk of the display will highlight the other side of his creative character. On view through December 31 at 600 Main Street. For more information, call 409/833-5100.

EVENTS

The first wagons of German immigrants, led by Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, arrived at an encampment on a bluff overlooking the Comal River near present-day **New Braunfels** on March 21, 1845. Now, 150 years later, some 80 guests and performers from Braunfels, Germany, will

make their way to New Braunfels to help celebrate the city's **Sesquicentennial**, April 14-23. Visitors can experience the city's rich German heritage at chorale concerts, folk dance performances, and dances featuring lively oompah bands and German song. Mariachi music and Tejano bands will accentuate the area's Hispanic influence, while an exhibit at the Sophienburg Memorial Museum will highlight Comal County's black heritage. For a complete schedule, call the C&VB at 1-800-572-2626.

Load up your mountain bikes for a ride on the wild side at **Fossil Rim Wildlife Center** near **Glen Rose**. Beginning this month, **Ride the Rim Spring Tours** will take cyclists through the back-backcountry of the 3,000-acre facility, down trails lined with blooming red-buds, and up hills painted white with Mexican plums. A ride through the Intensive Management Area promises rare glimpses of cheetahs, black rhinos, and manned wolves. Tours are scheduled twice daily on March 11-12, 25-26, April 8-9, May 6-7 and 20-21. The \$30 cost includes the tour, a T-shirt, and trailside snacks. Call 817/897-2960 to save your space.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	9,180	-14.67	18,984	-1.74
Anthony	16,314	-15.38	31,833	-8.86
Denison	17,373	**	35,535	**
Gainesville	28,338	-10.17	57,609	-13.62
Langtry	9,468	-3.19	17,829	+3.16
Laredo	9,108	-18.37	17,925	-15.76
Orange	37,182	-18.47	79,527	-4.98
Texarkana	44,232	+27.64	91,512	+29.65
Valley	50,982	-6.54	98,268	-5.35
Waskom	37,656	+7.87	74,457	+15.66
Wichita Falls	13,968	+6.65	26,967	+8.63
Capitol Complex	9,555	-11.87	18,978	-3.29
1-800 Phone Center	15,144	-12.27	36,606	+1.98
CENTER TOTALS	298,500	+1.35	606,030	+7.66

Data as of February 28, 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
	38,526	73,296
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	47	
Addresses offered	21,171	
Addresses transmitted	22,853	
Addresses transmitted		46,106
OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE		
Texas Highways print run		
This month		361,127
This month last year		422,431
This year-to-date		725,670
Last year-to-date		848,096

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-9 p.m. daily)

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
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FINAL NOTICE!

Article V, Section 66C, H.B. 558, 66th Legislature, 1979, requires that state newsletters to notify recipients in three consecutive issues that they must formally request the publication in order to continue receiving it. If you desire to continue receiving *Texas Travel Log*, please clip this portion (to include the mailing label) and return to:

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