

T1325.6

T694  
99/03

MARCH 1999

Go to Texas

APR 87

# T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

## FINAL NOTICE

Remember to return the form on the back page of this issue to continue your free subscription to *Texas Travel Log*. Only one response is necessary. So if we've already heard from you, forget we mentioned it.

## T x D O T

Her friends call her Betty Sue. She calls them "Honey." Twenty-six years ago, **Betty Reynolds** was hired as a travel counselor at the Denison Travel Information Center. She has since become the epitome of travel counseling, using her knowledge and quick wit to "bring up" another generation of employees. Last month when she announced her retirement, panic echoed through the Denison center. "Betty understands what needs to be done to keep the center running smoothly," said Joe Paz. "She actually trained me to become her manager. And she offers the same knowledge and sense of humor to the visitors as she does to her fellow workers." Friend and fellow counselor Devon Armstrong said, "Betty is our brain and our mother hen." Betty Sue Reynolds' last day as a travel counselor is March 31. But we'll always call her "friend." Cards can be addressed to Texas Travel Information Center, P. O. Box 1809, Denison, Texas 75021-1809. Or call her at 903/463-2860.

Following unexpected delays, sealed bids for the **Texas Accommodations Guide** were opened by TxDOT officials, who awarded a two-year contract to **Recognition Communi-**

**cations Inc. (RCI)** of Dallas. The contract includes an option to renew through 2002, affording RCI a fresh opportunity to maintain continuity within the publication and with contacts in the hospitality industry. The guide will be upgraded from newsprint to a Number 4 web coated gloss to allow for the addition of color throughout the text pages. Separate listings for hotels/motels, bed and breakfast inns and guest ranches will make it easy for Texas travelers to customize their business trips and vacations. The fee will remain at the 1998 level of \$100 per listing for the term of the contract. An overall lower cost to TxDOT to purchase the guides came as a welcomed benefit of the agreement. *The Texas Accommodations Guide*, the *Texas State Travel Guide* and the *Texas Official Travel Map* are delivered as a standard packet to callers requesting Texas travel information, and distributed through TxDOT's 12 Travel Information Centers. For more information, call Travel Division publisher Kathy Murphy at 512/486-5881. For details on accommodation listings and

advertising, call Eric Kincaid of RCI at 1-800-969-9896.

## MEXICO TRAVEL

In the December 1998 issue of *Texas Travel Log*, we warned that many U.S. citizens had been arrested and jailed by Mexican authorities for inadvertently bringing a gun or ammunition across the border. **Leo Garza**, manager of TxDOT's Travel Information Center in Laredo, reports a **new law**, effective March 23, will allow Mexican judges to issue a \$65 fine for possessing a weapon instead of the mandatory 2-to-8 year jail sentence. The law only applies to low-caliber weapons. Anyone carrying a military weapon will be arrested and face a stiffer 3-to-10 year sentence. TxDOT will erect 55 signs in the border region alerting the public of Mexico's gun laws.

## COMING UP

A new 107,000-square-foot building for the **Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth**

will triple the museum's exhibition space and create one of the city's most notable public places. The building was designed by 92-year-old New York architect **Philip Johnson**, who designed the original 1961 museum. The original entrance will remain intact. The area to the rear of the building will be replaced with a larger multilevel structure made of rich brown granite. The Amon Carter has grown into a major repository of American art and photography. A permanent collection of 300,000 pieces made expansion imperative. Though the museum will close during construction, its presence will remain in the community through loans to other institutions and possibly a temporary exhibition space. A timetable for construction has not been set. For more information, call 817/738-1933.

An **Austin** landmark will once again join the entertainment scene. The *Austin American-Statesman* reports the restored neon sign in front of the **State Theater** shines on Congress Avenue with promises for a bright future. The 1935 art deco movie theater will



**BEING RESOURCEFUL** An exciting new national museum is taking shape in Dallas. **The Women's Museum: An Institute for Women's Resources** will open in late 2000 in the former coliseum and administration building in Fair Park. A \$22-million renovation project will turn the 1910 structure into a 70,000-square-foot cultural center. The museum will chronicle the contributions of women throughout history, explore the similarities and differences in women's lives across time and inspire pride and hope for the future. For further updates, watch this space.

become a live-theater complex with the staging of "My Fair Lady" in April.

**P L A C E S**

**Amigo Man** has been welcoming **El Paso** visitors for 20 years. An iron sculpture of the city symbol reigns in front of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The smiling sun donning a Mexican sombrero, cowboy boots and sunglasses is found in the form of pins, stickers and other promotional items. But after so many years, the logo had run its course. It was time for change. At least that's what the city council thought when they voted to scrap the little fellow in favor of a gecko wearing shades and crawling toward a rising sun. The lizard was supposed to be part of a promotional effort to help boost the tourism industry. *The Dallas Morning News* reports it caught the scorn of residents instead. Now city leaders say they will bury the reptile and reincarnate the old logo. A cool, more hip Amigo Man will be seen this month in a new advertising campaign.

On July 25, Nolan Ryan will be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. In salute to



**TEXAS TRAVEL LOG**

is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel 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) 486-5874, FAX (512) 486-5879. Deadline for each newsletter is the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Jane McNally, John Russell, Mike Talley

Layout: Jane Sharpe/Sharpe Design

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

**CAPITOL COMPLEX TIC**

Counselor Mary Ulrich Jackson said they recently welcomed Oklahoma's First Lady, who was researching ideas for a gift shop in the capitol back home. Mary said she was a gracious woman who seemed impressed by the visitor center and gift shop in the historic General Land Office

building on the capitol grounds. 'The First Lady temporarily lost her demure and burst out laughing when counselor Joe Slocum handed her a bumper sticker reading "Don't Mess With Texas."

**TEXARKANA TIC** Manager Ann Dean reports progress on the center continues at a fast clip,

with contractors shooting for completion sometime next month. Phase two of the project will include razing the old building and temporary structures, the addition of a parking lot for RVs and large trucks, and construction of a flag plaza with a 50-foot Texas star framing the proverbial six flags.

this memorable event, the Texas Rangers' **Legends of the Game Baseball Museum and Learning Center** in Arlington unveiled **Nolan Ryan: Journey to Cooperstown**, on view through October 3. Photographs and artifacts follow the life and career of baseball's newest legend—from his childhood in Alvin, Texas, to the major leagues. Game-used balls, bats and jerseys, and a 1967 rookie card are a few of the items on display. Open Tuesday through Sunday at The Ballpark in Arlington; open daily beginning April 1. Call 817/273-5600 for details.

Billionaire investor **Tom Hicks** bought the **Mesquite Rodeo**, just as a multimillion-dollar hotel and convention center complex opened next door. *The Dallas Morning News* reports work is under way to enclose the 5,766-seat rodeo arena and install heating and air-conditioning to make the facility an attractive venue for year-round events. Hicks, who also owns the Dallas Stars hockey team, the Texas Rangers Baseball Club and numerous media outlets, said he plans to combine the investments into a large sports enterprise called the Southwest Sports Group.

**The Turn: America at the Millennium** has been canceled due to lack of funding. The event was scheduled to run November

26, 1999, through January 2, 2000, at Fair Park in Dallas.

We just learned about an exciting new way to see Texas. New Orleans-based **RiverBarge Excursion Lines Inc.**, that began operations last fall, has added **The Route of Jean Lafitte**, eight- and nine-day voyages along the Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Galveston and Galveston and Port

Isabel. Passengers enjoy the luxury of a deluxe hotel aboard the *R/B River Explorer*, a hotel and touring vessel built on two barges that can easily access both regular and remote landings. Stopovers invite guests to step dockside and experience firsthand the personalities, culture, history and sites of cities and villages along the way. Past itineraries have listed bargain shopping in Matamoros, the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus



**PACKAGE GOODS**

**The success of last year's Fort Worth Family Getaway, has prompted the C&VB to add even more options.**



**Family Getaway**

**offers a one-stop, à la carte approach to trip planning, with a choice of 11 hotels, attraction admissions, exhibit tickets, special events and dine-around certificates. The 1999 package will include a major art exhibition at the Kimbell Art Museum, productions at the new Bass Performance Hall, and the June debut of the Fort Worth Herd, a permanent herd of Texas Longhorns running daily in the historic Stockyards. Contact Dan Dipert Vacations at 1-800-433-5335.**

Christi, King Ranch tours, birding in Rockport, the tall ship *Elissa* in Galveston, Spindletop in Beaumont and the French Quarter and Riverwalk in New Orleans. Prices include accommodations, meals, entertainment, tips, taxes, port charges and scheduled shore excursions. To learn about other RiverBarge adventures or to book your space, call 1-888-GO-BARGE.

Texans have bragged for years that the **capitol in Austin** is bigger than the one in Washington, D.C. The *Austin American-Statesman* reports it's now official. After decades of debate, Texas General Land Office surveyors found Texas' capitol to be 302.64 feet tall from the oval walk at the south entrance to the tip of the star in the Goddess of Liberty's hand. The U.S. capitol measures only 288 feet. But be careful what you say in Baton Rouge or Springfield. Louisiana's 450-foot tower is the nation's tallest state capitol. At 405 feet, the capitol in Illinois is the tallest with a traditional dome.

In a press release received in mid-February, the **Brenham/Washington County C&VB** reported **bluebonnets** have been sighted in Brenham! The unusually warm winter weather in Central Texas has beckoned the coming of spring, bringing with it colorful wildflowers a month early. The bureau predicts peak viewing could happen this month, instead of the usual first weeks of April. But they warn, only Mother Nature knows what weather is in store. For updates, call 1-888-BRENNHAM.

**F A C E S**

**Bob Bennett**, retired president of Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington and past chair of the Texas Travel Industry Association, passed away on January 27. Bob is remembered as a valued leader

in the Texas tourism industry and, to many, a close personal friend. Cards and letters may be sent to 16421 N. Woodson Drive, Ramona, California 92065.

**M U S E U M S**

An important exhibit for ages seven through 10 is on view through May 30 at **The Science Place** in Fair Park in **Dallas**. **Face to Face: Dealing With Prejudice and Discrimination** offers insights, solutions and practical responses to end racism and prejudice, and to help defuse anger. Based on real-life experiences of children, the multimedia exhibit helps visitors identify prejudice and discrimination, and develop tools to respond constructively. Parents and their

**? TEXAS TRIVIA**

**What part did the Irish play in the fight for Texas independence?**

Irish immigrants to Texas, who left behind the dominance of England, once again faced oppression when Mexican General Santa Anna scrapped the Mexican federal constitution and declared himself dictator. So it's not surprising that 25 Irishmen signed the Goliad Declaration of Independence, four signed the Texas Declaration of Independence and 100 fought in the Battle of San Jacinto. Eleven Irishmen died at the Alamo and 14 were counted among Col. James W. Fannin's troops at the Goliad Massacre. As descendants of generations who had fought and died for their civic and religious liberties, the Irish were quick to recognize incursions upon their rights and to defend against them.

**TEXAS TRIVIA**



**EASTERN INFLUENCE** The Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art opened as a permanent museum in the Arts District in Dallas. The collection dates from 3,500 B.C. to the early 20th Century. Highlights include one of the largest private collections of 18th and 19th Century jade and a larger-than-life bronze Confucius sculpture. An interactive computer kiosk details each object and its origins.

The collection may be viewed on the Internet at [www.crowcollection.org](http://www.crowcollection.org). Open Tuesday through Sunday at 2010 Flora Street, across from the Dallas Museum of Art. For information, call 214/979-6430.

kids can explore such issues as stereotyping, name-calling, exclusion and self-identity. Call 214/428-5555 for more info.

address the social history of the Republic. For details, call 409/878-2214.

**E V E N T S**

**AeroFest '99** will kick off grand opening festivities April 17-18 for the new **Austin-Bergstrom International Airport**, scheduled to open May 2. Acrobatic aeronautics, vintage war birds and military planes will mark the return of military jets to the former Bergstrom Air Force Base, in celebration of the base's aviation history. Confirmed acts include the Army's Golden Knights parachute team, aerobatic pilot Gene Soucy, wing-walker Teresa Stokes and hang-gliding stunts by Dan Buchanan. Hot air balloons, a radio-controlled aircraft demonstration, concessions and aircraft displays will round out the free event. The \$400,000 show is expected to attract 50,000 to 100,000 people. For details, call 512/236-9211.

A dynamic new interpretive exhibit at the **Star of the Republic Museum** will become part of a \$6-million development project at **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park**. Designs are on the drawing board to revamp museum holdings into a more comprehensive presentation of the Republic of Texas. Exhibits will encompass overall political, military and social history, and cite the Republic's importance in the westward expansion of the United States and Texas' significance in world history. A Discovery Center with hands-on, multisensory activities opens this month as the exhibit's first phase. In the spring of 2000, first floor exhibits will offer insights on early inhabitants, cultural groups, exploration and military history. Second floor exhibits, scheduled to open in 2001, will

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	8,475	+26.97	16,167	+19.36
Anthony	10,104	-33.07	20,238	-30.83
Denison	15,789	+6.52	31,875	+6.40
Gainesville	26,385	+4.83	50,505	-16
Langtry	8,211	-16.76	15,216	-13.80
Laredo	7,569	-45.68	16,212	-43.13
Orange	40,632	-35	80,634	+03
Texarkana	24,657	-8.56	49,311	-12.88
Valley	63,678	+30.01	118,062	+18.58
Waskom	26,943	-31.45	50,964	-32.90
Wichita Falls	15,261	+26.54	28,080	+19.94
Capitol Complex	9,081	+11.62	16,740	+15.15
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	<b>256,785</b>	<b>-1.91</b>	<b>494,004</b>	<b>-5.03</b>

	This Mo.	Y-T-D
<b>Mail Services</b>	61,935	111,366
<b>Literature Distributed at Trade Shows</b>	9,000	12,600
<b>Automated Attendant Road Condition Calls</b>	5,529	125,781

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily, Central Time)

Internet address: <http://traveltex.com>  
<http://www.texashighways.com>  
<http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org>

Data as of February 28, 1999  
 \*Compared to last year

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**FINAL NOTICE!**

Texas law requires state newsletters to notify recipients in three consecutive issues that to continue receiving the publication, they must request it each year. To maintain your free subscription to *Texas Travel Log*, please clip this portion (to include the mailing label) and return to:

*Texas Travel Log* Circulation  
 P. O. Box 149249, Austin, Texas 78714-9249  
 (Only one reply per year is necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Date)

TRAVEL DIVISION  
 P.O. BOX 149249 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78714-9249

