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SEPTEMBER 1994
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Government Publications
Texas State Library

T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

LISTEN UP

An audio version of TxDOT's **Texas State Travel Guide** was recorded for the visually impaired, thanks to the talents of nearly 30 volunteers and staff members at the Texas State Library in Austin. Dedicated volunteers worked more than 180 hours to record nearly 25.5 hours of audio on five cassettes. **Sara Stiffler**, co-manager of the library's Talking Book Program, said, "We hope that Texans with visual impairments are now able to experience more of their home state through listening to the travel guide and visiting those places they find interesting." Travel Publications business manager **Matt Samaripa**, who coordinated the project, said copies of the tapes are available free at all Texas Travel Information Centers. Matt added that, eventually, all of TxDOT's travel literature will be available on audio tape. For information on other free services for folks with visual, physical, or learning disabilities, call the Texas State Library at 1-800-252-9605.

COMING UP

Ground breaking ceremonies marked the beginning of construction of a municipally owned **family aquatic park** in **North Richland Hills**. The \$5.7-million attraction was made possible by voter approval of a special use half-cent sales tax. Fun-seekers will choose from six water slides, and plunge into an 800-foot-long "endless river," a large wave pool, and leisure and lap pools. For land lubbers, plans include an outdoor pavilion, a gift shop,

concessions, sand volleyball, a dry playground, and a video arcade. Officials predict first-year attendance at about 164,000. Admission will range from \$3 to \$10. The water park is slated to open this spring.

A new **Holocaust Museum** will open in **Houston's Museum District** in late spring of 1995. Though fund raising efforts and final plans are still under way, officials have secured the expertise of Ralph Appelbaum, the critically acclaimed designer of the permanent exhibition space at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Details on the exhibits have not been finalized, but officials said the project will emphasize the life-style and richness that existed in Europe for the Jewish community and how it was destroyed. The new museum will become the country's third or fourth largest institution of its kind.

The **Texas Heritage Archives and Library** in

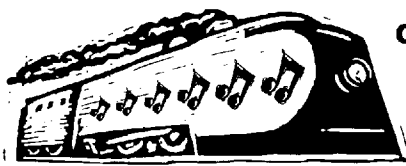
Jefferson is well on its way to becoming one of the premier historical museums in the state. Executive director **Charles Chitwood** said a \$4-million collection of rare books, historic maps, and early banking history will be housed in the 1865 Haywood House hotel, in Jefferson's downtown historic district. The doors will open to the public on a regular basis as soon as enough funds are raised for installation, which, Chitwood said, he hopes will be within a year. In the meantime, the museum will bring in a series of traveling exhibits to the historic river port town.

Crossroads of Empire: Early Printed Maps of Texas and the Southwest begins a three-week run on September 18. The exhibit will cover the exploration and mapping of Texas' corner of the New World from 1513 to 1873. A daily slide show and special video presentations will complement the exhibit. For information on upcoming events, call 903/665-1101.

PLACES

Texas' largest city launched a high-power, \$3-million advertising campaign to compete for its share of tourism dollars. Central to the marketing plan is the new slogan, "**Houston: The Real Texas,**" that C&VB officials hope will change the notion that Houston is just oil derricks and cowboy boots. The campaign promotes Houston's proximity to the Gulf Coast, its extensive art and cultural scene, the international flair of its restaurants and celebrations, its sense of history, and its ties to NASA. Glitzy new brochures, maps, and visitor guides complement the campaign. Call the C&VB at 1-800-365-7575 to get the scoop.

The beach vacation destination of **South Padre Island** ranked first statewide in tourism growth among the top 15 destination cities in occupancy tax receipts, according to a recent State Comptroller's Hotel Occupancy Tax Report. South Padre's tremendous 41 percent growth



CHOO-CHOO-CHA-BOOGIE The American Orient Express unveiled **The Branson Limited**, a luxury passenger train offering tour packages from San Antonio, Houston, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, and Austin, to Branson, Missouri, one of the top musical entertainment centers in the world. The route will take passengers through some of the most spectacular scenery in America's heartland. Tours will include transportation, overnight accommodations, food service, transportation to and from the hotel in Branson, and tickets to musical stage shows. For dates and price information, call 210/225-1100.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

resulted in more than \$2.35 million in gross taxable income. **Bill O'Connor**, chairman of the city's Economic Development Council, said, "With such dynamic tourism growth, the island will likely be sought as a premiere site for a new luxury resort, major entertainment center, or perhaps even a casino if appropriate state legislation is passed in the coming year."

Counselor **Rhonda Hillis** from the **Gainesville Texas Travel Information Center** said the second phase of the new **Gainesville Factory Shop** is almost complete. Thirty new outlet stores will open in mid-November, just in time for Christmas shopping. Rhonda said the Factory Shop, which already boasts 67 stores, has been a real boost to the economy. "Now bus loads of people are coming here from Dallas to shop," said Rhonda, "instead of the other way around."

FACES

Welcome **Ross Bannister**, newly appointed director of special events for the **Grapevine C&VB**. Bannister brings to the city a seven-year history of special event planning, and has served as a volunteer for Grapevine festivals for the past two years. For information on

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

DENISON TIC Counselors Devon Armstrong and Betty Reynolds officially transferred this month from the Gainesville TIC to the new facility in Denison, which officially opens September 13.

TEXARKANA TIC Counselor Stephanie Thomas reported an Elvis sighting, after a man with an open shirt, pork chop sideburns, and dyed black hair appeared at the center, where he was handed a packet of travel brochures. "Thank you," said

upcoming events, give him a call at 817/481-0454.

The **Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden** announced the appointment of **Cynthia M. Shelley** as group sales manager. Ms. Shelley has an extensive travel and tourism background through staff positions at hotels and a restaurant in Florida, Colorado, and Texas. Her duties will include securing group tours for area schools, day-care facilities, conventions, civic groups, hotels, and tour and travel organizations. The 66-acre Arboretum is on the shores of White Rock Lake at 8617 Garland Road. Call 214/327-8263 for information on group tours and upcoming events.

PUBLICATIONS

A new magazine featuring tourist spots in Corpus Christi, and highlights in South Texas and Monterrey, Mexico, was created to help boost two-way visitor travel and good will, reports the *Corpus Christi Caller Times*. **Monterrey & Corpus Christi Connection**, a 24-page magazine published every two months, contains arti-

cles in both English and Spanish. The current issue spotlights the USS *Lexington* Museum on the Bay, the Texas State Aquarium, the Rockport-Fulton area, and the King Ranch. It also features a map of Monterrey and lists several of Monterrey's major visitor attractions. The initial 35,000 copies are being distributed free at tourist-related locations in Corpus Christi, with SARO Airlines in Mexico, and at visitor facilities along the border and in Monterrey. The magazine is privately financed by Corpus Christi businessman **Robert Rivera** and his wife,

the mysterious stranger. "Thank you very much."

WASKOM TIC Counselor Donna Watson said Native Texan Larry Butler dropped off a tabloid highlighting the country music scene along I-40 and I-10. Seems Larry's been pickin' and singin' since he was a small tyke, when his daddy traded a load of cedar posts for a \$10 Gibson guitar. Besides appearing on "Louisiana Hayride" and the "Grand Ole Opry," he's played with just about every major country/

Western artist, he said, "both dead and alive," including Tex Ritter, Bob Wills, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, Lefty Frizzell, Ray Price, Jim Reeves.... A real Texas character who's still goin' strong.

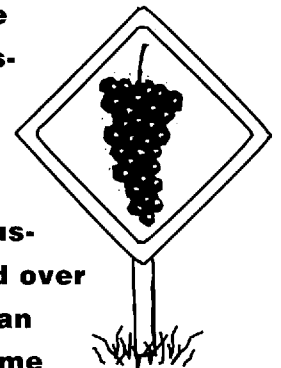
WICHITA FALLS TIC Travel guru Bruce Neal, long-time public relations director at Six Flags Over Texas, dropped in for a visit last month, followed, a few days later, by an appearance by Charlie McIlvain, owner of Fort Worth's Idle Time Tours. It's always great to see old friends.

Arlene, a native of Mexico. The Riveras said the publication will likely expand to 40 pages in August. For more info, call 512/880-5970.

HISTORY

History's in the making at **Ysleta Mission in El Paso**, where the **Tigua Indians'** tribal council has petitioned Congress to change the official name of the tribe from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to Tigua Indians of Texas, and to reduce the blood-quantum requirement from one-eighth to one-sixteenth.

A SIGN OF THE WINES The Texas Department of Transportation will soon install signs pointing the way to wineries and vineyards. The signs will include a cluster of grapes superimposed over a star. A separate panel can be added to include the name of the facility. More than 130,000 people visit Texas wineries each year.



According to *Dallas Life Magazine*, though lowering the blood quantum would more than double the size of the tribe, all the new Tiguas would be children or other relatives of present members. Now, under federal law, tribe members must be of at least one-eighth Tigua blood. Some other U.S. tribes require only a small amount of Indian blood to qualify, as determined through negotiations with the federal government, then made into law. Tribal governor **Elias Torrez** said, "My children's blood quantum is one-sixteenth. The government doesn't consider them members of the tribe. But Indian people amongst ourselves don't discriminate. We don't see each other as a quarter, an eighth, a full blood. It's what we have in our hearts — the tradition that was planted in our hearts and in our souls and in our minds — that matters."

W I L D L I F E

A one-quarter acre ranch near **San Marcos** will soon become refuge for the **Texas tortoise**, which faces the potential spread of a life-threatening disease. Tortoises brought to the site from across Texas will be tested for the illness and, if given a clean bill of health, returned to the wild. "We want to prevent the Texas tortoise from dwindling to the point that it's necessary to list it as a federal endangered species," said **Dr. Larry McKinney**, resource protection director with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "This is an attempt to be proactive instead of reactive and avoid an ecological 'train wreck' before it happens." The department has provided a \$2,000 grant for Southwest Texas State University to build the ranch at a university-owned research site. For information on the Texas tortoise ranch, call 512/245-2178.

MUSEUMS

An historical documentary using the latest in laser technology premiered Labor Day weekend at the **Texas Seaport Museum in Galveston**. "**Passage to Galveston: The Story of Elissa**" tells the tale of one of the oldest active sailing ships in the world. Historic photographs and archival footage trace *Elissa's* history from her construction in Aberdeen, Scotland, through her long career at sea, to her dramatic rescue from the scrapper's torch. The production documents the vessel's meticulous restoration by the Galveston Historical Foundation, and shows Texas' Tall Ship in her fully rigged glory under sail in the Gulf of Mexico. "Passage to Galveston" is shown hourly in rotation with "*Elissa: The Longest Voyage*," a presentation of the legends and lore of



FOREBEARERS RETURN
After a 50-year absence,
black bears are recolonizing in Big Bend National Park where 502 bears were sighted last year.
The bears are probably returning because of a saturation of bears in northern Mexico. For whatever reason, the recolonization is special because it is occurring without human assistance.

the sea. Admission to the museum includes self-guided tours of the museum and the 1877 *Elissa*, access to the museum's computerized immigration records, and both theater presentations. Open daily at Pier 21, on Port Industrial Blvd. between 21st and 22nd Streets; 409/763-1877 for more details.

A collection of actual casts from human faces by artist Willa Shalit will be presented at the **Dallas Museum of Art**, September 8 through November 20. **In Touch: Lifecasts of Famous People**, on loan from the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, offers an opportunity to gain sensitivity to the challenges facing visually impaired people. Blind and sight-disabled persons receive a rare chance to feel the likenesses of such celebrities as Stevie Wonder, George Bush, Whoopi Goldberg, and Roger Staubach. Free to the public at 1717 North Harwood. Call 214/622-1200 for more information.

Festival, Saturday, October 8. The community of Luling will celebrate its cultural heritage with a fun-for-all event on Davis Street, downtown. Festivities will include an antique show, antique and classic car show, pet parade, children's games, family entertainment, and festive food and drink. The antique show will be housed in the historic Walker Brothers Building, future home of the Luling Area Oil Museum. Oil museum exhibits will be on display in the building throughout the day. For more information, call the chamber of commerce at 210/875-3214.

A kaleidoscope of music, food, and fun awaits visitors at the **Conroe Cajun Catfish Festival**, October 14-16. Begin the weekend at the Party on the Square, featuring Cajun headliners, popular musicians, street dancing, exhibits, and family events. Dance to live music from four festival stages, and tempt your palate with spicy Cajun cuisine, including boudin, crawfish etouffee, and gumbo. It's a weekend jam packed with family-style fun. For a complete schedule, call the festival hot line at 1-800-324-2604.

E V E N T S

Make plans now to enjoy an old-fashioned Texas get-together at the **Night In Old Luling**

TEXAS TRIVIA
What Texas city is known as the Air-Conditioning Capital of the World?

To beat the heat, folks in Houston spend \$1 billion a year on electricity. Thus landing the title, Air-Conditioning Capital of the World. Some 90 percent of all homes and almost all businesses there are air-conditioned. When President Jimmy Carter tried to require all federal offices to set summer thermostats at 80 degrees, federal employees in Houston raised such a stink that an exception was made. Too cool.

TEXAS TRIVIA

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	15,987	-3.00	116,859	+3.91
Anthony	13,146	-15.14	145,365	+6.29
Denison	Opening This Month!			
Gainesville	31,674	-33.26	312,423	-6.93
Langtry	5,739	-3.48	70,989	+7.76
Laredo	17,718	+5.80	108,726	+4.2
Orange	50,844	+7.73	406,992	+6.30
Texarkana	55,845	+7.12	386,598	+19.66
Valley	14,688	-12.91	237,480	+17.02
Waskom	47,508	-3.37	374,031	+10.58
Wichita Falls	19,038	+5.54	147,720	+11.34
Capitol Complex	13,905	+94.67	108,903	-.80
1-800 Phone Center	16,872	+115.48	113,790	-6.23
CENTER TOTALS	302,964	+7.6	2,529,876	+5.22

Data as of August 31, 1994

*Compared to last year

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	53,501	972,124
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	67	
Addresses offered	87,470	
Addresses transmitted	35,450	
Addresses transmitted		620,834
OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE		
Texas Highways print run		
This month		397,471
This month last year		450,944
This year-to-date		3,307,766
Last year-to-date		3,581,850

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
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED