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**INSIDE! 2005 NATURE CONSERVANCY EVENTS
TOP CHEFS ■ HISTORIC POST OFFICE MURALS**

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS

HIGHWAYS

JANUARY 2005

www.texashighways.com

ROCK ART OF THE LOWER PECOS

Spirited Away

PLUS— SAN ANTONIO'S
COWBOY BREAKFAST

REMEMBERING THE
BIG "D" JAMBOREE

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WE START OFF the year with a visit to some great outdoors areas, which **The Nature Conservancy** has been helping to preserve for some 40 years in Texas. The group's first land acquisition here was 2,626 acres near Eagle Lake west of Houston, which was conveyed to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the establishment of the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, home to one of only two wild populations of the Attwater's prairie chicken, one of the most endangered birds in North America. The other population, as **Carol Barrington's** story relates, is at the Conservancy's Texas City Preserve.

This issue also focuses on food and art. **Jim Peyton** takes readers to the state's largest **breakfast**, the unofficial kickoff of the **San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo**, and **June Naylor** visits some of **Texas' top chefs**. **Randy Mallory** helps us tour the **rock art** of the lower Pecos River, and **Philip Parisi** offers a look at some post-Great Depression-era art, the **post office murals** painted throughout Texas between 1934 and 1943....

SPEAKING of art, I'd like to publicly congratulate the most recent **Texas Highways** winners of the **International Regional Magazine Association (IRMA) awards**, announced in Bar Harbor, Maine, in September 2004. The annual IRMA conference recognizes the world's outstanding regional magazines in areas such as writing, design, and photography.

Texas Highways, the Official Travel Magazine of Texas, received awards in the following categories:

Travel Feature: Bronze Award: "Big Bend: A Not-So-Rough Guide" by **Lori Moffatt** (January 2003).

Profiles: Silver Award: "Letter from Fredericksburg: A National Museum Honors World War II Heroes" by **Howard Peacock** (November 2003).

Essay: Bronze Award: "A Highly Personal and Opinionated Essay on Wildflowers" by **Howard Peacock** (April 2003).

Feature Photography: Gold Award: "Scenes from a Texas Town: Roma" by **Joel Salcido** (January 2003).



Photojournalist Randy Mallory contributed this month's feature on Lower Pecos rock art, some of which dates back approximately 4,000 years.

Photojournalism: Silver Award: "Grit and Glory: Six-Man Football" by **Laura Wilson** (October 2003).

Photographic Essay: Award of Merit: "Autumn in Texas May Be Fleeting, But It's Oh, So Sweet" by **Joe Lowery, Rusty Yates, Wyman Meinzer, and Richard Reynolds** (November 2003).

Art Direction of a Single Story: Bronze Award: "Autumn in Texas May Be Fleeting, But It's Oh, So Sweet," **Jane Wu Knapp** (November 2003).

IRMA's membership includes more than 40 publications in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! May 2005 be one of the best years yet for all of you.

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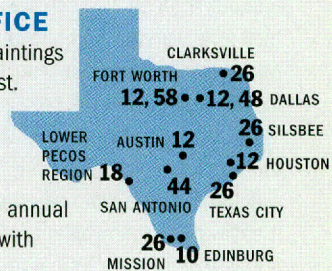
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ABOUT OUR COVER Partially hidden by rocks and accessible only by boat via Lake Amistad, Panther Cave is a premier rock-art site. Story on page 18. Photo © Randy Mallory

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- 48 BIG "D" JAMBOREE** Move over, Grand Ole Opry. From the 1940s to the 1960s, Texas' own "barn dance" program rocked the state from its hometown in Dallas. BY GENE FOWLER



MICHAEL A. MURPHY



The 2004 Friends of Fort Davis Festival, held in October, celebrated the 150th anniversary of the post's founding. Shown here reviewing our October article on the fort are members of the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldier Association: (left to right) Saddlery Sergeant Curtis Clark, First Sergeant Barrie Tompkins, and Trooper Raymond Clark.

The Pies Have It

IN REGARD to June Naylor's "Life of Pie" in November, I discovered a great place for pie while visiting my daughter in Lubbock. The sign simply stated "The Slaton Bakery—West Texas' Best Kept Secret." My daughter, son, and I decided to check it out, and we were pleasantly surprised. They serve everything from homemade jalapeño bread to candies, cookies, and cakes. But the best part for me was the homemade pie! Coconut being my favorite, naturally I had to have a piece with lunch and a pie for the road. They also have an antique room and a wonderful collection of teapots. You can also see some of the awards they have won for their chocolate sculptures. Arc check out their new cookbook, which includes tales from the bakery's past.

We also enjoyed Randy Mallory's article on the Caldwell Zoo. I grew up in Tyler and have watched this zoo grow over the past 25 years. It easily rivals many big-city zoos. Definitely a must-see if you're in the area.

LISA GAYLE BENNETT,
AMANDA, AND TRISTAN
Har.derson

ED. NOTE: *The Slaton Bakery is at 109 S. 9th St. (in Slaton); 806/828-3253; www.slatonbakery.com.*

YOU NEED to go to Weatherford and try a Hutch's fried pie. The pies are delicious, and there are lots of flavors to choose from.

BILLIE WILLIAMS
Midlothian

Ed. Note: *Hutch's Pie Shop is at 145 College Park Dr.; 817/594-0751.*

THE BEST piece of pie I've eaten was at Clark's Outpost in Tioga. I first heard about their six-inch-high meringue on CBS *Sunday Morning*. Save some room for their tasty barbecue.

LOU ANN CUNNINGHAM
Nacogdoches

ED NOTE: *Clark's Outpost Bar-B-Q is at 101 US 377 at Gene Autry Dr.; 940/437-2414 or 800/932-5051; www.clarksoutpost.com.*

Suited to Nudie

WOW! What a great issue [October]. Not only were my favorite singer-songwriters featured, but also Nudie's Rodeo Tailors in North Hollywood [book review in For the Road]. I didn't realize the connection between Tex Williams and Nudie. Tex's record shop was a few doors south and on the other side of Lankershim Boulevard. Nudie had a Pontiac convertible with pinto-hide seat covers and guns mounted on the fenders, kind of like Leo Carillo's (Pancho in *The Cisco Kid*) old Chrysler. Last time I saw Nudie, he was with Roger Miller having a beer at the Palomino Club, also on Lankershim. David Bromberg was playing that night. Those were the days! Gotta buy the book.

JACK EDWARDS
Oak Ridge North

Falling for TH

JUST WANTED to let you know that both your October and November issues were

knockouts. Keep up the good work!

MAXINE BERNREUTER
San Antonio

Mark Your Calendar

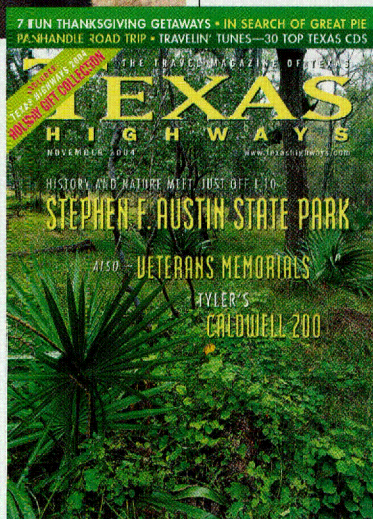
JUST WHEN I think *TH* couldn't surprise and please me more, it does just that! Two stories last May—"The Main Squeeze: Accordion Culture in Texas Music" and "Gliding into History," the story of Lubbock's Silent Wings Museum—were great! And

now, another great story about more silent wings, on the Texas Butterfly Festival in Mission [October]. As one who has attended the festival, my advice to readers is: If you missed the '04 festival, put it on your calendar for '05!

AGNES G. MADDUX
San Antonio

For Whom the Bells Toll

AS LONGTIME subscribers to *TH*, we were so pleased to see the nice article on our aunt, Hedwig Kniker, in *Speaking of Texas* [November]. She was truly a petroleum pioneer and an extraordinary Texan. A state historical marker has been placed at her birthplace, in Gay Hill, near Brenham.



COURTESY ROSE MARIE MENDER McCLUNG



Heather Vaughn stands beside the tile fountain in the courtyard of San Antonio's Menger Hotel, founded by her great-great-great-grandparents William and Mary Menger.

Tex-Mex parties here at home. *TH* makes the rounds among our friends here in sunny Cape Town.

ANNA KEYTEL
Cape Town, South Africa

Veterans Memorials

THANK YOU for Joseph Wiseman's fine article on Texas' monuments to veterans. Please encourage readers to visit another outstanding tribute to those who have served our nation—the recently completed Lubbock Area Veterans War Memorial.

GORDON WILKERSON
Lubbock

THE MONEY for the construction of the memorial in Lubbock was raised by us veterans and surviving family members, who bought bricks inscribed with veterans' names and where and when they served. The bricks represent veterans from all over the United States. I noticed a brick with the name of a Civil War veteran.

ED WATSON
Portales, New Mexico

ED. NOTE: For more information on the Lubbock Area Veterans War Memorial, at 82nd and Nashville in Henry Huneke Park, call 806/794-9006; www.lubbockwarmemorial.com. We also heard from Mary Tom Crain of Amarillo, who told us about 'the World War II

memorial at the corner of 5th and Taylor in Amarillo, and the memorial honoring veterans from Hartley and Dallam counties recently unveiled in Dalhart. Mary also mentioned the new reflection center at the Texas Panhandle War Memorial, at I-27 and Georgia in Amarillo.

Fan from Indiana

AS AN 84-year-old Hoosier, unable to travel, I receive *TH* as a gift from my grandchildren in the McAllen area. The articles and beautiful pictures of different parts of Texas are refreshing, and I find myself deeply absorbed while reading. Texas music played by Ray Benson and Asleep At the Wheel keeps my old feet tap-dancing. Keep the articles and the history lessons coming.

PHELLUS McNEELY
Beech Grove, Indiana

Charles' Choices

IN RESPONSE to your "30 Favorite" lists in the September issue, here are mine: Best bed and breakfast: Moonlight Bay, Palacios. Best fishing guide: Captain Mike Mosley, Matagorda. Best nachos: Pulido's Mexican Restaurant, Mineral Wells. Best hamburgers: The Hill Bar and Grill, Waller. Best seafood restaurant: Outrigger's, Seabrook. Best Mexican restaurant: Taqueria Tepatitlán, on N. Main, Houston. Best chicken-fried steak, Hickory Hollow Inn, Houston. Best BBQ ribs: Hinz's, Sealy. Best ethnic festival: Wendish Festival, Serbin (fourth Sunday in September). Best Texas author: Leon Hale. Best shoeshine boy: That would be me, at Frank Gostecnik's Barber Shop, Brookshire, early 1950s.

CHARLIE WILSON
Houston

CORRECTIONS: In November's story on pies, the photos on page 14 of Pampa's Coney Island Cafe and Jeff's in Kress were taken by Wyman Meinzer. And in December's story on pro basketball, we misspelled the name of Brett Coomer, who took the photographs of the Houston Rockets on pages 27 and 28-29.

WRITE OR EMAIL: Talk to *TH*, Texas Highways, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879; email: letters05@texashighways.com. Web site: www.texashighways.com. Though we are unable to print every letter, we just might select yours to appear in the magazine—whether you send us kudos or criticism. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Our first lesson in paleontology as young children came while visiting her lab in San Antonio. What a thrill it was to look through a microscope! After retirement, she continued her interest in the petroleum field and added to it everything from canning to coin collecting. During this time, she frequently visited our family in Austin. The UT tower was clearly visible from our home, and we always marveled at her great interest in the chiming of the tower clock bells. Little did we know then that she would be the one to complete the 56-bell carillon.

Incidentally, besides the Kniker Carillon, her estate continues to provide college scholarships annually through the San Antonio Foundation. Her legacy lives on.

JANICE KNIKER LEE, *Houston*
JULIA KNIKER ECHOLS, *Fair Oaks Ranch*

Menger Memories

REGARDING Kathryn Jones' story on San José Ceramics [October, Just Passing Through]: This photo [above, right], taken several years ago in the courtyard of San Antonio's famous Menger Hotel, shows the same tile mural at the patio fountain mentioned and pictured in your magazine. The beautiful young lady is my granddaughter, Heather Vaughn, who is also the great-great-great-granddaughter of the couple who founded the hotel. Annually, about the middle of March on occasion of my birthday, I usually spend some time at the old landmark in honor of my great-grandparents Mary and William Menger. Having the Menger highlighted in your magazine, including the article in the January 1996 issue, is a great honor. Only one other member of my generation is still living—my cousin Charlotte Menger Belcher of San Antonio. Each of us has quite a large number of progeny, so these notices in *TH* are truly noteworthy.

"POSEY" ROSE MARIE MENDER McCLUNG
Round Rock

Cape Town Kudos

I HAVE been receiving *TH* for the past three years (a gift from Sherri and Jack Dugas of San Antonio) and enjoy reading it. I'm looking forward to experiencing Texas hospitality and visiting some of the many exciting places you have featured. I hope our visit in the future will coincide with some of your festivals. Our Texan son-in-law has introduced us to Tex-Mex food, and we have had wonderful

For THE ROAD

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS AND PLACES

SOMETHING ALL OUR OWN

FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, NBA STAR GRANT HILL HAS COLLECTED paintings, collages, sculpture, and works on paper by the most lauded African-American artists of the 20th Century. Beginning December 19, 2004, and continuing through April 17, 46 works from his collection will appear at the **Dallas Museum of Art** in an exhibition called **Something All Our Own: The Grant Hill Collection of African American Art**. The son of Dallas Cowboys running back Calvin Hill, who is also an art collector, Grant grew up with an awareness

that while African-American entertainers and sports figures are often revered by the public, black artists have historically received less recognition. Included in this show are Romare Bearden's bold collages, Elizabeth Catlett's strong, elegant sculptures, John Biggers' intricate drawings, Phoebe Beasley's colorful, mixed-media creations, and many others—all of which defy easy categorization, just like the artists themselves. Call 214/922-1200; www.dm-art.org.

SILK AND SATIN IN A LAND OF IRON AND DUST

OPENED TO SETTLEMENT IN 1875, THE Texas Panhandle was soon covered with towns, farms, and ranches. In his 1931 book, *The Great Plains*, historian Walter Prescott Webb wrote of "women's fear and distrust of the Plains," and said that the conditions "precluded the little luxuries that women love and that are so necessary to them." No disrespect to Mr. Webb, but the curators at the **Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum** in Canyon beg to differ—and they have the satin boots, lace parasols, and ivory hairbrushes to prove it. From January 29 through July 10, the museum highlights *Silk and Satin in a Land of Iron and Dust*, an exhibition of household textiles, clothing, and other objects used by early settlers of the region. Call 806/651-2244; www.panhandleplains.org.

REBEL RADIO

FOR DECADES NOW, FREDERICKSBURG'S rolling countryside, diverse shopping, historical attractions, German-inspired eateries, and numerous lodgings have drawn visitors. Some folks even head that way for another reason—to tune in to the Texas Rebel Radio Network's

KFAN (107.9) and KEEP (103.1), which pride themselves on a scattershot playlist where blues, rock, country, zydeco, and folk enjoy equal airtime.

From January 14 to 16, Texas Rebel Radio presents the 3rd annual **Windows on Texas** music festival, which is, according to KFAN program director Rick Star, "like a miniature version of Austin's South By Southwest." Along with panel discussions with industry professionals, the festival highlights more than 20 bands at bars, restaurants, galleries, and other venues across town. On Sunday at 4, the wrap-up party turns into a raucous dance. Unlike its sibling in Austin, which draws worldwide music-lovers to Texas in April, this event is free. Call 830/997-2197; www.texasrebelradio.com.

EYES TO THE SKIES

IF YOU WANT TO SEE SOME STARS—NOT the ones in Hollywood, but the ones suspended in the black night sky—attend the University of Texas at Austin's free **public star parties**, held at the Robert Lee Moore Hall rooftop observatory on Wednesdays, one hour after sunset, starting January 19.

The cylindrical observatory has a domed top, which rotates and retracts to create a window to the stars, thanks to the modern lens of the 16-inch Moore telescope. If you want to see something special, an astronomer can enter its coordinates into the telescope's computer, and it will automatically focus the scope on the requested star or planet.

GRANT HILL COLLECTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ART



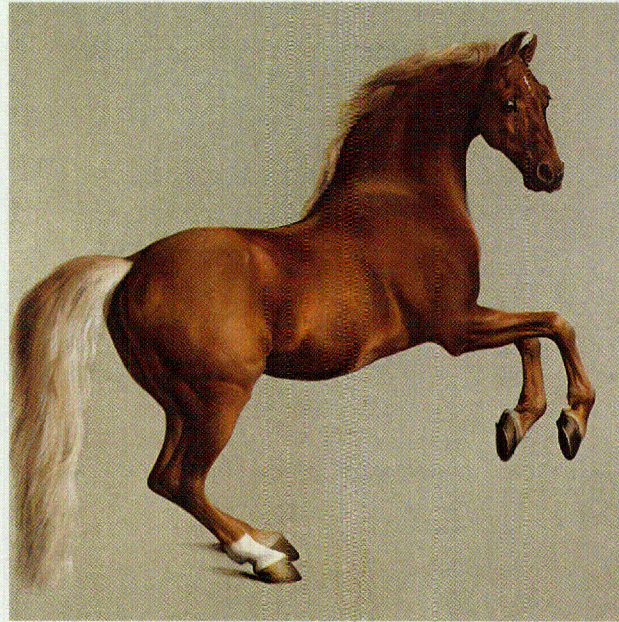
Something All Our Own: The Grant Hill Collection of African American Art appears at the Dallas Museum of Art through April 17. This is *Time for the Bass*, a collage by Romare Bearden (1911-1988).

If a large crowd gathers, like one did during last October's red lunar eclipse, the astronomers will bring several eight-inch telescopes outside. They also distribute hot-pink planet pins and copies of *StarDate*, a magazine published by the McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis, home of one of the world's largest optical telescopes—the Hobby-Eberly.

Plan ahead to see comets during a meteor shower, like the Centaurids, which will stream through the Southern Hemisphere January 28 through February 21. Check the 2005 Meteor Shower Calendar online (www.imo.net/calendar/cal05.html) to plan a visit during optimal viewing conditions. The International Meteor Organization recommends February 8, when the new moon creates "perfect observing conditions."

So, is that a satellite or a planet? If you want to stop guessing, come sneak a peek through the telescope and see white light, moon craters, and flying objects—though no confirmed UFOs have been spotted yet.

© THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



In 1762, George Stubbs created the life-size *Whistlejacket* for the Marquess of Rockingham.

Museum in Fort Worth presents *Stubbs and the Horse*, a collection of works ranging from refined portraits of racehorses to harrowing scenes of lions attacking horses in the wild. The exhibition's centerpiece, a life-size oil painting called *Whistlejacket*, was commissioned by the Marquess of Rockingham, a Whig Party leader who supported independence for the American colonies. With its focus on the horse rather than the rider, *Whistlejacket* marked a turning point in mankind's respect for animals as independent beings. Call 817/332-8451; www.kimbellart.org.

Robert Lee Moore Hall is on the southeast corner of Dean Keeton and Speedway. UT holds star parties only when classes are in session, and cancels them if it's too cloudy. Call 512/232-4265 (weather hotline and schedule) or 471-5007 (skywatcher's report); <http://outreach.as.utexas.edu/public/parties.html>.
—COURTNEY RUSSELL

A VERY FLAKY GATHERING

ON JANUARY 8 IN PEARLAND, THE 9TH annual *Winterfest* brings a flurry of winter wonderland to a town that rarely sees snow. Festival organizers will create some 60,000 pounds of the fluffy stuff from giant blocks of ice. The snow will be the raw material for snowman-building contests, giant snow piles for angel-making, and snowballs for tossing. You'll also find camel and pony rides, a petting zoo, the crowning of the Snow Queen, and lots of live music. Call 281/652-1775; www.leisureexpress.com.

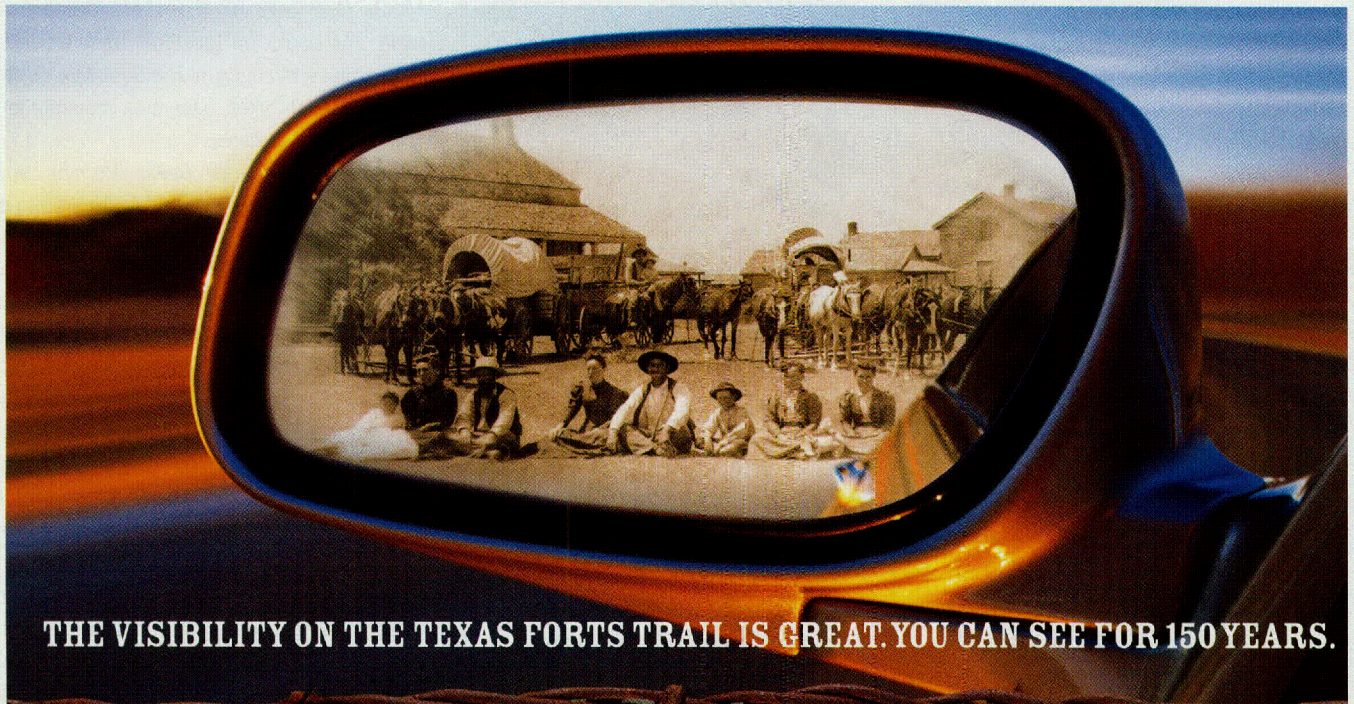
GEORGE STUBBS' HORSE SENSE

YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE LIFE'S EXPERIENCES may lead you. Take English painter George Stubbs (1724-1806), who spent the good part of his early thirties dissecting and

sketching the bodies of horses—and thus wound up with such a detailed understanding of equine anatomy that he arguably became the greatest painter of horses in the history of art. Through February 6, the Kimbell Art

CHILD'S PLAY

WITH THE GOAL OF ENCOURAGING DISCUSSION about the effects of high-quality film and television on children, Dallas' *KidFilm festival*, an outreach program of the USA Film



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For free driving maps on the Forts Trail or any other Texas Heritage Trails, call 512/463-6254 or visit www.thc.state.tx.us.



FOR THE ROAD

Festival/Dallas, showcases children's movies, shorts, animated features, and documentaries every January. Now in its 21st year, KidFilm kicks off at Dallas' Angelika Film Center on January 10. For 12 days, school groups can visit with filmmakers, writers, and directors, and view films made especially for them. On January 22-23, the festival welcomes the general public to

view premieres of new movies and enjoy classics such as *The Wizard of Oz*. Call 214/821-6300; www.usafilmfestival.com.

GLIDING ABOVE MARFA

PERHAPS BEST KNOWN FOR THE CONTEMPORARY art museum called the Chinati Foundation and for its mysterious Marfa Lights, the tiny town of Marfa has in recent years become the Big Bend area's undisputed cultural center. Art galleries, restaurants, and unusual lodgings attract sophisticated travelers from New York, Europe, and beyond.

But this is West Texas, after all, and sometimes you just want to get away from civilization and all urbane matters. That's when you should call Kathie and Burt Compton, who can take you high above the Chihuahuan Desert on an exhilarating **glider ride**. "Our goal is to share the joy and peacefulness found high above the Marfa plateau," says Burt, a Master FAA flight instructor who discovered Marfa in 1967 during a national soaring contest.

After a 20-minute preflight briefing at the Marfa Airport, the adventure begins: Carried upward 2,000 feet by a tow plane and then released, the crafts soar on Marfa's famous thermal updrafts, affording passengers views of the Davis Mountains, Chinati Peak, and, when visibility is good, the mountains of Mexico and Big Bend, some 100 miles away.

Rides are available for anyone age 12 and older; tickets cost \$95, but you'll find \$20-off coupons at the Marfa Chamber of Commerce office (207 N. Highland, 800/650-9696; www.marfacc.com). For more details about the glider rides, call 800/667-9464; www.flygliders.com.

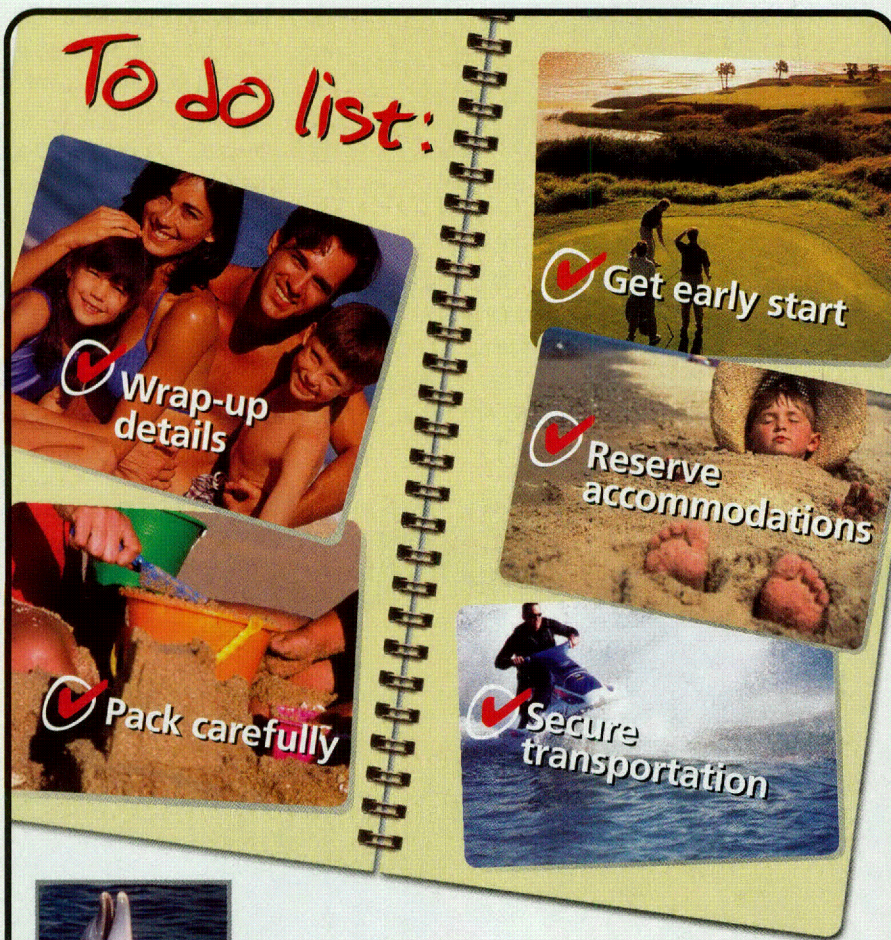
LET'S BOOK IT ACROSS TEXAS

IN "SPOTLIGHT" THIS MONTH, WE FOCUS on books, ranging from histories and cookbooks to a memoir of life in the Big Bend during the 1930s (see page 8). If you're a traveler who *really* has books on the brain, pick up Jessie Gunn Stephens' engaging *The Book Lover's Tour of Texas*, which takes readers on a literary journey across the state.

With a Foreword by *Dallas Morning News* "Texana" columnist Kent Biffle, *The Book Lover's Tour of Texas* not only escorts readers to bookstores and other interesting sites, but it also provides background reading (both fictional and nonfictional) to help illuminate various areas. For example, if you'd like to read a mystery set in Fort Worth during your next trek to the city, check out the works of writer A.W. Gray. If you'll be visiting Gainesville's Frank Buck Zoo, learn a bit about its eponymous founder by reading his 1930 book *Bring 'Em Back Alive*, the movie version of which made Buck a star. Or if you'll be traveling to San Antonio, see if you agree with Sarah Bird's descriptions of the cuisine encountered there in her book *The Mommy Club*. Hundreds of book recommendations make this book a keeper.

Find *The Book Lover's Tour of Texas* (Taylor Trade Publishing, \$17.95) at stores; to order, call 800/462-6420, ext. 3022.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.texashighways.com



Texas State Aquarium



USS Lexington Museum

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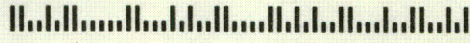
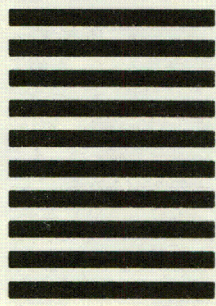


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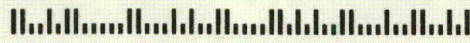
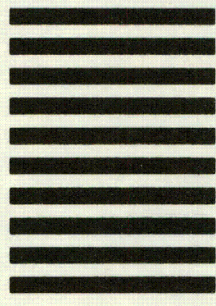


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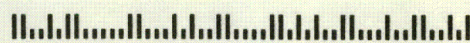
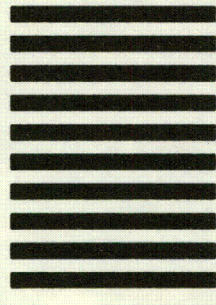


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HOOP DREAMS COME TRUE

Before University Scholastic League (UIL) governed high school sports in Texas, before no-pass-no-play rules went into effect, before colleges awarded athletic scholarships to girls, and before women started playing major-league baseball in the early 1940s, girls' basketball in Texas truly had

“a league of its own.” Formed in 1939 by L.C. McKamie, the superintendent of Abbott Independent School District between 1926 and 1948, the High School Girls Basketball League of Texas produced some of the state's best female athletics of the era. Schools competed, regardless of enrollment size, for county, district, and state titles.

One of the most successful teams in the league's 15-year history was the Aquilla High School girls' basketball team. Coached by superintendent John P. Cox, the Aquilla Cougarettes won the state title three years running (1944-46), a feat accomplished by only one other school (Dimmitt, 1952-54).

Playing basketball at Aquilla High was mandatory. Practices, held daily before school and during lunch, were considered as important as biology and English. If grades weren't up to par, students were benched. That rarely happened, however, for Cox instilled in his athletes the importance of academics.

Of the 20 girls who played during Aquilla's three-year reign, the six A-team players—Edith Gerik Cernosek and Marcella Nors Kaska of West; Juanita Kennedy Erwin of Hillsboro; and June Padgett Winter and twins Audine Odom Loften and Pauline Odom Anderson of Fort Worth—are planning a 60th reunion in Fort Worth in 2006.



COURTESY JUNE PADGETT WINTER

The Aquilla High School Cougarettes were state basketball champions for three consecutive years. Coach and superintendent John P. Cox posed with the 1945 team. Front row (left to right): Frances Latham, June Padgett, Betty Tanner, Edith Gerik, Betty Fay Looper, and Nell Payne. Back row: Aline Larry, Myra Jean Burleson, Audine Odom, Marcella Nors, Pauline Odom, and Juanita Kennedy.

With a three-year record of 96 and 1, the Aquilla Cougarettes attributed their success not only to teamwork and dedication but to friendships, which remain strong today. “We've all kept in touch over the years,” says June Winter. “Marcella and I have been friends since we were six. Playing basketball together is something we're all proud of. Mr. Cox didn't really keep records of the game, and we never paid attention to how many points we scored. The important thing was that we were a team. We played as a team and won as a team.”

—Kathleen Kaska, Austin

“80 JOHN”

Although “80 John” Wallace entered life as the son of slaves, he left his mark as a success-

ful rancher. Born in 1860 in Victoria County, Daniel Webster Wallace chopped cotton from the age of six. But he wanted to be a cowboy, and he joined a cattle drive around 1877.

After punching cattle for several ranchers, Wallace signed on with Clay Mann, who had ranched all over the Southwest before settling in Mitchell County. Mann, whose brand was a large “80,” began calling Wallace “80 John” to distinguish him from another black cowboy named John. Mann grew to respect the young cowboy and understood his dream of owning cattle. The two men agreed that the rancher would put \$25 of the cowboy's \$30 monthly salary toward the purchase of cattle.

Wallace's lack of schooling bothered him, and in his mid-twenties, he attended school to learn how to read and write. He married in 1888 and continued working for Mann, who let him run his cattle on Mann's ranch. In 1891, Wallace moved his herd to 1,280 acres that he had purchased southeast of Lorraine in Mitchell County. He became “one of the most respected black ranchers of his time,” according to *The Handbook of Texas*. At his death, in 1939, his lands were valued at more than a million dollars. He was honored posthumously when a Colorado City school (now used as a senior citizens' center) was named for him. A state historical marker at Lorraine notes that “80 John” Wallace, strong as well as prosperous, rode bucking horses until age 74.

—Barbara Barton, Knickerbocker

SPOTLIGHT on Books

New Year's Resolution

FORGET GIVING UP CHOCOLATE, LOSING 10 POUNDS, OR KEEPING THE junk drawer organized: Here's a New Year's resolution that guarantees reward so sweet, a new chapter in your life quite literally awaits. Here it is: Read more. Don't forget fiction, of course, but here we've gathered an assortment of nonfiction volumes, ranging from histories and travel guides to cookbooks and photo portfolios—all with Texas ties.

CULINARY HOUSTON

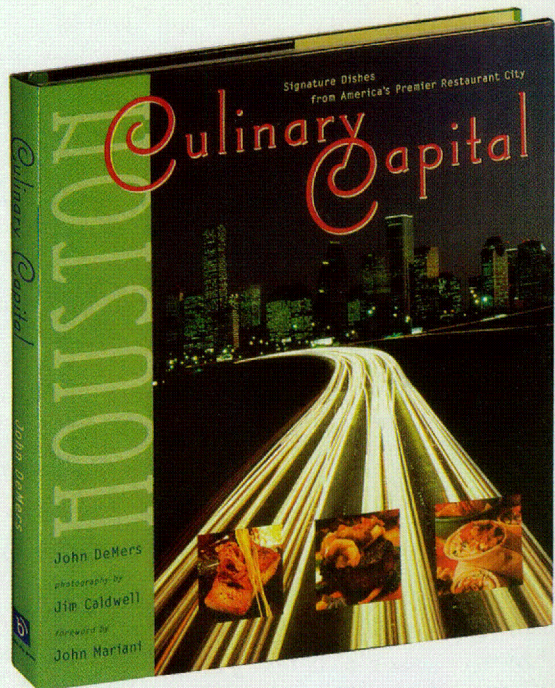
FOR A KITCHEN-TABLE TOUR OF SOME OF Houston's best-regarded eateries, you can't beat *Culinary Capital: Signature Dishes from America's Premier Restaurant City* (Bright Sky Press). Writer John DeMers presents recipes from 75 of Houston's some 11,000 restaurants, along with tantalizing photographs. The dishes skew to the elegant side—mesquite-roasted duck, seafood with asparagus mousse—but you'll also find such simple fare as Ninfa's

legendary green sauce. At stores (\$24.95 hardcover); to order, call 866/933-6133.

ROAD TRIPS

NEW FROM LONGTIME DALLAS

Morning News columnist Bryan Woolley, *Texas Road Trip: Stories from Across the Great State and a Few Personal Reflections* (Texas Christian University Press) makes you want to hit the open highway and discover the state's alluring



charms. Full of descriptive detail and steeped in nostalgia, the book—a compilation of Woolley's essays published from 1999 through 2004—is a rich compendium of what makes Texas so darn interesting. As Woolley, a Fort Davis native, says, "...road trips are what I do for a living...the main ingredients are unpredictability and keeping yourself open to whatever is there.... Texans are proud, independent, and eloquent...most aren't reluctant to tell you what they think—about anything." At stores (\$19.95 paperback); call 800/826-8911 to order.

ART ACROSS TEXAS

WHILE IT'S EASY TO FIND ART SPACES IN big cities like Dallas and Fort Worth, what do you do if you've got an art jones in Abilene, Victoria, Lufkin, or other towns with lesser-known art scenes? Rebecca S. Cohen's *Art Guide Texas: Museums, Art Centers, Alternative Spaces & Nonprofit Galleries* (University of Texas Press) is your solution. Arranged regionally, the hundreds of listings in this book include hours (though we do recommend calling ahead), addresses, phone numbers, Web sites, a brief description, and, in most cases, a photograph of the building or a representative piece of artwork. At stores (\$24.95 paperback); call 800/252-3206 to order.

WESTERN ART, REVISITED

BARELY OFF THE TOWN SQUARE IN Llano, a gallery called Art on Main highlights the colorful paintings of Janet Mason and her late

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husband, Mike. After Mike's death, in 2003, Janet published *Day's End: The Watercolors and Photography of Michael K. Mason*, a coffee-table book that celebrates Mike's love of horses, cowboys, and range life. Call Art on Main, 325/247-1903, to order the book (\$95 hardcover, which includes a limited-edition print; \$45 paperback), or to tour the gallery.

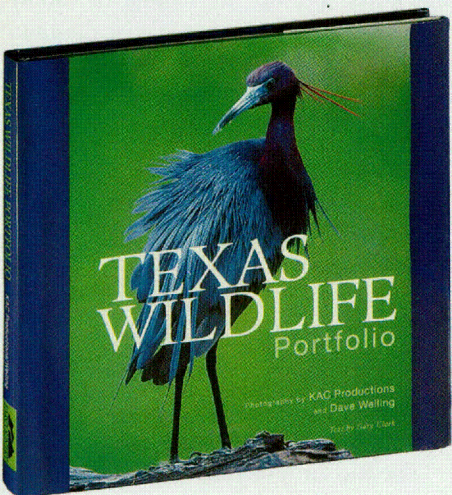
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR HAT ON

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, CHEF GRADY SPEARS has wooed Texas taste buds with his gourmet approach to cowboy cuisine. For his fourth book, *The Texas Cowboy Kitchen; Recipes from the Chisholm Club* (Texas Monthly Custom Publishing and Ten Speed Press), Grady pairs up with Fort Worth writer June Naylor to impart new meaning to the phrase "comfort food." The 100 recipes here, including those for chicken-fried oysters and Frito-chili pie (with venison), may make you swoon. At stores (\$34.95 hardcover); to order, call 800/841-BOOK.



WILDLIFE, UP CLOSE

THANKS TO THE PATIENCE AND SKILL OF photographers Larry Ditto, Rolf Nussbaumer, Bill Draker, John and Gloria Tveten, Glenn Hayes, Greg Lasley, Dave Welling, and Kathy Adams Clark, armchair naturalists can explore the inner workings of our animal kingdom via the pages of Farcountry Press' new *Texas Wildlife Portfolio*. This gorgeous coffee-table book features 120 pages of extraordinary photographs, including such



beguiling images as a dragonfly perched on the nose of a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, an eastern screech owl camouflaged against the bark of a tree, a swirling mass of Mexican free-tailed bats, a baby alligator draped in moss, and a purple gallinule nestled in the grasses of a freshwater marsh, just to name a few. Naturalist Gary Clark, who writes the weekly "Wonders of Nature" column in the *Houston Chronicle*, wrote the text. Wow! At stores (\$24.95 hardcover), or call 800/821-3874 to order.

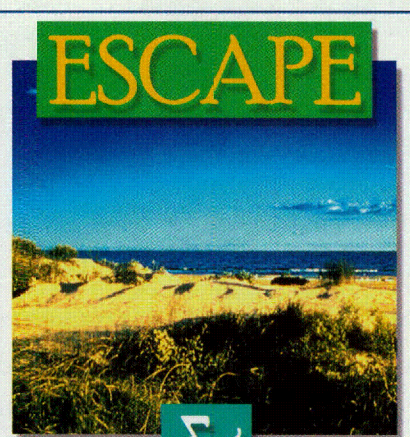
PAPPY PASSES THE BISCUITS

WHEN RONALD REAGAN AND ARNOLD Schwarzenegger cashed in on their celebrity appeal to become California politicians, they were following in the footsteps of Texas' own W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel, the 1930s businessman-turned-radio-personality who later served as Texas governor. In the new book *Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy: Pic-*

tures of Governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel (University of Texas Press), Austin writer Bill Crawford has compiled a rich cache of images—most of them taken by employees of the Department of Public Safety and previously unpublished—to present a captivating look at Texas in the years before and during World War II. At stores (\$29.95 hardcover); call 800/252-3206 to order.

BIG BEND ADVENTURES

IF YOU VISIT THE BIG BEND THIS YEAR and like books, don't miss Jean and Mike Hardy's cozy Front Street Books, full-service bookstores in Marathon and Alpine where you'll find a vast array of regional titles, as well as new and used volumes from other genres. In 1997, the Hardys entered the world of publishing with Iron Mountain Press, which specializes in titles related to Texas, the Southwest, and the borderlands. Iron Mountain's latest releases include Jim Glendinning's *Adventures in the Big Bend: A Travel Guide* (2nd edition), which covers everything from rafting the Rio Grande to Jeep tours, and Patricia Wilson Clothier's *Beneath the Window: Early Ranch Life in the Big Bend Country*, a memoir of the author's childhood in the 1930s and '40s. At bookstores (\$18.95 and \$17.95, respectively, both paperback); call 866/327-0964 to order.



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Escape TO...

EDINBURG'S MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY

The MOST, Presenting the Borderland's Past

BY EILEEN MATTEI

EDINBURG has never been a sleepy little town. In 1908, when it was a tent city called Chapin, where cattle trails used to run, a wagon caravan arrived in the dark of night. After long hours moving legal records from their flood-prone Rio Grande location to the newly-voted-in county seat, Hidalgo County citizens felt the air was full of promise.

New development equaled new opportunity, and investors stood ready to improve the new town, named for County Judge Dennis Bangs Chapin, who had put the relocation deal together. But Chapin would find himself deprived of a place in history: After he disgraced the community—he was tried, but not convicted, for killing a man in a San Antonio bar fight—the town's name was changed to Edinburg.

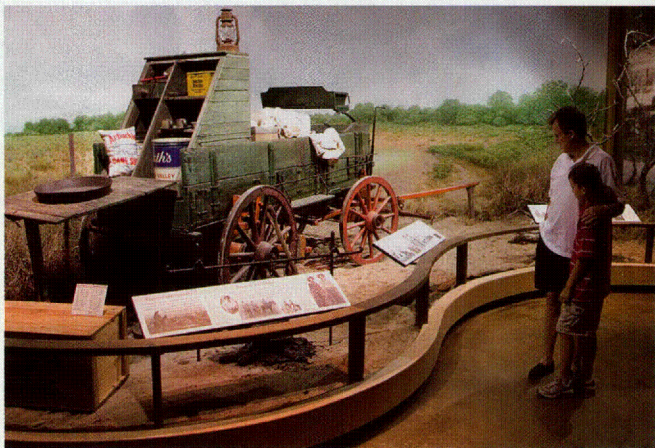
While a concrete-and-glass courthouse and the University of Texas—Pan American dominate Edinburg's skyline now, the new Museum of South Texas History (a.k.a. MOST-History) looks back, to the centuries when this region was the colorful frontier of a new world.

When you pull open the museum's tall mesquite doors, you step into what feels like a grand hacienda, complete with Mexican tile, grillework, and a sweeping staircase that rises to the exhibit floor. The triumphs and the tough times of the Borderland, on both sides of the Rio Grande, take center stage here, with interpretive

panels in English and Spanish to guide you through the past.

"The museum gives people a sense of how this area evolved, how deep our roots are. We are descendants of many cultures," says museum director Shan Rankin. The exhibits begin with a replica mosasaur, a marine reptile from 80 million years ago, immersed in shimmery, underwater lighting. "Children always want to know where the dinosaurs are, but this area was under the ocean then," says Shan. Petrified palm tree trunks, an oystershell reef fragment, and mammoth bones lead to a full-size mammoth skeleton (which might look familiar, since this reproduction was used in the film *X-Men 2*).

Nomadic Coahuiltecas left no written record, but the museum, using multimedia, dioramas, and artifacts, offers a glimpse of the earliest South Texans as they camp on a bluff over the Rio Grande.



In the museum's Cattle Kingdom section, a chuck box hails from the still-working McAllen Ranch, founded in 1790.

As you walk into the next gallery and spy three Spanish caravels under sail, the room suddenly darkens, leaving you gazing at stars twinkling on the domed ceiling and listening to the creak of wooden ships. Once the light returns, the compass rose that covers the floor and the artfully displayed war-dog collar, chests, swords, and coins—the latter debris from shipwrecks off South Padre Island—link visitors to the age of Spanish exploration.

Farther on, take a peek inside a *jacal* (hah-CALL), or stick house. "It's this area's version of the log cabin," Shan explains, sticks being the simplest building material in a land with few trees or rocks. She has seen the fragile-looking house prompt the telling of family stories about growing up in a jacal, drawing a new generation to take an interest in its heritage.

At the Colonial Ranching Compound, you can stand outside a kitchen and imagine a mother-daughter conversation in Spanish. Shan recalls a young woman who was thrilled to see the outdoor brick oven, or *horno*, so similar to her grandmother's. Ranch tools, practical if not beautiful, contrast with the workmanship devoted to saddles, stirrups, bridles, and spurs from the 1700s.

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Photo by Larry Ditro

The triumphs and the tough times on both sides of the Rio Grande take center stage here, with bilingual interpretive panels.

Valley's history, especially during the Mexican American War (catch each nation's perspective of the conflict in both English and Spanish), the Civil War, when wholesale smuggling flourished here, and the riverboat era, when the region began to shed its isolation like a winter coat under the semitropical sun.

At the riverboat exhibit, casks stacked high next to burlap-wrapped cotton bales evoke the period. Riverboat songs in the background (sung by the Gillette Brothers of Crockett) and the mini-theater's brief video about the shallow-draft paddlewheelers convey the excitement and bustle of the era.

You enter Cattle Kingdom through a *leña* (wood) fence: curving mesquite limbs stacked between sturdy posts. At the chuck wagon on the grasslands, you hear cattle bawl in the distance and a rattlesnake shake a warning, but it's the sound of English and Mexican ranch songs that make you feel lonesome. In an adjoining building, part of the old Hidalgo County jail and its second-floor Hanging Room (used only once) share space with the museum's extensive archives.

As a catalyst for discovering the region's heritage, MOST-History presents programs like *Tamalada*, a tamale-making and storytelling weekend January 15-16, and Pioneer and Ranching Crafts Day on February 12.

BACK IN REAL TIME and just a block away, La Jaiba dishes up hot shrimp broth almost as soon as you claim a table. A cilantro sauce enhances the seafood restaurant's dishes, but save room for the superb flan. Or try the Legal Eagle, a cafe near the courthouse with a sense of humor: The Grand Jury sandwich is roast turkey, and the Law Clerk is a hot dog.

As a town of 54,000, Edinburg has plenty more for visitors to see and do. UT-Pan American (which in 2000 was second in the nation in the number of bachelor degrees awarded to Hispanics) boasts three art galleries, plus active



The old Southern Pacific train depot, at 602 W. University Drive, now houses Edinburg's Chamber of Commerce.

theater and dance programs. The first of the Valley's World Birding Centers shows off the habitat of Edinburg Scenic Wetlands. You can observe wood storks, moorhens, and great blue herons from shaded observation decks, or walk through the abundant butterfly gardens. Indoors, the center offers fascinating bird-identification software.

THE MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY

is at 121 E. McIntyre in Edinburg.

Admission: \$4. Hours: Tue-Sat

10-5, Sun 1-5. Call 956/383-6911;

www.mosthistory.org.



For more information on Edinburg, contact the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce, 800/800-7214; www.edinburg.com.

La Jaiba is at 202 N. 10th Ave. Hours: Daily 11-5. Call 956/316-3468.

The **Legal Eagle Cafe** is at 114 S. 12th St. Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30-6, Sat 8-4. Call 956/316-1902.

World Birding Center/Edinburg Scenic Wetlands is at 714 S. Raul Longoria Rd. Hours: Daily 8-5. Call 956/381-9922; www.worldbirdingcenter.org.

Edinburg's 1927 Southern Pacific depot is still in use as the home of the Chamber of Commerce, but thanks in part to first-rate exhibits and caretakers, the building where Borderland memories live on is the Museum of South Texas History.

Harlingen writer EILEEN MATTEI enjoyed Edinburg's Museum of South Texas History so much that she became a member.

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BY JUNE NAYLOR • PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH



TOP TEXAS CHEFS

a cooks'

TUCKED AWAY near the Lakewood neighborhood in East Dallas, a petite restaurant called York Street owns one of the city's most desirable—and elusive—Saturday-evening reservations. But the 12-table bistro, lauded by regional and national food critics as offering possibly the best menu in Big D, is far from a typical Dallas restaurant: Not only does York Street have no bar, reception area, or parking lot, it also offers—horrors!—no valet parking.

John Mariani, the food scribe who in *Esquire* called York Street owner-chef Sharon Hage a “chef to keep an eye on,” says he initially passed by the place several times, thinking it was a laundrette. But like Mariani, fastidious diners go to great lengths to eat the food crafted by Hage, who has been hailed like no other Dallas chef since Dean Fearing and Stephan Pyles began their stratospheric rise with the birth of Southwestern cuisine in the 1980s.

[CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE LEFT] Roe, roe, roe your boat to Austin's Driskill Grill for trout caviar. At Dallas' York Street, diners delight in chef Sharon Hage's exceptional offerings. One of Hage's tempting entrées is peppered buffalo New York with ivory-lentil purée. A delicate creation of lobster and parmesan comes from chef Lanny LaCarte II at his Alta Cocina Mexicana, inside Joe T. Garcia's in Fort Worth. A shooting star of contemporary cuisine, Austin's Driskill Grill chef, David Bull, shown here with chef de cuisine Josh Watkins and sous chef Scott Shoyer, proudly pleases particular palates.



tour



York Street's chef and owner, Sharon Hage, busily adds the final touches to salads in her restaurant kitchen.

Hage—a finalist for a coveted James Beard Award in 2004—distinguishes herself as one of a new breed of culinary wizards who have quietly assumed control of cuisine in Texas. Full of youthful creativity and determination to explore novel ideas, these pacemakers are providing fresh definitions for great food in the Lone Star State.

While they don't travel down typical roads in preparing the four major Texas food groups—that's barbecue, Tex-Mex, chicken-fried steak, and Shiner Bock beer—they take every opportunity to use local, regional, seasonal ingredients. That's owed to palpable passion for truth in food, as well as a pioneering streak that every Texan should understand.

“Rather than belabor the ingredients, Hage extracts the very best from them.”

Hage is one of four such Texas chefs, each of whom reflects the kind of versatility, diversity, and obsessive attention to detail you see on the Food Network. By observing her and her colleagues, food-lovers can see how this new breed of chef embraces the vibrant food

SHARON HAGE

What she serves: veal chop with white-cheddar pudding; lamb's tongue salad; roasted quail with lavender

What she eats away from work: Asian fare, such as grilled Japanese specialties and Vietnamese noodle bowls

YORK STREET

6047 LEWIS STREET, DALLAS; 214/826-0968

opportunities Texas generously provides.

Upon opening her jewel box of a restaurant about four years ago, Hage began a tradition of presenting diners with small glasses of silvery, dry fino sherry and little saucers of warmed almonds and spiced olives. Guests are given ample time to relax and carefully consider the unusual, fresh-from-the-market offerings, such as braised rabbit in pancetta broth and buffalo steak with scalloped potatoes.

Side dishes might be exotica like fiddlehead ferns, but often she happily presents tomatoes and zucchini that friends bring in from their own gardens.

“I was quite taken with everything she served—her dishes were composed with two or three elements, never more than four,” says John Mariani, noting Hage's foie gras with East Texas black-eyed peas and cornbread, and her dessert of white cherry-rhubarb buckle. “Rather than belabor the ingredients, she extracts the very best from them.”

A Detroit native, Sharon Hage cooked plenty in big places, putting in an externship at Dallas' Tower Club while studying at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and spending five years in New York restaurants before coming back to Dallas. High-profile work included serving as Neiman Marcus' executive chef and working at the elite Hotel St. Germain in Uptown.

The intimate setting of York Street reminds her of her favorite New York restaurants, however, where she came to understand that “you can run a viable business out of a closet.” Hage and her three kitchen-mates chat endlessly about changes to make in the next week's menu, sometimes a new dish lands on tables just 24 hours after it was dreamed up, and



Chef David Bull offers a Dali-esque invention of lobster salad with boucheron goat cheese, herb salad, and blackberry-lavender syrup. Below, Bull prepares for an adventurous tour of good taste—involving champagne and caviar.

many diners will gobble up even the most exotic items.

“It’s a nice surprise to find people latching onto things like sweetbreads—if we don’t have them, regulars will ask for them,” Hage says. “We can express ourselves culinarily and still do a good business, and not a lot of places can do that.”

IN AUSTIN, chef David Bull at the Driskill Grill began grabbing headlines in 2003 when *Food & Wine* named him one of the nation’s 10 best new chefs, citing him for “creating some of the most exciting Mexican-inflected cuisine in the country.”

A native of upstate New York, Bull’s culinary gene kicked in at age 10 when he began slicing bread and making salads in his grandfather’s restaurant. Also a CIA graduate, Bull worked at Dallas’ Mansion on Turtle Creek before heading to the Driskill Hotel in Austin in 1999.

In Texas, chef Bull found the food diversity compelling. Not only was he wooed by wonderful barbecue and true Mexican cuisine, he was amazed at the proliferation of French and Japanese dining. Austin gave him a bushel of reasons to consider himself at home.

“People in Austin have really opened up their arms, and there’s so much good food,” says Bull. “Being in the middle of the country, we can get produce and fish

DAVID BULL

What he serves: foie gras with black mission figs and vanilla brioche; beef tenderloin with black truffle-potato purée; seared hamachi with crab-crust scallop roll

What he eats away from work: fancy Frito pie, barbecue, and sushi

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604 BRAZOS STREET, AUSTIN; 512/391-7162

from everywhere, and we have really great local providers and purveyors in Central Texas.”

Bull says one of his challenges at the Driskill lies in changing people’s perceptions about hotel restaurants. Instead of

offering generic or mundane “hotel food,” Bull surprises diners with offerings such as hot-smoked Bandera quail with coriander orange curd, Patrón (tequila) ice, and micro cilantro, as well as a Japanese fish called hamachi, which he serves with frozen cucumbers and wasabi foam.

Bull changes his menu in some fashion or another on a daily basis, depending on the best things available at the moment. As the hotel’s executive chef, Bull has a kitchen staff of about 35 with whom he can brainstorm about vibrant, new dishes. The collective inspiration helped him craft a dynamic menu—featuring such gems as smoked ruby red trout with fried pickles, and seared diver scallop with pulled oxtail and chanterelle mushrooms—when he was presented as a celebrity chef at the James Beard House in New York in 2004.

hours before in the market. The five-course market-tasting menu (which changes daily) has delivered such goodies as duck prosciutto, veal rib chop with grits and saffron aioli, and organic *fromage blanc* pastry roulade with wild grape jam.

MONICA POPE

What she serves: Texas cheeses with black-eyed peas and feta; organic tomato and potato soup with basil pesto; beef roulade with manchego custard

What she eats away from work: gnocchi, foie gras, veal cheeks, and Vietnamese dishes

T’AFIA

3701 TRAVIS STREET, HOUSTON; 713/524-6922



SUPERSTAR status has long been assigned to Houston’s Monica Pope, once called the Alice Waters of the Third Coast for her monumental work at Houston’s Boulevard Bistro, and another who was named by *Food & Wine* as a “Top 10” best new chef. Now Pope receives effusive reviews for her innovative cuisine at the new and thrilling T’afia, a place in south midtown that she calls her “re-birth,” where she underscores her intent to serve the region’s freshest food by hosting the Midtown Farmers Market (produce sellers, plus artisan bakers, cheese-makers, and chocolatiers) in her restaurant’s parking lot every Saturday morning.

At dinner, guests can sample goods Pope found perhaps just



Chef Monica Pope of Houston’s T’afia garners great reviews with such selections as her corn and snow pea greens pancake with feta butter and smoked trout (top photo).

Pope wows even the city’s most demanding palates. Robb Walsh, dining critic at the *Houston Press*, calls Pope “a genius,” describing her restaurant and work as “flat-out brilliant.” *Gourmet* recently featured T’afia, too, with rich praise.

Houston was ripe for a place such as T’afia, says Pope, a German-born chef who grew up in Houston, studied culinary arts in London, and worked all over Europe before returning to Texas. Like Bull and Hage, Pope rejoices in realizing that patrons share her passion for candor on the plate and palate.

“I kept hearing people say, ‘I just want to eat clean food,’” Pope says. “They respond to my challenge, which is to keep flavors honest and clean and good.”

With a like-minded kitchen staff of eight, Pope can further a mission she established a few years ago when she helped charter Chefs Collaborative 2000, an organization of hundreds of chefs nationwide who spread the gospel of clean food sources and using healthful, seasonal foods in cooking.

At T’afia (which Pope says comes from the French word “ratafia,” a fortified wine featured on her wine list), she can combine her love for food and home.

“I could do this in San Francisco or New York, places I really like,” Pope says. “But this is where I want to be. It’s home.”

COMING HOME and cooking from the heart sound familiar tones to Lanny Lancarte II, Fort Worth's most exciting new culinary personality. The first in four generations of the Joe T. Garcia's restaurant family to ever take a cooking lesson, Lancarte shocked Cowtown by graduating from the CIA and opening an haute-Mexican-cuisine dining room within his great-grandfather's celebrated Tex-Mex landmark.

Although the creations sound complicated, Lancarte so carefully composes ingredients that they resonate with clarity.

To prepare for eventually opening his own bistro, Lancarte produces lavishly wrought creations in petite portions in the enclave he calls Lanny's Alta Cocina Mexicana. This tasting-menu style of dining allows guests to sample a wide variety of flavors, such as lobster ceviche, goat-cheese-stuffed *huitlacoche* (Mexican corn truffle) ravioli, and braised beef short ribs atop apricot mole, which Lancarte pairs with unusual wines from Mexico, Spain, and France.

Although the creations sound complicated, Lancarte so carefully composes ingredients that they resonate with clarity. To achieve this, he combines the best seasonal products he can locate—whether from a local goat-cheese maker or from an overseas fish purveyor—with pure Mexican cooking and classical training.

“My nouvelle Mexican food lets me

LANNY LANCARTE II

What he serves: lobster-goat cheese crepe over tomatillo salsa; pepita-cruste sea bass in Key lime beurre blanc; tenderloin carne asada with lentil tamal

What he eats away from work: sushi

**LANNY'S ALTA COCINA MEXICANA
AT JOE T. GARCIA'S** 2201 NORTH COMMERCE
STREET, FORT WORTH; 817/626-4356



Chef Lanny Lancarte II fuses pure Mexican cooking and classical training with exciting results in Fort Worth.

put different techniques and cuisines I've learned with authentic ingredients to present those ingredients in a new way,” says Lancarte.

An impressive coterie of diners—among them, Edward P. Bass of the city's prominent Bass family—has found Lan-

carte's groundbreaking dinners worth frequent visits.

“A seven-course meal with Lanny in the beautiful [dining] room at Joe T.'s ranks as one of the all-time-great culinary experiences in Fort Worth,” says Bass. “Lanny's marriage of French cuisine with indigenous Mexican tradition is truly magical.”

The tiniest details take hours of preparation. For the presentation of his *xoconostle* (Nahuatl for cactus fruit)

sorbet, Lancarte crafts the perfect little ice block. Shaped in a ram-ekin and dotted with purple and yellow flowers inside the ice, the block has an indentation that holds the sorbet, and the whole work sits atop a bright green square of banana leaf.

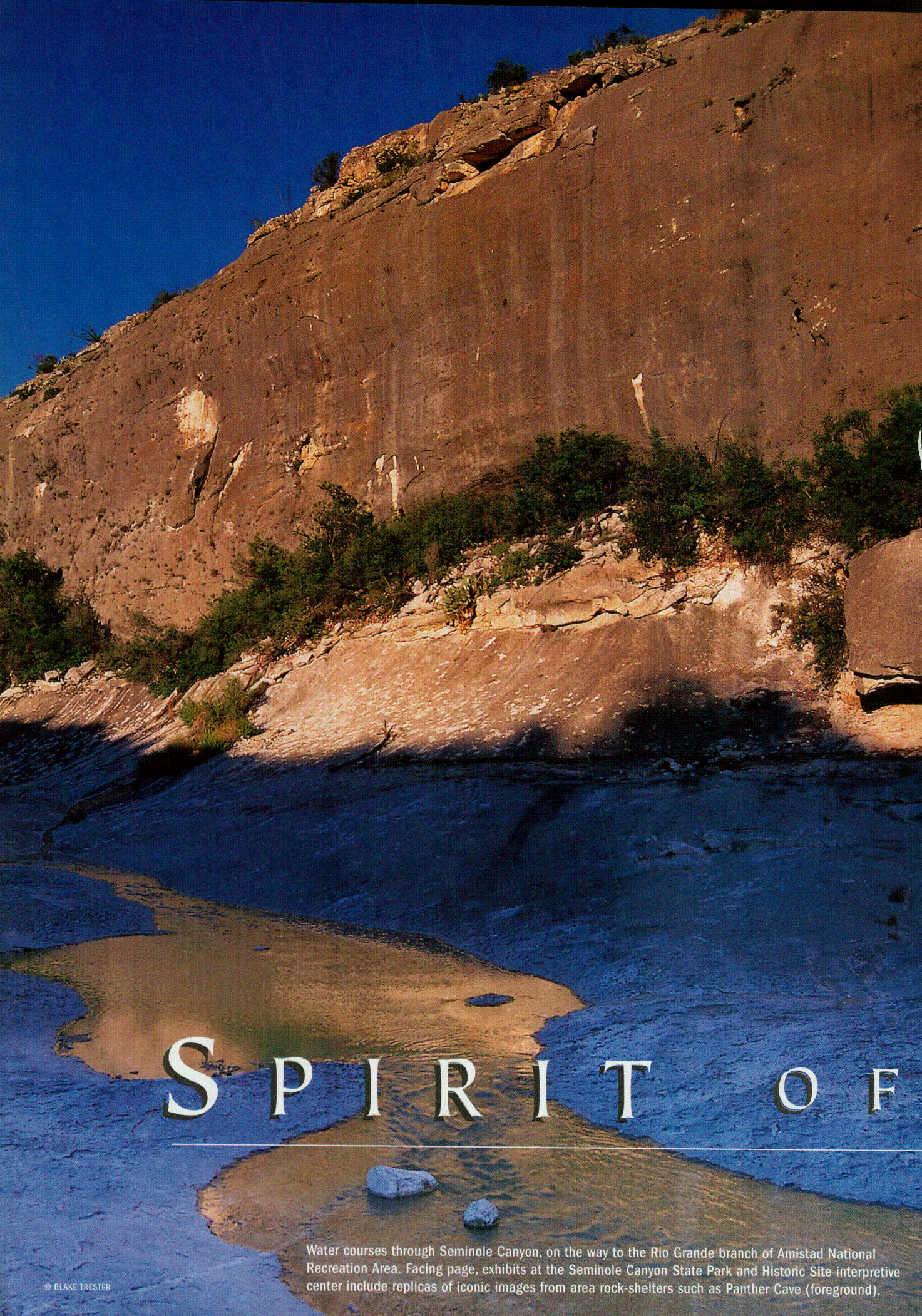
The elder Lanny Lancarte, the Joe T. Garcia grandson who runs the mother restaurant, worries that his son works too hard. The younger Lancarte says his intensity lies at the core of his commitment—and that it's part of his enjoyment.

“We're not doing brain surgery here, but I want to touch every plate before it goes out,” he says. “I've got

to stay focused the whole way, then open a beer after the last dessert is served.” ★

JUNE NAYLOR pursued the perfect pie in our November 2004 issue.

Staff photographer GRIFF SMITH shot June Naylor's “Life of Pie” feature.



S P I R I T O F

Water courses through Seminole Canyon, on the way to the Rio Grande branch of Amistad National Recreation Area. Facing page, exhibits at the Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site interpretive center include replicas of iconic images from area rock-shelters such as Panther Cave (foreground).

ANCIENT ROCK ART

OF THE LOWER PECOS

OPENS A WINDOW

TO THE REGION'S

MYSTERIOUS PAST.

THE STONE

BY RANDY MALLORY





NCE I PASSED LAKE

Amistad, northwest of Del Rio, traffic on US 90 thinned out across the spare desert scenery.

My fellow travelers—18-wheelers and perhaps tourists bound for the Davis Mountains or Big Bend National Park—continued the gradual climb toward the mountains of the Trans-Pecos. I turned off just before the high bridge over the Pecos River and veered onto backroads to view some of the oldest and best-preserved rock art in North America.

Archeologists call this area the Lower Pecos—where the Pecos, Devils, and Rio Grande rivers form Lake Amistad. Eons of wind and water carved myriad canyons out of the undulating plateau. The same natural forces wore away soft layers in the limestone canyon walls to form countless overhangs. For millennia, these rock-shelters provided living quarters and ceremonial sites for prehistoric peoples.

On the floors of these spaces, the ancients left startling reminders of themselves—handwoven baskets and sandals, tools, cooking and trash pits, graves, and pebbles painted with geometric patterns. They also left fantastic pictographs—paintings on rock—covering the rock-shelters' walls.



© FRED HIRSCHMANN

Myriad pictographs in the Pecos River style adorn Rattlesnake Canyon, a side canyon of the Rio Grande.

THE EARLIEST PICTOGRAPHS HERE (PECOS RIVER-STYLE), PAINTED BETWEEN 3,000 AND 4,000 YEARS AGO, REMAIN THE STATE'S MOST PROLIFIC AND MOST STUDIED ROCK ART.

Some of the paintings depict simplified animal figures: deer, mountain lions, turkeys, rabbits, turtles, and birds. Others show strange, ghostly human figures with outstretched arms holding a staff or spear-like *atlatl*. Their long, rectangular bodies sometimes have no discernible heads, or sometimes have faceless heads of feathered birds or horned deer. Hair-like or fringe-like lines often radiate from the anthropomorphic beings.

These fanciful figures grace some 300

At Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site, Fate Bell Shelter (the overhang in the distance) was one of the first Lower Pecos River rock-shelters examined by archeologists, beginning in the 1930s.

known rock-art sites within a 50-mile radius of Lake Amistad. Hundreds more may lie undiscovered or unreported in the rugged backcountry.

Rock-art pilgrims from around the world come here posing the same questions: Who were these aboriginal artists, and what do their mysterious murals mean?

SEMINOLE CANYON STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE



The vast majority of rock-art sites are on private property, inaccessible to the public. Fortunately, a handful of public-access sites offer closeup views of pictographs.

Two popular sites lie within the 2,172-acre Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site (named for black Seminole Indians who scouted the area with the U.S. Army in the late 1800s). The park's interpretive center, on US 90, 20 miles east of Langtry, sets the stage for the viewing experience.

At the end of the last Ice Age (12,000 years ago), nomadic Paleoindians migrated here at a time when the climate was cooler and moister than it is now. A diorama in the museum shows ancient camels, massive bison, and mammoths crossing a lush Seminole Canyon. Another exhibit dramatizes a famous prehistoric



Galloway White Shaman Preserve features a replica of a hunter-gatherer camp, created with natural materials by Comstock artisan Steve Norman.

THESE FANCIFUL FIGURES GRACE SOME 300 KNOWN ROCK-ART SITES WITHIN A 50-MILE RADIUS OF LAKE AMISTAD. HUNDREDS MORE MAY LIE UNDISCOVERED OR UNREPORTED IN THE RUGGED BACKCOUNTRY.

incident: At Bonfire Shelter, west of the park, hunters killed hundreds of bison by stampeding them over a canyon rim. It is the continent's earliest known and southernmost "bison jump."

By about 7,000 years ago, climatic changes had created a much drier, sparsely vegetated landscape, similar to today's. Scattered clans of hunter-gatherers—possibly numbering in the hundreds—lived in the rock-shelters and survived on plants, small animals, and aquatic creatures found in the canyons. By about 4,000 years ago, some clan members (perhaps spiritual leaders) began drawing images that range from several inches to more than 20 feet high.

Their descendants, as well as new arrivals, were still painting the walls after Spanish missionaries and soldiers arrived in the 1500s, as evidenced by pictographs of buildings with Christian crosses, Longhorn cattle, and men with button-up shirts. The rock-art people eventually left the area, perhaps pushed into Mexico by climatic changes and by the arrival of Europeans and Indians.

The earliest pictographs here (Pecos River-style), painted between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago, remain the state's most prolific and most studied rock art. Later styles—called Red Linear, Red Monochrome, and Historic—were painted alongside and sometimes on top of earlier works.

These Stone Age painters probably mixed minerals, ground from local rocks, with plant oils or animal fat to make earth-tone paints in shades of red, black, orange, yellow, white, and brown—though red is the predominant color.

According to Seminole Canyon manager Emmitt "Pancho" Brotherton, some ancient artists painted with their fingertips or used plant fibers as brushes. Others may have blown paint through hollow reeds. "The hard part," Pancho notes, "is to step back thousands of years and decide what the art means."

That thought stuck with me as I climbed steep steps halfway up Seminole Canyon on a guided hike to Fate Bell Shelter. (The park also offers periodic

tours of its other public rock-art site, in Presa Canyon.)

Named for the site's former owner, Fate Bell is one of the region's most well-documented rock-shelters, first studied by archeologist A.T. Jackson in 1932. It's also one of the largest, measuring 450 feet long and nearly 100 feet wide. Hundreds of pictographs cover the wall here, reaching from five to 30 feet above the current floor level. The highest works were done when the floor was much higher, before floods gradually lowered the level.

The site's most famous scene, the "Triad," shows several figures commonly called shamans (spiritual teachers or supernatural beings). A red shaman has an antlered head and thick, feathered arms spread like wings. A tricolored shaman (red, yellow, and black) carries weapons and has a serpentine line passing through its torso.



Looming above Seminole Canyon, a 17-foot bronze statue titled *The Maker of Peace* is Texas artist Bill Worrell's interpretation of symbolic images found in Lower Pecos River rock art. The Galloway White Shaman Preserve's namesake pictograph (facing page) forms part of a 12- by 24-foot mural.



In an authoritative new book, *Rock Art of the Lower Pecos*, artist-archeologist Dr. Carolyn Boyd fleshes out the “shamanistic interpretation” of rock art. Texas historian W.W. Newcomb first proposed the theory in his classic 1967 text, *The Rock Art of Texas Indians*. (In it, Dallas artist Forrest Kirkland’s watercolor illustrations recorded many pictographs

now lost to weathering and vandalism.) According to Dr. Boyd’s interpretation, the painted images chronicle the shamans’ spiritual journeys to an underground spirit world. Pictographic arches represent transcendent gateways, and animal images symbolize spirit-helpers. To access the supernatural realm, shamans entered trances induced by ingesting hallucino-

genic native plants, such as peyote, mountain laurel beans, and jimson weed. Dr. Boyd finds similar practices and worldviews in contemporary Indian cultures of Mexico, including those of the Tarahumara, Huichol, Aztec, and Yaqui.

Rather than random images, the shaman rock art contains recurring themes, Dr. Boyd maintains. The coherent messages

A DREAMLIKE WORLD OF CREATURES AND DESIGNS—FLYING TORCHES, ANTLERED SHAMANS, CRENELLATED ARCHES, HUMAN FIGURES WITH FEATHERED DARTS, AND SLAIN DEER—SWIRLS ACROSS THE SURROUNDING 12- BY 24-FOOT MURAL.



© BLAKE TRESTER

The panther pictograph for which the Curly Tail Panther site is named lies inside an alcove on high cliffs. (The site is owned by the Rock Art Foundation and accessible only with a guide and special authorization.)

allowed ancient communities to share a common cosmology that made sense of their worldly experiences.

To educate the public about rock art, Dr. Boyd and her paleobotanist husband, Dr. Phil Dering, established the Shumla School in 1998. Headquartered in Comstock (between Del Rio and Seminole Canyon State Park), the school offers group field trips to local rockshelters and educational programs statewide.

GALLOWAY WHITE SHAMAN PRESERVE

A San Antonio-based preservation and research organization, the Rock Art Foundation also aims to teach about pictographs. In 1991, noted archeologist Dr. Solveig Turpin and photographer Jim Zintgraff (who coauthored influential rock-art books) helped form the foundation, which now has some 900 members.

A stone’s throw from Seminole Canyon State Park, I joined a guided tour of the foundation’s Galloway White Shaman Preserve (the Galloway family donated the site). The preserve’s gravel road winds past a striking, 14-foot-tall limestone statue by Texas artist Dean Mitchell. The shamanic effigy has a cutout in its torso aligned so that it catches the first light on summer and winter solstices. A short drive away, a replicated hunter-gatherer village interprets life in an archaic-Indian summer camp. Comstock artisan Steve Norman built the camp using local natural materials.

essentials LOWER PECOS ROCK ART

Near the camp, a steep trail overlooking the Pecos River descends into a narrow side canyon containing the preserve's namesake White Shaman pictograph.

The central shaman has a black panel and red undulating lines running the length of its pale white body. A dreamlike world of creatures and designs—flying torches, antlered shamans, crenellated arches, human figures with feathered darts, and slain deer—swirls across the surrounding 12- by 24-foot mural.

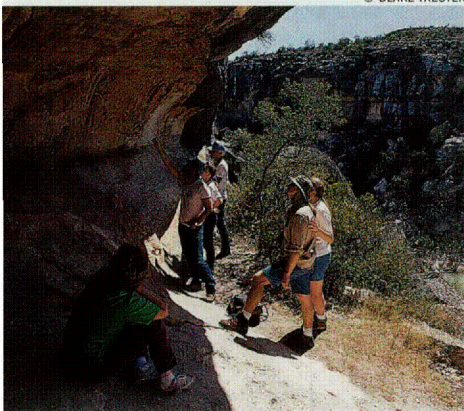
"I'm convinced the art is spiritual, developed by shamans in times of great need to teach lessons about life and death," says Jim Zintgraff. "Today is also a time of great need, so this is a place where people can still go to reflect and feel rejuvenated."

AMISTAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

For my final rock-shelter ramble, I hitched a boat ride with the Amistad National Recreation Area's chief archeologist, Joe Labadie, to Panther Cave, located where Seminole Canyon meets the Rio Grande. Metal stairs lead from the boat dock high up the canyon wall to where a tall chain-link fence protects the art. (Boaters also can access Amistad NRA's Parida Cave, located a few miles upstream from Panther Cave.)

More than 800 images cover the 85-foot-long Panther Cave in four or five layers. Layering suggests extended use, perhaps as a ceremonial site where elders instructed youth on rites of passage.

© BLAKE TRESTER



Visitors learn about the intricate details of pictographs on a guided tour of Galloway White Shaman Preserve.

Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site is 40 miles west of Del Rio on US 90. Interpretive center exhibits open daily 8-5. Guided tours of Fate Bell rock-shelter are Wed-Sun at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. On Jan. 29 and Feb. 19, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., a guided tour visits Presa Canyon (strenuous hiking involved). Tours on Jan. 30 and Feb. 20, 8:30 to 11 a.m., cover Upper Canyon's rock art and 1882 railroad sites. The 2,172-acre park also features improved camping and picnic sites, plus 9 miles of hiking/biking and nature trails. For reservations and fees, call 432/292-4464 (www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/seminole). Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. also offers periodic rock-art tours at Devils River State Natural Area (830/395-2133), Hueco Tanks State Historic Site (915/857-1135), and Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area (432/229-3416).

Galloway White Shaman Preserve, operated by the Rock Art Foundation, is approximately 1 mile west of Seminole Canyon State Park on US 90 at the Pecos River Bridge. Guided tours on Sat. at 12:30. Periodic tours also visit another Pecos River rock-shelter (the Lewis Canyon site, featuring rock carvings, or petroglyphs), 4 Devils River pictograph sites, and the Bonfire Shelter near Langtry (foundation membership required). Some tours require high-clearance vehicles. The Rock Art Foundation hosts a Rendezvous each Oct., with camping at White Shaman, rock-art tours, and entertainment. For schedules, reservations, and fees, call 888/525-9907; www.rockart.org.

The visitor information center at **Amistad Natl. Recreation Area** is 5.5 miles west of Del Rio on US 90 (across from Three Rivers RV Park) and features rock-art exhibits and videos. The center hosts presentations by experts on various topics every 3rd Sat. Call 830/775-7491; www.nps.gov/amis.



Shumla School is 50 miles west of Del Rio on US 90. On Feb. 26, 2005, it hosts "Prehistory on the Pecos," a full day of rock-art tours, hands-on activities, a barbecue, and a lecture. "The Pecos Experience," Mar. 6-11, 2005, features rock-art tours, seminars, art study, and nature activities. Shumla also offers educational programs for schools and community groups. For details and directions, call 432/292-4848; www.shumla.org. In mid-Oct., the Shumla School joins Amistad NRA and Del Rio's Whitehead Memorial Museum in sponsoring the annual Val Verde Co. Archeology Fair, held at the museum (1308 S. Main St.), to celebrate Texas Archeology Month. Call Amistad NRA, 830/775-7491, ext. 223.

BOOKS/VIDEO

Look for the following in your library or bookstore, or online: *Rock Art of the Lower Pecos* by Dr. Carolyn Boyd (Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2003); *Life in a Rock Shelter: Prehistoric Indians of the Lower Pecos* by G. Elaine Acker (Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1997, appropriate for children); *The Rock Art of Texas Indians* by Forrest Kirkland and W.W. Newcomb (Univ. of Texas Press, 1967, reissued 1996); *Pecos River Rock Art: A Photographic Essay* by Jim Zintgraff and Solveig A. Turpin (Sandy McPherson Publishing Co., 1991). The Rock Art Foundation offers an interactive CD-ROM, *Rock Art of the Lower Pecos* (\$25, www.rockart.org).

Looming over the painted wall is a red, nine-foot-tall leaping panther or mountain lion, the canyon's most powerful hunter. Beneath the cat, a winged human rises above a circle, possibly a sign of transmutation (changing from one state to another). "All cultures have this concept. People take on the nature of their world's most powerful figure," Joe explained. "You can't say exactly what the rock art means. But you can enjoy the beauty of the work and tap into its spiritual qualities.

Something powerful happened here 4,000 years ago."

Indeed, the pictographs of the Lower Pecos are works of art worthy of any modern museum. Yet, something in the immutable, solid nature of those limestone canvases whispers a deeper message. Whether millennia ago, or just yesterday, humans have always turned to art to help find their place in the world. ★

RANDY MALLORY will write about his fun finds along Waco's traffic circle in the March issue.



THE NATURE
CONSERVANCY
OF TEXAS



Make a Date

BY CAROL BARRINGTON

WITH NATURE

LESS THAN 10 MINUTES into a March stroll at the Texas City Prairie Preserve, we nearly stumble over a killdeer. Poofed protectively over her four speckled eggs in a rocky, ground-level nest, this beautiful brown-and-white bird keeps her wary eyes on us as we swiftly move back and then hunker down for a closer look.

Within minutes, the sound of wings whapping air draws our eyes upward as four roseate spoonbills fly overhead, a rare and stunning sight.

Obviously, it pays to move slowly and keep your eyes open at this 2,300-acre protectorate on Moses Lake, some 40 miles southeast of Houston on the western edge of Galveston Bay. If we had come near dawn—with advance reservations—we would have been taken to view a “booming” Attwater’s prairie chicken, one of the most endangered bird species on our planet, and we might have witnessed its energetic courtship dance. (The “booming” refers to the haunting call of the bird. It resembles the sound made when blowing over the top of a soda bottle.)

Marked only by a small sign, this special place quietly thrives under the ownership and protection of The Nature Conservancy of Texas, whose primary mission echoes that of its international parent, The Nature Conservancy: to preserve the “last great places on Earth.”

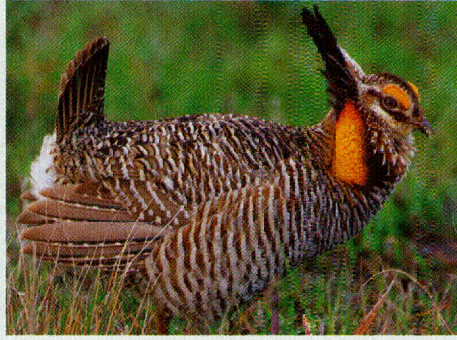
Texas has quite a few of those. A major force in Lone Star environmental projects since 1964, the Texas Conservancy currently owns 33 nature pre-



© NATURE CONSERVANCY/LYNN McBRIDE

At top, adult and immature roseate spoonbills share wetlands habitats with other wading birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl at Texas City Prairie Preserve. Above, right, prickly pear cactus and Indian blankets bloom at Chihuahuah Woods Preserve in South Texas. Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary (facing page) in East Texas preserves a mix of bald cypress-water tupelo swamps, hardwood bottomlands, and one of the last remaining longleaf-pine communities in Texas.





During courtship displays, male prairie chickens extend their long neck feathers upward behind their heads like horns. On each side of their throats, big sacs of yellowish-orange skin inflate, and the golden skin at their eyebrows engorges. They strut about, stomping their feet, raising and lowering their heads, and emitting long, low moans to attract females. The grasslands of the Conservancy's Texas City Prairie Preserve, shown above and right, and Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, northeast of Eagle Lake, are being managed to keep the endangered birds from extinction.

conservation projects, and manages an additional 27 land-preservation projects in cooperation with private landowners. In all, its protective umbrella covers more than 920,000 biologically diverse acres scattered throughout the state.

Some holdings are on private land, difficult to access, or are so sensitive they should not be disturbed. Others sponsor special public workdays, educational programs, hikes, field trips, bird counts, and so on at various times throughout the year.

The following four sites welcome the public daily and allow you to wander limited areas on your own. Be aware that you may have to search to find them, and on-site rangers and facilities such as restrooms and picnic areas are nonexistent. Dress appropriately, and bring

both drinking water and insect repellent.

Best visited during cool-weather months (now through March is ideal), each site has its own distinctive environmental personality and reason for conservancy protection.

TEXAS CITY PRAIRIE PRESERVE

By nurturing the sensitive environment required for their survival, this coastal preserve specifically cossets one of Texas' two surviving flocks of the extremely endangered Attwater's prairie chicken. Created in 1995 via a \$2.2 million land donation (including mineral rights) from Mobil Oil Corporation (now ExxonMobil), it's a prime example of how the Texas Conservancy works with industries to reach its goals.



ALL PHOTOS © NATURE CONSERVANCY/LYNN McBRIDE

More than a million of these wild grouse, known for their “booming” sound and dance, during breeding, once thrived on the Texas coastal plain. In recent years, their numbers—decimated by continued loss of native grasslands habitat—have been reduced to fewer than 50 birds in the wild. Good news, though: Conservation efforts may be succeeding.

The Texas City site had eight male

Attwater’s prairie chickens in its 2003 flock, and at least 11 males plus an undetermined number of females in 2004. The females prove difficult to count because they hide. To encourage breeding, the preserve uses what the staff refers to as “mail-order brides,” captive-bred female juveniles that are kept briefly in pens at the preserve while they acclimate and mature.

Every summer, those female birds (as

well as captive-bred males that are also acclimated in pens) are released in the hope that they will breed and thrive in the wild. However, there’s no such thing as old age for these birds; even in natural flocks, their life expectancy rarely exceeds three years.

Consistently providing and expanding the birds’ natural habitat is crucial. Aided by volunteers, the conservancy seasonally harvests and re-sows seeds of native







Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary features six miles of trails for hiking, photography, and nature study.



walking trails that thread 25 acres adjacent to the preserve's parking lot.

ROY E. LARSEN
SANDYLAND SANCTUARY

This 5,654-acre Hardin County preserve near Silsbee, in East Texas, protects one of the state's most unusual landscapes, an ecologically diverse mix of hardwood bottomlands, flowing water, sandy ridges, and bald cypress-water tupelo swamps.

Six miles of looping trails bring you close to pretty Village Creek, numerous rare plant communities, and one of the state's last remaining stands of longleaf pines.

Before settlement brought sawmills, more than 70 million acres of these handsome, silky-needed trees stretched from Virginia through East Texas. Because only three percent of that forest survives today, the conservancy works with many partners to reverse that loss.

Established in 1977 with donations from Time, Inc., and Temple-Eastex Inc., Sandyland Sanctuary received another 40 acres in 1978 from Gulf States Utilities Company, and nearly doubled in size in 1994 with a 3,158-acre donation from Temple-Inland Inc. The 1994 acquisition gave the sanctuary control of both sides of Village Creek for 8.5 miles, a primal canoeing or walking experience.

"Village Creek frequently overflows into its flood plain in spring and fall," points out Wendy Ledbetter, the conservancy's Big Thicket project director. "When the water's at normal level, however, the 2.8 mile-long Floodplain Trail hugs the creek as it guides visitors along sandbars and through hardwood and cypress forests. By the time the trail climbs the riverbank to the uplands portion of the sanctuary, folks have experienced something very special."

A globally important birding site (particularly in winter; 123 species have been sighted here), Sandyland Sanctuary also protects some 727 plant and 239 animal species. Plant rarities include the endangered trailing phlox (blooms in April), white firewheel (found only in Hardin County), and the carnivorous purple bladderwort. Worry not; the latter is very



Cypress swamp (top) is just one habitat found in the Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary, which also includes hardwood forests, flowing water, and sandy ridges with rare stands of longleaf pines. Chihuahuahua Woods Preserve (above) contains prickly pear and other cacti in a Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat that has become all too common in South Texas.

grasses and wildflowers, does prescribed burns and selective mowing, and uses cattle as a form of prairie lawn-service. The cattle eat everything but trees down to the ground, and leave lots of fertilizer behind, a vita-boost for the native grasses.

During the birds' winter "booming" season (January through mid-March), visi-

tors with advance reservations are taken in groups of 10 to observation blinds in restricted areas of the preserve. This is the only time you will have a chance to see these reclusive birds. Numerous other avian species, particularly wintering and migrating grassland songbirds, shorebirds, and natives, thrive along the public



© NATURE CONSERVANCY

Chihuahua Woods Preserve harbors numerous species of cacti and reptiles, including strawberry cactus and the Texas tortoise. The Texas Nature Conservancy offers checklists for the preserve's plants, birds, butterflies, and other animals.



Springtime at Lennox Woods Preserve in northeast Texas means the hardwoods bear new leaves and the dogwoods bloom in this remnant of an old-growth forest.

small, floats on ponds, and dines only on tiny insects.

Summer visits here can be hot and humid, but winter and spring deliver solitude, cool weather, and rare rewards. February finds violets and forget-me-nots blooming in the uplands and flood plains, while redbuds, wild plum, and Carolina jessamine blossom along the creek. March brings flowering dogwoods and wild azaleas, as well as large flocks of robins, goldfinches, and butterflies.

CHIHUAHUA WOODS PRESERVE

Less than five percent of the Rio Grande Valley's native Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat survives, and this 349-acre property near Mission

is a rare example. The conservancy acquired the site in 1991, primarily to protect a rare cactus collection unequalled in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV).

Visitors today find a wild place that's surprisingly easy to visit. Access is via a looping, mile-long trail, but project manager Lisa Williams suggests you "wear sturdy shoes, not sandals, because the paths are not regularly maintained. Leave pets and small children at home, because of thorns and the possibility of encountering poisonous snakes, insects, and Africanized bees in the park. It's important to stay on the trail and watch where you put your feet."

Warnings notwithstanding, Chihuahua Woods dishes up major visual magic when the cacti bloom, generally from

mid-March through mid-to-late April, a dream landscape for both photographers and cactus-lovers. Hundreds of plants, representing more than a dozen species, form thick color carpets along the trail. Late or extended rain affects the blooming season, so call ahead.

Birding is good year round, but winter is prime. Some 119 species either live here or visit, and there's no need to get up early for great viewing. The abundant food supply keeps the birds busy and visible well into the late morning.

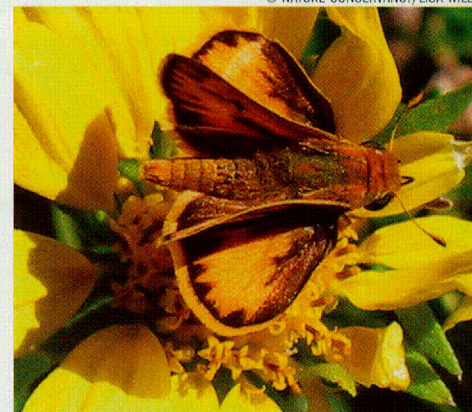
The LRGV's three-county area boasts nearly 300 species of butterflies—more than are found in the entire eastern United States—and 150 of those species can be seen only here or in northern Mexico. Chihuahua Woods gets its colorful, whimsical share year round, but October through January afternoons generally offer the best viewing.

LENNOX WOODS PRESERVE

The approach to this northeastern Texas treasure tells the story: A thick forest stands tall amid multi-acres of commercial pine plantations, the vivid juxtaposition of natural yesterday and surrounding it, man-managed today.

Come here to experience the verdant growth of the northeastern Texas flood plains as they were before trees became a money crop. Reached by gravel and clay tracks (four-wheel-drive vehicles are advised in wet weather), this 1,300-acre

© NATURE CONSERVANCY/LISA WILLIAMS



Skippers are classified with butterflies (family Hesperidae), but share some characteristics in common with moths: Unlike typical butterflies, they have antennae clubs that hook backward, stocky bodies, stronger wing muscles, and better eyes.



One reason the Chihuahua Woods Preserve discourages visits by young children and pets: Copperheads and other venomous snakes are best left untouched.

holding north of Clarksville protects one of the state's last examples of mature, virgin timber.

A visit here illustrates a natural ecological system at work. Quixotic nature nurtures or destroys, and the forest then thrives or recovers, with a little help from the Texas Conservancy.

"A severe ice storm in 2001 devastated nearly half of the younger trees in the uplands portion of the preserve," notes Jim Eidson, the conservancy's ecoregional manager, "but the more mature trees still form a verdant, cathedral-like canopy that awes visitors. A burning program has cleaned out the slash resulting from the storm, so the woods now are more open and host to sun-loving herbs, wildflowers, and native grasses. Lennox Woods still has some stressed trees, however, and falling timber is a threat, so visitors enter at their own risk.

"This also is prime birding territory," continues Jim. "Bring binoculars, because you're almost guaranteed to see pileated and/or red-headed woodpeckers, as well as a variety of canopy-dwelling warblers."

No formal paths currently exist—it's you versus the wild—so learn how to use a compass, and bring it along. The 366 acres open to the public include both upland and bottomland habitats rich with rare plants and animals. Numerous varieties of hickories, oaks, and pines dominate, with creamy white dogwoods lacing both forest understories in early spring. Professional zoologists and botanists conduct seasonal inventories here, and the Texas Forest Service says that one of the pre-

serve's post oaks is more than 300 years old.

Although most of the surrounding forest was logged years ago, this woodland area was kept in its natural state by four generations of the Lennox family, who owned the property from 1863 until they donated it to The Nature Conservancy of Texas in 1990.

AS THESE FOUR diverse preserves illustrate, the conservancy works with both public and private partners to save and rehabilitate a wide variety of unique habitats. Over the past 40 years, the organization's land acquisitions have led to the enhancement or establishment of such major public recreation areas as Big Bend National Park, Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, San Jacinto State Historical Park, and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, with more to come. The Texas Conservancy's most recent purchases include

87,760 acres to protect the headwaters of the Devils River (in Val Verde County) and 10,000 acres in the Madera Canyon area of the Davis Mountains. The latter site ultimately will offer public access via a 2.5-mile hiking trail.

"Texas is one of the most biologically diverse states in the nation, rich in natural treasures, yet it is losing its undeveloped land faster than any other state," notes Carter Smith, the conservancy's Texas state director. "While we have accomplished much, we still have our work cut out for us."

In the meantime, many of the conservancy's already-protected "last great places" offer insight into the natural Texas that was. Visit with care and enjoy! ★

A longtime member of The Nature Conservancy, Montgomery resident CAROL BARRINGTON is the author of the popular guidebook *Day Trips from Houston*. Her first of many stories for *Texas Highways* appeared in 1981.

essentials THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF TEXAS

FOR SPECIFICS and contact information on all Nature Conservancy of Texas properties, go to nature.org/texas, and click on "Places We Protect," or write to Box 1440, San Antonio 78295-1440; 210/224-8774.

Sites covered in the story are the **Texas City Prairie Preserve**, 4702 Texas 146 North, Texas City, 409/945-4677; **Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary**, Hardin County, 409/385-0445; **Chihuahua Woods Preserve**, Hidalgo County, 956/580-4241; and **Lennox Woods Preserve**, Texas 37 in Red River County, 10 miles north of Clarksville, 903/568-4139.

MORE WILD TEXAS

Several of the Texas Conservancy's access-restricted properties open to the public for special events or at specific times of the year. For details, go to nature.org/texas, and click on "Field Trips and Events." Some highlights:

The **Eckert James River Bat Cave Preserve**, southwest of Mason, offers interpretive tours 6-9 p.m. Thu-Sun, mid-May-Oct; 325/347-5970.

Home to approximately 4 million Mexican free-tailed bats, this is one of the largest bat nurseries in the United States. Best time to go: 2 hours before sunset, so you won't miss seeing the "bat tornado" whirl from the cave

and the bats soaring more than 200 feet into the sky (see "Going Batty in Texas," July 2002). Requested donation: \$5.

Wild and remote, the **Davis Mountains Preserve**, near Fort Davis, offers a variety of special events nearly year round; 432/426-2390. Eleven

rare plant species, wild animals such as black bears and mountain lions, and an incredible variety of birds (including 10 species of hummingbirds) make this "sky island" one of the most biologically diverse areas of Texas. Reservations generally required.

Other public events may include kayaking workshops at **Clive Runnells Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve** on West Matagorda Bay (fee), 361/972-2559, and winter tours at **Dolan Falls Preserve** near Del Rio (fee), 830/775-9292.

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- 1 TEXAS CITY PRAIRIE PRESERVE
 - 2 ROY E. LARSEN SANDYLAND SANCTUARY
 - 3 CHIHUAHUA WOODS PRESERVE
 - 4 LENNOX WOODS PRESERVE
 - 5 ECKERT JAMES RIVER BAT CAVE PRESERVE
 - 6 DAVIS MOUNTAINS PRESERVE
 - 7 CLIVE RUNNELLS FAMILY MAD ISLAND MARSH PRESERVE
 - 8 DOLAN FALLS PRESERVE

ART FOR THE PEOPLE

TEXAS POST OFFICE MURALS



AMARILLO J. Marvin Jones Federal Building and Courthouse, 205 East Fifth St., *Loading Cattle*, Julius Woeltz, 1941

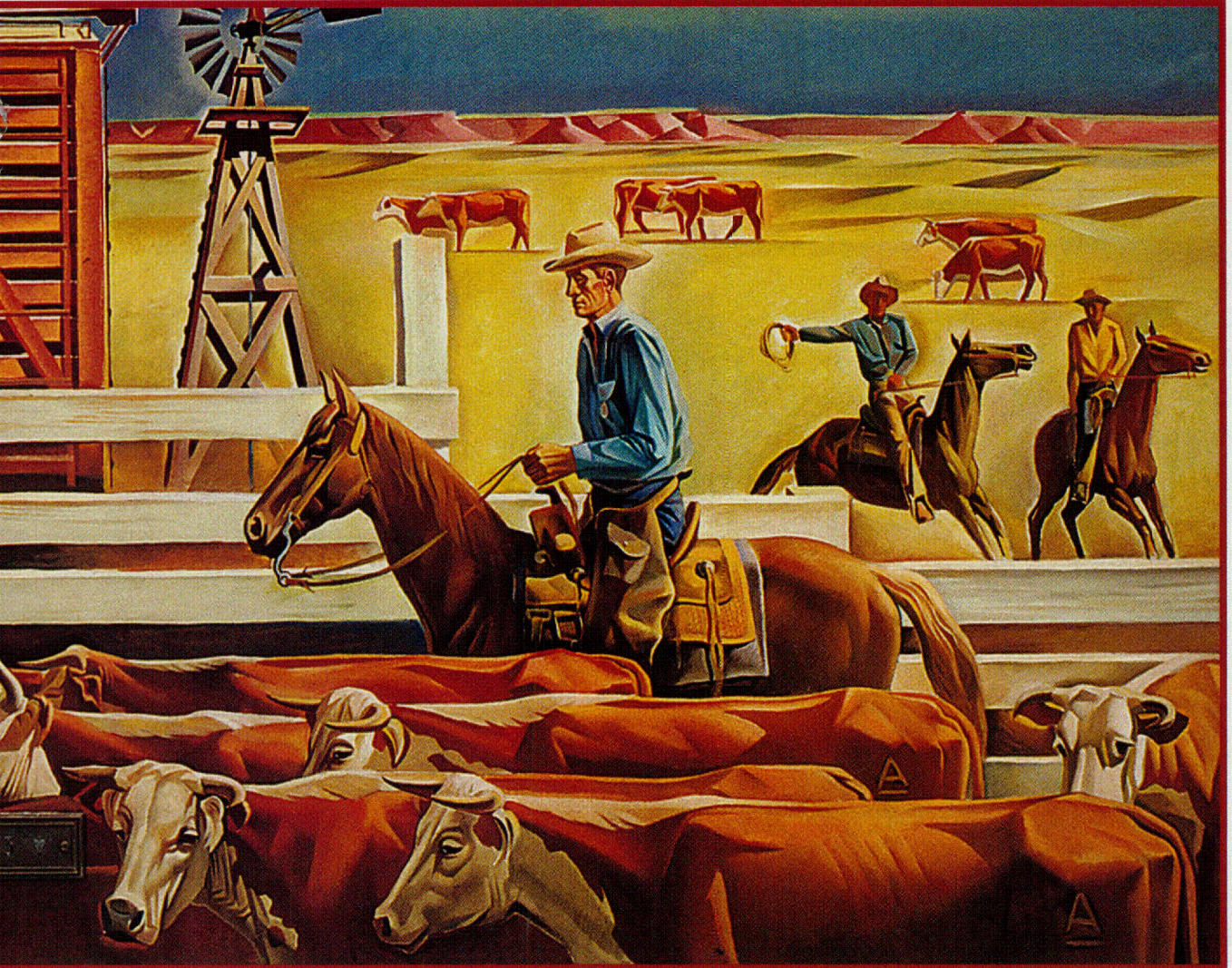
In Texas, artists created 106 artworks for 69 post offices and federal buildings. Nine have been destroyed or lost, and several are in storage, but most are still available for public viewing. Painted by some of the most promising and well-known artists of the 1930s, these artworks portray Texans' values embodied in such characters as the revered Indian chief Quanah Parker, cowboys, folk hero Sam Bass, Texas Rangers, and Texas legends Davy

POST OFFICE MURALS are the people's art. They portray the everyday lives, hopes, and aspirations of Americans. The murals sparkle with life and scenes depicting history, folklore, and regional landscapes. Yet, casual observers who happen upon the artworks may find them puzzling anachronisms—or marvelous surprises.

murals reflect the efforts of a country trying to recapture a vision of its greatness, a vision that had been reduced to a sputtering flame as the effects of the Great Depression swept across the country.

Crockett and Sam Houston. Several murals focus on Texas Longhorns, important symbols of Texas' historical identity.

Like all art, the post-office murals provide clues about the times in which they were created. The mu-



MURAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WYATT McSPADEN (EXCEPT WHERE NOTED); USED COURTESY TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

In attempts to reverse the country's economic and social woes, the Roosevelt administration initiated numerous public-work and relief projects under an array of individual programs. In 1933, artist George Biddle urged his friend President Franklin D. Roosevelt to employ artists to beautify the walls of public buildings with positive images of American life and history. The artworks would support New Deal objectives by bringing powerful, visual messages of hope to the people.

Roosevelt called upon Edward Bruce, an official with the U.S. Treasury Department and an accomplished painter, to



SAN ANTONIO U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse, 615 East Houston St., *San Antonio's Importance in Texas History: Santa Anna before Sam Houston*, Howard Cook, 1939

ART FOR THE PEOPLE

TEXAS POST OFFICE MURALS

organize a public-art program. In 1933, under Bruce's direction, the U.S. Treasury Department launched a six-month pilot program called the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP).

That year, an ambitious public-building program made available nearly \$145 million in public funds for the construction of 233 federal buildings, hospitals, courthouses, executive buildings, schools, libraries, post offices, and other public structures around the country. Under the PWAP, one percent of the building cost reserved for structure decoration would pay artists to create the murals. By June 1934, when the project ended, about 15,660 works of art, including 700 murals by some 3,750 artists, were displayed nationwide. Armed with such success, the PWAP staff convinced the federal government to extend the program by creating the Section of Painting and Sculpture (later renamed the Section of Fine Arts).

The Section focused on reaching as many people as possible across the country. And what better place to accomplish this goal than to install murals in local post offices, which often doubled as social centers? While art in public buildings had traditionally featured themes from classical mythology, the post office murals would instead address subjects to which Americans could relate.

The Section of Fine Arts' mission resembled that of the PWAP, which selected painters on the basis of merit. But whereas the PWAP provided relief to artists through hourly wages, the Section of Fine Arts paid for art through contracts won in open competitions. The anonymity of artists in the selection process gave all those competing, regardless of their ethnicity or gender, a fair opportunity (at least in theory) to land a contract. Local citizens also had a say in determining the art to be placed in their community.

The images presented here and in the book capture the vitality and compelling energy of Texas post office murals and make the murals accessible. In my book, I hope to foster a new understanding and enjoyment of the murals, and encourage people to visit, restore, and preserve a historic artistic legacy.

—PHILIP PARISI

PHILIP PARISI began researching Texas post office murals in 1989, when he was an editor with the Texas Historical Commission.



EL PASO Richard C. White Federal Building,
700 East San Antonio Ave., *Pass of the North*,
Tom Lea, 1938

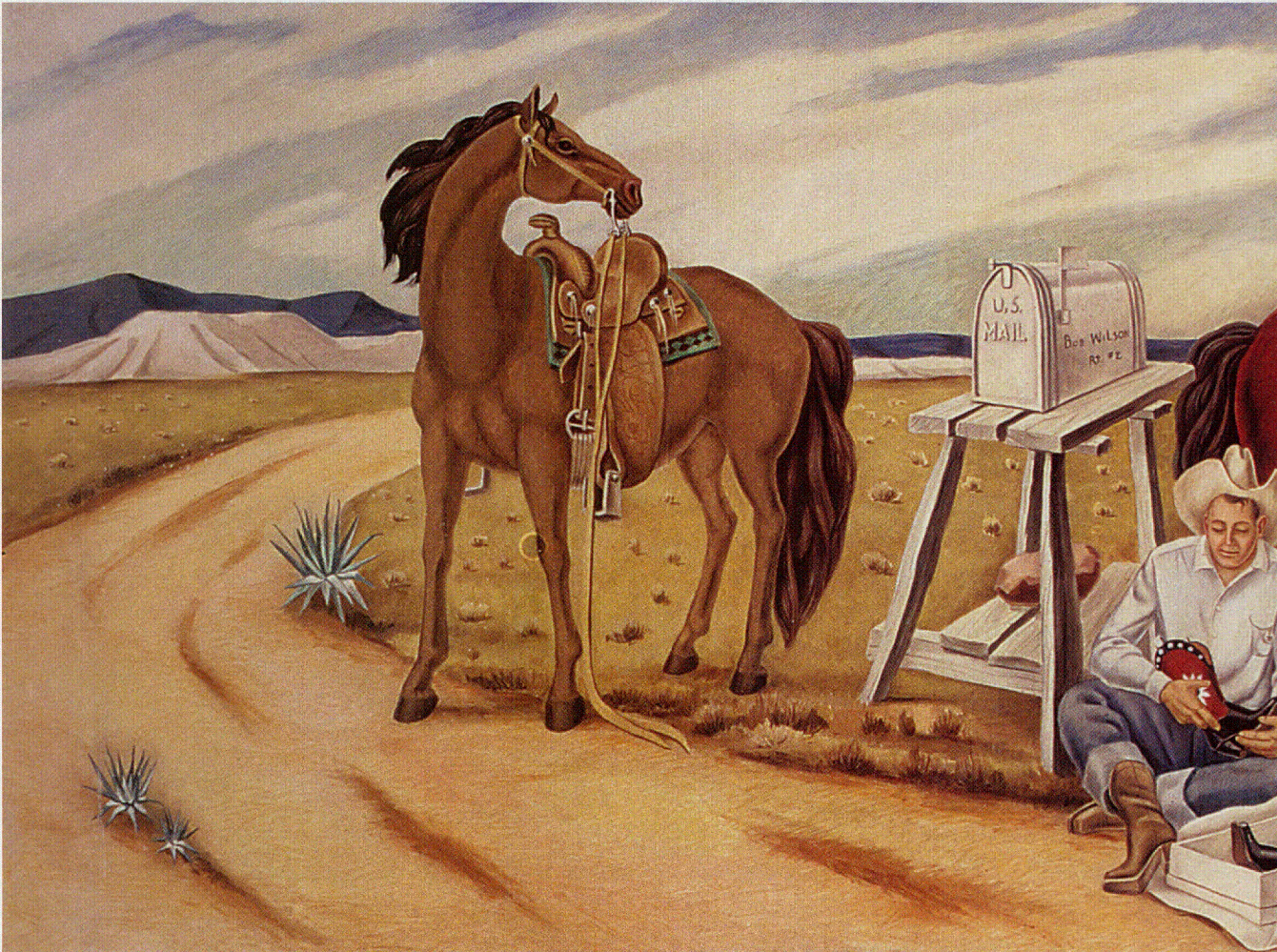


LINDEN Post Office, 200 East Rush St.,
Cotton Pickers, Victor Arnautoff, 1939

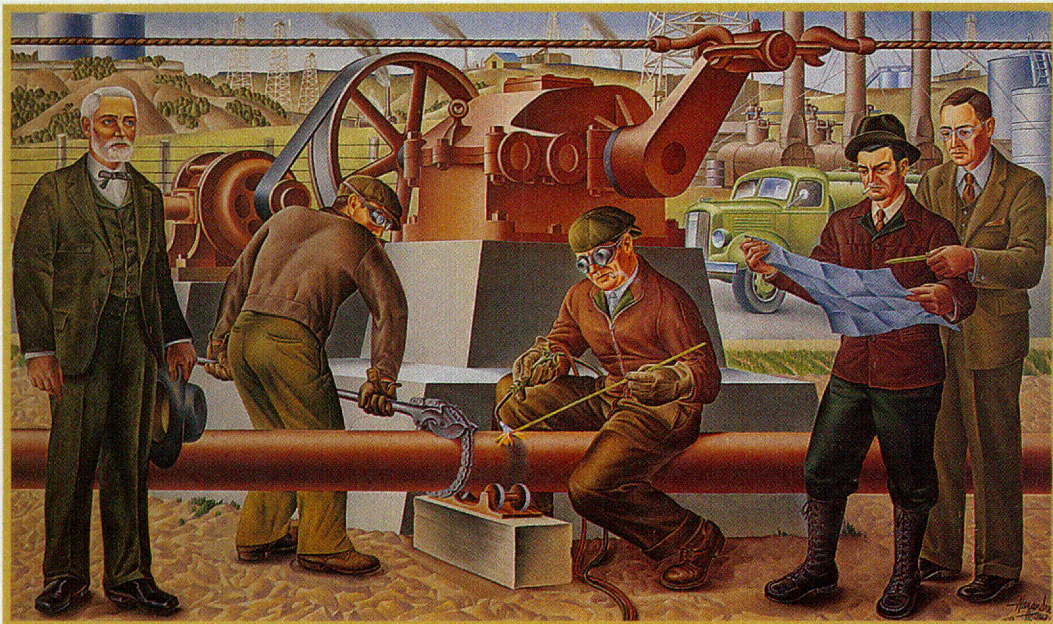


ART FOR THE PEOPLE

TEXAS POST OFFICE MURALS



GIDDINGS Post Office, 279 East Austin St., *Cowboys Receiving the Mail*, Otis Dozier, 1939



GRAHAM Old Post Office Museum and Art Center, 510 Third St., *Oil Fields of Graham*, Alexandre Hogue, 1939



FARMERSVILLE Post Office, 213 McKinney St., Soil Conservation in Collin County, Jerry Bywaters, 1941

ART FOR THE PEOPLE
TEXAS POST OFFICE MURALS



ALPINE Brewster County Tax Assessor's Office, 107 West Avenue E., *View of Alpine*, José Moya del Pino, 1940

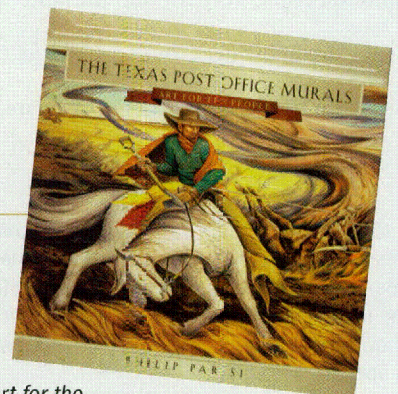
PHOTO BY PHILIP PARISI



ELGIN Post Office, 21 North Avenue C, *Texas Farm*, Julius Woeltz, 1940



HOUSTON Bob Casey Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 515 Rusk Ave., *Houston Ship Channel—Contemporary Scenes: Loading Cotton*, Jerry Bywaters, 1941



Look in your library or bookstore for *The Texas Post*

Office Murals: Art for the People by Philip Parisi (Texas A&M Univ. Press; \$50 hardcover). To order, call 800/826-8911; www.tamu.edu/upress.

For a listing of Texas post office murals, their locations, and a brief history, see www.thc.state.tx.us/triviafun/trvmurals.html.

You can buy 3 posters of the murals from the Institute of Texan Cultures; see <http://store.the-museum-store.org>, or call 800/776-7651.

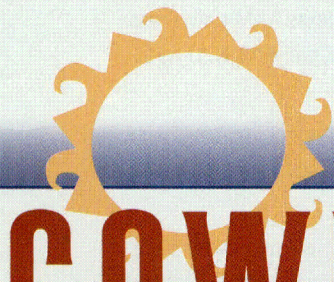
A TASTY TRADITION

BY JIM PEYTON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN DAVENPORT

WHILE THE ADAGE “There’s no free lunch” may hold true, once a year San Antonio invites all comers to a free breakfast. The unofficial kickoff of the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo, the Cowboy Breakfast has grown from serving a couple of hundred locals at its inception in 1979 to serving nearly 60,000 people from around the state. The event made it into *Guinness World Records 2001* for serving the most people at a breakfast in one hour: 18,941.

Once a year, volunteers at San Antonio’s Cowboy Breakfast cook a meal for thousands of people, who hail from San Antonio and around the state. The unofficial kickoff of the city’s annual Stock Show & Rodeo, the free feed at Crossroads Mall is open to everyone.



SAN ANTONIO'S

COWBOY BREAKFAST



Dancing before daybreak? It's a natural occurrence at the Cowboy Breakfast. With live music from local bands, a party atmosphere prevails. Volunteers prepare the food on site using cooking equipment custom-made for the event. Above right, workers scramble a spicy egg mixture for breakfast tacos. Chairman Cecil Lankford estimates that visitors put away some 32,000 tacos last year.

Staged entirely by volunteers in the parking lot of Crossroads Mall, in northwest San Antonio, the Cowboy Breakfast is always held on the fourth Friday in January (January 28 this year) from 5 to 9 a.m. Tasty food cooked on the premises—breakfast tacos, sausage-stuffed biscuits, and S.O.S. (ground beef and cream gravy served on a slice of bread)—accounts for

only part of the event's popularity. Thanks to music provided by some dozen local bands and the sheer number of people present, the early-morning extravaganza has the feeling of a huge Fourth of July block party.

The event's organizers carefully guard this tradition of down-home hospitality. Despite plenty of enticements over the years,



Part of the appeal of the Cowboy Breakfast is the tantalizing aromas of food cooking over mesquite. Above, Dickie Dzuik tends the firebox.

they have stubbornly refused to allow the breakfast to become just another for-profit civic event. They don't accept donations that come with strings attached, yet whatever supplies are needed always appear—free of charge.

Volunteer recruitment seems to work the same way. "Before the event, we have no idea how many people will show up to help," says chairman and "chief of operations" Cecil Lankford, "but the number increases each year. Last year, we had around 600."

Most of the volunteers arrive on the scene by 3 or 4 Friday morning. (Some come as early as Wednesday morning, when setup begins for two "pre-breakfast" events on Thursday: taco deliveries to the media—via limos—that morning, and a celebrity biscuit-cookoff that afternoon.) A blazing floodlight illuminates American and Texan flags flying 130 feet up, atop a crane parked near the cooking area. Like beacons, they guide a sea of cars into the massive parking lot.

A huge, open-sided cook tent on the northwest side of the lot serves as the operation's hub. Outside, volunteers line up to receive assignments that will have

them working furiously for the next four or five hours, after which many of them will go on to their usual jobs.

Pawnshop owner Lawrence Rahn has been working at the breakfast for more than a decade. He started out as a gravy-cooker, but for the last three years, he has baked biscuits, beginning his shift about 2 a.m. and going until almost 3. "The main reason I do it every year," says Lawrence, "is that you always run across all your old friends coming and going."

Near the cook tent, Cecil stands watch over a miniature volcano of mesquite charcoal as it sends sparks 15 feet into the darkness above. The red-hot coals will fuel the array of cooking devices inside. Cecil explains that while

the breakfasts in the early years made do with a half-dozen folding tables and three barbecue pits, feeding the hungry masses these days requires a 45-foot tractor-trailer rig to bring in all of the necessary equipment. Once it arrives, a forklift puts it in position.

The equipment, most of which Cecil designed and built, has a look that might best be described as "ranch-industrial." Huge cauldrons heat coffee over roaring flames. Volunteers pour pitchers of beaten eggs mixed with Ro-Tel tomatoes and crumbled bacon into massive iron cookers set over charcoal. Within a trailer, a huge barbecue-rotisserie packed with sausage-stuffed biscuits rotates through fragrant smoke.

"I love putting people who have never cooked here before in front of one of these things," says Cecil. "The learning curve takes about one minute, and no one ever leaves."

Cecil also claims that one thing you never see at the Cowboy Breakfast is a frown.

A stroll around the area bears this out. Inside the cook tent, people flip flour tortillas on iron griddles. On other cooktops, volunteers rhythmically break up hamburger meat with what look like mason's trowels. Nearby, others heat oceans of cream gravy. Outside, a man with a barn



It's hard to tell who enjoys the breakfast more—the diners or the volunteers. Once they get a rhythm going, Susie Henckel, Richard Egli (center), and Lee Pittman find "flipping tortillas fun."



El Rey Feo (a.k.a. Tom Sineni, chosen "The Ugly King" at the city's 2004 Fiesta) makes a guest appearance at the cow-chip-pitching contest.

shovel brimming with glowing mesquite coals works his way through the crowd warning, "Fire! Fire!" Several tables of San Antonio Conservation Society volunteers, some wearing motorcycle-club regalia, crack open eggs, saving the shells to be made into confetti-filled *cascarones* for Fiesta, in April. At eight 30- to 40-foot-long serving tables, volunteers wearing green bandannas prepare to dish up the food. As Cecil promised, every face wears a smile, which broadens when one pair of eyes meets another in a silent but unmistakable "Isn't this great!"

At five minutes before 5 a.m., a local celebrity sings the national anthem, then the bands start playing, and serving begins. The smell of food cooking over mesquite, the wail of country-western, and the back-beat rhythm of Tejano music advise arrivals that they are about to experience something quintessentially Texan.

their task like basketball players attempting free throws. Nearby, a row of booths, most of them media-sponsored, offer the crowd of early birds a chance to play various games and receive giveaways.

Around 7:30, the magic begins to dissipate as the sun comes up, and by 8:30 the parking lot starts to empty. Serving concludes promptly at 9, with any leftover food going to a local homeless ministry, and the once-a-year phenomenon is over.

Breakfast lines move quickly; the event made it into *Guinness World Records 2001* for serving almost 19,000 people in one hour.

The people in line for breakfast wait an amazingly short three-and-a-half minutes or less to be served, and a sea

of bodies moves to the beat of the music, coming from three stages (bands rotate on the hour). Old and new friends cluster in groups around complimentary stacks of the *San Antonio Express-News*' special Cowboy Breakfast edition.

On one of the stages, politicians and other luminaries attempt to toss cow chips into a gilded toilet, a nod to the event's rodeo ties. Some make casual tosses, while others address

EVEN THE ORGANIZERS of the Cowboy Breakfast have a hard time answering the inevitable questions: Why would a team of men and women work all year without pay to organize such an event? Why would hundreds of volunteers work all night to provide breakfast for 60,000 people, most of whom they don't know? And why would so many people go to a shopping-center parking lot so early in the morning? Chances are, it's not just for a free breakfast taco.

Perhaps the secret of the breakfast's success lies in the fact that no money changes hands, and that the gathering's overall motive is to see that everyone has a good time. The tradition reminds people of another era, when people often joined together to celebrate good fellowship in their community.

If you ask Cecil Lankford the secret of the Cowboy Breakfast's success, however, he'll tell you simply, "It's just a whole lot of fun." ★

Cookbook author JIM PEYTON loves the quirky creativity of the Cowboy Breakfast. Look for his new book, *Jim Peyton's The Very Best of Tex-Mex Cooking, Plus Texas Barbecue and Texas Chile*.

San Antonio Express-News photographer JOHN DAVENPORT is a regular contributor to *Texas Highways*.

essentials

SAN ANTONIO'S COWBOY BREAKFAST

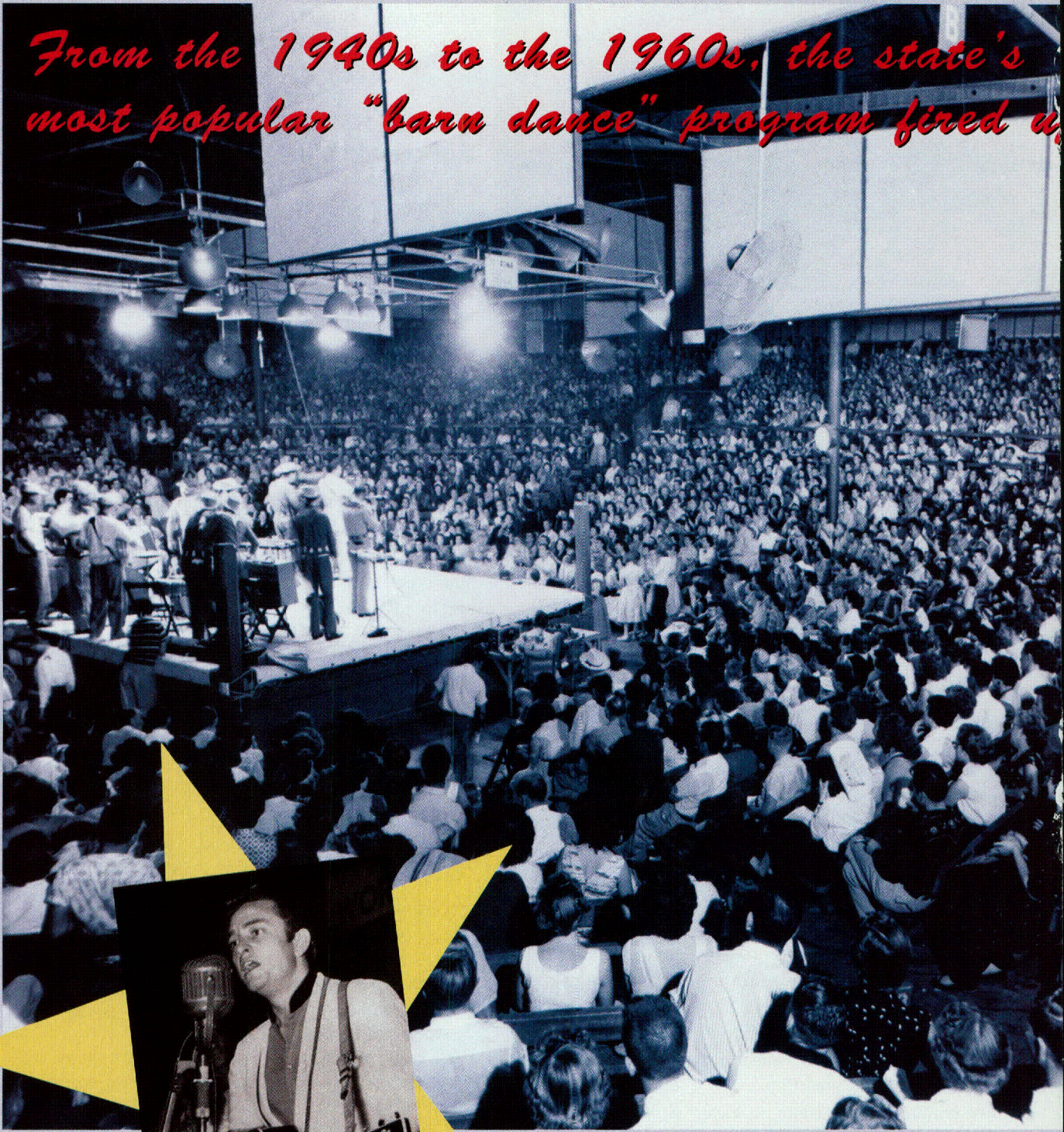
EVERYONE is welcome at the 27th annual Cowboy Breakfast, which takes place on the 4th Fri. in Jan. (Jan. 28, 2005) in the parking lot of Crossroads Mall (4522 Fredericksburg Rd., immediately southwest of where I-10 and Loop 410 intersect). Breakfast tacos, sausage-stuffed biscuits, S.O.S. (ground beef and cream gravy on a slice of bread), sweet rolls, milk, juice, and coffee are served from 5-9 a.m. Admission: Free. Call 210/479-3333 or 800/447-3372 (San Antonio CVB); www.sanantoniocvb.com.

Proceeds from booth rentals and commercial donations go to the Cowboy Breakfast Foundation, which funds culinary arts scholarships at St. Philip's College in San Antonio. For information about the foundation, write to Box 110, Adkins 78101; 210/273-1026.

For information about the **San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo** (Feb. 4-20, 2005), call 210/225-5851; www.sarodeo.com.



From the 1940s to the 1960s, the state's most popular "barn dance" program fired up



From the wrestling ring that doubled as the Big "D" Jamboree stage, the "doggonedest bunch" of singers and fiddlers heard in North Texas played to often-sold-out crowds and to radio and TV audiences. Like the *Louisiana Hayride* and other regional barn dances, the Dallas show helped put many a country musician—including Johnny Cash—on the road to renown.

BY GENE FOWLER



COURTESY BIG "D" JAMBOREE

BIG "D" JAMBOREE

"DI-RECT from Ed McLemore's Sportatorium at the corner of Cadiz and Industrial boulevards in downtown big friendly Dallas...the home of professional wrestling on Tuesday night and the home of the Hillbillies on Saturday night.... We've got bass fiddler players, big fiddle players, little fiddle players, middle-sized fiddle players, and the doggonedest bunch of singers you ever saw in your life...pickin' and singin' from the real early evenin' until real late at night."

Delivered with down-home flair by emcees like Johnny Hicks and Big Al Turner, those words introduced the Lone Star State's most popular musical "barn dance" program, the Big "D" Jamboree. From the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, "the Big D," as Johnny Cash called it, provided an important venue for

[ABOVE] A 1949 Jamboree cast included Gene O'Quin (front row, left), Betty Lou Lobb (front row, second from right), Riley Crabtree and Billy Jack Saucier (back row, fourth and fifth from left), Buddy Griffin (back row, third from right), and the masked Travelin' Texan, Billy Walker.



The original, octagonal Sportatorium, built in the 1930s for the Texas Centennial, burned in 1953; its rectangular replacement (above) was razed in 2003. During the Jamboree's heyday, the concession stand could bring in \$10,000 a night.

both regional and nationally known artists. And fans flocked to the Jamboree. "We'd pack that place with 5,000 people every Saturday night," recalled Johnny Hicks shortly before his death, in 1997. Thousands more tuned in to the program on radio and TV.

When the venerable Sportatorium fell to the wrecking ball in the spring of 2003, evidence of its rich musical history had been carefully preserved, thanks to a "labor of love" by Dallas musician and record producer David Dennard. A member of the baby-boomer generation, David discovered the Big "D" Jamboree in the 1990s while preparing reissues of recordings by local rockabilly avatar Ronnie Dawson (1939-2003). Amazed by what he discovered in folks' memories and scrapbooks, David became a compulsive curator of the Dallas show. In 2000, his independent label, Dragon Street Records (www.dragonstreet.com), released the two-CD set *The Big "D" Jamboree Live* (vol. 1, "Hillbillies," vol. 2, "Rockabillicies"), followed by *The Gals of the Big "D" Jamboree* in 2001 and *The Guys of the Big "D" Jamboree* in 2002.

The guys and gals included chart-toppers like Homer and Jethro, Cowboy Copas, Carl Perkins, and the Man in Black ("Here's our latest on Sun Records, 'I Walk the Line'"). But even Hank and Elvis sometimes got less applause than the regional Jamboree stars, who headed for Big D from all over the state. Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters trekked "all the way up from Taylor." Johnny Dollar hailed from Kilgore; the popular Belew Twins were from Greenville; and Ronnie Dawson's teenaged energy was imported from Waxahachie.



Johnny Hicks was a long-standing radio host of the Jamboree, which was broadcast live on Dallas' KRLD.

JAMBOREE PERFORMERS CASH. BUT EVEN HANK A GREENVILLE'S BELEW TW

COURTESY BIG "D" JAMBOREE



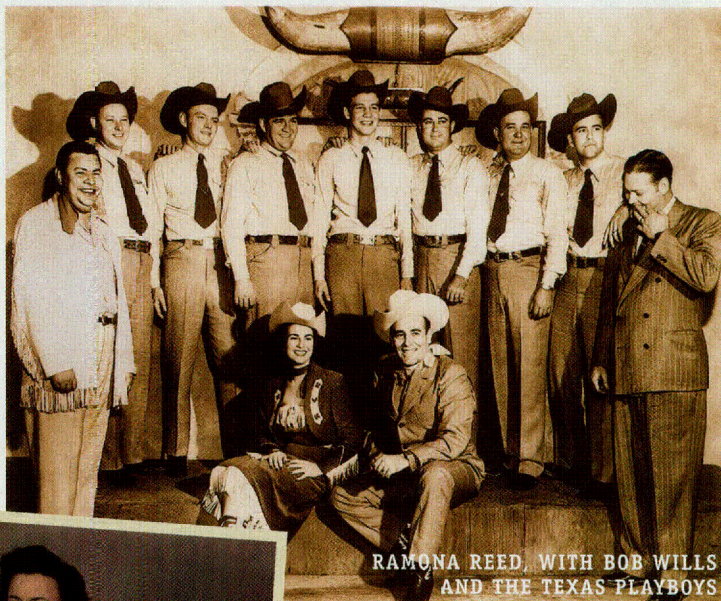
Hero worship. Young Darwin Dunn meets Hank Williams (photo date unknown).



DUDED CHART-TOPPERS LIKE HOMER AND JETHRO, CARL PERKINS, AND JOHNNY
 VIS SOMETIMES GOT LESS APPLAUSE THAN REGIONAL JAMBOREE STARS SUCH AS
 ND CORSICANA'S HELEN HALL.

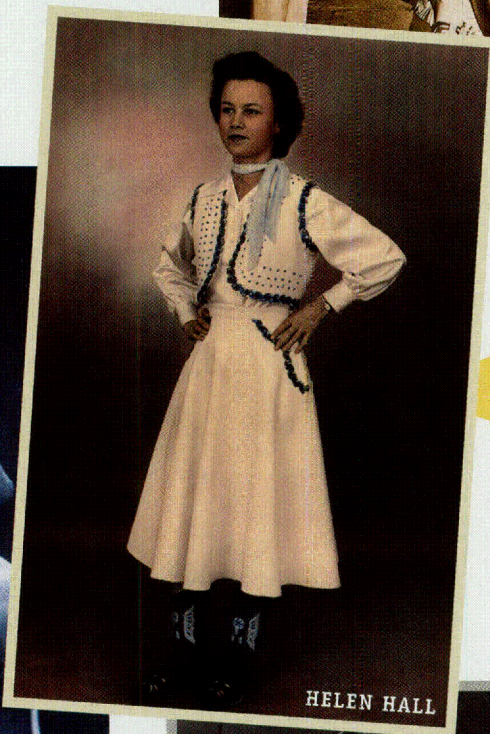


THE BELEW TWINS



COURTESY BIG "D" JAMBOREE

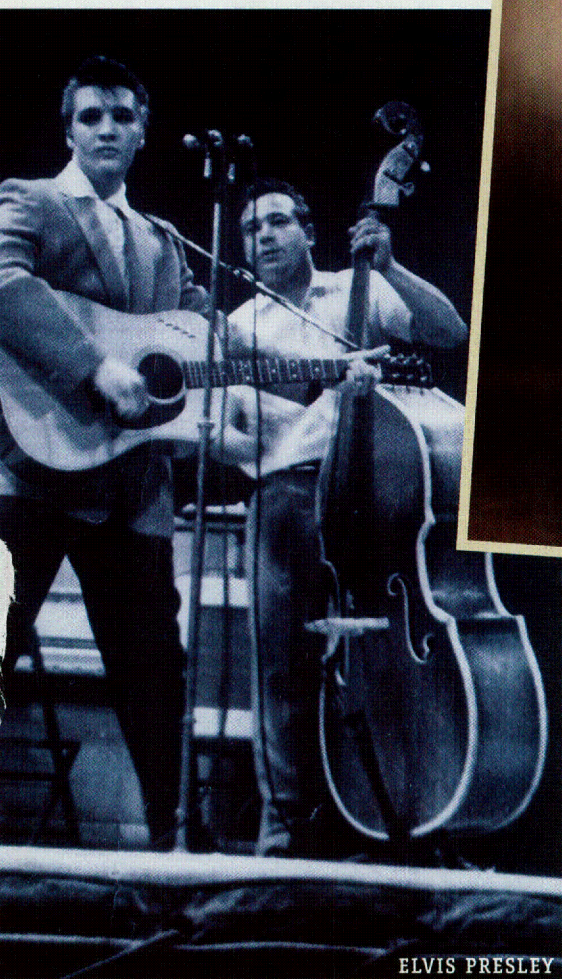
RAMONA REED, WITH BOB WILLS
 AND THE TEXAS PLAYBOYS



HELEN HALL



SUNSHINE RUBY



ELVIS PRESLEY



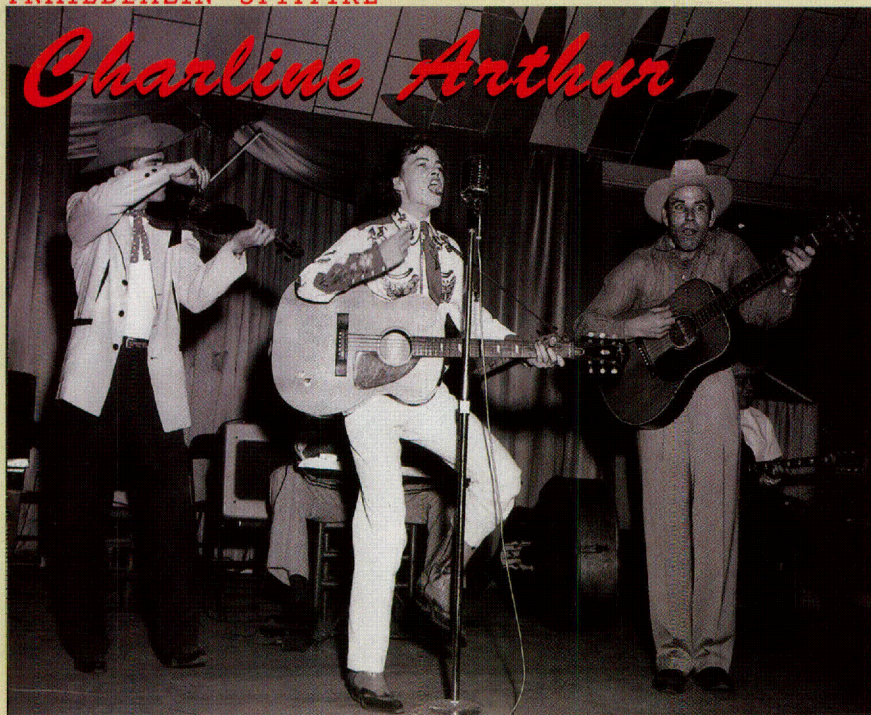
CARL PERKINS

As the program at left shows, performances featuring the Big
 "D" gang mixed the well known and the lesser known—along
 with the occasional coonskin-hatted icon from Texas history.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY DRAGON STREET RECORDS, EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

TRAILBLAZIN' SPITFIRE

Charline Arthur



CHARLINE Arthur was an outlaw country singer before her time. Her flash of success was followed by hard years and an early death. But she blazed trails that others would follow.

Her father, Ben Highsmith, was a charming drunk who later put the bottle down and became a preacher. Relatives swear that Charline was born in a boxcar, where her impoverished family was living, in Henrietta, Texas, in 1929. She apparently was named for her maternal grandfather, Charles Edward Wortham. One of her surviving sisters, Mary Curry, a music teacher in Joshua, Texas, says Wortham was a red-headed "shoutin' Baptist" who taught Charline to play the fiddle.

Both of Charline's parents were musically talented, and she was inspired by the rocking music of her dad's Pentecostal church. She wrote her first song, "I've Got the Boogie Blues," at 12, and at 15 was singing on a radio station in Paris, Texas. The following year, with her parents' consent, she joined a traveling medicine show, playing music and doing comedy. On the show,

she met Jack Arthur, who became her husband, manager, and bass player.

In the early 1950s, Colonel Tom Parker heard Charline singing on a radio station in Kermit, Texas, and helped her get a contract with RCA Records. She and Jack moved to Dallas, where they became regulars on the Big "D" Jamboree. In 1955, a poll of country disc jockeys named her the No. 2 female singer in the nation, behind Kitty Wells.

Charline was a bold and gifted entertainer who played several instruments, performed athletic moves onstage, and wore, not gingham dresses, but slacks. She once told an interviewer, "I was the first to break out of the stereotype and boogie-woogie. I was shakin' that thing on stage long before Elvis even thought about it... I was a trendsetter, I was a blues singer, and I wanted to sing something different. I wanted to be an original." Her strong voice was stone country, but she favored material with a sexual edge that went beyond what Nashville women were singing in those days.

During her brief glory years, Charline Arthur performed with the stars of the day, including

Elvis, who said his mom loved her records. But Charline never had a hit record, and, after clashing bitterly with producer Chet Atkins, she lost her recording contract and her spot on the Jamboree. She and Jack Arthur divorced in 1957.

Charline Arthur spent the rest of her life playing honky-tonks and recording for small labels. She spent several years in and around Pocatello, Idaho, where she was a regular at Myrtle's, a big, raucous club that featured everything from country music to strippers. She also shared a cabin behind the club with a female companion, says Charline's nephew, Larry Spangler, of nearby Chubbuck, who says his aunt was never particularly secretive about her lesbianism.



Charline's star shone bright for less than a decade, but she lived to see her best songs collected and re-released.

In her last years, crippled by arthritis, Charline scraped by on disability and cried while watching her old friends on television. But in 1986, the year before she died, the German label Bear Family issued an album of her old recordings. She's also featured on CD reissues of Big "D" Jamboree music produced by Dallasite David Dennard (www.dragonstreet.com). She pops up in women's studies courses. Years after her death, she's getting the recognition she craved.

—JAY BRAKEFIELD

Pictured above in Tyler in 1954, the dramatic and brassy Charline Arthur was a pants-wearing, high-energy performer who "helped shatter the wholesome gingham image of female country singers," writes Big "D" Jamboree historian David Dennard.

JAY BRAKEFIELD is the coauthor, with Alan B. Govenar, of *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged*.



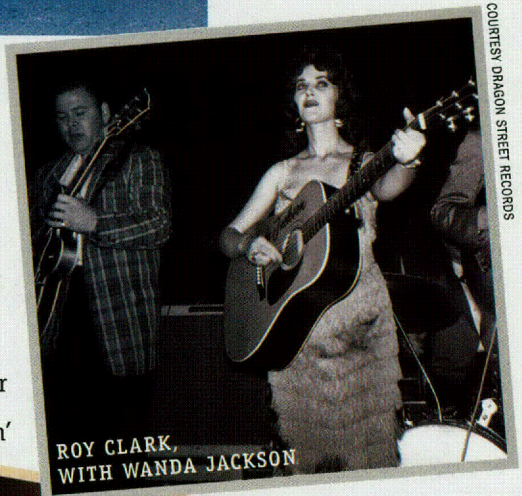
Musicians gathered outside the Sportatorium include Charline Arthur, Jamboree musical director and banjoist Smokey Montgomery (back row, left), Paul Blunt (back row, right), and Douglas Bragg (front row, left). Sportatorium booking agent Ed Watt (in car) sometimes donned the requisite furry-tailed hat and buckskin to play Davy Crockett.

Honky-tonkin' Helen Hall perfected her pipes in Corsicana, and the spit-fire performances of Henrietta native Charline Arthur made her one of the Jamboree's most popular performers (see facing page). The popularity and appeal of BDJ artists like Sid King & The Five Strings, from Denton, support music historian Kevin Coffey's contention that the "Dallas area was one of the earliest to feel the rumblings of rockabilly and rock-n-roll."

Still, the show maintained a Texas flavor. Future Grand Ole Opry member Billy Walker (remember "Cross the Brazos at Waco"?), billed as the "Travelin' Texan," played "the Big D" in a Lone Ranger mask. And during the mid-'50s Davy Crockett craze, BDJ booking agent Ed Watt appeared on the show in full Davy regalia.

The photographs that David Dennard collected of Jamboree performers and fans evoke a lively slice of what I like to think I remember of Texas from the 1950s. The images of rockin' hillbillies and croonin' cowpokes reveal a world long gone yet very much still present. An endless Saturday night of possibility, snapped in black-and-white and now fading to sepia. Emblems of an era, captured in a sequence of moments trapped in time. Sounds, pictures, traces of lives lived, lost, long remembered. ★

Author and playwright GENE FOWLER wrote about Texas accordionists in the May 2004 issue.

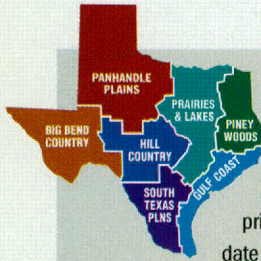


COURTESY DRAGON STREET RECORDS



COURTESY DRAGON STREET RECORDS

February



We provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

SOMETIMES DATES CHANGE after the magazine is printed. Before you drive miles to an event, confirm the date by calling the number listed next to the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce.

FOR DETAILS ON ANY DESTINATION IN TEXAS, CALL 800/452-9292 toll-free from anywhere in the U.S. and Canada, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. CST. A travel counselor at one of the state's Travel Information Centers will provide travel information and routing assistance, send brochures, and advise you of any emergency road conditions.

SEND EVENT INFORMATION to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by February 1 for May festivities). Space is limited, so we may not be able to print every event. For a quarterly, more detailed schedule of events, write for a free *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249.

FEBRUARY 2005

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

See www.texashighways.com for an expanded Fun Forecast with descriptions of events.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

1-28

PECOS

West of the Pecos Museum
Presidents Month Exhibit
432/445-5076

3-7

MONAHANS

Ward County
Livestock Show
432/943-2187

5

MIDLAND

Big Band Pops
432/563-0921

6

MIDLAND

Flag Retirement Ceremony
432/694-3408

19

ODESSA

Midland-Odesa Symphony
432/563-0921

24-27

EL PASO
Siglo de Oro
Drama Festival
915/532-7273

25-26

ALPINE
Trappings of Texas:
Custom Cowboy Gear
& Fine Art
432/837-8143

25-27

ALPINE
Texas Cowboy Poetry
Gathering
432/364-2490

GULF COAST

1-28

WEST COLUMBIA

Black History Month Exhibit
979/345-6125

1, 4, 6

HOUSTON

Il Travatore
713/228-6737 or
800/626-7372

2

HARLINGEN

Franc D'Ambrosio's Broadway
956/748-3020

3-6

PORT ARTHUR

Mardi Gras Weekend/
Jesters Treasures
409/721-8717

5

CORPUS CHRISTI
Symphony Orchestra
361/882-2717

HOUSTON

Moscow Chamber Orchestra
713/227-4772

KEMAH

Mardi Gras Night Boat Parade
281/615-6546

ROCKPORT

Bountiful Bowl Pottery Fair
361/729-5352 or
800/242-0071

8

PORT ARTHUR

Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Party
409/722-4233

SAN BENITO

Mardi Gras Dance
956/399-5800

11

ORANGE

The Full Monty
800/828-5535

11-13

HOUSTON

Minute Maid Park
College Baseball Classic
713/259-8500 or
800/278-7672

12

HARLINGEN

Music Fest
956/585-4847

12-13

CORPUS CHRISTI

Coastal Bend Quilt Show
361/776-3028

GALVESTON

The Full Monty
409/765-1894

17-20

BROWNSVILLE

International Birding Festival
800/626-2639

18-19

GALVESTON

Moscow Circus
409/765-1894

STAFFORD

Postcard & Paper Show
281/565-0771

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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2. Beaumont Ranch, pg. 59
3. Corpus Christi Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 6
4. Del Rio Chamber of Commerce, pg. 59
5. Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 9
6. The Greenville Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, pg. 57
7. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, pg. 8
8. Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas, pg. 58
9. Paris Convention & Visitors Bureau, pg. 57
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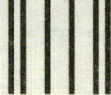
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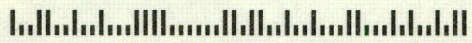
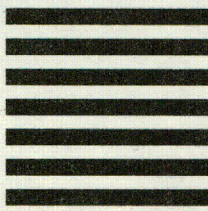


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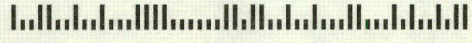
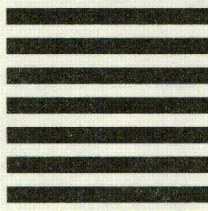


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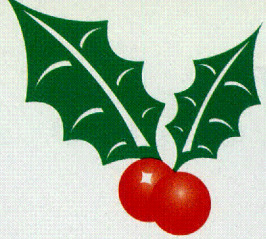
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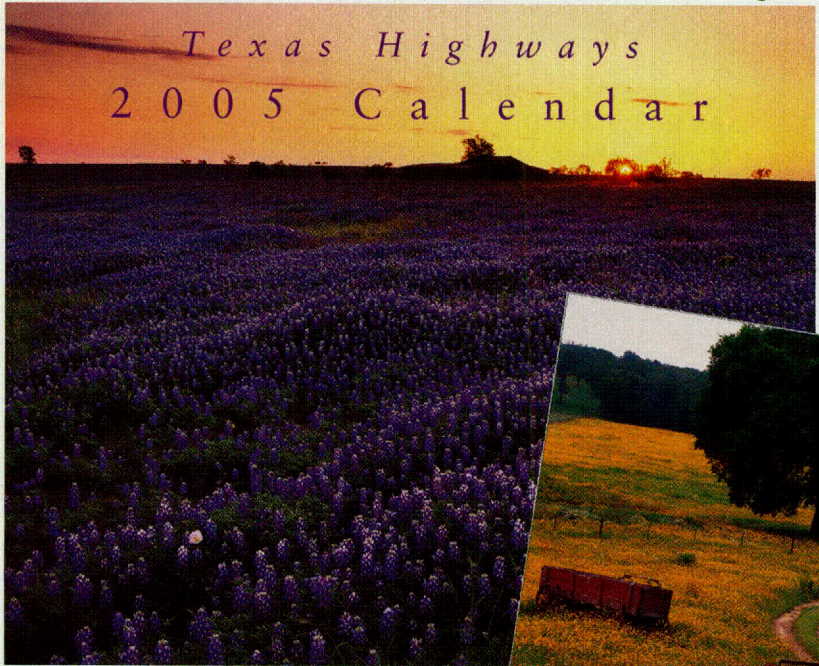
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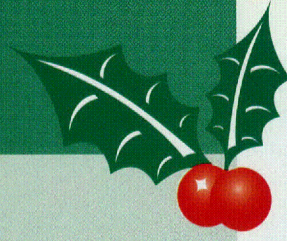
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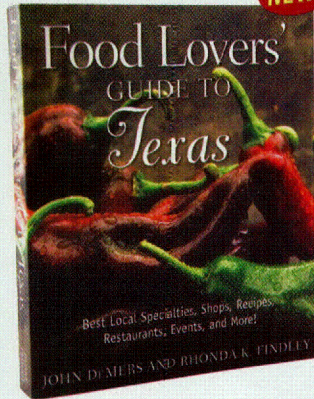
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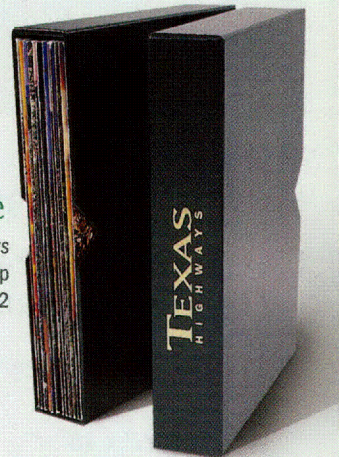
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 Jalapeño 100 Bicycle Tour
 800/531-7346

20-27
BROWNSVILLE
 Charro Days
 956/542-4245

24
HARLINGEN
 Shrimp Fest
 956/943-1315

24-26
BROWNSVILLE
 Sombrero Fest
 956/550-9682

25
HOUSTON
 Martha Graham Dance Co.
 713/227-4772

25-26
LAKE JACKSON
 Gone to Texas Quilt Festival
 979/292-0554

25-27
PORT ARANSAS
 Celebration of Whooping
 Cranes & Other Birds
 800/452-6278

26
HOUSTON
 Vienna Boys Choir
 713/227-4772

26-27
GALVESTON
 Home, Garden
 & Leisure Show
 409/762-3930

HILL COUNTRY

3-6, 10-13, 17-20
BULVERDE
 The Drawer Boy
 830/438-2339

4-6, 11-13
WIMBERLEY
 Jazz Festival
 512/847-2515

5
AUSTIN
 Carnaval Brasileiro
 512/452-6832

FREDERICKSBURG
 Chorale Concert
 830/997-0212

8
KERRVILLE
 Mardi Gras on Main
 830/792-8395

11-12
LUCKENBACH
 Hug-In
 830/997-3224 or
 888/311-8990

11-14
AUSTIN
 Ballet Austin
 512/476-2163

13
AUSTIN
 Freescale Marathon
 512/478-4265 or
 877/601-6686

18
AUSTIN
 McCoy Tyner
 512/329-6753

19-20
GEORGETOWN
 Gem & Mineral Show
 512/793-2740

20
NEW BRAUNFELS
 Mid-Texas Symphony
 830/629-0336

24
KERRVILLE
 Symphony of the Hills
 830/792-7469

24-MAR 13
MARBLE FALLS
Oklahoma!
 830/798-8944

26-27
AUSTIN
 Stamp & Postcard Show
 512/797-9503

27
AUSTIN
 A. Mozart Fest Concert
 866/468-7621

PANHANDLE PLAINS

3
ABILENE
 Harlem Globetrotters
 325/674-2287

5
SAN ANGELO
 San Angelo Symphony
 325/658-5877

7
SWEETWATER
 Big Country Dance
 325/235-3484

10-21
AMARILLO
 Nat'l Cutting Horse Assn
 World Finals
 817/244-6188

12
ABILENE
 Philharmonic
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WICHITA FALLS
 Wichita Falls Symphony
 940/761-8840

18-27
SAN ANGELO
 Stock Show & Rodeo
 325/653-7785

20
SAN ANGELO
 Chamber Music Concert
 325/653-3333

26
MINERAL WELLS
 Cross Timbers
 Cowboy Campfire Poetry
 940/328-1171

MUNDAY
 Knox Prairie
 Cotton Pickin' Quilt Show
 940/422-4540

26-27
WICHITA FALLS
 Home & Garden Expo
 940/716-5500

27
SAN ANGELO
 Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day
 325/481-2646

28
EASTLAND
 Old Rip Commemoration
 254/629-2332

PINEY WOODS

4-6
JEFFERSON
 Mardi Gras Upriver
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5-6
HUNTSVILLE
 Rocky Raccoon 100-Mile
 Endurance Run
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7
MOUNT PLEASANT
 Moscow Chamber Orchestra
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12
CONROE
 Conroe
 Symphony Orchestra
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14
TEXARKANA
The Full Monty
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19
MONTGOMERY
 Asleep at the Wheel
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MOUNT PLEASANT
 Tap Dance Festival
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CONROE
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TEXARKANA
 Boys Choir of Harlem
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PRAIRIES AND LAKES

4-6
ROUND TOP
 Republic of Texas Frolic
 979/249-3308

4-6, 25-27
FORT WORTH
 FW Symphony Orchestra
 817/665-6000

5
MESQUITE
 Symphony Pops
 972/216-8127

5-6
COLLEGE STATION
Giselle
 979/845-1234

9
COLLEGE STATION
The Full Monty
 979/845-1234

11-13
FORT WORTH
 Texas Ballet Theater
 877/212-4280

12
COLUMBUS
Play It Again, Sam
 979/732-8385

DALLAS
 The Baroque Madrigal
 214/320-8700

WACO
 Baylor Sacred Harp
 Sing
 254/710-6052

12-13
EMORY
 Eagle Fest
 903/473-3913

12-13
ROUND TOP
 International Guitar Festival
 979/249-3129

18
LEWISVILLE
 Lewisville Lake Symphony
 972/874-9087

19
RICHARDSON
 Chamber Music International
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20
BRYAN
 Brazos Valley Symphony
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21
FORT WORTH
 Pilobolus
 817/212-4280

22
DALLAS
 West End's
 Mardi Gras Parade
 214/741-7185

23
FORT WORTH
 Vienna Boys Choir
 817/212-4280

23-28
SALADO
 Artists' Workshops
 & Studio Tour
 254/947-8300

24-26
COLLEGE STATION
Tartuffe
 979/845-1234

25-26
YOAKUM
 Land of Leather Days
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26
CLIFTON
 Bosque County
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FORT WORTH
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 & Marathon Relay/
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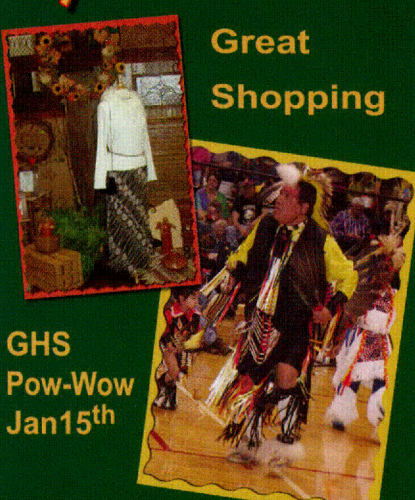
4-6
THREE RIVERS
 Choke Canyon
 Birding Festival
 361/786-4370

4-20
SAN ANTONIO
 Stock Show & Rodeo
 210/225-5851

12
SAN ANTONIO
 Asian Festival
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SAN ANTONIO
 Mardi Gras River Parade
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AT THE MONNIG METEORITE GALLERY

BY DAMOND BENNINGFIELD

WORKERS at the Gage Ranch, near Marathon, were eating lunch beside a stock tank on August 2, 1946, when a large meteorite slammed into the pond, splattering them with water, mud, and moss. When Dr. Gayle Scott, a Texas Christian University geologist, heard about the dousing that evening in Marathon, he telegraphed—strange as it may seem—a dry-goods salesman in

Fort Worth for guidance. Oscar Monnig not only sent advice, he showed up in person four days later. He identified the fragments of the meteorite (which had split into many pieces when it splashed down), classified them as a rare variety, and bought a few pieces for his own collection.

By the time he died in 1999, Monnig had amassed one of the world's largest private collections—fragments of some 400 individual meteorites—of these extraterrestrial visitors, cosmic rocks that survive their plunge through Earth's atmosphere. Today, many of those pieces are on display at the Monnig Meteorite Gallery, on the campus of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Exhibits in the gallery, which opened in 2003, describe how these chunks of

cosmic rock form, how they fall to Earth, how they are discovered, and man's strange reactions to them. You'll also learn the different types of meteorites (some are made of iron and nickel, some of various types of rock, and a few are a combination of these).

Most important, though, the gallery captures Monnig's passion

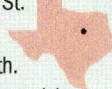
for meteorites through detailed stories about his discoveries and quotes from Monnig himself. "If I collected all the henhouse doorstops in Texas," Monnig says in one display, "I'd have a major meteorite collection."

Oscar Monnig began his collection in the 1930s, a time when scientists paid little attention to meteorites. His work eventually made him the top meteorite

THE OSCAR E. MONNIG Meteorite

Gallery is in the Sid W. Richardson Science Building, Bowie St. at University Dr., on the TCU campus in Fort Worth.

Public parking is limited, so visitors must compete with TCU students and staff for street parking (except on Sat.). Hours: Tue-Fri 1-4, Sat 9-4. Weekday-morning tours are available to groups of 10 or more by appt. Closed on university holidays. Admission: Free. Call 817/257-6277; monnigmuseum.tcu.edu.



This cosmic chunk, in the Texas Room, was part of the meteorite that formed the 164-foot-deep Odessa Meteor Crater.

expert in Texas and one of the top experts in the world.

Monnig traveled across Texas and Oklahoma for his family's wholesale dry-goods business, meeting farmers, ranchers, and newspaper editors in every town. He would leave a stack of small flyers at each general store that asked people to notify him if they found certain odd rocks. If the rocks were meteorites, he bought them. The purchases not only swelled Monnig's collection, they provided much-needed cash for Depression-era farmers.

"He bought one meteorite in the early '30s from a family in the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma," says Arthur Ehlmann, curator of the Monnig Collection and a long-time friend of Monnig. "A letter in the Monnig files here at TCU from the farmers says the \$35 check from Oscar was the largest check they received all year. And he never turned anybody down. We have more than 500 pieces of the same meteorite from Dimmitt. I asked him

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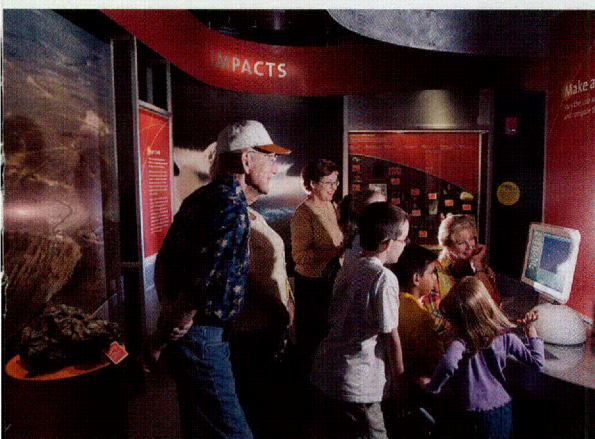
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More meteorites have been discovered in Texas than in any other state—278 as of 2000—and the Oscar Monnig collection includes pieces of 201 of those.



surfaces, showing flecks of colorful minerals or the interlacing geometric patterns that identify iron-nickel meteorites.

While most of the meteorites are fragments of asteroids—mountain-size boulders that orbit the sun—a few are pieces of Mars or the moon. The gallery's Mars display includes a small pinkish fragment

that visitors may touch. It was discovered in Libya in 1998; Arthur Ehlmann acquired it in a trade.

Much of Monnig's original collection is highlighted in the Texas Room (the gallery has two other rooms, the Impact Room and the Theater Room). A display notes that more meteorites have been discovered in Texas than in any other state—278 as of 2000—and the Oscar Monnig collection includes pieces of 201 of those. A state map shows where the meteorites were found—most of them in relatively flat areas of the Panhandle and West Texas, where Earth rocks are less numerous and meteorites stand out.

Glass cases in the Texas Room hold iron meteorites from Palo Duro Canyon and Floydada, stones from the towns of McKinney and Bluff, and other small samples. In the central case, a heavy chunk of iron from the meteorite that blasted out the 164-foot-deep Odessa Meteor Crater sits atop a five-pointed star. Each point aims at another rare or beautiful Texas meteorite, including the only known piece of a meteorite that many people saw fall near Kirbyville in 1906, and a slice of one called Pena Blanca Spring—the 103-pound rock that fell on the Gage Ranch in 1946 and elicited an excited call to the state's top meteorite expert, Oscar Monnig.

Longtime contributor DAMOND BENNINGFIELD is the executive producer of *StarDate*, a radio program that airs daily on almost 400 stations nationwide.



The display above spotlights a variety of stony-iron meteorites, composed of an iron-nickel alloy and stone (largely silicates). At top, visitors enjoy interactive exhibits in the Impact Room.

why he bought them all, and he said, 'If I ever turned anyone down, it would shut them all off. As long as I have a shed to put them in, I'll buy them.'"

Monnig made sure that his collection would have more than a shed for a home. He began donating meteorites to TCU in the 1980s, and he left the bulk of his estate—more than \$4 million—to build a public viewing gallery and to protect the collection.

The state-of-the-art facility offers videos, interactive computer terminals, text panels, murals, and other eye-catching displays to convey the story of meteorites. But the stars of the gallery are the meteorites themselves. Some are small, rough chunks blackened by high temperatures, caused by friction during their high-speed descent through the atmosphere. Others are polished sections of cut



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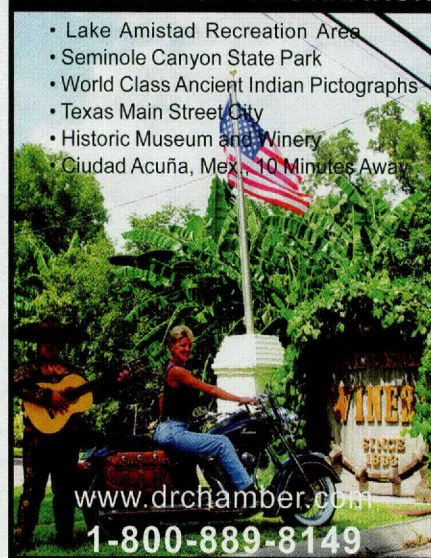
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KEVIN STILLMAN



At 24 feet tall, the "World's Largest Fire Hydrant" stands near the entrance to Beaumont's Fire Museum of Texas.

IN A PICKLE

CONGRATULATIONS TO TEXAS SASSY Foods, which garnered first place for **pickled products** in the People's Choice Awards at the 2004 Houston Hot Sauce Festival, where it had also won big in previous years. In addition, Texas Sassy Foods' pickle chips, pickle relish, and pickle sauce brought home a "Golden Chili" and several ribbons from recent International Zesty Foods Shows, the latest of which was held in Fort Worth. The proof is in the pickle!

We learned about Texas Sassy Foods thanks to *TH* fan Sally Stenis of Wimberley, who wrote to "Readers Recommend" and raved about Texas Sassy's pickle chips. "The unique flavor changes as you eat," says Sally. "The first bite tastes sweet, then it becomes slightly sour, then it turns pretty dern hot! Also, the Pickle Sauce is great in a Bloody Mary and other cocktails, too."

Texas Sassy Foods, owned and operated by Brenda and Maury Smeyne of Austin, originated in 1998 from a favorite recipe for pickle chips developed by Brenda. Learn more at www.texas-sassy.com, or call 512/215-4022 or 866/451-6728. You can order online or purchase Texas Sassy Foods products at numerous retail outlets throughout the state.

GOLDEN GUIDE TO SOUTHEAST TEXAS

THE SOUTHEASTERN EDGE OF TEXAS, known as the "Golden Triangle," encompasses an eclectic Gulf Coast blend of cowboy, Cajun, city, and country. Here, you can savor spicy crawfish gumbo, breathe in salty Gulf breezes, and partake of lots of Lone Star fun.

Now, you can read all about Southeast Texas' many attractions, accommodations, and events in a new, 68-page color brochure, *The Official Visitors Guide to Beaumont, Port Arthur, Nederland, Port Neches, and Groves*. Looking for an exhilarating boat ride in search of gators, a guided fishing expedition, antique shops, or a zydeco music venue? You'll find them all in the informative guide.

For your free copy, call 800/392-4401, or visit

www.beaumontcvb.com. You can also obtain the guide at many tourist stops in Southeast Texas.

WWII—MAY WE SHARE YOUR HOME-FRONT MEMORIES?

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY of the end of World War II. During that global upheaval, some 750,000 Texans (including 12,000 women) joined the U.S. armed forces to serve our nation.

Here at home, untold thousands contributed to the war effort in numerous ways. Men and women throughout the state pitched in to nurse combat casualties, train troops, manufacture aircraft and munitions, guard foreign POWs, and help families cope with rationing and other deprivations brought on by the war.

To commemorate that historic era, in the **November** issue we will recount stories and experiences of those Texans who helped our soldiers, sailors, marines, nurses, aviators, and coast guard by working on the home front to ensure victory. Were you—or your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.—among that number?

We want to hear your (or their) WWII home-front stories. Write to: *Texas Highways*, Attn.:

Readers Recommend...

RECENTLY, my husband and I ate lunch at the **Empresario Restaurant** on Goliad's town square. The very nice staff served a wonderful pork roast lunch with mashed potatoes and the best green beans I've ever eaten.

MISSY AND JOE POLASEK, *Boerne*
Empresario Restaurant is at 141 S. Courthouse Square; 361/645-2347.

EVE'S CAFE in **Lampasas** has the best Reuben sandwich I've ever eaten, and other folks attest to the delicious schnitzel. As for the homemade cheesecake, well, whether it's blueberry or a light-and-dark-chocolate combination or another flavor, it's outstanding. Owner Eve Sanchez provides a homey, relaxed atmosphere.

PEGGY THOMPSON, *Copperas Cove*
Eve's Cafe is at 521 E. 3rd St.; 512/556-3500.

WE BELIEVE that some of the BEST fried catfish can be found at **Jackie's Southernfried Catfish** in **Bells**. You can enjoy fish cooked by a real fisherman, whose fishing trophies decorate the dining room. You'll get excellent service, too.

W.G. GAINES, *Fort Worth*
Jackie's Southernfried Catfish is at 107 W. Bells Blvd.; 903/965-5284.

I RECOMMEND an unusual restaurant, **Riverside Seafood**, at **Liberty**. They serve the best gumbo, étouffée, crawfish, freshwater catfish, and even alligator. They deserve a mention in "our" magazine.

C.D. MONEY, *Houston*
Riverside Seafood (also called The Market) is at 439 US 90; 936/336-8392.

WWII-TX, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Please include a telephone number and/or an email address where we can reach you. If you have photos of you (or your relative) that help illustrate your story, we would appreciate seeing them (they will be returned to you). Let us hear from you by April 30.

Next month... Visit **Valentine** (the town) through the camera lens of Joel Salcido, explore **Houston** on a canoe trip through Buffalo Bayou, and retrace **La Salle's Texas odyssey**. We'll also take in the beautiful **X Bar Ranch** and **B&Bs with birding opportunities**.

IF YOU KNOW OF A NOTEWORTHY LONE STAR ATTRACTION, RESTAURANT, EVENT, OR PRODUCT, WRITE OR EMAIL: Readers Recommend, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: letters05@texashighways.com. Space constraints prevent us from publishing every suggestion we receive. We reserve the right to edit items. Because we're unable to check out every item in "Readers Recommend," and details can change, please call ahead for more information. **For more TexCetera items, see "Travel News" on our Web site: www.texashighways.com.**



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window on TEXAS

THREE ADULT BALD EAGLES built and occupied a substantial nest last year about 140 yards south of Texas 29, just east of Llano. Over the course of six months, Burnet photographers Peggy and Jess Thompson documented the activity at the nest, including the hatching and rearing of two young eagles. All the birds migrated north the last week of May. Visit www.cottonwoodphotography.com to view the Thompsons' current photographs of the nest activity.

