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T E X A S Travel Log

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

COMING UP

A Texas-sized entertainment development is coming to Sundance Square in **Fort Worth** in 1996. The multimillion-dollar project will bring one-and-a-half city blocks of shopping, dining, theaters, and offices to the heart of downtown. The AMC Palace, a nine-screen, 1,940-seat art-deco cinema, reminiscent of Fort Worth's original Palace Theatre, will offer roomy, high-back stadium seating, and quality picture and sound. Big Time Texas, with some 20,000 square feet of entertainment and dining, promises a true Texas experience, featuring authentic blues, new country, rock 'n' roll, and jazz. Retailers such as Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Big Time General Store, and a variety of boutiques will line the streets. For more info, call the Fort Worth C&VB at 1-800-433-5747.

A new IMAX 3-D film exploring the mystery of human imagination opens December 26 at **Moody Gardens in Galveston**. "Imagine" follows the dazzling visual journey of a young dreamer, a modern-day "Alice in Wonderland." The 24-minute film opens with "Alice" falling from an airplane, not knowing where she'll end up. Through her imagination, the audience experiences a journey full of surreal images and fantasies. In another dream segment the young woman is wheeled into a brain scanner in a futuristic Mind Lab. An overhead screen invites viewers into the mystery of her creative imagination, where wild painted bodies dance, and jet boats race through a narrow canyon. For show times, call 1-800-582-4673.

PLACES

Now Eastern European fans of the famed "Dallas" television series can live the fantasy of the wealthy West. *The Dallas Morning News* reports **Ilie Alexander**, a businessman in **Slobozia, Romania**, has turned "reel life into real life," rebuilding the fictional ranch and opening it as a hotel. The Dallas hotel/dude ranch was re-created from the architectural plans from the mansion on the real Southfork Ranch near Plano, and has the same long driveway and the same arched Southfork welcoming sign. A gray stretch limo parked in front of the main house bestows a rich Ewing-like feel. Two clocks at the reception desk display Slobozia time and Dallas time. And a rodeo arena for riding and watching prize-winning horses adds a real taste of Texas life-style to the Romanian hotel.

Dallas on Ice opened November 24 in a splashy debut that included a skating performance and the lighting of the West End's

Christmas tree. In the coming weeks, the 150-by-60-foot rink, at Munger Avenue between Market and Record Streets, will host carolers, a skating Santa, and possibly even a couple of Dallas Stars practices. Promoters hope the rink will become the "Rockefeller Plaza of Dallas." They insist the four inches of ice will not turn to slush, even if unseasonably warm temperatures continue. Dallas on Ice will welcome skaters until March 3. Open noon to 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, noon to midnight Friday, and 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday. Admission is \$6; skate rental is \$3. Only in Dallas. Happy skating!

Last month marked the opening of a new **Tigua Indian Cultural Center in El Paso**, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. Two years ago, the Tiguas closed their cultural center to make way for Speaking Rock Bingo, a state-of-the-art entertainment center next to Ysleta Mission. Without the center, the 1,500-member tribe has had no place to display centuries-old clothing and pottery, no place

to bake their traditional bread, and no permanent home for tribal dances. But even as the decision was being made to close the old center, tribal leaders were already planning to one day plow gaming profits into new facilities. Now the tribe has spent more than \$400,000 of those profits on their new pueblo-style center. The new cultural center includes a museum, seven Tigua gift shops, a cafe serving traditional and modern dishes, a courtyard for Indian ceremonies and dances, and two outdoor ovens to bake their traditional Tigua bread. Future plans call for a chain of Tigua convenience stores.

The first of five large convoys began moving the **3rd Armored Cavalry**, along with its museum, to its new home in Fort Carson, Colorado, after a 23-year history at Fort Bliss near **El Paso**. The move is part of the downsizing and reorganization of the military, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. The unit has served in the West for large parts of its 149 years, which has included campaigns in conflicts from the war



BULL MARKET In honor of the Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show's centennial anniversary next year, stock show officials will present the City of Fort Worth with a new \$11-million livestock facility. The Charlie and Kit Moncrief Building will add 170,000 square feet to the Will Rogers Memorial Complex and will feature a show arena, an exercise arena, stall space for up to 700 cattle or 280 horses, and 300 additional parking spaces. For a firsthand look, head for the stock show, January 19 through February 4.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

with Mexico to Operation Desert Storm. The 4,800-soldier regiment should complete the move by the end of April.

The **Arlington C&VB** made hospitality history in October when a meeting planner booked his convention in Arlington using the bureau's home page and E-mail services. **Don Baldwin** of Star Warriors Guild, an Internet enthusiasts group, met with his seven-member site selection committee to view the city's hotels. Committee members, from various parts of the country, virtually visited Arlington by way of the Internet and looked at several hotels before making their decision. Baldwin said the C&VB's Internet accessibility was the key to booking the meeting. Since the entire convention is being organized online, planners wanted to work with a city that could "keep up."

For the second time in four years, the **Texas Giant**, at **Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington**, was rated the number one roller coaster in the world by readers of *Inside Track* magazine. The crown jewel of Six Flags' coaster collection, the Giant has also been recognized as the top wooden roller coaster for four consecutive years by *Inside Track* readers. *Inside*

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG
is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel and Information Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to Texas Travel Log, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009. (512) 483-3727, FAX (512) 483-3793. Deadline for each newsletter is the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

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Contributing Editors: Marty Lange, Jane McNally, Mike Talley

Layout: Jane Yansky Design

CAPITOL COMPLEX TIC
Assistant manager Mary Ulrich Jackson and counselor Leslie Dennard were working their counter in the 1857 General Land Office building when a group of elderly ladies, coiffed and bejeweled, gathered around, gushing graciously as they picked up travel literature. The elderly leader leaned over to Leslie and confided, "I just adore your Jim Bean

Travel Center in Langtry." What's going on out there, Neal? Filmmakers began shooting a new movie about Desert Storm, starring Denzel Washington and Meg Ryan, on the Capitol grounds, in an attempt to make Austin look like Washington, D.C. Mary said they've only spotted the stars at a distance because security is so tight. Their next stop? El Paso.

They need a desert, you see. **GAINESVILLE TIC** A new "old" employee joined the center last month, to help fill the shoes of recently retired travel counselor Reva Keltner. Cindy Walker returned after a seven-year absence to get back to the business of telling visitors "where to go." It's good to have her back on board.

Track is a nationwide publication that specializes in covering theme parks and other similar entertainment outlets. The reader's poll is in its ninth year.

After a seven-year absence of commercial air service, **Del Rio** now offers the convenience of round-trip flights from Dallas/Fort Worth. **Lone Star Airlines**, that services the route, guarantees passengers the luxury of a 30-seat Dornier 328, the most advanced aircraft in its category. Service includes two round-trip flights each weekday, and one daily round-trip flight on weekends. Lone Star established its niche by offering reliable service to smaller markets that previously lacked air service. For flight information and reservations, call 1-800-877-3932.

Seniors can now view the abundant wildlife at **Fossil Rim Wildlife Center** in **Glen Rose** for fifty percent off the regular admission price every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. "The ability to drive through in the comfort of their own vehicle or a tour bus to view the animals already makes Fossil Rim popular with many seniors," said Judy Shelton, manager of the Scenic Wildlife Drive. The cool weather discount is good through February 29. For more info, call 817/897-2960.

The "**World's Largest Muleshoe**" now graces the entrance of the Muleshoe Heritage Center in (you guessed it) **Muleshoe**. The giant shoe arches upward 22 feet, and measures 17 feet across at its widest point. The monument joins the town's 1965 tribute to the unsung beast, the National Mule Memorial, a popular photo site near the intersection of U.S. Highways 70 and 84 in downtown.

Saddle up and head south to **San Benito**, where a new Texas-style attraction awaits visitors to the

Lower Rio Grande Valley. **Hay Rides**, set in a real country atmosphere in the middle of town, offers horseback rides, pony rides, and old-fashioned hayrides on horse-drawn trailers. Groups of up to 500 can arrange for catered meals, making Hay Rides the perfect site for company picnics and family reunions. Open Fridays and Saturdays at 1220 W. Business Route 77 at the old National Guard Armory. For information or reservations, call 210/399-9588.

The Board of Regents at South-

HIGH ENERGY The Central and South West Corporation's Solar Park in the Davis Mountains is now open to the public year-round with tours available upon request.



The five-year, \$17 million project is centered around 12 wind turbines and a wide variety of solar energy systems, and includes solar applications for stock watering, remote pumping, street lighting, and traffic signals. Four miles east of Fort Davis on Texas 118, near The University of Texas' McDonald Observatory. Call 214/77-RENEW for details.

west Texas State University reversed their decision to implement a winter schedule at **Aquarena Springs Resort** after several hundred people showed up at the popular **San Marcos** attraction and found the gates shut. "The sheer numbers of travelers dropping by to take a glass bottom boat ride or see the Natural Aquarium of Texas demonstrated the demand from the visitor market for the park to remain open," said **Jan Hardin**, director of tourism at the San Marcos C&VB. For more info, call the Springs at 1-800-999-9767.

F A C E S

Camille Keith, vice president of Southwest Airlines, was installed as chairwoman of the **Texas Travel Industry Association** during Travel Summit '95 in Amarillo. Keith has served in the forefront of the Texas travel industry for many years, contributing her talents to the Discover Texas Association and TTIA, and serving as chairwoman of the 1992 and 1993 Summits in Austin and Houston. She is a native of Fort Worth and an original employee of the 24-year-old Southwest Airlines.

Stephen C. Calloway, a 27-year veteran of the Six Flags theme park organization, was named president of **Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington**. He succeeds **Bob Bennett**, who retired last month after 11 years in the park's top position. Calloway began his career in 1968 as a seasonal employee at Six Flags Over Georgia near Atlanta. He last served as president of Six Flags Over Mid-America near St. Louis. Six Flags Theme Parks Inc. is the number two theme park company in the U.S., hosting more than 21 million visitors a year.

A W A R D S

San Antonio Mayor Bill Thornton presented **Sea World of Texas** with an Environmental Leadership Award from Keep San Antonio Beautiful Inc. during special ceremonies last month. The award honors Sea World for innovative programs involving recycling and environmental issues. In addition, Sea World recently served as the kickoff site for the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's "Clean Texas Star," the most aggressive recycling program for businesses in Texas history. The park began recycling products when it opened in 1988.

The **Georgetown C&VB** was awarded the **Silver Circle Savvy Award**, by the City-County Communications and Marketing Association, for its marketing and action plan. The award is based on creativity, quality of content and production, design, budget, and customer focus.

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Where in Texas is Lonesome Dove?

The real Lonesome Dove is not a town, but rather a Baptist church near Southlake, Texas, north of Fort Worth. Lonesome Dove Baptist Church, the oldest Protestant church in Tarrant County, was formed by settlers who moved from Missouri to Texas in 1844-45. The church was organized in 1846 and has stood in the same spot with the same name since 1847. The congregation will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year.

TEXAS TRIVIA



THE EAGLE HAS LANDED For several years now, a colony of eagles has called the **Lake Buchanan** area home. And each year thousands of nature-lovers take advantage of the **Vanishing Texas River Cruise** to view this magnificent American symbol from the comfort of an enclosed, 60-foot vessel. The two-and-a-half hour tours leave dockside daily except Tuesdays. For reservations and information, call 512/756-6986.

F O R T H E B I R D S

The *Dallas Morning News* reports that a larger-than-usual number of **whooping cranes** have arrived at the Texas Gulf Coast, prompting experts to predict a record population this year. **Tom Stehn**, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said that 122 whoopers had arrived last month at or near their winter home at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The birds typically begin their 2,500-mile trek from Canada in mid-October, with the entire whooper population completing the migration by mid-December. Only 133 of the endangered birds made it to the Texas coast last year. Stehn predicts about 145 whoopers will make it to the Aransas area this winter, coming close to their record of 146 in 1990.

M U S E U M S

Visitors can view a fascinating collection of **Birds in Flight**, by photographer **Russell Hansen**, at the **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History**. The exhibit is timed to

correspond with the Christmas bird count in the Coastal Bend. Hansen has been photographing birds in flight for more than 17 years, capturing on film over 100 species within three feet of the camera, using a variety of special techniques. On view through January 28 at 1900 N. Chaparral. Call 512/883-2862 for details.

H I S T O R Y

Six months after the Texas Legislature granted new powers in their search for the historic **Alamo flag**, state officials are no closer to bringing the banner home. The flag was captured by Mexican General Santa Anna and his troops at the March 6, 1836, Battle of the Alamo. Since then, the government of Mexico has held possession of the flag. But, according to *The Dallas Morning News*, even if the battle flag is retrieved, Texans should not expect to regain full possession. "I don't feel a return strategy is a winning strategy," said Secretary of State **Tony Garza**. "We're going to focus on some sort of ability to display the flag or a loan strategy. In my mind, the flag is theirs and it should remain there."

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	9,414	-1.78	129,915	-19.65
Anthony	12,153	-13.53	161,148	-16.10
Denison	13,944	-30.87	231,735	+262.65
Gainesville	25,491	-2.02	352,002	-12.87
Langtry	8,076	+8.29	102,999	+3.87
Laredo	8,784	+5.93	113,886	-18.62
Orange	48,780	+31.59	570,432	+6.25
Texarkana	49,443	-10.06	591,942	+4.60
Valley	27,768	+15.14	302,799	+2.43
Waskom	48,999	+3.37	531,552	+1.82
Wichita Falls	12,552	-3.46	190,407	-4.19
Capitol Complex	7,278	-25.99	115,845	-15.04
1-800 Phone Center	6,861	-46.12	191,745	+10.88
CENTER TOTALS	279,543	-2.30	3,586,407	+2.78

Data as of November 30, 1995

*Compared to last year

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	32,251	1,232,643
SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY		
TxDOT TRAX System	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Subscriber inquiries	51	
Addresses offered	42,136	
Addresses transmitted	12,223	
Addresses transmitted		1,203,269
OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE		
Texas Highways print run		
This month		389,536
This month last year		388,761
This year-to-date		4,155,837
Last year-to-date		4,509,934

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