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STOP ON ICE CREAM ■ EXPLORING LONGHORN CAVERN

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

TEXAS

HIGHWAYS

JULY 2005

www.texashighways.com

Idyll Pleasures

ON THE GUADALUPE

ALSO: Bovine Icon

TEXAS LONGHORNS

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THIS MONTH, former *Texas Highways* managing editor Rosemary Williams writes about a place to chill when the weather heats up—Guadalupe River State Park. She camped there last summer with her younger brother, Carl Williams. Carl died unexpectedly from complications after surgery just two months after their family trip. As Rosie has reminded me, *carpe diem*, or “seize the day”—remember how important it is to take the opportunity to enjoy time with family members and loved ones.

“We just never know, do we?” she said after Carl died. “That camping trip will always mean the world to me. It was painful to return to the park, but healing, too. I could just see Carl walking up the road with his coffee.” As you can tell, writing the story was difficult—and cathartic. Enjoy it....

Unfortunately for *Texas Highways* readers, Rosie says this is her last story for the magazine. “The years take their toll,” she told us. “Because I fear eventually producing a story that is not on a par with the magazine’s standards of excellence, I am packing up my freelance shingle and truly, honestly retiring.” I hope she has a change of heart. None of us produces stellar work at all times, but so far, Rosie has never disappointed. Our wish is that she’ll come to her senses after a brief hiatus, and start contributing again to *Texas Highways*....

WE WERE SAD to learn that our friend Charles Shaw, an illustrator for *Texas Highways* and numerous other publications, died on May 1. Charlie was Texas’ illustrator extraordinaire, particularly with historical and Old West topics. Among his credits are illustrations for J. Frank Dobie’s *Coronado’s Children*, James Michener’s *The Eagle and the Raven*, and more than 70 other books. Longtime *Texas Highways* readers may remember his drawings and watercolors that accompanied our Texas Sesquicentennial series on Texas history by Dr. Joe B. Frantz in 1986, as well as illustrations on Western and historical themes throughout our 30-something years as a travel publication. As

Bob Parvin, a former *Texas Highways* photographer and associate editor, said to me, “I don’t know of another painter or illustrator who has contributed more to helping Texans visualize the characters and events of their history.”

Thanks to Charlie’s friends, including Bob, Don Collins, Dwain Kelley, and Drew Patterson, the Texas Legislature passed a resolution on April 13, 2005, honoring Charlie as a distinguished artist of “Texas frontier lifestyles and



Rosemary Williams wrote about camping at Guadalupe River State Park with her brother, the late Carl Williams, beginning on page 26.

historical scenes, children, and musicians.” The resolution cited Charlie for his work on Michener’s *Texas*, Charlie’s own book, *Indian Life in Texas*, and the recently published *From a Watery Grave: The Discovery and Excavation of La Salle’s Shipwreck, La Belle*, as well as his illustrations in children’s books, including the Walt Disney Davy Crockett se-

ries. Charlie’s work is displayed in the collections of the Franklin Mint in Pennsylvania, the San Jacinto Museum of History at La Porte, Seton Hospital in Austin, the Longview Museum of Fine Arts, the King Ranch, the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, the University of Texas Press, the American History Center at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University Press, and the Star of the Republic Museum. For a sample of Charlie’s talents, turn to page 46, where you’ll see one of his images of Texas Longhorns, in Dale Weisman’s story on the venerable Texas icon....

BE ON THE LOOKOUT for this year’s *Where in Texas Are You?* contest, which we’ll publish in the September 2005 special issue of *Texas Highways*. The lucky contest winner will be headed for *Amarillo*. Look for details on the prize package in upcoming issues....

WE HOPE your adventures this summer take you to unforgettable places. And please, remember to seize the day....

Jack Lowry

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RICK PERRY

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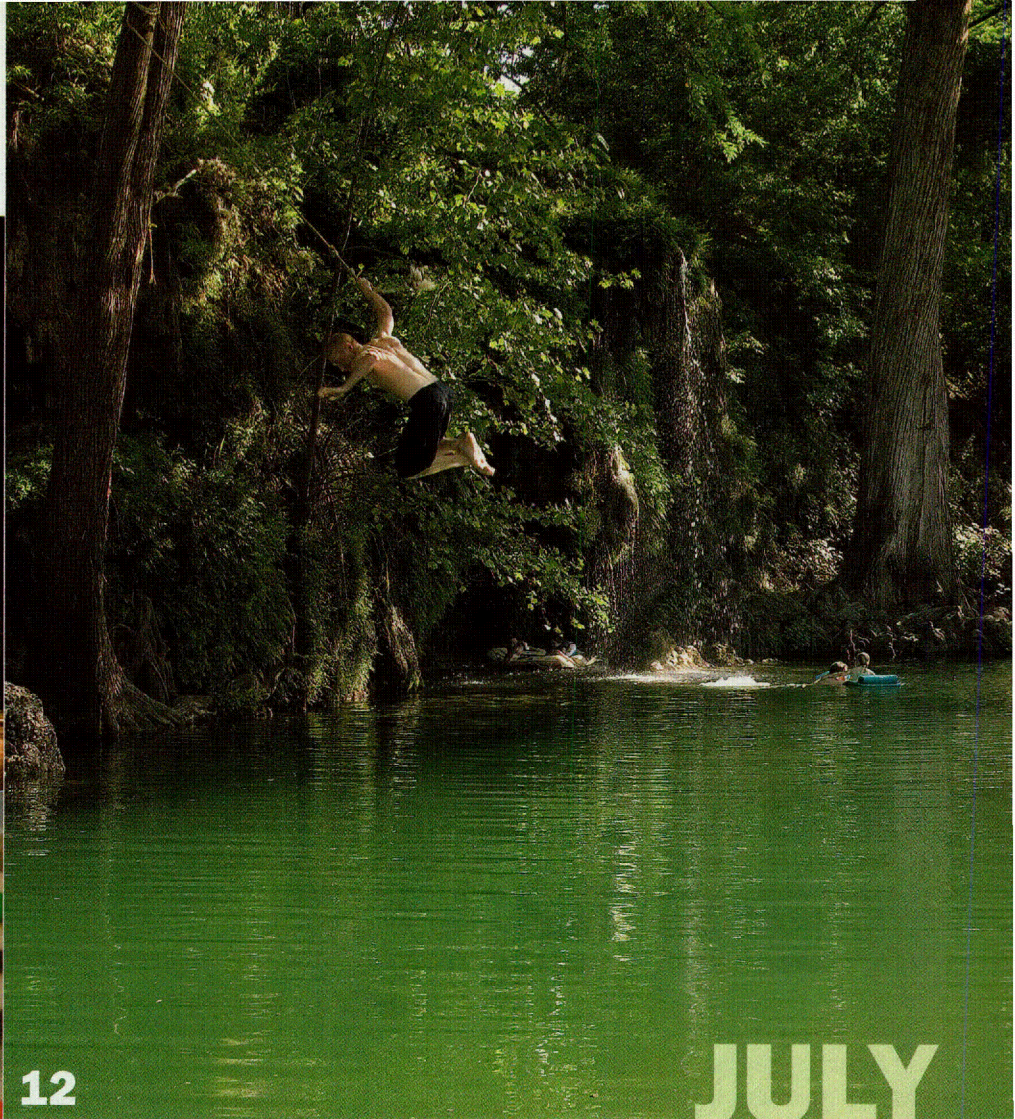




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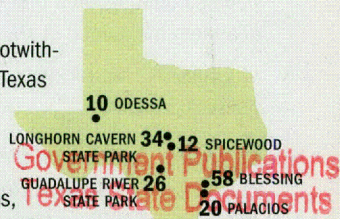
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ABOUT OUR COVERS FRONT: Techa Majalca of Austin chills under a bald cypress at Guadalupe River State Park, east of Boerne. Story on page 26. *Photo by J. Griffis Smith* BACK: A magnificent example of the State Large Mammal, this Longhorn was photographed near Marathon. Story on page 40. *Photo © Fred LaBounty*

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- 40 VIVA TEXAS LONGHORNS** Their legendary status notwithstanding, Longhorns really are a breed apart. Learn more about this Texas icon and why Longhorns are on the rise—again. BY DALE WEISMAN
- 48 I-SCREAM, TEXAS-STYLE** A longtime ice cream connoisseur presents a roundup of her favorite Texas ice cream shops, along with the scoop on Blue Bell in Brenham and *paletas* across the state. BY JUNE NAYLOR, PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

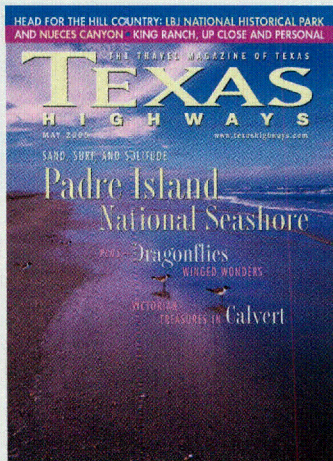


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DEAR READERS: We want your thoughts on the best of Texas, so we hope you'll take a few minutes to fill out the Readers' Choice Survey between pages 14 and 15. And if you have a story suggestion, feel free to include that on the survey, as well. Postage is on us. Many thanks!



Little "D" and the WASP

I NOTED with considerable interest two articles in the May issue (above). Of most interest to me, as a displaced Texan, was Randy Mallory's story on Denton's courthouse square. I left Denton 64 years ago to join the Army Air Corps. After World War II was over, I returned to Denton, where I was a reporter-photographer for the *Denton Record-Chronicle* for several years.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to visit the Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum. It is indeed a jewel. I have often thought that Denton's was the most beautiful of Texas courthouses. It was constructed of native limestone and sandstone with columns of Burnet County granite. I am pleased that there has been an obvious effort to rejuvenate the downtown area.

Secondly, I was interested in the TexCetera item on the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). I was in the last class of Aviation Cadets to go through primary training at the same time as the first class of women pilots. Sweetwater's Avenger Field at that time was operated by a government contractor. The women, having considerably more flying experience than the Cadets, were training to fly Army planes at Avenger Field. The WASP have been so often ignored that I was pleased to see them mentioned in TH.

WILLIAM H. McNITZKY
Kalispell, Montana

ED. NOTE: For more on the WASP in Texas, check out "The Sky Was No Limit: On the Wings of a WASP," by Melinda Rice, in our November 2002 issue.

German Geographer

GREETINGS from Germany. I didn't order TH; it was a present from my American friends. As a geography teacher (recently retired), I often used the magazine in my classes. Let me say thank you for all the interesting information during the last years.

RAINER FAGIN
Johstadt, Germany

Denton Delights

I GREW up in North Texas and attended the University of North Texas in the early '90s. Randy Mallory's article on downtown Denton [May] brought back many memories. In fact, my mouth began to water at the mention of Denton County Independent Hamburger Co. I've always thought the courthouse was magnificent. Too bad this award-winning restoration project didn't warrant a larger photo than a pecan Miss Piggy.

LAURAL PLOURDE
Uxbridge, Massachusetts

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that you didn't wander a bit away from the square in Denton to discover the most interesting museum in town, the Denton County Historical Museum, Inc. Housed in an unlikely place—the former Denton Factory Stores, on I-35—the museum contains the most extensive and interesting collection of photographs, documents, and artifacts relating to the history of Denton County and North Texas. A place for historical inspiration, for learning, and for research, the museum draws visitors from all states and dozens of foreign countries (Siberia and Sweden spring to mind). For a warm welcome and a look at the real history of Denton County, drop in Tuesday-Saturday 10-5 [5800 N. I-35, Ste. 308;

940/380-0877; www.dentoncountyhistoricalmuseum.com].

DIANE H. BARENTINE
Dallas

ED. NOTE: Thanks for writing, Diane. We've "wandered away" from Denton's courthouse square a number of times in recent years, including our March 2004 story on the town's Texas Storytelling Festival, and the story on the Arts and Jazz Festival the following month. Our last full feature on the town, which included the Denton County Historical Museum, was in March 1997. We will revisit the area in November, when we cover some of Denton County's historical bridges.

We Didn't Pay Her to Say This

YOUR NEW Web site [www.texashighways.com] is extra-extra-extra fabulous! Parfait! Splendid!

ANNA [no last name given]
Houston

Mission Statement

THANKS for including my suggested scenic routes in the Nueces Canyon area in May's Up Front. I want to mention, however, that there is no building at the San Lorenzo Mission site. The building long ago crumbled. A few years ago, the community made an effort to restore at least part of the wall but could not raise the



Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the 1896 Denton County Courthouse features 82 granite columns.

necessary funds. So, only a historical marker and the flags flying tell the world what once was.

MAXINE MAYES
Sisterdale

Waco's Own

IN REGARD to the March article on Waco, I have another local treasure to add to the list of the city's homegrown heroes: Hank Thompson. Hank is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame [inducted in 1989] and a living legend. He is known for his Western Swing music and songwriting, and as the leader of the famous Brazos Valley Boys. His music has spanned seven decades. Hank was born [in 1925] and raised in Waco and is proud to claim it.

JUDY SIMS
Crane

ED. NOTE: Thanks, Judy. From the Country Music Hall of Fame Web site (www.countrymusichalloffame.com): "Few country music artists can claim a longevity and track record to equal that of Hank Thompson. Between 1948 and 1974, he scored no less than 29 Top Ten hits, with another 19 in the Top Twenty, and continued to chart into the 1980s. Many of these, including 'Green Light,' 'Whoa Sailor,' and 'Waiting in the Lobby of Your Heart,' he penned himself, thus proving his stature in country music's great singer-songwriter tradition. Along the way, Thompson forged a potent blend of honky-tonk and Western Swing that has long served as a source of continuity amid country's experimentation with rock and pop sounds.... He still performs some 120 dates a year throughout the world." Find out about Hank's upcoming performances (and order his CDs) at www.hankthompson.net.

Special Kin-ship

LAST summer, I visited the USA and my relatives in Houston for the first time. They took me on a cross-country adventure by car and airplane throughout Texas. Prepared and informed by some years' study of *Texas Highways* magazine, I found Houston, Austin, Galveston, the Hill Country, and the Gulf Coast area intimate and familiar, but like the wonderful difference between a dream and the lively reality. In only four weeks, I got a comprehensive look at your state's nature, climate, economy, culture, hospitality, and social life, and I enjoyed my visit exceptionally.

One of the most lasting impressions has been from the visit to the Battleship TEXAS at

Dragonflies 101

ED. NOTE: Dr. John. C. Abbott called to correct and polish some of the details in May's story on dragonflies. Specifically referring to the "Dragonfly Details" box on page 48, Dr. Abbott says that some dragonflies lay eggs in (not on) aquatic plants, but most lay them in the water (not on), and near the water, where they later become submerged. He adds that dragonflies flying in tandem are technically in a "mate-guarding" position, whereby the male is guarding the female while she deposits eggs.

Dr. Abbott also notes that only one group of damselflies in North America holds its wings at a 45-degree angle when at rest; the others hold them back over the abdomen. And dragonflies are less active on cold and cloudy days (not "never seen"), and they do not shiver their flight muscles while perched.

The number of dragonfly species spotted in Texas is up from last year's figure of 213, to 221, "further evidence of the increasing popularity of dragonfly-watching," says Dr. Abbott, a senior lecturer in the Section of Integrative Biology, curator of the Brackenridge Field Laboratory Insect Collection, and a research associate of the Texas Memorial Museum at the University of Texas at Austin. For more information, including details on Dr. Abbott's new book, **Dragonflies and Damselflies of Texas and the South-Central United States** (Princeton Univ. Press, 2005),



© GREG LASLEY

For more on the Wandering Glider (above) and other dragonflies in Texas, as well as Weslaco's annual Dragonfly Days event, check out Scott Williams' story in the May issue.

the first guide devoted to odonates in this region, go to www.odonatacentral.com.

And Texas A&M University Press (www.tamu.edu/upress) has just released **A Dazzle of Dragonflies** by Forrest L. Mitchell (an associate professor at Texas A&M and a research entomologist at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Stephenville) and James L. Lasswell (a senior research associate at the experiment station). Check out the authors' Digital Dragonflies Web site, www.dragonflies.org.

San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site [281/479-2431; www.tpwd.state.tx.us]. I have been memorably affected by the German shell shown on board (among other things) by the proficient guide, and memories of Omaha Beach, where the TEXAS made a major contribution to the success of the Allied troops' landing. On this very short section of the Normandy Coast at the beginning of D-Day, on June 6, 1944, more than 4,000 U.S. soldiers lost their lives in a few hours—they symbolize all the Allied soldiers killed in battle to free Europe from Nazi tyranny. I returned to my home country with a valuable increase in experience.

PETER OSTERHOLT
Braunschweig, Germany

ED. NOTE: Good to hear from you, Peter. So glad you enjoyed your trip to Texas. Readers, you may remember Peter's letter and photo from June 2004 Talk to TH.

Linden Landmark

REGARDING May's Speaking of Texas, Linden is the site of a Rosenwald School. I realize you can't mention every one, but this one, Pleasant Hill, is in the National Register of Historic Places.

CHARLES A. STEGER
Atlanta

ED. NOTE: Also of special note is that the town of Calvert, featured in the May issue, and Yoakum have Rosenwald Schools, still used as schools. Several other of the old structures are still part of school districts.

WRITE OR EMAIL: Talk to TH, *Texas Highways*, Box 241009, 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.

For THE ROAD

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS AND PLACES

Lights, Camera, Action!

LONG BEFORE RICHARD LINKLATER, ROBERT RODRIGUEZ, AND WES Anderson made moviemaking in Texas hip again, the Lone Star State had established a silver-screen legacy with roots in the days of silent films.

Texas Movies, a new temporary exhibit that kicks off July 9 at the **Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum** in **Austin**, delves into Texas' rich moviemaking history. Did you know, for example, that in 1900, Texas' first filmmakers—armed with primitive Edison cameras—captured for posterity the devastation wrought by Galveston's great hurricane?

Artifacts from more than 80 films, along with costumes, props, production documents, and promotional materials, illustrate the astounding variety of movie projects made here. For example, check out a helmet and goggles from 1927's Academy Award-winning *Wings*, the oil-drenched clothing worn by James Dean in *Giant* (1956), a blood-stained blouse donned by Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), one of Sandra Bullock's dresses from 2000's *Miss Congeniality*, and futuristic outfits from 2003's *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*. Also on display are the vintage Chevy Bel Air police cruiser from this year's *Sin City*, press kits from *Urban Cowboy* (1980) and *Logan's Run* (1976), and posters for *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Silkwood* (1983), *Lone Star* (1996), and *The Rookie* (2002)—just to name a few.

In a state that can claim poignant Western storytelling (think *Lonesome Dove*), edgy post-modern humor (think *Rushmore*), and kinetic comic-book violence (think *Sin City*), a filmmaker might think anything's possible. Come see why indeed, they do. Call 512/936-8746; www.TheStoryofTexas.com.

PALACE AND MOSQUE

FORT WORTH WELCOMES the sheer beauty and richness of the Islamic Middle East when the **Kimbell Art Museum** displays *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Victoria and Albert Museum*

This table, made in Turkey around 1560, features wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with fritware painted under the glaze.

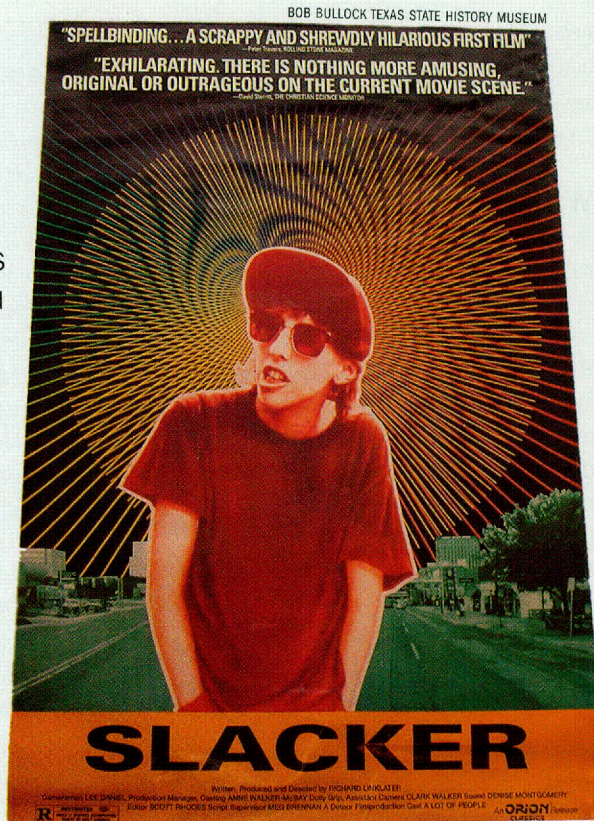
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON; © V&A IMAGES



through September 4. This spectacular exhibition illustrates the fusion of elegance and spirituality embodied in Islamic art.

The collection, a traveling exhibit from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, showcases more than 100 masterpieces originally collected by British individuals in the 1800s. The myriad ceramics, carpets, textiles, examples of calligraphy, metalworks, sculptures, woodworks, and paintings reflect the splendor and sophistication of Islamic culture. Wait until you see the 14th-Century Egyptian bottle created from enamel-and-gilt-decorated glass, and the Turkish wooden table delicately inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Each piece of art is categorized by a theme or era, creating five distinct sections in the exhibition. In "The Written Word," you can explore the influence and importance of Arabic calligraphy, while the "Courts and Courtiers: Art and Power" section highlights pieces created for royal palaces. Gaze at the 20-foot pulpit, made of wood with ivory inlays, constructed for a Cairo mosque in the "Mosques, Shrines, and Churches" area. In a section called "Ottoman Patronage," you'll learn how Islamic rulers galvanized artists to produce fritware, a high-quality, white ceramic that resembles porcelain and can be fashioned into objects of extraordinary size. Artwork featured in "Artistic Ex-



Richard Linklater's 1991 film *Slacker* presented a day in the life of Austin, Texas. His film *Dazed and Confused* also took place in Texas.

change" depicts the back-and-forth of creative ideas between China, the Middle East, and Europe. Call 817/332-8451; www.kimbellart.org. —AMANDA ABLACK

THE RING, PLEASE

LORD OF THE RINGS FANS, IT'S TIME FOR a Houston road trip. Here's the plan: Don your Hobbit or Wizard garb, and make haste to the **Houston Museum of Natural Science**, where you'll find *The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: The Exhibition* on display through August 28.

The trilogy, which dominated the box office between 2001 and 2003 and won a mind-boggling 17 Academy Awards, created a richly textured fantasy world by melding technology with the stories of British author and Oxford University scholar J.R.R. Tolkien. That real-world science, along with hundreds of props, costumes, prosthetics, jewelry, and other film memorabilia, promises to intrigue even the most indefatigable *Lord of the Rings* devotee. For example, not only can you experiment with computer-generated-image (CGI) effects and animatronics, but you can also explore the film phenomenon known as scaling, in which filmmakers use a mix of trick photography, forced perspective, and props to change the actors'

size. Would you be a Hobbit or a Wizard? Transform yourself, and see. Call 713/639-4629; www.hmns.org.

WESTERN LEGENDS

COULD ANY TWO ARTISTS BE MORE synonymous with iconic art of the Old West than Charles Russell and Frederic Remington? Both Russell (1864-1926) and Remington (1861-1909) helped legitimize Western art in the eyes of collectors, and at the same time documented a period of unparalleled transition on the Western frontier. Through August 21 at the **Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum** in Canyon, *Capturing Western Legends: Russell and Remington's Canadian Frontier* showcases works that deal with the Blackfoot tribes, the fur trade, and the ranching industry in the hinterlands between Alberta and Montana. Call 806/651-2244; www.panhandleplains.org.

ADAMS' APPLES

IN THE EARLY 1980S, RETIRED PETRO-leum geologist Baxter Adams started growing apples on his land west of Medina. "It couldn't be done," harrumphed the naysayers. But Baxter had some tricks up his sleeve, and soon his local apples enjoyed celebrity statewide. A quar-

ter-century later, apple orchards still thrive in the Hill Country.

Help celebrate Medina's juicy coup July 23-30 during the annual **Texas International Apple Festival**. The eight-day event includes a parade, car show, and petting zoo, cooking classes and baking contests, live music, crafts, a seed-spitting contest, an apple-eating contest, and displays of tractors and other farm equipment. Dozens of food vendors will sell apple treats, and you can even head to the orchards to select your own juicy fruits. Call 830/589-7224; www.medinatexas.com.

ART OF THE BOOK


KNOWN AS ONE OF 20TH-CENTURY DALLAS' most influential taste-makers, department-store luminary Stanley Marcus (1905-2002) was also an acute businessman, art collector, generous philanthropist, author, and lifelong reader. Long before Marcus collected art, in fact, he purchased books, seeking out major book dealers in London, Paris, and New York and following their bibliographic lead.

After Marcus' death, Southern Methodist University's DeGolyer Library received the bulk of his library and papers, which included rare books from throughout the world. Through July


31, SMU's Meadows Museum will showcase selections from the collection in *The Art of the Book: A Centennial Tribute to Stanley Marcus, Bibliophile*. One of the most spectacular items, a handprinted volume of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, dates to 1896; only 425 copies were made. Call 214/768-2516; www.meadowsmuseumdallas.org.


PLAINS AND SIMPLE

HOME TO THE STATE'S ONLY ACADEMIC program in country and bluegrass music, **Levelland's** South Plains College has seen more than its share of talented students, including such stars as Natalie Maines and Lee Ann Womack. So, as you might expect, Levelland's 44th annual **Early Settlers Festival** (July 9) features plenty of topnotch music—ranging from gospel and bluegrass to country, jazz, and rock-'n'-roll. But you'll also find a parade with almost 100 decorated floats, a rock wall for climbing, a Ferris wheel, a display of antique tractors, lots of games for kids, and dozens of local vendors selling such items as roasted corn, fajitas, funnel cakes, barbecue, and snow cones. There's even a "Best Dog Tricks" contest, which sparks the question: Can any pooch around here play the fiddle? Call 806/894-3157.



THE VISIBILITY ON THE TEXAS FORTS TRAIL IS GREAT. YOU CAN SEE FOR 150 YEARS.

 No matter where you look, there's history. Ahead are forts bearing the marks of battles fought. To the side are quaint town squares with historic courthouses and the best spare ribs you'll ever eat. Following intently are the stories of the people who struggled to make Texas great. So get in the car. Get on the trail. And take a look around — you can see your heritage from here.

 **TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**
The State Agency for Historic Preservation

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

CATCH A BUZZ

IN CLUTE, WHICH LIES ABOUT FIVE MILES inland of the Gulf of Mexico, mosquitoes are a fact of life. The little suckers (locals sometimes call 'em worse things) even have their own summertime festival, the **Great Texas Mosquito Festival**, which celebrates its 25th anniversary

July 28-30. Along with appearances by Willie Man-Chew, the 26-foot, inflatable mosquito mascot, this year's skeeter-pleaser features well-known acts like the Marshall Tucker Band, Roger Creager, and Robert Earl Keen, who will create a buzz of their own.

Silly contests, like a mosquito-calling competition and a mosquito-legs pageant, make light of the area's most maligned insect, and other activities—like the carnival, a goat-roping contest, and a "Buzz, Bike, and Skate" tour—keep the days fun-filled. But for many festival-goers, the food here is the big draw. It's so tasty and

GREAT TEXAS MOSQUITO FESTIVAL



The Great Texas Mosquito Festival in Clute celebrates its 25th anniversary July 28-30.

abundant that last year, a crew from the Food Network showed up to commit the BBQ-Fajita Cook-off to posterity, and wound up smitten with the Texas way of doin' things. After all, where else but the Lone Star State would you find a mosquito mascot with such an impressive bloodline? Call 800/371-2971; www.mosquitofestival.com.

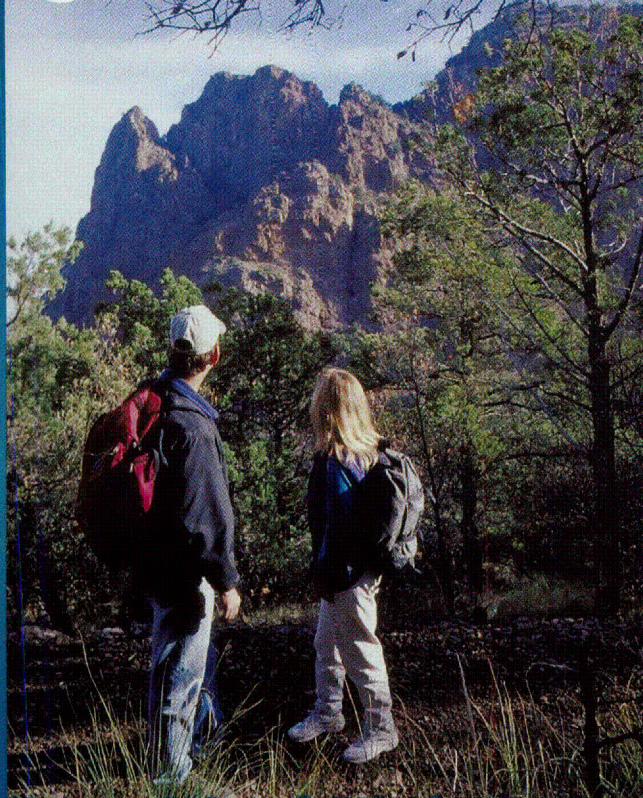
ROCKPORT OR BUST

IF YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED A COASTAL Fourth of July, what are you waiting for? See our story on page 20 for the lowdown on letting down your hair in Palacios, but other Texas beach towns offer plenty of Independence Day fun, too. Take **Rockport**, the artsy community on Aransas Bay, just south of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

The 36th annual **Rockport Art Festival**, held annually on the weekend closest to Independence Day (July 2-3 this year), brings in more than 125 artists, selected from entries from across the United States, to show their works. Add continuous live entertainment, artists' demonstrations, great food, a kids' tent, and, of course, the ever-present ocean breezes, and we can't imagine why you'd want to be anywhere else. On the 4th, after a patriotic boat parade, you can even watch fireworks from a sandy perch on the beach. Call 361/729-5519; www.rockportartcenter.org (festival), or 361/729-6445; rockport-fulton.org (town information).

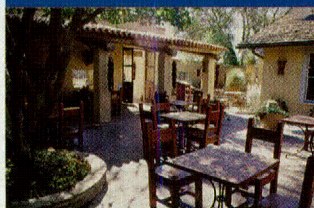
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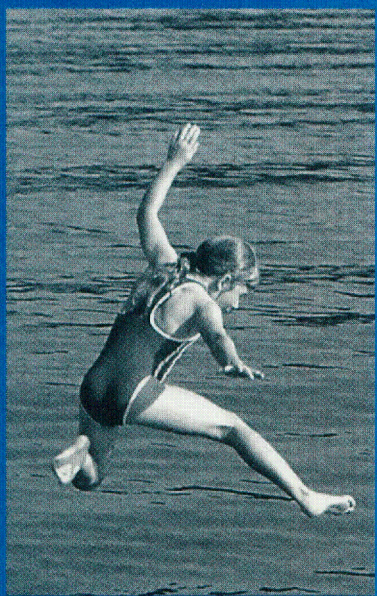


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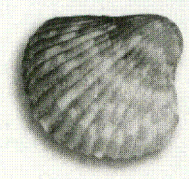
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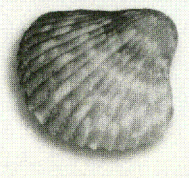
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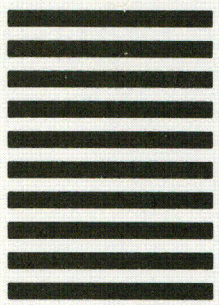


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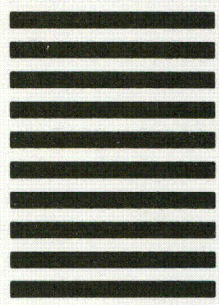


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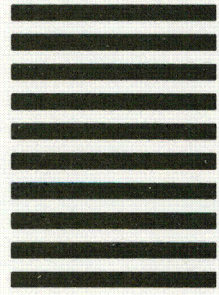


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SIDESADDLE UP!

Riding sidesaddle—an age-old tradition that essentially disappeared with the turn of the 20th Century—is alive and well in the Lone Star State. Members of a drill team known as the Texas Ladies Aside (TLA) regularly perform riding sidesaddle on proud, prancing Peruvian horses in parades, shows, trail rides, and other events in Texas and beyond.

Sometimes the women dress in long, sweeping riding habits of vivid colors and top hats reminiscent of another era. At other events, they don costumes that evoke Spanish tradition or wear sequined vests of red, white, and blue that show off the Texas star. Last year, thousands witnessed their elegance during the



The Texas Ladies Aside are shown here during the 2004 Texas State Drill Championships. The team will take part in the championships again this year, July 22-23 in Canton.

National Cowgirl Hall of Fame parade in Fort Worth, the Snookfest parade in Snook, the Fourth of July parade at Fort Davis, and the Texas Rice Festival parade in Winnie, among other appearances. TLA riders have also participated in the Kentucky Derby Parade, a Presidential Inaugural Parade, and two Tournament of Roses Parades. They have performed twice by invitation at the Peruvian National Show in Lima. There, the women used borrowed horses that learned to be sidesaddle drill horses in less than a week, a feat the women repeated at Canada's Calgary Stampede Equidance competition in 2000.

Founded by Sally Cochran and Eileen Craig of Caldwell in 1984, the Texas Ladies Aside was designated the state's "Official Equestrian Drill Team" by the 74th Legislature. Today, the group boasts nearly 100 devoted and energetic horsewomen, most of them in their forties and fifties, from all walks of life. In a performance team of eight to 12 members, each woman rides a laterally-gaited Peruvian horse, sitting

on an English, Peruvian, or American Western-style sidesaddle. The teams' synchronized patterns and skilled horsemanship earned the TLA a National Drill Championship in 2003 and 2004 in Myrtle Springs, Texas.

To ensure a continuous infusion of newcomers, the TLA (979/272-1495; www.texasladiesaside.com) sponsors a clinic each spring to introduce women to the pleasures of sidesaddle riding. The group has also hosted horsemanship clinics for junior and adult riders.

—Lana Robinson, Waco

CAMP HULEN

The mild Gulf breeze rustles the dense underbrush and nudges the tall palm trees that cover a vast tract of waterfront acreage just west of Palacios. A few cattle graze peacefully, waterfowl nest undisturbed, and there's not a human soul in sight. Only the wide, arrow-straight concrete roads and a towering old brick incinerator hint that this land was once the site of Camp Hulen, a major U.S. Army in-

stallation that at its peak, during World War II, housed more than 14,000 troops.

Established in 1926 as Camp Palacios, the 1,460-acre enclave was the summer home of the 36th Division of the Texas National Guard until the U.S. War Department took it over in 1939. Flanked by wide bays on two sides, the site proved ideal for target practice and became an antiaircraft training base for National Guard units. Eventually, 400 buildings covered the base, including some 300 floored and screened tents for enlisted men, a movie theater, library, bakery, post office, and hospital.

Besides altering forever the lives of the young soldiers who came to train, then shipped out to fight and possibly die on foreign soil, the camp profoundly changed the tiny town of Palacios. Commerce flourished, Hollywood stars like Rita Hayworth came to entertain the troops, and searchlights crisscrossing the night skies added to the wartime drama.

Today, natives like Ruby Penland (who wrote a short history of the camp for the Palacios Area Historical Association in 1987) treasure memories of those years. "I was only six or seven years old," Ruby says, "but my older sisters appreciated the fact that there were thousands of eligible young men out there." Ruby would tag along with a sister who worked at the base and who eventually married an officer she met there. "I'd ride the bus to the camp to go to the movies," Ruby adds.

Ruby also remembers when the camp housed German POWs, toward the end of the war. "There's not a lot of information about that—a lot of what went on at Camp Hulen wasn't in the papers," she says. "I have found documents that say there were around 200 prisoners. I remember seeing them being marched up and down the city streets."

If you listen closely, the sound of their footsteps—and those of the American troops who lived and trained here—still seem to echo along this out-of-the-way stretch of the Texas Gulf Coast.

—Angela Fox, Nashville, Tennessee

SPOTLIGHT on Great Stays

© MICHELLE MCKAY OTTO

Places with Personality

WE WOULD NEVER DISPARAGE THE TRIED-AND-TRUE Anonymous Bargain Hotel/Motel in Everywhere, Texas. Sometimes, after all, you simply need a place to sleep, and convenience triumphs over character. However, when the occasion calls for an awe-inspiring view, a smattering of history or architecture, and perhaps a breakfast that makes you swoon, here's some help.

GET THE GUIDEBOOK

EVERY TRAVELER SHOULD KEEP HANDY the 2005 version of *The Great Stays of Texas* guidebook, which is free on request from Historic Accommodations of Texas (HAT), the statewide association of fine bed and breakfasts, country inns, distinctive hotels, and guesthouses. Begun 21 years ago with such venerable charter members as the Menger Hotel in San Antonio and the Driskill Hotel in Austin, the association has ex-

panded its purview in recent years to include lodgings ranging from rustic log cabins to luxurious Victorian mansions. All HAT members must meet stringent criteria in the areas of safety, cleanliness, and amenities, which means that you'll always find a reading lamp by the bed, soft towels in the bathroom, and, more often than not, gourmet coffee in the morning.

The Great Stays of Texas features more than



At the 9E Ranch near Smithville, the Texas Lone Star Log Cabin offers a quiet spot to revel in nature.

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THE 9E

STAY A NIGHT IN ONE OF THE THREE cottages at the idyllic 9E Ranch, near Smithville, and you may never want to leave. Owned by artist Joan Bohls and her husband, Kent, a minister with a kind smile and an enthusiasm for nature, the ranch sprawls for some 300 wooded acres along scenic Piney Creek, a tributary of the Colorado River. With three miles of walking trails, three ponds, and hundreds of towering pine trees, the 9E offers unparalleled opportunities for birding, artistic pursuits, stargazing, and meditation.

Once part of a much larger tract of land, the ranch has been in Joan's family since 1958, when her father, Dr. Robert Yelderman of Rosenberg, purchased it to indulge his hobby of raising cattle. The original ranch barn is now a cozy cottage known as the De Colores Artist Barn, where guests can relax on the screened porch, dabble with paints and other art supplies Joan provides, and admire the abundant butterflies fluttering in the garden out front. A stone's throw away lies the rustic Texas Lone Star Log Cabin, which was built from cedar and pine trees that once grew on the ranch. Rocking chairs on an old-fashioned front porch provide more spots to unwind.

A few hundred yards away, near a Monet-inspired garden that blooms nearly year round with wildflowers, the Eagles' Nest Log Cabin boasts a splendid view of the ranch's rolling terrain. Like the other two lodgings here, the Eagles' Nest features a queen-size bed, a kitchen stocked with



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gourmet coffee and other treats, and a small library of books and videos. But we bet you won't find yourself watching television at this serene retreat: The outdoors beckons. Rates at the 9E run about \$135 per night, including breakfast. Call 512/497-9502; www.9eranch.com.

PANILO RANCH

AT PANILO RANCH B&B SPA AND RESORT near Sisterdale, owner Judy Kennell marries Hawaiian luxuries and Lone Star traditions for a Texas ranch getaway like none other. While *paniolo* translates to "cowboy" or "cowgirl" in Hawaiian, this 100-acre ranch isn't a dude ranch. (In fact, there's not a horse in sight—all the better for Buddy, the resident black lab and intrepid trail guide, who loves attention from guests.)

Instead of a traditional ranch getaway, guests at Paniolo Ranch find opportunities to paint in a fully equipped art studio, pick fruits and vegetables in an orchard and whimsically decorated garden, learn wire-twisting techniques in a jewelry class, go fossil hunting, and take in the abundant amenities at the Paniolo Ranch spa. Here, not only can you indulge in such spa treatments as a *Wawae a me Lima Lomi* (foot and hand massage) or a *Poepoe Kino* (Swedish full-body massage), but you can relax in the swimming pool, cold-water spa, therapeutic hot tub, or seated steam bath.

The three lodgings here—the O'Hana House (which has a hot tub), Spa House (with spectacular views and a lakeside patio), and the romantic Pineapple House—all feature luxurious baths, sumptuous beds, and even slippers to wear for late-night marveling at the star-studded sky. Rates begin at \$145 per night, including breakfast. Call 866/726-4656; www.panioloranch.com.

THE ADOBE ROSE

LIKE THE HUNDREDS OF OTHER MAVERICKS who make their home in West Texas' Brewster County, former Houstonian Lisa Cameron visited Marathon on a "wild hair" and decided to stick around. In the late 1990s, she purchased a hundred-year-old adobe home near the railroad tracks from noted Big Bend photographer James Evans, and began transforming it into a B&B.

Today, the Adobe Rose Inn features four guest rooms, each furnished with antiques collected in Lisa's travels. A walled garden, fashioned from 32 magnificent oak doors that came from an Irish prison, provides a serene place to relax. Trailing vines, potted flowers, gazing balls, an antique well, a hot tub, wooden tables and wicker chairs, and numerous birds add to the ambiance. Lisa envisioned her garden as the ultimate spot

to unwind and enjoy a meal: In the mornings, guests can choose from a wide array of breakfast treats, including fruit, yogurt, homemade granola, fresh coffeecake, eggs, and gourmet coffee.

Oftentimes, guests stop here en route to Big Bend National Park, which lies some 45 minutes south, but take our word for it: Marathon may wrap itself around your heart, too. Rates begin at \$95, including breakfast. Call 866/386-4564; www.theadoberoseinn.com.

LOUNGING ON THE LLANO

IF FLY-FISHING, KAYAKING, CANOEING, OR river-romping figure into your idea of an ideal vacation, you'll find everything you desire—plus some—at a 30-acre retreat called **Raye Carrington on the Llano River**, which lies some eight miles south of Mason. Owners Raye Carrington and her husband, David Jones, met during a fly-fishing expedition several years ago, and their love affair with the sport (and with each other) is still going strong. Spend a weekend at this idyllic riverfront retreat, and you'll fall under the spell of the Llano, too.

The retreat's three cabins and five rooms offer guests easy access to the river, which rolls lazily through these parts before developing riffles and

rapids farther east. Raye and David rent kayaks and canoes you can use to explore (and fish) on your own, and they also offer guests fly-fishing classes and workshops, year round. For paddlers who want to venture farther than a mile or so away from the ranch, they'll arrange a return shuttle for you and your boat.

"About half of our guests come here to fish," says Raye, "and the rest are just 'lovebirding.' They sit and read, go antiquing in Mason or Fredericksburg, ride bicycles, swim in the river, and perhaps take a canoe out."

No matter how guests occupy their time here, most everyone arrives at breakfast hungry—and that's a good thing. David's in charge of breakfast, and his repertoire includes such hearty country fare as blue corn-blueberry pancakes, served with thick slabs of smoked ham.

The stars shine bright here, too. More than 100 miles from the nearest big city, Raye and David's retreat is also popular with skywatchers, many of whom bring their telescopes. But you don't need fancy equipment to enjoy your time here, as the river and the stars work their magic all on their own. Lodging rates start at \$95, including breakfast. Call 866/605-3100; www.llanoriver.com.

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A WEST TEXAS OIL CITY GETS ITS VERY OWN ROCK STAR

Odessa's Stonehenge

BY HELEN BRYANT

HERE IT STANDS, where anyone walking out of Odessa's Home Depot can see it across the road: Stonehenge. In West Texas, at the edge of the University of Texas of the Permian Basin campus.

A replica of England's prehistoric stone circle might seem out of place in this town of oil rigs and prairie dogs, but it's not as mysterious as the original. England's Stonehenge is commonly thought to be some sort of astronomical calendar, but nobody's really sure why it was erected on Salisbury Plain some 5,000 years ago.

As a matter of fact, there are Stonehenges all over the United States, in Missouri, Washington, New Hampshire, Montana, Nebraska, Virginia, Georgia—and New Mexico, if you count



Stonehenge—in Odessa? You bet. This replica measures seven-tenths the size of the one in England (the circle of stones has the same diameter as the original).

Santa Fe's circular arrangement of dead refrigerators.

Odessa isn't even the first Texas town

to have a Stonehenge. A couple of neighbors in Hunt, west of Kerrville, built one in a field there in 1989, inspired by some leftover patio stones. That Stonehenge was pretty much a whim.

The seeds of Odessa's Stonehenge, built last year, took root several years ago in the minds of three men. Chris Stanley, chairman of UTPB's Humanities and Fine Arts Department, had for years required art students to build models of Stonehenge. His friend, retired contractor Dick Gillham, was a longtime backer of public art, always on the lookout for something to improve the cultural landscape of Odessa. (This is, after all, the place dubbed "the worst town on earth" in Larry McMurtry's *Texasville*, although I'm told McMurtry has since revisited Odessa and recanted.)

One day, Chris and Dick were staring at a bunch of rocks Chris' students had arranged in a rough approximation of Stonehenge.

"Chris said, 'Wouldn't it be nice to get a real Stonehenge?' never dreaming that we would," Dick recalls.

Connie Edwards, another Stonehenge fan and the owner of a limestone quarry about 60 miles from Odessa, helped make it happen. In 2002, Connie sold

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The circle of stones, positioned exactly as the British original, has the same diameter, but the structure is only 70 percent as tall.

stones to people in Montana who were building a Stonehenge there. He returned with an idea: Why not a Stonehenge in Odessa? He would donate the stones.

So, the three got The University of Texas System's approval to put Stonehenge on UTPB's campus and plotted to position the stones exactly as they are in England.

"A surveyor studied this thing from morning to night to make sure the stones were oriented right," Dick says. Dick raised money in the community to pay for moving the heavy stones.

The circle of stones has the same diameter as that of the original, but the structure is only 70 percent as tall. The Odessans saved a little money by using, for each vertical piece, two stones stacked atop each other. That meant heavy-equipment workers had to maneuver stones that weighed a mere 20,000 to 40,000 pounds, instead of 90,000.

The test of the positioning came on June 21, 2004—the Summer Solstice—when the rising sun was supposed to shine through a particular arch on the formation's northeast side.

"It worked perfectly," says Chris, who bases his judgment on photographic evidence. The solstice came on a cloudy day, and townspeople who had gathered to watch the phenomenon didn't see much. But they came out, and that's what matters to Chris.

"It gets people outside," he says, noting that many who've come to see Stonehenge are interested not only in the stone structure, but also in a wealth of bivalve fossils imprinted in the stones during the Cretaceous period, when much of Texas was under the sea.

Mathematics, physics, and geology students make field trips to study UTPB's Stonehenge, and public-school art students came from all over the

Permian Basin this year to draw Stonehenge for the Regional Visual Arts Scholastic competition.

Wildlife likes Stonehenge, too. Migrating birds roost on the vertical stones, and rabbits hide under the ones that rest on the ground.

On the sunny day when I visited, seven-year-olds Josh Anderegg and Alika Archuleta were climbing on the huge rocks.

Chris pointed out fossils to the kids, and they took the idea and ran with it. "It looks like where a dinosaur sat," Josh said of a broad indentation.

As far as Chris is concerned, that's justification for a Stonehenge in Odessa. "That was the real dream," he said, "that people would just come here and hang out."

Who knows? Maybe that's what the original Stonehenge was all about, too.

HELEN BRYANT loves all things ancient—or replicas thereof—and is on a mission to visit every Stonehenge in the country. Eventually.

STONEHENGE is on the northeastern edge of the Univ. of Texas of the Permian Basin, just off 42nd St. It's free to look at and walk around. More information is available at www.utpb.edu. **Odessa's area code is 432.**



Stonehenge isn't the only British icon that Odessa has reproduced. The city also has a replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and Anne Hathaway's Cottage. **The Globe of the Great Southwest**, on the Odessa College campus at 2308 Shakespeare Rd., is home to productions throughout the year, including those of the annual **Southwest Shakespeare Festival**. More information at www.globesw.org. Tours are available by calling 332-1586.

Other Odessa attractions include a **meteor crater** (free, I-20, at Exit 108), the **Presidential Museum** (4919 E. University Blvd., 363-7737), and the **Ellen Noël Art Museum of the Permian Basin** (next to the Presidential Museum, at 4909 E. University Blvd., 550-9696; www.noelartmuseum.org).

DINING Some of the best Mexican food I've found in Texas—and that's saying a lot—is at **La Bodega**, 1024 E. 7th St. (333-4469). Or for an Asian bite, try **Pad Thai**, 3747 Andrews Hwy./US 385 (362-8660).

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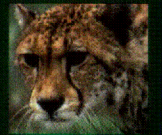
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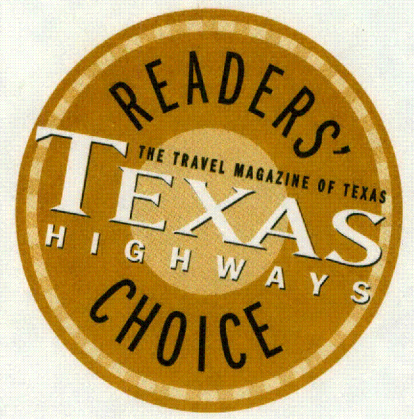
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4 My favorite place to watch the sunset is

5 My favorite cheap tourist thrill is

6 My favorite wacky attraction is

7 My favorite upscale restaurant is

8 My favorite restaurant for breakfast is

9 My favorite restaurant for barbecue is

10 My favorite restaurant for hamburgers is

11 My favorite restaurant for Tex-Mex food is

12 My favorite restaurant for catfish is

13 My favorite spot for swimming is

14 My favorite museum is

15 My favorite place to view spring wildflowers is

16 My favorite scenic drive is

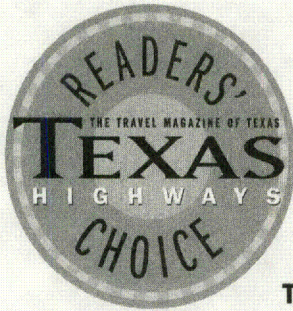
17 Texas' most beautiful building is (other than the
Alamo and the Capitol)

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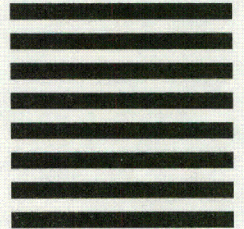
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PLUNGE INTO PARADISE Krause Springs

BY JOHN T. DAVIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Reset by the usual woes of modern urban life—bumper-to-bumper traffic, stressful workplaces, suburban sprawl, endangered waterways, and, as country singer Marty Stuart says, “Too much month at the end of the money”—parts of Central Texas share much of metropolitan America’s hustle-and-bustle and car-pool constraints. But take heart, because Central Texas also has a precious, random scattering of azure, turquoise, jade-green, and sapphire-blue life-giving, soul-restoring pools of water.

Swimming holes such as Hamilton Pool near Bee Cave, with its dramatic waterfall, the “Llano Slab” on a low-water crossing of the Llano River, the Comal River in New Braunfels, Wimberley’s venerable Blue Hole, and, of course, Austin’s famous Barton Springs—the glittering, living heart of the Capital City—aren’t automatic cures for all the travails of the 21st Century, but they do offer a proven, time-honored respite from everyday cares and the unrelenting Texas summer heat.

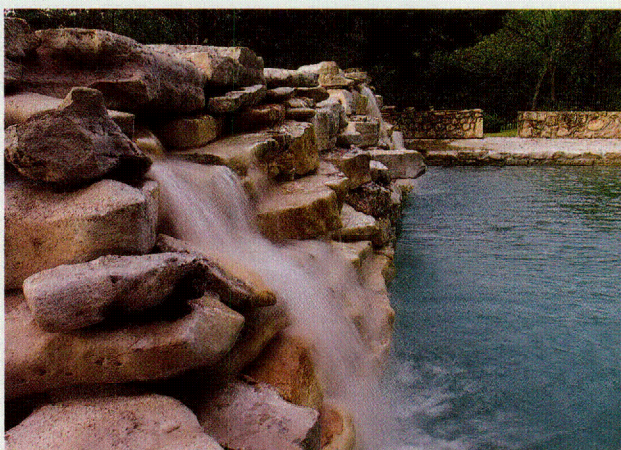
Krause Springs, a small paradise 34 miles west of Austin, off of Texas 71, has been managed by the same family since it first opened to the public in the 1950s. Elton and Jane Krause took what was once a hog farm on the banks of Cypress Creek and, through decades of unstinting labor and love, transformed it into a manicured jewel centered around one of the most beguiling Edens in the state.

Exit off Texas 71, splash through a low-water crossing, turn onto the Krause property, and you are immediately immersed in a postcard-gorgeous setting of the Texas Hill Country—rolling fields of native grasses and wildflowers, oaks set dramatically against an uncluttered horizon, and a blue sky that seems to roll on forever. (The site itself was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, owing to unexcavated Indian middens and burial sites on the premises.)

At the small pavilion on the patio of the family’s rambling stone house, one of the Krauses will be happy to take your admission fee and answer any questions. But the exchange is often short and distracted on the visitors’ part. They’ve already glimpsed the 70- by 20-foot, man-made spring-fed swimming pool down the hill.

WASH YOUR TROUBLES AWAY AT ONE OF KRAUSE SPRINGS’ CASCADING WATERFALLS—WITHIN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (LEFT), AND AT THE SPRING-FED, MAN-MADE POOL (RIGHT).

Shaded BY TOWERING,
ANCIENT CYPRESS TREES,
THE SETTING SEEMS VERY
NEARLY TROPICAL.





Elton

AND JANE KRAUSE TOOK WHAT WAS ONCE A HOG FARM ON THE BANKS OF CYPRESS CREEK AND





PLUNGE INTO PARADISE Krause Springs

Handmade stone benches, picnic grills, and tables dot the area, and a campground sits next to the property. Natural springs emerging from the bluff below the Krauses' ranch house give rise to small streams that seem to wind everywhere. "I've always heard there are 32 springs on the property," says Elton Krause with a grin, "but I've never bothered to count."

The true highlight of Krause Springs (pronounced KROW-zee; krow rhymes with now) becomes evident when you descend to Cypress Creek itself. There, an elbow of the creek and slickrock shelves of limestone combine to form a natural swimming hole with a dramatic 20-foot waterfall. Kids in particular seem drawn to the big rock below the falls (a toppled remnant of the original cliff) and enjoy the delightful deluge.

Shaded by towering, ancient cypress trees, the setting seems very nearly tropical. The waterfall sustains a voluptuous growth of elephant ears and maidenhair ferns, and the big slabs of sun-warmed limestone practically command the weary pilgrim to linger. It's easy to imagine a band of Comanche or Kiowa Indians taking their ease in the same spot hundreds of years ago.

Small tributaries flowing over and around a low concrete dam create strings of natural tubs, tinajas, and mini-rapids as they slowly erode the soft limestone. Elsewhere, the water slides in thin, sensuous sheets over the expanse of slickrock. Everywhere you turn, there is the toneless, soothing, Zen-like mumble of water running over stone.

On the Tuesday after Mother's Day this year, only one car was in the parking lot, and its mission was a solemn one. Sarah Goff of Spicewood has been coming to Krause Springs since she was a child and has "fond memories of this place," she said. Pointing to an enormous iron bell above the pool, she recalled, "If you had a good time, you had to ring the bell, and we *always* had a good time, and we *always* rang the bell."

On this day, though, she was arranging a memorial service for

DERRICK KRAUSE GETS READY TO TAKE THE PLUNGE FROM A ROPE SWING. THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN (FAR LEFT) IS HOME TO NUMEROUS FLOWERING PLANTS AND MELODIOUS WIND CHIMES. AT LEFT, OWNERS ELTON AND JANE KRAUSE ENJOY A PLEASANT AFTERNOON IN FRONT OF THEIR HOME, NEXT TO THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN.

TRANSFORMED IT INTO A MANICURED JEWEL.





YOU SUN; YOU SWIM; YOU LOLLYGAG. IT'S ALL YOU COULD ASK OF A SUMMER AFTERNOON.



© PAUL GUNN

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS? NOPE. IT'S THE HILL COUNTRY'S KRAUSE SPRINGS, WHERE YOU CAN CAMP OJT, OR JUST HANG OUT AT THIS LUSCIOUS FERN COVE.

PLUNGE into PARADISE Krause Springs

her mother, who had died on Mother's Day. The family's plans called for releasing a host of butterflies and doves in the Springs' backyard butterfly garden. Sarah recalled her mother first bringing her to Krause Springs at age four. Now, she said, her own daughter—age five—had just enjoyed her own first camping trip at the Springs. "She loved the waterfall and the hollow trees in the campground," said Sarah. Surveying the tranquil scene, she reflected, "This is God's country."

The origins of the springs are unclear, although they arise at what appears to be the western edge of the same Edwards Aquifer that gives birth to Austin's Barton Springs. Whatever their source, they seem to be in particular abundance on the Krause property. At least two big waterfalls can be found here, and the water runs between the gnarled, polished roots of the cypress trees, forming pools where anglers can go after the creek's smallmouth bass.

The spring water is cold enough to be startling, even on a hot day—between 65 and 70 degrees. Little kids shriek upon encountering it, while teenage boys fling themselves into the pool in heedless cannonballs (the better to impress the girls sunning themselves nearby). Older bathers, not willing to sacrifice dignity for instant respite, ease ponderously into the water, an inch at a time.

Because there are so few concessions to modernity (there's a Coke machine up by the house, and that's about it), and because the Krauses discourage boom boxes and other sources of loud music, Krause Springs has a timeless quality, a welcome suspension of modern-day rush. You sun; you swim; you lollygag. It's all you could ask of a summer afternoon.

Afterward, headed back into Austin, you might want to stop at Opie's Barbecue in Spicewood, where you select your cut of meat from the outdoor, wood-fired pits. Or, enjoy a cold beer at Poodie's Hilltop Bar & Grill (motto: "No Bad Days") along Texas 71. Or even, if you're lucky, catch a Willie Nelson concert at the Backyard, an open-air amphitheater in Bee Cave, as the sun sets.

Swimming holes, scenery, barbecue, and beer: All in all, the makings of a perfect Hill Country day.

JOHN T. DAVIS wrote about singing cowboys for the October 2004 issue. Photo editor MIKE MURPHY lives near another refreshing Central Texas cool spot, Hamilton Pool.



COURTNEY COBLE WELCOMES VISITORS TO OPIE'S BARBECUE, JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM KRAUSE SPRINGS, NEXT TO THE SPICEWOOD POST OFFICE.

essentials KRAUSE SPRINGS

FROM AUSTIN, take Texas 71 west about 34 miles, crossing the Pedernales River. Seven miles past the river, turn right at the sign for Spicewood (look for the Exxon station) onto Spur 191. Turn right onto Co. Rd. 404, cross the low-water crossing, and look for the entrance to Krause Springs immediately on the left.



Hours: Daily 9 a.m.-dusk; the gate is locked at 9 p.m.
Admission: \$3.50, \$3 ages 4-11. Camping per day: \$7, \$5 ages 4-11, with an additional \$4.50 charge for tent or RV hookups. No pets. Call 830/693-4181.

DINING **Opie's Barbecue**, 125 Spur 191, next to the Spicewood Post Office, open daily; 830/693-8660. **Poodie's Hilltop Bar & Grill**, 22308 Texas 71 West, Spicewood, 512/264-0318; www.poodieshilltop.homestead.com. **Spicewood Grill/Sam's Kitchen & Bar**, 9917 Texas 71 East, 830/693-4964. **BackStage Steakhouse & Garden Bar**, 21814 Texas 71 West, Spicewood, 512/264-2223.

MUSIC **The Backyard**, 13101 Texas 71 West, Bee Cave, 512/263-4146; www.thebackyard.net.

Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay

FIREWORKS shatter against the black velvet sky. With a boom and a crash, a pop and a sizzle, showers of neon-colored lights rain down, casting a multihued glow on the rippling water below and illuminating the pavilion that has been a Palacios landmark for decades.

I've long been a fan of small-town Fourth of July celebrations. There's a sense of community and camaraderie, plus plenty of elbow room. Food and music reflect local tastes and customs. Parking is usually plentiful and free—not a small consideration to us big-city dwellers.

Independence Day in Palacios—a laid-back town of 5,000 on Tres Palacios Bay, halfway between Corpus Christi and Galveston—has all these qualities. The day's events unfold in the morning in East Bay Park, starting with a reenactment of French explorer René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle's landing nearby in 1685. Costumed townspeople play the roles of La Salle, his crew, French colonists, and Karankawa Indians.

Following the reenactment, mouthwatering aromas fill the air as vendors prepare fajitas, tacos, and barbecue for

lunch, and families fire up grills at picnic sites on the grassy verge along the waterfront. Children's squeals ring out from carnival rides, and cyclists pedal leisurely along the bayside sidewalk. Laughing gulls cackle overhead, and an egret cruises low along the shoreline. After lunch, bingo games get underway, and a breeze from the bay takes the edge off the heat. Throughout the day, a helicopter ferries people on short rides. When the time approaches for fireworks, care-free conversations in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese mingle in the dark.

The next morning, I stroll the palm-lined bay. All is quiet except for the water splashing against the seawall. Built in 1935, the seawall has recently been reno-

BY MARY-LOVE BIGONY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGIL FOX



© LAURENCE PARENT



Whether you like fishing or admiring the spectacular sky, activities abound at the town's attractive pavilion and pier (above). The reflections of shrimp boats (left) glisten in the harbor. The largest fleet of shrimp boats on the Texas coast resides in Palacios.

Palacios



vated and a sidewalk added that runs a mile-and-a-half along the glistening bay. Palacios' distinctive, many-sided pavilion stands beside a fishing pier, one of two piers here that welcome anglers around the clock. At night, the piers' lights attract bait fish, which in turn draw prized sea trout, redfish, and flounder.

The pavilion is the third to stand in this

spot. The first, built in 1904, sustained damage from hurricanes before being replaced in 1935. During the 1940s, couples flocked to the structure to dance to the mellow notes of Harry James, Artie Shaw, and other Big Band-era greats. In September 1961, Hurricane Carla, the most powerful storm to hit the Texas coast in 40 years, destroyed the second

pavilion. In 1988, the city built the smaller, open-air pavilion I see on my walk today. (Even this one has sustained damage, from Hurricane Claudette in 2003, and the city may have to tear it down and build a fourth one.)

Across Bay Boulevard from the pavilion and pier stands the venerable Luther Hotel, whose history parallels that of the



Wake up to gourmet breakfasts at Moonlight Bay Bed & Breakfast, once the unofficial officers' club for Camp Hulen during World War II.

pavilion. Built in 1903 to accommodate investors and potential settlers, the hotel was moved two years later to its present location facing the bay—perhaps to be closer to the railroad. This Brobdignagian feat was accomplished by cutting the building into three sections and moving them using mule teams. Charles and Elsie Luther bought the hotel in 1936, renovated it, changed its name from the Hotel Palacios to the Luther Hotel, and reopened it in 1941 on their 20th wedding anniversary.

Today, an inviting green lawn dotted with white chairs—a perfect spot for watching sailboats and shrimp boats on the bay—welcomes visitors to the hotel. Inside, red carpet covers the lobby floor and stairs, and a ceiling fan rotates lazily overhead. Photos of some of the Luther's famous guests of the 1940s hang on the

walls, including Carole Landis and Rita Hayworth, who entertained the troops when the USO came to town during World War II.

Claire and Jack Findley, daughter and son-in-law of Charles and Elsie Luther, own the hotel these days, and Claire's cousin, Dolly Hamlin, and Dolly's husband, Billy, manage it. The Hamlins take pride in treating guests like family instead of customers. "We offer dominoes, cards, and lots of books in our coffee room," says Billy. "And we're happy to give people a tour of the old hotel."

On the third floor, the Luther's Penthouse—complete with living room, bedroom, bath, and kitchen—evokes a kitschy, mid-century feeling with silver-and-orange flocked wallpaper and peach carpeting. The living room and bedroom open onto a balcony that offers a pleasing view

of the bay. Though the penthouse is the only room with a balcony, the other rooms have their own charms, such as the Magnolia Room, which looks out over a huge magnolia tree, and the Shell Room, in which seashells play a major role in the decor.

JUST WEST of the Luther stands Moonlight Bay Bed & Breakfast, which offers rooms in two adjacent properties facing the bay. The main house, a two-story Craftsman home built in 1910, served as the unofficial officers' club for Camp Hulen (see Speaking of Texas) during World War II.

Innkeepers Gaye and Earl Hudson have decorated the sitting rooms, dining room, and five guest rooms with antiques for an atmosphere of gracious elegance. By request on Saturdays, Gaye plays 1940s tunes on a baby grand piano in the parlor. Out on the porch, white rockers lull guests into a blissful state of relaxation.

Gaye and Earl both enjoy cooking, and guests sit down to a gourmet breakfast each morning that might include an artichoke omelet with hollandaise sauce or amaretto crepes with strawberries.

A short walk to Main Street brings me to the Main Inn, where innkeepers Kathy and Nick Nichols greet me warmly. The Nicholsons settled in Palacios five years



Kathy and Nick Nichols navigated the Florida Keys before moving to Texas. The couple owns Bounding Main Sail Charters and the Main Inn.



During THE 1940S, COUPLES FLOCKED TO THE PAVILION TO DANCE TO THE MELLOW NOTES OF HARRY JAMES, ARTIE SHAW, AND OTHER BIG BAND-ERA GREATS.

Fireworks illuminate the night sky across from the pavilion as Palacios' Fourth of July celebrations conclude (above). At Palacios Park, an ice-cream bus draws a small crowd for refreshing treats to beat the summer's heat.

ago after falling in love with the marina, the bay, and the people. They remodeled the Main Inn, a two-story, German Gothic-style bed and breakfast, while maintaining the character of the original 1915 home. Today, the cheerful sun porch and pecan-shaded backyard encourage relaxation, as does a large pond stocked with goldfish. Guests, who can stay in the main house or in an adjacent bungalow, awaken to a breakfast that might include pumpkin waffles or green-apple omelets; Kathy and Nick are both vegetarians who love to cook.

They also love to sail. Before moving to Texas, in fact, the seaworthy duo spent nearly a year navigating the Florida Keys. So it's a natural that Kathy and Nick's second business, Bounding Main Sail Charters, offers sailboat charters into



MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Matagorda Bay on the *Papillon*, a 37-foot, sloop-rigged yacht. You can take a day sail, half-day sail, or sunset cruise, or you can even design your own cruise. Dolphins usually swim alongside the boat, says Kathy, while pelicans and gulls

circle overhead. On warm days, Nick may drop anchor and let passengers swim.

"Many of the people we take out say afterwards that they want to get their own sailboat," says Kathy. "That makes us feel good."



The Luther HOTEL OFFERS THE PERFECT SPOT FOR BAY VIEWS. PHOTOS OF FAMOUS GUESTS, SUCH AS RITA HAYWORTH, ADORN THE WALLS.

SOME 450 shrimp boats—the largest fleet on the Texas coast—also make their home in Palacios. If a drive around the harbor to look at the boats makes you crave a seafood dinner, head for the Outrigger Restaurant, where the wooden floor and tin ceiling remind visitors of another era. Opened in 2000, the restaurant occupies the 1906 building of the former Price Lumber Company. Old-fashioned shrimp nets, long-handled oyster tongs, and other fishing artifacts displayed on the walls pay homage to the area's main industry.

Known for its delicious shrimp, oysters, redfish, and flounder, the Outrigger also serves steaks and chicken.

On the first Saturday of each month, the restaurant's all-you-can-eat shrimp boil—a staggering, unlimited meal of shrimp, sausage, new potatoes, and corn—brings in the crowds, who also come for the regular live music. And you can't beat the sunset as seen from the Outrigger's deck, which

was built from planks that were part of the second Palacios pavilion.

Palacios boasts great Mexican food, too. My suggestion: Head downtown to Palacios Mexican Restaurant. Owner and chef Daniel Molina, a native of the Mexican state of Michoacán, came to Palacios a decade ago after working in Houston for 15 years. The restaurant, painted aqua and pink and festooned with sombreros and ropes of chili peppers, offers more than 70 choices on its sizable menu. Daniel's favorite, *fajitas de camarones* (shrimp fajitas), features grilled shrimp, prepared with onions, bell peppers, and garlic. Of course, that's just for starters: Diners can also choose from among eight enchilada dinners and six burrito dinners.



Built in 1903, the sprawling Luther Hotel (left) offers charming rooms, including Luther's Penthouse, the only room with a balcony. Rita Hayworth's picture adorns the Luther's walls, recalling her stay at the hotel while entertaining Camp Hulen troops during World War II.



Murals by artist Dayton Wodrich decorate buildings throughout town.



Sunsets and sumptuous seafood draw patrons to the deck of the Outrigger, known for its monthly all-you-can-eat shrimp boil.

IF AN after-dinner walk sounds good, take a tour of Palacios' murals (pick up a map at the Palacios Area Fund office). Painted by artist Dayton Wodrich on buildings throughout town, the murals examine the town's history, culture, and economy. For example, a wall of the Palacios Recreation Center highlights aspects of early-20th-Century history: the train depot, Hotel Palacios, the pavilion, and the discovery of oil. At the Pier Drive Inn, which sells everything from wine to fishing tackle, small murals portray area birds. The mural at City Hall delves into the area's cultural heritage with Karankawas; Spaniards and Mexicans, the next inhabitants; African-American cowboys of the 19th Century; and the Vietnamese shrimpers who came to the Texas coast in the 1970s.

Across the street from the library, a mural shows La Salle's tattered and sinking ship *La Belle*, one of four ships sent to establish a French presence on the Mississippi (La Salle's geography was off). The "three palaces" of local legend loom in the background. According to the story, Tres Palacios Bay received its name when shipwrecked Spanish sailors of centuries ago saw a mirage of three palaces as they swam to shore.

To La Salle and his doomed shipmates, a successful French colony was an illusion, too. *La Belle* sank in Matagorda Bay in 1686, and La Salle was killed in 1687 in an uprising of his own men.

of seven Texas museums involved in what is called the La Salle Odyssey (see story,

essentials PALACIOS

PALACIOS is in southwestern Matagorda County, on Texas 35, 28 miles from Bay City, the county seat, and about halfway between Corpus Christi and Galveston. Write to the Palacios Chamber of Commerce, 420 Main St., 77465; 800/611-4567; www.palacioschamber.com. Chamber hours: Mon-Fri 8-5. For area information, check out www.dayonthebayservices.com. The area code is 361.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Palacios Lions Club will stage its 56th annual **July 4 celebration** on Monday, July 4, 2005. Contact the chamber of commerce for details about this and other events.

The **Tres Palacios Loop** of the **Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail** has 10 sites where you can see huge numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds. The Tres Palacios Loop is on the Central Texas Coast map; pick one up at the chamber, or learn about all 3 birding-trail maps at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/birdingtrails.

Pick up a free guide to Palacios' **murals and historical markers** at the Palacios Area Fund office, 458 Commerce; 972-3960. The seabirds murals are at the **Pier Drive Inn**, 208 1st; 972-3284.

Palacios has two 400-foot lighted **fishing piers** that never close. Contact the chamber for information about fishing guides and

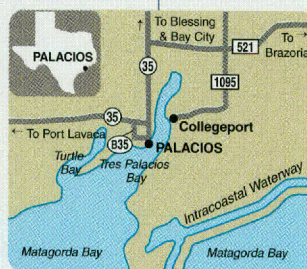
Three hundred years later, Palacios served as the base camp in 1995 when archeologists from around the world joined Texas Historical Commission archeologists to retrieve the 300-year-old *La Belle* and its artifacts in 1996-97. Today, the Palacios Area Historical Association Museum is one

February 2005). Each museum tells part of the La Salle saga. One of Palacios' contributions to the project is *La Petite Belle*, a half-scale replica of the original ship that eventually will be fully functional and seaworthy. Construction is currently ongoing at Lagasse Marine Ways, and shipyard owner Mike Lagasse welcomes visitors who want to monitor the ship's progress.

Since its early days as a pleasant seaside escape, Palacios has been a place of considerable allure. If simple pleasures seem harder to find these days, this bay-side burg proves they do still exist. ★

MARY-LOVE BIGONY of Austin retired last year from *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. This is her first story for *Texas Highways*.

Photographer VIRGIL FOX divides his time between Nashville, Tennessee, and Palacios.



kayak and canoe rentals.

Lagasse Marine Ways is at Turning Basin #1; 972-6060.

LODGING

Palacios has 22 fully furnished, rentable vacation houses. See a link to all of them, with photos, at

the chamber Web site.

Luther Hotel, 408 S. Bay Blvd.; 972-2312.

Main Inn, 208 Main St.; 972-3408 or 888/972-3408; www.matagordalodging.com.

Moonlight Bay B&B, 506 S. Bay Blvd.; 972-2232 or 877/461-7070; www.moonlightbaybb.com.

DINING

Outrigger Restaurant, 515 Commerce; 972-1479; www.outriggerrestaurant.com.

Palacios Mexican Restaurant, 511 Main; 972-2766.

LA SALLE ODYSSEY

The **Palacios Area Historical Association Museum**, at 416 Commerce (972-3960), joins 6 other Texas Gulf Coast museums in telling a different part of the La Salle story. (The other participating museums are in Corpus Christi, Edna, Bay City, Port Lavaca, Rockport, and Victoria.) A 75-minute CD telling La Salle's story is available for \$14 at any of the museums. To order, send an email to the Palacios Area Fund, rkaripe@wcnet.net.

GUADALUPE



Take Me to the River!

BY ROSEMARY WILLIAMS

Camping out at Guadalupe River State Park is like having three adventures in one: at a water-park, a wildlife park, and—at least in our case—a (family) circus.

In July 2004, my brother Carl and his family invited my friend Bobby Adcock and me to spend several days tent-camping with them at this gorgeous park on the rim of the upper Guadalupe River. We accepted, but we had our qualms. First of all, neither of us had camped out for decades. Second, it was July, for Pete's sake! Wouldn't we swelter or burn to a crisp or feel too old for such antics?

None of us had ever visited Guadalupe River State Park, much less camped there. After our first look around, we voiced unrestrained admiration for the 1,938-acre park's natural beauty. Abundant Ashe junipers, oaks, elms, and occasional sycamores shelter comfortable camping areas, and bald cypresses stretch skyward along the riverbanks. Here, magnificent cliffs of limestone trace the path of the Guadalupe River as it sluices, gurgles, and cascades in cool, clear emerald splendor on its journey from its origins, in Kerr County, southeastward 230 miles to San Antonio Bay on the Gulf Coast. Above the park, only rainfall from Nature herself dictates the river's flow, since no man-made impediment restrains the Guadalupe until it reaches Canyon Dam, which impounds nearby Canyon Lake.

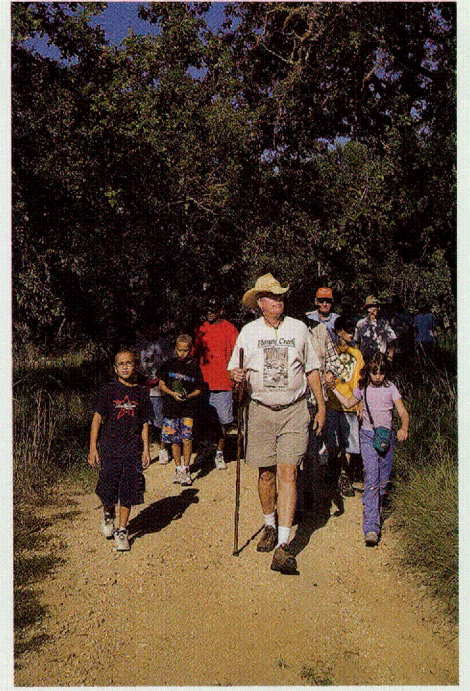
Limestone cliffs form a backdrop to Guadalupe River State Park's swimming area. Unpredictable currents make it a good idea for adults to keep a close eye on youngsters in the water.

Camping out amidst this bounty of Nature proved to be exciting, bracing, and, sometimes, challenging. Our family group, helped along by a few welcome amenities such as extension cords to tap into the electrical outlets and a couple of water-hoses to channel the running water at our campsites, made the most of every hour. We hiked, swam, tubed, rafted, talked, shared meals and memories, and, best of all, we renewed precious bonds of family kinship.

Our crew, which spread out over three campsites, numbered 13 and ranged in age from 13 months to 67. Setting up camp with them was a breeze. Modern camping equipment has come a long way since the days of heavy canvas tents and cumbersome wood-legged cots and chairs. Thanks to the new, lightweight

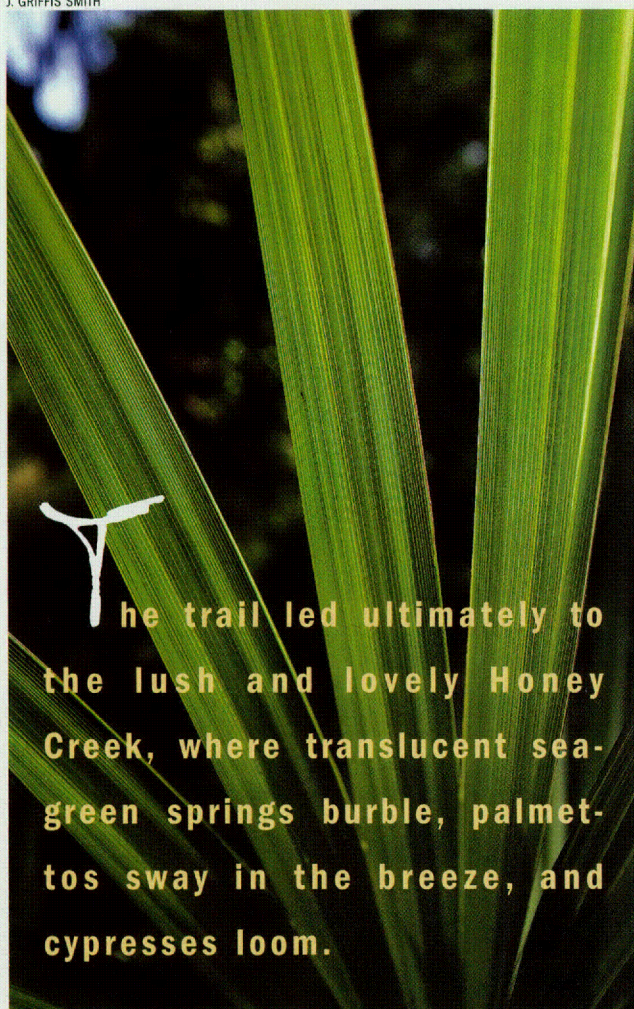
nylon gear, we made short work of raising our tents. Electric, plug-in pumps helped us air up sleeping-mattresses quickly, and well-insulated ice chests chilled and protected our food and drinks. Propane-fueled lanterns and stoves added another practical dimension to portability, and we also set up small oscillating fans to offset the heat a bit.

Once our "homes" were in place, we were ready to explore. The kids, of course, immediately wanted to head for the river. My brother Carl and his brother-in-law Mark obliged them by piling the young ones into the car and driving them there. Eventually, we all followed. The river lies a little too far from the campsites to walk there comfortably, especially when you're carrying towels,



© JASON MERLO

Honey Creek State Natural Area (above), which is adjacent to the state park, offers Saturday-morning guided tours of the geological and biological wonders of this Hill Country marvel. Hikers at the state park (top) may see a variety of wild mammals, birdlife, and plants such as palmettos (facing page).



The trail led ultimately to the lush and lovely Honey Creek, where translucent sea-green springs burble, palmettos sway in the breeze, and cypresses loom.

caps, inner tubes, rafts, and life vests. (And don't forget the camera!)

At the large parking area that rims the cliff above the river, you'll find picnic tables, grills, restrooms with showers, and vending machines. To reach the river, some 40 feet below, you must walk down hewn-rock and earthen steps. For comfort and safety's sake on land and in the water, you should wear some type of protective foot-covering.

As for the river itself: Gorgeous? Yes. Refreshing? Yes. Challenging? You bet. Its current can be deceptively strong, particularly when fed by recent rains. Signs throughout the park advise caution; you swim at your own risk.

First-time floaters such as Bobby and me grew wide-eyed at the river's strong, insistent tug and thrust. On the other hand, the kids met the current head-on, delighting in the swift, exciting ride that carried them around rocky outcroppings and through sluice-like waterways.

We all eventually stumbled from the river onto grassy slopes or one of several gravelly beaches, just made for stone-skipping contests. Picnic tables and grills throughout the grounds offered attractive places to eat and rest.

"Without doubt, the activities along the river—swimming, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, and fishing—are what draw most of the 250,000 annual visitors to the park," says park manager Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig. "In fact, that's the primary reason for the park's existence, to provide ready access to the upper reaches of the Guadalupe."

Mark does caution visitors: "Most folks don't realize it, but the current can sweep unwary swimmers right down to Canyon Lake. There's nothing to stop them between here and there. So we urge adults to keep a watchful eye on their children and never let them swim without flotation devices."

Back at the campground, our family gathered most evenings for a community dinner or at least a community dessert. Sandwiches and finger foods such as dips, chips, carrot and celery sticks, cookies, and fresh fruit always work well for such outings. Another good—and labor-saving—menu item, especially if you plan a "celebration meal" of some sort, is an entrée prepared at home.

Here's an example. The week before our vacation, I cooked a large pot of "Aunt Rosie's Campy Goulash" (see the recipe, on page 82 of the new *Cooking with Texas Highways* cookbook) and froze it. When we got to the campground, I allowed the savory stew to thaw in the

ice chest for a day or so, then heated it on the camp stove for an evening meal. I served it with bread and butter and a lettuce and tomato salad. Tasty!

Breakfast cooked outdoors becomes an ambrosial treat. Ah, the smell of bacon frying, coffee brewing, and biscuits baking! Even better, each morning my little brother, Carl, came strolling down to our campsite, coffee cup in hand. Thus we began each day with cheerful conversation punctuated by his hearty laugh and reminiscences of our parents and grandparents.

"S is," he said one morning, "I wanted to bring the grandkids here on their first camping trip to show them what our Granddaddy Williams showed us...how exciting and beautiful the real outdoors can be. He taught me so much about respecting nature. I really wanted to share that with my kids." And share it he did.

Nighttime brought new adventures. As darkness fell and lanterns flickered on, we sat around the campground talking while the kids played games or listened to music or hiked around the area. Eventually, we all drifted off to our respective tents for some rest in the surprisingly *cool* night (light blankets required). And thus began our wildlife experience.

My tent boasted a screened ceiling (it came with a cover, too, in case of rain), so that I could look up and see myriad stars twinkling. The first night, as I was admiring the heavens, I heard a rustling and scratching, a persistent and slightly unsettling indication that something beastly was afoot. I rose up and spotted a rather large, shadowy figure near the picnic table. Raccoon! I hissed a loud, "Scat!" and he scuttled away. Each night, he and a friend or two paid us the compliment of a visit as they searched for handouts. The wily, dexterous creatures can easily open unsecured containers and steal whatever appeals to them.

Fortunately, forewarned, I had brought several bungee cords to batten down the food boxes and ice chests. I had also told Carl and crew about possible nightly invasions, so they, too, withstood most of

the banditry. Except for one night, when one of the youngsters left a candy bar on the table. Next morning, it had been neatly unwrapped and disposed of, while a health bar sitting nearby remained untouched. Raccoons, it seems, don't watch their waistlines, either!

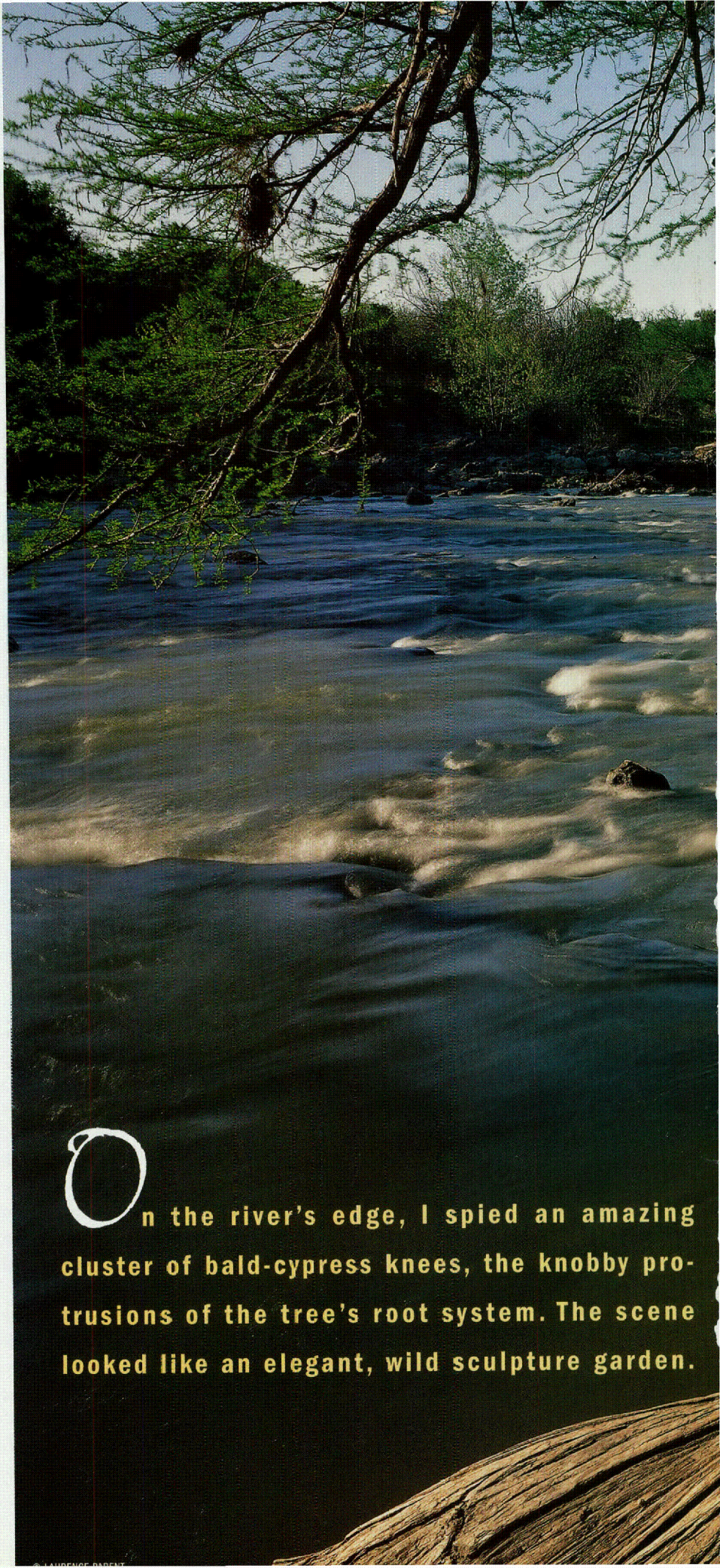
The kids saw an armadillo or two in the evenings, and I could swear I spotted a possum. We didn't come across any white-tailed deer this trip, but Mark, the park manager, says they thrive here. (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department closes the park for a couple of weeks during the slow camping season each year in December and January and holds public hunts to thin the herd.)

The park and adjacent Honey Creek State Natural Area teem with creatures of the wild. The 2,200-acre state natural area harbors feral hogs, as well as plentiful birdlife, including wild turkeys and the small, endangered golden-cheeked warbler. The latter, one of the rarest songbirds in North America, finds the strands of bark it uses for its nests in the Hill Country's abundant Ashe junipers.

You can visit Honey Creek only on a two-to-three-hour guided tour on Saturday mornings (or, for a large group, by prior arrangement). Guides such as J.W. Pieper and Wilt Shaw, both Texas master naturalists and members of the volunteer group Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc., lead you along an easily traversed, two-mile trail, stopping here and there to explain the vegetation or to point out a few of Nature's special oddities.

During one hike, J.W. stopped at a mullein plant. "Old-timers called this plant 'cowboy toilet paper.' Here's why," said J.W. He passed around a few of the plant's large leaves, so that we 35 or so hikers could touch the mullein's soft and soothing texture—and appreciate its practicality on the prairie.

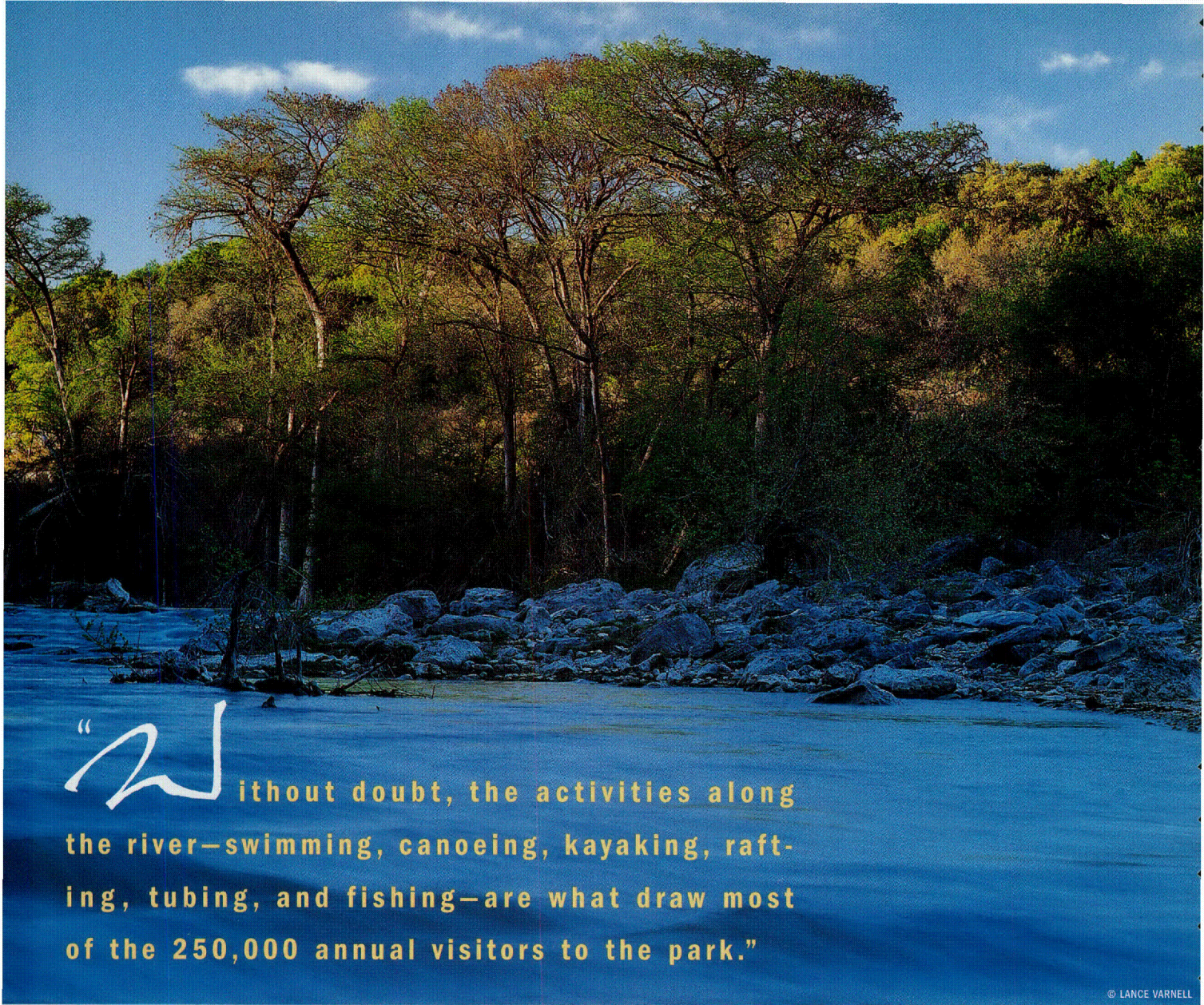
Later, Wilt plucked a tiny, cottony ball from the pad of a prickly pear cactus. When he crushed it between his thumb and index finger, a burst of crimson



On the river's edge, I spied an amazing cluster of bald-cypress knees, the knobby protrusions of the tree's root system. The scene looked like an elegant, wild sculpture garden.

Cool, swirling water flanked by bald cypresses defines Guadalupe River State Park.





“Without doubt, the activities along the river—swimming, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, and fishing—are what draw most of the 250,000 annual visitors to the park.”

© LANCE VARNELL

bathed his fingertips. “This little bit of fuzz is a female insect called the cochineal,” said Wilt, whose hand would bear the stain for several days.

“Native Americans used the beautiful red liquid from these insects to make war paint for their faces,” added J.W. “The Spanish exported it to Europe, and the British redcoats used it to dye their coats. It’s still used occasionally to dye textiles and to color such things as pink lemonade,” he told us.

The trail led ultimately to the lush and lovely Honey Creek, where translucent sea-green springs burble, palmettos sway in the breeze, and cypresses loom. “Honey Creek is the most beautiful, least-known treasure we have here,” said Mark

Abolafia-Rosenzweig. “People who take the Saturday-morning walks always feel privileged, it seems to me, because they know they number among the very few who have ever viewed this gorgeous spot.”

S Guadalupe River State Park also offers trails, more than five miles of them, for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. You can fish here, too, primarily for catfish, perch, and Guadalupe bass, on the upper and lower edges of the park’s river access. Remember to stay clear of swimmers and tubers—stray fishhooks tend to hurt when piercing flesh.

Bring your dog if you want to, but keep him on a leash, even in the river, and be prepared to show proof of current vac-

cinations. We didn’t bring pets with us, but we saw numerous dogs frolicking on their leashes and they—and their people—seemed to be having great fun.

For those a tad less active, the park affords lots of restful and meditative opportunities. One afternoon, I walked toward the park’s lower reaches. On the river’s edge, I spied an amazing cluster of bald-cypress knees, the knobby protrusions of the tree’s root system. The scene looked like an elegant, wild sculpture garden. I set up my chair and spent long, soul-satisfying minutes admiring the wood’s smooth symmetry and the soothing green of the Guadalupe as it swirled along the bank. Sometimes, Nature rewards us in quiet, but spectacular ways.

Above Canyon Dam, no manmade structures impede the course of the Guadalupe River, which ripples and flows freely through the park.

essentials GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK

But children usually want more energetic pursuits. Some of our group had planned daily excursions away from the park. One day, they trekked to Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels. "Awesome!" proclaimed the kids. Another day, they tubed down the Guadalupe River from just east of the park. On still another day, they took their boat to Canyon Lake. At the lake, Carl entertained the children by performing silly tricks on a towed inner tube. "We didn't know Grandpa could do that; he stayed on longer than anybody!" said his grandkids Brooke and Blair, with pride.

We grownups were concerned that the children might grow restive while camping out, but we shouldn't have been. Not once did I hear the youngsters whine or cajole or torment or complain about *anything*. They took to camping like they'd been doing it all their lives. And their favorite things?



A leap into the river means summertime fun. Remember to wear protective footwear and flotation devices.

"We loved just hanging out with Grandma and Grandpa and the family," said Brooke and Blair, as their cousins Brett and Katie agreed. "And we really had a blast swimming in the river or just sitting on that huge rock with Mark and Grandpa."

"The rock" is a boulder in the river

GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK and adjacent **Honey Creek State Natural Area** lie along the upper Guadalupe River in Comal and Kendall counties, on Park Road 31 off Texas 46, 13 miles east of Boerne and 29 miles west of New Braunfels.

Hours: Park gates open at 8 a.m. and close at 10 p.m. (registered guests have access after hours). The office opens daily 8-5 year round, with extended hours during busy season.

Entrance fees: \$5 ages 13-64, \$3 age 65 and older, free age 12 and younger; \$1 per person age 13 and older for sponsored school trips (not overnight). Free with a Texas State Parks Pass.

Camping fees (in addition to daily entry fees): \$12-\$17 daily, \$72-\$102 weekly. For self-contained RV units, there is a trailer dump site.

Ice and firewood: You can buy both in the park. You can also bring firewood from home, but it is illegal to gather firewood at the park.

Fishing is free (no fishing license required) in the state park through Aug. 31, 2005, as part of TPWD's "Family Fishing Celebration" program. Bring your own bait.

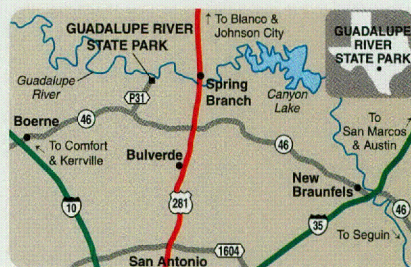
Equestrian: Horseback riding is allowed on the equestrian trails. Bring your own horse.

Tours of Honey Creek State Natural Area take place Sat. at 9 a.m. Ask the park attendant for directions. You must pay the state park entry fee, but the tour is free (donations are encouraged). Call ahead to confirm that the tour will take place.

Events: During the park's busy season—spring through summer—the volunteer group **Friends of the Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc.** (830/438-2656), sponsors programs on Sat. evenings at the park's amphitheater that include talks by naturalists, such as herpetologists and butterfly experts, and other entertainment. The group also plans special Halloween activities in Oct.

that attracts kids and grownups alike. I can still see my brother lounging there atop its limestone crest. I've now begun to call the boulder "Grandpa's Rock."

Our last evening together, we all began talking about vacationing "next year." The kids voted unanimously for another camping trip. We adults seconded the motion. Where will it be? Inks Lake State Park? Goose Island? Palo



For camping **reservations**, call Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., 800/792-1112. Call at least 3-4 weeks ahead to reserve your campsite; Guadalupe River State Park is very popular most of the year (it closes to camping for a few weeks in winter to allow public hunts). Most park facilities are accessible to the mobility impaired. For more information about the park, call 830/438-2656; www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

HELPFUL TIPS

Park rules prohibit public consumption and display of alcohol.

If you're planning **river activities**, call the park to learn the river's rate of flow, so you will know conditions for tubing, kayaking, etc. Numerous **river outfitters**, including one at the park, operate along the river; ask park attendants for more information.

If you feel like **eating out**, several restaurants are within a 15-20-minute drive, east along Texas 46 toward the junction of US 281, or west toward Boerne. Check out **Honey Creek Cafe and Saloon**, about 3 miles east of the park on Texas 46, for a heaping breakfast (served Sat-Sun until 11 a.m.). They also serve lunch and dinner. Call 830/438-3190.

If you need a loaf of bread, quart of milk, or other basic item, visit the **Bergheim Store** (830/336-2112), a funky, fun store established in 1903; it's about 5 miles west of the park on Texas 46. You can purchase T-shirts, nature items, and books at the **park store**.

Duro Canyon? A return to the wonderful Guadalupe River? No matter where we go, we know it will be fun, because we will all be together. When we parted, we all said, "Just wait until next year.... Next year...." ★

Austin writer ROSEMARY WILLIAMS wrote about the San Antonio Museum of Art in the March issue.



TALES from the UNDERGROUND

BY KATHLEEN STURGEON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED HIRSCHMANN

LONGHORN



CAVERN STATE PARK

IF YOU COULD HEAR the walls of Longhorn Cavern talk, they'd boom with tales to rival those of the finest storyteller.



THEY'D ROAR like the rushing waters that once flowed through this passage, whirling and carving and dripping to form the cavern's finest features. They'd snarl like bobcats devouring their prey, then ring out with sounds of Comanches chipping flint for arrows. Afterwards, the walls would laugh, low and long—just like the speakeasy customers who danced and drank here in the 1920s, or outlaw Sam Bass, while he was supposedly stashing 2 million dollars in gold somewhere in these depths.

Now, visitors come to hear the tales of Longhorn Cavern, hidden beneath the rocky soil of the Texas Hill Country. Its story begins 65 million years ago, when the Colorado River seeped through the ground and started dissolving

450 million-year-old limestone bedrock.

After 62 million years had elapsed, streams formed underground and began flowing and cutting through this rock. The next 3 million years saw the cavern alternately filling, draining, and being

scoured by sediment, resulting in its many stunning geological features.

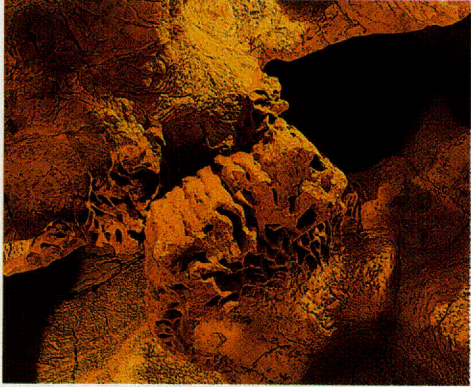
After the last draining, jam-packed silt filled the cavern. Still, enough open space remained for predators such as grizzly bears and bobcats to drag kills here, and for other mammals and insects to take up residence. Ancient bones—of elephant, squirrel, deer, bison, fossil camel, jackrabbit, gopher, and terrapin—all tell the story.

If you're squeamish, don't dwell on the fact that cavern inhabitants have also included scorpions, spiders, mice, crayfish, beetles, rats, crickets, and worms. Until 1950, as many as 12 million Mexican brown bats also called this home, according to on-site geologist and tour guide Al Gerow. "The bats got oil and dirt on their feet while feeding on insects at night, and you can still see where their feet stained the rock on the cave ceiling." All the

One look at the smooth and striated walls of Longhorn Cavern's Hall of Marble (previous pages), and it's easy to imagine the waters of today's Colorado River swirling through limestone millions of years ago to carve these amazing formations. In the 1930s, human handiwork (by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps) created the steps above, at the cave's main entrance.

brown bats are gone now, scared off by people. The only bats that live in the cave today are a few tiny eastern pipistrelles.

When and how humans first discovered Longhorn Cavern remain mysteries. Judging from artifacts such as tomahawks, arrowheads, and flint chips found in the cavern's largest room, experts believe the first human visitors were probably the Comanches, around 300 years ago. Two human skeletons have also been unearthed, one possibly that of a Native American.



At right, flowstone creates the intricate drapery formation in the Chandelier Room. The detail above shows broken stalactite flowstone in a honeycomb pattern on a corridor ceiling.

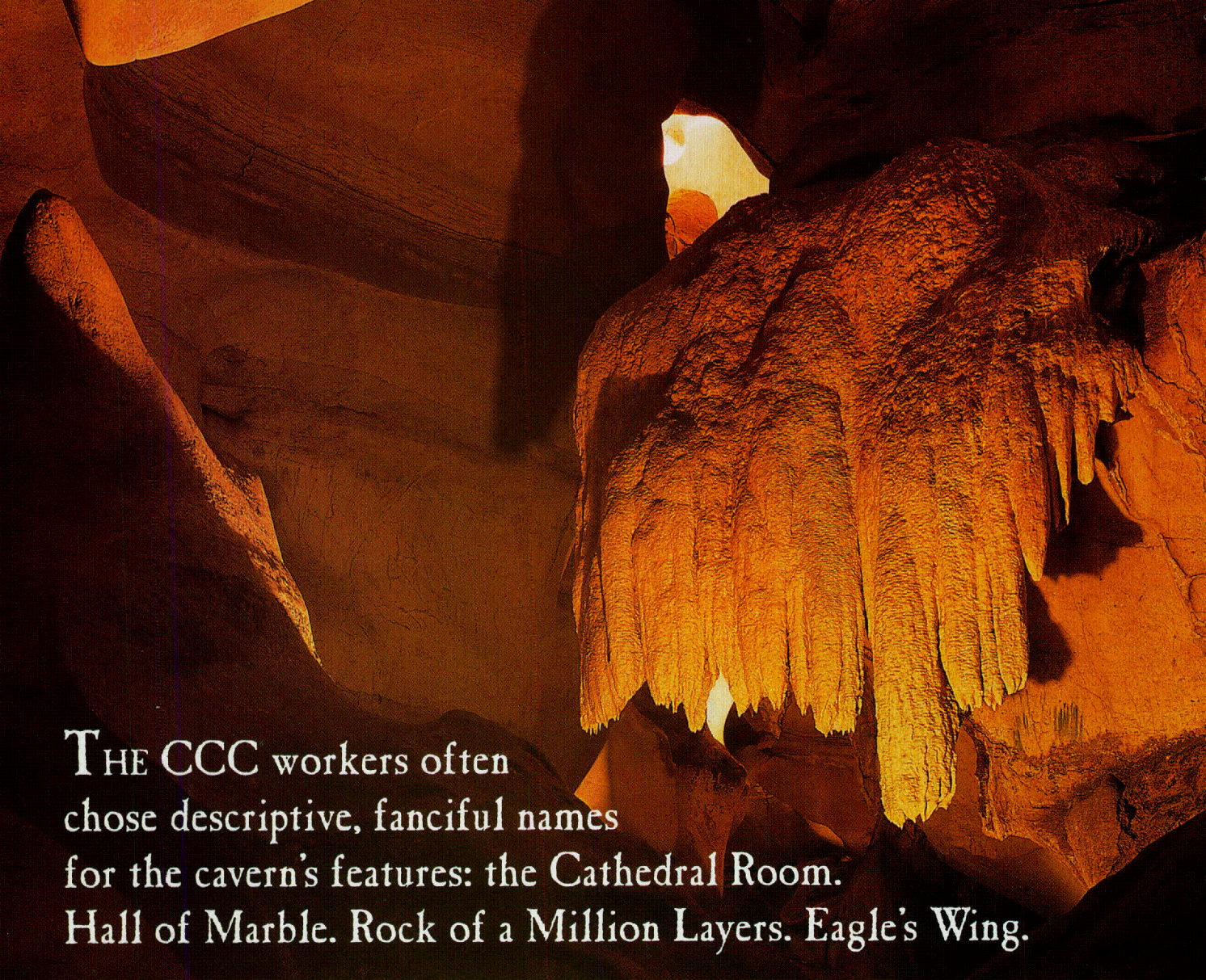
According to Al Gerow, the Comanche connection dates the human use of Longhorn Cavern to the late 18th Century or thereabout. Once people stepped into the picture, the cavern lost its stillness and darkness and never was the same. Human voices and enough drama to fill the pages of local folklore overtook the walls.

One such scene took place in the 19th Century, when pioneers and Native Americans kept trying to kill each other. The Comanches, wanting to command a hefty ransom, kidnapped a wealthy woman named Mariel King from San Antonio and high-tailed it back to the cavern. Three Texas Rangers hotly pursued, sneaking into the cavern through a back entrance. When the timing was right, each one shot a Comanche, scaring the rest of the band off. The Rangers then grabbed the damsel in distress and headed outside.

Rob and Jeannette Dalton (right) stroll at the end of the Hall of Marble. When selecting couter for your cave tour, keep in mind that the temperature is a constant 68 degrees, and the humidity about 80 percent.



MICHAEL AMADOR



THE CCC workers often chose descriptive, fanciful names for the cavern's features: the Cathedral Room. Hall of Marble. Rock of a Million Layers. Eagle's Wing.

But the Comanches, finally realizing that only three Rangers were in pursuit, launched a counterattack. Knives and gun butts swung as the groups fought; in the end, the Rangers escaped with Miss King.

The human drama continued with the Civil War. Confederate soldiers used the cavern's plentiful bat guano (droppings) to make gunpowder and squirreled it away in two cavern chambers, safe from Yankee eyes. "But the humidity in the cavern is about 80 percent, so the gunpowder was probably not worth much," says Al. Years later, after the end of World War I, the bones of a Confederate soldier, recognizable only by his uniform buttons, came to light in the cavern.

Of course, no Texas folklore is com-

plete without an outlaw story. About a decade after the Civil War, townsfolk in Burnet started whispering that Sam Bass and his gang were using Longhorn Cavern as a hideout. The locals couldn't confirm the rumors, and more than a century later, speculation continues about whether Sam hid 2 million dollars in gold coins here before dying of gun-battle wounds in Round Rock in 1878 on his 27th birthday. (Cavern operators hosted a role-playing game here a few years ago so visitors could examine the clues themselves and attempt to solve the lingering mystery.)

By the time the Roaring Twenties rolled around, the cavern wasn't just used



MICHAEL SANDOR

One of the largest formations in the cave, the Eagle's Wing (top) measures 10 feet across and five feet long. Though it looks manmade, the Queen's Watchdog (above, right), uncovered in the cavern in the 1930s, is thought to have been sculpted by water.

by humans, it pulsed with them. Its owner at the time, a man named D.G. Sherard, had transformed what had long been known as Indian Cave into Sherard's Cave, a sparkling speakeasy. Under the glow of candlelight, women decked out in cocktail dresses and high heels two-stepped and Charlestoned their way across a wooden floor, partnered by gentlemen and cowboys. Musicians played



In the Roaring Twenties, the cave was all the rave as a popular local speakeasy (above). Today, a twice-monthly concert series, featuring a variety of performers such as Austin's Jan Seides (top), keeps the cavern rockin'.

away on the stage, their instruments and voices echoing powerfully against the water-sculpted rock walls. As food descended by dumbwaiter from the above-ground kitchen, rich aromas filled the air, mingling with the haze of alcohol.

"It was an illegal bar, but it was never raided, because, according to legend, Sherrard let the sheriffs and constables in free," says Al Gerow. "Normally, the cover charge was a day's pay."

As the night wore on, tipsy customers wandered over to a dripstone column named the Queen's Throne, where they climbed on top, chiseled out their initials, and yanked off pieces as souvenirs. You can still see their unfortunate handiwork.

The days of wine and roses fled, how-

ever, in the face of the Great Depression. In the 1930s, Sherrard lost his wealthy customers and decided to sell the cavern. Purchased in 1931 by the State Parks Board, it became known as Longhorn Cavern State Park. Its improvement for public use saw the wild animals, Comanches, soldiers, and drunks replaced with convicts, pressed into service to do the work. When the locals cringed at the criminals' proximity, officials in charge moved them elsewhere, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), President Franklin D. Roosevelt's creation, took over the job in 1934.

The CCC men blasted away concrete-hard silt in the cave and carried it out in wheel-

barrows to create Park Road 4. By the light of kerosene lanterns, the shorter men hacked away in the cave's cramped spaces, uncovering and naming the park's stalactites, columns,

soda straws, crystals, and other formations. They often chose descriptive, even fanciful names: the Cathedral Room. Hall of Marble. Rock of a Million Layers. Viking Prow. Little Holland (a rimstone resembling a dike in Holland). A sense of humor emerged with the name Lumbago Alley, so christened for the back pain the low ceiling caused workers.

Aboveground, more CCC workers built the park's administration building and observation tower, crafted the main cavern entrance, and created stairways. When the project wrapped up in 1942, the CCC had cleared out at least

20,000 cubic yards of cavern material.

THese days, the walls of Longhorn Cavern tell yet another story. Not of warriors or beasts, dancers or dollars, but of visitors—scholars, children, retirees, and just the curious. You can take a 1.25-mile guided tour and listen closely. You'll hear your own footsteps hitting the packed dirt, mingling with the dust of those before you, joining a history that has only grown more fascinating with the passage of time. ★

KATHLEEN STURGEON is a freelance writer based in San Antonio. She has written for magazines, newspapers, Web sites, anthologies, and corporate publications.

Photographer FRED HIRSCHMANN, of Wasilla, Alaska, shot the stunning bluebonnets on April's front cover.

essentials

LONGHORN CAVERN STATE PARK

LONGHORN CAVERN STATE PARK is about 6 miles west and 6 miles south of Burnet in the Texas Hill Country. The 640-acre park opens daily from sunrise to sunset (closed Dec. 24-25).

Admission: Free for park grounds, Visitor Center, and Exhibit

Center. (The park also has a snack bar and gift shop.) **Guided tours** last about 85 minutes and cost \$10.95, \$9.95 age 60 and older and ages 13-19, \$5.95 ages 2-12. Summer tour schedule: Offered on the hour 10-4. Winter tour schedule: Mon-Fri 11, 1, and 3, Sat-Sun on the hour 10-4. The temperature is a constant 68 degrees (and about 80% humidity); dress appropriately, and wear comfortable shoes with rubber soles.

At least twice a month (July 2, 9, and 23, 2005), from 6-8:30 p.m., Longhorn Cavern hosts the **Simple Sounds Cavern Concert Series**, featuring live performances—by musicians, actors, and storytellers—in the cavern. Prices range from \$8-\$12. You can bring your own food and drinks.

Write to Box 732, Burnet 78611; 512/756-4680 (for tour times), 830/598-2283 (for tour information), or 877/441-2283 (for reservations and concert information); www.longhorncaverns.com. Also check out www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

For information on local attractions, lodging, restaurants, and events, call the **Burnet Chamber of Commerce** at 512/756-4297; www.burnetchamber.org.





Other states were carved or born;
Texas grew from hide and horn.

—FROM "CATTLE," BY BERTA HART NANCE



VIVA LONGHORNS TEXAS

By Dale Weisman

In a bovine world of homogenized crossbreeds and feedlot stock, the Texas Longhorn reigns as the king of cattle.

Longhorn cattle have an old-school look and retro appeal: lean and rangy, with sinewy legs, bony rumps, rounded ears, mottled and speckled hides of myriad hues—and oh, those magnificent, swooping horns.

“No breed of cattle has the personality and beauty of a pure Texas Longhorn,” says Joyce Kimble, an avid Longhorn breeder from Karnes City and owner of the champion steer Wow, a behemoth with 10-foot horns (see sidebar, page 43).

“Longhorns are truly a unique, chiseled animal,” concurs Lester Galbreath of Albany. A rancher, folklorist, and retired park superintendent, Lester managed Fort Griffin State Park and the State of Texas Longhorn Herd for more than 30 years.

He says, “When it comes to distinctive characteristics, you can put Longhorns up against any other breed, and with their horns, size, and colors, they win every time.”

Symbol of Texas

The Longhorn is universally recognized as the symbol of Texas,” says Lester, who explores the breed’s enduring appeal in his 2004 book *Learning from Longhorns*, coauthored with Glenn Dromgoole and gorgeously illustrated by the late Charles Shaw (see Up Front).

As an authentic Texas icon, the Longhorn stands proudly with the Alamo and the Lone Star flag. No other creature personifies perseverance, survival, and the indomitable Texas spirit quite like it. Like the American bison, grizzly bear, and other charismatic megafauna, the imposing Longhorn inspires awe and reverence.

Cute and cuddly? Well, maybe not, but when it comes to Longhorns, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The breed has a devoted following that appreciates its practical attributes and Texas-icon status.



Longhorn drives in the 21st Century? Sure. Visitors in Fort Worth's Stockyards National Historic District can witness wranglers driving the Fort Worth Herd (top) along Exchange Avenue twice daily. Fort Griffin State Park, near Albany, the official home of the Texas State Herd, also stages a Longhorn drive (above) during its Frontier Times festival each fall (October 14-15, 2005; note that Friday is School Day and more crowded).

No wonder that the University of Texas chose the Longhorn as its sports mascot, Bevo, in 1916 (see sidebar, page 45). Bevo XIII, the longest-reigning UT mascot, with 20 years of service, retired last year to the Liberty Hill ranch of longtime Longhorn breeder John T. Baker. John and his wife, Betty, not only raised Bevo XIII but also his successor, two-year-old Bevo XIV (real name, Sunrise Studly), who debuted in the Longhorn's 2004 football-season opener.

Over the years, Bevo has evolved into a popular brand and celebrity. Burnt-orange Longhorn stickers adorn countless vehicles in Austin and farther afield. During football games, fiercely loyal UT

The Longhorns. In this seminal work, he wrote, "The Texas Longhorn made more history than any other breed of cattle the civilized world has known."

That history began in the early 1500s, when Spanish explorers and colonizers introduced Spanish cattle to Mexico and allowed them to breed unchecked. Called "criollo," these progenitors of the Texas Longhorn spread throughout Mexico, and in the early 1700s, Spanish missionaries brought them to the mission ranches in South Texas. Many of the cattle escaped, proliferated in the wild, and eventually intermixed with



WOW FACTOR!

The Romans believed "names are destiny" (*nomen est omen*). So a decade ago, when Longhorn breeder Joyce Kimble named a gorgeous little calf born on her Karnes City ranch "Wow" (above), her choice proved prescient.

Over the years, Wow's tiny button horns grew and grew. They now span 90 inches tip to tip. Wow's "total horn" measurement—which includes the length of both horns plus the distance across the top of the head—is an impressive 120 inches.

Wow reigns as the nation's total-horn champion and has won six championships in that category: three at the annual Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America (TLBAA) competition in Fort Worth and three at the annual International Texas Longhorn Association (ITLA) competition in Glen Rose. Nearly 11 years old now, Wow could live to be 20. Since a Longhorn's horns never stop growing, well, just imagine.

Wow is more than the sum of his horns. His hide is a work of art: a multihued, brindled pattern called "waterfall paint." He's a big boy, too: At 2,020 pounds and 10 feet from nose to rump, he's nearly as heavy and long as a Mazda Miata.

Wow lives a celebrity's life on the Kimble Cattle Company ranch, which Joyce runs with her son Scott and daughter Janis. A family of chiropractors, the Kimbles took up Longhorn breeding in the early 1980s.

Joyce is understandably proud of Wow and exhibits him at livestock shows, parades, and schools. And when people first see him, they instinctively gasp, "Wow!"

"Everyone loves Wow," says Joyce. "How could you not? He's just an awesome animal."

—DALE WEISMAN

As an authentic Texas icon, the Longhorn stands proudly with the Alamo and the Lone Star flag. No other creature personifies perseverance, survival, and the indomitable Texas spirit quite like it.

fans erupt into frenzied "Hook 'em, Horns" salutes as photographers focus their lenses on the revered mascot.

Just as Bevo is known far and wide, Texas abounds with Longhorn-named attractions and businesses, such as Longhorn Cavern State Park near Burnet (see story, page 34), Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon in Austin, and Longhorn Steakhouse in Alpine. Not surprisingly, in 1995, the 74th Texas Legislature designated the Longhorn as the State Large Mammal.

Take a Sunday drive in the Texas countryside, and you'll see plenty of Longhorns, real ones as well as those on signs. In some locales, Longhorns prove as plentiful and picturesque as spring wildflowers.

"When people come to Texas, they want to see Texas Longhorns," says Lester Galbreath. "You can look at a lot of history in Texas. This history looks back at you."

Living Legends

It's a conundrum: Did Texas make the Longhorn, or did the Longhorn make Texas? The answer: yes and yes. To explore the breed's origins and impact on Texas history, read J. Frank Dobie's

English stock introduced to Texas in the 1820s by Anglo-American settlers.

According to Dobie, the Longhorn breed is a mixture of 80 percent Spanish cattle and 20 percent Anglo-American beeves. The breed evolved without human interference through Darwinian "survival of the fittest" in the South Texas brush country. What emerged from this parched and thorny ground was a Texas-tough *über-cow*, marvelously adapted to its harsh environment. Through natural selection, Longhorns developed stamina, resistance to disease, tough hides, strong legs, fiercely protective mothering instincts, prolific breeding, ease of calving, and long, sharp horns—lethal weapons against large predators.

"Put it all together, and you have an animal that has survived man, predators, weather, and terrain," says Joyce Kimble.

"As trail cattle, their equal never has been known," opined the legendary 19th-Century cattleman Charles Goodnight. "No animal of the cow kind will shift and take care of itself under all conditions as will the Longhorns. They can go farther without water and endure more suffering than others." The Longhorn's ability to



A Texas Longhorn bull named Rojo grazes in a western Travis County pasture on the D Bar D Ranch, owned by Floyd and Tricia Davis.

thrive on marginal range and, endure scorching heat and icy cold, walk great distances, and gain weight along the way served the breed well in one of the most colorful chapters in Texas history: the cattle-drive era.

Rivers of Longhorns

Following the Civil War, millions of near-wild Longhorns roamed South Texas, offering a ready source of beef

for a protein-hungry nation. Enterprising Texans rounded them up and drove them to northern markets along the legendary Chisholm, Goodnight-Loving, and Great Western trails. Calling these trail drives “rivers of Longhorns,” Dobie wrote that 10 million Longhorns surged north between 1866 and 1890 during “the most extraordinary, the most stupendous, the most fantastic and fabulous migration of animals controlled by

man that the world has ever known....”

Longhorns not only fed the nation, they helped reconstruct Texas, pumping an estimated \$250 million into the state’s economy. “Texas was built on the backs of Longhorns,” explains Linda Walker, owner of Lajitas Stables and frequent outfitter for the Longhorn cattle drives at Big Bend Ranch State Park. “It was Longhorn cattle flowing out of here that got the Texas economy going again after the Civil War. Much of our Texas heritage is based on that brief period of cowboys and cattle drives. For something that occurred over such a short period, it remains an enormously important part of how Texans view themselves.”

The romance of the cattle-drive era fueled the mystique of the Texas cowboy. Most of the drovers were teenagers, paid a dollar a day. A typical herd of about 2,000 Longhorns traveled 10 to 15 miles a day; a 1,000-mile drive could last more than two months. To appreciate the drovers’ true grit and the rigors of the trail, read J. Marvin Hunter’s *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, a collection of cowboy narratives, or Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove*, an epic novel inspired by historic accounts.

In an 11-part series written for *Texas Longhorn Journal* in 1978-79 (and republished in the online Texas Longhorn Reference Library), Alan M. Hoyt relates his interview with an old-time cowboy named Arvyn Jones. Arvyn, who was 104 at the time, had this to say about the trail drives of his youth: “We cussed about the weather, cussed about flood waters, cussed about rocky trails and busted wheels on the chuck wagon, cussed about the deserts, and cussed the damned Longhorns for not seeming to be bothered by any of this.

“I learned young that when Texas Longhorns died, they most assuredly went to hell, because they could take anything old Satan could give ’em and throw it back in his face.”

True Survivors

Although Longhorns were masters of survival on the trail, the breed fell victim to human meddling and nearly

became extinct. By the 1890s, the open range had succumbed to barbed-wire fences, and cattle drives had ceased. Responding to the growing demand for tallow for candles, ranchers began crossing Longhorns with European stock to produce fatter, beefier cattle. By the 1920s, nearly bred out of existence, genetically pure Longhorns were rarer than American bison.

Fortunately, farsighted guardian angels recognized the vanishing breed's historic, cultural, and biological value. In 1927, Will C. Barnes, a U.S. Forest Service ranger, gathered Longhorn breeding stock from South Texas for a small federal herd that was kept at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. In the early 1940s, J. Frank Dobie and retired range inspector Graves Peeler, with financial backing from Fort Worth oil magnate Sid Richardson, scoured South Texas and collected Longhorns for state parks. In 1948, these Longhorns were shipped to Fort Griffin State Park, where they became the Official State Herd. Descendants of these cattle live on at Fort Griffin and other state parks today.

The 125-year-old Y.O. Ranch, near Mountain Home, boasts the nation's first

registered herd of Texas Longhorns. "The Y.O. Ranch and the Schreiner family are synonymous with Texas Longhorns," says Charles Schreiner IV, managing partner of the ranch. "Longhorns are part of the Y.O. Ranch, just as we are."

Captain Charles Schreiner, Charlie IV's great-grandfather, bought the Y.O. Ranch in 1880 after amassing a fortune driving some 300,000 head of Longhorns up the Western Trail to market. Charlie IV's father, Charles Schreiner III, resurrected the Y.O.'s Longhorn ranching tradition by purchasing WR (Wildlife Refuge) stock in the 1950s to build a new herd. To perpetuate the breed, Charlie III recruited other cattlemen to establish the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America (TLBAA) in 1964. Two years later, he staged a quixotic Longhorn cattle drive from the Y.O. Ranch to Dodge City. Such a trip would have lasted two months in the 1880s, but Charlie's drovers made it in a week by trucking the animals between towns.



NAMING OF THE BEVO

When retold often enough, legends can masquerade as fact. Consider this account of how the original University of Texas Longhorn mascot came to bear the Bevo brand (Bevo XIV pictured above).

During halftime of the 1916 Thanksgiving game between UT and the Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University), UT alumni paraded a Longhorn named Bo onto the field. UT won 22-7, and the steer retired to a South Austin stockyard.

Several months later, Aggie pranksters broke into Bo's pen and branded him with "13-0," the score of a previous Aggie victory over UT. To erase the stigma, UT students supposedly rebranded the steer as BEVO, tweaking 13 into a B, the hyphen into an E and adding a V before the O. While the Aggie branding prank is fact, the rebranding is fiction. As for Bo, UT football fans barbecued him in 1920 and gave the branded hide to the Aggies.

So why the name Bevo? If only we could ask Ben Dyer, a former editor of the UT magazine *Alcalde*. He dubbed the mascot Bevo in an account of the 1916 game. It's possible he borrowed the name from a Prohibition-era near-beer named Bevo. A more likely explanation, as reported in UT's *Daily Texan*, involves a comic-strip series popular at the time, featuring monkey characters with names ending in O. The comic spawned a nationwide fad of creating O-tagged nicknames. Take "beevie" (plural slang for beef), add an O, and you get Bevo. Hook 'em, Horns!

—DALE WEISMAN



Longhorns participated in Austin's Texas Independence Day Parade this past March. Janice Heinz led members of the Texas Legend Longhorn Riders Association up Congress Avenue from the Town Lake bridge to the State Capitol.



Longhorns figure heavily in Texas history. Many researchers credit them with helping reconstruct Texas after the Civil War.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES SHAW, *LEARNING FROM LONGHORNS*, BRIGHT SKY PRESS, www.brightskypress.com

The Fort Worth-based TLBAA maintains the oldest and largest Longhorn registry, with more than 280,000 registered Longhorns since 1964. Other Longhorn organizations, such as the International Texas Longhorn Association (ITLA) and the Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry (CTLR), branched off as breeding philosophies evolved and diverged.

Longhorn breeders are now active in all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, and other nations. According to TLBAA estimates, there are about 140,000 registered Longhorns in the United States today, half of which reside in Texas. Longhorns are iconic fixtures on ranches around the state, and crowd-pleasers at livestock shows and rodeos. At cattle auctions, a yearling may go for \$750, and a prize bull with champion bloodlines may command \$40,000. Not bad for a breed that nearly died out a century ago.

A Breed Apart

“Longhorn breeders are in it for the joy of breeding,” says Larry Barker, director of promotions and events for the TLBAA. “They love the mystique and romance of the Texas Longhorn.”

According to Larry, breeders look for three characteristics: horn, color, and conformation. Next to horn length, breeders seek unusual colors, which Dobie wrote can be “more varied than

those of the rainbow.” Beyond the classic burnt orange, Longhorns come in hues of brown, tan, red, white, cream, black, blue, and brindle, and in solid, splotched, mottled, speckled, and peppered patterns. Longhorn breeders liken calving time to an Easter egg hunt: You never know what color you'll get. Some newborns can be pure white; then speckles of

It's a conundrum: Did Texas make the Longhorn, or did the Longhorn make Texas? The answer: yes and yes.

color emerge in a few weeks, and over time the calf matures into a four-legged Impressionist canvas.

In the 1950s and 1960s, cattlemen bought Longhorns as Texana novelties, but they soon came to appreciate the breed's practical side. It's not uncommon for Longhorns to live more than 20 years, and the cows calve once a year throughout most of their lives.

The Longhorn is an ideal beef cow for health-conscious consumers. Like buffalo meat, Longhorn beef is exceptionally lean (up to 98 percent fat free), low in cholesterol, and rich in protein, minerals, and vitamins. Unfortunately, demand exceeds supply (one source: www.banderagrassland.com). It's available at a handful of Texas restaurants and specialty markets.

Herd Mentality

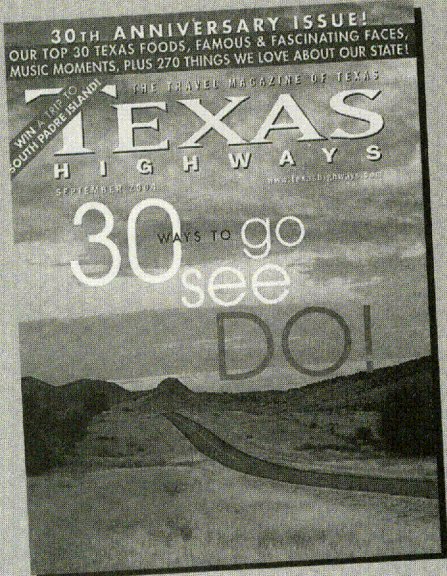
For a taste of the Texas cattle-drive era, you can see, hear, handle, and ride among Longhorns at Texas ranches and state parks. For a bucolic start, see the State Herd at their official home, Fort Griffin State Park, 15 miles north of Albany. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department keeps the herd through a breeding program and also maintains Longhorns at Palo Duro Canyon, Abilene, San Angelo, and Copper Breaks state parks. Of the 125 to 150 Longhorns that form the State Herd, about 40 reside at Fort Griffin. Each year, some 100,000 visitors from around the world come to view and photograph the Fort Griffin Longhorns. The staff stages a trail drive during its annual Frontier Times festival (October 14-15, 2005).

Pamplona, Spain, has its running of the bulls. Fort Worth has its own bovine spectacle: the Fort Worth Herd, offering what is billed as the world's only daily Longhorn-cattle drive. Hooves clatter on pavement, and bullwhips crack the air as trail riders drive a phalanx of Longhorn steers along Exchange Avenue

in the historic Stockyards District, once “the Wall Street of the West.” The cattle drive lasts just minutes, but it takes you back more than a century, to a time when the Chisholm Trail passed through Cowtown, as it's known, and the Stockyards bustled with cattle and cowboys.

“It's like living history, an interpretation of a proud era in our history and what helped build the city,” says Kristin Liggett, the city-employed Trail Boss of the Fort Worth Herd.

Pushing 15 pampered Longhorns several blocks along Fort Worth's Exchange Avenue may be a far cry from driving a couple thousand head of semi-wild cattle 1,500 miles up the dusty Chisholm Trail, but the mini-reenactment is exciting and colorful enough to attract hordes of cam-



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essentials LONGHORN SIGHTINGS

era-toting visitors from around the nation and the world.

"Our cattle are the celebrities of Longhorns," says Kristin. "Their pictures have been taken more times than you can ever imagine." The Fort Worth Herd promenades twice daily, rain or shine, and is the centerpiece of educational programs for all ages.

City officials launched the Fort Worth Herd in 1999 to mark Cowtown's 150th anniversary and create a fitting tourist attraction. Cowtown, after all, is the Longhorn capital of the world, with a Longhorn city logo and its own registered "running FW brand." Near the Stockyards, a monumental bronze sculpture of seven Longhorns memorializes the breed's importance to the city and the state. In Sundance Square, *Chisholm Trail 1867-1875*, a huge trompe-l'oeil mural, depicts a Longhorn herd surging toward you.

Longhorn cattle *will* surge around you when you're riding herd at the Y.O. Ranch's biannual Texas Longhorn Trail Drive, a Y.O. tradition for 30 years. Held each May and October, the drives kick off with a chuck-wagon dinner and Texas-style entertainment. Trail riders rise early for a hearty cowboy breakfast before saddling up and driving the Y.O.'s prize Longhorns through the wildflower-dappled Hill Country. Come evening, you'll feast on mesquite-grilled steaks, two-step to country music, and kick back by a crackling fire beneath a starry Texas sky. Captain Schreiner's drovers never had it so good.

For a more adventurous cattle-drive experience, head out to Big Bend Ranch State Park near Presidio. Each spring and fall, the 300,000-acre park hosts an authentic Texas Longhorn cattle drive for 25 participants. Trail riders round up the park's Longhorn herd, drive them along mountain-desert trails and into corrals, brand and vaccinate the calves, and then push the herd back out to pasture. The bloodlines of the park's Longhorns can be traced to the original Spanish herd.

Linda Walker, who has outfitted the state park's cattle drives the last few

TEXAS STATE HERD Some 40 of the 125-150 Longhorns that form the Texas State Herd reside in the pastures of 506-acre **Fort Griffin State Park and Historical Site**, which is 15 miles north of Albany on US 283; check with park staff for viewing information. A **trail drive** is staged during the annual **Frontier Times festival** (Oct. 14-15, 2005). The frontier fort was constructed in 1867 and deactivated in 1881. Park facilities include campsites with water, electricity, and/or sewer, a primitive campground (overflow area), and picnic sites. For reservations, call 512/389-8900. For park details, write to 1701 N. US 283, Albany 76430; 325/762-3592; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortgrif/.

LONGHORN TRAIL DRIVES AT Y.O. RANCH The Y.O. Ranch hosts Longhorn trail drives each spring and fall (May 27-29 and Oct. 21-23, 2005). The annual **Y.O. Longhorn Games & Super Bowl Saturday Sale** will be held this year Sep. 23-24. Write to the Y.O. Ranch, 1736 Y.O. Ranch Rd. NW, Mountain Home 78058; 800/YO-RANCH (800/967-2624) or 830/640-3222; www.yoranch.com.

LONGHORN CATTLE DRIVES AT BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK Big Bend Ranch State Park hosts Longhorn cattle drives twice a year, typically in early Apr. and early Oct. (Sep. 29-Oct. 1, 2005). The cost is \$875 per person; meals and bunkhouse accommodations are included in the fee. (Accommodations in the "Big House" are sometimes available, for an extra fee.) Each cat-

tle drive is limited to 25 participants. Due to the growing popularity of the cattle-drive program, consider making reservations months in advance. For details, write to Big Bend Ranch State Park, Box 2319, Presidio 79845; 432/229-3416; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bigbend. For more trail drive information, write to Linda Walker, Lajitas Stables, Box 6, Terlingua 79852; 888/508-7667; www.lajitasstables.com.

FORT WORTH HERD CATTLE DRIVES are held daily at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. (depending on the weather and the disposition of the cattle) on Exchange Ave. in the **Stockyards National Historic District**. Between drives, the cattle can be seen from the deck of the Livestock Exchange Bldg., at 131 E. Exchange Ave. No cattle drives on Easter, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. Free. For details, call 817/336-HERD (4373); www.fortworthherd.com.

OTHER LONGHORN EVENTS For information about other Longhorn-related events and shows, write to the **Texas Longhorn Breeders Assn. of America**, 2315 N. Main, Ste. 402, Fort Worth 76106; 817/625-6241; www.tbaa.org, and the **International Longhorn Breeders Assn.**, Box 122988, Fort Worth 76121; 817/244-8855; www.itla.com.

LITERARY LONGHORNS Look for *The Longhorns* by J. Frank Dobie (Univ. of Texas Press, 8th ed., 2000) and *Learning from Longhorns* by Lester Galbreath and Glenn Dromgoole (Bright Sky Press, 2004) in libraries and bookstores.

years, calls this weekend event "the real deal... in a class by itself."

"When you come out here," says Linda, "you get to be this mythical person with the real thing—Texas Longhorns. You look out over the bony butts and horns of Longhorns at a landscape that has no signs of civilization. It's exactly the view that drovers had 130 years ago."

It's a view worth preserving. Without Longhorns, there would have been no epic cattle drives, no Texas cowboys, and no Rhode Island-size ranches; Texas would not have rebounded as swiftly after the Civil War; and the history, culture, and mystique of the American West would be all the poorer.

In an essay from *In a Narrow Grave*, Larry McMurtry recalls an old song about the passing of the cowboy:

*I'm going to leave
Old Texas now,
They've got no use
For the Longhorn cow.*

The cowboy song is dead wrong about one thing: Texans do have use for the Longhorn.

"Longhorns are here to stay," concludes Lester Galbreath. "Some people breed them for historic preservation, others for commercial reasons. There are many more Longhorns around now than 30 years ago, but the need to preserve the authentic Texas Longhorn is as great as ever."

Without the rangy Longhorn, Texas simply wouldn't be Texas. ★

Austin writer DALE WEISMAN also wrote our December 2002 article on armadillos. He says, "These two odd-fellow creatures, armadillos and Longhorns, are respectively the state small and large mammals, and I love them both."

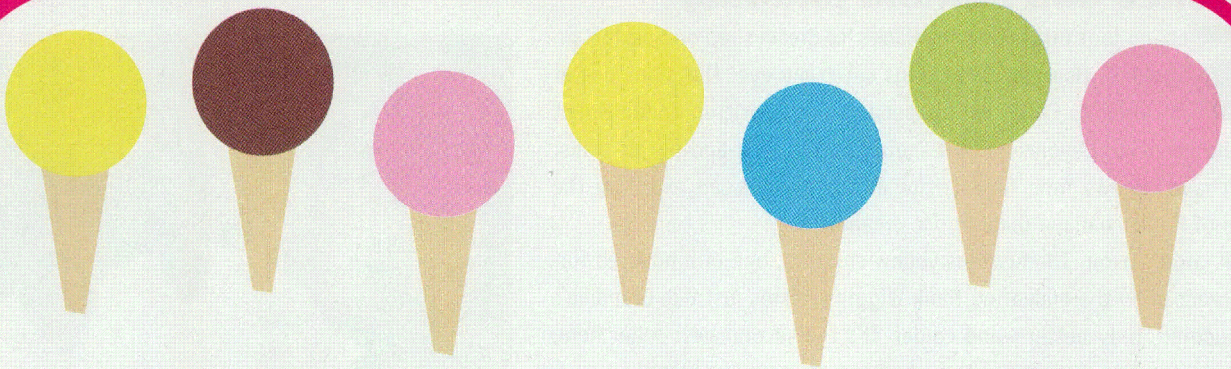


i's cream



BY JUNE NAVLOR
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

TEXAS-STYLE

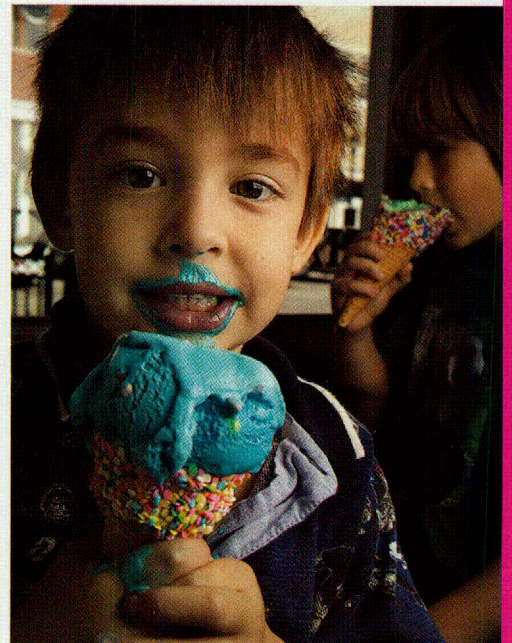


My eight-year-old niece,

Janie, wears a big blue smile as she makes the evening's proclamation: "Ice cream makes me happy, times two." She adores ice cream, particularly this crazy neon-blue stuff with a cotton-candy flavor. Her passion makes me certain that she'll remember this warm night for years to come, just as I remember sitting with my dad at a Fort Worth Ashburn's on summer nights decades ago as a preschooler, begging for yet another bite of chocolate chip ice cream. My favorite expression uttered at such outings: "More, please." • The pure pleasure found in savoring a lick of fine ice cream never fails to conjure happy childhood memories. We carry these feel-good recollections far into adulthood, pulling out the sensory snapshots when we need a little smile. Somehow a scoop of rocky road, butter pecan, or peaches-and-cream can help make a troubled day seem better. • While I still mourn the loss of Ashburn's and Carnation Ice Cream parlors, two places my dad and I enjoyed, I take comfort that we have a stash of good, homegrown ice cream shops across Texas to choose from today. As long as places like these exist, Janie and the rest of us can achieve happiness, times two.

The pure pleasure found in savoring a lick of fine ice cream never fails to conjure happy childhood memories.

A FLYING SCOOP OF VANILLA FLAVORS THE FLIGHT PATH AT AMY'S ICE CREAM IN AUSTIN. AT RIGHT, BROTHERS JACKSON AND CHASE LIBOWSKY ENJOY THEIR PROUD POPPA'S PERFECT PRODUCT AT MILWAUKEE JOE'S IN SOUTHLAKE.



Beyoncé and banana pudding

Setting foot inside the tiny Hank's Ice Cream shop on South Main Street in Houston, two things catch my eye: the giant poster of Destiny's Child, with a personal, handwritten endorsement from the beautiful Beyoncé; and, hanging on the pink-and-purple walls, framed rave reviews from food critics and customers, all extolling the virtues of Hank's banana pudding ice cream.

With good reason. The luscious yellow creation, one of a hundred flavors produced by the endearing Hank Wiggins, tastes just like Grandma's best pudding, only better—and colder. It's the second-best seller here, after butter pecan, keeping pace just ahead of caramel pecan.

Hank says his Jamaican customers particularly like his mango ice cream. Conversely, one customer urged him to make a licorice flavor—but it came out rather green, and no one knew what to make of it. A particular flavor that strikes me as unusual but lovely is the rose-petal ice cream, which indeed smells like roses, and tastes gently sweet and perfumed. "People don't take time to smell the roses, so maybe they can eat them," Hank reasons.

The ice cream bug bit the shopkeeper when he was just a child, making ice cream at his mother's cafe in Caldwell. Vanilla became his favorite by the time he was eight or nine. "I still love vanilla the most. I sample it every day and never get tired of it," he says. "It puts so many smiles on customers' faces, and I'll never get tired of those, either."

Hank, who opened his shop 20 years ago with his wife, Okemah, says business stays steady. Near Reliant Stadium and the Astrodome, this ice cream mecca's traffic builds during the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo in March and climbs during baseball season. Year round, the largest crowds come after church on Sunday, but Hank says plenty of folks show up at lunchtime on weekdays for a cup or cone.

"It's a feel-good kind of food for any age, one to 99," he says. And like my niece Janie, he says that "Ice cream just makes you happy."

HANK'S ICE CREAM, 9291 S. Main St., Houston; 713/665-5103.

'Til the cows come home

The comical cow motif plastered on the walls at Milwaukee Joe's Southlake location appeals to the kid in each of us, and founder Joe Libowsky's whimsical goofiness is confirmed when he appears in his black-and-white dappled cow suit.

A Milwaukee native (natch) and former federal agent, Joe abandoned crime fighting to attend to his first love. The die was cast when, at age eight, he whipped up a baked Alaska from a cookbook recipe. Today (with shops in Bedford, Southlake, and Dallas' Inwood Village), Joe pours his considerable energy into producing what I think could be the best ice cream anywhere, thanks to a milkfat content of 14 percent. (By comparison, premium store brands like Blue Bell, Breyer's, Ben & Jerry's, and Häagen-Dazs run between 12 and 16 percent. Federal law requires ice cream to have at least 10 percent.)

Kids adore Milwaukee Joe's cookie-dough and cake-batter flavors, along with a vivid blue variety called Disco Lives! Grownups go ga-ga for



CHILL OUT WITH HANK AND OKEMAH WIGGINS AT HANK'S ICE CREAM, ON SOUTH MAIN IN HOUSTON.

Blue Bell Bliss

Ice cream in Texas is synonymous with Blue Bell, that little creamery in Brenham. Begun as a butter maker in 1907, the company began producing ice cream in 1911. Demand has grown, and then some. Today, Blue Bell is sold in 16 states and claims about 60 percent of the market share in most major Texas markets. Spokesman Bill Weiss says that for the most part, Blue Bell can be found in every major Texas supermarket, and it's served in restaurant chains like Outback Steakhouse and Carrabba's Italian Grill.

Homemade Vanilla, created in 1969, continues to be the best-selling flavor. Cookies 'n Cream typically scores the number two spot, with Dutch chocolate often number three. Moo-llennium Crunch, which blends vanilla with dark chocolate and caramel chunks, roasted pecans, chopped almonds, and walnut pieces, has stayed in the top five since its introduction in 2000.

Plenty of folks make their way to the little creamery, where the visitors' center welcomed more than 100,000 for tours in 2004. Why? "Ice cream appeals to everybody," says Bill. "And we like anybody who likes ice cream."

BLUE BELL CREAMERIES, Loop 577, Brenham; 979/830-2197 or 800/327-8135; www.bluebell.com.



Milwaukee Joe's always has a special flavor of the day, which can be any one of 300 creations, such as Mud Pie, Dr. Ruth Baby, black cherry-amaretto, and baklava.

Patrons at Amy's can choose from a variety of "crush-ins," ranging from M&M candies to fresh strawberries, to customize their confections.



the Reese's & Fudge and the triple chocolate. There's always a special flavor of the day, which can be any one of 300 creations, such as Mud Pie, Dr. Ruth Baby, black cherry-amaretto, and baklava.

Customers frequently inspire the daily specials, such as the vanilla malt that shows up from time to time. An elderly man came looking for his long-ago favorite, Joe granted his wish, and now it's a hit with other customers. Some flavors just haven't worked, however, like Prune-Armagnac, suggested by a French chef, and white chocolate-raspberry, which "just tasted bad," Joe says.

Most impressive is Joe's insistence on true, authentic ingredients: He packs some flavors with chocolate-covered espresso beans (yum) and black raspberry truffles (double yum). What's more, he and his staff make their chocolate from scratch; Joe says the kitchen is coated in layers of cocoa dust on chocolate production day.

"In the past 10 years, we've seen more customers who say they've tried the low-fat varieties, but after a while, they decided that when they want to treat themselves, they want quality ice cream."

MILWAUKEE JOE'S, 1417 Main St., Southlake; 817/251-1667 (other locations in Bedford and Dallas); www.milwaukeejoes.com.

Amazing Amy's

That 14-percent-butterfat thing is what hooked me at Amy's Ice Cream, shortly after Amy Simmons opened her first heavenly location on Guadalupe in Austin in 1984. Then, as now, her super-premium dark chocolate ice cream makes me swoon. It's so thick and dreamy, I swear I can actually chew it. Everything makes sense when I learn that Amy cut her teeth at the renowned Steve's Ice Cream while going to college back east. From a teensy shop on the Drag, for which she wrote a hot check to secure the lease, Amy's has blossomed into an Austin legend, with seven stores in the Capital City, plus two in Houston and one in San Antonio, selling a total of some 100,000 gallons annually.

No matter which location I visit, I can find Amy's super seven flavors: Sweet Cream, Just Vanilla, Mexican vanilla, coffee, white chocolate, Belgian chocolate, and the vaunted dark chocolate. Seasonal flavors include goodies such as Amaretto-peach, cranberry, eggnog, fresh peach, and pumpkin-cheesecake. Special flavors, offered seven at a time, come from a list of about 150. These include such traditional favorites as chocolate brownie, mocha, and snickerdoodle, and such brilliant inspirations as Italian cream cake, peanut butter-and-jelly, root beer float, and Shiner Bock.

Patrons at Amy's find bonuses aplenty in feeding their ice cream jones: Amy's sells those wonderful "Keep Austin Weird" T-shirts, and most stores offer free wireless Internet.



IF YOU LOVE ICE CREAM, YOU'LL BE WILD ABOUT HARRY'S, TOO. GET YOUR LICKS IN AT HARRY COLEY'S SHOP, ON KNOX STREET IN DALLAS.

Paleta Power

Show me a Hispanic community, and I'll show you shops selling the smartest, sweetest way to cool off in summer. The goody in question is the *paleta*, the Mexican frozen fruit or ice cream bar (below). Said to have come from the state of Michoacán, the paleta has become the rage in Texas in the past three or four years.



One of my favorite places to enjoy these treats is at **Café Paletería**, which I stumbled upon in **Corpus Christi**. There, I sank my teeth into a thick, creamy *paleta de canela*, which was rich in caramel with just a hint of cinnamon. Had it not been so rich, I might have moved right on to a cappuccino or pistachio paleta, which were among dozens of cream-based varieties, or to some of the fruit-based choices, such as kiwi, lime, mango-chile, and cantaloupe.

Also, try **La Paletería**, a growing Houston chain with roots in Corpus Christi, which has about two dozen stores from Harlingen to Lubbock and many more in the works. La Paletería also makes several premium ice cream flavors, too.

A terrific homegrown find is **El Trópico** in **Amarillo**, opened two years ago by Chihuahua native Agustín Andrade. Taking a cue from his dad, who had ice cream-paleta shops in Mexico for years, Agustín says his longing for paletas while living in Plainview—as well as encouragement from friends—convinced him to open his parlor. Among 70 flavors of paletas, all of which are made on site, are the best-selling pecan and strawberry. The most popular among his 36 ice cream flavors are pistachio, pecan, and Oreo.

CAFÉ PALETERÍA, 5894 Everhart Rd., Corpus Christi; 361/993-1443.

LA PALETERA has numerous locations statewide; check out www.lapaletera.com.

EL TRÓPICO, 1111 E. Amarillo Blvd., Amarillo; 806/371-0226.

AMY'S ICE CREAM, 3500 Guadalupe, Austin: 512/458-6895 (plus multiple Austin locations, including one at the airport, one in San Antonio, and two in Houston); www.amysicecream.com.

Taming the wild custard

Shopkeeper Harry Coley had a wild hair and, in 1996, opened up a cheery little joint on Knox Street in Dallas where he could woo the masses with frozen custard. He knew it would be a success, as he was armed with his Okie mama's foolproof recipe.

Time has proven Harry a genius, as Wild About Harry's has legions of fans. His devoted followers, in fact, send photos of themselves wearing Wild About Harry's shirts while posing in front of the world's most famous landmarks. Even when in Rome, with extraordinary gelato close at hand, Harry's regulars long for his super-smooth and creamy peach, peppermint, coffee, and lemon frozen custards.

Even during the most harried business hours, Harry greets each customer personally. As two pals and I try diligently to finish a mammoth sundae made with vanilla, chocolate, and mint-chocolate-chip custard, topped with hot fudge, caramel, chopped almonds, and whipped cream, Harry seems genuinely concerned that we don't love it enough to eat every bite.

WILD ABOUT HARRY'S, 3113 Knox St., Dallas; 214/520-3113; www.wildaboutharrys.com.

Next time, I'm bringing Janie. She'll assure Harry he's got the goods to make us double-happy. ★

Last month, JUNE NAYLOR wrote about another favorite summer Texas treat, *aguas frescas*. See more of GRIFF SMITH's luscious images in our upcoming September special issue on Texas food.

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TEXAS
HIGHWAYS

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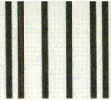
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Street Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Daytime Phone Number (_____) _____
(In case we have any questions regarding your order.)

Check or money order enclosed (payable to Texas Highways)
Charge my: Visa MasterCard
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Card number _____
Expiration date _____
Signature _____

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Product Total					
Shipping & Handling (See ad for chart)					
SUBTOTAL					
Add 8.25% Sales Tax for deliveries to Texas (products + S&H).					
TOTAL					

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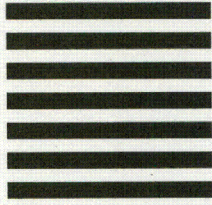


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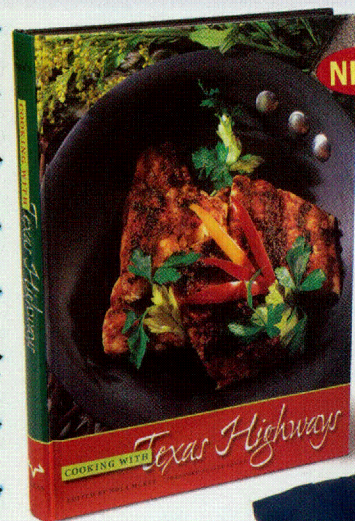
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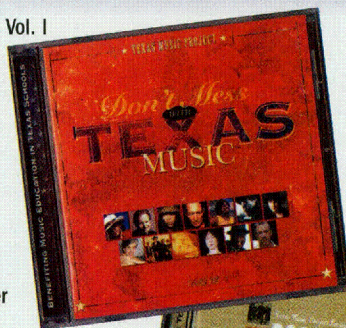
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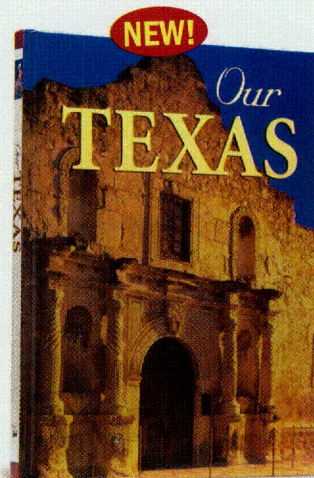
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2006 Wall Calendar

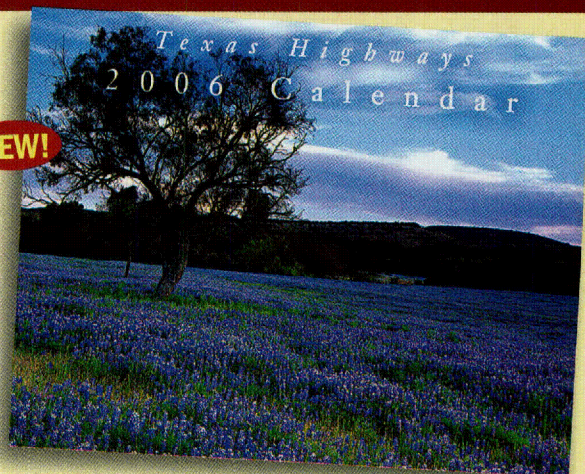
13 scenic images . . . all featuring Texas wildflowers!
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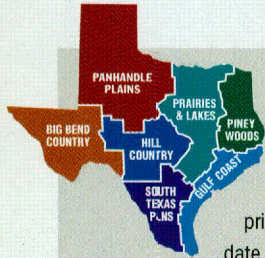
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August



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 August 1 for November 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.

AUGUST 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	29	30	31			

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

BIG BEND COUNTRY

1-Sep 3

MIDLAND
(began Jul 1)
Summer Mummies
432/682-4111

5-7

CLINT
San Lorenzo Fiesta
915/851-2255

5-6, 12-13, 19-20

ODESSA
Gypsy
432/337-9595

6

MIDLAND
Triathlon
432/682-2551

14

EL PASO
Music Under the Stars:
Tambu & Afro-Latin Jazz
915/541-4481

18-20

FORT DAVIS
Davis Mountains
Hummingbird Festival
800/524-3015

21

EL PASO
Music Under the Stars:
Noche Ranchera
915/541-4481

26-27

EL PASO
Son de Mexico
915/256-8888

FORT STOCKTON
Harvestfest
432/336-8525

28

EL PASO
Music Under the Stars:
El Paso Symphony Orchestra
915/541-4481

GULF COAST

3-7

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND
Texas International
Fishing Tournament
956/943-TIFT

3-6, 10-13

HOUSTON
Houston Shakespeare Festival
713/743-3003

4, 11, 18, 25

KEMAH
Rock the Dock
Concert Series
281/334-9880

5-6

ORANGE
OCAR Fishing Tournament
409/886-1363

5-7

HOUSTON
International Jazz Festival
713/839-7000
or 629-3700

5-7, 11-14, 19-20

BAYTOWN
Brigadoon
281/424-7617

5-7, 12-14, 19-21

WHARTON
Nine
979/282-2970

7

KEMAH
Blessing of the Fleet
Boat Parade
281/334-2303 or
832/347-8837

12-13

HITCHCOCK
Good Ole Days Festival
409/986-9224
or 986-7420

20-21

KEMAH
Steel Drum Festival
281/334-9880 or
877/285-3624

PALACIOS
Cannonball Run
Youth Regatta
361/972-2615 or
800/611-4567

26-27

HOUSTON
La Traviata
713/284-8350

26-28

CLEAR LAKE AREA
Ballunar Liftoff Festival
281/488-7676

HILL COUNTRY

1-5, 8-12

CONCAN
Cowboy Sunset Serenade
& Historic Hayride
830/232-5999
or 232-6132

1-13

WIMBERLEY
Shakespeare Under the Stars
512/847-6969

2

BOERNE
Abendkonzerte
830/537-4367

2-11

UVALDE
US National Soaring
Championships
830/278-4115

3, 10, 17, 24, 31

AUSTIN
Antone's
History of Blues
& Rock-'n'-Roll
512/329-6753

4-21

MARBLE FALLS
The Hobbit
830/798-8944

5, 12, 19, 26

BANDERA
Open Rodeo
830/796-3628

7

D'HANIS
Holy Cross Catholic Church
Celebration
830/363-3158
or 363-7268

10-13

SONORA
Outlaw Pro Rodeo
325/387-2880

11-27

INGRAM
Little Shop of Horrors
830/367-5121

12-13

JUNCTION
Summer Classic Rodeo
325/446-3190

SONORA

Sutton County Days
325/387-2880

12-14

MARBLE FALLS
Lakefest
Drag Boat Races
830/693-2815 or
800/759-8178

13

BURNET
Bluegrass in the Park
512/793-2223

FREDERICKSBURG
Fredericksburg Saturday
Night:

American Music in
the Texas Hill Country
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AUGUST 11-13

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18-20

JOHNSON CITY
Blanco County Fair & Rodeo
830/868-5700
or 868-7684

19-20

TAYLOR
International Barbecue
Cookoff
512/365-2677

19-21, 26-28

FREDERICKSBURG
Harvest Wine Trail
830/868-2321 or
888/997-3600

JOHNSON CITY
Harvest Wine Trail
830/868-5700
or 868-7684

20

KERRVILLE
Guadalupe River Parade
830/377-9838

NEW BRAUNFELS
Model Train Show
830/935-2517

SAN MARCOS
Eddie Durham Jazz Festival
512/353-0124

21

CASTROVILLE
St. Louis Day Festival
830/931-2826

25-28

FREDERICKSBURG
Gillespie County Fair
830/997-2359

27-28

STONEWALL
Grape Stomp at
Becker Vineyards
830/644-2681

28

AUSTIN
Austin Chronicle
Hot Sauce Festival
512/454-5766

PANHANDLE PLAINS**1-6**

BIG SPRING
US Hang Gliding
Championship
432/264-2361
or 263-8235

1-20

CANYON
(began Jul 1)
TEXAS Legacies
806/655-2181

4-6

DALHART
La Rita Theatre Melodrama
806/244-5646

XIT Rodeo & Reunion
806/244-5646

4, 11, 18, 25

LUBBOCK
Buddy Holly Center
Summer Showcase
Concert Series
806/767-2686

5

QUANAH
Cowboy Barbecue
940/663-2222

5-6

AMARILLO
Kwahadi Indian Dancers
806/335-3175

5-6

JACKSBORO
Ranch Rodeo
940/798-2715

QUANAH
Rodeo Parade, Barbecue,
Dance & Rodeo
940/663-2222

SAN ANGELO
Rope America Finals
325/653-7785

5-7

POST
Old Mill Trade Days
806/495-3529 or
866/433-OMTD

5-6, 12-13, 19-20

AMARILLO
Big Texan Western Melodrama
800/657-7177

6

DALHART
Fiddlers Contest
806/244-5646

12-13

LUBBOCK
Flatland Film Festival
806/762-8606

RALLS
Lions Club Parade & Rodeo
806/253-2342

VEGA
Oldham County Roundup
806/267-2828

12-14

VERNON
Summer's Last Blast
Classic Car Show
940/553-4421

13

LUBBOCK
Ranch Dance
806/742-0498

13-14

SWEETWATER
West Texas
Rodeo Association
325/235-3484

19-20

HAPPY
Happy Days
806/558-2411

WICHITA FALLS
Texas Ranch Festival
& Roundup
940/322-0771

20

AMARILLO
Polk Street Block Party
806/372-6744

25-28

WICHITA FALLS
Hotter 'N Hell 100
940/322-3223
or 723-5800

26-28

SAN ANGELO
NCHA Cutting Horse Series
325/653-7785

27

LUBBOCK
Prairie Festival
806/785-1876

PINEY WOODS**4**

CONROE
Concert in the Park
936/539-4431

13-14

HENDERSON
150th Sacred Harp Singing
903/898-0251
or 657-4303

17-20

NEW BOSTON
Pioneer Days Festival
903/628-2581

20

CARTHAGE
Tex Ritter Roundup
903/693-6634

Texas Country Music
Hall of Fame
Induction Ceremony & Show
903/693-6634

26-27

CONROE
Big River
936/441-7469

PRAIRIES AND LAKES**1-14**

ROUND TOP
(began Jul 20)
Shakespeare at Winedale
979/278-3530

2-6

DE LEON
Peach & Melon Festival
254/893-6600

3-7

DALLAS
Dallas Video Festival
214/428-8700

4-7

BASTROP
Homecoming
512/321-8331

5-6

ATHENS
Lone Star Cutting Horse Show
903/677-6354

5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-27

GRANBURY
Granbury Live
800/989-8240

6

SALADO
Salado Legends
254/947-9205

6-7

SALADO
Art Fair
254/947-5040

WASHINGTON
School Daze
936/878-2214

7

FRESBURG
Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic
Church Festival
979/732-3430

8-13

ALVARADO
Johnson County
Pioneer & Old Settlers
Reunion
817/790-3503

12-13

NAVASOTA
Blues Festival
936/825-6600 or
800/252-6642

12-14

ENNIS
PRCA Rodeo
972/878-4748

12-28

DENTON
Ragtime
800/733-7014

13

WAXAHACHIE
25th Annual Fun Run
972/291-2958

14

WEIMAR
St. Michael's Harvest Feast
979/263-5210
or 725-9511

15

PRAHA
Prazka Pout
361/865-3920 or
979/743-4514

18-20

ATHENS
MDA Rodeo
903/489-2652

19-21

COLUMBUS
Team Dairy Queen
Bicycle Tour of Columbus
979/732-8385 or
877/444-7339

HIGHLAND VILLAGE
Lions Balloon Festival
972/317-9073
or 539-7158

19-27

DENTON
North Texas State Fair
940/387-2632

26-28

DALLAS
Great American Truck Show
812/949-9200

27

ROCKDALE
Cultural Music & Dance Festival
512/446-2030
or 446-6680

28

ATHENS
Best in Texas Barrel Racing
903/677-6354

CISTERN

Sts. Cyril & Methodius
Catholic Church Picnic
361/865-3920

30-Sep 3

PARIS
Red River Valley Fair
903/785-7971

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**2**

THREE RIVERS
Brush Country Music Jamboree
361/786-3334

5, 12

SAN ANTONIO
Balcones Heights Jazz Festival
210/735-9137

18-20

PLEASANTON
Cowboy Homecoming
830/569-2163

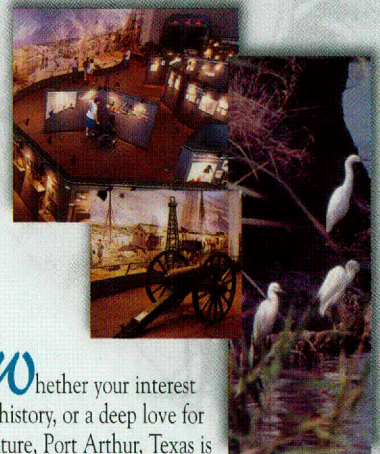
19

SAN ANTONIO
Gartenkonzert
210/222-1521

20

SAN ANTONIO
Canoe Challenge
210/227-4262

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A HELPING OF HEAVEN ALONG THE COAST

“A Blessing for You”

BY KATHLEEN KASKA

IF GOD dreamed of a hometown, it might look like Blessing, Texas, surrounded by acres of rich ranch land. This same thought may have crossed Jonathan Edwards Pierce's mind when he established the town on his 200,000-acre cattle ranch near the Tres Palacios River in Matagorda County back in 1903. At a time when no roads led to this out-of-the-way place, Pierce and other settlers lobbied for railroads in order to build a cattle business. When word got out that the rail line was a done deal, Pierce was so grateful, he proposed to name the town Thank God. The U.S. Post Office rejected the name, and Pierce settled for Blessing.

The tracks were laid in 1905, the town site platted in 1907, and by 1914, Blessing boasted a population of 500 and had two churches, a library, hotel, bank, and weekly newspaper. Early on, Pierce had hired an architect from Victoria to build the two-story, clapboard hotel, which the rancher named the Hotel Blessing.

By the 1930s, the town boasted 22 bus-



The late Texas travel writer Ann Ruff once wrote that the Blessing Hotel, built in 1906, "looks like a wooden Alamo."

inesses. Blessing grew to 1,250 in the mid-'60s (present pop. 861). The Hotel Blessing has maintained a toehold in the town's economy, and after a restoration in 1978, it was entered in the National Register of Historic Places. Still in operation, the hotel is now owned by the Blessing Historical Foundation and overseen by Pierce's great-great-grandson Lee

Edward Pierce. "We recently added a new coat of paint and have plans for replacing the balcony," says Lee Edward.

Nowadays, locals and passersby have two more things to be thankful for: the Hotel Blessing Coffee Shop and its owner, Helen Feldhousen. Since 1977, Helen has been serving home-style meals that would turn any grandmother green with envy. She and the gang begin working every morning at 6 a.m., and from 7:00 to 10:00 serve the best hot cakes, omelets, and bacon and eggs in Matagorda County. While the bacon sizzles on the grill, they prepare for the Blessing's famous noon buffet.

Ed Bell, a local resident and retired businessman, has been a regular at the Blessing Coffee Shop since the mid-'70s. "I'm here three to five times a week," Ed says. "Helen makes the best fried chicken and dirty rice I've ever eaten. To tell the truth, everything she cooks is wonderful, especially the peach cobbler and strawberry shortcake."

On Mondays, Helen features chicken-fried steak and roast beef; Tuesdays, it's fried chicken and sausage; Wednesdays,

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www.georgeranch.org • 281-343-0218

Since 1977, Helen Feldhousen has been serving the best breakfasts in Matagorda County at the Hotel Blessing Coffee Shop, as well as the eatery's famous noon buffet. "We're out of the way, but people usually find us," says Helen.



Helen Feldhousen, the culinary blessing in the town's hotel coffee shop, holds a pan of her famous yeast rolls. The cafe opens daily.

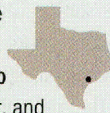
diners enjoy meat loaf and chicken-fried steak; Thursdays, it's fried chicken, sausage, and Swiss steak; Fridays offer beef tips, enchilada pie, and fried catfish; Saturdays bring chicken-fried steak, fried chicken, and liver and onions; and every Sunday, it's turkey, dressing, and all the trimmings. With the entrées comes a slew of veggies—corn, green beans, mixed greens, spinach, rice, potatoes and country gravy, yams, lima beans, black-eyed peas, broccoli—along with lettuce-and-tomato and other salads, dinner rolls, and cornbread. All that for \$6.95. Oh, and there's fruit cobbler and coffee or tea as well.

"We have regulars who come in several times a week," Helen says, "but it's always a surprise who'll walk in the door—Nolan Ryan, Johnny Rodriguez, bikers out on a run. We even had a group visiting from Japan. We're out of the way, but people usually find us."

If Blessing's not on your travel route, don't worry. Helen spreads her culinary talents around the area. After putting the pots on to cook at the Blessing, she travels to three cattle-auction barns and feeds the two-legged animals perusing the paddocks. On Mondays, she cooks at Edna's auction barn, Tuesdays at El Campo's, and Wednesdays at Wharton's. Fare at these establishments is home-style as well. If you're at any of these locations during the morning hours, try the homemade cinnamon rolls and breakfast tacos. And if your business lasts until the wee hours, celebrate with a grilled T-bone.

KATHLEEN KASKA wrote about the town of West in the April issue.

DRIVING into Blessing via Texas 35 from Bay City to the north, or Palacios to the south, take Farm Road 616 to the center of town. The **Blessing Hotel and Coffee Shop** is a two-story, wooden building on the corner of 10th St. and Ave. B. Rooms rent for \$30 a night and have AC, TV, and shared baths. Coffee shop hours: Daily 7 a.m.-2 p.m.; closed Christmas Day. Call 361/588-6623, or the hotel at 588-9579; www.hotelblessing.com.



Colorful cattleman Shanghai Pierce, brother of Blessing's founder, commissioned his own statue and tomb.

At the livestock auctions, Helen starts serving around 9 a.m. and continues until the last bovine is sold or the food runs out (a rare occurrence). Just in case, call before you go. **Edna Livestock Coffee Shop** is 34 miles northwest of Blessing (1543 Texas 111 North; 361/782-7666; open on Mon.). **El Campo Livestock Co.** is 30 miles north of Blessing (Texas 71 South at Otis Rd.; 979/543-2703; open on Tue.). **Wharton Livestock Auction** is 41 miles north of Blessing (3230 N. Richmond Rd.; 979/532-3660; open on Wed.).

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This exhibition is organized and circulated by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia. Support for the national tour has been provided by the Arnerberg Foundation and by AXA Art Insurance, Ltd, London. The catalogue has been funded in part by Sir Paul Getty, K.B.E., and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Image courtesy of the Duke of Devonshire and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement



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Cetera

MUSEUM NEWS IN COWTOWN

ON JUNE 19, FORT WORTH'S Sid Richardson Collection of Western Art closed temporarily (until next summer) for renovation and expansion. The collection, in Sundance Square, harbors art treasures that include works by Fred-eric Remington and Charles Russell.

Architect David M. Schwarz, who also de-signed Sundance Square's stunning Bass Per-formance Hall, plans an extensive facelift for the museum's façade. The plan, which includes up-dating the interior and reconfiguring the gallery space, will add more than 1,800 square feet of ground-floor area that will house education fa-cilities and visitor amenities.

For the duration of the renovation, you can see some of the collection's artworks at the **Amon Carter Museum** (3501 Camp Bowie Blvd.). You can also view the Sid Richardson Collec-tion's paintings, and browse the museum store's offerings, at www.sidmuseum.org.

And paleontologist wannabes, or simply the dinosaur-inclined, will enjoy a new permanent exhibit at the **Fort Worth Museum of Science and History**. *Lone Star Dinosaurs* "...takes the visitor through the experience of doing fieldwork, of going into the lab and making sense of field data, and creating an image of the place and time the [site] represents," says Jim Diffily, the mu-seum's vice president and curator of collections.

The exhibit also includes a "Texas Road Trip" section that highlights five dinosaur species from the Cretaceous period discovered in the Fort Worth area over the past 23 years. Plus, you'll see two complete skeletons of ornithopods, one from Pro-cator Lake (Comanche County) and the other found on a ranch outside Weatherford. A 57-foot, par-tially reconstructed *Pleurocoelus*, comprised of the bones of several of the creatures found on a Hood County ranch, tops off the collection. Call 817/255-9300; www.fortworthmuseum.org.

SURF'S UP

CATCH A WAVE—ER, A GLIMPSE—OF Corpus Christi's new **Texas Surf Museum**, where hundreds of artifacts narrate the general history of surfing and its connection to the Lone Star State.

The 2,500-square-foot museum houses more

© MICHAEL BOYD



Brad Lomax, cofounder of Corpus Christi's new Texas Surf Museum, holds a custom-made Lone Star surfboard.

than 35 classic surfboards dating from the ear-ly 1960s, as well as reproductions of 1930s- and '40s-era boards. Don't miss original surf-movie posters for famous flicks like *Ride the Wild Surf* and *Five Summer Stories*, or the pen-and-ink surf drawings by artis: Rick Griffin. Listen to surf tunes from collectib e albums featuring Dick Dale, The Ventures, and The Beach Boys.

Check out exhibits on pioneering Texas surf-ers, including legendary Galveston lifeguard Le-roy Colombo, among the first to surf in Texas in the 1930s, and Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz, who got his start in Galveston waves and went on to take second place in the Pacific Coast Surf Riding Championships in San Onofre, California, in 1941.

The museum also features a section devoted to Pat Magee, a former state surf champion and current Port Aransas surf shop owner. Magee collaborated with friend Brad Lomax, a Corpus Christi businessman, to construct the museum, at 309 N. Water St. Call 361/882-2211.

SMALL WORLD

THOSE WHO LOVE ALL THINGS SMALL WILL want to check out the new **Texas Miniature Museum**, at 211 W. Main in **Rocksprings**. The private collection, which dates from the early 1900s to the present, ircludes dolls, dollhous-es (from a 1911 wooden Bliss Dollhouse to a 1962 cardboard Barbie Dream House), doll-house furnishings, and itty-bitty accessories

Readers Recommend...

WE WERE visiting **Palacios** recently and stopped at **Los Cucos Mexican Cafe**. We were pleasantly surprised by the extensive menu. My shrimp fajitas with grilled vegeta-bles were scrumptious, and my wife raved about her enchiladas verdes. My son opted for the "El Gallo" platter—with grilled shrimp and chicken and beef fajitas—and he devoured it. The piping-hot, homemade flour tortillas were an unexpected bonus, as were the fresh salsas (red and green).

KEITH MARCUS, *Fort Worth*

Los Cucos Mexican Cafe is at 1601 First St.; 361/972-6024. (Our story on Palacios begins on page 20.)

WE STOPPED at **MK Corral Restaurant & Saloon** in **Glen Rose** for breakfast. Owners Michael and Karen Graves were so nice and friendly, and the food was so good that we returned for lunch.

PHILLIP AND BRENDA ROSS, *College Station*

MK Corral Restaurant & Saloon is at 902 NE Big Bend Trail; 254/897-2761.

ON MY way back to Austin from Houston last fall, I was hungry as all get-out and couldn't find anything open on US 290 on a Sunday midafternoon, so I felt lucky to find **Reba's Deli** in **Giddings**. The lasagna and Greek salad were scrumptious and got me home without fading from weakness.

SABRINA O'CONNOR, *Austin*

Reba's Deli is at 208 E. Austin (US 290); 979/542-4700.

(including teensy ashtrays from the 1960s). You'll also find a lending library of publications covering architecture, interior design, art, and miniatures, as well as a gift shop with vintage miniatures, architectural and building toys, and books for sale. Right now, the museum's hours are mini, too—open only the first and third week-ends of every month (and by appointment). Call 713/515-2780; ask about summer art and miniature craft classes. And stay tuned for next month's story on **Rocksprings**.

Next month... We'll see the sea creatures at Corpus Christi's **Texas State Aquarium**, sip a little *vino* at **High Plains wineries**, and retreat to the Hill Country's riverine **Mo-Ranch**. We'll also beat the heat in **Balmorea** and in the **Davis Mountains**.

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.**



ARTHUR MORRIS

window on
TEXAS

A **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**, grasping a Texas horned lizard in its beak, landed briefly on a barbed wire fence near photographer Arthur Morris, much to his amazement. Morris, who was photographing at the Forshage Ranch near Edinburg, says, "I about had a cow."

