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EDITOR'S NOTE

Plan Your Summer Adventure

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN over the past few years about the declining rate at which Americans take vacations. Various studies show that more than half of American workers leave vacation days on the table—to the tune of 640 million unused vacation days in 2015.

All of this seems fairly counterproductive when you consider the benefits of taking vacations, including stress reduction, heart-disease prevention, improved productivity, and better sleep. And more important than all of the science-based reasons for taking time off is the real reason we travel: to savor new experiences and make lifelong memories.

To do our part to turn the tide of lost memory making, we've compiled a list of 27 summer adventures to help you plan a vacation you and your loved ones won't soon forget.

And for more inspiration, our editors share some of their best Texas travel memories:

"One of my favorite trips was a girlfriend getaway to South Padre Island. Some of us went snorkeling around a natural gas rig while others who were certified scuba divers went deep. I remember being trans-

fixed by several barracuda, which seemed suspended in the water, watching us.

The gas rigs are not there anymore, but you can still dive around the submerged *Texas Clipper* and snorkel on the bay side."

—Senior Editor Lori Moffatt

"I remember a family summer vacation to Port Aransas when I caught my first fish. My dad took me fishing on one of the jetties, and I hooked a flounder. We filleted it on a splintery old fish-cleaning table and cooked it for dinner that night. Best fish I ever tasted."

—Associate Editor Matt Joyce

"My brothers and I were eagerly anticipating our annual Easter egg hunt. Baskets in hand, we hopped into the car. After a two-hour-long chorus of "Are we there yet?," mom surprised us with the best egg hunting ground ever—Bastrop State Park. It remains a magical place for me."

—Web Editor Lois Rodriguez

Happy memory making!

Emily R Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE, Editor

Share Your Texas

Share your favorite Texas travel memories with us on Facebook and Twitter using the tag #ShareYourTexas, or email us at letters@texashighways.com.



For even more summer adventure ideas, like parasailing in Port Aransas, visit www.texashighways.com.



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MAY

36

Nine-River Day

It's hard to beat the summertime satisfaction of swimming in a pristine Hill Country river.

On the summer solstice, we set out for a nine-river day.

Story by **MATT JOYCE**

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10 Epic Summer Travel Adventures

Zipline above Palo Duro Canyon, scuba in a Piney Woods lagoon, take a hike with views of the Chihuahuan Desert and the Chisos Mountains, and more. We've got your bucket list to ensure a stellar summer.

Story by **CLAYTON MAXWELL**

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8 Great Quirky Stays

Break free from chain hotels this summer and escape to one of these eight distinctive locales—wake up in a Hill Country treehouse, wander the grounds of a historic fortress, or take an evening dip in a hot tub in the shadow of the Chinati Mountains.

Story by **E. DAN KLEPPER, KATHRYN JONES, and JANE KELLOGG MURRAY**



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MAY



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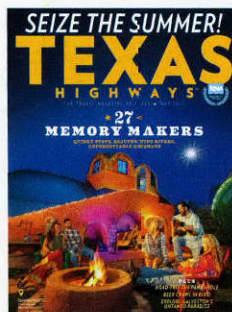
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COVER

Starry nights and good times at Eve's Garden in Marathon. Photo: © E. Dan Klepper

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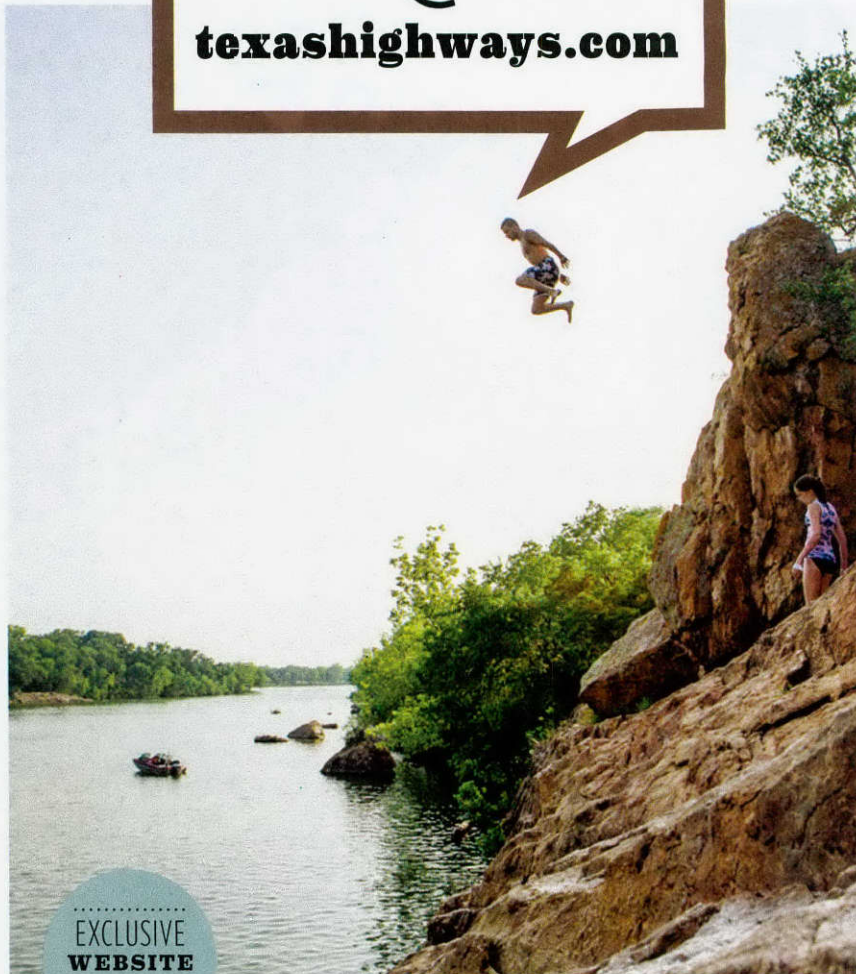
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make the most of your summer.

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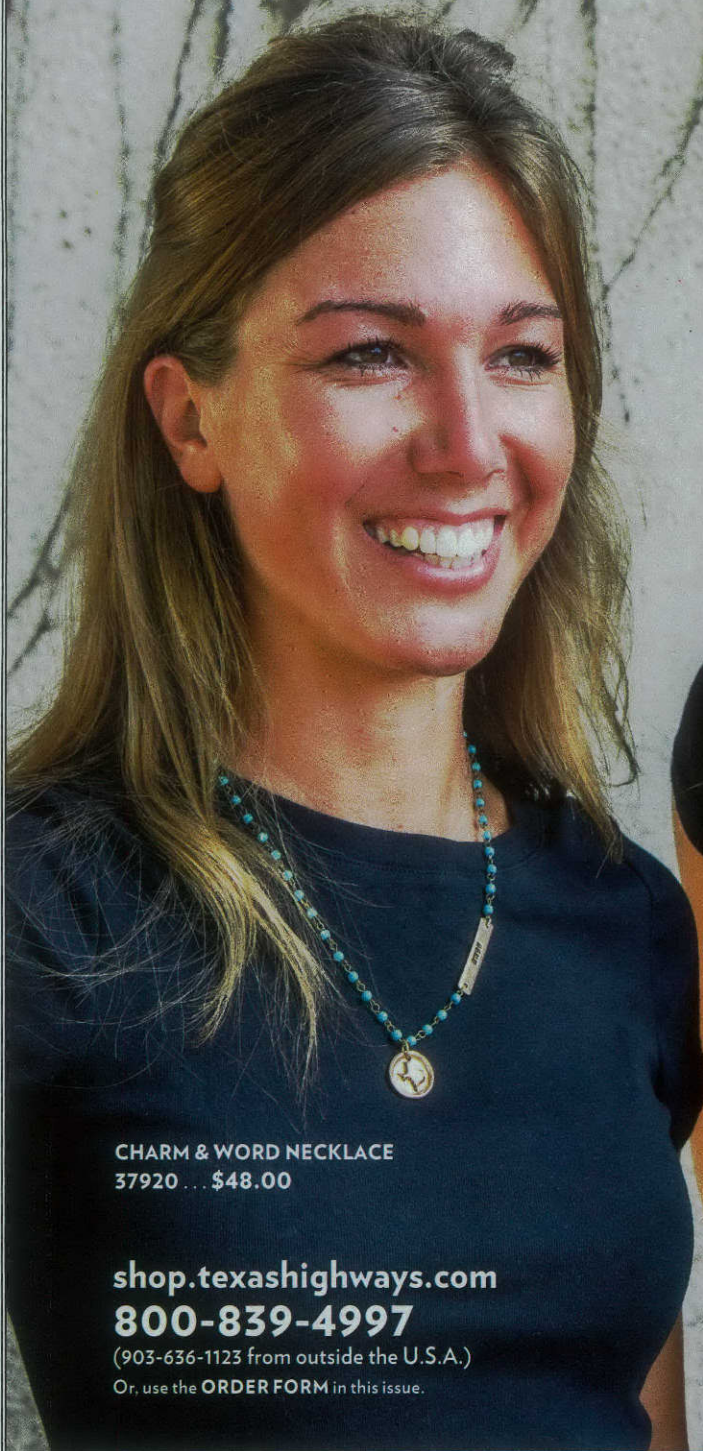
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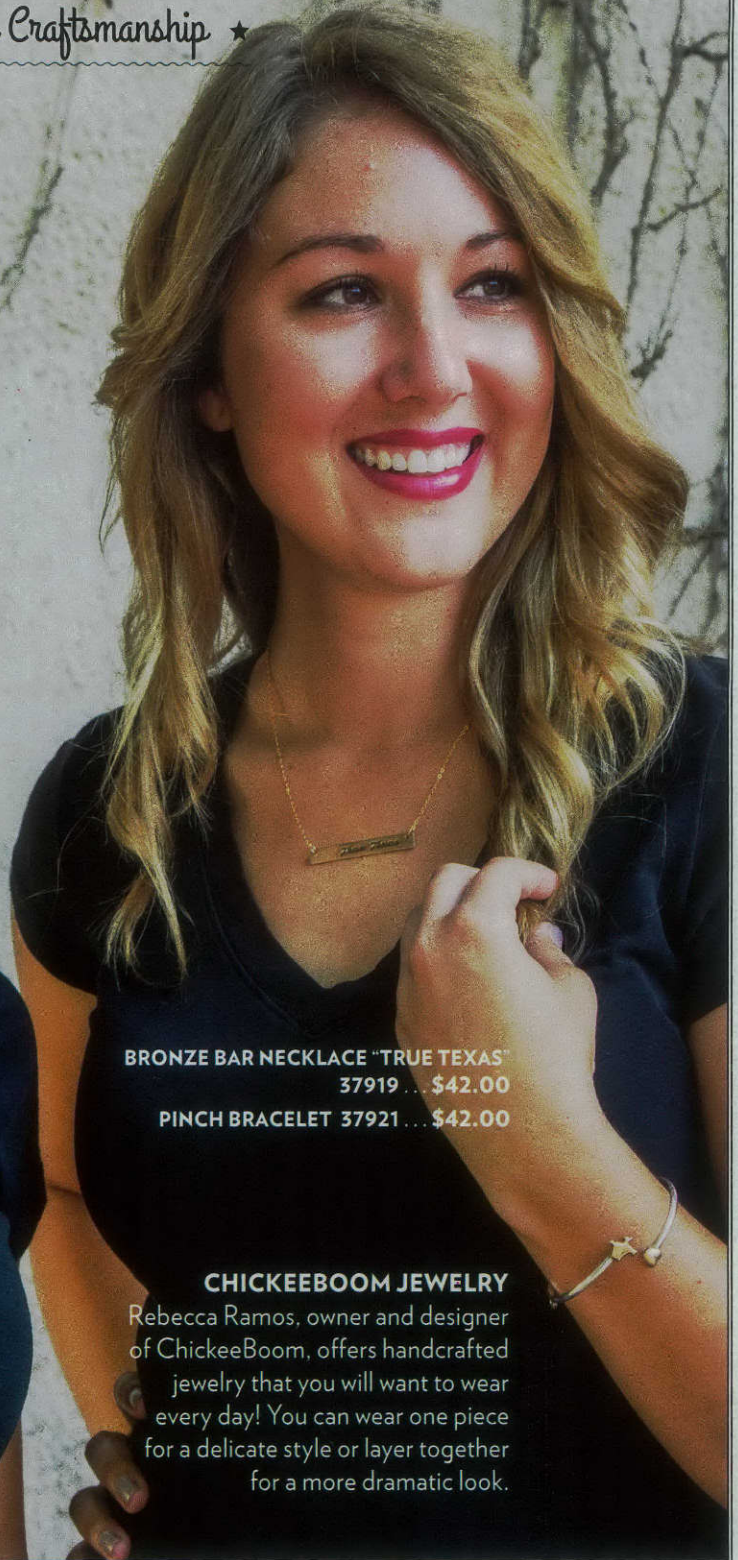
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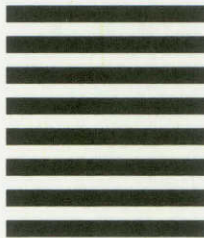
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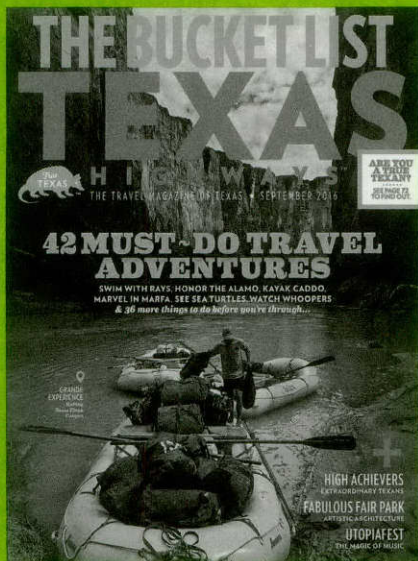
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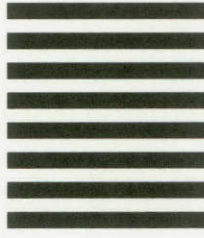
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We visited the Texas State Cemetery [April] several years ago and really enjoyed it. Some may think it strange to tour a cemetery, but this one is really worth the visit.

STEVE AND
LISA THOMAS,
NACOGDOCHES

Every Texan needs to read your magazine. Always positive and great pictures! DAVID LONDON, TIOGA



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Gardening Grace

The special flowerbed at our church has one single white bluebonnet this year. My brother started the flowerbed several years ago, and we still keep it going. He passed away two years ago. It makes us think he is still caring for it.

Kathy Vickers, Orange Grove

Wildfire Woes

The Panhandle wildfires of March and reviews that Hank the Cowdog author John Erickson's ranch was among those damaged prompted an outpouring of support from readers.

We've read and treasured every one of the Hank the Cowdog books with our kids because we could relate to the shenanigans of cowdogs and the daily challenges of raising cattle. My heart breaks to see the loss and devastation from the fires in the Panhandle. We'll keep Mr. Erickson's family in our prayers and look for tangible ways to help those who have experienced so much loss.

Lynell Dyson

Trabajo Rustico

Since the days of Dionicio

Rodriguez's *faux bois* work [April], an industry has developed using similar techniques. Besides the branches and trees that Rodriguez excelled at, now fireplaces, outdoor furniture, fences, and other things can be fashioned to look like natural trees and rocks. This is not artificial stone that is pasted onto a concrete base, but actual carving, staining, and texturing of the concrete. Corrosion of steel rebar destroys concrete. In Haiti, where I spend much of my time teaching disaster-resistant construction, corrosion of steel rebar is severe. We are introducing basalt rebar (made from lava rock), which doesn't corrode like

steel rebar. Anyone wanting to produce a permanent structure from concrete should investigate the use of basalt rebar and flexible basalt rope to reinforce the concrete.

Herb Nordmeyer, Castroville

Rocking Art

Llano Earth Art Fest [February] is one of the most fun and family-friendly events around. It's a great way to spend a day outdoors enjoying Texas beauty and to be dazzled by some awesome artistic endeavors.

Ron Anderson

Llano Earth Art Fest takes place annually in March.

READER'S
FAVORITE

Burton's Brazos Belle

The Brazos Belle in Burton is an excellent restaurant near the Texas Cotton Gin Museum. It's got a laid-back feel, but the food is topnotch, the kind of menu you'd expect to find in a fine-dining restaurant. We usually get the rack of lamb because it just melts in your mouth—nice and tender with a mustard glaze. Anytime we're in that area, we try to swing by. They make their own fresh bread, and we usually take home one or two loaves.

NICOLE TROJANOWSKI, Texas City

Brazos Belle Restaurant, 600 N. Main St. in Burton, opens Fri-Sat 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. and Sun 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Call 979/289-2677; www.brazosbellerestaurant.com. For more information, read *Texas Highways'* March 2015 story on the restaurant at texashighways.com.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin, TX, 78714-1009. Email: letters@texashighways.com.



SCENIC ROUTE

High Road

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SPECTACULAR VIEWS

of ponderosa pines, a formation called Laura's Rock, and Mount Livermore (the tallest peak in the Davis Mountains) abound at The Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve. To get there, take Texas 118 about 25 miles northwest from Fort Davis, turn south onto the preserve's Madera Canyon Road, and follow it for about five miles. Open to the public only on specific days, the 33,000-acre preserve is part of a sky island in the Chihuahuan Desert created by the cooler and wetter landscape of the Davis Mountains. For more information on The Nature Conservancy preserve and a schedule of open days, visit www.nature.org.







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Natural Galveston

East End Lagoon's
preserved paradise

story by Melissa Gaskill

Popular activities at East End Lagoon include swimming, fishing, birding, and kayaking tours.



HEAD EAST DOWN SEAWALL BOULEVARD in Galveston, past the lights and activity of Historic Pleasure Pier, beyond the elegant Hotel Galvez and Stewart Beach Park’s broad expanse of sand dotted with blue umbrellas and beach toys, through tangles of grasses and mangroves on either side and, just past a tranquil lagoon before the pavement dead ends at water, turn right onto Boddeker Drive.

Welcome to East End Lagoon, where locals have come for decades to swim, fish, birdwatch, and otherwise enjoy nature.

“When I was a small child, before World War II, families had little cabanas in front of the Seawall on that end of the island,” former Galveston Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas says. “There was a Beach Club and a dock for sailboats. Our families went there for picnics, and we swam in the lagoon.” In a home movie made by one of Thomas’ great uncles in August 1930, kids run on the sand, women wear one-piece suits and bathing caps, and men sit in the surf.

After the war, the Beach Club moved, and the cabanas gradually washed away. Families began to

These natural habitats once covered all of Galveston Island but have disappeared from much of it.

go elsewhere, Thomas says. This eastern tip of the island, owned by the federal government, sat ignored for years.

Thomas served as mayor from 2004 until 2010. She recalls local businessman and philanthropist George Mitchell insisting she do something to preserve the east end. “He believed this acreage could be a destination for people interested in nature, an asset Galveston has to offer not only to our own citizens but visitors as well,” she says. “The Army Corps of Engineers gave title to the property to the city in exchange for a commitment to keep it wild. The city is mandated, if you will, by that gift from the federal government, to keep the area and enhance it for people who love nature.”

Beginning in 2009, the city parks board and Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council took on the task of transforming these 685 acres into a nature park and preserve. Currently, the land is open for a variety of activities, including fishing, birding, and kayaking, but improvements call for making it more accessible by adding trails, a pavilion, viewing platforms, and launch areas for canoes

Located on Galveston Island, East End Lagoon offers 685 acres of wetlands, ponds, upland prairie, and beaches.

and kayaks. This work will be done in phases as funding is secured, with the vision to offer a natural experience and leave the land as untouched as possible. Long-term, the park staff plan to provide environmental education and interpretive programming in the pavilion, Thomas says.

In addition to the lagoon, the site contains wetlands, ponds, upland prairie, and beaches. These natural habitats once covered all of Galveston Island but have disappeared from much of it. Keeping what remains has benefits beyond recreation. Beaches offer protection from storms, while lagoons, marshes, and wetlands provide habitat at some point in the life cycles of many ocean species. A variety of wildlife depend on beaches and prairies, including birds, coyotes, and rabbits.



White-faced ibis

Any future structures will be built on upland property, says Sheryl Rozier, project manager with the Galveston Park Board. "We are sensitive to the ecosystem here. That is overarching throughout the project."

Galveston resident and volunteer guide Alice Anne O'Donnell leads birding tours for the Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council and monthly field trips for Galveston County Audubon Group, here and elsewhere on the island. Common bird sightings at East End include a variety of ducks, hawks, sandpipers, and terns. Cormorants, egrets, herons, and ibis frequent the

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ISSUE
No 35



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lagoon, while birds seen on the beach and in grass and pond areas along the road include black skimmers, gulls, terns, rails, and, in season, bitterns.

Four species of plovers—piping, snowy, semipalmated, and Wilson's—can be seen frequently throughout the year. Galveston Island boasts as many as 300 bird species, including year-round residents, spring migrants, and late wintering birds.

"You can bird right from the road at East End," says O'Donell, who has seen birds right out her car window, including white herons standing in cordgrass, their white plumage in stark contrast to its green, and osprey perching on poles and tall trees. "Birding is best here in the evening, though, with the sun behind you." People also bird from kayaks in the shallow lagoon.

The jetties along the channel off Boddeker often fill with anglers. Common catches here include trout, red drum, and flounder, and crabbing is also popular in the park. In addition to fishers and birders, this area, known as Big Reef, attracts those who like to watch giant ships and barges pass by.

Local outfitter Artist Boat offers guided kayak trips on the lagoon and other local outlets rent stand-up paddle boards and provide lessons. Everyone with their own human-powered watercraft is welcome to paddle the lagoon at no charge—in fact, access to the entire park is free and will remain so.

Whether visitors come to look for birds, reel in a fish, walk along the surf, paddle a kayak—or all of the above—East End Lagoon offers a place where anyone can make like a local and experience the untamed side of Galveston. **L**

Hat Trick

A family of hatmakers at Bryan's Catalena Hatters

story by Cynthia J. Drake

A CUSTOMER WALKS INTO CATALENA HATTERS looking for a special hat to match the one his friend never takes off his head, presenting a photo from his cell phone as a challenge to the hatmaker.

Looking at the customer's cell phone photo, Scott Catalena makes a quick assessment. "That's an Atwood Straw; that means he likes a short crown," he says, getting all the necessary details to complete the order.

Another customer reminisces about the dancing of his youth while his black felt hat gets a quick tune-up. "I still kick a little bit," he boasts. "I like my Tejano music."

"I've got a lot of customers who are glad their hats can't talk," Catalena says.



Scott Catalena forms a hat brim as steam pours out from the hat bar at Catalena Hatters.

Scott smiles, gives the second customer's hat a good brushing, then holds it over the steam bubbling out of one of three steamers—they sound like tea kettles—mounted around the semicircle counter.

"I've got a lot of customers who are glad their hats can't talk," Scott says. Some customers bring him hats that they purchased in the 1950s, and a few that are beyond the reach of refurbishment. "They don't want to let that hat go," he says.

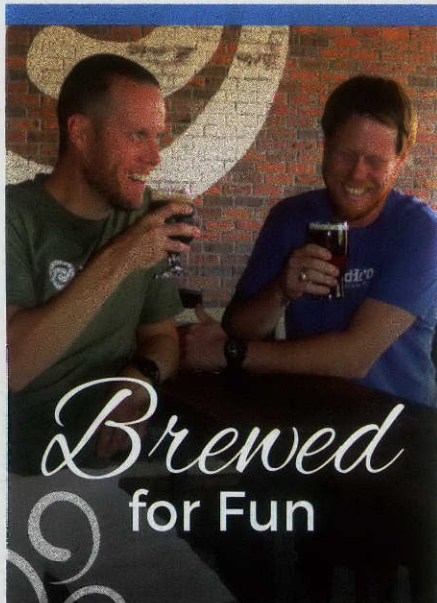
Catalena Hatters got its start in downtown Bryan in 1983. Even at that time, hatmaking was a dying art form, with hatmakers going out of business across the country. Sammy Catalena, and his new bride, Carolyn, scooped up hatmaking equipment from those stores, clinging to the dream that they could make a go of it.

"I didn't know anything about hatmaking," Carolyn Catalena says. "I remember our first order [to stock the store] was \$3,000. I stayed awake at night worrying. I thought, 'How are we going to do this?'"

Three decades later, Catalena Hatters has made a name for itself across the globe for its quality hatmaking. The business, which now includes sons Scott and Travis as well as a few long-time employees, handcrafts up to 4,000 hats per year, shipping them to locations as far flung as Australia, where they have a loyal consumer base.

Willie Nelson, Aaron Watson, and Charlie Daniels have all donned Catalena hats, and the Catalena Cowgirls—a precision rodeo drill team of about 20 cowgirls and paint horses—have carried the Catalena name through all of Texas' major rodeos since 1990.

Unlike so many mom-and-pop businesses that struggle to survive, the Catalenas have reached a point where they are at maximum capacity, and they've made a conscious choice to stay small.



Brewed for Fun

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Along with creating custom hats, Catalena Hatters stocks hats of various colors and styles.

“We’ve had people want to sell our hats in their stores, but that’s not what our goal is,” Carolyn says. “We want to make sure our customers are happy.”

The conversations the staff has with each person who walks in reveal the intimate level of customer service the store provides, whether a customer is purchasing an inexpensive straw hat, a 10x entry-level rabbit felt hat, or the shop’s premium quality hat—the 100x, made of beaver fur which can run upwards of \$800. (The x-factor represents the quality of the hat, mainly based on the density of the fur.)

“The busier you are, the less time you get to spend on each hat with each customer,” Scott says. “And you lose what you are.”

The store stocks dozens of hats of each color and quality with an open

crown and flat brim that can be styled and shaped to a walk-in customer’s preference—or they can be special-ordered.

HOW A HAT BECOMES A HAT

A hat starts its life as a hat body—a floppy, fuzzy rough draft of a hat with little shape or panache. It then goes through a dozen different steps, including blocking for just the right size, and sanding by machine and hand to shave down the fur. Light-colored hats get treated with petroleum jelly and a powder coating to even out the color.

Workers sew silk into the lining of each hat, and depending on a customer’s desire, they’ll add ribbons, braided horsehair, or a buckled felt band to adorn the crown and make the hat special.

And lastly, there is the crease, which is shaped to each customer’s specification.

The crease gives the hat its real sense of character, and you can tell a lot about the person wearing the hat

and even where he or she is from by the way it's shaped, Scott says.

"You start going west, you see the telescope crease (that's a flat circular top on a shorter crown); in the east you see the cattleman (a dressier crease on a high crown)," he says. "Hat shapes are very regional, even within Texas. You'll see a bigger brim and higher crown in Amarillo, and a shorter Cattleman's crease in Houston."

"It's an extension of your personality when you wear a hat," Carolyn says. "It's more than a pair of gloves or boots."

The Gus crease, a style worn by Robert Duvall in the miniseries *Lonesome Dove*, has grown in popularity in recent years, Scott says.

The smooth, sleek wool of a custom hat is counterbalanced by its thick, hefty brim, curled into just the right shape that seems like it will never unfurl for all the rodeos or two-steps its wearer might undertake. And indeed, with the exception of a few in-store "tune-ups" now and then, these hats really are made to last.

"It's an extension of your personality when you wear a hat," Carolyn says. "It's more than a pair of gloves or boots."

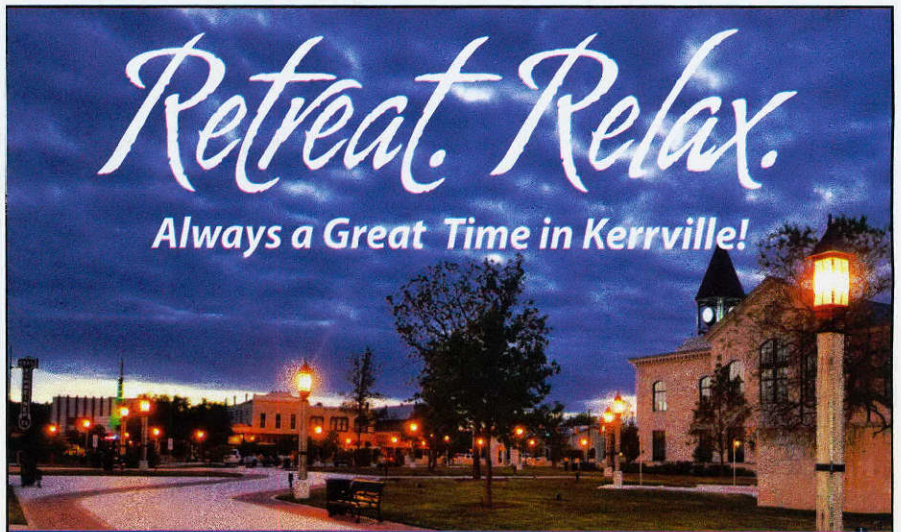
It's why people make pilgrimages to Bryan from Mexico to custom-order their hats, and why it becomes a family tradition for four or five generations, "from toddler to great-grandpa," to get measured in the modest storefront on Main Street.

"I grew up in here," Scott says. "This [hatmaking] becomes part of your identity. It's just what we do." **L**



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Pun, Pun, Pun

The O. Henry Pun-Off World Championships

story by **Joey Held**



“LEND US AN EAR AND WE’LL GIVE YOU MORE CORN!” That’s how the emcee greeted the jovial crowd at the very first O. Henry Pun-Off World Championships. And now, 40 years later, the annual Pun-Off is still going strong. Shucks, how could you not be a-maized by that?

Wordsmiths from across the country flock to Austin every May to celebrate the wide world of puns, matching wits in a contest of humor and skill to use words and phrases in ways that suggest multiple meanings. The daylong contest (May 13, 2017) draws several hundred spectators, who gather on the lawn at Brush Square Park in downtown Austin.

The Pun-Off consists of two contests: “Punniest of Show” and “Punslingers.” The former is a prepared monologue, song, or conversation lasting 90 seconds to two minutes, typically focusing on a certain topic. A panel of judges scores the contestants.

The 2016 Punniest of Show winner, Jerzy Gwiazdowski,

“Punning is a very social activity. A punster without listeners to annoy is like a tree falling in the forest with no one there to listen.”

recited every country in Asia—all 50 of them—averaging a pun every two seconds. Just a small snippet: “I don’t wanna Russia, I Kuwait. Now I know I don’t deserve Tur-keep you. I was a Nepaling boyfriend. Oman!”

The Punslingers contest, meanwhile, is a tournament-style battle. Two competitors at a time are given a subject and take turns making puns on the subject. The topics cover anything from the Civil War—“You’re doing a great job Lincoln these words together”—to seniors and aging—“I’m not sure I cane do this.”

If a participant can’t come up with

Steve Brooks, a six-time Pun-Off champion from Austin, addresses the crowd while former champion and current producer David Gugenheim looks on. Opposite page: Live music rounds out the day.

anything, repeats a pun, or uses other wordplay besides a pun (a metaphor or a cliché, for instance), that punster receives a strike. Like baseball, three strikes and you're out.

The punster who outlasts his opponents over five rounds is named Pun-slingers champion. In true-to-form spirit, the championship trophies for the Pun-slingers and Punniest of Show contests depict the backside of a horse.

Southpaw Jones, a punster from Austin, finished as runner-up twice in the Punniest of Show competition. He covets the trophy.

"Language separates us from the animals," Jones said. "There's something subversive about puns. We're making people laugh at words with double meaning or that are confusing. That's why you'll hear quite a few groans, too."

The contest's namesake, author William Sydney Porter, lived for about two years in the 1880s in the



small Queen Anne-style home that now houses the O. Henry Museum on Brush Square and serves as a backdrop for the Pun-Off. Writing under the pen name O. Henry, Porter wasn't specifically known for his puns, but he wrote more than 300 short stories and is perhaps the most famous author to have called Austin home.

The Brush Square Museums

Foundation raises funds during the Pun-Off through book, food, and drink sales for the maintenance of the O. Henry Museum and the Susanna Dickinson Museum, which is housed in the former home of Alamo battle survivor Susanna Dickinson. Dickinson lived in the 1869 house with her fifth husband, and the museum opened at Brush Square in 2010.



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Punsters say the camaraderie among contestants and interaction with the crowd make the event more vibrant.

“Punning is a very social activity,” said Steve Brooks, an Austin singer-songwriter and six-time Pun-Off champion. “A punster without listeners to annoy is like a tree falling in the forest with no one there to listen.”

Ben Ziek, a Los Angeles resident

who has won the Punslingers trophy five times and Punniest of Show twice, said he draws inspiration from the audience. “If I’m stumped in Punslingers, I’ll take a look at the crowd and see what can trigger something for me.”

Pun ideas can come in the strangest forms. Michael Kohl, a musician from Los Angeles, thought of the pun “chard wasteland” while watching the Pun-Off



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is May 13 at Brush Square Park, 409 E. 5th St. in Austin.
Free. Call **512/472-1903**;
www.punoff.com.

a year earlier. Onstage, he appeared as Don-algae Turnip, running on a presidential campaign of vegetables.

The monologue earned Kohl his first perfect score. (He placed third after a tiebreaker.) “This is one of the only events to give the audience a chance to be weird with you,” he reflected. “I’m in good company here.”

While many familiar faces grace the stage from year to year, newcomers add a fresh spark. The 2016 Most Valuable Punster—as selected by her fellow contestants—was Janani Krishnan-Jha, who flew from San Francisco with her mother as a high school graduation present.

“The fact that this exists is amazing,” said Krishnan-Jha, who’s now a student at Harvard. “It’s great to have a place to share clever humor, instead of bawdy or dirty humor, and have it be celebrated.”

Whether you’re a participant or a fan, the Pun-Off is sure to generate fond memories. And who knows? Maybe it will encourage you to sprinkle a few more puns into your everyday life.

Gwiazdowski, a Milwaukee native who now lives in New York, said he returns to the Pun-Off annually because “in every other part of life, when you make groaner jokes, everybody wants to kick you out of the room.

“Here, they cheer and give you trophies, which is a really nice alternative,” he said. 🏆



40 YEARS OF PUN

The Susanna Dickinson Museum, located at Brush Square, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Pun-Off with an exhibit of Pun-Off history, photographs, and an interactive game called “Is it a Pun?”



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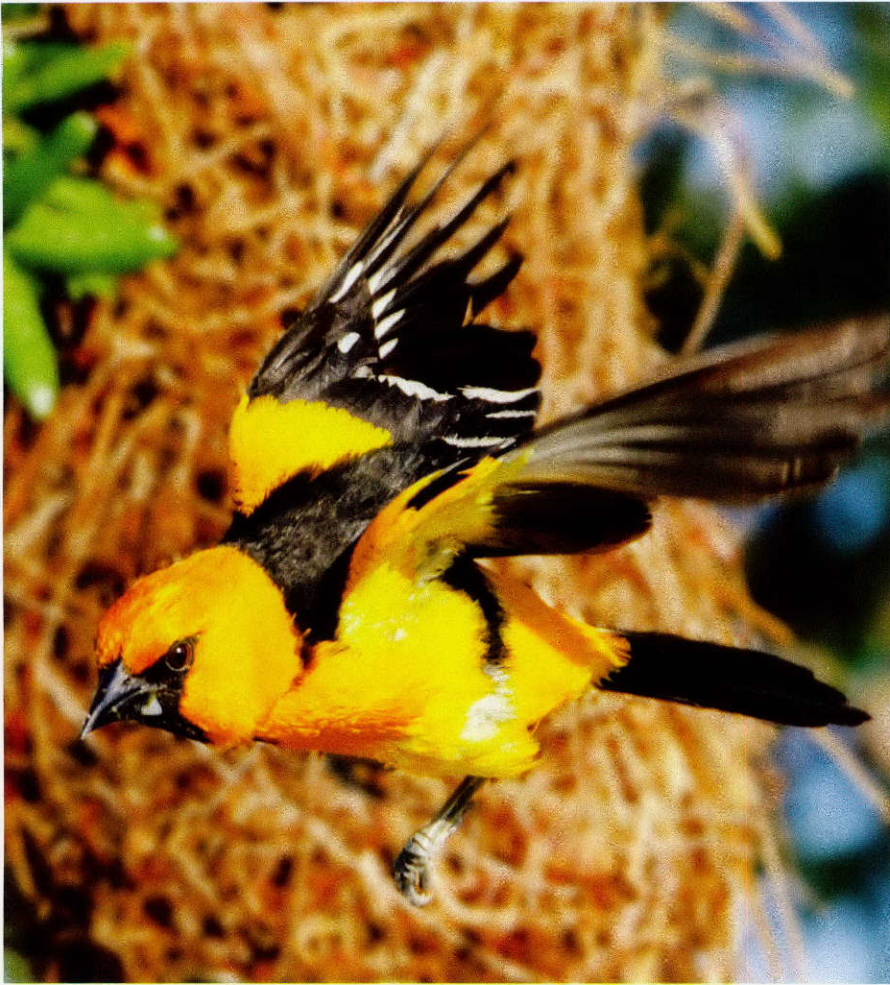
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The Birder's Nest

The Alamo Inn B&B in the Rio Grande Valley

story by **Daniel Blue Tyx**

MY SON BYRDIE HAD BEEN ANTICIPATING OUR planned visit to the Alamo Inn B&B for weeks. The two of us have been birding ever since Byrdie, then two years old, pulled down an unused field guide from the bookshelf and asked me to read it to him as a bedtime story. He's six now, and thanks to him I've caught the birding bug, too. Still, for all our countless trips to birding destinations near and far, we'd never stayed at a place designed by and for birders. Adding to Byrdie's excitement, he had recently decided he wanted to be a travel writer—he's also wanted to be an ornithologist, a veterinarian, and an astronaut—and he was looking forward to serving as my apprentice.

The Alamo Inn B&B caters to birders visiting the Rio Grande Valley in hopes of catching a glimpse—or better yet, a photo—of

The B&B caters to birders hoping to catch a glimpse of rare species like the ringed kingfisher and altamira oriole.



rare species like the ringed kingfisher and altamira oriole, which help make the region one of the nation's premier birding destinations. As a rule, birders aren't your typical bed-and-breakfast patrons—for one thing, we tend to disappear before the crack of dawn. As we were about to find out, the Alamo Inn isn't your typical bed-and-breakfast, either.

On the historic Alamo town square—bordered by a shaded plaza with a bandstand—we found the round sign with a picture of a golden-fronted woodpecker that marks the Inn's entrance. Innkeeper Keith Hackland greeted us warmly. White-haired and soft-spoken, Keith dressed the part of a birder in hiking boots, cargo pants, and a long-sleeved camp shirt. His accent from his native South Africa made me wonder how he ended up in the Valley—a story he'd share later. For now, he led us through the lobby to a literature rack nearly as high as the ceiling. "We offer our guests information as far as birding goes," Keith said modestly as he assembled a voluminous sheath of brochures, maps, and checklists.

Our arms brimming with birding know-how, Keith showed us up a flight of stairs to the Hummingbird Suite, our home for the night. It was almost as large as our actual home, with two bedrooms, a living room, and a full kitchen. The walls were decorated with hand-painted hummingbird artwork,

The Alamo Inn B&B specializes in lodging for birders, who flock to the Rio Grande Valley in search of the altamira oriole and other rare species.

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and twin stained-glass hummingbird lamps lit up the living room. As a writer, I also admired a bookshelf stocked with volumes ranging from literary classics to spy thrillers. “Books change the feel from that of a hotel to something more comfortable,” Keith commented.

I’d purposefully scheduled our visit for a relatively slow weekend, and Keith offered us a tour of the other Valley-themed suites, including the Pancho Villa, the Sea Shore South Padre Island, and the Victorian Edinburgh. Along the way, he recounted the history of the building, which was built in 1919 as the headquarters of the Alamo Land and Sugar Company, just as sugar plantations were starting to clear land near the Rio Grande.

Along with the building’s history, Keith shared details of his own remarkable story. In 1967, he was an exchange student at the Alamo high school, where he fell in love with

Audrey Johnson, the daughter of a farming and ranching family. Eventually, he returned to South Africa, and they lost touch. When they reconnected 30 years later and ultimately decided to get married, they moved back to Alamo. While looking for work in the area, Keith helped Audrey set up her medical practice in a rented suite in a historic building on the square. The owner, impressed by the care the couple took in restoring some of the building’s architectural features, offered to sell them the space. After an extensive restoration effort, the couple opened the business in 1999, with Keith as innkeeper and Audrey maintaining her practice next door.

Our tour at an end, Keith graciously bid us good night. Byrdie’s mind quickly turned to a new topic: dinner. Fortunately, along with the birding brochures, Keith had given us a guide to local restaurants. We didn’t have to look far. The first entry, El Dorado

Birders know the Rio Grande Valley as a hotspot for native and transient species.

Restaurant, was right across the street, and we headed over for a tasty Tex-Mex meal. Byrdie ordered the child's enchilada plate with fresh-squeezed lemonade, while I opted for a sizzling skillet of pork chops, sausages, and fajitas, served with grilled peppers and freshly made flour tortillas. Stuffed but contented, we returned for stories and an early bedtime since I knew that, like all good birders, Byrdie almost always wakes before dawn.

Sure enough, when I rolled out of bed the next morning Byrdie was already spread out on the floor studying his *Sibley Guide to Birds* in preparation for the day. We headed down to the self-serve breakfast that's set up for early-rising birders like us. I helped myself to coffee and prepared toast with strawberry jam to go with hard-boiled eggs from Keith and Audrey's yard chickens. Then, we were off to the world-famous Santa Ana National Wildlife



THE ALAMO INN B&B, GEAR & TOURS

provides birding-guide services, a retail shop, and several lodging options on and around the Alamo town square. The historic 1919 Alamo Land and Sugar Company building at 801 Main St. offers seven themed suites with queen beds and kitchenettes. Nearby, two buildings house seven suites with king beds, full kitchens, and a shared bird and butterfly garden. The Inca Dove Cottage is available for larger groups. Overnight stays start at \$75. Call **956/782-9912**; www.alamoinnbnb.com.

Refuge, only seven miles away. Byrdie made a beeline for the Canopy Walk, a swinging rope bridge that carries visitors high above the refuge's towering ebony and ash trees. After a couple of undulating walks back and forth, we stopped in our tracks to watch a majestic Harris' hawk perch at the apex of one of the ebonies—nearly at eye level.

Back at the Inn after three glorious hours of birding, I perused the Inn's outdoors store, where guests can arrange birding tours and purchase supplies ranging from binoculars and sun hats to guidebooks and maps.

Meanwhile, Byrdie regaled Keith, in whom he had found a kindred spirit, with stories of our morning's spectacular sightings.

At last, it was time to say goodbye to our generous host. I snapped one last photo of Byrdie and Keith by the Alamo Inn sign, and then led Byrdie reluctantly to the car. Waving goodbye, he brightened as he remembered his new vocation. "I already know what the article should say," he said proudly. "The Alamo Inn: friendly service, great restaurant recommendations, and the perfect hotel for birders." **L**

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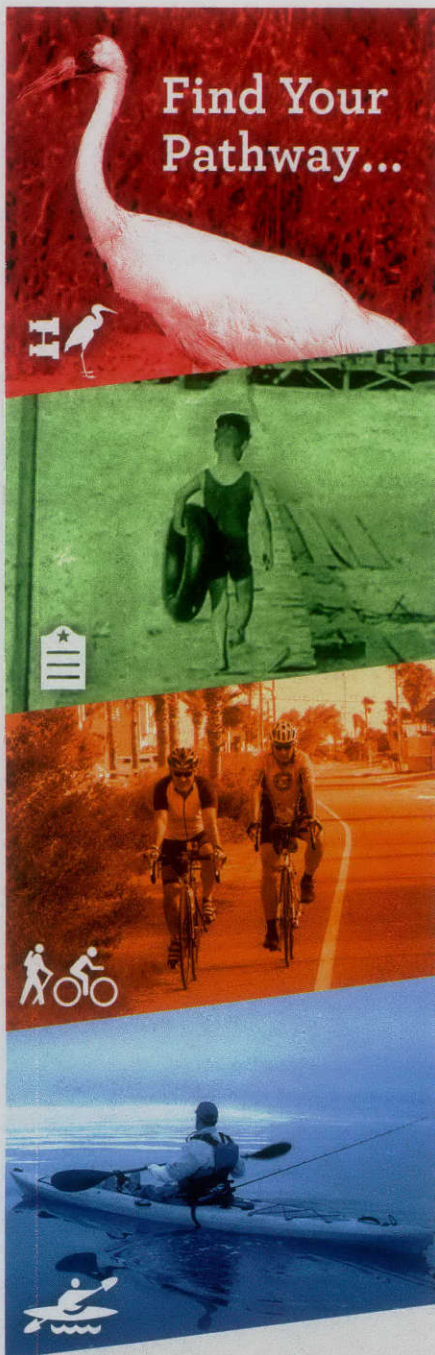
TRAVEL + DRINK + EAT

Working Up an Appetite

A climbing-gym café in Spring

story by Heather Brand

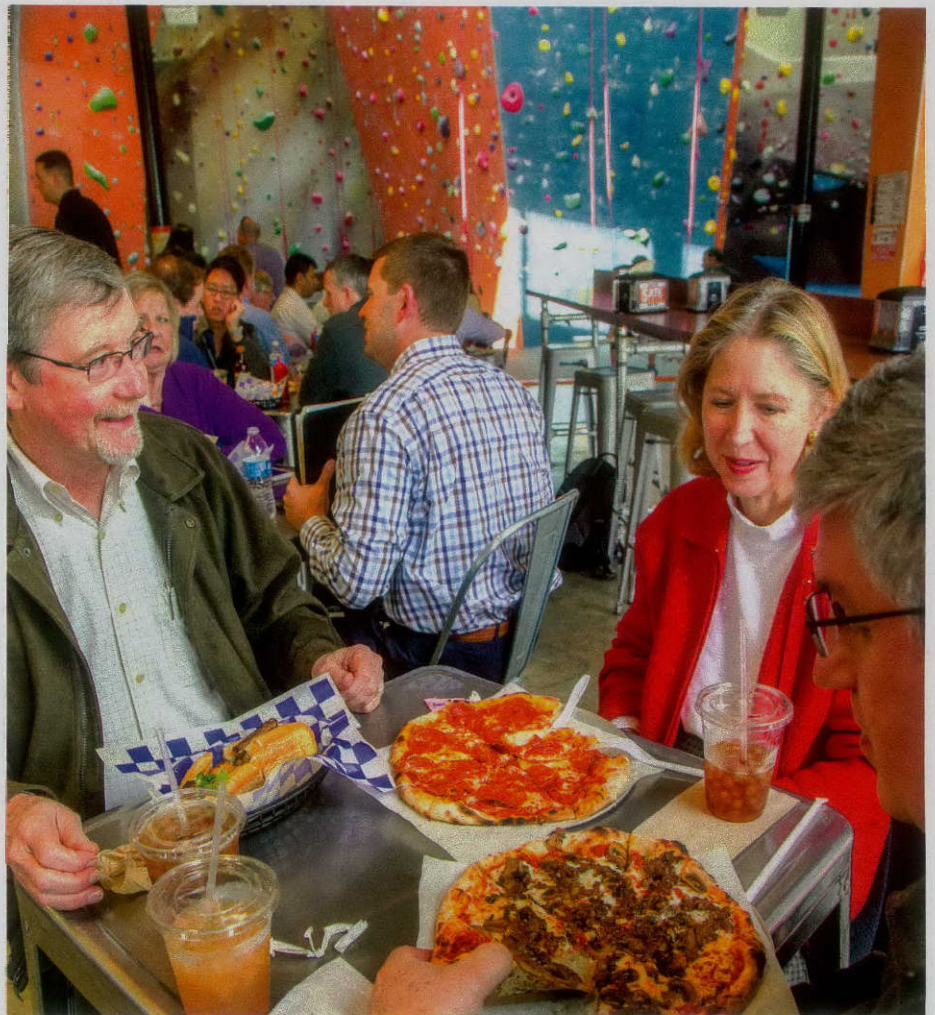




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TEXAS HAS A SCORE OF ROCK-CLIMBING GYMS, but only one boasts an eatery that has earned kudos for its food on a national level. The 5.ATE Café, tucked inside InSPIRE Rock Indoor Climbing and Team Building Center in Spring, just north of Houston, opened in December of 2013. Initially, InSPIRE attracted attention for the height and scale of its climbing walls, which stretch as tall as 45 feet and span about 17,000 square feet. But it soon gained recognition for its café as well, named for a climbing-route difficulty rating of 5.8 (a beginner-level ascent). Whereas most other gyms offer packaged snacks or smoothies, InSPIRE's 5.ATE Café features a full menu for a proper sit-down meal. Plus, its open eating area, in view of the action on the climbing walls, provides a dining experience like none other in the state. Determined to find out what all the fuss was about, I drove out to Spring to see if the café lived up to its reputation—and to try my skills at rock-climbing.

Opening a café in a gym was an unusual move, but for owner Paul Short it made sense: "I love the climbing community, and one of the ways I wanted to foster that community is through the café. People think climbers are all health-conscious, but in my experience they are more the burgers-and-pizza type. They burn a lot of calories, and they consume a lot of calories." He tapped his

Overcome by exhaustion and beckoned by the scent of grilled meat, I stowed my gear and headed over to the café's counter to order lunch.

Neapolitan pizza and award-winning burgers appeal to both climbers and foodies at 5.ATE Café.

brother-in-law, Charlie Williams, to operate the café and create the menu. An avid amateur chef, Williams wanted to focus on Neapolitan-style pizzas, inspired by his travels to Naples while serving in the Navy. However, the burger soon became a favorite among regulars, encouraging him to develop more burger options.

Today, the café serves at least eight different burgers daily, all made with crispy pressed patties and served on house-made English-muffin-style buns that soak up the juices. Among the inventive offerings are a garlic-butter burger with sautéed kale and truffle salt; a loaded “sweet and smoky” burger accompanied by arugula, sweet-potato tots, and Sriracha mayonnaise; and a “farmhouse” burger topped with cheddar cheese, pork belly, and a fried egg. Those seeking vegan, wheat-free, and low-carb options will find veggie patties, gluten-free buns, and lettuce wraps.

In 2016 the website Yelp ranked the 5.ATE Café seventh out of the top 10 best burgers nationwide based on reviews—the only Texas spot included on the list. *National Geographic* published these results in May of that year in an article titled “The Best Burgers in America: A Definitive Guide,” and word quickly spread. Short confesses that the hype generated by the café caught him by surprise. People flocked to the gym at lunchtime, eager to try the touted burgers. To accommodate the growing number of guests, Short expanded seating capacity from 30 to 50. He notes with some bemusement, “The café brings in a lunch crowd with no interest in climbing. If I ask them if they want to try it, they’ll say, ‘Heck no!’ But in the evening, when families and other climbers are here, they have fun climbing and then enjoy good made-from-scratch food.”

In addition to burgers, the café caters



THE 5.ATE CAFÉ AT INSPIRE ROCK

is at 403 E. Louetta Road
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www.5atecafe.com and
www.inspirerock.com.

to diverse tastes with selections that include a hummus plate, a *caprese* salad, a pork-belly *banh mi* sandwich, a “shar-warma” burger with *tzatziki* sauce, and Vietnamese coffee. “One of my favorite things on the menu is the *banh mi* taco,” Short says. “It’s Mexican fusion with Vietnamese. I’ve never met a climber yet who doesn’t like a taco of some kind.” Short took over the café last summer when Williams left to work as a corporate chef, but he faithfully follows Williams’ recipes and even adds new specials on a regular basis.

From the outside, InSPIRE Rock could be mistaken for a simple metal-and-brick office building, but the



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towering ropes obstacle course in its side yard (used for team-building workshops) gives it away. The inside is far from ordinary, with the open seating area of the café to the immediate left, a fully stocked pro shop to the right, and just beyond the check-in desk, a vast four-story atrium filled with climbing structures studded with color-coded holds to designate various routes.

During my visit, every surface was swarming with climbers, some bouldering without ropes, some top-rope climbing with the help of a belaying partner, some rappelling downward using an auto-belay system, and others lead climbing by clipping into dangling carabiners as they made their way across impossible precipices.

Figuring I should work up a proper

appetite, I signed a waiver and rented the appropriate gear. Outfitted with a harness, chalk bag, carabiner, shoes, and an ATC device for belaying, I approached the walls with a sense of excitement and a surge of adrenaline. Although you have to pass a certification test in order to top-rope and lead climb, anyone can access the bouldering areas and auto-belay systems, and I took full advantage of both. For several hours, I scaled the rock faces, clinging to irregularly shaped holds, wedging my toes into tiny crevices, and contorting myself into unusual positions to reach the top.

Watching from the safety of the ground, I savored the sense of accomplishment.

Finally, overcome by exhaustion and beckoned by the scent of grilled meat, I stowed my gear and headed over to the café's counter to order lunch. Short claims that "when you climb, you come away feeling 10 feet tall and bulletproof." You also come away feeling famished. Soon, I was tucking into a juicy "Hueco Tanks" burger and a heap of fries doused in Sriracha ketchup. Named for a well-known bouldering site in far West Texas, the burger was piled high with roasted green chiles and pepper jack cheese, plus all the fixings. With hands still trembling from fatigue, I washed it all down with a freshly made lemonade. All the while, I kept an eye on the painstaking progress of climbers traversing the same vertical paths I had just conquered. Watching from the safety of the ground, I savored the sense of accomplishment.

Although a rock-climbing gym might seem an odd location for an eatery, this unexpected combination works. The café draws two different crowds, appealing to climbers and diners alike, and it certainly satisfies both, whether your interest is in scaling new heights or in sampling new flavors. In my book, 5.ATE is a 10. 🐾

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IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY**

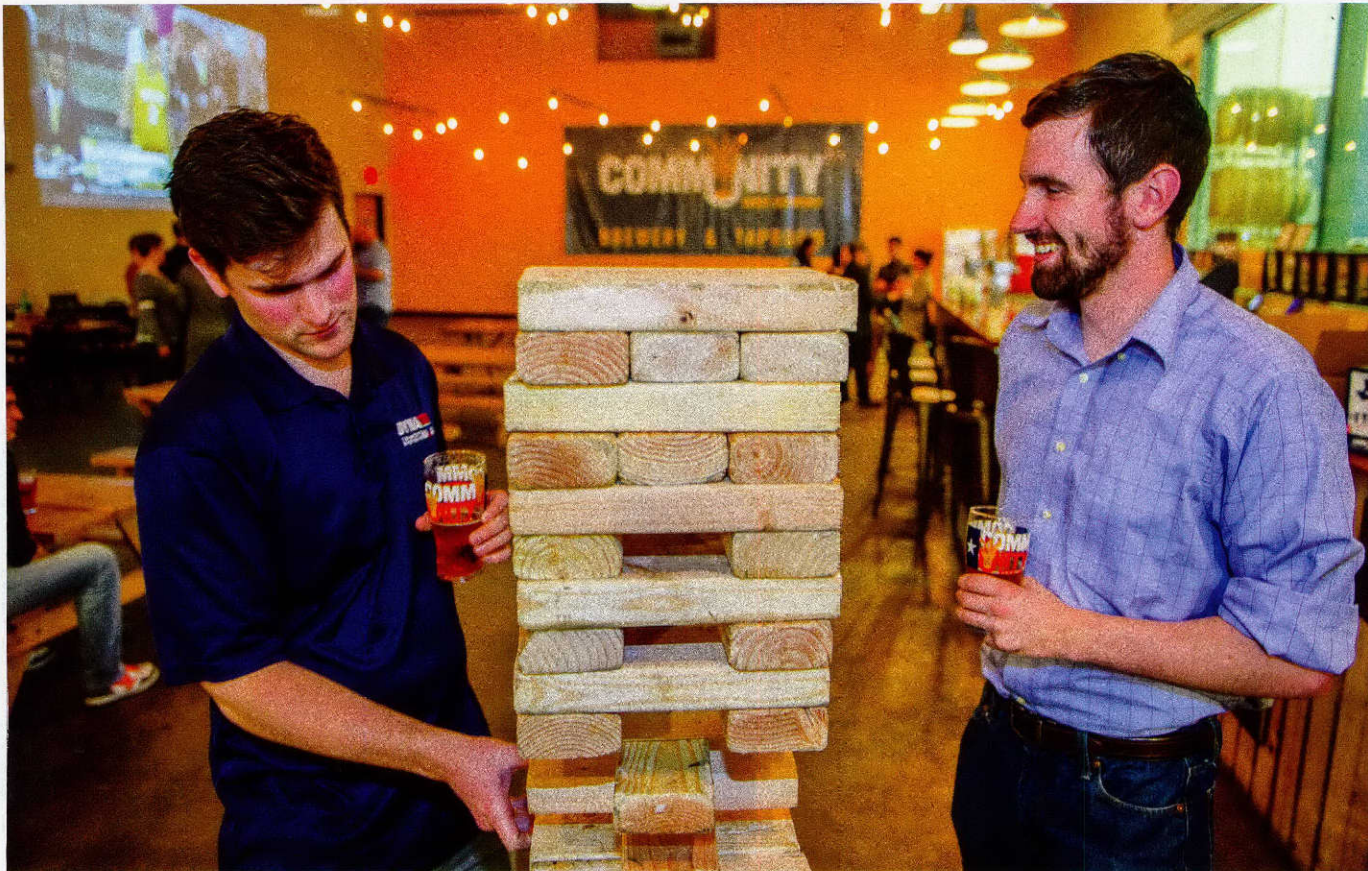
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Big Beers in Big D

A craft beer crawl in the heart of the city

story by **Bill Tucker**

THE CRAFT BEER SCENE CONTINUES TO THRIVE in Texas, and Dallas is no exception. Twenty-seven of Texas' 189 breweries and brew pubs call the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex home, according to The Brewer's Association, a national organization dedicated to promoting independent American brewers.

But my wife Jamie and I weren't venturing outside of Dallas proper for our tour. On a recent long weekend in Big D, we made plans to visit four breweries within a 10-minute drive of each other. We resolved to drink slowly, eat heartily, stay safe, and take the time to savor Dallas' finest suds.

Our first stop, Deep Ellum Brewing Company, serves as a modern-day hub of activity in the neighborhood of Deep Ellum, which has witnessed numerous cycles of boom and bust since it was first developed in the late 19th century. Thanks to businesses like Deep Ellum Brewing Company, which opened in 2011, the area is in the midst of another renaissance.

Pulsing with color, music, and activity, the taproom felt like a neighborhood party. College kids played Battleship and other board games while stroller-pushing parents sipped beer and

talked about world events. Outside, a patio outfitted with lounge chairs and benches awaited the taproom overflow.

Deep Ellum's beers range from the easygoing and accessible to the bold and daring. Tastes of the citrusy, low-alcohol Easy Peasy IPA and the crisp, refreshing Dallas Blonde evoked memories of cool summer evenings at family barbecues. But my wife and I decided to go big with the Cherry Chocolate Double Brown Stout. Nutty and chocolatey, with subtle cherry notes on the nose, this limited-release beer warmed me up and recalled past Valentine's Day indulgences.

Hungry for lunch, we ordered from the bar menu. I dug into a spicy, stick-to-your-ribs plate of chili-covered tater tots, and my wife sensibly ordered a sandwich. As the acting Reuben sandwich expert in our family, Jamie dove into Deep Ellum's offering, which featured a mountain of corned beef on fresh marble rye. In between bites and sips, she gave it her seal of approval.

Traversing the heart of Dallas' craft beer scene revealed fun times and fantastic beer.

At Dallas' Community Beer Company, visitors can play Jenga Giant and other games, listen to live music, and watch sports while sampling beers.

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The Texas Ale Project, like most breweries with outside seating, allows pets.

After letting the beer and lunch settle, we soldiered off to Community Beer Company in Dallas' Design District, one of the city's newest hot spots. Originally a strip of warehouses built south of the Trinity River, the Design District has transformed into a home-decor and nightlife destination where antiques shops bump elbows with hip eateries and trendy boutiques.

If Deep Ellum Brewing felt like a neighborhood party, Community had the atmosphere of a lively barn dance held inside an airplane hangar. Everything, from the fermentation tanks and beer taps to the cornhole boards, lives under one roof. Bar tables and picnic benches dotted the taproom as college sports played on projection screens on the brewery wall. A stack of board games next to the main bar beckoned players, and a two-piece rockabilly outfit set up at the far end of the hall.

From the taps, I tried Community's citrusy Witbier while my wife enjoyed

a bold, hoppy Mosaic IPA. As we played cornhole and listened to covers of Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson songs, the space filled with fellow customers.

After finishing our visit with a rousing game of Taboo, we drove a few blocks to Texas Ale Project. Inside, wooden tables and wall paneling project a vintage Texas vibe while stained concrete floors and sleek bar tops bring modernity to the mix. A large wall of windows provides views of downtown Dallas while an expansive patio encourages outdoor merriment.

Like the other breweries on our tour, Texas Ale brews excellent beer. The 50 FT Jackrabbit IPA balanced remarkable smoothness with a piney, semisweet hop kick while the limited-release Caucasian—described as a “white Russian imperial stout”—burst with vanilla and coffee flavors. The twist is in the color. While traditional stouts are generally thick and dark, the Caucasian appears golden and translucent like an ale.

With the evening in full swing, we traveled back to the Deep Ellum



To learn more about Texas craft beer, including the Texas Craft Brewers Festival in Austin (Sept. 30, 2017), see www.texascraftbrewersguild.org.



neighborhood to visit BrainDead Brewing, where a robot constructed from a beer keg greeted us at the door. Inside, artsy 30-somethings chatted at long picnic benches and industrial bar tables, circular lamps attached



DALLAS CRAFT BEER CRAWL

Deep Ellum Brewing Company is at 2823 St. Louis St. in Dallas.

Call 214/888-3322; www.deepellumbrewing.com.

Community Beer Co. is at 1530 Inspiration Drive in Dallas.

Call 214/751-7921; www.communitybeer.com.

Texas Ale Project is at 1001 N. Riverfront Blvd. in Dallas.

Call 214/965-0606; www.texasaleproject.com.

BrainDead Brewing is at 2625 Main St. in Dallas.

Call 214/749-0600; www.braindeadbrewing.com.

to wooden shipping pallets hung from the ceiling, and an array of music-themed artwork decorated the interior walls.

With a hip decor and bohemian clientele, BrainDead also takes risks with its beers. While I played it safe, noting the essences of banana and clove in my Idle Playthings Belgian Golden Strong, my wife swung for the fences with the 10th Anniversary DIPA. Made with wild yeast and aggressive hops, the Double IPA exploded with rich citrus and honey

flavors. And while we didn't order any food, the gourmet bar grub looked fantastic, especially the "Not Yo Fries" our tablemates were devouring.

Loaded with beef picadillo, pickled jalapeños, cheese, and guacamole, they looked (and smelled) so delicious, I almost asked them for a taste.

As we polished off our beers and enjoyed a crisp breeze blowing in from Main Street, we agreed: Traversing the heart of Dallas' craft beer scene revealed fun times and fantastic beer. Four breweries down, 23 to go. **L**

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Cajun Goes Coastal

Benno's on the Beach in Galveston

story by **Melissa Gaskill**

A SALTWATER-SCENTED BREEZE TUGS AT THE end of a roll of paper towels planted in the middle of our wooden picnic table. Warm rays of sunshine dodge between triangles of awning over the restaurant patio. The sound of gentle surf carries from the beach just across the street, where brown pelicans glide in a V above the surface of the waves.

This place on Seawall Boulevard in Galveston aptly reflects its name: Benno's on the Beach. I've come here with my daughter, Bridget, 23, looking for that laid-back Texas coast atmosphere I loved as a kid. Raised by a mother who loved experimenting with Cajun cooking and buying seafood right off the boat, I'm also looking for a Cajun-style seafood fix.

Benno's is known for its crawfish, with the season running from around the first of the year until about the middle of June.

Benno Deltz opened his restaurant in this prime location on the east end of Galveston's Seawall in 1983. Born on the island, a revered status locals refer to as "BOI," Benno had honed his chops for years as a manager at Gaido's Seafood Restaurant, which has been one of the town's most popular establishments since it opened in 1911.

"Dad's concept to begin with was more casual, more low-key, a little less expensive," says Tracy Deltz, Benno's son and the current manager. "Our menu has been pretty much the same the entire time. We focus on Gulf seafood, except for our crawfish and freshwater catfish. All our shrimp are wild-caught from the Gulf of Mexico, and our oysters are Galveston Bay oysters when we can get them, supplemented with Louisiana oysters when we can't. We still get live crabs out of Galveston Bay and clean and peel them ourselves. It's all fresh seafood, but we serve different items depending on the time of year."

The simple brick building has picnic tables inside and out, and most of the time you'll hear Cajun music booming from speakers mounted on the walls. Hungry diners order their food at a high counter facing an open window into the kitchen. The huge menu features all the Cajun classics, including gumbo, oysters, shrimp prepared a half-dozen ways, fish and oyster po'boys, crawfish étouffée, and crab claws.

This seafood bounty comes thanks to those waters right across the street. According to the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, the Gulf produces 1.3 billion pounds of seafood each year, more than the mid-Atlantic, Chesapeake Bay, and New England areas combined. Sixty percent of the United States oyster harvest and 85 percent of the U.S. shrimp harvest comes from the Gulf.

With difficulty, I settle on one thing, the Cajun Platter (\$17.95)—a sampling

Benno's manager Tracy Deltz shows off the Cajun-inspired seafood that put his restaurant on the map.

of shrimp, oysters, and snapper seasoned with a spicy blend of peppers, thyme, and rosemary, served with portions of fried potatoes, pasta salad, and fresh garlic bread. I add a cup of gumbo on the side and plan to steal a few bites of my daughter's stuffed shrimp (\$15.50), which arrive bulging with crab meat alongside a hefty pile of french fries and hush puppies.

"My dad developed a lot of our recipes himself," Tracy says. "We do a real good dark roux gumbo that's his recipe and a really rich étouffée, also his recipe. All our seasonings are either blended specially for us or we blend them ourselves from our recipes. We make our tartar sauce and cocktail sauce from scratch."

Normally a bigger fan of cocktail sauce than tartar sauce, I find I love the tartar sauce at Benno's, which tastes light with a bit of tartness thanks to pickle relish and lemon juice.

Tracy was a college student when his father opened the restaurant in March of 1983, and that August, he took a semester off to help. He fell in love with the restaurant business, though, and the "semester off" became permanent. "I was mostly cooking at first," he says. "I learned to cook by doing it. I was doing everything from peeling shrimp to working as a line cook, a fry cook, boiling crawfish and crabs, cleaning fish, the whole gamut."

Today, the restaurant is known for its crawfish, Tracy says, with the season running from around the first of the year until about the middle of June. Other big hits include boiled crabs, grilled oysters, and flounder.

Customers also rave about the homemade bread pudding; customers have been known to drive all the way from Houston for a piece. A former waitress even begged to take the recipe back with her to Thailand, and Tracy

agreed—not seeing much potential for competition.

"The bread pudding is my dad's recipe, too," he says. "I'm not even sure where he got it. It could be a family recipe."

Naturally, I have to try it. Served in a buttery square almost as large as a Rubik's Cube, it lives up to the hype. My daughter and I share one piece, savoring the flavors of raisins, sugar, and bourbon, then get another to go. I can definitely see driving from Houston for this.

Of course, I can see driving from just about anywhere in Texas when you add in fresh Cajun seafood with a view of the beach. 🌊



**BENNO'S ON
THE BEACH**

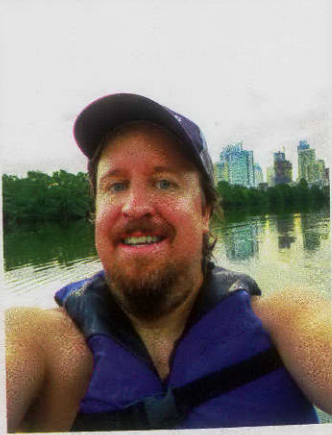
is at 1200 Seawall Blvd. in Galveston. Call **409/762-4621**.
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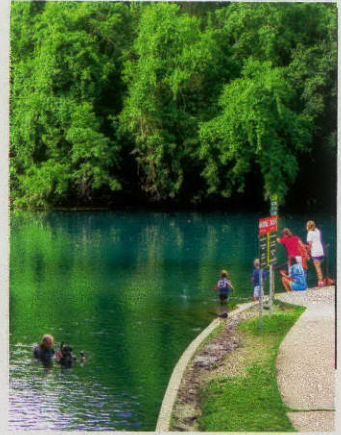
TEXAS



1 — Colorado River



2 — San Marcos River



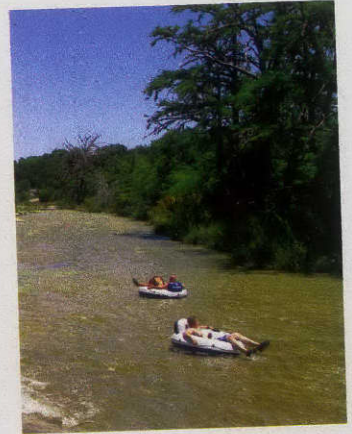
3 — Comal River



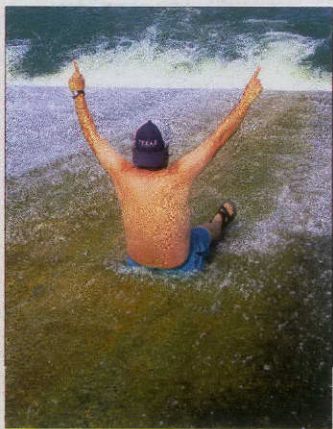
4 — Medina River



5 — Sabinal River



6 — Frío River



7 — Guadalupe River



8 — Blanco River



9 — Pedernales River

A person is sitting on a large, dark rock by a river. The water is flowing over the rock, creating a misty spray. The person is wearing blue denim jeans and a red shirt. Their feet are bare and resting on the rock. The background is filled with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and green. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

ROAD-TRIPPING THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY
RIVERS ON THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

~~~~~

# NINE-RIVER DAY

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STORY BY MATT JOYCE

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE SUMMER SOLSTICE THAT INSPIRES ADVENTURE.

As the official start of summer and the longest day of the year, the solstice illuminates a world of possibility with more than 14 hours of daylight. On June 21 this year, the sun will rise at 6:30 in the morning and shine until 8:36 at night. What better excuse to explore the outdoors?

I was pondering this potential last June as reports from around the Hill Country carried news of a rainy spring that had replenished the aquifers and swelled creeks and rivers. Numerous watersheds bisect the Edwards Plateau as spring-fed rivulets flow into creeks and rivers en route to the Gulf of Mexico.

Other parts of the world have their natural wonders, but it's hard to beat the summertime satisfaction of swimming in a pristine Texas Hill Country river. Add the summer heat of late June, stretch the day into solstician proportions—and a refreshing challenge began to take shape. “How many different rivers could I swim in in one day?” I asked myself, pulling out a map and gauging the distances.

I scanned the state southwest from Austin and walked my fingers across the map's squiggly blue lines, hopping from river to river like playing a game of Chutes and Ladders. I envisioned a western loop from Austin to Concan and back—an excursion across scenic Hill Country canyons, savannas, and river bottoms with stops for plunging into cold rivers, hiking rocky trails, and snacking on small-town eats.

A plan in place, I set my sights on a nine-river day.

1 COLORADO RIVER, AUSTIN

A speck of yellow light flickered across the ebony waters of Lady Bird Lake as I launched a rental kayak from the Texas Rowing Center dock and paddled my way into the pre-dawn darkness. The speck was a fishing skiff, my only company on this stretch of the Colorado River in downtown Austin at 6 a.m.

As I paddled downstream, the pale light of daybreak revealed the sights and sounds of the city waking up. Runners churned along the gravel hike-and-bike trail looping the lake,



Morning breaks over Lady Bird Lake on the Colorado River in Austin; paved sidewalks and grassy lawns line the San Marcos River at Sewell Park; boats await paddlers on the Comal River in New Braunfels.

the hum of traffic grew, and the first rays of sun illuminated downtown's glassy buildings in reflected shades of lavender and peach.

I navigated up the Barton Creek inlet to the spillway below Barton Springs Pool, watching the water's surface simmer with rising fish and swarms of swifts swooping for insects. Landing the kayak on a dirt bank, I dove into the water for a refreshing jolt. It wasn't until I emerged that I realized I had interrupted a photographer's daybreak photo shoot with a tattooed bikini model. Only in Austin...

2 SAN MARCOS RIVER, SAN MARCOS

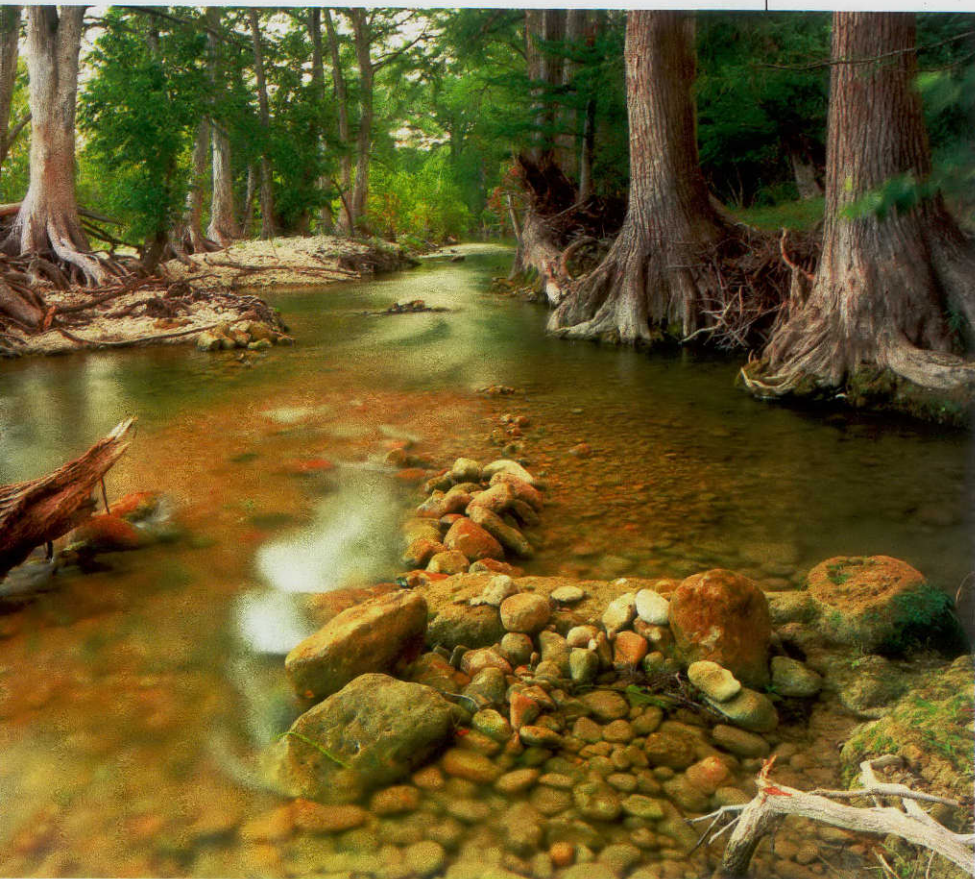
The morning was cool and comfortable, but signs of the day's gathering heat mounted as an angle of sunshine widened across the shady lawn at Sewell Park at Texas State University.

Devouring breakfast tacos from nearby Lolita's Cafe, I peered over the canopy of pecan trees and watched sunlight engulf the red spires of the 114-year-old Old Main, the oldest building on campus.

I held my breath and jumped into the San Marcos River's cleansing current, brushing my feet against the wispy, kelly-green leaves of Texas wild rice—a species found only here. Floating downstream, I pictured the water burbling from the Edwards Aquifer into Spring Lake, the river's headwaters only 1,000 feet upstream from the park.

Photos: Matt Joyce; © Jenny Sathngam (right)





Bald cypress trees line the Medina River near Bandera; a barbecue sandwich at the Ranger Crossing of the Medina River; swimmers play in the Sabinal River at Utopia Park.

3 COMAL RIVER, NEW BRAUNFELS

The water of the spring-fed Comal River—the state’s shortest river—appeared shiny blue-green as I walked down to the river at Prince Solms Park in New Braunfels. But standing on the bank, I could see clearly down 10 feet to the bottom, where perch and bass darted among the vegetation.

Three hours into the day, I was already on my third river, and I had bypassed chances to access two others (the Guadalupe and Blanco), saving them for later stops. This was a reoccurring theme: I passed up numerous chances to stop at inviting swimming holes—Guadalupe River State Park, Privilege Creek near Bandera, Williams Creek in Tarpley, and others—as I held to my schedule.

I had no tube to ride Prince Solms Park’s short tube chute, which lies just upstream from the colossal Schlitterbahn Water Park, so I swam a bit and then took a seat at a picnic table under a stout live oak tree. Nearby, children from a summer science camp dipped fishnets in the water, and submerged

scuba divers explored the river’s depths, leaving a trail of bubbles percolating on the surface.

“It’s a very relaxing environment down there,” diver Ben Flores of New Braunfels told me, relaying how he’s recovered everything from GoPro cameras to diamond rings, key chains, bikini tops, and even a prosthetic leg from the river’s floor. “I can’t afford to go to Cozumel every day, but I can swim and dive here every day.”

2 MEDINA RIVER, BANDERA

A few bystanders glanced over quizzically as I scrambled around to take pictures of my barbecue sandwich, which I had balanced on a cypress-tree root on the bank of the Medina River.

The image turned out pretty well, I thought, capturing the meaty sandwich (from Sid’s Main Street BBQ in Bandera) in the riverside’s sun-dappled light against a background of an emerald river and towering cypress trees.

Apparently I was getting a bit lost in my own thoughts on this fourth stop of my nine-river journey. But I snapped to attention when I jumped into the cool water and semi-swift current of the Medina River at the Ranger Crossing on Texas 16, a few miles west of Bandera.

After drifting downstream in the chest-deep water, I turned and swam against the current, spellbound by the water-level view of the river upstream. The cypress-lined banks enveloped the Medina like the walls of a Spanish Colonial chapel; the pristine river stretched to the horizon where it converged with the pale blue sky.



5 SABINAL RIVER, UTOPIA

The Hill Country terrain buckled into steeper and taller slopes as I drove west across Bandera County to Utopia Park. Here, a dam creates a broad swimming hole on the Sabinal River, which rises upstream near Lost Maples State Natural Area.

I noticed some other visitors fishing, so I grabbed my pole and cast a line as well. As I stood on the grassy bank, I thought back to a recent conversation with Doug Wierman, a hydrologist and fellow with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University.

Wierman had explained that most of the Hill Country's rivers surface in the Edwards Plateau region. The rivers give and take from shallow aquifers, and both the rivers and aquifers depend heavily on rainfall.

"What makes these rivers so unique is that the originating waters and springs are very nutrient-deficient—there's very little nitrogen compounds or phosphorous—and that's what discourages algae and makes them so nice and clear and pretty," he said.

The water's clarity made it possible for me to see several perch ignoring my lure. So I reeled in my line and jumped in the water.

6 FRIO RIVER, GARNER STATE PARK

"Sorry, the park's at capacity. We've been closed since 1:30," the Garner State Park gate attendant informed me as I pulled into the entrance at about 2:15 p.m.

Rats. I had been looking forward to renting an inner tube for a short float on the Frio River, as well as an ice cream cone from the park concessions stand. I know that Garner is the state's busiest park, but it didn't occur to me that it would be full by early afternoon on a weekday.

So I drove a short distance to a bridge on Ranch Road 1050, where I parked on the roadside and walked a trail down to the river. Here, water about 18 inches deep washes swiftly across a broad, flat limestone riverbed.

I sat down with my back against the current and watched cliff swallows dart around the bridge as tubers floated by. In the distance, a ridge of green hills undulated across the baby-blue mid-afternoon sky.

➔ ESSENTIALS

- ➊ **Colorado River (Lady Bird Lake):** Texas Rowing Center, 1541 W. Cesar Chavez in Austin. Call 512/467-7799; www.texasrowingcenter.com.
- ➋ **San Marcos River: Sewell Park,** 700-1 Aquarena Springs Drive in San Marcos. Call 512/245-2004; www.campusrecreation.txstate.edu/outdoor/sewell-park.html.
- ➌ **Comal River: Prince Solms Park,** 100 Liebscher Drive in New Braunfels. Call 830/608-2165; www.nbtexas.org/1691/Prince-Solms-Park.
- ➍ **Medina River: Ranger Crossing,** about three miles west of Bandera on Texas 16.
- ➎ **Sabinal River: Utopia Park,** 241 Utopia Park Road in Utopia. Call 830/966-3643; www.utopiapark.org.
- ➏ **Frio River: Garner State Park,** 234 Ranch Road 1050 in Concan. Call 830/232-6132; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/garner.
- ➐ **Guadalupe River: The Ingram Dam,** about eight miles west of Kerrville on Texas 39.
- ➑ **Blanco River: Blanco State Park,** 101 Park Road 23 in Blanco. Call 830/833-4333; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/blanco.
- ➒ **Pedernales River: Pedernales Falls State Park,** 2585 Park Road 6026 in Johnson City. Call 830/868-7304; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/pedernales-falls.



7 GUADALUPE RIVER, INGRAM

Having reached the westernmost point of my trip, I drove back northeast across Real and Kerr counties to Ingram and the Guadalupe River. The route climbed sharp bluffs carpeted in juniper, crossed big-sky savannas splashed with yellow huisache daisies, and then descended to the forested Guadalupe River valley.

The Guadalupe stretches at least 100 yards wide at the Ingram Dam, which has a sidewalk on top that's popular for sunbathing. On the upstream side of the dam, swimmers bob in deep water while minnows nibble their toes. On the opposite side, water pours over an angled spillway; algae and the rushing water combine to create a 45-foot slide to the river below.

I hadn't slid down the Ingram Dam since I was a teenager, but the slide and splash into the river were as thrilling as ever. Climbing back up onto the slippery spillway, however, was harder than I remember.

Back on top of the dam, I was chatting with a local when we saw splashing in the shallows near the bank below the spillway. We looked closer. A water moccasin had its jaws locked on a bird and was thrashing back and forth to subdue it. After about 10 seconds of struggle, the stubby snake pulled the bird's body into a dark crevice in a pile of boulders lining the bank. Time to move on.

8 BLANCO RIVER, BLANCO

The 70-foot-long picnic table at Blanco State Park offered a relaxing spot to eat the chicken-salad sandwich I had picked up at the Clear River café in Fredericksburg. The Civilian Conservation Corps built the concrete table in 1933, placing it on an oak-shaded bank of the Blanco.

The CCC also built the park's main swimming area, including a dam and an adjacent swimming pool that's continually refreshed by water pouring downstream (unless the river is low).

Though it was about 7 p.m. and the sun's lateral beams cast lanky shadows over the river, tireless children formed a loop as they jumped from the dam into the swimming hole, climbed a ladder back up to the dam, and jumped again—over and over and over.

I wonder if the CCC boys ever could have imagined the generations of Texans their creations would entertain?



On the Guadalupe River, daredevils slide down the Ingram Dam on foot; a cabin overlooking the Blanco River at Blanco State Park; sunset over the Pedernales River at Pedernales Falls State Park.

9 PEDERNALES RIVER, PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK

Hiking down the western side of the river valley at Pedernales Falls State Park, I watched the shadow of dusk advance up the opposite hill. The day's final sheets of light retreated to the ridge top of oak and juniper trees like warriors making a final stand. I made it just in time to jump in the Pedernales before sunset.

Floating on my back, I listened to the rattles and clicks of cicadas and bullfrogs. I turned my eyes skyward as the sun's final rays grazed puffy cumulus clouds. The clouds looked like marshmallows ignited by a campfire, blazing from white to orange, red, purple, and gray.

By the time I got back home to Austin, I had driven 370 miles over 16 hours, crossing nine rivers (some of them multiple times), and countless creeks.

"What's the point?" a friend asked me later, suggesting that she would prefer a more leisurely trip than a nine-river day.

Fair question. The point was to bask in the bounty of the Texas Hill Country's rivers and make the most of the year's longest day. Next time, maybe I'll swim in one river a day for nine days, or better yet, spend nine days at each of the nine rivers.

When it comes to swimming in a spring-fed Hill Country river, you really can't go wrong. 🐾

TH Associate Editor Matt Joyce is brainstorming adventures for the 2017 summer solstice. Share your ideas online in this story's comments section at texashighways.com.

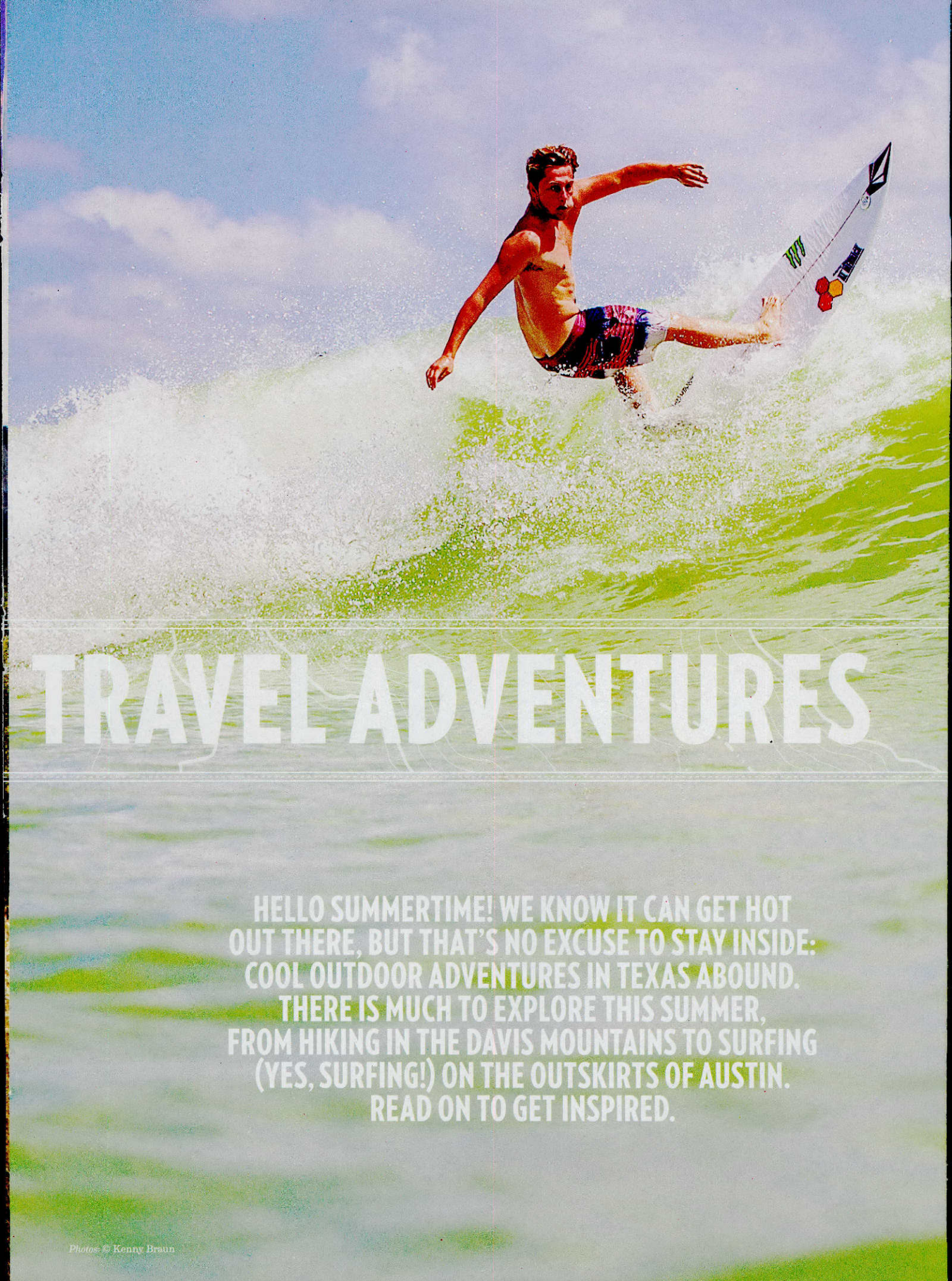


STORY BY
CLAYTON
MAXWELL



10 EPIC SUMMER





TRAVEL ADVENTURES

HELLO SUMMERTIME! WE KNOW IT CAN GET HOT OUT THERE, BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE TO STAY INSIDE: COOL OUTDOOR ADVENTURES IN TEXAS ABOUND. THERE IS MUCH TO EXPLORE THIS SUMMER, FROM HIKING IN THE DAVIS MOUNTAINS TO SURFING (YES, SURFING!) ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF AUSTIN. READ ON TO GET INSPIRED.

1

HANG 10 AT NLAND SURF PARK, AUSTIN

Nothing has made waves in Austin lately quite like the opening of the NLand Surf Park. It's just so unlikely—how is it that both surfing pros and beginners alike can now catch a wave in Central Texas? We can thank beer heir and passionate surfer Doug Coors, who paired up with visionaries at Wavegarden, the Basque wave-technology developer behind Wales' first surf park. Coors sought out a place in the United States with both demand and available space, and in 2016 opened the country's first inland surf park, deep in the heart of Texas.

Whether you've never surfed or have been surfing all your life, this summer you get a chance to hang 10. The 13-acre surf lagoon has three different wave configurations to accommodate surfers of various experience levels, plus instructors to assist first-timers. The waves can last a luxurious 30 seconds—a nice reprieve from the ocean's unpredictability. With coaches and classes, almost anyone can learn. And just like you'll find at Maui or Malibu, the surf scene here is cool, dudes. Bring a beach chair to watch the action from the beach or dig into an après-surf meal at the park's Blue Prairie restaurant. It's totally awesome. Surf passes cost \$60-\$90 for just under an hour; coaching sessions and clinics start at \$85. Shore passes cost \$5.

See www.nlandsurfpark.com.

2





ZIPLINE OVER PALO DURO CANYON, CANYON

If you don't think of yourself as the adventuresome type, you may want to think again. Most of us can overcome our fears and fly via zip line over Palo Duro Canyon, the second-biggest canyon in the United States. "We've had 90-year olds, we've had one-year olds," says Mel Smith, the owner of Palo Duro Canyon Adventure Park, which is headquartered in Canyon. "Grandparents can zipline over the canyon with their grandkids. We take people up who use wheelchairs. Everyone gets a chance to put down their video games and get out and do something real."

The whole experience, from donning safety gear to the exhilarating landing, takes only an hour, and that

includes driving out to the towers, climbing up the wheelchair-accessible suspension bridges, performing multiple safety checks, and taking a leap into the canyon. "We do all the work so that you can relax and enjoy the ride," Smith says. And what a ride! With more than 20 miles of visibility, you get a celestial view of the rocky, mesquite-dotted terrain, and you can peer down to the canyon floor some 460 feet below. If you time it right, you can fly into the pinks and purples of a desert sunset, or experience a Saturday-night Moonlight Zip, where you might get lucky and cast a moon shadow.

See www.palodurozip.com.



DIVE INTO BLUE LAGOON SCUBA, HUNTSVILLE

Whether you are a diving newbie or a seasoned pro, you'll find a slice of scuba heaven in Huntsville's Blue Lagoon. As improbable as it may seem, this former limestone quarry tucked away in the Piney Woods just outside of Huntsville looks more like Costa Rica than East Texas. And while Blue Lagoon admits swimmers, certified scuba divers enjoy priority status, so it's far easier to gain entry to this coveted oasis if you're there to dive.

With a depth that tops out at 30 feet, Blue Lagoon is an unimposing spot to first dip your fin into this underwater sport. Water temperatures range from the 50s in the winter to the 90s in the summer, and an on-site dive shop rents gear and supplies. Blue Lagoon's PADI certification program permits learners to complete online training off-site, then spend two days at Blue Lagoon mastering the open-water coursework; there's even a bunkhouse for the overnight stay.

See www.bluelagoonscuba.net.

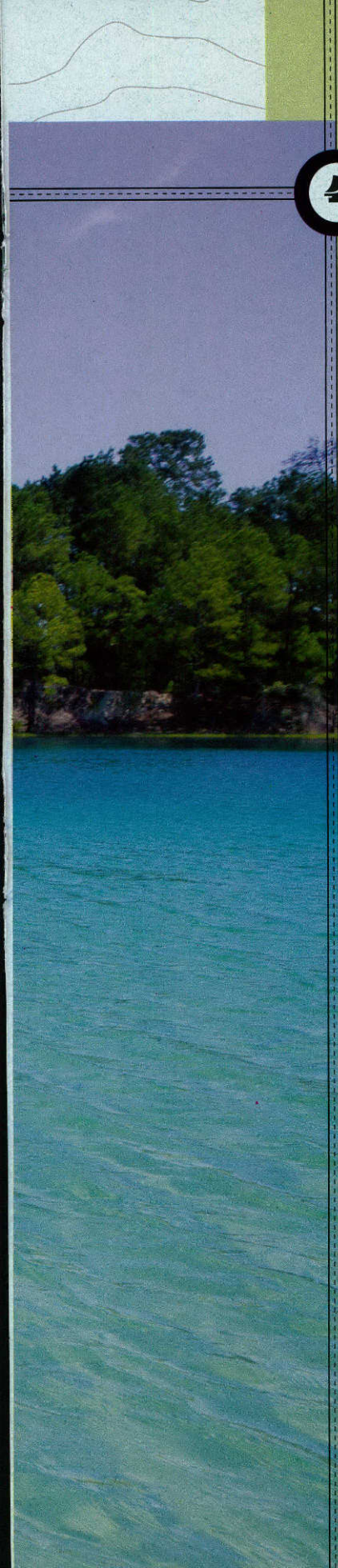
GO BIRDING, ROCKPORT

You don't have to be a seasoned birder to thrill at the pink swoosh of a roseate spoonbill coming in for a landing near Rockport Beach. No experience is necessary to delight in the silhouette of a magnificent frigatebird flying over Aransas Bay. Although plenty of serious bird nerds do flock to South Texas, even beginners can be astonished by the feathered friends that populate Texas coastal towns like Rockport.

Rockport is known for its whooping-crane tours in the winter and early spring, and its popular hummingbird festival in September, when scores of ruby-throated hummers stop here during their fall migration. But summers are the only time to see the magnificent frigatebird and the woodstork. Long-legged shorebirds such as ibis, egrets, and herons are also summer residents. "We see shorebirds arriving back from the Arctic in mid-July," says Debra Corpora, president of the Aransas Bird and Nature Club. "But the main attraction for novice birders in Rockport is the rookery at Little Bay."

This nesting spot—known unofficially as Bent Oaks—consists of eight acres of wind-swept oak trees where hundreds of herons, spoonbills, and other birds nest. You can't walk onto the property, but you can see the birds from the road. In 2015, the city of Rockport purchased the land to protect it from development. "Last summer I saw about 60 great blue herons sitting up in the trees," Corpora says. "The birds are usually there until the end of August."

See www.aransaspathways.com (for maps of area birding sites) and www.rockport-fulton.org.



SEE A FILM UNDER THE STARS, AUSTIN

Enjoy an *al fresco* summer movie at the Blue Starlite, the “mini-urban drive in” that is reimagining the retro movie experience. Its creator, Josh Frank, has a passion for repurposing the old and giving it new life. You can hook your car up to vintage drive-in speakers Frank bought on eBay and grab your popcorn and Whoppers from one of his spruced-up trailers. It’s a lo-fi movie night—the opposite of the booming multiscreen theaters that bombard the senses. Instead, with your windows rolled down, you might hear crickets and feel a summer breeze. You can also just walk in, sit under the stars on a blanket or lawn chair, and watch the reel roll with no car at all.

Frank launched the Blue Starlite in 2009 in an east Austin alley with spots for just six cars. The demand grew as more movie-lovers rediscovered the charms of an authentic drive-in experience; just this spring the Blue Starlite moved from its most recent locale on Austin’s 51st Street to a new three-acre site in Manchaca, which also offers a fire pit, picnic area, and proper restrooms. Soon, the owners hope to offer camping options so you can watch an outdoor flick and then crawl into your sleeping bag—a perfect summer adventure.

See www.bluestarlitdrivein.com.





GO BOULDERING AT HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORIC SITE, EL PASO

Not far from El Paso, approximately 34 million years ago, subterranean magma cooled to form rock that would eventually rise up and become Hueco Tanks, a range of rocky, red desert mountains. That cooled magma eventually cracked and weathered by erosion to form little pools, or *huecos* in Spanish, which held water and sustained life. Archeological records indicate indigenous Americans were drawn to the pools of Hueco Tanks as far back as 10,000 years ago; some of their cave drawings are still visible and are a magnet for visitors nationwide.

Today, Hueco Tanks State Historic Site is still a revered place—not only for its history but also for its potential for bouldering, or rock climbing without ropes. Since a limited number of people are admitted to the park at any one time, most bouldering fans regard Hueco Tanks as a rare climbing sanctuary. Climbers make the pilgrimage from across the globe to take a spin on Hueco Tanks' "boulder problems," or paths, which are known for their difficulty and beauty.

"It's the desert, so it has this stripped-down feel," says Rupesh Chhagan, a rock-climbing devotee who has scaled the rock walls here through the years.

See www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/hueco-tanks, www.huecoclimbers.org, and www.wagonwheelcoopt.com.



TRY FLYBOARDING, SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

Ever wanted to careen through the sky like Iron Man? The experience of jet-packing like a superhero is now within your reach thanks to flyboarding, a sport invented a few years ago in France. And while flyboarding first took off in beach towns overseas—you can see photos of actor Leonardo DiCaprio flyboarding in Ibiza and singer Drake doing it in Dubai—the sport has now landed in Texas.

If you want to defy gravity too, you'll need a lesson first. At South Padre Island Watersports, instructors offer a 30-minute training session before you hit the water for takeoff. Next, you'll strap on boots attached to the flyboard, as if you were going snowboarding or wakeboarding. A long hose connects you to the water flow of a jet ski; the water pressure is directed downward with the idea that you'll shoot upward.

But before you imagine yourself rising from the water like Neptune or the real-life hotshots you can watch flyboarding on YouTube, prepare yourself for a little water up the nose. On your first flyboarding outing, you may only get to soar a few feet out of the water; it takes a lot of practice to master a complicated maneuver like a back flip. But we all need something to aspire to, and even a few seconds of superhero flight feels better than none at all.

See www.flyboardsouthpadreisland.com.





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HIKE IN FORT DAVIS

If you love hiking in West Texas and dream of escaping the summer heat, here's a tip: Try the mile-high town of Fort Davis. This tiny West Texas town actually peaks for heat in June, but then July and August usually bring rain and cooler temperatures; daytime highs in August average in the mid-to upper 80s, and temperatures at night might even inspire you to pull out a sweater.

About 95 miles north of Big Bend National Park, the 2,709-acre Davis Mountains State Park offers a number of invigorating hikes on more than 17 miles of trails. From the trailhead by the interpretive center, you can take a 4.5-mile hike to the Fort Davis National Historic Site, or you can hike up to the state park's Skyline Drive and Civilian Conservation Corps trails. At the top of the Skyline trail, take a breather in the old CCC stone hut, which was built in the 1930s when the trails were first laid out. From here, you can see the Chihuahuan Desert's layers of beige, blue, and purple; the Chisos Mountains in the distance; and even the white domes of the McDonald Observatory.

About 10 miles north of the observatory, The Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve (below) offers hiking trails and scenic views of Mount Livermore, Madera Canyon, and plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

See www.fortdavis.com.



TUBE THE SOUTH LLANO RIVER, JUNCTION

A few miles south of Junction, where the Hill Country meets the beginnings of West Texas, you'll find South Llano River State Park. This park, lush with pecan trees and donated to the public in 1977 by a generous rancher, is famous for its turkey population in the winter. But in the summer, the main draws are swimming and tubing in the cool, spring-fed Llano River.

The easiest way to float downstream here is to rent a tube from the state park office (\$5) and relax into the stretch of the river that flows through the park. You can put in by the main bridge and enjoy an easy 15-minute ride down to the day-use area (repeating to your heart's delight), or you can keep going for the roughly two-hour

ride downstream. Be sure to get out when you see the red-and-white "Tube Exit" sign to the right, or you've got a long, eight-hour float into town. (From the "Tube Exit" sign, you'll have a 15-minute walk back to the day-use area, which is a good spot to park your car.)

If you want to take your tubing out of the park, try one of the outfitters in Junction. For about \$20, guides will shuttle you and your crew to a river crossing upstream, and then you can enjoy a two-hour float back to your car. You can also rent a sweet little rectangular tube perfect for a drink cooler.

See www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/south-llano-river and www.junctiontexas.com.

SKYDIVE, SAN MARCOS

One, two, three, Geronimo! Yes, it might seem crazy to jump out of a small aircraft soaring two miles above the planet, but if you've ever dreamed of flying like a bird, skydiving gives you wings. For a few exhilarating moments, you feel like a hawk floating on thermals over the Texas landscape.

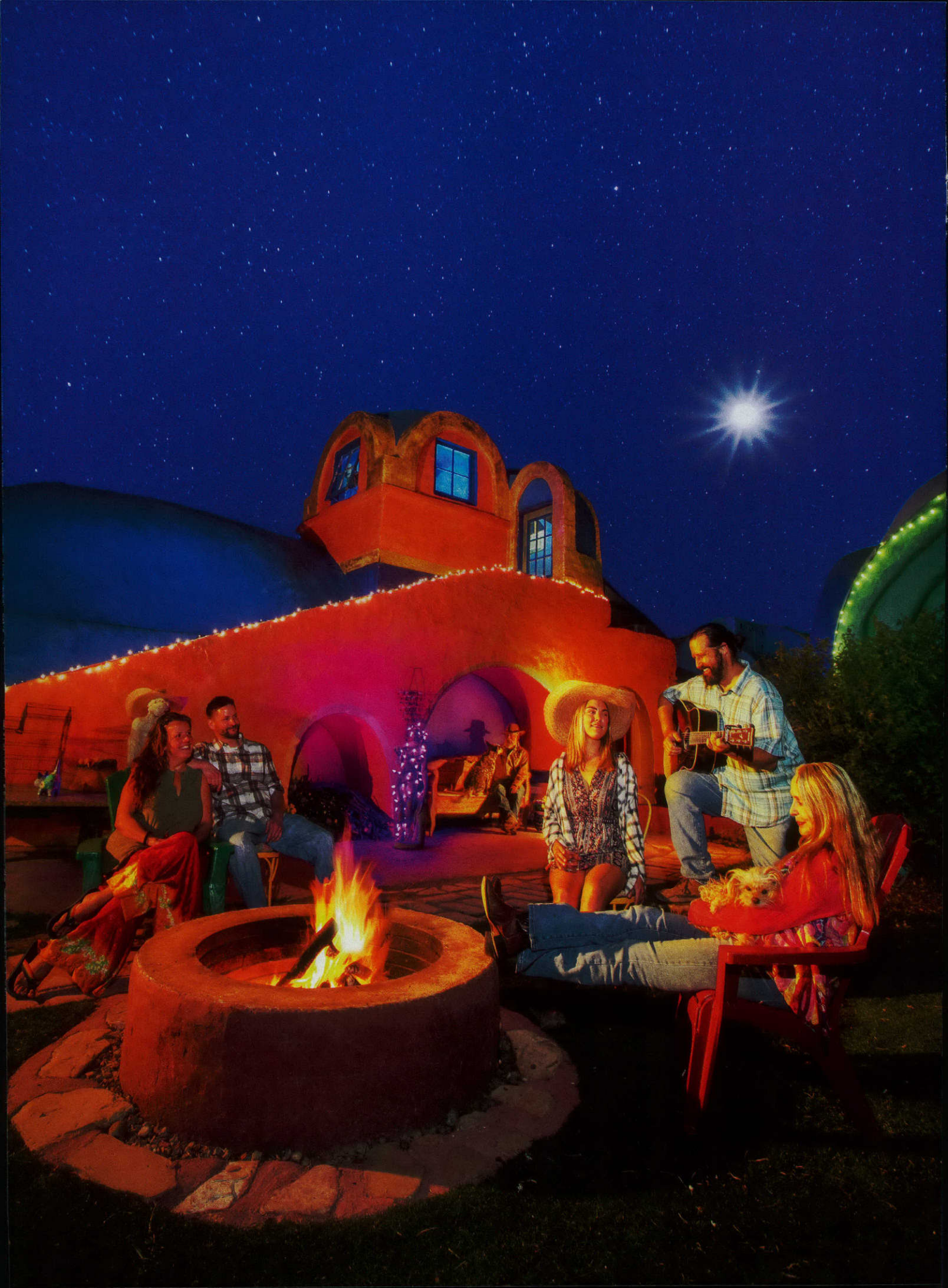
Because there are certain inherent risks to jumping out of a moving airplane, your first jump should be a tandem jump with a skydiving pro. There are many great outfits in Texas, but one well-established option is Skydive San Marcos, which has offered the experience for more than three decades.

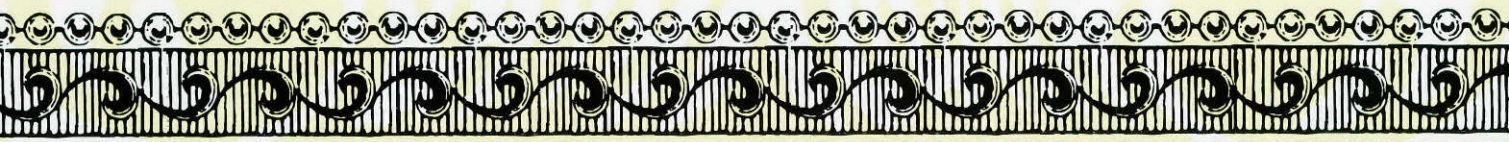
When you drive onto the property, you'll see a crashed airplane by the gate with a sign reading "There's no such thing as a perfectly good airplane—learn to skydive!" And while the instructors may be funny, they also take very good care of you. Following a group orientation and some individual instruction, you'll borrow a spiffy flight jumpsuit and board the plane. After an adrenaline-enhanced 15-minute ride, you'll take a literal leap of faith with your skydive buddy, experiencing nearly a minute of free-fall before you deploy the parachute and float another few minutes to the ground. According to instructors, the most common question they hear when it's over is, "When can I do it again?"

See www.skydivesanmarcos.com.



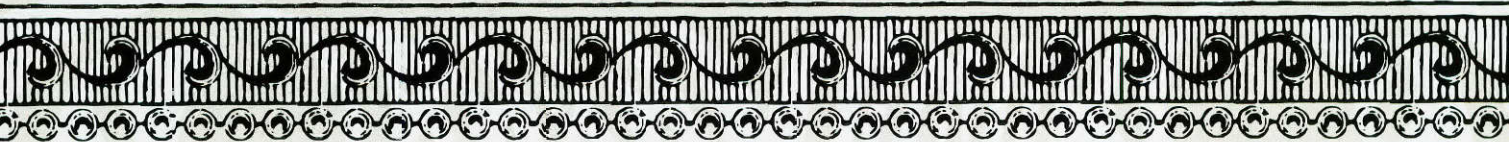
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↔ 8 GREAT ↔

Q U I R K Y
S T A Y S



IN THE BIG BEND FEEDER TOWN OF MARATHON, a lone, multicolored mirage appears on the horizon. Luckily, the fanciful sight gives way to a very real, if unlikely, organic bed-and-breakfast made almost entirely of recycled paper, Styrofoam, and sand.

Eve's Garden (*left*) belongs to an unconventional breed of Texas hotels that continue to crop up across the state, winning over travelers with their novelty and sense of adventure. While these hotels may look a little different, they aren't the result of hoteliers gone mad; their owners are forward-thinking Texans inspired to share their strange yet magical little corners of the world. Break free from hotel chains and escape to one of these eight locales for a truly memorable summer vacation.





EVE'S GARDEN BED AND BREAKFAST, MARATHON

KATE THAYER, co-owner, artist, and creative force behind Eve's Garden, entertains a particularly mesmerizing aesthetic. Her canvas is the B&B itself, a rambling arcadia of grottos, domes, patios, terraces, and blooming patches evolving across an entire square block. Original artworks and oddities cover the walls, and a 24-hour coffee alcove offers the local Big Bend java. Rooms open onto a massive covered garden where Thayer grows flowers, vegetables, and herbs year round, much of it featured each morning in Thayer's delectable (and complimentary) breakfasts.

Remarkably, most of the labyrinthine structure is constructed from papercrete, an adobe-like building material. "At first, we built with adobe, wanting to use local and natural materials," Thayer explains. "But adobe blocks weigh about 40 pounds each! So we began to experiment with papercrete—a mixture of recycled paper and Styrofoam, sand, water, clay, Portland cement, and perlite."

Thayer's creative output is a likely but antithetical result of her heritage. She's a great-granddaughter of the late-19th-century American painter Abbott Handerson Thayer, often considered the "father of camouflage." Thayer has turned Abbott's camouflage on its head by making sure her own creation can't be missed.

**\$185-\$215/night. 200 NW Third St., Marathon.
432/386-4165; www.evesgarden.org.**

—E. Dan Klepper



GOODNIGHT CABIN, PALO DURO CANYON

WAKE UP TO A SWEET BREEZE, birdsong, and a dizzy, cliff-hanging view of the second-largest canyon in the country after an overnight in Palo Duro Canyon State Park's Goodnight Cabin. Constructed from the surrounding rock along a slender edge of the canyon's lip, the cabin is often cited as having the best view in the entire state park system. It's one of seven cabins located in the park, all built by Civilian Conservation Corps crews in the early 1930s. Franklin D. Roosevelt created the CCC in 1933, putting many Americans back to work on conservation projects like Palo Duro Canyon State Park, which opened to the public in 1934.

The Goodnight sleeps four, and amenities include a fireplace, air conditioning and heater unit, bathroom with shower, and outdoor grill. The park features over 50 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails. During the summer months, guests can enjoy a barbecue dinner and watch *TEXAS*, an outdoor musical drama featuring dancing, singing, and fireworks. Reservations fill up fast, so park staff recommends reserving the cabin at least six months in advance.

**\$110/night. Palo Duro Canyon State Park, 11450 Park Road 5,
Canyon. 806/488-2227; www.tpwd.texas.gov.**

—E. Dan Klepper





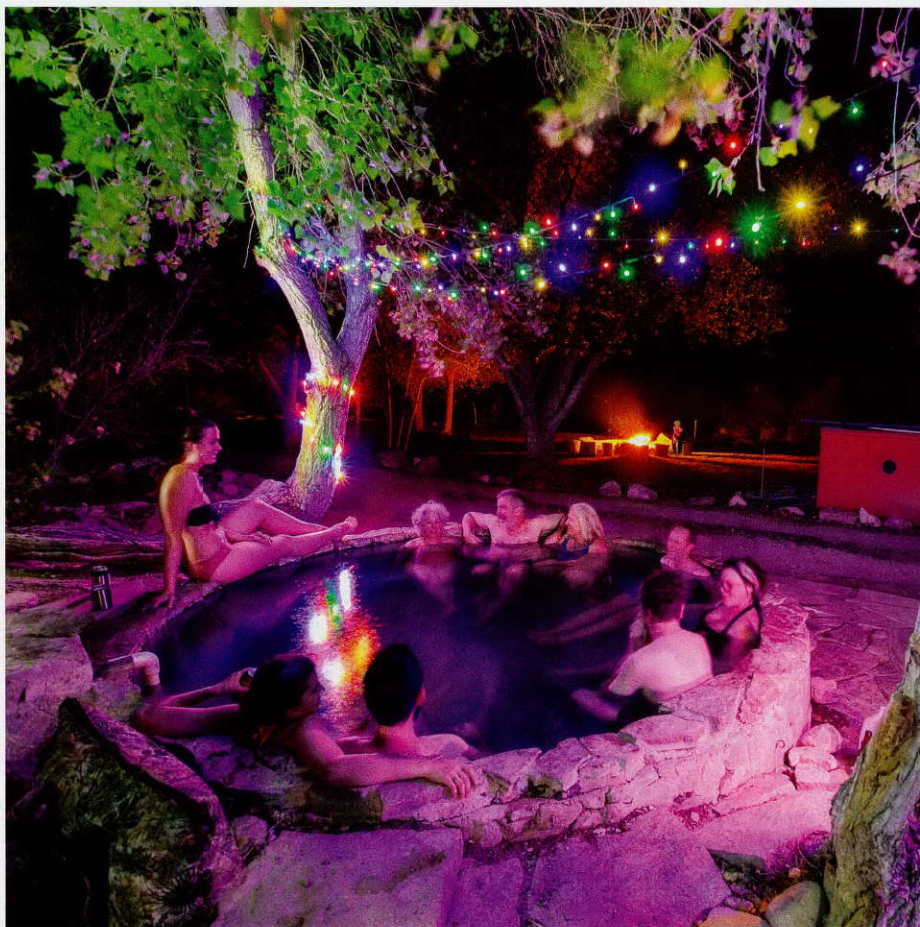
CHINATI HOT SPRINGS, PRESIDIO

A FAR-FLUNG SANCTUARY tucked into a rugged canyon between the Chinati Mountains and the Rio Grande, this remote resort offers a funky, handmade aesthetic surrounded by Big Bend wilderness. It's an invitation to turn off your cellphones (they won't work here), and revel in natural spring-fed hot tubs, homey cabins, overnight camping, and a relaxed atmosphere. The outdoor hot pool, deep enough for a seated, full-body soak and at just the right temperature for long-term lounging, provides the consummate, late-night bliss. Early risers often have the pool to themselves, along with filtered sunlight through cottonwoods and a breathtaking view of the Sierra Madres. Brisk desert nights make Chinati Hot Springs a destination for hot-tubbers year-round, and the addition of a cold pool (open March through October), perched high above the canyon, transforms the summer heat like an afternoon at the beach.

The earliest known published reference to the hot springs occurred in an 1885 report to the Texas State Land Board. "Several families are camped on the ground now, testing its medicinal virtues," inspector William M. Baines wrote during his visit. But don't take his word for it. Test them yourself. **\$105-\$140/night. 1 Hot Springs Road, Presidio. 432/229-4165; www.chinatihot springs.net.**

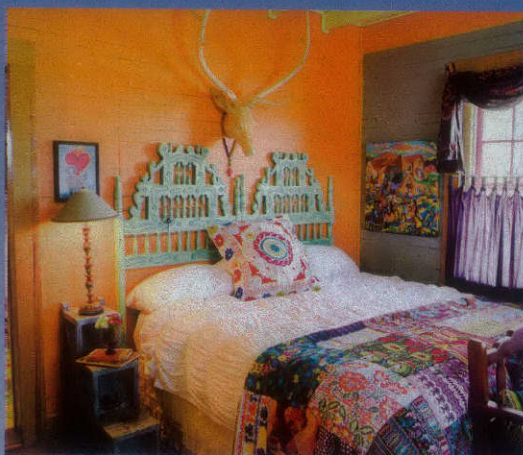


—E. Dan Klepper



RANCHO PILLOW, ROUND TOP

SHEILA YOUNGBLOOD has loved shopping the worldly treasures in Round Top since her grandmother introduced it to her as a little girl. During one of her twice-yearly shopping trips, Youngblood decided to make her biggest purchase yet: a home on 20 secluded acres. For a decade, it served as a private family retreat, hosting musicians and other creative types. "One year, a little girl came up to me and said, 'Wow, you must really like to share things,'" Youngblood recalls. "That really struck me because I realized I was sharing this place with only the people who were close to me. I thought, I wonder what it would feel like to open it up and invite people in to a new way to see things."



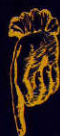
She opened Rancho Pillow to the public in March of last year. The whimsical wonderland is stocked with fun amenities: luxurious outdoor bathtubs, a heated saltwater wading pool, a poetry library, and a treehouse for the retreat's tiniest guests. Rental offerings include a 2,300-square-foot home and an air-conditioned teepee furnished with a king-size bed. The heart of Rancho Pillow is the barn, which doubles as a community gathering spot. "When you're here, you get the sense

that it wasn't made to be this giant moneymaker," Youngblood says. "It's just a place to come and be."

Rates start at \$300/night. 11222 Schuster Road, Round Top.
www.ranchopillow.com.

—Jane Kellogg Murray





THE QUARTERS AT PRESIDIO LA BAHÍA, GOLIAD

DURING THE DAY, Texas history lovers flock to this Spanish Colonial mission and presidio to soak in the site's centuries-long past. Built in 1721 and moved to its current location in 1749, the fortress has high stone walls that were garrisoned by soldiers from several revolutions over the years. It's perhaps best remembered as the site of the Goliad Massacre: In 1836, the Mexican army captured Colonel James Fannin and more than 300 Texian troops, marched them to the presidio, and executed them.

In the 1960s, the site was restored to its original glory, and builders installed a two-bedroom apartment for the fortress chapel's priests to reside. The priests have since relocated

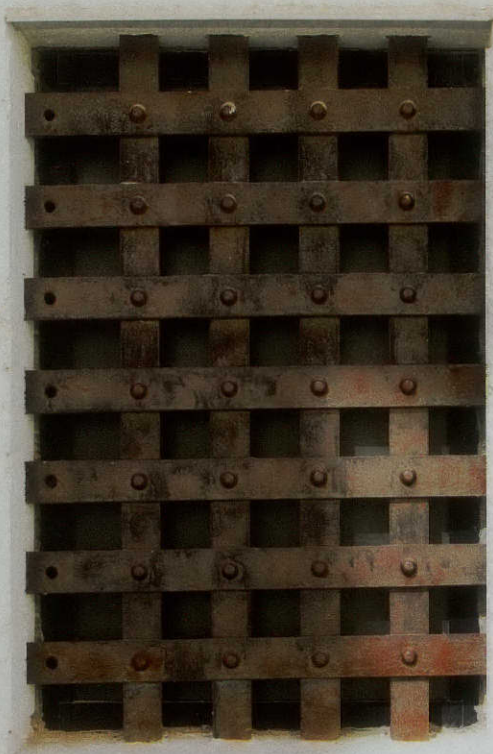


closer to town, so now you can rent the cozy quarters for yourself. The space can sleep up to four guests, and after the park closes to visitors at 4:45 p.m., you're given the freedom to explore the grounds solo. These days, weekend reservations tend to fill up four months in advance, but there's the occasional vacancy during the week. The rental offers a kitchenette, a fireplace, and—given the site's bloody history—a reported spiritual energy.

There's no reason to feel unsafe here, however—it's a fortress, remember? **\$212.50/night. 217 U.S. 183, Goliad. 361/645-3752; www.presidiolabahia.org.**

—Jane Kellogg Murray





THE CELL BLOCK, CLIFTON

DOING TIME IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT never felt so good as in The Cell Block, a 1930s-era jail converted into a modern luxury boutique hotel in the artists' colony of Clifton, 35 miles north of Waco. Tucked in an alleyway painted with colorful murals, The Cell Block stands out with its stark black-and-white boxy structure. Not used as a jail since the 1970s, the building found new life when Kaye Robinson Callaway opened it in 2014. "I just didn't want it torn down," says Callaway, who owns several downtown buildings. She updated the space but kept the original heavy steel doors, which function as working doors between the sleek sitting area, full bathroom, and bedroom with a queen bed, all decorated in black and white with pops of color. The music selection by the vintage phonograph includes Johnny Cash's *Live from Folsom Prison* and Elvis Presley's *Jailhouse Rock*. Try out the handcuffs—they come with a key—and guests can take their "mug shots" with an old-timey camera or relax on the rooftop deck with gas fire pit, aka the "prison yard." This is not a bed-and-breakfast—no food is served—but guests can sip small bottles of whiskey from Balcones Distilling or a complimentary bottle of tempranillo from nearby Red Caboose Winery.

\$225 weekdays, \$265 weekends. 120 Clifton Art Alley, Clifton.
254/227-5656; www.stayatthecellblock.com

THE B
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—Kathryn Jones



SALMON LAKE PARK, GRAPELAND

RUSTIC BARNWOOD BUILDINGS with pitched metal roofs dot the winding trails at Salmon Lake Park, nestled among the East Texas pines between Crockett and Palestine. The collection of restored buildings, pavilions, and reunion halls designed like saloons, a schoolhouse, town hall, and an old hotel draws families to a place that feels like it belongs in another time. Floyd and Fannie Salmon created this mini historic village with 21 cabins, RV sites, tent camping, and a small lake for swimming (no fishing, though).

Kids can slide and swing on a playground, ride on the miniature “Lost Dutchman Railway,” or treat themselves to snow cones at the snack bar housed in a bright yellow cottage. Floyd’s whimsical creations in metal and wood decorate the park—a wooden burro sculpture holds “saddlebags” of flowers, while metal birds and fanciful insects keep watch. One of the most unusual places to stay is the Tree House, which sleeps four and is built of tree limbs perched on tall tree trunks. The sounds of bluegrass music swell in the park during regular jams, and the Memorial Day bluegrass gospel festival and Labor Day bluegrass festival draw fans from Texas and beyond.

\$50-\$200/night for cabins. 357 Salmon Lake Road, Grapeland. 936/687-2594; www.salmonlakepark.com.

—Kathryn Jones



CYPRESS VALLEY CANOPY SPICEWOOD

IN 1998, David Beilharz was living a charmed life in Austin’s upscale Westlake Hills with his wife, Amy, and their four kids. But a spiritual quest in South America shifted his mindset in an instant. “After being in the pristine nature of the Amazon jungle for several weeks,” he says, “flying back into Austin was like coming back into a bubble on the foam of the latte of life.” The Beilharzes uprooted the family to an 88-acre, cypress-lined oasis in the Texas Hill Country. By 2004, they knew they wanted to share their sustainable lifestyle with others, and on July 4, 2005, Cypress Valley Canopy Tours opened as the first zip-line canopy tour in the continental United States.

The Nest treehouse, the largest of their rental offerings, is a two-bedroom sanctuary ideal for families, nestled high up above the creek near a small waterfall. Couples in search of a romantic getaway head to The Lofthaven—a treetop yurt with a canopy bed, connected to a bathhouse built into the rock. “There’s something about being up in a tree,” David explains, “whether it’s some instinctive monkey evolution or it’s feeling like *The Swiss Family Robinson*.”

Rates start at \$200/night. 1223 Paleface Ranch Road, Spicewood. 512/264-8880; www.cypressvalleycanopytours.com.

—Jane Kellogg Murray

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TAKE AN "ISLAND TIME" BREAK THIS SUMMER

Enjoying the cool breezes and crashing waves of the Galveston Island shore is one of those summer pastimes that make you forget you're even in Texas. But these days, the beach is just the beginning of what this charming little island has to offer.

Located on the Texas coast all the way south on I-45, Galveston is buzzing with new energy. Whether you're walking along the seawall where laughter fills the air near the Pleasure Pier or you're journeying through the island's emerging foodie scene one delicious bite at a time, it's evident that Galveston has been reborn in so many ways.

No longer just a beach town, Galveston is a thriving vacation destination because of its diversity – from its large collection of Victorian architecture and historical sites to its family attractions, culinary experiences and cruise port. Just recently, Galveston became home to The Bryan Museum, housing the world's largest collection of southwestern artifacts, unveiled a completely renovated Moody Gardens aquarium and created a brand new beach along the eastern part of Seawall.

Plus, it seems "new" has become a yearly buzzword for the island as the new attractions, new hotels, and new restaurants just keep coming.

While visiting Galveston this summer, you can see – and ride, if you dare – the tallest water coaster in the world at Schlitterbahn Galveston Island Waterpark. Or, if history is where your interest lies, you can visit historic downtown Galveston, where old-world charm is drawing fresh interest from lovers of the arts. Majestic iron-front buildings house a great variety of coastal-inspired art galleries, shops, restaurants, and The Grand 1894 Opera. While strolling the district, you can visit the new Hendley Green Park, for a picnic surrounded by beautiful Oak trees.

While there's plenty new to see on the island, there is nothing wrong with enjoying classic Galveston experiences, like sunbathing on the beach or enjoying a poolside drink. And, it's easy to lounge all day with Galveston's numerous lodging options, from beachside homes and condos to award-winning resorts and quaint bed and breakfasts.

For more information on Galveston, call 888-425-4753 or visit www.galveston.com



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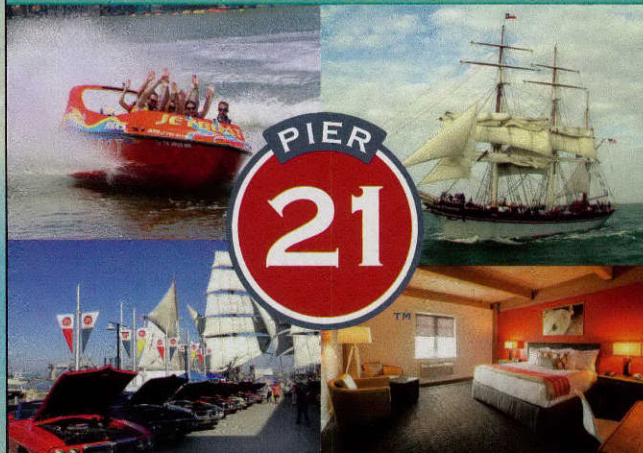


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➤ DESTINATION: VEGA TO TASCOSA ◀

Panhandle Passage

High Plains history on US 385 from Vega to Boys Ranch

story by **Shelley Armitage**

THIS TRAIL IS AS OLD AS THE BISON ROUTES. I'm told, from back when the shaggy beasts once blackened the plains along the northern Llano Estacado. Over centuries of migrations in search of grass and water, massive bison herds carved nomadic highways in the Panhandle sandstone.

I'm taking the descendent of one of those migratory trails today—US 385—from the grasslands hamlet of Vega to Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, which occupies the ghost town site of Old Tascosa on the Canadian River. Growing up in Vega, I made this journey countless times in the backseat of my dad's Plymouth. Though I moved away years ago, I return to tend to the family farm in the summer,



- **Amarillo**
35 minutes
- **Odessa**
4 hours
- **Fort Worth**
5.5 hours
- **San Antonio**
8 hours

and this drive always reminds me of the road trips of my childhood.

The route through the northwest corner of the Panhandle is full of stories as old as the bison's. A country of mesas and canyons, magenta vistas, and big horizons, this part of the Panhandle is also home to one of the largest wind farms in Texas. The 20-mile drive between Vega and Boys Ranch passes the routes of Spanish *entradas*, Comanche camps, the ancient hunting grounds of the Clovis and Folsom cultures, and ranches dating to the late 1800s.

A good place to start the journey is Vega (population 884), which was founded in the early 1900s. Locals like to remind visitors that Texas sold these

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
The Canadian River near Boys Ranch;
Old Route 66 in Vega; the Milburn-Price
Culture Museum in Vega

lands in 1882 to finance the construction of the Texas Capitol in Austin. The Chicago investors who bought the land developed the XIT Ranch, the world's largest fenced cattle ranch of its time.

Vega sits at the crossroads of US 385 and Interstate 40; the interstate's predecessor—Old Route 66—runs through the middle of town. Vega's courthouse square and vintage storefronts preserve the town's early 20th-century frontier heritage. The 1915 Oldham County Courthouse, a Classical Revival building, is a worthy destination with its inviting lawn and mahogany-lined interior. I like to feel the courtroom's gleaming wood banisters upstairs, linger downstairs among the historic photographs of ranch life, and glimpse the turn-of-the-century offices.

Across the street from the courthouse is the Magnolia Service Station, originally built in 1924. Now a museum, the building has been restored to its Route 66 heyday with a display of oil cans, tools, tires, an antique cash register, and some of Magnolia's non-gasoline petroleum products, such as hand lotion. Behind the filling station, a 23-foot metal arrow plunges into the ground beside a historical marker honoring Comanche Chief Quanah Parker. The arrow is one of dozens across the Panhandle that make up the Quanah



VEGA TO TASCOSA

For Oldham County tourism info, call the Oldham County Chamber of Commerce at **806/267-2828**; www.oldhamcofc.org.

Parker Trail, a road-trip guide and tribute to the Comanche people, who dominated these grasslands when European explorers first arrived.

From here, I'm drawn to a large mural covering the east side of the building across the street, the Milburn-Price Culture Museum. The colorful mural—one of five around town—depicts the meeting of a Comanche and a Comanchero. The latter were 19th-century New Mexican traders



who exchanged goods like guns and whiskey with the plains tribes for horses, bison skins, and slaves.

Museum Director Greg Conn describes the Milburn-Price, housed in a restored lumberyard building, as a “touch museum,” because you can pick up many of the objects. His wife,





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Karen Conn, meets us at the door for a tour, including the 1923 Model T outside and the printing press inside where you can print your own personal Route 66 postcard. There are artifacts dating to the Triassic period (Oldham County is noted for its fossil fields), giant wooden windmill blades, a horse sleigh, and vintage household items that convey a sense of what life was like in Vega's earliest days. Particularly striking is the late cowboy Jack Cauble's arrowhead collection, numbering about 1,000 pieces, including 9,000-year-old Clovis spear points and delicate Antelope Creek points. Linger long and you'll end up in the back swapping stories with the locals at the two 1930s Formica tables near the vintage popcorn machine. Greg's always got the coffee on.

If you're hungry while in town, try the Hickory Inn Cafe just west of the light on Route 66. For breakfast, my favorite is the Spanish Omelet with sausage and salsa. Lunch specials range from the pecan-grilled chicken salad

Stops in Vega include the Milburn-Price Culture Museum and the Hickory Inn Cafe, home of a tasty Spanish Omelet.

to the green chile cheeseburger and chicken-fried steak.

Driving north from Vega, the landscape changes from farm country into the Canadian River Breaks. The river's name is thought to be a corruption of the Spanish *cañon* (canyon), describing the rugged country of canyons and mesas. US 385 offers views of rolling ranch land and jagged arroyos cloaked in mesquite, cholla cactus, and junipers.

When I was a child, crossing the Canadian River was an adventure. There was no bridge. As my family neared the river with its pockets of quicksand, my dad dramatized the approach with tales of lost cowboys and horses, victims of the tricky sands. Our car would slide and spin as he gunned it across the shallow river, we kids burying our heads in our hands. Years ago, two cowboys recovered a Spanish breastplate from the Canadian's muddy red waters—remnants of the days when Oñate and Coronado navigated the region in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Today a two-lane bridge carries us across the river. Immediately across the river on the east side of the road, a shady picnic area offers a spot to relax beneath cottonwoods. The



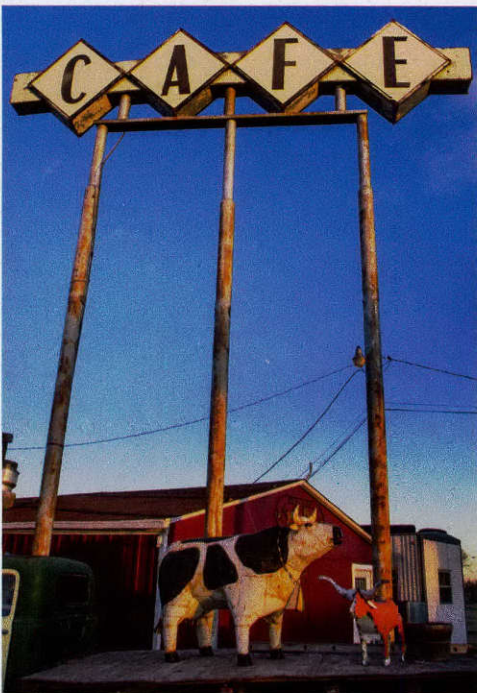


BOYS RANCH

For information on tours of Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, call **806/534-2211**; www.calfarley.org. The Boys Ranch Rodeo takes place annually on the Saturday of Labor Day Weekend.

cottonwoods' presence dates back to the early Hispanic sheepherders, known as *pastores*, who planted the trees to protect the settlements they built along the Canadian River banks.

About a mile north of the river, approaching the turnoff to Boys Ranch, the verdant valley to the east helps explain what drew the first settlers here. Among them was Casimero Romero, a New Mexico shepherd who came in 1876 trailing some 2,000 sheep, along with horses and cows, to the rich grasslands along the Canadian. Romero and his family settled on Atascosa Creek and founded the settlement of Atascosa near a spring that still runs today on the Boys Ranch grounds. In the 1880s, Tascosa—the "A" was dropped from the name—grew into a freight distribution hub for surrounding ranches and a rowdy cowboy town



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with the likes of Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett passing through.

To the left of the Boys Ranch gate, a twisted cottonwood marks the site of the now-gone adobe home of Frenchy McCormick, Tascosa's last resident. A dance hall girl, Frenchy moved to Tascosa in 1880 and married Mickey McCormick, a saloon operator. I once knew a man, Roy Turner, who said

Frenchy had babysat him when he was a boy. Turner told me that when Frenchy was an old woman and deaf, living alone in what had become a ghost town, tourists would stop by, often frightening her. They usually wanted directions to Boot Hill Cemetery, where the four men killed in Tascosa's biggest gunfight—an 1886 dispute stemming from tension over

a cowboys' strike—are buried and which visitors can still visit today.

Today, Tascosa is the site of Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, a 12,000-acre residential ranch and school for at-risk children. The ranch has hosted more than 10,000 young men and women since Farley, a former professional wrestler and Amarillo businessman, founded it in 1939. Visitors to the ranch can check out the Julian Bivins Museum, set in an 1884 building that housed Oldham County's first courthouse. The museum features period photographs and ranching and Native American artifacts. Boys Ranch also offers tours of its historic sites, with stops including the Boot Hill Cemetery and the 1885 Oldham County Schoolhouse, thought to be the oldest adobe schoolhouse still standing in Texas.

Boys Ranch also offers tours of its historic sites, with stops including the Boot Hill Cemetery and the 1885 Oldham County Schoolhouse, thought to be the oldest adobe schoolhouse still standing in Texas.

Back out on US 385, I drive south back to Vega. Just past the Canadian River, afternoon light catches Saddleback Mountain to the west. Anthropologists believe the Antelope Creek people lived here among the Canadian River tributaries about 800 years ago. In excavation sites on private land, archeologists have discovered farming terraces and points made from stone mined at Alibates, an ancient quarry that's now preserved as the Alibates Flint Quarry National Monument, 50 miles east near Fritch.

But that's another trail for another day. **L**



Shelley Armitage is the author of *Walking the Llano, a Texas Memoir of Place* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2016).

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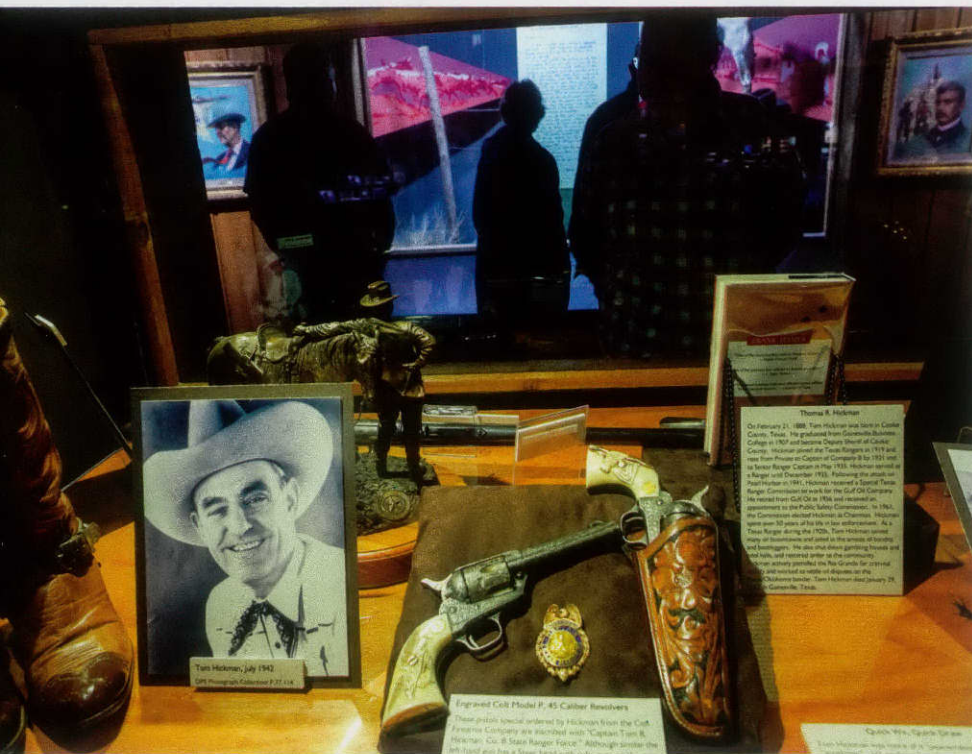
REAL TEXAS STORIES BORN AND BRED



Silver Stars and Six Shooters

Waco's Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Story by **Dave Montgomery**



THE TEXAS RANGER HALL OF FAME AND Museum in Waco has just opened for the day, and already nearly 100 fourth-graders pore over exhibits and artifacts chronicling one of the world's most storied law enforcement organizations.

As the students from Garland's Couch Elementary pass a display of Rangers' firepower from the mid-1840s, several try their hand at hoisting a replica of a four-pound, nine-ounce Colt Walker Repeating Pistol. Some accept the challenge to break apart and reassemble a replica of another early Colt pistol.

Located on Interstate 35, just across the Brazos River from Baylor University's landmark McLane Stadium, the stone complex holds thousands of relics, memorabilia, documents, and artworks that, in many ways, depict the eternal struggle between good guys and bad guys. Here you can see Clyde Barrow's pocket watch, the fictional Lone Ranger's mask, and enough firearms, saddles, and badges to outfit a large posse.

A typical tour lasts about two hours, but visitors often spend all day, captivated by the exploits of tough-as-iron enforcers whose deeds inspired countless novels, movies, and TV episodes. "Gus and Woodrow would have really liked this place," Oscar-winning actor Robert Duvall said in a 30-second public service clip on behalf of the museum in 2010. Duvall played sage Ranger Captain Augustus "Gus" McCrae in the *Lonesome Dove* television series, which also featured actor Tommy Lee Jones as fellow Ranger Captain Woodrow Call.

ONE-RIOT, ONE-RANGER

Waco and state officials initially planned the Ranger museum in the 1960s to lure motorists from I-35, which was still under construction through the center of town. The facility is

Here you can see Clyde Barrow's pocket watch, the fictional Lone Ranger's mask, and enough firearms, saddles, and badges to outfit a large posse.

now one of a number of Waco attractions tapping into the huge traveling market, including the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, the Waco Mammoth National Monument, the Dr Pepper Museum & Free Enterprise Institute, and the famous silos of Magnolia Market, owned by HGTV *Fixer Upper* stars Chip and Joanna Gaines.

The museum gallery opened as the first phase of the complex in 1968. The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, which honors 31 Rangers who gave their lives in the line of duty or performed exemplary service, debuted in 1976.

Executive Director Byron Johnson, whose 21 years of experience at the museum are evident in his easy recall of all things Ranger, recounts the "one-riot, one-Ranger" axiom that has come to exemplify the division's bravado.

As Johnson tells it, the phrase is often credited to Ranger Captain Bill McDonald in the late 1800s, after he was sent to prevent an illegal prize fight. "You've only got one prize fight," McDonald told an astonished official. "You only need one Ranger." But Johnson says there have been variations on the origins of the famous saying, acknowledging the line between truth and legend is hard to distinguish. "The two things you can say are that it's a legendary saying, and it's applied to the Rangers."

Johnson's team—as well as the entire community of Rangers and ex-Rangers—are preparing for a major milestone early in the next decade when the state observes the Rangers Bicentennial in 2023. "It sounds like a long way off, but it isn't," says Johnson, outlining preliminary plans that include community celebrations, a website, educational programs, TV documentaries, and other activities and productions.

PRESERVING RANGER HISTORY

The Rangers trace their origin to 1823, when "father of Texas" Stephen F. Austin commissioned 10 men to act "as rangers for the common defense" to

Exhibits at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum chronicle the evolution of the agency from the 1820s through present day.



THE TEXAS RANGER HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM,

at 100 Texas Ranger Trail, Waco, opens daily 9-5. Admission: \$7 (adults), \$3 (children 6-12) and free (children under 6). Call 254/750-8631; www.texasranger.org.

protect his young frontier colony.

Over the ensuing decades, the Rangers underwent varying incarnations, from fighting Native Americans and chasing desperadoes to emerging into a 21st century force whose crime-fighting duties have expanded to include border enforcement and public corruption investigations. They have been part of the Texas Department of Public Safety since 1935 and remain an elite force that now numbers over 160 and includes women as well as men. Rangers still wear white hats and circle-star badges fashioned from five-peso Mexican coins, a tradition rooted in the late 1870s and made official in 1963.

“Like every other organization, they’ve had to change with the times,” says Johnson, who sports a gold tiepin shaped like a Ranger badge. “And as the times have changed, they’ve adapted to it.”

The museum chronicles every step in the Rangers’ evolution. An eye-catching exhibit greets visitors shortly after they enter with a life-size display of a faceless mounted Ranger from the 1840s. A single-shot plains rifle hangs over his Mexican *vaquero* saddle while a single-shot pistol tucks into his belt in lieu of a holster, and a large gourd serves as a canteen.

One of the most popular attractions tells of the exploits of Depression-era outlaws Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker and the man who tracked them down—legendary Ranger Frank Hamer. The display includes a menacing looking Colt Monitor machine gun used in the law enforcement ambush that felled the couple in 1934 as well as three long guns taken from their car. Visitors can examine an Elgin pocket watch—engraved “Clyde B”—that



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Barrow left behind after he escaped from the Waco jail.

The museum recently renovated a pop culture section devoted to fictional heroes who have perpetuated the Rangers' legend, including the Lone Ranger of radio, TV, and movie fame, and the more recent *Walker, Texas Ranger* TV series, which ran from 1993 to 2001.

Museum Marketing and Development Specialist Christine Rothenbush says the museum staff continuously looks ahead as it asks modern-day Rangers to contribute cellphones, date planners, records, discarded equipment, and other items that could ultimately become museum artifacts of the future.

"We once had somebody ask us, 'Why are you collecting cellphones?'" she says. "Think about it—in a hundred years from now, how hard is it going to be to get that. Wouldn't you love to have the date planner for Frank Hamer? Well, it's the same thing." L



FREDERICKSBURG'S TEXAS RANGERS HERITAGE CENTER

A double-dose immersion into the history of the Texas Rangers and frontier life in the mid-1800s greets visitors on the eastern outskirts of Fredericksburg, where the **Texas Rangers Heritage Center** sits adjacent to a reconstruction of a 169-year-old military fort.

The privately funded 12-acre heritage center includes a ring of honor centered by the star-shaped Rangers badge and a 50-foot stone bell tower that glows blue each night in honor of law enforcement.

Immediately adjacent to the Rangers site, the city of Fredericksburg continues renovation of **Fort Martin Scott**, which opened in 1848 as the first frontier fort in Texas. The only original facility is a stone guardhouse, but the city has erected four replica buildings as part of a long-term renovation of the outpost.

Together, they illustrate the historical overlap between the Rangers and early-day soldiers, who shared a collaborative goal of protecting settlers on the rugged frontier.

Both the center and the fort are works in progress. Former Ranger Joe Davis, president of the Former Texas Rangers Foundation, said Phase Two plans call for constructing a 26,000-square-foot main building that will feature galleries and interactive displays tracing the nearly two-century-long evolution of the Rangers from their founding in 1823. Planners hope to open the center by 2021, in time for the Rangers' Bicentennial in 2023.

Both the Rangers center and the fort host numerous activities at their sites. Re-enactments depicting typical life are held at the fort twice a year on April 28-29 and Oct. 20-21.

The Texas Rangers Heritage Center, at 1618 E Main St., Fredericksburg, is open Thu.-Mon. 9-5. **830/990-1192; www.trhc.org.**

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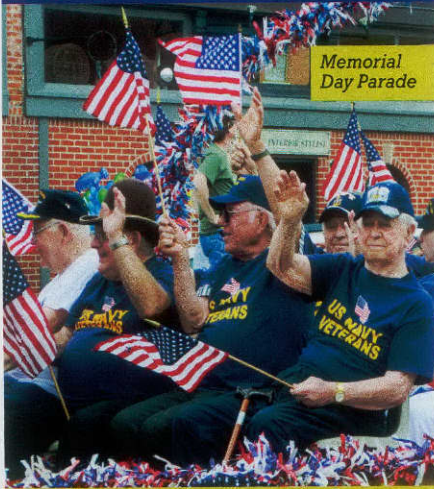
Galveston Island Beach Revue

DURING THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, GALVESTON ISLAND—still recovering after the devastating hurricane of 1900—launched an event to strengthen the city's tourism economy and offer an official kick-off to summer. The highlight of the day was the Bathing Girl Revue, which by 1926 had evolved into the International Pageant of Pulchritude—the precursor to Miss Universe—and had become such a success that on the weekend these events were held, the island's population

grew to three times its size. (We'd bet the daring new fashions of the flapper era had something to do with its popularity.) The pageant fizzled during the Great Depression, but after Hurricane Ike in 2008, the city resurrected the fun with a considerably less bawdy event, inviting travelers to watch as 40 competitors line up along the Seawall and don their best 1920s beach fashion. The fun returns May 19-21 with vintage bands, classic cars, baseball, and plenty of family-friendly fun. www.galvestonbeachrevue.com

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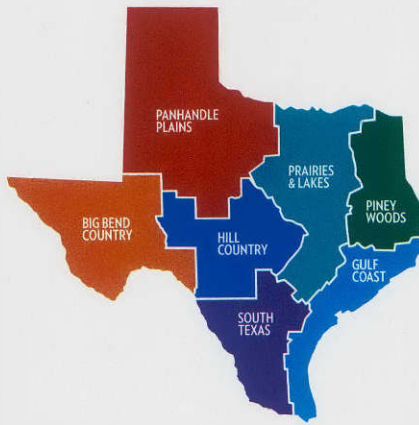
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BIG BEND COUNTRY

FORT DAVIS: Big Bend Brawl May 6. Kelly Outdoor Theater. fortdavis.com 432/426-3015

FORT STOCKTON: Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 6. James Rooney Memorial Park. 432/336-2264

LANGTRY: West of the Pecos Historical/Travel Fair May 6. Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center. texaspecostrail.com 432/291-3340

MIDLAND: Nana's Naughty Knickers May 5-27. Midland Community Theatre. mctmidland.org 432/570-4111

MIDLAND: A Day at the Races May 6. Museum of the Southwest. museumsww.org 432/683-2882

MONAHANS: Monahans Chamber Golf Tournament May 20-21. Ward County Golf Course. monahans.org 432/943-2187

ODESSA: Fiesta West Texas May 4-7. Ector County Coliseum. myfiestawesttexas.com 432/366-3541

SHEFFIELD: Fort Lancaster Western Frontier Days May 19-20. visitfortlancaster.com 432/836-4391

VAN HORN: Cinco de Mayo May 6. Van Horn City Park. vanhorn-texas.us 432/283-2682

GULF COAST

ALVIN: Las Vegas Casino Night May 12. Knights of Columbus Hall. alvinlions.org 281/585-3359

BEAUMONT: St. Michael Mediterranean Festival May 6. stmichaelmedfest.com 409/767-2685

BEAUMONT: *Spamalot* May 12-13, 19-20, 25-27. Betty Greenberg Center for Performing Arts. beaumontcommunityplayers.com 409/833-4664

BEAUMONT: Maypole Festival May 13. Beaumont Botanical Gardens. beaumontbotanicalgardens.org 409/842-3135

CLUTE: Planetarium Show May 2, 9, 16, 23. Center for the Arts and Sciences. bcfas.org 979/265-3376

CLUTE: CenterFest May 6-7. Center for the Arts and Sciences. bcfas.org 979/265-7661

CORPUS CHRISTI: *Wildlife in Focus* photography exhibition. Through Sep. 30. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Buc Days Apr. 20-May 6. Corpus Christi Bayfront and other locations. bucdays.com

CRYSTAL BEACH: Texas Crab Festival May 12-14. Gregory Park. texascrabfestival.org 281/773-3044

FREEPORT: Schuster Home Open House May 27. Schuster Home. 979/297-0868

GALVESTON: Artrageous May 6. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: Historic Homes Tour May 6-7, 13-14. Galveston Historical Foundation. galvestonhistory.org 409/765-7834

GALVESTON: Yaga's Wild Game and Barbecue Cook-off May 12-13. Pier 21. ycfund.org

GALVESTON: Arlo Guthrie May 13. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

HOUSTON: Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique* May 11, 13-14. houston-symphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: *Fun Home* May 16-28. Sarofim Hall, Hobby Center. tuts.com 713/558-8887

HOUSTON: Andres Conducts Brahms May 19-21. houston-symphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: Climbing Dreams May 23. houston-symphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: Classic Broadway May 26-28. houston-symphony.org 713/224-7575

KATY: Wild West Brewfest May 5-6. Katy Mills Mall. katybrewfest.com 713/502-0328

LAKE JACKSON: Concert Series: Checkered Past May 5. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejacksontx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tour May 6. lakejacksonmuseum.org 979/297-1570

LAKE JACKSON: Concert Series: Intracoastal Pirates May 10. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejacksontx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Concert Series: Fab Five May 12. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejacksontx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Bird Banding May 20. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. gcbo.org 979/480-0999

ORANGE: *The World War I Homefront: Orange Goes Over the Top* Through Jul. 14, 2018. The W.H. Stark House. [starkculturalvenues.org/whstarkhouse](http://starkculturalvenues.org/) 409/883-0871

ORANGE: *Branding the American West: Paintings and Films, 1900-1950*. Through Sep. 9. Stark Museum of Art. starkculturalvenues.org/ starkmuseum.org 409/886-2787

ORANGE: Shootout on the Sabine May 20-21. Orange Boat Ramp. orangetexas.org 409/883-1011

PASADENA: Strawberry Festival May 19-21. Pasadena Fairgrounds. strawberryfest.org 281/991-9500

PORT ARTHUR: S.A.L.T. Water Anglers' League Fishing Rodeo May 27-28. saltclub.net 409/963-0433

PORT NECHES: RiverFest May 3-7. RiverFront Park. pnriverfest.com 409/722-9154

RICHMOND: A Southern Garden Party May 13. Fort Bend Museum. fortbendmuseum.org 281/342-6478

RICHMOND: Mother's Day at the Park May 13. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

RICHMOND: Memorial Day Remembrance May 27, 29. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

ROCKPORT: Nautical Flea Market May 6-7. Rockport Harbor. rockportyachtclub.org 361/729-3115

ROCKPORT: Babes on the Bay Fishing Tournament May 19-20. Rockport Festival Grounds. babesonthebay.com

ROCKPORT: Festival of Wine and Food May 27-28. Texas Maritime Museum. texasmaritimemuseum.org 361/729-1271

SEABROOK: Keels and Wheels Concours d'Elegance May 6-7. Lakewood Yacht Club. keels-wheels.com 713/588-04130

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Run the Jailbreak May 6. Clayton's Beach Bar. runthejailbreak.com 800/767-2373

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: *Julie Madly Deeply* May 23-24. South Padre Island Convention Centre. elpaseoarts.wordpress.com 956/943-4700

STAFFORD: *Carmina Burana* May 21. Stafford Centre for the Performing Arts. fbso.org

SUGAR LAND: *Block Party, Too*. Through May 8. Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. hmns.org/ hmns-at-sugar-land 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: *Sweet: A Tasty Journey* May 12-Aug. 6. Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. hmns.org/ hmns-at-sugar-land 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* May 12-14. Sugar Land Auditorium. inspirationstage.com

SUGAR LAND: Celtic Woman in Concert May 20. Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land. smartfinancialcentre.net

SUGARLAND: Memorial Day Ceremony May 29. Sugar Land Memorial Park. sugarlandtx.gov/memorialday 281/275-2885

TEXAS CITY: Cinco de Mayo Parade and Festivities May 6. Nessler Park. texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5990

TOMBALL: Rails and Tails Mudbug Festival May 6-7. Historic Downtown Depot. tomballtx.gov 281/351-5484

TOMBALL: Vintage Car Festival May 13. First Presbyterian Church. fpctomball.org 281/351-2199

TOMBALL: The Honky Tonk Chili Challenge May 27. Historic Downtown Depot. tomballtx.gov 281/351-5484

VICTORIA: Cinco de Mayo May 6. Downtown. victoriachamber.org 361/573-5227

VICTORIA: Memorial Weekend Bash May 26-28. Victoria Community Center. salazarpromotions.com 361/237-0351

WHARTON: Wharton County Freedom Fest May 20. Historic Downtown. whartonfreedomfest.org 979/532-1862

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: *Stories to Tell: Selections from the Harry Ransom Center.* Through Jul. 16. hrc.utexas.edu 512/471-8944

AUSTIN: *Deep in the Vaults of Texas: A Campus Collaboration.* Through Sep. 6. LBJ Library. ljblibrary.org 512/721-0200

AUSTIN: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers in Concert May 2. Frank Erwin Center. uterwincenter.com 512/477-6060

AUSTIN: Cine Las Americas International Film Festival May 3-7. Various locations. cinelasamericas.org 512/535-0765

AUSTIN: *Six Guitars* May 4-7. The Long Center. thelongcenter.org 512/474-5664

AUSTIN: Jmbly May 6. Circuit of the Americas. jmbly.com

AUSTIN: Pecan Street Festival May 6-7. Sixth Street Historic District. pecanstreetfestival.org

AUSTIN: iHeart Country Festival May 6. Frank Erwin Center. uterwincenter.com 512/477-6060

AUSTIN: *Alice in Wonderland* May 12-14. The Long Center. balletaustin.org 512/476-2163

AUSTIN: *Momma's Boy* May 12. Frank Erwin Center. uterwincenter.com 512/471-7744

AUSTIN: Mother's Day at the Capitol May 14. AISD Performing Arts Center. 512/956-7420

AUSTIN: Hot Luck Festival May 18-21. hotluckfest.com

AUSTIN: New Kids On The Block in Concert May 21. Frank Erwin Center. uterwincenter.com 512/477-6060

AUSTIN: Citywide Garage Sale May 27-28. Palmer Events Center. cwgs.com 512/441-2828

AUSTIN: Life Time Tri CapTex May 29. Downtown. captextri.com

BANDERA: ProRodeo May 26-28. Mansfield Park Rodeo Arena. banderaprorodeo.org 830/522-0054

BANDERA: Funtier Days Parade May 27. banderatex.com 830/796-3280

BLANCO: Twin Sisters Dance May 6. twinsistersdancehall.com 830/868-7684

BOERNE: *Black Swan* May 5. Patrick Heath Public Library. visitboerne.org 210/421-6132

BOERNE: *Panache* May 5. Boerne Community Theatre. visitboerne.org 830/249-9166

BOERNE: Art in the Park May 6. Cibolo Nature Center. visitboerne.org 830/249-4616

BOERNE: Handmade Market May 6. Kendall County Fairgrounds. visitboerne.org 210/663-9046

BOERNE: Hauptstrasse Quiltfest May 6. Main Plaza. visitboerne.org 830/249-9511

BOERNE: Hot Rod Night May 6. Soda Pops. sodapopsboerne.com 830/331-8799

BOERNE: Art Waddle May 13. The Flats. artwaddleboerne.com 210/325-6390

BOERNE: Market Days May 13-14. Main Plaza. visitboerne.org 210/844-8193

BOERNE: Second Saturday Art and Wine May 13. Various locations. visitboerne.org

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BOERNE: A Thirst for Nature May 25. Cibolo Nature Center. visitboerne.org 830/249-4616

BOERNE: Moipei Triplets in Concert May 27. Cave Without a Name. cavewithoutaname.com 830/537-4212

BULVERDE: *The 1940s Radio Hour* Apr. 27-May 13. S.T.A.G.E. stagebulverde.org 830/438-2339

COMFORT: Spring Antique Show May 6-7. Comfort Park. comfort-texas.com 830/995-3131

COMFORT: Music in the Park May 9. Comfort Park. comfort-texas.com 830/995-3131

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Tour the Talent Studio Tour May 14-15. Various locations. artistsalliancehc.com 512/296-7751

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Redbud Artisan Market May 20-21. Dripping Springs Ranch Park. 512/858-7892

FREDERICKSBURG: First Friday Art Walk May 5. Various locations. ffawf.com 830/997-6523

FREDERICKSBURG: Maifest German Chorale Concert May 7. St. Joseph's Halle.

FREDERICKSBURG: Texas Flower Country Women's 5K and 10K Run May 13. Wildseed Farms. runintexas.com/flower

FREDERICKSBURG: Trade Days May 19-21. Sunday Farms. fbgradedays.com 210/846-4094

FREDERICKSBURG: San Antonio Brass in Concert May 21. Fredericksburg United Methodist Church. fredericksburgmusicclub.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Crawfish Festival May 26-28. Marktplatz. fbgrawfish.com 830/433-5225

FREDERICKSBURG: USO-Style Memorial Day Hangar Dance May 27. hangarhotel.com 830/997-9990

FREDERICKSBURG: WWII Pacific Combat Program May 27-28. National Museum of the Pacific War. pacificwarmuseum.org 830/997-8600

FREDERICKSBURG: Memorial Day Observance May 29. National Museum of the Pacific War.

pacificwarmuseum.org 830/997-8600

GRUENE: Mother's Day Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist May 14. Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com 830/606-1601

GRUENE: Come and Taste It! May 18. The Grapevine. grapevineingruene.com 830/606-0093

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days May 20-21. gruenemarketdays.com 830/832-1721

GRUENE: KNBT Americana Music Jam May 21. Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com 830/629-5077 or 830/606-1601

INGRAM: *Life in the Hill Country.* Through May 12. Hill Country Arts Foundation. hcac.com 830/367-5121

JOHNSON CITY: Art Walk May 27. lbjcountry.com 830/868-7684

JOHNSON CITY: Market Days May 27-28. City Park. lbjcountry.com 830/868-7684

JUNCTION: Crawfish Boil May 6. Granite Ranch. junctiontexas.com 325/446-3154

KERRVILLE: *The Matchmaker* Apr. 1-May 7. Playhouse 2000 VK Garage Theater. playhouse2000.com 830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: Hill Country Swap Meet May 6. Kerr County Hill Country Youth Event Center. kermarkdays.org 830/459-6198

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days May 6. Kerr County Hill Country Youth Event Center. kermarkdays.org 830/895-7524

KERRVILLE: *Peter Pan* May 19-21. Playhouse 2000 VK Garage Theater. playhouse2000.com 830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: Inaugural Kerrville Area Chamber of Commerce Big Shoot May 19-20. Hill Country Shooting Sports Center. kerrvillex.com 803/896-1155

KERRVILLE: Folk Festival May 25-Jun. 11. Quiet Valley Ranch. kerrvillefolkfestival.org 830/257-3600

KERRVILLE: Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show May 25-Jun. 25. Kerr Arts and Cultural Center. kackerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: *Dimensions in Quilting* Quilt Show May 26-28. Schreiner

University. hillcountryquiltguild.com 830/928-9407

KERRVILLE: Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft May 26-28. Y.O. Ranch Hotel and Conference Center. texasmasters.com 214/497-7179

KERRVILLE: Festival of the Arts May 27-28. Downtown. kvartfest.com 830/895-7962

KYLE: Market Days May 13. City Square Park. cityofkyle.com/recreation 512/262-3939

KYLE: Starlight Symphony Orchestra Concert May 20. Hays Performing Arts Center. starlightsymphony.org 512/703-7029

LAMPASAS: Trade Days May 27. Marigold's Antiques & More. lampasastradedays.com 512/734-1294

LEANDER: Old Town Street Festival May 19-20. oldtownstreetfestival.com 512/259-1907

LUCKENBACH: Hill Country Run Motorcycle Rally May 5-7. Luckenbach Texas. hillcountryrun.com 830/997-8515

MARBLE FALLS: Howdy-Roo CASI Regional Chili Cook-Off May 5-7. Johnson Park. howdyroo.com

MARBLE FALLS: MayFest May 10-13. Johnson Park. marblefalls.org

NEW BRAUNFELS: The Bellamy Brothers in Concert May 4. Brauntex Performing Arts Theatre. brauntex.org 830/627-0808

NEW BRAUNFELS: Kindermasken Parade May 6. Main Plaza. nbheritagevillage.com 830/629-6504

NEW BRAUNFELS: Wein and Saengerfest May 6. Main Plaza. weinandsaengerfest.com

NEW BRAUNFELS: Schlitterton XIV May 27-28. schlitterbahn.com 830/625-2351

OZONA: Memorial Day Ceremony May 29. Cedar Hill Cemetery. ozona.com/eventscalendar 325/392-2827

ROUND ROCK: Fit Foodie Festival and 5K May 20. Old Settler's Park. fitfoodierun.com 619/312-1212

SAN MARCOS: Classic Chevy Convention May 19-21. Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center.

centraltexasclassicchevy club.org 512/441-3439

SPICEWOOD: *A Toast to Tony* May 5. Spicewood Vineyards Event Center. spicewoodarts.org 512/264-2820

STONEWALL: Lavender Festival May 6-7. Becker Vineyards. beckervineyards.com 830/644-2681

UVALDE: Four Square Friday May 12. visituvalde.com 830/278-4115

WIMBERLEY: *By the Water.* Through May 7. The Wimberley Playhouse. wimberleyplayers.org 512/847-0575

WIMBERLEY: Market Days May 6. Lions Field. shopmarketdays.com 512/847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Starlight Symphony Orchestra Performance May 21. First Baptist Church. starlightsymphony.org 512/703-7029

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Western Heritage Classic May 11-14. Taylor County Expo Center. westernheritageclassic.com 325/677-4376

ALBANY: *Cell Series: Ted Larsen.* Through May 13. The Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: *Intimate View: The Ramsey Collection.* Through May 13. The Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: *What Lies Beneath: Collage, Montage, Assemblage.* Through May 13. The Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

AMARILLO: *Nacidos Charros: Born Charro.* Through Jul. 29. American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and Museum. aqha.com/museum 806/376-5181

AMARILLO: Mutfest May 7. Memorial Park. amarillospcanet 806/290-2883

BAIRD: Baird Railhead Festival May 20. Downtown. bairdchamber.com 325/854-1212 ext. 4

CANYON: *You are Here: Maps from the PPHM Collection.* Through Aug. 26. Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. panhandleplains.org 806/651-2244

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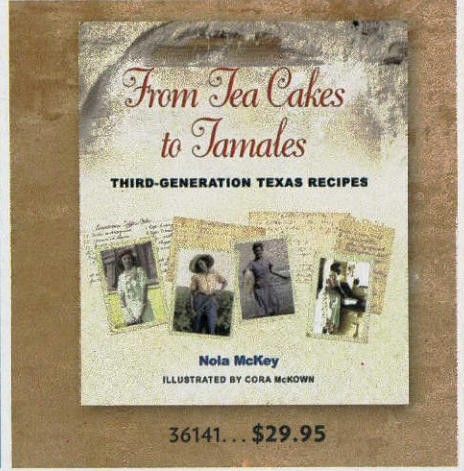
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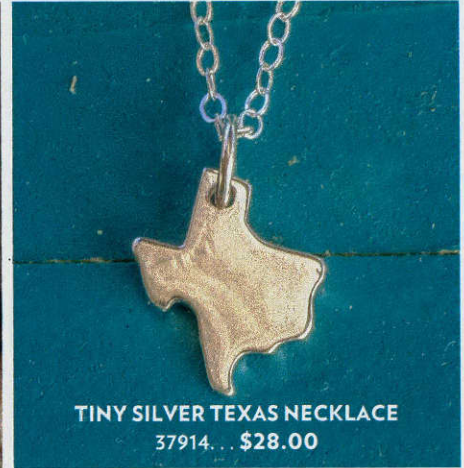
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COLEMAN: Walk for a Cure May 13. Downtown on Commercial Avenue. colemantexas.org 325/625-2163

COLORADO CITY: Run for the Wall May 21. Railroad Building. coloradocitychamberofcommerce.com 325/728-3403

GRAHAM: Lion's Club Carnival May 10-13. Downtown Square. 940/282-9910

GRAHAM: Run for the Children May 20. Downtown Square. runforthechildrentx.org 940/550-8963

LUBBOCK: First Friday Art Trail May 5. Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts. ffat.org

LUBBOCK: Cinco de Mayo Parade May 6. Historical Broadway. visitlubbock.org 806/792-1212

LUBBOCK: Lubbock Gem and Mineral Show May 6-7. Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. lubbockgemandmineral.org 806/797-5832

LUBBOCK: Wines and Vines Festival May 12-13. McPherson Cellars. mcphersoncellars.com 806/687-9463

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo Ceramic Invitational Exhibit Apr. 21-Jul. 2. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Gypsy* Apr. 28-May 7. San Angelo Performing Arts Center. sanangelopac.org 325/655-4136

SAN ANGELO: Art Thursday May 4, 11, 18, 25. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Family Day: Summer! May 13. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Downtown Stroll May 18. San Angelo

Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Armed Forces Day May 20. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. 325/234-0316

SAN ANGELO: Cactus Market Day May 20. Between Tarpley Music and Fischer Federal Building. 325/949-6200

SAN ANGELO: Memorial Day Exercises May 29. Fort Concho National Historic landmark. 325/234-0316

SAN ANGELO: Salmon Sculpture Competition. Through Aug. 7. Sunken Garden Park. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SNYDER: Snyder Wheels Car Show May 5-6. Towle Park. snyderwheelsclub.com 325/573-8961

WICHITA FALLS: Cajun Fest May 13. J.S. Bridwell Ag Center. downtownproud.com 940/322-4525

WYLIE: Wylie 500 Pedal Car Races May 7. Ballard Avenue. wylietexas.gov 972/516-6016

JEFFERSON: Battle for Jefferson Civil War Re-Enactment May 5-7. Cypress River Ranch. battleforjefferson.com 903/240-1599

JEFFERSON: Flea Market May 5-6, 19-20. jeffersonfleamarket.net 903/431-0043

JEFFERSON: Great Locomotive Chase and Naval Battle of Port Jefferson May 5-7. Historic Jefferson Railway. jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

JEFFERSON: Historical Pilgrimage May 6-7. Downtown. jeffersonpilgrimage.com 903/665-2315

JEFFERSON: Train Days May 20-21. Jefferson Transportation and Visitor Center. jeffersontraindays.com 903/665-2775

JEFFERSON: Sunday Social and Shoot-Out May 21. General Store. jeffersongeneralstore.com

LUFKIN: Ernie Haase and Signature Sound in Concert May 20. Temple Theater at Angelina College. angelinaarts.org 936/633-5454

MAGNOLIA: Corks and Canvas on The Stroll May 13. cityofmagnolia.com 713/542-4358

NACOGDOCHES: Multicultural Festival May 6-7. Sacred Heart Catholic Church. sacredheartnac.com 936/564-7807

PALESTINE: Art Tracks. Through Oct. 31. The Redlands Historic Inn. visitpalestine.com 903/729-6066

PALESTINE: Mother's Day Brunch Train May 14. Texas State Railroad. texasstaterr.com 903/683-3093

TEXARKANA: Twice as Fine Texarkana Wine Festival May 6. Spring Lake Park. texarkanawinefestival.com 903/223-8021

TYLER: Red Dirt Barbecue and Music Festival May 6. Downtown. reddirtbbqfest.com 903/581-0606

TYLER: East Texas Youth Orchestra Final Season Concert May 7. Caldwell Auditorium. etyo.org 903/952-3896

TYLER: Take 2 and the East Texas Youth Orchestra May 20. Tyler Junior College Campus. etyo.org 903/952-3896



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ADDISON: National Kidney Walk May 6. Vitruvian Park. kidneywalk.com 800/622-9010

ADDISON: Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides Walk May 13. Vitruvian Park. cff.org/great_strides 800/344-4823

ADDISON: Taste Addison May 19-21. Addison Circle Park. tasteaddison.com 972/450-2800

ARLINGTON: *Legally Blonde: The Musical* May 12-Jun. 4. Theatre Arlington. theatrearlington.org 817/275-7661

ARLINGTON: Dallas Wings Hope Opener May 20. College Park Center UTA. wings.wnba.com

ARLINGTON: Art on the Greene May 26-28. Richard Greene Linear Park. arthonthegreene.com

BONHAM: Bonham Heritage Day May 6. Historic Square. visitbonham.org 903/583-0302

BRENHAM: Maifest May 5-6. Firemen's Park. maifest.org 888/273-6426

BRYAN: XYZ Atlas May 5-Aug. 30. Downtown. xyzatlas.org

BURLESON: Memorial Day Car Show May 29. ddrockinrods.com 817/797-1197

CLEBURNE: *Time of Green Gables* May 4-20. Plaza Theatre. plaza-theatre.com 817/202-0600

CLEBURNE: Cinco de Mayo May 6. Hulén Park. visitcleburne.com 817/645-0949

CLEBURNE: Brett Butler in Concert May 5. Songbird Live. songbirdlive.com 817/489-4840

CLIFTON: Bosque Wildflower Art Show and Sale Apr. 25-May 31. Bosque Museum. bosquemuseum.org 254/675-3845

CLIFTON: *The Savannah Sipping Society* May 6, 13-14, 19-20. Bosque Arts Center. bosquestartscenter.org 254/675-2278

CLIFTON: Bosque Tour de Norway May 20. Clifton High School. tourdenorway.com 254/675-3720

COLLEGE STATION: *The Legacy of Ranching: Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future.* Through Jan. 8, 2018. George H. W. Bush

Presidential Library. bush41.org 979/691-4000

COLLEGE STATION: Starlight Music Series May 6, 13, 27. Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater. cctx.gov/starlight 979/764-3486

COLLEGE STATION: Kid Fish May 20. Stephen C. Beachy Central Park. cctx.gov/events 979/764-3486

CORSICANA: Airsho May 13. coyote:quadron.org 903/467-7170

DALLAS: *Shaken, Stirred, Styled: The Art of the Cocktail.* Through Nov. 12. Dallas Museum of Art. dma.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: *Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed.* Through Sep. 4. Perot Museum. perot-museum.org

DALLAS: *México 1900-1950: Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, José Clemente Orozco, and the Avant-Garde.* Through Jul. 16. Dallas Museum of Art. dma.org 214/922-1802

DALLAS: *ZimSculpt* Apr. 15-Jul. 31. Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden. dallasarboretum.org 214/515-6525

DALLAS: Jmb ya May 5. Fair Park. jmblya.com

DALLAS: *Roni Horn* May 20-Aug. 20. Nasher Sculpture Center. nashersculpturecenter.org

DENTON: *Materials Hard and Soft* Feb. 4-May 16. Patterson-Appleton Arts Center. dentonarts.com 940/382-2787

DENTON: *Cinco de Mayo* May 6. Civic Center and Quakertown Park. dentoncinco.org 940/349-7275


DENTON: North Texas Horse Country Tour May 6. horsecountrytours.com 940/382-7895

DESOTO: *Beneath the Stars: Poetry Series* May 26. DeSoto Civic Center Amphitheater. desotochamber.org 972/224-3565

ELGIN: Local Lore May 6. Historic Downtown. elgintx.com

ELGIN: Sip, Shop, and Stroll May 11. Historic Downtown. elgintx.com

ENNIS: *Snow White* Apr. 28-29, May 5-7, 12-13. Theatre Rocks! theaterocks.com 972/878-5126



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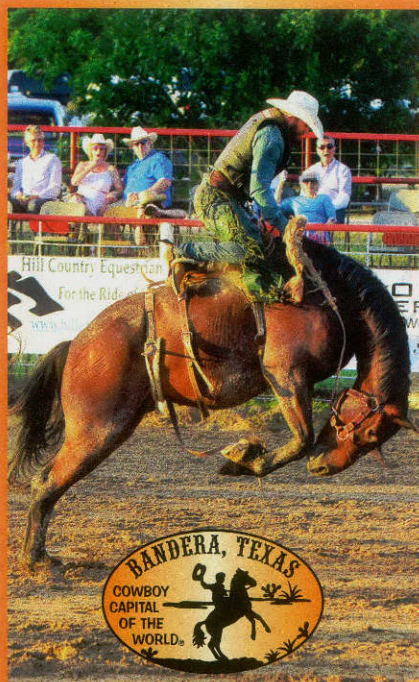
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972/784-6846

FAYETTEVILLE: ArtWalk
May 6-7. Historic Square.
artsformuraltexas.org/
artwalk.html 979/378-2113

FLATONIA: Cinco de Mayo
May 6. Downtown.
flatoniachamber.com
361/865-5920

FORT WORTH: *Focus:*
Katherine Bernhardt.
Through Jul. 9.
The Modern Art Museum
of Fort Worth.
themodern.org
817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Opera
Festival Apr. 15-May 7.
Bass Performance Hall.
fwopera.org
817/731-0726

FORT WORTH: Mayfest
May 4-7. Trinity Park.
mayfest.org 817/332-1055

FORT WORTH: Frontier
Forts Day May 12-13.
Stockyards Station.
stockyardsheritage.com
817/710-7357

FORT WORTH: Dean
& DeLuca Invitational
May 22-28. Colonial
Country Club.
colonialfw.com
817/927-4201

FORT WORTH: Van
Cliburn International Piano
Competition May 25-Jun. 10.
Kimbell Art Museum.
cliburn.org 817/332-8451

GAINESVILLE: Spring Fling
May 6. Leonard Park.
gainesvillecofc.com
940/665-2831

GARLAND: Urban Flea
May 13.
resurrecteddesigns.com

GLEN ROSE: B.R.A.T.
Attack May 5-7. Somervell
County Expo Center.
254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Photo Tour
May 6, 20. Fossil Rim
Wildlife Center. fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Discovery
After Dark May 12.
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center.
fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Dulcimer
Festival May 13-14.
Oakdale Park. lssds.com
254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: Mother's Day
Sunset Safari Dinner and

Tour May 13. Fossil Rim
Wildlife Center.
fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: AQHA
May 19-21. Somervell County
Expo Center. 254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Animal
Keeper Tour and Dinner
May 20. Fossil Rim Wildlife
Center. fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Third
Weekend Bluegrass
May 20. Oakdale Park.
254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: VIP Team
Roping May 26-28.
Somervell County Expo
Center. 254/897-4509

GRANBURY: First Saturday
Bird Walk May 6. Acton
Nature Center.
actonnaturecenter.org
817/326-6005

GRANBURY: *A Few
Good Men* May 12-28.
Granbury Opera House.
granburysquare.com
817/579-0952

GRANBURY: *The Sounds
of the '60s* May 13, 27.
Granbury Live.
bigcitymusicrevue.com
972/670-5053

GRANBURY: Ghosts and
Legends Tour May 19-20.
Historic Square.
granburytours.com
817/559-0849

GRANBURY: *Cruisin'*
Granbury Memorial
Weekend May 27-29.
Historic Square.
granburysquare.com
682/936-4550

GRANBURY: Last Saturday
Gallery Night on the Square
May 27. Historic Square.
lakegranburyart.blogspot.com
817/579-7656

GRAND PRAIRIE: Spring
Thoroughbred Season.
Through Jul. 30. Lone Star
Park. lonestarpark.com
972/263-7223

GRAND PRAIRIE: Cinco de
Mayo May 6. Traders Village.
tradersvillage.com
972/647-2331

GRAND PRAIRIE:
Chamber Golf Classic
May 12. Tangle Ridge
Golf Course.
grandprairiechamber.org
972/264-1558

GRAND PRAIRIE:
Celtic Woman in Concert
May 19. Verizon Theater.
verizontheatre.com
888/929-7849

GRAPEVINE:
ChocolateFest May 5-6.
Grapevine
Convention Center.
chocolatefestgrapevine.org
817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Main Street
Fest May 19-21.
Historic Downtown.
grapevintexasusa.com
817/410-3185

GREENVILLE: Audie
Murphy Day May 13. Audie
Murphy/American Cotton
Museum. amacmuseum.com
903/450-4502

HALLETTSVILLE:
Texas in World War I
Through Nov. 30, 2018.
Friench Simpson Memorial
Library. hallettsvillelibrary.org
361/798-3243 ext. 208

IRVING: AT&T Byron
Nelson May 15-21. Four
Seasons Resort and Club
Dallas at Las Colinas.
attbyronnelson.org
214/943-9700

IRVING: DFW Dragon Boat,
Kite, and Lantern Festival
May 21. Lake Carolyne,
Las Colinas Urban
Entertainment Center.
marcopoloworldfoundation.org
214/850-9986

KERENS: Barbecue and
Dancin' on the Bricks
May 20. cikerens.tx.us
903/396-2391

LA GRANGE: *The Cowboy
Ain't Dead Yet* May 20.
Historic Casino Hall.
visitlagrangetx.com
979/968-3017

LEXINGTON: Homecoming
May 5-6. Town Square.
lexingtontexas.com
979/773-4337

MADISONVILLE:
Madisonville Sidewalk
Cattlemen's Association
Steak Dinner and
Dance May 6.
sidewalkcattlemens.com

MADISONVILLE:
Barbecue Cook-Off
May 19-20. Madisonville
Sidewalk Cattlemen's
Association.
sidewalkcattlemens.com
936/349-0500

MCKINNEY: Third Monday
Trade Days May 12-14.
tmtd.com 972/562-5466

MCKINNEY: Memorial Day
Ceremony May 29.
Historic Pecan Cemetery.
pecangrovecemetery.com

MESQUITE: *I'm Not
Rappaport* Apr. 21-23, 28-30,
May 5-7. Mesquite Arts
Center Black Box Theatre.
mesquitecommunity
theatre.com 972/216-8126

MESQUITE: Melvin Brown
Exhibit May 1-31.
Mesquite Arts Center
Main Gallery.
mesquiteartscenter.org
972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Kidfish May 6.
City Lake Park.

cityofmesquite.com/pard
972/216-6260

MESQUITE: Mesquite
Community Band Concert
May 6. Mesquite Arts
Center Concert Hall.
mesquiteartscenter.org
972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite
Meander Historic Cemetery
Tour May 12-13.
historicismesquite.org
972/216-6468

MESQUITE: Opal Lawrence
Historical Park Tours
May 27. historicismesquite.org
972/216-6468

NOCONA: *Cruisin' Nocona*
May 4-6. Auction Building.
vicariauction.com
504/264-2277

PARKER: Texas' Tribute to
Elvis Festival May 26-28.
Southfork Ranch. graceland.
com 302/327-8419

PLANO: *Benini: Then and
Now.* Through May 6. Plano
Art Association Gallery.
planoartassociation.com
214/773-5696

PLANO: *Move Over, Mrs.
Markham* May 4-27.
Rover Dramawerks.
roverdramawerks.com
972/849-0358

PLANO: Courtyard Texas
Music Series May 4.
Courtyard Theatre.
plano.gov/417/courtyard-
texas-music-series
972/941-5613

PLANO: AsiaFest May 6.
Haggard Park.
asianamericanheritage.org/
asiafest.asp 972/379-9351

PLANO: Hasda Punjab
May 6. Plano Centre.
hasdapunjab.net

PLANO: Downtown Plano
Art and Wine Walk May 11.
Downtown Arts District.
planomagazine.com/wine
972/489-8301

PLANO: Live and Local
Concerts at McCall Plaza
May 19. Downtown Arts
District. plano.gov/2746/
mccall-plaza
972/941-5600

PLANO: PCANT Mela
May 20. Plano Centre.
pcant.info 469/608-9293

PLANO: Texas' Tribute To
Elvis May 26-28. Southfork
Ranch. texaselvisfestival.com
302/327-8419

RICHARDSON: Wildflower
Arts and Music Festival
May 19-20. Galatyn Park.
wildflowerfestival.com

TODD MISSION:
Middlelands May 5-7.
Texas Renaissance Festival
Fair Grounds.
middlelands.com

SMITHVILLE: Thunder on the Colorado Biker Rally May 5-7. Vernon L. Richards Riverbend Park. smithvilletx.org 512/237-2313

SMITHVILLE: Smithville Fly-In May 13. Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport. smithvilletx.org 512/237-2313

WACO: *The Wizard of Oz Educational Exhibit.* Through May 7, 2018. Mayborn Museum Complex. maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WACO: *Speed: Science in Motion* May 27-Sep. 3. Mayborn Museum Complex. maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WAXAHACHIE: Cinco De Mayo Festival May 5-6. Downtown. elliscountyhispanic.org 469/309-4040

WAXAHACHIE: Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Concert May 6. SAGU Hagee Communication Center Performance Hall waxahachiesymphony.org 888/937-7248

WAXAHACHIE: Scarborough Renaissance Festival May 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-29. srfestival.com 972/938-3247

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

BERCLAIR: Bercair Mansion Tours May 28. 361/358-3859

GOLIAD: Ranching in Early Texas May 6. Presidio La Bahia. presidioalabaha.org 361/645-3752

GOLIAD: Market Days May 13. Historic Downtown Square. goliadcc.org 361/645-3563

JOURDANTON: Malvin Prasifka Cook-Off May 19-21. American Legion Hall. 830/570-6307

SAN ANTONIO: Art In the Garden—Alyson Shotz. Through Jun. 19. San Antonio Botanical Garden. bluestarart.org 210/536-1400

SAN ANTONIO: Seven Seas Food and Wine Festival Apr. 21-May 29. SeaWorld San Antonio. seaworldsanantonio.com 800/700-7786

SAN ANTONIO: *Susan Graham: An American in Paris* May 12-13. The Tobin Center. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

SAN ANTONIO: Debussy—Ibéria May 19-20. The Tobin Center. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

SAN ANTONIO: Basil Fest May 20. Pearl Brewery Farmer's Market. sanantonioherbmarket.org 866/923-2226

SAN ANTONIO: John Williams and Beyond May 26-28. The Tobin Center. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

WESLACO: Alfresco Weslaco May 18. Historic Downtown. facebook.com/alfrescoweslaco 956/969-0838

WANT MORE?

GO TO THE EVENTS CALENDAR AT texashighways.com.

FOR A FREE PRINTED COPY of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, go to texashighways.com/freepubs, write to *Texas Highways Events Calendar*, P.O. Box 149249, Austin, TX 78714-9249, or call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 Central.

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Ten museums and archives at The University of Texas at Austin, along with the LBJ Presidential Library, share some of their most compelling and rare treasures in a new exhibit, *Deep in the Vaults of Texas: A Campus Collaboration*. Step inside *Deep in the Vaults* for a true Texas experience.

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Q: *Is Tuna based on a real Texas town?*

A: No. We used to joke that it was in Reagan County in the desert in far West Texas—just keep turning right until you run out of road! I love the isolation of West Texas. Part of my heart will always be out there. Last summer, I stayed at the Hotel Saint George in Marfa, and in Alpine I had great Mexican food at El Patio, a restaurant right next to the railroad tracks with a patio and live music, and saw a poetry reading at Front Street Books.

Q: *What are some of your other favorite Texas small towns?*

A: I went to high school in Crosbyton. It's right up on the caprock on this bizarre border between farm and ranch country. It was one of the first communities to take root after the Comanche were driven out. Quanah Parker did his vision quest just outside of Crosbyton. You'll find all this history at the Pioneer Memorial Museum there.

Q: *Where are you living now?*

A: I moved to Lockhart with my partner and our son in 2009. It's about 30 minutes south of Austin, and it's known for barbecue. They barbecue anything that holds still in this town! I'm a Black's Barbecue loyalist, but the ribs at Smitty's Market are like nothing I've ever had. The town square and courthouse are also charming. We have a community theater, the Gaslight Baker Theatre, which always has something going on.

Q: *What's Clear to Partly Crazy about?*

A: It's a one-person solo show that deals with cheerleaders, tornadoes, and mental illness. Part of the inspiration for the play is my mother, God bless her. When we were living in the Panhandle of Texas we didn't have a basement or cellar, so she accepted invitations from every kind lady in town to go to their cellar when there was a tornado warning. But we could never

go to the same cellar twice. We nearly died because we couldn't go to the same cellar twice. Image was everything for momma. The people at The Grand Opera House in Galveston are like family to me, and any time I have new material, they always give me a venue to help create it. If your readers haven't been there, it's well worth a trip. It's a wonderful place to see a show.

Q: *Where else do you go in Texas to see good theater?*

A: In Austin, the Rude Mechanicals are amazing and creative; they have a Fixing Shakespeare series, where they take Shakespeare plays that don't quite work and "fix" them. I have connections with people at the Long Center for the Performing Arts, and Austin finally has the facility it deserves with the new ZACH Theatre. Quite often you'll find good theater at the University of Texas at Austin. The best place for musicals is Texas State University in San Marcos. It excites me to go see what the young people are doing. I enjoy dropping in on the Houston Ballet and Houston Grand Opera, and of course the Alley Theatre and the Dallas Theater Center are important. But it's also important to keep your ear to the ground. Theater is everywhere.

Q: *What do you hope people take away from the new Greater Tuna experience?*

A: This is a fun play that should make people laugh and think, and take people's minds off the world. That's what art is good for, and that's the one thing I've always loved about the theater. I hope people come see it. We're going to be all over the state—all roads lead to Tuna! 🐷

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THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



A Taste of the Rich Life

ON THE FAR SOUTHWEST SIDE OF HOUSTON is a city on the Brazos River that's much smaller than its big-city neighbor but predates it by more than a decade. Originally settled in the 1820s by members of Stephen F. Austin's Old 300 and initially dubbed Fort Bend, the city of Richmond was incorporated in May of 1837. Withstanding the test of time, the small town abounds with history, eateries, and adventure.

9 A.M. To start the day, I headed to **Joseph's Coffee and Cigars** for a dose of history mixed with caffeine. This family-owned shop has been serving Richmond for over 100 years as everything from a candy shop to a furniture store. Today, it specializes in craft coffee, hand-rolled cigars, and antique English rifles. I felt so fancy in my British sporting jacket sipping my mocha latte that I almost convinced myself to buy a \$10,000 gun. Good times, ol' chap!

10 A.M. At the **Fort Bend Museum**, I learned how Richmond's history reflects significant milestones in Texas' history. From being part of Austin's "Old 300" story to helping establish the Texas Republic to forming our rich ranching heritage, there's much for history nuts like myself to dig into. Out back, I even found the tombstone of renowned Texan Deaf Smith, who delivered William B. Travis' famous "Victory or Death" letter from the Alamo.

12:30 P.M. Feeling like a lunch of Texas proportions, I headed to **The Swinging Door** for good ol' Texas 'cue. Locals packed each of the checkered tables and after trying a bite of moist brisket accompanied by fresh green beans, I knew instantly why this place has been hoppin' since the '70s. I was ready for a Texas-size siesta after my hefty meal, but pushed on.

2 P.M. Next I took my history lesson outside to the **George Ranch Historical Park** and spent the afternoon touring four houses separated by 100 years but connected through the iconic George family. Each home offered a distinctive experience and living-history demonstration. I learned how to tan leather in an 1830s log cabin, how to forge metal like a blacksmith at a Victorian

Chet Garner is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS. To view the Richmond episode visit thedaytripper.com

mansion, and how to rope cattle in a 1930s corral. If scientists ever figure out time travel, I'll now be able to survive in Texas no matter the time period.

4 P.M. As I drove deeper into the countryside, the landscape changed to grassy swamps as I entered **Brazos Bend State Park**. I hit the trail and soon found myself alone. That is, except for a nine-foot gator hiking the trail ahead of me. I looked around and spotted six more alligators hiding in the reeds. I was surrounded, which is the reason folks love to visit this park. Winding through ponds and marshes, Brazos Bend gives visitors a chance to see alligators in their natural habitat and free of fences. Some are even kind enough to pose for photos—from a distance of course. I even discovered a momma gator tending to 17 of her gator pups (aka "hatchlings"). On a distant hill, I spotted a large telescope dome and made a note to return later. But first, dinner.

6:30 P.M. Back in town, I headed to **Larry's Original Mexican Restaurant** and greeted a colossal plate of nachos and generations-old Tex-Mex recipes. Larry's signature cheese enchiladas oozed with goodness mixing perfectly with the chili gravy. I easily polished off my plate and probably ate a dozen tortillas sopping up the leftover sauce.

8 P.M. As the sun set, I headed back to Brazos Bend to the **George Observatory**. I felt dwarfed underneath the massive telescope and soon felt completely miniscule as I gazed up at the distant galaxies. Everything truly is bigger in Texas—including the night sky.

From traveling through time to hanging with gators and soaring through space, it doesn't matter how much money you have in your pocket. If you're tripping Richmond, you're already rich with life. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

Contact the city of Richmond at 281/342-5456, www.richmondtx.gov.

TRAVEL MATTERS

TRAVEL TALK WITH TRUE TEXANS



All Roads Lead to Tuna

The Texas humor of actor and playwright Jaston Williams

story by **Heather Brand**

THE ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT JASTON WILLIAMS GREW UP IN the small towns of Olton and Crosbyton in the Texas Panhandle, but he is best known for his portrayals of a different small town—the fictional hamlet of Tuna. The award-winning play *Greater Tuna*, which he wrote with his co-star Joe Sears and director Ed Howard, has been gracing stages across the state and beyond since its premiere at a theater space on Sixth Street in Austin in 1981.

With a rotating cast of misguided yet endearing characters, *Greater Tuna* both celebrates and lampoons life in small-town Texas, in this case the “third smallest town in Texas,” located somewhere “between San Angelo and Hell.” The production was so successful that it traveled to an Off-Broadway theater in New York, spawned three

With a rotating cast of misguided yet endearing characters, *Greater Tuna* both celebrates and lampoons life in small-town Texas.

Find tour dates for the latest incarnation of *Greater Tuna* at www.tunatouring.com.

humorous sequels, and has remained a perennial favorite for audiences far and wide.

Outside of *Tuna*, Williams keeps a busy schedule of writing and performing. This June, he'll debut the solo production *Clear to Partly Crazy* at The Grand 1894 Opera House in Galveston. And he's developing another one-person show, *I Saw the Lights*, inspired by a rash of UFO sightings in Lubbock in 1951. In the meantime, Williams is directing a new incarnation of *Greater Tuna* with new actors. The show is touring throughout the state.

Q: How do you explain the enduring appeal of *Greater Tuna*?

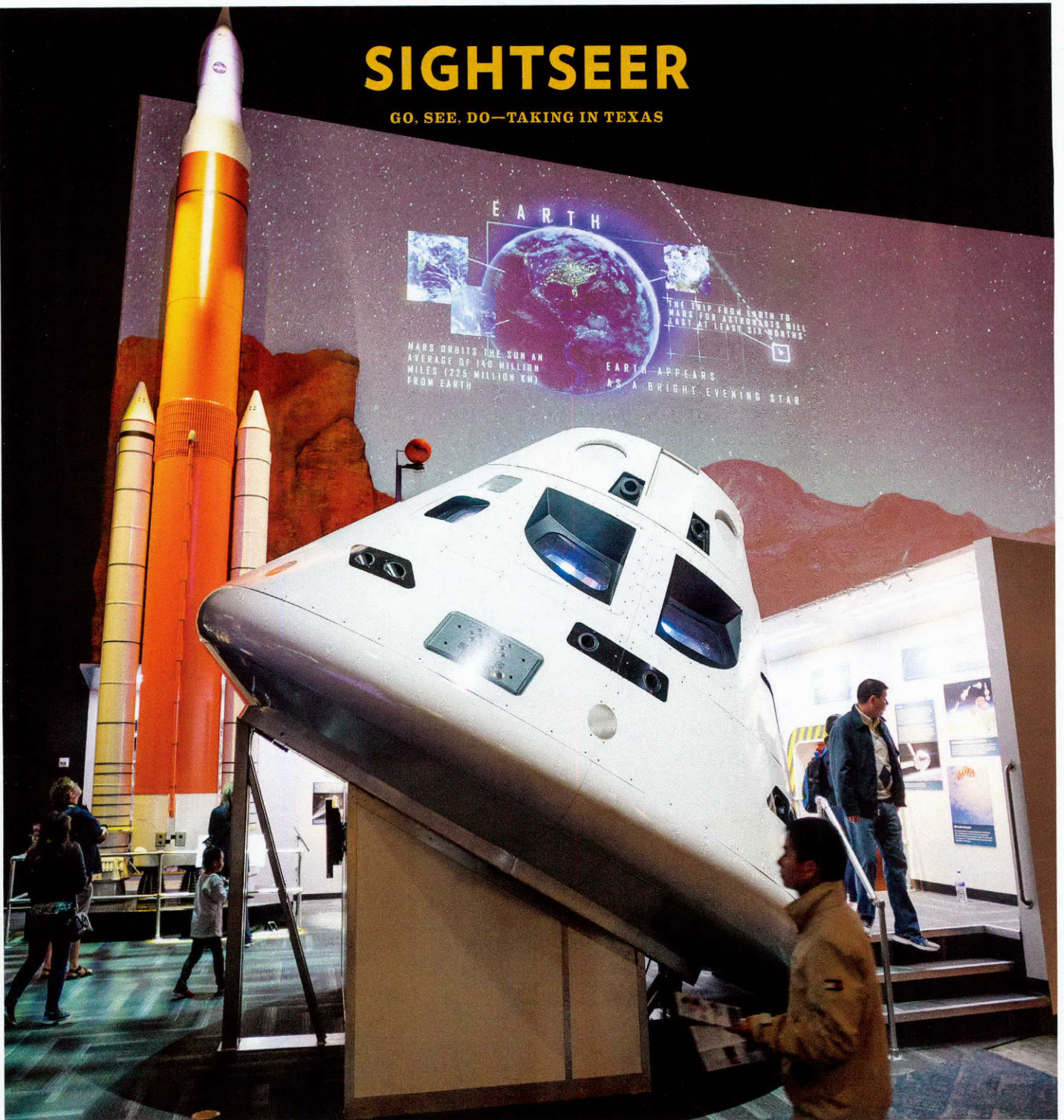
A: The play crosses boundaries—even people with different viewpoints can enjoy it. In the audience, you'll see someone in an Armani suit next to someone in overalls. I think some people are drawn to the characters and are oblivious to the political content; others see the play as satire. We wrote it in the early Reagan years, and it was originally about book banning and burning Buddy Holly records. The play is still very relevant. Everything old is newish again.

Q: How are you taking a different approach with this revival?

A: We started *Greater Tuna* when we were young, and it was time for us to let it go. By directing, I still maintain quality control, and we're restructuring and updating it, adding some new material. I'm using three actors [Ryan Bailey, Tim Childers, and Will Mercer] instead of two, and they are quite marvelous together and funny as hell. These people are introducing the play to a new generation. > continued on page 86

SIGHTSEER

GO. SEE. DO—TAKING IN TEXAS



WHAT: *MISSION MARS* WHERE: SPACE CENTER HOUSTON WHEN: OPEN DAILY EXCEPT CHRISTMAS

Mission Mars

Debuting in Space Center Houston's 25th anniversary year, *Mission Mars* explores the science of the red planet and NASA's efforts to send humans there in the 2030s.

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"Man in the Moon" based on William Joyce's series, "Guardians of Childhood" Photo By Doug Hodel