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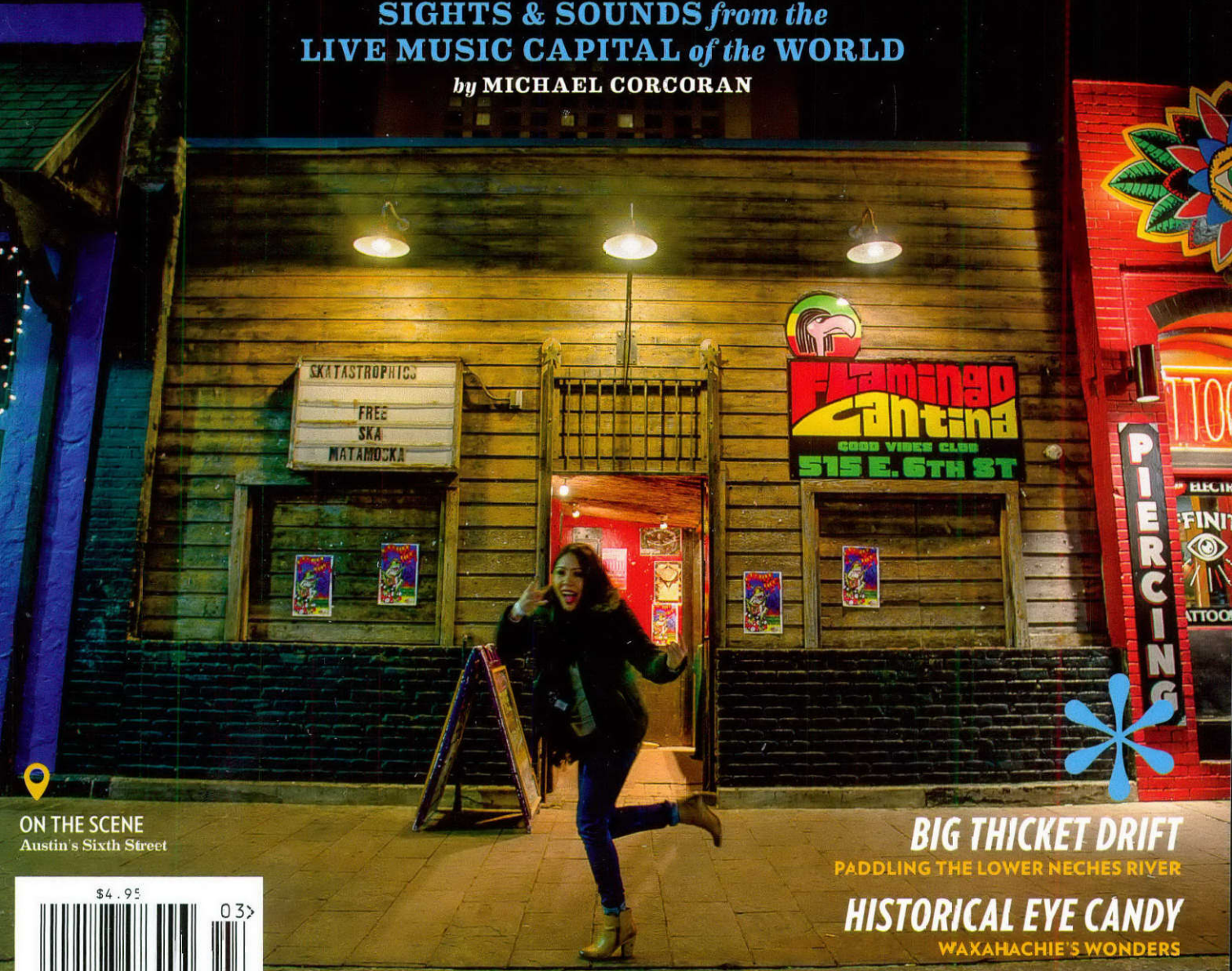
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THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS ★ MARCH 2017

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by MICHAEL CORCORAN



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EDITOR'S NOTE



Behind the Story

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF my new gig at *Texas Highways* is working with the knowledgeable and passionate staff. They work hard at curating content each month to bring you a True Texas experience. And often that work is done months in advance of when the stories hit your mailbox and local magazine racks. Last July, Associate Editor Matt Joyce (pictured) and Photo Editor Brandon Jakobait braved the sweltering East Texas sun to bring the magic of the lower Neches River to light.

The idea for the story sprouted from a previous trip Matt took to East Texas to learn about the history of the Pine Woods' timber industry ("Pine Curtain of the Past," January 2015). During his visit, he joined local conservationist Richard Donovan on a short canoe outing on the Neches River near Lufkin. A passionate advocate for preserving the wilderness of the Neches and its watershed, Donovan had paddled the entire river in 1999 and chronicled the experience in his book *Paddling the Wild Neches*.

Hooked by his brief float down the

Neches—and looking for the opportunity to return and share it with *TH* readers—Matt was intrigued when he learned about the Neches River Rally, an annual paddling event hosted by the nonprofit Big Thicket Association on a stretch of the river near Beaumont. Why not explore the Big Thicket via the Neches River?

Every new travel adventure requires a competent guide, and thanks to local recommendations, Matt and Brandon found that and more in Gerald Cerda. Gerald has been paddling the lower Neches and other Texas rivers since he was a kid, lived for a time on the river's bank, and started Big Thicket Outfitters after retiring from his career as a roofer. "Gerald is a classic East Texas character, and he made the experience all the more unforgettable," Matt says. "He knows that country like the back of his hand."

We hope Matt and Brandon's energizing excursion inspires one of your own.

Emily R. Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE, *Editor*

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The 401 locomotive displayed at the National Ranching Heritage Center.

LUBBOCK

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MARCH

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A Red River Road Trip

Join us on a drive south of the famed river as we explore a pair of historic towns with sizable doses of Chis-nolm Trail history. From Saint Jo to Nocora, meet Montague County's boot makers, mixed-media artists, and mayor-café owners.

Story by JUNE NAYLOR
Photographs by JOEL SALCIDO

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Ballast of the Beat

Explore the Live Music Capital of the World through 16 of Austin's longtime music clubs. Whether you prefer jazz, country, indie rock, punk, or conjunto, keep on rockin' in the free world.

Story by MICHAEL CORCORAN
Photographs by TIFFANY HOFELDT

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Big Thicket Drift

Throw out your itinerary and go with the flow on the Neches River in East Texas. Paddle a canoe, angle for catfish, stare at the stars, and enjoy getting lost in time.

Story by MATT JOYCE
Photographs by BRANDON JAKOBEIT



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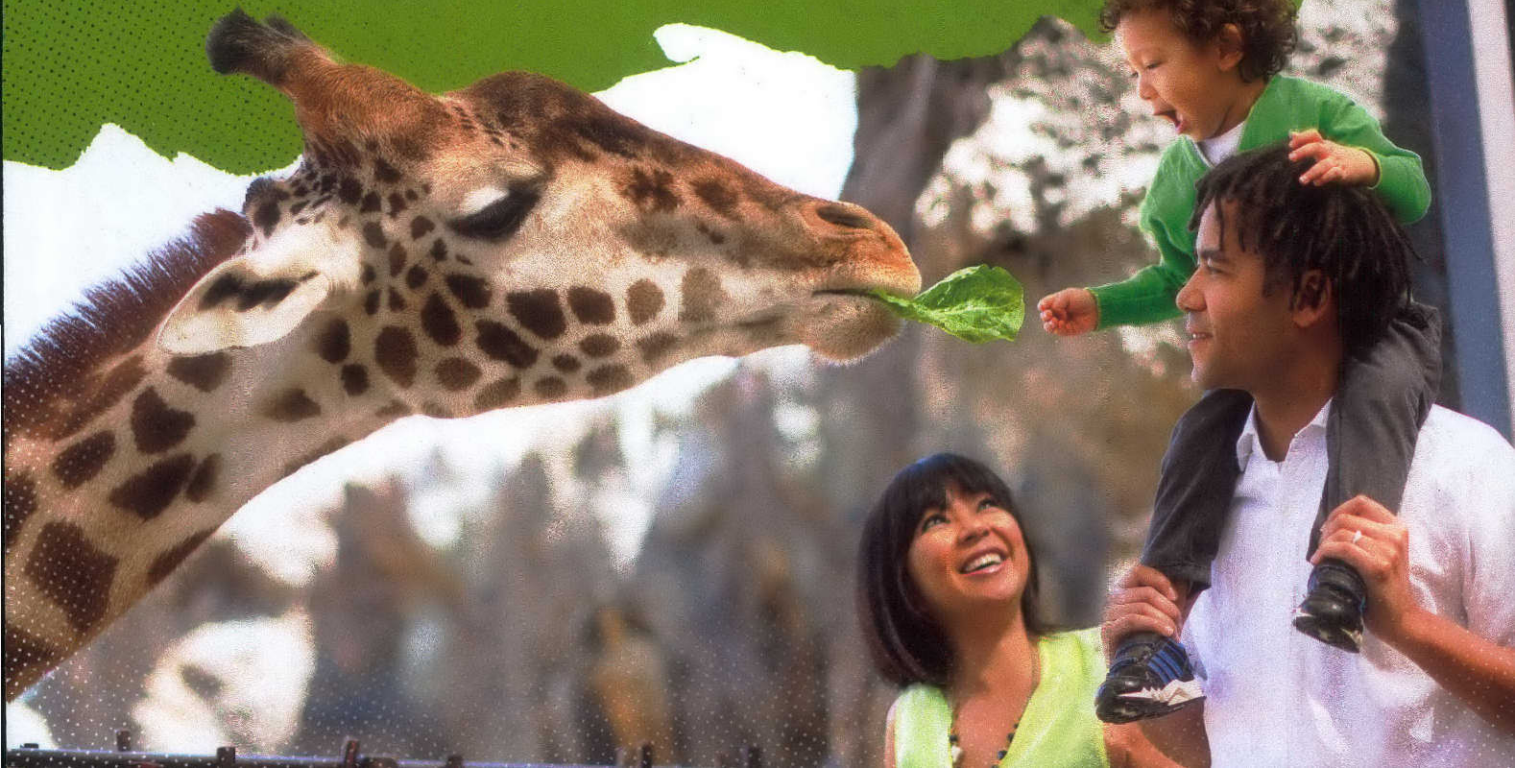
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MARCH



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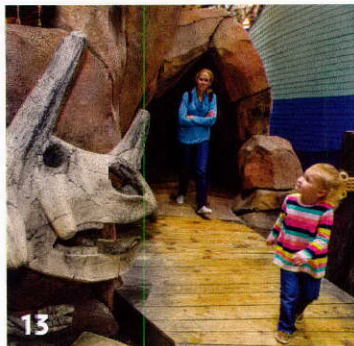
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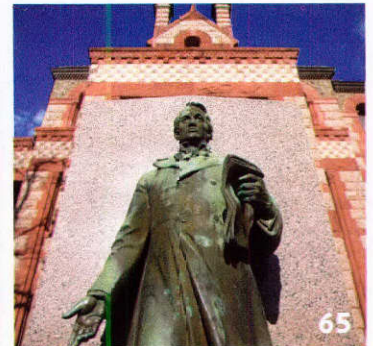
Padre Island National Seashore's untamed beauty



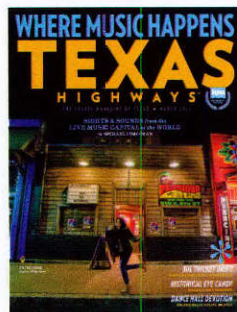
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COVER

The Flamingo Cantina on Austin's Sixth Street has hosted local and touring reggae acts since 1991. Photo: ©Tiffany Hofeldt



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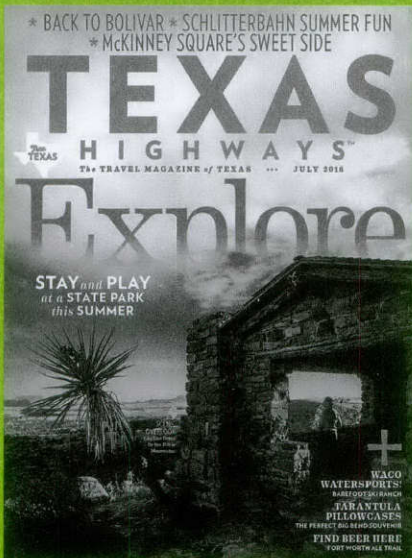
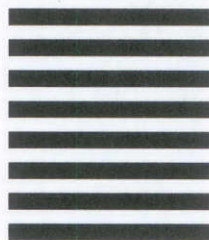
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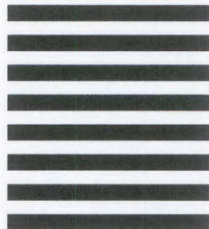
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MARCH

Salute to Texas Women

**MARCH IS NATIONAL
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

We spotlight Texas museums that pay tribute to the state's most influential women pioneers.

PADDLING THE THICKET

The Big Thicket Association's annual Neches River Rally is a prime opportunity for paddlers of all skill levels to explore the river or the Cooks Lake to Scatterman Paddling Trail.

REFUELING IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY

Maximize your travel time through the Red River Valley with these intriguing stops along the way.

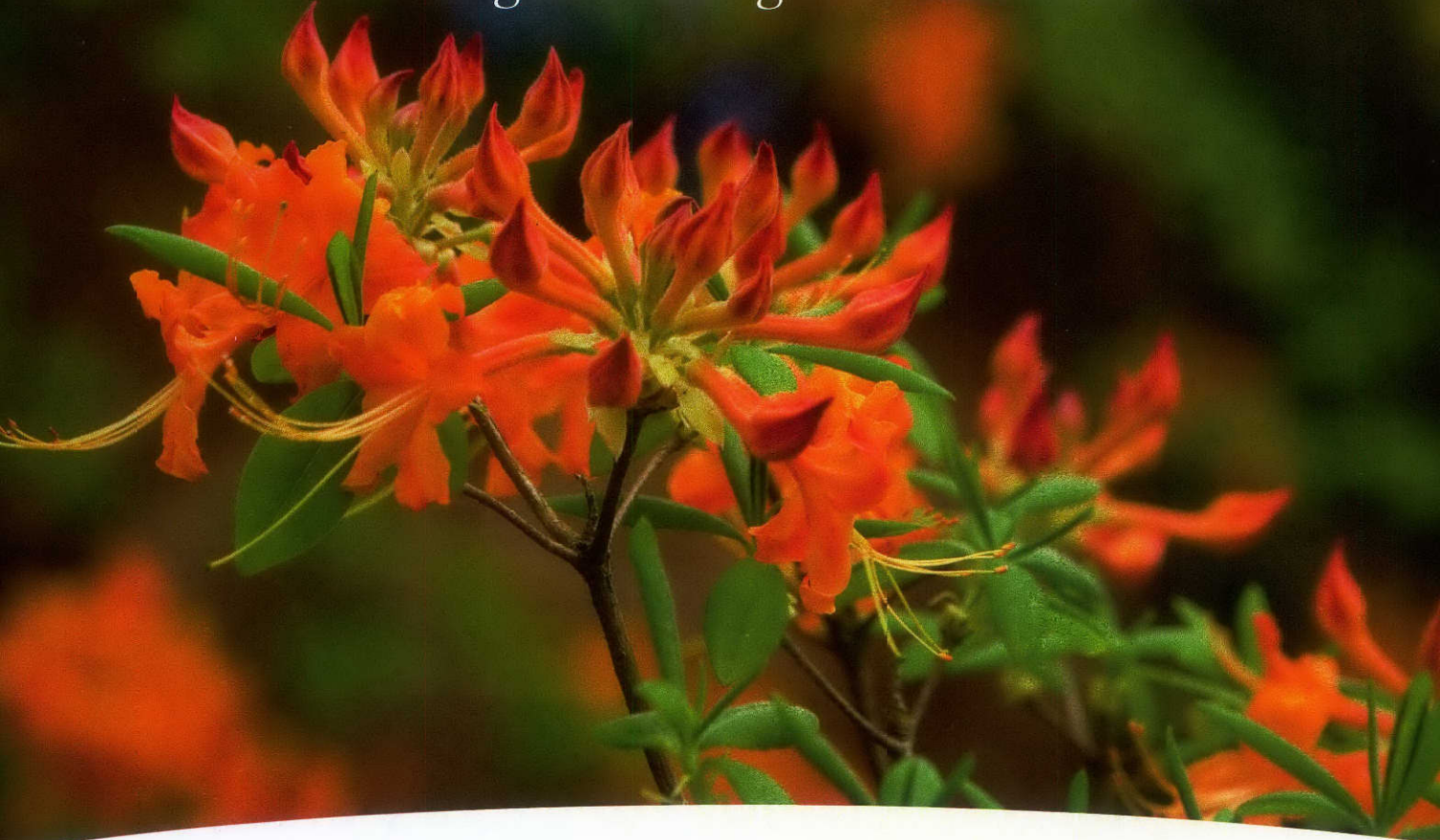


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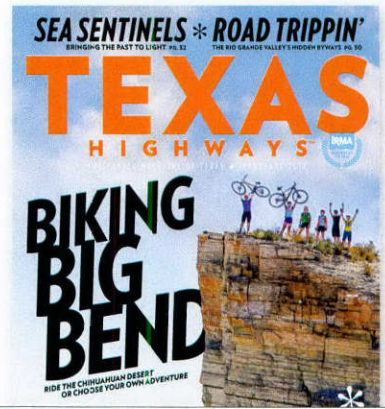
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MERGE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

This is my 17th year as a subscriber, and I have read every article in every issue since January 2002. We receive 10 different magazines at our house, and Texas Highways is my favorite.

WILLIAM THOMPSON, EVANSVILLE, INDIANA



OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH



Palestine...
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Pal-ahh-STEEN.
Lol! My adopted hometown.
MARSHA FLORES

It was great getting to know Little Joe's music while working on his illustration [January]! Thanks to *Texas Highways* for the collaboration!
NIP ROGERS, illustrator, NEW YCFK



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Gaming Family

Thanks for tipping us off to the National Video Game Museum in Frisco [November]. Our college-age kids enjoyed seeing the "prehistoric" video games, and my husband and I loved the walk down memory lane. My husband and son particularly enjoyed playing the old arcade games. We would never have known it was there if I hadn't seen it in *Texas Highways*!

Devon Hull, Lake Jackson

Directional Debate, part II

I often argue with my husband that Graham is in north-central, not West Texas. According to Texas Counties.net, Graham is in the North Texas region. However, West Texas begins quite east of the Pecos River. It actually starts in Throckmorton County, which is less than 40 miles from Graham. When driving through Throckmorton on US 183, it's possible to see where east meets west.

Lori Kramer, Graham

Menger Hotel

I can't believe "San Antonio's Grande Dames" [February] neglected to mention the Menger Hotel. Its opening in 1859 predates the three hotels mentioned. It also has more historical significance since it was at the Menger where Teddy Roosevelt recruited his Rough Riders for the Spanish-American War of 1898. It boasts both classic and modern elegance and is quite close to the River Walk and the Alamo. The brunch is superb, and the mango ice cream so impressed Bill Clinton that he had it shipped to the White House.

Steve Salinger, Ingram

Good Samaritans

While traveling from San Antonio to Cloudcroft, New Mexico, we came to a rest area about 25 miles outside of Fort Stockton. There was a man who had run out of gas and needed assistance. Fortunately, two different men had gas cans and were able to furnish him with enough gas to get to the next gas station. The young man offered to pay them, and they waived off the gesture and parted by all shaking hands. Traveling in Texas, people sometimes forget or don't realize how far it can be between towns.

Renee Forrester, San Antonio

READER'S FAVORITE

Czech Out These Kolaches

For those who live in the Houston-Galveston area, you can get your kolache fix at Two Czech Chicks Kolache Shoppe and Bakery in Danbury. My cousin is one of the owners; she hails from West and uses my grandmother's recipe. The trick to the kolache is the dough, which distinguishes the pastry from other pastries. For what it's worth, traditional Czech "kolace" are smaller than their Czezan descendants, and the klobasnek is a total Czezan innovation.

BRENT T. SYKORA

Two Czech Chicks Kolache Shoppe & Bakery, 1810 Main St. in Danbury, opens Tue-Fri 5:30-11 a.m. and Sat 6:30-11 a.m. Along with kolaches, the bakery serves cinnamon rolls, donuts, cookies, and more. Call 979/922-1010; facebook.com/TwoCzechChicksKolacheShoppeBakeryLLC

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THE RED RIVER VALLEY

offers an array of scenic beauty—most of it natural, with some surprises. At the intersection of FM 3206 and FM 677, a couple of miles southwest of the Saint Jo town square, artistic works by rancher Earl Nunneley greet travelers. This ladybug, created from a Volkswagen Beetle; and cactus, made with repurposed materials; represent a few of the sculptures that form a distinctive roadside gallery on the Running N Ranch. For more information, visit saintjochamber.com/things-to-do.





Make an afternoon of shopping at Chip and Jo's Magnolia Market at the Silos. Hop on the Silo District trolley to explore even more stores, restaurants, and attractions.



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A World of Exploration

Tyler's Discovery Science Place

story by LaDawn Fletcher



Kids learn about space exploration, geology, oceanography, and other sciences through interactive exhibits at Tyler's Discovery Science Place.



HOUSED IN A CENTURY-OLD BUILDING in downtown Tyler, Discovery Science Place stands out among the historic buildings surrounding it.

Many of the buildings on Broadway Avenue and surrounding streets have been carefully restored to their early-20th-century glory and are now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In contrast to the restrained architecture surrounding it, the L-shaped former warehouse that houses Tyler's science museum serves as a colorful billboard promoting the arts and sciences. Several exterior walls of the museum now boast a vibrant mural depicting plants, microscopes, insects, and constellations, conveying a sense of the fun that waits inside.

Exploration through touch is an integral part of the Discovery Science Place experience, and it begins as soon as you enter the fenced courtyard

While the cave allows you to explore land, the ship is dedicated to sciences of the sea.

leading to the museum entrance, which is shaded by a green awning. Benches flank the perimeter of the courtyard, providing a spot to rest and watch the goings-on at a recreated fossil- and gem-mining area known as the KO Mine. Here, water cascades from a one-story tower into a trough filled with sand, and kids and adults take turns shaking the sand through a sieve, looking for hidden treasures. (Pro tip: Some parents purchase bags of stones or trinkets from the gift shop at the entrance, guaranteeing their kids prospector success.)

The sensory experience continues once you enter the building, which features three exhibit halls anchored by a gift shop, where you can buy admission tickets and purchase science-related gifts ranging from microscopes and telescopes to geodes and plastic snakes. Just as other science museums nationwide have embraced today's "maker" ethics,

On different levels of a multistory faux cave, kids and adults can explore themes relating to geology and fossils.

where kids and adults are encouraged to express their creativity by adapting things, designing things, and making things, so has Discovery Science Place. Alongside the gift shop's magnets, T-shirts, and packaged science experiments, visitors can also purchase electronic platforms known as Arduinos, which allow everyone from beginner hobbyists to advanced programmers to make all kinds of gadgets, including tiny robots and motors.

In Discovery Landing, the first exhibit space, your eyes are immediately drawn to the replica of a giant ship, two stories tall and jutting from what at first appears to be a wall of rocks. With a closer look at the rocks, the entrance to "the cave" becomes visible. As you wind your way to the top, each landing features a display dedicated to an aspect of geology. When you press the button, the ground shifts beneath you, simulating the sudden shaking

and sharp jolts of an earthquake. Farther along, fluorescent lights illuminate glowing minerals and semiprecious stones.

While the cave allows you to explore land, the ship is dedicated to sciences of the sea. Tucked away from immediate view in the hull of the ship, a small theater plays videos about oceanography. After viewing the films and climbing to the second story of the ship, you can continue your oceanography exploration by using a microscope to study tiny objects and viewing sea creatures on a digital display. The second story also provides a panoramic view of the exhibits and attractions in Discovery Landing, including a kinetic sculpture next to a floor-to-ceiling window overlooking Broadway Avenue, its brightly colored pieces revolving in graceful, undulating patterns. From up high, you can watch kids unearth "fossils" in the Dino Dig Pit and carefully scale the climbing wall on the exhibit hall's far

end while adults and teenagers take in the nearby robotics exhibit, practicing their manual dexterity as they move plastic balls back and forth using a joystick. You can also see the outline of the Cinesphere, a small, circular theater with 15-minute movies on topics like space or dinosaurs.

Exploring the world beyond could easily be the theme of Discovery Science Place, particularly in Orion Hall, which offers a compelling look at space travel thanks to a collaboration with NASA.

On the day I visit, I enjoy watching a family of four fan out from the exhibit's entrance, each drawn to a different element of the display. An older child studies the full-size mock-up of the Orion spacecraft, whose real-life counterpart may someday take astronauts to Mars. Two mannequins sit in the astronauts' seats, facing the brightly lit control panels. Nearby,



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another child concentrates heavily as she mans the controls of the Mars rover exhibit while her parents examine gyro binoculars and other artifacts from completed missions. Orion Hall presents information about what has already been discovered in space, while leaving room for guests to ponder the age-old question: What else might be out there?

“Watching families here is the best part,” museum board member Josh Ebright says. “There are so many opportunities for adults to do things with the kids they bring, and everyone is having a blast.”

Space technology may take center stage in Orion Hall, but imagination plays the leading role in Hometown USA, the museum’s third hall of

exhibits. In a section cordoned off with white picket fencing, the Imagination Playground offers kids an opportunity to stack giant blue foam blocks to build expansive forts, mazes, and hideouts. Some create intricate games around what they’ve built. And for most kids, sending the towers crashing to the ground and beginning again is as fun as constructing them in the first place.

Water cascades from a one-story tower into a trough filled with sand, and kids and adults take turns shaking the sand through a sieve, looking for hidden treasures.

Hometown USA also features miniature versions of a hospital, bank, grocery store, post office, veterinary office, and other destinations, including a kid-size version of the Smith County Courthouse. At the grocery store replica, children squeal with delight while pushing grocery baskets brimming with plastic fruit and canned goods from one exhibit to the next. They share plates of faux food from the bistro before heading to the veterinarian section. They don kid-size lab coats and stethoscopes in the hospital, then recruit caregivers from nearby benches as customers and patients.

For children and adults alike, Discovery Science Place offers a delightful hodgepodge of playing, learning, and role-playing. For those who visit with a spirit of adventure, the museum offers an intriguing mix of what we know and what we hope to discover. **L**

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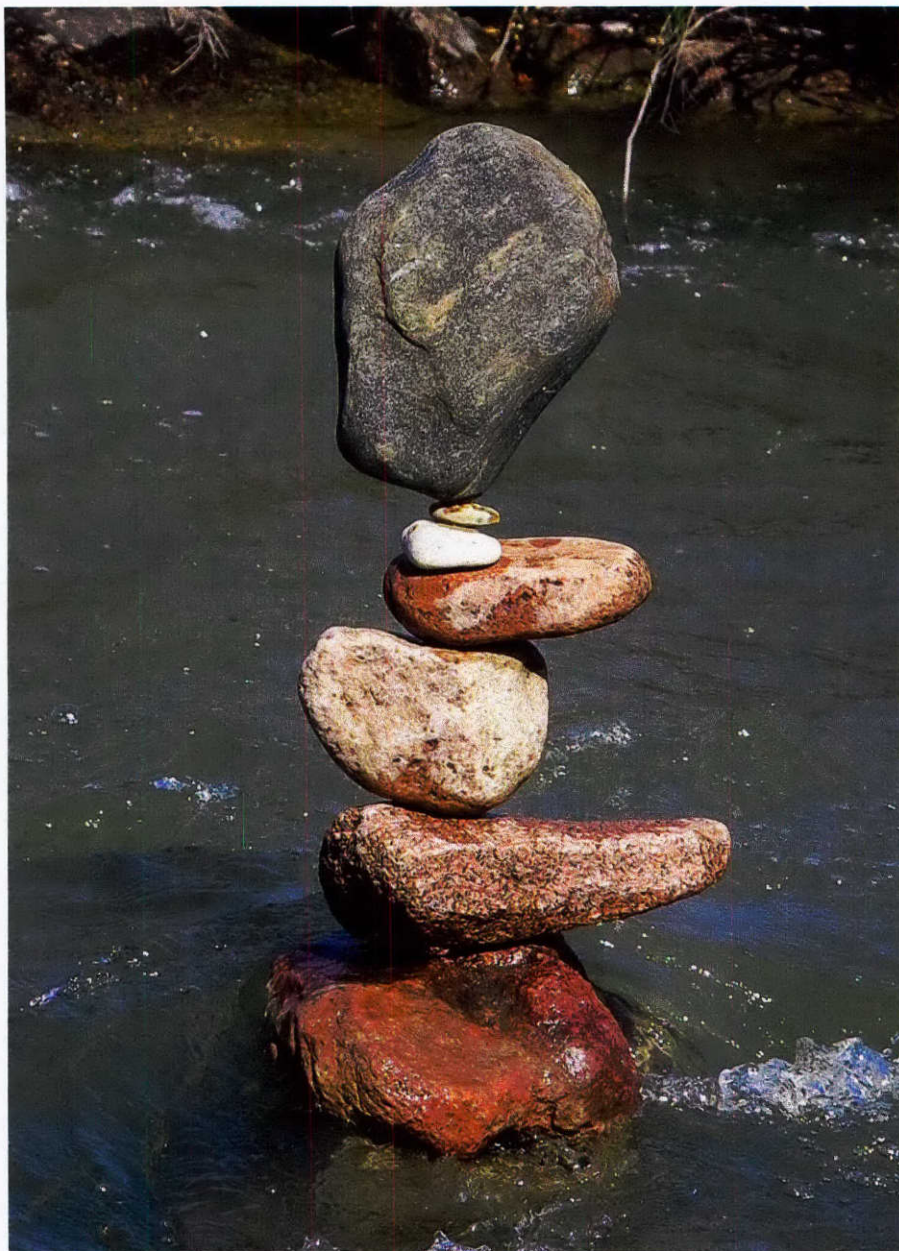
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The Art (and Fun) of Stacking Rocks

Llano Earth Art Fest celebrates this primitive form of Jenga

story by **Beverly Burmeier**

MICHAEL GRAB WADES INTO THE WAIST-HIGH water of the Llano River in Central Texas, reaches down to the bottom, and fishes out a platter-size rock. Like most large stones, it's not perfectly round, and its edges undulate in an irregular pattern.

Grab examines the rock, turning it over and over in his practiced hands, noting tiny indentations or notches that could act as a natural tripod for the stack of large and small stones he is building in the shallows. Working while the river's current flows

around his chest-high waders, Grab positions the rock, removes it, tries again at a different angle, and turns it over before dropping it back into the cool water. He's looking for a rock with a pointed end that can be placed tip-to-tip at the top of his growing stack.

Grab, who recognizes the humorous synchronicity of his name and chosen profession, lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he has been stacking rocks since 2008. As if by magic, he and other rock-stackers balance stones in seemingly impossible formations. No glue, Velcro, wire, or supports of any kind touch the rocks; only gravity holds them in equilibrium.

I'm watching him demonstrate his technique at the Llano Earth Art Fest (LEAF), where rock-stacking demonstrations are some of the most popular activities. For the third year this community-sponsored event, scheduled for March 10-13, features rock-stacking activities for professionals, amateurs, and casual visitors. The goal of all this fun is to bring more awareness to the natural resources of the area, says Llano resident and festival organizer Belinda "Binky" Morgan.

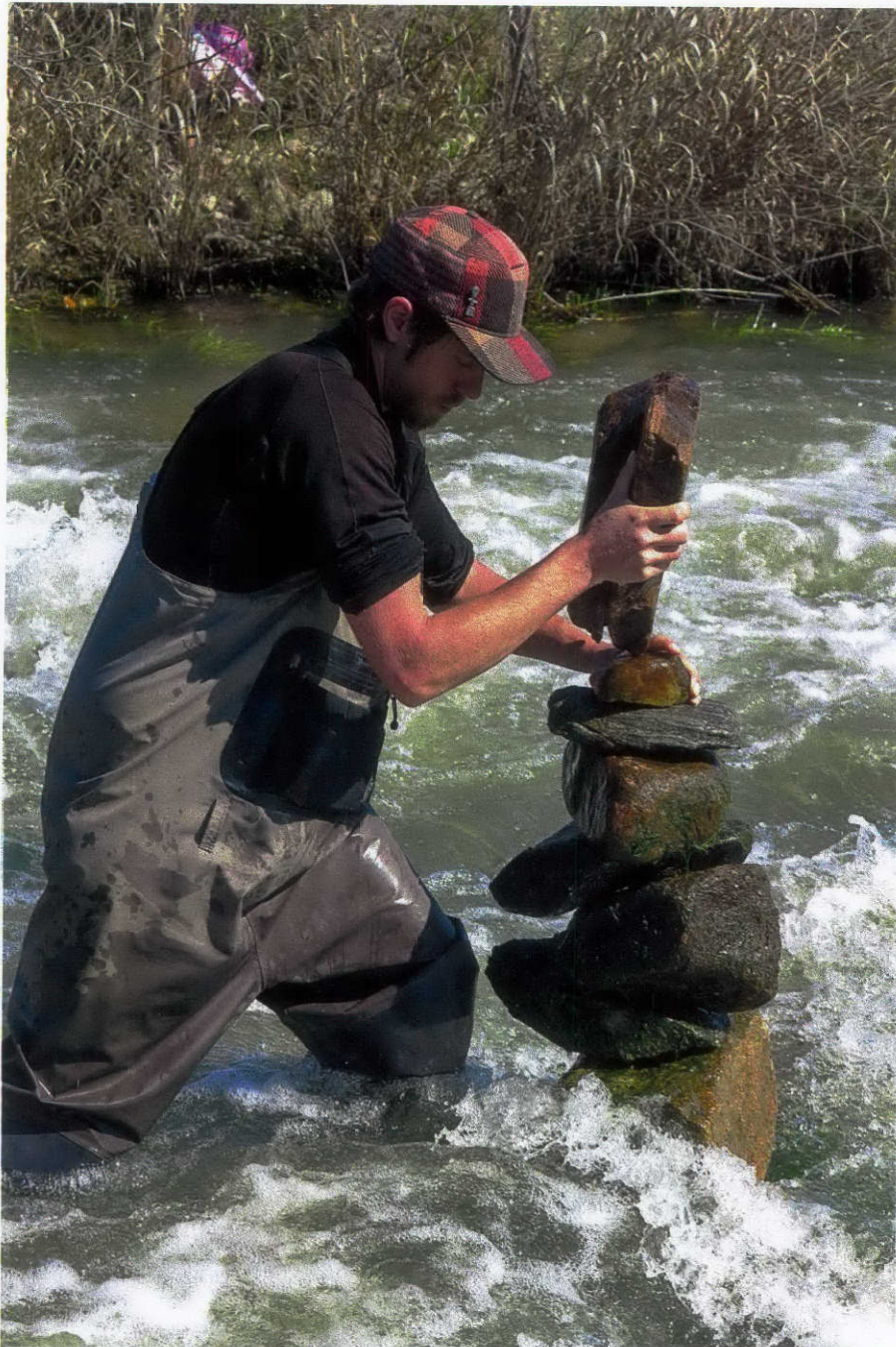
Located in the environmentally sensitive Edwards Plateau, Llano sits on the Llano Uplift, a geologic dome known for its abundance of granite and other igneous rock. Spurred by Morgan, leaders in the community thought that a festival centered around the amenities and natural appeal of the Llano River would attract visitors. As I look around at people of all ages delighting in their own rock creations, it appears they were right.

A MODERN FASCINATION

Morgan's idea for a river- and earth-centered event germinated in 2014 after she saw a picture of a cairn, or a stack of rocks, on social media. "It was one of the most beautiful images I'd ever seen," she says.

Building cairns is an activity that goes back many centuries, she explains. Far from being extinct, it has

The goal of all this fun is to bring more awareness to the natural resources of the area.



Michael Grab (left) makes a cairn in the Llano River. Rock-stacking requires a combination of discipline, creativity, and acute awareness of variations in natural objects.

become one of man's newest diversions, requiring a combination of discipline, creativity, and acute awareness of variations in natural objects.

To make the initial festival in 2015 more enticing, organizers created the first National Rock Stacking Championship (now the World Championship). "We decided to just own it," says Rich Houston, a local real estate agent and one of the organizers of LEAF. So they invited nationally known artists as well as area residents to participate on different levels.

"The response from the first festival

blew us away," Morgan says, noting that volunteers put on the event with support from the city and county. A few hundred people were expected in 2015, yet 5,000 attended. The turnout increased to 8,000 in 2016, with more expected this year. "It brings people into Llano and provides a boost for the economy," she says.

THE "ROCK STARS"

Rock stacking is at the heart of LEAF. Not only does the event attract nearly a dozen of the country's most prolific and enthusiastic professional

artists who work in this unusual medium, it's also a venue for local artists to create their own rock arches and towers.

Artists attending this year hail from throughout the United States and as far away as Italy and France. Each of the artists puts his or her unique spin on creating artwork with stones, and crowds gather to watch them balance rocks in delicately precarious formations.

Tim Anderson, a stone balance artist from Pennsylvania, gives popular demonstrations at the fest. Standing in the flowing river, he grabs rocks from the riverbed to stack in incredible structures. Finding the right rock and deciding how to best place it is often a slow process, but I find it fascinating to linger by the river most of the morning.

David Allen builds natural art installations for a living in his Maine studio. At LEAF, his stacked-rock

installations beckon me and other visitors to stop and marvel in admiration. His meticulous arches are among the most photographed displays. As I chat with him about his craft, he tells me that he stacks stones every day for both fun and practice.

For Grab, balancing rocks is an intuitive yet meditative experience despite—or perhaps because of—the inherent impermanence of these creations. “You’ve got to know the rocks,” he says.

FUN FOR ALL

“The professionals are interested in the artistic aspects of rock stacking and balancing, so we have fun competitions that are open to everyone,” says Houston, organizer of competitions for both pros and amateurs. “All you have to do to train is go outside and start balancing and stacking rocks.”

Soon I wander across the bridge



THE 2017 LLANO EARTH ART FEST

(LEAF) takes place March 10-13 at Grenwedge Park, 109 Haynie St. in Llano. Tickets (good for all four days): \$5 in advance; \$10 at the gate. See www.llanoearthartfest.org for more details.


where people are building stacks as high as they can reach. Patience and persistence rule as participants scoop up and replace tumbling rocks during this timed contest.

Large piles of rocks are brought in to supplement those that are found naturally on the land and in the river. Attendees are encouraged to build their own stacks using these randomly scattered stones. And they do.

“We didn’t envision this as a spectator fest,” Morgan explains. “We want people to get involved in creating earth art.”

For those visitors who enjoy being spectators, though, LEAF brings in dancers, painters, jugglers, and fire

spinners in addition to live music. Workshops on such topics as light pollution, primitive fire starting, plant medicine, and survival training help visitors better understand humans’ connection to nature. Children paint rocks and make boats to float down the river using natural materials like leaves and sticks.

While I marvel at the talent of professional artists, I love watching people of all ages build their own fancy structures from seemingly ordinary objects. Best of all, visitors prove the premise of the festival is correct: Stacking and balancing rocks is a delightful way to engage with nature while creating amazing art from the earth. 



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


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Dance Hall Devotion

Gruene Hall's Gospel Brunch With a Texas Twist

story by **Melissa Gaskill**

PEOPLE PACK THE WALL-TO-WALL TABLES IN Gruene Hall, and the band has hit full swing when I walk in one summer Sunday morning. Folks clap along to the music as they dig into plates of bacon and eggs, roasted turkey, and mashed potatoes.

While I find a seat, singer-songwriter Bret Graham launches into Kris Kristofferson's 1970s hit, "Why Me, Lord?"—sounding uncannily like Kristofferson himself, who has in fact played here.

Hands clap, little kids and servers dance along, and I hear a few shouts of "hallelujah!"

Gruene Hall's monthly Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist started 18 years ago with a birthday celebration for Pat Molak, co-owner of the New Braunfels dance hall and The Gristmill River Restaurant next door.

"We had a party the night before and did brunch on Sunday morning at the Gristmill with a gospel music band, Bells of Joy," recalls Mary Jane Nalley, Molak's business partner. "Pretty soon, we started doing it every month, then moved it to the dance hall because it grew bigger than the restaurant could handle. It's a tradition now."

Early on, Molak asked Graham to emcee the event, which is based on a New Orleans-style gospel brunch.

"I had played at Gruene Hall for about a year, and Pat knew I threw some gospel music into my sets," says Graham, who lives in the nearby community of Canyon Lake.

As the show took shape as a monthly offering, the Austin-based Bells of Joy stayed on board, and Nalley called Buckner Fanning, retired longtime pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, and invited him to give a brief sermon. Nalley had heard one of Fanning's radio segments and read his book, *God Drives a Pickup Truck*.

"I just called Fanning up cold, told him about the brunch, and asked if he'd come and give us 10 minutes of uplifting words of wisdom," she says. "When he said yes, I couldn't even believe it."

The Gospel Silvertones, also from Austin, later replaced the Bells of Joy, whose members had mostly retired over the years. Fanning passed away in 2016 at 89, and the show has yet to

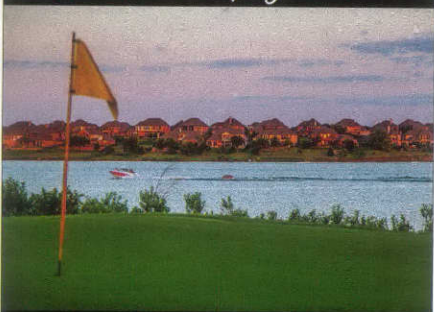


Brian Murphy of the Gospel Silvertones works the crowd at Gruene Hall's Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist.

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fill his impressive shoes. But Graham says the event just keeps getting better.

"I think it was sort of meant to be," Graham adds. "I went to Nashville back in the early '90s with hopes of making it, like a lot of people. I prayed for direction and really feel God led me to continue what I was doing, but some place I liked better. Texas seemed like that place. When Pat asked me to emcee the brunch, that gave me an opportunity to try to become this thing I set out to be—a guy who can play guitar and sing and entertain, all at the same time."

After singing for about 30 minutes, Graham and his four-member band turn the stage over to the Silvertones. "I can't say enough good stuff about the

Ready yourself for a buffet of breakfast and the Holy Spirit at Gruene Hall's Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist.

Silvertones; they bring real high energy, soul, and passion," Graham says.

As if to prove his point, when the Silvertones break into "This Little Light of Mine," all over the hall people wave their index fingers in the air and sing along. Some also join in when lead singer Brian Murphy belts out "People Get Ready," a 1965 hit by The Impressions: "There's a train a-comin'; you don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord." The band follows that with a rousing version of the Doobie Brothers hit "Without Love." Hands clap, little kids and the servers dance

along, and I even hear a few shouts of “hallelujah!”—not something you’d normally expect in a bona fide honky tonk.

“To me, there is a spirit to Gruene Hall, a good feeling when you walk in,” Graham says. “It takes you back in time, to how it used to be in Texas. Great food and great music.”

And plenty of both: the buffet prepared by The Gristmill includes turkey breast, roast beef, smoked Polish wedding sausage, pepper bacon, garlic mashed potatoes, migas, scrambled eggs, Texas French toast, buttermilk biscuits, cream gravy, fried apples, fresh fruit, and fresh hot sauce and tomatillo verde sauce.

No doubt this spread would impress the German settlers who built Gruene Hall in 1878, making it one of the state’s oldest dance halls. The building served as a community center, hosting weekly dances and everything

from high school graduations to badger fights. By the 1970s, with the dance hall and surrounding structures endangered by plans for housing development, preservationists managed to secure Gruene’s listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Nalley and Molak got involved when both became disenchanted with their jobs in San Antonio—Nalley in banking and Molak in real estate. Together, the friends prowled the Hill Country looking for a dance hall. Molak bought Gruene Hall and later rescued the nearby water tower and a former cotton gin and gristmill building that became the restaurant. Nalley joined the business within a couple of years.

Gruene Hall found its groove nurturing many former “new talents,” such as George Strait and Lyle Lovett, while offering big names—Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, and Kristofferson among them—the chance to

play in an intimate venue with historic character.

During my visit, Graham rejoins the Silvertones onstage for the final few songs. The morning ends, as always, with “When the Saints Go Marching In,” a New Orleans tradition and fitting benediction. Servers in cowboy hats and boots lead dancers through the picnic tables, napkins swinging above their heads in time with the music.

You definitely want to be in this number. **L**



GRUENE HALL

is at 1281 Gruene Road in New Braunfels. The Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist is held the second Sunday of the month (except January), 10:30 a.m.-noon. Tickets cost \$30 adults, \$15 children. Call **830/629-5077**; www.gruenehall.com.

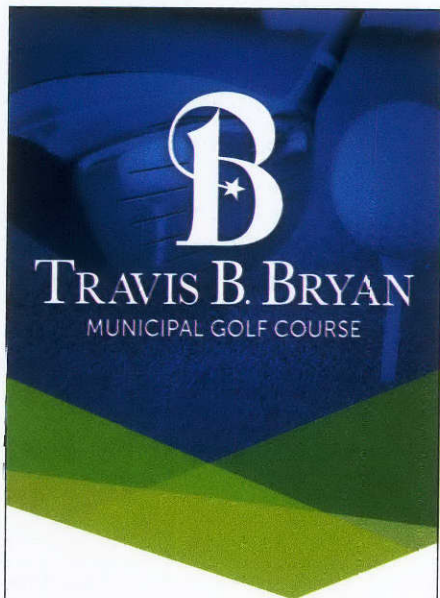
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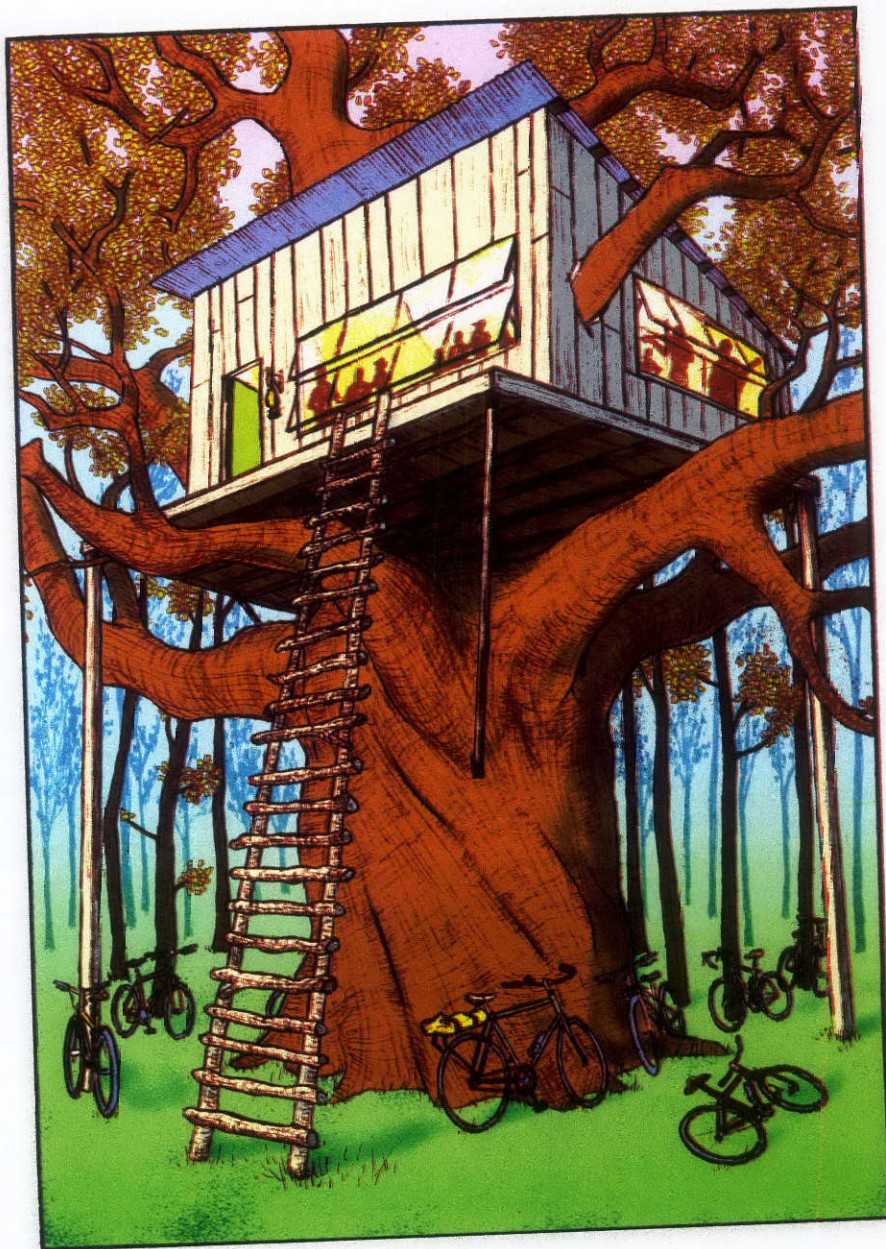
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Vision with Volume

The Flatstock poster show at South by Southwest

story by **Matt Joyce**

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'LL FIND AT SOUTH by Southwest, Austin's annual summit of creative industries and popular culture. President Obama showed up in 2016 to talk technology and tacos. In 2012, Dcrites hosted a party with rapper Snoop Dogg performing on a stage built to look like a five-story snack vending machine. And in 2007, Twitter famously took flight during the conference. The cultural stampede can be a bit overwhelming, especially for those who aren't jetting in on business accounts to network at the festival's technology, film, and music conventions. But tucked within the Austin Convention Center, there's an engaging

Flatstock is one of SXSW's most accessible activities for curious locals and tourists.

exhibition that is one of SXSW's most accessible activities for curious locals and tourists: the Flatstock poster show.

Organized by the American Poster Institute, Flatstock draws about 80 poster artists to Austin each year during the SXSW Music Festival. The artists come from across the globe to mingle with peers, market their work to bands and industry types, and display their screen-printed posters, particularly music posters promoting bands, concerts, and festivals.

Strolling through Flatstock feels somewhat like navigating a carnival midway as barkers pitch their games and rides. But it's not the artists themselves calling out; it's their splashy artwork that screams from the walls: Don't miss this rock show! Never forget that amazing festival! Check out my crazy colorful design!

"These are all real grassroots designers making artwork basically as close to from the soul as you can get in the world of commercial art," says Mark Brickey, a graphic designer from Los Angeles who hosts a podcast called *Adventures in Design*. "Where you and I are standing right now, this is the intersection where commercial art and fine art meet."

Flatstock is free and kid-friendly and features a stage that hosts about six bands each afternoon. Because the exhibition is located at the heart of the conference, thousands of touring musicians, industry reps, and fans filter through, providing a glimpse of the energetic, creative, and collaborative spirit that makes SXSW such a touchstone of popular culture.

Flatstock also bolsters the fundamental artistic element of music by honoring handmade artwork. The screen-printed posters offer balance to an industry that now reaches its audience mostly through touchscreens.

"The popularity of gig posters has been a reaction to the coldness of digital media," says Terrence Ryan, aka Lil' Tuffy, a San Francisco artist and co-president of the American Poster

Institute. "The decline of music packaging—CD sales and record sales—has also been a factor. There's a desire to have things that are handmade and personal."

Rock poster artwork traces its roots to the 1960s in San Francisco and Austin, where underground comic-book artists were recruited to draw posters promoting concerts. At Flatstock,

elements of Austin's music history from the past 40 years are on display at a booth hosted by the South Austin Popular Culture Center.

Artist Danny Garrett held court at the booth last year, signing copies of his book *Weird yet Strange: Notes from an Austin Music Artist*. Garrett started drawing music posters in 1971 and has worked with the likes of Willie Nelson,



Festival season is tuning up this spring on San Marcos' Downtown Square.

April 7-9: Swing On The Square features all things Western Swing – bands, dance contest and a Gospel Brunch with BBQ.

April 8: Brew Hop showcases breweries at downtown stops around the square with craft beers and food pairings.

April 28-29: MR Fest spotlights local and regional indie artists at multiple venues around the square.

Second Saturdays: Art Squared Art Market features artisan booths and live music on the lawn.

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Andy McDougall, of British Columbia, Canada, will return this year to demonstrate screen-printing at SXSW's Flatstock Poster Show. Below, the Jackknife booth.



Hopewell's imaginative artwork reflects the incredible diversity on display among the 55 booths in the convention center. Most of the posters cost about \$30, and many of the artists also sell their artwork on lower-priced collectibles like T-shirts, koozies, pins, and stickers. Although most of the posters promote bands and concerts, you'll also see artwork related to sports, politics, movies, and nature.

That's what I find at the Biscuit Press booth featuring the screen prints of Austin artist Dan Grissom. Among Grissom's posters was one depicting the tranquil scene of a stout, gnarly tree set in the middle of a deep forest at dusk. Bicycles lean against the base of the trunk, and a ladder climbs to a tree house built into the canopy of twisting branches. Warm yellow light glows from the tree house windows, highlighting the silhouettes of people playing instruments, dancing, and visiting. I paused as the scene transported me away from the noisy convention center and into the forest, riding my bike

Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Antone's, the seminal Austin blues club.

"The very fact that there still is a gig poster scene going on and the fact that for more than a dozen years now it's had a place at South by Southwest and other music conferences, I think that's incredible," Garrett says. "Because really, this whole thing started out with people trying to describe psychedelic music as it was emerging in the mid-'60s in San Francisco with art. I think that led directly to what me and my colleagues did, and it's still going on."

Flatstock itself, which hosts a series of poster shows throughout the year in the United States and Europe, has certainly had a hand in perpetuating

poster art since the show debuted in San Francisco in 2002. In 2016, I met two artists who took up printmaking after discovering it during visits to SXSW. One of them was Chris Hopewell, a poster artist from Bristol, England, whose Jackknife studio's eye-catching work draws on the imagery of comic-book heroines, beer can labels, and motorcycles.

"I came to South by Southwest because I was working in a different branch of music at the time, making music videos, and I discovered this," Hopewell says. "I fell in love with the whole idea of poster making, so I went back and bought a printing deck and started doing it."

to a tree-house gathering with friends and music—a magical adult fairyland of sorts.

As it turns out, Grissom had created the poster only a couple of weeks earlier for a Dallas-based environmental charity called RETREET. The group organizes weekend “Retreets” to plant trees for residents in places that have been damaged by natural disasters, while taking along their bikes for transportation and recreational rides. Since its founding in 2012, RETREET has planted trees in Bastrop, Wimberley, Lancaster, Cleburne, Rowlett, and the Possum Kingdom area as well as out of state.

“The popularity of gig posters has been a reaction to the coldness of digital media. There’s a desire to have things that are handmade and personal.”

Grady McGahan, the founder and director of RETREET, tells me later that Grissom’s poster captures RETREET’s fundamental values of trees, community, inclusion, and fun. “The tree is unique in that forest. It has a Berenstain Bears feel to it,” he says. “There’s a nostalgia for me looking at that image, nostalgia for this new thing that I think is a powerful motif that really draws you in: Come and climb this ladder, we’re having a great time up here, everyone is welcome.”

Now framed and hanging on a wall of my home, the poster evokes a similar reaction when I pause for a moment to focus on it or introduce the scene to friends. You truly never know what you’ll find at South by Southwest. 🌲



FLATSTOCK

takes place March 16-18 in Hall 4 of the Austin Convention Center during the South by Southwest Conference & Festivals. Admission is free.

www.sxsw.com/exhibitions/flatstock

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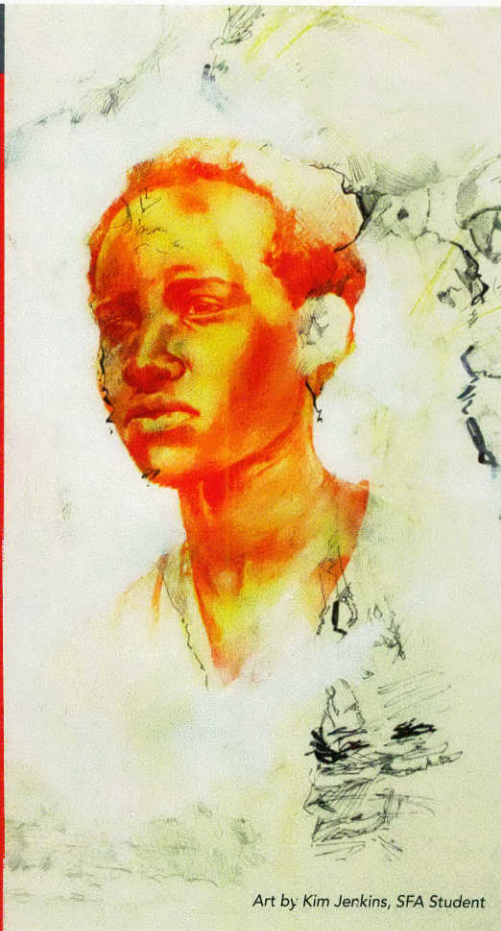
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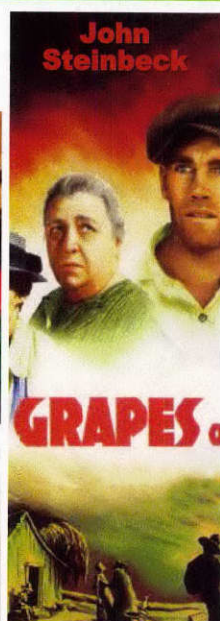
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Hidden Delights

Finding The Shed near Weatherford takes a little effort, but it's well worth the hunt

story by Amanda Ogle



The Shed owner Jeff Carr spent a year learning the art of baking before opening his eatery.

AUTHOR ROALD DAHL WROTE, “THE GREATEST secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places.” And when it comes to divine grub located in an unlikely shop, his words ring true.

Twenty miles west of Fort Worth on Interstate 20, David’s Stove Shop is a jackpot for antiques, wood stoves and grills, decor, and just about anything under the sun. And while many visitors come for the one-of-a-kind shopping, the store has seen an explosion of guests in the past few years thanks to the addition of The Shed, tucked away in the west side of the building.

After arriving with a friend and not seeing a sign anywhere noting The Shed’s location, we follow our noses. Walking through the Stove Shop past rows and rooms of trinkets, the scent of fresh sourdough and jalapeño bread intensifies.

In the cozy space that holds about 75 people, owner and chef Jeff Carr is hard at work in the 9-by-10-foot kitchen, building massive roast beef sandwiches, cheeseburgers, and more. Carr

“If you’d have told me when we first started that people would line up for 45 minutes to order, I would’ve told you that you were crazy,” Carr says.

opened The Shed after working for two decades in accounting. “I guess it was kind of a mid-life crisis,” Carr jokes. “I had just turned 40, and it was time for something new.”

While cooking always came naturally to Carr, he’d never worked with bread and decided to challenge himself. He spent a year learning the science behind bread making, and then began bringing his breads out to David’s Stove Shop on Saturdays when owner and longtime family friend David Clack makes briskets and ribs for grill demonstrations. Slowly but surely, Carr built a cult following.

The Shed came into being after Carr went from joining Saturday grill demonstrations to operating full-time. After clearing out a little room in the west end of the building, he opened up shop in November 2011. Through word-of-mouth alone, The Shed has grown from four or five tables and a bakery case to about 10 tables, a bakery case and, a constant stream of hungry patrons. “If you’d have told me when we first started that people would line up for 45 minutes to order, I would’ve told you that you were crazy,” Carr says.

After making our way through the line, we snag a booth and wait for lunch. My eyes dance across the walls at the eclectic merchandise: Western photos featuring windmills and saddles, metal hubcaps, antique oatmeal containers, and glowing string lights. Also proudly displayed are awards stating “Best Bread” and “Parker County’s Favorite Sandwich.” I watch the staff buzz around carrying trays when one stops at my table and delivers my side order of the soup of the day: fire-roasted red pepper cream. The smooth soup hits the spot, and it’s all I can do to not devour all of its velvety goodness before my main dish comes. As my lunch buddy slows down on his chips, our main courses arrive. Everything about the food screams homemade, from the grilled, buttery, jalapeño bread nestling



Patrons of The Shed often travel 50 miles or more to enjoy its homemade specialties.



THE SHED

The Shed at David's Stove Shop is at 4019 Fort Worth Highway (I-20) in Hudson Oaks. Hours: Tue-Sat 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Call **817/594-5533**; www.lunchbreadpie.com.

the thick-carved turkey and gooey white cheese on my hot turkey melt (\$6.75 for the small, \$8 for the large) to my friend's monstrous hot roast beef sandwich (\$7.50 for the small, \$9 for the large). The soft bun hugs a huge portion of hot roast beef, cheese, and grilled peppers and onions. My friend struggles to fit the sandwich in his two hands. Intrigued, I taste his sandwich but not before dipping it in the *au jus* on the side. It's every bit as good as my melt, if not better.

This is exactly how Carr wants his food to be, and he works hard creating this homespun experience. "We prepare all of the breads ourselves. We make our own meats for sandwiches. We smoke our own turkeys and cook our own roast beef," Carr says. He likes to have a hand in everything that comes out of the kitchen, whether it's a brisket taco special or a fried bologna sandwich.

Stuffed but fighting a sweet tooth, my friend and I make our way up to the bakery case to order dessert to-go. Everything from pecan and apple pies to peach hard pies and mountainous cupcakes occupy the case, but we decide on two distinctive items: caramel pumpkin pecan pie and cowboy pie, a Shed specialty. As we're paying, I overhear a man telling his food runner just how much he loves this spot. "I traveled over 50 miles to come here; I brought my mom here from Chicago and said 'don't mess around with anything else in town, come here,'" he says. Carr regularly hears of people traveling 50 miles or more to eat at The Shed. "It's an amazing feeling," he says. "I hear people say, 'we drove here from Dallas.' It blows me away every time."

Between The Shed's incredible eats

and the finds at David's Stove Shop, this spot is a destination in itself, and people love to think it's their own hidden gem. "We don't have a sign, we don't advertise, you have to have heard about it or find it. People have a kind of ownership over it simply because they had to find it," Carr says.

He never meant to not advertise or put up a sign; it's just how things evolved. "We've just left it alone and let it do its thing," he explains. "And now it's worked, so why bother messing with something that already works?"

Walking around David's Stove Shop after lunch, I find many intriguing items to avert my attention from my full belly. I stop to check out an antique barber chair, metal yard decor, cast-iron pans of all shapes and sizes, and a room of wooden rocking chairs, among other treasures. Back on the road, I think about how great it is to know about such a place and vow not to tell anyone. Then, I take out my phone and invite another friend for next week because I want everyone in on this little secret. **L**

RECIPE

COWBOY PIE

Courtesy of Jeff Carr,
The Shed at David's Stove Shop

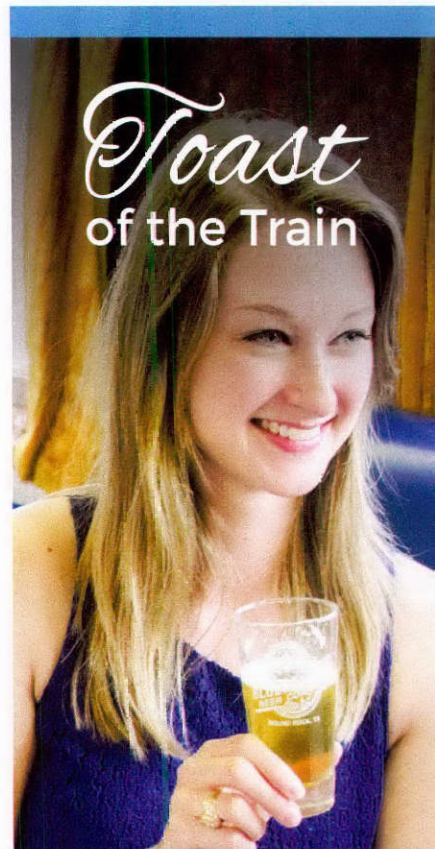
In a large bowl mix:

- ♦ 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- ♦ 2 eggs
- ♦ 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ♦ 1 teaspoon salt

Add:

- ♦ 3/4 cup pecans
- ♦ 3/4 cup walnuts
- ♦ 3/4 cup peanuts
- ♦ 3/4 cup chocolate chips
- ♦ 3/4 cup white chocolate chips
- ♦ 3/4 cup butterscotch chips
- ♦ 1 1/2 cups old-fashioned oatmeal

Stir together, and pour in prepared deep-dish pie shell. Bake at 350° for 25-30 mins until golden brown and set. You may cover with a foil tent after 20 mins to prevent over browning.



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Meringue and Memories

Oxbow Bakery in Palestine serves old-timey goodness

story by **Dana Goolsby**

THERE IS A SWEET SPOT IN EAST TEXAS WHERE mile-high meringue and heritage are folded into the ultimate dessert experience. Nestled along the banks of Caddo Creek in Old Town Palestine, Oxbow Bakery is a slice of old-timey heaven and a portal to nostalgic memories.

Becky and David Wolfe, a mother-son pie-making duo, quickly earned a following after opening Oxbow—originally a simple antiques store—in 2009. The building, once a mule barn, seemed perfect for showcasing collectibles from the past. “We wouldn’t do this anywhere else,” David says. “It’s a jewel down here in Old Town.”

Commerce in Old Town Palestine, today an entertainment and dining hub located about two blocks west of the 1914 Anderson County Courthouse, dates to the days when Native Americans

traded along Caddo Creek. In the early 19th century, Old Town was Palestine’s luminary district, housing equipment used to light the gas-fueled street lanterns. Today, Old Town seems mostly untouched by time.

Stepping inside the Wolfes’ shop, I notice subway tiles sparkling from the kitchen area, bordered by antique pie cases and seed bins. Vintage signs hang on the walls, and an impressive buffalo mount guards the retail shelves, which are stocked with edible gifts, including duck-fat caramels, bread and cookie mixes, and bags of local coffee.

Soon after opening the antiques store, Becky realized the business needed “a little something extra” to increase traffic, so she decided to bake pies. She started with a handwritten chocolate meringue recipe she found

The shelves are stocked with edible gifts, including duck-fat caramels, bread and cookie mixes, and bags of local coffee.

More than a dozen varieties of pie await at Oxbow Bakery in Palestine, which reopened with a new look in October.

tucked away in her mother's notebook and then began tweaking family recipes until she got them just right. "I started with one chocolate meringue and one coconut pie," she recalls.

"Every few months we added more flavors until we had about 15 pies," says David, who makes piecrust several times a day. Over the last year, David also has learned how to make the fillings "just like mama made them." These days, the antique Oxbow pie cases offer at least a dozen delectable flavors at any given time.

My first flavor was meant to be strawberry. Late one afternoon a few years ago, I ventured into the bakery in search of the much-talked-about strawberry pie. David smiled, told me he was out, and suggested I come earlier next time. Disappointed at first, I snagged the last slice of banana blueberry pie, and tasting it, I had an epiphany. Pie was no longer just for the holidays.

RECIPE

OXBOW'S BUTTERMILK PECAN PIE

For the crust, use your favorite recipe or a good commercial piecrust.

- ♦ 1 stick butter (1/2 cup)
- ♦ 2 cups sugar
- ♦ 1/2 cup flour
- ♦ 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ♦ 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- ♦ 4 eggs
- ♦ 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ♦ 1 cup buttermilk
- ♦ 1 1/4 cups chopped pecans



Melt butter and place in a large bowl. Add sugar, flour, salt, and nutmeg. Beat with a mixer, then add eggs, vanilla, and buttermilk, scraping sides and bottom of the bowl. Sprinkle chopped pecans on the crust, then pour the mixture over the pecans. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 300 degrees. Bake until filling sets, about an hour.

HAVE FUN!

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I returned the following week, earlier this time—but not early enough. In lieu of strawberry, I settled for pineapple meringue. As I slid my fork through the towering meringue and pineapple filling to the flaky crust, the trifecta of textures and tropical flavor made me grin from ear to ear. A few weeks later, arriving before noon, I finally got to try Oxbow's strawberry pie;

the combination of sweet berries, a delicate crust, and whipped cream tasted like springtime on a plate. Since then, I've learned the best way to eat Oxbow pie is with friends, so you can sample multiple flavors at once. (I've also learned if you show up to any gathering with an Oxbow pie, you will leave with new friends.)

While the Wolfes have perfected the

art of pie making, small business ownership has provided other challenges. During the Wolfes' sixth year of pie baking, disaster struck. After historic flooding in spring 2016, the Wolfes arrived to their shop in Old Town to find almost a total loss. Most of the Old Town businesses were damaged, but Oxbow was inundated to within feet of the ceiling. "We lost almost everything," David says.

As the Wolfe family transformed the old mule barn once again, customers waited with bated breath for the Oxbow pie drought to end. After cleanup and repairs, David and his wife, Breezy, began to execute their vision for the business' new look.

On October 23, 2016, Oxbow reopened. The bakery, now complete with a commercial oven and modern kitchen features, allows the Wolfes to bake 50 to 60 pies daily, practically doubling pie production. An open kitchen allows patrons to see how the pretty pies are made. The wooden tables and benches have been replaced with vintage diner booths and retro tables and chairs. Even the front porch got a makeover: Vintage metal lawn chairs encourage guests to linger and get to know each other.

Today, Oxbow has risen from the sludge and looks better than ever; more importantly, the pies taste as delicious as they always have. The pie cases beckon with more than a dozen delectable flavors, ranging from pecan praline cream to coconut meringue. Other favorites include the popular strawberry pie (when in season), banana blueberry, and traditional flavors such as chocolate meringue and butter-milk. You can try them all, slice-by-slice, in Old Town Palestine. 🍌

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The Best Yodeler in the World

A Bavarian-Texan shindig at Walburg German Restaurant

story by **Sofia Sokolove**



OFF A DARK WINDING ROAD ABOUT FOUR miles northeast of Georgetown, a lively German-style celebration unfolds most weekends. Or at least that's the rumor my friend Adam and I are acting on when we head out from Austin toward Walburg on a recent Friday evening.

When we arrive at our destination, the Walburg German Restaurant, the entrance looks so unassuming that we wonder if we've come to the right place. Despite a brightly lit marquee, the hard-lettered writing on the entrance reads "Groceries, dry goods, hardware, produce, cotton"—words that hint at the building's history. In fact, the 1882 building was once Walburg's mercantile store, and if you look closely at the brick, you can make out the name of the building's first owner: Hy Doering, a German immigrant who named his dry goods store for his hometown. Hanging below these vestiges of history, newer signage

For three decades, the Walburg German Restaurant has welcomed guests with live music, Bavarian-Texas cuisine, and dancing. Prost!

greet visitors with a more recent description: "Biergarten. German-American Cuisine."

As we push open the red double doors, we know we're in the right place after all. The happy sounds of clinking glasses and chatter greet us. Friends converge at long wooden tables covered in blue-and-white checkered oilcloth, which stretch nearly 100 feet from the door to the foot of a wooden stage, where a man sings in a jaunty mix of German and English. We pick a spot at a communal table, and with a little navigational help from our server, we order beers from a seasonal

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Ronny Tippelt (on accordion) and the **Walburg Boys** serve as the house band; when Ronny starts yodeling, listen up.

list featuring nearly a dozen German varieties on draft. Toasting with our frosty liter-size beers (or as an English friend of mine likes to call them, “proper” pints), we take a moment to look around.

The space feels a little like a beer hall, a little like a museum, and a little like an old-fashioned Hill Country lake house. Long green garlands and faded flags (representing the home countries and states of Walburg employees throughout the years) hang from the ceiling. There’s plenty of wall space to cover, and the restaurant takes full advantage. On the left side of our table, a colorful mural depicting a pastoral scene in Germany takes up nearly a third of the wall. On another wall, a bowed wooden shelf displays nearly a hundred or so mismatched mugs and ceramic beer steins. Half of the eclectic collection, we learn, belongs to regular customers who are part of a “stein club” and choose to leave their mugs at the restaurant to use on each visit.

Once we’re done admiring the

decor, it’s time to get serious about our food order. There’s a generous buffet that features most of Walburg’s menu items, and the faces of satisfied customers heading to their tables with heaping plates of sausages, sauerkraut, and creamy mashed potatoes make a convincing case for that route. But Adam and I each have our eyes on a specific menu item, and so we decide to order à la carte: The Bavarian Sausage Plate for him, and the veal Wiener-schnitzel for me, because “when in Germany,” right?

Walburg German Restaurant boasts of having a “Bavarian/Texas” kitchen, featuring authentic Bavarian dishes alongside Texas-German hybrids like “Cordon Bleu” (breaded chicken, pork, or veal stuffed with ham and cheese) and Texas-style grilled rib-eye steaks. And while our neighbor’s steak looks perfectly juicy, I’m glad we’re game for the specialties of the house.

There's little fuss about the presentation of either dish, but the entrées are both so tasty that it comes off as part of the charm. Adam's three different sausages—a house-made pork sausage, a veal Munich-style link, and a jalapeño curry wurst—are all delicious, but the real star of his plate is the sauerkraut. Not too tart, with the perfect amount of caraway seeds adding a subtle earthiness, it's so good I consider ordering a serving to take home. Meanwhile, my veal schnitzel hits all the right notes with side dishes of mashed potatoes and red cabbage.

As we're digging into a chilled piece of Bienenstich for dessert (an almond-topped, custard-filled cake that resembles a sophisticated Twinkie), the singer onstage directs us outside. "About 159 feet away is the best yodeler in the world," he promises. Our server pours the rest of our beers into plastic cups, and off we go to the beer tent

behind the restaurant, eager to hear the yodeling.

The world-renowned yodeler, it turns out, is also the owner of Walburg German Restaurant: Ronny Tippelt, who plays Bavarian tunes with his band The Walburg Boys most weekends at the biergarten. Tippelt bought the space back in 1987, after following a romantic whim that eventually led him to Texas. "I thought I'd stay a few years," he says with a laugh when we catch up with him between sets. "I've been here for 30."

Tippelt opened his restaurant in 1988 to create a home base for musicians, and particularly for his band. "You can send them on tour for a little bit," he says, "but they need a nest." Looking around the bustling beer tent and just outside, where kids scamper about and teens run back and forth from a small arcade room, it's clear Tippelt has created a home for more



**THE WALBURG
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Walburg. Closed Mon-Tue.
Call **512/863-8440**;
www.walburgrestaurant.net.

than musicians. "I see women with strollers," he says, "and I remember when *they* were in strollers."

As Tippelt heads back onstage, we nurse our final sips of bock and settle in to enjoy the music. As soon as he starts his high-pitched calls and yips, I'm mesmerized. "Whatever it is he's doing," I say to Adam, "it's incredibly impressive."

It's easy to see why people come back again and again to the Walburg German Restaurant: Somehow it feels like a new adventure while reminding us of a place we've enjoyed a million times before. **L**

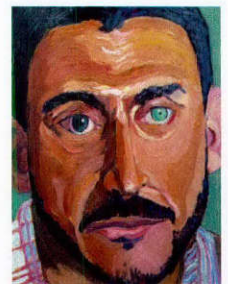
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A Red River Road Trip

Sweeping vistas, intriguing shops,
and estate wines await

Story by June Naylor
Photographs by Joel Salcido



Though a North

On a clear day north of Saint Jo, the sandbars and shallows of the Red River invite reflection.

Texas native,

I somehow never considered the Red River Valley a great getaway option—until recently. Tips from savvy friends piqued my curiosity about the stretch of landscape between Gainesville and Wichita Falls. Once my husband and I packed a bag and hit the highway, we quickly found makings for the perfect road trip, one populated with intriguing discoveries in a pair of tiny towns imbued with sizable doses of Chisholm Trail history. Best of all, we reveled in the quiet of lonely drives on lovely two-lane roads that climb and fall with the ridges following the famous river. In spite of its seeming remoteness, the Red River Valley reveals jewels easily mined simply by wandering along well-worn sidewalks and cruising raw, rewarding terrain. Here's how our week-end adventure unfolded.

We reached the town of Saint Jo, a community of about 1,000 residents in Montague County, less than 90 minutes after leaving Fort Worth. And because I'm a cowgirl at heart—my cowboy boots are my favorite footwear and I've rarely seen a horse I didn't yearn to ride—our first mission in Saint Jo was to find artist Donna Howell-Sickles. A descendent of Saint Jo founder Joseph Howell, Donna is famous for her mixed-media artworks depicting contemporary cowgirls and Western wildlife, thus earning her a spot in Fort Worth's National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame.

Fortunately, the artist is ever-present in the elegant, expansive Davis & Blevins Gallery she and her husband, John, opened on the town square in 2010. We found her greeting guests with the grace that emanates from her art, so we first amused ourselves by perusing gifts, including beaded necklaces, leather bracelets, silver-and-turquoise trays, and handmade scarves in the first of her three storefronts. The

Red River Beauty Opening spread:

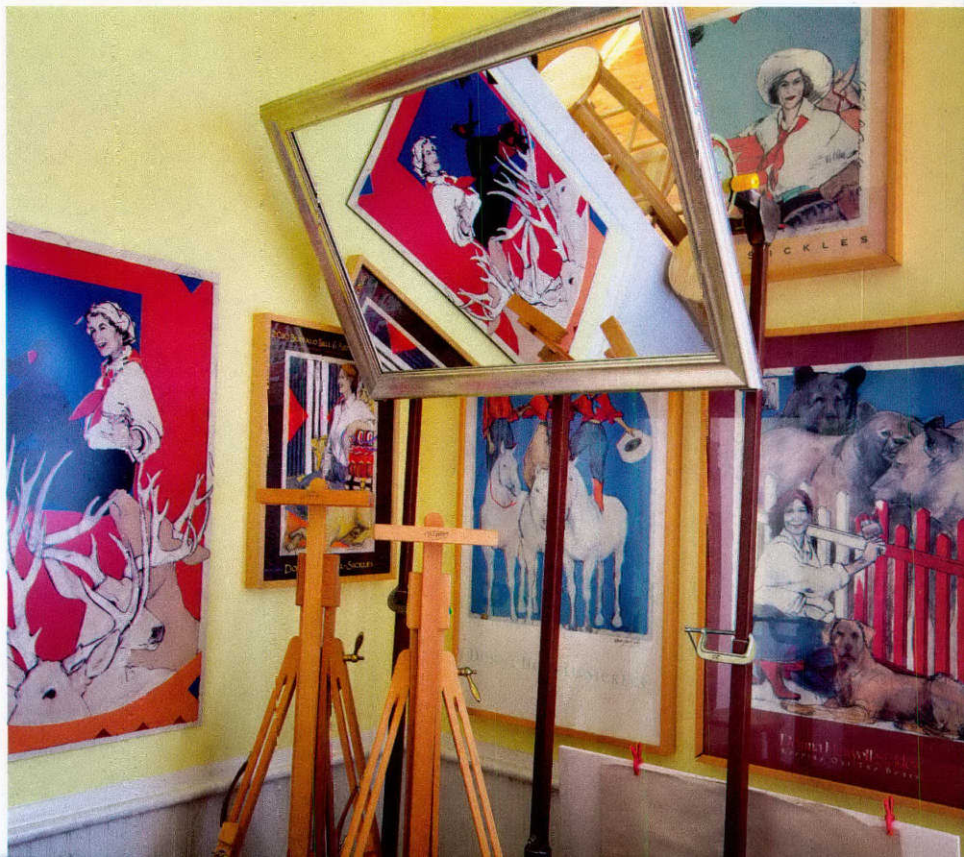
Artist Donna Howell-Sickles at her Saint Jo studio. A pastoral view along FM 2953 just south of the Red River.

Left, an expansive view of the Red River. Below: Donna Howell-Sickles' works capture the spirit of the American cowgirl.

two adjacent gallery spaces display Donna's original works, as well as sculpture, paintings, and drawings by more than 20 colleagues. We were struck by the extraordinary quality of work, which reminded us of the kind you'd find in galleries in Santa Fe, Aspen, and Scottsdale.

Once Donna learned that my husband, Marshall, is also an artist, she offered to give us a tour of her upstairs studio. Not only did we meet her very sweet Australian shepherd, Rubie, we were able to see various easels revealing her creative process with charcoal, pastel, and acrylic. When I asked her if the cowgirls are women she knows, her brown eyes twinkled as she said, "I always know them in spirit."

Eventually, we continued down Main Street to see more of Saint Jo, poking our heads past the swinging wooden doors of the Stonewall Saloon Museum, a wonderfully creaky 1873 stone building that has housed various businesses over the years, including bars, a bank, and allegedly a brothel. After fortifying ourselves with a chicken-fried steak at the adjacent Lazy Heart Grill, a friendly spot with a collection of old boots atop a piano, we moseyed on to look around other shops. My favorite, a boutique called Panache, enticed me with a selection of dishtowels, heavy wine goblets, scented candles, local olive oils, and a brass bracelet bearing the shape of Texas, embossed with the word "Howdy."



With much ground yet to cover, we made our way 13 miles northwest along US 82 to the town of Nocona. Just before we pulled into the vintage downtown, we took a moment to photograph the abandoned, art deco-era Nocona Boot Factory building. The leather goods industry, and particularly the cowboy boot manufacturing business, put the town on the map in the 1880s during the cattle-drive era and made it relevant long after the oil boom of the 1920s and 1930s ran its course.

Nocona boots are no longer made in Texas, but the company's boot-making legacy lives on, thanks in part to the Boot Store on Clay Street, the main thoroughfare in downtown Nocona. Occupying the 1925 brick building where Nocona got its start, the retail operation brims with goods made by two local boot companies, Fenoglio Boot Company and James Montague Boots. The selection of boots for men, women, and children runs the gamut from classic Western styles to wildly colorful, modern designs. Along with footwear, the shop also carries accessories, such as hats, necklaces, scarves, and other Western-inspired clothing.

Next door, Nokona American Ballgloves offers regular tours of its facility, which has been producing handmade gloves since 1934. We missed the factory tour, but the museum and retail store tell the fascinating history of still another leather crafter that has served the nation for decades.

The entire stretch of Clay Street, we found, offers varied portals to history. We realized right away that we would need the better part of a day to fully explore the Horton Classic Car Museum, a collection so large that it spreads throughout several downtown buildings. The cool rides, some 140 in all, each in pristine condition, belong to Pete and Barbara Horton,

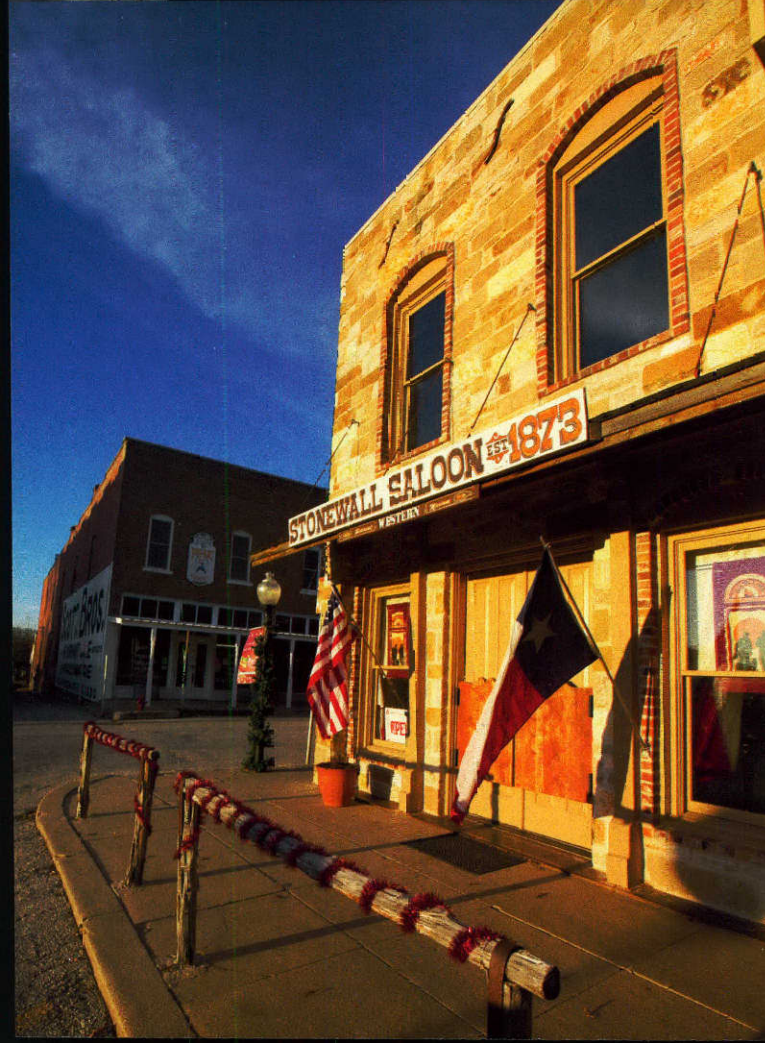
philanthropic residents who've helped Nocona restore several structures downtown. The majority of their beautiful American vintage and muscle cars (including more than 40 Corvettes dating to the 1950s) reside in a renovated Ford dealership festooned with enough neon and other flashy lighting to rival the Las Vegas Strip.

We enjoyed learning more history as we stopped to explore the Red River Station Inn. Owners Bob and Kristal Ferguson invested lots of time and effort into renovating the building, using found items like old windmills, metal awnings, and aged shiplap boards to add personality and warmth to the interior. Best of all, the Fergusons share a different story from Montague County heritage in each of the inn's 10 rooms; my favorites were the Mose Johnson Room, with a chicken motif that relates to a local poultry ranch, and the Amon G. Carter Room, honoring the founder of the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, who grew up in Nocona.

The inn also makes guests feel welcome with its upstairs lounge area, which doubles as a breakfast room and afternoon happy-hour spot. Before

Red River Ramble
Below: The back roads north of Saint Jo reveal a pastoral landscape.
Right, winemaker Patrick Whitehead in the barrel room of Blue Ostrich Winery & Vineyard; the Horton Classic Car Museum in Nocona; Robert Fenoglio serves as head storyteller at Fenoglio Station BBQ; the Stonewall Saloon Museum occupies an 1873 building on the Saint Jo square.

A cool mist softens the horizon north of Saint Jo.



moving on, we lingered in the inn's gift shop, admiring locally made woodcraft items, such as hand-turned bowls, boxes, and ice cream scoops with beautiful wooden handles.

O N JUST ABOUT EVERY CORNER IN NOCONA, we met or heard about someone with the last name of Fenoglio. A large family whose ancestors first settled in Montague County in the 1880s, the Fenoglios are partners in many Nocona businesses that have helped the town retain its vibrant character. By rehabilitating some of the town's historic buildings, the Fenoglios have created special-events spaces like Gertie's Dance Hall and Daddy Sam's Saloon, places that come to life when Nocona hosts its big Mardi Gras celebration and other annual parties.

Over breakfast burritos one morning at a bustling café called Fenoglio Station, we enjoyed a lively chat with the proprietor, Nocona Mayor Robert Fenoglio, whose ease in pouring coffee and greeting regular clientele while directing his friendly staff matches his talent for reminiscing about his family's history. We particularly enjoyed looking at dozens of framed family photos hanging on the walls next to rusted signs and license plates.

Balancing our time investigating the towns, we allowed requisite hours to wander the northern reaches of Montague and Cooke counties, taking in the unexpected topography. Setting out for a ghost town called Spanish Fort, which lies just a few hundred yards south of the Red River, we marveled at the vastness of the green, hilly countryside populated by trees, farms, and assorted old and new pump jacks—and little else. In Spanish Fort, we found what must be a forgotten cemetery,

Wine and Ballgloves Below, Blue Ostrich Winery & Vineyard produces estate-grown viognier and tempranillo along with a rosé, dolcetto, blanc du bois, and several blends. Right, Nokona American Ballgloves offers tours on Monday and Friday.

with exquisitely crafted headstones noting the lives of people born in the early 1800s, many of whom didn't live beyond 20 or 30 years. On what was long ago a town square, we photographed a deserted general store, a Chisholm Trail marker, and a beautiful granite historical marker dated 1936, which reads, "Let the grandeur of the pioneer be discerned in the safety he has secured, in the good he has accomplished, in the civilization he has established."

On various drives over the weekend, our two-lane roaming led to a trio of places we know we'll visit again. At Blue Ostrich Winery & Vineyard, not quite nine miles north of Saint Jo, we found a crowd of wine lovers at the farmhouse-style tasting room. The surrounding land was once an ostrich farm, and two of the long-legged birds still hang around and occasionally greet guests at their fence. We purchased a bottle of the tempranillo, made from grapes grown on the estate, which we enjoyed later at home with a steak.

Seven miles east, Arché vineyard and winery houses its tasting room in a contemporary building overlooking the vineyards. As was the case at Blue

The surrounding land was once an ostrich farm, and two of the long-legged birds occasionally greet winery visitors.



ESSENTIALS

Red River Road Trip



SAINT JO:

Davis & Blevins Gallery,
108 S. Main St., 940/995-2786;
www.sjmainstreetgallery.com.

The Lazy Heart Grill,
101 S. Main St., 940/995-2967;
www.thelazyheartgrill.com.

Arché vineyard and winery,
228 Wagner Road, 214/536-6330;
www.archewines.com.

Blue Ostrich Winery & Vineyard,
5611 FM 2382, 940/995-3100;
www.blueostrich.net.

Blue Ostrich Guesthouse,
940/995-3100;
www.blueostrichwinery.wixsite.com/guesthouse. Stay in a four-bedroom home with front and back porches, swimming pool, and sweeping views.

Ancient Ovens,
857 S. Childress Road,
940/366-4255;
www.ancientovens.com.

Texas Kings Hotel,
104 S. Broad St., 940/995-2565;
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Find five spacious, individually decorated rooms in a vintage building on the town square.

NOCONA:

Fenoglio Station BBQ,
510 West US 82, 940/825-3843;
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The Boot Store,
101 Clay St., 940/825-3047.

Nokona American Ballgloves,
105 Clay St., 800/433-0957;
www.nokona.com.

Horton Classic Car Museum,
115 W. Walnut St., 940/825-1022;
www.hortonclassiccarmuseum.com.

Red River Station Inn,
219 Clay St., 940/825-3107;
www.redriverstationinn.com.

Veranda Inn,
1523 East US 82, 940/825-5111;
www.verandanocona.com.
The property offers RV camping in addition to 29 modern motel-style rooms.



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Ostrich, a lively afternoon crowd filled tables inside and out. We sampled two dry wines, the full-bodied syrah and the crisp rosé, the latter with a label featuring Donna Howell-Sickles' artwork. After buying a bottle of the rosé, we set off for a dinner that came highly recommended.

At Ancient Ovens, a weekend-only dining destination just a few minutes' drive from Arché, we enjoyed an evening filled with good food and conversation. Guests come from across Texas to dine here, and the reputation for the pizzas and breads served fresh from the patio's large, wood-burning oven extends well beyond: Owners Denis and Susan Moody say they've served guests from across the country. The dinners, which last about two hours, are so popular that the hundred or so seats are booked up weeks in advance.

And no wonder: The open-air dining experience is casual and friendly, with community seating at tables under sprawling oak trees and the stars above. The Moodys urge guests to bring their own wine and beer (encouraging folks to buy at the local wineries) to enjoy with the baked bread creations and thin-crust pizza. We especially liked the artichoke-spinach dip and the pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, spinach, and green olives. When the weather's intemperate, there's a sizable indoor space with another big stone pizza oven.

That such a great dinner and setting would await us on the trip was just another in a long line of surprises in our Red River Valley expedition. **L**

Unwinding after a day exploring the Red River Valley, writer June Naylor discovered that apricot fried pie and Texas rosé pair well. Photographer Joel Salcido says he found the beauty of the landscape north of Saint Jo "incredible and at times surreal."



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LONGTIME AUSTIN CLUBS
NURTURE THE CITY'S
LIVE MUSIC CULTURE

STORY BY
MICHAEL CORCORAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
TIFFANY HOFELDT



The Old Austin crowd loves to reminisce about all-night jam sessions with Stevie Ray Vaughan and the lost progressive-country paradise of the Armadillo World Headquarters. Listening to “Austalgists,” it might sound like all the great clubs closed long ago.

But on any night of the week, venues across Austin keep the beat going with bands playing the best of Texas music of all genres—from country to jazz and conjunto to punk. At least 16 of these clubs have been open for 16 years or more. Few cities in the world can match that claim. In club years, 16 is about 87.

It’s true that such beloved clubs as Liberty Lunch and Flipnotics have fallen victim to soaring real-estate values, but new ones take up the slack, praying to break even. And hot new acts like A Giant Dog, Walker Lukens, Tameca Jones, and Moving Panoramas reinforce the “Live Music Capital of the World’s” independent-music prominence.

It makes no financial sense to open a venue for live original music, considering the overhead of installing a stage and sound equipment, then hiring a band, soundman, and bouncers each night. The rock-and-roll crowd is getting old, and the kids want to watch Netflix or roll to laptop disco. A smarter investment would be a cocktail lounge. Or an emu farm.

Nevertheless, the energy of regularly hosting mini-concerts hooks certain people. The plot changes every night. “On a good night, when the band’s great and the folks are totally into it, you feel like, ‘Wow, I’m the nerd from high school and I did this,’” said Randall Stockton, who opened Beerland on Red River Street in 2001.

As Austin is becoming more like Dallas and Houston, one thing that distinguishes the Texas capital’s quality of life is the live-music scene. The almighty South by Southwest conference, which makes Austin the capital of the new world each mid-March, was built on the backs of Austin clubs. They are to Austin what the missions are to San Antonio, though these venues are not physically impressive. In fact, most are dumps. But you don’t go to a music venue because of how it looks from the street. And when the band’s really great, it doesn’t matter that the wall you’re leaning against is painted plywood. You pay your cover (which is usually low in Austin) because you’re chasing magic. It doesn’t always happen, but you don’t want to be home watching *Big Bang Theory* when it does.

The only true motivation for opening a live music venue is a passion for the music and community around it. That’s the characteristic that ties these clubs together, as well as newer clubs that will someday be legends, such as the Mohawk, Hotel Vegas, White Horse Saloon, Parish, and C-Boy’s. Live music clubs are the heart and soul of Austin.



CACTUS CAFE

opened 1979

Some folks like their music loud or danceable, but the Cactus serves those who want to hear words elevated by melody. Located in the Texas Union building at the University of Texas—in the same space where Janis Joplin got her start, then a café called the Chuck Wagon—the Cactus sets the “listening room” standard in town. Legendary songwriters like Townes Van Zandt, Lyle Lovett, and Nanci Griffith favored the Cactus when they were starting out. Now the club hosts younger artists who look up to that group, along with intimate shows by influential veterans.
2247 Guadalupe St.
www.cactuscafe.org

FLAMINGO CANTINA »

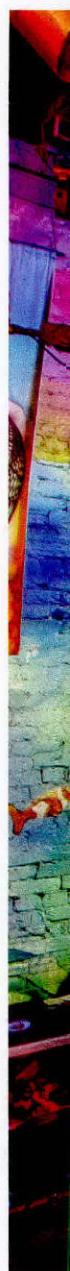
opened 1991

This Sixth Street club is known for Jah-dropping reggae, ska, worldbeat, and Latin music. It’s all for the love of irie, so it’s where Jamaican dub legend Lee Scratch Perry plays, even though he could fill bigger rooms. The Cantina is a tiny place, but tiered benches provide good sightlines, and there’s a rooftop deck.
515 E. Sixth St.
www.flamingocantina.com

STUBB’S »

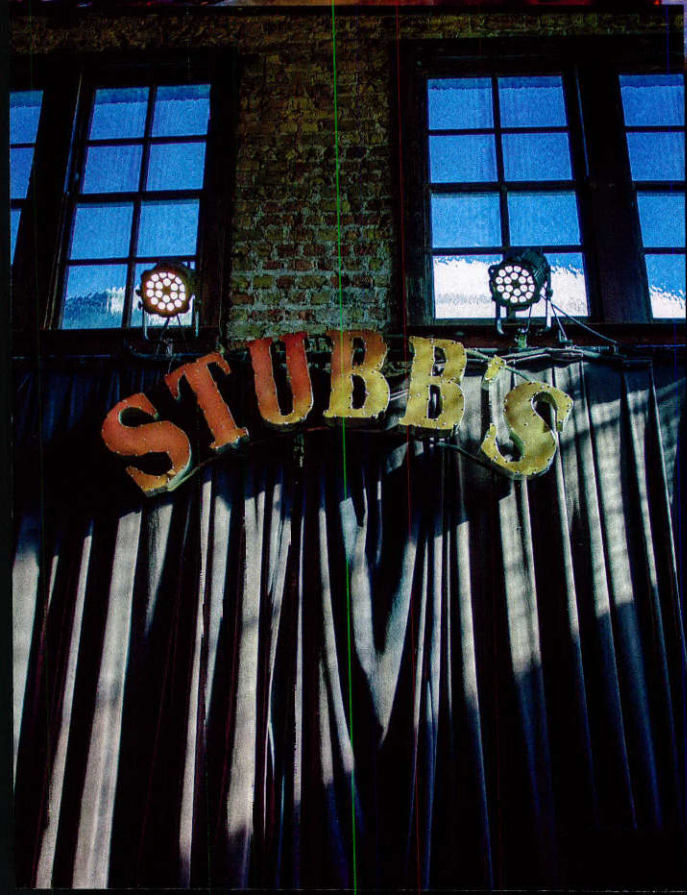
opened 1996

The Fugees played the weekend this barbecue restaurant opened its 2,100-capacity stage along Waller Creek. And Stubb’s has continued to draw staggering talent. Iggy and the Stooges, the Pixies, Merle Haggard, White Stripes, Loretta Lynn—you get the idea. There’s also an inside stage mostly for local bands and the very popular Sunday Gospel Brunch.
801 Red River St.
www.stubbsaustin.com





TOP, THE FLAMINGO CANTINA ON EAST SIXTH STREET HOSTS REGGAE, WORLD MUSIC, HIP HOP, AND MORE. BOTTOM, STUBB'S HAS AN OUTDOOR STAGE FOR BIG TOURING ACTS AND AN INDOOR STAGE FOR SMALLER SHOWS.





TOP, CAMPY DECOR GIVES THE CAROUSEL LOUNGE A TRAVELING CIRCUS VIBE. BOTTOM LEFT, ANTONE'S IS BEST KNOWN FOR THE BLUES. BOTTOM RIGHT, TWO-STEPPING IS A FINE TRADITION AT THE LITTLE LONGHORN.



CAROUSEL LOUNGE «

opened 1963

It's hard not to think about the "Pink Elephants On Parade" scene from Dumbo when you're at this ultra-campy, circus-themed dive bar. With an old wooden phone booth inside and crazy clown and elephant art, the Carousel is always the headliner, no matter who's on stage—usually four-piece rock bands on the weekends.

1110 E. 52nd St.

www.carouselounge.net

HOLE IN THE WALL

opened 1974

It was front-page news when the only consistent live music venue on Guadalupe Street adjacent to the UT campus closed in 2002. A parade of great talent played on the tiny stage in the front window overlooking "The Drag"—from Steve Earle to Timbuk 3, Spoon, and Alejandro Escovedo's garage band Buick MacKane. It was sad to lose all that. But a trio of entrepreneurs saved the club from the

wrecking ball, kept the live music, and installed a beer garden for folks who'd rather talk than rock. More recently, a ramen shop occupied a restaurant space in the back. The Hole has adapted without losing its edginess.

2538 Guadalupe St.

www.holeinthewallaustin.com

THE LITTLE LONGHORN SALOON «

opened circa 1950s

This tiny stone-and-mortar building on Burnet Road is thought to be over 100 years old and once housed a grocery store and a filling station. But for the past 50-some years, The Little Longhorn—called Ginny's Little Longhorn under previous ownership—has been a bastion of true honky-tonk music. Not to mention Sunday's "Chicken Sh*t Bingo," an Austin tradition. Don't miss one of the regular performances by James Hand, an original Texas honky-tonk troubadour who isn't a nostalgia act.

5434 Burnet Road

www.thelittlelonghornsaloon.com

BROKEN SPOKE

opened 1964

Built on the edge of town, this two-steppers' roadhouse is now smack dab in the middle of trendy South Lamar Boulevard. But when you're inside, it's still the '60s. One of owner James White's first touring acts was Bob Wills in 1966. From 1975 to 1982, George Strait played here monthly. The Spoke's got history—and a damn fine chicken-fried steak!

3201 S. Lamar Blvd.

www.brokenspokeaustintx.net

ANTONE'S

opened 1975

Can you name all six locations of Austin's "Home of the Blues"? Antone's feels like it's home again with its 2015 move to East Fifth Street, about four blocks from where the late Clifford Antone opened the original club so he could hear the likes of Muddy Waters and Jimmy Reed. Now co-owned by guitar great Gary Clark Jr., who got his start at the club's fourth location when he was 15, Antone's nurtures a mystique that lives on in a new club that's nicer inside but just as gritty onstage as ever before.

305 E. 5th St.

www.antonessnightclub.com

SAXON PUB

opened 1990

Booking as many as six acts a night, from happy hour to last call, the small club with the giant knight in armor out front has hosted an estimated 24,000 sets. Richard Vannoy, the Saxon's soundman for 25 years, has likely heard more live music than anyone in town. There were some lean years early on, but the Saxon eventually found its crowd—older live-music lovers who have to work in the morning and don't want to deal with Sixth Street, Red River, or the Warehouse District. The Saxon was a launching pad for Los Lonely Boys, Hayes Carll, Carolyn Wonderland, Monte Montgomery, and many more. Bob Schneider's Monday night residency is his favorite gig every week.

1320 S. Lamar Blvd.

www.thesaxonpub.com

SXSW 2017

Austin music venues are gearing up for the city's busiest week of live music during the annual South by Southwest Music Festival (March 13-19), when more than 2,200 bands come to town.

www.sxsw.com





CONTINENTAL CLUB »

opened 1955

Taking over a former laundromat, the Continental began as a private club featuring jazz combos. It was a sad haven for day-drinkers for most of the '60s and '70s but found its identity in the '80s as a club that booked the best in rock music, from punk to roots. And the bands get an instant review: If bartender Clara "Que Si" Reed jumps onstage to go-go dance during your set, that's four stars! If you want to see what Austin used to be like, there's the Toni Price "Hippie Hour" love-fest every Tuesday. Upstairs, a show at the separate Continental Gallery's intimate room is like having a jazz combo or singer-songwriter James McMurtry in your home.

1315 S. Congress Ave.
www.continentalclub.com

EMO'S

opened 1992

Only the name is the same. The Emo's at Sixth and Red River was the coolest punk dive in the country, "a home away from home for misfits," says original manager David L. Thomson III. The glorious dive closed in 2011 and relocated into a state-of-the-art rock box. Now owned by Austin-based promoters C3 Presents, Emo's current incarnation has more in common with a House of Blues than its dive roots. But Emo's still books great shows with top club talent.

2015 E. Riverside Drive
www.emosaustin.com

THREADGILL'S SOUTH

opened 1996

Known more for its home-cooking than its House rocking, Threadgill's South Austin location was built next door to where the legendary

hippie venue Armadillo World Headquarters (owner Eddie Wilson's first club) was located, so there had to be a live-music component. This 600-capacity, open-air venue is a great place to see Shinyribs, Carolyn Wonderland, and other acts that infuse roots music with new ideas and energy.

301 Riverside Drive
www.threadgills.com

SAHARA LOUNGE

opened 1978

When the authentic juke joint T.C.'s Lounge closed in 2011, Old Austin sighed. Beloved clubs are almost always replaced by cleaner, fancier establishments with no soul. But the new owners, mother and son Eileen Bristol and Topaz McGarrigle, both musicians, renamed it the Sahara, kept the lounge's old wooden building intact, added a beer garden, and carried on T.C.'s community tradition. Saturday is Africa Night, with music by Zoumountchi or the Sahara House Band, and the rest of the week you'll find Latin music, rock-and-roll, neo soul, blues, psych, and more. Robert Plant was a regular when he lived in Austin circa 2012.

1413 Webberville Road
www.saharalounge.com

SCOOT INN

opened 1955

For decades this was a neighborhood bar, but live music became the draw about 10 years ago. The club's 1,100-capacity, outdoor stage often hosts touring rock acts, while the newly renovated indoor Ivy Room has a piano for cocktail jazz and blues. There's also a small room of old photos that chronicle the venue's history, starting when freed slaves opened a grocery store on this corner after the Civil War.

1308 E. Fourth St.
www.scootinnaustin.com

BEERLAND

opened 2001

Garage rock heaven! Former Bates Motel punk club employees Randall and Donya Stockton took two years and put everything they had into opening their own club. And the crowd from the shuttered Bates followed them from Sixth Street to Red River. Beerland likes its bands loud. Three chords are preferred, but two will do if your singer screams like his hair's on fire.

711 1/2 Red River St.
www.beerlandtexas.com

ELEPHANT ROOM »

opened 1991

If jazz is your thing, then you want to check yourself into this E.R. The best musicians in town play this basement club, which often doesn't charge a cover (it's \$5 on Fridays and Saturdays), and you never know which Marsalis is going to pop in for a jam. You can't miss with trumpeter Ephraim Owens, an E-Room regular when he's not on tour with Mumford & Sons or the Tedeschi Trucks Band.

315 Congress Ave.
www.elephantroom.com

Michael Corcoran has been covering Austin music since 1984, including for the Austin Chronicle and Austin American-Statesman. Austin freelance photographer Tiffany Hofeldt has seen most of the city's music venues through the excursions of her guitar-playing husband. She embraces any opportunity to photograph all things Texas and music related.

LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL

For upcoming shows at music clubs, along with Austin travel information, call the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau at 512/474-5171; www.austintexas.org





TOP, THE CONTINENTAL CLUB ON SOUTH CONGRESS THRIVES ON ROOTS AND ROCK-AND-ROLL. BOTTOM, THE ELEPHANT ROOM, A BASEMENT CLUB, IS AUSTIN'S JAZZ HAVEN.



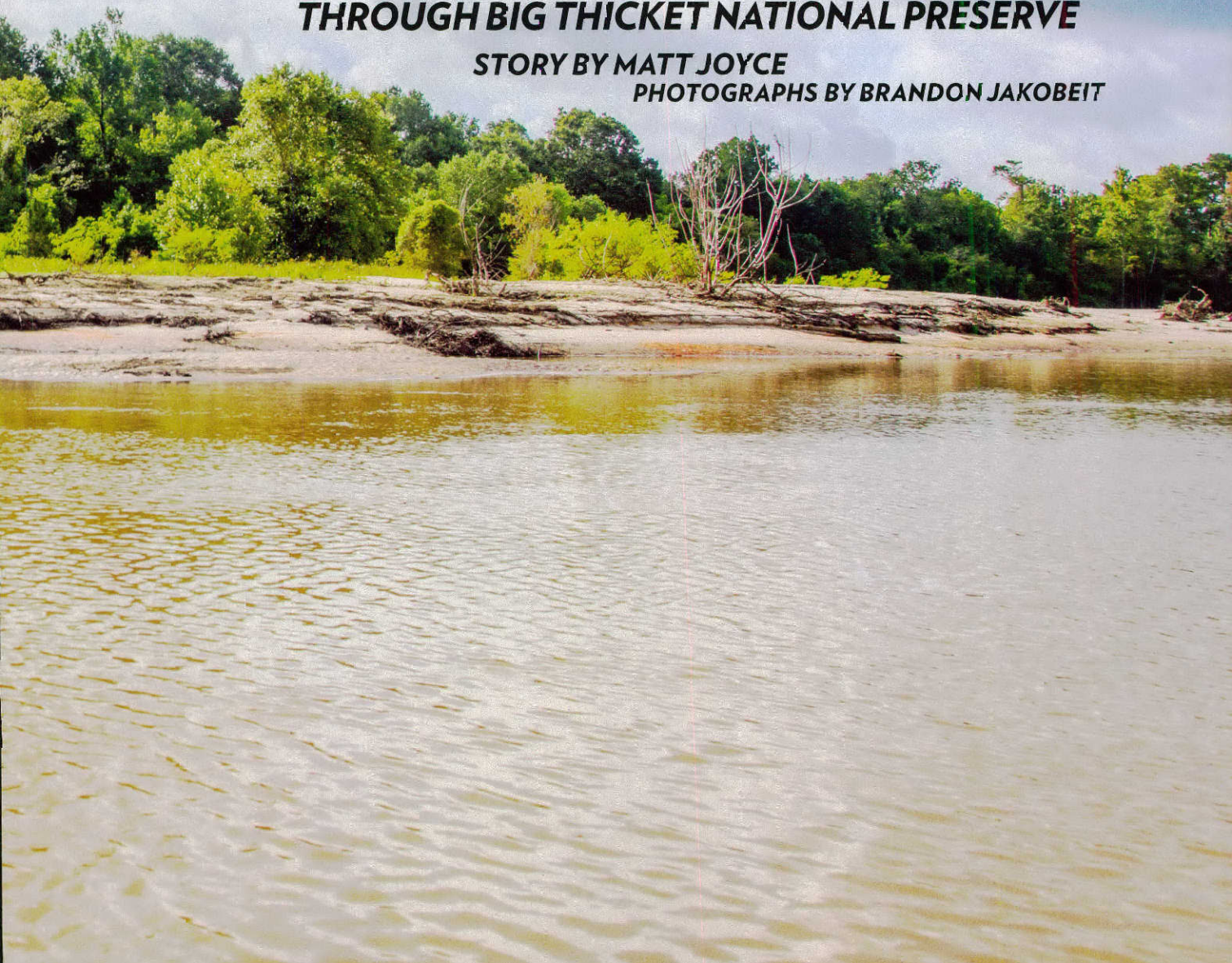


BIG THICKET DRIFT

**CANOEING THE LOWER NECHES RIVER
THROUGH BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE**

STORY BY MATT JOYCE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRANDON JAKOBEIT



“IT’S NOT TOO OFTEN THAT YOU JUST DON’T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO,”

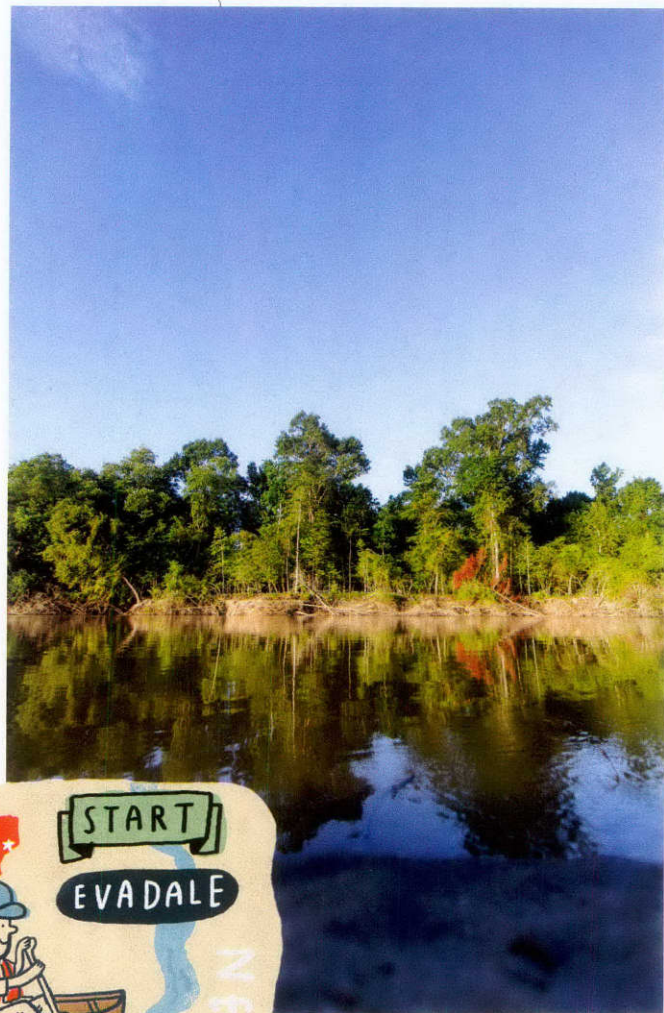
our guide remarked as we lounged on the sandy shoreline of the Neches River in East Texas, cooling off in the water after a day of canoeing. Across the caramel-tinted river, a dense forest crowded the dirt bluff on the opposite bank. Behind us, our loaded canoes rested on the edge of a broad, empty sandbar, its semicircle beach mirroring the luminous half-moon overhead.

True, we’d been bobbing in the shallow rapids for a half-hour or so to keep cool on that sunny July afternoon. But it would be misleading to imply we had nothing to do.

We’d paddled about 10 miles that day. Soon we would set up our tents, cast a lazy fishing line, cook a camp-stove dinner, and start a driftwood fire to accompany our tall tales and guitar strumming. We had plenty to do—just not the type of checklist fodder that dominates the clock-driven days of routine life.

When floating the Neches River through the depths of the Big Thicket, I was beginning to realize, it’s best to put your schedules and anxieties on the backburner and let the river’s current, meanders, and scenery be your guide. In other words—go with the flow.

I had embarked that morning from a boat ramp near Evadale with *Texas Highways* photographer Brandon Jakobeit and guides Gerald Cerda and Jason Cornolly of Big Thicket Outfitters. In two canoes loaded with ice chests, cooking gear, tents, bedding, folding chairs, clothes, and a guitar, we followed the lower Neches River through the Big Thicket National Preserve to a takeout point in north



Beaumont. For three days, we floated through a diversity of Big Thicket waterscapes, soaking in the beauty, culture, and history of this inconspicuous East Texas natural wonder.

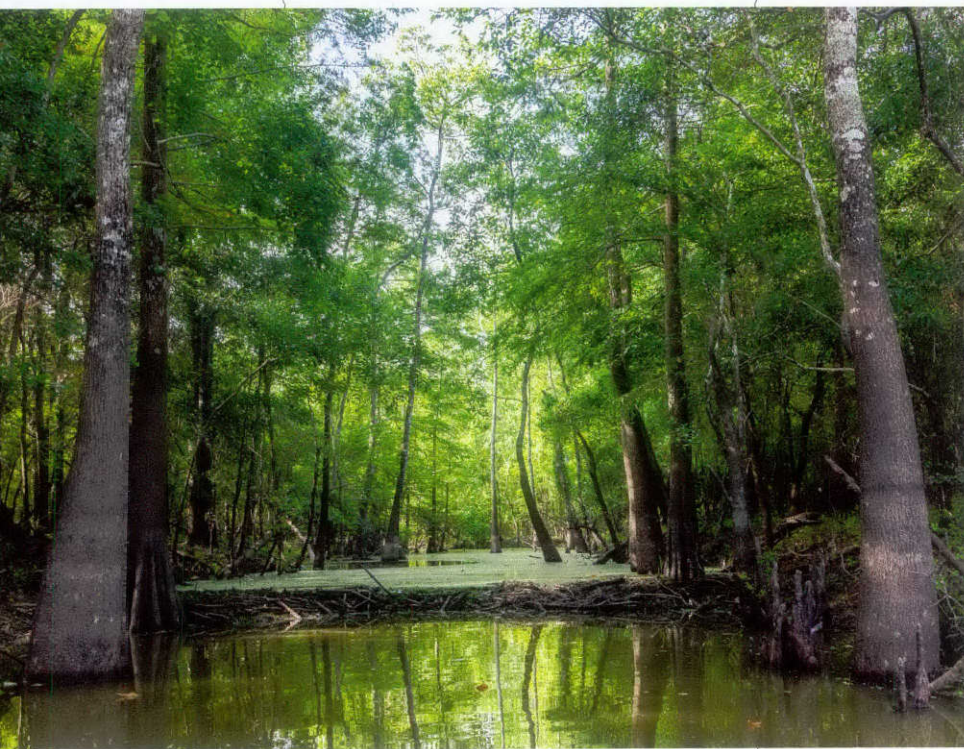
AS WE PADDLED around the first few bends in the river, it became apparent that we had gotten lucky with nearly ideal conditions—clear skies, a swift current, and fresh sandbars. Months of flooding in 2015 and early 2016 had scoured brush and trash from the sandbars and built them up with freshly deposited sand. Moreover, the river level had dropped in the previous weeks, uncovering the sandbars and channeling the river into a consistent flow.

“The river is constantly changing,” noted Cerda, who started Big Thicket Outfitters in 2012 after exploring the lower Neches recreationally since his

GOING WITH THE FLOW

The Big Thicket National Preserve protects the Neches River corridor from B.A. Steinhagen Lake to Beaumont, an 80-mile stretch with forested shorelines and occasional riverside cabins where everyone’s got a boat.





**THE
BIG THICKET
ASSOCIATION**

hosts the Neches River Rally each September to raise funds for its conservation mission. At texashighways.com, read expanded coverage of the association and the rally.

childhood. “You know that saying? A man never steps in the same river twice, because it’s not the same river, and he isn’t the same man.”

The Neches River originates from a spring in Van Zandt County and flows southeast 416 miles before emptying into Sabine Lake and the Gulf of Mexico. Starting at Town Bluff Dam, which forms B.A. Steinhagen Lake near Jasper, the river serves more or less as an 80-mile eastern boundary of the Big Thicket National Preserve.

The Big Thicket ecosystem once covered nearly 3 million acres, from the Neches west to the Trinity River, and from Woodville down to Beaumont. Only about 3 percent of the Big Thicket survives intact today, according to the National Park Service. The Big Thicket National Preserve protects 112,000 acres in a patchwork of 15 units across seven counties. Our float trip gave us a river-level view of the Big Thicket’s renowned ecological diversity, particularly the bottomland hardwood forests bordering the river and the sloughs and bayous of cypress and tupelo forests.

The Neches River’s sandbars were a central part of our canoe trip. We spent most of our days paddling downriver, sometimes leaving the main channel to explore swift-moving side courses, swampy lakes, and bayous. We docked

**OUR
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AND TUPELO
FORESTS.**

on the sandbars for swimming and picnic breaks, and for camping at night. (Most moderately fit people could handle this trip if they’re comfortable with being in a canoe for a few days and tent-camping.) Because sandbars are part of the public streambed, they’re open for camping. The national preserve requires permits for camping in its section of the river; permits are free and easy to acquire, either by phone or at the visitor center in Kountze.

Sandbars have always been one of the Neches River’s defining characteristics. The first Europeans to record their observations of the river in the 1500s called it *Río de Nievas*, or River of Snow, because of the white sand. There are at least two explanations for how the Neches got its contemporary name—one holds that a Spaniard named the river after the Neches Indians, a Caddoan tribe from the region; another is that the Spaniards adopted the name used by the Caddos, who called the river “nachawi,” their word for the bois d’arc tree. Whatever the case, historians believe that the natives of the area traveled by rivers and creeks as an alternative to the dense thicket. It’s hard to imagine that these pre-Texans didn’t frequent the sandbars as well.

Different chapters of Neches River history and culture bubbled to the surface throughout our float. We encountered fishermen angling for catfish and crappie with trotlines and fishing poles as well as funky wooden fishing cabins—some houseboats and some built on stilts on the shore. Near Vidor, we docked briefly to visit with jovial riverside residents kayaking and swimming off their back porches.

The Neches River basin has long been timber country; loggers once used this section of the river to float timber to mills in Beaumont. Large cypress tree

NATURAL HABITAT

Above, a beaver dam forms a pool on a creek that feeds Banks Bayou. Right, a campsite on a picturesque Neches River sandbar.





EXPEDITION

The Vincent
Chapman
Foundation

stumps with distinct rings around their bases are remnants of a century-old logging technique, Cerda said. Loggers would score the trunks in the summer to injure the trees and then return in the winter to cut and float them to the mill.

Early in the trip, we canoed under an old railroad swing bridge with a massive gear on its underside, possibly a mechanism for the bridge to turn and make way for riverboat traffic, which mostly ceased by 1900. We also paddled by the rusted remnants of shoreline docks for early 20th-century oil-and-gas operations, along with infrastructure for ongoing energy production in the Big Thicket.

With the exception of birds, wildlife in the Big Thicket kept a pretty low profile during our trip, but creature clues greeted us at every stop. Tracks in the sand and mud hinted at deer, raccoons, birds, dogs, and feral hogs. During the trip, I spotted three deer, a beaver, turtles, alligator gar, mullet fish, minnows, and an unidentified water snake.

Also on the sandbars, we found numerous shells from freshwater bivalve mussels, some as large as taco shells. The mussels scoot around the sandy river bottom, filtering water through their bodies to feed on microorganisms. When the water recedes, you can see the mussels' beautifully random paths in the sand, resembling the squiggly doodles on a junior high notebook.

Each morning at dawn, a growing chorus of birdsong ushered in the day. Occasionally, the rattle of a woodpecker would roll across the river valley. I saw a pileated woodpecker cross the river with its distinctive flap-swoop-flap-swoop flying motion. Cardinals, little blue herons, wood ducks, vultures, and great egrets accompanied us throughout the journey. And a first for me: swallow-tailed kites—a raptor characterized by its scissor-tail and sleek black-and-white body—circled overhead a few times.

At night, the sounds of owls, cicadas, crickets, and frogs provided the backdrop for our campfire tales. On our second night of camping, shortly after bedtime, a motorboat with a spotlight startled me awake and called to mind the unsettling banjo strains of *Deliverance*. Turns out it was some locals “bullfrogging”—hunting for fat frogs to fry.

The day before embarking on the canoe trip, I had visited the Big Thicket National Preserve Visitor Center in Kouritz to study up on my surroundings. Built in the shade of a loblolly pine forest and set in a Craftsman-style log building, the center presents exhibits about the Big Thicket's history, ecology, and wildlife, such as alligators, bobcats, mountain lions, and snakes. Historically, black bear, jaguars, and red wolves also roamed the area.

RIVER SOUNDS

Left, guide Jason Connolly contemplates the Neches. Right, Big Thicket Outfitters proprietor Gerald Cerda picks a tune after setting up a sandbar campsite.



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“People ask about bears, about mountain lions, about snakes,” Ranger Mary Kay Manning said. “And I tell them, honestly, the things I'm worried about are mosquitoes and ticks because of the diseases they can transmit. The mammals are going to stay away from people.”

Thusly warned, we brought plenty of bug repellent along. As it turned out, the mosquitoes weren't a major factor on the river or the sandbars (we stayed out of the forest for the most part, but they could be an annoyance at dusk. Just be sure to keep mosquitoes out of your tent for the night!

Big Thicket National Preserve's most popular paddling destination is Village Creek, a tributary of the Neches River that meanders southeast through the Piney Woods and Big Thicket. Big Thicket Outfitters does about 90 percent of its canoe and kayak rental business on Village Creek, Cerda said, because the creek is good for shorter trips, ranging from a couple of hours to overnight camping trips. Village Creek runs through similar terrain as the lower Neches, but the waterway is narrower. Near Lumberton, Village Creek State Park offers developed campsites with bathrooms.

But our river journey provided a broader perspective of the lower Neches. Dense hardwood forests dominated the shoreline for the first three-quarters of our trip. Sixty-foot, spindly trees such as water oak, river birch, and loblolly pine crowded each other along the precipice of the dirt bank, looking like marathon runners jockeying for position





at the starting line. Erosion exposed the trees' roots on the bank, while willow trees reached their green, leafy branches out over the river, providing moments of shade as our canoes floated beneath. Yaupon holly and sweetgum filled the understory, and flowering vines like trumpet creeper and wisteria added splashes of red and orange to the greenery.

I didn't see a single alligator on this trip, although I kept my eyes peeled for them, especially as we ventured into the lakes and sloughs that characterized the last quarter of our trip. Not far from Beaumont, we detoured off the Neches River and onto Scatterman Lake to follow the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department paddling trail known as "Cooks Lake to Scatterman." The 4.8-mile loop is the setting of the Big Thicket Association's Neches River Rally, an annual September event for canoeists and kayakers to explore this section of the Neches River, Pine Island Bayou, and offshoot lakes and sloughs.

HAPPY TRAILS

The 4.8-mile Cooks Lake to Scatterman Paddling Trail branches off the Neches River and explores beautiful sections of cypress and tupelo forest. Above, the weathered trunk of an old cypress known as the "Madonna tree" bears a faint resemblance to artistic depictions of the Virgin Mary.

THE PADDLING TRAIL TOOK US THROUGH THE FAIRY-TALE SETTING OF A SUN-DAPPLED SLOUGH FULL OF CYPRESS AND TUPELO TREES, WHERE THE LIGHT TOOK ON A SHADOWY, EMERALD QUALITY.

The paddling trail took us through the fairy-tale setting of a sun-dappled slough full of cypress and tupelo trees, where the light took on a shadowy, emerald quality. Witch-beard lichen and verdant ferns sprouted from the gnarly old trees. We maneuvered our canoes around the trees' knobby knees and ducked below massive spider webs in the branches. The forest muffled all sound except for the water trickling around our paddles. With a flash of white and a rustle of leaves, a hidden great egret splashed the surface and flapped toward the sky.

Leaving the silence of the water forest and rejoining the river, we paddled our way to a ramp near the Neches River Saltwater Barrier and pulled our canoes ashore. We were tired, hot, and sun-beaten, but in the calm, clearheaded, and refreshed way that comes from immersing yourself in nature for a few days.

"They call this a hidden gem," Cerda said as we surveyed the journey. "If it is a hidden gem, would more people come here if they knew about it?"

I tend to think so. Three months later, I returned to the lower Neches River, this time with my family in tow, for the Neches River Rally. We paddled along the leafy riverbank, spotting egrets and jumping fish, and marveled at the wondrously odd cypress trees that stretch from the water's murky surface to the sky. I could tell my family was just as captivated as I was. **L**

TH Associate Editor Matt Joyce never thought he would find the Neches River's murky waters so appealing. TH Photography Editor Brandon Jakobeit loves the alternative perspective that comes with a float down the river.

ESSENTIALS: BIG THICKET PADDLING

Big Thicket Outfitters offers a range of guiding and boat-rental services on the lower Neches River, Village Creek, and the Cooks Lake to Scatterman Paddling Trail. Canoe and kayak rentals cost about \$45 a day, with additional costs for customized guiding services. Call 409/786-1884; www.bigthicketoutfitters.com.

The Big Thicket National Preserve encompasses 80 miles of the Neches River and 35 miles of Village Creek, including most of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's 21-mile Village Creek Paddling Trail. For information on paddling in the preserve, including permits and local outfitters, call 409/951-6700; www.nps.gov/bith.

The 4.8-mile **Cooks Lake to Scatterman Paddling Trail**, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department-designated trail, is accessible from the boat ramp at the Lower Neches Valley Authority Saltwater Barrier. www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/inland/cookslake_scatterman/index.pl?tml.

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DESTINATION: WAXAHACHIE



Wake Up to Waxahachie

A weekend in the gingerbread city

story by June Naylor

GROWING UP LESS THAN AN HOUR'S DRIVE from Waxahachie, I've always been familiar with the historic town just south of Dallas. Because I hadn't spent time there in years, however, I took pleasure in discovering it again recently. The bonus? My husband had never visited Waxahachie, so I was thrilled to see it through new eyes during our weekend visit.

Waxahachie has long been one of the best places in Texas to indulge in a passion for later 19th-century architecture. And though the heart of town provides a wealth of historical eye candy, Waxahachie cannot be dismissed as a place stuck in another era. Thanks to a long-term partnership between the city's downtown development office and Jim Laxe Companies, the Dallas developer

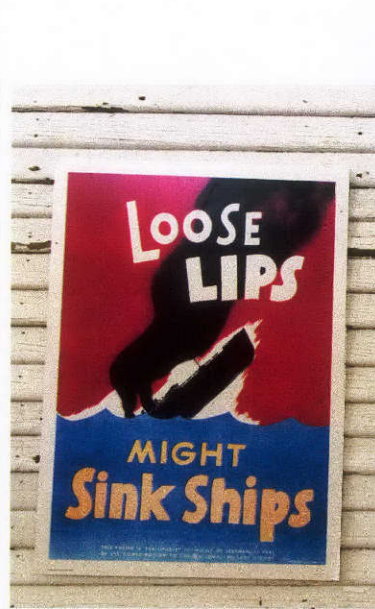


- ▷ **Dallas**
35 minutes
- ▷ **Abilene**
2.75 hours
- ▷ **Houston**
3.25 hours
- ▷ **San Antonio**
4 hours

that helped revitalize Dallas' Bishop Arts District and Design District, downtown Waxahachie thrives with ongoing building renovations that attract new shops and restaurants. We discovered plentiful examples of the old and stately becoming new, beautiful, and accessible again.

To provide maximum visual impact for my newbie visitor, we started our tour downtown with a spin around the Ellis County Courthouse, a sight that impresses me every time I visit. "Wow," Marshall said, gazing at the ornate 1895 structure rising nine stories over the center of town. "You weren't kidding. That's awesome."

Designed in the busy yet elegant Richardsonian Romanesque architecture style, the courthouse features details that are almost too complex to take in



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
The Doves Nest; a World War II poster in the Ellis County Museum; the historic Rogers Hotel now houses shops, eateries, and businesses; Fresh Market Coffee; the Richard Ellis statue at Ellis County Courthouse.

all at once. Adding to its beauty is the building's magnificent amalgamation of red limestone from Burnet County in the Hill Country and pink granite and Pecos red sandstone from a quarry outside of Barstow in far West Texas.

For a briefing on the town and to pick up a free touring map, we popped into the Ellis County Museum, just southeast of the courthouse. The museum occupies the mercantile space inside the former Masonic Lodge Hall, an 1889 high Victorian Italianate structure standing three stories. Exhibits in the glass-front cases include military garb and weaponry from the Civil War

through World War II donated by local residents, as well as signage, hardware, radios, and memorabilia from long-gone local businesses. I particularly liked the colorful wartime posters, such as one dating to World War II that warns: "Loose lips might sink ships."

We then explored the town square, wandering in and out of various shops and noting the profusion of historical markers on nearly every building. Thanks to the riches delivered by a booming cotton industry and the arrival of the railroad in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Waxahachie's business leaders erected exquisite commercial buildings and homes attesting to their wealth.

The busier shops speak to the

popularity of furnishings and housewares that look old, even if they're not: At Texas Pearls and Co., chairs, tables, sofas, and cabinets bear the Magnolia Home brand, known best to fans of the Waco-based *Fixer Upper* show on HGTV. Besides restored and painted furniture, the shop's goodies also include paint and home accessories, such as candles and mirrors. Across the street, a shop called Farmhouse also mixes old and new finds, from flower vases and garden birdhouses to a silver tea service and an old dresser transformed into a bathroom sink and vanity.

Poking around shops works up an appetite, so we headed into a favorite restaurant of mine, The Doves Nest. Set in a 1913 building that was once a hardware store, the business includes a sprawling shop that sells everything from Texas cookbooks

and costume jewelry to bath soaps, hats, and handbags. And at the rear of the store, in what was the saddle and tack room, there's a popular café serving lunch daily.

Starting with the signature appetizer, we dug our way through the ABC Spread, a mixture of toasted almonds and minced bacon with grated cheddar cheese, which we piled on pieces of fresh, crisp crostini with dabs of strawberry-jalapeño jam. We followed that up with a salad of grilled chicken over greens with crunchy vegetables and a sesame-soy vinaigrette; and a flavorful Texas muffaletta sandwich.

A few doors away, the Webb Gallery adds another dimension of culture to the square. Famous for its folk-art collection, it's also a friendly place to visit, thanks to the two resident Boston terriers that came bounding across the painted wooden floors to greet us. The duo persuaded us to relax on couches so we could pet them while admiring a collection of antique circus and carnival posters as well as paintings, such as those of flowers and birds by the late Uncle Pete Drgac, who lived in the Central Texas town of Caldwell.

Before departing downtown, we wandered down to the old railroad depot area for a little pick-me-up at Fresh Market Coffee. A happy buzz filled the air, along with the aroma of coffee, as patrons visited and played bottle-cap checkers on vintage wooden boards. Besides coffee drinks, Fresh Market serves homemade baked goods and cold drinks like bottled tea and cold-brew coffee. We wish we'd brought a cooler so we could take home packages of local cheese, yogurt, and tamales,

Branding the American West: Paintings and Films, 1900 – 1950

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This exhibition presents a unique examination of twentieth-century images of the American West as seen through the eyes of the members of the Taos Society of Artists, the California based artist Maynard Dixon, and films of the era.

starkmuseum.org



Maynard Dixon (1875-1946), *Mesas in Shagaw*, 1926, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 40 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, gift of Herald R. Clark, 1937



Organized by the Brigham Young University Museum of Art and the Stark Museum of Art, and made possible in part by generous grants from the George S. and Delores Dore Eccles Foundation, the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutzer Stark Foundation, the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, and the Utah Division of Arts & Museums.



WAXAHACHIE

For Waxahachie tourism information, call the Waxahachie Convention & Visitors Bureau at

469/309-4040;

www.waxahachiecvb.com.

along with fresh flowers for purchase.

Hopping into our car, we consulted our driving tour map. To make things simple, we stuck mostly with Main Street and the dozens of intriguing homes lining it, many of which show up on the town's gingerbread tours in June and at the Christmas season. An hour in, we had taken in one eye-ful after another of Eastlake, Queen

Anne, Gothic, and Victorian homes with curved porches, octagonal corner turrets, gabled roofs, stained-glass windows, and fish-scale shingle details.

As we roamed, we found ourselves at Getzendaner Park, filled with beautiful crape myrtle trees, a signature of Waxahachie. We wandered around for a few minutes in the company of butterflies on the Waxahachie Creek Hike



THE SCARBOROUGH RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL,

located about three miles southwest of Waxahachie's downtown square, takes place weekends

April 8-May 29. Call **972/938-3247**;

www.srfestival.com.

& Bike Trail, which extends six miles through town.

Ready to put our feet up, we checked into The English Merchant's Inn, a handsome red-brick home built by British cotton merchant James Wright Harrison circa 1915. Owners Mary and Howard Baskin have decorated the inn with books, artwork, and memorabilia to satisfy the anglophile's passion. The inn's living room is especially inviting for lounging and reading, while a movie room offers a place to watch *Places in the Heart* and *Tender Mercies*, both of which were filmed in Waxahachie.

Our spacious suite—done up with pillows emblazoned with the Union Jack and outfitted with a comfortable bed—opened to a balcony overlooking the front lawn and Main Street. We might have lazed about for hours, but dinnertime meant going out in search of a bite. We found much to enjoy at College Street Pub, where crispy fried green beans, a basket of fish and chips, and the signature French Burger—a patty melt on Texas toast—made for a tasty, casual supper in a convivial bar decorated with more Union Jacks.

We drew out our final morning in Waxahachie, lingering at the inn over beautiful Belgian waffles with fresh berries. We made one last stop downtown, where we craned our necks to stare up at the original, functioning clock tower crowning the historic courthouse, noticing how high it looms above even the surrounding pecan trees. Capturing the courthouse with our camera in the fresh daylight, we admired the detail of the exquisite carvings in the capitals topping the columns, many with flowers, leaves, and intricate faces. Driving home, I realized I'd fallen anew for this gentle town. **L**

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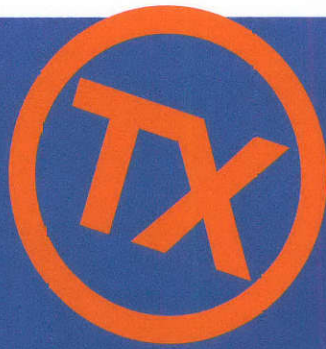
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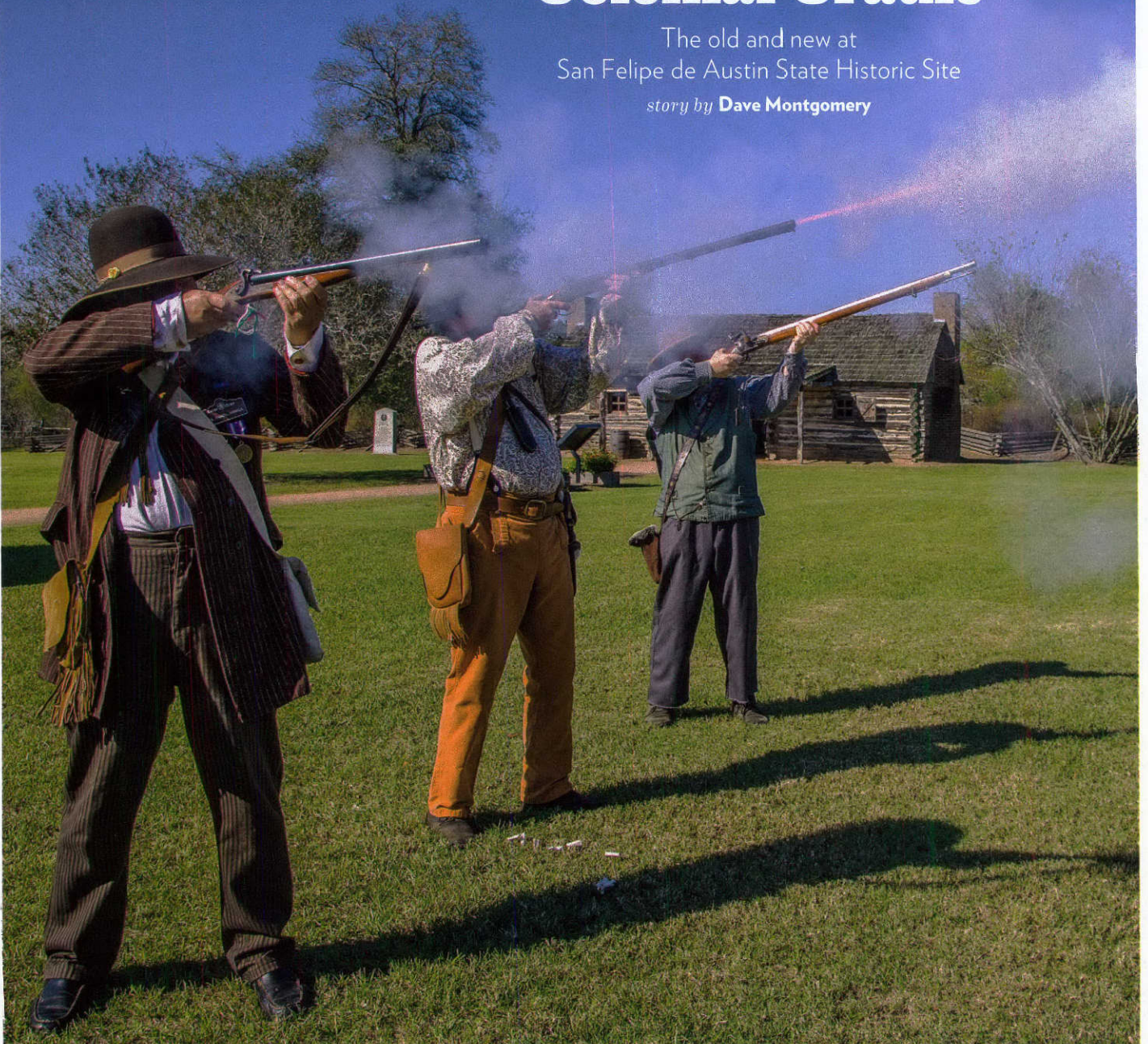


REAL TEXAS STORIES BORN AND BRED

Colonial Cradle

The old and new at
San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site

story by **Dave Montgomery**



San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, home to a replica of Stephen F. Austin's cabin (pictured in the background), commemorates Austin's birthday each November.



DURING A RECENT ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG AT San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, workers trowelled through a small, rectangular slice of land just north of the community of San Felipe in southeastern Texas. Nearly two centuries ago, a bustling frontier settlement created by the father of Texas, Stephen F. Austin, occupied this patch of prairie.

This particular dig—measuring 1.5 feet long, three feet wide, and about a foot deep—is excavating the site where William B. Travis practiced law in the 1830s, before he was martyred at the Alamo. Today, the only visible remnants of Travis' law practice are pieces of red brick poking from the dirt and fragments of glass and ceramics. The dig is part of a larger effort to document San Felipe and enhance the historic site with the construction of a new museum and visitor center, scheduled to open in 2018.

“Archeologists can't go anywhere and dig a pit and not find some evidence of the town,” says Michael Moore, a historian working on the project. “It's an incredible capsule of this early era.”

From San Felipe de Austin's founding in 1823 to its untimely demise in 1836—when a Texas garrison burned it to the ground with the approach of Santa Anna's army—the town served as

Recent archeological digs are part of an effort to document San Felipe and enhance the historic site with the construction of a new museum and visitor center, scheduled to open in 2018.

the heart of the vast colony of American settlers that Austin established in what was then northern Mexico.

In its heyday, San Felipe was Texas' second-largest commercial settlement after San Antonio. The town was most significant for its role in planting the seeds of the Texas Revolution and hosting the revolution's provincial government. Nearly every major figure from that era set foot in San Felipe de Austin at one time or another.

San Felipe de Austin gave birth to the precursors of the Texas Rangers and Texas' first postal system. The first book printed in Texas came from a San Felipe printing press, though as Austin's translation of Mexican immigration laws, it was hardly a page-turner.

Despite its rich legacy, San Felipe de Austin doesn't share the revered stature associated with other revolutionary-era landmarks such as the Alamo, San Jacinto, Gonzales, and Goliad. Although San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site—located just north of Interstate 10 near Sealy—has preserved the historic town site for decades, the town remains unknown to most Texans.

That's destined to change with a new \$12.5 million museum and visitor center now under construction. Fundraising is ongoing for the project, which is the culmination of years of effort by boosters, including Texas Historical Commission Chairman John Nau, State Senator Lois Kolkhorst of Brenham, former Austin County Judge Carolyn Bilski, longtime history advocate Florence Sims, and other energized volunteers.

Their intent is to make the San Felipe historic site an irresistible stop. The nearby Stephen F. Austin State Park enhances the area's draw with 473 acres of hiking and biking trails as well as campsites. Carved from the same lush greenery that surrounded the early colonists—hardwood forests of cottonwood, hickory, and cedar elm trees that slope down to the Brazos—the park

Survey tools on display in the Josey Store represent Stephen F. Austin's role in developing Texas.

is scheduled to reopen by March after damaging floods in April and May 2016 forced its temporary closure.

“One of our goals with this project is to position San Felipe de Austin alongside the other significant sites that Texans and visitors to our state immediately think about when they travel to experience the Texas Revolution story,” says Bryan McAuley, director of the historic site. “We want it to be uttered in that same breath.”

Although post-revolutionary San Felipe attempted to rebuild and served for a while as the Austin County seat in the mid-19th century, it never regained its former glory. Contemporary San Felipe (which locals pronounce as San Phillip) is a rural community with fewer than 1,000 residents. Mayor Bobby Byars describes the town as a personable place with a “country atmosphere.” Byars—the first African-American mayor in San Felipe and surrounding Austin County—is the great-great-great grandson of Celia Allen, a slave at San Felipe de Austin who ultimately won her freedom.

Created in 1940, San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site encompasses the old town site, although most of 19th-century San Felipe’s remains are still buried. Over the past 10 years, the Texas Historical Commission’s intermittent archeological digs have uncovered various artifacts, including bricks, ceramics, nails, lead-print type, and glassware, much of it fused together from the intense fire that destroyed the town in 1836.

The historic site offers group tours of the old town site, which is now a flat, grassy prairie hemmed by woods and the elevated banks of the Brazos. Stops include a 16-foot bronze statue of Austin, a 16-foot granite obelisk, a replica of Austin’s log cabin, and the 1847 Josey Store, where panels chronicle San Felipe history.

“You’re actually standing on top of a historic street,” McAuley informs a tour group from Houston as they gather near an 1830s-era well protectively encased in concrete. In its prime, McAuley



explains, San Felipe de Austin was “a real hotbed of early Texas history.”

San Felipe de Austin grew out of Austin’s agreement with Mexico to grant land to settlers from the United States as part of a colony that ultimately spread across 6 million acres. Austin selected the site for the colony’s capital because of a nearby Brazos River ferry crossing and the location’s

fertile soil and high, defensible bluff.

By 1828, the town included three general stores, two taverns, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, and Austin’s incessantly busy land office. Most of the 40 or 50 buildings were log cabins. The population, which included slaves, numbered about 200 in 1828 and grew to about 600 on the eve of the revolution. Males outnumbered females 10 to 1.


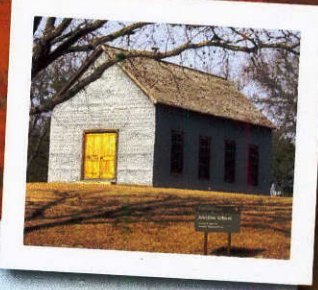
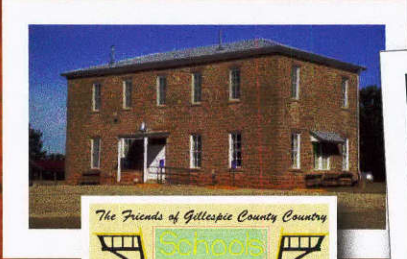
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With rising tensions between the colonists and the Mexican government, San Felipe de Austin became the site of two Texian conventions in 1832 and 1833 and a final Consultation in 1835 that fanned the revolution and led to the eventual signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos on March 2, 1836. The town was torched on March 29, 1836, to keep

it from falling into the hands of Santa Anna's advancing forces.

Visitors nevertheless can still get a taste of the hardscrabble life of colonial San Felipe as they wander into the weathered replica of Austin's log cabin—two rooms separated by a dirt breezeway—or explore the white-framed Josey Store visitor's center. The unfurnished cabin has a fireplace

in each room, including one that would have served as a bedroom and another that might have functioned as a living or storage room—or in bachelor Austin's case, as his land office.

The store was erected in 1847 as San Felipe attempted to rebuild following the revolution. It was later purchased by local physician J.J. Josey. Various owners moved the building several times before it opened as a museum near its original site in the 1960s.

One centerpiece display in the Josey Store is an 1839 cast-iron press virtually identical to the one that Gail Borden—the future inventor of condensed milk—used to publish the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, the San Felipe newspaper that chronicled the revolution. Free reprints of historic newspaper issues are popular with visitors.

At an October groundbreaking for the new museum, Nau said the 10,000-square-foot facility will feature exhibits exploring Austin's life, the story of the colony, and its role on “the road to the Texas revolution.” Visitors will be able to step out onto a large outdoor plaza bearing a map based on Austin's original 1824 plat of the town. Other highlights will be outdoor interpretative displays, rotating exhibits, and space for educational and research programs.

Now, those who have grown up with the stories of San Felipe are eager to share them with others. “We have a lot of history in our town, and it just hasn't been exposed,” Byars says. “I think our visitors center is going to get us out there on the map and let people know it all started right here.”

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EVENTS



MARCH'S TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT:

HILL COUNTRY > Austin

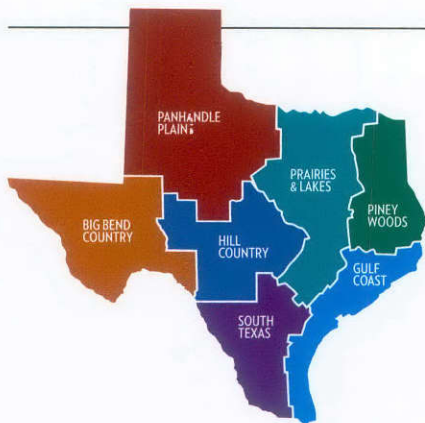
Rodeo Austin

SORRY, DALLAS COWBOYS FOOTBALL FANS: REAL COWBOYS represent the official sport of Texas, and you can find them year-round at rodeos in every corner of the state. But it's more than just boots, bulls, and bareback riding at Rodeo Austin (March 11-25). In a city dominated by South by Southwest in March, you'll find more than just the biggest

names in country music. In its 80-year history, the rodeo has attracted performers as diverse as Sublime, Boyz II Men, Dwight Yoakam, and Destiny's Child (Beyoncé's only appearance in the Live Music Capital of the World). This year's all-star lineup includes Elle King, Fitz and the Tantrums, and Patti LaBelle. www.rodeoaustin.com.

Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at texashighways.com.

EVENTS



BIG BEND COUNTRY

MIDLAND: *Murder on the Nile* Mar. 3-25. mctmidland.org 432/570-4111

MIDLAND: Class Brass Mar. 26. wagnermoel.com 432/563-0921

GULF COAST

BEAUMONT: *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* Mar. 11. sost.org 409/330-0643

CLUTE: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* Mar. 3-5. bcfas.org 979/265-7661

CLUTE: Mammoth Lake Triathlon Mar. 12. mammothlaketriathlon.com 832/520-4975

CORPUS CHRISTI: Blacklock's Beginning Wildflower ID and Natural History Mar. 25. stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CYPRESS: *Quilting: A World of Color* Mar. 3-4. whqg.org 713/870-1315

FREEPORT: Texas Joy Ride Mar. 18-19. 281/444-8680

FULTON: Oysterfest Mar. 2-5. fultonoysterfest.org 361/463-9955

GALVESTON: *Barefoot in the Park* Mar. 4. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: *In The Mood* Mar. 5. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: The Rob Landes Trio—Music from the Movies Mar. 12. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: 42nd Street Mar. 18. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: Scrap-Arts-Music Mar. 24. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: *Alice in Wonderland* Mar. 30. thegrand.com 409/765-1894

HOUSTON: *An American in Paris* Feb. 21-Mar. 5. tuts.com 713/558-8887

HOUSTON: World's Championship Barbecue Contest Mar. 2-4. rodeohouston.com 832/667-1000

HOUSTON: Eschenbach Conducts Bruckner Mar. 3-5. houstonsymphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: *In the Eyes of Our Children: Houston, An American City* Mar. 7-31.

pozosartproject.com 713/348-4882

HOUSTON: Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Mar. 7-26. rodeohouston.com

HOUSTON: Mendelssohn & Petrouchka Mar. 9, 11-12. houstonsymphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: River Oaks Garden Club Azalea Trail Mar. 10-12. riveroaksgardenclub.org 713/523-2483

HOUSTON: Ben Folds in Concert Mar. 16. houstonsymphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: Beethoven 6 and 7 Mar. 24-26. houstonsymphony.org 713/224-7575

INGLESIDE: Roundup Days Mar. 24-25. inglesidexchamber.com 361/776-2906

LAKE JACKSON: Brazosport Symphony Orchestra Concert Mar. 4. clarion.brazosport.edu 979/230-3156

LAKE JACKSON: Bird Banding Mar. 18. gcb.org 979/480-0999

LAKE JACKSON: Doggy Dash 5K Mar. 25. ljdoggydash.com 979/285-2340

LAKE JACKSON: VoicePlay in Concert Mar. 31. clarion.brazosport.edu 979/230-3156

NEDERLAND: Heritage Festival Mar. 14-19. nederlandhf.org 409/724-2269

ORANGE: *Barefoot in the Park* Mar. 3. lutch.org 409/886-5535

ORANGE: *The Illusionists: Live from Broadway* Mar. 10. lutch.org 409/886-5535

ORANGE: 42nd Street Mar. 16-17. lutch.org 409/886-5535

ORANGE: Music Fest Mar. 25. orangetexas.org

PASADENA: Southern Style Gypsy Market Mar. 11-12. outhernstylegypsymarket.vpweb.com 281/467-3577

PORT ARANSAS: IFA Redfish Tournament Mar. 31-Apr. 2. redfish4tour.com 501/412-7756

RICHMOND: Museum Lecture Series Mar. 3. fortbendmuseum.org 281/342-6478

RICHMOND: Brazos Cultural Heritage Festival Mar. 4. fortbendmuseum.org 281/342-6478

ROCKPORT: Whooping Crane Strut March 11. cityofrockport.com 361/727-2158

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Ultimate Music Experience Mar. 15-18. umesouthpadre.com

SUGAR LAND: The Lumineers in Concert Mar. 2. smartfinancialcentre.net

SUGAR LAND: *Elvis Lives* Mar. 3. smartfinancialcentre.net

SUGAR LAND: Cultural Kite Festival Mar. 4. sugarlandtx.gov/kitefest 281/275-2885

SUGAR LAND: *The Illusionists: Live from Broadway* Mar. 11. smartfinancialcentre.net

SUGAR LAND: Pi Day 3.14 Mar. 14. hmns.org/hmns-at-sugar-land 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: Tony Bennett in Concert Mar. 14. smartfinancialcentre.net

SUGAR LAND: Beethoven 6 and 7 Mar. 23. houstonsymphony.org

SUGAR LAND: *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* Mar. 31, Apr. 1-2, Apr. 7-9. inspirationstage.com

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SUGAR LAND: The Avett Brothers in Concert Mar. 31. smartfinancialcentre.net

SURFSIDE BEACH: St. Patrick's Day Parade Mar. 11. beachblarney.com 979/864-3414

TEXAS CITY: Wrestle Fest Mar. 4. texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5919

TEXAS CITY: El Cubano Chili Cook-Off Mar. 25. texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5919

TEXAS CITY: Concert, Movie and Fireworks Mar. 18. texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5990

TOMBALL: German Heritage Festival Mar. 31-Apr. 2. tomballgermanfest.org 281/579-6844

VICTORIA: Coppelia Mar. 4-5. victoriaballet.org 361/575-2313

VICTORIA: Hot Rod Takeover at the Crossroads Mar. 11. hotrodtakeover.com 512/657-4616

VICTORIA: Riverside Ride Mar. 18. riversideride.com

VICTORIA: The Texas Mile Mar. 24-26. texasmile.net 281/303-1844

VICTORIA: Polo at McFaddin Mar. 25. navemuseum.com 361/575-8227

VICTORIA: Quilt Fest Mar. 31-Apr. 1. quiltguildvictoria.org 361/649-3417

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: Elvis Lives Mar. 2. thelongcenter.org 512/474-5664

AUSTIN: Zilker Kite Festival Mar. 5. abckitefestival.org

AUSTIN: Fran Lebowitz Mar. 8. thelongcenter.org 512/474-5664

AUSTIN: South by Southwest Mar. 10-19. sxsx.com

AUSTIN: Stevie Nicks in Concert Mar. 12. uterwincenter.com 512/477-6060

AUSTIN: St. Patrick's Day Festival Mar. 17. stpatricksdayaustin.com

AUSTIN: Onion Creek Hickory Classic Mar. 23-25. onioncreekhickoryclassic.com 512/694-9904

AUSTIN: Fela! The Concert Mar. 26. thelongcenter.org 512/474-5664

AUSTIN: The Magic Flute Mar. 31-Apr. 2. balletaustin.org 512/476-2165

AUSTIN: Art City Austin Mar. 31-Apr. 2. artallianceaustin.org/artcity

AUSTIN: Urban Music Festival Mar. 31-Apr. 1. urbanmusicfest.com

BANDERA: Wild Hog Explosion Mar. 18. wildhogexplosion.com 830/796-4447

BLANCO: Twin Sisters Dance Mar. 4. twinsistersdancehall.com 830/868-7684

BOERNE: Pied-A-Terre Mar. 10. visitboerne.org 830/249-9166

BOERNE: Market Days Mar. 11-12. visitboerne.org 210/844-8193

BOERNE: Outdoor Family Fair Mar. 18. visitboerne.org 830/249-9511 Opt. 5

BOERNE: Concert in the Cave-Spring Equinox Mar. 20. visitboerne.org 830/537-4212

BOERNE: Viennese Tort Mar. 24. visitboerne.org 210/421-6132

BOERNE: Community Garage Sale Mar. 25. visitboerne.org 830/537-4096

BRACKETTVILLE: Fort Clark Days Mar. 3-5. fortclarkdays.org 830/563-5546

BULVERDE: Roar for Kids Bulverde Car Show Mar. 26. bulverdecarshow.com 210/854-1543

COMFORT: Vintage Market Days Mar. 3-5. visitboerne.org 903/530-4469

COMFORT: Hermann Sons Chili Cook-Off Mar. 11. 830/995-2188

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Texas Night Sky Festival Mar. 18. cityofdrippingsprings.com 512/858-4725

FREDERICKSBURG: Hello, Dolly! Feb. 17-Mar. 5. fredericksburgtheater.org 830/997-3588

FREDERICKSBURG: Texas Hell Week Bicycle Tour Mar. 11-18. hellweek.com/texas.html 806/683-6489

FREDERICKSBURG: Trade Days Mar. 17-19. fbtradadays.com 210/846-4094

FREDERICKSBURG: Celebrating Sinatra: His Life in Music Mar. 18-19. fredericksburgtheater.org 830/997-3588

FREDERICKSBURG: Doug Montgomery in Concert Mar. 19. fredericksburgmusicclub.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Hill Country Indian Artifact Show Mar. 25.

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- Texas Independence Day Celebration - Be Baptist a Texan **March 2**
- Great Muddy Escape Endurance Run **March 4**
- Rusty, Chippy Vintage - Repurpose Show **March 11 & 12**
- Walker County Fair & Rodeo **March 30 - April 8**
- Biannual Airing of the Quilts **1st Saturday in May**
- Cinco de Mayo Celebration **1st Saturday in May**
- Sam Houston Folk Festival **May 12-14**

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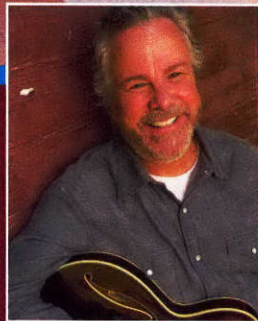


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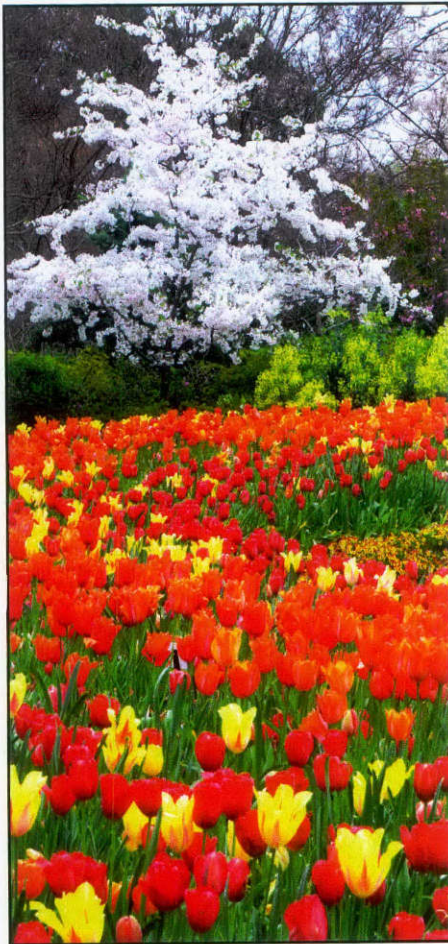
Godspell
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hillcountryindianartifacts.com
830/626-5561

FREDERICKSBURG: The American Chuck Wagon Association Championship Cook-Off Mar. 30-Apr. 1. ftmartinscott.org 830/997-6523

GEORGETOWN: Quilt and Stitchery Show Mar. 31-Apr. 1. handcraftsunlimited.com 512/658-6973

GRUENE: Texas Independence Celebration Mar. 2. gruenetexas.com 830/629-5077

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days Mar. 18-19. gruenemarketdays.com 830/832-1721

INGRAM: *Imagination* Mar. 1-3. hcacf.com 830/367-5121

INGRAM: *Flight* Mar. 10-Apr. 7. hcacf.com 830/367-2151

INGRAM: *Life in the Hill Country* Mar. 14-May 12. hcacf.com 830/367-5121

INGRAM: *Godspell* Mar. 24-Apr. 8. hcacf.com 830/367-5121

JOHNSON CITY: Market Days Mar. 25-26. lbjcountry.com 830/868-7684

KERRVILLE: Kerr Arts and Cultural Centers February Gallery Exhibits Feb. 9-Mar. 26. kacckerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: *Fashionably Early* Mar. 2-26. kacckerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: *Antigone* Mar. 3-5. playhouse2000.com 830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days Mar. 4. kerrmarketdays.org 830/895-7524

KERRVILLE: The Lettermen in Concert Mar. 19. caillouxtheater.com 830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: Magic of Motown Mar. 31. art2heart.org 830/459-4590

KYLE: Hooked on Fishing Mar. 25. cityofkyle.com 512/262-3939

LAMPASAS: Lampasas Trade Days Mar. 25. lampasastradedays.com 512/734-1294

LLANO: Earth Art Fest Mar. 10-13. llanoearthartfest.org 325/247-5354

LLANO: @LAST Llano Art Studio Tour Mar. 25. facebook.com/llano.art.studio.tour 325/247-4645

LLANO: Fiddle Fest Mar. 31-Apr. 2.

llanofiddlefest.com
325/247-5354

LUCKENBACH: Mud Dauber Festival and Chili Cook-Off Mar. 18. luckenbachtexas.com 830/997-3224

MARBLE FALLS: Main Street Market Day Mar. 4. marblefalls.org 830/693-2815

MARBLE FALLS: Paint the Town Mar. 29-Apr. 1. hcartcs.com 515/567-8614

NEW BRAUNFELS: John Anderson in Concert Mar. 10. brauntex.org 830/627-0808

NEW BRAUNFELS: Lucas Jack in Concert Mar. 17. brauntex.org 830/627-0808

NEW BRAUNFELS: Mandy Barnett: Heroines of Heartache Mar. 18. brauntex.org 830/627-0808

SPICEWOOD: Bill Kirchen in Concert Mar. 3. spicewoodarts.org 512/264-2820

STONEWALL: LBJ Kite Day Mar. 11. nps.gov/lyjo 830/644-2252

UVALDE: Four Square Friday Mar. 10. visitualde.com 830/278-4115

WIMBERLEY: *The Miss Firecracker Contest* Feb. 10-Mar. 5. wimberleyplayers.org 512/847-0575

WIMBERLEY: Market Days Mar. 4. shopmarketdays.com 512/847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Hill Country Writing Symposium Mar. 16-18. writing.texasauthors.institute 512/299-4810

WIMBERLEY: Wimberley Wine Walk Mar. 30. wimberleywinewalk.com 512/722-3668

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: *Spanish Texas: Legend and Legacy* Through Mar. 11. thegracemuseum.org 325/673-4587

ABILENE: Outlaws and Legends Music Fest Mar. 31-Apr. 1. outlawsandlegends.com 325/660-8458

ALBANY: *Cell Series: Ted Larsen* Mar. 4-May 13. theojac.org 325/762-2269

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AMARILLO: *Achievement in Art: The Collection of Montgomery H.W. Ritchie* Jan. 29-Mar. 26. amarilloart.org 806/371-5050

AMARILLO: *Nacidos Charro: Born Charro* Mar. 1-May 31. aqha.com 806/376-5181

AMARILLO: *Greater Tuna* Mar. 23. panhandletickets.com 806/378-3096

COLORADO CITY: *Railhead Trade Days* Mar. 18-19. coloradocitychamberofcommerce.com 325/728-3403

GRAHAM: *Cattlemens Derby and Classic* Mar. 6-12. cattlemenscutting.com 940/549-0401

GRAHAM: *Young County PRCA Rodeo* Mar. 23-25. visitgrahamtexas.com 940/549-0401

LUBBOCK: *LSO Masterworks* Mar. 3-4. lubbocksymphony.org 806/762-1688

LUBBOCK: *Cirque du Soleil Ovo* Mar. 8-12. unitedsupermarketsarena.com 806/742-7362

LUBBOCK: *ABC Pro Rodeo* Mar. 30-Apr. 1. abcrodeo.com 806/252-8792

SAN ANGELO: *Texas Independence Day Celebration* Mar. 3-4. rotb.com 325/212-4085

SAN ANGELO: *Bond and Beyond* Mar. 4. sanangelosymphony.org 325/655-4136

SAN ANGELO: *Frontier Ladies Living History Conference* Mar. 10-12. fortconcho.com 325/234-0316

SAN ANGELO: *Cactus Market Day* Mar. 18. 325/949-6200

SAN ANGELO: *Chamber Music Series: Metamusic* Mar. 19. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Over the River and through the Woods* Mar. 31-Apr. 9. angelotheater.com 325/949-4400

SHAMROCK: *St. Patrick's Celebration* Mar. 17-19. shamrocktexas.net 806/256-2501

SNYDER: *Western Texas College Rodeo* Mar. 30-Apr. 1. wtc.edu 325/574-6107

PINEY WOODS

CENTER: *Shelby County Grill Fest* Mar. 25.

shelbycountychamber.com 936/598-3682

CONROE: *Classical Music and Texas-Style Barbecue* Mar. 11. youngtexasartists.org 936/597-8825

CONROE: *A Celtic Celebration* Mar. 31. 936/597-8825

CONROE: *Greater Tuna* Mar. 31. 936/441-7469

CROCKETT: *John Anderson in Concert* Mar. 11. pwfaa.org 936/544-4276

CROCKETT: *Piney Woods Music and Arts Festival* Mar. 24-25. pwfaa.org 936/544-4276

HEMPHILL: *Great East Texas Outdoor Fest* Mar. 4. getof.net 409/787-3388

HUNTSVILLE: *Sam Houston's Birthday and Texas Independence Day* Mar. 2. walkercountyhistory.org 936/291-9726

HUNTSVILLE: *Great Muddy Escape* Mar. 4. thegreatmuddyescape.com 936/295-8009

HUNTSVILLE: *Rusty, Chippy, Vintage, Hippy and Garden Show* Mar. 11-12. huntsvilliantiqueshow.com 936/295-4162

HUNTSVILLE: *Herb Festival* Mar. 25. texasthymeunit.org 936/891-5024

HUNTSVILLE: *Walker County Fair and Rodeo* Mar. 30-Apr. 8. walkercountyfair.com 936/291-8763

JASPER: *Azalea Festival* Mar. 18. jaspercoc.org 409/384-2762

JEFFERSON: *Flea Market* Mar. 3-4, 17-18, 31-Apr. 2. jeffersonfleamarket.net 903/431-0043

JEFFERSON: *Route 49 Rally and Festival* Mar. 17-18. route49rally.com 866/398-2038

JEFFERSON: *St. Patrick's Day Express* Mar. 18. jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

KILGORE: *KilGogh Arts Festival* Mar. 31-Apr. 1. kilgogh.com 903/984-2593

LIBERTY: *Jubilee* Mar. 24-25. cityofliberty.org 936/336-3684

LINDEN: *Asleep at the Wheel* Mar. 11. Music City Texas Theater. 903/756-9934

LUFKIN: *42nd Street* Mar. 19. angelinaarts.org 936/633-5454

MAGNOLIA: *B-geO Magnolia Miles* Mar. 11.

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Showdown Barbecue
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magnoliatx.org
281/356-1488

NACOGDOCHES: Azalee
Trails Mar. 15-Apr. 15.
visitnacogdoches.org
888/564-7351

NACOGDOCHES: Main
Street Shop and Stroll
Mar. 25. visitnacogdoches.org
888/564-7351

PALESTINE: Old Time
Music and Dulcimer Festival
Mar. 23-25. oldpalmusic.com
936/222-1892

PALESTINE: Dogwood
Trails Celebration Mar. 24-
26, Mar. 31-Apr. 2, Apr. 7-9.
texasdogwoodtrails.com
903/729-6066

SAN AUGUSTINE: San
Augustine Garden Club Gala
Garden Fair Mar. 3-4.
sagardenclub.org
936/675-1072

TYLER: 42nd Street
Mar. 2. cowancenter.org
903/566-7424

TYLER: *The Illusionists.*
Live from Broadway Mar. 9.
cowancenter.edu
903/566-7424

TYLER: *Dirty Dancing*
Mar. 21-22. cowancenter.org
903/566-7424

TYLER: Azalea and Spring
Flower Trail Mar. 24-Apr. 9.
visitytyler.com/azaleatrail
903/592-1661

TYLER: Quilt Show Mar. 24-
25. qgetx.org 903/581-6676

TYLER: Rose City Artisans
and Flower Market Mar. 24-
25. goodmanmuseum.com
903/531-1286

TYLER: Disc Dog Event
Mar. 31-Apr. 1. petsfurpeople.
org 903/570-5400

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ARLINGTON: Maverick
Speaker Series: Farheed
Zakaria Mar. 7.
utacollegepark.com
817/272-5584

BURTON: Texas Ranger
Day Mar. 11.
burtonheritagesociety.org
979/353-0050

BURTON: LaBahia
Antiques Show and Sale
Mar. 24-Apr. 1.
labahiaantiques.com
979/289-2684

CLEBURNE: *And Then
There Were None* Mar. 2-4.

carnegieplayers.org
817/645-9255

CLEBURNE: *The Little
Mermaid* Mar. 2-4.
plaza-theatre.com
817/202-0600

CLEBURNE: *Singin' in the
Rain* Mar. 10-31, Apr. 1-22.
plaza-theatre.com
817/202-0600

CLEBURNE: SpringFest
Mar. 18. cleburnedowntown
association.com
214/202-5550

CLEBURNE: Yumiko
Schlaffer in Concert
Mar. 25. songbirdlive.com
817/489-4840

CLIFTON: Comedy Night
Mar. 11. bosqueartscenter.org
254/675-3724

COLLEGE STATION: Spirit
of Texas Festival Mar. 2-5.
softfair.com 979/571-8891

COLLEGE STATION: Living
History Weekend Mar. 25.
americangimuseum.org
979/446-6888

DALLAS: *Maya: Hidden
Worlds Revealed* Feb. 11-
Sep. 4. perotmuseum.org

DALLAS: Dallas Blooms
Feb. 25-Apr. 9.
dallasarboretum.org
214/515-6612

DALLAS: North Texas
Irish Festival Mar. 3-5.
ntif.org 214/821-4173

DALLAS: Quilt Show
Mar. 10-12. quiltersguild
ofdallas.org 972/866-0586

DALLAS: *México 1900-1950:*
Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo,
José Clemente Orozco
and the Avant-Garde
Mar. 12-Jul. 16. dma.org
214/922-1200

DENISON: Interurban
Film Festival Mar. 24-26.
smalltownbigart.com
903/815-5143

DENTON: North Texas
Horse Country Tour Mar. 4.
940/382-7895

DENTON: Texas Storytelling
Festival Mar. 9-12.
tejasstorytelling.com
940/382-7895

ELGIN: Sip, Shop and Stroll
Mar. 9. elgintx.com

ENNIS: The Lantern Fest
Mar. 4. thelanternfest.com
972/815-4748

FARMERSVILLE: Farmers
& Fleas Market Mar. 4.
farmersvilletx.com
972/784-6846

FLATONIA: Spring
Market Day with Texas
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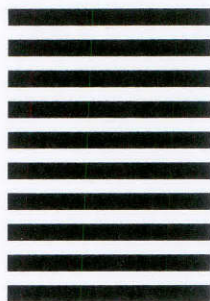


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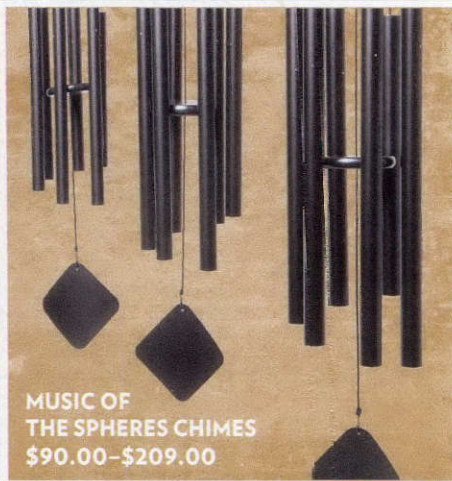
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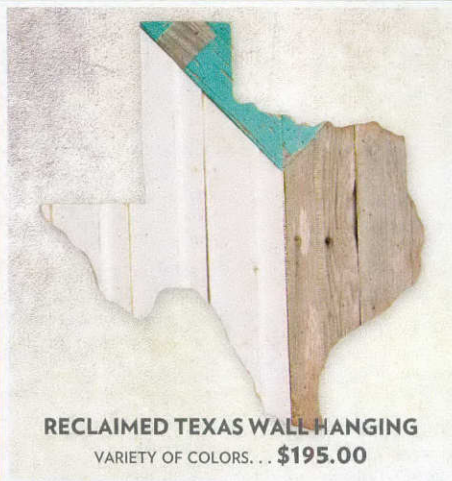
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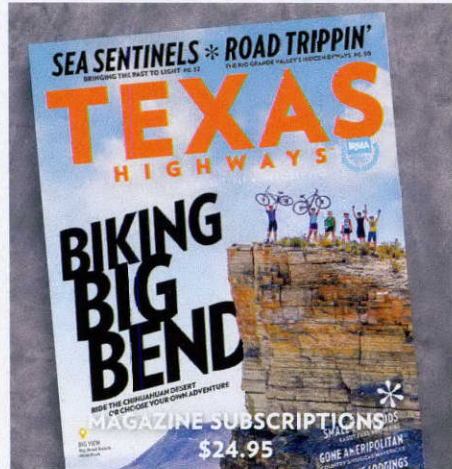
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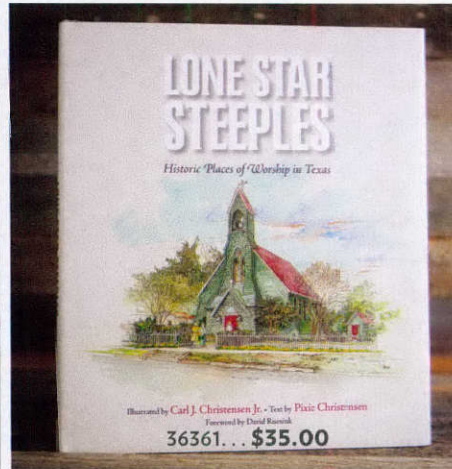
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FORT WORTH: *Focus: Stanley Whitney* Through Apr. 2. themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: *Donald Sultan: The Disaster Paintings* Feb. 19-Apr. 23. themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Show of Antiques and Art Mar. 3-5. fortworthshow.com 817/291-3952

FORT WORTH: *Greater Tuna* Mar. 29-30. basshell.com 817/212-4200

FORT WORTH: Food - Wine Festival Mar. 30-Apr. 2. fortworthfoodandwinefestival.com 817/336-1009

GARLAND: *The Servant's Last Serve* Feb. 23-Mar. 18. garlandartsboxoffice.com 972/205-2790

GLEN ROSE: Big Rocks Chili Cook-Off Mar. 10-12. 254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: Texas Para Unity Fest Mar. 18. dallasghost.com 254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Third Weekend Bluegrass Mar. 18. paluxybluegrass.com 254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: Family Fossil Dig Mar. 25. fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Paluxy River Spring Bluegrass Festival Mar. 30-Apr. 1. paluxybluegrass.com 254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: Vintage Market Days Mar. 31-Apr. 2. vintagemarkdays.com 254/897-4509

GRANBURY: *9 to 5: The Musical* Mar. 1-19. granburytheatrecompany.org 817/579-0952

GRANBURY: *Nashville and Beyond: The Greatest Hits of Country* Mar. 4, 18. bigcitymusicrevue.com 972/670-5053

GRANBURY: First Saturday Bird Walk Mar. 4. actonnaturecenter.org 817/326-6005

GRANBURY: Ghosts and Legends Tour Mar. 10-11. granburytours.com 817/559-0849

GRANBURY: General Granbury's Birthday Mar. 18-19. granburysquare.com 682/936-4550

GRAND PRAIRIE: *Cirque du Soleil Kurios-Cabinet of*

Curiosities Mar. 1-5, 8-12. cirquedusoleil.com/kurios 972/263-7223

GRAND PRAIRIE: *Back 2 The '80s* Mar. 3. verizontheatre.com 888/929-7849

GRAND PRAIRIE: Spring Tejano Festival Mar. 12. texastradersvillage.com 972/647-2331

GRAND PRAIRIE: Kidfest Mar. 25. tradersvillage.com/grandprairie 972/647-2331

GRAPEVINE: *A Day Out with Thomas* Mar. 31-Apr. 2, 7-9. historictains.org 866/468-7630

IRVING: Texas Steel Guitar Association Mar. 9-12. texassteelguitar.org 817/558-3481

LA GRANGE: The Best Little Cowboy Gathering in Texas Mar. 9-12. bestlittlecowboygathering.org 979/249-3033

LA GRANGE: *Uncorked* Mar. 17-19. lagrangeuncorked.com 979/968-3017

LEWISVILLE: Director's Choice Mar. 31-Apr. 1.

lakecitiesballet.org 972/317-7987

LULING: *Rajun' Cajun Gumbo Cook-Off* Mar. 11. lulingmainstreet.com 830/875-3214 ext. 3

MADISONVILLE: Madison County Fair Association Rodeo Mar. 17-18. mcfa.net 936/348-3591

MANSFIELD: *World's Only St. Paddy's Pickle Parade and Palooza* Mar. 17-18. pickleparade.org 817/988-0104

MCDADE: *Sherwood Forest Faire* Mar. 4-Apr. 25. sherwoodforestfaire.com 512/222-6680

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days Mar. 17-19. tmttd.com 972/562-5466

MESQUITE: Paul Gray Artist Exhibit Mar. 1-31. mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: *String Theory* Mar. 17. mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: *Hip Hop Cowboys Annual Spring Rodeo* Mar. 18. hiphopcowboy.com 972/839-2802

MESQUITE: Yuri Anshelevich and Gabriel Sanchez in Concert Mar. 25. mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

NAVASOTA: Texas Birthday Bash Mar. 3-4. texasbirthdaybash.com 936/825-6475

PLANO: *Will You Still Love Me in the Morning* Feb. 10-Mar. 5. theatre-britain.com 972/490-4202

PLANO: *Victor Victoria* Mar. 3-12. artcentretheatre.com 214/810-3228

PLANO: Chips: Poker Tournament and Casino Night Mar. 4. visitdowntownplano.com 972/948-5916

PLANO: Texas Fly Fishing and Brew Festival Mar. 11-12. txflyfishingfestival.org 703/402-8338

PLANO: *Daphne Garden* Mar. 17-25. artcentretheatre.com 214/810-3228

PLANO: Texas Music Revolution Mar. 24-25. khiy.com 972/941-5800

RICHARDSON: *Women of Ireland* Mar. 18. eisemanncenter.com 972/744-4650

RICHARDSON: *The Other Mozart* Mar. 23-26. eisemanncenter.com 972/744-4650

RICHARDSON: *Legendary Greats and the Young Artists* Mar. 25. planosymphony.org 972/473-7262

RICHARDSON: *Keyboard Conversations-Fiesta* Mar. 28. eisemanncenter.com 972/744-4650

ROUND TOP: James Dick in Concert Mar. 4. festivalhill.org 979/249-3129

ROUND TOP: Herbal Forum Mar. 17-18. festivalhill.org 979/249-3129

SALADO: Salado Spring Pub Crawl Mar. 24. salado.com 512/947-5040

SALADO: Songsmith Texas Music Weekend Mar. 25-26. songsmithonline.com 469/387-6380

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SALADO: Wildflower Weekend Mar. 25-26. salado.com 512/947-5040

SHINER: Spring Into Quilting Show Mar. 17-18. shinerheritagequilters.org 361/594-3185

SHINER: Citywide Garage Sale Mar. 18. shinertx.com 361/594-4180

SMITHVILLE: Pedal Thru the Pines Mar. 11. pedalthrupines.org 512/321-7760

WACO: Heart Of Texas Airshow Mar. 18-19. heartoftexasairshow.com 303/862-6829

WACO: Mammochs on the March Mar. 25. waco-texas.com/cms-waco-mammoth 254/750-7946

WASHINGTON: Texas Independence Day Celebration Mar. 4-5. wheretexasbecametexas.org 936/878-2214

WAXAHACHIE: Spring Lawn and Garden Show Mar. 25. ecmga.com 972/825-5175

WEST: Central Texas Ceramic Expo and Handcrafted Items Mar. 18-19. westceramicshow.com 254/716-5227

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

BEEVILLE: *In Silence* Through Apr. 21. bamtxexas.org 361/358-8615

EAGLE PASS: International Friendship Festival Mar. 24-Apr. 2. 830/773-3224

GOLIAD: Market Days Mar. 10. goliadcc.org 361/645-3563

GOLIAD: Goliad Massacre and Living History Mar. 25-26. presidiolabahia.org 361/645-3752

MCALLEN: Taste McAllen Mar. 30. facebook.com/tastemcallen 956/682-2871

SAN ANTONIO: *The Secret Garden* Feb. 10-Mar. 12. theplayhousesa.org 210/733-7258

SAN ANTONIO: *The Tempest* Feb. 17-Mar. 12. classictheatre.org 210/589-8450

SAN ANTONIO: Deep in the Arts of Texas Gala Mar. 2. artssa.org 210/226-2891

SAN ANTONIO: Spring Gala: An Evening with Gil Shaham Mar. 4. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

SAN ANTONIO: Fiesta of Gems Mar. 11-12. swgemandmineral.org 830/387-1766

SAN ANTONIO: St. Patrick's Day 5K, River Parade, and Festival Mar. 11, 17-18. harpandshamrock.org

SAN ANTONIO: Masks Mar. 17-18. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

SAN ANTONIO: From Piano Duo to Cinderella Mar. 24-25. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

WESLACO: Alfresco Weslaco Mar. 16. facebook.com/alfrescoweslaco 956/969-0838

WESLACO: Texas Onion Fest Mar. 25. weslaco.com/onionfest 956/968-2102

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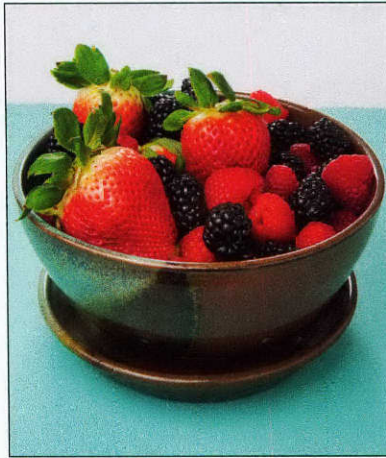
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continued from page 84

and the coyote ran in front of me, and the mountain lion was right behind him. And then they both saw me, and they both scattered in different directions.

Q: *Where do you go in Galveston?*

A: We stay at the San Luis Resort, and you know, I've had one of the best meals I've ever had in my life there at The Steakhouse. It was the best bone-in rib eye I've ever had. I eat at the best restaurants all over the country, and I'll put this steakhouse up against any place I've ever been. We ended up eating there two nights in a row we liked it so much.

Q: *Do you still practice or compete in rodeo?*

A: No. The events that I did are very dangerous. It's kind of like being a running back in the NFL. As a 40-year-old man, you don't go do it for fun. I still rope occasionally. If there's a fundraiser or celebrity team-roping event, I partake in those sorts of events. But the bareback riding, saddle-bronc riding, and bull riding, I haven't done any of that since the day I retired.

Q: *Do you miss it?*

A: I really don't. I think I was able to reach the benchmarks that I set for myself. You know as a young guy that it's a young guy's game. I went hard, I did everything I wanted to do, and I got all of it that I wanted. Sometimes it feels like another lifetime in a way. But I loved it, and I feel fortunate that I was able to make an amazing living doing what I would rather do than anything else. That was my dream. To be able to make a living playing cowboy was a pretty lucky way to make a living. **L**

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on them, and they're just smoking every kind of meat you can think of 24 hours a day. It's really rustic, and they've got a bunch of pictures of all the famous cowboys that frequent the place. Then there's a little diner called Peacock's that I've eaten at for as long as I've been in Stephenville, which has been 25 years I guess. It's a little old-school diner. They don't ever close. A few years ago they were going to shut down for Christmas, but they changed their minds because they couldn't find the key to lock the place. That's a true story.

I've seen really cool things in Big Bend on my motorcycle. I saw a mountain lion stalking a coyote. It happened right in front of me. I was probably going 50 miles an hour, and the coyote ran in front of me, and the mountain lion was right behind him.

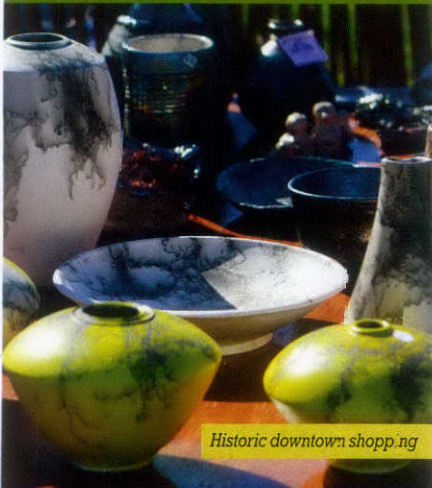
Q: *Where do you like to travel within Texas?*

A: I have a BMW motorcycle, and we love to take trips on it. Big Bend is an amazing place to go in the fall and wintertime. Whenever we only have a quick weekend or something, Paige and I jump on the bike and ride down to Galveston and eat some seafood and stay in a nice resort there. I've ridden all over the state pretty much.

Q: *What do you like to do out in Big Bend?*

A: I love the Gage Hotel in Marathon, and I love riding through Lajitas and Terlingua. I think those are really unique parts of the world. There's no other place quite like Big Bend—the culture and the people, everything about it. I've seen really cool things in Big Bend on my motorcycle. I saw a mountain lion stalking a coyote. It happened right in front of me. I was probably going 50 miles an hour,

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THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



Health and Happiness in Sulphur Springs

BACK IN THE DAY, folks traveled from near and far to this Northeast Texas town to take a dip in the sulphur springs for their rumored healing powers. While those stinky springs may be dry, I found that this town still flows with culture, art, good eatin', and the sweet aroma of Texas.

9 A.M. A crisp breeze greeted me as I started my day, causing my bones to yearn for a hot cup of coffee. Luckily, I spotted **Coffee off the Square** in a historic building just "off the square." While the name calls it like it is, the coffee tasted delicious, and my giant homemade cinnamon roll was a good omen for an epic daytrip.

10 A.M. I followed the "red brick road" to **Celebration Plaza**, the town's historic square. But after circling the regal 1884 **Hopkins County Courthouse** a few times, I realized this "square" more accurately represented a pentagon with five full sides. Regardless, the lush lawn and stately Veterans Memorial made it an excellent center of town. I noticed two large mirrored boxes that seemed a bit modern for such a down-home Texas town. I peered at my reflection and suddenly heard the sound of a flushing toilet as

a door swung open and a gentleman walked out holding his morning paper. I instantly realized these boxes aren't just art but outdoor restrooms with two-way mirrored sides. The public can't see in, but the user gets a full view of the square. And, yes, I did give it a try.

11 A.M. Interested in seeing more multipurpose art, I stopped into the **Sulphur Springs Public Library** to view the **Leo St. Clair Music Box Collection**. Started in 1919 by a World War I veteran after the Queen of Belgium gifted him a music box, the rotating collection has since grown to include over 150 music boxes as unique as Texas is wide. It was like walking through an art exhibit where all the sculptures make noise!

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

NOON I tripped back to the square and gave a hearty "howdy" to the town's favorite potato—the mascot of **The Potato House**, a stuffed-spud eatery where potatoes come filled with everything from broccoli cheese soup to chicken-fried chicken. I chose the "Easy Rider" piled high with jalapeños, hot sausage, and pepper jack cheese—it was definitely a "hot potato." After devouring the entire thing, my mouth was on fire; luckily I knew exactly where to go for some relief.

1 P.M. I headed to **The Southwest Dairy Museum and Education Center** for a scoop of vanilla ice cream topped with hot fudge and history. I meandered through the museum and learned all about the hard work that goes into producing milk and how the process has drastically changed over the years. Ice cream had never tasted so good or laborious. After working extra hard to milk a model cow, I decided that I had earned a second scoop.

3 P.M. Full of calcium, I was feeling strong enough to reel in a whopper and headed north to **Cooper Lake State Park**. East Texas is known for producing some of the biggest large-mouth bass in the country, and I was feeling good about my luck. I joined a number of anglers on a pier at the **South Sulphur Unit** of the park and cast my lure into the open water. Within minutes I had a white bass on the line. It

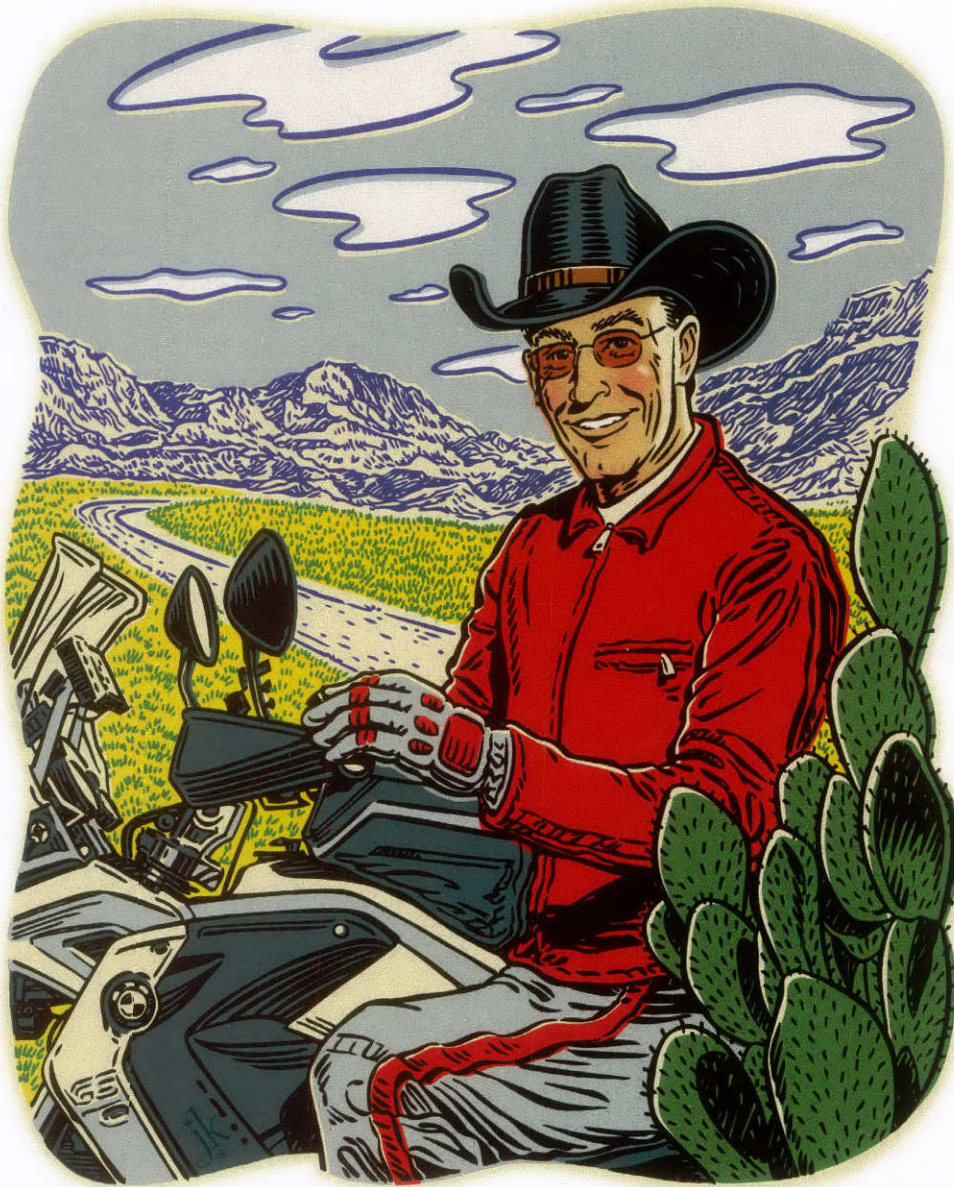
was followed by a few perch and a catfish, making for a great couple hours of fishing.

It's a shame that the healing springs are gone, but there's still plenty of therapy to be found in this town's art, wildlife, history, and food. And after a day exploring all of it, I felt better than ever. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

Contact the Sulphur Springs Department of Tourism at 903/885-5614, www.visitsulphurspringstx.org.

TRAVEL MATTERS

TRAVEL TALK WITH TRUE TEXANS



Rodeo Royalty

For Ty Murray, rough stock gives way to ranching and cruising

story by **Matt Joyce**

BULL RIDING HAS BEEN GOOD TO TY MURRAY. BUT THAT doesn't mean he wants to hop on the back of a 1,500-pound bucking bovine ever again.

"When you're young and invincible, you feel like getting hurt's just for the other guys," says Murray, a Stephenville rancher and ProRodeo Hall of Fame inductee. "Now being on this side of it, I look at these young guys riding bulls, and I think, 'how do they survive?'"

Murray grew up in a rodeo family in Arizona before moving to Texas for college. As a pro, the scrappy cowboy competed in bareback, saddle-bronc, and bull riding en route to seven Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association all-around championships between 1989 and 1998.

"When you're young and invincible, you feel like getting hurt's just for the other guys."

Murray retired from competition in 2002, and now the 47-year-old serves as an elder statesman of the sport. He co-founded the Professional Bull Riders in 1992 and still works for the circuit, providing TV commentary for about a dozen CBS broadcasts a year and hosting the annual PBR Ty Murray Invitational each March in Albuquerque.

Outside of rodeo, Murray raises black Angus cattle on his 2,400-acre spread and dotes on his 5-year-old son Kase. He and fiancé Paige Duke—a TV personality on the RIDE TV network—plan to marry in September.

Q: *What brought you to Odessa College?*

A: A full-ride rodeo scholarship. I had offers around the country but I wanted to come to Texas, and Jim Sharp, the guy who was my hero that was a few years older than me, he had won a national title for Odessa College.

Q: *How'd you end up settling in Stephenville?*

A: I just really liked the area. Being from Arizona and the desert, I thought Stephenville was great cow country. It wasn't East Texas, but it wasn't West Texas either. There's decent grass here that you have all the time, and it's a lot of water and rolling hills and scattered trees. I just thought it was perfect cow country.

Q: *Where do you like to go in Stephenville for fun?*

A: For anybody who comes to Stephenville, Hard Eight barbecue is the place to go. They have these giant barbecue pits with big lids > continued on page 82

SIGHTSEER

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