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T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

COMING UP

Texas Tech University in Lubbock broke ground on a \$9-million Special Collections Building to house the **Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict** and other historic treasures. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Texas Tech is establishing itself as the preeminent archive for the war, boasting more Vietnam War documents than any other depository outside the federal government. Donated materials, which for now rest on the third floor of the campus library, include Vietnamese flags, political posters, framed military medals, literature about Vietnam and the war, and cases of microfilmed government records. The 20th anniversary of the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam is in April 1995.

ECO-TOURISM

A 120-mile recreational trail from Dallas to the Red River is in the works, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. **The Dalhoma Trail** will link four counties in North Texas, 18 cities, three state parks, three lakes, and one national wildlife refuge. Dallas Mayor **Steve Bartlett**, who will head an executive committee of local elected officials studying the trail's development, said that cities, counties, and parks along the trail will pay for building their sections, and that local, state, and federal monies will be used. The North Central Texas Council of Governments executive board has authorized a \$110,000 feasibility study of the trail, which will cost up to \$30 million and take 10 years to

build. The trail will rank as one of the nation's five longest urban greenbelts, rivaling recreational trails in Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Portland, Oregon.

PLACES

The hushed echoes of Texas history lovers were heard once again when the **Texas State Capitol** in **Austin** reopened on October 15. The noble edifice shut its doors to the public in September 1993 because of a major restoration and preservation project. Though renovation is not yet complete, visitors are now welcome seven days a week. The Capitol tour guides are back, offering tours Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tours are every 15 or 30 minutes, depending on the crowd. Tours include the refurbished Senate chamber, the rotunda, and the new underground extension. The House chamber is scheduled for completion in January 1995.

The **Tigua Indians at El Paso** continue their struggle to open the state's first full gambling

casino, after the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court's decision in favor of the tribe. The Tigua's **Speaking Rock Bingo Entertainment Center** opened last November as a high-stakes bingo hall featuring state-of-the-art equipment with electronic display boards. They later added poker tables and a form of blackjack they call Tigua 21, where players bet against each other. Following the lead of tribes around the nation, the Tiguas want to open a full casino with slot machines, gaming tables, and card games where players bet against the house. **Vince Muñoz**, the Tiguas' executive gaming commissioner, said despite the setback, the tribe is not giving up. They see the operation as a way of making the tribe economically self-sufficient and of providing jobs, not just for Tiguas but for El Pasoans, as well. Speaking Rock already is drawing sizable crowds, where sessions are held daily except Monday. At 122 Old Pueblo Road next to Isleta Mission; 915/860-7777 for more info.

The **Star of Texas** cruise ship resumed operation last month

after suspending service September 6 for refurbishment and repair. The Galveston-based floating casino offers short day cruises, as well as a series of five-day cruises to Cozumel. For reservations, call 1-800-495-2121.

"The newest old place in town" is the **Godbold Cultural Center** in **Lubbock**, where visitors can relax and enjoy the beauty of the visual and performing arts. The center occupies the remodeled St. Mary of the Plains Clinic/Hospital and the University City Club building on 19th Street across from Texas Tech University campus. Original works by artists of regional and international fame are displayed in the various gallery rooms. Ballet, classical music, jazz, and drama are performed in the Main Stage Theater. Amenities include the Gallery Cafe, the Espresso & Capuccino Bar, and numerous shops. For a schedule of events, call 806/741-1953.

The first phase of **Wichita Falls' Multi-Purpose Events Center** is well under way, with the new Agriculture Complex scheduled for completion in

HEAVY HITTERS The Legends of the Game Baseball Museum

at The Ballpark in Arlington is slated to open February 10.

For the first time, The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum has allowed some 138 artifacts to leave

Cooperstown, New York, for an extended period of time.

Visitors can see the jerseys, bats, and trophies belonging to the legends. On the south side of The Ballpark on

Randol Mill Road. Call 817/273-5099 for details.



TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

January 1995. For more information, call **Jeff Syrus**, agriculture and operations director, at 1-800-799-MPEC (6732).

The Wichita Falls C&VB moved to new quarters at 1300 Seventh Street in City Hall. Personnel include **Shirley Dawson**, director, **Lisa Lyda** and **Paula Moers**, convention services, **Kristal Kingcade**, marketing assistant, and **Susan Walton**, tourism assistant. The staff eventually will relocate to the Multi-Purpose Events Center, where, in addition to promoting tourism, they will serve as booking agents for the MPEC. Their new mailing address is P.O. Box 630, Wichita Falls 76307-0630. Give 'em a call at 817/723-9988; FAX 817/723-9997.

IN PRINT

Texas took center stage when two top Texas tourist destinations were featured in two travel magazines in October. **American Way**, published by American Airlines, spotlighted the Texas Hill Country in a feature entitled "Ten Great Drives." Editor Jim Shahin writes, "The Hill Country was made for the unhurried life. This part of the world demands aimlessness, for it is itself a haphazard unraveling of rock and water, trees and fields, beauty and treachery, as if thrown



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Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Marty Lange, Jane McNally, Mike Talley

JUDGE ROY BEAN TIC

Imagine his surprise, when manager Neal Billings glanced out the window and saw, not a caravan of RVs, but a caravan of camels instead. Howdy Fowler is leading a small group of family and friends on a 2,243-mile journey across the southwestern U.S., retracing the steps of Lt. Edward Beale's 1857 camel expedition. Fowler, director of Trail Dust Ministries, believes the camels will help draw crowds so he can spread the word about gang and youth violence and how it's

destroying our kids. Over the past seven years, the group has taken similar journeys by horseback, horse and wagon, and on donkeys.

1-800 PHONE TIC Counselors answered more than six thousand calls within a short four-day span, during last month's southeast Texas floods. Counselor Joe Slocum said because so many major highways were closed, they had to route travelers going from Beaumont to Houston on a 200-mile trek through Livingston and Huntsville. "I love nothing better

than helping folks out," said Joe, "but I'll sure be glad when things slow down."

WASKOM TIC Comedian Justin Wilson, known to many for his unorthodox Cajun cooking show on PBS TV, popped in for a new map on his way to Fort Worth to help promote the opening of a new Dillard's department store. Counselor Donna Watson said he is just as funny in person as he is on TV. On his way out, he reminded everyone, "Don't do it if it's not fun." Sound advice!

together in one of God's indecisive moments." In an article on "The World's Best Walks," **Travel & Leisure** cites San Antonio's Paseo del Rio as one of 19 great walking trails selected from countless trails worldwide.

THEME PARKS

In a just-released poll by *Inside Track* magazine, a journal for theme park enthusiasts, the musical production "**Rockin' in Rockville High**" at **Fiesta Texas in San Antonio** continued to receive top ratings and reviews. In the September issue of *Inside Track*, Mark Wyatt writes, "Defending champion and two-time winner, 'Rockin' at Rockville High,' finished number two this year, still the highest rated show at a park bursting with excellent productions. This ultrainteractive '50s show will have you singing and dancing right out into the themed streets of Rockville." The nostalgic blast to the past brings to life high school pep rallies, a sock hop, and a top-40 dance show. For information on other great musical events, call 1-800-473-4378.

combining colorful lights, lively shows, and musical favorites, will greet visitors to **Sea World of Texas in San Antonio** nightly from November 25 through December 30, with the exception of Christmas Eve. The marine life park will be alive with carolers and sing-alongs, children's shows, appearances by the Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales, laser light spectacles, and Santa Claus. And famed sea lions Clyde and Seamore will star in a hilarious holiday show. Guests

exiting the park can drive through almost a mile of dazzling displays fashioned from thousands of twinkling lights. For ticket information, call 1-800-527-4757.

The Right Stuff — A Mach One Adventure blasts off at **Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington** this coming spring. The multimillion-dollar ride is based on the Warner Bros. movie, "The Right Stuff," which chronicled the birth of the U.S. space program and the supersonic jet



LEAPIN' LIZARDS! Amazing new creatures were added to the lush Rainforest Pyramid at Moody Gardens in Galveston.



A large glass terrarium now houses several dozen tiny Poison Arrow Frogs; Day Gecko lizards add new excitement to the Japanese Tea Room, and bird-eating spiders will alternate with Pink-Toed Tarantulas to greet guests from within their glass house. For information on other Moody Garden attractions and events, call 1-800-582-4673.

exploits of the original seven astronauts. The new attraction combines high-tech movie images, surrounding sound, and a computerized motion system to create the full sensation of slamming through the sound barrier in a jet fighter. Park president **Bob Bennett** said theming for the ride will be the most elaborate ever seen at Six Flags Over Texas. A real F-104 jet fighter plane will sit in front of a six-story replica of a 1940s hangar. Park guests will pass real jet engines in a simulated test stand as they approach the ride, and loudspeakers will crackle with instructions from unseen test personnel. Bennett said the aviation adventure will be the most spectacular family ride in the park's 33-year history. Call 817/640-8900 for details.

W I L D L I F E

The whooping cranes have begun their 2,500-mile southward migration from nesting grounds at Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories of Canada, to their wintering grounds on the Texas Gulf coast. Officials anticipate about 148 of the endangered birds will soon arrive at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge north of Rockport/Fulton. **Lee Ann Linam**, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's endangered species program coordinator, said, "Despite recent population increases, the whooping crane, whose only natural population winters in Texas, still is a highly endangered Texas treasure. It is only through the cooperation of Texas residents that we can effectively ensure that they will arrive safely at their Texas winter home." Anyone spotting a whooping crane is asked to report the time, place, and other details to the TP&WD's endangered species program at 1-800-792-1112 or 512/448-4311.

H I S T O R Y

Extensive plans to enrich the visitor experience at **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park** are well under way. Washington-on-the-Brazos, now known as Washington, achieved prominence during the Texas Revolution in 1836 as the site of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the drafting of the Constitution of the newly born Republic of Texas. It also served as capital of the Republic from 1842 to 1846. Though visitors now can perceive important elements of the town's history through the replica of Independence Hall, the Star of the Republic Museum, and Barrington, the home of President Anson Jones, officials were concerned that these were not sufficient in presenting a true understanding of Washington's place in Texas history. Plans include relocation of Barrington, which will become the center

TEXAS TRIVIA
Which Texas town served as the capital during the Republic of Texas era?

If you guessed Austin, you're right. If you guessed Houston, you're right. Actually, the new republic changed its capital eight times, starting with San Felipe de Austin, and then Washington-on-the-Brazos, Harrisburg, Galveston Island, Velasco, Columbia (now West Columbia), Houston, and finally Waterloo, which was renamed Austin after Stephen F. Austin, "The Father of Texas."

TEXAS TRIVIA



CHOW DOWN Belly up to the chuck wagon for the 4th Annual Ranch Hand Breakfast at the world-famous King Ranch near Kingsville. Visitors can get a taste of the Old West on Saturday, November 19, when a traditional cowboy breakfast is cooked and served outdoors. For more information, call 1-800-333-5032.

of activity for a living history farmstead, complete with barn, stock pens, fields for cotton and produce, and representations of slave dwellings. A new audio-visual presentation will enhance the visitor program at Independence Hall.

P U B L I C A T I O N S

A cluster of Texas towns teamed up last summer to produce a new regional brochure. **Lead Me to the Hills, Rivers & Lakes of Texas** includes important tourist information on Brady, Fredericksburg, Junction, Mason, Menard, Ozona, and Sonora. **Debbie Farquhar-Garner**, owner of the creative marketing company that published the brochure, said the piece has been well received, and that the 1995 version should be available by mid-April. For a supply, call 210/997-8515.

M A I L B O X

The Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus recently changed locations and staff. **Mary Lynn Amoyo**, executive director since 1991, resigned after the birth of her son. The new executive director is **LaRue Ersch**, who

most recently was director of sales and services at the Kerrville C&VB, and who also served as assistant director of tourism for the State of North Dakota. In addition, TACVB headquarters moved from Grapevine to Fredericksburg. Their new address is P. O. Box 1264, Fredericksburg 78624; telephone number, 210/997-9384; FAX, 210/997-9596. Give 'em a call.

M U S E U M S

Technology, creativity, and fun meet science at the **Fort Worth Museum of Science and History's** new exhibit, **LIQUID VISION: Lasers, Holograms, and Virtual Reality**. The interactive exhibit enhances the technical literacy of visitors by encouraging them to view technology as an asset to their creativity. The magical journey into the 21st Century includes six major areas where guests can step into an eight-foot-tall video game, star in their own music video, launch a fiber-optic fireworks show, see some of the world's largest holograms, and experience virtual reality. On view through January 1 at 1501 Montgomery Street in Fort Worth's Cultural District. Call 817/732-1631 for information on other museum events.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	21,306	+69.01	152,097	+10.02
Anthony	20,010	+11.91	178,026	+3.44
Denison	26,679	**	41,328	**
Gainesville	36,609	-18.49	378,000	-9.62
Langtry	14,097	+79.49	91,707	+14.67
Laredo	12,054	+16.40	131,652	+2.66
Orange	55,272	+42.06	499,818	+9.08
Texarkana	75,585	+79.25	510,918	+24.08
Valley	19,398	-17.42	271,497	+12.98
Waskom	53,193	+1.21	473,250	+8.89
Wichita Falls	21,495	+34.86	185,727	+13.10
Capitol Complex	8,622	-16.70	126,519	-.74
1-800 Phone Center	33,222	+840.87	160,197	+25.38
CENTER TOTALS	397,542	+41.67	3,200,736	+9.01

Data as of October 31, 1994 *Compared to last year

** The Denison TIC was temporarily closed in 1990 due to highway construction; resumed operation September 13, 1994.

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This month		399,966
This month last year		444,080
This year-to-date		4,121,306
Last year-to-date		4,478,361

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