



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on...

Bastrop

Weird before Austin was weird! Bastrop Celebrates 175 Years

Josiah Wilbarger left his farm with four friends to fight Comanche Indians in 1833, was shot, scalped and left for dead, and after being rescued lived for 11 more years. Here's the weird part...his sister appeared to him that night as he lay in pain and a woman friend dreamed of his plight and sent rescuers the next day to find him still alive with two of his group dead beside him. His sister had died years before his ordeal and visited him in spirit, he said.

And then there's the lady who sipped tea in her living room as her whole house was being rolled on logs to a new location a block away.

This year, Bastrop is celebrating 175 years of "being weird" in Central Texas, beginning with the events of June 9-16. June 8, 1832 marked the



Main Street with vendor tents on June 9

platting of the city of Bastrop by Mexican Land Commissioner José Miguel de Arciniega. This year, eight days of events marked the 175th anniversary of that historic day.

Eight days of diverse activities and events destined to be remembered for the next 175 years...and those of us who planned, cajoled, worked, sweated, worried, volunteered and participated vowed we'd **never** do an eight-day event again! Here's a list of all that happened in that festive week:

All day on Saturday, June 9th, there was a street fair was held on Main Street, proclamations and birthday cake at City Hall, unveiling of the "Moments of Valor" statue to honor our volunteer Fire Fighters and their 100-plus year history, followed in the evening by a bring-your-own (BYO) dinner on Main Street under the stars with a free concert, dance and fireworks. Whew!

On Sunday, June 10th, there was a walking tour of downtown churches with the chance to discover their place in the city's history, then a BYO picnic and free gospel choir recital in Fisherman's Park on the Colorado River. On Monday evening, June 11th, we showcased several beautiful old homes in the historic district with a "porch sitting" event. Homeowners of 13 of our historic homes invited people up on the porch to "sit a spell" and enjoy tea or



"Moments of Valor" bronze statue designed by Clint Howard, owner of Deep in the Heart Art Foundry

lemonade. Owners of two of the homes even made ice cream for their porch sitters. "Movies in the Park" followed at dusk in Fisherman's Park.

On Tuesday, June 12th, City Hall hosted an open house with all of Bastrop encouraged to come to the bi-monthly City Council meeting. On Wednesday, June 13th, the historic Bastrop Opera House held a Teen Tower Reunion. In the late 50s, the Opera House was a teen club called the Teen Tower. This year everyone dressed in their best-remembered 50s outfits and danced to "sock hop" music. On Thursday June 14th, the

Mexican food restaurants in the city had a cook-off competition with festivities that included mariachi music and performances by our local High School Ballet Folklorico group.

Friday, June 15th, gospel singing and family picnic dinners at historic Kerr Center kicked off Juneteenth festivities. On Saturday, the Juneteenth parade, proclamations, a community barbeque, and a free street dance finished off the week of celebrations.

By June 16th, we had a street full of dancing, happy folks, many having become new friends. It is hard to describe the pride everyone took in participating in the varied events. Most of the feedback has been about a wonderful week that offered something for everyone.

Throughout the remainder of 2007, all events will honor the 175 years of the city and we will continue to celebrate all that is “weird” about this wonderful community that was going strong when Austin was still called Waterloo. For those of us who put this together in 11 weeks, we are sticking to our guns...no more eight-day events. Unless in 25 years, for the 200th, we can all come sit in the audience!

Thanks to Nancy Wood, manager of the Bastrop Main Street Program, for providing the preceding article.

NEWS

GO TEXAN Products at the State Fair

The State Fair of Texas begins Sept. 28 and ends Oct. 21, 2007. The Food and Fiber Pavilion is the only place at the State Fair of Texas where visitors can learn all about Texas agriculture under one roof. From GO TEXAN member prod-

ucts such as salsa and soap, to exhibits that support farming and rural development or events that showcase leather crafts or Texas animals, the Food and Fiber Pavilion has it all. Visit the GO TEXAN web site to learn how your company can participate or check for events at the Pavilion as time draws near. Visit the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Heritage Trail’s booth while you are there.

EVENTS

August 2, San Marcos

Free concert under the stars at 7:30 p.m. held at San Marcos Plaza or Veramendi Plaza. For more information contact the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department at 512/393-8400.

August 3, Spur

Dinner theater at Swenson Park will feature *The Cowboy Ain’t Dead Yet* by J. Vandergrift. Dinner will be at 6:30pm with the show following. Tickets are \$25 with proceeds benefiting the restoration of the Palace Theater.

August 4, Henderson

Main Street Henderson is sponsoring the Henderson Gospel Concert at 6 p.m. at the middle school auditorium.

August 7, Grand Saline

Grand Saline Main Street will be coordinating the 24th Annual National Night Out crime and safety awareness event. There will be fun activities along with safety demonstrations in a carnival-like atmosphere. There will be fire extinguisher and fire safety demos, chocolate fights, CPR demos, etc.

August 7, Waxahachie

National Night Out returns to historic downtown Waxahachie. With games,

activities, fingerprinting for the kids and even a helicopter landing in downtown. All events are free.

August 10–11, Plainview

Plainview Main Street in partnership with Plainview Kiwanis and Newspapers In Education (NIE) will be presenting the first annual “87 on 87 Barbeque on Broadway” cook off. This is an International Barbeque Cookers Association sanctioned event. Proceeds will provide newspaper subscriptions to area schools for the use in the classroom. Call 806/291-1219 or email eturner@ci.plainview.tx.us.

August 16 and 23, Levelland

Movies on the Square and under the stars will include “Charlotte’s Web” and “Happy Feet.” Show time is 8:30 p.m. or dusk.

August 17, Bridgeport

People are Just Desserts... experience sweet rewards in all your relationships. Humorist Perry A identifies personality types based on favorite desserts. There will also be a dessert auction from some of the area’s most scrumptious cooks! Location will be at the Bridgeport Stage at 7 p.m. and tickets are \$10. Email atyson@cityofbridgeport.net.

August 18, Amarillo

Come to the Polk Street Block Party — the city’s biggest block party offers four stages with 25 live bands. More than 15,000 people are expected to enjoy the celebration. Call 806/372-6744 or see www.centercity.org

August 25, McKinney

Treat your taste buds at the 12th Annual Killis Milton Ice Cream Crank Off! Get out your ice cream bucket and sign up to compete. The flavors and competition have gotten fierce and exotic — even jalapeno flavored.

People come from all over to enjoy sampling homemade ice cream in the widest variety of flavors you will ever find! Presented by Clydes on the Square and McKinney Main Street. See www.downtownmckinney.com.

August 31–Sept. 2, Freeport

Cool blues to end a hot summer at the Summertime Blues Festival! This family-oriented event features live music, biker games, biker run, triathlon, kids area, stunt shows, great food, vendors, artwork, fireworks and more. Come enjoy Freeport's small-town hospitality. Call 979/233-3526 or visit www.freeportmainstreet.com.

AROUND THE STATE

Amarillo had a great turnout of more than 400 people at its High Noon on the Square free downtown concert in June. Of 350 meals sold, \$1 profit on each meal goes to feed the media and pay for stage, table and chair rental.

Amarillo also has a new 13-unit loft project, The Fillmore Lofts, which just opened.

Farmersville celebrated the completion of the historic Aston Building rehabilitation on Audie Murphy Day. The building features three split levels, a downstairs fireplace, upstairs office space, a rooftop deck in the rear and a custom-built stained glass dome.

Congratulations to **Rio Grande City** on its recent designation as a 2007 Preserve America Community.

AWARD NOMINATIONS

Texas Downtown Association's President's Awards
The Texas Downtown Association's President's Award nominations are due **August 3**. Texas Downtown As-

sociation awards program is a great way to showcase the projects, places and people in your Main Street community that make you proud. Whether your project is a finalist or winner, sometimes the simple act of submitting a project or person's name for an award is very meaningful to them and goes a long time to boosting local Main Street pride. See www.texasdowntown.org/awards.php

GRANTS

Make It Your Own Grant
The Case Foundation has launched an exciting new grant program called Make It Your Own, designed to help grassroots leaders involve their fellow citizens in dialogue, deliberation and action on community problems. This is one of those rare instances where a national foundation will make grants directly to local and neighborhood-level projects. For details see www.casefoundation.org, click on Make-It-Your-Own Grant. Twenty finalists will receive a \$10,000 grant to help make their idea a reality. This is not a prize for good works already done, but fuel to help move a great idea forward. The final four (chosen by the votes of our online community) will get an additional \$25,000 grant — for a total of \$35,000. Deadline for applications is **Aug. 8**.

HOPE VI Main Street Housing Grants

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has released applications for the current round of HOPE VI Main Street housing grants. The purpose is to provide grants to small communities to assist in the rejuvenation of an historic or traditional central business district or Main Street area by replacing unused commercial space with affordable housing units. Deadline is **Aug. 29**. See

www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=14597.

Communities Foundation Grant

Dallas-based Communities Foundation of Texas will begin reviewing grant applications this fall. The major areas of distribution include education, religion, culture and history, social services, youth and inner city/community. The deadline for consideration at the fall meeting is **September 14**. Visit www.cftexas.org/default.htm to learn more about grants in Texas and across the United States.

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

National Preservation Conference

The annual conference for the National Trust for Historic Preservation will be in the twin cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, **October 2–6, 2007**. This conference provides all-important know-how, innovative ideas and inspiration for people saving America's historic places and revitalizing communities. This is the premier educational and networking event for community leaders, volunteers and staff of the historic preservation movement. Register now at www.nthpconference.org/

2007 Calendar of Events

- **August 6, McKinney**
Main Street Interim Training for new managers
 - **August 7, McKinney**
Texas Capital Fund grant application workshop 9 a.m. – noon.
 - **August 7–9, McKinney**
Main Street Summer Workshop
 - **October 16–18, Fort Worth**
Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Annual Conference
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Web sites of Interest

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: www.aahpf.org
(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: www.ahlp.org
(The) Alliance for National Heritage Areas: www.cofc.edu/~heritage
American Institute of Architects: www.aiaonline.com
American Planning Association: www.planning.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org
(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: www.tclf.org
Handbook of Texas Online: www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online
Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies: www.icls.harvard.edu
Keep Texas Beautiful: www.ktb.org
League of Historic American Theaters: www.lhat.org
Livable Communities Task Force:
www.blumenauer.house.gov/issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=1077&IssueID=11
National Park Service: www.nps.gov
National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.nthp.org
Office of Rural Community Affairs: www.orca.state.tx.us
Preservation Easement Trust: www.preservationeasement.org/home
Preservation Directory: www.preservationdirectory.com
Preservation Texas: www.preservationtexas.org
Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org
Rails to Trails: www.railstotrails.org
Sacred Places: www.sacredplaces.org
Scenic America: www.scenic.org
Texas Commission on the Arts: www.arts.state.tx.us
Texas Downtown Association: www.texasdowntown.org
Texas Folklife Resources: www.texasfolklife.org
Texas Historical Commission: www.thc.state.tx.us
Texas Parks and Wildlife: www.tpwd.state.tx.us
Texas Rural Leadership Program: www.trlp.org
Texas State Preservation Board: www.tspb.state.tx.us
Urban Land Institute: www.uli.org

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**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

www.the.state.tx.us