

EDITOR'S NOTE



It's All About the Experience

WHEN SUGAR LAND RESIDENT Sandy Levin donated a series of bronze sculptures to the city earlier this year, including a whimsical depiction of two teenagers taking a selfie, he inadvertently ignited a conversation about public art and millennial self-absorption that went viral. Is it art? Does it validate youthful narcissism? Or does it, as the donor intended, simply portray a common activity at Sugar Land Town Square, one of the city's most popular tourist hubs? As anyone who travels knows, when the vacation's over and the realities of daily life encroach, a photo—selfie or not—can help you re-live those invigorating experiences over and over again.

Our September issue, in fact, is all about experiences. We've even refreshed the design and added some new stories to our lineup to keep the good times rolling. Our annual round-up of Extraordinary Texans showcases people who have accomplished

noteworthy feats like resurrecting a father's legacy, reimagining the movie-going experience, visiting every state park in Texas, and organizing the largest cultural celebration in the state. And since it's *Texas Highways'* 42nd birthday this year, we've also got a bucket list of 42 experiences we think are paramount for any adventurer, including floating a Hill Country river, spotting whooping cranes on the Gulf Coast, spray-painting some Cadillacs in Amarillo, and watching just-hatched sea turtles scamper to the surf. We also had a lot of fun designing a quiz that should determine if you're a True Texan (and if you're not, that's okay, too—we'll help you get there).

Go ahead: Give it your best shot.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Moffatt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LORI MOFFATT, *Interim Editor*

Searching for chachalacas—also known as Mexican tree pheasants—at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park.

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Change is in the Air

WHILE FALL OFFICIALLY arrived on September 22, most of us in Texas start feeling the season's change in October, when shortening days seem to intensify the other classic hallmarks of autumn—the roar of a hometown football game, the promise of a bowl of chili on a crisp evening, beating the squirrels to fallen pecans, and reveling in Texas' sometimes-elusive fall color.

Fall color is a tricky thing in Texas. Dependent on a delicate balance of rainfall, sunlight, and temperature, the color transformation is primarily the result of a disappearance of chlorophyll, which reveals the leaves' other pigments. But more often than not, autumn puts on a subtle show in Texas; consider the photo above, which highlights the cypress trees lining the Frio River at Garner State Park. "Beginning in mid- to late October through early November," says Garner State Park Interpreter Cara Bierschwale, "you'll start to see the cypresses turning a rusty color. If

you're at a high enough vantage point, you can see a ribbon of rust following the flow of the river. It's not a pop of color; it's subtle."

With October being Texas Wine Month, it's worth noting that you can often witness changing colors at some of Texas' more than 380 wineries, which are celebrating the end of harvest. "Toward the end of October, you'll see the vines start to go dormant," says Pedernales Cellars' Julie Kuhlken. "For a very brief window just after the first few cold snaps, they turn a brilliant orange yellow."

Read on for more ways to celebrate the season. Whether you want to hike the Guadalupe Mountains, search out ghosts, spend an evening at the theater, or meander along a Hill Country beer trail, we aim to please.

LORI MOFFATT, *Interim Editor*

Cypress trees reveal their fall colors along the Frio River at Garner State Park.

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Let's
Celebrate!

SINCE 1977, *TEXAS HIGHWAYS* has been a member of the International Regional Magazine Association (IRMA for short)—a group of nearly 40 publications whose missions run the gamut from covering travel in Texas to delving into the culture of the Pacific Northwest. Each year, IRMA members meet to talk shop, share ideas, brainstorm solutions to common problems, and recognize our talented peers with awards focused on design, writing, and photography.

And so, as we celebrate our 42nd year as the travel magazine of Texas, we're bursting with pride: On September 19 at the 2016 IRMA conference in Fort Lauderdale, *Texas Highways* received a total of 21 awards, including our first-time win as "Magazine of the Year;" a Gold prize for companion website; well-deserved laurels for our in-house wordsmith Matt Joyce, who won a Bronze award for "Magazine Writer of the Year;" and

multiple nods for design and photography.

Much of the credit for the magazine's editorial content in recent years belongs to our longtime colleague and friend Jill Lawless, who left the magazine in June to reap the rewards of part-time retirement. Jill's precise skills, keen wit, and equanimity in the face of occasional chaos kept us on task, focused, and sometimes in stitches. When I reached Jill with the good news, she sent enthusiastic congratulations from the comfort of her lakeside lounge chair, and—and true to her generous nature—thanked the whole team.

That team, of course, includes you, our loyal readers. We hope you enjoy the November issue.

LORI MOFFATT, *Interim Editor*