

# THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

A COLLECTION OF WEIRD (AND TRUE!) FACTS

By MIKE LOWERY

THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE 24-DAY EXTRAVAGANZA OF THE TEXAS SPIRIT.

THE CANCELLATION OF THE FAIR THIS YEAR WASN'T EXACTLY SURPRISING, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY LESS DISAPPOINTING.

WHERE ELSE CAN YOU FIND FAIR PARK'S SENSORY OVERLOAD, ITS JOVIAL JUMBLE OF ATTRACTIONS FROM DANCING TROUPES TO DANCING FOUNTAINS, LIVE MUSIC TO LIVESTOCK, AND BIG HAIR TO BIG TEX?

IN 134 YEARS, THE STATE FAIR HAS ONLY BEEN CANCELED NINE TIMES. THE LAST TIME WAS DURING WWII!

WHILE WE CAN'T GATHER IN DALLAS THIS YEAR FOR OUR ANNUAL TRADITIONS, WE KNOW THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS IS ALSO A STATE OF MIND.

SO HERE WE PRESENT AN HOMAGE TO THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS!



55 FEET TALL

95 GALLON HAT

BIG TEX

THE TEXAS-SIZE FAIR MASLOT!

HE WAS ORIGINALLY A SANTA CLAUS AND WAS CONVERTED INTO A COWBOY IN 1952

(HE WAS PURCHASED FOR JUST \$750)

IN 2013, THE NEW BIG TEX COST \$500,000.

IN THE 1970s, A REPLACEMENT SHIRT FOR BIG TEX WAS STOLEN OUT OF THE DELIVERY TRUCK!

HIS PANTS AND SHIRT ARE MADE BY DICKIES

WEARS LUCCHESI BOOTS

SIZE 96

SINCE 2005, THE BEST NEW DISHES AT THE FAIR HAVE COMPETED IN THE ANNUAL

# BIG TEX CHOICE AWARDS

HERE ARE A FEW NOTABLE ENTRIES.

## RUTH'S STUFFED MEXI-CONE



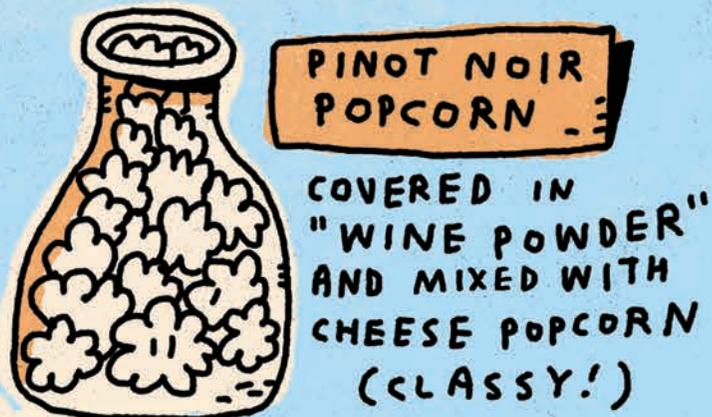
## BIG RED CHICKEN BREAD



## DEEP-FRIED CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP



## PINOT NOIR POPCORN



## COTTON CANDY TACO



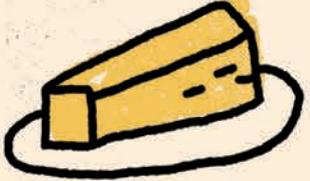
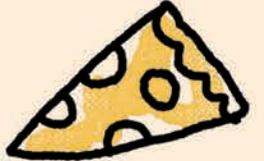
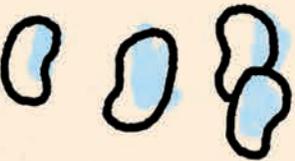
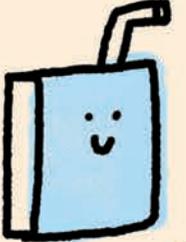
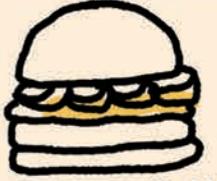
## SMOKY BACON MARGARITA



THERE ARE MANY THINGS WE'LL MISS ABOUT THE FAIR THIS YEAR, BUT THE INDULGENT AND BIZARRE FRIED FOODS MIGHT TOP THAT LIST. HOW MANY OF THESE DEEP-FRIED DELICACIES HAVE YOU TRIED IN THE PAST-OR PLAN TO TRY NEXT YEAR?

LET'S PLAY!

# DEEP-FRIED BINGO

 BUTTER	 SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS	 PIZZA
 JELLY BEANS	 COKE	 KOOL-AID
 FROOT LOOPS	 PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA BURGER	 S'MORES

THE FAIR HAS ONLY BEEN CANCELED A FEW TIMES - LIKE DURING WWI AND WWII. DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR THE FAIR-GROUNDS WERE USED AS AN ARMY ENCAMPMENT.

### A FEW NOTABLE GUESTS.



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (1900)



HARRY HOUDINI (1924)



ELVIS (1956)



DEBBIE REYNOLDS (1977)



SELENA (1994)

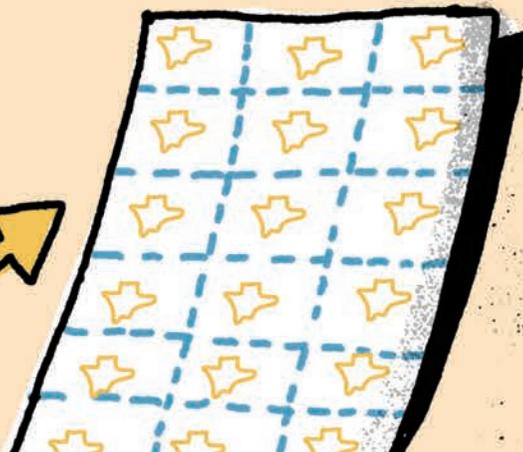


LOTS OF PRESIDENTS!



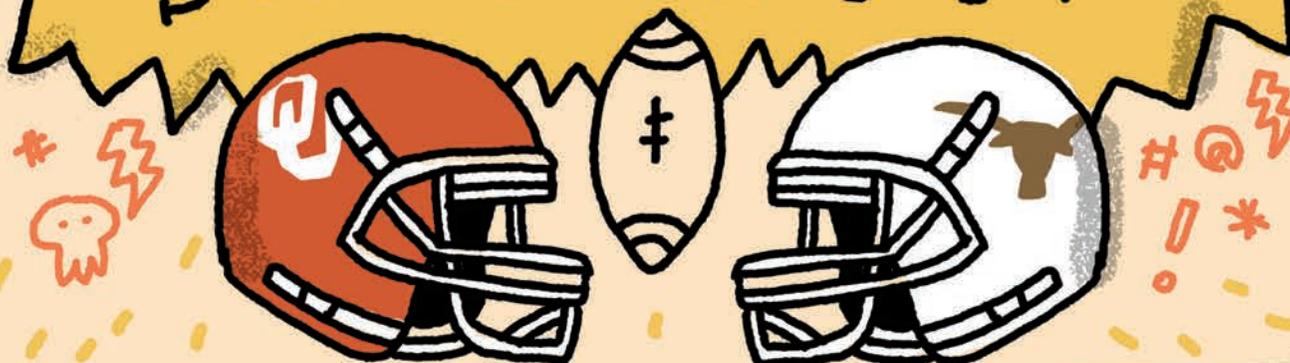
DON'T FORGET, NEXT TIME YOU GO, ON WEDNESDAYS ADMISSION IS JUST \$4 IF YOU BRING TWO CANS OF FOOD!

STATE FAIR COUPONS (THE FAIR'S CURRENCY) NEVER EXPIRE.



## THE RED RIVER SHOWDOWN, AKA

# THE RED RIVER SHOOTOUT!



A STATE FAIR TRADITION FOR OVER 100 YEARS!

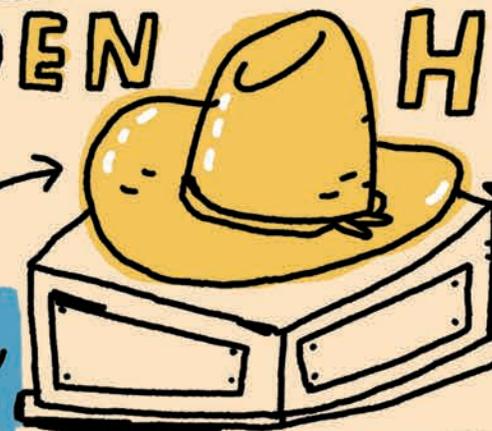
## THE LONGHORNS AND THE SOONERS

HAVE BEEN RIVALS SINCE 1900 - THAT'S LONGER THAN OKLAHOMA HAS BEEN A STATE!

DALLAS IS ALMOST EXACTLY EQUIDISTANT FROM BOTH SCHOOLS. OU IS ACTUALLY SLIGHTLY CLOSER.

## THE GOLDEN HAT

WAS ORIGINALLY MADE OUT OF BRONZE



TEXAS WON 8 YEARS IN A ROW ... TWICE!

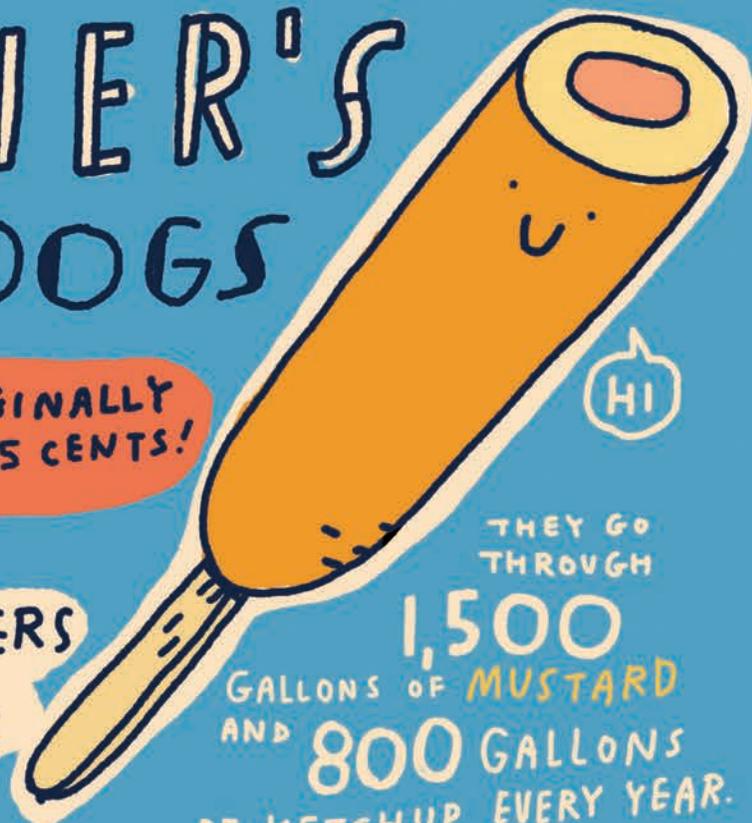
UT LEADS THE SERIES OVERALL, BUT OU HAS WON 7 OF THE PAST 10 GAMES.

# FLETCHER'S CORNY DOGS

DEBUTED in 1942 (THAT'S 100 YEARS BEFORE BIG TEX!)

ORIGINALLY JUST 15 CENTS!

CREATED BY VAUDEVILLE PERFORMERS NEIL AND CARL FLETCHER



THEY GO THROUGH 1,500 GALLONS OF MUSTARD AND 800 GALLONS OF KETCHUP EVERY YEAR.

OVER 500,000 CORNY DOGS ARE SOLD EACH YEAR DURING THE 24-DAY EVENT. THAT'S 60,000 POUNDS OF HOT DOGS!

FLETCHER'S SAYS MUSTARD IS THE CORRECT WAY TO TOP A CORNY DOG BUT STARTED MAKING KETCHUP AVAILABLE IN 1994 DUE TO CUSTOMER DEMAND.

FAIR PARK IS HOME TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTIONS OF

## ART DECO ARCHITECTURE



A POPULAR ATTRACTION IN 1938 WAS

### BOZO, THE MIND-READING DOG!



# THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS BY THE NUMBERS

THE FAIR STARTED in 1886, AND IT'S STILL HELD IN THE SAME SPOT. IT HAS GROWN FROM 80 ACRES TO A WHOPPING 277 ACRES! THAT'S ALMOST TWICE THE SIZE OF DISNEYLAND!

ADMISSION TO THE FAIR WAS ORIGINALLY 50 CENTS.

IN 1897, A FEATURED EXHIBIT WAS A PRESERVED 80,000-POUND WHALE!



ONE YEAR IT RAINED FOR 17 DAYS OF THE MONTHLONG FAIR.



14,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED OPENING DAY IN 1886.



IN 2019, MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE ATTENDED!

THE WORLD RECORD FOR LARGEST BUTTER SCULPTURE WAS SET AT THE FAIR IN 2013 BY SHARON BUMANN FOR HER MASSIVE "BIG TEX" MADE OUT OF

OVER 4,000 POUNDS OF BUTTER!

