

ELOISE YANTIS STOKER COLLECTION

2. CLIPPINGS

'... Wildness Is a Necessity'

Naturalist John Muir wrote that in 1901;
Sierra Club members find it is still true

By ELOISE STOKER

Canoes angled downstream from the bank, pointing toward 100 miles of wild river. Loading was almost finished and men and women picked up their lunch of cheese and crackers from the outgoing leader, shared advice and joked away excitement as they waited for the push-off.

Up on the bank the two shuttle drivers leaned against their campers and watched as one by one the canoes strung out on the Rio Grande, which was running high and fast but in the dawn light appeared deceptively calm and silver.

The men waited until the canoes were gone and the stillness of the country settled on them before shaking their heads and considering that while they'd like to be going downstream, heading home didn't seem such a bad idea with a northerly blowing in.

So the first National Sierra Club Outing in Texas began at Stillwell Crossing, Thanksgiving time 1968. When it ended five days later near Langtry, 25 canoeists would add their tales to those perhaps 75 others, including some who suffered great hardships and were lucky to get out, who had run this stretch of the river through the lower canyons.

They would tell of white water spills, dodging boulder obstacles, making blind turns between pressing cliffs with the river roaring in your ears.

And they would always mention the weather with pride; it was an unbelievable mixture of sun, rain and snow with a few days of north wind so strong that it took steady paddling to keep from being blown upstream. Those days 20 miles was hard earned.

THEY REMEMBERED the wild country and what it was like to enter unscalable canyons floating on a river, but that is harder to tell.

Because of the aridness, the landforms and clues to their formation are starkly revealed. Peaks, mesas, limestone canyons vary their mood with each change of light. In the deep river canyons cliffs rise over 1000 feet and are filled with shadows, while the reflection of sunlight on the white limestone walls of lower canyons hurts the eyes.

Caves and shelters pit cliff walls, and where there are accessible often contain

walking through the desert on the Mexican side. The man approached and said he was from a village to the south, and was on his way to visit relatives for a while because he became too involved with another man's wife. He was the only person seen during five days on the river.

The canoes floated the 100 miles on Mexican water. Beginning in Colorado, the Rio Grande runs wild through the mountains of northern New Mexico, then is diverted for irrigation projects through the rest of New Mexico and the El Paso area so before it reaches Presidio it is just a dry channel that is brought to life again by the Rio Conchos coming out of Mexico not far upstream of Big Bend.

Then it runs wild again for 200 miles through the park and lower canyons to form the heart of this border wilderness area.

The 1969 version of the National Sierra Club's run through the lower canyons of the Rio Grande took place the end of October and a few more people with experienced leaders saw and experienced one of Texas' few remaining wildlands, Texas' last wild river.

More people are familiar with the spectacular upper canyons in Big Bend National Park. In fact on a holiday weekend the river gets about as crowded as the downtown San Antonio River and this in spite of the distance to Big Bend and the skill required to negotiate the river in the canyons.

On Good Friday, 1969, 200 float permits were issued; Rangers estimate 2000 people make float trips through one of the three canyons each year.

OF THE PARK CANYONS, Boquillas on the east is the most open; Santa Elena on the west is deepest and closes in upon the river traveller. Santa Elena demands the utmost respect, and because of the dangerous rockslide it should be attempted only by those with boating skill and a knowledge of the canyon topography and river conditions.

Mariscal Canyon makes the big bend that gives the park its name. Its high walls are water sculptured limestone, sometimes polished white as ice; Indian petroglyphs are found on some riverside boulders.

The river in Mariscal provides excitement, and should be attempted only by

trips. Three San Antonio families were guests of the chapter for a canoe run through Mariscal Canyon during Thanksgiving, 1967, and out of this meeting grew the San Antonio group of the Sierra Club.

John Muir founded the Sierra Club, in 1892, to help people explore, enjoy, and protect parks, wilderness, waters, forests, and wildlife; and since April, 1968, the San Antonio group has added its efforts in behalf of a liveable environment to that of the Lone Star Chapter and the national Sierra Club.

THE CLUB AFFIRMS the need for wildlands in our civilization and the role of the city dweller to a liveable environment with clean air and water and green belts to relieve the lifeless machine surfaces.

Twenty-eight trips to explore or enjoy are listed in the San Antonio group's tentative outing schedule for this year as the club lets people know, and have fun finding out, about the places that make our state and city beautiful and can keep it beautiful. In today's engulfing urbanism, these places are only as safe as people, knowing about them, want them to be.

There are few wildlands left in Texas; a sad situation for a big state whose very name has stood for wilderness and freedom. The Rio Grande in West Texas is the last wild river we have running through a large wilderness area, but because the hill country has been traditionally held in large ranch holdings, the upper stretches of clear rivers like the Guadalupe, Blanco, Llano, Medina have retained their wild character within the flood area of their gorges.

Jim Stoker tells how it is canoeing on the Guadalupe River in this excerpt from his essay, "Illusion of Wildness."

"We entered a quiet pool, paddling methodically with long wooden blades. Large bald cypress, distant cousins of immortal Sequoia gigantea, stretched up and over, draped with their Spanish moss shawls. Mulberry leaves as big as plates jockeyed for the meager light over the stream bed. American elm, cedar elm, walnut, hackberry, red and live oaks, wild pecan trees grew in thick, luxurious profusion. . . .

"Then the boat entered a rapid. The bowman called the shots. Frantic paddle strokes to the port side. The stern paddler follows the lead. Aluminum scrapes

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Because of the a r i d n e s s, the landforms and clues to their formation are s t a r k l y revealed. Peaks, mesas, limestone canyons vary their mood with each change of light. In the deep river canyons cliffs rise over 1000 feet and are filled with shadows, while the reflection of sunlight on the white limestone walls of lower canyons hurts the eyes.

Caves and shelters pit cliff walls, and where these are accessible often contain traces of a prehistoric Indian culture that inhabited the r e g i o n for thousands of years.

Sometimes the canyons draw back to admit distant views of cliffs and peaks banded like rainbows. Trip members remembered short climbs at the end of the day for a hilltop view and how startling it was not to see any sign of man. The land is sparsely populated and no roads reach the river in this stretch; even live-stock are forced to stay back because of the ruggedness of the canyons.

EVERYONE WAS surprised in the middle of the journey to see a lone figure

just a dry channel that is brought to life again by the Rio Conchos coming out of Mexico not far upstream of Big Bend.

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"Then the boat entered a rapids. The bowman called the shots. Frantic paddle strokes to the port side. The stern paddler follows the lead. Aluminum scrapes limestone, leaving telltale red paint to mark our error. The lean canoe tecters, but stays upright. Small waterfall coming up. Front man jumps behind his seat. This raises the bow. Kneeling now for stability, as if praying, with our pulses racing, we sped out, over and down the waterfall. The pointed front of the craft hangs for a moment in space then plunges down with a smack at the bottom. We do a tight rope balancing act for a second and the boat is secure again and cruising the inevitable pool below the drop."

UNFORTUNATELY, THE large See WILDNESS, page 2-H

Wildness

Continued from Page 1-H

ranches are breaking up in the Hill Country and development of many forms threatens the remaining wild character of the river gorges. A river is a force that creates its own special environment and if Texans wish to retain even a small portion of the state's free flowing rivers, and that's all that's left, they will have to plan and act quickly, for time is running out.

Seeking wild rivers is only part of the search for wild country in Texas. It takes foot travel to explore mountains and forests, hills and desert. The physical and mental benefits of hiking are being extolled by people concerned about our lack of physical fitness, our constant exposure to urban stress, tension, and pollution; hiking has been recommended by doctors, philosophers, naturalists. John Muir wrote back in 1901, when urbanism was in its infancy:

"The tendency nowadays to wander in wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, overcivilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."

Today where do you go to walk away

from it all? In 1968 the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club dedicated the Lone Star Trail. This 100 mile trail winds through the East Texas forests north of Houston and was put together laboriously by the Houston group of the Sierra Club with the cooperation of many interested organizations in that vicinity.

This is the only trail in the state, outside of Big Bend, of sufficient length to pack-in and camp for several days on the trail. Its main attraction is the great biological variety to be seen, for this is near the Big Thicket, a crossroads community of towering trees and pitcher plants, herons and alligators.

The Thicket is doomed by the present Houston land boom unless protective measures are taken soon.

Most of the San Antonio group's hiking outings are built around a base camp with day hikes out from it since most state park and private facilities in this immediate area are not large enough to warrant trail camps. Still the hill country, the coast, and the west-to-the Pecos country offer many scenic pleasures to the hiker.

ON AN OUTING TO a large Devil's Backbone ranch, walkers traced a small green valley's clear stream to its spring source, saw numerous deer, armadillo, and on the hill slopes found several red-trunked mandrone trees.

They climbed steep hills and crossed between two hills on a connecting knife-

edge ridge. Further north, near Fredericksburg, Enchanted Rock is the crown of the granite-uplift country and offers easy climbing to the top of the dome, interesting hikes over the but-cropping area, or a chance for the beginning mountaineer to practice rope climbing, and other accent techniques on house size boulders or steep cliffs.

It is always disconcerting to climb the highest hill and see a truck puffing along a highway either along the cross ridge or in the valley. There are few places to escape the roar of a truck.

The coast has its beautiful island beaches and dunes and they've provided weekends of fun hiking, fishing, and swimming. Twenty-five whooping cranes obligingly gathered in a group for an outing at Aransas Wildlife Refuge and Goose Island State Park.

Like too much of the Texas coast, this state park is now hemmed in by housing developments and many fish and bird habitats have gone with increased urban pollution, development, or technology.

Some of the most exciting exploring trips have taken place in the Pecos-Juan Grande confluence area where both country hikes, climbs and primitive camps have been necessary to determine the precarious situation of the ancient Pecos River Style Pictographs, now threatened by increased accessibility and no protection.

RIGHT AT HOME, some outings are

just afternoon walks in city parks that still retain a natural flavor or in undeveloped patches of our urban area not in parks that contain some unique biological or scenic attraction that has miraculously escaped the bulldozer.

Young people discovered anew the huge San Antonio River pecan trees south of town that grandparents remembered from their youth. A biologist pointed out the golden gum trees in Olmos Park, and the red or Spanish oaks in Northeast Preserve put on a scarlet fall display.

San Antonio has always been above the national average in amount of green space per person but in recent years we have fallen below that average. For our own well being, our city green spaces and parks deserve foolproof protection and careful conservation planning.

Finally, to hike a large wilderness area, it's back to Big Bend to walk the trails in the Chisos Mountains, or try the less familiar but wilder mesa and desert semi-trails. But since so many people today have the same idea the park is becoming increasingly crowded.

Last Easter even the overflow camping areas were overflowing and many river and desert permits were issued. Because Big Bend is an arid region its ecology is very fragile and cannot be overdeveloped. It is just now healing some of its over-grazing wounds of the 1930's and



THE BIG BEND—A map of the Big Bend National Park shows location of the canyons which enthrall canoeists.

early 40's. Water is always a problem.

The Guadalupe Mountains Park is still years away, and though beautiful like Big Bend, it too is arid and fragile. What wildlands are left to meet people's need for wildness and space? It is time for

Texans to take stock and plan for the future of our state.

The Sierra Club welcomes inquiries and memberships; for information write The Sierra Club, 102 La Salle Place, Universal City, 78148.

"Canyons of the Painted Caves" article written for the Witte Museum Quarterly, 1969, based on field research done on the Pecos River Pictographs. "Wildness is a Necessity", an article on the Sierra Club in San Antonio, was written for the San Antonio Express, 1969, and is included on the next page.

Canyons of the Painted Caves

Eloise Stoker

Ed. Note: Eloise Stoker is a printmaker and potter who, together with her husband Jim Stoker (an exhibit of his paintings is coming at the Witte in September), is active in the Sierra Club. Mrs. Stoker has a B.S.A. from the University of Texas, a M.A. from New Mexico Highlands University, and post-graduate work in the Print Studio at Penn State University.

"In addition to this rich inventory of archeologic materials, here exists one of the truly unique pictograph regions of the world. The magnificent galleries of superb cave murals, executed in polychromatic and monochromatic styles, in stylized and naturalistic forms, are perhaps comparable only to the famous cave paintings of Europe."

Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Diablo (Amistad) Reservoir, Archeological Salvage Program, National Park Service, Graham and Bell.

10,000 years ago Paleo-Indian hunters stampeded extinct bison over the cliff at Bonfire Shelter. After both bison and hunter were gone, a stable culture of River People developed and lived for thousands of years in the Pecos-Rio Grande Rivers confluence region. Family groups patterned their moves from shelter to shelter after the cycles of the land. It was hot and dry but the rivers flowed and a wide variety of life surrounded the permanent waterways. The People netted catfish in the muddy water and searched the bottom for mussels. Nuts and seeds were gathered, some ground into meal, from the Mexican walnut, mesquite, and hackberry trees that grew along the Rivers' banks. Since this was a time before the horse and bow and arrow, the family hunters walked the hills armed with spear, dart, and an intimate knowledge of their territory, searching out deer and small game. Women and children picked through spiny vegetation and gathered sotol, prickly pear, or other plants to be eaten or used for weaving.

In the shade of the canyon shelters, fibers were stripped from plants, primarily the sotol, then woven into baskets, mats, sandals, rope, cording, and fine nets. Skins were fashioned into scanty clothing, winter robes, or bags, and men carved their throwing sticks, the atlatl, and dart or spear shafts, then lashed on stone points. Occasionally the family groups met in designated shelters for ceremonies seeking visions and control of powerful land forces. The River People developed metaphysical skills to carry them through crisis and boost their spirits as they met the constant demands of existence, food, clothing, shelter, in a harsh land. Of this aspect of their culture these Archaic Indians have left a remarkable visual record, cave galleries of ceremonial murals: The Pecos River Style Pictographs.

A trek into the Pecos-Rio Grande confluence region today reveals a land very similar to that of the pictograph painters long ago, if you can shut out the signs of technology. The prickly pear and sotol you carefully pick your way through on rocky hillsides are the same plants as those brought up as prickly pear pouches and matting out of accumulated layers in shelter floors. The small game you jump has ancestral bones in the middens; deer and catfish adorn shelter walls.

Hiking in the tributary canyons you are surrounded by limestone cliffs pitted with large and small openings, hot from the sun, sharp white with a blue strip above. The canyon floor is smooth with water standing in inviting bedrock pools; farther on it is filled with house-sized boulders. The foliage of mescal bean (mountain laurel) and oak is dark against the light rock and you find among a clump of small trees a Texas pistachio, a rare species almost extinct. In this wild canyon a deep cliff overhang sheltered family groups of an ancient culture existent some 1000 to 9000 years ago. It is large, some 500 feet long, and seems dark after the sunlight. The floor is dusty, having been stirred up by so many digs, mostly unofficial, and siftings that its cultural debris is now a frustrating mixture. On the walls you can see these peoples' paintings. Every space must have once been covered with paint, now most of it is eroded, smoked, or chipped, but there are still some impressive murals in Fate Bell Shelter.

At the south end of the shelter wall, costumed figures, about four feet tall and surrounded by symbol images, are woven together to form a complex grouping about sixteen feet long. They are painted in warm earth colors, from deep purple-red through yellow, with touches of black and white. A closer look reveals the color faded but the rich details still distinct. The center figure is violet-brown with an antler headdress and antlers below his feet. He spreads large curving wings that must have once been black but are now blue banded on the bottom with orange. Two other figures done mostly in brown stand at wing-tip and a third more-faded figure stands behind the group. A yellow and brown curved line snakes from the central figure northward.

The murals in Fate Bell that are still clear are of moderate size. Miles down the canyon ten and twelve foot figures stand silent watch between two large panthers along 125 feet of Panther Cave's walls. Each wears his own costume, festooned with feathers and fringe. Some headdresses seem to be horns, others tall feathers, and some are smooth domes continuing from the body. Signs of power surround them; prickly pear medicine bags hang from arms, the dart, atlatl, and spear are brandished. More naturalistic small deer are around several figures along with other mysterious symbols. Panther contains much over-painting and style changes which must cover several periods within the Pecos River Style. The form symbolization, or abstraction, and balanced grouping is incredible, even aweing. This alone surely points to a long-lasting culture which allowed time for this impressive mural art to develop.

Red-brown is the predominant color of the Panther paintings, but some figures are black, yellow, or bright red and one masterpiece incorporates the rock color, outlining and fringing around it. The various browns, red, orange, and yellow are ochers, probably dug farther north; the blacks are most likely carbon, and the white, a light clay. These minerals were ground and mixed with water; then either used as a liquid, painted on with a folded, shredded sotol leaf brush, or molded into a crayon and dried. Yellow crayons, ocher lumps, grinding stones, and even brushes with pigment on them have been found in shelter floors. There is speculation as to how the murals on ceilings and high walls were painted but they are there, attesting the amount of time and trouble involved in their execution. This intensive effort indicates how important the murals were to the River People and raises the mysterious question of their meaning.

The theories advanced suggesting the meaning of the rock paintings have included the "dominance of a hunting cult" in the society or that the paintings were images of cultural deities. W. W. Newcomb, in *Rock Art of the Texas Indians*, suggests an interesting hypothesis: that the paintings were done within the framework of a shamanistic society and ceremonies. Shaman here is defined as a person in tune with the supernatural forces who possesses the skills to influence these forces. Assuming the large figures that are the central form of the pictograph groupings are shamans, we begin to notice many things supporting the Shamanistic ceremony theory. Each figure has as individual variation in costume, as each shaman in the society would but a deity would not, and carries the hollowed prickly pear pouches, perhaps medicine bags, that have been found in the digs. The Shaman hopes, even visions, the supernatural powers will influence the weapons he carries, bring him success and make the land provident.

Other figures are grouped around the central form, some in costumes as if other shamans or helpers, some simpler, perhaps indicating ordinary men. In some instances the smaller figures are grouped in lines as if dancing, and other times figures are prone with spears and darts all around as if the ceremony visioned victory over an enemy. Small deer appear brought down by darts; large unharmed panthers suggest totems. In the Archaic Pecos River Culture mural painting seems to have been one of the shamans' metaphysical skills and as such filled the beholder with wonder and hope in the midst of a ceremony.

It is possible their ceremonies included the taking of mescal bean or peyote potions to induce visions since the mescal bean has been frequently found in the middens, sometimes in baskets and once with a collection of other items that would indicate a medicine bag. This could explain the red dots found in connection with some large painted figures. All search for meaning after such a long time span involves a good bit of conjecture and it is best to remember this.

Conjecture aside, the Pecos River Style Pictographs are among the oldest examples of Indian rock painting in the New World and provide an unique opportunity for study and appreciation for those

in archeology, because they can add another dimension to the material studies made of midden deposits in the floors of the shelters, and to those in the arts, since they represent the finest primitive art. How long the murals lost now remains to be seen.

The San Antonio Sierra Club recently took an exploratory trip to Panther Cave. The weather was stormy, and it and the wild country made us work to get there but we felt privileged. The beautiful pictographs on the walls and the view over the canyons brought many thoughts.

Behind us was a mural showing one of Man's attempts to gain control of wildness, to manage his fate. The painting is a state of believed necessity rarely so clearly shown and so often sought in art. In front of us, on that Spring day, dammed water was half-way up the Rio Grande Canyon walls. Plants that fought hard for water through their repeating life were drowning, soil banks collapsed, swallows circled above their nests at water's edge. Men had gained environmental power to an extent unimagined by the People of the Pecos River Style paintings. As they painted and visioned ahead for food, water, health, and land control, they granted power and tried to meet and influence the spirits of all the earth around. They tried to incorporate some of this life force into themselves. When, after thousands of years, their culture died, they left the land unchanged except for the mute costumed figures that circled us on the cave walls. We, coming after, could still feel the power of the earth and feel sympathy with the paintings; but we wondered, as the water rose in the Reservoir, what we would leave after our centuries.

For that Texas wildness of men's dreams is eroding faster and faster with our state's growing urbanism; those familiar with the land and its life forms have watched this natural environment vanish beneath more and more reservoirs, miles and miles of super highways, sprawling housing developments that demand the forests as fodder. Have we stopped and thought, is this what we really want? Before Amistad, the Texas Rio Grande ran through wild canyons and desert from Big Bend to the Devils River. Upstream from Langtry to the Big Bend is still some of the wildest country in the United States. A hundred-and-twenty-mile Sierra Club canoe trip of 25 people last fall brought the total of people travelling down this stretch of river to one hundred. It's still beautiful and wild. We can keep this wild River if we want to, but Amistad Reservoir has flooded the Devils-Pecos-Rio Grande Canyons of the confluence region. Many of the pictograph sites will also be flooded and because other important sites are at water's edge, they are vulnerable to vandalism. Relic collectors will mix the layered floor and remove material so archeologists' attempts to study the culture will be frustrated, and every Indian rock painting site easily accessible has been initialed, smoked, shot and chipped into oblivion. If something is not done soon to protect these murals, they will be lost too.

SUMMARY

Some Hope for the Pecos River Pictograph Canyons

You can help start the Rio-Grande-Pecos River tributary canyons and their remarkable ancient Indian murals on the road to preserva-

tion by writing a letter urging support of the Amistad National Recreation Area Bill, H.R. 451. This Bill is sponsored by Rep. O. C. Fisher and is in sub-committee waiting for a hearing. Your letter should include the bill title and number plus some mention of the pictographs. The address is: The Hon. Roy A. Taylor, Chairman, Sub-Committee on National Parks and Recreation, Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

—Eloise Stoker

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MAKING POTTERY THE WAY Indians did is shown by Incarnate Word College instructor Mrs. Eloise Stoker as she prepares to take a pot from the fire. Students in the pottery class are (L-R) Mrs. Agnes Maddux and Miss Linda Johnson. (Staff Photo.)

1974

July, 1977



SNAP...
IWC primitive pottery students Becky Zertuche, Romelia Carranza and George Filis and instructor Eloise Stoker begin to add buffalo chips.

IWC PUTS A LOT OF CHIPS (BUFFALO) IN ITS POTTERY!

ART WHIRL

IT'S REFRESHING TO know when the chips are down at Incarnate Word College, the San Antonio Zoo will come to the rescue.

With chips. Buffalo chips, that is. Students in Eloise Stoker's summer

art course in primitive pottery were determined to create pots the way American Indians have done since at least 1000 A.D. This meant they had to find, dig, and prepare clay, form pots without aid from any mechanical device, and finally fire the pots outdoors in natural kilns.

Indian-style pottery firing begins with a wood fire, adding the dried clay pots, and covering it all with organic animal waste which, the Indians discovered, resulted in a reduction process and improved the quality of the pots. The Indian potter for centuries used the always plentiful supply of buffalo chips, but IWC students thought they would have to make do with less authentic but acceptable cow chips from local farms.

But then someone remembered seeing buffaloes at the San Antonio Zoo, and where there are buffaloes there must be chips.

IWC SENIOR BECKY Zertuche, art student-in-charge of chips, placed a call to Ernest E. Roney, assistant to the director of the zoo, and he agreed to provide the needed buffalo chips.

Next day Mrs. Stoker and several of her students arrived at the zoo, armed with several large sacks anticipating an art supply bonanza.

What they didn't know, however, was that the total buffalo population at the zoo is exactly two, and in this case the demand was far greater than the supply.

But patience pays off in all things, and weeks of diligent effort resulted in several sackfuls of buffalo chips, and the art students began chipping away at making pottery Indian-style.

"I suppose lots of people might think that primitive pottery, with attendant concern for buffalo chips, is just a fill course, said Dick McCracken, IWC public relations director. "But I can assure you that the course isn't



... AND POT!
Art student George Filis proudly displays the finished, newly fired pot.



... CRACKLE...
Once an airtight mound of buffalo chips has been completed with the pots at the bottom, it is covered with tin to help keep in the heat.

DARE SAY THE students who finish it will have new respect for commercially prepared clay, commercial glazes, and modern gas and electric kilns. It is easy enough for the professional and student potter to take it all for granted.

McCracken noted the students have also learned that the Indian pottery tradition is far from quaint.

"It's deadly serious business and there are so many variables. After weeks of work if the fire doesn't reach about 1500 degrees F, the pots won't mature and you can start all over again. Or, if there is a bit of moisture or an air bubble in the clay the pot will explode during the firing. Or an unseen rock might explode and crack open a pot during firing.

All in all, it has been a course in art, art history, basic chemistry and physics, history, and anthropology all in one."

McCracken expressed thanks to Roney for his time and patience in helping the students, "and of course the bison who are unselfishly, if unknowingly, giving of themselves as patrons of the arts in San Antonio."

July, 1974



SNAP...
IWC primitive pottery students Becky Zertuche, Romelia Carranza and George Filis and instructor Eloise Stoker begin to add buffalo chips.



... CRACKLE...
Once an airtight mound of buffalo chips has been completed with the pots at the bottom, it is covered with tin to help keep in the heat.



... AND POT!
Art student George Filis proudly displays the finished, newly fired pot.

IWC PUTS A LOT OF CHIPS (BUFFALO) IN ITS POTTERY!

ART WHIRL

IT'S REFRESHING to know when the chips are down at In-carnate World College, the San Antonio Zoo will come to the rescue.

With chips. Buffalo chips, that is. Students in Eloise Stoker's summer

art course in primitive pottery were determined to create pots the way American Indians have done since at least 1000 A.D. This meant they had to find, dig, and prepare clay, form pots without aid from any mechanical device, and finally fire the pots outdoors in natural kilns.

Indian-style pottery firing begins with a wood fire, adding the dried clay pots, and covering it all with organic animal waste which, the Indians discovered, resulted in a reduction process and improved the quality of the pots. The Indian potter for centuries used the always plentiful supply of buffalo chips, but IWC students thought they would have to make do with less authentic but acceptable cow chips from local farms.

But then someone remembered seeing buffaloes at the San Antonio Zoo, and where there are buffaloes there must be chips.

IWC SENIOR BECKY ZERTUCHE, art student-in-charge of chips, placed a call to Ernest E. Roney, assistant to the director of the zoo, and he agreed to provide the needed buffalo chips.

Next day Mrs. Stoker and several of her students arrived at the zoo, armed with several large sacks anticipating an art supply bonanza.

What they didn't know, however, was that the total buffalo population at the zoo is exactly two, and in this case the demand was far greater than the supply.

But patience pays off in all things, and weeks of diligent effort resulted in several sackfuls of buffalo chips, and the art students began chipping away at making pottery Indian-style.

"I suppose lots of people might think that primitive pottery, with attendant concern for buffalo chips, is just a trill course," said Dick McCracken, IWC public relations director. "But I can assure you that the course isn't easy."

I DARE SAY THE students who finish it will have new respect for commercially prepared clay, commercial glazes, and modern gas and electric kilns. It is easy enough for the professional and student potter to take it all for granted.

McCracken noted the students have also learned that the Indian pottery tradition is far from quaint.

"It's deadly serious business and there are so many variables. After weeks of work if the fire doesn't reach about 1500 degrees F, the pots won't mature and you can start all over again. Or, if there is a bit of moisture or an air bubble in the clay the pot will explode during the firing. Or an unseen rock might explode and crack open a pot during firing.

"All in all, it has been a course in art, art history, basic chemistry, and physics, history, and anthropology all in one."

McCracken expressed thanks to Roney for his time and patience in helping the students, "and of course the bison who are unselfishly, if unknowingly, giving of themselves as patrons of the arts in San Antonio."



Contemporary Artists' Group

JIM AND ELOISE Stoker, of Trinity University and Incarnate Word College, respectively, will be among artists represented at a reception Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., at the Bank of San Antonio, which will open an

exhibition by the Contemporary Artists' Group of San Antonio. Some 27 local artists' works will be featured. [Courtesy Photo]

Entertainment

"TEXAS CRAFTS" Exhibition was shown at the Witte Museum from April 10 to May 27, 1979; note the above article from the S.A. Light and the Witte Museum announcement on the next page which includes photo of Stoker Raku Shell Bowls. "TEXAS CRAFTS" was also exhibited at the Tyler Art Museum, Corpus Christi Art Museum, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, Abilene Art Museum, and the Waco Art Center.

April 1979 at **SAMA**

San Antonio
Museum
Association
Witte
Memorial
Museum
San Antonio
Museum of
Transportation
3801
Broadway
San Antonio
Texas
78209
512 826-0647



*Fluted Pinch Bowl, Raku, by
Eloise Stoket.*

Texas Fine Crafts

Works by seventeen contemporary craft-artists from throughout the state of Texas will be on exhibition at the Witte from April 10th through May 27th. On display will be examples of Texana, silversmithing, basketry, hand-dyed and hand-spun weavings, coverlets, gun engraving, furniture, and clay and wooden vessels.

Big Bend Rocks and Rafts

The SAMA is sponsoring a May 17-20 trip to the Big Bend area to raft through Santa Elena Canyon on the Rio Grande River. Rock hounds will be able to scout for agate and other minerals while others may trail ride the mountains. For further information contact the Natural Sciences Department.

Gems and Minerals

A permanent installation of gems and minerals opens to the public late in April in the Lone Star Hall of Wildlife and Ecology at the Witte. It is a preview appearance of new installations being planned for the Witte following the opening of the San Antonio Museum of Art.

Artist Team Will Show Works

The Southwest Craft Center's May exhibition will show works by a husband-wife team of artists with special interest in the wilderness, Texas landscapes and life forms on the land.

Ursuline Gallery will display hand-built clay pieces by Eloise Stoker and oil paintings and prints by Jim Stoker May 11 through June 13.

The exhibition opens Friday with a 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. cocktail-preview featuring a slide show of the natural areas on which both artists base their interpretations: canyons of the Rio Grande and Big Bend country, the East Texas forests and other locales all over the state.

Eloise Stoker, assistant professor of art at Incarnate Word College, works in native clays to produce a variety of functional pieces, including bowls, jars, and dome sculpture containers with removable lids. "My work presents a little different point of view," the potter notes. "I am most interested in pottery form to

symbolize land forms and life forms."

In addition to teaching studio art in a variety of media at IWC, Eloise also teaches Indian Art of North America and Primitive Crafts in the College's Native America Program.

Trinity University associate professor of art Jim Stoker has exhibited his oil paintings, etchings, lithographs and drawings in galleries and museums across the nation and in Mexico. His works are in numerous public and private collections, including the Pennsylvania State University, San Antonio Art League and Prairie View College collections, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and the Witte Memorial Museum.

The May 11 opening reception is open to the public, at no admission charge. The Stoker works also may be seen during regular Ursuline Gallery hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

S. A. Light May 6, 1979

Center features Stokers

The Southwest Craft Center's exhibition this month will feature works by a husband wife team of artists with special interest in the wilderness, Texas landscapes and life forms on the land.

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The exhibition opens Friday with a 5 to 8 p.m. cocktail-preview featuring a slide show of the natural areas on which both artists base their interpretations: canyons of the Rio Grande and Big Bend country, the East Texas forests and other locales all over the state.

Eloise Stoker, assistant professor of art at Incarnate Word College, works in native clays to produce a variety of functional pieces, including bowls, jars, and dome sculpture containers with removable lids.

Jim Stoker, Trinity University associate professor of art, will exhibit oil paintings, etchings, lithographs and drawings.

The Friday opening reception is open to the public, at no admission charge. The Stoker works also may be seen during regular gallery hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

The Craft Center is at 300 Augusta St.

Witte Now Displaying Texas Art Forms

Looking at the bone-handled knives and silver spoons in the Texas Fine Crafts Exhibition at the Witte Museum, it is difficult to believe they were created by hands, not a machine.

The perfection of a silver chalice and wine cup evokes the image of a Renaissance craftsman creating his articles through some secretive and magical process. The process is still magical but the craftsmen participating in this show are all 20th century and dedicated to preserving the art of their age-old crafts.

The Texas Fine Crafts Exhibition, at the Witte through May 27, contains works by 17 contemporary craft-artists from Texas. There are examples of Texana, silversmithing, basketry, hand-dyed and hand-spun weavings, coverlets, gun engraving, furniture, and clay and wooden vessels.

Three types of weaving are represented. The small woven baskets by Elinor Evans of Houston hold their shape by the integrity of soft fibers tied into thousands of knots. Each basket requires hundreds, (and one, a thousand), hours to construct.

Margaret Sheppard of Houston has been weaving her original fabrics for 30 years. Ann Matlock weaves caftans from yarn she has spun and dyed with flowers, roots and bark.

The work of six metal workers

are in the show. Roy Bellows is a blacksmith. The finished quality of his fireplace tools offer only a hint of what the metal has survived: fire so hot it has changed its molecular structure and heavy hammer blows forging its shape.

Using fire but not force, Le Corbeau of San Antonio executes polished silver pieces like his fish breadbasket made of interwoven strips of silver.

Nails are foreign to the wooden furniture of Roger Deatherage. The joints of his cherrywood chest of drawers are perfectly dove-tailed while the handles seem like lips about to kiss.

In ceramics, the works range from primitive raku pots to wheel-thrown vases. The hand-built pots and plates of San Antonio ceramicist Eloise Stoker reflect landforms and lifeforms. The images on Ishmael Soto's porcelain plates look like Rorschach inkspots but are representative of animals.

The Texas Fine Crafts Exhibition will be the focus of the Sundays at the SAMA series May 20. Held at the Witte Museum, live demonstrations will be given by Frank Hendricks, the San Antonio gun engraver featured in the show, and Eloise Stoker, ceramicist. Rose Slivka of Craft Horizons Magazine will give a lecture and Augie Meyer and his Western Head Band will perform dance music.

THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT

Sunday, May 13, 1979



Who, What, Where

ON THE
SOCIAL SCENE

JIM AND ELOISE STOKER IN CRAFT CENTER
...their art show continues on view in gallery

PHOTO BY STEVE KRAUSS

Lampli

By EVE LYNN SAWYER

Johnny Esquivel played and all of the 120 members and guests of the Lamplighters danced much of the evening in San Antonio Country Club.

The formal dance was the last function of the season for this couples' dancing club, which begins in the fall with its new members' dance.

Hosts for the formal, Ben and Luanne Taylor, welcomed the black-tie crowd and introduced them to Dallas guests, Caroline and Dick Riblet. Riblet is an artist who paints portraits as well as landscapes and seascapes.

A group of the members went to Laredo the previous weekend for an across-the-border outing. Among these were Messrs. and Mmes. John Kefauver, Stanley Price, Ned Hays, Ferd Meyer, Phil Musgrave, Ben Taylor, Willie Geise and Jack Gordon.

Rome

We visited with Jayne and Charles Huffington, who are looking forward to a trip to Rome. After they return, the couple will open their home on June 12 for a coffee for new members of the Alamo Heights Methodist Church.

Retired Col. and Mrs. Malcolm E. Norton drove to California Easter and had no gasoline problems at the time. They drove all along the coast on Highway 1.

When the Nortons were in San Francisco, they stayed in the Marine Memorial Club.

In Burlington, they visited former San Antonians, Jack and Betty Krueger Neal. The Nortons were in the Neal wedding. In June, the Neals

She calls

By ANN LANDERS

Dear Ann: You have an only child — a daughter, so I'm sure you will understand.

Please tell me if you think it is "sick" for a married woman (age 29) to telephone her mother five or six times a day if she feels like it.

My husband says I'm a little nuts but actually he gets mad when he tries to call me from the office and the line is busy. What do you say? — Stockton, Cal.

Dear Stock: It may not be "sick," but it certainly is excessive.

Jot down on a piece of paper the things you want to say after the second call and save them for the next day.

Then phone someone else — like maybe your mother-in-law.

Dear Ann Landers: I am engaged to a wonderful girl. We plan to be married next year.

The Booterie Patent
Central Park Mall
Candie's
**Newest
Arrivals!**

Candie's coated sandals are real

of carpet, draperies and

Aladdin

Artcraft magazine

December 1979/January 1980 Volume 1 - Number 1

TEXAS

Texas Crafts at Sarah Campbell Blaffer

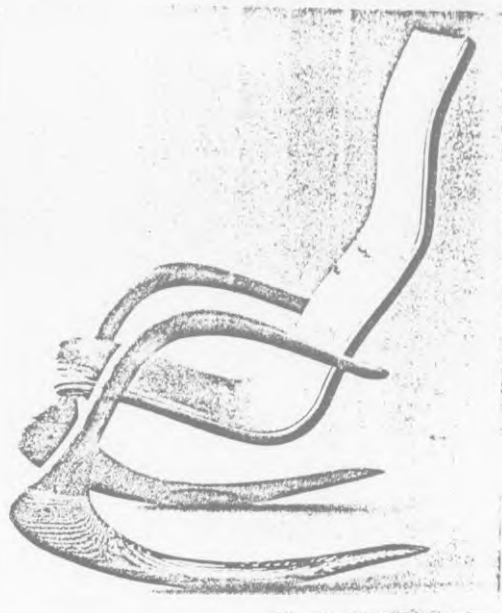
Houston

The Texas Crafts exhibit which appeared at the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery of the University of Houston vividly illustrated the possibilities of the melding of craftsmanship and art. Function was the key to selection of the works by seventeen Texas artists in a wide variety of media; function in the tradition of the nineteenth-century craftsmen who produced objects in daily use in the home. But this spacious and elegant exhibit was aesthetically satisfying as well, in the best tradition of the artist working at the full range of his creative powers.

The exhibit, organized by adjunct curator Michael J. Metyko, was the result of months of talks and visits with dozens of artists throughout the state. As the first traveling crafts exhibit organized by a major Texas museum, it appeared in Waco, Abilene, Austin, Tyler and San Antonio as well as in Houston.

Fiber works in the exhibition included the subtle shadings of handspun and handwoven Texas mohair caftans and blankets by Ann Matlock of Austin; the traditional geometric patterns of Swedish coverlets, pillows and placemats woven by Houston's Margaret Sheppard; and coiled soft fiber basketry by Ilmor Evans of Houston, incorporating such diverse materials as camel hair, linen and goat hair with the traditional sisal and jute.

Metalworks ranged from sophisticated and innovative silver by Le Corbeau of Kerrville, John Rogers of Bandera and Val Link of Houston, to handsome steel knives by Clyde Fischer of Victoria, intricate custom engraving on metal inlay for firearms by Frank Hendricks of San Antonio, and blacksmithing by Roy Bellows of Fredericksburg.



Courtesy Sarah Campbell
Blaffer Gallery

Roger Deatherage
Rocking Chair
Ash, leather
45" x 27" x 15"

Cabinetry and woodworking were represented by two Houstonians, Carlton Cook's industrial-looking mixed-media cabinetry combining such materials as aluminum, pine, stoneware, glass and galvanized metal; and Roger Deatherage's elegant furniture with its beautiful dovetailing, satin-smooth finishes and mellow hues.

Ceramics included salt-glazed porcelain by Finn Alban and wheel-thrown reduction fired porcelain by Ishmael Soto, both of Blue, Texas; hand-built, low-fired ceramics by Piero Fenci of Houston; wheel-thrown stoneware by Mike McNamara of Dallas; hand-built ceramics by Eloise Stoker of San Antonio; and burnished, sawdust-fired ceramics by Pauline van Bavel-Kearney of Austin.

The scope of the exhibit was enhanced by its handsome catalog which includes, in addition to fine photographs of the artists and their work, the first bibliography on Texas crafts. There is also a lengthy and fact-packed essay by Lonn Taylor, curator of history for the Dallas Historical Society, on the history and development of Texas crafts. The catalog is available through the Blaffer Gallery.

Exhibitors and commentators alike

emphasize the importance to these artists of the personalization of the object, a rejection of mechanization and mass production for the joy of the unique creation. Their pleasure in the work shines through. The resulting exhibit was, unfortunately for the viewer, liberally sprinkled with "Please Do Not Touch" signs—unfortunately, because these works give an almost overwhelmingly tactile impression, a sensuous joy in surfaces, textures and materials that makes the urge to touch or stroke almost irresistible.

It is exciting to see utilitarian objects interpreted so creatively and with such care. Metyko hopes that crafts will provide "the means of maintaining and regenerating our communion with the elements of nature lost from the urban environment." Such an exhibit, with its dedication to standards of unquestionable quality, is an important step in increasing public recognition of the artistic status of the craft media.

Kathleen Samsol Hawk is a freelance writer in the Houston, Texas area.

Sunday, May 11, 1980

Student Art on Display

Students in all of the Southwest Craft Center's departments will participate in the Spring Student Show and Sale through Thursday.

In the largest student exhibition ever staged at the downtown art school, works in clay, fiber, metal, stained glass, photography, sculpture, graphics, painting, drawing and calligraphy will be on view.

"The entire Ursuline Gallery will be turned over to the show," Gallery Director Luann Cohen said. "Each student will enter three pieces to be judged."

Jury for the competition will be John Squire Adams, of the San Antonio Art Institute faculty; Terry Puckett, member of the St. Phillips College art faculty; and Eloise Stoker, of the art faculty at Incarnate Word College.

Two awards will be Craft Center scholarships. In each department additional prizes of gift certificates for supplies will be given.

Regular Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

Ursuline gallery showing

Works by some of the most widely recognized talents in the local art community will be featured in the Ursuline Gallery's spring show, opening Friday at the Southwest Craft Center.

Timed to coincide with Fiesta and the downtown art school's April 19 and 20 Fiesta Arts Fair, the exhibition spotlights members of the contemporary artists group.

Some 60 paintings plus a collection of works in clay will be shown, reflecting a wide variety of styles.

"The exhibition will be one of the largest we've ever staged," said Ursuline Gallery Director Luann Cohen, "and one of the most interesting, as a panorama of what's going on at the top level of San Antonio art."

Works by potter Eloise Stoker will be featured along with paintings by 21 members of the Contemporary Artists Group.

They include: John Squire Adams, president and Margaret Putnam, chairman of the Ursuline exhibition.

Also included are: Mildred Cocke, Finis Collins, Mary Hetherington, William Kolbe, Mary Lou Lewis, Amy Freeman Lee, Ivan McDougal, Stevie Kesner Manak, Dru-silla Pfannstiel Pinca and Tom Pressly.

In addition, Margaret Pace, Allen Richards, Nessye Scharlack, Barry Scott, Caroline Shelton, General Alden Watt, Robert Willson, Margaret Wray and Helen Van Buren are included.

The exhibition will remain on display through May 6.

The public is invited at no admission charge.

Regular gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

Saturday, Oct. 4, 1980

THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT

River Art Show Set

More than 300 persons are expected to exhibit art work at the 36th Annual River Art Show scheduled from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday along the banks of the San Antonio River and the Paseo de la Villita.

Mariachis will entertain periodically both days of the free show from the River Art Group barge.

All entries for the competition will be displayed on the steps of the Arneson River

Theater both days. More than \$2,500 in prize money will be awarded at 4 p.m. Sunday.

Jurors for the competition are Eloise Stoker, well-known potter and teacher at Incarnate Word College, and Bart Forbes, renowned illustrator from Fort Worth.

Mime center attraction at party

By Eve Lynn Sawyer
Express Columnist

The high school crowd and some of their parents turned out 175 strong at the invitation of Fred A. and Wandita Turner to a dinner dance for their daughter, Milissa Anne.

The party in the St. Anthony Club had a little of everything — two bands, Joe Morin and Orion, a mime who was the center attraction as he went through his routines, and a sumptuous buffet.

The celebration was for Milissa's birthday, which was two days later, but the party date was Halloween. Tubs of cattails and corn marked the entrance to the club, and dry ice swirled clouds of mist throughout the entry hall.

Apples were in one tub of water but no one got down on hands and knees for that.

Jack o'lanterns arranged with corn, apples and cattails on all the tables, were scheduled for delivery to the Children's Hospital next morning.

Milissa is a sophomore at Alamo Heights High School. Helping her celebrate was her sister, Melanie, who attends Alamo Heights Junior School.

Wanda and O'Neil Ford had planned to attend the party, but they were stranded in Corpus Christi by bad weather and were unable to make it back in time.

When Fred and Wandita were married, they had also donated the flowers from their wedding to the Santa Rosa Hospital. With this supper party they continued the tradition.

Among the guests at the St. Anthony were Carolee Graham, Henry Graham, Milissa Hutt, Stephen Spoor, Desi Hutt and Patty Sue Hutt.

Craft Center

Ceramic artist Eloise Stoker and painter Jeannette MacDougall opened their show in the Southwest Craft Center Friday.

Eloise, who has been a potter for 11 years, told of getting into the field through her sculpture and painting.

Her pots are hand-built, meaning she doesn't use a wheel. She was making three-dimensional landscapes for painting and decided to apply the technique to pottery.

"Now all my pottery has some connection with a landscape," she explained. Her New Mexican sunset pots were a result of a course she taught on the Indians of the Southwest at St. John's College in the mountains behind Santa Fe.

In the evenings, Eloise made crayon drawings which were the basis of her pots to be created later.

Her Olmos Basin jars were inspired by

the area behind Incarnate Word College where she teaches.

The "buffalo pots" were a result of her being in the Wichita Mountains at Lawton, Okla. Eloise told of learning Teddy Roosevelt had sent boxcars of buffaloes to the mountains to be released in a wildlife refuge.

The buffaloes had been plentiful there at one time, but had disappeared. The Commanche Indians, led by their last chief, Quanah Parker, were dressed in ceremonial attire to receive the buffaloes.

The mental image of this colorful panorama was the inspiration for Eloise's pottery.

MacDougall

As for Jeannette MacDougall, she has painted seriously since graduating from high school in 1971 and attending the Interlochen Fine Arts Academy during the summer on a scholarship.

After earning her undergraduate degree at Trinity University and studying under Elizabeth Ridenhower, Jeannette spent five weeks last summer at the Parsons School of Design in New York working on her master's degree.

Cecl and Seawillow Jackson, who headed the host couples at the Craft Center, left the reception to don pirate and gypsy costumes for Lies and Doug Howell's Halloween party.

Another host couple, Betty and Jerry Culhane, mentioned their trip to the British Isles.

Fritzie Abbott assisted as a hostess while her husband, G.W., kept a watchful eye on the downstairs gallery. The items from the Craft Center's Villita shop have been moved there during the renovation of the entire La Villita area.

Reception

Mrs. George Bush and Mrs. William P. Clements Jr. will be in San Antonio to honor Lupe Anguiano at a cocktail reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12, in the Valero Energy Corporation.

Lupe is the founder of National Women's Employment and Education, which will benefit from the \$25 per person admission fee.

Reservations, open to the public, are available through Women's Employment and Education.

David Dullnig gave a Halloween party at his home attended by 60 guests. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Himada of McAllen and Mr. and Mrs. Gregg Brant of New Braunfels were out-of-towners there.

Assisting the host in welcoming his friends were family members Darrell Dullnig, Karen Frausto and Amber Frausto.

Jose Greco and his wife, Nana Lorca, and members of the Ballet Folklorico Me-

xicano were honored with their Society for the presentation Monday.

At a reception in the retired Brig. Gen. and Mrs. Greco were greeted with riachi Imperial by the circus.

More than 150 guests per party which featured catered by Don Strange.

On Tuesday, a Spanish Willow Way home of W. Ford honored the Grecos. Cypress tables, which W. mother had had made by Conservation Society.

Margaret Stanley, director introduced Mayor Henry (wife, Mary Alice).

The mayor presented an cate to Jose Greco and at had previously been made years ago.

Cisneros continued, "as though he were reel guests applauded, the applause shows you approve."

"I had to campaign to come mayor and he gets it."

Dance

Jose replied, "That's be dance." Councilwoman chimed in, adding "It's cause this is election day."

Next to one wall of the was an altar for All Souls' ess invited guests to samp as they had served their pup

Jose Greco chatted abo Marbello, Spain, where he restrengthened." He spok Austin, Houston and Dallas

Among the guests were Patsy Steves, the Go Sweetie Jutson, Margaret Street, Lynn Huntress and (

Britishers

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Smit Shire, England, celebrated versary by visiting Mr. a Dillard.

Dillard met the Smiths War II, but this is the first seen each other since.

The Britishers saw the M of Horns, the Tower of the the Alamo. In Corpus Chr were entertained by George

The Smiths will see Our in Austin, New Braunfels They were greatly impress tonio and said they would here because the people are