

The Flivver Flash

The Official Newsletter of the Space City T's - Houston, TX

41st Annual Texas T Party - Schulenburg, Texas

Story by Debbie Marino

Photos by event participants

[Space City T's Web Site](http://SpaceCityT'sWebSite)

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It was a dark and stormy night... at least that's what participants of the annual Texas "T" Party faced on Tuesday evening, as they checked into their hotels in preparation for the official start of the tour on Wednesday morning, October 10th. Luckily, skies cleared early enough for a few Model T cars to be unloaded from trailers that night, although many waited until daylight to be on the safe side.

The Space City T's, the Houston chapter of the Model T Ford Club of America, held this year's event in Schulenburg, Texas, October 10-13. Chairpersons for 2018 were Rosemary Stokley, Jeff Cordes and Luke Cordes. Coordination of routes, accommodations, and food for over 90 cars and 180 people is a pretty daunting task, done on a volunteer basis, but was handled skillfully by this group, resulting in a very smooth four day tour. Last year's chairpersons, Jim and Sandra Ruhmann were also instrumental with computer work and other coordinating. Many thanks to all of you.

For those drivers that didn't have a chance to pick up their registration packet on Tuesday, the hospitality suite of the Holiday Inn Express was

opened again for check-in on Wednesday morning. A forty-plus tour book with step by step directions is the most important item in the bag, although it's always fun to see what other goodies and snacks are in there, as well as local information. It was also a good time to stock up on some drinks for the day out of the coolers and greet friends from other clubs that may only get a chance to see each other once a year. Thanks to both sponsors and member donations, at the end of each day, the room was reopened to reveal a new list of door prize winners.

Wednesday began with the 8am driver meeting, as held every morning of the tour, to discuss the day's route (averaging 84 miles each day), as well as any changes due to construction or other



events after the tour book has gone to print. In many cases, the driver's are lucky enough to have riders with them, so their job as navigator

Inside This Issue

Page

41st Annual Texas T Party in Schulenburg, Texas

1 - 5

Photos From the Texas T Party

6

[Christmas Dinner](#) / Calendar of Events / Ads / General Info

7

Club Info / Dinner Info / Meeting Info / Map

8

becomes equally important down these often less-traveled scenic routes away from the busy highways. First stop was a short distance to Weimar, Texas, city park pavilion for a morning coffee stop. Locally-made fruit kolaches were also provided. After a little “coffee klatsching”, it was time to leave for Columbus, Texas.

After the cars parked around the Courthouse Square in Columbus, everyone was free to visit the 1890 Colorado County courthouse. Other points of interest were the War Memorial Museum, housed in a previous water tower built in 1883, and the 1886 Stafford Opera House, which is still used for live theater performance on occasion. There was also the Mary Elizabeth Hopkins Santa Claus Museum, which began in 1913 when she started her collection, only stopping in 1990 when she deceased. More than 2000 items are on display. On the way back to the square was the Alley Log Cabin of 1836, where Abram and Nancy Alley raised five children in this Texas Colonial Period home.

Lunch was provided by Peter’s BBQ in the Ellinger, Texas, Chamber of Commerce Pavilion



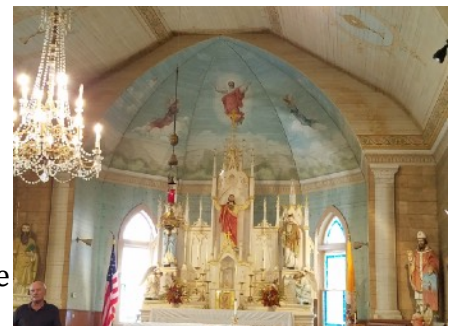
Hall. Then it was on to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammansville, Texas, one of four painted churches in Fayette County scheduled on the tour. (“Painted churches” have elaborate interiors that were painted by traveling artists who advertised in church newsletters. They utilized stenciling, freehand and infill painting, and trompe l’oeil graining and marbling.) The church was built in 1890 but destroyed by a hurricane in 1909 and rebuilt, only to be burned down in a fire and rebuilt a second time in 1919. This one is known as the “Pink Church”, although its walls and ceilings, adorned with various painted motifs, are more of a soft dusty rose. The stained glass windows have minimally decorated panels, illustrating the Czech history, and allowing in plenty of natural light, which creates a very peaceful environment.

German-born fresco artist, Fred Donecker of San Antonio, who painted this church, also added a popular marbling technique. At each one of the churches during the tour, a local guide was present to explain the history and hardships of the Czech and German settlers and the architecture of each building.



Thursday morning started close by in Schulenburg on their quaint Main Street, where the Schulenburg Historical Museum resides. Once the old Wolters Mercantile in the early 1900s, it now houses the museum of the town’s history and artifacts. On the same street is the Texas Polka Museum, dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of polka music in Texas and its bands and musicians of Czech, German and Polish descent. One of the tour participants, George “Sonny” House, actually found old photos of himself and his wife Stephanie’s cousins in the Cloverleaf Orchestra polka and waltz band. Quite a nice surprise!

The next stop was the Rocky Creek Corn Maze in Moulton, Texas. Because of the rain earlier in the week, things were a bit muddy in the corn maze, but that didn’t stop some people from trying to make their way through it. There were also duck water races and a large hay bale staircase that you ascended before sliding down a large ramp on the other side, among other things to try. Then it was on to Moravia, also in Lavaca County, to have lunch at the dance hall across from the Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church. This wooden painted church, a Gothic Revival architectural style built in 1912, was designed by its original pastor, Emil Schindler, in a cross shape because he felt it would withstand the winds better than so many other churches in the area that were



destroyed in the 1909 hurricane. Again, it was Fred Donecker, along with his sons, who painted the interior in 1923, showcasing a variety of techniques. Donecker painted interiors of additional churches, but the Moravia church is thought to be the most untouched since the original painting. The colorful mural depicting Jesus' ascension is a stunning contrast against the white and gold altar.

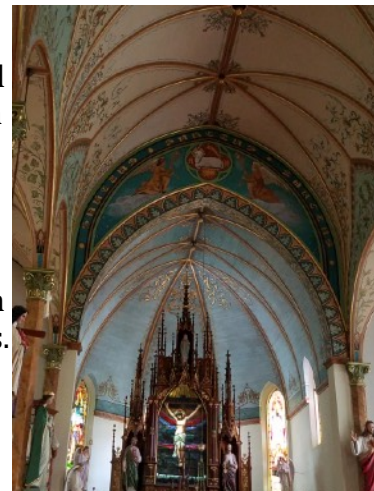
A quick drive down the road was the Moravia Vineyard & Winery. Visitors enjoyed a generous wine tasting of a dry red and white wine along with a sweet rose' and a sweet white wine. Cheese and crackers were served, as well as some jellies made from their leftover grapes. Both the wines and the jellies were available for purchase for those wanting to take a taste home with them. The day wasn't over, however, as Thursday afternoon was set aside for "picture day" at Freyburg Hall. The German benevolent Order of the Sons of Hermann built a dance hall in Freyburg, Texas, in the early 1900s. Drivers and passengers got the chance to dress in their period clothing if they chose, and all the participants lined up to have their picture taken alongside their Model T by a photographer.



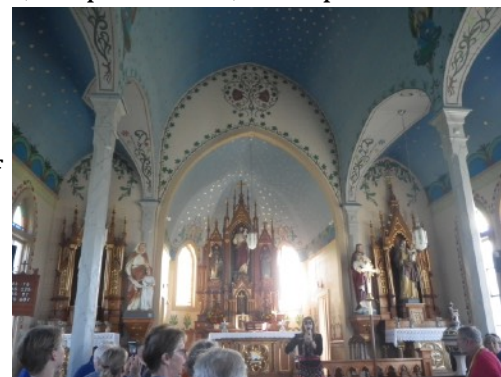
St. Mary's Catholic Church in High Hill, Texas, was the third painted church on the tour's agenda, but sadly, a funeral was scheduled for Friday morning, so anyone who wanted to view the inside still had the opportunity to visit on their own Thursday or Friday afternoon. It was well worth the effort to stop and see, as this church is known as "Queen of the Painted Churches" with its exquisite painted woodwork and ceiling, faux marble columns using turkey feathers, stained glass windows, and exterior blue-grey stone provided by a local quarry in nearby Moulton. St. Mary's first church was built in 1869 until a larger one was built in 1876. When the present church was constructed in 1906, the original stained glass windows, donated by people of the parish, were moved to

this new building. Statues of saints are at every turn, Stations of the Cross were imported from Italy, and there is even a painted reproduction of Michelangelo's "Pieta".

The interior was designed by Ferdinand Stockert and Hermann Kern in 1912. To create the look of Gothic vaults and joints, they painted on canvas and glued them onto the wooden walls. The most exquisite of the churches, no corner has been left untouched.



Friday morning, on the way to the next painted church, the route took drivers on FM 615, which turned into Piano Bridge Road. The 1885 Piano Bridge, often said to have been named after the musical sounds that were emitted while driving over it (until necessary repairs in 2012), is actually a piano-wire truss bridge. It is one of the few remaining iron bridges in Fayette County, and rather fun to drive over it, especially in a Model T. A short distance from there was the St. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Dubina (meaning "oak grove"), Texas. While not as elaborate, the beautiful ceiling painted sky-blue with 3,426 white gold leaf, six-point stars, hand painted frescoes of angels and vines, and carved depictions of the Stations of the Cross, make this painted church the cheeriest of



them all. Their first church was built in 1876, but was destroyed by the hurricane of 1909, then rebuilt in 1912. It survived a fire that destroyed much of the town that same year, but the colorful chapel didn't survive being whitewashed in a 1952 attempt at modernization. Originally painted by Stockert and Kern, a restoration in

1983 brought back to life all of its history and hallmark looks, including half an oak leaf at pew ends and acorns depicted throughout the interior. Reflecting a Czech preference in design, rather than a German one, the minimal use of stained glass sustains that cheerfulness of the church's sun-drenched interior. The same iron cross made by freed slave and blacksmith, Tom Lee, which topped the first church, was put back up when the



new church was constructed.

For lunch, there was a variety of choices in La Grange, Texas, around the center of town.

This author

chose a blast from the past at the iconic four generation, 114-year-old Prause's Meat Market, where a no-frills lunch is sold by the pound or the link and served on paper plates with bread and sauce for you to make your own sandwich, alongside potato salad and coleslaw. It was impossible to resist picking up some cookies afterwards at the 71-year-old, family-run Lukas Bakery on the way back to the Model T in the town's square. An optional stop before leaving La Grange was the Texas Quilt Museum, where both antique and contemporary quilt art are showcased in two adjoining historical buildings. The rest of afternoon was spent visiting Burkland's Autobarn, a private car collection of John Burkland, with over 125 plus vehicles and other collectible auto memorabilia.

Then it was time to get ready for banquet night at Sengelmann Hall back in Schulenburg. Sengelmann Hall is a fully restored 1890's Texas dance hall, complete with a restaurant, saloon and biergarten, located in the historic downtown area. Many chose to get dressed back up again in their period clothing for this occasion, and after social hour, the buffet lines began. Once everyone had a chance to finish their plates, awards were presented. The Hard Luck award this year officially went to Max and Nona Meinen for a broken connecting rod. Unofficially, a 2nd hard luck story went to Mike Noe, who made the

mistake of parking his T overnight under a telephone wire full of birds, leaving the car a mess upon inspection in the morning!

Most Congenial awards were presented to the families of both Julius and Marvin Neunhoffer. The Member's Choice award went to Julius Nuenhoffer's 1918 Coupelet. This award is for the Model T that participants would most want to take home with them. Attendance award went to Jerry and Donna Giebler after having attended all 41 Texas "T" Party events. The Furthest Traveled Award went to Paul and Sandra Murphy of Limerick, Ireland, and Furthest Driven Model T Award went to Brinson Burks of Gladewater, TX. The Furthest Traveled Using a Tow Vehicle and Trailer Award went to Ray and Sharon Foster of Santa Monica, California. Youngest Driver was awarded to Daniel Shedrow at 20 years of age, while the Oldest Driver went to Ken Harding at 93 years of age. Joe Pinnelli won the drawing for the 2019 free registration. It was also announced that Sophie Adcock had been declared the winner of the Farkle tournament that played out in the hospitality suite on Thursday night after a little social hour of food (including homemade ice cream and cobbler) and friendship took place.

The last day of the tour, Saturday, October 13th, brought the Model Ts to the final painted church on the schedule, St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Assumption in Praha, Texas. Fresco artist, Swiss-



born Gottfried Flury, moved to Moulton to work on churches in the area and painted the flowers and angels of the light blue walls on this present stone church (and fourth one) of the parish, dedicated in 1895.

There are supposedly over 60 varieties of plants native to the state

painted inside the church, as Flury was asked to make the ceiling look as if the Garden of Eden

existed in Texas. From 1901-1919, Father Netardus was both the pastor and an artist of the chapel, as well. Later, a parishioner and house painter by trade, Gene Mikulik would help restore the statues and altars, and himself creating a painting of the Virgin Mary hanging in the church. A large crystal chandelier, donated in the 1920s, served as a way to illuminate the shadows of the stained glass-windowed interior. A Veteran's Day memorial service is held annually, as nine native sons of Praha lost their lives in WWII, leaving the town with the loss of an entire generation of their young men and the sad distinction of the largest ratio of deaths to residents in the entire country.

After the church visit, lunch was in Smithville, Texas, at their recreation center. Once the plates of salad and pasta were finished, the Model Ts could



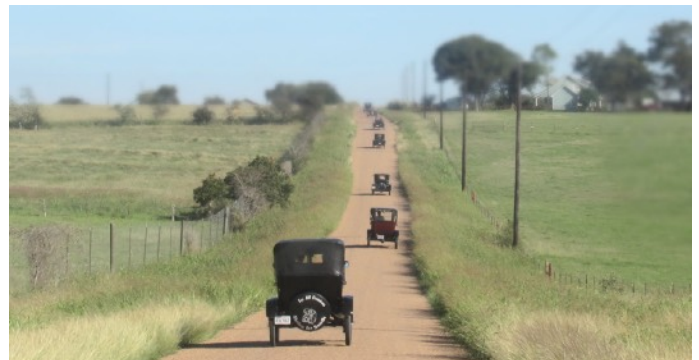
head to the downtown historic area where the 2018 Texas Photo Festival Competition was being held. The festival is planned with

sets and models ready to be photographed based on the interpretation of the person behind the camera. The Model Ts were parked on the closed-off street for the same purpose, and they became the backdrop of some of the photos. Developing rain storms on Saturday had sent some of the cars and their owners home earlier than expected. Some left after the banquet on Friday, others right

after the Smithville run. But the immediate area was spared major downpours for the most part, and those who stayed had a relatively nice day to contend with, although, side curtains were a plus if you had them for the occasional drizzle in the morning.

This tour was an opportunity to appreciate the Czech and German people that came to Texas in the late 1800s to early 1900s via the port of Galveston, then known as the "Ellis Island of the West". Tours entirely devoted to visiting painted churches in the central Texas area are quite popular; getting the chance to witness them in person, while traveling there in a Model T, is even more fantastic. With such beautiful interiors reminiscent of the settlers' European roots, these churches are not just for show, they are active parishes. Their exteriors may resemble typical small-town churches, but the frescoes and paintings make one truly glad their parishioners did not believe in Henry Ford's philosophy of "any color so long as it is black"!

The entire tour was a success, thanks to the chairpersons and everyone else who volunteered their time. Finding hotel properties, parking, and food for over 180 people, plus mapping routes and making reservations and deposits in advance is a team effort. Helping each other out, whether on the road or with last minute adjustments, is just what Model T people do, which is why over four decades of Texas "T" Party tours have transpired. The 42nd tour will occur in the fall of



2019. Location and chairpersons are yet to be determined, but it is sure to be as memorable as the one in 2018 and years' past, due to the volunteers and attendees that make it special each year.





St. John The Baptist Church Parking



Hospitality room get-together



Texas Touring



Ellinger, TX Photo Op



Coffee & Kolaches in Weimar, Texas



Hotel Parking



Only in Schulenburg, Texas

The Flivver Flash is published by the Space City T's chapter of the Model T Ford Club of America in Houston, Texas twelve times per year. This newsletter is produced for the education and enjoyment of members and those expressing interest in joining the Space City T's. Said education and enjoyment is as it pertains to the Model T Ford automobile. The Flash is also shared with other antique auto clubs. Other clubs may use articles from this publication with credit to this newsletter or the original source. News, articles, ads or anything of interest to the club must be submitted to the editor by the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Emailing takes place the last week of the month. Annual dues are \$25 per year.

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THE FLIVVER FLASH

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Calendar of Events

Nov 10	Alvin Car & Bike Show
Nov 14	SCT Meeting
Dec 2	SCT Christmas Dinner
	Christie's Seafood & Steaks
	6029 Westheimer Rd.
	Houston, TX 77057
Dec	NO Meeting in December

Thanks to all of you who took the time to send cards and letters and came out to Hobby Airport for that wonderful reception home. I was very humbled (to tears) by all of your gratitude!

Many thanks to the volunteers and sponsors of [Honor Flight Houston](#) for making my Honor Flight trip possible to [Washington D.C.](#) I can't possibly explain in words my thanks to all of you!

Anthony J. Marino
Captain, USAF 71-76



The Space City T's Club is the Houston, Texas chapter of the Model T Ford Club of America. All questions concerning membership, The Vintage Ford magazine, the MTFCA library, chapter insurance, purchase of manuals, back magazine issues, or store items can be directed to the following:

Model T Ford Club of America

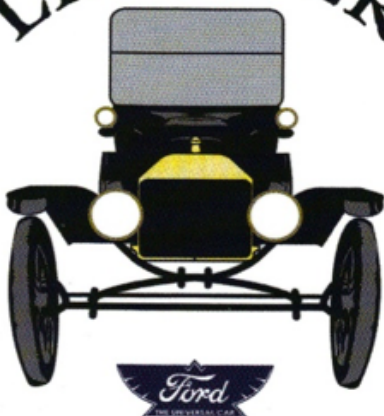
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This ad expires January 2019

2018 Space City T's Christmas Dinner

SUNDAY DECEMBER 2, 2018

CHRISTIES SEAFOOD RESTAURANT 5:00pm

Please RSVP for a head count to Dave Lucas at:
(713) 299-3059

Men should bring a man's gift and women bring a woman's gift with a value of \$20.

You may also bring a **new** Toys for Tots gift as an option if anyone wishes to bring one.

Next Meeting

November 14, 2018



Dine with Friends at
Demeris BBQ at 6:00 P.M.
located at

1702 West Loop North,
Suite A, Houston, TX 77008

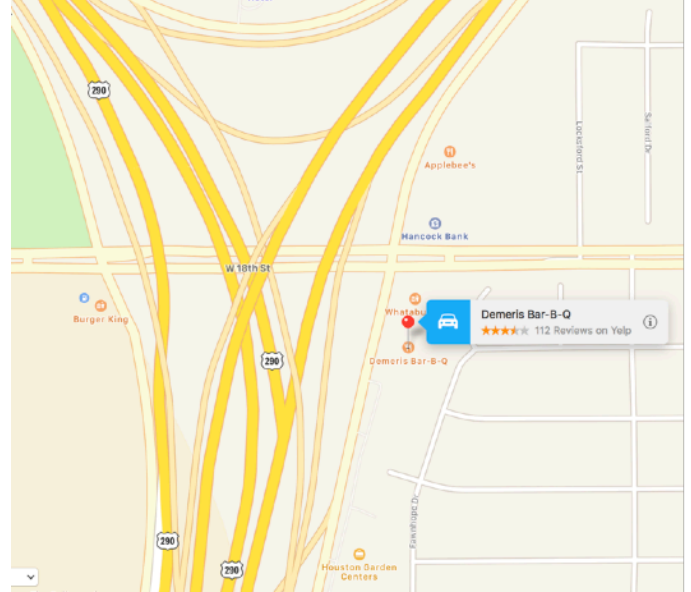
Then attend the
Space City T's Meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Place:

Lazy Brook Baptist Church
1822 West 18th Street in the
Heights

Website: www.spacecityts.org

Email: modelt@spacecityts.org

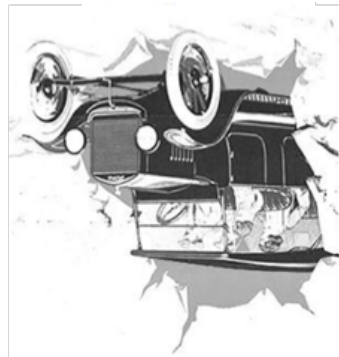


Directions to Demeris BBQ

From the east or west on I-10 or the south side of downtown, take the I-610 West Loop North and get off at the 18th Street Exit. Demeris BBQ will be immediately on the right after Houston Garden Nursery.

From the west on Highway 290, exit at Mangum and turn right to 18th Street. At 18th, turn left, cross under West Loop and turn into the Whataburger parking lot on the right. Proceed to Demeris BBQ after the Whataburger.

From the north on I-45, take the 610 North Loop West around to the I-610 West Loop South to the Hempstead Highway exit. Make a U-turn under I-610 and proceed north on the frontage road to just before 18th Street, Demeris BBQ will be on your right after Houston Garden Center.



First Class Mail



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