

## INFORMATION HIGHWAY



Anthony Frederick

## RECENT SPOTTINGS

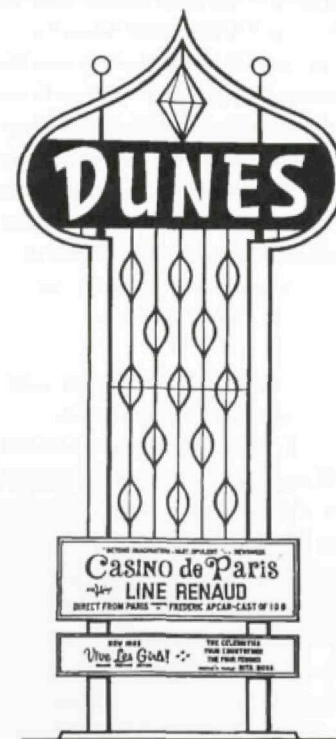
Half concealed among the upheld hoofs and blazing udders of the colossal cows atop the canopy of Amy's Ice Creams and Coffees in Shepherd Square is evidence of a heretofore unknown hide effect of bovine growth hormone – a dairy king to keep more than the malts all shook up. The happy Holsteins are the work of Laurie Smith Design Associates.

## STAR-SPANGLED BUILDING

The Gulf Freeway storefront of Advertising, Banners, and Flags of Texas, Inc. (Christine Vesellea, artist and proprietor) added a touch of glory on the way to Hobby Airport until last spring, when it moved to an off-off ramp site.



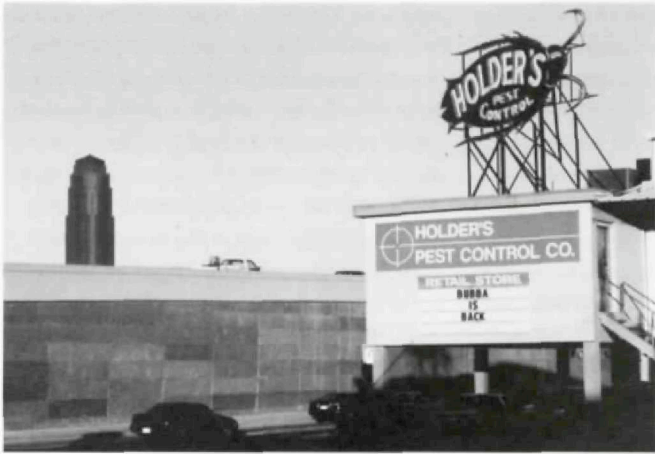
William Heiser/McLoud/Tony Nazzone



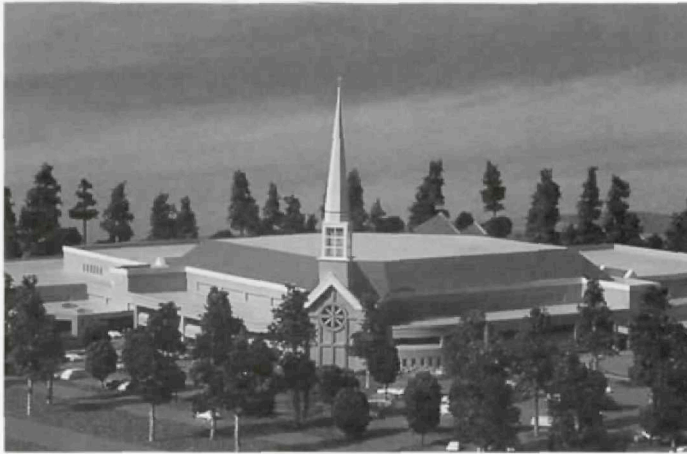
## DUNESBURY

The sign of the Dunes Hotel, a landmark the authors of *Learning From Las Vegas* described as “an erection 22 stories high that pulsates at night,” bit the sand last fall under cannon fire from the “pirate ship” of Steve Wynn’s Treasure Island. The 180-foot-high Dunes pylon, designed by Lee Klay and built by the Federal Sign and Signal Corporation of Los Angeles in 1964, set off a wave of pylon envy that endowed the strip with five of the world’s six tallest electrical signs.

g e i s t



Leo Cord Hertzberg and Paul Heiser, Photographers, © 1994



ROACH CLIP

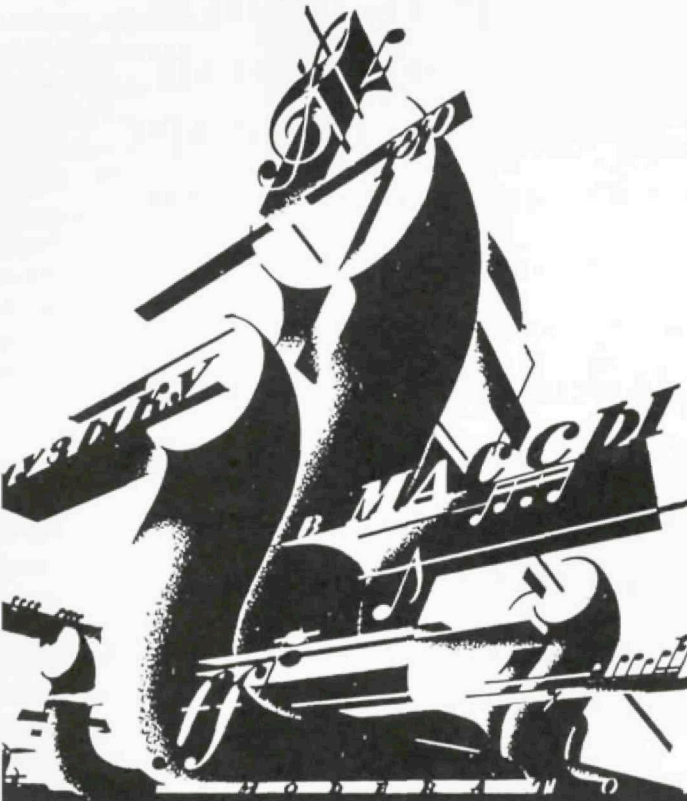
It's hard to keep a good roach down. The Holder Pest Control Company's once wall-mounted shrine to the city's patron insect – a 1:1 translation from the chalk outline of an average-size specimen – was moved to the roof of its Southwest Freeway premises to counteract the effects of a recent widening of the highway.

AMEN CORNER

The steeple-cornered Forest Cove Baptist Church, Kingwood (Hatfield Halcomb Architects, 1993–94), is a matter of Gibbs and take – a 4,000-seat mega-church that is to ordinary churches as “shopping malls” are to “individual retail stores,” in the words of its architects (*Texas Architect*, November-December 1993). Forest Cove's inspiration point finds a soulmate in the Grecian formula of the Children's Museum of Houston (Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates and Jackson & Ryan, 1989–92, *Cite*, Spring-Summer 1993).



Leo Cord Hertzberg and Paul Heiser, Photographers, © 1994



SAXUAL POLITICS

When Bob Daddy-O Wade and R. A. Hilder's 65-foot-high saxophone for Billy Blues on Richmond Avenue topped out 23 feet over the height permitted by the city of Houston's sign ordinance, the wailing didn't stop until the Municipal Art Commission certified it as a work of art outside the jurisdiction of the sign control commissariat. The club's management pointed to the sax's lack of lettering as evidence of unfettered artistic purpose, although Jakob Chernikov's theater set of 1931 spelling out “Music for the Masses” advances the (still?) revolutionary idea that letters, even whole words, can coexist artfully with horns aplenty. For the record, Chernikov's sub-manifesto, *The Melody of Constructivism*, grooves (if not exactly swings) to just such an assemblage as Billy Blues' totem of surfboards (mouthpiece), beer kegs, washtubs, canoes, inverted Volkswagen (bell), and other proletarian detritus: “We are affected by the whole aggregate of elements combined together in a definite scale. The feeling of pleasure we experience on contemplating a constructive creation, i.e., the impression we receive, depends on the specific features that this or that object possesses. Certain inner qualities introduce this distinction. It is extremely difficult to establish the limits and boundaries of certain points at which constructive forms affect us. . . . When authentic grandeur and aspiration are combined in any creative work of man, and when functional movements are present in it, we obtain a definite ‘melody.’”

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