



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Thursday, March 4th 2021 Day 46



It took me a little driving around last night to find a parking spot to sleep in, but this fancy theater appeared empty and the grounds were very unkempt, so I gave it a try and had no issues.

My Austin City Limits tour is at 11:00 and I want to make sure I'm not late. Therefore, I'm heading downtown right away to find a parking spot. I can always wander a little until my tour starts.

My first choice turned out to be the best, a free lot along the Colorado River with a two hour limit. I might be gone three hours but that's ok.

I wanted to get off the river front paths where everyone else was, and I was lucky enough to find this nice paved path along the Shoal Creek, which empties into the Colorado. After a couple blocks I came across this old railroad trestle, oddly still sitting in the middle of downtown

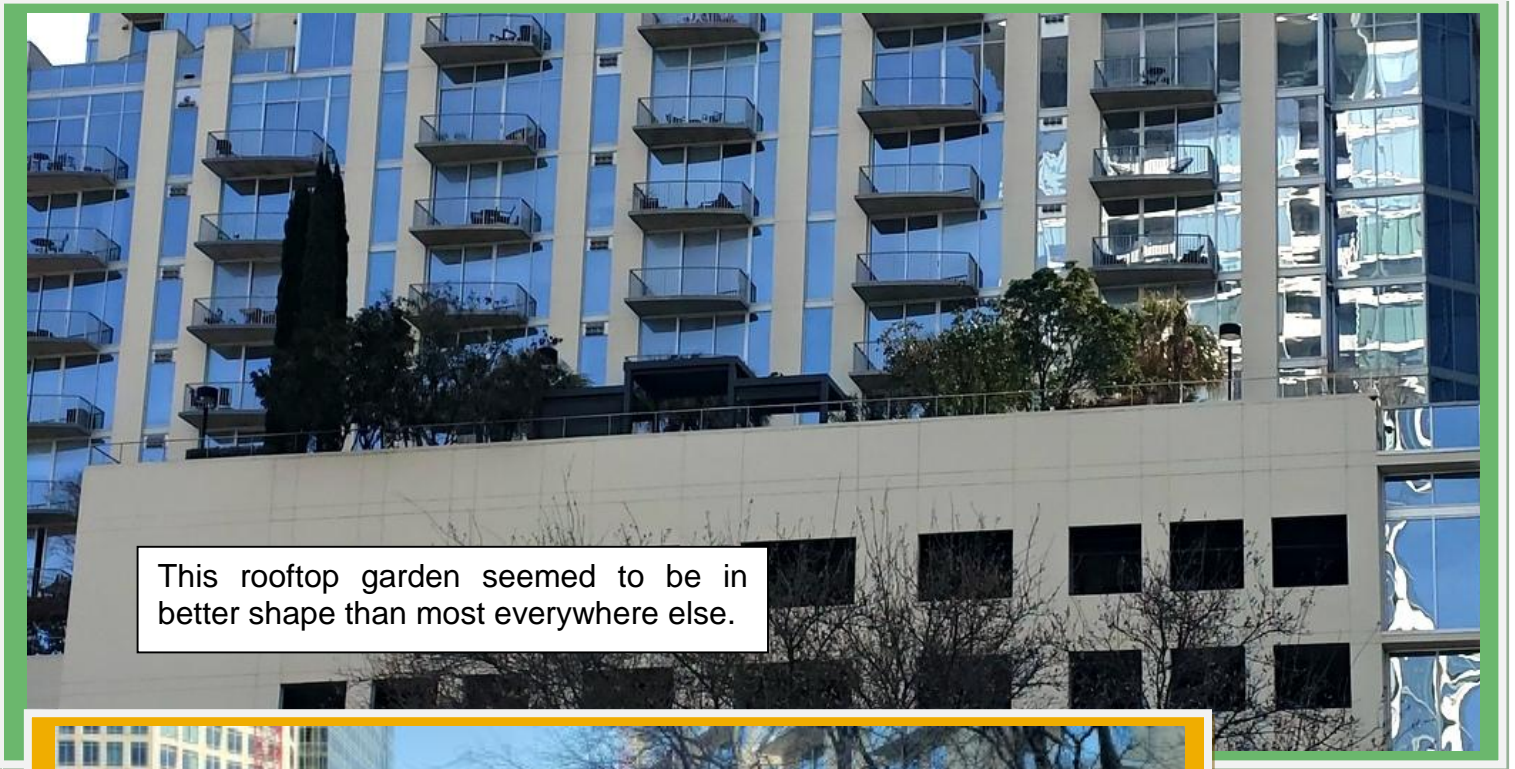




Still intact, but obviously not still in use, you can see both ends of the track. This Third Street Trestle is surrounded by \$5 billion of real estate. Constructed in 1925 by the Union Pacific, it replaced an earlier trestle built in 1876. One article says it is almost a done deal to tear it down; another states how important it is to refurbish and maintain. Tearing it down to build a new bridge does not make sense to me. The streets on both ends are closed off into small parks and a pedestrian walkway already exists. I guess only time will tell. As I took the picture of the trestle from the trail, I then turned around and took the picture below of the modern bridge a block away, just for contrast.



I quite enjoyed this walkway. I only ran across two homeless people, as opposed to the tents along the river front and under the highways, some of which were twice as big as my RV. It reminded me of Los Angeles. I don't get that impression in Houston unless you go to specific areas, but for the relatively small size of Austin compared to LA or Houston, I was...I was... just shaking my head. I saw no tent cities in San Antonio at almost three times the size. Just checking, Austin and San Antonio have nearly the identical homeless populations. Enough, back to the trail. You can see a portion of it in the photo above; paved, curving, vegetation (I'll come back to this), walls of rocks, bricks and other surfaces, no vehicles, no waiting for the walk sign, and about one-tenth the number of people as the river front trails. There was garbage strewn around, especially in and along the water, but even though the water was shallow, it was very clear.



This rooftop garden seemed to be in better shape than most everywhere else.



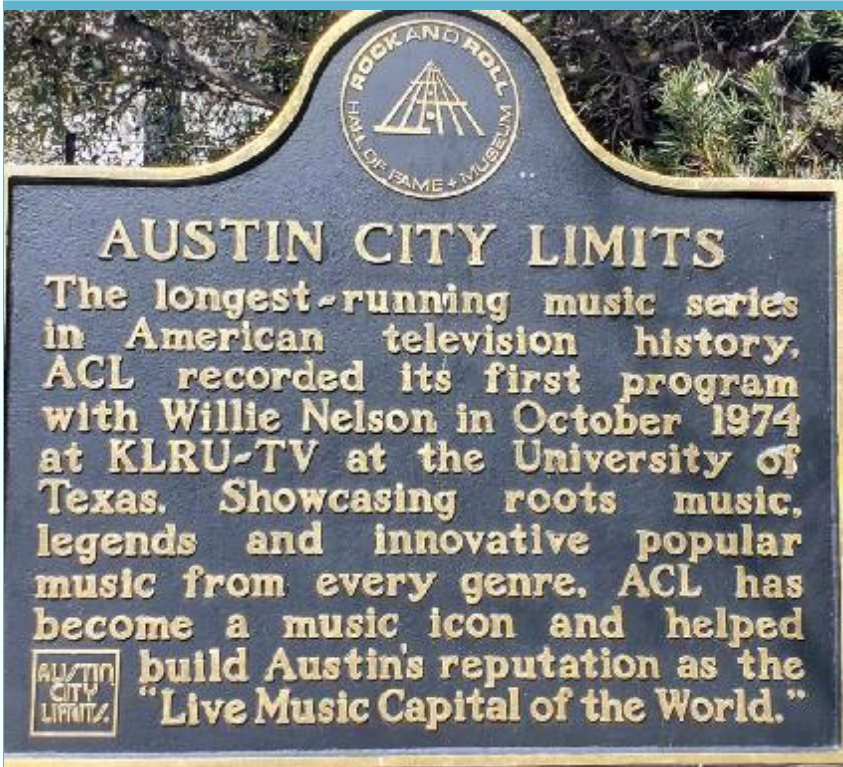
The trees look dead, the bushes look dead, the grass looks dead, the weeds.....are thriving naturally.

The bamboo thickets are dead.





The palm trees are dead. It is going to take years for the Texas vegetation to return to pre-freeze splendor.

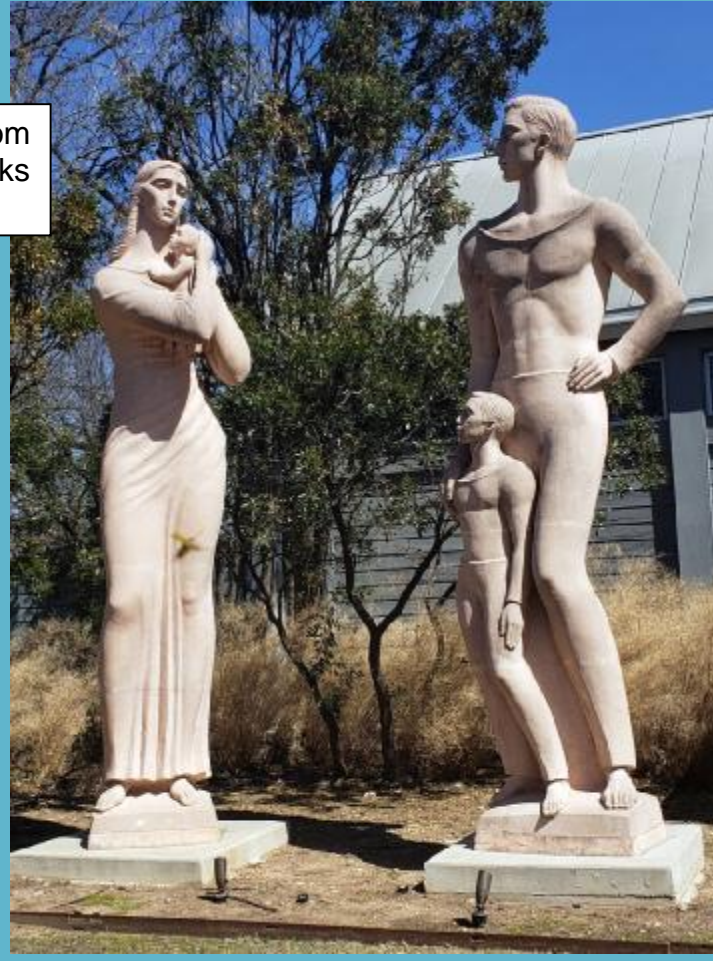


I made my way up to the surface streets and began to zig zag my way back to the Moody Theater. The box office, where we are supposed to meet, was very difficult to find, but I still arrived eight minutes early, which was seven minutes late of their suggested fifteen minutes early. The box office is closed. I pulled up the ticket on my phone, yup, right day, right place. What the heck? I knocked, I called (voice mail for three different departments and one no answer), I sent an email. No return calls, no email reply, no answer to my knock. I waited until 11:20 and then headed back to the RV. Needless to say, I was not, and am not now, a happy camper. Not that I'm a big Willie Nelson fan, but I recently finished a couple of his autobiographies which gave me a little more respect for him than I may have had previously. And since I am here in Texas.....

UMLAUF sculpture garden & museum

I mentioned this sculpture garden yesterday. The senior rate got me in for five bucks. Let's get right to it because there are 63 sculptures here plus several more inside.

Uh, kinda looks a lot like the one from yesterday except there are two works instead of one.



Charles Umlauf
St. Michael and Lucifer
1985
bronze

Don't worry, I'm only including five sculptures here. He seems to like the family model, especially a mother and child. I counted ten entitled 'mother and child' in one form or another; about 4 reclining nudes/bathers; several religious pieces; two of eve, and some animals. I think that is what made 'St. Michael and Lucifer' stand out a little more than the rest. It breaks the artists mold, gets him out of his comfort zone.

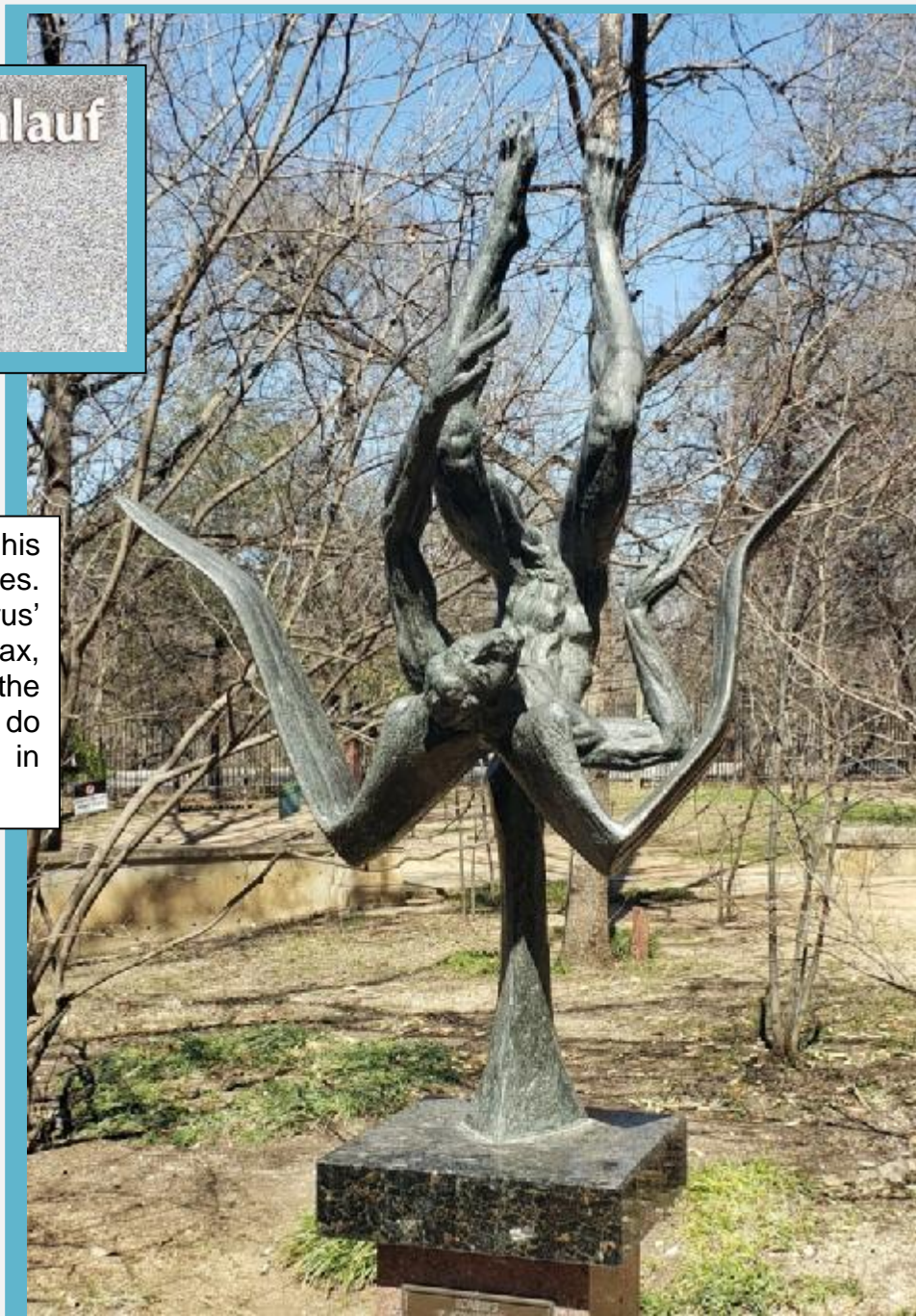


Charles Umlauf
Rhino
1976
bronze

I have a soft spot for Rhino's, probably because the John Wayne film *Hatari!* is one of my favorites.

Charles Umlauf
Icarus
1965
bronze

This is another one a little out of his comfort zone. However, I have issues. If I recall my Greek Mythology, Icarus' wings were made of feathers and wax, that's why he couldn't fly close to the sun. The wings on that sculpture do not appear to have anything in common with feathers and wax.





This is a waterfall, most likely sculpted by the landscapers and not a sculptor, but still has depth, is pleasing to the eye, and provokes contemplation. Not to mention that it is always changing, and pleasing to the ear as well. So you think I'm an art critic, huh?

Damian Priour
Pointed Sphere
2005
limestone and glass



Oddly enough, I found this design to be just about the most interesting one of all. Why oddly enough? Because it was not done by Umlauf, which I did not realize as I was approaching it and thinking to myself that "this was not what I have come to expect from Charles Umlauf", and then I read the sign and found out I was right.

After two days in Austin I have had enough. Enough of big cities, enough traffic, enough homeless, enough parking issues, enough state troopers, enough closed museums, enough finding a place to sleep issues, and enough people issues. Some cities are just not RV friendly. L.A. is one, Encinitas, Ca. (I think it is) is another, and Austin is right up there with them.

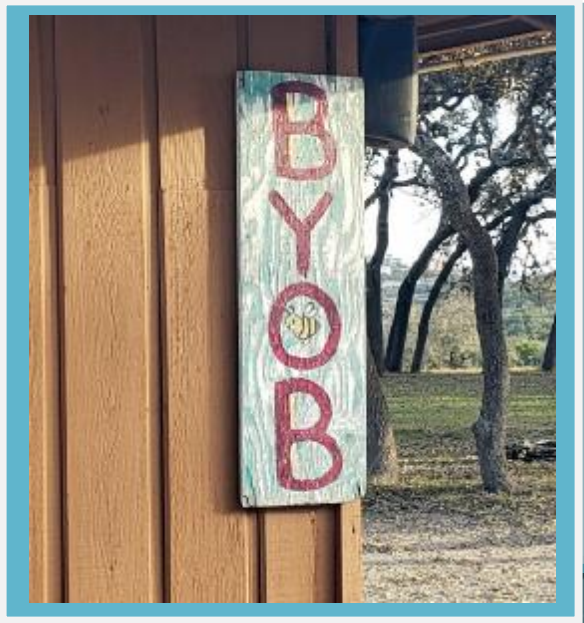
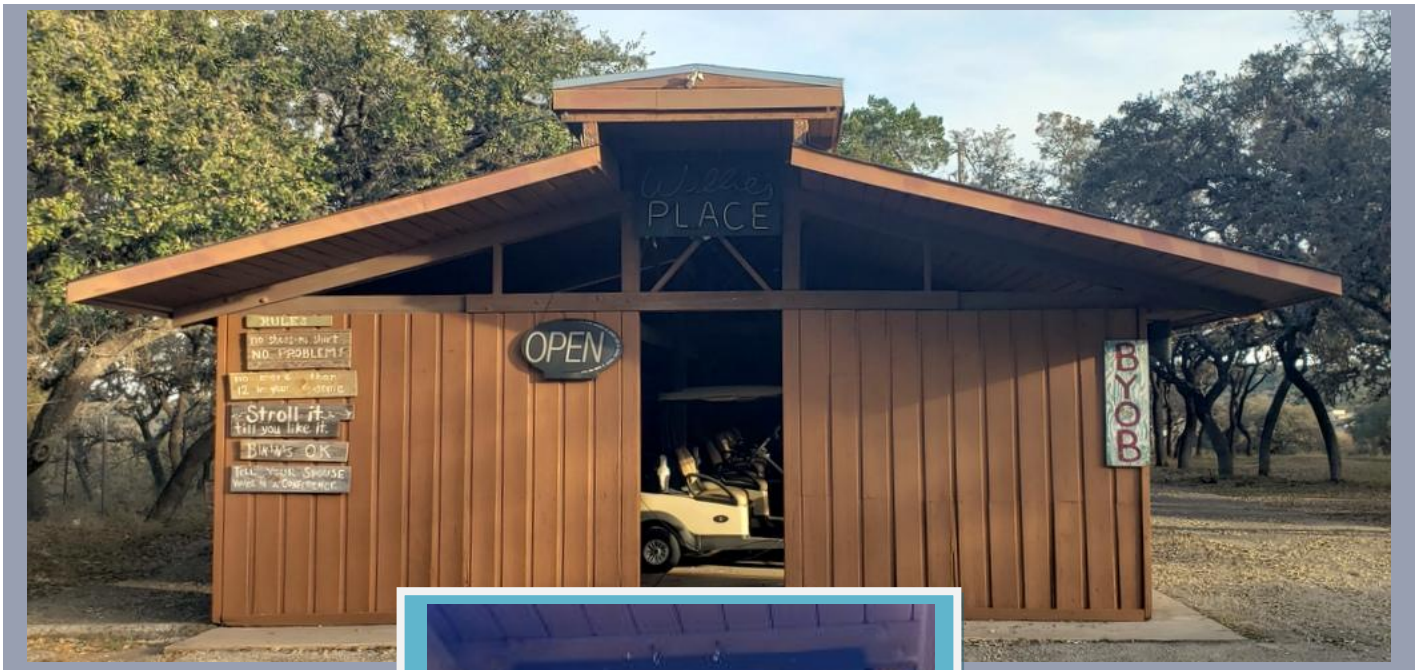
I had planned to do my laundry and clean the RV tomorrow, but I decided to get that out of the way today and head out to the country and some fresh air and uncrowded spaces. Below is the entry gate to Willie Nelson's Luck, Texas ranch.



Willie found that he liked golf enough to buy a nine-hole golf course just down the road so he could go golfing anytime he wanted. This RV was in the parking lot. Maybe he's teeing it up right now.



It doesn't look like your typical travel RV does it? Maybe a tour bus?



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Signs say it is members only, and closed, but I saw a couple out on the ninth green. I like the 'bikinis OK' rule.



The photo above is the first tee box. It's hard to tell in this photo, but there are about two dozen deer down in the middle of the fairway.

Willie's house and golf course are near Briarcliff, Texas. I took what appeared on Google to be back country S-curve roads, but ended up being roads through subdivisions for the most part. Then it was ranches (I did see a couple Longhorn).

Back on the road again (ha ha), I took HWY 281 into Marble Falls. The Walmart here is RV friendly, so I joined the other three RV's here for the night.

I have no plan, no itinerary, so I may spend several hours tomorrow working on that, just so I have some idea of where I want to go.

I hope no one is upset that I didn't spend more time in Austin, but the thought of the crowded walking paths, dodging the homeless, trying to find parking, and RV unfriendliness drove me away. The traffic here is horrendous, and that's with Covid. I can't imagine what it would be like if everyone and everything was back to normal. I think it highly likely that the rapid growth of the city outgrew its infrastructure. Construction will be continuous forever now. A truck driver I spoke to said he had not been here since 2011 and that there must be fifty large new buildings since then.

I think I mentioned this, but just a reminder anyways – the Colorado River that flows through Austin is NOT the same Colorado River that flows through the Grand Canyon. This one starts in Texas (then why is it called the Colorado?) and the other one has headwaters in, you guessed it, Colorado.

Until next time.....