

Touring at the San Antonio Conference



The Alamo. Photo © Jim Mahoney, APSA, EPSA

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PSA members will experience the best of South Texas when we meet at the San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel in September for our 78th annual conference. San Antonio, the seventh largest city in America, is a vibrant place with plenty to do, see and of course, photograph. Our hotel, the beautiful Wyndham San Antonio Riverwalk, is conveniently located along the spectacular River Walk with its excellent restaurants, interesting shops and amazing sites. We will also be within walking distance of the historic Alamo. The Alamo, along with the other four Spanish Roman Catholic sites (known as the San Antonio Missions), was recently awarded the status of World Heritage Site by the United Nations.

San Antonio Botanical Gardens. Photo © Ralph Durham



The Conference Committee has planned exciting bus and river barge tours that will include

site seeing, learning and abundant photographic opportunities. All tours will leave from the hotel, including river barge tours that will depart from the hotel's water taxi dock.

A tour that everyone will want to enjoy will be a *river barge tour of the World Famous San Antonio Riverwalk*! Lush green sub-tropical foliage lines the banks of the jade-green river. The Paseo del Rio is studded with colorful sidewalk cafes, gift shops, boutiques, restaurants, nightclubs and hotels. In the mile and one-half horseshoe river bend, the river is shaded by towering cypresses, oaks and willows and bordered by gardens of flowering ornamental plants. The tour will explain the geographic features, history and significance of this location while enjoying the sights and sounds of this uniquely San Antonio treasure.

We will also be offering a *private dinner barge tour of the world famous Riverwalk*. We will board the river barge at our hotel and enjoy an authentic Mexican food dinner while cruising along the San Antonio River. The river barge driver will provide a guided evening tour of the Riverwalk. This experience is much different from the day tour as the restaurants that line the Riverwalk come to life with music and lights.

Heading north to Fredericksburg, where old world charm still exists today, will surely be a popular tour. On a *Texas Hill country adventure*, we will visit the Admiral Nimitz State Historical Park and National Museum of the Pacific war, which is located in the downtown area. We will then continue and stop at Wildseed Farm for lunch. Following our lunch stop, we will continue to the



A quiet stroll on the Riverwalk. Photo © Ralph Durham.

LBJ Ranch where Lyndon Johnson was born, lived, died and was buried. The view across the river to the “Texas White House” is spectacular, and provides insight as to why Mrs. Johnson returned to the ranch at every opportunity. We will be able to tour the ranch at our own pace and stop at sites along the way such as the President’s birthplace, the Johnson family cemetery, and the Johnson’s ranch house (known as the Texas White House.)

Not to be missed will be a *tour of San Antonio*, visiting the San Antonio Botanical Gardens and the adjacent San Antonio Garden Center. The gardens include “Watersaver Layne,” a cluster of miniature cottages with colorful diminutive gardens whose blooms belie their thrifty ways with water. Each tiny cottage is a different architectural style, complemented by its own “front yard” of attractive water-saving plants. These 33 acres of lush foliage and colorful blooms beg to be appreciated. Our next stop will be the Japanese Tea Garden of San Antonio. The garden underwent a major renovation beginning in May 2007 when its beautiful ponds and waterfall were repaired.

For lovers of history and beautiful architecture, there’s no better place to visit than the *King William Historic Neighborhood*. This is a 25-block area near downtown on the south bank of the San Antonio River. It was considered the most elegant residential area in the city and zoned as the state’s first historic district. It has once again become a fashionable neighborhood. The Steve Homestead is an elegant three-story mansion built in 1876 that we will be able to tour. Following our walking tour, we will enjoy lunch along the banks of the San Antonio River at the historic Guenther House restaurant.

No stay in San Antonio would be complete without visiting the famous *San Antonio Missions*

National Historical Park. We will spend a full day visiting the missions. First, we will venture to *Mission Concepción*, the oldest un-restored Catholic Church in the United States. Our next stop on this historic trail is the “*Queen of the Missions*”—*Mission San Jose*. This will be followed by stops at *Mission San Juan Capistrano*, and then *Mission San Francisco de la Espada*.

We will also offer early morning and late day “photography” tours to the missions to take advantage of the early morning and late-day light. The early-morning tour will take us to *Mission Espada and Mission San Juan*. On the late-day tour, we will visit *Mission San Jose and Mission Concepcion*.

A private evening tour aboard a double-decker bus will bring us to many different areas in and around downtown San Antonio. Highlights will include *Hemisfair Plaza, the Alamo, and the Pearl Brewery*, etc. Participants may sit on the uncovered upper deck which offers a 360° field of view or inside the air-conditioned lower deck with large windows. This tour will offer an elevated view of the Alamo during twilight.

The cost of all full-day tours will include lunch and gratuities. We will do our best to accommodate everyone with special needs. If you require something special, please let us know in advance so that we can be certain that you will enjoy your experience to the fullest.

Because of our hotel’s convenient location and its proximity to so many of San Antonio’s landmarks, we will be taking walking tours that will present us with some excellent photo opportunities of the city’s most famous attractions.

Please note that Conference and Hotel registrations will both open on the same day. This will be Friday, April 1. ■