



Our purpose is to document and publicize the values and conservation needs of horned lizards, to promote horned lizard conservation projects and to assist with horned lizard management initiatives throughout their ranges.

## Judge Gives Lizard Another Chance at Legal Protection

Fish and Wildlife erred in taking it off potential endangered list

by Benjamin Spillman

A lizard known for its dinosaur-like features is back in line for endangered species protection, according to backers of the tiny, desert reptile. A federal judge in Arizona on Tuesday ruled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service erred when it dropped the flat-tailed, horned lizard from consideration as a "threatened" species eligible for special legal protection.

In a 15-page ruling, District Court Judge Neil Wake said the government, "violated the Endangered Species Act" by failing to evaluate the impact of habitat loss on the species when it withdrew a proposal to list it as threatened. The ruling, according to environmentalists who support more lizard protections, means the lizard will once again be considered for threatened species status. They say that could help the reptiles recover from building and other pressures that have pushed it from developed areas like much of the Coachella Valley.

Federal wildlife officials say they don't yet know the ramifications of the decision. "Without a listing it really just gets lip service," said Daniel Patterson, desert ecologist for the Center for Bio-

logical Diversity, one of the environmental groups behind the legal challenge.

"You can't just go out and plow lizard habitat into the ground," Patterson said. But if the lizard were to gain the special status, it could mean costly new building requirements in its habitat, including places like the Coachella Valley. Listing opponents say the lizard litigation battle is more about thwarting development than preserving reptiles.

### **ABOUT THE LIZARD**

Distinguished by a dark stripe along its flat, spiny body, the flat-tailed, horned lizard lives in low-lying, sandy areas of deserts in Southern California and Arizona. The Coachella Valley represents the northwest fringe of its range.

Earlier decisions by the Fish and Wildlife Service to withdraw threatened species consideration for the lizard were based on sound science, said Ed Kibbey, spokesman for the desert chapter of the Building Industry Association. If the lizard were to get added protection it could mean builders would have to compensate the government in exchange for disturbing lizard habitat, Kibbey said. That could mean anything from setting aside land on a project site to buying land for the lizard elsewhere, he said.

The lizard has already been driven from much of its local habitat, said Allan Muth, director of the Palm Desert-based Boyd Deep Canyon Research Center, a University of California, Riverside desert

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **1st All-Horned Lizard Art Show**

Wild Basin Preserve, Austin, TX.

February 4-5, 2006,

To participate on the planning committee, contact Bill Brooks at Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.

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# Reintroducing the Horned Lizard at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge

By Vivian Thomas (a 12 year old)

The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge is located west of Houston and south of Sealy, Texas. The refuge is home to the critically endangered Attwater prairie chicken. The chicken is a ground-dwelling grouse of the coastal prairie ecosystem. There were around one million prairie chickens in the Texas and Louisiana coasts over a century ago. In the park there are coyotes, dragon flies, flies, June bugs, wasps, bees, owls and hawks, armadillos, 250 species of birds, alligators, turtles and frogs, wild pigs, and a variety of snakes and lizards.

One of the rangers named TJ Schultz saw a horned lizard in March 2005. He had seen them when he was growing up in south central Texas. I found out about it when my sister, Mom and I worked the booth for the Attwater Prairie Chicken Festival in April. Terri Rossignol who is the manager said that they had not seen a horned lizard in 25 years at the refuge.

My mom contacted Lee Ann Linam who is the President of the Texas Chapter. My mom, sister, one of her friends, and I did a pre-survey over a large part of the refuge to locate the best area to go back to. We did find lots of red ants and sandy areas. We also made maps of the refuge showing sandy parts, areas with red ants, and low grass.

On July 30, we went back to



photo by Fannie Messec

the refuge with a large group of people. The people who went were: Ruthann Panipinto, Lee Ann Linam, Eva Thomas, Vivian Thomas, Leslie Nossaman, Bill Brooks, Rollo Newsom, Fannie Messec, and Fred Messec,

The weather was hot and in the upper 90's with heat index probably over 100. The roads required 4 wheel drive. TJ went with us. He drove a government vehicle. Lee Ann Linam gave out GPS systems to take readings for where the ant mounds were and if we saw a horned lizard. We drove to the areas that were best suited for horned lizards and took readings of the ant mounds. We also placed red flags on the mounds.

We saw glass lizard tail that looked and moved around in the grass like a snake. Someone had just run over the top part when we saw it. We saw lots of

grasshoppers, red ants, buzzards, deer, cows, butterflies, termite mounds, racer lizards, and velvet ants.

The Society had been looking for a place to re-introduce the horned lizard and especially one that was close to Houston. So many people in Houston contact the Society with displaced lizards that it was important to have one close by. The refuge is also a place that believes wildlife conservation is important.

It was concluded that the refuge could be a re-introduction site. However, there is not a lot of sandy soils. There are occasional fire ants. And there are some predators and they do use fire to control some plant life. What would make it a good site is that it does have sandy areas with low to no grass, it is hot, and there are lots of bugs including abundant red ants.



# Our Youngest Lifetime Members

By Bette Armstrong

The newsletter staff is starting a series which highlights our lifetime members between the ages of 0 to 17. If you are one or know of one please let us know. We would like to highlight one or more in each newsletter. Let us know how old they were when they joined, why they joined, what activities they have been involved in with the Society, and their thoughts on the horned lizard. Please send to [poppies14@houston.rr.com](mailto:poppies14@houston.rr.com).

Our first is Claire Zoelick. She is a friend of Bette Armstrong. Claire loves animals and became the youngest lifetime member of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society at the age of four in 2000. Claire lives in Eastland, TX, the home of "The Most Famous Horned Toad in Texas", Old Rip. She has been thrilled to see a few live horned toads around the area.

Claire has been involved with activities with the Old Rip Commemoration ceremonies in February in the Eastland County Court House on many occasions. She has also been in the Old Rip Fest parade which is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of September every year.

Her ambition is to become a veterinarian or rescue dog trainer. She also enjoys music, dance, bicycling, swimming and activities with her friends. She does have a busy little life, yet is sensitive to all God's creatures.



photo by Jim Armstrong  
*Who is the friendly horned lizard?*  
(answer on page 10)

Claire is a blessing to her family and hopefully will bring joy to all she meets.



**Please renew your annual HLCS membership!!**  
**HLCS depends on its membership for its conservation and educational presence in the community.**

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Corporate ..... \$250

*Lifetime* membership .....\$300

The HLCS welcomes contributions in any amount you wish to submit and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

# New Mexico Chapter News

By Tom McCain

The little girl is Jenny from Pecos, New Mexico, a village 8000' high in the Pecos Wilderness east of Santa Fe. The photos were taken by her father, Dave Reichert a photographer and architect also of Pecos. The title is "It's a reptile eating reptile world". Tom McCain of New Mexico Chapter will set up photo exhibit at New Mexico and Texas State Fair exhibits. Tom's e-mail is [htinc@juno.com](mailto:htinc@juno.com).



photo by Dave Reichert

## Judge gives lizard another chance – continued from page 1

wildlife research center. He said it once roamed around Snow Creek and other sandy areas but is now limited to the Coachella Valley Preserve, a refuge in Thousand Palms. "They can't survive in developed areas," he said. "Too many kids, cats, dogs, traffic, all those things."

The lizard has been the subject of intense legal and bureaucratic battles dating back to 1982. In 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service withdrew a proposal to list the lizard. In 2001 a federal judge ordered the service to reconsider. The lizard was again proposed for listing, but in January wildlife officials withdrew it once more. "This species has been the subject of a fair amount of litigation over the years," said Jane Hendron, a spokeswoman

for the Carlsbad office of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

A proposed local plan to balance economic growth with protecting the environment was designed to ensure the lizard sufficient habitat to survive in the Coachella Valley, even without federal listing. But the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Plan is not yet in place, and some lizard supporters say the government's threatened species tag would give momentum to ongoing preservation efforts.

Wake's ruling Tuesday drew praise from the environmentalists, but it didn't outline what the government would need to do to comply. The judge scheduled a conference Friday between the opposing groups.



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*Dig this:  
We live here too!*



photo by Fannie Messec



photo by Erik Enderson

# HLCS National News

by Wendy Hodges, President

## **Thank you, Pam Allison and Welcome Fannie Messec**

Pam Allison who has been our graphic editor for the newsletter has decided to move on. She will be missed. Thank you for all your hard work and excellent editing, Pam!

We had someone volunteer to take her place. Welcome to Fannie Messec as our new graphic editor!

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## **A Grant for the HLCS**

The HLCS has received a \$500 grant from Chevron Corporation. The grant was written by Leslie Nossaman and her daughter Vivian Thomas. This amount covers the publication costs for producing a color brochure. The brochure will be a kid's information brochure that will be used to teach kids about conservation issues.

The grant was provided through the Chevron Employee Involvement Fund, which exists to encourage employee voluntary involvement in the community by providing financial support to enhance the success of their efforts.

The brochure now needs to be created. If you have any pictures of horned lizards that would appeal to kids including one where the lizard is squirting blood out of its eye or if you have any materials already prepared that might help, please send to Leslie Nossaman at [poppies14@houston.rr.com](mailto:poppies14@houston.rr.com).

## **HLCS Website Update**

### **HLCS website link now on the Texas Christian University website**

The Texas Christian University (TCU) mascot is the horned lizard. The mascot is called "The Horned Frog". The TCU website has beautiful pictures of horned lizards throughout. A while back ESPN awarded TCU with the best mascot! We contacted the TCU staff recently to see if they would add a link to our website on their university website. We thought that by having our website on theirs it would help spread the awareness of the horned lizard conservation efforts. TCU quickly jumped on this opportunity.

One day after we made the request to the Chancellor, Victor Boschini, the Senior Advisor to the Chancellor, Bob Bolen, and the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communication, Larry Lauer it was on their site. Go to [tcu.edu](http://tcu.edu) and look under Admissions and "What's a Horned Frog?" or under the Common Resources and "What the Heck is a Horned Frog?". They are both on the main page. Thanks to all at TCU who made this happen and primarily to Larry Lauer who was the main person who made this happen!

# Texas Chapter News

## Texas Chapter Calendar:

**OCTOBER 1 AND 2, 2005** - The Texas Wildlife EXPO was held at the TPWD's headquarters in Austin and is the largest sports and outdoors show in Texas. This is our largest outreach event of the year. This amazing outdoor show featured each of the Texas State Parks and every major conservation society in the state.

**FEBRUARY 4 AND 5, 2006** - This weekend is going to be a red-letter weekend for the Horned Lizard Conservation Society and the Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve in Austin, TX. The two organizations are co-sponsoring the very first all Horned Lizard Art Show!

All forms of media will be accepted. The only rule is that there must be a horned lizard somewhere in or on the piece of art. There will be three categories: Professional, Amateur, and Youth, with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes for each category. Also, there will be a horned lizard art display featuring several of our member's extensive collections as well as several surprises.

There will be exhibits featuring several very special artists. An exhibit explaining the steps Tom McCain takes to produce his beautiful hand painted pewter horned lizards should be most interesting. There will be an exhibit, information, and sale of the art by Californian artist, Mary Hawley, the one who's design is on our "Flat-tail" and "Dig This" t-shirts.

Also we have a very special exhibit planned to display works by the late Charles Shaw who illustrated Joyce Gibson Roach's book, *Horned Toad Canyon*. There will be a TX HLCS sales booth featuring the societies extensive collection of horned lizard t-shirts, jewelry, books, cards and posters.

If any member owns a unique horned lizard piece you would like in the display-only portion of the show, please let Bill Brooks know, as soon as possible.

All requests for further information and artist applications should be made in writing to the HLCS, P. O. Box 122, Austin, TX 78767 or call and email Bill Brooks, 512-581-0377, Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu

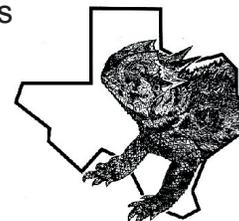
This should be a wonderful, fun filled weekend. Volunteers are needed for so many varied jobs ranging from taking tickets, HLCS goods sales, refreshments, mailing, promotions, and help with set up on Friday afternoon 8/3 and breakdown and clean up on Sunday evening after the show. All volunteers get free admission into the show, of course.

Thanks already go out to Ruthann Panipinto for producing and designing our applications and posters. They will be going to print and will be ready to mail out soon.

The show will be in the Ray Benson Hall of the Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, 805 N. Capital of Texas Highway, Austin, TX 78746, 512-327-7622, [www.wildbasin.org](http://www.wildbasin.org). Help spread the news! Our members and friends are strongly encouraged to volunteer for this historic and festive art extravaganza!



CAPS, CAPS, CAPS!!! Guess what! A newly designed HLCS cap is ready for ordering. It is a one-size-fits-all khaki brushed cotton, with the HLCS logo stitched in dark brown and dark blue thread. They are \$14, plus \$3 for shipping. Checks (payable to HLCS -Texas Chapter) should be mailed to HLCS – Texas Chapter, P.O. Box 122, Austin, TX 78767. Order yours now!



# New Children's CD Includes a Pair of Horned Lizard Songs

By Monty Harper

Monty Harper, HLCS member and children's songwriter from Stillwater, OK, has included two songs about horned lizards on his latest children's recording entitled *The Great Green Squishy Mean Concert CD*.

The first song, "Horny Toad," was originally written by Harper in 1999 for a cassette commissioned by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. He was asked to write songs with a "Way Out West" theme. In his research he ran across mention of the horned lizard. "I was flooded with memories of playing with horny toads in my yard as a kid," says Harper, "and I thought I might feature them in a song.

I was dismayed to find out that horned lizards are no longer common place, and that's when I knew it was important to write this song. I wanted to share these amazing creatures with kids today who likely haven't ever had the chance to see or touch one."

The new CD contains an updated version of "Horny Toad," recorded live with a four piece rock band. The song is a celebration of our favorite little critter, including a multitude of factual details about his survival strategies, eating habits, hibernation, and more. The last verse touches on the subject of conservation, warning the listener

"If you see him in his habitat he'll thank you very much / when you take a good look but don't touch!"

Harper donated the "Horny Toad" song to HLCS in 2003 and is pleased to have finally sent in the first royalty check from sales of the new CD. He is hopeful that future uses of the song will generate even more income for the organization.

The second related song on the CD is "The Legend of Old Rip" which of course tells the story of the most celebrated horned lizard in history. For those who may not know, Old Rip allegedly spent thirty one years sealed inside the cornerstone of the Eastland County Courthouse and lived to tour the country when he was dug up afterwards. Harper had included a verse about Old Rip in a previous song, but only became aware of the magnitude of his celebrity after Bette Armstrong invited him to sing at the Old Rip Festival in Eastland, TX in September 2001.

Harper was thus inspired to devote an entire song to the legend, which turned out to be something of a challenge. "It took me a while to figure out how to approach the story as a song," says Harper. "I asked myself why is this story so compelling? I think it's the fact that Old Rip is a true survivor. When you hear the story you

empathize with Old Rip. You put yourself in that cornerstone and think about what it must have been like."

The song is a rocking blues number which Harper returned to perform at the Old Rip Festival two years later. At that time filmmaker Todd Kent was on hand, making a documentary called *Toad Spotting: The Legend of Old Rip*. The award-winning film features Harper's live performance of the song, and is now available online at <http://www.savvycenter.com/explorer/store/storeoldrip.htm>

Harper's CD, *The Great Green Squishy Mean Concert CD*, can be purchased for \$15 at CD-Baby.com. You can also visit the official website at [www.Great-GreenSquishyMeanConcertCD.com](http://www.Great-GreenSquishyMeanConcertCD.com). The songs "Horny Toad" and "The Legend of Old Rip" are available as individual digital downloads through iTunes.

Harper can be contacted about the songs by email at [monty@montyharper.com](mailto:monty@montyharper.com)

## Horny Toad

Survivor from the age of the dinosaur, he's a horny toad. He's a cold-blooded horn-headed insectivore 'cause he's a horny toad. He's a squat round lizard with a spiny sense of style. People call him a toad, but he's a reptile.

He's a horny toad, a little horny toad, horny toad.

He's really rather shy and doesn't want you to see that he's a horny toad.

That's why his color pattern blends with the scenery, that clever horny toad.

You'll catch him scampering a bit, but then he stops and lies flat

while your eyes keep moving, and - Hey, where's he at? He's a horny toad, a sneaky horny toad, horny toad.

Pop up out of the ground. Get warm in the sun.

Gobble harvester ants until the day is done.

Now do the horny toad shake. Wiggle side to side.

Dig down into the soil. It's a cozy way to hide 'til the morning time, when the sun will shine

on the horny toad, the sleepy horny toad, horny toad.

He'll try to make you think he's dead, acting so laid back, that tricky horny toad.

He may warn you with a hiss if you try to make a snack out of the horny toad.

He can puff himself up to unusual size.

When he's really provoked he squirts blood from his eyes.

He's a horny toad. Don't eat the horny toad, horny toad.

Pop up out of the ground. Get warm in the sun.

Gobble harvester ants until the summer is done.

Do the Horny Toad Shake. Wiggle side to side.

Dig down into the soil. It's a

cozy way to hide through the winter snow. He'll be laying low cause he's a horny toad, a sleepy horny toad, horny toad.

We used to find him all over in the arid loamy sand, the common horny toad.

But now days fire ants and humans are encroaching on his land, endangered horny toad. So if you see him in his habitat, he'll thank you very much when you take a good look but don't touch!

Mr. Horny Toad, protected horny toad, horny toad.

He's a horny toad.

He's a horny toad. *Phrynosoma cornutum!*

He's a horny toad. He's a Texas Horned Lizard!

He's a horny toad, horny toad.

© 2003 HLCS

### The Legend of Old Rip

Who stole the show at the courthouse dedication?

Whose sad strange fate was well-observed by all?

Who was the town-folks' gift to a future generation?

Who found himself enshrined in the courthouse wall?

Old Rip, named for Rip Van Winkle,

Took a nap in that cornerstone. For thirty one years he was sealed inside it.

For thirty one years he was all alone, all alone.

Old Rip, Old Rip the horny toad.

Old Rip, Old Rip the horny toad.

Who dangled like a leaf when the stone was opened? What icon did not seem to have survived? Then who twisted 'round and heard three thousand voices? Shouting out, "He's alive, yes he's alive!"

Old Rip, named for Rip Van Winkle, Took a nap in that cornerstone. For thirty one years he was sealed inside it. For thirty one years he was all alone.

Some folk claim it was merely a joke, A sleight of hand, meant to deceive. Some folk call Rip's revival a hoax, But me and Eastland, Texas - we believe!

Who toured this land from Dallas to St. Louis?

Who met President Coolidge eye to eye?

Who rests in peace at the Eastland County Courthouse?

Who reminds us we can triumph if we try?

Old Rip, named for Rip Van Winkle,

Took a nap in that cornerstone. For thirty one years he was sealed inside it.

For thirty one years he was all alone, all alone.

Old Rip, Old Rip the horny toad. Old Rip, Old Rip the horny toad.

© 2005 by Monty Harper



# My New 18 inch Horned Toad Racer 2005

By Bette Armstrong

Hi, my name is Bette Armstrong and back in the late 1990's, a friend named Larry (a retired chemist) and I decided to have a horned toad race in the small Texas town of Eastland, the home of "The Most Famous Horned Toad in Texas", Old Rip.

And you know now days, horny toads are hard to find. Not to mention it would be illegal in the state of Texas to capture and race live ones. So we decided the next best thing to do was to design and make our own remote control horny toad. Each of us had no idea what the other was making, but we did decide it was to be no bigger than 32 inches long.

The day came when it was time to show off our prize possessions. Larry's was awesome. It looked like a real horned lizard but larger than 32 inches, with small wheels on its underside. I don't know what Larry made his mold from, but it was super light.

Now in order to make this race more interesting, we decided whoever won the race would get the other ones horned toad racer.

It was time for me to show my racer off. I had designed and made this stuffed 18 inch horned toad back in 1995. But I could also enlarge my pattern to accommodate a 32 inch remote



photo by Betty Armstrong

control car which had big truck size tires. I made my stuffed horned toad but it came out too heavy. SO...I put this liquid cloth stiffener solution all over the cloth and let it dry, then pulled the stuffing out of the horned toad to make him hollow and light and fitted him over my big truck tire remote control racer.

Well, to make this story short. That BIG hollow horned toad on truck tires WON the race and I am now the proud owner of Larry's awesome horned toad racer. We did go back the following year for a return match race with the same game plan. But I want you to know, I think Larry used some devious and questionable tactics to win that race and my horned toad that year. AND let it be known! He has not come back for the big third and final RACE OFF!

So this year, I have decided to redesign and make my original 18 inch horned toad into a sleek and fast looking remote control racer. It has large tires and I want all to know, he is fast and can really pop a wheelie!!! I will always say, if you can't find a real one now days, just make your own. We all will never forget the days of playing with our beloved little horny toads.

I hope to share this new horned lizard racer with you at some of the HLCS functions in 2006.

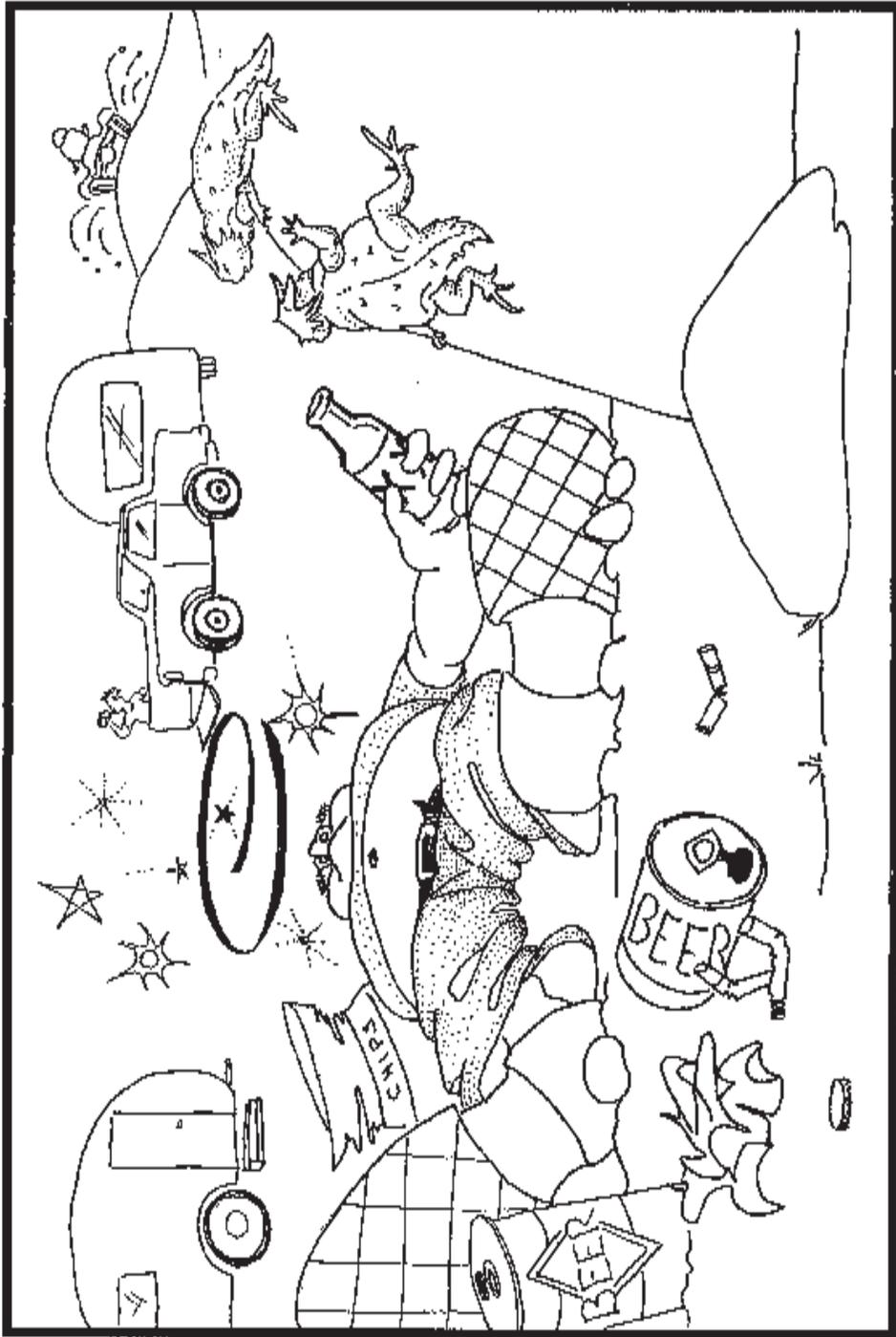
The first will be a Horned Lizard Art Show on February 4-5 at the main hall of the Wild Basin Preserves, off Highway 360, on the west side of Austin. Maybe someone out there is ready for a horned lizard race.....Hope to see you there!



The friendly horned lizard is Bette Armstrong.

# HAYWIRE

by M. Hawley



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