

GIVE DAD A MANCATION

By Cecilia Harris

The perfect gift for dad could be just a few miles away. Plan a manly vacation weekend to Abilene for dad on Father's Day or anytime this summer. Whether dad is interested in history, the arts or sports, he's sure to have fun in Abilene.

Start dad's day off by hopping aboard the Abilene and Smoky Valley Excursion Train, 200 Southeast Fifth Street, which travels through the river valley, giving dad the unique opportunity to experience early-day rail travel. Check the train's schedule and look for special weekends when the 1919 steam engine will pull the train. Then meander through Old Abilene Town, 100 Southeast Fifth Street, where can-can girls kick up their heels in the saloon and disputes are settled by gunfights in the street. Teach dad a lesson in history inside the one-room schoolhouse.

For a different look at life on the plains, visit the nearby Heritage Center, 412 South Campbell, where you will find a log cabin, big red barn, old-fashioned general store and telephone office. Among the exhibits are farm tools and machinery, early-day fire-fighting equipment, Wild Bill Hickok's guns, and even an old automobile. Be sure to take a spin on the turn-of-the-century wooden carousel built right here in Abilene.

Just across the street is the Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home, 200 Southeast Fourth Street, featuring exhibits focusing on President Dwight D. Eisenhower, World War II, and the 1950s era. A special exhibit this summer is on the liberation of Europe and includes the Holocaust. Visit the president's boyhood home to learn of Ike's humble beginnings and then see the spot he chose as his final resting place.

If dad has a passion for photography, visit the Jeffcoat Photography Studio Museum, 321 North Broadway, where he will view the work of three generations of photographers documenting over a hundred years of history. Here he will also see how photography has changed over the last century through the large collection of cameras and other photo equipment.

Then head to the American Indian Art Gallery, 206 South Buckeye, where all of the artwork is produced totally by Native Americans. Here dad will see baskets, jewelry, paintings, carvings, pottery and sculpture created by artists from 30 Woodland and Plains tribes. In the evening, take dad to the Great Plains Theatre, 300 North Mulberry, to see a live, professional production in a historic limestone church.

Would dad like to meet a Hall of Fame athlete? Then stop at the Greyhound Hall of Fame, 407 South Buckeye, where he can pet San Tan Goforit (Jade) or Gary Gityourown, official greeters, and learn about greyhounds and greyhound racing. Play a round of golf at the Chisholm Trail Golf Course, 645 2400 Avenue, or hop in Abilene's new city swimming pool, 4th and Poplar, where dad can try out the slide.

Head to 2209 North Buckeye where dad can work up an appetite getting a strike at Green Acres Bowl before dining on a Chisholm Trail steak at Joe Snuffy's restaurant, 209 West First Street. Or,

catch up on your favorite sport during dinner at M&R Grill Sports Bar, 1720 North Buckeye, treat dad to fried chicken and all the fixin's at The Brookville Hotel, 105 E. Lafayette, or enjoy the view while enjoying prime rib and strawberry cream pie at Mr. K's Farmhouse, 407 South Van Buren.

A weekend away in Abilene might just be the best gift dad will receive on his special day.