

LEOH Trip

Mini Murals and Eclectic Menagerie Park

April 12, 2024



Precinct One bus driver **James Booker** was not only a safe driver, but a delightfully entertaining one. We hope to have him drive us on future trips!

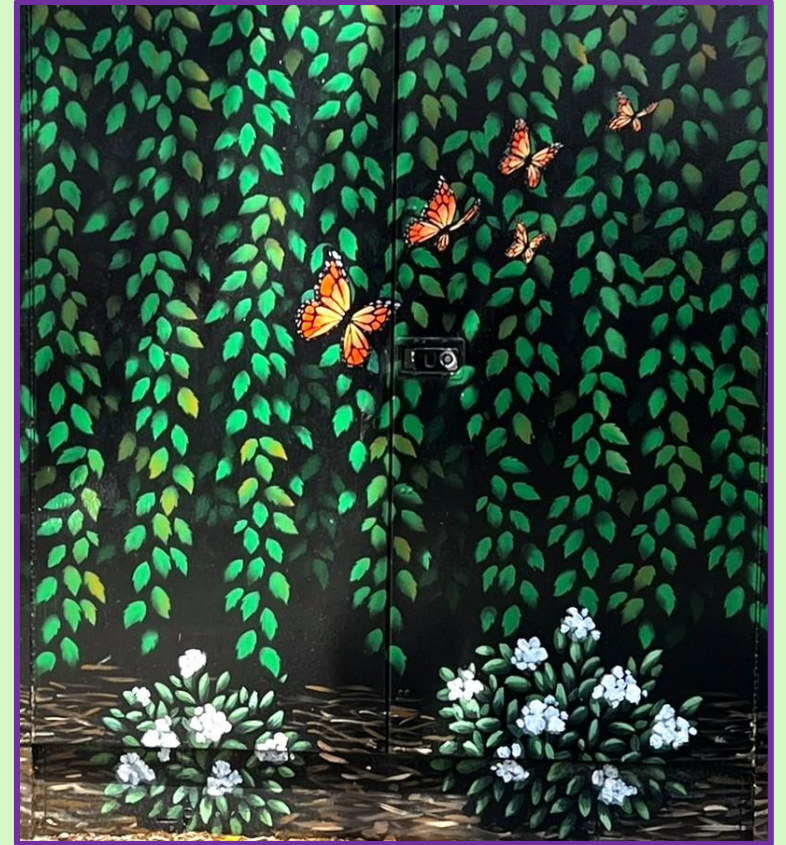


In between viewing mini murals from the bus, we stopped at the large pond along Meyer Forest Drive off W. Bellfort Avenue to enjoy nature on a beautiful spring day.

Thank you, LEOH tour guide **Ann Fairchild** (far right in the photo) for planning another fun trip!

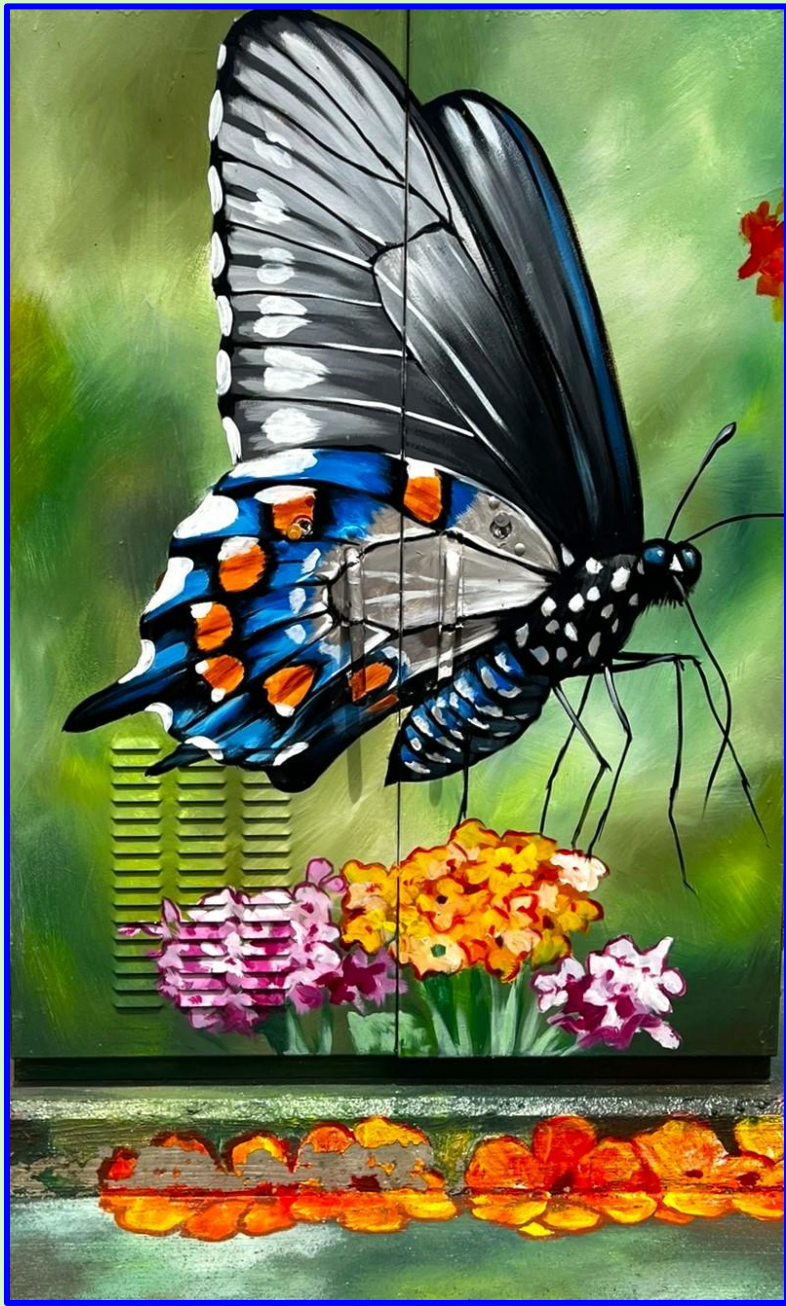


In 2015, Houston's **UP Art Studio**, whose mission is "civic pride through civic art", launched the mini mural pilot project. With support from the City of Houston Public Works, the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, art foundations, and Council Member Larry Green, what began as 31 painted traffic signal control boxes has grown to more than 400, created by local and national artists.



While it was nice to ride in the hybrid Precinct One bus, the windows did not accommodate clear viewing or taking photos of the mini murals! An attempt was made the following day by a couple of LEOH members to capture pics by car of at least some of the murals on the bus drive. A few others were added that were not on the bus tour's route. Above are the views on 3 of the boxes around **Evelyn's Park**.







Visit [minimurals.org](https://www.minimurals.org) to learn more.

You may use an interactive map locator at this web address to zoom in on mural locations and photos. Below that map is a list of locations in the Houston area. Click on any name/location to view the murals in that area.

Our bus journey continued to the **Eclectic Menagerie Park** at 2838 W. Bellfort Avenue.

The park is part of the over 100-acre **Texas Pipe & Supply** business, founded in 1918 and run by the Rubenstein family.

We were joined on the bus by one of the company's long-time employees and Executive Assistant, **Fay Adam**, who discussed the park's history and shared information with us about some of the pieces. Fay had just completed her shift, so we appreciated the time she gave us, along with her park knowledge!

The collection began many years ago when family member **Jerry Rubenstein** bought the hippopotamus sculpture from a statuary in El Campo. Soon, a rhinoceros appeared, and more and more pieces continued to be added.

Many can be attributed to local artist **Ron Lee**, also known as a welder, contractor, designer, and inventor.

Others were contributed by light metals artist **Mark Rankin**.

Another interesting fact is that **Jerry Rubenstein** and his brother **Maury** bought the 5-acre former site of **Teas Nursery** after it closed in 2009. They then gifted it to the city of Bellaire for \$1, with the stipulation that it be made into a park and named after their mother, **Evelyn Rubenstein**, a longtime Bellaire resident and philanthropist who shared the Teas' love for the outdoors and beauty of nature.

Learn more at texaspipe.com by clicking on the "**eclectic**" tab. You may also view a brief **PBS** video on this site that includes interviews with **Scott Rubenstein** and **Ron Lee**, along with more great views plus explanations of the art pieces.



To the right:
the Hippopotamus, the first
piece of art installed.





Who's in that plane?
It's Snoopy!
Flying nearby, a gigantic steel owl!





Creatures everywhere!



A few of the cows from the Houston Cow Parade of 2001.



Ahhh – a mariachi band.
Oops, looks like one of them
is a little tipsy.

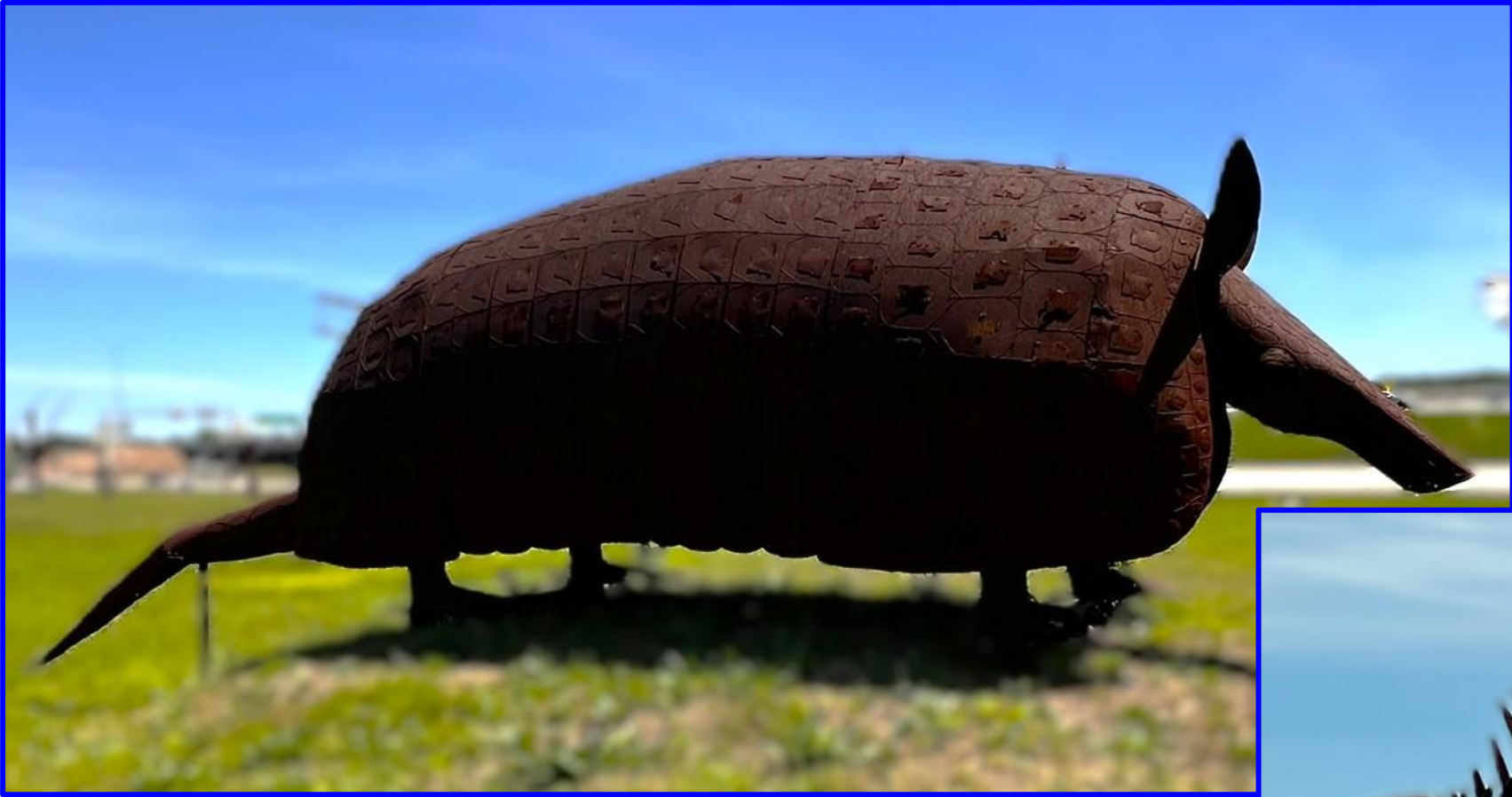




This truck has seen better days...

The long and short version
of a fishing adventure.







We enjoyed lunch with a complimentary dessert at Hu's Garden,
to top off an entertaining and informative tour!

In addition, everyone sang *Happy Birthday* to Jane Shinn!

