



John Anders

CHEAP THRILLS

THE ERA OF creeping inflation, crawling commercialism, and galloping paranoia is upon us. Now, more than ever, we need cheap thrills.

A cheap thrill, like free love, is about all most of us can afford these days, anyway.

Don't get the wrong impression. Cheap isn't such a tawdry word when you think about it. If brevity is the soul of wit, then think of "cheap" as being a short, businesslike adjective. In my book, a cheap thrill ranges from investing a quarter in a motel vibrator bed to gamboling through the park while strains of a free symphony concert waft through the gentle spring breeze; from strolling, ever so slowly, past the Fredericks of Hollywood store window at Town East to buying fresh corn by the bushel at the Farmer's Market on Sundays.

Here is a listing, a collaboration of some of the great minds of this newspaper, examining a few things you can do in this town for about \$2.

Many of these, like the best things in life, are free. (Maestro!)

FOR PERHAPS the best year-in, year-out dramatic offering in town, try the Sportatorium on Industrial Blvd. on Tuesday nights. The edifice is a trip 'n itself, its ambiance vacillating broadly between post-Dust Bowl and pre-Texas Stadium. Wrestling is barely the main event because the rowdy crowds are spectacles in themselves. Tickets range from \$1.50 (prior to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays) for general admission to \$4.50 for ringside. But don't wear anything spiffy. You're apt to be christened with beer.

Then, there is the Highland Park Pharmacy on Knox Street where Char-

lie Day has lovingly jerked sodas for fifty years. For well under a buck you can get a lime freeze or an old-fashioned soda that restoreth the soul. The ceiling here, advises our Film Critic Phillip Wuntch, is also a thrill. "I love the old grillwork ceilings," he confesses. "There's a great one in the Tom Thumb in Snider Plaza, too."

Naturally, movie house ceilings run more to Wuntch's tastes. He rates the tops in town as the Inwood Theater (nude mermaids on a ceiling mural), the Fine Arts (twinkling stars), the Lakewood (mirrors in the lobby ceiling) and best of all, the Village's art deco look.

Movie-going generally exceeds the \$2 limit we established, but you can knock some off the ticket price by hitting the advertised Early-Bird or Twilight Hour specials. And the Texas Theater on Jefferson in Oak Cliff, occasionally shows fine pictures. The adult price is a buck, day or night.

OUR DRAMA EDITOR Jack Neville lists driving home during rush-hour traffic on the Dallas North Tollway as a cheap thrill. (The price may go up soon by a nickel, but Neville gives no quarter). His working theory is that every male in North Dallas is rushing home to Sophia Loren's younger, more zotic sister who also happens to make the world's driest martini. Neville attacks the problem with a white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel of his beloved Gremlin. "There's room for maybe a pogo stick and a Cadillac zips through it," he says. "It's an awesome trip."

City-side staffer Dave McNeely gets somewhat the same rush by negotiating the big hill down Hampton Road just north of the FW Turnpike



Charlie Day . . . Dean of Dallas soda jerks.

on his daughter's 10-speed bike.

"If something goes wrong," he warns, "this is NOT a cheap thrill."

At Half-Priced Books on McKinney Avenue (open Sunday afternoons) they don't mind how long you browse. And the paperback selection is mindblowing according to The News' Features Editor Marilyn Schwartz.

Sneak in among the school children and cub scouts to tour the Dr Pepper and Mrs. Baird's Bread plants. (Bread and DP's never tasted so good.)

For plant freaks, a stroll through Casa Verde or Northaven Gardens is like a breath of spring air. And walking through specialty food stores such as Fisher's and An'ones can be an edifying experience. "If you're hungry, it won't be a cheap thrill," notes TV Channels Editor Patty Moore.

FOOD BARGAINS can be gleaned from discount houses and salvage warehouses. Charles Adler of our Universal

Desk recommends JC's Salvage Grocery, Elm and Haskell, for 99 cent T-bone steaks, and markdowns on all kinds of canned goods.

The Thursday evening programs at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts are wonderful. Dinner (\$2.50 with reservations), a lecture or performance are added to the museum-going experience. Come to think of it, all of Fair Park, from museums to midway, constitute the best collective "cheap thrill" in town, with the possible exception of people watching.

This endeavor is nearly always free, of course. Some of the best vantage points are Northpark, particularly at Christmas, Hall and Thomas Streets after midnight on a weekend, and at TGIF Friday's during Sunday brunch when all the operators, resplendent in their finest plumage, are hard at work.

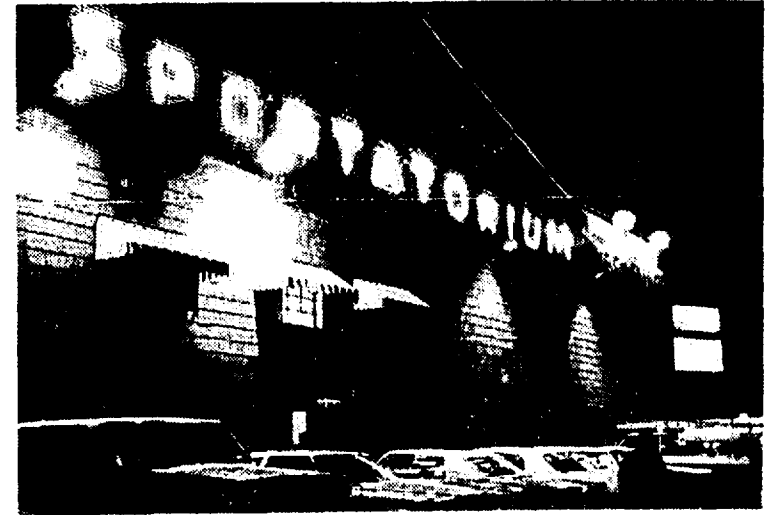
During my misspent youth, our crowd got off on lying on the Love Field runway while planes landed perhaps 100 yards beyond us.

Talk about a rush. This was definitely a PG-rated thrill and I can't imagine any parent condoning such madness. When one of our number got busted for trespassing by the Love Field heat, the fun was over.

I've replaced this rush by traversing the rocket slide at Lake Cliff Park which is not so innocuous as it sounds. Kids don't have any problems with this slide, but it scares the hejenez out of grownups.

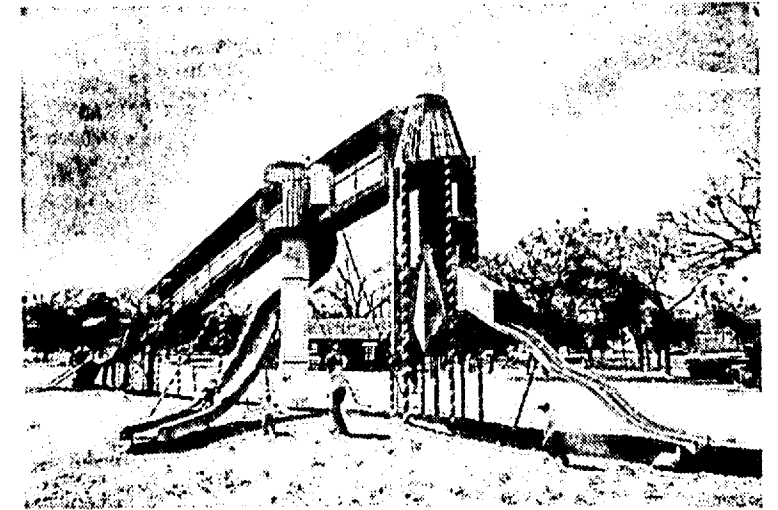
For X-rated cheap thrills, I refer each of you to your own imaginations. (Or maybe back to Fredericks' window).

COMING SOON: Son of Cheap Thrills.



-Dallas News Staff Photos.

The Sportatorium grapples with heavy drama on Tuesday evenings on Cadiz and Industrial. Wrestling gets top billing.



A cheap thrill of the first order, the Rocket Slide in Oak Cliff is irresistible to grownups as well as small children.