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HotLine 713.467.8857

Volume 37

April

2004

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Our 40th year of paddling fun  
Please renew your membership NOW.

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### Program - April 14, 2004

Bruce Litton will talk to us about Hidalgo Falls and the Festival this weekend. Hidalgo Falls is the property purchased by the TPRA to preserve a place for paddlers. Be sure to join us at 7 PM at the Red Cross Bldg on 59 near Kirby.

### Renew your membership now!

We need your help. Please renew your membership

for a year of great events that we are planning for this, our 40th year anniversary celebration. Renewal form at left in the contents list.

### We need your correct email address!

Please send your current email address to Marilyn Peery now.

Email address: [mpeery@ev1.net](mailto:mpeery@ev1.net).

The Waterline is the monthly newsletter of the Houston Canoe Club, Inc. The Waterline is made possible by your dues and critically depends on member contributions. Please submit items (please do not embed photos in MS Word documents) to the Editor at the following address.

[sherrib57@hotmail.com](mailto:sherrib57@hotmail.com)

## Houston Canoe Club Officers and General Meeting Minutes

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### Officers for 2003

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Commodore: **John Ohrt**

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Governor 3: **Paul Woodcock**

713.722.4945

[plwdcck@yahoo.com](mailto:plwdcck@yahoo.com)

### Change of Address

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Submit change of address to Marilyn Peery.

Email address:

[mpeery@ev1.net](mailto:mpeery@ev1.net).

Physical address:

Marilyn Peery

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Houston, TX 77025

### New Members

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Anne Coker and Isaac Joyner

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### Waterline Submissions

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Submit content to the Newsletter Editor,  
Sherri Blifford, by the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Send electronic submissions to  
[sherrib57@hotmail.com](mailto:sherrib57@hotmail.com).

Send snail mail submissions to  
Sherri Blifford  
8233 Kingsbrook Rd., #134  
Houston, TX 77024

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## From the Helm

by John Ohrt, Commodore

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Although the pecan trees haven't leafed out yet, which is the old way of telling when spring has really come, the spring paddling season is well underway. As a reminder, be cautious of sudden changes in the weather which can occur anytime until early June when cold fronts collide with hot humid gulf air. These will result in hard rain, high winds, and big drops in temperature. Keep informed of the weather reports. It is your responsibility to be prepared for all trips you go on.

And speaking of trips, the Houston Canoe Club has a varied trip schedule. We do not specialize in only one area of paddling. We have as many different sorts of trips as we can get trip organizers. I recommend that all HCC members take advantage of this and try something different this year.

Try camping out of canoes; sitting around the campfire at night watching the stars come out and the fog on the early morning river.

Try some whitewater; with the thrill of running wave trains and rapids.

Try some exploring some new flat water areas like Lakes Charlotte and Sheldon. Go on a new river.

Trying something new will make you a better paddler and you always learn something. Of course don't try something that your skills or conditioning are not up for, but variety is one of the best parts of HCC so make use of it. There is a very active schedule between now and mid June, look it over, put something on your calendar, take the time, and get out there make new friends and enjoy

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## Current River and Jack's Fork

by Paul Woodcock

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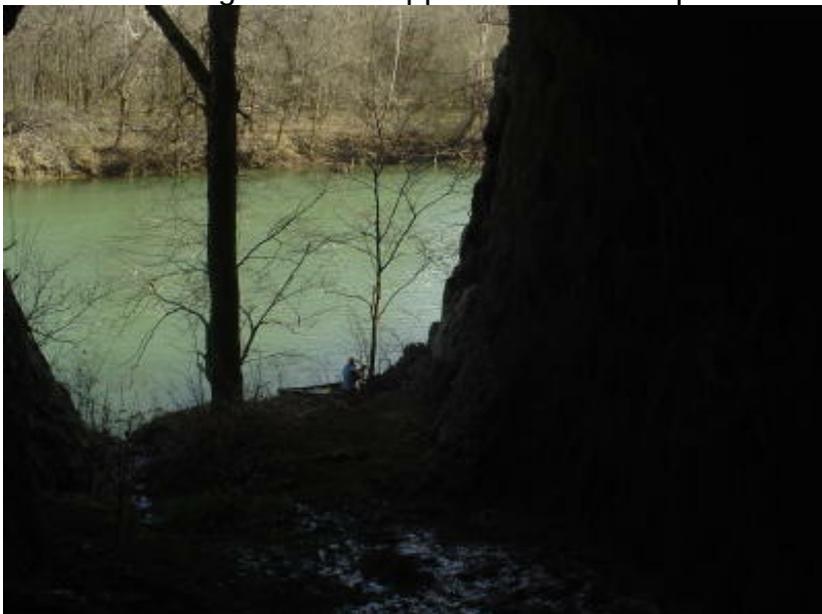
### Jack's Fork River

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Paul Woodcock

We had decided to run the Current River in Missouri over spring break. Mary Zaborowski spent a month gathering information from the internet. She had a problem finding any outfitter to shuttle us, as most of them ,didn't open until Memorial Day. She had assembled a three ring binder with maps pictures and sights to see on the Current River. It was an impressive research project. Mary had met a lady in a grocery store line who had canoed the Jack's Fork River and she had described its beauty. As we were headed to Eminence on Highway 19 and we saw a sign for a put in on the Jack Fork River, so we decided to drive over and look at it. It was beautiful with clear water high bluffs, much like a miniature Buffalo National River. I commented that the water was real low and it would be questionable if you could run it with out dragging your canoe.

We headed over to Two Rivers National Park where we met David Conger. He had arrived the night before. The Park was deserted. Ron and Judy Nunnely arrived late that afternoon and we assembled our camp gear for a departure to the Current River the next morning. We had supper around a camp fire to ward off the chill.



Cave on Current River

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Paul Woodcock

The next morning the outfitter showed up and suggested that we might want to run the Jacks Forks River, as the water was high enough to paddle. He said that it is something that you can not do always and the Current River can be run all year because it is spring feed. We discussed it and decided to run the Jack Fork even though we had nothing but the funky outfitters map. He shuttled us to the Prongs, where we put in. The weather was starting to get cloudy, but it still was a comfortable day and we took the time to explore a couple of small caves. We passed a pocket park and in the early afternoon started to look for a campsite. All the nice gravel bars that we had passed had seemed to disappear. We stopped at a couple of places, but couldn't find a good camp. It was looking more and more like rain, when we finally found a gravel bar with enough level places to put up our tents. It started to rain. We strung tarps and pitched tents and had a good meal under the tarps.



Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Paul Woodcock

As this trip was 10 miles shorter than had planned, we got a leisurely start the next morning. The sun came out. The rapids were all class ones, but they were constant. It was always moving water. That afternoon we saw a large bird flying and when it turned we saw the flash of its white tail, an eagle. I have seen one on every trip I have taken this year. As the tents were wet we decided to camp early to dry everything out (especially my sleeping bag.) Mary and David decided to fish, unfortunately they did not catch anything large enough for supper. After eating I walked back in the woods and discovered a trail and started to follow it. It went up a steep incline and about three rest stops later, I found myself on a high bluff overlooking the river just as the sun was setting. It would have made a great picture, but I hadn't brought my camera and realized that I had not told any one at the camp I was leaving (another safety rule broken), so I started back. The temperature was dropping, so we had supper and retired to the tents. The next morning I had to start a campfire to thaw out my wet river shoes and socks, as I had left them outside the tent and they were frozen solid and I could not get them on. This day was just like the one before moving water and rapids. Beautiful scenery and easy paddling. Mary had the good fortune to spot a mink on the river bank. We were approaching a small rapid that was curving to the bank up against a rock. I was trying to do a pry, when I heard my paddle break. We were rushing toward the rock. Mary manage to draw the bow of the boat to the right, but as I grabbed my spare paddle we slammed into the rock. I leaned into the rock and tried to draw the stern with the bent shaft. It was not a strong stroke, but we managed to stay up right. I really don't like to paddle moving water with a bent shaft and I spent the rest of the afternoon grumbling about paddling with Mary's straight paddle, it was at least 10 inches short. We camped at a horse camp that night and had a small shower, and ear mics and jigs in honor of St. Paddy. The next morning was beautiful. As we paddled down river, David pointed to the roots of a large tree in the river. About six feet up was a yellow paddle. I waded the waist deep water and pulled it out. 62 inches the perfect length and in good

shape. The river takes away my paddle and the river gives it back.



Jack's Fork

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Paul Woodcock

As we paddled into Eminence the river finally broadened out and we passed a huge number of stalls. We later learned that there were 3000 stalls for the trail ride that they have there in the summer.

The next day Judy and Mary provide the shuttle so David, Ron and I could paddle a portion of the Current River. I finally got to see a mink. It ran along the shore watching Ron and I tandem the big red Old Town. We had the time to explore couple of caves by the river.

After lunch Ron and I started hiking up the road where the women picked us up. The shuttle out was a beautiful 10 mile ride through the forest on gravel roads.

It was a great trip and the bonus is we have all the planning done for going back and really paddling the Current River.

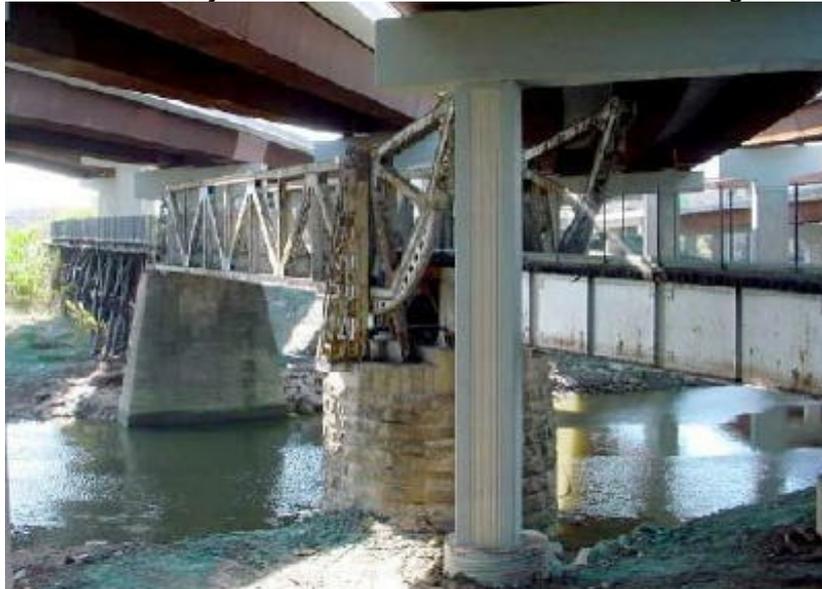
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Houston is well known as the "Bayou City," but it could easily have been called "the Draw Bridge City."

Why the Draw Bridge City?

A municipal ordinance establishing the Port of Houston and fixing wharfage rates and rules was adopted on June 8, 1841. The port encompassed all the wharves, landings, slips and roads along Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou within the corporate boundaries of the city. Throughout the 19th century, steam ships, schooners and barges made their way to the foot of Main Street to offload goods at the Port of Houston.



Bridge under 59

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

As early as the mid-1850's, the Houston Direct Navigation Company was a driving force in the economic growth of the City. Commercial marine traffic took precedence over road traffic and even rail transport. As a result, bridges crossing Buffalo Bayou could not be built in a way that would restrict the passage of ships enroute to Houston. The first draw bridge in Houston was the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad bridge which was built in 1865 to connect the GH&H tracks coming from Galveston with the Houston and Texas Central Railroad line on the north side of Buffalo Bayou. The tracks unceremoniously divided the subdivision of Frosttown at that time, and a modern bridge sits unused today as the railroad right of way will become part of Houston's Bikeways System.



After a threatened revolt of secession by citizens of the Fifth Ward in the late 1800's, an iron draw bridge was built at San Jacinto Street in 1883 to connect the north side of Buffalo Bayou with the central business district.

As Houston grew as a rail center, draw bridges were constructed to connect the main rail lines on either side of the ship channel. There was the Houston Belt and Terminal Railway bridge in Schrimpf's Field in Frostown, the International and Great Northern bridge near Lottman Street, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad bridge near North Velasco Street, the Houston Belt and Terminal Railway bridge above Wayside Drive and the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad bridge at Hedrick Street. Eventually, the popularity of motor vehicle traffic caused draw bridges to be built at McKee street, at the modern Jensen Drive and at Lockwood Street. Ultimately, a total of ten draw bridges were constructed over Buffalo Bayou between Main Street and the Turning Basin.

Marine traffic to Allen's Landing and other points upstream of the Turning Basin declined after the opening of the deep water port in November, 1914. All of the roadway bridges have been replaced by modern concrete structures. Some of the railroad bridges have been replaced with modern bridges. Others have been removed as the need for rail connections has diminished.

Some of the draw bridges were of the traditional vertical rise type, while others were swing bridges that rotated horizontally on a pivot. The HB&T Railroad bridge in Frostown has been renovated as part of the reconstruction of the US59 highway overpass in 2003. This Strauss Bascule draw bridge, designed by the engineer who also built the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, has been converted for use in the Houston Bikeways System. Although access is somewhat limited while the hike and bike paths along the bayou are under construction, it is possible to get to the bridge from the north side of the bayou near Nance Street. If you have not had a chance to see a showcase example of one of Houston's historic draw bridges, this is your opportunity

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The Bayou Beckons:  
Houston's Wettest, Wildest Two Weekends On Water!  
by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership  
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JOIN US at the Buffalo Bayou Partnership's 2004 Bayou Beckons!  
Buffalo Bayou Regatta and Bayou Sprints on Saturday, May 1st.

1. Texas largest canoe and kayak race, paddle 15 miles through the heart of Houston
2. Or join us for a ½ mile double kayak sprint race in Downtown Houston
3. Both events will finish at historic Allen's Landing in Downtown

Houston Dragon Boat Festival also on Saturday, May 1st  
Colorful dragons, beating drums, and plenty of entertainment throughout the day at Allen's Landing

Anything That Floats Parade on Saturday, May 8th.

Generous prizes for the most creative floats on the bayou, directly after Everyone's Art Car Parade

All volunteers and participants receive a free Bayou Beckons t-shirt, lunch and refreshments.

Proceeds from this event benefit Buffalo Bayou Partnership's efforts to restore and redevelop Buffalo Bayou.

For more information and entry forms on Houston's Water Weekends, see our website at

[www.buffalobayou.org](http://www.buffalobayou.org) or contact:

Winifred Riser, [wriser@buffalobayou.org](mailto:wriser@buffalobayou.org) or

Harpreet Brar, [events@buffalobayou.org](mailto:events@buffalobayou.org)

or call: 713-752-0314

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## Recruiting Volunteers for the Regatta

by Donna Grimes

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On Saturday, May 1st, the annual Buffalo Bayou Regatta will take place and on the following Saturday, May 8th will be the "Anything That Floats Parade." HCC members have always played an important part in the success of this regatta. Last year HCC members filled 40 different positions from pre-paddle on the bayou, to helping launch boats, to serving as safety on the bayou, to time keepers. Last year, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership were very pleased with our help and have again asked me to serve as Race Director and I again ask you for your help. Let me know if you'll be available on either of these dates ( May 1st is the "biggy") and in what capacity you would like to help.

Send me an email to: [donna.grimes@mindspring.com](mailto:donna.grimes@mindspring.com)

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## Armand Bayou Annual Trash Bash

by Anne Olden and John Ohrt

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From Anne Olden

At least a dozen HCC members turned out for the cleanup this year. It seemed to start a bit earlier than usual, as those of us arriving at 8:45 were the latecomers getting on the water. Thanks to Ann Derby for handling the HCC signup sheet. The weather was very cooperative, cool but not damp, and not too windy. Paddling into the wind can be a challenge any time, but especially with a canoe full of garbage. We didn't have to go far to find the usual cans, bottles, tennis balls and styrofoam cups.

My strangest find was a bowling ball. Half of the outer shell was missing, exposing a white core. It was still very heavy! We also picked up some very large (empty) snail shells, at least 2 1/2" across the opening. We didn't take any that were occupied. We steered clear of poison ivy and wished we'd brought a long pole or rake to get under overhanging branches.

There were many youth groups working the shoreline and other land areas. We went back to the put-in about 11:30, and after getting our boat loaded, barely got some of the remaining hot dogs at the Nature Center. The raffle had already concluded, and most of the groups were leaving. We enjoyed visiting with HCC members during lunch. As always, I think we all come away feeling we've done something worthwhile.

From John Ohrt

On Saturday, March 27th a good sized group from the Houston Canoe Club participated in the annual Trash Bash cleanup day. This event targets many waterways in Harris County and the HCC has traditionally focused on Armand Bayou. We hit the water around 9:00 armed with trash bags and gloves. For two hours we picked up bottles, cans, styrofoam, plastic and anything else we could reach and haul back. Some folks even got some very big barrels out of the bayou. We were then fed hot dogs at the Armand Bayou Nature Center. It was a beautiful warm day, completely different from last year which was a freezout. Thanks to Ann Derby for coordinating and to everyone who worked so hard at cleaning up one of our favorite waterways. The next time you paddle Armand Bayou remember the cleanups that keep it so enjoyable.

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Armand Bayou  
by Rick Brunson  
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Click on image to enlarge.

Here's a photo of me and my sons on Armand Bayou. Notice the local inhabitant sliding off the bank.

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### For Sale and Wanted

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#### Dagger Dimension

The best tandem DAGGER made - the DIMENSION.

Outfitted for white water by MIKE YEE.

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Saddles and thighstraps and string cages.

In excellent condition. \$1600.

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Also, two new Bob Foote big blade Norton paddles.

Light and almost indestructable. Cut to size. \$100.00 each.

email: [tigards2@hal-pc.org](mailto:tigards2@hal-pc.org)

#### Canoes

Several canoes for sale

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Lessons  
by Susan Eda  
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Here are the canoe class schedules:

You do not have to be a scout to take the class, but they will be taught at a Boy Scout Camp. People need to take the Fundamentals of Canoeing class to learn their flatwater skills before they sign up for the Basic River Canoeing class. However, the Basic River Kayaking class will be taught in recreational kayaks and sit-on-tops, so no prior paddling skills are needed for the Basic river Kayaking class. The class dates are:

- Fundamentals of Canoeing: April 17-18
- Basic River Canoeing: May 1-2 and May 15-16
- Basic River Kayaking: May 15-16

Contact Susan Eda for more information at [edas@springbranchisd.com](mailto:edas@springbranchisd.com)

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