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Houston Canoe Club  
*Waterline*



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## Christmas Party for HCC Members

(in lieu of meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 12th)

Don't forget the annual holiday gathering on **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 6-9 PM at 3015 Eastside** (Upper Kirby District Bldg.), southeast corner of Richmond at Eastside. The party is in the conference room by the front door. The Club will provide ham and turkey, soft drinks and water. Please bring a vegetable dish, salad or dessert. You're welcome to bring wine, beer, etc. Also, bring a CD of photos from a paddling trip that you'd like to show and talk about for a few minutes.



If you need further information, please contact Anne Olden at [aolden@ix.netcom.com](mailto:aolden@ix.netcom.com) or 713-864-0205

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## When Shoulder Safety Doesn't Work

By Robert Langley

Any good paddler knows to keep your elbows in front of your body; don't reach

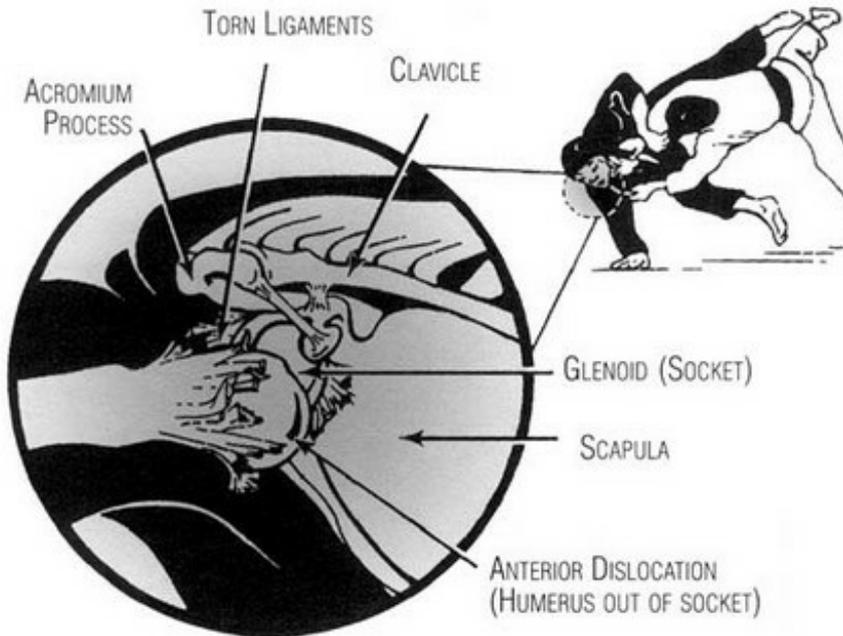


back rotate!

Notice the good arm/shoulder/ back in these two paddling strokes



It takes very little force to dislocate your shoulder once it is in a vulnerable position. But what happened when that Class IV was a little more than you bargained for or that innocent-looking, one-foot-deep rapids turns in to a medieval rack? Now you've got a dislocated shoulder, a limp arm and it hurts like h\*ll.



### ***Shoulder Dislocation***

This occurs when there is a direct trauma to the shoulder, as occurs with falling on the shoulder.

Just about all

paddling classes include some discussion of shoulder safety but they never tell you what to do when you screw-up. Here are some guidelines for getting back on the water after a shoulder injury.

1) Get your shoulder reduced (That's medical gobbledegook for relocating it.) as soon as possible. The longer you shoulder is out of socket the more damage can be done. This is especially true for large, muscular individuals. All those big muscles tense up and reduction becomes much more difficult. Note that there are a lot of bad things that can happen when a shoulder is not properly reduced. If your shoulder is reduced in the field be aware of any numbness that may be caused by pinched nerves or blood vessels.



2) Seek medical attention. An x-ray can tell if all of the hard parts are intact and back in the correct place. It will take an MRI to tell how much damage was done to the soft tissue.



Note the arrow points to a torn rotator cuff, which can only be detected with an MRI

3) On your first doctors appointment ask when, rather than if you will start physical therapy. I don't know what the right answer is but six weeks after your injury is too long. In today's world of HMOs, PPOs, and ECPs

(whatever) you will have to be your own advocate. It is imperative that you keep your shoulder moving. If you put it in a sling for six weeks hoping it will get better you will soon find yourself with a case of adhesive encapsulation. (More medical gobbledygook for frozen shoulder.) Waiting too long to get physical therapy and having loss of range of motion in the affected shoulder is a common problem.

4) Once you have started physical therapy, make your own toys. For less than the price of a typical copay you can buy or make the tools you need to do 90% of what you do in therapy at home. Augmenting your physical therapy sessions with a good home program will speed your recovery, but follow your therapist instructions about how hard to push.



5) Don't over do it. You get three strikes with a shoulder before you will need surgery. Don't spend them all in you recovery. Don't immobilize your shoulder but don't re-injure it either. Dislocations often result in rotator cuff tears. The muscles take time to heal. Pushing them to hard can be counter productive and lengthen your recovery time.

6) Settle in for the long haul. Shoulders are the most complicated joint in the body and take time to heal. Six months to a year is not an atypical recovery period with good physical therapy. Two years or longer is possible without physical therapy.

7) Once you're back on the water make good shoulder health part of you routine. The reoccurrence rate for dislocations is very high. Make rotator cuff exercises part of you workout to help prevent re-injury.



Here we have Robert Langley  
"Back in the Paddle Again:"

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## The King

by Louis F. Aulbach

The regal flotilla pulled up to the wharf at the foot of Main Street. After the royal entourage exited to the landing amid the fanfare of the occasion, King Nottoc stepped off the elegant vessel and strode up the path to Commerce Avenue as the throngs of admirers cheered wildly and thousands of Houstonians clogged the downtown streets. The celebration of the No-Tsu-Oh carnival had begun.

Such was the scene for the beginning of the 1909 No-Tsu-Oh festival when Captain James A. Baker, Jr. was the king. But, the exuberant festivities were similar in each of the annual celebrations of No-Tsu-Oh from its beginnings in 1899 to the final carnival in 1915.

The No-Tsu-Oh festival (Houston spelled backwards) was a week long civic celebration of the importance of cotton to local economy. The Mardi Gras-style festival was presided over by King Nottoc (cotton spelled backwards) who usually was a prominent businessman chosen for the event. A local debutante was selected as the queen and her coronation at the grand ball was the highlight of the six days of parades and festivities.

The origins of the No-Tsu-Oh festival derive from an earlier event established in the mid-1880's by the local produce growers and wholesalers. This festival, called the Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Festival, was short lived. However, the concept had a certain appeal and the No-Tsu-Oh Association was organized to bring the No-Tsu-Oh Carnival to Houston in December, 1899. Later festivals were held in November.

A prominent event during the early No-Tsu-Oh festivals was the football game between the University of Texas and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. The rivalry of this game exists today as the annual contest between UT and Texas A&M.

The popularity of No-Tsu-Oh began to wane prior to the 1915 festival, and the carnival atmosphere of the festival seems to have degenerated to the level of "tin-horn parades and garrulous horseplay" as noted on the Houston Chronicle editorial page of November 18, 1915. The Chronicle begged: "Let it be our last 'Carnival.'"

With the arrival of World War I, the No-Tsu-Oh festival ceased and faded into



history.

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## Welcome New HCC Members!

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## Life in and on the River

By Cecilia Gill

Welcome to "Backwater Backwash", a random and incomprehensible collection of thoughts, observances and experiences in no particular order, so that it makes absolutely no sense at all.

Animal encounters in, on and near the water. We've all had them. Some are as simple and mundane as spotting a few birds or seeing some fish. Some are as spectacular and harrowing as seeing and touching a manatee or having an alligator slap the side of your boat. Any body of water can have its share of residents to encounter, from a small pond to the vast ocean.

I have been told tales of people trying to dig a stuck deer out of mud, or seeing moose in the water as they paddled by. I was told once about a fellow in Alaska who was innocently kayaking a river and went through a rapid, surprising a few bear who were fishing along the way. He never paddled during Salmon Season again, so the story goes. I've also heard pretty much the same story, but with a tragic ending.



I have learned that sometimes, when YOU see something, you probably should keep it to yourself.

Once while paddling with some friends on the San Marcos, we saw a snake swimming with a large fish in its mouth across the river. The kayaker who was closest to the snake hadn't seen him. I told him to wait for the snake to get across. Instead, he freaked, paddled blindly like a maniac, scared the snake (who dropped the fish,) flipped and rolled. "Great. You just made a snake lose its lunch. Way to go."



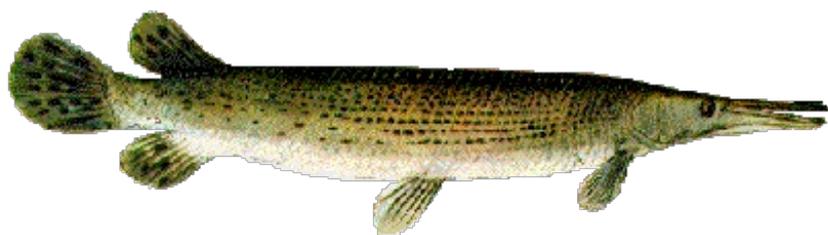
On a paddle to Lake Charlotte with a novice in the bow of my canoe a while back, we picked up a hitchhiker: a Shrimp Spider. All I did was say, "Hey, look at this cool little spi-..." and the girl in the front of the boat shrieked and about made us capsize! I had a hard time calming her down. Later, we got a large gray spider of some kind in the boat. I leaned down to the spider and whispered, "Be very, very quiet..."



I have learned that sometimes you see and learn new things.

I took a friend of mine to Armand Bayou to fish out of my canoe once. He caught

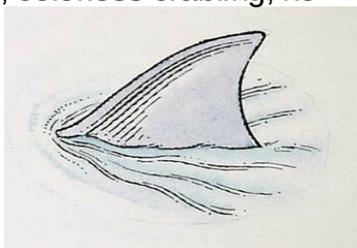
a gar! It was the first time I had ever seen one of those prehistoric, vicious looking things up close and personal!



It was terrifying!

The thing managed to get itself off the hook, so we used the paddle and the net to get that thing AWAY from us and out of the boat! It was an astounding 10 inches long! I still have nightmares...

On the San Bernard, I discovered that a newly hatched, colorless crabbling, no bigger than a sesame seed, is perfectly formed and can still pinch you. Also, while kayak surfing in Padre Island South Beach, I discovered that sometimes the fins sticking out of the water belong to dolphins.....and sometimes they don't!



I also discovered that some ducks can be viciously territorial if you paddle too close to their nests. Of course, a vicious duck is kind of funny...

Some of the most precious animal encounters I remember having myself, others might not find all that fascinating. Like sitting in the boat under a tree, observing a Crab Spider weaving her web. Or spying on a fishing heron. Or letting minnows nibble at my legs in the water. Or watching a dog splashing in to retrieve a toy. Or seeing a mama cow and her calf standing on the bank, mooing. Nothing too exciting, but memorable all the same.

~</>~  
SYOTR!

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## My Favorite Paddling Partner

by Donna Grimes

Anyone who has paddled with Bill and me from 1994 until 2003 knew our favorite paddling partner, our dog Dancer.

Dancer was a small mix of Welsh Corgie and probably Sheltie and Dancer learned to enjoy the river as much as the rest of us. She learned to sit when "Mom" Donna decided to surf and to run down the side of the bank when the waves were too big and Dad and Mom would run them and pick her up at the



end of the rapids.

Dancer even inspired Ann Derby to write a song about her

High Water Dog (Dancer's Blues)

By Ann Derby

We wanted to canoe the river  
But we'd never seen the river so low  
We were looking at the bones of the riverbed  
Where the rapids used to flow  
We thought of better days with surfing waves  
As we dragged out boats along  
Only one of us was satisfied  
And that was Bill and Donna's dog, oh yeah  
She was a happy dog.

When the river's up it's tough on a pup  
You know her legs just ain't that long  
And if the water's deep she could be swept away

Because the current can be so strong  
But in a dried-up situation  
Lord, it ain't no thing  
She was a high-water dog in that low-water river  
She was the River Queen, oh yeah  
She was the River Queen.

She was everyone's friend when evening came and we sat around the campfire.



We miss Dancer as she had to be put to sleep from a broken back in 2003,  
giving us a broken heart.

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## A Wild River Rescue

By Paul Woodcock

Many times people ask me why I canoe or more specifically why I spend weeks at a time in the wilderness. A single incident helps me answer this question. While canoeing the Guadalupe River, just before the State Park, a group of people yelled from the bank, "Can you help that deer?"

Dana, Mary and I saw a doe swimming in the water. The bank dropped too steeply so that she could not climb out. We paddled over to see how we could help, and Dana herded her into a small cutback and we trapped her there. Mary caught her around the neck and held her. I was reluctant to get in the water with a wild animal, fearing she might start kicking and fighting to get away. However, seeing no alternative, Dana stabilized our canoe while I jumped into the waist-deep water and tried to lift her up the bank. She weighed about 70 pounds and at first I had trouble getting a grip so I could hoist her up the bank.

A few times in my life I have come into contact with wild animals. When I was a teenager I climbed a tree to a hawk's nest and will never forget the feeling as he defended his home - not really anger or aggression, but a steely look in his eyes as he spread his wings and screamed at me to leave him alone. I was at a wild mustang auction and I could feel the horses' restlessness as they continuously circled the pen trying to find a way of escaping, and I could hear the desperation as a gray mare squealed and tried to kick apart the trailer she was being loaded into. I was feeding a pack of Russian huskies, untamed half-wolf, and I have never felt such hostility as the pack circled me growling as I put their feed down and slowly backed out of the pen.



As I struggled to

lift the doe to the bank, I felt total acceptance of me. Maybe she was just exhausted, but she didn't resist my touch as we struggled to get out of the river and onto the bank. She fell once as she climbed the hill, and then she disappeared down the other side.



It is experiences like this one that I would never have enjoyed if I did not canoe. The earth is my mother; the sky is my father, the animals my brothers and the canoe makes it possible to be close to them.

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## The Deer and the Coyote

By John and Anne Olden

During the summer of 2006 we paddled in Wyoming and Montana. Much of this was whitewater, but one evening we paddled the quiet Oxbow section of the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park. This is the time of day to see wildlife, and we were treated to three juvenile bald eagles gathered at the river's edge, sandhill cranes and many beaver slapping their tails in protest at our intrusion. The most surprising and amusing sight that night was watching an encounter between a doe and a coyote. First we saw the doe running through the grass along the shore. Then we spotted the coyote she was chasing. We speculated that the coyote may have gotten too close to her fawn. She seemed to be determined but not distressed at the intrusion. Abruptly, the coyote stopped and lifted his tail. The doe stopped, too, waiting for the coyote to finish. Then the chase resumed, and they disappeared into the brush. You may be able to see this scene in the picture – the doe looking at the coyote; the coyote with tail raised looks back at her.



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## Llamas, Anyone?

By Robert Langley

One of the great things about paddling is that it has something to offer to just about everyone. The boat is a marvelous vessel, capable of transporting a paddler wherever he wishes. It takes the adrenalin junky to his next big thrill, the sportsman on the path to his next trophy and the paddler seeking tranquility to a placid world of natural beauty.



One of the best things about paddling is the opportunity to see wild things in their native (though sometimes not so natural habitats). While paddling, I have seen turtles, deer, snakes, cows, water fowl of all kinds, an occasional bald eagle, and encountered a shameful number of fish (up close and personal through no fault of theirs.) One of the strangest sites I have ever come across was a striped water snake sunning itself while draped over three turtles in what can only be described as reptilian harmony.

With the exception of my second son, who once befriended a baby turtle on the Guadalupe, I have rarely seen anyone earn the affection of river wildlife. All that changed on a recent paddle down the stretch of the Colorado River between Webberville and the 969 bridge. Over the years this stretch of river has become my favorite section for my scouts to make their first overnight canoe trip. Several conveniently placed islands create ideal camping spots. Due to the heavy rains this past summer, many of the islands had been submerged for months. When the time to make this year's trip approached, I thought it wise to scout the river. On a warm October day, six paddlers set off to re-explore a familiar section of the river. When we approached the first island, I was prepared to see a sandbar stripped of all vegetation; I was not prepared for what lay before me. There on an island in the middle of the river stood **a big black llama!**



Being a city boy, I

don't claim to have any real knowledge of conventional livestock, let alone llamas, but if I recall llamas are related to camels and camels spit (this is the extent of my knowledge). For whatever reason this particular llama did not seem to want to spit, perhaps because he was too preoccupied with his attempt to snuggle with one of my paddling partners with whom he seemed hopelessly



enamored.

I don't

know if it was his cigar or scent after a long warm paddle (both had limited appeal in my opinion) but the llama seemed helpless to resist my partner's mysterious allure. Alas, relationships are short lived with llamas. When we returned the following weekend with the scout the llama was nowhere to be found. Just as well; I suppose the boys are a bit young to be exposed to llama love.



## The World According to Gar

By: Cindy Bartos

Several years ago, on a warm July day, John and I were paddling our sea kayaks in the Lake Charlotte area.



This was back

before the development of Cedar Hill Park so we put in at the I-10 bridge, paddled upstream to Lake Pass, crossed to the north side of Charlotte and continued on to Mac's Bayou. This was also before the cut was made through the road/levy crossing Mac's so paddlers had to lift up and over the earthen mound if they wanted to continue on to the area known as the Barge Canal. The water flow on the other side tends to slow somewhat and this particular day was a mass of bright green duckweed



We paddled for a short while, John gaining some distance ahead while I was steadily paddling to the rhythm of the 'swish' sound every time my kayak blade cut through the thick



vegetation.

As I was completing a forward stroke on my right side I felt something hit my extended left arm. Almost simultaneously I noticed that an alligator gar was now in the cockpit



of my kayak.

It actually wasn't just sitting on the bottom; it was panicked and desperate to get back into water, so it was thrashing about – side to side. I was also getting a little panicked because the position of the gar was such that its namesake teeth were facing my seat and inches from some sensitive areas.



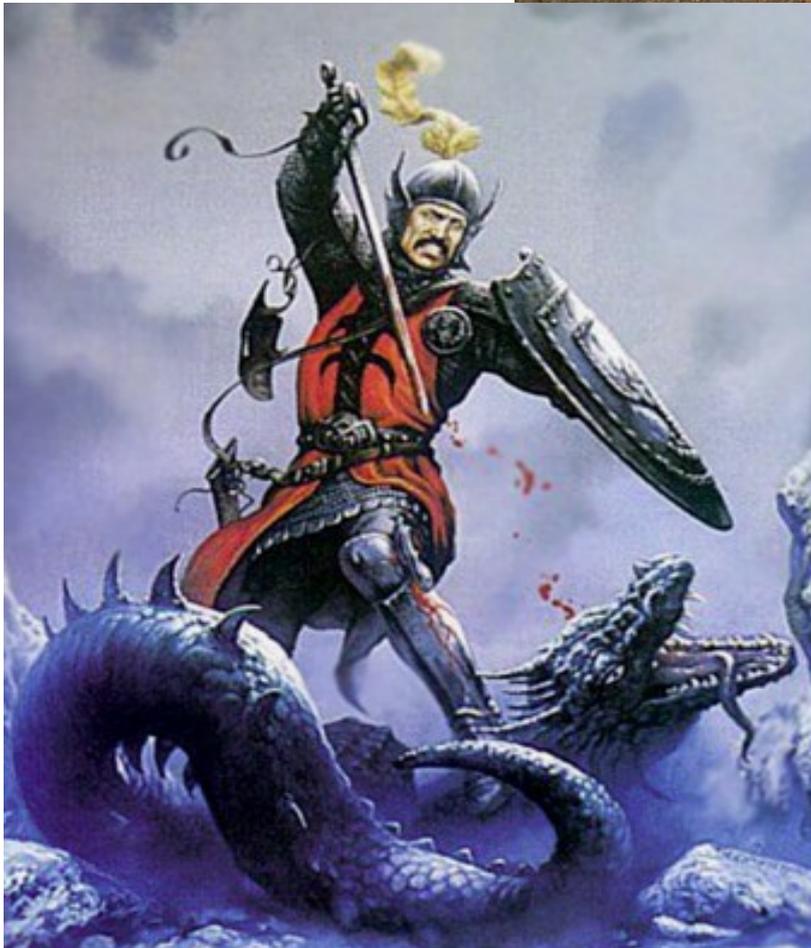
My knees came up to about my ears as I called to John, "There's a small gar in my boat!" Of course *small* is relative – and even though it was about 30 inches long, I didn't want him to think it was one of the reported large creatures known to lurk in the swampy waters.

Quickly, John paddled back to have a look. The gar was still going strong so John took a hand towel he carries with him and threw it on top of the slimy green gar and tried several times to lift it out. Due to



John's position in his kayak it was difficult for him to get a good grasp so it was up to me to remove the gar. With the hand towel in place I reached around the snapping teeth and tried to lift the prehistoric looking fish. Every time I lifted, the fish thrashed, bashed and dropped back into the kayak.

"Look out," I heard John say as he raised his kayak paddle high in the air and brought it down, striking the gar with several quick blows . At last the creature was quiet.



With the hand towel still in place, I bravely lifted the gar off the bottom of my boat. Just as I was ready to drop it over the side the beast came to life and thrashed one more time – this time landing back in the dark swampy water.

Despite the hot July sun the rest of the trip was spent with the spray cover snugly in place – partly to contain the aromatic odors of fish blood, scum and scales and partly to keep out any other fish with the desire to go kayaking.

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## A floating Goat

From Joanna Johnson

Mine is short and sweet... The Hasselmeier family and my family were taking a spring break trip and spent one day paddling the San Marcos. We were resting on the banks at S-Turn when a group of tubers floated by... with a goat. Yes, a goat. Photo is attached.



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## Manatee encounter of the close Kind

By Paul Woodcock

When one of these Manatees swims right next to your canoe and he is as long as the boat, it is an amazing feeling. This was on the Swanee river in Florida.



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## Hawks and Snakes by Ken Barnard

I was on a HCC trip on Oyster Creek several years ago. The put in was Highway Six at the bridge near the Airport. There were eight of us all in solo Rec. Canoes



and we were on the return leg of the trip. We spotted a large hawk and when it flew off its perch I twisted and leaned to better observe its flight over our boats. Unfortunately, I leaned a bit too far and fell out of my canoe – which stayed upright and no gear was lost. When I surfaced sputtering muddy water my BFF Rudy Rivers paddled a little closer and in a booming voice said, “ Hey Ken, not everyone in the group got to see that. Would you

do it again? “ I almost died of embarrassment and learned that it’s good to bring a change of cloths in a dry bag even on a flatwater trip

Several years ago Marlyn Kirkus and I took a trip down Buffalo Bayou to Allen’s Landing. About halfway there we came to a small logjam. I was pushing small logs and brush away trying to clear a way through when I felt a sharp pain in my index finger. I lifted my hand out of the water and there was a small 6 or 8 inch green snake attached to my finger. Well, I don’t like snakes and I let out a scream and jerked my hand up FAST. The snake went flying almost straight up and for a moment it looked as though it was going to come back down in the boat with us. I yelled again and prepared to abandon ship.



Fortunately for all concerned the snake missed the canoe and we soon continued our trip.



## Whut thuh hayul is theyut?

By Bob Arthur

Sometime back in the early to mid 1980's, a group of HCC paddlers decided to paddle down the San Bernard River, out into the Gulf of Mexico and then camp on the "island" between the mouth of the river and Freeport. The island exists because of the Intercoastal Waterway and as far as I know, the mouth of the San Bernard has completely silted up making access to the Gulf impossible now. HCC paddlers from memory included Larry Wild, Jerry Richardson, Jim Diehl and Anne Stevenson. There were others but they slip my mind.

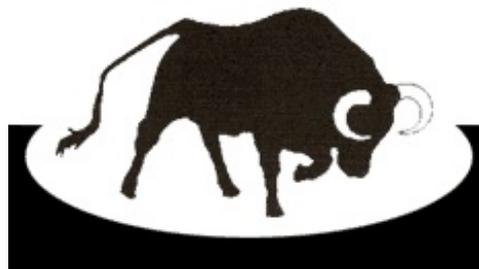
We camped and fished and paddled in the surf and had a general all-around good time. My partner and I paddled an 18' 6" touring canoe, not a perfect surfing boat, but we had a good time and I still have the canoe, a Beaver Big Brother (and that's another story).

Late in the day, camp was all set up, firewood gathered and we settled into the usual "around the camp-fire" bull session for an hour or so. Not a light could be seen in any direction but there must have been some moonlight and you know there were about a million or so stars shining. Someone noticed this apparition approaching down the beach from the West.... lumbering down the beach toward our camp. What the hell is that? Getting larger and larger as it approached, just the outline of something big. The thing approached to within 25 or 30 feet of our camp when shining flashlight beams helped us identify it as a large black bull.



Since I had worked on ranches, I thought I'd chunk something at it and holler "hoey" and chase it off.

Well, I chunked and hollered and the dang thing made a charge.....sort of a false charge, but he didn't tell me that at the time. I think I jumped 15 feet back toward the camp....we measured my footprints the next morning.....it may well have been 20 feet. The bull didn't come any further, but hung around for a couple of hours sort of in the edge of the light from the very large fire we built to scare him off. Everyone knows that animals won't approach a fire, don't they? I think I learned that from a Tarzan movie.



As we had paddled down the river earlier in the day, we had noticed this black

bull on the island and paid it no mind. But he paid attention to us and just came for an evening visit. And we really did have a campfire ***bull session***.

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## The Spirit of the Eagle

By Paul Woodcock

This incident happened on the Hays River in Canada. We had been informed that we could camp no closer than twenty-five miles from the take out at York factory on the Hudson Bay because of the danger of Polar Bears. We set up



camp and as we were pitching our tents we discovered some Polar Bear scat. It was old and the wind was blowing so hard we could not move camp anyway so we spent a nervous night on the river. The glow of a forest fire on the horizon did not add to our peace of mind. We got up at sunrise so we could get on the river before the winds started to blow. We stopped at noon for a long lunch and to rest up after 5 hours of paddling

through the smoldering forest. The winds started to pick up when we started to paddle after lunch. When the tides started to come in, it made paddling even



harder.

Dana had gone close to shore to try and find an easier route. We were in mid river when I looked over to the shore and saw the largest eagle I have ever seen sitting in a tree branch hanging from the bank over the river. He just sat there as Dana approached and when he was directly beneath him he flew down river and landed in another tree. I could see him watching Dana as he paddled toward him. One more time he waited until Dana was directly beneath him and then flew down river and waited in a tree almost as if he were saying, "Come on, old man; I know you can make it."





He repeated this for almost two hours until the river took a right turn and we were not paddling directly into the wind. We could see the dock at York factory. He then circled overhead and flew away. This was one of the most difficult days of paddling I have ever done and I don't know if we could have made it with out the spirit of the eagle guiding us down the river.

the earth is my mother.  
the sky is my father  
the animals are my brothers  
the canoe lets me get closer to them  
Paul.

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