www.houstoncanoeclub.org July 2002 Hot Line 713-467-8857 Volume 18

On June 22, Bill and I had our annual Kids' Paddle on the San Marcos. As we watched kids and adults jump from Bill's Rope Swing, he and I were reminded of his article published in the HCC newsletter in 1993 of his joy of rope swinging. I suspect I will have some article from various participants about their experience for the August newsletter, but with Bill's story and Fraser's pictures, you can better understand why we enjoy taking kids' paddling ...and rope swinging. Donna

I LOVE ROPE SWINGS

by Bill Grimes

Don't get me wrong, I practice safe paddling, I keep my PFD on my back, my helmet on my head or ready if the next bend is bubbling and I keep my throw rope by my side. I worship the feats of Bob Foote; I practice *the* forward stroke with its shoulder thrust and lean and unwind and side slip and reentry; I've read many articles on boat design, paddle design, saddle design, thigh strap and foot peg placement. I've become a serious student of white-water paddling and I'm becoming a scholar (i.e.: boring to co-workers), but I have a weakness. I fall from these lofty ambitions on hot summery days if I spy a rope swing lurking around the bend with its tail wrapped around a sturdy limb, it's knotted head with frayed tongue beckoning me like the serpent in the garden of Eden beckoned Eve.

This weakness began 42 year ago, in the summer of my 10th birthday. My dad received orders for reassignment to Okinawa, so we had to drive from Chicago to San Francisco to fly to Okinawa and we had to go to the Grand Canyon (just to make sure it was grand). This was in those sweltering days which preceded car air conditioning, so my dad's tactics to beat the heat



Elizabeth Kabacki makes a jump at the rope swing as others line up for their turn

were to start driving early in the morning (4:00 is early when you're a Tennessee farm boy), while my brother and I slept in the back seat of our '55 Chevrolet Bellaire sedan. Around 9:00 my brother and I would wake up and if we hadn't hit a major attraction by noon, we would start calling each other names, poking each other and in general heading down the path towards mayhem. So dad would pull into a motel, but not any motel, only one which advertized air conditioned rooms and, most importantly, a *swimming pool*.

Before this trip, my brother and I had only "swum" in those plastic pools which were stretched around steel frames and seemed to



Bill and James Wood join the kids in a rope swing plunge

have more patches than original plastic by the end of the summer. But the motel pools were big turquoise and tile pits with sun sparkled bluer than blue water and diving boards. I can't remember getting my whole head under water before this trip unless I got all scrunched up, but diving boards empowered us with flight and total, unconditional (no scrunching required) emersion. The only way we ever got on these planks was by challenging each other's manhood. (Ever seen two skinny 9 and 6 year old kids with burr haircuts challenge each others masculinity? I knew that backing down from one too many "triple-dog dare ya's" could leave deep and corrosive marks on my soul because I was the older brother and out weighed him by 15 pounds.). . . .

With rope in hand, I hesitate, as I did on the steps to the diving board 30 years ago, wondering: How deep is the water? How strong is the rope? the limb? How cold is the water? Am I strong enough to grip the rope until it comes full swing? withstand the rush of cold water? keep my feet up? (Are my glasses in a safe place?) This check list must be checked several times before my feet can leap from the bank. Then there's flight... I'm over the target... my hands release the rope... I feel the cold stringing break of the water's surface surging between my toes... through my genitals... and up

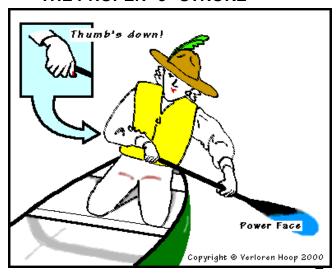
my noise. I gently touch bottom, kick off and rocket through the water's surface to find out if my companions rated it a 10 or "a sack of potatoes" (lowest allowable rating among other canoeing/rope singing friends)

There are a lot ways to enjoy the water not taught at NOC (body surf a wave train, sit in a waterfall), but no river trip is complete until I retrieve the kid in me though baptism in the shear exuberance that is water. So, if we're canoeing side by side, talking about good paddling techniques, and a grin enters the corners my mouth (and you didn't say anything funny), look on the banks in the tree limbs between the leaves for ... a rope.



"Grandpa Bill" watches his 6 year-old granddaughter Margo Tarrant make her first jump of this year, while adult helper Malynda Richardson, grandagughter Timisha Young and Emily Blumentritt watch

THE PROPER "J" STROKE



Kerrville Area River Trips

by Raj Mankad

Raj Mankad and Miah Arnold are new members to our club who first paddled with HCC on the Memorial Day Paddle on the Colorado. They were so enthusiastic that they joined Bill and me for our annual Kerrvile Folk Festival trip June 1 & 2, agreed to write this article about their experience and then became kids again them-selves as they joined the Kids' Paddle on June 22. Welcome to our club and we all appreciate your volunteering. Donna Grimes

Around every turn in the Guadalupe
River stands of cypress trees rose up, towering, like judges in white cloaks. Donna and
Bill ran each rapid first, then helped us through
one-by-one, "Watch the branch, cross-paddle,
cross-paddle, now draw!" We powered down a
straight channel cut in the rock bottom over a little
waterfall, a three or four foot drop. We swam in the
clear, deep pool and we sat under the waterfall,
pressing into our scalps and our shoulders. The
water was low, but in some parts the river pulled
down on you bitterly like you forgot to invoke her
name before you started swimming.



Miah Arnold and Rai Mankad successfully run Steward Falls

Then there was the Medina. When we unloaded the canoes, toothless men in pick-ups warned us, "Be careful now." But on first impression, you might call the Medina a stream. "Never seen the river this low," Donna said. The boats did float and the little river was canopied like those old avenues in Mobile and Savannah. The cypresses on the Medina don't judge you, they love you with their dappled shade. Sometimes you'd see mothers playing with their children near the banks and for a moment you'd think the Earth hadn't yet been scarred up like it is

now. But the Medina isn't wild, it's beautiful like you wish your insides were. And in the evening, we heard songs at the Folk Festival, but you could still feel the rivers soaked in your flesh, singing in your bones



Enjoying the small fall and cool water on the Guadalupe

Welcome New Members

Donna Bailley

2247 Robinhood St, Houston, TX 77005 713-627-5221

djbailey1@duke-energy.com heard about HCC from Sandy Truxilo

Thomas Dillard

PO Box 353 Bay City, TX 77414 979-244-1155 <u>thomasd@jump.net</u> heard about HCC from Seaspace

Ken Goodman

11938 N. Durrette, Houston, TX 77024 713-781-7260 keng@yahoo.com

heard of HCC from Houston Chronicle

Raj Mancad and Miah Arnold

1325 1/2 Laird St. Houston, TX 77008 713-863-7627 blackcatbluehouse@yahoo.com

heard of HCC from web site

Chuck and Lih Shiang Monteith

15810 Jersey Drive, Jersey Villiage, TX 77040 713-896-4303

cmonteith@pdq.net

Officers for 2002

Commodore Fraser Baker 713-202-2503 fraser@pobox.com

Vice Commodore Jim Null 713--664-1083 medislide@earthlink.net

Recorder Marilyn Peery 713-669-9193 kit.santome@pdq.net

Purser Kevin Casement 713-748-0468 paddlinman@hotmail.com

Fleet Captain Randall Nord 281-565-0541 keeppaddling@mail.ev1.net

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Newsletter Deadlines

Have to the editor by the 18th of the month. Electronic submissions:

Donna.grimes@minds pring.com

Snail Mail:

Donna Grimes 4838 Kingfisher Houston, TX 77035

Change of Address

Contact HCC Recorder, Marilyn Peery

Monthly Meetings:

Second Wednesday of every month at the Amercan Red Cross Building at 7 PM

Address: 2700 Southwest Freeway

Thought:

A good pun is its own reword

Houston Canoe Club General Meeting June 12, 2002

(Note: These are minutes that have not been approved. Any changes or amendments to the minutes in the July meeting will be noted in the July minutes)

The meeting was called to order by Commodore Fraser Baker. Officers present included Vice Commodore Jim Null, Recorder Marilyn Peery, Fleet Captain Randall Nord, and Governors Bill Grimes and Candy Donahue. There were 44 people present.

The program on "Off Road Vehicles in Texas", was presented by Skye Lewy of the Nueces River Authority. She urged members to contact legislators, TPWD and TNRCC concerning this problem. John Bartos suggested that the Conservation Committee determine the best way to do this and draft a sample letter to be posted on the club web site.

Minutes of the May 8th meeting were approved. Tracy Caldwell introduced and welcomed visitors.

Randall Nord gave the Fleet Captain's report.

Fraser announced that members may receive a 10% discount on items purchased from the NOC store.

He also announced that there definitely will be no Rendezvous this October and that talks are being held with the ACA to hold it in 2003.

A volunteer is still needed to solicit ads for the newsletter and handle club PR.

In Kevin's absence, Fraser reported that last month the club took in \$295.00 and spent \$138.85 for a net gain of \$156.15 and a balance of \$26,955.86.

Page Williams announced that the Texas Beach and Bay Access Guide, a book of maps of the Texas coast is available free from the web site kenneth.helgren@glo.state.tx.us

The meeting was adjourned. Marilyn Peery Recorder

Houston's Dry Gully and the Underground Railroad

By Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski

In the early days of Houston, the town looked different than it does today. Not only were there no tall buildings in the 1840's, as you might expect, but, more interestingly, the general topography of the town was different. Three major ravines cut through the townsite whose city limits encompassed the area from Buffalo Bayou on the north to Walker Street on the south and from Bagby Street on the west to Caroline Street on the east.

On the western edge of the town, a deep gully began near the corner of Texas Avenue and Milan Street (across from Jones Hall on one corner and the Chronicle Building on the other) and ran across several blocks to the bayou near Prairie Avenue (Wortham Center is built over it now).

More to the northwest, a ravine cut diagonally from a point near the intersection of Preston Avenue and Milam Street (on the corner of Market Square) to the bayou at Franklin Avenue and Louisiana Street.

Along the eastern limit of the city at Caroline Street there was a deep ravine that ran down Caroline Street from a point between Prairie Avenue and Preston Avenue to Buffalo Bayou. An 1842 Thomas Flint painting of St. Vincent de Paul Church, at the corner of Franklin Avenue and Caroline Street, clearly depicts this large gully at the lower end of Caroline Street. The gully became narrower after reaching Congress Avenue, and it gradually narrowed so much that it disappeared between Prairie Avenue and Texas Ave.

Dry Gully, as the Caroline Street ravine was known, was a significant topographic feature in the town. Situated on the city limits, Dry Gully provided a slight sense of separation from the commercial area of Houston for the homes of prominent businessmen who, the 1850's, lived on Quality Hill. Quality Hill was a residential area bordering the east side of Caroline Street and the ravine. It extended east from the gully along the high ground along both Franklin Avenue and Congress Avenue to Chenevert Street (an area immediatley north of Astros Field). Bridges crossed the gully at both Franklin Avenue and Congress Avenue.



The Harris County Criminal Justice Center now stands on Block 12

Along the west side of Dry Gully, the business activity was thriving on Commerce Avenue and the landings of the bayou. John Kennedy, better known for his trading post on Market Square, had a grist mill at Congress Ave and the Dry Gully. The first Roman Catholic Church building in Houston, the Church of St Vincent de Paul, was erected during the summer of 1842 at the southwest corner of Franklin Avenue and Caroline Street at the edge of the deep ravine.

City of Houston, Block 12 (the site of the new Harris County Criminal Justice Center) is bounded by San Jacinto Street, Commerce Avenue, Caroline Street and Franklin Avenue. Excavations done at the site prior to the construction of the building revealed some interesting details of life in Houston during the period before the War Between the States.

Sylvia Routh, a former slave with no apparent means of income, had purchased Lot Number 5 in Block 12. She owned a wood frame house built in 1838 on the site. Her lot backed up to the Dry Gully of Caroline Street and she was less than two blocks from Buffalo Bayou. Oddly, a mysterious brick-lined room had been constructed beneath the house.

According to county records, Mrs. Routh was a well-connected woman. She was protected in the pre-Civil War times, when

blacks had few property rights, by high-ranking friends of her dead, common-law husband who was a white man. Records indicate that she owned a fleet of ships that served the docks in Houston. One of her sons died in a shipwreck off the coast of Mexico in 1846.

What is the story behind this woman? What is this brick-lined room doing beneath her home? Why did she have a fleet of merchant ships? One theory is this: supported by her white colleagues, Sylvia Routh was smuggling for an underground network that delivered slaves from Texas to Mexico during the period from 1836 to 1865. Runaway slaves were hid in the basement room of her house. When a ship was to leave the docks at Allen's Landing, the runaways would make there way out of the basement room into Dry Gully at night. Under the cover of darkness, they could make their way along the dirt paths of the ravine the two blocks to the ship as it stood docked in the Bayou at the foot of Caroline Street. Secure in the vessel, the runaways made their way to Mexico under the guise of a merchant ship.

Horace Taylor, as mayor of Houston after the Civil War, installed a culvert in the gully at Caroline & Congress. Thus began a process that, by the end of the century, would result in the closing and filling of Dry Gully. Today, Caroline Street shows no evidence of the deep ravine that was its lower end. And, the history of this topographic feature is securely buried beneath tons of fill dirt, asphalt and concrete.

From The Helm



By John Bartos, former fleet captain and Commodore.

The Houston Canoe Club's Southwestern Canoe Rendezvous (tm) has been the largest and most exciting on water canoe and kayak show in the country for the last 13 years. As you know if you have ever attended, this event is eagerly anticipated by paddlers from the Southwest and the entire country. Since 1989, the SWCR has brought to Texas top ranked instructors, the premier retailers and manufacturers in the paddlesport industry and numerous well-known featured speakers. The event has benefited from tremendous support from the industry, the American Canoe Association. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and numerous Texas paddling clubs. Most of the organizing of the event was handled by volunteers of the Houston Canoe Club. Proceeds have been used to help numerous water resource, conservation and education causes. We really believe that the Rendezvous has made a valuable contribution to the quality of paddling in Texas and the surrounding region.

For various reasons, the Southwestern Canoe Rendezvous will not take place in 2002. We apologize to all who are eagerly anticipating the event. We intend to continue to provide a

quality paddling event focused on introducing canoeing and kayaking to newcomers as well as providing expert instruction for experienced paddlers. We are currently working on making that happen for 2003.

We sincerely appreciate your past support and hope that you will be ready to hit the water in the beautiful Texas autumn of 2003.

Wed May 22, 2002 08:40 EDT

Jury awards couple \$5 million in canoeing death of son

(Houston-AP) -- A Houston jury has awarded more than five (M) million dollars to a Houston couple whose son drowned in a canoeing accident at an Arkansas summer camp.

Allen and Marjorie Schubert sued Camp Ozark of Mount Ida, Arkansas, for negligence in the July Fourth, 2000, drowning of nine-year-old Sam Schubert. He drowned as he and other campers were paddling canoes in a river when his overturned.

According to testimony, at least two camp counselors were near the boy when his canoe overturned. But one chose to retrieve another canoe while the second paddled his canoe past the boy.

The Houston Chronicle reports that by the time other counselors reached the boy, he'd been pinned underwater for several minutes by his overturned canoe. The child died August 17th, 2000, in Memorial Hermann Hospital.

The camp is owned by Houston attorney Sam Torn under Ozark Interests.

Ozark's attorneys say they may appeal.

Who Be These People?Janice Frels

(new member in 2001 and actively involved with the club since then)

- Where were you born and raised?
 Kansas City, Mo. I loved growing up in KC a nice blend of country, down home friendliness with just a bit of trying to be a sophisticated big city. Spent a lot of time in the Ozarks my parents had a cabin there really pretty, hilly country as many of you paddlers know.
- 2. Are you married, have children Like George Strait, "all my ex's live in Texas." Met my first husband by picking up friends of his that were hitch-hiking (another reason to listen to your parents when they tell you not to pick up hitchhikers). Fell in love, married him and eventually moved to Texas when he got a job with Texaco in 1974. We had two children, my son Chris is 32 and lives only a couple of blocks away from me with his family, and my daughter Wendy who is 27 and also lives in Houston with her daughter.

Divorced husband number one and married number two in 1978. We had a daughter named Renee who is 19 and still lives at home. She is going to school and working part time, and will become a full time student at Sam Houston State in the fall. I like to tell people that I have children born in three different

3. Where educated and degree?
Attended Central Missouri State
for a couple of years and quit to
get married – my priorities would
be different now.

decades - 1969, 1974, and 1982.

Occupations? how long?
 Actually I have spent most of my adult life with Dr Pepper Bottling



Co. Started working for them in 1978. Presently, Accounting Manager at DP

5. Other places lived, how long in Houston. When I first got married we lived in Biloxi, Ms. My husband was stationed there with the Air Force. Then we were transferred to Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, that was nice because I was closer to KC. After his tour of service ended, we moved to Starkville, Mississippi where he attended Mississippi State and then to Houston when he graduated in 1974. Been here ever since.



Janice helps with Armand Bayou River Cleanup

6. How did you become involved with HCC?

I was having a couple of beers after work one night at the local ice house by Dr Pepper and Fraser Baker came in and we started talking about lots of things, including photography. He was able to lure me to his apartment, on the pretense of looking at some of his pictures. He called me the next day and we started seeing each other regularly in the fall of 2000 and he introduced me to paddling. We have been canoeing together since then.

7. What is your favorite type and place to paddle?

I would have to say I enjoy the Hill Country the most because of the beautiful scenery and the moving water of the Medina or Guadalupe River. I also have a special fondness for Armand Bayou – the first place I ever paddled with Fraser, and the Colorado River around La Grange in the fall when the leaves are changing color is nice too.

- 8. Do you have any other hobbies or outside activities?
 - Fraser and I enjoy taking a nice brisk walk in the park at the end of the day. Our goal is to walk at least 30 minutes every day to help offset the 30 ounces of wine we drink! Spending time with my kids and grandkids is a favorite pastime. I have the most incredible little granddaughter who helps me rediscover the joy in just being.
- 9. Any other comments? I have really had fun getting to know members of the HCC and going on paddling trips. I have been on all sorts of vessels from pontoon boats, ski boats, sail boats, and even did a cruise along the coast of Alaska, but I was never in a canoe until I met the Commodore, and I am loving it.

FOR SALE

Old Town Penobscot 16' Royalex canoe (red) + accessories (straight and bent-shaft paddles, cane seat back, removable center bench, anchor and more). Total new value \$1,400; asking \$895 or best offer. Call 979-845-0283 (days); 979-690-067 (nights/weekend); or email sarcher@neo.tamu.edu. Buyer must pick up in College Station, TX.

14' Aquaterra Spectrum Expedition

Touring Kayak. (no rudder). Red w/ spray skirt, cockpit cover, air bag + paddles. Total new value \$950; asking \$595 or best offer. Call 979-845-0283 (days); 979-690-067 (nights/weekends); or email sarcher@neo.tamu.edu. Buyer must pick up in College Station, TX.

Red, excellent condition, very tough, blow-molded HTP **whitewater kayak**; the hull is based on the '92 Prijon Olympic slalom boat so the boat ferries and carves well. The boat is 10 feet and 2 inches long, 25 and half inches wide, weighs 38 lbs. Cockpit is 25"x17". Rockered design means very easy to Eskimo roll with or without paddle. Full

bulkhead foot brace for extra safety; drainplug, etc. Great, responsive boat for beginners or a great expert boat for those who prefer more volume in bigger water/drops. Can also be converted to C-1. \$325 obo Stephen in Dallas 972-686-7878 or sguykayak@yahoo.com

18 foot Wenona Jensen with double sliding seats, kevlar, wooden gunwales, sells new for \$2000.00. Asking \$ 750.00. Will throw in 2 pfd's. Contact Debbie Wiggins at 409 751-0103 BTVCanoe@ev1.net

From Bob Scalding at 713 557-5099:

QCC500 w/rudder (16'10" x 23")Touring \$1400.00

Necky Alsek w/skeg (14' x 25")Recreation \$500.00

Euro-Kayak Cyphur (10'6" x 24") Creek Boat \$300.00

Trips/ Activities with the Houston Canoe Club

7/10 General Meeting at American Red Cross Building. Speaker: Aaron Tuley

7/20/02 Armand Bayou - Great for all paddlers! Enjoy a leisure paddle and observe wildlife close to home. Contact Randall Nord for deails at 281-565-0541 or rfnord@ondeo-nes.com.

8/3-4/02 Weekend on the Neches - Come watch or participate in the Neches River Race on Saturday and enjoy a leisure paddle on the Neches River on Sunday. Everyone is invited to stay (for free) the night at the M and B Canoe/Kayak Rentals and Campground in Slocum Texas. Contact Mary Z. at 713-884-1925, coachz66@hotmail.com or maryzabo@yahoo.com for all the details.

8/31 - 9/2/02 Sabine River Trip - Come paddle the Sabine River on this annual Labor Day weekend trip with several area clubs and hosted by the Big Thicket Voyagers. Contact Mary Z. at 713-884-1925, coachz66@hotmail.com or maryzabo@yahoo.com for all the details.

Pool Session: second and fourth Monday of the month. Practice paddling strokes, wet exits, deep water entries, and rol techniques. Westside YMCA, 1006 Voss. Helmets and PFD's required. Time: 7 P M enter building, 7:15 enter pool, 8:45 end of session; 9 PM lights out in locker room.

On the 4th Monday, there will be a "trained spotter" to help people practice their rolls. Fee: \$10 per session for Non ACA members; \$5 per session for ACA members. (bring your ACA card or number)

Contact Christy Long at clong@smith.com for more information

Notice of potention clinic: Patti Carothers is wanting to bring Nigel Foster out here for a weekend in the fall. Would anyone be interested in taking a class from him? She is guessing the cost will be \$100/day. Tentative dates are Oct.19-20 in the Rockport area. Need a comittment from twenty people to make it happen. Contact Patti ASAP at info@paddlesports.com or at her store-Southwest Paddle Sports

Join ACA —American Canoe Association promotes safe paddling by persons of all ages, forges local and national partnerships for betterment of paddlesport, and works in the spirit of cooperation to speak our message through the country. Houston Canoe Club is linked with ACA through Paddle America program, which benefits our members. Normal dues to ACA are \$30, but if you join through HCC, your fee is only \$15 for individual membership or \$20 for family membership. As a member, you will receive access to hundreds of ACA sanctioned paddling events, six issues of Paddler magazine, the quarterly American Canoeist newsletter, valuable member-only discounts on equipment, books, and services (note the \$5 per session discount in our roll sessions). Consider joining, and contact Kevin Casement, our pursuer, who has the applications and send them to ACA. Once you join through HCC, ACA will directly handle your membership, sending your membership card and number and handling annual renewals with them at the Paddle America discount

Houston Canoe Club P.O. Box 925516 Houston, TX 77292-5516

Non-Profit Organization

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Check out the electronic format of this newsletter – available to current members only – At www.houstoncanoeclub.org on the trip page

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