



Houston Canoe Club  
*Waterline*



www.houstoncanoecub.org :: Volume 2010 :: April

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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 to HCC's Newsletter Editor, Linda Gorski at [LindaGorski@cs.com](mailto:LindaGorski@cs.com).

The Waterline is prepared by an on-line newsletter editor written by Fraser Baker, HCC's Webmaster.

## Next Meeting Announcement

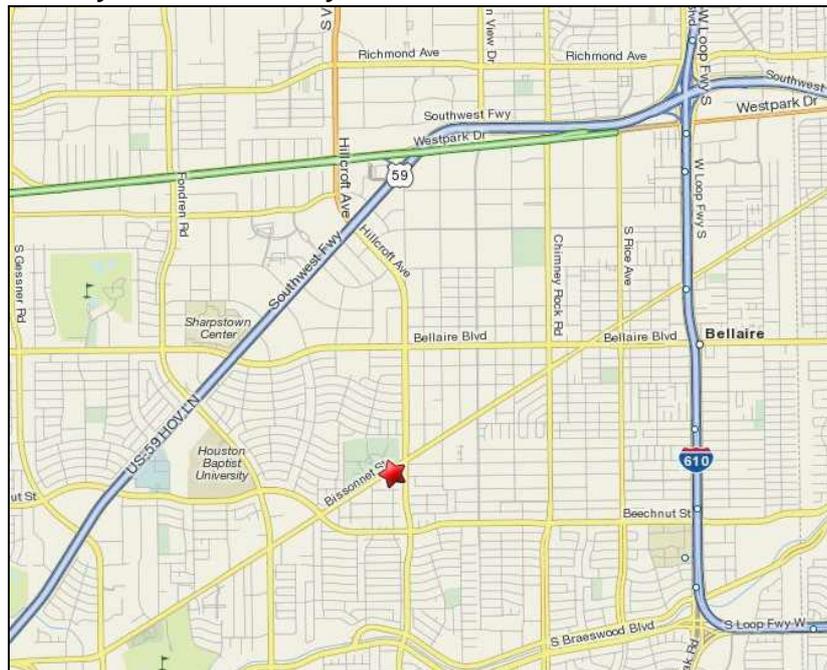
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- When:** April 14, 2010 @ 7:00 PM  
**Where:** Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas  
**Directions:** First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just West of Hillcroft.  
**Speaker:** HCC Members **Joe Coker** and **Dave Kitson**  
**Speaker Bio:**  
**Description:** The April 14 meeting of the Houston Canoe Club will feature HCC members Joe Coker and Dave Kitson who will present a program entitled "**Paddling in the Lower Trinity River Basin**".

This is going to be a fantastic follow-up to our program last month when the HCC committed to partner with the Corps of Engineers to develop paddling trails in the Wallisville Project. (See article and map of project elsewhere in this newsletter).

The Houston Canoe Club holds the world's foremost expertise in paddling in this area, and this month, two of those experts will share their knowledge and guidance with us. Dave and Joe have paddled hundreds of miles in the basin and continue to blaze new trails. Join us for this meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 14 at the Bayland Community Center.

Map to Bayland Community Center:



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Be sure to set this date aside on your calendar, then come out to support our speaker and club.

## Last Meeting Minutes

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**Date:** March 10, 2010  
**Recorder:** John Ohrt  
**Minutes:** **HOUSTON CANOE CLUB GENERAL MEETING**  
Bayland Park Community Center

Commodore Bill Grimes called the meeting to order.

Bill welcomed all to the meeting, and gave a brief talk on the Cypress Swamp Paddling Trail and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Corps of Engineers by which HCC would partner with the COE to develop the trail.

Officers were introduced.

Paul Woodcock introduced two visitors and a new member, Richard Long was welcomed.

Paul Woodcock gave a Safety Minute on camp stoves.

Bill Grimes introduced the program speaker, Richard Long, Supervisory Natural Resources Manager for the U S Corps of Engineers. He gave a power point presentation on the proposed Cypress Swamp Paddling Trail, and asked for the partnership help of the HCC for input and for manpower to make it happen. Some of the issues he would need help with were: setting up kiosks at put ins, setting buoy mileage markers, getting GPS readings, and perhaps creating floating picnic platforms. After the program Bill Grimes asked the Club members if they consented to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the COE. A motion was made by Louis Aulbach that it be signed. The motion was seconded. After discussion the motion was voted on and passed with no objecting votes. The Memorandum of Understanding was then signed by Bill Grimes and Richard Long.

Fleet Captain Donna Grimes gave the trip report. Past trips included: the San Marcos cleanup with a next day trip on a very high San Marcos, a Regatta practice run at very low water, a trip to Colorado Canyon on the Rio Grande at high water. Upcoming trips include: the Buffalo Bayou Regatta, a Lake Charlotte paddle, the Hidalgo Falls festival, the Burnham Ferry trip, the annual Trash Bash cleanup of Armand Bayou and upper Buffalo Bayou, Easter in the hill country, and the Lampassas River (see web site for details).

The minutes of the February general meeting were accepted.

Harmon gave a financial report. He is working on the website and the possibility of PayPal.

Linda reported that the newsletter is online.

Bob Arthur made a motion: "that the words *'has a minimum participation of three paddlers'* be added back into trip policies". The motion was seconded. The motion was discussed. Bob Arthur

amended his motion to state “*three HCC paddlers*” instead of “*three paddlers*”. The amendment was seconded. The amended motion was discussed. Louis Aulbach made a motion to table the motion. This motion was seconded. The Motion to Table was voted on and passed by a majority of the votes.

John Bartos made a point of order that the Club constitution already gives the Fleet Captain the option to do what they want to with regard to a mileage award program, and therefore Bob’s motion would not really add anything.

The meeting was adjourned.



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Please contact HCC's recorder, John Ohrt, if there are any omissions or corrections.

## New Members

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**Member Name:** Lynn Anderson  
**Membership Type:** individual  
**Member's Family:**

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**Member Name:** Richard K. Long  
**Membership Type:** individual  
**Member's Family:**

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**Member Name:** Van Odell  
**Membership Type:** family  
**Member's Family:** Sheila Odell

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**Member Name:** Mary Stafford  
**Membership Type:** individual  
**Member's Family:**

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**Member Name:** Kevin and Pamela Albers  
**Membership Type:** family  
**Member's Family:**

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The HCC cordially welcomes new members to our club. New members are the life blood of the HCC, so be sure to provide opportunities for all our new members to paddle by coordinating more trips.

## Market Place

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### Items For Sale

**Item:** [White Water Rodeo kayak](#)  
**Description:** Prijon Delirious  
Purple - used, but in very good condition  
stored in garage  
**Asking Price:** \$400  
**Contact Name:** Tracy Caldwell  
**Contact Phone:**  
**Contact Email:** t\_caldwell@sbcglobal.net

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**Item:** [Sawyer Oscoda Solo 13 Canoe](#)  
**Description:** I have more photos which I can forward to anyone interested. It is stored in my garage. It seems to be a rare, desirable boat.  
[Photo 1](#)  
[Photo 2](#)  
**Asking Price:** \$750  
**Contact Name:** Ken Proctor  
**Contact Phone:** 281-480-1268  
**Contact Email:** kenneth.proctor@sbcglobal.net

###

**Item:** [Wen-no-nah Whisper 15-1/2](#)  
**Description:** Wen-no-nah "Whisper" is a 15-1/2 foot lightweight solo canoe. Jensen designed to be quick but stable. It's perfect for those flatwater HCC trips where you need to keep up with the group. Really good condition.  
**Asking Price:** \$650  
**Contact Name:** Ken Barnard  
**Contact Phone:** 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.  
**Contact Email:** kenkayaks@yahoo.com

###

**Item:** [We-no-nah Jensen 18](#)  
**Description:** We-no-nah "Jensen 18" is a 18 foot ultralight kevlar tandem canoe with wood gunnels and portage yoke. Real fast, it is used in "Citizen Racer" category and is perfect for HCC flatwater trips. It is in good condition and would retail new at about \$2999 but is selling used for only \$650.  
**Asking Price:** \$650  
**Contact Name:** Ken Barnard  
**Contact Phone:** 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.  
**Contact Email:** kenkayaks@yahoo.com

###

**Item:** [Cobra Expedition](#)  
**Description:** Cobra "Expedition" is one of the fastest sit on top kayaks ever designed. It is 18 feet long and only 24" wide. It has a rudder and three covered hatches and is rated for up to 425 lbs total capacity. In their ad in the Dec. issue of Canoe & Kayak it is described as being *"ideal for anyone interested in performance touring or fishing. A high level of paddling efficiency enables paddlers to travel longer distances in a shorter time."* Its current

retail price is \$1470 or buy mine used for \$650.

**Asking Price:** \$650  
**Contact Name:** Ken Barnard  
**Contact Phone:** 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.  
**Contact Email:** kenkayaks@yahoo.com

###

**Item:** [Kevlar Dagger Genesis](#)

**Description:** Made by Spencer Canoe to Bob Foote design in 1998. Black with wood gunnels. Carefully maintained, strong and indestructible (i.e. always repairable: check Spencer in San Marcos). About 50 pounds, fully outfitted for white water trips (pedestal, straps, airbags, etc.). Best offer over \$1,300 (original cost \$2,750). Will throw in Mitchell Kevlar white water paddle. Boat is terrific in white water up to and including Class IV (I know, been there, done that). Boat has done the Middle Fork, Main Salmon, Chattooga IV, Salt, Lower Canyons, Yampa, Ocoee, et al, all with grace and beauty! Will deliver. Boats now in San Antonio and San Marcos. Can try out on the Guad if a serious buyer.

[Photo](#)

**Asking Price:** \$1,300 (negotiable)  
**Contact Name:** Bruce Walker  
**Contact Phone:** 210-621-3039  
**Contact Email:** bruce@sourcestrategies.org

###

**Item:** [Dagger Ovation](#)

**Description:** New about 2000. Wood gunnels and fully outfitted for white water. Purple/blue. About 11 ½ feet, 50 lbs. Best offer above \$450. Lightly used. A sweet, maneuverable boat for the Guad or Lower Canyons or even the Ocoee. Will deliver. Boats now in San Antonio and San Marcos. Can try out on the Guad if a serious buyer.

**Asking Price:** \$450 (negotiable)  
**Contact Name:** Bruce Walker  
**Contact Phone:** 210-621-3039  
**Contact Email:** bruce@sourcestrategies.org

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## Items Wanted

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Please contact the Newsletter Editor to post any items that you may have for sale or desperately need.

# Book Review: "River Horse" by William Least Heat-Moon

by  
John Rich

Here is the description of "River Horse" on the back cover of the book, which introduces it far better than I can:

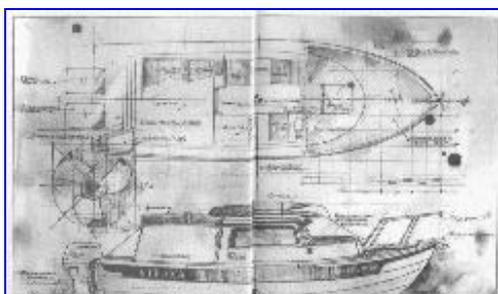
*"In his most ambitious journey ever, William Least Heat-Moon sets off aboard a small boat named Nikawa ('river horse' in Osage Indian) from the Atlantic at New York Harbor in hopes of entering the Pacific near Astoria, Oregon. He and his companion, Pilotis, struggle to cover some five thousand watery miles, often following in the wakes of our most famous explorers, from Henry Hudson to Lewis and Clark.*

*"En route, the voyagers confront massive floods, dangerous weather, and their own doubts about whether they can complete the trip. But the hard days yield up incomparable pleasures: generous strangers, landscapes untouched since Sacagawea saw them, riverscapes flowing with a lively past, and the growing belief that efforts to protect our lands and waters are beginning to pay off.*

*"Teeming with humanity, humor, and high adventure, River Horse is an unsentimental and original arteriogram of our nation at the millennium."*

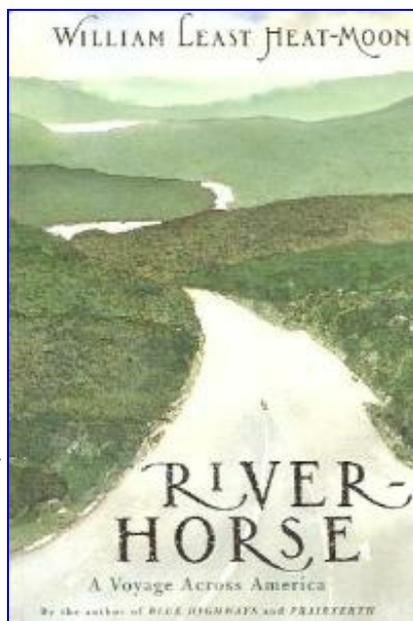
It's like Jack Kerouac's "On the Road", but done on the water instead. While the primary boat in the story is not a canoe, the book still relates by its nature of a water voyage and all the experiences and adventures which go along with it. And the crew did carry a canoe strapped down on top, for when the water became too shallow to continue with their motor boat. Determined to cross America by water on every river mile possible, the canoe was often employed, with a small motor on back, to live up to that pledge.

Along the way during the four-month journey, he describes the fascinating history of the land along the rivers, from prehistoric times, to Indian lore, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, early European settlement, and the Lewis and Clarke expedition.



The boat used for the trip was a 22-foot C-Dory, a shallow bottom boat powered by two 45-horsepower outboard engines, chosen to be tough, able to navigate shallow waters, and powerful enough to motor upstream against swift currents.

{Click on the images to display a full-screen



**Book cover**



version in another window}

### The boat

The goal of Heat-Moon was to cross America by river alone, while trying to avoid the use of the Great Lakes, as that would be "cheating", because he wanted to use the interior of America as much as possible. He managed to succeed in this goal, to the extent attainable. There were several occasions where the boat had to be portaged around obstacles, mostly consisting of dams. For that purpose, he had a ground crew following along with a truck and trailer, who would haul him out of the water at the bottom of dams, tow the boat around the dam, and then put it back into the water above the dam. The Missouri River alone has some 15 dams, without locks for river traffic. There were also several other locations where he had to hop, skip and jump over a small amount of land in order to change bodies of water to continue his journey. Figuring all this out took years of study, driving the route by car beforehand, and collecting a library of maps and books.

Just in case you want to try this yourself, here is the route they followed to accomplish this amazing feat: Starting in New York harbor, go up the Hudson to the Erie Canal, through numerous locks to Lake Erie, cutting across the corner of Lake Erie to a portage point into Lake Chautauqua. Then into the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania, down to Pittsburgh, where you enter the Ohio River. The Ohio takes you past the states of Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana and Kentucky. At the southern tip of Illinois, the Ohio enters the Mississippi River,



The route across America by river

which is traveled upstream through Illinois and Missouri, to the confluence of the Missouri River. The Missouri is the longest stretch traveled on the journey, moving upstream westward to the Rocky Mountains, through the states of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. This section has to be timed for just the right season, to catch the snow-melt from the Rockies to provide enough water depth, without being so much that it's too fast or dangerous. In Montana you catch the Jefferson River, then a short portage over the top of the Rockies, and next you're on the Salmon River, heading downstream again, to the Pacific. But the Salmon has class IV and V rapids, so the Nikawa is traded for a white-water raft across Idaho. Then the water is ready for Nikawa again at the Snake River, in Oregon, which flows into Washington State, and the Columbia River. The Columbia, finally takes you all the way to the Pacific Ocean, where Heat-Moon took a bottle of water he collected in New York, and emptied it into the Pacific, to symbolize the completion of his journey.

At 500 pages, the book takes a while to read. The author also seems to use at least one big word per page, so either keep a dictionary handy, or be prepared to assume the gist of the word from the context. There is some serious contemplation which really makes you think deeply, and to understand the emotional draw of the water, as well as light hearted moments like: *"I wonder how far the water level of this river would drop if all the fish were removed."* I can heartily recommend this book for good reading - it kept me up late many a night.

William Least Heat-Moon is the pen name for William Lewis Trogdon, who was born in 1939 of Irish, English, and Osage ancestry. Trogdon claims his Indian father said, *"I call myself Heat Moon, your elder brother is Little Heat Moon. You, coming last, therefore, are*



*Least*," providing him with his pen name. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Heat Moon earned a Ph.D. degree in English, as well as a bachelor's degree in photojournalism, from the University of Missouri. He also served as a professor of English at the university.

Other books by Heat-Moon include "*Blue Highways*", about a 3-month, 13,000 mile road trip on America's back roads, "*PrairyErth*", a history of the people of Chase County, Kansas, and "*Columbus in the Americas*", a brief history of Christopher Columbus.



**The author, and Captain of Nikawa, William Least Heat-Moon**

# ACA Trip Leader's Course

May 1 - 2, 2010

by

**Ken McDowell**

## ACA River Canoe/Kayak Day-Trip Leading Assessment Course

The Houston Canoe Club is hosting a weekend class for trip leaders the weekend of May 1-2.



If you would like to gain more confidence for leading trips, or learn how to effectively support your trip leader, this event is for you. We will spend a weekend camping or bunking at the [Southwest Paddlesports](#) outpost at Hidalgo Falls, near College Station. The emphasis of this course is trip leading, safety, education, and rescue, not paddling instruction. It is not a whitewater course. It is open to beginners and experienced paddlers, but limited to 10 enrollees.

### Fees:

The course will be taught by Patti Carothers, an ACA Instructor and proprietor of Southwest Paddlesports. Her fee will be paid for by the HCC Safety and Education fund.

If you want to share meals with Patti (I do!) she will provide all meals from Friday evening, April 30 through lunch May, 2 for \$30 per person.

If you want to sleep in a bunkhouse at Southwest Paddlesports' outpost at Hidalgo Falls, there is a fee of \$15 per night.

If you want to sleep on the ground and eat on your own, there is no fee. Just bring a boat, etc.

This class will be challenging, rewarding, educational and fun!

What do you need to do? Let me know if you are interested. The class is half full already. You must be an HCC and ACA member, though a single event \$5 ACA membership will suffice.

More details? Contact me:

Ken McDowell, Vice Commodore Houston Canoe Club

[komcdowell@earthlink.net](mailto:komcdowell@earthlink.net)

713-432-1896



# Rehab Paddling

by  
Paul Woodcock

## Year One

The day after I retired I ended up in the hospital room folded over with incredible pain. The emergency room doctors decided I needed my gallbladder removed. After surgery I woke up with small incisions in my chest, and a small amount of pain. I was looking forward to a speedy recovery so I could enjoy retirement with more time on the river. I had bought the maps for the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. I wanted to be one of the first through paddlers of the 750 mile river trail.



The second day I got out of bed with tremendous pain and swelling in my lower abdomen. I had developed some weird infection. This started a saga of seven operations, drain tubes, blood transfusions, two trips to intensive care and two months on a feeding tube. Four months in a hospital bed was made bearable by pictures of campsites and rapids on rivers I had paddled over the former years.

When I was finally released I weighed 125 pounds and could walk about a hundred feet to the mail box and back. As I sat watching soap operas I had to make a decision whether to spend the rest of my life sitting in a chair reading books, watching TV or return to camping and paddling the rivers that I love. I decided on the latter. I started walking a little farther each day. There was a tree a couple of blocks from my house. It had a large hole in its trunk and a couple of limbs with green leaves. As I touched its trunk, I could feel its determination to keep on living. This became my totem. I always returned to it during each long walk to touch its spirit.

A friend offered me the use of a school gym after school. I don't mind mindless labor, digging a ditch, loading hay etc. However, I hate to just exercise. I discovered the new machines with their automatic tracking devices give you a little more motivation. I came up with the idea, the rehab paddle. It had to be a short trip with an easy put in, and take out. I started doing these weekly, and I was surprised how many people joined me on these trips.



The Labor Day Sabine trip was my immediate goal. It has a steep put in and the take out is a large sandbar with a steep bank, plus it was a 32 mile camping trip. When I arrived I had stacked my gear behind the truck and took one pack down the bank to the river, and I had to stop and catch my breath. I got back to the truck I saw that my gear and canoe were gone - paddlers from all over had grabbed them and carted them down to the

**Paul's inspiration to recover from surgery - paddling in the Labor Day Sabine River trip.**

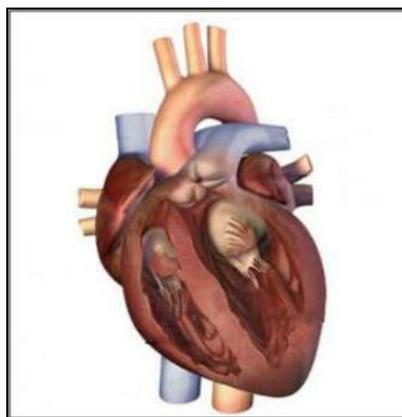
Photo by Paul Woodcock

river.  
At the end of the first day I arrived at the campsite and just collapsed beside the boat. After 20 minutes I was finally able to set up

camp. I crawled into the tent and went to sleep at 6:00 that night. When we got to the take out, the sand bar seemed to stretch forever and the bank looked insurmountable. A couple of teenagers were on their 4 wheelers and a ten spot led them to volunteer to haul my gear to the truck. I continued the rehab paddles and bicycle rides until Christmas, getting stronger and stronger.

## Year two

When I was in the hospital they discovered a heart murmur that was so significant they were bringing interns in to listen to it. The doctors decided that I was strong enough for heart surgery, so I was back in the hospital again. This time everything went well and I was soon released. I had a pillow that I had to clutch to my chest when I walked and the pain was intense.



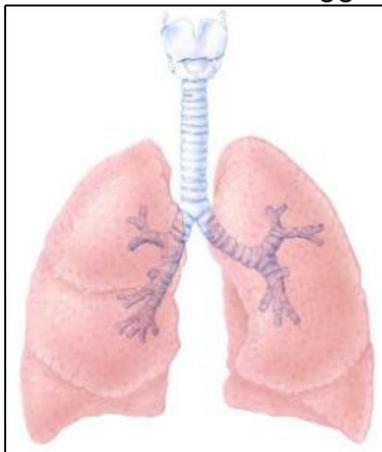
Once again I was sitting in front of the TV. It was decision time. I did not have access to the gym so I bought a weighted vest and started walking. It was on one of these walks with my long hair down, unshaven, and my pillow clutched to my chest, that I was stopped by the security patrol as a suspicious person.

The tree had one more limb missing and the hole in the trunk was a little larger but we were both hanging on. There is a drainage ditch by the subdivision with 15 foot high banks and my goal was to walk up and down it for the entire length.

By the time of the Sabine trip I was recovering half way. I was able to carry most of my gear to the river and made it easily to the first camp. Partly because I was in better shape than last year and partly because of the strong current. At the take out, the river was so high we just unloaded gear at the bank. The NFCT seemed like a possibility and I started studying the maps again.

## Year Three

The next summer I kept getting weaker and weaker, and the Sabine trip was much harder. I used a wagon to pull gear down to the bank and asked for help getting the boat to the water. I struggled setting up camp and just hired the four wheeler to get the gear to the truck. I had lost a lot of physical ability, then discovered I had pneumonia. They drained two liters of fluid from a tube inserted in my back. It was just day surgery. That did not solve the problem, so back to the hospital for surgery. They sent me home with two weeks of antibiotics that had to be taken intravenous. My grandson became very adept at administering this twice a day.



Because of all the cuts made in my chest, abdomen, and right side of my torso I had to change my paddle stroke using mostly arms. Part of the problem with my first surgeries was that my abdomen muscles were

so strong from all the paddling I had done that they could not get the infection to drain but I had not been able to rebuild that muscle. Because of the pneumonia surgery I had a large C shaped scar below the left shoulder. The shoulder muscles were cut longitudinally and latitudinally. The first trip with Natalie I found it was almost impossible to paddle but gradually I got stronger and stronger.

On one of my walks I discovered that the tree had been cut down. By now I had collected an exercise ball, the wii fit, hand weights, exercise videos, and jump ropes. Unfortunately I spent more time looking at them than using them. Was this because the spirit of the tree was no longer with me or just because I saw so little improvement in my physical ability? I bought a cart to carry my boats. I still continued to paddle but chose my trips carefully so I could stay within my physical ability. After a couple of hours the pain would set in and I started counting my trips not by miles per hour but miles per Tylenol.

## **Year four**

I discovered that I had prostate cancer. I had to decide on surgery or radiation treatments. Having only the right back area of my torso with no scars and not wanting to go under the knife again, I decided to opt for the radiation treatments. After 35 trips to the center I had finished them all and was wrung out.

I talked to the doctor and he said I should still be able to paddle while undergoing treatment so I made it a goal to be sure I made the 100 mile award from the canoe club. Each week as more cells were killed off I felt myself getting weaker and weaker. After finishing the Pelican island trip I just sat in my kayak totally exhausted, and had to ask for help loading the kayak. I had paddled 169 miles this year. Since then I have been real careful planning trips. I can load the boat and portage it about 1/2 a block. The North Forest trail seems farther away than ever. It has a couple of 1 mile portages and 200 miles of upstream paddling and I will not be the first to complete a through paddle.

On one of my walks I saw young shoots growing from the roots of the tree. Maybe this is a new beginning. Medicare now covers gym membership and I am going to join. I am looking forward to the Sabine trip and its long sand bar portage. I hope to be able to do it without help this year. I still have the maps and am going to join the North Forest Canoe Trail groups so I will know about all the new campsites . My long canoe voyages may be over, but maybe not just yet.



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

Paul.



**Paul Woodcock - River Rat**

# Did you Know...

## Snippets from the Club's History

by  
**Linda Gorski**

After my article in last month's newsletter about the origins of the Houston Canoe Club and its first logo, I got a couple of really interesting articles from folks eager to tell "the rest of the story". The first was from club member Polly Buenger. She writes:

*"I am James H. 'Jimmy' Jones' daughter and was just a kid but I do have some of his pictures, his jacket that has an original full-color emblem it, a decal on our very old kayak and who knows what else in in the boxes.*

*"I have lots of pictures of the Texas Water Safari that he and Lyn Maughmer won. And pictures of Fred Hurd, Sam Hare and I think Ken Hurd, other guys that he raced with over the years.*

*"I remember Fred H. Hurd, Kenny Hurd, Lyn Maughmer, James H. Jones, Paul Carll, A. R. Long, and Sam Hare. As I said, I was just a kid and these were my dad's friends so I have very few stories. But it was this group of folks that have given me the courage, knowledge, or call it what you like to take dad's 1998 truck, put a truck camper on it and head to Alaska where I took our kayak about 20 miles down the river, alone. Was it smart?? Not at all, but it was an adventure I'll never forget. Thanks to my dad and his group of friends.*

*"By the way, do you remember the 'The Weekly Reader' from your school days? Well, I have the one that Jimmy Jones and Lyn Maughmer were featured in. I thought it was funny that dad was in LIFE Magazine and 'The Weekly Reader' after they won the Texas Water Safari."*

What a great story!!! HCC members featured in LIFE Magazine AND The Weekly Reader! Thanks for passing this along, Polly!

Also got a note from Bob Arthur about the Houston Canoe Club's logo. He writes:

*"The current club logo, depicting two paddlers in a canoe, is actually the 'Unofficial Logo' of the HCC. The paddling bobcat represents the CAT (Canoe Association of Texas). The later winning design by Warren Maul (I think, its been years) was from a photo of Kay DiDinato in the bow and Susan Eda in the stern paddling. If I'm not mistaken, Maul was some sort of graphics designer and came up with a very slick version. The objective was to create a very colorful design. The design was voted on and at some later date an effort was made to make the design the 'official emblem' of the club. There ensued a heated discussion with a final decision made that the original logo would remain as official and the current design as unofficial design."*

Thanks for the comments, Polly and Bob. If you have anything to add, send your notes to [lindagorski@cs.com](mailto:lindagorski@cs.com) and we'll publish them next month.





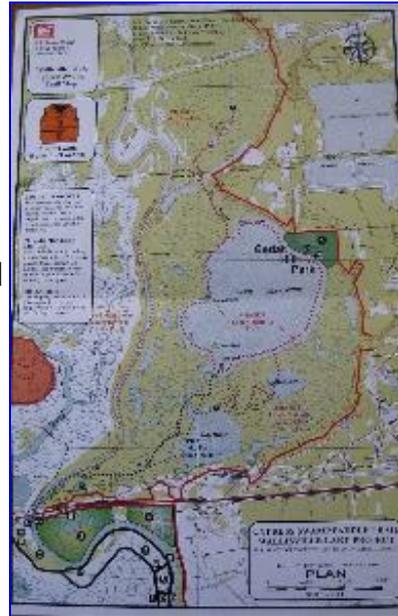
# US Army Corps of Engineers and HCC sign Memorandum of Understanding

by  
**Linda Gorski**

The Houston Canoe Club and the US Army Corps of Engineers signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the HCC meeting on Wednesday, March 10, establishing a framework by which the Corps and the HCC agree to cooperate in activities to advance paddling opportunities on the waters of the Wallisville Lake Project.

Richard K. Long, Natural Resources Manager for the Houston Project Office of the Galveston District, USACE, presented a program on the Cypress Swamp Paddle Trail at the Wallisville Lake Project before the signing ceremony.

Long said that the proposed trail will be located on Federal land in Chambers and Liberty Counties on the east side of the Trinity River, north of I-10. The trail will be developed in phases as funding and manpower is available. When fully developed, canoeists will be able to paddle up the Trinity River to Lake Pass which connects to Triangle Lake, Miller Lake and Lake Charlotte. Canoeists can also access Mud Lake from Miller Lake via Mud Lake Bayou.



**Cypress Swamp Paddle Trail map**



**Signing the Memorandum of Understanding from left to right  
Natalie Wiest, John Bartos, Bill Grimes and Richard Long**

Photo by Linda Gorski

Following the signing ceremony, members of the club expressed enthusiasm for helping with this project. Immediate tasks include cleaning debris left over from Hurricane Ike and putting buoys in to mark the trail.



# Pieldos

by  
By Charles Zipprian

*The following story was inspired by rock art paintings ("pictographs") found in Indian cave shelters, which can be viewed by means of a canoe trip along the Pecos River of west Texas.*

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## Perception

*"Because memories fade significantly and witnesses to an incident can easily become influenced by the power of suggestion, eyewitness's accounts of an incident may differ significantly from the facts."*

- Federal Bureau of Investigation

Pieldos walked the scrap of deerskin over to his bed. Taking some rawhide strips and a bone needle, he began to attach the scrap to his bedroll speculating on how many times he had performed this same act. As a child, Pieldos would collect small scraps his mother tossed away and laid them out to form a sitting fur so he could act like an adult. All the tribe's males would sit comfortable on their skins while eating and discussing the day's events. Pieldos liked to run his fingers through the softness of the fur while listening to the talk. Waking in the middle of the night, Pieldos realized he had fallen asleep while listening to the campfire talk.



**Sleeping fur**

All photos by Charles Zipprian

The softness of the scraps had lulled him and was so pleasing he decided to have a bed of scraps to sleep on every night. Thus began Pieldos' long career of collecting scraps. It became a camp tradition to save the scraps for Pieldos. Soon he learned to take a strip of yucca fiber and yucca needle and bind each of the scraps together. Over time he exchanged the yucca for rawhide. The scraps covered a large area in which he slept and formed the first crude bed quilt. Pieldos' bed continued to grow with each addition of scrap and was known throughout the tribe. Pieldos' bed was soft in summertime and warm during winter. Many of the hunters started taking whole hides to convert them into bed coverings. When Pieldos became an adult he knew he could make a bed from combining several larger skins, but he still favored his large raggedy bed of scraps.

*(Click on the thumbnail images to display a full-screen version in a separate window)*

Over night the weather-changed cold, a front was running down from the Canadian Rockies and had dropped the temperature many degrees. The north wind tugged at his coat in the early morning as Pieldos climbed up the ridge overlooking the canyon. Pulling his coat closer to him, he turned away from the wind and looked out across the plateau. It had been a good season with plenty of rain up on the plateau and the grass was thick and lush. The tribe had hunted well this year. There was plenty of dried meat, sotol, and fish for the members to supplement the winter's catch. Pieldos knew that regardless of how much they collected, before the spring arrived many would be hungry. He headed south out across the plateau

hunting for a supplemental deer.

Pieldos threw his atlatl dart and caught the deer just back of the shoulder. The deer, a young buck sprang away but Pieldos knew from experience the buck wouldn't travel far with the wound. Following the deer tracks down into a small canyon he sighted the deer. Pieldos was pleased with the morning hunt, the sun was warm and felt good on his shoulders. Setting his coat and atlatl down he began to process the deer.

Working quickly with his antler knife, Pieldos was astonished when the first atlatl dart landed a foot in front of him. Blinking the surprise from his eyes, he jumped back as three other darts landed right where he had been squatting over the deer. He scrambled back scanning the area for the attackers. Two more darts landed as he continued to back away. He spotted four attackers dashing behind some boulders. Giving up on any chance of retrieving his coat or weapons he moved back staying out of range of their darts.

Pieldos took his time going back to the tribal cave. He tried to hide his tracks by walking on hard rock or jumping from boulder to boulder. The cold wind was chilling him as he entered the cave. Grabbing his ragged sleeping fur Pieldos cut a slit for his head and pulled the bulky garment onto his shoulders. Struggling to wrap the broad sleeping fur around his body, he walked closer to the cook fire. Looking like a spinnaker sail, Pieldos told the other tribe members of the attack.

A couple days later, the talk was focused on a long walker who had come into their camp. Each year a few wanderers would pass through the Pecos area. The tribe called them "Long Walkers." This particular long walker had seen the tribe's people surrounding a few bison. A hunter had come upon the bison grazing and had been able to get together enough of the tribe's people to go after them. The hunters had formed a semi-circle around the beasts and had driven several of them off the cliff. Each of the hunters walked into camp with as much meat as he was able to carry. The long walker waited until the hunters left, then he gathered up a skin and as much leftover meat and bones as he could carry. Following the hunters he arrived at the cave and laid the skin, meat, and bones down in sight of the cave. Although, many people saw the walker no one acknowledged his presence for many minutes. Eventually, an old man walked over to the pile and grasped one of the bones and went back into the cave. Several minutes later, a mother sent a child to get a portion of meat. Only after all the pile had been taken was the wanderer invited into camp.

The wanderer told of raids from the people far to the south across the big river. He told stories of marauders who had come up stealing food and attacking the isolated local hunters and gathers. Sitting by the fire, Pieldos retold the story of the attackers he encountered and suggested they post a night guard.



Waking to a early gray morning, the silence was crisp. The clouds were so low the world was a white blanket of snow with a thick coat of fog. Pieldos pulled his scrap sleeping fur tighter around him. Sitting on Lookout Rock, Dark Skies was on guard duty this morning. Lookout Rock is a tongue of boulder extending thirty feet out from the cave floor. The land had eroded away on each side of the boulder forming a natural perch five feet above the surrounding land. Being higher than

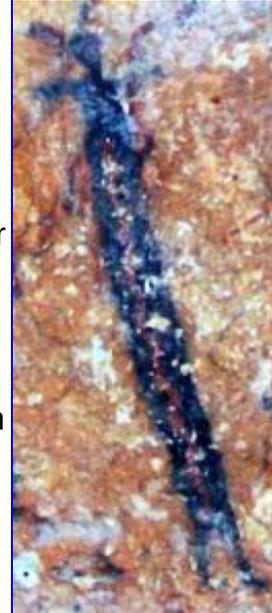


**The fog**

the neighboring brush in front of the cave, Lookout Rock allows a good view of the whole area in front of the cave.

When he became an adult, Dark Skies choose his name because the world was only a mixture of shades of gray. Dark Skies was Pieldos' closest friend and was colorblind

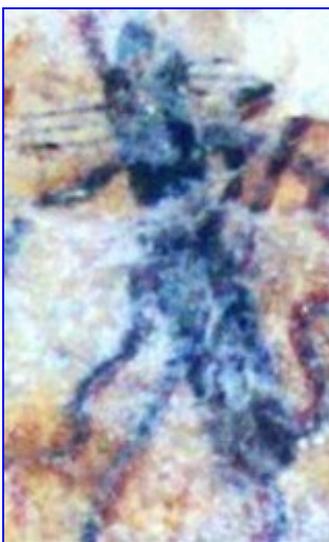
since birth. Walking over to his friend, Pieldos stood next to him listening to the silence. A pebble rolled somewhere off in the distance. The sound rolled on and on in the silence until they heard it splash into the river. Signaling Dark Skies, Pieldos motioned for him to get the other tribe members ready for he felt they would soon be attacked. He directed them to slide out of the cave on the far right and left to gain the ridge and work there way down toward the riverfront. Pieldos walked around the cave making slight noises, letting the marauders in front believe all was normal in the cave. He walked over to pick up his antler knife and his war bonnet.



**Marauders**

The Long Walker sat on the far ridge under of a Juniper tree watching and listening to the marauders sneak up on the encampment. He cared not for the marauders, but even though the tribe had been good to him the tribe was not his people. After the marauders left, he would take a walk through the encampment and see if anything useful remained.

Pieldos moved up and down the cave entrance, his sleeping fur hung around him. Peering into the mist, he could see only a few steps ahead as he carefully moved out of the cave. The fog drifted in front of him, never fully clearing as he walked forward his knife held ready. Taking great care to place his feet down to prevent rolling a stone he made his way to Lookout Rock.



**Vanishing warriors**

Using the thick fog as cover and knowing every inch of the ground around the cave, Dark Skies and the other tribe members had slowly crept down and hidden waiting for the marauders to expose themselves. Dark Skies thought of the many times he and Pieldos had snuck around in the dark trying to surprise each other. Now, they waited for the sun to rise and clear away the fog. As they hunched down, they saw a glimmering figure drift out of the fog. Wisps of mist drifted across the figure as it stood out among the white fog. For a heartbeat, Dark Skies had thought a ghost had come to attack them.

The multi-colored figure glimmered and seemed to grow in size, after a moment Dark Skies recognized Pieldos' sleeping fur. While watching the spectacle, Dark Skies saw an atlatl dart shoot from a mist-shrouded bush. The dart sailed through the air at the glimmering figure. The fog closed around both dart and figure causing them to disappear into the white mist. Shortly Pieldos appeared again and seemed to float above the ground, the dart had no effect on him.

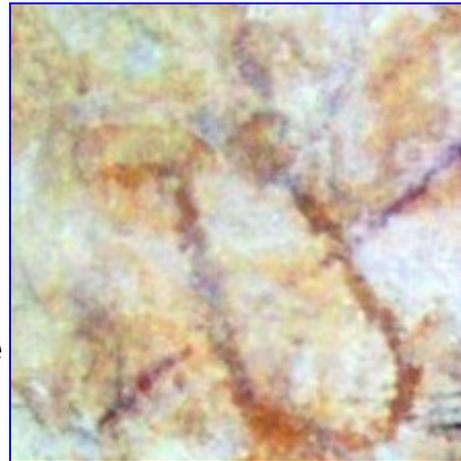
The attackers were an organized group. As the one dart was launched from the left another marauder on the right came running in to attack. Sensing the attack, the figure raised the antler knife high and turned toward the attacker. Unknowingly the attacker ran within a few feet of Dark Skies who launched his own dart. The mist closed in on the scene. When the mist cleared no sign of the marauder was seen again, as if the floating spirit had eaten him whole.

The trees crackled and the silence grew on. All poised to react, the attackers and the tribe members waited for the other to move first and to die.

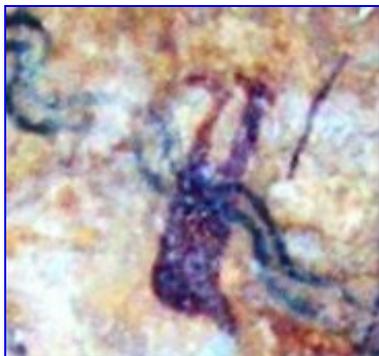
Pieldos could see or hear nothing, he knew they had been attacked but didn't yet know how many there were hidden. With all sight and sound gone, time dragged by as the fog continue to blanket everything. Still the silence rang on.

Slowly the figure began to grow out of the fog. The outline of shoulders, bare traces of a large figure neither man nor animal. All at once five darts were launched out of the bush heading toward the mystery figure. The darts fly true and strike the shimmering scraps of Pieldos' bed coverings and pass through the many openings.

The attackers look on in awe as the darts strike and pass through the figure with no damage. The marauders begin to back away they could no longer handle this spirit that cannot die. They leave this canyon of ghosts.



**Vanishing dart**



**Swallowed man**

The Long Walker sat for many hours thinking of what he had seen, a huge fur cover beast able to float through the air. A guardian that is able to control the movements of wind and fog to confuse his enemies. A creature of multicolored fur so powerful it could eat men whole and make atlatl darts disappear like smoke. After a day of thinking, the Long Walker left for a cave on Painted Canyon.

The tribe members scouted the area for several weeks and kept a lookout for any marauders. After many weeks the only sign they found was a drawing on a cave wall. The tribe gathered around the new drawing wondering what it could be about. Looking at the drawing Dark Skies begin to chuckle, then laugh. When he finally stopped laughing, he pointed to Pieldos. With tears rolling down his eyes, Dark Skies explained the strange drawing was of Pieldos and his sleeping fur. Of a creature that could swallow a man whole, of atlatl darts passing through Pieldos' fur without injury, and how the strange beast could float on the mist.



**Pieldos on Lookout Rock**

The story of Pieldos standing in his bed covers defying the marauders was told over and over during the evening campfires. Over time additional figures were

added to the scene whenever a member did a heroic deed for the tribe, but no figure came to match the spectacle of Pieldos in his sleeping furs.



*The characters and events in this story are fictitious. The author does not intend any similarity to real persons, living or dead be they ghosts or figments of imagination.*



**The author, Charles Zipprian**

# On Power Tools

by  
**Milton "Skip" Johnson**

While waiting for the weather to warm up (please let it be soon) I had been cogitating about what to write about for the newsletter at the same time I was making a decision on whether to buy a router with a 1/2" collet or make do with what I've got. Let's do both, this will be a general soliloquy about power tools plus the circuitous logic behind buying a tool I don't particularly like.

This starts with the "need" for a specific profile in a piece of 3/4" thick UHMW plastic to be used as a tip plate on a rudder. The easiest way to get this shape is with a router bit available from MLCS (good company). The bit is only available with a 1/2" shank. The only router I've got an inexpensive Dewalt over 30 years old with a 1/4" collet. The reason the router has lasted so long is that it has rarely been used. To make do with what's available means using the drill press, which will take a 1/2" shank router bit. The drill press has been used a lot over the years with both router and shaper bits, but always in a mode that entailed some sort of jig to feed strips into the rotating bit. The idea of feeding a small oval piece of plastic into a whirling dervish of a router bit by hand doesn't seem too wise; I've grown attached to my fingers over the years. So a new 1/2" router it will be, but it'll be an inexpensive one since this is a tool that is not likely to see much use.



Let's move on to a general soliloquy about tools. First a general disclaimer; take the following comments with a grain of salt, they are the opinions and predilections of the author and in no way constitute either good or recommended practices. My primary interest is in building boats, tools are just tools. A good one is to be appreciated primarily for how easily it does a particular job.



Over the years there's been a number of times while talking to someone with one of my wood strippers nearby that the inevitable question comes up "what brand of table saw do you use?". The answer "I don't own a table saw" is usually met with a blend of consternation and shock. There is absolutely nothing wrong with table saws, it's just that I started out using a radial arm saw and am familiar and comfortable with it. So here's the premise; it's not so much the tool as what you are most comfortable with. To be fair one consideration most people wouldn't have is that I live in a flood way area and there's some basic

goodness in stationary tools that have motors mounted high above the floor.

Now that I'm about to buy the absolutely cheapest router available it might be a good time to talk about quality regarding tools. There's a lot of truth in the old maxim "you get what you pay for" but I think that should be tempered by factoring in how much you are really going to use that tool. A carpenter needs the best skilsaw

he can lay his hands on, the fellow that's cutting up three or four sheets of plywood a year can probably get by with a little bit less. That being said, I've never regretted buying some really good (and expensive) equipment at times but there's always been some outside impetus, usually a less expensive tool just didn't last. So my tools range from the very basic, a Harbor Freight roto hammer drill, to the very best, a Fein shop vac that's also used for vacuum bagging.



The one place to never economize is at the interface between tool and work. Sawblades, sandpaper, drill bits and the like should always be the best available. The best sabresaw in the world is not going to be able to cut a clean line in a piece of plywood with a blade from the bargain bin at the dollar store. Likewise there is no substitute for Norton's premium 3X sandpaper. I've become such a junkie on this one aspect that I even use the premium bimetallic utility knife blades.

As keen on sharpness as I claim to be, I'm not into sharpening stuff and no longer own a single hand plane and what chisels I have are barely serviceable.

Here's a list of my power tools and some general comments.

- Floor mount drill press; 30+ years old.
- Radial arm saw; same age as drill press and getting pretty long in the tooth.
- Sabresaw
- Cordless drill 2 speed 12volt
- Makita pad sander ¼ sheet
- 3"x24" belt sander
- Shop vac
- Air compressor
  - Blow gun
  - DA sander (2)
  - Air file
  - Rotary grinder
  - Narrow crown staple gun
  - Brad nailer
  - HVLP paint sprayer
- Floor fan
- Skillsaw
- Heat gun
- Power plane

That's the main list somewhat in the order of use, plus the following stuff that's rarely used.

- Router
- Hammer drill
- Band saw

That's it for now, I had thought this would be about tools in general but there's enough stuff to cover that the next segment will talk about hand tools including the one you cannot ever have enough of... clamps.





**The author, Skip Johnson**

# WARNING FOR BOQUILLAS CANYON PADDLERS

by  
**Linda Gorski**

*In previous issues of the Waterline we have passed along information from fellow paddlers about disturbing activities they have observed on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande near Hot Springs in the Lower Canyons. The following letter was sent to one of our members by a friend who paddled Boquillas Canyon with his family over spring break. The names have been abbreviated with an initial to retain anonymity.*

*We urge you to take every precaution when you are paddling in this area! And please report any sightings of similar illegal activity to the Border Patrol.*

---

We just got back about an hour ago, we had a great time. This was my first time on the Rio Grande as it was for everyone in the group. There were eight of us all together: me, the db's, my son, two sisters, niece and brother in law. Everything worked out really well, the only casualties being a lost multi tool and some sore muscles.

The only uncomfortable part of the trip came at the very beginning. A couple of miles down from the RGV (editors note: Rio Grande Village) there was a teenager walking along the bank on the Mexican side. As I got closer I could see that there was someone behind the cane that seemed to be trying to keep out of sight and that the kid on the bank was talking to. When I was nearly up to the kid on the bank the second one came out of the cane carrying a rifle, looked like a .22, and sorta jogged along the bank just ahead of me. I stopped and waited for C and M and hustled them past then went back and hustled my son along and told him to keep up with us.



**Map of Boquillas Canyon  
(red arrow)  
Click to enlarge**

Up ahead I saw that C and M had stopped to wait for us a little way down. The kid with the gun ( I haven't shared this with C) raised the gun up one handed, laughing, and pointed it at M who was about a 100 yards down river by then. It wasn't the motion of someone who was about to shoot but more of the motion of someone imagining that they could shoot if they wanted. I was troubled. I escorted my son through and caught up with C and M and got them moving again.

The kid with the gun also had a walkie talkie and was calling with it to another group of about 5 or 6 people sitting on rock jutting into the stream at a narrow point in the river. There was some chatter back and forth that I didn't understand but that my brother in law who speaks Spanish said was about "all the good stuff on the boats" As I herded C, M and my son through I saw that one of the kids on the rock was trying to conceal an assault rifle of some sort - folding stock, flash suppressor and sights like on the M-16. No one in this group made any motion threatening or otherwise, just stared, but I was still very uncomfortable.

As far as I know the only people carrying these weapons are the law/ military and the bad guys. These guys weren't the police. That night I picked a campsite on the U.S. side in Boquillas Canyon that appeared to be inaccessible except by water or a very long fall. We lashed all the kayaks to a tree stump and each other well away from shore. Everyone slept very lightly, I sneezed once, during the night, and found myself almost instantly in the beam of my brother in laws spotlight.

The next day saw beautiful weather in a beautiful place with zero drama. The third day the wind really kicked up and the temps dropped. In the canyons the wind was right on our nose at what I'd guess at 25 to 30 mph making progress difficult sometimes and wet always. M, who just the day before was already planning our next trip, cheered when she saw the bridge at La Linda.

All in all a great trip; scary enough to make a good story, challenging enough to give a nice sense of accomplishment and best of all, a happy ending.



## **HCC Member Accepts "Proud Partner" Award**

**March, 2010**

**by**

**John Bartos**

See the attached link below to see an article and a photo on a great award received by our own Bob Arthur. Bob spent a lot of time spearheading the Buffalo Bayou Paddle Trail in conjunction with the Bayou Preservation Association, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Houston Canoe Club. Great work and a well deserved award. Congratulations, Bob!

The story begins at the bottom of page 3, here (pdf file): ["Bayou Forum"](#)

You'll also want to check out the story "*Low-Key Paddle Trail Dedication Suits BPA*" on page 6, which mentions several members of the Houston Canoe Club by name, as well as the club's participation in the Buffalo Bayou Paddle Trail dedication. The article also includes a photo of some HCC members portaging canoes down the bank to the water.



# Commodore's Column

by  
by **Bill Grimes**

Recently you may have seen discussion on the HCC e-mail listbot about a change to the Trip Mileage policy that will come before the membership for a vote at our General Membership meeting on Wednesday, April 14. The following paragraph is what is currently in the mileage policy:

*"Mileage for all trips and events posted on the HCC website are eligible for inclusion in the Fleet Captain's log, so long as notice of the trip is posted at least 3 days in advance. To assure that mileage is counted, the Trip Coordinator must assure that the appropriate Trip Participant list is completed."*

A motion was made by Bob Arthur to change the wording as follows:

*"Mileage for all trips and events posted on the HCC website are eligible for inclusion in the Fleet Captain's log, so long as notice of the trip is posted at least 3 days in advance **and have a minimum of three paddlers**. To assure that mileage is counted, the Trip Coordinator must assure that the appropriate Trip Participant list is completed."*

Following discussion on the issue, Louis Aulbach moved to table the motion until the membership could be informed of the motion through the listbot and newsletter.

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The following is a statement from club Commodore, Bill Grimes:

I support the 3 paddler minimum requirement on a trip because the club's major function is to offer group paddling events for our members. By requiring a minimum of 3 paddlers on a trip to qualify for entry in the Fleet Captain's log, we encourage group events and discourage solo events. Group paddle events "unite persons interested in paddle-sports", "educate persons to become safe and competent paddlers", "support conservation" and "promote paddle-sports for the purpose of recreation and competition."

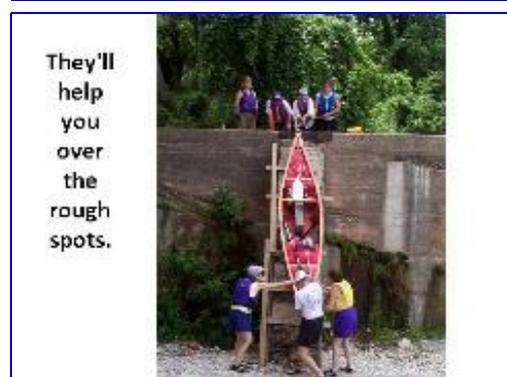
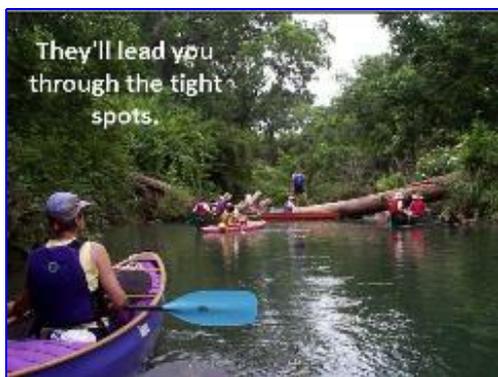
Through group paddles:

- We learn how to paddle better not only from the good paddlers who always do the right thing at the right time, but also from the not so good paddlers who demonstrate the wrong thing to do (I, too have been a "Good Bad Example").
- We learn more about paddle boats and paddle gear, what boats work better in whitewater, on lakes, in the gulf, in swamps and bayous. We also learn how to secure our boats for transporting.
- We learn more about camping: gear, camping sites, camping food and how to keep it fresh and all of Louis' "first rules" for everything.
- We learn more about where we paddle: the fauna and flora, the ecosystem, the geology, the history and the archeology. If you only paddle the Pecos alone, you would miss the ancient Indian pictographs and petroglyphs in the cliffs of the side canyons.
- We help each other through the tight spots (over fallen trees & dams).
- We make new friends and share the experience. Most of Donna's & my

friends, we met through canoe club paddling events.

- Also, safety is dramatically improved when you paddle with a group by helping in rescue efforts and through the groups' collective experiences.

The below images are from a Powerpoint presentation put together by the Grimes'. Click on the thumbnail images to view a large version in a separate window.



## Upcoming River Trips

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### HCC Trips:

**Date:** Saturday, March 27, 2010

**Title:** Trash Bash around Houston

**Inclusive Dates:** March 27

**Description:** On this day, we work to clean Houston Waterways. HCC has always been active in helping to preserve our water ways. Help out and volunteer. Looking for good support and help, and the famous hot dog meal at the end. Christy Long will headup the Buffalo Bayou Trash Bash, and John Bartos at [jbartos@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jbartos@ix.netcom.com) will coordinate the Armand Bayou

#### 2010 TRASH BASH® LOCATIONS

Armand Bayou (Bay Area Park) • Bastrop Bayou (Marlin

Marina) • Brays Bayou (Mason Park)

Buffalo Bayou (North Drennan Street) • Buffalo Bayou (Terry Hershey Park)

Cypress Creek (Collins Park) • Dickinson Bayou (Highway 3 Bridge)

Galveston Bay (Seabrook/Boat Ramp at Hwy 146) •

Galveston Bay (Texas City/Bay Street Park)

Galveston Bay (Virginia Point Peninsula Preserve) •

Houston Ship Channel (Baytown Nature Center)

Lake Conroe (Cagle Recreation Area) • Lake Houston (Lake Houston Marina)

Little White Oak Bayou (Moody Park) • Sims Bayou (Glenbrook/Reveille/Sims Woods Parks)

White Oak Bayou (Little Thicket Park) • White Oak Bayou North (Ermel Elementary School)

**Skill Level:** **Blank:** Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing.

**Contact:** Contact Christy Long by phone 281 415 8087, or by email [clong1956@sbcglobal.net](mailto:clong1956@sbcglobal.net).

###

**Date:** Saturday, March 27, 2010

**Title:** Village Creek in the Big Thicket

**Inclusive Dates:** 3/27-3/28

**Description:** Explore exotic lands like never before. Saturday morning, a short 4-mile paddle on Village Creek gets us into the middle of the Roy Larsen Sandlylands Conservation area. We can pitch camp on a clean, beautiful sand bar and hike into the remotest parts of this wild area.

On Sunday, after another 4 mile paddle downstream, we will take out with time left for lunch at Catfish Village in Sislbee.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on

Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Ken McDowell by phone 713-432-1896, or by email [komcdowell@earthlink.net](mailto:komcdowell@earthlink.net).

###

**Date:** Friday, April 02, 2010

**Title:** Easter Weekend Hillcountry Paddle

**Inclusive Dates:** April 2 - 4

**Description:** If Mother Nature cooperates, I would like to plan a Friday and Saturday (possibly Sunday?) paddle in the hill country and if there is water, include the Medina River.

It you are interested in enjoying the beauty of nature, the joy of moving water, and the challenge of a few rapids, come join us. Camping at a campground.

**Skill Level:** **Novice:** Confidently execute basic strokes plus ability to manage high wind and high waves typically experienced on Lake Charlotte or Sheldon reservoir, can maneuver the boat on moving water plus familiarity with eddy turns, ferrying and surfing in Class 2 rapids typically found on the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers. Able to read the river and identify the eddy line.

**Contact:** Contact Jim Barton by phone 832 731 6057, or by email [jbarton@armko.com](mailto:jbarton@armko.com).

###

**Date:** Saturday, April 03, 2010

**Title:** Lampasas River

**Inclusive Dates:** April 3

**Description:** This is an exploratory paddle (meaning I've not done it before) The paddle will be for roughly 9-10 miles Last mile will be lake paddling. Skill Level: Intermediate (mainly cause I don't know the river or what to expect.)

**Skill Level:** **Intermediate:** Knowledge of basic whitewater safety, self-rescue and rescue such as retrieving a pinned boat. Able to capture small eddies, run Class 2 rapids confidently, but challenged by Class 3 rapids such as Cottonseed on the San Marcos at say 300-400 cfs.

**Contact:** Contact Charles Zipprian by phone 713 849 6389, or by email [charles.zipprian@ge.com](mailto:charles.zipprian@ge.com).

###

**Date:** Friday, April 09, 2010

**Title:** Springs fest

**Inclusive Dates:** April 9 - 11

**Description:** Join the Olympic Outdoor Center in San Marcos for paddling enthusiasts at Rio Vista Park in San Marcos for all or one day.

Check out details at

<http://upcoming.yahoo.com/event/5278514/TX/San-Marcos/Springs-Fest-2010/Rio-VIsta-Water-Park/>

**Skill Level:** **Blank:** Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing.

**Contact:** Contact Ben Kavanli by phone 512 203-0093, or by email [benkvanli@yahoo.com](mailto:benkvanli@yahoo.com).

###

**Date:** Saturday, April 10, 2010  
**Title:** Race on the Brazos 2010  
**Inclusive Dates:** April 10  
**Description:** The Inaugural Canoe Race on the River Brazos from Rosenberg to Richmond, a distance of 7.3 miles, a two person standard, stock canoe 14 -20' min 32  
**Skill Level:** **Blank:** Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing.  
**Contact:** Contact Andrew Bockholt, chariman by phone 281 239 2755, or by email [brazosrace@gmail.com](mailto:brazosrace@gmail.com).

###

**Date:** Saturday, April 17, 2010  
**Title:** Burnham's Ferry/Colorado River/ 175th annual  
**Inclusive Dates:** April 17 - new day  
**Description:** 13 miles on the Colorado River, between LaGrange & Columbus, TX. A trip to visit and possibly explore the Burnham's Ferry area where the Texas Army crossed in 1835 on or about March 17 of that year.

Car camp at the take-out if desired, with possible group feed/dutch oven cooking. A bit of star gazing, some spittin, some whittling, a bit of staring at the fire and possible general carousing. Put-in and take-out are both on private property and there are no facilities at all at the campsite, meaning its primitive. No need to haul camping gear on the river as vehicles will be left at the take-out area.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Bob Arthur by phone 7134160017, or by email [rwarthur@oplink.net](mailto:rwarthur@oplink.net).

###

**Date:** Saturday, April 17, 2010  
**Title:** Colorado River near Bastrop  
**Inclusive Dates:** April 17 - 18  
**Description:** Let's call this the Colorado spring fling. This is the same route as the freeze trip 16 miles. There will be a \$25.00 shuttle fee per boat and a food charge depending on how many go on the campout. Beginning paddlers should be prepared to get wet on the rapids where they might dump.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Paul Woodcock by phone 713 594 9969, or by email [plwdcck@yahoo.com](mailto:plwdcck@yahoo.com).

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## **Other Club Trips:**

# A Foggy Paddle on Cotton Lake

by  
**Dave Kitson**

The original plan for this day was to put in at the boat ramp on the northern end of Pickett's Bayou and paddle down Pickett's to The Cut Off then up the Cut Off to a right turn on the Trinity River downstream to the Sulfur Cut followed by Mac Bayou to Lake Charlotte. Unfortunately, the park at Champion Lake/Pickett's Bayou was closed due to flooding so that trip was impossible.

The chance of rain reported by the weather folks during the week before the trip ranged from 10% to 20% to 30% to 60% to 55% in no particular order. Saturday night it was predicting 30% for most of the day Sunday. Needless to say, when we met at the gas station at FM-565 and I-10 it was raining. This was a strong and enthusiastic group consisting of Paul Woodcock, Joe Coker, Ken McDowell and Charles Zipprian which decided to make the trip regardless.

There were several options for a replacement trip so after a short discussion the group decided on Joe Coker's suggestion of the salt marsh area south of Cotton Lake. I had come prepared with a Google Earth map of that area just in case that was the decision since Joe and I were the only ones who had been there and we had only been there once. The area is a maze of small streams winding through the salt grass which really all look the same so it has the potential for getting lost.

The put in is at Hugo Point which has two great boat ramps with piers. On this day the water was at the very top of the ramps which, combined with the flooding at Pickett's, indicates that the water was extraordinarily high everywhere in the Trinity River area. In no time we were ready and set off in light to medium rain and very dense fog. It was very pleasant listening to the rain falling on the water and the dense fog made for a really peaceful and beautiful trip down to Trinity Bay.



All photos by Joe Coker,  
unless otherwise noted.



Photo by Paul Woodcock

We did notice that there was a considerable current running toward the bay but the consensus was that it must be tidal and would be going the other way by the time

we would be heading back (Cue ominous music). There were few birds on this leg but Joe Coker did see an otter stick it's head above the water for an instant. By the time we reached the Bay the rain had stopped but there was still fog. The Bay was invisible in the fog but we could hear what sounded like surf so a couple of us paddled out a ways and sure enough there was a sandbar with 6" or 12" breakers 75 yards out from shore. On the way to lunch at a large shell midden right on the bay we encountered a handful of White Pelicans and heard but did not see what must have been a large flock of birds setting up quite a ruckus somewhere out on the bay.



**Lunch on a shell midden**

As we started back it became obvious that the current flow was not tidal. We would be paddling against probably a 2 to 3 mile an hour current for most of the way back. The water was full of eddies and turbulence that would turn the boat in all directions if you were not careful. Coming around a corner the current would take your bow and send you sideways out into the middle of the stream in seconds. The last mile or so in the bayou the current was running maybe 3 to 4 miles per hour so we took frequent rests (Donna, we really think we deserve extra mileage for this). It was hard to believe that this much water could be flowing this close to Trinity Bay.

We all got back safely if a little tired. The fog made this a really beautiful trip, it absorbed sound so everything was quiet and peaceful and the low visibility gave the illusion of being all by ourselves out in the wilderness.



**Joe Coker**



**Dave Kitson**



**Paul Woodcock**



# **A Kayak with a View**

**Feb. 27, 2010**

**by**

**John Bayduss**

It is the mid-70s' with New York City's Mayor Beame facing a huge city-wide fiscal crisis - and I'm looking for a job.

With companies experiencing massive lay-offs I decided to pack a bag and head south towards Mexico then settle somewhere in California. Withdrawing my life savings I placed \$600 in each of my socks, installed fresh batteries in my portable 8-track player including "Sly and the Family Stone Greatest Hits" and the recently released Rolling Stones "Black and Blue" and began my trek southward.

Traveling towards Mexico I saw the skyline of downtown Houston and knew I had found my home. The City of Houston has offered me so many opportunities, including three college degrees, three state licenses, and a wonderful job. Every time I see our magnificent Houston buildings standing proud against the Texas sky a feeling of pride always forms.

Paddling Buffalo Bayou with the Houston Canoe Club on February 27th was no exception... seeing downtown Houston coming into view as we paddled down the bayou made me think about our wonderful city and my love for it, a love that is approaching almost four decades.

Sophie Lopez was the leader of the trip and we were joined by John Ohrt, Christy Long, Coleen Connaly, Lydia Cruzen, and a couple of others. We put in at Briar Bend Park two blocks from San Felipe and Voss. We took out at Allen's Landing behind the Spaghetti Warehouse.



**At the launch site, getting ready to paddle Buffalo Bayou**



**John Bayduss**



**Launch site**



**A dog swam to us to say hello**



**Buffalo Bayou**



**Buffalo Bayou**



**Downtown Houston coming into view**



**The take-out**



# Chocolate Bayou

Dec. 2009

by

**Mark Andrus**

In December, 2009, I went on the club's Chocolate Bayou trip from Highway 35 to County Road 171. We made two different shuttle runs so someone could stay with the boats the whole time. I brought the only canoe and all the rest of the boats were kayaks. The reason I brought a canoe was that most of the time it is possible to step out of the boat on a salt-water barrier and pull it over. It is much easier getting out of a canoe than a kayak. There were about 10 boats on the trip. I did not know any of the other people on the trip before I met them at the put-in. There must be many new people in the club.



**Boats in parking lot at put-in**



**In the water one bend past the put-in**

The day was nice as it is possible to tell from the blue sky in the photographs. Although Chocolate Bayou is not as wild as it was when I started paddling it about 20 years ago, it still has many scenic parts. Everyone except me portaged around the salt-water barrier. I managed to paddle over it since the water level was higher than usual. I was careful to make my passage near the bank and hit an eddy on the downstream side. I know about the dangers of low-head dams with the possibility of re-circulating water downstream so I do not recommend crossing dams unless you know what the water is like on the downstream side.

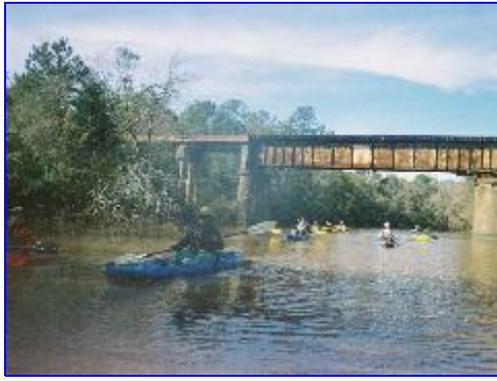


**Kayaks in front of me**



**Downstream from salt-water barrier**

The bayou was mostly undeveloped for about the first 3 miles. We ran into an area of bayou homes on the bank about a mile upstream of the take-out, which is interesting. There was an old railroad bridge a short distance above the take-out. The take-out was at a county park and it was very muddy. There used to be a restroom at the park, but it is gone now.



**The bridge at 171. We took out at the park just before the bridge**



# Rio Grande River Colorado Canyon

Feb. 2010

by

John Rich

In late February, six Houston Canoe Club members set out for Big Bend Ranch State Park in west Texas to paddle the Rio Grande River through Colorado Canyon. The participants were: Ken Anderson, Louis Aulbach, Dana Enos, Linda Gorski, Robert Killian and John Rich.

*(Click on the thumbnail images to display a full-screen view in another window)*



**Location within Texas**

Louis, Dana, Linda and John car-pooled and convoyed together in two vehicles carrying four boats. Robert and Ken drove separately and arrived later to join up. The car-pool group had the pleasure of breaking up the long 12-hour drive over two days, by stopping overnight at the non-profit Shumla School west of Del Rio. Those members do some volunteer work for the school, and in exchange get an occasional use of the facility. There we spent the evening chatting in front of the fireplace, and warming our toes - temperatures at night were dipping into the 30's. I rolled out my sleeping bag right in front of the fireplace, with the idea of waking up in the middle of the night to throw a few more logs on the fire, but ended up sleeping straight through.

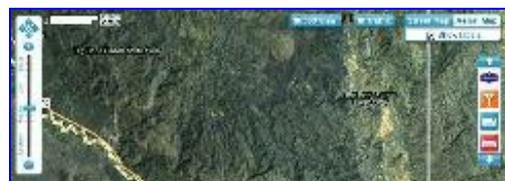


**Shumla School fireplace sign**



**Toasty toes**

The next day we finished off the drive to Big Bend Ranch State Park and claimed our campground at a place called Grassy Banks, alongside the Rio Grande River. Although, after the flood last year, the grass has almost been scoured clean, and it could now be called Sand & Rock Banks. Big Bend Ranch State Park is adjacent to Big Bend National Park, on the west side. As you can see from the maps, below, the terrain is very rugged and remote. Highway FM-170 running alongside the river here is considered to be the most scenic drive in Texas. It also provides access to the river at several points for water sports.





**Detail area map  
Section paddled in blue**



**Terrain map**

## Grassy Banks

The campsite had a shelter roof, picnic table, and pit toilet. As we settled in, Linda quickly pitched her tent off to the side and declared it a no-snoring tent zone. The Rio Grande was gurgling just a few yards away, and we were entertained with ducks playing in the water. This would be our home for several days.



**Trucks & boats at the campsite**



**Tents spread out along the  
riverbank**



**Ken's Jellyfish tent**

Ken's tent reminded me of a jellyfish with dangling tentacles. The tentacles here are actually mesh pockets into which rocks are fitted, to anchor the tent in the wind. The sand was too deep and soft here for tent stakes to do much good against a strong wind, but it did provide a soft sleeping surface.

When we checked into the park and with a local river outfitter, we discovered a surprise. The water flow was way up from it's normal average of about 250 cubic-feet-per-second (cfs), to a whopping 2,500 cfs - a ten-fold increase. Wow! The explanation was that the Mexican water authorities decided to release some water from a dam on the Rio Conchos River, which flows into the Rio Grande River just upstream at the town of Presidio. Apparently no one really knew this was coming in advance, and they only became aware of it when the daily USGS water gauge readings, available on the internet, suddenly spiked. Some work needs to be done there to get the Mexican authorities to provide more advance notice to people downstream of their pending actions.



**USGS water gauge showing spike in  
flow**

So now the question was; do we want to run the river at this high level? The outfitters were doing it in rafts, and reports from guides coming off the river varied as to the severity of the rapids, ranging from class II to class III, but all indicated that you could "line" around the two really bad rapids if you wanted.

For two days we decided to go out on hikes instead of paddling, hoping that the water level would drop. We had two fabulous day-hikes in Big Bend Ranch State Park, on trails featuring an old wax camp, a crystal-covered hill, and an old cinnabar mining area.

### **East Contrabando Trail**

This (right) is the desert plant called candelilla, or "little candle" in Spanish. I actually tried to light one slim stalk of these with a match once to see if it would burn like a candle, with no success. However, the plant is harvested in large quantities to be boiled in vats, with a dash of acid, to extract large amounts of wax from it. This wax is then sold to companies who use it in cosmetics, and products like lip balm. So a wax camp is a location where this collection and raw processing is set up. Once the area has been harvested, the workers pack up and move on to another location.



**The candelilla plant**



**A wax camp rock hut**

This camp included several stone-lined pits where the vats of water and candelilla were boiled, as well as several rock huts occupied by the workers. The area was still littered with debris, including soles of shoes, pots and pans, broken glass, etc. The pots and pans looked like they had been abandoned just yesterday, instead of 70 or more years ago.

The "Crystal Trail" turned out to be my favorite, because I'm a sucker for a pretty rock. At first we were quite disappointed, as only a few calcite crystals were being spotted along the way. But then, miles up the trail, we rounded a bend, and "Wow!" There was an entire hillside covered in opaque white rock crystals, facets sparkling in the sun like giant diamonds! This scene made the 8-mile hike that day all worthwhile to me.



**Crystal hill**



I think the crystals were either calcite or gypsum, but I'm not sure. Whatever they were, it was quite a scene. It looked like a carpet of snow, on an otherwise brown desert landscape.



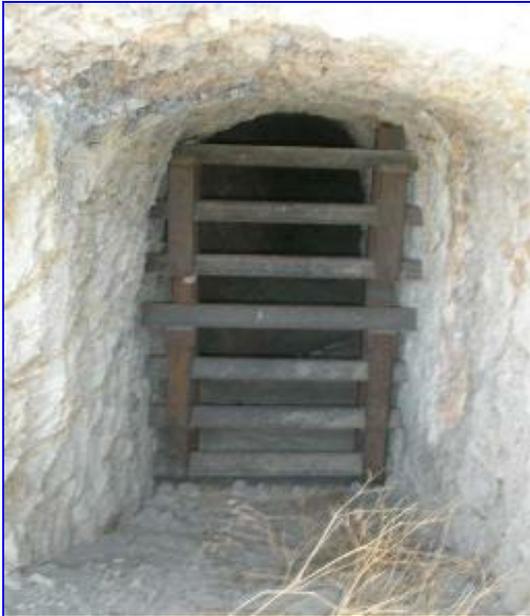
**Close-up of crystals**

## **West Contrabando Trail**

The next day's hike featured a mining area, which included several "prospects" where test holes were dug looking for valuable minerals, to fulfill men's dreams of wealth. But they almost all came up dry holes in this area. There were the ruins of several old rock homes, where the miners lived while pursuing their back-breaking work and dreams.



**Miner's hut**



**Mine shaft**

There was one mine shaft where cinnabar was found. Cinnabar comes in the form of red crystals, usually embedded in quartz, and when processed in a furnace, mercury is extracted from it, which was quite valuable prior to WWII. This was one of several places where cinnabar was found in the Big Bend area. This mine shaft has been sealed with a grate to keep out fools like me who would love to crawl in and explore.

Back in camp after two days of hiking, the water in the Rio Grande was still roaring along just as before, showing no signs of subsiding. So, are we going to paddle or not? Did we bring our canoes all this way, not to use them? Ken, Louis, Dana and John decided to "go for it", while Linda

made a precautionary decision to stay aground. Robert had been delayed in his arrival, because his rear axle burned out on the road in Sonora, and he had to get a replacement from Del Rio to fix it, so he missed this paddle.

## **Colorado Canyon**

Normally, we would paddle this 18-mile section of the Rio Grande in two days, with an overnight camp on the riverbank. But because the water was flowing so fast, we decided to run the stretch in just one day, traveling light and fast without the burden of heavy camping gear in the boats.





**Scenic put-in**

The high, fast water level had several effects. One was that boulders which normally protrude from the water were now submerged, so you didn't have to worry about crashing into them. However, there were often huge waves pushing up off these submerged boulders, so you still had to maneuver to avoid the location, or risk being swamped. Even riffles became magnified and provided more excitement than usual.



**The paddlers: Dana, John, Ken & Louis**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Setting out**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Ken runs muddy mega-riffles**

When the river widened you were greeted with relatively calm water, but it was still pushing you along at a good clip. And then you got to relax and enjoy the fantastic scenery.

A few miles into the trip, we pulled over for a rest break at a side canyon on the Mexican side of the river. We hiked through the cut in the mountain, and upon coming out the other side, we found a large stone corral, and a rock hut, used by some cowboys in days of old. Alongside were mortar holes in stone, from when ancient Indians also occupied the area, grinding beans into meal.



**Sun-sparkled water scenery**



**Canyon scenery**



**Indian mortar holes**

Back on the river, there were two rapids which were downright scary-looking. Ken and I decided to run the first one, while the others chose to line around it. I went first, got swept into a path which I didn't want, and was briefly in trouble in a hydraulic-like eddy. But I stayed upright and powered out of it. Ken maintained the

correct entry path and shot through, making it look easy. The 2nd rapid had a long series of huge standing waves, and the current looked like it would push you into them against your will. We scouted this rapid from the riverbank, and everyone chose to line down the other side, rather than tackle it afloat.



**Closed Canyon Rapids**



**Panther Canyon Rapids**

One paddler overturned his boat at Quarter Mile Rapid where the river made a sharp bend and the current was flowing right into a cliff wall. The paddler ended up floating downstream in the fast current for about 20 minutes before he could be extricated to shore. Every time we attempted to tow him laterally to an upcoming sand bar, the current would sweep us right past it before we could get there. Yikes! Meanwhile, the floating paddler was hanging onto his boat and keeping it in front of him as he should, while maintaining the proper feet-first orientation. Eventually the water gave us a break and we got him to shore. He pulled out his dry bag and donned a fresh set of dry clothes, while others bailed out his boat. Then it was back on the water again.

Eighteen miles later we ended our trip at the Grassy Banks take-out site, which was also our camp site. All we had to do was pull our boats up out of the water, and we were home! Linda awaited there to greet us. The entire 18-miles was covered in about five hours, including time for a side hike and a lunch break. That was moving fast!



**Scenery**



**Linda Gorski staying warm**

Just as the water conditions hit us with a surprise on this trip, the weather was now to do the same. A ranger was making the rounds of all the camp sites to warn campers of an oncoming cold front. It was predicted to drop temperatures into the 20's, and many campers weren't prepared for that kind of freezing cold. Campers were apparently abandoning their tents and sleeping bags and heading into the

nearby small towns to grab motel rooms to ride out the cold wave. We all decided that we had the proper equipment and clothing to handle it, so we stayed put.

Not only did the temperature dip into the 20's, but we also had SNOW - a bit of a rarity in that area. It didn't stick to the ground where we were alongside the river, but it did stick to the mountains a couple of thousand feet higher in elevation. I normally sleep in my underwear inside my sleeping bag, but this night I put on

several layers of warm clothes inside the sleeping bag, and also pulled my head down inside and cinched the opening shut with my drawstring - snug as a bug. I stayed toasty, despite the frosty temps outside. However, getting out of the bag in the morning was a most unpleasant experience. Brrr!



**Ice on tent**



**Snow on mountains**

Our original plan had been to continue paddling the next day, starting where we were at Grassy Banks, and moving 8 miles downstream to the town of Lajitas. But with the air temperature so frigid, an overturned boat could turn into a life-threatening situation with hypothermia. And with the water flowing so rapidly, we weren't confident we could keep all boats upright. So we decided to delay that second paddle until the weather warmed up in a few days. Oddly enough, the local outfitters continued putting rafts full of high school kids on the river, as previously scheduled. Meanwhile, us old folks occupied our time once again with hiking.

### **Rancherias Trail**

Our next choice for a hike was the Rancherias Trail, on the west side of Big Bend Ranch State Park. It generally follows a spring-fed creek bed up towards the mountains, and provided beautiful scenery. At right, you see Ken posing with the biggest cairn I've ever seen. This was very early on the trail, and the more miles you hiked away from the trailhead, the smaller the cairns became. When we finally turned around to come back, the cairns were down to just clusters of two or three small rocks.



**Ken with giant cairn**



**John hiking**

Here you see John, red-faced from the cold, dressed for cold weather hiking with heavy coat, sweat pants, gloves and two wool caps. Snow-capped mountains are in the background.

One of the neat features along this trail was a hillside pock-marked with small caves like a giant Swiss cheese. Several of the larger caves showed signs of occupation, like this



one, with fire-blackened ceilings, stone walls in front, and mortar holes nearby. They might have also been occupied by early cowboys tending their herds, as one had the name "Gibson" inscribed inside.



**Robert & Louis  
with Indian cave**



**Ron and Ken in the lead**

Finally the cold spell broke, with temperatures predicted to rise to 60. We took our time in the morning, lounging around, watching the thermometer. When it got to 50, we pushed our boats in the water and started our trip to Lajitas. Robert had his truck fixed by now and had arrived, ready to get his boat wet and join us. Another solo paddler showed up at the put-in with a kevlar boat - his name was Ron, and he seemed to know what he was doing. Ron paddled along with us, for safety in numbers.

A local private school sends all their 8th-graders out on a wilderness field trip in Big Bend at this time of year. They took turns in groups doing hiking, primitive camping, and river rafting. I wish I had gone to a school like that! Here (right) you see the kids in guided outfitter rafts. Some of the rafts full of girls were singing songs non-stop, which drove me a little batty - I like quiet in the outdoors. And of course, the rafts full of boys were horse-playing and joking around. Some of the guides actually managed to get their batch of kids working together, and doing fun things like paddling in synchronization, or spinning in circles. I'm sure they all had great stories to tell later back home, along with good memories to last a lifetime. And just maybe, some of them will grow up bitten by a call for the outdoors.



**Kids in rafts**



**Windshield view**

Left: A scenic view of some Big Bend mountains from inside Ken's car, with two boats on top, headed back to the campsite. Ken and John had to do some creative roping to get both canoes secured on top, with one boat tilted up on-edge atop the other. It looked like a big spider web up there, but it worked.

At this point our planned water adventure was complete, but we still had several more days of hiking to do before returning to civilization. Our home base for this phase was a primitive campsite on the west side of Big Bend



National Park, called Terlingua Abajo, which means "Terlingua South". The larger town of Terlingua is to the north, so-named because when it was founded there were three languages spoken there: English, Spanish, and Indian. In the photo (right), you see the warming sunrise creeping down the sheer cliff face of Mesa de Anguila, with St. Elena Canyon as the large cleft. There is not even a pit toilet here - pick your bush. But there is a nice spring-fed creek which was wonderful for evening outdoor baths.



**Camp sunrise**



**Camp guest**

Every evening a little kangaroo rat would appear and scurry about amongst our feet and under the camp tables, looking for crumbs to eat. He was careful to stay in the shadows out of direct moonlight, and the slightest movement would send him scurrying off. I finally managed to snap this photo, just pointing my camera into the dark, and getting him at the right moment. Speaking of critters, from this campsite we also had the pleasure of hearing coyotes howl every night, somewhere nearby.

The hikers here are posing with the remains of an old car in the campground. We had six hikers ready to do some exploration, looking for specific features which had been researched in advance by Louis Aulbach and Dana Enos, who had studied books and maps to provide clues for these little known sites.



**The hikers: Linda, Robert, Ken, Dana, Louis & John**



**Crossing Terlingua Creek on stepping stones**

The first day was spent hiking north along the west side of the Rattlesnake Mountains, looking for an old brick kiln that was reportedly built in the area near natural clay deposits in the hillsides. We discovered many neat things, including a large antler, hillsides covered with fossil clams, a horse skeleton, crystal rocks and more. But we could find no signs of any brick kiln.

On day two, we used a map which Louis cleverly put together, overlaying an old 1930's map on top of a current topographical map. After beating the bushes with no success, we climbed a hill and surveyed the area for any signs of the brick kiln. Even with binoculars we



spotted no clues. But from our high perch, we studied the terrain features closely, including the modern zig-zag fence line, picked a point in the distance where it "should" be, and upon hiking to that spot, that's exactly where it was!



**Linda Gorski amidst bricks**

The kiln was no longer standing, but there were several piles of bricks, and plenty of debris showing human occupation. The debris is just junk, but can be most interesting to explore. We found various fragments showing porcelain from Germany and Belgium, old west firearm cartridges, Circle A ginger ale bottles, Vicks Vapo-Rub jars, and so forth. While in the area, we also visited the old Molinar ranch site, and the Valenzuela ranch site.



**Farming village home**

On our last day of hiking we headed south to try and find an old Mexican cemetery, which Louis and Dana found a reference to in one journal article about the area. No other publication about Big Bend cemeteries makes any mention of this site, so we eagerly accepted the challenge of trying to find it. Terlingua Abajo was a large farming community from about 1880 into the 1940's, raising crops and livestock on the fertile flood plain to support the mining population of the area. They even laid stone canals to divert

creek water to their fields. The photo (left) shows the ruins of the largest home in the area. I've counted 28 home ruins altogether here, most of which are now just rectangular outlines of rocks where the walls have tumbled over.

There are two other cemeteries in the area, on small hilltops right next to each other, which we had seen before. One has 10 graves and the other 13. Graves in this countryside are marked by piles of rocks, which keep the wild animals from digging into the shallow burials. Wood crosses are usually erected, but as of this date, they are usually rotted away and fallen over, the names carved into them no longer legible. One of the cemeteries is interesting because the arrangement of graves on the hillside is in the shape of a giant cross. After reviewing those sites for the two new hikers to the area, we branched off looking for the new mystery cemetery.

Since the tradition in the area is to put cemeteries on hilltops, that's where we were logically looking, huffing and puffing our way to the hilltops, but to no avail. So we then just followed the written description literally, and in short order, we stumbled upon it! It was to our surprise that we found it on flat open land, hidden amidst the brush - it was virtually invisible until you walked right up on it, since the brush is much higher than the piles of stones. This cemetery had about 36 graves by my count, making it a fairly large one for the area. I say "about 36", because it's hard to be sure. Some piles of stones seem to be much larger than is needed for one person, and may contain two, so you're not really sure how to count them.



**Found it!**

And with that, our time in Big Bend was up. We managed to complete our desired paddling despite the high water, and we achieved both of the new discoveries we

were seeking on our land hiking. It was a fun and adventurous 10 days with a fantastic bunch of people, amidst spectacular scenery. A few days of cold weather can't spoil all that. We'll be back again.

Ken Anderson hadn't had enough yet, and he stayed an additional week to do volunteer work with the Sierra Club, helping the Park Service dig some runoff diversion ditches to save the rare Big Bend Mosquitofish, whose range consists of only a single spring-fed pond in the Rio Grande Village campground, and whose population at one time was down to just three fish; two males and one female.



**The author, John Rich**

Photo by Louis Aulbach



# Buffalo Bayou Regatta

March 13, 2010

by

**Christy Long**

38th Annual Buffalo Bayou Regatta  
15 miles from San Felipe to Sesquicentennial Park  
March 13, 2010

Finish time: 2 hours and 8 minutes

Christy Long and John Orht tandem, Second Place, Senior class

It was a beautiful day to be on the Bayou. John Orht and I along with several hundred paddlers raced along at a fast pace vying for the perfect spot, which was always in front of the next boat.

This event is a nice mix of racers and recreational paddlers. Everyone is racing against the clock but you want to be at the finish line by noon to get your choice of free lunch and goodies.



**Charles Zipprian and his son Chance  
paddle to the finish line.**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Skip Johnson (wood boat) gives a  
high five as he finishes the 15 mile  
course**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Sophie Lopez placed third in the  
"Solo Unlimited, Women's  
Division"**

Photo by Linda Gorski

(Click on the thumbnail images to display a larger version in a separate window.)

Houston Canoe Club members supported the race in a variety of ways. Below is a list of some of the HCC Members that participated in the 2010 event, one way or another:

Carl Gilson - Race Director (great event Carl)

Bob Arthur - Starting Judge (regatta participant since 1983)

Henny Halliburton - registration table (new member)

Linda Gorski - HCC table (talked to lots of people)

Paul Woodcock - HCC table (got forms for other races)

Ann Derby - HCC table (promoted the club to passersby)

Frazer Baker - Sweep boat (headed them down stream)

Ken Anderson - Sweep boat (gave free stroke lessons)

Harmon Everett - Sweep boat (the last boat in the race)

Robert Killian - Sweep boat (making plans for next year's regatta)

Bruce Heilberg - racer

John Orht - racer

Skip Johnson - racer

Sophie Lopez - racer - placed third in the "Solo Unlimited, Women's Division"

Charles Zipprian - racer

Chance Zipprian - racer

Billy Welborn - racer

Mike Pollard - racer

Justin Gosses - raer

Christy Long - racer

Check race results at

- [Buffalo Bayou Regatta](#)
- [Race Results \(pdf file\)](#)



**Boats filled the hill at Sesquicentennial Park after the Buffalo Bayou Regatta.**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Paul Woodcock and Ann Derby man the Houston Canoe Club's hospitality table at the Regatta.**

Photo by Linda Gorski



**Carl Gilson, one of the Regatta organizers, announces the prize-**

**winners.**

Photo by Linda Gorski

Did you know that Bob Arthur supplied the concrete balustrades, shown here, that surround Sesquicentennial Park? In addition to being an HCC member he is also Chairman of the Bayou Preservation Association's Paddle Trail Committee and has been a Regatta participant since 1983.



**Bob Arthur with balustrades**

Photo by Linda Gorski



# San Marcos River Cleanup 2010

March 6th

by

Robert Langley

When everything else in the hill country has dried to a trickle and the skin between your toes starts to crack from dehydration you can still paddle the San Marcos. So on Saturday March 6th paddlers from around the state gathered to give back to the river that has given us so much. Perhaps it would be more technically correct to say that we gathered to take back what should never have been given in the first place. In any case the Houston Canoe Club was well represented by 14 members (Christy Long, Rika Muhl, Harmon Everett, Frank Ohrt, Marilyn and Cliff Peery, Billy Welborn, Louis Aulbach, Bill Grimes, Debbie Snow, Tracy Caldwell, Robert Killian and Dutch Becker) and 3 off-list helpers (Julie Luck, Dennis Moroney, and Elizabeth Dennis) as we cleaned the section from San Marcos River Retreat to Skulls crossing.

Anyone that has paddled this section of the San Marcos in the last ten years knows that this has become a major tuber hang out. Besides having abysmal taste in music, a story for another day, they leave behind a LOT of beer cans. So while volunteers on other sections of the river collected old tires, plastic bottles, refrigerators and who knows what else, we picked up beer cans, beer cans and did I mention beer cans. One lady we met cleaning a sandbar on the side of the river told us she had picked up a thousand beer cans. I told her I was impressed that she had kept counting that long.



**Paddlers get underway on the San Marcos River Cleanup.**

Photo by Rob Langley



**Members of the HCC collected an outrageous number of beer cans.**

Photo by Rob Langley

To be fair we also picked up several dozen pairs of sunglasses and copious quantities of flip-flops. Had we had twice as many paddlers and a little more time we probably could have picked up twice as much trash. However unlike other cleanups that are mostly about education, we left the river noticeably cleaner than we found it. I did not take a final tally but I picked up 30 trash bags at the leaders meeting and brought a box from home and we ran out of bags before we ran out of trash. Tom Goynes arranged a place for our trash to be picked up just upstream of Cotton Seed rapids so we were able to run it with light boats. By the time we reached the takeout at Scull's we had filled our remaining trash bags. Tired but not beaten we loaded our boats and remaining trash and headed back to the San Marcos River Retreat.

When we got back to camp we were ready for a hot shower which was appreciated by all, particularly any bystanders with functioning olfactory senses. (Fermenting river muck has an aroma all its own.) We were then off to Shady Grove Camp Ground for a complementary BBQ dinner. The barbeque was outstanding surpassed only by the dessert selection and the company.



**Piles and piles of trash!**

Photo by Rob Langley



**Enjoying the barbeque dinner.**

Photo by Rob Langley

This is always a fun event. You get to meet paddlers from around the state including many of the who's who in Texas paddling. I contend that there are only two degrees of freedom in the paddling community. (You and the people you know, know everyone. That's another story for another day.)

This event and ones like it are one of the reasons the paddling community is such a close knit group. This was also a day when the paddling community showed the community at large that we are not just river users but river caretakers. My hat is off to all those that gave their time to give a little bit back to the river.



**Frank Ohrt at work.**

Photo by Rob Langley

