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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.

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

Next Meeting Announcement

When: May 13, 2009
Where: Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas
Directions: First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just East of Hillcroft.
Speaker: Paddling Anglers in Canoes and Kayaks (PACK)
Speaker Bio:
Description: The program for May (which starts at 7 p.m.) will highlight the activities of PACK - Paddling Anglers in Canoes and Kayaks. Formed in March 1998 with about ten enthusiasts looking to share the fun of Gulf Coast fishing from small boats, the group now boasts over 380 members. Meetings have been held monthly since 1998 on the third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The group currently meets at the REI store on Westheimer Boulevard. PACK's focus has always been on camaraderie and fun while supporting safe legal fishing from kayaks and canoes and advocating environmentally sound use of marine resources. PACK sponsored the largest ever canoe and kayak fishing tournament and BBQ on the Gulf Coast in April of 2001. The group continues to hold tournaments each year and makes numerous trips, including weekenders to places like Matagorda Island and Goose Island State Parks, Cedar Bayou and the Padre Island National Seashore. PACK is continually planning new paddling and fishing adventures throughout the year. Most members fish in saltwater because of the proximity of the bays and Gulf to Houston. Kayaks have become the boat of choice because they are easier to maneuver in the frequent winds along the coast. Meetings have included a variety of speakers about fishing and boating but mostly the group focuses on planning outings and swapping stories about previous adventures over cold refreshments. There is no better place to learn about canoe and kayak fishing the Texas Gulf Coast. For more information on PACK see www.packtx.org

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

Last Meeting Minutes

Date: April 8, 2009

Recorder: John Ohrt

Minutes: HOUSTON CANOE CLUB GENERAL MEETING April 8, 2009
Bayland Park Community Center Commodore Bill Grimes was out of town so Vice Commodore Ken McDowell called the meeting to order. Officers were named and introduced. Paul Woodcock has agreed to be Boatswain. Linda Gorski is working with John Rich and Louis Aulbach on the newsletter. She is looking for content. New members and visitors were greeted. The minutes of the April general meeting were discussed and approved as they had appeared in the newsletter. John Ohrt gave a Safety Talk by reading from accident reports out of the current issue of the AW Journal, and discussing how members could apply learning from the mistakes of others to avoid similar incidents Skip Johnson gave an excellent and enjoyable program by describing how he builds boats out of foam strips (instead of wood) coated with fiberglass. His technique creates a tough light canoe. Skip brought his boat inside to show, and described how it performed on the recent week long Big Bend trip with rapids, camping gear, wind and sand to deal with. It did real well. There were lots of questions by the members on the various facets of construction. Fleet Captain Donna Grimes was also out of town, so Recorder John Ohrt gave the trip report: past trips included the Y'all come Paddle on the San Marcos which got in a beautiful weekend of spring paddling sandwiched between two bad ones, the all women's paddle on Village Creek where the deluge did not dampen the spirits of the dauntless damsels (the cabin helped); upcoming trips were discussed which included a possible Easter in Arkansas, an Easter Spring Creek paddle, the Buddy Paddle on the San Marcos, and the Memorial Day trip to the Columbus Loop on the Colorado. Ken McDowell discussed the recent court decision favoring preservation of a wilderness corridor down the Neches River, and disfavoring Dallas damming it up. Members used the last part of the meeting to write letters to congressmen and senators who are influential in the final decision. Ken mailed them. Ken also announced that some fifteen books have been donated to start a club library. Anyone who wishes to donate more books, or check out and read the ones we have, is welcome. They should be available at the general meetings. It being close to 9:00, the meeting was adjourned. Some members stopped at Jax Grill on the way home for fellowship and fries.

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

New Members

No New Members

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

Items For Sale

Item: Canoe - Old Town Discovery 119
Description: Has pedestal, and can provide the wood seat. Used infrequently, very good condition. See Old Town site for info:
http://www.oldtowncanoe.com/canoe/generalFamily/discovery_119.html
Also, reviews at:
<http://www.paddling.net/Review/showReviews.html?prod=26>
Asking Price: \$\$425
Contact Name: Louis Aulbach
Contact Phone: 713-683-8379
Contact Email: lfa@hal-pc.org

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Item: Supermax by Seda Kevlar C1
Description: *Supermax* by *Seda*. Kevlar C1. A C1 is a decked canoe that usually resembles a kayak. Paddlers kneel rather than sit with legs outstretched. This boat is about 12 feet long and a solo racing C1 from the late 1970s. Still in excellent shape. Fun to paddle. Easy to roll. Can be converted to a kayak, although a conversion kit will have to be handmade. Includes thigh straps and old neoprene skirt.
Asking Price: \$\$100
Contact Name: Phil Montgomery
Contact Phone: 713-502-4209 Mobile 713-348-2542 Work
Contact Email: pmontgom1@yahoo.com

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Item: Atom by Dagger C1
Description: *Atom* by *Dagger*. This is a solo C1 plastic whitewater canoe. The Atom is a tough reliable boat. Takes lots of punishment. Includes sprayskirt. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqbb5iwJtFM> to see an Atom in action. C1s are great boats, especially for kayakers who like a challenge.
Asking Price: \$\$200
Contact Name: Phil Montgomery
Contact Phone: 713-502-4209 Mobile 713-348-2542 Work
Contact Email: pmontgom1@yahoo.com

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Item: Canoe - Old Town Discovery 169
Description: For Sale: Old Town Discovery 169
Blue. Good condition.
Has skid plates.
From the Old Town web site:
Discovery 169

These value-packed recreational canoes are made tough, rugged and unsinkable, thanks to our 3-layer process. And they're also made to perform. Agile, stable and easy to handle, Discovery is sure to be a family favorite for years of outdoor enjoyment.

* Roto-molded decks with grab handles
* Ash carrying yoke and thwart

- * Vinyl gunwales
- * Black blow molded seats

Length - 16' 9" / 5.1 m
Width - 37" / 93.9 cm
Width at 4" Waterline - 35" / 88.9 cm
Bow Height - 23" / 58.4 cm
Depth - 15" / 38.1 cm
Weight - 85 lbs / 38.5 kg
Max Load Range - 1,350 - 1,400 lbs
Suggested Retail - \$1,049.00 US

http://www.oldtowncanoe.com/canoes/generalFamily/discovery_169.html

Asking Price: \$\$325

Contact Name: Louis Aulbach

Contact Phone: 713-683-8379

Contact Email: lfa@hal-pc.org

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Item: Dagger Vesper Touring Kayak

Description: Dagger Vesper Touring Kayak. Excellent condition. Length 13'10". Width 23.75 inches. Weight 45 lbs. Nice little touring kayak for lakes, rivers and bays. Easily adjustable footpegs. Works well for the smaller paddler, under 5'10" or so and less than 175 lbs. Good southeast Texas type of boat. Email Bob Arthur for photo.

Asking Price: \$\$450

Contact Name: Bob Arthur

Contact Phone: 713-681-0888

Contact Email: rwarthur@oplink.net

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Items Wanted

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

Vintage Wagon Wheel Found on Buffalo Bayou

by
Linda Gorski and Louis Aulbach

A few weeks ago one of our friends called to say he had found something interesting while exploring the banks of Buffalo Bayou. This discovery was made a few months after Hurricane Ike had churned up the waters and eroded some of the banks along the bayou.

What our friend found was part of a most interesting wagon wheel that just begs more research.

The wagon wheel was discovered about one quarter mile downstream from Allen's Landing and across from the Gable Street Power plant in the Arsenal Block curve.



Louis Aulbach points to the spot where the wheel was found.

Photo by Linda Gorski



Photo by Linda Gorski

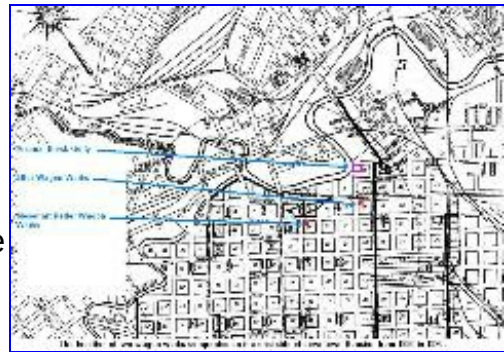
Research into Houston's Sanborn Insurance Maps indicates that there was a wagon wheel maker (Mosehart & Keller Co. Wagon and Carriage Factory) just north of the bayou at Caroline Street and Franklin Avenue operating in the late 1800's and early 1900s. However, an existing building in the 100 block of Crawford Street, at Commerce Avenue, is the old Eller Wagon Works that dates from 1909.

Further adding to the mystery of the wagon wheel, a newspaper article from the February 25, 1896 issue of the Galveston Daily News says that in its regular weekly meeting, the Houston City Council passed a resolution that trash and garbage was allowed to be disposed of in the gully at the end of Crawford Street just a block away from the Eller Wagon Works.



The arsenal block gully was right at the end of Crawford Street. There is no doubt that the news article was referring to that gully as a dump. The carriage maker and repair shop could have been cleaning out their bin of replaced carriage wheels and simply tossed our wheel into the dump. Slowly, over time, the wheel settled to the bottom of the gully's mud, even after the gully was filled in. The wheel lay in the mud for a century until the rains of Hurricane Ike scoured the bottom mud of the bayou and released the wheel from its muddy bonds. It floated up and settled gently on the opposite bank as the water subsided. There it lay, waiting to tell its story.

The wheel was probably thrown away after 1896 when the City sanctioned the use of the gully for a trash dump. The intricately hand-carved hub makes me think that the wheel actually dates from earlier in the 19th century and the wheel simply had worn out. The carriage was brought to the wagon shop for a replacement. Judging from the small width of the wheel it was a light duty carriage or wagon that may have served as a personal car for one of the many businessmen who lived in the Upper Third Ward.



Map by Louis Aulbach

Are these garbage disposal practices of the late 19th century still impacting today's Buffalo Bayou as artifacts such as this wagon wheel are washed out of former trash gullies after big storms?

Here's what we do know about the wagon wheel.

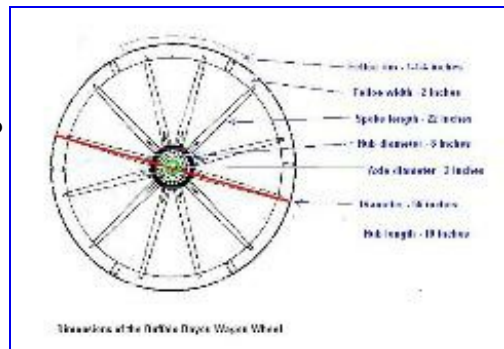
The wheel is 56 inches in diameter.

The spokes are 22 in length.

The hub appears to be handcarved and not turned on a lathe. The axle hole is approximately 2 inches in diameter and the outside measurements of the hub are 10 long and 8 in diameter.

The outer rim surface of the felloe (the exterior rim or a segment of the rim of a wheel supported by the spokes) measures 1 ¼ inches and the rim is 2 inches thick.

Our research on this wagon wheel continues. Was this broken wagon wheel, beyond repair, thrown out as trash by the wagon wheel maker? Was it damaged when someone tried to cross the bayou in his wagon? How old is this wagon wheel? Where did it come from? What kind of wood is it made from? What kind of a wagon was it used on?



Sketch by Louis Aulbach

We have sought information from many websites dedicated to wagon wheels – and there are a few! None of the wheels shown on the web match exactly the measurements of this wagon wheel. We've concluded that it could possibly be from an ice wagon (there was an ice plant nearby), a fruit and vegetable wagon (on its way to Market Square to sell goods), an ambulance, a surrey or wagon for personal use.

If anyone out there has information to share about this wagon wheel, we'd love to hear from you. And if you've pulled anything interesting from the Bayou, send us a photo and we'll try to help you research it.

GROOVY New Rules for Disposing Human Waste on Rio Grande

**by
Linda Gorski**

Nothing can spoil a river trip so quickly as the discovery of human waste and toilet paper at a prime camping spot. To protect the quality of the Rio Grande ecosystem and to enhance the wilderness experience of a river trip, all users of the Rio Grande River must apply the Golden Rule to the issue of human waste – pack it out!

The National Park Service requires all commercial outfitters and private river parties using the Rio Grande to carry out their solid human waste. In fact, your trip leader must sign a document pledging that each person on the trip is carrying out his or her waste and fines can be imposed if this requirement is not heeded.

Until recently, this meant carrying out solid human waste in a bagless system compatible with RV dump stations. These bagless systems are washable reusable toilets more commonly referred to as groovers. In river rafting terminology, a "groover" is a rocket box which serves as a latrine. (In case you've ever wondered, the name comes from the grooves you get on your thighs and buttocks when you sit on the thin metal rim of the box to make your deposit!) Bagless containers can be emptied at most RV camps for a nominal fee or at dump stations in Big Bend National Park for free. Currently these bagless systems can be rented in the Big Bend at Desert Sports (432-371-2727), one of the outfitters in the Terlingua area, or purchased online from a number of sources. Unfortunately, on a group canoe or kayak trip it's usually a source of contention as to who gets to carry the group groover in his or her boat.

Fortunately for all of us, the National Park Service has recently approved for use a personal bag system for carrying out waste. These bags contain a chemical powder (believe it or not called "Pooh Powder") that activates the decaying process and includes an odor neutralizer. They are very easy to use, store compactly in your canoe or kayak and there is no smell or leakage. And the best part is that these biodegradable bags can be disposed of in any trash container when you get off the river. Thus, no more worrying who's going to carry the groover or clean the "group groover" at the dump station in the park.

Two of us on a recent trip to the Great Unknown of the Rio Grande used this personal bag system. I used a product called the Restop 2 Wilderness Waste Containment bags which I purchased at Desert Sports in Terlingua for approximately \$3.50 a bag. Each bag is good for one use. The Restop 2 consists of a Mylar outer bag that is gas impervious and contains a large plastic inner bag that you unfold and squat over. The Mylar outer bag is sturdy enough to hold the plastic bag in place but you can also dig a depression in the sand and place the bag in it for more structure. Also, each Restop 2 bag contains an ample supply of toilet paper for one use and an antiseptic wipe to clean your hands. When finished, you simply fold the plastic bag inside the foil bag and ziplock it shut. Store the foil bag in your boat until the end of the trip and then dispose of it in any trash can at the takeout.

One online source (and the cheapest price I found) for the Restop2 is <http://www.backcountryoutlet.com/outlet/RES0003/Restop-2-Disposable-Solid-Waste-Bag-5-Pack.html>

Another person on the trip used a product called the Wag Bag Waste Kit which includes a disposal bag, toilet paper and hand sanitizer. It is designed to be used with a portable toilet but the user simply shoveled his waste into the bag. At the takeout the bags were disposed of in a trash bin. REI sells individual Wag Bags for about \$3 a bag or less if you buy a case. Online costs are cheaper from either <http://www.rei.com/product/662978> or http://www.campmor.com/outdoor/gear/Product___11129). Both of us who used these bags experienced no leakage and no smell whatsoever even though we were on the river for six days in 95 degree heat.

As our trip leader was undertaking the dirty task of cleaning the "Group Groover" at the dump station in the park, (and having watched us just toss our waste bags into the nearest bin) he indicated that from now on he would encourage paddlers on his trips to use these individual waste containment bags.

Boat Builders Corner

by
Skip Johnson

Do you really want to build a canoe/kayak?

A poor question for this writer to ask since I've got a boat-a-year habit (I never met a boat I didn't like, or built/owned one I didn't love). But this column is about building boats so let's paddle on.

Why build a canoe/kayak? There are a lot of very good boats out there and a good used one will probably cost less than the materials for a similar homebuilt boat.

Reasons to build your own vary from the occasional need for something specialized like a multiman Safari racing canoe to the more common desire to build your own boat just because you want to build your own boat. If you have Safari fever, you're already a lost soul, beyond hope and we won't have any more discussion in that direction in this column but let's do talk about the whys and how's of building your own boat.

Why build your own boat? Part of the answer is in the question. When you're finished you can say "My own boat". If that phrase resonates within you, you're already close to the point of no return. No matter what the reason, that basic desire to build your own boat is fundamental to the process, there are only two other absolute requirements; first, a place to build the boat and second, at a minimum, the bemused tolerance of your significant other. All else is just details.

Here in the Houston area, the only overriding requirement for place is that it remains pretty dry. It's also fairly important that the place be pretty well lit (as I age this gets a higher priority). I'm not qualified to give advice on the last item except to say I've been fortunate in this regard and that it helps to pull your head out every once in a while.

What to build? For a first boat, I'd strongly recommend a small boat, so the rest of this will concentrate on solo canoes/kayaks. There are two basic approaches to building small boats. First is a stitch and glue type boat like the CLC kayak kits and second are strip built boats. I've got a real soft spot in my heart for the strip built boats so let me say a few things about the stitch and glue types first and then I'll talk at length about the strippers.

For a stitch and glue type boat there are two choices. One is to build something from a kit. CLC and a number of other companies do a very good job with this format, I've got no direct experience with the process but I've seen a number of good looking boats done this way. Second if you want to really roll your own then there a number of plans available such as Jim Michalak's Toto, double-paddle canoe, built from two sheets of 5.2mm underlay plywood.

On to strippers. Once again there are two choices. You can strip in wood or one of the new structural foams. Wood doesn't need much of an introduction.



Lost Souls of the Safari

Photo by Skip Johnson

Organic, renewable, good strength to weight ratio and just plain gorgeous when finished bright (clear). The structural foams, divynylcell or corecell, are relatively new products (compared to wood), which allow building a boat that's a little lighter and tougher, but not near as pretty.



Foam Stripper

Photo by Skip Johnson

Tough choice, I cheat and have some of both. I use the tougher foam cored stripper boats for trips like the GURG

(great unknown Rio Grande) and the Colorado 100 adventure race. The wood strippers see less use nowadays but they are too pretty to ignore and it's still soul satisfying to take my little 12' EasyB out for an early morning paddle.

The cost for either choice, both in dollars, time and effort are similar. The formwork is identical, tools are virtually identical. Subsequent articles will walk through the steps of building a little solo stripper, both in foam and wood, highlighting the differences where applicable. Please feel free to contact me at skipj@oplink.net if you have any questions, comments or suggestions on the direction this column travels.



Woodstripper

Photo by Skip Johnson



My own boat - the Easy B

Photo by Skip Johnson

Why I Paddle: Commodore's Inaugural Message

**by
Bill Grimes**

I want you to ask yourselves, "Why do I paddle?"

Why do I put out all of the expense of paddling? After renting boats for 10 years, I went down to buy a boat and paddle and came home with canoe, 2 paddles, PFD, car rack, straps. Then there was: dry bags & net gear bags, quick-dry sun-protective garments, D-rings, saddles... the list goes on & on. Some of you are on a quest for the perfect boat or perfect paddle. My quest is the ultimate paddling shoes that really stay on my feet.

After 20 years, Donna & I have accumulated 9 boats, a dozen paddles and if I could find all of our gear, I estimate it would fill 3 to 4 – 55 gallon oil barrels. And that estimate does not include camping gear. I don't believe we have the most gear or the largest fleet in the club.

Then there are car racks to carry your boat to the water. For 3 years in a row, Donna & I went of car show and came back dissatisfied with what we found. We finally came to the conclusion that there is no vehicle that looks great, is priced right, has low gas consumption and carries 6 boats. We're keeping our old Ford F150 until Toyota creates the Prius truck. This was just another reminder that we were in a paddle based life style.

Ask yourself...Why do I put up with hours or days of preparation and travel just to go paddling?

A local paddle requires organizing (& often repairing your gear), loading the car the night before. So you have to get up at 6:00 am for 9:00 put-in. But the HCC does not paddle only local waters. In Texas, there's the Medina, Pecos, the Rio Grande in Big Bend. Then we paddle the rivers in North Carolina, Wyoming, Minnesota and even Canada. So far, the airlines have not figured out how to strap my very aerodynamic canoes on their wings or get it through baggage handling. So, we drive.

Why do I abandon my non-paddling family to go paddling? My answer was to marry a paddler. I know that some of you did and some of you thought you married a paddler.

Why do I put up with the risk?

I ask myself this question after every nasty swim and I continue to the repeat it for several days. Let me point out some facts:

- A (PFD) Personal Flotation Device is not a fashion accessory.
- Most of our meetings begin with "Safety Minutes" – safety hints.
- You signed a disclaimer when you joined the club.
- You should know by now that is can be a dangerous sport.

So, why do you paddle? Each of you has your own unique answer. For me it's escaping the hustle and bustle and traffic of Houston, touch with nature, quiet wonder of the water and the scenery and the thrill of running rapids.

I know we share this joy, because..I've seen you tear up while recalling an encounter with wild life. I been with you when we paddled into a hatchery where fuzzy headed egret hatchings calling from their nest and everyone was silently absorbing the moment. I've heard you tell campfire stories of mythic encounters

with legendary rapids and awesome waves. I've seen flying laughing children and parents on rope swings, kayakers walking 2" taller after their first combat roll and sunsets that fill painted limestone canyons with a rosy orange glow. And I am totally hooked on paddling

We paddle because we really, really, really enjoy paddling!! It's this joy of paddling that we share, that needs to be broadcast to our friends, our neighbors and fellow Houstonians. Later in this meeting I'll announce the formation of a Membership Enhancement Task Force. I'm inviting you to join us and help spread this message.

The Final Paddle: Farewell to Nancy Burns

Celebration of Her life - San Marcos River Retreat May 24, 2009 2 p.m.

by

Edited by Linda Gorski

Our fellow paddler, Nancy Esther Burns, died peacefully on Easter Sunday, with family by her side.

She was born on August 24, 1931 in Rochester, New York to Alfred and Esther Moxon. Her brother Al Junior was born a year later. Nancy lived in the Rochester area and she married Bill Burns in September, 1950. They moved to Amarillo, Texas where Bill had grown up, and to Oklahoma City, where their daughter Kathy was born the following year. In 1952 the young family moved to the Canal Zone and the Republic of Panama, where Bill Junior was born in 1959, Barbara in 1961, and Jeanine in 1963.



Nancy Burns

Photo by Fraser Baker

In 1973, Nancy and Bill divorced and she moved to San Antonio, Texas with Barbara and Jeanine. Nancy lived and worked in San Antonio until 1997, when she moved to the Fredericksburg area, where she lived at the Evergreen Villa apartments. In May 2008 Nancy was diagnosed with cancer and in November she moved to the Fredericksburg Nursing Center, where she received dedicated and compassionate care with support from the Hill Country Memorial Hospice Program.

Nancy is survived by her four children, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren, as well as her brother Al and his family. She also leaves numerous friends and penpals from her many interests she was a dedicated river paddler and hiking enthusiast, and throughout the years she was a member of the Texas River Protection Association, Alamo City Rivermen, Hill Country Red Hat Society, Sierra Club, Sweet Adelines, Audubon Society, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Austin, as well as theater groups, church missions and bottle digging clubs in the Republic of Panama.

Donations and memorials can be sent to the Texas River Protection Association, 444 Pecan Park Drive, San Marcos, Texas 78666; or the Hill Country Memorial Hospice Program, PO Box 835, Fredericksburg, Texas 78666, or the charity of your choice

A Celebration of Life gathering is planned for May 24 at 2 p.m. at the San Marcos River Retreat in San Marcos (Tom Goynes place). The family is inviting all Nancy's old paddling buddies to come and is hoping you'll be able to share "Mom" stories with them. Donna Grimes is organizing a roster of who is coming from the Houston Canoe Club and who might be willing to bring food to share with everyone. Contact Donna at donna.grimes@mindspring.com before May 10 to let her know if you'll be there and what you can bring.

Dragon Boat Races at Allen's Landing May 2, 2009

Allen's Landing, Downtown Houston May 2, 2009 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

by

Sereniah Breland

Dragon boating racing is a competition in which a traditional Hong Kong style BuK Dragon Boats measuring 40 feet in length, 4 feet in width, and carry 20 paddlers, 1 drummer, and 1 steersperson are used to propel the boat forward against other teams. Teams race down a course ranging from 250 - 1000 meters which lasts about 45 seconds to a whole minute. For pictures and video, visit www.texasdragonboat.com (<http://www.texasdragonboat.com/>) or go to: R:\Public\Texas Dragon Boat Festival 2008.

Race Day: The actual race will be on Saturday, May 2 from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm at Allen's Landing (100 Main Houston, TX 77002). The day is filled with various cultural performances and activity booths.
For more information contact:

Sereniah Breland
Support Services Director
City of Sugar Land
2700 Town Center Blvd. N.
Sugar Land, Tx 77479
281.831.9963 mobile
281.275.2226 direct
Dragon Boat Race
sbreland@sugarlandtx.gov

Focus on a New Member: Sereniah Breland

by

Sereniah Breland is one of the newest additions to the Houston Canoe Club. Also new to the Houston area, she is interested in finding paddling friends to explore the great outdoors. She owns a 12' Old Town Sport Kayak and has ventured to the bay side of Surfside and Galveston immediately upon arrival to Houston. When not leisurely paddling, she serves the City of Sugar Land as the Support Services Director and enjoys sports, reading and spending time with her Doberman, Bacchus.



Sereniah Breland

Upcoming River Trips

HCC Trips:

- Date:** Saturday, May 02, 2009
Title: Medina River Cleanup
Inclusive Dates: May 2
Description: We hope you will join us by boat or by land for the Eighth Annual Medina River Cleanup on May 2, 2009. Rain or drought, the Medina River Cleanup will be held without fail on that day. Each year between 100 and 200 people from cities and towns across Texas come to clean up the river, its banks and crossings
- Registration will be from 9-12 AM at the Bandera City Park at the dam. Your donations go to grow the fund and cover the expenses for the annual river cleanup.
- 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 Cecelia Gill by phone 832 741 2713, or by email whitewaterider@yahoo.com.
- ###
- Date:** Saturday, May 16, 2009
Title: Bay Day on Kemah Boardwalk
Inclusive Dates: 5/16
Description: Bay Day 2009 is scheduled for May 16, 2009 at the Kemah Boardwalk. There will be many activities that HCC paddlers may enjoy. HCC will have a booth and could use some help with members manning this booth at one hour intervals
- 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 Donna Daniels by phone 713 838 7056, or by email dkdaniel_131@yahoo.com.
- ###
- Date:** Sunday, May 17, 2009
Title: Lake Charlotte
Inclusive Dates: May 17
Description: Lake Charlotte is a pretty little lake off the Trinity only a short distance from Houston. Meet between 9:00 & 9:30 and be out maybe 3 - 5 hours. Bring sunscreen, water, and a lunch.
- 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 Ken Anderson by phone 832 647-8343, or by email klandrsn@hal-pc.org.

###

Date: Sunday, May 17, 2009

Title: Lake Charlotte

Inclusive Dates: One Day

Description: Lake Charlotte is a pretty little lake off the Trinity only a short distance from Houston. Meet between 9:00 & 9:30 and be out maybe 3 - 5 hours. Bring sunscreen, water, and a lunch.

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 Ken Anderson by phone 832 647-8343, or by email klandrsn@hal-pc.org.

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Date: Saturday, May 23, 2009

Title: Memorial Day - Sabine River

Inclusive Dates: 5/23 -25

Description: This is a float trip down the lovely, sandy Sabine River. It is a true wilderness camp-out-of-the-canoe trip. After unloading and shuttling Saturday morning, we will get on the river. We will camp on a sandy beach for the night, then Sunday morning, pack up and go further down the river to another sandy beach to camp. Monday, Memorial Day, we will go on to the take out, pack up and leave.

Some of us will camp under the Tx Hwy 63 / La Hwy 8 bridge Friday night, May 25.

Everyone who signs up who has never done this trip before will get a packet that will include maps, suggested gear and other useful information. This trip is a total of 28 miles over 3 days.

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 Cecilia Gill by phone 832-741-2713, or by email whitewaterider@yahoo.com.

###

Date: Monday, May 25, 2009
Title: HCC Memorial Day Paddle
Inclusive Dates: 5/25
Description: This Memorial Day Paddle is the tenth (minus 2 due to high water) of a very successful, well attended and enjoyable 6 mile day trip on the Colorado River near Columbus Texas. The putin, at business 71 and the Colorado River on the north side of Columbus, is only a half mile from the take out, SH90 and the Colorado River on the east side of Columbus. Plan to arrive at 8:30, prepare your boat and shuttle your car so that we might launch by 10:00.

Colummbus is some 70 mile west of Houston on interstate 10.

Experienced HCC paddlers will be along to give paddling tips and to provide all sorts of information to newbies about paddling. We will paddle a few miles, stop for a break on an island, then resume for a few more miles, then stop at a beach for lunch. Be sure to bring a lunch and a desire to make new friends and renew old ones. Watermelon and a cake will be provided. The trip will end by about 2pm.

The day can be hot, so be sure to bring sunscreen, ample water and a hat. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are manditory and must be worn.

This is a moving water trip, and the ability to control your boat is a prerequisite. However, if this is your first time in a paddle boat, being able to accept and follow instruction is manditory.

This trip is an American Canoe Association (ACA) sanctioned event. As such, those who are not ACA members will be required to pay \$5.00. To expedite the signin procedure at the putin, please read and complete the liability waivers located on this website under the Membership link.

There is no trip size limitation, but be sure to contact the trip coordinator prior to Memorial Day.

SYOTR

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 Fraser Baker by phone 713-202-2503, or by email flbaker@sbcglobal.net.

###

Other Club Trips:

Spring Creek

April 11, 2009

by

John Rich

On April 11th, trip leader Ken McDowell and 17 other paddlers showed up under the Highway 59 bridge at 8:00 am to paddle Spring Creek, north of Houston.

The original plan was to start in Spring at the Riley Fuzzle bridge, and go downstream back to Hwy 59. Unfortunately, the water level was very low, making the upper stretch of Spring Creek most likely impassable. There was a real risk of having to drag boats over sandbars for miles. So Ken made the correct decision to alter the plan to avoid that stretch of the Creek. Instead, "Plan B" was to put-in at Jesse Jones Park, paddle upstream as far as possible, then turn around and go back past Jesse Jones Park, and continue downstream to Hwy 59.

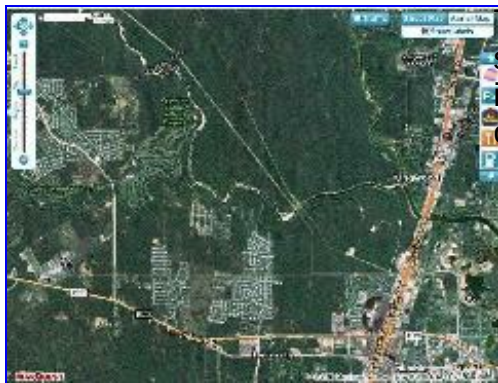
The shuttle was done by Southwest Paddle Sports, who picked us up under Highway 59, and took the boats and paddlers to Jesse Jones. This is a short and simple shuttle drive: south on Hwy 59, west on 1960, and then turn into Jesse Jones Park.

The following street map shows the easy shuttle route, and the blue line shows the section of creek that was paddled. The solid blue line is Spring Creek, and the dotted blue line is Cypress Creek.

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



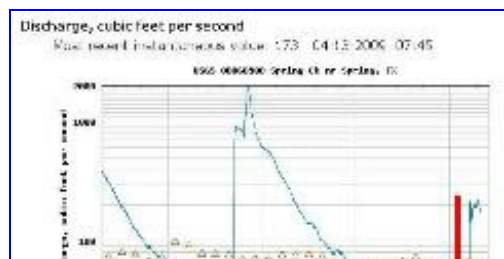
Float plan & Street map



Aerial photo

The next image is an aerial view of the same section, showing how undeveloped and pristine it remains, with white sand beaches on the outside of the meanders.

On this online water flow chart, I've marked the day of the paddle with the red arrow. You can see that the water level is low at that point, and that the characteristic of this creek is to get large spikes during rainstorms, and then to quickly drop back to a low level again. Just one day after our trip, the rain created yet another



spike. At 40 cfs there is not enough water to paddle Spring Creek above Cypress Creek. The previous time I've paddled that stretch the water was at about 80 cfs, which made for a very pleasant day.



USGS Water flow chart



Neat license plate

Southwest Paddle Sports does an excellent job on the shuttle service, for anyone running a trip in this area.



The boat trailer

How many boats can you fit on a boat trailer designed to hold ten boats? Answer: at least 16! And if it wasn't for those battleship canoes that occupy an entire berth for just one boat, it could hold even more.

Arriving at Jesse Jones Park, we checked in with the park ranger, pulled the posts up out of the middle of the paved hiking trail down to the creek, and drove the shuttle van down the quarter-mile trail to the boat ramp. The boats were unloaded from the trailer, and carried down the concrete ramp to the water line. After final preparations were made, we pushed off into the creek.



Boat ramp

Photo by Joe Coker



Preparing to enter

Photo by Joe Coker



On the water



Ken McDowell, trip leader



Break time on a sand bar

Photo by Joe Coker

After paddling upstream for a while, we stopped for a rest and lunch break on a white sand bar at the confluence of Cypress Creek and Spring Creek. From there we scouted Spring Creek upstream, and confirmed that there wasn't sufficient water to paddle, and that we had made the correct decision to not begin further upstream. You could walk across the creek there and barely get your ankles wet.



Settling down on the grass for lunch



Group photo

by Joe Coker

After lunch, we gathered up for a group photo. The participants were: Ken Anderson, Joe Coker, Roy & Lydia Cruzen, David Kitson, Halcyon Learned, Linda Leatherwood, Jim Goodale & Honey Leveen, Linda Love, Ken McDowell, William & Gabby Neptune, John Rich, Milton Robertson, Jacqueline Webster, and Natalie & Ellen Wiest.

Then Ken called us together into a pow-wow to discuss our next move. Some paddlers wanted to try continuing further upstream on the Cypress Creek branch, while others were ready to turn around and head for the take-out at Hwy 59. So we had a show of hands, and 10 people decided to go upstream, while the remaining 8 headed back downstream. The up-streamer's weren't sure how far they would get due to low water, but they were going to give it a try.

As it turned out, Cypress Creek had sufficient



water to paddle without dragging bottom. The banks were lined with woods, and occasional spots contained fishermen. The creek seems to contain bass, catfish and gar. You could see fish breaking the surface, but not with enough of the body showing to positively identify the type.



Cypress Creek



Cypresswood Drive Bridge

We followed Cypress Creek upstream to the Cypresswood Drive bridge, and called that our turn-around point.

This bridge could serve as an additional entry and exit point for Cypress Creek. There is sufficient space for parking under the bridge, and a short walk down a 15-foot high soft sand bank to the flat beach water line.

After a short break under the bridge, we headed back downstream, stopping two more times for breaks. Once again at the junction of Cypress Creek and Spring Creek, and then back at Jesse Jones Park. At the park, several paddlers went up the path to check the closing time, to ensure that their vehicles wouldn't be trapped inside closed gates by the time we were done. The park closes at 7:00 pm, and they tow vehicles which are left behind. Beware.



Gabby naps while William talks with his hands



Air traffic

Aircraft taking off frequently from Bush Intercontinental airport pass over the creek, creating a very noisy disturbance. But the noise is temporary until they've passed by overhead. The odd thing is, that the Highway 59 road traffic is just as noisy, and continuous! But you don't hear that until you're within about a mile of the highway.

Joe Coker approaches the Highway 59 take-out point.



The take-out beach



Approaching the take-out

He-men Ken Anderson and William Neptune carry two boats at once from the take-out back to the vehicles, parked 100-yards away under the bridge.

Note: the large images seen here have been reduced in size to fit computer screens. If you see a photo here that you would like to have, e-mail me at JohnRich3@sbcglobal.net and I'll be happy to send you a full-resolution copy.



Carrying boats

The group that went up the Cypress Creek branch ended up paddling a total of about 9 miles, getting off the water by 4:30 pm, making for a day that was just right; not too long, and not too short. The weather cooperated and wasn't too cold, nor too hot, and we didn't get rained upon. While it was disappointing not getting to paddle the upper section of Spring Creek, we got to explore Cypress Creek instead. And as usual, it's all done with an amazing group of wonderful people. About half of this group I had not paddled with before, so I got to make a bunch of new friends. All in all, a darned good day on the water.

The End

Pelican Island to Texas City Dike

November 8, 2008

by

Natalie Wiest, League City

Our new HCC member John Bayduss was looking for a weekend trip, and it didn't take much urging for me to join him. Looking at the weather forecast for the weekend of November 8-9, it wasn't hard to choose Saturday the 8th as a fine day to do an open water paddling trip on Galveston Bay. I hadn't been to the north tip of Pelican Island in some time, so off we went across the water. As predicted, winds were barely perceptible and wave heights low. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the temperatures in the 70s, just perfect to be out paddling.

We met at 9 a.m. in Galveston, and were underway in short order. The shell beach putin has been considerably altered by Hurricane Ike – it's a lot lower than it was before. It's also been cleaned so at least the large items are totally gone although occasional seat cushions, children's toys, shoes, and about anything else that floats continues to show up on a periodic basis. Jelly fish were swimming about although the dolphins were very quiet; probably because of the number of fishers ashore and on the water.

I was curious to see if the birds had returned in any numbers to the sanctuary on the north tip of Pelican Island. Laughing gulls certainly are not there in pre-Ike numbers. The resident ospreys seem to have done just fine with the usual 2 or 3 on the wires next to 51st Street. A single willet was working the beach. We paddled some distance from the shoreline, so any other birds weren't obvious although typically the gulls can be seen in large numbers. None today.

Two white pelicans were on the spit at north Pelican; but no evidence of the 100 or so I had seen circling above the bay some weeks back. No wheeled traffic was visible on the Texas City Dike, and I was curious to see if the dike was still there – no question as we got closer, it certainly is there but apparently must be closed to traffic on the mainland side. We had it to ourselves.



Pelican atop the pilings that are all that is left of the fishing pier on Texas City Dike.

Photo by Natalie Wiest

I proved beyond the point of satisfaction that indeed those granite blocks that form the dike are VERY slippery near the waterline, and for some distance above it. Sure enough, I slipped right off the rock and into chest deep water. Thankfully no crowd to yuck it up; Ellen took it in with dumbfounded amazement (and I didn't tip her out of the canoe on my slide!) and John at least didn't laugh too hard. I suspect fishermen nearby got a chuckle out of it too, and no harm done. We paddled on around the southern tip of the dike and I was pleased to see that beaches still remain on the Houston Ship Channel side, but none of the upper structures of fishing piers or buildings over the water. That didn't seem to bother the brown pelicans at all, and birds of all ages were there in the largest concentration I've seen since the storm, probably 20 or 30 of them.

We enjoyed stretching our legs, eating a bite, and taking in the scenery of container ships and cargo carriers passing in the Houston Ship Channel not far away; or at anchor in Bolivar Roads farther toward the Gulf. The ships travel at considerable speed and we got a firsthand observation also of the water levels

they push ahead and pull behind as they passed.



Ellen watches an empty ship head out to sea from Houston

Photo by Natalie Wiest today.

We followed the Intracoastal Waterway through the Pelican Island cut on our return. We actually passed a heavily-laden double barge we had crossed paths with earlier as it and another barge played do-si-do in the Texas City channel. The north side of Pelican Island has not had a trash pickup and was littered with all kinds of lumber, a mostly-intact pier, furniture and appliances from who-knows-where in Ike's path. Its bird sanctuary signage was gone too; at least two wade/kayak fishermen were walking along its beach at the spit side. In contrast to other trips I've done here, there were virtually no birds to be seen. The beach along the spit is usually covered with cormorants, brown pelicans, occasional white pelicans and various shore birds, but none

It was a flat gorgeous day to be out on the water – I'm sorry you weren't there as well, but maybe you can enjoy some of the flavor from the photos.



Note the water level on John's kayak - pushed by a ship in the Houston ship channel

Photo by Natalie Wiest



And when the ship has gone by, it sucks the water back after it - notice contrast in water level

Photo by Natalie Wiest

Natalie Wiest
League City.

Lake Charlotte

April 15, 2009

by

John Rich

On April 15th, instead of working on income tax filings like everyone else, retired IRS agent Ken Anderson led a paddling trip to Lake Charlotte west of Houston. The trip was attended by Joe Coker and John Rich, who filed form 4868 to get a six-month filing extension, to give them time to go paddling instead.

First up is large-view map showing where Lake Charlotte is located, relative to Houston. From downtown, you can be there in about an hour.

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



Lake Charlotte



Road map

The next image is a detailed road map showing the relevant landmarks so that you can easily find the put-in location.

Instructions: Drive east on I-10. After crossing the Trinity River bridge, take exit 810, which is Road 563. Turn left on 563 and drive north about 2.6 miles. Turn left onto Lake Charlotte Rd. and head west. This is the one tricky part. You're looking for Cedar Hill Park, but there is no sign at the entrance. The sign, for some strange reason, is located inside behind some

bushes, which can't be seen from the road. So look for a mobile home on the right with a small cemetery next to it. Across the street from that is a dirt road with a gate made out of large pipes. That's what you want - turn left into the entrance, and follow the dirt road back to the loop at the Lake Charlotte beach. If you miss the small cemetery, you'll end up at the 90-degree turn at the end of the road, and that means you've gone too far.

This image is the USGS online water level chart. As you can see, the water level was only 7' on this date, as shown by the red arrow. Natalie Wiest tells me that this gauge never goes below 6.8 feet, and the true water level at that reading might actually be lower than 6.8. That's just where it bottoms out. So all it really means is that the water is less than or equal to 6.8', but not how much less than. This is very low for this lake, and we feared it would impede our plans. Our concerns were soon to be justified.



Water gauge



Here's the close-up aerial view of the lake area.

The dotted white line was the planned route. We were to start at Cedar Hill Park, paddle south to the cypress trees lining the shore, and bushwhack through the trees into Mud Lake. From there, we would take a small channel over to Miller Lake, and paddle to the high ground on the south shore for a lunch break. Then back to another channel called Lake Pass, which leads back into Lake Charlotte, and then to the take-out point once again.

Float plan

However, the water was so shallow that this plan was abandoned. Paddling across Lake Charlotte the water was so shallow, that the tip of the paddle was hitting mud with every stroke. Fish were scattering across the shallows from in front of our boats. At the south shoreline, there was no water between the cypress trees as usual - just mushy mud.

So, we headed for Lake Pass and hoped to use that as a shallow water alternative to get into Lake Miller, and then resume our plan that way. But that too would prove fruitless, as you shall see.

The dotted red line was the actual paddle route we ended up taking during the course of the day. I'll talk more about that adventure below. Let's get on with the story!

This is the put-in beach in Cedar Hill Park. It's a mix of sand, mud and shell, but the mud is a minor factor, and you don't sink in with your shoes.



The put-in site



Water gauge

Ken and Joe check out the actual water gauge in the southeast corner of Lake Miller. It's the usual metal box with a solar cell on top for power and a radio antennae to transmit the data. It's kind of neat to be able to sit in the comfort of your home and look at the data generated by this equipment out in the waterways. It's a great tool for planning your paddling trips.

The south "shoreline" of Lake Miller was a mushy mud bog. I couldn't even get to the trees before I bottomed out in mud. There was no



way we were going to paddle through those trees to get to Mud Lake. I put the word "shoreline" in quotes because there really isn't any land there - it's normally just cypress trees surrounded by water.



Muddy shoreline



Shoreline

Ken paddles along the south shoreline. Notice how the cypress tree trunks are darker at the bottom - that's the part that is normally under water, which reveals just how low the water is here from normal.

I don't know what it is, but there's something visually appealing to me about cypress tree trunks. I like the way they flare out at the bottom, and the convoluted folds of the wood. It reminds me of the skirt of a flamenco dancer.



Cypress tree trunk



Ken does the limbo

And now we've arrived at Lake Pass, hoping to get through this channel into Miller Lake. The mouth was very muddy, and getting through the squishy mud we left tracks like sea turtles going up a beach to lay eggs. Inside the pass there was just enough water to paddle. However, there was now an even larger problem. Hurricane Ike has toppled over hundreds of trees through this area, many of which now lay across the channel, creating numerous obstacles to passage.

Here you see Ken getting creative to pass under a log, by doing the limbo dance inside his canoe.

This is typical of the trees which have fallen across the channel and now impede passage. We actually got past this blockage, by sliding over top of the trunk at the waterline, and then zigging right around the two above the waterline.





Trees blocking channel



Joe rides side-saddle

Joe rides side-saddle to squeeze underneath an overhanging log.

Three times we had to stop and break out a bow saw in order to cut our way through obstacles. The cutting ranged from a 5-inch thick log at the waterline, to numerous small branches, like the ones seen here. Without the saw, we wouldn't have penetrated nearly as far as we did.

Alas, we finally reached a point where there was a giant tree across the Pass, about three feet in diameter. The only way to continue would have been to portage around it, and we were too bushed to continue fighting it, with no guarantee that we wouldn't just find yet more obstacles on the other side.



Ken fights a tree

Lake Pass right now is an interesting challenge, requiring one to be part crazy for wanting to even try it, part lumberjack, part acrobat, and part gymnast. Oh, and you also better not be afraid of spiders dropping down into your boat from all the overhanging branches.

Lake Pass needs some serious chain saw work to make it navigable once again. As it stands now, it is no longer passable. And this also means that there is no way to get into Miller Lake - it's cut off. At higher water levels you might be able to bushwhack through the cypress trees into Miller Lake, but I don't think higher water levels are going to help passage through Lake Pass.



Spider

At this point we abandoned our efforts to get to Miller Lake, and decided to head back out into Lake Charlotte, and check out Bird Island for a lunch spot. Bird Island is normally not really an island - it's just a cluster of cypress trees sticking up out of the water. But at this low water level, we figured there might actually be some land under there. And we were hungry and in need of a rest break!



Bird Island beach

Arriving at the Bird Island cluster of trees, we discovered a small shell beach hidden inside, with enough high ground to stretch our legs and enjoy a good lunch spot.

The cypress "knees" are a source of entertainment, as you can imagine them a social gathering of many people standing around engaging in good conversation. I think I even recognize a few of them as people I know.



Cypress "knees"



Interesting tree roots.

Warning: this photo is rated "R" for gruesome violence. Bird lovers, click at your own risk. Bird Island turned out to be a macabre scene out of a horror movie. The thick vines on the island were full of dead birds, which somehow got caught up in the tangle and couldn't escape. Joe came up with a theory that they might have been blown in during hurricane Ike, in winds of such high velocity, that they had no control over where they landed. This photo shows the remains of six birds hanging in the dangling vines. It was a gruesome, creepy sight.



A macabre scene



You're not in the clear yet. This photo is a dead ibis. There were dozens of dead birds in the small cluster of trees, most of which were egrets. There were a handful of ibis, and even one roseate spoonbill.

Okay, after this one, you bird lovers are now cleared to continue looking at photos once again.



Dead ibis

After lunch, we departed Bird Island and headed for what looked like a white sand beach at Buzzard's Roost, on the west shore of Lake Charlotte. It turned out that the "white sand" was actually white shells, but that's okay too, because it beats mud. And it was here that we made our most interesting discovery: a dead 9-foot long alligator! There were some old gator egg shells laying around, so this must have been a nest site. We checked carefully to see if any other monsters were hiding in the brush waiting to ambush us.



Gator



Gator souvenirs

We gathered up some gator souvenirs from the sand, including claws, scutes - even the skull. Scutes are the bony plates which make up the gator's back.



John with skull

Photo by Joe Coker

And by then it was mid-afternoon, and time to head back across the lake to the take-out. The wind was at just the wrong angle, so that I had to paddle 95% of the time on the left just to go straight, and that gets very tiring very quickly.

Our original grand plans may have been foiled by low water, but we managed to have fun anyway, and were per chance to experience and see amazing things rarely seen. So despite the challenges, it was still another great day on the water, and it sure beat the heck out of staying home and doing taxes.

The End

Lake Charlotte 2

Lake Charlotte April 15, 2009

by

Ken Anderson

Three of us (Joe Coker, John Rich, & Ken Anderson) tried Lake Charlotte on April 15th. We expected low water (usually you'd want 8 feet or more on the gauge but it was 6.8) but the weather was great. Blue sky and low humidity is something of a pull. So off we went.

The plan called for us to paddle from Cedar Hill park to the south side of Lake Charlotte and through the cypress forest into Mud Lake but instead we paddled to Lake Pass. It looked good going in.

Once we got into Lake Pass it didn't look so good.

Normally one paddles Lake Pass although sometimes you pole Lake Pass. We broke with tradition.

We bashed, cut, mowed, cussed, ducked and invented new ways of paddling:

The straddle stroke:

The hand-pull stroke:

The lay-back and relax stroke:
After exiting Lake Pass we tried Bird Island. I've never seen dry land on Bird

Island so this was a first. We did

find birds...dead birds. We suspect the birds were blown into vines and couldn't escape. Rather sad. From there we moved on toward Buzzard Roost. Buzzard Roost is an island where gators like to sun and build nests...one steps carefully onto Buzzard Roost.

We found a 9' gator but it was a dead 9' gator. No sign of other gators other than the remains.



Not so easy in Lake Pass

Photo by Ken Anderson



Paddling looked easy going in

Photo by Ken Anderson



Joe doing the hand-pull stroke

Photo by Ken Anderson



John doing the Straddle Stroke

Photo by Ken Anderson



From Buzzards Roost we headed back toward Cedar Hill and beer. Loaded up the cars and chatted a bit.

The trip took about 5

hours and was without a dull moment. Good companions help even more so than good weather both of which we had.

There weren't many birds something which is out of character for Lake Charlotte but, hopefully, a May trip will find more birds. A special price discount for anyone bringing a chain saw or is a blood relative of Paul Bunyan.



Alligator

Photo by Ken Anderson



Ken doing the lay-back stroke



Beauty spot on Lake Charlotte

Photo by Ken Anderson

Devil's River Arm of Amistad Reservoir

Devil's River August 13, 2008

by

Mark Andrus

On Wednesday, August 13, 2008, I missed the monthly Houston Canoe Club meeting because I was going to Comstock to meet Jack Richardson for a trip on the Devil's River arm of the Amistad Reservoir. An eight-hour drive is not usually what I do on a birthday. Brandon Seay from the Granbury area was already there.

We loaded the boats the next day and drove over to Rough Canyon marina to put in. Jack and I were sailing his 36-foot canoe and we strapped on a small 8 foot sailable dinghy on it. Brandon sailed his 18-foot Dagger Cascade canoe.

All of the boats could be paddled also when the wind died down or went the wrong direction. We sailed up about 6 miles to Indian Springs passing up the old WPA camp halfway.

We set up camp on the shore opposite Indian Springs to stay for the next 3 nights. Jack had a big 20 by 20 foot tent in which we all set up our cots and kitchen. Brandon made frozen margaritas with his special recipe, since he manages a bar in his outside life. Brandon and Jack cooked their specialty dinners. We paddled across to Indian Springs whenever we wished. The water from the springs was much colder than the lake water.



Photo by Mark Andrus

Many power boaters would come up during the day to play in the springs.

Life was good until Friday night after dinner when one of the fierce summer thunder and wind storms in the area blew the big tent down.



Power boats share Indian Springs with paddlers

Photo by Mark Andrus



Jack Richardson at Indian Springs

Photo by Mark Andrus

Jack was able to rig a tarp for us to sit under while the storm blew through.

After the rain let up, I dived under fallen big tent and got out my small tent and put it up for the night. The small tent was able to stand up to the storms with ropes tied to rocks and shrubs. Jack stayed under his tarp and Brandon set up a small tarp for himself. Another problem we had was the ice was running out even though we brought a lot of it. We got more ice by promising a power boater margaritas if he came with ice the next day. He came back with



How many of us have had our tent blown down by fierce winds on the

the extra ice.

Pecos or the Devils?

Photo by Mark Andrus

We set up the big tent again Saturday morning.

Another windstorm came through Saturday afternoon and blew it down again even with our best efforts to keep it upright and to reinforce the staking. After that, we gave up and left it down. Bad summer storms are not unusual in the area since we had those 3 of the nights we were on a Pecos trip 2 years ago. We had an unusual north breeze on Sunday, which enabled us to sail back on the return trip.