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[www.houstoncanoeclub.org](http://www.houstoncanoeclub.org):2007:May

## **Thuse Donnellan, a Houston Entertainer**

by  
Louis F. Aulbach

Born to Irish violinist Timothy Donnellan and his wife Emily in July, 1845, Thruston "Thuse" Donnellan became one of the most popular local entertainers and artisans of Houston in the latter part of the 19th century.

Thuse's father came to Houston from New Orleans in 1838 and soon established himself in the city. Tim Donnellan served as the alderman from the First Ward in 1842 and 1843 and he owned several tracts of land in town. But, the family was best known for two reasons. When Timothy Donnellan died in 1849, he was buried in a grave vault on the bank of Buffalo Bayou at the foot of Franklin Avenue. The vault is empty now, but it still exists below the bridge (see <http://www.hal-pc.org/~lfa/BB38.html> for a picture and more history of this man ).

The second reason for the notoriety of the Donnellan family was the horrific death of son Henry in 1867. Henry and his business partner A. C. Richer were dismembered by the unexpected explosion of a discarded Civil War bomb that they had recovered from Buffalo Bayou. Henry was buried in the vault with his father.

Thuse showed his artistic talent early and he began painting about age eighteen. He later studied art in New Orleans and Chicago. Although a teenager, he enlisted in the 2nd Texas Infantry during the Civil War and served as the snare drummer for the regiment. Because of his age, Thuse Donnellan was not permitted to remain with the 2nd Texas Infantry when it crossed the Mississippi River for action. He was reassigned to duty in Texas.

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## First Quarter, 2007 Pool Session Pool Fees

	Attendees	ACA	HCC	Hask	BCWC	Non ACA Members	Dad's Club Pool Fee per Session	\$6 Fee Collected	Number of Spotters	Overage HCC Covered (in red)
January 8, 2007	8	8	6	1	1	0	\$50	\$48	1	(\$2)
January 22, 2007	12	12	7	3	2	0	\$50	\$65	1	\$15
February 12, 2007	13	12	6	5	2	1	\$50	\$72	2	\$22
February 26, 2007	16	14	6	2	3	2	\$50	\$96	0	\$46
March 12, 2007	13	13	6	4	1	0	\$50	\$72	1	\$22
March 26, 2007	12	12	6	3	3	0	\$50	\$72	0	\$22
first quarter	74	71	37	18	12	3	300	\$425		\$125.00



**Rio Grande River  
Big Bend National Park**  
February 2007  
By John Rich

The purpose of this trip, to Big Bend National Park in southwest Texas, was a 3-day wilderness canoe trip on the Rio Grande River, through the deep, scenic canyons along the Texas-Mexico border. Some land-hiking was also done before and after the canoe trip to complete the week of adventure.

The drive from Houston to Big Bend is about 10 hours, and since I depart Houston on Friday afternoon, a good stopover point for the night is Seminole Canyon State Park, on Highway 90, just west of Del Rio, which is about six hours from Houston. There, I joined up with Louis Aulbach and Dana Enos to



camp for the night.

The next day we caravanned to Big Bend, which is an additional four hours of westward driving. There, Natalie Wiest, Terry Burgess and Donna Grimes joined up with us in the campground, ready for the great canoe adventure.

**River Day 1**

I've joined up with my five fellow participants, and here you see the caravan of canoes, from a unique perspective, headed for the river put-in site:

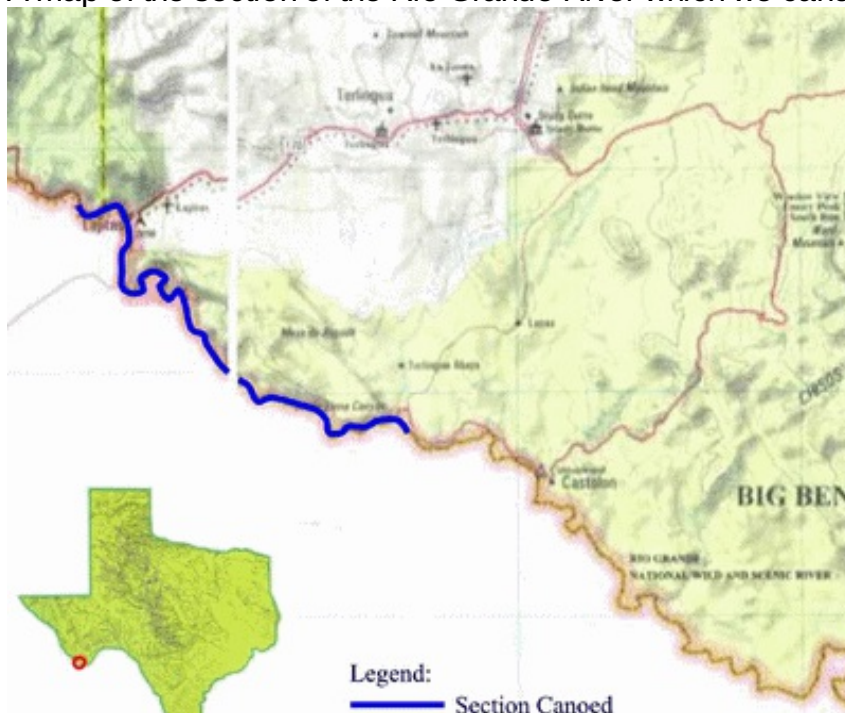


Photo by Terry Burgess

To start the trip, we unloaded our boats and gear at the river put-in near the tiny town of Lajitas. Then we drove our vehicles to a local outfitter shop and parked them on their lot, and hitched a ride in their van back to the river put-in location again. This kept the vehicles safe from break-in while we were away, and the outfitter was retained to pick us up three days later at an appointed place and time, downstream.

The canoe plan is for three days on the river. On Day 1 we will paddle about half the total 21-mile distance, which leads up to Santa Elena canyon. On Day 2 we'll camp on the riverbank, hike to the top of a mountain, and relax. And we'll finish up on Day 3 by paddling through the deepest canyon and popping out on the other side of the mesa.

A map of the section of the Rio Grande River which we canoed:



The light-green area on the right is Big Bend National Park. The darker green area on the left is Big Bend Ranch State Park. And the white area in the middle is the towns of Lajitas and Terlingua, and private land.



The boats have been taken off the vehicles and placed next to the river, and we are tying down our loads of camping gear, sufficient for three days in the wilderness. Don't forget the toilet paper!



Day 1 on the river – there are just "small" cliffs at this point:



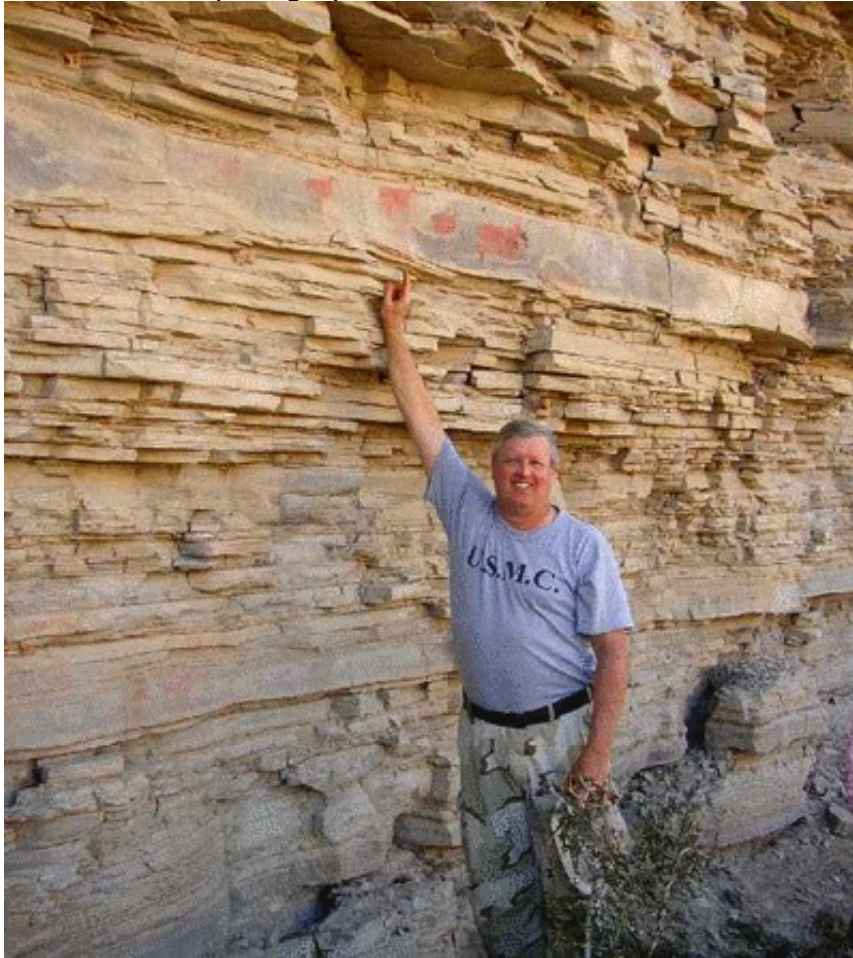
Lunch break on a gravel bar, amidst grand scenery: We sit on our life vests for comfort amidst the rocks.



After lunch, we paddled some more, and then pulled over on the Mexican side of

the river to view some ancient Indian pictographs on a cliff wall.

John Rich with pictographs:



A close-up view of the paintings:



What kind of creature is this with the puffy lips? Notice that there appears to be some liquid spewing forth from the animal's mouth. One thought is that this was the way the Indians represented the noise the animal would make.

All the pictographs were marred with modern graffiti scratched on the rock.

Back on the river again: That peak up ahead is called "The False Sentinel". I think it's a "sentinel" because it stands straight and alone, and it's "false" because there is another one very similar further along. And the 2nd one marks the beginning of the deep and narrow Santa Elena canyon. So this one is "false" because it doesn't have that significance as a landmark, and if you don't know that there are two of them, it could lead you to believe you're farther along the river than you really are.





We've reached "Entrance Rapids", so-named because they mark the entry point into Santa Elena Canyon, which is the cleft on the far left in this photo. Here we stop for the night and make camp on a sand bar. Everyone spreads out and tries to find a piece of soft, flat ground upon which to pitch their tent. The camp tables are set up in a central location as a gathering spot for meals and relaxation. Canoes are turned upside down so that if it rains overnight, they won't



fill with water.

Relaxing in our collapsible camp chairs, facing the river, watching the moonlight dance on the rippled water, and enjoying good conversation. Seated here, from right to left, are: Dana, Louis, Natalie, Donna, and Terry (in the darkness).





## River Day 2

On day two we just stayed put, camped on the riverbank, and hiked up to the top of a peak overlooking the desert and surrounding mountains and mesas.

We started our hike by going up the bottom of a canyon, headed up from the riverbed. That canyon came out on top of a mesa. Then you cross the mesa for quite a while, to get to the bottom of the peak. And then the real work begins...

One of the scary parts (below): This involved going sideways across an area with a lot of loose rock, at the top edge of a high cliff. Here you see Louis moving carefully. Concentration was required, as a slip and tumble over the edge would be fatal.



The final stretch: up some steep talus, and then hand climbing up about a 15-foot rock wall to the top. This shows a good view way down into the river valley where we started, about 1,500 feet down. This is Louis and John getting close



to the top.

Photo by Terry Burgess

We made it! Wow, what majestic scenery there was! That jagged zig-zag canyon down below cutting through the mesa is where we will enter Santa Elena Canyon with our canoes the next day. That canyon is 100 to 200 yards wide, up to 1,500-feet deep, and 10 miles long. Once you go in, there's no turning back.



Terry Burgess, John Rich, & Louis Aulbach





Along the way, Terry found a nice fossil ammonite, an ancient snail-like sea creature, over 65 million years old.

Dinner time, salad is served: John, Louis, Dana, Donna & Natalie. It looks downright civilized.



Photo by Terry Burgess

### River Day 3

Now we've finished the day in camp on the river, and are ready to head back out onto the water again, following a pastel river sunrise:





Entering the canyon, narrow and deep. There is no going back, now.



Narrower and deeper! Light barely penetrates down here, unless the bends of the canyon just happen to align with the direction of the sun, as it does up ahead around the corner.



This is the tricky part of Santa Elena Canyon, where "Rockslide Rapids" lives. Part of the cliff sheared off and dropped house-sized boulders into the river, creating an intricate maze through which you have to weave, all the while being pushed along by a swift current. At this water level (3.8 feet/200 cfs at Lajitas), it was fairly tame – deep enough not to scrape the bottom of the boat (usually), but not so deep that the current was too dangerous.

Here is one web site to check the Rio Grande water level at Lajitas:  
<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc/stalist.php?funct=obs&shefid=TGAT2>

My panoramic profile of Rockslide Rapids: Ack! You could portage here, but it would be one heck of a lot of work climbing over steep, rough talus.





We had a river guidebook with us (written by Louis Aulbach), which shows an aerial view of this, taken from atop the cliff looking down, and we studied it the day before. I memorized the recommended route through these boulders, by reducing each move to a one-syllable word, coupled with mental visualization. So, if you ever find yourself approaching this maze in a canoe, just remember this: "left, right, middle, right, left". That's the secret!

I only crashed into a couple of rocks, but nearly everyone else did too, so I didn't feel overly clumsy. It's a good thing these plastic canoes are tough.

Here I am running Rockslide Rapids! Donna stands by ready with a camera and rescue rope. You enter from behind the rock on the left side of the picture, and have to make a 90-degree right turn, with the current pushing you towards that giant boulder. I made it, and only scraped a little bit. If you make a left turn instead of a right, you are then presented with a row of boulders called "the tight squeeze", where the largest gap between them is only 36-inches wide – no one tried that path.



Photo by Terry Burgess



On the downstream side of Rockslide Rapids, we pulled over to the shoreline to take a short break, gather our wits, and see a few things there. Here, Natalie examines an inscription carved into a boulder, by R.T. Hill, of the U.S. Geological Service, who first surveyed this canyon in 1899. Why does his "G" look like a "C" ?



Photo by Terry Burgess

After that excitement in the rapids, it was time for a lunch break, on a beautiful soft grassy bank, inside the canyon walls. Pictured: Terry, Louis, Dana, Donna, Natalie.



Louis appears to be racing downhill at a steep angle!



Photo by Terry Burgess

When I first came around the river bend and saw this view on both sides of the canyon, I had to go "oh no...", because it looked like it was going to be log-flume bad. But actually, there was a weird optical illusion here. The angle of those striations in the layers of rock made it look like you should be rushing downhill at a high speed. But in fact, the water wasn't that fast here. The explanation is that the rock layers are angled upward, while your brain wants to assume that they are level, therefore making it just appear and feel like you are actually rushing downhill. Phew!

The light at the end of the tunnel, er... canyon. We're finally about to exit the 10-mile long Santa Elena Canyon, and pop out on the other side of the mesa into somewhat open country once again.





The take-out: You pay an outfitter handsomely to bring a 4WD passenger van and canoe trailer out to a gravel bar to pick you up. We were right on time, as pre-arranged, and he was there waiting for us. Next, you unload all your gear and throw it in the van, and load all the canoes on the trailer. Then he drives you back to his shop where your personal cars are waiting for you.



My excellent group photo, which I arranged on the morning of Day 3, with a dramatic background:





It took some doing to get everyone rounded up at the same time on a busy morning with everyone racing to pack their boats, and not be the last one holding everyone else up. Natalie is the butt of a lot of jokes for being short, so here she stands on a rock to gain some height and hopes that no one will notice. Busted!

From left to right, is:

- Terry Burgess, archaeologist.
- John Rich, mainframe computer geek.
- Natalie Wiest, librarian.
- Dana Enos, retired NASA engineer and locksmith.
- Donna Grimes, retired schoolteacher.
- Louis Aulbach, city records administrator.

Schoolteachers, librarians, computer geeks and paper-pushers: Not exactly the type of people you would expect to be rugged outdoorsmen! But these wonderful people are all highly experienced in the outdoors, and a true pleasure to spend time with on the river and in camp.

=== The End ===



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## Trash Bash - Buffalo Bayou - Texas Style

by Donna Grimes

For years, Houston Canoe Club has been there for any river cleanup that occurs around the state. We've helped with the San Marcos for probably twenty years, the Armand Bayou ever since I've been a member (1988) as well as the Medina, the Guadalupe, the beach....you name it. But, I had never helped clean Buffalo Bayou. Of course it needs it. That bayou used to be so polluted that the annual race down it used to be dubbed "The Reeking Regatta".

So, when Bob Arthur approached me asking if Bill and I would help, by leading the canoeing group down one section, I gladly accepted. Like I LIKE getting my hands all yukky in that water? Snakes crawling up my arms? Spiders up my legs? No....but I love to paddle a clean stretch of water, and Buffalo Bayou certainly needed cleaning!

However, as time drew nearer those that had planned to help began dropping out – sickness, babysitting problems, boy scout obligations....you name it. These kinds of problems always arise, but the biggest problem with cleaning Houston waters in the spring was about to descend on us – **Rain and Thunderstorms.**

Concerned about the forecast, I emailed Bob Arthur asking about what we'd do if the storm came in. Bob's typical cryptic reply, "What? Are you afraid of a little water? You won't melt. It's cleanup come hail or high water." Grumble, grumble, grumble....And as predicted Saturday morning brought me wide awake to loud thunder and strong splatters on the roof. Grumble, grumble....but I'm up! We are to meet at 7 AM – yes 7 AM on a Saturday!!...and it's Raining!!! But, I rouse Bill (more grumbling, but this time in a deeper tone) and we start loading the car. However about 6:30 - the electrical storm has taken our electricity. The rain is falling so hard, there is NO WAY we can even make it to our cars. About 7:10, we pull out of the drive; at 7:20 Bob Arthur's calling, "Where are you?" Yes, we got there. The anticipated crowds at 7:45 number about ten – 8 of which are HCC members! Good old faithful HCC members!



At 8:30, the crowds now number 17 counting the 8 HCC members and six of us join forces to clean together. Bill and I ran shuttle while the rest unload boat – oh yeh, it's still raining – but no thunder and lightning.

But as we work our way down the river – sopping wet, the water is rising. Soon we realize we can stop in one spot and pick up plenty of trash floating down the



river.

We picked up lots of trash, we got very wet and muddy, but the drizzle softened the light and made the bayou feel mysterious, almost Tolkien-esque. I felt even less like I was in the middle of the city. The beauty of the bayou under this light was awesome. We saw many waterfalls coming off the banks, heard the sound of water rumbling through the drainage pipes, enjoyed the camaraderie of my fellow HCC buddies. Even a trashbash in Houston water can be enjoyable.





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## Current River Rehab Trip by Paul Woodcock

This summer I started what I called my rehab canoe trips. The requirements were having short, easy put in and take-outs and being close to home. This first wilderness rehab trip was on the Current River: Short (only 58 miles) Easy put in and only one portage, and Close to home (Missouri).

We left Houston early Saturday Morning the first day of Spring Break and had no problems until we hit Dallas ,where we got stuck in a traffic jam behind a wreck. As the cars inched by, we got many admiring looks at the canoe trailer loaded with canoes. We met the other members of our party at a camp sight . Because of the delay in Dallas, we had a late supper. The next morning, we left to arrive at Two Rivers camp site and set up our camp. The next morning ,the shuttle picked us up to go to the put in at Baptist Campground.

I had paddled this section of the river last fall, and it was full of shallow channels around gravel bars, but the river was much higher this time and we did not have to wade. There were many fishermen on this section of the river. We came to a gravel bar and the boat in front of us grounded in the shallow water. I was following close, but the current was too fast and I decided to just back paddle and hold the boat while they got out of their boat. I did not notice that we were ferrying sideways in to a branch of a log next to us. As we hit it I could feel the boat starting to tip over. The day was warm ,the water was not too cold and it was only about waist deep. I dragged the canoe to shore, unloaded the gear and with the help of the other paddlers got the water out, and repacked the gear. A fisherman down stream had picked up the water bottle that floated free and returned it as we paddled by. We came to Cedar Hill Bridge where we had to portage. I had planned to camp on the other side of the bridge so we would not have to load and unload the canoes, but the area had a No Camping sign. I had to accept help on the portage as I was tired from the dumping and paddling. Just a short distance down river we came to campground and set up camp. I had bought a large capacity gravity fed water filter. We hung it from a tree and were able to filter water for the whole group. It is much better than the small pumps I have used in the past.

After supper, I decided to take a short walk to watch the sunset. I saw a road leading out of the valley, so I started walking up it. At one point it ran close to the edge of the valley and I could look straight down about 300 ft. I continued climbing, getting more exhausted at each step, but I wanted a picture of the sunset. As I topped the ridge, the sun went down and I missed the picture. I sat down on a rock exhausted and wondered how I would get back to camp I had no choice but to walk back. I arrived at camp and went directly to sleep. It had been a long day.





The next day we passed several springs and the current became stronger I was getting colder and started to rain ,so it was a relief to set up camp. There was a high area where we could pitch our tents, so if the water began to rise we would be high and dry. We camped across from a cave we were going to explore. The next morning after breakfast ,we ferried across the river to see the cave .My boots crunched the gravel as I walked to the boat. As we entered the cave I noticed that Cecelia was barefoot, as she had been on the trip. I was concerned that the rocks on the cave would be too sharp for her. My worries were ungrounded, as she had no problem. I had been in this cave last fall, so I was the designated leader. As we went deeper into the cave, the ceiling got lower and lower until I came to a place where I had to get on my belly and try to get through a small opening. I could not remember having done this on the last trip. I then remembered that this is where we climbed up over the rock and worked our way through a narrow passage.. We then came to a large room filled with shallow water where we could see the bats sleeping overhead. Most of the caves are closed to protect the bats, but this one had such a small population that you were allowed to explore it. As we worked our way out of the cave, I remembered the last time I was here and wondered if I would find the energy to exit. This time I was not as tired, so I guess the long walks and trips to the weight room had paid off. On our paddle that day we passed a large spring with no trespassing signs and an old mental hospital. We came to the Pull-Tight Cabin. We hiked up to see the cabin. It is unique in that the logs are all vertical and the location next to the spring made it absolute fabulous.



The next stop was at Jerktail Park, where we hiked up to see a huge spring. When we came back we saw the people who did not take the hike, looking overhead. The Air Force F-18, were having a training session. We watched the dog fight with laser flashes and all.

The last day of the trip was paddling into a head wind, but the weather had warmed up. On the trip we had seen lots of eagles. One sat in a tree as we paddled under him. A deer stood no more than 40 feet behind the paddlers. It stood quietly and watched them. Then it bounded into the woods. One deer had been surprised by the boats and jumped in the water and swam up close to Bobby Hatfield's kayak. We also saw a mink running on the bank of the river and some paddlers even saw a badger.

It was a great trip. I love camping on the river, but I now realize that I have a lot of rehab to do before being able to portage gear and go on another of the 400 mile wilderness paddles. The last night of the trip we stayed at Two Rivers Campground and the temperature began to drop again. This time in the low 30's. As we were leaving Eminence, Missouri the next morning, one of our fellow campers who left before us heading north in Missouri called us on a cell phone with news of his driving through a heavy snow storm. We had just missed this. Yet the drive from Missouri to Arkansas was beautiful. The following people were on this trip during Spring Break in March: Ron Nunnelly, Bobby Hatfield, Bob Pearson, Cecelia Gill, Dana Enos, David Conger, Mary Zaborowski, Shelia Hill-Lorenz , and myself, Paul Woodcock.





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## **Hidalgo Falls Festival - April 14** by Scott Coultas

"Well, another Hidalgo Falls Festival is now in the books. The water level was really something else. The weather on Saturday could have been better. It is clear that some folks were not really well prepared. Still, all in all, a good time.



(The fellows are surfing at the top of Hidalgo Falls Rapid, on river left.)





I want to put out a special tip 'O the helmet and wave of the paddle to the folks who worked so hard to pull this program off. Well done!  
Patti & James and all the folks associated with South West Paddlesports  
Steve Daniel  
James Williams  
Bruce Litton  
And . . . . . anybody else who volunteered their time. Events don't happen with out you.

Here is a link to the pic's I took. 318 of them. Most are from the rodeo but there are a couple from the Giant Slalom.  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/scottcoultas/sets/72157600081479928/>

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### **Blanco River - Where the Floatability is Rain Dependent!**

By Donna Grimes

Spring and rains go hand-in-hand, and many Texas rivers are dependent on that rain. Many river runners have the river gauge websites on their "favorites" list and check it almost daily to see what is flowing. I have been waiting for YEARS to paddle the Frio River. There the quick rapids and good drops keep the blood pumping, but alas, my available time and the Frio's water flow have seldom matched. It's been almost ten years!

However, the last week in May, the hill country had rain, and many of us packed our gear and headed up there to enjoy the Water Festival on Rio Vista Dam on the San Marcos and then paddle somewhere that Sunday, April 1. The choices were numerous! Barton Creek is Running! Frio has Water!! Medina is UP!! Choices!! YEAH!! But we could only do ONE and since I had never done the Blanco, this was the choice.....for about 22 people! But the group broke into about three different groups - much more manageable.

The Blanco was running about 950 cfs. on the Wimberly gauge. We chose an upper section - above Wimberly with the put in being below the Narrows (I'm not doing that!) but after Fischer Store Road, making the trip about 8 miles.



(several paddlers at the put-in – waiting for the shuttle to return)

The water was beautiful! The typical, crystal clear hill country water one sees on the Nueces, the Frio, or the Medina.





(high water on the upper Blanco River)

Because the water was up, the rapids were challenging, and this white water junky found herself taking many “sneak” routes. That’s what comes from paddling challenging water too seldom – you lose your nerve. But those with more daring ran the tough stuff. However, one kayaker with good skills and good roll, turned over and was washed up against a log which concerned us as we saw him trying to roll against a log. He did come out of his kayak and wash down stream, but it certainly made me aware of the possibility of disaster for even good paddlers.



(the keeper tree that almost did one kayer “in”)

When we got to the take-out, it was interesting to see what happened to a land owner who thought he’d block the takeout from people driving across to his property. He parked his pickup on the bridge. But when the rains came, see

where is pickup ended up – high in a tree.



So, I again had a chance to paddle a new Texas river, to meet new paddlers. There were only four HCC members on this trip: Marilyn Peery, Donna grimes, Debbie Snow, and Christy Long, but MANY good paddlers from around the state.

I hope this rainy season lasts and I get to paddle more this year.

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## **Pecos River at 400 CFS** by Paul Woodcock

Easter weekend, April 6 - 12, 2008, Dana Enos and I left to paddle the Pecos River. This would be the first time I have paddled rapids and camped out of a solo canoe. I took my Mad River Intrigue. It is a 16 foot crossover solo tandem. There was plenty of room for my gear, even with the extra seats in the canoe. We met David Conger and hired a shuttle. We were only going to paddle a few miles the first day. The river was flowing 400cfs so I got to experience a real strong current at the put in. I was amazed at how easy I could control a canoe solo.

The first night a cold front came through and we decided to stay at camp because we were afraid of hypothermia if we got wet. During the day it started to sleet. We retreated to our tents. I climbed up the canyon side just for something to do. I hate sitting in camp all day.

The next day David ran the first rapid but Dana and I portaged it as he almost wrecked his boat getting through I still had concerns about my solo skills. Over the next few days I became more and more confident. We lined two other rapids but ran everything else. There were some real class threes and I really appreciate David's skill in reading the rapids. In the tandem I am in the back and follow the bow partner. In the solo I am on my own.



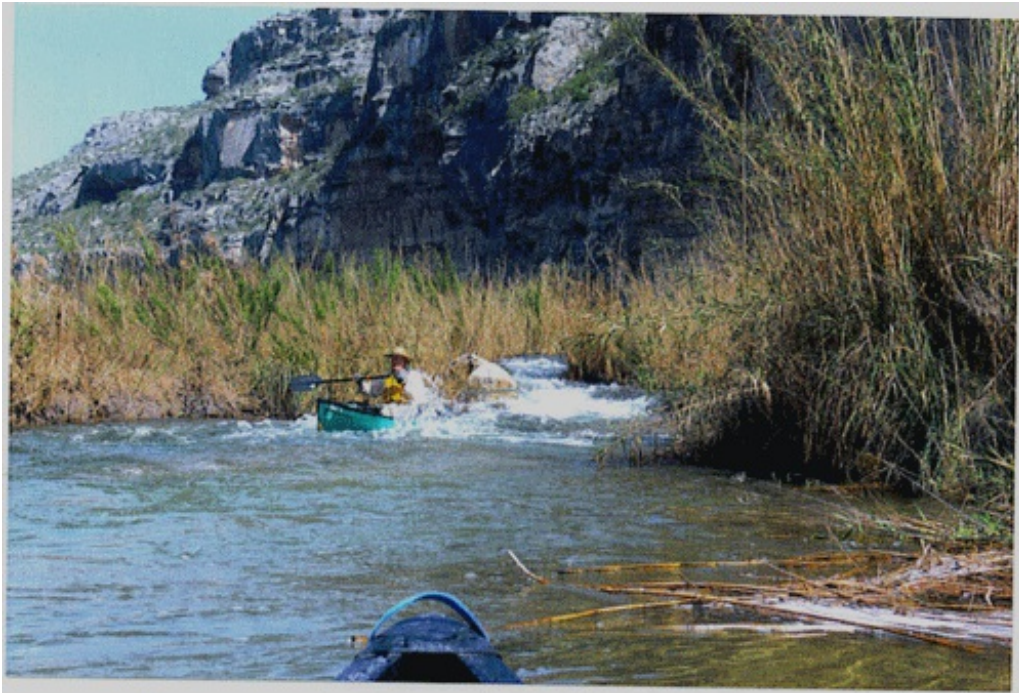
I was given some MREs from a Katrina victim so I survived on my own cooking this trip. They are not too bad a meal but are too bulky to be used on a long trip. We had to wade a section of the flutes but Dana kept finding channels to the right side so we floated most of them.





There were many exciting rapids but the two I remember the most were:

**1.** Dana lead us into a small rapid and he just disappeared. I followed him and discovered him in a large eddy. The only exit was water running swiftly through the river cane. David went through first and I head him yell "All Clear" I bent down in my boat and held the paddle in front of my face hoping I would not get cut from the cane. I was just a few feet above the water. The current rushed me through the cane with the leaves slapping the paddle handle in front of me. Immediately when I cleared the cane I was at a ledge with a large drop. I quickly did a pry and found the chute and dropped over with my heart beating fast. I guess David meant that he was all clear and not that the run was all clear.



**2.** It was a long rock filled rapid and at the top it looked as if it would pull you right over the ledge. There was a large eddy in the middle and at the bottom a ledge running across the river. I was surprised how easy it was to miss the ledge at the top and after eddying out I looked for the passage that David had taken. The only thing i could see was a path that ended with a large rock but David had



gone that way so with my heart in my throat I eased in the current. I shot down the water like a rocket and just before hitting the rock managed to turn the canoe making a perfect run. I would not even attempted this if I had not seen David go first.

We all bounced off rocks and each of us got hung up at one time or another but no one tipped over or damaged our boats. Life is good.



The last day we had to stay in camp for a day because of the strong head winds. I finished a book I had brought, so it wasn't a totally boring a day. I discovered is much easier to paddle tandem in the wind . I have never run the Pecos at this water level and It is the best trip I have taken in since the Hays River years ago. All I have to do now is put skid plates on my canoe. The Pecos is challenging river to run but those of you have the skills should put it on your list of things to do.

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 the Editor at [donna.grimes@mindspring.com](mailto:donna.grimes@mindspring.com)



## **Easter in the Hill County** by Donna Grimes

Annually, Bill and I have led an Easter trip in the hill country. However, the last few years, we've had to cancel because of lack of water. This year didn't look any different. Water was low ( 53 cfs on the Medina and 100 on the Guadalupe). But, about ten days before the Easter break, it started raining, and it looked like the trip was on. Then I got busy, trying to find campsites. All the state parks were full; our usually RV park with a camping island was available BUT the water was too high to drive to the island. It could go down, making the road muddy and slick, and I chose NOT to camp there. We found another RV park that would take tenters, and we were on.

The size of the group grew to 24 participants, but the prediction for cold weather that weekend, made the size dwindle....to 18. that's still a good size

Our Friday paddling group gathered at the put-in on the Guadalupe River near Center Point, and the water was about 350 cfs. There were 14 boats:

6 solo canoes ( Marilyn Peery, Cliff Peery (C1)Donna & Bill Grimes, Jim Barton, Louis Aulbach),

7 kayaks – sit ontops, blowups,white water (Jacqueline Webster, Ken Barnard, Justin Cetereski, Christy Long, Calvin Doody, Karen Getger, Joe Clemens) and one tandem canoe - Ray and Jacque Moranek)



(paddlers enjoying surfing together)

We played in the rapids, laughed, helped others when boats tipped over – yeah! That happened.



(having lunch together)





But, by the end of our paddling day, the warm weather was turning colder, and people began giving

the latest prediction – colder than anticipated. Some opted to leave that night (Ken) some opted to stay in hotels ( Ray, Jacque, and Jacqueline) and some brave souls who didn't paddle with us on Friday, arrived to paddle on Saturday and Sunday. (Kevin Fox and his friend).

But after a cold, rainy night and a colder morning with the prediction to continue getting colder – not warmer ( it was then 40 degrees –the predicted high for that day), many others started saying “I'm going home” – including me, the leader of the troop. Christy, Justin, Ray Moravek, and our newbies – Kevin and friend wanted to stay. But with not having warm enough clothes and the chance of hypothermia, they too relented and went home.

Sometimes it's necessary to do this – even though it's not what was planned. Having one great day on the river is better than none. And there's always next year....or next week!

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