



Table of Contents

Next Meeting Announcement
Last Meeting Minutes
New Members
Market Place
A Canoeing Good Luck Charm
Houston Canoe Club Logo Shirts
Warning to Paddlers - Lower
Canyons of the Rio Grande
Book Review - "Borderline" by
Nevada Barr
River Recipes - Colorado Canyon
Jambalaya
River Recipes - Bob Arthur's
Christmas Party Cornbread
Canoe Pooling
100-Mile Paddler Awards
Lighter than it Looks
Book Review for kids - Kayak
Anna and the Palindrome
Creek
Letter from the Editor(s)

Trip Reports:

Upcoming River Trips
Smoke on the Water
Time Traveler
Turtle Bayou

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: February 10, 2010 @ 7:00 PM
Where: Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas
Directions: First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just West of Hillcroft.
Speaker: Ben and Michelle Kvanli
Speaker Bio: If you're into whitewater or have been out to San Marcos spinning your kayak around at Rio Vista Falls, our February 10 meeting is for you. Our speakers, Ben and Michelle Kvanli, run the David and Debbie Power Olympic Outdoor Center in San Marcos and coach for the Red River Racing Team.

Ben has competed for the United States in C-2 for the last 3 years, with his partner Mark Poindexter. He is an ACA Instructor Trainer allowing him to help certify other paddlers in Texas and beyond to spread the love of paddling. Ben is also a motivational speaker, and gives to his community in San Marcos by serving on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Michelle is a three time U.S. Marathon Team member and whitewater instructor, and international whitewater slalom racer. She continues to write the curriculum for the Olympic Outdoor Center. Michelle is on the San Marcos Convention and Visitors Board, and the San Marcos River Foundation Board. Ben and Michelle have helped to bring a new whitewater park to the City of San Marcos that opened in May of 2006, Rio Vista Falls Park. Through the Red river Racing Team they are helping to develop the sport of whitewater slalom, and working with wounded veterans to help them improve their lives through paddle sports. Both strive for excellence in all they do, trusting God to take care of the future, and thanking him for all the experiences that they have had and all of the people he has brought into their lives.

Both Ben and Michelle have incredibly interesting backgrounds, too long to tell here. But check out these websites for more information:

http://www.redriverracing.org/Michelle_Kvanli.html

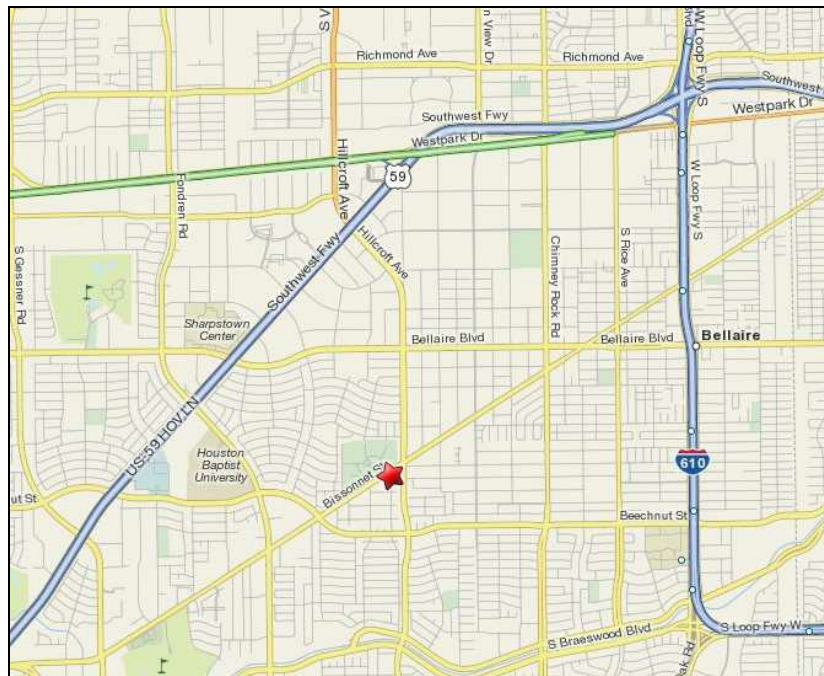
http://www.redriverracing.org/Ben_Kvanli.html

http://web.mac.com/michellekvanli/Kayak_Instruction/Home.html

See you at the February meeting!

Description:

Map to Bayland Community Center:



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

Last Meeting Minutes

Date: January 13, 2010
Recorder: John Ohrt
Minutes: HOUSTON CANOE CLUB GENERAL MEETING
Bayland Park Community Center

Commodore Bill Grimes called the meeting to order.

Bill announced that he and Donna are getting shirts with the HCC logo on it. Bring your own shirt in to the next meeting and they can take it to the logo place. There is a small charge.

Harmon Everett announced that the Lake Somerville trip had been canceled due to extreme cold weather, but some people went up anyway. He showed a video of the kayaks breaking through ice on the lake. It looked cold.

Officers were introduced and visitors were greeted.

Fraser Baker gave the Safety minute on how tight is too tight for a PFD.

Vice Commodore Ken McDowell introduced the program speaker, Fleet Captain Donna Grimes, who presented a primo power point pictorial review of "The Year in Paddling". She stated that the club did 6,938 group miles, 789 trip miles, with 60 guests - 25 of which became members, 58 trips with 110 days on the water. Her goals for the members were; Paddle more in 2010, Paddle something new, and Coordinate a trip.

Next came the mileage awards. Ken Anderson had the most miles (320). Ken McDowell coordinated the most trips (27 people coordinated trips) . Mike Pollard was the most active new member. The awards were handmade Hei Matau necklaces.

Next came the awards of brimmed hats with the club logo to all 100 mile paddlers. They were: Ken Anderson, Donna Grimes, John Rich, Joe Coker, Ron Nunnely, Paul Woodcock, Harmon Everett, Bob Pearson, Mike Pollard, Christy Long, Dana Enos, Chuck Leinweber, Dave Kitson, Phil Matticks, Tisha Matticks, Bill Grimes, Natalie Wiest, Skip Johnson, Robert Killian , Fraser Baker, Janice Baker, Louis Aulbach, Ken McDowell, Kathleen Burgess, Terry Burgess, Kelly Motter, Robert Langley, Darren Gaebel (apologies for any spelling errors).

Past trips included the Dickinson Bayou festival of lights nighttime paddle , Chocolate Bayou, Lake Charlotte, and Park and Play on the San Marcos. Upcoming trips included Boquillas Canyon, an historical paddle on Buffalo Bayou with Louis Aulbach as guide, and the Lake Somerville trip that had been cancelled. The San Marcos cleanup and the Buffalo Bayou Regatta are coming up in March, as is the Burnham Ferry trip.

Harmon gave the financial report and passed out a budget report

which was discussed. There being nothing else, the meeting was adjourned and a large crowd went to Jax for dinner.

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

New Members

Member Name: Ricky Sousley - I am 60 years old and a retired Deputy Sheriff. I am very new to kayaking. I have gone twice to Rio Vista park with

Membership Type: individual

Member's Family:

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: There are no items to list this month.
Description:
Asking Price: \$
Contact Name:
Contact Phone:
Contact Email: ###

Items Wanted

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

A Canoeing Good Luck Charm

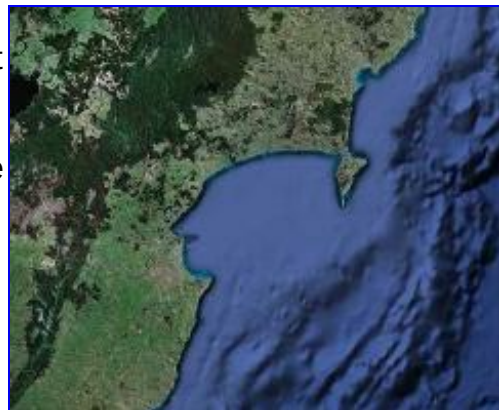
by
John Rich

The Maori natives of New Zealand have a long history of living with the sea, and fishing from their long canoes is of vital importance to them. Among the symbols they have adopted in their culture is the "hei matau", symbolizing the importance of these elements to their lifestyle.

A hei matau is a bone or greenstone carving in the shape of a highly stylized fish hook. It represents strength, good luck and safe travel across water. Hei matau literally means "fish hooks", and is pronounced "*Hay mat-ow*", where "ow" rhymes with "cow".



The fish-hook shape of the hei matau has its origins in Māori legend, which holds that the North Island of New Zealand was once a huge fish that was caught by a great mariner using only a woven line and a bone hook. Legend holds that the shape of Hawke Bay is that of the hei matau, which caught in the fish's side on the beach. Turn the pendant image upside down mentally to see the relationship to the shape of Hawke Bay.



Hawke Bay, New Zealand

For the Māori, the hei matau is a cultural treasure. It represents not only their land, but also prosperity, fertility and safe passage over water. They also denote the importance of fishing to the Māori, and their relationship to the god of the sea, Tangaroa.

Traditionally, hei matau were carved from whale bone. They came in several different forms ranging from the plain and utilitarian, used for actually catching fish, to the highly decorative, which served as treasured family heirlooms. Today, their main use is ornamental and they are commonly worn around the neck not only by Māori, but also by other New Zealanders who identify with the hei matau as a symbol of New Zealand. They are also popular items on the tourist market.



Since whaling is now banned in New Zealand, hei matau are commonly carved from cattle bone instead. Some Māori carvers continue to use whale bone when it can be found naturally, from whales which wash up and die on beaches. Such whale bone hei matau are highly prized for their cultural heritage and their scarcity.

Ken Anderson's HCC hat, and hei matau (right), both of which he was awarded for being the top club paddler of the year for 2009.

If you would like to wear one of these symbols yourself, as a good luck charm for safe passage over water, or to display your passion for canoeing, numerous online web sites are available which sell these items.



John Rich

~~~ The End ~~~

# Houston Canoe Club Logo Shirts

by  
**Donna Grimes**

I am working with J. Harding Compay to get our Houston Canoe Club logo put on YOUR shirt. If you will bring a paddling shirt, a work shirt, a T-shirt... whatever you might like an HCC logo put on, I will take it to this company and have the logo put on for \$6. The embroidered logo is 2½-inches in diameter. This logo is embroidered directly into the fabric of the shirt - this is not just a patch sewn onto the shirt.

I have attached a couple of shirts that I have placed the logo on just to give you the idea. I got ones made for Bill and me out of the Magellan shirts, worn for fishing and for being out in the sun that we wear paddling in. They are on sale at Academy right now.

Bring your shirt, ID the shirt (pin on your name), and give me the \$6. I will collect shirts both in January and in February and have them for you at the meeting in March.



**Embroidered patch**



**Donna Grimes**

~~~ The End ~~~

Warning to Paddlers - Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande

by
Linda Gorski

Recently a good friend of ours spent his Christmas vacation paddling the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande. As you will see from his note to me below, he has paddled this section many many times but his encounter with a group of men at Hot Springs was the first time he has been so alarmed in all his years on the river. Here's his note, word for word. We have forwarded his note to our outfitter friends in the Big Bend to see if any other paddlers have had similar encounters. The Border Patrol has also been notified. If you plan to paddle the Lower Canyons anytime soon, keep your guard up!

...We had three wonderful weeks. Sure, it was cold, but I like those conditions. We didn't see any other boaters. One of many highlights for me was running all the rapids (except Hot Springs) with a camcorder on a tripod on top of the raft. Some of the videos didn't turn out well due to a poor camera angle but Upper Madison and Rodeo are beautiful.

But the reason I'm writing now (as opposed to later in the week when I'm caught up with my work) is I had an encounter at Hot Springs that might be worth passing on to HCC members.

We'd planned to stay a couple of nights at the camp between the two stages of the rapid. Late morning after our first night I saw a man between us and the springs. He was retreating when I noticed him. About five minutes later I saw another guy in the same place, and he too was retreating by the time I noticed him.

Never one to miss a chance to talk to Mexicans, I walked down to find the guys a few minutes later, thinking they might be part of a fishing/hunting group led by my friend Beto Peña, owner of San Rosendo Canyon. I left my paddling partner behind in camp.



Hot Springs Rapid

In the sandy pasture just downriver from the main springs, I found the group, seven men, walking hurriedly upriver and about to turn up the road into the canyon. My presence unnerved them, but they stopped to talk.

We talked only a couple of minutes. This was the nastiest group of people I've ever seen in my life, most looking like they'd spent most of their lives in Mexican jails. Their movements were rapid, and I thought they might be on meth.

They began lying right away. They couldn't answer any of my questions, innocent questions like how long it took them to walk down from Beto's ranch or what they were using for bait (they'd first told me they were there to fish). Several of the guys were from the south of Mexico; this I knew by their accents. I'm not saying these guys were [Zetas](#) but everything about them gave that impression. For the first time in all my years living on the border and in Latin America, I was scared, though at

that time I had to do everything in my power not to reveal it.

The day before we'd hiked down along the river about a half a mile below the springs and there was evidence of A LOT of foot traffic. In fact, I remarked to my partner, "I wonder if the Mexican Army just left."

Anyway, we spent the next three hours slowly packing up camp in the most inconspicuous way possible and when we floated past Hot Springs and the fishing area below it, there was no sign of the guys. I suspect they were waiting us out or at least waiting until dark to cross their load.

Beware that these guys were the roughest imaginable kind of people. If this kind of people is smuggling right now, I'd advise all boaters to bathe at Asa Jones Hot Springs and avoid landing at Hot Springs altogether except to scout the rapid. Perhaps I'm overreacting, but I doubt it.

~~~~~

**FURTHER NOTES:** Our outfitter friend got back to us and passed along the following advisory:

The National Park Service advises that boaters not camp or spend a long time at the Hot Springs area because of the increased pedestrian traffic at that location. This is a situation that has gotten worse in recent years, and it would be best if boaters stopped at Asa Jones, upstream of Hot Springs, to camp, bathe and fill up their water supplies. Linger for a long time at Hot Springs only increases the chances of contact or confrontation with Mexican nationals or others on the Mexican side of the river. As far as we know, no major problems have occurred, but play it safe and minimize the chance that an incident may happen on your trip.

~~~~~

AND HERE ARE SOME COMMENTS FROM PADDLERS ON ANOTHER DECEMBER 2009 LOWER CANYONS TRIP:

I am thinking the border patrol is going to stop these trips sometime in the future. Our trip leader had to fill out a form showing which campsites we'd stayed at on the Mexican side and at the Border Patrol check station on the highway, they were not so interested in the fact we had run the river but asked questions as to what we had seen.

There are two places in the www.nps.gov site where they talk about the border. There may be more, I just noted these two:

<http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/western-hemisphere-travel-initiative.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/river-camping.htm>

In addition I ran across a bunch of statements on points like the Hot Springs being drug and illegal alien crossings and to avoid these sites.

In addition, when preparing for our december trip, I remember reading something on the NPS site stating that camping on the Mexican side was considered as a border crossing and that should be reported to the park service. Maybe this is where the camp site form originated.

~~~~~

We are following up on all the information we are receiving from paddlers regarding the Lower Canyons and other sections of the river and will include additional warnings or observations in the newsletter. Watch this space!

~~~ **The End** ~~~


Book Review - "Borderline" by Nevada Barr

by
Linda Gorski

It's cold and windy outside today but warm and toasty inside – a perfect day to fix a hot cuppa, wrap up in a blankie and read a good book.

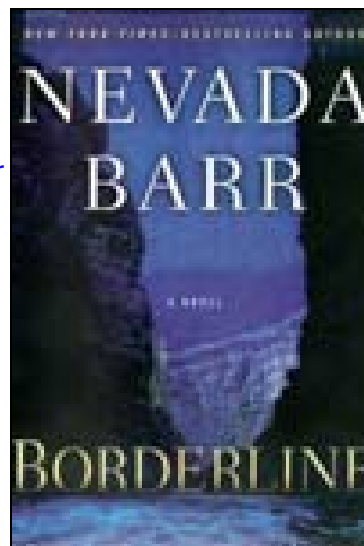
For those of you who have not had the pleasure of tucking into a book by Nevada Barr, you've missed a good read. Barr has published 16 books, most of them murder mysteries set in national parks around the United States. The heroine of her books, Anna Pigeon, is a park ranger who has served at a number of national parks – and, of course, solved murders at each.

I got hooked on Nevada Barr's entertaining books when I was spending half my life in airports and on airplanes during my recent eight years abroad. The first book that I read was *The Track of the Cat* – a novel set in the Guadalupe Mountains of Texas. Barr's other novels are set in equally appealing places - Mesa Verde, Glacier National Park, Yosemite, Rocky Mountains National Park, Dry Tortugas, Natchez Trace, Statue of Liberty, Carlsbad Caverns, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Cumberland Island National Seashore, and Isle Royale. The fact that Barr actually served as a National Park Ranger adds a twist of reality to the series. And it makes it more exciting to read a mystery set in a park location which you've personally visited and which you can visualize in your head.

Barr's latest book, *Borderline*, is set in Big Bend National Park and the reason I'm reviewing it for you is that the plot begins with a raft trip on the Rio Grande, through Santa Elena Canyon.

Here's the publisher's description of the book:

"Drained and haunted by the killings on Isle Royale, diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and on administrative leave by order of her superintendent, the one bright spot in Anna's life is Paul, her husband of less than a year. Hoping the warmth and the adventure of a raft trip in Big Bend National Park will lift her spirits, Paul takes Anna to southwest Texas, where the sun is hot and the Rio Grande is running high. The sheer beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert and the power of the river work their magic—until the raft is lost in the rapids and a young college student makes a grisly discovery. Hair and arms tangled in the downed branches of a strainer between two boulders, more dead than alive, is a pregnant woman. Nature, it turns out, isn't the only one who wants to see the woman and her baby dead. Instead of the soul-soothing experience Paul planned for her, Anna and her husband are sucked into a labyrinth of intrigue that leads from the Mexican desert to the steps of the Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas."



If you've actually been out to the Big Bend, a lot of the places in the book will be familiar to you. If you've rafted or paddled Santa Elena Canyon you might be confused when you read the book and here's why. I attended a book-signing by Nevada Barr here in Houston the day *Borderline* came out. While chatting with her I told her I had paddled the Rio Grande several times. In reply she said, "Well, you'll

notice I've moved a rock or two in my description of the raft trip through the canyon." Poetic license, I guess.

This book is not rocket science but it is a good read about a familiar place. I have the book in hardback if you want to borrow it - just drop me a note - lindagorski@cs.com.

If you want to read more about Nevada Barr and her series of Anna Pigeon books check out her website at www.nevadabarr.com.



Author Nevada Barr rafting the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park.

~~~ The End ~~~



# River Recipes - Colorado Canyon Jambalaya

by

**Linda Gorski (Menu by Louis Aulbach)**

Some of you have had the distinct pleasure of sharing a food group with Louis Aulbach as the cook. And if you haven't, you've missed one of life's great culinary delights.

One of the very best dishes Louis Aulbach has ever prepared for me on a river trip was his hot spicy jambalaya on a rock ledge camp in Colorado Canyon on the Rio Grande during our very first trip together in November, 1998.

Earlier that year we'd partnered up to start writing The Upper Canyons of the Rio Grande, a guide to paddling the river from Presidio down to Terlingua Creek, including Colorado and Santa Elena Canyons. This canoe trip through Colorado Canyon was part of our research for the book. I did not tell him that this was my first trip in a solo canoe EVER until we were at the put in – or that I was paddling a borrowed Dagger Sojourn that I'd never even sat in, much less paddled. He found out the truth way too soon.

When we put in at Rancherias, the water level was 3.5 ft on the Presidio gauge which is about 370 cfs. Water had been low for the past couple of years, and although 3.5 ft is low, it was still a runnable level.



**Colorado Canyon**

Photo by Linda Gorski

Rancherias Rapid is no more than 100 yards from the put in, a rocky first drop to a pool, followed by a right-turning set of standing waves. Bumpy in low water, but easily negotiated...except for this rookie who took her first swim in the Rio Grande after being underway no more than 2 minutes. Fortunately, the water temperature was about 70 and the air temperature was about 80 because I spent a good portion of the first day in the water!!!

Louis assured me that I did all the right things once I DID fall out of the boat - didn't swamp it, got on the correct side of the boat so I didn't get pinned up against the canyon wall, managed to get it to shore and bail it out. He also said that he had led a few members of the Houston Canoe Club (who shall remain nameless, but who are now excellent paddlers) down this same stretch of river for their first taste of Rio Grande whitewater, some having similar experiences as I.



**Louis lining my boat.**

Photo by Linda Gorski

As I said, I spent a lot of time in the water that day. When I wasn't [tumping](#) in rapids, we were in and out of our boats lining them to be sure I didn't end up in the water inadvertently. It was a long day.

We did not want to stop too early this day (just in case we had problems the next day), so we continued on down river in hopes of finding a good camp site. Unfortunately, the low water had left many sites quite muddy. It was late in the day and no good site was coming into

view. We had planned to camp within the canyon, but it now seemed as if we would have to proceed on out to the sandbar beyond the end of Colorado Canyon.

We paddled in the stillness of the late afternoon, looking at every possibility for a place to pitch our tents. I could tell Louis was getting a little anxious - darkness was beginning to settle in and I'm sure he was envisioning having to pull my cold, soggy self out of the water in the dark if we didn't find a camping spot soon!

Just after exiting the section of the lava flows, often called "Black Rock Canyon" we found a set of ledges in the rusty red rocks on river right. Although space was limited for tent camping, the site lent itself well to cots, like the rock ledges on the Pecos River. There were excellent kitchen rocks and little balcony-style cot sites right above the river's edge where you could see the mirror image reflections of the canyon in the setting sunlight. No sooner had we pulled our canoes up than the first huge catfish jumped out of the water.



**Our rock ledge in Colorado Canyon  
- home for the night!**

Photo by Linda Gorski

Although we didn't catch any fresh fish for dinner, Louis fixed, hands down, the best dutch oven jambalaya I've ever tasted. Could it have been that I was cold, tired, sore and incredibly hungry after pulling myself in and out of the water all day???? Whatever the reason, that hot, spicy meal really hit the spot! Here's the recipe for Louis' jambalaya.

~~~~~

Jambalaya

link sausage - 1 lb
bell pepper - 1/2
tomatoes - 1 can
boullion, chicken - 2
rice - 2/3 cup
basil - 1 tsp
oregano - 1 tsp
garlic - 1 tbl
pepper, crushed red - 1/2 tsp
onion - 1
oil
water - 1-1/2 cup

Saute chopped onion and bell pepper in 1 tablespoon oil, until soft. Add rice, tomatoes (crushed), water, boullion, basil, oregano, garlic, red pepper and simmer until rice is cooked. Add sliced sausage and cook until sausage is heated.



Louis cooks-up Jambalaya

~~~~~

After that delicious meal, we enjoyed a cool night under a billion stars in the narrow slit of the canyon panorama with huge moon shadows adding a special mystique to the place. The setting was made even more dramatic by the coyotes howling in the distance and bats fluttering down from their canyon crevices. All night long those huge catfish jumped out of the water, making enormous plops and teasing

us to wake up and drop our lines in the river.

It was a magical trip just as every river trip is. But that jambalaya will remain as one of my favorite memories. ...And I'm not sure if it was the good meal or the good instruction, but I managed to stay in my boat the rest of the trip!



**Louis Aulbach and Linda Gorski still  
paddling together - here on the  
Great Unknown of the Rio Grande  
in 2009. He's a very patient man, a  
great paddling instructor and an  
awesome cook!!**

Photo by Chuck Leinweber

~~~ The End ~~~

River Recipes - Bob Arthur's Christmas Party Cornbread

by
Bob Arthur

If you attended the wonderful Houston Canoe Club Christmas party on December 5th, you MIGHT HAVE tasted the dish brought by Bob Arthur. It was a scrumptious cornbread that looked as moist as the day is long and all evening I imagined it just melting in my mouth. Unfortunately there were lots of people at the party and just a little of the cornbread. So I didn't get to try it. I was one of those who asked Bob for his recipe... so he has provided it here. Enjoy!

~~~~~

## Bob Arthur's Cornbread

- 1 can whole kernel corn, drained (15 oz size)
- 1 can cream style corn (14 oz size)
- 1 package Jiffy corn muffin mix (8 oz size)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups shredded medium or sharp cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large bowl stir everything together except cheddar cheese. Pour into greased casserole dish. Bake for about 45 minutes or until lightly browned. Top with cheddar cheese and continue baking for 5-10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Let stand for at least 5 minutes and then serve.

Note: You can double the recipe and bake in a 9x13 pan for 55-60 minutes then top with cheese. Best when warm but still very good after sitting awhile as in a potluck setting. Everyone loves this recipe! Enjoy!

For those not familiar with Jiffy corn muffin mix it is a packaged mix that has the flour, corn meal, sugar, lard, baking soda and salt mixed together. As a muffin mix it is supposed to be mixed with 1 egg and 1/3 cup milk and makes between 6-8 muffins. I am sure you can make a homemade mix that would be just as good (umm, probably better). I just haven't gotten around to it yet



**Bob Arthur chillin' on Buffalo Bayou.**

Photo by Linda Gorski

~~~ The End ~~~


Canoe Pooling

by
Billy Welborn

Houston Canoe Club paddler Billy Welborn has kindly offered to loan any HCC member his trailer for "canoe-pooling". Here's the story.

~~~~~

I recently saw an email from Harmon Everett asking about setting up a car pool on one of the trips. I like to call it canoe-pooling instead of car pooling.

I don't know how much this is practiced by HCC members, but to me it is a great idea. I canoed with the same 5 guys for about 20 years. I built a trailer to haul a minimum of 6 boats and related gear for paddling and camping. We used one vehicle and hauled our boats from Longview to New Mexico, Colorado, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Georgia, N Carolina, S Carolina, and all over Texas. Of course we were dependent on fellow paddlers or passers-by for shuttle rides. We had a van, so no problem getting everyone in one vehicle.

If there is any interest, I will make that trailer available to anyone wanting to canoe pool on any trip. Even if two vehicles have to be used, that is better than 6.

The trailer has an enclosed gear box that is 48"W X 81"L X 18"H. It does not have a top but can be covered by a tarp if desired. It has triangular center uprights front and back with three 78" crossbars on each. It has a 1 7/8" ball hitch and a flat 4 prong electrical connector. The trailer is very light, well braced, and very sturdy. I can easily pull it around by myself. Loads are easily balanced and it trails beautifully with no sway. It carries two spares.

I have personally pulled this trailer thousands of miles without problems. It can be pulled by a compact car. However, the ideal pooling vehicle is a 5 or six passenger SUV or dual cab pickup. Just think about expenses being divided by 5 or 6; not to mention how much fuel is not burned, and pollution avoided.

The trailer will carry 6 full sized canoes. It will carry even more kayaks. And of course it can carry a combination of canoe and kayak.

I am attaching a couple of pictures. The empty trailer is current, the loaded trailer was about 10 years ago on a trip to the Ocoee. HCC members can call me at 979-245-3996 or email me at [bdwelb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bdwelb@sbcglobal.net) for more information about the trailer or to make arrangements to borrow it.



**Here's the trailer fully loaded for a**

**This is the trailer being offered to  
HCC members for canoe pooling.**

Photo by Billy Welborn

**trip to the Ócoee**

Photo by Billy Welborn

I'm looking forward to lots of paddling in 2010! Hope you are too.



**Billy Welborn**

~~~ The End ~~~

100-Mile Paddler Awards

by
Donna Grimes

Last January, when Commodore Bill Grimes gave his opening talk to the club, he reminded us of why we paddle – from the joy it gives us. The “Joy of Paddling” is what we should broadcast to our friends, neighbors and fellow Houstonians. Well, we did that!

We paddled on club trips 789 actual miles, but almost 7,000 group miles. That latter number is the number of paddlers times the distance. So if 10 people paddled a distance of 6 miles, it counted as 60 group miles.

We had 60 guests on our trips – of which 25 became members. We had 58 club trips this year... and if you add the multi-day trips, we were on the water somewhere around 110 days. That's almost 1/3 of the year that we were paddling.



All these paddlers received 100-mile awards at the January 2010 HCC meeting

Also, to encourage what this club is all about (paddling) we give out awards to those who paddle over 100 miles on HCC trips. This year we had 28 100-mile paddlers. Oh Yeah! They received both a framed picture with the exact number of miles they paddled plus an exclusive Aussi-looking hat with the HCC emblem on it. When you see someone wearing a hat like this, you will KNOW he belongs to this special group.

Here is the full list of the 100-mile paddlers:
The first number is the ranking, descending from most distance, and the second number is the number of miles paddled on club-sponsored trips in 2009.

1. 320 Ken Anderson
2. 281 Donna Grimes
3. 228 John Rich
4. 203 Joe Coker
5. 196 Ron Nunnelly
6. 169 Paul Woodcock
7. 162 Harmon Everett
8. 157 Robert Pearson
9. 138 Mike Pollard
10. 138 Christy Long
11. 135 Dana Enos
12. 133 Chuck Leinweber
13. 133 David Kitson
14. 129 Phil Matticks
15. 129 Tish Matticks
16. 127 Bill Grimes
17. 117 Natalie Wiest
18. 117 Skip Johnson
19. 110 Robert Kilian
20. 108 Fraser Baker
21. 107 Janice Baker
22. 104 Louis Aulbach

23. 104 Ken McDowell
24. 103 Kathleen Burgess
25. 103 Terry Burgess
26. 101 Kelly Motter
27. 100 Robert Langely
28. 100 Darren Gaebel

In addition, other awards were issued. As fleet captain, I chose three people.

1. **Ken Anderson** for having paddled the most – 320 miles (NO, you cannot buy any of his miles! – although he had enough to give two more people a hat)
2. **Ken McDowell** for coordinating the most trips. Ken led 5, BUT we had 27 people who coordinated trips and I appreciate each one of them.
3. Our most active “newbie” who just joined in March, yet paddled 138 miles and will become a trip coordinator this year – this is **Mike Pollard**. I hope other new members can become as active as you.



Ken Anderson, left and Ken McDowell, right receive Hei Matau awards from Donna Grimes.

Photo by Bill Grimes

As awards for these three, I got the “Gift of Safety over Water” the Hei Matau. For more info about the Hei Matau, see [this story](#) which appears elsewhere in this issue.

The “Joy of Paddling” will not just be a theme for HCC for 2009, it will continue because of the joy paddling brings to each of us.

As a New Year and a new decade, I challenge you to:

- Paddle more –become a 100-mile-paddler
- Paddle something different (try a new river or bayou, or a new craft, different from what you now paddle
- Coordinate a trip with HCC. As fleet captain, I will help you with the how, you decide the where, and I will try and find an experienced trip-leader to assist you the first time.

See you on the Water.

Your Fleet Captain.

Here are a few of the recipients showing their joy over receiving a 100-mile paddler award:





Dana Enos



John Rich



Natalie Wiest



Paul Woodcock

~~~  
**The End** ~~~

# Lighter than it Looks

## How to make your own paddle

by

### Skip Johnson

The lead picture shows Jeff Jouett with his new two pound mahogany double blade with s.s. ferrule from Duckworks next to yours truly and my old pound and a half double blade made from Quam, a Central American wood with a density somewhere between Western Red Cedar and Balsa. The paddle may be light but it's tough enough to have seen me through close to a thousand river/creek miles so far and the paddle's probably in better shape than the paddler.



**Practice**



These paddles are about the 4th generation of wood/epoxy/fiberglass double blade paddles that started out as a way to use of the leftover materials from building a stripper

canoe. The design has evolved to the point I don't see anything I'd change if I started building a new paddle tomorrow. Such a simple thing, a round shaft with a wide spot at each end, but there are subtle symmetries afoot, every curve and shape has a purpose perhaps not evident at first glance. The dihedral of the blades and location of shaft centerline on the blade help keep the force of the stroke centered on the shaft so there is no torque to strain your forearms after a long paddle. The slight cup of the blades allows the blades to slide into the water with minimum fuss. The tilted forward blades move the effective portion of the stroke forward much like a bent shaft single blade (the asymmetrical cousin). An unexpected side benefit of freeing the upper end of the blade from the shaft is the shaft stays dryer than expected and I've never felt the need for drip rings even though I favor a fairly vertical stroke.

On to building a paddle. First a disclaimer, please use whatever techniques and tools you're most comfortable with and have at hand, but do follow prudent practices around sharp rotating machinery as well as keeping you skin isolated from uncured epoxy hardener.

The paddle is essentially a shaft with a blade at each end so lets start with the blades, as there's a few more steps involved. The blades are just like a stripper canoe a wood core with a fiberglass skin on each side. The wood core can be 3/16" thick and the skin can be 4 or 6 oz glass, 4 oz preferred but either will do. First cut out 36 or so strips about 8" long with about a 15 degree taper on cut. Then tape together in two panels make sure they are mirror images of each other. You can carefully match strips in various patterns/colors if you wish depending on how far you've descended into this particular addiction (I've been known to double bookmatch decks in the past). It is prudent to use a harder strip on the tip, I've used mahogany and maple in the past.



The blade form is made from a section of 2x6 with 4 pieces of ¼" material fastened as shown, note the skewed angle and mirror imaging.



**Bladeform**



**Taped blade blanks**



**Gluing**

With each blade blank taped together run a bead of glue, titebondII works well, in the joints. Draping the strips over the edge of workbench as I go works well for me.

Put the still taped and glued blanks on forms and weight down. After glue has dried, sand concave side of blanks smooth, then fiberglass.



**Glued blank on form**

Next step should be done fairly quickly, wood with glass on one side has a tendency to wander a bit depending on temperature and humidity, even mahogany.



**Paddle pattern**



**Fiberglass**

Use the paddle pattern as a guideline, far more important to have sides match, but mirrored, than have this exact size/shape blade. It is important to have the slope in the tip. Length isn't too critical though I doubt that much shorter would be in your best interest.

Width could easily be ¼"-½" narrower, go wider at your own risk. Once the outline is cut, making both a left and a right, sand the outside of blade smooth, tapering the perimeter down to the face of the blade. Glass second face and set aside while making shaft.

Take 8 – 7' long strips of typical stripper material, ¼" X ¾" and make v-groove in

one  $\frac{1}{4}$ " face of each strip. Here I'll digress, many will use a table saw for this operation, others will use a router/table setup. I use a shaper bit in a drill press, feeding the strips through a jig clamped to the drill press table. Reason being I don't have a table saw and routers are at the far end of my "Gee I really like this tool" spectrum.

However the v-groove is done, then rip the strips to  $\frac{9}{16}$ " wide, this will finish out to a shaft  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter, so if you want a thinner shaft go maybe  $\frac{1}{32}$ " narrower, a little bit goes a long ways here. The next step requires a seven to eight foot long flat space, a good 2x4 or 2x6 will work. Clamp all eight strips together, v-groves down getting strips aligned as best you can. Taper both ends down to  $\frac{5}{16}$ " or a little less, leaving the middle 32" or so parallel, a power plane is handy here. Then lightly sand planed area to open the grain.



**Shaft work space**



**Assemble**

Assemble. Always do a trial run before mixing glue. This can be a real invitation to frustration if you try it freehand, here's what has worked best for me. First mark all the strips in the middle on what will be the outside. Then strap the strips together over a 3-4" long piece of 1" pvc pipe or similar. I use a home made bungee with a large rubber band and a piece of dowel.

With the strips held in reasonable proximity to each other you can get the strips interlocked at each end and start 'zipping' strips together towards the center, pull the piece of pipe out of center before you go very far.



**Zippping strips together**



**Re-clamp**

Once you've got the assembly down, its time to actually glue stuff together. Lightly reclamp strips together v-groves up and mix epoxy. First spread a coat of neat epoxy in grooves followed by epoxy thickened with wood flour to the consistency of thick syrup. Assemble for real, it is actually easier with the epoxy lubricating the joints. Clamp every 8" or so

with cable ties or equivalent.







**Epoxy**



**Wood flour**



**Assemble**



**Clamp**

Eyeball down the length of shaft to make sure its straight, easy to adjust at this point. If you prefer you can pre-make some jigs to hold everything in line, but eyeball adjustment seems to work for me.

Next day after the epoxy's set, it's time to shape down the shaft. Clip and remove cable ties. Once again a power plane is useful to knock off edges and go from 8 sided to 16 sided. From here sandpaper round. I often use a really old ½" industrial drill (600 rpm load or no load) clamped in a vise to rotate shaft.



**Shaping**

Mating blades to shaft takes a little thought, particularly feather angle. First decide on feather angle, anything from zero to ninety degrees. If angle is anything besides zero degrees you have to decide whether to use left or right hand control. The vast majority of paddlers use right hand control (even us old lefties). Some of the earlier iterations of my double blades were automatically of the ninety-degree variety and they still feel fine for a short paddle but I now set my blade angle at about 75 degrees. Incorporating a ferrule in the middle of the shaft allows you to set the feather angle wherever you want by drilling an extra hole for the lock button.



**Trim shaft ends**

To trim the shaft ends for blades I cut an eight to one taper at the end of the shaft and sand the cut face to match the curve of the paddle blade. Mark the location of the shaft on the blade and then gather up 4 pieces of 1x2 or so and some clamps. Mix epoxy, once again pre-coat end grain before applying thickened epoxy.





**Clamp**



**Glue**

Clamp and let cure.

Only thing left is to coat shaft with a coat or two of epoxy before varnishing then go out and have some fun.



**Skip Johnson**

~~~ The End ~~~

Book Review for kids - Kayak Anna and the Palindrome Creek

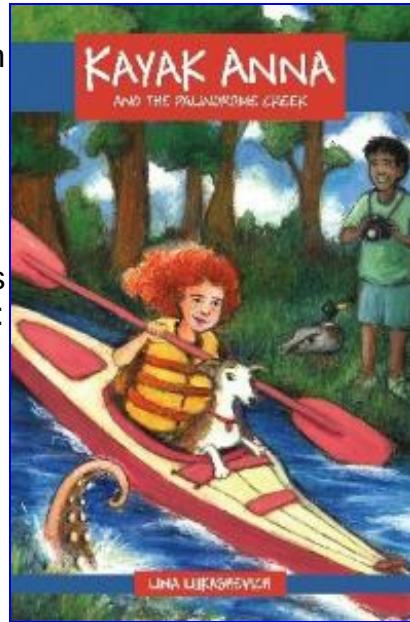
by
Lina Lukashevich

Lina Lukashevich has written a new children's book to share her love of kayaking with the next generation of paddlers. "Kayak Anna and the Palindrome Creek" is a splashing eco-adventure for readers ages 9 to 13. It's a novel about a girl who cleans up the pollution of her neighborhood creek while learning about forgiveness, environmental activism and ravenous trolls.

All profits from Kayak Anna are donated to Living Water International to provide safe, clean drinking water for children around the world.

Kayak Anna is being used by a number of schools and nature educators and Lukashevich is relying on word of mouth promotion from fellow paddlers to let more families and schools know about this book. Here's how you can help:

- Buy books for young readers at KayakAnna.org or Amazon.com for only \$9.99.
- Mention the book and link KayakAnna.org in your website or blog
- Sell the book at your paddle shop.
- Tell your local schools, scouts, and libraries to use this great resource (contains a class discussion and activity guide)
- Share this email with fellow paddlers.



Lina Lukashevich resides in Chicagoland with her musician husband Johnny L and numerous unruly Whippet hounds. She enjoys ukelele music, leafy sea dragons and mildly strenuous kayaking expeditions.

~~~ The End ~~~



# Letter from the Editor(s)

by  
**Linda Gorski**

What do your editors do when they are not paddling? As you know from some of our published trip reports, Louis Aulbach, John Rich and I (plus our buddy Dana Enos) share a passion for history and archaeology. The four of us spend a lot of time hiking, exploring, and researching historical sites in various parts of the state of Texas - and sometimes even digging them up!

In December Louis, John and I were privileged to take part in a very important archaeological survey at a plantation site near Hempstead. We spent four very cold, wet and muddy days on our knees digging in holes.

Many of you may have seen the television reports on this dig which ran on at least three of the Houston TV stations, or perhaps you read the article that appeared in the Houston Chronicle on Sunday, December 27.



**Linda, Louis, John and John's friend Kay Choate at the beginning of Day 3 of the dig -- BEFORE getting wet and muddy.**



**John digging on the far left and Linda in the funky (but warm) hat on the far right.**

Photo by James Nielsen Chronicle

I wonder how many of you recognized two of the folks in the photo that accompanied the article as your fellow paddlers Linda and John, digging away, exposing the foundation features of the 1822 plantation house!

So what do you do when you're not paddling? Send us a blurb about what you do in your spare time, and maybe even a photo, so all of us in the Houston Canoe Club can get to know each other better.

~~~ The End ~~~

Upcoming River Trips

HCC Trips:

- Date:** Thursday, January 21, 2010
Title: Big Bend - Boquillas Canyon
Inclusive Dates: 1/21 - 1/23
Description: Our annual winter trip to Big Bend - Boquillas Canyon is set for Jan. 21st, 22nd and 23rd. Three days Two nights on the Rio Grande River. We will need those that are planning on going to be at the put-in by Noon on Jan. 20th, so we can set up the return shuttle.
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 Philip & Tisha Matticks by phone 713-826-5705, or by email ptmatticks@att.net.
###
- Date:** Sunday, February 07, 2010
Title: Buffalo Bayou
Inclusive Dates: Feb. 7
Description: Enjoy a late Sunday morning paddle down the Buffalo Bayou with the man who is writing a book on the bayou's history: Louis Aulbach!
Skill Level: **Neophyte:** Never paddled before.
Contact: Contact Louis Aulbach by phone 713 683 8379, or by email lfa@hal-pc.org.
###
-

Other Club Trips:

Smoke on the Water

by
John Bayduss

Saturday night was a first for me: to paddle my kayak in the dark. Meeting other Houston Canoe Club paddlers at Dickinson Bayou, we set our canoes and kayaks into its silky waters, illuminated by only one large light located at the pier's edge. As we paddled away from the pier, the large light became smaller and eventually disappeared leaving us in darkness. Added to this darkness was a heavy fog surrounding us, a fog that gave the sensation of paddling through a cloud on the ground.

As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I could see the v-shape front of my kayak slicing through the fog. As the fog parted, it quickly grew back cloaking me in its heavy cape, giving me the feeling of being a letter inside an envelope. Paddling at night raises my awareness, it heightens the senses giving the journey an edge, a sharp edge, an exciting feeling. As we paddled further into the blackness I could picture a man sitting on the bayou's bank, very possibly Edgar Allen Poe himself. This night would give Poe the perfect setting to write another one of his macabre tales.



{Click on the images to see larger versions in a separate screen.}



As we paddled back to our original destination the light at the pier became our beacon, our lighthouse again. After placing our kayaks and gear back into our vehicles, we settled down for a late night meal of homemade chili and cornbread. Saying our goodbyes we knew the following day I had another day of paddling which I will write about soon.



John Bayduss

~~~ The End ~~~

# Time Traveler, by Charles Zipprian

by  
Charles Zipprian

This is one of the most unusual trip reports we've ever published. His ethereal descriptions could bring to mind a number of the glorious expeditions we are all privileged to experience. Let your own imagination flow across time. Were you a member of the expedition...

~~~~~

Today, I travel back in time.

I lay staring out the window as the first streaks of gold break across the horizon and creep across the ceiling. I've thought about this day so many times my mind doesn't know how to react. Finally, the excitement wins the moment. Throwing off the covers I dress and begin packing for a long anticipated expedition. Purified water is a must, along with some food and basic camping gear. The terrain is going to be difficult, gloves and strong boots are needed. The infrastructure we take for granted today won't exist for a thousand years. Our group of scholars and professionals will voyage many miles during the expedition. While we expect no trouble it is still wise to be alert for possible safety hazards and disturbances from the local wildlife or inhabitants. Our research into the area has taught us that many of the local Indian bands have marked their territory by use of various plant combinations that dye the rock face. We will be making a wide loop through the area in a hope to explore many of the cave sites containing these pictograph drawings. We plan to visit them quickly and leave them undisturbed.

I take a few minutes to load all my equipment into my transport vehicle. There is little room available, size and weight are a factor so the equipment has to be spared down to the minimum. Driving to the launch site this morning, the radio had broadcast a local weather forecast and news. It occurred to me this would be the last forecast I hear for several days. Once we embark, there will be no radio stations blaring out the news. No phones available to call the cops or ambulances to rush us to help in case of emergencies. The group will be solely dependant upon itself to meet all obstacles.

I watch as the sun crests the bordering cliffs and spray the lower canyon with orange light. We meet to go over last minute details such as safety signals, traveling order, and first day plans. We have eleven members going on the trip. All are packed and ready for what lies ahead. Each member sneaks glances at other members trying to determine their levels of anxiety. After another review of safety reminders, we launch the expedition knowing there is no turning back now.

We travel only a short distance before we begin to hear the roar. There are two tandem vehicles where the partners must work in unison to navigate the obstacles. Each of the remaining nine members manages the controls of their own vehicle. The vehicles barely give off a whisper of sound as we glide along. Communication is kept low as we approach the first barrier. Each vehicle passes through with only slight rocking and bouncing of its occupants. On the other side, the smiles break out as we begin to relax a little more knowing the first hurdle has been passed.

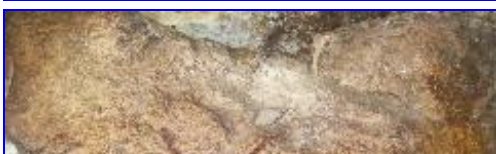
As the anxiety diminishes I can look around seeing this new world for the first time. The rawness of the land washes over me. My mind has conditioned me to expect

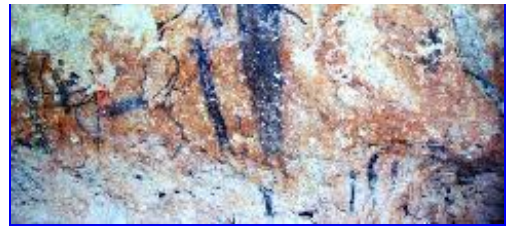
smooth roadways, sidewalks, and manicured landscapes. In this time zone I see rugged boulders the size of autos. Jagged landscapes tower above me dwarfing those around me. The cliff's irregular changes in color show the passage of time through the land. What would be pebbles in my time are the size of footballs here just waiting for time to wear them down. The area is thick with swaying bamboo breaking all symmetrical lines. In this world, smooth and manicured doesn't exist.



My party finds an isolated site and makes camp for the night. As the light fades the stars begin to shine. As a team of scholars we know the meaning of the term billion. Until this night, looking up into the night sky not one of us had ever truly seen a billion. The night air is so clean and clear, as a group we decide the word pollution has not yet been invented.

The next morning and for several mornings following, we break camp early to get the most of the time available. The day's travels bring many new wonders. Drawings on cave walls, symbols that none can read and allow speculative theories to abound. Etchings in the stone that cover acres. Flocks of butterflies that are so vast they are mistaken for birds. A cliff side so white it appears to be made of snow. The continuous ruggedness of the area has caused many of the party to have abrasions and contusions. We travel on. Recording what we see, yet knowing we are missing so much because the eyes and brain can only absorb so much at once. Each night a few members gather to stare into the night sky and tranquility flows down on us as we search the vastness above us.





For the final time we break camp. The traveling is easier now with an anticipation to get back to our time, to have showers and cold drinks and greasy cheeseburgers available for the asking. We pass through the last of the barriers and see a high modern bridge ahead. The bridge brings on a melancholy mood soon it will be time to start looking back at the photographs and recordings. The time has passed for making the memories.



The Guardian



The Guardian

Pencil sketch by Charles Zipprian



The author, Charles Zipprian

~~~ The End ~~~



# **Turtle Bayou**

**January 24, 2010**

**by**

**Dave Kitson**

We had a great day for a paddle on Sunday the 24th with temperatures in the mid 60s and a clear blue sky. The group included Ken Anderson, Paul Woodcock, Cindy and John Bartos, Mike Pollard, and Charles and Chance Zipprian.

We set out from White's park at 9:30 and made our way upstream on Turtle Bayou. About half way up we encountered a pair of adults and several high school age kids on a barge engaged in cleaning up fallen trees, branches and debris from Ike. It looked like they will have cleaned the bayou to a distance of 2 miles or so from I-10 when they are done.



**The group on Turtle Bayou**

Photo by Dave Kitson



**Clean up on the Bayou.**

Photo by Dave Kitson

The water was very low this day so we were only able to go 2.8 miles upstream from the park before we were forced to turn around. I had paddled this stretch a couple of months ago during very high water and was able to go a little over 3 miles upstream, the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of which involved paddling under, over and around fallen trees. At the end there is a shack that is in the process of falling into the

stream but we did not get that far on this day.

Turtle Bayou gets the award for weird trees. Here is a photo of a fallen tree that has bullseyed it's way right thru a hole in a still standing tree.

Back at the park we had lunch and then Charles, Chance, Ken, John and Cindy had to leave.

This left Mike and Paul to paddle on. The 3 of us paddled a mile or so up White's Bayou. This is one of the best bayou paddles left after Ike in my view. Although it has lost some of its biggest trees the high banks give the illusion of being in a tall forest. The stream is slim and winds back and forth south from White's park.



**Paul Woodcock checks out one of the weird trees on the bayou.**

Photo by Dave Kitson





**Mike and Paul on White's Bayou.**

Photo by Dave Kitson

It is probably possible to go 1.5 miles in high water conditions but this day we only made about a mile, still it made for a wonderful hour.

Not yet ready to quit we then made the run on Turtle Bayou downstream to Lake Anahuac. This stretch is wide and fairly well wooded with just a few houses here and there. The wind off the lake was pretty intense which made the last 100 yards a chore and prevented us from actually going out on the lake.

By the end of the day we had paddled 3 of the 4 possible trips leaving only Albritons Gully (I am not sure of the name) for another day.



**These trees appear to be holding hands.**

Photo by Dave Kitson



**I took this photo after Hurricane Ike - looks like this tree is just hanging in mid-air.**

Photo by Dave Kitson.

~~~ The End ~~~