



www.houstoncanooclub.org :: Volume 2009 :: December

Table of Contents

- Next Meeting Announcement
- Last Meeting Minutes
- New Members
- Market Place
- The Blazing Paddles-All Done Up in Red and Purple
- Christmas Stories from HCC members
- The Poop Tube
- Boy Scouts
- Boat Builder's Corner
- HCC Christmas Party, Saturday, December 5

Trip Reports:

- Upcoming River Trips
- Pecos River
- Buffalo Bayou: From Briar Bend Park to Woodway

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: January 13, 2010 @ 7:00 PM
Where: Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas
Directions: First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just West of Hillcroft.
Speaker: No General Meeting this month!!! Christmas Party December 5.
See info below
Speaker Bio:
Description: There will be no general meeting in December. Instead, the HCC will host a Christmas Party for its members on Saturday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m. at the Upper Kirby Building at the corner of Eastside and Richmond. SEE ARTICLE BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION. Our next general meeting will be held at the Bayland Community Center (see address above) on January 13, 2010.



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

Last Meeting Minutes

Date: November 11, 2009

Recorder: John Ohrt

Minutes: HOUSTON CANOE CLUB GENERAL MEETING
Bayland Park Community Center

Commodore Bill Grimes called the meeting to order.

Bill presented a power point on being in shape to paddle and the upcoming yoga classes.

Bill announced that the December meeting will NOT be at Bayland, but at the Christmas party December 5th at the Upper Kirby Management District Building, 3015 Richmond at Eastside (between Kirby and Buffalo Speedway). Party set up will begin around 6:00 pm and the party starts at 7:00 pm. The club will buy a ham and a turkey; everyone will bring a side dish and whatever you want to drink.

Officers were introduced and new members were greeted (one of our guests was Bill Grimes).

Paul Woodcock gave the Safety minute on how to secure your boat.

Vice Commodore Ken McDowell introduced the speaker Regina Lindsey the Executive Director of the Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition. She gave an excellent power point including photos from the HCC trip this summer. She discussed plans for a canoe trial and future canoe launch spots, as well as working with the city of Houston to develop a park on the bayou.

Fleet Captain Donna Grimes showed the current mileage chart and encouraged everyone to try for 100 miles. Many are getting close. Past trips included the low water week long Pecos River paddle and hike expedition, Matagorda Bay - lots of wildlife, a high water trip on Boquillas Canyon of Big Bend, Spring Creek, the San Antonio River trip to Goliad, and the Lower Guadalupe which came up for a few hours. Upcoming trips are Buffalo Bayou, yoga classes, Colorado River camp from boats, the Christmas party, and the Dickinson festival of lights.

Business Meeting: Bill Grimes called for nominations for officers from the floor. Hearing none, the existing officers were accepted by acclamation as follows: Bill Grimes Commodore, Ken McDowell Vice Commodore, Donna Grimes Fleet Captain, Harmon Everett Purser, John Ohrt Recorder, Linda Gorski Newsletter, Paul Woodcock Boatswain.

Harmon gave the financial report.

Paul reported that we have nine new members.

The website committee reported that Harmon is working on learning the system. Fraser Baker was recognized and thanked for his (at least) eleven years of service on the website. The web site would not

have happened except for Fraser's hard work.

The meeting was adjourned.

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

New Members

Member Name: Shane Everett
Membership Type: family
Member's Family: Shanna Everett

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: Repair kit for Klepper
Description: Former owner of a double-seat Klepper Aerius Classic has a repair kit (blue canvas and gray rubber hull patches) and unopened polish and preservative chemicals available to a Klepper owner and sailor with a good home. Originally cost \$45. You may have it all for \$20 American. Also have a detailed assembly and parts list for the wooden framework.

Asking Price: \$20.00

Contact Name: Ron Scott

Contact Phone: 281-931-3780

Contact Email: ronscotttx@mac.com

###

Item: Old Town Discovery 16'9"

Description: 85 Lbs, 3 layer Poly, 4 paddles. Very Good Condition, few superficial scratches on bottom, About 1995, Always garaged, Used only in South LA. Sells new \$999 at LL Bean, Used \$400-700 in good condition.

Photos: [Click here \(pdf file\)](#)

Asking Price: \$400 OBO

Contact Name: Malia

Contact Phone: 281-433-1476

Contact Email:

###

Item: Wen-no-nah Whisper 15-1/2

Description: Wen-no-nah "Whisper" is a 15-1/2 foot lightweight solo canoe. Jensen designed to be quick but stable. It's perfect for those flatwater HCC trips where you need to keep up with the group. Really good condition.

Asking Price: \$700

Contact Name: Ken Barnard

Contact Phone: 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.

Contact Email: kenkayaks@yahoo.com

###

Item: We-no-nah Jensen 18

Description: We-no-nah "Jensen 18" is a 18 foot ultralight kevlar tandem canoe with wood gunnels and portage yoke. Real fast, it is used in "Citizen Racer" category and is perfect for HCC flatwater trips. It is in good condition and would retail new at about \$2999 but is selling used for only \$700.

Asking Price: \$700

Contact Name: Ken Barnard

Contact Phone: 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.

Contact Email: kenkayaks@yahoo.com

###

Item: Cobra Expedition

Description: Cobra "Expedition" is one of the fastest sit on top kayaks ever designed. It is 18 feet long and only 24" wide. It has a rudder and three covered hatches and is rated for up to 425 lbs total

capacity. In their ad in the Dec. issue of Canoe & Kayak it is described as being "ideal for anyone interested in performance touring or fishing. A high level of paddling efficiency enables paddlers to travel longer distances in a shorter time." Its current retail price is \$1470 or buy mine used for \$650.

Asking Price: \$700

Contact Name: Ken Barnard

Contact Phone: 713-666-7298 9-5 Mon - Sat.

Contact Email: kenkayaks@yahoo.com

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Items Wanted

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

The Blazing Paddles-All Done Up in Red and Purple

by
Donna Grimes

This past weekend (November 6 - 8) as the Blazing Paddles decorated their boats, getting ready to join the flotilla down the San Antonio River, some of the other HCC members questioned me about what this “**Blazing Paddle**” stuff was all about....so....Inquiring Minds....are....about to get the answer.

A number of years ago, I heard about a group called [The Red Hat Society](#) – a society of women over 50 who “just want to have fun”. The idea is that now they are old enough not to be bogged down with responsibilities, but to grab life by the ying-yang and run with the gusto of a kid.

Such an idea appealed to me and I approached some of my friends over fifty.....all of them paddlers. The group started and for five years we have formed a sisterhood of fun, frolic, paddling, and laughing with each other.

Since we ARE paddlers, we named ourselves The Blazing Paddles and we have made quite a “splash” on rivers across Texas. Our debut was at the “Anything that Floats” parade where we won People's Choice award.



Colorful paddles!

Of course, being paddlers, we made sure we had the proper gear – paddles that showed off our colors, matching nightwear, T-shirts with our “blaze”, even our own song, written by Ann Derby.



The Blazing Paddles won the People's Choice Award.



The Blazing Paddles in their fancy pajamas



Donna and Lillian model the Blazing Paddles T-shirt



Boats all decorated for the Goliad Paddle

You might see us on the San Marcos River or in New York City. We've cruised, been one of the Goliad Paddle Trails' - their Favorite participants as we whisk down the San Antonio River with our boats all decorated.



Blazing Paddles prepare to tackle the San Marcos River



Red Hats prepare to paddle the San Antonio River in the Goliad event.

This sisterhood not only enjoys the great outdoors but we dress to the nines and parade our colors with the best of them. Even other red hat chapters envy us our enthusiasm, glitz, and glamour.



The Glitzy and Glamorous Blazing Paddles

Any of you ladies out there over fifty – who paddle – and are ready to adopt the philosophy of “love, laugh, and live longer” may join us.

Now, if you younger than fifty “wannabes” would also like to join – you can wear the less dynamic colors of pink (rather than red) hat, and lavender (rather than purple) outfits. We LOVE our **pink hatters**.

We are already planning our big adventure next year – out West – hiking across the Navajo Sandstone.

Drop me an e-mail and join our chapter Queen Donna-mite.
donnapaddles@gmail.com



Pink Hatters



The End

Christmas Stories from HCC members

December 24, 2004

by

Cindy Bartos

We had just finished a fine Christmas Eve dinner of fresh Redfish John had caught earlier in the day when I looked out the window and noticed it was snowing! Large white flakes were falling all around and quickly covering the ground, our kayaks and the palm trees...

Palm trees?? Yes - Rockport, Texas was having its first ever White Christmas! Christmas morning we awakened to 6 inches of wet snow, sparkling under one of those deep blue Texas skies. As we walked the neighborhood we watched the little kids (and several big 'kids') build snowmen, throw snowballs and, at least temporarily, forget about the litter of opened presents sitting around the Christmas tree.

We couldn't resist the opportunity to slide our kayaks through the snow and into the salt water to paddle with snow banks on one side and the expansive Copano Bay on the other.

(Click on the photo to view a larger version.)

The deeper snow stayed on the ground for a while but the next day we put in at Goose Island State Park - blue sky, slight breeze, calm waters and no evidence of snow. We paddled up to Dunham Bay and not long into our paddle we spotted two magnificent Whooping Cranes, whooping as they flew overhead. Sometime later we sat in our kayaks and watched silently while a pair of adults and a young crane fed in a nearby marsh.

We have always considered seeing the endangered cranes an appreciated privilege - but with the gift of the snow and the presence of the cranes, this was one special, magical Christmas on the Texas Gulf Coast.



Paddling in the snow

Photo by John Bartos

~~~~~ The End ~~~~~

Christmas Memories of Fort Hood, Texas

by Linda Gorski

Recently we've all been overwhelmed by the news out of Fort Hood in Central Texas about the killings of several service men and women and the wounding of many others. This was a tragedy, not just for Fort Hood and the surrounding communities, including Killeen, but for the nation as a whole.

I have only happy memories of Fort Hood. Many recent news reports have highlighted the close bonds that exist among the families of the soldiers who are facing long separations and uncertain futures. That's the Fort Hood I remember.

I've lived at Fort Hood for a total of six years in my life - the first three as a child when my dad was stationed there as an Army aviator. My claim to fame during that

first tour at Fort Hood is as a Girl Scout in 1955 when I sold a box of Girl Scout cookies to Pvt. Elvis Presley outside the post theater. And, yes, I did get his autograph!

I remember wonderful Christmases with six of my eight brothers and sisters who were around at the time.

We never had a lot of money or got a lot of presents but that year my parents granted my fondest Christmas gift wish – a typewriter – and thus began my love of writing.

The second time I lived at Fort Hood was in the early 1980s when husband Rick, now a retired Army Colonel, commanded the 17th Engineer Battalion in the 2nd Armored Division. We were privileged to have 600 soldiers and their families as part of our extended family. No matter which post we lived on around the world – and Fort Hood was no exception - Christmas Day always included a huge feast at the mess hall, shared with the soldiers who had to stay behind to answer the call of duty. (It wasn't until many years later that my daughters realized that most people actually eat Christmas dinner at home and that Mom is supposed to cook!)

In October 1982 my daughters and I came up with an idea that we hoped would make a happier Christmas for our soldiers who had to stay in the barracks over Christmas. We proposed to make Christmas stockings for each soldier and to fill them to the brim with goodies and hang them on their bunks on Christmas Eve. I brought the idea to the wives in the battalion and they all embraced it enthusiastically.

We were on a tight budget so we started collecting old worn out long olive drab socks that the soldiers wore with their high top boots. Didn't matter what condition they were in. From October through Christmas Eve those socks were piled on my dining room table and every time anyone had time they dropped by and we decorated those stockings with anything we had in our craft baskets – buttons, feathers, rickrack, sequins, glitter, cotton balls, paint, glue. We got our kids involved and they came up with some really creative designs! We decorated socks for two months and eventually made one for each and every soldier who had to stay in the barracks over Christmas. We collected stocking stuffers from willing retail shops in the Fort Hood area. Grocery stores gave packets of cookies and crackers and other non perishable items. McDonalds, Burger King and Dairy Queen gave gift certificates for free food. Banks gave keyrings. Car dealerships gave pencils and pens. The mess hall provided fresh fruit and nuts. The week before Christmas the wives stuffed the stockings.

On Christmas Eve Rick and his company commanders and first sergeants loaded up the stockings and played Santa's helpers. Just before midnight on Christmas Eve they hung a stocking on the bunks of each of their soldiers. On Christmas morning the soldiers had a surprise. Some thought it was corny. Others really got a kick out of it. One of the company commanders thought it was the biggest waste of his time and the corniest idea ever. But he went along with it.

I got a note from that same company commander several years later. The note



Linda Gorski, age about 10, at Fort Hood, Texas, with three of her eight brothers and sisters.

explained how reluctant he had been to take part in what he considered to be stupid idea. However, now that he was a battalion commander himself he was decorating and filling stockings for his own soldiers who had to stay in the barracks over Christmas at Fort Knox. And, by the way, that young man is now a 3 star general who recently commanded III Corps and Fort Hood and relates this story to me every time I see him.

If you Google “Christmas stockings for soldiers” you’ll see that many organizations now ship Christmas stockings to soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world. My daughters like to think that we started something special!



Happy Holidays – and please keep our service men and women in your prayers!

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

# The Poop Tube

by  
**John Rich**

Well, I hate to spoil the nice mood from all the pleasant stories here, but this smelly subject is one that is ripe for discussion. So I'm just going to cast aside the niceties, plunge in, and tackle the issue head-on. (*Yes, I'll be making gratuitous bathroom jokes here.*)

The subject matter is: Pooping in the wilderness. I could use many other words to describe the relevant act, but I'll try and stick to the less offensive ones. If you don't want to read about poop, then you should exit this story now, because from here on out, I'm going to talk about it much more than you probably want to hear.

The fact is, an awareness of issues about pooping in the woods is made necessary by our Federal government, in the form of the National Park Service. Yes, leave it to the government to regulate our bodily waste functions. And by gosh, they're already actually doing it in some places!



## Park Regulations

For example, here's a notice from Big Bend National Park in west Texas about potty rules for trips on the Rio Grande River.

### "River Use Regulations:"

Quote: *"All solid human waste must be carried out, with the following exception: kayak-only or single-canoe trips."*

Here's another example from a recent canoe trip I did on Lake Powell in Utah.

### "Lake Powell Pure - Now and Forever:"

Quote: *"You are required to possess and utilize a human sanitation device (portable toilet) that does not use plastic bags to contain the waste. This waste may not be disposed of in the trash, but only at pump-out/dump stations located on the lake and at the marinas. As an alternative, you may use a commercial Waste Bag Containment System, that can be disposed of in the trash."*

There are probably many other examples of such regulations around the country - these are just the two that I have personally run into recently. So, if you're preparing for a trip, it behooves you to be aware of what your options are for legally pooping in the woods, without getting a ticket from a Park Ranger for it. That would be embarrassing, for both parties.

## Compliance Solutions

You may recall that Linda Gorski previously talked about this subject back in May, with her story "["GROOVY New Rules for Disposing Human Waste on Rio Grande"](#)". Linda introduced a couple of new products to address this problem, which makes

it fairly easy to comply with these new park regulations.

The first one is called the [Wag Bag](#) - click the web site reference for a description and photo of this product. You get a package of 12 Wag Bags for \$32 - that's \$2.70 per poop. Disposal is easy - you just drop it in any dumpster when you're done.

Another similar product is the [Restop](#). There is the Restop 1 for urine, and the Restop 2 for poop. Restop 2 sells in a pack of 5 for \$16, or \$3.20 each. Their web site even has a slide show to demonstrate how to use their products - it's family rated viewing.



If your paddling trip is short, these products may be just the thing you need to get you through the wilderness in compliance with the potty rules. It also wouldn't hurt to have a few in reserve even on trips of only a few hours, as sometimes you never know when the urge will strike.

Butt, as you can see, a week-long wilderness trip could get a bit expensive with this accommodation. If you go once per day, you'll need at least 7 bags, and with a few extra "just in case", that will add up to about \$25

worth. That's a lot of money to spend for simply pooping in the woods, when you normally get to do that for free. And you'll have to spend this kind of money every time you make such a trip.

And now after that long introduction and review, I have finally arrived at the actual subject matter of [this](#) particular story - the Poop Tube. You've probably been wondering when I was going to get around to that.

The poop tube is a reusable toilet system that you can build for a one-time up-front cost of about \$29. Once you've made this initial investment, the ongoing cost thereafter is minimal. For less than the cost of about ten wag bags, you can have a reusable poop tube that never runs out! You simply drop your waste matter inside the tube, keep it sealed up, and then dispose of the collected contents upon your return to civilization. If this money-saving idea appeals to you, then read on.

### **Poop Tube Construction**

So far, I have been unable to locate any source from which you could purchase a ready-made poop tube, so it seems like the only current option is to make your own. Thus, that's where this story is going next. Here are the components you need to build your own poop tube, and their cost:

- 4" diameter sewer & drain pipe, 10' long - \$11.00
  - End cap adapter - 2 @ \$3.56 each
  - 4" plug - 2 @ \$1.91 each
  - PVC pipe cleaner - \$3.00
  - PVC pipe glue - \$3.00
- Total: About \$29.00

You might be able to find a hardware store that sells the 4" diameter pipe in shorter sections, for a reduced cost. But 10' is the standard length, which is going to leave you with a lot left over. Maybe you can turn around and sell your excess to someone else who wants to build their own poop tube. Or you could go into business making and selling poop tubes, as there seems to be a market opportunity here.



The components

(Click on the thumbnail photos to view a larger version in a separate screen.)

I chose 4" diameter pipe because this was the widest diameter available, and I reasoned that this would make it easier to drop the poop down inside the tube without making a mess. You are free to use a smaller diameter, if you think that will work for you.

Note that this 4" diameter plastic pipe is called "sewer and drain" pipe. It is thinner and lighter than PVC Schedule 40 pipe which is designed for pressurized water systems. Be sure you get the right kind - there is no need for the heavier pipe in this poop tube application. And make sure that you also get the fittings for that type of pipe - since the sewer pipe is thinner, the outside diameter is smaller than the heavier PVC Schd 40 pipe. Thus, PVC Schd 40 fittings won't fit on the equivalent inside-diameter sewer pipe. The fittings should be segregated by type in the plumbing section of the hardware store. Dry fit them in the store before you leave, so that you don't get home with something that won't work.

I have also seen other fittings used on the end of the pipe, which come from RV (Recreational Vehicle) supply stores. These include different closing systems than just a threaded cap, and include a small cap that can be removed to attach a hose for clean-out. I don't know anything about these fittings, but you can investigate further on your own if interested.

The glues can get confusing, as they come in different colors and brands. Just pick something that says it works on PVC and CPVC, and you'll be okay. The cleaner comes with a swab under the cap so you can prepare the pipe to receive the glue. The glue also has a swab under the cap, for applying it to both surfaces of the pipe to be joined.



PVC pipe cleaner & glue

So, head for the hardware store and buy your bag of goodies. Then you can get busy in your garage putting them together. Construction is very simple, and anyone can do it.

You can review this do-it-yourself information from Home Depot for tips for gluing together PVC pipe:["Cutting & Connecting Rigid Plastic Pipes:"](#)

The only decision you have to make before beginning assembly, is to decide how long you want to make the poop tube. I started thinking scientifically about this, but there is a notable lack of information about the cubic volume of the average human poop. I wanted my tube to be good for a week, but had no idea how much volume I

needed to accomplish that. So I just eyeballed it and made mine two feet long. After a few days of usage on the river with this, I quickly realized that this was probably bigger than necessary. And when packed vertically in my canoe, it sticks up above the gunwales, which could snag passing tree branches. So I think I'm going to cut mine down to a foot and a half in length.

To cut the pipe to length, you can use a hand wood saw, hack saw, sabre saw, or any other type of saw you have handy. It doesn't require anything special. Try and make the cut square for the best fit. Remove any burrs around the edge when the cut is finished, with a knife or sandpaper. Now all you have to do is clean, glue and fit the parts together. Dry fit everything first to make sure they'll go together smoothly once you add the glue. Once the glue is applied, you have a very limited time to fit them together, before they become permanently bonded. So dry fit first to ensure you won't have a hang-up when you're running out of glue time.

Use the pipe cleaner to swab around the plastic where the end cap adapters will fit over the pipe at each end. That's the outside of both ends of the pipe, and the inside of both sleeves of the adapters.



The completed poop tube

Once that's dry, you can proceed to gluing. Swab the glue liberally around the same areas you just cleaned, doing one adapter and one end of the pipe at a time. Immediately slide the adapter over the end of the pipe, giving it a slight twist to smear the glue around together for a good seal. Repeat with the other adapter on the other end of the pipe. That's it! You are now the proud new owner of a poop tube.

The end caps are screwed into the adapters to seal the pipe. I put arrows on one end of the pipe with a magic marker as sort of a "this end up" sign, so that I wouldn't unscrew the wrong end cap and come face to face with a previous deposit.

## Utilization

So let's say you're now out in the field and you're ready to use your new poop tube on its maiden voyage. How does that work?

The technique that worked well for me is this: I took along a roll of paper towels as part of my bathroom kit. I laid down a two-sheet thick layer of paper towels on the ground. If the wind is blowing them away, put a small rock on each corner to anchor it. I've heard some people say they use coffee filters, but the coffee filters I see in the grocery store aren't very big, and my aim isn't very good. If you can get your hands on some of those giant industrial-sized coffee filters like restaurants use, that might make a good alternative. Squat down over the towel and do your business. Aim the urine stream downhill if necessary, so that it doesn't flow back into the towels and weaken their strength. There should be enough distance between the two functions so that only the poop ends up on the paper towels. At least there is for men - I don't know how that works out for you ladies. Use your toilet paper and throw that on top of the poop. When done, pick up the four corners of the paper towels, and drop the wad into your poop tube. You may hold the poop tube in one hand, and the wad in the other hand to accomplish this.

If you're squeamish about accidents in this delicate

handling, you can add some disposable gloves to your bathroom kit, and don a pair for the operation. A pack of 10 is only about \$3. Throw them into the tube also, when done.

Warning: I was hoping my poop tube would be watertight from the inside out. But when I filled it half-way with water in my garage, and sat it upright, there was some leakage through the end cap threads. Not to worry though. The thickness of poop is sufficient to prevent leakage, and the paper towels absorb any loose liquid so that it isn't sloshing around loose to run through the threads. Another good idea is to throw a couple of handfuls of kitty litter in the bottom to absorb loose liquids. Alternatively, you can buy a different fitting and glue a solid end cap on one end of the pipe. That way, stored upright with that end down, you're guaranteed no leakage. However, that's going to make it more difficult to clean out later, as the rinse hose water won't just flow straight through. You might also try sealing the threads on the bottom end with plumber's teflon tape. Needless to say, the last thing you want is the contents of the poop tube leaking out into your canoe. I tested this out thoroughly at home before going out on the river with this contraption. Yeah, that makes for a funny story, which I won't go into here.



**Disposable gloves**



**End cap wrench**

There's one other item you might want in your bathroom kit, and that's a wrench. You'll want to screw the end caps on tight for security of the contents, but that can also make them difficult to remove by hand. So I made a crude wrench out of plywood to fit over the square lug on the end cap. It's lightweight, and provides the necessary leverage to do the job. You could also simply use a regular wrench, as long as the jaws open wide enough to fit over the lug.



**Dump station sign**

Of course, the down-side of this reusable system is that you must eventually dispose of the collected contents. This can be done at any RV dump station, where underground storage tanks are located to handle such matters. These are present at many camp sites, and include a water hose to wash out your poop tube after you dump the contents in the hole in the ground.

And that, thankfully, is the end of this unpleasant discussion. Congratulations for bearing with me to get this far. Now you have some ideas on what you can do to comply with these park potty rules when you run into them in the future. Happy camping!



Poop tube ready for action on Lake Powell

~~~ The End ~~~

Boy Scouts

by
Gordon Start

I am Scoutmaster to Boy Scout Troop 1020 and we go canoeing at least a couple times per year. Up until this year, I had always insisted the Scouts have their Swimming Merit Badge and some other "on the water" experience, such as Summer Camp taking the Canoeing, Sailing, or other water sports Merit Badges.

This year I decided we needed to change the program and find ways to include everyone--especially the younger Scouts.



**Canoeing Merit
Badge**



This Spring, we had a day trip on the Colorado River, taking the loop around Columbus, TX. It's a nice float and a fun paddle, but as the number of Boy Scouts signed up grew, my anxiety also grew. Eventually, we had 25 Scouts signed up and ready to go on the River. How was I going to watch, herd, and keep safe (all while having fun) all of the Scouts? Also, the older Scouts were not sure

they wanted to "babysit" the younger Scouts.

(Click on the thumbnail photos to view full-screen versions.)

My anxiety was misplaced. As we went through the hour or so training early in the morning, the older Scouts took charge (as is the goal in Boy Scouts) and ran the show. During the paddle, the older Scouts helped the new paddlers.

In the end, the older Scouts agreed that canoeing offered great a opportunity for them to lead the Troop and train the new paddlers (practicing and improving their leadership skills) - and it was still fun.



The author, Gordon G. Start

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

## **Boat Builder's Corner**

by  
**Skip Johnson**

The Boat Builder's Corner is continued from last month.

### **Finishing the Inside**

I don't personally know of anyone who really looks forward to this stage of building a stripper, but it's not really that bad. A part of the problem is finishing the inside just can't give you the rush that comes from shaping and finishing the outside, particularly a first boat. Even if the task is (relatively) onerous, it's got to be done so here we go.

First order of business is to make some saddles to support the boat when it's turned right side up. Three will do for this short a boat, one at about the midsection and one about four feet towards either end. Easiest way is to go back to the stations and use them as a pattern, cut out just a little extra, it doesn't need to be an exact fit, but the saddles do need to have the same baseline reference. The whole idea is to have a stable platform to set the boat in while finishing the inside. At this stage the boat is still pretty flexible, and trust me, it's entirely possible to end up with a fairly twisted boat or one that's kinda caved in on the bottom where the inside was glassed while sitting on a table.

Once the saddles are made it's time to take the boat off the form. First pull what rubber bands remain on the inside off. There may be a few towards the end you can't reach but don't worry about them, they'll pop loose in just a bit. Go around and pull the hull away from the form, just gently pulling out a half inch or so around the sheer and pushing up on the inside to release hull from the form. Then with a scrap of strip to protect the edge, lever up at the bow and stern with some wedges or a lever such as a small crowbar or a claw hammer. Use some steady pressure and as soon as you feel the first give as the boat comes loose you are ready for the next adventure.

Once both ends are free you can slowly work the boat off the form moving each end an inch or so at a time until it is completely free. Go ahead and lift the boat off the form, light isn't it? At this point the boat feels pretty flimsy and you can twist it a little and the sides can be pulled in and out at will. But it will always return to its original shape. The saddles can be mounted to the bottom of the original strongback or what's often best for me is a good straight aluminum extension ladder set on sawhorses.

After pulling out any rubber bands left on the inside and knocking off any glue drips it's time to sand down the inside of the hull. If you have any sort of vacuum system that can hook up to your sander of choice now is the time to use it. Failing that, remove sanding dust with a shop vac on a very regular basis and wear appropriate breathing and eye protection. For me a belt sander takes down the rough edges in the bottom quickly followed by a quarter pad orbital sander and/or a dual action air sander on the bottom and sides. For the curve of the bilges I now use 6" sanding disc stuck to a short piece of three to four inch PVC pipe and use a sort of diagonal twisting motion to smooth out these areas. The very ends where conventional tools won't reach a piece of sandpaper wrapped around the end of a stick a couple of feet long will reach most of it. Once the insides are cleaned up and the scratch

marks from the coarser sandpaper removed you are almost ready to glass the inside. Before glassing the inside mix a small batch of epoxy and make a fairly thick (peanut butter consistency) paste to fillet the inside of the stem and stern.



**Inside filled**

Photo by Skip Johnson



**Cutting Cloth**

Photo by Skip Johnson

Glassing the inside is easier, or at least not as frenetic as doing the outside. For one thing the glass goes down on the inside crosswise of the boat with about an inch overlap on the seams. With four foot wide cloth this means you will have two full size pieces in the middle of the boat with about two feet at each end to fill with a separate piece on each side. Precut the two center pieces to span from gunnel to gunnel with about a half inch of extra on each side. Cut this fairly carefully since too much extra makes it difficult to keep the edges stuck down. Lay both middle pieces in the boat with the one inch overlap and clamp the edges three or four places at each edge.

Old fashioned wooden clothespins work well here but regular small spring clamps are just as good. Fold back the overlapping edge on the second piece you are going to wet out

and remove the clamps from one side of the first piece and fold back to expose the area from the centerline to gunnel on that side of the cloth. Time to laminate. Brush a fairly thick coat of mixed epoxy on the exposed wood and then carefully drape the loose edge of the cloth onto the wetted surface. Try to get the cloth to make contact with the surface in a progressive fashion, without bridging any areas. Gently patting cloth down with your gloved hand as you go can be helpful. Once the cloth is in contact with the epoxied hull, brush some more epoxy on the cloth dabbing into place rather than dragging the



brush, which will drag the cloth out of position. Repeat for other side of first piece of cloth followed by second piece of cloth. Some gentle squeegeeing is in order to get the cloth fully wet out without puddles. If you drag too hard or in the wrong direction the cloth will lift up off the hull surface and some care brushing and/or squeegeeing will be required to get the cloth to lay back down. For me the ideal is to have the entire glass area wet out with the cloth texture showing and no glossy puddles of resin anywhere, that's the lightest natural nonslip surface you can do. The balance of the ends can be done with a piece on each side with a little overlap and it should be neat but I don't worry about a little puddling or other imperfections here, since the area will be hidden under deck and bulkheads. Let the epoxy cure overnight before trimming the cloth edges and then we'll start covering those decks and bulkheads in the next installment.



**Glassed**

Photo by Skip Johnson

~~~ To be continued... ~~~

HCC Christmas Party, Saturday, December 5

**3015 Richmond (Upper Kirby Building)
by**

Linda Gorski and John Rich

The Houston Canoe Club will host a Christmas Party for all members on December 5th from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Upper Kirby District Building, 3015 Richmond, on the southeast corner of Richmond at Eastside. The party will be held in the conference room by the front door.

The Club will provide ham and turkey, soft drinks and water. Please bring a vegetable dish, salad or dessert. You're also welcome to bring wine, beer, etc. Also, bring a CD of photos from your paddling trips this year that we can show during the party.



See a map of the location [here](#).

If you need more information about the party, please contact Ken McDowell at komcdowell@earthlink.net or 713-432-1896.

See you there!!!!

Upcoming River Trips

HCC Trips:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Date: | Wednesday, November 25, 2009 |
| Title: | Park and Play Day |
| Inclusive Dates: | Nov. 25 |
| Description: | San Marcos River at the Rio Vista Dam Area. Come and join us for a park and play day. It's a great time to take advantage of the 72 degree water and work on your surfing, peel-outs, rolling and other intermediate skills. |
| 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 Robert Langley by phone 713 683 6917, or by email roblangley@comcast.net .
|
| Date: | Saturday, December 05, 2009 |
| Title: | Greens Bayou |
| Inclusive Dates: | Dec. 5 |
| Description: | Before the Christmas Party for HCC that PM, John Ohrt will be leading us on a paddle on the beautiful Greens Bayou that morning. You will paddle a couple of hours up and then paddle back, seeing this nice bayou in Houston AND still have time to get to the Party that PM. |
| 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 John Ohrt by phone 713 877 1504, or by email jcohrtjr@aol.com .
|
| Date: | Saturday, December 05, 2009 |
| Title: | HCC CHRISTMAS PARTY at 7 PM |
| Inclusive Dates: | Dec. 5 |
| Description: | Come join HCC for an evening of eating, drinking and visiting, at the Upper Kirby District Building 3015 Richmond, the southeast corner of Richmond and Eastside. Bring a side dish, dessert and beer/wine to go with the meat and soft drinks provided by HCC. |
| Skill Level: | Blank: Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing. |
| Contact: | Contact Ken McDowell by phone 713 432 1896, or by email komcdowell@earthlink.net .
|
| Date: | Saturday, December 12, 2009 |
| Title: | Dickerson Bayou Festival of Lights Paddle |
| Inclusive Dates: | Dec 12 PM |

Description: Saturday evening, join Paul Woodcock and other HCC members for a two mile paddle down the Christmas-lit bayou to the

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

Contact: Contact Paul Woodcock by phone 713 772 4945, or by email plwdcck@yahoo.com.

###

Other Club Trips:

Pecos River
Oct. 11 - 17, 2009
by
Harmon Everett

Saturday, Oct. 11, the Pecos Paddlers (Donna and Bill Grimes, Harmon Everett, Christy Long, Fraser and Janice Baker, Charles Zipprian, John Rich, Billie Corbin, Jim Barton, and Robert Killian) were to meet at the Seminole Canyon Campground.

By sundown everybody had shown up, and we transferred equipment and boats to condense down to 4 vehicles that had to be shuttled.



Six boats on two cars

Photo by John Rich

Star viewing

Photo by Harmon Everett There was a notice posted at the bathrooms that members of the San Antonio Astronomy club were hosting a star party at the park that night, so many of us wandered up to the top of the hill and looked through the big telescopes they had set up, looking at Jupiter's bands, or M51, or M7, or just sat back and watched for shooting stars, and marveled at the clarity of the night sky and the Milky Way while we learned how to find some new stars and new constellations.

Sunday morning we saddled up and found our way to the little store where we met with Emilio and the drivers that were going to drive our cars back to the take-out. Then we drove up the road the 60 miles to the Pandale put-in amid discussions of: "I don't remember it looking like this." And: "Was there always an intersection like that?" and: "Are we sure we're going in the right direction?" But we found the flat shelf rocks of the put-in, and unloaded the gear. The trucks headed back to the take-out with the shuttle drivers and soon Bill discovered (too late!) he'd left his hat in the truck.



Readyng boats at the put-in

Photo by Harmon Everett

The water was very low, we found out later it was listed as 150 cfs at the gaging station at Langtry, and we probably won't go back at that level again, it was just too hard. The water temp at the put-in was 69.5 F, and the ph level was close to neutral, at 7.2. As we went downriver, the temperature and ph levels both increased.



Harmon is ready to do battle with the river cane

Photo by John Rich

A half mile down river, John wanted to try to find some caves with pictographs. Most expeditions don't stop because it is so close to the put-in, but we agreed we would stop this time and see them.

After hacking our way through fifty yards of thick cane, we came to an arm of the river – if we had only paddled a few more yards, we could have just paddled around to it! Then John and I scrambled our way up through the scrub, talus and boulders to get to the cliff face. After half an hour, though, I gave up and turned back, and John came too. We

will have to leave those caves for another trip.

Although the normal distance the first day is usually about 8 - 9 miles, we stopped about mile 6 for camp the first night as looking for the pictographs made us late. It rained overnight.



Camp, Day 1

Photo by Harmon Everett

Day 2 turned out to be mostly rainy and gray. Molly got wet and was pretty damp and cold most of the day. While Louis cautions strongly against bringing pets along, Donna and Bill had brought Molly, who turned out to be a delight to have with us. Always cheerful and polite, and willing to set forth on whatever adventure we were going on, hopping from boat to boat – sometimes in midstream.



Donna goes for a swim, while Molly tends the boat



Paddlers and pooch crowd a tent to eat out of the rain

Photo by John Rich



Donna and Molly

Photo by Harmon Everett

Occasionally Donna slipped and let her boat go, and Molly successfully navigated the canoe down a couple of rapids by herself.



WINDS UP DOOR

Photo by Harmon Everett

**Negotiating rapids and rocks**

Photo by Haron Everett

The annual butterfly migration happens in October. Several times along the trip there were trees just loaded with butterflies, and usually there were half a dozen or so butterflies sailing along with us anywhere on the river.

Quite often on the Pecos the river comes to points where it flows through multiple narrow chutes lined by overhanging cane plants, like Christy is facing with this one in the photo below. There is no way to know what lies beyond the entrance that you can see. You just have to pick one, charge in, and see what

**Into the unknown**

Photo by Jim Barton

**Harmon hangs on as his kayak tips**

Photo by Donna Grimes

It rained overnight which was probably a good thing, because the next 4 miles of the flutes just about busted everybody, and what with the rain on day 2, and also last night, it probably added

**Molly hitches a ride with Robert**

Photo by Harmon Everett

There were a bunch of rapids to run. We stopped at Everett Canyon at Mile 17 where we camped, and I collected water samples from Everett Springs. I didn't get the temperature of the springs, but the ph was about 7.6.

**Monarch butterflies**

Photo by Fraser Baker

happens. So we had a whistle system that the first paddler through would use to signal the results to the remaining paddlers up on the high side. One blast of a whistle meant that the channel was good and everyone else can come on through. Two blasts on the whistle meant the channel was bad, and you should try some other path. And of course, there's always the standard three blasts, which means "*I'm in trouble and need help!*"

**Charles hangs his front end over a rapid**

a couple of inches to the water in the flutes. It was still incredibly difficult to drag the boats.



John & Bill walk the flutes

Photo by Donna Grimes



The flutes

Photo by Harmon Everett

Did I mention that the flutes involves about 4 miles of dragging your boat? The thin joke was that we were no longer the Houston Canoe Club, but were now members of the Houston Swimming, Hiking and Dragging your Boat Club.

At one point I hadn't seen Christy or Charles for a while, so I walked back a half a mile or so (upstream...sigh) to find them emptying Charles' boat. He had been dragging it through some rapids when the cleat broke, and the current swung the boat around, capsized it, filled it and pinned it. Like that's never happened to anybody before. But it had taken a while for Christy and Charles to get it unstuck, upright, and emptied out.



Ancient pictographs

Photo by Harmon Everett

We stopped at a couple of places and John led us up to see pictographs.



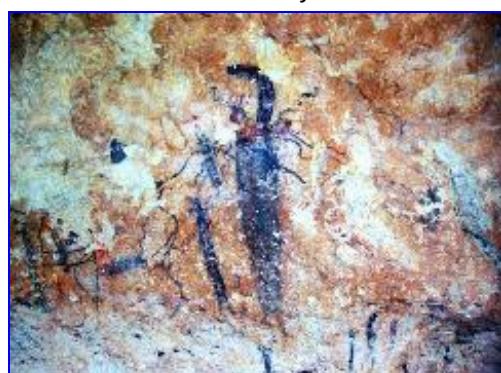
More pictographs

Photo by Harmon Everett



More modern pictographs

Photo by Harmon Everett



Dramatic pictographs

Photo by Charles Zipprian





"Piggy panther"

Photo by Robert Killian



Camp on a gravel bar

Photo by Harmon Everett

We were all exhausted from working our way through the flutes, and after only 6 miles, we stopped for the third night

on a rocky bar, and everybody spread their clothes out to dry like a refugee camp. It might have been more enjoyable if we weren't all so tired.

I turned over going through the first rapids of the 4th day, and then swamped or turned over at practically every rapids, ripple, swell or cane overhang the rest of the day. I'm sure most of the rest of the group got tired of bailing out my kayak as I stumbled, swamped and tipped through the day. I suspect that on the first swamping, the stuff I had strapped to the top of my boat got waterlogged, and heavier, while



the food and water under the deck had been being used up over the past several days and below deck was lighter. The combination of the two probably raised the center of gravity an inch or two, and made the boat unstable. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.



Jim & Billie run Waterfall Rapid

Photo by Harmon Everett

We made it to Camp Canyon, and made camp. We walked up the canyon and looked at the pictographs, including Monkey man and Lizard man.

On Day 5, I made some adjustments to try to lower the center of gravity back down a couple of inches.





The monkey-man pictograph

Photo by Harmon Everett

We stopped and hiked up to see the Electric Shaman pictograph at Still Canyon, and spent an hour or so looking at the massive petroglyphs on top of the mesa at Lewis Canyon.

Lewis Canyon petroglyphs

Photo by Harmon Everett

were, several of us almost raised our hands, but instead, answered no and it flew on. We wondered if they made a regular trip upriver to look for survivors, or if they had been called in.

We went down Waterfall rapid, with several running it, and making it look easy.

We made it to Painted Canyon for camp that night, and unloaded our gear.



Hail Mary rapids, Class 3½

Photo by John Rich



Donna sets up for Waterfall Rapid

Photo by Harmon Everett

John, Jim and Christy, Bill, and Donna ran Hail Mary rapids, and the rest of us lined our boats. My kayak has developed two large cracks on the inside of the hull. They aren't leaking, but obviously open up when the hull flexes.

Day 6 was our layover day. Most of the group went with John to look at several different caves and pictographs. Fraser, Janice and I stayed in camp and lazed the day away. I'd never be able to own a house by a river. I'd never get anything else done. I'd just sit and watch all day long.

Three other people came by around 4:30. Employees at Big Bend, they had put in at Pandale a day after we had, and were pushing downriver faster than us. They had started out with 4 people in their group. It turned out that they were the ones who had called in the airlift for one of their group the day before, as she had rolled a canoe over her leg and possibly broken her ankle. They had satellite phones and were able to call out. One of them had been stopping at springs along the river and taking ph, temperature, and electrical conductivity (a measure of dissolved salts) readings along the way. At our campsite that day, the Pecos temperature was 78.8 F – substantially warmer than when we had put in, and the ph level was greater than 8.5 – as high as my pool tester went, which meant the river was substantially alkaline. Her readings indicated that Tardy Spring was a degree cooler than the river, not as saline, and not as alkaline. Now I wish I'd been more rigorous in taking readings all along the river. For one thing, I'd have a reason to call up and talk to

her. The bikini she was in as they lined their boats through Hail Mary rapids wasn't the outfit most of us would have recommended, but seemed to suit her just fine. Really fine.



One that didn't get away

shooting stars each night.

Robert had been fishing all along the river, catching and releasing dozens of fish. This night he kept several and fried them up to share. A truly remarkable feast, thank you, Robert!

The skies at night the last couple of nights were clearer than I think I've ever seen. I could make out all the seven stars of the Pleiades, and see that the star halfway down the sword in Orion was a double star. The Milky Way was clear and bright, and we saw several

One of the experiments I had brought involved a folding solar oven. There was a rumor that if you set it up at night in the desert, the heat from a bottle of water set up at the focus would reflect out into space, cooling the water in the bottle and making it freeze. This myth was pretty well busted. I set up the solar oven, I put in the water and the night sky was about as perfect a cold sink as it will ever get, and the water not only didn't get ice, it didn't even get cold.



Harmon's magic ice machine

Photo by John Rich

The next day, Day 7, we were supposed to meet the tow boat at around 1, so we had to get up and get going early. We had 6 miles to go, several more rapids, and the weir dam to get over. My kayak slid down the face of the dam and immediately turtled as it went in the water. Dam.

Inspired by meeting someone else who came equipped to take ph and temperature readings along the river, I stopped at a spring a couple of miles along, to find the temperature was cooler than the river, at 76 F, even though Louis' book lists it as a hot spring, and the ph at about 7.5.

At the weir dam, we again met the people from Big Bend, waving as we passed their campsite.

The last mile or so before entering Lake Amistad and meeting the tow boat is populated with huge, house-sized boulders we slalomed around. We stopped and had lunch, got back on the water and around a turn, met the tow boat. We tied the boats together end to end, and side by side, and after some trouble getting the motor on the pontoon boat started, we headed off for the three hour tow to the take-out.



The tow-out

Photo by Jim Barton

Surprisingly, our friends Louis Aulbach, Linda Gorski, and Robert Langley were there waiting

for us. They had been at the Shumla School for an event, and heard that someone on a Pecos expedition had needed to be evacuated out by helicopter and were afraid it had been one of us. They were so relieved when they found out it wasn't.



Desert sunrise

Photo by Christy Long

We packed up our gear and headed back to Houston, but Donna and Robert Killian were going to stick around and go on the Boquillas Canyon trip the next week.

This trip down the Pecos was a pretty exhausting trip. Maybe in a couple of years, I might think about doing it again. Then again, maybe not.

~~~ The End ~~~

Buffalo Bayou: From Briar Bend Park to Woodway

November 14, 2009

by

Dave Kitson

On Saturday, November 14, 2009 a large group of paddlers met to paddle Buffalo Bayou from Briar Bend Park near San Felipe and Voss to Woodway at I 610. We had a beautiful day for this paddle and a great turnout. This was a joint trip with the [Bayou Preservation Society](#) so we had a mixed group that increased the numbers. Participants included Bob Arthur, Rea Inglis, Harmon Everett, Billy Welcurn, Ann Derby, Calvin Doody, David Kitson, Darren Gaebel, Natalie Wiest, Ellen Shipman, Fraser Baker, Michael Pollard, Donna and Bob Zaptka, Kathy Lord, Mary Carter, Charles and Chance Zipprian, Claire Caudill, John Bartos, Bruce Heilberg, Allen Craid, Sopie Lopez, and Rika Muhl.

The put in at Briar Bend Park is a set of switchback steps about 25' down to the water. While it is a fair vertical distance, the steps make it far easier than it would have been trying to make it down the bank without them.

The streambed here is flat and hard so getting in the boats was easy and the bayou was flowing at a pretty good clip so we did not have to paddle too hard to make good progress.

Most of the bank along this bayou is sand with occasional red clay so there was reasonably firm footing whenever we got out. There are also a few small rapids (Class 0.5) which were fun to navigate. The bayou has cut

a channel 20 to 30 feet deep the whole way so we were always in a little valley with forest and big dollar houses high up on the bank surrounding us. Except for the houses and some traffic noise you feel like you are out in the country until you get to the rest stop.



The bayou in this area is quiet and serene

Photo by John Bartos

We stopped to rest at a place called the "Shopping Cart Graveyard". There is a small stream intersecting the bayou from river right that people dump their shopping carts in; when there is a big rain they wash down to Buffalo Bayou and come to rest there. Several dozen protruded out of the sand at this spot. From this point on there is also a great deal of general trash along the banks to remind you that you are in a big city.



Negotiating the put-in at Briar Bend Park

Photo by John Bartos



Shopping Cart Graveyard

Photo by John Bartos

I am sure we were all thinking that this was going to be an easy trip, only 6.5 miles and a one or two mile an hour current to help. Then we encountered the fallen tree;

three or four feet in diameter and all the way across the bayou. River left was collapsed bank and impossible; river right was a 10' vertical climb in loose wet sand and mud over the root ball of the tree; the other choice was to climb out of the boat over the log. Some folks elected to climb out of the boat onto the log, drag the boat over the log and then climb back into the boat. Most of us climbed up the bank in calf deep mud and sand, dragging the boat behind us, over the root ball and down the very steep back side. In any event, we all made it through without any serious incidents. I do hope that this is a part of the bayou that the BPA decides not to preserve.



The take out at Woodway is steep sand and rock but the streambed has enough flat area that it is easy to get out of the boat under the bridge and if there are two people to carry the boat up the steepest part of the bank it is not too difficult.

All in all I think everyone had a good time. I for one will paddle this again.

A difficult takeout at Woodway.

Photo by John Bartos

~~~ The End ~~~