



The Alamo City Rivermen

Babbler

Issue MMCCXLVII

October 2003

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

Paddling the fine line between geek and Bubba.

Next Meeting

October 8, 2003, Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near the intersection with Harry Wurzbach. See the [linked map](#). 6:30 to 8:30.

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Turkey Trots On!

Ruby Begonia may have lost this year's race, but we won't as we do the Alamo City Rivermen Turkey Trot down the Colorado River this year from the town of La Grange to Columbus, from Friday, Nov.28 thru Sunday Nov. 30. This is the next stretch downstream from what was done last year. As always, enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends and then put in with us the next day for a relaxing three day float down a central Texas river. The distance is approximately 33 miles. This trip is really nice this time of year. The weather has usually blessed us with pleasant days and cool nights, and the tree lined bluffs are usually at their height of autumn color change. And we'll always be hoping for that bald eagle sighting as in past years. This trip is primarily flatwater, with riffle rapids only, suitable for beginners. It is remote, with no road crossings, so while it has a great get-a-way-from-everything feeling, everyone will have to be self contained. Imagine, one whole day without cars or cell phones!

We will meet at 10:00am Friday on the 28th at the town of La Grange at White Rock Park on Mode Lane. There is a canoe launch provided by LCRA there which can take 3 miles off the trip. We will check it out and see if it is feasible, as it is rather high, otherwise we will have to go upriver three miles to Buffalo Trail Park at Hwy 71. After unloading, we will drive down to Columbus to leave our cars at the takeout. I will be trying to arrange to leave our cars at Howell Canoe Livery for safety, which is located at the Business Hwy 71 crossing. There were objections about shuttle fees from some trippers on the last trip, so this time to avoid controversy we will have to do our own driver's shuttle. I will need someone with a large SUV/truck to volunteer to drive the drivers back to La Grange and leave their truck at the park, if the group wants to avoid shuttle fees. Let me know if you can help.

We will be spending 2 nights on the river, with takeout planned Sunday afternoon at Hwy 71 Bus. in Columbus. As always, we will Dutch oven cook the 2 night meals. All other meals are on your own. Camping will be on one of the many islands or sand bars. You will need to have all your own camping gear. Everyone should come ready to help with wood gathering, food prep, cooking and cleanup for the night meals. In addition, we will ask that you help carry some of the groceries and charcoal. There will be a trip fee to cover parking fees, the two dinners, taxes, titles and license. I will have this pinned down in the next newsletter.

(Continued next page)

(Turkey Trot continued)

In the meantime, I will need to get your name, email and phone number if you are intending to go, so the food and meals can be planned.

If you do not have a boat, but have the gear and would like to do this trip, Howell Canoe Livery in Columbus can provide one for you. You will have to rent your own boat and make your own arrangements and payments. Rental will be \$60.00 for 3 days, plus returnable deposit. Their phone number is 979-732-3816, or 979-732-2689. tell him that you are with our group if you rent. There may be a discount if more than 3 boats are rented. If you are renting a canoe, please let me know, as he may throw in a driver's shuttle for the rest of us. This is usually a great trip, and hope you can make it. Sign up for the trip with Randy Hohlaus, 13747 Cedar Canyon, San Antonio, Texas, 78231, ph. 210/493-7058, or email at hohlaus@prodigy.net.

Randy Hohlaus

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Upcoming Events

October 4, 2003	Lower Guadalupe, Devil's Playground	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
October 8, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
October 10-13, 2003	Seadrift area	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
Undetermined	San Antonio River at Goliad, day trip with overnight camping option	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus@prodigy.net , 493-7058
November 12, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
November 28-30, 2003	Turkey Trot, Colorado River, La Grange to Columbus	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus@prodigy.net , 493-7058
December 2003	Christmas Party	
January 14, 2004	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
January 2004	Freeze Trip	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901



Guadalupe Delta

I did the Guad from Tx 35 down into Mission Lake and back up Schwing's Bayou to Tx 35. It was a beautiful trip-not a soul in sight the whole 6 hours! The Guad is different than what I'm used to in the Hill Country but similar to that around Gonzalez. Mission Lake was deep enough and was pretty. No one out there, so it was kind of spooky. I was in a sit-in Carolina (14') and didn't have many problems, a few strainers here and there but nothing major. I'd use a smaller boat for Hog Bayou and Alligator Slide Lake.

Gay Culbertson

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October 4 : The Dam Devils Playground Run

Float with the Alamo City Rivermen, October 4 as we enjoy a special fall trip on the scenic Lower Guadalupe to include canoeing, dining and dancing at Gruene. We will meet at 10:00 AM at Canyon Dam and River Road and then run shuttles to the Take Out, Lazy L& L

Campground (830-964-3455). This is also the location of the Devils Playground (class 11 rapid) a distance of about 8.5 miles river miles from start to finish. The takeout is 10 dollars per vehicle but we may get a discount rate since the Alamo City Rivermen actively participated at this location for the Whitewater Event of the 1993 San Antonio Olympic Festival.

After the float we will head over to the Grist Mill for an enjoyable dinner and then kick up our Teva's to dance to the tunes of Wayne Toups and the Zyde Cajuns at Gruene Hall. Note the band starts at 9:30 PM.

Gib Hafernick, 210-492-7517, home, 210-355-1726, cell or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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October 10 – 13 : I'm Going to Seadrift Dammit!!!

This is a different kind of Alamo City Rivermen trip in that I am planning on staying at the Seadrifter Inn (361-785-203) in Seadrift. The Seadrifter is situated almost directly on the bay and immediately adjacent to the Seadrifter is a neat café that serves an excellent breakfast and draws a good number of the locals.

I plan on arriving in Seadrift Friday evening for dinner at Barketts Restaurant at 9:00 PM, which is one of the best Gulf Coast Restaurants in Texas and then fishing in the Bays and estuaries during the day and while cooking out at night for Saturday & Sunday. Seadrift is a small coastal fishing community and is just the right size to hang out in. If we catch fish we will cook them that night. If we don't we will send someone into Port Lavaca to buy fresh seafood at the fish market.

My schedule will more or less be like this for the weekend:

October 10, Friday - Leave San Antonio by 6:00 PM with the intentions of eating at Barkett's Seafood Restaurant by 9:00 pm.

October 11, Saturday – Do some running in the morning and then go fishing either at the pavilion in Seadrift or on the various bays in canoes or kayaks. If we catch fish in during the day we would cook them and if we do not we would send someone into Port Lavaca to buy fresh fish or shrimp.

October 12, Sunday - Same as Saturday

October 13, Monday - Return to San Antonio.

You are on your own for making reservations and let me say the Seadrifter fills up fast. I am including a list of all hotels in that area.

Seadrifter Inn, 361-785-2031

Bay Motel, 361-385-2226

Captain's Quarters, 361-785-4982

Hip's RV, 361-655-7170 (Note: This has 5 RV sites on the water directly across from the Seadrifter Inn)

As an alternate to fishing there are others things to do, which could include canoeing in the Guadalupe Delta, nearby Matagorda Island State Park or Aransas National Refuge or paddling the San Antonio, Matagorda or St. Charles Bay. Gib Hafernick, 210-492-7517, home, 210-355-1726, cell, or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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Copano Bay to Goose Island

Put-in: west end of Copano Bay bridge in Fulton

Take-out: Goose Island State Park

Length: 4 miles

Duration: 2 1/2 hours

In trying to get up the courage to paddle in the open ocean, I decided to cross Copano Bay as a test. Having paddled for about 7 years now on rivers and lakes, my mind still has this fear of the open water. Just the thought of having a bank or shore there close by is reassuring and the thought of not having one nearby is downright scary! I had wanted to paddle across the bay following a series of small platforms, but the water was too choppy, so I headed for the bridge pilings and used them as a mental crutch to cross the bay.

It's interesting seeing the underside of the big bridge and the only sound was that of the traffic on the bridge. The old bridge has been turned into a fishing pier, and there were people lined up the whole length of it-I stayed on the south side so as not to get tangled up in the many lines. Got to see a few pulling up fish-that's an interesting sight, seeing the fish slowly flying straight up in the air (the lines are invisible)! Looks like a UFO was beaming them up!

Once across that huge expanse of open water(and still alive), I headed down the shore exploring the islands and homes along the way. The sun was going down as I paddled up to the boat ramp after circling the island-the Copano Bay bridge was outlined by the orange and yellow colors and looked so small.

Maybe next time I'll attempt to cross the bay, but for now, I'm perfectly content staying close to shore as I explore the bays along the coast.

Gay Culbertson

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Teas Free-Style Canoe Roundup

On Columbus Day week-end, October 11 & 12, the Houston Canoe Club and the ACA will be sponsoring a Texas Freestyle Canoe Roundup. It will be a two-day event, with clinics for novice, intermediate and advanced Freestyle Canoe paddlers. We will have a special clinic for White water paddlers who want to learn freestyle. On Saturday night we will host the National Freestyle Canoe Competition under the lights.

Bob Foote, Nationally known Canoe Instructor, is now recommending Freestyle paddling to all of his White Water Students and all other flat water paddlers. He knows that it can improve their overall paddling.

By the way, Men's Solo Freestyle National Champion, Mark Molina, just won the International Competition in Rolling in Greenland for his age group. This is quite a major accomplishment. I am sure the flexibility, balance and discipline, he learned in Freestyle Canoeing helped him accomplish this great feat.



To learn more go to the Houston Canoe Club website and click on National Freestyle Championship, www.houstoncanoeclub.org. Or email Lillian Tigard at tigards2@hal-pc.org.

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Lake Charlotte/Wallisville/Lower Trinity River

Description: This area has been touted as the "largest Westernmost cypress swamp" along the coast of Texas. Described here is the area east of the Trinity River and three lakes that are incorporated. Lake Charlotte is the largest of these three lakes; Lake Miller second; and Mud Lake third. New growth cypress trees line Lake Pass. They have grown considerably in the 20 years since I first visited this area and shade the Pass along most of its length.

The Pass appears paddleable year round. When this area and upstream along the Trinity River have had little rainfall, the levels of the shallow lakes may go so low that they can not be paddled, and the mud bottoms are too soft for long distances to make poling a viable alternative. When the Trinity is in flood stage, one can literally paddle through the trees and little or no dry land is visible. Lake Miller's southern shore is about the highest elevation for finding a dry spot to get out of a canoe under flood conditions.

The area teems with wildlife. Summer visitors can be rewarded with the sight of hundreds of shorebirds feeding on the shallow lake bottoms. Winter avian visitors include many migratory species, and there are hunting blinds on some of the lakes (Charlotte for sure), so you may want to take that in consideration if you're paddling during duck and goose hunting season. I have seen beaver along Lake Pass, alligators, and a recent Houston



Houston Canoe Club

Canoe Club trip saw a herd of wild hogs. White ibises, night herons, and many other birds nest in the area. Also large nests of wasps, some at head height in the pass, so keep your eyes open! Lots of snakes too.

Driving Directions: To get to Cedar Hill Park, exit IH10 at exit number 810, labeled "Anahuac, Liberty, FM563". This is about 30 miles east of Houston. Follow FM563 about 2.8 miles north. Lake Charlotte Road intersects at this point. "Hatcher's Christmas Tree Farm" is the easiest-to-spot landmark at this intersection. Turn left (west) on Lake Charlotte Road. In another 1.1 miles, the entrance to the park is on your left. If you go past the entrance, you will have to make a sharp right hand turn. The Sherman Cemetery is directly across Lake Charlotte Road from the park entrance, which at this writing (February 2001) has absolutely no signage. Drive on down the park entrance road until you can see the water. This park has nice picnic facilities and plenty of good parking for a day on the water.

In the past, HCC trips departed from the parking area on the east bank of the Trinity river. To get there from Houston: take Interstate Highway 10 eastbound for approximately 30 miles from downtown. You will cross the Trinity River on a very high arched bridge. On its east side is Exit 806/"Frontage Road" exit. Get off there, but slow on the exit ramp as you need to make an acute-angle right turn from the ramp onto the access road. You're now headed back toward the river. Just before the road goes under the highway above, you will see a dirt road off to your left. Turn on to that road and go about 1/4 mile down to the river bank. There is plenty of parking on the grass and a concreted (although in poor repair) ramp from which you can launch.

Paddling Directions: Since December 2000, there are two good access points for the area. The newest one, at Cedar Hill Park, puts you right on the banks of Lake Charlotte. The classic put-in is from the banks of the Trinity River, and requires upstream paddle of several miles through Lake Pass.

Lake Pass is about 1/4 mile from the parking lot under the I-10 bridge. It is upstream on the east bank of the river. It is about 2 miles long. Numerous downed trees (work of beavers and Mother Nature) make navigating a little more challenging. You will pop out of a willow



Houston Canoe Club

thicket at the far southern end into Lake Charlotte. Note your entrance area carefully, as you'll have to find it for the return. If you proceed east on Lake Charlotte about another 1/4 mile and look carefully through the trees you will notice a clearing a couple of hundred yards in through the woods. If your timing is right and water levels are up, you can now cut your own path through the woods and into Mud Lake. As of the latest paddle trip (February 2001), there are red, 4" round reflectors nailed to trees that mark the best path. This is a beautiful little lake with an off-limits-in-nesting-season end. That's off to your left as you enter. If you paddle on to your right you will see an obvious water pathway into the woods again. This is a lovely pass that leads back to Miller Lake. It looks deceptively easy on the map, but is much more challenging in real life. A compass and a GOOD map will help you through here, although I usually find the "look for the clearing through the trees and paddle through the brush" technique is most successful. I understand a paddle trail is to be marked through this area, but not there as of last time I paddled (summer 1999). Another willow thicket hides the passageway from the northwest corner of Miller Lake, back to Lake Pass.

This is a very simplified report of the layout and sights of this area - get a good map, or better yet, join a Club trip to really enjoy it, and easily find your way home afterward. The full roundtrip as describe above is about 8-10 miles of paddling. There is no overnight camping permitted in this area, to my knowledge, other than the parking area.

Commercial barge traffic, and many pleasure boats, use the Trinity River so keep your eyes peeled for traffic on the river. Only shallow draft small craft can make it up the Lake Pass or into Lake Charlotte from upstream.

(From Houston Canoe Club website)

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Classes

Susan Eda is running her Basic River Courses in San Marcos again this year. This is a class for folks who can control their boats on moving water. Most boat types are ok, but contact Susan with specific questions you may have.

ARC Basic River Canoeing Class, American Red Cross basic river canoeing October 4 and 5. Contact Sue Eda by phone: (713) 465-8711 or email: sseda@mail.esc4.com

ARC Basic River Kayaking Class: October 4 and 5. Contact Sue Eda by phone: (713) 465-8711 or email: sseda@mail.esc4.com

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Lake Dam to Dam Paddle

APC Lake Austin Dam-to-Dam Paddle - Saturday - 10/18

Trip 2: Mary Quinlan Park to Emma Long Park

Time: 9:00 AM.

Approximate length: 6 miles

Bring: PFD, water, sunscreen, lunch or snack, smile or grin. Plan: We'll meet at the TAKE OUT and load up boats and drive to the put in. We'll stop at Commons Ford Metropolitan park along the lake for a lunch/snack break. Why the TAKE OUT you ask? It takes half the time to do the shuttle at the beginning of the trip if you meet at the take out.

Directions to Emma Long Park (where we'll meet): From Loop 360, Loop 1 (Mopac), or IH-35, go west on RR 2222. Turn left at the first light (City Park Road) past the intersection of Loop 360 and RR 2222. Follow City Park Road several miles until you reach the park. After you go through the gate, park in the gravel lot to the left by the water. We'll do a shuttle up to the dam. Note: The City of Austin charges a \$5 to \$8 fee at the park. This trip is not appropriate for short recreational or whitewater boats. Contact Carla Jennings, 751-3283, cjenn@austin.rr.com

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Website Update

Our club's new website has been up for just over a year, since August 2002. The page view counter was reset September 13, 2002 for reasons I don't recall. As of the morning of September 27, 2003, the page view counter shows 3,161 page views.

If you have not checked out the Paddling Links page lately (<http://www.alamocityrivermen.org/paddling.html>), take a look at it. New links are added as I find them, and you may see something new. If you find a bad link, please let me know, and I will correct it. In case you're not familiar with the technique, you can right click with your mouse on a link and open the link in a new window. That leaves the links page open in the original page so you can more easily go back to it. Thanks.

Ken Bennight, bennight@alumni.utexas.net

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South Carolina Indians making a canoe
From <http://www.cla.sc.edu/sciaa/staff/amerc/Canoe.html>



Alamo City Rivermen

P.O. Box 171194 • San Antonio • Texas • 78217

ACA Paddle America
7432 Alban Station Blvd.
Suite B 232
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a member of the Alamo City Rivermen Canoe and Kayak Club and would like to take advantage of the club discount to become a member of ACA Paddle America. I enclose a check for an individual/family membership in the amount of \$15.00 (single) or \$20.00 (family).

Please use this name for your membership role: _____

Please send mail to the following address: _____

Happy Paddling. Thank you.

Member, Alamo City Rivermen Canoe and Kayak Club

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Alamo City Rivermen Mileage Log Sheet

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

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Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Alamo City Rivermen Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Business Telephone: _____

The Alamo City Rivermen try to keep their activities safe, but risk is inherent in water sports. We cannot and do not guarantee safety. The Alamo City Rivermen disclaim liability for accidental injury or death in any sponsored event. As a condition of membership and participation in club sponsored events, I release, acquit, and forever discharge the Alamo City Rivermen and its officers, agents, and members from all liability arising out of or relating to a sponsored event, even if negligence of the club or its officers, agents, or members is a cause, and even if I die or am injured. This release includes not only actual paddle trips but also all other club events and driving or riding to and from club events.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Membership dues are the same for an individual or a family. As a member of the Alamo City Rivermen, you are automatically entitled to our monthly newsletter, NOC Outfitter store discounts, a \$10 discounted membership in the American Canoe Association through the Paddle America Program, and subscription to our email list. Details on these benefits are available in our newsletter.

I prefer to receive the newsletter: (Please circle the one you choose)

Dues if newsletter sent by email \$15.00

Dues if newsletter sent USPS \$20.00

(Note: Newsletter copying and mailing has been our biggest expense; using email frees up money for other activities, including our website.)

Mail this completed form, together with a check, to:

Alamo City Rivermen Canoe Club
P.O. Box 171194
San Antonio, Texas 78217