



# The Alamo City Rivermen Babbler

Issue MMCLXI

May 2005

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

## Padding the fine line between geek and Bubba.

### Meeting

April 13, 2005, 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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### Club Officers

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kmcusick at juno.com  
830-885-5324

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### Next

### Caddo Lake

Tom Rust has been leading annual paddle trips to Caddo Lake for around 30 years. I wasn't along on a representative sample, but my guess is that this year's trip (April 22-24) was typically excellent. We had about 14 paddlers, including one from San Angelo and another from Rio Frio. Everyone was early at the rendezvous, so we moved to the put-in. From the put-in, it was only about a mile to the western end of Goat Island, where we camped.

I had imagined that the island might be a tangle of undergrowth, but I was pleasantly surprised. It is park-like. The vegetation is mostly widely spaced pine trees with grass in between.

After establishing base camp, we were free to explore the swamp unburdened with camping gear. Tom used pink plastic ribbon to mark the way back to the cars, and some of the major channels have markers. If you stray from those channels, things get interesting.

Mike Fox was among those with a GPS giving an accurate display of the area we were in and a line showing the path taken. That's a good thing to have in a swamp. I took off on my own and felt reasonably confident of my path, knowing I had paddled consistently easterly, until it came time to make a hard right turn. Figuring I would miss that turn unaided, I left a marker. When returning, I found and retrieved the marker, but something went wrong after that.

When I left camp, I apparently traveled not only easterly but somewhat northerly. I did not realize that, by the time I made the turn, I had worked my way back to the south. After retrieving my turn marker, I never again saw any landmarks I had noted on my way out. I was getting worried even though, paddling generally into the sun, I knew I was going westerly. To my surprise, when I thought I was still a significant distance away, I stumbled on camp. All's well that ends well, but the bottom line is that I was lost. Had I not stumbled on camp, I could have spent the night in the swamp in my canoe. It got down to 39° that night.

If you haven't been, you're missing a great experience. But if your sense of direction is no better than mine, stick with somebody who has a GPS. (Ken Bennight)



Dense duckweed covering water

## Upcoming Events

May 11, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
May 28-30, 2005	Memorial Day Trip	????????
June 8, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
July 2-4, 2005	Independence Day Trip	????????
July 13, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
August 10, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
September 2-5, 2005	Labor Day Trip	??????
September 14, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
October 8-10, 2005	Angelina-Neches Forks	Ken Bennight, 826-7071, bennight at stic dot net
October 12, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
November 5, 2005	Goliad Canoe Trail, San Antonio River, Goliad	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus at prodigy.net 493-7058
November 9, 2005	Monthly Meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
November 25-27, 2005	Turkey Trot	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus at prodigy.net 493-7058



## The Travails of Ordering a Boat

Those who know me have seen the 17 foot Grumman canoe I have had since 1974. It has served me well and is still seaworthy despite it's hull deformations. I prefer to think that it has acquired character. Even so, among its faults is poor handling in the wind. I am quickly blown to the lee shore, so I avoid open water such as coastal marshes. For that reason among others, I decided to get a kayak.

Reading extensively on the web, eventually, after considerable vacillation, I settled on a Wilderness Systems Pungo. No one boat is really good both for rivers and for open water, but the Pungo seems a reasonable compromise, weighted toward the open water side. I don't expect it to be terribly maneuverable in rapids, although if I had it I might know more.

Anchor Marine of Texas here in San Antonio is a Wilderness Systems dealer, so I went there to order one. Anchor Marine carries only sit-on-tops in inventory and strongly encouraged me to buy one of those. I tried out a Wilderness Systems Ride on a Saturday Paddlers trip, but when I got in it, the water line was above the top of the seat scupper. By my lights, that was unsatisfactory.



On or about March 3, I ordered a 14 foot Pungo in camouflage pattern, the better to harass ducks in season. After inquiring, Anchor Marine found that Wilderness Systems did not have one in stock. It would take two weeks for them to make one. To avoid a special shipment for which

I would have to pay extra, it would take another two weeks for delivery. That left me expecting the Pungo in early April in plenty of time for the Caddo Lake trip. Alas that was not to be.

When I called around the end of March, I was told that, to avoid special shipping charges, the boat would not arrive until the end of April. As you can see from the article above, that was after the Caddo Lake trip. This is being written on May 2, and I still don't have the boat. If and when I get it, I'll write about how it does. In the meantime, bear all this in mind if you want something Anchor Marine does not have in stock.

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### **Medina River Cleanup**

The Alamo City Rivermen will assist in the section from the Hwy. 16 roadside park to the Bandera City Park. It is a 5 mile stretch with some small rapids. Whitewater skills are requested. We will meet at the Bandera City Park and be ready to arrange the shuttle at 9:30-10:00 AM. We hope to be on the River by 11AM. Bring a lunch, snacks, drink.

We should be back in the park by 4PM. A free barbeque will follow. If you want to camp Friday and or Saturday night, you can, for free, at the City Park. Discounts are also available for cleanup volunteers at Yogi Bears/Jelleystone campground, right across the road. Both areas are on the River. (I plan on camping both nights. Let me know if you want to join me and we'll coordinate).

Anyone who arrives Friday is welcome to attend the Medina River Protection Fund fundraiser and Wild Hog Barbeque at the Estrellita Stone Ranch at 6PM. Please consider making a donation if you attend this event. Please visit the groups website at [www.medinariver.net](http://www.medinariver.net) for details.

Gary Tupa, 210-684-7382 H ; 210-317-7972 C

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### **Aulbach's Guide to the Devil's River**

Louis Aulbach has a new river guide hot off the press. I just finished reading the book and it made me want to jump on a plane, leave the cold and rain of the UK behind, and come back to Texas to paddle my canoe. This guide introduces the paddler to the beautiful Devils River, just west of Del Rio. This 68 page guide provides a mile by mile description of the river, the rapids and the natural environment for the 47 miles from Baker's Crossing, the site of Camp Hudson, past the Devil's River State Natural Area to Rough Canyon Marina on Lake Amistad.

The spring-fed Devil's River emerges near Juno and flows over limestone ledges and through deep fish-filled pools until its confluence with Lake Amistad. Ever wondered where the name Devil's River came from? According to the Handbook of Texas, the river got its name when in the 1840s Texas Ranger Captain John Coffee (Jack) Hays stood on the banks of one of its deep and seemingly impassable canyons and asked his companion about the river's name. When told the name, he reportedly replied (language cleaned up here for the reader) "H\*\*\*, this looks more like the devil's own river than the Rio San Pedro (Saint Peter's)!!" And thus the river's name was born.

The stream was well known to early travelers because it allowed access from north to south through rugged canyonland. East-west expeditions followed its banks as far as possible before striking out into the desert. Today the Devil's offers paddlers one of the most picturesque and challenging runs of any river in Texas. And some world-class bass fishing along the way.

The book retails for \$15.95 and is in stock today at Austin Outdoor Gear and Guidance ([www.kayaktexas.com](http://www.kayaktexas.com)), Seminole Canyon State Historical Park or from the publisher, Louis Aulbach, at [lfa@hal-pc.org](mailto:lfa@hal-pc.org). Other retailers will be supplied soon. Check the author's website <http://www.hal-pc.org/~lfa/Stores.html> for other places to buy the book.

Linda Gorski

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### Longing for Something Different?

There's different, and then there's different. I recently ran across the Canoe North website (<http://www.canoenorth.ca/>), which will outfit you for a trip on Great Slave Lake or one of its tributary rivers, including the Mackenzie. Bring your own mosquito repellent just in case. And plan on going in the summer.

Canoe North is located 40 miles from the source of the great Mackenzie River on the southern edge of Great Slave lake in the town of Hay River in the Northwest Territories. North of the 60th latitude, at the mouth of the Hay River. Trips include the Buffalo River, but not the one in Arkansas.

I would definitely expect a change of pace from South Texas.



Mike Fox checks out a duck blind.

## 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

# Alamo City Rivermen

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Miles: \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ River: \_\_\_\_\_ Put in: \_\_\_\_\_ Take Out: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Miles: \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ River: \_\_\_\_\_ Put in: \_\_\_\_\_ Take Out: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ River: \_\_\_\_\_ Put in: \_\_\_\_\_ Take Out: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ River: \_\_\_\_\_ Put in: \_\_\_\_\_ Take Out: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Miles: \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_