



The Alamo City Rivermen Babbler

Issue MMCLXI

20th Anniversary Year

February 2007

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

Paddling the fine line between geek and Bubba.

February Meeting Date

Next Meeting

January 14, 2007 (Valentines),
Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West
Avenue, near the intersection with
Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.

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There was substantial sentiment to change the February meeting to avoid Valentine's Day. Unfortunately, the meetings rooms were all booked, so we could not change it. Accordingly, the February meeting will be **Valentines, February 14** at the usual time and place. Randy Hohlaus will have pictures and a report on the Turkey Trot.

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2007 Dues

That time of year again. Please pay your dues to Marie Searight, P.O. Box 171194, San Antonio, Texas 78217. They are \$15 if you receive the newsletter by email and \$20 if you receive it by USPS. If you joined in the last calendar quarter of 2006, you are good through 2007.

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2006 Mileage Award

The 2006 Award for most miles paddled goes to **Virginia Villarreal**, who submitted an entry for 131.7 miles. Second place goes to J.D. Phaup. If any others think they may have paddled more, they ought to have timely submitted an entry. Ought they not?

Now if only we knew who has the trophy. If you have it or know who does, please help retrieve it so we can give it to Virginia for the remainder of 2007.

Thank you to those who participated. I apologize for not getting this in the January newsletter.

Upcoming Events

February 14, 2007	Monthly Meeting (By all means send flowers during the day, so your significant other will let you come to the meeting!)	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00
March 3, 2007	San Marcos Clean-up, Martindale	Kathy Cusick, kmcusick at juno dot com
March 14, 2007	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00
late March ????	Pecos (3-day float)	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus at prodigy dot net
April 7, 2007	Trinity River Clean-up, Glen Rose	Needs a trip leader
April 11, 2007	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00
April 14-15, 2007	Hidalgo Falls Festival	Needs a trip leader
early May ????	Llano River (car camp and 2-day float)	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus at prodigy dot net
May 5, 2007	Medina River clean-up, Bandera	Needs a trip leader
May 9, 2007	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00
May ????	Anhalt Maifest, Guadalupe	Randy Hohlaus, hohlaus at prodigy dot net
May 26-28, 2007	Memorial Day Trip to Seadrift	Gib Hafernick, gibguy at compuserve dot com
June 13, 2007	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00
July 11, 2007	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00



Life on the Colorado

By Bob Heinsohn

My interest in the Colorado River began back in the mid-1950s while working on my parents farm on the Colorado River in Fayette County. I fished in the river during the summers and hunted along its banks throughout the year.

After a long time, I purchased my first canoe in 1989. Soon thereafter, a Houston friend, Millie Lehrmann, and I started taking camping trips on the river. Trips of different sections of the river were taken during the following years from Town Lake dam in Austin to the River Bend boat ramp past the town of Matagorda. On the 120-mile section from Columbus to Matagorda, which we paddled in five days, we saw bald eagles and alligators, as well as a variety of flora and other fauna.

We also took a paddling trip from Highway 190 to Bend , Texas and another one from Highway 190 to Colorado Bend State Park. The latter segment was traveled in record time during a flood stage. I have paddled some sections of the river numerous times, especially the part traveled by the Alamo City Rivermen on their Freeze Trip in January.

Paddling the river and tent camping are only part of the fun on the river. When a person takes his time paddling, he can find fossilized oysters and bones from prehistoric animals, Indian artifacts, antique items, rustic bricks, petrified wood of various sizes, mineralized rocks, pieces of coal, odd-shaped iron-ore pieces, fossil rocks, animal skulls, and driftwood. Man-made items that have been found are bowling balls, a Boy Scout mess kit, a crude boat anchor, and a railroad crane hook with an attached frayed metal cable.

Property owners along the river have lost and gained land slowly after many decades of floods. Some landowners, who have developed their riverbank into a “beach” with few or no trees, have lost considerable property to the power of the river. They forgot that the roots of trees and other vegetation on the river bank keep the soil stationary and prevent erosion. Some owners have their homes and outbuildings too close to the river’s edge, which really can be a problem on an outside bend. The worst example of this practice can be seen below Smithville where approximately 20 feet of a house is hanging out over the river due to erosion underneath its foundation. The Colorado still has a few scattered cypress trees along its banks, although there no longer is an abundance of these trees, because cypress tree lumber was prolifically used for building houses and picket fences in earlier times.

During flooding, items are washed into the river from litter on the streets to lost items in creeks, as well as from dumping sites used for temporary erosion control. Years ago, a large number of used tires were dumped during a flood stage and came to rest high on a sandbar on the inside bend below Highway 59 at Wharton. In November 2004 during a flood, massive amounts of trash were evident in the river below La Grange. There are also places where sand or gravel has accumulated in large amounts in the riverbed, having been caused by erosion on the banks from sand and gravel mining, resulting in the movement of silt downstream.

All Texas rivers need to be environmentally protected for future generations to enjoy. Whether boating, fishing or enjoying the wildlife and quiet scenes along the rivers, everyone deserves clear and clean water for their leisure activities.

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Memorial Day, Seadrift

May 25-28 I am going to Seadrift to fish and just to hang out. I have reserved rooms 1 & 2 at the Seadrifter Inn for myself and Saskia. Margarita Boulet and Letti Macias have reserved the upper rooms of the annex. The rooms have connecting balconies and, when combined, make a great place to hang out. They have lots of shade and the best view in Seadrift.

Note: That leaves only six rooms left as the Seadrifter has a total of eight. So if you are halfway interested, make a reservation soon. Here are the only hotels in Seadrift:

Seadrifter Inn, 361-785-2031

Bay Motel, 361-785-2226

Captain's Quarters, 361-785-4982

The cool thing about Seadrift is there are only three hotels in town. When they fill up, that is it for the crowd scene in the evening.

Paddling opportunities abound, both in the bay and in the Guadalupe Delta. Hope to see you there. Gib Hafernick 210-492-7517, home or Gibguy at Compuserve dot com

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Turkey Trots, UT Not!

Randy Hohlaus

Mix eight canoes and kayaks, eleven human paddlers, two canines, cool and sunny weather, trees bursting with fall color, and the Fightin' Texas Aggies upset of t.u.: PRICELESS. Sorry teasips, just had to get that in, you've had more than your share of years lately!¹ As trip leader, outfitter, navigator, pathfinder, cook, this is more an impression of significant moments remembered than a chronicle of passage for the tenth annual Turkey Trot. Other than Nancy, I was the only one who had run this river before. My goal: an awesome photo shot of a bald eagle, my long-lensed Nikon packed safely away in its waterproof Otter box. I knew that once we passed what is now called Buffalo Wallow rapids, we would be into the raptors lair.

We launched at LCRA Plum Park (thanks again, LCRA!). Our 19 mile journey to La Grange was to take two days down unbridged over waters, with an overnight and community meal on an isolated island. A shuttle was provided by the fine folks from Colorado Landing RV Park in La Grange-(979) 968-9465. The water level was just enough at 280 cfs to keep us moving. You could still grind into sand bars if you weren't diligent in following the narrow deep water channel meandering back and forth across the great face of the wide and now shallow river. River reading skills definitely were required and kept sharp on this trip. There are various riffle rapids at spots, and some small ledge drops scattered around to keep things interesting, but what is now called Buffalo Wallow rapid on the maps is the only place where there is any moderate challenge to paddling technique. Indeed, a boat hung here on a ledge, a few touch and go anxious moments as it tipped back and forth while we wondered if gravity or paddler's skills were going to triumph.

We found a fine lunch spot, on the tail end sand bar of a hummocked island. About half way through our break, came a large splashing sound. Alerted by



¹Editor's Note: Oh woe! Oh woe! Oh woe are we!

Buddy the Dog's woofing, no more than twenty yards behind us, a group of over a half dozen deer came crashing down the right cut bank onto the narrow channel before them. Regaining balance, they sprinted across the island flats and onto the shallow gravel bar of the opposite channel, their flying hooves kicking up great sprays of water. What spooked them to cross the river at our spot, I don't know, but the deer in full gallop splashing across the river made a fantastic sight.

The sun was now dropping to the top of the tree line, meaning that we had to reach our targeted camp sight quickly. I was now on a hunt for Raabe creek, a double mouthed creek cut in the left bank that served as the landmark for the large island where we had camped years previous. A few smaller islands passing made for confusing distractions, and shooting my last film on egret backlit in the setting sun, I set my camera aside, resolved that the time to take pictures was through. I was going to miss our island if I didn't pay attention. No sooner had I put the camera back in the dry box, a great rustle came from the tree directly over my bow. A bald eagle, glistening white head, surprised at me as I in him, erupted from the tree and flew directly overhead my head, the whoosh whoosh whoosh of its great wings leaving me in awe. And my camera in the bag. Well, there was my picture gone.

We found the island with a small sandy depression in the middle perfect for locating our fire. Shrimp etouffee was on the dutch oven menu that island night. As the garlic bread was being wrapped for the coals, a vigorous debate erupted, splitting the camp into two factions: the Shiny Side Out Gang and the Shiny Side In Homies. The challenge was on, the garlic bread unwrapped and rewrapped so there were even loaves both ways. After scrupulous scientific method applied to the coal placement, the results were seen a positive by both camps, and the schism remains even to this day. The meal was wrapped with desert of pecans roasted in butter and brown sugar, a treat that this year did not survive the night.

While the meal simmered, a light beamed from upriver. Closer and closer, like a Safari racer on a midnight sprint, it was Glenn, paddling in the dark to reach us. What a great surprise, and guts. That night, we were the last two left around the fire. I don't know what it was, the brand or the place, but he had the finest sipping whiskey I have ever had. And to pair it off, I pulled out and finished my last remaining Pecos River cigar, my once a year indulgence, to make a great way to cap the evening. Thus set, he shared the memories of his Dad who just passed away, his inspiration for boating, the memories slipping into the night like the rising sparks of the fire.

The second day, I spotted another large raptor springing into the trees from river right. Definitely not one of the great ospreys so common this year, I am convinced from my Petersen's that I saw a golden eagle, my first ever. The folks at Colorado Landing later confirmed at the takeout that there were golden eagles on the river.

Approaching chalk bluffs, a great breeze blew up from the south. The trees above Scott's kayak erupted in an explosion of multi-colored leaves, glittering golds, reds, yellows slowly filtering down to the water. No other trees so affected, this must have been a blast sharpened by the topography of surrounding hills and wind patterns. Some still remained falling as I paddled through them, an experience unique to fall paddling.

As you can tell from this chronicle, this river, overwhelm with adrenalin rushing white water quietly in impression, a gentle song of abundant softly flowing waters, a cleanser of one's soul. trip. Dial your clock back on the lower Colorado,



suitable for novice level canoers, does not and bare knuckled paddling. Rather, it seeps and spectacular wildlife, glittering colors and Not one other person was seen over our two day and reconnect.

Alamo City Rivermen Mileage Log Sheet

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

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

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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 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