



# The Alamo City Rivermen Babbler

Issue MMCCXXXII

December 2002

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

## Padding the fine line between geek and Bubba.

### Next Meeting

**Holiday Party, Sunday,  
December 8, 2:00 until 7:00 See  
the accompanying article.**

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### Club Officers

President VACANT!!!!!!!!!!!!

Vice President David Plylar  
wavegrazer@lycos.net

Sec./Treas. Marie Searight  
marie@wireweb.net  
830-625-0604

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Mailings Pam Vanderny

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### Doozurdoo

**It's that time of year again. Dues are  
due from everyone. It's \$15 a year IF  
you get the newsletter by email and  
\$20 a year if you get it by snail mail.**

**Please bring your dues to the January  
meeting or mail them to Marie  
Searight, Treasurer, ACR, P.O. Box  
171194, San Antonio, Texas 78217.**

### Presidency Vacant

Since the November meeting, Chris Vogeler has reconsidered remaining president. Regrettably, he believes he must bow out.

So, folks, we need a president pronto. Someone please step forward.

### Freeze Trip

The Rivermen's biggest event of the year is around the corner. We will put in at the FM 969 crossing on the Colorado River, probably in January. Show up on time on penalty of missing the shuttles. There is a small fee for the communal meal.

After the shuttle, we will paddle about 8 miles down to a large island to camp, cook an elaborate meal, and sample some serious wine grog. Around the campfire at night, expect poetry reading, music, tall tales, conversation, and camaraderie.

The next day, it's merely four or so miles to the city park in Bastrop where the take out is at a made-to-order boat ramp. Paddlers of any skill level should be comfortable with the trip.

Often 80 or more paddlers from all over the state participate. If you make just one paddle-camping trip in a year, this should be it.

### Holiday Party

Our meeting for December takes the form of a Holiday Party at Henry Holman's house, 212 Canada Verde in Hollywood Park, Sunday, December 8 from 2:00 to 7:00 P.M.

The club is buying meat and miscellaneous supplies. Please bring bring salads, snacks, veggies, and desserts.

**Please RSVP so we can figure quantities for meat, plates, etc. RSVP to alamo@yahogroups.com. If you don't have email, please phone 494-7500.**

Don't forget the gift exchange. Gifts should not be of significant value, and gag gifts are well within the spirit of the occasion.

It's BYOB. Make sure you have a designated driver.

*Directions from 281 North Expressway:*

Exit at Donella Northbound or Southbound. Northbound it is one exit past Thousand Oaks/Mecca. or Southbound 281, it is 1 exit past Loop 1604. Proceed West on Donella for 2 long blocks to Mustang Circle - - Turn right up the hill to a stop sign at Rua De Matta. Turn left (West) on Rua De

(see page 2)

(Holiday Party, continued)

Matta and go 6 long blocks to a stop sign at Voght Drive, crossing Voght Westerly still on Rua De Matta one more block to a right turn only cul-de-sac, turning right. 212 is the 4th house on the left. with street no. on the mailbox in front and on the house by the front door. There is a semi-circle driveway.

*Directions from Loop 1604:*

Exit at Stone Oak Parkway/Voght Drive. South on the Voght Drive direction between a Diamond Shamrock Convenience Store and the Clear Lake Bank. Go 1 block to Paseo Canada and Turn Right. Proceed 2 blocks to a left turn only cul-de-sac turning left on Canada Verde and proceed a long block to 212.

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## **Big Slough (off the Neches River)**

By Noel Kirkwood  
(nkirkwood@tyler.net)

The premier paddle in East Texas is Big Slough, a large area that is flooded in the winter and spring. Located in the Davy Crockett National Forrest, between Alto and Crocket. After hunting season you don't encounter many people. Massive Oaks, Gums, Hickorys (including a few of the remaining Scaley Barks, once common in East TX). The trees are probably 100 to 200 years old. I have seen deer, feral hogs, coons, eagles, gators, and river otters, very rare plants like the Neches River Rose Mallow, all kinds of flowering plants.

It is an outstanding spring float. An eleven mile loop down Hickory Creek, up Big Slough, down the Neches, then back up Hickory Creek. At summer and fall levels it is brutal. Lots of going under, over, and around trees in the

creek. At spring levels it is a moderate loop, requiring some boat control skills and paddling upstream for half the trip. The scenery makes it worth while.

It began as a marked, maintained trail. When the area achieved wilderness status, the Forest Service had to remove the signs that said Big Slough Canoe Trail. When the slough is flooded you can get yourself seriously lost.

This is one of the last remaining wet land areas in East TX. You may spend part of the day lost or fighting your way through; the easy way through changes with the water level; that is what it makes it interesting.

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## **Email Group**

The Rivermen email group is alamo@yahoogroups.com. If you are not a member, please email bennight@alumni.utexas.net.

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## **Sea Kayaking**

Email from Trey Berndt of Austin

A couple of times, we've put in with sea kayaks at Cavasso and paddled across the bay to backside of Refuge and up Big Bayou. But that's more of a touring boat trip with compass and GPS in hand. But it did give us a chance to paddle personally with gators, something that puts a new spin on staying kayaker side up.

The creek doesn't look like much at the muddy put in, but it opens up into a wide mouth on the bay with nice grass and lots of birds and fish. Outside of the creek mouth, which is pretty big, you can get surprised by the intensity of the wind and waves.

Had to basically ferry the bay one time to get back, when we failed to get interested in the weather report and

taking those waves on our beam was not an option.

But you can have a real good time just gunkholing along the mainland side.

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## **USCA Canoe Instructors Certification Course**

Bob Spain, a USCA Certified Instructor/Trainer is offering a United States Canoe Association (USCA) Canoe Instructor Course in January. The course will cover basic instruction to teach a "beginner canoe" course. The course will include 4 hours of classroom instruction followed by 4 hours of on-the-water demonstration. The cost of the course is \$95 which includes an instruction video, instructors polo shirts and membership in USCA, which is required. If you are already a USCA member the cost is \$75. All students will have to pass a CPR /first aid course to receive the canoe certification (you can take the instructors course before you have your CPR certification, but you must pass the CPR course before you can receive your instructor's certification card).

He prefers to schedule the class on Friday and Saturday, because he can get some assistance from other instructors for the Saturday on-the-water portion. However, he may hold it during the week if that is preferred by a majority of the students. The maximum course size to 12 to 14 people, but if two courses are held at the same time, he may combine the classroom portion into one larger class.

If you are interested or you know someone who is, please have them respond by email ([bob.spain@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:bob.spain@tpwd.state.tx.us)) <mailto:bob.spain@tpwd.state.tx.us> or phone (512-389-4635-office) or (512-302-1005-home) which dates that you will be available. Based upon the initial interest, he will finalize the dates

and respond to those that are interested. There will be a \$25 dollar deposit to reserve a spot in the course. The money is needed to order instructor t-shirts in advance.

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Dear CanoeTX Group,

My name is Chris Hanna and I share the same passion about kayaking as I understand this group does. I will graduate from Southern Methodist University this December with my MBA. For a lack of a better term, my thesis has revolved around my business plan for constructing a whitewater stadium in Dallas, modeled after the Penrith, Australia stadium. I have received much feedback and encouragement from the University and local investors that this is something that should be pursued. I have presented my plan to a few investors and sponsors and have follow up meetings with three venture capital companies over the next four months.

I am writing this group on the recommendation of Dr. Daniel at Texas A&M University. He mentioned that people in this group have tried to complete the same project in Austin. I would like to talk to those folks and see if they are willing to share information as well discuss with me where I am in the process. If anyone is interested, or has any information please contact me through this group or my personal email address of [channa@airmail.net](mailto:channa@airmail.net) or my cell phone at 214-923-9330.

I absolutely believe this project can be accomplished with the help of other dedicated kayakers.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Chris Hanna

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## Proposed Legislation

The controversy over 4 X 4's traversing river beds is familiar to those subscribing to CanoeTX. For those not subscribing, there is little public land in Texas for public use. River beds constitute the single most common example of such land.

4 X 4 enthusiasts have taken to using river beds as trails for club outings and individual trips. Heavy vehicular traffic can damage riverine environments, which has led to calls for restrictions on use.

An issue of importance to paddlers is whether restrictions on 4 X 4's will also affect paddling. Many bills addressing this situation are likely to be introduced in the coming legislative session. One such bill proposed by Robert Puente (D. San Antonio) is House Bill 206.

This poses risks to paddlers. It gives river authorities the power to regulate vehicles. Boats are well within the commonly understood meaning of the word "vehicles." It also gives river authorities the power to regulate for the "public safety." This could easily lead to more river closures such as that experienced in Comal County after the recent floods.

Many more bills are introduced than are passed. There is no reason to believe this particular bill will actually become law, particularly in its present form. Some restrictions are likely, however, and neither is there any reason to believe whatever does become law will be any more solicitous of paddlers' concerns than is this bill.

If you want to follow the activities of the Legislature this session, to the extent that is possible, you may be interested in the "Texas Legislature

Online" website:  
[www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us)

If you want to know who represents your district, check out this link:  
[www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm)

Representative Puente, who is the author of HB 206 has a site here:  
<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/dist119/puente.htm>

HB 206's text follows. The emphasis is added.

**A Bill to Be Entitled:** an Act relating to the protection of the natural condition of the beds and banks of state-owned watercourses; providing civil and criminal penalties.

Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Title 11, Natural Resources Code, is amended by adding Chapter 212 to read as follows:

Chapter 212. Protection of Natural Condition of Beds and Banks Of State-owned Watercourses

Sec. 212.001. Power to Adopt and Enforce Rules.

(a) A river authority may adopt and enforce rules to:

(1) **limit or prohibit vehicular access to and use of the beds and banks of the state-owned watercourses** within the authority's boundaries in order to protect the natural condition of the beds and banks against disturbance; and

(2) **prohibit** within the beds and banks of the state-owned watercourses within the authority's boundaries littering, destruction of aquatic habitat, pollution, and **activities endangering the public safety**.

(b) A river authority may not adopt rules under Subsection (a)(1) limiting or prohibiting vehicular access to and use

of the beds and banks of state-owned watercourses by an owner of the adjacent uplands or an agent, employee, representative, or lessee of the owner for reasonable purposes related to usual and customary agricultural operations if the vehicular access and use is limited to those reaches of the watercourse adjacent to the owner's property.

(c) Rules adopted under this section do not affect the use of the beds and banks of state-owned watercourses for:

(1) emergency or rescue operations; or

(2) activities specifically authorized by the state or a political subdivision of the state acting under state law.

Sec. 212.002. Civil Penalty; Injunctive Relief.

(a) A person who violates a rule adopted by a river authority under Section 212.001 is liable to the river authority for a civil penalty of not less than \$50 or more than \$1,000 for each violation. Each day a violation continues is considered a separate violation for purposes of assessing the civil penalty. The river authority may sue to collect the penalty.

(b) A river authority may sue to enjoin a violation or threatened violation of a rule adopted under Section 212.001.

(c) A river authority may sue for injunctive relief and a civil penalty in the same proceeding.

(d) A suit under this section must be brought in a district court in the county in which the violation occurred or is threatened.

Sec. 212.003. Criminal Penalty.

(a) A person commits an offense if the person violates a rule adopted under Section 212.001.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

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Many's the time when we paddle  
That we stop on a shore with some  
cattle,  
But your chances don't mull,  
Encountering a bull.  
That's when you need to  
skedaddle.

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## CanoeTX

CanoeTX is a website dedicated to the Texas River Protection Association and is the effort of our very own David Reichert. It has interesting links and is the avenue for subscribing to the CanoeTX listserv.

The listserv is an excellent way to stay informed about upcoming trips, places to paddle, and issues of interest to paddlers. If you are not familiar with CanoeTXm check it out here:  
[world.std.com/~reichert/canoeTX.htm](http://world.std.com/~reichert/canoeTX.htm)

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## Web Directories

Web directories are compilations of web sites by subject area. If you have never checked out a web directory, go to Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and give it a try.

At the main Google screen, underneath the word "Google," there is a series of tabs labeled "Web," "Images," "Groups," "Directory," and "News."

Click on "Directory." When the screen changes, click on "Outdoors," which should appear under "Recreation." When the screen changes again, you should see a long list of topics

alphabetically arranged. One of those topics is "Canoeing and Kayaking," which is shown to have 1,267 separate sublistings. Click on "Canoeing and Kayaking." When the screen changes, you should see not only more subcategories but also numerous links to sites. Explore to see what is available in the subject area.

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## Opportunity

Become a published author! Imagine what a jump start it will be to your fledgling writing career when you can claim to be published in this newsletter.

Articles are wanted and needed. Polish is optional. Please send to [bennight@alumni.utexas.net](mailto:bennight@alumni.utexas.net)



## Upcoming Events

December 8, 2002	Holiday Party, 2:00 to 7:00	Henry Holman, 212 Canada Verde
January 8, 2003	January Meeting, Planning	N.E. Loop 410 and Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
January or February 2003	Freeze Trip, Colorado River, Bastrop	GibGuy@compuserve.com
March 14-23, 2003	Pecos Expedition (Pandale to Highway 90)	GibGuy@compuserve.com
???????	Brazos River	AlamoChris@aol.com

## Club Decals:

ACR club decals are now available by mail order. The possibilities for these four inch by four inch, four-color gems are endless. Buy one for each side of your boat, buy one for your car, buy one for each of your paddle blades, stick 'em on your dry bags, put them on your rain suit, sew it to your PFD, trade 'em, heck, take a couple of extra ones to patch your tent with. If you would like to get one or a baker's dozen of these little gems, send your order with \$3.00 for each decal you want to ACR, c/o Randy Hohlaus, 13747 Cedar Canyon, San Antonio, Texas 78231. All orders are confidential.



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## Paddle America Membership

As an ACA (American Canoeing Association) Paddle America affiliated club, Alamo City Rivermen members are entitled to an optional Paddle America membership in the ACA. This includes a subscription to the magazine Paddler which is really a fine publication. This Paddle America membership benefit will save you \$10.00 over the regular dues. To join you must send the ACA a copy of the official ACR Paddle America membership form letter which you can receive by calling our Officers. The form letter is also in our newsletter every fall when our dues renewal notification occurs. We will not process this for you, you must do it yourself and you must use the form letter the Rivermen provide you to receive the \$10 discount.

Another great benefit is a 10% discount at Nantahala Outdoor Center at 800-232-7238 or [www.noc.com](http://www.noc.com) Make sure you mention that you're a member of Alamo City Rivermen and ask for our discount. Our membership form is in this newsletter!

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**Pecos River Trip:** Gib's Pecos River Trip is still on for Spring Break 2002. If you have not reserved a spot, email Gib pronto. Space is limited.

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**Kayak Wanted:** Henry Holman wants a small, solo kayak for his grandson. He also needs, a paddle, PFD, and spray skirt. Call 494-7500.

## 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. Even at this price differential, those taking the newsletter by email subsidize those who do not.)

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

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