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Volume 34

January 2004

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Say Happy Birthday to the club - 40 years of paddling fun
Please renew your membership NOW. Keep this club alive.

Membership dues make our events and this newsletter possible.
Please do your part by using the renewal form below.

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Program - January 14, 2004

Lake Sheldon Paddling

Tom Olson will present an update on activities at Lake Sheldon. This is a nice place to paddle

so new members especially should be sure to come hear him.

Renew your membership now!

We need your help. Please renew your membership

for a year of great events that we are planning for this, our 40th year anniversary celebration.

Renewal form at left in the contents list.

We need your correct email address!

Please send your current email address to Marilyn Peery now.

Email address: mpeery@ev1.net.

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 trip reports, news worthy items and any literary musings you wish to inflict on your paddling buddies to the Editor at the following address.

sherrib57@hotmail.com

Houston Canoe Club Officers and General Meeting Minutes

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Officers for 2003

Commodore: **John Ohrt**

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Vice Commodore: **Mary Zaborowski**

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Recorder: **Anne Olden**

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Purser: **Anna King**

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alking@houston.rr.com

Fleet Captain: **Fraser Baker**

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Newsletter Editor: **Sherri Blifford**

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Governor 1: **Ron Nunnelly**

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Texascanoebuilder@hotmail.com

Governor 2: **Ken Anderson**

281-856-9388

klandrsn@hal-pc.org

Governor 3: **Paul Woodcock**

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Change of Address

Submit change of address to Marilyn Peery.

Email address:

mpeery@ev1.net

Physical address:

Marilyn Peery

4119 Mischire Rd.

Houston, TX 77025

Waterline Submissions

General Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2003

These minutes have not been approved. Any changes or amendments will be posted in next month's issue of the Waterline.

Commodore John Ohrt presided at the meeting.

John announced that the Pool sessions at the Dad's Club located at I-10 and Bingle will resume in January on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. The cost is \$5 for ACA members and \$10 for non-members.

John announced that there will be no general meeting in December. Instead there will be a brief meeting during the Christmas party.

John introduced the officers in attendance.

The recorder's report was read and accepted.

Lillian Tigard thanked the HCC for their generosity in giving the awards for the National Freestyle Competition. There were 22 students that attended the clinics and 14 competitors from all over the country. It was a high quality competition and if anyone wants a DVD or tape of the competition, Lillian has them available for \$23 or \$15 respectively.

Fraser Baker gave the fleet captain's report including asking persons to describe past trips and to announce upcoming trips. Fraser announced that the annual freeze trip will be January 31, 2004.

The Christmas party will be Dec. 13 from 7-10 at the Northwest Fitness Club. Cheryl announced that the club will provide turkey, ham and beer and everyone is asked to bring a covered

Submit content to the Newsletter Editor, Sherri Blifford, by the 18th of the month.

Send electronic submissions to sherrib57@hotmail.com.

Send snail mail submissions to Sherri Blifford
8233 Kingsbrook Rd., #134
Houston, TX 77024

everyone is asked to bring a covered dish to share.

The following officers for 2004 were elected unanimously:

- Commodore – John Ohrt
 - Vice Commodore – Mary Zabrowski
 - Recorder – Anne Olden
 - Purser – Anna King
 - Newsletter Editor – Sherri Blifford
 - Fleet Captain – Fraser Baker
 - Governor (3-years) – Ron Nunnely
 - Governor (1-year) – Ken Anderson
- And Paul Woodcock has another year in his 3-year term to complete.

Mary Z. introduced Natasha who gave an extremely interesting presentation on the Rivers of Russia.

The meeting was adjourned.

For those interested, Lillian Tigard showed the National Freestyle Competition video after the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary W. Carter

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Member News and Other Tidbits

by Sherri Blifford

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Shuttles - Good Ones and Bad Ones

I have information on getting a good shuttle in Big Bend if anyone needs it. I'll put it in the next newsletter but if you need it sooner, send me an email.

Please send your best and worst shuttle experiences and information to us for an upcoming program. Send them to Paul Woodcock or any other officer, please.

Member's Items

The officers are planning all kinds of great events for this year, including a 40th anniversary celebration in October.

The Freeze Trip dates have changed because of the Super Bowl! Update your calendar to January 23-25.

Thank you, Cheryl, for a lovely Christmas party.

Pool sessions are cancelled for January.

After almost 9 years of hard work, Jeannette Truxillo has finished her doctoral dissertation! Congratulations to "DR. J".

Mary Z is celebrating a new granddaughter, Ashley Desiree Zaborowski.

Kevin Casement bought a house and moved. Send him an email for new contact information until we update the roster.

Jerry Williams moved to Conroe. Send him an email for new contact information until we update the roster.

Ron Nunnelly is heading to Philadelphia next week on business. Actually, he's just conditioning for the Freeze Trip, learning to survive the cold.

Send your news and we'll put it here.

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Sears on the Bayou

by Louis F. Aulbach and Linda Gorski

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The RPW Warehouse sits on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou at Studemont Street.

By the end of the 1920's, Houston, as an American city, was showing signs of the changes in society that were happening across the United States. Some of these broad patterns can be seen in the development along Buffalo Bayou.

If River Oaks ushered in the suburban residential way of life that was connected to the business center by modern roadways, like Buffalo Drive, and a dependence on the private automobile, then the suburban retail department store concept began with the opening of the Sears, Roebuck and Company store on Buffalo Drive (now named Allen Parkway).

By 1920, the population of the United States living in cities outnumbered the rural population. At the turn of the twentieth century, the situation had been the reverse. Robert E. Wood, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company saw this change and recognized the effect on retail merchandising. He opened an experimental retail store in Chicago in early 1927, and by the end of the year, he had twenty-seven retail outlets to complement the mail order catalog operations. By 1929, Sears had 319 retail stores and by the country's entry into World War II in 1941, there were more than 600 Sears stores nationwide.

Houston's Sears, Roebuck and Company store was built in 1929 on a three-acre site at the present day intersection of Allen Parkway and Montrose Boulevard. It was the first suburban department store in Houston.

Designed by the firm of Nimmons, Carr and Wright, the Sears store building is an architectural example of the type of high quality development along Buffalo Drive as it emerged as the major corridor between downtown and River Oaks. The new \$1,000,000 retail department store opened for business on the corner of Buffalo Drive and Lincoln Street in August, 1929.

Situated in a prominent position on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou, located adjacent to the railroad spur from Chaney Junction, and convenient to residential neighborhoods that stretched in a broad arch across the southwest side of the city from South Main Street to River Oaks, the Sears, Roebuck store seemed to ideally positioned for success. Yet, after only a decade, the store was relocated to South Main Street, near its current day intersection with US 59. The unpredictable nature of the bayou had shown its hand. On December 9, 1935, Buffalo Bayou rose in flood to its historic high level, reaching an estimated flow of 40,000 cfs. The first floor of the Sears store flooded, and substantial losses were incurred. The subsequent 'flood' sale, in which damaged goods were displayed and sold on the second floor of the building, was an event to remember and was well patronized by bargain-seeking shoppers.

By 1942, the Olympia Arena was operating on the site of the old Sears store. Then, in 1943, the building was the temporary, first home of the Baylor College of Medicine. Baylor College of Medicine moved from Dallas to Houston before the Texas Medical

Center could construct the building it had promised, so students at Baylor attended classes during the first four years, until 1947, in the old Sears warehouse.

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In Memory of Winston Padgett

by Bob Arthur

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Winston Charles Padgett, 64, died Dec. 25, 2003 of ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. Winston had been a DPS Special Agent and had retired after 33 years of service and had also served as an investigator for the Hardin County D.A.'s office.

I first met Winston on a Rio Grande Lower Canyons trip in 1982. I was a new paddler and wanted to go awfully badly, so when Joe and Betsy Butler put together the trip, I jumped at the chance and I'm glad I did. I don't remember everyone that was on the trip, but it was Winston's first trip also and he was unforgettable. A large man, 6' 6", with long bushy hair and a beard, at the time serving with the DPS as an undercover investigator. What an interesting guy and interested in everything. He was one of those people that one feels comfortable with immediately.

An incident on that trip happened when we stopped above a rapid to scout it and also to look at one of the candelaria "factories". Somehow, Winston's boat came untied and ran the rapid unattended. We always said the empty boat ran the rapid better than Winston and his partner could have. He had taken his camera out of the ammo box and had left the open box, including his watch, wallet, keys and other valuables on top of the spray skirt and they stayed there through the entire rapid.

He had this glass eye that he said he won in a poker game, right out of a fellow's eye socket. He'd mounted it and wore it on a big gold chain and said that when he got in a tight spot, he always turned it around to his back to watch behind him. He got into tight spots as a DPS investigator. There are many more stories.

Over the years he had redone the Lower Canyons trip many times and had also rafted the Grand Canyon in the Colorado River many times. He was a major force in the Big Thicket Voyagers and was responsible for the planning of the Labor Day Sabine River trip that so many HCC members have paddled.

Quite a guy and he is missed.

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Hidalgo Falls Update

by Steve Daniel

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For all those who were so generous in contributing money toward the Texas Rivers Protection Association purchase of the four additional acres overlooking Hidalgo Falls: good news. Last Wednesday, TRPA finally closed on the sale when Tom Goynes (TRPA president) came to College Station to sign the papers.

Many of you probably thought that all of this had been finished last summer, but the deal had been delayed by a number of factors. All during that time small bands of volunteers continued to work at the site, ultimately clearing away over 20 tons of debris. In order to get the money we needed for this prime spot, we had to sell 2.9 acres of our land downstream from the rapid and still needed an additional \$15,000 to cover the difference. But as many of you know, paddlers from around the state came through with donations sufficient to guarantee that future boaters will have a wonderful paddlers' Park at Hidalgo Falls that is not threatened by residential and commercial development.

To get a better idea of what the new boundaries are, or to see photos of the site or the rapid, click on the links at <http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/hidalgo.html> .

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New Year's Paddle
by John and Anne Olden

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HCC members joined with others from the Bayou City Whitewater Club, as well as paddlers from Austin, Bryan and San Antonio, for two days of river enjoyment. Ten people met at Pecan Park late Thursday morning, January 1, to make the run to Sculls. The water was low, but there were still waves for playing. The temperature was mild and the trip relaxing. Mamacita's was closed for the holiday, but Café on the Square was open that holiday night. We enjoyed a campfire in the cool evening.

Several of the Thursday paddlers went home and others joined the group at Slumber Falls on Friday. We played the gates before going downriver. The water was fun even at this low level of 120 CFS. It was a good introduction to several of the group who hadn't done this stretch, including some who were new to moving water. The lower level gave a good view of rocks and rock formations that aren't visible at higher water levels. The sun came out and offered a perfect day. It was a great way to begin the new (leap) year.

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New Members

James Barta
james.barta@equifax.com

Don and Martha
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kitrisdad@earthlink.net
Ruth and Kip Hasselmeier
ruth2tx@ev1.net

JoAnne and Bobby
Johnson
joanne8678@yahoo.com

Christine Krohn
cprohn@aol.com

Victor and Angelica Nieto
vnieto@houston.rr.com

Gary and Sandy
Schippers
gsskip@sbcglobal.net

Dennis Pumilia
dpumilia@yahoo.com

Robert L and Darlene
Surprenant
robertjs57@hotmail.com

For Sale

Eureka Domed Tent

Good condition; 3 person (really 2) \$25

John and Anne Olden 713-864-0205

aolden@ix.netcom

Wavesport Triple X freestyle competition kayak

At the US Freestyle Team Trials back in November, this model won top spots in men and women's categories.

The boat weighs 33 lbs, is 7'10 inches long and is black with red highlights/cool graphics. 1 year old. Pics available. Located in Dallas. MSRP \$950 - Must sell quick \$349 OBO. Stephen Guy Pocock - 972-686-

7878 sguykayak@yahoo.com

Mad River Canoe - Intrigue

Intrigue, 15'9", three seats, Solo/Tandum, Roylex \$700

Call Mary Zaborowski at 713-884-1925 or 832-215-4551 or email maryzabo@sbcglobal.net

Mary Z is in Canada until late July so, if you can't wait, call Bob Scheffler, 713-692-7494

15-ft sailboat (Sunfish)

Mask, sail, riging, drp wooden eel, wooden rudder, \$600.

maryzabo@sbcglobal.net or Bob Scheffler, 713-692-7494

Mad River Canoe - Freedom

Freedom, Roylex \$700 Email

maryzabo@sbcglobal.net or call Bob Scheffler, 713-692-7494

Mad River Freedom,

Friend in Kuwait needs to sell his canoe Spruce colored, wood trim. It was only paddled on one fishing trip, like new condition. He is asking \$600. Thanks!

Call Bob 713-6927494 or 713-504-1916

Kayak-like boat for two

Phoenix Vagabond Pokeboat (for 2 people), 40-lb Kevlar, natural Kevlar color, two convertible paddles, two sets of foot braces, two flotation bags, very stable, 16'5"L x 29"W x 15"H. Used once, excellent shape

Paid: \$2,189 Asking: \$1650

phone: (281) 837-0410 (please leave a message)

pager: (713) 415-7109 (after 3:00 PM weekdays) e-

mail: robcanet@hotmail.com

Newbie Journal - Great Lesson

by Sherri Blifford

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The Newbie is almost ready to graduate. Since I haven't done a column for months, you get a double-dose to start the new year.

Part one is my great lesson.

Part two is my adventure in Bouquillas Canyon.

The Lesson



Pecos River enroute to Big Bend

Photo by sherri

Click on image to enlarge.

Last fall I entered the winning bid on a paddling lesson at a Sierra Club auction. John and Cindy Bartos had generously donated the lesson so it was satisfying to benefit the club even as I got a much-needed lesson.

Cindy heard my fears and whittled away at them, replacing each one with coping techniques. She listened as hard as she talked, a real rarity, and she didn't just lecture. She took time to explain and demonstrate. We had a quiet pond all to ourselves so we could indulge in practice without embarrassment.

After that lesson, I went on two trips on the Colorado River, then to Bouquillas Canyon. I got to use all my newly learned strokes. Knowing them and, more important, knowing when to use them inspired confidence, almost cockiness. Watching my stern partner stand up and surf the canoe by leaning one way and another, I tried it, landing abruptly. Another time I turned to the stern seeking approval only to find my tandem partner taking pictures of me instead of paddling. Now that's a vote of confidence.

Oh, and I didn't capsized the canoe once on all three trips. That's not to say I'm an expert ...

yet.

[Click here to go to my adventure in Big Bend.](#)

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Bouquillas Canyon

by Sherri Blifford

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Bouquillas Canyon

Click on image to enlarge.

Bouquillas is one in a string of canyons along the Rio Grande River in Big Bend National Park and the adjacent wilderness area. I'd heard about Santa Elena Canyon and the rock slide and assumed all the canyons were filled with wild, tumultuous rapids. When we launched late on a cool December day, my anxiety level was high. We'd planned this trip carefully around the full moon. There was some talk of a moonlight paddle. Somehow that seemed more sane sitting in my warm living room than here, perched in the bow of a canoe, straining to see.

The sun slid behind the canyon walls long before the moon peeked over them. It got cold. In the dark every noise was amplified. Oh, goodie. Cold and dark and scary. I sneezed. My throat hurt. Nervous little prickly thoughts danced in my head.

"Get a grip" I scolded myself. I was with an outfitter who knew the river well, having done it more than 200 times. But we were alone on a tense international border and I was getting sick. No one expected us to surface for four days. Our bodies wouldn't be found in time. Then I heard the unmistakable roar of rapids.

"Can we camp right here, please?"

"We'll be fine and there's a better place just ahead," pleaded my friend.

"Those are rapids and I'm scared."



Big, Terrifying "Rapids"

Photo by Sherri

Click on image to enlarge.

The canoe turned so abruptly I almost lost my balance. I turned to find a reassuring smile instead of the scolding most males would have dished out. We camped. On the hardest, muddiest bank we'd find in four days. At daybreak I walked down to check out the "rapids", all ten feet of them, ankle deep! Somewhat sheepishly, I quietly accepted grapefruit and hot coffee, grateful there weren't any nasty "I told you so" comments.

Isn't that usually the case with our fears? Only the unknown can be truly terrifying. Only in the darkness can a small bump become a great thundering boulder. In the quiet ritual of hot coffee watching a sky smeared with vibrant color, other fears melted, too, as I made a silent vow to trust more and worry less.



Hey, this is fun!

Photo by Don Greene

Click on image to enlarge.

Describing Bouquillas is an exercise in futility. All the superlatives sound silly. It is magnificent and intimidating, clearly reminding one of our insignificance. Walls of limestone go straight up to the sky. Light dances on the ridges and curves, reflecting the walls in the river. Cobble decorates the river and occasionally tests your skill. When the moon does rise, it glares brilliantly, bouncing off the stone. We didn't need a flashlight. We did need to pull the tarp over our heads to make it dark enough to sleep and, once, to escape a sand storm. Using a tarp instead of a tent isn't a "macho" thing here. Tents

blow down in the fierce winds. A tarp can be wrapped securely for warmth and shelter. One night frost formed on the tarp when temperatures dropped just under 20 degrees but I was warm in a cozy cocoon.

On an earlier hiking trip to Big Bend, I'd seen small row boats at the village taking passengers across the river for a dollar or two. They're gone now, more victims of the madness created by terrorists. Further proof that fear is the unknown. The river is quiet and empty.



Campsite in Bouquillas Canyon

Photo by Don Greene

Click on image to enlarge.

In almost any discussion of camping, someone has to hold forth as though they originated the concept that their idea of roughing it is the Holiday Inn. One would think they might at least be slightly more creative.

How can they witness the graceful glide of a beaver in that soft light of dusk? Their souls can never soar with the blue Heron that dives, perches, and soars again as though to lead a canoe downstream. Look up at a thousand feet or more of canyon wall and find a tiny plant growing out of rock. Now THAT is perseverance.

Let those naysayers imprison themselves and lose the wonders of a river. Give me an island under a sky bright with stars. Let me escape the noise and nonsense to reclaim my soul and then be lulled to sleep by water bubbling over rocks.

Just don't assume that I'm the one "roughing it".

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