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HotLine 713.467.8857

Volume 36

**March 2004**

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

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

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**Program - March 10, 2004**

Les Bechdel of Canyons Inc.

([www.canyonsinc.com](http://www.canyonsinc.com)) based out of McCall, Idaho has been providing guided raft-supported trips down the Middle Fork and Main Salmon rivers in Idaho for 18 years and many folks from the Houston area have been on these trips. Les will present an informal slide show of their trips and discuss some of the human and natural history of the area.

As some of you know, Les co-authored *RIVER RESCUE*, the first definitive book on the subject. The book has sold over 90,000 copies. Following the slide show, Les will be available for an informal discussion of river safety topics.

**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](mailto: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 items (please do not embed photos in MS Word documents) to the Editor at the following address.

[sherrib57@hotmail.com](mailto:sherrib57@hotmail.com)

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## Houston Canoe Club Officers and General Meeting Minutes

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### Officers for 2003

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### Change of Address

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Submit change of address to Marilyn Peery.

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Marilyn Peery

4119 Mischire Rd.

Houston, TX 77025

### Waterline Submissions

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### General Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2004

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

John Ohrt, Commodore, welcomed members and visitors and introduced the officers. He thanked those who have lead trips already this year and encouraged each experienced member to coordinate at least one trip this year.

John announced that the pool sessions on the 2nd and 4th Mondays are again being held at the former YWCA on Wirt Road. He said the class with Bob Foote will have to be postponed, possibly to November, as Bob will be leaving Houston early in March.

John Bartos gave a brief talk on uses of a GPS.

Fraser Baker, Fleet Captain, presented awards to a number of people for various accomplishments last year, including most trips coordinated, most miles paddled, etc. He recognized John Ohrt as the biggest booster of trips, Sherri Blifford as most improved paddler, and Bob Arthur for the historic paddle on the Colorado River.

A motion was made and seconded to donate \$500.00 to the Red Cross for allowing us to hold both the officers' meeting and the general meeting at their facilities; also, the hat would be passed for additional contributions. The motion carried. \$118.00 was raised.

Natalie Wiest gave a very interesting program on her sea kayaking trip last summer with four others in Prince William Sound in Alaska.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Olden, Recorder

Submit content to the Newsletter Editor,  
Sherri Blifford, by the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Send electronic submissions to  
[sherrib57@hotmail.com](mailto:sherrib57@hotmail.com).

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

General Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2004

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These minutes were approved at the February meeting. They were not published in the last newsletter due to time constraints.

Commodore John Ohrt presided, pointing out that this is the club's 40th anniversary. Tom Olson, Manager of Sheldon Lake State Park gave an interesting presentation on the history and future plans at the Park.

The current officers were introduced, and John thanked those who had served as officers last year. John reminded people to renew their membership.

Fleet Captain Fraser Baker discussed upcoming trips. He reminded us to look at his list of trips taken last year, showing miles paddled, trip coordinator names, etc. This is the last chance to correct/update these records. He will present awards in various categories at the February meeting.

John discussed a meeting held with Ann Best. Ann had talked with John about reviving the Rendezvous. It was agreed that this year's efforts will focus on a 40th anniversary gathering in Huntsville State Park, with a variety of activities and a potluck/Dutch oven dinner on Saturday night. Fraser read a motion asking the members to approve the club's reserving ten contiguous campsites at the Park for the weekend of October 9/10 for this event. The motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Olden, Recorder

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From the Helm

by John Ohrt, Commodore

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Spring is almost upon us and the paddling opportunities are bursting out with the leaves. We start with the annual San Marcos cleanup. We continue our do-gooding with the local Armand Bayou cleanup on March 27. I admit that it's not too much fun picking up trash, but it is fun getting out with your friends and it feels good to put something back to these two streams. They certainly give a lot back to us.

Mary Z gets to take a full week over spring break camping on the Current River in Missouri, teachers have all the fun.

The first weekend in April is looking good for a whitewater skills trip in the hill country. April 18 will be the big festival up at Hidalgo Falls near Navasota with paddling for flat and moving water folks. We all owe a tip of the paddle to the Texas River Protection Association (TRPA) for its courage and foresight in protecting the river access at this popular spot. There are three TRPA directors from the Houston area and all three are Houston Canoe Club members. Hidalgo Falls will be our April program. Mark it on your calendar to come learn about this great resource just 1 1/2 hours from Houston.

Looking further down the road the Buffalo Bayou race is set for May 1st, the all womens trip for May 15 & 16, and Fraser's extremely popular Columbus loop trip for May 31st. It's looking like a great spring, see you out paddling.

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## Cold and Windy Valentine's Paddle

by Mary Zaborowski

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Our morning started off with a meeting of all paddlers at the What-a-burger at I-10 at Garth Road. After a hearty breakfast and "Hot Coffee" or what I refer to as "Necture of the Morning Gods", onward to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located off I-10, FM 562 and FM 1985 to the Park Entrance.

There you sign in and obtain maps and look at all the wildlife goodies for sale, then headed toward the boat ramp. We put-in there and paddled out the boat canal to Oyster Bayou. Paul and I had never traveled to our right, out into the East Bay area.

So being very adventurous, we decided to paddle that route. The temperature was hovering around 42 degrees, with a slight breeze blowing. We had high tide and plenty of water to paddle. The deep marshes surrounded us with high embankments of the prairies on either side.

Suddenly we came upon a herd of cattle. We paddled to the other bank as to keep away from them, but it was too late, they stampeded. The old Bull made sure we saw him and his herd, as he gave us a loud bellow sound to give warning. Along with this herd was a young cow trying to give birth, yet the calf was stillborn, and she had trouble keeping up with the rest of them. I felt a little sad that this had to happen and we couldn't help or paddle back. We continued to paddle past Onion Bayou toward East Bay.

Then, as we passed the deep marshes and Otter Lake, a sudden chorus of hundreds of waterfowl lifted up in flight, hovering over the lake at only about 100 feet. There were Roseate Spoonbills, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, White Face Ibis and White Ibis, and this was to only name a few of this abundant flock.

What a sight to behold!!

In the intercoastal canal, we spotted the huge tankers coming in from the Gulf of Mexico up to East Bay. After finding an area away from the mud, we beached among a dotted shoreline of shells with a small grove of trees. Stretching our legs, getting out of our boats, we enjoyed a lunch. Here as I looked out at the Bay I had mental images of the Native Americans who inhabited these areas including the Karanhawa and Atakapa Tribes that enjoyed the abundance of shell fish and the beauty of this area of the Texas Gulf Coast.

Then the winds shifted and we headed back up the Oyster Bayou into the strong winds. This made the trip difficult since it took only an hour and a half to get to the Bay and now it took us over *three* hours to get back to the boat ramp in the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Viewing of the migrant birds and long-legged water birds made the trip all the worth-while paddling that cold Valentine's Day! We made it back to our vehicles to load the boats and gear when the temperature made a sudden serious drop into the 30's.

Then looking back across the marshes of the Refuge as we left, we could see a single spoonbill walking among the marsh, looking for his supper before the sun set that evening and weathering the cold bitter wind. He and others like him are protected in this refuge from human harm.

Paddlers that day included Bobby Hatfield, Ron Nunnely, Paul Woodcock and myself in one solo cano, one kayak, and one tandum canoe.

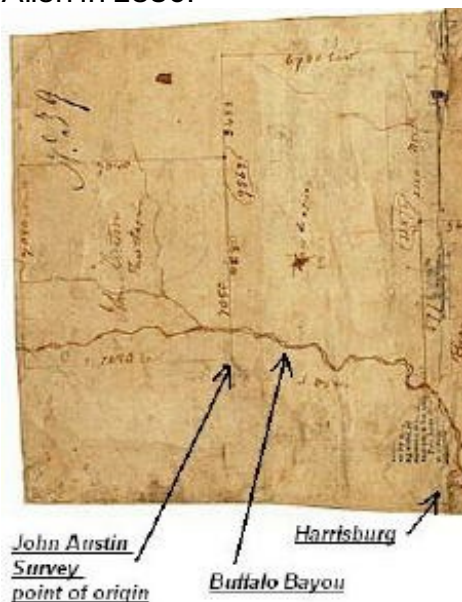
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Where is the John Austin Survey?  
by Louis Aulbach and Linda Gorski  
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Nearly every history of the City of Houston begins with the story that after the Battle of San Jacinto, the Allen brothers purchased the grant of land that had been made to John Austin and laid out the town of Houston there. John Austin was a close friend of Stephen F. Austin and they themselves believed that they were distant cousins although that could not be proven conclusively. Perhaps because of this association, in 1824, John Austin received a grant of two leagues of land, about 8,856 acres, more than most of the grants given to others at the time. John Austin died in 1833 during the cholera epidemic, and his wife and his estate were willing to sell the land to Augustus and John Allen in 1836.



Click on image to enlarge.

The feature of the Austin tract that most historians mention is its location at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou. This spot was the place the Allen brothers selected for their town.

What is often not mentioned is this: what is the extent of the John Austin Survey? Where exactly are the boundary lines? A piece of land of that size, nearly 9,000 acres, covers a lot of ground. What part of modern day Houston would be in this survey?

The two maps presented here will help you visualize the John Austin Survey. One is a map made in 1824 by Stephen F. Austin's surveyor, and the other shows the survey as an overlay on a recent Houston street map.

The survey point, or the point of beginning, for the John Austin Survey is located east of Minute Maid Park at a point that is about 150 feet east of the intersection of Commerce Avenue and St. Emanuel Street in northeast corner of Lot 7, Block 190 of the City of Houston. From there, the southern boundary of the John Austin Survey goes due west. It cuts across the center field bleachers of Minute Maid Park and extends diagonally across the modern central business district to the intersection of West Dallas Avenue and Bagby Street in front of Three Allen Center.



Click on image to enlarge.

In the nineteenth century, West Dallas Avenue was the San Felipe Road. It is probably not mere coincidence that the road and the survey boundary are the same. The survey line follows closely the route of West Dallas along the south bank of Buffalo Bayou until it reaches Shepherd Drive. Beyond Shepherd Drive, the boundary line slices into the curving lanes of River Oaks to the survey's southwest corner on Troon Road. The southwest corner of the John Austin Survey is about 90 feet southwest of the southwest corner of Troon Road and Denman Road, on the property at 2211 Troon Road.

From its southwest corner, the western boundary of the survey goes north to Buffalo Bayou, which it follows for about a quarter of a mile before crossing Memorial Drive. If you are in your canoe, you can paddle along the survey line in the long straight section that approaches Memorial Drive with the former Bayou on the Bend Apartments on your left.

As the bayou turns east toward Shepherd Drive, the survey continues north, crossing Memorial Drive and aligning itself with Reinerman Street. Reinerman Street, a road built later in the 19th century on the dividing line between the John Austin Survey and the John Reinermann Survey, is the western boundary as far as White Oak Bayou.

As was the case with the other settlers who received grants of land on Buffalo Bayou from Stephen F. Austin, John Austin recognized the value of the natural resource on the land that could make his fortune -- timber. The land north of Buffalo Bayou and west of the junction with White Oak Bayou was a heavily forested extension of the East Texas piney woods. Each of the grantees of land to the west of White Oak Bayou established sawmills on their land. The Allen brothers were no exception.

The bulk of the Austin Survey lay north of Buffalo Bayou and it seemed to hold an inexhaustible supply of lumber for building materials. The first plat of town of Houston showed a parcel of land set aside for a steam sawmill on the north side of Buffalo Bayou at the modern intersection of North San Jacinto Street and Wood Street.

The western boundary of the John Austin Survey goes north from White Oak Bayou, through modern subdivisions whose names reflect the timber lands in which they were built: Shady Acres, Shepherd Forest, Timbergrove and Garden Oaks. The northwest corner of the John Austin Survey is near the intersection of Loop 610, the North Loop, and a utility easement that is about 140 feet east of Attridge Street. From the northwest corner, the northern boundary follows the course of the North Loop. Heading east on the north side frontage road until Arlington Street, the boundary switches to the south side frontage road, goes through the I-45 interchange, and then proceeds down the center of Loop 610 until it reaches its northeast corner at the Missouri Pacific Railroad tracks on the east side of the Hardy Toll Road interchange, about 200 feet west of the intersection of Gold Street and Linder Street.

If you are driving east on the North Loop, the freeway becomes elevated near the Hardy Toll Road. From this vantage point, it is possible to see the skyscrapers of downtown

far to the south. As you peer across the tree tops, it is not difficult to imagine the expanse of timber which appeared to be a source of immense wealth to our City's founders.

From the northeast corner, the eastern boundary goes south, back to the east side of downtown. Roughly paralleling the route of Elysian Street, the survey line crosses Buffalo Bayou once again about 600 feet east of the McKee Street bridge in the historic Frostown district. Running along the eastern edge of the Settegast tract, the boundary of the John Austin Survey returns to its origin.

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## Death of a Friend - Wesley Liles

by John Bartos

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Longtime Houston Canoe Club member, tireless volunteer and wonderful story-teller, Wesley Liles died on March 2.

From the Houston Chronicle 3/4/2004:

ARNOLD WESLEY LILES, born June 7, 1927 in Homewood, Alabama to Ethel Dawson and Arthur Louis Liles, passed away on March 2, 2004 in The Woodlands, Texas at the age of 76. He loved storytelling, canoeing and bluegrass music. Wesley was an Army veteran of WWII. He was a retired employee of Stewart & Stevenson and worked part time for Southwest Paddlesports. He was involved with the Folklore Society, Tejas Storytelling Association, National Storytellers, Houston Canoe Club, Cee Banders Radio Club in Birmingham, Al., Outdoor Nature Club and the VFW. His parents, a brother, Frank Liles, and a sister, Sarah Mayer, precede him in death. He is survived by: Jean, his wife of 53 years; his children, Laurel C. Tumis and husband Michael of Grayslake, Illinois, L. Brian Liles, Liana V. Liles, Lenora D Russell and husband Mike, Lisa K. Liles; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren; brothers, James Carol and Lloyd Louis Liles; numerous nieces and nephews.

His funeral was March 5th.

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## Remembering Lesley Wiles

by Tom Goynes

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Sorry to hear about Wesley. The funniest story I know about him is something of which I'm not real proud, but which can't be changed.

It was back in 1971, Paula and I were living together (by the way, I had been born and raised a Catholic, but wasn't a Christian at that time). Wesley musta either assumed we were married or figured we ought to be. So at the first opportunity he had, at a Houston Canoe Club meeting, he announced to Commodore Paul Carr that he understood that the club had lost a member but gained a family.

I was totally oblivious to his innuendo (I must have been a lot stupider back then?) but Paul knew exactly what he meant. Paul turned red and then asked me if I wanted to explain Wesley's comment to the club. I finally realized what was being discussed, spent about a nanosecond contemplating the gravity of marriage, and then introduced Paula to the club as my wife. She was shocked, Paul was shocked, and I, from that moment on, considered myself married.

So I will always remember Wesley as the preacher who tied our knot. And he musta done something right, because we've been married now for 33 years (incidentally, we did get married officially at the first opportunity after that fateful club meeting). I'm not sure if I ever told Wesley what he did. But I suppose he's having a good laugh about it right now.

Thanks for the memories, Wesley.

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## Volunteer to Coordinate Race Needed

by Natalie Wiest

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The City of Baytown in conjunction with the Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center on Goose Creek is putting together a canoeing race event for May 22, 2004. They would love to have an HCC member help with organizing the event, and a bunch more of us to participate. I see that the same day is a TCRA race so the person I would nominate to the "helper" position is probably competing in that. If any of you would like to volunteer to help get this first-ever event off the ground, please contact Kylie Duchie at Baytown Parks & Recreation Department. Her email is [kmduchie@baytown.org](mailto:kmduchie@baytown.org) or call at (281)420-6593. /div>

I will help with contact information, but there's lots more to be done in a relatively short time and I know we have some great event organizers and coordinators within HCC. Kylie would love to hear from you.

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### For Sale and Wanted

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#### Mohawk Shaman 12 Whitewater Canoe

Need to sell my whitewater canoe. Practically brand new. \$500 obo.

Call Malynda Richardson at 713-407-3815 (office) or email me at

rio\_rat@hotmail.com

#### Wenonah Sandpiper solo canoe

Wenonah Sandpiper solo canoe in great shape for sale. I would suggest any interested buyer go to [www.wenonah.com](http://www.wenonah.com) to see pictures / specs on this boat.

Contact Bruce Putnam 281-480-5689 or email: [bputnamjcl@hotmail.com](mailto:bputnamjcl@hotmail.com)

#### Bell Wild Fire

14' Bell Wild Fire, green Royalex w/vinyl trim, fore/aft grab loops, D-rings, knee and toe pads, new web seat, good condition.

Asking \$650. Photos available. Located Mandeville, LA; would consider meeting Houston-area buyer part-way for delivery.

Contact Bill Evans at 985/624-9668 or email: [bevans@gs.net](mailto:bevans@gs.net)

#### Boy Scout Troop needs a used kayak

I have a boy scout in my troop that is looking for a used Tandem kayak to purchase. Something relatively stable, it won't be used for racing but rather paddling bayous and marshes for leisure. Please let me know if you have something you would like to sell or if you know where I should look. Thanks, Roy Lewis

email: [WWILDCHILD@aol.com](mailto:WWILDCHILD@aol.com)

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## Freestyle Instructor Training

by Becky Molina

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For those interested, there will be an American Canoe Association Freestyle Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) March 16-18 in Abita Springs, LA. This is just prior to and just down the road (30 minutes or less) from the La Louisiane Freestyle Symposium.

The IDW is for intermediate to advanced paddlers who are interested in refining their skills in an intensive yet collegial setting with a heavy emphasis on methods of teaching skills to others. Other than working through the entire repertoire of freestyle maneuvers, topics include safety and rescue practice, modeling and teaching skills that are prerequisite to Freestyle, a review of ACA structure and curriculum, theories of hydrodynamics and pedagogy, group management for on-water instruction, and more. These topics are covered in on-water and classroom sessions.

Participants will have opportunities to receive feedback on their skills and their teaching style. Those interested in earning certification as ACA Freestyle instructors must take this course (or one like it) prior to taking the Instructor Certification Exam.

For more information, please email me at [beckmark@aol.com](mailto:beckmark@aol.com).

Hope to see you somewhere in Louisiana!

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Just when I thought I graduated a friend warned me: As soon as you think you know about rivers, you get humiliated by one. Well, luckily that didn't happen this month but the newsletter gave me a dunking of a different sort. After years of schedules, I usually pride myself on meeting or beating deadlines. February sneaked up on me and blasted me with a cold awakening.

There I was at midnight, thinking I could whip out a newsletter in record time (less than 8-10 hours) since it was deadline time. There's no point in boring you with a litany of what went wrong but the timing was cosmic. The computer, lovely 'puter, decided to go into slow motion. The cable connection went south. Then, oh, joy, I opened what I hoped would be great stuff only to find pictures embedded in Word.

Microsoft Word (groan, this is not the time to hold forth on Bill Gates) has this cute thing where you can pop pictures in a document. When they don't float around, it's pretty neat. But just try getting them back out so you can use them in the code for publishing online. It's possible. So is climbing Mt. Everest, losing weight, or extracting your own teeth and it's almost as much fun.

After a long, fruitless session, it was time (3 AM) to do the only sensible thing: make cookies and eat them.

Another session followed in between other minor commitments (like the day job, for example). At this rate, editing this thing will be so fattening, I'll need a 20-foot tripper just to stay afloat!

Someone sent me photos and no story. Time for creative writing 101. But this isn't a fiction letter, it's a newsletter. Hmmm. Much more of this and the cookies will be replaced with Scotch, straight up.

Lack of sleep finally took it's toll making me sick so I missed a meeting for the first time in a long time. Naturally, that was the one where I've heard that I got some kind of award. I don't know what it was but maybe we'll find out this meeting.

Before I have to join Overeaters Anonymous or AA, won't you help, please? Send me trip reports and stories. They don't have to be fancy. In fact, less is more. Plain text in an email is lovely. Scribbled notes on a paper napkin suffice. I'll do the spell-check thing and basic editing stuff. Just the facts, ma'am. Send photos in slightly less than a jillion megabytes in one message. Send me funny items. Send me sad items. Send me ideas for events and trips. Send me a new cookie recipe (the chips and oatmeal are long gone).

If you send complaints, remember that I may be on the next trip with you and I do own a water gun. Paybacks are not a pretty sight.

See you on the river...

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