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Our 40th year of paddling fun

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Program - July 14, 2004

Alicia Strogon

Vice President of Development and Outreach
Galveston Bay Foundation

Come hear what the foundation is doing to preserve the coastline. She will also bring some literature on places to paddle out and around the bays.

Come join us at 7 PM at Red Cross Bldg on 59 near Kirby.

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

sherrib57@hotmail.com

Houston Canoe Club Officers and General Meeting Minutes

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Submit change of address to Marilyn Peery.

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General Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2004

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. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The purser gave her report - the Club has money.

Fraser Baker asked for reports on trips made and discussed the upcoming trips.

A lively swap meet ensued. The Club netted \$82.15 from rope, duct tape and other supplies that had been in storage.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Olden, Recorder

Waterline Submissions

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
10222 Windsor Lane
Houston, TX 77031

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Vick's Lake -- A Popular Park on Buffalo Bayou

by Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski

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Spotts Park on Waugh Drive was the site of the former Vick's Park and the small oxbow lake called Vick's Lake.

Click on image to enlarge.

A century ago, Houston residents escaped the hectic pace and the heat of summer in the city by spending a relaxing day in the park, much as we do today. Picnicking among the shady trees along Buffalo Bayou was popular. So was canoeing the bayou and paddling on Vick's Lake. The bayou swimming hole in Vick's Park was considered to be one of the city's best.

Vick's Park was on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou between the modern Studemont Street and Waugh Drive. It was named for the family that had owned the land.

Three young men of the Vick family in their early twenties left Tennessee about 1880 and came to Texas. By 1900, the three had married, started families of their own and established themselves in the communities that were developing northwest of Houston along the Washington Road. The Vick brothers and their families lived in close proximity to each other near the modern intersection of Washington Avenue and Waugh Drive. Tobe S. Vick raised cattle on his farm lying between Washington Road and the bayou. Andrew Vick, the oldest brother at age 45, was joined by the youngest brother, B. S. Vick, as owners of rental property.

The industrial site that developed near Chaney Junction, the intersection of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad - with the Galveston, Houston and San Antonio Railroad spur - offered opportunities for employment for several hundred men. Both the Fidelity Cotton Oil Company and the Butler Brick Works were major employers. Many of the factory workers and their families lived in the scattering of neighborhoods along Washington Road.

The Vicks lived in this neighborhood and rented houses to these workers who held jobs as oil mill laborers, house carpenters, day laborers, dairy men, farmers, wood cutters and coal burners. The largely working class neighborhood was surprisingly integrated for the time. According to the 1900 census records, the homes around the Vick families were occupied by twenty black families and twenty-one white families who were evenly distributed in the block patterns of the census.

In addition to Tobe Vick's farm, Andrew Vick owned a large tract of land west of the Butler Brick Works on the GH&SA spur which included most of what would become Vick's Park. In a situation that may have been outstanding foresight or it may have been merely fortuitous, the Vicks rode the crest of the boom in housing and residential development that accompanied the growth of Houston in the two decades that spanned the turn of the century.

The Vicks Park Addition, tightly sandwiched between the Hartman Addition to the west and the Riverside Park Addition to the east, consisted of two rows of lots located along Vida Street. Named for Andrew Vick's daughter Vida, Vida Street was the main avenue of the small subdivision. It ran south from Washington Road to the edge of the high bluff overlooking the valley of Buffalo Bayou where, in 1910, the 48 year old Tobe Vick lived

on his two acre farm at 47 Vida Street with his wife Zadella and their two young children. Tobe still considered himself a cattle stockman.

Perhaps inspired by the success of his real estate ventures, Andrew Vick moved on to San Antonio to explore the opportunities there. By 1910, Andrew and his son Ivan, living with their extended families at 325 West French Place in San Antonio, describe themselves as real estate speculators.

The forty-four acres of land on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou between the modern Studemont Street and Waugh Drive became Vick's Park by 1917, a city park. Later, the park would be incorporated in the property along the bayou to the west as a part of Cleveland Park. The channelization of Buffalo Bayou in the mid-1950's removed the northward curving bend in the bayou at Waugh Drive. The oxbow that was Vicks Lake was filled and contoured during the construction of Memorial Drive and the Waugh Drive cloverleaf. Today, the former park site is the City of Houston's Spotts Park.

The Vicks Park Addition has been carved up by the widening and extension of Heights Boulevard on the south side of Washington Avenue, as well as by the extension of Yale Street south to connect with Waugh Drive along the route of the former Vida Street. Only two homes of the addition, built about 1926, remain. Lying between commercial tracts on the north and an office building to the south, these remnants of the Vicks Park Addition are soon to be lost to the rapid pace of development occurring along the Washington Avenue corridor. Tobe S. Vick's homestead is, in 2004, an office building and parking garage at 55 Waugh Drive, owned by the Parkway Investments Partners. By 1920, the Vick brothers no longer appeared in the records of Houston. Their park has been transformed under another name. Their subdivision will soon be renewed into something else. In the fading light of history, Vick Avenue, located across the bayou one block south of Allen Parkway at Rochow Street, will linger as the sole reminder of the Vick family legacy in Houston's "western" suburbs.

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October 9th & 10th Huntsville State Park Campout Plans

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We are making plans to celebrate our 40th anniversary with a family campout in Huntsville State Park.

The Club has reserved 10 campsites that will accommodate up to 80 people, if you make a reservation with the officers. There is no charge to you for camping on these sites. Motels are also available in Huntsville (6 miles north of the park). There will be activities for children as well as adults and time to renew acquaintances and make new friends.

You are welcome to camp on the HCC sites both Friday and Saturday nights. Several members will arrive early to try to reserve our sites together. We will let the Park office staff know where the HCC sites are and ask them to direct those camping with HCC to those sites. There is a Park entrance fee and a fee for more than 2 vehicles on a campsite. Please let us know how many are coming so we can plan accordingly. There is no store in the Park but canoes can be rented in the park. Be sure to bring chairs, sunscreen, hats and plenty of drinking water.

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The State of Rivers

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The latest issue of Texas (the TPWD magazine) is "The State of Rivers." Pages 14-15 have a short article on Sen. Bill 155, passed in the last session of the legislature (the last regular session, that is), regarding vehicles in rivers and the way counties can tailor the law to local situations.

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Want to learn the latest techniques in SwiftWater Rescue for paddlers? Come and join Jim Simmons and Tom Jenkins, both ACA SwiftWater Rescue Instructors, as they are offering two ACA 2-Day SwiftWater Rescue courses.

The first is for "experienced Women paddlers" on July 31 - August 1, and the second, open to all, is on August 14-15. Both courses will be on the Lower Mountain Fork River, near Broken Bow, Ok.

Each class will be limited to about 10 participants, so the student/teacher ratio will be great!

DESCRIPTION--The 2-day workshop is intended for intermediate and up whitewater paddlers in kayak, canoe, raft, or other inflatable, who are capable of performing river maneuvers in class II whitewater and beyond.

The course consists of classroom sessions, land-based drills and hands-on practice in various river skills. Participants should be in good health and physical condition, with good swimming ability because extended periods of practice time are spent in the water. Each paddler should be comfortable being in and swimming in the river current. Each workshop emphasizes strategies and proven rescue techniques for minimizing risks encountered in whitewater boating. Some of the main topics include:

1. Practice swimming drills and self-rescue, wading, throw rope management, boat based and other assists,
 2. Rescue scene organization,
 3. Techniques for entrapment and pins,
 4. Drills with the specialized rescue PFD, and
 5. Introduction to the basics of knots, anchors, haul systems and other techniques.
- Highlight of the workshop will be the rescue simulations and "putting it all together" in team scenarios.

A participant's signed agreement to the ACA Waiver/Release of Liability will be a condition of enrollment in the workshop.

Cost: \$125.00 per applicant (plus \$6.00 if not an ACA member) Camping, lodging and meals are not included.

For further details or to apply for either workshop, contact Tom Jenkins by calling 903.639.1409 or sending an email to:

paddling@att.net

Complete course description and equipment requirements will be sent upon request for an application.

From the San Marcos River Foundation

Edited by Anne Olden

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From weekly San Marcos River Foundation email - This notice was put out early in June before a San Marcos City Council meeting, urging people to attend that meeting and give their views on this proposal. I haven't seen further information on this issue.

 Anne

A major building project has been announced by the Chamber and Economic Development Council for San Marcos, but much more thought and discussion will go into this project before the Council votes on the issues involved. I've spent a lot of time researching the conference center that is being discussed, and here is what I have learned about the proposal. It is of importance to SMRF since it is being proposed for the land above Spring Lake, adjoining the Mimosa Circle neighborhood.

This issue started with a proposal by a well known international hotel builder and owner, Mr. Hammonds, first for a convention center and hotel near the outlet malls on IH 35. He likes to build big hotels near capitals of states and universities. The project later evolved into a smaller conference center and hotel, with accompanying resort community, to be located on the land above the Brown School buildings, which is above the slough that feeds Spring Lake. The views from this high knoll are the draw that changed the plans for this project, which is called Gateway to the Hill Country.

If built there, Bert Brown Road, which runs by the old golf course building off Post Road, would be the main entrance to the hotel and conference center and would of course be widened and a bridge put in over the slough. There would probably be other entrances on Lime Kiln Road, and there would be a golf course along Sink Creek, in the flood plain area that is seldom flooded now because of the two Sink Creek flood control dams. There might need to be other entrances since the city would not want a land-locked development, so Holland Street's extension, or near Bluebonnet, might be other connections, though that is not decided yet.

The Holland Street extension was not put on the city's Transportation Master Plan because of environmental concerns about that location, so we will have to see how this will impact this choice.

Residences would be built around the hotel and conference center, and on the other high points of the land that reach all the way to Elm Hill Court and Oak Ridge Drive, and also include land near Inwood, Norcrest, Lamar and Mimosa Circle. The owner of the property envisions high-end, large-lot homes that are part of the "resort", but there are not yet plans drawn. The City Council wanted public input before plans are drawn. A lot of the land is on the recharge zone, some on the transition zone. The hotel would be about 2,000 ft. from the slough, but much infrastructure would have to cross the slough. The hotel and conference center will be quite visible because of the height of the buildings, plus the fact that they are built on the top of the highest hill around the lake. But the homes might not be so visible, as the trees are so thick on the property. The owner of the land intends to keep a lot of trees, but of course the hotelier may be the one to make those decisions about the property he is building on, and the roads leading to it.

At this point, we cannot be sure of any of these plans, as they are not on paper yet, but I appreciate that Mr. Gilmore, the owner of the property is willing to show the land and discuss his concept openly with any who are interested. He has done a tree survey, and is attempting to preserve the large oaks on the land, and clumps of trees where possible, because he sees the trees as part of the value of the land.

The conference center would require considerable investment by the City, many millions of dollars, and also in the infrastructure like roads and water/wastewater lines. If it were built near the mall, that infrastructure would pretty much already be in place, saving a great deal of money. The disturbance that would occur to the slough area, and subsequent runoff into the lake, is also a factor that must be considered, when such

major infrastructure work would be done at the lake site. Major road work would have to be built very quickly in the Aquarena Springs Drive, Post Road, Uhland Road area to connect this project to the Interstate, if it were built on the Spring Lake site. A bridge over the slough at Lime Kiln Rd. would also be needed soon, and the major springs that feed the river are just above that area, so the construction of the bridge would have major environmental impacts, and thus be quite expensive.

The costs of all this must be weighed when choosing a site.

The actual hotel, which could be in the 7 to 10 story range, with perhaps 280 rooms, would be built on the high knoll above Brown Schools. The accompanying conference center, which is not yet planned but could have a capacity of seating perhaps 3000, and the parking for both structures (3000 cars?), is not drawn yet. But the Council has asked for public input to know how the citizens feel about the project at this stage. Because the plans are not drawn yet, it is hard to do an engineering assessment of the runoff expected, but it is clear that roads and parking lots can cause serious pollution problems.

The river has already suffered a lot from the University's building projects, since they do not follow local ordinances that protect the river. In Austin they have discovered that parking lot sealants which release very toxic substances in runoff can have a major impact on water quality. These are problems we will have to deal with on this Spring Lake site, if we intend to protect the river for recreational use in the future. Our development rules only do minimal protection during small rainfall events, not big rainfall events. Past building projects in town like the apts. at Holland and N. LBJ which have caused mudslides down the creek beds that feed Sink Creek, and devastating erosion from increased impervious cover, illustrate the kind of damage that could occur.

The two local outlet malls are facing a downturn expected because a similar mall is being planned for the Laredo or Brownsville area, which could take the estimated one third of the San Marcos malls' business which is from Mexico. This proposed convention or conference center, if built near the malls on IH 35, could give them a real boost. The question is whether the hotelier can be convinced, and the City Council as well, to locate the project near the mall instead of Spring Lake.

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For Sale ---- Wanted

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For Sale/Wanted

Wenonah Vagabond Solo Canoe for Sale

I have a Wenonah Vagabond solo canoe I would like to sell for \$700.00. I paid \$950.00 about 1 ½ years ago. It is Alaskan Ivory with wood trim and is in very good condition. I enjoy this boat but since we have bought a tandem I don't think it will be used much. The specs can be found on the Wenonah website. Thanks

Anna King

Sugar Land email alking@houston.rr.com

Two Kayaks for sale

Necky Alsek (14'6") rotomolded plastic, aqua green color, in excellent condition, has a rudder and rear hatch.

\$800 or best offer.

Perception Captiva (17') rotomolded plastic, royal blue color, in excellent condition, has a rudder and front and rear hatches.

\$800 or best offer.

Both kayaks are in great condition and are about two years old. They have only been used in freshwater lakes until moving to Houston last fall. We have been busy and haven't used them very much (4-5 trips a year). We will be moving across the country in June and can't afford to take them with us.

We live in Houston and store the kayaks at Clear Lake. If you would like more information, please e-mail me at naomic@wsu.edu. br>

Thule Racks

Thule Racks. I have Kayak Loop and Bike holder. Bought new in 1995. best offer.

Email: ewindus@ev1.net

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