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Meeting October 12th

Christian McNeil

REI Events Specialist

giving a presentation on Paddling in the Winter
Come join us at 7 pm at the Red Cross Building
on north side of IH 59, near Kirby. We always
welcome visitors.

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

Buffalo Bayou Paddle

by Natalie Wiest

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The lone standing tree on this otherwise channelized portion of White Oak Bayou.

The tree seems emblematic – last one standing; a trumpet creeper vine clinging to it in full bloom; knees in the water, and a mattress washed up against its base, trash all up and down it where the waters have reached.

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Natalie Wiest

Saturday, August 20, became a “free to paddle” day for me at the last minute due to a Girl Scout activity cancellation, so I decided to take advantage of the time to do another Scout deed – check out the downtown part of Buffalo Bayou that I hadn’t paddled in years, and see about its suitability for floating a bunch of Scouts later this year. If you haven’t been on the bayou in some time, or just curious on what’s going on, thought you might like to hear about it too.

First, I was looking at several potential put-in and take-out spots. Luckily or not I decided to use Eleanor Tinsley Park as our meeting and put-in spot. The good luck is the long downhill grassy slope to the bayou, an easy skid for boat and gear; but a lot more effort on the return when it’s all uphill! I had previously put the Girl Scouts in at the Woodway crossing of the Bayou; found that a little too much hard paddling for that crowd in the time allotted so I was looking for something easier and shorter.

Even with a late Thursday note on the online bulletin board, four other intrepid HCC paddlers joined me: Marilyn Kircus, Joy Kreider, Bob Price, and Louis Aulbach. Louis’ extensive knowledge of the bayou, including alternate put-ins and takeouts, and its history, was very welcome; I had re-read parts of his Buffalo Bayou writeups (see his Web site at: www.hal-pc.org/~lfa) before paddling, but as I’d also quickly been “lost” with the multitude of bridges, it was great to have the expert along for guidance!

We put in at 4 p.m. with an air temperature of 95; and took out shortly before 7 when it was 90. Plenty warm for paddling!

Streamflow was about 200 cfs at the Houston gauge

(http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tx/nwis/uv/?site_no=08074000&PARAMeter_cd=00065) and

there was an almost imperceptible (except on the return!) downstream current. Louis advised us that the bayou is tidal for several more miles upstream. We did a leisurely paddle downstream, past Sesquicentennial Park, and Allen's Landing, then upstream on White Oak Bayou, farther downstream to McKee Street bridge; and then back upstream to Tinsley Park.



The train has emerged from under the Main Street bridge, and is crossing White Oak Bayou where it is emptying into Buffalo Bayou.

Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Natalie Wiest

In the long time since I'd been on this stretch the city of Houston has made some great strides in beautifying the bayou and is in fact in the process of putting even more plantings and walking trails in. It was quite a change from the neglected dump of 15 years ago. If you were at the HCC meetings where the planning for the bayou was discussed, you can now see that taking place before your very eyes. Townhouses and condos are sprouting from the north banks of the bayou and park property – it's an urbanized bayou indeed.

Probably the most benign place to put canoes in or take them out is from the nether reaches of the Spaghetti Warehouse parking lot at 901 Commerce Street. Louis advised this will cost you \$3 a carload but seems well worth it to me, as long as you aren't conflicting with the busiest times for the restaurant, and yes, I did eat there afterward and it was delicious!

Alternate takeouts/putins I scouted included Guadalupe Plaza at the Jensen Drive bridge. Beautiful park, nice big parking lot – but would be a heck of a challenge to go up and down steps and ramps to get to the water, where you have to deal with a concrete dock that on this day was at least 2' above the level of the bayou.



Here's another Buffalo Bayou shot – Louis is facing Allen's Landing and the Houston downtown skyline from White Oak Bayou.

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

Photo by Natalie Wiest

From Tinsley Park to here is a 4 mile roundtrip paddle. Bute Park doesn't appear to have the water access worked out, at least not with civilized road or parking lot . The park under development at North York street crossing is likewise not in a usable state, or at least not what I'd want to hazard with a bunch of Scouts. I considered White Oak Bayou upstream for potential too, but the steep concrete-lined slope to the water looked way too dangerous and with no observable eddies or stopping places, I wouldn't consider this as an alternative.

I'll let my photos speak more for the area; the lone cypress in mid-stream White Oak Bayou, the train crossing the bayou, Wortham Center/Sesquicentennial Park, Allen's Landing, and the view of downtown from upstream.



Ceramic or Steel?

Here Louis, Marilyn and Joy are inspecting a water supply pipe at the remains of Houston's first electric generating venture on the bayou.

Older installations like this one often used ceramic pipes instead of metal. You'll have to ask Louis for the verdict.

[Click on image to enlarge.](#)

Photo by Natalie Wiest

In addition to Louis' web site, you should take a look at the Bayou Preservation

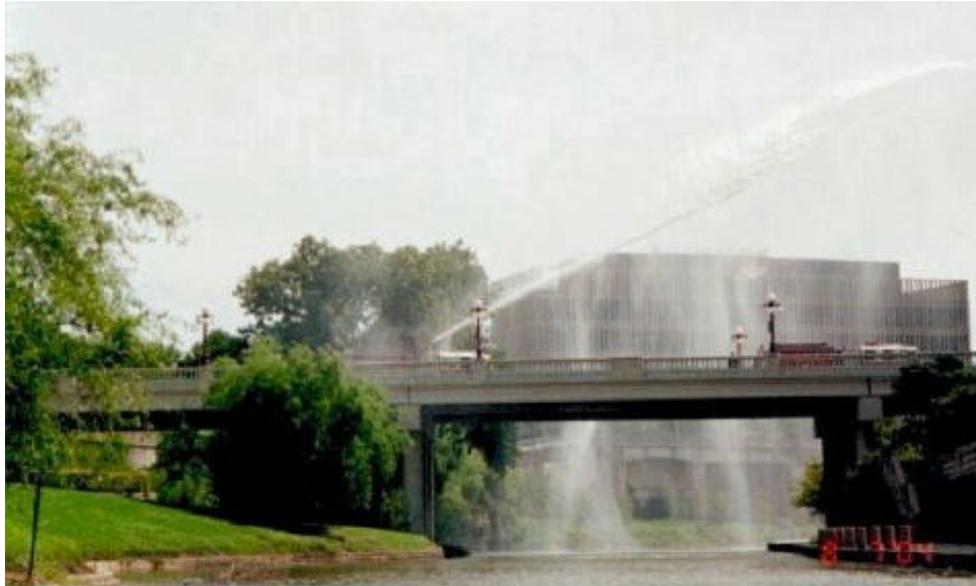
Association's site for descriptions of Buffalo Bayou paddling.
BPA's site is at: www.bayoupreservation.org and click on "Water Access", then "Buffalo Bayou". Best of all, hop in a boat and see it for yourself!

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The Texas State Fair began in Houston.
How did we let that one get away?

by Louis F. Aulbach

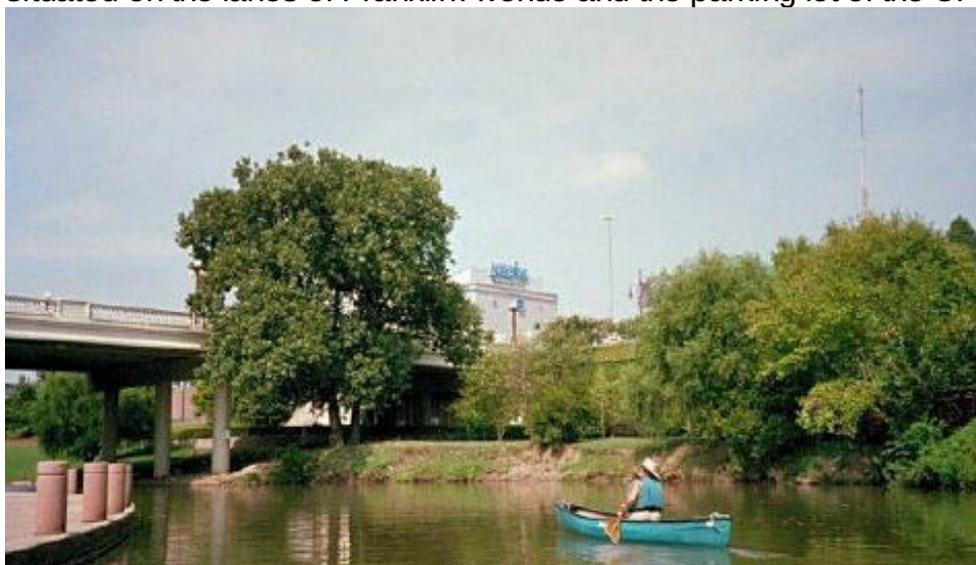
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The U S Post Office on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou sits near the original site of the Texas State Fair.

The state fair began informally as farmers and haulers who brought goods to Houston gathered in Henke's wagon yard north of the current site of Landry's Aquarium near Washington Avenue. Henry Henke provided a place for them to camp and exchange their produce for goods and supplies that they needed back on the farm. An informal fair was held on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou in the years after the Civil War until 1870 when John T. Brady organized the "state fair" of the Agricultural, Mechanical and Blood Stock Association of Texas.

The location of the state fair was on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou south of Washington Avenue. Today, the topography of the area has been changed by the channelization of the bayou between 1927 and 1929 that removed a long curve of the bayou below Preston Avenue. Washington Avenue also has been re-routed closer to the bayou and connected with Franklin Avenue. The original fair grounds would now be situated on the lanes of Franklin Avenue and the parking lot of the U. S. Post Office.



The Aquarium lies beyond the Preston Avenue bridge.

The fair association bought 1400 acres on the south side of town, in the modern Midtown area south of the Pierce Elevated, and moved the fair there in 1871. The typical prize categories at the fair of 1872 included handicrafts of tanned sheep skins, leatherwork for saddles, moss mattresses, gentleman's pantaloons, coat and

vest, as well as factory products such as jeans, osnabergs, cottonades, cotton knitting yarns, cotton tweed and sewing silk. Although several of the first place awards went to entries from around the state, many blue ribbons were awarded to local artisans and Houston area factories such as the Eureka Mills and the Houston City Mills.

In 1874, the state fair was apparently quite a large event. The City was buzzing with excitement as a large number of Indians came to the fair and camped near McGowen Street and Travis Street. The Indian wars were still active on the Texas frontier at this time, and the Battle of the Little Big Horn was still two years hence. Fortunately, it seems that their presence at the fair was mostly uneventful.

The state fair continued in Houston through 1878, but it was discontinued after that when interest in the event waned because of the economic depression of the late 1870's and a resurgence of yellow fever in 1879. A group of businessmen in Dallas organized the event in 1886, and Dallas has been the site of the State Fair ever since. Besides the wagon yard, Henry Henke was involved in a number of other mercantile ventures, one of which was the wholesale grocery business. His partnership with Mr. Camille G. Pillot came to be called Henke and Pillot. When they entered the retail grocery market, the Henke and Pillot stores were a dominant grocery chain in Houston for decades and the business survived until 1956 when it was acquired by the Kroger Corporation. The branded stores remained into the 1960's and, if you have been around Houston long enough, you may remember them.

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For Sale

Old Town Kayak Loon

Red, 17', excellent condition. Tandem with sliding seats, can be handled by one or two persons, Extra storage compartment added,. Comes with paddles, vests, and transporting racks.\$ 600.00 contact Bill at 713 827 8026

Old Town Canoe

Green, 14'7" tandem polylink3 polyethylene one year old, never been used, perfect condition

Paid \$507.69 incl. taxes. Will sell for \$407.00

Pat Farley 281-443-8293 or email patjfarley@earthlink.net

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
11527 Ainsworth Drive
Houston, TX 77099

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From the Bow:
by sherri

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Whew! What a month it's been. We recoiled in horror at Katrina, then came Rita. For those of us who love the water, facing the damage of its rage was humbling.

And we were spared. It's time for gratitude.

The Monday morning email chatter was full of umpteen-hour-drives-getting-nowhere stories. What we couldn't say in all the babble was how, once again, nature had brought us to our knees and made a mockery of all our futile attempts at control.

Our big plans for a fall festival got pushed aside when the state park was closed.

Actually, we learned later that the park re-opened but it was too late to recoup. Sorry, Cecilia, that your event was sacrificed after all your effort. Maybe next year?

Our parks took one beating from the storms and another, sheltering evacuees. Short on funds already, they have a tough struggle ahead. Write your state representative and senator to remind them that we need parks. Parks are more than fun; they rebuild weary souls.

Now the cooler weather and calmer water beckon. We go forth a bit more timidly, with renewed respect.

See you on the river?

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Raccoon Bend Work Session Invitation

by Kirk Farris

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On October the 15th (Saturday) from 8 AM to 2 PM a large group of lawyers will be working on the bayou at McKee Street. Part of what we are doing is cleaning up Raccoon Bend, the Canoe landing, along our park site. This is a sand bar and we wish to provide this as a natural take out point for water craft. Any person in the Canoe Club is welcome to come help or just survey the site for future programs. For more information, contact Kirk Farris at kfarris@ev1.net

Editor's note: Kirk Farris is an artist and environmentalist, known for his work on the McKee Street Bridge. He founded the Art & Environmental Architecture, Inc. (AEA) which is a non-profit organization dedicated to revitalizing an historic area of downtown Houston. You can learn more about his work on his website at

www.frosttownhistoricsite.org

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Please join us

The Canoe Trail Goliad Committee invites you to participate in the
3rd Annual Fall River Flotilla.

- DATE:** Saturday, November 5, 2005
- PUT-IN TIME:** 9:00 a.m. — noon
- LOCATION:** San Antonio River at HWY 59 Bridge, Goliad, TX
- DIRECTIONS:** Beginning at 9:00 a.m., unload your canoes, kayaks, jon boats, and safety gear in the staging area on the north side of the Highway 59 bridge, west of downtown Goliad on the San Antonio River. Then drive to Goliad State Park where a shuttle service will be ready to return you to your boat and gear.
- Next is the fun part! Paddle 6.5 miles of Goliad's scenic riparian corridor to Goliad State Park. Lunch will be awaiting all registered paddlers! Shuttle service will continue until noon.
- LUNCH:** Lunch will be served throughout the afternoon until the last paddler returns to the Park.
- All paddlers must supply their own boat and safety equipment.
- REGISTRATION:** To register, e-mail info@canoetrailgoliad.com by Wednesday, November 2.
- CANCELLATION:** Event and shuttle service are subject to cancellation through 8:00 a.m. on event day due to weather and/or flow conditions. In the event of inclement weather or high flows, contact (361) 645-3405 for event status.

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**Canoe Trail
Goliad**





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Canoe Trail Goliad

www.canoetrailgoliad.com

Invitation produced courtesy of the San Antonio River Authority.



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