



Houston Canoe Club
Waterline



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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 to HCC's Newsletter Editor, Cecilia Gill at whitewaterider@yahoo.com.

The Waterline is prepared by an on-line newsletter editor written by Fraser Baker, HCC's Webmaster.

Next Meeting Announcement

When: February 13, 2008
Where: Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas
Directions: First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just East of Hillcroft.
Speaker: Mary Ellen Whitworth,
Speaker Bio: Executive Director of the Bayou Preservation Association
Description: She will portray the state of Houston's Bayous.

Be sure to set this date aside on your calendar, then come out to support our speaker and club.

Last Meeting Minutes

Date: February 13, 2008

Recorder: Robert Langley

Minutes: January 9, 2008 General Meeting John Olden Presented a safety minute on cold weather paddling The guest speaker was Ben Kvanli who gave a presentation on the Olympic Outdoor Center in San Marcos. The center will be hosting the Olympic trials at Rio Vista on February 17th. There was a call for volunteers to help with the Olympic trials. Training will be February 9th. The San Marcos Spring Festival will be April 6th. Bob Arthur reported that the committee tasked with determining what should be done with the clubs assets had meet and was preparing a report. Ken Andersen reported that the committee reviewing ACA trip requirements was still in the research stage. A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve Ken McDowell's expenditures above what was budgeted for speaker's gifts. Bob Price announced that the club now has a lending library. Members can check our DVD's for one month and return them at the following meeting. Check the website for upcoming trips.

Please contact HCC's recorder, Robert Langley, if there are any omissions or corrections.

New Members

No New Members

The HCC cordially welcomes new members to our club. New members are the life blood of the HCC, so be sure to provide opportunities for all our new members to paddle by coordinating more trips.

Market Place

Items For Sale

Item: RPM Max WW Kayak
Description: Beautiful blue RPM Max WW Kayak by Dagger Very good condition / bags, sprayskirt & paddle also available
Asking Price: \$250
Contact Name: Ken Barnard
Contact Phone: 713-666-5666 (W) 979-793-3248 (H)
Contact Email: ken@ControlSolutionsInc.com

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Item: Dagger Vesper - Touring Kayak
Description: 13'10", 40 lbs, Multi-colored plastic. Good day tripper/overnighter for lakes, bays and rivers. Works well for paddlers up to about 180 pounds plus gear. Rear hatch and two small air bags. No bulk-heads. (Not a large cockpit rec boat)

Also a Nimbus Auk take-apart kayak paddle, carbon shaft and composite blades. \$100.

Asking Price: \$500
Contact Name: Bob Arthur
Contact Phone: 713-416-0017
Contact Email: rwarthur@oplink.net

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Items Wanted

Please contact the Newsletter Editor, Cecilia Gill at whitewaterider@yahoo.com to post any items that you may have for sale or desperately need.

Backwater Backwash

by
Cecilia Gill

Welcome to "Backwater Backwash", a random and incomprehensible collection of thoughts, observances and experiences in no particular order, so that it makes absolutely no sense at all.

I think for this month's Backwash I will try my hand at some poetry... Then I promise to not do that anymore, for the next few months, anyway.

I call this.....actually I don't call this anything. It has no title yet.

Enjoy?

It lives atop our SUV
And travels where we go.
And people say when they see
"I wonder what they know?"

Its longer than our SUV
And makes me park back in.
There is a possibility
That someone could crash in.

It has a place in our garage,
A place it never sees.
Instead it takes the rain's barrage
but is shaded by the trees.

It hardly ever does complain.
It never makes a sound!
But people think that I'm insane
For toting it around.

We're always ready for a trip,
We rarely have to pack,
And when the straps, they start to slip,
I tighten up the slack.

At rivers, lakes and gentle streams
We take it down to play.
And whether sun or moon light beams,
We always want to stay.

But time does come to put it back
And head for home once more,
Where it waits and waits upon its rack
Until the next fun tour.

It lives atop our SUV
It never has said, "Boo!"
I take it everywhere with me
Our big ole red canoe.

by Cecilia Gill



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SYOTR!

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Cecilia

Safety Minute

by

Normally, "Safety Minute" will run with the safety presentation given by a member that took place the month before. I ran the January "Safety Minute" with the presentation given in January because the newsletter came out late last month.

In other words, whoever is doing the "Safety Minute" presentation this upcoming meeting and their presentation will be run in NEXT month's newsletter.

Make sense?

However, to fill this in for you, I have borrowed an article from BCWC which was posted by Scott Coultas.

The Fine Nine
by David Luinstra

Every kayaker knows the bare essentials that will get him/her and their kayak on the river. But conscientious paddlers should have much more with them on every trip. Being properly prepared for the unexpected is every boater's responsibility to the group. Being prepared is an important first step in the prevention of unwanted incidents. And the very best rescue scenario comes about when the incident never happened.

Here's what I call the "Fine Nine":

The Knows - (Yourself, Your Group, River, Weather, Evacuation Routes.)
Prevention of an emergency is the best of all worlds and "The Knows" are our first line of incident prevention.



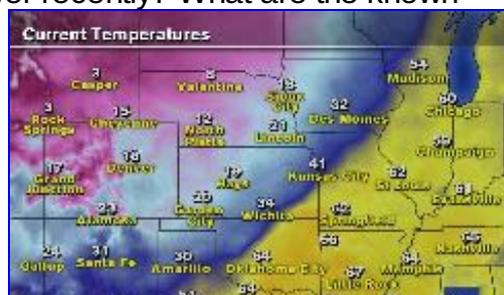
Yourself - Know your limitations. Know what weather you are prepared for and willing to paddle in, what class of river you are comfortable paddling. Know your mental and physical status. Assess whether you're rested or tired, tense and stressed or relaxed.

Your Group - Is the group size appropriate for the river? Know the abilities and limitations of the people who will be on the river with you. Who are the strong boaters? Who needs to be watched? Should they even be considering paddling this river?



The River - Know the river classification, current level, whether the level could rapidly change and the river's hazards. Depending on the river difficulty, has someone in the group paddled the river recently? What are the known hazards of this river? .

The Weather - Have you checked the local forecast? A rain can quickly change the difficulty level of a river. A cold front can raise the risk of hypothermia.



Evacuation Routes - Are



there access points where a person could be evacuated in the event of an emergency? Members of the group should know where such access points are.



Clothing - Are they appropriate for the weather and a possible weather change for the worse? This is more important as the weather becomes colder and we paddle more remote river sections. This does not mean dressing for everything going right. Dress for the unexpected. Are you dressed for a swim or to help with a rescue of your paddling buddy? Are you dressed for a rescue where you might need to stand in the river for an extended time? There are many good articles about how to dress for cold weather paddling. (Editor's Note: See Layering for Cold Water Boating)



Shoes - (If you cannot wear shoes in your boat, you need a bigger boat.) Can you get out of your boat and run 50 to 100 feet over the flotsam, jetsam and natural hazards in time to save the life of your buddy who is pinned heads down in that Class III rapid you have run many times without a problem? Do you have time to get your sandals out of the back of your boat and put them on?



requires fuel and water. Consider carrying a little extra for the quick trip that is unexpectedly extended by an emergency. This happened recently to a group of paddlers planning a 2-mile trip. They spent the night within a quarter mile of the takeout because of an unexpected rise in water level that didn't allow them to cross a tributary on foot.



Shuttle Keys - I suggest two sets of shuttle keys, one permanently attached to your PFD and one permanently attached to your shuttle vehicle. The first time your buddies are cold, wet and you have locked them out of the shuttle your popularity is going down hill fast, especially if you or one of your buddies is hypothermic. Even a \$50 chip key would seem cheap. Lost/not available shuttle keys are your fast track to becoming a campfire legend.



Rescue Equipment - Throw rope, knife, carabineers, prussic loops, webbing, swiftwater rescue training. These are basic tools for saving your buddy's life or for them saving yours in a river emergency. Are you and your paddling buddies prepared to save each other's lives?



First Aid Supplies - Medical kit, CPR mask, Wilderness First Aid Training and CPR training. While injuries on paddling trips are rare, they happen and can be minor to life threatening. Are you and your paddling buddies prepared to take care of each other?

Breakdown Paddle - (Unless you're able and to willing to hand paddle out.) I have carried my breakdown for about five years and have only needed it once. I have loaned it to boaters without paddles (including a canoeist who had lost both of his) six times and they were all really glad to borrow it so they did not need to walk out of remote rivers. (for canoeist, be sure to always carry a second



paddle for the same reason)



Lending Library

by

Bob Price

HCC is pleased to announce the addition of a DVD lending library. DVD's can be checked out at the general meeting and need to be returned at the next general meeting or mailed back to the Fleet Captain.

If you would like to contribute a video to the library, please bring it to the general meeting.

We will make a DVD Copy to add to the library and return your original with a DVD conversion.

Titles include;

Quick Start Your Canoe (ACA)

Pivot Point (Canoe)

Whitewater Bound (Canoe)

Quick Start Your Kayak (ACA)

Kayak Handling

Kayak Basics

Decide To Return (ACA – Sea Kayaking)

Rollin with Nolan (Kayak)

Go with the Flow

Texas Whitewater

Slalom Technique (Kayak)

The Citizen Racers Workshop

New Additions

LL Bean – Guide to Canoeing

■■■■■■■■■■ minded canoe paddlers. If you knew Padgett, you know that he had the award ceremony set up to achieve the maximum benefit at the recipient's expense. About the time they reached that part of their meeting, Butler stood up and "moved" that a new entry be placed into the running and so it was. The beautiful picture of Winston's loose canoe running the rapid with all of his worldly goods perched precariously on top, surrounded by 15 or so examples of fine knots was offered as evidence that this lack of knot tying skills truly was a dumb ass act and was surely deserving of the award. And so it was awarded. Of course, there always repercussions and memory serving Padgett wrote several letters along with photocopied evidence of a cut rope in defense of himself, but the fact remains, his canoe ran a Rio Grande rapid better without him than it could have with him. And that's the way it was.

Freedmanstown - A Neighborhood on the Bayou

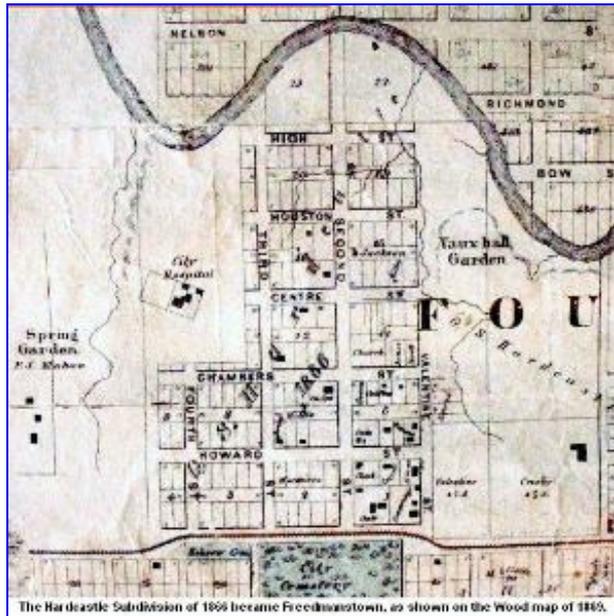
by

Louis F. Aulbach

With the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves on June 19, 1865, the City of Houston faced a crisis. How would it adjust to a peace time economy, and how would its newly freed residents adjust to a way of life they had never known? One of the most pressing issues for those who suddenly became freed from the protection and care of their former masters was where would they live.

Help came from sympathetic businessmen and influential citizens of Houston. In particular, Garrett S. Hardcastle set aside a tract of land that he owned as a residential development for these newly free persons. The Hardcastle Subdivision soon became known as Freedmanstown.

Hardcastle came to Houston in 1836 from the eastern shore of Maryland. He was a devoted Methodist and when the Shearn Methodist Church was organized in 1841, he was made a steward of the church, a position he held until his death in 1884. From the mid-1850's, Hardcastle began to acquire land along the north side of the San Felipe Road. On July 14, 1855, he purchased land from William R. Baker that lay between his own land on the west and the land of Clement R. Hobson on the east. Hardcastle acquired the twenty acres that Hobson owned on May 6, 1857, and he moved into Hobson's former home on the property.



As the Assessor and Collector of taxes for Harris County, Garrett Hardcastle and other Methodists paid the taxes for freed slaves and helped them keep their properties. By 1866, twenty-two dwellings in the subdivision were occupied by freed slaves. In time, besides Freedmanstown, four adjoining additions in western part of the 4th Ward became largely black-owned residential neighborhoods: W. R. Baker Addition, the Castanie Addition, the Senechal Addition and the Hopson Addition. The highest percent black ownership was in Freedmanstown.

In 1874, the local newspaper reflected a somewhat less than generous view of the residents of Freedmanstown. It noted that the area had to be patrolled by the police in order to preserve order and curb the vandalism. The neighborhood was second only to Vinegar Hill in notoriety, and the children ran naked while the place reeked of "idleness and crime." Nevertheless, residents such as Richard Allen, the first African-American state legislator from Houston, pursued the ideals of good schools and voting rights for blacks in spite of the rising specter of "Jim Crow" laws that would come into place by the end of the 19th century.

Although the black community in the adjacent subdivisions seemed to thrive and prosper, the Hardcastle Subdivision/Freedmanstown declined. In 1908, City officials created the fifteen block "Reservation" in the Freedmanstown district in an attempt to plan and reserve a geographic district for all of the prostitutes of the City. The Reservation was formally abolished as an entity of the City in 1915.



Freemanstown continued to lose its identity in the pre-World War II period. As one of the nation's first urban renewal projects, the San Felipe Courts (later Allen Parkway Village) were constructed in 1939-1940 on the Hardcastle Subdivision, Freedmanstown and part of the New City Cemetery of 1879 as housing for white working class families.



The final indignity for the original Freedmanstown came in 1984 when the National Register of Historic Places designation of the Freedmen's Town Historic District in the 4th Ward went to the black community that was south of West Dallas Avenue and between Genesee Street, West Gray Street and Arthur Street.

Upcoming River Trips

HCC Trips:

Date: Sunday, February 17, 2008

Title: 2008 Olympic Team Trials qualifier

Inclusive Dates: February 17

Description: We are pleased to announce that the USACK board has awarded Red River Racing Team a 2008 Olympic Team Trials Qualifier. This means that some of the best racers in the country will be coming to San Marcos' Rio Vista Park to begin their run for a spot on the Olympic Team! The top 3-4 placing finishers in each of the 4 categories (K1, K1W,C-1, and C-2) will go on to compete in the Olympic Team Trials April 26-28th in Charlotte North Carolina! We are so excited to work with the City of San Marcos to promote the sport of Canoe/Kayak racing, to be recognized by USACK as having a good racing and training facility, and for the chance to show San Marcos and the Nation what a unique and beautiful resource the San Marcos River Truly is.

The Race will be held Sunday February 17, 2008 at Rio Vista Park! There will be pro-racing, novice, and junior classes so that anyone interested can compete! Cheer on Local Red River Racing Junior athletes, and local Olympian Ben Kvanli, and his wife Michelle! Come enjoy the Olympic Spirit!!

Volunteers will be needed to work as gate judges, announcers, and for boat checking and other various jobs. We will train anyone interested. We will also be looking for local sponsors to help promote and sustain the event! If you are interested in details, volunteering or in sponsorship opportunities please contact <http://www.redriverracing.com/>.

Don't forget to mention you heard about it from HCC!

Skill Level: **Blank:** Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing.

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Date: Saturday, March 01, 2008

Title: San Marcos River Clean-up

Inclusive Dates: March 1

Description: Don't miss this annual gathering of paddlers from across Texas to clean up a favorite river. Camp free at Pecan Park or Shady Grove campgrounds and eat great free BBQ dinner on Saturday night. HCC traditionally cleans up the stretch from Pecan Park to Shady Grove. Weather & water permitting, there will be a trip on Sunday. Non-ACA members pay \$10. HCC members get double mileage for the cleanup.

Last year there were so many beer cans we filled our boats and had to leave many cans still littering the

beaches. We need all hands on deck to clean up this year!

Skill Level: **Intermediate:** Knowledge of basic whitewater safety, self-rescue and rescue such as retrieving a pinned boat. Able to capture small eddies, run Class 2 rapids confidently, but challenged by Class 3 rapids such as Cottonseed on the San Marcos at say 300-400 cfs.

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Other Club Trips:

Pelican Island Day Paddle

by

Natalie Wiest

The beauty of working on Pelican Island is that I get to look out over the water at least 5 days a week – the tough part is that I can't go out and paddle as often as I'm there, so I finally had time over the Christmas break to get out in my sea kayak. This was December 27th, and it was a lovely day to be on the water. Air temperatures got as high as 65, just right for a vigorous paddle and winds were in the tolerable range of 12-14 knots. I didn't have any takers for this trip, so paddled by myself, getting out at the cut for the Intracoastal Waterway to take some photos and stretch my legs. I made a complete circumnavigation of Little Pelican Island, north of that ICW cut. This part of the island is closed to landing a boat because it is a bird sanctuary. At this time of year you can find the white and brown pelicans and cormorants along the beach, but in the next several months it will be tightly packed with nesting birds of both pelican colors and lots of gulls and other colonial nesting species as well.

Photo 9998 South side of the Pelican Island cut for the Intracoastal waterway. What a perfect day to be on the water!



Photo 9996 Brown pelican and laughing gulls on their private sand beach.



Armand Bayou Times 4

by

Natalie Wiest

One of the best ways to finish off one year, and start the next one off right, is to do multiple paddles on a favorite body of water, and Armand Bayou was the place for



me.

Trip 1 started out in a rainshower the day after Christmas, December 26, 2007.

Rick

Brunson was my only taker for that trip that I had posted to the HCC List. It was paddling lightly as we set out from Armand Bayou park after a bit of a misstep on my part so our departure was at 10 instead of 9. We paddled upstream to where the former Exxon bridge had spanned the bayou, noting many rafts of lush, green water hyacinths floating about as it appeared the bayou was rising with the rainfall and perhaps the tide too. The bayou had some of its natural Christmas cheer in evidence: white roses, and red berries of yaupon.



. Trip 2. New Year's Eve day. Daughter Ellen and I paddled up Horsepen Bayou,



and this time the bayou was much lower than on the 26th. The exposed mudflats proved irresistible for a group of 4 roseate spoonbills, and a smallish flock of white pelicans too. All trips to the bayou featured plenty of ospreys, and they are particularly numerous at the embayment of Horsepen Bayou. We ran into Robert Stark at the takeout – like us, he just couldn't stay inside on the pretty day.

Trip 3. January 12. Rheda Boardman and her friend Caroline wanted to paddle and of course I'm an easy mark for any trip on Armand Bayou, so we met at Bay Area Park and proceeded upstream well past the former bridge site. It was a sunny but fairly windy day and I was apologizing to Caroline for no 'gator spotting, having



regaled her
with tales of
“the big one”



I've seen in this area on several occasions, what did we notice but TWO good-sized gators hauled up on the bank catching the warm rays of the sun. Ellen did her usual admirable job of keeping the nose of the boat down in the water and thankfully was game for one more trip the next day with Linda Day.



Trip 4. January 13, 2008. Linda Day is the proud new owner of a purple Dagger Rival whitewater canoe. I'm not going to say it is identical to mine, but she wanted to see what outfitting I'd done in my boat as she was about to outfit her new, used boat. They were an interesting contrast in form and existing outfitting – hers having lovely wood gunwales and thwarts; mine with wood thwarts, but metal/plastic gunwales. Her Rival is also appreciably wider than mine, which I am

attributing to the different outfitting. Surely both boats must have been popped from the same mold. Both boats turn turquoise under the purple skin when they drag over the inevitable rocks. Ellen was along for the ride too; and the three of us paddled four boats up the bayou as we didn't want to leave the floating at the dock while we were out and about.

A pair of very odd-looking black ducks were commingled with the usual geese at the park. One looked for all intents and purposes like he had two heads – but my photo reveals otherwise. He must have been fledging or something similar, sure looked weird!

So there you are with four trips on the same body of water, and no two of them alike. It's always a pleasure to paddle at Armand, I hope you've been out enjoying it too.



Lake Livingston Dam to 59 - Birder's Paradise

by

Paul Woodcock

I was invited to paddle a section of the Trinity River from lake Livingston Dam to Highway 59. This a Birders Paradise section of the river.

The weather report said that the rain would stop by midnight but at three A.M. I could still hear the rain falling. At 6 it was still raining and it was about 40 degrees. As I left Houston I was hoping it would clear up but, I was determined to paddle and there were a few members of the group who I knew felt the same way. When we met at the private camp sight to pay parking fees we found out some had canceled. As we drove toward the put in we could see the white caps on Lake Livingston. As we started unloading the boats below the damn we all were all putting on extra clothing as the windchill made it very uncomfortable.

Two bald eagles watched us from a distance as we paddled down river. One of the paddlers had borrowed a kayak and had to stop to adjust his foot rests, all the other paddlers used this time to start taking off layers of clothing as we were all getting too warm from paddling. A flock of black tipped pelicans flew over head in that straight line formation that always inspires one .

A cormorant was swimming in front of us. In Japan they are used as fishing birds. A band is placed around their neck to keep them from swallowing the fish and they retrieve it and give it to their owners. Ukai, or cormorant fishing, is a traditional method of river fishing that has been practiced in Japan for some 1300 years. This method involves fishermen using cormorant birds on leashes to catch sweetfish (such as the Ayu). Ukai is not as widespread as it once was, because it is no longer an economically viable form of fishing. Nowadays, there are only a few people authorized to perform ukai, and it is protected under the Imperial Household Agency. Positions are usually inherited and passed on within each family.

The photographs bellow were taken during my several trips to Japan in Uji, Iwakuni and Arashiyama. I was lucky enough to cover the whole event including:

Because cormorant fishing is a daily activity for nearly five months of the year, the fishing masters begin each day by selecting ten to twelve healthy cormorants for the evening's activities. When the birds are selected and the boats are prepared, the six fishing masters draw ropes to determine the order in which they will fish.



When the cormorants catch the fish, they are brought back to the boat using ropes attached to their bodies. When they are back in the boat, the fishing masters remove the fish from the birds' throats. Each bird can hold up to six fish in its throat. The birds are prevented from swallowing the fish because of a ring tied

around their necks. The cormorants, however, are still able to swallow smaller fish. Though the ropes are strong, the fishing masters are able to quickly break them if a bird's rope gets caught beneath rocks, ensuring the bird will not drown.

Each night, cormorant fishing officially begins when three fireworks are set off in the evening sky. At first, the boats come down the river, one by one, catching fish. They use a fire attached to the front of the boat to attract the fish and hit the sides of the boat to keep the birds active. As the night draws to a close, the six boats will line up side-by-side and descend the river in a process called sougarami. Those who come to view cormorant fishing are often able to view the night's catch.

We saw numerous eagles and red tailed Hawks and many more pelicans on the rest of the trip.

The take out boat ramp is one of the longest and steepest ramps in Texas so we portaged our canoes and kayaks up the ramp while others drove to the put in to get the vehicles.

We had decided to barbecue steaks at Ron's house making the perfect ending to a great trip.

the earth is my mother.
the sky is my father
the animals are my brothers
the canoe lets me get closer to them
Paul.

Silly Goose

by
Robert Langly

On a cool clear December day Pat, Susan, Debbie, Dan, Rita, Janelle, Kathy, Rob and I set out to run the familiar section of the San Marcos from Pecan Park to Sculls Crossing. This was to be my first moving water trip since my shoulder injury so I was carefully reviewing the potential hazard against the condition of my upper body. I recalled: the under cut concrete slab on river right at the lower section of Old Mill which can easily be avoided by taking the river left track, The occasional strainer at S-turn, avoided by staying to the inside of the turn, the under cut of the river left wing wall at Cotton Seed, not to bad at 300 scfh, and the occasional aggressive geese just up stream of Cotton Seed. You may not think of geese as a river hazard, but beware; these birds are loud and have a bad attitude. On numerous trips I have had them come out in the river to meet us and occasionally take a nip at a kayak and/or canoe.



Everyone geared up their boats and moved down to the river bank. I was eager to warm up and test my shoulder in the flat water adjacent to Pecan Park. After a brief warm up and a little easy playing we moved downs stream. The river level was on the low side for my taste, but the stunningly beautiful December day more than made up for the lackadaisical river conditions. The group slipped down stream occasionally stopping to play. As we neared Cotton Seed I readied myself for the most significant hazard that the river would have to offer this day: geese.



As we approached the swift water above the wing wall the geese came out to meet us. One Snow goose and one Canadian were in hot pursuit, honking loudly and taking a somewhat aggressive posture. But something was different today. Usually once we clear their territory they call off their attack and return to the river bank, however their usual behavior was replaced by something else. The geese stayed with the group as we slipped through upper Cotton Seed and picked a play spot or

the river bank to hang out. Then I understood that something quite out of the ordinary was happening today; the geese weren't defending their territory, they wanted to play. I am pretty sure it was the first time I ever saw a goose surf. The one consistent part of their behavior was they maintained an aggressive posture. Not aggressive in a threatening way, more like my cat is aggressive about getting her head scratched. Then in one of those Kodak moments the snow goose waddled upon back Debbie's kayak for a ride or perhaps more. After slipping off the back the snow returned and climbed on to the front of the boat and proceeded to nuzzle her PFD in what could only be interpreted as a plea for attention.



Debbie was kind enough to give the goose a hesitant hug before it was time to

move on down the river. This time we left the geese behind as we scampered off to meet our shuttle.

I am beginning to think that the river is just the place to get in touch with our friends in nature. First the turtle then the lama and now a goose, what's next? I expect to find myself befriending a fish or curling up with a snake in future expeditions.