

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE



December 2022/January 2023

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Questions? Want to contribute to the newsletter?

Patty Geisinger at pattyjoeg55@gmail.com

Membership:

Please consider joining or renewing for 2023! Membership should be renewed now and we have the option to make your membership Auto-Renew to make your life much easier! Did you sign up for Auto-Renew last year? Are you unsure of your membership status? Email pattyjoeg55@gmail.com and Patty will check!

The link to the website is below. Fill out the form and submit at your chosen level. You will receive 2 vinyl TCKRA stickers, a 2023 TCKRA Fridge Magnet Calendar, a free parking pass for shuttle setting only at the new Fentress Amigos Beach and at San Marcos River Retreat (the Goynes), an invite to the annual banquet and the TCKRA Newsletter before everyone else! Thank you for supporting Texas paddle sports!

[Join the TCKRA](#)

About the TCKRA

The Texas Canoe and Kayak Racing Association is a statewide club for people interested in paddle sport racing. The primary focus of the club is USCA and ICF class marathon racing, but other disciplines of paddle sports are promoted through [TCKRA Race Calendar](#)

In 1971 a group of canoe paddlers with an interest in canoe and kayak racing joined together and formed the TCRA (which later evolved into the TCKRA). During the past years the organization has grown to one of the largest canoe and kayak clubs in the state. The club is now recognized as the voice for canoe racing in Texas and its members have gained national recognition. Each year the TCKRA participates in approximately 20 canoe races and the TCKRA also organizes and sponsors the Texas State Canoe and Kayak Racing Championship Series. These championship level race events complement the other annual racing events by recognizing the top competitors in a variety of paddle sport disciplines and classes.

Whether you are a novice paddler, intermediate or seasoned racer, TCKRA is a great way to meet new people, improve your skills and get out on the river. Our membership spans the state and varies widely by age, gender, skill-level and boat type; even our working careers and professions. We also share a great deal in common-the competitive spirit and an enduring love of the water.

Your annual dues help fund events and activities throughout the year and around the state. By joining the TCKRA you enjoy the following benefits:

- 8 championship races, (Unlimited, Aluminum, USCA and ICF, Surfski)
- The Martindale Triathlon
- Spring and fall river cleanups
- Newsletter
- Annual banquet
- Paddling clinics – free to TCKRA members
- 2 TCKRA decals for every member
- A 2023 TCKRA fridge magnet calendar
- A 2023 TCKRA parking pass (for setting shuttles only) at Fentress Amigos Beach and the San Marcos River Retreat
- A TCKRA membership will give you a voice in the racing community and allow us to continue to promote canoe and kayak racing in Texas.
- Volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

Our members paddle kayaks and canoes crafted from wood, plastic, aluminum, carbon and Kevlar.

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TCKRA>

Follow us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/tckra/>

2023 TCKRA Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

Morgan Kohut (President)
Kaitlin Mynar (Vice President)
Grady Hicks (Treasurer)
Patty Geisinger (Secretary)

Board Members

Sandy Yonley
Lee Lichlyter
Clint Sutherland
Lydia Hueslkamp
Tommy Yonley
Mike Smith

Letter from the Incoming TCKRA President

Morgan Kohut

Hello my fellow paddle people! I am thrilled to be your 2023 TCKRA president and give back to the Texas paddling community. I'd like to thank Nate for his leadership the past two years and helping grow the organization to what it is today. I look forward to working with our board and volunteers to continue growing paddle sports across Texas through racing, cleanups and protecting the rivers we all enjoy.

See you on the river!
Morgan

2023 Race Calendar

(Editor's Note: Races listed are not all TCKRA events but a compilation of all races we know of)

Jan. 22nd – Town Lake Series #1, Fiesta Gardens, Austin 10am
Jan. 28th – Texas Winter 100K (TWO), Town Lake to Bastrop, 5 am/7am/Sup start-Noon
Jan. 29th – Town Lake Series #2, Fiesta Gardens, Austin 10am
Feb. 12th – Town Lake Series #3, Fiesta Gardens, Austin 10am
Feb. 18th – Texas Water Safari Seminar, 413 Main St, Martindale Texas, 10am-4pm
Feb. 19th – Town Lake Series #4, Fiesta Gardens, Austin 9am
Mar. 4th – **TCKRA Spring Break Open:** Fentress to Luling 90, 10am
Mar. 5th – **TCKRA San Marcos Cleanup**, Luling 90 Gravel Bar, 8:30am
Mar. 11th – Buffalo Bayou Regatta, Houston, 7700 San Felipe (1/4 mile west of Voss), 9am
Mar. 18th – San Antonio Race Series: Race the River: Downtown Riverwalk
Mar. 19th – MAC #1 City Park to Spencer's Campground (please pay the day use fee)
Mar. 25th – Greens Bayou Canoe and Kayak Classic, Houston
Mar. 26th – MAC #2 Staples Bridge to Luling 90
April 1st – **TCKRA ICF Marathon State Championships**, Brooks Lake, Sugarland 10am

[Upcoming Races and Events](#)

Annual TCKRA Banquet

Shannon Issendorf

We had another great banquet to end the 2022 TCKRA paddling year! A fun turn-out for a relaxed evening of BBQ, beverages and super fun awards. The conversation turned to paddling and family and what a great year it has been. We hope to see more of you next year!

Membership in the TCKRA is your invitation to the banquet at the end of each paddling year!



Race Reports

Open Water State Championship

Tommy & Sandy Yonley

2022: Great Turn out this year! Enjoyed having some extra lifeguards come join us for safety and to compete!



Sandy Yonley

2022 TCKRA Open Water Championships Results					
Saturday, October 15th					
~5.5 miles out and back (~1 mile laps) at Stewart Beach, Galveston, Texas					
Overall	Name	Time	Difference	Class	Age Group
1st	Thomas Yonley	50:11.0		Men's Surfski	40-50
2nd	Kevin Anderson	53:27.1	+3:16.1	Men's Surfski	40-50
3rd	Benjamin Beck	54:09.0	+3:58.0	Men's OC1	30-40
4th	Dain Buck	56:41.9	+6:30.9	Men's Surfski	30-40
5th	Jacquelyn Emmert	59:03.8	+8:52.8	Women's Surfski	30-40
6th	Jackson Lau	59:46.0	+9:35.0	Men's OC1	40-50
7th	Matt Murphy	1:00:55.9	+10:44.9	Men's Surfski	40-50
8th	Hau Pham	1:03:19.0	+13:08.0	Men's OC1	40-50
9th	Mark Zlomke	1:04:34.9	+14:23.9	Men's Masters 50+ OC1	50-60
10th	Nattie Blue	1:05:00.1	+14:49.1	Women's OC1	40-50
11th	Su Boone	1:05:55.0	+15:44.0	Women's Masters 50+ OC1	50-60
12th	Chuck Scheidt	1:07:43.3	+17:32.3	Men's Masters 50+ Surfski	60-70
13th	Jay Berger	1:13:16.8	+23:05.8	Men's Surfski	40-50
14th	Tina Burgos	1:13:18.5	+23:07.5	Women's Masters 50+ OC1	50-60
15th	Brad Rex	1:16:33.4	+26:22.4	Men's Masters 50+ OC1	50-60
16th	Rick Hayley	1:20:00.0	+29:49.0	Men's Masters 50+ Surfski	60-70
17th	David Horner	1:23:29.5	+33:18.5	Men's Masters 50+ Surfski	50-60
18th	Mike Gordon	1:24:15.1	+34:04.1	Men's Masters 50+ OC1	60-70
19th	Mark Devall	1:30:01.5	+39:50.5	Men's Masters 50+ SUP	50-60
20th	Douglas Chavarria	1:31:50.4	+41:39.4	Men's SUP	40-50
	Jimmy Mooney	DNF		Men's Surfski	40-50
Category Results					
SUP					
1st Men's Masters 50+ SUP		Mark Devall			
1st Men's SUP		Douglas Chavarria			
OC1					
1st Men's OC1		Benjamin Beck			
2nd Men's OC1		Jackson Lau			
3rd Men's OC1		Hau Pham			
1st Women's OC1		Nattie Blue			
1st Men's Masters 50+ OC1		Mark Zlomke			
2nd Men's Masters 50+ OC1		Brad Rex			
3rd Men's Masters 50+ OC1		Mike Gordon			
1st Women's Masters 50+ OC1		Su Boone			
2nd Women's Masters 50+ OC1		Tina Burgos			
Surfski					
1st Men's Surfski		Thomas Yonley			
2nd Men's Surfski		Kevin Anderson			
3rd Men's Surfski		Dain Buck			
4th Men's Surfski		Matt Murphy			
5th Men's Surfski		Jay Berger			
1st Men's Masters 50+ Surfski		Chuck Scheidt			
2nd Men's Masters 50+ Surfski		Rick Hayley			
3rd Men's Masters 50+ Surfski		David Horner			

Results from the 2022 Open Water championship

Photos by Sandy Yonley

Dickinson Bayou Brawl Sandy Yonley

What an absolutely beautiful day for a canoe race! Here are the results from the 2022 Dickinson Bayou Brawl. Thank you to everyone who came out to race and cheer on the kids!

Overall Rank	Time	Name	Class	Overall Rank	Time	Name	Class
1st	0:35:58.0	Thomas Yonley	Men's Double-blade Solo	1st	40:50	Thomas Yonley	Men's Double-blade Solo
2nd	0:41:43.2	Jonathan Zeek	Men's Double-blade Solo	2nd	30:40	Jonathan Zeek	Men's Double-blade Solo
3rd	0:41:44.0	Matthew Murphy	Men's Double-blade Solo	3rd	40:50	Matthew Murphy	Men's Double-blade Solo
4th	0:42:03.3	Jay Berger	Men's Double-blade Solo	4th	40:50	Jay Berger	Men's Double-blade Solo
5th	0:49:26.3	Zane Asselin	Men's SUP	1st	20:30	Zane Asselin	Men's SUP
6th	0:50:22.3	Chris Almaguer	Men's Single-blade Solo	1st	40:50	Chris Almaguer	Men's Single-blade Solo
7th	0:50:36.2	Morris Paillet	Men's SUP	2nd and 1st Masters 50+	50:60	Morris Paillet	Men's SUP
8th	0:50:38.2	David Jacobs	Men's Double-blade Solo	5th and 1st Masters 50+	70:80	David Jacobs	Men's Double-blade Solo
9th	0:50:49.5	Mark Duvall	Men's SUP	3rd and 2nd Masters 50+	50:60	Mark Duvall	Men's SUP
10th	0:54:24.3	Hoang Pham	Men's SUP	4th and 3rd Masters 50+	50:60	Hoang Pham	Men's SUP
11th	0:56:09.2	Natalie Peck and Greg Forton	Mixed Aluminum	1st	40:50	Natalie Peck and Greg Forton	Mixed Aluminum
12th	0:58:18.7	Douglas Chavarria	Men's SUP	5th	40:50	Douglas Chavarria	Men's SUP
13th	1:01:57.6	Jimmy Mooney	Men's SUP	6th and 4th Masters 50+	60:70	Jimmy Mooney	Men's SUP
14th	1:05:47.5	Grady Hicks	Men's Recreation Solo	1st and 1st Masters 50+	70:80	Grady Hicks	Men's Recreation Solo
15th	1:06:07.1	Scott Sieffert	Men's SUP	7th and 5th Masters 50+	50:60	Scott Sieffert	Men's SUP



2022 Dickinson Bayou Brawl Adult Race Results
Saturday, November 5th, Dickinson, Texas
Paul Hopkins Park to 646 and Back: ~4.72 Miles

Overall Rank	Time	Name	Class	Class Placement	Age Group
1st	0:35:58.0	Thomas Yonley	Men's Double-blade Solo	1st	40-50
2nd	0:41:43.2	Jonathan Zeek	Men's Double-blade Solo	2nd	30-40
3rd	0:41:44.0	Matthew Murphy	Men's Double-blade Solo	3rd	40-50
4th	0:42:03.3	Jay Berger	Men's Double-blade Solo	4th	40-50
5th	0:49:26.3	Zane Asselin	Men's SUP	1st	20-30
6th	0:50:22.3	Chris Almaguer	Men's Single-blade Solo	1st	40-50
7th	0:50:36.2	Morris Paillet	Men's SUP	2nd and 1st Masters 50+	50-60
8th	0:50:38.2	David Jacobs	Men's Double-blade Solo	5th and 1st Masters 50+	70-80
9th	0:50:49.5	Mark Duvall	Men's SUP	3rd and 2nd Masters 50+	50-60
10th	0:54:24.3	Hoang Pham	Men's SUP	4th and 3rd Masters 50+	50-60
11th	0:56:09.2	Natalie Peck and Greg Forton	Mixed Aluminum	1st	40-50
12th	0:58:18.7	Douglas Chavarria	Men's SUP	5th	40-50
13th	1:01:57.6	Jimmy Mooney	Men's SUP	6th and 4th Masters 50+	60-70
14th	1:05:47.5	Grady Hicks	Men's Recreation Solo	1st and 1st Masters 50+	70-80
15th	1:06:07.1	Scott Sieffert	Men's SUP	7th and 5th Masters 50+	50-60



44th Annual Martindale Triathlon Patty Geisinger & Sandy Yonley



2nd race for young Mr. Lacewell! Patty Geisinger



Sandy Yonley

The 44th Annual Martindale Tri had the perfect weather conditions to test drive our new bike course! We had SO many Triathletes join us this year! And one super-fast young man on the bike-wowzer! The mayor of Martindale gave a welcome and started the race on a cool morning but during the bike portion, the temp started rising to the perfect paddling weather! Everyone enjoyed the post-race meal provided by the Martindale River Café. We had so many volunteers and Pat & Jack Spencer were amazing hosts! Looking forward to next year, number 45, so make plans now to come participate on the last Saturday of October, 2023!



Patty Geisinger

San Marcos Dec. Solos

Jay Daniel

San Marcos Solo 2022							
Place	Paddler	Previous Best Time	Start Time	Finish Time	Split Time	Split Rank	Boat
1	Chris Bailey		10:20 AM	12:51:10	2:31:10	4	Surf
2	Jason Cade		10:30 AM	12:52:10	2:22:10	2	ICF K-1
3	Will Leeds		10:30 AM	12:52:40	2:22:40	3	SU
4	Phil Gumbert		10:15 AM	12:55:25	2:40:25	5	SU
5	Tommy Yonley		10:45 AM	12:57:19	2:12:19	1	ICF K-1
6	Richard Zambrana		10:15 AM	13:07:05	2:52:05	6	C-1
7	Mary Jo Gumbert		10:00 AM	13:07:20	3:07:20	9	SU
8	Erin Magee		10:00 AM	13:08:10	3:08:10	10	ICF K-1
9	Jesse Hazelwood		10:00 AM	13:08:10	3:08:10	10	Surf
10	Shawn Boyett		10:15 AM	13:10:55	2:55:55	7	C-1
11	Norm Thomas		9:30 AM	13:23:24	3:53:24	12	SU
12	John DuPont		10:20 AM	13:23:25	3:03:25	8	SU
13	Grady Hicks		10:00 AM	14:04:15	4:04:15	13	Rec
14	Trey Popaditch		9:30 AM	14:58:30	5:28:30	14	SU
15	Chris Gonzalez		9:30 AM	15:14:27	5:44:27	15	Rec

Thanks to Jay Daniel for putting on another great San Marcos December Solo/Tom Goynes Bday race this year. The Solo's began in a staggered start at Rio Vista Park and proceeded downstream on a very low river to Staples Dam. Thank you to everyone who came out to race!



Patty Geisinger



Sandy Yonley

Ho Ho Ho Gonzo to Hochheim

January 7th, 2023

A good amount of folks came out for the annual HoHoHo hosted by Erin Magee. She invited everyone to come out and usher in the New Year on the river! This year it was warm and the water was low. Interested in

coming out next year? Details are usually shared on the FB forums and if you worry about shuttles, the BIG RED BUS - generously run by Possum Belly (John DuPont), is usually in the run and can shuttle 11 max in the interior. Getting in on the shuttle is a great way to hear the stories of past Safari's during the 20 miles up to Gonzo, so watch for the details for 2024!

2022 Upcoming Races

Town Lake Series

Sundays Jan. 22nd, Jan. 29th, Feb 12th & 19th 2023

John Baltzell



2023 Town Lake Race Series Schedule

The Town Lake race series 2023 will once again be a handicapped series, 10km each race with different routes, though we will introduce different class emphases on particular dates. All hulls/classes are welcomed and will be raced each weekend. As a reminder the first class (race) starts at 10:00am registration opens at 9:00am. The race start and finish is located at the festival beach boat ramp on the east side of I 35. Numbers will be provided if do not have one and there is no entry fee. ***I will be adding two new categories this year. Both will be Masters (with a combined age of at least 120 years) in Pro Aluminum and Fast C2 but am still doing the math on the handicaps, so watch the FB forums for more info!

Jan. 22nd: *Solo unlimited/K1

Jan. 29th: *OC1/C1

Feb. 12th: *Tandem unlimited/K2/ C2

Feb. 19th: *Adult/Child Start at 9:00am, 10:00am Reg. Handicaps, Post race potluck.

Town Lake Handicaps (10km)

*Female SUP/Rec. Solo (anything plastic) 10:00am

*Rec. Tandem/Aluminum (First time paddler's) 10:02am

*Female C-1/OC1 10:04am

*Female Solo Unlimited (Safari style hull)/Male SUP14' 10:06am

*Female C-2/Female V8 Pro 10:08am

*Male C-1/Pro Aluminum 10:09am

*Male OC1/Fast Sea Kayak/PRS Ski 10:10am

*New to C2 Male 10:11am

*Female K1 (ICF)/Mixed C2 10:12am

*Male Solo Unlimited (Safari Style Hull) 10:16am

- *Male V8 Pro 10:18am
- *OC-2/Tandem Unlimited/Fast Male C2 10:19am
- *Male Surfski 10:20am
- *Male K1 (ICF) 10:21am
- *K2 (ICF) / Multi-man (Safari Style Hull 3-6 man) 10:22am

See you on the Water

John

TWS Safari Seminar

Saturday, February 18th, 2023, 10 a.m., 413 Main St. Martindale TX

Planning on doing the 60th Annual Texas Water Safari in 2023 for the first time? Going novice? Said yes to being a Team Captain and have no idea what you have signed on for? You will want to join other novices on February 18th from 10am-4pm for the Safari Seminar in downtown Martindale at 413 Main St, next to the Martindale River Cafe! Bring a Chair! TWS Board Members and Safari Veterans will be presenting on rules, guidelines, the river, how to prepare and more! The event will be livestreamed on the TWS Facebook page and recorded. Please visit the website for more information! <https://www.texaswatersafari.org/safari-seminar/>

TCKRA Spring Break Open

Saturday, March 4th, 2023, 10 a.m., Amigos Beach at Fentress



The TCKRA invites you to open the 2023 racing season with a 14 mile race on the San Marcos River. On March 4th, the **Spring Break Open** will start at 10:00am at Fentress Bridge and finish at Luling 90 River Trail Park. We will post driving and parking directions on our Facebook page as we get closer to the event. Race registration will be available both online and on race day. Please visit www.tckra.org to register for the race or on race day beginning at 8:30am.

All Solo and Tandem hulls are welcome so BYOB (Bring your own Boat) and we'll see you on the river! Awards will be given out to top three Female, top three Male, and top three Aluminum winners.
Race Fee's: \$20/racer

<https://www.tckra.org/event-details/tckra-spring-break-open-2>

TCKRA San Marcos River Clean Up

It's time to break out that Aluminum Canoe! Please join us for the TCKRA Spring River Clean-up on Saturday, March 4th! This year we will be focusing our efforts on the lower river of the San Marcos River between Fentress and Zedler Mill in Luling. **We'll meet at the Luling 90 gravel bar at 8:30am** to have a quick briefing before splitting up and getting on the water.

Don't let not having a boat or partner stop you from joining in on the fun, let us know ahead of time and we can team you up with someone and/or find you a boat to paddle (thanks [#texascanoesandkayaks](#)). Looking forward to seeing everyone and giving back to the river that brings all of us so much joy!

2023 MAC Spring racing schedule

Brought to you by Kaitlin Mynar and the Martindale Athletic Club, the annual MAC races are held along sections of the San Marcos River. The intention behind this series is to get folks into a racing mindset, to race how they train, to test equipment and begin their training season! It is also a lot of fun competition with friends! We have a group reservation at Palmetto for the Night Race—please contact Kaitlin for details.

Race 1: City Park to Spencer's Campground

Sunday, March 19th, 9a.m.-need more time, 10 a.m. Main start

Race 2: Staples to Luling 90

Sunday, March 26th, 9a.m.-need more time, 10 a.m. Main start

Race 3: Luling 90 to Palmetto State Park (be sure to secure a Palmetto day use pass)

Sunday, April 2nd, 9a.m.-need more time, 10 a.m. Main start

Race 4: *Mike Simmons Memorial Night Race*

Palmetto State Park to Gonzales (Pay for parking at Palmetto and gates lock so make appropriate arrangements)

Saturday April 22nd, this race involves staggered starts



Fireside Chats with Tom Goynes

Early on during the pandemic, Tom Goynes began sharing some of his Safari stories on his facebook page. With the loss of Safari that year, everyone missed out on the yearly ritual of sharing stories after the race. So with Tom's blessing, we hope to continue sharing with everyone some of his legendary Safari stories.



That's me sitting on the bottom, Ricky in the bow and Jim in the stern

I decided in 1963, at the age of 12, that I was going to race in the Texas Water Safari. One of the big hurdles I had to get over was Sunday Mass. Couldn't miss it - mortal sin. So, I started scheming how we could have a priest meet us at the Gonzales gravel bar on Sunday morning. But then, along came Pope John the 23rd and voila, you could fulfill your Sunday obligation on some other day of the week. And I think we started saying the Confiteor in English. Anyway, one big hurdle out of the way. Next big hurdle was the boat. I didn't know much about canoes in those formative years. I mean, I had paddled on the huge canoe at Six Flags with 100 of my closest friends. But somehow, I didn't really think that was what canoeing was all about. On one occasion, I had seen my neighbor, across the street, get into a car with a traditional looking canoe on top - heading off for some amazing adventure.

And I knew that somehow, someday, I was going to have to have my own canoe.

Once, while navigating Clear Creek, which is between Houston and Galveston (and which is anything but clear, by the way) in a motorboat with my dad, we passed a family in a canoe. And, once again, I was moved deeply. I had to somehow get into a canoe. But, I knew I had to do the Safari, and the only boat dad owned was a V bottom aluminum boat, so that was going to have to do. And, after all, Big Willie and Frank Brown had paddled, rowed, and sailed a V bottom boat all the way from San Marcos to Corpus. We could too. And, after all, the description of the race was that it was the world's toughest boat race. We had a boat. Next step was convincing Jim that he could catch tons of Diamond Backed Water Snakes if he went all the way from San Marcos to Freeport. (The Safari went to Corpus Christi in 1963 and 64, but then ended in Freeport in 65, 66, and 67). We somehow managed to get the boat trailer attached to the family car and headed to a reservoir on the banks of Clear Creek, where we could row around for a few hours. There wasn't a boat ramp, so we had to drag the 400 pound craft through some mud for a pretty good distance. In retrospect, there is no way we could have drug that boat around the first dam on the San Marcos River. My respect for Big Willie grew exponentially. I don't

remember how we found the canoe that we ended up buying. It seems like it was in one of those free newspapers with lots of junk advertised. It was priced at \$100 and Jim and I only had about 2/3 of that amount between the two of us. So we invited this big friend of ours, Ricky Page, to join our team. He had the rest of the money. And there was the fact that Ricky was as strong as an ox. One thing I learned, fairly early in the game, is that it pays to choose a really strong partner if you are going to race in the Texas Water Safari.

Our training runs consisted of paddling long distances on Clear Creek. We would sometimes camp along the shore, eating whatever we could catch. We usually caught hard head catfish and crabs. Once we went so far up Clear Creek that we found a logjam. A tree across the river. We figured that must be the end of the line. We couldn't imagine carrying a canoe around a fallen tree. So, we turned around and went back downstream. On one occasion we must have run up on top of a big alligator (or possibly a dolphin - something big). It lifted up our canoe, along with the three teenaged boys and all our camping gear. Not sure how high we went - it seems like ten feet at the time - and then we landed back in the water. We never laid eyes on the critter. But from that moment on I knew that rivers held amazing and mythical creatures. And that added immensely to the allure of rivers. The canoe we had purchased was a beautiful wood and canvas canoe. I am still pretty sure it was an Old Town Canoe. The guy who sold it didn't think so. But at any rate, it was a work of art and would be worth thousands of dollars today. It is so sad that it wound up in the hands of three idiots. We noticed one day that it was covered with canvas. What the heck? We thought it was fiberglass. So, off came that canvas. I learned, much later, while refurbishing a similar canoe, that there is a real art involved in hand rubbing clay into that canvas to make it smooth. It takes a lot of skill and a good bit of time. But you can rip it off in no time at all. Once the canvas was off, we ran down to a local fiberglass salesman and bought some cloth and resin. We figured it would only take an afternoon to make our craft strong and beautiful. But we soon discovered that the resin had a bad habit of dripping through the gaps in the wood planking of the canoe and forming icicles on the inside. And, at the same time that it was dripping through to form icicles, it was leaving little voids where water would later squirt through. We learned, the first time we put it in the water, what the term "leaks like a sieve" means.

So, it was back to the fiberglass salesman for more resin. The bottom line is, we eventually bought enough resin from Mr. Miles that he was able to send his kids through college. When we finally finished we had a really sturdy canoe. Lifting it was the only problem. But for that we had Ricky. Since sails were legal, we decided that we had to have one. Mind you, none of us knew anything about sailing. But that didn't stop us. I mean, none of us knew anything about paddling a canoe either (for instance, we always liked the really heavy paddles, because all one had to do was lift the paddle up and drop it into the water for a powerful stroke). So, we went to our local army navy surplus store and bought a parachute. Next we talked mom into sewing that parachute into a triangle. We found a mast (a center pole from a large army tent) and voila, a sail. This would be a good time to talk about mom. I am amazed, the more I think about it, how mom not only put up with our crazy plan to enter this boat race, but the fact of the matter is, she was very supportive of the plan. I mean think of it, three teenagers, none of whom had ever entered a race of this nature, paddling a canoe day and night through alligator infested waters, all the way from San Marcos to Freeport. In retrospect, I can't help but wonder if she was thinking about reducing the size of the family. I mean, she often mentioned the fact that I was eating them out of house and home. And then, there were Jim's snakes constantly ending up in her drawers... But surely a loving mom wouldn't entertain such thoughts. Nonetheless, she did drive us to San Marcos, and I think she even paid our entry fee. Back in those days, there was no rule prohibiting two way radio communication, so we took a Citizen's Band walkie talkie and mom had such a radio in her car. At one point, she was seen calling for Tommy, Jimmy or Ricky while sitting in the middle of the bridge over the river at Cuero. The leaders were expected at Cuero, we were back in Luling (about 100 miles upstream). We had no idea what kind of food to eat, and back in those days the race lasted for a week, so we took 40 pounds of canned food. Lots of spam, pork and beans, deviled ham and Vienna Sausages. Someone told us that freeze dried food was the ticket, so we went out and bought some dried apples. They were terrible. So, mom reconstituted them in a tasty sugary concoction that probably weighed another 40 pounds. We decided we also needed some sandwiches, so mom bought a loaf of white bread, made a bunch of sandwiches and then put them back in the bread sack to keep them dry. They got wet.

We also decided that we weren't going to drink any of that nasty river water, so we took about 5 gallons of fresh drinking water in one gallon plastic bottles. Once we added our sail and mast, our canoe probably weighed in at 300 pounds. Jim and I could barely lift the stern. Ricky had to take care of the bow. We were set. We were really excited to be at city park in San Marcos for the check in, hanging with all the great Safari heroes that I had read about. I remember getting out of the car and going straight over to a wood strip sculling rig that I thought belonged to the Bloodworth brothers from Houston (who had won the race the year before). I told the guy standing by the canoe (who happened to be Froggie Sanders, its owner) that this was the canoe that was going to win. He said, "I hope so". In fact, the winning boat that year would be the Bloodworth brothers' boat, not the boat I was admiring. Later, after we had nailed our Radar Light (a hand held spotlight that attached to a heavy battery) to the bow of our wood and fiberglass canoe, one of the Bloodworth brothers walked by, looked at our loaded craft and laughed uncontrollably.

Minutes into the race, when we went under our first low water bridge and broke the light off, I realized what he had found so amusing. We had noticed (during our many practice runs) that the canoe always turned opposite the side that the stern man was paddling on (we didn't know about little details like J strokes or maybe switching sides to steer). So, we made sure that the bowman always got to paddle on his right side (fortunately, we were all right handed). That way, he could kinda counteract the stern man who, for whatever reason, seemed to have some sort of advantage over the bowman (the guy up front). The plan was for the bowman to paddle 30 minutes on his right side, then move to the stern where he would paddle 30 minutes on his left side. The man in the middle of the canoe was to rest quietly. Then, after 30 minutes of rest, he would move to the bow, start paddling on his right side, and try to keep up with the stern man so the canoe would go straight. We thought it was an absolutely brilliant plan.

There were two big problems (well, at least for me). Since I was the youngest, at 16, I had the honor of sitting in the middle of the canoe at the start. And, since there were hundreds of spectators commenting about the fact that the kid in the middle wasn't paddling. I was soon having to paddle from the middle position of the canoe (while sitting squarely on the bottom of the canoe). It was an awkward position to say the least. And, of course, neither of my partners were willing to give up their comfortable seats. So, I was stuck in the bottom of the canoe for hours. In no time we learned that, unlike paddling on Clear Creek, a trip on the San Marcos River involved getting out of the canoe and carrying it around obstacles. There were dams. There were logjams. There were low water bridges. Plus, we learned that 1967 would be remembered as one of the worst races as far as low water conditions. There wasn't a lot of water in the river. We were constantly out of the canoe carrying it or dragging it toward Seadrift.

And then we found Cottonseed Rapids. We had never seen a rapid before and we learned that our ability to run whitewater was fairly limited. Especially with our unique method of steering a canoe. I think the bowman fell out when we hit the first rock. Then the stern man followed. And finally, the youngest member in the middle. Our canoe actually made it through the rapids, but without its crew. And while it was in one piece, it was quite

damaged. We counted 7 holes. One of them was big enough to put your hand through. Undaunted, we pulled out the fiberglass repair kit that we had purchased (on the advice of race officials) just the day before at the local auto parts store. In retrospect, I wish the officials had suggested duct tape. It would have worked a lot better.

We soon learned that what we had actually purchased was a muffler repair kit. It contained fiberglass and resin. But no catalyst (the stuff that causes the resin to heat up and harden). According to the instructions, all you have to do is soak the fiberglass in the resin and apply the mess to your leaky muffler. Then you just start driving your car and the hot muffler causes the resin to harden. Undaunted, we forged ahead with our repair job. After all, this was Texas in June. And it was midday. Surely our canoe would reach the required temperature.

Unfortunately, the canoe never quite achieved the proper temperature. But hey, we had fun anyway. We swam. We ate the meat out of the soggy sandwiches. We ate some of the sugary apples. We even got to see some of the stragglers of the race go by. It was mighty encouraging to find that we were actually faster than a couple of teams. After about three hours, the resin was actually getting tacky. So we took the empty sandwich bag and

smashed it into the sticky resin. Voila, the hole that you could stick your hand through was, at least, kind of patched.

We still had a number of smaller holes, but fortunately, we had plenty of packs of Wriggly Chewing gum. Undaunted, we chewed on. In no time we had the loaded canoe back in the water and were headed toward Martindale Dam.

There were lots of signs, on the bridges, that the race had gone by. Beer bottles and cans, mostly. People back in the mid 60's weren't thinking environmentally (and I suppose a bunch are still in that camp). We did come across one spectator who made a snide remark, "Are y'all late for this year or early for next?" We just missed mom at the second Prairie Lea Bridge. We heard the car start and saw the lights come on as we were paddling by. I'm not sure where she spent the night, but the next day she was chasing the winners down in the Cuero area, and trying to contact us by CB radio. We spent the night somewhere below Prairie Lea. We arrived at the Luling gravel bar (Hwy 90) about noon on Sunday. Almost 24 hours behind the leaders. I had been sitting in the middle of the canoe operating a bilge pump for what seemed like an eternity (our patches leaked - like a sieve). I learned a valuable lesson: that one should not wear cotton underwear if one plans to sit in bilge water for 24 hours. I had a horrible case of diaper rash. The head judge, Lawrence Hagan, didn't have a hard time convincing us that we should probably abandon our efforts and try again next year.

Once mom made it back to Luling and loaded us into the Rambler station wagon, we figured we would be on our way home. That is probably what most moms would have done. But not ours. She drove us to Cuero to watch the lead boats go by. I'll never forget the sight of Bob Narramore and Ben Nolen, paddling a Sawyer Super (an 18 1/2 foot racing canoe known as a pro boat) with single blade paddles staying just ahead of Froggie Sanders and Charlie Hall in their sculling rig. It was late afternoon on Sunday. Almost 36 hours into the race (remember, there was no water in the river), and they were paddling as if the race had just started. I was hooked. I had to win this race someday, someday. This was simply too much fun. Mom still wasn't done with the race. We stayed in a motel and then watched the leaders come through the Moody Street Bridge in downtown Victoria the next morning. The Bloodworth Brothers came through first, with a ten-minute lead. Froggie and Charlie were second. Ben and Bob had wrapped their canoe around a tree the night before. They would manage to duct tape the canoe back together and limp to the finish line. Mom drove us home after Victoria, but then drove us to the finish line in Freeport that next weekend. We might have dropped out of the race, but she didn't. In fact, she loved the race and followed it the rest of her life and was always delighted to hear about the women finishers. Even when Alzheimer's had taken most of her mind, she would always ask me: "Have they had the Safari yet? Were there any women finishers?"

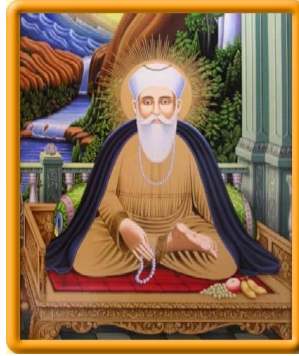
The Safari is open to anyone. You don't have to be crazy to enter. But you will probably be crazy by the finish line.

Tom



Palmetto Hotline

River Guru



Palmetto Hotline

December 2022

Greetings inferior racers!

Not much to report so I headed out of town for Christmas and got stuck at some airport for days trying to reschedule my flight back to Texas and having no success. Heard that some brave folks went HoHoHo with that guy from the Big Red Bus and it was low, slow and slower. Great training for TWS 2023.

See you on the river!

The river guru is a collective hallucination shared by the greater paddling community. The views and opinions of the Guru are not the views of the TWS or TCKRA...but we all think it's pretty darn funny.