

# NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE



December 2024/January 2025

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### **Questions? Want to contribute to the newsletter?**

Patty Geisinger at [pattyjoeg55@gmail.com](mailto:pattyjoeg55@gmail.com)

### **Membership:**

**Please consider joining or renewing for 2025! 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](mailto: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 2025 TCKRA Fridge Magnet Calendar, a free parking pass for shuttle setting at the Fentress Amigos Beach, San Marcos River Retreat (the Goynes) and Calhoun's in Tivoli, 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 2025 TCKRA fridge magnet calendar
- A 2025 TCKRA parking pass (for setting shuttles only) at Fentress Amigos Beach and the San Marcos River Retreat, Calhoun's in Tivoli
- 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/>

# 2025 TCKRA Officers and Board of Directors

## Officers

Nathan Tart (President)  
Shannon Issendorf (Vice President)  
Grady Hicks (Treasurer)  
Patty Geisinger (Secretary)

## Board Members

Sandy Yonley  
Jonathan Zeek  
Stahl Urban  
Tommy Yonley  
Holly Orr  
Kaitlin Mynar  
Clint Sutherland



## A note from the Outgoing TCKRA President

*Morgan Kohut*

The highlight of my time as president has been meeting so many members and new paddlers just getting into the sport. Wishing all our members a happy new year and plenty of river therapy in 2025.

See you on the river!

Morgan

## Letter from the Incoming TCKRA President

*Nathan Tart*

Happy New Year TCKRA members! I'm honored to be elected President for 2025 and look forward to working with not only my fellow board members but also each of you as we continue to accomplish the goals, we set out to achieve. Can't wait for the race season to crank up and see everyone out on the river. Please remember to renew your membership for 2025 if you haven't already!

Nate

## 2025 Race Calendar

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

- Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>** – Austin Town Lake Races #1, Fiesta Gardens, 10am  
**Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>** – Dtx Paddlers Panther Island series #1, 480 N. Taylor, Ft. Worth 4 miles 10am  
**Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>** – Texas Winter 100K (TWO), Town Lake to Bastrop, 5 am/7am/Sup start-Noon  
**Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>** – Austin Town Lake Races #2, Fiesta Gardens, 10am  
**Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>** – Dtx Paddlers Panther Island series #2, 480 N. Taylor, Ft. Worth 6 miles 10am  
**Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Austin Town Lake Races #3, Fiesta Gardens, 10am  
**Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>** – Texas Water Safari Seminar, 413 Main St, Martindale Texas, 10am-4pm  
**Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>** – Austin Town Lake Races #4, Fiesta Gardens, 10am  
**Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Dtx Paddlers Panther Island series #3, 480 N. Taylor, Ft. Worth 6 miles 10am  
**Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>** – **TCKRA San Marcos Cleanup**, Luling 90 Gravel Bar, 8:30am  
**Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup>** – **TCKRA Spring Break Open**: Fentress to Luling 90, 10am  
**Mar. 8<sup>th</sup>** – Dtx Paddlers Panther Island series #4, 480 N. Taylor, Ft. Worth 6 miles 10am  
**Mar. 16<sup>th</sup>** – MAC #1 City Park to Spencer's Campground (please pay the day use fee)  
**Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Buffalo Bayou Regatta, Houston, 7700 San Felipe (1/4 mile west of Voss), 9am  
**Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>** – MAC #2 Staples Bridge to Luling 90  
**April 5<sup>th</sup>** - Hokulele Solo with the **TCKRA ICF Marathon State Champs**, Houston  
**April 6<sup>th</sup>** – MAC #3 Luling 90 to Palmetto  
**April 12<sup>th</sup>** – Elm Fork Regatta, Trinity Fork Park, 9am  
**April 19<sup>th</sup>** – MAC #4: The Night Race; Palmetto to Gonzales Gravel Bar

### [Upcoming Races and Events](#)

## Race Reports

### **44<sup>th</sup> Annual Martindale Triathlon**

*Patty Geisinger*



The 46th Annual Martindale Tri on October 26<sup>th</sup> had a fun turnout of paddlers and triathletes who came out to give our unique TCKRA Triathlon a whirl! A record number of young people competed in our new Adult/Youth categories. Although the river was low, it was a truly good day for racing!

### **San Marcos Dec. Solos**

*Jay Daniel*

Thanks to all that came and participated in the Tom Goynes' Birthday Bash/San Marcos Solo on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The weather was great!



## **2025 Junior Texas Water Safari**

**(In Memorium, John “Possum Belly” DuPont)**

From the Texas Water Safari Facebook page

Today we lost iconic paddler John Dupont, aka Possum Belly. John was a true Texas legend. For decades, he was the embodiment of the Cowboy spirit—fearless, determined, and always leading by example. His remarkable smile greeted us at every race, and his courage, both on and off the water, showed us all what it meant to face challenges with true grit. John was a mentor to so many in the paddling community and touched every person who had paddled with him, alongside him, or even got a shuttle in Big Red. He was the kind of Texan whose spirit and memory will forever be a part of our river heritage—a man whose legacy is not just in the races he competed in, but in the lives he impacted. Rest in peace, John Dupont, your spirit will flow through these waters forever. Hut!

\*\*There are no results due to loss of John during the race. He will always be remembered for his smile and we will miss him as a friend and lifelong TCRA/TCKRA member.



## 2025 Upcoming Races

### Town Lake Series

Sadly, the amazing John Baltzell, who created this race series over 20 years ago, has taken a new job which begins right away in January, so he needed to take a year off to truly focus on it! Thank you to Brian Jones, Patty Geisinger and Sandy Yonley who will host a simpler version of the 4-week series on Town Lake on Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. There is no cost for participation, and please arrive by 9:30 to sign up. We will begin at 10am weather permitting! All boat types welcome!



### TWS Safari Seminar

Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025; 9am-4pm, 413 Main St. Martindale TX



Planning on doing the 62nd Annual Texas Water Safari in 2025 for the first time? Going novice? Giving it another attempt or said yes to being a Team Captain and have no idea what you have signed on for? You will want to join us on February 8th from 9am-4pm (with a break for lunch compliments of the TWS) 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 and to RSVP so they can plan on food!

<https://www.texaswatersafari.org/safari-seminar/>

## TCKRA San Marcos River Clean Up

March 1st, 2025, 8:30 AM

Luling Dam, 1243-1603 S Magnolia Ave, Luling, TX 78648, USA



It's time to break out that Aluminum Canoe! Please join us for the TCKRA Spring River Clean-up on Saturday, March 1st! This year we will be focusing our efforts on the lower river of the San Marcos River between Luling Dam and Palmetto State Park.

**We'll meet at Luling Dam (Zedler Park South--on the opposite side of Zedler Mill) at 7:30 am** to drop off boats and shuttle the vehicles down to Palmetto State Park. We will have a shuttle van to bring drivers back to Luling from Palmetto (NO Boats). The goal is to get on the water by 9am (preferably 8:30am--just depends on how fast we can get everyone shuttled). Once you are done cleaning up the Luling Dam to Palmetto stretch of river the TPW Park Rangers are planning to help us load the trash and haul to the dumpsters using the park buggies.

Free camping at Shady Grove (1 night) and San Marcos River Retreat (2 nights) is available--you will need to call either campground and let them know you are with the cleanup beforehand to reserve a spot. Showers are at Palmetto State Park, if you want to clean up immediately after your cleanup.

Please [RSVP HERE](#) so we can be sure to include you in all the relevant info and so we can be sure to have enough space in the shuttle. 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! Don't want to paddle? There are a lot of bridges that also need attention along the San Marcos River. The land crew is meeting at TBD location--we will post updates soon.

## TCKRA Spring Break Open

Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, 10 a.m., Amigos Beach at Fentress



The TCKRA is excited to open its 2025 racing season with a 14-mile race on the San Marcos River. On Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Spring Break Open will start at 10:00am at Fentress Bridge and finish at Luling 90 City Park. Entry fee is \$20 for solo and \$40 for a tandem team (or, in other words: \$20/person) Race day registration will also be available starting at 8:30am. Please register online.

Classes:

Men's Solo Unlimited

Women's Solo Unlimited

Men's Tandem Unlimited

Women's Tandem Unlimited

Mixed Tandem Unlimited

Men's Aluminum

Women's Aluminum

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 the top 3 in each class. Special recognition given to age category winners.

Please visit <https://www.tckra.org/event-details/tckra-spring-break-open-4> 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.

## **2025 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. Or join the Martindale Athletic Club FB group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/504427003069618>

**Race 1:** City Park to Spencer's Campground

Sunday, March 16th, 9a.m.-need more time, 10 a.m. Main start

**Race 2:** Staples to Luling 90

Sunday, March 29th, 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 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 19<sup>th</sup> this race involves staggered starts.



## New North Texas Racing Series – the DTX Panther Races



This is a new race series for those paddlers in the Northern parts of Texas. Thank you to Clint Sutherland and the DTX Paddlers folks for introducing this 5-6 part race series.

Location: TC Paddlesports at Panther Island, 480 N Taylor St, Fort Worth, TX 76102

Time: 10 am- 1 pm

Dates: Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, March 8<sup>th</sup>

This entire series will be focusing on everyone being able to race everyone. It does not matter what type of paddle craft you are bringing. You will be racing against the clock. At the end the "handicap" times will add to some of the faster boats and take away from some of the slower boats. So, when registering you will need to know a little about your boat = length, width and possibly weight. This will be a short 4 mile loop. The launch site is flat and easy to get in, it is sandy and easy on the boats. As far as I can tell it is skeg/ OC friendly. No frills races, as in no shirts, food or trophies. Maybe a small goodie bag if sponsors come through. \$10.00 per person.

Registration is only at Webscorer. <https://www.webscorer.com/register?raceid=372850>

## Texas River Marathon (the Prelim)

Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, 9 a.m. River Haven RV Resort, Cuero to Victoria Pumphouse



Texas River Marathon (**online registration only**) Team Captain is required. Entry fee: \$60 per paddler.

**Deadline to register is April 12th.** No entry fee for team captains. <https://www.texaswatersafari.org/register/>

35-mile race from River Haven RV Resort to the Pump House Restaurant. This is the preliminary race used to determine starting positions/line up for Texas Water Safari. It is not mandatory to race this race in order to race the Texas Water safari. The cut off at Hwy 447 Nursery Bridge is 1:00 PM (Saturday). An additional cutoff deadline is 4:00 PM (Saturday) at Victoria City Park boat ramp. The finish line cutoff is 5:00 PM (Saturday) at the Pumphouse Restaurant in Victoria City Park. If you do not finish by 5:00 PM and are entered in Safari, you will lose your starting position in the TWS. You can

still race the TWS, but your starting position will be moved back to one of the last starting rows. T- shirts are only guaranteed to teams and one team captain per team. You will register your boat number, and you are required to have this number on your boat race morning. **Team captains are required for this race and cannot be shared between teams.** You MUST register by April 12<sup>th</sup>!!!

## **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.*

This year we complete our Year of the Family in our Paddler Profiles with one of the original Parent/Child stories from the Goynes Family. Thank you Tom, Paula & Sandy for sharing!

### **Keeping Safari in the Family (or keeping the family in the Safari)**

*By Tom Goynes*



In 1995, the Goynes family had this great idea to do the Texas Water Safari together. I had acquired the John boat, a 24 foot stretched ICF C-2 that Jay Daniel had made. The concept was, if an ICF C-2 was good, a longer version of that boat would be even better. And I still believe that he was on the right track. It certainly made for a very stable canoe. And Jay and I were actually doing pretty good in that canoe, in 1993, until the rudder broke off as we were dragging our canoe down through the rocks at Ottine Dam. And I mean, the whole rudder assembly. The bracket that was attached to the stern. It even took some of the stern with it. We probably should have cut the cables and eliminated about ten pounds of useless weight. But we didn't. We carried that rudder all the way to Seadrift, just in case we ever figured out a way to reattach it. By the way, does anyone else remember the mud in the bay that year? Jay and I probably spent a couple of hours attempting to swim/crawl/squirm through that mud. We both finally figured out how to slither like reptiles, and were making pretty good time, when we both suddenly realized that neither of us were dragging the canoe with us. But I digress. I somehow ended up with the John Boat. It got that name because our boat number was (John - in little letters) 316. I was, after all, fresh out of a semester at Dallas Theological Seminary. Anyway, in 1995 we were training, as a family unit, (Paula, Sandy and I) for the Safari in that stretched ICF canoe which was now a C-3. And we were attempting to portage Staples Dam. Ever notice how many bad things happen at dams? I hate dams.

I, thinking I was still a champion Safari racer, leapt from the lower ledge of the dam onto a slime covered rock in the river. To my surprise, I flew off that slippery rock and landed on another rock breaking my fall with my rib. And, consequently, breaking my rib. Have you ever heard the crack of a rib breaking? It really eliminates the need for an x-ray. I remember finding myself standing on the bottom of the river with the wind knocked out of me and therefore, not very buoyant. So, instead of trying to swim for shore, I merely walked to shallower water. We had a team meeting and decided that it would be best to stop the training run there, at the bottom of Staples Dam rather than proceeding on to Fentress. In fact, our original plan was for me to wait below the dam to be rescued by the local fire department. But, I happened to be a volunteer fireman at the time and knew the local fire department had very little equipment to effectively lift me up that concrete wall that is on the left side of the river and immediately below the dam.

Have you ever noticed those steel rods that are kinda like a ladder going from river level to approximately ground level (the same level as the ground under the house on stilts) at Staples dam? While Paula and Sandy went to get the fire department, I decided to climb that ladder, broken rib and all. It wasn't really that hard to do. And it sure saved a lot of hassle for the local volunteers. If you can ever rescue yourself - do it. Anyway, that incident took place about 6 weeks before the race. And I really thought I would be able to pull it off. But my rib felt otherwise, so we put off the family trip for a year. So, in 1996 we began earnestly training for the Safari. Sandy was 14 years old. Her parents were in their 40's. I'm not sure if such a thing had ever been done before. There was the time that Jerry Cochran ran the race with his wife and mother. So, I guess crazier things have been done.

My Kennedy's Disease was progressing nicely by 1996. Kennedy's is a form of muscular dystrophy. It's kinda like Lou Gehrig's disease, but you get to live longer. Since stumbling (and some spectacular falls) is a part of the disease, I got the name "Stumbles". The other two names given to my partners were "Mumbles" and "Grumbles" - but I'm not sure who had which name. Doesn't really matter. Let's just say that there was a lot of mumbling and grumbling going on in the front of the canoe. The ICF C-2 has no tumblehome. In other words, in the middle of the canoe the gunnels are the widest part of the canoe - too wide for a person to paddle. Back in the 80's, when Mike Spencer (as my employee) first stretched an ICF C-2 into a C-3 we gave the boat a good bit of tumblehome. So, the person sitting in the middle could paddle easily without reaching out over the gunnels. But the John Boat, like the original C-2, had no tumblehome. So, we had to improvise. We pulled the gunnels together amidship (as best we could) and then pushed them out toward the stern. It made the widest point just a little bit astern of center, so the middle seat was bearable (barely). I was the obvious choice for stern man. Having muscular dystrophy, I didn't want my teammates to have to witness my strange strokes (and the perception that there wasn't a lot of muscle involved). Also, having a lardass in the stern meant that we could move the two lighter paddlers further into the bow where the canoe was narrower, thus making it easier to paddle. Sandy, being the lighter of the two remaining paddlers (and being a pretty strong bow person) got to paddle in the front. That left the middle seat (which happened to be the least desirable) for mumbles. It was a bit strange - it felt like there were two bowmen. And I was so far astern that I could often not hear their conversations. Just a lot of grumbling and mumbling. When I did make it out, I learned that the person in the middle really wanted to sit, at least for a little while, in the bow. And the person in the bow had no intension of switching. I felt a bit like Humphrey Bogart in "The African Queen" except that there were two Audrey Hepburns involved. I had this strange feeling that I needed a cigarette (I have only smoked one cigarette in my life, and that was in a bar in San Marcos - but I digress). I could see myself using my Camel to burn the leeches off my partners. I hope I haven't let the cat out of the bag - y'all do realize we have leeches in the river...

I realize I am probably making this particular race out to be a less than desirable event. Not at all. It did have its downers. But like any Safari the good times far outweighed the bad. I have always enjoyed training for the Safari as much or more than the actual event. The best part being the feasts that were eaten after the training run. Usually at Dairy Queen (because there are hometown Dairy Queens all the way to Seadrift - except for Seadrift). There is even a DQ in Tivoli.

Nothing like a Hunger Buster meal followed by a Blizzard after a strenuous 2 hour paddle. The water was kinda low in 1996 (that, it seems, is becoming the norm) but our family was able to make it all the way to the Gonzales Gravel bar by 4 am Sunday morning. It was one of those rare occasions where a cool front had made it through Texas on that second Saturday in June and there was a whole lot of freezing Safari contestants lying around in wet cotton or ripped tights. I will never understand why more teams don't take at least some nylon paddling pants and jackets. They really don't weigh that much. And for that matter, neither do polyester long underwear. We went one further - we actually had pile sweaters and pants under our paddling pants and jackets. We were dressed for a severe Texas winter, you know, when the temps drop down into the 40's. And I suspect that is about where the temperature was that morning at Santa Anna's Crossing. We also had the luxury of having a couple of self inflating Thermarest mattresses. And we had our spray cover to use as a blanket. While those around us whimpered and shook, we snored comfortably. It was a great night for sleeping. Then, when we woke up, we fired up our little camp stove and made hot oatmeal. Now, keep in mind that in 1996 you still had to carry everything with you from the start. But how much does a backpacking stove weigh? And what about some dry instant oatmeal? The only problem was that we were so anxious to eat the stuff that all three of us burned our tongues. But that didn't stop me from making myself some instant coffee. With my newly burnt tongue I really didn't feel like drinking anything hot, but I had to walk around and visit with all the freezing Safari folk and suggest they, too, should make themselves some hot coffee. And why, I would ask, haven't they put on their foul weather gear? It would be much warmer than wet tights. I even had the audacity to offer some coffee to the freezing race officials. They told me that that would be against Safari rules. But being a bit of an expert on those rules, I assured them that I could give them all the coffee they wanted, but they couldn't give me nuttin. They assured me that they were about to give me sumptin. So I decided it was time to get back in the canoe.

As we were packing up to go, and the fog was slowly lifting, the Team of Chokar Mopar Fumar (or something like that) paddled by, and with a big smile the bowman turned to his partner and announced: "And today is a whole new day!" And so it is with the Safari. Every morning, until you reach Seadrift, is a whole new day.

We finished the race that year late on Tuesday afternoon (actually it was pretty close to sundown) right around the 80 hour mark. So that meant we got to enjoy 4 glorious Safari mornings - just one short of the maximum. Now for those of you that are used to finishing the race sometime Sunday night, it might be hard to imagine camping at the Gonzales Gravel bar Saturday night and in Cuero Sunday night. But you need to remember that the river was really low and that we were barely moving. It was such a long day that Sandy (aka Grumbles) made an announcement somewhere between Hochheim and Cheapside. She said that this race was absolutely insane, and if we wanted to continue on, we were welcome to do so, but that she was getting out at the next bridge. I agreed that she was absolutely correct. There was no way we were going to make it to Seadrift. But what about the next bridge. Could we make it to the next bridge? How far is it to the next bridge, she asked. A couple of hours. OK, she decided, she could do that. But that would be it. And so began our plan of only making it to the next bridge - not even thinking of making it all the way to Seadrift. I recommend this plan, especially if you are a novice. Your first goal will be to make it to Staples. Then Luling HWY 90, Palmetto, Gonzales etc. Eventually it may be one bridge at a time. And don't set as your goal to just make it by the deadline for each checkpoint. Get there as soon as you can. The deadline game won't work. You will always find a stretch of river where you need a little bit of extra time. Have plenty of buffer. We actually finished with 20 hours to spare. If you have a rough bay you may use up all your buffer. Anyway, we managed to get all the way from Gonzales to Cuero Hwy 72 (we even portaged Cuero Dam - something you don't have to do anymore) before camping. I remember pulling into that bridge about midnight. We cooked ourselves some dinner, rolled out the self-inflating mattresses and settled in for a nice night's sleep. And Mumbles and Grumbles had no trouble sleeping, but the stern man had this problem with a pesky little dog that kept hanging around. In case there is someone reading this that has a kitten or puppy that they want to get rid of (or perhaps a better way of saying it, is they want their unwanted animal to go to a good home) simply take it to a bridge on the Guadalupe River anywhere from Gonzales to Tivoli on the weekend that begins the second Saturday in

June. There will be tons of spectators following this big canoe race, and many of those spectators will be kids (bored kids, who are really tired of this canoe race) who will be greatly attracted to your unwanted animal.

We later learned that there were a number of names that had been given to this cute little puppy. Freckles being one of the nicer names. Freckles had all these cute brown spots all over her face. And although Freckles had been well fed by all the kids who were following the canoes ahead of us (which included almost all the other canoes in the race) she still wanted the companionship that she had grown accustomed to from all the other Safari people. So, she kept trying to sleep right on top of my feet. Which initially annoyed me. And I kept shooing her off. But as the evening coolness crept in, I realized that she was pretty good at keeping my feet warm. So, even though she wasn't on our equipment list, I softly whistled for her to come back and get on my feet. I realize that such a thing might be considered to be against the rules, but she was, after all, available to anyone sleeping under that bridge who wanted their feet warmed. So I reasoned that it was probably a legal thing to do.

As we paddled away the next morning, we noticed that Freckles made quite a commotion and seemed unhappy with us leaving. But we were soon busy estimating how far it was to the next bridge. Our Team Captain was Peter Derrick, assisted by his wife Kathy. He is a no nonsense math teacher who likes to torment home schooled math students whose parents have trouble teaching math. They hire Mr. Derrick. Then they learn math. He is listed on the who's who of math teachers because one of his students made a perfect grade on the advanced calculus placement test. Kathy teaches canoeing. No nonsense canoeing. Many of her students have won the Safari, or at least their division. Peter is a very serious team captain. Once, while paddling solo in the race, with him as my captain, he informed me that rate of loss to the lead teams had improved by 11 percent (or something like that). I was stumped. What did this mean? I was still dropping further and further behind. But maybe not at as fast a pace? The good news is that it gave me something to think about until the next bridge. Later, in that same race I was very excited to see Derrick's on a mutual friend's deck (in between bridges). It was terribly hot. I only needed some ice to put on my head. But he refused: "Nothing for you here. You need to pick up the pace and earn your ice if you really want it." The one thing you never did while Peter was in charge was spend unnecessary time at a bridge or checkpoint. Get in, get out, get gone. There will be plenty of time to talk about the race once you get to Seadrift.

So, I was very surprised when we got to the next bridge below HWY 72. I saw Mr. Derrick standing on the bridge and told him: "Nothing for us here - we haven't earned it." But he said, "Tom, pull over I have something to tell you." This is something that he had never done and will probably never do again. What could possibly be so important that we had to stop paddling. Had he finally solved Pi? It turns out that he wanted to talk about Freckles. It seemed that the little dog had been very upset when we paddled away. I'm guessing it realized, as slow as we were moving, that its chance of being adopted were greatly diminishing - we were for sure at the back of the pack. There might not be another opportunity. So it whined and barked and followed us downstream as we pulled away. Peter wanted to know if he could go back and see if Freckles was still there, and if so, could he get her for us. We could have our very own Safari dog. As he said this I noticed that both Mumbles and Grumbles had turned around and were looking at their stern person. I considered the situation. If I said no, my race would end. Maybe not at this bridge, but certainly by the next one. If I said yes, there was always the chance that the little dog had disappeared. I went for the yes. The dog was still there. And that is how we acquired the bestest dog ever. We renamed her Safari. And called her Safi. Safi turned out to be a great addition to our bank crew. She became a much appreciated distraction while they sat in the heat waiting anxiously for us to round the corner and come into view. And then, when we finally reached the bridge, she was a distraction for Sandy - making her forget about her desire to drop out. She had something to live for again. The pain and anguish of the race diminished. I'm not really making this race sound like fun, am I?

At any rate, we struggled on. Eventually we made it to the Hwy 59 bridge below Victoria - the one with the carcasses of the alligator gar and other animals. It is a great place to camp for the night. And because of the smell of the place, it also makes it possible to get an early start the next morning - there is no reason to hang around. Breakfast is certainly not a priority. It turns out that Jack and Mark Elvig had chosen a much better campsite. They spent the night on a beautiful sandbar just upstream of that bridge. They even paddled down to the bridge to tell their team captain where they would be camping and told their crew that they should spend the night in a more comfortable (and less odorous) spot. Our bank crew got to enjoy the smell of the carcasses. Anyway, sometime that Tuesday afternoon, I remember our team lamenting the fact that we hadn't seen another team in days. Oh how we longed for some competition. And we finally got our wish. But what we had hoped for was that we could catch the boat ahead of us (position number 24) and what we got instead was the Elvig's catching us and trying to steal our 25th slot. The race was on. Somehow we made it to the take out for the portage into 3 o'clock cut ahead of them. And we were all sitting in the river doing what safari people do when they sit in the river. We had left plenty of room for the Elvig's to take out, but they insisted that we go first - we had won the race to the take out - we deserved to be the first boat on the portage trail. I had to insist that they go for the lead, because we were busy. Lead canoes have no idea of the politeness that goes on at the back of the pack. Once we did get out of the river and started dragging our John Boat around the jam, we found the Elvig's standing, holding a camera, with a perplexed look on their faces. As I recall, they only had one photo left on their camera, and they realized that they had not managed to get a photo of themselves. Would there be any way we could take a photo of them? We briefly discussed Safari rules and couldn't remember anything that pertained to one team taking a picture of another team with said team's camera. So the picture was taken. Once again, the top ten teams won't understand how such things can be going on in the back of the pack...

The Elvig's would have taken us down for sure, but they had this family tradition of eating Beef Stroganoff at Tivoli Bridge (for the strength to cross the bay) so, while they were getting out their camp stove, we made our move. As we were going under the Wooden Bridge (it has since been replaced by an ugly concrete structure - but at that time it was an amazing wooden artifact) I mentioned to Sandy that this was our last bridge. Should we consider getting out? She assured me that we were gonna make it to Seadrift after all, and in 25th place, God willing. The bay wasn't so bad. We ran a straight line past Foster Point and then Grassy Point and made the left turn toward the pavilion. Sandy was pretty excited. She started waving at the crowd way too early. And, in fact, if you finish just before sundown on Tuesday evening, there really isn't much of a crowd left. She even had a little bottle of perfume that she had carried all the way down the river, which she applied, so she would be prepared for her fans. Once we arrived at the finish line, there were a few folks still there to greet us. I think Ron Henk might have been the judge who welcomed us (or, he might have just had that air of authority about him). I told him that I expected a bit of a refund from our entry fee. We had paid for 100 hours but only used 80. He said we were welcome to paddle around in the bay for 20 hours if we wanted. I decided that I would forgo the refund. The Elvig's came in about an hour behind us. Another team who loved to keep Safari in the family. It just happened to be Paula and my 25th Anniversary that year, so 25th place seemed appropriate.

Happy Anniversary, Sweetie.



*The 1996 TWS Perspective from Mumbles and Grumbles:*

**Paula Goynes (aka Mumbles):**

This was my last Safari. I had raced with Tom twice in 1979 and 1984, each time wondering as I was sitting at the starting line, what in the world am I thinking?, but we finished both races in 5th place. So finishing in 25th place was a whole different feeling. It was very memorable for sure, and I would do it all over again if I had the chance. The Safari is always a brutal experience, with the heat and humidity, not to mention the mosquitoes and biting flies, plus the river that year was low. This was in the old days when you had to carry all your provisions with you. The only meal I remember was the HOT oatmeal and hot cocoa Sunday morning on the Gonzales gravel bar. The little backpacking stove we took paid off. We also took foul weather gear because you just never know. It was a very good thing too, as it dipped down into the fifty's that Saturday night. We stopped all three nights to sleep a little which Sandy and I were able to do, but being a "racer", I'm not sure Tom did though. It's the hardest thing you will ever do but it's a very special feeling to finish with your child. This of course was not Tom and Sandy's last race together. They went on to finish four more Safari's.

**Sandy Goynes Yonley (aka Grumbles):**

My Dad discovered the Texas Water Safari as a 16-year-old back in the '60s thanks to an article in the Houston Chronicle. I grew up with the race being a permanent part of our family calendar. He's not only won the race 7 times, but he was also the race director for the TWS for a number of years. I grew up on the river and I think that I knew racing the Safari was a foregone conclusion. However, when it came time to buckle down and get in a boat, I recall that my teenage self needed some "do the race or no TV for the summer" motivation (and X-men was a strong motivator).

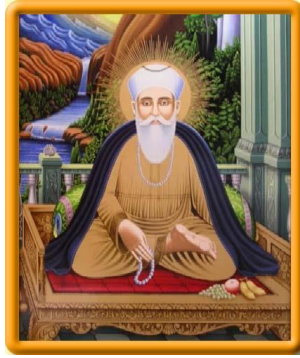
As Dad mentions, our first attempt ended prematurely when he inadvertently dove off Staples Dam during a training run and cracked a few ribs. I think not doing the race at 13 was actually a good thing because, even after an additional year of maturing, doing the race at 14 was a challenge (for Dad especially, since he had to do a lot of solo paddling). My nickname that year was "Grumbles". Fortunately, we adopted a puppy halfway through the race. Puppies plus X-men equaled me staying in the boat to the finish line. Despite the fairly difficult first year, Dad asked me if I wanted to do the race again two years later (just me and him this time—Mom had had enough of the terrible middle seat in the 3-man); which led to me getting bit by the Safari bug and racing tandem with him 4 times. During our 5 Safari's together, he taught me all he knew about racing, boat rigging, you name it.

Those were my favorite Safari's out of the 11 that I have done. He certainly didn't coddle me (he refused to let us pull over even for the most basic of needs...although he did let me wear silly hats and take a disposable camera—one of my favorite memories was paddling into Cottonseed during the race and taking a picture of the spectators while Dad paddled us through the rapid, pre-planned of course). He taught me to be tough and press through when you think you can't continue with another stroke. But he also taught me the importance of good sportsmanship and finding the joy of being in a boat. While my memory is a little fuzzy from the races, and the moments aren't distinguishable by year, if you ever get the chance to race with your children: it might be the most impactful thing you'll ever do for them as a parent.



# Palmetto Hotline

*River Guru*



## Palmetto Hotline

In keeping with our ongoing effort to pull together archival and ancient information about the Texas Paddling community, we found this rather hilarious Palmetto Hotline submission from the River Guru of 2002. So many names remain known so it is our hope that this will be an entertainment for everyone! Thank you to Lee Diviney and Jay Daniels for the materials!

### **PALMETTO HOTLINE, August 2003**

*This is the annual post-race issue of the Hotline, written in the days immediately following the Safari.*

*Please excuse if the Hotline is more incoherent than usual.*

—Hotline Writer (River Guru or RG)

Are the Safari's getting weirder or is it just me? As everyone knows, this year the Legend of Nekkid Man 2002 was born. Less well advertised were the Welsh GPS meanderings, the Lovebirds missing in action, and two paddlers overnight in the Gonzales Emergency Room/Large Animal Vet Clinic. There are lots of stories to tell but stick with the Hotline if you want the facts. The River Guru heard lots of crawfishin' from the above-mentioned teams, so it looks like history is already being re-written.

#### **RANDOM THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS**

- Not content to paddle on the wrong side of the river, now the **British** have taken to paddling the wrong direction. Blimey!!!
- Note to **Topless Gals of Stairtown**. We appreciate your support, but a little jog now and then would do wonders. And if you could move down river to a well-lit portion of the Hochheim run, that would "lift" the fellows "sagging" spirits. Anyone arriving there in daylight doesn't deserve the help anyway.
- How many times are you paddlers going to get sucked into the sweepers between Cuero and Nursery? Heard that the **Smart's** and several novice and alum teams just couldn't keep out of the trees. The sweepers have been there for years and standards and aluminums are drawn to them like magnets.
- Team **Devodog**: RG's advice is to borrow **Julie and Colin's** GPS for your next bay crossing. Heard they are practically giving the darn thing away.

## SCENES THE RG WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SEEN.

1. **John Bugge, John DuPont** and **Ted Slaughter** lying in the bottom of their boats while whining about their aching backs.
2. **Tommy Y** explaining himself to **Sandy G** as to why he was staring at the Stairtown Chorus Line with his mouth gaping open. Next time he'll take the RG's advice and paddle stern.
3. Overheard the conversation of **Laura** of **Team Zoom Zoom** as she pegged out her Gloat-O-Meter talking with **John S.** Team ZZ certainly shot holes in the RG prognostications made in the last Hotline.
4. The look on **Sammy Prochaska's** face as **the Cowboys** tried "chumming" into his boat.
5. Been in the Gonzales Hospital as they hauled out the carcasses of two local drunks sleeping it off and replaced them with the carcasses of **Ken Thigpen** and **Jeff Glockenhiemer**. Heard they also got to share the same IV bag since Gonzo hadn't ever had two real patients in both of their beds before.
6. **K. Keiffer's** look of relief as Nekkid Man 2002 erased all memory of his cheap imitation of Nekkid Man of the 1990s.
7. **SheaDog** giving the Kleenex Speech Traveling Trophy to **Don Zeek** after the banquet.
8. **Norm Thomas'** heart-to-heart talk with the **Big Guy Upstairs**. Norm really showed Him who's boss.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

The River Guru overheard lots of conversations between team members this year. Test your knowledge of the various teams. Answer key is at the bottom

1. Bow: "Look, give me one good reason why I should give up sky diving." Stern: "Thud..."  
Bow: "You mean 'thud... ouch!' or just 'thud'?"  
A) Baker Boys                      B) Ollie's Pride                      C) Slaughter Boat
2. Stern: "You're not playing solitaire again are you, Dad?" Bow: "No, it's a hallucination." Stern: "Oh, ok. Put the 8 on the 9."  
A) The Mendenhall's              B) Mynar's (Logan & Joe)              C) The Elvig's
3. Bow: "You know that boat dock we just passed?" Stern: "Yeah, what about it?"  
Bow: "The repairman hammering on the boards called me a paranoid little weirdo... in Morse code!!"  
A) Steppe/Bain                      B) Devo/Sheepdog                      C) Gib/Tim Hezel
4. Stern: "What is the difference between apathy and ignorance?" Bow: "I don't know and I don't care."

A) Kaki/Jackie                      B) Grady/Jerry B.                      C) The Nelson's

5. Middle Seat: "I'd rather drink a pint of what's in the bottom of this boat than listen to your singing."

A) Cowboy's                      B) Binion Boat                      C) Grumpy Old Men

6. Middle Seat: "After that last portage, I don't think anyone will confuse us with a Mensa meeting."

A) The Mynars                      B) Deviney & Co.                      C) Jerry's Kids

7. 4<sup>th</sup> Seat: "Hey guys. I just want to tell you how much I love you and love paddling with you." 2<sup>nd</sup> Seat: "Shut up, man, you're startin' to freak me out."

A) The Mynar's (Dave)                      B) Binion Boat (Johnny)                      C) Cowboy's (Liam)

8. Husband: "After all these years, I'm still getting a tingling feeling being with you here." Wife: "Don't get emotional with me. It's just the battery pack that shorted out."

A) The Derrick's                      B) The Smart's                      C) The Gumbert's

**Answers:** 1. (C) 2. (B) 3. (C) 4. (B) 5. (A) 6. (C) 7. (B) 8. (All of the above)

**Scoring:** Give yourself 5 points for each correct answer. For incorrect answers, give yourself negative 2 points and dip your rump in a bottle of Vaseline. Tally up your score to determine your Safari ranking.

**Less than 10:** Rank novice. Spend more time at Herbert's eating and drinking with the safari paddlers in order to improve your score.

**11 to 25:** Experienced paddler. You've probably woken up from the dream of "They started the race and I can't find my boat" several times already. For **Sam Felts**, it was deja vue, and it was for real this year.

**25 to 40:** Safari veteran. You've got more money invested in canoes than in your house and the smell of contact cement and epoxy resin are aphrodisiacs to you. Get a life!

**Over 40:** Typical safari paddler. You take this race way too seriously. You also flunked math.

### **REPORTER'S INTERVIEW**

*Some weeks ago, the intrepid RG grabbed his trusty reporter's hat and slogged through the primeval swamp to speak with the legendary "Wild Man of Tivoli". After several hours of bush whacking and several understandably mistaken attempts to interview naked, babbling locals, the WMoT was found, naked as a Stairtown tuber, reading the February issue of the TCRA newsletter, which had just arrived. A local fisherman-versed in "Nekkidman-ese", acted as my interpreter.*

**RG:** So, how does it feel to get this close to the finish and not make it?

**WMoT:** Snarrrl, grr grr grrrrrr growwwwl!

**Interpreter:** *Well, I'm disappointed of course, but I think I've learned from the experience.*

**RG:** Learned?

**WMoT:** Hooooowl, Snap, arf arf, mmmoooooooo.

**Int:** *Well next year I intend to start the race naked and add cloths as I continue down the river. The chiggers were merciless, I tell you! Um, could you pass me that barbecued Gar snout? I'm positively famished!*

**RG:** I guess you're in a low emotional place right now... **WMoT:** Snort? **Int:** What?

**RG:** I guess you're upset?

**WMoT:** Rooar, snort snarl burrrrrP.

**Int:** *Oh Yes. I'd always heard there was comradery back in the pack. You now what I say to that? Ha!... Ha. Ha! I had no sooner hung some wash out to dry than some boat filled with **young hooligans** took my shirt and left me an empty cheetos bag. Then they paddled off singing "Muskrat Love". The young boy was doing the chirping parts- Kids these days, sickening! Boy, I could sure go for a little frog stew. I make it myself you know...*

**RG:** I'm starting to see how you might have wandered off track in the Safari.

**WMoT:** Yap yap yap yap! **Int:** *You talk too much.*

**WMoT:** Rrr, rr, yap yap yap yap!

**Int:** *(Oh, Sorry) You're right. This is one long race, and I eventually became convinced that we were lost and headed in the wrong direction, then when I saw **Team UK** coming upstream something snapped, it was the elastic band on my underwear. Well I was so uncomfortable that I stripped naked and ran through the woods. I didn't actually start screaming until I hit the first palmetto bush- Man, they're pointy!*

**RG:** One last question, didn't you get rescued?

**WMoT:** Bleeet, snarl Snapsnap, Hooooooooooooowl!

**Int:** *If you call being put in a boat taken downstream to family and then to a hospital "Rescued", sure. But I realized that the bank of the scenic alligator lake was the place for me. I mean the birds, the trees...*

**RG:** Uh, I think this is the San Antonio River. We're really just up from the saltwater barrier here.

**WMoT:** ARRRRGH, SNORT SNOOOORRRROORT GRARRRRR!

*With that my trusty interpreter and I fled for our lives and trudged wearily but happily back to civilization.*

*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.*