

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE



Special Edition June 2025

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Questions? Want to contribute to the newsletter?

Patty Geisinger at pattyjoeg55@gmail.com

Membership:

Are you unsure of your membership status? Email pattyjoeg55@gmail.com and Patty will check! Many races remain in the 2025 racing season, and we would love to send you the 2024 Fridge magnet and parking pass!

The link to the website is below. Fill out the form and submit at your chosen level. You will receive a 2025 TCKRA Fridge Magnet Calendar, a free parking pass for shuttle setting only at the Fentress Amigos Beach, San Marcos River Retreat (the Goynes) and Papa & Maga's Calhoun's RV Retreat 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
- 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
Stahl Urban
Clint Sutherland
Jonathan Zeek
Tommy Yonley
Holly Orr
Kaitlin Mynar

2025 Race Calendar

(Editor's Note: We will continue to update the 2024 Race Calendar as soon as information on the races becomes available.)

June 13th – 62nd Annual Texas Water Safari, Meadows Center, San Marcos to Seadrift, 9am

Aug. 2nd – Neches River Wilderness Race, Palestine Tx, 8am

Aug. 23rd – TCKRA Aluminum State Championship, 969 to Bastrop, 8:30am

Aug 30-31st – Junction Up and Back Race, Junction Tx, 8am

Sept. 6th – Trinity River Challenge, Carrollton, 9am

Sept. 6th – SASPAMCO, San Antonio, 10am

Sept. 13th – Colorado River 100, Fisherman's Park, Bastrop, (TBD)

Sept. 20th – Junior Texas Water Safari, City Park, San Marcos, 9am

Sept. 21st – TCKRA USCA State Championships, tbd

Sept. 27th – Rotary Regatta, Friendswood, 8am

Sept. 28th – TCKRA Open Water State Championships, Galveston, 12noon

Oct. 11th – USCA Stock Aluminum National Championships, Bastrop, 8:30am

Letter from the TCKRA President

Nate Tart

With the 2025 racing season in full swing, we have seen some great competition on the river so far. With that said, I think we are all excited to see our "Super Bowl" of racing kick off here in just a couple weeks, The Texas Water Safari! If you aren't planning on racing, come out and spectate on Day 1. It's a great experience and you will see a lot of TCKRA members racing down the river. To those members racing in the 61st Texas Water Safari we will be pulling for you. Have a great race, stay hydrated, stay cool, and see you at the finish line!

Don't forget there is still a lot of racing left on the calendar after the TWS. These are great events that offer shorter distances and epic battles. I hope everyone has a great summer and see you on the river soon!

Nathan Tart, President TCKRA

Paddler Profile

In each edition of the newsletter, we will feature an interesting and accomplished member of the Texas Paddling Community. If you would like to nominate someone to be featured in the Paddler Profile, please email their name(s) and contact info to pattyjoeq55@gmail.com

John Mark Harras

What is your full name?

John Mark- John Mark Harras



Where are you from originally and where do you live now?

John Mark – I was born in Tyler and live in the greater Woodlands area now -but have lived always in Texas!

How and why did you get started in paddling?

John Mark – My Dad, Martin, was a paddler since he was a young man, (his canoe in his teens was a wood strip and canvas named “Aqua Regina” -Queen of the Water- he kept it on Belle Isle in Detroit). So I have been in canoes since I was born.



How did you get started racing?

John Mark – The Safari! My Dad had a co-worker in Victoria who was in a double-truck photo at Cottonseed in Texas Monthly back in the Late 70’s /early 80’s. It was the wildest section of river I’d ever seen, from then it was only a matter of time.

Where do you paddle most frequently?

John Mark - The San Marcos River!



What is your favorite race?

John Mark – The Safari! Nothing like it, is there?



Other than the Safari, pretty close call between the Liffey Descent in Ireland or the Devizes to Westminster (DW) in England. In the Liffey, they hold back the river and then flood the course. There’s about 1,200 boats so they start in waves, paddle about ¼ mile then go over the weir, sort of like the prelim start except instead of a pour over right, it goes straight down! I did the

Liffey in 1993 with Robert Stricker and again in 1998 with Bill where we finished 4th in Canadian class.



For the Devises to Westminster, you have to guess when you'll get 108 miles down a canal (the Avon), then down the canal with a little flow from the Kennet River and then finally the Thames. You have to hit the tidal Thames in a narrow window of time. Wade and I finished 2nd in Canadian Class in 24 hours and 35 seconds. We also won 1st International in the Senior Class.

| 2008 Devises Westminster - Senior Class | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------|-----------|---------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|--|
| Position | Name | Club | Gender | Boat Type | Civilian / Military | Age Category | SubClass | Race Time | |
| 1 | Olle Harding & Richard Hendron | Longridge & Richmond | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 17:32:30 | |
| 2 | Dave Pedlar & Stuart West | Worcester | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 17:33:15 | |
| 3 | John Edyvian & Tristram Turner | Fleury River & Bristol | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 17:37:26 | |
| 4 | Philip Pearce & Timothy Payne | Southampton University & Bristol University | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | University | 18:21:25 | |
| 5 | Henry Hendron & Graham Stonehouse | Richmond | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 18:45:57 | |
| 6 | Simon Hubery & Barry Buxton | Royal Engineers | Male | Kayak | Army | Senior | | 19:15:49 | |
| 7 | Kevin Littlehales & Nigel Uxman | Bristol & Bradford On Avon | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 19:33:15 | |
| 8 | Paul Baker & Andy Nicholson | Royal Marines & Wey | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 19:36:14 | |
| 9 | Nanette Kelly & Piran Shelley | Richmond | Female | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 19:44:03 | |
| 10 | Dave Ethel & Richard Kay | Royal Marines | Male | Kayak | Navy | Veteran | | 19:49:58 | |
| 11 | Graham Forrester & Michael Purchas | Bradford On Avon | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Veteran | | 21:18:13 | |
| 12 | Tom McMullin & Guy Mellor | Royal Engineers | Male | Kayak | Army | Senior | | 21:22:00 | |
| 13 | Peter Hutchinson & Robert Stansby | Richmond | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 21:38:00 | |
| 14 | Kath Birch & Earl Hewett | Wokingham | Female | Kayak | Civilian | Veteran | | 22:16:45 | |
| 15 | Gert Van Deventer & Marina Van Deventer | Richmond | Female | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 22:18:13 | |
| 16 | Alison Auld & Bethan Davies | Wey | Female | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 22:32:55 | |
| 17 | Edward Cuy & Adam Williams | Faring | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 22:39:38 | |
| 18 | Andrew Rowall & John Dobbs | Faring | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Veteran | | 22:46:24 | |
| 19 | John Kavanagh & Nicholas Price | Macclesfield & District | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Veteran | | 22:47:51 | |
| 20 | Cliver North & Robin North | Richmond | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 22:50:18 | |
| 21 | Rupert Dash & Iain Hutchinson | Royal Engineers | Male | Kayak | Army | Veteran | | 22:52:09 | |
| 22 | Martin Brown & Tye Valley | Royal Engineers | Male | Kayak | Army | Senior | | 23:23:53 | |
| 23 | Kevin Sans & Andy Stammers | Metropolitan Police | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Veteran | Police | 23:27:37 | |
| 24 | Matt Smith & Toby Mitchell | Royal Engineers | Male | Kayak | Army | Senior | | 23:27:48 | |
| 25 | Gary Harper & Seb Roby | Banbury & District | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 23:29:45 | |
| 26 | Kieran Abbott & Michael Newbery | Woking | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 23:40:30 | |
| 27 | Tim Holland & Jon Horne | Independent | Male | Canadian | Civilian | Veteran | | 23:40:40 | |
| 28 | Antonio Clementi & Michael Dobson | Woking | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 23:59:36 | |
| 29 | Jason Brown & John Mark Harris | Texas Canoe Racing Assoc. | Male | Canadian | Civilian | Senior | Oversize | 24:00:35 | |
| 30 | Roger Jagger & Greg Manning | Integrate Paddling | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Century | | 24:11:44 | |
| 31 | Klaudia Gajucka & Julian Grunstein | Tower Hamlets | Female | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 24:11:48 | |
| 32 | Ben Evenden & Rory Ridell | Bristol UOFC | Male | Kayak | Army Reserve | Senior | University | 24:14:36 | |
| 33 | James Bean & Gary Vallance | Basingstoke Canal | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 24:25:11 | |
| 34 | Dave Apps & Steve Hainge | Independent | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 24:25:36 | |
| 35 | David Prodd & John Richardson | Jersey | Male | Kayak | Civilian | Senior | | 24:29:30 | |

Both are Great Races!

What kind of boats do you paddle? What kind of paddles do you prefer?

John Mark - I prefer long boats, but I'll go in about anything other than Olympic boats, too tippy for a guy in a cowboy hat. Paddles, I like mostly chewed up carbons, and I think I still have a Black Bart, which dates back away.



What is your training regimen? What cross training do you do?

John Mark - I'll usually start in February and try to get over 100 hours on the San Marcos and Guadalupe for the Safari.

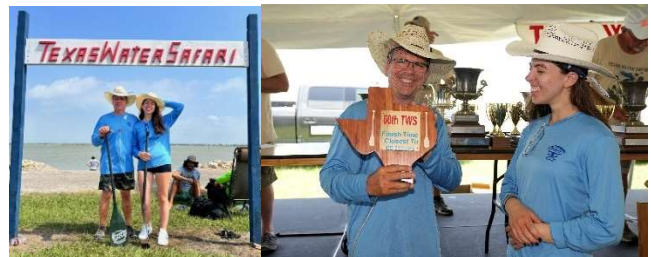
What kind of food or supplements do you use during training and racing?

John Mark - I'm old school, so lots of snack foods, Iced tea and Gatorade light



What are your significant accomplishments in paddling?

John Mark - We came in 2nd in the Safari way back in 2003 (with our thanks to Wade, Tim Rask and Tommy), and then had a 36 hour race in 2007, very proud of those two. In 2023, I joined the pretty exclusive club of paddlers who have completed a Safari with one of their kids. Josephine joined the 6, and we had a great time, I considered retiring after that one, because how do you match it?



Getting three Mixed 1st places with Carol was great, some of those we were also only mixed finishing, but for Carol's part she was committed to the racing. There actually wasn't a trophy until our third year '87.

Finally as a member of the Cowboys team, it's been my honor to have completed 18 Safari's with Bill "Polecat" Stafford and 28 with John "Possum Belly" Dupont. We miss our friend and bowman, but I'm grateful for the times we had together.



What do you enjoy most about paddling?

John Mark – I love the teams, the beautiful rivers, carving a tight curve in a longboat. All the people you run into! Does that sound wrong somehow?



Do you have any training or racing goals for the next few years?

John Mark – I'm hoping to reach 40 finishes, if I can, and then go hang out somewhere cool in June for the first time since the Reagan administration.



Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for paddlers just starting out?

John Mark – Way too much! So I'll go with a bit of off to the side advice. Put your family first, get the chores done, You go faster if you're having fun.

Any final words?

John Mark - I love the sport and specifically the Safari, It's the greatest canoe race there is, and I'm proud to have been a part of it.



Race Reports

Texas River Marathon (the Prelim)

Patty Geisinger

An absolutely epic start where low water caused complete chaos for all the boats behind the leaders. Hopefully everyone saw both Sandy Yonley and Trab Seyn's drone videos of what happens when you pack 116 boats through 2 inches of water atop gravel bars with tight corners. If you haven't seen them, please go visit the video tab on the TCKRA Facebook page. At least everyone got to see the river in these low conditions and plan accordingly. But it was a good day of racing!



Calhoun's Gator Chase Race

Patty Geisinger

We had a good turn out for the 2nd Annual Gator Chase. Not sure how many gators were sighted but I heard that at least 1-2 were seen. Sadly the most excitement came from a bee/wasp hive that folks had a run in with upstream of the Salt Water Barrier. It is always so helpful to have the TWS folks arrange access for everyone from the Swinging Bridge checkpoint to race/explore down through the Cuts and the Log Jam. Many smiling faces arrived at Tivoli to claim their Gator Tooth! Papa & Maga's Calhoun's River RV Retreat is a lovely place! Make sure you have your TCKRA parking pass on before parking there and follow the parking guidelines. They are a checkpoint during Safari and will have food and restrooms so tell them how much we appreciate them!



The General Clinton Canoe Regatta

Shannon Issendorf

Memorial Day weekend every year plays host to the General Clinton Canoe Regatta. This 70 mile race begins in Cooperstown NY on the Susquehanna River and after portages onto the Unadilla River, ends in Bainbridge, NY. This year, we had five out of the top 10 teams with a Texan in the boat. The river was very high and quite pushy. The feed teams had to do their handoffs from canoes because the water was high that you couldn't walk out very far into it. Handoff's in C2 racing are very fast because all the boats are very close together. Taking time to stop for a feed will drop you back in the placement. It is very technical to hand off food from a canoe, keeping your balance while passing bottles within seconds. The field was pretty stacked this year. Logan Mynar came in 2nd and Chris Issendorf in 4th. Both Kyle Mynar with Lep Linares and Kyle Issendorf had great races, finishing in 7th & 9th. The race within the race this year was definitely in the Mixed class. My hat off to Cecili Bugge and her husband Danny Medina. They had a phenomenal race and congratulations to Cecili for her 1st top 10 finish! And Lydia Huelskamp came in 32nd. As always, ALL the Texans did amazing because we can grind forever!



Upcoming Races

Neches Wilderness Canoe Race

Saturday, August 2nd 9 am

The Neches River Wilderness Canoe Race takes place on a section of the Neches River in rural Anderson County near Palestine, the county seat, about 120 miles southeast of Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex. This part of Texas is rolling hills, ranch land with oak and pine forest. Only 55,000 people live in the entire county, which is bounded on the on the east by the Neches River and on the west by the Trinity River. Both of these rivers are unrestrained during flood season, fairly tame during August and September. This part of the Neches is the

Texas State Historical Railway section, where vintage steam trains carry tourists between stations at Palestine and Rusk, crossing the Neches near U.S. Hwy. 84 transects it banks south of the racecourse finish line. Driving time from Houston is about 2.5 hours, from Dallas about 2 hours, and from Tyler about 1 hour. Learn more about the Palestine area by visiting www.visitpalestine.com/.

The race covers 22 miles of scenic, largely uninhabited Neches River Trail and the uniquely challenging racecourse annually attracts a mix of world class marathon canoe and kayak racers, adventure racers, and amateurs of all ages for a crazy day of fun and adventure on the Neches River.

For more information: <https://www.necheswildernessrace.com/>



Junction Up and Back Race Saturday, August 30-31st, 9 am



Wanted: Paddlers! This event offers a unique paddling experience up the South Llano River then back down again. Inspired by kayaking enthusiasts and participants of Texas Water Safari boat racing events, the inaugural Up and Back Boat Race was held September 2, 2017, and marked the first kayak/canoe open boat race hosted on the South Llano River. Racers have 12 hours to finish the 35-ish mile course that both starts and ends at Lake Junction in the city's municipal park. Competitors boat up the South Llano River to the "First Crossing", turn around and boat back to the South Llano Bridge.

Divisions include tandem, men's solo, women's solo, SUP and relay. Any man-powered craft is permitted. All racers who complete the race within the 12-hour time frame will be entered into the finisher's drawing for cash and other prizes. The most challenging portion of the route is said to be paddling upstream through rapids and rocks.

For more information: <https://www.junctiontexas.com/up-back-boat-race>

Howdy Novices!!

Patty Geisinger

Welcome to our HUGE class of Novice paddlers this year. Not sure how much fun everyone will be having on this river level, but at least you chose wisely in your boat!! Thank you to these newbies (and a few returnees) for being willing to answer a few questions so we can get to know you a bit before the big day!

We have little doubt that it will be an epic experience for most of you. 165 boats will line up soon on Aquarena Springs and begin the more arduous adventure ever downstream. There are 34 teams registered as Novice in this year's race. We have 2 Novice Women's boats and a few mixed Novice as well! We've enjoyed meeting some of you over the past year. I sent our questionnaire to as many teams as I could locate (added a photo if I had one) so the rest of us can be ready to cheer for them and encourage them. Good luck to all racing to Seadrift!

New England Thunder

Boat # 8 – Jeffrey Alden – Hingham, Massachusetts & Spencer Allen – Denver Colorado

Goal: We're looking to make it to the finish and have an adventure. We're always looking for something foolish to do outdoors, this seemed right up our alley.

How much have you trained? We've all put in a fair amount of time individually running, biking, cross country skiing, but probably could use some more time in the boat. We did make it to San Marcos in May, we spent a lot of time sorting out gear, food, and getting comfortable in the water. We paddled from San Marcos to the Luling dam. It was very eye-opening and useful to our final month of prep.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did Not Race

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: We don't have much canoe racing experience other than a few short spring runoff type events. But we have a diverse set of outdoor races, a few of us have competed in whitewater rafting races, the American Birkebeiner (50K cross country ski race), the Grand Travers (a backcountry ski race from Crested Butte to Aspen Co), and many other trail and bike races.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Peanut butter and jelly, ramen noodles, Snickers, and some assortment of gels and energy drinks.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A pillow and a Budweiser.

Interesting Training Stories:

Aluminum Falcon

Boat # 94 – Alex Gibbons-Schertz TX & Tyler Vigil- Austin, TX

Goal: To Finish.

How much have you trained? We've been kayaking and canoeing for over ten years but this will be our first endurance paddle so hopefully enough to allow us to finish.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Tyler- Endurance races such as Ironman and Ultramarathon.

Alex- Multi-day paddle trips on the Devils River and Rio Grande. **Entire team-** Overnight paddle trips on the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco rivers, plus many nights primitive camping in various locations such as 60 miles down Padre Island National Seashore.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? All the body will accept - sandwiches, liquid calories, water, and electrolytes

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A beer and a hammock to sleep in!

Interesting Training Stories: Boat modification- used aluminum from crutches and walkers to make bracing for the new seats. **note from their TC Megan: Since neither Alex nor Tyler have social media, I created both a Facebook and Instagram page with the name 'Aluminum Falcon' for them to be tagged.



Keep Hammering

Boat # 229 – Tristan Summy – Seguin, Tx & Waldo Morrison – San Antonio, Tx

Goal: Finish the race and WIN the Novice division!

How much have you trained? We had our 5 month of training last year, an attempt at the 2025 Safari, and will be another 5 months on the water by the time the Safari comes around this year.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 6:31:34, 3rd Novice

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Conquer the Coast 66-mile bike ride (2023&24), Water Safari attempt (2024), regimented endurance training.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Lots of carbs! SPIZ, chicken salad sandwiches, PBJ, and anything else our captains bring, haha!

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Ice cold Gatorade and beers from our family and friends!

Interesting Training Stories: During the prelim we were flipped in the beginning on a rapid and battled back to 3rd place novice from almost last place overall. On our training of the cuts we counted 227 gator gar, 3 snakes and 6 alligators!



Bon Temps

Boat # 323 – Michael Shaw & Jack Jorden – Tyler, Tx

Boat Name is Bon Temps (GOOD TIMES) reflecting Jacks childhood upbringing in Louisiana. And that time on river/lakes are almost always good times. Number 323. Based on Colossians 3:23. “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men. That we might strive to do our best in the canoe and out in all aspects of our lives.”



Goals: **Jack:** to finish (and not die as Mike is 56 and I am 71). Considering using it as a tool to raise funds and awareness for ministry in East Texas that shelters those that have been trafficked. I am also, regardless of outcome, in the best

shape I have been in in years (one of my goals) **Mike:** When my paddling buddy, Jack, told me about the race and asked me to do it with him I said, "I'm gonna need a reason to try this. And not just because I think I can do it." A few months later saw a presentation by Tim Tebow at a dinner raising funds for a ministry in East Texas called Selah. It is a home for young women who are in transition trying to escape being sexually trafficked. I want to somehow leverage what we are doing that is so physically and mentally challenging to raise awareness for the physical and emotional challenges these young women are going through and hopefully encourage people to give to this cause.

How much have you trained? **Jack:** I first heard of TWS last June when I happened upon a tent at finish line (thought there was good seafood to be had, instead I got challenged to try the Safari), came home and called Mike who after looking it up, was a go for training. We first entered the Neches Wilderness Race in August. Since, we have raced in TWS Jr, Sabine River challenge and have participated in MAC 1,2,3,4. Have been training most weekends early in year. And trying to get out during week and. I missed Gator chase/Prelim as I was out of the country. **Mike:** We've been paddling together since July 2024. We have done a few races for practice, including the Naches Wilderness Race in August, the Jr. Texas Water Safari, The Sabine River Challenge, all of the MAC races, the Bay rat race, and I teamed up with another paddler, Joaquín Fonseca, to do the cuts in the Calhoun Gator Chase. We try to paddle together at least once or twice a week as well. We typically paddle on the Neches River, just north of Lake Palestine, or on the Sabine River, or also on Lake Tyler.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Unfortunately, we did not get to do the prelim because Jack and his wife had a previously planned vacation to Italy and the Mediterranean area. I did get to do the Gator Chase with Joaquín though.

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: **Jack:** I grew up in a swamp in pirogue, paddled Northern Tier with youngest son also, we also combined canoeing and camping traveling from Baton Rouge to just above New Orleans the spring break when he was 12. Took 4 days on the Mississippi. Great memories for us both. I usually only run to the frig or bathroom. Wife would tell you I have been known to run my mouth. I got fair amount of exercise jumping (to conclusions), I did cycle back until few years ago. As far as endurance, my wife and I endured rearing 7 kids, and finally are empty nesters. This is better for my BP. **Mike:** Most of my paddling experiences were with the Boy Scouts of America both as a youth and an adult leader. As a youth, I went to the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota/Canada, and then again 32 years later I was able to do that with my oldest son.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? **Jack:** Will be doing a lot of Hammer nutrition (seen at seminar), I also like peanut butter and jelly (or with syrup in a ziplock), will try to keep it basic. **Mike:** I have been practicing using Hammer Perpetuem - I really like it. It has helped. Keep me fueled for four hours at a time. I will supplement that with either a Hammer Gel or possibly peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fruit, mashed potatoes or Ramen. My electrolyte choice is now LMNT, after trying Liquid IV and diluted Gatorade. It seems to work the best for me. I'm also going to bring some of the hammer electrolyte capsules for extra.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? **Jack:** One of the main W's, our wives, water or watermelon, not certain which order we will want them. **Mike:** My family and a cot or something to take a nap on. We plan to go go go until we get there maybe taking a few cat naps on the way if absolutely necessary.

Interesting Training Stories: **Jack:** Have been impressed with the friendliness of the paddling community. I was told it was very family friendly and that has proven to be so accurate. I called Clint Southerland about our canoe as our placement was usually at the end of the pack, and I asked if it might be that the canoe was not TWS worthy OR if Mike and I were just old guys that were out of shape. He was so very tactful as he responded that "No, you have a good canoe". Thanks Clint I think, just call a spade a spade. But we press onward as everyone is so very encouraging.

Mike: We were not prepared for how bad the bay was on the day we crossed it during the Bay Rat Race. It was so discouraging to paddle as hard as you possibly could just to keep from blowing backwards. We did the first half about 7.5 miles on the river in around an hour and a half. The final 7 miles crossing the bay took us over five hours because of the wind and waves. It was brutal. Also, we have made so many new friends participating in all of the MAC races. Jeannette Burriss offered her home to us for a sleepover just before MAC 2 even though she was gone on vacation. It's been such a fun adventure because of the great people who we have met and who have instantly befriended us. My newest paddle partner, Joaquín Fonseca, is not able to compete in The Safari this year. So he has agreed to assist our team captain crew just for the experience. We love this race and the community already even though we haven't participated in the big one yet.

Whiskey Richard

Boat # 343 – Ross Garman – New Braunfels, Tx & Lucas Sergent – San Marcos, Tx

Goal: Ultimately to finish. We know there's going to be some difficult times throughout the race but we'll be at the finish.

How much have you trained We purchased our Alumacraft about 4 months ago and have taken it on the water about 4 whole times! One of those was the River Marathon. We've been learning as much as we can from other participants and previous finishers.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 7:21:51, 13th Novice

Type of Boat: Alumacraft Quetico 17

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: 2025 Texas River Marathon

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We'll be utilizing a meal replacement powder for about half our nutrition, fruit, protein bars, electrolytes, and the occasional comfort food like a breakfast taco or burger.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Vacation hours and Whataburger.

Interesting Training Stories: Haven't trained enough to have any...



Columbus Flotilla

Boat # 717 – Trey & Lucas Brantley- Columbus, TX

Goal: My original plan was to do the race next year, but my son said he was interested so we decided to go ahead and race this year before he leaves for college in the fall. Our goal is just to go as far as we can in the race, but the main benefit is to spend time together training, etc.

How much have you trained? I work in Houston during the week (we live in Columbus), so our training has been limited to weekends. We've done at least 1 training run every weekend, generally between 15-25 miles at a time.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not race

Type of Boat: Alumacraft

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Lucas has done a lot of hiking and mountaineering. I got into rock climbing in college and Lucas has been a sport climber since he was 7 or 8 years old.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We're planning on a mix of liquid nutrition and some whole foods after each checkpoint. I tend to eat a lot of fruit, Lucas will eat anything that falls into the boat (other paddlers beware), and we both like chocolate pop tarts.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Training has been very tough on my bursitis, so the one thing I want waiting for me at the finish is a flat surface I can lay down on. I may not sit after the race, on anything, for weeks!



Interesting Training Stories: I'd say our most eventful training story was during the MAC 2 race. Lucas has more canoeing experience than I do (I had zero) and was our original stern man. He's more aggressive than I am when

approaching hazards, and we were moving too fast when we approached a low clearance bridge. I was able to lay back and clear it, but Lucas didn't quite make it and smacked his face into the bridge! That was the first (but not the last) time we failed to finish a race. After that Lucas moved up to the bow and I learned the stern position. So far that seems to be working out much better.

We're no doubt going to be one of (if not THE) slowest teams out there, but hopefully we won't be hitting any more bridges.

Florida Mans

Boat # 850 – Aidan Edgar & Greg Bargo – Tallahassee, FL

Goal: Mostly “not die,” but if we can also raise awareness for how bad we are at paddling, that’s a bonus.

How much have you trained? Does binge-watching episodes of the Emmy-award winning tv show “24” count? If so, then extensively. If not... we own paddles...well, truthfully we borrowed them.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: **6th Novice 6:49:30**

Type of Boat: Alumacraft Canoe

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Once tried to carry all the groceries from the car in one trip. Still recovering. Also, climbed Denali and then hopped on a bike and cycled from Alaska to Baja.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? A balanced diet of beef jerky, gummy worms, and regret. Washed down with electrolyte-infused desperation.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? An ambulance. Or a burrito. Actually, a burrito in an ambulance.



Interesting Training Stories: We accidentally paddled in circles for 45 minutes before realizing one of us wasn't paddling at all (Aidan). Teamwork makes the dream work. Also, Greg got hit in the chest by an alligator gar during Calhoun's Gator Chase.

HEYDEY

Boat # 1001 – Peter Andrews & Trey Turner– Austin, Tx

Goal:

How much have you trained?

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: **Did not race**

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race?

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

Interesting Training Stories:

H2O Bros

Boat #1044 – Hunter Hemmeline- Lubbock, Tx and Hank Stokes – Hawley, Tx

Goal: Just finish the race!

How much have you trained: Absolutely zero.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: **Did not Race**

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We plan on drinking water and LMNT electrolytes and eating a lot of protein and carbs.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish: The 1 thing we want when we finish is an ice cold beer.

Interesting Training Stories: We are just a couple firemen trying new things to challenge ourselves and have a good story to tell.

Baby Shark

Boat # 1104 – Nicholas & Noah Willis - Elgin, Tx

Goal: Our goal is to finish.

How much have you trained? We've trained 3 times (hoping to do a 4th this past weekend).

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We plan to eat PB&H sandwiches and drink water, hopefully some jerky too.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish: And we'll want a cold beer waiting for us at the coast.

Interesting Training Stories: Pictured here are Aluminum Team #4547: Jeffrey Ault & Nathan Willis (left), #9917 Women's Novice Team Jacqueline Vittitoe & Natalie Willis, and #1104 Nicholas & Noah Willis. A Family Safari!



Sons of Thunder

Boat # 1432 – Kert Prater & Grant Caskey – Georgetown, Tx

Goal: Our primary goal is to finish this race in this Novice division and soak up God's creation from the river's point of view. A secondary goal is to beat our buddy's time last year of 65 hours =u).

How much have you trained? We began our training journey the first of March and have been pretty steady training on Lake Georgetown and a couple of San Marcos river runs.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 14th Novice in 7:22:33

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Grant has done the Appalachian Trail and has that endurance experience to pull from.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Our veteran TWS friend, Travis Crow, recommended a combination of Tailwind electrolytes along with Bare Performance's Recover. We may also experiment with sunflower seeds, pickles, PB&J sandwiches, and Nutella.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Our family



Interesting Training Stories: Grant and I went out on our maiden voyage in a Grumman canoe on Lake Georgetown. It was 5:30 in the morning and we had a cold front slated to blow in around 6:30 that same morning. I checked the radar and thought, “We’ve got to get on the lake and get this party started. The race is going to be here before we know it.” The radar showed the front hitting the lake around 6:00ish so we planned on getting at least 30 minutes of paddling before heading back to the boat ramp. We were pumped and rookies. We were making our way around the perimeter of the lake with only the glow of the city reflecting off the water and noticed the wind was picking up about 50 yards in front of us. “Eh,” we thought, “let’s keep going.” In a matter of seconds, wind gusts of at least 30 mph were slamming our bow and pushing our boat perpendicular to the wind. We wrestled the boat into a cove and didn’t tump by the grace of God. We quickly put on our life jackets and decided to try riding the wind gusts back to the boat ramp. That didn’t last long. We tumped into the frigid water, filled our canoe, and were forced to abandon our canoe and retrieve it after the front passed. What an exciting beginning to our TWS adventure. One we’ll never forget.

Bram Bros

Boat # 1483 – Cashon & Coleton Bramlett- Stephenville, Tx

Goal:

How much have you trained?

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not race.

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

Interesting Training Stories:

River Rattlers

Boat # 1738 –Nick Fauver – Austin, Tx & John Moore, Sugarland, Tx

Goal: Have fun!

How much have you trained? Occasional weekends when possible.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: **1st Novice 6:04:19**

Type of Boat: AlumaCraft QTCL17

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: 2025 TWO100k

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: Nerds gummy clusters, Pedialyte

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? At minimum, a few cold beers, maybe more.



Interesting Training Stories: nothing too crazy so far!

Los Viejitos

Boat #1924 – William Ortiz – Uvalde, Tx & Jeff Haley – Del Rio, Tx

Goal:

How much have you trained?

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race:

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

Interesting Training Stories:

Paddle Cattle

Boat #1985– Peter Arlein & Mike Hahn – Carbondale, CO

Goal: We're looking to make it to the finish and have an adventure. We're always looking for something foolish to do outdoors, this seemed right up our alley.

How much have you trained? We've all put in a fair amount of time individually running, biking, cross country skiing, but probably could use some more time in the boat. We did make it to San Marcos in May, we spent a lot of time sorting out gear, food, and getting comfortable in the water. We paddled from San Marcos to the Luling dam. It was very eye-opening and useful to our final month of prep.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did Not Race

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: We don't have much canoe racing experience other than a few short spring runoff type events. But we have a diverse set of outdoor races, a few of us have competed in whitewater rafting races, the American Birkebeiner (50K cross country ski race), the Grand Travers (a backcountry ski race from Crested Butte to Aspen Co), and many other trail and bike races.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Peanut butter and jelly, ramen noodles, Snickers, and some assortment of gels and energy drinks.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A pillow and a Budweiser.

Interesting Training Stories: We are friends with Boat #8 New England Thunder so our answers are the Same!

Billy O'Tea

Boat #2000– Luke Porter- Greenville, SC & Nicholas Parson, Lewisville, Tx

Goal: We prefer to avoid snake bites but wouldn't mind some hallucinations. Most of all, we want to arrive in the beautiful metropolis of Seadrift alive and in one piece. If all goes well, maybe, just maybe, we can pull out the novice victory.

How much have you trained? It has been 4 months of excessive rowing to get the VO2 max high, the heart rate low, and the digestion dialed. It feels like we have rowed to the moon and back, but it has only been 450 miles...

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: This is our first canoe race but we are experienced ultramarathoners. We are devout members of the Church of Suffering and disciples of David Goggins.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: We believe this will be as much of an eating challenge as a rowing challenge. We plan on eating anything and everything that sounds good. The theme of our nutrition is "8th grade sleepover."

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A Michelob Ultra and a cigarette -- that counts as one thing.

Interesting Training Stories: Luke learned about the dangers of stepping on an oyster bed the hard way. We now have an album of feet pics but no modeling agencies have called.

Wet Bandits

Boat #2319 –Micah Harris – San Marcos, Tx & Miles Maynor –New Braunfels, Tx

Goal: This year's goal is to make it in time for the awards banquet and both be mostly alive.

How much have you trained? We have been in the river a lot more this year. We have done the top section multiple times and several other parts.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 9th Novice, 6:57:39

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Last year's Safari attempt. We have been kayaking/ hiking our whole lives.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: We have spiz, perpetuem, electrolytes, water and pickle power. We also plan to mix in solid foods and a cold beer from time to time to boost morale.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Our families



Interesting Training Stories: we don't fall out of the boat as much as we used to now.

Bonus Question: What lessons from last year are helping guide you this year? We learned to just paddle at our own pace and keep going. We also learned how to manage migraines and our electrolyte intake. We also learned what a terrible feeling it is to quit, so we won't be doing that again.

Chicken Dippers:

Boat #2769, Sandy & Tyler Radsek -Oak Creek, WI

Goal: To make it to the end.

How much have you trained? Once - a single 15 mile paddle down a casual Wisconsin river.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Aluminum Voyager

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: In 2017 my brother and I made an attempt at the Tour Divide, which is a 2700 mile self supported mountain bike race from Banff, CA to Antelope Wells, NM. We did it in a similar style and approach as we are to the TWS with minimal experience/training and just going for it. A "Jesus take the wheel" approach if you will.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: To keep hydrated we will use LMNT electrolyte drink mix, Gatorade, and to eat our bodyweight in burritos/trail mix.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A cold beer, my wife and my dog.

Interesting Training Stories: Uhh..

Rock Thumpers

Boat # 3130 Ryan Guajardo – Round Rock, Tx & Conner Myerson, San Antonio, Tx

Goal:

How much have you trained?

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did Not Race

Type of Boat: 17ft. Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

Interesting Training Stories

Team Cheeky: Novice Women

Boat # 4444 – Kathryn Ford- Austin, Tx & Alison Bard- Austin, Tx

Goal: Alex: Finish in one piece and only shoot off our flare guns AFTER we finish (**Do not Do this)

How much have you trained? We've done about 230 miles, majority on the safari course, Devils River, Llano River and Lady Bird Lake.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: We have both run a few marathons and been on a bunch of multi-day canoe/camping trips.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race?

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? The coldest beer we've ever drank and our chocolate lab pups.



Interesting Training Stories: During one of our 40 mile training runs on the San Marcos River, a Blue Heron followed us down the river the entire way. It was like he was watching over us. We named him Harry.

Crayon Pirates

Boat # 5001 –Andrey Fortygin & Hector Luna Rodriguez - Boerne, Tx

Goal:

How much have you trained?

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat:

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race?

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

Interesting Training Stories:

Crazy Dreams

Boat # 5050 – Garrett Norman - College Station, Tx & Michael Groomer -San Antonio, Tx

Goal: Our goal is to survive and make it to the finish in time!

How much have you trained? We've made it to most of the pre-Safari races along the course. And put in over 200 miles along the rivers.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 12th Novice, 7:18:24

Type of Boat: Alumacraft

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Spiz, water, gels, bars, tailwind, more water, fruit

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Our families!

Interesting Training Stories: We met for the first time at the MAC1 race and paddled for the first time together in a boat we had bought the week before. It was beat up and leaked like crazy, but we made it to Staples. We've come a long way since that day and are ready to attempt the Safari.



Aluminum Can's Last Stand

Boat # 5224 – Roman & John Ruiz – Seguin, Tx

Goal: My hope would be to finish in 85-90 hours, but honestly I would be happy with 99:58. We are just looking to finish.

How much have you trained? We participated in all but one MAC race and have been on the river several times. We have probably not trained as much as we should have, but we are trying to get some quality time in the canoe before the race.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 8th Novice, 6:55:21

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: I have only participated in the Texas Winter 100K in 2024

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We keep a jug of water/ jug of hydration mix and a bottle of Spizz. During the race check points, I'll snack on uncrustables, fig newtons and protein bars. Maybe an occasional breakfast taco.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? I haven't really thought about it. Maybe an egg salad sandwich and a couple of cans of McConauhaze.



Interesting Training Stories: I don't know that we have had any really interesting stories. I was a little worried about the father/son dynamic. My partner for last year, Tim Clark, and I had similar temperaments and while we both had our times of frustration, I think we did a great job of being mostly pleasant with each other. Roman and I have a different relationship and personalities, and I wasn't quite sure what the river would draw out of us when we were having a difficult time in training. I'm happy to say that I have been pleasantly surprised and it has been a wonderful experience to spend all of those training hours together, in nature and blasting our favorite songs. Lol. For anyone who paddles alongside of us during the race, I apologize if you don't like the song we are playing. Don't worry, you will be passing us up in no time!

Bonus Question for John: What lessons from last year are helping guide you this year? I have become much better at reading the river to move more efficiently. I am still not good at it, but I am better, none the less. Last year was my first attempt, and while we were unable to finish, we still did about 150 miles and 58 hours of paddling. Now knowing what paddling for an extended amount of time is like, it helps me go into this year with a little less anxiety and nervousness. I will definitely do my best to enjoy every minute of it, because as soon as we were out of the race, I couldn't wait to do it again.

Voyageur Banditos

Boat # 6683 – Jill Kreindler - Austin, Tx & Pete Garcia - Shoreacres, Tx

Goal: Jill: FINISH **Pete:** Finish.....3rd times a charm.

How much have you trained? Jill: This is a hard one to answer, as I am not sure how you quantify this? I would like to have trained more, but it has been difficult with a full-time job, a second part-time job, some family obligations and just everyday life to also keep up with. **Pete:** More than previous years, but surely not enough. That's why I guess it was meant to meet Jill on the river. Very confident this year.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Jill: Did not race tandem, but we did both participate in the Texas River Marathon and Calhoun's Gator Chase as solos. Pete was gracious enough to help me out after a flip during the TRM which led to us not making it to the Nursery cutoff in time. While unfortunate, it did connect us and created our new team! **Pete:** As Jill stated, I stopped to help her and another team before I came upon her. 31 years as a firefighter, I wasn't going to leave her there.

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: **Jill:** I am an Ironman triathlete (Wisconsin 2017) having competed in over 40 multi-sport races over the years. I have been canoeing since I was about 10 years old at the summer camp I went to in Northern Wisconsin. I have been on countless river trips up there and also visited Voyageur's National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Most recently, I paddled the Devils River for my birthday in early March. **Pete:** Ran college track and just a determination to finish.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? **Jill:** Water, water with Nuun, Clif Bars and other gels/stroopwaffles with me in the boat. From my captain, macaroni and cheese with meat and veggies, oatmeal with fruit and possibly some other things that we have not yet decided. **Pete:** Spiz, water, electrolytes. Uncrustables and a breakfast taco every now and then.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? **Jill:** A shower! **Pete:** Food and a shower. I'm sure my wife will agree on the shower.



Interesting Training Stories: **Jill:** I have seen so much wildlife in my training: deer, raccoons, beavers, cows, alligators, snakes, alligator gar, Guadalupe river bass, wild hogs and many types of birds/waterfowl. **Pete:** The cuts were crazy this year and then I got to the hydrilla water plants blocking the river.....I about cried.

Flyswatters

Boat # 6969 –Gage Smith – San Marcos, Tx & Jared Richter- Kyle, Tx

Goal: Our goals are simply to finish and avoid any altercations with alligator gar.

How much have you trained? We learned how to canoe about 4 months ago, so about 4 months of once a week long paddles with an optional day or two of short laps.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Alumacraft

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Between the two of us we've got a lot to draw from. Jared has 3 combat tours in the marine corps which is certainly a feat of adventure, endurance, and mental fortitude. I have a few 100k runs under my belt, a bicycle ride across the US, and a 5 day ultra in the amazon.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? spiz, tamales, peanut butter, burgers, nerds' clusters, gu, and maybe an alligator gar if things get really serious etc. We are really the poster children of a healthy diet.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A dry place to sit down where the alligator gars can't get to me.

Interesting Training Stories: NFL linebacker sized alligator gars detonating around our boat in the middle of the night... Did I mention our aversion to alligator gars?

It's Alright Ma (I'm only Paddling)

Boat # 7203 – Mitchell George- Tyler, Tx & Michael Rokyta- San Antonio, Tx

Goal: Finish! Get top 3 in our class.

How much have you trained? Does watching YouTube videos count? We are good at disappointing Holly Orr during coaching sessions.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 4th Novice, 6:32:59

Type of Boat: Alumacraft Voyageur

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Does watching YouTube videos count? We are good at disappointing Holly Orr during coaching sessions.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? I heard Spiz is good for you. We've been eating turkey legs, oatmeal cream pies, old boots from the river.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? A lukewarm Miller High Life

Interesting Training Stories: The Ottine swamp monster threw a dead squirrel at my partner on a training run.



Cuckoo Canoe

Boat # 7331 –Evan Cuyler & Brandon Avila- Georgetown, Tx

Goal: Evan and I are looking at finishing in 63 hours, this will beat the 65 hour finish time that our friends did last year

- This race means a lot to the friendship Evan and I have. and we hope to continue finding other challenging adventures to go on together

How much have you trained? Evan and I have been training since last year after we watched our friends race the 2024 TWS

- We have focused on time on the river and have succeeded in spending time on the water almost every week since then
- Starting in January, we have paddled on a section of the San Marcos almost every weekend, while also paddling on our local Lake Georgetown during the week at 5am

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 2nd Novice, 6:15:28

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: I am an avid outdoorsmen

- I like to spend my time outdoors mountain biking, backpacking, rock climbing, fly fishing, and paddle boarding
- I have raced a couple of Enduro mountain bike races and also a small local triathlon in my hometown of Castaic, CA

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? Nutrition for this race has been an adventure in itself

- Un crustables are going to be a treat
- I also want Bucee's brisket tacos
- I also have an electrolyte mix that tastes like a margarita, I do love margaritas

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish?

I would love to see my family if they are able to be there, but I have little's, so they may be sleeping

- Not sure if it's allowed, but I would love a celebration beer, good ole Modelo



Interesting Training Stories: Evan and I ran into the biggest river Bull that I have ever seen. We refer to him as the Great River Bull. We don't mess with the horns.

I would love to share our story and how we got mixed up in this incredible experience.

Basically, it all started with our very good friend Travis Crow. He's completed a couple of TWS' and took 1st USCA C-1 Man in 2019. Well, last year we watched Travis and Fred race C-2 in the 2024 TWS. Ever since then, Evan and I have been hooked and that's when our adventure started. There are several competitors this year that I am connected to.

Kert Prater and Grant Caskey (Novice Aluminum), Travis and Tanner Crow (father & son C-2), and myself and Evan Cuyler (Novice Aluminum). We all go to the same church and it has been incredible to go on this journey together.

I am originally from Southern California and have been living in Georgetown, TX for about 3 years. I never knew about the TWS, but it was something that was definitely up my alley. Growing up in Southern California I was exposed to ocean kayaking and white water rafting, never did I ever think that I would be racing a canoe 260 miles through Texas! I am Hawaiian and I definitely feel a connection to the water. I grew up with a deep respect to the life water provides, but also the strength and dangers in can deal out if not respected. I see this race as not only a great adventure, but more so seeing the beauty of Texas that so few get to experience. Most of it will be the land, but also the incredible people we have met along the way.

Howard U Ducka

Boat # 7824– Kara & brother Duane Howard– Inez, Tx

Goal: My name is Kara Howard and my copilot is Duane Kuchler, who happens to be my older brother and the only crazy person who agreed to help me check the water safari off of my bucket list! A few of our goals include finishing the race in time to attend the awards banquet, not drowning each other through the log jams, staying positive, and looking alive at checkpoints (even when we feel nearly dead) so mom can rest peacefully until the next stop!

How much have you trained? Our training program has been pretty intense with the help of a TWS goddess, Holly Orr! I am so grateful for everything she taught us and can't wait to put it all together during the safari!

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 5th Novice, 6:33:56

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: We were team captains for the winning novice team last year Tub 1 and Switched places with them this year. We've been kayaking and canoeing our whole lives; this is our first race season.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race?

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Cold beer and our families and our dogs. The one and only thing I want waiting at the finish is my husband, my family and my friends.... AND a frozen margarita!



Interesting Training Stories: I think we have found every rock and stump in the first 40 miles and learned a lot from that section. This whole process has taken an army, a lot of organizing for drop offs and pickups, and we couldn't have done it without our favorite people always willing to help! When this whole idea came about, I had no idea how many hours and hours, good and BAD, I would spend with my brother on the river and I couldn't imagine doing it with anyone else!

Silverback Bombers

Boat #8008 – Riley Orr & Charles Herst – Austin, Tx

Goal: Our goal is to have fun thru the pain, ride the strongest tailwind for 3 days straight, and see some big fish blow ups along the way. Riley has to catch a flight to Shanghai for work right after the race, so we'll have to get it done under 90 hours or he may get fired...

How much have you trained: Lots of laps on Town Lake and different sections of the race route during weekends. We've done a few 30-40 milers on San Marcos/Guad and are planning a night paddle and Seadrift paddle before June. Also, nonstop mental reps.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Alumacraft

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: Lots of camping, fishing, leisure paddling experience on rivers such as Llano River and Devils River. Nothing like TWS, so this should be a fun test.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: Smoothies, milkshakes, edamame and bugs

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? An apology letter from whoever invented this race.

Interesting Training Stories: We decided to try and hitchhike out of Palmetto state park in the dark back to our car in Fentress from one of our 30 mile paddles. In the end our great friend drove from Austin to get us. (The novice division feels right for us). Aside from that, we've seen some amazing wildlife, including a bald eagle, some massive gar and two falcons fighting.

Team Beef

Boat # 9119 – Logan Mailhes – *Dripping Springs, Tx* & Jimmy Beckett – *Seguin, Tx*

Goal: Survive, grow physically mentally and spiritually, get the feeling of completion and fulfillment that will change my perspective on life and stress. Make me a better entrepreneur and husband.

How much have you trained? A little over 100 hrs. in the boat

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Alumacraft

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: I am an Eagle Scout so I did lots of long distance rowing and sailing growing up. Other than that no official endurance racing. This is hopefully gearing up to put me on a trajectory to keep pushing myself every year for the result of my life.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? We are going to stick to Whole Foods and two types of power bars also oranges, we will also be taking supplements like keystone and electrolyte packets

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? The patch and hug the wife and celebrate with team captains.

Interesting Training Stories: Took us 12 hrs. to get from Staples to Luling on our first ever paddle. Jimmy brought his dog and we flipped and got pinned twice. We never brought a dog again! Also saw 96 Gators when practicing the section from Calhoun's to finish line.

John 1:5

Boat # 9292 –Ben Bollich- *Eunice, LA* & Joe Bollich – *Gonzales, LA*

Goal: The goal is to finish and find what lies along the way.

How much have you trained? We've trained averaging one trip per week since February in bayous of the Atchafalaya River spillway. Trips lasted up to ten hours. Our last training run was on the San Marcos from Rio Vista Park to Luling 90.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Wenonah Spirit

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: This will be a true novice experience- we've done nothing close to the TWS.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: Still fine tuning the race diet.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Ice cold beer.

Interesting Training Stories: Enough time in the Atchafalaya Spillway will change your life.

The BiPartisanship

Boat # 9697 –Walter Kelleher & Dawson Jacobs- *Victoria, Tx*

Goal: Finish under cutoffs.

How much have you trained? A little over 150 miles together, one more session in the cuts this weekend.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: 11st Novice, 7:11:27

Type of Boat:

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: **Dawson:** Several Backcountry hunting trips in New Mexico and Wyoming, as well as a 60K and 50 mile ultramarathon **Walter:** Thru Hike Appalachian Trail in 2017, Climbed majority of 7 summits (Everest next March), and a few ultramarathons including the Moab 240 Miler in 2024

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: Tailwind, Milkshakes, and any other calories we can stomach

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Victory Cigars



Interesting Training Stories: We went through two training runs holding our paddles backwards before realizing it.

Ship Happens

Boat # 9917 – Jacqueline Vittitoe – San Antonio, Tx & Natalie Willis – Pflugerville, Tx

Goal: As they gear up for the TWS, both of girls' primary goal is simple: avoid injuries and cross that finish line with smiles on their faces! They're determined to work as a team and see how far they can stretch their limits physically, mentally, and emotionally.

How much have you trained? While they've always been athletic throughout their lives, this race is a whole new adventure. Since then, they have been lucky enough to learn some important canoe skills and have been avoiding those pesky trees, thanks to a fantastic lesson from Holly. Their training has been nothing short of an epic quest over the past two months. Their weekend practices ranging from a cozy four hours to an adventurous 10 hours, exploring different parts of the river, from night paddles to still waters to swift currents.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: Did not Race.

Type of Boat: Alumacraft Voyageur

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience:

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race? When it comes to fueling their adventure, they're all about those small quick carb snacks with a side of protein. They plan to stay hydrated throughout the race with the help of water, electrolyte packets, and a dash of minerals and vitamins.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? Of course, after conquering the race, both girls expect a hot shower and a blissful long sleep!



Interesting Training Stories: When it comes to the Texas Water Safari, Natalie and Jackie are ready to paddle their way to victory! Their first practice, about two months ago, was quite the journey. They planned to embark on a 20 mile stretch that took them all day. Struggling with trees, dodging hundreds of water bugs, enduring countless spins, and tipping the canoe multiple times, they found themselves processing just how challenging navigating a canoe can be.

The B.I.L.'s

Boat # 9959– Cory Dean – Ft. Worth, Tx & Sean Marable- Weatherford, Tx

Goal: Our boat is dubbed 9959.... because we are 100% ok with a time of 99 hours and 59 min

How much have you trained? As much as we could with small children.

Prelim Novice Placement/Time: DNF, but we learned a lot. Most importantly is to review the time cutoffs and just because it is your first race, you should never start in the back.

Type of Boat: Aluminum

Other Race/Adventure/Endurance Experience: We did a 5k once.

What do you plan on eating/drinking during the race: Bacon and iced coffee.

What is the 1 thing you want waiting for you at the finish? To be able to facetime our wives and kids.



Interesting Training Stories: B.I.L.s stands for Brother In-Laws. Originally, Seth was going to be the team captain, but Dallas Rayes is now on a 2 year mission trip to Ecuador. Seth agreed to get in the canoe. Also, we refer to our Team Captains as our TEAM MOMs. Could not ask for better support and a positive outlook for this adventure from Matt and John.

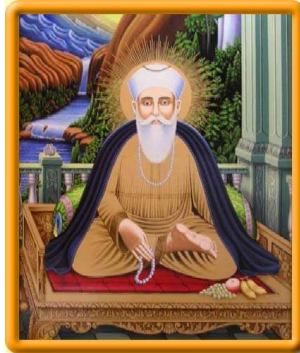
****Editor's Note:**

I cannot thank all the teams who responded to me for this article! I enjoyed reading all the responses and cannot wait to be there as you navigate your way down the river! I appreciate your patience and if anyone realizes they missed my emails, and still want to contribute, please email me your answers and I will add them afterwards and this newsletter will be archived on the TCKRA website. We hope to educate future Novice paddlers by sharing all your stories of training and preparation to better help them plan in the future.

Good luck in your Novice Safari! I will see you ALL in Seadrift!
Patty Geisinger, TCKRA Secretary and Newsletter Editor, TWS Social Media volunteer

Palmetto Hotline

River Guru



Palmetto Hotline

As we await a volunteer to step into the large shoes of the River Guru, here is a small gift from our Paddler Profile this newsletter, John Mark Harras of the Legendary Cowboys. As in most of the Palmetto Hotlines, perhaps the young paddler eyes should be averted! For many of us, we were not involved in the bygone days when nicknames were earned and The Cowboys did intensive evaluations of potential boat-mates. And each year, members of the Cowboys were highlighted on their "business cards". Enjoy these (slightly inappropriate) blasts from the dearly remembered past!

Evaluation Form:

SAFARI PARTNER EVALUATION FORM

NAME _____ TITLE _____ DATE _____
BOAT _____ CLASS _____
FIRST SAFARI _____ DATE OF LAST SAFARI _____

KNOWLEDGE

____ This SOB really knows his shit
____ Knows most phases of the race. Stays upright the majority of the time
____ Knows just enough to be dangerous, tries to go under some log jams
____ Can't tell which way the river is flowing or which direction is up.
____ Paddler is brain damaged, a fire ant has a higher I.Q.

ABILITY

____ Excellent paddler if not preoccupied with sex
____ Pretty good, only occasionally blows it out his ass, knows what a double blade is for
____ Doesn't give a shit if his output is good or bad
____ Does shitty paddling constantly, huts while using doubles and uses 2 hand control
____ Couldn't count the blades on his paddle & get the same number twice.

PACE

____ Fastest water plucker I ever saw, pees between strokes
____ Fast SOB for 2-3 hours if he thinks he'll get a long boat ride, can pee while sitting
____ Does a lot of paddling going between the banks looking for gravel bars, fidgets a lot
____ Paddles only if kicked in the ass every five minutes, stops while chewing, for snakes, bugs, and spiders
____ Couldn't paddle less if he was in a coma

DEPENDABILITY

____ A very dependable paddler, paddles while he pukes
____ Usually dependable at team try outs, has finished in top 3
____ Conscientious, only if sex urge is satisfied, the water is high and it's not dark.
____ Can depend on him to be the first one gone at BPM or Palmetto, whatever is first, Lilly dipper
____ Completely incompetent, totally worthless unless going to Rio Vista

COOPERATION

____ Extremely cooperative; alias "Boat Brown Noser"
____ Brown noser in good standing, leans only when in timing
____ Cooperative only if his ass is kissed frequently, only in timing when sleeping
____ Thinks his job is to piss-off everyone, picks on everyone's downfalls, he's never out of timing
____ Doesn't give a shit; never has and never will

APPEARANCE

____ Extremely neat and orderly, even combs his public hair
____ Neat and orderly; at picture and interview time
____ Needs to be introduced to soap, water and toothpaste
____ Flies leave fresh dog shit to follow him

LEADERSHIP

____ Carries serrated rudder around and gets good results
____ Occasionally gets told to get out of the boat
____ Constantly pisses off the troops
____ Only the janitors obey him, often gets left at log jams
____ Couldn't lead a pack of starving wolves to fresh meat

BALANCE

____ Solid as a rock, past olympic gymnast
____ Sits in the middle of the boat, can put one foot ahead of the other while walking the boat
____ Occasionally sits in the center of his seat, easier to swim than walk the boat
____ Can't find his seat with both hands, leans when switching while double blading
____ Dangerous in a jon boat, switches are like jello

PORTAGES

____ Fast as a water spider with a bass on his ass
____ Occasionally falls through a log jam, can run on 2 feet
____ Can't stand on an 18" log, can put one foot in front of the other if not in a hurry
____ Must wear a life jacket at log jams, 4 wheels it on all portages
____ Can't stand on a bridge, faster if he stays in the boat at all portages

DRIVING

____ Can get a long boat down the San Marcos without a rudder
____ Uses a rudder for a crutch, likes bumper pool
____ Needs a rudder as big as a stop sign with 1,000 pound aircraft cables, uses foot peddles like a steering wheel
____ Needs a rudder on an aluminum boat, works as part of the propulsion system, has to portage Cottonseed
____ Wraps the canoe in Staples Lake, official sweeper cleaner, can't find the stern.

RIVER READING

____ Knows every deep spot, corner & eddy. Boat seem articulated.
____ Looks ahead far enough to see the next obstacle. Can tell the deep from the shallow water
____ Takes it as it comes, can pull it out of his ass when it's not puckered so tight the pin is stuck
____ Constantly looking for new teammates to rake out of the boat, wears crash helmets and pads
____ Uses Safari map out of the race packet, wears reading glasses, solo paddler by teammates demand, would be faster if floated

INTENSITY

____ All out, known to chew off an arm if it gets in the way
____ Pushed till it starts hurting, takes sports creams, knows what a heart monitor does
____ Afraid it will start to hurt, lilly dips to keep up, brings sleeping pad
____ Doesn't know what hurt or stroke rate is, brings sleeping bag and pillow
____ A turtle is more intense and goes further while on his back

DURABILITY

____ Super man could take lessons
____ Like sex, will finish most of what he starts
____ Slightly better than a one legged man without a wheelchair in a marathon, doesn't like the heat
____ Can't stand the sight of blood or red KoolAid, any reason to quit will do. Pukes when it gets over 85 degrees
____ Doesn't need a reason, never was going anywhere past the couch

