

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE



March 2026

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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 2026 racing season, and we would love to send you the 2026 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 2 vinyl TCKRA stickers, a 2026 TCKRA Fridge Magnet Calendar, a free parking pass for shuttle setting only at the new 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 Racing 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 many 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 2026 TCKRA fridge magnet calendar
- A 2026 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/>

2026 TCKRA Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

Sandy Yonley (President)
Jonathan Zeek (Vice President)
Grady Hicks (Treasurer)
Patty Geisinger (Secretary)

Board Members

Geoff Waters
Mike Gordon
Tommy Yonley
David Dunnington
Jill Mulder

Letter from the TCKRA President

Sandy Yonley

Racing season is here, and the Texas paddling community is already off to a strong start—great to see so many familiar (and new) faces out there!

Membership packets have been mailed to everyone who's renewed for the year. Just a quick reminder that shuttle parking is limited to three locations: San Marcos River Retreat, Amigo's Beach in Fentress, and Calhoun's RV in Tivoli. You can find more details for each spot in the shuttle parking pass brochure that comes with your membership packet. If anything's unclear, feel free to reach out.

There's a busy year of racing ahead, so whether you've been training all winter or are just now dusting off your boat, we're looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming races!

Sandy Yonley
2026 TCKRA President

2026 Race Calendar

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

April 4th – MAC #3, Luling 90 to Palmetto State Park. 9am and 10am start

April 11th – Elm Fork Regatta: Carrollton TX 9am: [Elm Fork Regatta](#)

April 18th – MAC #4 The Night Race, Palmetto Low Water to Gonzales Gravel Bar 5pm

April 18th – Hokulele #2: Lake Pointe Green [Hokulele Paddling Club FB page](#)

April 25th – The Bay Rat Race, Calhoun's RV Park, Tivoli, 8am [Bay Rat Race](#)

May 2nd – The Texas River Marathon, River Haven RV Park to The Pumphouse, Victoria 9am

May 2nd – Race the River: Mission Reach, San Antonio River Flood Control Tunnel Outlet 9am

May 3rd – Calhoun's Gator Chase, Swinging Bridge to Calhoun's 9am

May 10th – Race the River: Goliad, 8am, TBD

June 12-16th – 63rd Annual Texas Water Safari, San Marcos to Seadrift, 9am

June 21st – Hokulele #3: El Jardin Beach: [Hokulele Paddling Club FB page](#)

June 27th – Lake Livingston Paddle Fest, TBD

<https://www.tckra.org/tx-racing/calendar>

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

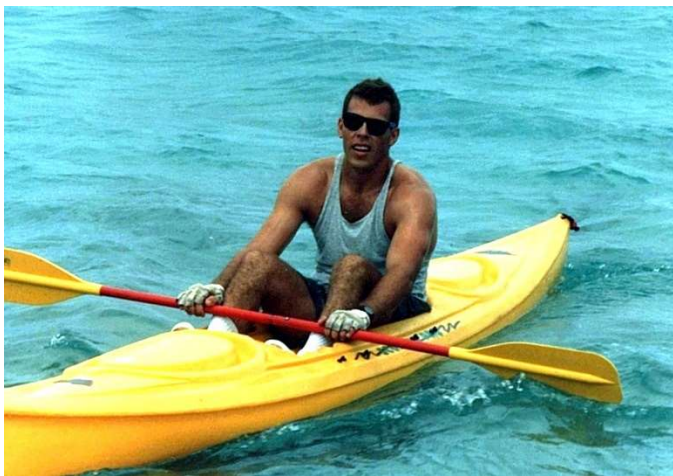
Geoff Waters

What is your full name?

Geoff- Geoff Waters

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

Geoff- Born and raised in Michigan, now living in Austin.



How and why did you get started in paddling and racing?

Geoff – Being from Michigan, with Aunt & Uncle in Grayling, and more distantly related to previous AuSable winners, I've known about canoe racing for a long time. My first race was in 1992 when I was based on Johnston Atoll in the middle of the Pacific. The marina had heavy, plastic sit on top kayaks (with flat bladed aluminum paddles) and I started paddling the lagoon for exercise and to see the wildlife. Johnston Atoll is very windy, so grinding against a 15-20mph wind in those heavy kayaks was definitely a work-out. The base held triathlons (The Atollman), open ocean swims, and 2x/yr kayak races. I won the first kayak race I entered (a whopping .5 miles out to a buoy and back)

and got hooked. I was undefeated for the 5 years I was on Johnston Atoll. A few years after moving to Austin, I learned about the TWS and got into endurance paddling.



Where do you paddle most frequently?

Geoff- Town Lake, Austin. 2-3x/wk. One lap is a perfect.

What is your favorite race?

Geoff- I've had a lot of fun doing the Come & Take It with my kids when they were younger. It is my favorite non-ultra. I love races which are long enough for old age and treachery to counterbalance youth and 0% body fat... The original Colorado 100, back when the LCRA reliably released water over Labor Day, was always a highlight for me.



2013 Colorado 100

What is the most interesting race you have done?

Geoff- The head to head competition makes the AuSable River Canoe Marathon very interesting. Everyone is an expert paddler, in effectively identical canoes, so you can really see technique and strategy at work. I've done 3 ACRMs, with 3 different partners, paddled both bow and stern, and learned so much each time.



AuSable Canoe Marathon, 2016

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

Geoff - I'm a big fan of New Zealand multi-sport kayaks. They're built to be fast in a lot of different conditions, and they're tough enough to survive rocky rapids. No spray skirt needed for the bay! I've had a Sisson Astrolab, a Flow Kayaks Rockstar, and am currently paddling a Ruahine Firebolt. I also have a Bell Magic C1 which I got for training for the 2024 AuSable, and I use it occasionally on Town Lake just to mix things up. My double blades are Flow MS2s (mid wings) with a titanium strip on the blade edge; also built for rocky rivers. My singles are Zavs, and I have a Werner which might be a small outrigger paddle. I use it in training, so when I switch to a Zav for a race, it feels like it weighs nothing.



What is your training regime?

Geoff - I probably have the dumbest, most brute force training regimen... no one should model themselves after me. I paddle a lot of miles... mostly on Town Lake. This time of year, I target 40-50 miles a week, pushing the pace as much as possible. I embed 1/10th mile sprints within my mile splits. In the run up to ultras, I up

that to 55-65 miles/wk, with 25 mile weekend paddles replacing some of the Town Lake laps.



What is your cross training do you do?

Geoff - Some biking, some free weights. I used to run, but I started getting shin splints. I have a weighted vest at work, which I wear while going up and down the stairwells a few times during the day. It helps prep my legs for portaging.



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

Geoff - I thought I had hydration dialed in, but it has been a problem for me in recent years. I use Enduralytes for electrolytes, some proactive based on time/temp, some reactive based on actual cramping. Hand cramps are a fairly reliable early warning for me. Nutrition was also something I had dialed in, but I've developed problems swallowing solids by day 2. I get most of my calories from Spiz, squeeze pouches of yogurt, and when my swallowing allows, summer sausage.



What are your significant accomplishments in paddling?

Geoff - Not counting my 30min 'attitude' penalty, I won solo kayak in the 2019 Yukon River Quest.

- 2nd place men's solo (sub 40hr) in the 2018 MR340.
- 3x 2nd place men's solo unlimited finishes in the TWS, one was also a 12th place overall finish.
- 2x 1st place CR100
- 4x 1st place W100K
- 1st place solo and overall in the 2023 AuSable River Challenge.
- 3x ARCM finishes, back half of the field, but improved each time!



What do you enjoy most about paddling?

Geoff - Seeing things most people never will... Paddling with huge manta rays and dolphins in the Pacific. Hitting a very large alligator in the Guad during a training run. Racing across Mio Pond in the moonlight; with the water reflecting like a black mirror. Flipping in Nursery Rapids; my bow light lit up underwater like a swimming pool. I could see fish suspended in the eddies behind the boulders. It's fun to race, and it feels great to do well, but the friendships and the chance to make core memories keep me paddling even though my most competitive years are (probably) behind me.



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

Geoff - I need to get to 10 TWS finishes! Other than that overarching goal, I'm in a 'bucket list' phase of my paddling career where I want to do as many different ultras as I can. I'm signed up for the California River Quest in May, and I'd like to do the Thames 200Ultra or the Loire 725 in the coming years.



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

Geoff - If you joined the TCKRA and are reading this newsletter, you're off to a great start! It has never been easier to connect with other paddlers, arrange shuttles, etc., so don't be shy.

Any final words?

Geoff - Getting into paddle racing will change the trajectory of your life. Training for races (there's always a next race to train for) will help you stay physically and mentally fit. You can be part of a community that really cares for each other. And you'll greatly increase the odds of having the best stories whenever you get together with non-paddling friends!



TCKRA San Marcos River Clean Up



Thank you to all those who came out on March 7th and made the 2026 San Marcos River Clean Up a great success. It made me proud to see so many TCKRA members volunteering their day to clean the river!

It was a great day to get so much trash out of the river! Many groups came together to do different sections and our folks got a lot out! Remember it takes just 5 minutes if you are on the water to pull some trash out! Let's leave our rivers cleaner than we found them!



RACE REPORTS

2026 Texas Winter 100K (the TWO)

Veronica Sosa

“The 15th annual running of the 2026 Texas Winter 100k is in the books! Huge thanks to all the racers, race officials, volunteers, photographers, ground crews, and everyone who supported and made this race possible. I sincerely appreciate everyone’s patience as I ventured into my first attempt at race directing. I had an amazing time and I hope you did, too! For the record, WE ALL WON! ❄️👊🏻 [#dontletthecolddayswin](#)”

Delayed by a huge winter storm, Veronica hosted her first TWO on January 31st with support from so many folks! From West and Barbara all the way to her huge team of volunteers on the day of! Definitely a fun time on the river for everyone, even if it was pretty chilly! Delicious gumbo at the finish from the Bonura’s warmed everyone up! Check out this great winter paddling opportunity next year for sure!

Texas Winter 100K Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/804441526315141>



Town Lake Series

Patty Geisinger & Brian Jones

With the exception of one race day due to freezing rain, arctic temps and less than optimal driving conditions, the Town Lake Scrimmages were held successfully again in 2026. We still miss John Baltzell and thank him for all these years of fun times in the winter on Town Lake in Austin. Brian and I stuck with the long course of Fiesta Beach to MoPac and back as many folks were chasing times. We had strong turn-outs and enjoyed being together on the water!



Pictures by Sandy Yonley

TCKRA Spring Break Open

March 8th, 2026



Another spectacular Spring Break Open hosted by Sandy & Tommy Yonley, with food from Jay Daniel! The weather decided that it was gonna mess with us all and keep it rainy and wintery for the race only! And yet Everyone Turned OUT! We had over 50 boats in the race including our young people! It was a fun day to break open the Texas Racing season! Thank you to everyone who came out to have fun with us!



2026 MAC Races

Brought to you by Kaitlin Mynar and the Martindale Athletic Club, the first 2 MAC races were held so far this year. You still have the chance to do MAC #3 and MAC #4 The Mike Simmons Memorial Night Race. These are so fun for everyone who wants to see all the sections of the San Marcos in race-type conditions! Such a good turnout for the first two and a big thank you to Kaitlin and her family for all the hard work!

Race 1: City Park to Spencer's Campground was March 15th, 2026

Race 2: Staples to Luling 90 was March 22nd, 2026

2026 Upcoming Races

2026 MAC Race #3 & #4

Race 3: Saturday April 4th, Luling 90 to Palmetto State Park: staggered starts at 9am & 10am. Remember to get a parking pass at Palmetto before the race. More info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2450412122096524>



Race 4: Saturday April 18th *Mike Simmons Memorial Night Race*: Palmetto State Park low water bridge to Gonzales Gravel Bar with catfish dinner. Staggered starts at 6:30pm and 7:30pm. Please see the event information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2178971219526724>



Texas River Marathon (the Prelim)



Make sure you get registered for this year's Prelim and Gator Chase by April 11th! This is a 35-mile race from River Haven RV Resort to the Pump House Restaurant in Victoria. 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.

Cut-off deadline for reaching Hwy 477 Nursery Bridge is 1:00 PM. 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.

Registration here: <https://racehub.racehubhq.com/races/TexasRiverMarathon2026>



San Antonio River Basin: Mission Reach

May 2nd , 2026

8 am Check in, Race start 10am

The San Antonio River Authority and the San Antonio River Foundation invite you to join the 1st installment of the 2026 Race the River competitive paddling series! Test your skills along the Mission Reach Paddling Trail as you navigate 5–7 miles of one of the most scenic and technically challenging stretches of the San Antonio River. Paddle alongside competitors from across Texas and push your limits in this exciting season opener.

All finishers will receive a commemorative patch, and we'll celebrate your achievement with a post-race gathering and an awards ceremony for top competitors. Do you have what it takes? Let the adventure begin!

Event Details – Saturday, May 2, 2026

- Racer Check-in Location: San Antonio River Flood Control Tunnel Outlet
- Racer Check-in Time: 8AM-9:15AM
- Race Start Time: 10AM
- Amateur Race Cutoff: 12PM at Padre Park Safety Checkpoint
- Amateur Race Finish: Espada Park (5 Miles)
- Pro Race Cutoff: 12PM at Espada Park Portage
- Pro Race Finish: Camino Coahuilteca River Crossing (7 Miles)
- After Party: Espada Park
- Awards Ceremony: 1PM or when All Racers Have Arrived
- Lunch will be provided for all participants, followed by an awards ceremony where prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in each category.

Registration Information:

<https://www.paddlesignup.com/Race/TX/SanAntonio/RacetheRiverMissionReach>



Calhoun's Gator Chase May 3rd, 2026



Hope you get yourself signed up for this year's Calhoun's Gator Chase! The best way to go see the Log Jams the day after the Prelim. Join in with all your friends and navigate, explore this section of the TWS course! Have fun with all your friends looking for gators, gar and sweepers! Registration Here: <https://racehub.racehubhq.com/races/GatorChase2026>

The "Gator Chase" will be held at 9:00am on Sunday, May 3rd. This race will be held the day after the prelim. The start will be at the Swinging Bridge TWS Checkpoint and finish at Wooden Bridge TWS Checkpoint. Total length is 25 miles. All entries will get an alligator tooth key chain. We will also serve lunch for racers when they finish. There will be no official awards ceremony. We understand teams need to get home so awards will be handed out when you finish. Awards will be given to 1st to 5th place in all classes. All finishers will also receive a 5x7 wooden plaque with artwork of an alligator and the name of the race. The cutoff time to finish is 2:00 PM.

- CLASSES:

- 1) Unlimited – Men and Mixed are in the same class– any design – 2 to 6 paddlers.
- 2) Women's Unlimited – any design – 2 to 6 paddlers.
- 3) Solo Unlimited – man and woman are in the same class– any design.
- 4) C2 Class – men, women and mixed are in the same class– all USCA specifications, TWS standard boats, aluminum, and recreation canoes - single blade paddles only.
- 5) Recreation Class - men, women or mixed are in the same class- recreation or aluminum canoes that are no longer than 17 feet 4 – single blade paddles only - no carbon or Kevlar or racing design allowed.



63rd Annual Texas Water Safari Friday, June 12th, 2024, 9am

When: June 12th – June 16th, 2026, 9am

Where: Spring Lake, San Marcos to Seadrift, Tx

Registration: <https://racehub.racehubhq.com/races/TexasWaterSafari2026>

More Information: Race information, course description, rules and procedures, boat types and all details regarding the TWS can be found at: <https://texaswatersafari.org/>



From the Archives:

Patty Geisinger

I have been tasked with taking years and years of TCRA/TCKRA boxes of historical documents, compiled by Lee Diviney, and finding a way to archive them digitally. It is slow going. But as I have looked back into the history of paddling in our state, I found sweet, funny and inspiring stories written by paddlers who have reached the steps over the years. And I decided it might be nice for all the members, new and veteran alike, to revisit these Safari stories. And if you are so inspired to write up your own, I would love to add it to the archives! Please enjoy this entry from Uncle Russ. This story was originally published in the August 1998 TCRA Newsletter.



Not the 1988 TWS but many familiar faces

Disaster and Recovery – Memories of 1988

By Russ Roberts

What can you say about a disaster – one that takes you out of the world’s toughest and greatest race, and forever places beside your name those dreaded letters, D.N.F for “Did Not Finish.” When the initial empty feeling begins to disappear, you curse your bad luck and feel at least a little sorry for yourself. Perhaps you awaken in the night with nagging thoughts of what you would do differently. For my part, I have engaged in all these useless exercises since the wee hours before dawn on Sunday, July 12th, 1988.

When the starting gun goes off in the Texas Water Safari, three distinct races begin. While teams who are going for it all battle for the lead, those who want to finish are bringing up the rear. In the middle are the racers who realize that they are a very long shot to win, but want to finish high, or win their class or both. In 1987, my goals were to finish and win masters (accomplished) and to win the novice division (don’t laugh too hard Matt and Jim). After a disappointing finish in 19th overall, I took a long hard look at myself and concluded the following:

1. I failed to eat after Gonzales and became dehydrated
2. I let the adrenalin take over when we took the novice lead, and sprinted all night,
3. I never learned to paddle and
4. I was a fat slob.

I resolved that 1988 would be different.

As June 11th approached, things looked good. I had an ICF boat that wasn't too badly hogged out, considering that Phil Bowden had used it to try to kill Ron Henk; I had a good partner in my son David, who is sort of a Brian Mynar clone without the experience, and two of the best bank runners on the river in Susie and Lisa Hansen. Finally, I had paddled over 1,200 miles and lost 30 pounds. Then, with only two months to go, David was forced out of the race when he flipped end over end in a bicycle race and tried to eat a concrete curb. The long hours at the hospital were a sobering reminder of the relative value of racing compared to life. Right Rocky?

The partner problem disappeared when Bob Spain and I agreed to team up and go for as high a position as we could manage. Bob was a little concerned that he had never driven a rudder-equipped boat and had never paddled over 20 miles. My only concern was whether Bob would ever drop below 200 strokes per minute. He very quickly discovered the miracle of the rudder pedals and became an extremely good driver. We felt comfortable in the boat and managed to get in almost 200 miles on the river. We rigged out one of the new Goynes-influenced tuff weave ICF boats and found that it made a big difference. We could go fast. All systems were a go and we felt like we could knock over any remaining parts of the Slayden log jam that the stern man of the "General" team hadn't chewed through with his teeth.

We had a great start and settled into a steady race, running between 8th and 12th place most of the day. Despite our ultra conservative game plan, a lot of minor annoyances, and a really easy pace, we found ourselves exceeding our fastest estimated times, as night approached. We ran with the 10-can to Gonzales, enjoying Robert Youens songs (I hope he doesn't do the things he sings about), and wondering why Kevin Bradley stood up in the bow so much. At the dam, one of the clips that secured our bow light broke, and we made a mistake. We stopped at the bridge to fix it, letting the boys in the aluminum boat get away. Gib and Hal Leffingwell passed us. We made our second mistake by not catching them immediately. Instead we paddled into the night alone.

Shortly before dawn, we found ourselves about seven miles from Hochheim in dense fog. We were in tenth place or better, had been eating and drinking regularly, and had used singles about 70% of the time. We were feeling strong and knew that we were in reach of 3 or 4 boats. We agreed that at dawn we would break out the doubles. Only the fog was a problem. My visibility in the bow was limited – Bob's was almost nonexistent. Suddenly we found ourselves aground behind a small island, river left. We could hear moving water ahead, but it did not sound bad. We pushed back into the current – mistake number 3 – we should have stopped to reconnoiter. We seemed to be in a bend to the left, but suddenly we found ourselves being swept sideways toward a cutbank on the outside of a right hand curve. Bob and I saw the stump almost simultaneously, protruding about a foot from the water, with heavy current pushing straight into it. There was no time to avoid it. AS we hit the stump just behind the bow seat, I yelled "lean left", but Bob had already anticipated. I leaned too, and grabbed a brace, but it didn't matter. The current swept the boat over and submerged the right gunwale. The wrap was instantaneous and explosive. It actually sounded like a "splat!" As I hit the water, I grabbed where the bow should have been. It was gone. As I was carried downstream of the current toward the cut bank, I saw a big strainer coming up rapidly. About 20 feet before I hit it, I happened to pass a small brush pile and was able to grab it and climb halfway up out of the water.

Meanwhile, Bob had found a bank eddy and was able to stand in chest-deep water. A few flashes of his headlamp confirmed our worst fears. We agreed to wait until daylight and take no chances. About 30-40 minutes later, 3 boats came by in quick succession: Donna Bugge and Jim Keirnan, Ted Slaughter and Tim

Ahern and the two gentlemen whose names I didn't catch. We assured them all that we were OK and with the growing light, we swam ashore. After trying to wade out to the boat, we found the current was far too deep and fast, and decided that the downstream strainer made a swim too risky. We began the long walk out. We got a lucky ride from the rancher, a real gentleman name Billy Polasek, who interrupted his morning to take us all the way to Hochheim.

We returned Monday and salvaged the boat and what equipment had not been liberated. Somewhere on the river, there are probably some guys in a flat bottomed boat, trying to figure out what to do with a Lendel paddle, a spray cover, 3 flares and a snake bite suction syringe. I have some suggestions for them.

The hours after wrapping the boat were filled with the feeling that we should still be paddling. Our whole team remarked that we kept looking at our watches, thinking of where we should be. Lisa and I drove to Seadrift on Tuesday, and I knew that the healing process would begin among the Safari people. Nevertheless, it was a strange sensation. John Bugge says that the Safari is the worst thing that can happen to you all year. Wrong, John. It is driving south along the seawall to the flagpole.

My non-racing friends reacted with a mixture of sympathy and amusement. After all, what kind of fools would do such a thing anyway? One very well-meaning friend commented: "What a shame. All that time and money and training wasted." I started to explain, but just smiled, in the knowledge that I will cherish 1988 as much as 1987.

What will I remember of the 1988 Safari? I will remember the comradeship of a great partner in Bob Spain and of team captains in Susy and Lisa; the time spent learning from veterans, most notably Tom Goynes, Troy, Robert and Rocky, and the great advice Mike Riley sent us before the race. I will remember the Aggie in the back of my boat who kept insisting we were not going to make it to the Slayden logjam in daylight – until he remembered to take off his sunglasses! I will recall the fact that Safari people can laugh with others and at ourselves. On one occasion, Joe Mynar was ribbing Troy about having been beaten by a C-1 in the Prelim. Troy reminded me in a loud voice that Joe could show me some great camping spots on top of the logjams near Cuero Dam. Never mind, guys, I have one staked out upriver. And shortly after Safari, after the Shrimpfest Race, Horsefly Daniel paddled up a couple of hours after the race was over and commented to my partners that they were lucky to have had me in the boat. You remember Horsefly! He's the guy who broke two paddles in the Safari. Personally, if I ever break a paddle, I'll just wait until Horsefly canoes by and use him as a paddle.

I will remember being taught the meaning of humility one November morning on the Sabine by Mike Shively, and the lesson he gave me afterward about giving up. And I will remember when John Bugge passed me during the Prelim, and himself badly dehydrated and hurting, paused long enough to remind me to eat and to put more rotation in my stroke. I will recall how flattered I was that Bob and I made honorable mention on the 1988 sign, although I knew that if John Bugge and Mike Shively had lost any sleep the night before, they were seeing other boats than ours in their dreams.

I will remember 1988 as the year of the victory for those great gentleman and competitors: Joe Mynar, Fred Mynar and Brian Mynar – all three of them!

But perhaps most of all, I will remember those "wasted" hours spent training, especially the miles with Hoyt and Judy – almost a thousand of them, our comradeship and rivalry, racing together in practice runs; that icy day in January, when the rain between Gonzales and Hochheim was so thick the bailers couldn't keep up

with it and the fire and hot coffee afterwards. I remember the combination of pride and alarm I felt when they shot past us in the Safari at Prairie Lea.

Personally I learned many lessons this year on not giving up, from many people, but the best lesson was from a squirrel. I was sitting at a concrete picnic table a few weeks ago, and a squirrel that had been moving through the treetops apparently lost its balance and it fell with a “splat!” on the concrete top. For a full second, it lay against my arm, then groggily got up and jumped from the table. It didn’t hesitate a moment before running right back up into the treetops.

See you on the River.

Russ Roberts went on to finish 7 Safari’s, had 2 DNF’s and was a Team Captain 3 times for his son David who had a dnf in 2002, but went on to win the Novice Division in 2003 and in 2006 when David finished 10th Unlimited.

The 1988 Texas Water Safari had 31 finishers and 19 DNF’s: [1988 TWS Results](#)