

The DDRC Current News

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The Official Newsletter of the Dallas Downriver Club

December 1999

August on the Ocoee (Part 2)

Debbie Meller, Chris Burt, Mark Poindexter, and Wayne Sanaghan

by *Wayne Sanaghan*

Late Saturday morning we came up on the 96 Olympic kayaking runs. Deciding the discretion is the better part of valor, and fear the better part of discretion, I scouted first while Mark and Chris charged right through. Debbie scouted as well, more to keep me company than out of any need for her. Right off the bat we saw Dan Daniels from the infamous, head-splitting, Richland Creek trip, and his newly decorated, hand-painted, 70's Grateful Dead Flower Child kayak. Pretty cool.

After looking over the run, the time of purification was at hand. I had listened very carefully to Debbie's explanation while she explained step-by-step the best approach for the entire 200 yard run. When I got in my boat, I thought about what she said and replayed everything I remembered in my head: "(blank), (blank), Oh, yeah, don't get stuck in Humongous* or you'll die, (blank)" (*Humongous is a class 4 hole and a real keeper). I ran down my checklist:

Kayak and paddle. Check.

Helmet and nose plug. Check.

Life Jacket/Sprayskirt. Check.

Common sense and courage. Missing.

Foolhardy bravado and a sinking feeling? That'll have to do. Check.

Sparing the details of the trip, I made it all the way down the run without flipping over once. If you were judging me for time, you wouldn't have needed the second hand, but I made it. Debbie had left out what to do about the huge boulder sitting in the river at the end of the run, but I figured the best thing to do would be to not hit it. I must be getting better because I'm starting to figure these things out on my own.



After we were all worn out playing in the rapids, we topped and had lunch on the side of the river. The kids wouldn't stop fighting and it took a while to settle them down for their nap. (See pic of Chris helping Mark untangle himself from the C-1 cramps.)



It's a fun spot to sit, and we saw a boat going down upside down (paddler absent). A minute later, we saw two rafters float by and get caught in Humongous. One person had a close call, getting stuck for several panicky minutes while the people on the shore just kept tossing more ropes. They finally got her out and she was not very interested in continuing the trip (See pic). Another group of rafters lost a person and while the guide pulled them in, the boat drifted away from the takeout. Another guide on shore tossed them a rope so they could hit the eddy take-out after the bridge. Raft + 7 people in strong current vs. 1 person on shore. Want to guess who won that tug-of-war?

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Y2K OFFICER ELECTIONS!

The Dallas Down River Club will not survive without active members volunteering their time to take on club responsibilities. If you use the DDRC for a paddling or social network, you need to help keep it alive. It's really not that bad folks, and you get to know so many of the membership and other club members that it creates more friendships and more opportunities to paddle!

Officer elections will be held at the January meeting. Before then, we need to take nominations for Officers. Nominations will be held at the November and December meetings. Those positions up for nomination are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor. All other positions in the club are appointed by the President. We need you!

If you would be interested in one of these positions or know of another member that you think would do a good job, please nominate yourself or them at the December meeting. Here are the gracious folks that accepted nominations at the November meeting, but we need more. Let's have fun and be competitive!

President:

Betty Scott

Vice-President:

Alan Tittle

Mary Beth Kvanli

Treasurer:

Chris Cockrell

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Marge Mitchell

1999

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Debbie Meller 972-727-9290

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Newsletter Editor:

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Rich Grayson 214-827-0144

Environmental:

David Lamb 214-931-3068

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Jerry Kier 972-869-2642

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Judy Purze 972-717-5053

Yo Deatherage 972-222-1407

Safety:

Mary Beth Kvanli 214-352-5446

Training:**Kayaks**

Debbie Meller 214-727-9290

Caddo Lake Permits

One of our club members now has the dubious honor of receiving the first known ticket for camping on Goat Island without a permit. They shall remain unnamed to protect the innocent. The Game Warden has found a new source of revenue. Any one camping at Caddo now needs to have a Limited Use Permit, a Gold or Silver Conservation Passport or a Public Hunting Permit. Failure to abide by their interpretation of the regulations will now cost you \$147.50. Have a nice day!

Get Connected on the Internet

DDRC's website is provided by Inturnet, inc., a local ISP based in Richardson. In addition to providing our club with FREE web space, inturnet also offers access to DDRC members at a 10% discount off the regular monthly rate of \$19.95 per month for unlimited, 24 hours per day access.

To top it off, DDRC receives a 10% bonus for each member signing up, so it's a double win-win for you and the club. If you want your own web pages, inturnet provides 10MB FREE space, enough space to create about 900 pages (more or less)! You will also receive an e-mail address so you can communicate easier.

Call Tod E. Weber at (972)783-0066 for an account and be sure to tell him you are a DDRC member so both you and the club get the bonuses, or contact Rich Grayson.

Most Miles Paddled

It is almost time to tally up those miles for the annual Most Miles Paddled Awards. The female and male that can produce a log of the most miles paddled in 1999 will get possession of the great trophy's Hans Weichsel donated to the club. The women's trophy is in memory of Helen Livingston's sister Selma Bering, the men's in honor of former Club President Jim Stephens, both of who died while on river trips.

The rules are simple. You must have been a club member for at least six months. Only the miles you paddle while a club member count, and "you" must do the paddling. Most any human powered watercraft counts. Miles are measured from a recognized publication. We need dates, put-in and take-out, trip leader or trip members' etc. etc. The Trophy Award Committee shall make the final decision. Logs are due by the January club meeting.

Newsletter: The DDRC newsletter, Current News, is a monthly publication distributed to club members and affiliated paddling organizations nationwide. The deadline for submissions is the 1st Thursday of each month. Information may be submitted via e-mail, at schleter@dallas.net, or fax/phone to Steve Schleter, at (972) 329-0729. Articles about and of direct interest to DDRC members will receive first priority, paid advertising will be given second priority, and other materials will be included on a space-available basis. Unless otherwise specified, all information about river trips will be added to the DDRC Internet website trip calendar.

Change of Address: Please contact Chris Cockrell, Treasurer, if you need to report a change of mailing address. If you fail to get a newsletter, it will be because we do not have a current address or your membership has expired. Chris will be happy to correct wrong addresses, and take your dues if you are in arrears.

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\$20.00/year - Individual or Family
\$200.00 – Lifetime Membership

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We had to shuttle to the lower Ocoee (after Dam 2) and even on that relatively short trip, we saw the re-emergence of “Slug-Bug” (the kids) and “Pinch, Poke, Owe me a Coke.” (I’m not telling which female played this kids game) Chris and Mark put in at the dam, Deb and I started a little farther down and waited for them to get down to us. I’m not at their skill level and I do appreciate the time Deb takes to “baby-sit” me and keep me (more or less) out of trouble. The lower run was a lot of class 2-3 fun. I hit a few bigger spots and I caught every roll. It usually takes me a little time to warm up. The rafts were even thicker down here and we had to watch out for them in the slow spots so we didn’t get pinned.



I got so busy talking to Chris (see pic of him surfing a big hole) that I was surprised by Surprise Ledge and just sort of fell over it. You’re supposed to relax before an accident, right? It flipped me, tossed me a little bit, and I rolled back up. Expecting to see a river, trees, and skyline, I was surprised to be staring right into a waterfall as tall as I was in the kayak. I didn’t realize it, but it had flipped me around and held onto me. Trying to get out, I wound up parallel to the wall and couldn’t get out. When paddling doesn’t work, brace and use your paddle to push off the wall. It’s not pretty, but it works.

It cost me a contact lens and a little bit of pride to get stuck in something so minor. The way I keep losing contact lenses—and usually only one—had led me to my newest piece of kayaking gear: An eyepatch. Arrgh, Wayne the One-Eyed Pirate Kayaker! It beats squinting one eye closed the whole trip.

Before we were interrupted, Chris had been warning me about getting caught by rafts. They hold onto plastic boats like pocket fuzz onto Velcro and if his lecture wasn’t warning enough, a raft plowed right over him in Double Trouble and sure enough, he was stuck on it.

All the other rapids were a lot of fun, the scenery was great, and I understand why this was picked for the Olympics. When we got down to Table Saw, I saw a cascading series of standing waves and received a lot of great advice from Chris ... then hit it all wrong. You’re supposed to hit it at a 45° angle and push through or something like that and I just rode right down the middle where the waves were the biggest. While it might have been the wrong line, riding the top of the Table Saw was a ton of fun! I was tossed around more than a handful of quarters in the dryer (and probably made more noise, too) until I finally flipped. After a couple of tries (I admit it; halfhearted tries. All this getting beaten up was wearing me out) I finally bailed. The only one I missed.

After Table Saw was the Doldrums, and they were just that. Flat water and a lot of the rafters jumping out to swim. It looked like a giant pot of people soup. The rafts were so thick that you could practically walk downstream. A raft full of 14ish-year-old kids asked how I rolled. “Not very well.” (I missed the roll, but I caught that one). They wanted a roll demo so, in the flat water, I rolled over. Then, unknown to me, the raft drifted over me. I couldn’t figure out why I couldn’t roll up. I just thought I was hitting it wrong and kept trying...and trying. I had only flopped in the swift water once, I sure wasn’t going to lose it in flat water. On the 4th try the raft finally came off me and I got my roll. Half the river was watching and cheered when I made it. A cheer for taking 4 tries to hit a roll—I’ll have to take my glory where I can get it.

The last real rapid is Hellhole, a real quick and deep water pileup next to the power plant. It was packed and while I took the easy route to the left, Chris blasted right through the hole. Several times. I swear, he’s like an unruly kid.

It was a short, flat-water paddle out from there. The highlight of the trip: I got to hear the infamous “Jalapeño Nacho Cheese Something” Grand Canyon story from Mark and Chris, followed by Debbie and her peanut-butter story. The stories, and a meal at the Wildwater Deli/Steakhouse, pretty much capped the night.



(Hey! Who forgot to pay the water bill!) Sunday, August 15th we woke up to a beautiful new day. I jumped in the tent with Chris and wrestled him awake. I surrendered when he put his armpit in my face in his version of a sleeper hold. I immediately surrendered; I’m not that strong. We drove off to breakfast blind, zooming down the highway with sun glaring off the fog still on the windows. We passed through Copper Hill and saw a single miner still on strike since 1996 (Here’s a hint: You lost!) and stopped at a gas station where Mark went in to find directions to a diner. The local’s reply stumped Mark until he figured it out: “They wouldn’t be serving it yet.” (Thinking Mark said ‘directions to dinner’ with an accent.)

We just did one river run so we could get on the road. I wasn’t hitting any rolls, but everyone was amazed at my self-rescue skills, keeping the boat and paddle with me every time. Practice, practice! Going into Flipper, Debbie dropped in and got stuck, but figured she’d just surf for a while. She didn’t realize I was right behind her. We bobbed and bonked off each other until I finally saw her fly across my bow upside down and slightly airborne, followed by the strangest sensation as I saw the sky. I tried twice to roll, blew it, then tried to bail. That wasn’t

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working either—I kept yanking the loop, but the skirt wasn't coming off. I was stuck! The feeling of panic passed quickly (you know that final calm you're supposed to feel...) then I realized I was pulling the front boat loop instead of the skirt loop. A definite vacancy at the Grey Matter Hotel, but at least I know I was kissing the deck. I pulled the correct loop and bailed out thinking I could have rolled upright by now.

After another short lecture and watching a flawless run by Chris, I ran Table Saw for the second time. Again, I made it almost all the way down then flipped near the end. Instead of a series of tries, I remembered what Chris had said and held on, waiting for the bouncing to settle down with paddle positioned. Bobbing along downstream upside down was actually pretty relaxing. I was set, I was calm...then I remembered Diamond Splitter was right below—there's a reason the water wasn't settling down! T-minus dumb and counting...



I did a panicky roll, blew it, and swam. I self-rescued to an eddy just before Diamond Splitter. I was floating upriver of the eddy rock, swinging the kayak and paddle into the eddy when WHAM! Raft in the rear, pinning me to the rock like a frog to a dissection tray (and looking about as graceful when my arms and legs shot out). I lost my boat and paddle. The rafters tried to grab my stuff, but they lost it. Once again Chris, Patron Saint of Kayak Rescue, picked them up for me while I walked around. (Pic L to R: Chris, Mark, Wayne, Debbie).

We just played the rest of the way out. We went through some Class 2 stuff where I committed the cardinal sin. Chris was eddying behind a small rock while I approached from 20 feet away, looking right at him with all the time in the world to change course. I said "Oh shoot," on the way as I went where I was looking instead of where I wanted to go, spun 180° on the shallow rock, then thumped back into the water and kept going. As far as he needs to know, I meant to do that.

(The kids take a power nap so they'll have energy to wrestle the rest of the night.) We stopped for a while to practice the Human Mystery Move at a jump-off rock (it holds you under, even with a life jacket), and pushed past Hell Hole (even the kids didn't play long). By noon Dallas time, we were back on the road heading home. A great trip with some fun people. Chris and Mark are excellent C-1 paddlers and it was great to be out with them. Debbie seemed to be friends with half the people on the river and I appreciate her letting me tag along.



The Colorado River **From** **Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek** **By** **Jerry Kier**

Between October 12th and 27th I had the opportunity to raft this stretch of river with Judy 'Gearhead' Purze and nine other rafters and kayakers from Austin, San Antonio, and El Paso. For the uninformed, this is the stretch of the Colorado that has carved the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Our private permit group was 4 kayaks and 5 rafts strong, with Judy and me in a virgin purple 14 ft Aire self-bailer. Quite frankly, I was very nervous about this trip. Stories about huge waves, flipped rafts, swims through long rapids, and cold water abound among the rafting elite. Who in our paddling community has not seen them smile and wink when discussing Lava,

Granite, and Crystal? I, being a mere class 3 canoeist, was a passenger on this trip of 225 miles; an aide to a Canyon veteran passenger who had ridden some of the biggest water in the world, but commanded a raft on none of it. This she readily acknowledged, as she was more nervous than I. So what were we doing on this trip? As Judy said, "the Canyon is about overcoming fear"—and we did! Our leader was Pablo and our sweep was Johnny, and they conducted a 16 day clinic for us. Judy got better and more skilled by the day. Her short, choppy, weak strokes became powerful, long strokes. Her confidence (mine also) grew daily after we hammered Grapevine Rapid

at mile 81.5. The transformation was remarkable. We had no flips, a couple close calls, and lost only 1 oarlock and no oars. Judy became a Monster in the rapids and I learned that I am a good flat water rower.

So what about the Canyon and River? They create sensory overload, with each day more spectacular than the previous. Perfect weather, incredible colors, awesome rapids, interesting hikes, and no canned chicken made for a memorable trip. After 16 days I was ready to start over.

LOWER COLORADO RIVER — Week of February 20, 2000 — Known for its exceptional bald eagle populations, the lower Colorado is also a great habitat for canoe campers. We are almost assured of good wildlife sightings. Depending on the weather, water flow, and other considerations, we may attempt the entire 128 mile section from Webberville to Columbus. This river has good gravel-sand bar camping, and generally easy paddling. Come on down and enjoy outdoor Texas in the winter! Call Mark McClain 972-253-4449 if you are interested in coming along.

For Sale:
1A Yakima racks with 48 inch bars, \$80, Jerry Johnson, metro 817-267-5375

For Sale:
Lynx inflatable kayak by Aire. Includes 3 kayak paddles plus all other necessary gear. All for \$200. Call Windell Thomas @ 972.492.5023

WELL, THIS IS IT!
by Steve Schleiter

After 38 issues I have come to the conclusion that I have had about as much fun as one can stand. So with a heavy heart I must announce my retirement as your newsletter editor. This will be my last issue, but as soon as our next worthy volunteer takes over you should continue receiving this fine publication that you have learn to love and enjoy. But remember, this is YOUR newsletter and without your trip reports and articles there could not be one, so keep them coming.

I want to thank everyone for the opportunity of being the editor and I really have had a fun time with it.

BOB NARRAMORE

(972) 272-3353

Club Funds Proposals

There was a motion and a second to that motion at our November Club meeting to donate \$1500.00 to several charities. The Bayou City Whitewater Club has given \$900.00 to the Texas River Protection Association, and there was a proposal to match that, and another to up the ante to an even \$1000.00. Another was to give an amount to the Private Boaters Association. These items will be discussed further and voted on during the December or January Club meeting.



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PLACE
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The December meeting will be our official Christmas party. There will be decorations, desserts, and a help yourself, buffet dinner instead of the individual menu orders.

We are encouraging members to bring and share a favorite dessert, as we always do at the December meeting. Last year we had the whole back of the room full of sweets and goodies.

Bring your tales of recent trips and any future trip plans to share with us too!