

Celebrating 13 years of outdoor fun!

www.townaustin.org

For all the Wonder Women of TOWN-Austin: What a fun and productive year 2008 was for our organizations and its members!

We had over 110 scheduled outings + impromptu ones and our Wednesday night paddling. Over forty members led outings or assisted with them. Did you enjoy these or lead them? Our outings included:

Individual outings - Frisbee golf, our holiday party, birding, game nights, RV expo, music at various venues, Bamberger Ranch, experiencing a Trikke, Canoe and Kayak – try a kayak weekend, Cap10K, Galveston's FeatherFest, Sand Fest in Port Aransas, Balcones Songbird Festival, volksmarches, tours of Washington-on-the-Brazos, Antique Rose Emporium, and the Blue Bell Creamery, Sand Castle Competition in Galveston, Kerrville Folk Festival, canopy zip lining tour (my personal high), TX Safari Canoe Race, tubing on San Marcos River, Zilker Music under the Stars, play day at Bob Wentz Park, gospel brunch at Threadgill's, Zilker Park Blues on the Green, Deep Eddy Splash Party, wine tasting, Krause Springs Picnic, baseball at Dell Diamond, Black and Blue at Wimberly, kayaking and snorkeling in PortA, Rockport Hummingbird Festival, walking tours, and Texas Renaissance Festival and camping,

Kayaking - Town Lake, full moon paddle, Mary Quinlan Park, Brushy Creek, Lady Bird Lake, Walsh Landing, and 360 Bridge

Mountain biking – Mary Moore Seawright and Cameron Park Women's Mountain Bike Clinic

Hiking - Pedernales Falls SP, McKinney Falls SP, Enchanted Rock, Barton Creek, McKinney Roughs LCRA park, Wild Basin, Canyon Lake Gorge, Buescher State Park, Bright Leaf, death marches - Bastrop, Walnut Creek, Mary Moore Seawright, Dick Nichols Park, Longview Park and Stephenson Preserve, Onion Creek Park, Lake Georgetown Goodwater Loop, and St. Edward's Park

Camping - Canyon of the Eagles, Hill Country State Natural Area, Jellystone Park, Lake Belton, Inks Lake, Lost Maples State Natural Area, Llano River, Garner State Park, Big Bend!!!!, and Guadalupe River State Park Specials for our membership – Celebrate TOWN at Mary Moore Seawright and Thank You for our outings leaders (IMAX and lunch)

Our membership increased to 170. Our member Birgit joined us for activities while she was posted here from Germany for 18 months. We enjoyed hiking her husband and daughter. Our member Sabin had a new baby girl Eva. Our participation at the TPWD Expo XVII was a hit and our membership grew from the publicity and outreach at the event.

Our subgroups for camping, hiking and kayaking generated well attended events. Thank you to those subgroup leaders.

The **speakers** at our monthly meetings included: Joy Emshoff (TX Water Safari), Mark Klym (hummingbirds), Kurt Hill (Rowing Dock), Jennifer Brown (Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan), Bob Spain (TX Kayaking Trails), Judy Aswell (dehydrating foods), Carol Castlebury (Volksmarch), Joy Emshoff and Kim Jennings (TX Water Safari participants), and Heather Givens and Carol Castlebury (knot-tying). Our November meeting was a successful potluck and garage sale.

If you think I'm excited, happy and pleased about our year for 2008, you are correct! I'm proud to be your group coordinator and looking forward to our 2009 together. from Coordinator/President – Jacque Austin

TOWN Meetings are the 4th Tuesday of each month, at the LCRA Red Bud Center. Outings discussion at 6PM, meeting starts at 6:30PM.

Directions to 3601 Lake Austin Blvd. The LCRA Red Bud Center is located at the corner of Lake Austin Blvd and Red Bud Trail. Park in front of the building. The front entrance is located on the 2nd floor; in conference room 225. Here's a list of **upcoming speakers** for our TOWN meetings:

April- NOAA Weather May-Blue Birds June-Wind Power and Wildlife

"Our mission is to provide all women the opportunity to learn and experience outdoor activities in natural surroundings through a safe, non-threatening, and supportive environment."

TOWN LEADERSHIP TEAM

Coordinator/President – Jacque Austin jsaustin54@sbcglobal.net

Membership Chair – Jenn Trivette iltrivette@yahoo.com

Club Treasurer – Janet Fitzsimon-Barr janetfb@austin.rr.com

Webmaster - Jacque Austin isaustin54@sbcglobal.net

Club Newsletter – Dawn Goodall 2emailDawn@gmail.com

Outings Coordinator – Judy Dunavant judydunavant@sbcglobal.net

Publicity Chair – June Apprill japprill@swbell.net

Club Secretary – Cindy Frey cef0490@yahoo.com

Club Historian – Paulette Boudreaux pboudreaux@eccwireless.com

Austin TOWN P.O. Box 300494 Austin, TX 78703

March 24 - Lora Dame of Tom's Dive and Swim Shop will introduce us to the world of Scuba Diving.



We have a FREE Scuba Diving Outing on Sat.3/28 at 1pm courtesy of Lora and Tom's Dive and Swim Shop. Contact jsaustin54@sbcglobal.net

The **February meeting** was an informative presentation about backpacking from Nick Somers of REI. Nick began by emphasizing the need to respect pristine areas and adhere to the "Leave No Trace" principles. Planning ahead should include picking a partner, choosing a destination, gearing up accordingly, and obtaining necessary permits and knowledge of any restrictions. Clothing should include base layers, insulation, waterproof shells, socks, hiking boots, and camp shoes. Boots should be waterproof but breathable, and dry socks are essential or you may get the dreaded TRENCH FOOT. He discussed the difference between an internal and external frame pack. In general, internal frame packs distribute the load better and are more comfortable. Most brands of packs have models specifically designed for women. Other gear should include a sleeping bag/pad, stove/fuel, tent, water system. and cook set. Continued on page 2

Due to weather, we missed **January's meeting** which was to be with Ashley Mathews on TPWD Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) workshops.. Additional info available at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/bow/.





Page 2 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org

Scuba Diving for the beginner -at Tom's Dive and Swim Shop

Contact jsaustin54@sbcglobal.net

FREE

Spots still Available!

March 28th 1pm

March 27-29

Inks Lake Campout - we will go there fairly early on Friday AM, stay Friday & Saturday nights, and return Sunday. we will have all 3 dogs with us, so you might want your own campsite for this one! We plan to hike and kayak, read and relax, play games etc.; call (512) 389-8900 to make a reservation. RSVP to Nance so we can figure out some sort of method of coordinating and finding each other at the park. nance 512.632.0672



TOWN Outreach Event Lake Somerville, Birch Creek Unit

Families, friends, and well behaved dogs are invited

We are inviting Waco, Houston, and San Marcos TOWN groups to join us, as this is a central location. Activities available include kayaking,

canoeing (rentals available), hiking trails, biking roads, and a fishing pier. Also there is another part of the park that allows horses and has a

horse trail. The Lake Somerville Trailway, located around the west end of the reservoir, connects Birch Creek State Park with Nails Creek State Park via 13 miles of

trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, backpacking, birding, and nature study. Flag Pond, located approximately 4 miles from Nails Creek State Park and 9 miles from Birch Creek State Park along the Somerville Trailway, provides wildlife viewing opportunities in conjunction with a system of interpretive trails, nature study, outdoor classrooms, and wildlife photography. The Flag Pond Nature Theater provides an excellent

wildlife-viewing platform.

TOWN AUSTIN is renting the very nice Group Dining Facility for Friday and Saturday, useable 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The facility includes AC/Heat, BBQ grill, refrig, stove and oven, microwave, double sink, tables and seating, and bathroom (toilets only)

By renting the dining area, there will be 14 RV sites with electric and water available only for our group, and up to 20 tent sites around the perimeter.RV sites cost \$16/ per night, tent sites are \$10/ per night. There is a \$3 per day use fee if you don't have a TX Park Pass, which admits anyone in your vehicle. Sites are first come first served paid at the facility upon arrival. We will take names of definites, so we will know if we need overflow reservations. The showers are in different parts of the park, with sites 31-60 (Post Oak) being closest--short trail thru woods, and by road.

We are planning to utilize the Dining Hall for educational classes that our members with special knowledge or experience can share with interested TOWNIES--Please let Beverly or Paulette know what you might be interested in teaching or learning or anyone willing to lead an excursion is welcome to volunteer. Beverly Travis 254-421-3896, brtravis@hot.rr.com

Paulette Boudreaux, 512-589-3438, phoudreaux@eccwireless.com

Thursday-Sunday, April 2-5

February meeting continued. - Nick spent some time discussing sleeping bags, down vs. synthetic, and stressed that a down bag must be washed in a front load style washing machine rather than a top load machine with an agitator. He also noted that stoves must be kept clean in order to function properly. To save space, Nick often uses a platypus water bottle (2½-3 liter) which collapses as he drinks. He mentioned using aquamira to purify his water. There was so much to cover that Nick did not get to spend a lot of time on packing the pack but remember to "AVOID THE VOID", by packing items inside each other. Nick uses stuff sacks to organize his gear so that he can quickly locate and retrieve items. Most of the weight in the pack should be against your back and he recommended keeping fuel near the bottom of the pack so that it can't spill on your food. Nick brought a variety of equipment for demonstration purposes. He shared 10 Essentials that you or someone on the trip must have: map, compass, headlamp (or flashlight), batteries, food, water, extra clothes (rain layer, beanie, or extra clothes), 1st aid kit, knife, and a fire source. This is what I jotted down. REI's ultralight backpacking checklist (see link below) also includes sun protection and emergency shelter as well as a few more specific items.

Whew, it was a lot of information in a short time. Here is the link for the REI backpacking checklist:





Page 3 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org

Texas Sand Sculpture 3-Day Festival (Texas Sandfest)

Trip open to everyone. Dogs allowed as long as they are well behaved.

Location: Port Aransas, Texas on the beach, one mile south of Horace Caldwell Pier, near beach marker 9 - 11.

Benefits: Art Center For The Islands, Port Aransas Community Theatre, Port Aransas Food Pantry, & Port Aransas Preservation & Historical Association

It is highly recommended that you book your place to stay soon as possible as the island gets sold out very quickly for this event. We will weather pending include a kayak trip, bike riding, souvenir shopping, boogie boarding, pier fishing and a campfire on the beach at night with s'mores etc. More details to follow.

Those interested in camping, I recommend: http://www.surfsiderv.com/ I have camped here. Unfortunately they don't allow tenters; however they have excellent showers and restroom facilities and a very helpful staff. It is located one block from the beach which is within walking distance. Tenters check this link http://www.onthebeachrvpark.com/ This campground allows tenters. I have not camped here before, For those who need a condo/hotel I recommend:

http://www.alaughinghorselodge.com/ This facility allows pets.

Please make your own reservations and then let me know how many in your party are coming, a phone number and what day you will be arriving. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Paulette. 512-589-3 pboudreaux@eccwireless.com

Check this link for more information. http://www.texassandfest.com/

Friday -Sunday, April 17 - 19



Palo Duro/Caprock Canyons Camping Trip

TOWN members and guests invited

Do you want to get away from it all? Go somewhere that I like to refer as "the middle of nowhere"? Hear the coyotes howl and see a billion stars at night? Please come join me in the Panhandle of Texas! I am camping in Caprock Canyons and Palo Duro State Parks the week of May 17-23.

Schedule:

Arriving Caprock Canyons the afternoon of Sunday, May 17th
Leaving Caprock and driving 90+ miles to Palo Duro On Wed, May 20th – camping there until
Sunday, May 23rd RSVP Gloria Blagg 512-426-9740 (cell) gloria blagg@sbcglobal.net

May 17-23

Pictures of Palo Duro taken by Dawn 2008...it was beautiful and I am going again on Gloria's trip!









Page 4 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org

Leader Appreciation Outing -

For those of us who swam with the sharks, dived with the gannets, and lunged with the bottle-nose dolphins, the IMAX 3D movie Wild Coast was indeed an untamed and holding your breathe experience. We were all there to gorge on the massive shoals of sardines moving from warm to cool water off the south east coast of Africa. The film is impressive and the 3D glasses much improved. It's a good movie to share with your families.

Twenty-six TOWN-Austin members (who led outings, supported Expo, and Board members) met to enjoy the movie: Amelia, Andra, Beverly, Bonnie, Carol, Carrie, Cindy, Dannielle, Dawn, Deborah, Gloria, Heidi, Jacque, JanetC, JanetFSB, Jenn, June, LisaK, LisaM, LisaS, Marie, Nancy, Paulette, Penny, SandyO, and Stacy. We surprised Andra, Jenn, and June by honoring them with Academy gift cards. Their above the bar efforts during 2008 contributed substantially to our outings, both in numbers and variety. After the movie, Marilyn joined us and we adjourned to Hula Hut for a light repast. Never let anyone equate the Women of TOWN with the South Beach Diet or Weight Watcher points. Judging from the decibel level at our table, a good time was enjoyed by all 25 of us. Most of us managed to share desserts even after eating our fill earlier of sardines. And what a surprise for me – I didn't even know it was my birthday. That's it for now, Jacque TOWN-Austin Coordinator



Lake Georgetown Hike Crockett Gardens and Falls

On Saturday morning, ten TOWN women (Marcia M., Judy W., Debra L., Marilyn C., Jacque A., June A., Dawn G., Lisa W., Sue W., and Diana H.) joined me for a five mile hike along the Goodwater trail at Lake Georgetown. We hiked from Cedar Breaks Park to Crockett Gardens and Falls and back along the same route. Along the way, we saw some nice views of the lake and stone relics of an old homestead. There really was water at the Falls and there were a lot of wild irises, one of which was blooming. During the hike, we went geocaching and found 9 of 12 geocaches that are the traits listed in the Boy Scout Law. We found geocaches for "trustworthy", "brave", "clean", "reverent", "kind", "cheerful", "helpful", "obedient" and "loyal". They were micro geocaches so they weren't very easy to find. Some other time we will have to look for the last three geocaches ("thrifty", "friendly", and "courteous".) The group also found one large geocache and Jacque found two before the hike started so it was guite a successful day. The weather was good and the company was even better. Thanks for joining me for the hike! Submitted by and photo of iris by Lisa Sands

Kayaking every Wednesday night

at The Rowing Dock.
We will paddle about and hour.
Try to get there a little early
if you need to rent a boat,
and be ready to shove off at 6:00.

Don't forget to sign up for beginner lessons for April 1 at 6:00. There are a few spaces left. For more info contact Joy at jle0987@yahoo.com

One example of abundant wildlife seen during outing described on next page! photo by Dawn







Page 5 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org

What a good turnout we had for the **Port Aransas Whooping Crane Festival** held Feb. 26 – March 1! GloriaB (with her son Eric) and Adela (with daughter Annie) roughed it in their respective campers. Janet, Dawn, Beverly, and I enjoyed the amenities at the Laughing Horse Lodge. CarolB (with her mom and sister) stayed at Bella's. Sharon (with husband William and friends Patti and Steve) stayed at the Plantation House. We even made a new friend, Julia (with son Will), Julia will soon join our membership roll.

Thursday: The drive to Port Aransas was highlighted with numerous crested caracara; Beverly and I met at the civic center to procure our registration packets for the festival. Beverly and I headed for the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center which is located at the water processing plant. (That should alert the reader to the strong possibility of yucky smells!) We spotted teals, grebe, an alligator, pelicans, cormorants, roseate spoonbills, herons of all variety, yellow warbler – among other birds. Early Thursday evening Gloria, Adela, Julia, Beverly, and I attended the welcome event at the Art Center for the Islands. The center of attraction was the International Crane Foundation's Children's Art Exhibit. I have to admit I'm not much of an art person, but the drawings and media variety were certainly impressive. We sampled the wine and catered goodies almost to excess. To add to the evening, an acoustic guitarist played big band melodies and 70's tunes. After the reception, we walked to Castaways for dinner enjoyed (what else?) seafood.







Friday: Gloria, Julia, and Carol enjoyed field trips. Beverly, Adela, and I joined the bus group to travel to Fennessy Ranch. The ranch is suffering from the severe drought plaguing south Texas. Despite that, we saw wild turkeys, green jays, mottled ducks, gadwalls, vermillion flycatchers, ospreys, northern harriers, crested caracaras, green kingfisher, sandhill cranes – among other birds. Beverly was the heroine of the trip as she spotted an Audubon oriole which was an exciting find. We also enjoyed viewing an eagle's next with two babes and mom and dad. Luncheon was enjoyed at Virginia's on the Bay – although I must admit the food was not as tasty as I recalled. Late in the afternoon, Janet, Dawn and Sharon all arrived. Some of us birded at Paradise Pond which is dry except for man-made two drip lines. Again Beverly spotted a great bird – a kiskadee (large, brown, and yellow). Back to the birding center we went for additional looks. Dinner Friday evening was a pot-luck gathering at the picnic area where Gloria and Adela camped. It turned out great just like most pot-lucks do – Frito pie, bratwurst dogs, green salad (for health), and smores.

Saturday: Gloria, Janet, Dawn, Beverly, and I converged at the ARK (Animal Rehab Keep) at UTMSI (UT Marine Science Institute) for a tour. This was great; we a variety of turtles and birds that are being rehabbed. We also met Billie Bob who has been with ARK for 11 years; his front flippers were surgically mauled, so he cannot swim and defend himself. This would be a great place for us to volunteer this summer. Beverly and I also toured the salt water marsh area and found several geocaches. After lunch we (CarolB with family, Gloria and son, Julia and son, Sharon and entourage, Beverly, Adela, Janet, Dawn, and I) all met for the whooping crane boat trip. We met a professional photographer who enlightened us with tips. We did manage to see probably 15 whooping cranes, harriers, sandhill cranes, cows, a wild pig, and lots of black-crowned night herons (frequently referred as trash bags by one of our group). Being the glutens for punishment that we are – we headed back to Paradise Pond and onto the stinky place one last time. For dinner we gathered at Spaghetti Works for the best food (except the pot-luck!) that we had.

Sunday: Janet, Beverly, and I departed Port A. and headed for Choke Canyon State Park where we spotted: crested caracaras, vermillion flycatchers, a kiskadee, golden-fronted woodpeckers, a variety of herons, a common-yellowthroat warbler, roseate spoonbills, sora rail, more trash bag birds, a very long alligator, and three diamond backed water snakes. Janet promised they were not poisonous, but neither Beverly nor I did any wading after that. This is a great state park and we could have spent all day there.

If you are not a birder, then this trip report was too long for you. We did have a fun four days. The wind was the only negative aspect as it blew over 50 mph much of the time. Submitted by Jacque/photos by Dawn

Trip Reports



Page 6 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org

The Enchanted Rock hike on Saturday the 28th of Feb, ROCKED!

It was a clear sunny day with lots of wind, but bearable. The group was a small group of four, Suzanne H, Judy J.D., Laura A. and myself. I apologize if we missed anybody who should up on time and left with out us. I was running late that morning and didn't get there till around 10:30.

The group decided to hike instead of run which was good. This allowed us to start on the Loop trail and take some of the less traveled backwoods trails. Along the backwoods trails we saw many interesting rock outcrops and boulders.

After we Looped the main dome, it was time for a lunch break. Judy found us a nice clean picnic table. We all enjoyed our lunches and getting to know each other. With our belly's full and bodies recharged, we hit the Summit Trail for the steep trek up the rock. We all made it to the top, despite the winds effort to blow us back down the rock. At the top we took in the magnificent view and parted ways with our group.

Judy and Suzanne headed back down the rock to the comfort of their cars, while Laura and I headed to the unknown darkness of the cave.

With head lamps on and a fun sense of adventure we descended into the cave. It was dark and you had to follow the arrows which showed you the way to end. In the cave, we encountered some tight, technical areas you had to maneuver through. I would recommend leaving backpacks with someone outside the cave. Alas, we both made it to the light at the end of the cave, which lead us to the back side of the rock. The cave is fun to explore but if you don't like tight, cramp, dark spaces, I would not recommend it.

After the cave we hiked around a little more than called it a wonderful day in nature and headed back to Austin. Thank You All for going on my hike.

Vanessa Verstuyft

Cindy Frey, Amelia Greene, and Grace, Wally, and Christian Pratt joined me for a lovely stroll at Wild Basin. While we waited for Cindy and Amelia to arrive, eight year old Christian and I did our good deed for the day by picking up a BUNCH of broken glass in the parking lot. After everyone arrived, we struck off. The Arroyo Vista loop was way too puny for us so we did the Creek Loop. We picked up the interpretive guide and used it to identify many of the plants along the way. Christian and I chatted about the plants, Wii games (we both like them), and books. We stopped at several scenic overlooks and actually saw water at the waterfall! The wind from the previous day had subsided, the sun was out, the temperature was perfect and we all had a wonderful time. Thanks to all of the hikers for getting me out and moving. Hope to see you outside soon! Lisa Sands



Check out this coot behind! photo by Dawn P.S. – A coot is a bird we saw at Port Aransas

Our hike on **Barton Creek** was very enjoyable. We had 6 ladies :Nancy and Bonnie, Amelia, Cindy,Carol C., Kathy Reeves (new member as of Sunday), and two dogs (Sachi and Jax).

We hiked the back trails that I know fairly well, plus we were all feeling adventurous so we explored several spurs that we found while out there. We probably hiked maybe 5-6 miles in all. The weather was perfect, chilly but not cold.

After, we went to Poke-Jo's for lunch. Thanks ladies, for hiking with me. nance

Trip Reports



Page 7 of 7 March 2009 Austin TOWN

Check website for updated info www.townaustin.org





Canyon of the Eagles

4 members from TOWN Houston and 2 members from TOWN Austin were in attendance. We arrived on Friday which turned out to be an absolutely gorgeous day. The campers checking into the camping area, and the others checked into the cabins. Friday we hung around and got to meet and know each other. Saturday at 10:00 we took the boat trip (the boat was heated thank goodness) and the ride was great. You could ride on the open area on the top of the boat or stay in the heated cabin which is where we ate our lunch. Our tour guide was a retired school teacher from the area who had lots of interesting information to tell us about the lake and the area. It was very informative. We saw sea gulls and pelicans but no eagles on this trip. We had about 30 people all together on the boat trip. We were only able to ride on the lake as the water in the river was too low for the boat to go down. Afterwards several of the group went hiking and then had a massage at a near by spa.

We all got together again to each dinner at a very nice restaurant in the park that is located near the cabins. Annie and I had a very good time.

Submitted by and photos by Adela Rojas

Bird Island/Lady Bird Lake outing - seven of us in our rainbow of kayaks departed

Martin Park and paddled downstream Lady Bird Lake. Here is who came:

Cindy, Marie, Nancy, Dawn, Lisa M., Donna from San Marcos, and Marilyn.

We kept to the north shore and did see a few ducks we couldn't identify, with lots of cormorants flying overhead. Away from the island we were approaching. Our first foray was into Fiesta Garden lagoon, which was quiet and dotted with fishermen and more ducks.

The grandstand facing the water attested to past Aqua Fest celebrations.

You could almost hear the voices of cheers and the sputtering of speedboats echoing through the years.

After the lagoon we re-entered Lady Bird Lake and kept to the shoreline again, enjoying the relative silence of this H&B trail compared to the one closer to MoPac. Right before Longhorn Dam another cove opened to the left. Dawn promised there was one there, and she kept us going.

We explored that cove then headed for Bird Island.

Just as we had been promised, there WAS a bird on Bird Island! A kingfisher. I never actually saw it, but others did--and heard it. We had to head back to our put-in spot before any other birds came to roost on the island. If you try this paddle, go closer to dark. It was a bit cool and windy, but we had fun, and the margaritas at Nuevo Leon didn't hurt, either. Submitted by Marilyn Fowler





Bird Island (photos by Dawn)