

Trip Reports

Davis Mountains State Park (Jul 7-17)

This was one TOWN outing that will be remembered for javelinas, Montezuma Quail, and the rain. There is no way I can remember all that the 14 of us did while on this outing. However, I can give some highlights and the others can reply with comments as they recall memorable events.

Because of the drought and the fires, Javelinas were more than plentiful in the campground at Davis Mts. State Park. Pat decided that a stick and a whistle would be her protection and they seemed to love sniffing around Barbara's tent in the night. Barbara also had a skunk sniffing around one night.

On Friday, July 8 we began gathering at Davis Mts. State Park in Ft. Davis. Gloria detoured by way of South Llano River State Park and the Guadalupe Mts. Jenny, Jan, and I spent the night before at Sonora Caverns campground and Carrie stayed at South Llano River State Park. By Friday evening, Jan, Jennie, Gloria, Barbara, Pat, Rexann, Carrie, and I had arrived and set up camp at the park. Peggy and Marie were in Ft. Davis at the Stone Village Inn. On Sunday Carol and Nicole arrived to stay at Indian Lodge in the park.

That night we attended a presentation by a park host on the plants and animals in the park. One of the things we were told was that the park had had 1/10" of rain since September, 2010. We changed all that, however. One afternoon we had 3/4" of rain, wind, and pea-sized hail. The result was that Barbara's rain fly blew off and her camp was soaked. Rexann got some rain in her tent and Carrie had ventured off and left her windows and ceiling vent open, letting in quite a lot of water. However, Carrie mopped up her Casita while Barbara carted her possessions off to the Laundromat in Ft. Davis. By evening, everyone was back ready to camp. Our TOWNIES are real troopers.

Before I left the park the host said we had 3" total of rain while our group was there. The desert had begun to turn green and look much better than when we arrived.

Those of us who are birders had hoped to see the Montezuma Quail when they come down the mountain. Fortunately, we got to see them several times at the feeders and again on the road to Alpine. Another great view was seeing them around the office area at the park.

In addition to those of us who camped in the park, Carol and Nicole had a wonderful suite in Indian Lodge in the park. On Tuesday night before the observatory events they hosted a party where we shared snacks, stories, and friendship. We then headed to McDonald Observatory for the twilight presentation and star party. The clouds and large moon minimized the star party but it was still a good event anyway. Carrie went back later for their daytime event.

Marie & Peggy had a suite in Stone Village Inn in Ft. Davis where they had a great time and really liked the owner. They couldn't say enough good things about him or Stone Village. We got to meet him and tour the village when we went in to town visit. He invited us all to come swim in their pool but we never had time. He also agreed to give us a discount anytime a number of us want to reserve a room there.

One evening we had dinner at the Black Bear Restaurant at Indian Lodge and then participated in a rather challenging guided hike into Modesta Canyon at the Chihuahuan Nature Center in Ft. Davis. Carrie and Gloria had hiked the same trail earlier in the day.

The Rock Shop at Woodward Ranch was another highlight. We visited with the owner and scavenged through the tables of rocks outside the shop. Carrie spent quite a while rock hunting.

One morning nine of us hiked the Limpia Canyon Primitive Area trail and later that day went to Balmorhea State Park to swim. Jenny and Jan provided watermelon for us all. Incidentally, those two had amazing food and are wonderful hostesses.

Another interesting event was a broom making demonstration. Carol and Nicole had been there the day before was encouraged the rest of us to see the demonstration. Several of our members bought brooms and a couple of us bought two.

One day, after the other campers had left, Gloria, Carrie, and I went to Alpine to visit the Museum of the Big Bend on the Sul Ross campus and have lunch at the Reata Restaurant. While we were there we also rented the movie GIANT. That evening we set up my TV outside and began the movie. However, shortly it began to rain so we moved inside the Casita. We had popcorn, M&M's, cookies, and cantaloupe. Quite a cozy movie night.

Around 8:30 p.m. or so that night, Susie and Jen showed up and began pitching their tent. However, the rains came before they could get set up so they ended up sleeping in their car and setting up camp the next morning.

The next day Carrie, Gloria, Jen, and Susie hiked the trail from the Skyline overlook at the park to the Ft. Davis Natl Historic Site. I drove the 75 mile scenic drive while they hiked. I picked them up at the end of their hike, they toured the site, we had lunch at a Mexican restaurant and we visited Ft. Davis. That evening Jen and Susie attended the observatory events.

Saturday Gloria and Carrie packed up and left. Jen, Susie, and I hiked some of the trails at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and then made our way to Alpine. We returned the video that we had rented earlier and then visited the Museum of the Big Bend and had lunch before returning home. After we got back we went to a presentation on the 10th Calvary at Ft. Davis. Jen & Susie then made their way to Marfa to successfully see the Marfa lights.

We had ladies to go see Marfa lights on 3 occasions and all were successful.

Sunday morning Jen & Susie packed to leave and the outing was over. Thanks to some amazing ladies for making this trip so fun!

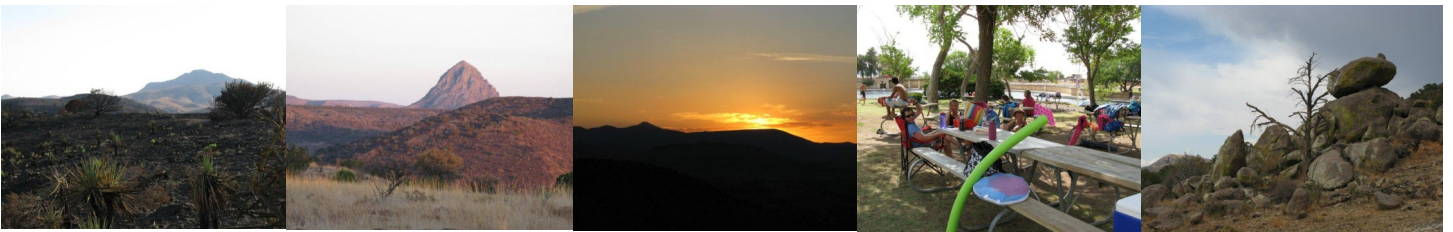
You should have gotten a link to our pictures on Picasa. If not, you can click here:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/117115647223565366114/DavisMtsTripPhotos?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCP-NysPQmrmq1gE&feat=directlink>

~JudyD

Outing Leaders: Share your adventure & pictures with us!

Trip Reports



Images courtesy of Judy D, Gloria B, Carrie L, and Jen L

E-mail your trip reports to townaustin@yahoo.com!

Trip Reports

Hiking in McKinney Roughs LCRA Park (June 26)

Well, it was a very warm day (translate that as a blistering hot day) on the trail in McKinney Roughs LCRA Park this morning. Four of us (BobbiT, CarolC, Jacque, and LindaW1) met at the Pope Bend Trailhead to walk the 4.5 mi. route connecting Road Runner, Buckeye, Pecan Bottom, Coyote Road, and Deep Sandy trails. The Turk's Cap and Pigeon Berry plants were outstanding in numbers and color. We checked out the 203 year old pecan tree which is also in great shape considering the heat and drought.

One discovery to note for future hikes: the Hyatt Resort outside snack bar is closed to outsiders (that was us). So don't plan to purchase food there. The security guards (yes, it took two to handle the four of us) said the change occurred June 1st and may continue only for the summer months. They did however allow us to use the facilities.

The Colorado River was flowing rapidly and appeared deeper than when we saw it in May. I'm guessing that is due to water release for the rice farmers downstream. We visited with a one-eyed horse and learned that CarolC sees an *obstetrician* for her eye prescription. Hmm ... might have been the heat. One never knows what secrets are revealed on a TOWN hike. We saw several examples of scat, spider-worts, and three anaconda (up to about 8 ft.)

We decided to have lunch together, but it was a test to locate a functioning restaurant. We replaced our 631 burned calories with fried catfish and catfish. That certainly balanced out well. Join us next time. I promise not to hike McKinney Roughs again until it's cooler.

~Jacque

Kayaking on Lady Bird Lake (June 29)

Lady Bird Lake kayaking was a huge success this week. Nine and one-half people graced the water, nobody got hurt and everyone had a pleasant time. Or at least it sure appeared as though they did. They were smiling and talking and making general merriment, so I'm taking it upon myself to interpret it as "a pleasant time." Afterward some folks went for a beer and some went for burgers to extend the "pleasant time" being had.

To the two women that paddled the double: I did not think to tell you at the time that we have the kayaks for two hours at a discounted rate. I just thought y'all liked to go along at a faster clip or maybe had to get home early. If you rushed because your fearless leader forgot to tell you that you didn't have to rush, my apologies. Please, come again and take your time.

~BobbiT

Hiking River Place Nature Trail (July 9)

Today I was joined by LisaS, JaneH, and BeckyR on the River Place Nature Trail. Becky is visiting her sister, Jane, all the way from Michigan. Another friend, Kristy was out running the trail and joined us for about half of the hike. We hiked a total of 5.43 miles from start to finish just under 3 hours.

I learned that my fellow hikers are all athletes – Becky and Jane participate in State and National Senior games doing all kinds of track and field events and Lisa has finished several marathons. I now feel inspired to visit the gym more than once a week and start running again so I can enter the Austin Gorilla Run next January!

We managed the hundreds of steps on this trail pretty well. We didn't get wet crossing any of the streams since they were dry, but we did see some muddy dogs walk by us who found a small puddle to play in. We enjoyed the variety of shaded trails, rock ledges, overlooks, and did I mention the steps? This is a great training trail if you plan to do any mountain hiking.

There was a nice display of wildflowers at the turn around point. We spotted some turtles and fish in the pond when we returned to the trailhead then ended the hike with an ice cold, juicy watermelon, compliments of Lisa.

We all agreed that this trail is a keeper, so look for another River Place outing when the weather gets cooler. It was a blast! Thanks ladies!

~CarolynD



Hiking on the Barton Creek Greenbelt (July 17)

The Greenbelt Hike today was a success with 13 women braving the heat and humidity. TOWN members included Jacque, Alisa, LisaS, SandyS, LindaF, CarrieL, JudieT and MarshaK. Guests included Dawn, Anne, Alex, Sharon and Kim, and with so many guests it was deemed Recruitment Weekend with some of the women wanting to join TOWN.

We started out from Marsha's house and walked the 2 blocks to get on the greenbelt in Travis Country. We saw white wing doves, weird caterpillar-looking things, minnows, a nice spring with cold water and a gnome tree, where gnomes go up to sleep at night after a day of playing in the woods. It was really an elm tree that had burls from insects, but gnome tree sounds better. It was hot but still tolerable. The ground was cracked and the American Beauty Berry bushes were just starting to turn with the fuchsia berries that light up a bleak summer landscape. We traveled about 3 miles in 2 hours and solved many of the world's problems by making new friends.

About 20 minutes from the trail end, Marsha called husband Frank, who had been joined by Kim's husband Tom, to ensure that the spinach quiche was heated. Upon a staggering finish back to Marsha's house, brunch was served, along with many good stories and future plans for adventures.

Frank also showed folks how to make bullets in case anyone wanted to learn the fine art of gunsmithing. Perhaps, Frank summed it up best, "That was a nice group of women". Thanks all!

~Marsha

Got a recipe or tip to share? Submit to jenlagrange@yahoo.com.

This and That

Welcome New 2011 Members!

- ◆ Laura Bowers
- ◆ Suzan Van Hoorebeke

We're so glad that you've become a TOWN Austin member!



125 or Bust: We have it in our sights! Keep up the great job!

We're currently at 111 members strong....well on our way to 125!

Summer is in full swing and there are lots of cool indoor, water, and outdoor activities planned! Let's get more wonderful ladies to join!

Ask a friend, family member, or co-worker to join! Bring a pal to a monthly meeting!

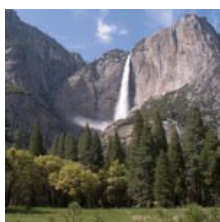
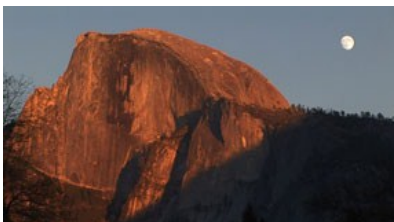
Together We Can Make It Happen!

Let's Go to Yosemite National Park (May 20-27)

This is a shout out to all TOWN ladies who are interested in going before Memorial Day Weekend and the crowds arrive. The general thought is to rent a couple of cabins or a private home and spend a week there. Dates are tentative at this point. Contact LisaM to express your interest or to ask questions.

Click here to learn more about Yosemite National Park and learn about how to plan your trip:

<http://www.nps.gov/yose/photosmultimedia/ytp.htm>



Spotlight on TOWN-Austin Leader: Carolyn Doolittle

Carolyn Doolittle is the TOWN-Austin Publicity Chair. Originally from Groves, Texas (a small town in southeast Texas near Beaumont and Port Arthur), she now calls North Austin her home. A member since 2009, this is Carolyn's second time serving on the TOWN-Austin board. Last year she was the historian.

Carolyn loves to hike, geocache, and ride her bike on trails. She especially loves to do long distance hiking (10k or longer!).

Carolyn is a member of Capital Area Master Naturalists (CAMN). She also recently completed the 2011 classes and is working toward her 40+ hours of volunteer service and advanced training to her designation. She is also a member of the Colorado River Walkers (a Texas Volkmarching organization) and the Sierra Club.

She enjoys reading *Backpacker* magazine and books such as *60 Hikes within 60 Miles, San Antonio/Austin edition* (by Tom Taylor and Johnny Molloy) and *Best Hikes Near Austin and San Antonio* (by Keith Stelter).



Carolyn states, "Since I joined TOWN-Austin a few years ago, I have had so much fun doing outdoors things, sharing laughs, and making new friends. I've found it a safe place to try new things and for me that has been kayaking, geocaching and tent camping. I look forward to many more fun times."

See a board member or go online for info and a membership form.

TOWN Austin

P.O. Box 300494
Austin, Texas 78703-0009
townaustin@yahoo.com

Monthly Meeting Location

LCRA's Redbud Center
3601 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703
(512)473-3535

Our Mission

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

Your TOWN Austin Leadership Team

Coordinator/President

Jacque Austin - jsaustin54@sbcglobal.net

Membership Chair

Lisa Sands - lsands@austin.rr.com

Club Treasurer

Janet Fitzsimon-Barr - janetfb@austin.rr.com

WebWoman

Jacque Austin - jsaustin54@sbcglobal.net

Publicity Chair

Carolyn Doolittle - cadoolittle5@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Jen LaGrange - jenlagrange@yahoo.com

Secretary

Gloria Blagg - gloria_blagg@sbcglobal.net

Historian, Scrapbook, Web Photos

Sandy Ostiguy - sandyos@yahoo.com

Outings Coordinator

Judy Dunavant - judy.dunavant@sbcglobal.net

About TOWN Austin

Texas Outdoors Woman Network (TOWN) is an offshoot of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's *Becoming an Outdoors Woman* (BOW) program. Our goal is to enable outdoor oriented women to meet and build friendships with women who have similar interests. Local chapters have monthly meetings and outings which are initiated, planned, and conducted by members. Read about TOWN Austin's history by reading about our origins online.

Monthly meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month at the LCRA Redbud Center (3601 Lake Austin Blvd). We begin at 6 p.m. Bring a snack or your brown-bag dinner. The business meeting begins about 6:30. Bring a drink and join us for special announcements, guest speaker, and socializing. Please see our online calendar for details.

Our outings occur on a regular basis. We offer a wide variety of activities. Visit our online calendar to check out what is happening next.

We'd love to show you what TOWN Austin is all about! Prospective members are invited to join us for a couple of outings before becoming an official member!

Our activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Archery
- Backpacking
- Bird Watching
- Camping
- Day hiking
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Fishing/Fly-fishing
- Horseback riding
- Mountain biking and road biking
- Geocaching

Most trips are planned with minimal cost in mind. We try to carpool and donate for gas. You are always welcomed to create your own carpool when possible. Lodging costs are divided among the participants. Additional costs may be incurred such as State Park entrance fees or tour fees.

Interested in leading a TOWN Austin outing?

It's really quite simple and we can always use more leaders. A checklist is available to help you plan an outing so you don't forget anything. There is also a liability release form everyone should sign at the beginning of each outing. See the website for a list of outings we would like to take, but have not yet scheduled.



Find us on Facebook

Texas Outdoor Woman Network, Austin Chapter

Visit us on the Web
www.townaustin.org



Cafe Press offers TOWN Austin t-shirts and other wonderful products.

www.cafepress.com