



Celebrate TOWN Party!

October 24

Well, we certainly had a fun time at our Celebrate TOWN-Austin outing held Sunday, October 23rd. Thirty-four folks arrived at Brushy Creek Lake Park in Cedar Park to visit, hike, kayak, and bike; attending were: BarbaraD (with young lab pup Zumba), BobbiT, CarolB, CarolC, CarolynD, CarrieL, EolaL (even with an injured hand), GloriaB (and cookie making son Eric), JacqueA (with husband Stephen and Taos friend Sharon), JanetFB, JaniceB (new member), JenLaG, JoanB, JudieT (with puppy Daffnie), JudyL, LindaBW (with husband Tom), LisaS, MarieW, NancyR, PatB (new member), SandyO, SusanW, SusieA, SuzanVanH, (with husband Kenny and sons Jonathan and Matthew), and TammyW (with husband Sam and son Brandon).

We began our day with a hike led along the Brushy Creek Lake Trail led by CarolynD. Zumba the yellow lab pup accompanied us for protection. Interestingly we stopped to examine the Champion Cemetery which is located just about 40 feet off the hiking trail.

Reading the historical marker we discovered: John (Jack) Champion (1817-1908) was a native of York County, South Carolina. He moved to Texas by 1850, the year he and Naomi Jane Standefer (1834-1862) were issued a marriage license in Williamson County.

In 1854, Champion bought more than 200 acres at the headwaters of Brushy Creek. He later served in the Civil War and, briefly, as County Sheriff. The grave of Naomi, the mother of seven of Champion's nineteen children, is the oldest of the four marked graves in the pioneer family's cemetery.

Surveys indicate the presence of at least five unmarked graves. The cemetery is well cared for and very intriguing.

At the same time we were hiking, TammyW with her husband and son went fishing and enjoyed the lake.

Upon our return from hiking, our cooks JoanB and SandyO announced that "burgers and dogs are ready." How's that for timing! We enjoyed lots of tasty salads, desserts, roasted peppers, beef hot dogs, cookies, veggie burgers, cake, burgers, and pie. Yes, we enjoyed eating.

After lunch, the kayakers left to enjoy the water and bikers hit the path rolling. Some of us stayed behind to visit and enjoy sitting/burning those

calories. SuzanVanH, her husband, and two sons went fishing and actually caught something! Several of us went geocaching (we located two) and met the game warden while searching.

Thanks so much to those who volunteered! Special thanks to JoanB and SandyO for their cooking skills. JoanB and LisaS made certain the coals were cool and wet when the munching was over. Thanks to CarolynD and CarrieL for leading the kayaking and to JanetFB and NanceR for herding the cyclists.

~Jacque

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Upcoming Events

- **NOVEMBER**
- **Nov 26 (Sat):** Twilight hike, @ McKinney Falls SP, 5:30 p.m. Not a TOWN sponsored event.
- **Nov 27 (Sun):** Hike to Sometime Island
- **DECEMBER**
- **Dec 1-4 (Thurs-Sun):** Camping @ Palmetto SP
- **Dec 4 (Sun):** Hike @ Lake Georgetown
- **Dec 10 (Sat):** Hike @ Bright Leaf 8:30 a.m.
- **Dec 13 (Tue):** Hike Planning Mtg. 6 p.m.
- **JANUARY 2012**
- **Jan 6-8 (Fri-Sun):** Holiday party @ McKinney Falls SP
- **Jan 22 (Sun):** Thank you outing for leaders
- **MARCH 2012**
- **Mar 23-25 (Fri-Sun):** BOW week-end in Brownsville
- **MAY 2013**
- **May 20-27 (Sun-Sun):** Yosemite National Park

Trip Reports

Camping at Garner State Park (Oct 14-16)

Ten (plus doggies) of us had a good time despite not seeing *color* in the leaves last weekend at Garner State Park campout. Janet, Jan, Jenny, June, Joan (lots of "J" names!), Karen, Marilyn, Karen, Sandy, Dawn all camped at Garner and did some hiking at Lost Maples State Park. The weather was beautiful.

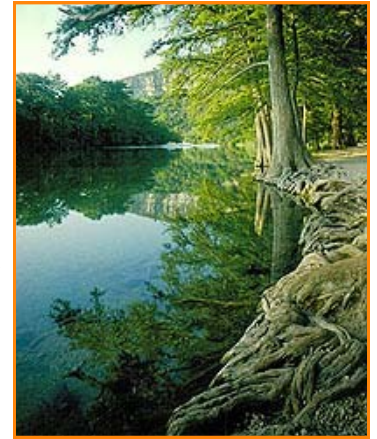
We hiked one of the loop Trails at Lost Maples (just under 5 miles) and there were indeed some steep areas! We were amazed watching a large family carting their camping supplies piled high in a wagon down the trail even with some items in their arms to the first primitive campsite on the trail.

Two of the three doggies went back partways (with their mommies, of course). We crossed creeks many times, and walked in the creekbed, but water was not a problem. At the end of the hike, we had a wonderful picnic lunch near the parking area in the shade. Some folks went into Utopia, and Karen and Dawn went exploring the beautiful river in the old part of Garner.

Even though campground was busy as usual, most folks were behaving. Before dinner, the very first (we think) TOWN scavenger hunt took place with Karen and Joan taking the honor of most items found...items were found from camping neighbors and not off the ground since yours truly is a Leave No Trace follower and also masterminded the list of items to find. We had a tabernacle group from a nearby site serenading us Saturday nite as we sat around a real campfire. There was a pinata party and we think a gathering of chanting to drums and watching a pony movie on a big screen (not all in one campsite, mind you!)

Sunday morning most of us enjoyed getting a slow start before we returned to the hectic nature of our every day lives. So yes we saw the maple trees. No they had not turned yet, but we enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and the wonderful company of each other!

~Dawn



Hiking at River Place Nature Trail (Oct 15)

It was a beautiful Saturday to hike the River Place Nature Trail! I was joined by some amazing hikers - JacqueA., CarolC., JaneH., MarshaK., JudyL., and Carriel.

It was challenging as usual with all of the elevation changes, but I believe the hill country views and all the different rock formations and interesting plants we saw made it worthwhile. We were out on the trail for about 4 hours and hiked just under 6 miles. There were some nice shady resting spots all along the trail so we took advantage of them a few times. Unlike the time we hiked it in July, we actually saw some water in a few places this time - a man-made waterfall was gently flowing to provide water for wildlife and plants off of a cliff and there was a little water in the creek bed.

There were some interesting plants sprouting along the trail in one section that looked like pinto beans and a cute jack-o-lantern made from rocks. That particular group of rocks has been arranged in different forms of trail art every time I've been out there. I'm looking forward to hiking there again soon. I hope you'll come back and join me.

~CarolynD



Kayaking on Lady Bird Lake (Oct 19)

Katie G who is our best Nature Informant brought her mother, ConnieM, who is visiting from San Antonio on the 19th. We are suddenly having to remember the rules of the road (stay on the north shore when paddling west, and when going east, stay on the south shore) as Lady Bird Lake is now busy with sculls and the motorboats who accompany them. We are now needing jackets and sweaters in the cool, and it is dark when we are bringing the boats back in.

This season, thirty-seven and a half members and guests made it to the Rowing Dock. We saw twenty-two different birds, the fabulous male neon skimmer mayfly, and other wildlife from alligator gar to nutria. We were serenaded with piano music from the city's art installation at the Barton Springs inlet, tried stand-up paddling, separate-hand paddling, marveled at Marie's pedal-Hobie and Janice's handy inflatable kayak. We enjoyed the beauty and relaxation of the Lake, and of course the company of other TOWNies.

OK, it isn't the Appalachian Trail, but during the winter, Texas kayakers can be practicing for the 740-mile Northern Forest Canoe Trail along with their sisters getting ready for the A. T. A nice story of a young woman's inspiration appeared in Guideposts in August of this year: <http://www.guideposts.org/inspirational-stories/positive-change-kayak-trip-brings-hope-new-life>

Outing Leaders: Share your adventure & pictures with us!

Trip Reports

Our Hike on Barton Creek Followed by Brunch (Oct 30)

Today was a beautiful day for a hike and we had 11 adventurous wanderers: Alex, Jan, Susan, Effie, Carrie, Kim, Kim, Janice, Jacque, Jenny, and Marsha. We started from Marsha's house and met a porcupine, sadly, that had been hit by a car just minutes before the trip started. It was the first time that any of us had seen a porcupine in the wild, but regrettably, it had been killed.

We walked about 5.7 miles in gently rolling hills with a few rough spots with uneven terrain. We followed the route from west of Mopac and then went under Mopac twice to follow along the creek bed and then back to Marsha's house. During the hike, we were listening for birds but could only identify a few by sounds. We were, however, able to identify cardinals, tit mice and chickadees. We also passed Spider Joe who was leading a group of young enthusiasts looking at nature, especially spiders!

We finished at Marsha's house and was joined for brunch by Tom and Frank. Willie, the Rat Terrier, again proved to be the Holy Terrier, by nabbing Frank's salad and just being a pest. Millie, the Rat Terrier, proved to be delightful. Willie also stole the remaining bread after the hikers left. It is rumored that TOWN may vote to ban him from all events- the first to ever be banned!

German stew, noodles, homemade bread, salad and Chocolate- cherry cake were on the menu and a big THANKS for the church canned goods! Thanks again!

~Marsha



Hike on Blunn Creek Preserve followed by Lunch (Nov 12)

I was joined by six TOWN-Austin members at Blunn Creek Preserve this morning (SallieN, JennyF, JuneA, BobbiT, CarolC, and MarilynF). We hiked the short loop trail to the Overlook which provides a great view of St. Edwards University. At the Overlook, we also read information about the volcanic activity that took place approximately 75 million years ago. Much of the trail is composed of compressed volcanic ash, and there is tuff rock all around. The University sits on top of a volcano and other volcanoes now provide overlook views of downtown Austin and the surrounding terrain.

We found an amazing, huge live oak tree near the creek on the north end of the trail. It took 3 Townies with outstretched arms to circle the tree. As we walked we noticed a lot of fresh mulch and cut down trees in huge piles. The area is full of invasive plants like Chinaberry and Lugustrum. It looks like an effort is being made to reduce the invasive species so the natives have a chance to thrive. Back at the trail head, we met a lively bunch of students from East Austin College Prep Academy. They were spreading native grass seed today. Their leader said they do work at the trail often including clearing invasive plants. CarolC shared the story with them of how Blunn Creek got its name. Joe Blunn, a carriage trimmer in the 1800's, was trying to return home to his family one rainy night. His attempt to cross the 5 foot deep creek proved fatal for him and his horse. The creek was later named for him. Go here to get the whole story http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cepreserves/bc_index.htm.

After we finished our initial hike, Marilyn left for another engagement and the rest of us decided to explore some side trails to see if we could connect to the Blunn Creek Greenbelt at Big Stacy and Little Stacy parks. We tried 3 different trails and they all got us to Oltorf, but we were blocked by a chain link fence. We decided to continue the exploration another day and headed over to Kirby Lane Cafe on Lamar for lunch.

All in all, I think we had a great time together. Two hours on the trail, nice cool weather, learned something new about Austin, met friendly people on the trail, and shared delicious food and good conversation at Kirby Lane. I'm attaching some pics courtesy of Marilyn, Bobbi and Carolyn. Join us next time.

~CarolynD



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

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

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



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Texas Outdoor Woman Network, Austin Chapter



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.



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