



A Big, Giant THANK YOU!

At last month's TOWN Austin meeting, we collected lots of goodies to send to our friend and fellow TOWNie, Vanessa Verstuyft.

If you recall, Vanessa is in Iraq with the Army National Guard. She arrived a few months ago and will be there most of 2011. Working 12 hours days, 6 days a week, Vanessa is running an IT service desk.

We're happy to report that Vanessa has received all of the items and sent a big, giant *Thank You* to everyone in TOWN Austin for your kindness and generosity!

Vanessa, thank you for your service to our country. We look forward to your safe return back home to Texas!



Thank you TOWN! I miss y'all and can't wait to get back to Texas for some outdoor fun!



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Upcoming Events

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Kayaking Lady Bird Lake @
Rowing Dock. 6 p.m.
Only \$10! What a bargain!

MARCH

Mar 25-27 (Fri-Sun): BOW
Outing. Open to any outdoor
woman.

Mar 27 (Sun): Guided Hike @
Bright Leaf Preserve. 9 a.m.

APRIL

Apr 1-10 (Fri-Sun): Camping
@ Big Bend National Park.

Apr 2: Beginner Kayak Lesson.
9:30–11:30 a.m. Rowing
Dock.

Apr 3 (Sun): Hike McKinney
Roughs LCRA Preserve. 12
noon.

Apr 10 (Sun): Tour Benini
Sculpture Ranch. 10:30 a.m.

Apr 14-17 (Thu-Sat): Old
Settlers Music Festival.

Apr 15-17 (Fri-Sun): Beginner
Campout at McKinney Falls SP.

Apr 17 (Sun): Touring
Chaetura Canyon (members
only). 8 a.m. - 12 noon.

Apr 23-24 (Fri-Sat): Easter Hill
Country Tour hosted by the
Austin Cycling Association
(ACA). *Note:* Not a TOWN
sponsored event.

Apr 26 (Tue): Monthly Meet-
ing @ 6 p.m. Karen Blizzard is

a hiker and biker and works for
Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-
ment. Karen's presentation is
Preparing for a Day Hike.

Apr 29 - May 2 (Fri - Mon):
Friends of Balcones Songbird
Festival and Camping.

MAY

May 1 (Sun): Hike @ Walnut
Creek Metropolitan Park. 10:30
a.m.

May 13-15 (Fri-Sun): Camping
@ Inks Lake SP.

May 13-15 (Fri-Sun): Outreach
2011 TOWN Texas: Birch Creek
Unit Lake Somerville.

May 24 (Tue): Monthly Meeting
@ 6 p.m. Dr. Dale Schaeffer will
talk about skin protection, skin

cancer and what we should
look for on our skin from
poisonous plants and insects.

May 27-30 (Fri-Mon): Camping
@ South Llano SP.

JUNE

Jun 17-19 (Fri-Sun): Camping @
Blanco SP.

Jun 18 (Sat): Night @ the Ponds
Note: Not a TOWN sponsored
event.

Jun 28 (Tue): Monthly Meeting
@ 6 p.m. Speaker TBA.

JULY

Jul 8-18 (Fri-Mon): Camping @
Davis Mountains State Park in
Fort Davis, TX.

Trip Reports

Hiking: Doeskin Ranch (Feb 20)

We started with 14 (Jacque, Gloria, Evie, SusieW, Amanda, JudyL, Marie, Peggy, Barbara, CarolC, Bobbi, JanetC, Jessie and me) and at the end, I noticed there were only 4 others with me...but, hey, nobody actually died, so it was all good :-)

When I said this was an exploratory trip for me, I was not joking. I couldn't even figure out where Doeskin was located. It is way the heck out there just outside of Marble Falls. So I finally get there and one of our soon to be members says, "Hey, you're not blonde." I had told her she would know the group by the cute, little, blonde amongst us. I should have mentioned that I have a 10 year old, Jesse.

So we headed out and it is a very nice hike.. Lots of switchbacks. Yes, there is a lovely uphill stretch that I didn't think I was going to make. Lucky for me, Jessie pulled me up with her walking stick. One good reason for offspring! There was a very recent burn up on top of Rim Rock Trail that was interesting to see. I wonder what it will look like in two or three years. What will be growing up there?



The birders and scat lovers had a ball. I'm not sure if there are a lot of animals out there or just a few VERY active ones. There was scat everywhere. Fortunately, Jacque took extensive photographs and measurements for anyone who missed all that poo. I'm really hoping it is for a class Jacque is taking! There were quite a few birds flying around and a lot of dead grass according to one Master Naturalist. I think this would be a great hike in the spring when things really start growing. There are big, beautiful open fields!

After stompng around at 1280 ft. we turned and headed back down, straight down, no switchbacks here. There was a fork in the road and we turned left., into what we

thought was a dead end. We turned around and headed back to the road less traveled and I noticed that 4 women had started bushwhacking their way back to the cars, which we could see but couldn't get to without going cross country. And then there were 10 little hikers.

We walked a ways and then the birders heard a group (gaggle? flock? pod?) of birds in the trees and decided to investigate. And then there were 6 little hikers.

Now I know you should never leave



members alone, but have you ever tried to drag birders away from a discovery that could be included in a book? Impossible! So we left them. So the 6 of us walked a little ways down the road, and Carol decided to be a good person and wait for the birders.

And then there were 5. We strolled up the hill back to the main road which we could only access by crawling under a fence. I thought I would be the one stuck in the fence (and then there were 4), but Janet nicely told me to "put your big butt down!" and I made it.



We walked the quarter mile back to the parking lot and met up with the 4 bushwhackers, who had waited a long time for us. Judy had enough time to go down to the restrooms and pick up a map at the trail head. MAP?!? Wow, if only we had noticed those on the way out. I'm thinking that would have been very helpful in showing us that our route wasn't a dead end, but an actual trail. The birders and Carol showed up about a minute after us and I was grateful we had all survived.

Now, before anyone takes me too seriously, it couldn't have been that bad. After we all made it back to the parking lot, Amanda said, "What are we doing next weekend?" See, she isn't even a member yet ,and I didn't scare her away. Whoever is doing next weekends hike, You will have to try harder!

Thank you, ladies, for joining me out in the great outdoors for some adventure, fresh air, and a lot of beautiful scenery in the hill country. I had a great time and can't wait to do it again.

~Jenn



Outing Leaders: Share your adventure & pictures with us!

Trip Reports

Hiking: Enchanted Rock State Park (Feb 26)



We met at the HEB in Dripping Springs at 8:30 a.m. and carpoled in two cars to Enchanted Rock, arriving at 10 a.m. There were eight hikers of the two leg variety, seven women and one brave man. When ask by one of the TOWN members, he confirmed that he'd had his shots. (PeggyP, SandyS from San Marcos TOWN, JanetFB, EvieT, JanB, JennyF, SandyB and DonB) .

A very pleasant weather day for hiking and the company was great. The conversation ranged from scat to high tea. We enjoyed the view of the rock as we

looped around its base and observed several rock climbers. There wasn't much active wildlife but interesting and pleasant nonetheless. Even the birds were a bit bashful. A few cardinal, mockingbird, black vulture, and field sparrows were heard singing but hard to see with the overcast.

Sandy Creek was flowing nicely with some small fish and teensy tadpoles, although one was spotted and quite large – probably a bullfrog baby. The redbud trees seen along the way were budding but otherwise very few other signs that spring is coming.

We completed the four mile loop in about two hours. Five of us enjoyed our sack lunch in the picnic area. The other three took

off to lunch and visit friends at a local wine vineyard.

I've saved the best for last - Jan's famous and very popular chocolate chip cookies. They really hit the spot and were greatly appreciated.

~Jan



Birding & Hiking: Pedernales Falls State Park (Mar 6)



How good can a day possibly be? We experienced a fine one at Pedernales Falls State Park. Nine of us gathered at the two bird blinds to check the avian activities (BarbaraD, Eola, GloriaB & guest Mark, Jacque, JudyW, MarciaM, SusanW, and Suzan.) We identified the following: mockingbird, spotted towhee, dark-eyed junco, house wren, lesser goldfinch, ladder-backed woodpecker (male and female), mourning dove, house sparrow, house finch, Carolina chickadee, and chipping sparrow. A Hispid cotton rat displayed itself at the blind and most of us thought he was pretty cute. Someone else referred to him as, "You dirty rat, you." So, it was that *beholder* feature kicking in.

As we prepared to hike the 4.8 mile loop

which starts in the campground, I discovered that Trammel Crossing had six inches of water. That meant tip-toeing 75 feet through six inches of water. So, since we really did not want wet toes and shoes on a 34 degree morning, we instead opted for the Wolf Mtn. loop. I have a history with Wolf Mtn. and was determined not to repeat the death march I led there.

Evie and Kim joined the nine of us at the trailhead for Wolf Mtn. which meant now there were 11 total. (That number will become important, so pay attention.) Everyone was a good sport about the change in trails since I promised we would hike the first choice when the flood waters recede or when an ark is available. Onward on the trail, everyone visited and got to know each other. TOWN women are so very congenial. MarciaM introduced us to an app for tracks and scat. That was a hoot! We saw evidence that bunches of raccoons are gathering on the trail for meeting, greeting, and pooping. Five of the group turned around at the beginning of Wolf Mtn. Loop and six continued onward (5+6=11). We all met up again in route back to the trailhead (11!) Happily,

all 11 started and completed the hike together which means I didn't leave anyone behind this time. The long route was 5.4 miles in 2:19, moving time.

Eola had previously suggested Nutty Brown Café for our local lunch, so all 11 met there. Suzan (a soon to be member, we hope) suggested that the healthiest choice for a side veggie was fried potatoes drizzled in queso sauce. So we did it which, of course, negated any calories burned during our hike. Everyone must have enjoyed lunch because talking subsided and flatware was flying. Thanks everyone for participating in the PFSP hike.

~Jacque



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

Outdoor Tips & Yum

Dutch Oven Breakfast

Ingredients:

- 24 Eggs
- 1 Loaf of Bread
- 2 lb Italian Sausage, hot & spicy
- 2 lb Mozzarella Cheese
- 1 Green Pepper
- 1 Onion
- 2 cn Mushrooms
- Water
- Shortening

Instructions:

1. Grease a No. 14 Dutch oven. Grease the lid if the oven is full enough that the contents might hit the top while cooking.
2. Break the loaf of bread into pieces and place in the bottom of the oven.
3. Beat the eggs with some water (to add some *fluff* to the dish).
4. Pour the eggs over the bread.
5. Brown the sausage and spread it on top of the eggs/bread.
6. Slice the cheese and lay it on top of the sausage.
7. Dice the pepper and onion and spread on top of the cheese.
8. Slice the mushrooms and spread on top of the pepper/onion.
9. Cover and cook for 45 minutes in the usual Dutch oven way.
⇒ 12 coals underneath and a 18 on top should work fine

Variation: Add some bacon if desired

Servings: 12

www.netwoods.com

Tips to Keep Animals Away from Your Campsite

Though bears tend to get the worst reputation when it comes to animals invading campsites, the most common offenders are mice, red squirrels, raccoons, and birds. When they come looking for food, here's how to keep animals away on a camping trip.

1. **Keep your campsite clean.** Never leave stinky dirty dishes or uneaten food lying around out in the open. Wash dishes immediately after use. As for uneaten food, either burn it or store it in your cooler.
2. **Store all of your food in a vehicle at night (preferably the trunk of your car).** Includes the cooler. If you are camping on foot with no vehicle on hand, get a cooler with a lock on it, secure it with a rope tied around it, and suspend the cooler from a tree. As for dry, non-perishable foods, wrap them in a towel and suspend them from a tree. Animals may still be able to reach them, but it's safer than keeping it vulnerable on the ground, or worse, with you.
3. **Never store food of any kind in your tent.** This includes snacks. The last thing you want is an unwelcome guest barging in for food in the middle of the night.
4. **Bears love the smell of mint, so keep your toothpaste with your food.**
5. **Place fabric softeners throughout your campsite—animals hate the smell of them.** Secure them in various spots around the perimeter, put some in your tent and even one with your food to mask its smell.
6. **Keep a flashlight on you at all times.** You may be able to use it to scare off any animals that wander into your campsite at night
7. **Though many animals forage for food at night, beware of those who will attack in broad daylight.** Seagulls on beach campsites are a perfect example, and they can tear into just about anything – from a loaf of bread to a box of crackers.

www.ehow.com

Don't Be Bugged Outdoors

As you already know, bugs are a huge problem with any outdoor activities. Mosquitoes, black flies, and other pesky insects can be very annoying as they swarm and bite causing much itching and discomfort. There is no one solution that works all the time but here are a few tips to help keep the bugs away.

- Stay away from wet, grassy areas.
- Avoid using fragrant or scented personal products.
- Wear light colored long sleeve shirts and pants.
- Wear a hat and a bandanna on your head and neck.
- Keep cool – bugs are attracted to sweat.
- Traditional bug repellent – most contain DEET as the active ingredient against bugs. Use this sparingly. This chemical may be harmful and should not be used on children.
- Sunscreen/insect repellent – this may have a lower concentration of DEET.
- Avon *Skin So Soft* – tests don't prove this but many insist that it works.
- Citronella candles and oil – helps keep mosquitoes out of the area.
- Head Nets – keeps bugs away from your head and face.
- Garlic – it will secrete through your pores.
- Zinc or Vitamin B – also secretes through your pores.
- Citrus – deters the bugs.
- Coconut soap and coconut oil – repels mosquitoes.

www.lovetheoutdoors.com

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

This and That

Coming Soon: Stickers & Magnets

Get your dollars ready! We're about to finalize an order that will include stickers (4"x4" and 3"x10") and a car magnet (3"x11"). They will be so reasonably priced that you're going to want at least one of each!

Stick 'em on your car, your kayak, your tent, your cooler, or RV! We want you to stick TOWN all over the place! Keep an eye out in next month's TOWN Austin News. We'll announce when they're in stock and ready to own!



Welcome New 2011 Members!

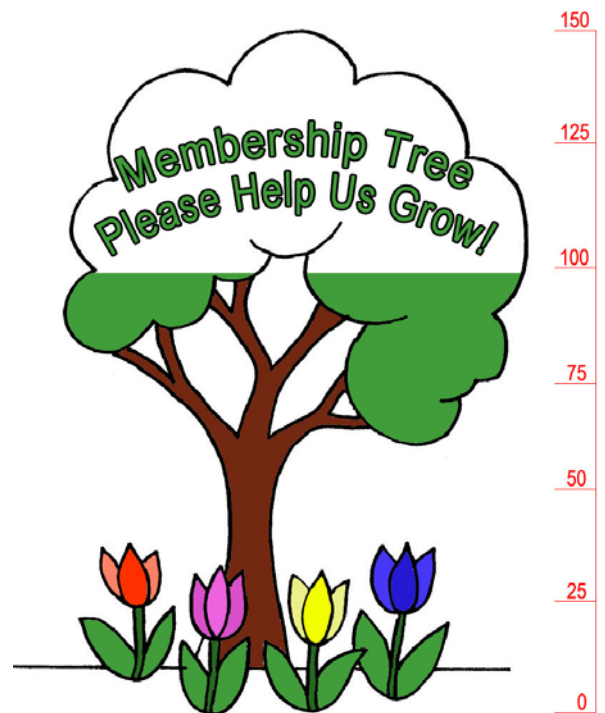
- ◆ Cory Blum
- ◆ Stacey Bucklin
- ◆ Dolores Campbell
- ◆ Deb McClintock
- ◆ Marsha Karrass
- ◆ Sophie Lopez
- ◆ Alisa Rayel
- ◆ Margie Steele

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

Spread the Word: Ask Your Friends to Join TOWN Austin!

We're currently at 93 members strong! Help us reach our 2011 membership goal of 125+.

Just in time for the spring, let's get more wonderful ladies outside! Ask a friend, family member, or co-worker to join! Bring a buddy to a monthly meeting!



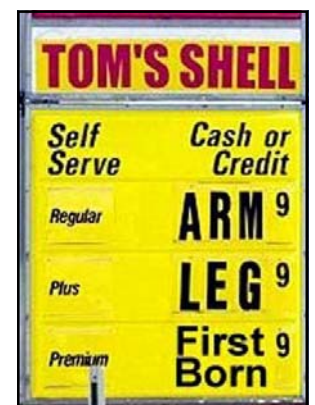
Carpooling Reminder!

Help the Environment; Help a TOWN Sister Out!

Please make an effort to carpool to TOWN outings and meetings. Every effort you make will make a difference!

Also, please share travel expenses with the driver and each other. Discuss the estimated fuel costs ahead of time. Also, keep in mind that the driver is responsible for vehicle maintenance, so for longer trips, it's advised that riders pay for the gas.

Thanks for doing your part!



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

TOWN Austin

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

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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