



HRCC NEWS

A.K.A "THE LETTER"

ISSUE 06.1 - APRIL 15, 2006

ALL ABOARD!

My mental journey on the Canoe Trip is pretty typical. I normally start off slow by getting on my Budweiser Bicycle. I ride that for a while until I pedal my way up to the Jack Daniel's Short Bus. Then, I usually just throw the bike in the back and ride the JD Short Bus wherever it takes me... most times that's to somewhere in Jamaica.

But last Trip was a little different. I thought I was riding along fine in my comfy seat when something amazing and unexpected happened. The bus pulled straight up alongside the Night Train. And without even thinking about it, I bought a ticket and jumped on.

Who the hell knew that the end of the line for the Night Train was at Jarvis Island? And did I mention that all the seats were full of Hogs when it got there? As I recall, it made for a pretty damned good time. Although I'm still trying to figure out why I was laughing so hard... and what was that awful aftertaste from?

If you can't tell already (or you just can't remember), the '05 Trip was a blast! Jarvis Island was a stunning

success and I want to thank everyone who made it possible by vote and effort alike. As usual, there are a few things that we'll do differently this year (the Running Dummy can tell you at least one!), but more on that stuff later.

THE BLOW-BY-BLOW

I gotta say, though, things didn't start out all that hot. We were faced with the blatantly un-Hoggish absence of Moose and Johnny <shaking head in disbelief>. And man did we feel it. Not only were we nix a couple of primo Hogs, but we were also keenly short of some valued quartermastering skills. Add to that the fact that nobody I know had a truck available that was capable of towing the loaded trailer. Defeat loomed. Queue the ominous music. But after much angst, Deano was finally able to secure his dad's beastie and we were once again in the tow business.

But the trailer, for some reason, was all pissed off about the whole situation. I dunno if it's just a one-truck trailer, but it decided it didn't want to go

2006 TRIP DATES

Administrative Day

Wed 8/23

Canoe Trip

Thu 8/24 - Sun 8/27

and blew a tire shortly after we left for Vermont. And I can say that Deano is an expert at shredding trailer tires... and rims... and pavement. Just to make it up north we had to replace both tires and one of the rims. Ch-ch-ching...

But all the troubles melted away as we were met warmly at Wilgus by a fine group of early-Hogs (with cold beers). We had a great turnout on Wednesday, and it gave us all the time and manpower we needed to nail down everything for the downriver trip to Jarvis. We checked the weather report and made the final decision to go for it on Friday. But being on the island was going to screw up our usual Friday dinner at the Bricker's buffet. So we decided to do that dinner on Thursday instead.

Thursday brought us to the Golf Tourney. It turned out to be another great day for golfing. By golfing, of course, I mean endlessly drinking Buds whilst driving a cart way too fast along the edge of a cliff. As usual, Eric kicked all of our asses. I'm getting better, though... he only beat me by about 63 strokes this time. Whattya mean I had too many Mulligans? I only went through four boxes of balls this time!

Then off to Bricker's we went... but wait! It seems that sometime shortly after our Bricker's visit in '04 they decided to simply abandon the dinner buffet. It's looking suspiciously like we broke the buffet. Go figure. All-you-can-eat means all you can eat, right? In our defense, nobody ever told us that 23 refills per Hog was too much!

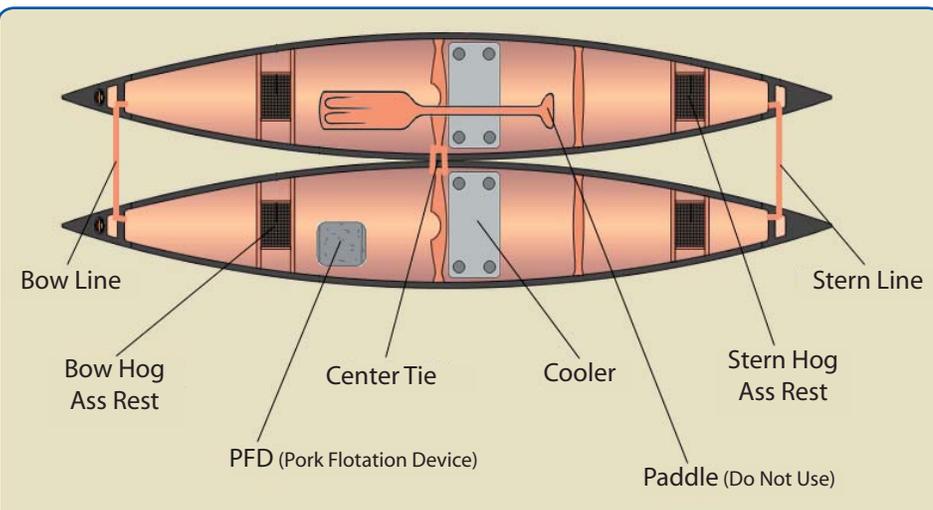


Figure 1: Essential Flotilla Diagram. Please note: The alternate term for "Center Tie" is "Running Dummy Maker", and the alternate term for "Cooler" is "Beer Bitch Ass Rest".

OK, plan B. We decided to overrun a Chinese Buffet instead. As the Orange Horde boisterously flowed through the front door, a little asian man looked up at me and said "Ooooh, you want back room!" To the back we went, and for the paltry sum of nine bucks a head we cleaned out that buffet too. I've never seen so many scampering orientals. Wonder if they'll give up and quit like Bricker's did.

Friday was moving day. We packed all the stuff and did the gawd-awful ferry thing to the Ashland Ferry Landing. Man, we have a lot of shit. Dave O, Deano, Eric and I volunteered to stay off the flotilla and go ahead with the Avon and a couple canoes to set up the island. We left the rest of the Hogs in Casey's capable hands <snicker> and we headed off downriver. We thought we had the Running Dummy Award tied up when we swamped a canoe along with all of Dave's stuff. Cot to the bottom, totes full of water, it was very nice.

But the award was snatched from our grasp by noneother than Casey. With on about fifty years of experience sitting on that flotilla, nobody seemed to remember what a CENTER TIE is (see Figure 1). You know, that little piece of twine that keeps the canoes from FLIPPING OVER. Casey turned out to be the poor schmuck to step just the right way to tip and sink three canoes... and all his stuff... and the radio... and the mermitees... and all of Scott's stuff. A quality Running Dummy win, Casey. I think it's the best one since Dave O slammed Larry into the side of the flotilla. Congratulations!

Once we were settled in to our camp on the island, the real fun began. Noticing the lack of facilities, some set to work on a shitter. I don't think I've ever seen such a latrine. We christened it Shit Row and it was a glorious line of weed cubicles that could accommodate up to about five squatters at a time. Magnificent. My ass thanks you, oh builders of butt-hole bearing bliss!

From there on my time line is a little fuzzy 'cuz, well, you know. But sometime soon thereafter the Night Train pulled in. I literally cannot remember laughing so hard in my life.

See, Eric happened to be laying across the tracks when the Night Train came through. Some Hogs decided to keep him from falling out of his hammock and the island echoed with the unforgettable stretch-and-tear sound of military-grade duct tape. For Eric, it was the night of the Duct-Taped-to-the-Hammock Blues. I doubt a caterpillar could make a better looking cocoon. I swear I did damage to my stomach muscles that night.

HEARD ONE NIGHT AROUND THE HOGFIRE

SUNG TO
KRAFT MACARONI & CHEESE BLUES:

"Well I was sittin' in my hammock
<da da da duh>

Wasn't even wearin' my shoes
<da da da duh>

Tried gettin' up to drain the lizard
<da da da duh>

And found I's stuck here with these
blues!

I got the blues.

Lord! Lord! Lord!

I got the blues!

Somebody come and 'hep me,
'cuz I got the

Duct-Taped-to-the-Hammock...

...BLUES!"

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Lefts Not Allowed

In the morning, after we managed to drag our asses out of bed and eat, we organized the first official HRCC paintball tournament. It turned out to be quite the three-man competition, and nearly everyone took part. We only had time for a single-elimination contest, but I don't think anyone minded. Has anyone seen my extra balls? I coulda sworn I left them right here...

Thanks again to Casey and Mike for another awesome Saturday night

dinner. A few of us had initial misgivings about nixing the usual steaks for pork chops (stupid butcher!). But the duo worked their magic and it turned out as great as ever. We're being pleasantly spoiled every Saturday dinner by their skillet-welding skills. The only problem is, it makes Sunday breakfast seem like little more than a bit of bacon to keep the Spodie down.

As the evening progressed we enjoyed a pretty decent-sized pile of fireworks. I'll try and get more for this year, and feel free to bring your own. After the pyro show the second new tournament kicked off... poker.

The tables were pushed together and the Texas Hold-'Em kicked into gear. It was a raucas affair which ended with Mike Brown walking away victorious. There can be only one...

On Sunday morning, we got a real-world lesson in that strange foreign language called "Weatherman-ese". Apparently "very slight chance of showers" translates directly into English as "it's gonna rain like a fucker until all your shit is wetter than a fat chick in the bon-bon aisle." (Good analogy, eh Scott?) But guess what... we didn't much care.

So 15 Hogs (with 2 Rookies) mostly broke camp and Spodie Master Deano mixed up the land Spodies. Something about land Spodies isn't quite the same, though. Deano does it well, but land Spodies just don't come with that "drifting along unable to focus on anything but your feet" aspect. More river Spodies this year, I think.

THE SKINNY

So, we held the business meeting in the rain under the canopy. In the face of the expenses that we incurred and the net loss from the year before, we had to assess each member five bucks. This just about brought us even on the balance sheet. It was decided that we should hold the Club dues at the raised \$75 mark and leave open the possibility of future assessments in an effort to stay in the black. I don't foresee the dues being reduced in the near future, but you never can tell... I might hit the lottery for a bazillion dollars and subsidize the whole

"In the beginning there was nothing. Slightly after that there was a little more stuff, but not quite enough to make it interesting. Hogs and small furry creatures did naught but roam the earth in all directions as far as the eye could see. And it was good... not great but pretty good.

And then the heavens did part (much like a busted zipper) and a huge left hand did poke forth through the open heaven-fly. From the palm, in a flurry of feathers and nasty pointy talons, sprang forth falconry. And the Hogs did witness the splendor and they rejoiced, and the small furry creatures did flee for their tasty little lives.

So it is written."

Excerpt from The Book of Hog Chapter 05 : Verses 1-3

shootin' match. Hey, lemme dream!

We also announced the Contest and Tournament winners. Hands-down, Running Dummy went to Casey (see Figure 1). There's a small-mouth bass upriver that's been passing himself off as Scott, putting on sultry music and then taking seedy pictures of the she-bass with his nice new digital camera.

A special mention goes to Wilgus Ranger Betty Vader who, without hesitation, gave us a drill and bits so we could hotwire Scott's car. No ID required. I dunno about you, but I feel secure in the notion that our crap is safe at Wilgus.

"Mad B" had the best poker face, and cleaned up at the Texas Hold-Em table. I think the pot was somewhere in the neighborhood of eighty bucks. Not bad for an evening of artfully bullshitting your buddies.

Eric again excelled at golf and took the tournament title. I think the rest of us should just give up. That or get him really tanked before we play. Oh wait... that didn't work. Oooops, did I say that out loud? Crap...

The first Hog paintball tournament ended up with Nate, Eric, and me on top. Well, Nate was on top, but... errr... yeah, anyways we somehow managed to avoid shooting each other long enough to grab the flag a bunch of times. I have a feeling it will be a tougher task this year now that everyone has been broken in.

I must say that an unofficial Best Fisherman award goes to Eric. Minutes

after the contest was closed on Sunday, he caught a great one off the head of the island. I think it was the only thing caught all trip. Good job again, Eric.

Rookie of the Year was awarded to Joel for his enthusiastic attitude and entertainment prowess. He worked his ass off, did everything that was asked, and belted out the freestyle, too.

Brian ran a close second, and the two Rookies again illustrated the unerring attention that our members pay to their Rookie selections. Not everyone is fit to be a Hog, and it's an honor to welcome members like these guys into the fold.

This year we already have at least one Rookie, probably two, so Joel and Brian don't have to fear being Rookies again. Good for them...bad for the rest of us. They were really good.

This time it was Nate who hadda pee the most. Into the river he went on Friday, snatching the Blown Bladder award from the rest of the cross-legged Hogs on the float. And in stand-up Hog fashion, he payed his fine with the best, highest quality shit beer that money can buy. Yummy!

Scott did a quality job of keeping the Rookies motivated with their duties, and we never found ourselves wondering where the firewood was. The only disturbing image I have of the wood project is of Mike Brown wielding a chainsaw. <shiver>

In addition to the usual recognition of the winners, trophies were

awarded to mark the achievements. This is an old-school HRCC tradition, whose main purpose is to elicit comments from un-Hogs like "I told you to get that fucking thing off the mantel!" and "Can't you find a better place for that piece of shit?!" Yes, Honey, that one is a horse's ass. And, yes, it goes right there on top the shiny new high-definition television.

We also took the time to respect and recognize the service of our members by starting a new tradition; service stars. We've tried to do service recognition before with hash marks on shirts, but it's proven hard to manage because new shirts aren't produced each year. With the new pins, one gold service star is awarded for each five years of service, or survival as the case may be.

Larry picked up five stars for his 25th Trip Distinguished Survival Award, and Scott, Mike B, and Steve all received their first stars. Our highest ranking member is Dave Occhialini, the last remaining founder of the HRCC, who now proudly wears six stars with a seventh coming this year (for the mathly-challenged or really stoned, that's 34 HRCC Trips). He's nearly a decade ahead of the next closest active member.

TWEAKS FOR THIS YEAR

There were only a few things that didn't go exactly as planned once the trip started. And to those I crack a beer and proudly pronounce "Shit Happens!" We really do have an outstanding group that handled the mishaps and annoyances with the proper grain of salt.

The one thing I certainly did miss on the trip last time was the river. There were four of us who didn't get any actual river flotilla time. We faked it by motoring up a ways and drifting back to the island, but that's just not the same. We're going to make a concerted effort to have at least two river segments this year. I do realize that the weather played a part on Sunday, and that's perfectly fine. Had it really been "scattered showers", we probably would have had a nice float South that day. Stupid weather men! There oughtta be a law...

Another item that worked out ok but could have been considerably better

was the meal prep. I neglected (mostly because I just didn't feel like it) to put the effort into formalizing who the meal teams were and what the logistics should be for the meals. This led to a bunch of probably unnecessary trips to Claremont for provisions. I am very seriously considering pre-buying a good portion of our victuals and freezing them solid. Then they can serve as both food and ice for our stay on the island. Ideas on this are welcome.

Also along those lines is that the volunteer corps for setting up the island will not consist of the same people this year. Who knows, maybe we can figure out a way to have everyone on the float this time. The problem is one of security. We don't want to set up our stuff on the island only to have it stolen while we're all on the float. It's a conundrum. I have some ideas (like razor wire and heat-seeking anti-personnel potato cannons), but I'd like to hear any and all creativity on the matter as well.

BEING WORKED ON

There are a few things being worked on for this year's Trip. The first is I'm trying to hook up with somebody

who can (and will) work on the Avon for short cash. It's been about 15 years since the Avon has had a good overhaul, and it's time to get the repairs refreshed. If anyone has any input into this matter, please let me know.

Another thing that I have been tinkering with is the HogTek SpudChucker. This is an engineering hobby of mine that I like to share with the Club when I can. Yeah yeah, I said I was gonna have one last year and it didn't come to pass. So I guess I'll have to put it all out there... ***I WILL have a new model of the HogTek this year, or I will drink triple Spodies.*** Oooh, I gurgled a little just thinking about it... *Update: Test fired the new 195 cubic inch HogTek SpudChucker last weekend. Holy muther of gawd...*

Some of you may have noticed that the HRCC website has been missing in action. In our glorious wisdom, we decided to initiate a transfer and move the site to a new host. Oooooops. It turns out that .org transfers are a pain in the ass when your registrar sucks big donkey dick. It couldn't be going less smoothly.

So, there is a slight chance that by the time you get this letter the site will be up again. At which point you may

CHECKS, CONFIRMATIONS AND COMMENTS TO:

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notice that a few sections have been updated and added. Stay tuned...

So, what's the bottom line? The island was a great success, and will continue to be our destination of choice. Wilgus remains our fall-back plan. And the weather will determine, at the last minute, what our approach will be. Wednesday check-in at Wilgus will continue for anyone wanting to take part in the final planning (and, of course, the pre-Trip stupidity).

So GentleHogs, gather your Rookies and send in your dues... we have no money in the treasury to kick us off this year. We're totally running on credit. Mmmmmmm, debt.

And I can't say it enough... thanks again to a great bunch of Hogs for an unforgettable Trip last year. Never before have so many Hogs come up to me just to say what a great group we have. This thing just keeps getting better and better.

See you on the river...

Andy

A Sad Note: It is with a heavy heart that I must announce the passing of a Hog. Mark Davis has died of a heart attack at the untimely age of 60 in Florida. While not an active Hog now, he was an avid participant in his time. Mark was one of those guys who made my early HRCC trips that much more memorable. Now we honor him amongst the ranks of Hogs Past, where he'll remain in the company of Hog greats like Rich Fistler and Mark Williams.



Proof Positive: Many have expressed concern over the Missing Moose. It wasn't until this actual proof was discovered on Route 2 in Massachusetts that we were able to say definitively that Moose isn't broken... These photos are the actual front and back of two separate town line signs, the existence of which can mean only one thing...
 Moose will forever be Orange! ... (By the way, it's Moose not Wendell!)