

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No. 281

Monday, March 16, 2015



After a short but intense winter here on the Lower Miss, with ice and snow and almost an entire week of snow days, the air seems to be softening, and the ground warming up, and every day the buds in the trees seem to double in size in expectations of their approaching explosion of green, the cardinals are getting aggressive, and the mockingbirds more territorial, and the mosquitoes waking up from hibernation with ravenous hunger... It's a good time to get out and enjoy the outdoors wherever you are. Or come and enjoy our wild rivers if yours are still iced over! See below for some spring paddling opportunities, including the Sunflower River (during Juke Joint Festival April 11th), the Mississippi (during Bluz Cruz, also April 11th), Bayou deSaird (Louisiana, the first full weekend of May), and back on the big river for an incredible workshop for men led by Jim "Pathfinder" Ewing (May 22-25th). If you ever considered opening your own canoe & kayak livery, or wondered what it would take to operate your own guiding and outfitting business, come to University of Louisiana - Monroe May 2-3, and learn from the experts. Whatever you do, get outside and shake off those winter blues. And wherever you are, we extend our Quapaw blessing, "May the River be with You!"

Quapaw Canoe Company

Spring Schedule

March 2015:

16-26 Atchafalaya River Expedition

From Three Rivers WMA to the Gulf of Mexico

via Morgan City

April 2015:

April 11th Juke Joint Festival

(See schedule below)

<http://www.jukejointfestival.com>

April 11th Bluz Cruz

(See schedule below)

<http://www.bluzcruz.com/>

15-30th Rivergator Expedition:

Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico

including Plaquemine, New Orleans and Venice

May 2015:

2-3 Canoe Outfitting & Guiding 101

University of Monroe - May 2-3, 2015

For details and enrollment please go to:

<https://webservices.ulm.edu/ce/content/canoe-outfitting-guiding-101>

Fri May 22 - Mon May 25, 2015

Men on the Water: A Healing Journey

Adventure Workshop on the Mississippi River

October/November 2015:

Rivergator Completion Celebration Expedition:

St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico

1180 miles on the Middle and Lower Mississippi River!

Rivergator Expeditions you can join in 2015:

April 15-30, 2015: Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico

225 miles downstream through the Industrial Corridor down the biggest inland harbor in the world, including Plaquemine, Morganza Floodway, Donaldsonville, Bonnet Carre Spillway, New Orleans, Algiers, Belle Chasse, Venice, Pilot-Town, Mile Zero, Head of Passes, Birdsfoot Delta, last camp will be a sandy beach on the Gulf of Mexico!

October/November 2015: St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico

1180 miles on the Middle and Lower Mississippi River! Start: Missouri River Confluence. End: salty waters of the Caribbean.

-- Bluz Cruz 2015 --

Quapaw Canoe Company is offering space in our big canoes for 2015 Bluz Cruz, a 22-mile race ending up on the Yazoo River in downtown Vicksburg. One of the great races along the Lower Mississippi River! Begins at 8:00 am April 11th at Madison Parish Port, LA, and ends in Vicksburg, MS at the river front. The race fee will go to support the Service Over Self Organization. You can of course paddle your own canoe or kayak. But if you want to join 10 others in an unforgettable team experience, try the big canoe! The Big Canoe offering includes registration and everything you'll need in the canoe for the day. For signup go to: <http://www.bluzcruz.com/quapaw.htm>.

For more information about Bluz Cruz, please go to: <http://www.bluzcruz.com/>

-- Juke Joint Festival 2015 --

2015 we are partnering with GRIOT ARTS,

Our good neighbors across the street,

for this years' Juke Joint Festival.

Several of their youth participate

in our River Arts Youth Project.

Events Include:

Canoe-Carving Demonstration & Workshop -- Griot Arts Building Open House -- Improv Theater Workshop -- Paddling on the Sunflower River -- Griot Youth Rock Band -- Sunflower River Camping -- Griot Art Gallery -- 1Mississippi: Can the River Count on You? -- GRIOT and GREENS -- Sunday Daytrip on the Mighty Mississippi!

GRIOT/Quapaw Canoe Company

Activities During

2015 Juke Joint Festival April 9-12

Canoe-Carving Demonstration & Workshop

Paddling on the Sunflower River

Sunflower River Camping

1Mississippi -- Can the River Count on You?

GRIOT and GREENS

Sunday Daytrip on the Mighty Mississippi

All events will meet & take place street level 3rd & Sunflower in downtown Clarksdale all day 9 - 4pm every day Thursday April 14 – Saturday April 16, Mississippi River Daytrip 1pm - 7pm Sunday April 12th. For more information contact Quapaw Canoe Company 662-627-4070 or john@island63.com.

Canoe-Carving Demonstration & Workshop

Quapaw Canoe Company

9 am to 4 pm Wednesday - Saturday

Location: Quapaw Canoe Company, 289 Sunflower (Third Street & Sunflower, opposite GRIOT Arts). Contact: 662-627-4070 or 902-7841. Catfish Dugout Canoe carving from 3-ton cottonwood log. Partnership with Spring Initiative and GRIOT ARTS youth programs. This project supported by the Mississippi Arts Commission. All ages welcome. We provide instruction, tools and safety equipment. Children under 12 must be accompanied by parents. Contact: Quapaw Canoe Company 662-627-4070 or john@island63.com.

Paddling on the Sunflower River

Quapaw Canoe Company

9 am to 4 pm Wednesday - Saturday (Pick your time and stay out as long as you want)

Canoe or kayak or SUP. Paddle the beautiful (and muddy!) Sunflower River through downtown Clarksdale with the “back-door view” of Red’s Lounge, The Riverside Hotel. Possible run through a Delta Wilderness with a take-out at Hopson Plantation. Meet Location: Quapaw Canoe Company, 289 Sunflower (Third Street & Sunflower, opposite Sarah’s Kitchen). Contact: 662-627-4070 or 902-7841. See below for options & rates.

Sunflower River Camping

Quapaw Canoe Company

Wednesday - Sunday

Quapaw Canoe Company will be hosting a public campground downtown for tents campers. No trailers or RVs. Porta-Johns and hot showers on location. Camp on grassy sites along the banks of the Sunflower River! Easy access to downtown Clarksdale and all the stages and juke joints. Everything within walking distance! \$25/tent/night for 2 people, \$10 each additional person/night. Bring your own tent and sleeping bags. Parking for 1 vehicle per tent. (You can find close by parking elsewhere). Contact: Mark “River” Peoples 662-902-1885. Quapaw Canoe Company 662-627-4070 or john@island63.com.

1Mississippi -- Can the River Count on You?

Quapaw Canoe Company

9 am to 4 pm Wednesday - Saturday

Ongoing Exhibit and Southern campaign headquarters for the 1Mississippi River Citizen Program. Come on over and learn about how you can help protect and better the waters of America, our drinking water, swimming water & lifeblood of the nation. Become a River Citizen and join us in making the Mississippi River sparkle like the beautiful “Queen of Rivers” that she is.

GRIOT and GREENS (Saturday 11am-2pm)

Fresh greens collected and cooked by the youth involved in the GRIOT’s new Job Training Program Meraki. Contact Emily Wisseman ewissema@gmail.com or 217-778-0516. Vegetarian options. Donations accepted, proceeds to go to support of the GRIOT Meraki program.

Sunday April 12th, Mississippi River Daytrip 1-7pm (Sunday Only)

Write john@island63.com or call 662-902-7841 for reservation. Meet at 1pm at Quapaw

headquarters 289 Sunflower Avenue in downtown Clarksdale gear up, and then shuttle to Montezuma Landing, which is directly above Friars Point. We'll paddle by the beautiful warm light of mid-day to Island 61 where we'll make swim stop and watch the sun rotate over the waters of Old Town Bend. Shortly thereafter we'll follow the river downstream over the main channel of the Mississippi as it makes the turbulent escapade below Kangaroo Point. After supper, we'll push off into the shimmering waters of the river, the darkness of the boils highlighted by shining whirl lines, boil lines, and low angle sun reflections. By the last light of the day we'll paddle around Old Town Bend, and then silently slip in between Is. 62 and 63. Sometime around sunset we'll cut into the channel below Island 63 and meet our shuttle driver Ellis Coleman "Mr. Smooth Dancer" at Quapaw Landing. Call ahead to make your reservation. \$125/person includes guiding, outfitting and shuttle. Live music on board! Potluck Supper. Bring a loaf of bread, a salad, or a rack of ribs to share. 662-627-4070 or john@island63.com.

Griot Arts Events: Friday April 10th:

Improv Theater Workshop For Students 7th-12th Grade 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Sheila Shotwell will lead a fun theater workshop for any students interested.

Contact Emily Wisseman ewissema@gmail.com or 217-778-0516 for more information.

Griot Arts Events: Saturday, April 11th

Griot Arts Building Open House 278 Sunflower Ave 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Please come by and Learn more about our after school arts program and our new job training program! www.griotarts.com.

Contact Emily Wisseman ewissema@gmail.com or 217-778-0516 for more information.

Griot Art Gallery Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM 274 Sunflower Ave Join us to view local artists' work. Live Music in the afternoon. www.griotarts.com

Contact Emily Wisseman ewissema@gmail.com or 217-778-0516 for more information.

Griot Greens - 11:00 AM- 1:00 PM - Stop by the Quapaw Canoe Co. parking lot on Sunflower Ave for a treat from The Meraki Farm and see the fruit of the labor of the Griot's new Job Training Program. Greens and Cornbread will be available during the lunch hours. Contact Emily Wisseman ewissema@gmail.com or 217-778-0516. Vegetarian Options. Donations accepted, proceeds go to support Griot and Meraki. www.griotarts.com

Griot Youth Rock Band will be performing in the Griot Art Gallery (274 Delta Ave) from 4:30 to 5:30. Come by to see the future musicians of Clarksdale showcase their talents.

Description: Paddling on the Sunflower River

Intro: Beautiful paddling through downtown Clarksdale, and upstream & downstream as well. Re-discover Clarksdale from its main artery, the Sunflower River. Back-door view of riverbank blues places like Red's Juke Joint and the historic Riverside Hotel. Get close to Mississippi Delta Wildlife such as fish, turtles, snakes, frogs, song birds, birds of prey (mainly hawks & owls) wading birds & other waterfowl, occasional deer, possum, armadillos, raccoon & beaver. Flat water. Easy paddling. Guide service available. Do your own paddling & shuttling or we can provide canoes, kayaks and shuttle service. See below.

5 paddling options on the Sunflower River:

1) Downtown Clarksdale "Back-Door Blues Shuffle & Turnaround" (1-3 miles): Start off downstream under the Railroad Bridge and paddle behind Delta Hardware (Charlie Musselwhite CD), Ground Zero Blues Club, Red's Juke Joint, Martin Luther King Park, the Riverside Hotel (where Bessie Smith died in 1937), and make a u-turn under the Blues Highway 61. Paddle back. Flexible timing, you decide how fast you want to paddle, and how soon you want to turn around. Leave from Sunflower Landing (behind Quapaw Canoe Company).

2) Downtown Parks & Wilderness (1-3 miles): Paddle upstream behind City Hall, around Soldier's Field and enter the rich Cypress forest hidden along the banks of the river. You will be amazed by the variety of wildlife in this thriving floodplain ecosystem. Commonly seen are egrets, great blue herons, red eared turtles, mississippi map turtle, needlenose gar, red shouldered hawk, beaver and river otter. Paddle up to the Duckwalk Park and make turnaround for a leisurely paddle back downstream. Leave from Sunflower Landing (behind Quapaw Canoe Company).

3) Clark Park to Sunflower Landing (3 miles) Leisurely 3 mile paddle into downtown Clarksdale through some of the woods & neighborhoods north of town. Owls & beavers. Paddle through the cypress, oaks & sycamores of the Duck Walk. You've never seen downtown until you've seen it from the river! Put-in at Clark Park (Lee Drive & Friars Point Road). Take out at Sunflower Landing (Public Parking just downstream of 2nd Street Bridge). Shuttle available.

4) Clover Hill to Sunflower Landing (10 miles) 3-4 hours of paddling. Wild & remote-feeling. Great views of Coahoma County as it used to look. Paddle through woods & fields for miles and not see anyone. No people or buildings until you get close to Clarksdale.

Lots of deer, ducks, owls, hawks, and migrating birds. Put in at bridge near Clover Hill. (turn off Friars Point Road at Kenoy's and go East half mile on Farrell-Eagle's Nest Road. Park on SE side of the 2nd Bridge. Put in below bridge. Take out at Sunflower Landing (Public Parking just downstream of 2nd Street Bridge)

5) Sunflower Landing to Hopson (6 miles) 2-3 hours of paddling. Leave downtown Clarksdale and paddle under the Railroad Bridge behind Delta Wholesale Hardware, Red's Juke Joint, the Riverside Hotel, 61 Highway – you will see why the Sunflower River has the blues! The river alternates between short narrow passages with clogged channels through submerged trees and long pools bordered by big trees and wide fields. The banks are thick with hawks, owls & deer. Put in Sunflower Landing

(Public Parking just downstream of 2nd Street Bridge). Take out at Hopson Bridge

Rental & Shuttle Rates

Canoe Rental Half Day: \$35/canoe with paddles & life jackets for 2 people

Canoe Rental Full Day: \$70/canoe with paddles & life jackets for 2 people

Kayak or SUP Rental: \$35/person/trip with paddle & life jacket

Shuttle Rates (per person with canoes & kayaks):

Sunflower Landing – Clark Park: \$15

Sunflower Landing – Clover Hill: \$25

Sunflower Landing – Hopson: \$25

20% off for Friends of the Sunflower River in current good standing!!!

Who Are the Friends of the Sunflower River?

Friends of the Sunflower River is all about appreciating and caring for the lonely little river that winds its way through the center of the Mississippi Delta, from Friars Point to Clarksdale, from Mound Bayou & Merigold to Sunflower; from Indianola to Anguilla, from Holly Bluff to Vicksburg.

This river has the blues! Besides the many blues & gospel musicians who were born & baptized along its banks, its mussel shell beds (which are reported to be the richest such biota in the world) seem to be in constant danger of overzealous engineering. The Sunflower River has been

neglected and over-worked; so much that it was proclaimed America's "Most Endangered River" in 2003.

The good news is that its forests constitute the largest bottomland hardwood forests in the National Forest system (they also produce the highest carbon-sequestration of any forests in North America!), and its banks are home to every creature winged, webbed or otherwise, found native to the Mississippi Delta. It's a beautiful place to get away, to reflect a moment on the rivers and woods of America, to walk along its banks, to paddle its waters, to enjoy its scenery. Most importantly, its home to all of us who live on or near its banks, and second home to many others who love it from a distance. Shouldn't we be taking better care of our lonely muddy river?

Physical Description: The Sunflower River is born in the bayous and lakes of Northern Coahoma County and meanders South some 250 miles through the Yazoo/Mississippi Delta paralleling the Mississippi River on the West and the Yazoo on the East, (with which it confluences with 10 miles above Vicksburg). A small but dynamic river, once forested, now mostly bordered by fields, the Sunflower is a rich habitat for all creatures native to the region, including black bear and panther. Its muddy current averages 2100 cfs (cubic feet per second) at Sunflower, 3461 at the mouth of Bogue Phalia, and approximately 4500 where it empties into the Yazoo River at Steele Bayou. Its drainage includes most or all of Coahoma, Bolivar, Sunflower, Washington, Sharkey & Issaquena Counties, some 3,689 square miles, inhabited by 169,150 people.

Cultural/Historical Mélange: In its journey through the Delta, the Sunflower winds through the layers of mud and history that gave the world its first great blues singer (Charlie Patton, Dockery Plantation), the first mechanized cotton picker (Hopson Plantation), its oldest African-American founded community (Mound Bayou), rural Civil Rights era leaders (Fanny Lou Hamer, Sunflower County; Aaron Henry, Clarksdale), the Teddy Bear (Delta National Forest), King of the Chicago Blues (Muddy Waters, born in Rolling Fork, lived 25 years at Stovall) and the renowned ambassador of the blues (B.B. King, Indianola). The Rev. C.L. Franklin (Aretha's Father) is just one of many who were baptized in her muddy waters. Bessie Smith died at the G.T. Thomas Hospital which sits on her banks in Clarksdale (now the Riverside Hotel). Today you can hear live blues along the river at juke joints Red's and Sarah's Kitchen. Legendary woodsman, Holt Collier (1846-1936), who cornered the Teddy Bear, reported its waters to run clear & clean, and Roosevelt started each day of the hunt with a cold-water swim. One of our long-term objectives is to make the waters safe once again for fishing and swimming.

Canoe Outfitting & Guiding 101 - University of Monroe - May 2-3, 2015

Always wanted to start your own canoe/kayak river business and didn't know how or where to start? This 2-day workshop is for you! For details and enrollment please go to:

<https://webservices.ulm.edu/ce/content/canoe-outfitting-guiding-101>

Title: Canoe Outfitting & Guiding 101: A 2-Day Primer for Starting Your Own Small Business as Canoe Guide and Rental Service

Description: Learn the ins and outs of starting a small business dedicated to canoe livery and outfitting. Learn to safely guide canoeists through our local bayous, rivers and lakes for supplemental income. Introductory workshop lightly covering the many challenges and opportunities for a nature tourism business. This class will set the stage for how to make your dream job come true. This two-day class is ideal for the person who loves the great outdoors and wants to share that enthusiasm with others. Half indoor classroom, half outdoors. Participants will know by the end of workshop whether or not to pursue this kind of business, and how and where to proceed if they so desire. No previous canoe experience required, but must be comfortable in water settings. Most aspects of this program are applicable to kayaks and paddleboards also.

Men on the Water: A Healing Journey

Fri May 22 - Mon May 25, 2015

Adventure Workshop on the Mississippi River

Jim PathFinder Ewing, the author of seven books on eco-spirituality and mind-body medicine, will be teaching a three-day workshop on the river. Timed to coincide with the release of his new book, *Redefining Manhood: A Guide for Men and Those Who Love Them* (Findhorn Press, Spring 2015), the workshop will focus on reassessing the concept of men and their roles in today's society.

Canoe builder and youth leader John Ruskey and his team of Mighty Quapaws will be your outfitters, guides and cooks for the expedition.

Summary: 4-day weekend with paddling, camping and workshops. Muddy Waters Wilderness. This is a journey through some of the wildest & remote islands & forests of the Lower Mississippi. Described in a 12-page article in *National Geographic Adventure Magazine*, August 2007. Great back channels & oxbow lakes to explore. Fossil finding & rock hunting at Knowlton Crevasse & Catfish Point. Great swimming throughout. Abundant wildlife, exceptional birding, world class fisheries, the greatest concentration of white tailed deer in the country, as well as the Louisiana black bear. No towns or industry. The only evidence of civilization is the tugboats on the river.

See http://www.island63.com/expeditions-muddy_waters.cfm for photos and description.

Charge: \$550 each all inclusive includes all workshops and teachings, shuttle, meals, guiding and outfitting, and everything you will need for the river. Special deal for fathers and sons, and same deal for couples: 500 each.

Meet: 9am Fri May 22nd

Quapaw Canoe Company

291 Sunflower Avenue

Meet at 9am. Park your car, pack your bag and load the canoe. Shuttle to Mississippi River and set off downstream. 4 days on the biggest river in North America. Primitive Camping. Bring tent and sleeping bag, or arrange rental.

Finish: Mon May 25th

Return to the same sometime mid-day. Unpack your bags. Say goodbye to new friends. Your

car will be waiting you. Return home.

Men on the Water: A Healing Journey

Jim PathFinder Ewing

Workshop Description:

The workshop is normally taught in two segments: one as a men's retreat (the "Men" part of the title) as a path for men in self-discovery and inner growth; and one for women ("Those Who Love Them"), so they can understand and help men grow in wisdom and stature to meet today's changing roles. This workshop is for men, women and children, or singles, and will focus on concepts in the book as well as living in harmony with nature, in keeping with being on the river.

The outline of the three-day workshops is an evening session of approximately two hours, followed by a full day, then a morning session to wrap up and share what is learned.

This workshop teaches men how to be men in a new, yet time-tested way, by reevaluating how they were brought up and determining which behaviors are suitable for adopting, and which are suitable for rejecting. No one is taught what to believe, only how to examine what is believed, so self-discovery can take place.

Participants should bring notebook or paper and pens to write down insights and understandings. It is recommended that those attending the workshop read Redefining Manhood before the trip and be prepared to discuss the concepts. Some exercises in the book will be part of the workshop.

Paddling and Camping Description

Quapaw Canoe Company

Food & Gear: Quapaw provides all necessary river gear & emergency equipment. Normally we prepare all food & refreshments, drinks include spring water, juices and milk. Alcoholic beverages BYOB. We will pack all necessary cookware and eating utensils, as well as camp tables and camp chairs.

Bring all personal gear and stuff into our waterproof drybags before launching (or use your own). These are backpack-style bags made of tough waterproof material - great for packing on a rainy day! It takes three complete fold to make them water-proof, be sure to lock all four buckles! If you have any questions, check with your guide.

Be prepared for rain or intense sun UV exposure! Sunlight is surprisingly intense on the river, even in the winter (you get the sun twice – once from above and once reflected from below). Sunburn is our number one complaint and has caused more than one Mississippi River paddler very painful days and sleepless nights. Be forewarned! Sunglasses, sun screen, long sleeve clothing and a wide brim hat are all good ideas, especially for anyone particularly sensitive.

We can supply tents & sleeping bags to anyone who needs them, \$35ea/person/trip regardless of length. Otherwise, bring your own and pack with your gear into our dry bags.

Camping: Remote islands, sandbars, towheads, usually sandy places, sometimes it's necessary to make a muddy landing. In inclement weather it might be necessary to find shelter within the forest. This is primitive camping on a river island, no services of any sort. Bring everything you need to make yourself comfortable. Bring your own toiletry. Bring a change of warm clothing, including summer months, when mornings can be cool. It's always cooler on the river.

Charge: \$550 each all inclusive includes all workshops and teachings, shuttle, meals, guiding and outfitting, and everything you will need for the river. Bring your personal items and camping gear and we'll provide everything else. Fee includes canoes, paddles, lifejackets and all necessary river gear, first aid kits and emergency gear; and meals, which include all the food prep, campfire cooking, cookware and eatware, and cleanup. Also includes shuttle and transportation of canoes and gear plus our vehicles and drivers to and from Clarksdale to the river.

Deposit: \$250 deposit required to hold date, remainder due at trip start. Deposit refundable in case of severe weather or other unforeseeable disastrous or dangerous occurrence.

About the Book:

While women have forged ahead in the workplace and society, men are finding themselves increasingly marginalized, socially, professionally, economically — enough so that one book on bestseller lists recently has been titled *The End of Men*. This has led to calls for a men's movement and courses are being taught, but they are failing to find traction among men. The reason should be plain: where once Iron John stood as an archetype, along with the King, Warrior, Lover and Magician, those roles have become sadly outdated. The old archetypes of manhood no longer apply.

In this book, the author of six previous books on energy medicine, Native American spirituality and mindfulness, outlines why the current courses on men's empowerment are failing and offers a new way of looking at male roles that predates the modern era. It is a "back to the future" approach to manhood that actually is better suited for the male psyche, having existed for

thousands of years in all parts of the globe. Modernized, this “survival kit” for the male gender can revitalize male and female relations on a more balanced and time-honored footing. This book serves as a self-help manual for men, a guide for men’s retreats, and a primer for wives, daughters, mothers and female friends to help the men in their lives adopt a newer, healthier way of living in balance with a society that is rapidly shifting its roles.

Other books on this topic repeat tired stereotypes of the “king,” “lover,” “warrior,” “magician” and similar shorthand versions of men’s roles; but those roles no longer hold much value in today’s society. In a society where women have more education and higher earning capacity than men, a woman can be “king.” Women no longer sit idly waiting to be awakened by a Prince Charming; they are active lovers, emancipated from the Sleeping Beauty archetype. If men try to adopt outdated “lover” roles, they find themselves alone, even pitied. Women are warriors, and magicians, and welders, firefighters and CEOs. An “Iron John” who wishes to retreat into what he is taught is his strength in masculinity — the wild man of ancient times — will find himself alienated and out of step with reality. Conversely, if men try to adopt feminized versions of men’s roles, they will find themselves equally marginalized. Women don’t need men to be women. Nor do they need men who patronize them.

Redefining Manhood: A Guide for Men and Those Who Love Them

Findhorn Press, Spring 2015

by Jim Ewing



The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

is brought to you courtesy of

The Lower Mississippi River Foundation

www.rivergator.org

www.wildmiles.org