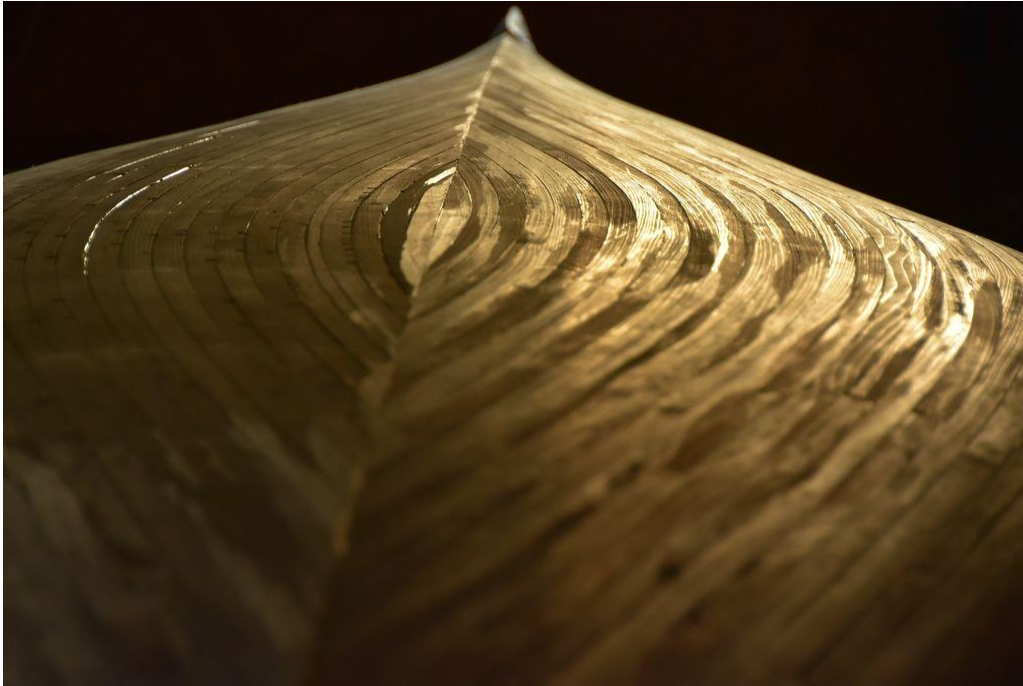


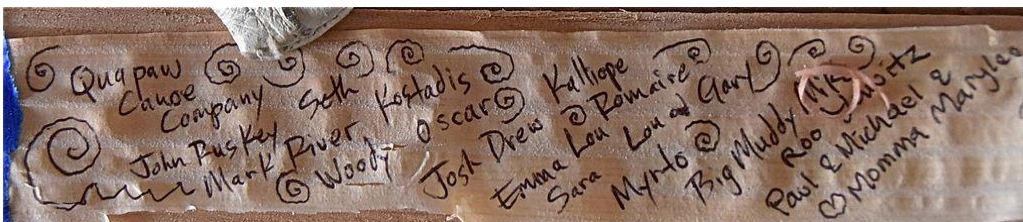
The Agony & Ecstasy (of the Canoe Builder): Dragonfly in Larval Stage

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No 337

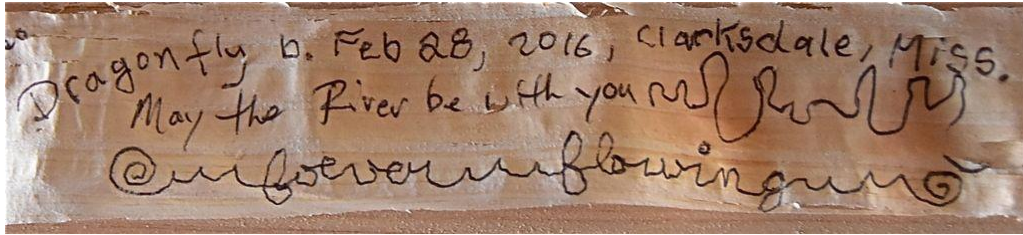
Posted Wed, Mar 3, 2016, Clarksdale, Miss & Helena, Ark



The Heart of the 29-foot Dragonfly Cypress Strip Canoe



Found in the **Heart of the Dragonfly** Canoe: Seth, Kalliope, Romaine, Kostadis, Myrto, Brer Josh, River, Rachel, JR, Zoe, Lau, Woody, Ojay, Wanbli Mike, Roo, Paul, Michael, Momma Marylee, Linda Bearheart and Orca Barb, Lou and Gare-Bear, Driftwood, Sarah, and Emma Lou...



Special Thanks to Chris Lese and students from the Marquette University High School for sending us 2 big boxes full of rags and plastic containers! Also, Allen Johnson and Laura Barnaby from Rust Restaurant, Dr. Patti Johnson, Nancy Foley, Rachel Bouer, Joan Twillman and the St. Louis STRONG (=Sisters Taking Responsibility of Our Natural Gifts), and many others who left yogurt containers and rags at our doorstep and tied up in plastic bags to the hitches on our canoe trailers! All of you are now a part of the Dragonfly Canoe.



Seth Installing the Redwood Heart -- after 2 days of agony and ecstasy

It Takes Many Hands: Master carpenter/canoe

builder **Seth Barger** has been my brother of the saw, hand plane and chisel in the last four big canoes to come out of the Quapaw Canoe Shop: the graceful 29 footers Junebug I and Junebug II, Grasshopper, and now Dragonfly, perhaps the most beautiful stripper canoes to ply the muddy waters of the Lower Mississippi -- and certainly the hardest working! This year Seth invited his good friend **Kostadis** to join in the build. Kostadis is a stone and wood conservator from Greece who presses olives and squeezes grapes when not restoring churches and boats. Together with Mighty Quapaws **Mark River, James "Woody" Sykes, and Oscar Donaby, Justin Riney** and **Emma-Lou**, Seth and Kostadis shed some blood, let flow many many tears, and shared a few choice words as the long strips of Louisiana Bald Cypress were pulled into position, some easily, some not so. The last peice, the redwood heart of the canoe, required 2 days of measurements, a soak in the Sunflower River, a special jig, an impossibly long skinny shaping, one failed attempt, and many headaches and much agony -- and a vicious cut down the length of Seth's middle finger.



Kostadis Helping fit the Redwood Heart of the Dragonfly Canoe



Mark River, Kostadis, Seth, Canoe Builders Measuring and Fitting in the last Strips



Emma Lou Tickling the Belly of the Dragonfly Canoe with a Draw Shave



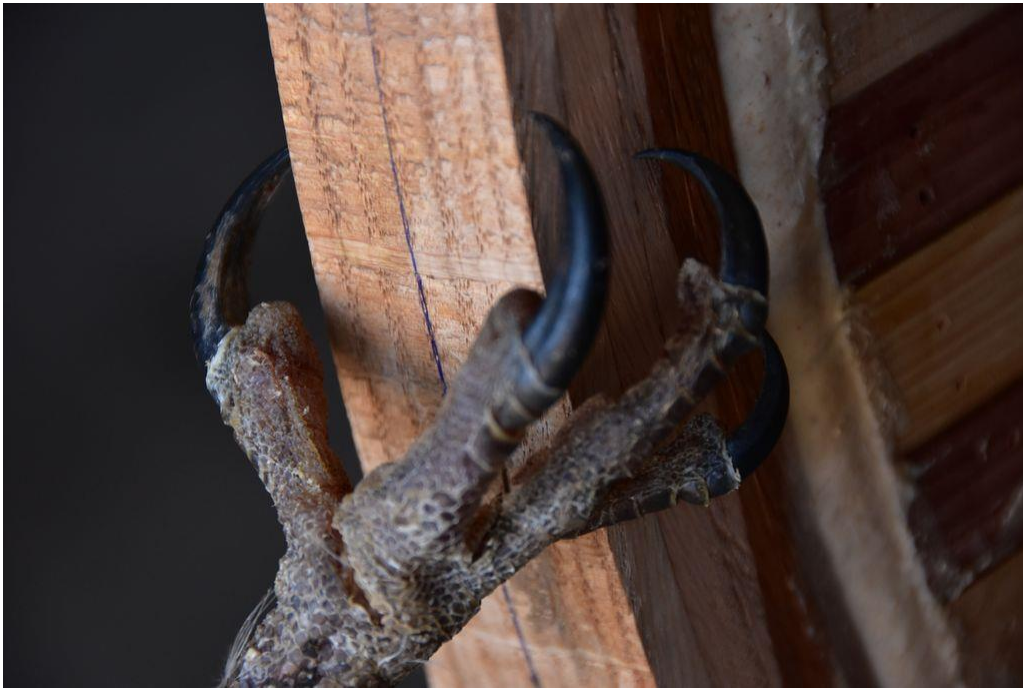
Driftwood Johnnie Shaping the Stern with a 3" Flat Carving Chisel & Wood Mallet



Justin Riney Smoothing the Red Oak Stern Stem with a Scrub Plane



Seth Working his Magic on the Belly of the Dragonfly until the Wood Grains Shine like Ice



The Eagle has Landed (Red Tailed Hawk actually -- thanks Layne and Claire!)



Dragonfly gets a Final Dusting after Weeks of stripping and Days of Planing Smooth

After a larval stage (fiberglass) and then pupation (seats & gunnels), Dragonfly will eventually migrate north to join the **Big Muddy Adventures** team, the big canoe people at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi in St. Louis. Dragonfly is a 29 foot voyageur strip canoe. She is constructed of Louisiana Bald Cypress with redwood accent strips and red oak stems. We found some beautiful white ash to adorn her gunwhales.



For more photos of beautiful Wooden Canoes on the Lower Miss, and more reading, go to www.rivergator.org

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

is a service of the Lower Mississippi River Foundation

Clarksdale, Mississippi ~ Helena, Arkansas