

Blue Cruz, Big Canoe, Big River

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No 345

Thursday, April 28, 2016



Big Canoes bumping below Angie and Allie Islands

Intro:

Advance Note: I sent the wrong version of this on Tuesday. I am re-sending today with photos. Thanks for your patience.

Bluz Cruz is this Saturday, April 30th, in Vicksburg. See below for details!

*We celebrated **Earth Day** by doing our work: helping protect our most endangered habitats by fostering stewards in the next generation. Last week we guided a 5-day trip with 37 8th graders from the **Environmental Adventure School**, which has a 20-year history of outdoor education in the Pacific Northwest.*



Fostering next generation's stewards of our rivers: 37 eighth graders from EAS

*As I write this I am very proud of our newest Mighty Quapaw Apprentice, **Capt. Valencia Metcalf**. Last week Valencia accepted the challenge to become a BIG CANOE PADDLER on the BIG RIVER! Whoo-whoop! Valencia joins the long line of Big Canoe Big River Captains like Clifton "Cliff" Carr, James "Woody" Sykes, Jeremy "Popeye" Hayes, and Oscar "Ojay" Donaby in the distinction of becoming young outdoor leaders on the biggest river in North America! Osiyo Valencia Metcalf! We send our blessing to the four winds in recognition of your achievement!*

*Meanwhile across the pond a large group of paddlers made a marathon effort in support of **Quapaw Canoe Company Flood Relief** [#Quapaw24BigPaddle](#). Keep reading below.*

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- - - Bluz Cruz 2016 - - -

Quapaw Canoe Company has open seats in our big canoes for 2016 Bluz Cruz!

For signup go to: <http://www.bluzcruz.com/quapaw.htm>.

This weekend is Bluz Cruz 2016! Blue Cruz is the classic 22-mile race ending up on the Yazoo River in downtown Vicksburg. Join the fun at one of the great races along the Lower Mississippi River! Begins at 8:00 am on Saturday, April 30th at Madison Parish Port, LA, and ends in Vicksburg, MS at the river front.

Quapaw Canoe Company has open seats in our big canoes for 2016 Bluz Cruz. The race fee will go to support the Service Over Self Organization. Most people paddle their own canoe, kayak or paddleboard. But if you want to join

10 others in an unforgettable team experience, join the teams in one of the big canoes! 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/>

- - - Quapaw Vicksburg - - -



Layne Logue: Welcome to the Quapaw Canoe Company tribe!

This weekend is also the Grand Opening of Quapaw Vicksburg! River Angel Layne Logue has decided to open the most recent outpost of the Quapaw Canoe Company for guided adventures on the Lower Mississippi River in the Vicksburg area. For canoeing, kayaking or paddle boarding on the big river in the Vicksburg area contact Layne Logue at layne@island63.com or call [662-529-7354](tel:662-529-7354). Our paddles up to Brother Layne and the newest outpost of the

Quapaw Canoe Company! Quapaw Canoe Company is dedicated to providing access to the wild splendors of the Lower Mississippi River by paddle power.

- - - About Layne Logue - - -



Layne is a kayaker, canoeist, and River Angel at large in the State of Mississippi

Layne Logue is the leader and River Guide at Quapaw Canoe Company – Vicksburg Outpost. He was born in New Orleans, Louisiana (Chalmatte) and moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi when his father got a job with the Corps of Engineers. Fishing, hunting, and playing outside was his childhood...and he still plays outside today. Layne also lived in Saudi Arabia for five years (age 9-14) when his father volunteered for an overseas tour. He is currently a Civil Engineer working with the Mississippi Dept. Of Transportation. Layne has always loved the Mississippi River and once he found paddling and John Ruskey, his life was forever changed to support the Mississippi River and all life on it. Layne is also a River Angel and helps the long distance paddlers with providing them a place to stay and resupplying them. Layne is a Bluz Cruz Committee member and helps coordinate the 22 mile Canoe & Kayak Mississippi River race held in Vicksburg every April. He has an eagle eye when it comes to spotting wildlife, and uses his passion of photography to

document and share the beauty of the River. Layne's goal is working towards a healthy thriving Mississippi River and providing transportation for people to see the magic that occurs on it. The Mississippi River flows through his heart.



Layne Logue is also a talented musician!

- - - Quapaw 24 Big Paddle - - -

Sunday morning (April 24th) on the River Wey in Surrey, England, a big group of paddlers with the [#Quapaw24BigPaddle](#) finished up their 24-hour marathon adventure in support of Quapaw Canoe Company! Inspired by the outdoor leader Dave Cornthwaite, Chris Barnes, Andy McLean, David Ardill, Tamsin Shakespeare, Terri Witherden, Anna Lund, and Lillie Cooper -- and a host of

others from over the Atlantic made a 24-hour marathon paddle on their River Wey in our behalf. We are deeply touched by this show of compassion for our losses in the Sunflower River Flood of March 2016. We at Quapaw Canoe Company are humbled and inspired by this act of strength and generosity. You guys are helping us get back on our feet. We hope in some way... that further on down the river of time... that our work will help others find rejuvenation in the wilderness... what goes around comes around! Update: We are finished cleaning out the Cave, and are rebuilding all our areas for guiding & outfitting, kitchen, library, and offices 30 feet above cave level, at street height (Sunflower Avenue). Come check it out! We've been blessed with sweat assistance (cleanup), equipment (kitchen appliances) and donations. But mostly we've been inspired and deeply touched by the outpouring of sympathy and acts of commiseration, such of the [#Quapaw24BigPaddle](#). It is friends like you that give meaning to the work we do, in sharing the wild beauty of the biggest river this side of mother earth.

We are approaching our **May 9th deadline** for this fundraising effort. Please consider joining the good faith and spirit demonstrated by our English/Kiwi/Aussie friends and share your support for the cause, by giving here:

<https://www.generosity.com/emergencies-fundraising/quapaw-canoe-flood-recovery>

- - - Capt. Valencia Metcalf - - -



Capt Valencia Metcalf guiding "Bikini Bottom" through DeSoto Lake Chute

I am very proud of our newest Mighty Quapaw Captain, Valencia Metcalf. She is now known amongst us big river Mighty Quapaws as Captain Valencia Metcalf!

Valencia has been training with our youth leader Mark River Peoples for the past two years on the Sunflower River in smaller 2-person canoes. She quickly rose through the ranks from bow to stern, and then assistant teacher with our after-school programming with GRIOT Arts led by Mark River. Last week Valencia accepted the challenge to become a Mighty Quapaw BIG CANOE PADDLER on the BIG RIVER with a big group of kids we had for a week.



Capt Valencia Metcalf leading six kids & one parent down the Lower Miss

Whoo-whoop! Paddles Up! Valencia joins the long line of Big Canoe Big River Captains like Clifton “Cliff” Carr, James “Woody” Sykes, Jeremy “Popeye” Hayes, Darius "Daredevil" Jurden and Oscar “Ojay” Donaby in the distinction of becoming young outdoor leaders on the biggest river in North America! This is one of the primary benchmarks of our apprenticeship program, and she excelled. She was one of six captains on the water last week. Five days on the water with her own team -- which consisted of young ladies, one female chaperone, and one young man. All eighth graders. They named their fire engine red 29-foot voyageur canoe "Bikini Bottom" -- I think from the Sponge Bob Island.

Valencia graduated from High School last year and is currently a student at Coahoma Community College. She came to us from the GRIOT Arts program, thanks to the direction of GRIOT Arts leaders Cali Noland, Emily Wisseman, Josue Atibalentja and Emily Cooper and other mentors who are helping shape healthy futures for young men and women.

Osiyo Capt. Valencia Metcalf! We send our blessing to the four winds in recognition of your achievement!

- - - My Brotha Mad Dog - - -

My Brotha Mad Dog
by Mark "River" Peoples

My first year as a guide for Quapaw Canoe Company, I met him, on my first trip from the Helena Harbor. A pleasant man with a cheerful demeanor, but a strong presence, gave me my first complement.

"I knew something great was going to happen to this company..."

I never forget the feelings in my heart at that moment. I knew the Delta was my new home.

That was the type of man he was. He never hesitated to show a person their qualities, but was willing to give constructive criticism when needed. He gave me a thesaurus, that I still can't figure out how to use. He gave me a book for writers that help sharpen my skills and helped me with my approach to stories. He was the anchor for the company who had more stories about the Delta and its history than locals who grew up here. He had an appetite for knowledge and continued to learn throughout his life. He had a list of "suggestions" for me to write about, and I'm sad, he didn't live to read them.

Just like the rivers that flow, the meanders of life are ever-changing, causing us to re-adjust our purpose and vision constantly, humbling us along the way. This life is fragile and fleeting, so you must make the best of it daily.

Mad Dog did that and I shall also.

- *Mark River*

- - - Million Strokes by Mississippi Matt - - -



Mississippi Matt leaving Island 62 headed towards the Gulf via one million paddle strokes!

Two weekends ago Matthew “Mississippi Matt” Burdine came through Clarksdale during Juke Joint 2016. And then last week we crossed paths on Island 62 — he solo paddling and us with a group of 37 eighth graders! River Angels Vicksburg downstream keep your eyes open for Mississippi Matt! Good guy on a good mission — to support breast cancer research in honor of his grandmother, mother and many friends that he lost to breast cancer. Go to Matt’s website <http://www.amillionstrokes.com/#!about/-/cee5> for photos, writing, and more info.

Canoe & Kayak Magazine interviewed Matt last year:

Matthew Burdine is paddling a 16'6" Wenonah Solo Plus from the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Lake Itasca, Minn., to its end in the Gulf of Mexico. He put his paddle in the water on August 24 and hopes to complete the 2,300-mile trip within the month, including a stop in New Orleans for Jazz Fest. He chose a canoe because it felt more primitive and would carry more gear. Unintentionally, he turned 30 on Day 30 of the trip.

C&K: Why did you decide to embark on this trip. And why solo?

Matthew Burdine: I wanted to embark on the Great American Adventure and paddle down the middle of America. Camping on the [islands in the middle of the river is magical](#). I chose to do it now because the water is low and the sandbars are exposed. The magic happens when you're out there alone and when you take your time. More personal transformation happens when you're alone.

C&K: What are the main challenges on a trip like this?

Preparing mentally for a solo 2,300-mile trip is daunting. The first three weeks are the hardest. Your mind and body have to adjust until you get into the river trance. I focus on each day, moment by moment until I just click in with the river and the next thing you know an eagle is staring at you. The other main challenge will be safety. The river starts and ends in marshland. Lake crossings can be dangerous, and when the wind changes it's like being out in the open ocean. Soon there will be lots of big currents and big barges that I'll have to navigate.

C&K: Why did you decide to paddle to support breast cancer research?

I lost my grandmother, mother and many friends to breast cancer. Paddling for a cause gives me more fuel to deal with the challenges. Every two minutes

someone is diagnosed with breast cancer. Every year, one in a thousand men are diagnosed.

C&K: What are you looking forward to on the trip?

The surprises. The unknown. I want to remember this trip for the rest of my life. I earned an MBA and pursued a career on Wall Street. I decided I couldn't live wearing a business suit every day and wanted to be out experiencing the world. I went to the Rocky Mountains and became a river guide and a ski instructor. I want to experience the magic in life, to be spontaneous and to take it all in. I want to open my heart and expand my mind.

Read more at <http://www.canoekayak.com/canoe/matthew-burdines-paddle-cure/#CP1dVZWjzz1LzCuR.99>

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

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

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