



INNER CITY OUTINGS - ATLANTA

An Outreach Program of the Sierra Club
November/December 2005 Newsletter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Horizon Theater Fundraiser Success

Our annual Horizon Theater Fundraiser was a huge success. We had about 140 people in attendance and raised \$2700. ICO wants to give a big thanks to Mike Foy and the Horizon Theater for, once again, coordinating this awesome event. Thanks to all of the volunteers who brought food and sold tickets. For those who could not attend, the play was great. You should go and see "The Big Bang" and support the Horizon Theater.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wilderness First Aid Training

Mark your calendar for **November 12th** for Wilderness First Aid training. It will be an 8-hour course most likely beginning at 9am, and we are currently working on a location. The cost of the course is \$55/person for 5-12

participants or \$45/person for 13-24 participants. The book is \$20 for those who want to keep it. ICO will reimburse \$50 of the training course, assuming you are working towards becoming a certified leader. ICO will also be providing lunch. Please let John or Erin Bracey know if you are interested

REI Gift-Wrap Fundraiser Coordinator Needed

Our annual REI gift-wrapping fundraiser will be held the 2 weekends (December 10-11 and 17-18) before Christmas at the Perimeter and I-85 stores. If anyone is interested in leading the entire effort, taking on one store, or in learning more about what this job entails, please let Erin know at (erinbracey@kcc.com). We will also need volunteers to wrap gifts, but that will come later. This is a fun way to earn a lot of money for ICO.

Sierra Club and Beer

Date: Wednesday, November 2
Location: Raging Burrito in Decatur

RECENT ADVENTURES

Chattahoochee River Family Festival 8-27-05

Brookhaven Boys and Girls Club

Brookhaven's latest adventure had all of the components of a regular day in the life of an Atlanta resident: snakes, marshmallows, canoes, and wild dancing. Myra, Rick, Cyerra and I joined Claire and fourteen kids from Brookhaven for a fabulous day at the Chattahoochee River Family Festival at Jones Bridge park.

We were greeted by an eastern king snake and its human, handler/counterpart, when we arrived at the park. Quickly, even the squeamish in the group warmed up to our cold-blooded host (the snake), and we learned characteristics for determining whether a snake is venomous. We were drawn away from the snakes by the music of a live harpist, who quickly responded to the kids' enthusiasm by demonstrating her prowess in performing such popular tunes as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

Several of the kids joined in the singing, and Victoria won the crowd over with her rendition of Mary Had a Little Lamb.

After leaving the harpist to her harping, the gang embarked on the not-quite-arduous-but-certainly-scenic Butterfly Trail. We made our best attempts to capture a butterfly or two for a closer look, but were satisfied in strolling along the river and discussing invasive plants, cloning, and how to build boats out of plastic coke bottles. The walk concluded with free T-shirts and pedometers for all and a BBQ lunch in the shade.

The Chattahoochee staff did a great job running the program and provided a number of additional activities including marshmallow

roasting, arts and crafts, and a fish and turtle identification station. Perhaps most popular of all the activities was canoeing. No one capsized and only two of the kids returned to shore soaking wet. Our adventure at the festival concluded with a live performance from a local hand-drumming troupe. After a few songs, a handful of the kids were lifted to their feet (either inspired by the music or physically nudged onto the dance floor). Wild dancing ensued and everyone was keen to demonstrate their favorite MC Hammer dance moves.

We wound down on the van ride home with a discussion about human/elephant conflicts in Africa, and the kids proceeded to overestimate my age by ten years. A fabulous time was had by all, everyone was excited about their new pedometers, and the only complaints voiced on the trip came from a couple of pairs of soar feet!

--Myra Banke

Brookhaven Goes Spelunking Raccoon Mountain Caverns - Chattanooga, TN September 17, 2005

"This wasn't in the #%&!*\$%# brochure!"

Let's start by shifting the blame and avoiding any personal responsibility - it was the brochure that got us into this mess. The brochure in question touted the "South's premiere caving adventure" at Raccoon Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The adventure consisted of a guided, overnight stay in the Raccoon Mountain cave. Our guides gave us a lot of information concerning the extent of the caving network, but that information won't be included here, because it was all forgotten the first time that we were

on our bellies, heads turned sideways, dragging ourselves through a narrow cave passageway.

"This wasn't in the #%&!*\$%# brochure!"

The brochure talks about how the cave is always a "comfortable" 60 degrees year-round. OK, so technically, the temperature was very nice, but who can say that lying on your back and pushing with your feet to wriggle through a little 20-inch hole is "comfortable"?

Well, to be perfectly fair, maybe it was comfortable for teenagers. Our group, which consisted of 5 teenage boys and 1 teenage girl, seemed to be having a great time. I am not sure what they found so fun. Maybe it was from meeting the challenges in the cave, such as the passage over "the canyon", where you had to maintain 3-points of contact as you moved on a narrow ledge over a 20-foot drop. More likely, it was watching the three adults who accompanied them, squirm, grunt and grumble their way through the subterranean torture chamber. I think the latter was more likely as it seemed that throughout our entire 4-hour trek, the cave walls were echoing with kids' and, admittedly, adults' laughter.

Actually, it may not have been solely the fault of the #%&!*\$%# brochure that the adults found themselves in the positions they were in. Some of the blame lies squarely on the aforementioned teenagers. Throughout the cave, our guides would stop in the larger passages and explain what was coming in the next parts of the cave that we were going to explore. They would also give the group options for which way to proceed. Normally, the choices were either to walk through some spacious cavern or to crawl and squeeze through some narrow passageway with names like "the birth canal". And inevitably the teenagers would choose "the birth canal". We definitely need to work on these kids' decision-making abilities!

For the kids, I guess it was felt that "it is a chal-lenge", to twist in pretzel fashion. At least that was what one of the kids said to goad an adult into proceeding through a hole where our guides told us that to get through, we had to roll over on our backs, stick our hands above our heads and push with our feet to get through. Who figures out these things? And those same kids, laughed hysterically and commented "It's a Boy" when the bald head of one of the adults began to push through said hole. For the adult, the "chal-lenge" resulted in an exclamation of "I think I'm stuck", until the guide told him to twist, exhale and push to extract himself. Again, Who figures out these things?

But as we settled into our sleeping bags, which we had dropped off along with a change of clothes in a large cavern at the beginning our tour, even the adults realized that we had a great time.

The next morning, as sat outside the cave and ate the continental breakfast provided by Raccoon Mountain, there was even talk of doing it again next year. All kidding aside, it was one of the best ICO trips we've ever had.

--Rick Cohan

TRIP SCHEDULE

Sep 17 Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club
Raccoon Mountain Caves
Overnight Caving Trip
Rick Cohan
rcohan@deloitte.com

Sep 17 Warren Boys & Girls Club
Day Hike
Amicalola State Park
Erin Bracey
erinbracey@gmail.com

Sep 17 KIPP
Day Hike
Kennesaw Mountain
Diana Ellsworth
dianaellsworth@teachforamerica.org

Sep 24: Cool Girls
Overnight
Red Top Mountain State Park
Denise Berbach
dberbach@hotmail.com

Oct 15 Kipp
Day Trip
Petting Zoo
Permiel Dass
Pdass20@hotmail.com

Oct 15 Warren Boys & Girls Club
Overnight
TBD
Stewart Lewis
Stewart.lewis@hok.com

Oct 22 Cool Girls
Day Hike
TBA
Denise Berbach
dberbach@hotmail.com

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Oct 22 Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club
Overnight Camping
Black Rock Mountain St. Park
Rick Banke
rbanke@bellsouth.net

Nov 19 Warren Boys & Girls Club
Overnight
Cloudland Canyon State park
Stewart Lewis
Stewart.lewis@hok.com

Nov 19 Cool Girls
Day Hike
TBD
Denise Berbach
dberbach@hotmail.com

MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are a chance for you to meet the other volunteers and to hear more about recent and upcoming trips. These meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club, from 7pm - 8:15 pm. The club is located at 1330 N Druid Hills Rd, near the corner of N Druid Hills and Peachtree Rd behind the Brookhaven MARTA station.

Upcoming Meetings:

September 27
October 25
November 3: Steering Committee at the Bracey's
November 22

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings program is:

- > to promote personal development by linking cultures, fostering respect of self and others, and providing leadership skills

- > to promote appreciation and protection of our local and global environments through a process of outdoor exploration, education, spiritual growth and sharing

The ICO program meets these goals by providing safe and enjoyable outdoor experiences for persons who may not otherwise have them.

ICO STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTORY

Group Chair:	John & Erin Bracey 404.869.1875 jlbracey@hotmail.com erin.wieckert.bracey@kcc.com
Treasurer/ Nat'l Reporting:	Eve Maschinot 404.370.0038 eve.maschinot@marrinc.com
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