



Punk Rafting Adventure

yours for the taking



Greetings, friends,

In 2005, a few of us set out on a punk rafting adventure, building a raft out of found and scavenged materials and floating for a week, Huck Finn-style, on one of the largest fastest rivers on the continent, the Missouri.

We lived to tell the tale (barely), and so year after year, we've taken longer and longer adventures, floating many major American rivers on completely ridiculous homemade rafts. After that first single raft trip, we invited others, launching with whole punk raft flotillas. The experience has been life changing.

This is not white water rafting. We're talking rivers with class zero rapids. A floating river. A lazy hot summer day eating found apples sort of river. These adventures remain low on specifics, high on general concept, mood, and emotion. Part of an experiment and a belief in the power of boredom to inspire.

Typically, we'll spend a day or so getting to our launch spot, a day or so building our rafts, and then get out on the river soon as we can. As much as possible, we've scavenge the materials we need ahead of time.

Here's a list of things you might want to bring. Starred things we consider essential:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| *good oars (2 per raft) | tent |
| *life vest (1 per person) | books |
| *stuff to build your raft | sling shot or sling |
| *canvas for shade | pirate flag |
| *water jugs | corn cob pipe |
| *mosquito net | water filter |
| *musical instruments | hurricane lamp |
| *straw hat | hatchet & other tools |
| *toilet paper | playing cards |
| *knife | water proof bags |
| *sleeping bag or blankets | fishing equipment |
| *food | |

Hot summer days and nights of rafting through twists and turns and islands, camping beside driftwood fires, exploring the wildness without and within, fishing and floating and reading and swimming and wasting away the days.

Enjoy your adventure.

With much love,
The Crew of the Good Fortune, 2006

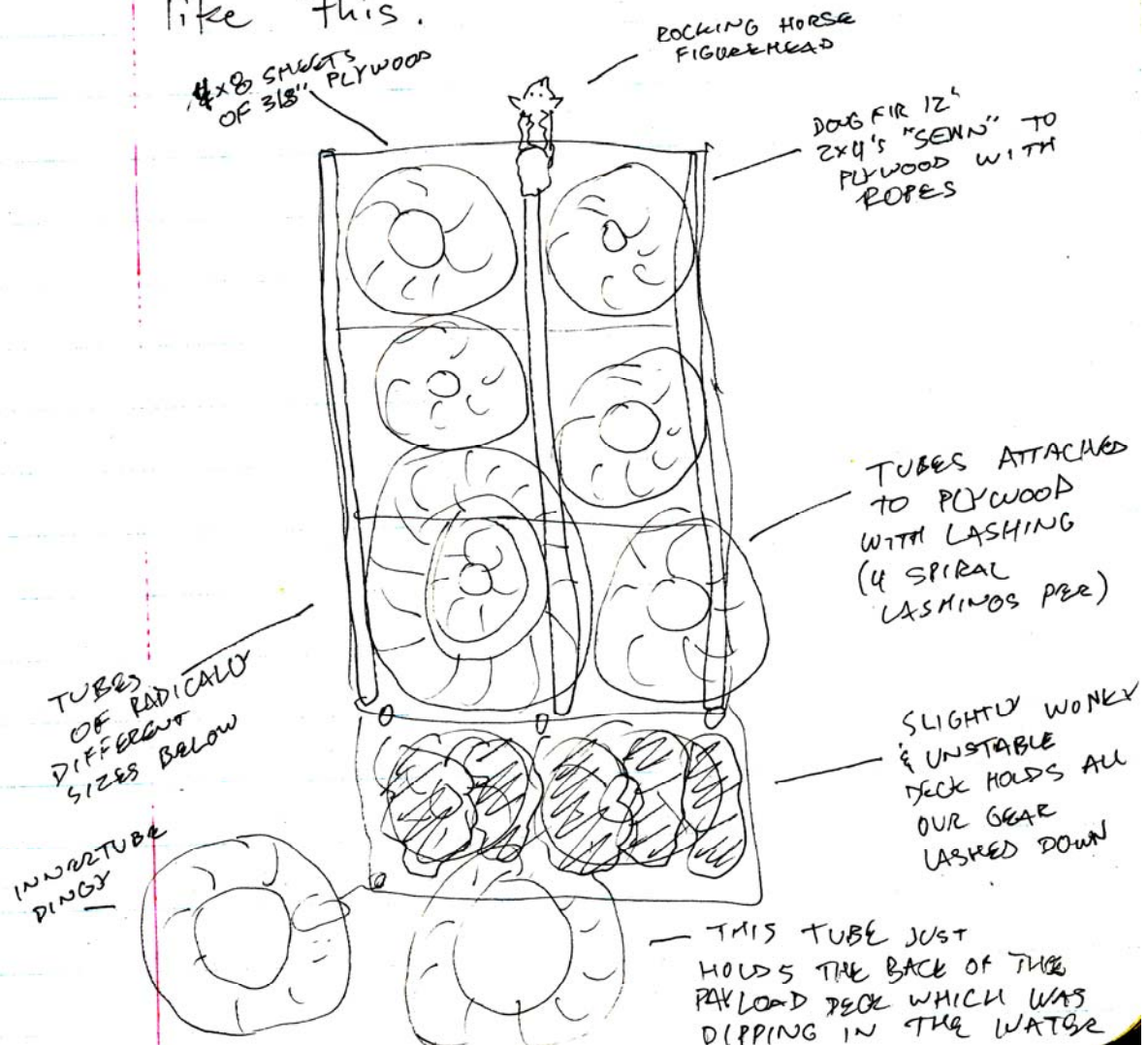
The Raft

LIST of MATERIALS WE USED to BUILD OUR RAFTS:

- SHEET of PLYWOOD per PERSON to BUILD RAFT
- 2 TRUCK TIRE INNER TUBES per SHEET of PLYWOOD
- 100 FEET of ROPE per SHEET of PLYWOOD (also USEFUL to TIE ITEMS to RAFT)
- 2x4s LONG ENOUGH for LENGTH of RAFT (on both sides)
- FABRIC for SHADE STRUCTURE
- NATURAL TWINE (for shade structure)
- BRACE & AUGER (old FASHIONED PERSON-POWERED HAND DRILL)
- 2 OARS (FULL SIZE)

THIS IS HOW WE MADE OUR PARTICULAR RAFT. OF COURSE, YOU CAN MAKE YOUR RAFT DIFFERENTLY & ADJUST THE ABOVE LIST ACCORDINGLY. THERE ARE MANY MANY WAYS to MAKE ALL KINDS & VARIETIES of RAFTS. HOORAY!

Our final raft design which was evolving up to the 11th hour looks like this.



A page from Annie's diary

aug 3rd Monday
We just got home from the river trip, 6 Days
on the river. I think more than anything
I took home with me after the trip, I
realized I need to take my relationships and
interactions more at face value. Think about my
emotional ~~responses~~ responses, understand where
I'm coming from, Accept others, let them feel
the way they feel, act the way they act. Don't
judge people. Everyone is doing the best they
can.

Lessons learned so far...

2006 Rafting Trip

lessons learned so far:

good oars for each craft

each raft gathers own materials

barrels, tubes, whatever early

no rotted lumber - const. site?

duct tape & twine good!

we used 3-400' of rope / boat

discuss process early (after 1st day)

can't have too many tubes

mosquito netting is good

people resp. for own food (esp)

backup fire making - good!

- Discu

- Mos

- Light

An invitation to an adventure

Subject: [ac-bayarea] Punk Rafting Adventure - yours for the taking

From: Rico Thunder <thespoon@thespoon.com>

Date: Thu, 10 Aug 2006 14:07:47 -0700

To: ac-reportback@lists.riseup.net, ac-bayarea@lists.riseup.net

Last week we completed a 100+ mile punk rafting trip on the Sacramento River. We built a raft out of found and scavenged materials and floated for a week Huck Finn-style down from Red Bluff, rafting through all the twists and turns and dangers and islands of the Sacramento, fishing and floating and reading and swimming and wasting away the days.

We jumped ship in Colusa but left the raft tied up along the banks of the river for the next set of adventurers to enjoy.

The boat (actually two identical rafts tied together) was made of truck tire inner tubes, and cast off plywood and 2x4s, all lashed together with rope. There was a rough shade structure made of branches and canvas. It has a fabulous couch for lazing away the hours.

We left a note on the boat that said something like this:

We left the raft securely tied up along the western bank of the Sacramento in Colusa. It is at the river end of 2nd street off of Market. Follow the trail along the left to the river.

This adventure is yours for the taking.



Rico Thunder
Premier Purveyor of Mystery and Mischief since 1966

Congratulations, on your new raft...

Dear Adventurer —

Congratulations on acquiring your new raft! We hope you'll have many hours, days, and weeks of fun.

Your new raft comes fully equipped with the following:

- robust flotation devices
- plywood decking surfaces
- shade structure
- carpeting
- pirate flag
- comfortable seating
- eclectic ornamentation
- mooring line/inertube line
- topo maps of Sac River
- innertube for floating about

This raft was built from the finest scavenged materials for a cost of next to nothing. It was built and launched in Red Bluff along the banks of the Sacramento River. We floated for five days and camped on beaches for five days.

It brought us such good luck and great adventure we named it "The good fortune."

You'll need the following to continue your trip down river:

- paddles
- personal life jackets
- sleeping bags
- water
- food
- tents/mosquito nets
- beer
- sunscreen
- musical instruments

Have fun. Stay safe. Make trouble & adventure.
Send us photos & stories.

2006 Punk Rafting Crew

A letter from Scurvy

hello friends,

in late july/early august, four friends and i built two rafts made out of donated truck inner tubes, hundreds of feet of rope, dumpstered plywood and termite chewed 2x4s (not our best option we realized later as we had to reinforce these beams...fortunately we found some further material discarded at a construction site in a small town we stopped in briefly). we drilled holes in the wood with a human powered hand drill and laced the materials together with the rope, so that there would be no pointy parts to puncture the tubes. one of our mottos being, "screws and tubes do not mix." and another motto being, "i won't drown," that was worn by our mascot, blue bunny, who i found in red bluff, and that is a twin of pink bunny back home in santa cruz.

on monday morning, july 31st, we launched two rafts, attached together until we gained further confidence on the river. days later we separated the rafts, as was the original plan. also given the circumstances and limited space, it proved easier and more effective to have two rafts. we had one raft with myself and two other friends, and a couple of folks were on the other. on our raft we constructed a shade structure made from branches we found on a deserted beach covered with a large fabric that was do-it-yourself decorated with a skull and crossbones. it was all tied together with twine, and the shade structure covered the comfy couch we had on board, a free find we had scavenged in the town from which we launched.

the discovery of the couch, like the plywood, abandoned 2x4s, discovery of blue bunny, loaner red toyota with bad transmission from stockton (another story all to itself), new friend in red bluff, "rock the kasbah" playing on the radio when earlier in the day i had an itch to hear that song long before we had turned on the tiny stereo, and many other happenstances all through the trip

inspired the name for our raft...the good fortune (contrary to the send off from one fellow in red bluff who yelled a farewell to us, somewhat jokingly, "good-bye, i'll read about you in the newspaper (pause) in the obituaries!" and the sheriff who at the boat launch warned us about the swirls that he claimed "sucked a speed boat 40 feet under the water last year." this bit of news alarmed us, until we knew better, and we got in the habit of reducing the sense of threat by calling the potential hazards "swirlies"...thanks to annie for her continually inventive linguistic playfulness).

we spent from monday morning until saturday afternoon drifting (with the occasional paddling to avoid snags or to move forward when the water was still and there was a headwind or to come to shore). the five of us covered many miles as the river twisted its way through the central valley of california. the weather was the kind of hot we enjoyed, being on a raft in a cool river, but not so much that we would swelter.

during this trip i learned to trust the river and to trust in myself. at first, i was fearful of the current and the downed trees reaching up threateningly out of the water (we named these "river sharks"), that seemed to want to pull our homemade raft into their jagged clutches. when i finally stepped forward to call, to direct the raft in the water, we zig-zagged across the river to avoid these snags. this was exhausting work, and i was tense with vigilance to stay clear of these hazards. later i learned to read the river, to move into select currents that would take me where i wanted to go. much thanks to rico's example, i learned to use minimal effort to ease the raft around obstacles, that the currents themselves would work their way around, and so we would often ride their flow. there were periods of serene calm, just drifting lazily...and times when the river presented challenge after challenge...strong currents and downed trees in the water, when we would read the river

currents the best we could and sometimes paddle strong to avoid snags or to come to shore...on the river the only external challenges were those right before me and the pleasures of the drift gave me a sense of freedom.

we saw nor heard a sign of civilization for days, much to my relief, and close to the end of our drift the signs of human encroachment, pumps sucking water from the river rather than being fed by creeks and the roar of automobiles instead of the calls of birds and chorus of frogs and crickets at night, filled me with a creeping dread.

i saw/see my trip on the river as being a metaphor for my life...

where i feel i struggle so much in my day to day existence, living in a culture that is full of snags...

where i am full of doubt in terms of my own capacity to challenge myself to confront more fully this society and my place in it...

and i realized that i need to nurture more of a belief in myself...

to take chances...

to risk living a life that resonates with me more fully, where experiences such as these on the river are not aberrations, where the norm is making my desires come true. on the trip my life felt very immediate...

in the morning waking on a deserted beach to spend another day on the raft with people important to me, no destination in mind except downriver, where we would paddle when necessary with a physicality that was tangible and effective, eat sunflower seeds all week by the handful, play music (old country blues on a tiny tape player that played at a wound up speed...and our own sounds, a thumb piano or a harmonica), read *pippi longstocking* to each other, shoot pebbles or peanuts with the wrist rocket, lazily bask in the sun (and sometimes bake, hence the mutual reminders to apply sunscreen and drink water),



dunk bodies and heads in the cooling river, drift in the inner tube attached with a long length of rope to the raft, share cigars while lounging on the couch, spill whatever was on our minds in the moment, sit silent and still, appreciate the coming dusk as colors on the river deepen, come to shore in the evening at another deserted beach, collect firewood and prepare food together, ward off voracious mosquitoes through the night to awaken in the morning with wonderful folks to drift another day that was our own.

in addition to all of this, we had tremendous fun. i hope you can join us next year on another river.

with love,
scurvy





MODES.IO/PUNKRAFTING

WES MODES is an artist and high-tech runaway. In various lives, he is a sculptor, writer, performer, artist, community organizer, geek, and mischief-maker.

Wes lives in Felton, a village in the hills above Santa Cruz, California, in a little cabin he's been fixing up for years, making art in a converted travel trailer.

Follow the chronicle of his journey designing, building, and floating a little hillbilly shanty boat: SHANTYBOAT.MODES.IO