

**THE OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING:
A GOTHIC TALE**

April 1982

It was a cold and dreary night. The wind through the live oaks on Louisiana Avenue moaned and cried like sad creatures of Perdition. One by one odd folk climbed the stairs to an upper garret after pressing a button marked "Tramontana." Inside, however, there was cheer. The gracious Madame Tramontana, a hostess of elegance *par excellence*, had polished the silver and crystal, lit the candles, and was setting out the paté and the hot artichoke dip.

Warren Duffy sat in one corner swigging on a can of Dixie beer. One could see by the look in his eye that he was contemplating a unique Sierra Club hike through New Orleans's Irish Channel. On the other side of the room, as serene and inscrutable as a Burmese Buddha, sat George Barry. Aloof from the chit-chat, gossip, and friendly argument, George was mentally planning yet another hike through the Homochitto National Forest in search of the Redneck subspecies of Sasquatch.

The din grew louder as an argument over the number of times that Betty Jensen has ridden a bicycle around Anchor Lake grew heated. Someone suggested that if Betty had one dollar for every trip she's made around Anchor Lake, she could pay off the national debt.

Suddenly, there was a loud report, like a pistol shot. Into the room strode the fearless Outings Chairman. Dressed in white jodhpurs, carrying a whip and a chair, Jim Whelan cut a dashing figure.

"This meeting will come to order," said the chairman, as sixteen feet of braided oxhide cracked over his head. The rest of us jumped up on our stools or chairs and dutifully began to discuss the coming outings.

"There will be a *reverse* inner-city outing," announced Ann Duffy.

"Instead of bringing inner-city children into the outdoors, they have invited us to camp

out in their neighborhoods. I mean, when you think about it, you can't find more of a wilderness than the St. Thomas Project." A camp-out was tentatively scheduled for the night before Mardi Gras.

Amidst boos, hisses, guffaws, and such, the 275th annual Memorial Day canoe trip on Red Creek, Mississippi, was scheduled. This trip will celebrate the 98, 637th anniversary of the discovery of fire.

– Earl Higgins