

Grand Masters: Geek, Great Kahuna
Joint Masters: Master Chugger
Bayou Beaver
Swamp Rat
Hash Cash: Head Czech
Get Lucky
On-Set: Silent Dick
Religious Advisor: Hairy Palms
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THE 555th WEEKEND

May 4-6, 1990

What a weekend it was! Over 150 **hashers** congregated in Houston and Fort Bend County to commemorate our 555th run; a fine turnout, including visitors from as far away as Long Beach, California, and Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Putting the event on was such a big, complicated task, consuming so much time and effort, that I question whether the Houston Hash will be able to do anything like it again until burnout subsides and nostalgia takes hold. The last act, which I shall relate first, was Rear Layer and Geek's Long March with forty trashbags full of garbage.

Our cleanup committee didn't. A week after the 555, all the trash and garbage was still laying all over the tennis court when the engineers arrived to dismantle the stage and showers. Gebhard was understandably curious why it hadn't been cleaned up, so Rear Layer, Geek and I cleaned it. Letch and Hooter Bill arrived to help load it all. John's Cumming arrived to collect the remaining cooking gear; he had to clean the second barbeque trailer before he could return it to the meat company. Then, he, Letch and Hooter helped Becker unload and store the showers and lumber.

After a week in the sun, the garbage was a fly factory, and Rear Layer cautioned us to watch for snakes as we shoveled and scooped all the trash into bags and loaded it into his trailer. Layer and Geek drove away to the landfill in Rosenberg. Unfortunately, that landfill is closed for 90 days. So, they drove to the landfill at Tanner Road. Unfortunately, that is a class II landfill, which turns down garbage. So, they drove to a landfill near West Mount Houston, where Geek and Rear Layer got the trash dumped. Unfortunately, they had to drive all the way back to Gebhard's ranch and pick up Rear Layer's scaffolding.

To put on an event like the 555 is difficult. Difficulties reveal character. When everybody knows the piano has to be moved, there is a difference between the people who pick up the stool and those who pick up the piano. As Engineering Manager for the 555, I saw plenty of both types,

although as On-Set I shall identify only **some** of the latter.

Our debt to John Hoggatt is very large. He lent us the scaffold for the stage; he delivered it, assembled it, dismantled it, and picked it up. He also hauled the **steam** cleaner and a generator back to the rental yard for us. Hoggatt lent us fuel cans, extension cords, and the steps to the stage. Finally, he helped clean up the tennis courts and hauled the trash mountain across Harris County when it wasn't really his job. I'm proud to work with him.

I must cite many others. Leo is high on the list, of course. How difficult is it to organize three **meals** for 170 people, when you have to haul all the food and all the cookware, cook and serve it in a place without electric power, running water, or lighting?

Dave Becker deserves mention, too. He hauled the showers for us, assembled them, and put the flooring on the stage.

John Breland spent many hours doing what he did for the 555. This includes the weeks he spent practicing with the band and making bargains with Coors and rental yards and Bill Gebhard. He had to ensure that many details were seen to, providing solutions to problems which arose with food, engineering, and the hare **committee**. He was the central man at the 555.

Shirley Adams had to arrange many things, such as publicity and hospitality. She organized the flyer printing, packet stuffing and packet pickup. We had offered out-of-towners lodging on Friday night and tentspace Saturday; it was up to Shirley and Lydia to keep our promises. She and Lydia also organized the entertainment; remember the OTR skit and the Newly-Wadded **Game? Some** of the things Shirley did were invisible precisely because the problems she prevented never occurred.

Our 555 T-shirt is destined to be a classic, with a beautiful design and attractive colors. Thank Lydia Westbrook for that, and when you see Pete Smith's tape of the entertainment, remember that Lydia and Shirley -organized the show.

Our Head Hare was Harry Palmer. He recruited the hares for each run and ensured that the trail was properly scouted. This included a lot of contacts and visits with the owners of the land the trails crossed. Harry's best accomplishment was arranging the fine weather in which we were so fortunate.

We have never had a better Hash Cash than Marcia Campolongo, so pleasant yet so efficient and businesslike. When the hashers were standing around the Sunday breakfast, Marcia set up shop and started turning our shirts and other merchandise into money. The Houston Hash is known for giving the **most** enjoyment for the least money, and part of the reason is that we've had good Hash Cashiers. I'll never try to pay Marcia with rolls of pennies again.

As Engineering Manager, I was fortunate to have good engineers, because there was a lot to do. John Hoggatt was extremely helpful, as noted above. Musclehart, Letch, and Love Glove showed up to help Dave Becker and **me**

haul the showers on the Hash Workday, and Letch also helped with the dismantling the week after the 555. Dan McQuillen had to work the weekend of the 555, but he still kept his promise to get the steam cleaner and a generator delivered to the site. Dave Becker did the building we needed on the showers and the stage floor; he lent us the lumber. I myself helped Rear Layer haul and assemble the stage, rigged the stage footlights, lit the bonfire, repaired the hot water supply to the showers, refueled the generators and the steam cleaner, ensured chlorination for the pool, helped Hoggatt assemble the stage, picked up garbage and recruited all the other guys who did all this.

The Friday Run was held around River Oaks, so we could show the out-of-towners how the average Houstonian lives. Hares: Cocker, Pineapple, Bubble Butt. The trailhead was at West Alabama and Sul Ross. The live hares led the pack at first onto a false trail to the southeast, but we retraced our steps north across West Alabama and to the back end of Drano's alma mater, Lamar High School. There was a lot of shortcutting, since that area is prime marathon-training territory and is familiar to many long-distance Houston runners. They started ticking off possibilities for on-on bars (e.g., Lizzard's), which are also quite familiar to most Houston hashers. Since it was billed as a "high sock" run with a last-ride warning for rides back to the start, many assumed this A-B run would end in Memorial Park. Surprise--after looping and checking around ritzy River Oaks, it led us to a parking lot a hundred yards from Blanco's. The on-on continued in that windswept parking lot until midnight, then moved into Blancos to astonish and amuse the regulars.

Later back at the Ranch The camping campaign was held at the ranch where Bloody Bush resides, along the favorite bicycling roads southeast of Fulshear. It had been fitted out for an interhash, with a lovely rendition of the Houston Hash logo painted on the bottom of the swimming pool by Mike (that's short for Michealangelo) Anderson. Bloody Bush had also painted a cow skull with lightning bolt and 555 on the end of the pool under the diving board.

Hashworkers had mowed the campsite, cleared the tennis court, constructed showers, added a hot water supply, built the stage, and strung cable to support a canopy. (Silent Dick, who was being held as a love slave by Minnie Mousse, did not arrive in time to pitch the canopy, but the weather was cool and clear and it turned out we didn't really need it.) The buses took off for the run promptly at forty minutes behind schedule, while Peterbilt constructed the kitchen. Rental generators added power and electrified music was soon blaring over the court. A whole pig was spitted and roasted over an open fire, while Peterbilt and the rest of the Food Committee cooked with gas burners and barbeque pits. The bill of fare included chicken, ribs, sausage, beans and cole slaw--a fine barbeque.

The Saturday Run was called superb by many discriminating hashers. It included mud, shiggy, road, street, and railroad trestle around the muddy, floody Brazos. Hares: Late Cummer, Dick Head, Lover Legs and Poison. Lube Job said that the run included deep, deep mud; tight barbed wire; brambles, a do-loop, a fugawii field of corn, and a tough check in a low-rent area of Rosenberg with plenty of amused locals. Most of the hash made it through all right to the on-on under the highway bridge at 90A near

Rosenburg, but not without mishap. Double Team fell on the railroad tracks. At first, her knee didn't feel too bad, but when it swelled like a volleyball a few hours later, she had to take it home. Some of the walkers, including Minnie Mousse, were on the long trestle when the long train arrived. They had to stand on the trestle walkway for ten minutes while the train passed just inches away, and they swear they'll never walk another train trestle again. At the on-on, John Trevathan got the hashname of Hairdresser, ostensibly since only he knows for sure about fiancée Brunette Bush, but those who attended the last trip to New Orleans already knew the truth.

The Entertainment: The muddy pack boarded the buses back to Bloody Bush's place while the clean wimps who hadn't run rode back in a lovely RV with Can't Hound and Thai'd One. A truck from Coors was there, dispensing beer like a giant cow giving milk, while the band and skits set up. The first skit was science-fiction from the OTR, in which the Raggars wore silvery costumes and antennae, bemoaning the fact that nearly all the Hashmen on earth had died, and bemoaning even louder that Hooter Bill was the only one left. The San Antonio Hash did a clever skit concerning the other hash houses present, with witty impressions of prominent hashers. The climax (the one on the stage, not the ones in the tents) was the Newly-Wadded Game, with four newlywed hash couples answering properly embarrassing questions from your host, Elmer Fudd.

After that, the band took over, featuring Swamp Rat, I'm Cumming, Faulty Equipment, Witch Bitch, and Fast Dave Washburn. They played for four hours under the gibbous moon, as the crowd danced on the tennis court and imbibed kegs of Coors. The live band, which is a distinguishing mark of a fine interhash, had taken the players several weeks of practice to prepare and several hours of work to set up. Canned music wouldn't have been the same, and we needed amplification to carry the music over the tennis court-dance floor. As it was, though, we had the live band and a brightly-lit stage, entertaining the crowd and driving the cows far back into their pasture.

To keep the lights on and the amps going, Engineering Manager Silent Dick had to continually pour more gasoline into the two generators cranking out the power near the stage. This was anxiety-provoking, since the mufflers were glowing cherry-red and a little spilled gasoline or a stray spark could have set the gasoline can, both generators, and the chief engineer up in flames. This could also have happened with Keezer, who was pouring gasoline onto the smouldering stack of wood we hoped would create a bonfire. Scott Lauritzen risked becoming a flaming youth by spraying charcoal lighter on it. Keezer missed fire with the gasoline and walked away, but we managed to stack enough kindling over the little fire which had caught, and in a few minutes there was a blaze which would have impressed Red Adair.

It did impress Grind Slut, who cried "Surf's up!" and demonstrated the interesting sport of bonfire surfing. He was still capable of haring the Sunday run, although with a bandage over his leg burn. Much worse off was Hairy Palms, whose palms weren't so hairy after he tripped while trying to throw another log onto the fire (How far is the Old Log Inn?). At this writing, he has to scrub the dead flesh off his burned hand every day, and he reports, "It really, really, really, really hurts to do that." The

doctors say they'll know in two weeks whether or not he'll need a skin graft. After his last bicycle crash, Harry doesn't have many unscarred places left to graft it from. To the casualty list of Double Team, Grind, and Hairy Palms, we must add Blue Balls, who is sporting a purple cast this week. He did not break his ankle on any of the runs--he finished the runs with an ankle he broke last week. Not a new-fangled Velcroed-on cast, either; it's a real, solid ankle-to-knee job which weighs a ton and has to be broken off. One of the (dis)advantages of this is the fact that it covers part of his poison ivy. He's already itching to get it off.

The Sunday Run: The Food Committee, brilliantly led by Peterbilt, served a fine breakfast Sunday morning, with sweet rolls, crescents, fresh fruit, many flavors of juice, coffee, **mimosas**, and cold **tamales**. Bloody Mary (naturally) was serving bloody marys as the crowd watched the bolder hashers skinny-dip in the cold pool. They were briefly distracted by the Glassblower-Wallbanger wrestling match. The runners took off shortly after 11:00 (Hares: Mighty Mouse, Scorched Slut, and Katy Evans). They were given a naturalist guide to everything in the woods which can bite or poison you, then they returned two hours later with **some** bites and poison.

The down-downs were sung and here Katy got the hashname of "Gnarly Wench." Then, the feast commenced. This **time**, it included the pig which had spent the night over the fire, the crawfish which had spent the night in the refrigeration truck, plus corn on the cob, boiled potatoes, and barbecued beef. The eating was fast and furious, **almost as** fast as the beer-drinking.

When Peterbilt announced, "The Hash is over! Go home!" people started to do just that. Diehards Yo Adrian and Armadildo Dundee responded by chasing and stripping each other, culminating in Adrian doing something to Dundee which Eckerd Drugs refuses to develop our pictures of and which we can't get even a government art grant to portray. Worn from this **game** of chase, Dundee eventually passed out nude on the tennis court. Good Samaritans eventually washed him off and revived him in the pool.

Unfortunately, the Coors truck was sunk in the mud. Ten hashmen pushed it back, then forward, while a dozen others schemed to give the poor truck **some** traction. We seemed to be doing little more than extending the trench the tires were digging. Swamp Rat went and got Gebhard's tractor, a sound idea, but in the end the mighty Hashmen did the job. At last the truck's tires caught a little traction, then more, until the truck climbed out of the ruts, to the cheers of the crowd.

At last, there was nothing left but the stage, the showers, a few campers striking tents, and Peterbilt packing up the kitchen under the setting sun. The third day of an interhash is the saddest and the best, when you are tired from the weekend but deeply relaxed. You've spent a weekend of sport, good food, and entertainment with friends you haven't seen in a long time, plus the new friends you'll be seeing at future interhashes. You go home with everything dirty, your clothes and you.

Memories fade if you do not recall them. Since you recall the best memories more often, you remember them better. Even the bad parts of a fun event like the 555th eventually **seem** funny, however ruefully you remember

