

Lifetime Senior Pass Going UP

Mark Your Calendar!

February 1-5, Wed-Sun. / Piney Woods

Explore the Piney Woods from Martin Dies Jr. State Park There are many places to explore nearby including the Big Thicket National Preserve and the Angelina National Forest. We will have 2 screened shelters with space outside the shelters to set up tents. No limit to the number of tents per site.

Martin Dies is about a 4 hour drive from Dallas. Deposit of \$10 to secure your spot. Maximum 12 people.

Event Leader:

Shirley Meurer

sameurer@yahoo.com

February 23-26 Inks Lake Camping

Directions: The park is located 9 miles west of Burnet. Take State Highway 29 to Park Road 4. Go south 3 miles to the park entrance.

We have 4, water only campsites, reserved in the nicest part of the park. There are 7.5 miles of hiking trails in the park.

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/inks-lake>

Event Leader:

Barbara Minyard



January Hike

Barbara_gran@yahoo.com

Sat., March 18, 9:00 a.m./Bike Ride at Oak Point Trail

Meet at the parking lot for the Oak Point Amphitheater

We will bike on the concrete trail 10-12 miles with options to do less. If you don't bike but want to hike that is an option also.

The Preserve and trail map is at:

<https://www.plano.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14360>

Brunch afterwards at Poor Richards.

Event Leader:

Shirley Meurer

sameurer@yahoo.com

April 6, 7, 9, Camping at Buescher Park

Robbie is planning a camp out in April to Buescher Park. There will be a sign up sheet at the meetings or you can contact her directly. Water only no electricity.

Event Leader:

Robbie Chandler

rbbchandler@yahoo.com

Sat., April 15, 8:00 a.m.-12:30 Dutch Oven Cooking

(Easter weekend) 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Come learn the basics of Dutch oven cooking! Hands on class with plenty of teachers to help you. This is an annual event held in Sulphur Springs and you will leave with knowledge on how to begin Dutch oven cooking. Cost is \$15 per person (includes all equipment and food used during the

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NEXT TOWN MEETING

MONDAY, FEB. 6, 2017

**LA MADELINE
5290 BELT LINE RD
ADDISON, TX**

**6:30-7:00 Social Hour
Meeting 7:00**



class). Registration forms will be available closer to the class date. This is Easter weekend - so come on out and learn to cook in a time-honored tradition! Both women and men are welcome to sign up for this event.

Event Leader:

Sharon Richman

kelleyrichman@yahoo.com



Update on the Cost of a Lifetime Senior Pass

On December 10th, 2016, the Congress passed by unanimous consent a bill (HR 4680) that increased the fee for the lifetime Senior Pass (a.k.a. Golden Age or Geezer Pass) from \$10 to \$80. The Bill is now on its way to the President's desk for his signature. The cost of the "new" Senior Pass will be tied to the price of the America the Beautiful annual pass. An alternative to purchasing the new \$80 lifetime Senior Pass is an annual "Senior Annual" pass for \$20. It will be good for one year from the date of purchase.

There is no definitive word as to when the price hike goes into effect but our advice is if you're at least 62, go get the Senior Pass for \$10 as soon as possible. You'll then be grandfathered in.

Tent Buying Guide

Review by: Kristin Hostetter

Shopping for a tent is like shopping for a home: there are dozens of

styles, designs, sizes, and features to consider. In this guide, **Backpacker** gear editor Kristin Hostetter shows you how to pick the right one for any outing.

Tent Types

Tents fall into five basic categories:

- Summer/Screen
- Three-Season
- Convertible
- Mountaineering/Winter
- Tarp

Summer/Screen

These tents are designed for maximum ventilation and bug protection in steamy summer months. Good ones—with strong skeletal systems and full-coverage rain flies—can handle weather from moderate breezes to summer thunderstorms. Summer tents feature large swaths of mesh (as opposed to nylon), so when you peel back the fly, air flows freely through the shelter.

Three-Season

Aimed at keeping you dry and cozy in any conditions, from spring through fall, three-season tents are structured to handle strong winds (but not snow loads), and the walls are made from a combination of mesh and ventilation, which strikes a good balance between ventilation and protection.

Convertible

This type of shelter is aimed at campers who dabble in all types of conditions. It's a hybrid design that features pole, vestibule, and rainfly options that allow you to strip it

down for summer trips or fortify it for stormy adventures. Walls often feature mesh windows with solid nylon panels that can be zipped close when weather hits. The tradeoff for all that versatility is weight. These tents are typically heavier than other options.

Mountaineering/Winter

With tough fabrics, sturdy pole structures, and plentiful external guy-out points (loops affixed at various key points on the tent's fly), these tents are built for the harshest conditions. They typically have low, boulder-like shapes to help shed wind, and large vestibules for gear storage.

Tarp

Geared toward ultralighters who will sacrifice anything to save weight, a tarp is one solid sheet of nylon or polyester that can be rigged to trees, roots, boulders or trekking poles. Good knot-tying skills are essential to get the most out of this type of shelter and since there are no walls or floor and bug protection is sacrificed, but if rigged properly, tarps can be surprisingly weather-resistant.

Backpacker Tips: Selecting the Right Tent

When shopping for a tent, you'll find a ton of specs and numbers, which can be confusing and often misleading if you don't know how to analyze them. Here, our checklist for getting the most out of your money.

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Wimberley, Texas

Wimberley, Texas, is a lovable little place. One minute you feel lost in the woods, the next you're doing your best to hold onto your wallet while immersed in quaint touristy shopping. A few bags of goodies later, you're back in sweet Mother Nature's arms.

I finally made it to Jacob's Well, a quirky little spring that emerges right from the bed of Cypress Creek. Now I've seen plenty of photos of this sweet swimmin' hole, but truth be told, I believe they were all taken with a wide angle lens, because it's quite a bit smaller than I anticipated. Even so, it's much larger than its biblical namesake and something you should see. The hole itself seems only

about 10-12 feet wide and opens up like a bugle near the top. It appears to be 30-35 feet deep, but actually branches off into a cave system that is at least 140 feet deep. I've heard the water's quite cold (68°F), even in summer. If it wasn't January, I don't think I could have resisted a quick plunge, if only I just to ward off middle age for a few minutes.



The charms of Cypress Creek are undeniable. Bald cypress trees line many Hill Country waterways.



Above: Giant cowboy boot painted with Texas native plants. Right: Shopping under the stunning live oaks.

What you rarely see in the Jacob's Well publicity photos are the uber-cool, contoured limestone walls along the north side of the creek and the beautiful native plants tucked in among the live oaks, cedar elms, and those ubiquitous Ashe junipers. They met me like old friends as I walk along the trail . . . agarita, evergreen sumac, white mistflower . . . even the ball moss gave me a smile.

Posted by Steven Chamblee
Neil Sperry's Gardens Online Newsletter



Views upstream (left) and downstream the headwaters of Cypress Creek.



Steps help, it's still a tight squeeze to get through the clefted boulder and down to water's edge.



Mission Statement

The TOWN mission is to provide all women the opportunity to learn and experience outdoor activities in natural surroundings through a non-threatening, safe and supportive environment.

Floor Space: When looking at floor space, check the dimensions, not just the square footage. Tall guys need a longer layout; stout hikers need more elbow room.

Headroom: Total headroom will be dictated by wall slope (“hubbed” or short “eyebrow” poles often mean steeper sidewalls and better living space). Think about how many people you’ll be camping with and what kind of weather you might be dealing with. Think you might be tent-bound for days in bad weather? Tents with consistent headroom from end to end are great for foul weather card games. Concerned about weight? Ultralight designs—often low ceilinged or sloped at the foot—are better for sleeping than sitting.

Shape: Aside from the square footage of your tent’s vestibule, consider the shape. High-roofed rectangular designs offer more dry storage and a safe place to cook in wind and rain. See more on shape below.

Tent Shapes

Tents come in several configurations; each shape has pros and cons.

A-frame

Simple, light, and often inexpensive, A-frame designs have sloping walls, which can limit head and elbow room. Because their broad sidewalls can get battered in high winds, A-frames are best for benign conditions.

Modified A-frame

This type of tent uses a center hoop pole, a ridgeline pole, or curved

sidewalls to create more interior space and structural stability than standard A-frames.

Dome

Domes come in many shapes, sizes, and pole configurations, but typically feature arched ceilings, have good stability in wind, and good interior space.

Hoop/Tunnel

Hoop, tunnel, or tube tents offer a good combination of weight and weather-resistance but they are not freestanding, which means they require adequate staking to achieve their shape

Pyramid/Teepee

These shelters consist of a rainfly supported by a vertical center pole and are staked out to form a teepee shape. Space to weight ratio is excellent, but the floorless design means compromised performance in wet or buggy weather.

Wedge

Higher at the head end and lower towards the foot, wedge tents are aerodynamic (pitched low end into the wind) and lightweight. The trade-off is that interior space is sacrificed, especially headroom.

Get to Know Your Tent

Set Up Your Tent at Home: Don’t wait for your first trip to set up your new tent. Set up can sometimes be tricky until you become familiar with the way the poles fit together and connect to the tent body, and the last thing you want is to be fumbling around by headlamp with rain and

wind howling in your face. Go through a few dry runs at home, so set-up becomes second nature.

Seal the Seams: Make sure all the seams on your rainfly and tent floor are taped by the manufacturer. If not, you’ll want to apply seam sealer to prevent water from creeping into the stitch holes.

Stakes? Check: Makes sure that you have plenty of stakes (plus a few extra) so that you’re able to secure all stake-out loops and guy-out points when bad weather hits. (The more stakes you use, the tauter the pitch, and a taut tent equals good weather protection.)

Know Your Guy-Outs: Especially for convertible and mountain tents, identify all the guy-out loops on the outside of the fly and pre-attach guy-lines to each of these points. (Again, remember: this is not something you want to be fumbling with in dark, nasty conditions.) Guylines can dramatically increase the stability of the tent in big winds.

Pad It: Consider making a ground cloth or footprint for your tent; it will protect the floor from abrasion. Dupont Tyvek material (available at most big home improvement stores) is a rugged, light, and cheap material. Just place your erected tent on top of a sheet, trace it with a marker, then cut a few inches inside the line. (Bonus Tip: You want the ground cloth slightly smaller than the tent’s actual footprint to prevent water from channeling underneath.)