

# NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE



OCTOBER 2012

## In this Issue

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Paddler Profile .....               | 2  |
| 2012 Race Calendar .....            | 4  |
| 2013 TCKRA Board and Officers ..... | 4  |
| Martindale Tri Info .....           | 5  |
| Race Reports .....                  | 5  |
| About the TCKRA.....                | 10 |
| TCKRA Membership Application .....  | 11 |



## Paddler Profile

*(Editor's Note: In each edition of the 2012 Newsletter we will feature interesting and accomplished members of the Texas paddling community. If you would like to nominate someone to be featured in the Paddler Profile, please email their name and contact information to [castevenson@gmail.com](mailto:castevenson@gmail.com).)*

This edition's featured paddler is David Sing.



**TCKRA: What is your full name?**

*David:* David Charles Sing.

**TCKRA: Where are you from originally, where have you lived and where do you live now?**

*David:* I grew up in Kenmore NY, a suburb of Buffalo NY. I went to undergraduate and graduate school in Ithaca NY (Cornell University), worked for General Motors in the Detroit MI area, attended grad school for my Ph.D. in Madison WI (University of Wisconsin Electrical Engineering), and since 1986 I have lived in Austin TX.

**TCKRA: What is your racing background?**

*David:* My Multisport racing background: I was a high school swimmer (not a very good one, barely earned a varsity swimming letter) and played some rugby football at Cornell (where I tore up my right knee). I did my first swim-bike-run triathlon in 1984 in Wisconsin, and have been racing the traditional swim-bike-run triathlon in TX since 1988. By 1990 I was regularly winning my age-group in regional races, and in 1991 made the USA Amateur triathlon team and competed in my first (of now four) world championships at the Olympic race distance. I completed the Hawaii Ironman in 1992, and in 2002 the Wisconsin Ironman. My bad right knee (old rugby injury) has in recent years restricted my racing to the Olympic and Sprint distance triathlons (ie 10k and 5k runs). I still race the traditional swim-bike-run events, but in the past few years I've done some more alternative events, like the Mt Taylor Winter Quadrathlon in New Mexico (bike-run-ski-snowshoe up the 11,300' Mt Taylor, then back down), the Peaks to Prairie Triathlon in Montana (run-bike-kayak in the Yellowstone river), and the SOS Triathlon in NY (bike-run-swim-run-swim-run-swim-run through the woods and lakes in the Shawangunks Mountains).

**TCKRA: How did you get started racing?**

*David:* I'll answer this as it refers to Canoe Racing: I learned whitewater kayaking while I was a grad student at the University of Wisconsin in the mid 1980's, and continued paddling some on the Guadalupe when I first moved to TX in 1986. In 1991 I teamed up with one of my triathlon buddies (Craig Grimes) to enter the Martindale Triathlon.

**TCKRA: When was your first Martindale Triathlon?**

*David:* 1991 race with Craig. We borrowed a heavy ABS canoe, Craig ran and I

biked. I set the bike record with a 40:26 time. The next year I got a call from Lee Deviney who was impressed by our team's efforts in 1991 with a heavy plastic canoe and offered to find me a fast boat to take on the then dominant team of Gene Davis and John Bulter (aka the "Meatheads"). I was doing Ironman that year, but in 1993 I took him up on the offer, borrowing a downriver boat and winning the 1993 race.

**TCKRA: How did you hear about it and why did you do it?**

*David:* I had heard about the Martindale race in the late 1980's, when Gene Davis and John Butler were the dominant team. I knew Gene through his participation in standard swim-bike-run triathlon, he was a member of the Austin Triathletes club in which I was an active member.

**TCKRA: How many Martindale Tris have you done?**

*David:* 17 (13 solo, 4 team). Won solo 1993, 2003, 2005, 2009.

**TCKRA: Have you always done the Martindale Tri solo, or have you done it as a team as well?**

*David:* Team (always the cyclist): 1991, 1999, 2010, 2011.

**TCKRA: What is your best (and worst) leg?**

*David:* My best leg is the bike, worst is the run (that old rugby injury again....)

**TCKRA: What kind of boat do you paddle?**

*David:* When I go solo, I have a downriver kayak that Lee Deviney sold to me about 2004 for \$200.

**TCKRA: What kind of paddle do you use?**

*David:* Epic carbon wing paddle.

**TCKRA: Have you ever done any paddling-only races?**

*David:* Did the San Marcos solos twice: 2005 and 2006. First year was second finisher (was seeded at 2:50 or something like that).

**TCKRA: How has the Martindale Tri changed over the years?**

*David:* Since I've raced solo so many times, I was disturbed when the rules changed regarding tandem boats, allowing any kind of boat as opposed to the previous rule which limited the teams to an ACA defined canoe with single bladed paddles. It used to be that a good solo boat was about as fast as a traditional canoe, especially on the old more technical course City Park to Westerfield crossing course. Now a team with a 20' tandem boat on the Spencer's to Staples course has a huge advantage in the water over a solo boat.

Certainly the course has changed. I think those of us who have raced the event a long time miss the excitement and chaos of the mass start from city park, especially with a lot of novice paddlers who could hardly keep a straight line. Plus the stretch of the river to Westerfield Crossing is certainly more interesting than the current course. And as a cyclist, I loved the finish on the bike, no need to keep anything in the tank.

**TCKRA: Why do you keep coming back year after year?**

*David:* Its fun race, and compared to the ultra-competitiveness that you see in some of the triathlons it's pretty low key.

**TCKRA: What is your training regimen?**

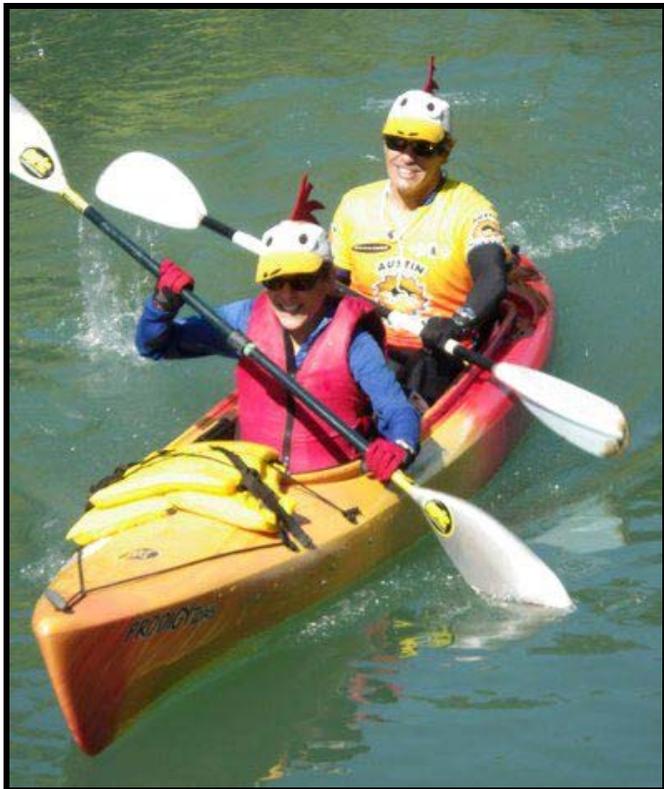
*David:* Right now I'm a full time grad student, having quit my job at Freescale Semiconductor at the end of 2010 to start a new career in Materials Science (I'm doing research on batteries for large scale

energy storage). Hence my training has dropped quite a bit: I swim 3 times a week, run 2-3 times a week, and do a long (50+) ride on the weekends. If I'm racing Martindale I start paddling after Labor day a couple days a week on Town Lake, and then usually do a couple runs of the Spencer's-Staples course in October.

**TCKRA: Any words of wisdom or advice for your fellow Martindale Tri participants?**

**David:** First timers: you've got to go and paddle at least once on the river before the race.

The rest: remember to have fun.



Martindale Tri 2011 - David with wife Meryl Brodsky.

## 2012 Race Calendar

- Oct. 5-7** – Tour de Teche, Port Barre, LA
- Oct. 6** – Come and Take It, Gonzales
- Oct. 13** – Cuero Turkeyfest Race, Cuero
- Oct. 20** – Laredos Rio Fest, Laredo
- Oct. 27** – Martindale Triathlon, Martindale
- Nov. 3** – Dickinson Bayou Brawl, Dickinson
- Dec. 1** – December Solo Race, San Marcos

## 2013 TCKRA Officers and Board of Directors

*(Editor's Note: The TCKRA recently held open elections for the 10-member board of directors. The election concluded September 8<sup>th</sup>. Officer elections took place at the TCKRA meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup> in Austin. The newly elected board and officers are below.)*

### Officers

- Jay Daniel (President)
- Michael Vandever (Vice President)
- Grady Hicks (Secretary/Treasurer)

### Board Members

- Holly Orr
- Michael Vandever
- Cindy Meurer
- Chris Stevenson
- John Baltzell
- Chris Paddack
- Jay Daniel
- Sam Binion
- Andrew Condie
- Grady Hicks

### Alternates

- Frank Gray
- Joy Emshoff

# Martindale Triathlon

October 27, 2012

Post-safari blues got you down? Are you experiencing weight gain and boredom? I have the answer for you! The Martindale Triathlon is calling your name! The Martindale Tri has been around since 1979. Sure the course has changed due to safety reasons and urban sprawl, but the camaraderie, fun, and athleticism remain the same. It is a long running tradition to pit paddling skills against the running and biking skills of the traditional triathlete. Many times the paddler prevails!

The Tri is always held the last Saturday in October. Start your day with a cool 7 mile run followed by the 16.2 mile popsicle course, and ending the morning with a quick 6 mile paddle from Shady Grove Campground to Staples Dam. Recruit your friends or that quick runner and/or cyclist and compete in the tandem or relay division. If that is not an option for you, the solo division is always competitive and hotly contested.

For more information visit <http://martindaletriathlon.com>

*USAT sanctioning rules apply.*

## Race Reports

### MR 340

*Michael Vandever*

A (mostly) Texas six man team participated in the 2012 Missouri River Canoe Race. Texans Wade Binion, Chris Paddack, Jay Daniel, Andrew Condie and Michael Vandever, along with Belizean Andres Cabb made the 14-hour drive to Kansas City on Sunday, July 29.

### Race Overview

Roughly 300 canoes raced in this year's MR340, the seventh running of the race. Approximately 184 finished the race; reportedly the highest percentage of DNF's ever for an MR340. For the first time, the race had a staged start with solos (roughly half of all boats entered) starting at 7:00 AM on Tuesday, July 31, and all other boats starting an hour later. Both races commenced on time with a replica cannon blast signaling the official starts. Racers battled 100+ degree heat throughout the race, which has an 88-hour time limit.

The race has 8 mandatory checkpoints (plus the finish line), where ground support was required to text the in/out times to race officials. Unsupported teams were required to text themselves through the checkpoints, as well as maintain a Spot Tracker throughout the race. Reportedly, this new text requirement went well and aided in race officials' ability to track racers, as well as folks following the race online.

In addition to the 8 mandatory checkpoints, numerous opportunities are available for teams to meet their ground support to resupply. Unlike the Texas Water Safari, the MR340 is a fully supported race. Racers can have unlimited ground support and can receive anything they might need from their support. Some racers choose to take long rest periods (elaborate camps set up in advance by their

support team) with a few even choosing to stay in hotels. Others paddle straight through or sleep on the bank when they need to.

### **Inside the Team Lonestar Race**

Plans were made to take on the 2012 MR340 by Team Lonestar early in the spring. Initially, West Hansen was slated to be the sixth team member, but Amazon Express obligations ruled him out and by mid-summer, Andres Cabb was called in as a replacement. All of the team members had completed the 2012 TWS and felt they were well prepared for the 340-mile race roughly 5 weeks later.

If I had to choose one word to describe the 2012 MR340 it would be HOT. It was relentless. The summer of 2012 found the Midwest in the midst of a record heat wave and drought. The MR340 found itself right in the middle of it. River levels were lower than normal, especially when compared to the last few races. The weeks leading up to the race saw temperatures above 105 degrees with little or no rainfall. The days preceding the race saw a brief respite from the heat, but it had built back up by race day.

The race actually starts on the Kaw River, just before its confluence with the Missouri River. When the cannon went off at 8:00 AM, we were able to propel pretty quickly toward the front of the pack, just after the confluence. Two other boats, a three-man canoe comprised of Missouri paddlers Joe Mann, Matt Dresslaer and Ryan Slebos and a two-man OC2 consisting of the Anderson (former MR340 race winners) brothers from Washington State finished out the lead pack.

With the smaller boats riding our wake, we settled into a pretty brisk pace for the first stages of the race. The Anderson Brothers dropped off for a pit stop at the 30-mile mark and were not able to catch back up to the wake. But we knew they were lurking and still a threat.

Team Lonestar and the 3-man boat both pulled over for supplies at the 40-mile mark and left virtually together. Both boats skipped the first official checkpoint, Lexington, and the 3-man boat stayed on our wake.

Our bank crew was comprised of Jay Condie (Andrew's dad), Susie Paddack and Kayla Taylor. All were fresh off of their support roles in the TWS and all were awesome. They made some adjustments for us (fresh fruit and drink requests) that saved us (especially me) on Day 2.

All day long, we passed solo boats that had an hour head start on us. We finally caught the lead group of solo boats at about 5:00 PM. A couple of them were able to hop on our wake for a few minutes. All were friendly and in good spirits as we passed them.

We were alternating double and single blade paddles throughout the day. The 3-man had to stay on doubles in order to stay on our wake. They tried to switch to singles and quickly dropped off, forcing them back to doubles to regain our wake. We made a couple of pushes and were able to drop the 3-man team by mid-afternoon. However, they caught back up before nightfall. As soon as they hit our wake, we made another push, immediately separating again. We thought we'd seen the last of them.

Sometime after nightfall, we received word that the Anderson Brothers had really dropped back and were now racing for the Tandem title; they were at least an hour back. At the next few checkpoints, we learned that the 3-man boat was hanging just out of view; we just weren't putting any real separation on them. We never saw their lights, but knew they weren't far behind. As I recall, sometime just before sunup, we noticed they were closing fast. We made the plan to catch up on maintenance (eat, stretch, whatever), then put on another sprint as soon as they caught us. We were able to drop them again. Again, we thought we'd seen that last of them.

Daylight came and a few more checkpoints came and the 3-man, though not in sight, was still not too far behind. Their bank crew was always standing next to our bank crew at the checkpoints. We actually caught sight of them a couple of times on long straightaways and we could hear the spectators in the rear distance after we'd leave checkpoints. It wasn't until early afternoon on Day 2 that we finally put some serious time on them in a relatively short stretch. If I recall correctly, in about a 20-mile stretch our lead went from 9 minutes to 20 minutes. It was the first real separation of the race.

The final few checkpoints saw more of the same. Our lead continued to increase. We finished a little over an hour in front of them in 39:40. It was a grueling race, made more so by this year's heat, water level and the relentless 3-man team.

It was Condie's fourth MR340; Cabb's and my second. Wade had supported West in the first MR340. Jay and Chris were first timers. It's a great race on a great venue. The Missouri folks are very friendly and the race is well run. Thanks to all who helped to put it on.

## **2012 Act Belong Commit Avon Descent**

*Sandy Yonley*



Adventure, danger, kangaroos: The 40th Annual Act Belong Commit Avon Descent in Western Australia had it all. When Tommy and I were approached about representing the USA on the Spirit Paddle Sports team in March, we really had no idea what we were getting into. The Avon Descent is a two day race the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in August that covers 84 miles total (35 on the first day and 49 on the second); has around 700 competitors, tens of thousands of spectators, and lots of news coverage, complete with a news helicopter following the event. It is known as the "world's greatest white water event."

### **Rude Awakening:**

We made our best preparations and, in a flash, it was time for the (very long) flight to Perth. We were fortunate to be able to get there the Monday before the race in order to adjust to the time and temperature difference (Perth is 13 hrs ahead and our summer is their winter). Spirit Paddle Sports told us ahead of time about a special plastic tandem ski they had produced by welding the front and

back of two PRS ski's together. On Tuesday we tried out the tandem ski on a lake and were impressed with how fast it was on flat water, even in shallows. We were also excited to be able to race tandem since we would be together and have a much better chance at winning prize money as a mixed team.

Early Wednesday morning, we set out to practice an 11-mile section of the Avon that included most of the worst rapids. Bad things happened. Western Australia had been having one of the driest Julys on record and the river was a rock garden with a small trickle of water running through it. Tommy must have gotten out of the boat 60 times to drag it and me over rocks. Near the end of the run we ran Bell's rapid, which at this water level was not a safe thing to do, and significantly damaged the boat. It was a very demoralizing training run resulting in extreme leg soreness and our focus for the race changed to simply finishing (realizing also that the rapids, even in low water, were often beyond our skill level). Fortunately, there was sufficient rain from Tuesday through Thursday to give another 6 inches of water in the river. This would still be a very low water race (the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in race history), but there would be just enough water to avoid most of the portaging that was required on our practice run.

### **Starting at square one:**

After the disaster on Wednesday, the amazing people at Spirit worked overtime to set us up in another, beefier, tandem ski. By Thursday afternoon we were rigged and ready to go again just in time for a quick paddle through a small section of ti trees as well as a rapid called Posselt's Ford. We took one look at the rapid and decided that we needed to portage. Keep in mind that Posselt's Ford is not normally considered difficult--the guidebook didn't even assign it a difficulty level. Fortunately, Michael Baker, one of the Team Spirit guys [who has won the race], was there watching and told us to run it, yelling: "Don't even think about it!" So we backed up the boat and gave it a go. After successfully making it, we said, "It looked angry" he replied, "Naw, that's not angry, mate, that's just a little sad". Looking back on it, the advice to run it was exactly what we needed to hear. Wednesday's disaster had made us overly timid and, as it turned out, during the course of the race we would be running many rapids that were a lot more "angry" than Posselt's Ford!

### **Day One:**

It was impressive to see all the boats lined up along the bank at the starting area! They did the start of both days in grids (~20 boats per grid on day one and ~4 per grid on day two). We started in grid #3 and we were the first boat in our grid to make it to the first portage, Northam Weir. There was lots of paddling through shallow water. Although Tommy had to get out a dozen times for hidden sandbars, we paddled quite aggressively in the shallows and passed several tandem teams (including a few mixed teams). We also were passed by several of the top solo paddlers who started 1-2 minutes behind of us. There were only two real rapids on day one and, since the water was so low, everyone in front of us portaged, so we did too. The hours went by reasonably quickly and before long we were in the ti trees, which start 6 miles from the finish. We found the ti trees to be unexpectedly easy at the low water level as the river was more channelized, making for faster flow, and there was generally only one obvious way to go; this was very similar to a certain unnamed tree-laden cut in the mysterious lower section of the Guadalupe River. Two miles from the finish, we spotted a mixed tandem team in front of us (paddling a composite surfski)--we would later find out they were running in 2nd place Mixed. They seemed to be very tired (and struggling to navigate through the trees); we caught them about one mile from the finish and ended up beating them to the line by nearly two minutes. We finished in 30th place Overall, 2nd Mixed, and 1st Plastic Double (by a wide margin) and most importantly, we saw two kangaroo's hopping across the river right in front of us during the race.

### **Day Two:**

With sufficient rain, the 2nd day of the race includes over 70 class II-IV rapids in a remote, 25 mile section of river. I can't imagine what it would be like in high water, but even at low water it was

daunting to us (especially in a tandem boat). Really, we did pretty well for two people who don't have much whitewater/wildwater experience. I did lots of back sweeps and in many cases, Tommy jumped out of the boat pushing and pulling it around (and over) smaller of rocks. A couple of the rapids proved to be very intense with some minor bodily harm involved (Tommy's waterproof pants had lots of holes from rock scrapes—fortunately these only resulted in minor cuts and bruises, and my left ear was a victim of an assault from an errant tree limb). The only pre-planned portage was at Emu Falls—we had scouted this one on Friday and it was simply not runnable by virtue of the fact that our tandem boat could not fit through the "washing machine" at this water level. We ran all of the other rapids including "Syd's" (one of the scariest rapids on the course, known for hurting people and boats). We did well through Syds right up until the last drop but then got pinned against a rock and nearly turned over; Tommy jumped out of the boat (as I nearly fell out) to lift it over the rock and somehow we made it through with only minor bumps and bruises--no boat damage. We ran Bell's rapid, the last rapid on the course, with excitement but no problems.

At this point, we both said to each other that this really was a lot of fun. It is hard to describe the occasions of terror that we felt, being a bit out of control in many of the day's worst rapids; but the joy of getting through it all in one piece was equally indescribable . We looked back on several long straightaways and couldn't see the mixed team that had been running with us previously, so we cruised on toward the finish line with occasional power boats whizzing past. The intensity of the rapids had depleted every ounce of adrenaline, so we were relieved to not have to sprint to the finish. We finished in 26th place Overall, 2nd Mixed (1st Mixed was in a K2 and had tons of experience, so we were 40 mins. behind them...not even close), and 1st Plastic Double--this put us into some cash winnings.

The experience was incredible. The race course was gorgeous, running through a national park in the valley section where the rapids were. The people at Spirit were amazing hosts. The Australian's were great. All in all it was a trip we will tell our grandchildren about: we survived the great Avon Descent!

Huge thanks to my parents, Tom and Paula for watching our kids, all the guys at Spirit who helped us in so many ways and cheered us on (especially Alan Fernandes and Lannin French...and Sid and Justin for rigging/team captaining, and Alan A. for all the helpful advice), the USA Spirit crew of Mike Drost and Debbie Richardson for all the support and lending us a training boat, Ginsie Stauss and Ian Rolls for generously lending us their PRS's, and of course everyone who was rooting us on from home while we were away. We were both very encouraged and it meant a lot—it really felt like a team effort.



## **About the TCKRA**

The Texas Canoe and Kayak Racing Association is a statewide club for persons interested in paddle sport racing. The primary focus of the club is USCA and ICF class marathon racing, but other disciplines of paddle sports are promoted through TCKRA's Race Calendar and Points Program.\*

In 1971 a group of canoe paddlers with an interest in canoe and kayak racing joined together and formed the TCRA (which later evolved into the TCKRA). During the past years the organization has grown to one of the largest canoe and kayak clubs in the state. The club is now recognized as the voice for canoe racing in Texas and its members have gained national recognition. Each year the TCKRA participates in approximately 20 canoe races and the TCKRA also organizes and sponsors the Texas State Canoe and Kayak Racing Championship Series. These championship level race events compliment the other annual racing events by recognizing the top competitors in a variety of paddle sport disciplines and classes. Additionally, the TCKRA culminates the season by awarding the top overall paddlers of the year. This recognition is determined through the accumulation of TCKRA Points.\*

Whether you are a novice paddler, intermediate or seasoned racer, TCKRA is a great way to meet new people, improve your skills and get out on the river. Our membership spans the state and varies widely by age, gender, skill-level and boat type; even our working careers and professions. We also share a great deal in common - the competitive spirit and an enduring love of the water.

Your annual dues help fund events and activities throughout the year and around the state. By joining the TCKRA you enjoy the following benefits:

- 4 championship races, (Unlimited, Aluminum, USCA and ICF)
- The Martindale Triathlon
- Race discounts for TCKRA members
- Spring and fall river cleanups
- Bi-Monthly newsletter
- Texas paddler directory
- Annual banquet
- Paddling clinics – free to TCKRA members
- 2 TCKRA decals for every member
- Paddler of the Year points competition\*
- A TCKRA membership will give you a voice in the racing community and allow us to continue to promote canoe and kayak racing in Texas.

Our members paddle kayaks and canoes crafted from wood, plastic, aluminum, carbon and Kevlar.



## TCKRA Membership Application

|                |       |                   |   |
|----------------|-------|-------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>    | _____ | <b>Date</b>       | _____   |
| <b>Address</b> | _____ | <b>New Member</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <b>Email</b>   | _____ | <b>Birthdate</b>  | _____   |

Publish contact information in the membership directory (check one)  Yes,  No

Type of membership (circle below)

|            |      |                            |
|------------|------|----------------------------|
| Youth      | \$5  |                            |
| Individual | \$15 |                            |
| Family     | \$20 |                            |
| Business   | \$25 | <b>Business Name</b> _____ |

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP** shall consist of the members of a household. The household dependents other than the parents or guardians must be less than 18 years of age as of January 1 of the membership year. Dependents age 18 as of January 1 of the membership year must obtain their own individual membership.

**YOUTH MEMBERSHIP** is available to any person under 18 years of age as of January 1 of the membership year.

**BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP** is available to any organization.

If a Family membership, please list family members below:

| <b>Name(s) for additional family members</b> | <b>Birthdates</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| _____  | _____             |
| _____  | _____             |
| _____  | _____             |
| _____  | _____             |
| _____  | _____             |

**Send form and payment to:**  
TCKRA Membership  
444 Pecan Park Dr.  
San Marcos, TX 78666-8544