

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The Dreamcatcher Expedition! [jigglebox@gmail.com](mailto:jigglebox@gmail.com)

What: The Dreamcatcher Expedition, Paddling for Hope down the whole Mississippi River

Who: A retired Navy Captain and a clinically depressed writer

When: September 1<sup>st</sup> to late October

Where: Lake Itasca, the Twin Cities, St. Louis, New Orleans & all river towns in between

Why: To find the common thread and collect the dreams of river residents, to send the latter out to sea in a corked bottle at journey's end.

How: Paddles, a PDA, a photographer's eye, and the best river gear money can buy.

Launching from the Canadian border Labor Day Weekend, retired Navy captain Frank Grandau and author Rick McKinney will canoe the 2,350-mile Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Their vessel: an 18-foot We-no'nah Minnesota II canoe. Their mascot: Clyde the basset hound. Their mission, two fold. For Grandau, the trip is the fulfillment of a life goal and a search for commonalities among the river's many varied cultures. For McKinney, the trip is part of an ongoing battle against depression in himself and others, this time with a positive spin: the dream-filled bottle of hope for humankind.

Grandau, who attended Parks College on the banks of the river in Cohokia, IL says, "It's probably been more of a goal than a dream for me. I think I'm too much of a pragmatist to dream much anymore." Grandau and McKinney met while each was on his own solo thruhike of the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail in 2004.

McKinney is the author of the recently published "Dead Men Hike No Trails," a chronicle of his hike that New Hampshire's Concord Monitor called "Better than Bill Bryson's A Walk in the Woods." McKinney suffered a friend's suicide in late 2003, avoided taking his own life by hiking in 2004, hiked the Rockies in 2005 for depression awareness, and then lost another friend, a love interest, to suicide in January. To him, this trip is a damn-the-torpedoes launch into a place of hope and improved mental health.

The canoe, the equipment, the trip's initial concept and planning: all Frank Grandau. McKinney's lone task: show up. But as those who have been there can attest, when you're depressed, showing up is oftentimes the hardest thing. McKinney is excited, however, and hopeful. In six months on the Appalachian Trail, he went from a "mental and physical basket case" to "a machine," his suicidal thoughts, gone. "I'll be damned if I not only complete the river but shed a ray of hope for other depression-sufferers in the act."

Statistics say 1 in 4 Americans suffer some form of mental illness. The author, however, intends to fight depression this year by emphasizing the positive and concentrating on hope and his honest wish to ferry the dreams of others downriver. "This journey is going to be all about hope and connections between people," McKinney said. "Oh, and Frank, Clyde and me having a heck of a good time!"

Contact info:

Cell phone: 480-283-3237; email: [jigglebox@gmail.com](mailto:jigglebox@gmail.com) or [fgrandau@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fgrandau@sbcglobal.net)