



Fishing provides entertainment for kids of all ages

## *Catching Fish, Chasing Frogs, and Feeding Turtles in Cinco Ranch*

# *Experience Katy's*

"So what do you think, Mark, a popper or a streamer here?" Samuel Clemens' statue on the park bench in front of the Cinco Ranch Branch of the Fort Bend County Libraries offered no response, but he still contributed to my fishing enjoyment. At near 8:30 p.m. I was working my fly rod along the banks of Katy's small Lake Gayle, add the light reflecting off the water to reveal turtle heads surfacing and the occasional fish splashing at the end of my line, and I envisioned a setting out of Mark's Tom Sawyer. Of course the reflected light was from the LaCenterra shopping center rather than oil lanterns, and this wasn't the Mississippi River ambling by in front of me. But this setting wasn't a bad substitute for a country boy living in the city.

### **Close Proximity to Fishing Holes**

A job transfer brought my family to Katy in the summer of '06. My wife and I agreed on the most important Katy selling points of work proximity, schools, and neighborhoods, but from there our interests diverged significantly. She valued proximity to a Super Target and entertainment centers; I cared about distance from Bass Pro Shops and fishing impoundments. So upon move-in I astutely unpacked fishing gear first, swung by Bass Pro for necessary equipment additions (necessary being a relative term), and headed to the closest fishy-looking body of water. I didn't have to go far, only a mile from our new home. At Lake Pointe I found numerous hungry sunfish and a few voracious Largemouth bass. Some 18 months and



*“But rest assured the fishing, feeding, finding  
and overall fun won’t be forgotten.”*  
- Sam Stroder

Most kids can't resist crossing  
the rock waterfalls



# Great Outdoors

by SAM STRODER

countless unpacked boxes later, I've fished many of Katy's waterways and found them all to be calming short-term getaways. Some are so accessible that one--purely hypothetically, of course--could easily stop off on the way home from work, roll up business slacks and shirtsleeves, and fish a little (at least until their all-knowing wife visualizes that image and embarrassingly drops off more fitting attire).

## Location, Technique, and Bait

Most all but the newest Katy lakes and ponds have healthy populations of Largemouth bass and sunfish. Crappie and catfish also populate some. My family's favorite Cinco Ranch fishing locales

are Lake Gayle, from the south bank below the spillway, South Park Lake, small northernmost cove, and Lake Pointe Lake, small cove directly adjacent to the parking lot to the south. My preferred bass tactic is fly fishing a floating frog pattern or terrestrial along the shallows in the evening, or stripping white streamers along the steeper banks and rock outcrops most anytime of the day. The more common crankbaits on spinning gear or soft plastics on level-wind equipment seem more apt to attract the larger bass, and this heavier gear certainly improves your odds of landing any fish hooked.

The majority of local Largemouths--fish, not people--are less than 12", but many exceed 17". I've seen a four, five, and six-pound bass





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caught, and hear reports of ones exceeding 10 pounds (from fishermen, keep in mind...). From around the bridges bordering Lake Gayle, I've landed slab-sized crappie on smallish white wooley-buggers and hand-sized Bluegills on small yellow poppers.

### Entertaining Younger Fishermen

Entertaining kids is the ideal utilization of these Cinco Ranch fishing holes. For such, you're probably after near-guaranteed action. Try suspending a piece of weenie or Canadian nightcrawler from a bobber in one of the many spillover pools, and get your hook-extracting pliers ready. Good luck trying to keep up with fish removal and hook re-baiting for seven 9-year old boys on a birthday party, or even squealing collections of 14 and 16 year old girls.

### Turtles, Crawdads, and Frogs

Fish aren't the only pond residents, either. Ducks, frogs, turtles, and crawdads contribute to a diverse and interesting ecosystem. Most of my three children and my pond 'expeditions' start with fishing downstream of the spillway in Lake Gayle, but eventually shift to feeding the ducks and turtles or chasing crawdads and frogs. The other day my son and I caught a huge bullfrog, arguably outweighing even Mr. Twain's Calavaras County lead-weighted croaker. We've also found that the near-tame ducks will eat out of your hands, and the red-eared turtles love cheese-baked goldfish crackers. Granted these aren't quite National Geographic revelations, but we still found them entertaining, and they seem to hold Mark's approving gaze.

### Spillway Trek

No LaCenterra lakes fishing adventure is complete without a trek across the aforementioned rock spillway. Our tender-footed children aren't exactly Huckleberry Finn, so a car ride home with wet feet usually includes their soaked sneakers or flip-flops. And keeping a towel handy for the car seat in the event of a deeper plunge is a good idea--those moss-covered rocks are slippery.

### Perspective of Mr. Clemens

Fortunately shoes, clothes, towels, and even car seats can be dried to original condition, as if the LaCenterra lakes fishing adventure had never occurred. But rest assured the fishing, feeding, finding, and overall fun won't be forgotten. If you don't believe me, just ask Mr. Clemens sitting there in front of the library. Mark's seen a lot in his day, and he knows which of it is worth remembering. Some of it he's even written down.

KM

*SAM STRODER, his wife, and their 3 children transferred to Katy from small-town west Texas in the summer of 2006. Fishing and writing are both hobbies of his, so this article seems a fitting combination.*



Trying to catch a big one in Katy's lakes



## Planning on Fishing in Cinco Ranch?

*All Cinco Ranch fishing holes are for residents only and are catch and release. Additional information on access and regulations may be found on the internet at: [CincoRanchpoa.com/Recreational\\_Facilities.asp](http://CincoRanchpoa.com/Recreational_Facilities.asp)*



Winners of a fishing contest held at a local lake



## *Cinco Ranch Fishing Tips*

- Toss a few crackers to the turtles surfacing 20 feet or so out from the south bank downstream of the spillway. Wait a few minutes, they'll show up.
- Take a leisurely stroll around the lake on the paved sidewalk, but before you've fed the ducks, unless you want quacking company.
- Hunt for crawdads around the spillway rocks. But be careful, they pinch.
- Find the huge bullfrogs hanging around the water's edge. They look almost artificial suspended under the moss accumulations with only their eyes and nostrils above waterline.
- Traverse the spillway, carefully. The moss-covered rocks are slippery.
- As evening approaches stop by and 'visit' with Mark Twain on the park bench back of the library. He's a particularly good listener when crickets and frogs are serenading in the background.



Photo by Franklin Isabell

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