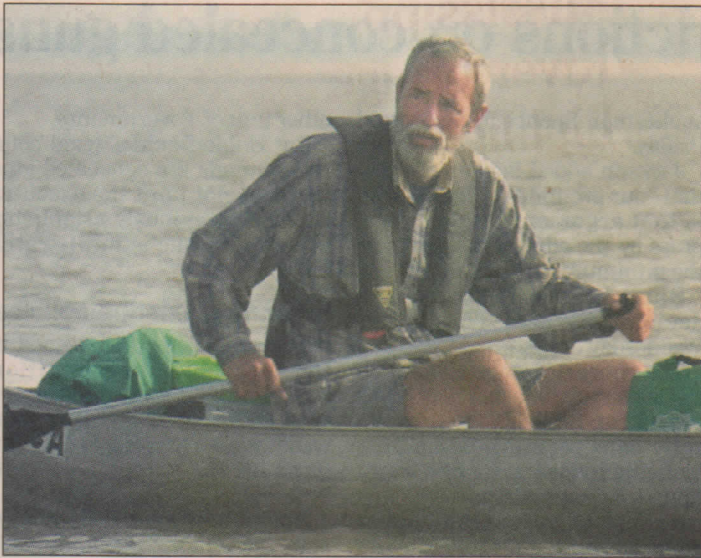


THAT'S LIFE



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Ron Haines resumed his canoe trip down the Mississippi River at Cape Girardeau Friday morning. He began his journey on July 28 and hopes to complete it next month.

# Going for it

## Florida man trades tabloid work for canoe trip

BY HEIDI HALL  
Southeast Missourian

After a three-decade career of exposing celebrity foibles for a gossip-hungry American public, Ron Haines is on a very solitary, private mission.

He's navigating the Mississippi River in a 30-year-old aluminum canoe.

It took the Star tabloid relocating from South Florida to New York City to prompt

Haines, 59, to begin the journey of a lifetime. Haines wanted to keep his Lantana, Fla., home instead of his job as photo editor at the celeb-driven weekly.

"I told my wife, 'What I'd really like to do is canoe the Mississippi River,'" he said. "She said, 'Go for it.'"

So he drove himself and his canoe to the headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., and began his journey on July 28. His luxury items are an aluminum-frame folding rocking chair, books and a cell phone to keep his wife, Sue, his daughter, Jennifer, and his parents in Ocala, Fla., informed about his trip.

Haines said he picked the

Mississippi for its variety: the wilderness of Minnesota, the river towns of Iowa, Illinois and Missouri and the "petrochemical alley" near New Orleans. Along the way, he is staying with fellow members of the Sierra Club, an organization aimed at protecting the environment. Those included Bill Mallonee of Jackson, who met Haines on Wednesday when the boater arrived in Cape Girardeau.

"He got my name from a Web site somewhere," Mallonee said. "He called and I said, 'Yeah, sure. I like to meet people.'"

That has been Haines' experience all along the river — friendly people willing to give a hand with carrying the canoe around dams and rapids or providing a place to stay.

He plans to finish sometime in mid-November. After that, he's not sure what will happen.

"I'll probably write a book, but I don't know what form it's going to take," he said. "I don't have a theme yet."

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