

Canoeist heads south

Ron Haines is doing a lot of canoeing these days, while he is in between jobs.

Haines, 59, is on his way down the Mississippi River from its headwaters to New Orleans. He stopped in Dubuque Tuesday and Wednesday to meet with members of the local branch of the Sierra Club and to take in some sights.

Haines started his adventure on July 27 and expects his trip down the river will take four months. Each day, he paddles for about seven hours, takes time out for a siesta on a beach or sandbar during the hottest part and sets up camp in a park or on a beach for the night.

"I like to poke around in places I've never been before and meet new people," said Haines, who bought his canoe 30 years ago.

Low river levels have caused Haines some minor problems, such as the time he got lost in a patch of wild rice because the main river channel was too low.