

March 2007

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North Texas River Runners



Commodore's Corner

I know that this time of year those of you who travel on business are busy flitting around to destinations such as Miami, Scottsdale or maybe even Cabo San Lucas. Well, this last week I was lucky like you. My company provided me a week's stay, all expenses paid, in Dakota City, South Dakota, where the temperature was in the teens and the snow was in the feet. Unlike banking, finance and data processing, feeding the world is not a glamorous business. The raw materials for our production processes are derived from cattle, hogs and chickens and they are born, raised and dispatched in locations like Dakota City.

A couple of days before my arrival there had been a very significant blizzard. Snow was drifted to the roofs of farmhouses and in the city it was pushed to the curbs to a height that prevented a clear view of oncoming traffic at intersections. Nothing had melted in the cold temperatures. Ponds and lakes were frozen over as were all the rivers and creeks except the Missouri River. My hotel was right on the banks of the Missouri, very close to the spot where Sgt. Floyd of the Lewis and Clark expedition died and was buried. I was able to watch the water, along with numerous chunks of ice, flowing by. I believe that paddling on the river is popular in the summer there, but it would have been unpleasant and dangerous this time of year.

Winter in that part of the country is bitter. The ground can be completely covered over with snow for extended periods. I noted that around the office building the poor rabbits were reduced to sneaking up close to the building at night and eating the bark from the landscaping shrubs. Most of the shrubs had been completely girdled. I don't expect the shrubs will live, but the rabbits will most likely be able to survive a little longer until spring brings real food. Nature provides a hard life in the North Country winters.

And speaking of nature.....please be sure to attend our next monthly meeting on March 20th. Suzanne Tuttle and Ken Seleske of the Fort Worth Nature Center will present activities of the nature center and will discuss coordination of the upcoming river cleanup project with which our club will be assisting. The Fort Worth Nature Center is a terrific asset to this metropolitan area and it deserves all the support we can offer.

Sunny beautiful Mexico by Laurie Patterson

Lorraine McPhee, Clyde Mahler, and I left Arlington Texas for San Marcos on February 4, 2007. There we met Ben and Michele Kvanli, Patrick Brown, Holly Crancer, and Shelly Smith for an exciting adventure to paddle whitewaters in Mexico.

We left San Marcos February 4, 2007 at 5:00 in the morning. We crossed the border at Laredo to Nuevo Laredo where we obtained our visas and exchanged our money to pesos. We drove up the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains to Rayones. We set up camp at Clear Sky Resort on El Rio Pilon. The camp had a great atmosphere with thatched roof covers to place our tents under. Since it was late we choose a short section of the Pilon. The Pilon is a nice class I- II river, great for shaking off the long drive and warming up for the days to come.

We woke up at 4:30 February 6, packed our tents and continued traveling further south on I85 to El Rio Salto. This was our first real taste of the Mexican whitewater we came to experience. We started the river with a bang, a 27 foot waterfall. I decided to portage the fall and build up my skills. Clyde and Lorraine decided to brave the fall. They were both successful; although Lorraine said the force of the fall knocked her nose clip off.

Ben and Michele did a great job teaching us how to run drops, travertine slides and boofing off falls. The water was exceptionally clear and a beautiful turquoise. The water and air temperature was in the mid seventies, making an absolutely beautiful day. The drops were fun, challenging, and helped to boost my confidence. The take out was above a beautiful 160 foot waterfall (Cascade El Mecco). After leaving the river we drove to El Naranjo for dinner. The food was great and Lorraine enjoyed hot chocolate. We relied heavily on Ben and Shelly's Spanish to order our food. After eating we traveled further south to Mico and the village of Pago Pago, where we set up camp at the Huasteca camp ground.

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Since we had set up camp in the dark, we had no idea of the credible beauty around us until the next morning. The camp was along side of the river. There were several small waterfalls and rapids in view. Everything was a lush green. We spent the day scouting and running the many drops, slides and waterfalls. We all had successful runs down the 20 foot waterfall.

The following day we drove to La Morena to run Rio Tampa`on. First we paddle 1 mile upstream to the Cascadas Tamul a 345 foot waterfall. There Ben paddle up behind the fall and ran the rapids. We continued downstream 6 miles through the whitewater section. Here we encountered 5 solid class III rapids. We had spent a little too much time at Casacadas Tamul and we found ourselves having to run the last 2 rapids in the dark. As we continued paddling toward the take out we started hearing a sliding sound from the bank followed by a thump in the water. Our boats would rock as the wave moved across the river. I began replaying the ride to the river, including the warning signs about crocodiles. There was much discussion on weather they were crocks or caimes. I really didn't want to get that close of a look ,so I just tried to think what would Ronnie Ash do? I thought paddle quietly and don't flip over. Since it was so dark we had a hard time finding the take out. We paddled along the river yelling Porfirio (the shuttle drivers name), and Ayuda por favor (help please). We later discovered Porfirio had given up and gone home, forcing us to continue paddling. We saw some lights, and pulled up at a beach. Patrick and Michelle walked up the street of the small village of San Carlos yelling Ayuda at 11:30 at night until someone finally came out of their house. A young man gave Ben a ride to Valles where Jorge (a friend of Ben's) came back with a truck, blankets and jackets. We arrived at Jorge's at 3:30 in the morning and spent the night there.

After finding Porfirio and the trailer we spent the rest of the following day resting. We checked out the town of Tamin were we did some market shopping and found a pharmacy, so I could pick up a Tetnus booster to give Patrick, who had stepped on a rusty nail the day before. We went to see the Huasteca Indian ruins at Tamtok.

Our last day in Mexico we got another chance to run the Micos an absolutely incredible way to end this wonderful trip. I think anyone that loves to paddle and enjoy the great outdoors, has got to paddle these rivers. It is definitely a highlight in my life. An adventure to remember.

Blast From the Past

To Alleviate Diane's 2007 Newsletter Fears

A Recap from Diana's (not the same person) Commodore's Column: March 1997

Fear can be a major motivator. In fact, the only reason why I'm typing this article now is because I'm *afraid* I won't get it completed in time to get the newsletter out. I'm also afraid this newsletter will go downhill fast with Janet and I having to hodge-podge it between the two of us (we need a volunteer!). Anyway, my fears for the newsletter translated into my thinking about fears on the river.

Actually, I think most people underrate the value of fear on a river: especially beginners. Beginners, and sometimes, experienced paddlers, tend to view their fears as a negative experience. I'm talking about the general fear of rapids that everyone has from time to time, or from rapid to rapid, depending on your mental fortitude. You know, the fear where you start thinking above the rapid, "This is a HUGE rapid. I don't know how I'm going to run it. I'm gonna swim. If I swim, I'm gonna get bruised up. I could inhale some water. I could DIE!!" That fear. The one where you can't spit and get diarrhea (maybe there's a correlation there). However, all the paddlers I've seen who have this fear of rapids also tend to have good sense. I've also observed the paddlers who for unknown reasons don't experience these fears, and they don't have good sense: either for themselves or for anyone else. These are the people who "pooh-pooh" class VI hydraulics, and what's worse, they try to convince other people to run the drop.

The other fear I've observed is the fear of making mistakes on the river. Fears of swimming, pinning the boat, losing a ferry angle, missing a surf, hitting a rock, missing an eddy, not seeing the route, etc. can occasionally get the best of a paddler. From my ready listing, you would think I spend a lot of fearful time on the river, but the truth is, I've spent more time actually *performing* these mistakes than being afraid of them. This is not to diminish the fact that I have spent hours of quality fear/worry time, but once you actually start to perform the mistakes---it's not that bad. In fact because of my mistakes, I've learned more about the river faster than the non-mistake makers. (I say this with an air of superiority- once you make enough mistakes, you'll learn this trick). It's true. I know lots of self-rescue tricks and how to z-drag a boat because of my mistakes. I've also learned the art of pretending that any maneuver I perform on the river was intentional. For instance, if I'm on a ferry and lose my angle: I meant to peel-out. Frankly, I'd like to see more people lose this fear and start making more mistakes (I mean that in the most unselfish manner possible).

So the next time you're on the river, remember that famous quote: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself" (unless a class VI rapid is involved).

Activities

March 17th cardboard boat building 1-5 PM

March 24th Roll Session at YMCA

March 30- April 1 San Marcos Spring Fest

<http://www.redriverracing.org/springsfest.htm>

April 14th Brazos River Clean up

April 22nd Nature Center Clean up 9-12

Coming up next.....

First of all, I would like to thank everyone for the great turn out at our February meeting!! It was really nice to see so many friends again! This month we will be having guest speakers from the Fort Worth Nature Center. Ken Seleske and/or Suzanne Tuttle will be with us to talk about the Nature Center in general and about the new and exciting canoe programs that Ken has planned for it's future. There is a lot of room for us to volunteer and practice our skills! He has some new programs that I think would be great for us to get involved in! One of the first things that we as a group will be asked to participate in is the April 22nd clean up. Barb Cutter has worked hard to get this started and I think it is a fantastic way for our club to start and take ownership of our very own sponsored clean up program. I hope everyone will clear their schedule and make time to participate!! This is a great opportunity to give back to our environment and our community and to meet new people that we may be able to introduce to our club.

It is always such a pleasure to see everyone!! I sure hope to see a lot of you at the April 22nd clean up. If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like more information please contact one of the officers. They will let you know when and where to meet and we will post an update in the April newsletter.



The North Texas River Runners

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Future Meetings.

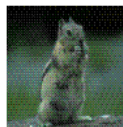
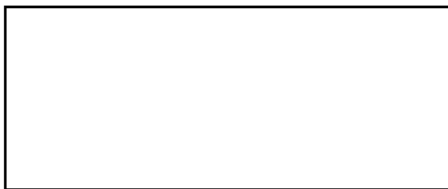
Our meetings are held from 7-9 Pm @ Spring Creek BBQ in Bedford. Hope to see you there.

March 20, 2007

April 17, 2007

May 15, 2007

June 19, 2007

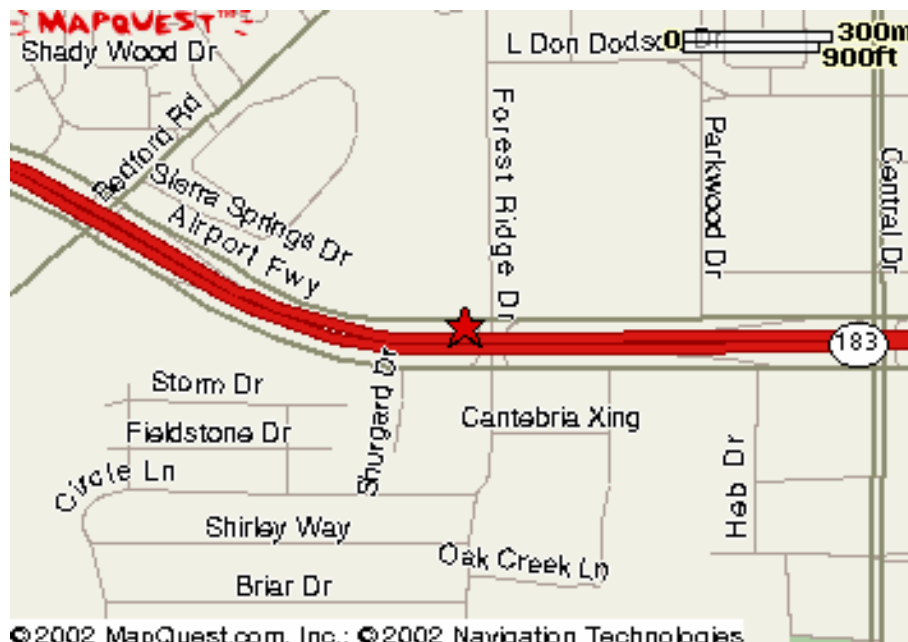


Home of the Prairie Dog Surfing Society

“If we’re not in the hole, we’re sitting right beside it.”

If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please contact:

dpoling@gmail.com



Spring Creek Barbecue

1509 Airport Freeway
North-West Corner of Forest & 183

**Club meetings
are held on the
3rd Tuesday of
the month at
Spring Creek
Barbeque from
7:00—9:00 PM
Next Meeting:
March 20, 2007
Tuesday**