

November 2006

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North Texas River Runners



Commodore's Corner

Positive thinking paid off for me! Curtis and Dianna's class had the very good fortune of catching the Mulberry running at a real nice level for the scheduled training trip. True, things looked real bleak right up to the planning date, but Mother Nature produced enough rain in Northwest Arkansas to satisfy our needs. The water was good, the weather, although a bit chilly at night, was outstanding and the fall foliage was becoming very colorful. All things work themselves out in the end.

Comments on last month's program with Ben Kvanli have been very positive. Talking with other members leads me to believe that improved meeting attendance is directly related to the quality of the programs. Good programs are difficult to put together. You have an idea for a program? Let Carmen know. You have a subject you would like to hear more about? Let Carmen know. You have comments on the programs you have seen? Let Carmen know. She is working for you and is anxious to produce programs that meet your needs as club members.

Our November meeting program will feature George Wilhelm. George will discuss his trip this summer down the Nahanni River. George is one of us, he has a good oral presentation technique with a lot of visuals and, without a doubt, he has a very interesting subject. In addition, if you are anywhere near the age of considering retirement, he is just the person to push you right on over the edge. You probably want to get to the meeting early so that you can get a good seat with a view of the screen. After George's presentation, if you find yourself with the urge to spend three weeks on a Canadian wilderness river....let Laurie know.

We will see you at the meeting on the 21st. Until then, be sure you paddle with a purpose.

— Allen Harrison

NTRR Activities

It is time to start planning our cardboard boats! We will have our 1st session planned for December 2nd at my house. We have the cardboard in. Please come with ideas and plans. If anyone would like to take their cardboard to another location, Ray can bring it Saturday to Ronnie's. Let me know how much you need and bring a trailer. The pieces are approximately 3' X 11'. - Laurie

A Proper Little Canoe Trip

By Ronnie Ash

How do You define a “proper” canoe trip? For me, it means an expedition, boats loaded with camping gear and supplies, overnighing on the river bank, and a map and compass strapped to the thwart in front of me. Thanks to the energy, imagination, and superb organizational skills of our activities director, Laurie Patterson, a fortunate group of us were able to enjoy just such a proper canoe trip on the Buffalo River as September set and October dawned.

We negotiated the lowermost section of the Buffalo, some 23 river miles from Rush Landing down to the White River, then clawed our way about a mile upstream on the White to the take out at Buffalo City. Cooperating to control their tandem canoes were the teams of Laurie Patterson and Ray Louthan, Allen Harrison and Jean Muncrief, and “Big John” Simmons and myself. Perched upon his Wilderness Systems Tarpon 120 sit-on-top was John Kuhlenschmidt, and occupying the cockpit of her long and laser beam narrow Perception Shadow sea kayak was our Canadian compatriot, Susan Blair.

Departing Fort Worth, we sought to avoid the traumatic traffic of Dallas by taking Hwy 380 east from Denton to intersect I30 at Greenville. (I’m still waiting for TxDot to build a bridge over Dallas so that I’ll never have to go there again!) It looked good on the map, but it proved to be like driving 80 miles on Rufe Snow, with an endless succession of traffic lights slowing our average speed to a walking pace.

The temperature was freefalling toward the upper 30’s and darkness was well established when we reached the Buffalo Point Recreation Area, so we hurriedly pitched our tents and happily warmed our souls with the perfect prescription for a chilly night, Frito Pie. After the dishes were done the 2 Johns and I founded the Angry Bears Snoring Club at our campsite, while Susan sought protection from the cold by unreeling her bedroll in one of the vehicles. Poor Susan, thinking that her equipment list was limited to what she could stuff in her low volume kayak, was less than adequately prepared for the night time temperatures we encountered. (For the record, in the absence of a friendly rafter, canoeists can usually be counted upon to tote a bit of gear for the hapless 2-blader!)

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On Friday morning, before setting out for the put-in, we witnessed the amazing spectacle of a coyote chasing a deer through the campground.

For your reference file, Laurie engaged “Dillard’s Ozark Outfitters” to run the shuttle for us. They did a fine and friendly job. Enroute to the put-in, we passed by the abandoned and intriguing zinc mining town of Rush. Although we lacked the time to linger, it certainly looked worthy of exploration on a future outing

As we unloaded and sorted our gear from the trailer and the vehicles in preparation for loading the boats, it looked as though it would hardly fit in a freight train, much less a few canoes. Happily however, we were able to stow it all away with room to spare. Heck, we could have carried an extra blanket for Susan if only we’d had one! It’s no wonder that some of the world’s foremost scholars consider the canoe to be the most elegant, highly evolved, and perfect machine ever conceived by the mind of man.

Once underway on day 1, we encountered no other human beings whatsoever. (Add that element to my list of the qualities defining a proper canoe trip!) Sweet solitude, it was so nice to be back on the Buffalo, with a fresh view of delightfully undeveloped Ozark Mountain riverbank revealed beyond each successive bend. Thanks to Jean’s naturalist knowledge, we were able to identify an osprey flying overhead, and, of course, we were constantly scolded by kingfishers as we eased along downriver.

With 24 miles to make in 2 river days, we couldn’t dally too long, so we set a pleasant pace until we found an acceptable campsite at mile 116.4. Evening brought an appropriately primal chorus of yipping and yowling coyotes to add to the ambience.

On the second day we did begin to pass a few camps and see other boats on the river. Allen and Ray took advantage of the Buffalo’s Smallmouth population for a bit of angling. The sight of Ray fishing from the bow of his canoe while Laurie coned the boat from the stern was almost more than one camper could comprehend. “My wife wouldn’t do that if you held a gun to her head!” he exclaimed. (Obviously, his wife never attended the TCJC College of Canoeing!) (Sorry, but I am psychologically incapable of referring to my dear old Alma Mater as TCC – it’s an immoral abomination and I refuse to condone it!)

The quality of our wilderness experience declined as we drew to within about 3 miles of the White and began to encounter motorboats ascending upstream from the White. The motorboaters were not without entertainment value though, as some were burdened with incredible loads. We met several motor canoes stuffed with gear stacked so high that their sternsmen were stretching their necks to see over it, and their freeboard could only be measured in millimeters. They reminded me of containerships, rolling top heavily under deck loads piled up to the lower edges of the wheelhouse windows. They showed superhuman determination in climbing upriver beyond riffles and rapids far too shallow and rocky to employ an engine, and set up elaborate camps suitable for semi-permanent habitation.

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Allen picked up a fishing newspaper which described the White as one of the 6 most deadly fishing rivers in the US due to rapid rises in flow level. The article stated that the White's flow can go from 50 c.f.s. to 22,000 c.f.s. within minutes and without warning. All I can say is, "Yikes!" Maybe my next Buffalo trip will take out at Rush Landing! (Or, as suggested by Ted "Dr Danger" Drake, simply take a right at the White and float effortlessly downstream about 10 miles to take out at the village of Norfolk. At 22,000 c.f.s., that shouldn't take long!)

Sunday morning, before turning our thoughts back towards Texas, we went for a dandy little 3 mile hike on the Indian Rockhouse Trail, rated by Laurie's Buffalo River Hiking Trails book as "strenuous." Initially the path descended down a steep and ruggedly rocky trail seemingly designed to twist ankles. (Our elevation declined so much that I became convinced we must surely have descended below sea level. Moreover, I was almost certain that we would have to climb an equal amount before this stroll was over. This suspicion ultimately proved to be gaspingly correct!) My titanium enhanced ankle was rigorously tested, but my careful steps became more carefree when Ray, at Laurie's suggestion, found a classic Friar Tuck pike-staff for me to use as a walking stick. Thus equipped, I was prepared not only for uncertain footing, but also to confront any highwayman foolish enough to waylay us.

Highlights on the trail included an abandoned zinc mine and, of course, the Indian Rockhouse itself, a prehistoric McMansion complete with running water and a skylight. Actually, it was a wide, shallow, bluff face cave with an exposed underground stream at one end, a sink-hole skylight at the other, and a few stalagmites scattered about for interior decoration. It was inhabited by hunter – gatherer groups for thousands of years.

We were exceedingly fortunate with the water level on the Buffalo. For weeks it had been too low to run, then, only days before our arrival, it was at flood stage. (A canoeist at one campsite we passed informed us that the river had been 7 feet higher a week ago!) We dove through the window at just the right time. Things simply fell into place for us (due, I'm quite certain, to Laurie's planning and preparation). What didn't fall we pushed! We were all agreed that the section we ran really merits 3 days instead of the 2 that we had available.

The North Texas River Runners are wonderfully fortunate to have Laurie as activities director. Not only is she as sharp as a new scalpel and a superbly able organizer, she's a dedicated cheapskate, devoted to minimizing costs. (A sterling quality in any individual! If only our elected representatives shared it!) What better way to show our appreciation than by attending the events she enables? It's the often touted but rarely found Win / Win Situation!

The Buffalo outing was, indeed, a proper little canoe trip, demonstrating, yet again (!), that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats!

A canoe trip on The Mulberry river with TCC

By Darrell Little

This trip was certainly a challenge for me and a challenge to the instructors to get me safely down stream. I managed to get my canoe pinned on a rock. I was very impressed by the skills Curtis and Diana used to get me and my canoe safely downstream.

This was not to be their only challenge. As some of you know the stream makes a 90 degree turn when it hits a flat rock wall. I turned over again and they rescued me and my canoe again. Thank you both for both rescues!

These are not the only rescues these two did for me. I didn't have an air mattress and didn't have a clue as to how cold one could get without one. They provided four towels to put under my sleeping bag and it sure made a difference. Guess what is on my shopping list and it isn't towels! Curtis also put my tent up for me on arrival at the site. Thanks again Curtis.

Jean and Allen Harrison also demonstrated how to prepare meals in camp and on the river. Thanks for everything, especially the hot water to make hot tea. Boy, it was just plain cold there on the Mulberry.

The second day was much better, the water flow had slowed some and as I recall, I didn't turn over the second day. The group as a whole really worked together to get the canoes loaded and unloaded. It sure makes a difference when everyone tries to do their share.

Ronnie is outstanding, he could be way behind me and yell at me such as, Thumb up Derrell, The pry is behind you Derrell, Etc. We had one new student and Ronnie took her in a tandem boat. I felt like she did very well. I hope she stays with the program.

I have just about learned how to ferry across the river, but I have a ways to go on the inside/offside circles. The only complaint I heard was: "It is COLD". The instructors were great, I never felt like my life was in danger. Thank You Again! The camp ground area was clean and the restrooms were sufficient and included a shower. The water could have been warmer, but I would not say it was too cold to use.

Crispy Peanut Squares

1 cup sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 cups crisp rice cereal squares
1 cup peanuts

Combine first 3 ingredients in a glass bowl; microwave at HIGH 3 to 4 minutes or until melted, stirring once. Stir in vanilla.

Fold in cereal and peanuts. Spread mixture into a lightly greased 13 x 9 inch pan. Cover and chill 1 hour or until set; cut into squares.



The North Texas River Runners

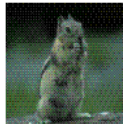
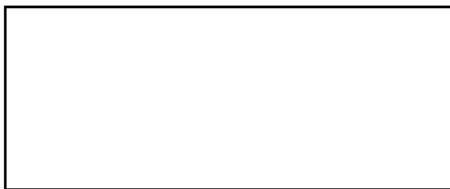
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Future Meetings.

The last meeting of the year is this month. We hope to see you all there. 7-9 Pm @ Spring Creek BBQ in Bedford

November 21, Tuesday



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

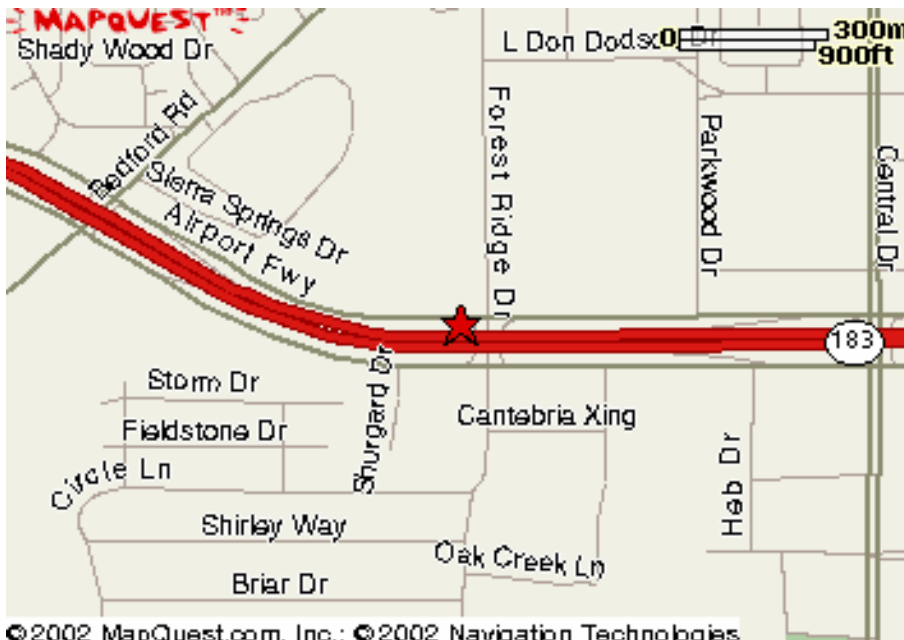
Upcoming Activities

December 2nd: Cardboard boat building begins.

December 9th: NTRR Christmas party

For more information on any activities, contact Laurie at

queenbee@uwmail.com



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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:
November 21st
Tuesday**