

July 2006

# North Texas River Runners



Commodore's Column  
By Curtis Boerner

Ahoy from the Helm,

It has been a short time since our last meeting but hopefully you have had a chance to go boating. Some of us did on one of Laurie Patterson's wonderful activities recently, Many thanks to Laurie for the great work and effort she has put into the activities this year. She has had at least one activity a month and often more. Also a note of thanks to Chris Gross for all of the wonderful meeting programs she has arranged. The programs have been great.

Please remember, now is the critical time when our whole club membership can step up to the helm and help keep our ship sailing straight. We may have a few new faces at the next several meetings from the Main Street Days event. Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is not to be bashful but to step forward and greet these new guests. Strike up a conversation with them and let them know they are welcome at NTRR.

While we are on the subject of stepping up to the helm, do not forget that August is election time for the club. All officer positions are elected at this time. Nominations will be taken starting at this months meeting. Again, do not be bashful: consider being an officer.

See you at the meeting,  
Curtis

## Upcoming Activities

**August 26th 4:00pm- ???.** NTRR Barbeque at Barb Cutter's home.

**September– Date to be announced–** Come surf the waves at Rockport ledge in Arkansas. Park and Play!

**October– Date to be announced–** Trip to the Buffalo River.

**November– Date to be announced-** Women's trip.

For more information on any activities, contact Laurie at [queenbee@uwmil.com](mailto:queenbee@uwmil.com)

## Inside this issue:

Water Snakes	2
Can you handle the heat	4
July Program	4
Doggone Days of Summer	6
New friends in England	7



*(Continued from page 2)*

to engage in.

The coppermouth rattle moccasins are pit vipers, with a pit between and slightly below the eye and nostril, long moveable fangs, a vertical and elliptical cat's eye pupil, and a large triangular shaped head with a small, smooth, shiny cap over the nose.

The nonpoisonous water snakes have round pupils, no pits, no long fangs, and a large smooth cap over the top of the head. Those caps are a feature that I was previously unaware of, but you can see it here – short nose cap on venomous, long head cap on nonvenomous. Also, the non poisonous watersnakes have long tapering tails, unlike the short tail that tapers abruptly from the thick body of the cottonmouth.

I discovered an interesting little treatise from the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension on "Avoiding watersnake confrontations."

First, and most obvious, give snakes a wide berth. (No problem there!)

Avoid areas that snakes use for sunning. (Short of staying home, this may not be entirely possible for us!) Since many water snakes like to sun on tree branches, then drop into the water when they detect movement, we should try not to drift under over hanging branches. (Or crash into the tree from which the branch projects!)

Unfortunately, snakes sometimes do drop into boats. (It's happened 4 or 5 times in the canoe class.) Getting a scared snake out of a canoe can be a stimulating experience.

NCSU recommends carrying a pair of long handled reptile grips in your canoe. (If the handles were long enough to suit me, I'm afraid they wouldn't fit in my boat!) According to the NCSU they aren't very expensive and they are certainly cheaper than repairing a canoe hull perforated by multiple shot gun blasts or a trip to the emergency room. (Having recent experience in the matter, I can certainly testify as to the exorbitant cost of emergency room treatment!) Before a snake actually falls into your boat, you should prepare for the event by practicing picking up pieces of soft garden hose with your reptile grips. (Something tells me that the snake might be more resistant to this process than the garden hose!)

The best method that I have found for dealing with the sudden intrusion of an unwelcome reptile into one's personal space is teleportation, moving from point A to point B without passing through the intervening space. Admittedly, this is a difficult skill to master. I've only been able to do it once, on the Chatooga river. I had just slid gracefully into an eddy and nudged up alongside a very large rock. Looking to my right, I beheld a startled copperhead nestled in a crack in the rock not 12 inches from my face. At least I thought it was a copperhead – in retrospect it may well have been a banded watersnake. At that moment, however, the primitive survival oriented center of my brain didn't have time to debate the fine points. It said COPPERHEAD!, and POOF, I disappeared from the saddle of my Whitesel and reappeared in the water 12 feet away, just downstream from Decapitation rock in Bull sluice rapid. Now it could be that a near psychotic level of terror is required to initiate the teleportation process, but I'm convinced that it can be done, given sufficient motivation.

And of course, we wouldn't want to bang into rocks, upon which a snake might be getting a tan. Since we all exhibit precise boat control, that shouldn't be problem, eh?

Swimming snakes are not a threat – they cannot jump into your boat from the water. I've always been afraid that they could climb up my paddle shaft, but the NCSU paper did not address that question.

Carry a first aid kit, and if you are going into harm's way, be it whitewater or a reptile friendly environment, don't go alone. Keep your eyes open and your wits about you. And, really, don't worry yourself unduly. Here in this room we have hundreds of years of canoeing experience, we've seen more snakes than you could count, but how many of us have ever been bitten? (God, I hope nobody raises their hand!) Give 'em some room, live and let live...

Legions of serpents notwithstanding, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. ■

## **CAN YOU HANDLE THE HEAT?!**

**By Jean Muncrief**

No, I am not talking about having Diana as your tandem instructor in Charles' paddling class – I am talking about the heat as in hot temperatures coupled with high humidity.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, hundreds of people die each year from heat related causes.

Due to the nature of paddle sports, heat related illnesses can be prevalent when paddling in hot humid conditions where outside temperatures exceed 95 F combined with lack of adequate fluid intake. This can be complicated when paddling cold rivers by wearing wet suits, dry suits and other insulated garments that may not allow body heat to properly escape.

Generally in hot weather when we paddle, we sweat or perspire a lot (depending on your gender). Sweating works to cool the body by evaporation but it also may result in an excessive loss of electrolytes and water can result in a number of heat-related illnesses.

Let's look at the three most common and the First Aid treatment for them.

The least severe is heat cramps. This involves muscle cramps typically in the legs and abdomen. The treatment is to get out of the heat to a cool place (shade will do) and rest. Slowly stretch and lightly massage muscles in the legs to reduce spasms. Give cool water or sports drinks containing salt and sugar.

Next is Heat Exhaustion which is an early indicator that the body's cooling system is becoming overwhelmed. Heat exhaustion occurs when the body's rate of heat gain is greater than the rate of heat loss. Remember, the weather does not need to be excessively hot as dehydration is a major factor in the development of heat exhaustion.

*(Continued on page 5)*

### **Freeze Frame July Program**

Friends and family won't believe your tales of high adventure? Prove your point with photos from your trip! Curtis will be providing some tidbits for water photography including how to get the best shots and how to keep your camera dry.

Here are the meeting dates for the rest of the year! Be sure to mark your calendars as there are a couple of exceptions noted by an asterisk (\*). Meetings will continue to be held at Spring Creek BBQ from 7pm - 9pm.

July 18, Tuesday

August 15, Tuesday

September 19, Tuesday

October 17, Tuesday

November 21, Tuesday

*(Continued from page 4)*

**Signals of heat exhaustion include:**

- cool, moist, pale, ashen or flushed skin
- headache, nausea, dizziness
- general muscular weakness and fatigue
- Heavy sweating

Now, let's look at heat stroke, sometimes called Sun stroke and then review the first aid treatment for both. Heat Stroke is a life threatening condition that can quickly lead to collapse and death of the victim. In heat stroke, the body's temperature is usually above 105 F as the cooling system has become overwhelmed and stopped functioning.

**Symptoms include:**

- red, hot dry skin or pale, damp skin
- changes in level of consciousness
- vomiting
- pulse that is weak and rapid
- shallow breathing
- irrational, confused or combative behavior

**First Aid for both heat exhaustion and heat stroke include:**

- move person to a cool, shady place or to an air conditioned area if possible
- Loosen tight clothing
- Remove heavy and perspiration soaked clothing
- Apply cool, wet towels to skin
- Fan the person
- Mist or sprinkle with cool water
- If person is conscious, give small amounts of cool water or sports drink

If a person refuses water, vomits or has an altered level of consciousness, it is an indication of heat stroke and time to call 911.

For heat stroke, you can place ice or cold packs on the wrists, ankles, groin, the neck and in the arm pits to help cool a persons body. If the person starts to shiver, stop cooling efforts immediately.

If a person is semiconscious or unconscious, turn them on their side in case they vomit and monitor for signs of life. Be prepared as you may need to perform CPR.

Now, let's talk about what we can do to prevent heat related illness.

Hydration is first on the list. Those who begin paddling in an already dehydrated state are at increased risk for heat related illness. So, bottom line, pre-hydrate 2 to 3 hours before, immediately before, during and after paddling. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. To maintain hydration, you must drink beyond thirst.

Don't drink liquids with alcohol, caffeine, or large amounts of sugar as they actually cause you to loose more body fluid – okay, I will say it, they make you pee more! And you don't want to loose that liquid!

Try paddling during cooler parts of the day and allow for frequent rest periods. Take a swim or practice your rolls.

Wear loose fitting, light weight, light colored clothing that allows moisture to evaporate quickly. This will help keep you cooler.

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

**Wear a big brimmed hat no matter how dorky it looks, it actually does keep you cooler.**

**Acclimate yourself to the heat gradually by increasing time spent outside over a 7 to 10 day period before a full paddling day in the heat.**

**Remember, it is always better to prevent medical problems than to treat them especially on the river. Being knowledgeable about heat related illness, how to prevent it, how to recognize the symptoms and how to treat it will make paddling a lot more fun and safe for everyone. ■**

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## Doggone Days of Summer By Diana Boerner

You'd think being a dog was easy: someone feeds you, scratches your belly, and occasionally takes you outside for a romp. I know men who would be satisfied with less. Not our dog, Alice. Alice wants adventure. Alice wants to be a circus dog.

So out of a desire to fulfill Alice's adventurous needs (and desperation for not getting a doggy sitter), Curtis and I decided to take Alice to the Quachita River in Rockport. The drive out began with Alice's usual frenetic excitement and quickly dissipated into questions of "Are we there yet?" Once at the river, Alice enjoyed cool dips in the river as Wax, Diane, Jennifer, Matt, Carmen, Weldon, Scott, Laurie, the Mahlers, Lorraine, Curtis and I surfed the various waves. This particular park and play section of the Quachita has a little something for every surfer. You can front surf, side surf, 360, pop-up, or just generally make a fool of yourself for an appreciative audience.

Although Alice has not yet received her surfing certificate (we didn't allow her on the waves), she did get to practice being the hood ornament of my solo canoe. It seems that when Curtis and I are in our solo boats, Alice *always* wants to join the *other* boater. So, in an attempt to get closer to Curtis, Alice crept out onto my bow deck plate. Just like a tightrope walker with quivering legs, Alice managed to balance in place for approximately 30 seconds before splashing into the river. The performance was dramatic.

Not having our fill of doggy fun, a few weekends later, Curtis and I brought Alice along for NTRR's midnight float on the Brazos at Whitney. This time, we kept the pack together in a tandem canoe. Laurie, Ray, Jean, Alan, Lois, Weldon, and John paddled downstream as Alice lurched from side to side in the tandem canoe. We had the best release I've ever seen and moved downriver quickly. Not satisfied with her tightrope performance from the previous trip, Alice attempted to walk the length of the canoe by only placing her feet on the gunwales and thwarts. The shocking news is that she was successful...once. When she hit water this time, Alice began swimming away from the boat (towards shore) until I said the magic doggie word:

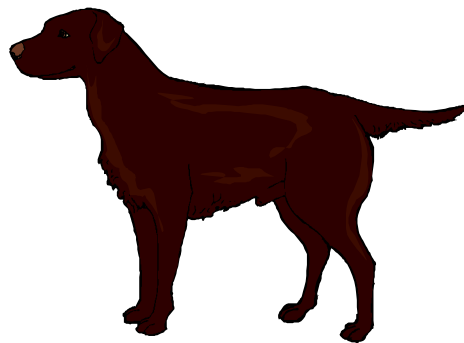
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cookie. Just like the cookie monster, she immediately returned to the canoe for a quick re-entry.

The group stopped for supper and while we sat on the banks, I saw a torpedo go by in the water. Weldon claims it was a carp, but the speed of it in shallow water almost made me run for cover! It was dark when we embarked on our journey again, and thanks to the power of glow sticks/bracelets, Curtis, Alice, and I looked like ghost riders roaming through the night. The group made it to the takeout in effortless record time, and everyone enjoyed the peaceful and dare I say, scenic paddle.

Both trips were NTRR sponsored trips and while each trip had a different flair and focus, both were fun. Alice would like to encourage NTRR members who have not found time to attend an outing to join in! She says that anyone who can't find time in his/her schedule for boating is leading a dog's life (which is still better than a cat's life). So, get up off the couch and join in the adventures! Don't make me use the magic word! ■



## **New Friends in England**

### **By Diana Boerner**

I recently received an email from someone in England asking permission to use some of our NTRR articles in his canoe club newsletter (Marlow Canoe Club), and in exchange, we are welcome to reprint some of their articles (credit being given on both sides, of course). I received a copy of their newsletter this month, and Jean & Lois' omlette recipe made the cut! I will be posting some of the Marlow articles in future newsletters and will bring a copy of this month's newsletter to the meeting for any interested. In the meantime, check out their website at [www.marlowcanooclub.org.uk](http://www.marlowcanooclub.org.uk) and see what is happening in canoes and kayaks across the pond.

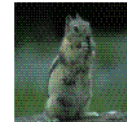
Please Note: The newsletter editor has a new address! Please send your articles to [cdboerner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cdboerner@sbcglobal.net)  
New deadline date for articles: 1st of the month



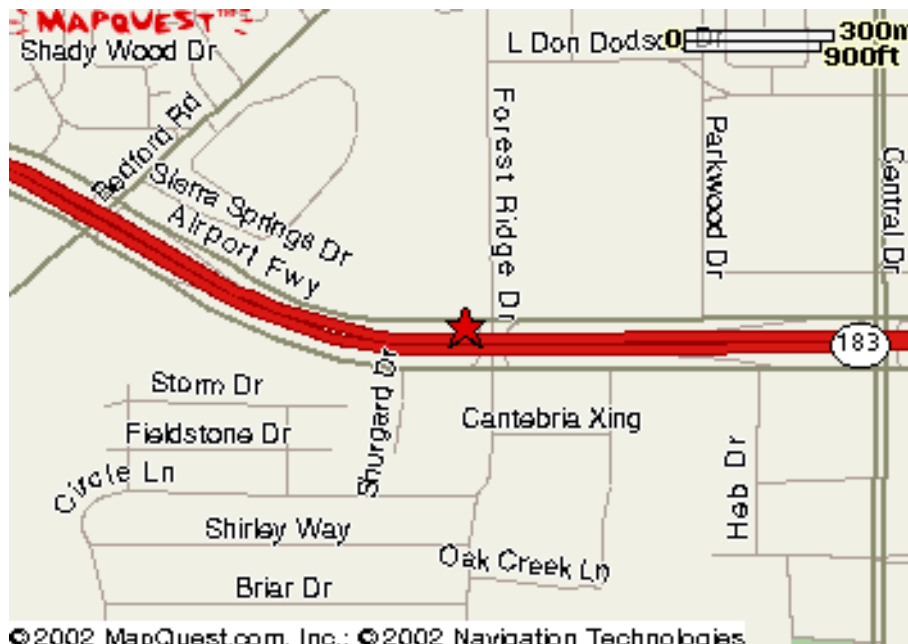
**The North Texas River Runners**  
P.O. Box 1284  
Bedford, TX 76095-1284



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: [cdboerner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cdboerner@sbcglobal.net)**



Club meetings  
are held on the  
3rd Tuesday of  
the month at  
Spring Creek  
Barbeque from  
7:00—9:00 PM  
Next Meeting:  
July 18th,  
Tuesday

**Spring Creek Barbecue**  
1509 Airport Freeway  
North-West Corner of Forest & 183  
817-545-0184