

March 2004

Visit us on the web at: www.river-runners.org

North Texas River Runners



Commodore's Column

By Diana McCown

Surf's Up!

For those of you who haven't had a chance, you should really make an effort to get out to the new dams being created on the Trinity River! The surfing wave is great! If it's raining, there's a good chance you could find the wave up for a few good hours. A few of us went out there several weeks ago to "show out" for some of the developers at the request of Streams and Valleys. Charles, Curtis, and I all acted as a canoeing "taxi service" for a group from Canada! Kathy and Eric were showing off in their tandem boat, and several kayakers made some moves on the wave.

Last weekend, a group of us went up and ran the Cossatot. Ken was on his way out East on one of Charles' clinics, and they decided to run the Cossatot on the way up. This was Ken's first time on whitewater in his new solo boat. After the first few rapids, Ken came into an eddy and informed me that hitting rocks in his own canoe was a different experience than hitting rocks in one of the TCC canoes: it hurt more! Bob, Curtis, Janet, Wes, and Charles were also there. It was Wes' first time to run the Cossatot. It was great getting to run the Esses and Zigzag again.

Janet, Jean Marc, Steve, Curtis and I also paddled down the Trinity River from Hebron to Sandy Lake last month. Lots of red tailed hawks were out showing off above all the trash in the river. We managed to collect 14 balls of various sorts (soccer balls, kick balls, tennis balls, golf balls, even a plastic bowling ball). The trip took about 3 hours and made for a nice afternoon.

Lots of rain means lots of water! Hope to see you at the next meeting!

See you on the river,
Diana

Monthly Program

Elizabeth Acosta from the Elm Fork Nature Preserve will speak on the Preserve and the new canoe launch point. Adelaide Leavens from Streams and Valleys will talk about the whitewater course and activities taking place in Fort Worth. Bill Anton will give a five minute review on a new paddling prod-

Buffalo River Trip

Buffalo National River April 8 - 11 2004.

Canoe trip

open to all NTRR members comfortable paddling class I and II water while carrying sufficient personal and group food and gear for a three-day float. Trip Leaders Ted Drake & John Simmons went on this trip for about 15 years with the TCC South Campus canoe class and know all the spots to stop and enjoy trails to high bluffs for spectacular views, the tallest waterfall in the Ozarks, beautiful hidden valleys, abandoned settlers cabins, etc. Please contact Ted or

> John at the March meeting or by email (tdrake@twu.edu

> ; moordr@comcast.net) no later than April 4.

Christmas Time, West of the Pecos

By Curtis Boerner

The calm warmth of the morning sun lit up the canyon walls. Reflections of brown, red and white greeted the chill of a frozen morning. At the end of the shallow pool, silted water rippled through the shoals. The only sounds, paddles and canoes sliding though time along with the laughter of fellowship. This must be close to what is meant by the statement "peace on earth, good will toward men".

In the chill of late December, five adventurous renegades traded in the headache of pre-Christmas activities for a much more relaxing location. Although not always as warm as the shopping mall, Santa Alena Canyon and the Rio Grand River sparkled more brilliantly than a holiday ornament. On a self-generated exploratory mission for future Boy Scout activities, I Curtis along with my Scouting buddies John, Greg, Troy and Alan trekked west to Big Bend National Park. A short ten-hour ride of fanny fatigue proportions.

Although the river flow did not match the name of Grande, we launched from the old town of Lahitas in three loaded canoes. A three-day/two night international trip of around 24 miles would now satisfy our adventurous spirit. Walking my craft across one of many shallow shoals between pools, it did not take me long to realize the term Grande stood for the views and not the amount of water in the river. The first half of the trip is actually not in the canyon but through the desert. Majestic buttes, rocky cliffs, Salt Cedar, Willow, and Cane line the wet ribbon entry to the canyon. Although it is currently illegal for a U.S. citizen to cross into Mexico and back to the States without going through a border patrol station (like you can actually paddle this river and actually always stay on the American side), this must not be true for Mexican horses and burros or the caballeros that chase them. Eating breakfast the first morning we noticed a horse staring at us and the funny looking area we called camp. After a short glimpse he dashed off as Mexican cowboys galloped through our camp area, lariats in hand, in swift pursuit. The wayward equine made the first nights pick of a campsite a little tricky in order to find an area with little animal waste remnants. Ah, life on the boarder.

The short days of the winter solstice lead to a diminished paddling schedule. With the amount of darkness being much greater than the amount of light, our day of paddling usually ended between 3:00 and 4:00 in order to be finished creating camp and eating our freeze dried dinner before the sun went down at 5:00-5:30. But what to do in the dark of night until bedtime? Not to worry! John had just the ticket. With an oil drain pan for a fire pan and a stash of Duraflame Logs we had insta-fire (now some of you may be wondering why the "fake" logs but we did not know if we would be able to find or be allowed to burn wood in the canyon). But not to be outdone, John also provided stimulating entertainment in the form of Jiffy Pop popcorn. Yes, cooking Jiffy Pop over a Duraflame log is as laughable as any reality show on the TV. So... in the soft dancing "blue" petroleum flames of the fire with the sizzle and crackle of Jiffy Pop in the background we shared tales of old and the new.

Entering Santa Alena Canyon resembles walking through a door (I found it funny at Christmas time to be paddling through something with the term "Santa" attached). You are either in the canyon or not. Immediately, sheer 800 - 1,000 foot cliffs are on either side of the narrow band of agua. Routes in the river become picky to avoid craft stopping sandbars and shallow shoals. Rock Slide rapid, 1-2 miles inside the canyon, provided a puzzling labyrinth for the two tandem canoes as each tried to navigate the narrow slots at the low water level. House size boulders making up the rapid provided a new view of the canyon as each one was negotiated.

Further into the canyon, sounds become amplified as they echo back and forth off the cliff faces. At one point I slapped my paddle flat on the water creating a blasting of sound that made even my ears ring not to mention scaring my friends on the river. Alan and Troy were at this point seeking cover thinking that it was possibly gunfire from above.

Mild warm days and semi cold nights made the trips atmosphere comfortable. Relaxing views of the canyon and its washes along with the gentle sway of water melted frustrations of town. The solitary feeling of being the only paddlers on the river this time of year made the river a special setting. And as with any holiday, plenty to eat and the company of good friends will make any Christmas memorable, especially when it is on the river!!!



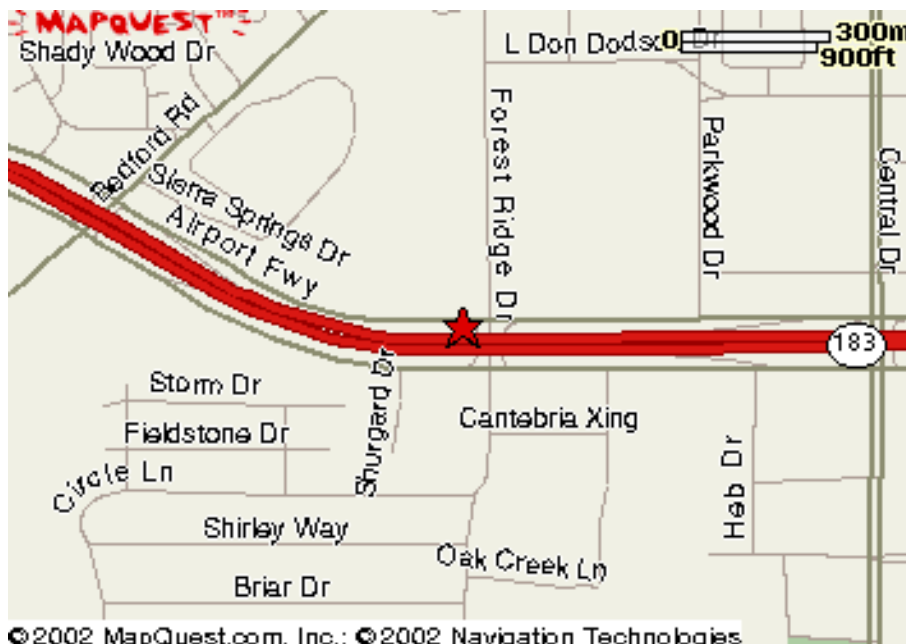
The North Texas River Runners
P.O. Box 1284
Bedford, TX 76095-1284



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: Tyler Bennett @ GMChighrider01@aol.com**



Club meetings
are held on the
last Tuesday of
the month at
Spring Creek
Barbeque from
7:00—9:00 PM

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