

September 2005

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North Texas River Runners



Commodore's Column
By Curtis Boerner (or his wife...)

Ahoy from the helm,

Since the newsletter editor is running last minute this month (make that every month— I am a newlywed), my husband did not have time to write this column. So I'm taking over— just this once! We had our elections at the August meeting! Here are the election results:

Commodore: Curtis Boerner **Vice commodore:** Chris Gross **Treasurer:** Cathy Cade

Activities: Laurie Patterson **Webmaster:** Ted Drake **Safety:** Jean Muncrief

We are still looking for an Environmental officer! A special thanks to Beth Barber for all the great work she did as secretary and to Laurie Patterson, the only brand-new officer this term. Finally, I want to thank the rest of the crew who either took the same office for another term or played musical chairs and took a different office for another term! They've all done a great job!

Remember, this is your club and we need your help to make it successful. Help out by writing a newsletter article, giving a program, or, most importantly, showing up to the meetings!

See you at the meeting,
Diana

September Program Texas Paddling Destinations

Itching to head out for another paddling adventure? Gas prices too high to head out of state? Charles Allen of the Trinity River Expeditions will be giving a presentation about some of his favorite Texas paddling destinations! Come prepared to share some of your favorite locations with the group also!

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blender, yawing as the river would have it, floating along sideways and backwards.

It was a great day for the wildlife watch. We got a good look at a group of big horn sheep comprised of 7 ewes and 5 lambs, and we were treated to the spectacle of a raven swooping in to alight on its nest on the canyon wall and feed the 4 pre-pubescent baby ravens contained therein.

At Ross Rapid, "Red Leader," our canoe probe (Ted), eyeballed the situation and led us through without stopping to scout. Much to our surprise and relief, the rapid was simpler at this level than it had been 2 years ago at 1000 CFS. To quote the classic Grand Canyon line, "Big waves, go right down the middle, keep on paddling!"

We wanted to stop at John's Canyon to show those members of the group who were not with us 2 years ago what an idyllic campsite it was. When we reached it however, it was already occupied, so we ran the lively outflow rapid and aimed to eddy out at the campsite immediately below John's Canyon. Approaching the eddy we thought we were home free, but Ted, Laurie, and Jean and I all got tapped by a sneaky little pourover rock. From upstream it looked like any other of the innumerable white capped waves – it wasn't until you were right on top of it that the dark and menacing tooth became visible through the heavily silted water. Fortunately, a quick curse and a ready brace enabled us all to remain upright. Will these lessons in humility ever end?

Government Rapid was unrecognizable, bearing no resemblance whatsoever to the obstacle we encountered two years ago. It was Long, Loud, and Large! We scouted it intently, conferring on routes and contemplating consequences. Although there were no overtly obvious bone breaking threats, there was plenty of canoe flipping potential all right. Rocks on river left eliminated any over all sneak, leaving no option but to enter the rapid by jumping right down its throat. The left edge of the entrance was well defended by two wicked waves – tubular tormentors that would have been right at home on Hawaii's North Shore. Right of center the flow raged with undeniable determination towards a large and abrasive rock at the rapid's lower end.

The cool move (for canoeists) was clear - after entering the rapid and clearing the rocks on the upper left, drive left and introduce oneself to the long pastoral eddy on the left bank. Of course, the potential impediments to that plan were also all too clear. Once caught up in the grip of that remorseless current and under the influence of all those angry waves, the best laid plans of mice and men might easily "gang apley!"

Our noble rafters graciously agreed to lead, so as to be in position to catch any hapless canoeists who might meet with misfortune. Weldon went first, floating imperturbably down the middle and back ferrying away from that beckoning rock at the bottom. (Sometimes you have to envy the ponderous stability of those rafts – "Don't worry, be happy!") George and Linda were next, with George demonstrating a more "lefterly" entrance through the big tubular waves at the top.

Ted piloted the "pathfinder" canoe, with a center entrance, a dry intelligent ride along the left edge of the main train, and a dramatic finish through the big curlers on the bottom left. Allen took a cue from George and targeted the top left tubulars. His light bow lifted nicely over the waves and he slung into the very top of the eddy on river left with immaculate grace. Vada virtually repeated Allen's run and then seemed surprised to find herself so soon safe and dry! Laurie, disdaining the conservative course, took the raft route and the wild ride right down the middle of the long chaotic train.

As Jean and I were buckling on our helmets and preparing to push off, 2 women in a loaded tandem ducky paddled up alongside us and said, "Can you tell us where we are?" (I was scared for me and Jean, but suddenly, I was even more scared for those 2 gals!)

Jean and I peeled out, hoping to emulate Allen and Vada with a "lefterly" entrance and a quick eddy turn. (Jean later said that as we approached that top towering tubular wave, she felt like a bug and it looked like a windshield! – it looked more like a tombstone to me!) Unlike the ethereal dance of the light weight solo boats, our loaded tandem bow failed to rise at all. We drove our aluminum and Kevlar clad nose right into the heart of that gulping monster, took on about 500 pounds of water, and quickly discovered that our plan had gone somewhat "aglely!"

Even with Jean's powerful adrenalin fueled forward stroke we were unable to propel our waterlogged bus out of the wave train and into the eddy until we bashed through the big curlers at the bottom left and simply ran out of rapid. It was a thrill ride all right, involving a bunch of bracing and a multitude of involuntary exclamations!

The morning's tension was countered by exhilaration as we gathered together to congratulate ourselves for successfully surviving Government. This gang of TCJC Canoe College graduates had done their homework well! A large group of friendly rafters who had observed our passage gave us a big cheer and smiling "Well Done!"

On downstream in another insane "riffle" of 2 & 3 foot chaotic waves, Jean and I sailed along unconcernedly, commenting that we'd seen bigger waves than this in the bathtub! Just a little further on, as Jean and I were bowling along with the current, a big boil about 16 feet in diameter welled up underneath us, elevated us about 3", and brought us to a complete stop. We had to dig in and pull to paddle off the darn thing! These high volume flows have some strange side effects!

We had an assigned campsite that night, Slickhorn B, which proved to be a pretty site. After unloading the boats ("Let's form a line here!") and setting up camp, Ted, Allen, and I hiked up Slickhorn Canyon for a short and chilly swim in one of the pools.

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During dinner (another culinary triumph of thick pork chops with apple sauce, broccoli and rice casserole, cheese biscuits, and red velvet cake with butter icing... looking back on it now, and considering what I made for my own dinner tonight, I come close to weeping!) 6 ewes and 4 lambs paraded up canyon on the wall across the river from us. As Ted later observed, "It was such a remarkable event that Ronnie put down his pork chop to look!"

Tuesday morning, day 8, we were under no particular pressure as we had only 10 miles to go to our next and final campsite at Oljeto Wash (also assigned to us by the BLM.). Laurie and Jean once again produced an imaginative and excellent meal of egg casserole, hash browns, and link sausages with cinnamon swirl and honey butter biscuits. (Sigh...) While the gals walked up Slickhorn Canyon to cavort in the pools, the rest of us were content to park in the shade and digest that delightful breakfast.

Shortly after noon we succeeded in getting organized and underway, splashing and bouncing cheerfully through Slickhorn Rapid. This point marked the beginning of our hellish 17 1/2 mile endurance paddle through slack current and shallow sand bars 2 years ago, but today the current remained swift and we floated along without effort or care.

We boat scouted the Grand Gulch and Trimble camp sites with an eye toward future San Juan trips, but neither appeared too desirable.

Arriving at Oljeto, we secured the rafts to a questionable little tamarisk tree (the only available anchor point) and drug the canoes up on the sand bar. Oljeto provided the perfect venue for a hike, a gently rising hard packed sand highway with few obstacles and fascinating topography. There was ample evidence that the wash had played host to some overwhelmingly forceful flood waters.

After Laurie and Jean once again made the outstanding seem routine by making Mexican Lasagna for dinner, the rest of us decided to nominate them for Co-River Runners of the Year and Rulers of the Riparian Repast!

There was a nightmarish eddy at the downstream end of our campsite. The lower part of it was a huge pulsing boil that would rise up about 2 feet then suddenly subside, draining it's overload into the swiftly circling upper part through a series of swirling, sucking whirlpools. The bank along its shore side edge continually eroded, caving in to the furious vortex like a calving glacier of sand. None of us were willing to approach that crumbling verge!

Linda, who had graciously assumed the critical and sensitive responsibility of selecting our toilet sites, cleverly placed our porta potty behind a tamarisk grove with a good view of that dreadful eddy. No case of constipation could long survive looking at that!

That evening we noted lightning in the distance, coming nearer as darkness fell. Once we went to bed it was upon us, the interval between lightning flash and thunder crash indicating it to be less than 2 miles away, and sounding like it was right up Oljeto Wash. Rain began to patter upon our tents. Let me tell you, there's nothing like camping at the discharge end of a flash flood funnel during a thunderstorm to keep a fellow awake and anxious! Allen and Jean even got up and moved their tent to higher (6 inches!) ground. Thankfully, it soon faded away and by midnight we had starry skies and untroubled minds.

On Wednesday, our 9th and final day, we loaded the boats and lashed down the gear for the last time. Although we did encounter some shallow sand bars, the current continued swift and our way remained easy through the 7 miles to the take out. Canyon walls gave way to open spaces, signaling the finish of another fine San Juan adventure.

Innumerable elements and events combined to make this trip memorable: the high water level and the trials which that posed, the harsh grandeur of the canyons, and our activities in and around camp, to name but a few. What made it outstanding were the abilities, efforts, and personalities of the participants.

Allen, Jean, and Laurie had never before undertaken to plan, organize, and produce an outing of this magnitude. They met that daunting challenge with brilliant imagination, diligent exertion, and exceptional success. They were aided in their task by George and Linda's admirable habit of keeping and continually updating detailed expedition equipment and grocery lists. The entire unabridged dictionary lacks sufficient superlatives to adequately praise Jean and Laurie's menu or to quantify the work that they put into it.

I think of Vada's perpetually pleasant helpfulness, Linda's introduction of the superior 4 bucket dishwashing system, Weldon's devotion to his "antique" photographic apparatus and his patience in searching for the perfect light, Laurie's wide ranging competence and sparkling PR skills, George and Weldon's willingness to haul our tons of gear, Ted's decisive scouting and route finding abilities, Allen's keen and perceptive eye, Jean's encyclopedic knowledge of botany, and I'm certain that a fellow couldn't ask for a finer or more able set of shipmates.

Those eighty five miles on the swiftly flowing and shockingly cold San Juan have conclusively demonstrated one philosophical fact - "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats!"

(Now if I just had a pretty little plywood dory and a permit for the San Juan in 2006, I would never ask for anything else, ever again...!)

Annual Women's Trip

Mark your calendars! We will be having our now not so Annual Women's Trip Saturday, Nov. 12 through Sunday Nov. 13th.

Join us for a weekend of paddling without the boys. This will be a white-water trip, so you must have experience and be comfortable on class II-III water. The location will be determined by rainfall and will be announced closer to the trip date. In the past, we have run the San Marcos or the Guadalupe.

Space will be limited, so sign up now! Contact Diana Boerner at 817-656-3475 (home) or 972-824-7403 (cell) for more information or to put your name on the list.

No men allowed, not even if they promise to wear a skirt (Ronnie)!

Fabulous Friday Night Flips

Just like last year, indoor heated pool time to work on your roll and paddling strokes, and private lessons from US Team Members and other skilled instructors. New for this year, bring your paddle skirt and PFD and demo the entire line of Jackson Kayaks. This event is appropriate for all skill levels, beginners to experts.

The Colony Aquatic Park Pool 5580 North Colony Blvd.

Friday nights, beginning October 21, 2005
through April 14, 2006
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Costs- \$5.00 pool rental, free Jackson Kayak use, \$5.00 PFD-skirt- paddle rental

Please visit our website for more information
www.kayakinstruct.com

DDRC Annual Halloween Campout At Caddo Lake 2005

Dallas Downriver Club has graciously extended an invitation to NTRR members to join them for their annual Halloween campout at Caddo Lake. Here is an excerpt from their website:

Dallas DownRiver Club formally invites you and your family or friends to help us haunt Goat Island on Friday Oct. 28th thru the 30th. Camp will be at the usual location on the Southwest corner of Goat Island near Pine Needle Lodge. Put-in and take-out will be at the Pine Needle Lodge alternate area which is located just past the entrance to Pine Needle Lodge.

Saturday the 29th will include several events and contests:

Pumpkin carving contest

Pinata for the kids

Best decorated tent site contest

Dutch oven cook-off and pot luck dinner

Costume contest, apple bobbing, etc.

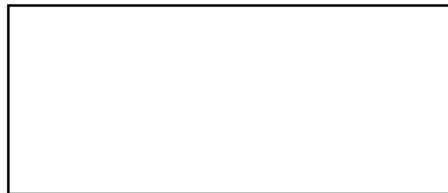
Camping is primitive, so bring water and appropriate camping gear. For more information, visit the DDRC website at www.down-river.com or call:

Charles Edwards: 972-867-6579 or Jack Deatherage: 972-222-1407

Ed. Note: Curtis and I went last year and had a blast! We plan to return again this year.



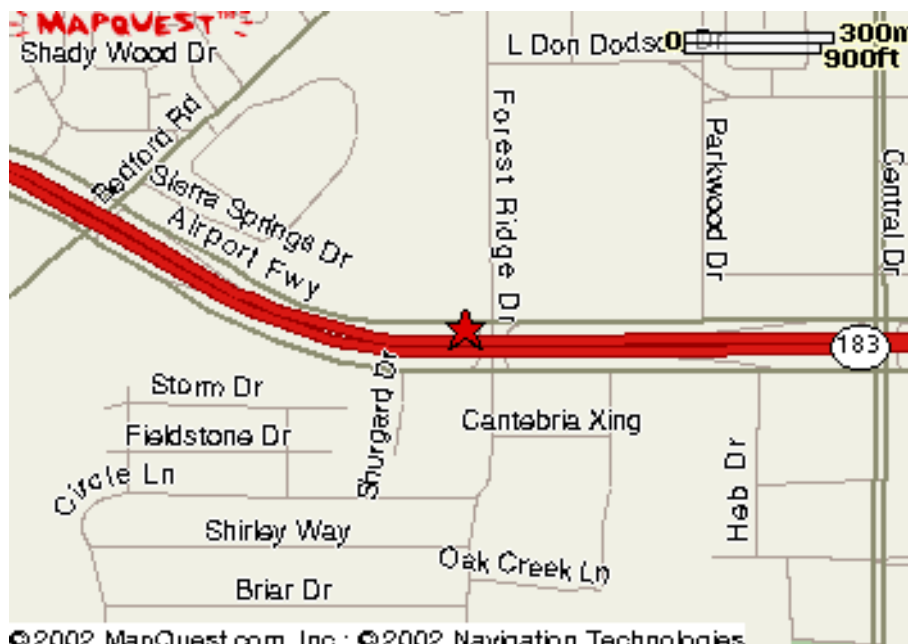
The North Texas River Runners
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Bedford, TX 76095-1284



Home of the Prairie Dog Surfing Society
"If we're not in the hole, we're sitting right beside it."



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contact: gigixL13@msn.com**



Club meetings
are held on the
last Tuesday of
the month at
Spring Creek
Barbecue from
7:00—9:00 PM
Next Meeting:
September 27th

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