

RAZORBACK UNIT

ARKANSAS RAZORBACK UNIT 005 / WBCCI

MAY - JUNE 2015

Spring rally showcases Arkansas River valley

BY MARK MAGIE

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Spring arrived in a big way on Petit Jean Mountain near Morrilton this year when the Arkansas Razorback Unit members set up camp for their annual Spring Rally April 16-19. "I'd like to say how pleased I am about the large number of campers - 14 rigs and 31 people; and especially the large number of new members who attended," said Paul Moore, rally organizer.

"The weather forecasters kept trying to spoil the weekend, but we carried on with some changes of plans, and the weather was surprisingly cooperative after all. It also helped that Petit Jean State Park is so beautiful," he said.

"A really big feature of this rally was the breakfast and supper provided by Hugh and Euna Ridenour, who travelled from their home in Florida. Euna is Ellen Richardson's sister. Hopefully they'll come camping with us again," Moore said. Euna Ridenour is the Region 6 recording secretary. "Several people helped out by bringing gazebos and Dutch ovens, and volunteering to be Hugh's kitchen helpers," Moore noted.

Four families in Airstreams who aren't yet members were camping at Petit Jean the same weekend. "We invited them to join us at happy hours and for the Ridenours' Cajun supper. One family said they will join WBCCI. Hopefully the others will too," Moore added.

Two area excursions were planned for the rally. "I was pleasantly surprised at how interesting the museum in Morrilton's restored train station was. Of course, the tour and tasting at the local winery, Movie House Winery, went well. 14 of our members went and had an enjoyable time, and several bought some of the locally-made wines," Moore said.

Those attending included Neil Anderson and Jane Fudge, Jason and Dana Landrum and children Jane, Henry and Charlie, Mark Magie and Annette Murray, Bill and Donna McNair, Hugh and Euna Ridenour,



Photo by Carole Barton

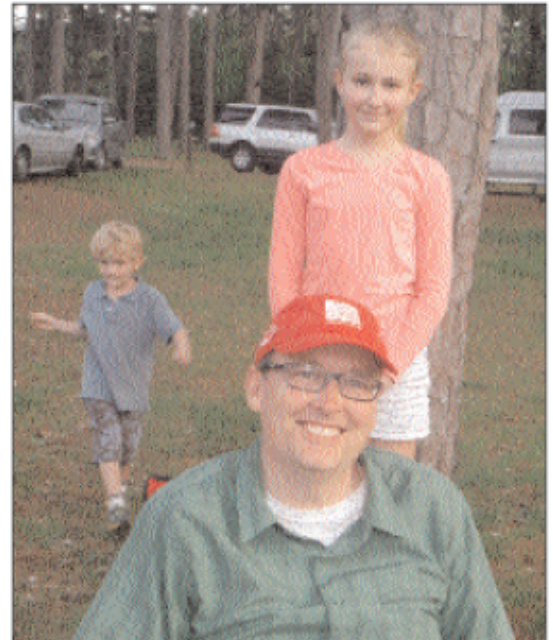
ROCKEFELLER MEMORIAL - Unit members take a break in Morrilton at a statue in memory of Winthrop Paul Rockefeller who was a rancher, philanthropist, statesman, politician and Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas. The Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, named after Win Paul's father who was Arkansas Governor in the 1960s, includes 188 acres on Petit Jean Mountain where the governor lived for 20 years. Petit Jean State Park is 2,658 acres of woods, streams, waterfalls, trails and spectacular views.

Ellen Richardson, Jim and Jane Pankey, Bill and Carole Barton, Dave and Laura Wessinger, Bob and Melissa Anthony, Patti Kymer and B.J. Davis, Paul Moore, Larry and Terry Madden, and Scott and Danielle Moody and sons Jacks and James.



WEIGHT OF THE WORLD - Unit rally organizer Paul Moore clowns around on one of the many Petit Jean trails.

At Rally: Airstreaming means friends and smiles



Spring Rally - fantastic food, fun and fellowship



It's time to review the S-word important stuff

Snakes have captured our imagination—and fear—for as long as we've shared the planet together. They are the stuff of legend. While less than one-third of all snake species are venomous (unless you live in Australia, where that number is 65%), it is good to know what to watch out for. Be careful around all snakes - non-venomous snake bites aren't painful, they feel like a pinprick.

1. *Know the snakes.* There are four different types of venomous snakes in the United States: cottonmouths, rattlesnakes, copperheads and coral snakes. **There are six venomous snakes that call Arkansas their home: the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, the Timber Rattlesnake, the Western Pigmy Rattlesnake, the Texas Coral Snake, the copperhead, and the cottonmouth.**

2. *Cottonmouths.* The cottonmouths have elliptical pupils and range in color from black to green. They have a white stripe along the side of their heads. They are often found in or around water, but have also adapted to live well on land. Young snakes have a bright yellow tail. They are often loners, so if you see multiple snakes coexisting peacefully, it is probably not a cottonmouth.

3. *Rattlesnakes.* Look for the rattle on the tail. Some harmless snakes imitate the rattle by brushing their tails through leaves, but only rattle snakes have the button-like rattle at the end of the tail. If you can't see the rattle, they also have a heavy triangular head and elliptical eyes like a cat's

4. *Copperheads.* These beauties have a similar body shape to cottonmouths but are much brighter, ranging from coppery brown to bright orange, silver-pink and peach. The young have yellow tails as well.

5. *Coral snakes.* Another beautiful but deadly snake is the Coral snake—so beautiful that other snakes—not-venomous ones such as the King snake—look just like them. They have distinctive coloring,

though, with a black, yellow and red bands, a yellow head, and a black band over their nose.

One rhyme to help distinguish coral snakes from king snakes is 'Red touch yellow, kill a fellow. Red touch black, friend to Jack.' Another variation is 'Red on black, venom lack; red on yellow, deadly fellow'. However, most of the time coral snakes will not bite - they are very shy. There are no known deaths from the Arizona coral snake and only a few from the Eastern Coral snake.

6. *Look at the color patterns.* Venomous snakes in the U.S. tend to have varying colors. Most snakes that are one solid color are completely harmless. However, some cottonmouths are also venomous so this is not a foolproof way to tell them apart. Also, beware of venomous escaped pets.

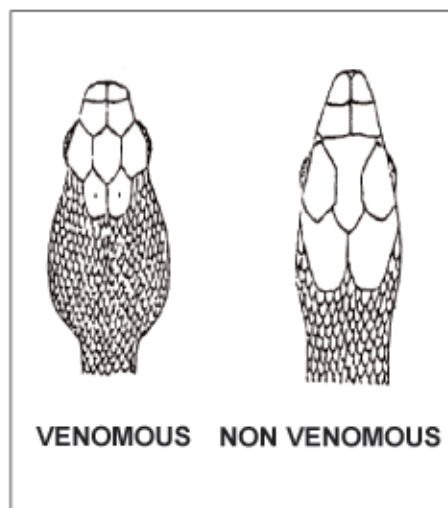
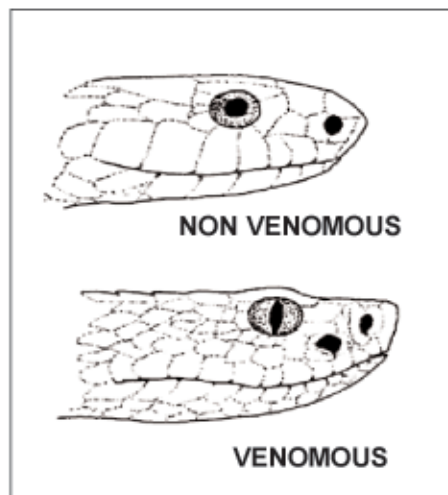
7. *Check out their head shape.* Non-venomous snakes have a spoon-shaped rounded head and venomous snakes will have a more triangular head. This is because of the venom glands (this is less noticeable on the coral snake).

8. *Look for a rattle.* If the snake has a rattle on its tail it is a rattlesnake, and therefore venomous. However, some non-venomous snakes do mimic the rattler by rattling their tails, but lack the rattle "buttons" that sound like little salt shakers.

9. *Look for the heat sensor.* Some venomous snakes in the U.S. will have a small depression between the eye and the nostril. This is called a pit (hence "pit viper"), which is used by the snake to sense heat in their prey. Coral snakes are not pit vipers, and lack this feature.

10. *Watch out for mimics.* Some non-venomous snakes mimic the patterns and behaviors of venomous snakes. Eastern milk snakes can look like copperheads, rat snakes can look like rattlers, and harmless king snakes can look like coral snakes.

Always treat any snake as a venomous snake if you are uncertain whether it is venomous or non-venomous. And though



you should remain cautious, do not kill any snake—it could be illegal to do so, and killing non-venomous snakes allows venomous snake and vermin populations to grow.

11. *Watch how the snake swims.* To tell the difference between a venomous water moccasin/cottonmouth and a harmless water snake: Check to see if it is swimming with only its head above water, or whether most of its body is floating, too.

If just the head is showing, it is most likely a harmless water snake, but if the body is floating too, it could be a water moccasin (almost all venomous snakes swim with their lungs inflated, leaving the majority of their bodies afloat).

A water moccasin will have elliptical pupils and the harmless water snake will have round pupils. Either way, leave it alone and allow it to leave the area.

Camper tires sometimes test Big Bang theory

BY LARRY MADDEN
RAZORBACK UNIT PRESIDENT

A tire failure on an Airstream or any towed camper makes for a very nervous situation, with a potential for catastrophic results.

My good friend Perry invited me on the maiden voyage of his new, slightly used, 2007 Fifth Wheel. This was a big upgrade in campers for him and his excitement and pride were evident.



After a quick tour, we were hooking up and ready for the road. Prior to leaving I asked Perry if the tires were the original equipment. He replied, "yes, but they are in good shape and I've had all the valve stems replaced."

By the time we got on I-40, night had fallen and it was raining, but our conversation remained focused on our fishing trip. Forty-five minutes into our journey, Perry noticed a slight vibration in the steering wheel, soon followed by a very loud bang. The steering wheel was now vibrating excessively and the camper started to sway. Perry did an outstanding job regaining control of both his truck and camper, no panic, just decisive action.

While standing on the side of a very busy highway on a dark and rainy Friday night we discovered two blown and shredded tires on the right side of the camper. It was not clear if the tires failed due to age or damage from road debris. We had no spare tire and were going to be working in a very dangerous environment.

The solution after removing the two bad tires was to take a good tire from the left side and install it on the right side. Then with only two good tires we slowly made our way off the Interstate highway to the relative safety of an off ramp, where after disconnecting the camper, we made a trip to Walmart to buy replacement tires.

The lessons we learned were invaluable. After I returned home, I got busy looking for ways to minimize the chances of repeating this experience while towing our Airstream. It is suggested by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), camper tires more than five years old should be discarded and replaced, regardless of mileage and external appearance. Heat, ultra-violet rays and other environmental exposures affect the life of tires.

I had recently replaced the tires on The Silver Bullet due to tread wear, so with a fresh set of rubber we were in good shape. My next quest was to find a way to manage the tires properly for our safety and maximum service life. I narrowed my research to two topics: a tire pressure monitoring system and servicing the tires with nitrogen.

Nitrogen is an inert, non-combustible and non-flammable gas. It has been used in aviation for many years servicing tires, struts and emergency systems. For aircraft tires, nitrogen's primary purpose is the prevention of tire fires, corrosion and the effects the vast range of temperatures have on tire pressure.

Does it make sense to service our Airstream tires with nitrogen? I have discovered this question has generated considerable conversation. To clear the fog of this topic, I have come to the conclusion that for "my" particular needs, nitrogen-filled tires, while providing some benefit, is not cost-effective or convenient.

There are many tire pressure monitoring systems on the market regularly used by professional truck drivers and the military for early warning of a potential problem with tires and the excessive buildup of heat. All American passenger cars produced after September 2007 have tire pressure monitoring systems as standard equipment.

We have owned our Airstream for seven years and from time to time I have given thought to purchasing a tire pressure monitoring system. However, as a natural procrastinator I would put it off, choosing instead to use our resources in other areas. Soon after the shared experience with my friend having a double tire failure at 65 mph on a dark and rainy night, I realized the error of my ways.

As we were preparing for our winter escape this year, I got busy researching tire monitoring systems. I settled on a brand named Tire-SafeGuard. The reviews were mostly positive in nature and by comparison to many other brands, this system was reasonably priced.

The system includes six pressure transmitters that screw on to the tire stems. They are also secured with an Allen Wrench screw which



Tire stem transmitter



Monitor and mount

deters theft. The batteries are easy to change and are readily available. The monitor is conveniently small and light weight, measuring 3.5 x 2.5 inches. After an overnight charge of the monitor and some time to review the features, I programed the system for four tires and installed it as directed.

I have been extremely pleased with the operation and programing features of this system. While on the road it works continually, updating tire pressure and temperature every few seconds. The programing also allows for audible warnings at desired levels of pressure and temperatures. The system worked flawlessly during our journey to Florida in January.

On our trip to Petit Jean State Park for our unit's Spring Rally, Terry and I were distracted from enjoying the beautiful day, light traffic and pleasant conversation. A loud continual chirping sound drew our attention to our Tire-SafeGuard system. Its display showed our left front Airstream tire losing air very rapidly. I slowed down and exited I-40 at the next exit. After a quick inspection of The Silver Bullet and a tire change, we were "back on the road again!" Saturday afternoon the technicians at Walmart found a four inch slice on the side wall of the tire making a repair impossible. It's purely speculation, but we both think this little jewel just may have saved us from damage to the wheel well area and the expense and hassle getting it repaired. The sound of rushing air makes for an exciting ride in a hot air balloon, but not so much for an Airstream!



APRIL LUNCHEON -- At Whole Hog Cafe in Little Rock on April 2, from left, seated, Jim and Jane Pankey, Dana and Jason Landrum, Terry and Larry Madden. Standing, Dave Wessinger, Dorr and Barbara Moore, Annette Murray and Mark Magie, and Paul Moore. **The next luncheon is June 4 at noon at Tacos 4 Life at 2235 Dave Ward Drive in Conway. RSVP to Larry Madden.**

Our Spring Rally was not only a huge success with 14 rigs attending, it was a lot of fun! The meals that were prepared by our visiting friends from the New Orleans Unit, Hugh and Euna Ridenour, were fantastic! Paul Moore did an outstanding job managing the rally and his hard work was appreciated by all.

A personal thanks to all who so very generously donated to Cents for Kids. Carole Burton notified me the total amount collected was \$220. I will follow up with more information on this very worthy cause after we return from the International Rally in July.

As our membership continues to grow we are looking forward to fresh ideas and input to ensure all Razorback members have an opportunity to enjoy Airstreaming in Arkansas!

"Live long and prosper"

Larry Madden

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
LARRY MADDEN
RAZORBACK UNIT

NEWSMAKERS

MAY BIRTHDAYS

5/1 - Jennifer Gulley
5/17 - Larry Madden
5/18 - Minnie Bridges
5/21 - Mark Magie
5/24 - Katie Gulley

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

5/6 - J.W. and Marie King
5/15 - Jim and Jane Pankey
5/16 - Charles and Helen Bourgeois
5/27 - Jason and Dana Landrum

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

6/2 - Bill Allen
6/5 - Jane Landrum
6/7 - Terry Madden
6/12 - Donna McNair
6/14 - Shane Artz
6/15 - Bill Barton
6/21 - Jenne Artz

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

6/11 - Dave and Laura Wessinger
6/26 - Charles and Emogene Duran

SAVE THE DATES -

For the latest information on upcoming events, check the Razorback Unit website at www.arkansasrazorback.wbcci.net



- ++ JUNE 4, 2015 - Unit luncheon at noon, Tacos 4 Life, 2235 Dave Ward Drive, Conway
- (Please RSVP to Larry Madden for a head count)
- ++ JUNE 26 - JULY 4, 2015 - WBCCI International rally, Farmington, NM
- ++ AUGUST 6, 2015 - Unit luncheon (dates, location to be determined)
- ++ SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2015 - Razorback Unit Fall Election rally, Maumelle Park, Little Rock
- Make reservations in sites B11 - B29 at www.recreation.gov (Please RSVP to Mark Magie)
- ++ OCTOBER 1, 2015 - Unit luncheon (dates, location to be determined)
- ++ OCTOBER 13-16, 2015, Region 6 rally, Picayune, MS
- ++ NOVEMBER 5-8, 2015, Razorback Unit buddy rally, Buffalo Point National Park
- Make reservations in area C at www.recreation.gov (Please RSVP to Jason Landrum)
- ++ DECEMBER 3, 2015 - Unit luncheon (dates, location to be determined)

WWW.ARKANSASRAZORBACK.WBCCI.NET