

Snakebite

The best cure is to be wary

University News Service

It's spring and time to be wary of snakes, a Texas A&M wildlife scientist warns.

"If you come upon a snake, remain calm and simply walk away," Dr. Fred Hendricks, associate professor of wildlife and fisheries sciences, says. "Most snakes are not aggressive and most man-snake encounters go unnoticed by man. In any case, an average person can outrun a snake."

Hendricks says chances are only four in 10 that a poisonous snake will release venom when it bites. The fatality rate from snake bite is extremely low, he says. Less than 1 percent of the victims who are struck die from the 2,000-plus bites annually reported nationwide.

Snakes are most active between April and mid-June because it is the mating season. In early spring they move about a great deal, but as the weather warms up much of the activity will be limited to the early morning and late evening hours, the wildlife expert says.

"Nearly all bites occur from people handling snakes, rather than being surprised by one," Hendricks says. "Most bites come as no surprise."

Hendricks says people should learn to distinguish one snake from another, because rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths (all pit vipers) and coral snakes are the only ones considered dangerous in Texas.

He says people should be cautious when picking up fallen limbs, boards, tin and other objects on the ground this summer.

"They ought to get rid of debris," he says. "If they did, it would reduce the likelihood of a snake being around."

"Don't lift anything towards you," he says. "Lift things away from you so a snake won't be staring you in the eye."

There's no standard procedure for treating snakebites, Hendricks says, although most doctors would advise remaining calm, avoiding unnecessary movement and putting a constricting band above the bite to slow down but not cut off the blood flow. Then go immediately to the hospital.

"There's so much controversy about how to treat snakebites that the best cure seems to be to learn to avoid snakes and not get bitten in the first place," he says.

Americans respect religion's influence

Associated Press

Americans have more respect for organized religion than for any of the country's other major institutions, and the impression is growing that religion is having greater impact on society.

But there has been a downward trend in the view that religion can answer most modern problems, although a majority still think it can do so.

These are among findings summarized in the latest reports of the Princeton Religious Research Center, a branch of the Gallup poll organization, which gathered the data.

Results of recent surveys also show some key differences between evangelicals and non-evangelicals on some major social issues, but also some striking concurrences. Protestant and Catholic views ran parallel on several issues.

A majority of both — 73 percent of Protestants and 72 percent of Catholics — favor prayer in public schools. Majorities — 51 percent of Protestants and 59 percent of Catholics — favor a ban on abortions except in case of rape, incest, or when the mother's life is endangered, Gallup finds.

Most Americans also are found to think it is proper for religious groups to express their views about political, social and economic matters, but not to oppose or endorse specific candidates.

Only a tiny minority, 3 percent, say their pastors have ever sided for or against particular candidates.

The findings were based on interviews with scientifically selected

cross-sections, most of them involving 1,000 or more people.

The topmost degree of confidence expressed in organized religion, compared to other institutions, continued a consistent pattern turned up over the past decade.

Similar to results of six previous surveys conducted since 1973, the new study found that two-thirds of Americans — 64 percent — have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion.

The next highest rated among U.S. institutions, as measured by the degree of confidence in it, was the U.S. military, which 58 percent of the people voiced substantial trust.

In ensuing order, with the percentages having confidence in them, were these institutions:

Banks and the U.S. Supreme Court, both 51 percent; public schools, 47 percent; newspapers, 34 percent; organized labor, 30 percent; the U.S. Congress and big business, both 29 percent, and television, 26 percent.

While a majority — 56 percent — think religion can "answer all or most of today's problems," the proportion has shown a steady decline from what it was 10 years ago — 62 percent.

The present level was even further down from the high optimism of a quarter century ago when 81 percent in 1957 felt religion offered solutions to most all difficulties.

Nevertheless, the proportion of Americans who think religion is increasing its influence on American life has risen almost steadily from a low of 14 percent in 1970 to a current 42 percent.

Ice sculptors practice perishable form of art

Associated Press

MIDLAND — Sculpture has traditionally been one of the most durable, permanent art forms, but some sculptors' soaring eagles, graceful swans and proud dragons turn into mere puddles of water within hours.

"Almost any ice carving will last five to six hours," said Robert Vervynch, executive chef of Mission Country Club.

Ice carvings are often used as chilly but grandiose centerpieces adorning banquet tables for parties. While primarily decorative, ice sculptures originally had a very utilitarian purpose.

"Ice carving was founded in the late 1800s by Auguste Escoffier for the purpose of preserving ice cream bombs, which are best presented when placed upon an ice base," according to Vervynch.

Vervynch still sometimes makes ice carvings intended as much to keep food chilled as to look pretty, such as small ice boats to keep shrimp cool.

Vervynch and his staff members carve at least 40 ice sculptures a month, he said.

One of Mission Country Club's ice carvers, Mike McDonald, recently won third place in the ice carving category at the Texas Chef Association's Culinary Salon statewide competition in Dallas.

Like most Midland ice carvers, McDonald uses an ice pick to scratch a rough outline of his sculpture on one face of a large ice block. The

standard block of ice weighs 300 pounds and is 22 inches wide, 42 inches tall and 11 inches thick.

Then he fires up a small chainsaw and starts carefully — but noisily — lobbing off chunks of ice until he has transformed the block into a rough statue.

Asked how he knows where to cut and how deeply, McDonald gave a classic sculptor's reply, "I just eliminate what doesn't belong there."

He also adds most of his detailing with delicate applications of the chainsaw to the ice. McDonald prefers using the chainsaw to handtools because it is faster and the power-saw's fast-moving blade is able to cut into ice without his having to bear down and risk shattering the carving.

"Pressure is what kills the ice," he said.

Not all ice sculptures use the same techniques.

"Everybody does it a little differently," said Bill Chambers, executive chef of the Petroleum Club of Midland. "I base out on a chainsaw. Then I do the actual sculpting with a chisel. I use a little pocket saw to finish with."

Jean Pierre Thevenaz of the Master's Club does his ice carvings entirely by hand, but not because he's an artistic ascetic. He used a chainsaw, he said, until "I burned it out."

Rather than replace the saw, he now simply uses handtools.

The chefs said the ephemeral nature of carefully-crafted ice carvings doesn't bother them.



Here's something worth a **CLOSER LOOK!**

2 Bdrm 1Ba for the price of a 1Bdrm 1Ba*
*summer only

\$ 180

SCANDIA

Two Blocks from CAMPUS

FALL PRICES from:

\$ 280 1Bdrm
\$ 370 2Bdrm

Stop by 401 Anderson for a personal tour.
Hours: 9am - 6 pm Mon - Fri
10am - 5 pm Saturday
1 - 5 pm Sunday

693-6505



When you're at odds over **RENT....**
Come to us for the answer!

\$150*

*as low as \$150 summer
\$265 fall

Sevilla

1501 Holleman
College Station, Texas
693-2108

- Spacious Flats, Lofts and Townhomes
- Swimming Pool
- Laundry Facilities
- ½ Mile To TAMU Campus
- On Shuttle Bus Route
- Large Walk-In Closets
- Professional On-Site Management
- 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance
- Private Patios And Balconies

Visit our office for a personal tour.
Hours: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday through Friday
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.