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The Battalion

Thursday, June 3, 1993

SNAKE! Research Park director advises visitors not to fear potential snake encounters

By JANET HOLDER

The Battalion

People sunbathing at Research Park may be afraid when they see a snake swimming through the water.

But John Millhollon, director of Research Park, said the snakes living there pose no threat to park visitors.

"We've had snakes at Research Park for years but have never had any reports of injury to people or animals... people should keep their pets out of the water and on a leash to ensure their safety," he said.

Gary McEwen, district supervisor of the Texas Animal Damage Control Service said, the majority of snakes in that area are water snakes.

"Water moccasins are the only water snakes that might be there that would be poisonous," he said. "There are also land snakes that might be around Research Park such as the rattlesnake or copperhead."

Jim Cathey, a graduate student in Wildlife and Fisheries, said he has seen only plain-bellied water snakes at Research Park.

lled water snakes at Research Park.

"The plain-bellied water snakes are non-poisonous snakes that eat fish primarily," he said. "The snakes often edge streams and ponds looking for food."

"These snakes also bask in the sun to regulate their body temperature," Cathey said.

Cathey said if people see a snake they are afraid of, they should try to identify it. The Audubon Field Guide to North American Reptiles will identify most snakes.

But McEwen said people should not try to capture the snakes, especially if they don't know what kind of snake it is. If a snake is trapped or grabbed it may try to attack.

"The Research Park is kept clean and the grass is cut short so the snakes should be able to see any people coming toward them and have time to escape," McEwen said.

"If a person or an animal is bitten by a snake they should be taken to a medical facility."

"You can often tell if the snake is poisonous by the bite marks," he said. "The poisonous snakes have fangs so they leave a different mark than a non-poisonous snake."

"But even if the snake isn't poisonous, it's still good to get medical attention since the bite could cause infection," McEwen said.

He said the best way people can deal with snakes is to leave them alone.

"We've had snakes at Research Park for years but have never had any reports of injury to people or animals."

-John Millhollon, director of Research Park

McEwen said people shouldn't worry about snakes disturbing them because snakes usually avoid people.

"Most snakes will go away if a person or animal approaches them," he said.

Water moccasins might be more aggressive during mating season, but McEwen said they mate in the spring so this should cause no problems to summertime park visitors.

Health Tips

By KRISTIN OGRODOWICZ

Special to The Battalion

In the summertime many people think of beaches, barbecues and boats. But, do we think of our eyes? Our eyes need protection from the sun during all of these outdoor activities. Many people do not realize the effects of the sun's rays on their eyes until later in life when problems occur.

Here are some tips when purchasing sunglasses. Look for sunglasses that block as much ultraviolet radiation (UVR) as possible and at least 75% of visible light. UVR coat is the protective coating on most sunglasses that protects eyes from damaging rays.

The glasses will usually have a percentage telling the buyer how much light is being filtered by the lens, via reflected, refracted and absorbed. Coating does have its disadvantages. It scratches easily, isn't very durable and it's expensive.

Look for sunglasses that fit

Summer is time to select eyewear that does more than just look cool

your different activities. For general purposes look for medium to dark tinted lenses for use in any outdoor activity.

For special purposes, very bright light environments such as skiing, tropical beaches and mountain climbing, use dark lenses. For cosmetic purposes such as shopping and other around-town uses, use lightly tinted lenses.

Look for sunglasses that block part of the blue light. Most glasses that block 75% or more of UVR block out blue light. Brown or amber tinted lenses block blue light the best.

Plastic lenses are better than glass, because they absorb more light. If you happen to scratch the outer lens, don't be alarmed, the coating is placed on both sides of the lenses to protect your eyes.

Also, look for sunglasses that

let you identify colors. You should be able to distinguish traffic light colors with your glasses on. Gray and green colored glasses are least distorting to people. Amber and brown produce some color distortion. Purple and blue tend to distort too much.

Look for sunglasses that don't distort shapes, lines and vision. Gradient lenses (darker at the top than at the bottom) are useful for driving, since they let you see the dashboard more clearly.

Sunglasses should also be large enough to keep the light out from above, below and the sides of the frames.

They should fit comfortably. You should wear sunglasses outdoors, on sunny days and even in the wintertime.

Your sunglasses should also fit your budget. The name brands will be more expensive

but you can get an adequate pair for under \$10 per lens with protective coating.

Make sure your sunglasses are durable. Glass lenses don't scratch as easily as plastic, but they do break; therefore, plastic lenses are best for most people. Mirrored lenses offer the most protection because they deflect the rays, but again, they scratch more easily.

You should see an eye care professional for sunglasses if you have had cataract surgery, which removes the eye's UV-absorbent lens, you're taking a drug that increases your sensitivity to UV (such as tetracycline), or your sport or occupation keeps you outdoors much of the time, particularly in locations where sunlight is reflected off sun, sand or snow.

Protecting your eyes by wearing sunglasses can make a difference down the road. If for no other reason, it's the cool thing to do because "shades" are in! Schedule regular eye check-ups and keep those eyes healthy.

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Table with 5 columns: Time (8pm, 10pm, midnite) and 4 days (Monday 5/31, Tuesday 6/1, Wednesday 6/2, Thursday 6/3) listing subjects like Chem. 101, Phys. 201.

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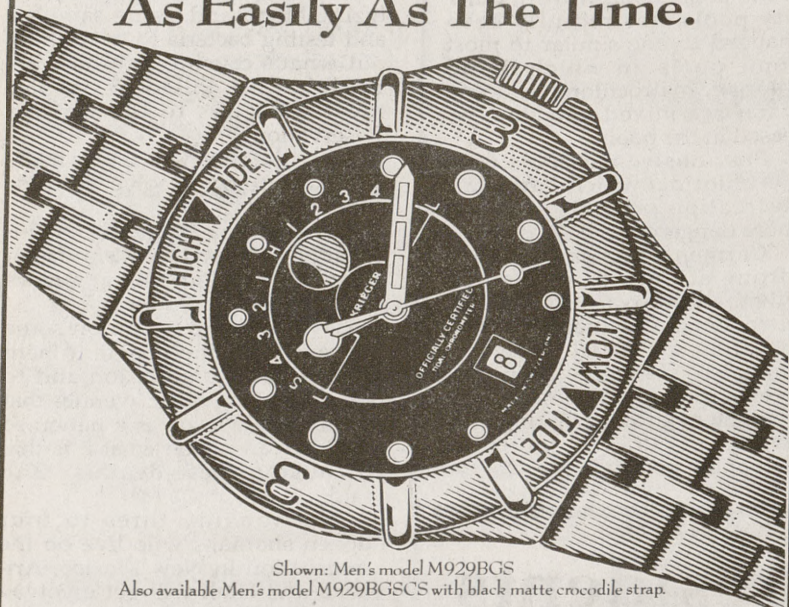
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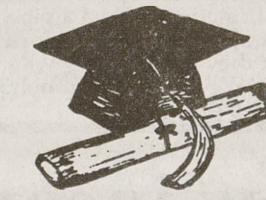
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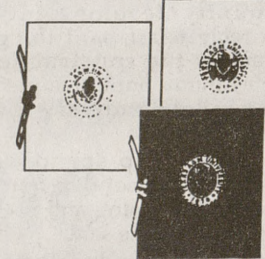
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