

Ever More to Learn - cont'd

The first lesson I learned is the doctors are probably not experts in dealing with venomous snake bite wounds, and they will admit it. Not their fault, they just don't see enough. I found out they call Texas Poison Control for advice in the care and treatment. For example, they wrapped my hand in ice. That's okay, I was expecting that. Fifteen minutes later they came in and said we are not to wrap it in ice. One doctor told me he had just arrived from New York three months earlier and had never seen a snakebite. While all this is going on the swelling continues, and the pain follows the swelling. I did get sick one time. A doctor came in and asked if I wanted any morphine. Now I currently take no prescription drugs and take very few over the counter drugs. But, when he asked if I wanted morphine, I said "hell yes"!



I was told about the anti-venom serum and was counseled about its side effects. They do not want to give this treatment early on. Because a bite can be a minimal warning bite, with little venom injected, they want to watch the swelling to determine what course of treatment to take. I was admitted for the night and the marking of my arm started. They said if the swelling went past my elbow they would recommend anti-venom. They also take blood samples for what seemed like every hour to check for coagulation abnormality, a problem you can have with the venom. Throughout the night nurses came in and drew lines on my arm along with the time. By morning the swelling was between my elbow and shoulder.

Okay, time for anti-venom. I was told because of the "potential" severe side effects of the anti-venom, I would be moved to the intensive care unit for this procedure. Hmm, I thought. So off we go to the ICU. During my wheelchair ride I was often greeted with "hey you're the snakebite guy". My fifteen minutes of fame I guess. On another side note: I found out everyone has a snake story and is anxious to share it with you. At the hospital, doctors, nurses, aids, and orderlies all came in to look at my hand and tell me their story. I actually really enjoyed talking to everyone. Now comes the serious stuff. They come in and explain the potential side effects of anti-venom. The list was long and gruesome as I remember. Primarily anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction). But, I consented and the IV started. Guess what, no reaction! I was both relieved and little disappointed after the big build up (just kidding). I found out the anti-venom provides antibodies to neutralize any remaining venom. It does not make you well. The pain and swelling already in place do not get better with anti-venom. It just doesn't get worse. I stay another night in ICU for observation.



The next day about noon I am examined, and it is determined I can be discharged. That's it. I am home. Nothing else. No tetanus shot, no antibiotics, and no idea how long the pain and swelling would last. The pain had now turned into extreme soreness to touch anywhere on my left arm but, it was better than the "fire" of the initial bite. The swelling went down in about two weeks. My middle finger remained stiff and sore for about 6 months. It is still stiff on cold mornings but otherwise I am 100% recovered. Total cost of (4) units of anti-venom..... \$32,568! But there was good news.....Medicare paid 100%.

So as my Father used to say, "What did you learn from this?" Number one, you are not going to die from a copperhead bite. Number two, seek medical attention. And lastly, use common sense. Look **high and low** before you reach, especially in copperhead habitat.

Ever More to Learn - cont'd

Dorothy Thetford, class 2001

EVENING PRIMROSE



Showy-primrose (sometimes called buttercup)
(*Oenothera speciosa*)

The white colored Showy-Primrose flowers of the Great Plains are diploids and open in the morning, while the rose-colored flowers of our area are tetraploids and open in the morning.

The oil of *Oenothera* is used in cosmetics, including lipstick, and the fragrant evening-opening flowers are scented for the moth pollinators.

Two of our most recent evening bloomers are the Missouri Primrose (*O. macrocarpa*) and the Stemless-Primrose (*O. tribola*). Their flowers begin opening near sunset and become show-stoppers with their almost iridescent, bright yellow color as the sun sets. The flowers of *Macrocarpa* and *Tribola* bloom only one evening and usually wilt by 9-10:00 the following morning. These plants have a shorter, specific blooming cycle vs. the longer blooming season of the Showy-Primrose.

Our pink Evening-Primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) has been blooming for a couple of weeks, and will continue blooming throughout the summer. It is one of our showiest and most abundant wildflowers. The *Oenotheras* are annual or perennial herbs, opening near sunset or near sunrise.



Stemless primrose (Oenothera coryi)





From Alex Lieban

Camera shy!



Venturing out



*Zebra swallowtail—photo
from Jonathan Reynolds*

LEARNING ABOUT THE BOARD



Take notes

Meet your . . .

Article—Jan Deatherage;

Photo—Denise Remfert

Immediate Past President—Jan Deatherage



“The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

This quote conveys a positive meaning for our chapter as we have grown exponentially the past several years but we still maintain our sense of community, shared interests and general love of what we do. Our history, albeit less than 20 years, is rich with knowledge of what makes our organization successful, welcoming and rewarding to our members.

There are so many new ways of doing things and wonderful ideas that help us grow. In a volunteer organization, support for making those ideas come to life depends on our ability to be nimble and productive. It helps to know our core capabilities - our people and their talents. As Past President, my role is to provide the Presi-

dent and Chapter just the right amount of continuity to the flow.

The Past President also chairs the Nominating Committee, which is responsible for making sure that we have key roles in our Chapter’s leadership filled with willing volunteers. Leadership is critical to keeping the ball rolling. Over the past 4 ½ years, I’ve served on the Board to help the Chapter with Publicity and presently I’m helping out with Training for our new class this year. I’ve stayed pretty busy and my involvement has allowed me to learn so much about our organization, its people and its impact on our community.

When I retired from the world of advertising, I wanted to find a way to keep learning and growing while making a difference. Growing up in Dallas before it was so cityfied, I was blessed with opportunities to experience nature as a kid. It has been nice to rekindle that interest here in Denton County. I look forward to experiencing it even more once my term expires this year. Everyone has a talent they can share. Please let me know if you are willing to share yours. You won’t regret it.