

THE MAVERICK BULL

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 1987



THE MAVERICK BULL, is the monthly newsletter of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, an internal organization of the National Speleological Society (NSS 6-322).

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The Editor invites all cavers to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art, and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed, stamped envelope should accompany it. News items may be submitted on floppy diskettes in either APPLE II, or IBM compatible ASCII Text file format. Items should be of interest to cavers and their ilk, and be non-political (except cartoons of very good humor) in nature.

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EXCHANGES: THE MAVERICK BULL, will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact any officer.

COMPLIMENTARY NEWSLETTERS: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO will provide complimentary newsletters to persons or organizations considered to be Grotto friends. Grotto friends are persons or organizations who provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers.

COMPLIMENTARY NEWSLETTERS: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO will provide three free issues to interested parties. At the end of this period the persons receiving the newsletter will have subscribed, become a Grotto member (or will be one soon) or complimentary newsletters will be suspended.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Subscription Rate is \$10.00, per year for non-members.

PRINTING: This issue was printed FREE by the TROG PRESS, INC. in the Republic of Texas.

MEMBERSHIP POLICY: Any caver with interest, beliefs, and actions, consistent with the purposes of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO and the National

Speleological society is eligible for membership. Membership in the National Speleological Society is encouraged, but not mandatory except to hold office. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three trip requirement with at least three different grotto members. These three members shall act as sponsors and at least one of these members will be required present at a Grotto Meeting where they may be voted in by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

Mavericks: 1) American pioneer who did not brand his calves, 2) An unbranded range animal, especially a calf, 3) the University of Texas, Arlington, football team.

MEETINGS: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month, at SMOKEY'S RIBS, at 5300 East Lancaster in the east central part of Fort Worth, Texas. Just short of one mile west of Loop 820. This is a central point in Tarrant County, and should be convenient to the mid-cities, Arlington, and Fort Worth! The time is 7:00 P.M., and the food is good. Go through the regular line for your grub and then come to the "party room" which we have reserved in back.

COVER: The cover is the finished artwork of the Grotto Logo. The artwork was provided by Steve McClelland for the price of two barbecue sandwiches and two free patches when they're made.

OFFICERS

Chairman:	Corky Corcoran 600 Autumn Lane Plano, Texas, 75075 214-578-1474
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Editor/Secretary:	Butch Fralia 6315 Woodmont Court Fort Worth, Texas, 76133 817-346-2039

1987 CALENDAR

- Sept. 8; Maverick Grotto Meeting.
- Sept. 19,20: Texas Old Timers, once again to be held at Lazy L & L Campground, on F.M. 2722, So. of Sattler, near New Braunfels, Tx. Fees will be \$11.00 for TSA members, \$13.00 for non members, this includes camping and a B-B-R feed Saturday Evening. Vendors will be present, selling cave gear. A special Grotto meeting will be held at Old Timers to allow persons, outside the normal meeting area but but otherwise qualifying to apply for membership.

Oct. 10-14 *Cancelled Due To Impact Maria* Guads Trip, New Mexico. McKittrick Hill Caves, Christmas tree, Helens Cave, Wind Cave, Spider Cave, Chimney. Contact Corky or Donna

- Oct. 13; Maverick Grotto Meeting.
- Oct. 16-18; Kickapoo Cave, TSA Project, Uvalde Co., N. of Brackettville, Texas.
- Oct. 16-18; Fall MVOR, Lake of the Ozarks Grotto host, Alberta Zumwalt, Rte 1, Lohman, Mo. 65063 (314)782-3560
- Nov. 10; Maverick Grotto Meeting.
- Dec. 8; Maverick Grotto Meeting.

AUGUST MEETING

The last meeting of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, was held, August 11, 1987, at Smokey's Ribs in East Fort Worth.

Two new cavers petitioned and were accepted for membership. Pooch Amy and Teresa White, have

fulfilled their three trip requirement, obtained sponsors, paid their dues and are raring to go caving. Pooch even owns the mandatory four-wheel drive vehicle which was recently put to the test.

The program for the meeting was a live performance by THE MAVERICK GROTTTO singers performing the latest cave ballads. Donna Anderson, David Finfrock, the elusive Sharon Lytle, and Teresa White provided an evening of fun and entertainment.

A rather large crowd attended, including many visitors.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The artwork for the Grotto Logo has been completed (see front Cover), a decision needs to be made on colors and if patches are to be made. Who will be responsible for getting them etc.

The program for this meeting will be a slide presentation on Caves of the Guads, by Ron Miller. Ron is an excellent photographer and the slides are extraordinarily good.

EDITORIAL**HELP!!!!**

With election of new officers coming up later this year I felt it would be a good time to remind everyone that to hold office, one must be a member of the NSS. By joining now, you should have your card and NSS number back in time for elections. The annual membership fee is \$22.50 per year (add \$2.00) for each additional family member. This may be the best caving bargain in terms of printed material. The NSS provides plenty of printed publications including an annual membership directory. The Address to write is:

National Speleological Society
Cave Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama, 35810

There is also the Texas Speleological Association. For \$6.00 you can receive a subscription to THE TEXAS CAVER Newsletter, which is becoming quite magazine like. For an additional \$4.00 you can also become a member (This fee covers one

household). Dale Ellison however informs us that you may never be put on the mailing list. He subscribed to the CAVER at the beginning of this year and has yet to receive an issue. This has been brought to the attention of local TSA Officials but as of yet they've not responded. At any rate, the address is:

THE TEXAS CAVER
U.T. STATION
BOX 8026
AUSTIN, TX. 78713-8026

HARD ROCK AND COOL WATER

by David Finrock

DATES: August 1-2, 1987

DESTINATION: HardRock Cave,
Little Crystal Cave,
Murrey Co., OK.

PERSONNEL: Pooch Amy,
Donna Anderson,
Fanette Begley,
Patty Burgess,
Corky Corcoran,
David & Shari Finrock,
Dale Ellison,
Butch Fralie,
Arlene Heintz,
Bobby Moore,
Joe Ben Pruitt,
Andrew & Judy Roe,
Lynette Schroeder,
Ryan Taylor,
Craig Tebbett,
Dennis & Joshua Thompson,
Judy Thompson,
Teresa White,
Pam & Quinta Wilkerson,
John ?, Connie ?
Shane the Wonder Dog

Some of the party (and I do mean party!) arrived Friday night and set up camp at Turner Falls, but many didn't show up until Saturday. The plan had then been to head for Wild Woman Cave, but it had recently been closed by the owner, so we decided on plan B, and drove on over to Hard Rock Cave.

Of course many of the experienced cavers already

knew Hardrock, inside and out, but those who hadn't been to Hardrock since May were in for a surprise, as the spring rains had caused massive resurgences, and the shifting gravel had greatly changed the look of the cave. For those unfamiliar with Hardrock, it was a pleasure to discover a real walking cave, with only one crawlway. That made it especially nice for first-time cavers Patty and Shari.

On emerging back into the August heat, however, much of the group called it quits and returned to Turner Falls while the more intrepid (or ignorant) cavers insisted on a ridgetalk back to a cave Dale had discovered a week before. Butch had entered it then, but found that after a big drop, it squeezed down too much for him to continue down the passage he could see.

The high-tech radio ridge walk crews prowled the ranch, with team one (Dale, David, Shari, Pooch and Teresa) arriving on the scene first, and team two (Butch, Corky, Dennis and Arlene) following.

David led the way down the Fissure, with Dale and Pooch following. It was a tight chimney down 60 feet, which was trouble enough. What made the descent worse was the un-nerving banshee-like screeching coming up from the depths. Butch gave assurances that it was just two baby birds. Yeah, sure! against all odds, Butch was right! (I get lucky sometimes - Butch) Two little fledglings on a nest of sticks on the floor of the cave were making all of that terrific racket. On reaching the bottom, Dale and David pushed (squeezed) past the constriction that stopped Butch, the previous week, but were disappointed to find the passage made a U-turn and then ended in another 10-15 feet. Then came the limb out, which was a real struggle, and tore the seats out of the pants of all three explorers.

The drive back to Turner Falls was followed by dinner and a welcome swim, and the arrival of yet more cavers. Donna dug out her mini-guitar and passed it to Pooch, who led the group in bawdy cave ballads. The singing seemed to get better and better (that or the drinking got heavier; it was hard to tell which). In between songs, Pooch would occasionally tell sum-a-dem sout-looziana Cajun story. Finally the Park Police appeared out of the darkness. They said they didn't mind the singing. It was that loud Aaa-eeeeee! punctuating the end of each song

that was arousing complaints from campers down in the valley a mile away. (The Park Police hadn't had so much excitement since the month before when they'd caught a three year old taking acorns from a squirrel -- Butch) So at 3 A.M., our covers gave in and crawled into their tents for a short night's sleep. (From the sounds coming from some of those tents, it was evident that not everyone dropped right off to sleep!)

Sunday found most of the group in no condition to go caving again. Instead, there was a lot of sunning, swimming, and hiking along the creek. A few found the energy to explore Little Crystal Cave on the Turner Falls Property. This group included Donna, Dennis, Craig, Fanette, Lynette, and Judy. While they were underground, Butch strolled over to the entrance, impressing the tourists by nonchalantly beating a rattlesnake into submission (it had almost grown it's first button - Butch), and trying to convince them not to spray Black Flag into the cave's mouth.

During the afternoon, tents came tumbling down, as weary covers headed home agreeing that the weekend was a thorough success.

A hard day of caving, followed by a day of relaxation in the healing waters of Honey Creek, is a good prescription for too much civilization.

SEWERLUNKING

by Donna Anderson

DATE: August 6, 1987

DESTINATION: Beneath Northeast Mall

PERSONNEL: Donna Anderson
Chuck Cluck,
Butch & Jennifer Fralia
Jill Shoemaker
Craig Tebbet

The sewerlunking craze has hit the Maverick Grotto. After hearing rumors of formations beneath our city streets, I decided it was time to check it out for myself. I called Chuck Cluck and asked him if he would lead a trip to the labyrinths under Fort Worth. Chuck agreed, but said it would be best to keep the group small to avoid detection from Security Guards as our destination would be beside the Northeast Mall.

We arrived at Chuck's house about 7:00 PM on Thursday night. Were delightfully entertained with melodious tunes by Chuck on his banjo while we waited for everyone to show up. We then set out for a wonderful and unique adventure.

We parked across the street from the mall in order to avoid any hassel from the Security Guards. We walked down the bank of the drainage ditch but were then hailed by a Hurst Policeman and Mall Security Guard. Butch and Chuck went back to talk with them and assured them that we were not carrying any bombs and we were just on an innocent outing. Butch gave them his business card and told them if they ever needed any help to rescue anyone from the storm drains, that we would be gald to help. They were grateful for our offer of assistance as they said they had to go in there once and they didn't like it and didn't want to go in again.

We then continued on our journey. Suddenly the four large storm drain entrances loomed before us. We donned our helmets and turned on our lights. My small 110 camera was ready to document this historical event. The walls were covered with colorful graffiti, poems, and pictures (mostly skull and crossbones). On one wall there were many statements about Satan worship. On the opposite wall were statements about Jesus loving us. Eventually the graffiti died away. The last words we saw were "You are at the point of no return." So we continued.

The storm drains were mostly dry. In a few places there was an inch or two of water and some mud on top of the concrete floor. There was little debris and the rain water had left it pretty clean. We had fun with the echoes in the passageways. Eventually we came out to daylight and we looked down another passage and saw the small waterfall. We were then faced with six choices of passages going even further. We chose one of them and continued on. Covers posed for pictures beneath the soda straws which were seen on the ceiling, some of which were pure white and others a reddish brown. We came out in daylight again. We decided to start our journey back and decided that since there were six passages and six covers we should each take a separate path and meet up at the junction. Solo sewerlunking! We each chose a path but Jennifer and Jill decided they would go together. We all met at the junction and then took a different passage back towards the

towards the vehicles. A nice round tube was spotted along the way and we all stooped low (Donna didn't stoop -- Butch) and ran through the long pipe. This led us outside again and we climbed up the bank and rested as we watch cars go by (we were on an island in the middle of North 820). They were watching us too.

Back down to the tube and a quick run and we were back in the trunk passage once more. This particular passage was heavily decorated. There was flowstone of various colors on the walls. Then we came upon several spectacular rimstone dams! It was truly amazing. Unfortunately, I had run out of film just before we reached the rimstone dams. There were also more soda straws in this passage. The longest was about five or six inches long. We decided we had to come back with our 35mm Cameras and tripods. soon we were outside once more. We all decided it was a fantastic trip and are now all hooked on sewerlunking.

A SAN SABA WEEKEND
(OR A HAVEN IN THE HILLS)

by Mark Porter

DATES: August 14-16, 1987

DESTINATION: Crystal Lake Crawl,
Fenceline Fissure,
Rotten Log Cave,
San Saba, Co. Tx.

PERSONNEL: Becky Brown,
Dale Ellison,
Butch & Jennifer Fralis,
Mark Porter,
(Shane stayed with his
Grandmother that weekend.)

It had been a long and trying week in the salt mines but good fortune had raised it's pretty head. Instead of staying around the metroplex doing the ever redundant household chores and honey do's, I had the great pleasure in securing a spot on a caravan heading for the hills of Central Texas. Friday afternoon having wound down to mid afternoon I hopped in the wagon and headed west for a meet with the rest of the crew at Butch's place in Fort Worth.

Having reached my destination, I found the Trooper in the drive with Butch and Jennifer starting to get their gear together! During this brief intermission, Dale arrived and I got a chance to view the video these fellows had just completed the evening before. The video consisted of thirty minutes of film shot by Butch and Dale from a previous trip to Fence Line Fissure. The film was narrated by Butch with Dale in the starring role. Butches living room had been turned into a mini-studio where they edited the tape, added the narration and background music. Coming Soon to a grotto meeting near you! By this time the Trooper had been packed then with a short stop to pick up Jennifer's friend Becky. We were on our way south. Upon arriving in the wee morning hours we proceeded to set up camp and catch some shut eye.

The area we were caving is in central Texas, not far from the town of Bend a few miles south of the Colorado River.

Getting plenty of needed rest, we decided by mid-morning to gear up and explore a small cave up the creek from the campsite called Crystal Crawl. After entering the cave were found a large population of Daddy Long Legs clinging overhead as were went into a narrow crawl just off the main room. As we made our way up the passage were showered by sheets of spiders as our lights neared the top of the passage. We continued on up the crawl and came to a section with small domes in the ceiling and as each of us crawled under a dome we were deluged by hordes of crickets. We were not alone!! A couple of hundred feet down the road the passage began to narrow. Butch and Dale decided to dig it out and squeeze through into a slightly larger passage that petered out about 190 feet on past.

Being full figured, I decided to return to the cave entrance and wait for their return. Within thirty minutes they had given up their quest and returned.

Taking a short break and for some unknown reason we decided to take a hefty ridge walk for the remainder of the afternoon in the 100 degree plus heat. Finding nothing of interest, we returned to camp, grabbed a cold one, swimming trunks and lawn chairs then headed for the creek to kill what was left of the day.

That evening, instead of cooking steaks and potatoes over an open fire we opted for the glamor, hamburgers, and fries of San Saba.

The next morning broke hot as fire. We had a conversation with the landowner who had come down to work on his cabin. He told us the history of the area and gave us some ideas on who to check with about other caves in the area.

By this time it was late morning so we got our gear together and began our trek over the hills to two locations.

Our first stop was to Rotten Log Cave. This cave is small being made up of one large entrance room with a crawl passage leading off this room which ends in a mud choke about a hundred feet back.

Having conquered this challenge we proceeded to our final destination; Fence Line Fissure. We entered the cave by a vertical chimney. it was an easy ten foot climb down to a sloping passage which is one of two parallel fissures that make up the main area of the cave. Once we made it into the main room everybody was perfectly content just to sit around and relax in the coolness of this chamber. Nobody made the effort to climb the eight foot pit which has the passage to the rest of the cave. We made our way back out and began to head back for camp. Along the way we stopped and checked out a couple of pits but the temperature was nearing the boiling point so we decided to cut it short and get some relief at the swimming hole.

After breaking camp and eating a watermelon that had been cooling in the spring for two days, we departed from this haven in the hills to the dread sound of the alarm clocks, Monday Morning.

CARLSBAD CAVERNS BAT COLONY OVER A MILLION

EDITORS NOTE: The following press release, dated 6/29/87 from the National Park Service, is being reprinted from SOUTHWESTERN CAVERS, The official newsletter of The Southwestern Region.

The bat colony which occupies a portion of Carlsbad Caverns during the summer is currently estimated at approximately one-and-a-fourth million bats, according to Park Superintendent Rick Smith.

At one point in the early 1970's, the colony had dropped to an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 bats. Based on research, the earlier declines had been attributed to the effects of pesticide use in the vicinity of the park, with DDT and it's breakdown elements of DDE and DDD being the major pesticide residues found in the tissue of dead bats. The use of DDT was banned in this country in 1972.

In addition to the DDT ban, other factors which may have contributed to the recent increase in bats at Carlsbad Caverns National Park are the abundant moisture received this year, which in turn has increased available flying insects upon which the bats feed, and the sealing of two mining shafts which had been cut into the portion of the cavern where bats roost in the early 1900's. By sealing the shafts, natural temperature and air flow patterns were restored in this portion of the cavern. Since the shafts have been sealed, the bats have resumed roosting in the domes where it appears they roosted prior to the cutting of the shafts. The domes now being occupied by the bats were not used by roosting sites from the time they were cut until they were sealed in 1981.

The recent estimate was made by the traditional method of visually checking the amount of ceiling space occupied by the bats and multiplying the square footage by the average number of bats per square foot. Research is currently underway to devise another counting method, using video tapes of the exit flights and computer analysis of the tapes.

Evening bat flight programs are offered each night during the summer and early fall at no cost. Currently, the talks at the cavern entrance amphitheater begin at 8 p.m. MDT, and flights are taking place about 8:30 PM although the times will gradually move up as sunset occurs earlier through the remainder of the summer.

WEDDING BELLS

George Crosby and Kay Montgomery, of Louisiana were married sometime during the month of August, at Bridal Cave in Missouri. Congratulations to Kay and George and we wish them the best of luck.

was finally reached. It was hot and dry. It was Corky's day.

Everything went well until Corky, rigging rope pads on the way down, discovered the rope was insufferably tangled in the old mining wire rope. Though no threat, it took some time to unthread the rope out of it and into the clear path. Everyone else made it down without a hitch and an extensive tour began. Gerald and Corky took photographs while Mike, Steve and Steve explored various side passages. A call from the second group brought the first group to a small (in Ogle terms, 8 - 20' ceiling) passage that had seven shields adorning it. From there the group explored some of the unchecked leads pointed out on a previous trip. The report was the same for all, no go. After a quick trip to the back and a few more photos the group headed back to the surface. Here Corky is in the limelight again when plagued by ascending equipment failures. Again the problem was not threatening it was quite difficult and uncomfortable for the poor soul. Never the less, he obviously made it out and the long, waterless march back down the mountain began. You see, it had been a three quart round trip and no one brought more than two.

The vehicles were a welcome sight and after refreshments, the camp even more welcome. Soon steaks were sizzling on the grill and shortly the peace of the desert was unbroken except for the occasional snore of an exhausted caver.

And Corky says, "The birds and the trees, they're talking to me. The Crickets rubbing their legs together, they're talking to me. The Bats screeching high in their cave, They're all talking to me. If I could only understand what they're saying."

And the answering machine sings, "0000AAA Corky! He's gone caving."

One cannot imagine the sheer size of Slaughter Canyon by looking at a map, one must hike through it to get a true picture. Corky had warned everyone it would be a long hike to the caves. Even he was surprised at how far it was. Perseverance paid off and a few hours later and they were sitting in the entrance of Goat Cave enjoying the cool if somewhat scented breeze.

If you have last year's convention guidebook the description there is very accurate. The group had nothing to add except the dead goat was the best part and it made a nice resting spot before going to Lake Cave.

Doing both caves in one day made sense to everyone. They're about eleven hundred feet apart, so what if it's straight up. It was early afternoon when the cavers left Goat and very late afternoon when they reached Lake. The entrance, almost at the top of the mountain, offered an awesome view of the canyon which seemed to stretch endlessly away in all directions. The cave is fascinating if not lengthy. It harbors a healthy colony of cave swallows and it's fair share of bats. A large number of the formations have been sculpted by erosion into really bizarre shapes. Most peculiar is the lake for which it's named. No one could explain why it was there. Jim Bob gives it four bats, check it out.

Only one fate befell Corky that day, he looked up when he should've looked down and stepped in a mixture of guano and water with the consistency of, well, you get the idea. New boots too!

The hike back was easy, down hill all the way. After dinner caving for the next day was cancelled due to lack of energy. Mike and Steve decided a shower and a bed were ripe for the agenda. With Corky trailing along (he wanted to make sure he got back across the streambed) they headed for Carlsbad leaving Gerald and Steve to another story.

The next day Mike, Steve and Corky visited (at separate times) Carlsbad Caverns, Sirloin Stockade's Salad Bar, and Jim and Andy Goodbar's house. Jim was still out fighting a fire in the Gila National forest as he had been all weekend but Andy was there and se greetings to all. Of course, Corky didn't leave town soon enough and got caught in a tremendous hailstorm that put a few more dents in L.U.R.C.H. but then it was Corky's day and those things were to be expected.

And the sun goes down like a big bald head, disappearing over the mountains. It's Corky's night.