

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 1

PRODUCED BY CHARLIE C

JANUARY 1992



Maverick Grotto members host a BBQ/BEER bash at Smokeys Ribs in Fort Worth, Texas shortly after our British caver friends arrive at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. Many friendships were made and reestablished during their short visit in Fort Worth. Each British caver was given a Maverick Grotto Patch to take with them as a welcome gesture and souvenir. (The Editors staff is working on a complete report of the British cavers trip to the United States.)

THANK YOU-TODD HEINTZ!

Another warm, "THANK YOU" is being sent to Subscriber Todd Heintz for a great three book donation to the Maverick Grotto Library. Russell Hill, the Official caretaker of the Library, welcomed these excellent sources of information. The first book, TEN YEARS UNDER THE EARTH was written by Norbert Casteret, 1897. This book contains the essential parts of two

successive books from M. Casteret's pen: Dix ans sous terre...and Au fond des gouffres. This is the 1975 printing by Zephyrus Press. Todd reports that this book is about a French caver that explored the underground and is well worth the investment of time to read it. The second book, CAVES AND KARST OF KENTUCKY is a 1985 publication. Members of the NSS prepared this publication along with the Kentucky Geological Survey, University of Kentucky, Lexington. This is an excellent book for you if your researching caves of Kentucky. The third book donated is, AMERICAN MINERS' CARBIDE LAMPS. This book was compiled by Gregg S. Clemmer and profusely illustrated by Wendell E. Wilson. This is a Copyrighted book printed by Westernlore Press in 1987, Tucson, Arizona. For the warm hearted caver that collects these mine relics this book is a must as it is a "Collector's Guide to American Carbide Mine Lighting."

NEW CAVER

Kileen, Texas-Maverick Grotto welcomes into the caving world SHELBY MARIE LLOYD. She was born to the proud parents of Don and Corien Lloyd on December 6, 1991. She weighed 6 lbs. 5 ozs. and was 20 inches long. Congratulations Corien and Don!!!

JANUARY MEETING PROGRAM

The January program will be a video documentary about the Black bear. Cavers are often in remote areas and knowledge of these beautiful and great animals could come in handy some day. Remember, the meeting date is January 14; don't miss this informative program. Coming programs include a 3-D cave slide show (yes, with the funny glasses).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1992 EVENTS

JANUARY 10-12, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK.
Contact: Butch Fralia, 817-346-2039(H).

JANUARY 14, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING. *The newly elected officers take their respective leadership roles for 1992 during this meeting. Make plans to attend and voice your thoughts about '92. Please bring your check book to pay your 1992 dues and verify information such as phone numbers, charter/subscription/membership information. (Each year, Maverick Grotto must fill out an Internal Organizations report to maintain our Charter in the NSS so please bring your NSS number with you.) Plans are being made to give each interested person attending, a copy of our Charter and Constitution.*

JANUARY 1992, CARLSBAD CAVERNS MYSTERY ROOM SURVEY. During some weekend to be determined in January, another trip will be made to Carlsbad Caverns to assist Pat Helton of LAG. This is an on going project in conjunction with Cave Research Foundation. Contact: Pat Helton, 806-796-0973.

JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 2, TSA WINTER MEETING. Plans are being made for five sessions on surveying and map making procedures. The Winter meeting will be a learning experience in actual caves, and intended to train and get more cavers involved in map making. George Veni will be instructing. The exact location for classrooms and camping on a San Saba ranch have been chosen but not confirmed. For the most up-to-date details or until the Editor receives confirmation contact: Butch Fralia, 817-346-2039.

FEBRUARY 7-9, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK PROJECT & EARTH DAY PLANS. Contact: Butch Fralia, 817-346-2039.

FEBRUARY 11, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING. If you did not attend the January meeting and have not paid your Membership Dues and/or your Subscription Dues for the 1992 calendar year, your time is running out and the delivery of your Newsletter may be interrupted. The computer system used for generating the mailing labels has been set up to delete a name after: A. three month free introduction, B. subscription expires, C. membership expires.

FEBRUARY 21-23, POWELL'S CAVE. This survey trip to Powell's Cave will be a good time to apply the experience gained at the TSA Winter meeting in surveying. Trips occur on the fourth weekend during the months of October, February and June. Contact: Terry Holsinger, 512-445-7340.

MARCH 10, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING, last chance to pay dues and retain 1992 membership or subscription.

MARCH 13-14, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK.
Contact: Butch Fralia.

MARCH 28-29, HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, Special project to complete work in 21 caves which has spanned over several years. The last time, the park staff barbecued a Pig (no guarantees for this trip). Contact: Butch Fralia, (817)346-2039.

APRIL 10-13, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work trip.

APRIL 14, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING.

MAY 1-3, TSA SPRING MEETING. Preliminary planning for the spring meeting is underway. Plans that were listed previously, the meeting site was Kickapoo. This is no longer the case. TSA Chairman Carl Ponebshek is working on Luckenbach, Texas.

MAY 8-10, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work trip.

MAY 12, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING.

JUNE 9, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING.

JUNE 12-14, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work trip.

JULY 10-12, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work trip.

JUNE 14, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING.

AUGUST 3-7, NSS CONVENTION, Salem, Indiana, Delaney Creek Park. Contact: Scott Fee C/O 1992 Convention, P.O. Box 2262, Clarksville, IN, 46206. (317)291-7807. **Register now for \$60 until December 31, 1991. All fees are fully refundable.**

MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING FOR NOVEMBER 1991

Chairman Dale Ellison opened the meeting at Smokey's Ribs in Fort Worth. Two people applied for membership status with the Maverick Grotto this evening; Terry Free and Steve R. Fritts. Both applicants filled out an application listing their sponsors and the three trip requirement locations. Both were voted into membership by the attending members unanimously. Jimmy Thomas announced that the trip to the Caverns of Sonora was full and required no additional volunteers. Other trip announcements were made. Nominations for the Maverick Grotto Officers for 1992 were opened. No other names were added to the list of nominees and the motion was made and seconded that the nominees be accepted and voted in. The officers for the Maverick Grotto which make up the Executive Committee for 1992 are: CHAIRMAN-Butch Fralia; VICE-CHAIRMAN-Ed Young; TREASURER-Jimmy Thomas; SECRETARY/EDITOR-Dale Ellison.

Due to the inaccessibility of Danny Sherrod's residence, a different location for the Grotto Christmas party was discussed and decided upon. Barbe Barker opened her home, located in Irving, for the event. At the time of compiling this newsletter, there have been no written reports on the Christmas Party event. The honorees that were not present to receive their CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT awards will receive them through the U.S. Postal Service in a plain brown envelope. Russell Hill announced that a group of cavers from Britain will be arriving at DFW Airport and their first stop will be at Smokey's Ribs for BBQ and BEER. Russell invited all to attend and help our caving friends feel welcome. Also at the time of

compilation of this newsletter, there have been no written reports detailing this event. The proprietor of Smokey's Ribs had to special order additional quantities of Budwiser on tap for this special occasion. A special "Thanks" goes to Barbe Barker for photographs supplied to the Editor of this BBQ/BEER bash one of which was electronically scanned and used in this newsletter. Dave Milhollin visited us from Miami, Florida. Chad and Lisa Fenner visited as did W.C. Cross. The Editor has received a letter from a subscriber, Dave Eddy. He has been reassigned to Fort Hood, Texas and probably will have a chance to attend the work project at Colorado Bend State Park. Amy Mercer of Texas A & M has rejoined us on our mailing list again.

NOTICE: If you find typos in this newsletter, they're here for a porpoise; some people actually enjoy looking for errors and the Editors' staff strive to please as many readers as practicable. (Reprinted from C.O.G. NIZANCE the official newsletter of the CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTTO of the NSS located in Oklahoma City, November 1991.)

LOST

At some time this past Fall, a flashlight was found at Colorado Bend State Park within 25 feet of Polish Cave. If it is yours and wish to have it back, call the Editor and offer a verbal description to the satisfaction of the Editor for repossession. Within a reasonable time delay from the publication date of this newsletter if the item is not claimed, it will become the property of the finder forever.

CAVE TASK FORCE MEETING

by Butch Fralia

Attendees:

Cavers: Carolyn Biegart, Butch Fralia, Pat Geery, Lee J. Graves, Keith Heuss, Cari Ponebshek, Ron Ralph, Mike Walsh, Mike Wharton, Jim Wolfe and others.

TPWD: Robert Basse; Superintendent CBSP, Bruce Bunn; Regional Director, Ron Ralph; TPWD archaeologist, John Williams; Cave Liaison/Manager.

December 13, 1991, a conference was attended by interested cavers and Texas Parks and Wildlife officials. The conference was held in the Gorman Falls 2. conference center, Colorado Bend State Park.

The first subject of discussion was the installation of a Bat gate in Gorman Cave. Mike Wharton has won the contract for this installation. With assistance from volunteer cavers and personnel provided by

TPWD, the gate will be installed for a cost of \$3,000. The cost would otherwise have been about \$10,000. Payment for the gate will come from an outside source who owes TPWD in the form of future goods and services. The installation will commence the second weekend of February and may take as long as ten days. This will coincide with the regularly scheduled work trip to the park. All grottoes have been asked to ask for volunteer assistance from members who are able to attend any time during this period. There was discussion of the gates impact and it's installation. Anyone working in the cave will be required to have leather gloves, ear protection, preferably rubber boots with lug soles and the usual cave gear.

John Williams (with assistance from cavers) is putting together a cave management plan for Gorman Cave which will likely be open to the public soon after the gate is installed. Recreational caving is coming close to reality and cavers will begin grading caves for public access and developing a management plan for those caves.

Texas Parks and Wildlife is currently enjoying a major reorganization and decision making responsibility is being thrust to the lowest level possible. John Williams is being reassigned to the property acquisition group but will retain responsibility as cave manager for the time being. Cavers are asking this position be retained so there will be someone to act as liaison and coordinate cave management policy across the state.

Bruce Bunn stated the new reorganization would likely place CBSP in another region. This is reason for regret on the part of cavers because Bruce has worked well with us in the past. He has been instrumental in the movement to open Gorman Falls and Gorman Cave.

During the spring convention TSA meeting and again at oldtimers, a vote was taken to continue and pursue renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement between TPWD and TSA. This was the major subject of discussion at the conference. The MOA has been expired for three years and project activity has continued regardless. TPWD has been unwilling to renew the agreement but there has been a change in the situation. Keith Heuss (TSA liaison to TPWD) has

received a letter from TPWD head of legal counsel, stating that all non-profit, volunteer groups, providing services to TPWD would be required to have a MOA on file. TPWD is now asking for the agreement rather than delaying acceptance. They are actively assisting in the wording and structure to assist cavers in getting more out of the agreement in return for their services.

John Williams stated he saw a great deal in the old agreement about services cavers would provide TPWD but little of what TPWD would provide in return. He made suggestions such as cavers could expect TPWD to provide camping facilities for project activity apart from the general public. TPWD would provide specialized safety equipment such as oxygen and carbon dioxide measuring equipment. A caver stated that it should require TPWD and cavers to work together on projects on a partnership basis and get out of the special interest relationship. This was deemed acceptable, the new director of TPWD, Andy Sampson is high on such.

An area of contention in the proposed MOA is that cavers removed the provision of providing cartographic services. A motion was made at the Spring TSA meeting that cartographic services be removed. Creating a finished cave map is a time consuming process and it was decided that in the event TPWD wanted this service, they could contract with individuals or the individual could contribute a finished map but it is beyond the ability of the TSA to provide this service. TPWD wants to retain this provision but restated such that the map can be a line plot or sketch with appropriate notes to assist in cave rescue, etc. It was agreed that this will be put back in.

Keith Heuss and Carl Ponebshek are working to rewrite the MOA in a manner which will be acceptable to both TPWD and cavers. TPWD is in need of volunteer service and cavers have reached a point of undeniable assistance in a number of areas. The signing of this agreement should take place quickly.

TPWD and TSA will begin to meet on a monthly basis in Austin. This is intended to improve communications and assist in the process of opening parks to recreational caving. While these meetings will not always result in action, they will assure cavers have presence in TPWD.

THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

by Butch Fralia

DESTINATION: ARKANSAS - MOUNT IDA, FITTON CAVE, HARRISON, -- ALL OVER

DATE: NOVEMBER 26-30, 1991

PERSONNEL: BUTCH FRALIA, RAY FRITTS, ARLENE HEINTZ, TODD HEINTZ, WAYNE PIERCE, MARK PORTER, TAG SWAN, AND JIMMY & PAT THOMAS (ALMOST).



Mark Porter

Mark Porter and I planned this trip a long time before the day finally came to leave for Arkansas. I got off early for the holidays, and Ray Fritts on vacation for the week arrived at my house shortly after I did.

We transferred his belongings to my truck, dallied for a bit then drove to Garland to collect Mark. Mark was waiting with his gear in the driveway. We loaded his equipment and headed for Sulfur Springs to pick up Tag Swan. It was scarcely an hour to Tag's where he was packed and ready. Wonderful! Everyone's timing was perfect, at 4:30 we were an hour from Arkansas.

We were driving to Mount Ida, where we would spend the first night and visit the area Thanksgiving day. We stopped at a Dairy Queen in Mount Pleasant and took some of the gloss off the initially flawless trip with overly cooked Chicken Fried Steak sandwiches. Oh, well, into every life a little rain must fall. We continued on and at 8:30 P.M. arrived at a Forest Service FREE campsite, just outside Mount Ida. Our good fortune was continuing to be nothing short of miraculous. I listened for sirens and looked for red lights because it seemed as though we should be in; violation of some natural law arriving at a campsite before 11:30.

Thursday morning we broke down our camp and drove into Mount Ida where we located Otis Standley's rock shop. Mark had made a college field trip to this area and knew Mr. Standley at one time allowed people to dig in his quartz crystal mine for \$2.00 a person. Mr. Standley's shop is adjacent to his house so he was open for business. He collected \$2.00 each, gave us a ball point pen, a business card, the key to the gate and drew a map on the back of some scratch paper. He made suggestions on where and what we might find and we were off.

At the mine we found many small crystals in the area recommended by Mr. Standley but finally realized this was going
4. nowhere. Being good cavers we began a

ridgeway of the area around the mine. Ray walked down the side of the hill and started finding many crystal clusters on the side of rocks. We all found enough nice samples in the area to make the stop worth while. At 1:30 we had enough, returned the key to Mr. Standley and began the drive north.

In Russellville, we enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner at Shoney's. We ate our fill thinking it nice to have a real Thanksgiving dinner without having to cook or clean up the mess. We entertained ourselves discussing the unusual names of several young waitresses. Our main was Stormy, originally from Texas. Odyssey brought our main course. When we paid, the cashier named Mary, I commented it was unusual for someone to have a bona fide name at Shoney's. She made a remark about Odyssey and I asked if she (Odyssey) had a boy friend named Homer. From the blank look on Mary's face, I surmise literary humor to be wasted on Arkansas.

When we arrived at Cavers Camp (near Fitton) just after dark and thus far the trip had exceeded our expectations. We were in short sleeves and quite comfortable. We were equipped for cold weather and hadn't brought light clothes. We set up camp and spent the evening imbibing and enjoying each other's tall tales.

The National Forest Service has built a fine camping area called Caver's Camp, within walking distance of Fitton Cave. It has picnic tables, fire pit with cooking grill and best of all, a good toilet facility (no shower). There is water and telephone within short driving distance. The site is located on the Compton-Erbie road, midway between Compton on highway 43 and Dog Patch on highway 7. There are three different routes by which camp can be reached but the most reliable is by way of Compton since the other two feature low water crossings on the Buffalo River.

Later that evening other cavers began arriving. Terry Holsinger had come up from Austin with another caver and Rob Holstead arrived in his huge van with a load of Cavers from Colorado. They said they had

been on the road for 19 hours during the previous two days. They were all meeting for a Friday trip where with about six tons of equipment they would test their photographic ability.

Friday morning our fortune began to change. A forest ranger arrived looking for Tag with instructions to call home. He provided directions to the nearby phone at the Compton-Erbie campground and explained there was a commuter airline located in Harrison if the need arose.

On the way to the phone, we saw an elk which had shed it's horns and had begun to grow short spikes for replacements. Elk shed their horns yearly and regrow them. The animal calmly stood on the side of the road and watched us pass. I've heard both elk and bear have been reintroduced to the area but this was the first time I've seen either.

Tag phoned home to learn his father passed away on Thanksgiving day and he was summoned back home. Back at camp, he gathered what he would need for the flight, leaving his camping/caving gear for drop off on the return trip. Mark and Ray elected to stay in the area while I drove Tag to Harrison. Lone Star Airlines has three flights a day from Harrison to DFW. I never learned if these were direct flights but we arrived very close to time for the next flight and Tag was able to depart quickly. We regret the loss of Tag on the trip because he's good company, we also regret his personal loss.

Lone Star has a round trip from Harrison to DFW for \$129 which might be worth checking to see if it's available from DFW. This is a reasonable fare for a short weekend when you're feeling flush and dying to go to Arkansas. I saw a parking place for an AVIS rental car so that service is available also.

Returning to camp, I performed some of those maintenance things you're supposed to do at home, loaded my pack and headed for the Blue Diamond Trail to find Mark and Ray. The Forest Service has located a number of easy hiking trails through the area. This particular one, provides an easier route to Fitton than the CRF trail unless of course your on a CRF trip and allowed to drive to the cave. If it rains enough, the Blue Diamond is impassable because it follows the creek bed and you still have to walk the CRF trail. Of course if it rains enough, even the CRF has to walk the CRF trail.

I immediately found Mark and Ray

5. coming back from Friday the 13th Cave (also

known as Mud Cave). I had my nerve up to drop Devil's Den, a deep pit in the area. Mark and Ray readily agreed before I lost my nerve. We loaded rope and vertical gear into the truck and headed out. The cave is several miles from camp and some people walk there but can you can get within 1000 feet by car.

We arrived at the cave, rigged the lowest (and safest point). I went down and discovered myself rappelling beside a waterfall. The pit is about 60 feet deep on the short side and perhaps 85 feet on the high side. It's a pleasant drop, free hanging without banging against walls. It would be really great if you could just avoid the waterfall. Mark and Ray soon came down and we explored for a short time. There's about 125 feet of passage which has very tall ceilings, fossils in the walls and on this trip there were bats hibernating on the ceiling. It doesn't take long to explore but it's worth the effort.

Mark and Ray went out while slow climber I am, I waited until last. They are both big old boys and I being out of shape wanted them topside in case I needed a "tow" out. It was did great for the first 45 feet and my seat harness began slipping down to my knees. I had loaned it to someone who had readjusted it. I didn't realize the need for readjustment until that point. I kept fighting with the seat harness and ran out of gas a few feet from the top. I knew I'd get out but I wasn't sure exactly when. I thought there for awhile, I'd have to take a nap or something first. I finally got out. Oh well, into each life a little rain must fall and as a matter of fact, it was raining when I got out.

A hiker had come along and was talking to Mark and Ray. His name was Wayne Pierce and had been on six CRF trips to Fitton since January. We had an extra slot on the permit. He seemed like he knew what he was talking about so we invited him to join us the following day. This by the way was more insurance than being a good Samaritan. There is a requirement that four people must enter the cave or you can't use the permit. If something happened to the remainder of our party, we'd be able to enter the cave.

Did I mention it started raining? It started pouring on the way back to camp as it only seems to pour at Fitton. Listening to the radio there were severe thunderstorm warnings for the county we were in and tornado warnings just north of Harrison, about 15 miles away. At camp, Mark and Ray got in their respective tents while I waited

in my truck and listened to it rain. Ray came to check on me and we started talking about showers which were available at Ponca. We talked ourself into a hot shower and drove to Ponca in a severe downpour to learn the showers had been disconnected because they were to much trouble to maintain. Oh, well, into each life a little rain must fall.

Without a real rain god along to stir up totally unnatural weather, I predicted the rain would abate and we could cook supper around 9:00 P.M. My estimate was conservative and the rain abated at 8:30. Mark and Ray drained their tents while I drained the Coleman Stove and started water boiling. It rained some more later in the night but nothing serious.

The next morning, Cecil Creek was up. Rob Holstead reported they had gotten back to camp at midnight and at which time the creek was waist deep. This meant the Blue Diamond trail was closed. I was still tired and didn't want to walk two miles up the steep CRF trail. It looked for a time like the trip wouldn't be necessary. Arlene and Todd, hadn't arrived from Missouri, Pat and Jimmy hadn't arrived from Eureka Springs where they were to stay until Friday evening (Saturday morning if the weather was bad), and Wayne hadn't come down from Compton. It was later than we'd planned on meeting and we began to get nervous.

We decided a ride would calm our nerves so we drove up to Compton to see if anyone was wandering around up there because of some mistake I'd made in directions. On the way back to camp, we heard a horn honking and looked back to see Arlene and Todd following us. Back at camp we found Wayne and learned from Arlene that the Thomas' Wagoneer had difficulty and had been unable to leave Texas.

We quickly donned gear and began the long trek up the hill. I got a good head start figuring everyone would pass me on the way up. Sure enough, they caught up and some of them passed me. The steep road up to Fitton is about two miles long and seems like it goes straight up. Even the hardest find themselves taking frequent rest stops. The walk took about an hour and a half to get there but finally at long last, Fitton Cave. We entered the cave just in time as a light rain began to fall.

Inside the entrance, we rested, rearranged equipment, put on knee pads and such. Fitton is a fantasy cave, all Texas Cavers (or at least cavers who cave in 6. Texas) know that caves are small and crawly.

Fitton passage is mostly walking and except for two locations, crawling is an elective experience. One of the most heavily decorated areas of Fitton is but a short distance from the entrance. There are tall and beautiful formations which are great for photographs. After the formation area, you go down a steep rocky area to a lower level where there are smaller formations. Quickly it's down to hands and knees (borehole) for about 100 feet where you reach the dreaded manhole. The manhole is a short climb about 12 feet deep. It's dreaded because the walls are very slick, hand/foot holds are barely perceivable and it begins to bell about midway down.

We climbed down the manhole, traversed some narrow stoop walking passage then into the main passage of the cave. At this point, the passage is 20 to 40 feet wide and about the same dimensions in height. The walls are a paleontologist delight with crinoid stems, shells and an occasional starfish. At this point, the cave is easy walking though other than fossils, there isn't much to see except size. Soon there is a big room where the passage goes down to a lower level with a running stream following the main passage. Leaving this room the passage is much the same as before until you arrive at the razor back area where you're walking on a raised floor which rises to a sharp point. You finally arrive at a small squeeze area where packs and helmets come off to slide through a small opening between small formations growing on flowstone. After the squeeze is a small formation area then it's down into a large passage again. This passage continues until there is a large room called the Round House.

It should be mentioned at this point Wayne began leading. He knew the cave better than he lead us to believe. He knew short cuts that only a person would know from being in the cave a number of times with those who know it well. At the Round House, I was completely turned around because we took a route I hadn't traveled before. This led into passage which eventually took us into the New Maze area. In this area we were able to visit such scenic areas as Jergens leap and Horse Piss Falls. There were a many areas where the passage seemed to drop down toward the center of the earth. We visited this area for awhile before being lead to a hole in the ceiling which was difficult to climb but with Wayne's help, everyone made it up. The next surprise was a tight squeeze which took

some time to get everyone through. Mark and I had experienced this squeeze on a previous trip from the other direction and that time couldn't get through. Someone has dug it out slightly making it barely passible.

Through the squeeze and up a steep passage and you are into a beautiful area of the cave. The walls are covered with gypsum and gypsum formations, mostly flowers. This passage leads into a huge room which provides access to the Tennouri room. This room is notable for it's size, gypsum formations and at some time, a visitor wrote the name of the room, using a carbide lamp, on a large rock.

From the Tennouri room, we began the trip back out in the direction of the Round House. We passed through passage beautifully decorated with gypsum flowers. We discussed the source of sulfuric acid which makes gypsum form but no one knew the source. It was pointed out that in a gypsum cave there are few if any formations while in a limestone cave with gypsum deposits there are always formations. This is because the limestone is constantly being attacked and the gypsum growing.

We backtracked through the passage where we had entered and eventually returned to the entrance. On the way in, Arlene had mentioned fossilized starfish in the walls of the cave. We saw an area where there were several well defined starfish. Attempts were made to photograph the fossils but there wasn't a camera with a close up lens so it's unlikely the photographs will do them justice.

We spent 9-1/2 hours in Fitton and made a leisurely tour which would have taken fifteen hours or more had we not such a knowledgeable guide. We learned much about the cave and the visit will long be remembered.

Outside the cave, the temperature was about 35 degrees. This was at first a pleasant change from the cave which seemed hot in comparison. It was apparent there had been heavy rain while we were in the cave. The road was much soggy. It seemed like it took forever to get back to camp. When we reached it, the creek was higher than when we first crossed and the temperature was lower.

At camp, the only thing on anyone's mind was getting warm. I got in my truck to change clothes and asked myself; why get

out? I was camping in the truck, the sleeping bag was stretched out invitingly and I heard it call my name. I decided to miss a meal and found myself snuggled warmly in the zero degree sleeping bag Dale Ellison loaned me for the trip. I went to sleep and never knew when Arlene, Todd and Wayne left. It was suddenly morning and I felt wonderful after an exceptionally good nights sleep.

This morning, started one of the best and one of the worst parts of the trip, going home. We drank hot coffee, packed and headed south intending to have breakfast on the way. As we drove toward Compton, reaching the top of the hill, we saw ice coating trees and fences creating a beautiful scene. Fog was very heavy slowing progress considerably. The fog continued for many miles and was still with us when we stopped to eat. After eating the fog was lighter but still heavy until we reached Hot Springs. We gassed up and made our way to Bismarck and I-30 where we knew the increased speed limit would get us home quickly. The cruise control was quickly locked on 70; we were trucking.

There was occasional light rain but nothing of consequence. Our fortune quickly changed and the traffic began slowing down, becoming slower and slower until it stopped altogether. We speculated for the next hour and a half and nine miles about the huge wreck it would take to cause that kind of back up. We came to a construction area where traffic was reduced to one lane causing the tie up. I became tired and we switched drivers. In the passenger seat I sawed logs for a time only to wake up and discover we were stopped again. It took 3-1/2 hours to travel fifty miles from Bismarck to Texarkana. I made it home at 11:00 P.M. instead of 6:30 as I should have.

It was agony having to loose Tag to the trip as we did. It was agony having to put up with the rain and wading Cecil Creek. It was agony walking the two miles straight up to Fitton and the two miles back down. It was agony driving in the fog and the traffic. It was ecstasy for nine and one half hours in Fitton Cave which made the agony worth bearing. I'll do it again, first chance.

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THE MAVERICK BULL is the monthly newsletter of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, an internal organization of THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other Grottoes to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-address stamped envelope should accompany it.

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EXCHANGES: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, will exchange newsletters with other grottoes. Contact the editor.

COMPLEMENTARY NEWSLETTERS: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations who provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. THE MAVERICK GROTTTO will provide three free issues to persons interested in becoming members.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Subscription rates are \$10.00 per year for members and non-members.

MEMBERSHIP POLICY: Any individual with interest, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO and THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY is eligible for membership. 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. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

8.

MEETINGS: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is a little less than one mile west of Loop 820 and next door to K-Mart. The time is 7:00 P.M. and the food is good.

CARBIDE: Grotto carbide is available at the meeting on even numbered months. The carbide is free to all members and is sold to others at the price of fifty-cents per pound. Anyone needing carbide at other times should contact Bruce Anderson (817/246-6313) to arrange for pickup.

LIBRARY: Support your Grotto Library. Russell Hill will be accepting books, magazines articles on cave related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. We wish to thank Russell for his efforts each month to bring and set up the Grotto Library.

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CAVE RESCUE: CALL COLLECT (512)686-0234

