

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO



Volume 6 Number 7

Produced By Charlie G

July 1992

GROTTTO



SUMMER SIZZLERS

Details
Inside

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 11-12, Monthly expedition to Mystic Cave area. Contact Greg Mooty, 214-827-2857 or Woodrow Thomas at 903-395-4431.

JULY 12, TCMA Board Meeting and Swim Party. This takes place at noon in New Braunfels, TX, Contact Mike Walsh 512-628-2169.

JULY 14, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING.



JULY 17-19, THREE FINGER'S CAVE RESTORATION. Volunteers are needed for assisting in a restoration project at Three Finger's Cave, which is a Guad cave at Three Mile Hill. Work will be supervised by Ransom Turner of the Lincoln National Forest, Carlsbad. Saturday will be the work day in the cave. To participate in the project, the Agreement For Individual Voluntary Services must be completed at least a month in advance of the trip. For information contact Oren Tranbarger at 512-349-5573.

JULY 19-25, MAMMOTH CAVE RESTORATION FIELD CAMP. Contact Norm Rogers, 4324 W. Rockwell Drive, Peoria, IL 61615, 309-692-6715.

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.

Pre-register by July 15th and save \$15.00. Registration fee is fully refundable.

SEPTEMBER, SPELEO-ART SHOW, Marlboro Gallery, Prince George's Community College, Largo, Maryland. Contact Prof. Donald Phillips, P.O. Box 3064, Alexandria, VA 22302, 703-730-0679 (H) or 301-322-0965(W).

SEPTEMBER 21-25, 5th ANNUAL LINT RESTORATION CAMP. Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Contact Pat Jablonsky c/o DMNH, 2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO 80205, 303-370-6473. (NSS News states no later than June 1)

OCTOBER 16-18, 15th ANNUAL TEXAS OLD TIMERS REUNION. Lone Man II Ranch near Wimberly. Now is not too early to make plans for this awesome event.

OCTOBER 9-11, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work resumes.

NOVEMBER 10, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING, annual election of officers.

DECEMBER 11-13, COLORADO BEND STATE PARK, monthly work trip.

DECEMBER, MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING will not be held in favor of Christmas Party.

JANUARY 25-27, 1993, 4th MULTIDISC. CONFERENCE ON SINKHOLES and the ENGINEERING and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF KARST, Pampa City, Florida. Contact Barry F. Beck, Florida Sinkhole Res. Inst., University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816, 407-823-5645.

COVER: This month's cover of the Maverick Bull is a introductory drawing of what I called the, "Grotto Lotto", because of the hoop-la over the State of Texas Lottery. It just didn't sound right to call it "Grotto Raffle." The design is to excite and make you want to get involved with the purchase of tickets at the grotto meeting for July. I hope to see you at the meeting and cheer you on about the nice things you will win!



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A KARST RESEARCHER:
EVIL PACKRATS CHEWED MY ROPE

BY W. WOODROW THOMAS

Saturday March 7, 1992 marked the day I began work on the Dennis' Pit dye trace. This was to be the third groundwater trace in as many years conducted for the Mystic Cave Project. My goal now was to either integrate the water passage in Dennis' Pit with the Mystic Cave System or to show the existence of an adjacent underground drainage basin. While Greg Mooty led the dive team in the continued underwater exploration and survey of the Blue Hole, I prepared for the dye trace by placing "bugs", (dye detectors), in the area's springs and creeks. I placed ten bugs that day in every possible place where the dye could emerge and even in a couple of "impossible" places. After finishing up, I checked in with the dive team and headed over to rig Dennis' Pit.

Dennis' Pit is a vertical shaft almost exactly 100 feet deep with a 75 foot long section of walking/stooping passage at the bottom. This passage is a phreatic water tube which ends in a sump. Dennis' Pit is about 3/4 mile E-SE of Mystic and I hiked over carrying the rope, vertical gear, and 3 1/2 pounds of sodium fluorescein. I had decided not to drop the pit solo and dump the dye that day because I wanted to have someone photo-document the injection process. Instead, I rigged the 110 foot rope and lowered it down the pit with a 4 foot stick tied to the end. The stick was to be used to stir the powdered dye into the water in the cave. I stashed my vertical gear, an extra handline, and the dye under a ledge outside of the cave entrance and left the pit rigged for the night.

The next day under threatening skies Greg and I returned to Dennis' Pit. I discovered, to my chagrin, that a packrat had chewed into the bag holding my vertical gear and had eaten my seat harness nearly in two. The evil rodent had also nibbled at the extra handline and had gnawed at the rigged 110 footer as well. Fortunately no substantial damage was done to the ropes. I was able to rig a "diaper sling" from a loop of webbing to use as a back-up to my dubious primary seat harness. We did the drop, stopping at the Orange Grotto on the way down to photograph.

I always enjoy rappelling into this cave. It is the deepest single drop in the Arbuckles and definitely one of the most scenic and spacious. It may even be the deepest cave in Oklahoma but that is another story. (A historical note- Dennis' Pit was named after Dennis Thompson, who told me of an unnamed cave and gave me directions to it. After we found the cave and had explored and mapped it, I realized that it did not fit his description. I later found the cave that he was referring to, Double Entrance Cave, but by this time the name Dennis' Pit had stuck.)

At the bottom of the cave I prepared to "inject" the dye while Greg set up to photograph. I waded out into the water passage with my stick and 2 bags of dye. Although sodium fluorescein is red in dry powdered form, it changes to shades of orange and yellow on contact with moisture and it dissolves in a brilliant green color when thoroughly mixed with water. As I dumped the dye and stirred it in, the fine red powder filled the air and I closed my mouth to avoid the bitter taste as I breathed. Greg had chimneyed over the passage and was holding himself out of the water while he snapped pictures.

He chanted, "Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," as I stood thigh deep in the swirling reddish/green mass stirring with a stick. Moisture condensed from the breath out of my nostrils was causing dye to stick to my mustache. There was no current in the water passage so I was forced to stir the dye completely in order to assure proper mixing. We exited the cave and on the surface I found that not only were my clothes stained by the dye from the thighs down, but that my mustache was dyed a bright yellow.

After cleaning up, I decided to show Greg the locations of all the dye bugs that I had placed the previous day so he could help in retrieving them if need be. We made the rounds and ended up at the Chapman ranch headquarters to inspect the bug placed in a spring there. Two young boys, about 10 and 11 years old- the sons of a ranch hand, met us there. They were curious about caves and our project and they began to talk about the various karst features in the area. They mentioned a cave nearby that I had never heard of and my ears perked up. After questioning them, they agreed to show us its location. They called it South Cave. It had never been entered and for all they knew it was just an opening in the bottom of a sinkhole.

We drove a mile or so across the top of a relatively flat section of ridge with absolutely no landmarks except a cattle feeding lot and a couple of trees in the distance. These trees, as it turned out, marked two small enclosed depressions, one of which contained the entrance to South Cave. It was getting late in the day and Greg and I were not prepared to go caving so I grabbed a helmet and a light and climbed into the entrance for a quick look/see. A short climb-down led to a natural bridge and a small room of standing height. It looked like the end until I laid on the floor and peered under a ledge into a crawlway. My carbide faintly illuminated the blackness on the other side. Major Voidage! Excited, I called up to Greg that we had something and to start gearing up. I retreated to grab a bag and some extra light. Soon we were scooping booty in street clothes and tennis shoes. After the short crawlway the cave opened into a room 45 feet long, up to 20 feet wide and of standing/stooping height. This room is formed along gently dipping bedding planes and contains several areas of dripstone growth. We checked the upper end of the room briefly and quickly located a lower route following the dip of bedding planes further into the cave. A quick climb over a ledge, past a 3 foot high stalagmite, and through a short crawl led to the second room. This room, 20 feet long and averaging 10 feet wide, has some standing room and additional calcite formations. So far, so good.

Greg and I were struck by our good fortune. South Cave was in an area where there was no surface expression of karst or even any significant outcropping of rocks- an area which we had not bothered to investigate. Also this cave was unlike the many tight crevice-type holes we had checked numerous times around the area. Here was real passage with real formations. In addition, I had detected major air movement at the entrance, (the cave was blowing)- a rare phenomenon in these parts. To my knowledge, only one other cave in the Arbuckles, a 2 1/2 miler, moved air like this. My mind raced as we crawled deeper into South Cave. I was picturing the topo map depicting the major ridge that contained the entrance. I was running through the conventional methods of air movement in caves to account for this kind of action. And I was mentally calculating the depth possibilities of the cave and the potential miles of virgin passage.

Then suddenly, the cave changed character. After the second room came a constriction and a 7 foot climb down. The chert beds that we had been crawling on, and which probably contributed to the large size of the first rooms, had been breached. We were now looking at a gnarly, narrow crawlway through water, albeit blowing air. Greg pushed forward to see that it did not open up immediately and he backed out reporting that it looked grim. I was disappointed at the change of character in the cave, yet I was elated at the discovery of a cave of this size and nature. I was especially excited about the brisk air movement and what that meant for the potential volume of the cave involved.

Greg and I quickly returned to the surface. We estimated we had seen a couple of hundred feet of nice passage. We offered to take the two boys on a tour of the cave. After gearing them up we accompanied them for an "exploration" underground. This was their first caving experience and they seemed to enjoy it. I gave a strong safety and conservation spiel throughout the trip. We limited our sightseeing to the first big room, allowing the boys to poke into every nook and cranny, and then exited the cave.

On top, the day was darkening so Greg and I bade farewell to the boys and to each other and began the trip back to our respective homes. On my drive I reflected upon the day's events - the ups and downs, ins and outs, and joys and frustrations I had experienced. Just another day in the life of a karst researcher.

P.S. My mustache is now back to normal.

McCLUNG - BARKER Nuptials

BARBE BARKER and DAVID McCLUNG WERE
MARRIED MAY 31, 1992 IN A PRIVATE
CEREMONY AT BARBE'S IRVING home.

THE BRIDE WORE AN OFF-THE-SHOULDER, CREAM-COLORED WEDDING DRESS.

THE GROOM WAS SMARTLY ATTIRED IN A

TUXEDO.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND!!

RABIES:

How Much of a Threat Is It to the Typical Caver?

By Karen A. Baldi, M.D.

It took me a moment to separate the high pitched squeeks from the sound of people behind me scrabbling across the rocky floor and water dripping overhead, but a few of the others must have heard it too, because suddenly they fell silent, and I recognized it as it grew louder.

"Incoming!" someone whispered and instinctively, I crouched slightly.

"Actually, it's 'outgoing,' some smart-aleck replied. "After all, we're the ones who are 'incoming' if you want to be strictly accu—oh, !@&*." Then I heard a clatter signalling that the mighty (mouth) had fallen, brought low by a creature not half his size. The flutter of wings grew fainter and a few more oaths from those further back indicated the fugitive's direction. Then he was gone.

The thought of coming into contact with a rabid bat is enough to keep most people away from caves. As spelunkers, we know that the creatures are relatively harmless and indeed, beneficial to the environment and deserve both preservation and respect. But, that little incident taught me that I'm not the only one who tends to get a little nervous when a bat whizzes past my ear in a tight crawlway.

We've all been exposed to various vampire movies and old wives' tales that characterize bats as human predators and universal carriers of rabies. But are such accusations completely untrue? How much risk does the typical caver run of contracting the rabies virus and what can he or she do to prevent it?

In the U.S. and Canada, most cases of rabies are found in wild animals but in Mexico, more than 90% of the carriers are dogs. A variety of animals can transmit the disease which is found most commonly in skunks, fox, raccoons and bats with an occasional coyote, bobcat or other carnivore thrown in for good measure. Rabid bats have been reported in every U.S. state except Alaska and Hawaii; some of them have transmitted the virus to humans.

Rabies is caused by a virus which is found in the saliva of infected animals and thus, is usually transmitted by a

direct bite. (More casual means of transmission are unlikely since animals don't spit much.) It is possible to contract rabies if animal saliva touches a fresh, open wound—which is why you should always wear gloves when crawling over that "popcorn"—or by inhaling some in aerolized form as it floats around the cave, although the latter is highly unlikely. In other words, your best defense is intact skin and all scratches, abrasions, cuts, etc. should be fully covered before you enter a cave.

Although unpleasant to deal with for other reasons, contact with guano is not a rabies exposure; (remember, it's present only in saliva) and as a rule, bats pose little threat to humans. Most types have teeth too small to penetrate human skin and are more interested in insects, fruit and small prey, than they are in you! However, if transmission seems likely it's important to know that, although always serious, the degree of urgency depends on how close to the head the bite has occurred. Since rabies specifically attacks the brain, a bite to the face poses a more immediate threat than infection through the foot, and multiple bites are more serious than a single bite.

Having said all this, the question remains, how much risk do cavers run of contracting—or even being exposed to—the disease? Just to put the issue into perspective, more cases of plague are reported in this country than of rabies and frankly, you're more likely to be involved in a car accident on your way to the cave than of contracting rabies when you get there! In the U.S., for example, only one case of human rabies was reported in 1987 and none for 1988 and 1989; historically, that's about how it runs. A rough compilation of animal statistics reveals 788 reported cases of rabid bats in 1986, 2379 infected skunks, 95 rabid dogs and 160 rabid cats.

Unfortunately, although the number of domestic animals exhibiting the virus continues to decrease each year, the number of reported cases in wild animals has risen annually since 1976. Despite the extremely small threat to humans, people do die of rabies, particularly outside the

United States. If you're exposed to the virus, what should you do about it? First, all bites and wounds should be cleaned immediately with soap and water. (This advice applies in all situations. After all, rabies isn't the only type of infection we have to worry about.) In other words, even if you don't use carbide, you should always carry water.

Next, get medical attention, fast. No one likes the thought of exchanging a cave trip for one to the hospital emergency room, but don't wait 'til the next morning. Anti-rabies treatment should begin as soon as possible and definitely within 24 hours of the potential exposure.

Treatment usually involves thorough cleansing of the wound and possibly a tetanus shot, followed by a series of rabies shots. The first shot which is administered in the buttocks, consists of Rabies Immune Globulin (RIG) which provides an instant dose of antibodies to fight the virus. This is followed by a rabies vaccine shot in the upper arm. (Fortunately, the stomach shots are a thing of the past.) After the initial procedures, you'll have to return for four more doses of the vaccine on days 3, 7, 14 and 28. Side effects of the treatment are usually minimal and typical of most vaccines: fever and a sore arm. Occasionally there is also nausea, headache and muscle aches. A new vaccine was developed and is now available, called Rabies Vaccine Adsorbed (RVA) which may produce fewer reactions than the current Human Diploid Cell Vaccine.

The series of shots stimulates the immune system to produce huge amounts of your own antibodies to fight the rabies virus. The shots can be stopped only if the animal has been captured, killed and tested for rabies and found not to have the disease. If you can safely trap the suspect bat for testing, do so. Failing that, you should always undergo the entire course of treatment, unpleasant though it may seem. Failure to do so may result in inadequate protection against the virus. Symptoms of rabies will progress from fever, fatigue and worsening pain at the site of the bite, followed by a "hyper" feeling, tendency to overreact to noises

In the U.S. and Canada, most cases of rabies are found in wild animals. . . . A variety of animals can transmit the disease which is found most commonly in skunks, fox, raccoons and bats with an occasional coyote, bobcat or other carnivore thrown in for good measure. Rabid bats have been reported in every U.S. state except Alaska and Hawaii. . . .

and physical sensation, and excessive sweating and salivation. Finally, the throat muscles spasm and close, making it impossible to swallow or breathe, leading to death. (Now you see why the kid had to shoot Old Yeller!)

The bottom line: don't wait for signs of rabies to show up. By then it'll be too late. Treatment is of no value once symptoms appear and they're liable to be misunderstood...the people around you will think you're on drugs and ignore or mishandle your condition.

The instructions described above apply even to the most local, small-scale caving trip, but what does all of this mean to the long-distance traveller? Say you're getting ready to head out on a long-awaited expedition to the deepest cave in Mexico, a multi-week-long trip, miles from home, telephones and hospitals...what do you do then? It is possible to receive preventative rabies treatment—much like a tetanus “booster”—before you leave. Such treatment consists of three shots of the vaccine

spread out over 28 days, so plan ahead.

If you get bitten by a potentially rabid animal, you must still see a doctor as soon as possible for more shots of the vaccine. Never assume you're completely protected; the preliminary treatment will just slow down the progress of the disease, an important precaution if you can't reach medical treatment right away. For future prevention, booster shots can be obtained every two years if needed. Approximately 18,000 people per year receive such pre-exposure prophylaxis. However, for those of us who cave only two-to-three times over the summer and never leave our home state, it's probably not worth the inconvenience or cost.

To summarize, when evaluating your level of risk, it's important to consider how much caving you do and how far afield you're likely to travel, in terms both of mileage and access to quick,

reliable medical treatment. Although rare, rabies is a terrible disease which attacks the brain, and can kill. Even so, it is entirely preventable!

It's always a good idea to discuss any proposed vaccine treatments with your doctor, especially if you have a specific medical condition, are on other medication, or have exhibited allergic reactions to vaccines in the past.

If the onset of symptoms or other illness after a caving trip lands you in the local emergency room, always explain to the physician on duty that you're a caver, followed by specifics on when you were last in a cave and what happened. This is an important part of your medical history and may provide the key to identifying your illness.

For more information about rabies, you can call the Center for Disease Control's 24-hour hotline (404-332-4555).

National Park Service Terminates Lechuguilla Cave Project, Inc. Agreement

In a letter dated April 30, 1992, Carlsbad Caverns National Park Superintendent Wallace B. Elms formally announced the termination of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Park and the Lechuguilla Cave Project, Inc. (LCPI). Superintendent Elms' action comes following long-standing reports of strife within the LCPI and between the LCPI and the Park.

In taking this action, Superintendent Elms made a point of thanking all cavers who have worked in Lechuguilla Cave, including those who have worked under LCPI since its inception. Superintendent Elms stated their contributions are “recognized and appreciated!” The following points are excerpted directly from Superintendent Elms letter.

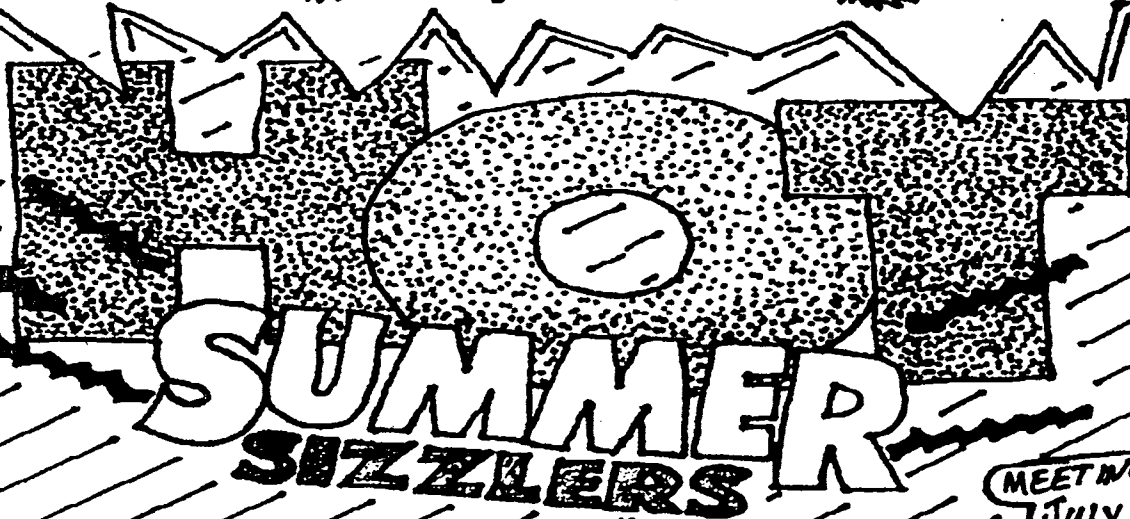
“1. The MOU with LCPI is being terminated. Among the reasons for the termination are: a) Questions raised by the LCPI President about the validity of the MOU because it was signed by John Patterson, Secretary, Lechuguilla Cave Project, Inc. and continued disagreement with the interpretation of the MOU; b) Lack of timely response to the park's verbal and written requests for survey notes and digital data over a one-year period; c) Failure to furnish the park with current LCPI membership/participation lists; d) Resignation of three of the seven LCPI Board members; e) Inadequate cooperation with other park cooperators, as well as lack of clear indication that cooperation between the LCPI leadership and the NPS would improve.

“2. Cooperation between the park and cavers will continue. For the time being, the park itself will organize and conduct exploration, surveying, and scientific expeditions which of necessity will have to be scaled back in size and scope.

“3. Other options and alternatives for exploration and surveying will be considered and evaluated in the near future. The park now has 80 known caves and some exciting new discoveries in Carlsbad Cavern as well as in Lechuguilla Cave. The National Park Service is responsible for managing all of these cave resources in a manner that will assure their preservation for the benefit of future generations, as well as being enjoyed by those using them today. We welcome assistance from all individuals and organizations who are interested in helping us do that. However, all cooperators and those interested in cooperating must remember, along with all park employees, that the park and its resources belong to all present and future residents of the United States and are not owned or managed for the benefit of any one group.”

GROTTO

LOTTO



MEETING
July 14th

RUSSELL HILL

ANNOUNCED
IN OZARK
AND OTHER
GROTTO
PUBLICATIONS!

DON'T BE A
CAVE WENIEE
BE AT THE
GROTTO
MEETING!

BOB & BOB ANOUNCES A DRAWING

TO INCREASE YOUR CAVING EQUIPMENT LIST.

RUSSELL WILL BE SELLING TICKETS @ \$1.00 EA. OR 7 TICKETS FOR \$5.00 OR 15 TICKETS FOR \$10.00 FOR DRAWINGS HELD AT THE MAVERICK GROTTO MEETING FOR A LIST OF "FAB-U-LUS" ITEMS. BOB & BOB HAS SOLD A LOT OF GREAT STUFF TO MAVERICK GROTTO AT VERY DISCOUNTED PRICES TO HELP US INCREASE OUR GROTTO BANK ACCOUNT AND TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE AT THE 2ND TUES. MEETINGS. ALMOST A PRIZE WINNER FOR EACH TICKET PURCHASE. HOW ABOUT HIGH QUALITY SCUBA FINS, T-SHIRTS, POSTERS, LIGHTS, CYLUME LIGHT STICKS, BUMPER STICKERS, ... A GREAT SHOT AT A COFFEE TABLE SIZE BOOK ON OZARK CAVES, ... AND HOW ABOUT CAVE MASTER CAVING HELMENTS? IF THIS "GROTTO LOTTO" DON'T GET CAVERS TO THE MEETING, WE HAVE FOUND A PLACE THAT WILL SELL DISCOUNT EXPLOSIVES!

Copyright c 1992, THE MAVERICK GROTTTO.

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.

REPRINTING ARTICLES: Internal organizations of the NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to the author, as will be stated in the byline) first appearing in THE MAVERICK BULL, if proper credit is given and complete copy of the publication if delivered to the editor of THE MAVERICK BULL at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor at the address herein.

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 one free issue 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.

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 Butch Fralia (817/346-2039) 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.

CHAIRMAN: Butch Fralia
3412 Walton Ave.
Fort Worth, Tx, 76133
(817)346-2039

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ed Young
3030 Oak Ridge Place
Grand Prairie, Tx, 75051
(214)262-8188

SECRETARY/EDITOR: Dale Ellison
1208 Dan Gould Rd.
Arlington, Tx, 76017
(817)473-0463

TREASURER: Jimmy Thomas
3705 Bluebonnet Circle
Weatherford, Tx, 76087
(817)599-8278

CAVE RESCUE: CALL COLLECT (512)686-0234

