
THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO

Volume 9 Issue 2

February, 1995



Susie Giles descending Guaguas

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of The National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed 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 stated in the byline) first appearing in *The Maverick Bull* if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of *The Maverick Bull* at the address herein.

Exchanges: The Maverick Grotto will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact the editor.

Complementary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free

issue to persons interested in becoming members.

Subscription Rates: Subscription rates are \$15.00 per year for non-members and free for members.

Membership Policy: Any individual with interests, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of The Maverick Grotto 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 located less than one mile west of Loop 820 and next to K-Mart. The time is 7:00 p.m., and the food is good.

Carbide: Grotto carbide is available at the meeting if prior arrangements are made. Carbide is free for the asking. Contact Russell Hill at 220-7108 or Butch Fralia at 346-2039 for more information.

Library: Support your Grotto Library. Russell Hill will be accepting books and magazines 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:

Mike Anderson
532 Arroyo Dr.
Fort Worth, TX. 76108
(817) 448-9764

Vice-Chairman:

Michael Nelson
7232 Harwick Ln.
N. Richland Hills, TX. 76180
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(817) 292-7722

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513 Valley Park
Garland, TX. 75243
(214)271-8147

Cave Rescue: Call collect:
(512) 686-0234

Photo Credits

This month's cover photo was taken by Clark Giles of his wife Susie Giles rapelling the 500 foot drop into Hoya De Las Guaguas on their recent trip to Mexico.

Minutes for the January Meeting

The January meeting informally began at 7 p.m. The business portion was called to order at 7:37 by Grotto President Mike Anderson.

New visitors:

Nancy and Gene Cushion from BCI.

Announcements:

The annual grotto dues are now due.

The D/FW grotto has a new newsletter editor - Mike Pearson

Old Business:

The lightbulb that was broken at last month's meeting was replaced at a cost of \$21.

T-shirts are still available.

New Business:

None.

Trip reports:

Jay Jorden, Steve Dalton, and Clark and Susie Giles trekked down to Mexico over the Christmas/New Year's break.

Mike Pearson did some Arkansas caving.

Mike Anderson went to Three Fingers and Wonderland.

Chad Fenner is coordinating the Maverick and D/FW participation in a multi-grotto Easter trip to Three Mile Hill.

Program

The program was an informative presentation by Nancy Cushion from BCI, including slides, charts, and even

Editors Ramblings

Happy February!

Well, it's kind of a small issue this month. No trip reports turned in. I guess nobody went caving over the holidays. I did manage to get a cool picture from Clark Giles of his wife Susie descending into Hoya De Las Guaguas. I thought it would make a cool cover.

Speaking of cool covers, the January issue of SpeleoSpace, the Greater Houston Grotto newsletter (as opposed

to the Not-so-great Houston Grotto?), has a full-color photo of Pico de Candela taken by David Locklear. Maybe we'll try to squeeze in a color cover sometime this year.

Don't forget about the Easter trip coming up the 15th and 16th of April. Spots are filling up fast. I talked to Charles Haskett of the Greater Houston Grotto and he said that their permits were filling up also. I'm also expecting some NTSS folks to sign up

as well (Their newsletter comes out a week earlier, usually.), so if you wait 'til the last minute to sign up you may be taking your chances.

This trip is one of my favorite trips of the year and, trust me, it's a lotta fun. Its an opputurnity to go caving in one of the richest cave areas with people from all over this part of the country. Don't miss it.

-CF

February Meeting

The February meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 14 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m.

This month's program will be a video presentation from the NSS library. We have requested "Spirit of Exploration"

and, depending on availability and timing, we'll see it.

Call for Programs and Program Preferences

Mike Nelson, our grotto vice-chairman and program coordinator, has asked that everyone think about what they would like to see in the way of meeting programs. Would you rather see slides from other members caving trips; outside speakers brought

in to speak on cave-related topics, educational presentations on subjects like ropes, knots, lighting, conservation, ecology, biology, photography, rapelling/ascending, geology, etc.; videos on any/all of the same subjects; or what? You tell us

(or at least Mike); we want this to be your meeting.

Additionally, if you have any slides, presentations, videos, or ideas of things you could do as a program, let Mike know so we can all share your experience and knowledge.

Texas' Newest Grotto Gets Off the Ground

By Alvis Hill

Texas is a big state. REALLY big. Texas cavers are well known for traveling all over the state in search of caves: from the east (Arkansas) to the west (New Mexico); from the north (Oklahoma) to the south (Mexico). However, those same cavers have the hardest time making grotto meetings.

Cavers who aren't linked up to a grotto find themselves isolated from their caving buddies. And isolation isn't conducive to productive caving.

So, when you're a caver and live in, say, Waco, Brownwood or Cross Plains, it gets real lonesome because the nearest grottos are in Austin or the D/FW area. Central Texas cavers

have had to settle for long-distance grotto meetings and spots on mailing lists. Some cavers fade from view simply because they lose touch with their peers.

In recent years, one of the best opportunities for Central Texas cavers to "stay in touch" with caving has been the Colorado Bend Project. It's fairly

close to home and affords the opportunity to do some caving and make a productive contribution at the same time. In addition, we've had the opportunity to develop many quality friendships with like-minded individuals.

As we meet at Colorado Bend, some of us have kicked around the idea of forming a new grotto somewhere in the vicinity. It sounded like a good idea, but there was some concern that a new grotto might become too closely identified with the Project. The more we talked, the more we realized that a new grotto wouldn't have to be affiliated with Colorado Bend at all. There were cavers out there that just needed to be "tied in" somewhere.

So, on August 6, 1994, a group of nine cavers met at Mr. Gatti's in

Lampasas to officially discuss forming a new grotto. In October, 13 cavers met as an organizational committee to work out the bylaws and NSS paperwork. In November, we approved the bylaws and became the Central Texas Grotto. (Still waiting to hear back from the NSS.)

The Central Texas Grotto exists to offer cavers some camaraderie, as well as to educate the general public as to what caving is all about. Conservation and safe caving practices are of the utmost concern. We plan to recruit novice cavers, as well as offer training at all levels of expertise. So far, we have about 20 members, with several visitors at our last meeting. (Dues are only \$5.00, since we are not planning a newsletter at this time, just a quick card to announce meetings.)

We are currently planning an Earth

Day project, as well as a Grotto caving trip, so things are beginning to develop nicely. If anyone out there knows a Central Texas caver who needs to "get connected," they can contact us at the address and phone number below:

The Central Texas Grotto
c/o Alvis Hill
1202 N. 7th
Temple, TX 76501
(817) 773-5940

P.S. If anyone would like to join the grotto by mail, please make the check out to me or Pat Copeland, our secretary. We don't have a grotto account yet.

STATE COURT SENTENCE IN CAVERN BOMB THREAT TO START JANUARY 1, 1995

News Release
National Park Service
December 27, 1994
By Bob Crisman

The person who was arrested and pled guilty in State District Court for making a bomb threat at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in December 1993 will begin serving a 90-day jail term on January 1, 1995. Possible federal charges in the case are still pending.

A joint investigation of the case by National Park Service rangers and the Eddy County Sheriff's Office led to the

arrest on January 21, 1994 and guilty plea on September 19, 1994 by Yolanda Carrasco, a former employee of the park concessioner. The Cavern Supply Company, which operates the concession, cooperated with law enforcement personnel in the investigation.

Under State law, a bomb threat is a fourth degree felony, and Carrasco could have received up to an 18-month sentence and as much as a \$10,000 fine.

The bomb threat was costly for the park, taxpayers and the concessionaire, as well as being very

disruptive for park visitors, some of whom may have been on a once-in-a-lifetime vacation.

Many visitors had to be turned away on the day of the threat, or were evacuated before they could see the cavern, since it was necessary to be sure there was no bomb as a safety precaution.

Costs to the park and taxpayers, which have not been recovered, ran into thousands of dollars because of having to bring in a military team with a bomb-sniffing dog, employee overtime expenses, lost fees, and loss of revenue at the concession and other

Proposed BLM Policy

Submitted to Cavers Digest by belski@acca.nmsu.edu

The following is an analysis of the proposed BLM policy governing recreational caving permits.

Fees for permit to enter BLM "special

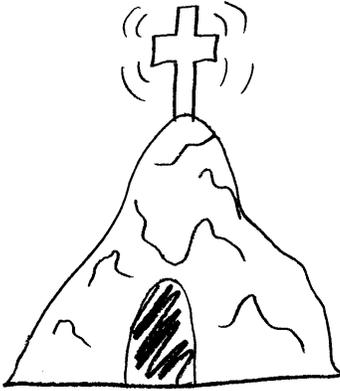
tion permits will be required.

State: New Mexico
District: Roswell
Resource Areas: Roswell and Carlsbad

List of caves:

Crystal Cave
Jarnigan No. 2 Cave (sic)
Crocket Cave (sic)
Lost Cave
Doc Brito Cave
Little Manhole Cave
Endless Cave

Easter On the Hill (Three Mile, that is)



Christ spent the first Easter weekend in a hole in the side of a mountain. Now you can, too. The Ft. Worth Maverick and the D/FW grottos join other Texas grottos, including NTSS in Wichita Falls and the Greater Houston grottos, for a multi-grotto family caving trip to Three Mile Hill. This is the fourth year for the trip (first that the Maverick and D/FW grottos have been involved in) and has been a smashing success in the past. The trip is open to cavers and non-cavers alike. Non-cavers can enjoy camping in one of the most beautiful national forests around. Someone will be in the campsite 24 hours a day. Cavers will enjoy caving in one of the greatest cave areas in the world. Everyone will enjoy the fun and camaraderie that this annual trip is famous for. We'll camp just this side of Dragon's Teeth, so four-wheel-drive is not necessary to get there. Contact Chad Fenner (817) 292-7722 for reservations and

- McKittrick Cave
- Fort Stanton Cave
- Sand Cave
- Wind Cave
- Torgac Cave
- Algerita Blossom Cave (ABC)

1. Direct and indirect cost to the government

The direct cost to the government would be for signing at each cave and a volunteer self-service pay station at caves which are checked on a weekly basis. There would be an additional workload for on-board personnel to collect fees at cave sites where there are self-service pay tubes. There would be an additional workload by on-board personnel associated with processing the permits, receiving and accounting for money derived from the fee collection and tracking volunteer hours. Additional equipment such as locks, lock boxes and money bags, will be needed for the collection process.

The indirect costs to the government would be administrative staff time to supervise accounting, reporting and auditing functions. It could take the recreation planner an additional 5-10 minutes to derive the additional information at the time the permit is issued.

2. Benefits to the recipient

There will be less "no shows" for people who obtain a free permit and cancel the date assigned to them to enter the cave. There could be an increase of volunteer time from the caving community on BLM projects to obtain waivers of fees to enter the caves. Funding from permits would

provide funding for work projects associated with the caves. In a pay-as-you-go society, the cavers will know that their support for the program, through fees, will go directly into the management of caves, through the 1230 and 1231 accounts. Of the amount collected, 15 percent will be immediately available to the Resource Area to be used in the cave program.

3. Comparable Recreation Fees Charged by Other Federal and Non-Federal Public Agencies within New Mexico and Bordering States

Carlsbad Caverns National Park charges \$8 per minor and \$12 per adult for a ranger-guided tour of Spider, Slaughter and Ogle Caves. Because of the changes in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the U. S. Forest Service is in the beginning stages of looking into charging for cave entry.

4. Economic and administrative feasibility of fee collection

The average number of cave permits issued within the District is 500 permits per fiscal year. The effect of a fee permit may reduce this number of permits per year within the District. Cavers may use other caves to ply their activity. This may help reduce wear and tear on the caves, thus letting the cave animals reclaim traveled portions of the caves. Collection would be done by the administrative staff within the Resource Areas. In cases where a fee pay tube is located at the cave, fees will be collected by a resource person who

regularly works the area. In the case of Fort Stanton Cave, the administrative and maintenance people from Valley of Fires Recreation Area will collect the fees. The fees will be administered with 1230 and 1231 funds from Valley of Fires Recreation Area. Outdoor Recreation. Planners at each Resource Area will facilitate the paperwork for the application and permit process. Existing administrative personnel will collect the fees from the public and complete the accounting process. Overall revenue potential for fee collection could be a minimum \$4,950 if 250 permits are maintained for the fiscal year. Of the above amount, 15 percent of the fees collected will be immediately available to the Resource Area collecting the fees. The above figure is derived as follows:

250 permits times \$5.00 per application fee = \$1,200
 250 Permits times \$3.00 per participant times an average of 5 people per permit = \$3,750

TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUE
 \$4,950

Caves which require a BLM authorized trip leader to lead the caving trip (such as Torgac Cave) will be charged a flat fee of \$30.00 per trip. There may be some reduction of revenues due to Friends groups, educational, scientific and volunteers groups exempt from fees. If an individual volunteers five hours on a BLM authorized work project, the daily use fee will be waived for that individual for one day of caving.

5. Public policy or interest served

The cave use within the District is mainly from New Mexico, the surrounding states of Texas, Colorado and Arizona. A small portion of the visitors range from all over the United States and foreign countries. The cost of the permit system will be borne by the special interest caving groups and independent cavers. The existing services include maintained roads to the caves and cave gates at each managed cave which prevent unauthorized access to the caves.

6. Other pertinent factors

Fee collection will achieve better protection for the caves through improvement or replacement of old cave gates for increased security. Locks and equipment can be purchased through the permit fees. Small research projects and cost share agreements can be funded. The fee system may spread the visitor use out to other areas and lessen the impact on the caves which are intensively managed.

Field recommendation on implementation of entrance fees:

Entrance Fee Recommended/Not Recommended: RECOMMENDED

Implementation Date: (Not Specified)

Entrance Fee: \$3.00

Application Fee: \$5.00

Rationale: Based upon the legislative criteria summary noted above, it is in the government's best interest to charge fees for caving for caves listed as "special areas" and Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA).

Signed

Tony L. Ferguson for Roswell District Manager 11/15/94

William C. Calkins, New Mexico State Director 12/20/94

The public is invited to provide feedback at the following address.

Bureau of Land Management
1717 West 2nd Street
Roswell, New Mexico, 88201-2019
ATTN. Cave Entrance Fee Collection Policy

THE TEXAS CAVER WANTS YOU

Deadlines for the March, 1995
issue are January 15, 1995.

Send your articles, trip reports,
cartoons, photos, and general
comments to Noble Stidham,
P.O. Box 1094, Lubbock, TX 79408

Editorial Response: This topic has been the subject of much debate recently on the Cavers Digest. It seems that everyone has an opinion. These opinions have hit on everything from the government's role in managing "public lands" to the Republican take-over in the House of Representatives. I'll not try and list every viewpoint, but suffice it to say, whatever you believe, someone out there agrees with you.

I personally believe that there is no harm in charging small fees for entering caves. Nearly everything I do requires some sort of fee, especially if I am required to obtain a permit to do it.

In spite of this, I believe that there are several flaws in the above proposal analysis. First off, government agencies are notorious for mis-estimating the cost/revenue impacts of a given decision. I do not believe that they have taken into account theft and vandalism that is sure to happen when it is revealed that there will be cash in an unwatched, self-service pay station near each of these caves. Now, non-cavers will be trying to crash the gates for reasons more than "just wanting to see the cave". I also have a hard time accepting that the only indirect cost to the government will be an additional 5-10 minutes per permit for the

recreation planner.

Additionally, I don't feel that the litigation aspects have been fully explored. I'm not a legal expert, but it seems like the courts are more likely to award judgments against a landowner in the case of a personal injury case, if the landowner collected a fee from the plaintiff to be on the land.

But even if the revenue estimates are correct, it seems like a lot of work to collect an additional \$750 a year (15% of \$5000) for cave improvements. I'll bet they could get that from simply asking for donations from cavers who request permits.

It also seems that they are comparing these fees to those collected at CCNP for caves where a ranger guide is provided. Unless BLM plans to offer ranger guides, they are comparing apples and oranges.

Again, to summarize, I don't have any problem with paying a small fee to enter a cave. I've even done it at certain CCNP caves. I do feel that there will not be the anticipated payback associated with this decision and the question of "Is the effort required worth the small gains?" should be carefully weighed.

Chad Fenner (Nobody in particular)

*Other grotto members are invited to editor.
put their 2 cents worth in by submitting
their written opinion to the newsletter*

" CARLSBAT CAVERS" HONORED FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE AT CCNP

News Release
National Park Service
By Bob Crisman
January 18, 1995

The "Carlsbat Cavers" organization of Carlsbad, NM has been honored for donating over 2,500 hours of service at Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP). The group has also received the 1994 Organization Award from the Keep New Mexico Beautiful Foundation.

Receiving individual recognition awards, and leading with the most hours of volunteer service with the group at Carlsbad Caverns, are Larry and Phyllis Weston, both of whom have worked over 600 hours each at the park.

The "Carlsbat Cavers" group began working at CCNP two years ago and

has helped not only with cleanup and cave restoration work but also with educational programs and off-trail cave trips during busy holiday periods. In 1994, the group donated a total of 2,882 hours, with 1,590 hours in educational and interpretive activities, and 1,292 hours in cave restoration projects. In addition, the group has helped with marking trail routes, alarm system repairs, vandalism surveys, producing maps, and roving patrols to supplement available ranger staff.

The number of volunteers working as "Carlsbat Cavers" has varied from 14 to 28 people, but more volunteers are needed and welcome. Anyone interested in working with the group can contact Phyllis Weston at 505-887-6790, or Ranger Carla Beasley of the park staff at 505-785-2232, extension 0 for the operator. While there is no

salary involved, volunteers receive the satisfaction of doing fulfilling work in one of the world's greatest caves, and also have the satisfaction of knowing that they have helped preserve one of the nation's greatest treasures for the benefit and enjoyment of park visitors. During 1995, the group plans to do more preventive and long-term remedial projects.

"The park is fortunate to have the Westons and others in the group who have contributed so much," stated Superintendent Frank J. Deckert. The Westons moved to Carlsbad, NM from California and operate Eddor Electronics located on National Park Highway.

LECHUGUILLA CAVE PASSES 80 MILE MARK WITH OVER 11 MILES ADDED IN 1994

News Release
National Park Service
December 29, 1994
by Bob Crisman

A total of 14 exploration and science trips were conducted in Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park in 1994, adding 11.2 miles to the cave's known length. As 1994 ends, and 1995 begins, the mapped length of Lechuguilla Cave stands at 80.4 miles.

Less than 10 years ago, in May 1986, when a major exploration breakthrough occurred, Lechuguilla Cave was thought to be less than 250 feet long, or not even as long as a football field! Now, it is the third longest cave in the United States and the fifth longest cave in the world.

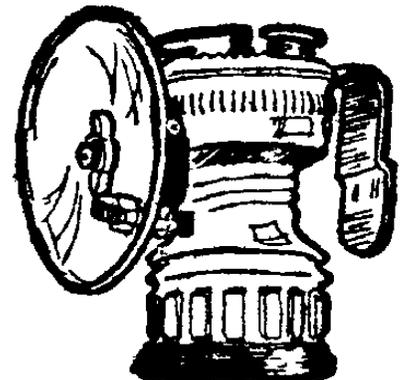
Discovery of a loop closure error in

survey records has resulted in a correction of Lechuguilla Cave's depth, which is now 1,566 feet. However, it still remains the deepest limestone cave in the U.S. and is exceeded in depth only by a lava cave in Hawaii, which is over 2,000 feet deep.

Among the scientific trips into Lechuguilla Cave in 1994 were visits by a team of NASA scientists in April and again the week of December 11th. The NASA scientists are studying some of the 600 strains of microbes found in the cave for clues to potential life forms beneath the surface of planet Mars. Other scientists are studying the cave's microbes for potential medical applications, including possible treatments for cancer.

NPS officials who are responsible

for management and approval of trips into Lechuguilla plan to approve six trips into the cave in 1995 for exploration, along with several additional science trips.



Calendar Of Events

February 10-12, 1995, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039

February 17-19, 1995, TSA Winter Meeting - Near Camp Wood - Contact Doug Allen (512)476-9031.

February 25-26, 1995, Powells Cave Resurvey - Contact Terry Holsinger (512)443-4241,
George Veni (210)558-4403.

March 10-12, 1995, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039

April 7-9, 1995, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039

April 15-16, 1995, Easter on Three Mile Hill - Contact Chad Fenner (817) 292-7722

May 12-14, 1995, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039

June 9-11, 1995, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039

July 17-21, 1995, NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia. Contact Carol Tideman, (410) 792-0742.

August 3-9, 1996, NSS Convention, Salida, Colorado. Contact Skip Withrow, (303) 693-0997.

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