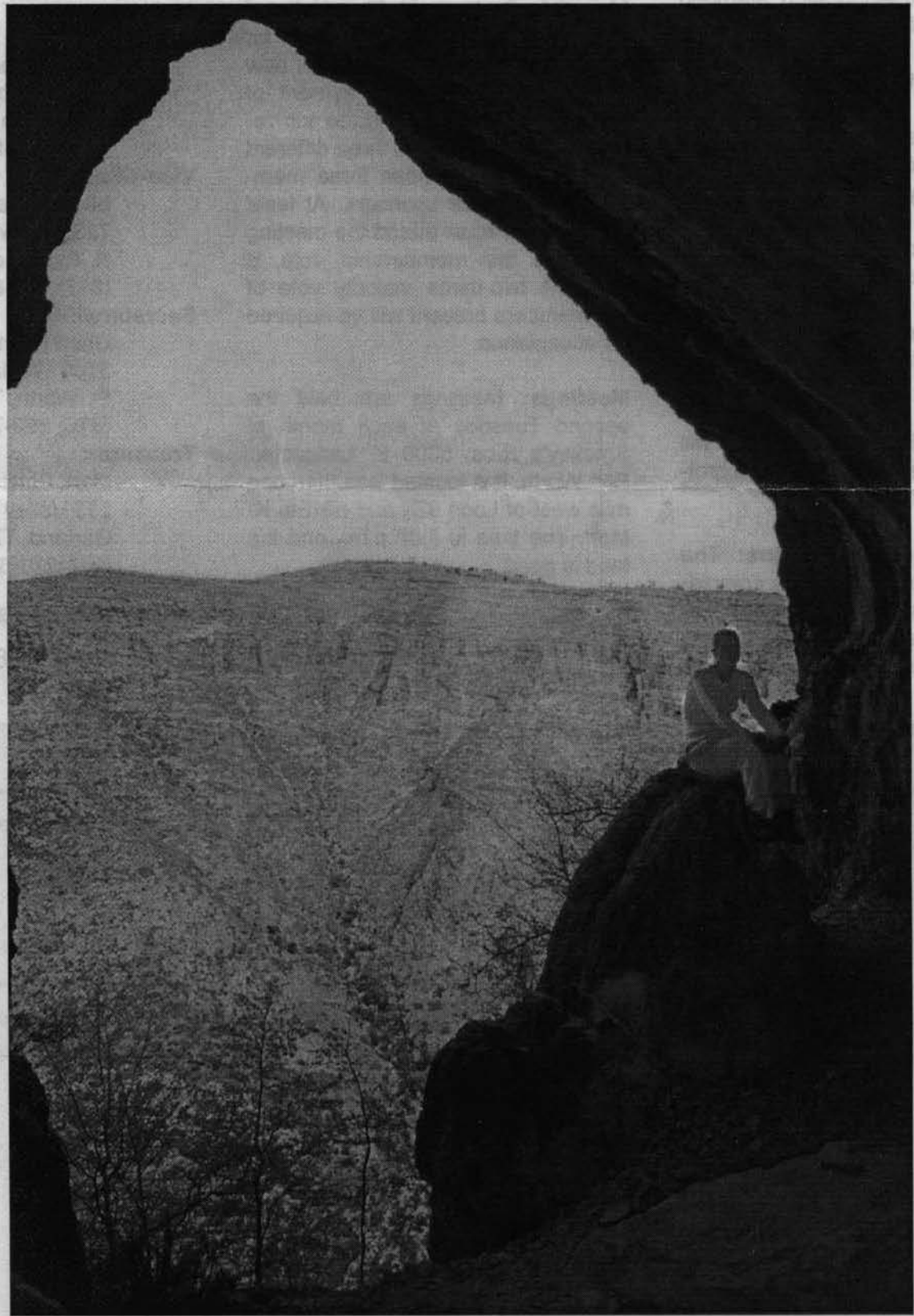

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTO



Volume 9 Issue 5

May 1995



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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 pro-

vide 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.

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Photo Credits

This month's cover photo is of one of Rachel Shelton sitting in the entrance of Pink Dragon. It was taken by Shanon Seals on the recent Easter trip to the Guads. Next month we'll have a trip report from that trip.
Page 5: The helectite column in Hell Below, taken by Shanon Seals. See article inside.

Other Credits

Editor: Chad Fenner

Editor-in-charge-of-English: Lisa Fenner

Minutes For the April Meeting

Maverick Grotto, Apr. 11, 1995

The April meeting informally began around 7 p.m. The business portion was called to order at 7:30 by Grotto President Mike Anderson.

Visitors:

Pam Jones

Announcements:

Ownership of Robber Barons cave is transferring to Texas Cave Management Association.

Old Business:

The Rites of Spring party was a success with about 25 people in attendance.

The issue of grotto gear was discussed. After a lengthy discussion, we decided that between the various members, we had several sets of helmets/lights and other basic gear available to borrow. It was decided that what would be a better use of funds would be to have Ernest Parker do another vertical class.

New Business:

Since Ernest has not done a vertical class in three years, we decided to approach him about doing one. The grotto will absorb any related costs. Butch Fralia was elected to approach Ernest.

Trip Reports:

Donna Anderson went to "Cascade Caverns" and "Cave Without a Name."

Butch's monthly trip to Colorado Bend State Park resulted in the finding of three previously lost caves (lost since '88), but no other incidents.

The Easter trip is this weekend!

The business meeting was then brought to a close.

This month's program was a slide presentation from the NSS library on Cueva Cheve, narrated by Mike Nelson.

Editor's Ramblings

Happy May!

Yea! We got trip reports. We got one from Pat Copeland from a January trip and one that is the first of what I hope will be many from the recent Easter trip. (Do y'all remember your writing assignments?)

The Easter trip was a huge success. From my point of view, I learned a few things about organizing large trips like this. One, find someone to organize food. Did anyone notice that the Houston camp managed group food for a group size of 23?! And best of all, Susan Herpin, the Houston organizer, did nothing. She found someone else, Charles Haskett, to organize it. I guess we'll have to kidnap Charles and make him live in Ft. Worth before next year.

The second thing I learned was to arrange for a designated trip leader for each trip. Once we got there, a lot of people started swapping and dropping out of permits. That was O.K. for the most part, but in two cases it

left the rest of the party without an experienced trip leader. Fortunately, everything worked out anyway, but next time I want to be better prepared.

The last thing I learned was to ensure that everyone understands all the rules. I found out that some cavers from our group went to check out a cave on a day that we didn't have a permit for. The Houston group has an extensive hand-out that they gave to each person on the trip that covered all the standard do's and don'ts. Since I want this trip to be open to beginners, and I can't be with each beginner in every cave, I need to ensure that each person is well-informed. Also, having designated trip leaders will help that as well.

All in all, it was a good, fun trip, with many first time Guads cavers. Next year, I'll just be a bit better organized.

Compuserve gets World Wide Web access! For all you non-nerd

types, the World Wide Web (WWW) is an Internet product that allows you to visit various "home pages" around the world. Each home page may cover any topic or even a number of topics. It allows you to read information, view pictures, and even listen to sounds related to the topic. Many even have links to other home pages on the same or similar topics. The available topics range from various music artists, to cartoons like Calvin and Hobbes, to businesses like Southwest Airlines and Ford Motor Company. There are even home pages dedicated to caving! In fact there are a bunch of them. I've made a list of some of them in this month's newsletter. Many of them have links to others that I have not listed. If you have Compuserve and want more info, call me. I understand that Prodigy already has WWW and America Online will have it soon.

-CF

The May Meeting

The May meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 9 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. This

month's program will be either a video ordered from the NSS library or Blockbuster, or a Mike Anderson slide

show. (We didn't know at press time.) In either case, it ought to be a good meeting.

WhiteFace Cave

by Pat Copeland

Cave: WhiteFace Cave San Saba Co.

Cavers: Bill Tucker, Todd Tucker, Scott Sirkel, and Pat Copeland

Date: Jan. 7, 1995,

Bill had called about a possible trip into a cave that he had talked to Ray Mathews about. Bill told me that he and his son, Todd, were cave divers, but the caves they had been into were caves they just walked up to and entered from the surface. He has a dive shop in Grand Prairie where they train and sell diving equipment. I told him that this would not be the case for this particular cave and advised him that he should come down and see the cave before he made plans to do any diving in the cave.

After talking to the rancher, the trip was arranged for Saturday.

Bill, Todd, and Scott arrived at the Dairy Queen in San Saba, then we all drove to the ranch. The dirt roads were in pretty good shape after all of the rain and moisture from the snow they had during the week.

Arriving at the cave, Bill was amazed at the unusual location of it. Most people think of a sink hole or maybe in the side of a hill or mountain, but the entrance to White Face is located in a group of small trees with a circular 10 foot diameter hole located almost on top of the hill.

Bill secured the rope for our descent down into the 20-foot sink. From there I went down another 20 feet to a safe spot and waited on the others so I could inform them of the safe route down the 100-foot slope that consisted of clay, guano, and loose rock conglomerate. Huge boulders on the top of the 45-degree slope are perched on clay and small rocks and on one trip a caver received a broken rib from loose rocks falling. They sat very still 'til I reached the bottom. Bill was next, followed by Scott and Todd.

After everyone was down the slope, I pointed to a small hole a little to the left and crawled through. Bill

followed and called back to Scott, "This is a little small Scott, so you come first, just in case you have a problem, and Todd will follow." Scott was a little bigger than Bill and Todd.

After getting through the Bone Hole, they followed me down holes and through the breakdown. The Saddle Rock makes everyone slow down going around it. Finally we reached the Guardian (big stalagmite) and headed down the rocks covered with guano. The cave was unusually dripping. We finally reached the water and found it was at its usual level. The water was near the edge of Rock Island and it was so clear that it looked like a mirror. The water was turquoise colored where it was the deepest. It is hard to describe how beautiful the water is at this depth of the cave. I was checking the water for the right hole while Bill put his bathing suit on and his mask and slowly eased his way into the water. Ray had told him about his two previous dives and said the best area was the first one, but when Ray made his dive the water was about 15 or 20 feet lower than it was now, but I found the spot where he first dove.

Bill was not disappointed, for he had high hopes of exploring this underwater cave -- this is what he does best. After Bill scooped it out, Todd wanted to look for himself. Todd is Bill's 23-year-old son and has been diving with his dad and mother since he was five years old, so he was well qualified. He also was excited about exploring the underwater part of the cave. Scott and I sat and watched while they checked it out.

Todd said he saw lots of small white cave shrimp and isopods, more than had been seen in other trips. Finally they were satisfied and started thinking about how they would be able to get their tanks and gear down to this level. Many options were discussed and one was to head back up.

When we arrived at the bottom of the slope, Scott decided he would wait on us while I took Bill and Todd to check out Stalactite Hall. The huge mountain of bat guano seems to grow

about a foot or more every year. The rocks were really wet with the damp guano but carefully we made our way up over and down to the Hall. I could quickly see the Greeter was cleansed of most of the guano that had been there the previous trip. The water was not just dripping, it was running off the ceiling and down into the rimstone dams. It was exciting to see the formations with so much water dripping from them. Near the Shell formation we could hear this gurgling sound of water trying to come out of the rocks above our heads.

The Hall was just beautiful. All the rimstone dams and pools were full of water and running down the edge. I went down further to check out the dry cave coral lake, but it was still the same: dry! The water seems to stop dripping before it reaches this part of the room. We all started the crawl back to the Greeter, up the guano-covered rocks, and up the Guano Hill to Scott.

The time had come for the trip up!!! Todd was sent up first, followed by Scott. There are two spots that are a little difficult, and Scott found them. I had put my Gibbs safety in my backpack just in case..... and it's a good thing I did, for Scott used it going up. When we all reached the top, Bill pulled up the rope while I coiled it.

We found my spare light that was left in the sink part of the cave. It was rusted and corroded, but at least it was still there.

Everyone quickly put on dry clothes! It always feels so good to get on clean, dry clothes even though your body is a little dirty. We discussed a possible date for a return trip to dive the waters below and see just what they will yield.

Bill suggested we drive back into San Saba and get something to eat. The Poor Boys Cafe has the best brisket I have ever eaten. (Sorry Hickory Stick.) The TV was on and the San Francisco 49s were beating up on the Chicago Bears 30 to 3. We talked awhile about what was in store for the diving trip. Bill was leaving for a trip to

Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, and to the Amazon Basin for two weeks, so it was decided to try for the last of February or the first of March.

I bid them farewell and headed back to Brownwood. Really had a great time taking them to their first dry caving trip, and made three new friends. Look forward to our next trip.

HELL BELOW AND BACK

by Chad Fenner

Cave: Hell Below

Cavers: John and Dawn Langevin, Shanon Seals, Chad Fenner

Date: April 15, 1995

I spent the previous three months prior to the Easter trip organizing the 10 permits, getting people signed up, making sure everyone was on at least one permit a day, and that every permit had six cavers on it. If you look at my original sign-up list, the only name

you'll see from the above list is Shanon's. As it turned out, three people cancelled prior to trip departure (less than 72 hours prior). Another agreed to switch permits so a different group would have an experienced trip leader. (Thanks, Troy!) A fifth person had a bad experience on rope and needed a confidence-building trip. (Hell Below ain't no confidence-building trip.) That left Shanon alone on a permit for one of the coolest caves in the Guads. (Except of course for Carlsbad, Lech, and, oh yes, Madonna.)

Being that I was the permit holder, I decided that I would take the opportunity to go back to Hell Below. Last time I went, my knee was giving me trouble, and I missed some stuff. The night before, we also asked Mark Porter if he wanted to go. The next morning, Shanon and I found out that Mark had made a store run. We waited a while, but finally decided to steal John and Dawn from the Hidden trip and go on. (Sorry, Mark.)

John and I had been to Hell Below, but Dawn and Shanon had not. (Although on Shanon's first trip to the Guads he managed to get on a Madonna trip with Mike Huber. This was Shanon's second trip to the Guads.) If you've never been there, Hell Below has a pretty tricky drop once you're past the horizontal entrance. John and I rigged the drop, then I went down while John talked Shanon and Dawn down. Fortunately neither had any problems. (Of course Shanon wouldn't have any problems. After doing the Madonna drop, Hell Below was a piece of cake. Did I mention that I've never been to Madonna?)

Since we got a late start, we decided to go ahead and have lunch at the bottom of the

drop. We then proceeded to the back of the cave.

Most of Hell Below is a series of parallel passageways that vary from 5 to 20 meters wide and 5 to 30 meters high. Most of the way the passage is split down the middle by a rather foreboding chasm. The ledge beside the chasm varies from wide and flat to narrow and lets-get-our-heart-rate-up sloping. There are several points where you have to climb over or around something with very little below you for quite a ways. There is very little straight walking passage, mostly climbing and boulder-hopping.

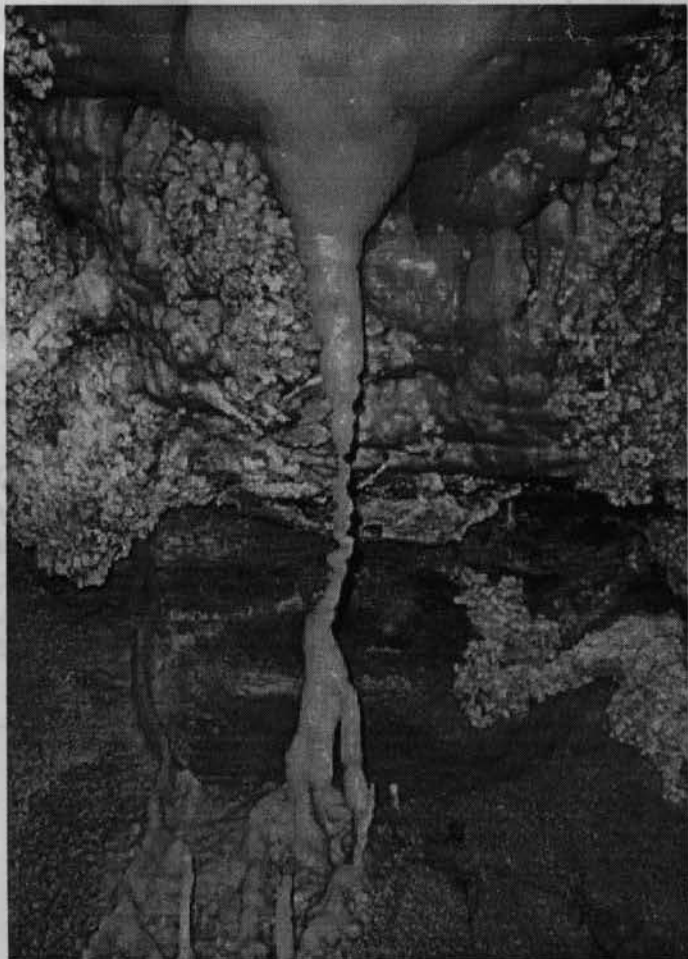
It is also very pretty. There are fabulous formations, incredible flowstone, and hordes of helectites. (Of course, the're not as fabulous as the formations Shanon saw in Madonna, but I'm not bitter)

The entrance to the back area is marked by what Kevin Glover calls "the most photographed formation in the Guads." It's a helectite column. It's really cool. Beyond that are three pristine, green pools of water. It's really an incredible sight. (Although from what I hear, its not as incredible as the Guardian formation Shanon saw in Madonna. Not that I would know.)

We stopped for a while for a photo op. In fact the entire trip was done at a pretty leisurely pace. There is so much to see and photograph.

On the trip back, Shanon and I stopped at the Gyp Joint, a gypsum passage with some incredibly pretty white formations in it. At the back of the Gyp Joint was some flagging tape blocking the passage. Beyond that we could see what looked like a snake-like formation, arching from the left wall down to the floor. (Shanon pointed out that the Snake Dancer formations in Madonna are much neater, though.)

We got back to the bottom of the drop and started up. The last part of the drop (or first part of the ascension) is really difficult to ascend, due to the lips and juts on the wall. It would be relatively simple to climb if it weren't for the snot-like consistency of the wall



covering. We all made it using a harness and a safety ascender, but it took a while. (I was suprised that it took Shanon so long. You would expect that someone who's been to Madonna could shimmy up something like this pretty fast.) The main drop is a 30-meter free ascend to a bolt where you then have to transfer to a safety line and stand on a ledge that really ain't there, then crawl through a 1-meter diameter portal to the bottom of the other drop. This time Shanon went first, then me, Dawn, and finally John. (After the 80-meter Madonna drop, Shanon had no problems coming up this one.) Dawn had a little trouble on the transfer point, but with me at the top, and John at the bottom, we talked her through it.

We used Mike Huber's method of pulling the rope completely out of the cave before bagging it. (How come Mike will take Shanon to Madonna on his first trip to the Guads, but has only gone with me to Hell Below, Wonderland, and the Pinks?)

When we got to the top we saw lights around where our vehicle was. Apparently we took longer than we were supposed to, and Mike Anderson and Mark Porter were coming to check on us.

It was a fun fourth trip to Hell Below. Maybe some day I'll have a first trip across the Dog Tooth Spars in Madonna.

1995 Texas Speleological Association Photo Salon

Here is a chance for all you photographers, experienced and inexperienced, to show some of your best cave or caving-related slides or prints. This year the TSA Photo Salon will be offering a \$25.00 cash prize for the "Best of Show" entrant, and film as a prize for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category. Although the TSA convention is focused on Texas and Mexico, all cave photographers and cave subjects are welcome. The categories will be as follows:

SLIDES A-- Single flash B-- Multiple

flash PRINTS C-- Black and White D-- Color.

Additional categories could be added depending on the entries.

Judging will take place prior to the convention. Please label all entries with the photographer's name. Any additional information you choose to include about each photo, such as the name of the cave, its location, or people in the photo will be helpful.

Entries should be sent to:

Susie Lasko
8222 Jamestown C-127
Austin, TX 78758

Deadline for entries is May 13, 1995.

Texas Speleological Survey Photo Archives

The TSS will initiate a new project at the forthcoming Texas Speleological Association Convention -- we will start building photo archives for the benefit of Texas cavers! TSS has served as the information and map archives for TSA since 1961. In producing the 1994 NSS Convention Guidebook, "The Caves and Karst of Texas," we started a nice photo collection with about 200 prints.

Ernie Garza has volunteered to donate some time at the convention to duplicating selected slides. He has a custom slide copier based on a color enlarger. This setup allows him to use color filtration to correct each lot of slide duplication film used. TSS will buy the film and processing.

We invite Texas cavers to bring some pre-selected slides to the TSA Convention for duplication. You will get them back the same weekend. We will handle your slides with care and make two or more duplicates of selected slides -- one for archival and one for a "loaner set" that can be loaned to TSA grottos for programs. The "Texas Caver" editors may use the slides for

publication. We will have someone there to take down data on the photographer, year of the photo, caption (if any), cave name (if possible), county, and names of people in the photo.

TSS is interested in the following types of slides: High-quality, aesthetic photos of Texas caves; cave entrances and other documentary photos; technically good, but not necessarily "beautiful" photos of cave resources such as archeology, biol-



ogy, geology, minerals, paleontology, hydrology, guano-mining gear, pictographs, etc.; historical photos, such as old caving scenes and important projects; examples of Texas karst landscapes.

We hope to duplicate at least 200 slides at this event. Further work may be planned at future TSA meetings if participation is good. While you're at it, please enter the TSA Photo Salon, which is being organized by Susie Lasko!

Inquiries about the TSS Photo Archives should be directed to:

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1995 Maverick Grotto

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The Cover Of The *NSS News*

by Frank Reid

(Published by permission)

tune: "The Cover of the Rolling Stone" by Dr. Hook

I'm a hard-core caver, I do owners a favor
'Cause they beg me to go in their hole.
I've done the world's deepest pit
and the world's longest crawl;
I'm loved everywhere I go.
I make all kinds of waves to save all kinds of caves
And I always pay my grotto dues.
And they really ought to put my picture
on the cover of the *NSS News*.

NSS News...

Gonna see my picture on the cover,
Gonna get my dad to hide it from my mother,
Doing all those dangerous things
on the cover of the *NSS News*.

I found virgin passage in commercial Mammoth Cave
And I mapped everywhere I went.
I cultivated speleo-political connections
with the East-Coast establish-ment.
I went to the board meeting in the big city,
I licked stamps for the money committee,
I told them my face would sure look pretty
On the cover of the *NSS News*.

(spoken:)

That's cave mud on my nose. It's from Lechuguilla.
Since you're a special friend, you may touch it.

I got a mile of PMI and a high-tech rack
for sliding down slippery slopes.
I got a 44-D blonde graduate student
that wants me to show her the ropes.
I go on international scientific caving expeditions
And Mixon gives me good reviews.
But I never did get my picture on the cover of the *NSS News*.

I beat claustrophobia and histoplasmosis,
There's so many fine things I've seen.
I've been just about every place a caver can go
Except "America's Caving Magazine."
I've been in *National Geographic* and Discovery Channel
and *Outside* didn't refuse.
But I just can't get my picture
on the cover of the *NSS News*.

CAVE-RELATED WEB SITES

Now that I finally have WWW access through CompuServe, I've found numerous cave-related, Web sites all over world with links to many more. Here's a spattering of what I've found:

US Speleology (Cavers digest archive, photos, clipart, software, very nice page, lots-o-stuff):

<http://speleology.yale.cs.edu>

NSS Cave Conservation Section:

<http://www.halcyon.com/samara/nsscems/>

NSS Human Sciences Section:

<http://www.halcyon.com/samara/nsshss/>

NSS '95 Blacksburg Convention (correction from March issue):

<http://sfbox.vt.edu:10021/B/balister/nss95.html>

Northeast Diggers Club:

<http://www.eideti.com/home/trbarton/cavenews/>

MIT Caving Club:

<http://www.psc.duncan.com/dcg/index.html>

Central Kentucky Karst:

<http://www.wku.edu/~glennja/karst.html>

Australian Speleology:

<http://www.osi.curtin.edu.au/interests/Speleology/intro.html>

Scottish Caving (has links to web pages for clubs all over Scotland and Europe):

<http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/~arb/speleo.html>

And if that ain't enough, here is the most complete cave related WWW links page I've found. (It's from the home page of Australian caver Sherry Mayo. She's got quite a collection of cave-related pictures and stuff there, also):
<http://rschp2.anu.edu.au:8080/cave/cavelink.html>

NSS News...

Gonna see my picture on the cover,
Gonna show it to my stock-broker brother,
Me and all the other BNCs*
on the cover of the *NSS News*.
NSS News gives me the blues,
'Cause I just can't get my picture
on the cover of the *NSS News*.

(spoken:)

Who you gotta know, anyway? Is she married?
Oh No! They messed up the color again!

* BNC = Big-Name Caver

Calendar Of Events

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

May 19-21, TSA Convention, Kendalia, Texas - Contact Doug Allen (512) 476-9031

May 27-29 CRF Memorial Day Expedition-Carlsbad Caverns - Contact Brian Holcomb (505) 266-8485

June 3-4, Government Canyon Karst Project - Contact George Veni (210) 558-4403

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

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

Sept. 1-4 TSA Labor Day Project - TBD

Sept. 2-4, CRF Labor Day Expedition - Contact Brian Holcomb (505) 266-8485

October 20-22, Texas Cavers Reunion, Flat Creek Ranch - Contact Susie Lasko (512) 873-0256

Nov. 23-26 CRF Thanksgiving Expedition at Carlsbad Caverns - Contact Brian Holcomb (505) 266-8485

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