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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.

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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.

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Photo Credits

This month's cover photo of Ed Goff, Pam Massey, and Ed Corfey in Gunner Cave on their Memorial Day weekend was taken by John Langevin. The photo was worked up into a cover by Dale Ellison and Chad Fenner.

Page 4 (LL): John Langevin in Gunner cave by Pam Massey.

Page 4 (UR): Ed Goff gawking at some columns in Hidden Springs cave by Pam Massey.

Other Credits

Editor: Chad Fenner

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

Visit Our Web Site

The *Maverick Bull* is available as a World Wide Web site at: <http://www.why.net/user/caver/bull/>

Minutes for the August Meeting

Maverick Grotto August 13, 1996

The August meeting began at approximately 7 p.m. The business portion of the meeting was called to order shortly after 7:30 by Grotto Chairman Mike Anderson.

Visitors

None

Announcements

This is Butch's last meeting for a while. He's signed up for a class on Tuesday nights.

Officers' Reports

Treasurer: About \$684

Library is here.

Old Business

We do have a reservation for the back area of Keller's Ranch for the party. Directions to appear in the

September *Bull*. An effort is being made to contact the charter members.

Russell Hill will bring a cooker (needs volunteer cooks). There will be a side dish contest (with prizes!).

Russell will be in charge of most meats, Butch will be in charge of fajitas.

New Business

Connie Sparks applied for membership and was unanimously accepted.

Nominations for officers for 1997 are 2 months away. Three of the current officers (chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer) have indicated that they cannot run next year.

Trip Reports

Dave Milhollen was a part of a historic pottery find in a wet cave in Mexico. (Maybe we can get a trip report out of it — hint, hint, wink, wink).

Dale Ellison has permits for Smittle Cave Sept 8.

John Langevin, Mark Porter, and Mike Anderson went to Temple and Middle Creek Spring caves in Arkansas.

The meeting closed and was not followed by a program this month, mainly because our vice-chairman became a new father just prior to the meeting.

Editor's Ramblings

Happy September!

So what do you think? Is it incredible or what? I've been waiting three years for a chance to do this.

Of course I'm talking about our full-color cover this month.

Hope you were surprised, pleasantly, of course. A few people knew it was coming: John; of course, — it was his picture; and Pam Massey because we wanted a trip report to go with it. Butch knew, because it's about all I talk about while he helps me during final assembly of the newsletter. ("Gee, someday I'd love to do a color cover".) Dale Ellison knew because we used his super-deluxe color printer to print the master. Dale also helped me work up the cover from the photograph that John gave us.

I had asked John quite some time

ago to begin looking for a photo that would be the perfect cover photo. Of course, you'd know that the one he found was landscape rather than portrait. Oh well. It even looks good sideways.

A couple of months ago, he told me he had the perfect picture. It was, too. Unfortunately, when he had it converted from slide to print it didn't seem to have the same brilliance that the slide did. Fortunately, Dale's image editing software allowed us to "play with" the colors a bit to bring out the red and blue in the clothing. We also added the bright red logo that Ed Goff did for us a few months back to help bring out the color a bit more. And all of this under Arlene's watchful supervision.

Dale is, however, quick to point out that this is not the Maverick Grotto's

first color cover. He showed me an issue he did back when he was newsletter editor that had color. And it was 3-D to boot. The issue featured a Boy Scout trip to River Styx, and he had cut out 100 Boy Scout emblems, colored them all by hand (and crayon), and taped them to the cover such that when you unfolded it the emblems "stood up", so to speak. Pretty cool!

I'd also like to thank Dale and Arlene for helping pick up the tab for this. The reproduction costs for the cover alone cost three times more than reproducing the entire rest of the newsletter.

Well, I hope you enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Good Caving.

CF

September Meeting

This month's meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 10 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster,

at 7 p.m. This month's program will probably be a slide show from the NSS library. In any case, I'm sure

that it will be interesting. Join us for good food and good cave talk.

Gunner and Hidden Springs

by Pam Massey

Cavers: Pam Massey, John Langevin, Ed Goff, Ed Corfey

Date: Memorial Day, 1996

Caves: Gunner and Hidden Springs

The road trip to Arkansas was as exciting as ever. John and I identified almost every species of roadkill except maybe a fox or an opossum. But the high point of our travel was the lunch stop on the way.

The day was quite windy as we pulled into the gas station next to this sporty little luxury car belonging to little "Fifi" the poodle and her owner. John had brought along another fine-smelling variety of cheese for lunch, and while Fifi's owner was taking her out of the car, the wind picked up a little more. John's cheese wrapper (and its fine odor) was quickly picked up by the wind and smacked into Fifi's owner's face. (If looks could kill!)

John and I had to laugh quite a while over this little incident!

Being a holiday weekend, both our

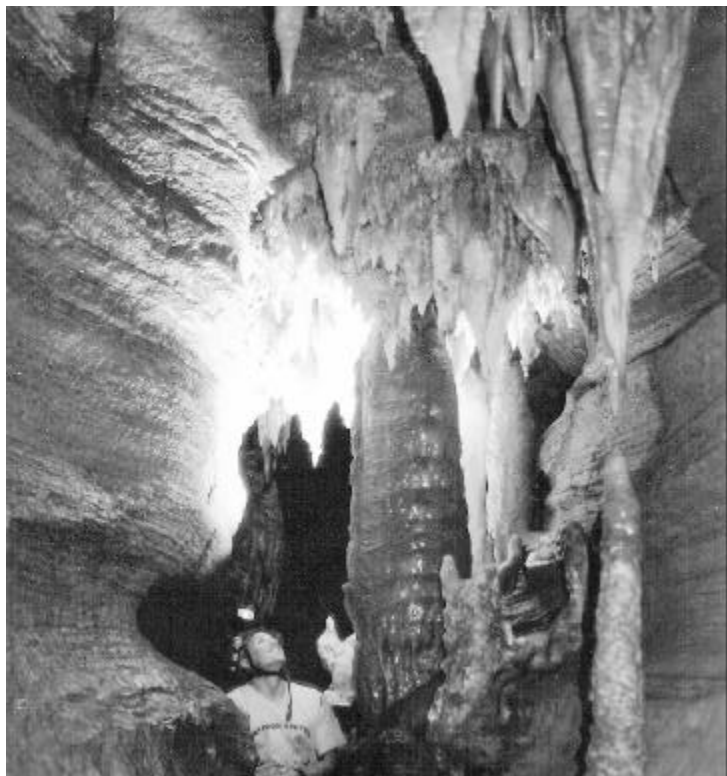
usual campgrounds were closed, so we ventured to new ground and camped at Barkshed. The first night camping was really nice and rather quiet, but the next night we affirmed all previous thoughts we had about Arkansas and its people.

"Maw, yew got enny vechable oil?" "Naw, honey, I just got this here corn oil."

The family proceeded to pour this on the bonfire they were building in the middle of the campsite, about 15 feet away from our tents. I can only guess that the family was out of food, because they started roasting plastic grocery bags over the bonfire. But then again, maybe they were conducting some sort of scientific experiment. I just don't ask when I'm in Arkansas.

We met up with Ed the next morning and headed to Hidden Spring. The cave is a seep located in

a rather large sink. As you enter the sink, you notice about a 15-20 degree change in temperature, which is wonderful when it's hot. Coming out of the cave is a different story! The cave has some really nice formations which can be seen in the horizontal passage. It also has a section which can be reached with vertical gear. There is a belly crawl that is about one foot



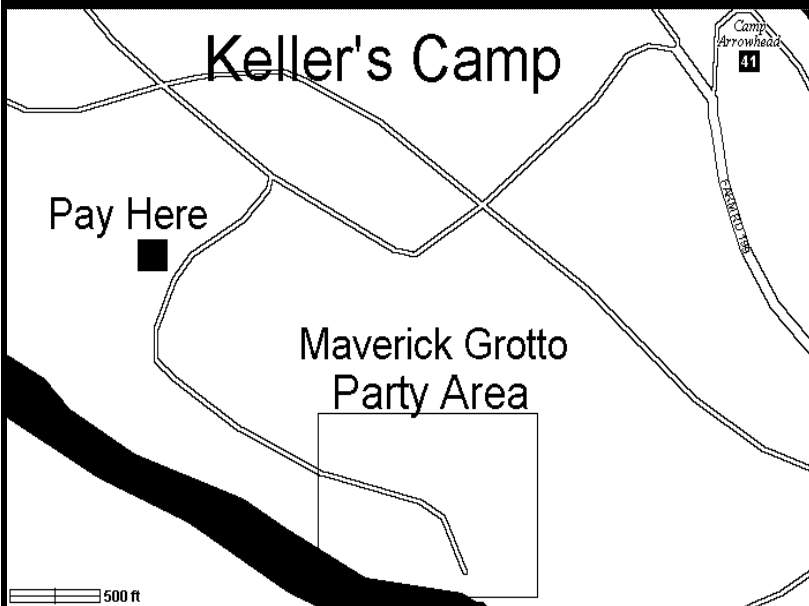
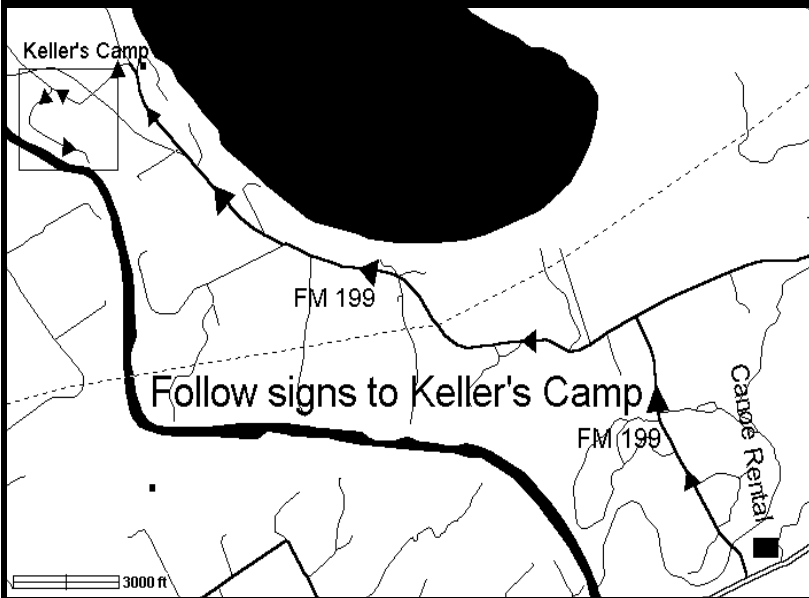
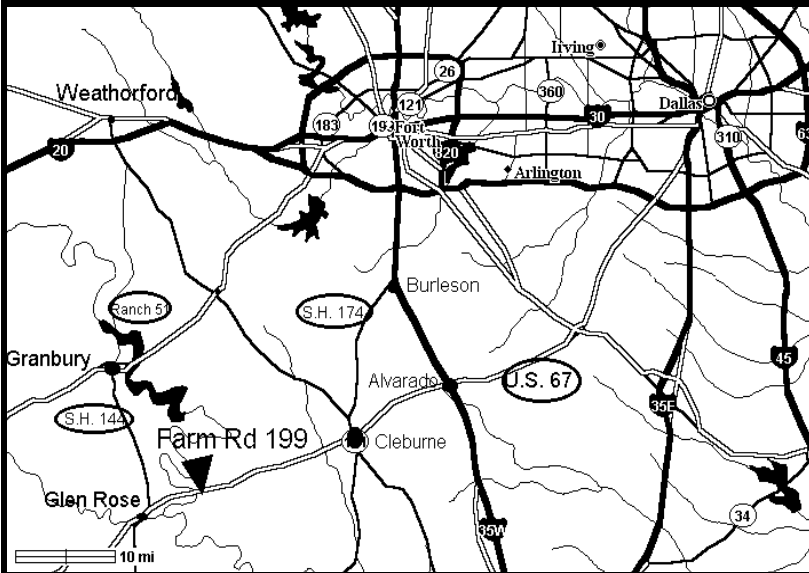
high, but only for about 10-15 feet.

Ed Corfey, an Arkansas caver, joined up the following day for our trip to Gunner, which is supposed to be a wetsuit cave. The last time I saw the entrance to the cave, snow was still in the bottom of the entrance. This time there was no snow, but still a remarkable drop in temperature as we neared the entrance. We wore no wetsuits and survived. The deepest areas of water were only about two feet or so, and I wore neoprene socks in this.

Gunner is the longest cave in the Sylamore Ranger district and has some very pretty formations. We never found the one-foot-high rimstone dam, but the helictites we found while searching for the dam were beautiful. There is an upper level to this cave as well, but that trip will have to be made another time.

Gunner has some really beautiful, smooth river passage with some rather large flowstone columns and nice draperies. The contrast in colors from rich chocolatey brown to almost pure white stalagmites add to the beauty of the cave.

It's Party Time! The Maverick Grotto 10th Anniversary Party!



Everyone is invited to help the Maverick Grotto celebrate its 10th Anniversary at Keller's Camp. Keller's is located between Cleburne and Glen Rose, Texas, about five miles NW of U.S. 67, on FM 199. The best landmark is the Canoe Rental place on the north side of US 67. Turn North on FM 199 and follow the signs to Keller's Camp.

Once in Keller's, stop and pay the toll to the gate keeper. The daily fees are by the carload. \$5.00 for day use, \$8.00 for overnight tent camping, and \$12.00 for RV camping with hookups. Tube and canoe rental are available at the camp, and shuttle service is available during the day. There are facilities on the property and several are located in the party area.

The rules for the campground are:

- 1) Dogs must be kept on leash.
- 2) No Firearms!
- 3) No ATV (mini bike, etc.).
- 4) No excessive noise.
- 5) Speed limit - 10 mph and slower.

The grotto will have a large area reserved at the far south end of the campground, and some of the rules like 1 and 4 will likely be overlooked unless for some reason the campground is crowded and someone uses the poor judgment to camp right on top of us.

There are cliffs alongside the party area offering the possibility for some rock climbing. There are large pecan trees that we can rig ropes off of for climbing and rappelling, so bring your gear. The NTSS squeeze box may be present. If you have any favorite games you'd like to show your skill at, bring them. Mike Anderson will bring horseshoes.

If you have a GPS, bring it. We'll do some practical GPS training for anyone interested. We'll practice finding a location with a GPS and talk about using UTM coordinates on a topo map.

There are lots of trees, so there will be plenty of shade. Bring something to sit on. If you have a portable table that can be used for serving, please bring it.

Saturday evening will offer a meal with a variety of meats. Brisket, turkey and fajitas are a few planned. Anyone else who has a favorite recipe will be welcome.

Bring a side dish to go with the main course. There will be a **contest** with **prizes** awarded to the best side dish. Bring your own booze: the grotto **IS NOT** furnishing a keg. Rumors have it that Steve Smith of the Springtown Winery may donate a case of wine. Some soft drinks will be furnished, but you might want to bring your own in case they go fast.

Donna Anderson will furnish a piñata for the kids.

A slide projector and screen will be on hand if you have slides you'd like show off to your fellow cavers.

Maverick Grotto Welcomes New District Ranger in Style . . .

. . . Caving style that is! The Guadalupe Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest has a new District Ranger. His name is Mike Baca, and he comes to us from Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

Other than a few commercial caves, Mike is new to wild caving, but I think we got him off to a good start. His first wild cave was to Cottonwood, Second Parallel with Cave Specialist Ransom Turner and Maverick Grotto reporter-in-the-field Pam Massey. He apparently enjoyed the trip and is anxious to do some more wild caving in the future.

John Langevin Makes the NSS Salon . . . Again!

Once again, Maverick Grotto member John Langevin places in the NSS Photo Salon. He had 10 photographs (out of 16 submitted) accepted for show. Included in that were two green ribbons and one blue.

Let's all congratulate John on his well-deserved accomplishment.

5th Annual Caverns of Sonora Restoration Project

November 2-3, 1996

by George Veni

Restoration work at Caverns of Sonora was postponed last year so the owners could host the National Caves Association convention. I've since had many calls from cavers

saying they were suffering withdrawal symptoms and that they needed their Sonora fix. You can quit calling to complain and start calling to reserve your space for the next project, which will be held during the first weekend of November.

This year's project will involve hauling rock and rubble out of the cave, which was generated during its development by cutting paths for trails. This material was dumped to fill side passages or to create unsightly piles. Like many shows, Sonora was developed on a shoe-string budget and took some shortcuts to become operational. But unlike many caves, the owners want to undo the damage and are asking for our help.

This year we will work in the Sponge Rooms, just past the area where we held our first restoration project; see the foldout map in *The Caves and Karst of Texas* for their location. This is also just past the Devil's Pit where we last hauled rock (we'll get back to finish the pit another year).

Much of the rubble currently fills 2-m-deep pits. If we're lucky, we may open up some long-forgotten or unchecked passages! But remember, the work will be heavy and tiring. If your physical or medical condition is not up to it, please wait until a less-strenuous project is planned before volunteering to help.

In return for a hard day's work on Saturday, Nov. 2nd, the owners will provide lunch and a catered dinner with dessert and all the fixin's that has kept many cavers coming back each year. Also that evening, from 7 p.m. until midnight, guides will take cavers along the trail to photograph the cave's splendors to their heart's content. The tour lights will be left off to avoid interference with the photography. For those not wanting to do the night tour, bring slides for showing in the Visitor Center. The next day, I'll lead a 3-4 hour lights-on tour for cavers to get a few more photos and to discuss the cave's history, exploration, and geology, or

just to tell a bunch of tall tales. Regular tours will also be available at no cost. Sorry, but there will be absolutely no off-trail access — the cave is much too delicate.

If you would like to come help out at Sonora, please contact me by Oct. 28th. The owners need to know how many people to expect in order to prepare meals (let me know if you're a vegetarian) and to prepare equipment and areas for work crews. Bring gloves, small army-type folding shovels, plastic 5-gallon buckets, and upright dollies if you have them. Helmets and carbide lamps are not allowed in the cave, and lights will generally not be needed, although a pocket flashlight or elastic-band headlight may occasionally be useful.

There is a limit of 70 people for this trip, and while it may seem like a lot, it will likely fill soon. Reservations will be first-come, first-serve. I will develop a waiting list in case of cancellations. And let me know ASAP if you have to cancel!!! The last project was nearly ruined by no-shows and by cancellations that unnecessarily waited until the last minute to tell me.

To get to Caverns of Sonora, take I-10 8 miles west of the town of Sonora and follow the signs for 7 more miles. Below is a schedule of events. To reserve your space or for more information, call, write, or e-mail me: George Veni, 11304 Candle Park, San Antonio, TX 78249-4421, 210-558-4403, kveni@tenet.edu.

Schedule:

-- Friday nite to Sat. morn: Arrive and register for the project in the campground (Friday night) or the Visitor Center (Saturday morning).

-- Sat., 8:30 a.m. to noon: Work in cave (self-serve refreshments will be provided in the cave at the work sites).

-- Noon to 1 p.m.: Break for lunch.

-- 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.: Work in cave.

-- 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Clean-up (hot showers available).

-- 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Dinner.

-- 7 p.m. to midnight: Lights-out photo trip in cave. For anyone

wanting to stay on the surface, a slide projector and screen will be set up in the Visitor Center -- Bring your slides!

-- Sun., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Free access to regular cave tours.

-- Sun., 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Lights-on caver tour.

MISCELLANEOUS PARTY NOTES

We are in need of some strands of small white Christmas lights to string together for use at the October 5th party. As it is difficult to buy Christmas lights this time of year, we are in need of your help. We would like to create a real festive atmosphere. Please contact Donna Anderson if you could donate or loan some lights.

Mike Anderson has volunteered to bring an electric ice cream maker to go with the cobbler Bruce Anderson plan to cook in a dutch oven. Mike needs one or two more electric ice cream makers. (Mike emphasized electric, not hand-cranked.) If anyone has one, please contact Mike.

Follow Up To Some of Last Month's Stories

A letter to the editor of the Austin American Statesman

Editor
Austin American-Statesman
P.O. Box 670
Austin, TX 78767

To the Editor:

I don't know why the City of Austin should act surprised at the vandalism in Maple Run Cave (see "Vandals damage South Austin caves," July 30, p. B1). The City has owned the cave for years, and it still has not put a locked gate on it to prevent this type of destruction. Vandalism and littering also is occurring at several

other caves owned by the City.

The City is supposed to be a partner with Travis County in protecting caves under the BCCP. The permit issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service requires the protection of 35 Travis County caves containing endangered species plus 27 other caves that have rare species. This expanded protection was part of the BCCP's "no surprises" policy, which would preserve rare species that could someday land on the endangered list. But surprise! The City is actually promoting recreational caving in some its most sensitive caves, like Airman's, District Park, Goat, and Maple Run. The City's Parks and Recreation Department recently published a booklet, "A Guide to Austin's Most Visited Caves," with locator maps! Those caves are part of the BCCP, and too much traffic in them will trample the tiny creatures that are supposed to be protected. Why is the City of Austin overusing these sensitive caves when there are over 300 caves in Travis County?

Caves are very fragile environments. In my opinion the City of Austin needs to reset some priorities here. The different departments responsible for the caves are not working together to uphold the BCCP permit.

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Yates comes up dry

posted to Cavers Digest by Dave Jagnow, NSS #8177 RL

Yes!! I just learned today that Yates Energy has plugged and abandoned (P&A) their Diamondback Federal #1 well that was being drilled about 1-1/2 miles northwest of Lechuguilla Cave!! I believe this will probably be the last drilling we will ever see within the Serpentine Bends area of Dark Canyon. I also hope

this is the last drilling threat we will ever see so close to Lechuguilla Cave and Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

I spoke with Kathy Queen, a BLM drilling inspector in the Carlsbad office. Kathy witnessed and directed the plugging of the Diamondback well. It was plugged on the 13th and 14th of August. The well never reached their proposed total depth (TD) of 10,500'. They encountered crooked hole problems near 10,000' and started twisting off equipment, and apparently had some expensive fishing jobs (to fish the bit and drill pipe out of the hole). I don't know if they were even able to run logs across the Morrow sand objectives. I have requested copies of the drilling reports from BLM.

We can be proud of the BLM for monitoring this well. They did what the oil industry would consider "overkill" on the plugging job. Kathy said they set a total of 8 or 9 cement plugs throughout the well, each plug consisting of a minimum of 100' of cement. Most importantly, they set about a 250' cement plug at the shoe of the intermediate casing (below the base of the Capitan Reef complex). They "tagged" it with drill pipe to make sure it was properly placed, and solid. They also set a 100' cement plug at the base of surface casing (300') and another 100' cement plug at the surface. I was very pleased that the BLM took seriously the need to really plug this well, to lessen any future threat of it leaking gas into the Guadalupe caves.

The Diamondback Federal #1 was a financial disaster for Yates Energy, even though they got the BLM to pay them \$2.2 million for the "taking" of some of their leases. They essentially got a free well. The well which was scheduled for 35 days took 55 days to drill, and they lost the bottom of the hole to drilling problems. I tried to contact Yates Energy today, but they refused to return my calls, and would only say that it is a "tight hole" (not giving out

information on it's status).

I'm sure Yates Energy is greatly disappointed -- but they sure made my day!!

Talk About Being Cozy at Night, ...

by Dale Ellison

Your sleeping bag is your friend or enemy. Just how do you select a sleeping bag?

Shape and size

Sleeping bags are often classified by their shape. You may find bags in the mummy or tapered style, the modified tapered, barrel, or rectangular shapes. The mummy shape is the most efficient, since it conforms closely to your body shape and eliminates cold air spaces around you. The modified tapered bag offers many advantages of the mummy style, but provides slightly more room. The rectangular bag gives the most room and the greatest flexibility for a wide range of outdoor uses. Often two bags can be zipped together to make a double-size sleeping bag for two people. The barrel shape bag is a modification of the rectangular shape, with a slight taper at the foot.

In addition to the various styles or shapes, sleeping bags come in a range of sizes. You'll see bags labeled as "standard" or "single" if they're meant for one average-size person. Bags large enough to accommodate two people are labeled "double." "Tall" bags are designed for taller than average individuals, and "oversize" bags are made for people who are both taller and larger than average, or for an average size person who wants extra room. Within each classification is a range of sizes. Check the information on hang tags to find the exact size, in inches, of the bag you're interested in.

Insulation

Insulation is a vital part of a sleeping bag, and it's often a major factor in determining the bag's price. Bags are usually rated for the lowest

temperature at which they can keep an average person comfortable. The ratings are a *general* indication of how warm a bag is, but are *not* absolute. Bags designed for an expedition in frigid conditions may be rated as low as -40 degrees F, while warm-weather bags may have a rating of 35 degrees F or +40 degrees F. Matching the sleeping bag's temperature rating to the temperatures you expect to encounter is a good way to be reasonably sure you're getting the right kind and amount of insulation for your needs.

You'll want to pay careful attention to insulation materials when you choose a sleeping bag. The primary function of insulation is to create dead air space between you and the outside environment. These dead air spaces trap heat from your body to keep you warm on a cold night. Goosedown is considered to be the premiere insulating material because each cluster of down creates hundreds of tiny dead air pockets, trapping body heat for warmth. Down is also highly compressible and lightweight for those who need easy carrying in a sleeping bag.

The synthetic insulation materials Quallofil and Hollofil are widely used in sleeping bags. Quallofil fibers are constructed with a number of hollow tubes inside the fiber. These tubes trap air and make the fibers behave much like down in terms of insulating properties. Some advantages of a synthetic material, like Quallofil, over down are that it provides better insulation when damp, it dries faster than down, and it is mold and mildew resistant. Dacron Hollofil is another synthetic insulation fiber with hollow spaces inside, but Hollofil has fewer of these dead air spaces than Quallofil and is usually used in bags designed for warmer climates.

Materials and construction

When you choose a sleeping bag, you should be aware of the kind of cover the lining you're getting. Woven nylons and polyesters are popular materials for bag covers and

liners. These materials are durable, comfortable, and attractive, but if you expect to encounter damp or rainy conditions, you may want to select a waterproof breathable material like Gore-tex or Hocus Pocus to keep out dampness. Some bags come with flannel liners for extra warmth and comfort.

You may want to check that the bag you're interested in is quilted to prevent shifting of the insulation. Warm-weather bags often have only one insulation layer, but cold weather-bags have multiple layers, and shifting can be more of a problem. When insulation shifts, you feel cold spots, and the bag isn't as warm or as comfortable. Some bags are constructed in layers — the bag-within-a-bag construction. This makes it easy to separate inner and outer layers for quick drying. When you select a sleeping bag, you should also look for construction techniques such as weather stripping around the zipper, wedges at the zipper base to keep out cold air, baffled fit ends for foot warmth, and anti-snap zipper tape.

Do not cut quality when choosing a sleeping bag. Being cold and uncomfortable at night can ruin your entire camping trip. I recall a caving trip once to the cave state, Missouri, between Christmas and New Year. The first day was balmy, but the next day it began to snow, the temperature dove, and it got dark. I can't remember exactly, but it was 5 degrees and 7 inches of snow, or was it 7 degrees and 5 inches of snow? Milk inside my ice-chest froze. The sweat inside my tent trailer froze to resemble a palace of crystal chandeliers of shimmering ice. I slept nude in a 0 degree, long, mummy with a slick polyester lining. It was OK, but would have preferred the lining have been flannel. Wear a toboggan on your head for additional warmth, but if it is tight, your hair will hurt the next morning!

Calender of Events

Oct 5, 1996, Grotto Anniversary Party. See details inside.

October 11-13, 1996, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

November 8-10, 1996, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

December 13-14, 1996, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

January 10-12, 1997, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

February 7-9, 1997, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

March 7-9, 1997, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

April 11-13, 1997, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

May 9-11, 1997, Colorado Bend State Park - Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

**Maverick Grotto
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Ft Worth TX. 76133**

Special Pre-10th Anniversary Collectors Issue!