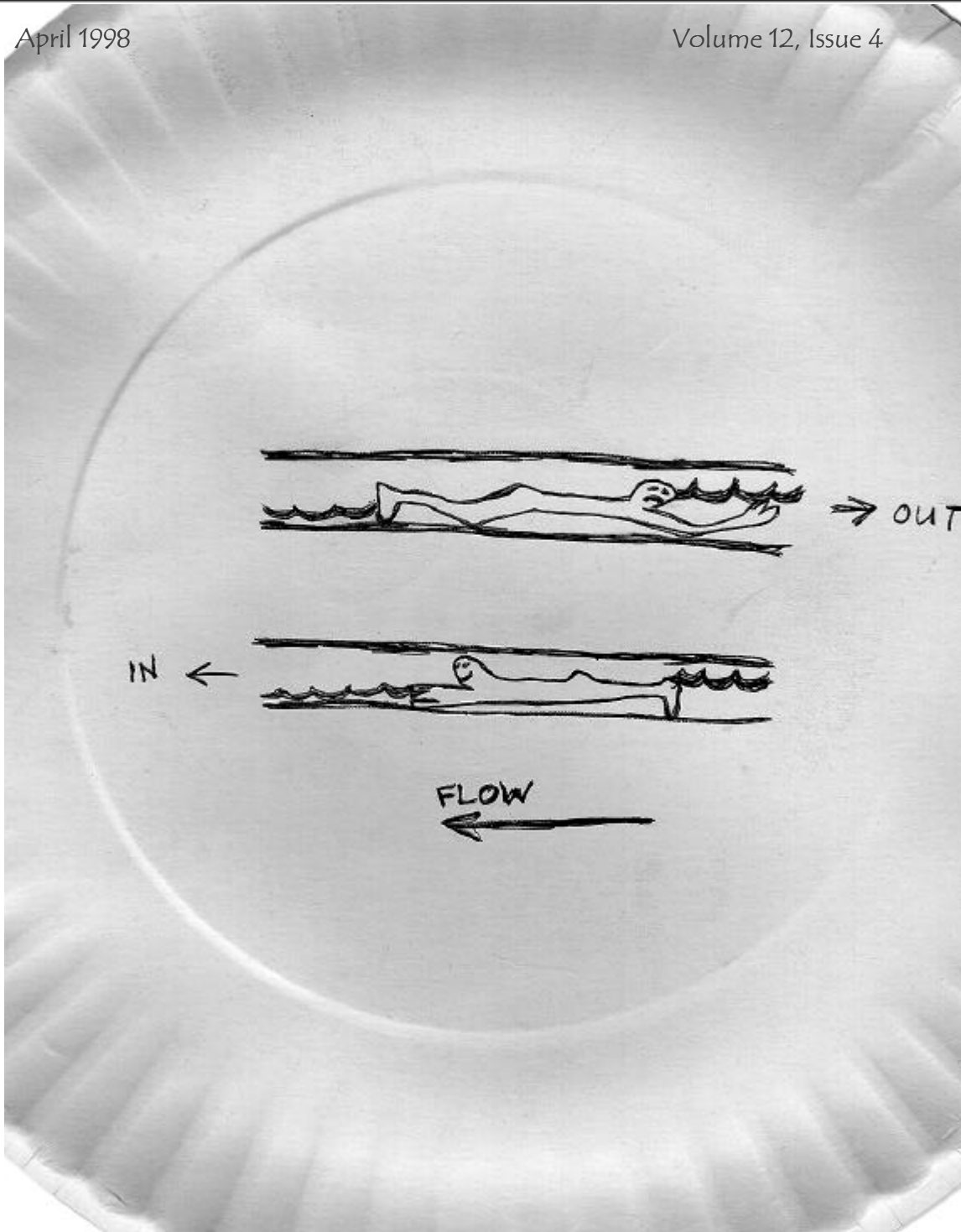


# THE MAVERICK BULL

The Monthly Newsletter Of The Ft. Worth Maverick Grotto

April 1998

Volume 12, Issue 4



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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 is a drawing of a caver entering and exiting Pete's Crawl in Powells Cave .

## Other Credits

Editor: Chad Fenner

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## Visit Our Web Site



The *Maverick Bull* is available as a World Wide Web site at:  
<http://www.fwst.net/np/maverickgrotto>  
Web space donated by Star-Telegram Online Services.

## Minutes for the April Meeting

### Maverick Grotto April 14, 1998

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

### Visitors

I didn't write any down.

### Announcements

R.D. presented Karen with a piece of an antler. I'm sure there is a story there!

R.D. is doing a cavern course in Lake City Florida over Memorial Day.

Lincoln National Forest is starting a new volunteer program. The next orientation is May 25.

Dave "Cave" McClung gave out some TSA newsletters.

The CRF Memorial Day restoration may not happen.

MVOR is the first of May.

### Officers' Reports

\$548.96 in Treasury.

### Old Business

We generally discussed the idea of putting a meeting announcement in the Fort Worth Star Telegram.

### New Business

None.

### Trip Reports

Sharon went to Cave Without a Name.

Karen, RD, Ed, Laura, Shanon,

Chad, his son Christopher, along with some friends of theirs, (Larry and Brian), had a less than 100% successful trip to Three Mile and McKittrick Hills.

John Langevin had a less than 100% successful trip with some explorer scouts.

At this point the two groups swapped stories to see whos was worse. It was pretty close.

The meeting closed and was followed by this month's program, which was by Ed Goff and Shanon Seals presenting slides from a number of their recent trips.

## Editor's Ramblings

Happy May.

Ode to Chad's Transmission

Come and listen to my story about a man named Chad, The mountain caving man, barely kept his grotto glad. They said "Up the mountain, is where you want to be, But you can't get there in a sedan by Chevy."

Cavalier, that is, four doors and a trunk.

Well the next think ya know, ol' Chads a lookin' 'round, Trying to find a vehicle that'll get him out of town. He pulls up in a lot and he thinks he's found some luck, Cause there in front of him sits a four-wheel-drive truck!

Ford, that is, full-size and extended-cab.

Well the next thing ya know, ol' Chads a happy man, Going up the mountain as much as he can. Then he and Ed and Wayne are heading to the hill When the transmission on his truck decides to take a spill.

Transmission fluid that is, all over I-20.

Well everybody knows you haven't got a shot, When the transmission fluid's out, the gears will get real hot.

And that's what happened when Chad had tried to cave. His transmission ended up in a truck transmission grave.

Dead that is. \$2000 down the drain!

Good Caving.  
CF

## May Meeting

This month's meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 12 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m.

Note from R.D. - Ha, so you think your vice-chairman has been hard at it, gathering together world-class speakers and mind-blowing programs for your exclusive amusement. Well I have, as a matter of fact, but the answers to my inquiries have not arrived in as timely a manner as I would have hoped.

I will say at this time that I am in serious negotiations with a university

biology professor who earned his doctorate researching some of the cave life in Texas, and am also talking to a former U.T. Grotto member who now resides in North Texas who has fond memories of expeditions in Sistema Purificacion. One of these presentations may be finalized in time for this month's meeting, but just in case the free Bar-b-que is not enough of an enticement, I will have a program dealing with the Maya artifacts my team found in a submerged cave in

Cozumel a few years ago.

In the meantime it is again time to beg and plead for the members of the grotto with potential grotto programs to step up and volunteer to enlighten us at a future meeting. We have had several excellent presentations from our own members recently, and I am sure there are more people who are just itching to share their unique perspectives on the underground experience. Call me, and I will see if I can fit you into the busy schedule.

## Pete's Crawl at Powell's Cave

R. D. Milhollin NSS 29962

I should begin any description of my first trip through Pete's Crawl with a testimonial to the absolute veracity, meticulous detail, and pinpoint accuracy of any communications received from Terry Holsinger. I have been in Powell's Cave only once before, when my team was assigned to try to find new or connecting passage in a low area denoted as the "G" survey in the grand scheme of things. The Powell's I saw that day was dry-dusty, with small crawly passages that took a toll on knees and elbows. I had been keenly interested in the possibility of diving the sump in Powell's since first hearing about it through idle conversation around a campfire. After some checking around, I sent Terry a longish e-mail message requesting information, asking advice on planning and additional contacts, and describing ideas for logistics to tackle the task, and concluding with a request to be scheduled to go to see the sump entrance on the upcoming Powell's weekend. The answer received was very succinct and to-the-point: "K, T.", with the "T" being a signature (I suppose.) That was all I needed, I got with a small group from the Maverick Grotto and the trip was on!

Friday evening Wayne Peplinski, Ed Goff, and I prepared Ed's Rav for the trip to Menard. On a previous sojourn Ed and I had slept for a few hours underneath a "NO CAMPING" sign in the Menard city park as a result of relying on a "Can't miss it" directional program received from a veteran Powell's participant, so we were taking particular care to have advance preparation and detailed instructions for all planned phases of participation. Arriving around midnight, we found a small but dedicated circle of drinkers around a fire, who promptly went to bed as we pulled in. We set up a spartan camp and crawled into sleeping bags,

anticipating the morrow.

Saturday dawned crisp and comfortable: perfect caving weather. Some of us had brought along wetsuits, but all had cave clothes in anticipation of wet conditions and hours underground. All except Wayne, who found on close inspection that morning that he had not packed the polypropylene underwear.

I met early on with Jerry Fant, an artist, caver, and experienced sump diver formerly from Missouri, but recently relocated to Wimberly. We had been kicking around some suitable Texas locales that needed cave sumps dived, and had decided to see what possibilities Powell's held.

We found Terry making breakfast and using maps and survey notes as placemats (not really!) and asked about his recommendations for making our trip goal, while cheerfully chiding him about his draconian e-mail style. I was under the mistaken impression that the sumps Terry had in mind were upstream from where I had been before, but was soon corrected. That end of the cave indeed sumped, but through a big-ish breakdown formation, usually considered impassable.

Terry suggested that wetsuits were overkill for what we had planned, that where we were going was only about 15 minutes away, through the entrance maze, down into the canyon, all the way to the breakdown, then a short crawl to the water. We agreed that wetsuits were out, but because of the anticipated water, the polypros were in, er...., on.

Terry asked if another guy could join our group, and we cheerfully agreed. Verlon Smith is a computer manufacturing quality-control guy from San Marcos, and we found out later that this was his first trip underground, period. This guy is a trooper; I suppose he thought that what we were doing was what all new cavers did on their first trip.

Wayne decided to come along until he felt discomfort; I silently wondered whose definition of discomfort he

was planning to use, for this could mean a trip time range for him from 10 minutes to who knows when.

There was the usual line at the new entrance pipe, all varieties of cavers in all varieties of get-ups, all queued and pleasantly chatting among themselves while waiting their opportunity to descend the 40-foot shaft via 50-foot ladder. We observed a group headed by a student from UNT (and NTSS member) planting native plants around the entrance. Looking good!

Once inside, we proceeded directly along the route Terry had prescribed, but we never saw the right color reflectors that marked our best path. Not to worry, cave sense prevailed, and we soon arrived at the canyon, crawled down with packs and all, and encountered a group of University of Texas (Austin) biology students preparing to gather root samples in order to identify the foliage that subsisted topside as a result of the underground stream. We had already been warned that in the sumps themselves we would need tree-trimmers to cut the roots away in order to progress forward. We didn't mention this premeditated destruction to the students, but instead offered to let them know if we encountered anything unusual as we progressed. At this point, we had been 15 minutes in the cave.

Right where the scientists-in-training were working was where the cave entered the water stream. Verlon jumped right in, not knowing the proper procedure of carefully orchestrated hems-and-haws, gear adjustments, and lame excuses combined with mock courtesy (no, please, you first) that would allow one to remain in comfort longer while your buddy gets dripping wet looking for the passage. Hmmm, a few feet back the stream was running with vigor, but just in front of us the water was sluggish and was holding stirred-up silt. Where was the water going?

Jerry quickly joined in the wet stuff, declaring that the water was WARM (this from a Missouri caver, of

course.) Verlon was directed (from the dry shore) to check a smallish tunnel leading away from us at a 90-degree angle. Over the splashing from water trying to wash him into the ravine he asked if we wanted to look, that he thought it "might go." One after another we took turns looking, and yes, it "did go."

I led the way down the small-and-growing-smaller passage, occasionally looking back to see if there were any lights following. With chin and all of the front of us in the water, and with backs and helmets scraping the uneven ceiling, for around 70-80 feet the going was by elbows and toes finding bearable holds and push-pulling along. The floor was pocked with sharp edges, and the side walls were erratic in their shape. Each foot forward required some new or different motion to lead to the next, and as I neared the viewable end, the ceiling forced heads down into the water. It was either remove the brain buckets and push them ahead, thus losing one useful crawling hand, or take an earwash. Balancing on fingers and on the tips of boots, three-point suspension style, I made it through and popped into open passage. The room was lined with smooth, water-carved walls coated with hard mud, and featured an old well-casing coming down from the ceiling and a three-dimensional artistic representation of either a devil or a Vulcan character from "Star Trek." One by the one the other cavers emerged from the small entrance tunnel I had just traversed, except for Wayne, who had elected to stay with the root-purveyors due to his lack of fuzzy underwear.

Jerry was excited. He declared that the downstream passage was just like Missouri streambed passage, only the temperature was bearable. Heck, it was comfortable!

The passage averages 20 feet across measured from the widest section, usually around 4 feet above the streambed flood. The height was usually at least 6 feet, but the walking passage following the stream

sometimes required us to stoop down to four feet or so in order to pass. There were numerous lifeforms along the passage, mostly living on the clay and mud banks that alternated from side to side as the stream meandered. We noticed spiders, cave-adapted crickets, isopods, and large millipedes. Oh yes, lots of root bundles, some just breaking through the ceiling and trailing into the water, other areas where in more confined quarters the going was slowed down considerably by the roots that clogged the water we were sloshing through.

Our team, minus Wayne, who by now had tired of root-ology and had retreated to his tent and an afternoon nap, progressed further into the downstream portion of the cave, in search of the sump that would mark a future exit point from a dive done from the resurgence in Neel's Cave. It is probable that Ed will lead a team back this way again to help retrieve the dive gear Jerry and I will use when we attempt a through trip and survey.

2.5 hours later, we reached the sump and found the guideline that had been left from the 1982 through trip made by a team led by George Veni. The cave had narrowed at this point to around 3.5 to 4 feet wide and had only about 3 feet of air above the water level. The water we were sitting in came up to and over the waist.

The trip was a success, and on the way back we sang impromptu cave ballads that should not be published in a respectable, family-oriented cave publication. (Do those exist?)

As we exited through Pete's Crawl (named, by the way, for Dallas resident and long-time DFW Grotto member Pete Lindsley), we experienced a different kind of phenomenon (short-lived panic?) as our bodies dammed up the water IN FRONT OF OUR FACES as we filled the tube. None of had noticed this effect as going into the cave caused our butts to back up the water behind us (see Ed's accompanying illustration on the cover.)

Each of us wondered how the 15 minutes Terry Holsinger described for the trip had turned into more than four hours. Upon exiting Powell's, and finding the project ringleader, he succinctly explained that the 15 minutes he described was indeed to the stream passage, that he had in fact never been through the crawl that led to the sump, and that as a matter of fact our team had comprised the 8th, 9th, and 10th individuals that had EVER crossed that passage. He had no idea what lay beyond that point other than what had passed in conversation with the former team from the previous decade, but was interested in hearing about our trip! (It must be noted that seriously, folks, the organization and leadership Terry lends to the various projects he coordinates make it possible for a tremendous number of Texas cavers to make positive contributions while having fun. Thanks Terry!)

Dinner was welcome, conversation around the fire that evening was cordial, and the beer flowed like water! A good end to a great day caving in Texas. More to come...

## Exploring in Arkansas

by John Langiven

John Langiven and the Leaders (Dr. Chris Mann, Donnie Rexroat) and members (Brian ???, David Foster, Tami Foster, and Jenny Noblit) of Explorer Post 250

We met at the home of Dr. Chris Mann on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 18 and departed under warm, sunny conditions. The forecast assured us that we would not enjoy such favor for much of our trip.

Our plan was to travel to the Fitton Caver's Camp via the Erbie Road, and it went well until we arrived at the low-water bridge on the Buffalo. As we rounded the curve and the river came into view, it was immediately apparent that we would not cross there. El Nino's rains had swelled the river to a level I had

never seen before, so we retreated to the Erbie campground to make camp and discuss strategies.

The promised turn in the weather came soon -- a light rain began shortly after we pitched our tents. After donning ponchos, we conferred and decided to attempt to reach the trailhead to the cave by the road from Marble Falls. This route would require us to negotiate a ford at Cove Creek, but with the Erbie Road ruled out and the only other way (the road from Compton) almost certainly too muddy, it seemed our only option.

We ate a quick breakfast Thursday morning and, after loading our gear and ourselves into Chris' van, we headed into Jasper for water. For reasons unknown, none was available at the campground; we thought perhaps the high water had contaminated the well. We filled up and headed for the cave.

I had not used this route in several years, and we had to back-track once and use the GPS receiver to ascertain our location before continuing. Farther down the road, things began to look more familiar, and we soon arrived at the crossing. I wouldn't say it looked good, but it certainly wasn't as frightening as the Buffalo, so we forged ahead and made it across. Chris and I, seated in the front, never noticed, but those in back said that the rear end had moved slightly in the current.

We had reached the trailhead, but still had to contend with five crossings of Cecil Creek on the hike to the cave. I was deeply concerned, because the third crossing can be difficult, with swift and thigh-deep water, even in a normal spring.

The first two fords weren't difficult, but their condition was an unsettling portent of things to come.

Water flowing over the log bridge at the first one threatened to dump us into the creek, so we crossed on some rocks downstream. At crossing two, one usually walks on cobbles among which the shallow water ripples and barely wets the soles of shoes. On this day, we waded through knee-deep water.

Our fears were confirmed when we arrived at the third ford. I waded carefully into the swollen stream and was in crotch-deep water when only a few feet from shore. The current was swift, and I felt that with one more step, I'd be swept off my feet. I retreated, and we discussed our options -- back-track and try to cross the creek at the ford on the road to the Chestnut Cabin, or blaze ahead and try to pick up the trail where it crossed back to the side we were on.

The first option looked grim, since the ford was downstream and right at the spot where Fitton Spring feeds in. The second involved hiking through unfamiliar territory and still required a negotiation of the fifth crossing. Since the stream there is wide and shallow, we chose to try it.

We struck out along the creek, but our progress was soon blocked by a bluff that faced directly against the creek. Chris and I waded in at several forbidding locations and found nothing passable. After a few minutes of vascillation, we headed up the hill through boulders covered with colonies of walking fern. We soon dropped back to creek level via a steep, slick draw. Unfortunately, our bad luck held out, and we were soon stopped by another bluff. We repeated the wading attempts with similar results.

Rather than back-track again, we climbed the nearly vertical hillside, clawing up the muddy, slick face in a steady rain. It reminded me of the scene in *\*The Guns of Navarone\** when they climb the cliffs in the rain to blow up the guns.

Donnie, tall and a gymnast, made it to the top first, with relative ease. I found the handholds, mostly small trees, rather far apart and I was concerned for the petite Tami. My fears were unfounded -- when I turned at the top, I watched her follow the same route with no more difficulty than I had. Donnie informed me that she was a gymnast, also.

During our last wading attempt, I had noticed an out-of-place-looking waterfall spilling down the bluff, and as we traversed the hillside, I saw

below us the source -- a large spring, flowing from a cave entrance. Donnie and I climbed down for a closer look and noted the location for future exploration. We dropped down the other side of the hill, crossed a small stream, and soon picked up the trail at the fourth crossing.

We arrived at the last ford and were encouraged by its appearance. The deepest part of the stream was on the near side, and as I waded across, I soon began to rise from thigh-deep to knee-deep water. As I did, the light, steady rain suddenly became a downpour. I turned to those watching my progress and wondered aloud if God was expressing His displeasure at our overcoming the last major obstacle.

Unfortunately, our hubris wouldn't allow us to take the hint, so we continued. On the other side, we stayed high on the hillside rather than follow the trail in the streambed. I had a little trouble finding the trail up to the caves; nothing looked familiar, with water coming from everywhere. When I realized that a small waterfall was the trail, we struggled up and were finally at the cave. It was 11:45; the hike that usually takes an hour had begun at 9:45.

The caving was uneventful. We changed into dry clothes and boots and looked around the unusually wet entrance room. After that, the only indication of the weather was the increased flow of water far below us at the T-Junction.

We headed down the East Passage, taking a side trip to the Crystal Room by way of the Kansas Turnpike. Donnie waited in the East Passage with Chris, who had been hit by a truck Tuesday evening and didn't feel that his injured shoulder would tolerate the contortion required to negotiate the Turnpike. We rejoined them after viewing the beautiful gypsum crystal formations and we all continued to the Roundhouse Room, where we entered the Tennouri Passage.

Though everyone enjoyed the display of gypsum flowers and was

duly impressed with the size of the Tennouri Room, I sensed that enthusiasm was waning rapidly. It was around 4:45 and I, too, felt more tired than seemed normal after only five hours of caving. That, no doubt, was due to the grueling hike to the cave. We turned toward the entrance, exiting at 6:15.

A cold front had passed, dropping the temperature and turning the rain into an almost-imperceptible snow. We were fortunate to have a little daylight left and we set out to back-track along the route we had taken to the cave. We stayed high on the hill to cross the slick draw rather than drop down to creek level. I'd left my GPS receiver in the van, but by dead reckoning we managed to come down at the same group of fern-covered rocks. We soon found the trail and returned to the van.

Now, during our egress from the depths of the cave, I had remarked to Donnie that before it was over, the trip might come to resemble \*Deliverance\* without canoes or sodomy. As we approached the Cove Creek ford, my prophecy was about to be fulfilled. The rain had stopped, and the streams we'd seen on the return hike were noticeably lower, so we expected no trouble. We talked of returning to camp, eating soft tacos and crawling into our sleeping bags.

My customary ensemble of shorts and tights was wet, and I prepared to remove them as Chris brought the van around the curve toward the creek. He was surprised at its sudden appearance and braked hard. I was looking down to disrobe, unconcerned, as we entered the water. I heard Chris say something profane and looked up to see that the van was beginning to float off the low-water bridge. He threw it into reverse in a desperate attempt to return to shore before we went over the side. He had to open his door to see, and water flooded the van. His quick action got us back to solid ground, and when the shock wore off, we began salvaging things from

the flooded floor.

Donnie expressed a sudden impulse to get to the bathroom. I looked out and noticed a pair of athletic shoes floating downstream. Chris recognized them as his, but said they were old anyway.

We discussed our limited options and turned the van around to investigate the muddy Compton road. We got about half a mile beyond Erbie Church, not even close to the usual mudhole, before the road became too soft. Chris, maneuvering carefully to avoid becoming stuck in the bar ditch, turned the van around. As we started down the road, the engine, insulted by its baptism in the creek, died, and our campsite for the evening was chosen for us.

We were seven people in a seven-passenger van with one sleeping bag, one blanket, two towels, and some damp jackets for bedding. Our food consisted of one bag of tortilla chips, two boxes of granola bars, and one bag of oranges. We prepared ourselves for an unpleasant night.

The back seat of Chris' van folds down into a bed, and we began with David, Donnie, and Brian there, Jenny and Tami in the middle seats, and Chris & me in front. We told jokes and talked about movies for awhile.

Chris' pager beeped at about 10:00, but we had to conserve the power in the cell phone battery. He pushed the button, tossed the pager back into the console, and said something like, "Take two aspirins and \*don't\* call me in the morning."

We gradually dozed off, but throughout the night we all seemed to go through cycles of sleeping, shifting until our meager covering left us exposed, and then waking up shivering. Jenny, in the seat behind me, was suffering badly from the cold. I could hear the shivering in her breath and feel it through my seat, against which her legs rested. Eventually, the ladies joined the men in the back seat to conserve warmth.

Morning arrived to reveal a light

dusting of snow on the tops of the highest hills. At around 7:30, Chris and I opened the engine compartment and found that, though the distributor was dry, the carburetor was full of condensation and the air filter was sodden. The battery had regained some strength, but it still couldn't start the engine.

At 8:00, the Buffalo National River office opened, and we called for help. I first tried the extension of Chuck Bitting, the cave resource manager, but had to leave a message on his voice mail. I got the operator and told her of our situation. She transferred me to a man named George, who spoke of sending wrecker. We lost the weak signal, and when I called back, Chuck had his voice mail and was waiting for my call.

I had called him to begin with, knowing that he, a caver, would be more sympathetic to stranded cavers. He arranged to have two of the park's maintenance personnel, Bob White and Loyal Breedlove, come to our aid. (I have made a point of including the names of these three men so that they may take their rightful places in the panteon of caving saints.)

While we waited, I noticed that Brian, who had only shorts to wear, was wearing Donnie's jacket like a pair of pants. I had used the same jacket as a sort of sleeping bag, shoving both feet into one sleeve. They were the only part of me that was consistently warm that night.

I had estimated that our rescuers would take an hour and a half to arrive. At 8:55, we were surprised by a noise in front of us and looked over the raised hood to see the blessed sight of a park service truck. The van started immediately, with an infusion of power from their truck, but ran roughly. Chris held the accelerator down lightly to increase the idle rate while the water burned out.

When the van seemed ready, Bob and Loyal led us down the road to the ford. Though the creek was clearly lower, we were white-knuckled as we entered the water.

We made it across, where we met another group of cavers from Texas. After hearing our harrowing tale of survival, they decided to visit Fitton another day. We thanked our saviors profusely and headed to camp.

A light snow was falling when we arrived to find that the wind had broken the women's tent frame, and Brian's and David's sleeping bags were wet. We sorted through our gear and hung things from trees and lantern hooks to dry. We hoped that, after a day and night of rest, we'd be ready to visit Copperhead Cave, so after eating we broke camp to move to a location near it.

The road from the town of Mt. Sherman to Camp Orr (BSA) and Copperhead Cave is steep, dropping 1260 feet in about two miles. It is not, however, normally muddy, but these were not normal conditions. We were quickly turned back by mud, and after a brief, we decided to return to Texas immediately.

Later that day, as we crossed the state line into Oklahoma, the sun, unseen since Wednesday, began to appear. The highway was pointed directly into it, and shafts of light spilled to earth through gaps in the clouds. The sign at the state line says, "Welcome to Arkansas," but nature was clearing telling us, "Go home."

## New Caver

A new caver has been born into the Fralia Clan. Many people will remember Jennifer Fralia who caved with her father, Butch, years ago. She gave birth to Jerry Don Carnes, Jr. at 10:28 p.m., April 27, 1998.

Mother and son are doing fine, while the father is experiencing a problem. He keeps floating to the ceiling causing someone to have to grab him by the feet and place him firmly back down on the floor!

## New USGS Course Available

Exploring Caves is an interdisciplinary set of materials on

caves for grades K-3. Caves entail at least five scientific disciplines: earth science, hydrology, mapping, biology, and anthropology. Each of these disciplines involves a unique content area as well as the development of particular intellectual skills. This unit aims at helping teachers to sort and organize the most important ideas in this rich scientific area. Detailed lesson plans serve as ways to pass these ideas on to very young students.

For more information, see the USGS website at: [www.usgs.gov/education/learnweb/caves/](http://www.usgs.gov/education/learnweb/caves/)

## The Speleo Digest

It's Coming! 1997 Speleo Digest Available in June!

"For years cracks ruled my life. Vertical cracks, horizontal cracks, underwater cracks. If I wasn't in a crack, I was reading about one, looking at pictures of one or talking about one. Some mornings I woke up covered with mud, not knowing where it came from. I have read stories in the newspaper and have seen it on TV, but I never thought it could happen to me. I admit now, I was a crack addict." From Confessions of a Crack Addict, Speleo Digest 1997.

Are you too a crack addict? You've probably heard the warnings. If you are, don't worry, the National Speleological Society has something to feed your habit, The 1997 Speleo Digest.

If you want to know the dangers of exploring cracks, and the challenges, check out the '97 Digest. From sump diving in the northeast to exploring places like Gator Hole, Alien Abduction Cave, Amnesia Cave, Cyclops Cave, Hellhole and Prison Den Cave, it's 548 pages of the best work from many of the NSS' finest grotto newsletters.

Over 300 articles written by nearly 200 authors from across the United States are included in this Speleo

Digest. With topics like aerial ridgewalking, caving for bones in Jamaica, or wondering what it's like caving with Stephen King, this book won't cure your addiction to cracks - it will only make it worse. The 1997 Speleo Digest even provides revealing social commentary: If you have friends who have toured the country and stayed at a caver's home every night, or who sift the good carbide from what others have left after changing carbide, you probably know a Tight Caver. You know the ones - they dig the used tires out of sinkholes and take them home to put on their cars.

From the earliest cave maps in the United States to the latest, for tips on terminology, for the lowdown on caving in other countries, for the best caving cartoons, for the latest theories on the genesis of formations, and for the best scoop on what is going on in the caving world today, get one before they're all gone. (There are a lot of addicts out there.) Order yours today for only \$19.00 plus \$4.50 shipping from the NSS Office, 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama, 35810, (256) 852-1300, [nss@caves.org](mailto:nss@caves.org).

For those of you online, you can find out what a Speleo Digest is (in case you didn't know), you can read the History of the Speleo Digest series. you can check out the Summary, Table of Contents, Publications Represented, Author Index, Cave Index, and Article Title Index for the 1995 Digest, the RECENTLY PUBLISHED 1996 Digest, and the 1997 Digest, all online.

Did that article you wrote make the cut? Was something from your grotto publication considered? How is your state or area represented? Yep, it is all at your fingertips!

Just go to <http://www.caves.org/pub/speleodigest> and have fun.

## Cavern Diving Certification



## Course

R.D. Milhollin, a cavern instructor for the National Speleological Society Cave Diving Section, will be conducting a cavern diving course in northern Florida over the Memorial Day Holiday weekend. This class will teach certified scuba divers the skills necessary to safely dive in the sunlit entrance areas of the submerged caves often encountered in tropical karst areas such as the southeastern U.S. and the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. The course serves a dual purpose. It is viewed as an advanced specialty by open water certification agencies such as NAUI, and as an introductory level course by the cave diving certification agencies such as the NSS-CDS and the NACD. The course will coincide with the annual CDS cave diving workshop, held this year for the first time in Lake City Florida. The workshop attracts cave divers from all over the world, and includes reports on current exploration, new technology, and safety-related issues, and features a film festival. Interested certified divers please contact the instructor at (817) 459-3959 or via internet: [rdmilh@tenet.edu](mailto:rdmilh@tenet.edu)

## Rocket City Pre NSS Convention Camp

Hosted by the Huntsville Grotto

There will be a Pre-Convention Camp conducted in Huntsville, Alabama [Home of the NSS] this summer [Friday July 31, Saturday August 1, and Sunday Aug. 2]

The camp will be limited to less than 60 PRE REGISTERED non-Tag Cavers.

We have an excellent camp site provided by the Saints Motorcycle Club. It is a grassy site on the banks of the Flint River with a swimming hole and canoe service available. Canoe trips can be arranged where you can be taken up river to canoe 10 miles right back to camp. The site

even has a bandstand and other amenities. An outdoor shower will be set up.

The Space and Rocket Center and other local attractions can provide non-caving diversions.

Bring your bike, as the biking in the area is super, both road and trail!

If you are not into camping there are MANY motels in the area.

### Schedule:

NOTE: All cave trips will be "LED" trips

Friday July 31 1998

Arrival, set up camp. There will be a NSS Office "Open House" that day from 1 to 5 PM. This will be a good chance to see and visit the home of the NSS. There will be an opportunity to visit Shelta Cave, which is located next to the office. The campground will provide a center for socializing later in the evening.

Saturday Aug. 1 1998

Cave trips!!! We will provide both Horizontal and Vertical led trips. All trips with the exception of Fern and Kennemar will be in and around the Huntsville area [Madison and Morgan county Alabama]. There are 10 open air pits that are at least 150 foot deep with in the city limits of Huntsville alone! . Some unusual cave trips are being planned. A trip listing is in the works.

That evening there will be a party complete with a Band. [BYOB although the Saints do have a Donation Bar available]. There will be at least one band and could be as many as three. Sunday Aug. 2 1998

More cave trips, or break camp and head to the convention site in Tennessee which is about 75 miles away with a satisfied cave fix and possibility a hangover to kick off convention with.

Oh the cost?? \$12 will get you camping, cave trips and party. All profits will go to the Southeastern Cave Conservancy.

The Saints will provide a breakfast bar Saturday and Sunday Morning.

This Pre -Convention Camp is designed for the non TAG Cavers who wish a TAG caving experience.

Come and enjoy Southern Caver Hospitality!!

### REGISTRATION FORM

All participation will be pre-registration and will be on a first come, first serve basis. There will be no walk in registration. Registration deadline is July 1, 1998. Cost is \$12, make checks payable to the Huntsville Grotto.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

HORIZONTAL CAVER

VERTICAL CAVER

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR VERTICAL ABILITIES:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Registration deadline is July 1, 1998.

Mail registration to:  
Rocket City Pre-Camp  
Care of Roger Haley  
PO Box 822  
Madison, Alabama, 35758  
EMAIL: [rdhaley@ingr.com](mailto:rdhaley@ingr.com)

## Memorial Day CRF cancelled

The CRF Memorial Day expedition announced in the TSA Activities Newsletter has been cancelled. Response has been weak. Barbe Barker has decided it would be best to cancel the expedition, but she encourages everyone to consider participating in CRF's next expedition, which will be the week-long restoration field camp.

Maverick Grotto  
C/O Chad Fenner  
3700 Wayland  
Ft Worth TX. 76133

## Calendar of Events

May 8-9, 1998, Gypkap, New Mexico. Contact Joli or Chris Lee, (505) 585-8406  
May 9-10, 1998, Colorado Bend State Park. Contact Terry Holisinger (512) 443-4241 or Butch Fraia 346-2039  
May 23-25, 1998, SWR Regional, Hermosa, New Mexico. Contact Steve Peerman (505) 523-2167  
June 27-30, 1998, Gypkap, New Mexico. Contact Joli or Chris Lee, (505) 585-8406  
August 3-7, 1998, NSS Convention, Sewanee, Tennessee. Contact William Shrewsbury, (423) 886-3296  
August 22-23, 1998, Gypkap, New Mexico. Contact Joli or Chris Lee, (505) 585-8406  
July 12-16, 1999, NSS Convention, Twin Falls, Idaho. Contact David W. Kesner, (208) 939-0979