

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Monthly Newsletter Of The Ft. Worth Maverick Grotto

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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 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 is an artsy kind of a shot taken by Laura Goff of R.D. Milhollin hanging from a tree

Page 4: Wayne Peblinski in water at Honey Creek cave by Ed Goff

Page 4: R.D. on rope again, this time in a cave by Ed Goff

Pages 8-9: Various shots from the Karen Perry Halloween Party by Chad Fenner

Other Credits

Editor for one more issue: 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.fwst.net/np/maverickgrotto>
Web space donated by Star-Telegram Online Services.

Minutes for the October Meeting

Minutes to the October 13 , 1998 Grotto Meeting

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

First-time Visitors:

Heather, John Langevin's friend from work.

Announcements:

Petzel has a new Mega with a better back. The new back can be worn in the traditional back-of-the-helmet location, or on the waist.

TCR this weekend, the Mavs will have a special roped off area. Butch

will man a TCR booth.

Officer's Reports

Treasurer: We have \$464.96

Old Business:

Fall Party a success. Russell's Chile won the prize.

Halloween part on the 31st at Karen Perry's

New Business:

Nominations for officers were as follows:

Chairman: John Langevin

Vice Chairman: R.D. Milhollin

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook

Secretary/newsletter editor: (drum roll, please) Ed Goff

Trip Reports:

Ed, Wayne, and Chris Sorbin went to CBSP. They hauled 80 lb packs for an hour, including scuba gear, only to find a whopping 8 feet of water.

Karen Perry got a 4WD truck (hooray!)

R.D. announced two holiday trips (Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Years).

Michael Coulter has TAG connections and wants to organize a trip there this spring.

Program

This month's program was a presentation on the new library

Editor's Ramblings

Happy November.

Ever gotten on a trip to a cave you have never been to before and have no clue what you are in store for? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to read trip reports from previous trips to that cave as published in the *Maverick Bull* or any of the exchange newsletter we receive?

Ever remember reading about that new Petzel thing-a-ma-jig that what's-his-face wrote, but can find the article again?

Have you been looking for a good book that covers the caves that start

with the letter "R" that are in states west of Chicago?

That list of trip reports, the technical article, the book you are looking for, and much more could be found at the hit of a few keystrokes. IF. Yes, there is an IF. If . . . If we had all the material in the grotto library cataloged.

At the last meeting we discussed a process to get that done, but it involves everyone's help. Our grotto has 13 years of books, newsletters, periodicals, and now movies and other multimedia material. If everyone checks out one or two items each

month, we could do this by the end of the millennium (only 25 months away!).

If you missed last months meeting, I'm sure Sharon would be happy to give anyone a quick refresher on the process. Actually, it's really simple. You read over the material, fill out a form on what you read, then turn it back in. Even an A&M caver could do it. :)

Good Caving.

CF

November Meeting

This month's meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 10 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. The program will be by Ed Goff and

will be a review of different cave trips he's been on during 1998.

As usual, many upcoming trips will be planned and discussed, so come

on out and enjoy the food, program, and caver fellowship.

Christmas Party Announced/Renounced

At the October D/FW grotto meeting, they voted on and announced a grotto Christmas party (Mavericks welcome as well) on Dec 12 at Jay Jorden and Shelia Knight's. All the usual details, a keg would be purchased, bring a side dish/snack/softdrink, and of course the famous white elephant give gift exchange.

But that's not the end of the story. At the recent Halloween part, a revolution took place, and that decision was overturned. The location was changed to Dave "Cave" McClung and Barbe Barker's. I'm sure this story is not over yet, so stay tuned to this channel as the details develop, but in any case, keep Dec. 12 open.

Powell's & Neal's Cave

By Don J Abercrombie

I left early Friday afternoon in an attempt to reach the camp before dark. It was strange going caving without the boys. But Eric had homecoming and thinking I was going to spend Saturday in Neal's cave I decided to leave Nicholas behind.

My first big adventure happened when I took 377 from Stephenville to Brownwood. At one point I sat for 20 minutes while they worked on the highway, the rest of the time I averaged 40 miles an hour because of traffic. I had envisioned a nice cruise through the country, instead I got brain damage. I now recommend Hwy 16 for less stress.

I arrived at camp right at dark. Ed Goff, Dave Milhollin and Wayne Peblinski pulled in at 1:30 AM.

The next morning (late morning) when everyone was up, and after helping with rigging of the cable ladder at Powell's Cave, then watching the line grow to go down, Wayne and I followed Ed & Dave to Neal's Cave. George Veni led us there and talked to the land owner before we went to the cave. Also, a group of UT Austin students and their professor decided to go with us.

When we arrived at the cave, Doug, the land owner, showed up and gave us a very interesting history of the cave and the property. We put on our wet suits and headed for the cave. About that time Doug said that he wanted to go with us. We were delighted to have him along and to see his interest in the cave. Luckily I had brought two wet suits and two helmets. So Doug was well suited for caving. See it pays to take everything you own even though you never need it. I always know when I'm ready to go because I can hardly get in my van for all the "stuff". Okay, back to Neal's cave. Doug, Wayne and I decided to go explore the lower

stream passage while Ed and Dave tried for the sump at the upper stream passage.

The entrance into the cave was a tight crawl around a rock, then the passage slopes downward until you come to a cliff of large breakdown and loose dirt. You go to your left through a crawl and can then safely make it down the breakdown. Even though we didn't use one, the entrance of Neal's Cave does require a safety line. (Unless you have more testosterone than common sense.) Once at the bottom you hit water and with wet suits on for about 30 minutes it was a welcome sight. Doug, Wayne and I took off on our belly's through the cave. We were trying to get water in our wet suits to cool down. The entrance room is about 40 feet or higher, but after that it averages two feet to five feet high. The water is about 12 inches deep, and the mud well...tie your boots tight. We went maybe three or four hundred feet back, took our time and just enjoyed being there. Then Doug and Wayne began to work on the rock dam that Doug's father or grandfather built inside the cave. I tried some more video taping without enough light. Then we came out, cooled off and said our good-byes to Doug after inviting him to our camp.

Wayne and I grabbed a snack and headed for Powell's cave and explored the upper crevice passage and some connecting routes. I had never been to Powell's Cave and quickly realized that I was seeing but a fraction of it. The cave is one that you can easily get turned around in as several people did while we were there. I stuck close to Wayne, we followed the markers and had a great time. We decided we were tired and headed out. They had rigged a narrow (single foot) cable ladder at the entrance. People were tired coming out of the cave so Chris(?) and I rigged up a rope and helped several people up the entrance. One of them was a seven year old girl who was tired and ready to get out.

Her father began to send her up the ladder without a safety line. I made them stop and got Nicholas' harness (I told you I take everything) and Chris and I gave her a fun ride up.

Ed and Dave returned to camp about 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. that night. They spent 9 to 10 hours in Neal's Cave. At that point Wayne and I were glad we didn't go with them. Doug came to our camp that night and watched the video on my 12 volt TV VCR (I told you, everything). The light was bad so we offered to try again. Doug said he couldn't ask us to go to that much trouble, but Wayne and I convinced him that we could "suffer" through it. Doug also met Terry Holsinger and asked if he could come to Powell's Cave in February. Yes, I think Doug might be hooked.

The next morning Wayne and I rushed, oh I mean suffered back at Neal's Cave and had a great time. When we came out and watched the video we realized that moisture had gotten into the lens and everything was blurred. So we went back to Powell's Cave, ran into Ed and Dave and posed for some photo shots. I ran smack into a rock that didn't even see it. I was 6'3" when I went into the cave, I am now 6'1". So that's why we wear helmets in caves.

Powell's Cave is an excellent cave trip and Terry H. is doing a super job overseeing things. The trip was great!

Trip Questions:

1. Why did a herd of cattle surround Dave's tent and threaten to stampede? (The guys said they were bulls, but ranchers don't have ten bulls together, so we'll just call them cattle.)
2. Has Dave picked up any bad habits lately?
3. What could make Ed scream?
4. What would Wayne kiss in a cave?
5. Who spent 1 year in a cave living off the cave life?
6. Will Don ever take video shooting lessons?

To find out the answers and more come to the meeting.

Honey Creek Day Trip Aug. 22, 1998

by Wayne Peplinski
 Ed Goff
 R.D. Millhollin
 Wayne Peplinski
 Justice Milsom

Did anyone check the weather?

At 3:30 in the morning when the alarm wakes you up on your day off, it makes me wonder what we won't go though to do a little bit of caving!

After loading my gear and eating a power bar for breakfast I was off to R.D.'s only to get lost on the way. This was the start of our Honey Creek Day Trip. I was to pick up Dave and meet Ed and his friend at Ed's house, after back tracking a little I managed to find Dave's and make it to Ed's by about 4:30 a.m. We loaded up Ed's "new monster caving truck". It sure looked familiar! It was nice to be able to stretch out in the back and snooze on the way down.

Waking up around Georgetown I noticed that it was raining a little bit, but not too hard. We pulled over at a Texaco to grab a drink. R.D. was still asleep in the suburban, I think he said he was dreaming of 10 cent



bananas?

The cashier said she had not heard of any bad weather headed our way, Great! I thought it will probably stop any minute now! WRONG!! It rained the rest of the way to the cave.

We arrived at the entrance gate only to see alone truck with a bat sticker. After pulling up, Ed rolled down his window and said "are there any caves around here?" this is how we met Hal Lloyd from Austin. He was the only caver to show up besides us four.

We discussed where we thought

everyone was and decided that they knew something we didn't, like RAIN. After about 2 hours of waiting, we were thinking of taking in a show cave on the way home, but after a 5 and 1/2 hour drive we wanted to at least see the entrance to the cave .

We drove down a muddy and slick road to the entrance, after looking down the shaft with a spotlight it appeared that the water flow was about normal, but if you've seen this entrance you know it's kind of hard to tell because it's a pretty good drop, about 30 meters I believe.

It was only a light sprinkle now, so we thought we would see if the landowner had seen or heard from any of the T.S.A. group, since this was supposed to be a work trip.

We found him down at the sheep barn shearing sheep with a Brigg's & Stratton motor with clippers on a long swivel arm, it was a pretty interesting operation.

He told us that he had not heard or seen anyone, but that if we wanted to take a look at the cave to feel free to do so, just to lock up for him!

Hearing this we headed back to the entrance. Once there we decided to use Ed's truck for the elevator since Justice did not bring his vertical gear. I rode down with him as I had been down before. Ed and R.D. decided to



rappel in and climb back out. Because it was wet and muddy outside, it was a little different kind of ride than usual, a little bumpy but fun. Going up is the part I don't like, you get the feeling that you could possibly be ripped in half if you were to get hung up along the way. (nice thought huh!)

Safely at the bottom, I could see that the water flow was only slightly above it's flow from the last trip when we were all down we decided not to stay to long or stray to far from our exit because we knew that the water level could change quickly with the rain above ground. We went downstream about 100 ft. to a large dead flowstone that was coming out of the side of the passage. There was another small passage above this. Climbing over I could see why it had stopped forming, at some time in the past, the water started flowing around and under this formation. There was a lot of rimstone and some shelf up this passage, I would like to take a better look at this on the next trip.

We wandered around for about 20 more minutes, looking at the passage upstream and then decided that we should be going, but not without some photo's. This didn't last long, though, and we were soon above ground. At some point while we were in the cave, Hal had left. He seems like a fun guy to cave with! Once out of our wetsuits and into dry clothes we were on our way home. It was a long drive but we at least got to do a little caving. To bad that the other cavers didn't show up they missed seeing the blind cave trout jumping the rimstone dam's, this has to be a once in a lifetime thing!!!!

Karst hydrogeology job opportunity

Posted to CaveTex by George Veni

The Edwards Aquifer Authority has announced a job opening that is of interest to karst types seeking employment. Please pass this note

on to anyone, yourself, student, former student, etc. who you think may be interested.

The job will pay between \$5416 to \$6666 per month for a Chief Technical Officer who will direct Edwards Aquifer research programs. Minimum requirements are an MS in geology, hydrogeology, or a related field, 5 years experience with large scale water resource projects, knowledge of karst aquifers, and knowledge of regulatory processes. EAA may consider other experience in lieu of some of the above job requirements. The deadline for applications is 2 November 1998. For more details, check out the EAA web site at: www.e-aquifer.com

The job will be based in San Antonio, Texas. The Edwards is a highly complex karst aquifer which needs more good people working on it -- especially people who are knowledgeable about karst.

No-name cave has a bright future

In a copyrighted story by Zeke MacCormack of the Express-News, Cave-without-a-Name has changed ownership and is headed for a bright future. They are planning a new marketing campaign and new attractions, but no new name.

"The name will remain. That's how people know it," said Tom Summers, a Houston wholesale fabric distributor who, with caver and photographer Blair Pittman, bought the property from Eugene Ebell.

"My main goal is to preserve it, let people enjoy it and educate them," said Summers, 63, who financed the buy and is leaving the cave management to Pittman.

Ebell was ready to bow out after nearly four decades of leading as many as 20,000 visitors a year down the steep stairway into the cool darkness of the quarter-mile long cavern, where spectacular rock formations hang from the 30-foot ceiling.

"I liked giving the tours, but my legs

gave out and I couldn't get back up the stairway," said Ebell, 80. "I only went up and down that stairway 35,000 times."

Discovered in 1935 when the property belonged to James L. Horne of San Antonio, the cave was the subject of a contest to name it when tours began in 1939.

The winning entry came from a local student who said the cave was "too pretty to have a name." The non-name stuck, except for a few years in the 1970s when it was temporarily called "Century Cave."

Until recently, it was promoted primarily with hand-scrawled signs on unfinished plywood placed along Kreuzberg Road.

"We never did much advertising. It costs too much," said Ebell, who entered the business in 1962 when he married Horne's widow, Jolene. She has since died.

As the deal slowly came together over recent months, tours were led by Pittman, 61, crazy about caves since visiting The Devil's Sinkhole in Rock Springs as a boy.

"It was fantastic," Pittman recalled. "I was hooked."

Since then, he's visited and photographed more than 300 caves worldwide. His cave photos have appeared in the National Speleological Society News, and he will soon publish a coffee-table book called "Texas Caves."

Pittman already has erected new signs along Kreuzberg Road and installed new lighting in the cave.

He and volunteers also have started slowly removing tons of silt and clay to unearth new formations.

"You don't really own a cave," Pittman said. "A cave owns you."

Nature trails soon will be built around the existing office, and Pittman has visions of a new visitors center and possibly a second entrance to make the cave accessible to the handicapped.

"It's going to take us a few years to turn this thing around and get the facilities on the surface to match the beauty of the cave underneath,"

Pittman said.

Ebell is confident the cave is in good hands with Pittman.

"He's a caver and he wants to keep it natural, not put any kiddie rides in or miniature trains," Ebell said.

And Pittman isn't complaining about leading up to eight back-to-back tours a day.

"It's been good for me," the pack-a-day smoker said. "I don't do a Stair-master at night."

TCR Stories

Unless you live under a caving rock, you've probably heard something about this years TCR and the weather they had. In case you missed, TCR had a bit of rain. Enough to make the creek rise about 9 feet. Almost as soon as the weekend was over, survivors started posting their stories on CaveTex. I started collecting them, but then realized that Gill Ediger was doing the same thing on the TSA web page. Here are some highlights from those stories.

From: Butch Fralia

I want to thank everyone who helped me get my trailer out of the river bottom when I foolishly got it stuck. I was aimed the wrong way to pull it out directly downstream with the river (and back to the road). I went upstream to try and turn around. I couldn't see worth a flip because my glasses kept fogging over and those involved know the rest.

Russell Hill, Dave McClung, Terry Holsinger and a host of others worked hard to get me out then when space couldn't be made for the turn-around, pulled the trailer off my truck and turned it around where I could attach. I was worried about having to leave it for awhile there and I'm getting pretty attached to my little luxuries!

Thanks again for the fine effort. Once again cavers come through for each other.

From: Wayne Bockelman

We packed up about 3:30 and heard Gill telling people to evacuate as we were leaving. The police in Uvalde told us that Highway 90 was closed and that we couldn't make it through San Antonio. The three of us found an empty, single room at the "Amber Sky" motel. Most of the motel rooms were already filled with hunters, we were told. When we headed east about 11 a.m. San Antonio TV said that Highway 90 was closed but there was a detour via Military Road. I-10 was also under water east of town at FM 1604. By the time we got there the roads were open and our trip back to Houston was uneventful.

From: Travis Kinchen

Having camped up on the hill, I was not forced to evacuate. As a matter of fact, I slept so well that I missed the whole evacuation. I rolled out of the sack at 7:30 AM thinking that I'd be the first person up. SURPRISE!! The first thing saw was vehicles parked all over the place that hadn't been there the night before. Then I noticed the river. Wow, what a change from the day before when I had been floating lazily down the riffles on my inner-tube. I walked down through the lower campground and gawked at the flood's results.

From: Krawdaddy0@aol.com

Ahoy there, So glad to hear of all the rescues and safe evacuations. After being awakened I soaked up as much of the water as I could with my sleeping bag and tent and all other things and drove to higher ground. Being as I was moving I just kept going. Made it home via San Antonio via 1610 as they had 35 closed at 410. Special thanks to all that helped in any way before, during and after the event especially Gill who I am sure is still doing the lions share of this work.

From: Carl Kunath CE@aol.com

Thanks for the wakeup call Sunday AM. I think that without it, we might

have been in trouble. North to Rocksprings was blocked at 0415 so we escaped south to Uvalde and then to Junction where we had breakfast at 0645. Blue sky and white clouds in San Angelo.

Thanks for doing another TOTR! We like the Chalk Bluffs site.

From: Martha McArthur

Thanks [Gil] for waking Danny up and saving our lives.

From: George Veni

I'm glad to hear that many people liked the TCR site at Chalk Bluff, despite the rain. I liked it too. However, as a bit of historical perspective, if memory serves right we've had 4 caving events in the Uvalde area since 1981, including this TCR. All were accompanied by floods. Two of the events were the 1981 TSA Spring Convention which was cancelled by floods, rescheduled, then caught by rain on the new date to create a huge and entertaining mud-pull weekend on Bob Oakley's ranch. Regardless of this history, I'm willing to try Chalk Bluffs again for TCR, and Allan is right in pointing out that flooding in our usual TCR sites closer to Austin would have been a far worse experience.

From: Mark Minton minton@mail.utexas.edu

Most of the sauna was lost in the flood. We heard someone was down trying to dismantle it when a five-foot wall of water came down the river. Being all lightweight materials it just took off. The hot tub got washed downstream a couple of hundred feet, but came to rest at the head of a small rapid, with the firebox sitting on top of the flattened sheet metal of the tub. Next morning we got a strap around it and winched it back to shore with Peter Sprouse's bus.

Only the chimney was gone. Firebox should still be usable but I have my doubts about the tub. The flood water had gotten up to about the level of the food serving "tent". A

Halloween Party Fun For All (that were there, that is!)

In spite of a low turn-out (only 15 people or so), the D/ Fenner, best male costume as Zorro; Barbe Barker, best FW/Maverick Grotto Halloween party was a tremendous female costume as a high-dollar Lady of the Night, and blast. Karen and husband Rod Perry offered their house as Don and Jennette Metzner, best couple's costumes as two a sacrifice to the party gods and went all out decorating it. monk-robed, hooded, dark spirits (presumably to carry the From the mine-shaft-style cadaver recovery, to the prostitute and pimp, AKA Barbe and Dave, off to their skeleton, rat and maggot-filled coffin, the place was eternal destiny).

spooked to the MAX. Karen also offered door prizes, including a bat-adorned headpiece given to caveman Jay Jordan and "Rocky prizes for best costumes. The winners were: Chad Horror Picture Show" survival kits given to all present.



(Far top left) Our hostess for the evening, Karen
 (Top center) Cavemen the way it's supposed to be, Jay and Shelia
 (Top right) Some guests just hung around.
 (Bottom left) Other guests hit the sack early.

T H E M A V E R I C K B U I L D



(Top left) Pimp and Lady of the Night, Dave and Barbe

(Top right) Buffy the Slayer taking out her villainess mom, Gracie and Karen Cagle

(Bottom left) The dark spirits, Don and Jeanette Metzner

(Bottom right) I knew milk came from a cow, but beer from this cow? (Robert Halcro)



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Calendar of Events

November 13-15, 1998, Colorado Bend SP Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger, (512)443-4241, trhill@sprynet.com

December 12, 1998 Grotto Christmas Party. See Details inside.

December 11-13, 1998, Colorado Bend SP Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger, (512)443-4241, trhill@sprynet.com

July 12-16, 1999, NSS Convention, Twin Falls County Fairground, Filer Idaho. Contact: David Kesner, (208)939-0979, drdave@micron.net