
THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTOS



Volume 15 Issue 12

December, 2001



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issue to persons interested in becoming members.

bring and set up the Grotto Library.

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

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.

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

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Guest Editors: Butch Fralia & Sharon Mastbrook

Visit Our Web Site

The *Maverick website may be seen* at: <http://www.maverickgrotto.batcave.net>

Minutes for the November Meeting

Minutes to the November 13, 2001 Grotto Meeting

The November meeting approximately 7:05 p.m. The business portion of the meeting was called to order by Grotto Chairperson, Chad Fenner.

New Visitors: No new visitors

New Members: Alan Goodman

Announcements: T-Shirts will be at the December meeting.

Trip Reports: Scott went to the November CBSP project with Keith Heuss, Wayne Peplinski, Mark Gee, Rafael & Friends.

They went with a group across the CBSP river to ridge walk. Identified 2 caves and a crevice. They surveyed 11 stations for a total of 115'. Wayne had medical attention due to hypothermia.

Dawn & Alvis Hill were also at CBSP in November. David Gers & Phil Sanders went to Quanah to Little Crystal and Walkup.

Old Business: Revision/Updating the Grotto Constitution was discussed. RD Milhollin will get create a committee to work on that project.

A discussion of separating the Secretary/Editor position was held. At this time, we will continue to have a joint position.

Butch Fralia motioned to accept the nominated officers by acclamation and Ernie Parker seconded the motion. The Grotto Officers for 2002 are: Chad Fenner, Chairperson; Ed Goff, Vice-Chairperson; RD Milhollin, Treasurer; and Wayne Peplinski, Secretary/Editor.

RD Milhollin has some leads for a person to do the Grotto decals, badges, etc. He will get more info and present in an upcoming meeting.

Program: The meeting was adjourned and James Savage was the Auctioneer for the Grotto Auction. The Auction was a great success!



Editors' Ramblings

Another year is closing in on us. As we reflect on the past year, we are constantly reminded that our country and world is changing.

We've had an interesting year in our grotto. Friends have visited, friends have moved away, and friends have stayed to continue the journey of being a caver. Deep huh ;) As we approach another

year, let us look forward to the caving experiences we will have. More importantly is the friendships we will continue to nurture on this journey.

Thanks to the Officers we have that make the grotto run smoothly. Thanks to the members that make our grotto special.

We wish all of our friends a Happy Holiday Season and a Great New Year in 2002!

Butch & Sharon



December Meeting

The next meeting of the Maverick Grotto will be held December 11, 2001 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth. Meeting starts 7 p.m. at Smokey's BBQ on Lancaster 1 mi. west of south Loop 820 in east Ft. Worth.

As usual there will be great barbecue available and lively discussion.

One probable subject of dis-

cussion will be proposed changes to the Grotto Constitution. The concept of separating the offices of Secretary and Newsletter editor has been discussed and will require a constitutional amendment to make it official. Dave Milhollin and others have suggested changes that will have to be proposed and put into a sample format. It will

have to be published in a newsletter prior to the meeting it will be voted on.

The December program will be a "rough edit" of the ambitious video shot by Chris Buntentbah of the recent Thanksgiving-week sump diving expedition to Grutas de La Puente, SLP, Mexico.

November trip to the TSA Colorado Bend Project

reported by Scott D. Boyd, Ft. Worth, TX

Friday night, 11-09-01:

Soon after dark, several people mentioned they were going to go into Turtle Shell Cave, so I "volunteered" to go with them. (Sorry, I didn't get names.) I got my gear together, while the others did the same. I went to wait for them by the campfire, and after about 15 minutes, they still hadn't shown up, so I thought they had gone on without me. The other guys that were gathered around decided to show me where it was. By this time, there was another caver that had joined our little expedition. (Again - I don't remember who it was...) Once we found the cave, the two of us went in. Soon afterwards, the original group showed up. About 5-7 of us took the short tour through Turtle Shell Cave. We then went and explored Lemon's Ranch Cave.

In L.R. Cave, there was some bad air in a restricted, belly-crawl passageway, but four of us went through it, as one caver reported that the air got better once he got to the larger passageway on the other side. Two cavers decided they didn't want to risk the bad air, so they waited in the large room for us to come back out. We had a great time slurping through the black mud on the floor of the passageway, which looks like it has flowing water during rainy periods. We finally arrived in the back of the cave where the formations were, took a break, and took a few pictures. I think that seeing the formations in Lemon's Ranch Cave were worth the strenuous experience of crawling through the bad air section. We then made our way back out, which took a while, and went back to

camp.

Saturday 11-10-01:

Two groups were assigned to do ridge walking in the section of the park across the river. Our group consisted of Keith Huess, me (Scott Boyd), Scott Serur, Bill Allred, his son Xavier Allred, and his friend Kyle Scott. While following the fence line to get to our assigned area, we came across several previously marked caves and crevices. We looked at them briefly and continued on. Along the way to the area we were supposed to ridge walk, Scott Serur found the first cave of the day. It was a narrow crevice, with a long vertical drop, so a rope was rigged, and Allen King (in the other group) went down to look around. He reported that there was a 15 ft. drop. Scott then entered the cave and explored further. It turns out that the first drop was followed by another 15 ft. drop. At the bottom of this drop, there was a room about 30 ft. in diameter and about 4 ft. high. In this room was another drop about 30 ft. to a floor. They then exited the cave. The cave was flagged, documented, GPS coordinates were taken, and it was later dubbed "Scott's Drops Cave". The two groups split up after this find.

While the others were finishing up at that cave, I went exploring nearby. Close by, I discovered a narrow crevice or fissure. I called everyone over, and I chimneyed into it. It was about 8 ft. deep, 20 ft. long, and about 12 in. wide, at most. It was a pretty tight squeeze! I looked to my left and right with a flashlight, and didn't see any passages large enough for a

person. It was flagged, documented and GPS coordinates were taken. We also found a small hole nearby. When a small rock was dropped into it, it went down quite a ways, and the sound could be heard in the crevice I had entered. I had noticed that at about floor level in the crevice, that there was a horizontal gap between the floor and the layer of rock above, so it's likely that the crevice and the hole are connected. There was also another similar crevice nearby, only narrower. It was off in the opposite direction from the small hole, so we don't know if the two crevices were connected.

Later on, Keith found a small hole in some rocks. Two very small openings were visible at the entrance, with a large rock between them. Scott S. or Bill dug around it, trying to enlarge the entrance, but he didn't have much luck. This cave will need some sledge-hammer type of persuasion to remove the large rock blocking the entrance. (The large rock had a crack in it, so it might be breakable.)

Around 2:30 pm, a few of us (middle-aged guys) were getting very tired, so we decided to start heading back. During the hike and ridge-walking, we discovered that Xavier had a hidden talent as a cactus-magnet, and we had to stop several times so that he could extract cactus thorns from his legs. And at one point, I decided to test the sharpness of a small yucca dagger by impaling my shin. Yes -it was sharp! And it drew blood too! We crossed back over the river at about 4 pm and returned to camp to rest our weary bones...

The following two articles are a bit of nostalgia since this is the fifteenth anniversary of the grotto. The first article is a short summary of the beginning of the Grotto. It's written in an old English tone so it should be different. It was published in the 10th anniversary issue of the Maverick Bull. The second article was also printed in that same issue. It's been updated slightly to cover the five years since the article was written.—Ed.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Maverick Grotto

by Butch Fralia

In the beginning there was only document complementary to the year the coffers of the Grotto called DFW, an old Grotto of great society of caving. A statement of Mavericks were managed by Dale renown, and it was in Dallas. Upon intent on the part of other speleos Ellison. a dark night, some who professed to willing to say "let there be more In the second year, the be speleos (children of the and let it be in Fort Worth!" These finances of Corky Corcoran, the underground) gathered high upon a were the words of the ancient first of Chairmen, heeded the call of hill in a County called King, on a speleo, Joe Giddens, wise in the night shift. Editor Butch Fralia Ranch called Bateman, near a cave ways of the ancient art. produced twenty-eight issues of called Styx. Many a liter of fine It came to pass in November "Bull" then moved on to other lager (the nectar of Oztotl) were of 1986 a gathering of some twenty demands of life. Donna Anderson consumed and spirits ran high! A speleos willing to say; "let there be served two years in the role of Vice warm fire lit the night and the more and let it be in Fort Worth!" Chairman until she returned to the hearts of the speleos who gathered In the minds of most, gathered on ranks of Speleos where she is still a there. A voice spoke from the dark that long passed night was remedy strong and respected influence. saying; "let there be more and let it to a monthly drive on a work night Speleos Dale Ellison and Danny be in Fort Worth!" That night the to the far away county of Dallas. Sherrod are still among us. thought was not well received but There was willingness to expand Through the years have they held the suggestion took root and later the ranks of speleos unable to make high office and left us with the other voices sprang forth saying "let the trek to far away county Dallas. legacy of their contributions. there be more and let it be in Fort And so it came to pass in During the passing of eight Worth!" Thus in the summer of those days, the formation of the years, the grotto of Maverick has 1986 were the beginnings of The Grotto of Mavericks. Those known seen many fine cavers enter it's chambers. Those such as the one as Mavericks were numbered known as Dave "Cave" McClung well known in the hearts of all. The early speleos, those twenty and became known as the guide them through the rocky Among us has walked the well called the founders, gathered at a charters. They chose leadership passages of the early days. These known David Finfrock until called later time to discuss their thoughts. were named as Chairman: Corky from our midst by prime time television. Many have come and There was Donna Anderson, Corky Corcoran, Vice-Chairman: Donna abide still while others have come Fralia, Joe Giddens and Danny Corcoran, Treasurer: Joe Giddens, and Secretary-Editor Butch Fralia. and gone. Sherrod. The ancient speleo, Joe Anderson, Treasurer: Joe Giddens, and Secretary-Editor Butch Fralia. This leadership remained mostly in Thus is the story of the Grotto of Mavericks in it's Giddens, wise in the lore of the old and Secretary-Editor Butch Fralia. place for the passing of a single beginnings. Long may it live in the time speleos, spoke on that which year. Mighty Joe Giddens was the county Tarrant and forever shall it must be accomplished to become a gathering of those of similar mind. called away to a far place called dwell in the hearts of those who acknowledged by the most illustrious of speleo organizations, Arkansas and there today remains. have known it's times, it's trials and The NSS. There must first be a gathering of those of similar mind. Upon the beginning of the second it's tribulations. A drafting of a constitutional

The Changes

by Butch Fralia

The remaining Charter members of the Maverick Grotto, observed many changes since November, 1986. The people, the technology and politics of caving and the Grotto has changed. You decide for yourself what is better and what is worse.

From the list of Charter Members, you see some who are no longer with us. Where have they gone? Some moved away, some left caving and some like Rey Perkins, left and came back (and then left again!). During the first fifteen years, new blood has come forth to replace those who left and we have grown. We watched people come into caving to experience the great adventure then move on to other things. We watched people come into caving to find a place for themselves in the caving community and remain today. Those remaining charter members have grown older. We need new people in our midst to carry the torch and keep caving alive. We need new people to broaden our horizons and sharpen our perspective. We need new people to remind us of ourselves when we first became cavers. We need new people to remind us that while caving isn't for everyone, it's not ours alone! People come into caving and leave. Some leave of their own choice and others with our blessings and encouragement. Others come and like us find a home in caving. We need them! Bring them on!

Caving technology has changed. Camping gear, climbing gear, helmets, lights, survey gear, all are constantly changing and get-

ting better. For the most part, caving is still inexpensive and affordable. Every caver with four or five years experience has a museum of equipment they have bought and tried.

Lights have changed. We started with carbide and graduated to Wheat lamps. Along came Petzel with the Mega Light (and others) to provide for our caving pleasure. Small helmet lamps putting out nearly as much light as the Wheat with about 1/10th the weight.

The most recent fad is the LED lamp. Unfortunately they don't put out a lot of light but they look cool and the batteries last for a long time. It will be interesting to see how this trend develops.

Not long ago, a good sleeping bag and tent could only be purchased through specialty mail order houses. All that could be found locally were huge cabin tents and summer boy scout sleeping bags. Today, all manner of back packing tents and cold weather sleeping bags can be purchased locally.

Today, helmets and climbing gear are available locally. Fifteen years ago, there were few people who made climbing harnesses. Most climbing rigs were home made and the variety was astounding. Today, a variety of commercial sources provide complete climbing systems. Texas Caver, Joe Ivy will custom tailor a complete climbing system with all the hardware at a reasonable cost. Bob & Bob have commercial chest and seat harnesses of high quality. Local outlet Mountain Sports offers a variety of commercially made har-

ness systems. REI in Dallas offers equipment. There will always be home made rigs but for those of us short of time or skill, the gear is now readily obtainable.

One significant change in the last fifteen years is the advent of GPS system. When the Grotto was first formed, these things weren't available and you wouldn't believe how often we lost our caves (and still haven't found some of them). What may have been more important than our caves was the times we lost our cars! With the GPS system, we can visit a cave, store our locations and return to the cave and our cars time and again. If you can get a location for a cave from someone, you can locate it without having to wait until someone who knows where it is can go!

The change in communication via the newsletter and e-mail are astounding. We started out with a newsletter produced on a computer that by today's standards was a relic of the dark ages. In the beginning, hand written or typed text was typed into the computer. That was edited and spell checked, then exported into a text file format. It was then imported into a program that would do double columns and a variety of fonts. In the beginning a photograph was taped onto the cover sheet and Xeroxed. Today photographs are scanned into the computer to create a digital image and then if necessary, re-enhanced. We've added digital cameras to our collection of high tech toys so a lot of the photographs are just dumped into a computer and sent via e-mail.

The software to produce news letters has changed dramatically along with the computers. The first newsletters often required forty hours a month to produce a 'quality' (relative term) newsletter. Today, using El Cheapo Microsoft Publisher Software, a quality newsletter can be produced in about a fourth the time of that produced in 1986.

The most difficult part of producing a newsletter was in gathering material. Communication was via Ma Bell, hand carry and the US Mail. The Internet was virtually unknown outside academic circles. Few people had access to a typewriter so articles were mostly hand written. Today, most people have computers and type their submission. Internet access is a common reality. For a time when Chad Fener transposed the newsletter onto a web-page that was known throughout the world. Through trial and tribulation, there is still a Grotto newsletter though not updated with the frequency that Chad kept it up. Today we communicate via Internet e-mail. We send articles for the newsletter between the Author and the Editor via the Internet. Scott Boyd's article for this newsletter was transmitted by e-mail!

A further enhancement to communication on caving trips is the cell phone! Not in our wildest

dreams fifteen years ago did we think about people taking their cell phones on caving trips. Sounds silly considering we used to go caving to get away from phones and the "real" world. It's not all bad though, there's been a few times that having a cell phone to call someone already at a cave location has made the difference for some people ever finding the place.

Communication during a ridge walk used to be by yelling and sometimes whistling for people to come see the cave you found. Today there are the inexpensive Family Radio Service (FRS) walkie talkies that work for two miles and sometimes more. (You thought I was going to say call by cell phone didn't you!).

The politics of caving has changed. Cavers, once a secretive bunch have come out of the closet. Always conservationists and environmentalists, they have used their unique knowledge to try for protective cave legislation in Texas and other places. One effort did result in cavers being included in the landowner liability protection laws of Texas.

The saddest change, is the relationship with landowners. Property sold, and the new owners object to anyone other than immediate family and friends on the property. At River Styx Cave, cavers had a

wonderful relation with the owners for many years. With the death of Shorty Mongrain, the estate has been settled and the property divided among new owners who do not want cavers there for liability reasons. Today, liability is a major issue. Regardless of the laws on record, anyone can sue anyone else for anything! Even if the landowner wins the suit he or she has lost because of lost time and the expense of legal representation. Regardless of whether the landowner wins or loses, cavers always lose.

To elucidate, I've never known a caver to sue a landowner. I've known cavers to get hurt and hide their injuries to keep from alarming land owners. Until they get to know us, they are going to be leery.

There are still cave owners open to cavers visiting their land but they are few and far between what they once were. I sometimes concern myself about people returning to the same cave to many times and wearing out their welcome with friend land owners. It still behooves us as it always has to maintain the best possible relation with our land owners.

It's been an interesting fifteen years. What do we have to look forward to in the next fifteen years? Only the future will tell.

The Charter Members

Anderson, Donna
 Begley, Fanette & Ryan Taylor
 Corcoran, Corky
 Dalton, Steve
 Ellison, W. Dale
 Fabry, David
 Fralia, Butch
 Giddens, Joe & Georgene
 Heintz, Arlene

Hill, Russell-Cynthia Van Hooser
 Lytle, Sharon
 Miller, Ronald E.
 Penney, Susan/ Chuck Cluck
 Perkins, Reynold E.
 Porter, Mark
 Poynter, Brooks Edward
 Pruitt, Joe Ben
 Robertson, Jody

Savage, James
 Sherrod, Danny
 Spears, Eric
 Thompson, Dennis
 Walton, Cleo
 Wilkinson, Quinta, P.
 Williams, Chris-Jackie-John-Jennifer

December 11, 2001, — December meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth.
January 8, 2002 — January meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth.
January 11-13, 2002— TSA Volunteer project, Colorado Bend State Park
February 8-10, 2002 — TSA Volunteer project, Colorado Bend State Park
February 12, 2002 — February meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth.
March 8-10, 2002 — TSA Volunteer project, Colorado Bend State Park
March 12, 2002 — March meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth.
April 9, 2002 — April meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth.
April 12-14, 2002 — TSA Volunteer project, Colorado Bend State Park

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