



*Volume 16, Issue 2  
February 2003*

**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, photographs, and other two- and three-dimensional goodies. 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.

**Complimentary Newsletters:** The Maverick Grotto will provide complimentary 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 per year for nonmembers 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. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

**Carbide:** Currently carbide is unavailable.

**Library:** Support your grotto library. Russell Hill is accepting books, magazines, and videos related to caves and caving for our library. Thanks to Russell for his efforts in transporting the library collection to meetings.

#### Chair

Ed Goff  
737 Bizerte Ave.  
Dallas, TX 75224  
(214)942-6024  
egoff@rice.edu

#### Vice-Chair

Phil Sanders  
Box 180664  
Dallas, TX 75218-0664  
(214)557-0769  
utcaver@yahoo.com

#### Secretary

Karen Perry  
6112 Eagle Court  
Joshua, TX 76058  
(817)309-2283

#### Treasurer

R.D. Milhollin  
3711 Gene Lane  
Haltom City, TX 76117  
(817)834-2327  
rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org

#### Newsletter Editor

Diana R. Tomchick  
10106 Technology Blvd. #826  
Dallas, TX 75220  
(214)418-5827  
Diana.Tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu

#### Cave Rescue

Call collect (512) 686-0234

## Photos and Artwork

Cover photo: Milo Marks at the walk-in entrance (entrance #1) to Stephen's Gap, AL, by Diana Tomchick

Page 3: all by James Savage

Page 4: by Mark Gee

Page 8: all by Diana Tomchick

## Other Credits

Page 5: map by Mark Gee

Printing & mailing this month's newsletter: Butch Fralia & Sharon Mastbrook (thanks a lot!)

## Visit Our NEW Web Site!

Check out the site at its new location:

**[maverickgrotto.org](http://maverickgrotto.org)**

## January meeting minutes by Karen Perry

The meeting was called to order shortly after 7 pm, and 19 members were present.

**Visitors:** Melissa Marzahn, Kristopher Megahan, Dan Smith, Barry Williams, Bobby de Vos, Clive Parsons

**Old Business:** Bumper stickers, tee shirts, patch design were discussed again. Agreed to use artwork by Mark Gee's lost friend, as redone by Christopher Fenner.

New website can be used for member email. Proposed fees passed vote. You may now have an email account, a paper copy of the newsletter and membership for a mere \$22.00 yearly. Membership plus a paper copy of the newsletter by mail will remain \$15.00 annually, or you may receive a newsletter via electronic means plus membership and email, also for \$15.00. Since Butch Fralia owns the domain, if you have questions, contact him. He would also appreciate new photos for the webpage. Seems the 1995 Newsletter has been very popular, with average hits of 10 per day.

Pam Massey got married, no details.

The downtown Fort Worth 'Flying Saucer' is the proposed site for the March meeting.

Karen Perry is securing details and confirmation, more information will be available at the February meeting. R.D. Milhollin also suggested 'Buck & Loons' in Arlington for possible DFW/Maverick



*Chair Ed Goff (standing) leads the discussion at the January grotto meeting.*

joint events in the future.

Dan Smith, a.k.a. RiverDogDan, is a new member of the grotto.

Upcoming trips: Milo Marks has a trip to Carlsbad on February



*Vice-Chair Phil Sanders discusses upcoming trips with Bobby de Vos, Clive Parsons and Scott Boyd.*

8-9th. Mark Gee is going to help with the break through this month at the Hard Bargain trip, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Trip Reports: Mark Gee went to Colorado Bend State Park and Hill's Gate Cave projects. Milo Marks went to a red sandstone cave in the Arizona desert SE of Tucson. R.D. Milhollin and Robin Barber went to the Aquismón area of México over the Christmas/New Year's break, and R.D. climbed out of Golondrinas

while Robin watched the gear at the surface. Ed Goff went to the Purificación region of México, but was too sick to go caving, and went mountain climbing later. Milo Marks attended the National Cave Rescue training course at Colorado Bend State Park.

Meeting adjourned for a break and the program, which was Butch Fralia's video from the Colorado Bend project.

## February meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11th, at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 Lancaster, at 7 p.m. The after-meeting program will be a presentation by Mark Gee, subject unknown at press time. See you all there!

## Pay your Dues!

Use the handy form and envelope attached to last month's newsletter, or come to the grotto meeting and pay in person.

## Next month in the Maverick Bull

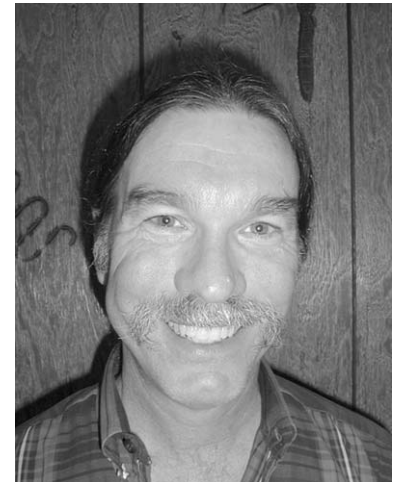
Due to a surgical procedure scheduled for late February, I am looking for someone to volunteer to be guest editor for the March edition of the Maverick Bull. Please contact me if you can help me out, and don't forget to send in those contributions!

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## New Member Profile

### Dan Smith

I am an avid outdoors person whose hobbies include backpacking, canoeing, bicycling, "herping" (reptiles and amphibians), and now caving. I also ride a motorcycle. I got started caving about 6 months ago when I met Phil Sanders on a Sierra Club canoe trip, and he invited me on a beginners caving trip for the next weekend. We went to the caves near Quanah, including Walk-Up and Ladies' Descent. Since then I have explored the caves at Turner Falls, including the grand opening of the most recently discovered cave (Told-U-So) [Ed. Note: see related article on page x]. I also participated in the Thanksgiving trip to New Mexico to crawl around in the Parks Ranch system and to visit Yellow Jacket. I have two sons, Sam and Cameron (aged 15 and 14, respectively) who have accompanied me to two of the wild caves at Colorado Bend State Park. Both boys are eager to join in on the caving adventures, so I bought them caving helmets and headlamps for Christmas. I don't have a four-wheel drive vehicle, but Sam will be receiving his mother's Explorer (4-WD) next year when he gets his permanent driver's license.





# Fourteenth Trip to Colorado Bend State Park

by Mark Gee

I really enjoy the Texas Speleological Association (TSA) project at Colorado Bend State Park (CBSP). I was curious about the history of the project, so I went to my library and looked at some of my older editions of the Texas Caver magazine and found out some interesting facts about who, what, and why this joint project with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the TSA was started.

In an August, 1985 issue of the Texas Caver (TC), it says that several of the TSA training caves had been closed to cavers and that the TPWD had recently purchased two of these caves, Devil's Sinkhole and Gorman Falls Cave. Following this development, at the 1987 TSA Convention the membership created a TSA Cave Management Committee to work with the TPWD to help with underground surveying, biological investigation, geology, groundwater assessment, air quality evaluation, general safety, visitor impact and management, public education, and cave rescue. A letter was drafted by Gil Ediger and Mike Walsh, approved by the TSA Executive Council and mailed to Charles D. Travis, the executive director of the TPWD at that time. It contained an offer to help them on a long-term basis with their caves at CBSP and Devil's Sinkhole. A few weeks later, a letter from Charles Travis, Executive Director of the TPWD, was sent to Mike Walsh thanking him for his letter offering professional assistance in cave inventory and management plans for both Devil's Sinkhole and Gorman Falls, now known as Colorado Bend State Park. The TPWD welcomed their offer of assistance and looked forward to working with them as the master plan process was begun. A contact person with the TPWD, Miss June Secrist, was announced, and all activities were to be coordinated through her. Mr. Mike Herring, of TPWD, was appointed as head of a cave task force to develop long-term cave management policies for these fragile resources.

This was the start of a Texas Cave Revolution.

In a later issue of the TC (Oct. 1985), Mike Walsh was confirmed as chair of a committee chair that would form a liaison with the TPWD. Mike then offered the TSA's services to the TPWD. It was believed that the TSA's experience would be an invaluable aid to the TPWD in preparing a master plan, and that TSA input would make their job easier and contribute to more meaningful parks for the general public.

Another meeting was called for all TSA members to comment on their thoughts about the agreement with the TPWD to work voluntarily in their caves.

The first issue of the Texas Caver (TC) in which I found a reference to CBSP was in an article written by Jay Jordan titled "Gorman Falls." It seems that Cicurina Cave, Blue Ribbon Fissure, and other leads at Lemons' Ranch and Gorman Falls State Park were to be visited by Jody Robertson, Quinta Wilkerson, Danny Sherrod, Jeff ....., Bobby Moore, Connie ....., Butch Fraila, and Jay Jordan.

This was to be the first of a series of scheduled monthly trips to Gorman Falls State Park in San Saba County. An additional 6000 acres of the Lemons' Ranch property had been purchased by the TPWD, and was now part of the park.

On this first trip, sanctioned by the TPWD and TSA, cavers from around the state drove to the park. People north of Hillsboro had cold temperatures and icy roads to contend with during their drive, as the temperature had been in the teens. The date was January 8, 1988.

The TPWD and TSA project has been running for 14 years now. I've been very fortunate to be involved with the project for the past two years. I'm a new caver with only two and one half years experience. I've been able to meet many other cavers, talk about their experiences in caves, learn how to cave, and learn to survey, climb rope, what to look for when searching for caves, and how to sketch and



Marshall Gee at the entrance to Sangria Cave, CBSP, January 11, 2003.

draw maps.

This past January 11, 2003, I made my fourteenth trip to CBSP. Rafal Kedzierski, my son and myself were to survey and sketch caves on the other side of the river. Rafal didn't make the trip down, but a caver from Indiana that I recently met during my Thanksgiving week trip to Mexico was in camp and wanted to learn to survey. So Ben Kim joined us. Ben now lives east of Austin.

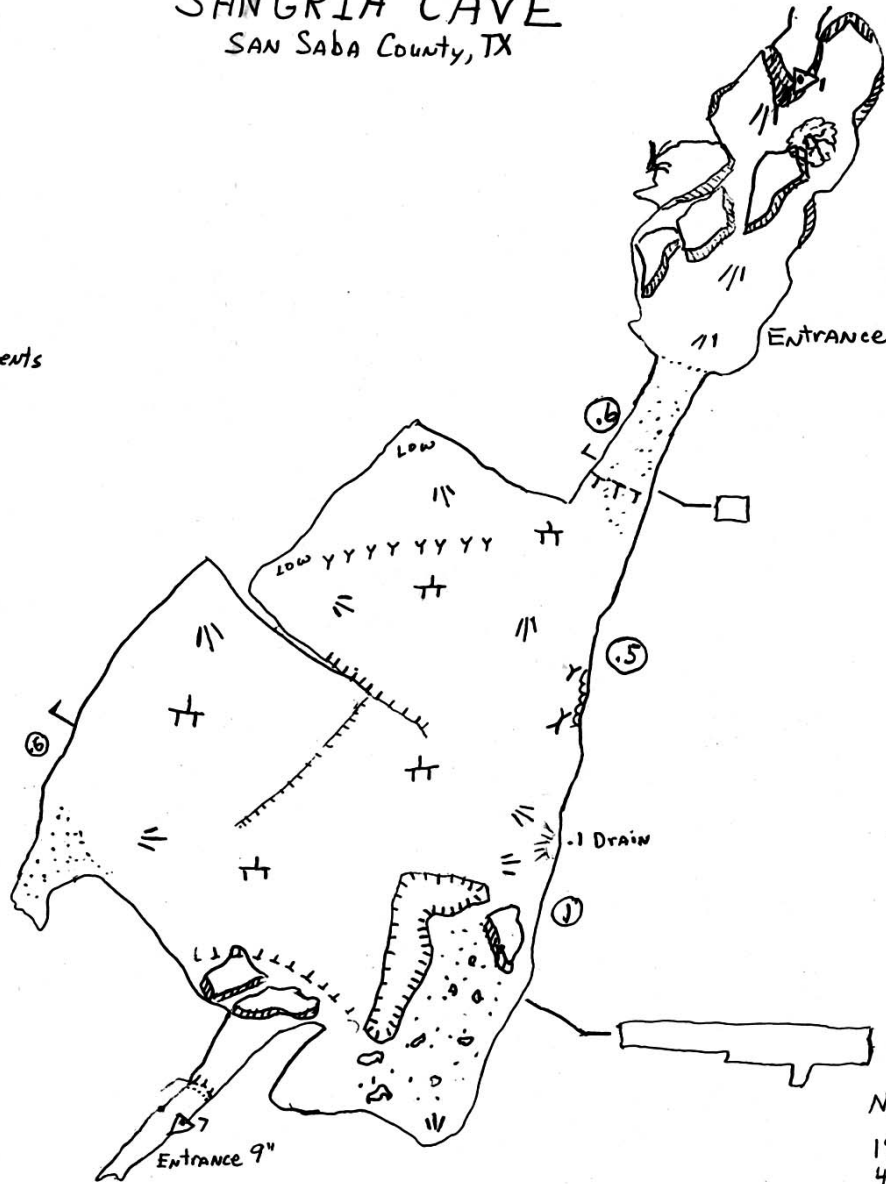
We crossed the river at about 10:00 am and walked to a cave discovered between Carlsbad Connected and Three Skylight Cave. As the surveyor and sketcher I named it Sangria Cave, because I found a Sangria bottle at the entrance. The bottle is now gone. Who removed this bottle? Well, let's survey.

We started by finding a survey station at the entrance of the cave, 0-datum. Ben held a light at station 2 which allowed me to show my son how to use my Brunton Survey Master instrument. You have to keep the compass level to

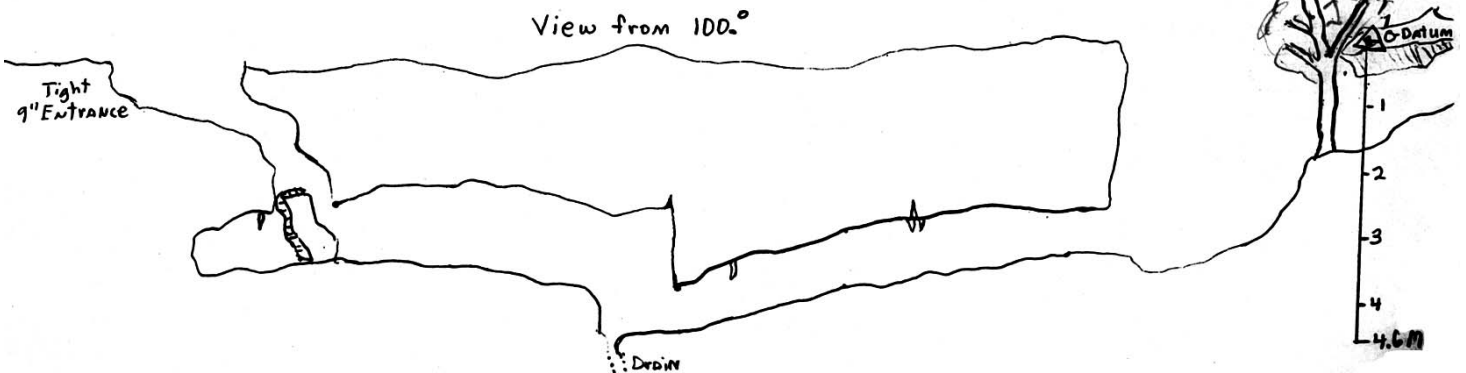
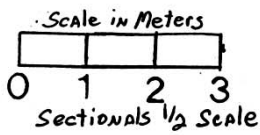
SANGRIA CAVE  
SAN SABA County, TX



Tape And Instrutments  
Ben Kim  
Marshall Gee  
Book, sketch, & Map  
Mark Gee  
NSS # 49625  
1-11-03



NSS Map Symbols Used  
19.19 Meters Length  
4.6 Meters Depth



allow the numbered dial to float so it will give an accurate reading. It took him a few minutes but he figured it out and his only problem after this was holding the light too near the compass and causing the compass to give a false reading. Then Ben was given the instrument to do a back-shot. He also took a few minutes, and got a reading with a difference of only one degree. Any reading within two degrees is acceptable to me. Azimuth, declination, and distance were taken for seven stations to the second entrance. They both felt comfortable with reading instruments when we were through. I was doing the sketch and it suffered a little because my attention was on helping Ben and Marshall learn to read the instruments.

The north entrance is where we started our survey. The cave follows a fault from the NE to the SW. A small sink about 5 m x 2 m then drops about 3 m to a 0.5 m x 0.7 m opening. Crawling for about 3 m you come to a low room about 10 m x 7 m with a ceiling of 0.5 to 1.2 m tall. Very few formations have formed here. A crack in the ceiling yields a line of stalactites. A small column and some flowstone are seen along the east wall near a small drain in the floor. At the center of the room, a large piece of breakdown has fallen to split the room. A 1.2 m ceiling height to the south end and 0.5 m ceiling height is to the north of this room. The floor is breakdown and bedrock. The 2<sup>nd</sup> entrance was too small for me to exit, at about 0.2 m. I have seen bats in this cave, but only during the summer. Some cave crickets and one spider were seen on this trip. The cave is in the Hunnicut limestone formation. Most of the caves in the park are in this formation, with other caves found in both the Gorman and Tanyard formations.

After our survey, I took Ben and my son to show them other caves that I had worked in. We went to the entrance of Three Skylight Cave, dropped a few rocks down the 30ft. pit but heard no rattlesnakes. Then we checked a few holes to the west to see if they were caves or karst features. We checked five different openings. Two were only karst features; two were too tight for me to enter, and one other will need surveying at another time. After this I walked them to Half Hill Cave. We spent forty-five minutes in the cave exploring and talking.

We left the cave using our GPS unit to get us to the boat. On the way we saw several karst features but no caves were found. It had been a successful day. One cave was surveyed, two known karst features found to be surveyed later, and two more people trained to help with a survey in the future.

Back at camp, frito-pie was prepared and eaten. Ben, Paul, Bryan, Marshall, and I got together in my tent, known as the Hilton, for a little conversation, because a heavy mist was falling outside. It misted or rained most of Saturday night. Camp was very wet as I packed up Sunday morning; my son and I got an early start home so I could watch the NFL playoff games. There is something other than caving that I enjoy.

Till next time!

Happy Caving

# Didn't Tell Us Everything!

Recounted somewhat accurately

by Dan Smith

A group of seven intrepid nocturnal cavers (Phil Sanders, Mark Gee, Kevin Lillie, Jason Parmer, Bill Tucker, Bobby de Vos, and myself) made another assault on Told-U-So cave at Turner Falls on the weekend of January 18th. Some of the group had spent the day Saturday tromping the bushes in another failed attempt to locate Bitter Enders cave. But after dark, with reinforcements, the team arrived at the Told-U-So site and quickly widened the cave entrance enough to provide the grand opening tour.

Jason and Kevin were the first to enter the cave. The rocky entrance required a rather contortionist position to make a successful penetration of the cave, so we sent in the two "skinny guys" first (not that they needed any encouragement). Beyond the entrance was a larger room that would accommodate four or five men (and two bats). This room was about four feet high and perhaps five feet wide. Beyond this chamber the cave quickly narrowed to a roughly circular tunnel of about three feet in diameter, which angled gently downward for about another thirty feet. Following Jason and Kevin, Bobby entered the cave, followed by myself. By the time I had wiggled through the entrance, Jason and Kevin had disappeared down the tunnel, followed by Bobby. I started down the tunnel, but halted after about eight feet because Phil yelled in to me to make sure I was there to assist from inside in the event that he got stuck. I waited in the tunnel for a few minutes listening to the sound of Phil trying to be smaller than the entrance, but alas, he was unable to simultaneously get small and make the significant spinal arch that was required for entry. He retreated just as I backed out of the tunnel to watch the show. Bill came in next. Mark had already tried and admitted that the entrance was too small.

About the time that Bill was squeezing through the "door" I heard Bobby crawling back up the tunnel toward the first room. As he shuffled on belly and elbows up the slope I became aware of a rather constant buzzing noise coming from his direction. "What's that noise, Bobby?" No answer; just continued shuffling, along with the strange sound. The buzz stopped for about 10 seconds, then restarted. Once Bobby emerged from the tunnel it became obvious to me that the continuing buzzing was still in the tunnel. I asked again, "What is that noise?"

"I think it's a snake" Bobby said. "I saw a snake." "S\_\_t" I think. That's a rattle, not a buzz. "Where was it?" I asked.

"About halfway up the crawl space" he replied. He had to put his head almost on the cave floor to see the snake under a slight overhang. "He was close! Right there!"

By this time Bill had joined us in the entrance room, and we all got still in order to listen to the buzzing. "He's pretty stirred up" I'm thinking. They don't usually rattle for that long.

Well, Bobby, undaunted, tells us that Jason and Kevin



need a mirror, some tape, and a stick in order to see around a very tight corner. They believe they have reached the functional end of the cave, but want to make sure. We call for the needed supplies from outside, and Phil and Mark pass the requested materials into the cave. "I'm not taking it down to them," I remark with selfish intent. Bill and Bobby quickly agree.

Bill hollers down to Kevin and Jason, "You'll have to come up here to get the mirror. We're not coming down there. There's a rattlesnake between you and us. And he's pissed." A pregnant pause occurs at the other end of the tunnel, followed by a request to admit that we were kidding. Bill delivers the bad news. "No, I'm not kidding!" For some reason Kevin and Jason want to know EXACTLY where the snake is before they'll come up. So Bill gallantly agrees to creep down the tunnel to locate the snake. He tells me to pull on his ankles if he yells for me to extract him, tells me he won't be my friend any more if I don't obey. I tell him that if the snake bites him on the a\_\_, that I won't be his friend any more either. He finally finds our new friend about halfway down the tunnel, tucked into a tiny alcove, as far away from us as he can get. But it's not really far enough. Now some folks may say that twelve feet was not far enough, but this snake is probably not even out of arms reach if you have long arms. Dilemma. We had to figure out how to get two covers up the tunnel and past the snake (he's about 2 inches in diameter, and Bill reckons he has about 9 buttons) without an unfortunate encounter. We discussed chasing the snake down the tunnel into the larger space where J. and K. were, but decided against that, on the odd chance that he might decide to retreat into a place where the tunnel is even narrower. We think about trying to chop the snake with a shovel, but in the restricted space we may only succeed in pissing him off even more. We finally arrived at a plan to stuff a gear bag as full as we could get it, and place it between the snake and the crawl space, thus shielding the poor snake from the cavers during their retreat. This plan worked. We attached a cord onto the bag, and after Jason and Kevin had made it past the snake we were able to pull the bag up behind us. The snake was still rattling. After everyone had safely made it into the entrance chamber I crawled carefully back down to identify the species of rattler. It was a diamondback; I'm guessing it was between two and two and a half feet long. By my best estimate he was about 24 inches from where Bobby, Kevin, and Jason had crawled both down and back in the tunnel.

After retreating from the cave we figured that the total length must be about 25 meters (the cave, not the snake). Although Kevin never got the mirror to look around the final bend, he thinks that they had reached the end of the cave. Definitely a good adventure, as all caving trips should be.

Phil tells me that there will be one more expedition in mid February to map the cave. (I'll bring my snake stick on this next trip). Also, one more attempt will be made to locate Bitter Enders, this time with aerial photos and topo coordinates. Both projects will probably be accomplished in one day.



# Maverick Grotto Annual TAG Trip 2002: Part III

June 7 - 14, 2002

by Diana R. Tomchick

Personnel: Michael Coulter, Ed Goff, Chris Hall, Milo Marks, R.D. Milhollin, Brian Pate, Diana Tomchick, Bill Tucker

Friday June 14th was the last day of our trip, and would prove to be one of the best. The sky was overcast and it threatened to rain, but our host Michael Coulter promised this would be no problem, as we were going to Stephen's Gap in Alabama. This TAG classic has a scenic waterfall that plunges into the 143 foot pit entrance, but if you're feeling lazy you can get off rope and walk out of a second entrance (see cover photo of this issue) to drop the pit repeatedly. This aspect sounded immediately appealing to much of our group, as the extra-long day spent at Tumbling Rock two days before had taken its toll. Michael had warned us that "Tumbling Rock will chew you up," and afterwards I realized that the people who named the Suicide Crawl were not exaggerating. It would be wonderful to visit a less physically demanding (yet very photogenic) cave on our last day.

Since Stephen's Gap would be on the way home to Texas, the plan was to pack up all of our belongings and start out on the long drive home after our day of caving. After sorting through all of the gear and saying our thanks and goodbyes to Michael's family, we hopped into the vehicles and were on our way. Michael led the way in his surprisingly speedy little truck, and we all scrambled to keep up and not get lost in the backwoods of northern Georgia and Alabama. Michael had called Brian Pate, former resident of the metroplex and member of the Maverick and DFW grottoes, and he was to leave work (lucky guy!) and meet up with us at the cave.

Stephen's Gap is closed during hunting season, and is an incredibly popular caving site, but fortunately for us we didn't have to worry about either problem. Since we weren't there on a weekend there were no crowds and we had the cave to ourselves for the whole afternoon (the overcast sky probably deterred less hardy folks, too). The climb up the mountain to the site was no worse than anything we'd seen earlier in the week, so in short order we were at the pit entrance. The amount of lush vegetation that surrounded this pit, though typical for the southeastern United States, made it challenging to walk around on the surface. Three rig sites were used, one along the wall opposite the waterfall, one between that site and the waterfall (and through some poison ivy, Brian noticed later) and one through the "keyhole." This site extends through a small slot in the overhanging ledge to the pit, which allows one to peer out through a thin crack at the main pit entrance to see the waterfall while coming down the rope. You initially feel as though you are



The top of the pit entrance to Stephen's Gap, before the ropes were rigged.

his tripod and camera on this ledge to shoot photos of us rappelling down into the pit.

Most people who visit Stephen's Gap probably spend their time dropping the pit repeatedly and spend little time visiting the rest of the cave. Ed discovered that it was as much fun to crawl behind the waterfall (getting totally drenched in the process) and poke around in the breakdown passages. Weeks later I found a map for this cave, drawn up by the Huntsville Grotto, in the 1999 SERA Handbook (*Journeys Through TAG*). None of us realized it at the time, but there are seven known entrances to the cave, and a quite extensive system of tight passages with smaller drops of 10 to 30 feet. After I'd dropped the pit several times, I noticed Ed standing around, wet and shivering uncontrollably but with a huge grin on his face. "What happened to you?" I asked, and he told me about how much fun it is to get wet when you know there's no danger of hypothermia. No one ever said that cavers were a rational bunch of people.

With all of the opportunities to crawl around in the passages, rappel down ropes and take umpteen pictures of your fellow cavers, the afternoon flew by quickly. It was easy to see why this is such a popular caving destination. The rain came but it was short-lived and more of a drizzly type than a drenching downpour. Soon enough we realized that we'd better pack up and head out for dinner, so we de-rigged and headed down the mountain. Michael needed to head home soon and couldn't join us for dinner, but Brian had no such constraints. I noticed Brian had a GPS unit that contained a database of restaurants and asked if he could locate an Italian restaurant for our dinner. I feared that otherwise we'd be eating again at another greasy-spoon Huddle House and no one wanted that again (Ed had taken to calling it "Horror House"). He located an Olive Garden in Huntsville, which we found readily, and it was a good meal and a nice way to wind down from the trip. We

entering a small vertical cave due to the restricted view from the rock. After passing through the keyhole you quickly realize that you are instead dropping into a rather large, damp pit! At the bottom you have a choice—you can continue down the full 143 feet and gain access to the rest of the cave passage, or you can stop approximately 30 feet from the bottom on a ledge, where you can easily walk out of the cave to repeat the process. R.D. decided to set up

booked a room in the hotel next to the restaurant and the six of us bedded down, caver-style, in a 2 - b e d r o o m room. It's a good thing that I'm pretty hard of hearing, but I always take the earplugs just in case you have a really loud snorer in the group. The drive home on Saturday was as uneventful as one could hope.

This was my first extended caving trip, and it was one of the best times I've had on a week's vacation in years. When I returned home I ordered several books on the TAG area so I could be prepared for next year's trip. I have a few new caves on my list that I'd like to see (Camp's Gulf, with its huge rooms, is at the top) and I'd love to return to Tumbling Rock. The Maverick Grotto 2003 trip will probably be scheduled again for the first week of June, after the beginning of the public school summer vacation so that Michael Coulter can join us. He and his family showered us with hospitality and were extremely gracious in allowing us to take over their basement and garage during the week, and we are extremely grateful to them. At the end of our trip we talked about the possibility of renting a condominium for the week for the next trip, to make it easier on the Coulter's and to allow us to bring a larger group of people. If you're interested in going on this trip, talk to R.D. Milhollin, the organizer, and keep early June open on your calendar. It'll be a lot of fun.



Bill Tucker rappels through the keyhole.



Chris Hall drops the pit at Stephen's Gap.



# Newsletter Exchange Review

by R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

NSS News January 2003 (Vol. 61 No. 01)

This first issue from 2003 features articles on caves in Egypt and the Dominican Republic. Bill Halliday really seems to get around, but in this case it seems he is digesting and reporting on the work of other people, particularly the Egyptian national park service. The Wadi Sannur cave was discovered through blasting in 1991, and is not solutional in origin, but instead formed as a huge covered rimstone basin around an ancient hot spring. The 900 foot (275m) long, crescent-shaped room is considered the largest known of its kind. The cave has many formations, many suitable for isotope dating. A map accompanies the article.

Keith Christenson contributes an excellent article on an expedition he organized and led to the central mountain range in the Dominican Republic around Christmas of 2001. The region he targeted had been looked over by archaeologists previously, and extensive cave formation seemed possible there. This area is prosaically named Nalga de Maco, or "Toad's Butt," after a neighboring mountain peak. After the expected last minute snafus that arise during transport to and arrival in a foreign country, the team packed their mules and headed up into the mountains. The caves they found ranged from enterable springs to large passage with high leads, some featuring voodoo figurines at the entrance. The descriptions of the ridge-walking on the mountain surrounding their valley were brutal. There is plenty in the narrative concerning bats for those interested. Lots of good color photos in the article and on the covers.

This month's "Spelean Spotlight" is on Jim Olsen, the guy who brings to most computer-literate cavers the Cavers Digest. A couple of letters pointed out the strange article from the November 2002 "News" titled "Caving in Two Areas of Mexico with Potential for Deep Caves" that failed to mention what parts of Mexico, how deep, or who wrote the article. "Jay's Journal" reports that the NSS is in negotiations to buy Great Expectations Cave in Wyoming (a subsequent internet posting confirmed the deal), and donations are being solicited. In "Society News" the Congress of Grottos wants issues, and "Speleonics" wants articles. Also, the NSS needs a chairman for the Youth Groups Liaison Committee to work with scouts and others. In "News and Notes," Red Watson is retiring as editor of cave books. The "Technology" column reviews the Photon Fusion Light, a very bright 6-LED headlamp.

Keith (Andy) Harris lists the 20 longest caves in the US, and guess what? Mammoth is still number one. Texas' own Honey Creek measures in at number 9. Also of regional interest, Texas has 20 caves longer than one mile. Matt Leissring reviews "Labyrinth", a novel by Mark T. Sullivan. In a nutshell, the reviewer thinks the plot is

a stretch, but stretched by a skilled storyteller, and is a story set in caves but not about caving. A brief synopsis is included of the book "Running Scared (Mysteries in our National Parks)" by Gloria Skurzynski and Alane Ferguson, and published by National Geographic. It appears to be a mystery novel with an interesting premise, not the genre we are most used to receiving from NG.

*C.O.G.nizance* January 2003 (Central Oklahoma Grotto)

Roy Diehl won the contest for chairman of the C.O.G., and in addition to the usual officers they have a Sergeant-at-Arms and a Gavelier (same guy). A trip to Cattle Cave in northwest Oklahoma was reported. The unidentified author (my guess for author, based on writing style and the fact that he mentioned everyone else in the third person, is Steve Beleu) details how two teams entered through separate holes, one known and one not, and joined up underground, thus establishing an exit from the back of the cave, although a wet and nasty one.

A letter from Bruce Brand of the Columbia in central Colorado states that a friend of his has relocated to southwest Missouri and is reopening Trueit's as a show cave. The new owner, who until recently managed Moaning Cave, did not get any survey info from the previous owner, and is looking for teams to come out to help explore and survey this spring (this might be a good grotto project for the Mavericks).

Steve Beleu contributes a striking free verse ode to a bat based on a somewhat bizarre reference to winged quadrupeds he found. Nice work. Four more of his compositions are featured on the last page. I hope to see some of his work in the "SpeleoDigest" poetry section.

*Speleospace* January 2003

No newsletter was published this month.

*The Oztotl Caver* January/February 2003 (DFW Grotto)

Oztotl Speaks! Jay and the Jordan clan took off to Tennessee and went caving with some folks in the Knoxville area. Nice pictures accompany the article. The group first visited Angel's Cave in Knox County, then on New Year's Day accompanied a kids trip to Emblen Cave. This was Liam Jordan's third caving trip. The adults were reminded that "it's dark in here," and that "this is really neat"! Julia Birch (age 7) contributed an accompanying article detailing her impressions from the same trip.

In other news, the Pearsons have added to their growing collection of grandchildren. Savannah and Cassidy, welcome!

In executive session, the DFW Grotto officers made some changes to the way things are done. Look for more novice cave trips, and bi-monthly newsletters.



## Caving Events Calendar, February 2003

compiled by R.D. Milhollin

- Feb 08-09** **Colorado Bend State Park Project:** long-time favorite of Mavericks, pretty close to home, semi-regular schedule, second weekend of the month. This month will be devoted to organizing data previously collected. All the normal project participants are asked to participate. Work will take place at the conference center on Saturday, everyone is welcome to stay Friday and Saturday night in the bunk beds. Notebook computers, a printer, a scanner, map drafting equipment, and a warm shower will be provided. Bring food for an informal potluck for Saturday night, and after dinner on Saturday, there might be a Gorman Cave trip (or you can go anywhere in the park), but everyone is expected to work on data during the day unless you have a special circumstance and prearrange it with the project leaders. Please bring a notebook computer if you have one, your maps that you need to draft, all of your sketchbooks that have CBSP data, your map-drafting equipment, and new ideas for what we could do at the park in the future. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (515) 443-4241 [trhli@sprynet.com](mailto:trhli@sprynet.com) or Dale Barnard [Barnarddale@yahoo.com](mailto:Barnarddale@yahoo.com)
- Feb 15-16** **Government Canyon State Natural Area Project:** 20 miles northwest of San Antonio. Survey, exploration, ridge-walking, enter property with group, contact in advance. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller [mlmiller@gvtc.com](mailto:mlmiller@gvtc.com)
- Feb 15-16** **"Skaving" Trip: Grand Junction, CO:** 8 days in Colorado skiing and visiting caves. All caves are at altitude, be in shape. **Contact:** Phil Sanders (214) 557-0769, [utcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:utcaver@yahoo.com)
- Feb 15** **TSS Board of Directors Meeting:** 10:30 am at the TSS Office on the Pickle Research Campus, University of Texas, Austin. Due to security reasons, all those planning to attend TSS work sessions or meetings need to verify with Jim Kennedy at least one week in advance. **Contact:** Jim Kennedy [jkennedy@batcon.org](mailto:jkennedy@batcon.org)
- Feb 21-23** **High Guads Restoration Project (New Mexico):** On-going work in the Lincoln National Forest, spectacular scenery and caves. Last weekend of the month, caves include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, Black. **Contact:** Susan Herpin [sherp@zianet.com](mailto:sherp@zianet.com)
- Feb 28-Mar 01** **Robber Baron Cave, San Antonio:** first weekend of each month, a new and ongoing project to restore the collapsed entrance to this popular Texas cave. Initial tasks will include clearing out dead trees and surveying. Plans for the entrance ramp and bunker and the surrounding grounds will be developed. Please make contact if you are coming, and if you are bringing a truck or a chainsaw that can be used for clearing the bigger trees. Robber Baron will soon be open for visitation, but it needs some help. **Contacts:** Linda Palit (210) 699-1388 [lkpalit@swbell.net](mailto:lkpalit@swbell.net) or Evelyn Mitchell, [joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com](mailto:joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com)
- March** **New Mexico Trips:** North Texas Speleological Society (NTSS) trips scheduled, may be space available. Specific dates and caves not available at press time. Just ask. **Contact:** Phil Sanders (214) 557-0769, [utcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:utcaver@yahoo.com)
- Mar 7-9** **Bracken Bat Cave Project:** Work on fence-line and surface cleanup. **Contact:** Bob Cowell (210) 662-9171 [bcow911@aol.com](mailto:bcow911@aol.com)
- Mar 21-25** **"Skaving" Trip: Northern CO:** 5 days skiing and caving in northern Colorado. **Contact:** Phil Sanders (214) 557-0769, [utcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:utcaver@yahoo.com)
- When Scheduled** **CRF Carlsbad Caverns and Fort Stanton Cave Restoration:** New Mexico restoration in large, sensitive caves. CRF trips have unique requirements, trips over long holiday weekends. **Contact:** Barbe Barker (505) 687-4270 [cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net](mailto:cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net)
- When Scheduled** **Val Verde and Sutton County Caves:** Sensitive landowner relations, visits by appointment only. **Contact:** R.D. Milhollin (817) 485-0733 [rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org](mailto:rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org)

Maverick Grotto  
 c/o Diana Tomchick  
 10106 Technology Blvd. W. #826  
 Dallas, TX 75220