

THE  
MURKIN  
VERICK  
BULL

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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.

**Reprinting Articles:** Internal organizations of the National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyright belongs to the author as stated in the byline) first appearing in the *Maverick Bull* if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of the *Maverick Bull* at the address herein.

**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 included with membership dues 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. Smokey's is less than one mile west of Loop 820. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

**Carbide:** The grotto currently does not have carbide available.

**Library:** Support your grotto library. Russell Hill is accepting books, maga-

zines, and videos related to caves and caving for our library. Thanks to Russell for his efforts in transporting the library collection to meetings.

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**Photos and Artwork**

This month's cover: Mark Gee, foreground, and Dave Engelberger, background, in Wen Cave, New Mexico, by R. D. Milhollin  
Pages 4-5: Gorman Falls Cave, by Mark Gee

**Other Credits**

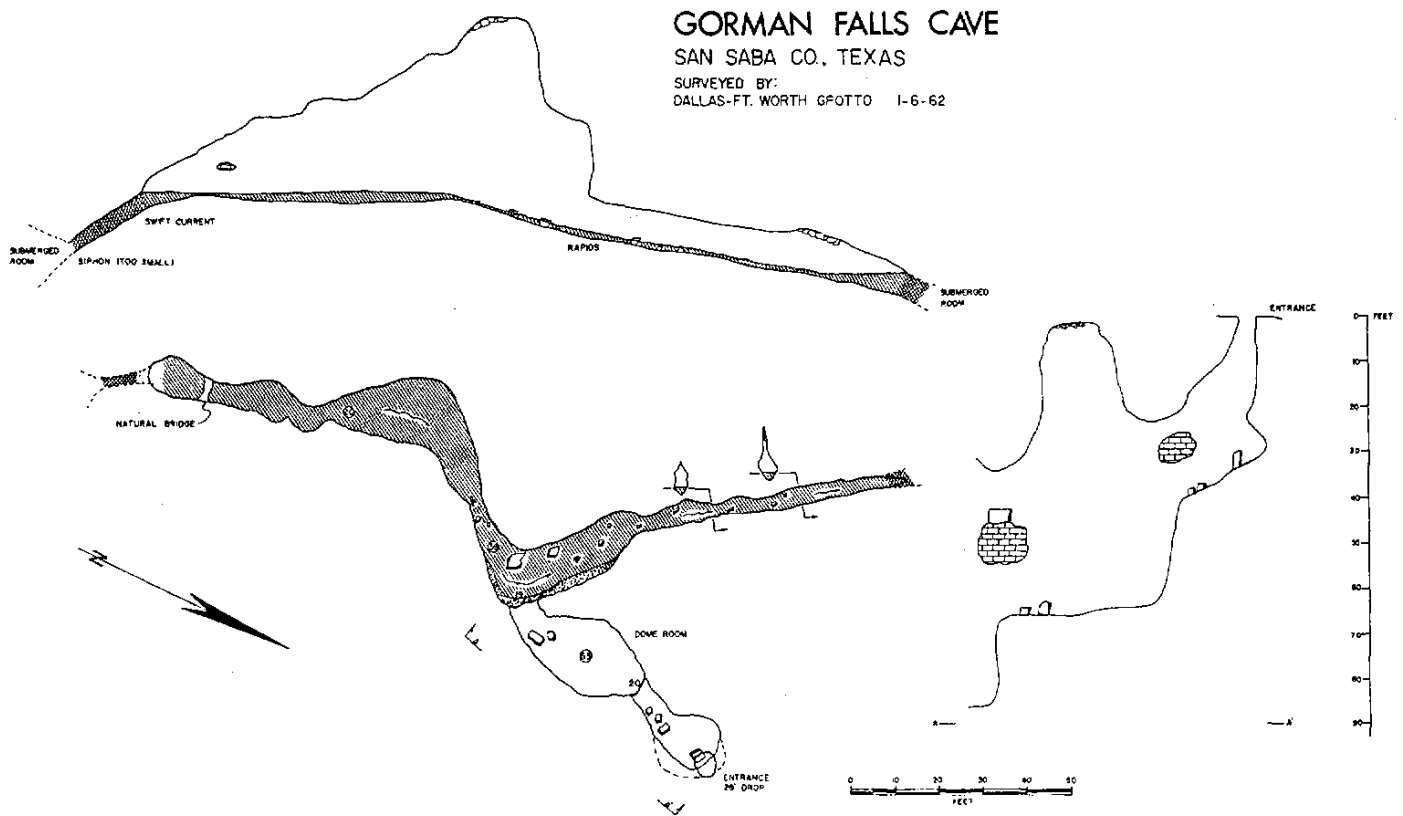
Stand-in editor this month: Ed Goff  
Printing, collating, stapling, stamping, mailing: Butch Fralia and Sharon Mastbrook (thanks again!).

**Visit our new website!**

Check out the site at its new location:  
**maverickgrotto.org**

**March Meeting Program**

This month's meeting is Tuesday, March 11, at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 Lancaster, Ft. Worth, at 7 p.m. Karen Perry will give a program on "Caving the Guadalupe: Changes in what is expected from trip leaders."



Map reprinted from *The Caves of San Saba County, Part I*, by J. R. Reddell and J. H. Estes, 1962.

# Colorado Bend Workshop

By Mark Gee

A great time was had at Colorado Bend State Park a few weeks back, as I walked and waded through a raging stream deep beneath Gorman Spring.

Back on January 31, I had run into Terry Holsinger at the Longhorn Cavern resurvey. Terry asked if I was going to be at CBSP for the TSA project, to which I answered yes. Then he told me that we would be staying in the conference center and that he had all the project material from the last two years. We were going to be organizing all the data. "Oops." If I hadn't opened my mouth, I could have been home painting my

house, or some other fun project.

Well, I showed up one week later and a total of six were there to help compile all the correct cave descriptions, GPS locations, and survey notes into file folders labeled under the cave name. I drafted a map from survey notes that Chris Hall, from Houston, had recorded in January of 1996. This was a four-level cave with the fourth level right beneath the entrance. I was able to draw a plan view but the profile, well let's just say, wasn't going to be drawn by me. This would be a good time for a computer-generated profile.

Dale Barnard and Carol Schumacher worked at Dale's computer typing in a cave name and a short cave description for each new cave on the list. Chris was doing the same on another laptop. Terry and Bobby DeVos shared cave stories with each other.

After a long day, with snow falling most of the day, dinner was started at 5:30. We all had planned and prepared a potluck dinner. Later that night, Carol started a fire and we gathered around the fire talking about this and that and put in a video called "Texas Down Under." "Yaw-no. Butch was a much



younger looking man back in 1989 or so." Keith Heuss, of the Hard Bargain cave dig, didn't have his pot belly either. Various caves from around the state were shown in this video, which I enjoyed very much. I hope to get a recording of this tape someday. Around midnight most everyone went to bed. I must have been the first to sleep, for I never heard a snore from anyone.

The next morning, Sunday, I was the first up. Bobby was up just after me and he was packing to get an early start home to Fort Worth. With the snow completely melted away, Bobby left around 8:30. Bobby had left a little too early because after breakfast Chris and I asked Terry to unlock the gated entrance to Gorman Falls Cave. He did so, but before we could enter the cave, we first packed up our gear and cleaned up the conference center. Dale had already headed for home. Terry went to talk to the park ranger, Carol stayed and worked on a wax figurine for a bronze casting, and Chris and I rigged the rope to drop the 90-foot-deep, multi-level drop.

We stood over the entrance, put our harnesses on, and threaded the rope through our descent devices. Once in the cave, the noise from the stream was deafening. We first dropped 30 feet to a rocky floor in a room that measured 15 by 25 feet. We saw a few bats in some of the ceiling recesses. The floor was covered with large and small breakdown. Everything was wet. At one end of the room was the second drop. Using the same rope, we placed it over the lip and padded the rope. We both dropped another 25 feet into a small, shallow pool. This room was very

wet with much water dripping from the cave walls and ceiling above us. This room measured about 15 by 30 feet. The floor sloped to the top of the third drop. Again we pulled the rope over to the lip and tossed it down into a raging

stream below. Then another rope pad placed at the lip, and we were ready to proceed. First we again checked for bad air, then we rappelled down into ankle-deep water with rapids both upstream and downstream. We again checked for



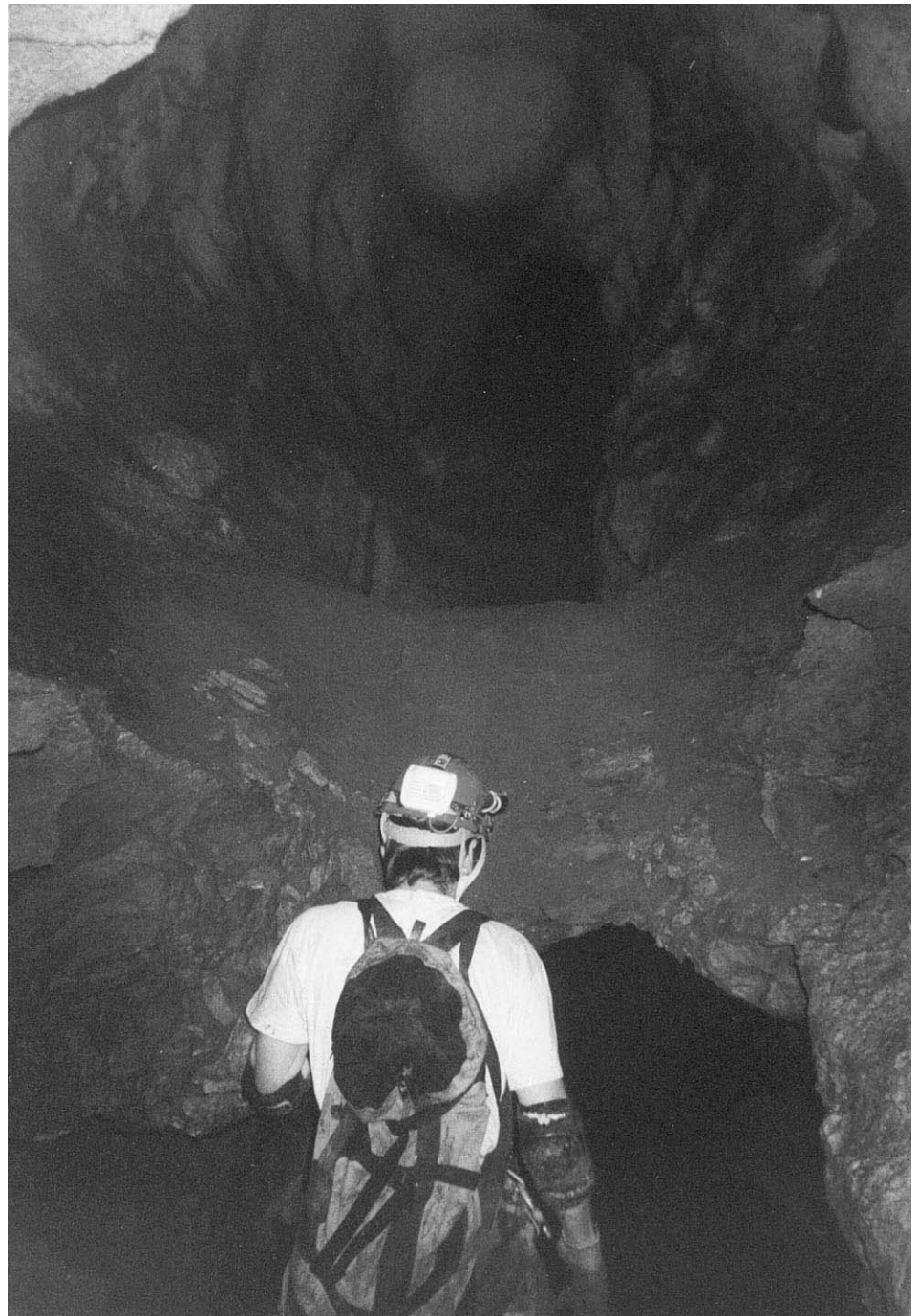
Chris Hall in Gorman Falls Cave. The 4" well pipe supplies water to the conference center.



bad air. The air was a little questionable but seemed safe. The cave is known to have bad air most of the time, I am told.

Chris asked, "Which way do we want to go first?" I chose upstream, so in case the water was strong enough to knock us down, we would be upstream of the rope.

This narrow passage had a ceiling height of about 35 feet and was four to ten feet wide. The ceiling sloped down to us as we moved through the swift current and rapids. One turn to the left and then one to the right took us under a natural bridge of rock. After about 100 feet the passage sumped, with water-filled passage one foot tall and three feet wide sloping down. The water was crystal clear. I took a few photos, then we turned around to go downstream beyond the rope. Just past the rope was the largest and longest section of rapids. It dropped about four feet and the water was strong enough to take your feet right out from under you. The ceiling, as on the upstream side, quickly came down as we continued through the 70 feet of downstream passage. Flood debris was seen all the way to the ceiling near the end of the passage. The passage narrowed and a large rock remnant, left hanging in the center of the passage, stopped further exploration. The floor fell away, beneath the water, to an undetermined depth. Looking down the passage to the very end was a whirlpool with two fishing bobbers floating round and round. We couldn't get to them so we had to leave them in the cave. A few more photos were taken as we headed back to the rope. At the



*Chris Hall examines the natural bridge in Gorman Falls Cave.*

rope we stopped to catch our breath and talk awhile before climbing out. We had been in the cave for an hour and a quarter. We had a long drive home, so Chris headed up the rope first. At the surface Carol and Terry were there to greet us. I coiled my rope and we all

said our good-byes.

This is not a typical Texas cave. How many caves in Texas have a rushing stream running their course? I very much enjoyed my trip into Gorman Falls Cave. Looking forward to my next trip underground. 🐾

# Great Expectations Cave Preserve

By Diana R. Tomchick

<http://caves.org/greatx/>

On January 30, 2003, the National Speleological Society acquired a tract of land in Wyoming that contains the main (upper) entrance to Great Expectations Cave ("Great X") and Johnny Creek Cave. Great X is an alpine cave located at 8,500 feet elevation in the Big Horn Mountains, with a vertical relief of 1,408 feet (third deepest limestone cave in the U.S., second deepest in Wyoming). At almost 8 miles of surveyed passage it is the second longest cave in Wyoming, and it contains the Great Hall, the largest room in a Wyoming cave. Trapper Creek sinks into the cave near the entrance and later joins with Johnny Creek and other tributaries to form the Lost Worland River within Great X, yielding over five miles of alpine stream passage. Approximately 4 miles down Trapper Canyon the stream reappears near the lower entrance to the cave (the "Great Exit") on U.S. Bureau of Land Management property.

The NSS borrowed \$190,857.57 to purchase this 40-acre preserve with the goal to protect and preserve access to one of the premier alpine caves in the United States. They are accepting donations from NSS members, grottoes, and private citizens to help defray the costs for this cave acquisition. The San Antonio-based Bexar Grotto has recently pledged to donate \$150 to the cave acquisition fund, with a challenge to other Texas grottoes to "meet or beat" this amount. In response to this challenge, the Maverick Grotto has started a

Great Expectations Cave Acquisition Fund and is soliciting donations from individual grotto members; please direct your donations to the Maverick Grotto Treasurer, R. D. Milhollin. As of the February meeting, the fund totaled \$50. When making a pledge, various cave formations may be specified (see <http://caves.org/greatx/features.htm>), but most require a minimum pledge of \$1,000. Alternatively, any single foot of depth may be pledged for \$100/foot. During the March meeting we will assess the progress of the acquisition fund and discuss whether we wish to pledge for a specific cave feature.

The purchased property shares a northern boundary with the U.S. BLM, an eastern boundary with the Bighorn National Forest, and southern and western boundaries with private landowners. The cave will remain open to qualified recreational caving, exploration, and scientific studies via a permit system. The cave will be accessible for approximately six months per year, but this access is self-limiting due to snowfall and high altitude. The cave is remote and access to rescue personnel is extremely limited. Due to flooding potential, the prime access season will be mid to late summer through early fall.

The website listed at the beginning of this article includes links to a photo gallery and to the NSS's detailed management plan for this cave. The plan includes a fascinating history of the discovery and survey of this cave and highlights the challenges encountered during exploration due to the extreme

weather conditions and altitude (the average cave temperature is 39 degrees, and snowstorms occur well into the month of May!). Permits for through trips (described as "one of the most sporting and dangerous caving trips in the United States" in the management plan) will be required to meet additional steps in the permitting process, including obtaining written permission to cross private lands to reach the Great Exit, and for each trip member to "have a full wetsuit or dry suit, extra helmet-mounted sources of light, and full vertical gear in case they need to exit the cave back through the upper entrance." ❦

## Exchange Review

By R. D. Milhollin

NSS News, February 2003 (Vol. 61, No. 2)

The News features several interesting articles in this second installment for 2003. Tina Oliphant leads off with a review of the "International Single Rope Technique and Rescue Exchange in the Tetons." In September of 2002, cavers from the U.S., Canada, and Poland gathered in the Teton Mountains for four days of SRT (single rope technique) and SPR (small party rescue) practice and information sharing. The integration of these two techniques was the central theme, and the motto of the event might well have been "just keep moving." Thirty cavers attended the event, demonstrating different variations of the frog system, and the Poles demonstrated that with full understanding of a 3:1 haul system,

counterbalance, and Tyrolean, these were the only tools needed to retrieve an injured caver from a deep cave. The article points out that in Poland a certification is needed to cave in the Tatra Mountains or as a member of Polish international expeditions. The initial course takes 8-12 months to complete, but absolute proficiency is the goal of the instruction.

Dan Austin reports the goings-on at the 2002 TAG Fall Cave-In. His article is a first-person account of one of the largest caver gatherings in the country. Some of the highlights were carbide bombs, partial pit auctions, bonfire, confederate soldiers, Mystery Falls, and South Pittsburgh Pit.

Bill Steele's "Spelean Spotlight" turns this month to Steve Hudson and Diane Cousineau, sweethearts who married other people but eventually ended back with each other: a fitting tale for Valentine's Month. Steve is the president of PMI Rope, and Diane is involved in the rescue organization that covers Ellison's, Pettijohn's, and Anderson Springs Caves. Both were involved in the original exploration of Ellison's in the 1960s, and more recently as members of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy.

The 2003 NSS Convention Planning Committee contributes a nice section on the upcoming convention at Porterville, California. It looks as though there will be fine facilities with plenty of showers, but no shade, so tarps and other artificial trees are advised. All sessions and salons will take place in either air-conditioned or swamp-cooled facilities; expect a hot and dry climate. The article covers plans for the howdy party, banquet, tours, salons, workshops, field trips, and pre-registration.

Cave poetry and grotto patches lead into the regular features. "Society News" addresses the NSS Convention salons. Shelta Cave, the void under the NSS office building in Huntsville, will be getting a bat-friendly gate. People are needed to fill posi-

tions in the all-volunteer NSS organization: a Market Analysis Committee chair, a marketing person for the NSS Bookstore, and a chair for the NSS Grant Committee. Looks like a good month for business majors out there to get involved. Bill Halliday sent in a letter telling of his 1949 experience at the Grand Canyon Bat Cave covered in the December 2002 News. "Jay's Journal" reviews grotto newsletter articles from all over the country. This month he spotlights Bill Walden's coverage of cave surveying from the Central Ohio Grotto's COG Squeaks. The Birmingham Grotto Newsletter special TAG issue contains one article on "What I Learned and Heard at TAG 2002" that might open your eyes (ears?) as to what goes on there. Minnesota and California caves are the subjects of various articles found here and there. Stories of massive survey scoops in Kentucky's Fisher Ridge System are revealed in the July-September edition of Detroit Urban Grotto's DUG Scoops. Greg Springer's "Science of Speleology" column deals with shale and limestone formation this month. This is a great series, highly recommended for almost any level of caving experience. The obits announce the deaths of Pennsylvania caver Les Good, a force to contend with in Speleo-Olympics during the 80s and 90s, and Tennessee caver Mark Moore, one of the founders of the Spencer Mountain Grotto. As usual, great cover artwork, and a few fine photos inside from last year's salons.

*Speleospace* (Greater Houston Grotto), February 2003

The Houston grotto reports in the meeting minutes that several new members have joined in the past couple of months. They have a detailed caving calendar, the dues are due, and new grotto t-shirts are soon available. Sort of sounds like the Maverick Grotto.

*COGnizance* (Central Oklahoma Grotto), February 2003

Prescheduled trips are set up to the southwestern and northwestern areas of the state every first and third Saturday (respectively). Anne Ault takes us on a trip report in the middle of winter to Broken Horn Cave, in the northwestern area of Oklahoma. The wind chill outside was about 7 degrees (not certain whether C or F, but toward that end of the scale who's counting). A corn snake was awakened in the process of exploring some very tight and grabby passage. Sue Bozeman picks up the narrative describing what might be a confusing water path through the cave. The cave offered the usual rough, tumbled-down gypsum breakdown, mucky water over the boots, crawly, gooey, mud . . . well, you get the idea. Sue Bozeman reports on a trip to Cattle Cave, and describes a survey in a bone-yard complex. Shawn Thomas details another visit to Broken Horn Cave, where a nice "round dome room" was encountered while exploring. They also find another entrance, and this time two sleeping corn snakes! An AP story with a Dallas by-line was copied that described how researchers (in Australia, at Duke University, and at NYU Medical School) are experimenting with using vampire bat saliva to help stroke victims by dissolving blood clots. "Eek! Tarantula!" by Paula Carrington, an article excerpted from the *Carlsbad Visitor Guide*, discusses the eating, mating, and other habits of the hairy desert spider.

*Oztotl Caver* (DFW Grotto)

The voice of Oztotl will reveal spelean truths on a bi-monthly basis from here on out. A one-page newsletter was sent out with a few trips announced, but the faithful will have to wait until March for the next full-blown edition. ♣♣

# CALENDAR

- Mar 21-25** "Skaving" Trip: Northern CO: 5 days in Colorado skiing and visiting caves. Details are not final, but we have a cabin reserved for the dates noted above. **Contact:** Phil Sanders (214) 557-0769 [utcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:utcaver@yahoo.com)
- Mar 22-23** **Government Canyon State Natural Area Project:** 20 miles northwest of San Antonio. Survey, exploration, ridge-walking, and digging. Enter property with group, contact in advance. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller [mlmiller@gvtc.com](mailto:mlmiller@gvtc.com)
- Mar 29-30** **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 [sherpin@zianet.com](mailto:sherpin@zianet.com)
- Apr 04-06** **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 Evelynn Mitchell, [joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com](mailto:joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com)
- Apr 5-6** NTSS will host a beginner trip to the Quanah caves during the first weekend of April. We'll take 6-8 cavers and probably camp overnight at the caves. I hope to also visit Lady's Descent during this trip. **Contact:** Phil Sanders (214) 557-0769 [utcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:utcaver@yahoo.com)
- Apr 11-13** **Colorado Bend State Park Project**
- Apr 26-27** **High Guads Restoration Project**
- May 02-04** **Robber Baron Cave, San Antonio**
- May 02-04** **TSA Convention, Cascade Caverns**
- When Scheduled **CRF Carlsbad Caverns and Fort Stanton Cave Restoration:** New Mexico restoration trips in large, sensitive caves. CRF trips have unique requirements, trips over long holidayweekends. **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@academicplanet.com](mailto:rdmilhollin@academicplanet.com)

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