

The Maverick Bull

The Newsletter of the Ft. Worth Maverick Grotto

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June 2003



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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.

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Photos and Artwork

Cover artwork by Aurelio Duque Martinez
Pages 3 & 5: Bill Tucker

Page 4: Pat Copeland

Page 8: left, Chad Fenner; right, Laura Goff

Visit Our NEW Web Site!

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

This month's cover

The artist featured on the cover of this month's *Bull* is Aurelio Duque Martinez, born in San Luis Potosí on January 23, 1963. Trained as a machine tool technician, he joined the Red Cross (among other things, the Cruz Roja is one of the main caving organizations in Mexico) in 1984. In 1985 he moved to Texas, and a year later to Detroit, and since then has spent time between Texas and San Luis. He has a ten-year old son, which doesn't allow him to leave SLP for long periods. Aurelio has been working in the jewelry business for almost fifteen years; "I export sterling silver jewelry that I design with speleological themes to the US, and right now I'm studying fine arts. I know some nice people from the DFW grotto, but I lost the old bumper they used to give as a gag gift at the grotto Christmas party. I have been caving in Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and of course in Mexico." He has hosted a couple of Maverick Grotto trips to Cueva de la Puente outside of SLP.

May Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order around 7:30 p.m. by Ed Goff; eight members were present.

Visitors: None

Announcements: newsletter contributions will be cheerfully accepted, and are needed for the May and June editions.

Old business: Once again, the prospect of new grotto T-shirts was discussed, but no decisions were made. Diana Tomchick suggested that two paintings by Aurelio Duque Martinez could make nice T-shirts, and promised to use one of the designs for the cover of the June newsletter.

The Great Expectations Cave

June Meeting

The meeting will begin promptly at 7 pm this month, so there will be time for the program: Ed Goff will be presenting slides from the Cueva del Tecolote expedition in March.

Acquisition Fund now has \$175, which happily surpasses the Bexar Grotto donation of \$150. Contributions will continue to be accepted until the close of the June meeting, after which a check will be sent to the NSS in the name of the Maverick Grotto.

New business: There was no new business.

Trip reports: Ed Goff and Robin Barber described their trip to Montemayor in Mexico from May 2-4. A group of about a dozen Monterrey cavers had it rigged for a club outing, and Ed and Robin brought some light rope for the drops past the Rebirth Canal, which was sumped last August. They entered the cave at 5 p.m. on Friday. Robin went as far as the passage beyond the Argo Well (around -325 m), and Ed continued to the Rebirth Canal (-385 m), where most of the Mexican cavers had been waiting for them. The Rebirth Canal was passable this time, and two of the Mexicans and Ed went to the bottom of the cave (-500 m) while the rest headed back to camp at the top of the big drop. Afterward they returned to camp, where Robin had been getting some sleep, and they ate a meal and Ed slept for a couple of hours before we left the cave at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

RD Milhollin talked at length about the Cueva Cheva expedition. All photos from this trip are property of the National Geographic, but ones they will not use will be returned to the owners in several months. We look forward to both an after-meeting program and a newsletter article from RD when his photos are returned to him.

Since the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm, there was no time for the program.

Whiteface Cave

San Saba County, TX

January 7 & March 11-12, 1995

by Bill Tucker

I first heard of Whiteface Cave from *THE CAVES AND KARST OF TEXAS*, and was immediately intrigued by the mention of underwater passages. The bibliography



Whiteface cavers. Front, from left: Todd Tucker, Shelby Martin, (kneeling) Scott Sirkel, Pat Copeland, Bill Tucker. Rear, from left: Russell Baker, Richard Hodgkins, Bruce Kofron, Jeff Potter.

led me to call Ray Mathews, who had previously dived there. He sent me copies of articles he had written about his dives there into the Ellenburger Aquifer, and referred me to Pat Copeland for more information on gaining permission to enter. Pat took an immediate interest, and invited me to come to the cave on a "dry run" exploration to see what the cave was like, and determine the feasibility of diving there. Ray and Pat both warned me of the difficulty of getting diving equipment down to the water, but I had to see for myself.

In January, Todd Tucker, Scott Sirkel and I met Pat in San Saba, and she took us to the cave. We are all experienced cave divers, however, we had no experience in "dry" caving. All of our diving has been in caves where



Dive sherpa Shelby Martin

the water was easily entered, so we were in for a surprise at Whiteface. Pat took good care of us novices, teaching us how to safely negotiate the climbing and crawling that was necessary to reach the water, some 200 feet below the surface of the land. We had a great time on our first caving experience, but she wore us out by the end of the day.

Our first sight of the underwater stream confirmed my hopes that we would find clear water. Slipping into the water with just a mask and swimsuit, Todd and I could see several interesting openings in the breakdown in the streambed. We quickly decided that it would be worth the effort to try to dive here, and we began to make plans with Pat for an "expedition" in March.

We had several weeks to plan and prepare, as well as persuade some others to help with our heavy equipment. Pat recruited Dale Barnard, Russell Baker, and Jim and Kathy Gatewood, all experienced cavers. I recruited a group that made up with enthusiasm what they lacked in caving experience: Scott Sirkel, Shelby Martin, Richard Hodgkins, Bruce Kofron, and Jeff Potter.

Each diver had about 120 pounds of equipment required for safe cave diving. Our double air cylinders were broken down into singles for the move, and then

re-assembled at the water's edge. Special buoyancy compensators were attached to the double cylinders to enable us to regulate our buoyancy... enabling us to be completely weightless, or neutrally buoyant underwater. By being neutrally buoyant, we are able to float effortlessly above obstructions, and avoid stirring bottom silt that could reduce visibility to zero, a serious hazard. Regulators



Bill Tucker preparing to dive.

and gauges were then attached to each cylinder for redundant air supplies. Each of us carried 3 or more dive lights, and a backup safety reel with braided nylon line. The dive team used a primary reel with several hundred feet of line to maintain a continuous guideline to the safe exit point. While this is not normally done in "dry" caving, it is an absolute necessity in cave diving, where visibility can become zero. You have no extra time to deal with being lost underwater where your air supply is limited. Wetsuits were required in the 68-degree water.

Even with all the help, it took 4 hours to get our equipment to the water. Once all of our equipment was at the waters edge, we found that there was no level ground on which to work. We assembled our dive gear on muddy, uneven rocks, wishing we had brought down a tarp.

The first dive that Todd and I made on Saturday was to the northwest of the rock or "island" in the middle of the stream. The clarity of the water was incredible. Using a safety line on a reel, we entered the shallow horizontal passage, and continued to the northwest at depths between 10 - 20'. After about 150' we came to an opening in the breakdown that continued deeper at a steep angle. We descended into this opening, but we did not go deeper than about 35' before coming to a restriction that discouraged us from descending farther. I think we could have passed it and entered the larger passages that we saw which were deeper, but we were stirring up a lot of silt, which reduced visibility. Because of that we decided to continue to the northwest in the shallow passage at about 15' of depth, in hopes of finding an easier way down. About 200 feet into that passage, it began to get

smaller, and some small rocks were beginning to dislodge from the ceiling due to our bubbles. In the interest of safety we turned the dive, feeling a little disappointed but not yet discouraged. We still had another tunnel to explore on the other side of the island. If that did not open up, then I felt like we could return and pass through the above-mentioned restriction.

The second dive on Saturday was to the left side, or southeast of the big rock in the middle of the stream. The water was still clear and undisturbed in that area. I went alone, knowing that one diver would stir up less silt, and only planned to take a short look to see if it warranted a dive for the two of us on Sunday. The tunnel that I entered went almost straight down to about 20', and then opened up into a larger area with passages similar to that seen in the dry part of the cave. I could immediately see that this was going to be a good area, with several choices of depth and direction. I continued downward at steep angles up to about 60 degrees, encountering several minor restrictions. Each was followed by larger passages running northwest to southeast, like the rest of the dry cave. I continued to work deeper at a steep angle, seeing more open rooms and passages to my left and right. This appeared to be the area that Ray had described from his previous exploration that took him to about 85'. Continuing deeper, I was very careful to maintain neutral buoyancy to prevent silting up the beautifully clear water. At about 90-95 feet of depth I passed another steeply angled restriction in which my tanks were against the ceiling, and chest against the bottom. I could see that the restriction was short, and quickly opened up to my right, the northwest.

I passed the restriction and found myself at the entrance of a huge room. I entered, and laid about 150' of line into the room, reaching a maximum depth of 113' as I swam through mid-water. I tied the line off at my maximum penetration onto a rock to my left. This was a tremendous flat-topped rock over 50' long, tapering from 20 - 40' wide, and about 20' high. It had separated cleanly from the ceiling and dropped several feet. Looking straight past that, the passage appeared to angle to the left (west). To the right (north) the room sloped upward.

The awesome beauty of the perfectly clear water in such a large room was overwhelming. All the effort expended to make this dive was forgotten... all I could hear was the sound of my bubbles, and my heart pounding from the excitement. I had a strong urge to go farther... I could see that passages continued for some distance, but I knew that Todd would be expecting my return to the surface by then. I reluctantly began my ascent, savoring the wonderful feeling of an adrenaline rush, knowing that I had explored a room that no human had seen before.

As I slowly returned up the steep slope and over the tons of breakdown, I thought how easy it was to glide weightless over the rugged terrain. It had taken great effort by several people to negotiate the dry part of the cave, carrying the same equipment that I now wore so easily. The twenty-minute dive seemed as if it had only been five or ten minutes. I am sure that my enthusiasm

and elation over the dive was apparent to the others when I broke the surface. I must admit that it was also a great feeling to return to the safety of the water's surface. We exited the cave at about 8 PM, leaving everything except the air tanks. We would need full tanks for Sunday. That night we camped on the bank of the San Saba River, enjoying the perfect weather and savoring our successful day of exploring. Tired and hungry, we all ate well and slept even better.

On Sunday we found the water surface still a little murky from my previous dive, with visibility of about 8'. Expecting the clarity would improve with depth, I carried my Nikonos camera in hopes of capturing on film what I had seen on that dive. Todd and I followed the line that I had placed the day before, and as we cleared the vertical tunnel into the first room, we were relieved to find clear water. Passing by the shallower passages, we

at 10' increments, we determined the room to be about at least 100' in length, with an estimated maximum floor to ceiling height of about 40 feet or more. It is probably 40-50' wide in places.

Moving to the right (north), we could see the ceiling begin to slope upward along the same general angle of the entire cave. We turned the dive after about 50', before we could determine the full extent of this big room, due to a line entanglement in our reel.

I had expected to see water-carved passages at these depths; however, it still looks like the rest of the cave in shape and angle of descent. The main difference that I noticed was that the rocks were clean and bright. Only a thin layer of tan-colored silt lies over the flat surfaces. I did not notice any water flow during our dive, however, the deep room had cleared up completely on Sunday, so there must be some water movement that

took away the silt from Saturday's dive. Silt was still suspended in the water shallower than 25 or 30'. The only aquatic life we saw were amphipods that had been previously seen by Mathews.

Several more dives would be necessary to fully explore just this one large and irregularly shaped room, and we suspect more passages lie beyond it. I had hoped to explore some of the shallower passages running to the northwest during our ascent, but we were already requiring decompression time due to the depth and length of our dive. We reluctantly ascended to 20' and began several minutes of decompression before we could return to the water's surface.

We returned to the surface with the same feeling of elation that I had experienced the day before. The haunting beauty of the underwater caverns made it worth all the planning and effort required to get there. I will never forget it, and I hope to return and explore farther in spite of the difficulties of moving the equipment.

It took over four hours to get all of us and our equipment out on Sunday evening. I don't think that we have ever worked so hard for just 3 dives, but in the end we decided it was worth it.

Todd and I are grateful to the Linthicum's for allowing us to explore their cave, and to Pat Copeland for arranging our access to Whiteface Cave. We are also indebted to all our friends that came and worked extremely hard so that we could dive. I hope that they share our feeling of accomplishment. Thanks to Ray Mathews for information about his dives in Whiteface that made our planning easier and our diving safer.



Todd Tucker underwater in Whiteface Cave.

descended along the line, through the restrictions in the breakdown, and into the big room. We paused along the way for a few photographs.

The water was still perfectly clear in the large room, it was literally as clear as air. The silt that I had stirred in the restrictions the day before had not spoiled the beauty of this area. Todd reached a maximum depth of 117 feet in the middle of the room, but he was still well above the bottom, which was about 20 feet below him. Yet another passage could be seen there, again leading downward at about 60 degrees of angle...very enticing, but too deep for us to safely explore at this time. In open water we would feel comfortable diving deeper, but we had agreed before the dive on a maximum depth of 130' for safety.

Going to the point of my farthest penetration of Saturday, Todd tied on a line and continued farther to the northwest. Using our safety line, which was knotted



Newsletter Exchange Review

by R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

NSS News May 2003 (Vol. 61 No. 05)

This issue of the *News* opens with an article dealing with the Wells Cave Preserve, which was purchased by the NSS in January of 2003. It is the tenth NSS cave property and the eleventh NSS Preserve. Located in Pulaski County Kentucky, Wells features 11.5 miles of passage and multiple entrances. It was surveyed during the 1970's and 80's, primarily by the Dayton Area Speleological Society (DASS). The article provides information on the geology and hydrology, geomorphology and passage descriptions, as well as resources. The area is a refuge for rare bats and flowers, as well as mussel species in the creeks and blind troglobites such as fish, crayfish, and invertebrates in the cave. The Nature Conservancy and several governmental and non-governmental agencies are working together to preserve the quality of the watershed through buffer zones that include sinkholes draining into the cave. A fairly detailed history of the cave and its exploration are included. Michael Johnson and Larry Simpson, two of the original explorers of the cave, each contribute short remembrances of favorite trips into Wells to accompany the main article.

Tom Turner contributes a fascinating account of original exploration in Florida, in an air-filled and highly decorated cave. The Brooksville Ridge Cave is located on a geologic karst formation of the same name, which was a former coastline of the state during past ages when the sea level was higher. Today, where development has not reached, can be found a hammock of Live Oak, Magnolia, Hickory, Pine, and Sweetgum trees growing in succession, with thick vines growing upward to the sunlight. Members of the Tampa Bay Area Grotto (TBAG) followed a tip from one of their old-time members who had read of a large cave somewhere in the area. The entrance turned out to be in an abandoned quarry (hence the printed report) but it had to be dug open. What follows is a very well written account of the exploration by the TBAG group, and some fantastic photos from inside the cave. The helictites are fantastic, and colors are vibrant. Exploration continues: a must-read article!

If that wasn't enough, damn! An article on the Great Expectations Cave Preserve with photos is next. "Great X" will become the NEWEST NSS-owned cave preserve, with a permit system to allow scientific, exploration, and recreational uses to continue. A management committee is in place, and fund-raising efforts to help pay for the property is ongoing. The preserve is located in Wyoming on the west side of the Bighorn Range at an elevation above 8500 feet.

The recorded history of the cave goes back to 1906 when a geologist visited the area, photographed a fault within 100 feet of the entrance, but failed to mention the cave. Cavers first visited and documented the cave in 1972, found an entrance rock-shelter, and decided that

a cave might exist under the breakdown debris. The "Crisco Crack" entrance was uncovered in 1977, and cavers found their way down to the "Cephalopod Malt Shop", which was wildly decorated with a soda straw ceiling and a fossil cephalopod floor. Student cavers from the U. of Wyoming began surveying the same year. Survey continued in 1978 and led to the discovery of the Great Hall, a huge borehole 2000 feet long and 100 feet in diameter. Exploration continued by following the strong wind currents, which led to the "Lost Worland River" 400 feet down a canyon. By 1979 the surveyed cave measured almost three miles, and an exploration team experienced the first serious flood, which is a continuing hazard at Great X. The first through-trip between the cave's two entrances was made in 1980, and after that exploration stopped for five years for several reasons. A final survey push in 1985 yielded a length of 7.9 miles and a vertical distance of over 1400 feet, but a map has never been completed.

Great Expectations is today the third deepest limestone cave in the U.S., and a through-trip is considered one of the most "sporting and dangerous" caving trips in the country. Much of the vertical passage is next to waterfalls, and some of the way is via wading through canyon passage, swimming across plunge pools, and climaxes with the "Grim Crawl of Death" near the Great Exit. The water and air in the cave is 38-39 degrees F. Access to the cave is best during late summer to early fall, when the potential for flooding is at a minimum. Those who know Pete Shifflett will want to check out his photo from the 1980's that is included with the article.

"In the Media" mentions a *Sports Illustrated* article by Michael Ray Taylor that features Rumbling Falls Cave in Tennessee. A photo from Fantastic Pit in Ellison's Cave was featured in the October 2002 *National Geographic*. The man who looted Elephant Mountain Cave in Nevada, possibly the "most important archaeological site in the Great Basin" according to the BLM, was fined \$2.5 million in a federal civil case. The *Virginian-Pilot* reported that among other things, the guy dug up two basket burials each containing a child, and reburied them in his backyard. The *Missouri Conservationist* reports that gating bat hibernation caves is helping the endangered gray bat to return to viability. In Kentucky a company wants to build a coal-burning plant above a sulfur-rich coal mine 50 miles from Mammoth Cave. Perhaps the resulting acid rain will help regional caves to grow. The spring 2003 *Nature Conservancy* magazine features cave photos, and *Outside* magazine lists dangerous destinations as determined by the State Department, among them the caves of Macedonia. Mammoth and Carlsbad are featured in other articles, and *Science* has an article on Chauvet. The October 2002 *Smithsonian* featured caver and scientist Carol Hill, as well as Carlsbad and Lower Kane Cave in Wyoming. In April the periodical included an article and photos from Naica Mine, Chihuahua, the "Cave of the Swords". The *Dayton Daily News* interviewed former NSS prez Mike Hood, who discussed ancient Native American artifacts in caves, and the importance

of conservation. Several articles dealing with bats were published, as well as evidence for interpersonal violence among Neanderthals as evidenced by fossil crania found in caves. A sad story about the extinction of Arkansas' blind cave alligators was reported in the *Arkansas Democrat*.

Bill Steele interviews cave archaeologist James Brady in the *Spelean Spotlight* feature. Dr. Brady began as a Mayan specialist, but was brought into the areas of cave sciences through his work with the Naj Tunich project in Guatemala. A couple of books related to caves and caving, although in different ways, are reviewed. "Caves of the Golondrinas Area" by Texans Peter Sprouse and Jerry Fant reviews speleological aspects of the area such as history of the exploration, geological and biological descriptions, excellent photos, great maps, and a fine bibliography. Reviewer Bill Steele says this may be THE best AMCS publication to date. In contrast, "The Descent" by Jeff Long deals with speculation, fiction, and fantasy as related to caving. Reviewer Mark Minton describes the book as somewhat sloppy in composition, and unbelievable in fact, but still "a fast and sometimes interesting read." As usual there are openings in the NSS structure; a chair for the Educational Grants and Scholarship Committee is needed, along with Market Analysis, and Bookstore Marketing committee positions. Speleo-politicians everywhere need to check out proposed changes to the COG Rules of Procedure. In *News and Notes* The Western Cave Conservancy got their tax-free status, and a couple of caves in West Virginia were connected.

Jay's Journal reviews articles from other NSS-affiliated organizations, mainly grotto newsletters. This month he features articles on caves in Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Gordon Birkheimer and Mel Eady, who are planning to join the Maverick Grotto 4th annual TAG trip in June, are mentioned as finding Conley Hole in TAG, "one of those TAG pits everyone has heard of, but the actual location is widely unknown." In the classified section Steve Knutson advertises space available on a Peru caving expedition, elevation 9000 – 13,000 feet. A caver I met recently in Mexico and now teaches ESL at the same school as Michael Coulter (also on for the TAG trip), will be on that trip. Oh yes, be sure and check out the back cover for a large-scale map of Wells Cave not included in the article.

Oztotl Caver May/June 2003 (Vol. 22 No. 5/6)

This month's cover features long-time Texas caver Keith Heuss and Rebecca Rainbolt-McDaniel at Joe Onate Cave on Falling Waters Ranch out near Uvalde. The lead story detailed the trip, ably written by Mark Gee. Mark includes a nice map of the cave on page 6, so don't put down the article until you finish with the map. The Maverick Grotto 4th Annual TAG Trip (open to all north Texas cavers and their friends and caving buddies) was announced as well. Congratulations to the Pearson's, who announced the birth of their 10th grandchild, Marcus

DeLaFuente. Marcus's mom Rachel began caving before she was a teenager, should we be taking bets on how long before Marcus makes his first caving trip?

COGnizance May 2003

Amazing issue, amazing due to the lack of trip reports. I have enjoyed reading accounts of this group's adventures in the (mainly gypsum) karst of Oklahoma, but none made it into this month's newsletter. However, to satiate those who just have to read one, a report from last month was reprinted in improved format. A call for input for an upcoming Bibliography on Caves and Karst in Oklahoma was included from Kenneth Johnson, and Steve Beleu submitted a report on a GIS Symposium. An article on bats and rabies finished out this edition, except for a few poems written by Steve Beleu, fine as usual.

No newsletter was received this month from the Houston Grotto.

TSS Open House

June 14, 10:00 am until dark, Austin, TX

The Texas Speleological Survey and the Texas Memorial Museum cordially invite you to attend a scheduled open house at the Texas Speleological Survey office in Austin on Saturday, June 14th at the JJ Pickle Research Center. For those of you who have never been there, this is your golden opportunity to look at the cave files for the State of Texas. If you know the office well, this is your opportunity to see the new set-up including the integrated computer system, new archive storage, map room, drafting room and, yes, the new kitchen.

We are working with the University of Texas to smooth the way at the gate during this Yellow Alert period. But you will need to RSVP so we can insure you get past the security guards at the east gate.

The office will open at 10:00 a.m. with tours on demand. Snacks and drinks will be available in our spacious lounge throughout the day. Lunch will be catered and should include grilled meat, potato salad, coleslaw, pinto beans and other goodies. We are working to provide a food sponsor but come with a few coins to contribute toward your meal.

Several tasks will be available for you to work on and our featured attraction will be the electronic clean-up of oversized cave maps scanned for us by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Several experienced computer nerds will be available to help you through the mapping software. Other TSS gurus will be leading crews attempting to organize existing and recent data generated by the various County surveys. We will keep working until everyone cries "Uncle" or about 5:00 p.m. Plan now to attend and mark your cave calendars.

The TSS "office" is in building 18-A at the J. J. Pickle Research Center (PRC) in north Austin. PRC is between 183 and Braker, between Mopac and Burnet. If coming

from the north or south on Mopac, take the Braker exit, continue east to Burnet Road, turn south (right) and enter the east gate on your right.

If coming west on Research (183), take the Burnet Road exit, then north on Burnet past the Jack in the Box to the east entrance on the left. A detailed map to PRC can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/maps/prc/> On blow-up map 2 ("NW Area"), building 18-A is the one just above the "ra" in "Granberry". From the gate, continue west and follow the dang signs. Park to the south in the PETEX lot across the street (Read Granberry Trail) from building 18-A.

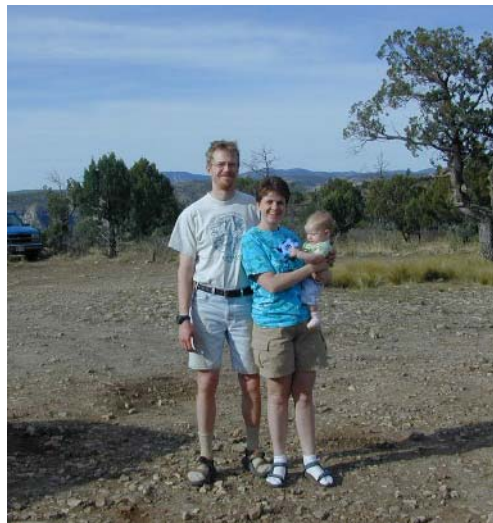
Don't forget to RSVP to Ron Ralph if you have any inclination of attending. If you have questions, please contact me ronralph@texas.net or Jim Kennedy jkennedy@batcon.org off line. You can also call the office at (512) 475-8802 (no one is ever there), Jim Kennedy at (512) 663-2287 or Ron Ralph at (512) 916-9190.

4th Annual Maverick Grotto TAG Trip by R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

This is to announce the 4th Annual Maverick Grotto TAG Trip. The dates are going to be around the week of June 13 - June 21. The trip is growing each year, and in the past we have had lots of fun bopping pits (Neversink, South Pittsburg Pit, caves of Monte Sano), traversing extensive trunk passage (Tumbling Rock, Ellison's Fantastic side), navigating well-known but fantastic places (Cemetery Pit, Green Well) and even a little of what we thought might have been semi-explored caves (well, that may be stretching it!).

This year two of the goals are Rumbling Falls and Camp's Gulf, both in Tennessee and close to Chattanooga. These caves each contain massive rooms that have been featured in photo spreads in recent NSS News issues. I am in contact with several TAG cavers, a few of whom are former Maverick Grotto members, for other ideas, and for suggestions and help in arranging accommodations for the trip. We have stayed in private homes in the past, but this year we are looking at staying in the Scottsboro area, and perhaps changing "base camp" locations during the trip to avoid the excessive driving we did last year.

This trip will involve driving out to the region, so car-pooling is highly recommended! Off-road or 4x4 vehicles are really not needed for most of the areas we have visited in the past, but some fairly strenuous hiking might be in store to get from the cars to the caves. Cameras are a must! I will already be in the region a week in advance, well, in northern Florida, but will be able to meet cavers



as they are able to tear loose and arrive, probably in the Huntsville area. A field trip to the NSS headquarters might be a good idea for early in the trip (and maybe a night on Monte Sano).

All Mavericks, north Texas cavers, and friends of North Texas cavers are invited to participate. Be aware that some of the caves require serious vertical skills. Appropriate equipment for each caver and demonstrable skills are prerequisite. If several cavers who are not ready for the deeper drops want to go anyway, we could arrange alternative day trips with equally cool caves that offer horizontal orientations or less challenging drops. By the way, the big-room caves do not require serious vertical skills, just some crawling.

If interested in joining the trip, or just to get some more info, please contact me at either of the following addresses:

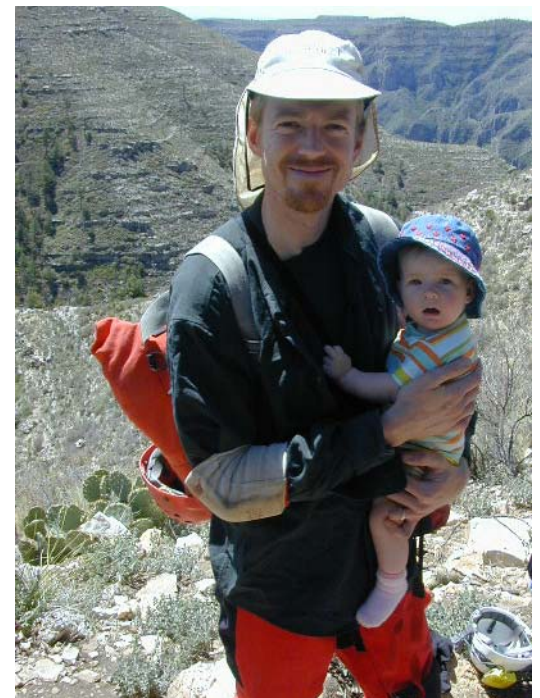
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Happy caving!

High Guads Restoration Project Trip April 26, 2003

Ed, Laura & Audrey Goff

As you can see from these photos sent to the newsletter by the Goff family, they have been caving recently in the High Guads. We understand that everyone had a great time on the trip.



Caving Events Calendar, June 2003

compiled by R.D. Milhollin

- Jun 06-08** **Kickapoo Caverns State Park Project:** ongoing project with Texas Parks and Wildlife to record all of the caves on the state park property. The organizers would like volunteers to "adopt a cave", with the eventual goal of drafting a final map. Opportunities to visit Kickapoo Caverns Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings, watch bat flights at Stuart Bat Cave, visit (not enter) Devils Sinkhole on Sunday afternoons and later in the summer possibly watch the bat flights at Devils Sinkhole. The combination to the gate will be given over Cavetex the week prior to each trip. Next trip won't be until September or October, due to the hot weather, so don't miss this one. **Contacts:** Kurt Menking kmenking@bcad.org (210) 325-5598, Travis Scott travii99@hotmail.com (979) 693-4088
- Jun 14-22** **4th Annual Maverick Grotto TAG trip:** see the article on page 8 of this issue. **Contact:** R.D. Milhollin (817) 834-2327 rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org, rdmilhollin@academicplanet.com
- Jun 14-15** **Robber Baron Cave, San Antonio:** second weekend of each month, a new and ongoing project to restore the collapsed entrance to this popular Texas cave. Initial tasks include clearing dead trees and surveying. Plans for the entrance ramp, bunker and surrounding grounds will be developed. Please contact if you are coming, and if you are bringing a truck or a chainsaw for clearing the bigger trees. **Contacts:** Linda Palit (210) 699-1388 lkpalit@swbell.net or Evelyn Mitchell, joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com
- Jun 14** **Texas Speleological Survey Open House (Austin):** an excellent opportunity to visit the TSS facilities, explore the files, meet other cavers and eat a bite of burnt meat. Starts at 10:00 am and ends at dark thirty. **Contacts:** Ron Ralph (512) 916-9190 ronralph@texas.net, Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 jkennedy@batcon.org, James Reddell (512) 471-1075 jreddell.caves@mail.utexas.edu
- Jun 20-22** **50th Annual Cave Capers (Indiana):** held near Salem, IN and hosted by the Central Indiana Grotto. Saturday highlights include cave trips and caving vendors. The after-evening banquet speaker is the internationally famous microbiologist and caver Dr. Norman Pace from the University of Colorado, who will speak on exploration in southern Indiana in the 1970's and '80s. More information can be found at <http://www.caves.org/grotto/cig/pages/capers.html>
- Jun 21-28** **NCRC Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar:** held at Camp Washington Ranch, NM. Extensive classroom and fieldwork in all phases of cave rescue; basic, intermediate, and advanced courses will be offered. Each course provides 100 hours of instruction over the eight-day seminar. Register by May 12 to avoid late fee. For a detailed course description, fee structure, meal and lodging arrangements, and registration form, visit the seminar web site at <http://www.caves.org/io/ncrc/seminar2003.htm> Please direct all comments to John Panches, National Coordinator, National Cave Rescue Commission of the National Speleological Society, national@ncrc.info
- Jun 28-29** **Government Canyon State Natural Area Project:** 20 miles northwest of San Antonio. Survey, exploration, ridge-walking, and digging. Participants must enter property with group, contact in advance for times and directions. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller mlmiller@gvtc.com
- Jun 28-29** **High Guads Restoration Project:** (New Mexico): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, Permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. **Contact:** Susan Herpin sherpin@zianet.com
- Jul 09** **Texas Speleological Survey Evening Work Session (Austin):** Wednesday evening work session at the TSS office in Austin, see article on page 7 of this issue for directions. **Contacts:** Ron Ralph (512) 916-9190 ronralph@texas.net, Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 jkennedy@batcon.org, James Reddell (512) 471-1075 jreddell.caves@mail.utexas.edu
- Jul 12-13** **Robber Baron Cave**
- Jul 26-27** **High Guads Restoration Project**
- July 18-20** **Karst 'O' Rama:** at Great Saltpeter Cave Reserve in Mt. Vernon, KY. Information: <http://www.gcgcavers.com/kor>
- Aug 4-8** **2003 NSS Convention:** in Porterville, California. Information: <http://www.nss2003.com>
- When Scheduled **Carlsbad Caverns and Fort Stanton Cave Restoration:** New Mexico restoration trips in large, sensitive caves. CRF trips have unique requirements, long holiday weekends. **Contact:** Barbe Barker (505) 687-4270 cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net
- When Scheduled **Val Verde and Sutton County Caves:** Sensitive landowner relations, visits by appointment only. **Contact:** R.D. Milhollin (817) 834-2327 rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org, rdmilhollin@academicplanet.com