

THE MAVERICK BULL

Volume 16, Issue 11
November 2003

The Monthly Newsletter of the Ft. Worth Maverick Grotto



Copyright 2003 Maverick Grotto.

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 copyrights belong 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 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 Blue Mesa Grill, 1600 South University Drive, 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

Address Change

Keith Heuss has retired from LCRA and has a new address.

1007 B Milford Way
Austin, TX 78745
(512) 440-0242
keithheuss@yahoo.com

Photo Credits

Cover photo: A bat in Friday the 13th Cave, by Pete Lindsley

Page 3: Dennis & Sharon Welch

Page 4: left, Mark Gee; upper right, Bill Tucker; lower right, Butch Fralia

Page 5: Yvonne Droms

Page 6: all by Pete Lindsley; all photos provided by Pete were taken with a Nikon CoolPix 5000 digital camera.

Page 8: Bobby de Vos

Page 9: Butch Fralia

Visit Our Web Site!

Check out the site at its new location:

maverickgrotto.org

October Meeting Minutes

Due to the unexpected closing of Smokey's Bar-B-Que, the October meeting was held at Dyno Rock in Arlington with 20 members and 4 visitors present. The program about the Nullarbor Aerial Survey in Australia was given by Jose Curras, followed by the second part of the Devil's Sinkhole video, which will be finished at the November meeting.

The business section of the meeting started with a discussion about donations for Bat Conservation International. All agreed to continue to talk and look into having BCI do a grotto program in exchange for the donation.

Diana talked about taking the newsletter to Kinko's for printing due to time constraints. Ed asked for a motion that Diana come up with a revised dues structure to be voted on in November regarding whether a member chooses to receive a paper copy by mail or an electronic newsletter. A sign up sheet of those present for paper only vs. electronic copy was passed around. Results are: Paper copy 7; Electronic 15. [Secretary's Note: Last year ('02) the dues structure for 2003 was changed when Butch set up the new website. \$22.00 annual for email, paper copy & electronic newsletter; \$15.00 for paper copy in snail mail only. This is how the dues for 2003 were collected.]

Next item on the agenda was where to have the next meeting. Karen made arrangements for Blue Mesa on University Drive in Fort Worth. All agreed to try it out.

Nominations for 2004 officers are:

Chair: Ed Goff

Vice Chair: Mark Gee

Secretary: Karen Perry

Treasurer: R. D. Milhollin

Newsletter Editor: Diana Tomchick

All are running unopposed. Only Mark is up for a new term, others are unopposed for a 2nd term.

In response to a cry for help from Aimee Beverage, the hat was passed to help with the purchase of prizes for the vertical contest at the Texas Caver's Reunion.

There was discussion about TCR, who is going, etc. Butch told of the closing of Smokey's and the meeting was adjourned to rock climb.

Dues Restructuring Proposal

by Diana Tomchick

I'm having difficulties with the printing of the newsletter. I am able to justify the time it takes to collect articles, proofread them, communicate with the contributors, scan photos, maps and slides, and lay out the newsletter and create the PDF file for the web site. I am just not able to justify the additional time (typically 3-6 hours or usually more) it takes to get the newsletter printed, collated, stapled, etc. Very few members have officially opted for the electronic version only of the newsletter. This is a big shame, as the online version is so much nicer than the printed one, as it includes all of the color photos, and people can access it much earlier than I can print it and the USPS can get it delivered to them. In fact, the Lubbock Area Grotto newsletter is only available online! I'm not proposing that the Maverick Grotto drop the mailing of printed newsletters, but I do feel that something needs to be done to relieve the newsletter editor of this burden. My solution is to have the newsletter printed, collated and stapled by Kinko's, and to try to slowly convince more members to opt for the electronic only version of the newsletter.

What would this cost, per person? If you opt for 12 printed newsletters per year (which I will provide this year and next year), a rough estimate of the cost to have them printed by Kinko's, plus the postage would be:

10 newsletters @ 10 pages each = \$0.75 each, total = \$7.50
Postage for a 10-page newsletter = \$0.37 each, total = \$3.70
2 newsletters @ 16 pages each = \$1.20 each, total = \$2.40
Postage for a 12-18 page newsletter = \$0.60 each, total = \$1.20

Total = \$14.80

My proposal is to ask the grotto to change the dues structure as follows:

Membership + electronic newsletter = \$7.00
Membership + electronic newsletter + email address = \$14.00
Membership + paper copy of newsletter = \$22.00
Membership + paper copy of newsletter + email address = \$29.00

The last time the basic grotto membership dues were increased (to \$15 per year) was when Mike Anderson was chairman, which according to Butch was a very long time ago.

I welcome any and all comments or suggestions about this proposal, you may contact me at Diana.Tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu or (214) 418-5827.

New Member Profile

Dennis & Sharon Welch

New Maverick Grotto members Dennis and Sharon Welch have always been the adventurous types. For years they have raced sprint cars at places like Devil's Bowl and Outlaw Speedways. On the way home from a race in Indiana on Labor Day weekend 2002, they stopped by Meramec Caverns for a look-see. Fourteen show caves later, with a new passion in tow, they made it back to Texas. One of those show caves had ended in a sump and the guide told a story of how a couple of divers had tried to push the underwater passage several years ago, but had turned back because of a strong current. This got Dennis to thinkin' "Wow, wouldn't it be so sweeeet to be the first person to navigate an underground stream and come up in some virgin cave area no one had ever seen before!" Thanksgiving weekend, they headed to five central Texas show caves (Cave Without A

Name was their favorite), ending with a wild tour expedition into Natural Bridge Caverns. Being adventuresome, they elected to be lowered on a harness through the 22-inch by 160-foot borehole to start the journey. What fun! They were hooked. Dennis and Sharon joined the Cave Diving Section of the N.S.S. in January of 2003. They weren't sure where to turn next, as Dennis works evening shifts on Tuesday nights as an Air Traffic Controller at DFW Airport, and they attend church every Wednesday night, the same nights as the monthly meetings for their local grottos. He finally decided if they were to ever get involved, he would have to take a night off work and find out about a grotto.

Their first grotto meeting was in August 2003 where they discovered one doesn't just sign-up, pay some dues and get a hard hat. Instead, they found they needed to be voted in after having made three trips with different grotto members who would then, for an astrological fee, recondemn them. The first caving/hazing trip was to "Hard Bargain" Cave near Gatesville where the trip leader (at least he was the one with the electric



fan and the bullwhip), Mark Gee, forced them down a tiny little vertical pit to load up bucketfuls of clay and gravel in bad air with the promise of an ancient cave just past the next shovel full. Prison

inmates doing hard labor on a chain gang have it better. While the rest of the crew lounged in the shade drinking sarsaparilla in the moonlight, cooled by a 6' electric fan and listening to Bach, Dennis and Sharon were forced to work for approximately 23.58 hours or from about 10 a.m. through 3 p.m., but escaped with not one speck of clean skin or clothing. The second and third trips occurred in Bustamante, Nuevo León, México. This trip was indeed a "bargain". On Saturday, escorted by R.D. Milhollin, the noted tent assembly engineer, we trekked for what must have been at least ten miles if one counts climbing up and down the tremendous amount of massive breakdown, through some incredibly expansive passage, past the Hall of Giants and the Cathedral to help remove "ancient tribal inscriptions" like "Pedro was here 1966". The payoff came on Sunday when, while most other grotto members were out burning up in the sun, hiking in torrential downpours, being chased by wild bulls, wrestlin' rattlesnakes or worse yet, listening to R.D. interpret the cryptic graffiti of somebody's forefathers, the Welch's and four other professional caving experts, including new grotto member Bobby de Vos, and La Gruta del Palmito pro Pete Strickland, took a leisurely stroll through the infamous "Birthday Passage", viewing some of the most beautiful cave candy ever seen (see article in last month's issue). This adventure may be hard for the Welch's to top anytime soon! Then, at the monthly meeting of the Maverick Grotto in September 2003, the unaware grotto members were traumatized when they were forced, without the threat of bottomless pitchers of beer, to veto Dennis and Sharon into their organization.

The tyranny of it all! Dennis and Sharon later volunteered that they enjoy participating in caving, diving, rock climbing, white water rafting, camping, hiking, sprint car racing and spending time with their church family in Keller and with their two grandchildren. While Dennis is telling pilots "where to go", Sharon practices medicine as a real estate agent in Southlake, healing your housing needs. They live on a private airport in Westlake,

northeast of Fort Worth with an old Rottweiler named Bambi, a chocolate Lab named Gadget, and a couple of outdoor cats. They love to learn and experience new and exciting adventures as well as to spend time reading. In so much as they DID stiff the grotto on "new member beer," they DO own two four-wheel drives! So with dry throats, let's welcome Dennis and Sharon Welch as the newest members of the Maverick Grotto.

New Cave Discoveries In San Saba County, TX

by Mark Gee, NSS # 49625

Milo Marks and Bill Tucker have been busy this past year exploring new caves on the ranch of a contact that Milo made last year. The ranch has a few known caves. Some have been explored, surveyed and mapped, and some have only been located and reported, but have not been entered. Unexplored caves include Cave Meadow Cave #1, at 15 feet deep, Grand Canyon Crevice at 75 feet deep, Grey Rock Cave at 25 feet deep and Little Dirt Hole Fissure at 20 feet deep. A map of Moss Cave, also on the ranch, was found in a Texas Speleological Survey from 1962 (see map).

On the weekend of September 13, 2003, several of the Maverick Grotto members and their guests met early Saturday morning in San Saba. Our group was to meet at the Dairy Queen and then drive out together to the ranch for a day of fun and exploration. As we left the Dairy Queen, I hoped to find a nice cave to survey. The rolling hills along the drive didn't show much exposed rock. As we turned on to the ranch road, it became obvious to me that caves were to be found. Large limestone blocks broke the surface, filled with cracks that must surely lead to cave development. Our convoy of vehicles drove about one half mile to the ranch house where Bill got out to greet the landowner with a handshake. They talked a few minutes before Bill got back in his vehicle, and we proceeded on down the two-rut road through the first gate. After driving about one mile, we pulled up to an old deer-hunter's cabin next to a windmill and found Dennis and Milo. After a little gear check, we loaded up in three vehicles and followed Milo to Joe's Cave.

Joe's Cave has two entrances. The first entrance I saw was a large ten-foot opening going straight down. Bill began rigging a rope so we could enter the cave. Some of the others entered through the crawl-in entrance. R.D. rigged a haul line because our first objective was to clean the trash up that Bill and Milo had seen on a previous trip. There wasn't much trash, but we did



Bill Tucker and Don Selby exploring the lowest passage of Joe's Cave.

haul out two large trash-bags and placed them in the back of Milo's truck. With this done, we began checking the cave.

The entrance to Joe's Cave is a funnel-shaped sink with algae covering the east wall. The total drop to a

breakdown floor is 46 feet, with 20 feet of it climbable. Three passages lead from the entrance room. The first passage, which contains some flowstone, leads downward for 10 feet on breakdown opposite the entrance and ends in a small dome room after 80 feet. The second passage is to the right of the entrance drop and leads down a breakdown slope for 20 feet and into a room 60 feet long, 35 feet high, and 20 feet wide.



Stephanie and Don Selby

This room had some bad air so we didn't want to stay too long. A small connecting passage leads to a 43-foot long passage. Very few speleothems had developed in this cave, but some bats were seen flying the whole time that we were inside. From the entrance room a third passage leads to the east, up a breakdown slope, and out a second entrance; this entrance is easily negotiable, but filled with thorn vines, spider webs, and loose, snaky looking rock. The total length of the cave is 432 feet and the total depth is 62 feet. James Estes and other members of the Abilene Grotto mapped it on April 28, 1961.

After our work and exploration, we loaded back into our vehicles and again followed Milo to another area where he and Bill had found other caves. We found several previously discovered caves and some new ones. R.D. again rigged a rope at several other entrances that he and Milo then entered. Most of the caves had bad air and they were not able to go all the way to the floor. One of the crevices that Milo went down became too tight and Milo had to bail, but R.D. was able to make it to the bottom. The estimated depth of the cave was fifty-five feet, but no horizontal development was found at the bottom. Other cave openings were checked, and some had a little horizontal development, but became very tight. I am not sure that they were completely checked to the end.

The ranch has many known caves and many that haven't been entered or found yet. This is definitely a worthwhile project, as much surveying and exploration will need to be done. The camping area is very nice and the brush on the ranch is not too thick. I hope that you can find the time to come the next time Milo and Bill have another trip out to the ranch.

A big Thank You goes to the landowner for allowing us to visit his ranch and explore his caves. I look forward to my next visit.

Till Next Time, "Happy Caving"

Texas Caver's Reunion 2003

by Bill Steele

This year the Texas Caver Reunion was held at the ranch where Honey Creek Cave is located, about 30 miles northwest of San Antonio. At 20 miles in length, Honey Creek Cave is the longest cave in Texas. Several Maverick Grotto members got to see some of Honey Creek while at TCR.



Bill Russell, a genuine Texas Old Timer.

Back in 1978, when this annual statewide convention started, it was called Old Timers' Reunion. Through the years, young, new cavers came along who didn't necessarily feel like they were "old timer" enough to attend

OTR, and the name was confusing as it conflicted with the previously established West Virginia OTR. In order to be more inclusive and less confusing, the name was changed a few years ago to call it what it is, a reunion of cavers in the state of Texas.

Another thing happened a few years ago, and that is that too many non-cavers were showing up for TCR. Part of the reason was that it was held for several years at the same location not far west of San Marcos, a college town. Another contributing factor was that nicely printed announcements were sent out, including a map, and these were easily reproduced and handed to friends. If every caver invited only two friends on the average, well, it could have become what has happened to the OTR in West Virginia, where 2,000 people show up, security is hired, and in fact a corporation has been formed to deal with the headache of it all. That isn't what happened in Texas, we went the other way, we went underground. We stopped publishing anything promotional about TCR. No map to the location was produced, and the site of the event wasn't announced until a month prior to the event. The result is a warm, smallish event with the feel of a large family reunion. It operates like raves did a few years ago, where you have to be fairly close to the loop to find out where it's located.



Bill Steele preparing to rappel into the shaft entrance of Honey Creek Cave.

Mark Gee, Diana Tomchick, and I went to the Honey Creek Cave ranch the weekend prior to TCR and cleared cedars and other undesirable trees and bushes for a grand campsite for both the Maverick and DFW Grottos. Butch Fralia and Sharon Mastbrook arrived mid-week to get set up and greet cavers as they arrived, just as Texans like it. When Friday, October 17 finally arrived, around 250 people showed up for caving, fun and fellowship. Of note

in the happenings, Ed Goff did the fastest sit-stand (frog) climb of 30 meters. Diana Tomchick was still suffering from a sprained ankle, so to practice self-rescue, she frogged 30 meters with just one foot. [Editor's note: Ed Goff, who was aiming for and barely missed the TCR 30 meter frog record with a time of 1 minute 30 seconds, later discovered that the rope wasn't measured correctly, and the distance traveled was actually 31 meters! He plans to try again next year.]

During the day on Saturday, various trips took place into Honey Creek Cave, including the classic swim-through from the shaft to the spring entrance, and trips up the spring entrance to the QA tributary. I took a huge duffel bag full of wetsuits to TCR, which allowed those who haven't bought one yet to try the "zero-gravity" cave environment of Honey Creek.

When dinnertime came on Saturday the usual feast was there, but it was even better than last year. At the end of the buffet line was a whole roast pig, the head of which became an object of amusement, which can be read about in another article in this newsletter.

The evening's festivities followed Saturday's dinner. High among them was the awarding of door prizes, and Mark Gee won a pair of thong undies. To date he has not been seen modeling them in public—Metroplex cavers might ask for a showing. A gigantic pile of cut cedar was set ablaze, kegs tapped, and a band played late. When Diana and I arrived at the hot tub early on Sunday morning, Yesterday met Today when we soaked with revelers still up from the previous night.

The Texas Speleological Association held its meeting on Sunday morning, attended by Mark Gee and Diana Tomchick from the Maverick Grotto. Diana has since been nominated for TSA chairperson, so if you've paid your dues and you get a ballot be sure to give her your vote. She vows to clean house, or something like that.

Attending TCR from the Maverick Grotto were: Robin Barber, Bobby De Vos, Audrey, Ed and Laura Goff, R.D. Millhollin and Mac the Cave Dog, Rafal Kedzierski, Bill Steele, Diana Tomchick, Clive Parsons, Don and Stephanie Selby, Will Harris, Mark and Melanie Gee, Bruce and Donna Anderson, Mike and Meta Anderson, Mike Cagle, Butch Fralia, Sharon Mastbrook, and their dogs Bear and Zuby (a six-week old adorable Black Lab puppy).

Scouts in the Ozarks October 11, 2003 by Pete Lindsley

In October I took several members of Allen Scout Troop 224 to the Arkansas Ozarks for an outing. Arriving at our camping spot along the Buffalo River at Boy Scout Camp Orr at 2:00 a.m., the group had several hours of sleep before heading out to two caves in the Cecil Cove drainage area on the north side of the Buffalo. Driving in to the headwaters of one of the almost dry streams that feed Cecil Creek, the group parked at the edge of the Buffalo National River. It took about 45 minutes to hike down the trail into the Cove and we stopped to take a quick look at Devil's Den, a 20-meter pit just a few feet from the trail. At the bottom of the hill we headed down Cecil Creek, which was also dry except for a few pools, and took the turnoff to the first cave. Mud Cave (also called Friday the 13th Cave) has a nice walk-in entrance that leads down into a large entrance room. The seven scouts had great fun swarming all over the single big room, slipping and sliding in the mud towards the back. We saw several bats roosting at good viewing levels on the sidewalls of the room. Breakdown leads were pushed and the smaller scouts were placed into service, pushing the tight belly crawls that carry a slight breeze as they head towards the nearby Ice Box Cave.

One of the scouts left a pair of good leather gloves at the entrance following lunch, and later that afternoon when we returned to pick up the gloves we found that a varmint had chewed off one finger completely on the remaining glove. The varmint still has the other glove.

Next on our agenda was a visit to Willis Cave. The small crawl-in entrance is just above a pool in Cecil Creek and is usually wet year-round because the small stream in Willis comes out in Cecil Creek as a spring. The entrance crawl soon opens to a narrow canyon passage with a stream running at the bottom. The stream passage opens into a larger room where the passage splits with the water coming in from the left fork. It's not too muddy in this part of the cave and the group got a good look at more bats and numerous calcite formations. Tom Dill had some previous caving experience and brought along his camera to get some cave photographs. We set up several shots with an auxiliary strobe using one of the Firefly slave units I had in my camera box. When the scouts checked out the right hand passage they found some really sticky mud. There was one place where they sank up above their knees and lost more than one shoe when



Scoutmaster Rod Britton stands in the entrance of Friday the 13th Cave.

they tried to exit. The guys got so muddy that when we returned to daylight they all headed into the pools below the cave just to soak and wash off the mud. We timed our exit from the canyon to reach the trucks just before dark as we drove back to Camp Orr.

On October 12th the group decided they had had enough hiking, but not enough caving. So we headed up the steep exit road from the Buffalo River level to the appropriate parking place for Copperhead Cave. Following a faint trail we quickly located the small entrance beside a dry creek bed. There is a convenient log that spans the entrance drop and we rigged a 30-foot cable ladder to the log and belayed the cavers down the 28-foot pit. Good climbers could make it all the way down a chimney to one side, but we all used the ladder when exiting. Copperhead runs under the surface creek (which was completely dry at this time of the year) and tends to flatten out downstream as it hits two closely spaced chert layers. We didn't push downstream very far because it was a belly crawl over wet cobbles. Frogs, salamanders, bats and spiders were among the critters we saw, but no copperheads (we did see two medium sized copperheads along the trail about 75 meters downstream from the cave entrance when we made our exit). The interesting part of Copperhead Cave is upstream from the entrance. Climbing up the wall from the canyon by the entrance, the scouts found a use for a small hand line to check out a floor lead that turned out to be a lower

level cut around. Continuing upstream they found numerous small waterfalls that could be easily negotiated because the water flow was only a few gallons per minute. We realized that in the



Tom Dill points out a hidden bat to Matthew Britton.

wet season the cave would be a bit more sporting and imagined great volumes of water coursing down the beautiful white, scoured and fluted canyon. I expect that when we track down a map of this cave we will see that the upstream end of the reported 1800-foot long cave will be well above the entrance. On this trip we probably saw about 1,000-1,200 feet of passage that was fairly easy-going. Back at the surface we enjoyed lunch and took our final mug shot for Troop 224.

Back in camp early, the boys had time to gather wood for a major campfire, take a short swim in the Buffalo swimming hole, and a few even joined Tom and I on a short hike along a ledge trail heading upstream for a glimpse of the setting sun.



Pictured at Copperhead Cave, rear to front/left to right, are Rod Britton, Krys Ferguson, Jared Patoskie, Spenser Nicholas, Justin Dunham, Matthew Britton, Clay Upton, Tom and John Dill.

Notes from Cheve: Part 3

by R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

The twenty-four hours we spent at Camp Two were somewhat weird. There is of course no way to tell time using any kind of natural reference, daylight is just an empty concept that deep underground. After climbing up a rope out of the East Gorge we passed through a small tunnel into an alcove about 20 feet high and 40 feet across. In the center of the camp there was an open area with a big flat rock that served well as a table of sorts. Along the corridor leading deeper into the cave was an area with little alcoves just the right size for personal camps consisting of a sleeping space and a little room to stack and organize gear. Slumberjack was an expedition sponsor, and their light-duty polyester sleeping bag stuffed right into a gallon wide-mouth Nalgene bottle, so they had been pretty easy for the initial crews to pack down to the camp. Large trash bags were in the camp to store the bags in so they would stay fluffed but also reasonably dry in the damp atmosphere. The camp was thus equipped with bags, stove, and fuel, all we had to pack down was personal gear and a bag liner so the shared bags would stay clean. We all seemed overly concerned about reserving battery power and carbide fuel, so much of the time we just sat in darkness. Exceptions were when someone would fire up the stove to heat some water or when someone would leave a sleeping bag to trek to the latrine. I had no idea what time I woke up, but it was late in the day, and I had slept more than eleven hours. Others had been up, ate, and gone back to sleep, but some time in the late afternoon we all decided that we needed to set a schedule and keep to it. Melanie insisted rightly that in order to be at our optimum we needed to stick to a surface schedule, i.e. sleeping at "night" no more than eight hours and traveling during "daylight" hours. We compared notes, and agreed that sitting still and doing nothing in the cave was having negative effects on us. I was hearing all kinds of sounds of things that were not there and seeing flashes of light, and Melanie said that her over-active imagination was making skulls out of the dim shadows cast by the carbide lamp onto the ceiling. When moving through the cave we had no time to be so distracted. We stayed in camp the rest of the day and night, and by 8:00 AM the following morning we were up, had breakfast together, and were soon departing the camp for parts unknown to us.

At Camp Two the East Gorge stream thunders on down below to a sump and disappears. Years before, cavers had discovered the perched beach and upper-level cave passage that led onward. The way was dry and fairly level, for Cheve that is. We were still climbing up and over rock piles, but no rope work was required for a couple of hours. We climbed up a precarious slope into the Low Rider Parkway, a wide passage with a flat, monolithic ceiling. After another couple of hours the passage characteristics were changing: the ceiling was lowering and the floor was becoming more uneven, and finally we came to the edge of a precipice. This was the Widow-Maker Shaft, and it seemed fairly straightforward at the top, but it was tricky as one reached the lower pitch. At the bottom our path intersected the resurged cave stream, crashing along with what seemed renewed vigor. We could move along, but carefully, from boulder to foothold to scramble-up. This quickly degenerated into one of the more entertaining passages in the cave, the Swim Gym. Contortion and balance are the name of the game here. It is possible to keep out of the water by carefully choosing handholds, but getting wet actually helped cool one off at times. Here communication was very difficult even between closest team members due to the roar of the water churning through the convoluted streambed and the need to be constantly climbing up or down, over and through holes in the rock wall. Just as I

was getting tired of this things suddenly changed. A rigged rope led straight up a flowstone wall and through a space between large boulders wedged in the thirty-foot high ceiling. The rigging was tricky, and concentration was needed to make the right move while soaking wet and carrying a bag half-filled with water. All around us the walls were decorated with a fine finish of tiny crystals that shone in our headlights. A two-story formation blocked the canyon passage and we had to climb over and around, carefully trying not to damage the huge stalagmite. On the other side we slowly climbed down into a large chamber that seemed to emit its own soft glow. All along the left wall were huge columns and tall stalagmites all lined up and seeming to flow from a continuous crack high above and running the length of the room. The floor was littered with broken stalactites fallen from the ceiling, and we noticed that most of the formations were cracked and broken, as if by the action of an earthquake. We were obviously in the Hall of the Restless Giants. This was more like New Mexico caving than anything else we had seen in the cave. The spray of the crashing waters was far below us; occasionally we could hear a faint roar from holes in the floor somewhere down under the breakdown. There was a calm serenity here, and at the end of the passage we stopped on a high point to have lunch.

We all thought from what we had gathered by talking to other cavers that we were near the halfway point to Camp Three, but the hardest parts of the trip lay ahead. We chilled rapidly in the large room, for right behind us was a dark hole that was blowing cold air like an industrial air conditioner. Lunch behind us, we began to inspect this next descent. The drop was rigged from a precarious point high up a slippery flowstone slope. The rope dropped away to a redirect visible about 30 feet down. From there it was hard to tell, but it looked as though the rest of the drop was uninterrupted and about 70 feet to the bottom. We were right, the redirect was a little tricky, but the rest of the drop was straightforward. Toward the bottom the passage narrowed down and we descended into a maze of cemented breakdown and water-carved channels, now dry. After several hundred feet of stoop walking, short rope-work, and squeezing through tight passages we found the "keyhole" we had been briefed on. This was a body-sized tube that you had to climb up to, and that then dropped downward into darkness. The recommended technique was to drop through feet first, feeling for foot-holds blindly while holding onto the rim of the hole and lowering ones body weight slowly. It was a little unnerving, but lasted a very short time. From there we entered a short but very confusing breakdown maze that forced the caver to dash under small waterfalls and slither through wet crawlways. At the top of a short climb-up we popped out into a huge quiet void our lights could barely illuminate. We had reached the Black Borehole.

The echoes were eerie. The dark walls somehow absorbed our lights. The continuing passage appeared ghost-like off into the distance, and the proportions were all unclear. The hall was between about 60 to 80 feet wide and up to 150 feet tall in places, I think. It was hard to judge distances in this vast chamber since there were no reliable references. We felt like small insects climbing slowly along over huge pieces of the ceiling that had fallen in some long ago geologic age. Even though we were working hard, our travel pace seemed infuriatingly sluggish. At times we had to climb up ropes rigged in somewhere high above us on a piece of the wall that appeared to be suspended in space. The image that kept appearing to me was something out of some old movie, possibly "Land of the Lost", only the obligatory dinosaur never stuck its head out of a hole just as we were slithering along one of the many precarious ledges along the route. The blackness of the cave walls and the breakdown comprising the floor were overwhelming, and probably added to the feeling of physical insignificance we felt as we negotiated our way through this massive room. After a couple hours of this the breakdown seemed to be filling the chamber more fully than at the end we had entered, and in fact at one point the boulders piled up in front of

us all the way to the ceiling, completely blocking the way onward. But the wind was apparent. You could hear the wind surging through this huge rock pile, and it seemed to be more powerful on the left side, and of course this was the side most difficult to get to. It took about thirty minutes to climb down from the pile we were on to what appeared to be a floor, then over to the left wall where the wind was blowing out. Marks on the wall indicated we had chosen the correct path; this was the beginning of a talus passage leading nearly straight up through the breakdown mountain. The route was pretty well marked, but we occasionally had to backtrack since the body-sized squeezes limited your head seeing what your feet were doing at several points. Pulling the packs "Through the Looking Glass" was the hardest part. The body can bend and contort, and you can alternatively pull and push with arms and legs, but the bag is just dead weight and has to be powered through. Here, a little teamwork went a long way!

At the top of the Looking Glass the sensation was akin to popping out of a manhole cover onto a huge city street. Only in this instance the street was a massive cave passage even larger than the Black Borehole. The walls and ceiling here were light colored and reflected light well, so there was a lot more to see. I didn't try, but it may have been a ten-minute hike from one side of the passage to the other. This conduit was of Carlsbad dimensions, and sloped steeply downward, and also continued upward past where we had popped up in to the room. Just to be sure, we added another rock cairn around the inconspicuous hole we would need to exit by, and began to descend toward a faint sound of crashing water somewhere below us. This was the A.S. Borehole, named as a second tribute to Jules Verne's fictional explorer who marked the way to the center of the earth by leaving his initials carved into the cave walls along the way. Upslope was another large room descriptively but unimaginatively dubbed the Mud-Floored Borehole. The way we were heading was down though, and we were all growing noticeably tired from the long, hard day. It was now around 6:00 or 7:00 PM and fatigue and hunger were becoming factors we would need to deal with soon. The A.S. Borehole continued downward with a slight twist to the left, and within thirty minutes we were peering down to where a massive torrent of water was ejected from a conduit coming up from the breakdown floor. Here the directions we received called for a sharp climb-up, but the trail was not well marked, and we ended up high above where we needed to be. Philippe and Melanie had gone ahead a different direction from Lewis and I, and we saw their lights off in the distance along the right wall high above the stream. They had located Camp Three, and we were able to join them there within a few minutes.

Our plan for the day, formulated with the benefit of a full day of rest and a renewed optimistic outlook early that morning, called for us to reach Camp Three, drop off unneeded weight, and make a quick dash down the river passage to the first sump at 1,362 meters beneath the highest Cheve entrance. Reality at Camp Three in the early evening was that we were all exhausted and hungry, and that a trip to the sump was not going to happen. This would be the end of our downward progress in Cheve this expedition. Like Camp Two, this camp was also a sand beach perched high above the moving waters, but there the similarities with that other camp ended. The room we were in was a huge tunnel sloping downward, and the camp was perched at the top of a steeply sloping wall facing across the river to a massive vertical rock wall. The ceiling was similarly of gargantuan proportions, and the sounds of the water slamming the rocks far below was absorbed or muted by the tremendous volume of the chamber we were in. Dinner was dehydrated something or another, and we tried each other's cups for variety. Hot Earl Gray was a treat, along with a candy bar or granola bar squirreled away for this occasion. The latrine was a mess as we expected, but the air was being sucked downstream or so it seemed, and up in the sleeping area we were not bothered by the smell. Sleep

came easy that night. I wrote a little in my journal but the feeling of intense isolation returned after everyone quieted down. Living in an American city in the twenty-first century, it is not often that one finds oneself so completely separated from society and from the comforts and gadgets to which we are accustomed. The knowledge that this was perhaps the farthest away from the world I knew was overwhelming, and I wondered when I would ever have the chance to experience this stark reality again. I turned off the light, sat back, and savored that rare sensation.

Pig's Head Paranoia by Bill Steele

Cavers have long had a fun tradition of sneaking rocks into the packs of those who let their guard down. The hope of the "rocker" is that the "rockee" doesn't notice the rock in their pack until they have carried it through the cave for a while. There are stories of rocks being placed in a person's cave pack that were not noticed until they were in their next cave, and even of a rock surreptitiously snuck into a caver's pack prior to their going caving. The "rockee" winds up blaming a person from their last trip and swearing revenge, of course egged on by the innocent seeming "rocker."

But them's rocks, and what could be better than a rock in a caver's pack but a pig's head in their truck? Such was the case

with our very own Maverick Grotto member Mark Gee at this year's Texas Caver's Reunion. But first, we must back up in time three weeks to a trip to Fitton Cave. At the entrance of Fitton, Mark commented that he'd never been rocked. It just

so happened that an expert rocker was present, and as Mark unlocked the gate (with his back turned to said expert and his pack out of his line of sight), said expert rocker very quickly remedied all previous oversight in Mark's caving career and sufficiently weighted his pack. Thus began Mark's rock paranoia.

Now we fast forward to TCR. It was late at night and most had sought the comfort of their sleeping bags. I had just met doctor-to-be Rafal Kedzierski, who said he was "up for a caper." We went seeking the roasted pig's head to plant somewhere deep in Mark Gee's truck, gear, or anywhere in his belongings. As we skipped down the road in the pitch-blackness, giddy at the thought of carrying a blackened pig's head like our champions from Lord of the Flies, Rafal commented, "I've heard of you but I didn't know that you were manic." What a wonderful compliment that was!

Alas, the pig's head was not to be found. Perhaps another of the rocker clan had already conceived of the opportunity to make caving history. One would think that the adventure was over, but no, fun was yet to be had. Early the next morning, before Mark and his wife could make their usual hasty escape from cavers, it was mentioned to Mark of the previous night's



The pig roaster at TCR.

cap and attempted mischief. A casual glance toward his truck in mid-story, and the observation that a dog



lingered near the front-end of the vehicle then triggered a new sort of paranoia. Mark was observed unpacking what had been packed, digging deeply into his mountains of stuff, looking very hard for a pig's head that wasn't there. Or was it? Did dogs run merrily behind him as he neared

his home? Do buzzards circle his truck to this very day? Or maybe we should ask, will Mark be rocked again?

The Neophyte Chronicles

by Roger P. Waite, NSS #50688

I am a neophyte, and these are my chronicles. Now before you skip this article, let me assure you a neophyte is not an obscure cave bug and this article is not intended for the Journal of Cave and Karst Studies. You see, a neophyte is defined as a novice or beginner. We're talking newbie, greenhorn, and a tenderfoot, that's me. I joined the NSS over two years ago, but I have never been on a caving trip until recently. I will leave the explanation of that two-year drought for another article and just say that things finally came together for me to go.

I snagged a courtesy copy of the joint DFW/Maverick Grotto newsletter, many thanks to R. D. Milhollin and Diana Tomchick. In it, I learned a little about the Government Canyon project in San Antonio. I had a three-day weekend coming up, so I contacted Marvin Miller of the Bexar grotto, who is the project coordinator. He graciously extended an invitation to myself and my 15-year old son, Andrew, to come down and help. He assured me there would be things that newbies could do.

Well, I watched the weather and the forecast said just a slight chance of thunderstorms and showers. We would be camping and were told the facilities are primitive. Government Canyon is a state park that is not yet open to the public and is still having its resources cataloged. I am a very experienced camper, and have spent time in the backwoods, but I wanted to focus on new horizons on this trip. Still, the forecast looked okay and off we went.

We got in late and were expecting to be the only campers. That proved not to be the case when we startled Emily Lott and Susan Rankin, who were down from Austin to do a plant survey. Otherwise, it was an uneventful first night.

Saturday morning we met up with our host Marvin and fellow grotto members, Rick Corbell and Rebecca O'Daniel. They very kindly showed us the ropes of ridge walking. Along about 10 a.m. a drizzly rain set in and it continued for the next thirty hours. We didn't let it dampen our spirits, though, because there was much to learn. Through the course of the day we learned how to identify everything in the world that was not a cave and began to get a slight concept of what constituted a depression with potential. Unfortunately, the first one I finally identified correctly had a huge rock sitting on top that would have required dynamite to remove. Marvin seemed disinclined to approach the park manager about that prospect. Oh well. The party did mark and record two points

of interest for later investigation. The area we were ridge walking was not expected to produce much, but it needed to be done, because it wrapped up the area around the park entrance.

With the day complete we returned to the campsite, where I found I had left the tent window flap unzipped. Did I mention I was an experienced camper? Well, I am, so I immediately zipped up the window and we went into town for a movie and dinner, while the sleeping bags dried.

Marvin came out the next day and took us on our first wild cave excursion. He had in mind to try to establish a connection between Hackberry and Dancing Fern caves. He led us into Hackberry and through a tight squeeze at the back. We were only the second group to go to this part of the cave. His plan was to leave us there and go into Dancing Fern and try to make an audible connection. You probably already know this, but remember, we're newbies--the sound of one's stomach gurgling is just like the sound of someone crawling over karst at a great distance. After we figured that out, we were well prepared when we finally did hear Marvin yelling. Andrew was able to pinpoint the direction of the lead. With this accomplished, and upon getting me unstuck from the tight squeeze, Marvin showed us the rest of the cave.

It was a very nice first outing. We wrapped up an area of ridge walking, proved a hunch about two caves, and opened up another mystery. The lead in Dancing Fern where Marvin heard us yell back is not the lead with the air movement--interesting. But the highlight of the trip was Marvin's parting words, "You guys are real troopers." At least, I think he said "troopers." Oh, and I realize now that the forecast wasn't wrong. It never did thunderstorm and shower; it was always just a steady stratiform precipitation.

I hope to contribute more chronicles in the future. There are plenty more caving 'firsts' out there for a neophyte to experience, and I know newsletter editors are often so desperate for articles that they will even take this kind of stuff.

[Editor's Note: Roger is mistaken, newsletter editors love to receive these sorts of trip reports because they come from people new to caving, and not because we are desperate for content. I look forward to more contributions from Roger!]

Newsletter Exchange Review

by R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

NSS News September 2003 (Vol. 61 No. 09)

"Anastomosis (u-nas'tu-mo'sis) *n. pl. -nes (-ses)* **1.** *Physiol.* A union, interlacing, or running together, as of veins, nerves, or canals of animal bodies. **2.** Any intercommunication, as of two or more lines, branches, or rivers. [*< Gk. Anastomosis opening < ana- again + stoma mouth*]

That is what is on the cover of this month's *News*. The first three articles deal with West Virginia caves, and are followed by a fine gallery of photos from the same karsty state. Doug Medville leads off with "The Exploration of the Portal," the Portal being a smallish cave entrance located at the bottom of a sinkhole that was dug open in 1982. Since there were several other projects working in the area then, very little exploration got done until 1986. It was strategically located where it was possible for cavers to use it to access two underground streams known to exist in the area. In 1988 serious survey began. In one day Bill Storage and Ohio cavers Rob and Tim Griffin first mapped 3,675 feet in the dry upper level fossil passage before downclimbing to a stream passage below. There they encountered one of the sinking surface streams known in the area and ended up surveying 12,000 feet of impressive cave! By 1990 The Portal was about six miles long, and no end was in sight. Hoping to connect into

the theorized Spring Creek System, whose water came from the other sinking stream in the vicinity, previous good luck seemed to play out as the teams hit a series of sumps. The water smelled bad, and this made sense since the valley above was populated with farmhouses and septic systems and outhouses. Several leads were tried, and passage was found until it all seemed to play out. Even though leads remained, the explorers called it a cave at 32,265 feet. A California caving couple just looking for a wooded place to build a house in cave country bought the property containing the cave entrance. Did the Portal teams feel sorry for them since they missed out on the exploration? Heck no! Dave Cowan, the new owner, just went across the road from his new property and found the entrance to the cave covered in the next article, Boar Hole!

Dave writes about digging Boar Hole open and then exploring the cave. He first saw water disappearing into a sink that had a fifteen-foot long drop at the bottom when all the debris was removed. In July of 1994, cavers first entered and found a small room big enough for two people and a six-foot belly crawl leading to a small dome. This led the explorers to an awkward climb-down, then down a breakdown slope, and after a twenty five-foot long crawl they broke out into thirty-foot high canyon passage. The cave seemed to get bigger as they went farther in. Some of the place names the team gave to areas of the cave are quite entertaining; all tie in somehow with the idea of pigs. When the original team had surveyed more than 2.5 miles, a group of cavers from the NYC Met grotto was allowed to come down to help with the survey, and an area of the cave was handed over to them. When Carroll Bassett from New Jersey saw the cave and then found out that most of the overlying property was for sale, he quickly closed the deal and moved to West Virginia. The property did not include the only known entrance, so Bassett decided to open his own and contacted cave radio wizard Brian Pease, who determined that there was a ten-foot overburden over a fifteen-foot tall dome where a connection could be dug. It took about a year but an entrance was finally dug and an entrance culvert installed. In August of 2000 Joe Ivy and Becky Jones took time off from teaching a self-rescue course on Bassett's property to participate in a survey party that included some digging. This was in an area of the cave that was known from Pease's radiolocations to overly some passages in The Portal. Some cavers working on the project were interested in making a connection so they began a dig in that area. That is where the next article starts up.

"Connection" by Yvonne Droms tells the story of the connection dug between Boar Hole and The Portal. It took place during the Christmas party work weekend at the WVACS field house in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. The water was high in many of the area caves and Boar Hole doesn't flood. Tom Malabad and Pam Tegelman went along, and one by one the team members slithered into a body-sized passage and took shifts digging. On Tom's turn he broke through into hands-and-knees then walking passage. It was about time to leave for the party, so survey was put off until the following morning. The body-tube was about 140 feet long so survey was going to be a trick. Pushing cave packs and helmets ahead was too difficult, the team ended up just carrying survey gear through. At the end of the tight survey was a side passage in which they found footsteps and a survey station.

Texan George Veni reports on the "1st International Seminar on the Sustainable Management of Karst" held in Coban, Guatemala. The town is located in cockpit karst connected to Guatemala City by newly paved roads. These roads lead out from Coban to previously isolated communities, where new towns threaten loss of forest ecosystem and exposure of caves and archaeological sites to damage and looting. Speakers discussed karst hydrology, geochemistry, geomorphology, ecosystems, land use, local karst research, anthropological and archaeological considerations, and sustainable tourism, along with other topics.

"News and Notes" describes a conference to be held in

Hanoi, Vietnam, called Trans-KARST 2004 for short. The full name is International Transdisciplinary Conference on Development and Conservation of Karst Regions. This meeting is part of UNESCO's International Geological Correlation Program, "Global Correlation of Karst Hydrogeology and Relevant Ecosystems." The Union Internationale de Spéléologie is also involved, and the hosting facility is Hanoi Normal University. Yet another cave science meeting will be held in Spain, this one on "Evaporite Karst Processes and Problems", in 2005. That should neatly fill a karst science groupie's travel calendar for the near future. In the Midwest, the Indiana Karst Conservancy has purchased Wayne's Cave near Bloomington. The property came up for sale quickly and was an unbudgeted expense, so the conservancy is accepting donations to offset the \$76,000 purchase price for the twenty acres containing the cave entrance. In the "Far West" the Cave Conservancy of Hawai'i has finalized purchase of its first property, Ole's Puka, located in a big island subdivision. Another job has opened up within the NSS, that of editor of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*. The "Letters" section has a comment on an accident reported in the recent *American Caving Accidents 1999-2001*. Under the "cave diving incidents" section, the death of scientist Henry Kendall in open water near the entrance to Wakulla Springs was reported. Barbara Anne am Ende suggests that it would have been more appropriate to place this in "caving-related incidents". John Holsinger sends in a correction to Greg Springer's recent "Evolution and Speleology" article stating that the term "troglodyte" refers only to human cave dwellers, lower organisms are properly referred to as "troglobites" if terrestrial or "stygobytes" if aquatic. "Society News" reports the results of the 2003 NSS Board of Governors election. Hazel Barton, Martha Hendrix, Doug Medville, and Phil Moss were each elected to three-year terms. Reviewer Matt Leissring gives *Yellowstone Farewell* by Wayne and Judy Sutherland a slightly-less-than-sterling review in the "Reading" column. The premise of the book is a fictional eruption at Yellowstone, similar in scope to the Mount St. Helens event of 1980. While he credits the story as being interesting and based on good science, Leissring feels the ideological jabs at media and environmentalists detracts from an overall fine book.

The next article really caught my eye. I had to look twice to be sure this was not the April issue, because the headline was "Scientists Restore Eyes in Blind Cave Fish and Find Virgin Passage". This sounds as though it came off a tabloid cover, but it is worthwhile to read on. The credentials of the authors seem real enough (Luis Espinasa, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, and William Jeffrey, University of Maryland). The research described is based on caving at Cueva del Pachon near Antigua Morelos, which was originally surveyed by some Texans in 1965. The "Spelean Spotlight" is on Jack Thomison, an admittedly low-key Tennessee caver who was involved in the exploration of several of the standard TAG caves there. "Obituaries" include Fernand Petzl, pioneer caver and equipment inventor, at age 90, Terry Tarkington, TAG caver for whom Terry's Terrible Tiger Teeth in Tumbling Rock is named, and Ed Moore, long time caver in Madison, Wisconsin. Greg Springer's "The Science of Speleology" covers human evolution and speleology. This work takes place almost exclusively in Africa, and the preservation of hominid bones in breccia at Sterkfontein is the focus of the article. Lastly, "Jay's Journal" features reviews of Tina Oliphant's tale of caving on Mexico's Cerro Ocote Mountain, caving in Kansas, the Swago area of West Virginia, and Fisher Ridge Cave in Kentucky.

The Oztotl Caver (DFW Grotto) September 2003 (Vol. 22 No. 7/8)

Dave McClung's smiling mug greets readers of the Oztotl Caver. He is pictured on-ladder with electric wires in his hand during the 2003 Bustamante restoration weekend. Inside are

meeting minutes, a news item in which a cave dweller is evicted, plans for a subdivision development over the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, report of a DFW Grotto adopt-a-highway cleanup outing, a job opening for a hydrologist in San Antonio, and announcement of a new cave book, *50 Years of Texas Caving* by Carl Kunath. Additionally, a blurb on testing bats for rabies in Scotland and announcement of the 2003 TCR grace this edition.

Speleospace September 2003 (Greater Houston Grotto)

No September newsletter.

COGNIZANCE September 2003 (Central Oklahoma Grotto)

Lots of goodies were in this month's edition. Trip reports include Cattle Cave, a Carlsbad restoration trip, and a trip to Horseshoe Cave and Alphabet Cave. There are news items about a boy getting bitten by a rabid bat, and a snippet about the original exploration of Karchner Caverns. Also, a UK commercial cave reported increased visitation, probably as a result of last summer's heat wave over yonder. A vampire bat joke and Steve Beleu poetry about vampire bats and fire salamanders round things out, except for a final excerpt about a Slovakian speleo-webpage.

Journal of Cave and Karst Studies August 2003 (Vol. 65 No. 2)

The NSS scientific journal features several articles in this edition. William B. White leads off in a defense of the journal as a necessary part of the NSS goal to be a scientifically oriented organization. Next, the team of Luis Espinasa and William Jeffrey (remember the *NSS News* article on fixing blind cave fish) publish a very serious species description on the world's northernmost cave-adapted fish, found in central Pennsylvania. Blaine Schubert and James Kaufmann contribute a description of the partial skeletal remains of a short-faced bear from a Missouri cave. Sandro Galdenzi and Teruyuka Maruoka discuss Gypsum Deposits in the Frasassi Caves, Central Italy. Patrick Applegate contributes an article on "Detection of Sinkholes Developed on Shaly Ordovician Limestones, Hamilton County, Ohio, Using Digital Topographic Data: Dependence of Topographic Expression of Sinkholes on Scale, Contour Interval, and Slope." Charles Self and Carol Hill (*Cave Minerals of the World*) authored "How Speleothems Grow: An Introduction to the Ontogeny of Cave Minerals".

* If members of other NSS grottos and caving clubs come across this newsletter, they should encourage their newsletter editor to contact the *Maverick Bull* about the possibility of a newsletter exchange.

Caving Events Calendar, November 2003 compiled by R.D. Milhollin

- Nov 14-16** **Kickapoo Caverns State Park Project:** Surveying, drafting, ridge-walking for new caves, relocating known caves, photographing caves, and working on the campsites as well as on a new project. The TPWD has asked for help in removing a portion of the bat viewing platform at Stewart Bat Cave. This project will need to be finished by March of next year before the bats return to the cave. TPWD is providing most of the equipment needed including a backhoe, dump truck, bobcat, and jackhammer. Campsites, fire rings, bathrooms with cold showers, bunk house, caves to explore, volunteers will be rewarded with trips to Kickapoo Caverns (photo and regular), any of the other caves on the property, and Devils Sinkhole tours on Sunday. There has been mention of perks for returning volunteers as well. **Contacts:** Travis Scott (979) 693-4088 tscott@collision-research.com Kurt Menking (210) 325-5598 kmenking@bcad.org
- Nov 22-23** **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. **Contacts:** Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com
- Dec 6-7** **Jester Cave, OK:** Help is needed to take a group of Venture Scouts through the longest gypsum cave in the U.S.A. A 3-mile through-trip is planned. **Contact:** Bill Steele (972) 785-2422 Oksteele@aol.com
- Dec 13** **Metroplex Cavers Christmas Party:** Come join the fun as the area cavers celebrate the holidays at R.D. Milhollin's house in Haltom City (3711 Gene Lane). Directions and map will be placed on the website. **Contact:** R.D. Milhollin (817) 834-2327 rdmilhollin@maverickgrotto.org
- Dec 12-14** **Colorado Bend State Park Project:** long-time favorite of Mavericks, pretty close to home, semi-regular schedule, second weekend of the month. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com or Dale Barnard Barnarddale@yahoo.com
- Dec 13-14** **Government Canyon State Natural Area Project:** 20 miles west of San Antonio. Activities include survey, exploration, ridge walking, and digging. Participants must enter property with group, contact in advance for times and directions. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller (830) 885-5631 mimiller@gvtc.com
- When Scheduled** **Carlsbad Caverns and Fort Stanton Cave Restoration:** New Mexico restoration trips in large, sensitive caves. CRF trips have unique requirements, and are held on long holiday weekends. **Contact:** Barbe Barker cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net
(505) 687-4270
- 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

Next Meeting:

Nov. 11th, 7:00 p.m.

Agenda items:

Officer elections

Proposed dues restructuring (see page 3 of this newsletter)

TSA 2004 Spring Convention

Program:

End of Devil's Sinkhole video and surprise video short.

There is no December meeting, so be sure to join us at the Blue Mesa Grill!

New Location: Blue Mesa Grill

University Park Village

1600 South University Drive

Fort Worth, TX 75024

(817) 332-6372



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