

# THE MAVERICK BULL

Volume 19, Issue 11      November 2004  
The Newsletter of The Maverick Grotto



## Maverick Grotto Information

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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 and photographs. 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.

**Complementary Newsletters:** The Maverick Grotto will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free issue to persons interested in becoming members.

**Subscription Rates:** Subscription rates are \$15.00 per year for non- members and free for members.

**Membership Policy:** Any individual with interests, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of The Maverick Grotto and The National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three trip requirement with at least three different grotto members. These three members shall act as sponsors. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

**Meetings:** Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Bodacious BBQ, 1206 E. Division St., Arlington. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

**Carbide:** Currently carbide is unavailable.

**Library:** Support your Grotto Library. Dennis Welch will be accepting books and magazines on cave-related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. We wish to thank Dennis for his efforts to bring and set up the Grotto Library.

## Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Tammy Cox– Pink Panther Cave, NM

Page 5: Chad Fenner (left), Bill Tucker-(right)

Page 6: Tammy Cox (left), Scott Boyd (bottom right)

Page 7 & 8 : Tammy Cox

Back Cover: Chad Fenner (Diana), photo of Chad unknown

**Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site!** Butch has done an excellent job at constructing the grotto web site and keeping it up-to-date. You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

[Http://www.maverickgrotto.org](http://www.maverickgrotto.org)

**Cave Rescue:** Call collect: (512) 686-0234

**Next meeting, November 9th, 7:00 pm**

**Bodacious BBQ**

**1206 E Division St.**

**Arlington, TX. 76011**

**(817) 860-4248**

**Program:**

Maverick Grotto Auction

Bill Steele will be our official auctioneer . Be sure and show up at 7:00 pm with plenty of items to donate for the auction.

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## October 2004 Meeting Minutes

### By: Scott Boyd

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The Maverick Grotto met October 12 at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington.

Program: Slide presentation of caving on the border of Coahuila and Nuevo Leon, Mexico by Ed Goff.

Reports from Officers:

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook reported that the grotto has \$919.83 in the checking account, and \$430.67 in petty cash, for a total of \$1350.50.

Old Business:

- \* Lex Cox Jr. was voted in as a member. He had applied in the past, but somehow, his application never got voted on.
- \* Ed mentioned the auction that will be held at the November meeting. It will be our program that month.
- \* We discussed the Christmas party, and possibly having it with the DFW grotto. We voted on having a meeting in December, and it passed.

New Business:

- \* Dennis Welch proposed that the grotto adopt one or more of the work projects that need to be done at Deep and Punkin Caves as a grotto project. Grotto members would do this work on a weekend that is not in conjunction with the TCMA work weekends at the property. The members voted on the idea, and it passed unanimously.
- \* Francie Tucker applied for membership, and was voted in as a new member.
- \* A raffle was held for a CD of caving ballads and an "AcroBats" game. It was won by Lex Cox Jr, and \$12 was raised for the grotto.

Trip reports and trip announcements:

- \* Sharon Welch reported on a grotto trip to several caves in Arkansas the weekend of Oct. 8 - 10, that included Whippoorwill and Farmers Caves. A great time was had by all.
- \* Bill Tucker reported on a trip to Maple Run Cave and Goat Cave in Austin that he, Dennis Welch and Scott Boyd went to on Sep. 27th.
- \* Milo Marks announced an upcoming trip on Oct. 18 - 19 to a ranch in San Saba County.

## Caving Events Calendar

### Second Saturday of every month Hilltop Project (Capitan, NM):

Ridge walking and digging in windy blowholes on USFS and BLM lands, about 5 miles south of Fort Stanton Cave, NM. Meet for Cave Diggers Breakfast on Saturday between 7:30 to 8 a.m. at the Smokey Bear Restaurant in Capitan. **Contacts:** Lee Skinner (505) 293-5723 [skinner@thuntek.net](mailto:skinner@thuntek.net) or Dick Venters (505)437-3712 [cavedigger@msn.com](mailto:cavedigger@msn.com)

### Nov 12-14 Colorado Bend State Park Project (Bend):

Second weekend of the month, from October to May. This is a terrific project for beginning cavers. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 [trhli@sprynet.com](mailto:trhli@sprynet.com) or Dale Barnard [Barnarddale@yahoo.com](mailto:Barnarddale@yahoo.com)

### Nov 13-14 13th Annual Sonora Restoration Project:

Second weekend of the month, from October to May. This is a terrific project for beginning cavers. **Contact:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 [gveni@satx.rr.com](mailto:gveni@satx.rr.com)

### Nov 20-21 Government Canyon State Natural Area Karst Survey (San Antonio):

This long-running project has lots of opportunities for both beginning and advanced cavers. Ridgewalking, digging, surveying and camping are available. **Contact:** Marvin Miller (830) 885-5631 [mlmiller@gvtc.com](mailto:mlmiller@gvtc.com)

### Nov 20-21 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM):

On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Usually the last weekend of the month, date changed this month due to Thanksgiving. 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](mailto:highguads@yahoo.com)

### Nov 21-27 Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon (Mexico):

Survey and mapping project over Thanksgiving week near Aquismon. **Contact:** Jerry Fant [jerry-fant@worldnet.att.net](mailto:jerry-fant@worldnet.att.net)

### Nov 27-28 GypKaP (Carlsbad, NM):

Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of

**Region NSS (New Mexico):** Sandia Grotto hosting (tentative).

**Dec 11-12 Colorado Bend State Park Project**

**Dec 11 Government Canyon State Natural Area Karst Survey (San Antonio)** Saturday only this month.

**Feb 02-06, 2005 7th Mexican Congress of Speleology & 5th Congress of FEALC (The Speleological Federation of Latin American and the Caribbean) (Monterrey, Nuevo León, México):** "Legislation and Protection of the Subterranean Environment." Cost: US\$50 until October 1, 2004, US\$100 later. **Contact:** Rodolfo Gonzalez [rogonzalez@cydsa.com](mailto:rogonzalez@cydsa.com)

southern New Mexico. **Contact:** Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 [blandevoid@comcast.net](mailto:blandevoid@comcast.net)

**Dec 04 Winter Technical Regional, Southwest Region NSS (New Mexico):** Sandia Grotto hosting (tentative).

**Dec 11-12 Colorado Bend State Park Project**

**Dec 11 Government Canyon State Natural Area Karst Survey (San Antonio)** Saturday only this month.

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## Announcement

Just a reminder to be sure and bring items to donate for the Maverick Grotto Auction to the meeting on Tuesday. Half of the proceeds for your donation will go to the grotto, or you may donate all the money for your auctioned item. Lets try to beat the amount raised last year of over \$300.00

## TCR From The Cooks Tent

Chad Fenner

Last year, I watched someone cook a fried turkey on a camping trip. I'll tell you now, once you've had deep fried turkey, you'll never go back to oven roasted again. Thanksgiving will have a whole new meaning. After that I was hooked. This past Fathers day, my wonderful family got me a turkey fryer setup. Since that point, I've cooked several turkeys just because they taste so dang good. And Thanksgiving is still to come! So when the call for TCR cooks went out, I decided that I should share this joy. I e-mailed Charley Loving and told him that I got this turkey fryer for fathers day and wanted to volunteer to fry a turkey for TCR. His response was little more than "sounds good to me". As TCR approached, I had not yet gotten any specifics from Charley, so I e-mailed him again asking if he still had me on the meat cooks list for a fried turkey. Again, not much more of a response than "sounds good to me". At that point, I felt like I had volunteered so I needed to go through with it, but had very little direction to go on. So being a "take action" kind of guy, I found a couple of small turkeys at Kroger. I was ready for TCR even if they weren't ready for me. I showed up Friday night and scoped out the place. I found Felicia Vreeland and mentioned that I had turkeys ready to fry. This was quite the shock to her, because she thought all the meat had already been accounted for. Now we had two more turkeys than she anticipated. None-the-less, she was very happy I was volunteering, but suggested that I cook one of the turkeys for the cooking contest at noon. She hinted that she didn't think many people were entering, so it might be an easy way to get a cool prize. Not wanting to rock the boat, I went along. The next morning, I met up with the rest of the Maverick gang including Maverick old timers Bruce and Donna Anderson, Dale Ellison, and Mike Cagle. Bruce was doing the corn again this year, and Mike decided to do a big ol' pot of slow cooked pinto beans. Bruce needed to start early to get all the corn shucked, and Mike needed to get the beans on so that they could cook all day. The turkeys only take about 30 minutes each, so I didn't need to start cooking for the dinner until much later. We all set up and did our thing, Bruce shucking, Mike simmering, and me deep frying a whole turkey. When the turkey was done, it got passed around to the judges for their evaluation.

Certainly in front of me they all ooowwed and



aaaahhed, but I knew I had a winner when I caught some of them sneaking back to where I sat down the leftovers for a "second evaluation". I did manage to hear that someone else was also frying a turkey that night, but didn't get the details. After the turkey, I



helped Bruce who was still shucking corn, and had already enlisted Mike and his son. Turned out that the other guy had an equipment problem, so I said I'd go ahead and do his turkey (about 15 lbs), as well as mine. Contrary to what you may have heard, the only real danger in frying turkeys is having the correct amount of oil. Too much oil will result in overflowing the pot, and of course, under the pot is a 55,000 BTU gas cooker which will set fire to the overflowing oil in a flash (pun intended). The key in measuring the correct amount of oil is to put the turkey in the pot, fill it with water, then remove the turkey and note the water level. Dump the water and fill it with oil to that level. I did that with my 10 pounders, and filled it with the proper amount of oil, but now I had a larger turkey, which meant less oil. But there was no way I could empty the oil and do the water trick now. Basically, I guessed based on passed turkeys I had cooked about the same size. My guess was perfect, and I managed to cook both turkeys just in time for the main meal without blowing up anything. Later that night at the awards ceremony, I found out that I did indeed win first prize in the meat category. For all I know, I may have been the only entry in the meat category, but Felicia was very gracious and the prize was a 12 piece "Outdoor Gourmet" knife set complete with a handle, lockable, aluminum carrying case. Pretty cool and a whole lot of fun. I haven't yet decided if I'll do it again next year, but I certainly had a great time this year.

## New Member Profile Francie Tucker

"I started going into caves in 1967, but in a different way than you may think. My first caving experience was also one of my early dives, and took place in water-filled Jacob's Well, near Wimberly, Texas. We didn't know much about cave diving, but we survived those early experiences and wanted to see more. Just being underwater was a thrill that would become a way of life for us. Bill and I eventually turned our love of diving into a vocation, and we spent over 30 years in the diving and travel business. Underwater caves were always fascinating to us, and we eventually pursued cave diving in earnest. I have dived in numerous caves in Florida, the Yucatan area of Mexico, Phantom Cave in Texas and Chandelier Cave in Palau. The beautifully decorated caves of the Yucatan are my favorites, especially Sac Actun and the famous Na Hoch Na Chich. It was 1995 before I went caving in the more conventional manner. Lately, I have taken more interest in caving (at Bill's urging) and recently enjoyed a caving trip to Arkansas with a large contingent of Grotto members. Although it really wore me out, I had a great time being with the group, and look forward to the next opportunity to go caving."



## New Member Profile

### Lex Cox

I started caving about 4 years ago with my wife, Tammy Cox, and our kids, Lex and Amber, in Arkansas. I enjoy deer hunting, camping, cooking, cowboy-ing and caving. Most of my free weekends are spent in Comanche working the cattle pens, hauling hay and working the auction barn. Here lately I have been doing more caving with Tammy and less ranch work. Hmm? I guess its ok to have several hobbies. I am a self employed sheet metal contractor, and do all kinds of general contracting. Also, my new nick name is CB, which stands for camp boy- If you go caving with me and Tammy be sure to come to our campsite around breakfast or dinner time and test out my cooking skills, or bring something over and I will be glad to cook it up for you.



## Caving trip to Devil's Den State Park in NW Arkansas - Oct. 8 - 10, 2004

By Scott Boyd

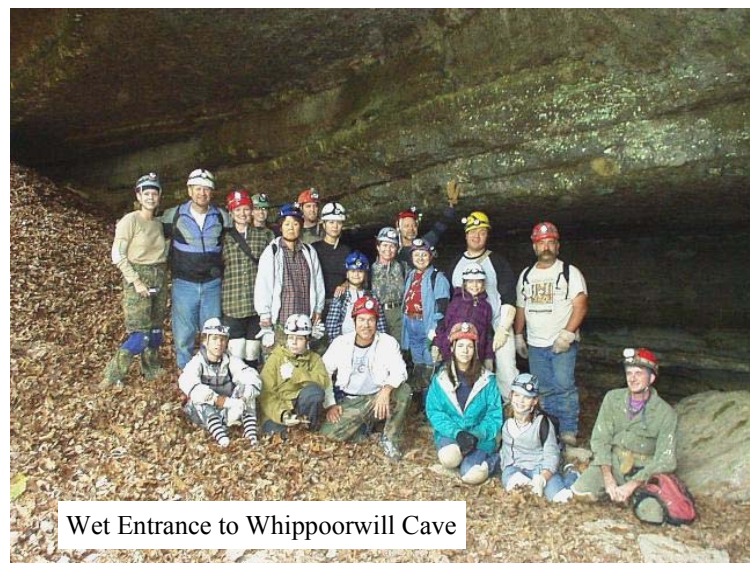
Participants: Scott Boyd, Lex, Tammy & Amber Cox, Kris Megahan and his two daughters, Haven and Savannah, Dan Smith, who brought Christian and Cameron, Bill and Francie Tucker, Dennis and Sharon Welch and grandson Ethan, Ethan's mom and grandmother, Jerry and Cynthia Hall, Jeff and Andi.  
(There was a total of 22 cavers on Saturday's trip)

### Friday night:

I arrived at the campground of the park at about 7:30 Friday evening. The Tucker's camper was there, along with the Cox's, but there was no one around. I later found out that the Cox family, Bill and Francie Tucker, and Jerry and Cynthia Hall were going through a nearby cave when I arrived. Kris Megahan and two of his girls arrived about 15 minutes later, followed by Dennis Welch and family members 15 minutes after that. I had just started to put up my tent in an empty space, but we decided to let Dennis use that space for his RV. Kris and I shared a space since we were both tent-camping. After the others returned from the cave, we all ended up gathering around the Cox's campsite. Lex fixed fried potatoes, mixed with fried onions and fried spam - pretty tasty!! We had really nice weather Friday night before I went to bed, but some time during the night, it started lightly raining, and it was still sprinkling in the morning when I woke up.

### Saturday:

There were 20 of us who drove or rode in six vehicles to Whippoorwill Cave, which is about 1 1/2 hour's drive to the north. The cave is located in the Madison County Wildlife Management Area. When we arrived near the cave around 12:30 pm, we met up with "Roc", a local caver who lives about 10 miles from the cave. He was our tour guide for Whippoorwill. He first showed us the Wet Entrance, sometimes referred to as the "Historical Entrance". It was about 1/4 mile away from where we parked. This entrance looked like a shelter cave, but back in a corner, there was a small opening that led to the



Wet Entrance to Whippoorwill Cave



Water Crawl passage, and the rest of the cave. We then hiked back to the vehicles, and went up the path to the Sassafras Entrance. Before we went in, Roc told us how this entrance was discovered, and how it got its name. After everyone slid and squeezed through the small entrance hole, we went down the long Sassafras Passage, which was a downward-sloping passage filled with lots of breakdown. Somewhere along the way, we stopped and ate some lunch. I think it was in the Middle Room, but I'm not sure. After going through the "Next Room", we entered the long, twisty, curvy Main-Level Passage. This passage, and the Upper-Level Passage, were carved out by water erosion, so they have mostly smooth sandstone or limestone walls that were curved and rippled. The Upper-Level Passage twists,

curves, and sometimes passes across the Main-Level Passage. While in the Main-Level Passage, we walked over a feature called "Razorback", which looked more like the backbone of a dinosaur, but was named after the Arkansas Razorbacks. It wasn't sharp at all, but had a series of bumps in the floor of the passage. At the end of the Main-Level Passage, we entered a large room known as the Heart Room. While we were taking a short break here, Dennis spotted a small passage off to one side about 8 feet above the floor. Roc told him that it led to Kathy's Canyon, and so Dennis and I climbed up to check it out. (Someone else went with us, but I don't remember who it was.) We went through a very narrow, twisty passage for about 40 to 50 feet and entered the canyon. To the right, about 10 feet down a slope, there was a small room we had been calling a "whirlpool room", as we had seen several of these types of rooms in the cave. They had a domed ceiling, with rounded, fairly smooth walls that

looked like they were formed by water erosion. The walls in this one were fluted also. Off in the other direction, the canyon went uphill over breakdown into a narrow constriction that we didn't go through, since everyone was waiting for us back in the Heart Room.

All through the cave, we spotted solitary bats, roosting on the ceilings and sometimes on the walls. Roc thought they might be Eastern Pippistrelles. They were very small bats, with gray fur. One we noticed had a tag on its leg. I thought it was really unusual that these bats were way back in the cave, even as far as the Main-Level Passage. I think they may have come in some other small entrance that's unknown and inaccessible to cavers, or they prefer flying through the twisty curvy passages to get way back in there. Really strange...

There was a couple of spots where a few cavers went down a side passage to see some salamanders that were in small pools of water. Later, while doing some research on the Internet about Whippoorwill Cave, I learned that these were endangered Ozark blind salamanders. When we got to the end of the cave where the Wet Entrance is located, eight people decided to go ahead and brave the crawl through the ice-cold water, and exit the cave. The rest of us doubled back through the cave to the Sassafras Entrance. Along the way back, we checked out the Water-Noise Room, a somewhat circular room with a small trickle of water that dropped about two feet to the floor. I thought it was a really pretty area. We finally exited the cave at about 6:30 pm, after spending five hours underground. We hiked back down the short distance to the vehicles, took a break and rested. Most people changed clothes for the trip back. On the way back out of the area, Roc was going to show us the entrances to a couple of other caves, but we lost track

Amber, Jeff, Haven, Kristopher, Andi and Savannah getting ready to go caving.



go ahead and brave the crawl through the ice-cold water, and exit the cave. The rest of us doubled back through the cave to the Sassafras Entrance. Along the way back, we checked out the Water-Noise Room, a somewhat circular room with a small trickle of water that dropped about two feet to the floor. I thought it was a really pretty area. We finally exited the cave at about 6:30 pm, after spending five hours underground. We hiked back down the short distance to the vehicles, took a break and rested. Most people changed clothes for the trip back. On the way back out of the area, Roc was going to show us the entrances to a couple of other caves, but we lost track



of him somewhere on the road out. After returning to camp, Lex grilled cheeseburgers for dinner. They were really great burgers, and much appreciated after a tiring, yet fun day of caving.

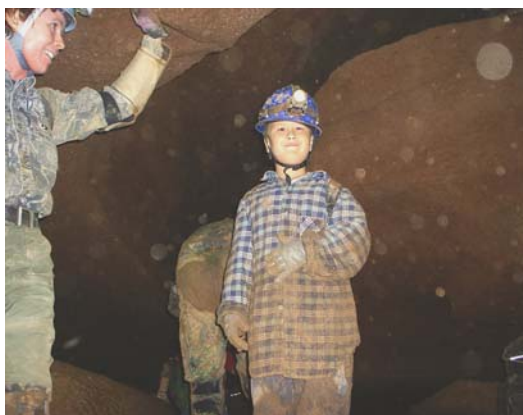
**Sunday:**

Sunday morning the plans were to go to Farmers Cave, located nearby in the park. My back was hurting somewhat, so I opted out of going. About eight people ended up going to Farmers Cave. Meanwhile, I went to the park store to get some ice, then took some photos of the rock dam and the creek near the store and pool. I then went up to Yellow Rock Look-out Point to call my

honey, take a few photos and admire the view. I didn't stay very long at the lookout point, as it started to lightly rain again while I was up there. I returned to camp and wrote part of this report on my laptop, and started to pack things

up to leave. While I was doing that, everyone returned from Farmers Cave, all covered in mud.

Around noon, about five or six people went to another nearby cave. I left camp at 12:30, and had an uneventful and rain-filled trip back home.





## Caving Safety & Techniques

There are several versions of cave safety guidelines, the main points being adequate training and reliable equipment. Some simple & easy suggestions are tying a knot at the end of rappel rope, and not using a carabiner for attachment to harness. Safe use of equipment can be achieved only by information, teaching, and demonstration.

Your chances of being injured are reduced by danger awareness and by knowledge of equipment and techniques.

Statistically, caving accidents are mostly attributed to poor judgment, little or no caving experience, or falls. The most common causes of caving accidents include falling, being struck by falling objects, and hypothermia.

**Falling:** To reduce the risk of falling, one should avoid jumping and uncontrolled sliding down slopes, wear proper footwear, check and discard any faulty or worn vertical equipment, and obtain proper training.

**Falling Objects:** Injury caused by falling objects are best avoided by always wearing a helmet, stay clear of the base of drops and climbs, and securing all items of equipment so that they will not drop on cavers below.

**Hypothermia:** If the temperature drops more than a few degrees, the body can no longer function properly. Carry extra clothing or something that can protect you from the cold.

**Other Hazards:** Not all caving problems involve injuries. A few people do get lost in caves, become stuck, or are unable to climb up a ledge or rope to get out of the cave. Exhaustion and a lack of light (or light failure) may cause someone to become lost who might otherwise have found their way out of the cave.

**Getting equipped** Every caving trip requires the same basic equipment and supplies. However, equipment for a safe and comfortable trip may differ from that listed here, depending on the cave.

Carry at least three independent sources of light per person. Mount the primary light on the helmet, so that you automatically have light wherever you turn your head, and your hands are free to climb safely. The second and third light sources must be equivalent to the primary light. Spare parts, including batteries and bulbs, are necessary components of each source of light. Lights employing light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are so inexpensive, small, and energy efficient, that their advantages outweigh those of candles and glow sticks. Candles are useful as heat sources in the event you have to wait, but should not be considered alternate light sources.

Wear a helmet that meets UIAA standards or the European equivalent, and buckle the chin strap. Your helmet protects your head and offers a mount for your lights. When you buy an inferior helmet, you reveal the value you place on your life.

Caving responsibly involves planning a trip, moving through the cave safely, and returning on time. You, and your partners are responsible for protecting yourselves, and the caves you visit.

Depending on the cave and the trip, you may also find these items useful.

Gloves , Knee pads

A large, plastic trash bag, carried in your helmet

Food sufficient for the length of the trip

Drinking water

A crush-proof container for human wastes

A small, strong, lightweight pack

Caves tend to be cold, so dress warmly. Wet clothes keep you colder than dry clothes, so avoid getting wet. Except in the driest, warmest caves, avoid wearing cotton clothing, because it absorbs and retains more water than synthetic fabrics. Polypropylene, nylon, and polyester tend to be more abrasion-resistant, absorb less water, dry more quickly, and retain heat better than natural fabrics.

Dress for the expected environment in the cave. Layers of clothing made from synthetic fabrics are suitable for colder caves, while lighter clothing is sufficient for warm caves. The outer layer needs to resist abrasion. Some caves are so cold and wet that they require more than just layers of warm clothes; do not attempt such caves without proper training.

Notify a reliable person about your caving plans, including the name and location of the cave you are visiting, and your estimated time of return (allowing time for unanticipated delays). Agree on what to do if you do not return on time. If you exit the cave after your estimated exit time, contact this person as soon as possible to prevent an unnecessary rescue.

A good group size is 4-6 people. Groups larger than six tend to be slow and difficult to manage, so divide a larger group of cavers into separate groups. In the event of an accident, at least one person should stay with the injured person, and at least two should go for help. That way no one is caving alone. Each group should have at least one, preferably two, people who are familiar with the cave and good caving skills and practices.

Vertical caving---using ropes to descend and ascend pits---involves special skills and special equipment. Vertical caving techniques and gear necessarily differ from those used by rock climbers. Seek vertical caving training from a competent instructor before doing rope work in a cave. Avoid using unknown ropes, slings, and ladders you encounter underground. Free-climbing a rope hand-over-hand is not recommended as it is highly unsafe.

When caving, remain clear headed. Drugs, including alcohol, that affect your alertness, judgment, or ability to think clearly make you a threat to your group's safety.



TCR 2004

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