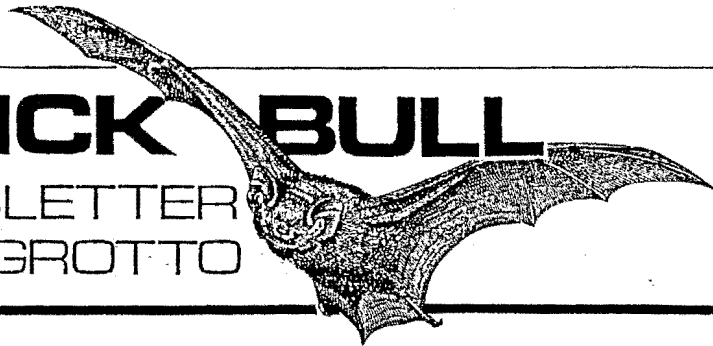

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO



VOLUME 5 NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 1990



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THE MAVERICK BULL is the monthly newsletter of THE MAVERICK GROTTO, an internal organization in the National Speleological Society (NSS 6-322). The editors invite all cavers to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art, and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed, stamped envelope should accompany it. Items should be of interest to cavers and be non-political in nature.

Internal organizations of the National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to author as will be stated in byline) first appearing in *THE MAVERICK BULL*, if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to THE MAVERICK GROTTO address at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the grotto at the address herein.

EXCHANGES: THE MAVERICK GROTTO, will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact any officer.

COMPLIMENTARY NEWSLETTERS: THE MAVERICK GROTTO will provide complimentary newsletters to persons or organizations who provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Grotto will also provide three free issues to persons interested in becoming members.

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

MEETINGS: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month, at SMOKEY'S RIBS, 5300 East Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is a little less than one mile west of Loop 820 East and next door to a K Mart. The time is 7:00 P.M., and the food is good.

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Arlington, Texas 76017
817-473-0463

Vice-Chairman: Bruce Anderson
504 Kimbrough
Fort Worth, Texas 76108
817-246-6313

Treasurer: Teresa White
5424 Finian
North Richland Hills, TX 76180
817-281-6240

Editor/
Secretary: David & Shari Finrock
1974 Barron
Fort Worth, TX 76112
817-451-3539

CAVE RESCUE: Call Collect 512-686-0234

CALENDAR

Sept 11	Maverick Grotto Meeting
Sept 15	Dedication of the Eckert-James River Bat Cave Preserve (Details in Aug newsletter)
Sept 16-22	CRF Carlsbad Caverns Lint Trip - (Contact Pat Jablonsky (303) 370-6474)
Sept 21-22	Big Manhole Digging Project
Sept 24-30	2nd International Speleological Congress in Monterrey, Mexico (Details in Jul newsletter)
Oct 9	Maverick Grotto Meeting
Oct 12-14	Texas Old-Timers Reunion on Blanco River near the town of Wimberley
Oct 26-28	Continuation of the TSA survey project at Powell's Cave
Oct 19-21	Colorado Bend State Park Work Trip resumed after summer break
Nov 1-6	Exploration of new ranch property near Del Rio (Contact Danny Sherrod for details)
Nov 10-11	Colorado Bend State Park Work Trip
Nov 13	Maverick Grotto Meeting

ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month was provided by Woodrow Thomas. An unknown caver (or at least part of a caver) is shown negotiating a squeeze in one of the Bower's Trail Caves in Pushmataha County, Oklahoma.

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING

(EDITORS' NOTE: The editors were on vacation last month, on a Windjammer Barefoot sailing cruise in the Caribbean. Since they missed the meeting, Arlene Heintz wrote the minutes this time.)

The regular monthly meeting of the Maverick Grotto was held Tuesday evening, 14 August 1990. We had two visitors: Bryan, a friend of Steve Jung's, and Michael, Dale Ellisons's nephew.

Dale Ellison opened the meeting and recognized our visitors.

A Joint Maverick/DFW party is being planned by Donna Anderson and Dave "Cave" McClung. It will be the weekend of 15-16 September 1990. Butch Fralia has made arrangements for his large grill to be delivered to the M&W Ranch for BBQ briskit. (Other details on the party in this newsletter).

Dale read upcoming events from several newsletters.

A fan was brought into the meeting room to help clear out Clorox fumes caused by an earlier cleaning.

An announcement was made about upcoming elections for officers for 1991. Give it some thought before the November election.

Danny Sherrod has made contact for access to a new ranch for ridge-walking. The property near Del Rio contains Crystal Cave and Langtree Lead. H.T. Mier's Cave, the sixth deepest cave in Texas (338 feet deep) is nearby. An opportunity exists to find a new "deepest cave in Texas". A trip is planned for Thursday 1 November through Tuesday 6 November. If interested, call Danny Sherrod at (817) 295-5167.

Bruce & Donna Anderson announced an upcoming trip to New Mexico. They will be visiting Wind Cave and McKittrick Hill over Labor Day.

A Cave Research Foundation trip to Fitton Cave in Arkansas is set for some time in September. Call Mike Pearson at (214) 694-2310 for details.

Ernest Parker will consider teaching another class in single-rope vertical techniques if there are enough inquiries. Call him at (817) 447-8344.

Mike Cagle announced that he is no longer a night worker and spoke to the grotto about seeking out new caves and making landowner contacts. He said that he's ready to ride with someone. Contact Mike if interested.

Danny Sherrod told about some experiences in Mexican caving, and commercial caves there.

We received a letter from Woodrow Thomas withdrawing from his offer to host the September program on dye-tracing in caves. His new job forces him to reschedule the program for some future time.

A short discussion was held about a possible Maverick Grotto project. One possibility was

River Styx, because of an increase in spray paint at the river entrance to the Bat Rooms. As of this publication, a reported new entrance north of the Racing Stripe room hasn't been checked out. This entrance reportedly has a small lead. Donna Anderson and Butch Fralia didn't know of this entrance, so it probably is a new one. However, last trip there, a large rust-colored rattler prevented any serious attempt to push the opening.

After adjournment of the business meeting, the program consisted of a video on a cave in Canada.

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTA
AT TEXAS OLD TIMER'S REUNION

In keeping with our policy of having meetings in remote locations to allow our long-distance members the opportunity to attend their mandatory annual meeting, there will be a special meeting of the Maverick Grotto at Texas Old Timer's Reunion. The meeting will take place on Saturday 13 October 1990 at TOTR. Contact Bruce Anderson later for the exact time.

DEEP DROPS IN SOUTH TEXAS

LOCATION: H. T. Mier's Cave, Val Verde Co.
DATE: 17-18 March 1990
PERSONNEL: Monte Duwe, Danny Sherrod, Bill Stephens, Clay Wages
REPORT BY: Danny Sherrod

All of us met in Eastland for the journey south to just north of Del Rio, where the cave is located. We parked at the police station which, by the way, is a great place to park out of town, due to the security.

The next day we made our landowner contact and went into the cave. This cave has six rope pitches, so it is a great way to develop technique for crossing lips, and ascending.

H. T. Mier's Cave has a limited amount of formations, including some large flowstone near some of the drops. The main attraction is the pitches.

We made it all the way to the bottom of the cave (at 338 feet it is the sixth deepest cave in Texas) to some crawls which we followed on a limited basis.

The next day, the landowner of the next ranch down the road asked us if we were interested in exploring another pit on his land. Naturally, we went to his pit. Unfortunately, it did not go very far. After looking at other areas of the ranch for caves, the owner agreed to let us come back. Also, he offered to let us use his Jeep and spare house while we looked for caves. Was this a dream or what?

MAVERICK GROTTOS
FALL PARTY

By Donna Anderson

The Dallas/Fort Worth and the Maverick Grottos are planning a joint fall party. It will be held on September 15th & 16th at the M & W Ranch (about 5 miles from Glen Rose). Bar-B-Q Brisket and a keg of beer will be provided. Bring your tent and plan to stay all weekend. Each person is asked to bring a covered dish such as beans, potato salad, chips, dip, hot sauce or other munchies for the main meal on Saturday evening.

Some party goers will be arriving Friday night. By early afternoon on Saturday the party should be in full swing with swimming, canoeing, setting up a sauna, and donkey rides for the kids (courtesy of Russell Hill). Russell has also promised to bring some of that delicious wine called Springtown Mist. Some of you may remember it from the last party. He gets it from a vineyard near where he lives called La Buena Vida Vineyards. The food will be served Saturday evening somewhere between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Also, if you play a musical instrument which would be suitable for cave ballads, such as a guitar, banjo, harmonica, fiddle, etc., please bring them for the Cave Ballad Extravaganza which will be held Saturday evening around the campfire. If it has happened to you in a cave, we probably have a song about it.

Grotto members, their families, those soon to be members, and visitors are all invited to the party. Don't miss this fun-filled weekend.

To get to the M & W Ranch from Fort Worth, drive south on Interstate 35W past Burleson to the Alvarado exit for U.S. 67, then go west on 67, through Cleburne. Drive over the Brazos River bridge and then about 2 - 3 miles, turning south on FM 200. Bear left at the Y intersection. Within a mile or so, cross the Brazos again and in another mile or so, the road takes a hard left. The road to the ranch takes a hard right. There will be a large "M & W" sign. There is an entrance fee for camping of \$3 to \$4. Once inside the ranch, just follow the grotto bat signs leading to our camping area. Fort Worth residents can also get to the M & W by taking U.S. 377 to Granbury, then taking state Highway 144 to U.S. 67 and turning left, then going a mile or so to the FM 200 right turn.

From Dallas, get on U.S. 67 southeast off I-35E and drive past Midlothian, then through Alvarado. Continue under the I-35W overpass and go through Cleburne, then past the Brazos River bridge to the FM 200 intersection. Make a left or go south on FM 200. Bear left at the Y intersection immediately after turning. Cross the Brazos River again and the road will make a hard left in a mile or two. Make a hard right there into the ranch. There will be a large "M & W" sign. There is an entrance fee for camping of \$3 to \$4. Once inside the ranch, just follow the grotto bat signs leading to our camping area.

MADONNA

By Don Denton

Jack London once wrote, "It is so much easier to live placidly and complacently. Of course, to live placidly and complacently is not to live at all". Most cavers I've met seem to be trying to live life to the fullest. This was true of our small group at Lincoln National Forrest over the weekend of July 27th 1990.

Saturday morning, July 28th, Texas cavers Danny Sherrod, Tom Bone (T-Bone), and myself joined up with Colorado Caver's Dawn Reed and Don Doucette at camp on 3-Mile Hill. We immediately loaded our gear into Doucette's 4WD and began the slow bumpy drive up and down one of the jeep trails. We spotted the ridge Madonna is on and parked the 4WD at the trail head. It was raining pretty hard, so we decided to wait until it let up some, after all, who wants to go into a cave wet and muddy!

The rain finally slowed to a drizzle. Taking advantage of this break in the weather we began hiking down to the entrance. The recent fires had scorched a great deal of area, but the view of the canyon was still breathtaking. The trail was fairly obvious, our only obstacles were an occasional cactus.

In the entrance room, above us, was the formation the cave was named after, MADONNA. Formations often take familiar shapes like faces in clouds, however, the Madonna formation could almost pass as being man-made. The limestone flowed down the large stalagmite almost making appear to be a sculpture veil over a head and body. I was sort of awe-struck by its similarity to an actual sculpture.

Pass the gate and through the maze we were above the 255-ft pitch. Doucette and I were pleased that a group of small mud sculptures made by previous cavers had not been disturbed. These were located in a crawlway where we rigged the rope. T-Bone sculpture a bone (his trademark) and left it with the collection.

We used a 300-ft. rope to rig the drop. the first 70-ft. is chimney which opens up into a 185-ft. freefall. The pit is bell shape and roughly circular with a diameter of about 200-ft.. We each repelled. My familiarity with repelling made me careless. I didn't check the tether to my pack, the tether came loose, I yelled rock and my pack fell 200-ft. Everyone below was clear of the drop area - standard procedure. Services for the contents of my pack will be announced later.

The second pitch is a 115-ft. chimney which we rigged with a 200-ft rope for repelling and a belay line for the climb out. We each descended the wet chimney and grouped together to eat snacks, Danny was gone exploring the rear of the cave while the rest of us took this break. Madonna is a highly-decorated cave. We were extremely careful negotiating our way through the delicate formations and speleothems. Two lakes are located

towards the rear of the cave, with large columns growing out of the water. Shields, helectites and soda straws are everywhere! The most spectacular formation was a round shield about 3-ft. in diameter.

Back at the entrance 10-hours later and up the ridge to the 4WD. Back at camp, T-Bone in the wee hours of the morning was cooking dinner for all of us! Working away in the rain with only about 3-hours of sleep in the last 40-hours, he managed to whip up BBQ chicken, pasta salad and vegetables. T-Bone would of been the perfect candidate for a Earnest Shackleton Expedition.

Whirlpool Project

by Jay Jorden

The following article, as well as the map on the opposite page, are reprinted from the 18 Aug 1990 issue of The OZTOTL Caver, the newsletter of the D/FW Grotto.

What began as a cave and property left over from development in a Central Texas flood plain has become a caver-managed preserve. The Whirlpool Cave Preserve officially became a reality the weekend of July 27-29, with about 40 cavers donating their time and energy to welding, mixing concrete, cutting and clearing brush, erecting signs and building gates, fences and other improvements.

This Texas Cave Management Association project had been in the making for more than a month. The second issue of the TCMA Activities Newsletter had outlined what needed to be done. Now, it was just a case of getting the people there to do the work. Cavers began arriving Friday night, but the real work got under way in earnest Saturday morning.

Weighing in with the most tools for the job was Peter Strickland. The bed of his small import truck was packed above the cab roof with a generator, electric arc welder, electric cement mixer, wheelbarrow, picks, axes, shovel and other tools. In addition, Gill Ediger and others provided an oxyacetylene torch and large flatbed trailer. Mike Walsh, TCMA executive director, had brought \$180 worth of heavy pipe for use in making fences and gates, a professionally lettered Whirlpool sign and other equipment. He had also brought soft drinks, cookies and other refreshments for tired, thirsty workers.

Through the weekend's activities, a number of residents from the neighborhood were drawn to the site by curiosity. TCMA members met with them and, in many cases, gave them literature on the organization in hopes of getting some new members and promoting landowner cooperation.

Besides Strickland, Bill Russell, Rod Goke, Keith Heuss, Katherine McClure, Alejandro Villagomez, Jack Ralph, Andy Grubbs, Terry Holsinger and others worked Saturday and Sunday. Cavers also came from Houston. A big contingent of cavers from the Dallas/Fort Worth area. They included James Savage, Dave McClung and Sheila, Corky Corcoran, Jay Jorden and a family of Polish cavers from Arlington.

The cavers had rented a gasoline-powered auger for drilling post holes and vast quantities of water were hauled in for mixing concrete. As usual, Pete's genius was at work, fashioning a (hopefully) vehicle-proof barrier near Mo-Pac freeway to prevent off-road driving past the cave. A new road, was cleared into the property from the other side - Lotta Lane - and a gate installed. The cavers fit right in with the neighborhood activity: we looked like a crew of contractors on a construction project! While a number of people worked on the fence and gate projects and jarred their teeth running the auger, others were busy with sickles and a lawn mower, whipping the campsite and the area around the cave into shape. Some cavers even escaped the Central Texas heat inside Whirlpool. A cave register, including a detailed questionnaire, was installed there. (See the map in the inside front cover of this issue for a layout of Whirlpool Cave).

After work Saturday, about 20 of the cavers who had chosen not to immediately rush off to a wedding party for Erika Heinen were treated, courtesy TCMA, to a pizza supper. Then, some workers went to local cavers' houses for showers and a change of clothes. They went to the party later. Some people chose to camp out at the property, but a number were offered cot and floor space with cavers' hospitality.

It was amazing that good camping could be found inside the Austin city limits. Were it not for the nearby bridges and the eerie glow of mercury-vapor lamps, the location could have seemed quite a bit more remote.

Sunday's heat came early, and cavers soon got to work again, moving flatbed trailer-loads of brush elsewhere on the property. More fence was welded and concrete poured.

Shortly after noon Sunday, the new Whirlpool sign was unveiled and dedicated by Walsh, along with other TCMA directors Ralph and Jorden. Lots of photos were taken and the effort was christened with a suitable bottle.

"Whirlpool belongs to all the cavers of Texas," Walsh said.

Whirlpool Cave

Travis County, Texas
July 1979

Barton Underground Research Project

Project Directors Mark Minton & Bill Russell

DIGGERS

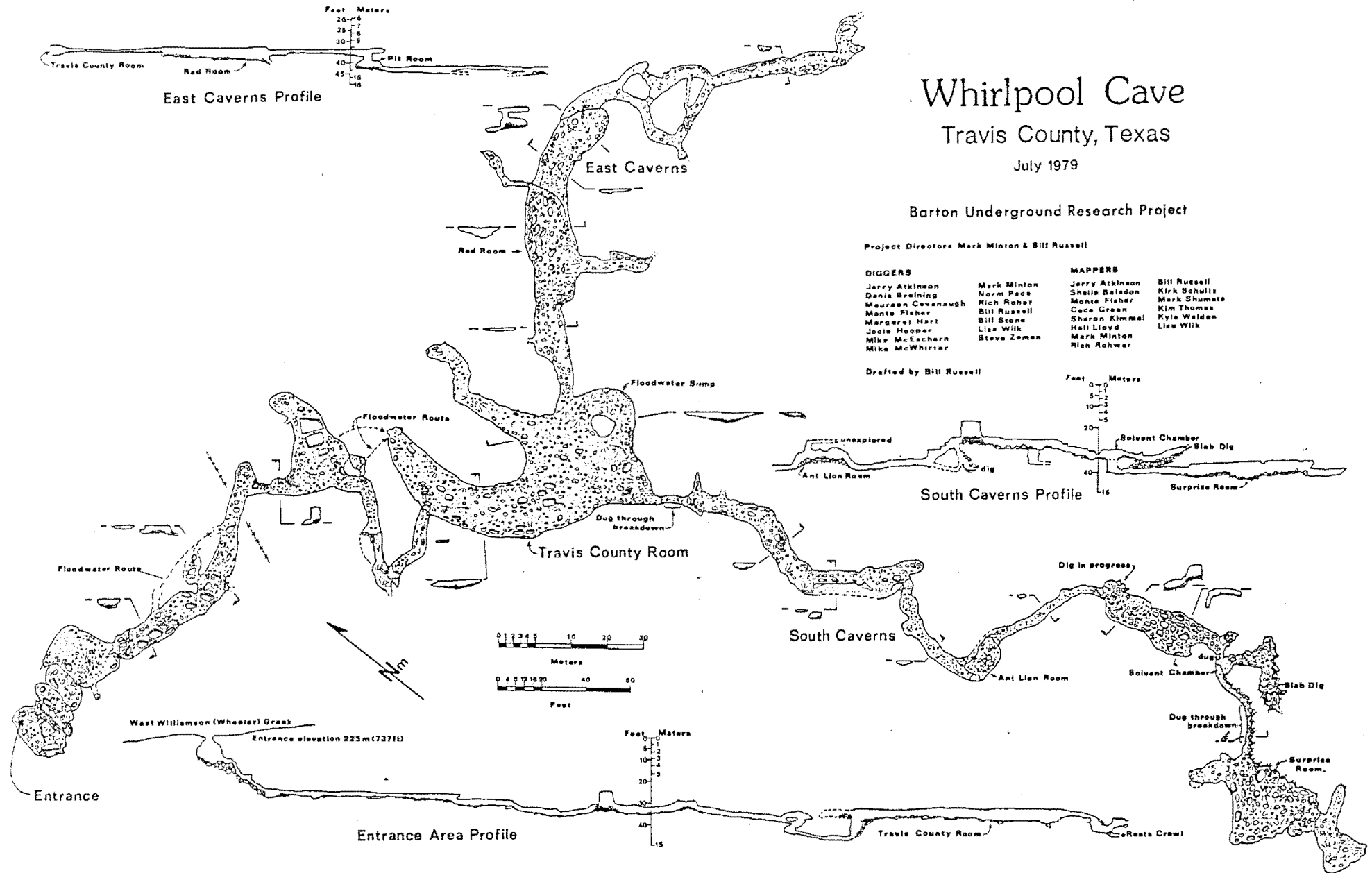
Jerry Atkinson
Dennis Bralning
Maureen Cavanaugh
Monte Fisher
Margaret Hart
Jocita Heeber
Mike McEachern
Mike McWhirter

Mark Minton
Norm Pace
Rich Rohrer
Bill Russell
Bill Stone
Lisa Wilk
Steve Zeman

MAPPERS

Jerry Atkinson
Shells Beason
Monte Fisher
Cace Green
Sharon Kivemal
Heli Lloyd
Mark Minton
Rich Rohrer
Bill Russell
Kirk Schullis
Mark Shumata
Kim Thomas
Kyle Walden
Lisa Wilk

Drafted by Bill Russell



WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN THERE?

The Carlsbad Restoration Camp is held the the third week of June each year. Cavers from all over the country come to restore areas that were blasted or covered over as a result of building the trail. The questions and comments of the visitors are many times a high source of entertainment during our stay. I have compiled the following list for your enjoyment. -- Dawn Burow-Hill

What are you doing?

Where can I get a hat like that

What are you digging for?

Where do you rent the helmets?

Did you find any gold?

Are you having fun?

Did you lose your contact?

Are you archeologists?

Could I just have one little rock?

How much do you get paid?

Honey, as long as you're up there, why don't you break me off a piece of that thing you're working beside.

You are doing a good job digging this (the cave) out!

So this is how the cave was made!

Now watch him. He's got a bucket full of dirt and he's going to be making some stalagtites.

I wouldn't doubt if all these formations were made of cement.

You can tell they carved all this out.

Is it darker down here at night?

I'll give you a dollar if you'll drop my little sister down that hole.

How much of the cave haven't you discovered?

How much of the cave is underground?

Are you using up our tax dollars to do THIS?

(Concerning one of the cavers) Look! There's Bigfoot!

(Concerning two cavers in white coveralls) Look, Mommy! Ghostbusters!

Daddy, Daddy! Look! This is where the cave men live!

Leprechauns!

Oh, was all this damage caused by bats?

(Cave cricket sitting on a stalagmite) Are you gonna smush him?

(huff puff) How much farther is it?

Excuse me! We've been lost three times. Can you show me the way out?

Aren't you afraid of falling through the floor?

Hey, Mister! You got a leak in your roof!

Did you find any Indians?

Are you guys trying to uncover bodies?

Boy, this would be a great place to grow mushrooms!

I knew it was a good idea to come here, but I had no idea we'd learn something!

I see you're doing restoration work. You're cleaning up after the bats, right?

Fort Worth Star-Telegram / Monday, September 3, 1990

ANN LANDERS

Except for an occasional batty one, bats are nice

Dear Readers: A while back I got hot and heavy into the relative merits of bats. Bat lovers by the thousands insisted that the furry creatures had gotten a bum rap and sprang to their defense. Bats ended up looking pretty good.

Then "C.L.B." wrote in about his hair-raising experience with a fruit bat in Austin, Texas. Once again I am being bombarded with letters *defending* bats. Read on and draw your own conclusions.

Dear Ann Landers: Healthy animals do not bite unless provoked. In the animal world as in forms of higher life, there are "psychotics." It is entirely possible that an occasional bat goes crazy and bites.

That nightmarish rabies treatment of 21 shots in the stomach is outmoded. They now have a far more efficient treatment that involves only three shots which can be taken in the arm.

You have a great deal of influence, Ann. It is unfortunate that you have chosen to perpetuate

the Western stereotype of the bat as evil. In China, bats are a symbol of happiness and prosperity. Symbolism aside, bats do much less harm than good. They eat billions of insects and pollinate useful plants such as agave, bananas, avocados, cashews, figs, cloves, mangos, guavas and others. I hope you will take the time to learn about bats from a reputable source instead of relying on emotional invective. I suggest that you contact Bat Conservation International in Austin, Texas.

—Anonymous

Dear Anon: Thanks for your testimonial on behalf of bats. Bat Conservation International has already contacted me. However, I have received numerous clippings about a man in Austin who was bitten by a fruit bat and died. While we have different opinions on this subject, rest assured, this is the last time I will mention bats for a very long time.

DEEP CAVES OF TEXAS

	m	ft	
1. Sorcerer's Cave (1981)	170	558	Terrell
2. Wizard's Well (1983)	118	388	Terrell
3. Big Tree Cave (1983)	106	348	Val Verde
4. Devil's Sinkhole (1983)	104	342	Edwards
5. Plateau Cave (1963)	104	340	Culberson
6. H.T. Mier's Cave (1986)	103	338	Val Verde
7. 0-9 Water Well (1965)(1980)	101	332	Crockett
8. Blowhole (1975)	101	331	Edwards
9. Emerald Sink (1986)	101	330	Val Verde
10. Heim's West Well (1976)	96.0	315	El Paso
11. 400 Foot Cave (1965)	94.2	309	Brewster
12. Troll Cave (1982)	91.7	301	Terrell
13. Deep Cave (1965)	91.1	299	Edwards
14. Mesa de Anguila Sinkhole (1980)	85.3	280	Brewster
15. Langry Quarry Cave (1983)	81.3	267	Val Verde
16. Genesis Cave	78.0	256	Bexar
17. Crystal Cave (1988)	77.1	253	Culberson
18. Fisher's Fissure (1961)	76.2	250	Val Verde
19. Natural Bridge Caverns	76.2	250	Cornal
20. Turkey Pens Cave (1989)	76.2	250	Real
21. Frio Queen Cave	71.9	236	Uvalde
22. Abominable Sinkhole	71.0	233	Val Verde
23. Montgomery Gypsum Cave	68.6	225	Terrell
24. Hunter's Well	68.6	225	Culberson
25. Blowing Sink (1989)	61.6	202	Travis
26. Mt. Emory Cave	61.0	200	Brewster
27. Sullivan Knob Cave	61.0	200	Lampasas
28. Whiteface Cave	61.0	200	San Saba
29. MFP (Mighty Fine Pit)	59.1	194	Edwards
30. Chivo Cave	57.9	190	Edwards
31. Quigg Sinkhole	57.9	190	Val Verde
32. Resurrection Pit (1989)	57.6	189	Burnet

The long and deep caves lists of Texas have been greatly expanded this year, thanks to the efforts of a number of cavers and also, thanks, to Bill Elliott who has developed a database named LOGICAVE for the Texas Speleological Survey. As you can see, the long caves list stops at the 1,000 meters mark, while the deep caves list contains 32 entries. Thanks goes to Bill Elliott, Bill Stephens, and Mark Minton for providing me with accurate lengths on several of the caves. Honey Creek Cave passed a milestone recently as its length was pushed over 30 kilometers. Over the next few years, the Powell's Cave resurvey may show that that cave is also longer than 30 kilometers. Everyone is urged to join in the resurvey efforts. Also, if you have more information on the caves of Texas, please send it to James Reddell or Bill Elliott.

Compiled by Dale L. Pate
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