

# THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTO



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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.

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**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 \$10.00 per year for members and non-members.

**Membership Policy:** Any individual with interests, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of The Maverick Grotto and The National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three trip requirement with at least three different grotto

members. These three members shall act as sponsors. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

**Meetings:** Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is located less than one mile west of Loop 820 and next to K-Mart. The time is 7:00 P.M. and the food is good.

**Carbide:** Grotto carbide is available at the meeting on even numbered months. The carbide is free to all members and is sold to others at the price of fifty cents per pound. Anyone needing carbide at other times should contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039 to arrange for pickup.

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

**Chairman:** Butch Fralia  
3412 Walton Ave.  
Fort Worth, Tx. 76133  
(817)346-2039

**Vice-Chairman:** Danny Sherrod  
3 Cobb Drive  
Joshua, Tx. 76058  
(817)295-5167

**Secretary/Editor:** Ernest Parker  
616 Nw. King  
Burleson, Tx. 76028  
(817)447-8344

**Treasurer:** Mark Porter  
513 Valley Park  
Garland, Tx. 75243  
(214)271-8147

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

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### March Meeting

Dave and Barbe McClung are going to give a program on their trip to the British Isles. They will talk about their experiences and give a slide show.

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### Last Newsletter!!!!

If you have not paid your dues or subscription fees **THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER.** Mail to Maverick Grotto, c/o Mark Porter, Treasurer, 513 Valley Park, Garland, Tx. 75243

## The NSS Election and It's Implications for Western Cavers

by Bill Yett 3604F, Member Colorado Grotto  
[title by editor]

You may have thought the national political season was over last November and would not come around again until 1996. However, for NSS cavers the political season comes up every year in the spring. We will soon be asked to elect four members to make decisions in the NSS for us. This has been going on for half a century and I doubt that few members think much about it.

I think a good case can be made that members, especially western cavers, should be paying much closer attention to who is making decisions for us. The NSS is not quite a household name yet, but is no longer exactly a minuscule fringe group of strange mud covered individuals either. In recent years we have pushed through national legislation and negotiated understandings with the major federal land agencies. We have also begun talking about paid officers, broadcast video productions, and becoming a Sierra club of the underworld. Who we elect is who decides such things.

If you have any concern about what deals are cut with federal agencies, how we appear to the public, or where our society is going, it behoves you to pay careful attention at election time. As unpleasant as it may be, I hope you will bear with me for a quick tour through speleo-politics.

**The Structure.** As noted above, every year we elect four directors to three year terms. These four join eight others elected in the two previous years and together they constitute the Directorate. They are all elected nationally "at large" meaning they represent no one region or other organized group. The Directorate, in turn, elects the four officers of the NSS - President, Executive Vice President, Administrative Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer (there is talk of creating a new office - a vice president for conservation and cave management). Once elected, officers become voting members of a larger and better known group - the Board of Governors, or BOG.

Since we are discussing the effective decision-making structure of the NSS, let us quickly dismiss the Congress of Grottos. That group has a right, under the by-laws, to meet and pass resolutions. The BOG is not in any way bound by such resolutions.

**The Demographics.** Last year a well thought-out survey of members was completed. For the first time we have a good view of the average member, his (male by 72%) caving activities and opinions. Among the tidbits are that we

are well educated - average 15.8 years of school, average 38 years of age, are well paid - the mode is \$50-75,000 per year, and have averaged 17 caving trips the last two years.

The data I saw in this survey did not provide any distribution of membership on a geographic basis. Now this is where it gets interesting to western cavers. Using the 1991 Members Manual (where the membership list is divided by state) it is fairly easy to get state-by-state membership numbers. If the geographical boundary between eastern and western caver is defined as the eastern border of the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, then western cavers make up 38% of the NSS membership. I think this boundary, for this purpose, is more conservative and defensible than using the Mississippi River.

There are currently only two western resident cavers elected to the Directorate. There is additional western resident caver appointed to the Directorate (to replace a resigned member). Western representation is therefore 25%. Since there are no current officers resident of western states, western representation on the full BOG is 18.75%.

Much of the NSS's actual work is done by committees. The 1992 Members manual which lists committees and chairpersons with their addresses shows only 18.1% of the committee chairs are residents of western states.

**Implications.** I do not believe this disparity is any deliberate attempt to disenfranchise anyone. Rather it is a result of some history and demographics. The NSS was largely founded and led to the present by District of Columbia area cavers. This probably explains why five of the eleven current elected members of the Directorate are residents of the single state of Virginia, Maryland or the District of Columbia (throw in Pennsylvania and the percentage reaches 29%). Name recognition counts in "at large" elections and the elected tend to turn to people who's abilities they know when it comes time to appoint people to committees.

Is there necessarily anything wrong with this regional concentration of decision-making power? If cavers from areas other than those within easy access of the DC Beltway feel they are being well represented, then there is no problem. If there is any other answer, then there are some fairly easy and effective solutions that have to do with

voting

**Solutions.** When your ballot arrives, vote for candidates you know, not names you recognize. If you do not personally know a candidate then read their platform statements. Pay attention to where they live and cave. Check to see if their credits indicate they are long time insiders (i.e. been officers, served on the Board before, or chaired a string of committees). If their platform is vague and full of warm fuzzy statements, be cautious.

If there is some one or two candidates you feel should be elected, vote for them only, in spite of the fact that you can vote for as many as four candidates. The way it works is that every candidate runs against every other candidate. Votes are totaled and the top four are elected. If there is some one or two candidates that you feel should be elected, and if you vote for them and then go ahead and use up the rest of the votes you are allowed, you have in effect voted for your

candidates opponents. To vote for less than four candidates has been called "power voting" and in the 1992 election 14% of those who returned their ballots did it.

"Getting out the vote" pays big dividends in NSS elections because most members (80% in 1992) do not return their ballots. A well organized regional effort for a regional candidate can be successful. Last year it took only 1,013 votes, not much more than 10% of the ballots mailed out, to get elected.

One problem has been getting candidates to stand for election. Getting on the ballot is very easy. There is a nominating committee that actively seeks candidates, especially from under-represented regions. A petition signed by 25 members will also get you on the ballot.

In conclusion I would like to modify the old motto attributed to Chicago ward healers- "get out there and vote early and vote often!" to "get out there and vote, but not too often!"

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### A Project That Never Flew

Little-known WWII weapons team was strictly bats.

By Joe Holley

[reprinted from the *Dallas Morning News*, Sunday, February 14, 1993] **Bat Bomb: World War II's Other Secret Weapon** by Jack Couffer ( *University of Texas Press*, \$24.95)

In December 1941, Jack Couffer was a 17-year-old high school student working part time for the Los Angeles County Museum. As an assistant to a biology curator named Jack C. von Bloeker Jr., young Mr. Couffer soon came to share his boss's enthusiasm for the order *Chiroptera* - bats. Dr. von Bloeker's expertise attracted the attention of Dr. Lytle S. Adams, a Pennsylvania dentist with a secret scheme to end the war.

Dr. Adams, short and plump, with wild white hair and blue eyes - like Santa Claus without a beard, Mr. Couffer writes - was eager to share his plan with anyone who would listen. It involved attaching tiny incendiary bombs to millions of bats, the only mammal capable of true powered flight, and releasing them over Japan's major cities. To the eccentric promoter from Pennsylvania, it was as simple as one, two, three: The bats would find roosting places in the nooks and crannies of the wood and paper buildings common in Japan, the buildings would catch fire and burn down, the Japanese would surrender.

Dr. Adams brandished a letter for the benefit of anyone who might question the effectiveness, not to mention the ethics, of his scheme. "This man is not a nut",

the letter said. "It sounds like a perfectly wild idea but is worth looking into." The letter was signed "FDR".

Enough people in positions of influence agreed with the president that Dr. Adams, beginning in 1942, was able to get a small team of bat-bomb researchers drafted into the Army. The team included a distinguished Harvard scientist, a Texas guano collector, a Chicago mobster, a Hollywood movie star and young Jack Couffer.

The researchers, several of whom seemed as wacky as their boss, spent much of their time during the next two years exploring bat caves in the Texas Hill Country; they "drafted" thousands of the furry little flying creatures to help win the war. In their first airborne test, the bomb-laden bats floated down from the sky and lodged in the control tower, barracks, offices, and hangers of a brand-new military airfield in New Mexico. According to Mr. Couffer, the buildings burned to the ground.

Despite the disastrous success - or successful disaster - the research went forward. The bats, strapped into an egg-carton parachute contraption, might even have had their 30 seconds over Tokyo, except for another top-secret weapon being assembled in New Mexico. Rumor had it that atoms were involved, not Dr. Adams.

Mr. Couffer, who became a Hollywood cameraman and director after his wartime

stint on the bat bomb team, has a moderately interesting tale to tell, although it's probably more a magazine story than a full-fledged book. His anecdotes about the bats themselves are both informative and intriguing. At one point, he finds himself in a bat cave near Bandera with a photographer, whose camera lights agitate the bats. By the thousands, they begin dropping from the ceiling of the cave.

"Colliding bats clung to our clothes, more came; they built squirming layers one on top of another over our bodies. We

couldn't see each other. Our flashlights were useless. There were only flapping wings and hurtling bodies, a compact mass of movement that stifled our breaths."

Unfortunately, Mr. Couffer's readers get bogged down not in bats but in bureaucratic minutiae about the project's fate in Washington. Either Mr. Couffer is trying to fill out a relatively skimpy story or he wants to get it right these 50 years afterward, for the record. Even bat enthusiasts will find much of *Bat Bomb* hard going.

### Solo Practice Made Easy

by David D. Clark NSS 25941

[reprinted from *Nylon Highway*] The simplest solution to a problem is often the best one. I needed a way to practice SRT climbing at home, alone and whenever the mood struck me. The rack and pulley system utilized at the NSS Convention climbing contests requires a partner to control friction. The system works great, but partners are not always available. The solution is to keep the system and do away with the partner.

A rope walker with a chest roller can leave your hands free to self belay while climbing. But what happens if you let go? A Munter Hitch tied into the rope and attached to your seat harness, between the rope bag and the rack, will serve as a belay while climbing. The belay hand can even let go of the rope; the hitch will capture progress. To operate the system, rope is fed through the Munter Hitch with a free hand to match the rate of climb. See Figure 1 for the climbing system setup.

#### OBSERVATIONS

The Munter Hitch does not wear out the rope. I have used the same rope for years. It will twist the rope, so start with the opposite end each time to reverse the twist.

With a little practice, I was able to climb with a double bungee system at a rate of 60' per minute (in short spurts) with this configuration. That should accommodate almost anyone.

The Munter Hitch, rack, and pulley system will work best if the rack is mounted up high, near the pulley. I use steel bars on the rack, set up on three full bars. The pulley is secured 14 feet overhead. I am 6'5" tall and weigh 230 pounds. My wife weighs one hundred pounds less than I do and uses the same friction setting.

If you climb from floor to pulley, without feeding the rope, you will have climbed almost twice the true vertical distance. Remember, the rope is traveling through a loop. As you ascend, the



standing line is traveling downward as the belay section travels upward with the climber.

Any climbing system can be used. Systems which do not leave your hands free, such as Mitchell or Frog, require that you stop every 20' or so climbed to lower yourself.

If you tie the Munter Hitch wrong, you will bust your ass.

## March Meeting

The meeting opened with the visitors introducing themselves. There were five visitors: Brad (who has some caving experience) and Lisa Riegel of Eules who have recently moved from California, Rodney Bryant of Arlington who is new to caving but has rappelling experience, Nolan Fowler of Midlothian who has some caving and rappelling experience, and Allen Christian of Fort Worth who has rock climbing experience but is new to caving.

Mike Pearson announced that he would be leading a survey trip to River Styx Cave the last weekend of March. See calendar.

An announcement was made that Danny Sherrod would be leading a trip to Carlsbad Caverns March 3rd.

Jimmy Thomas announced that there would be a symposium by GSA on caves and karst at TCU. See calendar.

Ernie Parker read the post card sent to

him by Martha MacArthur concerning the Easter week trip to New Mexico. See calendar.

Donna Anderson reminded everyone about the TSA spring meeting in Bracketville and said that there would be a preliminary executive meeting at Colorado Bend State Park the second weekend in March. See calendar.

A reminder was made that the membership dues are due.

The meeting was adjourned and then Greg Mooty gave an outstanding and informative program on cave diving complete with diving equipment, slides and literature. He talked about his experiences, certification, hazards of cave diving, equipment used, accidents, mental and physical stresses, and techniques. He also talked about the work going on at Mystic Cave and The Blue Hole which have been linked by dye trace.

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## 1994 NSS Convention Committee Meeting January 30, 1993

The 1994 NSS Convention meeting was held at the TSA winter meeting in San Saba on January 30, 1993. With Jay Jordan, Bruce Anderson, and Donna Anderson absent. Ron Ralph opened the meeting.

The treasurer's report stated there is \$1,510 with two outlays of \$500 and \$300 scheduled on or about June. The minutes as published were read with no corrections.

Ron mentioned a flyer produced at Mexspeleo was designed to encourage international participation in the convention. Ron then called for committee reports.

Bill Elliott asked for help with the guidebook. He will input the information and suggested using computer disks instead of hard copy.

Bill Nixon talked about sessions and coordinating program production with Elliott. He mentioned the need for others to do the advertising and informational part of the program.

Bob Cowell, Health & Safety, secured the EMS station on Fort Clark Springs and will have local paramedics ready to assist. He has a lot of equipment available in San Antonio for our use.

Cathy Winfrey is working on registration and reports the form and

text are being edited. She will have request for bid sheets out in 10 days. They will cover T-shirts, caps, pins, patches and perhaps plastic products with our logo.

Mike Walsh reported for Donna Anderson, and said access to caves is proceeding slowly. A number have been closed and an active program will be needed to secure enough caves for convention goers. Keith Heuss suggested a TSA project to locate and secure new caves.

Mike then talked about negotiations for the Howdy Party and suggested offering Alamo Village a flat sum for use of the grounds. He has contacted the Old Timers and is awaiting a proposal to cook for 1200. Mike also thought the Civic Center will be too small to seat 1300 for the banquet in case of rain. However, Ron stated he felt it would be adequate.

Ron wrapped up the meeting by inviting everyone to Fort Clark Springs on May 1st, promising that on that date, we would finalize many items and accelerate planning by scheduling more frequent meetings. He will check with George Veni about conducting a mini Waltz Across Texas. The meeting was then adjourned.

Reported by Ron Ralph  
Submitted by Donna Anderson

## COLORADO BEND-JANUARY

by Mary Speece

Crew: Ed Young, Pam Massey, Caleb Causey, Richard and Mary Speece and the 3 little Speeces, Jay, Chelsea and Cody.

During the regular Colorado Bend weekend trip, January 9-10, a group of eight, including at least four kiddos, (the youngest being 10 years old on up to age 17) descended into Gorman Falls Cave for a little cave research. An ongoing project for the last year or so has been a Bad Air Study in several selected caves, headed up by Ed Young. Our mission this weekend was to string a wire with a temperature sensor attached to the end,

down to the bottom of Gorman Falls for later bad air analysis. We were fortunate to have only marginal bad air this time, as this cave normally has too high a CO<sub>2</sub> level to enter. This was a first cave rappel for the four kids and I believe the first time in this cave for the adult kids, too. A successful excursion for everyone, one of the biggest surprises was the sudden drop in temperature when we returned to the surface after the warm fair weather when we dropped in. Now, with a little background, I want to share with you my son's first trip report...by Cody Speece, age 10.

my first rap  
by cody speece

The cave I went into was called gorman falls. Along with several other people I was the fourth to go in I thought it was fun going in cause you could go fast as you want and stop in the air. The first drop was 25 feet on the ground it was hard to breathe cause there is CO<sub>2</sub>. The second drop was in the air but it was harder to breathe. When you got down to the bottom there was water. The water was over my brothers head it was fun. The funnest was going up. If you are a lover that likes rappelling I recommend this cave for you.

## Calendar of Events

- March 13-14, Colorado Bend State Park. Ongoing monthly TSA project. Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039 or Ed Young (214)262-8188.
- March 13-14, TSA Executive Committee Meeting, Colorado Bend State Park.
- March 15, Geological Society of America Caves and Karst Symposium, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas. One of the featured speakers will be Jay Jorden of DFW Grotto. Contact Ernest Parker (817)447-8344 or Ken Johnson (405)325-3031.
- March 20-21, Guadalupe Mountains, Early Spring Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053
- March 20, Spider Cave, New Mexico. Horizontal cave. Contact Bill Bentley (915)697-3079.
- March 20-21, Ogle Cave, Carlsbad National Park, New Mexico. Contact Dave "Cave" McClung (214)258-8505.
- March 27, Amazing Maze. Horizontal cave. Work trip. Contact Walter Feaster (915)367-8253.
- March 27-28 and April 2-4, NCRC Level 1 Rescue Course, San Antonio, Texas. Five day course. 50 slots open. 25 for cavers, 25 for agency personnel. March 7 is the last day to enroll. Contact Joe Ivy (210)699-1388.
- March 27-28, River Styx Cave, West Texas. Survey. Contact Mike Pearson (214)694-2310.
- March 28-April 2 and April 5-10, AMSAR Technical Rescue Seminars, Joshua Tree National Monument, California. Contact American Search and Rescue Institute, Inc., Box 2399, Yucca Valley, CA. 92286-2399, (619)365-3114.
- April 2-4, Cadaver Crawl Hosted by Dead Cavers Society, Madison, Florida. Contact David Z. (407)678-6111 or Kenny P. (407)678-2392.
- April 8-11, New Mexico. Family trip. Parents must accompany children in caves. Thursday April 8 : Three Fingers Cave (vert.), Pink Dragon Cave (horz.), Pink Panther Cave (vert.), Pink Palette Cave (horz.), and Damn Cave (horz.). Friday April 9 : Madonna Cave (vert.), Hell's Below Cave (vert.), and Black Cave (horz.). Saturday April 10 : Hidden Cave (vert.), Cottonwood Cave (horz., at least two trips), Wonderland Cave (horz.), and Lower Cottonwood Cave if bats are awake. Contact Martha McArthur (817)723-9890. Trip leaders are needed for some of the caves.
- April 17, H.T. Meyers Cave, Southwest Texas (near Del Rio). Multi-drop vertical cave. Contact Bill Bentley (915)697-3079.
- April 17-18, Spring NSS BOG Meeting. Contact Robert J. Lenz, 3311 N. Neenah Ave. Chicago, Il. 60634, (314)545-0622
- April 24-25, Guadalupe Mountains, Mid-Spring Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053
- April 30-May 2, Spring MVOR, on Jack's Fork River, Texas County, Missouri. Contact Mitch Wieldt, P.O. Box 220081, Kirkwood, MO. 63122, (314)235-0382 (days).
- April 30-May 2, TSA Spring Meeting, Brackettville. Site of the 1994 NSS National Convention.
- May 7-9, Spring MAR (Mid-Appalachian Region), Ruitan Campgrounds, Chambersburg, Penn. Contact Pat Minnick (717)765-0521.
- May 21-23, SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Livingston, Tenn. Contact Helen Galloway (615)588-3617.
- May 28-31, 22nd Annual Speleofest, Seven Springs Campground near Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. Contact Alex and Jenny Hicks, 4806 Lacarem Dr., Louisville, Ky. 40299, (502)499-0768.

May 29-31, **Second Annual Black Hills Caver Classic, Cavern Wells, Hot Springs, South Dakota.** Contact J. Kevin Smith, (303)972-9495.

May 29-31, **Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Memorial Day Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

June 6-26, **Karst Field Studies, Mammoth Cave, Kentucky.** A series of 5 one-week courses on caves and karst landscapes. June 6-12, Speleology. June 13-19, Karst Geology and Exploration of Mammoth Cave. June 20-26, Karst Hydrology, and, Cave Survey and Cartography. May be taken for college credit or as a workshop. Contact Dr. Nick Crawford, Center For Cave and Karst Studies, Dept. of Geography and Geology, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101, (502)745-4555.

June 20-26, **Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Restoration Field Camp.** CRF project. Contact Dave Ecklund (803)648-7610.

July 3-5, **Fort Stanton, Independence Day Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

July 24-29, **Baikal Lake Caves, International Pre-Congress excursion, East-Siberian Institute of Geology.** Contact Dr. Andrey Filippov, st. Dekabrskikh Sobitij 29, VostSibNIIGiMS, Irkutsk, 664028, Russia. Fax 7-095-420-21-06.

August 2-6, **NSS Convention, Pendleton, Oregon.** Contact Bill Devereaux, Box 4081, Salem, Or. 97302-8081, (503)363-3831.

August 2-8, **XI International Congress of Speleology, Beijing, China.** Contact Secretariat, XI International Congress of Speleology, Inst. of Geo., Chinese Acad. of Sci., Po Box 634, Beijing 100029, China. FAX (861)4919140, Tel (861)202-7766 ext.361.

August 7-8, **Fort Stanton, Late Summer Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505) 344-7053.

August 18-September 4, **Sikhote-Alin Caves (Russian Far East) excursion.** Contact Dr. Andrey Filippov, st. Dekabrskikh Sobitij 29, VostSibNIIGiMS, Irkutsk, 664026, Russia, Fax 7-095-420-21-06.

September 4-6, **Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Labor day Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

October 10-16, **Lincoln National Forest, Fall Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

October 24-26, **Cave Conservation/Restoration Workshop, Carlsbad Caverns National Park.** Contact Pat Jablonsky, Denver Museum of Natyral History, DES, 2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver Co. 80205, (303)370-6473.

October 27-30, **National Cave Management Symposium, Carlsbad, New Mexico.** Contact Dale Pate (505)785-2232, ext. 26.

November 24-28, **Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Thanksgiving Day Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

December 18-19, **Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Pre-Christmas Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

December 27, 1993-January 3, 1994, **Karst Geoarchaeology Of The Yucatan, Mexico.** Study of caves and karst and their effects on Mayan culture. Originates at Cancun, extending throughout the Yucatan Peninsula, visiting caves, cenotes and Maya sites. Travel arrangements need to made by Oct. 1st due to holiday traffic. Contact Dr. Nick Crawford, Center for Cave and Karst Studies, Dept. of Geography and Geology, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101, (502)745-4555.

June 20-24, 1994, **NSS National Convention, Fort Clark Springs, Brackettville, Texas.** Contact Ron Ralph (817)246-4837 or Jay Jordan (214)398)9272.

## Woman Trapped In Austin Cave

by Ernest Parker

Having over twenty years experience in the emergency field in various organizations including the fire service and search and rescue, I find this incident of a "rescue" of a female from a cave interesting.

22-year-old Karen Schmidt of Round Rock, Texas was trapped for six hours inside Airman's Cave. She became stuck from the hip to the knee in a tight curve on Monday, February 22nd while she and a friend were exploring the cave. This was not her first trip into the cave. She says she prayed, relaxed, and slept while trapped. Ms. Schmidt freed herself after her friend left to get help. She walked a short distance from the curve, layed down and slept knowing that help was on the way. Her friend led rescue workers to the cave about 7 p.m. Rescue workers from Austin and Oak Hill were expecting a difficult rescue but when they started using a jack hammer to open up a path to Ms. Schmidt, she awoke and walked out to meet them.

Ms. Schmidt is a cool character. Many people would have tensed up or even panicked once the psychological support of the friend was gone. Instead she relaxed, freed herself and took a nap!

I have to question the techniques of the would-be rescuers. No emergency medical personnel was ever sent to check on Ms. Schmidt. She was trapped for six hours; four hours after emergency personnel arrived. The would-be rescuers, in this case, had no way of knowing if Ms. Schmidt's condition had deteriorated or if she had gotten herself into a worst predicament. Unless the victim's life is in imminent danger from his environment, his medical condition is always assessed first (or simultaneously with extrication efforts) and work to stabilize him is begun immediately. I have been in situations where I had to work to save the victim's life while team members worked to extricate us both from the danger, despite the danger to us all. The victim comes first!