

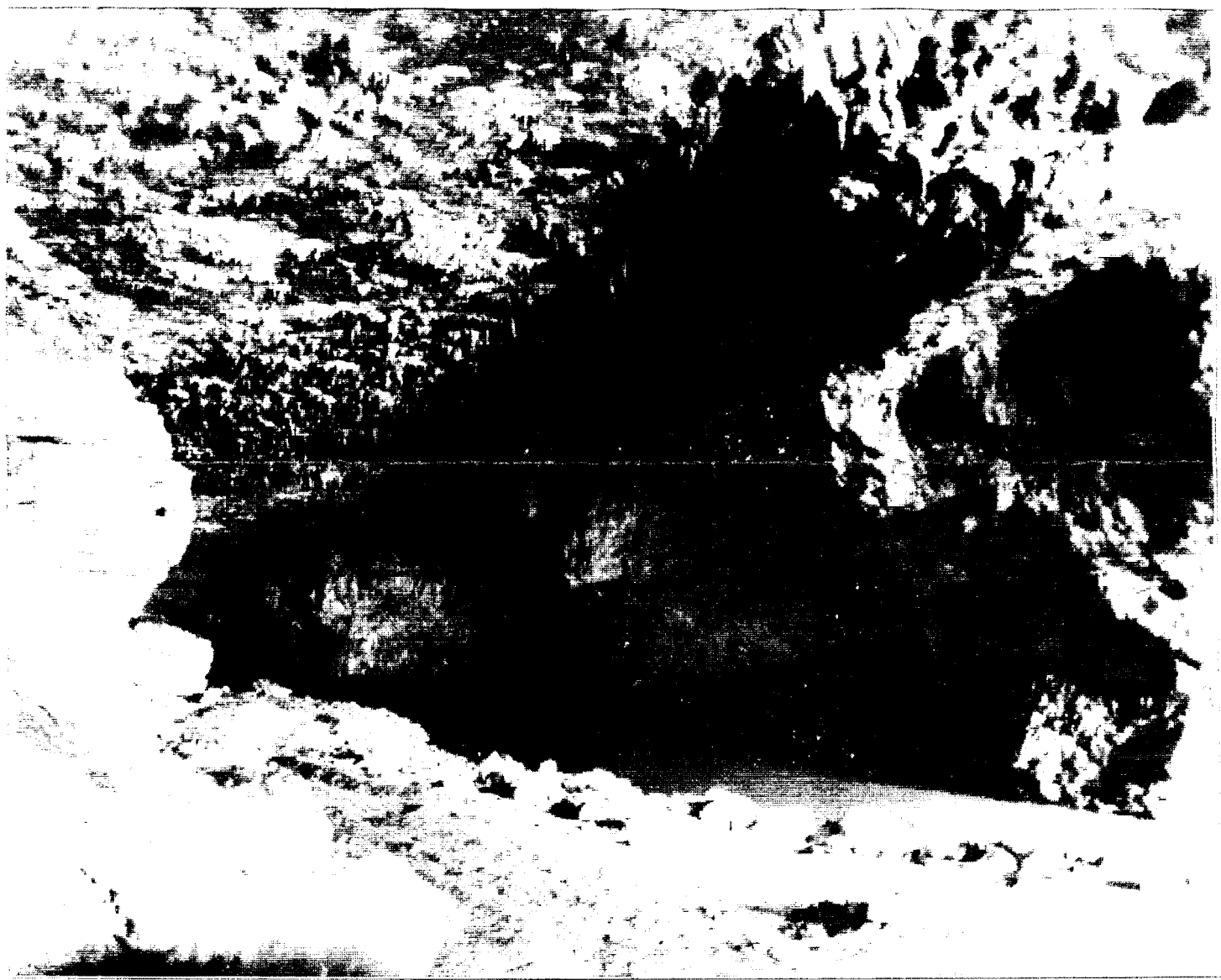


THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE MAVERICK GROTTTO

Volume 7, Number 6

August 1993



SMITTLE CAVE, MISSOURI

A time exposure, by Dale Ellison

July 1992 Issue of The Maverick Grotto.

The *Maverick Bull* is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an official organization of The National Speleological Society, NSS #312. The edition invites all individuals and other groups 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 \$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 all be 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 Bibs, 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 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. 76118
(817)346-2039

Vice-Chairman: Danny Sherrod
3 Cobb Drive
Joshua, Tx. 75058
(817)295-5157

Secretary/Editor: Ernest Parker
616 Nw. King
Burleson, Tx. 76118
(817)447-344

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

Cave Rescue: Call collect (512)696-0234

August Meeting

A little something different this month. The Maverick Grotto will meet at Wet and Wild Amusement Park! This month's program will be to have fun and get wet. Directions, for those who may not know, is: I-30 to Arlington, exit Stadium Drive, left on Stadium Drive, left on Lamar Blvd., left into Wet and Wild. Wet and Wild is directly across I-30 from the Rangers baseball stadium. Admission is \$17.95 plus tax for adults and \$11.95 plus tax for kids 3 to 9. Wet and Wild closes at 11:00 pm.

HIGH-TECH GEAR TAPPED TO INSPECT MOTORISTS AT LAREDO CROSSINGS

By Philip True

San Antonio Express-News, June 17, 1993

Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Mexican Customs officials unveiled a high-tech motorist inspection system on its side of two international bridges here Thursday with a low-tech enforcement method: Try to beat it, and steel spikes hidden in the roadway will flatten your tires.

The new system should be operating at all international bridges across the Rio Grande from Colombia-Solidarity north of here to Brownsville-Matamoros within two months, a Mexican Customs official said. It is to be installed at all U.S. Mexico border crossings soon. "We put the tire-punchers at the end of the lane, so nobody can say we made a mistake. If you punch your tires out, it's because you tried to run away," said Carlos Aguilar Chavez, chief of Mexican Customs here.

The first objective of the computer-driven system is to count and analyze incoming traffic, exclusive of commercial freight, said Carlos Escalante Rangel, an engineer with Tecnitrade S.A. de C.V., a Mexico City-based company that is installing the system here. "The basis for the project is information. The government cannot make policy decisions (about bridges and highways) without information," Escalante said. When a southbound vehicle enters the Mexican primary inspection area, it will trip hidden sensors and an electronic scale, he said. "The computer will record the day, date, time, number of axles, weight, and whether the vehicle received a red light or green light for secondary inspection," Escalante said.

While the data are useful for statisticians with the Mexican Treasury Department in Mexico City, with which the local computer will maintain constant satellite communication, the rub - or the spike - for those who carry more than they declare lies with the lights.

Traffic lanes feature a signaling device that looks like a normal traffic light. A computer-generated, random selection determines whether a vehicle gets a green light and is sent on its way after primary inspection by a Mexican Fiscal Police official. If the light is red, a tollgate drops across the lane and a set of spikes pops up from a steel plate embedded in the pavement, forcing the driver to turn into the secondary lot so that officials can take a closer look at the vehicle and its occupants. The

Fiscal Police officer then can raise the gate, retract the spikes, and go on to the next vehicle.

Aguilar said several bells and whistles will protect those who make honest mistakes with the system and drive toward the waiting spikes. An alarm sounds when a red light turns up, Aguilar said, and a second alarm will go off before a vehicle hits the tollgate and tire spikes.

Escalante said the system is a combination of international hardware and Mexican software. The industrial-quality computers are Taiwanese, while the tollgate and the tire-punchers are American. "The computers had to be of premium quality to survive the extremes of heat and cold found in the border environment. But the software that determines how everything works originates 100 percent in Mexico," he said.

Workers began installing hardware between Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros in March, Aguilar said. Customs officials in Mexico City decided to inaugurate the system here because this city is the border's largest and busiest crossing point.

Test runs earlier this week ironed out a few bugs and introduced bridge patrons to the new system, officials said. On Tuesday, a pickup truck leaving the primary inspection area suffered a minor dent when a tollgate accidentally dropped at the wrong time, a Fiscal Police officer said.

Laredo cabdriver Gumersindo Alvarez said it was too early yet to say what he thought about the system. "Really, we do not know how it is going to work. When we carry fares over, we always have to get checked out anyway," Alvarez said. But if the system delays the crossing, he said: "Then we will know whether we are going to complain."

Whatever the time required, that is the cost of modernizing Mexico, said a Fiscal Police officer who requested anonymity.

"You have to remember that this is a crossing between two countries. Our job is not only to wave people through, but to enforce laws against smuggling. What we are doing makes us more like (Customs officials) in the United States," he said.

The new system also will include a closed-circuit video monitoring system, Aguilar said.

TIPS FOR TRAVELERS TO MEXICO

(Reprinted from *Senior Facts*) The following information is an advisory on traveling to Mexico which appeared on a 1992 at Southwest Research Institute. It is of interest to the saving community and should be thoroughly reviewed if a trip to Mexico is being planned. This advisory was effective November 27, 1992.

The following is a list of U.S. embassy, consulate, and consulate agency locations and telephone numbers of the more important offices.

U.S. Embassy

Mexico City
Paseo de La Reforma 305
Colonia Cuauthemoc
(52-5) 211-0042

U.S. Consulates

Ciudad Juarez
Avenue Lopez Mateos 924-N
(52-15) 134043

Guadalajara
Progreso 175
(52-36) 25-2998

Monterrey
Avenida Constitucion 411, Poniente
64000
(52-83) 45-2120

Tijuana
Tapachula 961
(52-66) 81-7400

Hermosillo
Avenue Monterrey 141
(52-62) 172578

Matamoros
Avenue Primer 2002
(52-891) 6-72-70

Merida
Paseo Montaje 453
(52-99) 25-8366

Nuevo Laredo
Calle Allende 3330, Col. Jardin
(52-871) 4-0512

U.S. Consular Agencies

Puerto Vallarta
Parial del Puerto Local 12-A

Acapulco
Hotel Club del Sol

Cancun
Avenue Coba #30, Esq. Nader

San Luis Potosi
Venustiano Carranza #1430

Mulege
Hotel Serenidad

Durango
Juarez Norte 204

Oaxaca
Alcala 201

San Miguel de Allende
Dr. Hernandez, Macias #72

Tampico
Avenue Hidalgo #2000, Local 4

Veracruz
Victimas del 25 de Junio #388

Country Description

Mexico has a rapidly developing economy. Luxury accommodations in major cities and resorts are widely available. Tourist facilities in more remote areas may be limited.

Entry Requirements

Proof of citizenship is required for entry by U.S. citizens. A passport and visa are not required for a tourist/transit stay of up to 180 days. A tourist card issued by Mexican consulates and most airlines serving Mexico is required. Minors traveling without a valid passport require notarized consent from parent(s) if traveling alone, with one parent or in someone else's custody. For further information concerning entry requirements, travelers may contact the embassy of Mexico at 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, telephone: 202-728-1600, or any of the Mexican consulates in major U.S. cities.

Medical Facilities

Adequate medical care can be found in all major cities. Care in more remote areas is limited. Cholera is present in Mexico. However, visitors who take proper precautions with food and drink are rarely at risk. Air pollution in Mexico City is severe, especially from December to May. Air pollution plus Mexico City's high altitude is a particular medical risk for the elderly and persons with high blood pressure, anemia, and respiratory, or cardiac problems. Health facilities in Mexico City are excellent. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the U.S. In some cases, supplementary medical insurance with specific coverage abroad has proved helpful. For additional health information, travelers may contact the Centers for Disease Control's international travelers hotline at 404-3324559.

Crime Information

Street crime is common, especially in urban areas. Persons driving on some

Highway 100, particularly in isolated regions, as all roads been targets for attacks by bandits who operate primarily along state highways. Criminals sometimes represent themselves as Mexican police or other law enforcement. Highway 15 in the state of Sinaloa and Highway 40 between the city of Durango and the Pacific coast are particularly dangerous areas where a number of criminal assaults have occurred. Express Highway I (limited access) in Sinaloa has been a particular target, even in daytime.

Driving Information

U.S. citizens planning to drive to Mexico may do so on a current U.S. driver's license. U.S. or Mexican insurance is required. All vehicular traffic is restricted in Mexico City in order to reduce air pollution. The restriction is based on the last digit of the vehicle license plate. (There is no specific provision regarding license plates with letters only.) Listed below are the driving restrictions.

- Monday: No driving if license plate ends with 5 or 6.
- Tuesday: No driving if license plate ends with 7 or 8.
- Wednesday: No driving if license plate ends with 3 or 4.
- Thursday: No driving if license plate ends with 1 or 2.
- Friday: No driving if license plate ends with 9 or 0.
- Saturday and Sunday: All vehicles may be driven.

Also, no driving of vehicles with temporary license plates or any other plate that does not conform with the above.

Bringing Vehicles into Mexico

On April 1, 1992, the Government of Mexico issued regulations governing the entry of vehicles into Mexico. These regulations do not apply to owner-operated vehicles temporarily (less than six months) in Mexico and remaining within the "free zone," approximately 20 kilometers south of the U.S./Mexico border and all of Baja California.

Importers of vehicles traveling beyond the "free zone" must present: (1) a tourist card/visa; (2) a driver's license (original and copy); and (3) the vehicle title in the importer's name. If the operator of the vehicle is other than the importer, the operator must have the same immigration status as the importer, and the importer of the vehicle must be present in the vehicle at all times while it is being operated in Mexico.

If the above documents are in order, the temporary vehicle importer has two options: (1) post a bond base on the value of the vehicle as determined by local custom's officials; or (2) make a sworn statement at the Banco Nacional del

Especial Financiera Mexicana, with the Army, Air Force, and Navy National Bank, usually called the Military Bank, located in all customs offices at ports of entry. There is no need to pay a bond if the total value of the vehicle, as listed on Mexican bonding agencies on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border provide the service for a fee of up to 1-2 percent of the vehicle's value. A \$10 fee is required and can only be paid with a credit card (Visa or MasterCard) issued by a bank from the importer's country of residence. Cash payments are not accepted. American Express and Diner's cards are not considered bank cards.

All visitors may be asked to show vehicle importation documents at any time. These documents must be returned to the Mexican Customs Office at the border when leaving Mexico. Failure to comply with Mexican laws governing temporarily imported vehicles can result in vehicle confiscation and/or fines. If lost or stolen, vehicle importation documentation can be issued by regional Mexican Customs offices after the importer obtains a certified document from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate attesting to the loss. Additional information can be obtained from the Mexican Embassy or a consulate.

Drug and Firearm Penalties

Penalties for drug and firearm offenses are strict, and convicted offenders may expect lengthy jail sentences and fines. A permit from a Mexican consulate in the U.S. is required in order to import firearms or ammunition. Some Mexican cities have ordinances prohibiting the possession of knives or anything that might be construed as a weapon.

Dual Citizenship

U.S. citizens who are also considered to be Mexican citizens could be subject to compulsory military service and other aspects of Mexican law while in Mexico. Those who may be affected can inquire at a Mexican embassy or consulate to determine their status. In some instances, dual nationality may hamper U.S. government efforts to provide protection abroad.

Tips for Travelers

The Department of State's Pamphlet "Tips for Travelers to Mexico" is available for the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Useful information on guarding valuables and protecting security while traveling outside the U.S. is provided in the pamphlet, "A Safe Trip Abroad," obtained from the same address.

Registration

Americans who register at the U.S. Embassy or a U.S. Consulate can obtain updated information on travel and security within the country.

CAVING PRANKS

(Reprinted from *Bekar Facts*) This is a collection of various pranks (some potentially harmful and some harmless) that various cavers have described recently on *Cavers' Forum*. No responsibility is assumed by the editor of *The Bekar Facts* for the outcome of any of the pranks if tried.

John Lyles - Los Alamos, NM

In response to Ian Ellis' posting about the #407 flashing bulb. One of my caving buddies tells me of his prank using these bulbs on unsuspecting electric cavers. Note. Do not try this at home, kids, only in easy horizontal caves, preferably big smooth boreholes or nasty crawls.

While the victim asks you to pass their helmet to them why would they take it off? or sets it down during a break, you unscrew their lamp (applies to the Jastrite or Easter Seal variety, maybe a Petzl also) and exchange the bulb with the flashing type. Then when they start caving with it, it flashes, and they keep bumping their helmet and battery pack to fix the intermittent problem. After a minute or so of this, you can chide them about their "perfect" light. This trick only works once, and may lead to further problems in the future.

This is as fun as being leader in a crawl and passing gas (preferably from Vienna sausages). Are there any other obnoxious but otherwise harmless tricks out there?

Andy Waddington - UK

Actually, if you go for a nice six-egg omelette with the filling of your choice, but include a dozen or so cloves of garlic, finely chopped, and top it all with beans, then you do not need a crawl, or to be leader. Any passage less than about 20x20 meters will do, as my companions on a trip to OFD III several years ago will vouch.

Farting obnoxiously near the air intake while divers are charging their bottles can be fun, but since divers breathe through their mouths, it is not as effective as you would hope.

The old egg-in-the-bottom-of-the-caving-boot trick is usually fun, but if your victim is unobservant enough, it is even better in their wetsuit sock, or for divers, in their drysuit foot.

Speaking of eggs, there are various situations where it is in order to exchange people's hard-boiled eggs for raw ones, and vice versa. Bleary-eyed cavers coming down to fry breakfast eggs become very nonplussed when the hard white bounces off their pan.

Dye tracers in various drinks are good, though rhodamine B should be avoided, since it is carcinogenic. Fluorescein powder is good if you can find a drink in

which it is not too obvious (leaving it in the dark). Do not add the powder to beer because it froths up horribly. Fluorescein is also good added to the end of a toothpaste tube, since most people are not awake enough to notice until they are frothing green at the mouth.

Adding a few dead sheep to the bottom of entrance pitches is bound to result in fun when cavers arrive ankle deep in putrescent remains. Yorkshire farmers love this trick. They do it all the time.

There are various practical jokes to be played on people who are using explosives, but since they are likely to result in heart attacks, or at best, sense of humor failure, I had better not go into them here.

All you need is an evil mind, and opportunities will appear at every corner. You also need to be prepared for retaliation in kind!

Greg Springer - Morgantown, WV

John Lyles suggested a fun little trick to make enemies out of friends. I have another. However, this trick is seasonal (it can only be done during the fall). Here is what you need: (1) A small pit under 20 feet deep; (2) 20 or more bags of preferably dry leaves; and (3) a short rope.

Take your sucker on a "ridgewalk" and stumble across a "little pit you saw some weeks ago." Explain how it was a short climb down, and it looked like a passage might go off under one wall. In reality it is your dead-bottom hole now filled to within a few feet of the surface with leaves! The sucker climbs in and promptly sinks (gently) for 10 feet through the leaves. It is a riot. However, make sure they are not wearing carbide or they could be burned to death. The rope is to help them out if they need assistance.

I might add that a certain large cave I surveyed some years ago was entered via a 23-foot pit. The pit was a natural leaf trap, and it was quite funny to watch first-timers land in the leaves and struggle for hard ground. Eventually, they would begin to roll down the 10-foot slope below the landing point with a huge cascade of leaves. I learned to simply kick the pile down before landing (but I never shared that info lest my entertainment cease).

Any more tricks out there? If you like mine, I can tell you of a nice little pit to use near Sharps Cave in Pocahontas County, WV.

Mat Wood - UK

It has been a little while since I posted anything, but I could not resist John Lyles' requests for descriptions of nasty tricks! In a frequently visited cave near us, called Swildon's Hole, there is a very short sump (only about

...the "rock" in the water, which is often used as a step to lower parts of the cave.

When returning upstream, there is a "rottable sump pool" which everyone sits around waiting for all the party to come through. A favorite trick of ours (especially with people new to the cave) is to be through first and then to stand by the arch of the sump. When the next person comes through, you hold a rock

above their heads so that when they reach the surface they hit their heads on it. Thus, they think that they are still in the sump, and slowly make their way bump-bump-bump across the sump pool, to the delight of the rest of the party. When they get to the edge, they are released from their predicament! Obviously there is little danger because the sump is so short, but it does bring a laugh!

NSS Election Reform

(Editor's note: reprinted from *Bexar Falls*)

Cavers' Forum - Internet

Recently on Cavers' Forum, a petition was posted to change the way the NSS BOG is elected. This petition along with two proposed amendments to the NSS constitution, and the merits of the proposed amendments are discussed.

Larry Fish - Denver, CO

Some Colorado cavers have put together a petition to reform the way the NSS elects the BOG. The idea is to make the BOG more representative and more responsive. I have included a copy of the amendment and cover letter. Feel free to pass it on.

Dear NSS Members:

There is a problem in the NSS today. There is a perception that the NSS no longer represents the ideas and needs of its membership. There is a feeling that the Board of Governors (BOG) has lost touch and suffers from gridlock. You can see examples of this feeling everywhere.

The clearest example is the way the BOG continually ignores the Congress of Grottos (COG). The COG is the most representative body in the NSS yet the Board of Governors rarely takes the votes and recommendations of the COG seriously.

Part of the problem is that the NSS has grown so dramatically in the last few years. What used to be a relatively small group of like-minded cavers has grown into a diverse organization with many different philosophies and goals. It is now virtually impossible for the BOG to keep in touch with the needs of the membership.

The way to solve this problem is to change the way the BOG is elected. The only way that really makes sense is to elect BOG members by region. There are several advantages in doing it this way. First: you might actually have a chance of knowing the person you are electing. Second: the Governor you are electing would actually know the goals, needs, and

problems of your region.

Okay, so how do we change things? First, the bylaws of the NSS can only be changed by the BOG. It is unlikely that they will make any changes. In fact, in 1984, an ad hoc committee of the BOG studied and recommended regional representation, but the Board rejected the idea.

The best way to change things is through a constitutional amendment. It is relatively easy to amend the NSS constitution. Article eight of the NSS Constitution says:

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by either the Board of Governors or by petition of five percent of the regular or higher membership of the Society. Proposed amendments will be mailed to all regular or higher members of the Society. Amendments will be adopted by a two-thirds favorable vote of all ballots returned within ninety days of the mailing.

Basically, what we have to do is present a petition to the NSS with five percent of the membership signing. There are approximately 10,000 members of the Society, so five percent is about 500 signatures. It should be relatively easy to get the needed signatures. After presenting the required number of signatures, the NSS is constitutionally required to mail out ballots and solicit a vote on the issue.

Presented on the next page are two proposed constitutional amendments that: (1) change the way elections are conducted; (2) empowers the COG; and (3) changes the structure of the Board. If you agree with the idea of changing the way BOG members are elected, please sign the enclosed petition and return it to the specified address. Remember, you must be a regular or higher member of the NSS. Feel free to photocopy this letter and the petition and give it to anyone else who is interested in signing.

Committee for NSS Election Reform.

PETITION FOR AMENDMENT
TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NSS

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am a regular or higher member of the National Speleological Society. By signing this document hereby endorse, recommend, and submit the attached constitutional amendments to the Constitution of the National Speleological Society.

Name:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

NSS Number:

Date:

Date Joined NSS:

Signature:

AMENDMENTS TO THE NSS CONSTITUTION
AMENDMENT I

A. The Board of Governors shall be elected from not less than eight distinct geographic electoral districts. Two directors shall be elected from each district. Each director must be a resident of that district. Electoral districts shall be established in the bylaws and a good faith effort must be made to create districts that are equitable in numbers of members and represent members with shared interests and identifications

B. The boundaries of electoral districts shall be reviewed from time to time and adjusted to compensate for changes in the geographic distribution of membership.

C. Officers shall not be voting members of the Board of Governors except the President who may vote to break tie only.

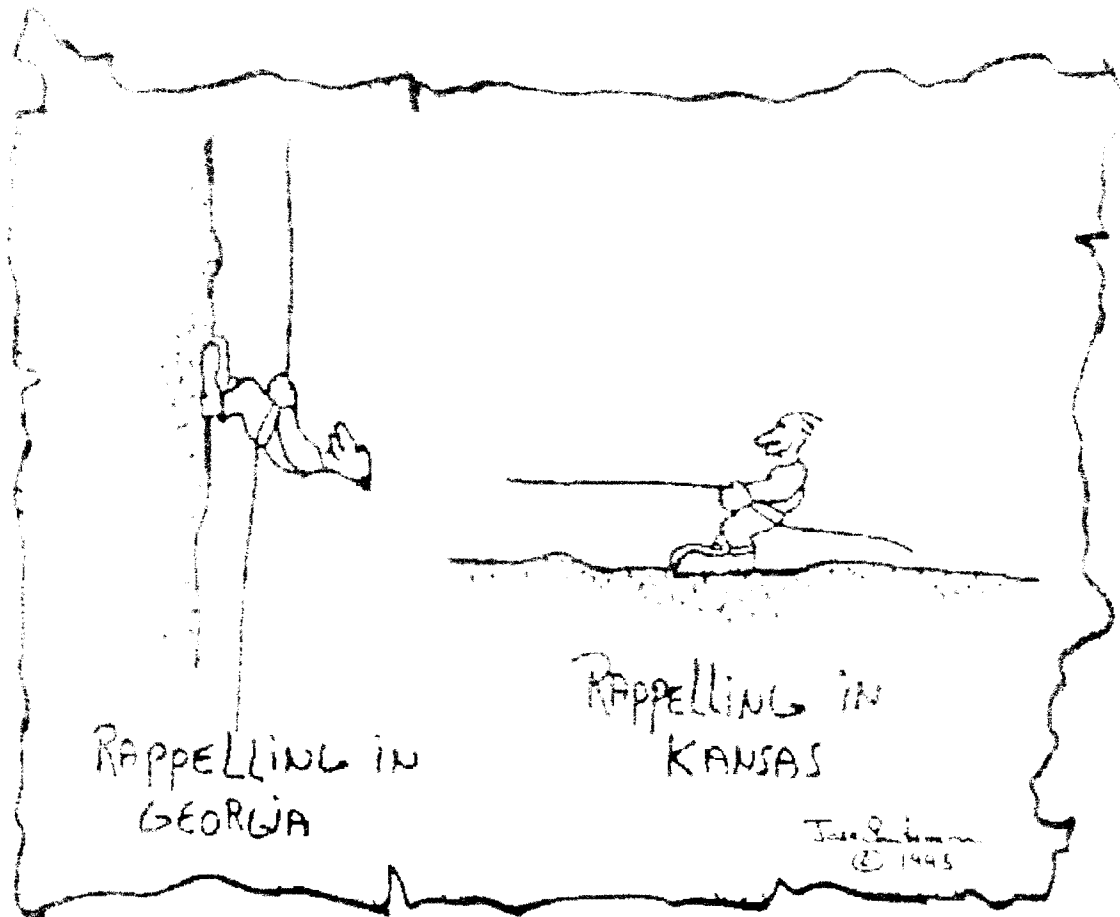
AMENDMENT II

Resolutions of the Congress of Grottos passed by a two-third vote shall become a part of the bylaws of the NSS. Such resolutions must be distributed to Internal Organizations at least 120 days before the meeting of the Congress of Grottos.

All such resolutions must be clearly identified as bylaw changes and must not be altered in intent during Congress of Grottos deliberations.

Petitions should be returned to:

Committee for NSS Election Reform.
C/O Bill Yett
2930 East 14th Ave
Denver, CO 80206



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