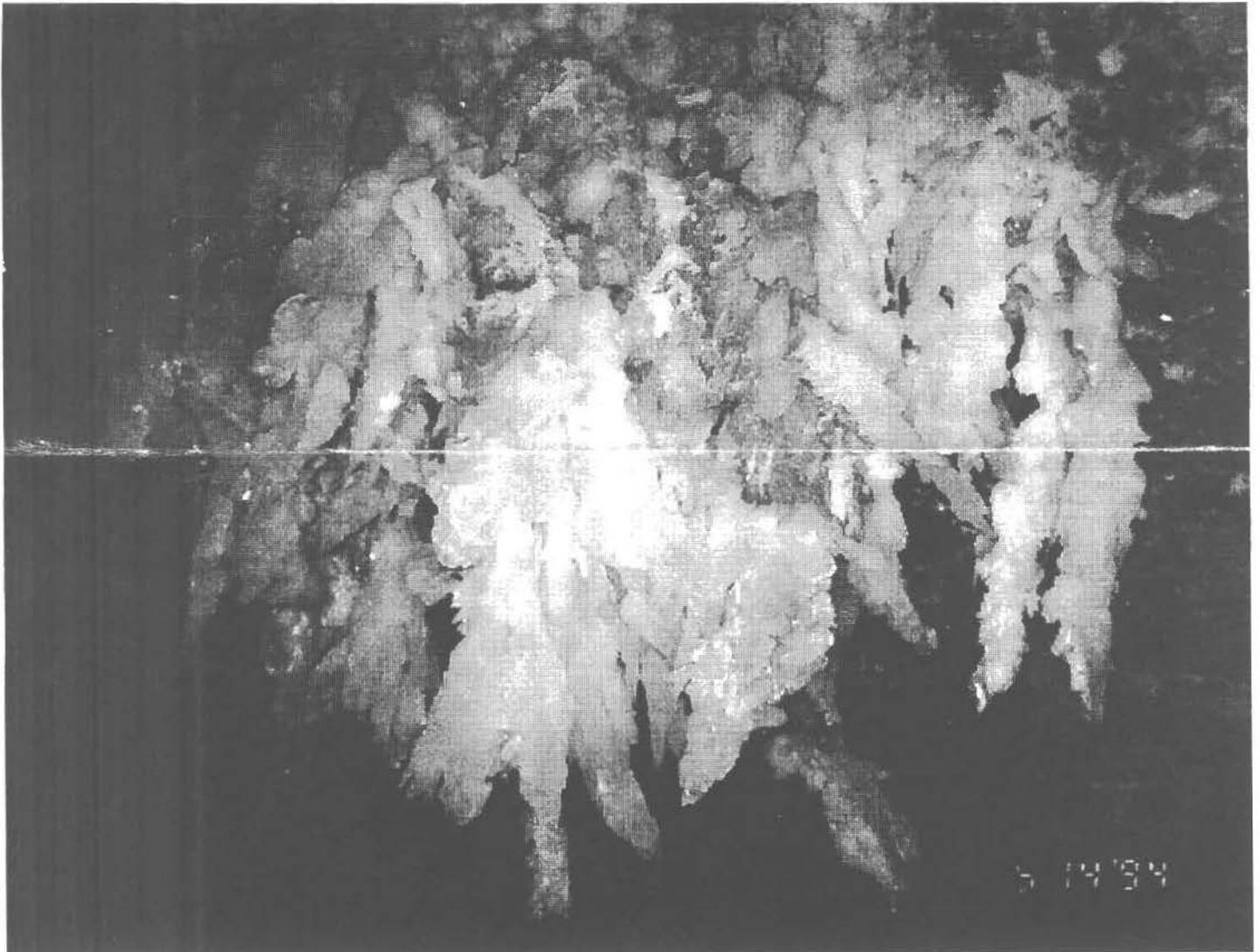

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO



Volume 8 Issue 7

July 1994



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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 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:

Mike Anderson
532 Arroyo Dr.
Fort Worth, TX. 76108
(817) 448-9764

Vice-Chairman:

Tracy Van Eps
276 Michelle Ct.
Mansfield, TX. 76063
(817) 483-8351

Secretary/Editor:

Chad Fenner
3700 Wayland
FL Worth, TX. 76133
(817) 292-7722

Treasurer:

Mark Porter
513 Valley Park
Garland, TX. 75243
(214)271-8147

Cave Rescue: Call collect:

(512) 686-0234

Photo Credit

This month's cover photo of a chandelier in Cottonwood's Second Parallel was taken by Clark Giles.
Page 5, The Column room in Cottonwood's Second Parallel by Clark Giles and John Thompson.
Page 6, A drill hole, again in Cottonwood's Second Parallel by Clark Giles.
Page 7, Some soda straws in Cottonwood's Second Parallel by Clark Giles.

Minutes For the June Meeting

The June meeting informally began at 7 p.m. The business portion was called to order at 7:35 by Grotto President Mike Anderson.

New visitors were recognized, including Shannon Seals from Arlington, and Ida Cocoran.

Not-really-visitors included Alvis and Dawn Hill making their annual visit to Ft. Worth for a grotto meeting. Alvis and Dawn were active in the Mavenc Grotto until they moved to Temple. They wisely chose to maintain their Mavenc membership and occasionally show up for a meeting.

The following announcement was then made: the NSS Convention is next week. (The last NSS

Convention in Texas was in 1978.)

The old business phase of the meeting began.

The grotto T-shirts are still in work

The River Styx trip was cancelled, again. It will be rescheduled sometime in the fall.

Under new business:

A motion was made to do something as a grotto, other than the monthly meetings or semi-annual parties. Several suggestions were made which included grotto caving trips and restoration projects. One specific suggestion was for a restoration trip to Caverns of Sonora. While a number of people offered to look into ideas, no specific idea was

carried.

Under trip reports:

Clark and Susie Giles talked about their recent Guads trip.

Martha talked about a recent restoration trip she went on. She mentioned that it would be a great grotto project.

John Langevin discussed his trip to Fitton and Copperhead caves with Don Metzner, Jennette Fortney, Troy Sheiton and his wife.

Shannon Seals mentioned an upcoming trip with an Abaline group to Black, Cottonwood, and Virgin caves.

Butch Fraillia then motioned that the meeting be adjourned.

Editor's Ramblings

Happy July!

Yea, yea, I know, you didn't get your newsletter in time for the meeting.

This month I took a two-week vacation that ended two days after my deadline for publishing the newsletter. One week of my vacation was spent at NSS Convention, and I told Terry Anderson there that the newsletter probably wouldn't be out before the meeting. Oh, well. At least I

didn't have to skip a month. (*Hi, Martha.*)

Speaking of the convention, every caver ought to attend at least one convention. It's really a fun experience. I got to attach faces to many of the caving names I've read about for so long. The caving was great, the salon was fantastic, the parties were fun, and the food was superb. Next year's convention is in Virginia, followed by Colorado the next year,

then Missouri the year after that.

Special appreciation ought to be given to the convention co-chairs Jay Jordan and Ron Ralph and the rest of the 1994 convention staff including our own Bruce and Donna Anderson, Gill Ediger, George Veni, Bill Mixon, and Blake Hamison.

Let's just see if Colorado can top that.

-CF

The July Meeting

The July meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 12 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. This month's program was unavailable at press time. In any case, I'm sure everyone will be talking about and

showing pictures from the recent NSS convention as well as making plans for upcoming caving trips, so make plans to be there.

Wait a second, by the time you

read this, the meeting will already be over. In fact this whole panel is really useless this month isn't it? Well, if you went. I hoped you enjoyed it.

Book Review:

Track of the Cat

by Nevada Barr

Submitted by Chad Fenner

No, *Track of the Cat* by Nevada Barr is not a textbook on how to teach your cat to be a cave cat. In fact, it's not even about caving at all. Why then is it being reviewed in a caving newsletter?

Track of the Cat is a murder mystery set in the Guadalupe Mts. of Texas and New Mexico, right in the heart of the richest caving in the world. For anyone who has ever visited this beautiful part of the country, this book's description of the landscape will make you long to go back.

The author, Nevada Barr, is a park ranger at Mesa Verde National Park, but her knowledge of the Guads make it obvious she used to live or work there.

For example, when our heroine, Anna Pigeon, has a hard day, she longs for a margarita. Well, every caver knows where the best margaritas in the Guads are. That's right, Anna visits Lucy's in Carlsbad.

In *Track of the Cat*, there has been a death in Middle McKittick Canyon. All the signs point to a lion kill, but Anna Pigeon, a ranger for Guadalupe Mountains National Park, doesn't buy it.

The story is of Anna's quest to clear the name of the mountain lion, (and thus avert a whole-sale slaughter) and find the real killer.

The ending has a twist that still has me spinning.

The book is very enjoyable to read, especially if you have the love of the Guads that I do. The author's descriptions are breathtaking. Nevada Barr does an excellent job of describing things I know to be real, like the trip down Queens Highway, and transitioning into things I know to be fiction, like one of the character's ranches, without a glitch. The only thing I missed was

a stop at Queen's Store for a Mountain Man burger.

My personal feeling is that the author does tend to "over-describe" things, like what a person is wearing, or the inside of a room, but I admit, I enjoyed this level of description when she describes a Texas Madrone, or a trail through the Lincoln National Forest.

The middle chapters did seem to drag a bit in this over-description, but the cliff hanger ending made it all worth it.

If you are easily offended by coarse language, or the casual acceptance of a lesbian affair, don't bother, but if you love the Guads, or a good mystery, pick up the paperback version and check it out.

NSS Salon Results

Out of hundreds of submitted entries, Maverick Grotto Member John Langevin had five photos accepted for show in this year's 1994 NSS Photo Salon. One even won a ribbon.

Unfortunately, the scanning equipment available to the grotto does not allow us to scan slides, but maybe with a bit of coaxing, we can get John to do a program some month and show us his award-winning slides.

Of other local interest, Jay Jorden, of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Grotto, also had several slides accepted for show, and the *Ozotl Caver*, the newsletter of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Grotto, had two newsletter covers accepted for show in the newsletter salon. Interestingly enough, both issues of the *Ozotl* that were accepted were hand-drawn prints by Houston Caver Kenny McGee.

Congratulations to John, Jay, Kenny, and the *Ozotl* staff for all their accomplishments.

Post Convention Caving

By John Langevin

Cave: Frio Queen

Cavers: John Langevin, James Loftin
Date: just after the convention

Frio Queen Cave is on private property on the Frio River just south of Concan. James Loftin of San Antonio ran convention trips to this and other caves on the same ranch and stayed after to cave with a few friends. As it turned out, it was very few friends – no one else showed up but me.

It was their loss, because the property would be a wonderful place to camp even if it had no caves. The campsite is right on the Frio, a river of crystal clear water. The cave is only a short (1/2 mile) hike away also.

Like most of the caves on the ranch, Frio Queen was dug open recently and is therefore in pristine condition. It is profusely decorated with columns, stalactites, stalagmites and many soda straws, some two to three feet long. I was most impressed with a butterscotch-colored stalagmite which, though six feet tall, never exceeds an inch in diameter and at points is only 1/2 inch in diameter.

Another unusual sight was a group of stalactites covered with spines like a spiny lizard. I photographed these and I'm anxious to finish the roll because my description doesn't do them justice. I only saw a small part of the known cave and, according to James, many leads remain to be explored. It could yet reveal other beauties.

After the cave trip we cooled off with a swim in the Frio, the perfect finish to a weekend cave trip.

From Here to the Guads or Cottonwood Delight

By John Thompson

Cave: Cottonwood Second Parallel
Cavers: Luz Villegas, Chad Fenner, Clark and Susie Giles, Larry 'Mr. Mobile' Martin, Kevin Glover, John Thompson

Date: May 13-15, 1994

On this Guads trip, I had permits for four caves; Cottonwood (Second

Parallel), Cavetree, Hidden Chimney, and Black, although this trip report will only be about Cottonwood. In all of my trips into the Guads I had never visited Cottonwood. What a gem I had been overlooking. I was expecting pretty. What I was not expecting was selenite chandeliers, massive amounts of selenite needles, beautifully clear eponite formations growing majestically from the floor, walls of aragonite, tables galore, etc. etc. etc.... Well maybe I am getting ahead of myself here....

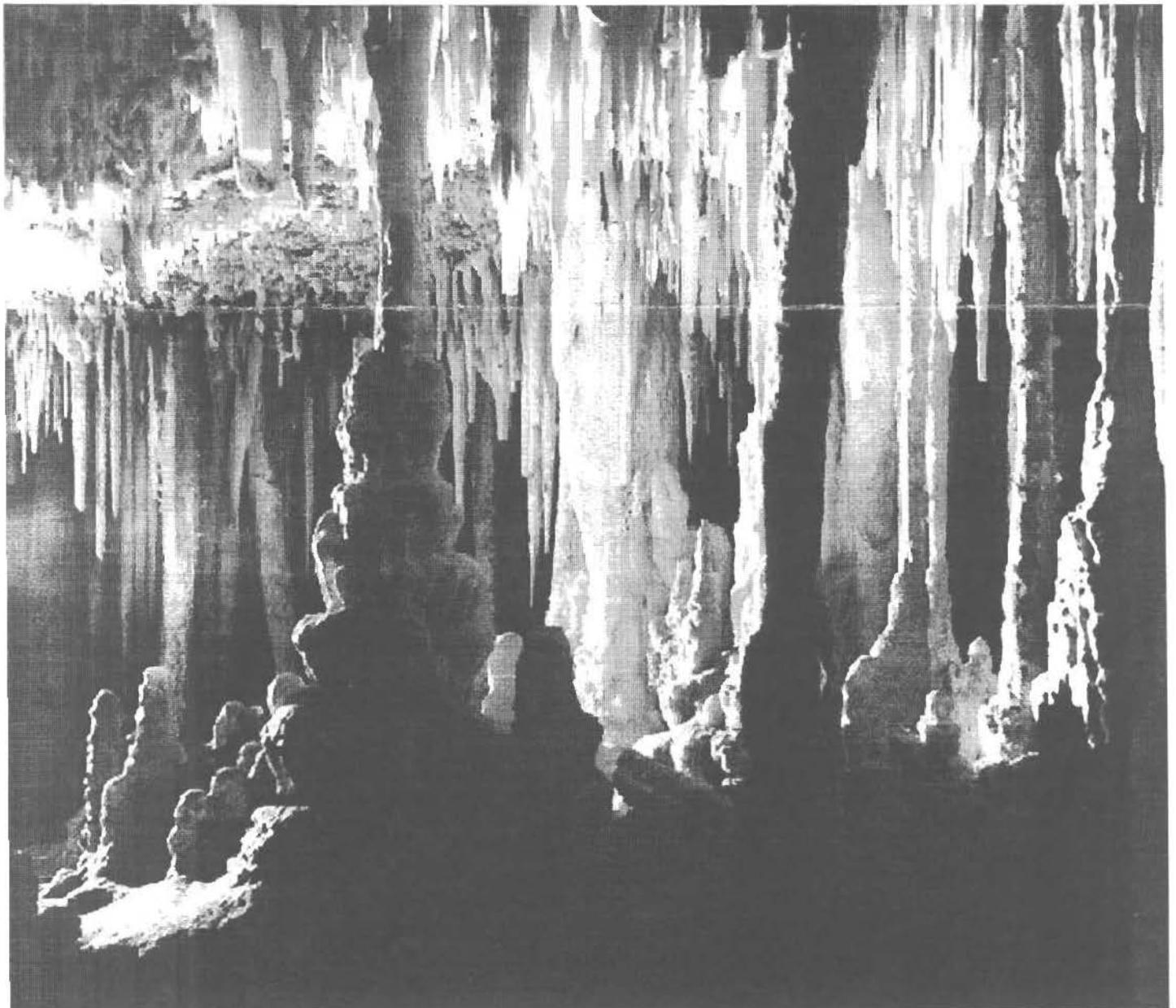
In the beginning, I wanted to squeeze in a cave trip between my spring and summer semesters, so I called Chad to see if he would be in-

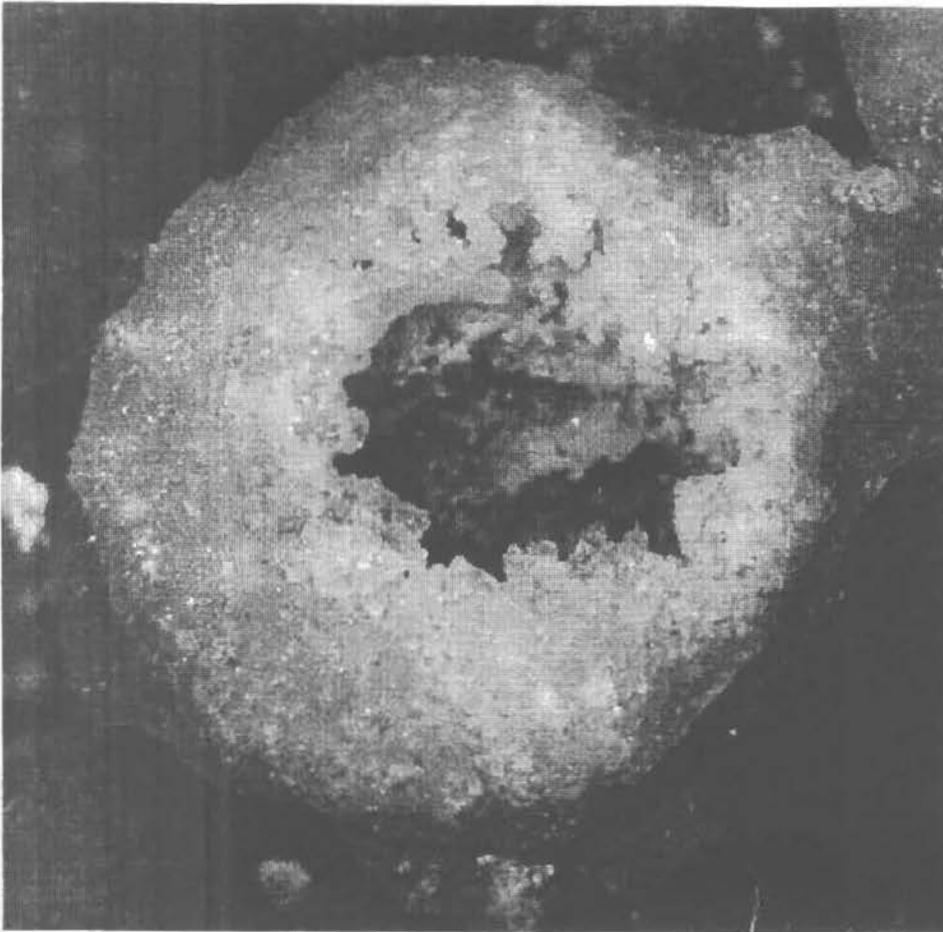
terested in a Guads trip. It didn't take long for us to decide on a non-vertical picture trip where we could bring some prospective cavers. I wished to bring Luz Villegas, a non-(but willing)-caver and Flor De Mi Corazon, and Chad brought a couple of prospective cavers along with his friend Larry.

On Thursday, I met Chad at his house around seven o'clock to get his directions to a place that would make a good camp. Then, I set my fairly new little blue Ranger hurtling westward towards the Guads. Would my new truck live up to the reputation of my previous truck, "Beast?" Hmmmm? Surely, Three-mile Hill would let me know. Along the way we drove

through a few rain showers, but from the flooded sections of road we encountered (especially in the Guads) a lot of rain this way had come! But what the hell, I had my cute blue truck and lots of caver testosterone—all in all not a worry in the world. Well, the trip up Three-mile Hill was anticlimactic, and I knew we would be camping before the Dragons Teeth.

I was thinking to myself that my little two-wheel drive truck was doing just fine... a chip off the old blo... then, with camp just around the corner, I came upon a water hole with three possible paths to drive through. I got out of the truck (at a cold 3 a.m.) and started poking the three paths with a





stick, but my attempt to find a shallow path through just made me depressed. BUT WAIT!!!! In Chad's directions, he had mentioned that at the previous road split, the left route could, should, I dare say would be better. (In his defense he did add fine print that said something to the effect that this could change in a flash if a storm comes through.) So I backed up to the last split and took the left route. It was very narrow, I would not be able to back up on this one... but, after all, Chad had said.... so onward Luz, I, and my little baby Beast went, but just before getting to camp there was another pond/lake.

Once again, I got out and probed and poked and prodded in hopes of picking a route through. This route was longer, and deeper than the other, but I was committed now. Besides, if I got stuck, I knew Chad was only a couple of hours behind me with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. After assuring Luz that I and my truck could make this "no problem", I entered first gear...entered Lake Fenner...and just

when the end was in sight, I found a hole that sent my front end under water causing a wave to roll over my hood and up to my windshield. With a splash similar to but larger than that created by Six Flags' Splashwater Falls ride, my now proclaimed BEAST II jumped out of the water and drove through what remained of lake Fenner like an amphibious assault vehicle...WE WERE THROUGH AND HERE WAS CAMP!!!!

On Friday, we visited Cavetree Cave first, then Chad took the others off to Black while Luz and I did the camping thing, enjoying the great weather. (See trip reports in last month's Bull. -Ed)

That evening, while looking at food stuffs, we noticed that our trip quartermaster C.E. Fenner had underestimated the amount of hamburger we would need for the weekend. (I said I wanted six pounds of ground meat, not six dollars' worth. -Ed) But then something happened that will change my thoughts about "getting away"

forever. Larry yells out that if I have Kevin Glover's phone number, he will give him a call on his mobile phone and ask him to bring us some more hamburger on Saturday. Not believing (oh woe be us of little faith), I got him the number. Just minutes later I heard Larry saying, "OK just bring up however much hamburger you can get, see ya tomorrow, Bye."

The Guads will never seem so remote again. Almost makes you want to put one of the little wonders in your pack for your next burn trip doesn't it? Picture this: "Hey, where is the entrance to Sentinel anyway?" "Hold on a sec, while I give camp a call on the mobile and see if they know"... or, on a more serious note... "Keep that leg immobilized, I'll ascend the rope and call for help, be back down in five minutes." Hmmmmmm, maybe not such folly after all.

Saturday brought another beautiful day in the Guads, and by 9 a.m., we were off to the tower to meet Kevin Glover who would lead us to Cottonwood Cave, Second Parallel Tour. Soon we were at the tower, Kevin was already there, and yes, so was our hamburger meat which we stuck in a cooler. The elephant trail made the hike to the cave short and easy.

The entrance to Cottonwood Cave is most impressive. There is a very large opening leading to a substantial entrance room decorated with many stalactites and stalagmites. Kevin pointed out that the formations we were seeing were known to have been brilliantly white before the cave suffered a lot of vandalism in the '50s and '60s. He also pointed out that the floor had been silted in to a depth of five feet, covering many formations due to an inappropriately placed entrance trail. The new trail down the entrance should prevent further degradation as it has been placed with conservation in mind using many switchbacks as you descend into the entrance room. The journey through the entrance room is beautiful and does not require artificial light as the entrance allows plenty of sun to enter. The entrance room had lots of cave swallows swooping and darting here and there. Lights are needed as you

travel up some formations in the cave and then down the substantial dirt/breakdown backside.

Near the entrance to the Second Parallel, Kevin left us for a few minutes to check out the locks at the Wonderland entrance. Shortly, he returned and we entered the small gate at the entrance to the Second Parallel. The entrance is followed by a relatively short crawl of maybe 50 to 100 meters. None of the new cavers had any trouble with the crawl or for that matter any obstacle in the cave.

Soon we were standing in the Second Parallel's main passage. It was truly impressive and well decorated. The damage that dust can cause was not nearly as bad as in Cottonwood's main passage, but some damage could be seen. Selenite needles seemed to be everywhere on the trail. We had to be vigilant to avoid stepping on these delicate formations throughout our trip in the cave. One of the most impressive formations I have ever seen in my life is the selenite chandelier in Cottonwood's Second Parallel. The size of the crystals are a truly awesome sight. Our adventure in Cottonwood Cave continued past the chandelier with agreements to photo shoot on the way out. After a short journey, we soon came across more of the wonders which have made this cave world renowned. There are gypsum flowers which extend 8 to 10 inches from the wall. And, if the incredible white of the flowers is not enough, there are the eponite formations which extend several feet, not inches, from the ground. Cottonwood is a cave that can knock your socks off once, then, when you round a formation, it does it again as you encounter a **very** large aragonite wall.

Well after the sensory overload at Cottonwood, it was time to sit and have a bite to eat in a bowl-shaped depression in a room with a ceiling decorated with a virtual plethora of small and medium stalactites. In one corner of the room, there was a pair of formations known as lion's tails-- truly a wonderful spot for lunch. After we stopped and ate, we divided into small groups of three and took turns

following Kevin into a beautiful room known as the Table Top Room. Kevin took Luz, Larry and Susie first. Then, Chad, Clark and I took our turn and eagerly went to see what the stir was about. **WOW.** The Table Top Room was aptly named all right. There were small lakes in the corners, and the entire room was filled with tables and helictites of all sizes. **WOW!** And, not surprisingly for this cave, you only have to look closer or in a different way and you discover something new. While photo shooting the room we discovered some of the formations phosphorized, emitting a light bright enough to read by. When Kevin is impressed, then you know it is something impressive indeed. Kevin said he was definitely planning to return to attempt to photo shoot the formation's glow.

Well, the time came to return to the group, and soon we were all planning to start back to the chandelier. After a short trip over some "ladderite" formations (a very convenient man-made formation), we were once again at the beautiful, wonderful, exquisite, astounding... chandelier formation. I set up and shot the formation from about a half dozen angles, bracketing

all my shots. This is one formation that would not escape my photo album.

After the photo shoot, we all took notice of the bright yellow sulphur formations high on the wall above us before starting out of the second parallel and out of Cottonwood.

The hike out of Cottonwood is a long, long, trail that is a continuous positive grade. Luz informed me that STEP REEBOK's claim that their workout is the toughest in the world, should perhaps be changed to the second toughest. I really didn't have the heart to tell her some of the pleasures we've had from many death march/burn trips in the Guads. Well, needless to say, the trip was wonderful, and the sights I saw in Cottonwood's Second Parallel will be with me forever.

P.S. The meal for which Chad needed the hamburger did turn out well. Furthermore, on the car trip to the tower we discovered a path that would allow us to avoid the water on the way down Three-mile Hill.



Calendar Of Events

July 16-23, NCRC Seminar 1994, Cave Rescue Operations and Management, Bristol, VA. Contact Nancy Chrimes, P.O. Box 560, Troutville VA. 24175, (703) 992-3665.

August 6-7, Late Summer Expedition at Ft Stanton Cave, MN. Contact Dick Desjardins, (505) 344-7053 or Fritz Hardy, (505) 345-1709.

August 20-21, NCRC Basic Cave Rescue Orientation Course. Contact Russell Kyler, (502) 522-3475 or Dennis Robertson, (802) 272-3776.

August 28-September 2, International Symposium of Biospeleology of the Societe de Biospeologie, Florence, Italy. Contact Dr. Guiseppe Messina, Ce.S.F.E.T., al Romana 17, 1-50125 Firenze Italy, (39) 55-222389, FAX (39) 55-222565.

September 1-5, Old Timers Reunion, Daily, West Virginia. Contact Bill Bussy, (919) 460-8968.

October 7-9, Tag Cave-In, Valley Head, Alabama. Contact E.T. Davis, (404) 973-8233.

Texas Cavers' Reunion, Location TBD. Contact Gill Ediger, (512) 441-0050.

November 4-11, 7th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology, La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain. USA contact: William R. Halliday, IUS Working Group on Volcanic Caves, 6530 Cornwall Ct. Nashville, TN. 37205, (615) 352-9204, FAX (615) 385-0491.

July 17-21, 1995, NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia. Contact Carol Tideman, (410) 792-0742.

August 3-9, 1996, NSS Convention, Salida, Colorado. Contact Skip Withrow, (303) 693-0997.

