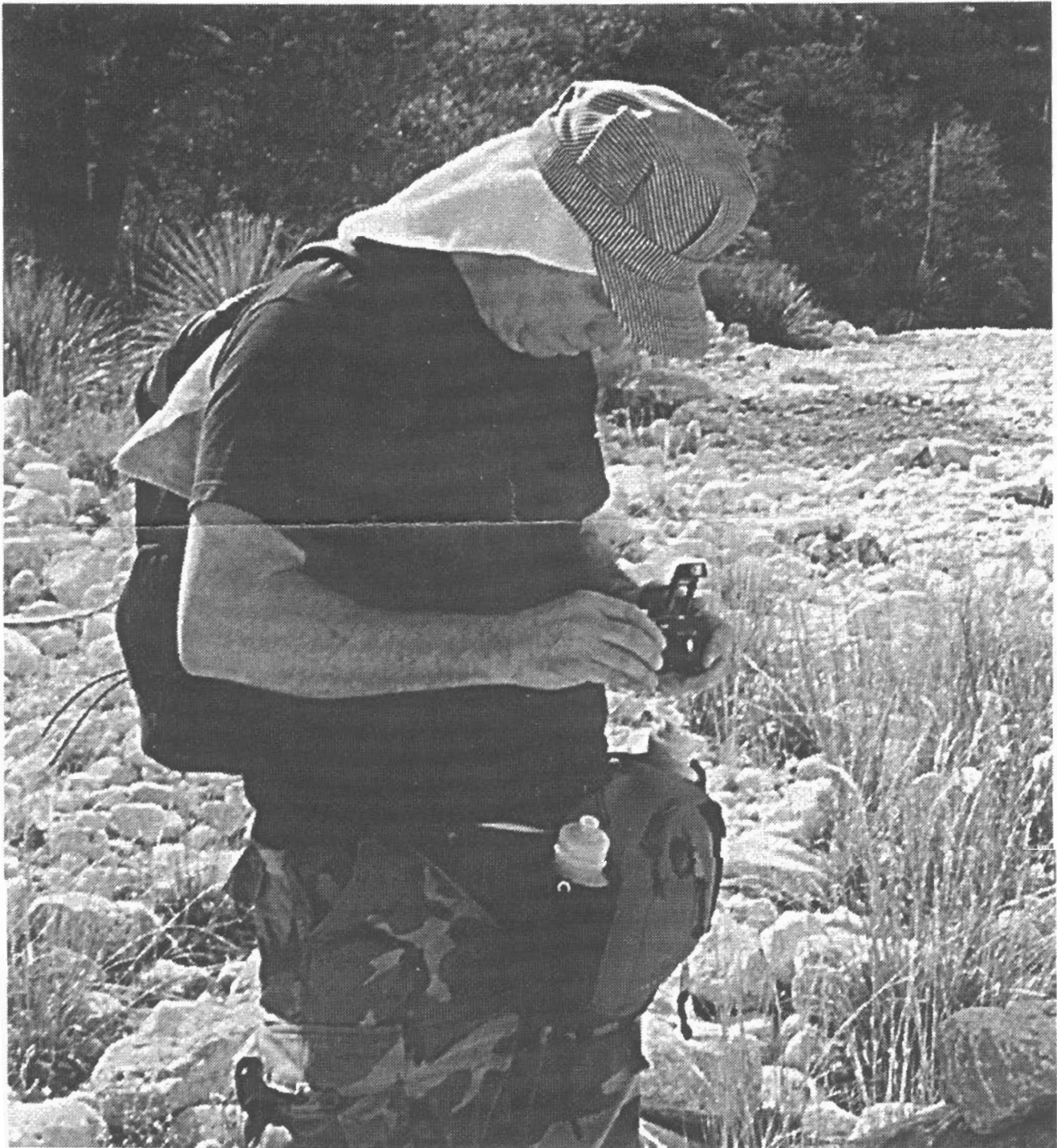


THE MAVERICK BULL

The Monthly Newsletter Of The
FORT WORTH MAVERICK GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 14, Issue 4

April 2001



CONGRATULATIONS TO
PHIL SANDERS
CAVER OF THE MONTH

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of the Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of the National Speleological Society (N55 G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art, photographs, and other two- and three-dimensional goodies. 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 news letters 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. Iandowners) 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 per year for nonmembers 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. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

Carbide: Grotto carbide is available at the meeting if prior arrangements are made. Carbide is free for the asking. Contact Russell Hill at (817) 220-7108

or Butch Fralia at (817) 346-2039 for more information.

Library: Support your grotto library. Russell Hill is accepting books, magazines, and videos related to caves and caving for our library. Thanks to Russell for his efforts in transporting the library collection to meetings.

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by Karen Perry

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Part 2 from Jerry Fant

Rod Perry for layout help

And others who helped or contributed

THANKS

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

The *Maverick Grotto* web site is now
at: maverickgrotto.batcave.net
Check it out!

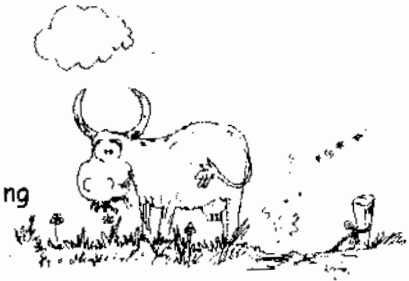
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APRIL Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, APRIL 10 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 East Lancaster, at 7:00 p.m. The program will be presented by Bat World in Mineral Wells. If you can only come to 1 meeting a year, Don't miss this one

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT APRIL'S MEETING:

You may pick up your GROTTO TEE SHIRTS!!! No April Fools. Yes, it's true! They are here. The AUCTION for Wayne's painting (the one we took the Tee Shirt design from) will be held. So don't forget the check book and be prepared to bid in a war of frenzied fun. And please remember the new time.



UP COMING TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

COLORADO BEND STATE PARK: April 14 & 15, May 12 & 13, Terry Holsinger @512 - 443 - 4241, trhli@sprynet.com.
HIGH GUADS GROTTO TRIP: April 12 thru 16. Karen Perry. This trip is full, waiting list available
FITTON GROTTO TRIP May 4. 5. 6. Karen Perry. This trip is totally full, waiting list available. Other caves planned so talk to Karen if interested. (The Park had to short us on promised permits due to some changes in park policy.)
rites of Spring Party, sponsored by DFW Grotto: May 9, 10, 11 at Turner Falls Park, Oklahoma
TSA SPRING CONVENTION, May 18, 19, 20 at Caverns of Sonora. Kerry Lowery at lowery4@crcom.net.
NSS NATIONAL CONVENTION July 23 thru 27, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky. For information: www.nss2001.com or contact B Bill Carr, PO Box 1406 Mt. Vernon, Kentucky 40456, (606) 256 - 0205. Registration fees refundable til May 1, 2001.

SHOPPERS GUIDE FOR CAVE GEAR

So looking for some gear but not sure who to call? Well hopefully these suggestions will come in handy. I'm not listing information for the great folks at Guadalupe Mt. Outfitters cause they are staying so low of stock, they may not have what you are looking for. Your best shopping bets are: (at least these are my favorites, ed.)

INNER MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS Route 1, Box 263 Greenville, Va. 24440-9727, <http://www.caves.org/imo> or imo@caves.org; 540 - 377 - 2690, Alex and Dru Sproul owners.

BOB and BOB, Cavers Serving Cavers PO Box 441-N, Lewisburg, WV. 24901. www.4bobandbob.com or 4bobandbob@4bobandbob.com; 800 - 262 - 2283, 304 - 772 - 5049, 304 - 772 - 3076 fax.



ON ROPE 1, INC. 6313 Jan Lane Drive
Harrison, Tn. 37341, 423 - 344 - 4716,
423 - 344 - 9089 fax. Bruce Smith, owner.

GONZO GUANO GEAR
11916 Bluebonnet Lane, Manchaca, Tx. 78652
512 - 292 - 1878
email: beck@gonzoguanogear.com
website: gonzoguanogear.com coming soon
Beck Jones owner

And for Bat enthusiasts:
BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL
P.O. BOX 162603 Austin, Tx 78716-2603
512 - 327 - 9721

CAVER OF THE MONTH/ PHIL SANDERS

Phil Sanders, age 43, has been caving now for six years. He is a member of Maverick and DFW Grottos, North Texas Speleological Society, The NSS: # 44096 and Southwest Region of the NSS. His favorite cave so far is Christmas Tree in Slaughter Canyon. His least favorite cave is Whirlpool in Austin, Texas. The most challenging cave he has visited has been one of the wild cave tours at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. The tour covered five and one half miles in about six hours. He was on the first official visit, pulling tape for the inventory survey in one of the 25 newly discovered caves on BLM land in the Carlsbad area. He can truly say he's had a virgin now!

Phil is famous for his great sense of humor. (But watch out for those practical jokes!) and is the proud owner of one of the most unique cave vehicles in the grotto, a 1988 Lincoln Towncar that has the distinction of making it to the top of Three Mile Hill to Texas Camp and multiple trips to McKittrick Hill in New Mexico. Phil is a private kind'a guy and is often accused of living out of the towncar, parking by a pay phone at night with a calling card. Give him a pat on the back next time you see him cause he will soon be Dr. Phil with a PhD in Neuro Science. He works as a chemist in Dallas. He's a great caver and a wonderful friend! Sorry, no prize won, just recognition for being such a great caver.

THE NSS AND SIERRA CLUBS TO JOIN FORCES Reported By Chad Fenner

1/4/01 -- San Francisco, CA. (AP) Sighting slow growth rates for both organizations, the Sierra Club and the National Speleological Society announced today that they had reached an agreement in principle to merge the two outdoor organizations. The merger won't be official until both memberships approve the action.

The new organization will be called "The Society for the Preservation of the American Wilderness" and will be divided into two divisions, the Sierra Club for the above-grounders, and the NSS for the under-grounders.

"In addition to giving our memberships more benefits for their club dollar, the merger will allow the two organizations to pool their resources for lobbying efforts to work for legislation for the protection of our outdoor, non-renewable resources, both above and below ground," explained Robbie Cox, current president of the Sierra Club.

Mike Hood, president of the NSS, said "I'm excited about this move. It makes perfect sense now that we have gotten legislation passed declaring underground areas as 'wilderness areas.' Since all environmental policies that apply to above-ground 'wilderness areas' apply underground as well, it only makes good sense that we work together on these issues."

The combined organization will have over 600,000 members, even when you take into account current members of both organizations.

"There are no immediate plans to combine the two respective publications, but that may come in the future. Many caves are found in mountainous areas anyway, so why not cover both in the same publication?" asked Dave Bunnell, editor of the NSS News.

If both memberships approve the merger, it could become effective as early as this fall.

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POYECTO TRIP REPORT BY JERRY FANT

On November 18th Ed Goff, Robin Barber, Tasuku Koni, Jesica Snider, Eddie Yonemoto, Pamela Tanino and Jerry Fant headed into Mexico staying overnight in the Hotel Taninul. Upon arriving at 2:00 in the morning we immediately soaked in the swimming pool heated by a hot spring, it was a great start to an incredible week. The following day we took in the sights visiting the caves on the hill behind the Hotel. Soon we were in Aquismon, Pam and Jerry decided to drive on to La Brecha to gain permission to camp. Not long after leaving they were back in town with the little truck that couldn't make it up the hill. It had been raining and the roads were soaked with about 4 inches of mud covering the rock beneath. Ed, Pam and Jerry then went up in Ed's four-wheel drive suburban making the hill look easy. Permission was gained and the camping spot selected for the week. Then we had to decide what to do with all the gear so that more would fit in the suburban back in Aquismon. The truck was unloaded and Pam stayed in camp while Ed and Jerry returned to town to unload the other truck and then carry everyone else to camp. In Aquismon several other groups of cavers were showing up for a week of caving in the area. Dale Barnard was there with Terry Whitfield, Paul Fambro, Chris Nicola, and Jay Jordan. Dale had a two-wheel drive that could not make it up the mountain either, so they decided to stay the night and come up the long way from Tamapatz. Ed's group finally made it to La Brecha late that night and set up camp.

The following morning was the first for some to see the jungle area that held many new cuevas and sotanos. The group went to a hill just South of town and off of the road, it was an easy hike. Jerry decided not to use guides for the day since he remembered where a cave was that needed surveying. How soon memory fails as he could not find the entrance, he left everyone in the field and went into the jungle alone to find the entrance. A new pit was located appearing to be about 20 meters deep then, about to give up, he found the entrance. Returning to the others he learned that they too had found a new cave. It had a small entrance to a small room which soon led to a 20 meter pit. By now Carlos has come up to check on everyone and showed Ed and Pam another sotano. Jerry led Robin, Eddie, Jesica and Koni to the cave to survey. Jerry caught up with Ed and Pam where Ed was already down in the Pit. Sotano Canon Barba had a 20 meter entrance pit which opened up into a large canyon and soon led to another drop. Pam rappelled next while Jerry went back for another rope. When Jerry returned Ed had already taken the entrance rope and rigged it at the second drop. Jerry rigged the short rope in the entrance and joined Ed and Pam who were at the bottom of the second drop and started the survey. At the bottom of the drop there is a small pool of water with air coming from across the top. The air is coming from a small 4 inch crack.

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Above Sotano Canon Barba 100 meters was the opening to a rather large pit, about 30 meters wide, 18 meters across and 30 meters deep. By now the others were coming up the trail, Robin's group went back to Pisos Falsos to finish up the survey there. Ed, Pam, and Jerry went to Cueva del Hoya Inclinado the cave that was found on the first day. Once inside the small entrance, the heart shaped room funnelled down to the top of a 20 meter pit. Jerry rigged the 30 meter rope to a pendant outside then rappelled down. A formation ledge was passed about 4 meters below the lip, it was full of nice columns and soda straws. The room below was quite large and fairly level. Pam and Ed came down next to push the side passages that led out. They did not go very far before ending in fill. Jerry dug some on the drain at the bottom of the pit and decided to try later as it was blocked with breakdown, although it did have good air. Ed began to sketch the cave while Jerry and Pam climbed out. Once everyone was out they went to the other pit up the hill from Canon Barba. Ed rigged and rappelled in while Pam and Jerry chatted with one of the locals who told them to "coma" (eat). There was a strange looking plant growing on the side of the pit that looked like something you would buy at a plant store. It was quite tasty with a flavour similar to cilantro - it was later known as "Chuchumbex". So Pam and Jerry finally joined Ed at the bottom where he had found a second pit. There is a large canyon leading away from the pit where the floor gives way to a deep fissure. It sounded very deep, so Ed and Jerry rigged a 70 meter rope and Ed went down to investigate. There are multiple ledges at the top end that made padding the rope a necessity. It was not long before Ed was back up, only to say the rope did not reach the bottom and that he was nearly 30 meters from the floor.

They derigged then went up higher to find another rig point without all of the ledges. This would have to be slated until Friday to return. They returned to camp to find that Dale's group had made it in after a 7 hour trip through Tamapatz and Tanzazob. Robin's group wrapped up the day finishing Pisos Falsos and another small cave in the same entrance sink. The constant drizzle was not letting up.

Wednesday had been a day set aside to use the guides at La Brecha to help carry ropes and show Dale's team how to find the deep 10.3 second sotano. Ed, Jessica, Robin, Koni, Eddie, Pam, and Jerry hiked up to Sotano del Rayo de Luz about 80 meters in elevation higher than La Brecha. There was quite a following from town as most of the available men came along to watch. The rigging was to some very small bushes, as there was nothing else to rig to. Jerry had assured everyone of a deep 100 meter pit, so he was the first one down. No less than five tangles in the rope had to be dealt with on the rappel, making everyone wait with anticipation. Finally on the bottom the signal on walkie talkies came over that it may be 80 meters. The pit was magnificent with flowstone cascading down most of the way. There is a flowstone divide about 40 meters down that separates the pit in half, that needs to be checked on the way out. Pam, Jessica, Koni, Eddie, and Ed made it down into a frenzy of photographs. No leads except for the other half of the pit were found, there was no access to it from the bottom of the pit.

Jerry and Pam tandomed out first, followed by the others climbing single. Eddie and Ed were the last ones out with Eddie pulling the tape measuring 83 meters of pit while Ed sketched the bottom. While he was climbing out he tried to reach the top of the flowstone separating the pits. The rope had been moved earlier making it a 10 meter pendulum and not possible without some anchors. They arrived back to camp right at dark with Dale's team not far behind. They had found that Jerry's 10.3 second pit bottomed out at 45 meters. Dale had also timed the pit at 9 seconds before dropping into a beautiful pit filled with lots of formations. There was a room at the bottom but no obvious way on.

On Thursday Ed and Jerry took Jay, Jessica, and Koni into Aquismon to catch a bus back to the States. Pam, Eddie, and Robin went with Senor Perez to a possible new cave which turned out to be only a shelter. They then hiked up the road to Cueva del Agua to survey and shoot photographs. Dale's group found with the help of a guide, a new cave also known as Cueva del Agua. On the way into town Jerry stepped into Ortega a plant similar to mala mujer. It is not quite as bad, but did cause nasty swelling below the knee. Paul had also found some and was blistered up around the hand. Jerry and Ed came back finally bringing up Jerry's truck. Everyone was back at camp early, it was Thanksgiving Day and a good meal was well worth being in Mexico. That night it was scheduled to have a slide show for the village of La Brecha. On the walk to town a loud speaker was blasting out in Spanish and Huastecan "respect our visitors, because they respect us, and to respect their things". This went on for about 15 minutes and not long after there were over 100 people gathered around to watch the show. It was intended to use the inverter driven by the truck to run the slide show. When the projector came on the fan would run, but when the light was switched on the whole thing would shut down! This happened several times before Jerry determined that the switch was bad. After tearing up the projector to fix the switch it was found that the switch was ok and the inverter was not powerful enough. With more than 100 people standing around it was not feasible to let them go home without seeing the slides. So Jerry, Paul, Eddie and Dale broke apart the lenses and used a flashlight to show a slide, it worked! The projector was reassembled and the slides were shown with a flashlight, it was one of the best slide shows ever! It was exciting to see adults and children watch slides for the first time! They will soon receive electricity and things will change fast for this little village.

Friday was to be the last day here in La Brecha and it was decided to make the most of it. The Sotano del Coma needed pushing, especially since it now had the best potential. Ed, Eddie, Pam, Robin, Jerry, and Carlos left camp to bottom the Sotano.

This was to be Carlos' first descent of a pit, the first in his village to go to the bottom of a Sotano, it was exciting for the whole village. Eddie and Pam rappelled in first, then Carlos hooked into the rope with no trouble - he had been watching very carefully all week. His wife was there to watch the event! Carlos made it down and was given a tour then was kitted up to climb out

It didn't take him long to climb and he will be ready on the next trip to join in on the exploration! Ed rigged the pit from a formation higher above the drop than last attempted. The rigging gave for only one ledge before it became freefall. Ed rappelled first, Pam was next then Eddie followed. Robin and Jerry opted not to drop this one - the mala mujer had Jerry's leg swollen from the knee down and Robin was sketching in the first pit. Ed had rigged the pit with a 100 meter rope with a secondary 30 meter to tie off if necessary since on the last attempt the rope was not long enough (with a shorter rope). Radios were brought to use to communicate in the deep pits, but with the overhangs they would not work in this pit. So now it was not known if there was a rope to cross.

Waiting seemed to take forever, but soon they were all up and ready to go eat. Ed and Eddie taped the drop at 62 meters, another one that seemed to be deeper than it actually is. There are no leads at the bottom and not much room for bouncing rocks to dodge the cavers. Somewhere on that hillside is a way down to where all of these caves are draining. Sooner or later it will be found. While exploring Sotano del Coma, Dale's group returned to tag several caves and to look at two sinks that were shown to them earlier in the week. Ed, Eddie, Robin, Dale, Paul, Terry, and Chris said their goodbyes to the village of La Brecha then headed off to Aquismon for market and back to the States. It was really hard to leave such a wonderful place as La Brecha not to mention all of the newly made friends. Relations are excellent there and they are awaiting the return of the next project with many more Cuevas y Sotanos!