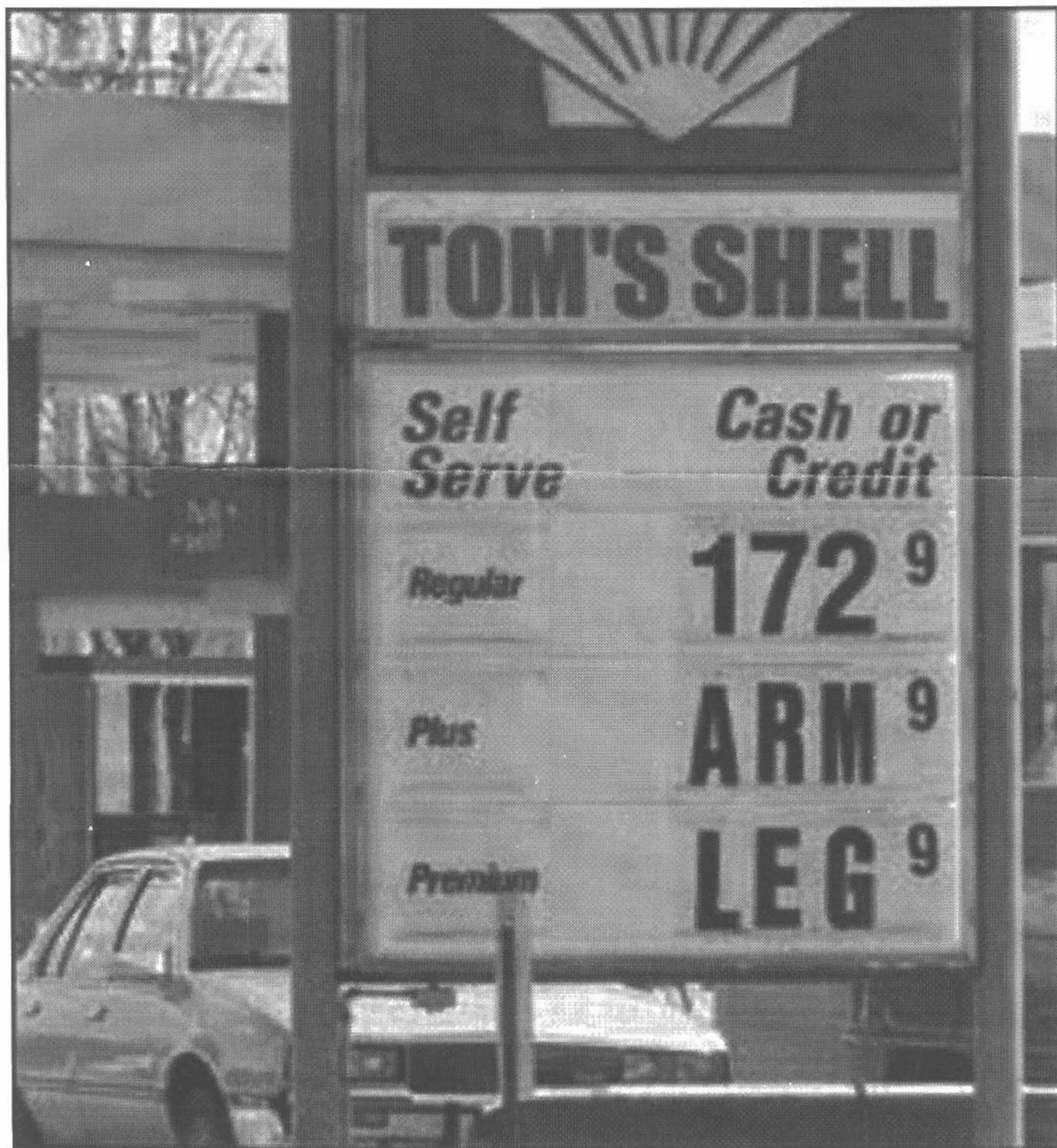


THE MAVERICK BULL

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

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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. Landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to

PHOTOS & ARTWORK

Front cover: Photographer unknown: photo courtesy of Jim Hutchins
Inside photos: Alan Goodman

CARTOONS BY CHARLIE LOVING

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

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THANKS

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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VISIT OUR WEB SITE

The *Maverick Grotto* web site is now at: maverickgrotto@hotmail.com
Check it out!

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JUNE Meeting

PLEASE NOTE LOCATION CHANGE

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 12 at DYN0 - ROCK in Arlington. You may call 817 - 461 - 3966 for more information.

This months program will be substituted with climbing. If you have your own shoes and harness, there will be a small fee, about \$5.00.

If you need to rent shoes/harness, the fee will be about \$10.00.

Come join the fun. Food and libations to follow at a restaurant or pub near by.



EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

Well, it looks as though Rod and I have survived the first half of the year putting out the Bull. I want to give a great big thank you to all those that have contributed photos, reports and other fun stuff. It makes the editor's job easier when they have material to print! So to the rest of you, get busy and put something together. I'm almost completely empty of reports and other articles. If ya'll want a newsletter, I need your help. Summer and the heat wave are coming fast. Trips are slowing down. The bats are back. The mosquitos are biting. Gas prices are soaring. Honeycreek is flooded. Colorado Bend has bad air. What is a caver to do???? Drink beer! Write up your favorite trip. Drink beer! Suggest a caver of the month. Drink beer! Draw a cartoon. Drink beer! Create a puzzle. Drink a beer! Send something to the Maverick Bull. And, of course, drink more beer.

Next item: I wish to give Michael Coulter a BIG APOLOGY for all the typos and unintended omissions from the TUMBLING ROCK TRIP REPORT last month. You can read the corrections in this issue. I really do appreciate the efforts of folks getting me reports and am sorry about the mess up! (I did send a warning in the January issue about typos and other errors to come. See what ya get for electing a dyslexic editor. By the way, my hand is healed up and doing great. Can't wait to get back underground in a few days.)

Last month's meeting we had a record number of visitors. The grotto is growing. This is great! It gives us a wonderful opportunity to share the message of cave conservation and educate an ever growing interest in speleology. It also means we have a responsibility (as experienced cavers) in providing information and training. Caves are a fragile, non-renewable resource that need our protection if we are to continue enjoying this exciting sport. I've held a couple of newcomer orientations at my house this spring. Mostly for folks making their first cave trip. After seeing how much they appreciated this, and experiencing first hand the difference it made on the trip, I'd like to propose this become a quarterly event sponsored by the grotto. Any one interested in helping? Even the most highly trained caver needs to keep their skills honed. The basics NEVER grow old. R.D.'s doing a super job of organizing vertical practices, but more is needed. Expanded workshops might be fun this summer. Any ideas?



SUGGESTED WORKSHOPS FOR SUMMER

Survey: Team members, Instruments, Book
First Aid and CPR/ With or without certification
Self Rescue/ Small Team Rescue
Knot Tying and Rope Rigging

These were some ideas I was given around the first of the year. If anyone is interested, contact me and I'll set up the workshop. These would not be offered as programs for meetings, but real educational opportunities. Some would be held in the evening, others early morning on a weekend. Let the Officers know what you would like! We work for you! Involvement is what makes your grotto strong.

Karen

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Guadalupe Mountains Caving Trip

Personal Account By Ken Thompson

Easter Sunday Weekend, April 12-15, 2001

Sponsor: Maverick Grotto, Fort Worth

Trip Leader: Karen Perry

Attendees: Phil Sanders, Chad Fenner, Christopher Fenner, Dave Gers,
John Behr, Rashive ?, Keta ?, Ken Thompson.

Campsite: Three Mile Hill, Lincoln National Forest, Eddy County, New Mexico

Although I had previously been in a couple of wild caves, the Guadalupe Mountains trip was my first real caving "adventure". The term "adventure" is relative to one's experience, of course, and so to some long-time cavers whose idea of adventure is nothing less than difficult rope work in deep pits of foreign caves, my modest "adventure" here may seem trite and pedestrian. But for me certainly, and I think for the others in our group who were also novice cavers, this "adventure" was a good initiation into the sport. Our permits were for several caves in the Lincoln National Forest: Cottonwood Cave (a good cave for beginners), Black Cave, Pink Dragon and Pink Panther Caves, and Hell Below Cave (not a good cave for beginners).

On the morning of Friday the 13th (oh my!), we set out for the easiest of the caves: Cottonwood. It was indeed an easy cave and a fun cave. I got my first taste of "crawling" and "climbing". Into a small hole I wiggled and squirmed to a tiny room whose main feature seemed to be sharp-pointed rocks. Now I could see the value of those elbow pads I chose not to buy.

A few minutes later Phil Sanders scooted up a hole in a passage ceiling to see where it led. I then asked and got permission to "climb" up the same hole -- my first ever climbing experience inside a cave. And what a shaft it was -- at least three feet long, maybe five! Would I need ropes? No, I "chimneyed" up, as agile as a mountain goat. With this difficult experience completed, I knew that I was ready, no doubt about it, for my next cave climbing adventure: The Aragonitemare!

Until this trip I had never considered that caving with kids could be so much fun. But Chad Fenner's ten year old son Christopher was an absolute delight. In Cottonwood, he seemed to know exactly where he was going, so I just kinda followed him around. While the adults were chit-chatting about this and that, he darted into a small passage, and I followed. We emerged into a beautiful room which to me seemed unfamiliar. But he deduced that it was the same room from which we had originally come. Marvelous!

After Cottonwood came Black Cave, a cave that was hard to find. Out came the GPS units. After observing how these techno-gadgets worked, or didn't work, to find Black Cave, I made a mental note to defer purchase for the time being. We finally did find the entrance, a small, unassuming recess in the canyon wall. I'm constantly amazed how such humble cave entrances belie the magnificent grandeur contained within. The inside of Black Cave was even darker than one would expect, a kind of terrestrial black hole eager to absorb every hint of light. What a sepulcher this cave was! And how beautiful, at least that which I could see.

After Cottonwood and Black Caves we returned to camp, and I rested. Later, I emerged from my tent and walked over to where Phil was showing another caver something he had brought on the trip. On the front of the box was the picture of a smiling, curvaceous young woman. Phil kept saying it was -- "inflatable". I didn't know what the thing was, but didn't ask any question: I didn't want to seem naive, being a new caver and all. I had the impression it was either a first-aid device, or maybe some kind of backup support for when an experienced caver has problems with his regular equipment. (Ed. note: Phil brought a blow up bed!)

Saturday morning, the 14th, I awoke to find that our party of nine had become a party of ten, with the arrival of Mike Huber, a Guadalupe Mountains caving expert. Mike would prove to be a terrific guy who would guide us through the "Pinks" that day.

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Guadalupe Mountains Caving Trip ... Continued By Ken Thompson

The hike to Pink Dragon was long, but the scenery was spectacular. And not a cloud in the sky. Both the entrance approach to, and the entrance hall of, Pink Dragon I found vaguely intimidating. After a brief rest at the entrance we began our descent down a rather steep slope of dirt and loose rock. This was going to be a more difficult cave I sensed than either Cottonwood or Black.

At some point I became vaguely aware of some commotion from the cavers in front of me. It was only later, much later, as we were hiking back to camp, that I learned that some rocks had given way under Karen's feet during our entrance descent, and she began slip-sliding away. Fortunately, she was able to halt her descent, but in so doing jammed her right thumb. It was badly swollen. Wow! I didn't know quite what to say.

For all the effort and pain associated with Pink Dragon, it really was a beautiful cave. We paused for quite a long time at "the dragon" while everyone took pictures. Mike later posted his Pink Dragon pictures on the internet. Although I did no serious climbing or chimneying in this cave, I did get some additional crawling experience, and I enjoyed that, even without elbow pads.

As we were emerging from Pink Dragon someone, I think it was Mike, observed how I used my butt to descend a slope, and in so doing, I learned another technical caving term. I've been called a butt-kisser before, but never a -- "butt-crawler".

After Pink Dragon, we split into two groups. Mike, Phil, Dave, Chad, and Christopher trekked over to Pink Panther Cave for some serious vertical work. The rest of us trekked back to camp for some serious rest and food, and for some serious pain medication (Advil) for Karen.

Around dark, the Pink Panther coterie appeared at camp, their trip evidently having been a success. But by now everyone, I think, was tired, and so the next day's sojourn to Hells Below Cave was cancelled. There would be no more caving on this trip.

Next morning we all drove back to the village of Queen for some breakfast, brunch, and lunch. Why can't I find a mom-and-pop cafe like this in Dallas? Our Easter caving get-together thus officially ended. Mike headed back to Carlsbad, and everyone else except me headed back to the Metraplex. I opted to stay another night. I wanted to do some more hiking (or "ridgewalking" as they say) in search of a couple of area caves, the approximate locations of which I knew.

As I was driving I reflected upon the previous couple of days. It really had been an "adventure", at least for me. I learned a lot, not only about caves but also about cavers, and everyone of them I had enjoyed being around. One of the surprises of this trip had been the fact that getting to the caves can be as challenging, or more so, than the caves themselves. Also I noted that my hobbies of running and Zen helped a lot: running had been good physical training, and both running and Zen fostered close attention to what was immediately at hand (or foot).

Something else about this experience caught my attention: the amount of work that must surely have gone into planning this group trip. This aspect of the trip was largely invisible to the participants, yet unless the scheduling, the paperwork, the coordination with the governing agency (in this case the Forest Service) were handled properly, either the trip would have partially failed in some way, or it would not have occurred at all. As trip leader, Karen really did do a superb job.

For me too, evening had come. It was time to leave. I rock-hopped down to the canyon floor and then ascended (without ropes) to the top of the opposite ridge. By now the fading sun had conspired with emerging starlight to propel me once again into that strange cosmic mood that always engulfs me on these solo hikes in the Guadalupe Mountains. It was time for some Moody Blues.

April Meeting Mavericks were visited by one of the bat rehab ladies from Bat World, Mineral Wells

