

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto Volume 19 Issue 4 April, 2005



Maverick Grotto Information

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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 Bodacious BBQ, 1206 E. Division St., Arlington. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

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

Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Diana Tomchick modeling the new temporary Oztotl tattoo. By Bill Steele

Page 9– Bustamante photos by Bill Steele

Back Cover: Bill Steele

Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site! Butch has done an excellent job at constructing the grotto web site and keeping it up-to-date. You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

[Http://www.maverickgrotto.org](http://www.maverickgrotto.org)

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

Next meeting, April 12th, 7:00 pm
Bodacious BBQ
1206 E Division St.
Arlington, TX. 76011
(817) 860-4248

Chair

Ed Goff
 737 Bizerte Ave.
 Dallas, TX 75224
 (214)942-6024
 egoff@rice.edu

Secretary

Scott Boyd
 509 E Glendale St.
 Crowley, TX 76036
 (817) 297-4427
 sdboyd56@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor

Tammy Cox
 237 Gwen St.
 Azle, TX 76020
 (817) 444-0186
 tammy.cox@charter.net

Vice-Chair

Mark Gee
 3819 Portland
 Irving, TX, 75038
 (972) 358-5105
 markageetxcaver@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Sharon Mastbrook
 3412 Walton Ave.
 Fort Worth, TX 76133
 (817) 346-2039
 cavedba@charter.net

Webmaster

Butch Fralia
 3412 Walton Ave.
 Fort Worth, TX 76133
 (817) 346-2039
 cavedba@charter.net

2005 NSS Convention

www.nss2005.com

By Sharon Faulkner, Convention Publicity Coordinator

The 2005 NSS Convention will be held July 4 - 8 in Huntsville Alabama, home of the National Speleological Society headquarters. Located in the foothills of the Appalachians just north of the Tennessee River, with 4000 Caves within 70 miles and 200 foot pits within the city limits, the North Alabama area holds a myriad of outdoor opportunities. Hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, fishing, boating, and the Trent Jones Golf Trail can all be found within the city limits. Huntsville, also known as the 'Rocket City' has a long history of contributions to the United States Space Program. Huntsville is home to the Marshall Space Flight Center, and the United States Space & Rocket Center, with its U.S. Space Camp for astronauts 9 and older. The conveniences of a metro area of 300,000 mixed with large open rural areas nearby await you deep in the heart of TAG.

An early registration discount of \$25 is in effect until May 31, 2005. More info can be found at www.nss2005.com/registration.htm

Cave Art Salons will include: slide and video, print, graphics arts, T-shirt, symbolic emblem, cartographic, cave ballad, and fine arts. Information about the Salons can be found at www.nss2005.com/salons.htm

The 2005 NSS Convention now has a message board for Convention related comments or questions. Please thank Will Marsh webmaster@nss2005.com and Andy Niekamp onlinereg@nss2005.com for their efforts in creating the message board. As folks suggested we used the same format as the 2004 Convention message board. Registration is not required for access.

www.nss2005.com/msgboard/

Caving Events Calendar

Apr 16, 30 Bat Flights at Stuart Bat Cave, Kickapoo Caverns State Park (Bracketville)

Observe an estimated 500,000 bats emerge from Stuart Bat Cave in the evening. A program will be given regarding bats, the environment and the resources of the park. Call for times; fees \$5 per person; reservations required (830) 563-2342.

Apr 16 Austin Nature Day (TCMA Whirlpool Cave Preserve): Join the TCMA and the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District for a trip into Whirlpool Cave (from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) during this city-wide celebration of nature. Volunteers are needed (from 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) to help with cave tours, information, to man the TCMA booth and interact with visitors. See pg. 6 Contacts and info: Julie Jenkins (512) 289-1336 julesjenk@sbcglobal.net Aimee Beveridge aimeebbev@sbcglobal.net www.AustinNatureDay.org

Apr 16-17 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad, NM): On-going dig project on BLM land. Contact: Stephen Fleming swcaver@caverns.com

Apr 23-24 Government Canyon Karst Project (San Antonio): This long-running project has lots of opportunities for both beginning and advanced cavers. Lots of ridgewalking, digging and surveying need to be done, and camping is available. Contact: Marvin Miller (830) 885-5631 mlmiller@gvtc.com

Apr 23 Earth Day Celebration, Colorado Bend State Park Project (Bend): Take a self-guided 1-1/2-mile scenic, round trip tour to spectacular Gorman Falls, a 65-foot waterfall in a beautiful Hill Country setting. See Gorman Cave in a walking wild cave tour. Hike to Gorman Springs, a beautiful area of the park open to the public only twice a year, on this self-guided tour. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Gorman Falls tours 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; wild cave tours hourly 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; fees Gorman Falls tour \$4 adults, \$2 children 6-12, free children 5 and under; Gorman Cave tour \$15 per person-reservations recommended (325) 628-3240.

Apr 23-24 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM):

On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. Contacts: Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote *highguads@yahoo.com*

Apr 29-May 1 TSA Convention, Fort McKavett State Park (Menard):

Hosted this year by the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Talks, vendors and the TCMA auction will be Saturday, trips into Powell's Cave (15 miles away) will be early Sunday. The beautiful Caverns of Sonora is nearby, too. Early registration will be \$20 for single, \$30 for family, on-site registration will be \$25 for single and \$40 for family.

Contacts: Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 *jkennedy@batcon.org* Bill Steele (214) 770-4712 *Speleosteele@aol.com* <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortmcka> see page 7.

Apr 30- May 7 Fort Stanton Cave Project (Carlsbad, NM):

Join the folks working on extending the length of this cave on BLM lands. **Contact:** John Corcoran III *john_j_Corcoran_III@msn.com*

May 07 The Bats of Government Canyon, Government Canyon State Natural Area (San Antonio):

Join Professor David Ribble of Trinity University and learn about the species of bats who call the caves of Government Canyon their home. Learn about bat ecology and then help set mist nets in hopes of catching a few as they feed in the night. Group size limited. 6-11 p.m.; suggested donation \$10 per person, benefiting the Government Canyon Natural History Association; reservations required and will be taken beginning at 7:30 a.m. April 27. **Contact:** (210) 688-2208 *educ-cmte@hotmail.com*

May 14 Texas Speleological Survey Board Meeting (Austin): Held at the TSS offices in Austin at 10:30 a.m. Open to anyone interested in Texas cave

information, its organization and publication. **Contacts:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 *gveni@satx.rr.com* Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 *jkennedy@batcon.org*

May 14 Cave Without a Name Campout (San Antonio):

Possible activities may include restoration projects in the cave, rigging and rappelling newly discovered pits on the property, photography and general fellowship with other cavers. Trips into nearby water caves are possible if you bring a wetsuit and there is enough interest. **Contact:** Mike Burrell (830) 537-4212 *CWAN@boernenet.com*

May 14-15 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad, NM)**May 14, 28 Bat Flights at Stuart Bat Cave, Kickapoo Caverns State Park (Bracketville)****May 21-22 Orientation to Cave Rescue (Carlsbad, NM):**

Sponsored by the Southwestern Region of the National Cave Rescue Commission, it is intended for both cavers and emergency services personnel. **Contacts:** Bob Rodgers (505) 640-3656 *southwest@ncrc.info* Tom Bemis (505) 785-3104 Jim Goodbar (505) 887-6544

May 21 Snakes and Bats Double Header, Copper Breaks State Park (Quanah):

Laurie Hall of the Waggoner Ranch will present her program about Texas snakes in the museum. Afterwards, Monte Lumpkin of Quanah, Texas and an active member of Bat Conservation International will give his popular program about bats in Texas. He will begin his presentation in the museum and then accompany visitors to the Comanche camp ground at dusk to watch the bats fly. Snake program 4-5 p.m., bat program 6:30-7:30 p.m.; fees \$2 adults, \$1 senior citizens **Contact:** (940) 839-4331.

May 27-30 Kentucky Speleofest (Upton, KY):

The 34th Annual event now has a permanent home at Lone Star Preserve, located near Mammoth Cave. Vertical and horizontal caving trips, camping and the Howdy Party are included in the price (adults \$21). **Contacts and info:** *KySpeleofest2005@yahoo.com* <http://www.mollyguard.com/>

May 28-29 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM)

May 28-30 Southwest Region of the NSS Memorial Day Regional Meeting: Location to be determined.

May until Oct Evening Bat Flight Tours, Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area (Rocksprings): Every Wednesday through Sunday the Devil's Sinkhole Society leads tours. Peer down into the depths of Texas and observe up to 3 million bats emerge. A short program will be given on the Devil's Sinkhole and bats. Visitors are shuttled in a tour bus from Rocksprings Visitor Center to the site. Call for times; fees \$10 adults, \$8 senior citizens, \$6 children 12 and under; reservations required. (830) 683-BATS (2287), (830) 683-3762.

Jun 04-05 Hilltop Project (Capitan, NM): Ridge walking and digging in windy blowholes on USFS and BLM lands, about 5 miles south of Fort Stanton Cave, NM. Meet for Cave Diggers' Breakfast on Saturday between 7:30 to 8 a.m. at the Smokey Bear Restaurant in Capitan. **Contact:** Lee Skinner (505) 293-5723 *skinner@thuntek.net*

Jun 11-12 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad, NM)

Jun 11 Bat Flights at Stuart Bat Cave, Kickapoo Caverns State Park (Bracketville)

Jun 18-19 GypKaP (Carlsbad, NM): Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of southern New Mexico. **Contact:** Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 *blandevoid@comcast.net*

Jun 24-Jul 02 National Cave Rescue Commission 2005 Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar (Union Hill, AL): Basic and advanced cave rescue courses offered the week before the NSS Convention. More info found at <http://caves.org/io/ncrc/2005Seminar/seminar2005.htm> **Contact:** Berta Kirchman *2005registrar@ncrc.info*

Jul 02-09 Fort Stanton Cave Project (Carlsbad, NM)

July 04-08 NSS Convention: (Huntsville, AL): "From Outer Space to Inner Space," this year's Convention is in the heart of TAG. Registration for NSS members is \$125 before May 31st, \$150 after. **Info:** <http://www.nss2005.com/>

Aug 21-28 14th International Congress of Speleology (Athens, Greece): All subjects and activities of interest to caves and karst will be covered, including paper presentations, exploration reports, caving

Cowtown Grotto Begins Meeting

By: Bill Steele

I haven't been invited to join, but I've got friends who have run into some of the charter members of the new Ft. Worth-based Cowtown Grotto and they've told me about it. I sure wish I could join, but I guess I'm "one of them," and even though I own both Lucchese (see: <http://www.lucchese.com>) and Tony Lama's (the latter of which I never wash or polish) and I have a cowboy hat and can ride a horse, but I don't sleep (with my boots on) in Foat Wurth so I'm not welcome. Anyone who's not already a member isn't either, I guess.

From what I understand the Cowtown Grotto members felt like misfits (that movie *The Misfits* was about cowboys), and got their feelings hurt when the Maverick Grotto democratically decided to meet at Bodacious BBQ in Arlington. Even though we eat beans and beef at the meetings, and the constitution of the grotto says that meetings shall be held in Tarrant Co., the founders of the Cowtown Grotto, being the purist cowpokes that they are, felt like the real intent was that meetings be held in Ft. Worth, and more precisely, within sniffin' distance of the Stockyards. So, they started their own thing and now meet beneath the bleachers at the Stockyards, where rumor has it most members have even found some lost change in the sawdust among the cow chips.

Word also has it that a specialty of the Cowtowners will be caving rope tricks. They can lasso and tie their ropes off for pits from a distance. They all have little circles on the back pocket of their Wrangler jeans, and can spit into a cave stream and taste test it downstream to know what cave stream leads to what surface stream. Yee Haw!

I could go on and on about things I've been hearing about the new Cowtown Grotto, but hey, what do I know? I live in Irving, not Dallas, not Ft. Worth, but a mid-Metroplex town named after some Yankee author who wrote about a guy named Ichabod with a big Adam's Apple. We who dared to join the Maverick Grotto to be friends and go caving with Ft. Worth cavers contributed to their desire to hang only with their own kind and form a new grotto. Surely they'll find some new caves and revisit old ones many times too. Someday a Cowtown Grotto member will surely

be able to say that they've set the all-time, never to be broken, record of the number of trips taken to Walk Up Cave. I think it stands at 97 trips, or something like that. - **Gotcha - Happy April Fool's**

Website Revisited!

By Butch Fralia

Ok Gang, let's talk about the website again!

I got laid off November 1, 2004 and I'm in the process of starting my own business doing website design and custom programming and network support. That's a little shameless advertising but take it as you will!

A couple of months ago, I did what's called a search engine optimization on the Maverick website as well as the TSS website. It's March 24, as I'm writing this and I'm here to report it's probably worked better than expected!

This month, some of the things to be reported as of 3/24/2005! Unique visitors: 798! Countries visited from: US, Australia 51!, Canada 36!, European Union 35! Norway 30! Netherlands 22! Great Britain 29 and so on. We're famous!

12 of 778 visitors have added us to their favorites. Of 30073 hits, 28449 of those were using Msie6.

The top key phrase was Maverick Photos, 28 visitors. Fitton Cave had 17 visitors. Phantom Cave pictures led the pack on people searching for and getting hits on.

I turned on the spam filter for all the maverickgrotto.org e-mail address and this includes the default officer e-mail addresses, i.e., chairman@maverickgrotto.org, vice-chair@maverickgrotto.org, Secretary@maverickgrotto.org, newsletter@maverickgrotto.org, treasurer@maverickgrotto.org and webmaster@maverickgrotto.org have collectively been getting over a MB of SPAM a day! The poor officers who get the forwards for this mess should be grateful they aren't getting all this trash!

As far as search engine referrals, Google remains in the lead with 352 referrals. Google photo's is second with 142 referrals.

In other words, maverickgrotto.org is getting it's fair share of traffic. For a local, specialized website, we're doing quite well.

Austin Nature Day

Hey spread the word. If you're not already participating in Austin Nature Day, PLEASE consider volunteering. If you've ever visited Whirlpool Cave, done your pre-Mexico grotto training here or just wanted something to do on a Sat. with friends, then help us by giving something back, a few hours of your time and expertise. Come on out on Sat. Apr 16th and help lead some new cavers on their **virgin cave experience.**

We need more volunteers!

Contact Jules for details: julesjenk@sbcglobal.net

For more information about Austin Nature Day, see www.austinnatureday.org Click on "[view events by a-z](#)" to see a description of "Get Down Underground"

Thanks to volunteers:

Fran Hutchins, Aimee Beveridge, Carol Henderson, Justin Shaw, Bill Russell and Jerry Fant, if he's not working-UT Grotto. Tammy Cox-Maverick Grotto,

Come on we need volunteers from some of our other grottos & groups using Austin's caves!

The 2005 TSA Spring Convention will be held at Fort McKavett State Historic Site near Menard. Pre-registration is \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families by April 15, with registration after that date at \$25 for individuals and \$40 for families. The registration form and other info is at <http://www.cavetexas.org/tsasc2005.htm> and <http://www.oztotl.com/tsa>.

The registration fee gets you free camping at the historic fort, Saturday talks, vendors, a photo salon, a map salon, Saturday evening banquet, and an auction benefiting TCMA's purchase of Punkin and Deep caves with Bill Steele handling auctioneer duties again. I hear that there will likely be signup sheets for Sunday trips to nearby Powell's Cave, the second longest in Texas. There will also be an open TSA members' meeting on Saturday afternoon, and a TCMA meeting sometime that weekend. Allan Cobb will be cooking breakfast Sunday morning to raise additional money for Punkin and Deep. Bring your bucks, and don't worry about cooking! If any other grotto or group would like to provide another meal as a fundraiser for the cause of their choice, let me know. TSA Store, TSS Bookstore, and a couple of other speleovendors will be on hand to stock you up on gear and publications. PBSS has agreed to handle all the registration chores.

All talks will be roughly 20-30 minutes unless we work out something in advance. Everyone will get a program guide at Registration listing the schedule for the weekend's activities.

Ed Goff of Dallas has volunteered to run the Photo Salon this year. Send all of your submissions and questions to him at 1900 Elm St. #513, Dallas, TX 75201, egoff@tm.com. The Map Salon will be organized by Bob Richards, you can send your maps to him at bob@cavegraphics.com.

A fascinating article on the history of the fort, a cavalry post active between 1852 and 1883, is at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortmcka/article.htm>

Another cool article, with maps, illustrations, and details on the legendary Buffalo Soldiers is at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/admin/buffalo/>

Did you know that Robert E. Lee was once stationed there? The Junction Eagle also did a nice story on the Fort at <http://www.junctioneagle.com/visitad2.shtml>

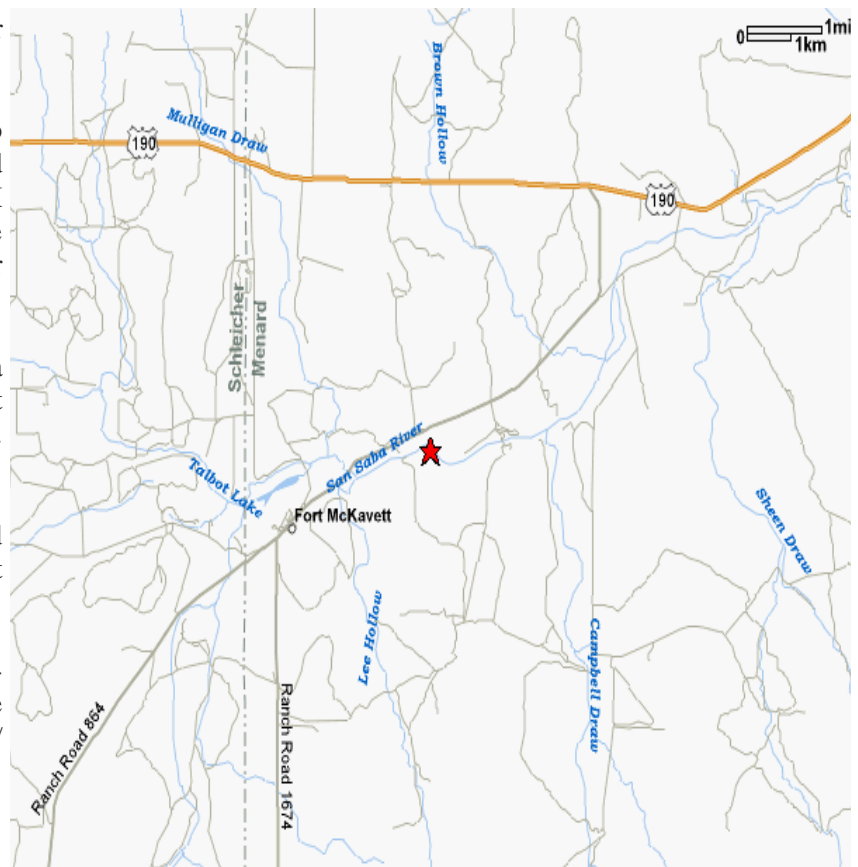
Registered Boy Scouts can earn a nifty patch by hiking around the grounds and doing a service project. Get the details at http://www.westtexasscoutinghistory.net/historicaltrails_mckavett.html

Bring your telescopes! Fort McKavett is a dark sky spot used by the San Antonio Astronomical Association and the Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society. The moon will be waning, and in the last quarter, on Saturday, April 30th; moonrise will be at 2:16 a.m. Check out the site's Clear Sky Clock at <http://cleardarksky.com/c/FtMcKaTXkey.html?1>

Fort McKavett is in western Menard County. It is approximately 192 miles from Austin, 167 miles from San Antonio, 360 miles from Houston, and 310 miles from Dallas. Directions and a map can be found at [http://maps.msn.com/\(x2mdqr55waiqhz4zhtjck45\)/map.aspx?L=USA&C=30.8266666667%2c-100.105&A=143.33333&P=|60C5|&TI=Fort+McKavett%2c+Texas](http://maps.msn.com/(x2mdqr55waiqhz4zhtjck45)/map.aspx?L=USA&C=30.8266666667%2c-100.105&A=143.33333&P=|60C5|&TI=Fort+McKavett%2c+Texas)

UTM coordinates are zone14 394127E 3410792N (NAD27). It is on the Fort McKavett 7.5' quad.

Stay tuned for more updates on CaveTex.





Bustamante 2005

by Bill Steele

2005 Texas Speleological Association Convention Fort McKavett State Historic Site *April 29-May 1, 2005*

Fort McKavett SHS is located approximately hour from Junction, Texas. The site was established by the 8th Infantry in 1852 to protect frontier settlers and travelers. Fort McKavett was called the rettiest post in Texas by General William T Sherman. Attractions include natural springs, buildings from the late 1800s and a visitors center with exhibits on the history of the post, other local memorabilia, and a small bookstore. Detailed directions to the TSA Spring Convention can be found on the TSA website at <http://www.cavetexas.org>. Details about Fort McKavett SHS can be found at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortmcka>.

Included in the registration fee:

- Æ Camping sites with porta-johns Æ TSA and TCMA meetings
- Æ Saturday talks Æ Saturday evening banquet
- Æ Saturday night auction and squeezebox competition Æ Speleovendors

We are encouraging pre-registration this year, to ensure that there is enough food for everyone!

Pre-registration (by April 15) On-site registration (after April 15)

Individual \$20 Individual \$25 _____

Family \$30 Family \$40 _____

I also want to pay TSA dues when I register! Individual \$20 _____

Family \$35 _____

TOTAL _____

Please download this form, complete it, and mail it with a personal check (made out to "TSA") to:

Texas Speleological Association

Post Office Box 8026

Austin, TX 78713-8026

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone (h) _____ (w) _____
(m) _____ email(s) _____

Additional names (for family registration/membership): _____

Among the several ongoing projects of the Texas Speleological Association is the restoration of Gruta del Palmito, a large, Carlsbad Caverns-type cavern located just up the mountain from the Mexican town of Bustamante, Nuevo Leon. On President's Day weekend, February 19 – 21, 2005, Maverick Grotto members Diana Tomchick and I, along with DFW Grotto member Jay Jordan participated.

Bustamante is located about 80 miles south-southwest of Laredo, Texas. From the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex it's about a twelve hour drive. The three of us left at noon on Friday, February 18, and arrived at the Bustamante canyon campground around 1:00 a.m. Everyone was already in bed.

The cave restoration project has been annual since 1997, except for 2004, which didn't happen due to possible conflicts with development at the cave. Up until this year, the project has always been conducted on the Labor Day weekend when it's usually quite hot. The weather was pleasantly cool in February.

At the 2004 NSS convention the Bustamante Project was awarded a coveted Certificate of Merit. This high honor was recognition for a worthwhile project which is very much appreciated by the people of the town of Bustamante.

Around 100 cavers helped on the project this year. On Saturday morning registration was held at the ticket office at the parking lot for the cave, and caver truck shuttles ran crews up the mountain. Diana, Jay and I went fairly deep into the cave and wire-brushed graffiti off the walls.

Back at the campground in the canyon that night, we sat around the campfire for a while, then went to bed and it was quiet. Not so at the Hotel Ancira. Music blared all night long, making those who stayed in the hotel for \$30 a night, planning on restful sleep, surely wishing that they had camped out for free in the canyon instead.

On Sunday various trips were available, including caving in Gruta del Palmito, hikes up the mountain, and a driving trip to rock art sites. Diana, Jay and I went caving in Palmito. We went along with Pete Strickland of Austin, who annually leads a climb up to the Birthday Passage and belays others while they hand-over-hand up a large diameter rope. It's really done quite safely, regardless of how it sounds.

That night a banquet was held at the Hotel Ancira in Bustamante. It was very well organized so that everyone present received a door prize. The food was excellent, and there plenty of it.

On Monday we joined many others for a tour of the mescal plant on the edge of town. Mezcal is a liquor similar to tequila, and is also made from cactus. It's famous for the worm at the bottom. Of course the macho thing to strive for is to lengthen your gulp so you're the one who gets the worm. Butch Fralia reminds me of the sort of guy who would always "win" the worm.

On the way back we crossed into the States at the Columbia Bridge, and it couldn't have gone smoother. There isn't even a booth to pay your liquor tax at Columbia.

They're talking about the Bustamante Project happening again next year on President's Day weekend. I highly recommend it. This was my first one. Diana and Jay had been there before. I'm planning to go again next year. It's great fun, it's Mexico, and you feel good about doing something for our wonderful neighbors south of the border.

See: <http://home.austin.rr.com/ojknox/bustainfo.htm>



Every bottle has a worm in it!



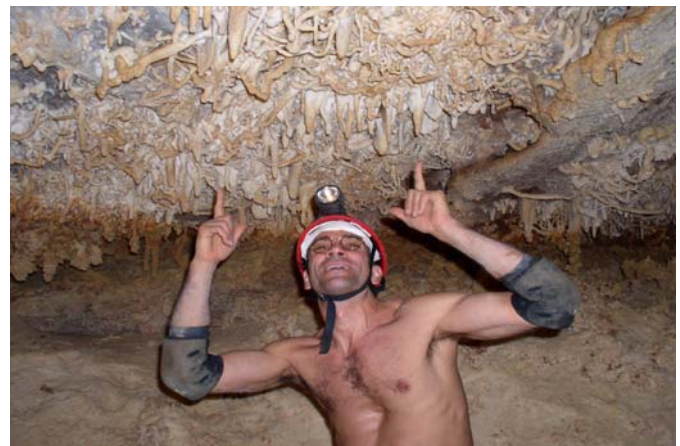
Building a bridge in the cave.



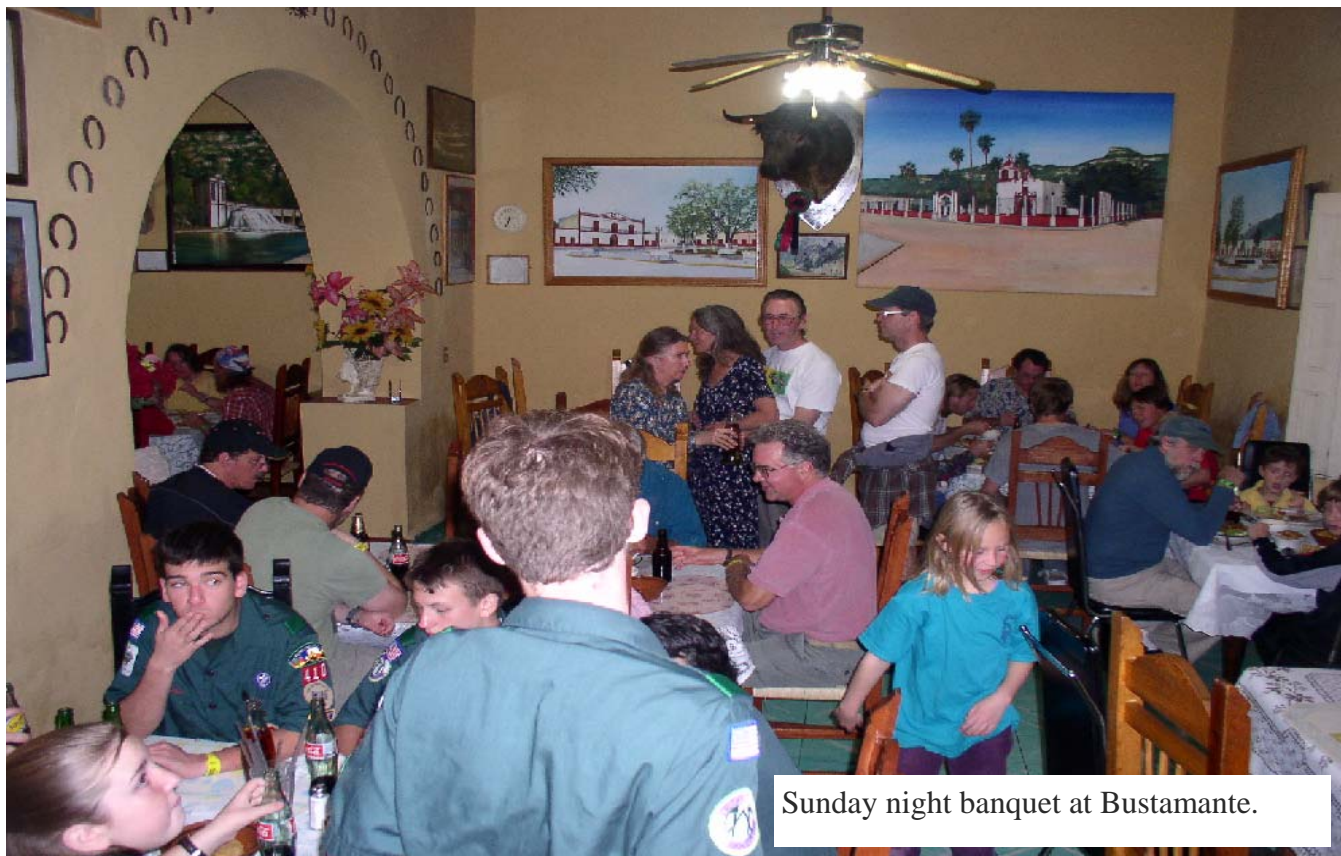
Graffiti on a stalagmite before scrubbing.



Same stalagmite after lots of scrubbing



Cave pretties



Sunday night banquet at Bustamante.

**Maverick Grotto
c/o Tammy Cox
237 Gwen St.
Azle, TX 76020**