

# THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto Volume 18 Issue 5 May, 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: Butch Frailia– Colorado Bend State Park

Page 9: Lex Cox Jr

Back Cover: Lex Cox Jr

**Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site!** Butch has been hard at work 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, May 9th, 7:00 pm**

**Bodacious BBQ**

**1206 E Division St.**

**Arlington, TX. 76011**

**(817) 860-4248**

Program:

I am not sure what the program will be, but I am sure, as always, there will be a great program, good food, and a lot of good information on cave trips and upcoming events. So be sure and join us for all the fun. Who knows, someone could have discovered a new cave.

Editors note-

The annual April Fools spoof was in last months issue. Did you find it? It was the "Cowtown Grotto Begins Meeting" article . Gotcha!

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## April 2005 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Scott Boyd

The Maverick Grotto met April 12th at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington.

Program: The night's program was a slide presentation by Diana of a caving trip to Mexico during Christmas 2003.

Reports from Officers:

Treasurer: Sharon reported that there is \$87.00 in petty cash and \$1487.83 in the grotto's bank account, for a total of \$1574.83.

Old Business:

- \* Butch reported that Keith Heuss brought him a bunch of old newsletters for Butch to put on the Web site.
  - \* We have 20 T-shirts ordered and need to order a minimum of 24.
  - \* Don Smith made a motion to for the grotto to buy extra T-shirts.
- Mark Gee seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed to buy six extra T-shirts.

New Business: none

Trip reports and trip announcements:

- \* The grotto discussed a possible trip to Deep & Punkin Nature Preserve. Mark Gee said he might be a trip leader to Deep & Punkin Caves. Ed Goff volunteered to arrange a trip to Deep & Punkin.
- \* Mark Gee and Andrew Goodbar went to Endless Cave.
- \* Bill Tucker visited Kingston Cave in W. Virginia.
- \* Bill Steele reminded everyone about the upcoming TSA Convention.

## Caving Events Calendar

**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 Hard Bargain Cave Dig (Gatesville, TX)**

For directions to the cave give me, Mark Gee, a call at home at 214-441-0036 or cell# 972-358-5105 or e-mail: *markageetxcaver@yahoo.com*. See page 7.

**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](mailto:KySpeleofest2005@yahoo.com) <http://www.mollyguard.com/>

**May 28-29 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](mailto:highguads@yahoo.com)

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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/> see page 7

**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 techniques, speleo equipment, films, media, art, and more. The Union Internationale de Speleologie hosts an International Congress once every four years. **Info:** [www.14ics-athens2005.gr](http://www.14ics-athens2005.gr)

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## Newsletter History

By Butch Fralia

One of the advantages of getting old is that you can wax nostalgic and folks just think you're a crazy old person! Hopefully people think of me as a crazy old man or just old man rather than old person because political correctness isn't my forte! I celebrated my 59<sup>th</sup> birthday at the April CBSP project so I admit to being old.

Keith Heuss (four months older than me) is cleaning out stuff and came across his (almost) complete collection of The Maverick Bull Newsletters to complete out the newsletter collection of the website. I've been scanning them into PDF files and uploading, fixing the web pages and all that. At the moment, they are all graphic scans meaning the newsletters aren't converted back to text in the scanning process. If someone wants an article reprinted in a current newsletter, I can do the OCR work.

Looking at some of the earlier issues brought back a lot of memories and almost a few tears. Some of those memories are taking me back through the various past newsletter editors and how we did them! We went through a lot of different technology and editors over the years. I celebrate them all!

I did the first 27 newsletters for the Grotto (1986 – 1988). Except for DFW and major publications like "NSS News" and "The Texas Caver" few newsletters were computer generated. Most were done on typewriters or handwritten so we thought we were being pretty cool starting up with a pretty decent newsletter for the times.

I owned a state of the art computer, an ATT 6300 with an 8MHZ 8086 processor! That was whizzing along back then. Windows was still a pipe dream so everything was DOS based and run from line commands. Computers like that are in museums today! Newsletter articles were sent in handwritten for the most part and I transcribed them into a word processor program called Multi-Mate that had the ability to spell check and export to a text file. Once transcribed and edited I exported

articles to a text file then imported them into a program called Fantasy. Most fonts were built into the printer and choices were limited. Fantasy used graphic fonts stored in the computer rather than the printer. It could print double columns for a newsletter format to look really cool! Well it was cool back then. I printed the newsletter on a 9-pin dot matrix printer and had access to a double-sided copier with a collator to produce the newsletter. For a time our only newsletter expense was postage and the 40 hours a month it took to do the newsletter. Finally I got tired of Fantasy and did everything in Multi-Mate, printing everything thing in the smallest font output then doing a paste up of the newsletter before copying. That cut about 10 hours a month off of doing the newsletter.

Digital copiers hadn't come out yet so all the copiers were analog. The nice thing about the analog copiers is they weren't limited to specific dots per inch (DPI) like the current digital copiers are. The copier I used could copy a photograph and other than it was on copier paper, it still looked like a black and white photograph. Of course, I didn't have many photographs to use back then.

Things got complicated at work, Gearhart Industries was sold out and there were questions about whether I'd be working for the Halliburton Company! On top of everything else, they moved my copier and in the process dropped it off the back of a truck. It wasn't economical to repair and not knowing if I had a job and problems reproducing the newsletter, it became necessary for me to drop out of the newsletter editing business! I announced at a fall meeting that when my term was up in 1988, I'd have to let someone else take the dread job.

David Finrock (yes the weatherman) and his wife Shari agreed to take over the newsletter and produced it on his wife Shari's Commodore 64 (remember those?). I was never sure who did the most toward producing the newsletter but they did it for two years. David and Shari were listed as co-editors in 1989 and 1990.

Back in those days, a dude named Steve Jung was a grotto member and computer engineer for a major phone company in the area. He volunteered (begged) to take over the newsletter in 1991, because he had all this cool equipment and software to work with. Unfortunately Steve's company decided buy new computers and replace all the software engineers. Steve lasted maybe three issues before he was out and finally had to move to San Antonio and live with his brother until he found another job.

Poor Dale Ellison was the chairman at the time and suddenly found himself without a newsletter editor after the March 1991 issue and undertook to do it himself. Dale didn't have a computer and actually did the newsletter on a typewriter (remember those?). Toward the end of the year he obtained a used computer from a family member and hung in there. At the end of the year, he gave up being Chairman and took on the newsletter editor's job. I remember working with him on various issues. Dale was using DOS based Word Perfect word processing software to create the newsletter. He printed the newsletter on a 24-pin dot matrix printer, which produced nice master copy as long as it had a new ribbon. Toward the end of his tenure, he was putting out some pretty attractive issues. He was editor through 1992 until Earnest Parker took it over in 1993. Dale is noted for producing the first color cover for The Maverick Bull. He actually

sat down with crayons and colored every issue by hand!

Ernie had a 200MHZ Pentium computer (with windows!) and an inkjet printer. He used Word Perfect, which would do double columns and could even do some graphics (pictures) about half decently. Ernie was editor in 1993 and 1994 and put out a number of great issues. Sadly the 1994 NSS Convention was to be held in Texas and a number of Maverick members were involved it organizing it so there were lots of long boring reports on the upcoming convention. At least he didn't have to scramble for material as much as find space to get a few real trip reports in on occasion. Somewhere in his tenure I spent \$1600 for a high end HP flatbed scanner and scanned a lot of pictures for his newsletters. We spent a lot of time together getting pictures scanned.

Copying was always a problem. I thought I had the problem solved when I bought a copier at auction for \$10.00. Ernie came over and we were going to do our first newsletter on it. At the time, we were printing about 75 copies. We started on the cover and were both impressed with how great they looked. Unfortunately we made it through about 50 copies of the cover when we heard a loud electrical arcing sound and the copier quit. It was going to cost about \$600.00 to fix it with a question about how long it would stay fixed. Ernie went back to copying the newsletter at a copy shop somewhere.

In 1995 Chad Fenner became the newsletter editor and began a new era with The Maverick Bull. His only requirement was that I'd still have to scan pictures for the newsletter. I readily agreed and since he only lives a few blocks from me, it was easy to work out. We both used AMI Pro word processing software that made a pretty good desktop publishing program. It was easy for me to write articles that he could directly import without having a lot of hassle. If you go to the website and look at the 1998 December issue, Chad writes a pretty interesting article about his experiences and accomplishments as editor. He started with a 24-pin dot matrix print then copied the newsletter at office Max. The copy quality was pretty poor for the quality of his original master. Chad finally bought his own HP Laser Jet, printer and an HP flatbed scanner (another interesting story in that December 1998 issue and was able to create a much nicer master but there were still copy problems.

Sometime during 1995, we had a serious talk about the quality of the newsletter that was going out and I bought what for the time was a high end, high-speed laser printer. Since we had the same software, it was easy for him to edit the newsletter then bring it over to print. We printed all original copies on a 600 dpi (dot per inch) 12 pages per minute (12ppm) laser printer. It got so good that Chad began submitting covers to the NSS Newsletter contest and we won some pretty cool awards. Note: I still own that HP Laser printer and it prints as good today as it did then!

There was a certain amount of inconvenience for both of us because we had to coordinate an evening we could print the newsletter. It took a couple of hours and although we grouped the printing chores as well as possible, Chad still had to take the newsletter home, collate it fold and stamp to mail it out. At this time we hadn't reached the point of having a choice between electronic or paper copies of the newsletter. In 1998, Chad decided it was time to move on to other tasks and gave up the newsletter position. During his tenure, I did at least one guest editor

edition a year. Ed Goff also did some issues during that period. It was the period of the first REAL color covers.

Chad started off using AMI Pro 2.0, a really great word processor that did a very good job as a desktop publishing package! Being computer geeks, we liked to keep up with the latest software and both of us upgraded to AMI Word Pro 3.0, this was one upgrade where the product went downhill instead of up! This was the era where we started having a great cover on every issue, a true graphic from a scanned photo. AMI WordPro 3.0 took about 20 minutes just to build the file to print a test cover and an equal amount of time when we were satisfied with it and printed it for real! I did some investigating and testing and decided to try Microsoft Publisher. While not as sophisticated as software like Quark Express, it was cheap and the cover print file was built in about 15 seconds. We both switched and until the end of Chad's term, we used Microsoft-Publisher.

Ed Goff took over the newsletter in January of 1999. He had/has extensive experience in desktop publishing and used that to produce a great newsletter. He also had access to high-end professional scanners, color printers and a lot of other neat toys. He's a MAC guy, which built its name in the desktop publishing world. He used the best software; Quark Express for the layout and Adobe Photoshop for pictures. Ed, with his experience could turn out a quality newsletter in a shorter period of time than any of the rest of us ever had. However, newsletters take their toll and by the end of 2000, Ed decided he had enough! He needed more time for other things!

In 2001, Karen Perry became the newsletter editor. Her husband Rob another MAC freak had all the equipment and she decided to try her hand at the newsletter. Even with computer crashes and other problems, she was able to put out a newsletter for most of the year. Finally, circumstances dictated she turn the newsletter over to someone else and Chad Fenner was the "guest" editor for the November 2001 issue.

RD Milhollin became both the Grotto treasurer and editor in 2002. Wayne Peplinski was listed as the Secretary/Editor and did the first issue. In the editorial of the 2002 January issue, Wayne announced he quit! He didn't want anything to do with the newsletter and realized it was a chore. I won't mention the names of a couple of other people who thought they were interested but didn't have adequate software or interest. Diana Tomchick took over the newsletter starting with the October 2001 issue and did it until the end of 2004 when she became the editor of The Texas Caver. I can note here that the newsletter that RD produced was from MS-Publisher, something I could deal with and create PDF files from.

There were a few trials and tribulations regarding printing the newsletter, Grotto dues and other stuff that I'll allow others to have their own recollections of. The bottom line is that Diana took over the newsletter, did a fantastic job at a reasonable cost!

Diana, another MAC freak, used MS-Word for copy/editing (how many PC users realize there's a version of Word for the MAC?). She used Adobe Photo Shop for editing pictures and Macromedia Freehand for page layout and generating a PDF for the website (and later printing at Kinko's).

Ed Goff started the process of creating PDF files out of newsletters for the website, back when the website was at maverickgrotto.batcave.net. Since Batcave wasn't charging for hosting

they weren't particularly concerned about user files. When their computers crashed, they lost the website and the website had to be reloaded. Unfortunately, Ed's hard drive crashed and he lost all the master copies of the PDF files, which is partly the reason I'm in the process of writing this article about recovering and scanning old newsletters.

By the time Diana became editor, I'd taken over the website and gotten us switched over to commercial hosting. I set up an FTP site for Diana and she uploaded her PDF files directly to the website for me to add to the newsletter collection. When we started this, it was the basis for establishing the policy there would be a private member/subscriber area where the latest newsletters could be downloaded. The general public could download newsletters 3 months old or older and the last three issues protected in the member subscriber area!

The cool thing for me was that Diana, being associated with university computers for a good part of her life could already use FTP (Internet File Transfer Protocol!). It held no mysteries for her and she plopped them right up there. The hosting company upgraded the on-line software, the FTP site quit working so I set her up where she could upload directly into the website which was great for both of us.

All good things must come to an end, Diana did such a good job she was in demand by the TSA to produce the Texas Caver! That then sort of brings us up where we are today. Diana announced she was going to do the Texas Caver and that someone else would have to do the newsletter. I recall Lex Cox III sort of volunteering or being volunteered (Tammy can expound on that) for one newsletter. I found out the Cox family owned MS-Publisher (remember that?) which I still have so I could get the file, make a PDF from it and put it on the website. As it turned out, Tammy not Lex III ended up taking over the newsletter and is doing a fantastic job of it. Tammy put the newsletter on a CD that she sent to me to create a PDF file for the website. Recently we got her set up to directly upload her publisher file to the website then e-mail me it's there. I download it, make the PDF, and upload the PDF along with the appropriate webpage changes. That cut two or three days out of her deadline giving her some breathing room for mailing the CD to get the newsletter on-line.

Tammy is doing a great job with the newsletter today. She's starting to let her own creative juices flow using color fonts and backgrounds to give the on-line newsletter a really nice look and feel. I just hope she keeps getting articles and doesn't get burned out anytime soon! Tammy, I never mentioned it but if you need a break, I'll do a newsletter and give you some breathing space!

About articles, some people know I really like my dogs. Before Bear, one of my two Labrador Retrievers, I had a Rat Terrier named Shane The Wonder Dog. Corky Corcoran, our first chairman called him Shane the Wonder Dog because he wondered why we bothered to call him a dog. Corky was known to get a little tipsy and after cooking steak over a campfire would share with Shane. He'd feed Shane steak off the same fork he was eating off of then tell us how Shane could take a piece of steak off the fork and never touch it with his lips or tongue! Shane slept with me in my sleeping bag and I seldom brought dog food on a caving trip. I shared my steak but never shared the fork I was eating with! Shane found himself the subject of news-

letter stories both inside and outside The Maverick Bull. When I had to put Shane down in 1994 due to cancer, Bear was given to me as a replacement. I found the article "Bear and Bo go Caving" in the September 1994 issue. It was Bear's first caving trip and he loved it. I found articles that are historical in nature, i.e., the Longhorn Cavern cleanup in 1989. The most difficult part was to keep the scanning process going without stopping to re-read every newsletter.

Old Maverick Bull issues have a lot of caving history in them and I hope you can take time to read them. Thanks to Keith for the missing issues and I hope to be able to find the rest and get them on-line for your reading pleasure.

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**In response to the article in the April 2005 Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto entitled "Cowtown Grotto Begins Meeting" .....** anyone interested in joining **The Cowtown Grotto of Fort Worth, Texas**, e-mail Wayne Pep-ski or Roger Mercer at [cowntowngrotto@yahoo.com](mailto:cowntowngrotto@yahoo.com)

Thanks,  
Roger  
President, Cowtown Grotto

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## Hard Bargain Cave Dig

By: Mark Gee

A dig at Hard Bargain Cave on May 21, Saturday. You can drive down on Friday and spend the night, as well as Saturday night, or drive down on Saturday morning and meet at Andy's in the middle of Gatesville on HWY 84, SW of Waco, at 9:00 a.m. and eat breakfast with myself, Keith Heuse, and who ever else shows up for the dig. We start digging around 10:00 and dig till we decide to stop, sometime after 4:00. We still are digging at the bottom of the 32' shaft into roadbase, that was dumped in the cave by the military back around 1950. The cave was filled because the commander thought that some of his soldiers may get hurt while trying to enter the cave during the military maneuver's that they were having at the north end of Fort Hood. Come out and have a good time with other cavers from around the state. For directions to the cave give me, Mark Gee, a call at home at 214-441-0036 or cell# 972-358-5105 or e-mail: [markageetxcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:markageetxcaver@yahoo.com)

## Mother Earth's Womb

As soon as I placed myself upon the edge of her slippery lips, I slowly stoop down upon her mouth so gently... so smoothly... that I slip into a trance, my own little fantasy world. As I slide into her darkness...the quietness... the tightness...I feel my heart beating.  
Faster and faster it beats.

I feel my vapor as I feel hers as it surrounds me, The wetness of her cool beads... running down the side of my face, streaming slowly as it drips down off my chin onto my neck. My eyes wide open trying to examine the beauty of her... form... her texture... so smooth... but somewhat rough, It gave me a such a sensation... so unbelievable... so desirable I quivered with goose bumps, as I felt her cool breath.

Her silence... her beauty... So delicate... so pristine... so untouched. She wore me out. But in a good way.  
Mother Earth's womb... she opened up, and invited me in... so I couldn't resist.

Poem Written By: Kelly A. Keener  
Reprinted from TagNet

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## A Reason to Spend a Week (Caving) in TAG

By: Tim White, SE-NCRC Region Coordinator  
(with Jane Morgan)

June 25 - July 2, 2005 (the week before the NSS Convention in Huntsville) will see a large number of cavers converging on the North Alabama community of Union Hill. Participants from all over the U.S. and a several other countries will gather a few miles south of Huntsville for more than 100 hard hours of caving activities in the famous Newsome Sinks caving area. These cavers will be students at the National Cave Rescue Commission - 2005 Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar. "This seminar consists of extensive classroom and field work in all phases of cave rescue including underground environment, vertical rescue, hauling systems, extrication techniques, medical management, communication systems, and the organization and management of cave rescue operations. Basic and advanced course material is presented for students who typically include cavers, emergency service personnel, and emergency managers." ....that's the standard line, but you ask why should I, the recreational caver, the hard-core caver, the expedition caver, the cave mapper, the ridgewalker, the pit bouncer, the new caver or Joe Grotto caver be interested in or take part in NCRC training?

As the NCRC Southeastern Region Coordinator, I

could go for paragraph after paragraph telling you why I feel you, as a caver, should experience a NCRC training. I also would bore you to tears with those paragraphs after paragraphs, so that is why I chose to include a reprint of an article by Jane Morgan that appeared in the Dogwood City Grotto's publication, *The Georgia Underground* (Vol. 39, No.1) titled "Why NCRC?". Here is what Jane had to say about the Level 1 class that she was a part of in 2003.

"Safety is a reoccurring theme when it comes to caving and yet we all seem to find ourselves in situations that remind us just how fragile we really are. NCRC offers training to equip ourselves when those situations occur and the ability to recognize when it is time to call for help. Sprained ankles can happen by just stepping off a curb or over a root. Not many people stop to think how much work would be involved in exiting a cave with an injury, or that much of that work would have to come from their caving partners or strangers. I am amazed when I think about how many people my husband and I have introduced to caving in the last decade, and have not had an accident. As much as I would like to believe that it is a result of how safe we are, accidents do happen. We can do everything in our power to prevent them, but it is not always a guarantee. We have had small things like dehydration to deal with and our group worked as a team to remedy the situation, which was only more reason for us to further our education and skills.

When I first heard about cave rescue training several years ago I was equally intrigued and intimidated. I was not yet vertically adept and although I had been climbing for several years, was not comfortable rigging on my own. On the other hand, I'm the kind of person who likes to solve problems. When it was announced at our grotto meeting that a modular NCRC course might be offered in the coming months, the anticipation was incredible. There were no longer any excuses; the course would be offered within my state, on two weekends rather than a week long session, and at a price I could afford.

What I discovered, during this course, is that there is so much more to gain besides learning basic rescue techniques like diagnosing dehydration, hypothermia, or low blood sugar in fellow cavers and good teamwork/rope working skills. This can also be a place to find a higher level of self-confidence that some desire. I never expected the self-esteem boost that came with picking a fellow caver off a rope, packaging a patient, rigging a pulley system or simply becoming one link in a complicated plan to find, treat, and bring lost and/or injured people from a cave. Many students may never be involved in an official rescue, but will find themselves with the ability to solve small problems on their own trips before they become big problems that require outside help.

For those of us who have never served in the military or worked in rescue/law enforcement jobs, we may try to imagine the kind of bond that exists, but without success. In fact, the term "co-worker" must have such a different, inconceivable meaning when your very life may depend on them on any given work day. I can only attempt to describe the intense emotion that I experienced for my peers and

instructors. I don't know if these courses become routine for the instructors or if they wonder why a student would feel this way from a training program. A bond now exists for me with my peer group that is more than just fellow "grotto member" or "caver". Even those terms shouldn't be taken lightly. Every time you set foot in a cave, especially in a vertical environment, you become interdependent with your fellow cavers. NCRC training is a powerful reminder of this and is valuable to all cavers."

What more can I say?

For more information see the web site at: <http://caves.org/io/ncrc/2005Seminar/seminar2005.htm>  
or e-mail the seminar registrar, Berta Kirchman at: [2005registrar@ncrc.info](mailto:2005registrar@ncrc.info)

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Austin Nature Day was a **huge success** at Whirlpool Cave Preserve. TCMA was pleased to open Whirlpool Cave as a natural resource event available to the general public. Caver volunteers toured approximately 45 people through Whirlpool Cave and about 10 or so drive-bys stopped by to see what was going on and take a look into the entrance room and we met some of our neighbors, which was very exciting.

Overall we were extremely pleased in how well our non caver visitors did in a 'wild' cave environment. Many of our visitors had been to commercial caves in the area and see Discovery Channel. shows on caving but, for all a trip into a wild cave was a most unique, exciting, and somewhat awesome experience. A short talk was given on the aquifer and how this cave fits into the water story in Austin and off they went into the underground, not really knowing what to expect. It must have been good because they all came out smiling and dirty!

We partnered with the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (BSEACD), who did all the scheduling for our event, provided lots of great free information and a terrific presentation board with great information all about our Austin segment of the Edwards Aquifer and how important caves are to our water story. Thanks to Jenee Galland, Enviomental Educator, BSEACD for all her help and many hours dedicated to seeing that our event would be successful.

Many, many thanks to our caver community volunteers, many of whom are TCMA members and several who drove hundreds of miles to support TCMA and this event at Whirlpool Cave.

Aimee Beveridge, UTG  
 Alan Blevins, ASS  
 Don Broussard, UTG  
 Tammy Cox, Maverick Grotto  
 Julia Germany, UTG  
 Carol Henderson, UTG  
 Caroline Hornsby, UTG  
 Fran Hutchins, UTG  
 Leska Lewallen, Baylor Rec.  
 Amy Nordfelt, ASS  
 Rebecca O'Daniel, UTG  
 Bill Russell, UTG  
 Wesley Shumacher, UTG

THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL THESE VOLUNTEERS  
 AND ANYONE WHOSE NAME I MAY HAVE NOT  
 SIGNED THE VOLUNTEER LIST.

**THANKS!**

Julie Jenkins

## Vertical Practice

By: Tammy Cox

Vertical practice was held at Dennis and Sharon Welch's home last month. We had a great turn out. There were 9 grotto members plus a few non members that came out for the fun. Milo Marks and Dennis did a great job rigging the ropes inside of the Welch's shop. Yes, I said inside. That was the best part. We were in an air-conditioned building that had a 16 foot high beam to hang ropes from. Regardless of rain or shine the practice could still go on, and it did. Bill and Francie Tucker, Scott Boyd, Kristopher Megahan, Lex and myself were also there just hanging around having fun. Practice went well. We worked on crossing a knot and doing changeovers. Scott was the first to cross the knot and do a changeover with success. Bill had copied a page from his vertical book on how to do changeovers with a long six bar rack. Unfortunately, I started up the rope without reading the instructions and had a little trouble, but finally figured it out with some good coaching from Dennis and Milo. After I

was off rope, Bill handed me the information he had copied and pointed out the section on the six bar rack that said the first thing you need to do is get a shorter rack. Now I know. Milo, who also had a six bar rack,

made the changeover look very easy and I was envious. There was a re-belay rigged at the other end of the shop. Everyone else did a great job at completing the re-belay with ease. I was determined to master the

changeover, so I tried it again and didn't ever get over to the re-belay area. I did, however, get to do a re-belay in Hell Below

Cave in the Guads the last weekend in April, but I will save that for another report. Thank you so much to Dennis and Sharon for having the practice at their home and to everyone that came.



Dennis & Sharon



Vertical Practice– From left to right, Bill Tucker, Milo Marks, Tammy Cox and Kristopher Megahan

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