

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto Volume 18 Issue 11 November, 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.

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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: Donna Anderson, see article on page 4

Page 4: Donna Anderson

Page 5: Butch Fralia

Page 6: photo of John Chelf & Dale Ellison by Butch Fralia, photo of Donna Anderson, Jen, Butch and Zubov by Sharon Mastbrook, photo of Mark Gee and Rafal by butch Fralia

Page 8, 9 and back cover by Ed malcom

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, November 8th , 7:00 pm
Bodacious BBQ
1206 E Division St.
Arlington, TX. 76011
(817) 860-4248

Program:

The annual grotto fundraiser auction will be the high light of the meeting. So sift through your garage and closets, raid your cave-gear boxes, and bring lots of stuff to auction off,

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October Meeting Minutes

submitted by Scott Boyd:

The Maverick Grotto met October 11th at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington. 17 members were present.

Program: Ed Goff presented a slide show of his caving trip to Peru this past summer.

Nominations were held for the grotto officers for 2006:

Chairman: Butch Fralia was nominated by Francie Tucker, and he accepted the nomination.

Vice-chairman: Mark Gee volunteered to run again.

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook was willing to serve as treasurer again.

Secretary: Scott Boyd was willing to serve again.

Newsletter Editor: Tammy Cox was willing to relinquish her position, but no one else volunteered, so she will run again.

New Business:

The 20th anniversary of the grotto is in 2006. Butch was appropriate for the position of organizing the celebration, as he's been with the grotto the longest. Ed Goff asked for ideas as to how to celebrate, but no one had any ideas yet.

Bodacious BBQ is going to stop staying open late on Tuesdays starting in January, so we will need to find another place to meet.

Dennis Welch said he won't be able to attend the next few months, so he asked if any one was willing to bring the grotto library. Bill & Diana volunteered.

Trip reports and trip announcements:

The Cox's took a trip to Whippoorwill and Pine Creek and Picnic Caves recently.

Scott reported on a vertical practice the past weekend at Lake Mineral Wells State Park.

Several members talked about an upcoming cave dive at Colorado Bend State Park in Be Excellent Cave and Gorman Creek Crevice Cave.

Caving Events Calendar

Nov 5 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. Work session held after the meeting. **Contacts:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 gveni@satx.rr.com Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 jkenedy@batcon.org

Nov 5-6 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

Nov 12-13 14th Annual Sonora Restoration Project: Must sign up ahead of time to secure approval for trip. Removal of rubble from Devil's Pit continues; 60 able-bodied cavers are needed to haul buckets, dig in the pit, etc. **Contact:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 gveni@satx.rr.com

Nov 11-13 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad, NM): On-going dig project on BLM land. **Contact:** Stephen Fleming swcaver@caverns.com

Nov 19-27 Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon (Mexico): Survey and mapping project over Thanksgiving week near Aquismón. **Contact:** Jerry Fant jerryfant@worldnet.att.net

Nov 19-20 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

Nov 19-20 GypKaP (Carlsbad, NM): Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of southern New Mexico. **Contact:** Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 blanvoid@comcast.net

Dec 3-4 Southwest Region Winter Technical Meeting (Carlsbad, NM): Somewhat equivalent to the TSA Spring Convention, includes scientific talks and general caver camaraderie. **Contact:** Dave Belski belski@caverns.com

Dec 10 Metroplex Holiday Party (Irving, TX): Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick host the holiday party for the Metroplex grottos. Party starts at 7:30 p.m., potluck dinner followed by white elephant gift exchange. Bring your caving slides, videos and/or tall tales and an appetite. **Contacts:** Bill Steele speleosteele@comcast.net Diana Tomchick

diana.tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu (214) 418-5827

Dec 15 Texas Speleological Survey Work Session (Austin): Held at the TSS offices in Austin from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Come help with the organization of Texas cave information. **Contacts:** Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 *jkennedy@batcon.org* Ron Ralph *ronralph@austin.rr.com*

Dec 17-18 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad, NM)

Jan 11 Texas Speleological Survey Work Session (Austin): Held at the TSS offices in Austin from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Come help with the organization of Texas cave information. **Contacts:** Jim Kennedy (512) 663-2287 *jkennedy@batcon.org* Ron Ralph *ronralph@austin.rr.com*

Jan 14-15 Colorado Bend State Park Project: long-time favorite of Mavericks, pretty close to home, excellent project for beginners. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 *trhli@sprynet.com* or Dale Barnard *Barnarddale@yahoo.com*

Jan 14 (or 21) Honey Creek Water Cave: come visit the longest cave in Texas. Possible trips include through-trip from manmade to natural entrance. Wetsuit required. Not sure yet about date but should know soon. **Contact:** Bill Steele *speleosteele@comcast.net*

Mar 24-26 NSS Board of Governor's Meeting (Irving, TX): The Metroplex grottos host the spring meeting of the NSS BOG. Evening parties on Friday and Saturday will be at Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick's house, Saturday meeting and catered lunch at the Irving Garden and Arts Center, and Saturday dinner at the Irving Spring Creek Barbeque. Come on out and meet your elected NSS officials and have a good time, too. **Contact:** Bill Steele *speleosteele@comcast.net*

Announcements

***Mark your calendar now!** We'll be holding a grotto fundraiser **auction** at the November 8 meeting. We've done this before, and it's always been a lot of fun and raised a substantial amount of funds for the grotto. It's great to bring caving gear and cave-related items to sell, but don't be limited by this; anything you'd consider selling on eBay or at a garage sale is fair game for the auction. Common sense: If you want to try to sell a heavy or oversize item, please be prepared to deliver it to the buyer, and bring a photo instead of trying to lug the item itself into the restaurant. The way it works is that you get to keep up to half the selling price of your item(s), and the grotto gets the other half. (feel free to donate the whole amount if you're feeling generous!) If we're lucky, renowned auctioneer Bill Steele will lend us his services. If you've ever experienced

one of his auctions, you know what a treat they are. So sift through your garage and closets, raid your cave-gear boxes, and bring lots of stuff to auction off, and/or lots of cash to bid on that great thingy that you just won't be able to pass up! This is sure to be a fun and exciting event!

*Congratulations to the Cowtown Grotto for being approved as the latest chapter of the NSS. It was official on October 25th, 2005. All of their hard work in getting the grotto started has been a success.

Indian Sited at Campfires at Texas Caver's Reunion October 15, 2005 By: Donna Anderson

Many cavers had the startling experience of glancing up from their peaceful campfire late Saturday night and seeing someone in full Indian regalia appear from the darkness. Clad in buckskins, full Indian head dress, and beaded moccasins, he surprised many a caver. But there was no tomahawk in his hand. Instead, he held a beautiful Native American flute inlaid with turquoise, mother of pearl, and coral. It was a full moon that night as he began playing his flute. The crowds hushed and all conversations stopped in mid sentence. All eyes were on this unusual visitor. The haunting music of his flute took them back to a time long, long ago when people lived off the land and were in harmony with nature. The beautiful melody of his flute floated softly through the air. Before they knew it, he once again disappeared into the darkness. A bit later, they could hear the faint sound of his flute as he played in the distance at yet another campfire. Perhaps he will magically appear at your campfire some evening. We are proud to say this mysterious visitor is from our very own Maverick Grotto. His name – **Dale Ellison**.



TCR 2005

By Butch Fralia

Sharon, the dogs and I arrived at Flat Creek Ranch about 3:00 pm on Thursday. Bruce and Donna Anderson had already arrived about fifteen minutes earlier and were in the process of setting up their pop-up trailer. We put our antique Mobile Scout in the same place as last year, ran out the awning, set up the 12x12 sun shade and were ready for the weekend. The ubiquitous Maverick Grotto signs were set up for their 17th TCR.

Bill Bentley from Midland soon arrived and a few people had already set up camp in the cook's area on top of the hill. Bill is the webmaster for the TSA website and will soon be the moderator for the new CaveTex mail list. Tom White who ran the list for many years at his own expense is transferring the CaveTex domain name over to Bill. A new host has been secured and sometime in November, CaveTex will live again. There's some rumor floating around that some guy named Fralia will be a co-moderator on the new list. One that could well be true! There was a donation bottle first at registration then at the TSA/TSS booth for people who might want to contribute to the hosting cost.

Sharon and Donna had planned to make new Grotto signs and all the materials had been purchased and were in the back of the big red truck. The material remained in the big red truck all weekend and in fact is still there today. No new signs! I wanted to get that out of the way and move on.

George and Kay Crosby, residents of

Lake Charles Louisiana were unable to join us this year because of Hurricane Rita. The good news is that while they missed TCR, their property is on high ground so they weren't homeless after the storm. Business and family obligations kept them away this year and I'm sure traveling from the flooded area also contributed to the situation.

Allan Cobb came by and we discussed that several vendors might not make the event including Bob Liebman of Bob & Bob who usually comes in from West Virginia on Thursday night. Bob usually comes in and stops by to play with our dogs with which he has a long-standing relationship. Bear was attending his 12th TCR and has been Bob's straight man for his comedy routine where he reads the rules about dogs in his vendor area. Moli the Snauzer (10 TCR events) was part of the act for many years until her demise, but Zubov, the young lab (3rd TCR) has filled in quite nicely. We waited through Thursday night and sure enough Bob wasn't there so we were beginning to think this wouldn't be a Bob & Bob year. Bob did arrive Friday morning saying he got a late start this year.

While we're on the subject of Bob & Bob, did you ever wonder where that name comes from? Does Bob have a split personality or what? It seems that many years ago there was a partner who's name was also Bob. He decided he didn't want to be in the cave vendor business so Bob of the Liebman clan bought him out and kept the name. So there really were two Bobs once!

Bob has cut down on his travels to events and pretty much does three a year now. The events are; Texas TCR, the NSS Convention and West Virginia OTR. He claims not to make any money in Texas but has developed so many friends down here over the years that he can't pass it up. With the cost of gas this year and driving his big Ford van pulling a trailer

from WV, he probably didn't make any money.

We wandered the area Thursday evening, taking the dogs down for a swim and generally chilling out. It was a peaceful evening with a few people arriving through the evening. Dale Ellison came down with brush cutting gear to help do some cleanup. We cooked up a few hamburgers for Dale, ourselves, and a couple of others. The evening was cool enough for great sleeping weather.

Friday, Dale and I were going to go to do some brush cutting down by the swimming hole. It seems that a lot of the brush from previous years had already been removed but some small trees that blocked the view of the Shelter where the band would play. It was about five minutes work for a chain saw (which we both had). The problem was getting down without the dogs. Peter Strickland was sitting up the hot tub and labs being labs wanted to swim. They were stirring up the water in the swimming hole irritating Peter who wanted to keep it clear until he filled up the swimming hole.

Back at camp, I discovered I'd left my chain oil at home but Dale had just enough. As we waited for the hot tub to get filled, word came back that someone else had cleared the small trees so our services wouldn't be needed. That was fine with us but we discovered Saturday night that "stuff" was cleared but not the offending trees! Oh well, something for another year.

Friday saw a lot of activity with the cooks setting up, Bexar Grotto getting ready for the fish fry, the hot tub being set up, and vendors setting up. Bruce Anderson, who has been cooking the corn for about five years, took his stuff up to the hill and got it ready. Otherwise, most of our contingent spent a pretty mellow day doing not much of nothing!

While we were doing nothing, this dude rides up on a bicycle and said he wasn't a Maverick Grotto but was from Fort Worth and wanted to know if he could camp with us. Of course we said yes and he secured a spot. His name was John Chelf who along with his wife Katie attended some Maverick meetings back in the Smokey's Rib days and paid dues for a



The antique Mobile Scout



John Chelf and Dale Ellison

while. Not very active now, he was once a very active caver. He should still be in shape for it because he rode the bicycle down from Fort Worth! Katie arrived later in the weekend and he rode back with her so it wasn't a two-way bicycle trip. John and Katie might get involved with the Grotto again and apparently likes to do slideshows so maybe he will provide some future program material.

People continued to come in Friday and well into Friday night. The Bexar Grotto held their fine Friday night fish fry and we cooked a few hamburgers for stragglers who missed the fish fry. It was fine Friday night with more great sleeping weather.

Saturday started slow but soon intensified into the usual hustle and bustle of TCR. TSA sold books and T-Shirts, AMCS sold books, TSS sold books, as did Rich Wolfert of Inner Realm Books from Carlsbad. Chris Vreeland sold T-shirts; Bob sold some of everything that Bob sells. There was even a massage parlor! Several people including Mercy Raines were selling jewelry. Sharon obtained a nice Bob & Bob caving pack for the Maverick Grotto door prize. It was turned over to Joe Ranzau with lots of labels that it was contributed by The Maverick Grotto!

There were the usual Speleo-Olympics and vertical contests. Some people watched, some competed but all had a great time!

I was able to turn the edited video of the Barb Macleod concert (from the Spring 2004 TSA meeting) over to TCMA for their review to see if they want to market it for a fundraiser. I've expended between 200 and 250 hours editing the video. There was a long delay in getting the DVD burned due to technical problems with the editing software. It was a relief to have it passed into their hands for the next step.

This years misadventure, at least for us was when Zubov, our young lab managed to tear pads on both front paws! He couldn't walk so ended up staying around camp and groaning when someone left the camp and he couldn't follow. Not expecting such things to happen at TCR, we didn't have the requisite Super Glue and wrappers to put the offending members back together. A young Vet Tech named Jen overheard me talking to someone about it. She had a kit with all the right stuff and volunteered to take care of him, which she did. After a moment of trying to remove the wrappers, he discovered he could run and



**Donna Anderson, Jen?, and Butch Fralia
working on Zubov's feet.**

walk again and left them alone. He did fine until a Saturday night swim shrunk the bandages and started the hurting all over again. We removed the bandages and he spent Sunday in the trailer looking out until we moved him to the truck for the trip home. Upon our arrival at home you couldn't tell he'd ever had a problem.

I offered to pay Jen for her emergency services but all she wanted was a cold beer to replace hers, which had gotten hot while working on the dog. I discovered later she'd swapped a Bud Lite for a Miller Lite and wondered if she'd noticed the difference.

Saturday evening, the cooks served earlier than usual at about 5:30 pm. It was a great selection of food and no one was turned away hungry. There was beef, chicken, turkey and other fine fare to go with it. Of special note was the excellent Fredricksburg sausage cooked by Bill Bell. Notably absent this year was the pig as Noble Dunstan was unable to attend.



Mark Gee and Rafal Kedzierski work as servers

Later, down by the swimming hole, the awards ceremony started up with the announcement of the event winners. TCMA sponsored a pumpkin carving contest and all the entries were on display complete with candles burning inside. There were some really great entries! When the door prizes were given out, the Bob & Bob pack was clearly announced as having been provided by The Maverick Grotto so the sins of past years were erased! For those who don't know the story, The Maverick Grotto used to regularly donate prizes for TCR. Andy Grubbs would announce our prize as another generous donation from the DFW Grotto. We hadn't given anything for about 10 years because of that.

The band for the evening was The Terminal Siphons who have played at the NSS convention in past years. They were great! They know how to take advantage of the acoustics and balance a soundboard. Their instruments were in tune! They played into the night except for a break during the Ramen Noodle wrestling contest.

Sunday morning, the TCMA had a fine breakfast for anyone who wanted to donate \$5.00 to TCMA. There were eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon and some really fine coffee ladled out from a rather large pot. Members of The Bexar Grotto (with help from a few others) did the cooking.

There were the usual TCMA and TSA meetings. Having bowed out of Speleo-Politics some time ago, I manned the TSA/TSS booth while others attended meetings. When the meetings adjourned I helped pack it up then returned to camp where Sharon had already packed most of our stuff. I finished the heavy stuff, hooked up the trailer and we began the journey home after another fine TCR.

There were 338 folks registered this year. That's down from previous years but then gas prices probably contributed a little bit to the down turn. Some folks are tired of Flat Creek since we've had a number of events there over the years. It's hard to beat the facilities.

After the event, word came out that a number of fires were left burning. Some folks chose not to use the porta-johns and a collection of poop and toilet paper was left strewn in various places. Not very caver like for a group of people known for being respectful of others property! Maybe it was guests who didn't know any better.

New Mexico Caving Information

By Dennis Welch scuba42@charter.net

Texas has some spectacular caves. However, our neighbor to the west, New Mexico, must not be overlooked for caving diversity and delight. New Mexico has a long and storied history for cave exploration. The Internet is filled with information about some of these wonders of nature. Often, cavers are at a loss as to how to go about getting to experience the spectacular caves of New Mexico they have heard so much about. The following information is provided to assist those competent qualified cavers whom wish to explore the beauty of New Mexico's numerous caves. The list

of caves and contacts is not exhaustive. In fact, several caves have been intentionally left off the list by the request of their guardians for their protection. This information will eventually be in the public domain of the Internet and therefore public information. Most of what is listed below has been gleaned from a variety of Internet sources and is available to anyone. This article is simply a concise compilation of some of the caves and contacts. The information provided may not be fully up-to-date and not every cave listed may be available for exploration. The government organizations always have the final word on approval.

Carlsbad Area NPS Caves: contacts for permits and directions – PRIMARY CONTACT: Tom Bemis (505) 785-3104, Tom.Bemis@nps.gov. Secondary contacts: Dale Pate (505) 785-3107, Dale.Pate@nps.gov; Stan Allison (505) 785-3105, Stan.Allison@nps.gov; Paul Burger (505) 785-3106, Paul.Burger@nps.gov.

- Chimney – vertical – no guide.
- Christmas Tree – vertical – no guide.
- Deep – vertical – no guide.
- Helens – vertical – no guide.
- Wen – vertical – no guide.
- Corkscrew – horizontal – no guide.
- Goat – horizontal – no guide.
- Lake – horizontal – no guide.
- Ogle – vertical – fee ranger guided.
- Spider – horizontal – ranger led pay tour.
- Slaughter Canyon – horizontal – ranger led pay tour.

Carlsbad Area BLM Caves: contact for permits and directions – Jim Goodbar (505) 234-5972, James.Goodbar@nm.blm.gov.

- Doc Brito – vertical at rear – no guide required.
- Wind/Hicks – vertical – no guide.
- Journigans – horizontal – no guide.
- Yellow Jacket – horizontal – no guide.
- McKittrick – no guide.
- Endless – no guide.
- Dry – no guide.
- Sand – no guide.
- Little Sand – no guide.
- Parks Ranch – horizontal – no guide – no permit.
- Mudgett's – horizontal – no guide – no permit.

Fort Stanton Area BLM Caves: contact for permits and directions – Bill Murry (505) 627-0220, Bill.Murry@nm.blm.gov.

- Fort Stanton – horizontal – trip leader.
- Torgac – trip leader.

High Guads USFS Caves: contacts for permits and directions – Roger Beason (505) 885-4181 rbeason@fs.fed.us; Deanna Younger, (505) 885-4181, dyounger@fs.fed.us; Susan Herpin cavesteward@yahoo.com, Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

- Black – horizontal – no guide.
- Cave Tree – horizontal – trip leader.
- Cottonwood – horizontal –no guide.
- Cottonwood, 2nd parallel – trip leader – seasonal closure for bats.
- Frank's – horizontal – no guide.
- Gunsight – horizontal – no guide – seasonal closure.
- Hell Below – vertical – trip leader.
- Hidden – vertical – no guide.
- Little Beauty – horizontal – no guide.
- Little Door – horizontal – no guide.
- Pink Dragon – horizontal – no guide – seasonal closure very hard to find.
- Pink Panther – vertical – trip leader.
- Red Lake – vertical – no guide.
- Sentinel – vertical – trip leader – seasonal closure. (Only the first drop and the room right after it is open in the spring/summer. A trip leader is required to make sure cavers stay in the correct area. The rest of the year, no trip leader is required.)
- Sitting Bull Falls – horizontal – no guide.
- Sucker – horizontal – no guide.

Gear that Changed my Caving by Bill Steele

With the annual Texas Caver Reunion coming up in mid-October, and the usual speleo-vendors sure to be there selling their wares, I want to pass on about something I got a couple of TCRs ago. I bought some Bomber Gear elbow-forearm pads that I love. Wearing them has changed the way I move through a cave.

The reason they've changed the way I move through a cave is that given I wear, and have through most of my 40 years of caving, Rock Master kneepads, these combined with the aforementioned Bomber Gear elbow-forearm pads, allow me to "bridge" my body from knees to forearms in crawlways. My belly and little man don't drag. Also, when coming into contact with the cave wall, instead of my shoulder making contact, I use the forearm or elbow part of the pad and don't even feel it.

There is a slight downside. Sometimes the edges of the pad catches, but rarely. It's also a little hard to take off sometimes. But, but, these slight downsides are very slight compared to the benefits. I've caved a lot in the past couple of years and have put some nicks and wear marks in my Bomber Gear elbow-forearm pads. Ask me to show them to you and I will. I'm not ready for another set, but if I see them for sale at TCR, I might just be tempted to go ahead and get my next pair.

Missouri Caving

By Lex Cox

On October 13th we headed out on our annual Missouri caving trip with our friends Danny & Michelle Malcom that live in Jane Missouri and Ed and Karyn Malcom who live in Mount Pleasant Iowa. Tammy, Amber and I left after work Thursday and drove about six hours to Van Buren, Arkansas where we stayed the night at a Motel 6. The next morning we stopped at a bakery in Rogers, Arkansas and got doughnuts and pigs in a blanket for breakfast.

We got to Danny and Michelle's house around 10:30 Friday morning and quickly threw our stuff out of my truck and onto their front porch so we could all pile in and head out caving. Danny had already got permission from a landowner not far from his house for us to explore a cave on his land. When we got to the landowners house they were not home but had left a note on the door with directions to the cave that they had only been in a few feet. Ed, Danny, Amber, Tammy and Danny's ten-year-old son, Shelby, and I headed to the cave. Once we got in the cave we followed a stream of running water down twisting, turning, walking and crawling passages. After a while Amber and Shelby decided to stop and rest while they looked at pretty formations. We kept going and got to a point where the ceiling tapered off to about a foot tall, Tammy was now leading the way. Danny, Ed and I waited in an area that we could sit up in while Tammy continued to crawl in the stream of water on her belly dragging her pack. Occasionally Ed and I would yell out "does it open up!" Tammy would yell back that it was great and for us to come on, but Ed just laughed and said he could still hear the toes of her boots scraping and her pack dragging so it must not open up much. Tammy crawled until she was almost out of earshot and then decided to come back, even though the cave kept going. We turned around and headed back up stream and met up with Amber and Shelby. They had fun playing in the



Tammy Cox in the stream passage

water and were all rested. Danny led the way on the other side of the cave up stream for a while until the ceiling began to get to a low belly

crawl again. Danny crawled a while until he could stand up in a very nice room. It had some nice formations in it to look at. Then, you guessed it, the cave went to a belly crawl in the water again and we still had other things too do that day so we left the rest of the cave to be explored another time.



Danny Malcom

We went back to Danny's house to eat some lunch. Ed had brought some potato chips from Iowa that are only distributed in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. They are available mail order worldwide. He brought extra bags for us to take home and sent one bag for us to give to Milo Marks. Ed had met Milo in July on a previous caving trip to Missouri and remembered that Milo had enjoyed the chips. After we had rested and cleaned up we went to the local high school football game. Danny and Michelle have 3 boys, and this was their oldest son's, Michael, homecoming game. We all went to watch Michael do a great job playing the drums with the band at the half time show.

The next day we headed out to go to a cave called Half Mile Cave. We traveled up an old logging road to the top of the hill where we parked. While we were putting on our caving gear three men came out of the thick woods riding mules. One of the mountain men's shirt was torn and the other one's ear was bleeding because they had been making their own riding trails. They asked what in the world we were doing and we told them we were fixing to



Guys on mules

rather make new trails, but they all wanted to watch us go into the entrance. The hike to the cave was down hill all the way, When we got to the entrance, one of the

guys on the mule was nice enough to take a group picture of us. Then we started into the cave which by the way got its name because you



have to crawl for half a mile before you get to a big room that you can stand up in. I led the way through the pea-sized gravel because the others decided if I could fit that they all could too. We stopped to make a few photos along the way in the crawl. There were a few side passages that



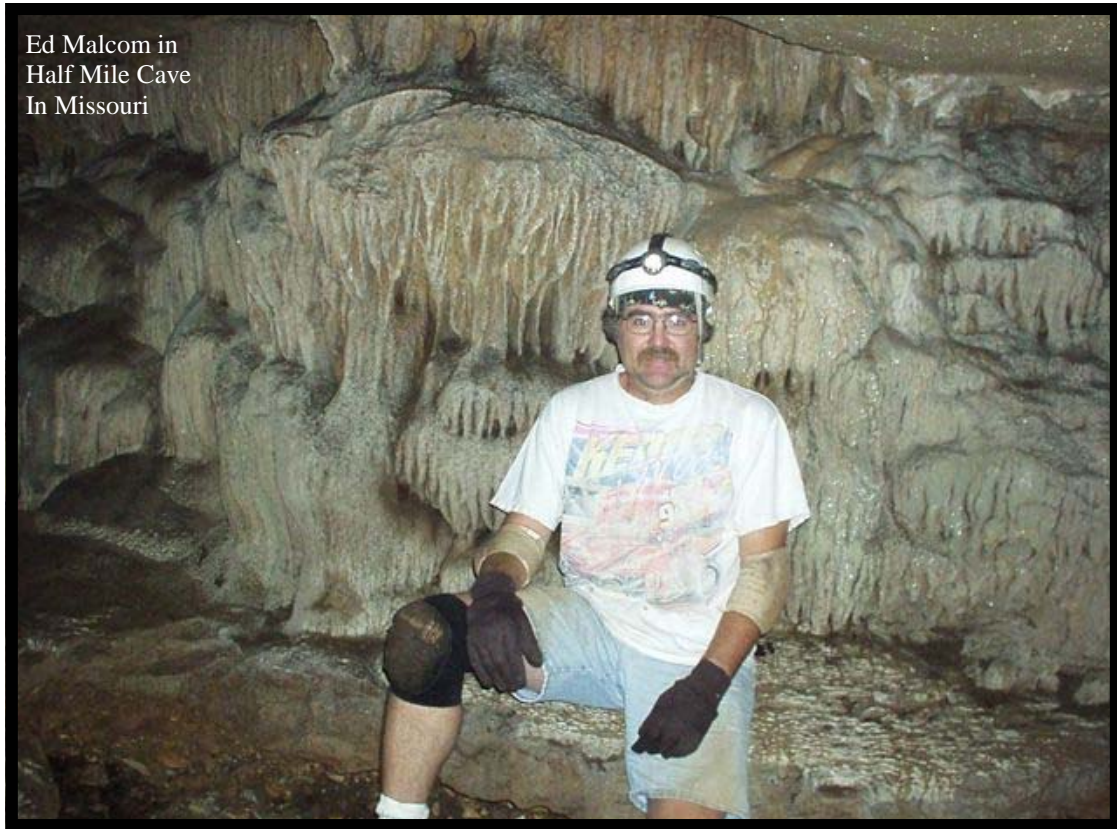
Jordan, Tammy, Lex, Ed, Shelby, and Danny in Half Mile Cave.

Tammy and Danny's son, Jordan explored along the way. Finally we got to the big room full of pretty formations where we all took a

break and had a candy bar and water. After our break we explored the big room. We went to the other end of the big room and it went back to a crawl. The neighbor that told Danny about this cave told us that it has two entrances. We started crawling again and after not much further we could see light up a rocky passage. We climbed up and out of the cave and were at the edge of a dry creek bed. The cave made a big u shape and we came out at the other end without having to do the long crawl again. We made our way back up hill all the way to the truck.

Then we went back to Danny's house for an evening around the campfire. We had Earl Campbell hot links, hot dogs, chili and some Halloween cookies.

Sunday morning we decided that we had so much fun at half mile cave that we went back and did it again backwards. Then it was time to clean up and head back home. We had an uneventful trip home and are looking forward to our next trip to Missouri to explore more caves.



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