

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto Volume 18 Issue 12 December, 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 7:00 p.m. The location will be announced prior to each meeting.

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. Bill and Diana will be temporarily bringing and setting up the grotto library on Dennis' behalf.

Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Grotto auction, by Butch Fralia. Top photo— Audrey Goff enjoying the auction, bottom left— Gary Gressett showing off his new tea set, bottom right—from left to right: Diana Tomchick, Mark Gee, Scott Boyd, Phil Sanders, John Langevin, Bill Tucker and Francie Tucker

Page 4: Butch Fralia.

Page 5: Auction photo by Butch Fralia, vertical practice photos by Charles and Tammy Goldsmith

Back Cover: Photo of John Crosthwait enjoying himself at the auction, by Butch Fralia

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

There will be a holiday party December 10th, at 7:30 p.m. at Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick's home in Irving, TX. in place of the December meeting.



Chair

Ed Goff
5445 Preston Oaks Rd. #339
Dallas, TX 75254
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



MINUTES

November Meeting Minutes submitted by Scott Boyd:

The Maverick Grotto met November 8th at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington. There were thirteen members and three visitors.

Program

This month's program was the annual grotto auction led by auctioneer/caver Bill Steele.

Reports from Officers

Chairman: Ed Goff reported that he listed the meeting time and place and a description of the grotto in the Dallas Observer.

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook reported that there is \$1229.06 in the checking account and \$121.00 in petty cash for a total of \$1350.06. She also mentioned the Bob & Bob pack that was donated and raffled off at TCR.

Old Business

Grotto officer elections: There were no other nominations. All officer positions were unopposed, and the nominees were elected by acclamation.

Chair: Butch Fralia

Vice-Chair: Mark Gee
Newsletter Editor: Tammy Cox
Secretary: Scott Boyd
Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook



A discussion was held about a new meeting place. Spring Creek BBQ at I-20 & Cooper, Pancho's at Green Oaks and I-20 and The Rig were all suggested. A vote was taken to decide where to meet. Majority vote was for Spring Creek BBQ.

New Business

Butch went with the Cowtown Grotto folks looking for and identifying local bat habitats.

Trip reports and trip announcements:

* John Langevin went to the High Guads Restoration Project and went to Hidden and Cottonwood Caves. He talked about the work that was done on those two caves.

* I reported on vertical practice this past Sunday the 6th.

* Ed and his daughter went to Inner Space Caverns this past weekend.

* Mark Gee announced an upcoming trip to Hard Bargain Cave in January.

* Bill Steele announced a trip to Honey Creek Cave on January 21st.

*Diana talked about the Dec.10th grotto Christmas party.

CAVING EVENTS CALENDAR



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. See page 4. **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 Barnard-dale@yahoo.com

Jan 21-22 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

Jan 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 high-guads@yahoo.com

Feb 18-20 Annual Bustamante Restoration Project (Bustamante, Nuevo Leon, Mexico): Ever popular restoration project is once again planned for the President's Day weekend. More info will be forthcoming after January 1st. **Contacts:** Orion Knox (512) 453-4070 Orion-Knox@alumni.utexas.net, or Rune Burnett bburnett1@austin.rr.com

Feb 18-20 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad region, NM): Cavediggers welcome, come see if this will be the next big one. **Contact:** Stephen Fleming swcaver@warpdriveonline.com

Feb 25-26 High Guads Restoration Project
Contacts: Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote high-guads@yahoo.com

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

Apr 29- 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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Metroplex Holiday Party



Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick will be hosting the holiday party for the Metroplex grottos December 10th at their home in Irving, TX. The party starts at 7:30 p.m., It will be a potluck dinner followed by a white elephant gift exchange. Bring your caving slides, videos and/or tall tales

and an appetite. **Contacts:** Bill Steele speleosteele@comcast.net or Diana Tomchick diana.tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu (214) 418-5827

January Meeting Location

The January 10th, 2006 meeting of The Maverick Grotto will be held at [Buck N' Loons](#) at 3517 South Cooper Street, Arlington, TX 76015-3410. This may be a one time deal or we may meet there forever. Keep checking the website for more information!



Buck N' Loons



Grotto Auction

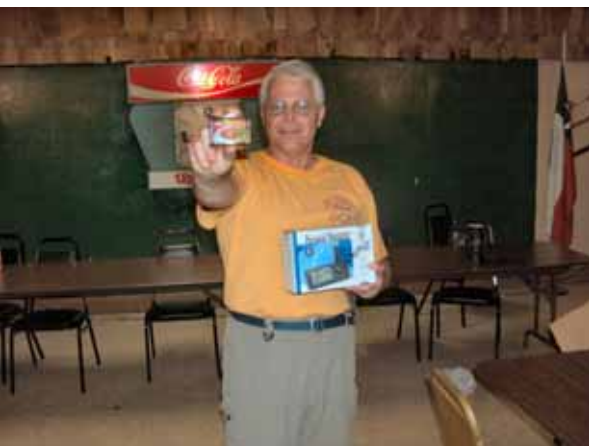
The annual grotto auction was held at last months meeting. Bill Steele readily volunteered to conduct it again this year. Once again Bill was able to talk members into paying more than the items were worth and everyone had fun while he was doing it. The proceeds go into the



From left :Bill Steele showing off the desk organizer, Audrey Goff and Ed Goff

grotto general fund and are used throughout the year for various grotto needs. Many thanks to grotto members who donated items, and a special thanks to Bill Steele for being our auctioneer. There was a wide variety of items donated to be auctioned off. I think the most memorable was the silkworm pupa. I don't have a complete list but here is a list of what I can remember. Batman action figure-a very nice jacket-desk organizer-flashlight-this years grotto t-shirt-several canned food items-rolls of film for slides- GPS II- tea cup set-French press coffee maker-thermos- a red white and blue do rag and a tape measure. Maybe we will do even better next year.

Maybe we will do even better next year.



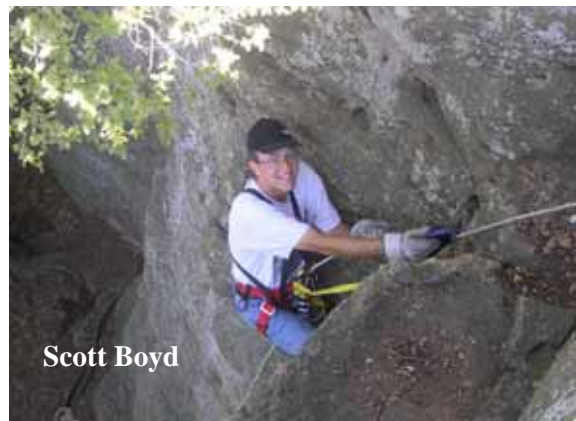
Bill Steele auctioning off a can of silkworm pupa and preparing to auction off a GPS II.

Mineral Wells Vertical Practice

Information from the editor

Scott Boyd and Tammy and Charles Goldsmith met on October 9th, 2005 at Mineral Wells State park rappelling area for vertical practice. This is a very nice area to do vertical work at. The park will close the rappelling area if there has been rain so be sure to call before you go. Information on the park is as follows: Website: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/lake_mineral_wells/ Address and phone number: 100 Park Road 71 Mineral Wells TX 76067 (940) 328-1171

Charles was kind enough to send me a few photos. Here they are.



Scott Boyd



Tammy Goldsmith



Charles Goldsmith



Thanksgiving in TAG

by Bill Steele

Diana Tomchick and I lined up a caving trip over Thanksgiving with our friend Jim Smith of Atlanta. She and I started rolling east at 7:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, and got to Memphis at 2:00 p.m. I'd called ahead to the Heartbreak Hotel and got the name of a restaurant serving T'Day dinner, so we ate at Marlowe's on Elvis Presley Blvd., just down the street from Graceland. It was perfect Memphis, complete with non-stop Elvis songs playing,



We ate Thanksgiving dinner in Memphis and ran into this familiar fellow. He said he's "All Shook Up" to go underground.

Cajun-style turkey, and cornbread dressing. And like The King, we ate too much.

That night we got to South Pittsburgh, Tennessee sort of late, so we wimped to a cheap motel, and left Jim Smith camping by himself on top of the mountain behind the motel. We met at Waffle House early on Friday morning .

After breakfast we rode with Jim in his new Toyota Tundra up Big Coon Mountain, and parked on a dead end, old and overgrown logging road where we would camp that night. From there we hiked downhill through the woods for over an hour to the entrance. Entering the cave at noon, we rappelled the first two drops and found ourselves at the top of the third drop. This 30-foot drop is a challenge to do, in that at the top there is a tight squeeze over a hump of rock sticking out from the left wall, followed immediately by a bolt over a freefall pit. The trick is to reach through the squeeze, engage your rack as high as you can, clip on a cowstail to the rope stretching from one bolt to the other through the squeeze, and pop through. We all did it easily on the way in, which is not what occurred 14 hours later on the way out

We got into a low passage with cold water half filling it up, and for a few minutes thought the cave was sumped. But we'd just missed the right way to go. Soon we were squeezing and sliding in mud and came out to the borehole passage. Below the borehole we got to our destination, the unsurveyed lower passage. We set 73 survey stations and mapped about 950 feet in seven hours before calling it a night and heading out. By midnight we were in the low airspace again and approaching the first rope.

When Diana and I got to the rope with the tricky traverse at the top, Jim was already off rope at the top. Diana went next. She was tired, and more arm strength was required of her than Jim and me due to our differences in centers of gravity to turn at the bolt from vertical to squeezing into a tight slot, and she struggled. Up to that moment, there had not been a name given to this spot. It was found 29 years ago, but awaited a fitting incident that spoke of its true nature. Jim tells me that he heard Diana say what is now the name of the squeeze: Leave Me Here to Die.

Back on the surface and changing clothes, the temperature had dropped but it wasn't below freezing. We had a long hike ahead of us uphill to our camp. I don't think we would have found the truck without Jim's GPS. It took us two hours, but we walked up to the truck dead on. It was 5:00 a.m.

While Jim heated up a very meaty and delicious venison stew, Diana and I set up her tent. Having eaten and hydrated with some Guinness, we crawled into thick sleeping bags and heard hunters' ATVs coming up the mountain in time to get a good shot at Bambi at dawn's early light.

Our plans for Saturday needed to change due to how tired we were with just a few hour's sleep, so we went to Russell Cave National Monument and took the tour. The cave's entrance had continuous occupation of one American Indian culture after another from paleo to historic - 9,000 B.C. to around 1650 A.D. It's a nice, big entrance with a flat floor.

Late Saturday night Jim headed to Atlanta to be there on Sunday for a play his daughter was in. Diana and I camped out on a mountaintop above South Pittsburgh, and then drove back to Dallas on Sunday.



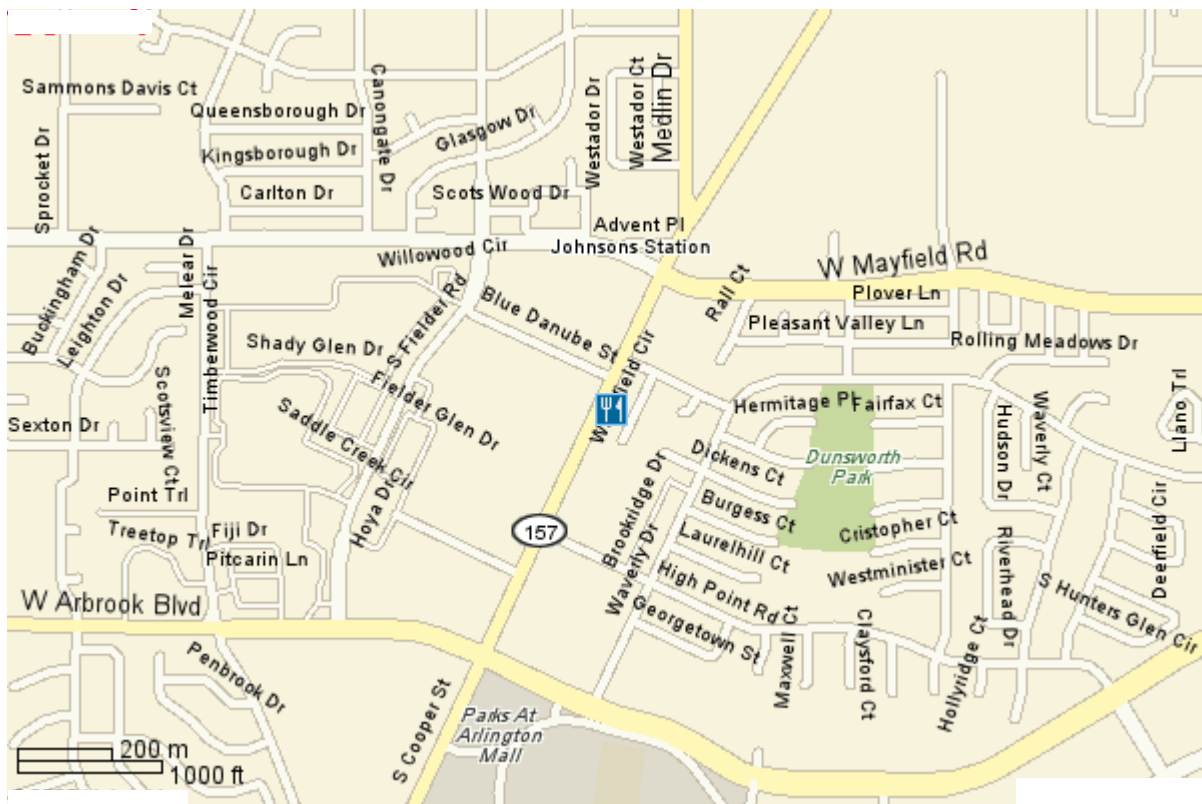
Corrections to last months information on New Mexico Caves

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 – vertical – no guide - limited access.
- Jurnigans – vertical entrance– no guide.
- Yellow Jacket – horizontal – no guide - Seasonally closed for bat protection 4-15 to 10-15.
- McKittrick – no guide - Seasonally closed for bat protection 4-15 to 10-15..

- Endless – no guide - Seasonally closed for bat protection 4-15 to 10-15..
- Sand – no guide - Seasonally closed for bat protection 4-15 to 10-15..
- Little Sand – no guide.
- Parks Ranch – horizontal – no guide – no permit - Subject to flash flooding.
- Mudgett's – horizontal – no guide – no permit - Contact BLM office for special access and safety information before visiting.

January Location: Buck N' Loons: 3517 South Cooper Street, Arlington, TX 76015-3410
Next meeting: January 10th, 2006





John Crosthwait at the November grotto auction

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