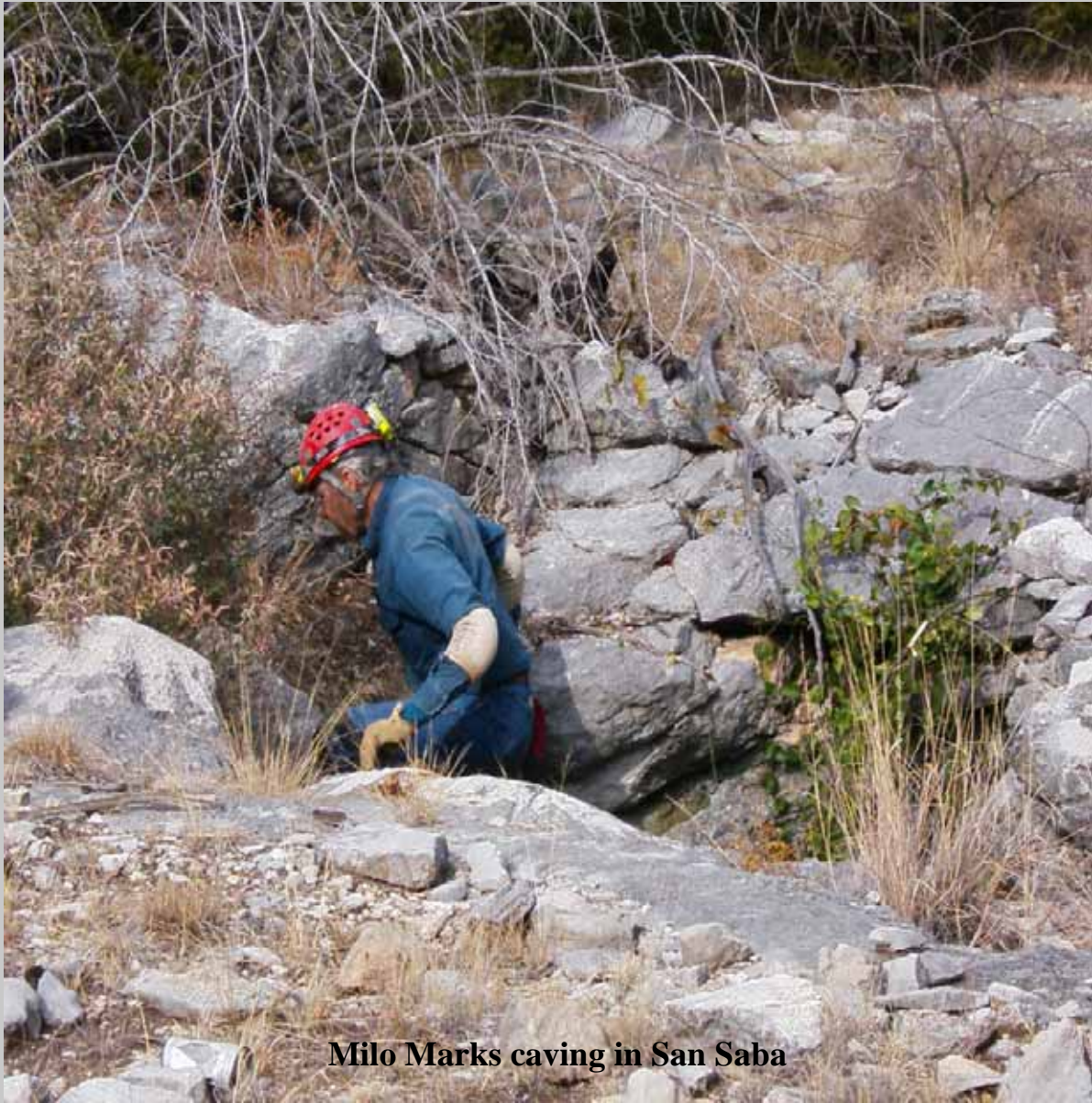


The Maverick Bull



Milo Marks caving in San Saba

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto Volume 19 Issue 7 July, 2006

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: Milo Marks coming out of Joes cave in San Saba by Lex Cox

Back Cover: Photo of RD Milhollin doing some vertical work in a cave in San Saba taken by Lex Cox

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

Cave Emergency:

FOR A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY IN TEXAS DIAL 911. FOR CAVE ASSISTANCE START BY CALLING THE CLOSEST NUMBER:

BEXAR: 210-326-1576 **COLLIN:** 214-202-6611
HAYS: 512-393-9054 **KENDALL:** 830-537-6111
SUTTON: 315-387-3424 **TRAVIS:** 512-663-2287
PARKER: 817 657-5780

Next meeting: July 11th, 2006 7:00 pm

Buck N' Loons

3517 South Cooper Street
 Arlington, TX 76015-3410.

Program: The July program will be a slide show from the NSS Audio/Visual Catalog: "Western Oklahoma Gypsum Caves." This slide show was prepared by the Central Oklahoma Grotto and highlights the caves and karst of the evaporite gypsum plain of Western Oklahoma (and North-west Texas, too).

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Caving Calendar

July 29-30 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

July 15 Strickland Pond Party (Austin): If you've never been to the annual Pond Party at "Stricklandia," you're missing the caver social event of the year. Come enjoy good food (potluck), good friends, good swimming and a great time. Call Pete for directions. **Contact:** Pete Strickland pstrickland1@austin.rr.com (512) 258-8384

July 15-16 Demystifying RAW Files (University of Houston campus): Workshop will be centered around using Photoshop CS2 for digital image manipulation. Space is limited, you must contact Kevin to sign up and obtain complete requirements. Workshop runs 9-5 on Saturday, 9-1 on Sunday. Free to NSS, TSA, TCMA and TCC members. **Contact:** Kevin McGowan caverlight@sbcglobal.net (512) 258-8384

July 22-23 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad region, NM) Cavediggers welcome, come see if this will be the next big one. **Contact:** Stephen Fleming swcaver@warpdriveonline.com

Aug 7-11 NSS Convention (Bellingham, WA). Held on the campus of beautiful Western Washington University, this convention will be a winner. Sign up for various geology field trips and workshops. Caving trips to limestone caves in Washington and British Columbia, and lava tubes in southern Washington can be arranged. Campus dormitory rooms are available if you don't want to camp, but the weather should be fine, cool and very little rain! **Info:** <http://www.nss2006.com/>

Aug 18-20 Third Annual EspeleoCoahuila 2006 (Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico): Organized by the Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología, AC (ACEAC). A variety of themes will be covered relating to cave exploration and rescue not only in Coahuila, but also in other parts of Mexico. Registration: 350 pesos (about \$32). **Contacts:** Monica Ponce mgpg7@yahoo.com Peter Sprouse petersprouse@yahoo.com **Info:** <http://www.oztotl.com/ps/EC/> (English) and <http://scintilena.clarence.com/permalink/219095.html> (Spanish).

Aug 26-27 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM)

Sept 02-04 Southwest Region Labor Day Regional (Sacramento Mtns., NM): The scenic limestone Sacramento Mountains are located east and southeast of Alamogordo. Cave trips and conservation projects in the region will be available. **Contact:** Kenny Stabinsky nmbatty@zianet.com

June 2006 Meeting Minutes

The Maverick Grotto met June 13th at Buck N' Loons, on S. Cooper St. in Arlington. There were 3 members present.

Program: Butch gave a slide show presentation about landowner relations and caving.

Reports from Officers:

Vice Chairman: Diana Tomchick can always use help with new program material and ideas. Please show your support by doing a program if possible.

Treasurer: Sharon couldn't make it to the meeting.

Newsletter Editor: Tammy Cox was also unable to attend the meeting but always needs trip reports and articles for the newsletter.

Trip reports and trip announcements:

Since attendance was so low, Butch, Diana and John talked among themselves, enjoyed dinner and called the meeting to be adjourned.

Chairman's Corner

Hello July 2006, where the heck did you come from? Every month I've started this column off with something like this. The reason; time is flying by and I feel like I'm behind the 8 ball in getting things done. This is the 20th anniversary of the grotto and yeah I was elected chairman for nostalgic reasons because I was here at the beginning. Nostalgia doesn't absolve me from the responsibility of making things happen like t-shirt designs, parties and stuff like that. I guess the bottom line is that we need some volunteers to make some stuff happen. I need some volunteers to make things happen.

On behalf of The Maverick Grotto, I offer condolences to Dennis Welch on the loss of his father, Paul Thomas Welch who passed away 6/1/06 in Indianapolis. The grotto is going to make a donation to The American Cancer Society in his name as a memoriam. A recent motion at a grotto meeting was passed to empower the officers to make financial decisions for such events without having to bring it to a common vote.

As I'm sure most of you are aware (I'll mention it here for those of you without e-mail), Dale Ellison, another of the original grotto members (he also helped found

it) recently suffered a stroke. It could of course have been much worse. Dale suddenly lost the use of his right arm and leg but is recovering well. He's been in physical therapy and is progressing along very well. He may be able to return home today (6/29) and that will be a great boost to his morale.

Arlene has been posting updates on the mailing list and I've visited once and talked to him once. Events like this keep life in perspective. When we think things aren't going well they could be much worse. There's no way that having a stroke is a good thing, however Dale's stroke could have caused more permanent and severe damage than it did. I'm not minimizing Dale's stroke, only pointing out that there are a few silver linings even in the worst of situations.

I called Corky Corcoran and we talked for awhile. He's also healing up but still needs two surgeries that will hopefully be the end of his ordeal. We had updates on Corky from Ida for awhile. Corky visited Dale at the hospital and Dale suggested Corky post to the list himself and let everyone know how he's doing.

Here's some follow-up on my discussion of LED flashlights in the June newsletter. I finally had to change batteries in the minimag that I converted in early March and have been using to test battery life. The flashlight didn't just quit but it got noticeably dim compared to another converted minimag with low use that's been used for a control sample to test new batteries against battery life. I must point out that the light strength seemed to be about the same until suddenly I noticed it was very weak. I can't tell you exactly how many hours the batteries lasted but it was probably longer than the 30 hours suggested on the package that the batteries might last.

You may or may not be interested in why I didn't let the light quit. Never fear, I can't let that information pass by the wayside. Our youngest Labrador retriever "Zubie" tested positive for Heart Worms (yes he was on the preventative). That was verified by a second test then some secondary test including looking at a blood sample under a microscope. At one time, the treatment consisted of a dosage of strychnine which was pretty hard on the dog. Veterinary science has progressed along like everything else and now Heart Worms can be treated with much gentler drugs. The treatment consists of two visits to a vet hospital for 3-4 days each. The dog has to be kept inactive and tranquil between the first and second visit and for 30 days after the second visit (not an easy task with a Lab). Zubie was doing so well the vet decided he could give the second treatment a couple of days after the first and we would only have to deal with a 3 week quiet time.

Even with the quiet time restrictions, nature must be satisfied. Zubie still had to go out and attend his needs. He had to be taken out on a leash to prevent running,

chasing neighborhood squirrels, cats and other things he likes to do. This included both day and nighttime outings.

We have an area in our yard we fondly refer to as DS land (use your imagination). There's no way anyone in their right mind would want to be in DS land after dark without a flashlight. The test mini-mag was the flashlight of choice. When the light output became dim enough that you couldn't tell what you might be stepping in, in DS land, it was definitely time to change the batteries. The night outings probably added about 15 hours of light usage which would have been three sets of batteries using an incandescent minimag.

That's it for now, happy caving, happy LED lighting and as it says on the TSA website, "we're all in this cave together."



The 2006 convention will be hosted at beautiful Western Washington University. The university is located between Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains, just outside of downtown Bellingham. Built with nature and beauty in mind this will be a stunning backdrop for the 2006 NSS Convention. Situated between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia, the spectacular natural environment of this region stretches from the San Juan Islands to Mt. Baker. Bellingham area and community offers recreational experiences from the relaxing to the exhilarating.

Activities

There will be a number of activities provided for you including: Geology Field Trips, History Tour, Caving Trips - Before, during, and after convention. You can

also visit the [caves](#) page for self guided cave trips and the [tourism](#) page for a variety of information on non-caving activities.

Please visit the new website at www.nss2006.org Chairman: Michael McCormack, Cascade Grotto, email - michmcco@exchange.microsoft.com

Landowners and Cavers

By Butch Fralia

Every once in awhile something comes up that reminds us as cavers of our responsibilities toward landowners. Recently, a TSS director asked an anonymous caver for specific cave information to include in the TSS files. The response that came back was pretty disturbing. I'm not sure of the caving status of the person being asked but he is a relative to folks owning four large ranches in three major cave counties.

Our anonymous caver brought the subject up to his family and it elicited some pretty negative stories about cavers. There were comments about fictitious caves, locations and one bogus cave map being circulated about one owner's property. This information resulted in trespassing, broken gates, cut fences and vandalism. The family finally permitted a few cavers to the property for exploration and mapping. Data could be published by county only (usually the way it works). Locations couldn't be shared with anyone and GPS equipment had to stay at home.

Organized cavers usually aren't the problem but unless landowners make a special effort to find out, they don't know the difference. It causes problems for all of us. Yeah, I know that on a few occasions there's been some trespassing sometimes accidental and sometimes intentional. (I've been the accidental trespasser to two occasions) On a few occasions when I've heard of the intentional, I participated in making sure they were berated soundly for it. I've heard stories from old landowners in San Saba County about how years ago cavers would just show up without making arrangements in advance, irritating landowners, It resulted in getting some properties completely closed to cavers. Years later when they had a chance to cool off and they were contacted properly, they were willing to try again and new relationships developed and still exist. What I haven't heard about in the bad cases is property damage and vandalism. When we as cavers have the opportunity to get on property, we need to be careful to follow any rules the landowner has established as well as the normally good

practices followed by cavers. Landowners will over time realize there's a difference between organized cavers and people who damage their property. Make sure you share any information you've gathered about the cave (including maps, descriptions) with the appropriate landowner and that if information circulates locally, it won't be from cavers. If you spot anyone on the property you don't think should be there, it's a good idea to let the landowner know so they won't associate the trespassers with you.

Outsiders have done a lot of damage but cavers can overcome the problems with time and care. It's obvious what happens when relationships are developed, you can see examples of what Milo Marks and Bill Tucker are doing in San Saba County.

Some past experiences:

Some of the experiences I've had over the years, point out that organized cavers aren't the only ones who visit caves. Landowners don't know the difference, they lump all cavers into one bucket. This makes life harder on cavers but it's the way life is, so all we can do is make the best of it and make sure we don't cause any of these negative opinions to be propagated.

A couple of years ago, our friendly landowner at Hill's Gate Cave suggested I should get "my" cavers under control, especially their mouths. It turns out that people who weren't supposed to know about the cave were asking about it. They weren't cavers but some of the locals. I did ask if he had any idea who'd passed the information on. He traced it back to one of his friends who'd been on the property who'd talked about it to everyone in site. By the time the story made the rounds, he had a major cavern on his property with buried treasure and the whole bit. The reason he didn't want a lot of publicity about it is that he's concerned about kids sneaking on the property and getting hurt. That problem resolved itself and cavers are still in good graces there. I may not be in good graces because I haven't set up any trips there in awhile!

Years ago when River Styx was open; two family members were in the area doing some bird hunting. They dropped by to make sure we had taken a list of names over to the house and if we knew of anyone on the property who shouldn't have been there. There were some weird folks from Springtown we'd met several times who like to sneak out there. They were true spelunkers, carrying six packs of beer into the cave in glass bottles, not wearing helmets. Probably the oddest thing was that they'd go caving then take off their caving clothes (usually cut off jeans and worn out tennis shoes) and

leave them near the entrance to the cave to use the next time they came back. Remembering the sight of some of those weathered clothes makes me itch just thinking about it. I'd tried to get them to follow the rules and even to get into organized caving. They thought of it as a male bonding ritual and wouldn't hear of it. Being concerned that 1) they were going to cause problems for cavers and 2) I was going to find one or more of them dead inside the cave. That and the fact both folks were holding shotguns (not on me), I suggested I'd seen some people in an area nearby and I didn't think they should be there.

The two family members went over to that area, found them and while one held a shotgun on them the other took all their pictures with a Polaroid Camera as well as their license plate. They were then escorted off the property with the shotguns in the ready position. One of the guys came back and thanked me for the information. I admitted I'd seen them before and tried to get them doing the right thing but they hadn't bought into it. He said that was OK, they'd had their chance but were no longer welcome.

Interesting enough, of the two family members's one of them was on the ranch a lot and I developed a good relationship with him over the years. The other family later became the owner of the ranch area where River Styx is located.

Unfortunately when the property went into probate after Shorty Mongrain died, the Bateman Ranch 108,000.993 acres (more or less) the ranch was divided into blocks of 7,000 acres by the heirs. Her nephew who'd become the cavers friend didn't end up with the cave. He did tell me that we were welcome on his part of the Ranch anytime we wanted to come. There just weren't any caves there.

Here are some things to think about when dealing with landowners.

When I was doing a lot of caving in the Arbuckle Mountains, there are a lot of electrical storms up there that kill cows. I thought I might be doing a good thing by letting the owner know. I'd write down the ear tag number when I found a dead cow or bull and take that information down to the owner. One day I mentioned he probably thought I was bad luck bringing in all this information about dead cows. He said he actually appreciated it, with 30,000 acres of land and one hired hand; he couldn't cover the ranch that closely. When he knew cavers were coming, he would focus on other areas knowing that if there was anything he should know about the area where caves were, they'd let him know about it. Once I took him information about a dead bull and while he was upset about the bull he was glad to know because he could get another

bull up there to service that area.

A lot of landowners spend time alone on their property and get lonely for some human conversation. That conversation can take a lot of turns from wanting to argue to just swapping tall tales. During one trip to Oklahoma, I contacted a landowner who the people I was with had made earlier contact. They thought I did a better job talking to the deep country folks and wanted me to talk to him. I introduced myself and he acted like he was pretty angry and started yelling at me. I said I was sorry to have intruded and would leave. I started walking off and he yelled "Where the hell are you going, I'm not through with you yet." I realized he wasn't as serious as he sounded and turned around and went back. I could see a little twinkle in his eye and yelled back that I thought he didn't want me there. He kept the argument going for a while then started telling us we couldn't go to his cave because there were rattlesnakes there. He then proceeded to start telling rattlesnake stories. I was wondering if this would ever end when his wife came to the yard and said he had a telephone call from one of his kids. He immediately says oops got to go, then says, "be careful around those caves, and watch for snakes." Up until that moment I didn't know if he was going to let us into the caves or not. We made a couple of more trips there and he seemed to enjoy it more than we did.

A similar situation is Harrell's Cave; the owner is a retired doctor and is perfectly happy for you to go to his cave as long as he knows you're up there. His wife has Alzheimer's so he doesn't get much intelligent conversation (I don't mean intellectual either) so be prepared for about 30 minutes to an hour of conversation if visiting if you ever go there.

One strange circumstance was a landowner wanting to check the ice chest and see if we had any beer. Sometimes the religious ones don't want one you to have beer. This guy went through the ice chest of one caver's truck and noted there wasn't any beer in there. The response was "oh no sir, we don't want to offend anyone." His response was "What kind of people are you if you don't drink beer? Where in the hell is the beer?" We took him over to the other truck where the ice chest was covered with a tarp and showed him the beer. He was happy, grabbed a beer and made some comments about the brand. After that we always made sure we had a case of his favorite brew on hand somewhere but the game was to find where it was hidden. This was a small price to pay for a great caving weekend on a property with some great caves. Of course it could go the other way, no beer means no beer!!

All landowners whether they will admit or not are interested in the caves on their property. Their interest runs through the gamut of how their cave compares to

other caves in the state in terms of just passing on information about it. It has formations, it's fun to go in, there's neat stuff to see. Give them whatever information you can about their cave whether it's a description or a map, especially if it's a map! Pictures taken inside the cave are almost as good as a map! If there's trash in the cave let them know, they may not know other people they've let in haven't been good citizens. If there's trash in the cave, feel free to clean it out!

Don't misrepresent yourself! If you're a sport caver, don't tell the landowner you're a scientist. Don't BS, tell the truth. If your name is George Veni, you can claim to be a world-class karst hydrologist. If your name is James Reddell, you can claim to be a renowned cave biologist. Don't be who you aren't. If a landowner has interest that are above a level you can provide, you can offer to contact someone with that specialty but don't claim it yourself unless you really have it. A favorite memory along these lines is an Oklahoma caver who presented himself as a member of the National Speleological Society (which is OK if you really are). He went to the front porch of a farmhouse and said his name and that he was a member of the National Speleological Society. The farmer looked at him for a minute, his mouth wide open then yelled "Mama, come see what's on this porch, the National Geographic Magazine is here to photograph our cave!" No amount of explaining could correct the impression. In this case, go see the cave but make sure if you take any photos, they get copies.

I'm close to closing this but want to reiterate the most important rule of all. If the landowner establishes rules for his property, follow them! If he says you've all got to go in at the same time, then figure out some way to do it. If he says close the first gate behind you but leave the second one open, do it! He has his reasons and some landowners have been known to use cavers as free labor. He doesn't want to drive out and open the gate so he gets you to do it for him. Don't ask, just do it!

Sometimes a landowner will request that all contacts go through a specific person or people. Honey Creek is like this as well as Hill's Gate Cave and probably a few more if I researched it better. If a caver tells you all contacts must go through them, give them the benefit of the doubt until you actually know for sure otherwise!

One final thing, this comes from both a real experience and common sense and falls under the category of rules. Once upon a time, there was a landowner on his property called Diamond Cave. It's marked on a topo map and you could get the information with a little work. However, you could get shot if you tried to go directly there. The first time we ever went there, we were supposed to have a contact who backed out and went looking at deer leases instead. On this particular day, we did have

a reference and more or less an appointment with a landowner who had a small cave on his property. Our contact was supposed to be there but didn't show up. We met with the landowner and he at least was expecting us. He took us to his cave, which happened to be a small vertical cave on a plateau in Coryell County. There wasn't a place to rig the pit so we parked my truck beside it and rigged off its suspension system. It was a straight down vertical hole about 30' deep. The first person down stated its depth and situation, the second person verified. When it was over the owner apologized for only having the one hole because watching cavers fight over who was going down first was the funniest thing he'd seen. He wished he'd had more caves so cavers could have spent more time on his property!

Our missing contact was supposed to make the introduction at the next property but again was off checking out great deer leases. I decided that we'd driven too far not to at least try to get into the next cave. We went over to the approximate area of Diamond Cave. I noted a small store and dropped in and asked about Diamond Cave. A young clerk attending the store knew about the cave and had an idea about the cave. She made a phone call and said someone would be down shortly. An old guy who's name I won't mention came down, he looked the group over and said who drove? I held up my hand and he said to get someone to drive my truck and follow him. I got in his truck and our friend Corky drove. I got the third, fourth and fifth degree interrogation about following rules set by a landowner on his own property. Turned out this landowner owned a number of banks and I was told later that if you owed him money, even downtown Moscow (when it was still a part of the old Soviet Union) wasn't a good place to hide. I finally told him that cavers aren't like Deer Hunters. If a Deer Hunter makes a landowner mad, deer are mostly the same across Texas except for Mulies and White Tail areas. A Deer Hunter can find another lease but since caves are unique, to see that particular cave, a caver must follow the rules of the landowner explicitly. Maverick Cavers went to that cave four times. Release forms were required for the first two times then forgotten after that. It was a great little cave, about 550' with some unique features.

This is the end, keep those landowners happy and they will discover the difference between real cavers and spelunkers.

Really the final note:

I was on a ranch in Oklahoma doing some caving and ridge walking. I got miss-located and ended up in the wrong pasture. Of course I didn't know at the time but I was trespassing! The next time I went back to the same

ranch, the owner suggested I should be careful and not get on the adjacent owners Ranch. He said the owner of the adjacent Ranch had complained there were people there who didn't have permission. I asked why he didn't come out and tell us. The landowner of the Ranch we were supposed to be on said he asked the same question. The response was that he (the wrong landowner) hoped we'd find some caves on this property like the ranch we were supposed to be on had. Since we didn't, we got a complaint!



**R D Milhollin caving
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