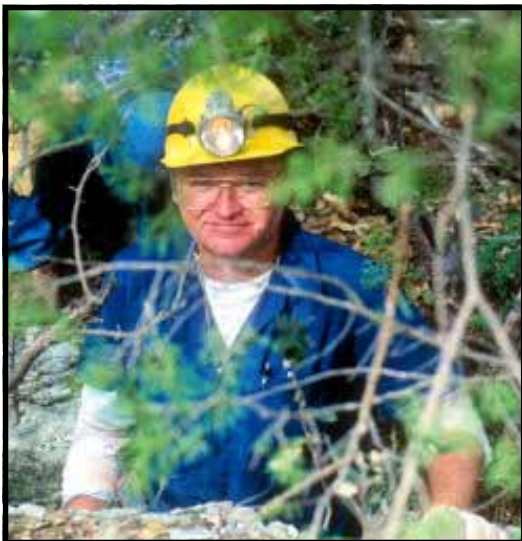


The Maverick Bull



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. Diana Tomchick or Bill Steele will be accepting books and magazines on cave-related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library.

Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Photos by Tammy Cox, Butch Fralia Keith Heuss.

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: February 13th , 2007 7:00 pm
Swinford's Pit BBQ & Grill, 1101 Terminal Rd.,
Fort Worth, TX 76106

Note: There will be a new flat screen TV and DVD player for the next meeting!

Program: The 52 minute video, "TAG--You're It!" This is a wonderful retrospective on T.A.G., its caves and cavers, produced by Benjy von Cramon as the program for the 1998 NSS Convention Banquet. Full of history, characters, and yarns; includes 'fantastic' pit-bopping and even exploration of virgin cave. Watch Jim Wilbanks rappel into 437-foot Fantastic Pit (Fern Cave, AL) with the "Antler Cam" suspended 10 feet above his head! Hear the history of the discovery and exploration of Ellison's Cave and the deepest known pit in the Continental U.S., Fantastic Pit! Don't miss this great video.

Chair

Diana Tomchick
 500 Kingston Dr.
 Irving, TX 75227
 (214) 418-5827
 Diana.tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu

Secretary

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

Newsletter Editor

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

Vice-Chair

Bill Steele
 500 Kingston Dr.
 Irving, TX 75227
 (214) 418-5827
 speleosteele@comcast.net

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

It's time to pay dues for 2007

It's time to pay your \$15.00 Membership and Subscriber Dues for 2007. If you're a subscriber and become a member later, your subscriber dues payment will be applied to your membership for the remainder of the year!

Caving Calendar

Feb 9 — Premiere of *Amazing Caves* IMAX film (Fort Worth Museum of Science and History): Come see the local premiere of one of the most spectacular caving movies ever made.

Feb 9-11 — Colorado Bend State Park Project: Second weekend of the month, this is a terrific project for beginning and experienced cavers, and the project is under new leadership this year. Come help locate, survey and produce maps of the approximately 380 caves and karst features in the park. Work assignments are handed out by 9 a.m. on Saturday, so don't be late. Overnight camping and recreational caving on Sunday will be available. **Contacts:** Rafal Kedzierski rafal_13@hotmail.com Mark Gee markageetxcaver@yahoo.com Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039 cavedba@charter.net Keith Heuss caverkeith@yahoo.com **Info:** CBSP@maverickgrotto.com **Directions:** www.maverickgrotto.org/maps/cbsp.html

Feb 11 — Government Canyon State Natural Area Project: 20 miles northwest of San Antonio, Sunday only this month. Activities include survey, exploration, ridge walking, and digging. Participants must enter by 9 a.m., contact in advance if you want directions. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller (830) 885-5631 mlmiller@gvtc.com

Feb 11 — Robber Baron Cave Work Day (San Antonio, TX): TCMA-owned Robber Baron Cave work project will start at 8:30 a.m. and continue all day. Let Linda know you are coming and they will provide water and lunch for you. Work includes: finishing steps and retaining wall, removing old chain link fence and removing ivy. Please bring digging tools including shovels and pickaxes, wheelbarrows, trowels, come alongs, pry-bars, 5 gallon buckets, water for mixing mortar, hoes and rakes, gloves, clippers, whatever it takes to take down chain link posts, or anything else you think might be useful. Caving is open after the work is finished. If you need a place to stay, let us know and we can hook you up. **Contacts:** Joe Mitchell (210) 679-8408 joemitchell@satx.rr.com Linda Palit (210) 699-1388 lkpalit@sbcglobal.net

Feb 11 — Karst Hunting at Onion Creek (Austin, TX): The Wildland Conservation Division of the city of Austin needs caver help to inventory caves, sinkholes, and other karst features. These features are the conduit by which water enters the Edwards aquifer; knowing their location will inform land management decisions. Training will be provided. **Contact and register:** Daniel Dietz, Environmental Conservation Information Specialist for the city of Austin (512) 263-6443 Daniel.dietz@ci.austin.tx.us **Info:** http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/downloads/karstridgewalking_onion_021107.pdf

Feb 17-19 — Manhole Dig (Carlsbad region, NM): Cavedig-

gers welcome, come see if this will be the next big one. If they didn't make it during the January trip, then this weekend could be the big breakthrough. If you plan to come, contact Steve as they need a minimum of eight people now to run the dig. Located on BLM land not far from Lechuguilla Cave. **Contact:** Steve Peerman gypcaver@comcast.net

Feb 18 — Cave Digging at Onion Creek (Austin, TX): From 8 a.m. to noon, we will be squirming into a cave, filling buckets full of dirt, trash, and debris, and passing the buckets to the surface. The idea is to promote greater recharge into the aquifer by "unplugging" major recharge features. If you like to get muddy, this is the job for you. **Contact and register:** Daniel Dietz, Environmental Conservation Information Specialist for the city of Austin (512) 263-6443 Daniel.dietz@ci.austin.tx.us **Info:** http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/downloads/karstdigwqpl_021807.pdf

Feb 23-25 — Texas Cave Conservancy Winter Conference (Cedar Park, TX): The Texas Cave Conservancy would like to invite you out to a new event that we plan on hosting each year here in Cedar Park, Texas. Camping (with a campfire) is available at the TCC Headquarters. In the event of a real winter we can make space for cavers inside the TCC Headquarters. Breakfast will be available on Saturday and Sunday. We will have an evening meal Saturday night followed by a special presentation and a party. Caving is available all weekend, as well as guided tours and workshops. **Contact:** Mike Walsh TCC-caves@austin.rr.com **Info:** <http://texascaves.org/>

Feb 24-25 — 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. **Contact:** Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Mar 9-10 — Jester Cave (Blair, OK): Come see the longest gypsum cave in North America, and enjoy the shallow water, bats, multiple entrances, the "Run-Around Pool," critters washed in from the outside (e.g., bullfrogs) and at the same time help clean up the caves. Bring a wire brush for graffiti and trash bag and/or a pack big enough to help carry out beer cans, bottles and any other garbage we might find. We'll camp out Friday night at Quartz Mountain State Park in OK, or you can stay in a room in the lodge at the park. After the trip we'll eat a steak dinner in Altus and return to the Metroplex. This is a trip very suitable for beginners and teenagers, so bring friends and/or family. **Contact:** Bill Steele (214) 770-4712 speleosteele@tx.rr.com

Mar 9-11 — Colorado Bend State Park Project

Mar 10-11 — Government Canyon State Natural Area Project

Mar 12-16 — Veracruz Caving Camp (Cordoba, Veracruz, Mexico): This event will be a week of caving and fellowship along the lovely Atoyac River near Cordoba, Veracruz. Our goals for this event are to visit the many caves of the area both known and unknown, and to promote fellowship between Veracruz and Texas cavers. Our hosts will be the cavers of Espeleo CEMAC Veracruz, and cavers from Cordoba, Orizaba, and Xalapa. Our camp will be at Playa la Junta, about 10 km north of the town of Paraje Nuevo. Bring wetsuit, PFD, whistle, and vertical gear, there are river caves to explore! There is a modest daily camping fee to stay at Playa la Junta, and the only rule is you can't bring beer in - you must buy it from them. They have a small tienda and will cook meals as well as serve beer. There are cold showers and flush toilets, if you want a hot shower bring your camp stove and shower bag. We will have a digital projector set up in the bar area each night to watch the slides of the day. **Contact:** Peter Sprouse petersprouse@yahoo.com **Info:** <http://www.oztotl.com/veracruz/>

Mar 17-18 — Manhole Dig

Mar 24 — Robber Baron Cave Work Day: Work includes finishing projects from the February 11th Work Day, then landscaping plantings and trails. Caving is open after the work is finished. **Contact:** Linda Palit lkpalit@sbcglobal.net

Mar 24-25 — High Guads Restoration Project

Mar 30-Apr 1 — Metroplex Cavers Rites of Spring Party: After a long absence from the calendar, this event IS returning. Stay tuned for more information as the event gels!

Mar 31-Apr 1 — Southwest Region Spring Regional (McKittrick Hill, NM): Cave trips and conservation projects in the ever-popular Southeastern New Mexico area will be available. **Info:** <http://www.caves.org/region/swrl>

Apr 06-07—Colorado Bend State Park: Due to the 2007 TSA Spring Convention scheduled for the second weekend, the project date has been moved to the preceding weekend!

Apr 13-15 Texas Speleological Association Convention (Albert, TX): Albert is just south of Stonewall, which is on 290 between Johnson City and Fredericksburg. Saturday April 14th is reserved for talks and presentations, Saturday evening there will be a dinner and the TCMA auction. We may have some caving Sunday. If you are interesting in giving a presentation please contact Kel Thomas at kthomas@sonoratx.net **Contact:** Jacqui Thomas jlrills@sonoratx.net

April 14 — Cave Day, Austin, TX: Two times a year, around April 15 and September 15, the Texas Cave Conservancy hosts CAVE DAY here in Cedar Park, Texas. This year we expect 500-750 visitors for this cave related public education effort. We need cavers to help run the event. We will even buy you dinner Saturday. For more information contact: Donna Mosesmann at Dogmos1@hotmail.com or call 512-249-2283.

Yes, we know that is the date the TSA set for their convention. Is

seems that it is the same weekend as the Colorado Bend project.

Apr 14-15 — Manhole Dig

Apr 28-May 6 — Fort Stanton Cave Project (Ruidoso, NM): Join the folks working on extending the length of this cave on BLM lands. Weekends will be devoted to installing the new entrance into the Mud Turtle Passage, weekday trips will be scientific surveys. You can attend during the whole project week, or either weekend. **Contact:** John Corcoran III john_j_corcoran_III@msn.com

Apr 28-29 — High Guads Restoration Project

Apr 28 — Robber Baron Cave Work Day: Work includes finishing projects from the March 24th Work Day, then landscaping plantings and trails. Caving is open after the work is finished. **Contact:** Linda Palit lkpalit@sbcglobal.net

May 26-28 — Southwest Region Memorial Day Regional (Ft. Stanton Cave, NM): Cave trips and conservation projects in Ft. Stanton Cave will be available. Hosted by the Sandia Grotto. **Info:** <http://www.caves.org/region/swrl>

May 25-28 — Kentucky Speleofest (Upton, KY): The 36th annual Speleofest is billed as "Underground Heaven" and takes place on the 67-acre Lone Star Preserve, acquired by the Louisville Grotto as a caving preserve. Typical events include lots of caving trips (including special beginner's trips), food, speleovendors, karaoke and more. Camping and hot showers will be available. Proximity to such attractions as Mammoth Cave National Park, the Jim Beam distillery, and Fort Knox should provide enough fun for non-caving friends and relatives. **Contacts:** Sue Milburn 270-300-8800 (d) 270-737-1868 (e) Sherry Gowens 256-310-4522 **Info:** <http://www.caves.org/grotto/louisvillegrotto/>

July 23-27 NSS Convention (Marengo, IN). Held in the heart of Indiana caving country, this should be a fun one. **Contacts:** Dave Haun (812) 829-4077 Kathy Welling (765) 653-6352 **Info:** <http://www.nss2007.com/>

July 29-Aug 4 Speleocongreso 2007 (Aquadilla, Puerto Rico): Fifth FEALC (Federation of Latin America and the Caribbean) Congress will include talks, speleovendors, salons, all the activities you might find at an NSS Convention, but the focus is on caving in the FEALC countries. **Info:** www.speleocongreso2007.org

Oct 8-12 — National Cave & Karst Management Symposium (St. Louis, MO). Held at the Holiday Inn Southwest/Viking Conference Center and Powder Valley Nature Center. Co-sponsored by Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy. **Contacts:** Bill Elliott Bill.Elliott@mdc.mo.gov Jim Kaufmann president@mocavesandkarst.org

Oct 16-21 — Cave Research Foundation 50th Anniversary Celebration (Hamilton Valley, KY). Come celebrate 50 years

of exploration of Mammoth Cave (and other caves around the U.S.) at the CRF Hamilton Valley Field Station. Caving, guided tours, camaraderie, food, song, camping and general good fun. Field trips will be conducted from Oct. 16-18th in the Mammoth Cave System, general celebration will occur from Oct. 19-21st. **Contact:** Pat Kambesis pnkambesis@juno.com

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Sharon Mastbrook

The meeting was held 1/9/2007 at Swinford's Pit BBQ & Grill in North Fort Worth. There was a slight that prevented showing the program. The remote control didn't match up to the TV so it couldn't be switched over to external input. There was a frantic rush to get that working which is why Sharon was taking minutes instead of Butch! The problem was never solved.

Visitors attending the meeting were David Castello, Kelly Lough, Daniel Dase, and Jim Weller, an old time caver from Austin. By Jim's definition, he was a TOTR cook before there was a TOTR.

Reports from officers:

Chair Diana Tomchick asked people to think about projects for 2007, cleanup, restoration? She also talked about needing new members and what could be done to help accomplish that.

Vice-Chair: Bill Steele— Not present due to work commitments.

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook said we have money and dues for 2007 are due.

Secretary/editor/webmaster: Butch Fralia said

we always need newsletter articles. He also announced that our website hosting company was upgrading all their plans including the ones that were already hosted. The space allocation has been increased to 6GB of which we're using 500 MB. He mentioned options of allowing people to have personal hosting space on the website.

New Member: Mike Swinford was voted in as a member.

Trip Reports: Cynthia Hall went to Fitton Cave (Arkansas) with Tammy and Lex Cox in November.

Diana Tomchick and Bill Steele went caving in TAG country.

There was a general discussion about why someone should join the NSS.

The upcoming TSA Winter Meeting at CBSP was discussed and plugged. The new camping area for the CBSP Project was discussed.



Mike Swinford became the newest Maverick Grotto member.

- Butch Fralia

TSA Spring Convention

By Jacqui Thomas

The 2007 TSA Spring Convention April 13-15 will be in

Albert, Texas at the historic Williams Creek School, built in 1897. Talks will be held in the original stone schoolroom and salons will be in the "new" section, added in dogtrot style in the 1950s.

The grounds are available for camping.

Albert is located just 6 miles south of Stonewall, on FM 1623. Stonewall is on Highway 290 about half-way between Fredericksburg and Johnson City.

In the vicinity: Luckenbach (Albert Luckenbach sold his store in Luckenbach, moved to Martinsburg, started a Post Office and renamed the town after himself, Albert, since there already was a Luckenbach); and the LBJ State Historic Park.

Dog lovers/dog owners, good news for you, dogs are welcome, although Gillespie County requires dogs be on leash and the school is owned by Gillespie County.

There will even be some parking for self-contained travel trailers and RVs.

The TSA Spring Convention is a technical meeting with presentations on various caving projects along with techniques for surveying, cave photography, mapping and just about anything else you can come up with. There will also be a map and photo salon.

Keep an eye on the TSA website for more information as it becomes available. The address is: <http://www.cavetexas.org>, you'll see a link on the home page to 2007 TSA Spring Convention information. There's also a map on the website showing where Albert, TX is located.

TSS Happenings

By Butch Fralia



The TSS offices are on the third floor of Building 18A at the Pickle Research Center, Austin, TX.

- Butch Fralia

The Texas Speleological Survey (TSS) held its most recent Board of Directors meeting February 3, 2007 at the Pickle Research Center in Austin Texas.

George Veni who has been TSS President for 13 years is leaving Texas to become the director of the National Caves and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) located in Carlsbad. He has resigned as TSS President and Director. After his years of exem-



TSS Board of Directors meeting 01/14/2006. With George Veni (top right) presiding.

- Butch Fralia

plary service everyone in the TSS and the rest of the Texas Caving world thank George for his service and wish him well in his new position.

Ron Ralph has been elected President of the TSS. Ron has been TSS Treasurer for several years and Allan Cobb will fill that position. Ron was also Office Manager so Jim Kennedy is taking over that task leaving Ron free for the challenges of his new job.

If you are new to Texas Caving, the TSS archives Texas Cave data and publishes reports on the various counties. *The Caves of Sutton County, Texas* that I had at the last meeting is a TSS Publication.

We maintain a paper and electronic database of Texas Cave data. If you are a caver and have a question about any Texas Cave you can ask the TSS and we'll give you an answer if the information is available. At this moment the TSS has records for 9,509 karst features (caves, sinkholes, shelters, springs and even rumored caves). 4,243 of those records are actual caves, we don't have all the data on every cave but we're working on it.

Camp Cooking for Cavers on Expedition

By Diana Tomchick

Over the Christmas/New Year's holiday Bill Steele and I once again drove back down to the Purificación region of Mexico for a two-week caving expedition. Our camping sites on these trips are primitive in the sense that generally we don't have any running water, and we certainly lack refrigeration and electricity. A big part of the fun (for me, at least) of such expeditions is menu planning and food preparation. I view it as a challenge to not only design nutritious and delicious meals, but also creative ones. Nobody really enjoys eating the same four meals repeatedly over a 14-day period (despite what they might tell you). Now there are cavers out there who view cooking as a chore, and aren't interested in doing more than eating Wolf's Brand Chili every night. On our trip this year, Marion Smith fell into that category, and he's coined an apt phrase for this activity, "heat and eat."

My goal when menu planning is to provide plenty of good quality, tasty, nutritious food with a bit of variety. Of course, this requires that your audience (the food eaters) be open to a little adventure at the dinner table, and fortunately this has not proven to be a big problem in my travels. This year I was cooking dinner for four people, as Mark Minton and Yvonne Droms rode with Bill and I in my Tundra and we ate together.

We cook with a two-burner propane gas Coleman stove. For several years I've been unhappy with the cheap pots and pans we'd been hauling around in our camp cooking box, so this year I purchased the GSI Hard Anodized Extreme 7 piece cook set to replace the old pans. This set is made of hard-anodized aluminum with a non-stick coating so it conducts heat well without hot spots, and cleanup was really easy. The nesting set consists of three pots (1, 1.5 and 2.5 quarts), three lids that double as frying pans and one handle, and retails for around \$75-85 (do a web search for the best current price). Yes, that seems a bit pricey, until you realize that a set like this, if taken care of properly, could last for years and make your cooking life so much easier. By the end of the trip I decided that I needed to replace the pots in my home kitchen with hard anodized aluminum ones, too! Also included in our cooking kit is a larger, 6-quart pot—I purchased a heavy-duty stainless steel one from an Asian grocery store (a good inexpensive place to find this item). I also added some wooden and/or plastic spoons to protect the non-stick coating on the new cook set.

This year I decided to add some Cajun, Creole, and Asian-inspired meals to the menu—in past years we relied mostly on variations of Mexican and Italian meals. Tacos, black beans and spaghetti are quick to cook and tasty, but a bit boring after awhile. I always also plan to include two to three "heat and eat" meals, as no one really wants to do a lot of cooking after an extra-long in-cave day. Nowadays there is such a huge variety of meal spice packets available in the regular grocery store for Indian, Chinese and other international cuisines that the hardest part is practicing restraint in menu planning! Here's the actual menu that I used for the trip.

PEP FOOD MENU, CHRISTMAS 2006

I planned the dinner menu for 14 nights in the field. The last three meals are emergency "open cans and reheat quickly" meals for extra-long days, to be used in a real pinch.



Marion Smith demonstrates his "heat and eat" campfire cooking technique.

- Bill Steele

BREAKFAST MENU

We mostly rely on granola and/or cooked oatmeal, and plan to have eggs and/or pancakes 2-4 times. We also usually finish off any dinner leftovers (if available).

1. Granola
2. Cooked oatmeal
3. Krusteaze pancake mix
4. Eggs
5. Coffee, tea & powdered milk (Nido)
6. Canned Mexican fruit juices
7. Tangerines

LUNCH MENU

We plan to rely about 2/3 of the time on sandwiches or tortilla wraps; the rest of the time we will consume "in-cave" food, which consists of canned spaghetti, chili, fruit, tuna, etc.

1. Whole wheat sandwich bread
2. Mustard
3. Various sausages
4. Oaxacan cheese
5. Tangerines
6. Tuna, Spam, deviled ham
7. Tortillas
8. Small cans of food for in-cave meals

DINNER MENU

Condiments will include limes, chips and/or salsas, avocados, cilantro. Bill will also try some Dutch oven baking (fruit cobbler, I believe) for dessert.

1. Mexican black beans (whole) & rice, corn, green pepper, tortillas & Oaxacan cheese
2. Pigeon peas & rice, small amount of ham or sausage, okra in tomato sauce, green pepper
3. Chicken mole & rice, green pepper, tomato, tortillas & cheese
4. Spaghetti & tomato sauce, ground beef or salmon, sliced black olives, green beans
5. Spaghetti & pesto sauce, can salmon, sliced black olives, green beans
6. Spaghetti & creamy pesto sauce, can salmon, sliced black olives, green peas
7. Chicken creole with diced tomatoes and okra in tomato sauce, green pepper, corn bread
8. Indian curry with garbanzo beans, pita bread, green peas
9. Thai curry (yellow or red), small can shrimp, tofu, baby corn, water chestnuts, green peas
10. Pad thai, small can shrimp, tofu, baby corn, water chestnuts,

green peas, chopped peanuts

11. Christmas ham & beans, pineapple slices, mixed green vegetables, corn bread
12. Chicken mole & rice, green pepper, tomato, tortillas & cheese
13. Mexican black beans (entero) & rice, corn, green pepper, tortillas & cheese
14. Thai curry (yellow or red), small can shrimp, tofu, baby corn, water chestnuts, green peas
15. Wolf's chili & green peas
16. Wolf's chili & green peas
17. Ravioli & green beans

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We tried two new dishes this year: fruit cobbler baked in a dutch oven over the campfire, and a Mexican-style cabbage slaw. Bill purchased a pre-seasoned 6 quart camp cast-iron dutch oven from the Lodge



Outlet Center (at a 50% discount) in South Pittsburg, TN while caving out in TAG country. A camp dutch oven has a recessed lid with a flange to keep the hot coals from falling off the top, and three short legs. He'd found a recipe and instructions for peach cobbler in a cookbook at work, but unfortunately I forgot where we packed the recipe in the truck so I had to reconstruct it from memory. We adopted it to use with other canned fruit such as raspberries and blackberries, and it worked well. The key to baking with a dutch oven is to generate and use a large amount of coals—the indirect heat will provide even baking. You do not want to place the oven near the direct flames, as this will cause the cobbler to burn. Use a hot pad or other tool (we used a pair of vise grips) to occasionally lift the lid and check the progress of the baking.

Dutch Oven Fruit Cobbler

Ingredients

- One 26 oz. can peaches in heavy syrup
- 2 1/2 cups Bisquick mix
- 1/2 cup sugar
- One egg
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Oil the inside of a dutch oven (I use olive oil). Preheat (for about 20 minutes) the dutch oven with coals from the campfire. A long-handled shovel works well for piling coals around the oven and on top of the lid.

Drain the fruit but save the liquid. Mix the Bisquick, sugar and cinnamon in a bowl. Break the egg in a small dish and beat well. Make a well in the dry mix, add the beaten egg and about 1/2 cup of the reserved liquid and mix. Add more liquid as needed; the batter should be thicker than pancake or cake batter,



A freshly-baked raspberry cobbler is pink due to the intense color of the fruit juices used in the batter.

- Bill Steele

but not as thick as biscuit batter. Stir only long enough to eliminate most of the large lumps—the longer you stir, the tougher the baked cobbler will be. Pour the batter into a pre-heated dutch oven, then add the fruit on top of the batter (it will sink as it's heavy). Bake until a fork inserted in the middle comes out clean (15-30 minutes; time will vary according to the amount of hot coals you use).

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The cabbage slaw was a variation on a recipe that Mark and Yvonne typically use. After 4-5 days in the woods, it's nice to have something that resembles a salad. Without refrigeration, lettuce doesn't hold up well, but a large head of cabbage typically lasts for the duration of the 2-week trip. This year our temperatures were unseasonably warm (over 60 degrees during the day and rarely near freezing at night) but the cabbage remained fine. When we ran out of bottled Italian dressing for the slaw, I whipped up a homemade Mexican-style vinaigrette that worked quite well.

Mexican-style Cabbage-Carrot Slaw

Ingredients

- 1/3 large head cabbage, shredded thinly
- One large carrot, shredded or sliced thinly
- One 7 oz. can sliced black olives
- One 7 oz. can pickled jalapeños (en escabeche) or pickled rastras
- Olive oil
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Place shredded vegetables in a large bowl, or pot with a lid. Drain the black olives and discard the liquid; add the olives to the vegetables. Drain the pickled jalapeños but save the liquid (serve the jalapeños as appetizers around the campfire). Add a roughly equal amount of olive oil to the jalapeño liquid (proportions may vary according to personal tastes), and shake a small amount of salt and pepper into the vinaigrette. Pour the dressing over the shredded vegetables. Stir several times (or place the lid on the pot and shake vigorously) while preparing the rest of the meal (over about a 30-45 minute period). You may also add a small amount (around 1/8 teaspoon each) of cumin and/or Mexican oregano to the vinaigrette.

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I look forward to more camp cooking adventures in the future. The best part about our caving expedition trips is that we can haul a lot of heavy items (canned goods, dutch oven) in the back of the pickup truck, so we have access to a lot of convenience foods and cooking tools that you wouldn't have when back-packing.

San Saba trip report

January 12-14, 2007

By: Tammy Cox

Participants: Bill and Francie Tucker, Lex and Tammy Cox, Landowner and friends

Lex and I drove to San Saba Friday night after work. The weather was calling for snow and ice but we decided to give it a try. We arrived at the landowner's ranch house around 9:30 pm and were invited in for wine and chit chat around the fire place. We also played a little play station two or three; I don't really know much about those games.

Saturday morning just after we had breakfast Bill and Francie arrived. They said the roads were not frozen but it was cold and rainy. We were of course still in the house visiting and staying warm. We weren't sure if they were going to brave the weather, but they didn't want to miss the caving trip.



- Tammy Cox

After everyone said their hellos we decided to bundle up and head out to one of the caves that we found on a previous trip. Bad air kept us from finishing our exploration last September and we were hoping the cold had solved that problem.

Traveling to the cave was done first class. We got to ride in the mule with the land owner. We didn't have to bush whack or carry heavy packs on our backs, we just drove up to the cave entrance and got our stuff out of the back and we were ready to go.



Bill Tucker demonstrates advanced vertical caving technique.

- Tammy Cox

The landowner had set up a ladder for easy access so it didn't take long for us to find out that the air was good and we got to spend a lot of time pushing holes. We poked our heads in every hole we could find and had fun doing some tight crawls. There were some formations in the cave and it looked like at one

time there used to be a large bat population from the pile of guano we found. We had lunch underground where it was warm and then went on to explore another bad air cave that we also found in September.

When we arrived at the next cave Bill lowered his mach 1 bad air tester (that he made himself) into the pit and the air was good. This drop was a pretty tight crack on rope that went down about twenty five feet and then turned left and made what looked like another twenty five foot drop. There was a pile of loose rocks



The owners friend in a tight spot.

- Tammy Cox

at the corner where you would be attempting your next drop. Bill and I both took a look and decided not to chance getting hit in the head by falling rocks. Maybe another day we can haul the rocks out and try again.



Bill Tucker climbing with something on his helmet.

- Tammy Cox

By this time we were cold and tired and we all went back to the Ranch house for a wonderful dinner that Francie and the landowners had made for us while we were gone.

Sunday morning we went to check out another lead in a different cave that bad air kept us from exploring in May of 2006. There was no ladder here so we rigged a rope and headed down.



Tammy Cox (Left) and Lex Cox (Right) negotiating the same tight spot. Photo Left Lex Cox, Photo Right Tammy Cox.



Bill Tucker with a small animal skull decorating his helmet.

- Tammy Cox

The air was good and we had fun pushing holes and also pushing Lex through a tight spot. Bill found a skull from some kind of a small animal and was sporting it in his headlamp strap. Lex thinks it was a possum skull. We climbed out and scouted around for another hole to explore.

The landowners friend and Bill spotted another twenty to thirty foot pit about two hundred feet away from the one we had just been in. Being cold, hungry and having a long drive home in the bad weather ahead of us we decided to save it for the next trip.

Everyone made it home safely and we are looking forward to the next time.

That's a wrap folks!



The Armadillo is sometimes called The State Bird of Texas because they are usually seen flying off the bumper of your car!

- Photo Butch Fralia

**Maverick Grotto
c/o Butch Fralia
3412 Walton Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76133-2230**