

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto

Volume 17, Issue 4 April 2004



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, photographs, and other two- and three-dimensional goodies. 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.

Complimentary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complimentary 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 per year for nonmembers 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.

Carbide: Currently carbide is unavailable.

Library: Support your grotto library. Russell Hill is accepting books, magazines, and videos related to caves and caving for our library. Thanks to Russell for his efforts in transporting the library collection to meetings.

Cave Rescue

Call collect (512) 686-0234

Photo & Map Credits

Front cover photo: "San Saba Caving" by Butch Fralia. Pictured are Melissa Marzahn and Kristopher Megahan.

Page 4, left: Jose Curras; right, Scott Boyd

Page 5, left: Scott Boyd; right, Butch Fralia

Page 6: photos provided by Jerry Atkinson

Pages 7 & 8: Mark Gee

Page 10: Diana Tomchick

Page 11: Don & Stephanie Selby

Page 13 & back cover: Jay Jordan

Visit Our Web Site!

Butch has been hard at work updating the web site, check it out! You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

maverickgrotto.org

Corrections to the March issue

In the article "Caves of Hudspeth County" I referred repeatedly to "Kitty Menking." Mark Gee informed me that Kurt and Kitty are not married, but I still don't know Kitty's last name. Perhaps someone else can enlighten me on this matter.

Next meeting, April 13th, 7p.m.

Bodacious BBQ

1206 E. Division St.

Arlington, TX 76011

(817) 860-4248

Agenda Items: TSA Convention, Great-X T-shirt Auction.

Program: Dan Smith will show slides of his 6 month and 2,500 mile backpack trip in 1981 from Mexico to Canada along the Pacific Crest Trail. The trail travels from Campo, Mexico north to Manning Provincial Park in British Columbia. Not a cave in sight, so there will be no cave pictures, but good mountain photos. Be sure to show up at 7 p.m., as we will start the program before the business meeting.

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March Meeting Minutes

submitted by Scott Boyd

The Maverick Grotto met March 9 at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington. Seventeen members and six visitors attended this month's meeting. The visitors were Lex & Tammy Cox along with their daughter Amber, Kristopher Megahan, Melissa Marzahn, and Pete Lindsley.

Program:

The night's program was a video of a December 2003 trip to Jester Cave in Oklahoma, in which several grotto members led 27 Venture Scouts through a tour of the cave. The video was followed by an explanation of the making of the video by Pete Lindsley.

Reports from Officers:

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook reported that we have \$1,270.08 in the checking account, and \$293.30 in petty cash, for a total of \$1563.38.

Newsletter Editor: Diana announced that the deadline for the April newsletter is April 5th, and requested articles and photos.

Old Business:

Diana talked a bit about the preparations for the TSA Spring Convention. Bill Steele told about the musical entertainment that will be at the convention.

New Business:

There was no new business this month.

Trip reports and trip announcements:

Scott Boyd gave a trip report on the grotto's weekend trip to a ranch near San Saba, TX, and more info was added to the report by Butch Fralia and Bill Tucker. Butch announced the upcoming Colorado Bend State Park project weekend. Diana gave some more info about the upcoming trip to Jester Cave in Oklahoma on March 20th. Bill Steele gave a trip report on a trip to the headwaters of the Frio River. Bill also mentioned an upcoming trip to the Grand Canyon for 18 days of rafting and caving.

Pete Lindsley applied for membership, and was voted in as a member. A raffle was held for another Great-X T-shirt, which was won by Jan Zelinka; \$20 was collected from the raffle.

Caving Events Calendar

April 09-11 Colorado Bend State Park Project: long-time favorite of Mavericks, pretty close to home, semi-regular schedule, second weekend of the month. This is a terrific project for beginning cavers. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com or Dale Barnard Barnarddale@yahoo.com

April 10-11 Government Canyon State Natural Area Project (San Antonio): 20 miles west of San Antonio. Activities this month focus on ridge walking on a 195-acre parcel of land that hasn't been previously checked for caves. Participants must enter property with group, contact in advance for times. See page 10 of this newsletter for directions and more information. **Contact:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 gveni@satx.rr.com

April 24-25 Government Canyon State Natural Area Project: More ridge walking. **Contacts:** Marvin and Lisa Miller (830) 885-5631 mimiller@gvtc.com

April 24 Caver's Adopt-A-Highway Trash Cleanup: See page 13 for more information, directions. **Contact:** Jay Jorden (214) 202-6611 jjorden@texoma.net

April 24-25 High Guads Restoration Project: (NM): Ongoing 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

May 01 Texas Cave Conservancy Open House: (Westside Cave Preserves, Austin): The TCC is hosting an open house to educate the public about caves, cave life, bats, recharge and cave related endangered species. Cavers are needed to demonstrate caving to the public; some of the caves of the preserve (including pits that require vertical skills) will be open to visitation. **Contact:** Mike Walsh Tccaus@cs.com

May 02 Bindseil's Wind Tunnel: (Comal County): Read about the project in the last (October 2003) Texas Caver, and see page 11 for directions and more information. **Contact:** Rick Corbell (210) 313-6084 rlcorbell@hotmail.com

May 07-09 Colorado Bend State Park Project

May 21-23 2004 Spring Texas Speleological Association Convention and Texas Speleological Survey Workshop, Longhorn Caverns: This year's convention is hosted by the Metroplex grottos and co-sponsored by the TSS, who will conduct a surveying workshop on Sunday morning. Sessions and vendors will be located at the Burnet Community Center. More information will be posted on TSA website, www.cavetexas.org and check page 9. **Contacts:** Joe Ranzau joe.ranzau@usaa.com Diana Tomchick (214) 418-5827 Diana.Tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu

May 29-31 Memorial Day Regional, Southwest Region NSS (Guadalupe Mts., NM): This event will include opportunities for recreational caving and work trips with the High Guads Restoration Project. Hosted by the Pajarito Grotto (Los Alamos, NM). **Contact:** Jennifer Foote bigredfoote@yahoo.com

July 12-16 NSS Convention: (Marquette, MI): This year the convention takes place in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, with field trips to Canada and points further south. **Contacts:** Jean DeVries devriesj@aol.com John Wilkerson caver@wilkersons.ws Website www.nss2004.com

Editor's Notes

Sometimes truth really is stranger than fiction! Yes, there is a Fiero Ranch, ask Maverick grotto charter member James Savage for more information on how to become an owner of one of these fine machines. The new Wink Sink does exist, check out the web site listed as a reference at the end of the article for more photos and links related to the original Wink Sink. Bill Steele really is a cave ventriloquist, though I don't know if he uses these talents above ground. You'll probably have to provide him with a puppet to find out—maybe one of those BCI bat puppets would do the trick.

Thanks to everyone who provided material for this month's newsletter—I had a great time putting it together, I hope you enjoy reading it, too.

Next month I promise to include an article about the Jester trip—I ran out of time to write it and room to print it in this month's newsletter. --Diana

San Saba County Caving

March 5-7, 2004

Editor's Note: This month we have reports from two grotto members about the San Saba County caving project organized by Milo Marks and Bill Tucker.

Scott Boyd

Participants: Scott Boyd, Jose Curras, Butch Fralia, Terry Holsinger, Milo Marks, Melissa Marzahn, Kristopher Megahan, R.D. Milhollin, Don and Stephanie Selby, Bill Tucker

Saturday morning, after everyone arrived, we all piled into several trucks and went about a mile south of the campsite. Butch was going to spend the day tagging caves and holes that were located on previous trips last summer and fall. Milo led several of us to an area with quite a few holes to explore.

Kristopher, Melissa and myself checked out several holes, pits, and cracks that went nowhere, until we came upon what would later turn out to be ELL-011. At the surface, this one was a crack about 6 - 8 feet long, 1 - 3 feet wide, and about 8 feet deep. I crawled down a narrow passage at one end and discovered a rock in the way. Beyond it was a narrow passageway into a room. We ate lunch outside this cave, and then went back to the trucks.

At some point in time we came upon Terry, and we chatted with him for a while and I ended up getting a small hammer and chisel from him to persuade the rock in "my" cave to move out of the way. We headed off to the cave, but we couldn't re-locate it (I didn't have a GPS unit).

Around 1:30, we ended up at ELL-006, a large pit that Bill and Jose had gone into. By 2 p.m., almost everyone was at this pit, and Milo, Kristopher and Melissa all dropped into it. It was during this time that a rattlesnake found Butch. We all had to go around to the side of the pit where the snake was and take a look at him. At 2:40, Terry, Stephanie and Don started surveying the pit, along with the short passage.

At 3 p.m., Kristopher, Melissa and I went looking for ELL-011 with a plan to dislodge the rock and explore further. When we finally found it, I crawled down into the passageway and worked on the rock for a while, breaking off a few small pieces. In the



Standing, from left: Terry Holsinger, Don Evan & Stephanie Selby. Seated, from left: Scott Boyd and R.D. Milhollin

of a four-foot slope, there was a drop-off into a room. I wasn't sure how far it dropped, so Melissa put on her climbing gear, we

rigged a rope, and she went in. She reported that there was a room that was about 15 ft. by 30 ft., with a 4 ft. ceiling, and that there were two or three possible leads. She also reported that there was a small colony of bats. We pulled her back out with a lot of effort, and it was decided to explore this cave further on Sunday. I later found out that some time on Saturday, Butch had been by this cave and had tagged it.

We then decided to return to the trucks, and since we didn't have a GPS unit, I used my compass to keep a bearing on which way we walked, so we could find this cave again on Sunday morning. When we arrived at the trucks, everyone else was either out in the field or back at camp, so I walked back to camp, and Kristopher and Melissa went to go check out another pit. Later that evening, after everyone returned to the campsite, Butch cooked up a bunch of teriyaki chicken for everyone to enjoy. We spent the rest of the evening eating, drinking, and B.S.-ing around the campfire.

Sunday morning - Milo, Kristopher, Melissa and myself went back to ELL-011. This time we rigged a rope to a tree, and used it as assistance for going into and back out of the large room. Melissa had said the drop into the room was only about 4 feet, so I decided I could climb out of there OK, since I don't have any vertical experience or gear. The three guys went in this time, with Melissa staying up top. I explored a very narrow vertical-crack passage that I could belly-crawl through. It went about 10 feet or so before it

became too narrow to go any further. Milo in the meantime explored another lead. He reported that part way in it was constricted with dirt that could be dug out. I crawled into it, and when I got to the restricted spot, I looked through it, and saw that the lead continued on a downward slope for about 30 feet or so to another crevice that went off in another direction. I'm really anxious to dig through and explore further on our next trip! I hope to get this cave surveyed and mapped next time, also.



"Milo Marks, Antique Caver"
Milo displays the sign Bill Tucker made for his birthday, while Butch Fralia looks on.

Next, the four of us went to Fern Cave (ELL-013). Kris and Melissa dropped into it, and reported that it went nowhere. They then went to a pit that they had been to Saturday evening, while Milo and I hiked back to the trucks. We found no one there, so we contacted Butch and the others by radio. They were at another pit, so we started to hike to join them, but we couldn't locate them. While we were looking for them, R.D. radioed that he and the others were returning to camp by foot, and Butch was headed back to the trucks. Milo and I turned around, and met Butch back at the trucks. We talked with Butch for a while. He was going to head home, and then Milo and I went looking for Kristopher and Melissa. They weren't at a couple of pits where we thought they might be, and we finally found them walking south on the road. They had dropped ELL-009, while looking for an un-tagged and unnamed pit that was discovered Saturday. Milo went back to camp, and I went with them to the unnamed pit. They rigged a rope and dropped into it and looked around, reporting that a short passageway went nowhere.

The three of us then drove back to camp. Everyone but Milo had left, so Kristopher and Melissa headed on home. Milo returned to camp about 15 minutes later, and both he and I broke camp and headed home, looking forward to the next trip.

Don Evan Selby

Bill Tucker and Milo Marks got to the ranch on Friday. Stephanie and I were planning on going Saturday morning, riding with R.D. Milhollin, so we packed our gear and camping stuff and arrived at R.D.'s place at 5:15 a.m. We were delayed by about 25 minutes in getting there because our car decided that 4:45 in the morning would be a great time to overheat.

We were looking forward to this trip, looking forward to getting some time in on our vertical gear since we were for the most part still vertical virgins. I was also eager to use my handy new GPS to get some reading of new shaft entrances. I had an urge to buy some chaps the day before we left on the trip because I usually volunteer to be the first one into a promising hole and I thought something like that would be a wise investment.

We were on our way somewhere between 5:30 and 6:00 in the morning and arrived at the ranch just moments after everyone else had left the rancher's house and headed to the campsite. So we signed our papers and off we went to the campsite where



Milo Marks prepares to descend into a pit while R.D. Milhollin takes survey notes.

had a high dome and two crevices, which led off in perpendicular directions to the alignment of the pit. The cracks were as high as the dome and ended about 4 feet off of the ground.

Terry was doing some collection studies for Jean Krejca of cave crickets, and asked if I would collect samples from as many different locations within the cave and to gather crickets of various sizes. I took the small bottle of ethanol alcohol (or more commonly known as "cricket picklin' sauce"...) and placed it into my back left pocket because the chaps obscured all the other pockets in my pants. Steph was already in the hole at the first ledge and was telling me to stop stalling around, so down I went. I dropped to the bottom of the pit, Steph was above me taking survey measurements with R.D. above the pit, and I was trying to grab little cave crickets and stuff them into the bottle. I gathered about 8 crickets before I started to help Steph take survey measurements from the upper ledge to the bottom of the cave. Then she dropped down to the bottom of the pit and we waited for R.D. to get his gear ready to come down as well, so while we waited Terry made the remark that ahem, we should 'enjoy' our time down there.

When we were all three down at the bottom of the pit I believe

it was Butch's voice that I heard remark, "now, that is a BIG RATTLESNAKE." I guessed they were upstairs looking at a snake somewhere off in the brush, so I continued to do my thing down there, but the bottom was a tad crowded with three people so Stephanie decided to leave the pit. When Stephanie had gotten to the top the rest of the group was off a-ways, looking at other promising holes.

As R.D. and I finished our survey Stephanie called down, "There is a big rattlesnake and he's getting close to the entrance, what should I do?" We told her to try to keep it out by using a stick to "persuade" it to go elsewhere. This was our cue that the time had arrived for us to get out of the cave, so I got on rope and headed up. While we were getting ready to come out of the cave Stephanie was commenting on how intelligent this snake was, as it was rather determined to approach a cave entrance that had people's voices coming out of the bottom of it and had another human standing outside waving a stick at it. I guess when you're a 5 foot poisonous reptile you aren't deterred from much. So I headed up and as I was about to poke my head over the first ledge I heard Stephanie scream "Oh \$%^&^&^%!!! THE SNAKE IS FALLING IN!!!" Which I'm really glad she announced, because I was wondering to myself why I heard something that sounded like a 40 lb. sack of potatoes land a few feet from my face, accompanied by angry rattling. Surprisingly Stephanie, myself and R.D. all used the same expletive here, I swear it wasn't rehearsed but it was in unison, like a choir or something. The chaps weren't doing me a lot of good on my legs since it was my head and arms that this healthy snake almost fell on, so I've resolved to do all ascending butt first in the future in case another snake incident occurs. R.D. hopped off the ground and got up above the floor, telling me to change over and do the same but since I haven't had much experience with change-overs on a calm day I wasn't that confident in doing a change-over with an angry snake beside me. I heard from both below and above that the snake was moving towards the shaking rope that I was attached to, so I decided to just get off the rope and

onto the wall. Now we were spread-eagled on the walls of the cave and Stephanie called down "Do you want me to call for help!?!". After pondering this for about a nanosecond we both screamed back YES!!!!. So Steph got on the radio and frantically called for help, and we waited and I wanted to whimper. I soon heard Terry and



Stephanie Selby

Bill commenting on how fat and healthy looking was the snake that was a few feet over our heads. "Man that is a big sucker" was not the kind of commentary I wanted to hear at this point. During this I tried to get to a more comfortable point on the wall where I could wait out the snake, so R.D. and I started to play a game of Cave Twister. He moved his foot out of one of the perpendicular cracks with dripping water, and I wedged myself into this crack and R.D. resumed his position, spread-eagled between the cracks.

Meanwhile, Terry and Bill constructed a snake snare from a giant pole and cable in Terry's truck. Then Terry dropped in with the snare to get the snake out of the way so that we could get out of the pit. After several tries of convincing the snake to enter the

snare it wondered off under a few rocks on the first ledge, and R.D. climbed out of the cave and I followed shortly after. Somewhere along the way people started laughing and telling me that I'm mooning them—apparently I busted the rear out of my pants. We got out of the cave and I was quite shaken about the incident, and Terry climbed out behind me, looked me in the eyes and the first thing he said was, "Got my crickets?"

I looked at him for a second laugh and reached around and grabbed those crickets that were hanging in the wind from the place where my pants used to exist.

After that wonderful experience we dropped into another shaft that had some rather large, loose rocks at the entrance. Once inside I discovered it was a very nice cave with some interesting formations, with a miniature rimstone dam and some gypsum bubbles high up on the wall. Bill Tucker used his rock climbing skills to take a closer look at them. I thoroughly enjoyed this cave—not only was there interesting formations, THERE WERE

NO FREAKING SNAKES! Stephanie and I got out of this cave as it was almost dinnertime, and rather than ride back to camp we decided to just walk back.

That night we ate some of Butch's Camp Chicken and around the campfire we all wished Milo a happy 60th birthday. The people present on this trip around the campfire were Scott Boyd, Butch Fralia, R.D. Milhollin, Milo Marks, Bill Tucker, Jose Curras, Terry Holsinger, Stephanie Selby, Don Evan Selby, Melissa Marzahn and Kristopher Megahan, if I am forgetting anyone please don't shoot me. I fell asleep beside the fire and went to bed at around 9 p.m..

Next morning we got up and after breakfast were off doing some more ridge walking, and found some more interesting holes that we marked and took GPS readings of the entrances. At about noon we decide it was time to leave, so R.D., Stephanie and I packed up and were off back to the city.

From the files of the TSS: Winkler County gets a New Sinkhole !!

Gerald L. Atkinson

Most people remember the famous Wink Sink, a solutional collapse feature that appeared suddenly on 3 June 1980 near the small town of Wink, Texas. When first discovered, the sink was approximately 20 feet wide and 40 feet deep, but over the next 24 hours it rapidly grew to 360 feet wide and 110 feet deep with a large lake at the bottom. The novelty of the sinkhole attracted media attention from around the country as news crews converged on Winkler County to report on the phenomenon. Geologists from the Bureau of Economic Geology at Austin concluded that dissolution of salt in the Permian Salado Formation



at depths of 1300 to 2200 feet below the surface was the cause of the collapse, but the reason for the original dissolution was debated amongst scientists. There was speculation that its location within an active oil field was not a coincidence, but others believed it was a natural occurrence, unrelated to field activities.

Over the next few weeks, blocks of earth up to 30 feet long fell into the hole at irregular intervals as the sinkhole continued to stabilize. Annular cracks extended up to 290 feet from the southern edge and a large portion of the southern margin of the sink subsided 10 feet relative to the north. Eventually, activity ceased and things returned to normal. A fence was erected around the sinkhole and signs placed warning of the dangers of trespassing. Kids and sightseers dutifully ignored the warnings seeking swimming opportunities or a good photo. The Wink Sink slowly submerged into the background of current events.

Nearly 22 years later history repeated itself with a roar. Early on the morning of 21 May 2002, field workers noticed a 360 foot-wide, 200 foot-deep sinkhole had formed overnight only 1 mile south of the original Wink Sink. A drilling rig was located only a few hundred feet away from the sink at the time! Two months later the sinkhole had grown to about 750 feet wide with a large lake at the bottom and was estimated to be over 300 feet deep. Wall collapse has continued to the present, and the hole is

currently estimated to be 700 by 1000 feet wide with vertical walls plunging 200 feet to the lake below. The owners have erected a chain-link fence enclosing a one square mile area around the sink as it appears that another sinkhole may be starting to form nearby.

Interestingly, the new sinkhole, while dwarfing its predecessor in both size and volume, has received relatively little public attention. Many people in the region are not even aware of its existence. Geologists believe that the new sinkhole owes its origins to the same dissolution of the Salado Formation salt that created the original Wink Sink, but disagree as to whether it is related to oil field activities. For the moment, neither sinkhole has seriously impacted human property or other concerns, and will most likely remain a footnote in the history books. It will be interesting to note, however, what public reaction will be if another monster sink suddenly appears in the area.



References:

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Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon 2002, Part 1

Mark Gee, NSS #49625

The root of this story goes back to the spring TSA Convention held at Colorado Bend State Park on April 26, 2002. Most of you might remember that the convention was held by the Colorado River at the conference center at Gorman Falls. Participants were asked to camp down the steep, dirt road along the river's edge.

Saturday night after the dinner was finished, I was wandering around the various campsites hoping to meet and get to know other cavers. Around a warm campfire, I met up with several other cavers. One of the topics of discussion was a caving project in Mexico during Thanksgiving. Jerry Fant was talking up the project and describing the area and what the caves were like that had been discovered. I was still a bit of a rookie and still unsure about going way down into Mexico to tackle all the huge, deep caves that I had heard so much about. Jerry told me that I wouldn't have a problem and that I would be welcome to come along. At that moment my heart was set on going to Mexico. The next challenge was to ask Melanie, my wife, if I could spend a week in Mexico and miss our family Thanksgiving back home. The following week my wonderful, loving wife gave me permission to go to Mexico.

I contacted Jerry that same week and told him that I would be going. The trip was still almost seven months away, but I never put things off. I began to prepare for the trip by learning to survey and sketch. The last couple of months before the trip were filled with anticipation and several phone calls with cavers from around Texas and New York.

A friend of Jay Jorden was going on the trip and he needed a ride. I needed riders, but ride with a "Yankee"? Well, as long as he didn't talk, I could pretend that he was a Texan. But he couldn't shut up. Chris Nicola, this Yankee caver, turned out to be a heck of a nice guy. He lived in New York City and worked for the state of New York. A month before we were to drive to Mexico, he sent to me a list of departure and arrival times for several flights into both Dallas and Austin. I picked the flight arrival time that would work best for our departure from Dallas. Chris arrived Thursday night with Jay Jorden, who happened to be working in New York City at the time. Jay wanted to go and was trying, no begging, his wife Sheila for permission to go. On Friday Jay was to pack his gear and then the two of them would drive to my house. On Friday afternoon, Jay called for directions to my house. He couldn't make the trip, but Sheila was going to drive Chris out to my house so we could get on the way. At 2:45 p.m., Sheila knocked on the door and I met Chris for the first time. He not only sounded like a Yankee, but looked like one too! Chris packed his stuff into my truck so we could leave for Jerry's home near Wimberly. I said everything that you might want to say to a Yankee. It didn't do any good; he was still a Yankee. Of course, Chris retaliated with a few comments about us Texans.

On the drive to Wimberly, Chris had a lot to say, a whole lot to say, but he wasn't too obnoxious. We found Jerry's house with no difficulties and arrived at 8:30 p.m. We exchanged the usual pleasantries and some not so pleasant. A short time later, Dale Bernard and Denise Prendergast, along with Andy Grubbs showed up. Later in the trip Jerry said that Andy was like one of his children. We all talked and had a few beers, and then Denise, Enora Fant, Andy, and I got into the hot tub to relax. The water was great. After working up a sweat, Andy and I walked down to the ice-cold water in the creek behind Jerry's house and lay down in the spring water. After a couple of minutes, my feet were numb and then, in the dark, I stumbled back to the hot tub. A few

minutes later, I went back into the house. It was after midnight and I was tired.

We were up at 5:15 a.m. so we could get an early start. We were to meet Scott Serur and Ron Rutherford in Wimberly at 6:00. A little before we left, Scott called to say that he couldn't find his birth certificate or passport. Jerry told Scott that we would wait while he tried to find them. To make a long story shorter, we met Scott and Ron in Wimberly at 11:45, and then headed to Mexico.

A few stops for fuel and food put us at the border at 8:45 p.m. After only one hour, we had all our papers and permits. We drove away from the Pharr border crossing and headed towards Ciudad Victoria Mexico, where we planned on spending the night. We arrived on the outskirts of Victoria at 2:30 a.m. Sunday morning. We stopped at a Pemex to use the facilities. While there, a funny episode involving the local police took place. Two pickup trucks with pipe racks mounted on their beds filled with policemen pulled



Tropic of Cancer, Mexico, 11/24/02
Left to Right: Mark Gee, Jerry Fant,
Scott Serur

in to the Pemex to use the facilities. Two policemen went to the bathroom. The other officers who were outside and still in the trucks got a radio call to respond to a call for help. The officers in the trucks yelled to the two officers in the bathroom that they needed to respond to a call now! One ran out quickly and jumped in the back of the truck. The other had not come out yet, but he was yelling back to the other officers to wait, that he would be out soon.

The officers in the truck continued to yell for him to hurry. Both trucks started turning around so they would be facing out towards the highway. One truck got tired of waiting and took off very quickly. The remaining truck sounded its horn over and over, revving its motor, and all occupants were yelling to the officer to hurry up. Finally, the officer came running out of the bathroom with his pants, gun, and holster down to his knees attempting to pull them up as he ran. Glued to his right shoe, was a three foot long piece of toilet paper trailing behind him, like a streamer, as he attempted to run and dive for the back of the truck. He landed with one foot on the bumper and the other on the ground, with his left hand on the pipe rack and right hand trying still to pull up his pants and his pistol almost dragging the ground. It was very comical as the truck sped off, tires spinning, and the officer holding his pants and the truck for his dear life. At some point he was finally able to fall in to the bed of the truck and secure his

weapon. After the Mexican version of the “Keystone Cops” sped away, we drove a short distance and checked into a motel. We turned in at 3:00 a.m.

At 7:00 a.m. everyone was up and loading the car. After a wonderful Mexican breakfast, we were now on the final leg of our journey heading towards Aquismon. On our drive through the mountains, we stopped for a few minutes at the Tropic of Cancer for a few pictures. It is a ball-shaped monument about six feet tall. Three of us climbed up on top for one photo. We drove on and several hours later pulled up to Mike Walsh’s rental house. It was 4:00 p.m.

At Mike’s home, we met up with Geoff Hoese, Amy Beveridge, and Roland Vinyard. They had all arrived ahead of us. The house is a two-story duplex, and Mike rents the bottom floor. It is clean with a working kitchen, bathroom, and a front room with several beds and two couches to sleep on. We were to stay at Mike’s that day while Jerry and Scott went up to see Juan Vassilo Anhill in LaLaja to arrange for a place to camp. Jerry and Scott returned with their thumbs pointing up. They had secured permission to camp in a cow pasture owned by Juan. That evening, our group of hungry cavers went to the square and had tacos from a portable taco stand. Others ate some skinny chicken down the street. Somehow, all eleven of us fit into Mike’s place and managed to get a little sleep.

The next morning, we packed up and headed to our campsite on the road south of LaLaja. The road was dry and not too rough, and if you drove slowly it made for a comfortable trip. When we pulled up to the field we were to camp in, a young man was sitting there on a large rock. I suppose he was to help us in some way. We waited while Jerry went into LaLaja to let Juan know that we were ready to camp. Jerry came back soon, and then we began to move rocks, cut some barbed wire, and build a gate that we could easily open and close each day. We had five vehicles and were able to park all inside the fence. Trees and plants were cut so we could put up our tents. When the kitchen tent was finished, we were all set. Jerry then announced that we were going to go check out Cueva Linda.

Jerry wanted to rig the cave for the next day’s survey and wanted all to learn the cave. We went all the way to the known end of the cave. The room we found ourselves in was known as the Junction Room. This room has three possible leads. One is to the north, up a large breakdown pile up near the 80-ft ceiling. The other two leads were to the south. One lead was down to a small, muddy crawl and the other above it was a 25-ft climb to a shelf with a 30-ft rappel on the other side. Scott made the climb up and said the cave appeared to continue. It was not checked.

The trip out of the cave was tough for me. I was very hot, hadn’t had enough water, and was feeling the effects of heat exhaustion. Several steep, wet, muddy slopes had to be climbed. The first rope ascent was 70 ft up some brittle popcorn and coral. Next was a short walk over breakdown covered with mud and flowstone, then a 50 ft repel, and then another steep flowstone-covered

slope. Between the breakdown slopes, the floor was very uneven with numerous rimstone dams, some containing cave pearls. A long 130-ft. handline was needed to get down a steep breakdown slope covered with flowstone. A couple more free climbs and another 500-ft. lead to the last two ropes up. From this point, most of the cave floor was covered with mud. The mud floors had numerous large mud cracks and a small intermittent stream that ran down the center of this 80-ft. wide passage with a 75-ft. ceiling. The stream had washed a clean path, exposing the limestone along the passage floor. Roland and I led the group out of the cave. Amy pointed up a slope that led to the entrance of the cave. We made our way up, then a little farther we found ourselves outside, walking among the many coffee plants in the canal that was once part of the cave years ago before the ceiling collapsed forming the canal.



Getting ready to head into Cueva Linda for our first day of exploration, 11/25/02

Left to Right: Geoff Hoese, Scott Serur, down front Jerry Fant, Chris Nicola, Amy Beveridge, Ben Kim, Roland Vinyard, Ron Rutherford, Enora Fant.

Amy punched in “Go to truck” on her GPS and we followed the trail log to the truck. When we arrived at the truck, Jerry, Scott, and Ben were nowhere to be seen. They had gone on ahead of us in the cave and were supposed to be waiting for us at the truck. The truck was still there, but where were they?

We settled down in the truck to wait for them. Ten minutes later, they came driving up in Ben’s vehicle. We asked how and why they were in Ben’s car? They told us that they had left the cave and followed several trails and had become lost. Then they found a large stone-covered trail and figured that it must lead somewhere, so they followed it for two miles and it came out on the road just above our camp. What luck!

When we got to camp, I was feeling bad. I took my gear off, changed into dry clothes, fixed my bed and climbed in it for the night. I wasn’t hungry. I would just drink my Gatorade

Next month: the second and final part of the story, wherein Mark finishes the survey of Cueva Linda and develops a taste for caña.

Fiero Afficionados Geared up for Fiero Ranch Fandango, Fajitas Jay Jorden

Nestled in the rolling prairie north of Dallas is a well-kept secret. For the past four years, vintage models of North America’s first rear-engine roadsters have been collected at the Fiero Ranch northeast of Celina, Texas (see photo on back cover).

On the afternoon of April 1, collectors, mechanics and others were invited to check out this fine line of automobiles. Fajitas were served. The steward of the collection wanted to showcase these Fieros in the last full year they are scheduled to be on the property. Several were in running condition when they were brought to the ranch, but need work.

A prize was offered for the first to get a Fiero in road-worthy condition, but was not claimed during this event. Another opportunity to view these fine vehicles will be available at the Spring Cleanup for Caver’s Adopt-A-Highway (see page 13).

Texas Speleological Association Convention and Texas Speleological Survey Workshop, May 21-23, 2004

<http://www.cavetexas.org/template2.asp?content=events/springconv.asp>

Plans are underway for the 2004 Texas Speleological Association Convention, which will be held on the weekend of May 21-23rd. On Saturday, the talks, salons, vendors, banquet and evening entertainment will be located at the Burnet Community Center, which is 11 miles from the campsite at Longhorn Caverns State Park. The Community Center is located just a few blocks from the historic downtown of Burnet, with plenty of places for shopping and eating.

Pre-registration will be available in a few weeks at the event web site, either by PayPal or we will have a downloadable PDF that you can fill in and mail with a personal check. We encourage you to pre-register this year; it will help us enormously with planning the amount of food for the banquet. It will cost \$20 to pre-register, and \$25 for on-site registration. Family pre-registration will be \$30 for two adults and all children 12 years or older will be an additional \$10, and add an additional \$5 per person for on-site registration.

This will be the first time that Longhorn Caverns, a Texas state park, has been the site for a TSA Convention. This time the primitive campsite will be in the picnic area, which is on the same side of the road as the information center. This site is large, level, tree-shaded and includes several picnic tables and ground grills. No campfires or RVs will be permitted on this site due to the sensitive nature of the karst environment. You should keep your dogs at home, unless you are absolutely positive that you will be able to abide by the TPWD rules which require you to have them with you at all times, and on a leash less than 6 feet long. If you wish to make your own arrangements, additional camping is available at Inks Lake State Park, a private RV campsite is located near Inks Lake and there is a Holiday Inn Express a few blocks away from the Burnet Community Center.

To date the program committee (Ed Goff, Pete Lindsley and Joe Ranzau) has commitments from Rodolfo (Fof) Gonzalez and Bev Shade to give talks, and they are currently working on nailing down the rest of the speakers. The Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) is planning on holding a fund-raising auction, which will probably take place during the evening's banquet of Texas BBQ.

A special feature of this year's convention will be the musical entertainment by renowned cave balladeer, Barb McLeod! Barb is best known for her compositions "Plastic Justrite" and "The Grand Kentucky Junction." She has won the NSS Cave Ballad Salon numerous times, and has graciously agreed to perform for us. Plans are underway to record her performance, with the final product to be sold as a fund-raiser for cave acquisition by the TCMA.

Robin Barber is organizing the Cartography Salon and Kevin McGowan of the Greater Houston Grotto is organizing the Photo Salon. Following this article are the guidelines for the Cartography Salon. Kevin has posted the Photo Salon guidelines on his website where one can download a PDF copy. Due to space limitations, I have not duplicated them here, but I will have some copies to distribute at the next grotto meeting. I highly encourage everyone to consider entering at least one of the Salon competitions this year! There will be prizes and ribbons awarded in each category for both Salons.

Meetings for the TSA and TCMA will also take place during the event, anyone may attend these meetings but only members may vote.

This year the event is being co-sponsored by the Texas Speleological Survey, who will run a surveying workshop on Sunday morning at Longhorn Caverns. The workshop participants may get an opportunity to survey in some of the smaller caves on the park property. More details about the survey workshop

will appear on the web site soon.

Currently we need people to volunteer to help Mark Gee with on-site registration, to assist with manning the TSA Store, to set up chairs in the morning at the Community Center, and to check the campsite at the end of the day on Sunday (we are responsible for making sure that all of the trash is gone). Mark and I will be asking for your help at the grotto meeting next week, and I hope to see you at the Convention.

--Diana

TSA Convention Cartographic Salon Guidelines Robin Barber

I am coordinator of the TSA Cartographic Salon this year.

I know many Texas cavers have expressed their frustration with surveying and not seeing anything coming from it. This is your chance to show them the results of all their hard work! I would like to encourage all of you - especially sketchers - to make maps out of the data you have collected on past trips and enter them in the Cart Salon this year.

If you want to enter a map, but are in need of data, you should contact the folks in charge of the Colorado Bend project since they probably have quite a bit available.

The following guidelines apply to the 2004 TSA Cartographic Salon:

1. To enter the salon, you must:
 - a) be a Texas caver, OR
 - b) enter a map of a Texas cave.
2. Maps that have previously won in this or another cartographic salon are ineligible for entry into the TSA Salon.
3. Maps must be submitted to the salon area by 9 a.m. the morning of the TSA Convention. The cartographer must fill out an entry form which will be supplied upon arrival for submission.
4. Maps may be picked up after 8 p.m. the evening of the TSA Convention, although it is recommended that they remain on display until 10 p.m. or after the banquet so that attendees may have a chance to view them after the awards are presented. Maps that are not picked up by 10 a.m. Sunday morning will be the property of TSA.
5. There will be an area available for maps that are not entered into competition to be displayed. These maps are subject to the same guidelines for submission as competition maps.
6. This year, there will be two categories: Experienced and Beginner. The categories are defined as follows:

Experienced - the cartographer has won a ribbon - in this salon or another one - or has maps that have been published.

Beginner - the cartographer has never won a ribbon in a cart salon and has never had a map published.
7. Maps that are longer than 100m or have a greater complexity will be given extra points. The number of points are up to the judges' discretion.
8. The winning entries are subject to publication in the Texas Caver, and a copy may be requested by the editor, if required.
9. A copy of the judges scoring sheet will be made available on the TSA webpage in the very near future (note that there are items that all maps should always include.). If you would like to see a description of what is generally expected on a competition map, please see the NSS Survey and Cartography Section's Cartographic Salon Judging Criteria webpage:
<http://www.caves.org/section/sacs/judge.html> Judging criteria for the TSA Cartographic Salon will be very similar.

If you have any question, please contact me (Robin Barber) at cavewoman@ev1.net.

I hope to see a lot of maps in the Salon this year. Good luck!

Government Canyon Karst Survey

Marvin Miller, George Veni

This is a reminder that the Government Canyon Karst Survey project is scheduled for the weekend of April 24th and 25th. This is also a plea for additional help this time around. The State Natural Area manager, Deirdre Hisler, has made a special request that the project ridgework a 195 acre tract in the far northeast corner of the Area in order to locate any caves or significant features there. This is an area that hasn't been touched yet by cavers. Deirdre needs the results of this survey in order to understand what the cave and karst resources in this tract of land are so that she can make more informed decisions while negotiating a proposed land swap.

There is no way we can do this with our usual turnout of 5 to 10 people for the weekend. We will need at least 20 on both days. The designated area has a lot of potential. There are several known caves just to the east of the SNA boundary in this area. This area has some of the most rugged terrain in the Canyon including the slopes of one of the highest points in the county, Black Hill. We need as many people on the project that weekend as we can get, and there is a good potential for finding caves.

If you've been thinking about helping out with the project sometime, then make this month the one. The Canyon has a nice campground dedicated to volunteers with secluded areas, fire rings and firewood, and no rocks. An outdoor shower and toilets are available. Let me know if you want to camp.

We will enter the gate to the Canyon at 9:00 a.m. both mornings. The gate will be locked behind us so be on time.

-Marvin Miller
(830) 885-5631
mlmiller@gvvc.com

In addition to Marvin Miller's trip to Government Canyon on 24-25 April, to help cover all 195 acres I'll be leading a trip on 10 and 11 April. We will meet at the GCSNA gate at 8:30 a.m. (see directions below) and wrap up in the late afternoon, probably around 5 p.m. each day. The area is remote and requires a hike to reach, so be prepared to spend the day there. Bring plenty of water, some sunscreen, your lunch, and a flashlight or two so we can poke into any caves we might find. Once we head in at 8:30, the gate will be locked behind us (which also means that if you show up late, you'll be locked out).

If you've never looked for caves and karst features, come along and learn how. We'll use the techniques used in professional karst surveys. If you plan to attend for either or both days, please let me know so I can prepare the appropriate sets of equipment. If you're coming in from out of town and want to camp Friday or Saturday night, that's not a problem so long as you let me know so I can make arrangements.

-George Veni
gveni@satx.rr.com
(210) 558-4403



Marvin Miller exiting Dancing Rattler Cave, GCSNA, January 25, 2004

Directions to the gate of GCSNA. Find the intersection of U.S. 16 and Loop 1604 in northwest Bexar County (clearly shown on any state highway map). Drive 2 miles north on U.S. 16 to the second traffic light and turn left onto FM 1560 (there is a Shell station on the corner). Follow 1560 for 3 miles to Galm Road. Turn right on Galm Road and drive 2 miles to the sharp left turn in the road. The gate to GCSNA is straight ahead. Park on the wide gravel shoulder and wait; we will all go in together.

Fang Go Caving!

Diana Tomchick

My first Girl Scout caving trip took place on February 7, 2004 at Beck's Ranch Cave in Austin. Will Harris needed some help with a troop from Plano, so Bill Steele and I volunteered. The troop consisted of two adults and four scouts, and they all were excited about their visit caving adventure.

Bill and I had never been in this cave, and Will had only visited the "dry" part, but he had some tips from Travis Scott on how to negotiate the "muddy" passage without getting too wet. The plan was to visit the dry passage first, then we would tackle the muddy passage if the troop wanted to get really dirty. The trip back to the end of the dry passage ended in a large room dubbed the "throne room," which prior to the gating of the cave by the Texas Cave Conservancy had seen a lot of traffic by beer-guzzling spelunkers. Volunteers had done a good job of removing most traces of graffiti in this area of the cave, but the "thrones" remained behind, where spelunkers had smoothed (gouged?) out areas high along one wall that are comfortably butt-shaped. The girls were delighted by this room, and spent a long time testing out the thrones and giggling about how this would be "a nice make-out place." Meanwhile, one of the adults pulled a bright blue furry hand puppet out of her pack and passed it around. "Fang goes on all of our adventures," and she proceeded to list so many fun trips that I started to get jealous and wished I was in their troop. Time dragged on, and we tried to get the girls interested in visiting the muddy passage, but they were having too much fun to listen. Then Fang made his way to Bill, and I discovered that the Man O'Steel, in addition to being a renowned caver, is also an accomplished ventriloquist. Who would have thought it possible? "Fang go caving!" he repeated, in a high, squeaky monster voice, as he smiled but his lips didn't move. The girls laughed, and then we finally did leave and go caving. Fang made it all the way back to the end of the muddy passage, through the wet belly crawl along with one of the adults and one scout. The directions on how to avoid getting wet seemed to apply only to the dry season, and Will wondered if perhaps Travis had played a practical joke on him.

When we returned back to the Metroplex, Bill discovered that he had Fang in his pack. I washed and dried the puppet, then packaged it up to send to the Scout leader. As I slipped it into the padded envelope, I swear I heard a faint, excited, squeaky monster voice say, "Fang go caving?"



New Members: Donald Evan and Stephanie Selby

As most of you know, we just got married in December, but it has been a long time that we have spent our lives together. We met in August 1995, Don Evan was a graduate student in population genetics and teaching Introductory Biology at the University of Texas at Arlington, and Stephanie was my student. We began dating in December of that year, after the class ended, of course. Stephanie had begun college early and had decided to take Intro to Bio in college rather than in high school, which she went to during the day. Our first date was December 15th of that year. We tried going to see a show in Denton, but because Stephanie was too young, we drove all the way back and saw "Toy Story." Don Evan was 22 and she was 17 at the time, and we've been caving ever since. The end.

OK to be serious, currently Don Evan is working on his Ph.D. at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth (UNTHSC), in the department of Physiology. He studies congestive heart failure, and is working on pioneering studies that show recoverable stages of the disease. Stephanie, who also works at UNTHSC in the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, studies protection of the brain from aging and alcoholism. Stephanie plans on continuing on to nursing school, to become a midwife.



We have been collectively to a number of commercial caves: Cascade, Innerspace, Carlsbad, Wonder Cave, Longhorn Caverns State Park, Natural Bridge Caverns, Merrimac, Crystal Onyx, Mammoth Cave, Onyx Cave, and old gold mine shafts in Colorado.

Since we have joined the grotto we have been to Honey Creek Cave, Labyrinth Cave, Joe's Cave and many little holes on the Ellis Ranch. We have been on closed gate tours to Whirlpool Cave, Karst Nature Preserve, and several other Austin caves. Closed or collapsed gate tours continued in San Antonio: Genesis Cave and Robber Baron, and we did a drive by to Airman's Cave.

In August of 2003, while visiting Stephanie's family in St. Louis, Missouri, we decided to take a trip to Merrimac Caverns for a tour. Although we enjoyed the tour we both felt that we were not able to enjoy the full experience. Our tour guide was a huge dork and kept us close by so we could be dazzled by the light shows in each room and tried to keep us entertained with his plethora of corny jokes, however we often lagged behind looking carefully at the formations we saw. We really wanted to be able to study what we saw, as with a background in science we have learned to look at things in detail, and enjoy taking careful observations. After we left the show, Don Evan began searching for the survey map of the cave we were just in. He began talking about how he has saved every survey map of every cave he has

been to since he was a child. We began seriously talking about caving.

Our next experience was in Turner Falls, OK. One weekend we decided to go to Turner Falls, just to be lazy, walk around, hike a little, play in the water, and to show Don Evan the castle house. But lo and behold there were little caves. So we found ourselves running from cave to cave trying to get into them. However we were not prepared for spelunking, as we didn't bring a flashlight, we had on flip flops, and were wearing bathing suits.

Later that summer we went to Stephanie's mother's house in Bend, OK. We drove to Bend State Park and began looking around. Don Evan noticed that there were caves nearby, so naturally he inquired about being able to go into them. He talked to the park ranger and found out we had to be members of a national caving group in order to be able to even think about venturing into them. So we began to investigate—a national caving group, a grotto??? Internet! And help from the ranger...what's the man's name we need to contact??? Butch? Well with the lovely help of the Internet we found our contacts, and decided to go eat one night at "Smokies," in the eastern side of Fort Worth. Our thoughts were "Oh no, we KNOW where that is, what are these people going to be like?" We talked it over in the parking lot, "What have we gotten into?" "Well," we thought, "we should at least go in, see what they are like and if it is scary we can leave, real fast." So we went in, and we were in line behind Bill Steele, and suddenly it wasn't so scary, we were going to be fine and we are going to enjoy this new part of life we have found.

Bindseil's Wind Tunnel Rick Corbell

Ever heard of Bindseil's Wind tunnel? A return visit to the site (after a thirteen year break) has been approved by Mr. Bindseil and is scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday May 2nd. Read about the project in the last (October 2003) Texas Caver. Vertically competent cavers are welcome to drop the 60-foot pitch and check leads at the bottom.

Want to come by but don't want to drag along unwilling significant others? No problem! There's plenty to do in the local Bracken area. The Bracken-Garden Ridge area is reminiscent of early Wimberly, with quaint shops and eateries. There's always Caparelli's Italian restaurant at Hwy 3009 and FM 2252, the favorite of the Bracken Bat cave crowd. Rolling Oaks mall is just two miles down the road at Loop 1604 and FM2252 also known as Nacogdoches Road.

Bindseil's property is on the west side of Bindseil Lane, which runs between Bat Cave Road and Marbach Rd about a mile west of FM 2252. Get there by taking the FM 3009 exit off IH35 between San Antonio and New Braunfels. Go west to the first traffic light at FM 2252. Turn left on FM 2252 and proceed through Garden Ridge toward Bracken and turn right on Bat Cave Road. Binseil Lane is about a mile down on the left. Turn on Bindseil Lane and look for orange flagging on a ranch gate. From the gate you'll be off pavement. If it rains we'll have to cancel as the track goes through the Bindseil farm. If it doesn't rain you should have no problem. I'll be in my minivan.

Due to family concern of liability, alcoholic beverage consumption is not allowed on the Bindseil property during this event. We'll have a TSA release form for all to sign. We have another opportunity to show how responsible we can be and still have a fun time caving. The project has had a flawless safety record and we want to keep up the good work. Call me on my cell phone to get directions clarified or for any other questions 210-313-6084, or email me at rlcorbell@hotmail.com

Newsletter Exchange Review, April 2004

R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

NSS News March 2004 (Vol. 62 No. 03)

The March edition of the *News* features the photos of the late Bruce Brewer, a caver whose obituary appears in this issue. The lead story however is a fascinating article by John and Susy Pint on "The Caves of 'Ar 'Ar" (Saudi Arabia). The Pints were actually paid by the Saudi government to help scout out new caves in a desert region in the north of the country, near the border with Iraq. On arriving at a desolate outpost of a town, the crew met with the son of the local emir who was a cave explorer himself. The first caves they visited were wolf dens, but with formations known to form only underwater. Black Scorpion Cave (Kahf Al Aqrab Al Aswad) has a room featuring intense gypsum formations with amazing names. Getting into and out of the area required air transport, and getting past the military police proved to be an obstacle. This was overcome by displaying photos of the caves to the soldiers and their officers, who in turn ended up introducing the party to the most remarkable cave zone in the region. One cave in this area featured cool, blowing wind, and harbored a baby hedgehog. Several more of these cool, blowing caves were discovered, and the authors postulate that there is a huge cave lurking out there under the desert.

Bob Cohen follows the Pint's stories of desert caving with a tale of dessert caving (of sorts), "You Can Only Be So Serious With Pants Full of Cheese". Read for yourself! Mark Collier contributes "The Awakening", a poem dealing with a novice's first underground venture. The drawing on page 75 is by Kenny McGee and took 3 years, about 300 hours to complete using microdots. The subject is Texas caver Carl Kunath. In a sidebar on page 76 the Conservation and Management Section is offering the Group Conservation Award to the NSS-affiliated group with a significant contribution to cave conservation. In *News and Notes* the Karst Waters Institute will present its lifetime achievement award to SUNY Oneonta Professor Arthur Palmer at the annual meeting at Howe Caverns, New York. *International News* gives the contact information for the most recent Cheve Expedition led by Bill Stone, featuring live updates on the National Geographic website via satellite phone from above the cave. The WKU 2004 Karst Field Studies courses are advertised on the same page, as well as a call for candidates for three NSS Vice-Presidential positions, Executive, Administrative, and Operations. Whew, very busy page!

Now for fun! Bernie Szukalski's *Underground Update* reviews selected articles in various Internal Organization publications. Often, references to Maverick Bull stories are referenced, but alas, not this month. The *Carbide Flash* of the Paha Sapa Grotto summarizes long and deep caves for South Dakota in the October-December 2003 edition, and Jim Pisarowicz describes how he utilized his toxic caving experience gleaned from Cueva de Villa Luz to lead a similarly experienced team in exploring the geyser caves of Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park. The group found high levels of H₂S and CO. One vertical cave had to be entered using air tanks. Also included was an article on small Custer County caves. The Frederick Grotto's holiday issue of *The Frederick Underground* features George Dasher's article on survey efforts in WV's Minor Rexrode Cave, home to two species of endangered bats. The September 2003 edition of *The Cave Conservationist* includes an article describing the Sinking Valley Karst by Larry Simpson. Cave Diver Jason Gulley experienced first-hand the adverse effects of flow-pollution susceptibility when he surfaced in an air bell filled with floating animal corpses. The December issue describes some cave cleanups, including Soard Cave and Tennessee's Rocky River

Cave. The November 2003 edition of *The Highlander* (Virginia Highlands Grotto) highlights descriptions and maps of Highland County caves by Rick Lambert. The November 2003 *Gadsden Grotto Newsletter* has articles dealing with caves discovered during ridge walking exercises and named for candy bars. Phil Sanders may want to hunt down a copy of the January 2004 *The Hollow Earth* published by the Wisconsin Speleological Society. It includes an article detailing digging and a connection between two previously known caves made by cavers assisted by PRISONERS from a nearby correctional facility. The Indiana Karst Conservancy's *IKC Update* tells the tale of two caving groups joining forces to clean up the really nasty Carcass Crypt Pit using a custom made and rigged nylon reinforced canvas lifting bag. Two tons of junk was removed and 200 feet of new fencing were erected around the site to prevent the necessity of a return cleanup trip. The Central Indiana's *CIG Newsletter* reports on a couple of caves found in a limestone-sandstone interface, and some assorted and various shortish caves in the Indiana area. Steve Higham writes about Cross Island Sea Cave in the December 2003 edition of *The Northeast Caver*, mouthpiece of the Northeast Regional Organization. Cross Island is on a relatively isolated island on a rather isolated pocket beach, and is now the longest measured sea cave in the northeast. Eric Henderson describes some granite caves in the area he found following old leads and pestering people until they gave him information. Of course both articles included maps of the finds. The Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy has come up with a "premium" for life membership in the organization: They will allow the member to name a cave found and surveyed in the McConnell's Mill Park, Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. The Conservancy's Fall 2003 *Karst Chronicle* reports the first such cave named was Rim Rock Cave, christened by MAKC Life Member #1 Dean Snyder. Kim Metzgar wrote up and described the cave, which is 127 feet long and 26 feet deep. Same Issue, different cave: Somerset County's Salisbury Mine intersects several cave passages, and a new effort to map the system has cavers hoping to "virtually reconstruct" the original cave, pre mine.

Next in order is the previously mentioned obituary for Bruce Brewer. He was an underground photographer of some repute, a professor of photojournalism, free-lance journalist, and caver. He drowned while leading a group of ecologists through Climax Cave in Georgia. He was active in conservation, above and below the surface, and was awarded the Southeastern Cave Conservancy's John Van Swearingen IV Stewardship Award for his efforts. He was an extraordinary photographer, and several of his photos are featured on the covers of this issue. The 2004 NSS Convention committee gets an opportunity to give an "Update on the Superior Convention". As most US cavers know, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is where it is going to be this year, and it will be from July 12-16, and is guaranteed to be cooler than here in Texas. The campground sounds well thought out, all necessary facilities are to be provided including a spa area, and the planners sacrificed valuable personal time to scour the Michigan clubs for just the right band for the Howdy Party. The planners note that in the area fine Canadian and local brews are preferred over the usual mass-produced American beers. Busses will provide transport from the campgrounds (where most of the social activities are slated to take place) to the campus of Northern Michigan University where the sessions will be held. A description of the town of Marquette, the local attractions, and what to do with kids and pets makes up the rest of the article.

Peter Jones is in the *Spelean Spotlight* this month, and he discusses caving in Colorado, New Mexico, Maine, his love of pottery, and his involvement with exploration in Lechuguilla. He is a recognized and prize-winning photographer, and is the US dealer for the Firefly brand of photo slave unit used by many

cavers. The *Safety and Techniques* section addresses what beginning vertical cavers should be taught, and what people training them should know. Several *Letters* arrived in the editor's mailbox this month. Duke Hopper corrects the December 2003 Coldwater Cave article by pointing to a previous trip through the Spong Siphon in which he participated. Ric Finch writes to complain about the positioning of the mailing label of the January edition of the *News*, and received an immediate reply from the editor. Steve Boehm questioned the purpose and authorship of the January article on the "Primal Quest Adventure Race", again answered (sort-of) by the editor. Finally, Bruce Horncastle offered some corrections to the September 2003 article "Exploration in the Portal", in which he was a participant. Lastly, Bill Mixon kicks in a review of the *Encyclopedia of Caves and Karst Science*, edited by John Gunn. This is a big book, with 353 articles, and expensive at \$150. Amazon is saying it will be \$250, but Bill says to stay tuned for discounts. Overall he sees the tome as a necessary addition to the speleological literature, even if small mistakes and omissions detract from a wholehearted two thumbs-up.

The Oztotl Caver (DFW Grotto) February 2004 (Vol. 23 No. 2)

The cover this month is a detailed pen-and-ink drawing of a cutaway view of a karst region by Jose Ganfornina of Sevilla, Spain. Pete Lindsley re-contributed a cool article documenting some of the early efforts of the DFW Grotto, going back into the Dark Ages before 1960. Some of the projects he mentions were Fitton, Cottonwood, Cave-Without-A-Name, Bustamante, and Powells. A notice for a beginner trip to Jester Cave in Oklahoma was posted as well.

The Oztotl Caver (DFW Grotto) March 2004 (Vol. 23 No. 3)

This is the "shorty" edition month, the cover is another rendering by Jose Ganfornina who does very detailed work, and it would be great to see some of his artwork in full size.

Speleospace (Greater Houston Grotto)

No newsletter received this month.

COGnizance March 2004 (Central Oklahoma Grotto)

I always look forward to reading a new edition of this newsletter. There are always trip reports, original artwork, and some humor. This month was no exception. Livening up the minutes page is a catchy poem by Steve Beleu entitled "Salamanders - 5". Some day you will see a book of his collected cave-related poetry published and for sale. Buy it! Then tell me in case I missed it. Trip reports include a bat count at Washita Bat Cave, two reports on Cattle Cave, and another bat count, this one at Jester. An obituary for Joyce Looney is included as well. She was apparently quite a remarkable person, born completely blind, but later acquired 25% vision. She explored caves in Oklahoma, New Mexico (Carlsbad Left-Hand Tunnel and Slaughter Canyon Caves, Malpais lava tubes), Buffalo National River, and many more, including one on her husband Joe's family property. She was said to be an inexpensive caver since she didn't use lights, but relied to some extent on "echolocation". Ted Blasingame sent in an advance review of an upcoming horror movie called "Cave." Great, just what caving needs right now, a group of deep cave explorers dive down into an ocean cave and get trapped, and then mutate mysteriously into primal beings by the time they are rescued! In other news, a comet is approaching Earth. No, this is not another horror movie, comet C/2002 T7 is real and is on the way. Best views are from the southern hemisphere in mid-May. And finally, a report of a scientist doing non-point source

pollution studies in Oklahoma's Twin Cave. The researcher is Geoffrey Cantey, funded by the Nature Conservancy, and is intended to help determine the source of pollutants that may threaten endangered species such as the Ozark cavefish, blind cave crayfish, and the gray bat. Oops, that's NOT all! Steve Beleu includes the music to an original song called "January Caving in Warm Weather." Some day you will see a poster for a concert.

* If members of other NSS grottos and caving clubs come across this newsletter, they should encourage their newsletter editor to contact the *Maverick Bull* about the possibility of a newsletter exchange.

Spring Cleanup for Cavers' Adopt-a-Highway **Jay Jorden**

It's spring and time once again to head for the open road. The Metroplexcavers have their own two-mile stretch of road -- on Preston, north of Dallas.

One of the clubs' names is featured on a big, bright blue sign at the east side of Preston Road/Texas 289, just north of Celina. But with that exposure comes some responsibility. We have to keep the grassy shoulders of the highway clean of litter.

The date for the next grotto Adopt-a-Highway cleanup is noon Saturday, April 24. This is the closest weekend to Earth Day, April 22. That's a big "trashoff" day for highway and beach cleanups around the state.

Our section of highway is about two miles north of Celina on 289/Preston. Celina is north of Highway 380, ENE of Denton and WNW of McKinney, approximately 15 miles due north of Frisco on Preston. Meet at the blue Adopt-a-Highway sign with DFW Grotto's name on it, at noon. Bring gloves. We'll provide orange vests, "Don't Mess with Texas" trash bags and water. Our stretch of highway has been mowed recently, and should provide some interesting and unusual finds. We'll pick up trash for a few hours. [Editor's note: in the past, grotto members have found such goodies as a reflective double-headed arrow highway/"Cave Exit" sign, auto bumpers, assorted hubcaps, and other things useful for constructing that perfect White Elephant gift for the Metroplex Holiday Party.]

After the cleanup, there's an opportunity for vertical practice with pulley climbs at our barn, near the site, for anyone interested. Directions will be provided at the cleanup.

The grotto's two-year agreement with the Texas Department of Highways/TxDOT was renewed in 2003 for the adopt-a-highway project.

Any questions, please e-mail me at jjorden@texoma.net or call 214-202-6611. See you there!



Trash collected on April 4th, 2004
Left to Right: Mark & Melanie Gee,
Diana Tomchick, Pete Lindsley

Cars, cavers and cattle

AT THE FIERO RANCH

Fandango, April 1

See page 8 for details!



Maverick Grotto
c/o Diana Tomchick
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Dallas, TX 75220