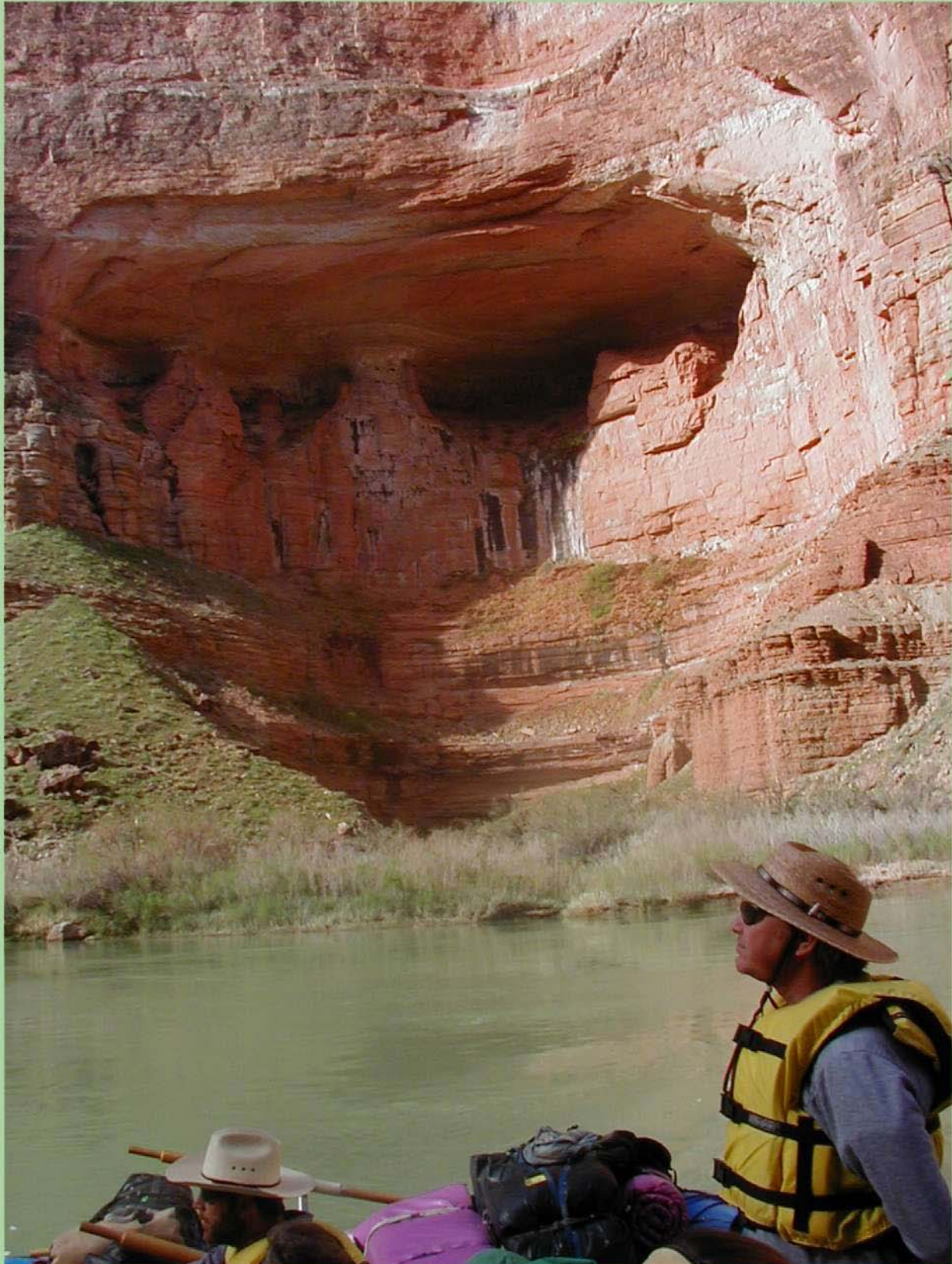


THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto

Volume 17, Issue 6

June 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: Passing unexplored caves on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, by Bill Steele. Left, Pete Miers, right, Brian Steele.

Page 4, photos by Brian Steele.

Page 5, photos by Mark Gee.

Page 6, map by Mark Gee.

Page 8, photos by Jay Jorden.

Back cover: Brian Steele looking out the entrance of Redwall Cavern.

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

Next meeting, June 8th, 7p.m.

Bodacious BBQ

1206 E. Division St.

Arlington, TX 76011

(817) 860-4248

Agenda: Discussion of possible joint grotto projects with the North Texas Speleological Society (Wichita Falls), Central Oklahoma Grotto (Oklahoma City). Come learn about the possibilities of caving in the gypsum plain of NW Texas/Southern Oklahoma.

Program: Bill Steele will present a slide show on caving in the Grand Canyon. Be sure to show up at 7 p.m., as we will start the program before the business meeting.

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May Meeting Minutes

submitted by Scott Boyd

The Maverick Grotto met May 11th at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington. Eighteen members and one visitor, Fofu Gonzalez, from Monterrey, Mexico, attended this month's meeting.

Program: Dan Smith showed lots of slides and talked about his trip on hiking the entire Pacific Crest Trail in 1981.

Reports from Officers:

Treasurer: Sharon Mastbrook reported that we have \$1,432.08 in the checking account, and \$250.40 in petty cash, for a total of \$1682.48.

Newsletter Editor: Diana Tomchick stated that the deadline for the June newsletter is May 31.

Old Business: Diana reported on the continuing preparations for the TSA Convention.

New Business: We discussed the possibility of waiving the international membership fee, so that Fofu could join the grotto. Soon, a motion was made to waive the fee, it was seconded, and approved. Fofu talked about some of the various trips he has been on with grotto members. He was then voted in as an international member of the grotto. We also discussed donating money to the TCMA Acquisition Fund for the purchase of Deep and Punkin Caves. Melissa Marzahn applied for membership, and was voted in as a new member. Stephanie Selby won a drawing for an Oztotl T-shirt.

Trip reports and trip announcements: Bill Tucker announced a grotto trip to the Carlsbad area that will be taking place June 11-13.

Caving Events Calendar

June 12-13 Carlsbad Trip (New Mexico): Saturday visit Wind (Hick's) Cave, on Sunday see Doc Brito and another, unnamed horizontal cave. Wind requires vertical gear. **Contact:** Milo Marks (254) 435-2673 milomarks@htcomp.net

June 26 Texas Speleological Survey Open House and Worksession (Austin): From 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., come to the UT Austin campus and see what's available in the TSS files. More information and directions can be found on page 7 of the January 2004 edition of this newsletter. **Contact:** George Veni (210) 558-4403 gveni@satx.rr.com

June 26-27 High Guads Restoration Project: (New Mexico): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. **Contacts:** Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

June 25-27 Karst-O-Rama 2004: (Mount Vernon, Kentucky): Karstorama is always a great party with lots of cave trips. New this year, there will be a carbide lamp swap meet/sale on Sunday. Hosted by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto. **Contact:** <http://www.karstorama.com>

until October Devil's Sinkhole Bat Tours: (Rocksprings):

Tours are offered Wednesday through Sunday evenings. The tour bus leaves the Rocksprings Visitor's Center between 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Tours return to the Visitor's Center between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Evening tour fee is \$12 per person. **Contacts:** Devils Sinkhole Society (830) 683-BATS(2287) or Devils Sinkhole State Natural Area (830) 683-3762 Website <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/sinkhole/sinkhole.htm>

July 12-16 NSS Convention: (Marquette, MI): This year the convention takes place in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, with field trips to Canada. Deadline for early registration is May 15th. **Contact:** Jean DeVries devriesj@aol.com John Wilkerson caver@wilkersons.ws Website www.nss2004.com

Aug 21 EspeleoCoahuila 2004: (Saltillo, Mexico): The first ever caving event dedicated to speleology in Coahuila, sponsored by the Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología AC. See page 7 of this newsletter for details. **Contact:** Peter Sprouse peter@purificacion.org

Sep 03-06 Labor Day Bustamante Restoration Project (Mexico): Long-running restoration project is **CANCELLED** this year. See page 7 of this newsletter for details. **Contacts:** Orion Knox Orion-Knox@austin.rr.com Rune Burnett bburnett1@austin.rr.com

Oct 15-17 Texas Caver Reunion: tentatively scheduled for this weekend, location as yet undetermined. **Contacts:** Andy Grubbs cen08586@centuryinter.net Allan Cobb ac@kihikihi.com

Nov 21-27 Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon (Mexico): Survey and mapping project over Thanksgiving week. **Contact:** Jerry Fant jerryfant@worldnet.att.net

Feb 02-06, 2005 7th Mexican Congress of Speleology & 5th Congress of FEALC (The Speleological Federation of Latin American and the Caribbean) (Monterrey, Nuevo León, México): "Legislation and Protection of the Subterranean Environment." Cost: US\$50 until October 1, 2004, US\$100 later. **Contacts:** Rodolfo Gonzalez rogonzalez@cydsa.com

TCMA Deep & Punkin Fund

Deep and Punkin Caves in Edwards County are under contract to be purchased by TCMA! After several months of negotiations TCMA has come to an agreement with the owner on terms for the purchase of these two classic Texas caves. Total cost is right at \$130,000 with all closing costs for the 222 acres of property. Join TCMA or send donations dedicated to the purchase of these fine caves.

TCMA will accept donations at their mailing address,

TCMA, PO BOX 202853, Austin, TX 78720-2853

Last month the Maverick Grotto collected \$150 from members. It was decided that the grotto would collect additional money from members at the June meeting, then vote on a donation from the grotto funds. Be sure to bring your checkbook along with you to this month's meeting!

DFW Grotto donated \$450 last month, \$200 came from the grotto general funds. Bexar Grotto donated \$437 to the Punkin and Deep Land Fund during their monthly meeting; \$200 came from the grotto account and the rest from members. Greater Houston Grotto donated \$200 from their grotto account during their monthly meeting and are currently are still accepting member donations. The last word was that member contributions had passed the \$200 dollar mark. The UT grotto contributed \$411.50.

Cave Exploration in the Grand Canyon

Bill Steele

I had never before been in an Arizona cave. Now I had the wonderful opportunity to not only continue the exploration of the longest cave in the state, but I was part of a team with a plan to assess the cave resources of the Grand Canyon.

Five years ago my good friend Scott Davis and his wife Rachel Schmidt invited me to join them for a "trip of a lifetime" rafting trip through the Grand Canyon. Scott and Rachel take people into the Grand Canyon and other wild rivers for a living. Rachel applied for a private permit 13 years ago, and got our date five years ago. I've known Scott over 20 years. He was



The entrance to Redwall Cavern, discovered and explored by John Wesley Powell.

an active Huautla caver in the early 80's. In the IMAX movie *Journey to Amazing Caves*, Scott is pictured rigging ropes to get to the cave in a cliff face in the Grand Canyon. He took the IMAX people and the two caver/actor women portrayed in the movie, Dr. Hazel Barton and Nancy Aulenbach, to that cave. Later he went back and explored it since the IMAX producers didn't allow it to be explored while they were there filming, giving the excuse that there wasn't time.

We spent 18 days, March 20 to April 9, on the Colorado River, and went a total distance of 225 miles. We went first through Marble Canyon from Lee's Ferry to the confluence of the Colorado River with the Little Colorado River, then through the Grand Canyon to Diamond Creek. We did 76 rapids, eight of which are considered the "big boys", and some of the biggest whitewater in the U.S. The water flow is regulated by what is released from Glen Canyon Dam, and they were letting out 20,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) most days we were on the river.

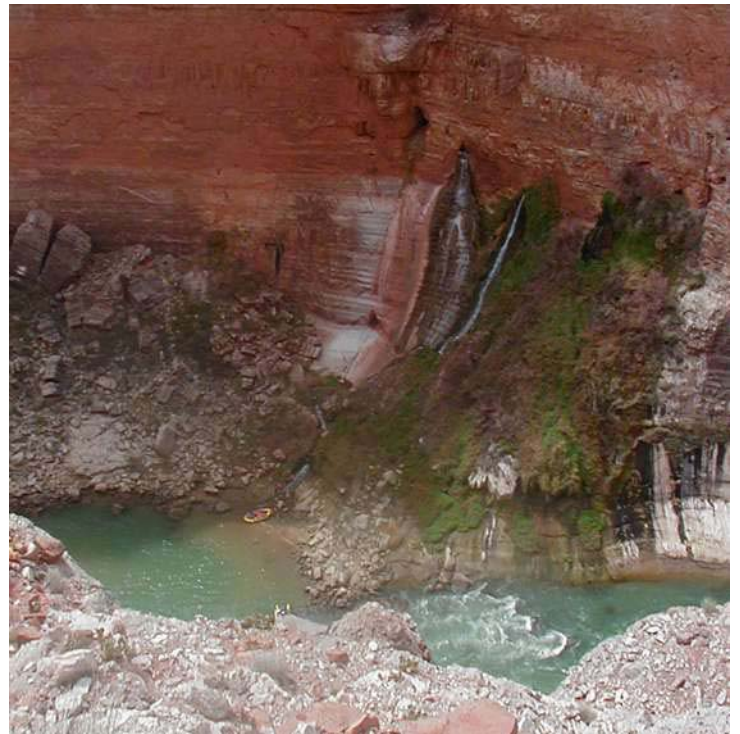
There were 13 people on the trip all together. We rotated between the boats, which were four inflatable rafts with oars, two powered boats with outboard motors, and two inflatable kayaks. Cavers on the trip in addition to Scott and his wife Rachel included Doug Powell, also a former Huautla caver, who lives in Kanab, Utah, and is a geologist with the BLM; Jim Smith of Atlanta, also a geologist and one of the most experienced cavers in the country; and my son Brian of Austin. Since our primary reason for doing the Grand Canyon was to assess its potential for cave exploration, we most definitely wanted to do "Unknown" Cave, which is along the Colorado River, and is one of the longest known caves in Arizona at four miles in length. "Unknown" was open last year, and my good friend Mark Minton, formerly of Austin and now living in Las Vegas, New Mexico, was able to see it and check it out for the potential for additional discoveries. It was explored in the mid-70s, but was thought to be sumped for the past 27 years. Mark and others got into it last year, but we found the water high and the cave sumped. The potential exists for there to be as

much as 20-plus miles of length and 3,000 feet of vertical depth yet to be explored in "Unknown" Cave, which would make it the deepest limestone cave in the country. The entrance is right above the Colorado River at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. It's very difficult to get to, in that the only ways are to float down the river or hike in from the North Rim, so efforts are ongoing to find an entrance into it on top of the North Rim.

Another cave we did was Tapeats Cave, which has the biggest borehole passages I think I've ever seen in the U.S. There's a lot of water coming out of it, a cave stream with a current that's difficult to swim against, and blasting air flow which hints at the amount of unexplored cave. The hunch is that Tapeats is also over 3,000 feet deep with over 20 miles of cave. It'll surely be reached some day.

As we rafted through the canyon we made note of perhaps as many as 50 large cave entrances high on cliffs of the Redwall and Muav limestones. Two tall fissure entrances in particular attracted my attention. They were about half way through the canyon, high up on the South Rim side, and the travertine deposits below them were hundreds of feet thick. We talked for days about the size of the chambers indicated by that much travertine.

The caving potential in the Grand Canyon is tremendous, and the obstacles are formidable. Hiking is very difficult given the relief. Permits to go caving are next to impossible to get since there are archaeological sites all over the place. Any one of the 50 or so large entrances we spotted, and documented on the river map, would take a monumental effort to get to from



The entrance to "Unknown" Cave, one of the longest caves in Arizona, is in the middle of the canyon wall. Extensive travertine deposits can be seen below the entrance. Note the raft in the lower left for scale.

above, and a long time to work out permission to even try. That said, they will be explored some day by someone, maybe one or two of them by my caving friends and me.

A New Bat Cave Found in Texas

Mark Gee, NSS #49625

[Editor's note: Mark's map of Schroeder Bat Cave, found on the following page, won an Honorable Mention green ribbon at the 2004 TSA Convention. Congratulations Mark!]

In the spring of 2003, I met Travis Scott at the Kickapoo Caverns project that Kurt Menking, Allan Cobb, and he were organizing. During a conversation with Travis, he mentioned a cave that he had discovered near some family owned land outside of Junction, Texas. He had spent a couple of years trying to find the owner of the property so he could get the



*Schroeder Bat Cave Entrance.
Travis Scott and a young Aggie lower a
ladder into the cave for the 3 meter drop.*

needed permission to visit the cave. He had found the owner over the Internet and discovered that he had not visited the property for twenty years. The owner was very pleasant and allowed Travis to explore the cave as long as a waiver was signed. The owner knew of the cave, but didn't know of anyone ever entering the cave.

Travis told me about the cave, named Schroeder Bat Cave, at the Kickapoo project and asked me if I would like to come along and help survey the cave and then draft a map of the cave. "Um, tough decision!" He said the cave entrance was an 80-ft rappel into 600 feet of passage. This sounded like a very good cave project and I jumped at the chance to explore and map it. For almost a year we tried to set up a date to visit the cave at a time when the bats were gone. After several attempts, a date was decided on.

On February 28, 2004 eleven cavers met at a hunter's cabin owned by Travis' father, known as "Scotland." Our group consisted of Amy, Jackie, Allen, (all young Aggies), Shannon Summers, Travis Scott, Amanda Scott, Allan Cobb, Kurt Menking, Julie Germany, Jim Kennedy, and myself. Our plan was to explore, survey, and check the bat population. On Sunday we arrived at the cave entrance at 9:30 a.m. The entrance was in a small depression in a solid limestone cap covering a large area. The entrance measured 3 by 1-1/2 meters.

Travis and Allen carried a ladder to the cave and lowered it to the floor three meters below. The cave had a vertical drop of 25 meters broken up by two different levels. The first level was three meters from the surface and the second was another

12 meters further to a natural bridge. The floor of the cave was found another 10 meters below. The last 10 meters was a free-drop and a rope is the only way down. Jim Kennedy set two bolts and rigged the rope. Jim went down first followed by Julie, Amanda, and Travis. Kurt and I began our survey at the surface. Travis, Amanda, and Jim were going to start their survey at the bottom of the entrance drop into the most easterly room. Kurt and I surveyed down to the floor of the cave in five shots.

The first room was a large one, measuring 31 meters by 17 meters. The ceiling was mostly flat. The floor was covered with large breakdown and a lot of bat guano. Eight large piles of bat guano as high as four feet were spread out along the north half of the room. The ceiling height was between 2 and 3 meters. At the north and south end of this large room, the cave dropped down 2 meters to more large rooms. The room to the south measured 24 meters by 19 meters. The room to the north measured 34 meters by 23 meters. The south room had one large guano pile, some dried-up pools along the east wall, and the floor was covered with at least 0.3 meters of bat guano. The ceiling height was 2 to 3 meters.

The north room had several large piles of bat guano. The floor was 0.3 meters deep in bat guano. A few formations were found to the north and east end. A small dome, 2.5 by 1.5 meters, had a large column beneath it and this extended up into the dome, which was 4 meters tall from floor level. A low muddy crawl at the NE corner was pushed, not by me, which extended the cave another 20 meters to a small room with a shallow pool of water and a pile of bat guano. Some of the passage was as small as 0.3 by .03 meters. "Way to go, Shannon Summers."

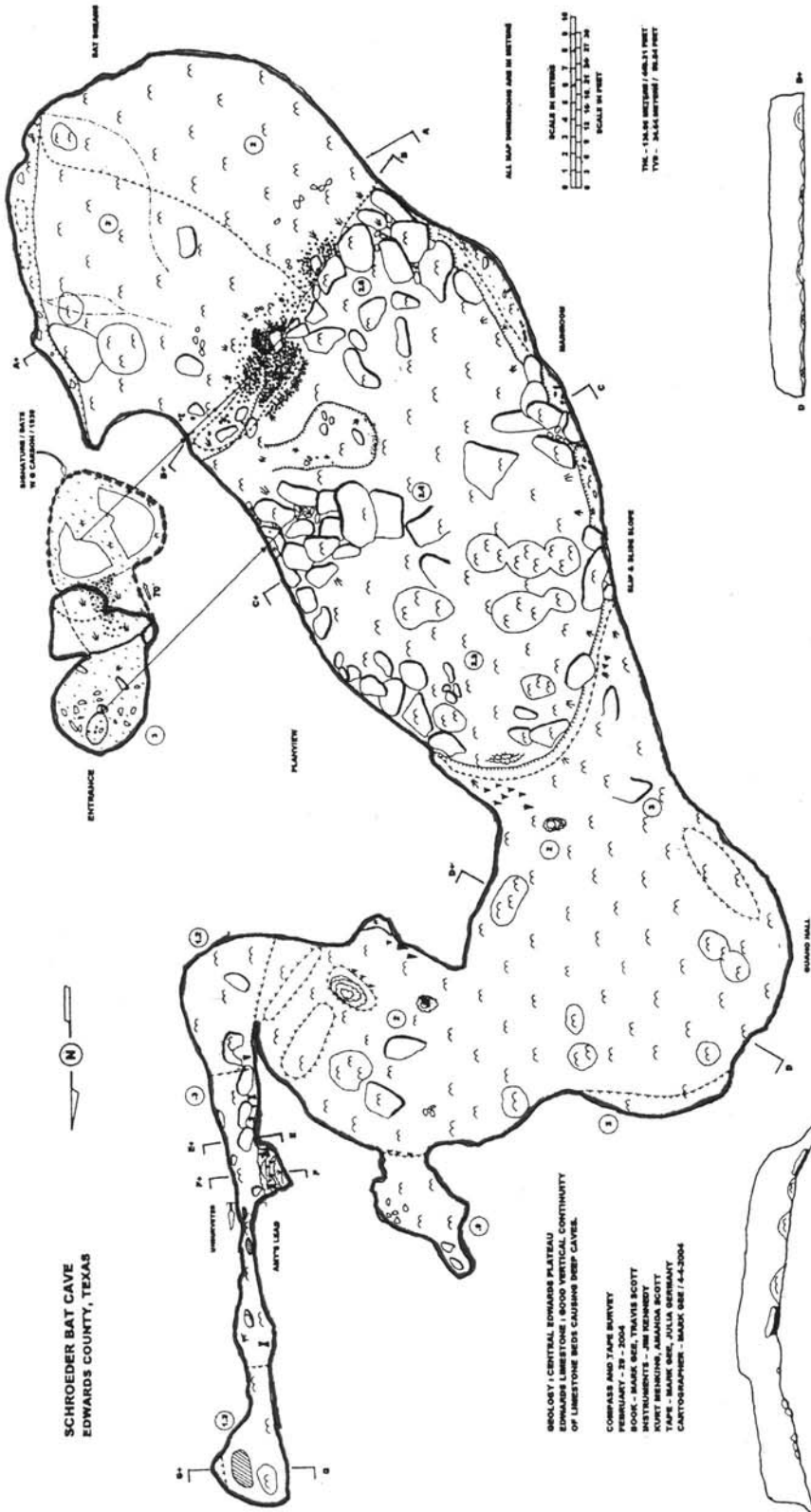
The first, second, and third rooms appeared to have been one large room at some point in time, then the central room ceiling collapsed leaving its floor level 2 meters higher than the rest. Both the north and south rooms have little breakdown. The entrance appears to have been filled with breakdown and



*Travis and Amanda Scott on rope.
Amanda said that she was
nervous but she hides it well.*

rubble before it collapsed, leaving a large pile of rubble beneath the entrance drop. A name and date, "W. G. Carson - 1939," was found scratched into the limestone wall on the east side of the second level just above the natural rock bridge. When first entered by Travis, a small 3/8" hemp rope, with foot loops every 0.5 meters, was found extending down to the floor of the

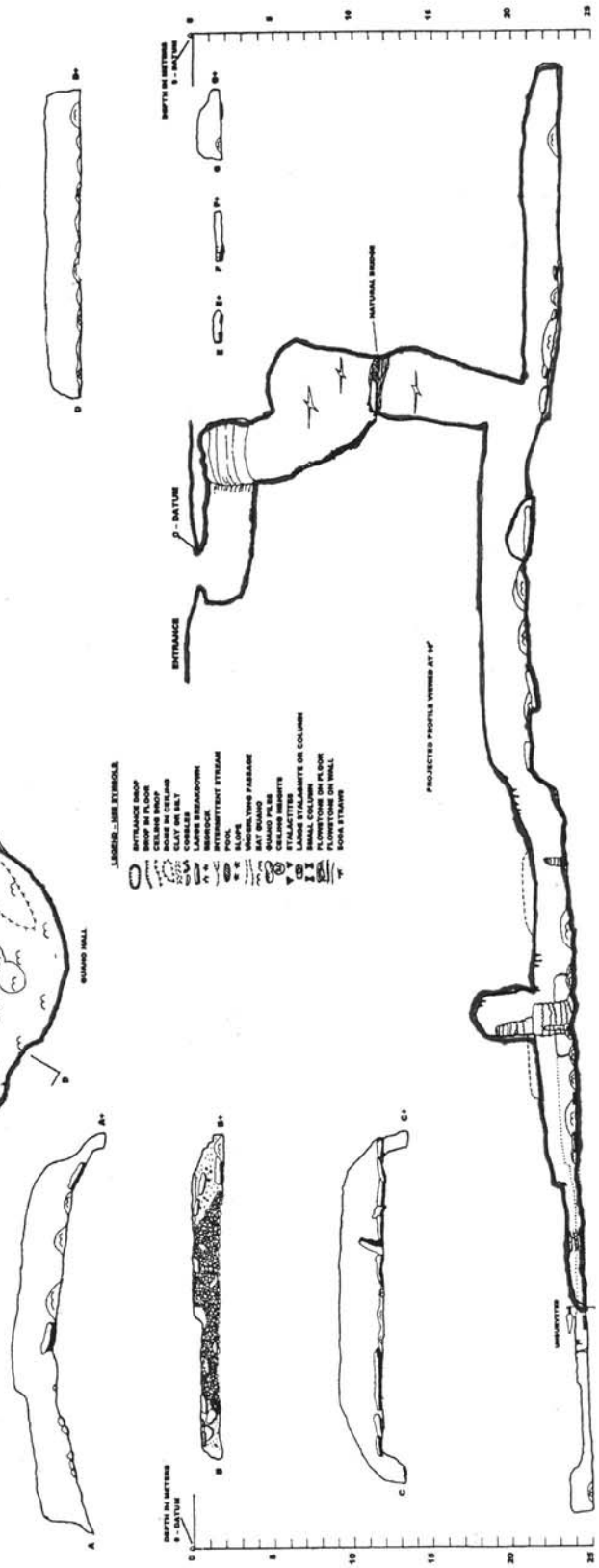
**SCHROEDER BAT CAVE
EDWARDS COUNTY, TEXAS**



**GEOLOGY | CENTRAL EDWARDS PLATEAU
EDWARDS LIMESTONE | 8000 VERTICAL CONTINUITY
OF LIMESTONE BEDS CAUSING DEEP CAVE.**

**COMPASS AND TAPE SURVEY
PERFORMED - 29 - 2004
BY
INSTRUMENTS - JIM KENNEDY
TAPES - MARK GAE, JULIA BERBANT
CARTOGRAPHER - MARK GAE / 4-2-2004**

- LEGEND - SEE EXTERIOR**
- ENTRANCE ROOM
 - ROOM IN FLOOR
 - ROOM IN WALL
 - ROOM IN CEILING
 - CLAY ON FLOOR
 - LAMINATED SANDSTONE
 - BEDROCK
 - POOL
 - SLOPE
 - PASSAGE
 - SHARP WALL
 - SHARP PILE
 - STALACTITES
 - LIMESTONE STALACTITE OR COLUMN
 - LIMESTONE STALACTITE OR COLUMN
 - FLOWSTONE ON FLOOR
 - FLOWSTONE ON WALL
 - ROCK STRAIN



cave. The cave has a few broken formations, which could have been caused from natural occurrences, but otherwise appears to be in pristine condition. A large bat colony occupies the cave in the warmer months.

Jim Kennedy, in a conversation over the phone, told me that he is quite sure that *Myotis velifer*, or cave Myotis, are the type of bats that inhabit the cave. He also feels that this may be a maternity colony. After looking at the areas on the ceiling where the bats roost, Jim suspects that between 20 and 40 thousand bats live in the cave. "This appears to be an active and successful colony," Jim said.

Exploring and mapping this cave was a very enjoyable experience. I have now finished the map that you see in this article. I will enter this map in the TSA map salon. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the owner of the cave and to Travis Scott for asking me to come along on the trip. The cave is another nice Edwards County cave. Hope you can explore it sometime.

Till Next Time, Happy Caving!

Caving News

Labor Day Bustamante Project Cancelled

Rune Burnett bburnett1@austin.rr.com, Orion Knox
Orion-Knox@austin.rr.com

Orion & I visited Bustamante in late April and in conversations with the mayor and Felipe Jr., it was obvious that they were convinced that there would be construction that would prevent our access to the cave over Labor Day weekend. At our meeting Tuesday night, the consensus was to postpone the project.

Although Orion and I both have serious doubts that the construction will actually occur, we feel it prudent to cancel the project for Labor Day. We will tentatively plan a project for early 2005, either MLK day or President's day, pending information from the Bustamante officials.

For those of you who still want to go to Mexico at about that time, there will be the EspeleoCoahuila 2004 Conference in Saltillo that could be an alternative. Peter Sprouse will be posting information as it is available.

This announcement is to clear Labor Day weekend for all those who may want to plan other activities. Thank you for your past support, and we will keep you posted about an early spring project.

Rune & Orion

EspeleoCoahuila 2004

Peter Sprouse, peter@purificacion.org

The first ever caving event dedicated to speleology in Coahuila will be held in Saltillo on 21 August 2004. EspeleoCoahuila 2004 is sponsored by the Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología AC. It will be similar to a TSA Convention, with presentations throughout the day.

Tentative list of talks scheduled so far:

Monica Ponce - "La ACEAC"
Peter Sprouse - "Cuevas en Coahuila"
Elizabeth Gutierrez "Cuatro Ciénegas"
Aimee Beveridge - "El Abra, Cueva mas large de Coahuila"
Ed Goff - "El Tarilla"
Rodolfo Gonzalez "La UMAE"
Terry Sayther - "Cuevas y Arte Rupestre en Coahuila"
Allan Cobb - "Sotano de Amezcuca"

If you would like to make a presentation relating to Coahuila caving, please contact me and we will see if we can squeeze you in. All of this activity will take place on Saturday, with a possibility of Sunday morning activities also. Although no official caving is planned for the event, there may well be some people caving or canyoning before or afterwards. The event location has not been confirmed yet, but negotiations are underway to hold it at the Museo del Desierto in Saltillo. This is a very nice museum to visit if you haven't been there yet, with a great cactus garden. Saltillo (Austin's sister city) has a mild summer climate and great shopping as well.

Carlsbad Cavern Cave Management Plan Revision

Paul Burger, paul_burger@nps.gov

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is in the process of updating its cave management plan. As part of that process the park is conducting a survey to identify issues that may need to be addressed in the plan. At this point, the park is only looking for broad issues and not alternatives. For example, if you believe that all cavers should be required to wear hot pink Spandex cave suits, the issue is "required cave clothing" and the alternative would be Spandex. Again we are only looking for issues to be addressed. The caving and non-caving public will have an opportunity to comment on alternatives at a later date.

We would like to have all of the suggestions in writing by June 30, 2004 either emailed to paul_burger@nps.gov or to Paul Burger, Cave Resources Office, Carlsbad, NM 88220. We will also be holding an open scoping session at this year's NSS convention on Monday morning.

New Museum of Natural History in Waco Features Cave Exhibit

www.baylor.edu/mayborn/
Bill Tucker

A new museum recently opened in Waco. The natural history section has a replica of a cave that visitors can walk through, and offers information on formation of caves, cave fauna and conservation considerations. It might be interesting to see if passing through Waco.

UAYCEF in National Geographic's Adventure Magazine

Chris Nicola, chrisnicola@juno.com

One of UAYCEF's Ukraine projects, concerning a cave survival story unlike anything which you ever heard before, is featured in the June/July edition of National Geographic's Adventure magazine; a preview of which can be found at the below link.

www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0406/excerpt4.html

The above referenced article, written by Peter Lane Taylor, tells the story of how 38 Jews survived the Holocaust by living underground for 344 days (breaking the World's previous record of 205 days). Peter also reports on a July 2003 expedition that he and I undertook to Ukraine in order to visit Priest Grotto and confirm this miraculous story of survival.

One of the organizations expressing interest has been the NBC Today Show, which is currently planning to tape interviews of the "Survivors", as well as myself, this coming week. The date the piece will air has yet to be determined. However, it will be posted on the news banner at the top of UAYCEF's homepage (www.uaycef.org) as soon as it is determined.

For additional information, please go to www.priestsgrotto.com

Chris Nicola, Director of UAYCEF <http://www.uaycef.org>, an NSS Project. Alt. email: cnicola@optonline.net (718) 204-8373

2004 TSA Convention & TSS Survey Workshop

Diana Tomchick

Interesting talks, an exciting auction, a beautiful musical performance, a delightful campsite, tasty margaritas and gorgeous weather were the highlights of a very successful TSA Convention that was held this year in Burnet, Texas on the weekend of May 21-23rd. One hundred seventeen adults registered for the meeting, and an unknown number of children accompanied them during the festivities. This marked the first year that Longhorn Cavern State Park hosted a TSA Convention.

The Convention got underway on Friday afternoon at the Longhorn Cavern campsite, which was in the picnic area near the Park Information Center. Former Metroplex caver Dave "Cave" McClung and his girlfriend Sherry were on hand to serve margaritas at the Observation Tower, which had been



Jerry Atkinson and Diana Tomchick at the TSA membership meeting in Burnet.

transformed into "Dave's Cave" with the help of Pete Strickland. The addition of a squeeze box (loaned by Jim Kennedy) helped make this the center of social activities on Friday and Saturday evenings.

On Saturday all other activities were located 10 miles from Longhorn at the Burnet Community Center. The morning program started with an entertaining video featuring Jim Kennedy in Bracken Bat Cave, and was then followed by presentations of caving in exotic lands such as Hawaii (Bob Richards) and Oman (Louise Hose). After a short break the talks focused on Mexican caving. Bev Shade spoke about recent discoveries in the Purificación region, R.D. Milhollin related the moving story of the attempted rescue of Mariano Silva Fuentes in Oztoquito, and Rodolfo Gonzalez (head of the Unión Mexicana de Agrupaciones Espeleológicas, UMAE) helped us understand the many layers of Mexican caving associations.

From noon to 1:30 p.m. the TSA Business meeting was conducted. Discussions included the future of the *Texas Caver* and how to secure a new editor and printer, the TSA Land Fund and the TCMA request that the TSA donate money from the Fund for the Punkin and Deep acquisition, and the institution of a new officer election procedure.

Highlights from the afternoon sessions included the future plans of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in Carlsbad, New Mexico by Louise Hose, Jean Krejca's study of cave cricket foraging patterns, the history of Punkin and Deep Caves from Jerry Atkinson, the TCMA plans for cave

acquisition and management issues by Linda Palit, a history of the survey (and multiple re-surveys) of Longhorn Cavern by Peter Sprouse, an update on the Government Canyon State



Sue Schindel of TCMA shows donations climbing in the Punkin/Deep fund.

Natural Area Project by Marvin Miller, and the plans to secure the rights to host the 2009 International Congress of Speleology in San Antonio by George Veni.

The Cartography Salon was organized by Maverick Grotto member Robin Barber. Mark Gee won the Best of Show and

Bill Steele and Aimee Beveridge auctioning off an item donated by Pete Lindsley: a 21- by 21-inch kerchief designed by Linda Heslop of the discovery of Sonora Caverns, with signatures from Jack Burch, Bart Crisman, Jack Prince and Pat Copeland. Allan Cobb and Dave "Cave" McClung confer in the background.



the blue ribbon in the advanced section for a map of Three Whirlpool Cave, and also an Honorable Mention green ribbon for the map of Schroeder Bat Cave (see page 6 of this newsletter). There were no beginning cartographers represented this year. Kevin McGowan organized the Photo Salon. Following the trends of previous years, all entries were in the Print Category (does no one shoot slides anymore?) and Travis Scott took home all the awards in the Salon.

The TCMA auction started during the banquet. Prior to the convention, the TCMA announced that a generous donor had offered to match up to \$10,000 for all proceeds from fundraising toward the purchase of Deep and Punkin Caves. This limited offer is being extended for one week before convention and one week after. A lively TCMA auction on Saturday evening netted \$3,400, enough to help them achieve their goal of \$10,000. Auctioneer Bill Steele provided humor and the proper perspective on many of the unique, historical donated items. As David Locklear wrote on CaveTex, "there were several items that you couldn't have given me for free; but surprisingly, these bid for top dollar." These included a bound set of Nylon Highway (the newsletter for the NSS Vertical Section) courtesy of James Jasek, purchased for \$300 by George Veni; an old "Carta Valley S.U.C.K.S." T-shirt, donated by Carl Kunath and purchased for \$125 then donated to the TSS museum; several sections of old, dirty caving rope from expeditions to Mexico, donated by Bill Steele that sold for more than \$100 apiece; and a guided trip to the end of Airmen's Cave by William Russell, which sold for \$250 to Rune Burnett (it was rumored that he bought it to give to his wife, Susan Souby).

Following the auction the TSA awarded the Preston McMichael award to Linda Palit for her long service to Texas caving. In addition, TSA Merit awards were given to Don Arburn

and Logan McNatt for their service to the TSA.

After the awards were presented, Carl Kunath introduced Joe Pearce and his wife as special attendees to the Convention. Joe started caving in Texas back in the '60's, and he and his wife decided to re-join the TSA and attend the Convention based on the joint TSA/TCMA mailing sent several weeks prior to the event. They received a standing ovation from the crowd!

Renowned cave balladeer Barb MacLeod sang cave ballads and flying songs to a very appreciative audience. For an hour and a half she regaled the audience with songs both serious and light-hearted. She was accompanied by Pete Strickland on a rendition of "Histoplasmosis" and by Rae Nadler-Olenick on a composition by Rae about the glory of carbide lamps. Barb agreed to allow the TSA to record her performance and to use the finished product as a fund-raiser for cave acquisition. Woodrow Thomas manned the mixing board and recording equipment, and is editing the recording for use as both a musical CD and to accompany the video recordings made by Butch Fralia, Keith Heuss and Jay Jorden. They captured over twelve hours of video from the Convention, and plan to edit this footage and create one or several DVDs of highlights that can be shown at grottos around the state. If you didn't make it to the Convention this year, you missed a good one, but you may still get a chance to see some of what you missed.

Sunday morning starting at 9 a.m. the TSS Survey Workshop took place at the historic Sam Bass entrance to Longhorn Cavern. Roughly 20 students learned beginning cave survey skills. The instructors were Jerry Atkinson, Allan Cobb, Paul Fambro, Jim Kennedy, Linda Palit, and George Veni. By 4 p.m. the last campers left Longhorn Cavern, and many hope to return soon!

NSS - NCKRI Proposal for Journal of Cave and Karst Studies

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Over the past few years, the NSS has seen its revenue fall while the expenses necessary to run the Society and support its programs and committees have grown. Through the hard work, contributions, and dedication of the Society's volunteers and committee chairs, we managed to maintain a satisfactory level of operations and member services and stay within budget. Of particular concern was our ability to maintain the quality and schedule of the NSS's periodical publications.

This year the Society received an extremely large increase in our insurance premium, which made cuts necessary in the budgets of many committees, programs, and operations for the upcoming fiscal year. To balance the FY04-05 NSS Operating Budget, large reductions in funding for the NSS News, Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, Members Manual, and American Caving Accidents were anticipated and considered by the Executive Committee. However, we strongly resisted cutting member services, and explored various opportunities and suggestions that would enable us to continue to publish Society publications with the same quality and schedule.

Louise Hose, the Director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI), proposed a Cooperative Agreement with the NSS, wherein NCKRI would publish the Journal as a joint venture with the Society. The financial arrangements discussed would help relieve the current NSS budget shortfall, and allow us to continue to produce the nation's top scientific journal dedicated to caves and karst.

The NSS Executive Committee considered NCKRI's offer at its winter meeting, and presented the idea to the NSS Board. An agreement would benefit the NSS and NCKRI, and especially the Journal. The NSS would obtain needed financial support for the Journal and increase its visibility and circulation, while

NCKRI will gain a scientific journal for its budding portfolio.

At the March Board meeting the NSS Executive Vice President was directed to pursue a joint publishing Cooperative Agreement with NCKRI, and report back to the Board.

Entering into such an agreement with NCKRI would be an important policy change for the Society, and will require a great number of details to be considered, for example: lines of authority; procedures for selecting editors; article review process; masthead design; distribution of expense and production responsibilities, etc. We would likely include a trial period and evaluation process in the agreement. The NSS and NCKRI continue to negotiate the major points of the agreement and the mechanics of the financial transactions, and hope to have an agreement finalized for the Board's discussion and approval at the Michigan NSS Convention meeting. The agreement will be posted on the NSS web site for review by members as well.

Possible NSS Dues Increase

Attention NSS Members, I have posted some very important information regarding the very real possibility of a 2005 Dues increase. I urge each member to review the information at the following links:

NSS Financial FAQ's

<http://www.caves.org/nss-business/president/finance.html>

The NSS Financial Tightrope:

<http://www.caves.org/nss-business/president/tightrop.html>

This information is also on The NSS Discussion Board:
<http://www.caves.org/soapbox/forumdisplay.php?f=22>
<http://www.caves.org/soapbox/showthread.php?t=129>



The Maverick Bull

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