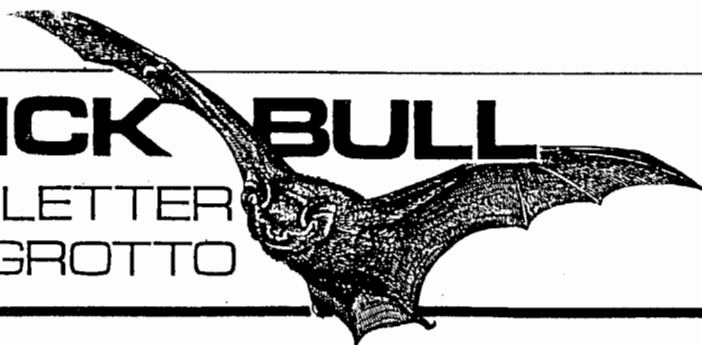


THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO



VOLUME 5 NUMBER 3

MARCH 1990



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THE MAVERICK BULL is the monthly newsletter of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, an internal organization in the National Speleological Society (NSS 6-322). The editors invite all cavers to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art, and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed, stamped envelope should accompany it. Items should be of interest to cavers and be non-political in nature.

Internal organizations of the National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to author as will be stated in byline) first appearing in THE MAVERICK BULL, if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to THE MAVERICK GROTTTO address at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the grotto at the address herein.

EXCHANGES: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO, will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact any officer.

COMPLIMENTARY NEWSLETTERS: THE MAVERICK GROTTTO will provide complimentary newsletters to persons or organizations who provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Grotto will also provide three free issues to persons interested in becoming members.

MEMBERSHIP POLICY: Any caver with interests, beliefs, and actions consistent with the purposes of THE MAVERICK GROTTTO 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 SMOKEY'S RIBS, 5300 East Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is a little less than one mile west of Loop 820 East and next door to a K Mart. The time is 7:00 P.M., and the food is good.

Chairman: Dale Ellison
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Arlington, Texas 76017
817-473-0463

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Fort Worth, TX 76112
817-451-3539

CAVE RESCUE: Call Collect 512-686-0234

CALENDAR

- Ongoing Monthly work trip to Colorado Bend State Park.
Weekend of the second Saturday of each month.
- March 9-11 Colorado Bend State Park Work Trip
- March 13 Maverick Grotto Meeting
- March 17-18 Spring SWR Regional at Big Manhole Cave. Contact
Steve Peerman in Las Cruces, NM (505) 523-2167
- March 30-April 1 Trip to River Styx Cave
- April 10 Maverick Grotto Meeting
- April 13-15 Colorado Bend State Park Work Trip
- April 21-22 Advanced Rapelling Class at the National Guard
Armory in Mineral Wells
- April 28-29 Continuation of Advanced Rapelling Class at Lake
Mineral Wells State Park
- July 9-13 NSS Convention at Yreka, California

ON THE COVER

Our Cover Cavers this month are Shari Finfrock, Arlene Heintz and Dale Ellison. They are all a bit haggard-looking here after slogging through the mud in Smittle Cave in Missouri.



MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The Maverick Grotto met on Tuesday 13 February 1990 for its regular monthly meeting. Teresa White was attending a college computer course and was unable to attend the meeting, so David Finfrock acted as Treasurer as well as Secretary/Editor for the evening. A Reminder: all dues must be paid by the end of March or you will be dropped from membership in the Grotto.

Bruce and Donna Anderson brought the carbide they had purchased for the grotto. It is now available FREE-OF-CHARGE to all DUES-PAID members. Bruce said he will bring it to the meeting of every even month for distribution. Just make sure you bring a can or other container to take it home in. If you can't make it to a meeting, call Bruce or Donna to make arrangements to pick some up at their house.

Butch Fralia reported that 93 cavers from across the state attended the TSA Winter Project at Colorado Bend State Park. Much of the project was concerned with surveying the multitudes of known caves on the property. But several cavers spent time recording aural descriptions of the caves. Dale Ellison was one of those strolling through the caves with a tape recorder. I suppose he was chosen because of his eloquence.

Butch also announced that the TSA Spring Convention will take place in late April, probably the last weekend of the month. At this time the location is undecided.

Earth Day will be celebrated nationwide on the weekend of 21-22 April. State Park Superintendents all across Texas will be organizing cleanups of the parks as part of that observance. No doubt this will include cleanup of state-owned caves as well. Watch for further information.

A property including Whirlpool Cave within the city limits of Austin has been donated to the Texas Cave Management Association.

David Finfrock announced that the GYPKAP Project would take place in the Burton Flats gypsum area east of Carlsbad, NM on 24-25 February.

Russell Hill passed on an invitation from the Hades Club of Great Britain. They are organizing a trip to the Pyrenees Mountains in southern France in September 1990. It will include one world-class cave with a depth of 1500 meters. See Russell Hill or Don Denton for more information.

Danny Sherrod, who participated last year, announced that George Veni of the University of Texas Geology Department will conduct another field course in karst geology in Mexico this coming August. Talk to Danny if interested.

Ernest Parker gave more details on his upcoming vertical rope session in Mineral Wells this April. (More information in this newsletter)

Dale Ellison suggested we organize a "No Excuses" caving trip to get many inactive cavers underground again. If their car isn't running, we'll drive them. If they lost their hardhat or light, we'll loan them one. If they're broke, we'll feed them. In short, NO EXCUSES, you're going caving! Everyone liked the idea. It's just a matter of getting it organized.

Butch reported that The Parks & Wildlife Dept. will premier their video on caves and caving at the TSA Spring Convention. They will ask for suggestions for alterations, before it appears on their "Made in Texas" program on PBS stations this summer. It was largely filmed at Colorado Bend, Longhorn Caverns and Devils River State Parks during 1989.

Butch also announced that he will try to bring a brown recluse spider and black widow spider to the March meeting so that we can better recognize them when we see them.

After the business meeting Bruce Anderson conducted a program on basic cave equipment and specifically, cave lighting. He concentrated on different types of carbide and electric lights, including trouble-shooting and repairing them.

 HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES ?

The following members of the Maverick Grotto in 1989 have not yet paid their dues for 1990. Dues are only \$10, a great deal. So make sure you pay at the Maverick Grotto meeting on 13 March, or send your check for \$10 payable to The Maverick Grotto to Treasurer Teresa White, at 5424 Finian, North Richland Hills, TX 76180.

Michael Cagle	Miles Cleveland
Chuck Cluck	Steve Dalton
Don Denton	Richard Dushman
Keith Heuse	David McClung
Dave Milhollin	Susan Penney
Mark & Pam Porter	Ed Poynter
Judy Thompson	

IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES BY THE END OF MARCH, THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE.

 SECOND INTERNATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL
 CONGRESS - - - MONTERREY, MEXICO

The second International Speleological Congress will be held in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico on 19-24 April 1990. Contacts are: Bill Halliday at (615) 352-9204 and Pedro Wood at Rio Cena 17 OTE, Colonia del Valle, San Pedro Garza Garcia, N.L., Mexico.

SHORT TRIP, SHORT REPORT

Date: January 26, 1990

Destination: Cat Hollow Cave, Williamson Co.

Personnel: Dawn Hill, Bill Larson, Alvis Hill

Williamson County is known for its abundance of interesting, if not large, caves. Bill Larson spends a great deal of his spare time in the area ridgewalking and digging and has found dozens of caves, some right in the middle of developing subdivisions. He recently contacted us and issued an invitation to see one of his newest finds.

Dawn and I made the 45 minute trip after work, arriving at Bill and Pat's house about 5:30. We visited with their pet bats, three of which are African fruit bats with wingspans of almost 3 feet. These guys are quite tame. They like to eat bananas and even seem to enjoy watching t.v.!

When you are used to all the bushwhacking usually associated with caving trips, its a real change of pace to make a few blocks, hop a curb and park. We drove right to the entrance, which Bill had hidden under rock and cedar limbs. The entrance was maybe four feet wide and had been dug out about six feet deep. The original "entrance" had been a very small crack which just happened to be blowing air the day Bill spotted it.

After squeezing through a short section at the bottom of the entrance pit we found ourselves in large room, maybe forty by sixty feet in diameter. The ceiling was slablike, ranging in height from three to six feet. The area opposite the entrance was very heavily decorated, and Bill's earlier airflow checks seemed to indicate going passage in that direction. We followed Bill through a nervewracking crawl between stalactites and long soda straws, cringing every time we touched anything. Fortunately, we didn't do too much damage. We soon found ourselves in a small open area surrounded by formations. While we took in the sights, Bill worked his way down a tight crawl in hopes of finding going passage. He soon returned and reported that he had pushed as far as he could without doing serious damage to formations. We worked our way back toward the entrance after about an hour and a half in the cave.

As we recovered the entrance, Bill noted that someday this neat little cave would be in someone's back yard, and they probably wouldn't even know. The area is rapidly developing and will probably take in the cave within the next couple of years. I'm glad we had a chance to see it.

We went back to Bill's house, picked up Pat and went out to eat at K Bob's. Not a bad way to spend a Friday evening!

MURDER & POISON IVY IN THE ARBUCKLE MTS.

By Woodrow Thomas

In June 1989 Greg Mooty and I spent a day in the Arbuckle Mountains of Oklahoma in search of new caves. We visited with the foreman of a large ranch who gave us permission to ridgewalk his land at a later date. He also mentioned two caves nearby, that he knew of. One was a spring cave near the west end of his land, just off a main highway. He said that after heavy rains a virtual torrent of water gushed from the entrance. We decided to check it out.

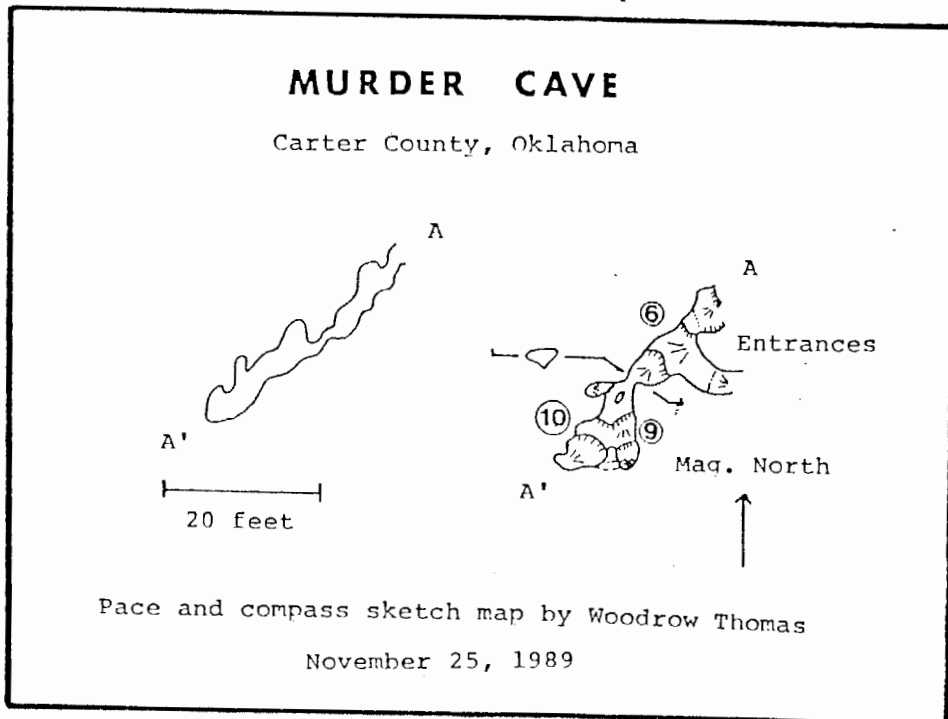
It was a rather idyllic scene at the entrance, which was shady and cool with gently flowing water issuing forth. Greg suggested the name Oasis Hole and I agreed. The cave entrance was in the bottom of a blade of rock formed by the vertical outcropping of the limestone strata. Surrounded by boulders, the entrance was about 3 ft. high and 5 ft. wide and led 8 feet or so to a sump pool. I peeled off my clothes and crawled into the water. By using my feet to explore the back of the pool, I discovered that the passage continued underwater with about the same dimensions at a slightly dipping angle. I was unable to find the end but was able to determine that there was a small air-bell on the other side of the sump. The entire cave had a slight petroleum smell which the foreman had said resulted from a nearby pipeline leak. We resolved to return there during drought conditions. Unfortunately I had touched some rather virulent poison ivy as I undressed near the entrance. A few days later I contacted an intense case of it in some embarrassing places. Needless to say, I call the cave by another name now.

The second cave mentioned by the foreman was the alleged site of a dead body disposal by an outlaw during the 1800's. That's how it came to be called Murder Cave. Greg and I tracked down the owner, confirmed the existence of the cave, and got his permission to enter. However, we were unable to find the man who currently leases the land, so we had to wait to visit it.

I was unable to return to the Arbuckles until November, when I was accompanied by Wade Kennedy. We first ridewalked the land of the first ranch forman, but found nothing of great speleological significance. We also checked Oasis Hole and found the water down about four feet. I crawled in and found about 15 feet or so of passage sloping down at a 30 degree angle to a sump pool some four feet deep. The passage continued underwater at the same angle of incline and it appears that the water would have to drop a whole lot further before entrance could be gained.

The next day Wade and I contacted the lessee of the second ranch and got permission to explore Murder Cave. The cave was just a short hike from the road and was easy to find. It has two entrances, each about 5 feet in diameter and about 6 feet apart. I entered one and found myself in a small entrance room which funnelled down on the far side to a bottleneck constriction approximately 3 feet in diameter. The cave appeared to be a likely home for a large animal so I cleared away some debris and continued cautiously. We had been told that the cave contained a deep pit so I brought a 30 foot rope. Once through the constriction, the cave opened up both above and below, but was free-climbable. There were no signs of large animals so I continued past several blind pockets and a couple of tall domes, to the bottom, which was filled with cobble-sized rubble.

The cave could best be described as a single phreatic passage which slopes downward from the entrance at about 45 degrees. This passage splits at the bottom into two alcoves connected by a short crawl. There was no air flow. A few cave crickets and a small centipede were observed. The cave also contains very old flowstone remnants and some highly weathered calcite crystals. The total extent of horizontal passage is about 20 feet and the depth is around 20 feet. According to several sources, ours was the first visit to the cave by organized cavers. A sketch map of Murder Cave accompanies this article.



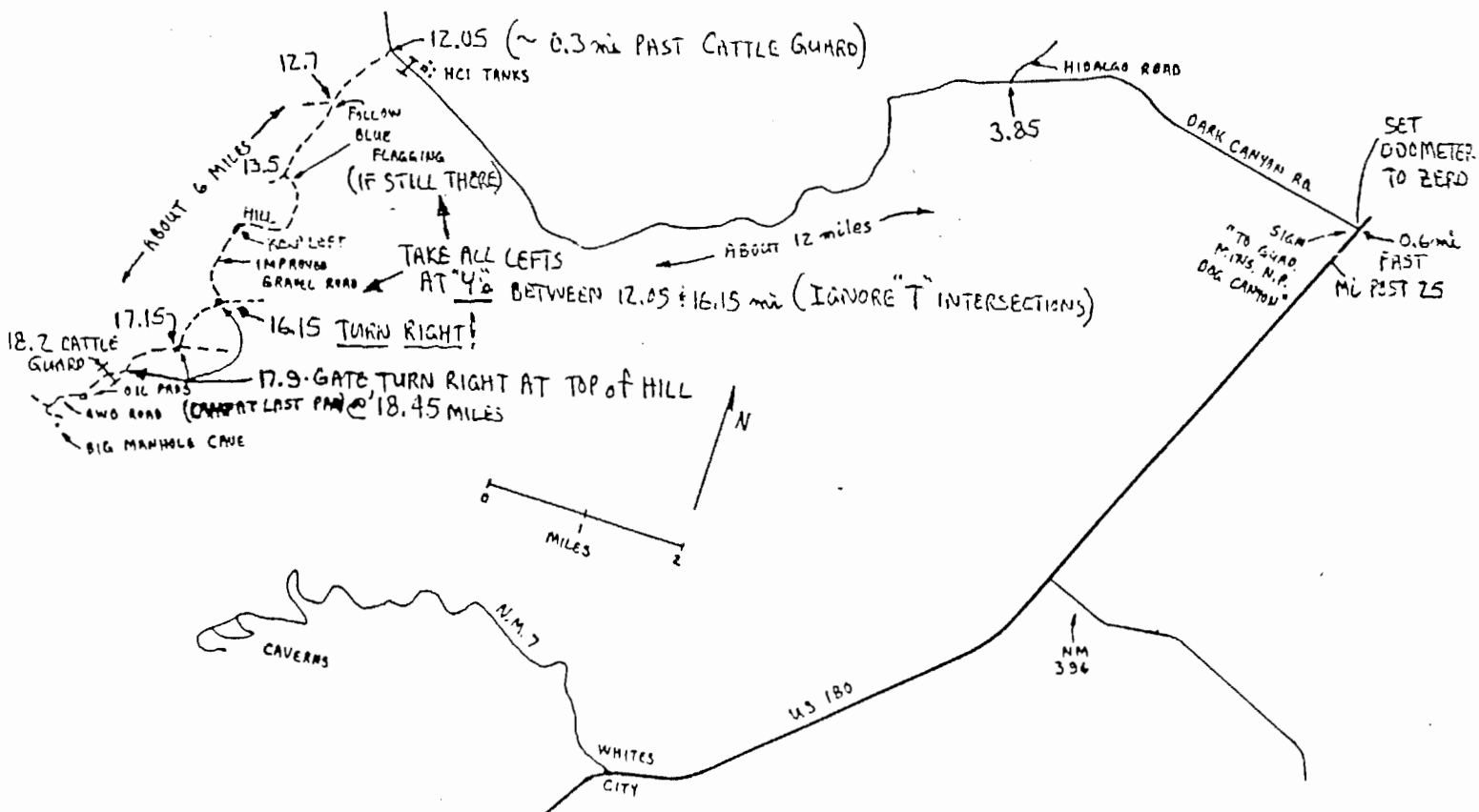
(The following article is reprinted from the JAN-FEB 1990 edition of SOUTHWESTERN CAVERS.)

SPRING REGIONAL SWR/NSS - MARCH 17-18, 1990 - BIG MANHOLE CAVE

This year's Spring regional meeting will be held at Big Manhole Cave (BMhC) southwest of Carlsbad, NM. Camping will be on the oil pad approximately 3/4ths mile from the cave entrance. (See accompanying map.) The actual business meeting is planned for late Saturday afternoon, at 5:00, so that work can begin early in BMhC.

Entry to BMhC requires that you be vertically qualified. (50 ft. free drop) An alternate activity (see below) is provided for those who don't wish to do the drop. The main tasks to be accomplished in BMhC are as follows: 1) final distribution of clay dig tailings on the cave floor, 2) further excavation of clay fill at the dig face to expose what we have determined to be a breakdown-filled joint, and 3) continue chipping at the calcified breakdown where the air is rushing out.

The alternate activity is a trip to Mudgett's Cave, located some 2 and 3/4 miles away in the scenic Serpentine Bends of Dark Canyon. Though the cave is basically horizontal, there is a steep slope to negotiate on the way to the cave. Mudgett's has been rumored to have blowing leads in it and those visiting will try to substantiate the rumors.



(The following article is reprinted
from the JAN-FEB 1990 edition
of SOUTHWESTERN CAVERS.)

1990 LECHUGUILLA PRECISION SURVEY PROJECT
(The Thundering Turtles)

EXPEDITION DATES	CALL DATE	CONTACT
March 3-10	Feb 24	Fritzi or Jim Hardy
April 21-29	Apr 14	505-345-1709
May 19-28	May 12	or
July 28-Aug 5	Jul 21	Robert G. Babb, II
Sept 1-9	Aug 23	502-224-3452
Nov 17-25	Nov 10	

The LPSP is an independent project created by Robbie Babb and Jim Hardy for the purpose of doing a theodolite survey of Lechuguilla Cave. The Cave Research Foundation and the Lechuguilla Cave Project are both supporting their efforts in many diverse ways. Fritzi Hardy (CRF) is expedition leader, cook, and support staff; Hilary Minich (LCP) is leader for the technical support needed in the cave. Anyone who is interested should contact the leaders to be placed on the mailing list and to ask any questions which they may have.

Trips begin on Saturday with a gathering of the troops. Sunday is training for those unfamiliar with the methodology and instruments and for transporting equipment to the cave. Monday through Friday are spent surveying, with Saturday as a finish up day and to pull whatever equipment needs to be removed from the cave. Sunday is clean the cabins and be gone. People are welcome for shorter periods of time if that is necessary. Theodolite training is available in Albuquerque on Saturdays by appointment with Jim Hardy. One does not need to be a super-strong caver at this point in time. Vertical gear is required, as well as the training to use it. The main absolutes are patience and an interest in the project.

Trips further into Lechuguilla, during each expedition, will be available for those interested and able.

RETURN TO RIVER STYX

Butch Fralia is planning another expedition to River Styx Cave in west Texas. For those of you who haven't been before, it's a gypsum cave, rather than the usual limestone. It's an excellent beginner's trip, but Butch is also planning a few "extras" for those wanting a bit more adventure. He's planning to drop the nearby Vertical Sinks to check for leads. At least one is already known to contain a 600 foot cave. And Butch is even hoping to find the elusive connection from the sinks to the River Styx System that was reportedly found by a group from the Lubbock Area Grotto. The trip will take place over the weekend of 30 March - 1 April. Contact Butch Fralia or better yet, come to the March meeting for more details.

(The following article is reprinted
from the January 18, 1990 edition
of The OZTOL Caver.)

The Armchair Caver's Guide to Mexpeleo 89

by Alan Malkiel

Destination: Ciudad Valles, SLP, Mexico.

Personnel: Susannah Patterson, Alan Malkiel, and about 230 International Cavers

Dates: December 24, 1989 - January 1, 1990

If you're expecting a tale of Big Pits, Miles of Borehole or Virgin Passage, turn the page because this is a review dedicated to all the wimp cavers out there. We left the truck behind and took the Volvo just to get into the proper cushy frame of mind and set out for the tropics of inner Mexico. An overnight rest in Brownsville prepared us for the grueling eight hour drive to the Hotel Taninul which was to be our base for the next six days.

To give some structure to this trip report I will present my comments in the same order as our priorities. First, the accommodations. First class all the way. The hotel comes equipped with giant hot springs/swimming pool flowing a few degrees above body temperature, two private caves for your enjoyment (one has been converted into a disco), foot thick walls, and king-size beds spacious enough for four cavers, all for the price of a Motel 6. Since the hotel is 2 Km. from the main road you wake up to the sound of jungle birds instead of mufferless trucks and busses. The majority of cavers were being poor bunked at the convention site without so much as hot water for about \$1.00 per night each, less if they brought a tent.

Of course, food has to come close behind lodging and there was food aplenty. For rich folks only, the hotel dining room has white linen on the chairs as well as the tables, live music at night, friendly waiters who are patient with grade school Spanish, and as an added bonus, the occasional good tasting dish at a reasonable price. Typical bill for 2 including cerveza and tip was about \$20.

Highlights were the guacamole, 1/4 chicken, and goat cheese enchiladas. Avoid the steaks and overpriced specials. For your lunchtime enjoyment try the Don Juan Cafe in the heart of the city. Super huevos, enchiladas, etc. at prices which beat McDonalds. For something different, there is a roadside stop about a mile north of the convention site which definitely does not resemble any Dallas eating establishment.

It is a bit short on atmosphere (actually with no walls there may be too much at times), and is not exactly sanitary (the riverbank outhouse was 6 meters upstream from the water dipping bucket). Also, don't expect to see your food at night, illumination comes from a single bulb hooked to a car battery. But overlook the small stuff and order the house speciality, a plate of Acamaya. These critters are so good they must be an endangered species. Picture a giant crawdad (crayfish for you Yankees), with a body about 4 to 8 inches long, split, covered with garlic butter and broiled. One bite and you're eating at the Ritz.

If your budget can't take the \$7 price tag, order a bowl of Mariscos (assorted seafood). It will keep your mind occupied as you identify the contents; shrimp, squid, fresh water clams, fish steaks, and a couple of smaller Acamayas to remind your taste buds of heaven. Food to avoid - the

Advanced Rappelling Course

Dates: April 21,22 and 28,29

convention banquet comes to mind. The chef made his "French Specialty", Turkey Tetrazzini. A superb example of high-school cuisine, capturing the very essence of canned stuff, accompanied by cabbage soup.

Once the important tasks were behind us, we did some caving. Yes, I did say caving. It is necessary to indulge occasionally in order to call one's self a caver. We picked Cueva de Aire, a short horizontal cave needing some survey work. The cave was entirely forgettable by most standards except for the fact it was used by the locals for sacrificial offerings. Outside was a bag of decapitated chickens which could only stimulate the imagination. Inside was the unexpected. Candles were everywhere, some still burning, a pool of blood, figures drawn with white powder, money, chicken bones, and open tin cans covered the floor; well you get the picture. Our group of 11 consisted of one experienced surveyor and 10 novices which accounts for the less than 80 meters surveyed in 4 hours.

If you're driving, forget unleaded gas, it's available only on alternate Tuesdays. I traded 5 gallons of Chevron Supreme to an unlucky soul with California plates for a ride to the Tampico airport. Forget safe driving habits, you are sharing the road with pigs, chickens, cows, horses of questionable background, half the populace of each village, and trucks with no lights. For that extra challenge you can follow our example and bypass the border checkpoints, skip the paperwork, and keep a close watch in the rear-view mirror for the Federales. Not recommended for those with weak hearts.

The real stuff. There was plenty for the serious caver: multi-day trips, the big drops, world-class slice shows, vertical contests, etc. However, I'll leave these topics to others with a different perspective.

The course is 32 hours long, with 8 hours of classroom instruction and 24 hours of hands-on instruction. The course includes 4 methods of rappelling, 3 methods of ascending a rope, 4 methods of belay, equipment construction and care, self rescue, and basic partner rescue from a line. Problem solving and safety are stressed.

The first day will be the classroom portion, which will be held at the National Guard Armory on Highway 180 in Mineral Wells. Going west from DFW, the armory is on the right of the highway, past the golf course. Entering Mineral Wells from the east, there is a large sign indicating a National Guard training site on the old Fort Wolters Army Base. Ignore this sign!

The hands-on portion of the course will be held at Lake Mineral Wells State Park located on Highway 180 at the eastern city limits of Mineral Wells. This part of the course will be held rain or shine, with dangerous weather (lightning, tornadoes, etc.) being the exception.

Class starts at 8:00AM and ends at 5:00 PM. There will be a 1 hour lunch break. It is recommended that students bring a picnic lunch. It is possible to drive into Mineral Wells for lunch; but the word is: the restaurants are crowded.

There is lodging available in Mineral Wells for those wishing to stay overnight each weekend. For camping reservations at the park, contact: Lake Mineral Wells State Park, (817) 328-1171, 8AM to 5PM daily.

There will be a \$10.00 course fee per person to defray instructor's expenses. For those not camping at the park, there is a park use fee of \$2.00 per car per day. There are fees for campsite use at the park.

Each student MUST bring to class helmet, leather gloves (no welding or farmers fencing gloves: too stiff), cleated shoes or boots, a seat harness or 25 feet of 2 inch tubular webbing, and about 6 feet of inexpensive rope for knot tying practice. If any student has any additional vertical gear or can borrow any, please bring it. Rappelling ropes are especially needed.

An accurate head count is needed, so please contact Ernest Parker, (817) 447-8344 (unlisted) if you wish to attend.