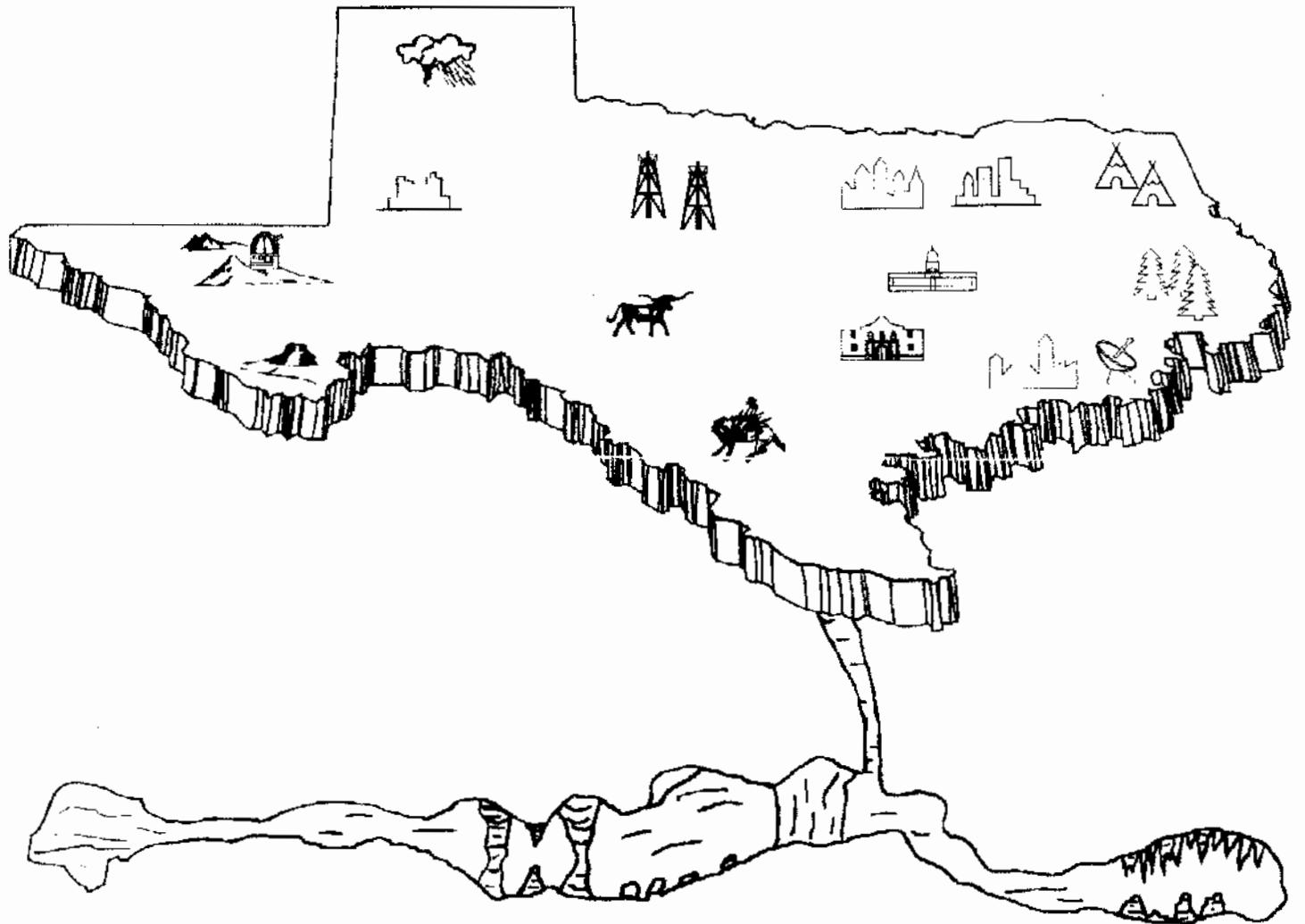


THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTO

Volume 7 Number 1

January, 1993



See **TEXAS!**

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of The National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed stamped envelope should accompany it.

Reprinting Articles: Internal organizations of The National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to the author as stated in the byline) first appearing in *The Maverick Bull* if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of *The Maverick Bull* at the address herein.

Exchanges: The Maverick Grotto will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact the editor.

Complementary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free issue to persons interested in becoming members.

Subscription Rates: Subscription rates are \$10.00 per year for members and non-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 Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is located less than one mile west of Loop 820 and next to K-Mart. The time is 7:00 P.M. and the food is good.

Carbide: Grotto carbide is available at the meeting on even numbered months. The carbide is free to all members and is sold to others at the price of fifty cents per pound. Anyone needing carbide at other times should contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039 to arrange for pickup.

Library: Support your Grotto Library. Russell Hill will be accepting books and magazines on cave related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. We wish to thank Russell for his efforts each month to bring and set up the Grotto Library.

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(817)346-2039

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Burleson, Tx. 76028
(817)447-8344

Treasurer: Mark Porter
513 Valley Park
Garland, Tx. 75243
(214)271-8147

Cave Rescue: Call collect (512)686-0234

January Meeting by Danny Sherrod

The January meeting will have a presentation on how to get permits to New Mexico caves near Carlsbad. A handout will be available with names and phone numbers.

A trip will be discussed for non-vertical cavers to Three Mile Hill in New Mexico, at a time to be arranged, in February or March. Three Mile Hill has some very beautiful caves and great camping. This trip can be done by leaving at noon on Friday and getting home late Sunday.

One goal for this year is to have 4 or 5 grotto trips to caving areas outside of Texas. If you have a trip that you would like to lead, please mention it at the meeting. If there is a cave that you would like to do, but do not know how to get the permits or plan the trip, mention this at the meeting also and we can try to help you with the details.

Trip Report: River Styx

by Donna Anderson

Date: December 26, 1992

Personnel: Donna Anderson, Mike Anderson, Meta Huzarevich, Pete Lindsley, Steve Lindsley, and Mike Pearson.

Mike, Meta, and I met Pete, Steve, and Mike on top of the hill overlooking the Wichita River around 11:30 Saturday morning. Our mission was to set some bench marks in preparation for the re-survey of River Styx. We set a bench mark at the 64 entrance and the 63 entrance. Steve entered the 63 entrance first checking for snakes. All was clear, so we proceeded into the cave. Meta and I checked some crawlways fairly close to the entrance. Then we all proceeded to the first passage which leads to the Gypsum Blister passage. Right before we reached that intersection, there was another crawl. Pete, Mike P. and I entered it and I spotted about a 6 to 8 inch salamander which was colored mostly light brown. When we reached a small room, Pete tried carefully moving a few rocks in a high area hoping in vain to find sunlight. After a brief shower of small rocks, we left the area.

We continued to the Junction Room and then to the Window. We entered a high crawlway which Pete and Mike P. had not been to before and we squeezed past a large rock into a nice size room with walking passage. You had to lean over to one side to walk as the passage was slanted, but it was still walking passage. After exploring this area, we continued on to the Dome Room and spotted a large yellow and white salamander on the way. Mike A. got his camera out and took several pictures of the beautiful creature. We reached the Dome Room wondering if we were going to see sunlight. It had not collapsed yet but we speculated that when the ceiling does come down, a cow will probably be found on top of all the breakdown - a poor cow who had been innocently munching grass in the wrong place at the wrong time.

We continued to one of my favorite crawlways. Everyone followed, led on by promises of a large room with several leads that have not been pushed very far. After one belly crawl we came to a small room where we could all sit and talk. A second belly crawl brought us to a small area where there were two passages. One is a "very sporting" crawl complete with

very cold water. The second led to a bypass around the "sporting crawl". Steve, Meta and I squeezed through the bypass. Pete didn't quite fit. Mike and Mike decided if Pete could not fit they could not either. We had entered a long corridor with an 8 foot room at one end. I showed Steve and Meta where the "sporting crawl" came out into the room. Then we checked out a crawlway on the opposite end. We then returned to the rest of the group. Since the others had been unable to fit through the squeeze, I told them I would make it up to them by showing them another really nice crawlway where I was sure they could fit. After setting our last bench mark, we started to head out of the cave. The crawlway I had told them about was kind of on our way out. Mike and Mike, however, decided they really had no intense yearning to see another crawl so we left them leisurely sitting in the main passage. The rest of us entered a belly crawl that was only about 5 feet long and we entered a large oblong room. At the far end of the room was another short crawl which opened into a small room. We climbed down a hole which led to another belly crawl about 30 feet long which opened up to a small area. At this point, Pete and Meta decided to wait while Steve and I continued. I had to move some rocks to get through and it was very tight in several places then we were able to stoop walk for a while. The passage again became very tight and then I climbed up to a tiny dead-end area where I could turn around. From that angle I spotted the continuation of the passage. However, we had been gone for some time and we thought the others would be getting tired of waiting so we returned to Pete and Meta. When all of us got back to the main passage, we found a note that said Mike and Mike had left the cave. The temperature was steadily getting colder as we neared the entrance. Steve once again led the group and checked carefully for snakes. Mike and Mike were at the top waiting for us. After changing clothes, we headed back home hoping to find a restaurant open. The Sonic in Seymour was the only place we could find. We had an excellent trip. We spent about 8 hours in the cave, set 8 bench marks, and checked out a lot of crawlways, none of which are on the map. We arrived back in Fort Worth around 1:30 a.m.

Chairman's Notes (01/93)

by Butch Fralia

In last months chairman's notes, I stated that the Grotto cannot do anything as a group other than have joint parties with the DFW Grotto. Several people are drafting plans for tall wooden structures suitable for crucifixion for such sacrilege. What they "thought" they saw was a statement saying we shouldn't have joint parties. That wasn't the statement but at least I got someone's attention. I'll return to the statement of last month's article after a few party comments.

I have enjoyed the parties and have gone to all but two and those were scheduled at times when I had other commitments. The only change I would make concerning parties is that I would like to see them paid for by charging admission rather than using the public fund of either grotto. At this time, we know how much it takes to fund the party and about how many will attend. Each Grotto usually contributes seventy dollars to the cause and there are typically forty people in attendance. If we funded the party by charging five dollars a head, that would be two-hundred dollars leaving thirty-five dollars for each grotto to add to their treasury. That is pretty close to what one newsletter mailing cost now. Both Grottos are always talking about ways to raise money, that would be as effective as any!

Parties are kind of like Grotto Carbide. Those folks who don't use carbide always find it objectionable that carbide is purchased from their dues. Those who don't choose to party (about half the membership) find it objectionable that parties are paid for from their dues. It's a no win situation but it seems fair that people who want to use carbide pay for their own and people who want to party, pay for their own.

Now back to the original issue. I contend that The Maverick Grotto has no personality to distinguish itself as a caving organization. I realize there isn't

a great selection of trips to go on but then when there are, there isn't a very long line of people wanting to go either. It's a new year and it's time for some changes. At the January meeting, Danny Sherrod will hold a program on how to set up a trip to New Mexico permitted caves. He is also planning on establishing trip dates that people can plan on. For those who construe money as a problem, cost can be minimized by car pooling and sharing expenses. With work and help, we can get some closer trips set up. Bristor Ranch, Harrell's Cave and River Styx are always options. I'm trying to get a line on some "lost" caves near Aspermont in the River Styx area. For anyone interested, Donna Anderson has suggested the Grotto could assume some role in the development and hosting of the '94 NSS Convention. If anyone else has options, hopefully they will share them with the club.

Individual grotto members distinguish themselves participating in activities like Colorado Bend, the Carlsbad Cleanup and Organizing the '94 NSS convention. The grotto as an organization has not distinguished itself in any way that I'm aware of. Ask yourself what the Maverick Grotto is known for. With Ernie Parker's help, we'll soon be up to a first class newsletter. That will be from Ernie's personal contribution as well, I HOPE, as the individual contributions of the membership. When I mention contribution, I'm talking about time, interest and involvement.

I as a member of the grotto will do whatever I can to further it's cause. The other officers share this interest with me. Furthering the grotto cause will require input from everyone as to what they want, and where they want the grotto to go. It will require involvement from everyone. Let's get it together folks, and become an organized group with interest and involvement in our chartered purpose; caving.

The Maverick Bull

by Butch Fralia

It's time to use your imagination just a little bit. Just sit back and relax and let your mind wander. Let your imagination work for you. Just imagine yourself reading **THE MAVERICK BULL** and imagine a wonderful article. Imagine the pride you take in that article when you look up and see your name on the byline. Imagine it's your article or your trip report that everyone is raving about. Imagine it's your article printed in what will soon

become one of the best newsletters in the state if not the country.

The December issue of **THE MAVERICK BULL** looked good and the January Issue will look even better. The only problem is that it's a little short of articles. Deep within the soul of every person lies a literary artist just waiting to jump out. It's time to try your luck, get your feet

wet and participate in making **THE MAVERICK BULL** an award winning newsletter.

The editor needs your help in keeping his morale up. He needs your articles to make the newsletter less of a chore to put together. Just imagine a newsletter (I know the editor would like to) where the editor can have a selection of what to print in an issue. Imagine a situation where a limited number of the available articles can be printed in an issue. Imagine the pride you'll take in yourself and **THE MAVERICK BULL** when you write one of those selected articles. Imagine how wonderful it would be to have a newsletter where you could read articles written by someone else besides Butch Fralia.

You know a lot of people read **THE MAVERICK BULL**. The Editors of **THE TEXAS CAVER** and **THE NSS NEWS** read **THE MAVERICK BULL**. Just realize that upon occasion, one of these publications takes articles that first appeared in **THE MAVERICK BULL** and reprints them for the world to see. Just imagine that you are discovered and your article is one of those reprints. Imagine how good you will feel!

Your imagination is working now, your creative juices are flowing. It's time to take positive action. It's time to take pen in hand, sit down at your typewriter and write the wonderful article you'll submit to the editor for the next issue of **THE MAVERICK BULL**.

Christmas Party

by Linda Parker

The DFW and Maverick Grottos had an exciting joint Christmas party on December 12 at Dave and Barbe's lovely home in Irving. Dave did a great job decorating. Everything looked beautiful. For a couple of hours, everyone ate, drank, and were merry.

Then the important part of the evening began-- AWARDS! Troy Shelton and Jay Jordan gave such coveted awards as the Stephen King Golden Pen Award, Run For The Border Award, Charles Dicken's "A Tale of Two Cities" Award and other such important presentations. Everyone was on the edge of their seats.

The excitement continued as "White Elephant Gifts" were distributed. The first one opened was a fine bottle of Irish whiskey. The recipient was

thrilled. A few weird things were given - a helmet with 3(?) light sources[candles], a box of Count Chockula cereal, etc. Then my turn came. How thrilled I was - a bread machine! Then Dave came in from the kitchen - the Irish whiskey and bread machine were actually presents he had bought for his family. OOPS!

When the "White Elephant" gifts were all done, Don Metzner showed some beautiful slides of his trip to Mexico, and Dave(Cave) and Barbe's recent trip to England. We all enjoyed hearing about their adventures.

The 1992 Christmas party was a great time! Thanks Barbe and Dave for being our hosts.

Dues Time Again

Once again January rolls around and it's time to pay Grotto dues. The 1993 Maverick Grotto is going to be a more involved Grotto and the 1993 **MAVERICK BULL** is going to be a prime newsletter. Please be prepared to pay your dues at the January Grotto meeting or mail them

in as soon as possible if you cannot attend. For those of you who are now subscribers or receive the newsletter and intend to become members during the coming year, subscriber fees will apply to membership. Membership dues and Subscriber fees are \$10.00 a year.

Errata

Oops! The article entitled "December Meeting" in the last issue should have been entitled "November Meeting". There was no regular grotto meeting in

December. That's what I get for concentrating so hard on publishing the **DECEMBER** issue.

Weil's Disease

Weil's Disease is a bacterial infection spread by the urine of rats. Cave water draining from farmland or areas of human habitation is usually infected with the leptospirosos bacterium. the organism enters the body through breaks in the skin or via the nose, throat, or alimentary tract. Mostly Weil's Disease resembles an attack of the flu but it can cause serious illness or death.

Testing for the Disease

A blood test is usually undertaken to confirm this notifiable illness. If the local Public Health Laboratory is not equipped to undertake an ELISA TEST, the sample should be sent to:

The Leptospirosis Reference Unit
Public Health Laboratory
County Hospital
Hereford, HR1 2ER
Tel: 0432 277707

Weil's Disease Can Be A Serious Illness. If it is suspected, antibiotics must be administered immediately.

Symptoms

The incubation period can be from 3 to 19 days. Early symptoms are: fever, muscular aches and pains, loss of appetite, vomiting with prostration. Later symptoms may include: Bruising of the skin, sore eyes, nose bleeds, and jaundice. The fever lasts for about 5 days and it may be followed by significant deterioration.

If you become ill after caving, particularly from 3 to 19 days later, and have any of the above symptoms, CALL YOUR GP EARLY. Tell your doctor you may have been in contact with Weil's Disease and show this card.

Issued by The National Caving Association....This card was given to Sherry and Don by Rosie and Arthur. Gee, did I bring home more than I claimed at customs? [Editors' Note: This article appeared in the January, 1993 issue of *Caver's Echo*. This article about a strange foreign disease brings back memories of my days in the Navy.]

Warning: Thefts of Equipment Underwater Continue

[Editor's Note: This article appeared in the September/October issue of *Underwater Speleology*, the NSS Cave Diving publication. While this article was written for cave divers, it has implications for all types of cavers - especially vertical cavers. The consequences of a stolen rope while cavers are in a cave, or vertical gear tampering can be fatal. I remember one instance in which a person attempted to remove one of our ropes while we were standing less than 50' away! His excuse: The rope was not being used at that exact moment! He became upset when we "insisted" that he leave it alone! There are some unsupervised people out there, in all areas of caving, who are not qualified to be there and thus do not realize the dangers of such actions. There are also people who are incapable of thinking ahead to such dangers and, unfortunately, there are also a few who just don't give a damn. The advice in this article is sound. I touch on this topic lightly in my vertical classes but I think I will start covering it in more depth in the future.]

There have been additional incidents recently of line reels and other equipment being stolen out of caves. Yet another diver was caught red-handed removing someone else's reel from a dive site. When asked to explain himself, the

diver is reported to have said that he didn't think reels should be left in caves for any reason. (This, evidently, was his justification for declaring open season on other people's equipment.)

Fortunately, no one has been killed (murdered) yet as a consequence of these thefts; however, there have been some close calls. In one instance reported to the Editor, a gap reel was stolen at the exit side of Mud Tunnel in Little River only moments after it's owners exited by the main tunnel sharing air after an out-of-air emergency past the Florida Room. Had the cave diving team had their out-of-air emergency earlier, while still in Mud Tunnel, and come to the end of the Mud Tunnel line in low visibility and not found their gap reel at the exit side, they could have run out of air while searching for the main permanent line.

When the donor diver went back in to retrieve the gap reel, which had his name on it in large letters, he encountered another solo cave diver swimming out with it. At first he thought this individual had seen them sharing air on their way out and retrieved their reel to assist them. But during discussion on the surface the other diver said he hadn't thought that anyone else was in the cave, and that the reel had been "abandoned". He also reported to have told them that he found Little River a very productive

location yielding him a couple of "abandoned" reels each weekend.

In another instance a primary reel run from the cavern to the start of the 70' tunnel was stolen out of Peacock while the divers were making their dive. Again, had they encountered bad visibility or had some other time-consuming emergency deep in the system, they may well have drowned - as so many open-water divers who didn't have a line down to the 70' tunnel - while searching for the entrance.

Law-enforcement officials recommend marking your equipment, such as reels or tanks, very conspicuously with your name and Social Security number. Go to the extra trouble of having this information engraved indelibly on several sides of the gear. Tape and magic marker can be removed and reels or tanks sold as ostensibly above-board "used" gear. Having your gear engraved with large, highly visible letters and numbers will make your gear a little less attractive to thieves looking for a quick resale.

Be suspicious of any used gear offered for sale that looks as though an attempt has been made to cross through identification marks. Don't hesitate to call your local law-enforcement agency to check on the bona fides of a piece of equipment being offered with a name and social security number on it, if they differ from those of the person attempting to sell you the equipment. (Report any thefts of gear marked with your name so they can be entered into the NCIC computer.)

Team up with other cave-diving groups when possible and coordinate your gearing up, diving, and gearing down so that at least one team is on the surface at all times, guarding vehicles and making note of any other suspicious activities or persons.

What's the old joke? - "Never mind the dog; beware of the Smith & Wesson"? Well... "Never mind the cave; beware of other divers with sticky fingers."

High Technology Comes To CBSP

by Butch Fralia

For most people, with the exception of a few computer nerds and electronics hobbyists, caving has always been an escape from the high technology world they immerse themselves in. That changed during the November '92, Colorado Bend State Park volunteer research project. GPS arrived and caving may never be the same!

GPS stands for Global Positioning System. It uses two special receivers that interpret satellite signals to provide navigational coordinates. Texas Parks and Wildlife is buying a GPS system to use with an electronic survey system. In September, TPWD person and old time caver, Bob Burnett was invited to attend a GPS seminar at Texas A&M. While there, A&M told him they would be willing to loan the equipment for research purposes. Bob perked his ears up and grabbed on like a bulldog.

Friday afternoon of the November trip saw Bob Burnett, Keith Heuss, and Travis Kinchens, in an intensive two hour course on the operation of the equipment. Saturday morning saw a group of cavers heading for Lively pasture to begin using the equipment to locate cave entrances. The operation is so automated that without any understanding of what you're doing, you can learn to use it "accurately" in about ten minutes. That weekend, coordinates were taken on twenty-seven caves. A return trip in December saw locations taken on about ten caves.

The GPS system is accurate to

within three meters. That's within ten feet of absolute location relative to the face of the earth. It uses two portable receivers, one that is maintained at a fixed (preferably known) location and another unit called the rover that is used to determine the location of a cave entrance. Both "base" and "rover" units record data in samples from the available overhead satellites. This data is time stamped so various measurements can be correlated. Location coordinates can be determined from three satellites. If a fourth satellite is available, the elevation can be determined. There are twenty-one satellites up that transmit navigational data, so finding four of them isn't a big chore.

Once the data is recorded, the units are returned to A&M (ASS Chairman/Maverick Grotto member, Travis Kinchen, A&M senior does pick up and delivery service), the data is dumped into a large computer. The Texas Highway Department has a very expensive fixed unit in Austin at an absolute location. Data from this unit, along with the "base" and "rover" units are compared and the cave location in longitude and latitude is returned to the project. A&M is working on new logarithms that will allow the data to be corrected to within one foot absolute. There are designs in the works that will be accurate to within less than a centimeter.

It's fun to play with a pair of seventeen-thousand dollar radio receivers but what does it all mean? TPWD is

buying a computer system that has map software on it. They are subscribing to a service from USGS to download topographical maps. Hopefully once these maps are available, TPWD can provide project managers with a digitized topographic map of a park. If that map can be transferred into a computer aided design (CAD) system, cave locations can be plotted on the maps and the maps printed. The CBSP cave locations were taken at the location where the

underground survey was begun. The cave survey data can be plotted on the same topo map, referenced to the GPS location. A plot can be generated that would be a very interesting geological fault map of the area.

Some of this stuff is in the future but GPS is NOW! When it all comes together, caving will never be the same. All the guess work of locating a cave from a pencil mark on a topo where someone thought it was, will be gone.

Texas Parks And Wildlife Signs MOU

During the October Colorado Bend trip, representatives from TSA and TPWD put the finishing touches on a new Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations. In early December, the MOU made it's way through all the various departments and landed on Director Andy Sampson's desk. He signed it off and last word was that it was waiting for TSA Chairman, Carl Ponebshek to drive up from Austin to sign the document. The first MOU has been expired for several years. Though TSA members voted to keep the document on the table, it wasn't pushed because of the reorganization going on within TPWD. A signed copy will be available later for all to see or for reprint.

The new document is different from the old in that it states that TSA and TPWD will work together "in partnership"

for the conservation of cave resources. They will work together "in partnership" for the availability of recreational caving. The language of the document is different in that the expectations from both organizations are more clearly stated.

Now the MOU is attended, the documentation supporting recreational caving can be moved into circulation. The proposed kick off for recreational caving is Earth Day, 1993. That is the third weekend of April. During the summer of 1992, monthly meetings were held and prototype guide brochures, hazard warnings and rules were designed. This is all in place and ready to begin the approval circuit. It appears that the long awaited availability of recreational caves on state parklands may soon become a reality.

Calendar of Events

January 25-27, 4th Multidisc. Conference on Sinkholes, Pampa City, Florida. Contact Barry F. Beck, Florida Sinkhole Research Institute, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Fl. 32816, (407)823-5645.

January 29-31, TSA Winter Meeting, San Saba. Technical sessions (surveying and mapping) at Jr. High School in San Saba. Camping on the Sloan Ranch.

February 13-14 Colorado Bend State Park. Ongoing monthly TSA project. Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039.

February 26-28, Powell's Cave. Surveying and exploring. Contact Terry Holsinger (512)443-4241.

April 30-May 2, TSA Spring Meeting, Brackettville. Site of the 1994 NSS National Convention.

June 1994, NSS National Convention, Brackettville, Texas.

Maverick Trip Report

for the literary Brain Dead

by Jim Payne

Name of Cave: _____ Location: _____ Date: _____

Were other cavers on this trip? Yes No Weather? Sunny Cloudy Rainy Snow
Did this trip involve camping? Yes No Temperature? Hot Mild Cold
Was there a campfire party? Yes No
Did anyone do any thing funny? Yes No if yes Who and What? _____

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Academic American Encyclopedia

Cave Fish

Most cave fish that live exclusively in caves are blind or nearly so. The famous blind cave fish from Mexico, *Astyanax mexicanus*, related to the piranha, appears to have no eyes; the orbits are vestigial and overgrown with skin. A less well known cave fish completely lacking eyes is a MINNOW from the Congo River area, *Caecobarbus geertsi*; it has long barbels for sensing food. In North America there exists a family of five species (*Amblyopsidae*) named cave fish; all are blind or have extremely small eyes. *Amblyopsid* cave fish are distributed throughout the limestone cave regions of the central United States, except for *Chologaster cornuta*, the rice fish, which is not found in caves but in

dark swamps instead.

Cave-dwelling species tend to be pale; their bodies lack pigment as a result of living in environments with little or no light. Blind cave-dwelling fish have heightened acuity of the other senses. In some cases extra tactile organs are distributed on the skin. Despite the fact that these fish are rarely if ever seen in open waters, they are very widely distributed, probably through underground channels. Breeding habits are unknown, but it is suspected that the female carries the developing eggs in a pouch found in the gill chamber.

A.R. Emery

