

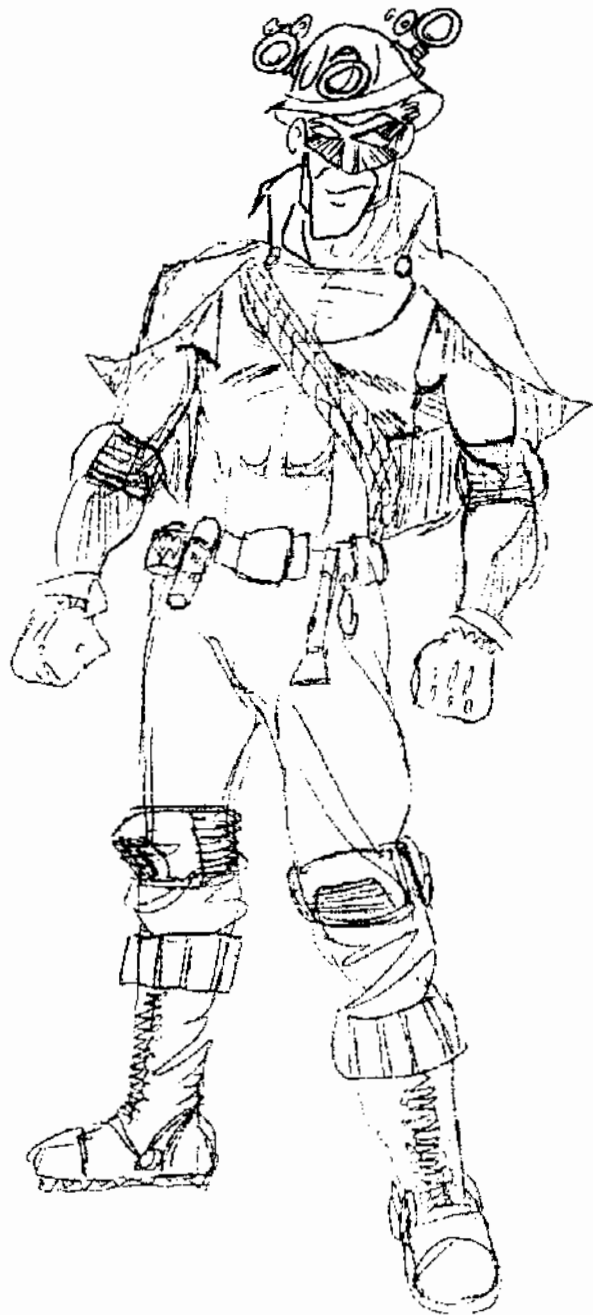
# THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTTO

Volume 7 Number 2

February, 1993

*CAPT. CAVER  
SKETCH #1*



*P. Kopp / 72*

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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.

**Chairman:** Butch Fralia  
3412 Walton Ave.  
Fort Worth, Tx. 76133  
(817)346-2039

**Vice-Chairman:** Danny Sherrod  
3 Cobb Drive  
Joshua, Tx. 76058  
(817)295-5167

**Secretary/Editor:** Ernest Parker  
616 Nw. King  
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

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### February Meeting

Greg Mooty will give a program on cave diving. He is going to bring diving equipment and cave diving publications for examination. He plans to tell about the various types of equipment used, including equipment such as propulsion

units (scooters), as well as the various techniques used, such as decompression diving and stage diving. He has slides to show as well, and he is going to discuss the work at Mystic Cave.

## Trip Report: Carlsbad Caverns

by Travis Kinchen

Date: January 2, 1993

Personnel: Chris Sabin, Alan Glennon,  
Travis Kenchen.

Howdy everyone! I haven't been around Fort worth for awhile and I thought I'd let y'all in on some of what I've been up to recently.

After Christmas was over, Chris and I met up with Will Obele (of Dallas) and his friend Ken and went on a climbing trip to Hueco Tanks out by El Paso. On New Year's Day, while Will and Ken went on to Ruidoso to go skiing, Chris and I dropped in on Carlsbad Caverns, where Alan was working as a volunteer. We hoped that Alan could get us onto a trip off trail somewhere.

When we got there, we found that Alan had been unable to squeeze us onto a trip to Lake of the Clouds which was taking place that night. Alan decided to pass up his own place on the trip, since we would be left behind. I thought that was noble, but unnecessary. Then again, he's been there twice already.

We stayed in the dorms with Alan, and enjoyed our first night indoors in nearly a week. The next morning Alan got Chris and me a spot on a Left Hand Tunnel tour which was being given for the public. We traveled on the old dirt trail which a one time was part of the guided tours. Now it is the main route to Lake of the Clouds and other beautiful areas. Although we didn't get to go as far down the passage as I would have liked, we did get to see some lovely parts of the cave which I had never seen before.

After the tour and a bit of lunch, Chris and I took the regular tour of the Caverns. Chris had never been there before, and was truly awestruck. I have been there quite a few times, but, as always, I was awestruck too.

The real treat, though, came after hours. There was a video taping session going on for a new Caverns video. Alan, Chris, and I rode the elevators down with a few other employees and friends to watch. We spent several hours waiting while the lighting was set up, but the time was never dull. as each new light was turned on, a new section of previously dark cavern was reveled. By

the time the lighting and all the cameras were ready, the entire Big Room was lit up like a stage. It was with out a doubt the most spectacular display of underground beauty that I have ever seen.

The action being filmed was a climb up to the Spirit World. The Spirit World is a section of passages above the Big Room reachable only by climbing 255 feet of rope straight up into the dome in the middle of the room, at the highest point in the room. The rope was originally put up there with helium balloons and draped over a stalagmite. Since then, for several years, parachute cord has been in place to haul up rope if the need should arise. For the filming, a 500 foot rope was pulled up and around the stalagmite, and tied off to one of the enormous formations in the Big Room.

The first brave soul up the rope was a film crew member, with 50 pounds of lighting equipment on his back. After he got up and set up lights in the top of the dome, the filming began. Next up was Jim Goodbar, a member of the original exploration team. Jim breezed up the rope with a seemingly endless string of wisecracks, took a short break at the top to admire the view, and then was filmed rappelling down. After Jim got down, Pat Kamthesis started up. She was using a frog system, and seemed to be having trouble with it (the sling lengths were not right, and she was limited to about 6 inch steps). About this time Dale Pate was taking up a group in the elevators, and as the next available elevator wouldn't leave until after midnight, we reluctantly left. As we walked down the trail, we all had a terrible time tearing our eyes away from the spectacularly lit area, and several of us nearly fell down.

The next day Chris and I departed for College Station, arriving home around 3 am. We had a great time despite not doing much real caving. We got to see a truly amazing cave lit up in a manner which may never happen again, and got to meet and talk with some really interesting and well known cavers who were staying at the park. When the new video comes out, look for us in the shots of people gapping at the climbers.

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### Dues and Subscriptions are due again!

\$10 per year for membership or subscription. Subscription fee applies to any future membership. Make payable to Maverick Grotto. Send to:

Mark Porter  
513 Valley Park  
Garland, Tx. 75243

**Great Cavers of the Bible, Volume I**  
by Alvis Hill

At some time or another, we've all taken ribbing from our non-caving peers about our strange obsession with things underground. Dawn and I sure get our fair share at church. Some of our friends there cannot understand why we take off an occasional weekend to make a caving trip. Folks are amused that I always manage to come up with a caving story on those rare occasions when they let me into the pulpit. Our pastor still can't believe we actually got him into a cave to marry us! Nevertheless, we try to assure them that we have not lost our marbles.

Fact of the matter is, I've done a little bit of Bible study on caves, and have discovered that there are at least twenty references to caves in the Bible. Several notable Bible figures were in fact cavers! Hebrews 11:38 speaks of great men of faith who wandered in "dens and caves of the earth". Listed below are a few of these "Bible cavers".

The first biblical figure documented to have lived in a cave was Lot. In Genesis, chapter 19, which details the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot fled the scene to the mountains. Verse 30 says that he "dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters".

The book of Judges, chapter 6, gives an account of the Israelites oppression by the Midianites. The situation got so bad that in verse 2, "the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds".

I Kings, chapters 18 and 19 give an account of the prophet Elijah. In chapter 18, Elijah destroyed four hundred-fifty of the prophets of Baal. When the wicked queen Jezebel discovered the fate of the prophets, she vowed to take revenge on Elijah. Elijah fled in fear and in I Kings 19:9, "came thither unto a cave, and lodged there". He remained in the cave while winds, earthquakes and fires raged outside. When he heard a "still small voice", which he discerned as the voice of God, he "went out, and stood in the entering in the cave". (King James English, really!)

My personal favorite Bible caver is King David. After David slew Goliath he ran afoul of King Saul and, as a result,

spent a lot of time in caves. In I Samuel 22:1, David escaped to the cave Adullam. Verse 2 relates that "every one who was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him". If you've less than thrilled with someone you found yourself in a cave with, maybe it could have been worse!

I Samuel 24 gives an account of another of David's caving experiences. David has fled, with Saul and 3000 men in hot pursuit. He hides in a cave at Engedi. In verse 3, lo and behold, Saul stops off and enters the same cave "to cover his feet" (i.e., potty), while "David and his men remained in the sides of the cave". Now David's men numbered about 400. Either this cave was really big, or those men sure were quiet! Anyway, while Saul was thus engaged, "David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily". (Cave humor for sure.) He could have killed him, I suppose, but instead decided to teach him a lesson for his lack of conservation ethics. Later, David's conscience bothered him, and he apologized to Saul for not respecting the office of the king.

David is also credited as having written many of the Psalms. Psalm 57 contains the superscription, "written by David, when he fled from Saul in the cave". Psalm 142 reads, "A Prayer when he (David) was in the cave". (David certainly knew where to go to get inspired.) Psalm 4 begins with the plea, "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress...". Upon study, I discovered that the word translated "distress" here comes from a Hebrew root meaning, "a narrow or tight place". Knowing David's background we can paraphrase this verse to read, "You have made room for me in a tight place". Spoken like a true caver!

So, we can see that when we take those opportunities to go caving, we are following in some pretty big footsteps. Maybe those occasional weekend trips aren't so bad after all. Just remember: if you find yourself "in the entering in a cave", listen closely. You never know Who may be speaking to you.

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**New Member**

The Maverick Grotto welcomes Chad Fenner as a member. Chad has been to Ogle, Wen and Hidden caves in New Mexico with Dave and Barbe McClung, and Shelia Knight.

Chad had his family with him at the

last meeting. His son loves puppies. At least he likes Barbe's new puppy and my 88 lb. German Shepard "puppy". Chad says as soon as his son gets old enough to carry his own gear, he's going to have him caving also.

## January Meeting

Butch Fralia opened the meeting and introduced the visitors: Mike Bales of Eules, Sheree Mahan & Martha McArthur of Wichita Falls (NTSS), and Chad & Lisa Fenner of Fort Worth. He reminded everyone that it is dues time again and congratulated Ernie Parker on the newsletter. He mentioned that he will make copies of the new Memorandum of Understanding between Texas cavers and TPWD if anyone wants one (see related article, last issue). He said that Earth Day is still the target date to have some recreational caves open in Colorado Bend State Park. He also announced that Bat Conservation International now owns Bracken Bat Cave (see related article this issue).

Danny Sherrod announced that he made a trip to Three Mile Hill, got snowed out, and did Carlsbad off-trails instead.

Bruce Anderson made a trip to Mexico with Troy Shelton and Steve Dalton. Checked out a lot of new caves. Maybe he'll give us a trip report soon.

Tag Swann went 2/12 miles into Fern Cave in Alabama.

Barbe & Dave "Cave" McClung and Russell Hill talked a little about their trip to England and Ireland. They agreed to give a program on their trip at the March meeting. Barbe announced that Allen Pritchard and Chris would be in town January 29 with a party to follow at Dave and Barbe's. Dave and Barbe would show them around Saturday and they would be leaving Sunday. Andy was also coming over and would be staying all of February.

Greg Mooty mentioned that there would be a cave diving photo opportunity at Mystic Cave January 17.

Martha McArthur told about some new projects upcoming in New Mexico (check calendar). She also announced that

Lechuguilla is being opened up to new people. LEARN will be conducting biological studies in Lechuguilla and new people will be accepted for the project. A pre-trip for orientation is required.

Sheila Knight announced that RET is opening a store in Dallas and she is going to work there (a friend in the fort?). They are accepting applications if any one is interested.

Russell Hill reported that the grotto library has new items on England, Ireland and South America.

Chad Fenner applied for membership and was voted in.

Donna Anderson announced that River Styx was going to be resurveyed. Pete Lindsley and Mike Pearson have agreed to plot the map on computer. Anyone interested in helping should contact Donna. You may work on computer, survey, sketch, or draw.

Danny Sherrod gave a program on how to get permits in New Mexico, passed out handouts with names and addresses for permits, and used some remarkable sales tactics to get some trip leaders committed for future trips. Martha McArthur will plan a trip for Easter weekend to Three Mile Hill, and Dave and Barbe McClung and Mark Porter will lead a fast weekend trip to Ogle Cave March 20 21.

Outgoing Treasurer, Jimmy Thomas announced that after writing one last check for news letter expenses, there was a little over \$300 in the account.

There was a lot of people present at this meeting, so there was lots of socialization after the meeting adjourned.

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### Bracken Bat Cave

Bat Conservation International now owns Bracken Bat Cave. They are looking for volunteers to help in a multi-phased, multi-year plan for the cave. They need help in trimming trees, Removing large rocks in certain areas, and building

bleachers. The cave is located just north of San Antonio, near Natural Bridge Caverns. Contacts are Kurt Menking (512)224-8511 (work) or (512)824-7230 (home) and David Bamburger (512)690-9089 (work) or (512)690-5564 (home).

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### Change of Address

Greg Mooty, 9222 Church Rd. # 200 , Dallas, Tx. 75231, (214)340-5247 (home), (214)480-6390 (work).



Greetings Ernest,

Just received latest *Maverick Bull* and saw request for printed material. Please find enclosed a recent article published in *Underwater Speleology*, [the] NSS Cave Diving Section publication. The article is intended to advise certified cave divers of hazards that can face even experienced practitioners, but might provide some insight for non-swimming cavers into the safety and procedural practices of underwater cave exploration. Please feel free to reprint all or part of the article for any future issues of *Maverick Bull* that lack a last page, and please donate original to *Maverick Grotto Library* c/o Russell. Best wishes in all endeavors, and go down smiling.

yours,  
Dave Milhollin

P.S. Send salutations to all *Maverick Cavers*...D.M.

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**Line Trap: An Incident**  
by R.D. Milhollin (NSS #29962)

Following a recent discussion with John Zumrick, I became convinced that sharing details of cave-diving incidents that did not result in tragedy, but could have, might help other divers avoid similar situations, perhaps preventing a future accident.

We can all learn from our own mistakes, and we can also learn from the mistakes of others. This is not an accident analysis; it is simply the narrative of a dive that caused anxiety. Cave divers with similar or related experiences are invited to prepare them for publication in future issues of UWS. [Editor's Note: the author is a CDS Cavern Instructor.]

In June of 1992 I was involved in a series of dives on Cozumel with local Cavern instructor Chuck Jones, Houston Cavern Instructor Terry Scroggins, and Texas cave diver Dr. Ise Kalsi. One of the dives involved descent into a rarely dived Cenote which featured dark red-stained tannic water toward the surface and fist-sized, sponge-like percolation at depth.

The first dive was made by Terry and Ise, who, returned to report a huge room with fine visibility below 60'. The line in place was described. Then Chuck and I agreed our objective would be to search the lower edge of the room for phreatic passage. Of course, any diver involved in such a venture should be fully cave trained and well experienced in cave diving under varying water conditions. Our equipment included double back-mounted 80's and separate K-valves.

I led the dive in, tying off the guideline at the surface. Chuck and I descended through low visibility down a short chimney and found a line tied off almost immediately, much sooner than Terry and Ise had described. Following this line, we descended at a 45° angle toward the large debris cone on the bottom, knowing that Terry had described a vertical drop. This was a little disconcerting at first, but we quickly

realized we were on a different line than the first team. Our line ended at 130', tied off to a large log on the edge of the debris cone.

After exchanging OK's and signals to proceed with the search, I secured the search line to the exit. We moved slowly through a low wall opening with a smooth rock ceiling into a slightly vaulted passage running parallel to the main room. My hope was that this was the main tunnel of a branching cave system, and that the cenote we had entered was an offset sink, a rather familiar feature of the local geography. In reality this "passage" was just a continuation of the main chamber, with a lower ceiling and an unknown thickness of extremely fine silt from the debris cone forming the floor and part of the wall.

My mistake occurred as I entered the low area and turned to the right to explore the "tunnel". The line had to be placed against the ceiling, but I neglected to check the security of the placement. Once I got inside and began swimming forward, the line moved away from the open area I had entered and headed directly into the debris cone. Even with careful kick strokes the visibility behind my fins immediately deteriorated, so Chuck held on to the line at the log waiting for me to signal or for the silt to settle some.

I could see ahead and soon realized that forward progress would be blocked by the massive silt accumulations. After checking all possible leads, I turned around in the near-zero-visibility passage and began to follow the line back out to where my buddy waited. Of course, the line continued out, but now it led me into an impassable area between the silt-laden debris on the floor and the limestone ceiling. Not realizing the danger, I continued to reel out until things began to get tight, and I was finally wedged thoroughly in the trap.

I have been in small spaces underwater,

and I have plenty of experience in zero visibility, but this was the first combination of the two in which the line out did not seem to lead to where I remember I had been before. Not a good feeling! The breathing resistance began to increase, probably due to low air in one tank combined with the thick, silt-laden liquid environment I now occupied. I would need to change second stages soon, and it would be difficult since I was severely wedged front and back, the other regulator nearly out of reach in this position and probably filled with mud.

At this point I realized my mistake. Line trap is a classic cave-diving predicament stressed at all levels of training. The first thoughts to cross my mind were "What a stupid mistake", "What will my friends say?" and "What a stupid way to die." I knew that panic was a real possibility, and would probably prove fatal. Only by banishing such useless thoughts and concentrating on the problem at hand could I successfully overcome this problem.

Drawing a deep long breath, I began to crawl backward, away from the entrance, and began a series of three distinct tugs on the line, hoping to get Chuck's attention. The first few signals brought no answer, but I was slowly working free of the gravel, mud, and rock that arrested my progress. Still no return signal, and, of course, at this most stressful of times- no visibility and no obvious way out- the reel jammed. Just then I felt the first of the return

signals. Chuck was at the other end of the line after all, and following the line in, he had noticed the problem and rerouted the line. I could feel the line move to the side, and began to swim along it.

In my disoriented state it seemed to be headed the wrong way, but logic said the line had to go out. After what seemed like hours of inching along the line I felt a hand. I signaled "OK", then "Turn", and a few kickstrokes later emerged into clean water.

Still a little shaken, we took a few moments to check all gear and air supplies. Seeing that all was intact, we completed an initial scan of the area we had set out to survey, then began a slow ascent, completed the required decompression and exited. The red sun peering down through the forest canopy was a most welcome sight.

On reflection, I credit the exceptional training received at each level of the NSS-CDS progression, which enabled me to rationally analyze the situation and act appropriately. I further realized that the ability to remain calm and to control thoughts was at least partially the consequence of several years of cave diving in less demanding conditions, working up slowly to deeper caves, longer dives, more complex dives.

I did make a mistake. At each level of cave-diving training line traps were discussed. Yet a line was laid which slipped. Did I learn from this experience? You bet. Just as importantly, I hope someone else does too.

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### Calendar of Events

**February 13-14, Colorado Bend State Park.** Ongoing monthly TSA project. Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039 or Ed Young (214)262-8188.

**February 13-15, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Presidents' Day Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

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

**February 27, SERA Winter Business Meeting.** Contact Donna Barrett (404)387-0327.

**February 27-28, Basic Cave Rescue Orientation Course, Carter Caves State Park, Olive Hill, Kentucky.** Contact Bruce Bannerman (304)743-5455.

**March 13-14, Colorado Bend State Park.** Ongoing monthly TSA project. Contact Butch Fralia (817)346-2039 or Ed Young (214)262-8188.

**March 20-21, Guadalupe Mountains, Early Spring Expedition.** CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053

**March 20, Spider Cave, New Mexico.** Horizontal cave. Contact Bill Bentley (915)697-3079.

**March 20-21, Ogle Cave, Carlsbad National Park, New Mexico.** Contact Dave "Cave" McClung (214)258-8505.

March ??, River Styx Cave, West Texas. Sometime in March. Survey. Contact Mike Pearson (214)694-2310 or Pete Lindsley (214)727-2497.

April ??, H.T. Meyers Cave, Southwest Texas. Multi-drop vertical cave. Planned for sometime in April. Contact Bill Bentley (915)697-3079.

April 9-11, Three Mile Hill, New Mexico. Possibly Madonna, Black, Hidden and Cottonwood Caves. Contact Martha McArthur (817)723-9890.

April 17-18, Spring NSS BOG Meeting. Contact Robert J. Lenz, 3311 N. Neenah Ave. Chicago, Il. 60634, (314)545-0622

April 24-25, Guadalupe Mountains, Mid-Spring Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053

April 30-May 2, Spring MVOR, on Jack's Fork River, Texas County, Missouri. Contact Mitch Wieldt, P.O. Box 220081, Kirkwood, MO. 63122, (314)235-0382 (days).

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

May 7-9, Spring MAR (Mid-Appalachian Region), Ruitan Campgrounds, Chambersburg, Penn. Contact Pat Minnick (717)765-0521.

May 21-23, SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Livingston Tenn. Contact Helen Galloway (615)588-3617.

May 29-31, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Memorial Day Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

June 20-26, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Restoration Field Camp. CRF project. Contact Dave Ecklund (803)648-7610.

July 3-5, Fort Stanton, Independence Day Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

August 2-8, XI International Congress of Speleology, Beijing, China. Contact Secretariat, XI International Congress of Speleology, Inst. of Geo., Chinese Acad. of Sci., Po Box 634, Beijing 100029, China. FAX (861)4919140, Tel (861)202-7766 ext.361.

August 7-8, Fort Stanton, Late Summer Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505) 344-7053.

August 2-6, NSS National Convention, Pendleton, Or. Contact Bill Devereaux, PO Box 4081, Salem, Or. 97301-8081 or (503)363-3831.

September 4-6, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Labor day Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

October 10-16, Lincoln National Forest, Fall Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

October 27-30, National Cave Management Symposium, Carlsbad, New Mexico. Contact Dale Pate (505)785-2232, ext. 26.

November 24-28, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Thanksgiving Day Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

December 18-19, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Pre-Christmas Expedition. CRF project. Contact Dick Desjardins (505)344-7053.

June 1994, NSS National Convention, Brackettville, Texas. Contact Ron Ralph (817)246-4837 or Jay Jordan (214)398)9272.