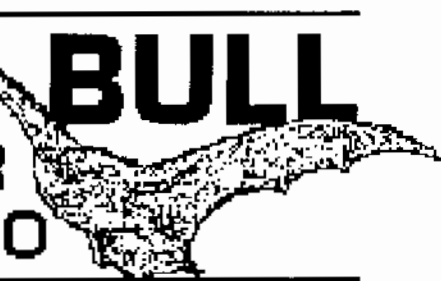

THE MAVERICK BULL

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE MAVERICK GROTTO



Volume 10 Issue 4

April Fool's, 1996



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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 \$15.00 per year for non-members 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 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 if prior arrangements are made. Carbide is free for the

asking. Contact Russell Hill at 220-7108 or Butch Fralia at 346-2039 for more information.

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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Photo Credits

This month's cover photo of Charles Haskett doing his thing at an Easter Trip in the Guads was taken by Chad Fenner

Other Credits

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Visit Our Web Site

The *Maverick Bull* is available as a World Wide Web Site at: <http://www.why.net/user/caver/bull/>

Minutes For the March Meeting

Maverick Grotto Mar. 12, 1996

The March meeting began at approximately 7:00 p.m. The business portion of the meeting was brought to order shortly after 7:30 by Grotto Chairman Mike Anderson.

Visitors:

Michael Montgomery
Kelbin Baker
Brian and Josh Kenny

Announcements:

Dues are past due! Pay Mark or Pam.

Jay Jordan's father died and Charles Haskett (Houston newsletter editor) was seriously injured in an accident. Our condolences go out to both families.

Dave McClung (via Mike

Anderson) announced that the TSA convention would be the 4th and 5th of May. Looking for slides and programs.

Old Business:

Several people reported on progress toward getting John Langevins slide show on video tape

Dave Milhollin is cleaning out several years of the Maverick Bull. Call if you're interested.

Dave is teaching a cave diving course in Florida Memorial Day weekend. Again, call if interested.

Butch went to River Styx to scope out the new ownership. Right now the property is in a state of flux, so for the time being, consider it closed.

Tenth anniversary planning is proceeding.

New Business:

Fort Worth Zoo is having a bat exhibit. Possibly have some event there.

Trent Hodgkins and Brad Smith joined the grotto. (Hey Trent, where's that trip report?)

Rites of Spring coming up April 27 at M & W.

Trip Reports:

Dave Cave has photos from his Mexico trip.

Donna went to Powells and mapped graffiti.

No one at the meeting went to this month's CBSP trip.

The meeting was closed at 8:15 and Dave Milhollin showed his "El Juyo" slides.

Editor's Ramblings

Happy April!

How'd you like last month's newsletter? Pretty snazzy. In case you missed it, last month's newsletter was co-edited by Ed Goff. Actually, Ed did all the layout and arranging. I thought he did a pretty good job. (He ought to, he does this for a living!) After the February fiasco, March was refreshingly easy (except for a typo on the cover caught 10 minutes too late. Don't worry, we fixed it!)

With April I'm back to the old method, so lets hope things go smoothly.

Hey, this is it for dues. I'm putting

warnings with this month's issue, so check your label. This will be your last issue if you don't pay by May.

Speaking of May, I plan to do a new grotto phone/address list. Check last year's, if any of the data associated with you is missing or out of date, call me and let's get you up to date. Sometimes its real nice to have everyone's (or someone in particular's) phone number handy.

I made an unscheduled trip to Houston this past month. Charles Haskett of the Houston grotto died after being in a coma a couple of weeks. He will be missed.

Maverick Bull Online Update. I have been putting the Maverick Bull on the World Wide Web since last October. I've gotten several favorable responses since doing so. I've recently added animated icons and sound (using Java, for you techno nerds), if your browser supports it (Netscape 2 with Win 95, Macs, or Unix). Right now I have a stalactite dripping water along with a dripping sound. For our next feat, Ed and I are working on a flying bat. Just haven't found the right sound yet.

Well, have a happy April Fool's.

Good caving.

April Meeting

The April meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 9 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. This

month's program was not available at press time. I'm sure it will be good, though. In any case, you can always

talk about your last trip and plan your next one. See you there.

Cavers Hit the Big One!

At last month's Colorado Bend State Park trip, cavers got more than they bargained for. A lot more. In school we all learned that Spanish explorers roamed this part of the world 300 years ago in search of gold, but who would have believed that they would have made a deposit right here in Texas?!

That appears to be the case for one Colorado Bend State Park cave.

On the March CBSP trip, a group of cavers were in a remote area of one of the more well-known caves there (which one isn't being publicly released yet) and noticed that the base of one of the walls seemed to be made up of medium to large rocks. With a little persistence, they were able to move the rocks and discovered a new passage.

This new passage led to a small, hidden room where someone had obviously been before, hundreds of years ago. In this room was a small chest with a large padlock. The lock and chest were both quite corroded, so opening the chest was not a problem.

In the chest were several thousand Spanish gold coins. Authorities say that the gold content alone is worth in the hundreds of thousands of dollars range, but as preserved, 300-year-old, Spanish coins, the find could be worth millions.

Under a state law passed early in the state's history, anyone finding unclaimed money on state property is obligated to report it. The finder is then allowed to keep half (minus state and federal taxes) for himself.

One park official stated that there had been evidence found in CBSP caves before that suggested that 17th century explorers had been to the park, but no one believed that anyone would ever find anything like this.

The coins were promptly removed from the cave and transported to state offices in Austin for safe keeping until the legal aspects can be sorted out,

but as one official stated, "someone's gonna be one happy caver."

The group of cavers (requesting anonymity until everything gets sorted out) consists of five people representing three different Texas grottos. They said that at first there was the temptation not to report it and keep the treasure, but realized that they would have a hard time cashing in the coins without drawing attention to themselves. One of them jokingly said, "Well, I was wondering how I was gonna get that new vertical gear." They all agreed to donate a portion of the find to the NSS as well as their respective grottos.

This is the second largest find in state history. The first was a sunken ship near Galveston in 1860.

BLM Settlement Enforces Cave Protection Zone

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today that it has reached an out-of-court settlement with Yates Energy Corporation (Yates) concerning drilling in Dark Canyon near Lechuguilla Cave. In September and November of 1994, Yates filed two lawsuits against BLM claiming that the Record of Decisions for the Dark Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and four additional applications for permit to drill (APD) constitute a "takings" of beneficial use of Leases NM-62161 and NM-81894. Since these decisions were issued (January 31, 1994 and May 20, 1994), lease NM-81894 has expired.

According to the settlement agreement, the federal government will pay \$2.2 million to Yates Energy Corporation, establish a no-surface occupancy restriction for two-thirds of lease NM-62161 (the area within the Cave Protection Zone), and allow drilling from the two locations identified in the Dark Canyon EIS as 1G and 2G. Any well drilled from these locations must be below the cave-bearing Guadeloupe Reef Complex (approximately 3,000 feet deep) before directional

drilling will be allowed. A "closed mud" system will be required in addition to some other requirements to protect visual resources. One of the conditions of approval specifies that a BLM inspector be on-site throughout the drilling process.

The settlement resolves controversy of drilling for oil and gas in Dark Canyon while protecting caves on both BLM-managed lands and the adjacent Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Lechuguilla Cave, a spectacular cave located within the national park boundaries, is located nearby.

Since the drilling locations are outside the Cave Protection Zone, BLM will apply standard conditions of approval for drilling, casing, on-site monitoring and plugging and abandonment.

The Texas Speleological Survey Technical Workshop

The Texas Speleological Survey will hold its second "TSS Technical Workshop" on Sat., April 27, 1996, in Austin, from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. at the TSS office. The focus of this year's workshop will be:

- Introduction to the TSS office and files
- Internet communications (E-mail and World Wide Web)
- Cave surveying software and video
- Global Positioning System (GPS)

Since we will have to rent a computer video projector, there will be a \$5 fee for attending. But, we will provide some refreshments and freebies!

We still have 18 of the 40 slots available to attend the workshop. Three slots were set aside for each Texas grotto until April 1, after which anyone can make a reservation. To reserve a place please call, write, or e-mail:

William R. Elliott, Editor
Texas Speleological Survey
12102 Grimsley Drive

Austin, Texas 78759-3120
TSS Office: 512-475-8802 (day)
Home phone: 512-835-2213 (evening)
E-mail: welliott@mail.utexas.edu (this was given wrong in the TSA Activities Newsletter)

We will demo Internet communications to help you get into e-mail or the World Wide Web. Various Internet services and their costs and features will be compared. The goal is to help Texas cavers communicate faster and better with each other.

David McKenzie will be demonstrating his incredible WALLS program, the hottest cave surveying program available (for Windows). David will be ready to release the program for free to cavers at the workshop. The program is now being used for big cave surveys such as Powell's Cave and Sistema Purificacion. Jon Fogarty will demo his CORE symbol editor for electronic cave map drafting. Wayne Bockelman will demo some Macintosh cave surveying programs: CavePlot and Toporobo.

A new video produced by TSS, "Cave Surveying," will be available on VHS tape for free to each Texas groto that attends. Others can purchase the tape at a low cost.

Margaret Hart will demo GPS receivers, which can be used to obtain the coordinates for wherever you are on the earth's surface. Some receivers are now around \$200.

The TSS office is located at The University of Texas' Pickle Research Campus (PRC), formerly known as Balcones Research Center. We are consolidating all of our files of cave descriptions, cave maps, topo maps, geologic maps, photos, videos, reports, and the TSS/TSA library in the office.

The PRC is in North Austin near the IBM plant, east of MoPac (Loop 1), south of Braker, west of Burnet, and north of Research Blvd. (US 183). There is a Braker Lane entrance, but on weekends only the Burnet Road entrance is open, and it is supervised by security guards. Tell Security that you are attending the TSS Technical

Workshop in Building 18A. Then drive straight in for two blocks to the first red brick building on the right, at the corner of Read Granberry and T.S. Painter. Park across the street in the lot next to the PETEX Bldg. and walk over to T.S. Painter to the door into Bldg. 18A. Come up to the third floor to the TSS Office. There are numerous fast food restaurants on Burnet Road.

Plan now to attend! When you write or send e-mail, please tell me your groto affiliation if you have one. The attendance fee will be collected at the door.

Thanks!
William R. Elliott, Ph.D

Easter Trip Getting Close

John Langervin still has an Arkansas trip in the Sylamore Ranger District for Easter Weekend. Camping will be either at Blanchard Spring Campground or Gunner Pool Campground. Cave permits include Gunner, World Wonder, Herald Hollow, Salt Peter, Upper Shelter and Lower Shelter. Gunner Cave needs a wetsuit, but all are horizontal. There is promise of some caves on private property. John can be reached at (817) 924-1919. Permit sizes range from four to eight per cave. Pam Massey will also serve as trip leader. This is a family trip, and children are welcome.

Also don't forget about Susan Herpin's Three Mile Hill restoration trip. I have it on good authority that she does have permits and there will be caving as well as work projects.

Caving Job Opportunities

Posted to Cavers Digest by Bob Buecher

Interested in being in on the (underground) floor of an exciting project constructing the trails in Kartchner Caverns? Arizona State Parks is now looking for workers to begin the underground trail construction. Of course,

since this is a state agency, the ad has been bureaucratically finessed to the point where the actual skills and type of work are impossible to determine. However, here is the actual text of the ad and who to contact.

SEASONAL PARK RANGER

Arizona State Parks has a seasonal Park Ranger vacancy in the Benson (Arizona) area. Must have a minimum of one year of work experience as a construction worker/laborer. Must possess or be eligible to obtain an Arizona Class D Drivers License. Send detailed resume and cover letter to:

Lupe Soto
Human Resources Manager
Arizona State Parks
1300 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

That is the official ad. I have nothing to do with the hiring process. I do know that the phone number for Arizona State Parks is (602) 542-4174. They also have a FAX number: (602)542-4180. I don't know what the pay scale is. I don't know what the length of employment is other than the cave is supposed to be open in Nov. 1997. I do know that it would be good to have people knowledgeable about the cave environment working on the project.

Floyd Collins Memorialized in Play

Posted to Cavers Digest by Chuck Porter, Editor, The Northeastern Caver

Here's a favorable review of *Floyd Collins*, an off-Broadway musical scheduled to play this month in New York City. The review is by Mike Nardacci, from the March 1996 NORTH-EASTERN CAVER. If you're going to be in the Big Apple soon, you might want to call Playwrights Horizons Theater at (212) 279-4200 to see about tickets.

First off, it should be noted, as anyone who has read TRAPPED! can verify, that Floyd Collins, during his two-week ordeal in Sand Cave, must

have suffered as much as any human being has ever had to endure. Surely, then, this is material for a powerful stage play. Or is it? What little is known of the real-life Floyd Collins does not suggest a compelling protagonist. While other players in the drama go about their actions, heroic, materialistic, spiritual, whatever, Floyd must essentially lie motionless, not making things happen. Couple this with the fact that Floyd left not one memorable quotation before or during his ordeal and died alone exiting without a death speech, and a playwright is served quite a challenge. And,

of course, *Floyd Collins* is a musical. A lanky, so-so-looking bachelor farmer, Floyd had no known love interest, so there goes any opportunity for a couple of romantic ballads. Does all this sound like a recipe for theatrical disaster? Well then, prepare to shed your cynicism, because *Floyd Collins* with a script by Tina Landau and music and lyrics by Adam Guettel is a touching and frequently gripping retelling of the ghastly events surrounding the Kentucky caver's death.

In *Floyd Collins*, the drama centers on Floyd, his brother Homer, and the reporter Skeets Miller. The latter two have a deep attachment to the trapped caver: Homer's is a lifelong thing, a relationship between two brothers who have never quite grown up; Skeets' is a sudden, brief, intense attachment that grows unexpectedly out of what promises to be a routine reporting assignment.

Christopher Inver makes a convincing, attractive Floyd Collins. Whether singing in the play's opening scene of *The Call* to find an underground wonderland, pantomiming Floyd's entrapment and his agony during the abortive attempt to extricate him with a harness, which Inver does, shatteringly, or fantasizing that he is free in two deeply-moving numbers, Inver turns Floyd into an Everyman, a small player on life's stage seeking a little fame and fortune, who finds adventure terrifyingly easy to find and deadly.

As Homer, Jason Danieley finds his fevered attempt to free his brother

interrupted by a Hollywood producer looking for an unsophisticated local to elevate to stardom. His touching duet with Floyd, *The Riddle Song*, culminates in a fantasy that Floyd is free from his rocky prison and back swimming with his brother at a local quarry.

But in any play based on the Collins events, the drama sails or sinks on the portrayal of Skeets Miller, and Martin Moran creates a complex character. Is his drive to save Floyd motivated more by a desire for fame than a wish to aid a suffering man? Or is his bravery an attempt to rebuke those who think him too small to be of use in the rescue effort? Moran powerfully conveys the stunned awareness of a man who finds himself challenged to save a fellow human being against increasingly overwhelming odds.

The music of *Floyd Collins* is a sometimes curious combination of bluegrass and Windham Hill-type New Age melodies and is serviceable in the play, but largely unmemorable. Exceptions are a ballad called *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, which could be a caver's anthem, and the rousing, cynical *Is That Remarkable?* sung by some cake-walking reporters.

Floyd Collins in its final days before opening for a limited run at the Playwrights Horizon Theater in New York still has something of the feel of a work in progress. Lee Collins, Floyd's father, and H.T. Carmichael, leader of the effort to rescue Floyd, are strong, interesting characters, but they do not seem integral parts of the drama at the play's end; moreover, Nellie Collins, Floyd's mentally disturbed sister, drifts in and out of the action without ever really connecting with Floyd's fate.

But in spite of its flaws, *Floyd Collins* compels -- during the intermission many members of the audience, obviously unfamiliar with the story, could be heard energetically debating where Act Two would lead, a good sign for the producers. And the ending, where Floyd's entrance into eternity is compared with an explorer's first tentative steps into unknown land, is a soaring moment, at once both hopeful and

sad. One can only hope that the play continues to grow. For with some work it could become a minor masterpiece of the American theater.

1996 NSS Convention

Preparations are going great for the 1996 NSS Convention in Salida, Colorado. The well is gushing with lots of water (one of our previous concerns) and all major facility issues have been solved. The setting of the campground, surrounded by 14,000' peaks, is probably the most spectacular ever for an NSS convention.

Pre-registration is very high, and field trips are filling fast. We encourage you to pre-register if you hope to participate in one of the convention field trips. Registration forms are available from this address: <nss96@caves.org>, the NSS office, or in the *March NSS News* (we understand that it might actually be out in March!).

We also have a WWW page. Check it out!

<http://www.caves.org/~nss/>

We'll see you in Salida, Heart of the Rockies, next August!

Honey Creek

The next Honey Creek trip will be on April 13. Once again, at least some of us will be going into the natural entrance, although we will all meet at the shaft first. For more information contact:

Mark Minton (512)-847-7422 (h),
(512)-471-5955 (w),
minton@mail.utexas.edu.

I have seen the light.

Posted to Cavers Digest by Paul Steward. Used by permission.

(Ed's note -- I found this on the Net and, while I am a smolly old carbide caver myself, I had to recognize the wit, humor, and just plain common sense that the author possessed.

Hope you enjoy it.)

Let's see if I have this right. Carbide is a very poisonous man-made substance. When mixed with water it creates a highly combustible, foul-smelling gas. Carbide looks like small stones. These are placed in the bottom chamber of the lamp. The top chamber contains water that is slowly dripped into the bottom chamber onto the carbide. As the water dissolves the stone, a combustible gas is formed. As pressure builds up, the escaping gas is forced out the top of the lamp. The escaping gas is then ignited to form a flame that you wear on top of your head. Perhaps I was going too fast. Let's review that last sentence. THE ESCAPING GAS IS THEN IGNITED TO FORM A FLAME THAT YOU WEAR ON TOP OF YOUR HEAD.

Why would any intelligent person go into a cave wearing a molotov cocktail on top of their head? The light is on, but is anybody home? Sometimes too much pressure builds up in the lamp, and water bubbles out the top. Sometimes the lamp erupts into flames. Sometimes the tip gets clogged. Sometimes water drips on the flame and puts it out. Sometimes the lamp works right.

As problems arise, the group is usually forced to stop while the flaming caver fiddles with his lamp. Carbide cavers can't hide. Just smell the air and you can tell if one is nearby. The smell of singed hair and coveralls usually accompanies these cavers.

Nothing can quite describe the experience of being in a tight place and having someone's can of spent carbide explode in their pack.

I am not a pyro-caver and never will be.

Thank God for Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison.

The Anti-Carbide Caver.

LATEST GUADS TRIP

By Charlie Haskett

(Ed's Note: The sudden, freak death

of Charles Haskett hit me hard. Charles was a fellow caver, fellow newsletter editor, and a friend. From the first time I met Charles, I felt he was someone I could count on when needed. He was always smiling and in a cheery mood.

The following is one of the last (if not THE last) trip reports Charles wrote. His love of the Guads is evident here. If you knew Charles, read and remember the good times. If you never knew Charles, read and learn a bit about him. -CF)

This trip started out unusually well. We had arrived at the top of Three Mile Hill in the late afternoon on Friday in absolutely spectacular weather. I was in an especially good mood because we had just managed to visit Sitting Bull Falls, which I had never seen despite my several trips to the Guads. It really is a beautiful and peaceful place. Despite being a little tired, since we had driven all the previous night, there was no rush and we could sack out early to catch up with sleep.

We had other purposes for this trip besides caving, and the specific trip to Madonna was not definite. The fact that it might be long and exhausting were considerations that might easily have changed our minds for this particular weekend. This was my friend Sal's first trip to the Guads and he has only been wild caving once, to Robber Barron and Big Bexar in San Antonio. While we were at Madonna Saturday, he expected to be camp sitting and hiking. As we were setting up camp, we heard voices coming from the next camp near the Dragon's Teeth. We strolled down to see if they were acquaintances and found two men, probably in their fifties, who said they had just done Cottonwood and Black and were going to do Hidden on Saturday. They didn't seem at all like cavers and so we got a little interested and chatted some more. They referred to Black as "Dark Cave" and spoke of something called "2000 Meter Cave." They explained that the map they had was very old. When we asked them about rope for doing

Hidden, they said something about a twenty foot rope and some other yellow rope they towed their boat with, about thirty feet long. They clearly did not seem to know anything about vertical systems or technique and we became concerned but did not say anything at the time. We later verified that they did have permits but they clearly did not know what they were into with Hidden.

When Mike Huber arrived a little later, we learned that Kevin Glover would not be available for Madonna as expected. Among other things, he was obligated to lead a trip into Black on Saturday. There was talk of Sal joining that trip, and some arrangements concerning Susan and Mike's involvement (I wasn't in on all of the conversations) and the possibility of me catching the two men and leading them on the Hidden trip. So the Madonna trip was even less definite when we packed it in for the night.

Waking at about 8:00 (local time), I had just finished the longest night of sleep I have ever had at the Guads. (Usually we are running severely short on sleep.) I was real ambivalent about Madonna since I knew it was one of the more physically demanding caves in the area. When we checked, the two men had already gone to Hidden. Suddenly, Susan asked "Are you ready to go?" Just that quickly I had to get psyched up and packed and loaded. All I knew about Madonna was that there was a 230 foot drop followed by a 165 foot drop. But the weather was again wonderful and I was rested, so what better chance would there be?

We loaded up Guadzilla II (Susan, Mike, David and me) and headed out across the Dragon's Teeth at about 11:10 a.m. Well actually that's 10:10 a.m. mountain time, so it was the earliest departure I have ever had for a Guads cave. This is one of the longest and roughest rides out there. After 45 minutes of horrendous bouncing and jostling, we arrived at the trailhead. Restoration work was to be an integral part of this trip, so our packs were a little more loaded than usual.

First, there was the extra food and water required by the extended stay, plus the equipment for the restoration work. Fortunately, some distilled water had previously been stockpiled in the cave for such work and we didn't have to carry so much ourselves. Add to this a 300' rope and a 185' rope and we were ready to go. What I didn't understand was why this 300' rope didn't seem to weigh even half as much as the rope we took to Deep during Easter. The trek to the entrance was not the worst in the Guads. The hike has a fair trend downhill but is not steep, with fairly clear trails. Then you get to the end of the ridge and it becomes very steep, almost cliff-like, for several hundred feet of loss in altitude. The cave is visible from uphill by virtue of the large tree that fills the entire entrance and was awash with glorious fall colors. In fact, several creases in the canyon walls and the entire streambed below were filled with the most wonderful autumn spectacle in reds, oranges and mottled greens.

We arrived at the entrance a dozen feet high and wide, but well obscured by the tree. Like many cave entrances, the rounded room slopes down steeply as you proceed. It quickly narrowed and became a short twisting passage that turned back on itself, presenting a locked gate about two feet wide and a foot and a half high. This was the start of about eight feet of sloping tube that constricted a little at the end where it dropped easily into a small room, actually the beginning of a maze of passage and breakdown. I navigated this tube feet first and my butt gently rubbed the ceiling at the constriction, causing a little concern about the future exiting maneuvers. From here, the next few hundred feet was mostly negotiated by forming pack lines in stages. The passage was not all that tight, but we otherwise would have been constantly removing and replacing our packs for each obstacle.

Eventually, we arrived at the top of the drop into the Big Room. This is a drop of about 230 feet, with the first 50 feet being through crevice rarely as

much as three feet across, followed by a free drop into the enormous room. This room isn't as big as Deep, but it's close. The rope was incredibly fast and I had about 35 lbs. of extra pack weight. About a third of the way down, I stopped to put on my sixth bar and still had to exert constant control from both hands to keep from going too fast. The landing point is an enormous expanse of flat rock that would make an ideal camping spot on extended trips. The cave falls into darkness in every direction. After stopping for snacks, we hiked down and around one side, then back up to nearly the same level as before. This was the top of the second drop - Dean's Drop - and was easily visible from the first drop. We had been instructed not to take all of our vertical gear, only the seat harness, rack, safety and a foot ascender. Dean's Drop starts on a slope, passes over a flowstone lip, then through twisting vertical cracks and tubes. While your body seems to move back and forth through the passage, in fact the rope hangs almost free through a straight line around which the passage undulates. The way back up is to chimney the entire 165 feet!

At the bottom of the Big Room drop, there was a cave register. At the top of Dean's Drop, we found the distilled water and cleaning supplies. At the bottom of Dean's Drop, we found another sealed box labelled "The Wine List" as well as some more cleaning supplies. From there, we started off for our cleaning objectives, which were modest but sincere. We were there to clean up cigarette debris left by prior surveyors and carbide left by inconsiderate cavers. Both of these substances are toxic to the cave ecology as well as being sometimes unsightly. During part of our cleanup (which included some wonderful sightseeing), I ended up in a small passage and room which I became eager to leave. It was a good illustration of the "Caver's Paradox" in that the room was exquisite, but it was almost impossible to be in without damaging something. It was full of pristine soda straws and

marvelous helictites, translucent figurines and other marvels without number, but all on a relatively small scale. The floor was entirely covered with delicate creamy cave coral. In the larger passages we worked, there was some of the largest dogtooth spar I have ever seen, lining the breakdown rocks all around us, but partially obscured with a layer of dust.

Eventually, we returned to our starting point. I felt somewhat guilty because I hadn't personally done much restoration work. This was mostly because the cleanup objectives were small spots which had to be found and it was a matter of chance where you were and how much was assigned to you from moment to moment. Nevertheless, Susan seemed at least partially satisfied with what we had done so far. We relaxed and had lunch. I took this opportunity to read through the notebook inside the "Wine List" box and encountered some beautiful poetry recorded there by Kevin. The notebook covered the past three years and was interesting reading.

While others had mentioned the Wine Cellar, I didn't know anything about it and gave it little thought. Suddenly, we were getting up to head there. It is some distance from the bottom of the drop and somewhat lower, and took about a half hour to get there. What a surprise! This is truly one of the magnificent sights in the Guads. It is a former lake room with table platforms about five to six feet above the current floor. Just below the tables are multiple layers of varying colors showing the water level changes of eons ago. On the current floor are still luscious pools and delicate ledges. In one small pool, we saw live underwater helictites or angel hair. The sight looked surreal and haunting, so delicate that a breath could destroy it. Along the walls were helictites without end. They ranged from pure white hairlike beauties to enormous foot long giants climbing like vines around each other. Soda straws were everywhere, and about a tenth of them were absolutely clear, appearing to be nothing but ice ready to melt if you got too

close. Out in the floor under the tables were the neatest formations of all, foot and a half high pure white Christmas trees of calcite, the branches being crystalline shapes in every direction. These were both solo and in clusters of three or more. Each one had a white soda-straw-looking stalagmite sticking a few inches out of the top.

I think the others were either amused or annoyed at my nonstop exclamations of delight. None of the four of us brought a camera. I concluded for my part that it was just as well this time, since it would take two weeks and a hundred rolls of film to capture any sense of this room and then it would be the frustration of shots that didn't come out right and simply not being able to capture the essence on two-dimensional film. Trust me, I want to go back for a photo trip.

Back at Dean's Drop, we again took it easy in preparation for the ascent. I went first, with David behind me as sort of a tandem. There must be some trick to starting this climb. The bottom is complicated by a substantial amount of slick flowstone, and I found it necessary to use my foot ascender for the first ten feet. One foot ascender combined with a 30 pound pack makes for awkward climbing. Once into the chimney, things were better but the pack continued to be a pain in the butt. On Mike's suggestion, I did not have the pack tethered to my belt, but instead to my safety. Therefore, I would climb a few feet without the load, then brace myself, hoist the pack, then slide up the safety and drop the pack again for another few feet of climb. It might have been less work to just climb with the weight on my belt. The climb was fun, but I was a little slow. 165 feet is actually not that far to climb and it seemed to be over with fairly soon. David was not far behind. We were both so tired that, once we signaled off rope, we immediately laid down on our packs and tried to catch a nap till the others got there. They didn't take nearly long enough! We did a little housekeeping, then hiked over to the big rock at the bottom of the first drop. I first derigged the 185 foot rope

and Mike found a carbide dump and stayed back by Dean's Drop while we started the stove and made dinner. Susan relaxed while David and I tried to get some more sleep before the BIG CLIMB!

After a rest and meal, it was time to climb. It was now after 10:00 p.m. local time and we were all beginning to slow down. No one was moving fast but we knew it was time to go. Mike climbed first with the plan of stopping on a ledge partway up the crack where he had seen some carbide dumps. At least he was low enough in the climb for us to easily hear his "off rope." I climbed next and was not nearly as fast as I would like to have been. It's all the pack's fault! When I would rest to catch my breath, I noticed I was swinging verrrry slowly towards and away from the walls. It was almost hypnotic. David came next, followed by Susan, then Mike finished the climb. Derigging was a little difficult since there was no good place for me to sit and wind rope.

We began again the pack line, forming a chain then moving a few feet ahead with the packs and ropes. Eventually we arrived at the tube leading to the gate. David went first then it was my turn. Standing there, the tube was about chest high. I had to put my helmet through first since it would not fit while wearing it. I stretched both arms in, then leaned into the tube, getting my weight off the floor. Using my arms on the rough floor and walls and rocking back and forth, I worked my way into the passage till it came to my tush. There was barely room to get through, and every time I moved my legs, it flexed muscles which made things worse. It didn't feel like I was moving forward, but I heard Susan say I was. So I continued and suddenly I was able to scoot forward in the tunnel.

Hah! It was a snap! No problemo!

Fatigue was getting to us and this short climb up the entrance slope was unenthusiastic. Outside, we dumped pee bottles and repacked. It was about 1:00 am and very dark, with no moon and a gazillion stars. There was no wind and the temperature was perfect. With packs and ropes loaded, we started up the "cliffs." The going was steady but slow. The subsequent hike was more uphill than I remembered, but not as long as some OTHER notable Guads hikes. Mike took off at this point and handily beat us back to Guadzilla. The 45 minute washing machine ride to camp seemed to take forever, but the cold Cokes were great. Camp dinner was never considered as we collapsed into our tents at about 3:00 a.m., only sixteen and a half hours after we had left.



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Calendar Of Events

- Apr. 5-7, Buffalo River Caving.** Contact John Langevin, (817) 924-1919
- Apr. 5-7, Easter Trip in Guads.** Contact Susan Herpin, (713) 939-7265
- Apr. 12-14, Colorado Bend State Park.** Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039.
- Apr. 13, Honey Creek.** Contact Mark Minton (512) 847-7422
- Apr. 20, Earth Day Colorado Bend State Park.** Contact Tom Kaler (817) 725-7583
- Apr. 21, Government Canyon.** Contact George Veni (210) 558-4403
- Apr. 27, TSS Technical Workshop.** Contact Bill Elliott (512) 835-2213
- May 3-5, TSA Convention.** Contact Dave "Cave" McClung (214) 594-1183
- May 4-5, Jester's Cave.** Contact Martha McArthur
- May 10-12, Colorado Bend State Park.** Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039.
- June 7-9, Colorado Bend State Park.** Contact Butch Fralia (817) 346-2039.
- Aug. 3-9, 1996, NSS Convention, Salida, Colorado.** Contact Skip Withrow, (303) 693-0997.