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Maverick Grotto Information

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of The National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art 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 7:00 p.m. The location will be announced prior to each meeting.

Library: Support your Grotto Library. Dennis Welch will be accepting books and magazines on cave-related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. Bill and Diana will be temporarily bringing and setting up the grotto library on Dennis' behalf.

Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Espiadero Cave in Mexico, see the trip report on page 7, photo taken by Gabriela Ramirez. Photo of Eduardo Grijalba (lalo) in a tight squeeze in the cave.

Page 4,5 & 6: Metroplex holiday party photos taken by Bill Steele and Butch Fralia

Page 7 & 8: The Failed Cave trip report photos taken by Roberto Santos and Gabriela Ramirez. Cave Without A Name photo taken by Scott Boyd.

Page 9: Cave Without A Name photo taken by Scott Boyd

Back Cover Photo: taken by Roberto Santos in the Cave in Mexico

Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site!

Butch has done an excellent job at constructing the grotto web site and keeping it up-to-date. You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

[Http://www.maverickgrotto.org](http://www.maverickgrotto.org)

Cave Rescue: Call collect: (512) 686-0234

**Next meeting, January 10th, 2006 7:00 pm
Buck N' Loons**

3517 South Cooper Street
Arlington, TX 76015-3410.

Program: ?? Come and find out!

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December meeting minutes:

There was no December meeting. A Metroplex holiday party was held instead of the meeting.

Caving events Calendar

Jan 14-15 Colorado Bend State Park Project: long-time favorite of Mavericks, pretty close to home, excellent project for beginners. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com or Dale Barnard Barnard-dale@yahoo.com

Jan 21-22 Honey Creek Water Cave: come visit the longest cave in Texas. Possible trips include through-trip from manmade to natural entrance. Wetsuit required. Not sure yet about date but should know soon. **Contact:** Bill Steele speleosteele@comcast.net

Jan 28-29 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. **Contacts:** Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Feb 18-20 Annual Bustamante Restoration Project (Bustamante, Nuevo Leon, Mexico): Ever popular restoration project is once again planned for the President's Day weekend. More info will be forthcoming after January 1st. **Contacts:** Orion Knox (512) 453-4070 Orion-Knox@alumni.utexas.net, or Rune Burnett bburnett1@austin.rr.com

Feb 18-20 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad region, NM): Cave-diggers welcome, come see if this will be the next big one. **Contact:** Stephen Fleming swcaver@warpdiveonline.com

Feb 25-26 High Guads Restoration Project
Contacts: Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Mar 24-26 NSS Board of Governor's Meeting (Irving, TX):

The Metroplex grottos host the spring meeting of the NSS BOG. Evening parties on Friday and Saturday will be at Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick's house, Saturday meeting and catered lunch at the Irving Garden and Arts Center, and Saturday dinner at the Irving Spring Creek Barbeque. Come on out and meet your elected NSS officials and have a good time, too. **Contact:** Bill Steele speleosteele@comcast.net

January meeting location reminder:

Don't forget the January 10th, 2006 meeting of The Maverick Grotto will be held at [Buck N' Loons](#) at 3517 South Cooper Street, Arlington, TX 76015-3410. This may be a one time meeting location or we may meet there forever. Remember to check the website for more information!

Chairman's Corner

Back in another life, I did a couple of terms as Maverick Grotto Chairman. I think the idea was that I was very active in caving and could make sure people knew about things they could be involved in. I was one of those people who kept state wide contacts and usually knew where trips were going on a given weekend. At least that's how I remember it.

A lifetime before that, Fort Worth cavers started talking about having their own local grotto. The only grotto at the time was the DFW grotto and with the area population growing, it was getting harder to get over for meetings. It was only once a month but still....

I don't recall discussing how long the grotto would last or that we even thought about having a 20 year anniversary but here we are. This year, 2006 is the 20th anniversary of The Maverick Grotto. I think the idea of having me as chairman for this term is nostalgic because I enjoyed that past life experience, one of the few still around who did. I do recall discussing the most important communication medium of a grotto is a newsletter. Over the last 20 years, I think it's safe to say it's been one of our best success stories! It wasn't always pretty, but there were very few issues missed and almost all of them were on time. I want to commend Tammy for continuing the newsletter tradition with a newsletter both timely and pretty.

During this last 20 years, I remember announcements for new grottos and even regions that aren't around today. Anyone remember the Southern Plains Region? How come The Maverick Grotto is around today and some of those other NSS I/O's aren't? To answer that, I point back to an article I wrote in the June 2005 issue; titled *If You Build It They Will Come*. The context of the article is that things seldom happen by pure luck and happenstance. You have to build a

grotto; people have to be involved for it to work. As long as there are people who will put together programs, organize caving trips (or other functions like parties), write newsletter articles and share their adventures through programs, the grotto will not only survive but thrive!

The Maverick Grotto has been lucky that there were always people willing to be part of that building process. They organized trips, wrote articles about them and put on programs. One of the founding concepts of the grotto was that it's a caving organization and we should be caving. If new folks come along who want to start caving or at least try it, find some place for them to go and get them started. A lot of those who were once new folks are still with us today and aren't so new any more! A lot of them are the movers and shakers that keep the grotto flame burning. It also helps that while some people have bonded closer as friends than others, grotto members have generally been respectful of each other and the organization not torn apart by its own internal politics. OK, I'll grant there were a few exceptions to that but overall we've gotten on well.

I'm not that active caver that I once was for various reasons that I won't go into here. However I haven't lost interest and want to see both caving and The Maverick Grotto continue to thrive. To that end, I want to encourage everyone to participate, write articles, organize trips, put together some programs and in general be an active part of the grotto. While I may not be as active I still remember how a lot of stuff is done and will assist anyone in any way I can.

We've got a lot of interesting stuff to look forward to this year. Determining if Buck N' Loon's will be a suitable place to continue meeting or to look elsewhere. If we have to look elsewhere, we'll need people to determine where the elsewhere might be! Being the 20th anniversary, a party is in order, hopefully one similar to the early parties we used to have where cavers from all over came and shared in the fun. We need people to be thinking about possible locations that will attract people to attend the party. There are caving trips to organize and to go on, articles to write and programs to put on. Programs don't have to be exclusively about caving to be interesting. I'm looking for help with all this stuff so let's get rolling and have another great year!

Metroplex Cavers Christmas Party

By Butch Fralia

Online Slideshow available at:

<http://www.maverickgrotto.org/photostuff/slidesChristmas/index.htm>

Diana Tomchick and Bill Steele hosted the Metroplex Cavers Christmas Party for the three local grottos; December 10, 2005. All those in attendance will tell you it was a great success. They have a large home located in the center of the metroplex that's equally easy or equally hard (depending on your location) to get to from any where in the area. People in other parts of Texas often don't realize how spread out the Metroplex is and how long it takes to get from one place to another. It's not uncommon to take longer to get out of the Metroplex than it does for the rest of the cave trip.

The house is quite large with separate living area and den so there was plenty of room for people to gather with their favorite group for awhile then move on to another. Everyone was impressed with the three fire places that added to the atmosphere of the party.



Folks at the party: (in no particular order - and I'm sure I probably forgot someone)

Bill Steele and Diana Tomchick (hosts)
Bobby Moore and Connie Chaney

Lex, Lex III, Tammy Cox
 Butch Fralia and Sharon Mastbrook
 Jay Jordan
 Pete Lindsley
 James Savage
 Mike and Karin Cagle
 Clark and Suzie Giles
 Ed Goff
 Jeri and Mike Pearson
 Dennis and Sharon Welch
 Bill and Francie Tucker
 John Crosswait
 Charles and Tammy Goldsmith
 Glen Goldsmith
 Dave "Cave" McClung
 R.D. Milhollin
 Troy Shelton
 Chris Vargas

As Christmas Parties go, this one certainly lived up to all the traditions of Metroplex Caver Christmas parties. There was lots of booze, camaraderie, food and the traditional white elephant gift ceremony. The evening started out with people arriving, greeting old friends and generally getting into the spirit of things. Pete Lindsley and Bobby Moore took charge



Bobby Moore and Pete Lindsley

of getting the gift exchange together, setting up the drawing and generally trying to make sure no one got what they brung!

Diana and Bill provided a Ham and Turkey for the main course and everyone else brought something to add to the collection. No one went hungry unless it was by their own choice. I can't remember all the trays and who brought what but if you brought something, just be aware that it was well received and eaten.



Sharon Mastbrook setting up the table for the goodies.

This wasn't one of those affairs where people gathered into their own little groups and spent the evening there. Everyone circulated throughout the evening. A lot of old friendships were re-established and some new ones made.

Chris Vargas attended, stayed for the evening and was planning on running in a Dallas marathon the next day. At the end of the evening he appeared no worse for wear and probably placed well in the Marathon.

There are usually two main events at caving Christmas parties; the presentation of the meritorious achievement awards and the white elephant gifts. No one had time or remembered to make up the certificates of meritorious achievement but there were lots of white elephant gifts!

The white elephant gift exchange is always looked at with both a sense of anticipation and dread! It's always fun but you can find yourself with some "really interesting" items to store for the party next year. For instance the Rack!



Ed Goff with the rack, John Crosswait is glad he didn't get the rack.

Ed Goff drew the rack and someone, I don't remember who, got the Metroplex survey gear. When I left the party, they had been left on the front porch (the winners already gone) so I guess Diana and Bill will store them for the next year. Dave McClung can never be outdone at these events and when he drew the Silkworm Pupa, he actually ate it. That satisfied a lot of less daring people's curiosity about what was actually in there. It's actually the Silkworm Pupa, cool little worms canned in some sort of sauce! Sharon and Dennis Welch are now the proud owners of the cave exit sign, the one with arrows going in all directions. That's a pretty good gift, worth of wall hanging for the next year! Someone got the climbing rope, delivered in an empty chicken feed bag. It looks like an antique ship.



Dave McClung eating the silkworm pupa.



Charles Goldsmith showing of the Cave Bear!

Tammy Cox drew the NSS Batman! Charles Goldsmith was inducted into the Clan of the Cave Bear! There was plenty of stuff to go around and some of it was actually useful, a concept totally outside the concept of the white elephant gift exchange. For instance John Crosswait drew Starbucks Coffee beans and a Starbucks cup. That seemed to be useful until he announced how much he abhors coffee! One thing's for sure, if you draw a number and it has to be brought in from the outside, it's going to be interesting.

Great Party! Great Fun! Be sure to keep your calendar open for next year.

Oh yeah! There were video cameras present and if time ever permits, a little editing and these may become grotto programs later.



Bill and Diana enjoying the gift exchange.

The Story of a Failed Cave Trip

By Nico Escamilla

Attendees: Roberto Santos, Hector Calderon, Gabriela Ramirez and Eduardo Grijalba (lalo).

Ok, so I have to type my own report after waiting a few days for the other guys to do it without any results.

Friday Dec 2 we went to Roberto's house in Monterrey to later meet the other cavers at the Wal-Mart parking lot. Hector Calderon showed up a few minutes after we did with all of his gear in a shopping cart, before he could even say hello I asked, what are you, a homeless guy? We went ahead to buy food and some thirty minutes later Lalo and Gabriela showed up, so we headed to Puerto Genovevo where we left our cars and were supposed to get a lift to get to Las Adjuntas, turns out that the "hordes of people going there in trucks" was just a lie, so we hiked about 10 kilometers which is near seven miles in the middle of the night till we got to Las Adjuntas and set up camp, right there after dinner we resumed



Group photo before the start of the long hike

jokes about Hector being a homeless, he wouldn't wanna sleep in a tent despite the cold wind and humidity, he'd rather sleep in a plastic bag he got at a mattress store (and he did, so he kept the homeless nickname)

Next morning we woke up, I was not as sore as I

expected to be, had breakfast and started to pick up our stuff when we heard a truck was coming, I'm saved I wont have to hike 15 kilometers uphill carrying my 35 lbs backpack cause I'm getting a lift I thought. The "truck" was a small Suzuki 4x4 that was stuffed with people already, no luck so we had to hike all the way up to Potrero Redondo, the estimated time for the hike was 3 hours but ended up being 5 and of course I was whining about it and wanting to come back, we got to Potrero and asked if there was a store and were nicely directed by a little girl, the store was closed and we asked a neighbor if there was another one, I'm the owner I'll open up for you he replied, we bought chips and sodas, I was starving and ate 2 bags of chips, 2 big ham sandwiches, and a tuna salad can. The sun was starting to go down so we resumed our hike to the cave. I forgot to mention our packs were so heavy on the way up that we took everything out and hid it in the bushes leaving only the necessary water some food and vertical gear to get down the cave. The sun was about to set and I started shivering, God!!! I left my sweatshirt and jacket with the rest of the stuff!! I had to use a trash bag to keep me warm while Roberto and Lalo searched for the cave, they yelled at us that they had found it so we headed there. The rope was anchored to a nearby tree to descend the entrance pit which is about 25 meters or 75' and these guys like to place re-belays and redirections at the slightest sign of friction, Hector started rigging the pit with an unnecessary redirection, and I did not argue cause I was taking a nap, this was my longest hike ever and I was tired, Lalo was second on rope and I was third.

When I started negotiating the redirection I started having cramps in my arms and legs, better safe than sorry I

said, clipped my ascenders and decided to not do



Nico Escamilla at the lip of the cave



Gabriela Ramirez exploring the cave.

went ok except for Roberto who hit his knee real hard while swinging on the rope, some pictures were taken, the pit de-rigged and we started hiking back to Potrero to ask the locals how much they would charge to drive us back to our cars because our buddy was in pain. One of them said I'll drive you for 1000 pesos which is about 100 dollars, and we said we could only pay 75 dollars, he said I'll take 'em and will also take your headlamp. I agreed, so he drove us down and we got to our cars at about 3:30 am and we headed back to Monterrey.

This was supposed to be a caving trip report but unfortunately I did not get to enter the cave. My muscles were worn out from the hike and that's why they cramped at the entrance pit.

I wanna go back either in a 4x4 truck or a 4 wheeler.

Cave Without A Name - Dec. 31, 2005

By Scott Boyd

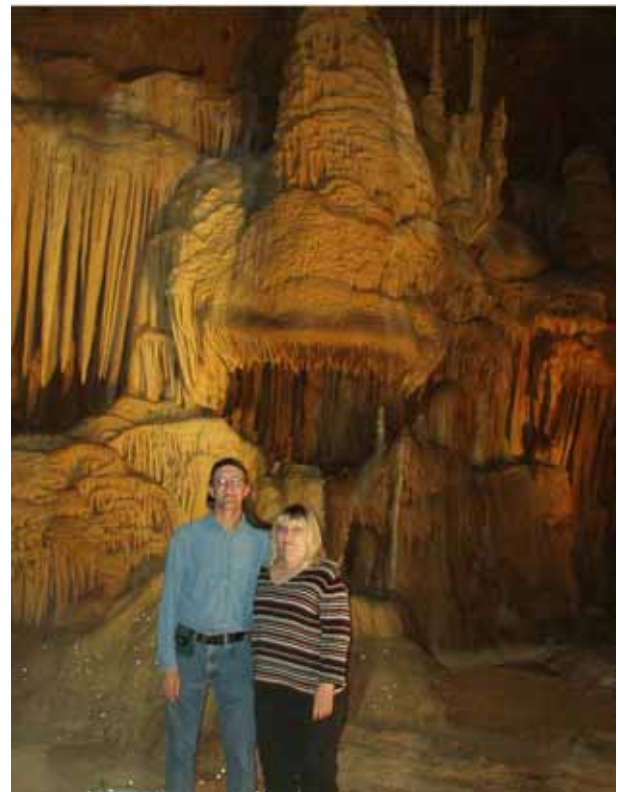
I had read on the Texas Cavers mailing list that CWAN had a "Christmas In The Cave" tour until Jan. 5th, so Debbie and I decided that we would both take the tour, and it would make a fun day trip. Neither one of us had been to CWAN, and I had had a

it. They tried to convince me to go down but I was peacefully asleep outside the cave, getting some rest for the hike down. They started coming out after a couple hours (maybe more I'm not sure cause I was asleep) everything

relapse of my case of "SUDS" (Severe Underground Deficiency Syndrome), so this was the perfect time to go.

The tour guide first took us to the natural entrance and told the group a little bit of the history of the cave, and we then went down the stairway entrance created by the CCC in the 1930's. It was sunny and warm outside, but in the stairway area, it was quite a bit cooler. Once we got to the bottom, and entered the main part of the cave, it was noticeably warmer and more humid. The main room was decorated with Christmas lights along the trail and several Christmas trees made from strings of lights. A very pretty sight! The guide first took us to the "Food Court", where we saw some of the best examples of cave bacon I have ever seen. Several "strips" of bacon were striped just like real pork bacon! The Food Court also had a 40 foot scoop ice cream cone in an alcove up in the ceiling.

After back-tracking through the main room, we went to the downstream end where the creek is. This area also had lots of formations, and was decorated with



Scott and Debbie at the "Christmas In The Cave" tour at Cave Without A Name

Christmas lights. The guided tour goes all the way to the creek, where the guide told us that they were planning to start a wild cave tour into the back part of the cave. They invited anyone that was interested to sign up for it, and they would send you more info.

CWAN has lots of great formations, and the tour guide was informative and entertaining. I was impressed with the size of the main room, which I thought was pretty big as far as Texas caves are concerned.



Christmas lights at Cave Without A Name

“Rock!”

By Bill Steele

When cavers learn vertical caving techniques they learn that no matter what you send careening down a pit you always yell “Rock!” to warn those below. If you drop a hammer, a cave pack, a light, whatever, you always yell the same thing.

Have you ever wondered if that’s always been the rule?

Well, it hasn’t. That rule came about in the early 60s, and here’s why.

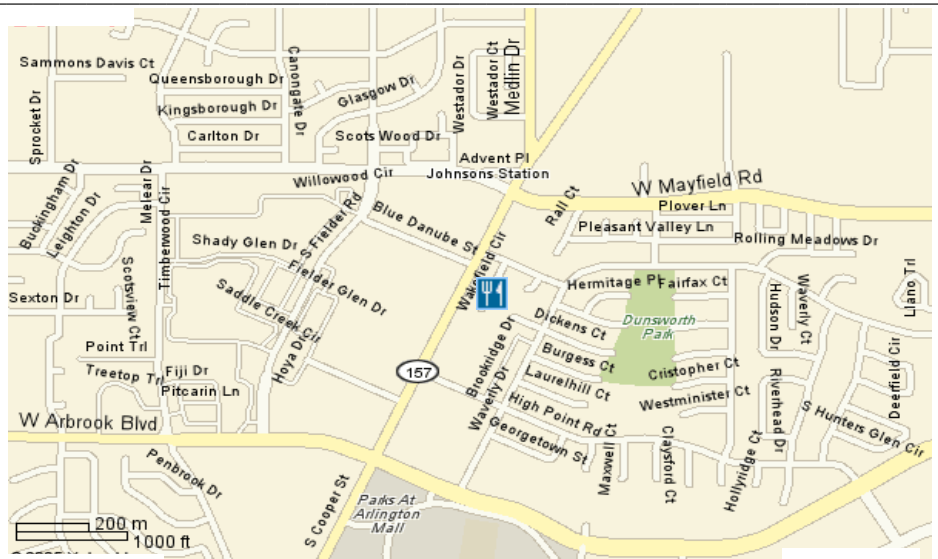
There was a tank haul in support of a cave dive that took place in a cave in England back then. After the dive and on their way out of the cave the support team was hauling loads up a pit. A heavy lead weight was inadvertently dropped and someone at the top of the pit yelled very loudly, “Weight!” It was the last load, so those at the top left the cave then.

Those at the bottom of the pit did wait, and waited there several hours before they decided it was safe and came out of the cave.

With that the Brits decided to always yell the same thing no matter what was dropped down a pit, and the idea has spread worldwide. “Rock!” is what we always yell no matter what is falling.

**January Location:
Buck N’ Loons:
3517 South Cooper Street,
Arlington, TX 76015-3410**

**Next meeting: January
10th, 2006 7:00 pm**





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