



The Texas Caver - 4th Quarter 2006

Greetings From TCR!

## *The Texas Caver*

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**MAILING:** The editor is not responsible for lost or misdirected newsletters caused by failure to notify editor in writing of address changes.

**Cover Photo** by Carol Schumacher, "Wes "Ramen" beckoned toward the fire!" The TCR bonfire.

**Back Cover** photo by Bill Steele, "Not bombproof rigging". Submitted at the TSA Convention Photo Salon this year. Print was sold at the TCMA auction and Linda Palit won the bidding and it will hang it in the Punkin/Deep field house. The subject was a friend of Bill's daughter, Audrey, and was taken during her friend's first caving trip at a cave in Real County.

## **2006 Texas Speleological**

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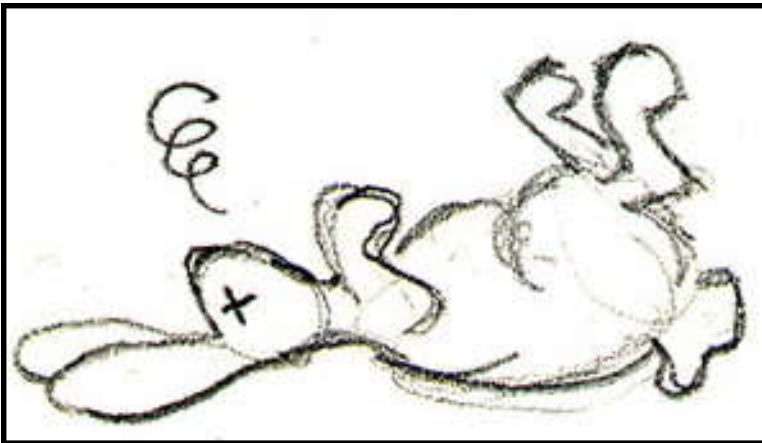
The Texas Speleological Association is a not-for-profit organization that supports cave exploration and studies in and around the state of Texas. It is comprised of both independent members and local grottos. The TSA is an internal organization of the National Speleological Society and represents the greater caving community in Texas. The organization holds business meetings 3 times a year, organizes an annual convention for Texas cavers, and sponsors caving projects throughout the state.

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# "Dead Rabbits"



Fellow Spelunkers,

Aggie Speleological Society, while perhaps experiencing a literary slump recently, would like to remind you all of our existence by subjecting you to some of our trip reports. Please file all complaints with Dale Barnard and Terry Jones\*ahem\*smith\*cough\*son (I don't think I ever got his family name) whose brilliant idea this was.

Location: Colorado Bend State Park, April 7-9th 2006

Away Team Consisting of: Brian Riordan, Anna Beach, Lisa O'Bryan & Nathaniel Brown

**Submitted by: Brian Riordan (Spelunker Novice 1st Class)**

"...He didn't answer; he just kept staring past Andy's mom, screamed and ran out of the house in just his socks. It took 4 hours driving around to find him, and he never talks about it. I've asked him myself several times, and he just shakes his head. No one knows what he saw."

"Brian, lock the doors", Anna said as we backtracked for the nth time down the deserted gravel road in Colorado Bend State Park. It was 2:00am, the moon was waxing just shy of full and we hadn't seen a confirmed landmark for over an hour- trying in vain to interpret our directions. In the spirit of the stories I had been telling, the car stereo was on its 5th loop of my Russian Opera album. In an attempt at being thorough, whoever had written our directions had listed roads along the way as landmarks. It was unclear, however, if we were to turn down them. In addition to this confusion, any dip in the road was debated upon if it was the low water area listed in our landmarks. Of course, the river that

created this low water area was unmarked, and all of them were dry at this time. The last step in our directions said to follow "faint rut tracks to the left" and to "pass a 'not open to public'" sign. We were searching for a place, in the dead of night, with unclear instructions that specifically told us to go where we weren't normally wanted.

Near the end of this 10 mile stretch of dirt road we'd been driving for over an hour, we noticed some faint tracks to the left. Dragging my poor Camry through the ditch and hauling her poor unprotected belly over ruts and rocks in the road, we slowly drove into the woods. The path curved to the right where there was a sign that read "road closed". No, this wasn't the same verbiage our instructions used, but it was the same point right? There was a hushed discussion in the car- everyone talking softly for some unknown reason. We were tired and wanted this to be our destination, but I thought it should read exactly how the instructions said. Not to mention it was one creepy looking stretch of road, and if there were any problems, I didn't have room to turn around. Instead, I backed up, turned up the opera and ran the dirt road loop once more, hoping for rut tracks somewhere else. Twenty minutes or so later, we were back at the end of the road, staring at the same faint rut tracks. I was still making jokes about ghosts that we were keeping awake with our headlights as we pulled past the 'road closed' sign. It wasn't long before my car headlights picked up something in the clearing ahead- something white on the ground. As we got closer, I thought it looked like a rabbit- a dead rabbit. I turned on the brights and quietly said "do... those look like rabbits to you guys?"

"Oh my God" Lisa murmured.

"B? Are those all rabbits?" Anna asked quietly. I wasn't sure if she was really asking for an answer, or just voicing what she hoped she wasn't seeing. I slowly drove to the left of this little clearing counting 11 twisted bodies of rabbits as I made a circle of the clearing. On the right side of the clearing there was a freshly dug pit next to the pile of dirt that had all but recently filled it. The rut tracks curved behind this and became a steep path down beyond.

"Brian lets go"

"Yah..."

Fortunately I had enough room to turn the car around and we cruised out of there. For the next 20 minutes we asked ourselves if those could have really been a bunch of dead rabbits and if they were, why were they there? Maybe they were bits of insulation torn up by a jackal, or... I don't know- SOMETHING that makes more sense a loosely strewn about collection of crippled corpses!

With my brights still on, I suddenly saw tracks I hadn't seen before off again to my left. Following them we past a "not open to public" sign and then, the sweetest sight we'd seen in a while: a caving sticker on the back of a truck. In the silver glow of the moon, with the cedar trees blowing around us we set up camp. We were too exhausted to think much more and all of us were soon fast asleep.

The following morning we were fortunate enough to be first greeted by Dale Barnard, our contact for the trip. In the light of day, I recited the previous night's events and laughed with him the idea of a clearing full of dead rabbits. He quickly picked out some caves he wanted us explore and describe, gave us an ancient GPS unit, the cave names and their coordinates and bestowed upon us the right to name any cave we found "dead rabbit cave" in honor of our brave, fictitious discovery the night before. So off we went into an area called "Lively Pasture", which seemed to me a misnomer. Either it wasn't a pasture at all, or it was the liveliest one I'd ever seen. Either way, it consisted of hills, trees and cactus, for miles; which was soon discovered- taking a 2 mile hike cross-country to find our first cave. We discovered along the way, numerous cracks in the ground that were all previously marked and labeled caves. Upon finding " Spider Web Cave" the first of four we were to explore and describe for the States files, we set down our packs, and got suited up. Lisa was the first down, reporting that the crack opening ran 7 feet down, and then had a 90 degree turn to the North East for 14 feet. There were Spider Webs- so that portion of the title was aptly named. As for the Cave- we demoted it to "Spider Web Crack", took some measurements, wrote down a description approximately 4 times longer than the cave itself; sat in the shade and

rested a bit. By this time we had all plunged numerous cactus fingers into various parts of our anatomy- in my case: my tender posterior. Nate graciously declined pulling them out for me, but my charm was too much for Anna and she gladly acquiesced to my request. To pass the time as we rested in the shade, I turned one of Satan's' pincushions into something more amendable to the tender legs of man by adorning each harpoon with a juniper berry. We were all a little bit safer, I think, for my efforts.

Counterintuitive to chronology, our second cave had the mysterious and alluring title of "Cave No. 6". Needless to say our anxiousness to plunge into its undoubtedly deep caverns, and beautifully pristine galleries hastened our steps. I was excited to report a volume in excess of the 100 square foot disappointment we had erroneously strapped headlights on for during the Spider Web Crack expedition.

Cave No. 6, according to our GPS, lay Northwest of our current location. Our road choices, were due North, or slightly South and West. The North route never veered West, so we backtracked. The Western road kept going slightly South. Despite heading in the wrong direction, I presumed that it would eventually turn North again, and would forthwith deposit us at the cool gaping maw of Cave No. 6. 2 or 6 miles later, our GPS had frozen, and was low on batteries, so we started cross-country. I turned off our global positioning unit for later use in confirming locale and started counting paces in my head. The troops were listless, and I feared a mutiny. While taking a tepid water break, I turned on our borrowed positioning device and confirmed that the tiny hill we were standing on was the exact location. We wandered about the area looking for openings, but found none. Cave No. 6 had a volume of -25 square feet- it was at this point I redefined caves in my mind. Apparently, like earnings, you can have a negative number. And a negative cave is a hill. Just like a negative mountain is a cave... In addition to this epiphany, I had another: my brain was too hot, and the sun was westering. Water melon and A/C time- back to the car.

On the hike back, we found a cave entrance, finally large enough to spend time exploring. We quickly shed our packs and scrambled down into a low arch at the base of a small limestone cliff in the side of hill. Nate,

in the lead, reported light on the other side and scrambled on ahead. The arch dropped down to about 1.5 feet high and was a toe and fore-arm crawl about 12 feet before it opened back up again. A crack in the ground about 25 feet long ran perpendicular to our crawl, which broke the ground surface about 20 feet overhead. There was a danger sign bolted to one wall, but no name. We went down.

15 feet below where we had crawled, the crack hit the main floor of the cavern and had 4 low-lying crawl ways going off in all different directions. We later found out we were in the main hub of Gorman Creek Crack. We chose the first crawl off to the right which was about 4-5 feet high and wound back and forth like it had been washed out by fast moving water. This wormy stooped walk was one of the liveliest tunnels I'd ever gone through, apart from seeing bone-white centipedes and more cave crickets in one place than ever before, some crickets were actually bouncing off my helmet and shoulders as the blindly leaped around in the dark. In a small room a little ways in, Lisa took the lead and made a difficult crawl down a small tube to scout ahead. Since no one knew where we were, including us, she decided not to push when it got too tight- somehow contorting her body and coming back headfirst. Back in the main hub, Nate chose another passageway but soon yelled back a dead end. We lacked kneepads and elbow pads and were too tired anyway to try the rocky crawls the other passages offered so we left, unappeased.

Once on trail again, we soon found a body of water we hadn't passed before, signifying, once again, a wrong turn. To eliminate pointless postulating, I followed my shadow east cross-country again, hoping to cross a path I'd recognize, and was running scenarios over in my head as to where we could have possibly gone wrong. Our GPS would not update position unless it was turned off and on again, so I kept moving, positive I'd find the way back. Fortunately for the group and my sensitive ego, I did, and we were relatively soon back at my beautiful Alaskan license plates eating watermelon and discovering the consequences that one could avoid by properly applying sun lotion to the pale, pale regions of my exposed epidermis. It was time to swim and nurse wounds.

On the drive to the river, we decided to find those ruts again and prove to ourselves that we had nothing to fear the night before and that there was, of course, a reasonable explanation for those torn up balls of white fur. I quickly located the area and once again dragged

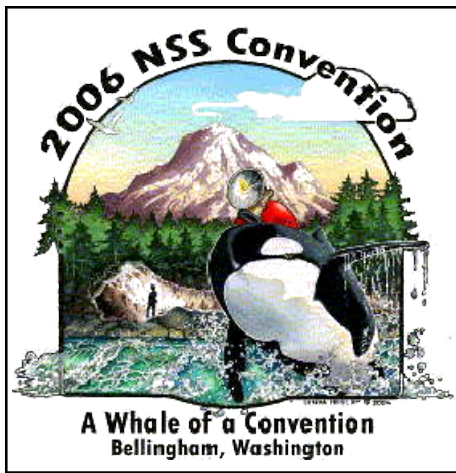
my car along the ruts leading past the ominous "road closed" sign. It didn't take long until we saw the balls of fur, but that wasn't what caught our attention. As we drove up, I counted more than 20 vultures violently thrashing around. More alarming than discovering that they really were dead rabbits was the fact that the vultures weren't on them... they were eating something in the pit. Nate bravely said he would investigate, and opened the door. The smell of death and decay wafted in and assaulted our olfactory. Evacuation was immediate, and not another thought was spent on investigating as all our energy turned towards swimming in the "open to public" area of the park, drinking cold water and eating some well deserved food. We all concluded that our contribution to the collection of cave information in the area was indispensable, and slept soundly with the proud knowledge of our accomplishments could not go unnoticed by the caving community. In the back of all our minds, however, was the knowledge that just a couple miles away in a clearing full of dead rabbits, something foul was being consumed.



**Caving Sam also says, "If you didn't  
pay your TSA dues at TCR,  
they are now due!**

**Pay them at :**

**<http://www.cavetexas.org/TSA/>**



## Texas Cavers in Washington:

### A Summary of What Texans Did at the 2006 NSS Convention

compiled by George Veni

Number of Texans in attendance: almost 40

#### Awards, salons, & events:

- President's Recognition Award for 50 years as an NSS Internal Organization – Texas Speleological Association
- NSS Conservation and Management Section Group Conservation Award – Texas Cave Conservancy
- NSS Fellows Award – Bev Shade
- NSS Honorary Member presentation and Conservation Award presentation – Geary Schindel
- NSS Fellows Award presentation – Bill Mixon
- Cartography Salon Organizer and Awards presentation – Jim Kennedy
- Vertical contests – I didn't learn the results, sorry
- Terminal Siphons – Keith and Lisa Goggin played in the multi-state band

**Caving trips:** I'm not sure who went caving but there were lots of glorious orcas, spectacular mountains, and beautiful trails to see

Chair meetings/workshops:

- Jim Kennedy – Cartography Salon Workshop
- George Veni – 2009 International Congress of Speleology Organizing Committee Luncheon

#### Papers:

- Cat Kennedy – Got Cave? No Bats? We can help with that: Bat Conservation International's search for restoration sites
- Jim Kennedy – Bat conservation in the borderlands
- Jean K Krejca, with Steven J. Taylor and JoAnn Jacoby – A biological assessment of caves in Lava

Beds National Monument, California

- Linda K. Palit and George Veni – Robber Baron Cave, Texas: surface restoration and management for subsurface species
- Mike Walsh and Cat Kennedy – The Texas Cave Conservancy: twelve years of conservation and management

#### Papers on Texas by non-Texans:

- Dwight Deal – Karst waterfalls: features of growing interest.
- Michael McEachern – 3D slide show on Caverns of Sonora
- Pierre Paquin and Marshal C. Hedin – Does bad taxonomy serve conservation purposes? The case of the Cicurina cueva complex (Araneae: Dictynidae) in the vicinity of Austin (Travis County), Texas
- Kelli Willson Randall and Annette Summers Engel – Microbially enhanced carbonate dissolution in the Edwards Aquifer of central Texas

#### Vendors and displays:

- Bill Mixon – AMCS
- Denise Prendergast – Jewelry by Denise
- Mercy Raines – Rolling Oaks Jewelry
- Texas Cave Conservancy – display showing cave preserves and educational activities in Cedar Park

Apologies: to anyone that was overlooked!



Photo of "Groad Hollow", the historical home away from home for Texas cavers at various nationwide caving events.

Submitted by Dale Barnard.

# Landowners and Cavers

By Butch Fralia

Every once in awhile something comes up that reminds us as cavers of our responsibilities toward landowners.

Recently, a TSS director asked an anonymous caver for specific cave information to include in the TSS files. The response that came back was pretty disturbing. I'm not sure of the caving status of the person being asked but he is a relative to folks owning four large ranches in three major cave counties.

Our anonymous caver brought the subject up to his family and it elicited some pretty negative stories about cavers. There were comments about fictitious caves, locations and one bogus cave map being circulated about one owner's property. This information resulted in trespassing, broken gates, cut fences and vandalism. The family finally permitted a few cavers to the property for exploration and mapping. Data could be published by county only (usually the way it works). Locations couldn't be shared with anyone and GPS equipment had to stay at home.

Organized cavers usually aren't the problem but unless landowners make a special effort to find out, they don't know the difference. It causes problems for all of us. Yeah, I know that on a few occasions there's been some trespassing sometimes accidental and sometimes intentional. (I've been the accidental trespasser to two occasions)

On a few occasions when I've heard of the intentional, I participated in making sure they were berated soundly for it. I've heard stories from old landowners in San Saba County about how years ago cavers would just show up without making arrangements in advance, irritating landowners, It resulted in getting some properties completely closed to cavers. Years later when they had a chance to cool off and they were contacted properly, they were willing to try again and new rela-

tionships developed and still exist.

What I haven't heard about in the bad cases is property damage and vandalism. When we as cavers have the opportunity to get on property, we need to be careful to follow any rules the landowner has established as well as the normally good practices followed by cavers. Landowners will, over time, realize there's a difference between organized cavers and people who damage their property. Make sure you share any information you've gathered about the cave (including maps, descriptions) with the appropriate landowner and that if information circulates locally, it won't be from cavers.

If you spot anyone on the property you don't think should be there, it's a good idea to let the landowner know so they won't associate the trespassers with you. Outsiders have done a lot of damage but cavers can overcome the problems with time and care. It's obvious what happens when relationships are developed, you can see examples of what Milo Marks and Bill Tucker are doing in San Saba County.

## Some past experiences:

Some of the experiences I've had over the years, point out that organized cavers aren't the only ones who visit caves. Landowners don't know the difference, they lump all cavers into one bucket. This makes life harder on cavers but it's the way life is, so all we can do is make the best of it and make sure we don't cause any of these negative opinions to be propagated.

A couple of years ago, our friendly landowner at Hill's Gate Cave suggested I should get "my" cavers under control, especially their mouths. It turns out that people who weren't supposed to know about the cave were asking about it. They weren't cavers but some of the locals.

I did ask if he had any idea who'd passed the information on. He traced it back to one of his friends who'd been on the property who'd talked about it to everyone in sight. By the time the story made the rounds, he had a major cavern on his property with buried treasure and the whole bit. The reason he

didn't want a lot of publicity about it is that he's concerned about kids sneaking on the property and getting hurt.

That problem resolved itself and cavers are still in good graces there. I may not be in good graces because I haven't set up any trips there in awhile!

Years ago when River Styx was open; two family members were in the area doing some bird hunting. They dropped by to make sure we had taken a list of names over to the house and if we knew of anyone on the property who shouldn't have been there. There were some weird folks from Springtown we'd met several times who like to sneak out there. They were true spelunkers, carrying six packs of beer into the cave in glass bottles, not wearing helmets. Probably the oddest thing was that they'd go caving then take off their caving clothes (usually cut off jeans and worn out tennis shoes) and leave them near the entrance to the cave to use the next time they came back.

Remembering the sight of some of those weathered clothes makes me itch just thinking about it. I'd tried to get them to follow the rules and even to get into organized caving. They thought of it as a male bonding ritual and wouldn't hear of it.

Being concerned that 1) they were going to cause problems for cavers and 2) I was going to find one or more of them dead inside the cave. That and the fact both folks were holding shotguns (not on me), I suggested I'd seen some people in an area nearby and I didn't think they should be there.

The two family members went over to that area, found them and while one held a shotgun on them the other took all their pictures with a Polaroid Camera as well as their license plate. They were then escorted off the property with the shotguns in the ready position. One of the guys came back and thanked me for the information.

I admitted I'd seen them before and tried to get them doing the right thing but they hadn't bought into it. He said that was OK, they'd had their chance but were no longer welcome.

Interestingly enough, of the two family members, one of them was on the ranch a lot and I developed

a good relationship with him over the years. The other family later became the owner of the ranch area where River Styx is located.

Unfortunately when the property went into probate after Shorty Mongrain died, the Bateman Ranch, 108,000.993 acres (more or less), the ranch was divided into blocks of 7,000 acres by the heirs. Her nephew who'd become the cavers friend didn't end up with the cave. He did tell me that we were welcome on his part of the Ranch anytime we wanted to come. There just weren't any caves there.

### **Here are some things to think about when dealing with landowners.**

When I was doing a lot of caving in the Arbuckle Mountains, there were a lot of electrical storms up there that kill cows. I thought I might be doing a good thing by letting the owner know. I'd write down the ear tag number when I found a dead cow or bull and take that information down to the owner.

One day I mentioned he probably thought I was bad luck bringing in all this information about dead cows. He said he actually appreciated it, with 30,000 acres of land and one hired hand; he couldn't cover the ranch that closely. When he knew cavers were coming, he would focus on other areas knowing that if there was anything he should know about the area where caves were, they'd let him know about it. Once I took him information about a dead bull and while he was upset about the bull he was glad to know because he could get another bull up there to service that area.

A lot of landowners spend time alone on their property and get lonely for some human conversation. That conversation can take a lot of turns from wanting to argue to just swapping tall tales. During one trip to Oklahoma, I contacted a landowner who the people I was with had made earlier contact. They thought I did a better job talking to the deep country folks and wanted me to talk to him. I introduced myself and he acted like he was pretty angry and started yelling at me. I said I was sorry to have intruded and would leave. I started walking off and he yelled "Where the hell are you going, I'm not through with you yet." I realized he wasn't as seri-

ous as he sounded and turned around and went back. I could see a little twinkle in his eye and yelled back that I thought he didn't want me there. He kept the argument going for a while then started telling us we couldn't go to his cave because there were rattlesnakes there. He then proceeded to start telling rattlesnake stories. I was wondering if this would ever end when his wife came to the yard and said he had a telephone call from one of his kids. He immediately says oops got to go, then says, "be careful around those caves, and watch for snakes." Up until that moment I didn't know if he was going to let us into the caves or not. We made a couple of more trips there and he seemed to enjoy it more than we did.

A similar situation is Harrell's Cave; the owner is a retired doctor and is perfectly happy for you to go to his cave as long as he knows you're up there. His wife has Alzheimer's so he doesn't get much intelligent conversation (I don't mean intellectual either) so be prepared for about 30 minutes to an hour of conversation if visiting if you ever go there.

One strange circumstance was a landowner wanting to check the ice chest and see if we had any beer. Sometimes the religious ones don't want one you to have beer. This guy went through the ice chest of one caver's truck and noted there wasn't any beer in there. The response was "Oh no sir, we don't want to offend anyone." His response was "What kind of people are you if you don't drink beer? Where in the hell is the beer?" We took him over to the other truck where the ice chest was covered with a tarp and showed him the beer. He was happy, grabbed a beer and made some comments about the brand. After that we always made sure we had a case of his favorite brew on hand somewhere but the game was to find where it was hidden. This was a small price to pay for a great caving weekend on a property with some great caves. Of course it could go the other way, no beer means no beer!!

All landowners whether they will admit or not are interested in the caves on their property. Their interest runs through the gamut of how their cave compares to other caves in the state in terms of just passing on information about it. It has formations,

it's fun to go in, there's neat stuff to see. Give them whatever information you can about their cave whether it's a description or a map, especially if it's a map! Pictures taken inside the cave are almost as good as a map! If there's trash in the cave let them know, they may not know other people they've let in haven't been good citizens. If there's trash in the cave, feel free to clean it out!

Don't misrepresent yourself! If you're a sport caver, don't tell the landowner you're a scientist. Don't BS, tell the truth. If your name is George Veni, you can claim to be a world-class karst hydrologist. If your name is James Reddell, you can claim to be a renowned cave biologist. Don't be who you aren't. If a landowner has interest that are above a level you can provide, you can offer to contact someone with that specialty but don't claim it yourself unless you really have it.

A favorite memory along these lines is an Oklahoma caver who presented himself as a member of the National Speleological Society (which is OK if you really are). He went to the front porch of a farmhouse and said his name and that he was a member of the National Speleological Society. The farmer looked at him for a minute, his mouth wide open then yelled "Mama, come see what's on this porch, the National Geographic Magazine is here to photograph our cave!" No amount of explaining could correct the impression. In this case, go see the cave but make sure if you take any photos, they get copies.

I'm close to closing this but want to reiterate the most important rule of all. If the landowner establishes rules for his property, follow them! If he says you've all got to go in at the same time, then figure out some way to do it. If he says close the first gate behind you but leave the second one open, do it! He has his reasons and some landowners have been known to use cavers as free labor. He doesn't want to drive out and open the gate so he gets you to do it for him. Don't ask, just do it!

Sometimes a landowner will request that all contacts go through a specific person or people. Honey Creek is like this as well as Hill's Gate Cave and probably a few more if I researched it better. If a

caver tells you all contacts must go through them, give them the benefit of the doubt until you actually know for sure otherwise!

One final thing, this comes from both a real experience and common sense and falls under the category of rules. Once upon a time, there was a landowner on his property called Diamond Cave. It's marked on a topo map and you could get the information with a little work. However, you could get shot if you tried to go directly there.

The first time we ever went there, we were supposed to have a contact who backed out and went looking at deer leases instead. On this particular day, we did have a reference and more or less an appointment with a landowner who had a small cave on his property. Our contact was supposed to be there but didn't show up. We met with the landowner and he at least was expecting us. He took us to his cave, which happened to be a small vertical cave on a plateau in Coryell County. There wasn't a place to rig the pit so we parked my truck beside it and rigged off its suspension system. It was a straight down vertical hole about 30' deep. The first person down stated its depth and situation, the second person verified. When it was over the owner apologized for only having the one hole because watching cavers fight over who was going down first was the funniest thing he'd seen. He wished he'd had more caves so cavers could have spent more time on his property!

Our missing contact was supposed to make the introduction at the next property but again was off checking out great deer leases. I decided that we'd driven too far not to at least try to get into the next cave. We went over to the approximate area of Diamond Cave. I noted a small store and dropped in and asked about Diamond Cave. A young clerk attending the store knew about the cave and had an idea about the cave. She made a phone call and said someone would be down shortly. An old guy who's name I won't mention came down, he looked the group over and said who drove? I held up my hand and he said to get someone to drive my truck and follow him. I got in his truck and our friend Corky drove. I got the third, fourth and fifth degree

interrogation about following rules set by a landowner on his own property.

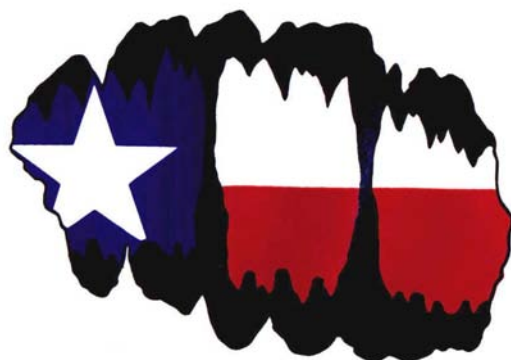
Turned out this landowner owned a number of banks and I was told later that if you owed him money, even downtown Moscow (when it was still a part of the old Soviet Union) wasn't a good place to hide. I finally told him that cavers aren't like Deer Hunters. If a Deer Hunter makes a landowner mad, deer are mostly the same across Texas except for Mulies and White Tail areas. A Deer Hunter can find another lease but since caves are unique, to see that particular cave, a caver must follow the rules of the landowner explicitly. Maverick Cavers went to that cave four times. Release forms were required for the first two times then forgotten after that. It was a great little cave, about 550' with some unique features.

This is the end, keep those landowners happy and they will discover the difference between real cavers and spelunkers.

#### **Really the final note:**

I was on a ranch in Oklahoma doing some caving and ridge walking. I got miss-located and ended up in the wrong pasture. Of course I didn't know at the time but I was trespassing! The next time I went back to the same ranch, the owner suggested I should be careful and not get on the adjacent owners Ranch. He said the owner of the adjacent Ranch had complained there were people there who didn't have permission. I asked why he didn't come out and tell us. The landowner of the Ranch we were supposed to be on said he asked the same question. The response was that he (the wrong landowner) hoped we'd find some caves on this property like the ranch we were supposed to be on had.

Since we didn't, we got a complaint!

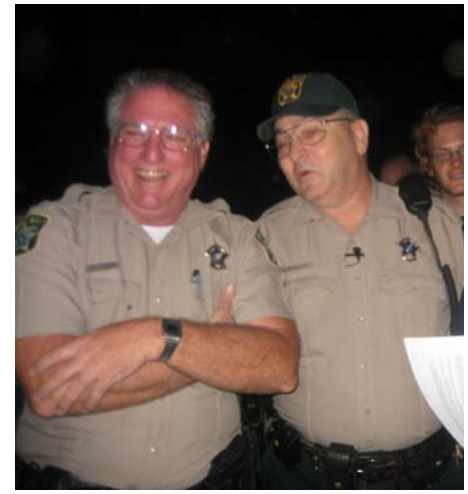




Dani Schumacher and Shannon Summers (in pink). Photo by Carol Schumacher.



The Maidens of Ramen. Photo by Carol Schumacher.



The local authorities enjoying festivities. Photo by Carol Schumacher.



Puppy swimming in Honey Creek Cave.



MC Extraordinaire, Alan Cobb! Photo by Keith Heuss.



Mike Walsh and a Devil in a Red Dress. Photo by Keith Heuss.



Cavers arrive from all over! Photo by Keith Heuss.



Going Down?! The shaft entrance at Honey Creek Cave.



vening  
cher.

Carol Schumacher and Dani Schumacher  
Photo by Carol Schumacher.

Michael Cicherski taking a well-deserved break  
from Registration. Photo by Carol Schumacher.



The Terminal Siphons performing before being told, "Hey, you kids!  
Turn down that music!". Photo by Keith Heuss.



Exiting the creek entrance at Honey Creek Cave.



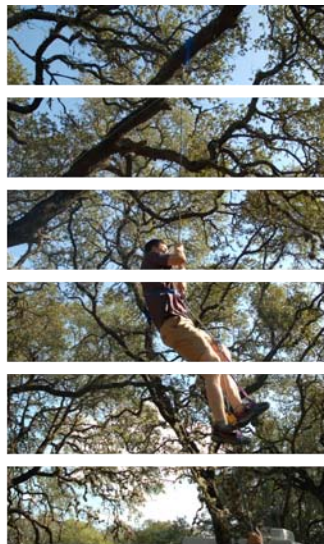
Aimee Beveridge doing some random plumbing  
advertising. Photo by Keith Heuss.

## TCR Rogues Gallery

Photos generously submitted by Keith Heuss



Caver extraordinaire  
Peter Sprouse



Speleolympics 2006



Nico Escamilla, who traveled all the way from Monterrey, and Bill Steele.



Cowtowneer  
R.D. Milhollin



TCMA President,  
Linda Palit



Keeper of the Hot Tub,  
Pete Strickland



Typical caver RV.

## Cavers, Cops, and Things That Go ‘Squish!’ in the Night

### A Newbie’s First TCR

Submitted by Mark Alman—Editor

It was shaping up to be a beautiful weekend and I was definitely looking forward to attending my first Texas Cavers Reunion, even though I have been caving in Texas for over 10 years now!

After enjoying a relaxing drive down, having avoided I-35, and after partaking of an excellent lunch at the Sunshine Bar and Grill in Blanco, I arrived at Honey Creek Ranch. I immediately found the Head Honcho of this shindig, Allan Cobb, and got busy setting up for registration.

I was assisted by Michael Cicherski, whom I’ve emailed endless times, but have never met. Michael is an incredible asset to the TSA and to the International Congress of Speleology in 2009 and it was a pleasure working with him this weekend.

Some other high points of the weekend:

- Hanging out with Allan Cobb and listening to him try to convince me to be the TCR organizer next year.
- Meeting all these great cavers whose names I have seen, but, have never met.
- Helping out Joe Ranzau and the Bexar Grotto TCMA Breakfast Benefit.
- Greeting and chatting with all of the NEW and YOUNG cavers in attendance. The lifeblood and new stewards of Lone Star State caving.
- The most excellent dinner by Felicia Vreeland and her Cooking Caver Crew. Just how does she pull off feeding this many every year?!
- The bonfire and the Terminal Siphons.
- The spectacle and awe and majesty that is Ramen Noodle Wrestling. A sight to behold!
- The Blast From The Past/Letting It all Hang Out atmosphere at the Hot Tub area.
- The County Mounties!
- Attending the business meetings and hearing all the good things Texas cavers are doing.

All in all, a very enjoyable and memorable weekend and if you’ve never attended this or the TSA Convention, you don’t know what you’re missing. Mark your calendars.

Don’t miss out next year!



## Government Canyon Project Update

Submitted by Marvin Miller

Tom Florer and I (Marvin Miller) were the only participants in the karst survey project at Government Canyon SNA this past Sunday. We hike up the Far Reaches Trail intent on surveying into the new area of Dancing Rattler Cave that had been discovered in May. Though a return trip had been anticipated several times since then, participation in the project had been poor, and this was the first time it was actually going to work out. On that caving trip in May, after surveying through a known area of the cave with Ron and Drew Rutherford, we worked on some dig leads. I managed to get through the area I was working on and found a hole in the floor, off the bottom of which a short bit of passage led to an overlook into a nicely decorated room. I had left it there, because it was the end of the day and I didn't want to scoop. Today we were going back to see what I had found.

I was a little worried about Tom making it through the squeezes back to the new section but Ron had enlarged them enough in his efforts during the May trip and Tom really didn't have a problem - until he got to the last one, the one I had worked my way through to find the hole in the floor. The passage is one of those you need to negotiate backwards, because it is fairly low, and at the hole there is no room to get your legs under you and down the

hole. The hole itself is about 1.5 meters deep and not a good candidate for head-first caving. So you have to go backwards and on your belly, and though Tom tried mightily, and even used our little sledge on the unrelenting stone, he wasn't able to contort his longer legs through the curves and bends of the passage. We did survey two short shots to the top of the drop. After that I left Tom and my "survey-as-you-explore" ethics behind and went to see what it was that I had found.

I wasn't going to be too disappointed if turned out to be just a nice little room. I was nicely surprised - very nicely. The passage I was in entered the room at the ceiling. I had to climb down about a meter-and-a-half, being careful to step around the stalagmites rising from the floor. The room was approximately 3 meters by 6 meters and everywhere were formations hanging from the ceiling, about 30 cm overhead, and rising from the floor. In between the stalagmites, the floor was covered with cave coral, so that footsteps really had to be placed carefully. In the middle of the room there was a striking pair of stalactites that bordered on being lion's tails, and at several places around the borders were dark voids that beckoned for closer inspection.

I found a comfortable perch and sat down to eat some lunch, set my camera out to acclimate, and plan out my exploration. After downing my Powerbar I made my way back to the side I had come in on. There was a lead down by the floor but it was well guarded by a gate of interspersed stalactites and stalagmites. Some broken formations were laying on the floor. I went on around the room and saw another low lead behind where I had sat to eat. I noted it for later because on the other side of the room were the best looking holes. I bellied up onto a sloping boulder and then climbed down the other side into another remarkable gallery. To the left I squeezed between tall columns and the wall and was suddenly amazed at an outstanding display of boxwork, the calcite fins extending out from the host rock by 20 cm and more. From here a hole led back up to the first room. I turned round and carefully stepped past numerous formations and ducked

under masses of soda straws to navigate down into the next gallery. Right away I was struck by the holes in the flowstone covering the wall to my right. Closer inspection revealed a millimeters thick shell of flowstone with the rock behind it eroded away leaving a space of several cm. Immediately to my right was something that looked suspiciously like a vent feature. Ahead were some nice columns and more boxwork-like stuff. I climbed up and over another breakdown boulder - or maybe it was the same one - and into another gallery decorated just like the previous ones. There was lead down low and I could see ahead along the main passage trend, past numerous formations and a tighter spot in the passage, to where it opened up again. I decided to stop there. I had been down here an hour already and still wanted to take some pictures. I headed back to my camera and spent another hour taking photographs. Then back up to where Tom had been patiently waiting for me.

On the way out I stopped to take some more photos of a little calcite crystal cup in the old section of the cave that I had never had the right camera for until now.. After we exited we headed fifty meters to the north to check out the entrance to Dancing Fern Cave. The ferns were dancing on Sunday, for sure. It was a good day to once again go inside this little cave and try to figure out where all the air was coming from. There was a lead at the end of a tight little crawl that had been on my mind. I took a crowbar along and pried on some rocks while Tom checked out the rest of the cave. There was some air coming from my lead but it didn't seem like enough to account for the air in the entrance. Maybe it was just more diffuse. I decided that the dig was probably worth a concerted effort at some point, considering that most of the digs in the Dancing System of caves had been successful so far. However, that was job for another day, and so we left and headed for home.

The next trip is Dec. 3rd. Trips into the new area will be limited to one survey team of 3 people, but the dig in Dancing Fern also takes small, determined people and promises big rewards. There are other caves to survey as well, and digs to work on

in other caves and on the surface. There are also plenty more caves to be found. All skill levels are welcome.

## **A Quick Look at Dealing with a Caving Accident**

**Submitted by DJ Walker**

As cavers we always try to keep safety as a priority. Though we attempt to cave safely the possibility of accidents is ever present. As reported in the National Speleological Society (NSS) publication American Caving Accidents, many caving accidents occur every year. In the April 2000 issue Part 2, statistics report that a total of 808 reported accidents with a yearly average of 61 reported accidents occurred between years 1986-1998. 90% of those accidents were fatalities or required aid from other people to exit the cave. It is important to note that these are only the reported accidents that occur. Many accidents happen and are not reported. With these numbers, and imagining the number of caving trip taken, it could be surmised that we are, in general, very safe and take measures to minimize injury. They also tell us the sobering truth; accidents do happen.

### **Safety Tips**

In the event of an accident, what are you going to do? What steps should be taken? Before we embark on what to do after an accident occurs we should take a moment and address accident prevention. The best way to deal with an accident is not to have one. Take note of a few safety tips:

- Pack your equipment appropriately. Keep emergency and first aid equipment available and pack stuff to sustain yourself longer than your planned trip time.
- Be proactive with Safety Checks. Have a buddy do a safety check of your gear, and safety check your buddies. Make sure vertical gear is on properly and that all equipment is in working order and ready for use.
- Always double check rigging. More than one

person checking rigging ensures mistakes are kept to a minimum.

- Don't take unnecessary risks. Protect climbs, rig approach lines, know what's below you, etc...
- Always let someone know of your plans. Letting someone know about your plans and an itinerary can benefit you in the long run by allowing Search and Rescue personnel to locate you faster.

### **Cave Rescue Training**

Even with all of the accident prevention in the world, the reality is that accidents happen. This is not intended to be an inclusive guide for cave rescue techniques or accident management. Rather it is a list of suggestions about appropriate actions to take. For more information about cave rescue contact The National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) or better yet attend a NCRC course.

The NCRC received its charter from the NSS in 1979, and serves as the Society's representative on issues of cave rescue training and operations. The NCRC is a component of the Department of the Administrative Vice-President of the NSS. It is a volunteer group developed primarily to train and track cave rescue resources throughout the United States. The NCRC is specifically NOT a functional cave rescue team. Rather it provides training and development opportunities for persons and organizations engaged in cave rescue activities. While many of the persons associated with the NCRC perform rescues, they do this as members of their local rescue squads, civil defense units, or cave rescue groups.

### **Accident Management**

When the unexpected happens and an accident occurs the first thing to remember is to stay calm. The accident may be serious but if composure is not kept it could become catastrophic. There is nothing getting excited or angry is going to do to help the situation. In fact it could have ill effects on the outcome. So what to do now? Many decisions need to be made and some need to be made in a timely

fashion. Here are a few suggestions on how to manage an accident:

- Provide safe access to the victim. Don't become a patient also. Realize if someone else got hurt doing something the chances of you or others getting hurt doing the same thing are pretty high. How did their accident occur? (rappelled off the end of the rope, rock fall with other rocks unstable, etc...) Do not have the same accident. Try and prevent your outcome being the same as theirs.
- Do a Severity Evaluation. Once an accident occurs the severity of the accident needs to be evaluated. Is it just a sprained ankle or a fatality?

If it is a fatality, it is important to understand the law recognizes the area as a crime scene. Your best option in the event of a fatality is not to disturb the area (except to check for life and attempt to perform any life saving measures). Leave equipment as you found it and don't remove anything from the deceased. Take pictures if you have a camera. This may aid in any investigation law enforcement may want to do. Document anything and everything you saw, heard, smelled, or felt as soon as you can.

If it is not a fatality, how severe are the injuries (i.e. life threatening or minor breaks and scratches). Try and provide some kind of medical care. At the same time determine if outside help will be needed. If outside help is needed and there are enough people in the party send someone out for help. Start devising an exit strategy.

### **Provide Medical Care.**

I am not going to go in-depth about medical treatment or patient management. If you are interested in learning more about medical care take a first aid class. I would suggest some sort of wilderness first aid/first responder training. Wilderness medicine has distinct differences from your basic street medicine. Medical training could prove to be priceless.

Basic first aid starts with ABC's (A-airway B-breathing C-circulation). Airway - ensure they have

an open airway that allows them to breath. Breathing - How is their breathing; fast, slow, shallow, full? Can we do anything to help this? Circulation - How is their circulatory system? Is their pulse rate fast or slow? Are they bleeding? If they are bleeding apply direct pressure and attempt to stop it. If they have broken bones splint the joint above and below. If there is suspected spinal injuries minimize spinal movement. Assess their mobility. Can they help with self rescue?

**Determine if self rescue / aided evacuation is possible.**

If the victim can aid in their evacuation by all means let them help. Evacuating someone that has to be carried or in a litter, complicates and increases the difficulty by many times. The amount of people required to safely and efficiently move a litter any distance is more than your normal caving party. It would take 8 or more people to tackle this task and possibly many more depending on distance and terrain. If the victim just has a sprained / broken ankle or other minor injuries, have them crawl or limp out aided by other cavers in the party.

**Who to call for help.**

If it is determined that outside help is needed, someone should be sent to call 911 or the local Sheriff's Department. Some areas of Texas, as well as other areas of the U.S., have the resources to adequately respond to most caving accidents, though it is known that this may not always be the case. It is pertinent that you inform the dispatcher or Sheriff of the details about the cave environment to which the accident involves. You may make a suggestion about calling the NCRC Regional Coordinator for information about cave rescue resources in the area. Once you have notified the local authorities, you may choose to call the NCRC Regional Coordinator yourself and inform him/her of your situation. He/she can interface with the local jurisdiction and aid in the decision making process during the incident. Understand that NCRC is not a cave rescue team, the Regional Coordinator will only offer cave rescue resources and can only act if

given the permission to do so by the local authority. Currently the NCRC Regional Coordinator is Tim Comer. He can be reached at (979) 247-3478 (h) or (512) 589-4813 (c). The Regional Coordinator changes from time to time. Up to date information about NCRC, Regional Coordinators throughout the US, as well as other cave rescue information be found on the web at [ncrc.info](http://ncrc.info).

As stated earlier the best way to deal with an accident is not to have one. Accidents are few and far between but be prepared for the unexpected. Come check out a NCRC seminar. They can be very informative and a lot of fun. See the web site for the next class offering ([ncrc.info](http://ncrc.info)). Cave safe and hope to see you around.



## Going West, Young Man.

### A legend in Texas caving moving to New Mexico

I'm writing for a few reasons. First, I want to thank everyone for their many public and private messages of support and congratulations on my being hired as the Director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI). I also want to pass along some information on my plans since some of you have expressed curiosity, and to give you a better idea of what NCKRI will be doing.

I begin work for NCKRI on 5 February 2007, but effectively I start making the move just before Christmas. I'll be out of town for the holidays with Karen, then will be away visiting family for a week. Afterwards I'll be moving and getting settled in Carlsbad. As for my consulting business, I will wrap up my existing projects over the next year or so. and then cut back to only occasional consultations involving project reviews and oversight, but I won't do any more of the major field

project's I've been conducting for 20 years.

If you're wondering how my move will affect the 2009 International Congress of Speleology. It won't, at least not negatively. I negotiated my job with the intent that I must be able to fulfill all of my existing commitments, including the Congress. This was not difficult to negotiate because the NCKRI Board is highly supportive of the Congress. I won't be able to make quick, spur-of-the-moment trips to check things out in Kerrville, but the Congress team includes a bunch of good people who will be handling things in Kerrville anyway.

As for TSS, I've notified the TSS Board that I will resign as President and as a TSS director effective as of the next TSS Board meeting on 20 January 2007 when someone will be elected to replace me. My resignation is a good thing. It will put new blood, ideas, and fresh energies into the office. I will continue to work with and support TSS and hope that other cavers will do the same.

So what is this NCKRI thing anyway? NCKRI is a newly-formed non-profit institute based in the city of Carlsbad, New Mexico. It grew out of earlier NCKRI that was part of the National Park Service, but switched to non-profit status to more effectively meet its goals due to various constraints in the federal system. NCKRI's location reflects its major partners: National Park Service, State of New Mexico, and City of Carlsbad.

They are the initial members of a consortium supporting the institute, which has the goals to nationally and internationally promote and advance sound cave and karst research, management, and education. Several other entities are working with NCKRI, such as the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Geological Survey, and a large part of my job will be to bring them and others together into a cohesive partnership that advances NCKRI's goals.

If really you understand the implications of what I just wrote, the idea of "losing" me to New Mexico doesn't hold true. NCKRI is not a part of Carlsbad Caverns and it is not a New Mexico institute except for its location. I will look to develop support and partnerships with NCKRI in Texas,

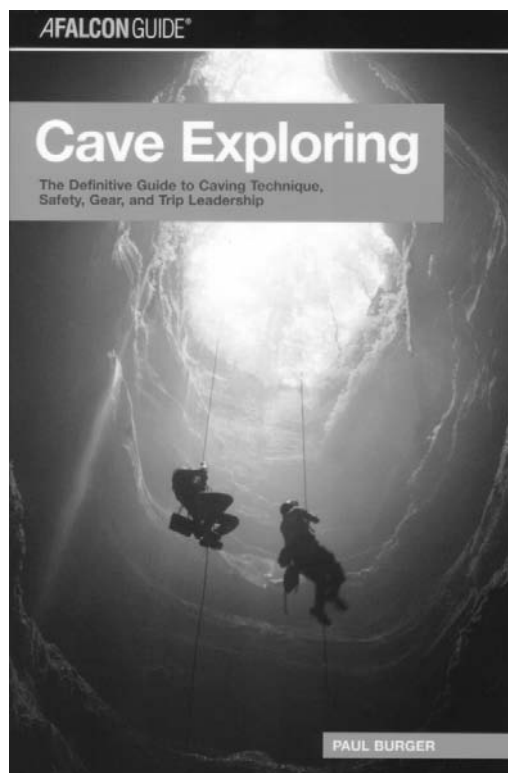
New Mexico, throughout the US, and in other countries. If NCKRI is successful, and the following is what drew me to the job, the benefits to cave/karst science, management, and education will benefit all regions and far more than anything I could have hoped to do as karst consultant.

How will I make that happen? I won't. It is the teaming of the many outstanding cavers, cave scientists, and cave managers and their organizations and agencies that will make it happen. My job will be to bring those people together.

So I'm going, but I won't be gone - no further than a phone call or e-mail.

I may even get to see some of you more than I currently do! If you have any suggestions or ideas for NCKRI, never be shy about sharing them with me. I haven't cornered the market on ideas or wisdom, and welcome hearing yours.

**George Veni**



**A Review of  
"Cave Exploring:  
The Definitive Guide  
to Caving  
Technique,  
Safety,  
Gear, and  
Trip  
Leadership."**

Paul Burger.  
Falcon, Guilford, Connecticut; 2006.  
ISBN 0-7627-

2560-5. 6 by 9 inches, 119 pp, softbound. \$15.95.

A new introduction to caving was certainly needed. The NSS's Basic Caving was last revised in 1992, and most of the material in it is much older than

that. Besides, it's a hodgepodge of material, sometimes contradictory, by many authors. McClurg's *Adventure of Caving* is good, unlike his earlier books, but the revised edition published in 1996 is hardly changed from the original edition of ten years earlier. Paul Burger's small book is less ambitious in its coverage, but at least it is up-to-date in areas such as rapidly evolving lighting choices. Following brief introductions to cave biology and the types of caves, including lava tubes and tectonic caves, a "Caving Basics" chapter covers mainly beginner's caving gear. The material on clothing is notable in covering a range of caves, from hot desert caves to cold alpine caves, but the book does read a bit like an advertisement for Capilene, which is just one manufacturer's trademark for polyester, just one of the available fibers for thermal clothing. It unfortunately repeats the often-seen bad advice to carry something inside the top of your helmet. The empty space is there for a reason. The following chapter discusses moving through horizontal caves, including how to get unstuck. Chapters on caving hazards and wet caves follow, the latter with good advice about swimming and crossing streams. I doubt, though, that many cavers will ever have a need to know how to climb into an inflatable raft. A chapter on trip organization has a nice discussion of the responsibilities of team members, but it has more emphasis on the notion of a team leader than most cavers will be comfortable with. The "Advanced Caving" chapter covers vertical caving, although nothing is really described except how to tie varieties of the figure-8 knot. (Burger thinks that kern mantle ropes have a twisted core.) It also includes notes about caves in or at least containing ice. There are reasonable conservation messages throughout; it is nice that there isn't too much evidence that the author has been brainwashed by his job at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, except maybe some bits about microbes.

I give Paul Burger a B—the old-fashioned B that meant above average, not the modern, inflated B that used to be called a D.

**Bill Mixon**

## Celebrate and Honor Life— Racing to Save Lives

Special Request from Janet Moore (Sister of "Mr. Mike" Moore - former contributor to "*The Texas Caver*")



Very recently, LLS promoted viewing a show airing on PBS called *Independent Lens: A Lion in the House*. The show follows the stories of five excep-

tional children and their families as they battle pediatric cancer. Seeing the courageous children fight gut wrenching physical and emotional battles, eagerly hopeful for a diagnosis of "life" tugged at my heart strings.

This past year, Ben, my 7-year-old, had two dark moles suddenly appear inside of a large nevus birthmark on his hip. In April 2006, Ben bravely underwent surgery at the Children's Hospital. Now he has a four-inch scar left in remembrance of his special birth given mark. Fortunately, his biopsy report came back negative for cancer cells.

As in April 2002, when my brother "Mr. Mike" Moore died after a brief battle with Lymphoma, the question came to me "WHY AM I NOT DOING MORE to support cancer awareness, research, and to support families facing this dread disease?" The question again led to action.

This time my goal is to raise over \$1500. and complete the Austin (Half) Marathon. What better way to celebrate victories of my special friends: Gregg Timmons long-term remission from Leukemia, my former "poster child" Garrett Reid's end of chemo,

and remember my brother Mike's life!

Help others to receive a diagnosis of "life" by taking action and donating now. Together, we make a difference!

HELP OTHERS TO RECEIVE A DIAGNOSIS OF "LIFE".

**To Make a Difference:**

<http://www.active.com/donate/tntctx/tntctxJMoore1>

**For Awareness:**

Warning signs / types of pediatric cancers -

[http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/lioninthehouse/03\\_02.htm](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/lioninthehouse/03_02.htm)

**For Support with blood related cancers -**

<http://www.leukemia-lymphoma.org/>

If your not comfortable with online donations, email me your address and I will send you a envelope for mailing a check.

Janet

"J. Moore" <[moore4thejob@yahoo.com](mailto:moore4thejob@yahoo.com)> or

(512) 924-9204.

## TCC Winter Conference, February 21st—23rd



The Texas Cave Conservancy would like to invite you out to a new event that we plan on hosting each year here in Cedar Park, Texas. The TCC Winter Conference, February 21-23, 2007 is an opportunity

for you to get out that winter coat, tent, sleeping-bag and do some camping, caving, learning and even some partying. The cave CO2 levels should

be at their lowest this time of the year. It is a time for caving. This annual event is directed toward new cavers. Even the old folks are welcome.

Camping (with a campfire) is available at the TCC Headquarters. In the event of a real winter we can make space for cavers inside the TCC Headquarters. Breakfast will be available on Saturday and Sunday. We will have an evening meal Saturday night followed by a special presentation and a party. Caving is available all weekend.

With a ten- dollar donation for the old- time cavers and free for cavers that have been caving for less than five years, how can you go wrong? This event will be what we make of it. If you want to hold a workshop, cave ballads, slides, or what – ever, contact us. If it is not fun, it probably is not worth doing.

Most of the events will start Saturday morning at the Twin Creeks Conference area located approximately five miles from the TCC Headquarters. This 49 -acre park is a special place. With a 100- year old log cabin, springs, year round water, tall trees and a great shelter cave, this will be a great home for the TCC Winter Conference.

The following are just some of the activities planed for the conference. Most of these activities will take place on Saturday.

**Caving-** Friday-Saturday-Sunday.

**Guided Tours:**

- Lifestyle's of the Indians of the Cedar Park Area. Runi Burnett & Mike Warton.
- Cave Related Geology of the Cedar Park Area. Mike Warton.
- Discovery of the Buttercup Creek area caves. Bill Larson.

**Workshops & Stuff:**

- Cave Photography. Ernie Garza.
- Cave Survey. Jerry Fant.
- Cave Restoration. Donna Mosesmann.

- Vertical Training. Becky Jones.
- Salamander Search. Andy Gluesenkamp.
- Cave Biology To be announced
- Cave Monitoring. John Worfold.
- Cave Library. Jeanette Larson.
- B.A.B.E. Pit -CO2 Study- Scott Serur
- Hall of Texas Cavers. Dave Cave
- The Golden Beginnings of Mexican Speleology -Terry Raines & Associates.
- Saturday Night Special Talk

More events and workshops to will be announced.

Help us start a new Texas tradition, the TCC Winter Conference!

Grottos, contact us for a free TCC Winter Conference CD, Texas Cave Conservancy 512-249-2283 or

TCC-caves@austin.rr.com

Come on out and have some fun!

Donna Mosesmann-TCC Director

figures on that yet.

Thanks to every caver who supported TCMA this weekend, and to all of you who share your money, experience, expertise and love of caves and caving with us. We want to buy more Texas caves and continue to preserve and manage the underground resources of Texas for the benefit of all. It will take all of us to make that happen.

AT TCR, TCMA members added new Board Members Don Arburn and Kevin McGowan. Welcome!

Aimee Beveridge and Sue Schindel were re-elected as Board Members. Congratulations to all.

Additional current TCMA Board Members include Allan Cobb, Jon Cradit, Jay Jordan, Joe Mitchell, Linda Palit, Joe Ranzau, William Russell,

We have also added Grotto Contact Persons for TCMA to facilitate better communication between the grottos and TCMA. They are:

Aggie Speleological Society – Travis Scott

Bexar Grotto – Linda Palit

Cowtown Grotto – R.D. Milhollin

Dallas Ft Worth Grotto – Jay Jorden

Greater Houston Grotto – Kevin McGowan

Lubbock Area Grotto - ?

Maverick Grotto – Butch Fralia

North East Texas Grotto - ?

Permian Basin Speleological Society – Bill Bentley

UT Student Grotto – Aimee Beveridge

Anybody who would volunteer to fill in the above two “?” – please let me know. If I left out a grotto or listed anyone incorrectly, please let me know that also.

Please contact any of us about TCMA business, TCMA projects, or caves that are for sale which TCMA might be interested in or able to buy. If one of us does not know the answer, we’ll keep digging and hopefully come up with the information needed.

See you underground,

Linda Palit—President, TCMA

## THANK YOU!

Texas Cavers, thanks for your generosity to TCMA at TCR!

We are rapidly paying for Deep and Punkin Cave. Our goal is to

pay off the note before our interest rate increases in 2009.

Our totals were about \$2250 or so, and that should make the next few payments on the property. We received \$330 from David Locklear’s Garage Sale, \$120 from Chris Vreeland (a portion of the TCR t-shirt money), \$1050 for memberships and t-shirt sales, and about \$450 from the silent auction. We also received over \$300 on the Sunday TCMA Breakfast, but I do not have the final





The 15th International Congress of Speleology will be held in Kerrville, Texas, USA on 19-26 July 2009.

Since it is never too early to begin preparing for a great event, the website for the Congress is now available with all of the latest information so you can start planning to attend. The goal of the website is to stay so up to date that if you don't find the information you need there, then it is likely that the information is not yet available (although you're always welcome to contact us and check).

The website is in English. Our summary leaflet is available as PDFs in French, German, and Spanish. The leaflet is currently being translated into Italian and will be posted as soon as it is ready. Later this summer, print-quality versions of the leaflets will be available on the web too. By the end of September, the entire website will be available in French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

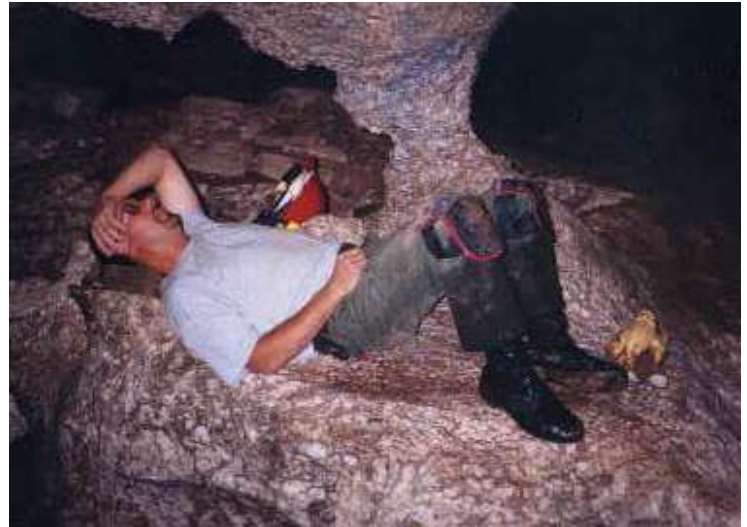
We encourage you to visit the website and bookmark it for future reference: [www.ics2009.us](http://www.ics2009.us)

If you want to be certain you receive all updates on the Congress or are interested in helping, contact us at: [secretary@ics2009.us](mailto:secretary@ics2009.us)

We look forward to seeing you in Kerrville in 2009!

George Veni

Chairman, 15th International Congress of Speleology  
Adjunct Secretary, International Union of Speleology



## From The Editor...

What a great year for caving and cavers in Texas!

With Thanksgiving approaching, a few things to be thankful for are:

- The always excellent TSA Spring Convention and the Texas Cavers Reunion at the beautiful Honey Creek Ranch.
- The Texas Cave Conservancy being recognized for their great work at the NSS Convention.
- 20 years of the TCMA and all of the work they do and the caves they purchase, protect, and conserve.
- All of the dedication and energy Grottos and cavers exhibit throughout the year. Visit the calendar at the TSA website to see what I mean. <http://www.cavetexas.org/events/index.html>
- Finally, all of the support, comments, compliments, and submissions from YOU as I complete my first of many years as *The Texas Caver* editor.

Lastly, some personal caver news:

Congratulations go out to **Kara and Charley Savaas**, who tied the marital and speleological knot Saturday, November 11th. The nuptials were conducted at the lovely ranch home of Terri and Peter Sprouse.

**Leah and Andy Gluesenkamp** welcome a new baby to their happy home!

