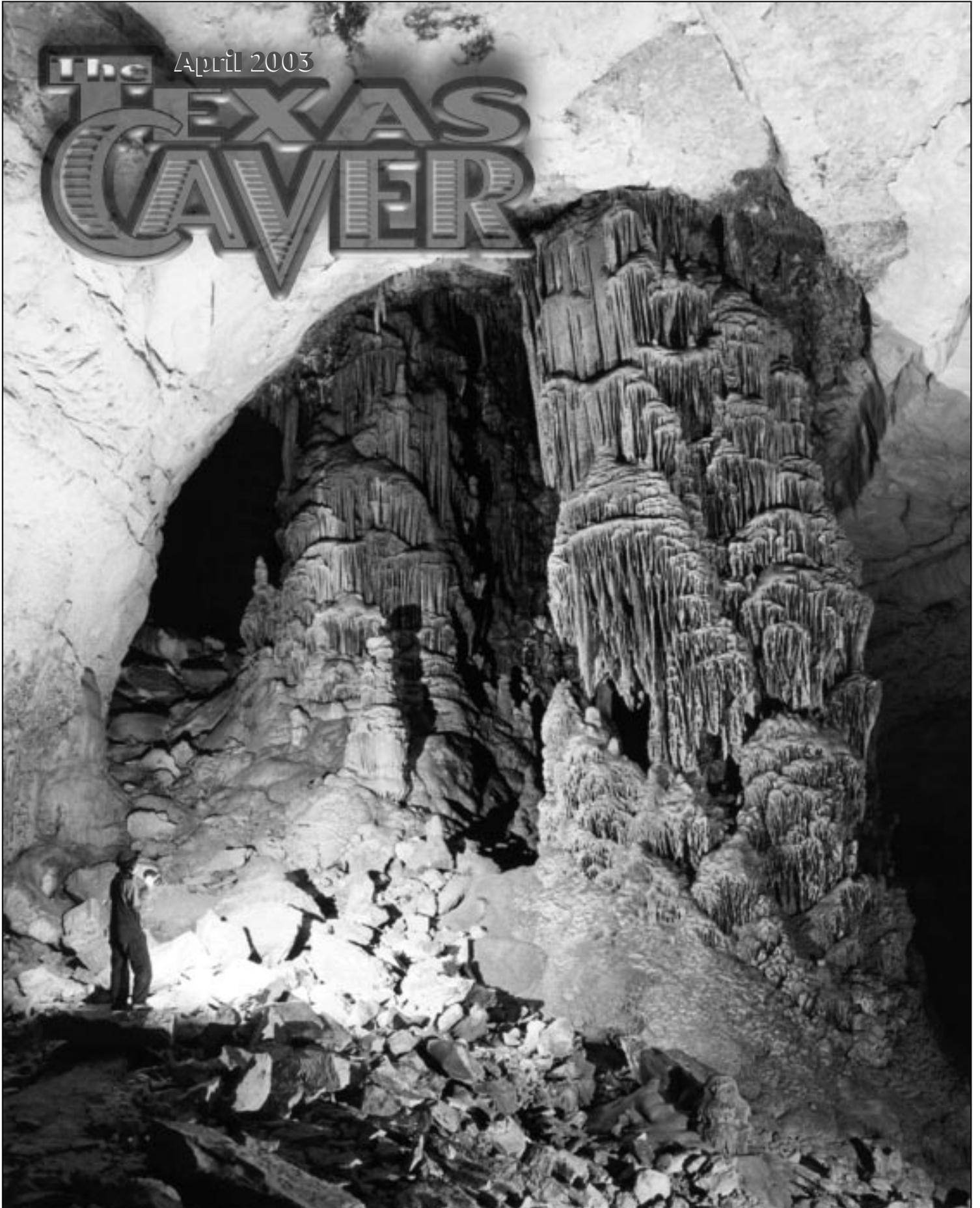


The  
**TEXAS  
CAVER**

April 2003



# THE TEXAS CAVER

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### THE COVERS:

FRONT COVER: Sarah Beadle in Kickapoo Caverns looking at the tallest column in Texas" Composed by Allan Cobb, taken by Travis Scott

BACK COVER: This is Mark Gee going into Gorman Falls Cave at Colorado Bend State Park 2-09-03. Photographer: Carol Schumacher

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### Correction:

My name is Amanda Scott. I just received our issue of this month's Texas Caver and I noticed that the author of the Kickapoo trip report is listed as Cynthia Lee. I don't know who Cynthia Lee is, but I wrote the trip report and my husband Travis Scott took all of the pictures which were also credited to "Cynthia Lee."

I know this sort of thing can happen, but we would really appreciate it if you let people know about the correction. Thanks so much, everything else looked right just the author name and the photo credits. Also, this trip report was from March 29-31 of 2002 - things at Kickapoo have changed and I don't want to get people confused.

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## Acrobatics in the Creux d'Entier

### A caving trip to the Swiss Jura

by Yvonne Droms

It was a gorgeous November day in the Swiss Jura mountains, almost too beautiful to go caving. The fog had lifted by mid-morning, and had unveiled majestic forests of firs and spruces and narrow, dark, gorges and canyons. Our disparate little group of cavers, composed of a few Swiss-Germans from Basel (Lea Guidon, Patrik Schilli, and Michi Abt), a Frenchman (Philippe Sénécal), a Texan living in Switzerland (Melanie Alspaugh) and a Swiss living in the US (me), geared up by the cars then trooped down the soggy, spongy pasture towards the mouth of the “gouffre.”

So far the multilingual composition of the group had been interesting. One person spoke only French and one only Swiss-German. Some others managed two or three languages, but not necessarily the same ones. This could be interesting, I thought to myself, once we start down the ropes and attempt to communicate from pit to pit... we would have to make sure we had the correct line-up of people in the cave.

Lea is passing the rebelay from the cable traverse onto the rope for the 32-meter pitch.  
photo Yvonne Droms



The Creux d'Entier is a mainly vertical cave that brings you down to a depth of 156 meters (500 feet) if you go all the way to the bottom. At the minus-100-meter level there are some passages going off horizontally. We had brought enough ropes to go down to the bottom. Some ropes had been rigged the previous week by another group and in exchange for the convenience of using them, we had volunteered to derig and bring them back out.

After our Jura Club hosts Damien Linder and Valérie Chopard led us to the cave, Melanie started rigging the first drop to a tree and rebelaying it to a big I-beam positioned across the pit. She then disappeared down the shaft, landing on an ancient wooden platform 20 meters below. Patrik went next because of his ability



Melanie starts her descent into the Creux d'Entier.  
photo Yvonne Droms

to communicate both with Melanie in English or French and with Lea who was to follow him, in Swiss-German. Michi and I were next, while Philippe joined the Jura Club for a trip to the Narines de Boeuf, a similar-sized cave in the area.

After I landed on the wooden platform I was warned that it was quite old and unsafe, so I clipped myself into the traverse line leading across to the edge of the rotten planks. Huge 10- by 10-inch timbers resting on two massive I-beams supported the boards from below. The platform was built at the junction of two large pits and served as a connection from one into the other. By the time I arrived there Melanie had already rigged outwards from eyebolt to eyebolt towards the anchor where the rope hung freely

Having a picnic: Melanie Alspaugh, Michi Abt, Lea Guidon, Patrik Schilli  
photo Yvonne Droms



down into the next pit. She started rappelling down the existing rope, examining it carefully on the way down because she had been warned by Damien that it might not be in too great of a shape.

The rope must not have met with her approval, because soon after she disappeared from sight, we heard her switch over to ascent and saw her climb back up to the anchor. The rope was too scary-looking, she said, and we should replace it with one of the ropes we brought along. Well, so much for going all the way down to the bottom of the cave: if we used our 50-meter rope here, we would not have one long enough to go beyond the minus-100-meter level. Oh well, safety first.

After some juggling with carabiners, cowstails, and figure-eight knots while hanging from the rebelay on the sheer wall, Melanie gave Patrik the new rope to be rigged and she started back down on the old one, since it was still connected to rebelays in various places. Patrik installed the new rope and rappelled off, then it was Lea's turn to make her way towards the disappearing ledge. A garland of rope follows the wall of the pit, and you clip yourself into the loops, alternating with your cowstails. Once the footholds disappear you put your weight on the traverse line, which in this case consists of a thin steel cable backed up by two ropes, and so you traverse across, pushing your feet against the wall in order to move sideways horizontally.

I followed Lea, enjoying the experience of hanging from a squeaky, tenuous cable tied to eye bolts sunk in the rock, with all that space below me, in the middle of this pretty pit lined with smooth flowstone. Nothing like all that exposure around you to make you concentrate on your task! At the rebelay, I switched over to the descent rope. "Seil frei!" Rope free. We had agreed to use German for our calls. Michi started on the traverse line while I rappelled off down the 32-meter pit. The beauty of all those rebelays is that many people can be ascending or descending the pits at the same time. This becomes a very important considera-

Lea in a decorated nook of the Creux d'Entier  
photo Yvonne Droms



Draperies flow out of a hole in the ceiling.  
photo Yvonne Droms

tion in cold, wet, alpine caves, when waiting for a long time can have deadly consequences.

In order to reach the third pit, another series of rope traverses and one more cable had to be negotiated. The steel cable, due to its inelasticity, allows you to remain closer to the horizontal as you move sideways, and it makes it easier to progress along walls devoid of footholds. This second cable took us to a loop of rope that enables you to round the corner and to reach a passage beyond. This involved a bit of gymnastics in order to keep your balance. Throughout these maneuvers, I kept wondering how such a cave would have been rigged in the US. One rope down to the bottom of the pit, another to climb back out of it on the other side? Here in Switzerland, I felt a bit like a circus acrobat, swinging from one trapeze to the next, then landing on a minuscule platform on the far side.

The next pit involved passing a redirect, then at the bottom of that rope, in order to reach a balcony, you had to pull yourself diagonally across the pit along the lower part of the rope, either that or rappel into the loop and climb back up from below. This was quite a jungle gym of a cave! A great playground to practice vertical techniques. One more traverse and another short drop later, we arrived at the minus-100-meter level and were out of rope to continue further downwards. We all gathered in a spacious room for a picnic. Out of the waterproof barrels came the various

components of a Swiss in-cave snack. The Thermos of hot peppermint tea; the bottle of Rivella (a type of dairy-based soft drink); the elaborate sandwiches made with fresh bread, lunch meat, and decorated with tiny pickles; the homemade hazelnut-chocolate cookies in the shape of bats... For dessert, Swiss chocolate, of course. A real feast compared to the sawdust-tasting energy bars I'm used to chewing back in West Virginia.

We left behind some of our vertical gear and continued along the horizontal passages, or galleries as they are called in Switzerland. We arrived at one place called "der Briefkasten" or the Mail Slot, which forces you to contort yourself while attempting to gain height without any footholds present, fighting gravity all the way. It was interesting to say the least, and everyone got to struggle for a bit. We passed by a very decorated area complete with a deep rimstone pool, and climbed up an extremely slippery slope by way of a handline into which we clipped our safety Jumars. We eventually reached the end of that part of the cave after downclimbing into a lower passage. It was time to turn around and head out.

Back at our vertical gear, we reorganized our little group and Michi took the lead this time, followed by me. Patrik and Melanie would be last and do the derigging. After some of the ropes had been collected, the people up ahead could take them out of the cave to lessen the load for the last ones. Gradually our small group worked its way up the pits and across the traverse lines and cables. I had to adjust my climbing system a few times at first, since I had borrowed quite a bit of equipment from Philippe and Melanie instead of carrying all that heavy gear from the US with me.

At one point, I was hanging in free space under an overhang, and the cable I needed to clip into was way up there, seemingly out of reach. I was a bit puzzled about how to cross this rebelay but luckily Michi was still within sight in the 32-meter pit and he gave me some tips about what to do to gain the extra few inches I needed to reach the cable with my short cowstail. As usual, it was obvious once it was pointed out to me. No wonder the Europeans are so good at vertical techniques, with such great playgrounds in their backyards... I found that my Pantin foot ascender was very helpful in dealing with some of the ropework.

By the time I reached the second cable traverse and worked my way across it, I had arrived at the bottom of the rotten platform. I stopped there to take some pictures while Michi started out for the surface on the last 20-meter pitch. That was a mistake because he ended up waiting up there for a real long time, freezing his extremities off in the light sleet that had started falling. So much for the gorgeous weather. Lea arrived behind me and I took pictures of her and Patrik sorting some of the ropes to be hauled out, and stuffing them into bags while clipped into the rebelays. At this moment, Philippe, who had spent the day at the other cave, came zipping down the entrance rope and bouncing off the platform like a mountain goat, to check on our progress. I grabbed my bag of rope and headed out into the cold, windy night, warming my hands on my borrowed carbide generator.

Melanie came out last, a rope bag tied to her D-ring and a garland of carabiners around her waist. We gathered up all the ropes to be returned to the Jura Club's field house, a lovely and ancient



Lea ascends up towards the second cable traverse, in the 20-meter pit.  
photo Yvonne Droms

farmhouse in the middle of a large, glacial valley. We hiked back to the cars and changed out of our PVC suits. It was an interesting cave trip and I got to meet a few more Swiss cavers. Thank you so much to the Jura Speleo Club, to the Basel Speleo Club, and especially to Melanie and Philippe for a wonderful time in the Swiss Jura.

Patrik arrives at the top of the 32-meter drop. Lea has already traversed across the steel cable.  
photo Yvonne Droms



## Trip / Project report for Kickapoo Caverns State Park

April 4-6, 2003  
Compiled by Kurt Menking, and Travis Scott 4-17-03

For those who haven't been to Kickapoo Caverns State Park you're really missing out. The over 6400 acre park was acquired by TPWD in 1987, and during the late 80's early 90's cavers did quite a bit of work searching for, and surveying the caves in the park. The two large well know caves, Kickapoo Caverns, and Green Cave (now Stuart Cave) were re-mapped by George Veni. Much searching was done to find the known, rumored, and even totally unknown caves within the park. Since TSS is the official cave record keeper for TPWD, all data collected was sent to the TSS files where they kept it organized and protected.

Alan Cobb and Travis Scott were attempting to re-kindle the karst survey project at KCSP

Jenni Hrobar and Brian Maiorino in Kickapoo Caverns  
by Travis Scott



Shannon Summers' feet sticking out of the entrance to Scorpion Cave  
by Travis Scott

when Alan was forced to go work in Hawaii. He asked Kurt Menking to fill in for him and Kurt agreed. Travis and Kurt worked with the park manager and other TPWD staff to set ground rules and build a plan to continue with the work begun many years earlier. It was incredibly refreshing to make a few emails and phone calls and within a few weeks have copies of all the

data collected and stored by the TSS. Files were sent containing surveys, location maps, biology, geology, and other data collected on the parks 18 known karst features. We were able to pick up almost exactly where we left off in the late eighties. Current technology helped out as Kurt had prepared topo and aerial photo maps with cave locations to assist the caver volunteers.

Travis, Kurt, and the park manager worked up a plan for where to start. The first phase of the project would be to re-find and GPS all known features. Several attempts were made by the park manager and various cavers in the last few years to find some of the known caves. A few were found after much searching, and most were simply not found. On our project weekend on April 17 cavers searched for 12 known features and found 11 of them. All were GPS'd and most had photos taken of their entrances and some even had photos taken inside. We verified first hand that Bee Cave still has very aggressive bees in the entrance pit. One cave named Cricket Syphon proved to be very elusive. The team assigned to search for it spent hours Saturday morning searching unsuccessfully. They were determined to find it and after a short lunch break they were hard at it again Saturday afternoon. They returned several hours later and still hadn't found the elusive cave. Another group agreed to look for it Sunday morning, but again they returned without finding it. It must be very badly located on the maps, or it must have a very small entrance, or the crickets have managed to hide it from us. Several have vowed to return and leave no stone unturned.

Saturday evening most of us attended the bat flight at Stuart Bat Cave. Then we went into Kickapoo for photos and general looking around. Joe Ranzau began photo documenting the graffiti locations through out the cave. He is interested in documenting the graffiti names and locations, and possibly researching the

names with local historians. He hopes to build an index of what names exist, and where they are within the cave. Sunday morning a small group returned to Kickapoo with 4x5 format camera, large flash equipment, and other assorted camera equipment. Many photos were taken and we can't wait to see the results. For those not familiar with Kickapoo Caverns it's a truly great cave. It's huge, well decorated, easy walking around, and can suck up film very quickly. The 1994 NSS convention guidebook has a great cover photo from Kickapoo. There are plenty of helectites, massive and petite formations, a few water pools, and even a few scorpions for good measure.

The park facilities are first rate. The park is not officially open to the public so at least for a while yet we have the place to ourselves when we are there. The camp grounds are current TPWD standard with asphalt parking pads for the cars, and concrete pads with picnic tables, and restrooms with showers. The showers felt like they were blowing ice cubes at me when I used them, but cleaning up after a day of hiking and crawling in dusty caves was worth the chill. And later in the year I expect the cold water will be quite welcome. There is a large barn, and a bunkhouse to hold meetings, and organize the trips, lay out maps etc.

In summary 18 cavers provided over 200 on site volunteer hours to find and GPS locate 11 of the 12 know karst features that we attempted to find. Only 3 of the 18 known features remain to be GPS located. Additionally a few new sinks were found and documented. We reviewed the existing surveys and information for the 18 features and are developing plans to complete the maps and data collection for those features. We also collected photos of the entrances and pictures inside for most of the known caves. We even managed to assemble a few picnic tables and install them plus some fire rings at the campsites. The next project weekend is scheduled June 6-8. We hope to see you there.



Trish Wilson in Kickapoo Caverns  
by Kurt Menking



Susan Souby, Trish Wilson, and Kurt Menking in Porcupine Cave  
Taken by Bob Burnett



Entrance to Bee Cave with a LARGE bee hive that prevented exploration  
by Shannon Summers

## **Government Canyon Karst Survey 15th & 16th February, 2003**

by Marvin Miller

Trip participants: Bobbie Breceda, Rick Corbell, Tom Florer, George Kegley, Justin Menking, Kurt Menking, Marvin Miller

### Saturday Activities

Thunderstorms had been forecast for Saturday morning but they never materialized. George Kegley, the park resource specialist, is always on the Saturday trip, but the only other person to challenge the weathermen was Tom Florer, lately of San Antonio, now from Austin. He was rewarded with a good day of caving. We decided to go up the canyon to survey, benchmark, and GPS locate Mad Crow Cave. From there we would head on into Area 19 to work on a dig. On the way up I wanted to stop and verify whether Feature 15-3 was actually a cave. It had been recorded in 1994 by David Locklear as a cliff-side feature and given the name 2-Skunk Cave. There was no indication on the form that it had ever been checked. There were some clues in the records, however, that suggested that 2-Skunk Cave is the current Log Cave. We located what seemed to be the correct feature and determined that it was indeed Log Cave.

On our way along the cliff face while we were looking for 2-Skunk/Log Cave we found another feature, previously unrecorded. It was a typical bedding plane crawl but it looked long enough to qualify as a cave. Tom and I set to work surveying while George took GPS readings. The passage was done in one shot, with two more shots for the wide entrance. At 7 meters in length it was indeed long enough to qualify as a cave, with the added bonus of a surprising 2.5 meter high dome close to the end of the passage, decorated with corroded flowstone and stalactites. Tom installed an aluminum benchmark while I sketched.

Mad Crow Cave was the next stop and it was another typical cliff-side crawl. The entrance was nice and big and perched at the top of a fairly large scree slope. 2 shots were enough to define this cave. While I was sketching Tom installed a benchmark and George gathered GPS data.

After Mad Crow we drove further north to the Rock Pile and then hiked east on the Little Windmill Trail. We intended to take the Comanche Cut Trail north but missed the intersection. We

eventually found our way to Features 19-11 and 19-12 by using GPS and going overland. We dug on the two main features enough to be able to see that the spaces they opened into were only about 10 cm high, with no indication that they opened any further. Before we left we started digging on an associated smaller sink next to 19-11. The dig needs to be continued.

### Sunday Activities

On Sunday I was joined by Kurt Menking, his son Justin and his son's friend Bobbie, and Rick Corbell. I took the opportunity to suggest we try to relocate Twin Cedar Cave. Both Kurt and Rick were on the team that found the cave back in 1996 but it hadn't been visited since and we didn't have a GPS location for it. We once again drove north to the Rock Pile and headed east on the Little Windmill Trail. When we hit the Comanche Cut Trail we turned south until we got to the intersection with the Twin Oaks Trail. Then we spread out on both sides of the Comanche Cut Trail and worked our way south looking for the cave. We wandered around for an hour or so without finding anything. I left Rick to go back to the intersection and try to reconnect with Kurt and the boys. I found them at the intersection and we decided it was time to quit and go do something more productive. Rick had wanted to check one more thing and then he would be along. Just as he was giving up as well, he found the cave.

The entrance lies between two good-sized cedars and drops straight down for about 2.5 meters to the floor of a low room. The room is at least 6 meters x 4 meters. Where the entrance comes down there is a solid rock wall, but around most of the room the floor and ceiling come together until it becomes too low to explore, though the cave can be seen to continue. Along the solid wall and about 4 meters from the entrance there is a hole that drops about a meter. Most of the floor of the cave is covered with a rich, organic soil.

Rick and I surveyed the cave in two shots while Kurt pulled rocks out of the hole in the floor. More digging could be done on the hole but it's probably not worth the effort.

We ended the day with the hike back to the car and the long drive back down the canyon.



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# Schroeder Bat Cave

May 24 2003  
By Travis Scott

Cavers: Scott Beadle, Sarah Beadle, Patrick Connelly, Brian Maiorino, Travis Scott, Amanda Scott, Shannon Summers

When my family bought land in the north east panhandle of Edwards County about 4 years ago, I immediately searched the TSS database for known caves in the area. My search found nothing in this part of Edwards County except a single cave marked on the topographic map. It seems that the TSS does not have any data on this cave although I'm sure some cavers must have been there at some point in time.

My search for the owner of the cave finally paid off in May of 2003 when I found the owner and we were granted access to visit and explore the cave. A neighboring land owner offered to take us to the cave as he lived nearby and the owner lived far away and couldn't make it that weekend. We were already heading out to my land for Memorial Day weekend to dig on another lead so we agreed to explore the cave at that time.

We arrived late Friday night and stayed up too late as usual. Awoke Saturday morning and Brian, Sarah, Amanda and I packed up the Xterra and headed out to meet the neighbor. He showed us around his land and told us of a hole on his property that was small, but went deep. We agreed to look at it after the cave. We again piled up and headed for the cave which was only a few hundred meters from his house.

The cave entrance is a large shallow sink in exposed rock. The opening is about 1.2m X 2m oval and drops about 3 meters to a sloping floor. The first thing I saw was a small rattlesnake on a large metal rack that had been dropped into the cave, presumably as a ladder. Our guide was equipped with a 2m long "snake grabber" which made snake removal quite easy. After the hazard was gone, we dropped a ladder and climbed into the darkness.

Sarah Beadle at the entrance and entrance sink.  
By Travis Scott



Scott Beadle looking at some dry formations towards the back of the cave.  
By Travis Scott

The sloping floor is slick with dirt and guano and continued downward to a ledge that drops nearly vertical for about 8 meters to another ledge. This drop seemed climbable but we decided to drop a cable ladder for extra support. I climbed down the ladder and found myself at the top of another 8m pit, this one was vertical and not climbable and appeared to be a fissure. On the way down to this point we noticed that a rope was already hanging down the drop on the other side of a bridge over the pit. The rope was the kind you could buy at Wal-Mart and was knotted with butterfly knots all the way to the bottom. It was obvious that we needed vertical gear to continue on and the rope down the pit wasn't going to be used, so we headed back to get the rope and the other cavers digging on the lead.

With the rope dropped and secured, I geared up and again descended downward into a virgin darkness. This is the first time I have had the chance to discover "new" passage. You always wonder what it would be like to discover some huge or real nice cave and as I dropped down I couldn't help but let my imagination run wild as I watched the wall in front of me fall away and become a ceiling over a void. Below the ceiling was a nice sized room with a breakdown floor and large piles of guano at the far end. It was tempting to run around and see where the passage was, but I set up my camera and waited for Shannon to come down the rope. Waiting ended up taking too long so I climbed down the breakdown pile along the side of the room towards a small void. I dropped down onto a flat mud/guano floor and crouched into a low, wide, circular room about 10m in diameter. There were a few large piles of guano and some very old trash that had come down the entrance shaft. The room had a flat floor that appears to fill with water at times and a flat ceiling that is about 2.5 meters high in half of the room and about 1.2m in the other half. The only exit from the room is a small drain at one end that is filled with dirt and didn't look like a promising dig. Disappointed in not finding that borehole passage I had imagined I turned back to see if Shannon had hit bottom yet.

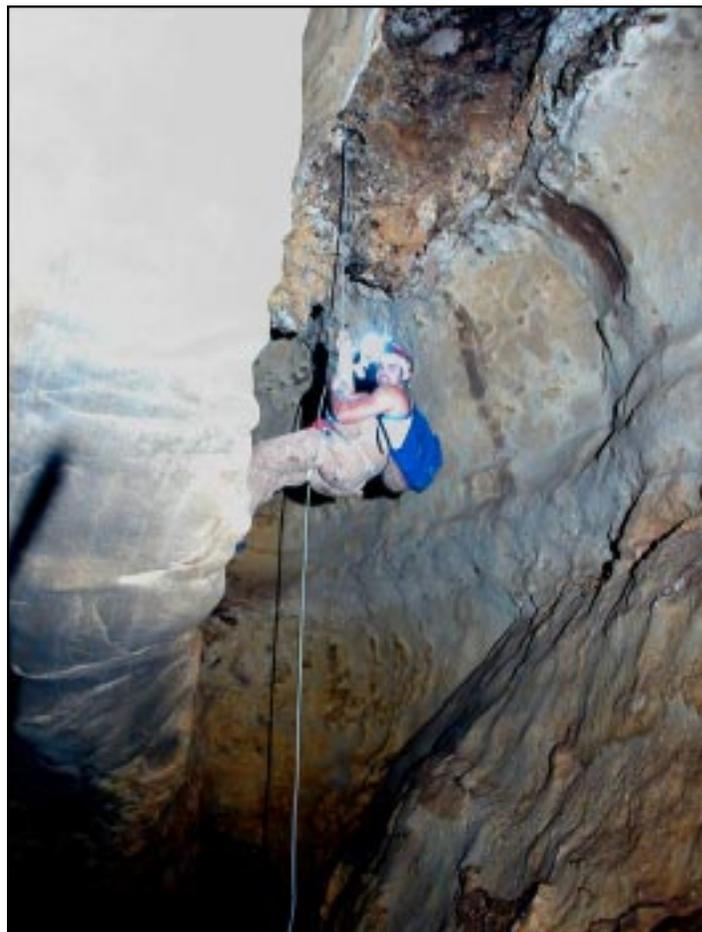
Shannon and I waited for the others while taking a few photos. The other side of the room has huge piles of guano and a large bat population hanging out above, adding to the piles. We did not want to disturb them so we stayed on our respective side of the room and kept quiet. After showing everyone the flat room, I realized that one could climb between the breakdown and the wall and check the perimeter of the room without disturbing the bats. So Patrick and I began the muddy crawl and found some interesting formations along the way. As we worked our way around one side of the room we noticed the cave getting wetter and the formations to match. After one of the tight squeezes, now on the other side of the bats, I looked up only to see darkness. Again, in that second my imagination

started running at the prospect of a void this size, then my eyes began to adjust from the white rocky crawl and I noticed that it wasn't a huge void, but another room with a nice dark guano covered floor. Not too disappointing though, the passage went!

I stepped down from the breakdown into thick deposits of guano. I looked up and noticed that the room had some old decaying and some new growing formations clustered together. Ahead of me the passage turned a corner and went out of sight. I don't know if Patrick was still behind me when I began trudging through the extra thick layers of guano, but I went anyway, knowing he was at least somewhere behind me. As I turned the corner I noticed places where the locals had stepped in the guano years ago and the bats had tried to refill the holes with more guano. I looked up and saw that the passage again turns a corner behind a large column and I followed it. From around the corner the passage drops into a crawl that looked like it gets tighter as it goes. I didn't feel like squeezing as I knew we would return for a survey trip and searched the larger passage for other leads. This part of the cave housed even more bats and I didn't want to stir them up too much, so everyone trickled over and looked at the lead then we headed out. Back outside in the Texas heat again we noticed it had gotten late. We quickly removed old wood and trash from the entrance of the cave so the bats have an easier trek out every day and headed back to "Scotland, Texas" for a nice fajita dinner. We left the hole on the neighbor's land for the return trip.

The main obvious passage of the cave was explored, but there could still be leads or digs to check out. The cave seems to be a large relatively flat-floored room/passage with a length I could only guess at and I'm not good at guessing. The entrance drop measured roughly 23 m to the bottom of the cave. The only floor elevation change noted was in the entrance room on top of the breakdown. Most of the passage is wide walking size passage at a maximum width of approximately 10m. The entrance room is covered with a thin layer of brown slippery mud that makes traversing it very painful while the rest of the cave is mostly knee deep in guano.

I am glad to have finally gotten to check out the cave after searching for the owner for so long. It is a good find and a significant bat cave.



Shannon Summers dropping the pit (total depth ~23m, free drop for ~8m).  
By Travis Scott

Hopefully on the return trip we can find more passage, get a good survey and check out the hole on the neighboring property.

Shannon Summers in the first room standing among the guano piles. This is the breakdown room at the bottom of the drop. The rest of the cave is a single, mostly level floor. By Travis Scott



## The Digital Database

Butch Fralia 2003-06-01  
cavedba@charter.net

If you don't know who we are; the TSS (Texas Speleological Survey) is that bunch of people who sells books at caving events like TCR. That's how a lot of people think of us but we do a lot more than that; we collect data on Texas caves, shelters, sinkholes, springs and just about anything else karst related. We study and promote caving and protect caves and karst areas. You can check out our website at <http://www.txspeleologicalsurvey.org/> to learn more about us.

OK, now I'm going to show off some of that information. The following data is from the TSS electronic database maintained in Microsoft Access. The information is effective as of today (6/1/2003). It will change tomorrow and the day after because we are forever adding and editing data. For instance, I'm currently working on updating Travis County data as provided by Bill Russell. I've worked my way through 71 of 791 records he provided. There are 149 entries that will be added to the database and 13 that will be deleted. So the database size will increase by 136 records and a goodly number of those records will be caves. Also, keep in mind that this does not include the reams of information in the paper files that have not yet been entered into the digital database.

Total Records on the database:	5494
Total Caves:	3458
Total Rumored Caves:	161
Total Archaeological Sites:	54
Total Historical Sites:	26
Total Paleo Sites:	63
Total Shelters:	53
Total Sinkholes:	638
Total Springs:	77
Total Undefined (not tagged cave, etc.)	1253
Total Counties in Texas:	254
Total Counties with Caves:	81
Total Records with Locations:	2737

I'm going to leave it to you to add up the numbers and find they don't add up to the total. They don't add up because some records have multiple designations such as cave and spring (Speaking of springs, there is an additional 1502 springs that haven't been integrated into the main cave database. They were identified from USGS Topographical maps.).

Something worth mentioning is the TSS definition of a cave. A "cave" is a minimum of 5 meters (can be a horizontal, vertical or a combination of the two) of humanly traversable passage. Anything less than that falls into the category of "feature" or "sinkhole". A "rumored cave" is one that's been reported but cavers haven't verified the existence. I have on a few occasions looked at the list of rumored caves and realized that I've been there and it's real. Maybe a future topic from the files of the TSS can be rumored caves.



Hopefully the question you are asking yourself is, "Where does all this data come from?" It comes from cavers just like you and me. The TSS takes data from anyone, anywhere at anytime. If you don't want to share with everyone or the landowner doesn't want to be contacted by anyone other than yourself, we can flag the record "proprietary" and list you as the contact. The data will not leave the TSS database without your permission. The record is also flagged as to who provided the data and when. You can go

**Continued on page 39**

### County Cave Count

Armstrong . . . . 5	Gillespie . . . . 12	Mills . . . . . 1
Atascosa . . . . 1	Hall . . . . . 1	Mitchell . . . . 3
Bandera . . . . 47	Hamilton . . . . 2	Morris . . . . . 2
Bell . . . . . 27	Hardeman . . . 10	Palo Pinto . . . 5
Bexar . . . . . 492	Hays . . . . . 75	Pecos . . . . . 14
Blanco . . . . . 20	Hidalgo . . . . 1	Presidio . . . . 6
Bosque . . . . . 1	Hill . . . . . 3	Randall . . . . . 25
Brewster . . . . 76	Howard . . . . . 1	Real . . . . . 38
Briscoe . . . . . 2	Hudspeth . . . 4	Reeves . . . . . 1
Brooks . . . . . 1	Irion . . . . . 4	San Patricio . . 1
Burnet . . . . . 72	Jack . . . . . 1	San Saba . . . 223
Cameron . . . . 1	Jeff Davis . . . 15	Schleicher . . . 8
Cherokee . . . . 1	Kendall . . . . 108	Scurry . . . . . 2
Childress . . . 15	"Kendall, Bexar,	Shelby . . . . . 1
Coke . . . . . 5	Comal" . . . . . 1	Starr . . . . . 2
Coleman . . . . 1	Kerr . . . . . 56	Stonewall . . . . 6
Collingsworth . 20	Kimble . . . . . 83	Sutton . . . . . 45
Comal . . . . . 162	King . . . . . 5	Terrell . . . . . 15
Comanche . . . . 1	Kinney . . . . . 35	Tom Green . . . 4
Coryell . . . . . 17	Lampasas . . . 39	Travis . . . . . 391
Cottle . . . . . 16	Llano . . . . . 41	Travis or
Crane . . . . . 2	Lubbock . . . . 5	Williamson? . . 1
Crockett . . . . 14	Mason . . . . . 27	Uvalde . . . . . 75
Culberson . . . 270	McCulloch . . . 13	Val Verde . . . 122
Denton . . . . . 1	McLennan . . . 2	Ward . . . . . 1
Ector . . . . . 1	Medina . . . . . 48	Wheeler . . . . . 3
Edwards . . . . 88	Medina? . . . . 1	Williamson . . 460
El Paso . . . . . 40	Menard . . . . . 11	Total . . . . . 3458

# TSS Update: 2001-2002

by George Veni

The past two years have been busy and productive for the Texas Speleological Survey (TSS), the organization that databases Texas cave information. Our most visible accomplishments have been the publication of two bulletins: The Caves of the Lampasas Cut Plains and The Caves of Burnet County. Both bulletins are long-needed reports on important and formerly neglected Texas karst areas. Both include a rich array of maps, including all versions of Longhorn Caverns that reflect the history of exploration for that lengthy cave. We hope these reports spur new exploration in these interesting areas.

As proud as we are of these bulletins, our less visible accomplishments are at least as significant and some surpass it. For example, during these two years over 550 caves and karst features were added to the TSS database, raising the total to more than 5,300! Some of this was gathered by scouring existing reports for information and by cavers reporting new caves, but much was provided by people and organizations that requested data from TSS and followed up by giving TSS new information they generated. Other important work included scrutinizing and updating large sections of the hardcopy portion of the database as we worked on a wide variety of upcoming publications: regional reports, an historical treatise, scientific studies, and even a coloring book for kids.

In 2002, the TSS Board of Directors was very pleased that Ron Ralph accepted our invitation to join us. Ron has worked hard to provide regular and productive work sessions at the TSS office. Now that these sessions are back on track, we will focus on drawing in more cavers to make the sessions more productive. This also gets more cavers the information they need, which returns more information to TSS to support future caving. The work sessions have covered many tasks, including the usual filing of materials and better organizing the files, but also expanding the office into two other rooms, helping the Texas Speleological Association (TSA) archive its files in one of the rooms, expanding our computer network with new hardware and software, and expanding our library.

For nearly 40 years, James Reddell has combed through thousands of books, reports, and newsletters to create TEXBIB, a keyword accessible bibliographic database for TSS. Last year, he turned over the reins of that never-ending project to Jerry Atkinson, who along with David McKenzie, are working to make it widely accessible via the TSS web site. TEXBIB currently contains more than 10,000 entries.

Several people have been involved with tracking down old photos of Texas caves and caving and identifying the caves and cavers shown in the hundred of photos we have already archived. Three things are driving this effort. First, it is TSS's function as a database. Second, Carl Kunath is producing the upcoming TSS book, 50 Years of Texas Caving, and can put the material to immediate and good use. Finally, if you do the quick math from the title of Carl's book with the age at which most people actively cave, it becomes sadly obvious that many old-time Texas cavers are at the age where we will be losing them and their history if we don't move fast to preserve it.

On a related theme, in late 2001 Mike Moore developed a form for cavers to indicate what they want their families to do with their caving equipment, files, books, etc. when they died. Much good information has been lost over the years. TSA, TSS, NSS, and other organizations could be specified as recipients. Sadly, the first donation of this type to TSS was the result of Mike's untimely passing. We appreciate his foresight and contributions in life and death.

The TSS could not function without the support of many people and organizations. For more information on TSS, visit our website at <http://www.txspeleologicalsurvey.org/> or contact me or any of the directors. On behalf of the TSS directors, I deeply thank the following people and organizations for their generous support in 2001 and 2002.

## **Donations of data and materials:**

Katie Arens: Windows and Office software  
Patti Barrett: Dell Pentium III-500 Mhz computer  
Bat Conservation International: computers galore, slide scanner, CD writer, and related hardware  
Christi Bennett: cave reports  
Mike Burrell: cave reports  
Beverly Chiodo: Hewlett-Packard 4P SCSI Scanner and SCSI card, 15" SVGA Monitor  
Mike Cunningham: cave reports  
Glenn Darilek: copies of rare issues of The Bexar Caver  
ESRI: Grant for ArcGIS software  
Katherine Goodbar: back issues of The Texas Caver  
Greater Houston Grotto: loan of old newsletters for compilation in upcoming publication  
Steve Gutting: rare issues of The Bexar Caver  
Denver Hopkins: loan of Speleospace newsletters for compilation in upcoming publication  
Pete Lindsley: Project Deep cave film on video  
Jim McLane: loan of Rice Speleological Society files for compilation in upcoming publication  
Kurt Menking: cave reports and locations  
Marvin Miller: Government Canyon State Natural Area, Real County, and other cave reports  
Evelynn Mitchell: cave reports  
Joe Mitchell: CD with Bexar Facts back issues, and cave locations  
Mike Moore: Balcones Grotto files, computers and hardware  
National Speleological Society: loan of old cave photographs by Bob Hudson  
Paragon Printing and Mailing, Danny Harp; six 150 Mhz to 300 Mhz computers

## **Donations of time and effort:**

Katie Arens: digitally retrieve and retype Kastning's dissertation  
Gene Bosche: work sessions and computer expertise  
Allan Cobb: work sessions  
Julia Germany: work sessions  
Terry Holsinger: web manager, work sessions, and computer expertise  
Cyndi Lee: work sessions and Hay County data organization  
Michael Moore: work sessions and Hays County data organization  
Joe Mitchell: writing Kendall County cave descriptions  
Bill Mixon: work sessions  
Ron Rutherford: work sessions and computer refit and maintenance  
Kathy Scanlon: work sessions and computer expertise  
Kate Walker: flyer  
Garry White: work sessions and IT committee

## **Party! Party! Party! Party!**

Ron Ralph

So, what is this TSS, this Texas Speleological Survey? Too good to be cavers? Too intelligent to talk with the multitudes? And where do they hangout? Certainly not at the Posse East in Austin.

If these thoughts and other contemplation of the universe have you awake at nights, not to worry, the TSS, like the government, is here to help you. Our new book "Everything you wanted to know about Texas cave files" will probably never be written so don't run to your favorite bookstores in the near future. But if you don't want to wait for the book, let me make a suggestion – come by and visit the office. Soon!

There is a scheduled open house at the Texas Speleological Survey office in Austin on Saturday, June 14th at the JJ Pickle Research Center on Burnet Road north of highway 183. For those of you who have never been there, this is your golden opportunity to look at the cave files for the state of Texas. If you know the office well, this is your opportunity to see the new set-up including the integrated computer system, new archive storage, the map room, the drafting room and yes, the new kitchen. We are working with the University of Texas to smooth the way at the gate during this Orange Alert period. You will need to RSVP so that we can get you on the list for the security guards at the east gate.

The office will open at 10:00 a.m. with tours every 15 minutes. Snacks and drinks will be available in our spacious lounge throughout the day. Lunch will be catered by Koffee Break Kavers and should include burned meat, Green Caves and Ham, Devilsfood Sinkhole Cake and other exotic goodies. We are work-

ing to provide a food sponsor but come with a few coins to contribute to the Koffee Kan.

Several tasks will be available for you to work on and our featured attraction will be the electronic clean-up of oversized cave maps scanned for us by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Several experienced nerds will be available to help you through the mapping software. Other TSS gurus will be leading crews attempting to organize existing and recent data generated by the various County surveys. We will keep working till the last dog is hung or dark, whichever comes first. Plan now to attend and mark your cave calendars.

The TSS "office" is in building 18-A at the Pickle Research Center (PRC) in north Austin. PRC is between 183 and Braker, and between Mopac and Burnet. If coming from the north or south on Mopac, take the Braker exit, continue east to Burnet Road, turn south (right) and enter the east gate on your right.

If coming west on Research (183), take the Burnet Road exit, then north on Burnet past the Jack in the Box to the east entrance on the left. A detailed map to PRC can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/maps/prc/> On blow-up map 2 ("NW Area"), building 18-A is the one just above the "ra" in "Granberry". From the gate, continue west and follow the dang signs. Park to the south in the PETEX lot across the street (Read Granberry Trail) from building 18-A.

If you have questions, please contact me ([ronralph@texas.net](mailto:ronralph@texas.net)) or Jim Kennedy ([jkennedy@batcon.org](mailto:jkennedy@batcon.org)) off line. You can also call the office at (512) 475-8802 (no one is ever there), Jim Kennedy at (512) 663-2287 or me at (512) 916-9190.

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## TCMA Still Looking for Caves to Purchase

by Linda Palit  
President, Texas Cave Management Association

Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) has been busy since the mid-1980s managing, acquiring and protecting Texas caves, and educating Texans about the importance of caves and karst landscapes. In recent years, our work has often focused around caves with endangered species, especially in the San Antonio-Austin area, often as part of emergency efforts to protect those significant rare caves, and because opportunities presented themselves. This is important, but acquiring caves for caving is also important, though seemingly more difficult. We need your help in finding and acquiring caves suitable for preservation for general caver use, and worthy of saving for the present and future cavers.

### Buying New Caves

TCMA has a committee that is vigorously looking for caves to buy. The committee is focusing on major caves that would be good for caving. Too many caving caves have been lost to concrete and locked gates or fill and urbanization. The more caves that TCMA can acquire, the more caves TCMA can protect and keep open to cavers. I'd love to tell you that we are about to close deals on several fantastic caves but will have to save that for another day. Land in and near counties along the Austin-San Antonio corridor has become obscenely expensive. Land prices further west are much cheaper but the caves often occur on huge properties that won't be divided for sale. The net result is the same as the cost is too high. But there have to be caves out there which are suitable! Think! Send us your ideas.

We're checking on possibilities around the state and are hopeful. If you hear of any cave that might be available, let us know and we'll put our committee to work on it. While funding is often an issue, don't dismiss a cave if the cost seems high. TCMA is a non-profit corporation and some owners may be willing to donate their caves for the tax break. Others might grant TCMA a conservation easement that gives them similar benefits. We might raise money to buy the property and sell areas that are not suitable for our mission. Options exist. Let us know.

Of course we still care about caves in urban areas and with endangered species. We recently acquired some property near San Antonio, seized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency as part of the assets of a big drug bust. It has one cave with endangered species plus a small cave that might go with some digging. We're also in contact with other land conservancies and trusts so we can help each other in protecting these caves. Where TCMA doesn't own the caves, we have some input to assure they're properly managed.

### Managing Old Caves

Speaking of management, TCMA is still actively managing several caves. Many cavers have been wondering about the status of O-9 Well since Joe Ivy died there in September 2000. Joe's

accident did not shut down the cave, but the management agreement was due for review and renewal at that time. A careful re-evaluation of our management contract was undertaken by both sides, but TCMA helped UT realize that continued exploration of O-9 Well and other UT caves is more beneficial than closing the caves. We're close to finalizing the new contract with them and hope to announce renewed access to O-9 Well soon.

### What About Robber Baron Cave?

Soon after the Twin Towers collapsed in New York City, we realized that "The Bunker", the 5-ton behemoth gate building over the entrance of Robber Baron Cave was in danger of collapsing. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) gave TCMA a grant to modify The Bunker and make it friendlier to the endangered species inside. The plan also included improving air flow for cavers and improvements on the surface to educate the surrounding urban neighborhood.

Bexar Grotto's Robber Baron Committee, which manages the cave for TCMA, spent many meetings and months looking at options to stabilize and repair the structure. Finally, we decided to restore the entrance to something approaching what it was originally before the sinkhole became a trash dump. We will get rid of The Bunker and the fill it's sitting on. The floor of the sinkhole is about a 5-m-thick deposit of construction debris and other junk dumped in there over the years. The plan is to remove The Bunker and all artificial fill, and restore the entrance to its natural stoop-walk to walk-in configuration. That will be great for the critters and should do wonders at improving the air quality for caving.

We've already started work, which will continue on the first weekend of each month until finished. If you want to help or for more details, contact Project Manager Evelyn Mitchell at: joe-evelynn@satx.rr.com. We'll be cutting a ramp into the side of sinkhole and using a bobcat to go inside and dig out the fill. If you have access to bobcats, dump trucks, or other equipment we might be able to use for free or cheap, let Evelyn know. The job is much

Linda Palit, Julia Germany, and Jim Kennedy answer Internet chat room questions in Longhorn Caverns between being interviewed for the live TPWD webcast. Photo by George Veni.



larger than the original USFWS grant covered so we're looking for help to stay within a very tight budget.

### Public Education

While TCMA's name says "cave management", we really don't manage caves, but people. And the more we can educate people on the importance of caves and their vulnerability to damage, the less people management we will have need to do.

TCMA has reached out to the public in many ways. First, our members have been tremendous at teaching people one-on-one about caves and karst. We've also worked on several group public events. The open house at the Karst Preserve at the Village of Western Oaks in Austin attracted hundreds of people. It was great to hear many of them say, as they walked away, that they didn't realize how important caves were until visiting the preserve.

We have been invited to other organizations' events as well. For example, in September 2002, USFWS held a public hearing in San Antonio about endangered cave species. While they fielded the biology and hot-button political questions, TCMA was given a table to discuss cave management in general, and maybe even pick-up a few leads!

In January 2003, TCMA was a key team member of a live Internet webcast from Longhorn Cavern, also broadcast on cable television, which the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) organized and targeted for middle and high school kids. While it had a Texas base, over 20,000 people from around the world logged on, watched, and e-mailed in questions. The webcast is saved and will soon be available for download at: "<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/expltx/eft>"

### Agency Partnerships

TPWD is one of several agencies that TCMA is partnering with to better protect and manage caves and to educate the public. For example, TCMA is serving on TPWD's Cave Management Working Group to help them establish sound strategies for managing their roughly 400 caves. While a few caves may be highly sensitive and require strict limits on visitation, TPWD and TCMA agree that the majority of the caves should be visited in order to better understand them, and that TPWD properties should continue to be searched for more caves.

One productive partnership we've enjoyed is with The Natural Conservancy. They have been looking for land to buy to protect the Edwards Aquifer. Since caves are important features of the aquifer, they have arranged for TCMA to go cave hunting on properties they are considering purchasing. So far we have had two trips to beautiful properties we otherwise wouldn't have a prayer of visiting, where we found one cave and several leads.

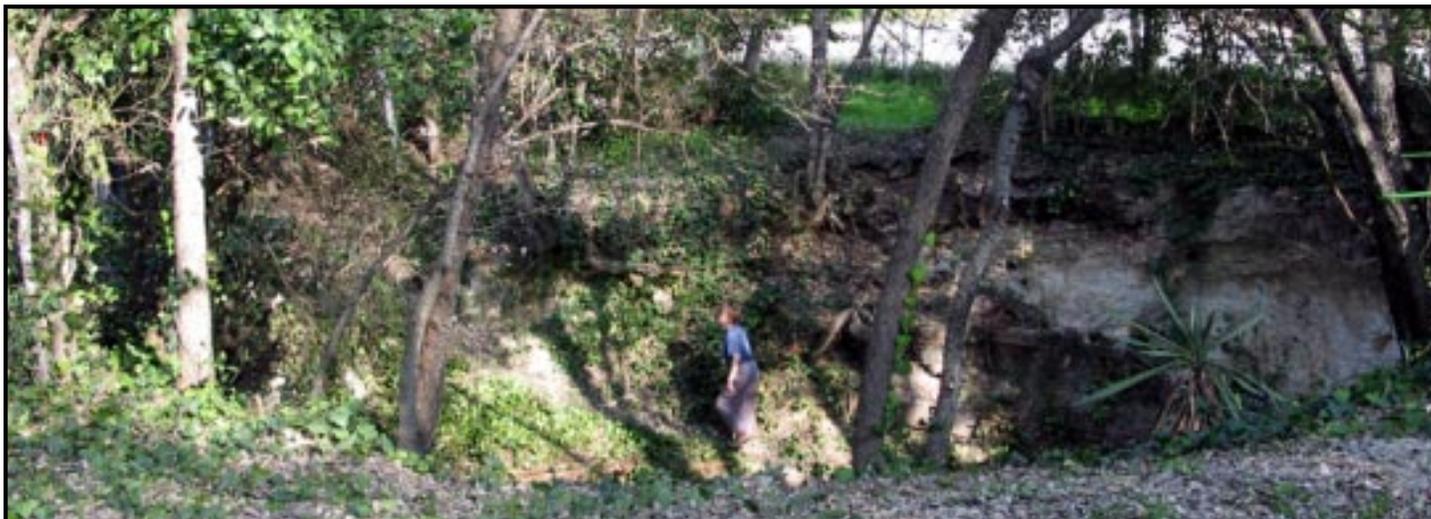
Since many caves in the Austin and San Antonio areas contain endangered species, the USFWS has invited TCMA to serve on the recovery team for the species. The purpose of the team is to determine the means by which the species can be protected and irrecovered to the point where they might be downlisted or delisted. USFWS and other agencies involved in this process recognize TCMA's expertise and are calling on us to help get the job done well and right. Similarly, Austin and San Antonio are both purchasing environmental critical land, some of which includes caves, and more and more TCMA is invited by the cities and other agencies to give its input. While meetings can be boring, they are also opening doors for cave management and acquisition opportunities that we wouldn't otherwise have.

### Help!

Opportunities keep opening, but manpower is not always adequate. TCMA has a freight-train of opportunities rapidly approaching. The problem is that we can only do a small portion of what that train will offer with the people currently active in TCMA. When those opportunities come, most will come fast and need fast action. We'll need people ready to jump on them. I hope you're interested and willing to help - even a little help will make a difference. There are many ways to help: chasing leads on caves for possible purchase, working with landowners, attending meetings, ridge-walking, loaning equipment, manual labor, ideas, and of course, caving. If you want to help or want more information, contact me: Linda Palit, 4019 Ramsgate, San Antonio, Texas 78230, 210-699-1388, [lkpalit@swbell.net](mailto:lkpalit@swbell.net).

Cleared of dead and non-native trees, the entrance sink of Robber Baron Cave is finally visible after the first entrance restoration project. Linda Palit in the sink-hole for scale.

Photo by George Veni.



## **Stan Moerbe**

Stan Moerbe of Uvalde, long time caver from Texas A&M and Southwest Texas University, was killed December 11, 2002, in a farm accident. In my 35 years of caving, I have known no other caver that was a decent person as was Stan. Always with a positive attitude, I never heard him speak harsh words toward another caver. His high moral and physical strength will be missed. Once, when we reached Gruta de Precipicio, 3000 vertical feet above the truck, we learned we did not have the rope for the first drop. He returned to the truck for the rope with no complaints. I know of no other caver that could have done that. He was a team player and always greatly advanced our efforts. Together with his wife, Sandi Luker Moerbe, they raised two fine caver children, Christi and Zack. Zack will be joining the Air Force and Christi will continue her university education. Sandi, always in our hearts, has asked to continue to be included in our caving plans. Stan will be missed and his family will continue caving with help from the caving family.

--Mike Walsh.

## **STAN MOERBE GOODBYE MY FRIEND**

by Dale L. Pate

I first met Stan when I was 13. We were both starting the 9th grade at Bishop High School in Nueces County, Texas. We both came from smaller jr. high schools and had several classes together. Through high school we became good friends and the summer after we graduated we took our first caving trips with Mark Whitaker, Rick Coughran, and Dwain Thiele forming the small and informal Bishop Spelological Society (BSS). Our first caving trips were to some crevice caves in Garner State Park in Uvalde County and to Midnight Cave in Edwards County. Mark had gone on a couple of caving trips with the Texas A&I Grotto and promptly introduced us to caving. For a couple of kids who grew up in

flat, dirt farmland, we were drawn to the rocks and limestone of the Texas Hill Country and the caves found there.

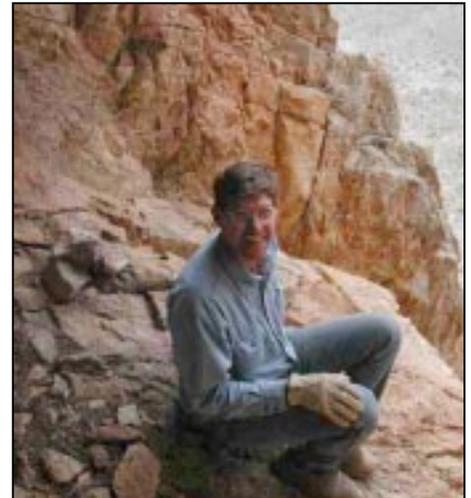
Stan started college at Texas A&M while I went to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. I immediately sought out the caving club at SWT (the Southwest Texas Grotto). A&M at that time did not have one. That was okay though because it meant Stan went caving with us quite a bit. At that time a number of SWTG members were very active especially in Mexico. Cavers like Mike Walsh, Blake Harrison, Logan McNatt, Joe Sumner, Charlie Yates, Keith Heuss and a host of others taught us about caves and took us caving. They accepted us into the caving community and in the process introduced us to some of the world-class caves of Mexico. Caving also brought Stan and Sandi Luker together. Sandi had joined the SWTG at the same time I did.

There are so many memories I have of Stan. He always had a smile or a laugh, he was stronger than an ox, and he was a good friend. In high school before we had caves, we both were into sports. Stan played football and I played basketball. Somewhere in there we both took up golf and had good fun laughing at each other. And then we found the caves. We also found that getting from home to the caves and back to home were at least half the fun. Being poor college students and not having access to the

plethora of gear available today, we made our own rappel racks and sewed our own seat slings and chest harness' from seat belt webbing. The inch-worm became our favorite ascending system. Somehow, with all the caving, we graduated from college. And after that, two of the greatest people you would ever want to meet (Stan & Sandi) tied the knot.

There were some funny times, such as when we were hiking in the Ahuacatlan area in Mexico jumping from rock to rock in a flowing stream when Stan slipped and fell on his

**Continued on page 39**



Stan at Whirley Wind Cave in Big Bend. December 2001.  
by Steve Fleming

left to right: Stan Moerbe, Sandi Moerbe (his wife), Bob Liebman, and my son Chris Heuss. Picture was taken in Big Bend in December 2001 on the trail head of Pine Canyon.  
by Keith Heuss



## **Volunteering at show caves.**

Mike Burrell

Cavers have a love/hate relationship with show caves. We love them because they tend to be the biggest, prettiest caves and are lighted in a way that brings out the beauty of the formations. We hate them because we are restricted to a very limited part of the cave and have to listen to (often-ignorant) tour guides talking about stuff we know more about. We are thrown in with tourists who ask stupid questions and bring their rude, loud and destructive children with them. We can see the damage caused by decades of abuse and thousands of grubby hands groping fragile formations. If you live near a show cave you may want to help by volunteering your time. Here are a few guidelines for building positive relations between cavers and show caves.

1. Build trust: Show cave owners and managers are paranoid. Many if not all of them have had bad experiences with cavers in the past. Spend time getting to know them. Most of them are fine people. Many of them are cavers who have found a way to make money doing what they love. They tend to be fiercely over-protective of the cave they are in charge of. Don't expect to be welcomed into their inner circle of restoration people and explorers until you have proven yourself trustworthy.

2. Be humble: Nothing will get you on the bad side of a cave owner faster than an arrogant attitude. You may have a Ph.D. in speleology. You may have done restoration in Carlsbad Caverns. Don't criticize what you see when you are trying to help. These people know what needs to be done. Shut up and listen! A wise man once said; "strive to understand rather than to be understood". You may see things that look really bad and need to be fixed but you don't know the big picture. You may be looking at a work in progress or something that is a lower priority than something that you haven't seen yet. Let the owner or manager set the priorities, unless of course they don't have a clue and give you permission to figure it out. If that happens make sure you make things better not worse.

3. Do no harm: This could be a whole separate workshop. Restoration is a delicate matter. Keep in mind that a show cave needs to be kept as "pretty" as possible. In show caves you might find yourself doing heavy construction and earth moving. Take it easy. Try not to break anything. If you do break a formation make sure you have all the pieces and leave them near the stump where they go. Go get someone in charge and show them what happened. They will be angry but will get over it if you attempt to fix it. Whatever you do don't try to hide the fact that you broke something. Cave owners will respect you much more if you own up to your mistakes. It's best to not break it in the first place. Sometimes while working in show caves you will run across pieces of broken formation. These could be there from the original trail building or from past vandalism. Leave these as close to where you find them as you can. Point them out to the management and let them decide what to do with the broken stuff. Don't fill up a bucket with broken formations and take them to the office! Some one probably spent a long time locating the stumps of those formations and

carefully placed the broken formations near the stump for a future repair project. If you find bones do the same leave them where you find them. If they are in the way of what you are doing you may have to stop that project until the paleontologists can evaluate the situation.

Take note of where lights are pointed if you are going to have to move them and make sure that you point them at the same spot when you put them back. Be careful with lights and wiring. You could shock yourself or you could knock out the light to half of the cave.

Stay out of the way of tours. Don't stack stuff on the trail. If the tour guide asks you to explain what you're doing to a tour do your best to keep it simple and brief. Answer even the stupidest questions with a straight face and don't argue with people.

4. Don't wander off: It's real tempting to want to see what's down that side passage. Don't do it! Ask the manager or owner what's in that lead they might just take you there, if they like you. Don't ask to go caving. Wait until they invite you. Many show caves have a flat "no off trail" policy. Respect that and one day the owner may take you to that really cool room in the off trail part of the cave. Again, be patient and let them know they can trust you.

5. Respect the business: Show caves are businesses. People pay to see them. Dealing with the public is a very tricky thing. Avoid doing anything that will turn potential customers away. If you're there as a volunteer try to stay out of the way of the flow of visitors coming through to see the cave. You will probably get very dirty working in the cave. Don't hang out in the visitor's center or gift shop all covered with mud. Don't mess up the bathrooms. Don't stack your muddy stuff in public places and don't strip off and change your clothes in the parking lot. Before you start working in the cave ask the management where you can clean up and change clothes when you're done for the day.

Please don't bring people with you who are not there to work. You might think digging in the mud all day is really cool but your 6-year-old won't. Don't expect the staff to let your kids go into the cave with you and don't expect them to baby sit while you're in the cave. Don't bring your dog unless you and the owners of the cave agree that your dog is OK. Again you're dealing with the public. Some kids see a dog and immediately start abusing it and get bitten. Some people are extremely fearful of dogs and will leave if they see one. Again, avoid doing anything that will turn potential customers away.

Don't ask for discounts or free stuff. You're volunteering because you want to help not to get free stuff. The owner may give you some free stuff or discounts because he appreciates your good work but you are not entitled to free stuff just because you worked hard.

If there is going to be a post work party don't start drinking until all the customers are gone.

Don't hover around the office while the staff is trying to close the business, count money etc. If money goes missing you may become suspect. Just get out of the way and let them finish up their day.

down in history as the discoverer of one of the caves in Texas.

I'm making a big push to get location data for all the records on the database. Cavers are people of fancy, they work in an area for a while until they get interested in something else or lose access to a property. Twenty years later, they regain interest or access and rediscover caves. The question in a case like that is whether a cave is a new discovery or a rediscovery. If the location is maintained, that question can be easily answered; new or rediscovery. The advent of the modern hand-held GPS makes gathering location data easy. We take location data in most any format but need to know the datum it is being reported in. The datum is the mathematical model of the earth used on maps for location coordinates. The earth isn't perfectly round so the datum corrects for that imperfection.

A point needs to be made that the TSS doesn't just take in data,

it also shares with cavers. There are limits to the amount of data that can be given out without a formal data request but if you are going somewhere you haven't been before and want to know what to expect, drop me an e-mail before you go and I'll see what I can find. We expect you to return the favor if you find anything on your trip. Let us know what you found and where you found it. Cavers have never been denied information when they asked for it unless they asked for too much at one time. Even then, there are formal procedures for large amounts of data. Most requests can be handled informally and aren't a problem.

Other items of interest to the TSS are your survey books, once you've finished the map; Walls survey files and of course a copy of the finished map itself. Trip reports and cave descriptions are highly desirable. The credit always remains with the originator. Anything you might be willing to help us out with will be greatly appreciated.

back. We had large framed hiking packs on (Stan's was very heavy) so he wasn't hurt, but he had fallen in water just deep enough to cover his pack. His arms and legs went to thrashing and splashing to no avail. He was like a turtle on his back. After we were able to stop laughing, we pulled Stan out of the water. He shook the water off, had a good laugh at himself and onward we went. He was extremely useful at times too such as when on a caving trip to Sotano de Japonés in the El Abra in Mexico, my legs were a little short for stepping across a deep pit. No problem, Stan just grabbed me and deposited me on the other side. Then there was the trip to the Langtry area in West Texas where everywhere

we went we found rattlesnakes, usually face to face in a crawlway. It's a wonder we kept caving after that.

Time went by and we went our separate ways as friends often do, seeing each other very occasionally. Meanwhile Stan and Sandi had two kids, Christi and Zack. Over Thanksgiving 2002, only a few weeks before Stan's accident, my wife Paula Bauer and I were fortunate to have had the whole family over for dinner. You can never know these types of things, but it would be the last time I would see Stan. He was a good friend and my life has been enriched from that friendship. I, and many others, will miss him terribly.

## Caves of the Golondrinas Area.

Peter Sprouse and Jerry Fant.

Association for Mexican Cave Studies, Austin, Texas; 2002. 8.5 by 11 inches, 174 pages. AMCS Bulletin 10. Softbound \$15, hardbound \$25, plus \$3 postage from AMCS, PO Box 7672, Austin, Texas 78713 or [www.amcs-pubs.org](http://www.amcs-pubs.org).

This reviewer has no doubt that Caves of the Golondrinas Area will be regarded as a classic caving publication. AMCS Bulletin 10, released in December 2002, very thoroughly covers a well defined area of caves in the proximity of Sotano de las Golondrinas, "the most spectacular and renowned pit in the world." Golondrinas was discovered by cavers in 1967, and since then has been the first Mexican cave destination by many hundreds of cavers from around the world. The challenge it presented cavers led to the development of the rappel rack, and modern caving ropes. An excellent history of Golondrinas is a highlight of this booklet. Color cover photographs make this publication appealing from the first look. The front cover presents the oft shown entrance drop of Golondrinas from the bottom, with two people climbing the same rope in tandem, and a summer shaft of light

reaching the bottom. The back photo may cause some controversy. A BASE jumper is looking up at the camera as he smiles and falls freefall backward into the void. Beginning in 1995, BASE jumping Golondrinas has been on television, and the resulting attention given to this cave has brought strange notions rarely entering caving, such as mysterious, invisible "rod" creatures, UFOs, and so on. Other highlights of AMCS Bulletin 10 include excellent geology and biology descriptions, an alphabetical index to 70 caves in the area, and an impressive artistic map of Sotano de las Golondrinas drawn by Austin's Peter Sprouse at his best. And there's more... Pages 31 - 72 are a chapter entitled Other Caves in the Area, consisting of 74 caves, descriptions of them, many maps, and location coordinates. There's also a comprehensive bibliography. In summary, Caves of the Golondrinas Area is one of, if not THE, best AMCS publication to date, and that's saying a lot when comparing it to many publications which have consistently been excellent for nearly 40 years. All cavers who have caved in Mexico, think they ever will, or like owning impressive caving publications, are going to want a copy. Bill Steele



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