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Texas Caver
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Front Cover, top: Norm Robinson rappels into Punkin Cave, Feb. 1963.

Front Cover, bottom: Bat flight from Punkin cave, 1963. Both Pete Lindsley photos.

Back Cover: Helicopter lowers litter in Matacanes canyon, Mexico, Rob Myers photo.

Caving Events

Second Saturday of every month Hilltop Project (Capitan, NM): Ridge walking and digging in windy blowholes on USFS and BLM lands, about 5 miles south of Fort Stanton Cave, NM. Meet for Cave Diggers Breakfast on Saturday between 7:30 to 8 a.m. at the Smokey Bear Restaurant in Capitan. Contacts: Lee Skinner (505) 293-5723 skinner@thuntek.net or Dick Venters (505)437-3712 cavedigger@msn.com

Oct 15-17 Texas Cavers' Reunion (Flat Creek Ranch): The annual get-together/party returns to this popular Blanco County site. Speleo-olympics and vendors, swimming, hot tubs, live music, food and more will be available. A great chance to meet and greet old and new friends, and to fill your caving calendar for the next year. TCMA will hold their business meeting on Sunday morning at 9 a.m.; the TSA Business meeting will be held following, at approximately 10 a.m. Contact: Allan Cobb ac@kihikihi.com www.oztotl.com/tcr

Oct 30-31 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. Contacts: Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Oct 30-31 GypKaP (Carlsbad, NM): Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of southern New Mexico. Contact: Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 blandevoid@comcast.net

Nov 06-07 Powell's Cave (Powell's Ranch, Menard, TX): Come see the second longest cave in Texas! Cavers of all skill and experience levels welcome. A cave sketching workshop co-sponsored by the Texas Speleological Survey and the Texas Speleological Association will take place in Powell's Cave this weekend. Contacts: Jerry Atkinson (281) 360-2244 JerryAtkin@aol.com Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com

Nov 12-14 Colorado Bend State Park Project (Bend): Second weekend of the month, from October to May. This is a terrific project for beginning cavers. Contacts: Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com or Dale Barnard Barnarddale@yahoo.com

Nov 20-21 Government Canyon State Natural Area Karst Survey (San Antonio): This long-running project has lots of opportunities for both beginning and advanced cavers. Ridge-walking, digging, surveying and camping are available. Contact: Marvin Miller (830) 885-5631 mlmiller@gvtc.com

Nov 21-27 Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon (Mexico): Survey and mapping project over Thanksgiving week near Aquismón. Contact: Jerry Fant jerryfant@worldnet.att.net

Nov 27-28 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM)

Nov 27-28 GypKaP (Carlsbad, NM)

Dec 04 Winter Technical Regional, Southwest Region NSS (New Mexico): Sandia Grotto hosting (tentative).

Dec 11-12 Colorado Bend State Park Project

Dec 11 Government Canyon State Natural Area Karst Survey (San Antonio) Saturday only this month.

Feb 02-06, 2005 7th Mexican Congress of Speleology & 5th Congress of FEALC (The Speleological Federation of Latin American and the Caribbean) (Monterrey, Nuevo León, México): "Legislation and Protection of the Subterranean Environment." Cost: US\$50 until October 1, 2004, US\$100 later. Contact: Rodolfo Gonzalez rogonzalez@cydsa.com



photo by Mark Minton

Photo Caption Contest

A famous former Texas caver was spotted at the fund-raising auction during the Indiana Cave Capers this year. Send in your humorous photo caption and the winner will receive a \$20 gift certificate to Gonzo Guano Gear. Send the captions to the editor at the contact info listed on page 2 of this publication. Winners will be announced in the next issue.

Deep Cave and Punkin Cave Purchased!

By Linda Palit and Geary Schindel

The Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) purchased Deep Cave and Punkin Cave, two classic Texas caves, on Friday, September 10, 2004. The property, which has been named the Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve, covers 224.845 acres of rolling land near Carta Valley, Edwards County, Texas.

What does this mean to Texas cavers? Within the next year we believe that any Texas caver that desires to visit the preserve will have the opportunity to do so, especially if you are willing to donate some labor while you are there. Initial trips will be work trips with the attached privilege of visiting the caves. After the initial work on the preserve, there will be ongoing survey trips, training trips, photography trips, and trips for caving. Our intent is to manage the cave and preserve to protect the resources, and to allow cavers to use the caves.

History

In the fall of 2002, the Texas Cave Management Association's Board of Directors created a Cave Acquisition Committee (CAC) to pursue the purchase of caves for Texas cavers. While the TCMA owns a number of caves in Texas, many of these have limited access because of endangered species issues or safety considerations.

The CAC worked for a number of months trying to find and evaluate available properties containing caves. In some cases, the caves were located on large tracts that were beyond the financial means of the TCMA, in other cases, the caves were just not significant enough to warrant the asking price.

In 2003, Jerry Atkinson brought the Deep and Punkin cave tract to the CAC's attention. These caves were the site of numerous trips in the early history of Texas caving including the "Operation Deep" expedition in 1965. However, over the last 20 years, there has been limited access to the caves as the original ranch was subdivided and ownership changed. This area of Carta Valley is also noted for a number of other fine caves and is the focus of a Texas Speleological Survey publication.

The CAC arranged a visit to the property and were excited about the prospect. The property contained not one, but two fine caves, was situated on a parcel of land that was in the price range of the TCMA, and was in a well known caving area. In addition to the caves, the tract also contained a hunting cabin that could be used (with a little work) as a field station/bunk house. Also, a nice cover of cedar, oak, pine and grasses were observed on the property. A comparison of the present conditions of the property to pictures from the 1965 Operation Deep Expedition showed the property to have made good progress in recovering from extensive overgrazing.

Negotiations

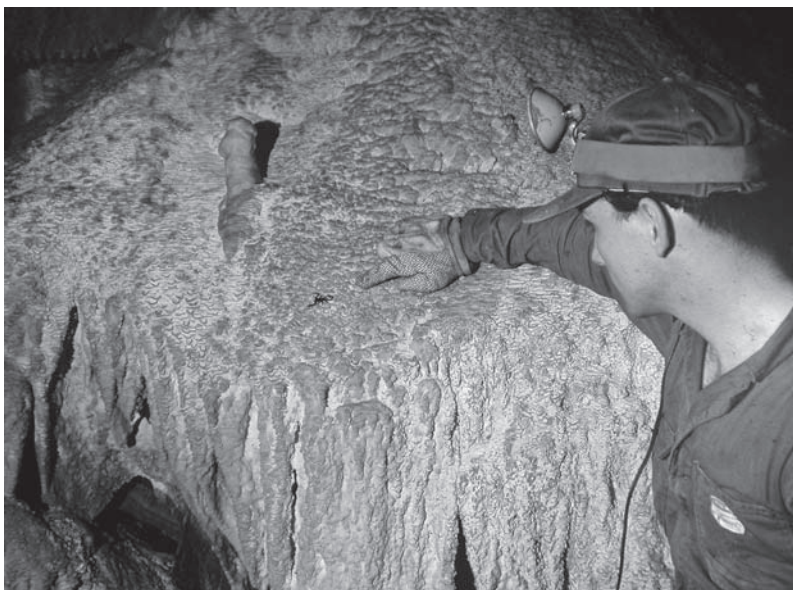
The purchase of the Deep and Punkin cave property took more than a year and involved a number of offers and counter-offers with the owners of the property. Negotiations were difficult because the property owner would not allow access into the caves to evaluate the condition of the caves or to make sure that they were worth the purchase price. However, a number of "old time" Texas cavers came forward and vouched for the quality of the caves. In addition to the negotiations, the purchase required a survey of the property (performed by CDS Murrey Engineering and Surveying at very favorable rates), title search, environmental survey, inspection of the hunting cabin and road access, and completion of various loan applications.

The negotiated purchase price of the property was \$128,900. The TCMA was able to secure a 15-year commercial loan at favorable rates, thanks to the sizable down payment made possible by successful fund raising at the TSA Spring Convention. However, a goal of the TCMA is to pay the property off within 5 years, thereby saving money for purchasing other properties. We made sure that there was no penalty for early payment of the loan principal. Hopefully, this will be the beginning of the acquisition of many Texas cave resources for Texas cavers.

Management of the preserve

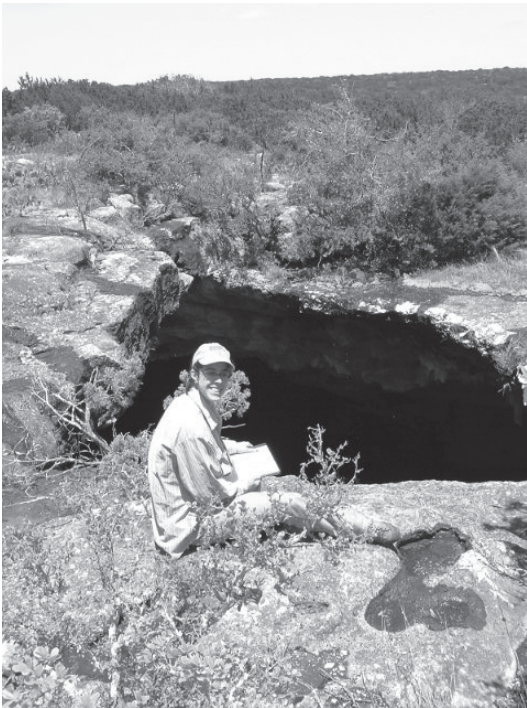
The TCMA has pledged to manage the property to allow as much access as possible by cavers with the intent to provide long term protection to the cave resource.

After the previous owners had accepted an offer by the TCMA, the Board formed a management subcommittee to develop a recommended Preserve Management Plan. The previous owner of the property would not allow access to the caves during the purchase process so the caves could only be evaluated from previous maps and photographs. The



ABOVE: Preston McMichael points out one of the many scorpions seen throughout Deep Cave, February 1963. This troglophile was later described as *Vaejovis reddelli*. RIGHT: Closeup of scorpion pictured above. Pete Lindsley photo.





*Bev Shade at the entrance to Punkin Cave.
George Veni photo.*

management subcommittee worked for a number of months developing an interim management plan. At the September 12, 2004 TCMA board meeting, the board adopted an "Interim Preserve Management Plan" (included below). Although the caves couldn't be properly evaluated before the purchase, the surface facilities could. The hunting cabin has a substandard septic system – consisting of simply a

straight pipe to a small open hole dug in the soil. Therefore, one of the highest priorities during upcoming work weekends will be to build an outhouse and composting system. The cabin is served by electricity and has a stove and oven and small kitchen facilities. In addition, there are two bunk rooms. Bunks and other furnishings will need to be built. Also, the property does not contain a water supply. The installation of a well will have to be evaluated as part of the long-range management of the preserve. Access to the property is through an easement across private lands. However, we will also need to help maintain the road to the site. The management plan had to take into account all of these conditions as the TCMA learns how to manage the property and cave resources.



*Cabin on the Deep and Punkin property.
George Veni photo.*

A number of work weekends will be scheduled at the property to work on preparing camping sites, improving the cabin, building a fire pit, building trails to the caves, and in inventorying cave resources before the preserve can be opened to full access.



*Countryside around Deep and Punkin Cave.
George Veni photo.*

Punkin Cave

Punkin Cave is a relatively large diameter pit that drops 40 feet into one of the largest rooms in Texas. The cave is estimated to house 1/2 million Mexican free-tailed bats, ranking it 14th in size in the state. This is larger than the more famous colony located at Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico. This cave has a considerable amount of passage off of the large room and may connect to Deep Cave.

Deep Cave

Deep Cave is one of the longer caves in the state. More than one mile of passage has been mapped and it is estimated that another 2 miles have been explored. Deep Cave is relatively unique in that the cave appears to have either a H₂S or CO₂ origin and includes a number of very interesting formations and features. Deep Cave is basically a horizontal cave that is approximately 300 feet deep. The characteristics of the cave are more ramiform in nature, not unlike Carlsbad Caverns and Lechuguilla Cave. The TCMA intends to have the limited mapping and resource evaluation efforts, which began and were discontinued under the previous owner, begin again.

What you can do to help support this project:

1. Become a member of the Texas Cave Management Association.
2. Make a sizeable donation to the land acquisition fund. We have received gifts that range from individual donations of several dollars to grotto donations of several hundred dollars to individual donations of one or more thousands of dollars. We have also received support from other conservation organizations. The Bexar Audubon Society recently donated \$5,000 to the effort.
3. Become a sustaining member by joining our monthly donation program through our credit card plan. We can charge your card on a monthly basis for amounts of \$10 or more.
4. Donate your time in helping to develop and maintain the property. You or your grotto can select a project to help improve the property.
5. Discuss any ideas you have related to property management, maintenance, and fundraising, to a board or committee member – get involved.
6. Come and enjoy the preserve.
7. Pass along any information you have on other caves which can be purchased by the TCMA. The only way to insure access to Texas caves is to have Texas cavers own them.

See pages 25-27 for the Punkin and Deep Management plan.

RESCUE IN MATACANES!

The word came out on CaveTex--the first EspeleoCoahuila was a rousing success, Peter Sprouse and the Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología, A.C. had done an excellent job organizing the first conference devoted to caving in Coahuila. Everyone had a great time and made new friends, and spirits were running high in anticipation that perhaps the climate for American cavers in México had improved. The misunderstanding with the Mexican government in the early spring, caused by the British cavers trapped by rising waters in Quetzalan, had dampened the enthusiasm for cave exploration in México for

many. Indeed, the postponement of the long-running Labor Day Bustamante project this year probably indirectly boosted the attendance for EspeleoCoahuila. Thus it was with high hopes and good fellowship that a group of Texas and Mexican cavers decided to take a side trip to a popular tourist destination: Matacanes. Told by three participants in the rescue of one of their comrades, each one provides a unique piece of the story. In the next issue, Kara Dittmer will share with us her experiences during the rescue. --Editor

EspeleoCoahuila Conference

By Terri Whitfield

After a full day of lectures, the EspeleoCoahuila conference at the Museo del Desierto in Saltillo ended with a hard rain. A cool, refreshing end-of-summer rain greeted us as we poured out of the lecture hall and retreated to the covered patios for dinner. The presenters of the conference had pulled off quite a feat. The beautifully orchestrated coming-out party for the fledgling Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología, A.C. (ACEAC) was unfolding nicely. Beginning with an introductory cave club video that was produced by ACEAC president Mónica Ponce, the following lectures covered a wide variety of aspects of caving in Mexico. The list of presenters included Rodolfo "Fofó" González, Presidente de La Unión Mexicana de Agrupaciones Espeleológicas (UMAE); Peter Sprouse provided an overview of the karst areas and known cave systems of Coahuila; Allan Cobb on El Sótano de Amezcua; Terry Sayther on the ever-mystifying petroglyphs of Coahuila; Jim Kennedy and Arnulfo Moreno reported on los murciélagos; Ed Goff on El Taríal; Aimee Beveridge described the exploration of El Abra, the longest cave in Coahuila; Norberto de Luna presented information on Rancho Tío Tacho; and an impromptu presentation of cave diving in the shallow caves of the Yucatan was delivered by the explorer Roberto Chavez.

The director of the museum also gave two presentations, first introducing himself as an archaeologist, a paleontologist and

a biologist and then – as a cave diver and leader of a team of explorers that had recently made a fascinating discovery. Over 400 meters into an underwater cave in Quintana Roo, Arturo González and his team of divers had discovered the skeletal remains of three humans believed to have walked into the caves prior to their flooding during the Ice Age 8,000 years ago. Carbon tests on the skeletal remains indicated that they are more than 13,000 years old, the oldest carbon date for human bones found in the Americas. This historic discovery could very well produce

the hard evidence needed for archaeologists worldwide to reconsider the widely accepted Clovis migration theory. Arturo described the painstaking care taken not to disturb the sites. Years had been spent and many dangerous dives had been undertaken to properly document the discovery. He had concluded his presentation with a reminder to all who venture into unexplored areas to be mindful of the possibility of the presence of invaluable artifacts, then showed disturbing images of the steel support beams of a newly-constructed beachfront hotel penetrating into the delicate underwater caverns below.

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny, giving us some relief from the rain. We had been on a weather watch in the days before the conference since an after-event canyoning trip through Matacanes had been planned. Fofó had run the canyon just the weekend before and updated us on its condition. The usually sparkling, clear water of the Matacanes plunge pools had become turbid, due to rain. Monterrey had been experienc-



From left: Rob Myers, Linda Palit and Terri Whitfield.
Peter Sprouse photo.

ing heavy rains all summer and the recent runoff had tainted the canyon lakes sepia-brown. There was some concern that if the rains continued we would need to call off the trip. An alternate plan was devised, to camp farther up the mountain at Potrero Redondo and to map two known caves in the area, Cebollo and Pterodactilo. But if the weather would cooperate, the canyon trip



*Becky Jones demonstrates to the conference attendees during the vertical and rescue training session.
Peter Sprouse photo.*

for Monday would still be a go.

Sunday's vertical and rescue training session was held on the grounds of Arturo's family compound, which was nestled in the hills beyond the Saltillo town square. Veteran rope and rescue trainer Becky Jones and Austin fire fighter and Special Operations Tactician D.J. Walker provided instruction to the uninitiated on the use of a frog system and various descenders. For the more

experienced, the team demonstrated pick-offs and combinations of three-to-one haul systems that required minimum amounts of gear, even incorporating the use of old-reliable prusik knots. During the rope session, Arturo invited those who were unoccupied into his home to view the flowing stream that wandered through his basement. He had constructed his house over a water source, with its access hidden by a door in the floor of an interior patio.

Raising the door revealed steps leading down to a stone and concrete chamber that housed flowing aqueducts. We ventured as far as we could, following the water up a narrow stoop-way before reaching a locked gate. For years, long before the house was built, the aqueducts provided a source of water, allowing it to be collected or diverted, then to pass on to a pond stocked with koi and then through the rest of the grounds. The house contained several other chambers hidden behind false fronts, doors masquerading as walls, with locking bars that must be moved in a particular, secret order. But the most captivating aspect of this imposing residence was the magnificent stone and tile work throughout the house. We entered into a multi-leveled, tiled open great room that had stone murals and medallions interspersed throughout and a wall of windows overlooking the city. Several rooms were capped with cupolas made of brick. The chimney and supporting walls had been built at an angle so that, once a year, the sunbeam of the summer solstice would illuminate a chosen spot.

As the vertical practice wound up, we all went to dinner at a restaurant across from Parque Alameda Zaragoza. We said goodbye to Arturo and his friend, Carmen, then left Saltillo, heading north through Monterrey and over towards the Cola de Caballo road. Since the weather had remained dry, we turned our attention toward preparations for running Matacanes canyon the next day.

The lure of Matacanes lies not only in its natural beauty and its cold plunge pools, but also in the range of experiences offered during every passage through the canyon. Whether the way on is to leap off an imposing high wall or merely over the next creek-side boulder, every jump into the rushing water demands careful consideration. Each successful maneuver over the slick rocks and around the swirling hydraulics adds to a growing collection of personal victories. Each bruise, stumble or misstep tends to fortify the will, while raising the bar for what may ultimately be achieved. Although there are considerable risks in pitting personal skills against natural environments, such excursions into the wild places present opportunities for attaining those rare, elusive and ephemeral feelings of profound satisfaction.

Under the Mexican Sun

A story of courage, determination and a helicopter ride

By Fofó González

Participants: Choy, Kara Dittmer, Fofó González, Tom Haile, Becky Jones, Vico Jones, Nicole, Memo Burelo, Rob Myers, Monica Ponce, Javier, Wes Schumacher, Bev Shade, Peter Sprouse, DJ Walker and Terri Whitfield

Kara Dittmer grasped a handhold while going under some boulders during the canyoning trip, but the force of the water hitting her back was too much and her hand slipped, she fell down a slide and hit another boulder with her legs. The flow kept her

head underwater and when she managed to get out of it, all her lips said, in a calm and controlled way, was "I broke my foot." Peter Sprouse and I were close to her, and he presumably thought as I did, that she probably had hurt it badly, but maybe, just maybe, it wasn't broken. That is, until she put her left leg out of the water and we saw the awkward angle at which the foot was dangling. Immediately we knew we were not going to be out of the river soon.

It all started several months ago, when Peter contacted the newly formed Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología, a new caving group based in Saltillo, México, and the idea of organizing a day-long caving conference related to Coahuila emerged. A

date was set for the event, Saturday August 21st, with a vertical practice planned for Sunday. But some cavers had in their minds the pictures and stories of a canyoning trip south of Monterrey, in the Sierra Madre: Matacanes. Thus, a side trip was planned to Matacanes on Monday.

The conferences went very well, we all learned a little bit more and most of the attendance was comprised of Texas cavers. By the way, it was a nice touch to have a taco stall in the museum for dinner, for a touch of "no, really, you are in México." The rope practice on Sunday was interesting too, and after having lunch at an Italian restaurant in downtown Saltillo we headed for Monterrey and then up the mountain.

This particular canyoning trip is one well developed by tour guides. The name, Matacanes, literally means "dog killer" and is rumored to be the local term for several things, from a kind of rock found along the river (travertine) to the formations found in the two caves the river goes through (showerheads). Truth is, the name has the same origin and meaning as "Manicomio Paralelo de Satanás" (Satan's Parallel Madhouse, a cave in the Purificación area), so it is just that, a name. On any given weekend during the summer about 200 people go down the waterfalls and pools, diving into the deep turquoise waters.

However, in the last few weeks Monterrey had seen an early rainy season that even forced Protección Civil to forbid access to



First rappel.
Peter Sprouse photo.

the canyon for a weekend until water cleared and returned to a normal level. Protección Civil is a government entity that oversees situations that are a threat to individuals, and has its origins in the México City earthquake of 1985. They conduct building inspections and also attend to chemical spills and leaks, for example. Also, in Nuevo León they are trained in confined space

rescue, mountain rescue and helicopter opera-

tions. Because of the high incidence of accidents in Matacanes once it started being a tourist destination, they also oversee the safety of the canyon.

By Sunday night we were all camped together. We stopped at

Adjuntas, where the canyoning trip ends, and noticed the water was in the normal range, and just a little bit murky, so we decided to do the trip.

On Monday morning we prepared our packs, crammed as many people as possible in two trucks, and started the drive up to the drop off point, where we hired two drivers to bring the trucks down to Adjuntas.



Overlook at first rappel.
Peter Sprouse photo.

Seventeen of us started to walk to the first waterfall, still an hour ahead. When we got there, you could see anticipation on everybody's face. Wetsuits were donned, harnesses put on and tightened, ropes rigged, everything double-checked...and we were all set! It had taken us longer than expected to get from wake-up to this point and the rappel also took longer than I had estimated. The trip is usually 6 to 8 hours long. At that point I was considering it might take us about 7 hours, which would put us in Adjuntas with

the last rays of light. I would feel comfortable even if we had a slight delay and were out of the jumps with the last bits of light and had to walk the last half-hour in the dark, which would turn into an hour (but after all, being cavers, darkness is our realm).

With all this in mind I pushed on, but before long the group was spread out again. We regrouped and soon after we reached the springs, a gorgeous area with ferns on the walls and water dripping all over the place. The whole river is a photographer's paradise. Almost immediately after that is "The Man Eater", where part of the river goes under some boulders, twisting and rolling it's way down—and that's the way you go too. It's like getting into a washing machine. You have to carefully chimney your way down a slope, then grab a wedged rock (cemented into place with calcite) and slowly let yourself down, then let go and slide the last few inches until your boots reach a boulder, staying for most of the time out of the flow until the very end.

There were about seven of us waiting at the bottom when it was Kara's turn. After she fell I carried her from under the boulders to a sandy place, and while DJ (who is a firefighter, EMT and

cave rescuer) was splinting her lower left leg we were considering options. There is only one way out overland in the middle stretch of this river trip, and nobody



Nicole "this is better than sex" at bottom of waterfall.
Peter Sprouse photo.

was sure if it was suitable terrain for carrying a stretcher. There are no open areas in the river for a helicopter to land and lifting her out was not a certainty. The only definite thing was that we would need help, that someone would need to bring a real stretcher and more hands to carry it.

The Call of the Man-Eater

By Rob Myers

After an uneventful night sleeping near the take-out point for Matacanes canyon, I was awakened by the wrenching metallic sound of Peter Sprouse crushing beer cans - a caver version of a wake-up call. We wanted to get an early start since we still needed to drive a short way up the mountain before starting the hike to the canyon. People slowly began emerging from their tents, poking through their gear and looking for breakfast. It hadn't rained much during the night, just a few sprinkles, which was good news. The canyon lakes should have very little runoff now. Once all were fed, we left most of the vehicles down at the take-out and loaded up the remaining trucks. With two people on the roof rack and one standing on the back bumper, Peter's truck led the way, winding up the twisting and rocky canyon roads. At Potrero Redondo we finalized the arrangements for our trucks to be shuttled back down the mountain and began the short hike to the branch of the Río Ramos that carves out the canyon. Matacanes is a spring-fed cold canyon, so I suspected that after a few hours of dunking in the plunge pools I would feel really good about having sprung for the cost of a wetsuit. When we arrived at the initial rappel, we all suited up then strapped into our seat harnesses and prepared for the descent. There is a deep pool just above the initial drop that captures the water before it spills over into the canyon. It's a true negative-edge swimming hole, the kind imitated by developers. It presents the first leap, the first test - a sort of canyon calling card. It's a jump of three meters followed immediately by a 40-meter rappel.

Monday must be a slow day at the canyon with the weekend warriors having cleared out. Although the sky was overcast and the water was a bit turbid, the thrill of descending next to a waterfall made conditions seem near perfect. The water fell in powerful, undulating waves against the rock, swelling the lake to start the flow down the canyon. Since we had the place to ourselves and a choice of rig points, we rigged two ropes just for fun. The full story about the short rope never got flushed out. Suffice it to say that it conveniently landed on a ledge which, although still some ways from the water, provided a fitting challenge for the sporting - and jump number two. Welcome to the world of the canyon. There was no turning back now.

For the next hour we traversed rock over rock, leaped from high and low ledges, and sloshed, swam, waded and floated through collecting pools hemmed in by the deep canyon walls. One moment would call for relaxation, allowing me to float on my back enjoying the scenery, but the next call would be for a leap through the air and a cold dunk into the rushing water. Then came the call of the Man-Eater.

The Man-Eater looked like fun from the top. The fast-flowing water had been channeled into a narrow passage that came rushing down like a natural water slide. Clutching rock with my hand and feeling for boulders with the tips of my boots, I braced myself against the rushing water and down-climbed into the chute. It bent sharply to the left then button-hooked back to the right, before bottoming out underneath a huge boulder. The water hit my back full force as it charged through the keyhole, smashed into the rock and turned into foam before crashing into a pool beneath the boulder. The Man-Eater turned out to be a really hairy spot - a tortured, twisting five-meter chute with an inclination that seemed to be only a few degrees short of a minus-ninety.

After I cleared the chute, I had turned to watch the others

negotiate the drop when Kara began descending. When she got spat out at the bottom end she disappeared from sight, then bobbed back to the surface in pain. She had continued to lie flat on the water, prompting someone to reach to help pull her from the current. Her face showed absolutely no doubt as she advised us all to take care because something was wrong. Kara seemed absolutely sure it was a break.

As soon as she said that, I recalled that when I broke my arm years ago I knew it instantly. It's not just a sharp jolt, or even tremendous pain; the sensation of bone cracking just runs through your whole body leaving no doubt as to what had happened. Then Kara started apologizing. Realizing what lay ahead and knowing that her pain was going to get a lot worse before it got better - she was apologizing. And all she asked was for someone to hold her hand.

Fofo:

We sent Faith Watkins (TX) and Choy (Monterrey) downstream, fast, so they could call the Protección Civil. Meanwhile, Becky Jones was preparing as the base of an emergency stretcher a rope ladder that would support Kara, and several were sent out to look for two saplings that would be the railings of the stretcher. We put her on the stretcher along with a couple of life vests for flotation and started to walk.

Carrying a stretcher is tiring and involves a certain degree of technique, and that's on horizontal, flat ground. In a river, with



*The Man-Eater
Rob Myers photo.*

water, boulders, mud, trees and plants, it is a constant juggling with feet and hands, trying to keep the stretcher relatively horizontal while not falling.

We were getting close to the second rappel, which is the entrance to the first cave. But before that there is a climb down where carrying the stretcher would've been impossible, so Kara had to get off the stretcher, clip on a rope and be lowered down. DJ set up the next rigging point, the rappel.

One of the difficulties we had was that if carrying the stretcher was slow, all the parts that are usually jumped would have to be rigged to lower Kara, and that made our progress even slower.

Rob:

I suppose that we all experienced some kind of reality shift at this point and a shuffle of priorities. We had expected to be out of the canyon by dark, and on the way home the next day. The focus of our new reality had shifted to first assessing and stabilizing Kara's condition, and then towards safely moving her over the difficult terrain and out of the canyon. We had a large group of seventeen, which proved to be a blessing. We had several presenters from the EspeleoCoahuila Conference on the trip. Whether it was by luck or by design, included in our group was the team of instructors for Sunday's vertical and rescue session - ropes trainer Becky Jones and Special Operations Tactician and Austin fire fighter, DJ Walker. Their years of training were about to pay off.

A plan was devised. We had rope, so Becky set to transforming the rope into a series of loops to make a stretcher. She needed two sticks of good wood about six feet long and at least an inch and a half in diameter. Teams were dispersed in the hunt for good saplings, while DJ set about stabilizing Kara. He removed her left boot then cut off her sock and the bottom leg part of her wetsuit. He checked for movement and capillary refill, cushioned her left leg as best he could, and duct-taped the broken leg to the good. We inventoried the group for painkillers, coming up with a collection of Ibuprophen. Meanwhile, a rigging team had been sent ahead to rig the upcoming 20-meter drop into the first cave so that Faith and Choy could be sent out of the canyon to alert the authorities of our situation and location.

Bev and Memo returned from their search with two perfect saplings, and an amazing story of at least one of them having been cut down with a rock. We stripped them of branches as best we could. With two nice poles and a skillfully knotted rope Becky was able to construct a decent stretcher. She lashed the poles to the knotted rope with webbing, and when this amazing stretcher was finished we even had webbed loops to use as handles. Wes and Vico donated their life vests as padding, an effort I thought was rather noble since it meant struggling to keep themselves afloat. We strapped Kara to the newly made stretcher and readied the group to move on.

By this time we were all anxious to proceed. Action provided more comfort than just sitting around and moving the stretcher would give us all a feeling of accomplishment and progress. It was late afternoon, and we were still in the upper part of the canyon. We had yet to traverse two caves and negotiate many swims

and jumps before we could begin the long walk to the trucks.

Since jumps were out for Kara, we needed at least two alternate-route finders scouting in front. Then the stretcher slowly began to move, seemingly in six-inch steps, four on a side and sometimes two in back. Becky had also suffered an annoying ankle injury at the Man-Eater, but was making her way ahead of the group with the assistance of a crutch made from a tree. Under the skillful direction of our special ops officer, DJ Walker, we maneuvered our patient with care. That was no small task to undertake in a difficult canyon like Matacanes. We would be carrying our patient through rushing water that cascaded down a boulder-filled canyon containing two caves. DJ taught us how to move with the stretcher - sliding it over our laps as we perched on the boulders. As we came upon deep areas the people at the rear would cycle to the front so we could pass the litter along. When someone would slip, another person would be there to grab the free handle.

The stretcher was lowered down drops, hoisted over boulders, but the worst times seemed when we had to swim with the stretcher. We had no choice but to occasionally immerse Kara into the cold, cold water.

There are innumerable details about the action of the following ten hours that I could share with you. The way carrying a litter in turbid water becomes dangerous since you can't see where you are stepping. How Matacanes seems to prefer growing poison ivy to any other plant. The frustration of taking six-inch steps when you know there is a lot of distance to cover. The cold that seeps in during the start-stop progress as we paused to rig ropes or planned how to pass Kara over boulders the size of cars. The one thing that gave me some confidence was how well people pulled together. A dire circumstance can make you feel very close to people who are in it with you, but that does not fully explain how proud I became of

our team. Immediately after the break I became worried about how capable this group of people were. Despite the hardships no one broke down, there was no snapping or sharp words exchanged. When someone slipped, another person was there to grab the litter, and everyone was focusing on the immediate tasks at hand and ignoring the hardships they couldn't change. I was extremely impressed with the selflessness of that group of people, and I now trust them immensely.

Proceeding was exhausting but was more comforting than our breaks. At least when we were moving, there was something to focus on and distract me from fatigue and cold. I knew there were two caves in the canyon, and when I reached the first one DJ was already rigging a system to lower Kara down the 18 meter drop that led to a deep pool. As Kara was descending a few of us were shivering and pulling out on the rope, trying to prevent her from bumping against the rocks. When she made it to the water, people detached the line and swam her to a small beach in the cave. We wrapped a space blanket around her and proceeded about 20 m further before we had to rig another lowering system, once again dropping her into a pool of frigid water and swimming her to the far bank.



The team carries Kara through the canyon.

Rob Myers photo.

When we made it out of the cave I realized that the sun was getting low. It was so tempting to try and push on through the night because the thought of sleeping in the canyon seemed much more unpleasant than what we had been doing. This is a dangerous situation though, as it is easier to slip or make mistakes in the dark, and as we became more fatigued the risk of an accident grew exponentially. Talking amongst ourselves we realized that our progress was extremely slow. There were several more spots where DJ would have to rig ropes for lowering Kara, as well as a whole other cave to contend with. It appeared that even if we moved throughout the night we would not make it out of the canyon until after dawn. We made the decision to stop overnight.

Fofo:

Shortly after getting out of the cave, darkness started to close in on us. We had to make a decision: keep moving during the night or bivouac and continue the next morning. The latter was picked, for safety reasons. Luckily we had wetsuits on and we carried trash bags or emergency blankets. That, and a fire (which Bev Shade tended lovingly all night long) made for a decent bivouac. Peter and Terri offered themselves as messengers, to get out of the river and give an update on our situation.

Around that time Choy and Faith were out of the river and found some guys in a buggie who offered to go fast up the mountain and call Protección Civil. That was nice on their part, the only problem was that they transmitted the information incorrectly. In the meantime, Faith found a way to make a call to Austin and contacted Chris Krejca, who in turn called Ed Goff.

Protección Civil arrived in the middle of the night, but due to the misinformation they looked for us in the wrong place. That's where they met Peter and discovered where we were. They went to the first waterfall, rested for a few hours and early in the morning started to rig the first drops, thinking we were still close to the beginning of the canyon and they would be able to bring Kara upstream.

Rob:

I worked ahead of the group, scouting for a place to camp that offered some shelter. I found an area with a slight overhang and a little level ground between the canyon walls and the river and built a fire. Kara was placed next to the fire, Becky perched on a rock ledge opposite her, and people ate and drank a bit, settling in for what was going to be a long night. Peter and Terri continued down the canyon to notify any rescue team of our location and condition.

We had not planned on staying overnight and so had limited food and even less warm clothing. As the hours drifted by people would shuffle around, occasionally sleep a bit, get up to warm themselves by the fire, and go back to searching in vain for a comfortable spot. Bev, Wes and I were awake most of the night feeding the fire and talking with Kara. I had only met her a few

days beforehand, but now feel I know her pretty well. The pain seemed to pounce on her in the early morning, around four or five o'clock. She had been lying in the same position on the litter for over ten hours and it had been about 18 hours since the Man Eater. We would try to make her more comfortable by repositioning her, propping up her legs, putting a fleece cap over her swollen toes, tucking the space-blanket under her, but there was only so much comfort one could hope for. Distraction worked better, and we talked for hours trying to pass the time. We sang drinking songs, recalled old jokes and stories, anything to pull our minds from the fear that pain and fatigue carried with it.



*Stabilizing the injury.
Peter Sprouse photo.*

Fofo:

With the first rays of light we started to get ready, checking on everybody's condition and we discovered we were all in good spirits. Kara said the worst part was spending the night, because at least when we were moving she had other things to think about (like "Oh, no, they are going to drop me!"), but when stationary all she could focus on was her pain. She was a remarkable patient, telling us what made her feel better and what did not make her feel better, and she was actually apologetic about breaking a bone and never screamed in pain.

We started to move, and managed to get Kara down another drop. Then, while rigging the following drop, Memo Burelo (Monterrey) told me "Hey, isn't that a helicopter?" I didn't hear anything, but soon after saw somebody coming to us from upstream. He was carrying a Sked so we thought that there was a good possibility he might know where the Protección Civil guys were.

It turned out he was from Protección Civil, who would've thought? We transferred Kara to the Sked and soon the helicopter found us. The guy from Protección Civil told us that the pilot was willing to haul Kara out right there, so we got her ready and the chopper went to get the winch and stretcher ready. Kara had a much needed painkiller injection and then up she went. She said the best part was the helicopter ride, she enjoyed it a lot and even managed to do some sightseeing while having two nice and handsome Mexican flight paramedics at her side.

Rob:

Near dawn Vico woke up, gathered more wood for the fire, and sat down with Kara. I drifted off to sleep and was later shaken awake to find the canyon filled with sunlight. The dawn brought clear skies, allowing the sun's warmth to bake the chill out of us and give us a bit of optimism. Without any ceremony and little discussion we picked up the litter and continued down the canyon as before, three or four people on each side with a few scouting the path ahead. As we came upon boulders or deep areas the people at the rear would cycle to the front so we could pass the litter along. The footing was unsure at best and created a hazard for everyone. Vico ended up spraining an ankle and I

considered the group lucky for not further injuring itself. Becky had a crutch made out of a tree with some webbing tied across a V at its top and with its support pushed ahead of us.

At one point the scout group called for DJ, as there was a particularly tricky obstacle that would require some creative ropework. The river cut a narrow channel between the vertical canyon wall on the right and the steeply angled rock slab on the left. It fell several meters into a pool where the current looked treacherous. There were few anchors and no way to move the litter on such a steep angle. Kara would have to be connected to a rope, and then traverse most of the slab under her own power, pulling herself along with her arms. We set her on a boulder and DJ began rigging the rope system when a new face appeared from upstream. A member of the Protección Civil named Joel had started down the canyon during the night and reached us right before we were ready to attempt the next obstacle. As we were strapping Kara into the litter that Joel carried, I felt amazement at how functional that sheet of plastic with metal grommets was, especially compared to our rickety litter. I began to relax a bit knowing that we had a real splint on Kara's leg and a more stable litter, plus some additional help. I checked on DJ and as I returned to the group a helicopter flew overhead. It was only visible for a few seconds between the canyon walls before it disappeared and we continued strapping Kara in. All of a sudden the helicopter re-appeared, trailing two men and metal litter beneath it on a long steel cable. I didn't think it was possible, but the pilot guided those men down the canyon and deposited them right next to us. As they were being set down, with wind shaking trees and throwing water in all directions, the whole event seemed surreal to me.

Before this point I had not felt like an observer as I was too caught up in the activity. But now my role was all but complete and as I watched a helicopter rescuing someone from a canyon it seemed almost unbelievable, like a story you hear about but never expect to witness. They disconnected the litter from the cable and waved the pilot off. At this point we noticed that the cable was tangled in a tree and as the helicopter lifted up we scattered. I know Becky took off downstream, as for the others I am not sure what refuge they sought, because I was too busy finding a nice tight crevice. and was ready to squeeze into it as I watched the cable strain a bit and then break free from the tree limbs.

One of the Protección Civil handed me a bag with Gatorade and some food. They gave us small cans of sweetened condensed milk to drink, but I could only take a few sips before I vowed to never touch the stuff again. I plan on keeping that vow, and advise anyone to avoid drinking such sludge, it's too unnatural. The rescuers gave Kara a shot of painkiller, put her in the metal litter, and when the cable reappeared they all clipped into it. Right

before they lifted Kara, who had up to now been extremely brave but by no means jovial, she pointed out that this was kind of fun and exciting. With the painkillers obviously working, she was pulled out of the canyon.

I was left with a confused feeling; all of a sudden there was nothing to do, no one to care for but myself and no emergency to focus on. It took me a while to begin having fun, and we were all pretty timid with the first few jumps, but eventually we relaxed and started having a blast, climbing, jumping, swimming, over and over, again and again. There are limestone waterslides flowing into emerald pools, scarlet flowers, bright turquoise lizards, and endless other beautiful bits of nature in that canyon.

The second cave was almost entirely swimmable, with showerheads over a foot across pouring water down on us. It seemed like paradise again and was the most fun thing I have ever done.

Fofo:

Well, no need to carry a stretcher anymore, so off we went. Well, not so fast, because the Protección Civil guys needed some help with de-rigging, so Wes Schumacher (TX) and Memo went upstream with them. Everybody else went downstream, we had a nice and sunny day, the water was almost clear and everything was joy and happiness.

When we were out of the river we saw that Protección Civil had even prepared some sandwiches for us, so we munched and drank malted water. We were the image of happiness. Then, we were told the captain wanted to talk to us. I was kind of expecting that, but I was not expecting that there would be a person from the Nuevo León Protección Civil legal department demanding explanations.

DJ, Becky, Vico and Nicole had to leave soon, so they just got in their truck and started to drive. What they didn't know is that they were not supposed to leave, so a police car started to track them, but apparently they didn't see them (a Ford F350, diesel, with big tires). Later there was a story about them leaving the truck and running into the forest to lose their trail. In any case, they headed for Austin and didn't know that we were at the Santiago Protección Civil headquarters, being questioned about the whole ordeal. Monterrey Tec cavers Valeria Alvarez, Juan Pablo Granados, Franco Attolini and Denisse Ovalle were waiting for us, with some food and drinks.

Finally, around 1 a.m., they let us go, but seized our gear, to make sure I would get back to recover it and pay a fine and go through the whole bureaucratic paperwork associated with it. Luckily, the Tec cavers were aware of Kara's situation and had people there. Her Spanish is very limited and the ambulance paramedic's English was limited as well, so they took her to the civil hospital, which is free and a treatment level to match (at least in the emergency room—I have to say they do have a couple of good departments).

Tec cavers Ramon Godina and Alejandra Herrera got her out of that hospital and transferred her to the Muguerza, where she was treated and eventually had surgery. The fibula shattered on impact, absorbing the force of the fall. Kara needed eleven screws and a metal plate, and the doctor simply described the pain she went through as "Horrible". She stayed in the hospital until Friday. She is in good spirits and will be back playing in a few months, after her week of Mexican adventures.



*Negotiating boulders.
Peter Sprouse photo.*

Texas Cavers in Michigan: A Summary of What Texans Did at the 2004 NSS Convention

compiled by George Veni

Number of Texans in attendance: almost 25

Awards, salons, & events:

Lew Bicking Award for exploration – Jim Coke [*Editor's note: Jim is the third living Lew Bicking Awardee from Texas.*]

Certificate of Merit – Rune Burnett and Orion Knox for the Bustamante Restoration Project

Certificate of Merit – Bob Richards, with Carlene and Kevin Allred, for development of the Kazamura Cave Atlas

[*Editor's note: Bob Richards provided the following information about this award. "Kazamura Cave is the world's longest and deepest lava tube at over 40 miles in length, and a depth of 3,600 feet on the island of Hawaii. This project took several years to map and this Cave Atlas also received the medal (best of show) in the Cartographic salon a couple years ago."*]

NSS Fellow Award – Kurt Menking

Best of Show, Fine Arts Salon – Kenny McGee, black and white drawing "Double Bubble"

Cartographic Salon, Expert Category, Merit Award – Bob Richards, "Main Upper Level, Marengo Cave, Indiana"

Cartographic Salon, Expert Category, Honorary Mention – Bob Richards, "Cueva de Villa Luz, Tabasco, Mexico, 3D Block Diagram"

Cartographic Salon, Expert Category, accepted for display – Bob Richards with Mike Yokum and Bernie Szukalski, "Hidden River Cave, Kentucky"

Cartographic Salon, Novice Category, accepted for display – Mark Gee, "Schroeder Bat Cave, Kerr County, Texas" and "Three Whirlpool Cave, Kendall County, Texas"

Cave Ballad Salon, Honorary Mention – Dale Barnard, "As Long as We Reach Together"

Cave Ballad Salon, Honorary Mention – Dale Barnard, "Whispers of Floyd"

Digital Color Photographic Print Salon, Honorary Mention – Bob Richards, "Hidden River"



Small wave-cut caves in the cliff below Castle Rock at Picture Rocks National Lakeshore, Lake Superior, Michigan. George Veni photo

A. Stern, Philip C. Bennett – "Microbial controls on sulfuric acid speleogenesis."

Bob Richards – "Survey and cartography of Marengo Cave, Indiana."

George Veni – "GIS applications in managing karst groundwater and biological resources."

Vendors and displays:

Bill Mixon – AMCS

Denise Prendergast – Beautiful jewelry!

Mercy Raines – More beautiful jewelry!

Kate Walker – "Texas Women, Texas Caves" calendar

Texas Cave Conservancy – new T-shirt and map of Westside Preserve at Buttercup Creek

Texas Cave Management Association – fundraising display for Deep Cave and Punkin Cave

Apologies: to anyone that was overlooked!

New Treasurer of NSS Section of Cave Geology and Geography – Tony Troutman

NSS Fellows Award presentation – Bill Mixon

NSS Science Award presentation – George Veni

Cartography Salon judges – Jim Coke and Jim Kennedy

Cave Ballad Salon judge – Steve Boehm

Photographic Print Salon judge – Terry Raines

Hot Tub! – Pete Strickland (with apologies to Pete for having overlooked his much appreciated contribution to NSS Conventions in my previous convention summaries)

Caving trips: None that I know of (the nearest cave was a 2-hour drive), but there was lots of beautiful hiking and boating in Michigan's upper peninsula.

Chair meetings/workshops:
John Moses and George

Veni –
2009 International Congress of Speleology Bid Committee Luncheon

George Veni – Geology and Geography session and luncheon

Papers:
Annette Summers Engel, Libby



ABOVE: Denise Prendergast selling jewelry. BELOW: Groad Hollow, the traditional Texas caver's camp at NSS Conventions. Both Dale Barnard photos.



Whispers of Floyd

by Dale Barnard

About the song: Just before our friend Christy Quintana died in a caving accident, she wrote a research paper for a college class on the story of Floyd Collins. She shared it with me, pointing out how proud she was of the last line: "So I wait, and I listen, and I welcome the whispers of Floyd." That immediately triggered a song idea for me, so I wrote this one to add to the collection of Floyd Collins songs already out there. Despite Christy asking to hear the song, I kept telling her that it wasn't finished yet, so she never did get to hear it. Thus, this song is for her and for the memory of Floyd.

You might not know Floyd Collins
But in '25 the whole country did
In the days of Kentucky Cave Wars
When his name was found everywhere in print

All the tourists went to Mammoth
Floyd hoped to steer some of them away
He found an entrance on the same road
And dreamed about the money he could make

So he wiggled through the passages
So tight he couldn't turn his head
He was kicking at the walls
To find some better form of leverage

He worried about nothing
It was part of his routine
So when a rock pinned his ankle
He stayed calm as he struggled to get free

CHORUS

They called him the greatest caver any one has known
I wish I could share with him the way his legend's grown
So I wait
And I listen for him
And I welcome his whispers down below

For six days people argued
About exactly what to do
A stuck man in a tight cave
They tried to think it through

They tied a rope and pulled on him
But he could not bear the pain
They tried a jack to lift the rock
And he cried when he knew that they had failed

One reporter kept crawling down
With a friendly voice and new supplies
But he never dreamed that the stories
Would win him a Pulitzer Prize

Then the rescue went to hell
In the passage there was a cave-in
Floyd was trapped without supplies
It was a race against time just to save him

BRIDGE:

When the headlines told his story
Tens of thousands gathered around
It was a media circus like they'd never seen

But he never heard a sound
For lonely Floyd was dying
Like no one could have dreamed
It was a sad time in Kentucky
It still seems sad to me

They started digging a rescue shaft
There were volunteers from all around
They knew they could reach him in a few short days
It kept collapsing but they struggled on

In shifts of three they dug like mad
And prayed that they'd see Floyd again
But it took ten days. It was just too long
He had died a couple days before they reached him

Within 3 months there were 3 books
Later movies, plays, and poems
A hit song that broke the record charts
And cavers kept on exploring

They carried on what he'd begun
Sometimes they hear strange sounds
Are his whispers there to remind them
To respect every inch of the underground?

CHORUS

As Long As We Reach Together

by Dale Barnard

About the song: After listening to the song "The Reach" by Dan Fogelberg, I started trying to figure out how to strum a guitar in three-four time. That led to this song.

It's dark, and it's quiet. The sun never rises to guide us.
It's damp, and it's barren, but its beauty can always surprise us.

The rains on the limestone below fight gravity for some relief.
A cavern emerges through thousands of moons never noticed.

It starts at the entrance. We surrender control to the timeless
We change it in passing, but we will never change it to serve us.

It grew without plan or desire, and always we've held it as sacred.
Like oceans and mountains, we only can know it for a moment.

CHORUS:

So we reach with explorer's hearts and hope in our eyes
That the depth of this darkness goes back farther through time
It's more than the cave that we see--
We see life like it matters
As long as we reach together

With the surface above us, we derive our strength from each other
We join as a collective for this is a place full of dangers

We go in awe of the scale for little we know of its future
But here in its darkness we see just who we are

CHORUS

Loud and Proud: OTR

By Jay Jorden

After a half-century, it's still the mother of all caving parties (sorry, TCR).

Old Timers' Reunion in West Virginia is a sight to behold and an event to be experienced. (You really had to be there.) Photos don't really do it justice...although many have been taken!

Since we missed the NSS Convention at Marquette, Mich., this year and just hadn't been punished enough by a long road trip, we decided to take in OTR as a sort of journey down Memory Lane.

I was surprised to find I was still on the TRA (The Robertson Association) membership list. That membership is required for admittance to what's billed as the largest cavers' gathering in the free world. Years ago, it got so big that non-cavers were trying - and succeeding - to crash the event.

This year's theme for the 55th annual OTR was: "Keeping Caving and the Party alive!"

The organizers succeeded on both counts. There was plenty of caving and the biggest speleo-extravaganza since the last time I attended one of these in the 1990's.

The festivities started on Thursday, Sept. 2nd, and continued through Labor Day, Sept. 6th.

The first thing a newcomer would notice at OTR is how big this event is - bigger than an NSS convention. More than 2,100 cavers and family members camped on 24 caver-owned acres along the rock-lined Tygart River.

The OTR property includes a permanent Vendors' Row, a large pavilion, showers, saunas and other improvements. There are three permanent hot tubs - one hot, another cooler and a cold variety. Several saunas have been built, both dry and "wet." OTR even has its own radio station: WOTR, 97.7.

The reunion has been held at the Dailey site since 1986 after outgrowing several former venues. Each year, since the beginning on Labor Day weekend of 1950, OTR had gotten bigger and better, so much so that word got around and bikers as well as the locals started showing up for a big party! (That's how the association for cavers, TRA, developed - to keep it a caver-only event.)



BELOW, OLD TIMERS': Gill Ediger, the Texas Cavers' Reunion organizer now living in Maryland, poses with Liam Jorden at the 55th annual Old Timers' Reunion in Dailey, W.Va. This year's theme: Keeping Caving and the Party alive!

ABOVE, RIVER RATS: The traditional Tygart River wine tasting at the 55th annual Old Timers' Reunion in Dailey, W.Va.

Both J. Jorden photos.



Also as a result, gate security is pretty awesome. The TSA (the airport guys) could learn a few things from some of these big beefy types wearing kilts and sporting claymores.

Cavers, even with a membership-only reunion, swelled beyond each of the rented sites in succession: McCoy's Mill near Franklin, W.Va., and Trout Cave, from the late 1960's and early 1970's; and the Alpine Shores

Campground near Elkins, W.Va., from the late 1970's.

The Mill could handle only 300 or so people and there was no controlled access to the site. Cavers packed into the old millhouse, where the wooden floor would sway during dances. The saunas out back were primitive, with heated rocks. The rule was that everyone got in and out at the same time to conserve the heat.

How times have changed.

My registration number for 2004: 2,141.

Another note is that the old rule was "no caving" during OTR. But that's changed, also.

After a quick trip to the Huntsville, AL, area (the site of next year's NSS convention) to visit in-laws, Sheila Knight, our son Liam Jorden and I traveled caravan-style to West Virginia in the company of Tricia and Paul Singley from Knoxville, TN. It's a nine-hour drive through the mountains from Knoxville.

Texans (or former Texans) spotted or missed at this event: Gill Ediger, Becky Jones, and Jim "Crash" Kennedy.

Caving available during OTR included: Bowden Cave off U.S. Route 33 near Elkins; Sinks of Gandy, site of the annual Randy Gandy Club swim; Trout Rock Caves; Stillhouse Cave; Simmons-Mingo; Shavers Mountain Cave; Sharps Cave; My Cave; Bickle Hollow Caves; and others.

We've been to the Trout/Hamilton system, Bowden's, My Cave and a few others in the area.

Area attractions include the Green Bank observatory and many Civil War-era historical sites, including the Rich Mountain Battlefield.

Union troops in the July 11, 1861 battle flanked the Confederate Camp Garnett fortifications, blocking the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike west of Beverly.

Besides caving and partying with the giant crowd drinking dozens of kegs of microbrews, lagers, ales, etc. over the four-day period, OTR included the following: vertical contests on ropes and ladders; a speleolympics; an auction; movie night (a triple feature with Cave-man, Young Frankenstein and Rocky Horror Picture Show); a fun run; and wine (and other beverage) tasting in the river.

Also featured: a Doo Dah Parade (an always wild event); Buzz City Grotto (that's the club that only meets at OTR) and Dead Puppies Grotto meetings; Real Men of Adventure meeting (Yes, Dave, you should have been there!); Kiddie Kapers; bonfire; a climbing wall; a panoramic photo; chicken feed courtesy of the Lions' Club; knot tying demonstrations; and a sleeping bag contest.

BTW, Real Men comprised the first officially recognized NSS affinity group, now presumably ostracized from conventions because of political correctness.

Some remarked that this year's OTR was a little tamer than past events; carbide cannons are now banned and things have settled down since a big fight broke out around the bonfire several years ago.

One neat feature about OTR: very little speleopolitics. (Anyone bringing up politics runs the risk of getting dope-slapped.)

So, don't be afraid of the 25-hour drive next year. Go for the Big One.

The Franklin Mountains paleokarst: Remnants of a major Paleozoic karst system.

By Gerald L. Atkinson

Introduction

Since the 1980s, petroleum geologists have actively studied various paleokarst features developed within the early Paleozoic carbonates of the Franklin Mountains. Many west Texas oil and gas fields produce from solution collapse breccias associated with paleokarst development during the Paleozoic, and in an effort to better understand these processes, explorationists began to study drill well cores and outcrops of age equivalent carbonates. It was during these studies that the Franklin Mountain paleokarst was widely recognized within the industry. Unfortunately, little of the published literature has been circulated amongst cavers, and few workers recognize the scale and extent of this remnant karst system. In many ways, the size and depth of the cave systems that once existed in the Paleozoic surpass the better known Ellenburger and Edwards hosted karst of the present.

Located on the outskirts of El Paso in far west Texas, the Franklin Mountains rise 3500 feet above the surrounding plains, and extend northward for over 23 miles into southern New Mexico. The mountain range consists of a series of westward tilted fault blocks exposing a 13,000-foot thick section of Precambrian to Cretaceous rocks. The exposed Paleozoic section includes 23 formations that unconformably overlie a Precambrian metamorphic assemblage, and are in turn unconformably overlain by a relatively thin Middle Cretaceous section. The early Ordovician-aged El Paso Group of the Franklin Mountains (equivalent to the Ellenburger Group of central Texas) is divided into 6 to 7 formations consisting of limestones, dolomites, and lesser sandstones with a total thickness of about 1600 feet. Individual beds range from 1 to 20 feet in thickness and represent cyclic deposition in a shallow water shelfal environment. The Middle Silurian-aged Fusselman Formation consists of approximately 600 - 900 feet of thick-bedded dolomites and lesser limestone deposited in an environment similar to the El Paso Group.

Ordovician Paleokarst Features

Several well-exposed paleokarst features are located throughout the southern half of the Franklin Mountains, but the largest and most impressive examples are located on the eastern flank of the range within the Franklin Mountains State Park (figure 1). The larger features are known as the McKelligon Canyon Breccia, Great McKelligon Sag, Quarry Breccia, and Lechuguilla Breccia.

The most spectacular paleokarst feature is the Great McKelligon Sag, located on the east side of the range in McKelligon Canyon. An area of solution collapse breccias measuring approximately 1000 feet wide by 500 feet high is developed within the Ranger Peak, Cindy, and McKelligon Canyon Formations of the El Paso Group. The overlying Montoya Group is folded and faulted down into the breccias and forms the roof of the one-time cavern (figure 2). Blocks of the Cindy Formation have been found within the breccias over 400 feet below their original stratigraphic position. A breccia pipe extends upward into the Montoya Group and contains fragments of the overlying Fusselman Formation of Silu-

rian age. The original vertical extent of the McKelligon Sag feature was at least 1200 to 1500 feet once structural dip is restored. It is uncertain as to how large the original void was before it was

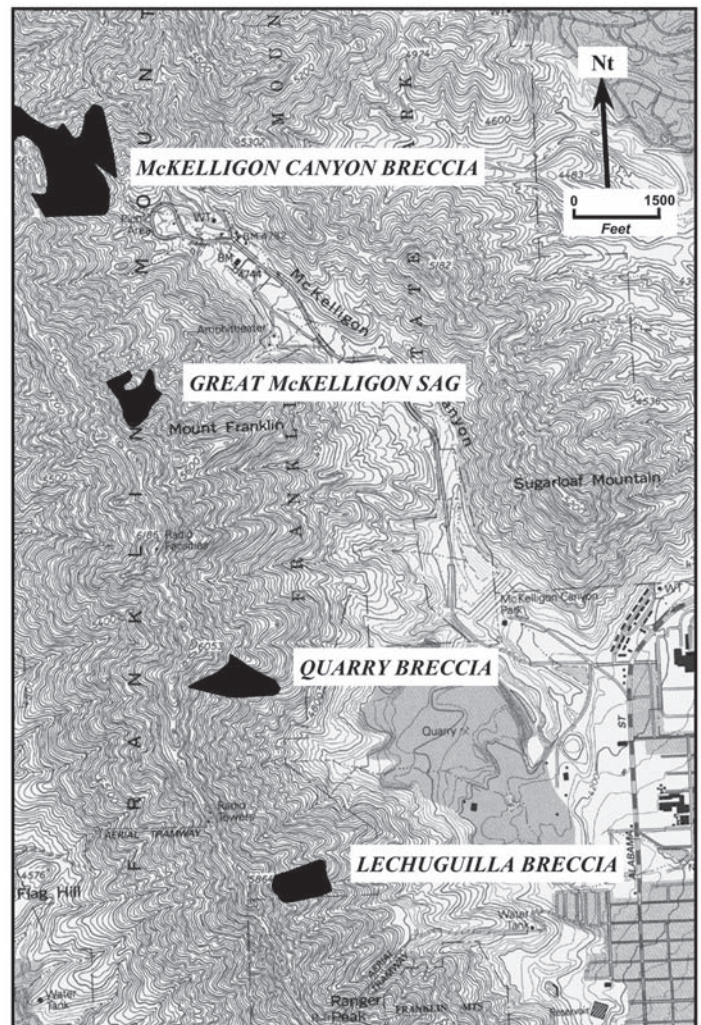
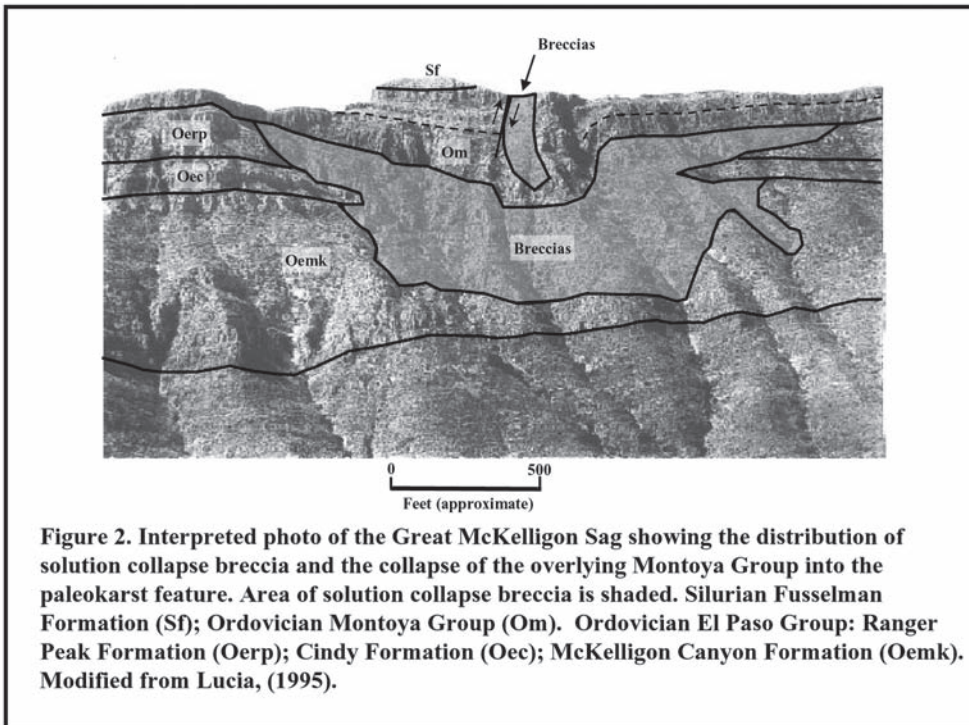


Figure 1. Topographic map of the southern Franklin Mountains showing the locations of paleokarst features mentioned in article. After Lucia (1995).

destroyed by collapse and infilling, but the fact that the roof of the feature sags some 250 feet stratigraphically down into the breccias suggests that a cavern measuring approximately 500 to 1000 feet wide by 200 to 300 feet high may have once existed.

The Quarry Breccia feature is located approximately 1 mile south of the Great McKelligon Sag and measures about 700 feet wide by 500 feet high. Although not studied in great detail, the overall geometry and stratigraphic position of the feature appear similar to the McKelligon Sag. The Montoya Group sags downward into the breccia and again forms the cavern roof, although brecciation does extend upward into the Montoya.



are tabular in shape and may extend for several thousand feet along the outcrop; their thickness rarely exceeding 190 feet. Though not mapped in detail, portions of the Ranger Peak breccias can be traced along outcrop into the upper sections of the vertical paleokarst features described above. The breccias underlie the unconformity between the El Paso Group and the overlying Montoya Group, a surface representing a period of non-deposition and erosion lasting approximately 33Ma. The overlying Montoya Formation has collapsed downward into the Ranger Peak breccias but does not appear to thicken into the collapses, indicating that the timing of collapse occurred after Montoya deposition (figure 3). The Ranger Peak breccias represent the remnants of a laterally extensive cave system that may have resembled present-day maze caves such as Actun Kaua in Mexico, or Powell's Cave in Texas. All are similar in being laterally extensive and developed within a confined stratigraphic interval.

The Lechuguilla Breccia is located 3/4 of a mile south of the Quarry Breccia and measures approximately 600 feet wide by 500 feet high. Although not as large as the McKelligon Sag or Quarry Breccia, the Lechuguilla Breccia is the most easily accessible of the Franklin Mountains paleokarst features and therefore the most studied. It is similar to the other features in that it is developed in the Ranger Peak, Cindy, and McKelligon Canyon Formations. It is not obvious that the Montoya Group is folded down into the breccias, but this may be due to the Montoya outcrop being offset from the paleokarst feature, and not directly overlying it.

The fragments that make up the Lechuguilla Breccia range in size from sand grains to boulders measuring some tens of feet on a side. Some of the larger Cindy Formation blocks found within the breccia are the size of small automobiles and are located 150 to 200 feet below their original stratigraphic position, suggesting that a cavern of significant size once existed. Smaller blocks of the Cindy Formation have been found as much as 400 feet below their original stratigraphic position. Most of the matrix between the breccia blocks contains no sedimentary structures, but some laminated sediments exist, primarily within the McKelligon Formation in the lower parts of the paleokarst features. The dip of the laminae conforms to the present-day structural dip, indicating that they were deposited prior to uplift and tilting of the mountain range.

The McKelligon Canyon Breccia is located approximately 3/4 mile north of the Great McKelligon Sag. Very little study had been done on this large feature, but the collapse breccias are developed within the McKelligon and Cindy Formations in an area measuring approximately 2000 feet wide by 450 feet high.

Besides the described paleokarst features which are laterally restricted and have a width to height ratio ranging from 1.2 to 4.0, more laterally continuous solution collapse breccias occur within the Ranger Peak Formation along the east face of the Franklin Mountains. These features

Silurian Paleokarst Features

While not as well exposed as the Ordovician section, outcrops of the Middle Silurian-age Fusselman Formation in the Franklin Mountains indicate the presence of an extensive paleokarst. The Fusselman is unconformably overlain by the Canutillo Formation of Middle Devonian age; the unconformity surface representing a period of non-deposition and erosion lasting approximately 30 Ma. Outcrops of the Fusselman throughout the range contain solution collapse breccias suggestive of a period of extensive karst development during post-Fusselman to pre-Canutillo time. Blocks of the Fusselman Formation are found in the breccia pipe above the Great McKelligon Sag, indicating that the timing of collapse and infill of the upper portion of the feature postdates Fusselman deposition. Subsurface drill well and seismic data from the nearby Permian Basin region also indicate a major period of subaerial exposure, erosion, and karsting during the early Devonian. Unfortunately, the lack of easily accessible Silurian outcrops in

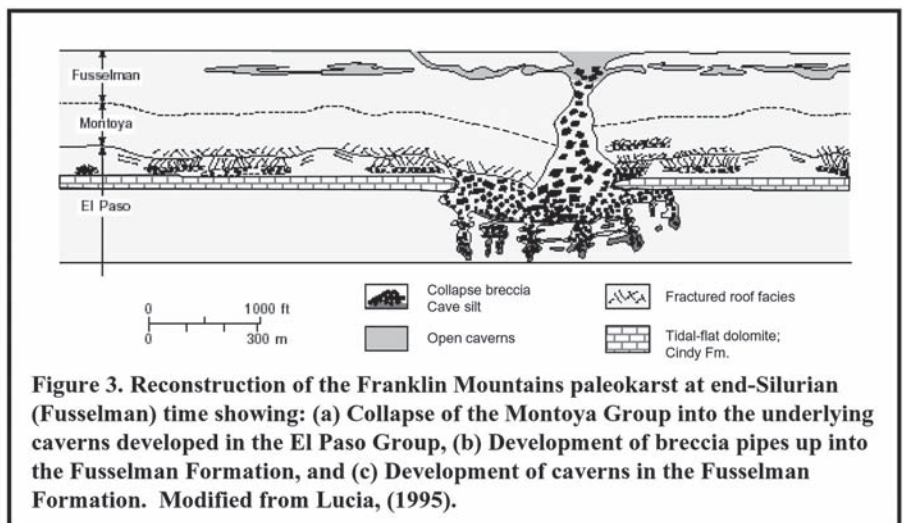


Figure 3. Reconstruction of the Franklin Mountains paleokarst at end-Silurian (Fusselman) time showing: (a) Collapse of the Montoya Group into the underlying caverns developed in the El Paso Group, (b) Development of breccia pipes up into the Fusselman Formation, and (c) Development of caverns in the Fusselman Formation. Modified from Lucia, (1995).

the Franklin Mountains has resulted in the formation being poorly studied.

Timing of Karst Formation

Lucia (1987; 1995) proposed that the El Paso Group paleokarst was principally formed during subaerial exposure that occurred after the deposition of the El Paso Group and prior to the deposition of the Montoya Group. This unconformity lasted approximately 33Ma and has been recognized throughout west Texas and New Mexico. Subsequent collapse of the caverns occurred during post-Montoya time and extended into the Devonian. A second, though less important phase of karst development according to Lucia, occurred during post-Fusselman to pre-Canutillo time, a period of subaerial exposure lasting approximately 30 Ma. The paleokarst developed within the Montoya Group and Fusselman Formation was formed during this latter period of subaerial exposure.

While it is tempting to attribute the formation of the paleokarst observed in the El Paso Group of the Franklin Mountains to subaerial exposure during the El Paso-Montoya hiatus, it is doubtful that this was the main period of dissolution. The Ranger Peak breccias are located immediately below the El Paso-Montoya unconformity, and the caverns they represent had a roof of Ranger Peak that never exceeded 150 to 190 feet in thickness prior to Montoya deposition. It seems improbable that the caverns did not subsequently collapse or infill with sediments during the 33 Ma period of exposure prior to Montoya deposition, or during later submersion below the Montoya seas when active carbonate deposition occurred. It is more likely that karst formation was associated with the post-Fusselman period of exposure and uplift, a time which can be unequivocally associated with deep-seated dissolution as is demonstrated with the Fusselman paleokarst features.

While the timing of the Franklin Mountains paleokarst remains somewhat questionable, the magnitude and extent of this remnant karst system is not. By present-day standards, a major cave system existed in the mountain range, with large rooms and laterally extensive passage development that may have continued for miles. The maximum vertical extent of these relict caverns is conjectural, but it can be argued that a pit on the scale of Sotano de las Golondrinas may have existed at one time in what is now the Franklin Mountains. Unfortunately, we are 400 Ma too late to explore it.

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Trip Reports:Honey Creek Exploration and Mapping to Resume

By Bill Steele

Honey Creek Cave is the longest cave in the state of Texas. It's located along the county line of Kendall and Comal counties, about 25 miles northwest of San Antonio. From roughly 1980 to 1996, 20 miles of passage were explored and mapped. There have only been a handful of survey trips since 1996.

George Veni teaches a karst aquifer course through Western Kentucky University each summer, and every other year it's based in San Antonio. The final outing is to Honey Creek. This year he

asked me to help guide his students in the cave. During his lecture on the speleogenesis of the cave he mentioned that there are 176 leads left to be checked, and mapping remains to be done. At that moment I decided to begin participating in checking those leads.

I got the list of leads from George and set up a trip for July 31st. Here's how the lead was described:

“QL Survey (passage off QA152)

*QL11 -- Small sump heading downstream. Station not flagged

(or at least the notes don't indicate a flag). This passage was the original downstream route of the QA and should lead about 450 m straight-line until it is truncated by the surface Honey Creek. Worth diving and trying to notch a downstream dam to open the sump. Another option is to use a pump to drain the sump, but 100 m of hose would be needed to dump the water to the main QA stream."

The QA passage is one of my favorites. It's the first major tributary side-passage in the cave, located about 1,000 feet inside the spring entrance. My team of Jim Bowden, Ted Lee, Faith Watkins, Tom Haile, Chris Krecja, Sharon and Dennis Welch, Liz Hunt (see: <http://www.mexicoprofundo.org/teammembers-lizhunt.html>) and I swam into the QA, and at the opening of it took off our fins and put on caving boots. Diana Tomchick was still recuperating from back surgery, so she didn't get underground beyond where you put on fins to swim the deep water of the entrance area of the cave.

I wanted to see the QL11 sump to decide if it was promising enough for Liz to dive. I also wanted to refresh my memory of the QA passage and assess the difficulty of a tank haul to this section of the cave. Decked out in wetsuits, fins, and with kickboards at the end of outstretched arms, our group swam upstream to Whistler's Mother, which had a couple of inches of air space through its three feet of length. I demonstrated how to take off your helmet, float face up on the surface, and slowly pucker and breathe all the way through a low airspace. It is very dangerous to hold your breath while diving underwater through a sump. The rule of thumb is to never, never dive underwater if you can breathe while you negotiate a low airspace instead. I stated that rule, and demonstrated how to do it, but to my dismay more than one accompanying caver chose not to listen and dove underwater anyway.

A little way up the QA passage we regrouped at the Mushroom Dome. There we discussed how the air quality seemed "character building." I happened to have a Bic lighter with me, so I got it out of a Nalgene bottle and tested the air quality. Before my wet fingers got the flint wet, a flame shot up once, puffed upwards and went out. That told us that the air quality wasn't so good, but my recommendation was to continue the trip but move at a slower pace and see if the air was "do-able." It was, and in fact seemed to improve the farther we went.

Our primary mode of locomotion was to "salamander" and wade upstream. Salamandering is a technique for moving in water that is deep enough to suspend your body, which is buoyant due to the wetsuit you are wearing. Forward motion comes from digging your fingers into the mud on the bottom and pulling yourself along. When the water is too shallow to suspend your body and you can't salamander, then the "Hemperly Technique" (named for former Texas caver Robert Hemperly, who is now in the U.S. Navy, having joined in his late 40's) works well. I demonstrated it,

but it takes some getting used to. With the Hemperly Technique you turn over on your back and bring your buoyant cave pack up under your head like a pillow, then push your heels into the mud, moving your legs like pedaling a bike. The only problem is you can't see where you're going.

We took a break at some of the best formations in the cave, and everyone caught up. Ted Lee said that Jim Bowden hadn't been seen since our last break at the Mushroom Dome. He volunteered to turn around and check on him, and said he would probably continue out of the cave with him to the entrance.

Next we came to a note written on a piece of cave survey paper and stuck to a muddy ledge about 1,000 feet up the QA. It was from Joe Ivy and Jim Bowden and was written about 20 years ago. Joe Ivy died in a caving accident in 2000, in 09-Well, a cave in West Texas. I feel a tinge of sadness every time I see that artifact.

Eventually we came to a sign hanging from the ceiling that reads "State Park Boundary." Twenty or so years ago someone acquired it and hung it in the cave at the approximate spot where you actually cross under the state park. Just beyond that we turned left and entered the 40-foot high Birthday Cake Dome. Back in the 80's a birthday cake was surreptitiously taken on a trip, and then brought out into this dome with candles blazing while cavers sang Happy Birthday to You. At the dome Sharon told me she was too cold to continue, so she and Dennis turned around to enjoy a leisurely trip out.

The rest of us continued on, but did not reach our destination. I was in the lead and took a wrong turn at a "T" where the larger way to the left is not the main way, and you'd never guess it. We got into one very low airspace after another; most of them had been hammered open, but then we reached one that was tight and real low. That's where we turned around. I know where to go next time: turn right at that "T".

That night we sat up late under a starry sky, and managed to persuade Jim Bowden to tell us his story of setting the standing world record for the deepest cave dive. Look around on the website listed above and you'll find the story.

Out of the darkness walked my daughter Audrey and her boyfriend Mark. They live in Austin and attend St. Edward's University. They camped with us and went in the cave with Liz Hunt and me on Sunday. We went up the QA passage again to Birthday Cake Dome, and Mark did his first caving trip. He says he's hooked, yet Audrey says that trip isn't like "most of Dad's caving trips," and I think I know what she meant.

Trips to Honey Creek will resume after the first of the year, and will be announced by Kurt Menking on CaveTex. The rules for caving there are 1) that each person cut a minimum of 10 cedar saplings, and 2) that each group going in the cave has a trip leader who is experienced at and knows the route they are taking. Please join us and help us knock off the 176 remaining leads in Texas' longest cave.

Trip Reports: Station C Cave, August 7-9, 2004

By Travis Scott

Participants: Jerry Atkinson, John Brooks, Kara Dittmer, Pete Lindsley, Ed Goff, Amanda Scott, Travis Scott, Bill Steele, Mary Thiesse, Diana Tomchick

Station C Cave is another cave here in Texas that hasn't been visited for decades and as a result, the owner contact has been

lost too, that is until recently. Jerry Atkinson did the research and found the current owner of Station C Cave, and so the trip was set for August 8, 2004. We headed out Friday night for our base camp at Lost Maples State Natural Area. Everyone arrived at the camp from their respective directions late in the evening. Glad to be outdoors and relaxing under the stars we all stayed up way too late as usual.

We had decided to get an early start Saturday morning as

Bill, Diana, and Pete had to be at the Devil's Sinkhole later that evening. So we awoke earlier than usual and prepared to go caving. As we piled into our vehicles to make the short drive to the cave the first drops began to fall. By the time we arrived at the dirt road to the cave we were in a full fledged thunderstorm. We decided to wait out the rain in our cars. After a while and many

a large room going two directions from the entrance pit. We only went one direction to the main part of the cave. Basically from the entrance room onward the cave is full of formations and is quite pretty. Bill and Pete's main goal was to drop the 12 meter pit near the back of the cave to a reported stream passage and push the lead. They took off immediately to find the pit and not wasting any time while a few of us took our time exploring and taking photos.

We finally caught up with the others in the Bat Room that contained the lead about the time Bill and Pete had to take off for the Devil's Sinkhole. Amanda, Kara, Mary and I took a break and ate some snacks. Soon we found ourselves checking some high leads at the top of the breakdown mound in the Bat Room. Against a wall near the top of the mound I found a small room that contained some interesting looking fungus. I crawled up to it to get a closer look, it was as if a spider had laid a web of little fungus hairs that in clumps grew about an inch or two long. It was quite interesting yet kinda scary looking, especially when I looked down and found that I was laying in it and was covered in inch long fungus hairs. I then climbed up the wall into an alcove where I could see a lead on the other side of the dome but admittedly didn't have the *cajones* to do the traverse over to it. After challenging the others, I headed down to see how the stream lead was coming along. When I got back, they told me that Mary had challenged my *cajones* and did the traverse to the lead. After a few minutes she returned after finding about 60 feet of nice passage. Of course I was made fun of for being beaten by a

*Ed Goff in the Helictite Crawl, Station C Cave.
Travis Scott photo.*



*Amanda Scott rappels into the entrance of Station C cave. The steel ladder can be seen behind and below her.
Travis Scott photo.*

flooded cave stories later, we decided to head out and watch the flood waters flow into another nearby cave (this would be a lot more interesting than sitting in our cars). Sometime after noon we decided to head back over to Station C and hike to the cave to keep from rutting up the muddy road.

Jerry had a pretty good location on the cave and we basically walked right up to it. The entrance is a triangle shaped sinkhole that drains a few acres of land down the shaft of the 70 foot pit. The owners had fabricated a nice rebar ladder which spanned the depth of the cave. However, we decided it might be best to rig the pit with a rope because we didn't know the quality or age of the ladder. By this time, Bill, Pete and Diana were running low on time so we sent John, Bill and Pete in first while Diana stayed on the surface.

At the bottom of the pit, basking in the ambient sunlight at the base of the ladder, we found a baby rattlesnake (about a foot long) who wasn't interested in our company, but to our delight, was happy to announce his presence. The entrance room is quite



woman with bigger *cajones*.

After another small break, and Amanda and I decided to return to the Helictite Crawl, a series of hands and knees crawling tubes through nicely decorated mazy passages, to take some more photos. Pete had found a easy route back to the main part of the cave that took us by Ed as he was climbing out of the stream passage completely covered in thick clay. He told us that the lead pinched off with clay and didn't go any further than we had hoped. We continued on and everyone eventually caught up and explored the Helictite Crawls. About the time we finished in the crawls it was time to head out of the cave. Luckily our little entrance protector was still perched on his rock and announced his presence one more time. After a few more photos we were all out on the surface again glad to see that beautiful weather had replaced the rain storms.

On the way back, after hiking through sinkhole after sinkhole, we stumbled upon what appeared to be a freshly opened cave. Ed dropped in to find it was only a small room filled with dirt and rocks. We packed up once more and headed back for dinner noting probably a handful more of large sinks on the way. When we got to camp, Shannon Summers was there waiting for us relaxing

in the hammock. Shannon came to join us in checking out a lead Sunday morning over by Concan, Texas. We all ate, told stories, and slept well.

Sunday morning after a light shower we woke to find Bill and Diana had returned from Devil's Sinkhole during the night.

After breakfast Shannon, Amanda and I headed off for Concan to check out a lead. Jerry, Mary and John were also heading off to find some land owners that afternoon on the way home. Our lead was described as a 30 foot pit that opened in someone's front yard during the last flood. We arrived and were directed to the pit. It was a hole about 3 feet across and 18 feet deep and was literally 2 feet from the back door of a house. It turns out that it is an old well that had not been filled in correctly and finally collapsed open again. The owners told us that they had been walking over the hole many times a day for years and are glad to have found it this way and not the hard way. Since it is not a cave or karst feature, they will back fill it and hope that it is the only one they find.

Many thanks to Jerry Atkinson for taking the time and effort to relocate and re-establish land owner contacts for this fine and long lost Texas cave.

Trip Reports: Tyra's Cave (a.k.a. H.T. Mier's Cave), February 7-9, 2003

By Cindy Lee

Val Verde County, Texas

Cavers: Jean Krejca, Vivian Loftin, Cindy Lee, Denise Prendergast, James Lopez, Travis Scott, Shannon Summers, Susan Hanna, Sammy Pizzo, Tom Haile, Bonnie Longley, Chris Krejca, Faith Watkins. Dogs: O-Nine and Rue

On the weekend of February 7-9, 2003, a group of Central Texas cavers met at Tyra's Cave (a.k.a. H. T. Miers Cave) for a weekend of cavin' and campin'. The trip had several purposes. First of all, Jean wanted to collect isopods for her dissertation work. Being as it is known as a cave with multiple drops and not many trips are organized for the cave, Jean received permission to bring a group. There is a rumored high lead so another purpose was to find the lead and do a bolt climb. We also wanted



"Team Biology." Left to right: Bonnie Longley, Faith Watkins, Denise Prendergast, Jean Krejca. Cindy Lee photo.

to start a re-survey of the cave.

We camped on site, just a few minutes from the cave opening. The cave entrance is in a sinkhole on the side of a dry creek bed. We filled the large entrance room with our parkas, gloves,

and other winter apparel, as the night had brought very chilly temperatures and spitting snow.

The cavers entered the cave in three teams. The first team was to rig the drops and then look for the high lead. The second team entered the cave a little later and began to survey. "Team Biology" was the last team to enter the cave.

The survey team led by Travis Scott surveyed to the top of the last drop, which included almost all the pit series for a total of 118 meters in length and 56 meters deep. The climb team led by Vivian Loftin was to survey from the bottom to the last drop. The climb team's main goal was to look for high leads, and they ultimately found one of them. They set 6 to 8 bolts and climbed about 20-25 feet but ran out of time to finish. A few more bolts are needed but there is good airflow and promise. There is at least one more high lead to find.

Jean Krejca led Team Biology. They went in search of pools of water. Rumor has it that there are small pools dispersed through out the bottom of the cave. Jean found the small pools and also found deep ones, so she got quite wet. She also found isopods so it was worth it.



Denise Prendergast at the last drop in Tyra's Cave. Jean Krejca photo.

Southwest Labor Day Regional

North Percha Creek – the Black Range, Hillsboro, New Mexico

By Mark Gee, NSS # 49625

Remember Ross Perot? Remember his comment, "When you hear that sucking sound it will be your job going to Mexico"? Recently I heard that sucking sound when my job went to Mexico and was asked to take some **permanent** time away from my job of twelve years. I have heard that sucking sound and it sucks!!!

I needed to get away from Dallas and have some fun, so I made several phone calls to cavers around the state asking if they knew of any caving trips coming up on Labor Day weekend. I called Bill Steele and he told me that he and Diana Tomchick were headed up to Kentucky for his niece's wedding. They also planned to do a little caving with one of Bill's caving buddies. I almost wish they had asked me to go, but it might have been a little hard to explain to Bill's family why I had come along. That same day Diana called and told me about the event in New Mexico. She had contacted Steve and Kathy Peerman of Las Cruces, telling them about my interest in attending the event, and received the directions to the campground where the Regional event would be held. Diana then called me and gave me the detailed directions. As soon as I hung up the phone I got out my Roads of New Mexico to see where the directions would lead. They showed that the get-together was in Sierra County in the Black Range, near Kingston-in short, the southwest corner of the state. That meant that the quickest way to get there was to drive all the way to El Paso, head up north through Las Cruces and then drive another hundred miles to the camp at North Percha Creek. (thanks Diana, the directions were great).

It was a twelve-hour drive with a stop in Pecos, TX to stay the night. I arrived at the Regional campsite at 10:30 Friday morning. As I drove in I met Kenny Stabinsky. He was putting up a few No-Trespassing signs, trying to keep the Labor Day campers from camping on the private land that was reserved for their get together.

I drove on and set my campsite up. Kenny came on down to camp a few minutes later. We talked a while, and I asked what he did for a living. If I remember right, he said that he worked for the state studying endangered plant life, and was somehow linked to NM State College.

It wasn't until 4:00 p.m. when others began to show up at camp. Bob & Esty Pape and Joanne Staley came from Tucson, Arizona. Joanne sells her sand blasted etchings on glass with bats

and other cave related figures. Richard Wolfert of Inner Realm Books was also there. Some may know Jennifer Foote, who helps lead the High Guads Restoration Project once a month in the Lincoln National Forest. In all, 35 people had shown up by noon on Saturday.

Friday afternoon the rain (as it so often does) began to fall, but it was not too heavy and never dampened our spirits. By nightfall those of us in camp were sitting around the warm campfire enjoying the cool weather. The rain had stopped.

The next morning at 9:00 am, Jennifer Foote called the Southwest Region meeting to order. Jennifer read the minutes from the last meeting, which were accepted. Jennifer then read about a recent rescue in a New Mexico cave, followed by reports from various cave restoration projects. Next on her agenda was a report from Blake Jordon about the Gyp-Kap project that he heads. The Manhole dig near Lechuguilla was talked about. At this time, power tools aren't allowed and all digging is done with hammers, chisels, and shovels. They are digging down along a

solid bedrock wall through large and small breakdown, and the progress is very slow. They hope to have five digs at Manhole in 2005. Jennifer mentioned the decreasing number of bats in Hidden Cave. Steve Peerman talked about some of his views on the population decrease. He felt that a section of the gate could be changed, as had been done in another New Mexico cave, which helped increase the bat population. Steve also mentioned a rattlesnake they had named Timothy that is responsible for eating several bats, and other snakes that get their fair share, too. Hopefully a solution can be found to help with increasing the

bat population in Hidden Cave. Bob Rodgers spoke a little about NCRC and setting up a date for a training course in 2005. Carol Belski asked for trip reports for the *Southwestern Caver*, which is the Southwest Region newsletter.

Project Underground, a Park Service program, seeks to educate and involve students in an underground workshop. A minimum number of students are needed to form a class and several cavers along with some park service people provide the leadership for the workshop. They teach the students the value of caves and how our intrusions can affect the cave and cave life. They also are taught what they must do when entering a cave to protect it for future generations and for future science.

A story was told about a walking stick, made from a shovel



Early Saturday morning SWR meeting.
Mark Gee photo.

handle, which Dave Belski had misplaced and thought had been stolen. The truth be known, the walking stick had mistakenly been left on a trailer and was unknowingly taken to Idaho. The stick in question was mailed back to a New Mexico caver and presented to Dave with an honorary award, which we will not mention, and Dave hem-hawed a little and set back down and was quiet.

An accident was mentioned. It occurred when a caver fell 20 feet on a rope tied in a tree. He broke his back, doctors said that he wouldn't walk and yet the caver walked from the hospital. It was not determined how his Petzl device failed. It was still attached to the rope after the fall. Other things were mentioned but these were the highlights of the meeting, which ended at 10 a.m.

Several different groups gathered and then left camp, headed for their various cave projects. One group left to go see a 100-foot waterfall that Dave Belski said was up Mineral Creek. Another went ridge walking. Coffee Cave, Robinson Cave, Cactus Cave, Mad Hornet, Lone Bat, Mosca Cave, and Cave Canyon archeological sites were visited. Other holes were checked and other rumored caves were looked for.

I ended up going in search of Cactus Cave with Kathy Peerman in the lead, Kathy O'Connor, Roger Kitt, Linda Starr, Bob Cornish, and Duke McMullan. The cave was to be found up on the canyon wall at the base of a rock bluff about 100 to 150 feet above the dry creek bed. At least this is where Kathy had told us to look. We followed the trail from camp along Percha Creek and passed the trail that went up to Robinson Cave. A little farther along the trail a few openings were seen in the cliff face. Kathy Peerman went up to check them and didn't recognize anything. Roger, Kathy O'Connor, and I continued along the cliff face and found several other likely looking karst features. Roger went up to one and I went up to another that I had seen. I found a cave entrance to an unknown cave, which had a large shelter type entrance with several big breakdown blocks in front of a large vertical crevice. A small opening 5 feet above the floor that measured 15 inches x 2 feet was seen. We entered it and immediately the entrance passage split into two parallel passages. The left was the larger one and I crawled and stooped for 25 feet and then both passages continued as one for another 60 feet but then became too tight for human passage. The cave temperature was 64 degrees. I crawled back out the entrance and yelled down to Kathy O'Connor that I had found a cave but that it must not be Cactus. I looked a little longer along the base of the cliff but I know more openings were found. I joined up with Kathy and Roger and went back up the canyon to find Kathy Peerman. She had found another cave. I went up the slope to her, and Kathy led into a narrow vertical crevice about 20 feet tall and 18



*Bob Cornish and Linda Starr at the entrance to an unknown cave.
Mark Gee photo.*

inches wide. Kathy was turned sideways and walked in but I had to get down and crawl where the passage was a little wider. After about 50 feet the passage size increased, and continued at about 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide. Occasionally you could stand up and walk. About 100 feet from the entrance the passage split. Straight ahead the passage continued 40 feet and ended in two small rooms. To the right the passage continued 10 feet and another passage took off to the right back towards the cliff face. This passage did lead to another entrance that came out in the sheer rock face above the entrance that we had first. Continuing straight ahead the passage ended in a "T." To the right the passage continued 40 feet past two small columns and ended in a solid rock wall. Back a few feet a small passage went to the right and tied into the second entrance passage that we had discovered earlier. To the left at the "T," the passage went another 100 feet through a few low areas and then ended with no continuation in a small mazy area. We had seen the entire cave. We all gathered at the

"T" passage and Kathy told us that this was not Cactus Cave either. She felt bad that she was unable to lead us to Cactus. We did enjoy the caves that we found. We got back to camp and made a couple of cracks about not finding Cactus, but Kathy took it OK.

The afternoon rain began again at 4:30 and continued several hours into the evening. That evening a potluck dinner was planned. The theme was chili. A few other dishes were prepared and all was devoured by the 35 cavers that ate that evening. Roger Kitt had brought three bottles of Big Garage wine, something that he enjoys making. For desert, two cool watermelons and some great apple pie from the apple festival in Hillsboro were consumed.

After dinner we were all treated to a warm fire. The conversation around the fire included Dave Belski's walking stick and Kathy Peerman's inability to find Cactus Cave. While we sat around the fire a squeezebox was set up and all the thin cavers started a contest to see who could squeeze through the smallest opening. At the end of the

evening a young man named Aaron Stockton beat out Jennifer Foote by squeezing through the box at 5 3/4". This guy was 6'2" but very thin.

Sunday morning it was very cool, somewhere in the 60's. Several were packing to leave for home but others were packing to go caving. Kathy Peerman came by camp to ask if I wanted to go to Robinson Cave. My first question was, "Do you know where it is located?" No sense of humor, she didn't even laugh, but she did smile.

A few minutes later Kathy Peerman, Kathy O'Connor, Sam Bono, and I were at the entrance of Robinson Cave. The entrance

was about 10 feet wide and 4 feet tall but it opened up quickly to a larger passage. Sam and I were the only two to enter the cave. The cave has no vertical passage. Sam said the cave had a back section that was on a lower level and was a little bit muddy. After seeing a lot of mazy passages, some fairly large rooms and two other groups of tourist spelunkers, we found the passage that got us down into the lower, more decorated, wet and muddy section. All of the passages still have wet growing formations. Some passages were very well decorated and many columns, stalactites, stalagmites, helectites and draperies were seen and flowstone covered large areas of the floor. Sam and I both traveled down different passages, pushing them until they became tight. After about 1 1/2 hours we carefully followed our path back out of the cave. I was told that the cave has 1000 feet of passage but I think it's quite a bit more, or at least it seemed like it.

Back at camp, after a little cleanup, those left in camp decided to pool our food and have another potluck dinner. Joann Staley had all the fixin's for a large pot of chili. This and a little other

food was plenty for all. We sat around the warm fire in our long pants and jackets. It was very cool and you wanted to sit close to the fire. There was some talk about things going on in people's lives and things going on in the southwest. I spoke up about how big and great things are in Texas and you know that this was well received. They were all in agreement and totally supportive of the great things that I had spoken of, NOT! What do you expect from a bunch of people living way out in New Mexico that don't know anything about Texas?

I had a good time in New Mexico. The cool temperatures, beautiful scenery, Ponderosa pines, nice caves and new friendships will be remembered for a long time. Several of the New Mexico cavers will be making the long trip to TCR this October at Flat Creek Ranch. I look forward to seeing my new friends again soon. A thank you to all who made me feel so welcome and for sharing your love of our underground world with me.

Till next time, Happy Caving!

Book Reviews: California Caves

By Bill Mixon

Hidden Beneath the Mountains: Caves of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Joel Despain. Cave Books, Dayton, Ohio; 2003. 8.5 by 11 inches, 128 pages, softbound. ISBN 0-939748-56-8. \$14.95.

Author Joel Despain is the Cave Specialist at those two national parks, and he has written a very nice book on the caves of the parks, which contain some of California's best-known caves, including Lilburn, Soldier's, and show cave Crystal Sequoia. There are color illustrations on most pages, many of them very nice color photographs of beautiful formations. Each of the major caves or cave areas in the parks has a chapter in which the caves and the history of their exploration are described. Embedded at various places are discussions of cave geology and biology that are generally very good, although I don't agree with Despain's definition of troglophile. There are a number of cave maps. One does not expect a detailed map of twenty-mile Lilburn in such a book, but the reader might have rather seen conventionally detailed maps of smaller caves, such as Crystal and Soldier's, instead of simple outline maps, which are color-coded for elevation, unnecessarily, since profile maps of those caves are also included. Needless to say, the conservation message is good. The price is very reasonable for such a heavily illustrated book. Recommended.

Gems of the Golden State: The 15 Best Caves to Visit in California. Ann Bosted. Donning, Virginia Beach, Virginia; 2003. 7 by 10 inches, 64 pages, softbound. ISBN 1-57864-235-3. About \$12.

Although a caver may be disappointed, it is not surprising that this booklet turns out to be a guide to the show caves of California, plus a few small or easy wild caves where self-guided visits are allowed. It is the sort of book you'll have to find in a show-cave gift shop or at a cave-book vendor; it is out of stock

at Amazon and Barnes and Noble doesn't list it at all. Most of the space is occupied by color photos by Peter and Ann Bosted. Many are very nice, but many others are not up to the quality they are capable of.

Range of Light, Realms of Darkness: A Guidebook for the 2003 NSS Convention. Merrilee Proffitt, editor. NSS, Huntsville, Alabama; 2003. 8.5 by 11 inches, 256 pages, softbound. ISBN 1-879961-21-0. For sale by the NSS Bookstore to NSS members only, \$15 plus \$6 shipping.

The title above is from the title page; the cover title is different (shame!). Besides the obligatory descriptions of a variety of California caves, including limestone and marble caves, lava tubes, sea caves, and caves in mud, this book contains a lot of other stuff. There is a nice chapter on the geologic history of the mountains named for snow. There are road logs and descriptive material for geology field trips, both on the west side of the range at Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks and on the east side around the Long Valley caldera and Mono Lake. These trips could be done self-guided. There is material on the history of caving in California. And so on. The result of all this is that the cave descriptions don't start until page 185. Accompanying the book is an envelope containing nine cave maps and a geology map for one of the field trips; all of these things could and should have been bound in to prevent loss. There is also a CD containing some programs of color slides and, allegedly, a virtual-reality tour of Hurricane Crawl Cave. To view the latter, you'll need to rock your computer boat by installing QuickTime VR. My computer systems always seem to have very little freeboard, so I didn't try it. A modest number of layout and typography glitches might charitably be attributed to the last-minute rush that convention guidebooks always seem to involve. Certainly worth the price, if you're interested in the geology of the Sierra Nevada or the caves of California.

**INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN
DEEP AND PUNKIN' NATURE PRESERVE
CARTA VALLEY, TEXAS**

September 12, 2004

Version 2.7

The Interim Management Plan for the Deep and Punkin' Nature Preserve was prepared by the Management Planning Committee and was approved by the Texas Cave Management Association on September 12, 2004. The Members of Deep and Punkin' Nature Preserve Management Planning committee were:

Geary Schindel, Committee Chairman
Jerry Atkinson
Rune Burnett
Terry Holsinger
Julie Jenkins
Joe Mitchell
Linda Palit, (TCMA Chairman)
Ron Ralph
William Russell
George Veni

The following Interim Management Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) at a regular meeting in Austin on September 12, 2004. The intent of this plan is to provide the terms of access to the preserve, as well as to protect the preserve and preserve the good relationship the TCMA has established with the neighboring landowners and members of the Carta Valley community. Please observe the rules so that all may enjoy this unique and beautiful natural site. Contact the Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve, Preserve Manager if you have any questions or recommendations in helping to better manage this preserve.

The Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve

The Texas Cave Management Association has noted the absence of caves open to visitation for recreational caving in Texas and committed to acquiring preserves to meet this demand. On September 10, 2004, the TCMA acquired the Punkin and Deep Nature Preserve. We are fortunate to have found a property containing not one, but two exceptional caves. However, this is a dry and fragile landscape and the two caves are very special biologically and geologically. The TCMA Board of Directors decided that it was appropriate to develop a management plan to

protect these resources for current and future generations of cavers. While we hope that you will visit and enjoy this great property, be aware that there are those that have come before, and there are those that will come after you. Please respect the preserve and leave it better than you found it.

Management of the Preserve

The management of the preserve will be carried out by the Preserve Manager. The Preserve Manager will be nominated by the TCMA President and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Only the TCMA Board of Directors may dismiss the Preserve Manager. The Preserve Manager may be advised by and delegate tasks to a preserve management committee that is composed of volunteers selected by the Preserve Manager with advice and consent of the TCMA Board. However, the Preserve Manager is ultimately responsible for the preserve. Questions or suggestions on management of the preserve should be submitted to the Preserve Manager

Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve Access and Use Policy

PRESERVE ACCESS - Access to the preserve will be available during the dates and periods determined and announced by the Preserve Manager. There may be some dates when the preserve closed to visitation. These dates and reasons will be posted as far in advance as possible.

RESERVATIONS - Reservations must be made in advance before visiting the preserve. Reservations may be made by contacting the Preserve Manager by phone or email. The reservation should include the name of the Trip Leader responsible for the group along with the approximate group size, dates, duration and nature of the visit (preserve management, recreation, exploration, survey, scientific, camping with off site caving, etc). The Preserve Manager will issue a visitation permit that must be displayed in the visitors' car dashboard while on the preserve.

TRIP LEADER – All trips to the preserve must have a Trip Leader. The Trip Leader is responsible for the actions of the people they lead to the preserve. A Trip Leader must be a TCMA member and approved by the Preserve Manager. The Trip Leader must provide a short trip report within two weeks of the visit detailing the caves

visited, names of all visitors, and any problems encountered.

CONSERVATION OR MAINTENANCE WORK REQUIREMENTS

- Past land activities have not necessarily been directed toward the best land stewardship ethic. We are asking that all visitors to the preserve practice good conservation ethics by performing a conservation or maintenance task while at the site. A list of tasks or projects will either be given to the trip leader with their permit or selected from a list posted on the preserve Kiosk. Conservation work may also be performed on neighboring preserve with owner permission.

LEAVE NO TRACE ETHIC – A Leave No Trace Ethic is in effect for the preserve.

VEHICLE ACCESS/ROAD EASEMENT - Vehicle access from Carta Valley to the preserve shall be limited to the most direct right of way across the private ranches to the TCMA preserve. The ranch road leading to the preserve is not owned by TCMA and the easement does not allow for access to neighboring property for any reason. The ranch road to the preserve is rough, and currently, only high clearance and 4 wheel drive vehicles will make it to the preserve. The road to the preserve includes a rocky steep hill and areas of deep ruts. We do not have permission to leave cars parked along the easement. Travel along the ranch roads during wet conditions can cause severe damage to the road and vehicles.

In addition, the road to the cabin also provides access to neighboring preproperties. Please do not block the main road through the preserve. The Preserve Manager reserves the right to cancel trips if travel on the road may result in excessive damage.

The TCMA does not have an easement or permission to drive on the road located to the west of the preserve that can be used to access Punkin Cave. If you must drive to Punkin Cave, please use the road by the cabin. This road will not be passable during wet weather and we do not recommend travel on this road 24-48 hours after a heavy rain.

Vehicles may only use existing flagged roads on the preserve. ATV and motorcycle use on the preserve may occur by permission of the Preserve Manager.

A road log to the preserve can be provided by the Preserve Manager to the Trip Leader.

CAMPING - Camping is permitted in the vicinity of the cabin. Please practice Leave No Trace Camping practices and keep noise to a minimum to avoid disturbing other visitors.

CABIN - Currently, the cabin is in need of repair and may not be used for camping. However, TCMA intends to open the cabin to camping in the near future. The Preserve Manager will determine when that will occur. The cabin may be used for cooking, meetings, and relaxing; however, the toilet system is not functioning and can not be used.

CAMPFIRES - Campfires are allowed only in existing fire rings, and no fires are allowed during dry or windy conditions. No green wood may be collected for campfires.

FIREARMS - Firearms, BB Guns, Paintball guns, bows, crossbows, explosives, and other implements of death or destruction may not be used on the preserve without the written permission of the Preserve Manager.

HUMAN WASTE - A latrine has been provided by TCMA and must be used for all fecal matter. The soil is thin and there is little capacity to absorb waste. One person's private latrine might be someone else's campsite a week later. If you can't use an outdoor privy, don't visit the site.

SOLID WASTE - Anything brought to the preserve that is considered trash must be removed from the preserve upon leaving. This includes charcoal ash, paper, food scraps, etc. as it will attract mice, rats, snakes, skunks, hogs, wild dogs, vermin, or even other cavers.

WATER - Do not expect to find any water on the preserve. In addition, we do not have the right to any sources of water from any surrounding properties. Please bring all of the water needed during your visit which includes enough to extinguish any fires you may build. Extra water may be placed in two storage tanks at the site.

PUNKIN CAVE - Punkin Cave is closed during bat maternity season. Generally, this is the spring and summer months. Specific dates will be posted.

CLOSURE OF SENSITIVE AREAS - Some areas within Punkin and Deep Cave may be closed

because of unusual or delicate formations and areas of active survey that have not had a resource inventory. Areas of restricted access will be identified with flagging and notes. Please note that more than 1 mile of cave is open in Deep Cave and that as areas are assessed, they will be inventoried and will generally be opened for visitation as quickly as possible. To help preserve the cave, those restricted areas should not be entered. The TCMA has an active mapping project. If you would like to assist with this project, please contact the Preserve Manager.

LARGE GROUPS - All large groups (over three vehicles or twelve people) need to make reservations at least two weeks in advance. To prevent problems with the neighbors whose land has to be crossed to reach the preserve, and prevent adverse impacts to the caves, the Preserve Manager will generally limit the number of visitors on popular weekends to no more than 24 people entering Deep Cave. There are no restrictions to Punkin Cave during the season the cave is open for visitation. If a sufficient number of trip leaders are available to provide proper guidance, the number of visitors to the cave can be increased during special occasions. A ratio of 5 non-TCMA members to each TCMA member entering the cave is encouraged.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY - The preserve and associated caves may not be used for any type of commercial activity or purpose including guided or commercial caving. Any activity with a registration fee or paid guide, or that is included as part of any promotion (no matter how worthy or cave-related), must obtain permission in advance from the TCMA Board of Directors before using the preserve. The request should be directed through the Preserve Manager who will discuss the issue with the Board of Directors.

UNAUTHORIZED VISITORS - Unauthorized visitors encountered on the preserve should be reported to the Preserve Manager in the trip report. Unauthorized visitors should be encouraged to leave the preserve.

RESOURCE DAMAGE - Any visitor observed damaging the caves or preserve or threatening visitors should be reported immediately to the county sheriff and then reported to the Preserve Manager. The preserve is served by 911 emergency services. Cell phone service is sometimes available at the cabin. The closest private phone is located at the ranch house located at the intersection of Highway 377 and

the ranch road.

PRESERVE MODIFICATION - Modification of the caves or preserve, including placement of bolts or other artificial anchors is not allowed without permission in advance from the Preserve Manager. There are many improvements to be made on the preserve. Any improvements or modifications to the preserve must have permission from and coordination with the Preserve Manager.

COLLECTION PERMITS - The collection or removal of plants, animals, minerals or cultural artifacts, including scientific specimens, is not allowed without a collection permit from the Preserve Manager.

REPORT OF PRESERVE MANAGER - The Preserve Manager will make a yearly written report to the TCMA Board of Directors regarding the condition and visitation of the preserve. The annual report will be presented to the board at the TCMA Annual Board Meeting. At the request of the Board, the project manager will give periodic updates either verbally or in writing as requested.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN - The Preserve Manager and their designees have full authority to enforce the TCMA Interim Management Plan outlined herein, which may include removal of persons in violation of the policy by law enforcement personnel. In addition, the Preserve Manager, with the approval of the Board of Directors, may also act to enforce the Access and Use Policy, as an agent of the TCMA, in a court of law. The Board of Directors may also temporarily or permanently ban persons from entering the preserve. Actions and decisions of the Preserve Manager may be appealed to the TCMA Board of Directors at either the next scheduled meeting or by convening an emergency meeting at the discretion of the TCMA President.

REVIEW OF INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN - The TCMA Board of Directors may modify this Interim Management Plan at any time at a regular, special, or emergency meeting of the Board of Directors. The TCMA President may make changes to the Interim Management Plan which will become effective immediately and will be in effect until the next meeting of the TCMA Board of Directors. At that point, the TCMA Board must either accept or reject the modification. The TCMA Board of Directors will review the Interim Management Plan at least once a year.

**INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN
DEEP AND PUNKIN CAVE NATURE PRESERVE
CARTA VALLEY, TEXAS**

SHORT VERSION

September 12, 2004

1. **Access** to the preserve will be available during the dates and periods determined and announced by the Preserve Manager.
2. **Reservations** must be made in advance before visiting the preserve by the Preserve Manager.
3. All trips to the preserve must have a **Trip Leader**.
4. All visitors are asked to practice good conservation practices and to **perform a conservation or maintenance task** while at the site.
5. **Leave No Trace** Ethic is in effect for the

- preserve.
6. The TCMA has an **easement** to the preserve. We do not have a right to leave the easement or to park cars along the easement.
 7. **Camping** is permitted in the vicinity of the cabin.
 8. Camping in the **cabin** is off limits until needed repairs are preformed.
 9. **Campfires** may only be built in existing fire rings.
 10. Please use the **latrine** provided at the preserve.
 11. Do not leave any **trash** on the preserve.
 12. **Water** is not available on the preserve. Please bring all your own water.
 13. **Punkin Cave is closed** during the bat maternity season.
 14. Please obey the **closure notices** located on flagging in certain parts of Deep Cave until a resource inventory can be performed.
 15. **Group size** should not exceed more than 24 people entering Deep Cave. A ratio of no

- more than 5 non-TCMA members to each TCMA member/trip leader is encouraged.
16. The cave and preserve may not be used for any **commercial activities** without direct permission of the TCMA Board.
 17. **Unauthorized visitors** should be asked to leave and reported to the preserve manager. If they are damaging resources or posing a threat to visitors, they should be reported to the county sheriff.
 18. **Preserve Modifications** should only be performed with permission of the Preserve Manager.
 19. **Collection** of any plants, animals, minerals, or cultural artifacts requires a collection permit from the Preserve Manager.

2004 Texas Cavers Reunion

Flat Creek Ranch October 16-17, 2004

www.oztotl.com/tcr

Come one, come all, y'all are invited to the 27th Annual Texas Cavers Reunion. This year, we will be back at the popular Flat Creek Ranch located near Pedernales Falls State Park.

Be sure to join the fun...

- Caving—OK, maybe there won't be real caving but at least you have to go underground to reach the creek.
- Swimming, hot tub, and sauna—Flat Creek flows next to the campsite and provides a lovely spot to cool off during the day, after a soak in the hot tub, or a steamy round in the sauna. The setting is scenic and refreshing.
- Competitions
 - o Rope climbing
 - o Cable Ladder Climbing
 - o Speleolympics
- Great food—On Saturday evening, a vast feast will be put on. Cooks will be working to make sure that wonderful food will be served. There will be a wide variety of foods that will satisfy the carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores in the group.
- Vendors
- Live music
- and best of all...lots of fun times.

The Fine Print:

- Please remember to bring your own reusable eating utensils to the Grand Feast and to come

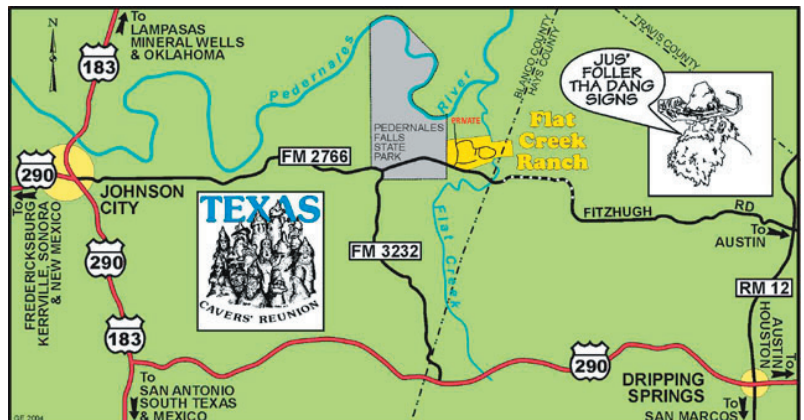
prepared to take your garbage home.

- Well-behaved dogs, friends, and family members are welcome, in that order; those that may tend to be obnoxious should be left elsewhere.
- Port-a-Potties will be provided.
- As a convenience to cavers and in support of the Texas Region of the NSS, the TSA will be collecting dues for the 2005 membership year. If you are not a TSA member, this is a very good opportunity to join and to show your support for the organization that cares about cavers and caving in Texas. The *TEXAS CAVER*, and the many caving Projects are obvious benefits provided to you and other cavers by the TSA. The TSA provides many other benefits that aren't so obvious--please join and support the TSA.
- The Texas Cave Management Association will hold a business meeting on Sunday at 9 a.m., and the TSA will hold their business meeting afterwards, at approximately 10 a.m. Anyone

may attend these meetings but only members may vote.

- Vendors of caving equipment and publications will be set up.
- The TCR staff is not in the police business. That means everyone should police themselves and those in their clan. In other words...you are responsible for the behavior of your children and your guests.
- Using Common Sense and Common Courtesy is the best policy.
- Remember, this is primarily a caver event. People who will contribute to the general craziness are encouraged to attend, those who will detract are discouraged.

See y'all there!





the Texas Caver

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