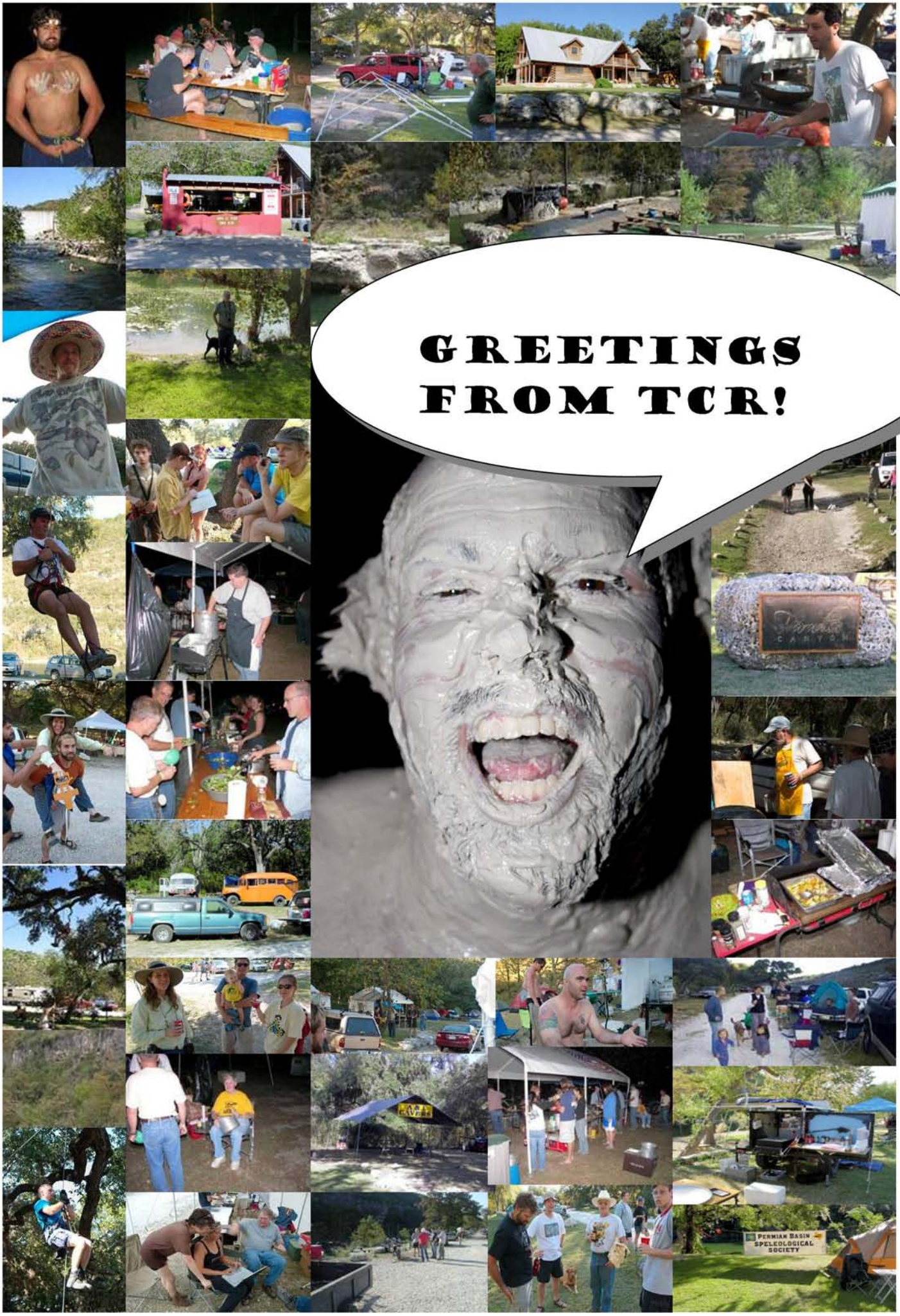

The Texas Caver - 4th Quarter 2007

The TEXAS CAVER

Written by Texas Cavers FOR Texas Cavers

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The TEXAS CAVER

October— December 2007 - Vol. 53, Number 4

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TCR '07 at Paradise Canyon Photos, featuring a "Cast of Thousands" by Mark Alman, Dale Barnard, Bill Bentley, Mike Flannigan, Butch Fralia, Gregg Geist, David Ochel, and Travis Scott.

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

Donna Grace Mosesmann

June 7, 1942 - Sept 11, 2007

Submitted by Mike Walsh, The Texas Cave Conservancy, and all who new and loved Donna.

September 11, 2007 Texas lost a very special caver, Donna Mosesmann to cancer. Today, a young, healthy Donna is in a wonderful place surrounded by caver friends that preceded her. They are even probably planning a great caving trip together. Floyd Collins may even join in on the trip.

Many of you know that Donna was a Director of the Texas Cave Conservancy. You may not know that she was a founder of both the TCC CAVE DAY and the TCC Winter Conference. Both events have proven to be successful thanks due to a large part through her hard work and commitment. Donna will be remembered through her caving contributions and through who she was. I will remember Donna, always, as my friend. This special issue of the TCC-NEWS is dedicated to our friend, Donna Mosesmann.

The gracious lady spoke of facing death from pancreatic cancer as another great adventure in a fascinating life. With her firm Christian faith, this attitude came easily. She was born Donna Grace Gates in Detroit Michigan to parents Ralph Christopher Gates, a Ford Motor Co. analyst and his wife Evelyn Cecelia Brietka Gates. As a girl Donna experienced strong religious feelings. She attended Capital University in Columbus Ohio planning a career in the Lutheran Church. In 1962 she fell in love and married Siegfried (Sig) Mosesmann, a vibrant young man from Colombia South America. She became a military wife, and in postings across the USA the couple raised three girls, Diana, Miriam and Amy. In 1992 Sig died of heart failure in a bicycle rally in Wichita Falls, Texas. Donna was very proud that despite her husband's death all three daughters finished college.

She herself acquired a BS at Midwestern State in Wichita Falls and attended graduate school in Dallas. She worked as a Speech Pathologist in north Texas and Dallas area public schools. In 1996, invited by friend Jim McLane, she moved to southwest Houston. She joined the Fort Bend County public schools, and for 10 years provided speech therapy to young and often disadvantaged children. Donna was an enthusiastic church worker and her good Spanish language skills allowed her to help immigrants. She was known for personal charity, patience, tolerance, and respect for people of all races and cultures. Politically, she took sides on issues that benefited the poor, the helpless and underprivileged.

Two of Donna's Daughters

Always active and athletic, at the age of 50 she embraced the unusual hobby of cave exploring. She was a member of several caving clubs around the state and in the summers worked as a volunteer in Carlsbad Caverns. She served as a director of the Texas Cave Conservancy. She especially liked camping, reading, flowers, working puzzles, and music (she was a competent clarinet player.) She enjoyed museums and travel. Comfortable in any social setting, her inquisitive mind, and intelligence attracted friends and admirers of all ages.

She could sense the needs of those with problems, evaluate situations, and offer useful advice. She loved pets and for several years cared for Darwin, a 5-foot lizard who had a private room with his own TV!

Friends remember Donna as a beautiful and petite woman who seemed much younger than her actual age. She and her loving companion, local engineer James C. McLane III shared the finer aspects of our human experience. She is survived by her three daughters and their families: Diana Allensworth with husband Ken and sons Tyler and Clayton of Wichita, Kansas, Miriam Simmons with husband Raymond and children John-Cole, Elizabeth and Ethan of Montgomery, Alabama, and Amy Barr with husband Kevin and children Lauren, Luke and Logan in Spring, Texas. She has one sister, Cheri Hill with son Lyle of Houston, and cousins Joyce Roberts of Ypsilanti, Michigan and Lee Roberts of Sandlake, Michigan. She doted over her grandchildren who range in age from 1 to 20 years old. These kids are blessed to have inherited from Donna, in various degrees, the noblest traits God has bestowed on our human race.

More about Donna may be seen on line at www.mem.com. A memorial service was held Saturday, Sept. 22 at 2 PM in the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1311 Holman, at Caroline. Interment of ashes will be at Forest Park in the Woodlands Cemetery. Gifts in Donna's memory should be directed to her favorite 501(C)3 organization, the Texas Cave Conservancy, PO Box 1164, Cedar Park, Texas 78613.

Donna Caving (Honey Creek?)

Gordon Birkhimer, Donna, Mike Walsh, Cat Kennedy & Gary Napper at the 2006 NSS Group Award Ceremony in Bellingham, WA

Caving by Mike Walsh

Donna started caving in 1993 when she joined the North Texas Speleological Society in Wichita Falls, Texas. I did not meet her until planning started for the 1994 NSS Convention-Howdy

Party. From the beginning, Donna stepped forward to assist. She worked in a number of the other NSS Convention activities. Donna caved in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and in the Republic of Mexico. Her Spanish abilities and her good nature made her a "must" for any Mexico caving trip. She worked with the CRF, Grotto Projects, the Caverns of Sonora restoration activities and she helped build the Texas Cave Conservancy. In addition, she expressed interest in getting more involved with the Texas Cave Management Association.

Donna with Bill Larson and Mike Walsh

Her love and commitment to teaching and public education led to the start of the Texas Cave Conservancy CAVE DAY. Along with Bill Larson, Jeanette Larson, George Nincehelser, Mike Walsh, Spencer Wood, Donna was one of the CAVE DAY founders in 2004. In 2005, Donna was elected to the Texas Cave Conservancy Board of Directors. In 2007, along with Bill Larson, John Worsfold, Mike Walsh, Donna was one of the founders of the TCC-Winter Conference. Over seventy-five cavers attended this event for new cavers. Donna conducted a Cave Restoration Workshop in the newly acquired TCC -Avery Ranch Cave. This year, over 750 visitors have seen the cave.

Her cave related public education work will not end with Donna. The Texas Cave Conservancy will devote a third of our efforts to cave related education thanks largely to her example. Donna will be missed however, her spirit will live on.

Donna and Darwin

What a wonderful life! By Martha McArthur

What a wonderful life she had! She has lovely daughters, grandchildren, a partner, and many friends. Her church, her work, her caving led her down many paths and she touched many people. We are all better off by having known her. I will always remember her and her smile.

I met her in Petrolia, Texas, while she was a speech therapist at our elementary school. She traveled to many schools in North Texas and only visited Petrolia a few times per week. She heard my caving stories in the lounge, while I was showing off weekend bruises and planning new trips. I had just been introduced to Don Denton through one of my students who dared me to go caving and used "guano" as a cuss word in class.

Don's mentality was to go caving every weekend so he could get through the work week. Seemed like a good plan to me. Donna had lost her husband to a heart attack while he was riding in the "Hotter than Hell" bike race in Wichita Falls. She was both shocked and mad at being left alone. Getting through each work week was hard for her, also.

After she joined the North Texas Speological Society in Wichita Falls in 1993, no one was safe from her harassing, nagging, and pushing us to go caving. I can clearly hear her say, "Let's stop talking about and go,". Paul Rodriquez, Joel Williams, Clay Wages, Vickie Williams, Bruce Freeby, Terry Anderson, Gary Mahan, Bill Stephens, and others were often talked into planning trips. If you told a good cave story, she would get you to take her there.

Here first vertical cave was Gunsight Cave in the Guads. Terry and Bruce took her and rigged the skylight so she could drop down into the cave. It is basically an open shelter type cave. The hike to the cave has always been named a "death march" because of the distance from camp. She was ecstatic to have been on rope.

Clay Wages and Bill Stephens helped train Donna on SRT, and she enjoyed any opportunity to practice climbing. We worked under the bridge at the Wichita River plus took an old grain elevator and helped the local climbing club put in a climbing wall. Donna also volunteered each year to work the portable climbing wall at Falls Fest.

Donna went to the National Cave Convention in Brackettville, TX, in 1994, where she had a great time dancing and caving.

Donna went to Summer Carlsbad Restoration with me many times. Once we were going into the Hall of the White Giants for the reward trip after hauling rock all day, and she thanked me for the Birthday Present. I wondered what she meant, and she said that day (June7th) was her birthday and she was so happy to be at the Caverns and going into a spectacular cave.

We had a great time taking Mike Queen to White City one evening, her new Jeep caught on fire, the wiring harness shorted out because we had spilled a gallon of water on the carpet.

Leaving the Texas Cavers' Reunion one year three of us were following each other when I stopped the in the first car and asked Donna to back up so we could turn around, she promptly backed in to Sheree Mahan's car.

Spanish speaking Donna was responsible for me getting a traffic ticket in San Luis Potosi when she translated what the officer said after he stopped me for running a red light. If she had let me play dumb, I might have been able to drive off without the fine. Later, I didn't feel so bad about the scratch my duffel bag put on her jeep roof.

One time while leaving for a caving trip from San Antonio, she manage to lock us out of Oren Tranbarger's house, with our car keys still inside. We had to knock on a neighbor's door to call Oren at work to come let us in.

We had a great time in Bustamante, Real de Catorce, and San Luis Potosi. I have some video Joel shot in Bustamante when we did Palmetto, I will see if I can get it on a DVD. We put pennies and pesos on the train track. There are lots of miles and smiles when thinking of Donna.

Donna Stories by Jim McLane

Donna and Jim McLane

<u>A Refugee Tale</u>

When the hurricane Katrina refugees from New Orleans began to flock into town, Donna wanted badly to help. She learned she had to take a training course to qualify to work with the relief.

After taking the course, the Red Cross said they would telephone when she they needed her. She waited a two or three days and no call, so she decided to take action. She just showed up down at the George R. Brown Convention Center, the building which had been turned into a giant shelter. Well it seems that the local charities had divided up the labor into so many days for the Baptists to there, so many for the Catholics, so many for the Jews, etc. Now when Donna just showed up it was Moslem day! She fit right in and had a wonderful experience. Later she served with other groups, but always without ever a concern over who she might be working alongside.

The Chicken Plant

A large metallic building was springing up across the street from Donna's apartment. No one knew anything about it and the construction permits were intentionally vague. Suddenly it was discovered that the owner was building a plant to process and package 10,000 pounds of chicken parts every day! The local civic associations were upset, but of course there is no zoning in Houston. We attended meetings of outraged citizens, but all the younger folks insisted that nothing could be done since the plant was 90% finished. A few older folks, including Donna didn't agree and she decided to take action.

A little research uncovered the fact that the chicken plant builder was also part owner of a fancy Houston restaurant. I paid a visit to a joke shop and bought 6 realistic-looking plucked rubber chickens. Donna and several ladies started picketing in front of the fancy restaurant wearing close pins on their noses and carrying the fake chicken carcasses on the ends of poles. They soon were featured on the local TV news. The other owners of the fancy restaurant put big-time pressure on the builder of the chicken plant to abandon his goal. They would do anything to get the ladies and their rubber chickens off TV. The chicken plant owner went bankrupt and the structure eventually became a warehouse.

A Real Teacher

Donna worked in Dallas in the Rowlett schools, possibly the richest, upper-class predominantly white school district in Texas. She took me to see her school. It was a real Taj Mahal with tile floors and electric eyes on the bathroom fixtures. When she moved to down to southwest Houston she went to work in the opposite environment: predominantly Black and Hispanic schools in poor neighborhoods. She was one of the few white teachers in her school so she was noticed and remembered by all the kids.

On many occasions we would be shopping in a store and some little kid would run up to Donna and hug her. The kid would be bubbling with excitement and dragging her mother over to meet Donna. I believe she was probably one of the first white people these kids met away from the influence of their parents. The extreme affection they showed for Donna made me proud that she was such an influence.

Vaya Con Dios, Donna Grace Mosesmann!

AMAZING MAZE CAVE – 17-19 FEBRUARY 2007

Submitted By Philip Rykwalder and Peter Sprouse

Participants: Bill Bentley, Aimee Beveridge, Stephen Bryant, Geoff Hoese, Alexander Klimchouk, Philip Rykwalder, Geary Schindel, Bev Shade, Vickie Siegel, Peter Sprouse, Bill Stephens, Pete Strickland

Peter Sprouse & Alexander Klimchouk at camp.
Photo by Philip Rykwalder

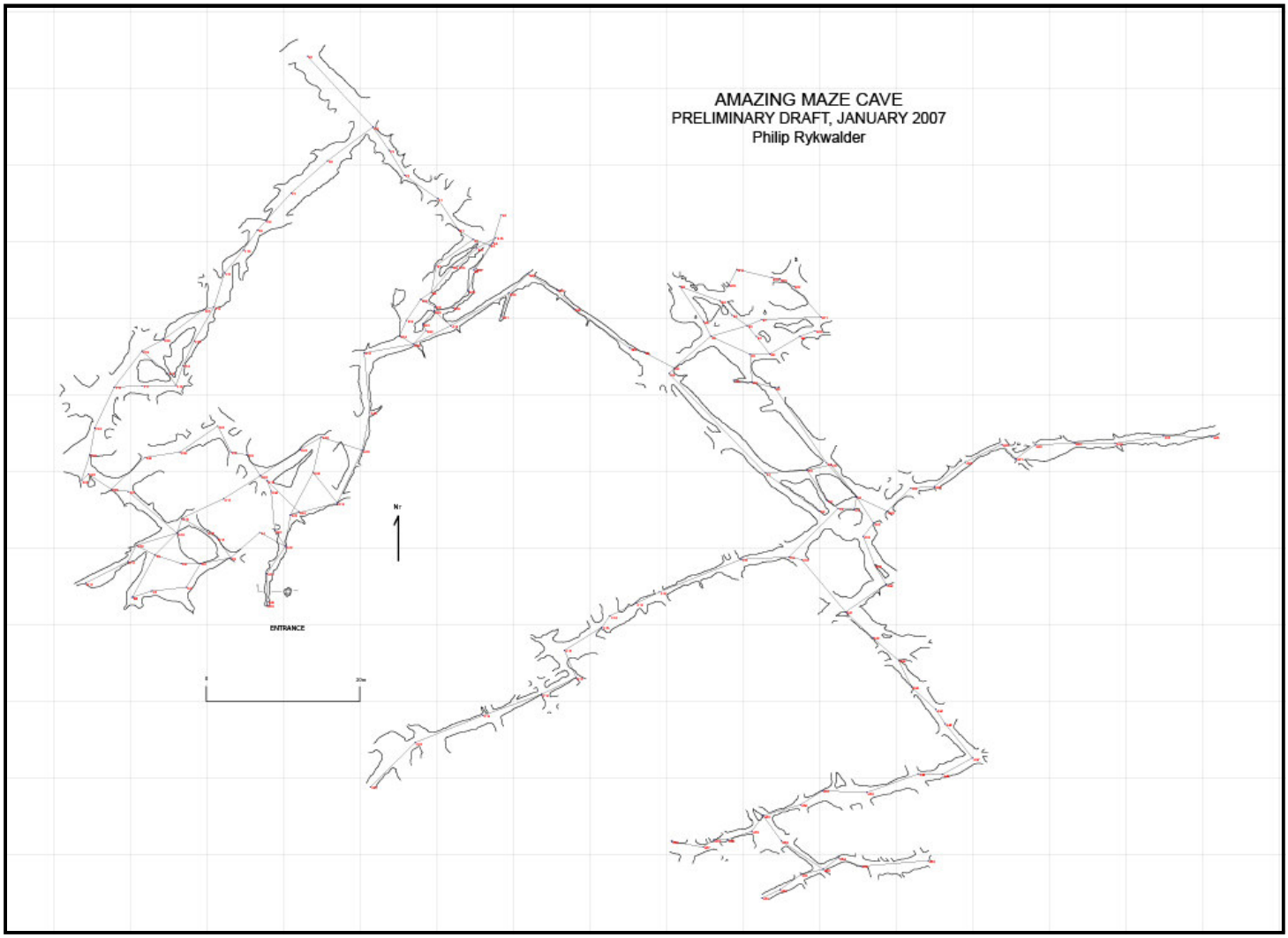
This goal of this trip was to continue with the resurvey of Amazing Maze Cave, and to provide a chance for visiting Ukrainian cave geologist, Alexander Klimchouk, to see the cave. Since this was a 3-day holiday weekend we would be able to field mapping teams both Saturday and Sunday. Cavers arrived at the campsite throughout Friday night and bedded down during a blustery West Texas night.

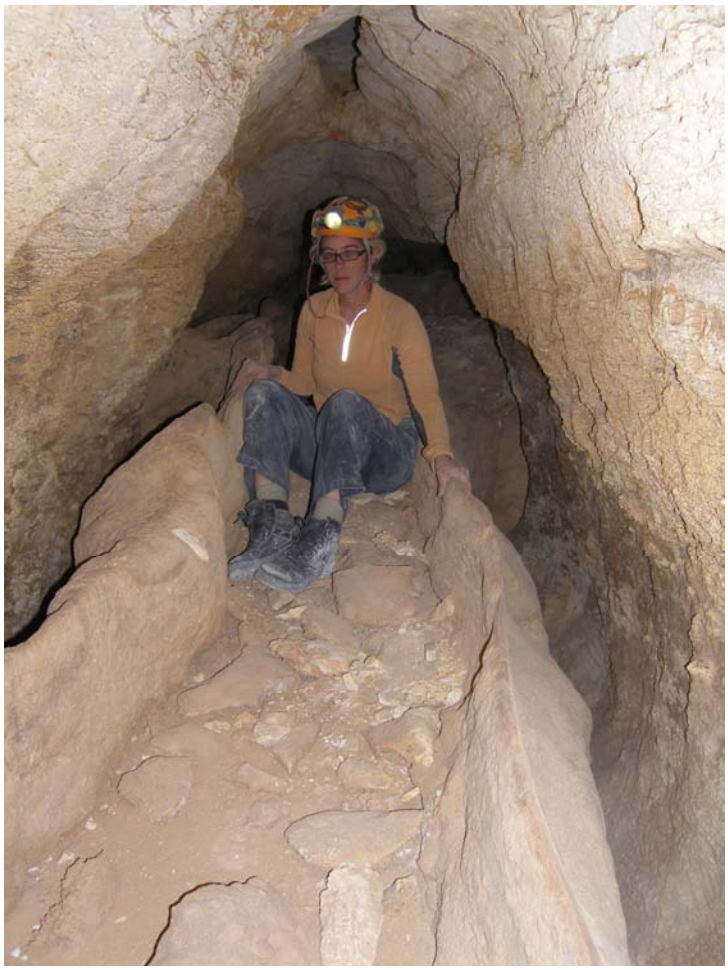
Bev Shade sketching .
Photo by Alexander Klimchouk

On Saturday four survey teams were organized, two for the East Maze and two for the West Maze. Aimee, Geoff, and Pete continued working in the area just north of the entrance, but made a short day of it as Geoff and Aimee were heading on toward Big Bend that day (to get married it turns out!). Peter and Stephen returned to where Peter had mapped the previous month, the vicinity of Dirt Bike Junction, Hunter's Hollow, and the Party Room, which at that time represented the northwest edge of the survey. They mapped several loops off of Hunter's Hollow then followed a passage to the northwest. This lowered to a crawl and teed into a larger passage. They explored to the right eventually reached Dirt Bike Junction via a complex route. They picked one route to survey back to where they'd left off. A final lead was pursued toward the southwest which soon showed signs of being close to the surface. Roots penetrated the roof and cooler air could be felt. It lowered to a crawl that would have to be dug.

In the East Maze Bev and Bill Stephens continued mapping in the area beyond Assumption Junction, off of the maze where Team Beaver had been working the month before. They found one of the long gypsum mounds typical of the cave, but this one was eaten out in the middle, forming a long canoe. Meanwhile Bill Bentley, Alexander, and Geary toured the East Maze looking at the geology.

Philip and Vickie started the first survey of the cave's lower level. Climbing down at a narrow slot near the Origin Room they mapped into a narrow slot passage 6m high that led to the Genesis Room, among the largest rooms found to date in the cave. Continuing into walking passage beyond, Alexander caught up with them at Klimchouk Alley and discussed the cave's genesis, noting hypogenic features of the cave before returning to Bill and Geary. Philip and Vickie placed over 25 stations in the lower level and left many leads going before they returned to map between the Origin Room and the Broken Spoke in the cave's main level. That day they netted over 200m of surveyed passage between the two levels and returned to camp well after nightfall.

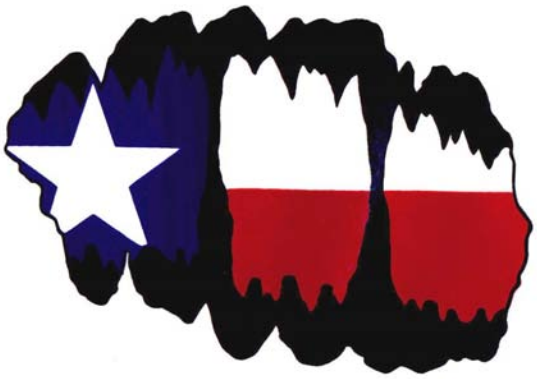




Bev Shade in The Canoe by Peter Sprouse

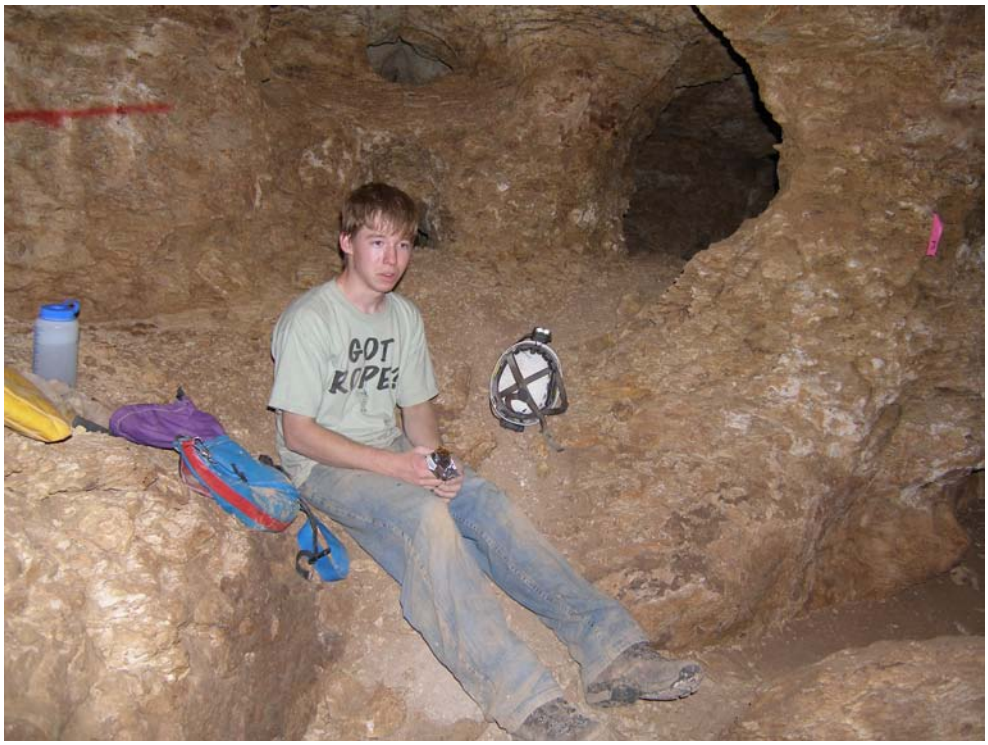
climbed a chimney into an upper level, which was cooler and had plentiful root masses hanging from the ceiling. Trucks could vaguely be heard on I-10, but no open exit could be seen. They backtracked to a canyon which dropped back down to the previous level. They were in a wide passage which contained some interesting gypsum bubbles. Working back toward where they had started the survey, they ran into Bev and Alexander, who dropped out of an upper level to join surveys.

At the weekend's close the cave's surveyed length was extended to over 1800m long and 18m deep with passages developed on three distinct levels. The resurvey of Amazing Maze will be run as a winter project with approximately two trips per year and the next survey trip will likely be in the winter of 2007/2008.



The next day, Sunday, a pared down crew entered the cave, as some people had gone home. Philip and Vickie continued to work the main level of the East Maze, wending their way back and forth, surveying passage west of the Origin Room and pushing to the end of the cave's northeast extent, mapping the Leprosy Junction, Mushroom Junction, Split Pants Junction and the Alcohol Junction along the way. They completed many loops and established a backbone survey for further surveys to connect to in the East Maze.

Bev led Alexander, Peter and Geary to her survey of the day before. Peter and Geary began mapping in a lead trending northeast, which crossed several junction rooms filled with the typical gypsum mounds. Then they



Stephen Bryant prepares to survey in Hunter's Hollow.
Photo by Peter Sprouse

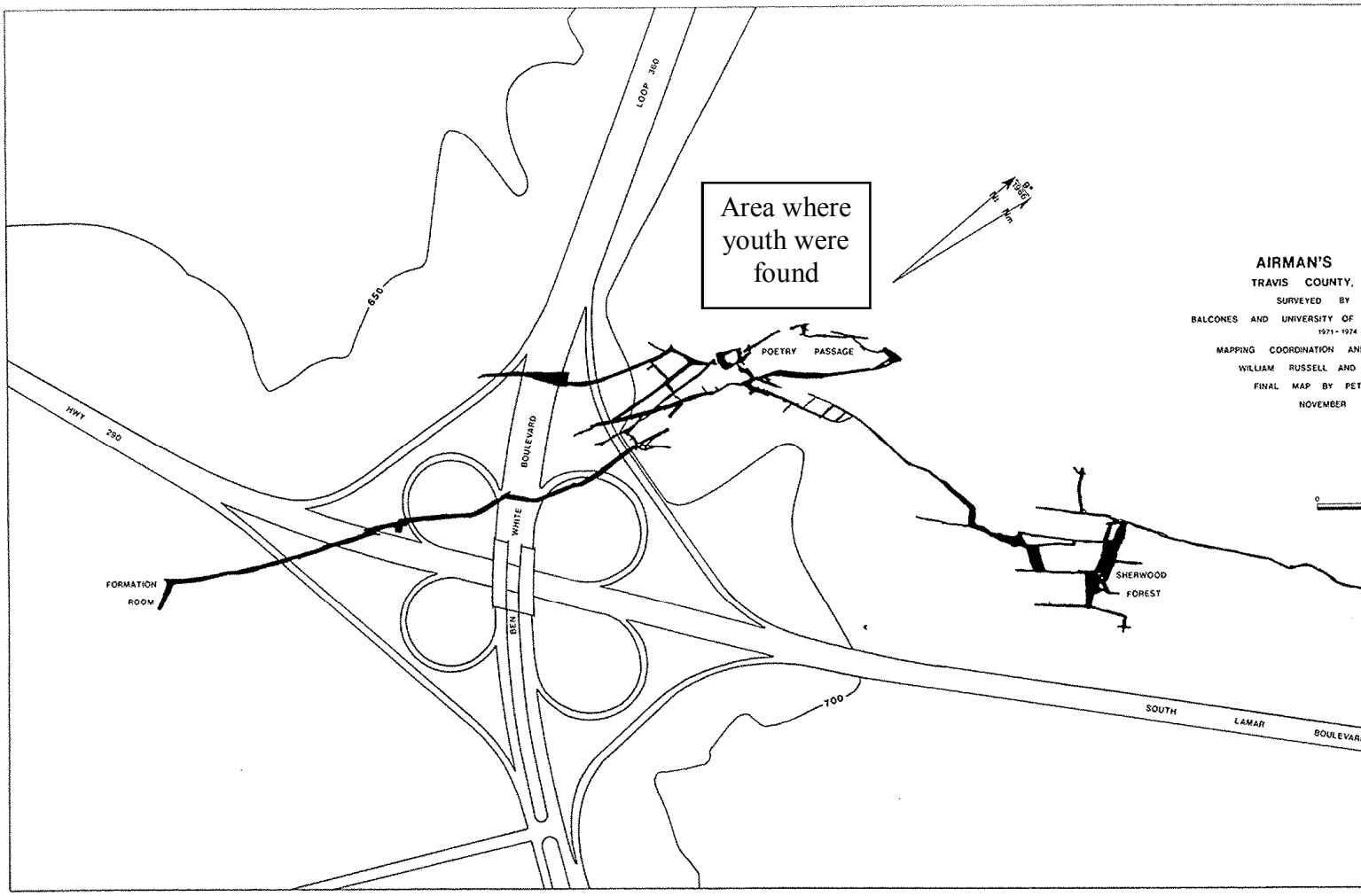
Airmans Cave Rescue— October 14, 2007 Austin, TX

Around 11:00 AM on October 13, 2007 a group of three (two females and one male) entered Airmans Cave in Austin Texas for a recreational caving trip. The plan was to travel to the end of the cave and back. The group had left instructions with a third party to call for help if they had not returned by midnight October 13. Early in the morning on October 14 (approximately 5:30 AM) notification was made to emergency response agencies that the group had failed to return by the pre-specified time.

A Cave Rescue Alarm was initiated by the Austin Fire Department (AFD) and the Austin/ Travis County Emergency Medical System (A/ TCEMS). Upon arrival a rescuer from AFD entered the cave to do a recon and look for clues that the group was still in the cave. The rescuer found a cell phone just inside the entrance and several full bottles of water stashed inside. (The cell phone was later determined to be one of the lost parties.) Eventually the group's vehicle was located at a common parking location for this cave.

The first rescuer happened to be the National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) Regional Coordinator. After conducting the recon trip and exiting the cave he conferred with the incident command post and the Regional Coordinator assumed a liaison role to assist in providing outside caver/cave rescue resources. A decision was made to request local cavers and utilize their expertise and assistance with the search. He started the process of contacting local cavers.

This cave is strictly a horizontal cave, mostly hands and knees/belly crawling passage, with an extremely tight entrance called the key hole. This cave has over 10,000 feet of mapped cave passage. A trip to the back usually takes 12-15 hours round trip by an experienced group. The expected circumstances were that the group was just overdue and was not expected to have any injuries. The cave environment in Airmans is not prone to cause injuries. Though the cave does have sections

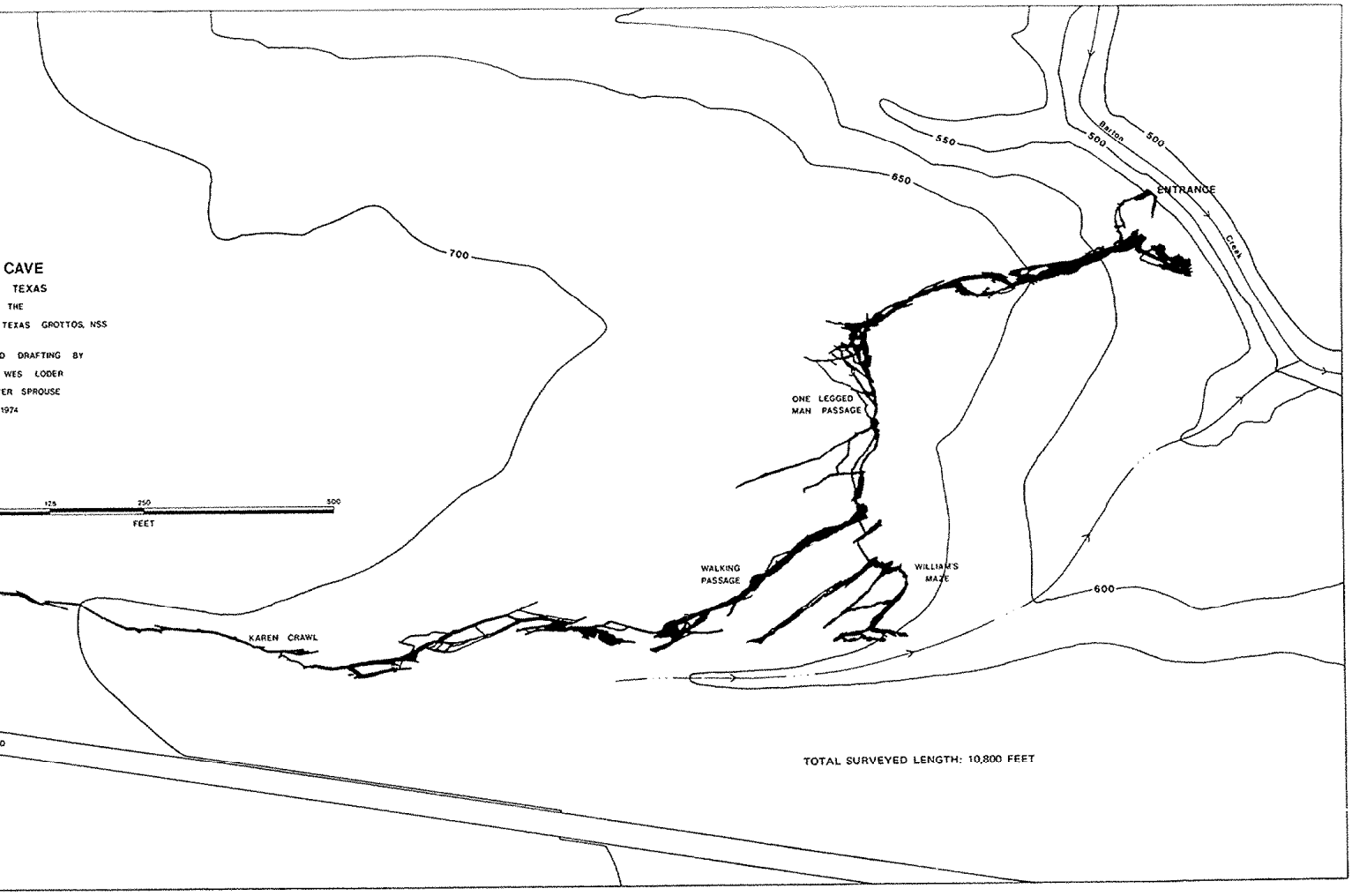


that are very maze-like and inexperienced parties have a tendency to get lost.

AFD and A/TCEMS called back off duty members of their Special Operations sections whom had cave rescue training and were small enough to squeeze into the small entrance. A Communication Team was created to push hard wire communication into the cave. Rescue workers from both agencies assembled teams to stage medical equipment, specialized extrication equipment, food, water and other logistical support items into the cave. Eventually the Communication Team laid over 3000 feet of wire and provided communications from a location that was several hours travel time from the entrance. This provided communication with teams operating inside the cave to the command structure outside. In addition, there were two staging locations set up several hours travel time into the cave. This would allow medical and other logistical items to more expediently be provided to support the operation underground.

Several local cavers arrived shortly after their request. Initially two cavers who had a history of relatively fast trip times in this cave were assigned the task of doing a hasty search. Their main focus was to travel to the back of the cave and return to the communication station, in cave, and give a report. The expected operational period for this group was 8 hours until we expected to hear from them again. Another team of two cavers, one of whom assisted in mapping the cave, were assigned to do a more thorough search. The expectation was they would be able to check all of the side passages looking for the cavers. Not long after that another caver with extensive knowledge of the cave was teamed up with a rescuer from AFD to become another search team. The caver had an excellent knowledge of probable locations where the group could possibly be lost. Eventually this team would locate the lost party.

12 hour operational periods were established. The first operational period was scheduled to end at 6:00 pm that evening. The NCRC Re-



local news coverage from various news agencies including CNN and FOX.

At approximately 4:49 PM a report from inside the cave via the hard wire communications was relayed that the lost party had been found. All three cavers were well rested, hydrated, and able to continue the trek out of the cave under their own power. The search team located the lost party in a maze-like section of the cave called "Poetry Passage". They had gotten lost and spent many hours looking for the way out. The cavers were still several hours from the entrance and eventually the party, with assistance from searchers, reached the cave entrance. All members of the party were in excellent condition and in no need of medical attention.

Many things contributed to the success of this event. Most significantly the ability for the local cavers to integrate so well with the local emergency response personnel proved to be invaluable. Nobody knows caves better than cavers. Additional the lost persons had done many things appropriately when planning the trip. They gave their itinerary to a third party with instructions to call for help should they not return. They took plenty of food and water. As they traveled through the cave they left green leaves to mark their path in an effort to not get lost. Unfortunately for them they got off their path and got lost. The party was not an experienced caving group. Their inexperience may have lead to their getting lost and needing assistance. Though this turned into a relatively big deal the system they put in place worked. They were able to sustain themselves for an extended period of time and help was initiated when they failed to return.

This report has been sent to the American Caving Accidents editor.

As the new National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) Regional Coordinator and an Austin Firefighter I want to send a deep thank you to the Central Texas caving community. I was at the incident from the very begging and it was very clear to me we needed cavers. This is the second incident I have assisted in coordinating since I took the Regional Coordinator's position in May 07. At both incidents cavers where the ones who found the person/persons whom needed help.

Compiled by: DJ Walker
NCRC- South-Central Regional Coordinator
Austin Fire Department- Firefighter
512-751-6010

Follow-up report was submitted by Bill Russell

This report is a supplement to the DJ Walker NCRC report on the Airman's Cave rescue and provides more details of the caver activities during the rescue. Without the overall coordination and resources of the Austin Fire Department and EMS the organized and directed efforts that resulted in an efficient search of the cave would not have been possible.

About 11:00 AM on Saturday morning October 13, 2007, University of Texas Students Jill Baggerman, 19, Jeff Brown, 20, and a female friend, 23, (a UT alumna) entered Airman's Cave in the Barton Creek Greenbelt. They were not experienced cavers, but two of them had visited the cave before, and they were determined to go to the back of the cave. Airman's Cave is a complex of over two miles of mostly small passages entered through a narrow squeeze that discourages all except the small and determined. To reach the back requires traversing about 5000 feet of passage (one way), mostly crawling. The students were well provided for their trip with extra batteries, lights, food and water. They were not using hard hats. They took a supply of green leaves to mark their trail so that they would not get lost, and left word that if they were not back by midnight to call for rescue.

About 5:30 AM the Austin Fire Department received a call that the students had failed to return. They initiated a cave rescue alarm and made an initial recon that found several water bottles and a cell phone stashed just inside the cave entrance; and located the students car at a parking place near the cave. It appeared the students were still in the cave. They decided to call local cavers familiar with the cave and placed a call to Julie Jenkins just before 8:00, and Julie called me.

We started an Airman's Cave call down, calling cavers that were familiar with the cave. First I called Drew Thompson at his house, but his mother said he had just moved and she would get in touch with him and his brother Slone, both veterans of many Airman's trips. Then I called Mike Sisson and left a message on his cell and home phone. Mike spends a lot of time in Airman's and (as a result?) is the fastest crawler in Texas. He holds the record for a trip to the back (4.5 hours), quite extraordinary considering the average time is about 8 to 12 hours. Many first trips by cavers take 20 hours to reach the back and return. After a few

minutes Mike and Drew called back they were on their way after two hours sleep. Julie tried to get Wes Schumacher, finally called his mother who called said she would call friends to wake him up.

With Drew and Slone in hand and Mike and Wes (hopefully) soon on the way, I picked up Julie and we headed to the Command Center the firemen had established at the end of the apartment parking lot above the cave. Bill, Julie, Drew and Slone walked down the steep hill to the cave. At the cave entrance we consulted with the firemen and agreed on assignments. Drew and Slone were designated Search Team 1 and were to head as fast as possible to the back of the cave. Bill and Julie were Search Team 2, we would check side passages up to Sherwood Forest and guide the group of firemen stringing the phone line. Everyone squeezed into the entrance, and headed toward the back. Julie and I checked side passages, and every so often banged rocks on the wall and listened for a response, but no luck. We left rocks and marks in the dirt to guide the phone crew, and everyone so often we would crawl back to make sure they were on track. Just before Karen's Crawl we met Drew and Slone on the way out. They had not found the lost students, and they had checked to the Wire Wiggle; and had no more energy after little sleep and no breakfast. Meanwhile Wes Schumacher had checked in and was placed on stand by; and returned to his house to await developments

The search teams going into the cave were following a trail of fresh green leaves carefully placed at every confusing intersection, and as we went into the cave we became more and more certain the trail had been left by the lost students. Meeting Drew and Slone on the way out was the low point of the rescue, because we thought the lost students had most likely ran out of light in the main passage, and we hoped they were not on the far side of the Wire Wiggle, a small crawl that opened into a complex area at the back of the cave. If they were lost in the back of the cave, it could be a long search.

Then the outlook improved--Team 3, Mike Sisson and Casey Parkitny, a fireman, arrived, fresh and heading for the back. Mike had finally answered his phone and rushed out to the cave. We checked back with the phone crew and found a medical assessment team had arrived at the end of the phone line in a small room about 3000 feet from the entrance, just before Karen's Crawl. We decided this was a good staging area, and followed Mike's team toward the back.

Mike's team pushed through Sherwood Forest and stopped for a short rest at the start of the Wire Wiggle. Mike remembered he once had trouble finding his way in this area as the obscure connection back to Sherwood Forest and the entrance is not obvious, and the Poetry Passage is obvious; so he crawled back into the Poetry Passage and gave a yell, and was answered with "Where over here!" The lost students had been found. They were in good spirits, had food and light, but ran out of water; they had stashed extra water at Sherwood Forest, but that was just out of reach. When first found they asked what time it was and on being informed that it was 4:00 PM one student remarked that she was due at work two hours ago, and she hope they would believe her excuse. Mike's team and the students met Bill and Julie at Sherwood Forest and Bill and Julie rushed back to the phone to send the news the students were safe and on the way out.

Meanwhile, on the surface the firemen called Wes and asked him to form a search team. Wes gathered Sandy Calhoun and returned to the cave and found Edward Gemar and Jordan Silverthorn, cavers who had heard about the rescue and volunteered to help search. Wes vouched that he thought they would be useful and Wes and Sandy were designated Search Team 4, and Ed and Jordan were Team 5. They made it in as far as the Walking Passage before getting the word that the lost were found. They waited in the relatively large walking passage to let the lost students and advance teams pass and then helped derig the cave, removing telephone wire and supplies. The telephone wire was worth the effort as it enabled the searchers in the back of the cave to communicate the lost students had been found and prevented more cavers, Peter Sprouse and Jean Krejca among others, who were next in line to form search teams, from having to crawl half way back only to meet the rescued students crawling out.

One problem that is especially acute with Airman's Cave is novice cavers under-estimates of the time required to reach the back of the cave and return. Even if all had gone well it is unlikely that the students would have been out of the cave by midnight. In this case the problem was addressed by each person in the notification chain reassuring themselves that there really was a problem. The person who noticed they were not back by mid-

night did not call 911 until after 5 AM, then the firemen checked the cave and parking lot, and by the time the cavers were called there was clearly evidence the students were indeed still in the cave and likely having a problem.

The rescue had attracted extraordinary nation-wide media attention, and reporters wanted interviews. As cavers we thought it best to leave the publicity to the firemen who were in charge of the rescue. The coordination with the Firemen had been so smooth we didn't want to say the wrong thing or attract too much attention this late in the proceedings. As one of fire captains returned a students phone he remarked that her employer was amazed to get a fire department captain when he called to find out why she was late to work; the student was relieved; now her employer would believe her.

The rescued students were somewhat reluctant to talk to the press, but after some discussion we had a practice press conference and rehearsed some statements with the students. Their brief statement played well, and they still had energy, even though it was now after dark. We invited them to the next grotto meeting; they will make good cavers.

Despite having no formal agreement between cavers and the Firemen/EMS, both groups worked very well together. The firemen were familiar with Julie Jenkins through practice rescues at Whirlpool and other caves that Julie manages. I was familiar with most of the caves active in Airman's because they were the same ones I went digging with. We all agreed that we need a more formal call down list.

Bill Russell

PS. Many of the firemen/EMS have cave rescue training, and were experts on moving injured cavers up a drop, but were too small to fit into the Airman's cave entrance. This resulted in the firemen having to use all their small cavers for the entire duration of the rescue, necessitating several thousand dollars of overtime. Several citizens commented that the students should have to pay, but most thought cave rescues were a service, like fire protection, the government should provide free to all. And, there does not appear to be any plans to close Airman's Cave in the immediate future, despite the publicity.

Editor—Airman's Cave Map courtesy of the TSS from their excellent Map CD. See ad on page 31.

The Carbide Corner

This issue's edition of the CC was submitted by: **Roger Moore** (Jr.), Ph.D., RPA, long time Texas caver and member of the Greater Houston Grotto. He currently wears the title of "Armchair Caver" and he also is the president and founder of Moore Archeological Consulting

My father, Roger Moore, Sr., was born in Orange, Texas, in 1896 and raised in Beaumont in the home of his grandfather after his father, a tugboat captain, was drowned in a hurricane while at sea in 1899. His grandfather, Capt. William Rogers, was a Confederate veteran and steamboat captain on the Neches and Sabine rivers of east Texas.

My father attended the University of Texas (as did his older sister), but dropped out to enlist in the Army when the US entered World War I. He enlisted as a private, but was sent to officers' school and served as a Second Lieutenant with a Pioneer Infantry unit in France. He saw combat in the Meuse-Argonne campaign. He remained in France for a time after the war attending the University of Toulouse.

By 1921 he was working in some capacity for a wildcatter who was engaged in exploration of an oil field in Kentucky. It was during this interval that he met the sadly still nameless photographer who invited him on the photo trip to Crystal Caverns. It was enough of an adventure in his eyes that it became one of the stories he related to me when I was a child (before I started caving). I don't remember if I ever asked him if he visited any other caves in his youth. I expect that I did, certainly after beginning caving myself, but I don't remember any answer.

He spent the bulk of the rest of his life in Texas, New York City, and Florida. He was a bit of a professional student, taking classes at Columbia, New York University, and Yale. He never did get a degree, but he did complete a non-degree certification program at the Yale Drama School.

He attempted to reenlist in the Army at the outbreak of World War II, but was rejected as too old. He took a job at the naval shipyard in Orange, TX, building Fletcher-class destroyers so that he could contribute to the war effort.

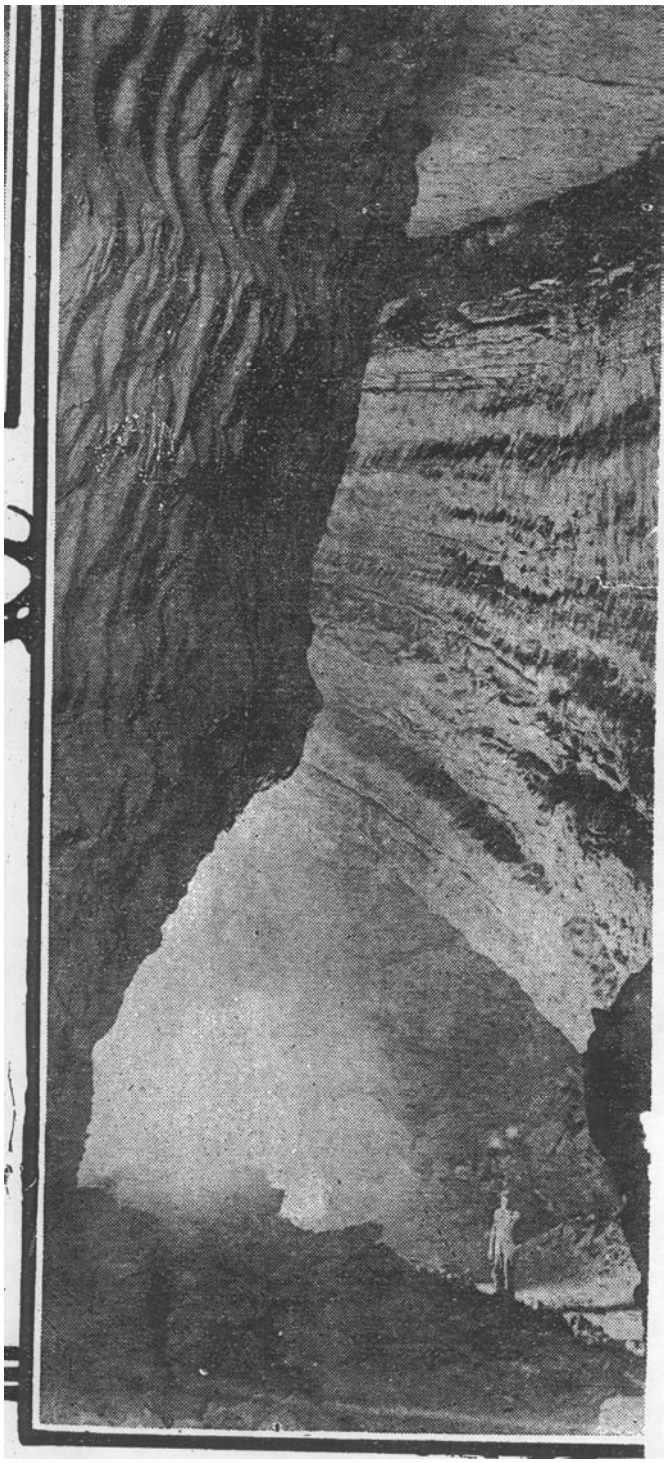
My father was married and living in pre-Disney Orlando when I was born in 1950. We

moved to Panama City on the "Redneck Riviera" in 1957, when he took a civil engineering job at Tyndall Air Force Base. He passed away in 1972.

I began caving as a High School junior, initially in a typically doofus fashion in 1967, but cleaned up my act shortly. I've been caving continuously (if quite irregularly) ever since. Ridge-walking in the Marianna Lowlands cave region of the Panhandle was my particular passion, and I located a number of caves in that area. I moved to Austin in 1974, and to Houston for graduate school at Rice in 1976. I've belonged to various Florida grottos, the UT Grotto, and the Greater Houston Grotto.

I've worked all my life as an archeologist and been self-employed since 1982. My most active caving period since being in Houston was in the 1990s, when former member Susan Herpin organized frequent trips to the Guads. Most of my current caving-related activity is desk-bound, compiling GIS data for the Texas and Florida cave surveys using all the mapping goodies I've acquired professionally.

Entrance to the Cave



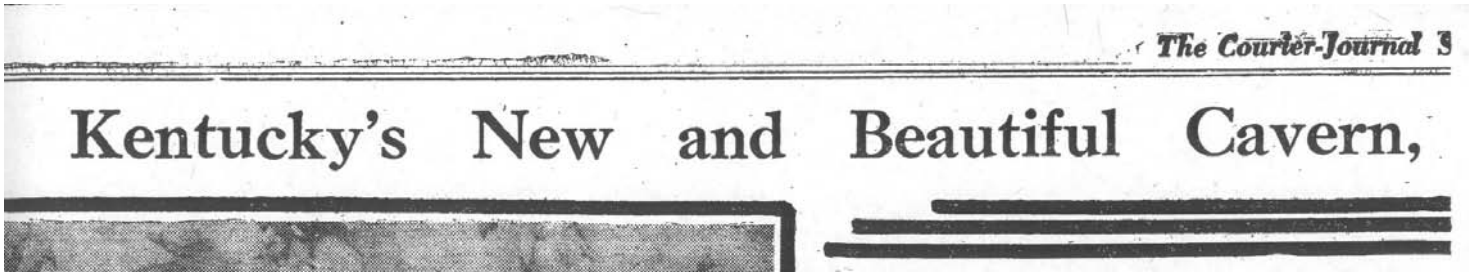
The Cathedral Hall, Notice size of the man as contrasted with height of this vast chamber.

Floyd Collin's Photo Sherpa

It was 75 years ago last May that Floyd Collins and his father, Lee, announced to the world (or at least to Kentucky) the discovery of their Great Crystal Cave. That Floyd and his cave have mythic significance for cavers hardly requires repeating*. But the myth has a personal significance for me that relates to the adventure of a young veteran recently returned from the trenches of France in the Great War: My father, Roger Moore, Sr. (I was born late in his life, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of his birth.) This story is the consequence of a brief period that he spent in Kentucky working in some capacity in the oil industry there.

During his stay my father befriended a photographer for the Louisville Courier-Journal. As the leading newspaper in the state, the Courier-Journal was the medium of choice - or necessity -

(Continued on page 18)



(Continued from page 17)

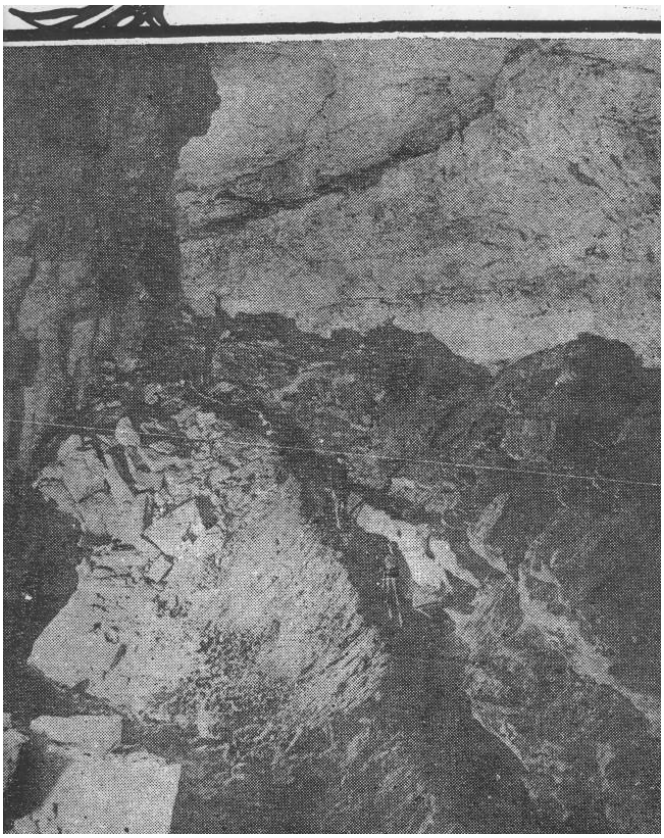
for the Collins in publicizing their new discovery. The centerpiece of this announcement was to be the first published photographs of the cave, to appear in the Courier-Journal's Sunday magazine supplement. A trip was arranged, and like every photographic trip today the photographer needed a photo sherpa to help with lighting and his heavy gear. He invited his new friend, my father, to fill this role. My father eagerly accepted and thus became Floyd Collins' photo sherpa.

He handed down to me a now-crumbling copy of the newspaper article which is reprinted below (with the permission of the Louisville Courier-Journal). I have vainly sought out more information on the caving trip from several experts on the history of Flint Ridge caves and I'd like to acknowledge their cooperation: Dr. Stanley Sides, Bill Austin, of Kentucky Underground (whose family formerly owned Crystal Cave), Dave Foster of the American Cave Conservation Association's American Cave Museum in Horse Cave Kentucky, Becky Bull of the Floyd Collins Museum, and 'Red' Watson. The most interesting information to come to light from these contacts is that the 1921 article seems to have been unknown to researchers in the area.

* But I'll repeat it anyway for those unfamiliar with the story of Floyd and his cave.

Great Crystal Cave, later renamed Floyd Collins' Crystal Cavern, was opened commercially after the appearance of the newspaper article. Crystal Cavern was the site of the 1954 'C-3' expedition, the first large-scale survey effort organized by the National Speleological Society. Floyd's cave, Mammoth Cave, and numerous other once-separate caves have now been connected to form the Flint-Mammoth System, at over 350 miles the longest cave in the world.

Floyd's Crystal Cavern was a commercial failure because it was too far off the beaten path. This prompted him to search for a cave nearer to good roads. But Floyd met a sad and very public fate in 1925 while exploring the nearby Sand Cave as another prospect for commercialization. A rock was dislodged in an unstable crawlway, trapping him some 70 feet below the surface. The attempt to rescue him became one of the first 'media events' of the modern era, and a carnival-like atmosphere soon surrounded the surface efforts to reach the hapless caver. Floyd was sustained for a time by sandwiches brought by William Burke 'Skeets' Miller, a slightly-built reporter for the Courier-Journal who was the only person with the body and the courage to reach him. Miller issued daily dispatches on the rescue and his own efforts, work which won him the Pulitzer Prize.



The Grand Canyon

After much confusion and failed efforts a group of miners began a vertical shaft to reach the trapped caver. In the interim, however, an additional collapse cut Collins off from Miller and the world. By the time the shaft reached him, Floyd had pushed his last crawl. His body lay in state for years as a formidable if morbid tourist attraction in the cavern which bore his name. Floyd was only

Another of World's Great Wonders

recently buried in a rural cemetery. For further information on this tragedy, read *Trapped: The Story of the Struggle to Rescue Floyd Collins from a Kentucky Cave* (A. P. Putman a & Sons, New York, 1979), by Robert Murray and caver Roger Brucker.

Kentucky's New and Beautiful Cavern Another of the World's Great Wonders

By Alvin Durning, Louisville Courier-Journal
May 1, 1921
(reprinted by permission)

Did the mighty subterranean stream which eons and eons ago carved out Mammoth Cave change its course after completing one of the western world's grandest wonders and begin chiseling a great new channel through the limestone strata of Hart and Edmonson Counties? This is the query geologists are asking since the discovery of a new three-tiered cavern of gigantic proportions three miles from the great cave. Through the lower tier there rushes a river of such volume that its force carries a stream of cold water across the current of Green River when it emerges, showing up black and somber against the placid emerald of the parent stream.

Only such a river, say they, could have created the great cave - the Mecca of tourists for over a century - when its hills and cathedrals, pits and domes, stalactites and stalagmites, avenues of entrancing beauty and its gypsum, limestone and onyx, molded with uncanny touch into every conceivable form and shape.

Whither went those turbulent waters? Echo River, the bewitching stream that rises and falls with the tide of Green River, they say is not the answer. Surface rivers sometimes change their course; why not those that flow hidden from the eyes of man? Pioneering beneath the earth, Lee Collins, and his son, Floyd Collins, farmers, found in February what they believed to be the answer to the perplexing riddle after they discovered a pit leading down to a second gallery in a cave on their place, which they had already named Great Crystal Cavern from dazzling white gypsum which hangs in snowy folds from the roof and tiers of the underground passages.

A kerosene lamp, which shown with a yellowish gleam into the stygian darkness, revealed avenues of beauty never before trod by man, unless the aborigine knew this place and came here to hide from the foeman. Hardy explorers as they were they were overcome with astonishment and fright at first. A noise which they did not understand came to their ears. They listened and recognized it as the gurgling of water. Then cautiously they pressed on. Around a turn then weirdly the flickering light beams danced on the riffles of a stream forty feet wide. A ledge on one side gave ample footing. A mist rose into the air which only a Dante could depict, as the river dropped precipitately to a great hole below.

Only a moment they stood before the precipice and its yawning darkness, then retreated, feeling that they had gazed into the inferno. Two days later, after relating their adventure to skeptical neighbors, they resolved to try again. Climbing through the rat hole-like aperture which leads from the upper tiers, they carried lanterns and torches and food. Awed only a moment y the incessant roar of the water they lighted a torch and threw it forward over the cataract. Spirally it descended, illuminating the sight with a ruddy glow, and then died suddenly in the raging waters. In that one brief moment they say they saw a wonder never before seen by man. Their dread overcome, they lighted other torches and watched the momentary lifting of the darkness in the gulf below. Estimating the distance at one hundred feet, they returned to tell their story to those who would listen.

Tarrying awhile and emboldened by what they had seen, they became enthralled with the task of exploring other passageways until lost in a labyrinth of turns and openings. Then the elder Collins discovered that their footsteps left an impression in the light glaze of sand on the cave floor. In this way they retraced their steps until they reached the upper tiers.

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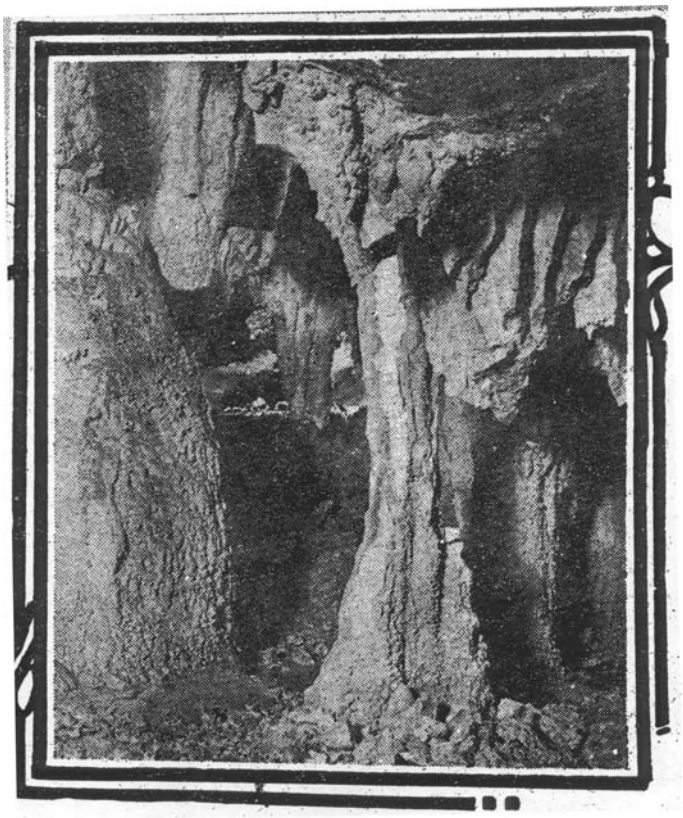


In four Kentucky counties, Hart, Barren, Warren and Edmonson, there are practically no creeks. The drainage is almost entirely subterranean and these hidden streams pour their waters into Green and Barren Rivers, mostly in the form of springs. The valleys are saucer shaped and flow to a center. Here are sinkholes into which the water disappears into a natural underground sewerage system - although the comparison is odious - and through these laterals, crevices in the limestone strain, it makes its way to the mains.

As a consequence nearly every farm of any size in this region can boast of a cave. Sometimes the air rushes in and out of these vents with a whistling sound. For many years Lee Collins and his father before him knew there was a cave on his farm. The narrow sinkhole entrance which breathed with the rise and fall of the temperature, seemed sinister and forbidding. Then one day the younger Collins, who had explored other caves, decided to investigate the one at the threshold of his home. About that time some rock for road building was needed and he decided that the sinkhole was an appropriate spot to blast where the limestone outcropped. The result was a larger entrance.

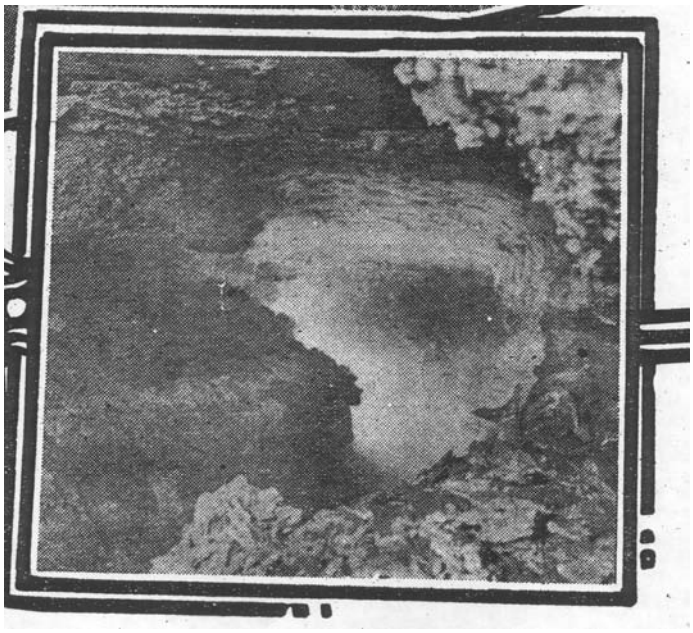
That was two years ago. Mustering up courage, he descended with a long rope tied about his body. Sixty feet below, he reached bottom. It was large and roomy down there. That was nothing. Everybody had caves more or less large or small. Subsequent blasting lowered the entrance until it was possible to enter without the use of a rope. It was just a cave. No concerted effort was made at exploration, but gradually by way of diversion young Collins went in every now and then just a little farther each day until on day he walked two miles and the family took notice.

He reported the recesses a veritable fairyland with snowy incrusted (sic) walls and weird ornaments of nature hanging from the ceilings. The reported find spread to Cave City, ten miles away, and embryo geologists went to the scene. The result was further explorations. A mile more of galleries were explored, but here where the walls showed the passage of a mighty stream some cataclysm of nature had shaken down the arches and blocked the passageway. This was the end.

The 'Flower Garden' of Gypsum Crystals

Undaunted, the father and his two sons, Marshall and Floyd, slowly removed stone after stone. In a cave there is usually no place to put debris, but luckily they found a depression caused by dripping water and threw the stones into this. Only a few yards of broken down natural masonry removed and a wonder new avenue was opened to their vista. One mile farther they found another blocked passage. This has never been opened, but in the new areaway they found the hole that led to the lower cave. On another wing which they opened up through tireless effort was revealed what may alone be classed as one of the wonders of America, "The Grand Subterranean Canyon." Here the water has cut its way down sheer perhaps 170 feet.

To the visitor this is the most inspiring sight to be seen. The walls rise abruptly on each side in



somber and silent beauty. The rays of the strongest calcium light barely penetrate to the smoothly carved roof. Here and there gigantic jagged boulders which somehow resisted erosion are ominously poised aloft and seem to sway in the glinting of the lights.

Right off to the right, the guide - one of the Collins boys - leads you to what he in unassuming voice calls "The Gates of Hell." There one sees where the river recently - perhaps a million years ago - bade adieu to the upper cave and plunged below. A fall of Herculean limestone blocks effectually bars man from following in its willful course.

Then turning away only a few yards and hidden under overhanging crags, the guide dispels the gloom by announcing "one glimpse of heaven." Many have marveled at the floral creations of the vegetated world, but here hidden 300 feet beneath the haunts of men, is a strange fantastic flower garden of the mineral kingdom. Beautiful snowy white lilies of gypsum exude in plentiful array through a thin film on onyx. "Nan Ramsey's Flower Garden," it is named after the first woman who saw it and went into ecstasies of admiration.

Over in Cave City and other towns along the Dixie Highway, there are many who deal in these curios of nature and find ready buyers among the tourists, but those who ponder must decline to break from their fastenings which nature through the ages has tediously and delicately molded, each tine drop of water adding its infinitesimal grain of building material to the whole.

Passing on down the main avenue, one often walks over a floor as smooth as an asphalt thoroughfare, then tramps over sandy spaces and at other times up and down hill. Everywhere strange beauties unfold themselves. One great white gypsum coated rock, is called "The Titanic" and looks singularly like the great ship plunging head first into the Arctic seas. Most of the beauties are unnamed, but such names as "White Mountains" or "The Glaciers" came instantly to one's tongue when great piles of white incrusted rocks are opened to the panorama of views. There is another place where a lantern placed behind a thin partition of overhanging gypsum gives an impression of the setting sun.

Uncanny freaks have been played here and there by the forces of nature. In one spot on a dark limestone wall the white gypsum has formed in the shape of a tiger springing for his prey. Many other likenesses can be pictured in the various formations by those with imagination.

The writer ventured only part way down the "rat hole," where one is loathe to squeeze and crawl in his "Sunday best," but saw enough to convince that another underground series of chambers underlies the upper tiers. Here and there, the limestone floor above gives forth a hollow echoing sound which means space beneath.

After all Great Crystal Cavern , is a cave in the making with the upper floors completed. When this work started no one can daresay, but before the swarthy sons of Egypt built the pyramids, the work was doubtless far advanced.

What stories of tragedy, these vaulted chambers could tell, they have forever sealed, but the skeleton of one human being was found in its recesses and 300 feet above Green River in a cove choken with stalactite and stalagmite, where the waters are believed to have found an outlet in the days gone by, three skeletons, almost molded away, believed to be those of a man, a woman and a child, were found beneath the bed of the cave. The bones still lie where they were found. No none seems to care. They are just dead of a bygone age, perhaps of a tragedy of the pioneer days, by mayhap a family circle of the misty past, a man, a woman and a child.

Editor—Roger notes that these photos have never been republished and are scans of the original 1921 photos. The originals were lost in a flood shortly after the original publication date. This is the reason for the quality of the photos.

Farewell to Johnny Gass

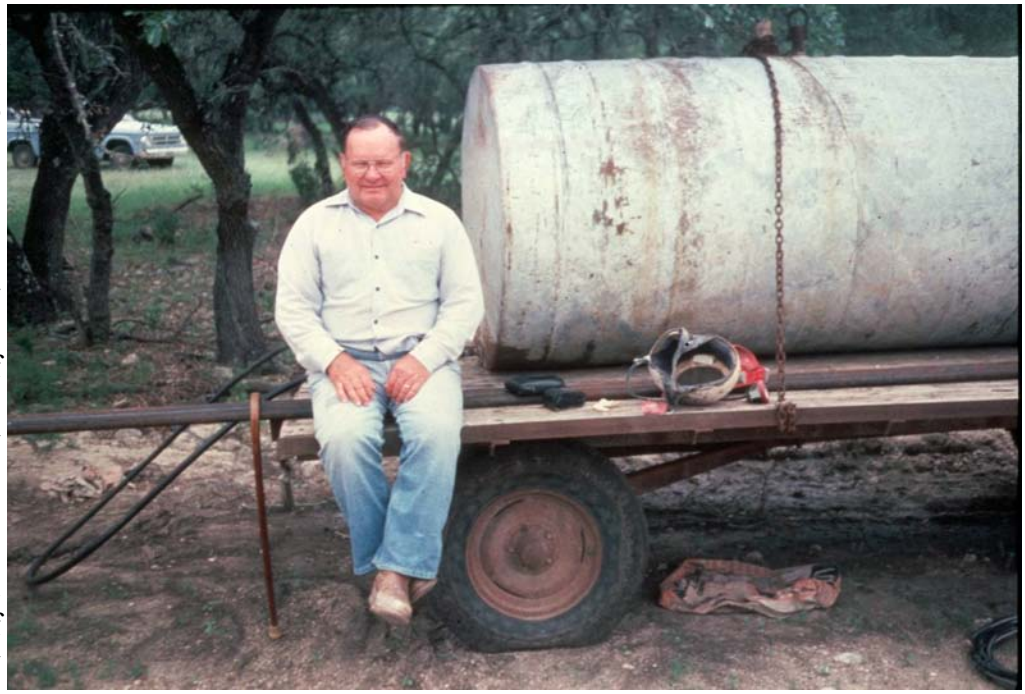
Johnny and his wife Anita presiding over Kurt & Kitty's wedding with Johnny's shotgun. (Photo by Steve Gutting)

Submitted by Kurt Menking

Johnny Gass, the owner of Honeycreek Cave passed away October 25 at the age of 85. His support and even encouragement of cavers is truly rare among cave owners. Johnny was tolerant of the intermittent cavers' requests to visit Honeycreek from the 50's thru the 70's. In 1980 a group of cavers approached Johnny about an aggressive survey project to map out the far reaches of the cave. Johnny enthusiastically endorsed our plan. We had no idea at the time how far that would lead. Within a few years the Honeycreek survey project accumulated more survey length than any other cave in the state.

Johnny always knew the cave on his land was special. He regularly told stories of how the cave would flood a few days after distant rains fell about 20 miles to the west. He had witnessed for years the cave would flood more severely after the distant rains than local rains on the ranch. Johnny allowed church friends, and many others to picnic or simply drive down to the spring entrance to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

For years we had monthly trips to Honeycreek cave, and Johnny always was excited to hear of our latest discoveries. He was given photos, maps, and or slide shows to let him see and experience his cave. He never really expressed much interest in seeing the cave first hand, but he was excited, right along with us. The cavers helped Johnny validate his claims of the significance of the cave on his property. We provided the proof that his cave was among the longest in the country. We gave slide shows to his church friends on several occasions, and helped him host several church outings / barbeques at the spring entrance, and or rappelling demonstrations at the shaft entrance of the cave.



1985 photo of Johnny during the shaft construction. (Photo by Kurt Menking)

In the early 80's Johnny tried in vain many times to drill into the cave using our early maps for reference. He was trying to hit the cave passage to make a new water well for his ranch. In 1985 we finally convinced Frank Reid to come down from Indiana with his latest cave radio and do a radio location for us. Within a few months after the radio location trip Johnny was busily drilling again. His drill hole intersected the cave exactly where we expected, but Johnny's desires were much greater than a simple water well. He wanted a shaft cavers could use to access the back reaches of the cave. He paid to have a 30" custom drill bit constructed and hired a local company to drill the oversized well hole. After a series of problems and equipment failures the 30" drill bit was abandoned. Then cavers from around the state jumped in to blast our way down into the cave. Johnny was there along side the cavers nearly every weekend lending technical and moral support, not to mention he paid for all the equipment rentals, and most of the explosives.

I don't think we'll find another cave owner more proud of his cave than Johnny Gass. Our collection of 20 plus miles of survey data would not have been possible without the support and encouragement we received from Johnny. My nearly 30 year relationship with the Gass family and most notably with Johnny has been one of the most enjoyable parts of my life. Johnny was a devout Christian, and loving family man, and a friend to cavers who helped make his cave the longest in Texas.

Johnny presiding over Kurt & Kitty's wedding with his shotgun. (Photo by Kevin McGowan)

TSA Honey Creek Work Project April 11-13, 2008

Most every Texas caver has been in Honeycreek Cave, or at least has been to one of the TCR's on the Honeycreek property. Now is the time for all Texas cavers to show up and support the Honey Creek Project.

At the last TSA meeting funds were approved to perform repairs on the tower at Honey Creek Cave. The tower was built more than 20 years ago, and is in need of some repairs. We plan to replace the cable, check and grease all pulleys, and re-paint the tower. We'd also like to do some more cedar clearing for the owner since that seems to be their highest priority need.

Camping will be available at the shaft entrance beginning Friday evening. Caving trips will be available Friday evening, and Saturday evening, and possible short trips Sunday morning. The shaft entrance will be closed for repairs beginning Saturday morning and if all goes well it should be operational Saturday evening. But if we run into a problem that requires pulley parts it may not be operational the remainder of the weekend.

The two main goals of the work weekend are to perform tower repairs, and cut cedar. Most of Saturday will be reserved for the work activities. If you still feel like caving in the late afternoon, then the spring entrance will be available, and if the shaft entrance repairs are completed that entrance will be made available as well.

Bring chain saws and loppers if you have 'em, and gloves for the cedar clearing. Most of the painting / tower repair related materials will be provided.

Contact: Kurt Menking, kmenking@bcad.org
210-325-5598

NSS Cave Safety—Part 1

Hello NSS Members,

My name is Kurt Waldron and I recently accepted responsibility for performing the duties of Chairman of the NSS Safety and Techniques Committee.

My beginnings in caving were rather humble, with a good friend in the Virginia Area Region (VAR) about 7 years ago. Over time I have done some interesting stuff and learned some interesting things. I am a National Speleological Society (NSS) Vertical Section Member currently teaching the NSS Vertical Section's Basic Vertical Training. I have also successfully completed Level 2 National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) training. In the past few years I have been actively involved in the Germany Valley Karst Survey Hellhole and Schoolhouse Explorations. Finally, I have performed long rappels at Sotano Golondrinas and El Culabra in Mexico, and tandem rappels at Whitesides Mountain and Bridge Day at New River Gorge Bridge. I hope my caving experience and training have prepared me to serve the NSS and its members as I chair this important committee.

What follows is the first of what I hope are many articles about how you and I can be the safest and smartest cavers out there. Your feedback and input to this vital topic will always be appreciated. I can be reached at cave_safe@hotmail.com.

Kurt Waldron

As you prepare to go on a cave trip, there are several things you should include in your pre-trip planning. Taking a moment to think about these things will help you have a safe trip and will give you some amount of protection against the many things that can go wrong while you are underground. Most of the things I suggest are optional and not required. Not doing them does not mean that sirens, bells and whistles are going to go off and the authorities will be called. But it does mean that if something does go wrong the odds are in your favor and you are more likely to experience a happy ending.

The mere fact that you are a caver implies that you are probably comfortable with some level of risk and with the unknown. This is good, but as you prepare for your upcoming trip you should anticipate potential problems and unknowns. You do not want to have a problem while you are underground, so you should never go into the cave without at least taking a few minutes to think about the things which can go wrong on your trip.

The two articles in this series discuss some things that I have found to be an effective way to prepare for your cave trip.

1- BEFORE YOU GET TO THE CAVE:

A- GROUP SIZE

The first thing you need to think about is the size of your group. NEVER CAVE ALONE. It is dangerous and foolhardy and is a sure recipe for a disaster if you were to have any problems. The smallest group that should ever go underground is 3 people. If someone becomes injured, you can leave someone with this person and send the other member of your team out to get help.

The upper limit for the number of people on a trip depends on the cave and the trip objectives. Two things to think about are caver experience and cave difficulty. You should also consider the speed of your group. There will be times when you will want to limit the size of the group going on your trip.

B- CAVE ACCESS

Make sure that the cave that you are planning on visiting is actually open. If you are unsure about the status of a cave, check with other cavers, your grotto or the NSS. There is never any reason to go into a closed cave! If you need to contact the land owner or the organization which controls access, do it and be sure to get the required permission beforehand. Parking and changing areas are also potential issues. There is nothing worse than an angry land owner who has seen yet another car load of naked cavers changing down the street from his house, in full view of his 3 year old daughter.

C- ESTABLISH A TIME TO BE OUT OF THE CAVE AND A PERSON WHO KNOWS THIS

INFORMATION

Make sure at least one person who is not going on your trip knows approximately when you are starting, how many people are going with you, where you are planning on going in the cave and approximately when you expect to be out. Make sure that person has a list of phone numbers for the local cave rescue groups. This person should understand that he/she is expected to call for help if you have not called by a predetermined time. If local cavers can't be contacted, and other options have failed, the 911 operator would probably be as good a start as anything else. This gets things started sooner, rather than later.

D- DOES EVERYONE HAVE THE SKILLS REQUIRED?

Everyone going on the trip should be physically and mentally up to the challenges associated with that trip. Is everyone vertically competent? If the trip is going to be seriously wet, do you need wet suits? Does someone have a limiting medical condition? The bottom line is if you think that you or someone else on the trip is not up to challenges that you will be encountering, it is far better to bring it up before it is a serious problem when you are in the cave.

2- IF YOU ARE TRIP LEADER TAKING PEOPLE UNDERGROUND FOR THE FIRST TIME

There are several things that should be discussed with people who have never been underground before. Discussing these things with them will help them be safer and have a better experience.

A- They should always have 3 points of contact when moving over uneven ground.

B- The group needs to stay together. The only reasons to not stay together will involve either someone with an injury or an emergency.

C- They should never exert themselves beyond the limits of their endurance and they should never do anything that they are not comfortable with. Remember, discretion is the better part of valor. If they have any questions or concerns, they should make them known.

D- They need to be made aware of the importance of cave conservation and what it means to them on this trip.

E- Finally, they need to know that if something fails or goes wrong they need to wait for instructions from you, the trip leader. What should be done in a life threatening situation will be addressed in future articles.

In part two of this article, I will discuss the considerations associated with respect to what to wear and what equipment to take underground with you on a horizontal cave trip.

The article you just read is reprinted by permission and was made possible by the determined efforts of **Don Broussard**, Safety and Techniques Chairman of the Texas Speleological Association.

With the recent Airman's rescue, Don and I thought that this would be an opportune time re-run this article, especially, given the fact that the bulk of cavers in the state are NOT NSS members and have never had a chance to read this well done piece.

Part 2 will be printed in the first quarter issue of the TC in 2008.

Don and I would like for all TSA members to beg, cajole, and insist that fellow Grotto members **join the NSS**! Not only do you get an excellent publication each month, you get useful and informative articles, like this one.

Join today at www.caves.org!

Thanks, Mark Alman—Editor

Equipment Review

The Caving Light of the Future is Here! by Bill Steele

In my opinion, the caving light of the future is here now. I remember years ago, caving with buddies with our carbide lamps on the front of our helmets, talking about the caving light of the future. We talked about it would be battery-powered; that it would shine a 200 foot beam; that it would be completely waterproof and rugged; and it would be so efficient that you wouldn't even need to carry spare batteries. We laughed, and someone would say, "Yeah, that I might live long enough to see that." I have.

It's the Pelican 2680.

http://www.pelican.com/lights_detail.php?recordID=2680

Here's what Pelican says about this light:

HeadsUp Lite™ 2680 Recoil LED™ We've taken our popular 2600 and outfitted it with our Recoil LED module. What you get is a hands-free light that's extremely powerful, durable, and efficient. The 2680 uses a 1 watt LED that's aimed backwards into the reflector. 100% of the light is captured and aimed forward as a tight collimated beam that's as bright as an incandescent. The body is made of tough ABS resin that's corrosion proof, submersible to 500 feet, and virtually indestructible. It is powered by 4 AA alkaline cells (included) and comes with a rubber strap for hard hat use and an adjustable cloth strap for bare head.

The best price I've found is at the CopsPlus Web site. They cost $56, plus shipping.

http://www.copsplus.com/prodnum5825.php

I like a lot of light. I like to see long distances in caves. If you tend to go to little caves, where you don't have long distances, then this might be too much light for you. Often I keep book when surveying. I like to be able to see the far wall and the ceiling. Many times when I've been caving with my Pelican 2680, I am asked, "Bring that light over here," so we can look up at the top of a dome, or down a pit.

The light is very tough. Well, look who made it, the same people who make Pelican cases, the end all and be all of waterproof cases. They advertise the 2680 as a dive light, and say it's good to a depth of 500 feet. I believe it. I've dove under water with it many times. It works just as well there as it does in air.

The light also comes with a very strong rubber strap. Its switch works well when muddy.
I get consistent 15 hour burns with 4AA batteries. After 12 hours I notice that the light is not as brilliantly bright as it was when the batteries were new. But it's still bright, compared to most lights, beyond 15 hours.

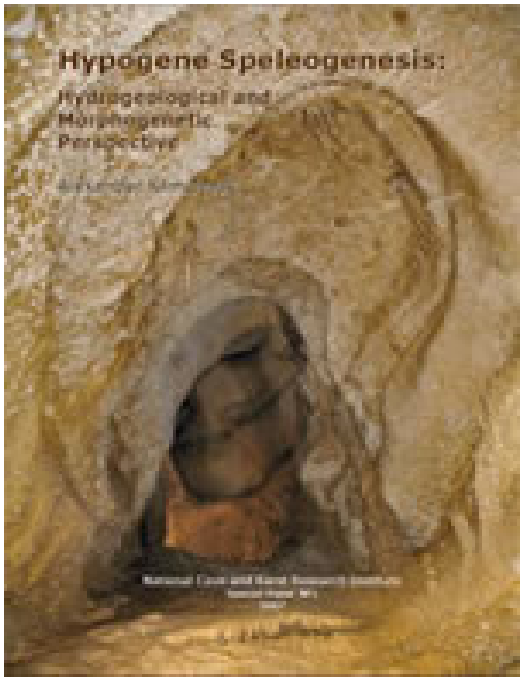
What are the down sides? Some people think it's too heavy for the front of their helmet. I don't. It does have 4 AA batteries and everything else on the front of your helmet. I don't mind it. Also, sometimes I have difficulty closing the battery chamber cap. Then there's the beam. It's very bright. It cannot be adjusted. I like that. What I like is a beam. In little caves some might think it's too much light. To me, though, there is no such thing as too much light.

Book Review

By Bill Mixon

Hypogene Speleogenesis: Hydrogeological and Morphogenetic Perspective.
Alexander Klimchouk, . National Cave and Karst Research Institute, Carlsbad, New Mexico; 2007. ISBN 978-0-9795422-0-6. 8.5 by 11 inches, 106 pages, softbound. Special Paper number 1. National Cave and Karst Research Institute

Available for $35 plus $6 domestic shipping or $13 international shipping. Payable by Visa, MC, AMEX, or Discover cards via sales@nckri.org or by calling 001-505-835-6168, or by check written to "NCKRI" and sent to NCKRI/E&ES, Attn: Lisa Majkowski, New Mexico Tech, 801 Leroy Place, Socorro, New Mexico, 87801, USA.



Alexander Klimchouk, a Ukrainian cave scientist and honorary member of the National Speleological Society, wrote this book during a year-long visit to the United States under the auspices of NCKRI.

It summarizes the author's thoughts on what I consider two related topics: hypogene speleogenesis by water, heated or charged with CO2 or H2S from deep sources, rising from the depths, and speleogenesis by artesian water, even local rainwater, that is passing upward from one aquifer to another through a soluble bed. An example of the first is 480-meter-deep Lechuguilla Cave in New Mexico, and classic examples of the second are the long Ukrainian maze caves formed in a 15-meter-thick layer of gypsum. The author considers all these to be hypogene caves because water moving upward was principally responsible for their development, and they do share some morphological properties, such as mazy passages that dead-end horizontally and ceiling cupolas that served as outlets. Members of the first class tend to be vertically extensive, with disorganized-appearing rounded rooms and domes, whereas members of the second tend to be compact, dense horizontal mazes of passages formed along joints or fractures by "confined transverse speleogenesis"-confined between the upper and lower aquifers. Klimchouk believes that the caves in the Guads also formed in a confining paleo-environment.

Besides the Guadalupe Mountains caves, which get the most space, and the giant gypsum caves of the Ukraine, numerous other examples of hypogenic caves around the world are described, illustrating the importance of this sort of speleogenesis, which has only relatively recently been recognized as an important alternative to epigenic caves, formed by descending rainwater gathering into underground streams.

Sixteen pages of color photos illustrate features of hypogenic caves, but there is very little actual color in them, and they could have been more usefully and economically printed in black-and-white at the appropriate places in the text. The English in the book is quite good, but it would get a low score from the sorts of programs that compute readability. It is dense with long words and complicated sentences, and a careful reading will require the patience to parse, after supplying the missing commas, sentences like, "Besides major sedimentological heterogeneities in the vertical section, such as alternating prominent beds of contrasting lithologies which determine the principal hydrostratigraphy in a basin depositional environments and facies changes within an otherwise 'homogeneous' soluble formation play an important role in determining the secondary porosity and permeability distribution and their subsequent evolution through burial diagenesis and tectonism." Fortunately, a less than careful reading, assisted by the many clear diagrams, will get the main points across.

While numerous articles and chapters have been written about hypogene speleogenesis, Hypogene Speleogenesis is the first book to cover the whole topic at length, and it is an important contribution to cave geology.

MINUTES OF FALL TSA BUSINESS MEETING, 21 October, 2007

(Convened during the Texas Cavers Reunion at Paradise Canyon in Medina, TX.
Submitted by Mark Alman)

Officers Present: John Brooks, Chairman; Jacqui Bills-Thomas, Vice-chairman; Mark Alman, Secretary; Darla Bishop, Treasurer

TSA Members and cavers in Attendance: Kurt Menking, Joe Ranzau, Don Broussard, Bill Steele, Ron Ralph, Lee Jay Graves, Jerry Atkinson, Carl Kunath, Jim Kennedy, Allan Cobb, Linda Palit, Robert Bisset, Ann M. Scott, Don Arburn, Orion Knox, Jay Jorden, Fritz F. Holt, Butch Fralia.

Chairman's Report: (Brooks) Convened meeting at 10:30 PM. Thanked all for coming and thought that the Spring Convention and TCR was well attended and that the TCR location and weather was excellent.

Vice-Chairman's Report: (Bills-Thomas)

Spring Convention Wrap Up: Enjoyable, but, a LOT of work. Advanced info online was helpful. Jacqui indicated that we need a plan or process for future conventions and Vice-Chairs to ease the planning and execution of these events. Early solicitation, selection, and election of TSA officers would help in this regard, also. See below.

Secretary's Report: (Alman) Minutes from the Spring Meeting were available for all to read. After reviewing, a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as read. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: (Bishop) Good turnout at TCR and a lot of renewals and new members added at Registration. See attached treasurers report on page 28.

Standing Committee Reports:

TSA Projects—(Kennedy) Jim had nothing to report, as the Project leaders hadn't submitted any reports to him. Jim stated that a few kneecaps may have to be broken in order to get reports.

Orion Knox mentioned that a Bustamante Project Coordinator is still needed. Orion and Rune Burnett are available to help more on these duties and to transfer what info they do have as to what this position entails. A lot of work (restoration, graffiti and trash removal, etc.) still remain to be done. Labor Day 2008 would be a good date to restart this project, as the road should be completed. Orion available to work with new coordinator in interfacing with local officials. Someone else would be needed to assign projects and to answer inquiries.

TSA Website— (Fralia) Slight dropoff at website during the summer, but, this is normal. Running at ~2500 hits per month. Dynamic calendar is up to date and used very heavily. Trying to coordinate it as THE central calendar for Texas caving.

There is a Members Only area, but, it is not heavily used or promoted.

"Crossing Into Mexico" section heavily viewed, but, is in need of updating. Gil Ediger, the original author, perhaps?

Safety and Techniques — (Broussard) Gave report on info on the emergency contact card and that it was still correct. Passed cards out to all.

Mentioned an excellent two parts series in The NSS News on beginning caving that he thought would be worthwhile to run in The TEXAS CAVER. He stated that he would contact the author for permission to reprint. Done and is in this issue!

Jerry Atkinson brought up the need, in light of the recent Airmans Cave rescue, that the TSA purchase "mole phones" so support people on the surface could talk to rescuers in ground. All thought this was an excellent idea and Jerry will research.

Membership Committee — Chair still vacant. Still, no takers.

TSA Land Fund – Jay Jorden discussed the land fund and possible future uses of the funds, i.e., acquiring land, purchasing a permanent location for various caving functions, give to other conservancies, etc. Jay to set up a committee to discuss and will involve a lawyer and new TSA Chair. Committee will discuss options, establish a trustee meeting, present to TSA Board, and vote.

Funds are currently with Fidelity and are

conservatively invested in CD's.

TSA Store – (Graves) Store still needs work and a committee formed to handle this. Inventory needs to be completed and items re-stocked.

Lee Jay did report that we had very good sales at TCR of TSA merchandise.

Need more bat stickers. Suggested a 3" x 5" design be used in order to maximize use of material. Lee Jay and Don Arburn to investigate. It was reported that there is a large roll of white reflective tape (Scotch Lite) in inventory and it could be used to fab a new supply of Oztotl stickers for the store.

Suggestion was made to create new designs for TSA T-shirts. Don to submit his design to Lee Jay for consideration.

(REI, Karst Sports have been contacted. No response yet. Turned down, yet again, by Bob and Bob to advertise).

Publications — (Alman) The TEXAS CAVER and the TSA continues to add new members and advertisers. We now have six companies and the TSS running ads. Advertising now covering over %10 of printing costs.

John Brooks gathering information and filling out the necessary forms for bulk mailing.

Jerry Atkinson/Carl Kunath have completed the 50th anniversary issue of The TEXAS CAVER. Mark Alman to handle printing and mailing of this special issue. Allan Cobb stated that TCR would donate $300 towards this special edition.

Various suggestions on TC content made and ideas for new advertisers we could add voiced. Mark to research.

Suggestion was made that, due to the generous donations that Whole Earth Provisions made to TCR, that they receive a free ad for a year in the TC. Mark to investigate and ad has started to run in this issue!

Old Business

2009 ICS Support – Possible sponsorship by TSA discussed. Jim Kennedy suggested a $1K TSA sponsorship and much discussion ensued. All agreed that an international event of this magnitude required a Texas caving presence, as it will be in Fredericksburg. Motion made, seconded, and approved to send $1K for TSA sponsorship of this event.

TSA Listserve for TSA Announcements – Consensus was reached to continue using CaveTex for this.

Discussions to buy various Texas caving related domains. Estimated cost was $8 per domain. Butch chair committee to buy up and register domain names and Darla to forward funds to do so.

TSA Signs — Don Arburn and Allan Cobb procured new weather resistant signs for use at future caving events. They also paid for them! Thanks, Don and Allan!

Bulk Mail Permit – John Brooks handling this and submitting forms for this.

TSA Mission Statement — No action yet. Suggestion made at the Spring Convention that the TSA needs a statement for its "reason to exist" Jerry Atkinson was to solicit inputs and work on a rough beginning statement.

New Business

TSA Winter Meeting – It was agreed that it would be held the weekend of January 11th thru the 13th at CBSP. Staff at state park is very interested in our continued participation, in light of this being the 20th year of the CBSP Project.

Honey Creek Tower Improvements – A grant request from Kurt Menking and Bill Steele was submitted for refurbishment of tower and replacement of cable for Shaft Entrance at Honey Creek Cave

The grant request reads "Most Texas cavers have visited Texas' longest cave at one time or another since the exploration and survey project began there in the early 80s. Since then there have been hundreds of trips to the cave, two Texas Caver Reunions were held there, and even a planning meeting for the 1994 Brackettville NSS Convention was held on the Gass Ranch at the Shaft Entrance. Honey Creek is the longest cave in the state. Some feel strongly that it is our best cave for many reasons. It is certainly a unique cave. Cavers from many other countries have visited it. Field trips to it are planned during the 2009 International Congress of Speleology. This cave is very important to speleology in our state.

The Shaft Entrance to Honey Creek Cave was constructed in 1985. Most of the cost was paid by the Gass family, the owners of the ranch where

(Continued on page 30)

TSA Financial Report for 2007
October 15, 2007

Through October 15, 2007 the TSA has assets of $6,652.58 in the Operating Account, $3,666.16 in the Savings Account and $7,947.80 in the Land Fund Account totaling $18,266.54.

Operating Account 8/1/2007 Through 10/15/2007

Subcategory	8/1/2007 - 8/31/2007	9/1/2007 - 9/30/2007	10/1/2007 - 10/15/2007	Total
Income				
Advertisements	135.00			135.00
Family Membership	30.00		120.00	150.00
Single Membership	18.24	19.12		137.36
Paypal Verification	0.18			0.18
Total Income	**283.42**	**19.12**	**120.00**	**422.54**
Expenses				
Total Bank Charges	5.00	3.00		8.00
Checks Ordered	31.12			31.12
Website Management		107.88		107.88
P.O. Box Renewal Fee	92.00			92.00
Publishing Texas Caver		1,223.96		1,223.96
Total Expenses	**128.12**	**1,334.84**		**1,462.96**
Starting Balance of 7,693.00				
Plus Income				
Less Expenses	**155.30**	**(1,315.72)**	**120.00**	**6,652.58**

Submitted,

Darla Bishop
2007 TSA Treasurer

(Continued from page 29)

its three entrances are located. For the past 22 years the Shaft Entrance has run smoothly without harmful incident, but it has not had any significant maintenance. This request aims to remedy that.

Our proposal is for the TSA to grant $1,200 of its funds for the expenditures listed below. A work weekend in the spring 2008 will be planned and well announced to Texas cavers, looking for representation from all grottos, not only to perform sorely needed maintenance on the tower and replace the cable, but also to cut cedar seedlings on the ranch, which the owner requests of cavers.

The main reason for getting the Shaft Entrance tower in tip top shape is for safety. Usually three cavers at a time are raised and lowered up and down the 145 foot shaft. An accident would be echoed throughout the worldwide caving community. The elevator cable used at the Shaft Entrance has been outside in the elements since 1985. The pulleys have not been routinely lubricated, and they have never been taken apart and examined. The tower has not been repainted. This would be an excellent gesture of statewide support to the Gass family, probably the most accommodating cave owners our state has ever seen."

Expected expenditures:

- 5/8" steel elevator cable, 230 feet at $1.60 per foot—$400.00
- Shipping for cable—100.00
- Rust-Oleum paint, brushes, wire brushes—$200.00
- Cherry picker rental and fuel—$350.00
- Concrete wheel stops (2) - $80.00
- Miscellaneous—$70.00

Total $1,200.00

The project will be under the leadership of

Kurt Menking and Bill Steele, Texas cavers who have been active at Honey Creek Cave since the project there began.

Allan Cobb stated that TCR would donate $200 towards this. A motion was made, seconded, and voted and approved to have the TSA donate $1K towards this effort, as well.

Project to be held April llth thru 13th, 2008. See announcement in this issue.

Bexar Grotto has donated much time and funds toward this. Need to encourage other cavers and Grottos to help out.

TSA Awards Committee & Chair — No action yet. At the Spring Convention, Joe Ranzau volunteered to chair an ad hoc committee to be appointed by John Brooks.

Nominations to be taken for the Chuck Steen Award for a caver that goes above and beyond to attract and welcome new cavers, and the Preston McMichael Award to be given to a caver conducting important and relevant research in the area of speleology and biology.

Plaque of Appreciation – Was received by Orion Know from the city of Bustamante for all the work Texas cavers have provided over the years. A very nice plaque and it will be displayed at the TSS offices.

TSA Elections — Linda Palit volunteered to be 2008 Election Chair and will handle mailings. Ron Ralph and Ann Scott to count ballots.

Ann Scott announced the results of the election on December 3rd. The results of the TSA 2008 officer election are:

John Brooks, President--78 votes

Robert Bisset, Vice President--80 votes

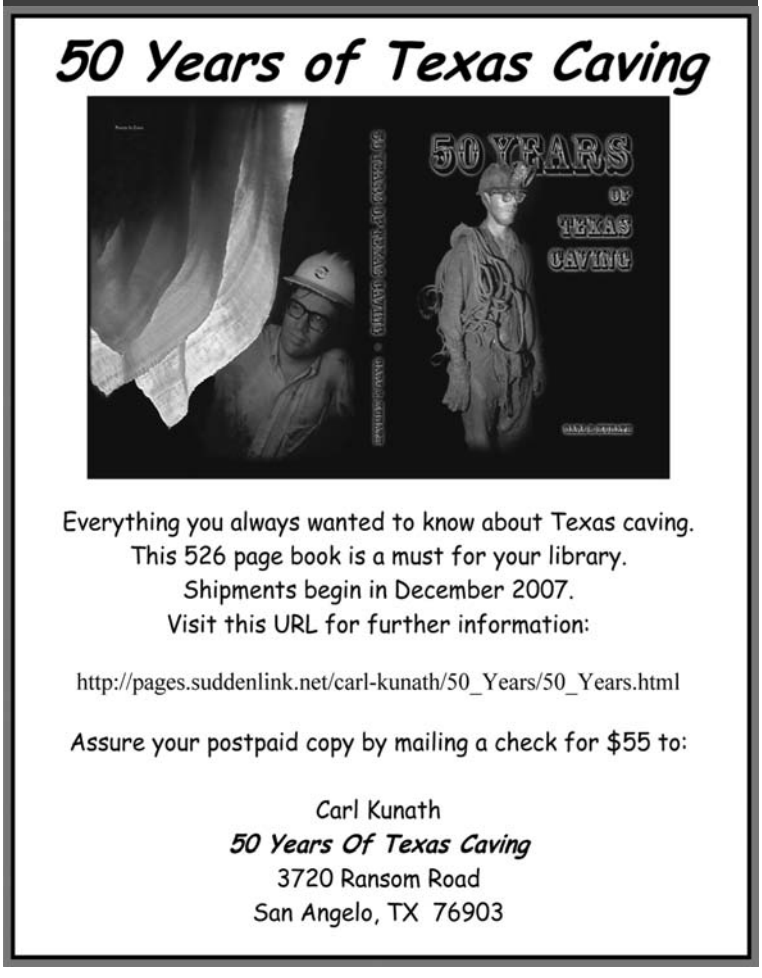
Mark Alman, Secretary--78 votes

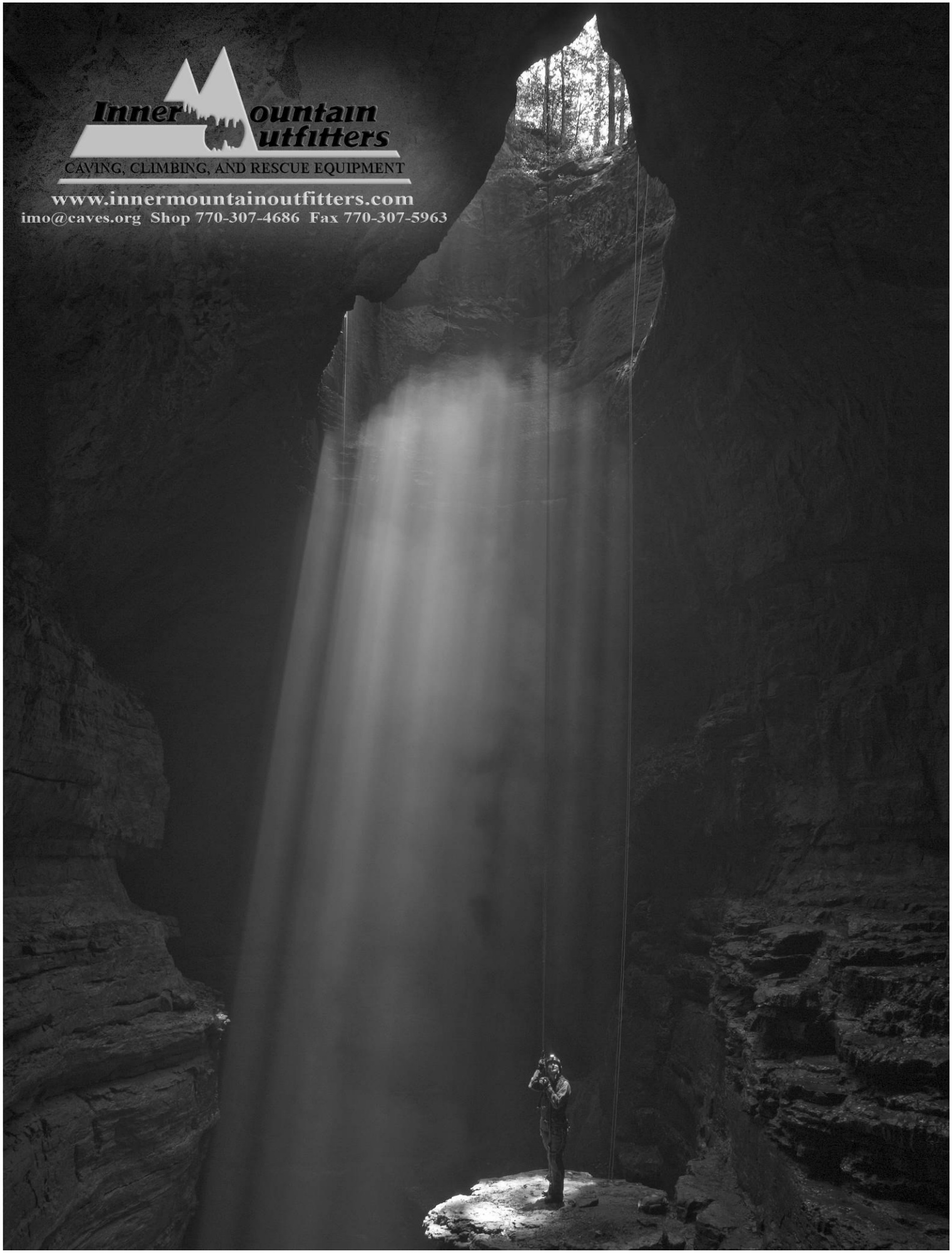
Darla Bishop, Treasurer--80 votes

84 ballots were received and counted by first Ron Ralph and then re-counted by Ann Scott (me!).

Write in candidates included 1 vote each for: Willie Nelson for President, Hugo Chavez for Vice President, Barbara Bush for Secretary, Jack Abramoff for Treasurer, Carl Kunath for President, David Locklear for Vice President, Jerry Atkinson for Secretary, Donna Anderson for Secretary, and finally 1 vote for Oztotl for President.

Congratulations to the Officers!

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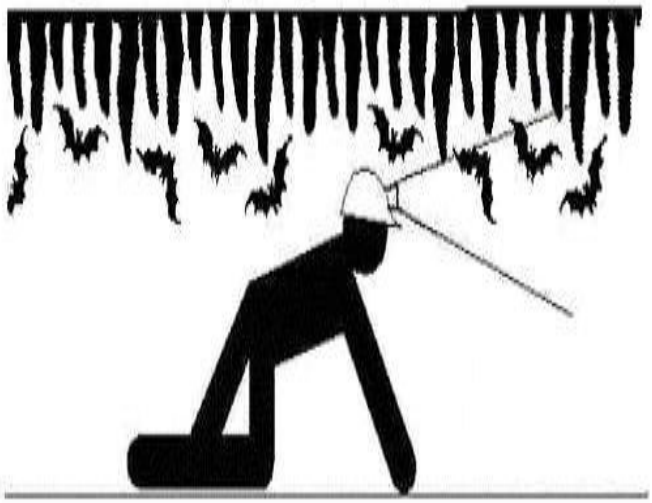

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Mark Your Calendars!

The Combine

2009 National Speleological Society Convention

and

15th International Congress of Speleology

is in

Kerrville, TX

from July 19-26, 2009.

The Advertising Committee is looking for folks/businesses who would like to advertise in the ICS publications that the visitors will receive. Ads could be for a business or from a grotto or individual who would like to welcome the visitors.

We are also looking for corporate sponsors, so if you or someone you know would like to be an ICS Corporate Sponsor, please contact Matt Bowers, who just joined the ICS committee for fundraising via email: matt66@ThirdMedia.com.

For all the information currently available on the 2009 International Congress of Speleology, please see the website: www.ics2009.us.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Cat Kennedy: ckennedy@batcon.org.

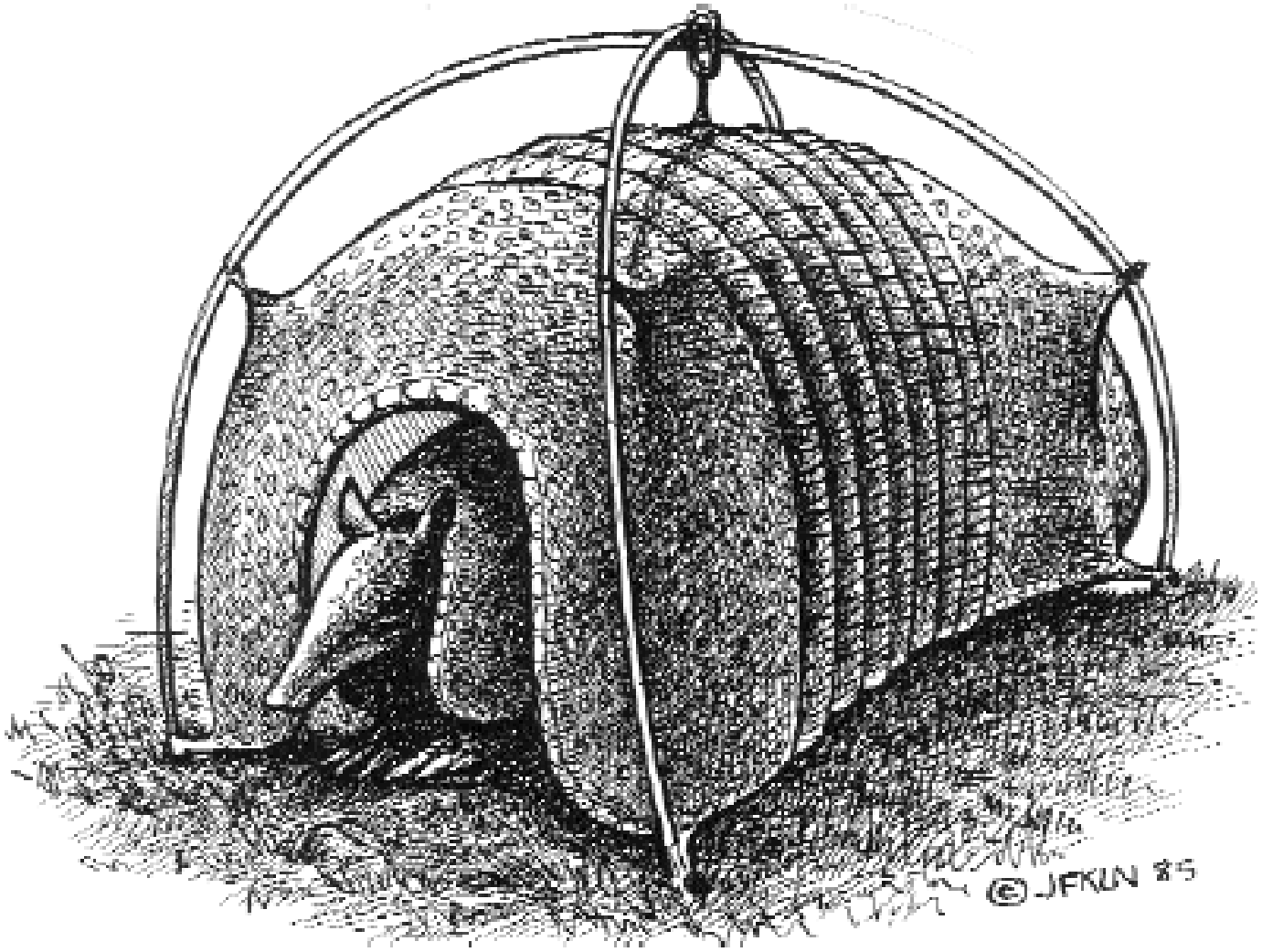
Thanks,

Julia
Advertising Committee
International Congress of Speleology
germanyj@aol.com

Check Out the NSS Website

National Speleological Society: http://www.caves.org

Don't forget, the 2007 NSS Convention is in Marengo, IN from July 23-July 27.



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