TCMA PASSAGES

SPRING 2003

Robber Baron Renovations Underway

by Evelynn Mitchell and Linda Palit

The work of reconstructing the entrance to Robber Baron Cave in San Antonio got underway in earnest this past spring and significant progress has already been made. The cave, owned by TCMA, was closed in the fall of 2001 after the entrance was deemed unsafe due to rotting timbers that support the entrance bunker. In response to this and other factors, a major project was undertaken by the TCMA to completely rebuild the cave entrance and excavate the sinkhole it lies in.

Robber Baron, an extensive maze cave (over 1.3 km) in the Austin Chalk formation, is located within the town of Alamo Heights, which is in the north-central portion of San Antonio contains The cave contains several endangered species and has been used by the TCMA for many years for introducing children and adults to caves and caving. After its discovery in the late 1800's, Robber Baron was first a commercial cave, then an open party cave for teens, but is now under the protection and management of TCMA. The sinkhole in which the cave is located was used as a local trash dump in the past, and years of floods have contributed a silt component to it. This trash and silt layer was not excavated in its entirety during the installation of the current gate due to its excessive density. Due to this factor, air-flow in and out of the cave was restricted, as was small animal and insect access. The San Antonio

See ROBBER BARON on p. 4

All photos by Evelynn Mitchell

Robber Baron Cave: Hardworking volunteers begin the process of breaking up the entrance bunker.

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View from the Palit

by Linda Palit

Caves in Texas! Who has them and who can get into them? — Wizard's Well, Sorcerer's, Fern Cave, Deep, Pumpkin, Blow Hole, Indian Creek, HT Miers, 500 Foot Cave, Devil's Sinkhole, and how many others have either no access or very limited access? Will what access that exists diminish, or is its current state permanent? These questions have been on my mind for a while, and I sometimes wonder if the situation is going to get better. TCMA has acquired half a dozen caves that are mostly open for access, and manages a few dozen more that are not open even to us. But, we still don't have any of the big ones.

During my presidency one of my goals has been that TCMA acquire at least one really good cave to preserve for Texas Cavers. Thus far, it hasn't happened. Will the next year bring an opportunity to buy a major cave in Texas, a cave that we will be proud to own and manage? A cave which deserves to be preserved, but also which Texas cavers deserve to see and have access to? I do not know. But we have a better chance of making this happen the more eyes, ears, and minds that we have working on the task. Please consider making this search a part of you conscious caving agenda. It is going to take lots of us to make the dream of Texas Cavers owning more Texas caves a reality.

That said, this year has been a good one for TCMA. We own several more caves, and we have several ongoing projects in west Texas, SA and in Austin, which are significant and are progressing nicely. TCMA finances continue to improve, and opportunities continue to increase as people begin to recognize our name. Our commitment is to conserving and managing caves in a way that is practical with well-developed plans, including as much recreational access as is possible. As our projects continue to expand, I am excited about the good people joining our efforts.

TCMA Board of Directors/Officers 2003

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Back issues of the *Passages* are available online at the TCMA website at www.cavetexas.org/tcma

TCMA "Marshals" Caves in Western Bexar County

by Joe Mitchell, George Veni, and Linda Palit

Three Bexar county caves and several karst features were acquired by the US Marshals Service as part of the confiscation of property from apprehension of drug dealers. The presence of these caves and karst features, some of which house endangered species, made for an interesting challenge for the US Marshals service and for TCMA.

When the US Marshals Service confiscated two lots in western Bexar County with karst features and endangered species on them, they were at a loss as to what to do with them. Other government Agencies were unwilling to deal with such small amounts of land, but recommended the Marshals sell the property to TCMA. Discussion about the situation led TCMA to conclude that TCMA was willing to be custodians for the caves and karst features, but that TCMA had little interest in buying them, owing to limited funds. The significance of these features is limited in terms of the importance to Texas cavers. Cavers are losing access to important caves of Texas and that problem is one of the current main focuses of TCMA. The caves and karst features of interest here are important and worth preserving, but they have limited recreational or research value, which is TCMA's current main monetary drive. The Marshals started to look for ways sell the caves to TCMA. Eventually, through an exchange of limited funds, the caves were deeded to TCMA. It was a laborious process not atypical of dealing with the government, but TCMA is thrilled to have in their possession three caves and one karst feature, the entrance of the latter of which may excavated to reveal a cave one day.

Photo by George Veni

Entrance to Chimney Cricket Cave

<u>Chimney Cricket Cave</u>[1]

While Richard Fulks was clearing land with a tractor, he uncovered the cave. Later that month, on Jan 30, 1982, Randy Waters explored the cave. The 1.0 by 0.5 by 1.3 m deep entrance pit opens along an enlarged bedding plane, offsets slightly and drops another 1.7 m. This drop is followed by a narrow 2.8 m pit. The cave is known to sometimes have high levels of CO2.

<u>Niche Cave</u>[1]

Roughly 5m in diameter, the entrance sink was filled with trash, the origin of which is unknown. In early 1982, Richard Fulks dug through the trash into the cave and showed it to Randy Waters. Two meters down the sink's west wall is the 0.5 m diameter entrance, which opens into the small cave. This "niche" parallels the sink and is slightly over 8 m long, 2 m wide, and 0.6 m high. The cave is in the Austin Chalk, but the trash fill obscures most of the cave.

See MARSHALS on p. 11

OOPS!!

Corrections from the last issue:

The photos on page 1 and 3 should be credited to Jim Kennedy and were taken at the previous year's event.

Logan McNatt was listed as donating an Explorer. He in fact donated to the TCMA at the *Explorer Level.*

Thank you to Jim Kennedy for bringing these errors to our attention.

ROBBER BARON *(from p. 1)*

Grotto has gated Robber Baron several times in the last 30 years. The current gate is the only one that has proven vandal-proof, but it is extraordinarily heavy.

Sinkhole Dig: Constructors and Associates uses a bobcat to build a ramp to be used for excavation of the sinkhole.

Because of the current air-flow condition, TCMA made a commitment to make the entrance more environmentally friendly, to improve the habitat for the endangered species, and to make some progress toward restoring the cave to closer to the original entrance and sinkhole. To make this process possible, several groups have been supportive, including Bexar Grotto, the National Park Service, Construction Associates of San Antonio, and TSA. The planning of the project began in the latter half of 2001 and the actual execution began this spring.

Last fall a committee of TCMA members got together to examine the problem at hand and draft a plan to regain access to the cave, and to make the new entrance more friendly to the endangered species by increasing the airflow into the cave, and allowing for natural debris and water to flow into the cave entrance more freely. After much debate, it was determined that the current bunker with the gate should be removed, that the sink hole should be dug out to be closer to the original walk-in entrance used in the 1920's and 30's, and that the new gate should be installed at that level. The TCMA board approved this plan at the end of 2002.

The restoration project has now moved forward from the general planning phase to the execution. In January, the project was kicked off by a day of property assessment and a site survey. We had Vivian Loftin, landscape architect and caver from Austin, present to help us flag all of the native tree species and help us decide which trees should be removed in preparation for the later coming heavy equipment and sinkhole digging. Vivian also vol-

Tree Removal: A Constructors and Associates front-end loader knocks over a dead tree along the alley next to the cave.

unteered her services to deliver a landscape design, which will be helpful in restoring the property once the dig on the sinkhole is complete. Some of the brush was hauled off to the city brush removal site that day as well.

February brought us the surprise of donated construction equipment and services from Constructors and Associates. Thanks to their team, a bobcat, a front-end loader, and 3 dump trucks, we were able to remove the pile of dirt in the parking area and the trees in the parking area. The bobcat was then used to dig a ramp into the sinkhole, and begin removing some of the fill. More brush was removed from the site that day also.

The workday in March had two goals, fill the shaft of the sinkhole with concrete sand to stabilize the rest of the dig, and begin demolition of the bunker. Before we could fill the shaft, we had to make sure that airflow would be maintained, so a length of PVC pipe was inserted into the shaft with a bend at the bottom to extend into the cave. The bottom of the shaft was then blocked with plywood and rocks in order to prevent sand from flowing into the cave. Once the shaft was prepared, sand was delivered into the shaft using a system involving another length of PVC pipe. Meanwhile, several methods were tried to begin demolition of the bunker, and a hole was eventually created in the top due to the efforts of Gary White. The hole made it easier for sand delivery to take place and the shaft was eventually filled. Once again, more brush was removed from the site this day.

The project has generated some local publicity and interest. Many people who live around the cave have come by during the project work days, curious as to the sometimes noisy activities going on. Most who come end up being very interested when the project is described and a number have offered to help. Almost everyone wants to go down in the sinkhole and take a look and many have a story to tell about the cave or rumors of caves nearby. The San Antonio Express-News also picked up the story and a reporter was present during the February workday. A major article ran on the front page of the Metro section the following day about the history of the cave and the work TCMA is doing there. Most recently, on April 21, WOAI (the San Antonio NBC affiliate) ran a news story on Robber Baron, interviewing TCMA President Linda Palit and showing video of the construction progress at the cave.

The future work trips out at Robber Baron Cave will take place on the second weekend of each month through out the summer. Work will involve demolishing the remains of the bunker, building a hoist at the top of the sinkhole for removal of buckets and heavy objects, more digging with a bobcat, eventual hand digging for the end of the shaft (volunteers needed!), and you guessed it, more brush removal. At this point, the project time line shows the project should be completed by the end of this year. If you are interested in taking an active role in any of the above tasks, please contact Evelynn Mitchell by e-mail at evelynn@satx.rr.com or by phone at (210)679-8408, and she will connect you with the appropriate activity leader.

The TCMA and the Robber Baron Project Committee would like to thank everyone who has given time to participate in the project. The Committee is very pleased to be making progress after the cave was closed for so long. We hope to see y'all in the cave some time next year!

Filling the Entrance: Prior to filling the entrance with sand, a pipe was installed to allow air flow into the cave. Filling the entrance keeps the cave closed while the gate is removed and stabilizes the ground for further excavation.

TCMA Austin Area Report: As usual the Austin karst keeps us busy…

Winter 2002 - Spring 2003

by Bill Russell and Julie Jenkins

Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve

This karst preserve is an area of about 18 acres in south Austin just south of Davis Lane west of Mopac. The preserve, containing four caves and a sinkhole, was set aside by the developer-Lumberman's Investment Company (LIC)- at the urging of the City of Austin. The developer expressed an intention to turn the preserve over to the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (the District) and the TCMA. LIC placed an annual assessment for preserve maintenance on several surrounding lots.

However there is a problem. Included within the three lots that comprise the preserve is a wet pond intended to improve water quality in the drainage that flows through the preserve. This pond requires makeup water to be added during the summer to replace water that evaporates and the pond leaks, further adding to the concern that the cost of this water will use most of the funds available to maintain the karst preserve. The TCMA and the district have been reluctant to accept the preserve until something is done about the cost of makeup water. One solution would be to drill a well, both the District and the TCMA approve of this idea if some money from sources other than the preserve funds can be provided. It was hoped that LIC would contribute to a well fund, since the pond serves parts of the subdivision beyond the area assessed for the preserve.

All Photos by Julie Jenkins unless otherwise noted.

Village of Western Oaks Annual Cave Day: Visitors of all ages, shapes, and sizes visited Live Oak Cave. Maybe, we'll get some cavers out of this annual event. It was the most enthusiastic group of non-cavers we've ever hosted.

Quite suddenly, LIC decided to escape all the problems and dump, er deed the preserve the City of Austin. This was announced at a strange meeting called by LIC to, among other things sign a management contract with the TCMA. Then just before the meeting LIC announced they would not attend their meeting as they had turn over the preserve to the city and thus there was no need for a meeting. The city has not accepted the preserve, and the city attorney attending the meeting said there NO likelihood they ever would. Currently, informal negotiations are on going, between the TCMA, the city, the district, and the neighborhood association, who pays fees to the fund that supports the preserve. Progress can be expected as soon as LIC is convinced the city will not accept the land, which could be some time if LIC proceeds as they have historically throughout this project.

The TCMA sponsored the second annual Austin Cave Day at the Village of Western Oaks or VWO Karst preserve, which despite rain showers early in the day was an enthusiastic success attracting about 200 visitors, many, many of whom wanted to go into the cave. Julie Jenkins, TCMA Vice President, along with Beckie Morris of the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District, coordinated the event through numerous meetings and phone calls to arrange the details. Carol Henderson provided numerous

handcrafted signs. Many children were taken through Live Oak Cave, a wonderful kiddy cave. We overcame the weather. Several cavers from the UT Grotto were present, including Andy Glusenkamp, Bill Mixon and Aimee Beveridge, TCMA boardmember. Andy gave a demonstration of vertical equipment. Cavers helped with the activities and staffed the caver book booth. Also present with lots of hands-on activities were the City of Austin-Watershed Protection, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Bat Conservation International (with two live fruit bats and several Mexican free-tailed bats), the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District, and the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, a City of Austin -Travis County shared responsibility, which includes Get Down Cave located in this preserve.

Prop 2 Lands: Headquarters Flat Cave entrance.

Despite LIC saying our management services were not needed, because they had given the land to the city, the TCMA has been managing the preserve, monitoring the caves, dealing with the trash, use of the preserve, etc, and managing the Open House which was high profile, so apparently LIC has no objections to the status quo.

City of Austin Watershed Preserves (Prop 2 lands)

The City of Austin purchased several thousand acres, mostly southwest of Austin, to protect the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer. These properties are officially known as the Watershed Preserves, but also referred to as the Proposition 2 lands after the election that approved the purchase of the properties. The TCMA has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Austin and has undertaken several cave projects and prepared karst reports to support the city's effort to manage these preserve lands. The City of Austin has recently hired a new manager of the preserve lands, Kevin Thuesen, who as the gods would have it, is actually a caver. He caved several years ago with our president, Linda Palit and helped restore the vegetation around the entrance to Powell's Cave.

The TCMA had their first official meeting with Kevin on April 10, attended by Julie Jenkins and Bill Russell for the TCMA and Kevin and Joanna Hahm for the City of Austin. The meeting was very successful and several old projects were reauthorized and new ones approved. The TCMA will over the next year or so 1) conduct a karst survey on several thousand acres in Hays County to check for caves and features. This karst survey will *not* involve the traditional transect walking the entire tract, but instead we will concentrate on likely karst areas based on geology and topographical maps; and then more thoroughly inspect the promising areas; 2) Mapping caves, such as the small Sky Ranch Cave; 3) Monitor three known bat caves for presence of bats; 4) re-establish the drip monitoring program in one of the major recharge caves on the preserve lands, Flintridge Cave. Our previous monitoring program was destroyed by flood waters, blasting through the cave.

The TCMA (Bill & Julie) have over the past 4 years been providing the land manager with preliminary karst reports of our findings on the various Prop 2 land Watershed Preserve tracts. Copies were printed and presented to Kevin, the new manager; he was delighted and most grateful. We have been told by top preserve management that our volunteer activities, especially our reports have saved the city of Austin thousands in consulting fees. Sadly, TCMA has not seen any dollars from our agreement with the city, however we do have a great relationship and an open door policy with the land manager and thus we have access to these sensitive lands. We view this relationship as vital to our continued access to city owned/protected caves and to keeping the TCMA on the top of the list of contacts when questions or issues regarding Austin's caves arise.

Photo by Bill Russell

Blowing Sink Entrance

Blowing Sink Tract

For over a year the TCMA has had a very informal agreement with the City of Austin to help the city manage the Blowing Sink Tract in south Austin. As our readers may or may not recall, the Blowing Sink Tract was not part of the Prop2 land purchases and was in danger of being swallowed up in the development fever that has infected Central Texas. If not for the TCMA this 165 acre tract of land with caves, sinkholes and sensitive recharge features would have been lost to residential development.

Over the past year we have stabilized the entrances to the caves, trimmed the old cow trails to allow access to the features, and negotiated with the neighboring developers to prevent environmental problems and encroachments on the tract.

Blowing Sink Cave frequently floods and the force of the water scours the passages and moves large boulders. Currently access to the lower levels is blocked by massive rock re-arrangements following the previous year's floods. Efforts to re-open the access to the lower cave and the Edwards Aquifer have been requested by city. Opening Blowing Sink Cave is a serious task, and given the concern of the city regarding liability, we will proceed slowly, until the city is secure with our activities. Our relations with the Austin Nature Preserves System manager are good, but it will be some time before we will have a formal agreement to manage the Blowing Sink Tract. Due to its sensitivity, this project will require the help of cavers willing to invest in this project, its past, present, and especially future, as this project will make the cave safer, prevent future problems, and increase accessibility.

Blowing Sink Cave: The entrance during major rain event.

Other

- Bill Russell, TCMA Austin Area Manager, helped with a biological survey at Lost Oasis Cave, a biologically interesting TCMA owned cave that is part of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan. Kathy Scanlon, UT Grotto caver and biology instructor at UT contacted Bill looking for a cave and help from TCMA for the survey. Jean Krejca, UT Grotto and karst invertebrate biologist was present as advising biologist. The trip was successful, lots of bugs were seen, including several species new to the cave, and all had a good time.
- Future meetings are planned with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Travis County Natural Resources department, which has purchased large land tracts in northern Travis County (including land across the road and downstream from the Strickland's and the hot tub). These meetings include assessing the caves and karst of these purchased lands, developing policy for the caves and karst management and plans for some karst training for staff.
- Another cave we have spent several years trying to gain access to and protection for is Grassy Cove Cave. This cave has lots of recharge and is located in the midst of a major suburban setting. The cave was owned by Stratus, a major land developer, but Stratus has recently given the land to the neighborhood Homeowners Association as part of its 'land deal' agreement. After a successful TCMA cleanup at La Crosse Cave, located on another tract of Stratus property a short distance from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Stratus is happy with the TCMA and has offered to recommend the TCMA to the Homeowners Association.
- Last February, after struggles to get approval from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to clean up a cave that had not yet been deeded from the Stratus Development Corp. to the Wildflower Center, TCMA mounted a very successful but chilly cleanup of La Crosse Cave, located just a short distance from the Wildflower Center.
- As manager of Austin's TCMA caves, Julie has administrated many trips to TCMA's Whirlpool Cave and continues to act as the city approved representative to administer activities for all city owned caves as well. Thus, keeping cavers in Austin's cave use loop and TCMA at the top of the list when it comes to Austin karst.

Cave cleanup at La Crosse Cave:

La Crosse Cave entrance before we started the cleanup.

…and after the cleanup.

Y2KAVE - Travis County, Texas

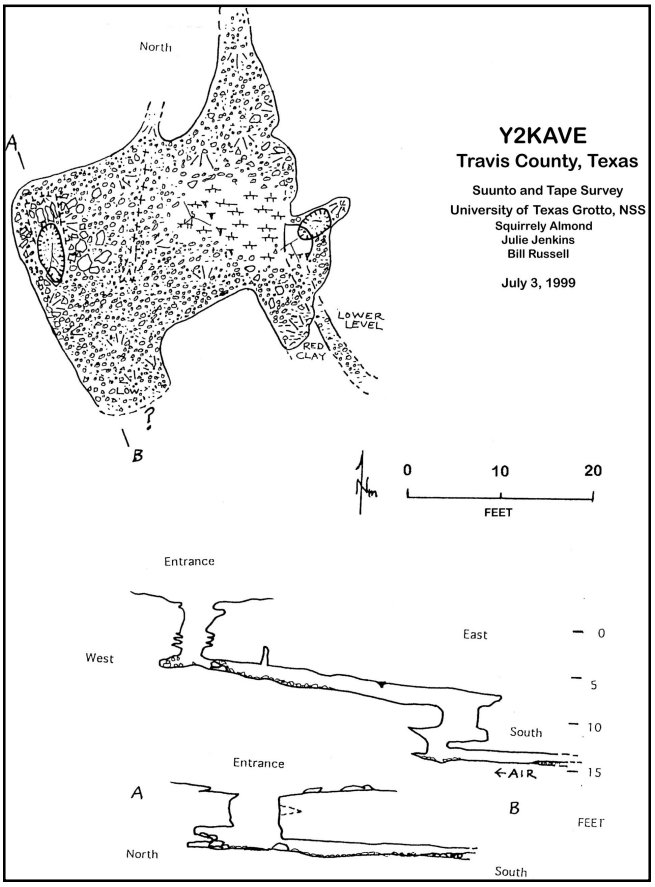
by Julie Jenkins and Bill Russell

Y2Kave, at the time it was discovered at the end of the last millennium, had the distinction of being the newest cave discovery in all of North America, likely in the Western Hemisphere, and possibly in the entire world. Think of it, a possible world record holder right here in Texas. Alas, fame is fleeting, and Y2Kave is no longer even the newest cave in Travis County.

But Y2Kave does have some claim to lasting fame. It is a lesson for those who do karst surveys. The surface sink above Y2Kave was noted on an environmental survey made before the development plan for the area was approved. The sink was shallow, full of loose rocks with no obvious cave and was labeled "not significant." The subdivision plat was accepted without a setback surrounding the sinkhole. The Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC), now the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, sets the standards for karst surveys. Their instructions for Geologic Assessments on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone "recommends" that "Removal of loose rocks by hand (no backhoes or jackhammers) around a natural opening *may* be appropriate"

But many of the companies doing environmental surveys in the karst realize that however "appropriate" it may be to move rocks, they work for developer and their job is to certify that as much as possible of the property is suitable for houses and streets. Thus, few rocks are moved, and many caves are left undiscovered. This is a potential loss not only to cavers, but also to the Edwards Aquifer. Good quality recharge is reduced and many of the direct openings into the aquifer are unprotected and lost.

Before cavers complain about lack of caves to visit they should support efforts by the TCMA and others to strengthen the standards for pre-development karst surveys. And on a more personal note, the next time an environmental person calls you about a cave, make them a friend, educate them, and show them how to find caves. If the present system of karst protection doesn't protect the karst, the long term interests of both the developer and the caves are endangered.



Map of Y2KAVE

Okay, off the soapbox and back to caves. The Y2Kave sink was rediscovered by a neighbor out walking his dog, who noticed considerable water had entered the sink during the wet spring. He knew some cavers, and asked them to help him check the sinkhole, the water must go somewhere. They eagerly responded, rocks were moved and a cave room uncovered. The entrance sink is a six foot deep oval shaped hole with several undercut ledges. A low squeeze from the bottom of the entrance lead to a cobble floored room that extended to the south as far as a light would shine.

The cavers began to explore. To the south the room soon becomes too low to follow, but by following the water flow around to the east they entered a larger section of the room where it is possible to sit up comfortably. The only obvious lead was a small drain hole in solid rock with a promising flow of air. This hole was enlarged by rock shaving and lead to a body sized drain. Unfortunately

the drain could only be followed for a few feet before the clay fill made the passage slightly too small. Digging began, but despite the air flow, enthusiasm was flagging, and hauling dirt out of the squeeze was tiring. About five feet ahead (a three hour dig) the passage changes and might enlarge to passable size.

Word of the new discovery spread and TCMA members mapped and documented the cave. Finally publicity prompted a request to the TNRCC to require the developer to establish a setback around the cave and protect the drainage area. And to the amazement of many, this request was approved, the developer was required to set aside four lots and construct a berm to prevent runoff from the developed area from flowing into the cave. Y2Kave will still be accessible in the next millennium, and the decision by TNRCC was, hopefully not just a fluke, and may indeed help set a new standard for karst surveys.

MARSHALS *(from p. 3)*

World Newt Cave[1]

Newt Cave was discovered and surveyed on Nov. 15, 1980 by George Veni. Formed in the Austin Chalk, the cave is primarily developed along a northeast-southwest joint. The 2 m long by 0.8 m wide entrance drops 1.2 m into the cave. A bedding plane 1.2 m below the ground surface collects and directs infiltrating water to the vandosely developed pit. Low, bedding plane crawls extend a short distance to the north and south, and extends 6 m to the southwest. Slightly offset from the entrance, a 3 m long by 0.5 m wide pit drops 6.3 m to the end of the cave.

Obvious Little Cave[2]

As Joe Ivy and George Veni were leaving a nearby cave, they "discovered" Obvious Little Cave. No vegetation obscures the sinkhole entrance of the cave, which is quite obvious from even 100 m away. They were both amazed that no cave explorer had noticed it during the investigations of the early 1980s in this area. However, someone else had found it as a layer of concrete covers the entire cave floor. The source of the concrete was probably a truck that rinsed out its hold as pouring a foundation.

The cave's entrance is 0.6 m in diameter and slopes to a depth of 1.6 m to a 2.5-m-deep pit. The cave is formed along a fault and goes east for 1.5 m, then down a 3 m and 2 m drop to a crawlway that becomes impassibly narrow after 3 m. Water that enters the cave flows down this passage bringing in broken glass and other trash.

The cave appears to be biologically significant. A blind Cicurina sp. spider and a blind Rhadine sp. beetle were found. Other observed species include at least two species of cave crickets (probably Ceuthophilus cunicularis and possible C. secretus), troglobitic springtails (probably Pseudosinella violenta), and empty snail shells (probably Helicodiscus eigenmanni).

Photo by George Veni

Obvious Little Cave Entrance

The above descriptions were excepted from the following sources and used with permission:

1. Veni, George, ed., The Caves of Bexar County, The Texas Memorial Museum, 1988.

2. Veni, George. 1997. Evaluation of areas of potential influence on karst ecosystems in Bexar County, Texas (part 2 of 2). Report for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, George Veni and Associates, San Antonio, Texas, 44 pp.

MINUTES
Board of Directors
TEXAS CAVE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
Meeting Date: Saturday, April 12, 2003 at 1 P.M.
Location: Home of Sue & Geary Schindel, San Antonio

Directors/Officers Attending	Absent:
Linda Palit, Pres. & Director (Jan 2003-Dec 2005)	Jay Jorden, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)
Sue Schindel, Treas & Direc (Jan 2001-Dec 2003)	Aimee Beveridge, Director (Jan 2001-2003)
Joe Mitchell, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)	Walter Feaster, Director (Jan 2001-2003)
Bill Russell, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)	Julie Jenkins, VP
Joann Delunna , Director (Jan 2003-Dec 2005)	**Noted Attendees:**
Kurt Menking, Director (Jan 2003-Dec 2005)	Ron Ralph, Past Director
	Bob 'Rune' Burnett, Past Director
	Joe Ranzau, Secretary, TSA
	Susan Souby, Secretary

Opening

The meeting was called to order by President Linda Palit. Jay Jorden authorized Linda as his proxy. Treasurer Sue Schindel presented the Balance Sheet and Summary Report as of 4/12/03. Assets consist of cash in the amount of $8,092.20. Income was $12,959.25 and expenses were $6,777.04, with a balance forward of $1,909.99, resulting in an overall total of $8,092.20.

I. Officers – we had a very poor attendance at the TCR Flood where we had our meeting this year. By default, we have just kept the officers from last year. Perhaps we should make that official? The following officers will to continue to serve until TCR in October 2003: Linda Palit – President, Julie Jenkins – Vice President, Sue Schindel – Treasurer, and Susan Souby – Secretary.

II. Web Page – Annmarie says she is willing; we need to keep up-to-date information getting to her. Annmarie Mikelski will continue as webmaster. She has requested additional pictures of caves owned or managed by TCMA to add to the web page. Joe Ranzau with the Texas Speleological Association said TSA will continue to allow space on their website, and Linda recommended continuing.

III. GLO – Ron Ralph – Helms West Cave and other

Ron Ralph stated that he has been in contact with the General Land Office (GLO) concerning TCMA management of Helms West Cave. He hopes that this contact will be a foot in the door for working with the GLO on a management plan similar to the one TCMA is working on with UT Lands. Ron will organize a coalition including TCMA members for reconnaissance of the cave and evaluation for cultural resources and for gating. He has contacted Peter Sprouse and Mike Warton for estimates on a gate. Ron expects to meet with the GLO archeologist and will keep the BOD informed of progress. Bill Russell added that Helms West has a place in Texas caving history as the cave where Texas cavers first witnessed single rope technique by Bill Cuddington.

IV. Statewide Land Trust Conference Friday – Saturday, April 25-26 – New Braunfels Civic Center

Linda requested that a TCMA Board member attend the Land Trust Conference. Jay Jorden may be able to attend; Linda will call him. Sue Schindel might be able to attend.

V. Next issue of Passages? Article on Robber Baron, Marshal Caves, Austin?

The Board discussed articles to include in the next issue of Passages. So far these include articles on the following: Robber Baron update – Evelynn Mitchell, Marshal's caves, La Crosse Cave clean-up – Bill Russell, and update on activities in the Austin area – Bill Russell. Joe Mitchell hopes to have the issue ready for the TSA Spring Convention May 2-4 if he receives articles soon.

VI. Austin Projects – Concerns?

Bill Russell distributed a written report and presented an update on the activities in the Austin area including the Village of Western Oaks Karst Park, the City of Austin Watershed Preserves (Prop 2 lands), Blowing Sink Tract, and Other projects. (This report is attached to the Minutes.) Bill added that Julie Jenkins is still looking for someone to help her manage Whirl-pool Cave.

VII. Ezell's – possible conservation easement with main management going to SWTSU and Longley.

Linda summarized the information which she forwarded to the Board members in an email from Gary Amoan, the Edwards Plateau Ecoregional Manager at The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The TNC is considering transferring Ezell's Cave in San Marcos to another entity. They have discussed this with Dr. Glenn Longley at the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center at SWTSU. SWT is interested. TNC would also like to have a conservation easement on the property and contacted Linda about TCMA being the easement holder. **THE BOARD APPROVED LINDA TO PURSUE TCMA HOLDING A**

CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON EZELL'S CAVE WITH TNC. Linda will also contact Jon Cradit to discuss his continuing to monitor the cave.

VIII. Fern Cave is on land which is a Nature Conservancy purchase. There is some hope that we may be able to become involved in management or ownership. **THE BOARD APPROVED LINDA CONTINUING TO PURSUE OWNERSHIP OR MANAGEMENT OF FERN CAVE.**

IX. Bullis contract will likely double next year. New guidelines about endangered creature habitat in Bexar County will affect our work there. Because of new guidelines regarding endangered species in Bexar County, Linda said the Camp Bullis contract may double in both the amount of work and the amount of the contract. Linda has contacted Peter Sprouse, and he is interested in continuing to manage the project. The increased revenue from the contract may require TCMA to file income tax returns.

X. Robber Baron Project

Linda announced that the work on Robber Baron is proceeding. Part of the bunker is gone and the shaft is full of sand. There is a pipe in the shaft for the cave to breathe and rocks are hiding the pipe. The fire department may haul the bunker out as part of their practice. Evelynn Mitchell, Tom Brown, and Linda are coordinating the project and discussing plans. Evelynn will make a presentation on the progress at the TSA Spring Convention. The next work weekend on Robber Baron is May 10-11, the weekend after the convention.

XI. O-9 Well

Linda presented a copy of the revised agreement between TCMA and The University of Texas System (UTS) for management of O-9 Well and Amazing Maze. The agreement has been sent to UT and TCMA is awaiting a response. Ron Ralph announced that he will be working in the field with the UT Lands archeologist for 10 days at the end of April and beginning of May. Ron will be able to enter into negotiations with UT Lands during this time. Ron contacted Walter Feaster and will meet with Walter to discuss the contract. **THE BOARD AUTHORIZED RON RALPH TO PROCEED AND SECURE THE CONTRACT WITH UTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF O-9 WELL AND AMAZING MAZE.**

XII. Membership and Other

Membership –

Linda reported that she sent copies of Passages to the Texas grottos along with membership applications. She requested that the grottos join, as well as individuals. Susan reported that the Greater Houston Grotto and 3 individuals had joined recently, probably in response to Linda's mailing. Susan said she will send out 2nd notices of membership renewals before the TSA spring convention.

Genesis MOU –

Joe Mitchell presented a MOU between TCMA and Cornerstone Church regarding Genesis Cave. **THE BOARD AUTHORIZED JOE AND LINDA TO ENTER INTO A MOU WITH CORNERSTONE CHURCH REGARDING GENESIS CAVE ON BEHALF OF TCMA WITH MINOR CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT AS APPROPRIATE.**

Harrell's Cave –

Linda requested a volunteer to talk to the elderly owner of Harrell's Cave about preservation. Rune volunteered to contact Terry Holsinger for information about the cave.

Deepwater Cave –

Kurt is continuing to research the ownership of Deepwater Cave. The cave is located in a subdivision off Spring Branch Rd. The property is currently tax delinquent, and Kurt is on the list to be contacted by Comal County if the property comes up for sale. Deepwater is an interesting cave at the base of the Glen Rose, and may be part of the old part of Honey Creek.

Caves on Lacantera land -

Kurt reported on the status of the caves the developer Lacantera bought to mitigate development. Kurt estimated that there are 15-18 caves scattered over several hundred acres. Lacantera filed a protective deed and agreed to protect the caves in perpetuity, but they have not set up a conservation easement or some other method for independent monitoring or management of the caves. Both Linda and Bill volunteered to discuss the situation with a representative of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Other Caves –

Joe is researching **a cave off 1604** which is in a development of hundreds of acres. Joe will discuss with the seller the possibility of purchasing only the cave. Joe Ranzau is researching **Alzafar Water Cave** in Kendall County. Kurt has been in contact with the owner of **Quarry Cave**, which may be the longest cave in Bexar County. The passages are similar to Robber Baron. Kurt said the owner sounds interested in cavers pursuing something with the cave. There are no imminent development plans.

Cave Acquisition Committee – Ron will contact Geary Schindel, chairman of the Cave Acquisition Committee, regarding future meetings of the committee and discussion of caves to be investigated for acquisition.

See TCMA MEETING MINUTES, APRIL 12, 2003 continued on p. 15

MINUTES
Annual Meeting
TEXAS CAVE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
Meeting Date: Sunday, October 20, 2002
Location: Horseshoe Bend, San Marcos River
Texas Caver Reunion

Directors/Officers Attending	Absent:
Linda Palit, Pres. & Director (Jan 2000-Dec 2002)	Jay Jorden, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)
Bill Russell, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)	Julie Jenkins, VP & Director (Jan 2000-Dec 2002)
Bob Burnett, Director (Jan 2000-Dec 2002)	Sue Schindel, Treas & Direc (Jan 2001-Dec 2003)
Walter Feaster, Director (Jan 2001-Dec 2003)	Aimee Beveridge, Director (Jan 2001-2003)
	Joe Mitchell, Director (Jan 2002-Dec 2004)
	Noted Attendees:
	Geary Schindel, proxy for Sue Schindel
	Susan Souby, Secretary

Opening

The meeting was called to order by President Linda Palit. Linda noted that a quorum of the general membership (10% of the members) was present for the transaction of business.

I. Treasurer's Report for 2002

In the absence of Treasurer Sue Schindel, Geary Schindel presented the Treasurer's Report. The Profit & Loss lists the income by item of $30,948.05 and the expenses by item of $21,901.66 for a net income of $9,046.39. The Balance Sheet lists assets of cash of $20,818.47 and equity of $20,818.47. Linda noted that the proceeds from the Texas Women Texas Caves calendars would be donated to the TCMA Cave Acquisition Fund. Also, the new Camp Bullis contract has been accepted and TCMA will now bill for the outstanding months of management services provided.

II. Passages and Web Page Report for 2002

Annmarie Mikelski, webmaster, announced she has been waiting for and is ready to include additional information on the TCMA web page. Joe Mitchell will email any additional information to Annmarie with a cc to Linda so she can help coordinate the additions. More information on individual caves was mentioned as being needed. Listing the contacts for the properties was mentioned as being very important. Annmarie agreed and noted that the contacts are up-to-date. There are 2 issues of Passages on the web page, and Annmarie said she has 2 more issues to include. Annmarie said that the location of the webpage on the TSA site is working well and that TCMA does not have to change to its own site. The website is currently paid for through the TSA bookstore. There is no need for TCMA to pay for the website. Annmarie also noted that there are quite a few items for sale with the TSA and other caving logos and that TCMA could have its logo put on any number of items at a low cost.

III. Update on TCMA Caves and Initiatives

A. Robber Baron

Linda described briefly the 3 possible plans for improving the entrance to Robber Baron: replacing the concrete bunker with a standpipe, digging out the entire sinkhole, or digging out a portion of the sinkhole and adding to the terrace. The Robber Baron committee will meet Monday, October 21, 2002 to discuss the plans and hopes to select a plan and assign tasks by the end of the week. Linda also reported having talked to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. (TP&WD) urban outreach person. They would like to donate an educational kiosk and to help with the plan for the improvement of the grounds.

B. Marshal's Caves in SA

Linda noted the purchase of the caves in the Laurel Ridge Subdivision in San Antonio from the U.S. Marshal's office.

C. Whirlpool

Bill Russell reported on Whirlpool, noting that it is still heavily visited by City of Austin personnel taking groups caving. Current manager Julie Jenkins is working out of town much of the time and is looking for someone to manage Whirlpool and Lost Oasis caves. It was suggested that any new guidelines for visitation and access be included on the website for ease in planning trips. Geary Schindel asked for pictures of the Whirlpool Cave entrance before the entrance bunker was installed. Bill Russell volunteered to send these to him.

D. Other Austin Initiatives

Bill Russell reported briefly on Blowing Sink Tract and the Western Oaks Karst Preserve. As noted in the Board meeting on Saturday, October 19th, the City of Austin (COA) appointed Rene Barrera as manager of the preserves. Bill and Julie will begin working on a MOU with the COA for work on the Blowing Sink Tract. Bill and Julie have expressed an interest on behalf of TCMA in ownership of the Western Oaks Karst Preserve if there is funding to operate the preserve and if the preserve can be separated from the wet pond located upstream from the cave.

III. Cave Acquisition Progress

Geary Schindel reported that the Cave Acquisition Committee received new leads this weekend on acquiring 'caves for cavers.' Geary also asked that each TCMA member return to their grottos and announce that TCMA is interested in buying caves. Geary mentioned that the Southeast Cave Conservancy purchased its first cave for $60,000 then raised enough funds to pay it off in 2 years. The SCCI purchased 3 more caves recently, leveraging the existing property to buy additional property. Several caves were mentioned as possible candidates for purchase. Annemarie volunteered to get Linda in touch with a cave owner in Houston.

IV. Nomination and Election of New Board Members

The terms of 3 Board members will expire in December 2002: Linda Palit, Bob Burnett, and Julie Jenkins. Susan, representing the Nominations Committee (Joe Mitchell, Ron Ralph, and Susan Souby) presented 3 nominees to replace the outgoing Board members. These nominees were Linda Palit, Joann Deluna, and Kurt Menking. The membership voted unanimously for the slate of nominees as new members of the Board of Directors. The term of service will be 3 years, from January 2003 through December 2005. Officers will be elected at the next Board meeting.

Next TCMA Board Meeting

Linda suggested that the next TCMA Board meeting be held in conjunction with the TSA winter meeting. She also suggested that the Board might meet in Austin before Christmas to visit Whirlpool and Blowing Sink or other caves in the Austin area in which TCMA has involvement.

The meeting was adjourned.

TMCA MEETING MINUTES, APRIL 12, 2003 *(from p. 13)*

New addendum to insurance policy – Jay sent word that there is a new addendum to our insurance policy that terrorist acts are not covered.

TP&WD Recreation Trail Fund – Jay also mentioned looking at the TP&WD recreation trail fund for Whirlpool.

Communication among Board Members

The Board discussed maintaining communication and agreed to keep each other informed by email of any meetings, activities, etc. which may affect TCMA. Linda suggested having just 2 Board of Director meetings each year, at TCR and at the TSA spring convention, and having the officers run the day to day business. This would require a definition of the authority and responsibilities of the officers. Linda noted how difficult it is to host a quorum of the Board. **THE BOARD RESOLVED TO CLARIFY ARTICLE 4, SECTION 4.8 OF THE REVISED AND RESTATED BYLAWS OF THE TCMA** which reads as follows: Telephone Meetings. Members of the Board or members of any committee designated by the Board may participate in and hold a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. **THE BOARD APPROVED ADDING EMAIL AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND AS A MEANS TO VOTE.**

TCMA official vendor of DOD

Linda reported that she renewed the status of the TCMA as a government contractor, and TCMA is an official vendor of the Department of Defense (DOD).

TSA Spring Convention

The Board discussed TCMA activities at the TSA Spring Convention. Joe reported that there is room under the covered area for a TCMA table. Membership applications and the newest issue of Passages should be at the table. The Board agreed to sponsor a 50/50 fundraiser for TCMA. The Board approved reprinting the TCMA T-shirts to sell. Linda and Joann will get the T-shirts reprinted. Evelynn Mitchell will give a talk on the progress at Robber Baron and will give a general summary of TCMA. The Board agreed to meet briefly on Sunday morning, May 4th to inform those attending of the recent accomplishments.

TSS Activities

Ron announced 2 TSS functions in which the TCMA officers and board might be interested. There is a TSS Board meeting at 10:30 AM on Saturday, May 31st. There is a TSS work session on Saturday, May 17th which will be an open house. The work session will begin at 8 AM at the JJ Jake Pickle Research Center. This will be a good time for people across the state to view the files for TCMA caves. Ron invited TCMA to participate by having a table to show maps of TCMA caves. Bill agreed to talk to the TSS officers about announcing camping available at Lost Oasis Cave for those attending from out of town.

The meeting was adjourned.

The Board and Officers of the Texas Cave Management Association express their appreciation to those who have contributed to the TCMA during this year:

New Members
Eddie Baker
Jake & Briana Deeds
Dan Formanek
Steve Gutting
Ted Lee
Roger Moore
Donna Mosesmann
Becky Prentice
Joe Ranzau
Richard Wark

Renewing Members
Robert Albach
Jacqui Bills
Tom Brown
James & Karen Clary
Rick Corbell
Bob Cowell
Mark Gee
Logan McNatt
Kurt Menking
Marvin Miller
Joe & Evelynn Mitchell
David & Lillis Moulton
Susan Souby
Peter Sprouse
Steve Taylor
Kate Walker

Life Members making donations
Bruce Anderson
Donna Anderson
Michael Anderson
Bill Bentley
Bob (Rune) Burnett
Gralin Coffin
George Crosby
Joann DeLunna
Walter Feaster
Lee Jay Graves
Joel King
Dave McAdoo
Dale Pate
Carl Ponebshek
Bill Russell
Pete Strickland
Tag Swann

Welcome to the:
Greater Houston Grotto
As an Institutional Member

Special thanks to
George Veni and Associates
For his Business Membership

Special thanks to our donors:
Explorer Level:
Logan McNatt
David Taylor
Caver Level:
Jacqui Bills
Peter Sprouse

Texas Cave Management Association

Since 1985, dedicated to the conservation and protection of our underground resources.

Cave Science - Cave Management - Cave Protection

TCMA welcomes and encourages cavers to become new members. We have dedicated years of field work and research to the preservation and protection of caves for the caver, the community, and the future.

Regular - $15.00 year
Associate - $10.00 year
(Students Under 21)
Family - $22.50
Institutional (Non-profit) - $50.00
Corporate - $100.00

Email: **tcma@cavetexas.org**
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