Texas Cave Management Association

TCMA PASSAGES

FALL 2010

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Amazing Maze Cave Labor Day Weekend Survey Trip and Musical Extravaganza

By Ellie Watson and Peter Sprouse

Over Labor Day Weekend a vivacious crew of cavers and scientists, led by Peter Sprouse, met in Pecos County, Texas to continue the resurvey of Amazing Maze Cave.

Celebrating the end of the summer heat, cavers from Houston, San Marcos, San Antonio, and Austin showed up with the sole purpose of continuing the resurvey of Amazing Maze Cave. There were eight survey teams in all, and one team from Stephen F. Austin State University was there to study and document the mineralogy of Amazing Maze as thesis research. The survey teams focused on thoroughness rather than speed. Many teams found areas with excessive ticks and fleas and excessively named passages after them, mainly in the south where there are a lot of small openings in the I-10 road cut for mammals to enter. A fox was even spotted outside on the road cut waiting for lunch.

On the first survey day, Don Arburn and Ann Scott returned to the North Maze where they had surveyed the year before, joined by Lee Jay Graves

Photo by Goeff Hoese

David Ochel and Aimee Beveridge surveying in typical Amazing Maze passage.

See AMAZING MAZE ⟹ *p. 10*

Vote on TCMA By-Laws at TCR Members Meeting!

The Board is proposing significant changes to the by-laws. See the article on pg. 3 for a description and pick up a copy of the proposed revision at the TCMA table.

INSIDE THE PASSAGES

Issues in Cave Acquisition	4
TCMA Faces Financial Challenges	5
Robber Baron History Revealed	6
Deep & Punkin Update	11

STATE OF THE CAVERS

By Arron Wertheim

Just a little background here: I have been the TCMA Vice-President since January 2010. After William Russell's stroke in February I have been filling in for him and helping to further his goals of the TCMA, goals in fact that we both share. We both understand the importance of this organization for caves, cavers, and ironically the rest of the sun-loving world, whether they know it or not. Our efforts in running this organization are simply guided towards buying and protecting more caves for cavers and keeping the TCMA a financially viable entity. How we get there is an interesting story, one being played out every day.

The TCMA is in the red. Linda Palit, previous President, had secured a fantastic cave-management contract with Camp Bullis in San Antonio. Her tireless efforts allowed the TCMA to bring in substantial moneys, dollars used to pay off Deep & Punkin Preserve, and dollars saved for rainy days. Camp Bullis cancelled that contract last year and so our major revenue source is gone. We still have savings but it won't last forever.

So far in fiscal year 2010 we are in the red. The good news is we are not as far in the red as the Board of Directors had budgeted! TCMA members have been extremely generous in their fundraising and charitable donations. The Robber Baron Open House headed by Preserve Manager Joe Mitchell was an overwhelming success in terms of family fun and charitable donations from visitors. The TSA Spring Convention Auction led by Jim Kennedy, Saj Zapitello, and Ann Scott enticed a good chunk of change from attendees. I tip my hat to the TCMA staff that has worked tirelessly raising funds for our expenses. Our other garage sales and shirt sales have been successful. And cavers general donations and TCMA memberships are very appreciated, especially knowing how financially difficult times are right now.

Yet despite our slimmed-down budget it still takes a substantial revenue stream to keep our properties open and available for caving. William and I have been attempting to streamline some Board business. Why? Because we see opportunity for the TCMA to become something different, something sustainable in an era of limited funding. How can that be? We recognize that the TCMA's greatest asset isn't money in the bank, nor even a respectful portfolio of Texas caves; the TCMA's greatest asset is the diverse group of cavers that support and encourage this lifestyle!

Cavers can be a wild and eccentric bunch! And often they are naked! But they also have more skills and experience than any group of people off the street. William and I have been doing everything possible to make sure Texas cavers have the opportunity to participate in the TCMA, to show off their talents, to help us with new ideas, and to march the TCMA forwards through these hard times.

TCMA can live without substantial revenue for a while but TCMA cannot survive another economic downturn in its current state. We need to change our organization to function in leaner times. We want cavers to step forward and help the Fundraising and Membership Committees. Matt Turner and Jill Orr are rebuilding the TCMA website so that we have

See WERTHEIM ⟹ *p. 12*

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Board Proposes By-Laws Revisions

By Joe Mitchell

The TCMA Board has passed a major revision to the TCMA By-Laws which will be presented to the membership for final approval at the Membership Meeting to be held at TCR. Many of the changes are minor, consisting of streamlining language and removing extraneous or outdated sections. The By-Laws Committee, whose members are Allan Cobb, Bill Mixon, Linda Palit, Joe Ranzau, William Russell, and Chair Joe Mitchell, has been working over the last few months to make these revisions so that the by-laws better work for the organization and are sufficiently general so that they can have broad applicability into the future.

Within these changes are four of particular significance. First is a change in the membership categories to simplify the options and clarify who is a member. The new categories are: regular, associate, life, and honorary life. The Regular membership category remains the same, being a 1-year membership with the following benefits: ability to vote at Members Meetings, visit O-9 Well and Amazing Maze (required by TCMA's insurance on the UT Lands), be a trip leader at our other preserves, and be an Officer or Director of TCMA. TCMA does not require membership in order visits any of the caves that we own, so long as at least one person on the trip is a member. The next membership category is Associate, which are people under the age of 18 whose parent or guardian is a Regular member. Associate members do not get to vote at Membership meetings. Honorary Life members are composed of all previous Life members and any additional people deemed by the Board to have a significant contribution to TCMA and Texas Caving. The Life member category allows a person to get a non-expiring Regular membership for a one-time fee. Both Honorary Life and Life members have all the rights and privileges of Regular Members.

The second significant change involves the way in which Directors are elected. Under the new by-laws any eligible TCMA member can run for Director but must submit their intention to run to the Nominating Committee at least 21 days before the election. The purpose of this advanced notice is to allow the Nominating Committee to discuss the duties and responsibilities of being Director with the candidate, not to prevent any person from running. Additionally, it provides all candidates with the knowledge of who they are running against and the same opportunities should they want to publicize their ideas about TCMA. Although there will only be 4 open Director positions at each election, there can potentially be more candidates if sufficient numbers of people wish to run, so elections at the annual Members Meeting will be by ballot. Nominations from the floor of the meeting will no longer be possible.

Summary of By-Laws Revisions

- Four Membership Categories: Regular, Associate, Life, and Honorary Life
- Candidates for Director must provide name to Nominations Committee 21 days in advance - no nominations from the floor
- Board sized fixed at 12 Directors.
- Director term limits of 2 consecutive 3-year terms
- Officers must be Directors
- Streamlining of language

The third major change is in the size of the Board and the terms of Directors. The size of the Board could previously be changed within a certain range by a simple vote of the Board. The size will now be fixed at twelve Directors. Term limits on Directors are also being implemented with each Director only being allowed to serve two consecutive 3-year terms. However, after a one-year break, that person can run for Director again. This is to encourage more turn-over in the Board so that new people can get involved.

The last major change is in the eligibility to be an Officer. Under the proposed by-laws, only current Directors may serve as Officers. This is for reasons of liability and it has been many years since TCMA had an Officer who was not a Director.

If you wish to vote on these proposed by-laws changes please attend the TCMA Members Meeting to be held Sunday morning Oct. 17 at TCR. To get a copy of the proposed new by-laws and the current by-laws for comparison, stop by the TCMA booth at TCR.

How Does TCMA Buy Caves and Why Don't We Have More?

By Linda Palit

CAVES! That has always been what TCMA is about, and it still is! We work to get people to give them to us; we work to get caves to manage; and we BUY them. In all of these areas we depend on Texas Cavers to help us. Information, open eyes, and communication are key. TCMA has limited funds, but enough savings for down payments on properties if we believe we can raise enough to pay for the cave and if the purchase makes sense. TCMA has an Acquisitions Committee who look and watch for caves TCMA might acquire. If you hear of a cave for sale, please send the committee information, or if you have time, volunteer to be on the committee. Whether you are on the committee or just communicating, the goal is to investigate possible caves that TCMA might acquire. Jerry Atkinson <jerryatkin@aol.com> is the chairman of the Acquisitions Committee, and welcomes your input and information.

But what's involved?

BUYING caves sounds easy, and perhaps it should be, but it is not. We began talking about the purchase of Deep and Punkin in ___ and it was two years later before TCMA signed the contract to purchase the cave. The good news is that __ years later in 2009 we finished paying for the cave. But what was involved in purchasing a cave.

Finding a cave Texas Cavers are interested in at a price we can afford is a challenge. Are we willing to spend millions of dollars for a ranch with a really good cave or pay a quarter of a million for a lot in a subdivision with a cave on it? The answer is, it depends on the cave and lots of other factors. These factors include: Are there ranch dumps of toxins(sheep dip or pesticides) near or in the cave? What is the access and easements involved? If it is in some sort of development what are the restrictions, and what are the enforcement or appeal procedures? Will the neighbors be willing to work with us? What is the tax situation, and will the county work with us? Those questions must be answered before we even begin to determine down payments and financing.

But the next question is, will Texas Cavers think this cave worthwhile and help pay for it? And how do we determine that? Talking to people is the only way I know, but it is a hard judgment based on size, location, camping possibilities if remote, etc. TCMA has made a list of the caves we would most like to have, including some classics, but that does not mean they are for sale or at a price that seems/is possible. Lots of details here, but let's just say it is complicated, and it takes time.

DONATIONS or MANAGEMENT of caves can be complicated also. We do our best to accept donated caves and have received some real jewels, such as Whirlpool, Robber Baron, and Ezell's. Each donation of a cave involves its own problems, and specific expenses that TCMA must pay for. If a cave has endangered species, visitation may be restricted (Ezell's) and there may be requirements for monitoring the cave for the species (Godwin Ranch Caves). If there are extensive monitoring requirements, TCMA must receive money with the donation to be able to afford to accept the cave. As a nonprofit organization, TCMA is legally responsible to carry out whatever requirements the endangered species carry; sometimes that is just good stewardship, but sometimes it is extensive monitoring and reporting. Donations from a neighborhood association also involve expenses; is the neighborhood willing to gate the cave if needed, or does TCMA need to do that? Managing caves presents similar challenges.

What's next?

YOUR ROLE as a Texas Caver is as you choose; TCMA is your organization. Because of the work and generosity of Texas Cavers TCMA holds significantly more caves than it did ten years ago. The thanks belong to you—our members! If you are intrigued and think you can find more caves for purchase, management, or that somebody will donate, help TCMA either formally or informally. If you just want to cave, keep your eyes and ears open anyway! Every tip may lead to a new cave that will be saved, restored, and conserved for this and the next generation of Texas Cavers.

Status and Challenges for TCMA Finances and Fundraising

By Linda Palit

TCMA is always in transition and always meeting new challenges. I have been thinking about a couple of them during the last few weeks. The following is from my point of view, and I am certain there are perceptions about financing and fundraising. I am not bothering with money numbers; if those numbers interest you talk to some of the TCMA Board, come to the meeting, and ask questions; there is lots of information and it is not secret. That information is just pretty detailed for a simple article or short meeting. I am giving my perceptions in general terms to inform you and prompt your thinking.

Good news! TCMA has savings and raises money.

Bad news! TCMA's income is significantly lower than it was for the past decade. TCMA is rethinking how to go about sustaining reasonable income, how to do fundraising, and how to finance its activities.

During the first decade of the 21st Century TCMA was very lucky to have a consistent and increasing income from a cave management contract that no longer is being issued for bids. Knowing that this would not last forever, TCMA saved a substantial amount of money. With this loss of income, TCMA is spending more yearly on sustaining itself than it is bring in as income. Currently, our income is from dues, donations, t-shirts sales, the fall garage sale, and the spring auction. Unfortunately, these do not pay for the general expenses of running the organization and maintaining our properties. This is not a crisis because we have savings. However, this IS a situation which must change if TCMA is to thrive and grow.

Solutions!

So what is next? TCMA has several options, but TCMA has to plan a path. Because TCMA is made up of Texas Cavers, your thoughts and input are invaluable. TCMA has traditionally been a caver organization; therefore it is appropriate that cavers help decide how to proceed. Below are some of the potential options to help fund TCMA:

Option 1: Turn to cavers and the caver community; ask for continuing donations, ask for donations at caves, ask for more donations on properties, ask for bequeaths; ask for presents, and ask for money.

Option 2: Increase fundraising activities such as dinners, happy hours with entertainment, and cave tours for donations. More personnel would be needed to staff these activities.

Option 3: Turn to more of a "traditional" nonprofit model such as those used by the Hill Country Conservancy and Nature Conservancy. This would involve fund drives and mailings directed at the noncaving community. This would involve increased outreach to the general communities who are interested in the environment or who surround our caves. This involves increased personnel working on and managing these efforts.

Option 4: Seek commercial contracts for managing caves; this could take several different forms but involves dedicated or paid personnel seeking this sort of work as well as performing and managing the work when it is found.

Option 5: Seek grants. Unfortunately, grants are not given for just "being a good organization." Grants are for specific projects. Grants could help fund specific activities on some preserves such as protecting wildlife or increasing education. This would involve increased personnel to find, write, and administer the grants.

Option 6: Proceed the way we are, and just use our savings now, and hope for some good luck in the future.

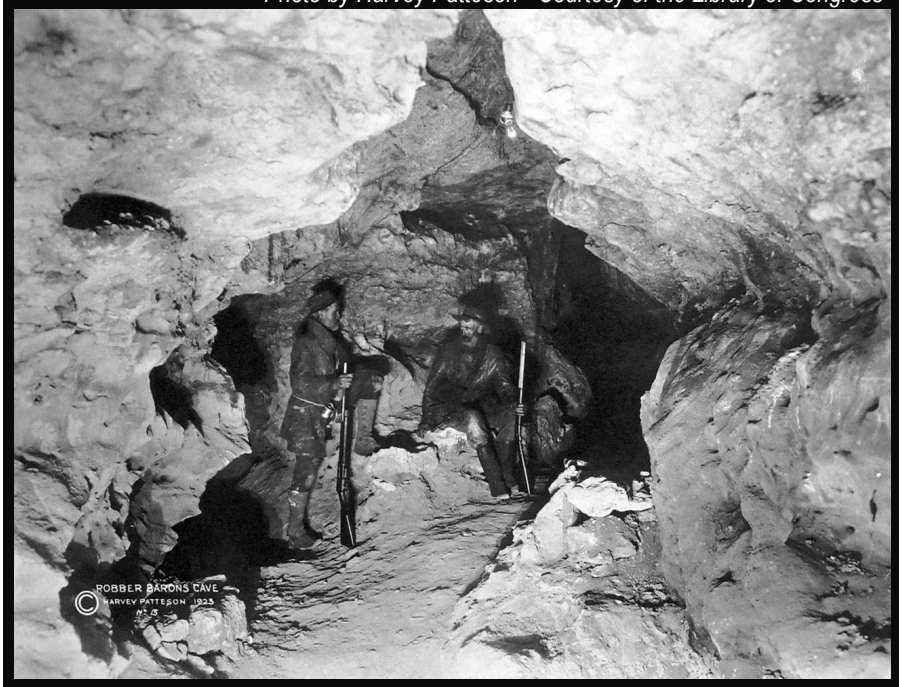
TCMA can pursue one or many of the above options. Any option probably will involve TCMA having a different presence in the Caver Community. If one of more of the options that include "increased personnel" is chosen, cavers will be asked to and have to volunteer more time and effort to make the organization function. The TCMA Board has discussed hiring an Executive Director to help facilitate a transformation TCMA into an organization that can meet the challenges of financing the activities needed on several of these options. An Executive Director might be hired with donations and savings, and a few test years could be planned, to see if that position would pay for itself and help with other financial challenges. Would this be worthwhile?

See FUNDRAISING ⟹ *p. 9*

A New History of Robber Baron Cave

By Joe Mitchell

Photo by Harvey Patteson - Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Costumed "mountain men" in Robber Baron from 1923, probably used for promotion of the cave. Note the light bulb fixture near top center.

TCMA's Robber Baron Cave has long been known to have an interesting history, being the second oldest commercial cave in Texas, but much of what is known is based on oral histories, or secondhand stories. Over the last two years however, new research into the cave's history has uncovered a wealth of information, solving some of the long standing mysteries, confirming certain tales, and showing that the cave was a well-known and popular local destination in the San Antonio area at that time.

Most of what was known about Robber Baron's history originates from research done by Randy Waters, George Veni, and others in the late 1970's and early 80's. Through interviews with people who had visited the cave during its commercial heyday, they learned that it was developed and managed by Arthur Harp with help from his neighbor Charles Spang, that portions of the cave were electrically lighted, that it was a speakeasy during Prohibition, that people visited portions of the cave far beyond the parts known today, and that places in the cave had colorful names such as Maggie's Den, the Devil's Kitchen, Popcorn Alley, and the Bottomless Pit.

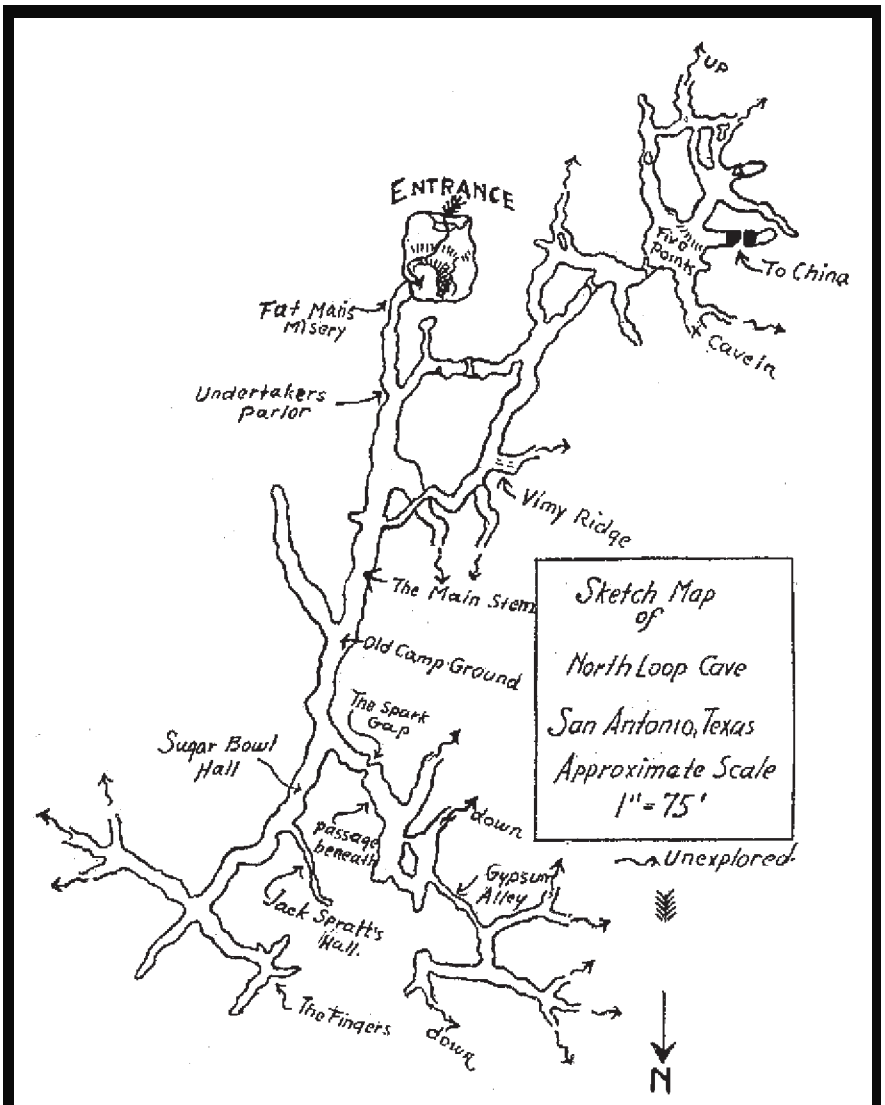
With the recent online availability of full-text searchable historical newspapers, an exhaustive search for references to the cave was possible for the first time. I located more than 60 articles about the cave from 1898 to 1950 with most of these in the 1920's and 30's. Most described events that were held at the cave including group functions and dinners, dances in the cave, radio demonstrations in the cave, archery competitions, and celebrity visits to the cave. The articles contain descriptions of the cave, interviews with Harp and visitors to the cave, as well as some highly exaggerated and imaginative tales of its history. An article from 1921 describes an explorer finding a man-made wall in the cave that may contain "piles of treasure stowed there by the warrior chieftain" or the "secret residence of a robber baron." An article from 1929 states that the cave was "once the rendezvous of a band of robbers whose depredations extended over a wide area." Other articles describe people becoming lost in the cave and of a raid by government prohibition agents looking for booze, but instead, getting lost themselves. One article from shortly after the Floyd Collins tragedy explains how the publicity from that event boosted visits to Robber Baron. Several articles describe "gypsum and quartz lining the walls" and "dazzling crystal" while other mention explorers finding rooms with "pure, clear water" and blind fish. The oldest articles have different names for the cave. The earliest use of "Robber Baron" is from late 1923. Before that it generally called "North Loop Cave" although also referred to as "Crystal Cave" or "Saur's Cave" after George Saur whose family owned the property from 1910-1950. A 1911 article calls it "Cave of the Quebrantahuesos" which is a Spanish word meaning "bone breaker". A photo in the "Caves of Bexar

County" shows a food stand building on the surface that also has the word "Quebrantahuesos" painted on it. Perhaps that word was an old Spanish name for the cave since it sits on one of the routes of the original El Camino Real. A couple of the articles indicate that it had a bat population of sufficient size that there were plans to harvest the guano from the cave. The very oldest article from 1898 talks of soldiers from a nearby base exploring the cave during their time off.

Several of the articles also have photos of the cave (although of poor quality) which show how the floor level in the passages was a few feet lower than it is now in many places. Perhaps the most interesting find was a map of the cave in a Sept. 1921 article that is listed as being based on a survey by the US Signal Corps. This map shows several portions of the cave near the entrance sinkhole and has many passage names not previously known. This map shows the entrance of the cave being the small entrance that was uncovered during TCMA's restoration project and the map doesn't even show the current entrance passage. Also of interest is that it shows several arrows going off from current dead-ends and also has an arrow pointing to one location with the caption "Passage beneath."

Since the names Harp, Saur, and Spang were known to be associated with the cave, I attempted to track down the descendants of these people to see if they had any information. So far I have not been able to trace the Harp's after the late 1930's when they moved to Kansas. The owner, George Saur was a major businessman in San Antonio in early 20th century had his home on the property containing the cave. His grandson and great grandson were found to be living in Houston. I contacted them, but unfortunately they did not know much about the cave itself, although they did tell about Mr. Saur, and the extensive rose gardens he had by the cave. The biggest find though was that Charles Spang's son, Charles Spang Jr. was still living only 4 blocks away from the cave. The Spang's lived across the street from the cave when it was commercialized and Charles Spang Jr. played in the cave as a boy, tagged along on tours and spent much time with the Harps. Although in his 80's, Mr. Spang shared many vivid recollections in a two hour interview regarding the cave, what tours were like, and about Mr. Harp, indicating that he was quite a colorful character. He talked about seeing the "Bottomless Pit" in the cave and identified its location as the same spot where the

See ROBBER BARON ⟹ *p. 8*



Recently discovered map of Robber Baron from 1921. The marked entrance is what is now the small side opening uncovered during restoration. Note that north arrow is incorrectly pointing southwest.

ROBBER BARON (from p. 7)

1921 map has the label "Passage Beneath" (without seeing that map). He also described his father and Harp exploring remote parts of the cave and reaching the windmill pipe from their property that intersected the cave, a couple hundred meters east of currently known parts of the cave. He stated that he used to have a large collection of material about the cave, but gave it to someone about 25 years ago. He did have a few photos of the surface of the property with Arthur Harp and members of his family showing 4th of July events, visits to the cave by a group of military officers, and of preparations for a big fish fry event at the cave.

Finding more photos of the cave from its commercial period has been another goal. One photo, previously printed in the Cave and Karst of Texas has since been found to actually date to early 1921, and the original is in fact a hand tinted photo from a postcard mailed in April of that year. Besides the low quality photos found in the newspaper articles and the photos from Mr. Spang, several other finds have been made. Three photos of the cave from the late 1920's and late 1930's were found in the Institute of Texas Cultures. Most recently, Jerry Atkinson found a listing in the Library of Congress of 5 photos of the cave. Copies of these were acquired and found to be from 1923 and show trails through the cave, electric lighting in the cave, and several people dressed up in costume – apparently as robbers or mountain men – probably to be used as publicity photos for the cave. There are indications that there may more photos available in this series, which might be held in a library in Austin.

Photo by Harvey Patteson - Courtesy of the Library of Congress

"Robbers" hideout in Robber Baron Cave in 1923. The location of this photo is just behind "The Man". The floor is now about 4 feet higher at this spot.

Finally, more careful examinations in the cave itself have uncovered some new evidence. A series of very old painted arrows have been found that appear to show various routes through the cave. Close examination of several passages has uncovered a great deal of previously unnoticed graffiti dating from the 1910's and 20's, with some dating back well into the 1800's. The very oldest found so far dates to 1836. Passages ending in arrows on the 1921 map are being dug and one has revealed some 20 meters of previously unknown passage with an airflow lead.

Altogether, this new information shows the cave as having a much older and richer history than previously thought. The cave

Photo provided by Charles Spang Jr.

Robber Baron developer and manager Arthur Harp (left) and Charles Spang (right) prepare for a fish fry event at the cave, ca. 1929. The sinkhole is just off to the left of this photo.

was being visited at least 175 years ago and was certainly well-known and often visited in the late 1800's. After it was purchased by George Saur in 1910, it again became frequently visited and publicized. Being a businessman, he saw the potential financial rewards of developing it as a tourist attraction. He hired Arthur Harp in the early 1920's to develop and operate the cave which was opened to the public commercially in 1923. Harp constructed trails, installed lighting and dug open the current entrance which is much larger than the old entrance. Harp probably invented the name Robber Baron along with the many tales of it being the hideout of bands of robber's and Indians in order to increase its mystique and draw visitors. He commissioned photos of the cave for publicity, painted Indian drawings in the cave, and even had a large mural painted on the sinkhole wall by a Native American. Later, along with Mr. Spang, they built a food stand on the surface, added a covered open-air pavilion for events, seating, a pistol and archery range, a horseshoe court, a zip line ride, and a merry-go-round. Spang also created stuffed dummies that were placed in various locations in the cave for scare-effects including the famous skeleton in a coffin placed in the "Devil's Kitchen" A portion of the cave, "Maggie's Den" was closed off with a door that could be locked and tables and benches were put in for events in the cave. As a side business, this area was also used as a speak-easy during off hours. Harp and Saur also experimented with other ways to make money from the cave including mushroom farming and incubating chicken eggs in the cave. The cave became more and more well known and was visited by dozens each day and was a site for many group events, being on the main highway north out of San Antonio. Visitors also explored many more distant parts of the cave but frequently became lost prompting Harp to seal off those connections so he didn't have to constantly search for people. Unfortunately the many visitors also broke off the speleothems in the cave turning what was a moderately decorated cave into one almost barren of formations. Eventually the Great Depression hit and visitation declined. Harp's mother became ill and they decided around 1936 to move to Kansas where other family lived, bringing to an end Robber Baron's commercial period. All lights and other commercial materials were removed by the late 1930's and over time it became only a hangout for local kids looking for adventure until modern cavers began to explore and map it in the 1950's.

There is still much mystery around Robber Baron's history and likely more discoveries to be made, especially the often sought routes to currently unknown parts of the cave. More research is planned including looking for anyone else who might have records or photos about the cave. I am working to develop a complete historical archive on the cave and if any cavers have items of interest even as recent as the 1970's, I would greatly appreciate receiving copies. I would like to give many thanks to Steve Gutting and Mike Harris who have been instrumental in much of this research. Additional thanks go to Jerry Atkinson, Jill Orr, Evelynn Mitchell, Zach Schudrowitz, and Ann Scott for their help as well.

FUNDRAISING *(from p. 5)*

More volunteer cavers would still be required to make it all work.

I really do not know how TCMA will meet its current financial challenges. I do know that the organization depends on its members, on the cavers of Texas. Your thoughts and input are and will be essential to the health of TCMA. Think about what you would like to see TCMA be, and how you would like it to function. Look for the place and the ways you can contribute. TCMA, Texas Caves, and Texas Cavers of the present and the future depend on your interest, ideas, and participation.

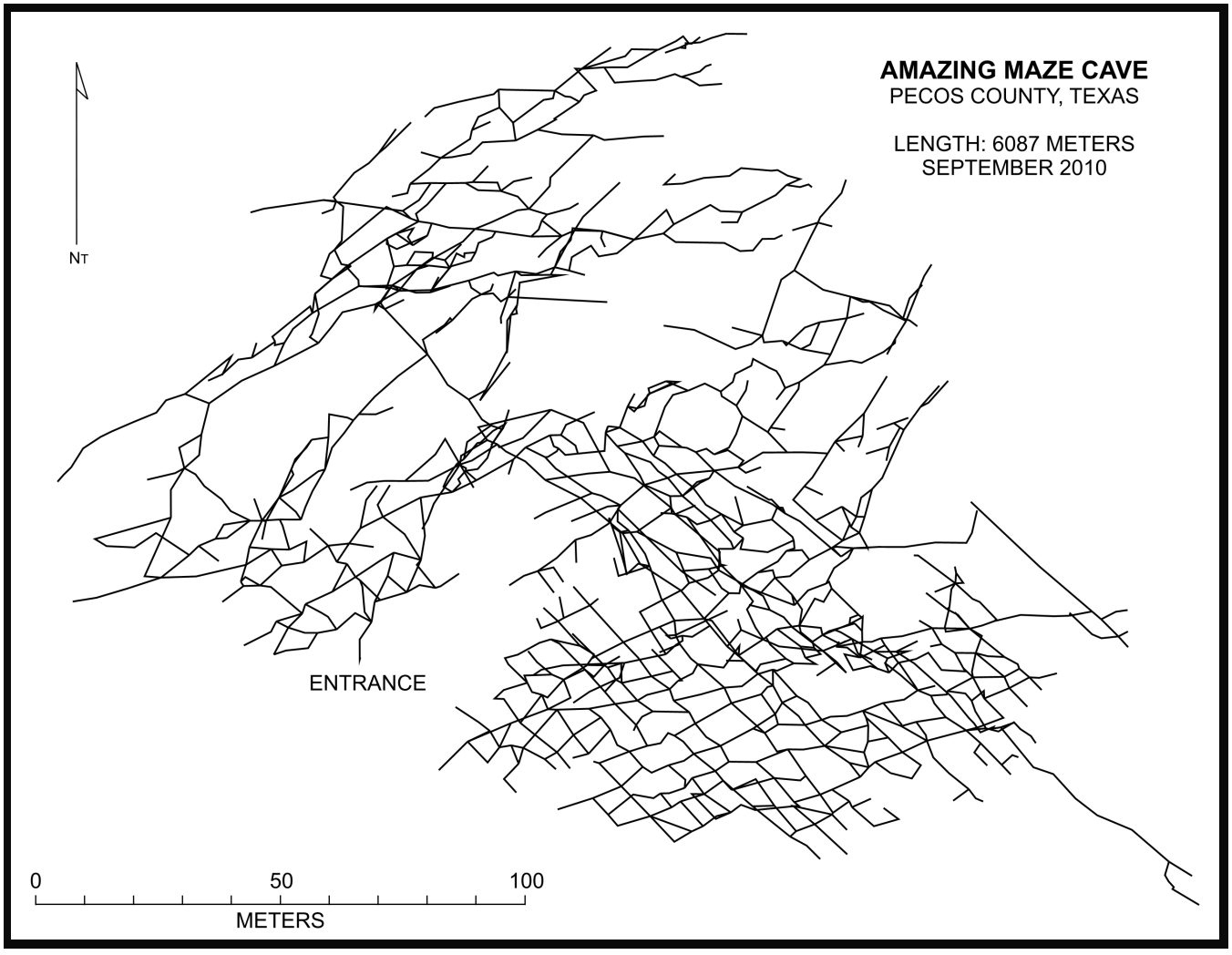
Open House a Success

TCMA held its second Robber Baron Open House on April 10, 2010. The open house provided a chance for the general public to visit the cave. Unlike most cave tours, visitors were given a chance to explore a portion of the cave at their own pace with caver volunteers placed at strategic locations to direct visitors or answer questions. A total of 153 people toured the cave and were assisted by 46 volunteers with $840 in donations raised for TCMA. Preserve Manager Joe Mitchell hopes to make the open house an annual fund-raising event due to its popularity with the public.

AMAZING MAZE (from p. 1)

and Ron Rutherford. Their place names included "Lee Jay's Crack" and "Death Rock Room". Liza Colucci, Mike Colucci, and Corinne Wong headed out to the dreaded Fleaway area of the South Maze, and found that it lived up to its name. They bolted back to Austin after that. One passage in that area was a canyon that could not be down climbed without a rope. Peter, Ellie, Caleb Mayeux, and Mallory Mayeux headed down to the Lower Level, where they mapped several loops. Ellie and Caleb dug open a lower crawl that had several additional low crawls going off of it–these are still going and need to be mapped on a future trip. Kevin Stafford, Bernie Thompson, John Thompson, and Josh Rubenstein worked on filling in the map of a complex part of the East Maze. David Ochel, Aimee Beveridge, and Geoff Hoese mapped an area adjacent to them, but a bit farther east. They reported hearing cars on the freeway, but things got tight at the "Rat's Hole". Ben, Cori, and Zach Schwartz were joined by Rae and Walt Olenick, and busied themselves cleaning up leads in the Beaver Bypass area of the East Maze. Saj Zappitello, Matt Zappitello, Sofia Casini, and Scott Serur headed to the southern limit of the cave near the I-10 road cut. They mapped quite a bit of maze, including the "TICKler". Sean Lewis, Jenn Knowles, and Cass Meyer headed out to the far North Maze and pushed the boundaries of that area in "Belch Boulevard".

On survey day two, Don's team returned to the North Maze, mapping "Lost Boyz" and "Deadfall Chamber". Josh Rubinstein, Sofia Casini, and Sean Lewis dubbed themselves the "Annihilators" because they annihilated leads. Peter, Mallory, and Caleb tied up a number of loops in the East Maze, naming one passage Munchin Luncheon Junction. Saj's team continued in the far South Maze, naming "Luna Tick Alley", the "Eratick Bypass", and the



"Septick Room". David's crew returned to the zone they'd been in the day before and mapped through the "Big Sandy". Cass Meyer, Jennifer Knowles, and Ellie Watson surveyed a section of the North Maze that was very close to the surface with loose dirt and roots overhead. Kevin's team wrapped up some work from the previous day and headed out early for the long drive back to East Texas. David's team continued mapping adjacent to them, dodging a gimpy skunk that seemed to be quite the caver.

No one needed to be told what to bring as most all had already paid a visit or two to this amazing cave. What Peter did announce before hand is that all attending the resurvey should bring their favorite musical instrument. And bring them they did! Mandolin, guitar, ukulele, and didgeridoo made an uncommon mix of instruments into a serious jam session that resonated over the desert plains. Desert critters came alive with the music and were not shy about coming to the circle of cavers to see what the party was about. Of course, all music would stop so everyone could admire the guests.

The mood for the weekend was very light and everyone was happy to be at Amazing Maze Cave. The campground was spread out so everyone had room for solitude while still allowing plenty of time for socializing and jamming. The team surveyed 1515 meters of passage, making the resurveyed length of Amazing Maze 6087 meters. There is plenty more to do.

Photo by Ben Schwartz

It's all about the wind - kite and windmills near Amazing Maze.

Deep & Punkin Update

By Don Arburn

The blistering 2010 summer is gone, so as West Texas cools, work at Deep & Punkin Nature Preserve continues. Recently I visited the property as the modifications to the back porch proceeds. The property has been blessed with copious amounts of rainfall and the grasses are tall and the trees are green–downright beautiful. The road has been groomed and is in great condition and most any car can easily get to the cabin. The schedule is filling fast for visits to Deep & Punkin. Any day now I expect notification for survey trips into Punkin, as the bats get ready to vacate for the winter for you Punkinheads. You know who you are.

Plans at this time are for continued work on the porch and general clean up around the property. Soon the porch will have a new roof and the peeling floor tiles will be removed. Construction debris is to be burned and/or hauled away and plans made for the cabinets. If you are wanting a part in helping, I'm announcing a trade–caving for help. All you can cave, for a couple hours worth of labor. A deal at twice the price! More plans for the property include two showers and improving the rainwater collection system in addition to adding new campsites.

Currently there are three trips scheduled to the property between now and the end of the year, however I'd like to add a few more. If you and your friends or co-workers have some free time, feel free to contact me and we can "work" something out for a fabulous caving weekend.

In parting, I'd like to thank everyone - EVERYONE - who has donated blood, sweat or tears to making the Deep & Punkin Nature Preserve the wonderful caving destination it is.

Turner New Whirlpool & Lost Oasis Preserve Manager

The Board has appointed Matt Turner to serve as Preserve Manager of Whirlpool and Lost Oasis Preserves, succeeding long-time manager Julie Jenkins. No changes to current access policies are planned. To schedule a trip to Whirlpool, contact Turner at <matt.turner@tcmacaves.org>.

WERTHEIM *(from p. 2)*

an updated "face" to show potential donors and grantors. Our efforts in conservation make a difference but they are underground where few ever see. If we show how important caves are in a way that everyone can understand TCMA will continue to be a success and meet its goals. And when we meet our goals we soon have more caves to explore.

Members donations are important–without them we wouldn't have gotten even this far, but what I'm really saying is the skills and efforts our members show off in TCMA business can eventually become a myriad of revenues. These revenues will secure the TCMA and provide caving opportunities for many more years to come. In the current Recession grants, easy money, and large donations are hard to come by and the TCMA is compelled to try a completely new and different tack.

The cartoon below is appropriate; the TCMA is changing and trying things a little differently. Whether it works or not depends on our members taking charge of their organization. The TCMA operates for you. It lives and dies by your involvement. And I have every faith and confidence our members can carry through to exciting times ahead.

Good caving!

Illustration by Kerry Brown, March 1999.

Seeking New Passages Editor!

TCMA is looking for a new editor for the TCMA Passages, which has been TCMA's newsletter since 2000. The Passages is generally published twice a year for TSA Spring Convention and TCR in the fall. If you are interested in helping out with this important means of communications between TCMA and its members, please contact current editor, Joe Mitchell at <joe.mitchell@tcmacaves.org> or Communications Committee Chair Kevin McGowan at <kevin@kevinmcgowan.com>.

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