



Texas Cave Management Association

October, 1997

P.O. Box 202853 Austin, TX 78720-2853

NEWSLETTER

T.C.M.A. Meeting Sunday, Oct. 19, 1997

TCMA Board of Directors invites all TCMA Members and interested **coverers** to attend the TCMA Board meeting to be held at the 20th Anniversary TEXAS CAVERS REUNION at Wemberly, Texas. Details of the TCR as well as directions to the campsite will be found in the TSA Newsletter mailed earlier this month. The TCMA Meeting will be held on Sunday Morning at 8:30 in the AM at the **Bexar** Grotto Campsite.

Your Board of Directors is aware that this is an early meeting, however it is requesting as much participation as possible. There are important **issues** to be discussed and your input may be valuable to existing cave management and potential acquisitions.

....a short report for you until the meeting:

WHIRLPOOL PRESERVE NEEDS WORK

by Jay Jordan, 9/10/97

A **quick** weekend trip to Whirlpool Cave Preserve in Austin confirmed that the property needs both graffiti removal and surface cleanup, along with other work. On the weekend of July 19-20, I met Bob **Zimmerman** and Ellen **Bernstein** in South Austin. **Bob**, who lived in the New York City area, had been planning the trip for several weeks. Ellen is a friend of Bob's and a reporter for the **Corpus Christi** newspaper.

I had called Nico **Hauwert**, the TCMA manager for Whirlpool, and secured the new combination. Nico already had plans for a weekend trip elsewhere, so I arranged to meet Bob and Ellen at Gill Ediger's. When I arrived Saturday afternoon, I heard that a group had left Gill's earlier that day for 0-9 Water Well, another TCMA-managed cave.

Nico had said that Whirlpool remained a popular cave for the city of Austin's youth caving program and had received much visitation. Since Ellen had not been on a non-commercial cave trip, Whirlpool seemed a good introduction for her. Some crawling and other moderate challenges with a little walking passage would give her a realistic taste of what it's all about

After parking at the compound, we geared up and entered. Ellen's biggest worry had been varmints inside the cave, but Bob and I were able to lay those concerns to rest. And, when the gate was opened, the cool blast of air hitting us on a hot day made for a quick decision not to linger around at the entrance too long.

Locking the gate behind us, we proceeded **down** the ladder, through the entrance room and into the squeeze to the lower level. Ellen had a few questions about how to best proceed and chose the best one. It was a learning experience for her and since Bob is a member of New York's Met Grotto and is used to colder, wetter caves, Texas-style caving in T-shirt and jeans was a novel one for him.

Along the way to the Travis County Room, we noted graffiti that someone **has** scratched into the ceiling in an alcove along the main route. Some other minor vandalism was noted for a possible restoration trip in the future. Bob, Ellen and I signed the register before continuing from the Travis County Room into the south passage, which contains a fair assortment of formations.

Among changes noted since **the** last trip to Whirlpool: heavy graffiti on concrete **beams** and supports under the bridge, which has obviously become a hangout for kids and **gang** wanna-be's; **signage** at the cave is still problematic; the original metal sign still leans against a tree and needs to be replaced. We also need a small, sturdy **kiosk** for TCMA brochures and other information. Once a new sign and **kiosk** are ready for placement, it's a relatively straightforward matter of scheduling a day or so when several TCMA folks can meet at the preserve and install them. 