

2005

A Significant Waypoint in Texas Caving

The Year 2005 marks a significant waypoint in the world of Texas caving. In September, 1955 the incredible portions of Mayfield Cave (Caverns of Sonora) had been discovered and in November, 1955 representatives of the several Texas caving groups met in Austin to discuss seeking recognition from the NSS as a Region. In between, members of the Balcones and UT groups had produced the first issue of what has become perhaps the longest-running caving publication in the Nation: *The Texas Caver*. Fifty years ago this month the first issue of *The Texas Caver* was published. The appearance of the *Caver* came at a time when there was much activity in Texas caving. The various Texas cavers were about to unite under the wing of the NSS as the Texas Region, the wondrous portions of Mayfield Cave (Caverns of Sonora) were discovered only a few weeks before, and there was much optimism for the future of Texas caving. Within a year, Texas cavers would hold their first annual convention at Rocksprings. I don't know that there has ever been a more exciting time in Texas caving.

One of the things that made the *Caver* an instant success was the good humor exemplified by the art of Bill Helmer that appeared on the cover of the first 16 issues (see following page).

Through the years, the *Caver* has had large excursions of fortune—good times as well as bad. Up to about 1995 it was the

ONLY means of mass communication for Texas cavers. For most of its first 20 years, the *Caver* was published on a regular schedule and served nicely as a newsletter. After it became irregular in the late 1970s it never regained its former timeliness and TSA began to decline. Some Editors and staff did a much better job than others. In recent years, only the brief editorship of Mike Moore produced a *Caver* that was timely enough to actually serve as a newsletter. Fortunately, the *TSA Activities Newsletter* took up some of the slack in the '90s and, with the coming of the Internet, the availability of CaveTex was invaluable in holding a feeble TSA together for the past ten years. The accompanying chart gives all the vital statistics of the *Caver*.

When CaveTex went down in the aftermath of hurricane Rita at the same time as there had been no issue of the *Caver* for many months, it showed once again that communication is vital to a healthy organization.

The history of Texas caving is both intricate and interesting. This brief essay is but a tiny preview of all that awaits you when *50 Years Of Texas Caving* is in your hands.

— Carl Kunath



Bill Helmer did the cover art for the first 16 issues of the *Texas Caver*. Top row: October, November, December 1955, and January 1956. Second row: February, March, April, and May 1956. Third row: June, July, August, and September 1956. Bottom row: October, November-December 1956; January-February, and March-April 1957.

TEXAS CAVER STATISTICS

YEAR	VOL.	EDITOR(S) [Principal Editor in bold]	ISSUES	PAGES	PHOTOS
1955	-none-	Bill Helmer, Joe Pearce, Barbara Pietsch, Roy Pietsch, Richard Scott	3	20	None
1956	1	Bill Helmer, Barbara Pietsch, Roy Pietsch, Joe Pearce, Richard Scott	11	87	None
1957	2	Arthur Carroll, Bill Helmer, Dave Kyser, Richard Scott, Jamie Spence, et al	3	52	None
1958	3	Ken Baker, Arthur Carroll, Bill Cronenwett, Stewart Davis, Dave Kyser, Richard Scott, Jamie Spence	3	76	34
1959	4	Tom Evans, Bud Frank, Dave Kyser, Dudley Roberts , Bill Russell, Arthur Simpson, Roger Sorrells, Jamie Spence, Tom White , Charles Whiteman	6	103	16
1960	5	Bud Frank, Dudley Roberts, Bill Russell, Charles Whiteman	2	24	None
1961	6	James Estes	12	140	37
1962	7	James Estes	12	145	15
1963	8	James Estes	12	134	22 (1 color)
1964	9	James Estes	12	182	46 (1 color)
1965	10	Pete Lindsley	12	244	79
1966	11	Pete Lindsley	12	164	30
1967	12	George Gray	12	175	32
1968	13	George Gray	12	152	33
1969	14	George Gray	12	134	54
1970	15	Carl Kunath	12	252	78
1971	16	Ronnie Fieseler	12	250	65
1972	17	Mike Moody	12	156	28
1973	18	Glenn Darilek	12	378	59
1974	19	Ken Griffin	12	194	66
1975	20	James Jasek	12	222	87
1976	21	Gill Ediger	12	228	69
1977	22	Gill Ediger , James Jasek, Chuck Stuehm	8	140	25
1978	23	Keith Heuss, James Jasek , Dave McAdoo, Bill Russell	6	96	20
1979	24	James Jasek , Bill Russell, George Veni	6	96	19
1980	25	James Jasek , George Veni	6	129	31
1981	26	James Jasek	6	104	31
1982	27	James Jasek	6	124	31
1983	28	James Jasek	6	124	20
1984	29	James Jasek, Jay Jorden, John Spence	6	136	39
1985	30	Jay Jorden, John Spence	6	140	53
1986	31	Jay Jorden, Dale Pate, John Spence	6	132	28
1987	32	Jay Jorden, Dale Pate	6	148	47
1988	33	Jay Jorden, Dale Pate	6	136	45
1989	34	Jay Jorden, Dale Pate	6	132	42
1990	35	Keith Heuss, Dale Pate, Oren Tranbarger	6	132	71
1991	36	Keith Heuss, Oren Tranbarger	6	136	47
1992	37	Keith Heuss, Oren Tranbarger	6	112	37
1993	38	Keith Heuss, Oren Tranbarger	4	100	35
1994	39	Keith Heuss, Noble Stidham	4	124	49
1995	40	Noble Stidham, Chris Vreeland	4	128	74
1996	41	Terry Holsinger, Noble Stidham, Chris Vreeland,	4	92	58
1997	42	Gill Ediger, Rebecca Jones , Jim Kennedy, Chris Vreeland	3	92	38
1998	43	Brian Vauter	6	100	63
1999	44	Joe Ivy, Rebecca Jones, Brian Vauter	6	120	79
2000	45	Joe Ivy, Rebecca Jones, Brian Vauter	6	164	172
2001	46 & 47	Jim Kennedy, Mike Moore	6	76	77
2002	48	Mike Moore, Don Arburn	6	136	133
2003	49	Don Arburn	6	120	152
2004	50	Rebecca Jones, Diana Tomchick			

Note: The yearly page counts should be reviewed with the knowledge that for many years the *Caver* was produced with a typewriter; often with fairly large type and generous margins. Later issues have been produced with the assistance of word-processing computers and have usually conveyed far more information per-page.

Compiled by Carl Kunath and Jerry Atkinson.