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All photographs were taken by Austin caver Paul Johnston.
Wayne W. Russell, Jr.
1947-1984
NSS 9873

Wayne Russell of Austin, Texas, became the ninth person to drown in Jacob’s Well, near Wimberley, Texas, on February 26, 1984. Because of the previous deaths, the property had been placed off-limits to all divers. Wayne and two non-NSS divers entered the spring on Sunday night, the twenty-sixth, to take notes for a map of the cave. After surveying in small chambers below the ninety-foot level, the other divers started up carrying a tank left from a previous rescue effort. They observed Wayne behind them on the safety line. When they looked back again, they thought he was just behind them in the murky water. By the time they realized that he was not following them, they had insufficient air to return and search for him. The other divers were arrested for trespassing. The recovery was made about noon on Monday. When found, Wayne's body was beside the safety line and there was no air in his tank.

Wayne began caving in 1962 at the age of fifteen, and joined the NSS later on. He caved extensively in California, Texas, and Mexico. In the past few years he worked primarily on the mapping and exploration of water caves in Texas and Mexico. He was a member of the NSS Cave Diving Section, but was not certified as a cave diver. He was employed as a mail carrier in Austin.

Wayne's caving centered on mapping and cave photography. He had served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Texas Speleological Association during the 1970's and had helped found several clubs over the years. After his death, his parents found the following poem, written by him, which was read at his funeral:

I am not an immovable object
Nor am I an irresistible force
Yet I am both an object and a force.

I am a friend of the Earth
I draw my life from it.
Eventually I must return to it.
Indeed I have never left.

I owe it much (a great debt).
I need the Earth,
This wondrous place where I was born
Existed so many years with no need for man.

But now it needs a friend.

On February 29, 1984, this quiet, simple, friend of the earth and of caving was buried near Utopia, Texas.

Jimmy L. Clements
THOUGHTS UPON THE PASSING OF A FRIEND

Jimmy L. Clements

I first met Wayne Russell at Texas A & I University at Kingsville, Texas about 1970. He was living in Corpus Christi and occasionally came to the A & I Student Grotto meetings. At the time, he had been caving for eight years and had a wealth of slides and stories about caves in Texas, California, and Mexico. We became friends and helped found the Corpus Christi Caving Club as a way to enjoy caving fellowship without having to drive so far.

Despite our meeting through caving, we didn't cave extensively together, although we were friends for years. While we knew each other, he lived in Corpus Christi, Matagorda Island, San Antonio, and Austin, and I lived in Corpus Christi, Pearsall, and Dallas. Our caving together tended to be occasional long trips to Mexico or water caves in Texas. He took me to do my first cave diving. Indeed, all of the cave diving I have done (which isn't much) was done with Wayne. For my first dive, Glenda Dawson and I went with Wayne to Cave-Without-a-Name near Boerne to help explore the upstream passage. There were also two military types from Corpus Christi who had been there with Wayne before. We made it through three siphons before reaching one that required removing your tank and dragging it beside you for about twenty feet. Since neither Glenda nor I had ever done any diving this would be interesting. Glenda decided it was more interesting than she was interested in and I bravely volunteered to accompany her out. On a later trip, I went further into the cave with Wayne and three other experienced divers. The upstream passages were not spectacular but the thought that there was more cave ahead kept pulling us on. I began to understand why Wayne enjoyed the work on such water caves. He enjoyed surveying, and the water caves were a surveyor's nightmare. But hard as it was there were always leads to be checked and the lure of more cave. It was the kind of surveying that not everyone could do or wanted to do, but Wayne was good at it, and enjoyed it.

Another reason Wayne did so much work on water caves was the type of jobs he held. He had a tendency to work at jobs that greatly restricted his caving activities. While I knew him, he was a bookkeeper for an agricultural equipment dealer, a bookkeeper at a ranch on Matagorda Island, and a letter carrier in Austin. If he wasn't working on Saturdays, when we would be going to Mexico, then he was at least far enough out of the mainstream of caving information to not know about trips. His caving tended to be on trips that he set up and that were to places (like Cave-Without-a-Name) that the cavers could get to fairly quickly, do the exploring and then return to the real world without a great deal of time missed.

Wayne and I got our diving certificate together. About 1975, I was working four days a week in Pearsall and Wayne was living in San Antonio. He signed up for a diving class and got me to go with him. So once a week for six weeks I would drive to San Antonio and we would explore the depths of a pool at a Catholic college. After two check dives in Canyon Lake, we were duly authorized to get our own air at dive shops, which was the main reason we took the course.

The last cave diving I did was with Wayne on a week-long trip to Mexico City and Vera Cruz. We were coming back and had one tank with us. We stopped at Naciamento Rio Mante to swim. Each of us took the tank and went down about twenty feet into the crack leading back to the spring. That was sufficient to satisfy our curiosity. Indeed, another group reportedly went down over a hundred meters before giving up on finding the end of that particular cave. The last caving we did together was in Cueva de Carrizal near Bustamante in Mexico. A group of us from
the Greater South Texas Grotto met Wayne and a group from San Antonio and Austin for the purpose of mapping Carrizal. He had made a discovery of a lead in the warm spring and of more leads in the cold spring. Therefore, he had organized a large group to thoroughly explore and remap the cave. That day there were four mapping teams loose in the cave at one time and much was added to our knowledge of the area. Even though it was our last caving together, we didn't see much of each other during the surveying. I was working with a group on the dry passages and Wayne was exploring the cold spring siphons. He returned several more times and I understand that he had most of the information he needed to finish the map, but we never went into a cave together again.

Wayne and I were friends for fourteen years. Over the years we raised snakes and bees together and I will miss him. He cared about caving, not in a political way but in a quiet way. He helped found two clubs that I know of. He wanted to introduce others to the quietness and beauty of caving. He served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the TSA during the 1970's, but when political battles broke out during the meetings, he didn't take part. It wasn't because he didn't care about the matter at hand, but simply that he did not like confrontation. Over the years he disagreed with various people about caving and other matters, but unless you had known him for a while, you couldn't tell whether he was being quiet because he was mad or being quiet because he was quiet.

When talking with people after the accident, the words most of them used to describe Wayne were quiet and simple. And so, in a quiet, simple place outside of Utopia he was laid to rest. For those of us who knew him, he will be missed.

Words For A Fellow Caver
George Veni

Why Wayne? What happened? Many cavers knew you but I was one of the few to cave dive with you. You were steady, calm and strong underwater; a stronger cave diver than most people had ever suspected. It is important to know what happened to you so your last act would be your greatest — a lesson to us other cave divers which could save our lives. Perhaps we'll never know and it's more the pity.

I won't eulogize long and laboriously for your many achievements which stand in the annals of Texan and Mexican speleology. They speak for themselves. Still I must mention a few: TSA Chairman 1973; contributor and participant in many regional surveys and speleologic activities; developer of one of the best speleo-stamp collections in the U.S.A.; leader of the Grutas de Carrizal cave diving project which has more than doubled the length of the cave; original pioneer of the upstream Neel's Cave sumps which set the stage for the major connection to Powell's Cave; responsible for pushing the sumps in Cave-Without-a-Name and extending it into one of Texas' longest caves; the prime mover of cave diving in Texas.

Undoubtedly some will criticize our cave diving, "A sump is God's way of saying that the cave ends". Yet in various times and places pits and even cave entrances held (and still hold) the same warning. We discussed this often and you knew not to let those comments bother you. Your work was a brave step into a new and important frontier in cave exploration. It has provided substantial volumes of valuable information. Others will chas­tise you for the circumstances of your demise, "Serves him right for violating aspects of our caving codes"; yet many cavers are guilty of the same crimes. Only like Nixon, you just got caught. Hopefully, most cavers will not condone or condemn your actions because they will understand them. We have all felt the strong alluring call of unexplored cave. It is a temptation which is hard to resist. Usually we can abide by our self imposed codes but occasionally we falter. Unfortunately this is something the general non-caving public cannot truly comprehend without the vicarious experience. You will be missed. You are missed. You had a profound affect upon the caving community and your passing has deeply affected many of us. You've taught and showed me many things for which you have my deepest gratitude. Peace be with you on your journey my friend. Good-bye.
John Willcox, Danny Self, both independent scuba diving instructors, and Wayne Russell, a veteran caver and cave diver entered Jacob's Well at approximately 7:50 PM Sunday, February 26, 1984. We were equipped with full wet suits, single 80 cubic ft. tanks, single nose regulators with an octopus, depth and pressure gauge consoles, 2 and 3 lights apiece, a spare 50 cubic ft. tank and no buoyancy compensators due to the narrow passages. We met at the first level in the first chamber at 25'. We then ran a safety line vertically from there to the beginning of the third chamber at 55'. We then started a new line which ran horizontally the length of the third chamber and halfway into the fourth chamber at approximately 85'. Once there, Wayne and John removed their tanks and checked their air pressure. Wayne led the way through the narrow opening of the fifth chamber pushing his tank in front of him and running a new safety line while John followed taking pictures. Danny stayed in the fourth chamber to maintain the safety lines and retrieve an old tank apparently left by two divers that drowned in the well in 1979 and were never recovered.

After the two went into and beyond the sixth chamber, Danny explored the fourth chamber which he estimated to be approximately 10' high by 8' wide. Upon completion, he picked up some spare line, removed his tank and squeezed through the passage. Once in, he found the tank, tied the piece of line to it, then turned and followed the safety line out. He was surprised at how narrow the fifth chamber was, which he estimated to be approximately 2' high. He was also getting concerned at how bad the visibility was getting. About halfway out he got tangled in the line that he had tied to the old tank and found he could go no further. So with a deep breath, he untangled the line and got back into the fourth chamber. He then put his tank on and attempted to pull the old tank back through the opening.

Meanwhile, Wayne had tied his safety line halfway in the fifth chamber and then tied a survey tape, a 100' tape measure that he would use to measure the length and diameter of the lower chambers. He then went into and past the sixth chamber. John was taking pictures and followed Wayne's safety line and survey tape into the sixth chamber. Visibility was getting so bad that he was unable to take pictures or see that well. However, he got the impression that it was quite large, large enough to stand in easily with a muddy bottom, unlike the rocky bottom in the other chambers. Wayne returned to the sixth chamber and motioned to John that it was time to go. John led the way back, following the safety line. When he got to the opening, he found the old tank was stuck. He was able to dislodge it and push it while Danny pulled it through the opening. Danny then turned and exited the fourth chamber carrying the old tank while John exited the fifth with Wayne right behind.

Once in the third chamber Danny and John met up. The visibility was a little better than it was in the lower chambers. Danny signaled to John "Where's Wayne?". John pointed down the tunnel assuming Wayne was working with his survey tape or putting his tank on. Up to that point there was never a signal or any indication that something might be wrong. So assuming Wayne would catch up, we decided to move up to a shallower depth so we would start decompressing. About halfway through our decompression stop we really began to worry. We could not go back because we were too low on air and had no bottom time. We then surfaced.

Wayne was found the next day by a dive team from Wimberley in the beginning of the fifth chamber lying on his safety line, mask in place and his tank by his side.
Jacob’s Well
Sketch

by Danny Self
OUR FINAL GOODBYE
Paul and Barbara Johnston

Wayne, it's hard to say how long we've known you; but we do remember meeting you at the U.T. Grotto meeting. Not only were you a caver, cave diver, and cave photographer, but also a fellow beekeeper. When we came to a cave club meeting or a beekeeping meeting, we always looked to see if you were there. Your eyes would always acknowledge us with a warm hello.

We remember when you first invited us to your home to show caving slides. Man were we impressed with your cave photography! Time flew that night. We were certainly embarrassed when we found out you had to get up at 5:30 a.m. to do your mail route.

Never will forget the time I helped you and your friends extract honey in your garage. We had honey everywhere with bees flying all around. I had to have my bee-suit on to function. You could calmly do the work in your street clothes. For our efforts, you rewarded us with a delicious homecooked steak dinner.

Knowing you exposed us to some of your caving friends and caving projects. In the Minas Viajas area, we met some of your nice Corpus Christi caving friends, saw some spectacular mountain and cave scenery, and even explored an old British mine.

Going with you to Carrizal impressed us with your determination to explore the unknown. I suspect you will be one of the few to have completely explored both the cold and warm streams of this cave. To have the courage to explore some of the underwater passages you have explored requires nerves of steel.

And do you know that you are one of the most easygoing travel companions around? It's nice to have an even-tempered person on a trip, especially after having driven many miles. Also, you were willing to let everyone on a trip do what level of caving they wanted to do. You never pushed anyone.

We remember when you took us to Honeycreek. We puttered down the underground stream enjoying the sights and doing cave photography while you and your cave diving friends enjoyed yourselves. Same thing at Cave Without A Name. We had a blast photo-

tographing the commercial trail while you and your companion did your cave stream swim.

Oh yes, what about the time we rediscov-
It must have been a funny sight to see the three of us stumbling through the cow pasture, stopping to look at two old slides of the cave area and then continue bumbling around through the sticker burrs until we found that long forgotten cave.

Not many extend a helping hand like you. You have helped the TI caving club enormously! You were willing to help a new caver get started. When visiting Cave Without A Name, you took milk to the elderly lady owner as she had requested. Also, you spent some weekends giving cave tours for them so her husband could have a weekend off. Not many people would get up at sunrise to help me bring my honey home to extract. And it was always pleasant when you dropped by on your day off to say hello.

I wonder sometimes why was it that your Christmas card is the only one I did not throw away this year? But I know! That beautiful photo card of tiny cave formations represented what you were all about - a love of caving, a love for beauty, a love for exploring the unknown.

If we could have had one last chat and told you how we really felt about your friendship and how much you really meant to us, this then is what we would have said.

May your spirit now freely explore whatever secrets your heart wishes to discover.

Wayne, we'll miss you.

"We're doing some mapping in Spring Creek. I sure would like for you to come along."

The invitation to come on a caving trip late last year from Austin was the last time I spoke with him. Connections, as it happened, couldn't be made for Wayne's trip, since I was forced to work in Dallas that weekend.

But there were other weekends -- scattered over 10 years and many miles -- when we and others got together for some memorable caving.

Cave diving was Wayne's first love, and he racked up some pretty impressive credentials in mapping excursions to Century Caverns (Cave-Without-a-Name), Spring Creek, Gruta del Carrizal, Honey Creek Cave and others.

Wayne was always striving to achieve new depths, map more passage, push another sump. But he never avoided the opportunity to get others involved in his projects, to teach his skills and to stress safety and conservation.

At a Bexar County cavers' get-together in 1975, Wayne stopped to teach me some diving basics in a swimming pool at Cascade Caverns near Boerne.

Wayne was an officer of the Corpus Christi Caving Club, and later moved to Austin, where he became active in the Central Texas caving scene.

He was an avid collector of postage stamps on caves and caving from around the world.

His death was a tragic one. Perhaps it will never be known precisely what went wrong in the waters of Jacob's Well.

But Wayne died in pursuit of his favorite activities—cave diving and surveying. He will be missed.
COME DIVE IN JACOB'S WELL WITH ME
Johnny Ripps

(The following article appeared in the Wimberley View on March 15, 1984. It was written by Mr. Ripps to give those who do not dive a chance to know what the cave is like. Mr. Ripps is a former highway patrolman who has dived in the cave several times and has helped bring bodies out.)

I try not to think of the nine divers who have lost their lives in the lower chambers of Jacob's Well. I can only imagine their fear and feelings of helplessness as they discovered they had gone beyond their limit with no chance to survive. Like a black widow spider spinning her web, Jacob's Well has claimed the lives of eight men and one woman. Five of these deaths have been within the last six years.

Why do men climb mountains, jump from airplanes, ride bulls, drive race cars, or attempt to accomplish the seemingly impossible? For the same reason divers continue to risk their lives to swim through the deadly chambers of Jacob's Well. Is it the challenge, their curiosity, their defiance of death; or just because it is the waiting to be conquered? Man's unquenchable thirst for adventure is the only explanation.

When I slip beneath the surface into the first chamber, my heart is pounding and the blood rushes through my body.

My eyes are open wide and filled with the excitement of searching for what unknown lies ahead. As I sink deeper into the tranquil cool waters, I am forced to clear my sinuses of the pressure created by the change in depth.

A lump briefly passes through my throat as I can only speculate on what surprises wait below.

It seems almost peaceful as I pass from the first chamber through the crevice which leads to the second chamber. I briefly check my depth guage. It reads 25, 30, 35 feet as the thin slivers of sunlight disappear behind me. Sinking slowly, I shine my underwater light into the false tunnels and crevices exploring the darkness.

It was here at 40 feet, in 1979, where I found Don Dibble sitting motionless staring into the darkness after surviving his near fatal accident during a recovery dive. He was in severe pain and almost helpless, but he was alive!

The bodies of the two divers we searched for that day have never been recovered. They had gone deeper into the cave than any diver had ever gone; but they never came back to tell their stories.

We are at the bottom of the second chamber, and my depth gauge reads 55 feet. Our underwater lights remind me of the giant spotlights at the county fair. They seem to reach out through the darkness like magic wands, ending suddenly as if someone cut them with a knife.

Like the dangerous beauty of a spider web, the cave's peaceful appearance lures you deeper and closer to the danger below. As we begin our descent through the third chamber, I shine my light on the walls of the cave to examine the fossil imprint of a shell. An albino catfish quickly swims through my light beam and disappears into the darkness. Beneath our feet, a crawdad scrambles deeper into a crevice seeking safety.

As I watch his retreat, I notice leaves along the floor of the cave. They have fallen from the trees above the well, and settled here deep within the third chamber.

The current is barely noticeable, and I realize this is when Jacob's Well is the most dangerous. Without a current the silt we stir up will not be carried away; instead, the crystal clear waters will become murky, and our vision will become
extremely limited. We stop to remove our fins so as not to stir up the silt any more than necessary.

As I shine my light down into the cave, I see a large boulder resting on the bottom appearing to block our way. I check my depth gauge; it reads 75 feet. Behind the boulder, the ceiling tapers downward; and the cave grows smaller in diameter.

I remember a previous dive when the current was so powerful it took all my strength to reach the boulder. The current was picking up gravel and moving it up the cave. Small pieces of gravel would hit the face plate of my mask with a force almost powerful enough to break the safety glass.

As we pass the boulder, we easily slide through the passage into the fourth chamber. It is like a small narrow room with a cathedral ceiling. I shine my light along the ceiling and I see pockets of air seeking along trying to find an escape route.

This seems to be the end of the cave, but at the bottom of this chamber there is a small opening large enough for only one man to pass through. To accomplish this I must take off my tank and push it through the opening ahead of me. Because the bottom consists of loose gravel, the size of the opening varies with the force of the current coming up from the springs somewhere below. The opening is actually a narrow crevice about nine feet long before opening into the fifth chamber.

As I slide through the narrow passage, my back is touching the ceiling and my stomach is touching the floor. My arms are stretched out ahead of me holding my tank. It is a tight fit, and this is where most of the divers have lost their lives. In 1978 our recovery team worked for two days before bringing the swollen body of a diver through this passage.

We have reached a depth of over 100 feet, and our remaining bottom time is less than 15 minutes. We get a false sense of courage; perhaps the side effect of nitrogen narcosis. (Our blood becoming saturated with nitrogen under pressure.) It is like drinking a dry martini on an empty stomach, and usually occurs at depths greater than 100 feet where the pressure exceeds four atmospheres.

Leaving the narrow crevice, I am now in the fifth chamber. My depth gauge reads 115 feet. I realize this is where Don was trapped and ran out of air in 1979. He was lucky, and freed himself to swim up through the narrow crevice to a waiting reserve tank. He sustained a serious injury, but he lived!

When I am standing on my knees, my head touches the ceiling. The chamber is 12 to 15 feet wide, but less than 4 feet high in the center. The ceiling drops down on each side of me, making the chamber appear saucer shaped. As I turn around to watch my partner entering the fifth chamber with me, my beam of light catches a fresh water eel slowly swimming through the narrow crevices.

As he passes within my reach, I make a half hearted attempt to catch him, and as I touch his slick grey body, he swiftly disappears into the chamber below. My partner stops beside me holding his tank under his arm. Using hand signals, he tells me he has less than 5 minutes of air left before he must start back. I motion for him to wait for me here as I turn and slide my tank through the opening into the sixth chamber.

Directly in front of me is a rock formation coming up from the floor in the center of the chamber. My partner's light shines over my head and lights up the back wall, as he waits behind in the fifth chamber watching me swim deeper into the cave. I notice the room is half filled with loose gravel making it appear smaller than I remembered.

Like moods of a woman, the cave is constantly changing and unpredictable. My air supply becoming critical, I briefly examine another tunnel I believe to be the entrance to a deeper seventh chamber. Perhaps it leads to the grave of the two divers lost in the cave in 1979. No one will ever know for sure, for without a surface supply air system, a deeper journey into the cave is impossible. Just being in this chamber makes my air supply a critical factor in this dive, allowing no margin for error. My exit must be carefully executed and without mistake.

As I re-enter the fifth chamber, my partner turns and begins his journey back up through the dangerous passage leading to the fourth chamber. The water becomes murky as he struggles to pull himself through the crevice. My visibility becomes restricted to less than a foot.
Paralyzed briefly, I imagine a rock slide blocking my exit to the safety of the less treacherous upper chamber. I slowly begin inching along, feeling my way as I follow the life line which leads to the surface and safety over 100 feet away.

As I reach to open the air reserve on my tank, I feel the bottom of the cave slide downward beneath me. My light suddenly goes out as a rock hits the switch turning it off. Engulfed in total darkness, I can hear the rocks sliding down around me. Discovering the switch on the light to be broken, I quickly turn on my back-up light. The water has become so murky, my light is no more than a glow at the end of my hand; but it gives me a false sense of security allowing me the presence of mind to analyze my situation.

Pulling myself along the life line, I am only a few feet from the fourth chamber and safety. My heart is pounding as I see the glow of my partner's light through the murky water.

As I enter the fourth chamber, my partner hands me my reserve tank. As I slide it over my head, my memory flashes back to 1977, when I almost lost my life when my equipment malfunctioned while searching for a drowned diver in Canyon Lake. If I had been in Jacob's Well that day, I probably would have died.

The water begins to clear as we pass through the third chamber. My light picks up the movement of a blind salamander as he half swims, half runs along the bottom. Entering the second chamber, I inflate my bouyancy compensator to begin a bouyant ascent. Looking up, I see the rays of sunlight piercing the darkness above. I turn off my light as I enter the crystal clear sun-lit waters of the first chamber.

Only a few feet from the surface, I look down to see a shiny new penny sparkling on the bottom. I imagine a wide-eyed young boy standing on the concrete wall above tossing the penny into the well, making a wish, and dreaming of what waits below for the penny.

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This is a factual account of several dives I have made in Jacob's Well. Some have been to recover the bodies of drowned divers. I would like to dedicate this story to my friends Don Dibble, Paul Battaglia, Doug Smith, Calvin Turner, and to all the divers who risk their lives each time a diver drowns in Jacob's Well.

I first began diving in 1966 when diver certification programs were only the dreams of a handful of men wanting to make diving a safe sport to be enjoyed and respected. As advanced as these programs have become, none of them sanction cave diving.

I have seen equipment progress from the basic mask, fins, tank and regulator to the modern assortment of gauges, regulators, tanks, bouyancy compensators, and colorful wet suits we enjoy today.

Regardless of the modern technology in our present equipment, Jacob's Well will never be a safe place to dive.

Save your life, and possibly the life of a recovery diver: Let this be your dive in Jacob's Well.

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DETAILS OF THE UNDERGROUND RIVER FLOAT AND CAMPOUT EXTRAVAGANZA TO CAVE WITHOUT A NAME - BOERNE, TEXAS

Date: July 30-31, 1983
Cavers: Victor Parker, Donna Parker, Anthony Loera, Tricia and Rudy, Wayne Russell, Rodney Leist, Jack Ackerman, David and Mary, and some others from TI
Reported by: Victor Parker

Our adventure began early on July 30, a Saturday morning, as my sister, Donna Parker, her friend Anthony Loera, and myself began packing all of our camping, caving, and dive gear for 3 days into my Volkswagen. We soon learned that this was going to take a lot more time than we had first thought. The problem was not getting the gear into the car, but getting the gear into the car AND having a place for three people to sit. At long last we began our journey (in traditional TI fashion - 3 hours late) to Boerne.

We arrived at the campgrounds about 3:30 PM and set up our camp, ours being the third party to arrive for the outing. Once everything was set up and everyone settled we waited for the next arrivals. Much to our pleasure Tricia and Rudy arrived next. We soon discovered that this was their first campout. Soon the entire camp was gathered around to watch Tricia and Rudy as they tried to set up their camp. My most sincere thanks go out to them for an enjoyable Saturday afternoon.

The trip into the cave started on Sunday with the arrival of Wayne Russell, our guide for the undeveloped part of the cave. The plan was for the entire club to follow the commercial tour until we reached the underground river. At that point the divers would remain to start getting dressed while the rest of the group completed the commercial tour. After the completion of the tour the rest of the troop would join the divers at the river's edge. The entire group was planning to go with the divers as far as the sump before turning back. Well so much for the well laid plans of mice and men! As it turns out everyone made it into the cave and to the water's edge sooner or later. However once we entered the water we began to leave a trail of cavers as they turned back due to one reason or another (the primary reason was the cold water).

There were ten of us who made it to the sump, six of the ten were divers. In our entrance plans we decided to use only 1 tank shared by two divers. At the time this seemed like a good idea. However once in the sump things didn't work exactly as planned. My dive team consisted of myself and Jack Ackerman. I was going to carry the tank and Jack was going to swim along behind breathing off the extra second stage. Well once we got into the sump there began a strange three way tug of war. I found myself fighting to stay off of the roof, keep my regulator in my mouth, and keep one hand on the dive line. At the same time Jack was trying to stay off the roof, keep up with me, and not lose his regulator. It was a very interesting experience, however we both did make it through the sump. Both Wayne and Rodney made it through the sump with little or no problems to the best of my knowledge. David and Mary on the other hand never got through the sump due to a buoyancy problem (they could never get off the roof).

Past the sump the four survivors continued on downstream enjoying the sights and

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the Texas Caver
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