



**Richard N.
“Dick”
Beauchamp,
NSS #3252**

Obituary and photo
submitted by Carl Kunath

Richard N. “Dick” Beauchamp, NSS #3252, died July 7, 2009 in Del Rio Texas following surgery for a brain tumor. Dick was 73 and had been interested in caves for most of his life.

Dick was the epitome of a quiet caver and few readers will have heard of him. Nevertheless, Dick played an important role in

Texas caving. Those of you who have *The Caves of Carta Valley* will note that Dick is one of those to whom the volume is dedicated. In the early 1960s Dick was living in Del Rio and teaching the one-room-all-grades school in the tiny Edwards County community of Carta Valley and working on his Master’s degree by attending summer sessions at Sul Ross State College in Alpine. Dick loved caves but had no caving companions in Del Rio. In the summer of 1963 he became acquainted with members of the Sul Ross Speleological Society. As a result, three Sul Ross cavers met Dick for a preliminary visit to some of the Carta Valley caves. On that first trip, they visited Chivo Cave, Name Cave, Fallen Stalagmite

Cave, and Punkin Cave. For some of these caves, this was the first visitation by cavers. At this time, Carta Valley was a vast unknown. Only a few years before, Preston McMichael had stumbled across this area and was then exploring a new discovery that he called Deep Cave. Other than Preston’s activities and a very few earlier visits led by Ken Baker of the U.T. Grotto, no one was caving in Carta Valley.

When I graduated from Sul Ross and returned to San Angelo, I immediately made contact with Dick and we commenced a flurry of caving activity in the Carta Valley area. As the local schoolteacher, Dick was acquainted with everybody in the area and his request for information or to visit a ranch or cave was never refused. It was an amazing time. Dick also had use of a small house near the school/church in Carta Valley and that became a caver house on the weekends. The next few years were a time of great discovery and exploration in the Carta Valley area as we began to grasp the true potential of this mostly untouched caving area. Much of this was facilitated by Dick Beauchamp.

When I looked for a picture of Dick to accompany this obituary, I found that although he was often pictured, he was usually too far away or somehow turned his head in the wrong direction. I was amazed how often he was doing something useful as he is seen here with a digging bar in hand as we were enlarging the entrance of a blowing crack at Carta Valley.

Dick is survived by a sister, a brother, and his wife, Dorothy. Dick was the sort of guy you wanted on your side. I shall miss him greatly as will all who were fortunate enough to know him.

We are diminished.