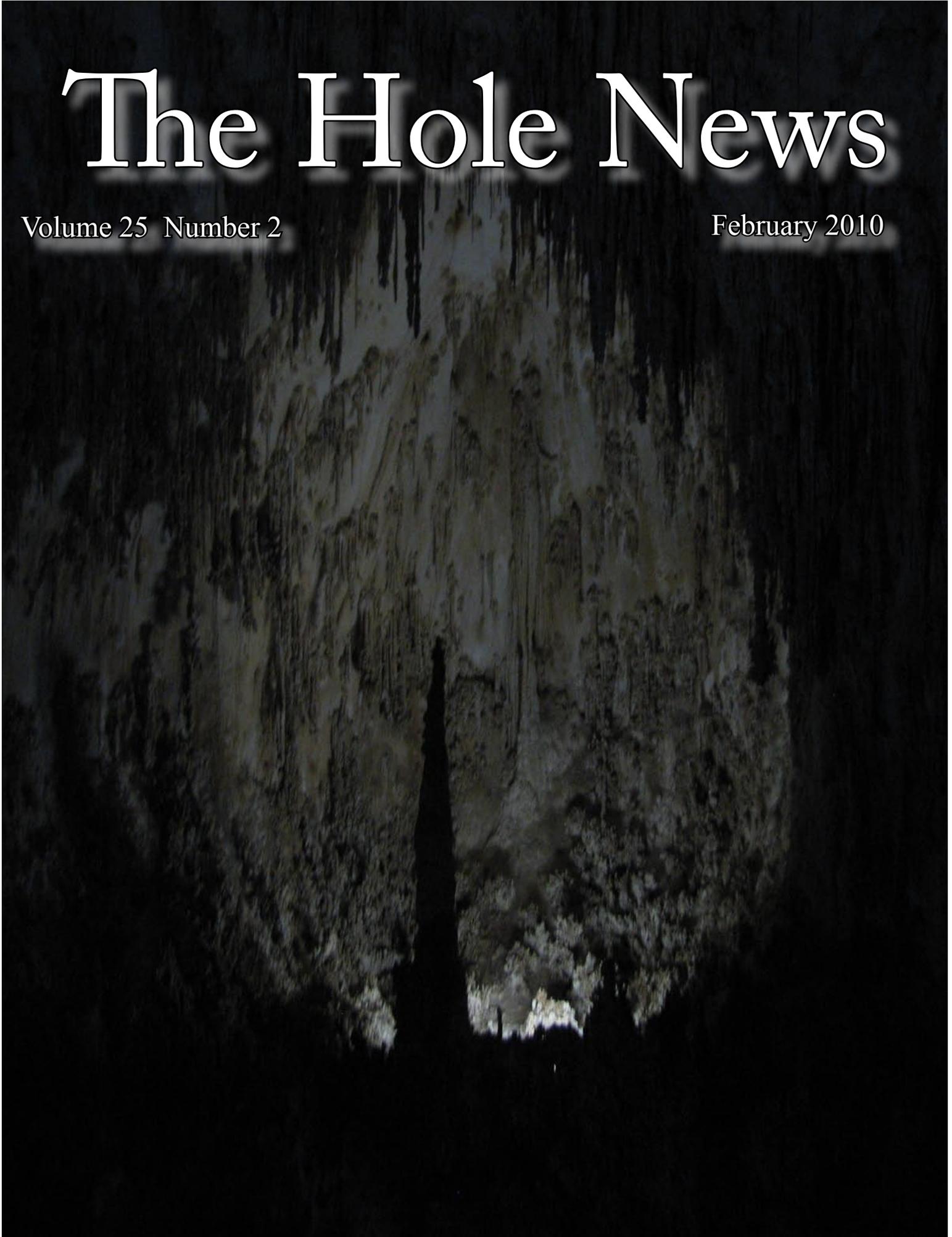
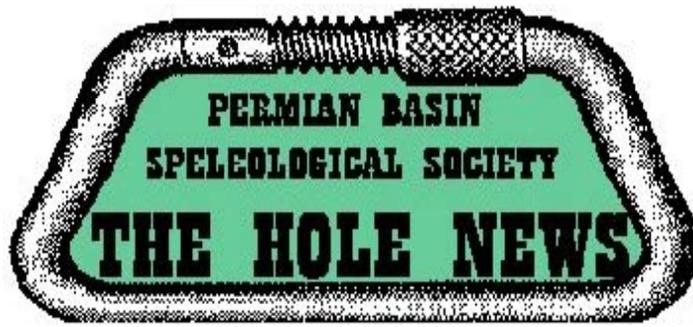


The Hole News

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Chartered in 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the NSS

Volume 25 Number 2

Amazing Maze: Still Amazing

Submitted by Jacqui Thomas

The PBSS trip for January was to Amazing Maze cave in Pecos County on Saturday, January 30. Although originally set as a beginner and non-vertical members weekend trip, it became, due to illness and injury and scheduling conflicts, a three-caver one day exploration extravaganza. Two of us, DIRT (Angelo State University) cavers Dustin Gashette and Sam Cleveland, had never been to Amazing Maze. Most of Sam's caving experi-

ence has been in Five Mouth with a shovel so it was especially fun to explore Amazing Maze with her.

I arrived at the camping area at 0915. Dustin and Sam arrived at around 1415, which gave me time to find the cave, check the area for snakes, do some birdwatching, eat a snack, read a chapter in each of two different books, and take a nap. The weather was chilly but the sun was warm and there was no breeze. Perfect hiking around weather.

First, we filled out TCMA member-

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Dustin and Sam ask the age old question: Which way do we go?

Scheduled Upcoming Events

- *Feb. 9, 2010*
PBSS Monthly meeting
Murray's Deli, Midland 7pm
- *Feb. 27, 2010*
5-Mouth Cave dig
- Mar. 26-28*
TSA Spring Conv.
Cedar Park, TX
- April 17-18, 2010*
SWR Spring Regional
Ft. Stanton, NM
- May 1-9, 2010*
Ft. Stanton Cave Project
- *May 8, 2010*
Tentative Carlsbad rock haul
- May 29-31, 2010*
SWR Memorial Day Regional
Location TBA
- *June 12*
Special vertical trip TBA
- * indicates PBSS club activity**

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ship forms. Next, we looked at the maps I had brought (printed from the TSS compact disc) and spent some time trading around lights and batteries and adjusting DIRT's new GGG kneepads, then we headed to the cave. It took me some minutes to unlock the gate and that gating/locking system is the slickest ever—I'm very impressed. There was quite a bit of scat in the entrance and most of it looked like ringtail.

We entered at 1500 hours without incident and went straight. Fortunately, Sam remembered to bring a copy of the map. We looked at it frequently and pulled out the compass, checking them against what we were seeing, and did a really good job of going where we meant to go. We commented that the map from the survey in progress will be infinitely easier to figure out than the one from 1990.

We passed a slot that looked inter-

esting but skinny, and after going on a ways, checking out side passages as we went, we decided to return to the slot. Dustin started down, looking for shorter people footholds and we also made sure everyone could climb back out before Dustin went the rest of the way down. I followed, then Sam. We followed a short dusty slope down to more passage, and basically ended up backtracking under the passage we travelled to get to the slot. The floor of the passage became very dry dirt sandy, rock free, and dead-ended at a "T." We explored both directions of the cross-passage, and Sam and Dustin found another, skinnier way to cut diagonally from the dead-end passage to the cross-passage.

Not far from Sam's crawl-over, still in the cross-passage, we took a couple of pictures of what looked like a pair of tiny, dimpled stalagmites. At first

glance they look like bases of coral. We frequently found bits of evidence that there was once quite a bit of calcite in this cave.

Back at the "T" we found somewhat soft, comfortable places to lie down for a while, lights-out, and enjoy the dark. Then we decided to start working our way back out, as we didn't want to cut too close to the time I gave Kel as the "If I don't call you by..."

It took us a bit longer to go up the slot than it did to come down, and we staged a person half-way up to get the packs out. As we continued out we made one wrong turn, or more correctly we did not turn when we should have, and we realized that pretty quickly because we immediately saw this pit. We wanted to get closer but we thought as soon as we looked into it we would want to figure out how to get down and we really didn't have the time to do that.

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Amblypygi as seen in Amazing Maze. Cool little bug.

We exited the cave just before 1900 hours. We noted additional scat from what was in the entrance when we entered, and happy tiny millipedes making dinner of it. The sunset was beautiful but the evening was chilly and we locked up and headed downhill as quickly as we could in the fading light.

The only other critters we saw were very tiny crickets, a very dark colored

arachnid or tailless whiptail-looking thing. We took pictures and Peter Sprouse later identified it for us as an amblypygi, probably the only variety found in Texas. (And harmless, which is disappointing as it looked pretty scary and we treated it as if it were a biting stinging thing, suited for a starring role in the newest cave horror movie). We also saw rhadine beetles, and a couple of “stink bug” beetles in

the entrance.

We picked up some trash, including a shiny new Bud Lite can that had been used for target practice, and were leaving the property by 1915.

We followed our post-Five Mouth tradition of eating at the Dairy Queen, only this time at the one in Ozona, which is bright and newly remodeled-looking (a bit less bright on the chairs we used), then headed to our homes.

More pictures on page 5



Sam in one of many slots.





Dustin belly crawling through a tight little spot.



Dustin, Sam and Jacqui after figuring out how the timer on the camera worked.

PBSS January 2010 Meeting Minutes

The January monthly meeting was held Tuesday Jan.12, 2010 at the usual location. The proceedings were gavelled to order at precisely 1900 hrs by Jacqui Thomas. Attending were: Bill Bentley, Walter Feaster, Tony Abernathy and Jacqui and Kel Thomas.

The treasurer's report by Bill Bentley followed with \$731.40 in the club's account. Bill also presented an updated members list with 23 current members.

Old business:

-Jacqui reported the annual NSS I/O report complete and in the capable hands of the NSS. Jacqui also thanked the NSS for the ease in which the report is electronically entered into the system.

-The Oct. issue of The Hole News was cited in the Jan. NSS News Underground Update section. This appears to have been the first time the PBSS newsletter has been men-

tioned.

-The Carlsbad Argus Current blog page is including PBSS meeting notes and newsletter links.

-5Mouth dig is still on for Feb.27.

New business:

-Bill has acquired a sack full of dust masks for future digs.

- TSA Spring Convention the last weekend of March in Cedar Park.

-Carlsbad Caverns rock haul May 8.

-Surprise and special vertical trip June 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 1950 hrs. in the usual gavel fashion.

Respectfully submitted by
Jacqui Thomas

Credits

Cover Photo: Carlsbad Caverns by Kel Thomas

Amazing Maze pictures by Jacqui Thomas



2010 Carlsbad CRF Schedule

The 2010 dates for the Cave Research Foundation Expeditions at Carlsbad Caverns National Park are:
Memorial Day, May 29 to 31
Labor Day, September 4 to 6
Thanksgiving, November 25 to 28
Restoration Field Camp dates will be announced later.

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