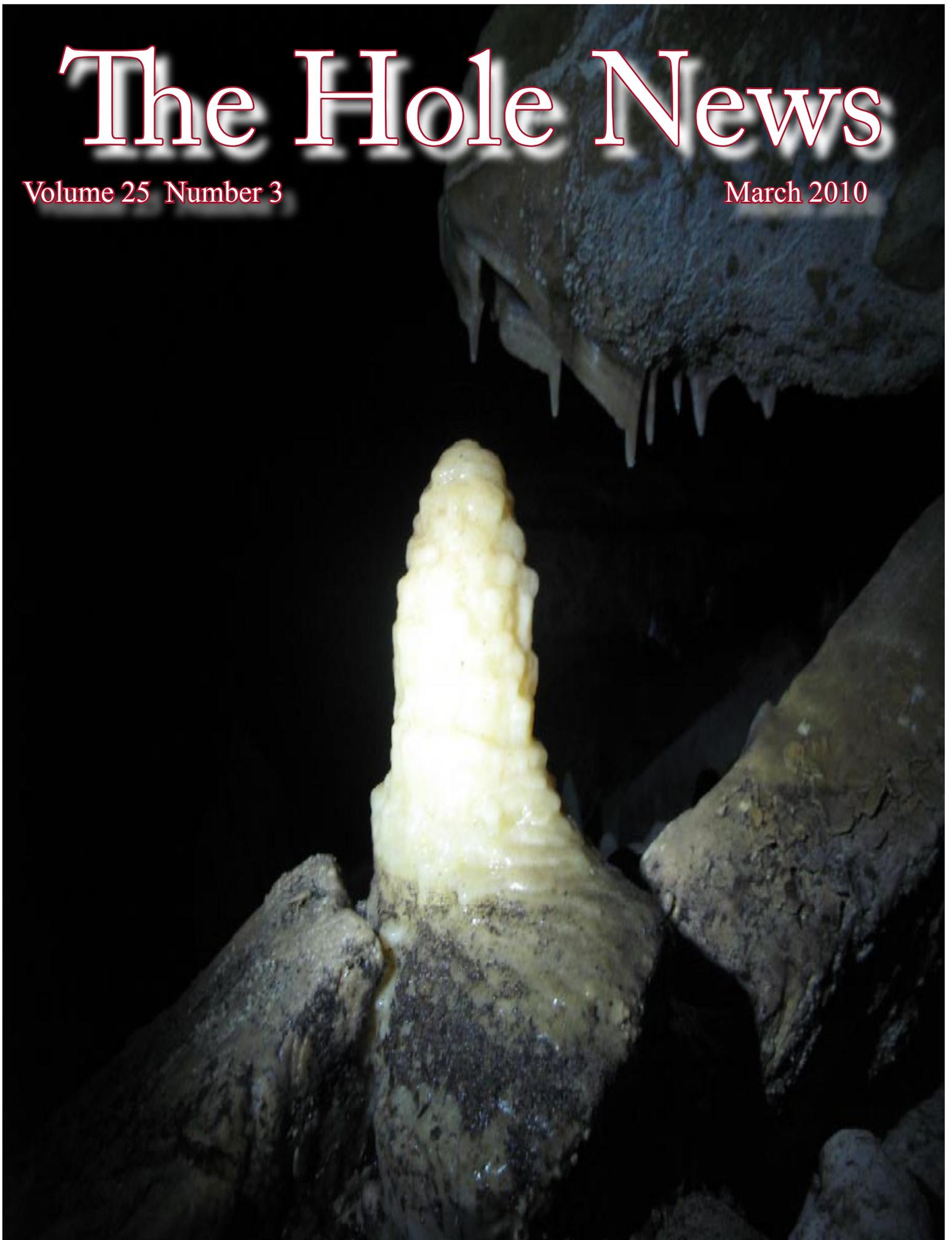
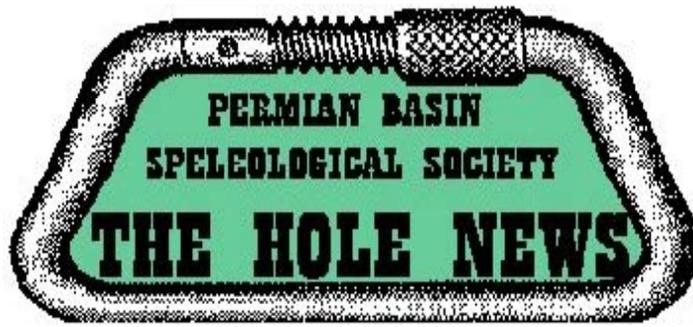


The Hole News

Volume 25 Number 3

March 2010





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Chartered in 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the NSS

Volume 25 Number 3

Blackstone Cave Revisited

Submitted by Jacqui Thomas

The TSS was in need of an update on Blackstone Cave, in Terrell County. Bill Bentley was just the caver for the job, and he put together an elite team of cavers to take care of business.

On the 13th of March, Bill Bentley and Walter Feaster met me, Jacqui Thomas, south of Sheffield. We had instructions and two of the team had been there many, many years ago, so we spent less than three hours being in the wrong place headed for the wrong place.

We finally found the cave in a totally cool-looking arroyo (team leader term—I would have, and did, call it a draw) with lots of trees and agarita and pokey things and big rocks and layers of rocks. We were pretty happy that we didn't have to leave the region without finding it.

What a sweet cave! It has been seriously vandalized over the years, both by scraped and spray-painted names and broken crystals, and has some trash in it. Still, it had some interesting features. A climb down over breakdown led into a room with corroded limestone ceilings with fossils and vestiges of calcite crystals in some small crevices. This room is twilight-y throughout.

The most obvious way to continue, an up-climb over corroded flowstone into a small, short passage with droppings from either raccoon or ringtail, and some larger porcupine-looking pellets, was a dead end. The left side of this room was lined with a long rock that looks rather like a nearly room-length spall from the ceiling. Between it and the wall is a passage back into another room.

This room has a relatively flat floor and a ceiling that is reminiscent of mammillary formations. It shows signs of partying and some burned stick ends that maybe were used for writing on the walls but looked more like an effort to make a torch.

From this room we went through a narrow and twisty hole that I would not have gone into head-first had I not known that it came out into a room. This room, like the last one, had patches where people had chipped sections of calcite crust from the walls and ceilings. The ceiling was very interesting, again looking like crystalline mammillaries but there were three areas that looked like they had been domes, in a row from where we entered. They were hung with crystal snowballs that almost filled the domes. [see picture].

In the first room we found three

Continued on pg.3

Scheduled Upcoming Events

Mar. 26-28

**TSA Spring Conv.
Cedar Park, TX**

April 17-18, 2010

**SWR Spring Regional
Ft. Stanton, NM**

**April 24*

Tentative Five Mouth Dig

May 1-9, 2010

Ft. Stanton Cave Project

**May 8, 2010*

Carlsbad rock haul

**May 22*

Possible date for Abyss Cave

May 29-31, 2010

**SWR Memorial Day Regional
Location TBA**

**June 12*

Special vertical trip TBA

*** indicates PBSS
club activity**

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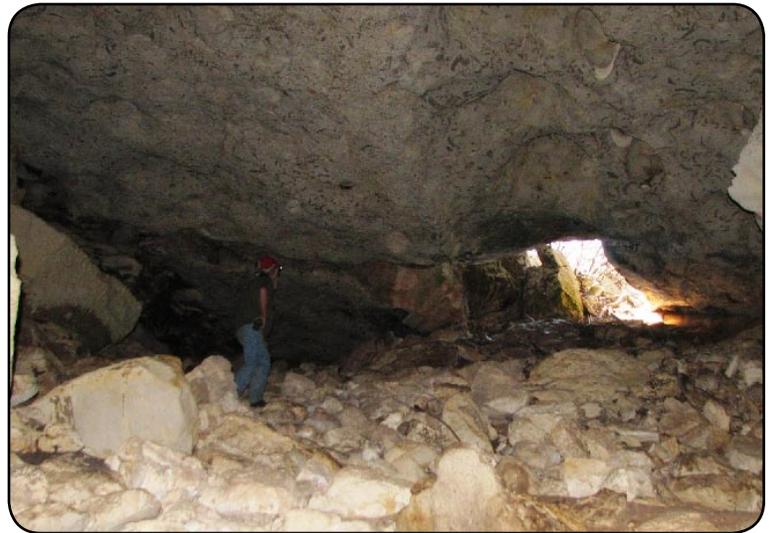
bats, we think pipestrelles. Also multiple crickets. We only saw bats in the first room, but we saw crickets throughout. Mostly we had standing room or we were stoop-walking. The last room was very stuffy and we were noticeably more comfortable the closer we got to the entrance. Bill was ahead of us into the entrance room and we heard him say, "There's something in here with us." Yikes! Before Walter and I could get into the room Bill reported back that it was

a "poriky-pine." I really wanted to get there in time to take a picture but the porcupine wandered off. We all saw orange glow eyeballs which were identified as belonging to a ring-tail, who kept ahead of all efforts to catch a picture.

We stopped to get a timer picture of us in the entrance then climbed out of the arroyo to walk back to the road in a beautiful warm spring day. I was home in Sonora and washing caving clothes by 1600 hours. Very fun day!



Bill, Jacqui and Walter at the cave entrance



Walter heads for the light



Ceiling as reported in trip report

PBSS February 2010 Meeting Minutes

PBSS Meeting February 09, 2010

The meeting opened at precisely 1900 and the “new” gavel continues to operate efficiently and effectively.

Attendees: Bill Bentley, Walter Feaster, Kerry Lowery, Tony Abernathy, Kel (notes) and Jacqui Thomas

Treasurer Bill reported that the treasury holds \$731.40, with \$20 of that being petty cash.

Old Business and New Business: Jacqui gave an Amazing Maze trip report, basically a retelling of the Hole News report but without pictures.

Don't forget the Five Mouth dig trip

the last weekend in February (weekend of the 27th). We came up with a couple of alternate camping plans (back home Saturday night, Thomas' house.) in case of seasonably cold weather.

Jacqui called the landowner for Abyss and he's fine with a trip but we need to work around lambing and spring turkey season. (Turkey season ends 02 May). Trip to be announced but anyone even remotely interested in seeing Abyss needs to be vertically competent. Seriously.

Kerry reported that there is an Outdoor Expo being held soon in Midland

and it may be the kind of event lending itself to a booth, perhaps in combination with the Permian Basin Outing Club (PBOC). Kerry will investigate.

We talked a bit about our May 8th Carlsbad rock haul and Bill will check to make sure we're still good for that date. Jacqui will look into the possibility another Amazing Maze trip.

The meeting was closed gavelly at 1943 hrs.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqui Thomas from notes by Kel Thomas

PBSS March 2010 Meeting Minutes

The March 9th meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society was attended by Bill Bentley, Walter Feaster, and Jacqui Thomas. It opened at 19:20, much later than our normal 19:00 but we were visiting and Jacqui was eating and we were hoping for another attendee or two.

The gavel remained in Sonora so we made do with the solid plastic sugar packet holder. Threats to take away the presidency as punishment were met with a version of “Have at it.”

Bill Bentley reported that the amount in the treasury has not changed from last month (\$751.40).

Old business included: Discussion of the Outdoor Expo. We did not hear from Permian Basin Outing Club about sharing space. That and our understanding that this Expo is geared more

towards outdoor adventures involving outfitters and/or guides resulted in the decision that other ways to reach potential cavers would cost less and be more effective. Texting back and forth with Kerry was part of this decision.

The May 8th Carlsbad Caverns Rock Haul is still on. More information and a list will be forthcoming closer to the date.

We discussed the weekend of April 3rd for the next Five Mouth dig. This is Easter weekend so we are floating the date to see if there's interest before approaching the landowners. The February Five Mouth dig was cancelled due to plan changes causing a lack of attendance and we don't want to do that again. We will be looking into April 24th for a possible Amazing Maze trip and if Amazing Maze doesn't work

out, that weekend is another possibility for Five Mouth.

Jacqui will call re: Abyss. Since we have May 8th taken up with Carlsbad the next available weekend after turkey season closes is May 22nd.

New business: Outline of Jacqui's recent trip to a Crockett County cave. Jacqui also reported that Kel has taken a job in Cody, Wyoming but he will continue to edit the Hole News as long as he gets trip reports from members.

Editor's note: Isn't technology wonderful?

Jacqui will not be able to attend the April meeting. The meeting was closed with the sorry substitute for the gavel at 20:04.

Respectfully,

Jacqui Thomas



A Preview Tease to *The Descente*' Part 3: *The Search for Crockett County*

Screenwritten by J. LaRue Thomas

We had a great time--the cave is one that was broken into in a caliche pit, so "brand new." Family members and hunters had been in. Wasn't as extensive as we'd hoped but a very interesting and pretty cave and there was a Devil's Tower-looking thing that seems to have been created from a small sinkhole that later filled over.

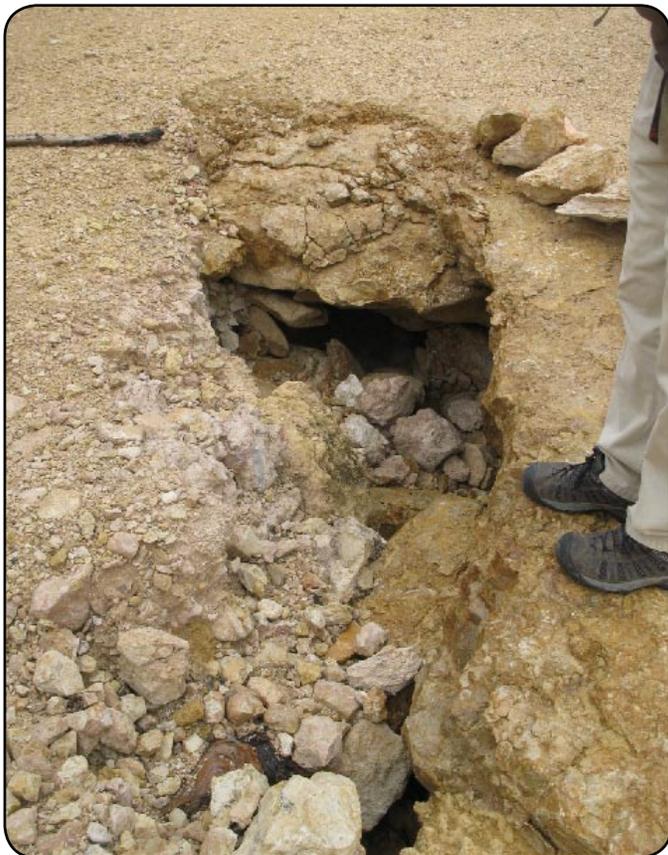
The small stuff the tower is made of is lightly cemented together by calcite and is full of calcified bones and a tooth that looks like it's from a camel. A small skull with teeth was also found. Some critter obviously, but nothing we could identify. All were very fragile.

It appears they all drifted in from the collapse of the center of a dome about 4 feet across and then the hole got cemented over by caliche. A paleontologist's dream.

Sofia is writing the report (for the Hole News!) and I have tons of pictures by Peter and Geoff who kindly loaded them onto my thumb drive. I will forever from now on take a thumb drive on every caving trip.

We went to two other already known but not entered lately caves, one we didn't enter because we could see 3 huge (very beautifully marked) Western diamond-backed rattlers coiled up at the bottom, and one we maybe shouldn't have entered (a climb-down, no rope needed) because all of us but Peter were in the cave and when Peter was standing at the bottom of the shaft he said, "you all saw these two rattlesnakes, right?" He was eye to eye with two small rattlers in a horizontal crack that we all had used in climbing down and never saw them.

We found a rusted metal yo-yo in that cave--had holes in it we think to make it whistle. None of us recalls ever seeing a metal yo-yo before. We shook out a lot of the rust and the dirt and took it out with us--we thought it might have been the landowner's from growing up there. (It wasn't). It still rattled a little from some dirt still inside so with the permission of the landowners we named it "Rattling Yo-Yo Cave."



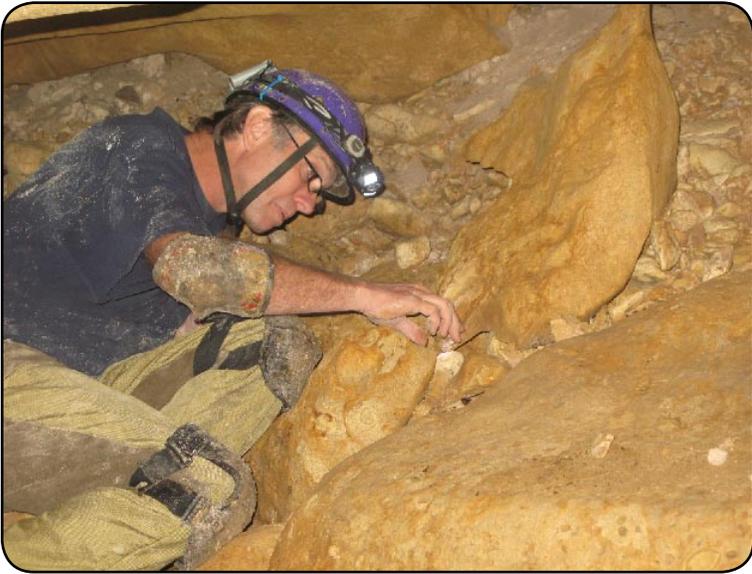
It started with a bulldozer in a caliche pit



*A 20' drop into that...or those?
Magnify and look closely*



More Crockett Co. Photos



Peter Sprouse carefully turning over rocks in unnamed cave



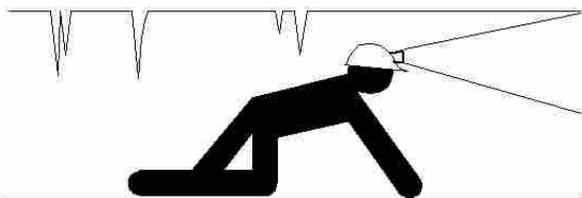
The dangerous rattling part of Rattling Yo-Yo Cave



The yo-yo part of Rattling Yo-Yo Cave



Wonders abound in the new caliche pit cave





Ryan and Sofia take a break



Jacqui squeezing through

Photo Credits

Cover Photo:
Unnamed new cave in
Crockett Co. by Geoff
Hoes

Blackstone Cave photos
by Jacqui Thomas

Crockett County caves
and Rattling Yo-Yo Cave
photos by Peter Sprouse
and Geoff Hoes

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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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PBSS Home Page

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*Built and main-
tained by Bill
Bentley*

