

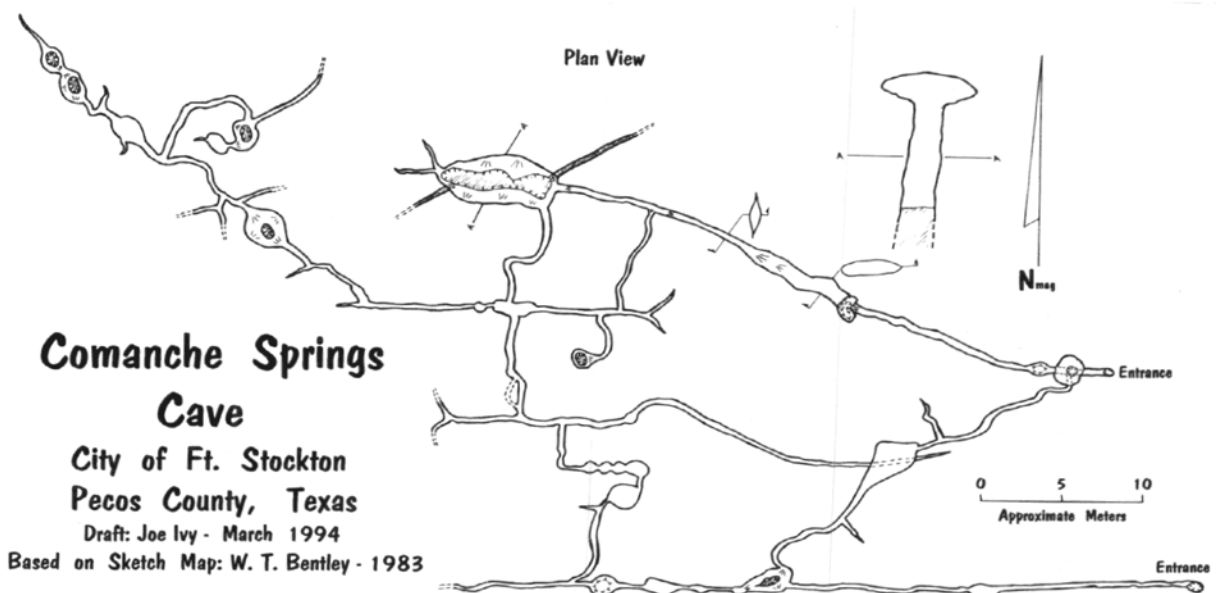
THE HOLE NEWS

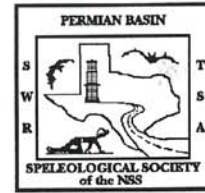
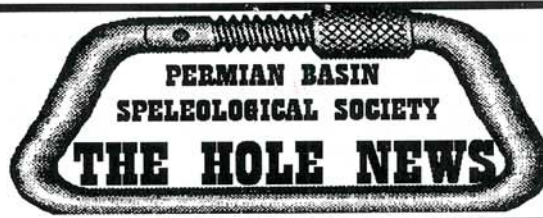
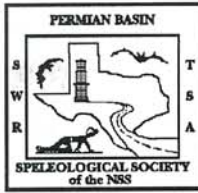
January

1999



Comanche Springs Cave, Ft. Stockton, Texas. Left to Right: Jodi Johnson (reporter for the Ft. Stockton "Pioneer"), John Phelps, Dale Ellison, Ruel Metcalf, Mike Swinford, Bill Bently, Kerry Lowery, and Karen Phelps. See trip report on page 3 of this newsletter.





January 1999

Chartered 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the National Speleological Society


Volume 14 Number 1

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on Tuesday, January 12, around 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 West Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda:

- Meeting
- Hauling Rocks at CACA
- Future Cave Expedition
- Discussion on Alternative All Natural Camp Foods 

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ (915)694-1824 or (915)559-3297, or E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshill.com>.

"The Hole News" is the monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons may be reproduced by cave oriented publications that exchange newsletters with PBSS, as long as proper credit is given to the author. Items for this newsletter can be sent to the Chief Editor, "The Hole News", c/o Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. Regular membership dues are only \$10.00 and includes one voting right, associate membership is \$ 5.00 and does not include a newsletter. Dues should be sent to PBSS Treasurer /Secretary, c/o Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then contact Kerry Lowery @ (915)394-4230 or <lowery4@crcom.net>. Or if you are not from this area and some how through circumstances beyond you're control or ours found a copy of "The Hole News" then you should contact the National Speleological Society at 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville Alabama, 35810-4431.

"PBSS Home Page"

http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.htm
Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley and Apex 2000 ISP.



Future Cave Trips and Events:

8-10 January--Colorado Bend SP Project: Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

16-17 January- -PBSS Trip to McKittrick Hill: Barry Hayes has permits for Mckittrick, Endless, and Sand Caves. Contact Barry at (915)333-8856 or <barrdonn@juno.com>.**

TSA Winter Business Meeting: Date & Place TBA. Probably in February at or near Colorado Bend SP. Will include varification of election of 1999 TSA Officers.

12-14 February--Colorado Bend SP Project:Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

27-28 February- - Tentative Date for Rock Hauling @ CACA: This date is not written in stone, more at the meeting.**

26-28 February--Powell's Cave Project: Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

1999 SWR Spring Regional: Where: Valley of Fires National Recreation Area (BLM) Near: Carrizozo, New Mexico
When: Weekend dates to be determined (likely late March or early April) Hosted and organized by: White Sands Grotto (Alamogordo)
Business meeting: Date and time to be determined.

12-14 March--Colorado Bend SP Project: Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

March/April 1999--Fitton Cave Mapping & Surveying Seminar: *CRF. Location TBA. Contact: Pete Lindsley 972-727-2497 or <lindsley@mcopn.dseg.ti.com>.

9-11 April--Colorado Bend SP Project: Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

18 May- -Wonderland in Cottonwood Cave: Allen Laman has arrangements for a trip to Wonderland area of Cottonwood Cave. Contact Allen at (915)550-0910 or <ilove2cave@msn.com>.

7-9 May--Colorado Bend SP Project-Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>. Last CBSPP trip of the season. Project resumes 8-10 October.

(Continued on page 2)

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"99" Membership Dues?

It is time to renew your membership in the PBSS. For a regular membership it is \$10.00, and includes one voting right and the newsletter. Associate membership is \$5.00 and does not include a newsletter. Make checks payable to Walter Feaster, the PBSS does not have a bank account.

If your name is listed below, you have not renewed, and this will be your last issue of "The Hole News". Also listed are some newsletter exchanges that no longer exchange with us. If we do not hear from you, you to will be dropped.

James Cullen	Grace Ford	Larry Gray
Annmarie Mikelski	Larence Parent	Christie Rogers

Escabrosa Grotto

Mark Alman (Grotto exchange DFW)

Mechanical Systems Inc. (Lubbock Area Grotto)

Central Texas Grotto

Things of Interest

The TSA has it's members manual on line now. Even if you are not a member of the TSA you still may be listed. Please don't make any links to this site, this is for caver use only.

<<http://www.caver.net/tsa/mm.htm>>

Here is a web site from Vancouver Island, B.C. (Canada). It is called **Radical Alternative Technology Series** (R.A.T.S.). These people have a different approach to caving. This may be due to caving to close to the magnetic north pole! <www.cancaver.ca/rats>

On our last trip to **Amazing Maze Cave** (Dec. 12) most people that were going didn't show. I assume the weather was the cause. That Saturday the weather cleared up and was really nice. The damage to the cave gate was so bad this time (gate off the hinges), it was decided to just weld it shut. Thanks to Dwaine Moore and Mike Gray for doing that for us. We are planning a major gate rebuilding this spring or summer.

A New Feature for "The Hole News"

At the recent PBSS Christmas party many members expressed an interest in "alternative all natural foods." This is a good idea. On these cave trips where we have to camp out, why haul along all those groceries, when fresh food is running around out there in front of you! So the "The Hole News" is starting a new feature a "recipe corner!" That's right, recipes for the little exploited resource of "insects!" Here are some guide lines to follow:

Bugs can be crushed and added to stews. This disguises the appearance and reduces the spew factor. Bees and wasps are OK eaten after a good boiling. The poison is basically a protein which disassembles at boiling temperatures. The stinger softens. Pounding them before boiling is effective. Bee and Wasp larvae are delicious! Many insects are edible (grubs, grasshoppers, ants, slugs, maggots, and earthworms to name a few).

Avoid insects which carry disease, are poisonous, have fine hairs, bright colors, or eight or more legs. One of the most dangerous insects is in the cantharidin family (blister beetles). I doubt that you will run into those unless you pop over to the Mediterranean just to munch bug. There are of course many cautions. ... Just a note. Beetles amount to about 40% of the known insects. The larvae of many beetles are very high in fat and protein and make great snacks.

When in doubt about a bug do the insect safety test. And follow these time tested rules.

Always try to cook insects.
Never eat bugs you find dead.
Don't eat bugs that bite back! *Duh!*
If it smells really bad, don't eat it! *Double Duh!*

One last thought ... If you have a strong stomach, or at least a clear spew zone for a technicolor yawn ... try maggots. Road kills are often infested with them. Gather a handful or two, drop your prize into an old sock and rinse in cold clear water a couple of times, then boil. After about five minutes toss in a bullion cube. When it is finished dissolving, settle back to a fine hot stew of what looks like brown rice. It is really a fine meal.

Disclaimer: The PBSS, it's officers, the editorial staff, or any one else, is not responsible for gastric distress, allergic reactions, feelings of repulsion, or other problems resulting from the ingestion of foods represented on this page.

Please: Do not eat cave bugs, they have a hard enough time surviving with out something else trying to eat them.

TRIP REPORTS:

Welcome to the MUD!

Squooosh and squash was the disgusting sounds that my feet made as I stepped into another mud filled chamber in this cave underneath the streets and sidewalks of the city of Ft. Stockton.

We had met at 9:00 AM in front of the Pecos County public swimming pool known locally and through the passages of regional history as "Comanche Springs".

It had been over 15 years since I had been in this cave and I was reminiscing in my mind how I first came to know the Haynes brothers and learn that they had a love for caves as much if not more than I did at that time. We explored Comanche Springs cave many times and lots of other caves in the area, even once using a backhoe to dig out the opening of one just South of town. I have since lost track of the Haynes brothers and wonder what they are up to these days...

*Comanche Springs had once flowed around 1,200 L/s (that's @60 Million Gallons a day) from 1922 to 1962 when they stopped due to excessive groundwater pumping for irrigation. Comanche Springs were once the largest flowing natural springs in West Texas, now they are just a memory gone by from a simpler time. The springs flow periodically when rainfall temporarily recharges the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer, thus flooding or submerging the cave. This accounts for the constantly wet and thick clay-like mud that we all enjoy so much. This was never more present as it was this unusually warm November day as we entered through the newly constructed gate into the depths of Comanche Springs Cave. I was the first to enter and was anxious to see if I could recognize and remember any of it... It was a short crawl approx. a foot to foot and half high and required crawling on your belly to get in... I guess I employed the same technique that I had used from the first and that was to sit down and do a roll until I was face first and on my belly. I think Kerry Lowery used the same approach. Once inside I had 2 realizations and that was 1.) I should have wore elbow pads! 2.) I should have wore gloves! Oh well needless to say it was muddy... Not mud like I remembered from before which had been packed in by all of the cave traffic, but fresh mud, undisturbed since the last time the cave had flooded... This was sticky and gooey type of mud.... Almost the consistency of a over cooked gravy... Maybe not so runny, but ever bit as slimy.

The passage seemed smaller and tighter than I had remembered, I almost panicked and backed out, but soon the feeling vanished and I was on my way. Pushing my pack in front of me like they do in them Kentucky caves and gathering mud with my belt buckle along the way, I inched forward. After about 20 feet or so it opened up and I was able to stand.

The cave continued up an into a crack about 5 to 10 feet wide and over several small pits until we had reached a junction about 40 feet from the crawl... We followed the old light wires that the Haynes brothers had installed years ago and were now nothing but rust and half buried in the mud. Kerry Lowery and Raul Metcalf had joined me at this point.

This junction was a up-down decision... up was easy enough and besides it followed the wires. This only went about 10 feet and ended up over the large pool called "Stephan's Well". We quickly backed down and made our way over to the edge of the ledge that over looked this pool which once blue green waters were now murky brownish and had trash floating in it.

Some one mentioned that they heard water flowing and I finally heard it as I never remembered water flowing in this cave before. We turned right at the edge of this pool and after about 20 feet came to a

4 way intersection that was plenty high enough to stand up in and had lots of places to sit. To our immediate right the passage went up about 4 feet and was small enough to crawl into and after 4 feet or so it went up in a crack sharply that Kerry and Raul explored to a dead end. At the base of this up rise was a passage interconnecting that from the left that paralleled the passage we were in and had a small 2 to 3 foot water fall and this was the source of the noise of running water. On the way back to the large intersection I noticed a small crawlway leading off to the direction of the entrance passage, (When I returned home I found that on the original map this was called "Little Brothers Loop"). Directly across from the passage just described was a crack that appeared to be blocked by break down and mud and was impassable, (I also discovered from my map that this cut off 4 of the pools and quite a bit of the cave that was once opened). So the only other way to go was to go onward into the cave to the South and I went in while Kerry and Raul explored the passages above me and soon found about 50 feet up the passage a small opening that was affectionately called "Born again Hole" ! This 10" by 14" opening was smaller than I remembered... I sat and waited about 10 feet up the passage from it and soon Kerry and Raul were there and they decided to go for it... Kerry slithered in and Raul soon followed. They called me a "wimp" or something like that for deciding no to go, but hey, I had been there and done that, even if I did not remember it all that well.

I went back to the intersection to rest and try to get some of the mud off of me. Kerry and Raul soon arrived back and told me of what they had found and then Dale Ellison and the young newspaper reporter lady were all there. We chatted about philosophical cave stuff and after about 20 minutes we exited the cave with no problems.

As I crawled out and got closer I noticed that the air was no longer humid and stuffy, but was getting fresher and cooler the closer we got to the entrance and when we finally came out into the sunlight it felt good.

After a few pictures we sat around and chatted about caves and trips and all the usual stuff that one does after a brief trip. We were in the cave a little over an hour. I found some clean clothes and made my way to the hot showers. It was good to be clean again, and very nice to have such facilities so close. The mud has a way of sticking in the hair and drying! It makes boots become 30 LB useless globs of slick! This is most annoying! Thinking back now about the trip I am not sure if the passage had collapsed or if it was just a duck under and my lights played tricks on me, I want to plan another trip there soon and see the mud and play in it again. Like Tony Grieco once said "Is caving the symptom or the illness?"

Have fun caving. Submitted by Bill Bentley NSS # 21977

Read more about Comanche Springs on the web at:

<<http://www.caver.net/com.htm>>

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* denotes new members

Please send all exchanges, correction, and updates to Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard, Midland, Texas 79703-4847-71. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes.

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