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Contact the editor @ 915-559-3297 after 8 p.m. Fax line-(915)694-1824,

"The Hole News" is the monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons maybe 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, Midland, Texas 79703-4847. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then contact Noel Pando at (915)-523-9294. 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.

Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on **Tuesday, October 8, 1996** at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 west Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda

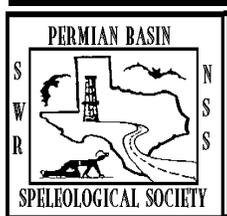
We will be taking **nominations** for club officers. Our grotto elections will be held at the Nov. meeting.

I will have more information about our **rock hauling trip** to CACA. If you are signed up for this and can't attend the meeting, please call me.

Mr. Bill Martin will be giving a program on **vertical rescue technics** (like used at Lech). He recommended we have a little classroom time before we go to the field. **Try to attend**, this should be interesting.

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ 915-559-3297, or 694-1824.

Cave Safely



Visite our Web Site

At

<http://www.apex2000.net/personal/bb2145/pbss.htm>

Future Cave Trips: Also other events from PBSS and other grottos.

October 5-6 GYPKAP: Contact Steve Peerman, @ 505-523-2167

***** October 12 PBSS Restoration at Carlsbad Caverns: Contact Walter Feaster @915-559-3297 or 915-694-1824.*****

***** October 13 Christmas Tree Cave: Contact Kerry Lowery @ (915)394-4230*****

October 18-20 Texas Caver's Reunion (TCR): It will be held at the Flat Creek Ranch near The Pedernales Falls State Park. Contact G. Willikers (?) @ (512)441-0050.

October 25-27 Endless Cave Survey: LAG needs help with this survey. Contact Mike Hill @ (806)793-0642.

October 26-27 Powell's Cave Project: Contact Terry Holsinger @ (512)443-4241.

November 2-3 Caverns of Sonora Restoration Project: Contact George Veni, 11304 Candle Park, San Antonio, TX 78249-4421. Phone: 210-558-4403. E-Mail: kveni@tenet.edu.

November 28-Dec. 1 CRF Thanksgiving Expedition: Surveying and restoration. Contact Erik Niemeyer (personnel manager) @ 505-298-8223 H, or 505-988-6863 W.

Most all of this material was stolen from various and sometimes reliable caving newsletters in the Southwestern Region and surrounding area, including the TSA's "Activities Newsletter"

***** Denotes a PBSS club Trip...

Carlsbat Cavers: Contact Phyllis Weston @ 505-887-6790 for restoration, educational programs, off trail trips.

Amazing Maze: TCMA cave. Contact Gralin Coffin @ 915-682-1904, or Walter Feaster @ 915-559-3297 or 915-694-1824.

Colorado Bend State Park: Contact Ed Young 915-682-3449 or Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or Dale Barnard 512-452-5709.

Fitton Cave Survey: Contact Pete Lindsley @ 214-727-2497 or e-mail lindsley@mcopn.dseg.ti.com

Government Canyon Karst Project: Contact George Veni 210-558-4403 or e-mail kveni@tent.edu

Honey Creek Cave: Contact Mark Minton 512-847-7422.

Madonna Restoration Trips: Contact Mike Huber @ 505-885-8898.

Mystic Cave Survey: Contact Woodrow Thomas @ 903-395-4431 or e-mail wwthomas@tenet.edu

0-9 Well: TCMA cave. Contact Walter Feaster @ 915-559-3297 or 915-694-1824. (CLOSED UNTIL NEXT SPRING).

Powell's Cave Survey: Contact Terry Holsinger @ 512-443-4241.

Robber Baron Cave: TCMA cave. Contact James Loftin @ 210-731-9392.

Whirlpool and Lost Oasis: TCMA caves. Contact Nico Hauwert @ 512-282-8441.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CAVING TRIPS PLANNED, PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW AND HE WILL PUBLISH THEM HERE IN THIS SPACE!.....

Christmas Tree Cave

Kerry Lowery has a permit for Christmas Tree Cave, Sunday, October 13. This is the day after our rock hauling trip to CACA. Christmas Tree Cave is located in the Carlsbad Caverns National Park, (see Rebecca Lee's trip report this issue). If you want to go contact Kerry @ (915)394-4230 or see him at the meeting.

PBSS Elections Are Close

Our grotto election will be held in November at our regular meeting. We will be taking nominations at our October meeting. Please be thinking of some one you would want as our club officers. Remember grotto dues are due in November too.

Texas Cavers' Reunion

The 19th Annual Texas Cavers' Reunion, October 18-20, will be held at the Flat Creek Ranch about 10 miles east of Johnson City. Just follow the signs to the Pedernales Falls State Park, then stay on Country Road 201 for about a mile-and-a-half.

Camping is free, but I think the Bar-B-Q Saturday night cost a little. There will be all kinds of caver related activities going on, plus all kinds of cave vendors. Pack your trash out with you.

You can start arriving after 5 pm on Thursday or later. If you need more info. I will have it at our next meeting or call G. Willikers @ (512)441-0050. Hey this is the info I got.

TRIP REPORTS: and other lies and stories



Carlsbad Caverns National Park Trip Sept. 1-2, 1996

Caves: Helen's Cave and Christmas Tree Cave

Cavers: Helen's- Tom Kaler, Melynn Conway, and Rebecca Lee.

Christmas Tree- Tom Kaler, Meliene Davis, Bill Sawyer and Rebecca Lee.

We didn't make it to the parking lot of Slaughter Canyon on Sunday until 4:30 PM. Tom, Melynn and I made the hike to the cave in a little less than an hour. Tom and I contemplated the different rigging points which were few and far between. Satisfied with our choice, Tom began the rigging and I set up the rope pad.

Careful of the centipede we saw touring the entrance to the cave, I dropped in to the 30 foot pit at 6:00 PM. Melynn followed me and Tom followed her. I was the first to stow my rack and begin looking around the cave. It has a high, open ceiling with stalactites hanging stoically above. I did a part intentional, part accidental slide down a muddy slope to the rest of the cave. As I gawked in amazement, I saw an odd formation standing strong and familiar in the distance. "It can't be," I mumbled to myself. It was. It was a locked gate. And guess which caverns didn't have the combination with them. Tom jiggled the numbers to see if it would pop open but no luck. So, we looked at the parts of the cave we could see before making our ascents up the rope. Total time in the cave about 20 minutes.

I went up first and Melynn followed me. When she reached the ever difficult lip, her knee ascender locked on the rope and wouldn't let go. She couldn't go any farther. She was stuck. Melynn tried to muscle herself over the lip but it was too hard. All she needed to do was take two more steps and she was out, but the cave wasn't letting go of Melynn quite so easily. After 15 minutes of trying different ways of freeing her, we decided to take her hand ascender off the rope and place it above the lip. That helped her a little. Finally after redoing her bungee, her knee ascender let go and she was able to take those two steps. I grabbed her one hand, she gripped her hand ascender with the other and with one last pull she was over the lip. I think Melynn was never so happy to be above ground than underground before that evening.

As the sun began to set, Tom quickly climbed up the rope. He wound the rope. We grabbed our gear and was about to head down the mountain when Tom noticed he was missing something. His pack was lying helplessly at the bottom of the cave. At that moment I actually thought I could hear this cave laughing at us. We decided to go down since it was dark and rain was threatening, and get permission to get the pack Monday which we did with no problem.

Monday, we once again got a late start on the hike to Christmas Tree Cave. We wandered on and off the trail until we finally found the rock cairn that leads straight up the mountain to the cave. It's much easier to rig the 20 foot drop at this cave and we were touring the sights in no time. This is a fantastic cave. The columns are huge and the soda straws many. It rewards the hike and warrants another trip. Once we got out of the cave, Meliene and Bill started down the mountain while Tom wound the rope and I finished packing my gear. We headed home at 7:30 PM. It was a fun trip but I think the cave called Helen's was trying to tell us something. I think I will listen.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee NSS# 42075

MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:		NSS #:
Abernathy, Tony	4415 Parkdale, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-694-7919	38776
Anderle, Chuck	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-685-3119	31477
Abner, Rich	1502 Pennsylvania, Big Spring, Tx 79720-4250	915-264-0023	Applied For
Bentley, Bill	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	21977
Bentley, Donnie	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	37549
Carlton, Don	1301 Daventry, Midland, Tx 79705	915-687-4352	30417
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701 6124	915-682-1904	33471
Cullen, James R.	8330 Endicott Lane, Dallas, Tx. 75227	214-412-1632	Applied for
Day, Rick	114 N.W. Ave. "F" Street, Andrews, TX. 79714	915-523-9665	Applied for
Feaster, Walter	4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703-4847-71	915-559-3297	31624
Franks, Steve	422 W. Pecan Apt D, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-683-3305	35245
Glasson, Larry	1101 N. W. 7th Street, Andrews, Texas 79714	915-523-9772	Applied For
Gray, Larry	31 East 33rd Street, San Angelo, Tx. 76903	915-653-3823	19588
Gray, Steve	106 Canyon, Big Spring 79720	915-264-7619	Applied For
Grieco, Tony	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Expired
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tex 79714	915-524-6327	41068
Kamon, Ken	4400 Andrews Hwy # 801, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7192	34637
Kirby, Chris	P.O. Box 1177, Van Horn, Texas 79855	915-828-3211	Applied For
Lee, Rebecca	3217 Heritage Lane, Abilene, Texas 79606-3317	915-695-0793	42075
Lowery, Kerry	P.O. Box 39, Coahoma, Texas 79511	915-394-4230	Applied For
Metcalf, Ruel	1410 E. 4th, Big Spring, Tx. 79720	915-264-9246	Applied For
Pando, Noel D.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	39037
Pando, Noel M.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	Applied For
Parent, Larence	P.O. Box 849, Manchaca, Tx. 78652	512-280-2843	Applied For
Wallace III, Warren	P.O. Box 382, Coahoma, Tx 79511-0832	915-394-4310	Applied For
* denotes new members			
	PNONE #:		

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.

More Trip Reports:

"...it's not so bad unless you feel the need to turn your head. ..."

The Crime: Horse Thief Cave

The Punishment: Dust

The Location: Horse Thief Cave, Wyoming

The Date: July 10, 1996

The People: Susan Herpin, David Herpin, Rich Wolfert, Libby Overholt, and Kevin Glover

Reported by: Kevin Glover

Cough, Cough! Hack! Wheeeeeze. Dust. It is everywhere. We've been crawling through it for what seems like a long time. Well, maybe it has been what with Rich's side trips. He had said that there were several registers in the cave, so.... Hey look, found another register up here! Oh, yea. I see, its the same one we signed in 30 minutes ago. Ok...were not far in ,somewhere along Demise's Crystal Crawl. The dust looks like it was tracked in here by cavers over several decades (they left chest and knee prints instead of boot prints). But it doesn't matter because it gets stirred up and breathed in by all of us regardless.

In some areas the dust is thicker, must be where all the tracked dust came from, and so we crawl through clouds. Up ahead, Libby is backing up toward me and away from a small passage. Hey what's up? The pretties are in the other direction. Libby tells us that she won't fit through the next belly crawl. Man! She won't get to see the pretties. All this punishment taken and she doesn't even get to enjoy the crime. Susan and I go on through the crawl pushing packs before us. I don't want to say that this cave is small, but if that crawl had had six inches of water in it, I might have drowned. We decide that Rich will escort Libby to the entrance and then come back the short distance to us and we four will continue....though the dust. Susan, David and I used that half hour to eat, rest and photograph some gypsum flowers.

There were a couple of them that were a foot long and as thick as my forearm. Anyway, Rich showed up and we were soon crawling again. After a brief episode of walking we were back to crawling in the dust. Rich mentioned that we really should be wearing dust masks, but we were already in the cave when he said that. Soon we come to the Gypsum Wall climb down. It's 15 feet down on a slightly overhanging wall. Rich goes first. I climb down second and Rich guides my feet. Susan asks, How is it? Is it very difficult? Its not too bad, I say, but it is slightly overhanging on the lower half.

I'm not gonna have to whine, am I? No. (Ed note: He lied!) David comes down next and has some difficulty due to short legs. He makes it and then Susan comes down last. Wheres my next foothold? She asks standing at the midpoint. Just lower your right foot down about two feet, instructs Rich, while you find some lower hand holds. What lower hand holds? I can't find that foothold. Now, how did I get into this? A good question. (Ed note: Kevin is being polite, I whined a lot better than that.) The night before, the five of us drove into Lovell, Wyoming and camped in a park in the city. Susan, David, Rich, and Libby were in the suburban while my Dad and I drove there in another car. We were traveling to Montana and Canada for some hiking, glacier viewing, and major oohing and ahing over mountain scenery, but we had stopped in Wyoming so I could go see Horse Thief Cave with the group. Susan, David, and Libby had driven into Colorado, picked up Rich and driven on to Lovell. Thus, we were all here at once. Later on, the plan was for Rich to take them through nearby Wind Cave in South Dakota. On the morning of the cave trip we got a lazy start from camp and began driving in both vehicles toward Horse Thief Cave parking area. Soon we were on dirt roads and then we reached the base of the canyon. Here the road climbs up one wall of the canyon as the canyon itself climbs in elevation. Its a long, steep road. Well, our car wouldn't even begin it. So, we were forced to transfer gear and ourselves to Susan's Suburban where all six of us crammed inside. (Ed note: Rich had advised us not to leave anything in camp, so my truck also contained camping gear for the four of us. And most of you know I never learned how to pack light, so it was a tight squeeze.) We drove up....way up. Eventually we levelled leveled out and drove through trees and over hills. Next, came Ball Bearing Hill. Rich told us that its been vastly improved, but that years ago it was like driving steeply uphill on ball bearings. If you stopped midway up the hill, you couldn't get started again, at least not in an uphill direction. Well, we zoomed right up that one and levelled out again. We drove over flat roads among grassy plains for a long while....Left here, right here, right here, right again, take the middle fork, follow the fence line, left, left again.... you are keeping track aren't you? We passed by an old mining camp from past decades. For some reason the camp was called Armpit though I can't remember why. Rich told us that Uranium has been mined out of these mountains and that the whole place is radioactive. Some expert somewhere had figured out that as long as you didn't spend more than 80 hours a year underground in this region that you would be OK. Or was it 40 hours a year? Well, whatever, we didn't approach it....I hope.

So we drove up to the entrance, its a sinkhole 50 feet across containing a 30 ft. by 15 ft. walk in entrance. Rich pointed over to a sign by the sinkhole. He explained that it was a border between Wyoming and Montana and also between BLM (Bureau of Land Management) and Park Service land. BLM is on the Wyoming side and has 99% of the cave under it and controls the access. A small portion of the cave is under Montana (we got to go caving in two states). Furthermore, the National Park lands on the Montana side aren't really Park lands. The Park Service rents land from a local Indian Reservation. Confusing? Not at all compared to the mazes in Horse Thief. (Ed note: More than 1% of the cave is under Montana. However there is a second entrance in Montana, and the connecting passage was cemented closed. Most of the cave under Montana can now only be accessed from the Montana entrance, which requires a separate permit from the Park Service, while the Wyoming entrance allows access to the cave which is 99% under WY and requires a permit from the BLM.) We entered the cave about noon. Now, my Dad who was not going in with us was preparing for an eight hour wait. **(continued next page)**

(Horse Thief continued)

We figured we could do everything we wanted within eight hours. So he went down into the entrance with a lawn chair and read a book while we entered the cave. It was a lot cooler down there than on the surface. Also, it was a nice big entrance and entrance room with a large main corridor leading further in. And of course, an hour later Libby joined him at the entrance while the rest of us made our long trip.

More Trip Reports:

But standing in this big entrance room looking up at the high ceiling, it was easy to imagine a cave with not so much difficult crawling, climbing and so forth. Am I almost there? asks Susan. Your right foot needs to go further out, answers Rich. Rich decides to stand on a rock just behind Susan, as if to catch her when she falls. (Ed note: when I fall? Thanks, Kevin) But she soon makes it down with a long step and some support from Rich.

Further into the cave we find climbing passages and rooms broken by crawl ways in between and soon the dust lessens considerably. Next, were on our bellies again routing through a breakdown maze. But, I suppose it was all worth it because next came the pretty part. We were in walking passage most of the time. Real, stand up, no knocking your head on the ceiling, straighten your back out, walking passage. As you can see I'm accustomed to stand up passages like those in New Mexico caves. However, this doesn't preclude me from punishing my body along with the rest of them. Well, the pretty part was really pretty. There were formations everywhere, draperies, soda straws, flowstone, lily pads around pools of water, even a 30 ft. column. But what else could I say after all those crawl ways? When we got through with that, Rich walked us across a large room to the so called Crack Where the Water Comes Down. Its an almost vertical fissure a few feet long and six to twelve inches wide. It went up through the ceiling and was 15 feet long or high. It starts four feet off the ground and is tucked into a corner of that large room we walked across. Oh, by the way, there's no water coming down and there may never have been any. Well, I don't think it was Rich's intention to actually take the group up the crack. But, he did suggest that someone climb part way up it, just for the thrill you know. So David gets a boost up into the crack and goes about half way. I can go on, he says, but I don't think I'll be able to get back down safely from the top. He looks up the crack a few more minutes and then comes back down. Well, it wasn't my intention to go up the crack, either, but seeing David make it only half way just made me want to try, too. So I wedged up into the crack. Soon my helmet jams. So I remove it and push it up over me. There are little ledges in many places (except at the very top) so its not so bad unless you feel the need to turn your head. At the top I extract my helmet and myself into a small room with coral fossils in the wall and look back down at the group, I'm clear, I say. David tries again, but only to the half way point. He is worried about getting back down. Don't worry, I say, if you fall just wedge your body into the crack. I'm too thin, he says, I don't think I will wedge. Oh come on, nobody is that thin. David goes back down and Susan is next. After the necessary straining and squeezing, etc. Susan hands me her helmet. That wasn't so bad was it? Susan? Well never mind never mind. (Ed note: It really wasn't that bad, not nearly as bad as the Gypsum Wall.) Soon, David is trying again. But if I fall, I'll just fall straight down and out of the crack. No, you can wedge into the crack. Just jam your body and you'll stop. But I'm too thin, I won't wedge. Its a real narrow crack, you'll wedge. There are techniques for doing this. My favorite is to do your best imitation of a ball. No, I won't wedge, says David. Quit whining and get up here, says Susan. I'm not whining. How are you going to make the fissure to the Cavernacle if you can't make it up this one? says Susan referring to an upcoming work trip in the Guadalupe caves of New Mexico. What Susan and I decide to do is get directions from Rich to a real big room that is nearby and to go see it and let David figure out the crack. After all, we didn't climb that crack for nothing. We want to go caving. So, we do. Walking a short distance, we enter one end of a huge room. It's not decorated, just bare rock, fallen boulders and dry mud on the floor. It's a long room, hundreds of feet, but only 100 ft. wide and 50 ft. high. Neat! We make our way back to David who is now close to the top. Soon, he too extracts himself and his helmet. So, we all looked down at Rich. Rich, we want to go caving, but you're our guide to the Chandelier.

From Rich's talk about Horse Thief Cave last night, we found out that in this area are a few gypsum chandeliers. (Ed note: This is the same talk where Rich told us he would not go up the crack with us. We did some arm twisting.) You know, I really didn't think all of you would climb the crack, says Rich, nor did I want to myself. I've been up there quite a few times and I've noticed that with the passing years, each trip is harder than the last. We sure do appreciate you, Rich. Rich comes carefully up the crack and we explore on into that huge room going across it and into breakdown maze. We find another register and sign in and keep on crawling. Arriving at the Chandelier, Rich figures that he won't be able to remember where the other chandeliers are so this will have to do. Its a beauty, about three to four feet long. It's got a dirty brown color to it, but its a nice piece. A sort piece of chandemite lies nearby on a dry mud floor. A couple of coral fossils lie embedded in gypsum nearby. Apparently, when the limestone rocks were altered to gypsum, these fossils weren't soluble enough to alter along with the cave. We sat and ate dinner while we contemplated our surroundings, and the way out. We figured we were already behind schedule. So, we start back. Past the register, across the huge, long, breakdown room we go. Down the really tight Crack, Where the Water Comes down, no incident there, through all the pretty calcite passages, through the breakdown maze crawling, Denise's Crystal Crawl (with dust), and soon into stand up passage. We surfaced eleven hours after entry. Only three hours late! Well, yes my Dad was worried, but Libby wasn't. We found them in the truck asleep.

Great trip! Thanks Rich.

Editors Note: It really is a lot of fun being able to put all those little editors note comments in a trip report someone else wrote. I think I should always get someone else to write the reports for the trips I go on just so I can do that.

PBSS Editors note: I received this report from Mr. Bill who received it from Martha, I think. The report was written by Kevin Glover and edited by Susan Herpin of the Greater Houston Grotto. I hope I have given credit to all involved.