

October 1997

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

Volume 12 Number 10

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, October 14, 1997** 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:

Nominations for Grotto Officers (elections in November)
Future cave trips to New Mexico.
Possible work trip to CACA.

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster

@
(915)559-3297, or (915)694-1824
E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshall.com>

"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 Ave., 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.

"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:

October 12-18, Lincoln National Forest, Capitan Area Expedition: This is a CRF Project. Contact Dick Venter @ (505)892-7370.

October 10-12, Colorado Bend Project: Contact Terry Holsinger (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

October 24-26, Powell's Cave Project: Contact Terry Holsinger @ (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>

October 17-19, Texas Cavers' Reunion: See info in this newsletter. (No map or info with exchange or complementary newsletter.)

*****October 18, Permian Basin Outing Club Cave Trip:** The PBOC has permits for Ft. Stanton Cave, New Mexico. The permits are not filled, we the PBSS have been invited to go to Ft. Stanton. If you want to go contact Walter Feaster before our next meeting.***

November 1, Caverns of Sonora Restoration Project: See text in this newsletter.

November 1-2, Amistad Speleological Project: Contact Cathy Winfrey, (512)444-0170.

*****November 15, PBSS Trip to McKittrick Hill:** This trip is for our new members. If you have not been there, these are must see caves. Contact Walter Feaster.

November 27-29, CRF Carlsbad Caverns Thanksgiving Day Expedition: Contact Barbe Barker @ (972)594-1183 & <cavers@get.net>.

*****December 13, PBSS Trip to Amazing Maze:** Contact Galin Coffin @ (915)682-1904 or <glcoff@agesys.com>.

December ?, 1997 SWR Winter Technical Regional (indoor) Las Cruces, New Mexico (meeting/session location to be determined). Hosted and organized by the Mesilla Valley Grotto. First or second Saturday in December. Business meeting scheduled for 9 AM. Technical paper presentations follow business meeting. If you wish to attend, want to present a paper, or need additional info contact: StevePeerman: <speerman@chilidog.lascruces.nmhs.edu>.

August 3-7, NSS Convention: Sewanee, Tennessee. Contact William Shrewsbury, (432)886-3296 or <nss98@caves.org>.

*****Denotes a PBSS Grotto Trip*****

**5th ANNUAL
CAVERNS OF SONORA RESTORATION PROJECT**

November 1-2, 1997 by George Veni

Following the resounding success of last year's restoration project at Caverns of Sonora, and the clamor for another trip, this year's project will be held during the first weekend of November. But first I apologize for this late announcement. I had coordinated to e-mail this with the project announcement in the TSA Activities Newsletter, that way the e-mailed announcement and mailed announcements reach everyone at about the same time. I wanted to make this as fair as possible for people to sign up on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, a near cancellation of TCR delayed the Newsletter and hence this e-mail (most cavers should get the Newsletter between now and Thursday). Now that you are notified, remember that last year the project filled within 12 days of being announced. If you want to be sure to get onto the trip, call or e-mail me ASAP to reserve your spot!

Like last year, this year's project will involve hauling rock and rubble out of the cave which was generated during its development by cutting paths for trails. This material was dumped to fill side passages or to create unsightly piles. Like many show caves, Sonora was developed on a shoe-string budget and took some shortcuts to become operational. But unlike many caves, the owners want to undo the damage and are asking for our help. This year we will pick up where we left off in 1994 and further clean-up the Devil's Pit. This is the worse rubble dump spot in the cave; see the foldout map in "The Caves and Karst of Texas" for the location. Remember, this work is hauling rocks!! The work will be heavy and tiring. If your physical or medical condition is not up to it, please wait until a less strenuous project is planned before volunteering to help.

In return for a hard day's work on Saturday, Nov. 1st, the owners will provide breakfast, a hearty lunch, and a catered dinner with dessert and all the fixins' that has kept many cavers coming back each year. Also that evening, from 7 p.m. until midnight, guides will take cavers along the trail to photograph the cave's splendors to their heart's content. The tour lights will be turned off as needed to avoid interference with the photography. For those not wanting to do the night tour, bring slides for showing in the Visitor Center. The next day I'll lead a 3-4 hour lights-on tour for cavers to get a few more photos and to discuss the cave's history, exploration, and geology, or just to tell a bunch of tall tales. Regular tours will also be available at no cost. Sorry, but there will be absolutely no off-trail access -- the cave is much too delicate.

NEW INFORMATION FOR THOSE HAVE BEEN ON PAST PROJECTS: The owners of Caverns of Sonora are implementing a recycling program. They will not be using paper, plastic, or styrofoam products for the meals. Please bring your own washable plates, cups, and utensils. The owners will provide a sink and soap for clean-up, and appreciate your help in their efforts to be environmentally correct.

If you would like to come help out at Sonora please contact me ASAP, and let me know if you're a vegetarian so the owners can be sure you also have something good to eat. Bring gloves, small army-type folding shovels, plastic 5-gallon buckets, and upright dollies if you have them. Carbide lamps are not allowed in the cave. Helmets will only be needed if you are digging in the pit. Lights will generally not be needed, although a pocket flashlight or elastic-band headlight may occasionally be useful. There is a limit of 70 people for this trip, and while it may seem like a lot, I expect it will fill within about a week of when this announcement goes out. I will develop a waiting list in case of cancellations (last year I called more than 20 people on the waiting list). And let me know ASAP if you have to cancel!!! One project was nearly ruined by no-shows and by cancellations that unnecessarily waited until the last

minute to tell me.

To get to Caverns of Sonora, take I-10 8 miles west from the town of Sonora and follow the signs for 7 more miles. Below is a schedule of events. To reserve your space or for more information, call, write, or e-mail me: George Veni, 11304 Candle Park, San Antonio, TX 78249-4421, 210-558-4403, gveni@flash.net.

Schedule:

- Friday nite to Sat. morn: Arrive and register for the project in the campground (Friday night) or the visitor center (Saturday morning).
- Sat. 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.: Breakfast and registration in the visitor center.
- Sat., 8:30 a.m. to noon: Work in cave (self-serve refreshments will be provided in the cave at the work sites).
- Noon to 1 p.m.: Break for lunch.
- 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.: Work in cave.
- 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Clean-up (hot showers available).
- 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Dinner.
- 7 p.m. to midnight: Lights-out photo trip in cave. For anyone wanting to stay on the surface, a slide projector and screen will be set up in the Visitor Center -- Bring your slides!
- Sun., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Free access to regular cave tours.
- Sun., 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Lights-on caver tour.

PBSS Welcomes New Member

PBSS welcomes Lori Hales who joined at our last meeting in Big Spring. Lori is from Odessa, Tx. We have some good caves arranged to visit, hope to see you there.

Elections in November

Our year end elections are coming up in November. We will be taking nominations at our October meeting. Be thinking of who you want for your grotto officers in 1998. Everyone try and show up.

Used Equipment Wanted:

Some of our new members have inquired about any used cave equipment. If you have any thing you want to sell, contact Mike Gray or Arlon Carroll, or any of our newest members.



TRIP REPORTS:

and other lies and stories

We Found It! August 23, 1997

Cave: Scallop Cave

Cavers: Meliene Davis, Melynn Conway, Barb Barker, Dave McClung, Sheree Mahan, Joel Williams, Tom and Rebecca Kaler.

The North Texas Speleological Society has a new baby! (Reference to trip report in "The Hole News" Sept. 1997) Through a round about way, Meliene received a tip about a cave and some sinks in Jackson County, Oklahoma that a landowner wanted checked. The N.T.S.S. jumped at the opportunity. The cave turned out to be small and hardly worth the drive across the border. Being the "smallest person," I was elected to squeeze through a passage leading from the cramped entrance slope. I only found three rusted French Market Coffee cans while Dave drew a rough map of the cave on a Manila folder. It was simply named Shirley's Cave.

The other cavers checked the two sinkholes and found them to be filled with overgrowth, dirt, and trash. Some farmer even put an old Model T in one of the sinks.

Disappointed with our findings, we wondered what we would do for the rest of the day when the landowner suddenly remembered another cave folks said went all the way to Eldorado. "Take us to it!" we clamored. The landowner took us to the general area leaving us on someone else's land (later we contacted the landowner and he didn't mind) to search through dense four to six foot high grass and weeds for a cave that may or may not exist. After a persistent search, it was found!

Tom Kaler and I were the last ones to happen upon Dennis (a noncaver) sitting at one of the cave's three entrances. When Dennis told us the others had already been in the cave for thirty minutes, our excitement heightened and intensified as we crawled deeper and deeper in to the cave. A crawling entrance leads to a narrow, person sized vertical crack which can be bypassed to lead to the larger 20 foot vertical entrance slope in the main room. A hand line is helpful as the slope is slick. From the main room, a cool lower passage calls to the curious to come hither and we all did.

It was clear to everyone that we had reclaimed a cave of significant size for this part of Oklahoma. As Tom and I continued in we met with the others heading back and their excitement was apparent. Barb was particularly exhilarated about a dig at the cave's end which she and T-Bone worked on later. The passage is littered with breakdown making for some tedious and muddy crawling. The

well saturated mud is deep too. I remember my hands sinking two to three inches like quick sand. The mud pulled strongly at my knee pads and managed to undo the Velcro on one.

The water passing through this gypsum cave has carved scalloped ridges (hence the name) on the walls. This formation-less cave obviously takes on a lot of water and we've all agreed never to visit if a threat of rain exists.

The temperature in this cave is cold enough to cause a caver's breath to linger in the air. Future trips will have us measuring the temperature as well as working on the survey which Dave started. And, a lucky few will have the honor of digging at the end of the cave. Presently, a small child can fit in the passage but none of the N.T.S.S. members are eager to sacrifice their offspring. I don't understand that.

Some have estimated the cave's length to be 500 to 600 feet. It is a colossal cave compared to Shirley's Cave which we explored earlier that day. It's a dream to find caves no other cavers know about and on this weekend we found two. Shirley's Cave is enough to be merely called a cave and leave it at that but Scallop Cave is a cave well worth further exploring and adding to a list of caves to see in Oklahoma.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee-Kaler NSS# 42075



More Trip Reports:

Return To River Styx Cave August 24, 1997

Cavers: Barb Barker, Meliene Davis, Melynn Conway, Kevin Lillie, Tom and Rebecca Kaler.

After two and a half years of legal non-visitation (not to say that people haven't sneaked in), River Styx Cave has finally been opened to cavers. When we in the N.T.S.S. found out that River Styx was open we immediately contacted Barb to get us in. Barb was hesitant citing land owner relations, her unfamiliarity with the cave, and the cave's treacherous reputation. But after finding and exploring Scallop Cave the previous day with us, she agreed to take us to be the first cavers to River Styx in two and a half years.

The first of our problems on this trip was finding the 1963 and 1964 entrances. Tom Bone and Dave McClung having been there before searched but as the sun beat down on the fully clad cavers and sweat began to pour, we opted to just take the plunge and use the river entrance.

After scaling the steep and brittle cliff over the entrance, we gathered one by one at the fowl, murky, guano odoriferous entrance. We knew we were going to have to get wet and some were hesitant. Tom Kaler took the lead and guided us through the bone chilling water passage. Deeper and deeper the water got when it finally reached the "whoo line" (whoo line- noun, A line on a caver's body at waist level that when hit with cold water causes a caver to cry, "Whoo!") Then the water got to chest level and though we were excited we were also uncertain of what we were getting in to.

Told the cave was not long and there was no way to get lost, we pushed on through the river passage. We looked for passages to take us out of the water but found none. No one in our party had ever come in the cave from the river and River Styx Cave was quickly becoming a Nemesis.

Occasionally we would hit dry land and we just knew we were on our way to the other entrances. Even the orange, spray painted arrows were guiding us in what seemed like the right way. Kevin (been there before) reassured us that it all looked familiar. So we waded on and on. We came to an area that had a strip of yellow flagging hanging over the exiting passage. It left only ten to twelve inches of air space to pass through and for most of us this was a new experience. We literally had to stick our noses in the air space and try to keep our heads above the water as we waded through the passage. Luckily the passage came to dry land and no one wanted to have to go back through the way we came. So, we knew we had to find the other way out.

We came across a footprint in some seeping sand and Barb

was sure it was Dave who had come in from the other entrance. But when we circled around and came to a place we had been to before, our hearts sank. It wasn't Dave's foot print after all, it was Kevin's and we were lost.

There was a passage going in another direction but it meant getting back in the water which is why we bypassed it the first time we came to it. It turned out to be more of the same. Our situation was getting grim. None of us had wet suits and we made a collective teeth chattering sound as we wandered around the cave.

Each one of us would take over the lead as some one else stopped, confused as to which way to go. When I was in the lead, I happened upon a string in a passage that I had found when we were going in to the cave. At least it was something familiar and we all agreed to try to exit through the river entrance though it meant staying in the water and braving the twelve inch air space water passage again. At this point, everyone wanted to be out of this cave.

A little farther and the cave was recognizable. We all knew we were finally going a right way. We came to a dry slope next to our passage. Tom climbed it and declared it to possibly lead to the bat roost. We knew we hadn't been there so we stayed in the water. A few minutes later, Barb recognized a rock close to the entrance which she had sat on. Then like a beacon in the night, we saw it. Sunlight! And Dave waiting patiently for us. Just as our teeth had chattered together, we sighed together and reveled in our team work.

Apparently we had become stuck in the river passage and for two hours tried to find our way through River Styx Cave. Remarkably we managed to get out safely and resist panic. Our misinformation and naivete endangered us but each one of us realized our capabilities a little more. After looking at a map of the cave later, Tom and I were amazed at how wrong our information was. It is not a straight cave as we were told but mazy. It is not 2000 feet long but 8500 feet. From now on, I'm going to do my own research on a cave before I go in.

There are future trips already scheduled but with trips limited to four a year with a twelve caver per trip limit, the opportunities will be scarce. Tom and I hope to get in on one or possibly even create another trip so we can see the parts of the cave we should have seen on this trip. But this time we want to go with someone who knows the cave and keep us as dry as possible.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee-Kaler NSS# 42075



This is a public
campground,
ol' muddy.
Be both careful
& respectful of
what other folks
see or think.

THE 20th ANNUAL TEXAS CAVERS' REUNION

17-19 October 1997

RUMORS—Well, some of the rumors you may have heard are true, others may be pure prevarications. A bit of a crisis has come upon the TCR this year, its 20th anniversary. We've lost a couple of good sites at the last minute, causing a bit of rushing about and the possibility of having to cancel TCR '97.

REACTION—Upon the realization that we had a problem a call went out to a number of Texas cavers. They picked up the ball and passed it on to others. Several much appreciated suggestions came in which proved unusable for one or more reasons. In the end, Mike Walsh, of the Texas Cave Conservancy, came through with some positive action, to wit:

WHERE—The 1997 Texas Cavers' Reunion will be held at Little Arkansas Campground, across the Blanco River from the very popular Lone Man II TCR site, a few miles below Wimberley, which we used for several years. The agreement is simple—camping fee will be \$5 per person over 12 for the weekend, under 12 free. Registration fee will remain at \$14 per adult, \$7 for kids over 10, under 10 free. A family rate of \$35 will get you and your spouse and all your combined kids in. Non-caver, accompanier kids still need to pay the full \$7, please. TSA membership can be paid at the same time. We're trying to make this the biggest TCR ever, so load up your caving wagon and come on down. Remember, we have good door prizes!

CHILDREN & GUESTS—This is a caver event. We encourage this event to be limited to cavers and their immediate families. We try to provide a safe environment for children to be a little freer than normal so that parents may be freer than normal. Please explain to your children what you expect of them and how they can stay out of trouble. We are not cops—parents are responsible for the actions of their kids & guests.

DOGS—Little Arkansas does not generally condone the free running of dogs. If you bring a dog, you may be asked to sequester it—or you may not. Come prepared, in any case, mentally and physically, to deal with it.

RAINI!—The County Road to the Little Arkansas Campground is subject to severe inundation during rainy weather. Should there be a hurricane or other severe rain event, the alternate site will be Camp Ben McCulloch, only a few miles away. See map on other side for directions to both. Signs and notices will be posted in any case.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

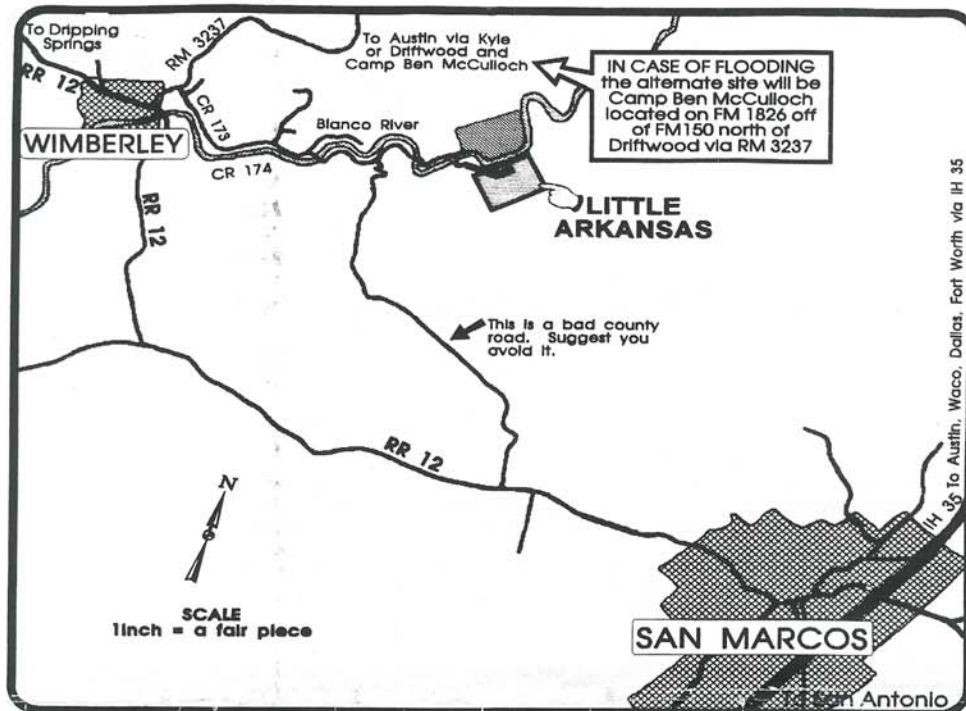
Friday—Arrival, Registration, Set-up.

Saturday—Registration, Cooking, Speleolympics, Supper, Awards, Slides, (maybe music), Hot Tub
This year's Speleolympics include the usual events, at least—Rope Climbing, Ladder Climbing, Obstacle Course, Rebelay, Cave Survey, Sleeping Bag—and maybe some others. As usual, there will be good prizes for the winners.

Sunday—TCMA, TSA, & TCR Meetings (in that order), Pack-up, Go home

REMEMBER—Bring your own reusable plate and utensils for supper—and your other meals, for that matter. Cut down on trash! Come prepared to take your personal garbage home with you. We will not have garbage cans. Bring toilet paper. **Bring all the drinking and wash water you will need for the weekend.**

The TSA Bookstore will be in full operation with T-shirts, bumper stickers, decals, patches, publications, back issues of *The TEXAS CAVER*, and other things you can't live without. So bring a few extra bucks and round out your speleo- paraphernalia.



MEETINGS AT THE CAVERS' REUNION

TCMA—The TCMA Membership Meeting mentioned on page 1 of the Newsletter will be held at Little Arkansas Campground, not Marneldo Ranch.

TSA—The TSA Meeting will be held Sunday morning at Little Arkansas. Officers for the 1998 calendar year will be elected.

TCR—Following the TCMA & TSA meetings there will be a general meeting to organize a staff for future TCRs. This is something I planned over 10 years ago but never got around to doing. I will mention several committees now extant and some that are needed: Registration; Cooks; Program, Awards (prizes, merit awards), & Entertainment; Contests & Events (including a coordinator for each one); Facilities (mowing, tents, lighting, crappers, firewood, signage); Beer and Cokes; Sauna and Tub; Admin (publicity, guidebook, tickets, database, treasurer, historian); Photographer, others. I would like to see people from all over the state participate. Perhaps Grottos could take on one of the jobs as a permanent (or 5 year) project. Perhaps 3 or 4 like minded cavers want to take over a simple job such as is done now with the Sauna and Hot Tub—like beer and cokes, or guidebook preparation. I have detailed items and checklists for some of these, others need to be developed. Generally, I know what is involved. That includes what has been done in the past, some of what could be done in the future, and what we can get by with at present. We don't want to place limitations on committees. Instead, we encourage creativity and change—whatever it takes to make a better TCR. The only restriction I suggest is that we don't want mere volunteers. We want folks who are ULTIMATELY DEDICATED to seeing that their little jobs get done, and on time. In most cases only 10 or 20 hours a YEAR will be involved—not counting some jobs which require work at TCR. Other jobs may require 40 or 80 hours spread out in 1 to 4 hour lots during the year. You pick your job—you may even get to design it—and you make sure it gets done, even if you have to get someone else to do it. As they used to say in the GGG, "We are unimpressed with eager but shallow support." If you don't want to do it, don't come forward.

You have a few weeks now to think it over and talk it over. Feel free to offer any ideas and suggestions. My intention is to work hard for a couple of years to get this staff going, then retire to my honky chair with a gin and tonic to watch you chosen few turn TCR into the event I was never able to and, hopefully, even more. If that doesn't happen, I'll still retire to my honky chair, and TCR will retire with me.

MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:	PHONE #:	NSS #:
Alton, Ron *	1 Scenic Dr., Big Spring, Tx. 79720	Unknown	Applied For
Bandy, Michael W.	15209 Country Ridge DR., Chesterfield, Mo. 63017	314-519-9081	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 Davenport, Midland, Tx 79705	915-687-4352	30417
Carouth, Dutch	6300 C. R. 55 E., Midland, Tx 79705	915-685-5094	Applied For
Carroll, Arlon *	1600 E. 53, Odessa, Tx. 79762	915-550-5042	Applied For
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
Florer, Tom	3609 Caldera # 112, Midland, Tx, 79707	915-6975959	Applied for
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, Mike *	3501 Boulder, Odessa, Tx. 79762	915-550-2395	Applied For
Gray, Steve	106 Canyon, Big Spring 79720	915-264-7619	Applied For
Grieco, Tony	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Expired (GDI)
Hales, Lori A. *	3509 N. Greer Ave., Odessa, Tx. 79764	915-381-3408	Applied For
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tex 79714	915-524-6327	41068
Kaler, Tom	4709 Nursery St., Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-766-1255	27372
Kamon, Ken	4400 Andrews Hwy # 801, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7192	34637
Lee-Kaler, Rebecca	4709 Nursery St., Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-766-1255	42075
Lowery, Kerry	P.O. Box 39, Coahoma, Texas 79511	915-394-4230	41518
Metcalf, Ruel	1410 E. 4th, Big Spring, Tx. 79720	915-267-7330	42854
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

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.

E-Mail Address:

Walter Feaster: <waltfeast@marshall.com>

Bill Bentley: <bb2145@apex2000.net>

Gralin Coffin: <glcoff@agesys.com>

Don Carlton: <donc@basinlink.com>

Ken Kamon: <kenkamon@apex2000.net>

Tom Florer: <tflorer@basinlink.com>

Arlon Carroll: <arlonc@aol.com>

Cave Rescue Numbers

U.S.A. 1-800-692-0234

MEXICO 1-210-686-0234 (call collect)

NEW MEXICO, U.S.A. Try "911" First

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