

# The Hole News

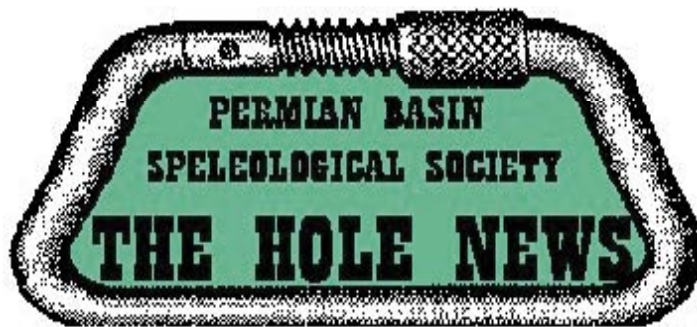
Volume 24 Number 11

November 2009





November, 2009



Chartered in 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the NSS



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# Rock Haul-O-Rama



*In this photo left to right:*

*Katy Roodenko, Walter Castruita, Kerry Lowery, Charles Goldsmith, Lori Hales, Jacqui Thomas, Patrick Ray, Sharon Long, Ruel Metcalf, Bill Bentley, Jim McLean, Martha McArthur, Walter Feaster, Steve Webb, Jamie Lankford & Udi Fuchs*

*Saturday November 14th, 2009 at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in Eddy County, New Mexico in the Big Room inside Carlsbad Caverns.*

**Submitted by Bill Bentley**

On Saturday November 14th, 2009, sixteen cavers from all over showed up at Carlsbad Caverns National Park to participate in a now over two decade old continuing project of hauling out rocks and debris left over from the 1930's elevator blasting.

It would seem as the story has been told and retold, that many years ago when the first and second dual shafts were

blasted out of the solid limestone reef; that rocks were blasted from both above and from below and met with precise accuracy. The fill material from below was spread about in areas that we are told was the old Lunchroom. This project was started in 1986 under the direction of Dick Ventors and later many others from the Cave Research Foundation in cooperation with the National Park Service and the National Speleological Society and with the help of many volunteer cavers started removing this blast debris for a couple of days during the week long Restoration Field Camps that lasted for several years. That work continues today but is

***Continues on pg. 3 More pictures on pages 3,4,5 and 6***

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## *Scheduled Upcoming Events*

*Dec 4-6*  
**SWR Winter Tech;  
Albuquerque, NM**

*\*Dec. 12*  
**PBSS Christmas Party  
Ess Cave**

*\*Feb. 27, 2010*  
**5-Mouth Cave dig**

**\* indicates PBSS  
club activity**

being organized by the Permian Basin Speleological Society off and on since 1991. This consists of an all day Saturday project. It is the PBSS's goal to attempt to accomplish this day long work project at a minimum of one day twice a year, once in the Spring and Once in the Fall.

The National Park Service reserved the 2 Research Cabins for all the caver volunteers to use for the weekend.

This trip consisted of the following volunteer cavers who have so generously donated their time, expense to travel and make this ongoing project possible. Walter Feaster and Bill Bentley from Midland, Texas; Patrick Ray, Lori Hales, and Walter Castruita from Odessa, Texas; Jacqui Thomas from Sonora, Texas; Ruel Metcalf from Big Spring, Texas; Kerry Lowery from Coahoma, Texas; Jamie Lankford from near Lubbock, Texas; Martha McArthur and Jim McLean from Sandia Park, New Mexico; Charles Goldsmith, Steve Webb, Katy Roodenko and Udi Fuchs from the Dallas Fort Worth area of Texas and Sharon Long from Kansas. Also our most gracious National Park Service liaison Stan Allison.

Saturday morning we awoke and made our individual coffee and breakfast. Then at 8:00 AM MST Stan Allison briefed us all on the purpose of our trip, safety, rules and thanked us all for coming. After the orientation, we signed the appropriate forms and then set off for our days work and began digging around 8:30 AM MST. We had some where in the neighborhood of 200 five gallon plastic buckets that were filled over and over by several cavers who immediately started excavating the rubble pile area upon our arrival in the designated work area. They looked like ants, all busy with their dedicated tasks. The silence of the big room was broken by the occasional dumping of half filled buckets into eagerly awaiting wheel barrows or the banging of a sledge hammer on huge boulders that later became little manageable rocks.

I was told I had a future at the big house making big rocks into little ones. Once the belly of the wheel barrows were filled, off they went down the visitor's trail to the freight elevators for a quick trip to the surface. Once on the surface and out the loading dock doors and into the cool autumn air, they were relieved of their loads by being dumped into a NPS dump truck.

This process was repeated over and over until at around 11:00 AM MST we broke for lunch. Half the group went back to the cabins to eat and the rest ate at the visitors center restaurant. The ice cream and pecan pie were a big hit.

After lunch we all went back to work and it soon became apparent that the dump truck was nearly full and with no NPS workers to dump it in the quarry we would soon be out of a job.

We managed to fill the NPS dump truck up completely by 3:00 PM and shut down early than planned. No one complained and several people who had never been on the tours at Carlsbad Caverns took off to take a free tour of one of nature's most scenic wonders of the underground. We meticulously carried all the picks, rock bars, shovels, buckets and wheel barrows out and had you not been aware you would have never known we were there. One visitor asked if we were lint pickers. The traffic was fairly light and I saw only a few children walk by. Nearly every visitor that asked what we were doing thanked us for helping out.

After regrouping and cleaning up at 6:00 PM we all headed for Lucy's in town to enjoy margaritas and Mexican food except Martha, Jim, Sharon and Lori who had to all leave early.

It was good to see old friends and make new ones, cavers are indeed a rare breed (I am not sure they have all been identified as to what breed though) and I am glad I am one of them.



*Udi Fuchs and Katy Roodenko*



*Steve Webb rearranging the dump truck bed*

# *A Blast from the Past*

*From the Hole News archives*

by *Lori Hales*

On June 10th of this year, Ruel Metcalf, Mike Gray, Cheryl Kettle, Dwaine and John Robert Moore, and I returned to a cave on private land a few miles south of Midland. The landowner had graciously given us permission to enter this 97' vertical cave and explore what turned out to be a football stadium sized room with a smaller passageway leading into another room with some of the most beautiful flowstone formations we had ever seen.

The rancher that owns the cave told us he had never been inside and would like to know what it looked like. So we hauled a portable gasoline generator, about 300 feet of electrical extension cord, and some flood lights into the cave to make a videotape. It took almost the whole day to lower all this stuff down the vertical shaft, which was very narrow in places, set it up inside to do the film, and then haul it

all out again. It was a real education in what Hollywood film makers often have to go through, but we got some great video as well as some still photos.

In the twilight zone below the vertical shaft we have seen frogs and mice living among the rocks of the big pile of breakdown in the middle of the room. On this trip we also found, or rather Mike Gray found, a snake we'll have to call Sneaky Snake because of his subtle way of changing the conversation to center on himself.

Sneaky Snake, no doubt drawn out of hiding because of all the light and noise, was rummaging through our packs in hopes we had brought along something good to eat when he ran into Mike Gray.

Mike's high school English teacher would have been proud at his ability to string several hundred expletives together in a single running sentence

without taking a breath. Mike never has liked surprises and he did levitate about 3 feet above the breakdown floor. I reckoned his hang time to be at least 4 or 5 seconds. Even Sneaky Snake was impressed, raising up off the floor to watch Mike bouncing around in the air above. Cheryl Kettle standing nearby shook her head and walked away. Sneaky Snake went back to examining the packs and later posed for photos.

We have made two trips to this cave and have had great fun with it. It has remained largely undisturbed through the years, and we hope things will stay that way. The room with the only formations is very small, but broken formations are mixed in with the breakdown on the floor, indications of what was once a very beautiful cave.

We would like to express our appreciation to the rancher that owns this beautiful cave for the great time we had exploring it.



*Jim McLean and Martha McArthur*



*Bill Bentley presents Stan Allison with a PBSS t-shirt*



*Left to right: Charles Goldsmith, Sharon Long, Lori Hales and Patrick Ray*

## ***PBSS November 2009 Meeting Minutes***

The meeting was called to order promptly at 7:09 and 30 seconds PM with the banging of the new (but old) mesquite wooden gavel that Walter Feaster had generously donated to the PBSS President with the intent that it be passed from President to President and to please retire the sacred (Scared) ketchup bottle that had since lost it's banging effectiveness when they switched from glass to plastic a few years ago.

In attendance were the following; Bill Bentley, Walter Feaster, Tony Abernathy, Lori Hales, Dwaine Moore & Patrick Ray.

An impromptu Treasurer's report was given as I had forgot the carefully printed out sheets...( Note that after the meeting we have a grand total of \$630.40 after sales of a Texas

bat sticker to Lori Hales and Dwaine Moore paid his membership dues.)

We discussed the upcoming rock haul at Carlsbad Caverns scheduled for Saturday 11-14-09 .... As of this time there are 19 people coming and most will be sleeping in their vehicles or other places so sleeping accommodations should not be an issue.

We discussed the nominations and Elections for 2010 officers... Patrick Ray is contemplating becoming a Vice-President to replace Sharon Long who has moved on to Kansas.. (She is missed already) Jacqui is being asked to run as President for another term, and Bill Bentley will continue another term as Treasurer leaving once again the Secretary position open another year. If no one runs against anyone we will all be elected by default or maybe

it was somebody's fault...

We discussed the upcoming PBSS Christmas Party to be held once again at Ess Cave in Crockett County on Saturday December 12th, 2009 . It will be a bring your own drinks and food plus enough to feed others affair. More to be discussed at the next meeting.

Dwaine Moore has somewhere around 800' of nearly new climbing roper on a spool that he is looking to sell.

It was decided that Saturday 2-27-10 would be the next tentative 5 Mouth Cave dig date.

The meeting was promptly adjourned at 7:38 PM

Respectfully submitted by Bill Bentley, 2009 PBSS Treasurer.



*Patrick, Charles, Walter, Ruel, Lori, Martha and Bill's back*

### *Photo Credits*

Cover Art: Photo by Kel Thomas  
Carlsbad rock haul photos courtesy of Bill Bentley and Jacqui Thomas

### *PBSS Officers*

*President*  
**Jacqui Thomas**

*Vice President*  
**Sharon Long**

*Secretary/Treasurer*  
**Bill Bentley**

*Newsletter*  
**Kel Thomas**



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***<http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.html>***  
***Built and maintained by Bill Bentley***

