

NOVEMBER 1986

P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

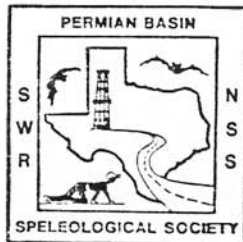
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P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

NOVEMBER 1986

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MEETING

The November meeting of the PBSS will be held THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 7:30 PM at the home of Lori Vian and Kathy Schweher, County Road 138 E (see map on page 2). Call Kathy or Lori at 684-0048 if you need additional directions. The main topic of discussion will be the cave trip schedule for the next few months.

NEWS OF NOTE

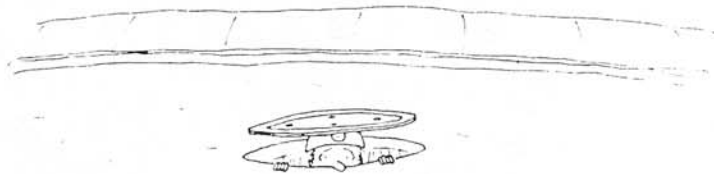
ELECTION RESULTS:

A new president was 'elected' at the October grotto meeting. Pat Kambesis, a newcomer who didn't know any better, was chosen to lead the intrepid spylunks during the next twelve months. Unfortunately, no one was crazy enough to want to edit the newsletter, so you all will have to put up with me for another year. The grotto owes its collective thanks to Bill Bentley, who has provided excellent leadership in his year as president.

T-SHIRTS:

Suzy Noldan would like to have a batch of grotto t-shirts made up, if enough people are interested. No particular design has been decided on, so if you have any suggestions bring them to the next meeting. Hopefully, Suzy will have an idea of the minimum order, cost, etc. by then. Incidentally, if anyone is interested in grotto patches we do have two or three left which you can obtain for the low, low price of \$4.00 each. Contact Tony Grieco if you want one.

OFTEN DESPERATE FOR SPELEO-THRILLS, CAVE-STARVED WEST TEXANS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO GO TO EXTREME LENGTHS TO SATISFY THEIR "GRAVE TO CAVE"...



CAVE TRIPS:

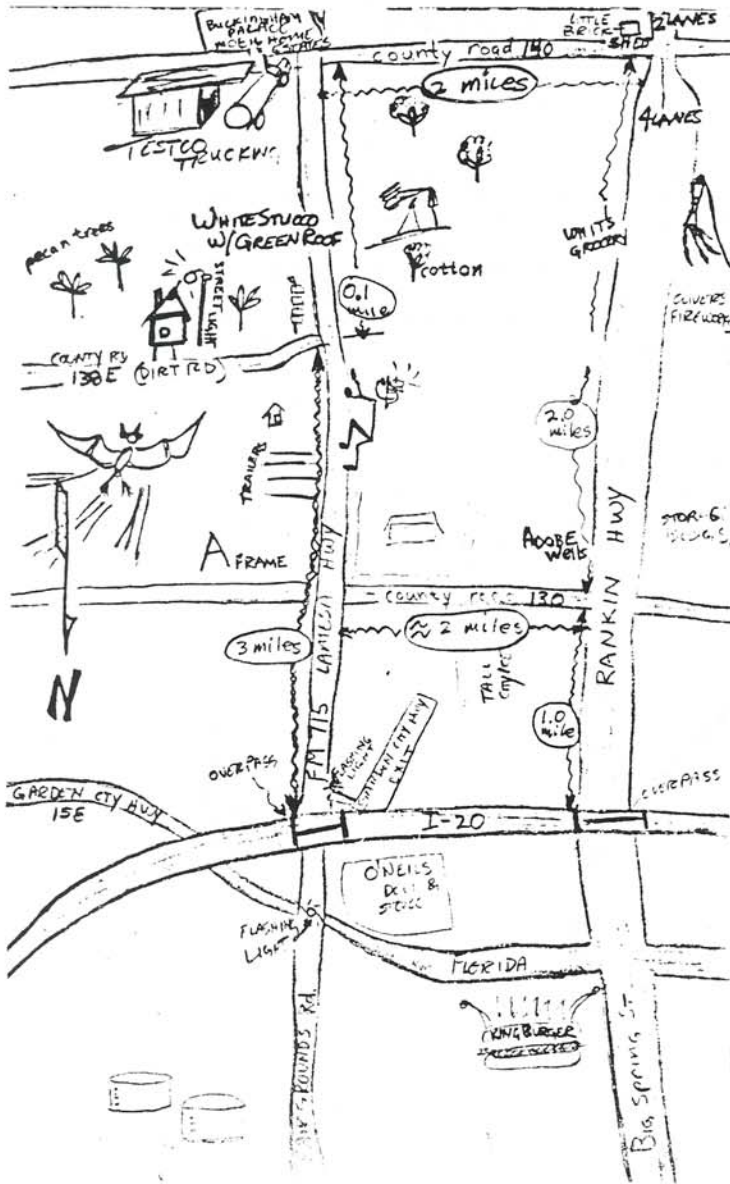
As far as I know, no trips are definite for

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the remainder of November or December, though this may change after the next meeting. Bill Bentley is talking about running a survey trip to Amazing Maze Cave sometime in December, so if you want to volunteer or are just interested in checking on the status of this trip call Bill at 697-3079.

DECEMBER 5-7, 1986: Southwestern Region Winter Technical Regional, to be held in Carlsbad. Several spylunks are tentatively planning to go, so if you need more information or want to try to catch a ride call Tony Grieco or Pat Kambesis. From what I understand there is some caving, in the form of restoration work, being planned for this weekend. Try to get out and lend a hand!



TRIP REPORTS

LECHUGUILLA CAVE, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Aug. 30-31, Sept. 1, 1986. PBSS participants: Pat Kambesis, Jerry Atkinson (Report by Pat)

On Labor Day weekend, Jerry Atkinson and I participated in the Lechuguilla expedition led by Roy Glaser and Rick Bridges of the Colorado Grotto. This was the first trip (with the exception of a geological reconnaissance during the week of the NSS Convention) since Patterson/Allured's successful breakthrough on Memorial Day weekend which netted over 3000 feet of virgin passage.

The original objective of the trip was to continue surveying and pushing The Rift- a large fissure-maze that had stymied further exploration on the discovery trip. Rick Bridges reviewed Patterson/Allured's survey data and discovered many problems, including two hanging surveys, lack of adequate floor detail and the absence of a vertical profile. At this point we decided that before we pushed The Rift, it would be necessary to clean up the discovery survey. This became another important objective of the expedition.

We arrived at Carlsbad Caverns on Friday night excited with the prospect of getting into new cave. The next day we hiked to the cave and split into two groups. Rich Wolfert, Rick Bridges and Al Williams would survey from the brass cap at the

entrance to Boulder Falls- a sometimes intimidating 150 foot drop.

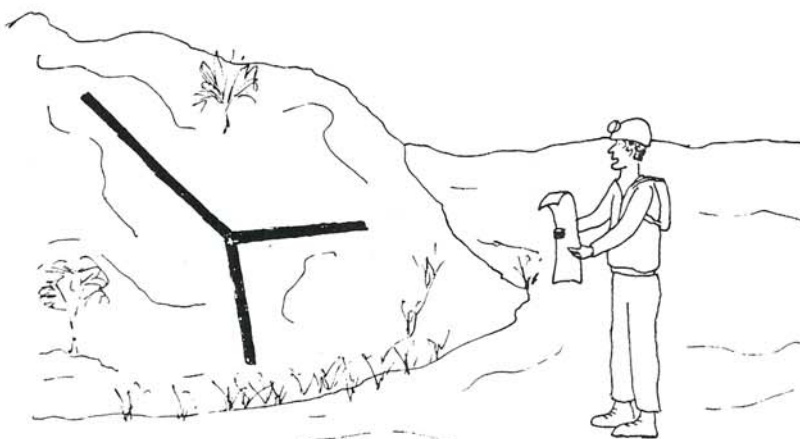
Roy Glaser, Jerry and I entered the cave with John Roth. We installed a plastic runner over a flowstone slope to protect it from scuff marks. John remained near the entrance area to take pictures while the rest of us made our way to Glacier Bay- one of two large rooms in Lechuguilla. The room is floored with massive gypsum (the glacier) which is up to 25 feet thick. Water dripping from the ceiling drilled many small holes in the gypsum and several pits drop through it to passages which lie underneath.

Standing on the edge of the glacier we could see two large corridors exiting the room. The left-hand one terminates after several hundred feet. The right one continues to the rest of the cave (whatever that must be) via the Windy City Passage and the Rift. We spent the rest of the day re-sketching Glacier Bay and doing spray shots in order to better define the room.

Not so bright and early Sunday morning two survey teams plunged into the cave to continue the clean up. Barb Amende, Allan Wilbanes and Roy Glaser tackled Rim City (approximately 1000 foot long corridor containing prolific gypsum crusts, rims and flowlers), the Left Hand Corridor and the Land Down Under (lower levels of Glacier Bay). Donald Davis, Rick Bridges and I tied in Boulder Falls with the Colorado Room (located at the base of the pit). We spent our day surveying this large breakdown room, checking out and mapping several small alcoves. The whole area is literally coated with gypsum and is very fragile. We flagged trails in order to not disturb the stuff. There are several large gyp blocks in this room, similar to that found in Glacier Bay but on a much smaller scale. We also surveyed one of Donald's leads- a pit that dropped about 20 feet under the gypsum blocks which leads to a lower level room. Again gypsum was in abundance, but in places it had peeled off the wall and we could finally see bedrock- the occurrence of layers of pisolites and fusulinids indicated that we were in the Seven Rivers Formation.

When we finished our task we sat around joking and dreaming about this cave- making wild speculations and driving ourselves into such a frenzy that we were ready to run off to the right, just to see what it looked like (I'd never seen it anyway), but Barb, Roy and Al appeared just in time to bring us to our senses.

Our last day (Jerry and mine) was Monday, and once again two survey teams proceeded into the depths of the earth to try to finish the clean up. Rick Bridges, Donald Davis and Ted Lappin surveyed the Windy City passage. Jerry, Roy and I tied in the Glacier Bay survey to Windy City and then leap-frogged to Sugar Lands passage (that must have been something to see!- editor). The air movement in Windy City was quite noticeable- the first place one notices it again since the entrance. Again there was too much gypsum to mention, but we were surprised to find areas on



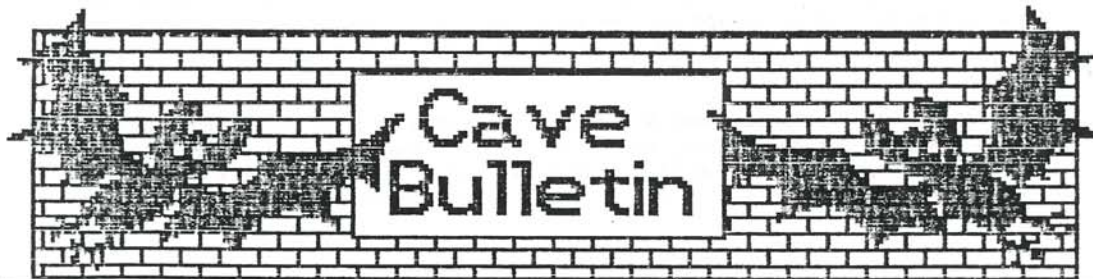
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HEY GUYS - ITS OVER HERE, RIGHT WHERE THE TOPO
SAYS IT SHOULD BE...

the ceiling that contained hordes of small hydromagnesite balloons. We started our survey in a low, long passage jut outside of Sugar Lands. The passage was in sharp contrast to most everything we had seen so far in that it contained no decoration- just an inch of red dust covering many breakdown slabs. Continuing into Sugar Lands gypsum abounded again. There were two gypsum covered alcoves and at the opposite side two 'windows'. When we finished I walked over to check out these windows- they looked out into the infamous Rift, a long, wide fissure (probably a fault plane). The ceiling loomed 60 feet overhead and the floor- it was hard to tell, it was obscured by large blocks in some places- could have been another 60 or so feet below. But most important, the wind whipped through Sogarlands and right up into the Rift. I was ready to jump in and follow it but the voice of common sense spoke (Jerry, that is), reminding me that we had to drive back to Midland that night.

The expedition continued without us during the next week with two more trips to the Rift. Again, cavers were stopped by one thing- taunted by the wind but constrained by time. In addition to caving just about every other day, Rick Bridges and Ted Lappen input each days survey data to a portable computer which plotted out an up-to-the-minute map. By the end of the week the expedition scored 7440 feet of passage to a depth of 908 feet.

Below is a trip report that was submitted by Pat Copeland. It is so nicely done that I have reproduced it whole, changing only the arrangement of the columns. Let this serve as a model trip report for all of you spylunks! - editor.



volume 1

August 9, 1986



Bat Cave Report

Cottonwood Cave, Second Parallel

Jerry Trout, Bob Trout, Ransome Turner, Bill Bennett, Tom Hill, Joyce Hill, Dave Gose, his daughter Michelle and her friend, Mary Ann Roth, Jay Gibson, Pixie Clark, and Pat Copeland.

The trail down to the entrance was really washed out because of all the rain that has fallen since June.

A loud clap of thunder shook the ground as we ascended from the trail into the big cave. (We found out that it rained one and a half inches of rain while we were in the cave.) The rimstone dams that hasn't been cleaned out in 5 years was full of water this time. The cave was very wet and slippery but very beautiful. We noticed that all the rimstone dams near Galiath were full along with all of the small pools.

Next came the sand slope, so easy going down (but what goes down must go up) and at the bottom was the pipe entrance to the second parallel. After the gate was unlocked, we all slid down and on to the next one. Bot worked and finally got the bars off the second gate. It was very wet and slippery getting up to it but we all made it. The hole was a very small square hole just barely big enough for several of our party but with a few obscene words and a lot of squeezing. Everyone made it. I think Joyce Hill deserved a gold medal because this was her very first cave. I never heard one complaint from her all the way, in fact, I heard very few words from her. She is a real trooper!

After everyone got through the "hole" we went on our way. We saw the Chandelier and the clear aragonite formation with the dead bat clinging in it. Jerry gave us a lot of interesting history of the cave and its eluding mysteries. We stopped

for lunch before the Coke table room (I think it should be called the "Dr. Pepper table room, I work for guess who- Dr. Pepper). We also had seen gypsum flowers and selenite needles along the walls in cracks and under rocks.

After lunch we divided into work teams. Ransome took Pixie, Mary Ann, Bill Greenlee and myself in the table room and we cleaned the formations, picked up every little and big broken formation that was broken. Then we washed them real good. We found old carbide, flash bulbs, cigarette butts, matches, paper, and Bill found an old "matter" that he and everyone was afraid to say what it was. We were lucky that we had plenty of water (cold, cold water). The bucket that I had carried with the brushes were really used. Bill said the formations were all so pretty wet that he thought he would carry the spray bag along on all cave trips so he could see how pretty they were when they were wet. After scubing and washing for several hours we finally had to get started out for the "Goat

Roast" so we looked over our days work with great pride then gathered up our "wet" packs and headed out. The others had worked on trails on the way out. After going down the "square hole" we knew we had the rest made with ease except for the sand slope. Remember "Murphy's Law, what goes up must go down", but in reverse.

Well we all made out and up the hill to the others at the vehicles. They all looked like Mr. & Mrs. clean up to us, but what the heck, we were all ready to head down the hill to food.



LECHUGUILLA CAVE, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Eddy County, New Mexico, October 11, 1986.

Participants: Bill Bentley, Dave Allured, Dave Logan, Barbra _____, Mike Queen, Steve Dunn, Dave Milligan (Report by Bill)

I was the first to arrive at the CRF cabin on Friday night, and later Dave Logan and Barbra entered the dark and deserted national park. I slept in the rear of my truck. The next morning, after a breakfast at the visitor center, I joined the rest of the group and we headed for the cave. On the way there we found Dave Milligan, his car stuck in the mud. We all helped to dig and push his car out, and once it was free we all loaded up and headed to the cave entrance.

We entered the cave at about noon and rigged the entrance drop. Mike Queen was the first to descend, followed by me, then Dave A., then the others. I was really surprised to find myself in Lechuguilla Cave again, since I was a skeptic at the time of the dig last May and didn't think it would produce anything. I was wrong with a capital W!

Dave A. and Dave L. opened the gate, which was on the end of a culvert which had been placed through the unstable dig to protect against cave-in. Steve went in first, battling 40+ MPH winds. I then followed, lowering my pack below me and blinking and squinting to keep the blowing dust out of my eyes. I have since compared the trip through the culvert to traveling from one time/space dimension to another- with the wind rushing past your ears you feel cut off from the calm, silent world of caves. Once everyone had made it through the culvert we began to explore this new discovery.

The cave was small and ugly and dry for the first few yards, then we walked through a passage that had a high ceiling with several leads in it. We followed the main passage and went through a duck-under and came out into a beautiful, wet passage with small pools of water and flowstone. Then Dave A. pointed out the Liberty Bell, a huge flowstone canopy that had a bell shape (no crack, though). We all then took off our boots and tiptoed down some flowstone that already showed signs of scuffing. At the bottom was the beautiful and unpolluted Lake Lechuguilla, which was a 20 foot by 10 foot lake, several feet deep. We followed this passage to the 150 foot drop, which looked like the inside of a human skull. The first few feet of this drop are against the wall, then there is a 70 foot free drop which ends at the opposite wall. At the base of this wall is a dry and sandy rubble pile.

Once at the base of the drop, we went around a room called Purgatory, where I got to see some beautiful, grey-coated cave pearls. We then travelled to just under the rubble slope and followed the main passage to a room that had white stalactites and some bones. This room was called Glacier Bay because of the massive, house-sized gypsum blocks it contained. We climbed down a crack that resembled an ice crevice and continued onward to an area called Windy City (because of air movement- it has nothing to do with Chicago). At this point I noticed how strongly this cave resembled a gypsum crystal cave in Texas- there were many similarities in texture, color and form, though there weren't any gypsum flowers here. Our group then went to an area called the Rift, which was a passage that ran 90° to the main passage and contained many leads, up and down, on both ends.

Our group later returned to a parallel passage near Windy City and surveyed 300 feet of difficult canyon passage. This took more than three hours. Dave Milligan and I were the first to exit the cave. The only incident that happened during the ascent was that one of the straps on my TAG pack decided to come undone, swinging around and scaring the (expletive deleted) out of me, since I was on a rope 145 feet off of the ground. Our group spent a total of 18 3/4 hours underground. We returned to our cars after a hike through the moonless desert. Dave M. headed home and I returned to the CRF cabins to grab a bunk for a few hours sleep.

HIDDEN CAVE, Eddy County, New Mexico, October 18, 1986.

Participants: Tony Grieco, Suzy Noldan, Joe Patton, Lori Vian, Kathy Schwehr (Report by Lori)

We rappelled approximately 50 feet into the cave from the entrance. From the base of the drop the upper part of the cave is accessible by walking down a rocky slope. There are two main parallel passages in upper Hidden. In one we climbed up a short slope between two columns into a small room with a lily pad pool in the center. Past the pool was a small crevice we chimneyed down into another part of the cave which we explored, then returning to the pool room. We then explored the second parallel passage before returning to the bottom of the entrance drop. From here we rappelled approximately 25 feet into the lower part of the cave, which we explored more extensively. There was a large area where large lily pads had formed, but were now dry. Suzy traversed around the edges while I took an easier route, climbing down and back up the other side. Then we found a large pool which we traversed around without getting wet, and followed the passage to a dead end around the corner.

Later, in another passage, I found Suzy hanging upside-down on the other side of a ledge (sounds like Suzy is more 'into' bats than any of us realized- editor)- the only part of her we could see was the back of her feet. She had crawled through a tight squeeze between the wall and a column, and was out on the other side of a sloping ledge which fell away 50 feet. With one wrong move... she eventually returned, however. We explored a short while longer, only finding dead ends as we went. Then we ascended back to where the entrance was and free climbed with a Jumar safety out onto the earth again. The trip lasted 4-5 hours.

BLACK CAVE, Eddy County, New Mexico, October 18, 1986.

Participants: Pat Dearen, Tony Grieco, Suzy Noldan, Joe Patton, Kathy Schwehr, Lori Vian (Report by Kathy)

Into the abyss we were consumed; into the void of Jonah's belly, wet, bubbly, alive with eerie translucence. Down we were swallowed, immersed in a black that never bathes off. Guided by Tony and Suzy, the four of us were immersed in live luminescent wonders. Hovering above chill, viscous fluids that awaited to engulf them, Suzy and Lori, chimneyed Jonah's gullet all the way to its tonsils. Tony and

Pat left to hunt for Little Beauty Cave (we still can't find the cussed thing-editor). Then Suzy and Lori returned- dry!- joining Joe and I , to enter Jonah's palate room- long, low palate, or yet another sleeping creature subdued within the Great One's insides? Suzy awakened it, while the rest fled blindly, traversing his bowels, to be placated by the ethereal beauty within the black slime. It was here that my flashlight was swallowed into an endless? crevice. As Lori and Suzy followed the Skipper into the depths, I clung, unseeing in the pulsations of the passage- ever expanding, contracting, breathing with slow, labored water noises. I clung with both hands and both feet, grasping tentative wet bubbles, while pondering the usefulness of candles and Vendbya's many arms. Up they scrambled, out we went. Back in the sunshine and comfort of Tony's Bronco, it became evident that this suspension had only been a mere 2½ hours.

COTTONWOOD CAVE, Eddy County, New Mexico, October 18, 1986. Report by Kathy Schwehr.

Cottonwood Cave is immense. It is a wonderful cavern of gargantua sticky-upees and hangy-downees (we in the PBSS strive to instill in our new members a thorough knowledge of speleo-terminology...-editor) of creams, yellows and orange-reds. Ledges parallel either side of the main room leading to an awesome balcony of deep red hangy-downees. An occasional bat was seen. Currently, much of the cave is gated off pending restoration.

Editor's Note- The following trip report was submitted by a member of the scout troop from the LDS Church which we took into Endless and McKittrick Cave. Thirteen people showed up for this excursion, nine from the LDS Church and four from the PBSS. The trip was a great success (we didn't lose anyone), and the scouts, though all speleo-newcomers, had more than enough enthusiasm to make up for their lack of experience. It was a real joy to take these guys through, and hopefully we can lead another trip for them in the near future. My thanks to Bill Bentley, Kathy Schwehr and Lori Vian for pitching in to help run things.

ENDLESS CAVE, MCKITTRICK CAVE, Eddy County, New Mexico, October 25, 1986. PBSS Participants: Bill Bentley, Tony Grieco, Kathy Schwehr, Lori Vian. Report by Gary Griffin.

Our caving trip went over as a success among those of us that went. Other than a few minor bruises, bumps, cuts, scrapes and dirty, muddy, grungy, moldy clothes etc. we all came out alive and well. One request has been made. One of our spelunkers lost a knife in the water going through the chimney (at the entrance of the Expressway-editor) in Endless and he wants somebody to retrieve it if possible and send it to 3517 Gulf, Midland 79707. A request has been made to go back again after we recover from the last trip. Once again we would like to thank you for all you did for us.

CAVE OF THE MADONNA, Eddy County, New Mexico, November 1, 1986. Participants: Jerry Atkinson, Terry Bolger, Bill Bentley, Pat Hill, Pat Kambesis, Suzy Noldan (Report by Bill)

We left at 5:30 Friday night and arrived about 9:45 PM at the 'Texas Campground' on the top of Three-Mile Hill past the lookout tower. Suzy was already there and had gone to sleep, so there was no fire waiting. The weather was unusually cool- a prelude to what was coming Saturday night. Pat K. and Jerry, followed by Terry, arrived, and we ate a late supper around a small fire.

The next morning things moved slowly, but by 10:30 we were en route to the parking area. It didn't take long to get there, and at 11:30 we entered the cave, though we did have some trouble opening the lock. After many tries we finally got it opened, and Suzy went off to find the drop while I toured the upper maze. We used Terry's new 300 foot Bluewater rope to rig with. Suzy descended first followed by Jerry, me, Pat H., Terry and Pat K. By the time Pat K. had descended, Suzy had located the second drop and had rigged it using another 300 foot Bluewater rope. I followed Jerry down, but we had some trouble with communication-even a whistle didn't work- because of the corkscrew-canyon crack-like drop. The drop was very difficult to descend because the pack would hang up every few feet. 160 feet later I was finally at the bottom. We then used rope tugs for communication.

Soon Pat Hill had descended and we went off to find Suzy and Jerry. They were looking at the prettiest decorations I have seen since Caverns of Sonora. About 300 feet from the bottom of the drop was an area known as the Wine Cellar, and it had large coke table formations and dogtooth spar christmas trees arranged around crystal clear pools of water. There was a nest of cave pearls that were ivory white and a three foot shield that had broken, with half of it fallen to the floor. There were so many helectites and soda straws that I was in a caver's frenzy oohing and aahing in this unbelievable room. Truly a caver's playground and paradise.

Since Pat H. had to be at work the next day, he and I were the first to exit. The surface was very nice and we caught the last glimpses of the November sun as it set over a mountain horizon. The walk back to the truck was twice as long as the walk to the cave, and after reaching the truck it began to rain. We left and drove from rain to pea-sized hail and then, 30 minutes later, we were driving through a foggy lightning storm. Then as we entered Carlsbad we developed engine trouble (as it turned out, a plugged fuel filter). We left Carlsbad at 8:30 and finally made it home at 2:30 AM.

MISCELLANEOUS

COVER:

This month's cover is a group photo taken during the grotto's second official cave trip, January, 1984, to Ogle Cave. Not a very photogenic group, eh? From left to right are Dennis Dougherty (now living in California), Robert Zoecher (present whereabouts unknown), Terry Hill, Pat Hill, Joe Collins (now cavorting with the Bexar grotto), Bill Bentley, Tony Grieco (nope, I wasn't any better looking even then), Vicki Grieco (at the time two months pregnant- the first pregnant woman to do Ogle, so far as we know), Bill Greenlee (still around, I think...) and Pat Murphy (presently in Wisconsin, i.e. he has dropped off the face of the earth...). Good friends and good times- that's still what it is all about.

KUDOS:

Thanks this month go to Bill Bentley, Pat Kambesis, Pat Copeland, Lori Vian, Kathy Schwehr and Gary Griffin for the trip reports, and in Bill's case, the cover photo. Also extra special thanks to Bill again for editing the last SPYLUNK- the break was greatly appreciated.

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