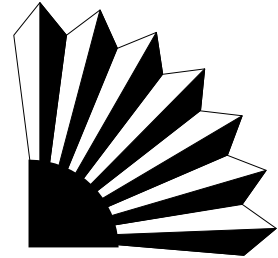
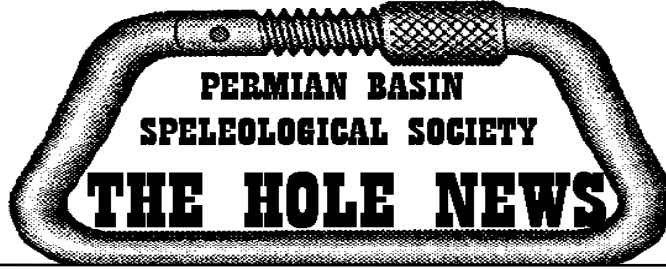
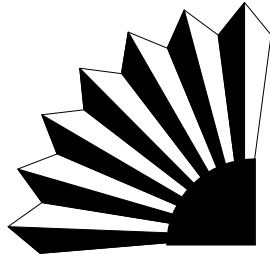




# THE HOLE NEWS

DECEMBER





December 1994

Volume 10 Number 12

## The monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society

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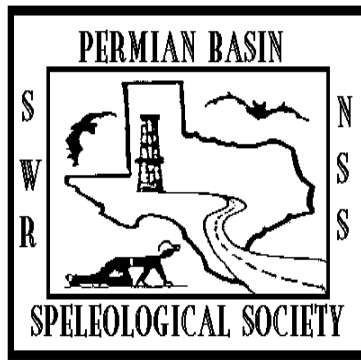
doc, .wps, and .wri formats for trip reports and \*.bmp, .pcx, and cdr formats for graphics. However type or handwritten submissions are also

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### From the Editor:

It is that time of the month again to churn out another newsletter and a special thanks to fellow PBSSer Larence Parent for the trip report that was sent to me on a floppy disc. I made the restoration at Caverns of Sonora and thoroughly enjoyed the talk and visit with Tony Abernathy who also helped haul buckets. I will try to write a trip report of it next month ....

Bill Bentley



### Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be on Friday Dec.12th, 1994 at 7:00 PM at the home of Chuck and Jan Anderle, and will be a bring your dish pot luck Christmas supper. Walter and Gralin are bringing the drinks. The Anderle's homestead is located at 5707 County Road 57 East. If you need directions then call Chuck or Jan at 685-3119 for more information. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM more or less. All PBSS members are urged to attend as this will be the installation of the new officers for



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Upcoming Trips \* Howling at the Moon Column \* Trip reports \*

## 1995 PBSS Officers

**President: Noel Pando**

**Vice President: Gralin Coffin**

**Secretary\treasurer: Walter Feaster**

**Newsletter: Bill Bentley**



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

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December 17th - 18th, 1994 CRF Pre Christmas Expedition, contact: Bryan Holcomb @ 505-842-5156.

January 1995 CACA PBSS Work trip contact: Chuck Anderle @ 915-685-3119.

January 12-15th, 1995 Precipicio!!!! contact:Oran Tranbarger @ 210-349-5573

February 25-26th.1995 Powell's cave Resurvey Project, contact: Terry Holsinger @ 512-443-4241

July 17th - 21st, 1994 NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia, contact: Carol Tideman @ 410-727-2497.

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

**915-697-3079 is the magic numbers that dialed from your phone can reach the editor!!!**

Most all of this material was stolen from various and sometimes reliable caving newsletters in the Southwestern Region and surrounding area, including the Greater Houston Grotto's “*Speleospace*”.

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## Trip Reports: and other lies and stories

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### Fawcett's Cave

Laurence Parent

Because Bill is always grumbling about lack of material for the newsletter, I thought that I'd send him a trip report. Maybe I'll even make it to a meeting one of these days and meet everybody.

In the middle of nowhere about thirty or forty miles north of Del Rio lies Devil's River State Natural Area. With 20,000 acres of Edwards Plateau limestone, it had to have a cave or two around somewhere. It requires twenty-plus miles of dirt road to get there, another good sign for caves.

Fortunately, although the road was dusty, it was a highway compared to most Guad roads.

I first went out there this past May to get some photos for a guidebook for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. I hadn't realized that it might be cave territory, but once I got there and tripped over a few limestone boulders, the idea occurred to me. I asked the superintendent, Bill Armstrong, and sure enough were caves. Or one cave anyway, Fawcett's Cave. Not many for all that limestone, but hey, it's better than none. Because it had a vertical entrance, he had only been in part of it once. He thought that it was about

2500 feet long, not bad, and thought that he had been in the best part. According to him, it had some formations, but he didn't seem tremendously impressed. As it turned out, he had a lousy guide on his first trip.

A cave is a cave, though, so I asked if he would be interested in having some cavers and me take him and his wife into the cave sometime to give it a look and get some photos. He was interested, but as such things go, it was several months before a trip took shape.

I called up Mike Huber to see if he wanted to drive 300 miles to check out a cave about which I knew almost nothing. Mike, being a true caver, naturally didn't hesitate and signed right up. He also talked two friends, Bruce and Linda Faulk, into coming with him. I called Larry Gray and he couldn't make it--maybe because San Angelo was too close for the drive to be enough of a challenge, I don't know. Big mistake. I called Ken Kamon and he wasn't sure whether he could make it or not.

My wife and I headed out to Devil's River a little early, on Thursday, October 13, so that I could shoot some photos of the river for a Texas Highways story. We got there

just in time to catch a few photos of the river before the sun set into a bunch of clouds. The next morning, of course, it was totally clouded out. By 9AM it was raining. The weather report talked about the remnants of a Pacific hurricane crossing Mexico and raining itself out on West Texas. I attempted to take a few photos huddled under an umbrella and poncho, but it was a challenge.

Afternoon came and it still rained. I kept thinking about all the dry wash crossings on the county road to the park as the superintendent regaled us with stories of the time that he had been trapped there for five days after a heavy rain. Evening came and it rained some more. The forecast called for rain that night and the next day, too.

I began to hope that Mike and Ken wouldn't show so we could get out while we could, but, alas, Mike was a CAVER and rolled in with Linda and Bruce at about 9PM mumbling about hurricanes, cows on the road, and downpours for the whole seven-hour drive. I said something to the effect that maybe we should leave while the going was good, but Mike said that after driving seven hours in a flood, he was going in that cave come hell or high water. I told him that if it kept raining we'd probably have the

## New PBSS Membership Rates Effective For 1995

Its that time of year again and the PBSS dues are now due and are payable to PBSS Treasurer Walter Feater. Dues rates are \$10.00 per regular member and this includes one newsletter and one vote. Associate membership is \$5.00 and includes one vote and no newsletter. This was voted on at the November meeting since the \$5.00 did not currently cover the postage and there is expected to be a postage increase in 1995. Walter

asked that all dues to be paid by the December meeting. Dues can also be mailed to 4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703.

Now if you don't like the dues increase, too bad you should have been at the last meeting and voiced your opinion. It was also decided that the dues should cover more than just postage for the newsletter and there should be a fund for other supplies that are needed like drill bits and blasting stuff, club rope, and other items that are needed from time to time. The printing and copies for the newsletter are presently being donated. Also there was discussion of a non-profit status for the club. If anyone knows how we may achieve this then let the Secretary know about it.



## HOWLING AT THE MOON BY BILL BENTLEY

This months cover photo is a silhouette shot from looking out the entrance to Mudgett's cave and was taken some time in 1982. The person on the left is Terry Hill and middle is Pat Hill, both brothers and part of the famous 7 Hill brothers caving team that was active in the early 80's.

There is not much information for the howling at the moon column this month. At the last meeting Steve Franks admitted that he missed Martha and was looking forward to another HT Meirs type caving trip so that she could quote "bug

the hell out of him". The PBSS outgoing administration decided to take advantage of the light turn out at the meeting to get a dues increase pushed through and voted and accepted just before the once a year elections took place.

The elections was a 50% turn out and the race for president and vice president was so close that it was decided by one vote each. Walter was a shoe in for the job of secretary /treasurer and Ken got one vote to replace Bill as the newsletter editor...(That was my vote...Ed. note). There has been no word about F cave as to when it will open, however rumor has it that JD is tunneling in from another property and will make the connection in time to get his social security checks cashed.....Until next month



continued on page 4..see Fawcett's

**Fawcett's continued from page 2.....**

high water and several days to explore the cave.

Luckily for us, Bill, the superintendent, let us crash on the floor of an old bunkhouse instead of out in the mud and rain. We sat around, told lies, and wondered if Ken was going to make it or if he was smart enough to watch the weather report and stay home. He didn't come because some urgent work came up, or so he said later. Being Friday night, we of course wondered if maybe the real reason was a date with his blow-up doll. Whatever the true story, he should have come.

The next morning dawned dark and rainy, but at least the roads were still open. After all this trouble we decided that we might as well go in the cave--at least it would be dry in there.

We got the superintendent and his wife and slipped and slid our way into the park backcountry (actually the whole remote area qualifies as backcountry). We arrived at the end of the road after having left a little Oil pan metal on a few rocks. It's not the Guads, but there are a few similarities.

The cave was a 50-yard stroll in the rain from the road--definitely not like the Guads. The entrance was an unimpressive manhole-size opening in the side of a hill. It dropped down about ten feet in two steps and then another 20 feet or so into the entrance room. With rain still drizzling down, we rigged up a rope for a short rappel and started in. My wife, Tricia, and Bill and his wife hadn't done much vertical work so we had to help them out and trade some gear back and forth.

We finally got into the entrance room, a decent size chamber with walking passages going off in several directions, but only a few formations. Bill had been down the most obvious passage and remembered some formations, so we headed down it first. From what his guide had said on his one other trip, it had the best formations. Wrong.

We headed down the nice easy walking passage, passing a few scrubby formations. At the end of the passage the ceiling dropped down and turned our walking passage into a crawlway. Tricia, Bill, and his wife Paula wisely decided to wait for us while we valiantly crawled onward. The passage soon ended and we crawled back out--or at least I did. I decided that the passage would make a great nasty crawl photo, so Linda, Bruce, and Mike got to lie in the mud a while longer while I took photos. Lots of photos.

After we finished the mud photos, Bill had to leave the cave to meet some other people coming to the park to canoe the river. Another mistake. While Mike helped him up the drop, I took some more photos in

the passage. When he returned, we took another shot or two of the passage even though the formations weren't anything to write home about. Mike didn't say anything, but I could tell he was wondering why he had driven seven hours in the rain to come here.

We decided to quickly check out the other passages before leaving the cave. I dumped my camera pack at the base of the drop (big mistake) and we headed down one obvious passage. It got larger and larger and had some small formations along one wall, a cluster of dry three-foot stalagmites, and a few bats. Things were looking up, at least a little bit. Mike seemed in a better mood.

I went back to the entrance room and headed down another passage. Faintly, in the distance, I saw what appeared to be a good clump of stalagmites and columns. I picked up my pace and moved closer. Yes, real formations! I kept going, past more stalactites and stalagmites. Soon I came to a passage full of wet white columns, stalagmites, and soda straws. Even a few pools reflected my light. I scrambled back, yelling at the rest of the group, some of whom were heading for the entrance drop.

Soon we were all admiring a long, heavily decorated passage. At the end of it, quite a few helictites decorated the walls and ceiling somewhat like Caverns of Sonora, but not wet. Mike was quite happy now. Unfortunately for me, however, because of our schedule we had to head out of the cave and didn't have time for photos. On the way out, a couple of us saw what looked like another passage on the right and scrambled over some breakdown to get to it. Sure enough, it had formations too. We hustled back, got the rest of the group, and gave the passage a quick look. As it turned out, we missed two other passages shown on a map Bill dug out later that evening. There's something to be said for looking at a cave map before going into a cave.

This time we finally started out of the cave. To save time, we found a way to climb around the drop. Mike rigged a safety line across a traverse and we worked our way out of the cave--into sunshine! By now it was 4PM or so, so we grabbed lunch and drove down to the river.

The Devil's River was almost as good as the cave--lush springs gushing out of a cliff onto the river bank, deep pools, tall live oaks and sycamores, swarms (flocks, herds, packs?) of monarch butterflies, crystal-clear water, and one of the largest waterfalls in Texas--a real oasis. After getting a few photos before the sun set, I joined the rest of the crowd and jumped in. There was a cold shower back at the bunkhouse, but the view was a lot better at the river. After Mike finished pursuing an armadillo and getting its photo, we dried off and headed back to the bunkhouse and dinner.

**continued on page 5 ....see trip report Fawcett's**

**Fawcett's continued from page 4**

We cooked Linda and Bruce's food and ate it up, blessing Mike's good sense in inviting them.

Ken and Larry missed a great trip. The superintendent still hasn't seen the good part of Fawcett's Cave. I got great photos of a muddy passage with few formations, but none of the scenic section. There may be a moral here somewhere, but I'm not sure what it is.

Earn a T-shirt by submitting a trip report or article to the Texas Caver. It is easy, so send material to The Texas Caver c/o Noble Stidham at P.O. Box 1094, Lubbock, Texas 79408

Texas and Mexico  
Cave Rescue  
Call Collect  
210-686-0234

This is Kriedler Funeral Home's 24 Hour Number

Ask for "Cave Rescue" and "John Kriedler"

qqqqq

**In New Mexico**

**Sonora Restoration Report:  
By Bill Bentley a participant,**

Of all of those from PBSS that had intended on making it, only myself and Tony Abernathy made it and arrived about 20 minutes apart Friday night at 8:30 PM. We set up camp and talked for a while. I graciously accepted the free beer that Tony had offered me and went around to meet all or the other cavers that were there. We saw Pat Copeland and visited a while, at about 1:30 I turned in. Saturday morning we awoke and went to the visitors center for blueberry pancakes and juice. it was good and hit the spot. After reading the poop on the do's and don'ts we assembled near the entrance to the cave and loaded all 85 of the buckets that Tony had

brought with him. Everyone was there for the group photo shoot.

Explanations of what we had to do were given to us as we entered and made our way to the bottom of the cave in a place called the Hilton Room. We moved rocks in 5 gallon buckets by hand on the stairs and used dollies on the flat spots. At the top the buckets were dumped into a truck and after 20 buckets were dumped then that caver would go to the Hilton Room and relieve the diggers and everyone advanced up in their positions toward the surface and FRESH AIR.

So like the Aliens working the dilithium mines on the Klingon prison planet Rura Pente we all loaded bucket after heavy bucket. From deep within the bowels of this dark abyss, I made my way slowly up and up toward the surface and the precious sunlight, talking escape with a fellow prisoner who came from the deep space station Graham, Texas and one from a distant star system called Holland. Our Warden George kept coming around and thwarted any escape attempts as he cracked the whip over us with threats of denial of water and bread. As this nightmare continued, through the sweat and steam that filled the stale and stagnant air it came into focus,....The Staircase from HELL! An endless staircase that from the base went up and winding through the rock void as far as the eye could see. It was at least several thousand feet up and perched every five feet or so was a body perspiring as each labored to lift and hand the endless supply of bucket after neverending bucket. The monotony was only broke by the occasional boulder that was handed from one unsuspecting soul to another, no hint of the weight hidden in the mass by the shear size. Once I had done my time and had been good and not try to escape I reached the surface and made Frankenstein like pawing motions at the daylight as it caused severe pain to my optic nerves. What joy and ecstasy it was for those short lived moments of cool dry air on the surface, I did my 20 buckets and was ordered back in the pit. What cruel and unusual punishment it was for that I who was guilty of no wrong doing, should be treated this way.

After we finished the work for the day we were treated to the best cooked wild turkey and trimmings that came close to being slightly better than the burritos that were served for lunch. That night it came a good old fashioned West Texas style "Gully Washer" and flooded all of the tents. During the deluge one of the many tent campers named Marcus got caught in his sleeping bag and as his tent blew over and proceeded to flood through the window opening, it created quite a ruckus that was ignored by everyone as no one wanted to go out and get soaked! The showers in our guest host of the owners and the manager of Caverns of Sonora; Bill Sawyer's house were nice. I got to meet a lot of friendly cavers who were also foolish enough to get talked into hauling rocks. I also got to see some others who had familiar faces but I couldn't remember their names to save my life and for that I am sorry. I had a really good visit with Tony Abernathy and was envious of his atomic blast tested canopy that didn't flap in the wind all night. His beers and wine coolers will be remembered too. And if I get the chance to go back and work my tail off and have some more Ralph Phillips style daydreaming I will with great gusto. In fact put me on the list for next year if there is to be a restoration.

Submitted by Bill Bentley

## MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:	PHONE:	NSS #:
Abernathy, Tony	4415 Parkdale, Midland, Tx. 79703	694-7919	38776
Anderle, Chuck	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	685-3119	31477
Anderle, Jan	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	685-3119	31478
Bentley, Bill	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	697-3079-357	21977
Bentley, Donnie	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	697-3079-357	37549
Brannon, Tom	3802 Crestridge, Midland, Tx. 79707	697-2806	Applied For
Brown, Jon	4633 Locust, Odessa, Tx. 79762	366-0581	Applied For
Carlton, Don	1301 Daventry, Midland, Tx 79705	687-4352	30417
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701	682-1904	33471
Coffin, Kari	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701	682-1904	33472
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Scott, Cruise	4245 Siesta Lane, Midland, Tx. 79705	687-5843	Applied For
Day, Kevin	617 Meadow, Roanoake, Tx. 76262	817-491-1026	Applied For
Day, Rick	114 N.W. Ave F Street, Andrews, Tx. 79714	523-9665	Applied For
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Feaster, Walter	4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703	699-7049	31624
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Fincher, Richard	P. O. Box 472, Crane, Tx. 79731	558-7248	Applied For
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Gray, Kim	P.O. Box 1273, Andrews, Tx. 79714	523-6409	Applied For
Gray, Larry	31 East 33rd Street, San Angelo, Tx. 76903	653-3823	19588
Grieco, Tony	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Expired
Harter, Gary	17 High Chaparrel, Andrews, Tx. 79714	532-9758	Applied For
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Pando, Noel M.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	523-9294	Applied For
Parent, Larence	P.O. Box 849, Manchaca, Tx. 78652	512-280-2843	Applied For
Sawyer, Bill	P.O. Box 1196, Sonora, Tx. 76950	none	Applied For
Slut, Guad	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Denied
Terrett, Tiffeny	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	685-3119	32792
Whidden, Lesia	1031 6th Street, Big Lake, Tx. 76932	884-3162	Applied For

Please send all exchanges, corrections and updates for this list to Bill Bentley 400 Eastwood Drive , Midland, Tx., 79703-5308. I will try to update and reprint with every issue depending on space available. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes.

Our new President Noel Pando has a short message: Our club goal for 1995 should be to increase our membership, which is one of our biggest problems. To have more activities and a goat roast someplace in the area, perhaps at Rick Day's ranch.