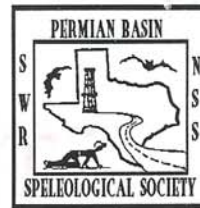


"THE HOLE NEWS"



December 1997

The Monthly Publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society



December 1997

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

Volume 12 Number 12

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, December 9, 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:

Grotto Trip to Amazing Maze
Now accepting Grotto Dues for 98
Have a Merry Christmas

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 may be 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:

December 13, PBSS Trip to Amazing Maze: Contact Gralin 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. If you wish to attend, or need additional info contact: StevePeerman: <speerman@chilidog.lascruces.nmhs.edu>.

6-7 December--Amistad Speleological Project. Still a lot of caves to explore. Contact: Cathy Winfrey (jhfogarty@aol.com)

12-14 December--Colorado Bend Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

24 December - 4 January--Laguna de Sanchez, Nuevo León. 30 or so known caves, some vertical. All skill levels welcome. 4WD nice but not necessary. Field house available, communal meals. Stay all or part of the time. For info or or maps contact: Jim Kennedy (jkennedy@batcon.org)

9-11 January--Colorado Bend Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

13-15 February--Colorado Bend Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

27-29 February--Powell's Cave Project. The entrance pipes are installed and backfilled to the rim, creating Texas' newest pit--28' deep. Bring vertical gear for a fast entry, or a seat harness for safety while climbing the ladder. (Bring a 50' rope in case no one else does.) Still lots of caving to do. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

10-12 April--Colorado Bend Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

8-10 May--Colorado Bend Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

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

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

“Howling at the Moon”

Steve Franks

where are you?



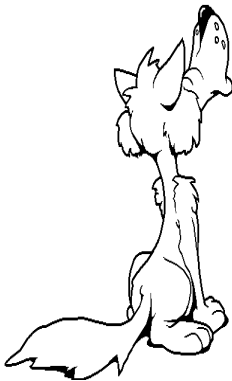
Steve we (PBSS) haven't seen or heard from you for a long time. What happened to you? Of course rumors abound. The reporting and writing staff here at the “Hole News” will attempt to resolve some of these vicious rumors.

Rumor#1: Alien abduction! Yes he was but was returned almost immediately.

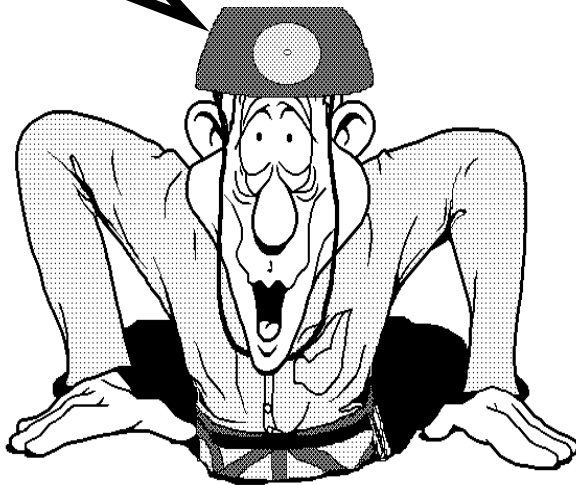
Rumor#2: Steve is held up in a cave some where with massive amounts of weapons and 54 back issues of Play Boy magazine. This is false, Ken wouldn't loan him his Play Boy collection.

Rumor#3:He is living in Wichita Falls. No, way. Don't even think about it!

So Steve, come see us at our next meeting and let us know what the heck is going on. Oh yes, bring ten bucks for you PBSS dues!



There he is. What is that you are doing?
Oh no!



On The Cover

Photos taken by Mr. Bill on the PBSS October 25, trip to Montgomery Gypsum Cave. Top row, from left to right, Mr. Bill and the cave entrance. Second row, left to right, Kerry Lowery and Mike Gray on rope. Third row, left to right, Felder Hogan doing something, and Noel Pando clawing his way out of the Pit of Death.

Election Results

Political power in the PBSS has transferred from Andrews, Texas to Coahoma and Big Spring, Texas. Kerry Lowery won the race for president over Noel Pando and Ruel Metcalf won the vice-president spot. Congratulations to our new leadership.

98 Grotto Dues!

It is time to pay up. Regular membership dues are \$10 and includes one voting right, associate membership is \$5 and includes one voting right, but does not include a newsletter. Please make checks payable to Walter Feaster. PBSS does not have it's own bank account. If you have not paid your dues by January 1,1998, you will be drooped from the grotto's roster. Have a nice day. :-)

From the Internet

To all NSS members,

I am happy to announce the forming of a new section within the NSS called "The Arts and Letters Section of the NSS." The goal of this section will be to put out a bi-annual publications (provided sufficient material) that will focus on CAVE- fiction, non-fiction, humor, drawing, poetry, cartoons, song writing, etc., for the purpose of bringing together people who enjoy writing and drawing, with "CAVES" as the focal point. We hope to spotlight individual talent within the caving community, and to help with writing, editing, and publishing skills, with the hopes of getting people's works published. Also, we hope this section could be a place where newsletter editors around the world could get material and ideas for their own grotto newsletters.

Like any publication, we will need material. If you are a writer, editor, publisher, artist, etc., send us your stories, drawings, writing and publishing tips, old or new material, it doesn't matter. As with anything new, we want and welcome all ideas you have to make this the very best section for everybody.

The anticipated cost will be \$5.00 a year. We are not asking for money yet. We NEED to gather as many names (required by the NSS) as possible for the present time. If your are interested, please fill out the following form and send to the address below. Feel free to call me with questions.

Thank you for your help and support.-Paul Steward and John Tudek

Return to: Paul Steward (Central New Jersey Grotto)
277 Clamer Rd.,Trenton, NJ. 08628, 609-530-9743

pddb@juno.com

Name _____
_Address _____
_City,State, _____
Zip _____
Phone _____
E-Mail _____
NSS# _____

TRIP REPORTS:

and other lies and stories

Caving at Turner Falls, Oklahoma

September 27-28, 1997

Cavers: Tom Kaler and Rebecca Lee-Kaler

The city of Davis, Oklahoma owns and operates Turner Falls Park in the arms of the Arbuckle Mountains. Described as a geological window in to our past, it consists mainly of Viola limestone. And with the lush, green trees and vines, it is a step away from Arkansas.

Heavily advertised by the park are a trio of caves that are open for anyone to visit. No permits are necessary and no park or Davis officials have any idea of who visits the caves nor seem to care about the caves' well being. All three caves (and the park) are basically trash barrels for carefree, careless visitors. And of course, there's graffiti.

Tom and I first visited Outlaw Cave. Roughly 50 feet in length, this cave has a low, crawl in entrance in the side of a bluff which leads to a round room (20X10) which leads via 25 feet of narrow, upward passage to the other crawl out entrance on the top of the bluff. A window inside the round room opens to a fantastic view of the surrounding cliffs and Honey Creek which flows over, down, and away from Turner Falls. We assumed outlaws once inhabited the cave but the park offers no historical information on the caves and visitors are just left guessing. There is some popcorn on the walls but that's the speleothem limit. A good thing too because were there other formations, the foot traffic would surely have them smashed by now. Not too disappointed but hoping to find something better in the other two caves, Tom and I set out in search of Wagon Wheel Cave.

This cave sits adjacent to Turner Falls and it is hard to take a picture of the falls without including the cave. From a distance, the cave looks deep and mysteriously tempts the curious to scale a thin ledge beneath the cave's entrance. Peeking around the corner of the entrance, the heart sinks at the sight. There's trash and about 15 feet of nothing, not even a wagon wheel. "Must have been one there at some time," we had to assume. Disappointed, it was off to our last caving hope we went. As we went, we checked out a few holes but basically found no other caves to speak of.

Crystal Cave was pictured in an issue of "The Texas Caver" so we deeply expected (hoped, wished, pleaded, begged) it to be better than what we had seen so far. A short, relaxing hike led us almost (we passed it twice and had to follow the voices of visitors to it) directly to the cave. The entrance in the side of a cliff is a large, round hole and tests the climbing ability of any who want to see inside. Very few do and are left to stand frustrated and puzzled as to how to get in and out. This was Tom and me until we realized that we're cavers and we have a rope! So, we made a plan to return early the next morning, rig a rope on top of the cliff, and Jumar up the slick, 5 foot obstacle from the bottom of the rope.

Our challenge was figuring out how to keep others from using our rope to get in while we explored the cave. We didn't want to be responsible for visitors using our rope without seat harnesses. We pulled the remainder of the rope in to the cave as far back as

it would reach. Then to keep anyone from untying the rope at top and stealing it, we wrapped part of the rope around a small column and the end of the rope we put through a crawl few novices would enter and tied it off. We felt it was pretty secure. They could cut it but they couldn't steal it. We could get out anyway if something happen to the rope.

Only at the very entrance could we stand. Just past the first crawl, we ran in to a squeeze which we could see led to another squeeze. We talked it over before I decided to take the plunge. It is tight but not so tight that I had to exhale to get through. However, I did take off my helmet. The second squeeze is similar to the first but leads to bigger passage. More crawling and wiggling led us to a 10 foot pit. Tom chimneyed down and with that was at the end of the cave. The continuing passage is plugged with mud and was littered with trash. Disgusted with all the trash we had seen that weekend, we took it upon ourselves to do some cleaning in Crystal Cave. Sadly, we filled a trash bag with cans, glass, batteries, and other junk.

True to its name, Crystal Cave has crystals sparkling on the walls. Tom estimated the caves length at 150 feet. Far bigger, better, and more fun than the other two caves. Finally we were satisfied.

The city of Davis might want to take note of what's happening to the Turner Falls area. I heard many other visitors complaining about the trash. We cavers get used to seeing trash and unspeakable amounts of stupidity in caves and camp sites but that's not to say that we accept it. And this weekend, Tom and I didn't accept it. We hope our little cleaning effort in Crystal Cave will help somehow if not for just a few days. We did what we could and now it's time for the city of Davis to do what it can.

After our visit to Crystal Cave, we drove to see Prices Falls (due to Tom's obsession with waterfalls). Prices Falls are also open to the public for swimming and camping and just as spectacular. But they're far less advertised hence far less expensive, far less visited, and far less trashed. The owners seem to care a great deal about their falls and immediately greet visitors to tell them the rules. The only trash I saw was one can which the owner quickly picked up while he spoke to us. He told us that he had partially explored an underwater "cavern" under the falls. Hint- the right smooth talking cave diver might want to check this out.

Granted, this area is not as vast and open for exploring as Turner Falls and the rules here are enforced but after this weekend it is a trade off Tom and I will seriously consider.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee-Kaler NSS# 42075

More Trip Reports:

Montgomery Gypsum Cave Trip

October 25th, 1997

Cavers:

Bill Bentley, Noel Pando, Felder Hogan, Kerry Lowery, Arlon Carroll, & Mike Gray

Reported by Bill Bentley

I decided to get up at around 4:30 AM since the wind and cold front had blown in and I couldn't sleep anyways. I made me a fresh thermos of coffee and was soon on my way... I made it into Irran Texas around 6:00 AM and was clearly ahead of the cold front and it was fairly nice and warm there...Got some gas at the Town and Country Store...I arrived at the cave entrance around 7:20 AM and was just in time for the cold front to blow in and the others thought I had brought it with me...I noticed that Noel's pop up camper was there recognized Kerry's hail damaged Jeep. The other white van had to be Arlon or Mikes...

I was the first one to get up and started stirring about...The cold wind drove me back to sit in my Toyota and wait for daylight, I noticed that Mike was up and making coffee, so I joined him and we roused Noel and Felder up and was soon enjoying breakfast burritos....It doesn't get any better than that when your miles from anyplace and there is good food and good company...Well you had to be there.

I rigged the entrance drop off the bumper of my Vehicle with some new PMI 50' that I had bought some time back at around 9:00 AM or so...I was the first one to rappel in followed by Arlon and the others...We cautiously looked for snakes but did not see any...Felder helped me rig the second drop and soon we were all at the last drop. Kerry had it rigged and was going down when I got there... I soon made my way down and was off the rope. The first thing I saw was the cave register that I had placed there many years ago... We all signed in and left our mark for future generations to see...

Once on the bottom I followed Arlon North and the others all went South and I knew that Noel and Felder was going to try to attempt the climb up and across the main corridor to come out at the Northern end of the cave. I was going to try to do the same thing from the opposite end and possibly meet half way...

We climbed up and up and up finally reaching the Haynes home made ladder that gets you up to the upper tunnel passage that leads across the the Southern end of the cave. About 60' or so in we found a small passage leading East and it connected to a few more passages and a crack that vertically come out somewhere in the ceiling of the main corridor, but I am not sure where... We made it up and over to a passage that ended in a window that came out in the main crack and was about 30' North from the bottom of the second drop... What a vertical maze this cave is! After a failed attempt to scare the other group with fake scary cat growls and monster groans by hiding in the ceiling we left the other group in the overhead tunnel passage and was soon on our way to try to inch our way down the "Dome of Death" in the Southern end of the cave. It is easier to climb down this time for some reason... Although I am not sure why? We all met and had a brief rest back at the register and I started my ascent up... We all exited the cave without any problems around 1:30 PM or so....I know the new guys sure enjoyed seeing all the pretty gypsum crystals and formations... This cave is a unique one and I will probably return again someday...

I left and drove back to Midland and arrived around 5:00 PM after a brief burger stop in Rankin...It had been many years since I had been down in that part of the world and I did truly enjoy the short but fun caving trip...I have come along ways since my first vertical trip in Montgomery's Gypsum Cave in '81 with one set of gear for 3 people... Alas we live and learn...

The Southwest offers a caver some of the best caving experiences in my opinion. I may be biased because that's where I live and that's where I cave... Its truly the cavers that makes the difference.. The people that I started caving with many years ago have moved on and new ones have taken their place and I still enjoy it...

Cave Safely,
Submitted by Bill Bentley
NSS # 21977