

February 2004

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

Volume 19 Number 2

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### Next Meeting of the PBSS

The next meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held 2-10-04 at Murray's Deli located at 3211 W. Wadley in Midland at 7:00 PM.

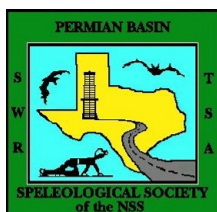
### *Our Agenda*

### *Meeting*

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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 made out to and sent to: Michael Anderson. If you are interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then contact Barry Hayes at 432-333-8856 or <cavelizard@yahoo.com>. If you are not from this area and some how through circumstances beyond your control or ours found a copy of "The Hole News" then you should contact the National Speleological Society at 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL. 35810-4431, or go to <www.caves.org>.

The "PBSS" Home Page  
[www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.html](http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.html)  
built and maintained by  
*Bill Bentley*



**President:**  
Barry Hayes  
**Vice-President:**  
Lori Hales  
**Secretary/Treasurer:**  
Michael Anderson

### **On Going Projects:**

**CRF Carlsbad Caverns:** Expeditions usually occur on holiday weekends. Contact Barbe Barker <cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net> or 505-687-4270. Or the CRF website [www.cave-research.org](http://www.cave-research.org)

**High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP):** Upcoming events usually take place the last weekend of each month. For more information contact Susan Herpin <sherpin@caverns.com> or 505-785-2423.

**PBSS Rock Haul at Carlsbad Caverns:** PBSS on going restoration in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. For more information contact Walter Feaster <wdfaster@cox.net> or 432-559-3297.

### **Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects:**

**\*\*\*March 13 - CACA Rock Haul:** Tentative date for the next Carlsbad Caverns rock haul

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

**\*\*\*Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority\*\*\***

*This will be the last newsletter for past due members*



### Ess Cave Trip

1-10-04

Crockett County, Republic of Texas

Participants: Barry "Father" Hayes, Bill Bentley, Jaqui Bills, Bill Sawyer, Jodie Trainer, Jamie & Katie

I arrived at around 9:00 PM Friday night and Barry was already there with his 1972 travel trailer that he has about \$1000.00 worth of repairs in. It took me about 15 minutes to get my truck tent set up and bed made for the night.

We visited until nearly 11 PM and I went on to bed.

Next morning I made coffee (with a old Coleman single burner stove that finally quit working on me after nearly 25 years), and had my breakfast, good thing I brought my coffee pot & stove cause Walter was gonna bring his but he got sick and did not make it.

Barry made about 5 trips up the road and down the highway looking for folks that were suppose to be there. At around 1:30 PM Jaqui Bills arrived and Bill Sawyer, Jodie and the kiddos arrived about 5 minutes later. We talked and visited for a while and then around 2:30 PM everyone entered the cave. The cave lock was missing and Barry had bought another one earlier in the day on one of his trips into Iraan.

I stayed up top and minded camp while every one went in the cave.

I gathered firewood and after everyone came out of the cave around 5:00 PM . We had some dang good chili provided by Barry and some good cookies provided by Barry's wife!

Bill cooked some chicken and brought tortillas. The kiddos had hot dogs and we ate well.

It was good to be sitting by a campfire drinking beer. The best part of camping.

The weather was very nice during the day and cool at night.

There was a full moon both nights and we saw 2 meteorites.

The pumpjacks sang us to sleep at night along with a chorus of West Texas wind.

You should have been there!

Trip report and picture by Bill Bentley

The Cave Conservation, Restoration, & Formation Repair Workshop was also held on 1-10-04. The workshop is an annual event sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Bureau of Land Management and the NSS.

The class was located at the BLM office in Carlsbad and was limited to about 25. The presentations by Sandy and Jerry Trout, Jim and Val Hildreth Werker, Dale Pate, Jim Goodbar, and Ransom Turner was followed by a late trip in the lower cave section of Carlsbad Caverns. I left before the walk-through.  
Michael Anderson



Walter at the 2003 Sonora Restoration  
Photographer: George Veni



## Bear Cave/Agonino Cave

By

Rebecca Lee

Living so close to Las Cruces, NM now, Tom Kaler and I decided to contact Steve and Kathy Peerman of the Mesilla Valley Grotto about future caving trips. We have met and caved with the Peerman's through Jeff and Mary Anne Bauknecht. Kathy mentioned a dig in Bear Cave on BLM land that Jon Corcoran was leading in November of 2003. She and Steve were going to help out and invited us to join.

Bear Cave is near Fort Stanton Cave and some hopes were up that it could be linked with the Fort Stanton system or have the same type of features. Given the fascinating features of Fort Stanton Cave along with new findings, Tom and I were pleased with the invitation to work in a cave that could possibly hold a similar fascination.

We arrived late at the camping areas for Fort Stanton Cave and eventually caravanned to Bear Cave with Jon and the Peerman's. Earlier while waited for the Peerman's to arrive, we talked with Donald Davis who was preparing to ridge walk that day. The others were already working in the cave.

Along the route to the cave, we stopped at the fenced area around the entrance to Agonino Cave. Jon explained to us how Agonino was a famous archeological site bearing important information and artifacts. He also informed us that it was only a one-room shelter with no walking or going passage.

The entrance to Bear Cave is a low, horizontal slit basically sunk in an otherwise normal looking forest floor. We met Lee Skinner and his two Welsh Corgies at the entrance and quickly realized that there were too many diggers to fit in to such a small cave. We sat outside talking to Lee for a while. Then, a man came out of the forest carrying a walking stick. It was Dick Venters. Due to recent surgery, he wasn't caving yet.

As we were talking with Dick and Lee, Dick asked Lee to tell him where some blow holes were that Lee knew about in the area and he would GPS them. Lee offered to drive Dick to the area and Tom and I asked to tag along. We thought that by the time we returned, the diggers would be tired and we could pitch in.

After a brief search, Dick found the first of four blow holes we each would find and he entered their locations in the GPS. None of the holes were penetrable but all were blowing air. Future digs we hoped. The holes were aligned as if one system so we were excited about the possibilities.

We searched for other holes on the other side of the road that Lee knew about but unfortunately were unable to locate them so we returned to Bear Cave only to find no one. We wondered what happened but there were no notes. We thought someone might have been hurt and the group had gone to the hospital. We just didn't know.

Since Tom and I had not entered the cave, we cautiously (note this) climbed inside while Dick waited outside. The cave is just as its entrance: a low, horizontal crack in the limestone. At every curve, a caver is vulnerable to the unknown. It has a soft floor and a few small formations. We searched for the digging area but were unsure about what we found. I wish we could have made it in while the group was digging so that we could see where they were trying to go. The cave is small going in about 25-35 feet and we crawled around for maybe 10 minutes. I feared we were missing something and there was more to his story. We returned to camp hoping to find the others and hear the story. A few caver vehicles were at camp but no one was there. So, we continued to be puzzled since no notes were left. As evening approached and it grew colder, Dick, Lee, Tom, and I decided to go home curious about the mystery.

We finally learned what happened when we attended the Technical Salon for the SW Region of the NSS in Las Cruces. Kathy told us that the reason the digging stopped was because of a rattlesnake!

"A big one," she said, "I'll show you a picture at the party later." Sigh.

Sigh again. Well, that's it for this story. Usually, I have a lesson or a deeply profound thought attached to the end of my trip reports but this time, I think I'll just leave the lesson to you.