

Permian Basin Speological Society

FEBRUARY 1990 MEETING NOTICE

DATE: Tuesday, February 27 NOTE: this is a week later than normal

LOCATION: St. Paul Methodist Church, 4501 Thomason
Park at the rear of the church.

TIME: 6:30 P.M.

JANUARY MEETING REPORT

We had a good crowd at Chuck and Jan Anderle's on the 20th, and us novices got some good instruction and practice in putting together our vertical gear. If Chuck's radio tower holds together, it will be a good place to try out and adjust new gear.

FEBRUARY TRIP

February 3 -- Eight lucky souls made the trip to Ogle cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The climb up to and down from the cave is a killer, but the weather was cool and clear - a beautiful day to hike in those parts. The 180 ft. drop into the cave was my first vertical cave experience, and it was the longest for most of us. Several of us if not most of us found some improvements that we need to make in our gear. Jim said that after about ten drops our technique would be much improved and prusiking would not be so much work. At the time, I wasn't sure I would live through ten more ascents. Park ranger Ron Kerbo and his son Daimon made the drop into the cave shortly after we did, and the second rope they brought sure made our exit much easier and faster. I found Ogle to be a really impressive cave. The size of the cave and the formations were truly awesome. When I first scrambled down to the bottom of the debris at the entrance, the sight of those gigantic white columns rising up in the dim light of my lamp took my breath away. The scale of the huge rooms reminded me of the time I went out onto the floor of the Astrodome, but the fallen columns and rock made me think of climbing through the ruins of some ancient temple. Ogle is well worth the effort to explore, and it was a challenge I'll long remember.

Everyone spent the night at White's City. Sunday Jim and Jerry got to go in a restricted section of Carlsbad Caverns to photograph some unusual formations. J.D. and family went to Cottonwood Cave (I think), and Chuck's family and I spent several hours going through Park's Ranch Cave. No report on Will and Debbie, but I think they were still sacked out when we left the motel.

MARCH TRIPS

I am promoting a day trip to Montgomery Cave near Sheffield in order to get in some more rope work. I don't think the cave itself is much to talk about. Several people want to also make another two day trip to the Park while the weather is still cool. We will decide on something at the next meeting.

BABY BENTLEY

Congratulations to Bill and his wife on the birth of their son Donald (great choice of names!!). I hope we can get the whole Bentley family to a meeting soon to meet all the club.

Emerging from a successful Labor Day weekend trip to the Guadalupe Escarpment's **Hell Below Cave**, Dallas/Ft. Worth Grotto members faced the major problem of having only two beers left for four cavers. Salvation was at hand, however, after they helped Lincoln National Forest rangers rescue inexperienced cavers out of nearby **Hidden Cave**. Tony Shelton reports on the rescue in the grotto's **OZTOTO Caver** for September 1989. The victims had used a dynamic belay rope to rappel into the vertical entrance, intending to exit by the horizontal entrance. They were trapped in the cave because the other entrance had been sealed. One of the four had managed to extricate himself by free-climbing the drop using a jumars for a safety. Forest Ranger Jerry Trout rigged a cable ladder so that two of the victims could climb out; the other had to be hauled out. After the rescue, Woodrow Thomas enlightened the victims about the NSS and gave them a ride back to their car. The Texas cavers were rewarded for their efforts with an undisclosed number of cold Coors beers.

How To Cave Safely

Caves can be dangerous if you're not properly trained or equipped.

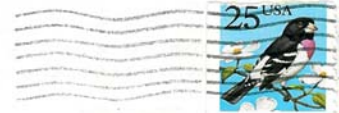
Here's how to reduce your risk:

- Join an experienced group for proper training and safe caving.
- Never go caving alone -- three or four cavers are the safe minimum.
- Always carry three sources of light.
- Don't attempt caves beyond your abilities.
- Use the proper gear, including a good hard hat and suitable clothing.
- Leave word with family or friends about your location and expected return.
- Always choose the safer alternative when you have an option.

Conservation

The *DC Speleograph* for October 1989 reports that **Lechuguilla Cave** was not recommended for development by the Carlsbad, New Mexico, Mayor's Task Force. The Task Force report was summarized into five major findings, the most important one to cavers being that "the preservation of Lechuguilla Cave is paramount and that it is in the best interest of all concerned not to seek to develop the cave for general use at this time." The Task Force supported the Congressional initiative to set up a Cave Research Institute in the Carlsbad area which will take a leading role in organizing and carrying out research in the cave.

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