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# PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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*February, 1992*

## MEETING NOTICE

Date: Tuesday, February 11, 1992

Location: Murray's Delicatessen, 3211 W. Wadley Avenue, Midland. Murray's is in a strip shopping center on the south side of Wadley, just east of Midkiff. It's the second store east of Texas Burger.

Time: 7:00 PM    Come at 6:30 PM if you plan to eat.

## FEBRUARY TRIP

Amazing Maize Cave is planned for February 22 and 23. To get to Amazing Maize from Midland or Odessa, go to Fort Stockton. Then go east (towards San Antonio) on Interstate 10. About 15 miles east of Fort Stockton, you'll see the St. Geneveve Winery (aka Fort Stockton Winery) on the south side of the interstate. The winery is a large building that covers about 4 or 5 acres. Take that exit. Go over the overpass and head back west towards Fort Stockton, either on the access road or another road that Y's off from the access road towards the right and goes parallel to the fence line. There's a gate with a combination lock about 500 feet from the overpass. Go through the gate and travel on the road perpendicular to the fence line about 1000 feet. Then you'll see another road heading off to the right; take the road, and go about 500 feet down into a caliche pit. Camp there. If you come up Saturday morning, the route to the cave will be marked. There's no set meeting time Saturday morning -- come at your convenience.

Chuck and J. D. will both have the combination to the lock. Call one of them if you think you might be the first one there Friday night. Open fires are not allowed. Beer is.

Amazing Maize, a horizontal cave, is one of the longest in Texas, with a current surveyed length of over 5 miles. Mike Walsh (phone: 512-629-2169) and/or Mike Warton will lead the trip. Both are from central Texas and cave in Mexico frequently. Walsh is best known for pioneering the Canine Method of Pit-Depth Estimation. Warton developed the ascending method used by Bill and Henry and also played an important part in the development of the Odessa Descending Method (i. e., rappelling without a rope -- ask Bill about this method).

The trip is primarily for clean-up and restoration, although there will be time for exploration. Most of the work will involve picking up trash, and bags and trash cans will be provided by Walsh et al. A couple of us may want to bring material to clean graffiti from walls.

PBSS will be performing this project in conjunction with the Texas Cave Management Association. The TCMA is a group of Texas cavers that manages and purchases caves; they carry a \$3 million liability insurance policy and have a very good, professional reputation.

You are encouraged to make this trip. Although a number of PBSS members have been involved in restoration, surveying and exploration projects, this will be our first "grotto" project -- our first opportunity to do some worthwhile work together, while enjoying a unique and special cave. Undoubtedly, we'll have the opportunity to do this again (see "Three Fingers" below). Be there!

Don, who has to work the weekend of the Amazing Maize trip, may plan something for February 29/March 1. If you miss the meeting and are interested, call him.

## MARCH TRIP

Lake and Chimney caves are tentatively planned for March.

#### J. D. IN HOSPITAL

As noted on the previous page, the meeting this month is being held at Murray's instead of J. D.'s house, the reason being that J. D. will be having surgery and should still be in the hospital in Midland on Tuesday.

#### NEW MEMBERS

We have two new members, James Cullen of Roulette, Texas, and Kenneth Knight of Wichita Falls. Both are friends of Steve's, so they must be bums. Both are also understood to be advocates of the Tony Jones school of caving philosophy. James and Ken have done a fair bit of caving in New Mexico, and are particularly looking forward to seeing Ogle cave.

#### THREE FINGERS

A couple of members have received letters from the Forest Service saying that Three Fingers will be closed to recreational caving during 1992. However, bimonthly restoration/work trips led by Forest Service personnel are planned for the year. The change in access may be a blessing in disguise. Finding the entrance to Three Fingers is difficult, so much so that several of us decided that we should agree to drop Tony from the membership roles if he would take us to the entrance. Also, finding your way around inside the cave without someone who's been there before is difficult.

#### SMALL ANIMAL SLAUGHTER/ROAST

Don has proposed obtaining a pig or goat for a PBSS function, and would like for you to give some thought to this idea. He or Chuck will have more details at the February meeting.

#### TRIP REPORT - MONTGOMERY CAVE - JANUARY 18 & 19, 1992, by Steve Franks

I left Midland around 8:00 PM TST Friday night as the snow and drizzle continued to fall, as did the temperature. I think small adversities like this make adventures more exciting. I mean, who wants to go somewhere where you can't almost freeze to death or get stuck in the mud or tear the heck out of your vehicle. I got an added bonus on this evening as the Adventure Van decided it would make me nervous by running progressively worse as each mile tentatively passed. I finally hit the dirt road, or mud road as it was this evening, and proceeded to the cave via yellow ribbons marking the way. I met up with Ken, Noel, Henry, and Rick at the windmill. We camped there and waited for everyone else to show up. ? \_\_\_\_\_

The next morning we drove directly to the entrance, geared up, tied off, and we were gone. My kind of cave!

The entrance was about a 30 ft. drop into a flat-floored pit with breakdown which sloped into the main passage where we shortly came upon the first drop of around 100 ft. The drop was down a wall and through a twist to another short wall. From there we continued 20 or 30 ft. to the next drop where Ken tied off while the rest of us criticized and offered our opinions on the subject.

This next drop, also around 100 ft., was down the same wall all the way, but had multiple ledges, with some interesting formations. The lower levels were filled with some of everything -- rooms, squeezes, crawls, verticle climbs, bones, and many gypsum formations. Rick told us of the dig at the bottom, and showed us the location. He referred to it as the crawl of death, or something like that. No one entered as our better judgment prevailed. We spent several hours in the lower two levels and then climbed out.

Everyone was in enthusiastic agreement that we should come back to this cave. We had the ceremonial cigar smoke. Rick did his impersonation of Groucho Marx. Ken made a speech and then we all left.

*Typist's note: I wish to publicly apologize to Tom. In the last newsletter I threatened Tom and implied he was good-for-nothing for not paying his dues. Tom actually paid his dues, before any of the rest of us. He dropped his check by Don's house back in August. What I should have said was Don is a good-for-nothing kleptomaniac who would sell his first born for \$5.00. Apologies, Tom.*

Hidden and Black Caves Trip 1/18, 1/19  
by Noel Pando

When Rick Day, Noel (my son) and myself pulled out of Andrews that Friday, it was a pretty pleasant evening with 50 degree weather and a clear sky. Everything went smoothly, even the new route to Carlsbad that we took through Jal. That was all to change when we got to Queens where a light drizzle began to fall, then it turned to sleet and by the time we reached the Klondike gap cut-off, it was already snowing. The snow continued to fall as we made our way up to the tower and the Texas campground where we discovered that we were the only ones on the mountain. We debated on whether we should stay overnight on the mountain and risk getting snowed in or go on down the mountain and camp in a safer spot. We decided to stay figuring the only way to go from the top of a mountain would be down. That night it snowed about four inches and if it wasn't for a propane heater a concerned relative of mine insisted I take, we would have spent a very cold miserable night. The next morning we awoke to a thick blanket of snow that threatened to cave in Rick's little camper. After a breakfast of Cocoa-puffs and canned milk, we set out to see if anybody else had arrived. At the Texas campground, we found J.D., his son Richard, Larry Gray and Don Carlton with his son Todd, who was still on his Christmas holidays from TCU. After all the greetings, J.D. told of finding Larry, Don and Todd on the road unable to drive any further because of ice and snow and also about the two other cavers from Big Spring and Abilene that caved in the hood of his Jeep while giving them a ride to Cottonwood Cave.

The road to Hidden was surprisingly smooth. The snow helped smooth out the moon craters and other road hazards but it did make a lot of mud and puddles that were deeper than I remembered them being. Just before we got to the drop off point for the hike down to Hidden, the road went down into a small ravine and made a sharp turn uphill. This turn almost claimed a Nissan Pathfinder and five PBSS cavers as the rear wheels slipped off the road into the ravine. Luckily, Rick had the vehicle in 4 wheel drive and the front wheels managed to get us back on the road. Needless to say, we took the long way back to camp that afternoon.

I was particularly anxious about Hidden even though I had been there before. On this trip, we were going into the upper areas where I hadn't been and also this was to be my son Noel's first vertical cave. The descent went great despite the ice and snow. Noel, a little nervous at first, mustered up his courage and made the first drop to the first level with no problems (I think). Once inside, we viewed some pretty neat formations, looked for the passage to the lower level which we did not find and went out to the old entrance that has long since been dynamited shut except for a small sliver of sunlight. While at the old closed entrance, we found a hibernating bat. Rick cautioned us not to disturb him because to do so would cause him to burn up calories needed through the hibernation. If disturbed, Rick explained the bat could quite possibly starve to death since his body is so small and the winter is so long. The second drop to the lower level also went pretty smooth. Most of the rimstone dam pools were dry including the "Wall of China" pool which I think is quite unique. After some more visiting and looking for the elusive passage to the upper level, we headed out. We all finally got out of the cave by 6:30. Noel did pretty good until he got up the last ascent where J.D. and Don had to help him with a little pull. By the time we got back to camp, it was "dark thirty"

and we got busy cooking a meal. While trying to cook in the blizzard that moved in, Larry decided that he needed to leave while he still could. Rick volunteered to take him to his car and escort him to the highway which he did and didn't get back until about 11:00 that night. That night, the wind blew and the snow fell. How Don and Todd survived the cold, I don't know. They spend the night in a small tent.

The next morning was a lot prettier than the previous one. The sun was out and the temperature was nice and crisp with no wind at all. That morning, we set out for Black Cave. After about thirty minutes of hunting, we finally found the path to the cave and made the short hike down to it. Once inside, the name Black Cave becomes immediately apparent. "It is black inside". All the formations seemed to be covered with a thin film of black, moist sediment. I thought this cave caught a lot of runoff from the hillsides which deposited the dark film inside of the cave. Rick then pointed out that this cave didn't get that much runoff because even the ceiling was coated black. He went on to explain that the film probably got there through chemical reactions between the cave temperature, humidity in the air and minerals present in the cave. Black, like Walter had described earlier to me was gloomy. Our head lamps did not have any spill over and the beam of light did not reflect any at all. If you wanted to look at anything, you had to shine your light directly on it. Black was filled with lots of formations from the ceiling and on the ground. There were lots of popcorn formations that gave you a feeling of walking through a hugh chocolate peanut cluster. At the back of the cave, Rick and Richard found a small passage way that led to the lower areas of the cave. They explored a little while and came back out saying that we need to come to this cave later and get to the lower levels when we have more time. It was getting a little after noon so we decided to get back to camp and head back home early. Rick had some schoolwork he had to get done before Monday morning and I had to get back because if it snowed here, it was probably raining in Andrews and the roof leak that I haven't fixed will rear it's ugly head again and jeopardize future weekend caving trips.

Driving off the ridge, we ran into a snow storm that included thunder and lightning which seemed strange with snow and cold weather. After dropping off Don and Todd at their pickup, we drove on down to the Queens store. Walter will be glad to know that the store is under new management (it's on their sign). Seems that the old manager finally got tired of aggravating people or people got tired of him aggravating them. Anyway, it's being run by a nice couple from Texas and they seem to be doing pretty brisk business selling burgers and fries.

Overall, the weekend to Hidden and Black caves was a great success to the people who attended. The snow and cold temperatures just added to the challenge that caving already presents.

**PBSS Newsletter**

Please mail material for newsletter to Ken Kamon, 400 W. Texas #1100K, Midland, TX 79701

**PBSS MEMBERSHIP**

Last Name	First Name	W. Phone	H. Phone	NSS #
Anderle	Chuck	685-3119	685-3119	31477
Anderle	Jan	685-3119	685-3119	31478
Bentley	Bill	694-7721	697-3079	21977
Brinson	Debbie	699-4081	687-4443	31906
Brinson	Will	699-4081	687-4443	31905
Carlton	Don	335-3265	687-4352	30417
Cargile	Terry		697-8700	-----
Coffin	Gralin	684-5548	682-1904	33471
Coffin	Kari C.		682-1904	33472
Cullen	James		(214)412-1632	-----
Day	Rick		523-9665	-----
Dickens	Henry	563-0421	367-5275	-----
Eddy	David			11830
Feaster	Walter		367-8253	31624
Fincher	J. D.		694-4381	1022
Fincher	Richard		694-4381	-----
Franks	Stephen	697-7672	683-6432	-----
Glossa	Jeff	682-9731		-----
Gray	Larry	655-6957	653-3823	-----
Guad	Slut		(505)393-5604	-----
Hill	Patrick		689-8347	-----
Hill	Tom	560-5065	687-2122	27888
Kamon	Ken	686-0720	699-7192	-----
Knight	Kenneth		(817)696-8713	-----
Nance	Jim		563-5208	27723
Pando	Noel		523-9294	-----
Scott	Melissa		694-4381	-----
Seefeld	Cheryl	699-0396	687-5042	-----
Showalter	Ernie	563-1663	682-1700	-----
Wall	Denise	(214) 373-3755	691-0105	-----

**PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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