

March 1999

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

Volume 14 Number 3

## 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, March 9**, around 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murray's Delicatessen. Murray's is located at 3211 West Wadley, Midland, Texas.

#### *Our Agenda:*

*Meeting*

*Future Cave Expedition*

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ (915)694-1824 or (915)559-3297, or E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshill.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 Kerry Lowery @ (915)394-4230 or <lowery4@crcom.net>. 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 & Caprok.net ISP*.



### Future Cave Trips and Events:

**12-14 March--Colorado Bend SP Project:** Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

**March/April 1999--Fitton Cave Mapping & Surveying Seminar:** \*CRF. Location TBA. Contact: Pete Lindsley 972-727-2497 or <lindsley@mcopn.dseg.ti.com>.

**27-28 March --TSA Convention:** At Blanco, check TSA Calendar Page for changes and updates.

**27-28 March--High Guads Restoration Project:** New Mexico-- Contact Dave Jagnow 505-662-0553 <djagnow@roadrunner.com >.

**10-11 April -1999 SWR Regional:** Will be held at the Valley of Fires National Recreation Area (BLM), near Carrizozo N.M. For more info contact Chris or Joli Lee <jclee@wazoo.com> or Steve Peerman <speerman@chilidog.lasruces.nmhs.edu>.

**9-11 April--Colorado Bend SP Project:** Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

**24 April--Earth Day at Colorado Bend SP:** Sponsored by CTG--Pat Copeland 915-643-2952 <copeland@web-access.net>.

**24-25 April--High Guads Restoration Project:**--New Mexico-- Contact Dave Jagnow 505-662-0553 <djagnow@roadrunner.com >.

**1 May--May Day is Cave Day at Cave Without A Name:** There will be an open house (open cave) at CWAN for the public and the media to show off the renovations taking place there. Cavers will be doing restoration and putting on caving demonstrations and collecting cave leads. All are welcome. Blair Pittman 830-537-4212 <cavepit@juno.com >.

**7-9 May--Colorado Bend SP Project-Contact:** Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>. Last CBSPP trip of the season. Project resumes 8-10 October.

**15 May--TSS Board Meeting/Work Session:** TSS Office at 11 a.m. Other work sessions will be held and announced before then. Check TSA Calendar Page often. For Board Meeting details contact George Veni 210-558-4403 <gveni@flash.net> . For Work Session info Jim Kennedy 512-443-8198 <jkennedy@batcon.org >. (Continued page1)

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**28-31 May--SWR Regional:** (Memorial Day Weekend) Location to be announced. Contact John Lyles 505-455-2565 <jtml@lanl.gov>.

**25-27 June--Powell's Cave Project:**--Contact Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

**26-27 June, 31 July, 25 September, 30 October, 25-28 November, 31 December--High Guads Restoration Project:** Contact Dave Jagnow 505-662-0553 <djagnow@roadrunner.com >.

**July 12-16, 1999--NSS Convention:** Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer, Idaho. Contact: David W. Kesner, PO Box 1334, Boise, ID 83701; (208)939-0979; e-mail <drdave@micron.net>.

**8-10 October--Colorado Bend SP Project:** Resumes activities. Contact: Terry Holsinger 512-443-4241 <trhli@sprynet.com >.

**15-17 October--Texas Cavers' Reunion:** Just the biggest caver party in The Great Southwest. Place to be announced.

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

(Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority.)

\*CRF is the Cave Research Foundation. Contact the Project Manager/Director for more information about joining a CRF Project. (Barbe Barker (972)255-7127 or <cavers@gte.net>)

### Info on the Web:

**CaveTex:** Is a free e-mail remail service for Texas cavers. To subscribe just:

- (1) Send e-mail message to <major-domo@mailing-list.net>.
- (2) Leave the subject line blank.
- (3) In the body of the message type: **SUBSCRIBE CaveTex**.
- (4) Then send it in.
- (5) You will receive 2 messages in return. One is an instruction sheet and the other is an authentication/confirmation message.
- (6) Follow the instructions.

**E-mail: NM Cavers List.** To keep current on announcements: Subscribing-- mail to: <listserv@unm.edu >

**Message body:** Subscribe nmcavers-I First name, Last name.

**Using for announcement distribution--**mail to: <nmcavers-I@unm.edu > with your message in the body.

**TSA Web Page:** <www.caver.net/tsa>

**TSA Activities News Letter:** <www.caver.net/tsa/tsaact.htm>

**SWR Web Page:** <www.caves.org/region/swr>

**Cavers Digest:** <www.ditell.com/~cavers> Follow instructions.

**Mr. Bill's Cave Links:** <www.caver.net/>

### New PBSS Members

We welcome **Don and Elizabeth Ross** to our ranks. Don and Elizabeth are from San Angelo. For their first trip with us they got to haul rocks at Carlsbad Caverns. We all hope this has not turned them against caving. It does get better.

**Steve Franks** (aka weasel) has rejoined the PBSS after several years of absence. Do you remember what a cave is Frank? Welcome back .

### Rock Hauling @ CACA, Feb. 27, 1999

Kerry and I arrived at the CRF hut about 11:30 Texas time where about half of our group had already retired for the night . The other half wastring to raise our spirits by downing our spirits.

The next morning came early , but the weather was perfect . We all got up and assembled our gear for the days rock hauling . Dale and Stan arrived about 9:00 AM Texas time and gave the standard talk on correct behavior in front of the vistors .

The group(Walter,Lori,Liz,Don,Felder,Kerry,and I ) made our way to the loading dock where we unloaded the buckets brought by Walter and got the wheelbarrows and proceeded to break in the new service elevators.

The hole seemed to have gotten smaller since we last left it. We all proceeded to dig in, Liz tested the durability of the sides of the hole. After her lead we all were very cautious of the sides. At 12:15 Stan and I left to take the dumptruck to the landfill,an hour later we made it back in time to have lunch with Tom and Rebecca.

During the day we found several things of interest. Walter found a spoon, Lori found a pocketwatch, and I dug up three coffee cups. Walter also drew my attention to a coke bottle that I had already deposited in a bucket. Thank you Walter!

The rock hauling was a success even though there were only seven of us, we still hauled two dump trucks full. I want to thank everyone that participated and hope the ones who didn't get to make it this time can show up for the next one.

Thanks Again, Ruel

### Texas Cave Rescue

The TSA Cave Rescue emergency number is still:

**1-800-692-0234**

This number will work in the U.S.. But the

### Mexico Cave Rescue

number has changed Area Codes. again.

**001-956-686-0234**

From Mexico dial direct or call collect(*Por Cobrar*-in Spanish)! These are the 24-hour numbers for Kreidler Funeral Home in McAllen, Tx. Ask for **Cave Rescue** and John Kreidler. Be persistent!

In the **Carlsbad, New Mexico** area try:

**911**



## TRIP REPORTS:

Goat Cave Trip, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, February 5, 1999

**For those of you who don't like babies, avoid this report.  
Run, run while you still can.**

Park Rangers occasionally get paid for time spent rappelling, caving, or hiking. These days are called, "Project Days" where the idea is to allow Rangers to experience the park without having to use their own time. Yes, it is a hard job but someone has to do it and I and another Ranger, Iffy Khan, recently received simultaneous "Project Days." So, we decided to go rappelling off some cliff faces close to Rattlesnake Canyon. Iffy had asked for permission to rappel in this area two weeks prior to this day and was assured that it would be allowed. But when Iffy double checked with the park resource managers about whether rappelling in our chosen location was still OK, the managers' tune changed. NEWS FLASH- rappelling cancelled due to the possibility of endangered cacti on the cliff faces. What can you expect from a conservation agency but to save cacti that may or may not be there?

Oh well, we were disappointed but the day was beautiful and we knew we couldn't spend it moping over crushed plans. "Be flexible," I thought as the die hard caver in me replied, "Let's go caving!" Enter our third and fourth party members. Dave Thomas is also a Ranger at the park but it was his day off and he was spending it caring for his nine month old daughter, Allison.

"We can go caving but Dave has to bring Allison," Iffy suggested.

I thought reluctantly about that scenario when Allison's mother, Kelly who is another ranger at the park, overheard our conversation and exclaimed, "Take her, hell, we took her on top of the water tanks." (Note- the water tanks are 25' tall and require scaling a partial ladder to get to the top.)

That sealed it. Allison's going caving but to which cave? Although Dave is an EMT and physically and vertically fit to take Allison into a vertical cave, we dismissed the idea. Allison was just a little too young despite the time Harry Burgess put a helmet made from Velcro and a butter tub on his daughter's head and took her to the Hall Of The White Giant when she was a tot.

It would have to be a horizontal cave and as far as the eight permitted caves on the park go, Goat Cave and Lake Cave were our only options. We opted for Lake Cave first as I was worried about Allison breathing the burned goat manure ash in Goat Cave which gets stirred up when cavers walk around it. But the lengthy five mile round trip hike, the steepness of the climb, and the fact that neither man or baby had been to Goat Cave changed our minds.

I procured the permit, Dave packed Allison's gear (i.e. baby bottle, powdered milk, diapers, and a change of clothes) and soon we were off to Slaughter Canyon. Iffy carried Dave's water because the backpack baby carrier Dave was using wouldn't hold his water. The sun was bright, that day was hot, and I suggested Dave put sunscreen on Allison before we started our two mile hike. I knew Kelly would skin Dave if Allison came home redder than a chili pepper. I think Dave knew it too as he had fastened a cloth diaper to Allison's bonnet to cover her neck. Unfortunately, Dave forgot the sunscreen and worried about burning his baby the entire trip. Do you see a theme developing here?

It would truly be a unique experience although Dave didn't think he and Allison would make the full length of the hike and to be honest neither did I. He figured Allison would get too uncomfortable and they would have to turn back. On the contrary my friend, Allison fooled us all! She couldn't have been happier if she were

wallowing in baby powder. She cooed, giggled, and smiled for almost the whole hike. I say almost because Allison, for some reason, didn't particularly enjoy being accidentally smacked in the face with a sotol stalk as she was dozing off to sleep. Needless to say, she cried.

When we reached Goat Cave's entrance an hour and a half later, we were on the verge of a momentous affair- on the verge of breaking the law as no one under the age of thirteen is allowed to enter the cave and on the verge of a monumental event as this would be Allison's first wild cave. Still cooing and smiling, Dave carried her off into total darkness. I know, I know, get to the caving part.

The entrance to Goat Cave is reminiscent of Gunsight Cave only on a smaller scale. Possibly the cave with the largest entrance in the park, a hiker can not walk by Goat Cave without seeing it. (If you already did, get your eyes checked and give up caving.) A short scramble up to the entrance, the cave immediately opens to a huge 100' arched ceiling with a 40'-200' corridor shooting straight back eventually to a length of 1,130'. We roamed around the cave which has formations but nothing really to brag about until one squirms through a hole midway back on the right wall of the cave to a lower level. When Tom Kaler and I went to Goat Cave a few years earlier, we had totally missed the lower level and since then had heard of the great beauty the level held. So, I was determined to find it on this trip. Once inside, the rubble pile brings a caver at eye level with a set of exquisite stalactites dangling from the room's ceiling and a wall of corroded drapery columns igniting a caver's excitement. They are unusual and not something one would expect in Goat Cave.

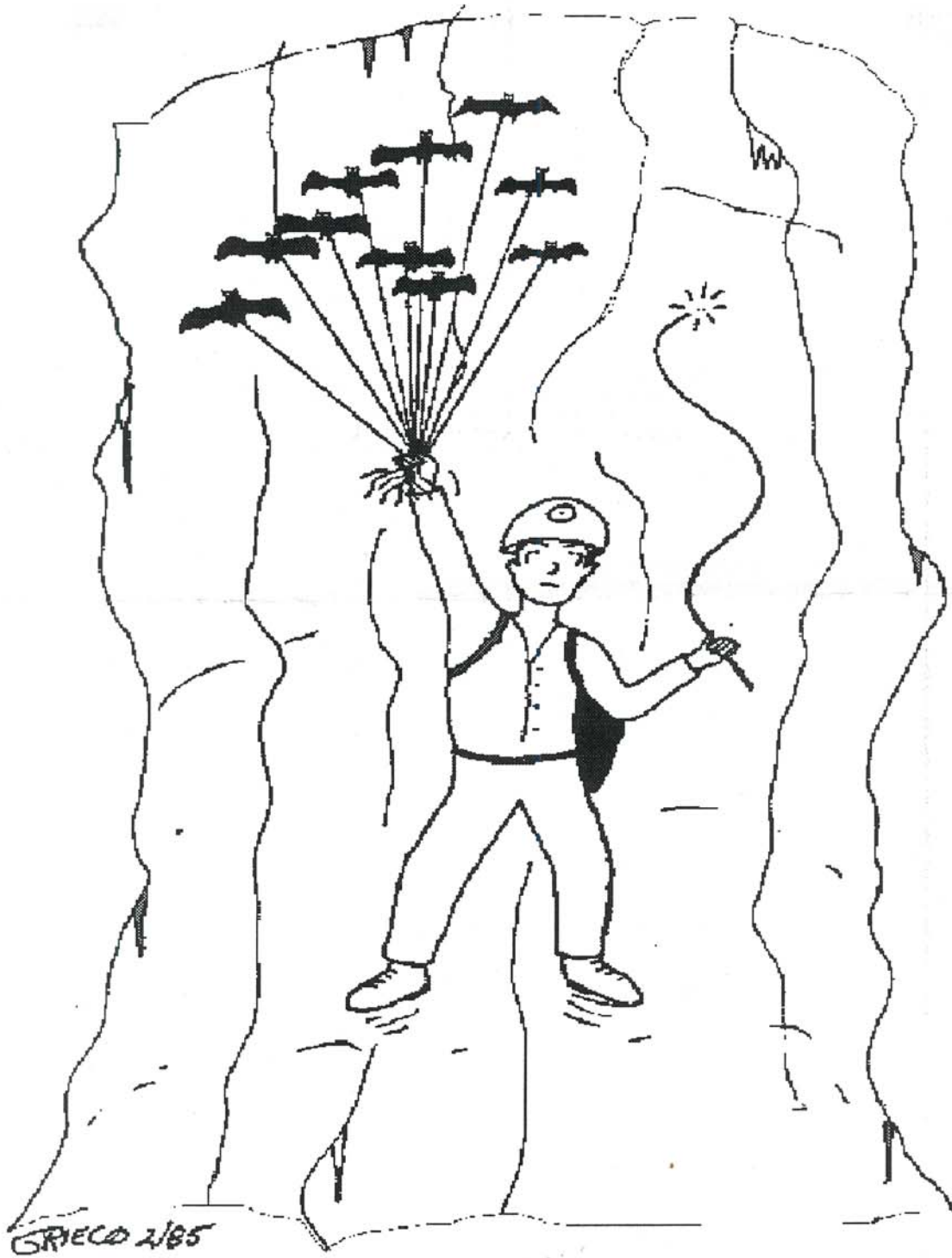
While Iffy and I explored the lower level, Dave and Allison explored the rest of the cave before retreating to the entrance. Dave was worried about Allison breathing the kicked up ash. Iffy and I noticed that previous cavers had built a rock cairn in the lower level to signal the way out and Iffy poked fun at the cairn until he realized he needed it to get out. We squeezed out of the room and scanned the rest of the cave before meeting Dave who was shoveling a gross, green baby food past Allison's smiling lips.

I snapped photo after photo documenting this unusual event for Allison's proud parents because it was pretty obvious that this trip was not so much about us exploring a cave, but about Allison being safely and successfully hiked to, in, around, and back from a cave. You've never been caving until you've been caving with two grown men cackling like a mother hen over a baby. There is a certain strangeness to sitting in the middle of the park's desert backcountry watching one man worry about a baby's clothing while another changes her diaper. It can not be left unsaid that Allison's safety was never at jeopardy. We would never have taken her anywhere that we were not totally sure she would be safe although the scramble to the cave entrance was a little "iffy." (No pun intended.) Interestingly enough, Allison's first wild caving experience had her sharing a common experience with cavers who hike through the Chihuahu desert to a hidden cave.

As Allison unfortunately found out, it is not the danger of the cave itself that will make a caver cry rather it is the cruelty of its desert plants.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee

# BAT ASCENDERS!





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\* denotes new members

Please send all exchanges, correction, and updates to Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard, Midland, Texas 79703-4847-71. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes. This includes e-mail addresses.

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