

April 2006

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

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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 **April 11** at Murray's Deli located at 3211 W. Wadley in Midland at **7:00 PM**.

On Going Projects:

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

Our Agenda

2006 PBSS Membership and Dues

**ESS Cave—Repair Gate-Replacing Rope
Montgomery Video
Dry Cave Survey**

“The Hole News” is the publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons may be reproduced by cave oriented publications that exchange newsletters with the PBSS, as long as proper credit is given to the author. Please observe copy righted articles. Items for this newsletter can be sent to the Editor, “The Hole News”, c/o Cindy DiTullio at <cadzone@sbcglobal.net> or mail to Cindy DiTullio, 2205 Independence Drive, Odessa, TX 79762

Regular membership dues are only \$15.00 and includes one voting right, associate membership is \$7.50 and does not include a newsletter. Dues should be made out to and sent to: **Barry Hayes**. 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 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, AL. 35810-4431, or go to <www.caves.org>.

**The “PBSS” Home Page
www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.html
built and maintained by
Bill Bentley**

Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects

April

Big Manhole Cave Dig: 15-16th For more info contact **Bill Bentley**

Montgomery's Gypsum Cave: 29-30th To finish the Video. Survey a small cave near there. For more info contact **Bill Bentley**

May

2006 TSA Spring Convention: May 19th-21st **Location:** John Knox Ranch –Fischer, TX Talks on TX caving, map & photo salons, Saturday banquet, auction. On-site camping included w/registration.

June **Deep and Punkin Cave: June 17th-18th:** Visit Both Caves, Help where needed for use of facilities. For more info contact **Kerry Lowery <klowery3@cox.net>**

24th– Summer BBQ-Meeting Rule's place or Big Spring State Park , Catered or Pot Luck, More details to follow....

July

High Grads Restoration/Ft. Stanton Trip

August

Lincoln National Forrest Caves

September

Caverns of Sonora/TCMA Caves

October

TCR

November

4th-Carlsbad Caverns Rock Haul

December

16th-Annual Christmas Party (BYOB) Steve and Cindy DiTullio

Denotes a PBSS Grotto Trip

Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority

Remailers & Bulletin Boards

PBSS: http://caver.net/mailman/listinfo/pbss_caver.net

CaveTex: www.cavetex.net

2006 Elected Officers

**President: Bill Bentley
Vice-President: Jacqui Bills
Secretary/Treasurer: Barry Hayes**

**Newsletter:
Steve & Cindy DiTullio**



Abyss Cave/Ess Cave**Weekend of February 10-12, 2006****Report submitted by Jacqui Bills Thomas**

PBSS is back to scheduling a caving trip each month and for our February trip we arranged access to Abyss Cave. Since the gate at Ess Cave had been broken and we needed to check on some things there, and Ess was also the nearest place where we know we can camp anytime, we made Ess Cave part of the trip. Barry and Lori were already set up at Ess when I made the same wrong turn I always do, so I could see the camp but couldn't get there. Lori drove up on the ridge and led me in.

We talked and ate and drank and admired Barry's terrific fire. Kerry arrived after dark. We said goodnight. We froze our butts off. Lori left early early on Saturday as she was sick with the stomach thing that was going around West Texas and wanted to get home before she got any worse.

Mike Gray (with, forgive me if the name's wrong, Irmina?), leading Steve Franks and Ken Kamen, arrived at Ess Cave around 9:30 Saturday morning. We drove toward Eldorado. We spent some time wandering around while trying to remember where exactly Abyss moved to. When we found Abyss, Mike left and Barry stayed above ground.

Abyss 11 February 06

Steve Franks, Kerry Lowery, Ken Kamen, Jacqui Thomas

With Barry Hayes guarding the rope anchor.

We rigged to a "cedar" at the entrance and backed up the anchor to another cedar. The entrance is smaller than I remembered and the drop of about ninety-five feet stays skinny for the first thirty or so of those. Steve, Kerry, Ken and I all made the rappel without incident. One reason for the trip was to oodge into a hole in some flowstone at the back of the cave, as some folks have reported that a hole in the small chamber below the flowstone blows lots of air. The hole is arrived at by crossing some large breakdown then traveling past a beautiful blue pool with white calcite sides and shore, then squeeze-walking through a narrow, tall canyon-like crack. The pool seemed to have about the same amount of water as the last time the club was there, but none of us could remember exactly when that was, although we all thought it had been at least two years ago.

We went through the hole in the flowstone and dropped down to look at the hole that needs to be bigger. It was not blowing air when we were there. It's just impossible to get your head in to see much more than flat floor. If the hole is to be expanded, we'll need to come up with a Grotto plan that is more than chipping rock with a bar because we could see where that had been done and it didn't work very well. The good news is that it's rock that would be chipped, not calcite.

Kerry did tunnel-rat squeezing and exploring enough for him and Steven DiTullio both, but we still missed Steven & Cindy. We slithered down a mud-lined passage which I needed help slithering out of, as my boots wouldn't hold on the mud on the way back up. Guess I need new soles or new boots. Following Kerry's lead, we squozed our way into several holes in the breakdown, and just before heading out Kerry found another place to check out for next time. None of the holes we found had blowing air, or even moving air, but they were interesting anyway.

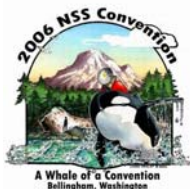
Kerry was the last one out and while frogging up something on his pack broke and the pack dropped back into the cave. Kerry said it was no big deal but when he said his rack was in his pack, we decided that a pack-retrieval rappel was a good idea. Ken very kindly volunteered, as he figured a second trip out on a rope walker would be more pleasant than a second trip out with a frog system. I agreed with his reasoning and finished packing up my frogging gear.

After we were all out everybody scattered. Barry and I returned to our camp at Ess and ate Donna's excellent chili all alone and had a great time burning up mesquite. It was really really cold Sat. night (20s) and we got something of a slow start Sunday morning.

Ess Cave 12 February 06

Barry Hayes and Jacqui Thomas

Saturday morning after breakfast Barry and I went into Ess to check on the rope to the upper room. That rope was still there but whoever broke in had returned, possibly to get their rope (the one Barry and Lori removed), and cut our traverse rope. Since the traverse rope is a major piece of our on-rope and chimneying training system, Steven and I have some chimneying to do to re-rig with new rope. We intended to replace that rope anyway, so it's something to look forward to in case we need an excuse to return to Ess Cave in the near future.



August 7-11, 2006 The 2006 NSS Convention will be hosted at beautiful Western Washington University. The university is located between the Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains, just outside of downtown Bellingham. Situated between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia, the spectacular surroundings of this region will make a stunning backdrop for the convention. For more information, visit the website at www.nss2006.org.