
PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume III No. 6

April, 1991

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Tuesday, April 9, 1991

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

Time: 6:30 PM

APRIL TRIP: DEEP, GUNSIGHT, SENTINEL, AND COTTONWOOD CAVES

Walter is obtaining permits for Deep Cave, Gunsight (Big Door) Cave, and Cottonwood for April 20, and Sentinel Cave for April 21. All the caves are in the Dark Canyon area, and tentative plans call for leaving the lookout tower area at 9:00 AM Texas time Saturday morning. Cottonwood and Gunsight are both walk-ins, although Gunsight may be accessed by a rappel. Entering Deep Cave involves a traverse to the tie off point and a 250 foot drop. A ladder or short rappel is necessary to enter Sentinel. A good bit of Sentinel can be seen without further vertical work, although getting to the bottom requires a traverse and a 250 ft. drop. Walter has only six places on the Deep Cave permit, and he's filling them in the order he hears from people; so if you want to go in Deep Cave, let him know soon. If you have a four wheel drive vehicle, please bring it. Also, we're probably going to need three short ropes (about 100 ft. each) for Sentinel.

MAY TRIP

Tentatively, Pink Panther, Pink Dragon, Pink Pallet and Damn Caves are planned for May 18 and 19.

MARCH TRIP REPORTS

McKittrick Hill Caves (Over Dramatization), by Will Brinson

McKittrick Hill, a cold and WINDY night. Two vehicles approach down a winding, lonely roadway in search of another yet another PBSS camp sight. A little after 10:00 Gralin Coffin, along with myself, my wife, Gralin's daughter and my daughter (back from Powell's Cave) arrived at the top of McKittrick Hill. After searching the area for other cavers, Gralin blazed ahead to search the area beyond the hill for signs of life. I wondered in silence if he would ever return.

After what seemed a long time, but was probably only a few minutes, he returned and confirmed what we already had suspected. We were the first to arrive. We sat in parked vehicles, and discussed the odds of surviving the night. Then, from out of the blackness, a faint light appeared on the valley floor below. We watched and wondered if the approaching vehicle would be yet another brave explorer.

Yes!!! In a matter of minutes, Walter arrived and explained that the 40+ mile an hour winds were, in fact, good weather for McKittrick Hill. He expressed his intentions to car camp on the hill despite the wind and Gralin decided likewise. The next to arrive were Tony and his son, who also decided to camp on the hill. At this point, I also decided to camp, but at the motel in Carlsbad. We reluctantly said good night and left the small band of cavers on the wind swept hill. As we drove away, I wondered if any would be alive at dawn.

On the way back into town, we encountered Rick, who was circling a gas well about half way to the camp. He asked directions and proceeded off into the darkness.

Next morning, we drove out to the hill, fearing what we might find. However, instead of finding the remains of tents and supplies scattered into the surrounding countryside, we found a cheery group of cavers who had been joined by Don, Tom & Son, and Ken. The morning was beautiful and the wind was only a gentle breeze. The group was full of stories about having already explored all the caves and "Sorry You Missed It" typical caver BS.

After a brief discussion, we all "geared up" and guided by Walter, our group proceeded into Endless Cave. The passageway we were to go on first branched back to the right. But which right was right? After a few wrong turns I asked Walter if he had a map of the cave. Being a well prepared caver, Walter said, "Sure, it's in my truck."

It soon became apparent that Endless Cave was somewhat of a maze, hence the name ENDLESS. After about a half hour into the cave, I asked Gralin if he had remembered to bring his flagging material that would be useful to mark the trail as we had discussed on several occasions and he said, "Sure, it's in my truck."

Well, once again it was obvious that the group was well prepared, but all in all, Walter did a fine job of guiding the group through the cave despite the desperate cries of "Waalterr" from some of our younger members. We all saw some of the caves' finer features including the War Room which was highly decorated with formations that resembled huge Indian War Clubs. The cave was a clean cave for the most part but unusually warm. Not much water was evident but several formations were still active.

After a good lunch, we next visited McKittrick Hill Cave. We entered through the lower entrance and exited through the upper entrance. It was an interesting cave, complete with a couple of bats. Tony acted as guide on this excursion and there were no casualties.

In summation, everyone that attended had a really good time, and I still don't think any of our group is still locked in the cave as the rumors say.

Sand Cave Trip

Don Carlton, Rick Day, Walter Feaster, Andrew Grieco, Tony Grieco, Jamie Hill, Tom Hill, and Ken Kamon stayed over for the Sand Cave expedition on Sunday. The group set out from camp at 9:00 AM, and, on the way to the cave, walked by the remains of a deer Walter slaughtered with barbed wire and a knife. Near the entrance and well into the cave the floor was coated with fine sand, causing several of the group to say Sand Cave was the dustiest they'd been in.

Once in the cave, six-year-old Andrew Grieco was appointed expedition leader. He lead seven grown men, single file on their hands and knees, in a series of circles and figure eights ending in a fair-sized room 20 yards from the entrance. Along the way, we saw plenty of snow-white popcorn, as well as a chimney that extended upwards a considerable way to the surface. Don woosed out at 11:00, while the rest of the group stayed on in the cave and discussed the merits and pitfalls of halogen bulbs and rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries. We left at 11:30. Although enjoyable, Sand Cave did not measure up to Endless and McKittrick.

New Blood, by Don Carlton

I had a great time on the club trip to McKittrick Hill last week. Even though I have been in Endless 7 or 8 times, I still find something new to see each trip -- and I haven't seen it all, yet. We found a passage in Easy Chair Maze that appears to have been blocked off from above. Tony or Walter is going to talk to Jim Goodbar about this. It was my first trip into McKittrick, and a lot of fun, too. By the time we went into Sand on Sunday, my knees were raw. I've got to get some new knee pads before my next trip.

The big news, though, is that Ken Kamon agreed to take over as newsletter typist!!! Time for some new blood. While I can't say that I really enjoyed my years as editor, it is not the burden that some folks imagine. I just hope that Ken knows how to spell speleological.

Typist's Note - I learned a lesson. Never say you have a new word processor in the presence of a desperate man. While I think I can type faster than Don, and I know I can spell better, his diligence and his entertaining trip reports can't be matched. Since the PBSS editor has been replaced with the PBSS typist, your help in submitting illustrations, inserts, trip reports, and news of upcoming events would be appreciated. Please mail to the address that appears below. If you have access to a Xerox, 20 copies of any illustration or insert would be helpful.

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 |
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| Carlton | Don | 335-3265 | 687-4352 | 30417 |
| Coffin | Gralin | 684-5548 | 563-0764 | ----- |
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| Feaster | Walter | | 367-8253 | 31624 |
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