
PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

April, 1992

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 1992

Location: J. D. & Melissa's house, 4306 Ferncliff, Midland. Ferncliff is a semi-circular street running between Midland Drive and Wadley. Going south on Midland Drive, you pass Albertson's on your right. Next street is Wadley. Ferncliff is third street on your left south of Wadley. Turn left (go east) on Ferncliff. J. D. & Melissa's house will be on your left (northwest side of Ferncliff), and has a black mailbox out front. Call J. D. at 694-4381 if you get lost.

Time: 7:00 PM

APRIL TRIP

Several members are tentatively planning to go to Watkins Cave this weekend, either Saturday, April 11 or Sunday, April 12. The cave is located about 60 miles from Midland, and plans are to enlarge the entrance so some of our more substantial members can enter the cave. A very short rappel is required to enter the cave. Walter is definitely gung ho about this project, so I would suggest you try him if you'd like to go this weekend. If you can't reach Walter, try Steve or Galin or Rick. Don has been looking into a possible work trip into Three Fingers, that could possibly occur in April. Be at the meeting or call J.D. for further developments.

NEW MEMBER

Kim McPherson, a friend of Ricks (not fiancée as reported earlier - sorry about the error) has joined PBSS. Kim has already visited several caves with us, and has a good bit of experience on rope. She teaches school in Midland. Welcome, Kim.

T-SHIRTS

Bill is taking orders for PBSS T-shirts. The base shirt is a light blue Hanes "Beefy" type, available in small, medium, large, and extra large adult sizes. The shirts display the PBSS emblem in color, and I understand they're very attractive. Also, PBSS bandanas will be available. The cost is \$7.00 per T-shirt and \$3.00 per bandana. To order, call Bill, or mail your money to him along with your order, or come to the meeting on the 14th. The cut-off date for orders is the end of the meeting on Tuesday. Bill's home phone number is 697-3079, and his address is 3815 W. County Road 116, Midland, TX 79703.

THANK YOU

In addition to lining up the T-shirts, Bill copied the enclosed article on "Optimum Rack Operation", taken from the NSS Vertical Section's periodical, *Nylon Highway*. Also, Bill has inked in a number of Tony's pencil cartoons, so now we'll have a whole new selection of Grieco's to enjoy. Thanks, Bill.

TRIP REPORT

Deep Cave, by James Cullen

For me, the trip started by catching a plane from Dallas to Midland on Friday the 27th of March. My plane arrived in Midland at 8:15 PM. Steve Franks picked me up at the airport, and instead of heading west we went to his shop to weld a muffler on his jeep. After our 'not-so-speedy' repair (rig-job) and a few more stops for ice and other necessities we were underway.

We finally arrived at our destination of the lookout tower on Guadalupe Ridge at about 4:00 in the morning. Ken Kamon, Henry Dickens, Kenneth Knight (aka Belushi) and his friend Charles were already there. Belushi was the only one who came out of his bag to greet us since it was fairly cold and windy as hell. (So what else is new?) After fighting Steve's shiny, new pop-up trailer we got to sleep about 4:30, if you could call it sleep.

The next morning we all awoke to the sound of Noel Pando driving into camp. After breakfast and formal introductions, we were on our way to Deep Cave. After about a 1-1/2 mile drive and 3/4 mile hike we were at the entrance. The entrance slopes down for about 100 feet to the rigging point for rappelling. Much of this must be traversed, so we belayed the first guy across and tied a safety line. After rigging the 310' rope Ken went down first. It took about an hour and 10 minutes for us to get into the cave. At the end of the rappel we landed on a huge pile of debris and breakdown with only five feet of rope left! The breakdown pile sloped down on 3 sides into the cave. Some portions of the floor were silt/sand covered. There were numerous formations inside, including many "broomstick" type stalagmites, which I had not seen before. Some were as high as 10-12 feet and only 1-1/2 inches in diameter. After "touring" the big main room and smaller side rooms for about 2 hours we started out. Those with the greatest need to go to the bathroom went first. During this time everyone remarked on everyone else's ascending system, talked about jobs, ate, or actually went outside to use the bathroom. (Some people, I believe, used this as a ploy to go first.) The ascent time for the whole party was about 2 hours 15 minutes.

I was happy to get back to the vehicles which carried little 12 ounce cans of refreshment. By the way, the damn wind was still blowing. (So, what else is new?) Due to being dog tired, Steve and I went to bed fairly early and missed most of the festivities of the night.

Next day - March 29 - Noel got up and went to meet some others at Chimney Cave. Henry and Ken went home. Belushi and Charles went to Carlsbad Caverns. Steve and I went to the Guadalupe Administration Site to try and get "penciled in" for another cave. Since we couldn't find anyone we went back to Dark Canyon and practiced vertical work on the small cliffs there. All in all the trip was enjoyable and I look forward to many more with the PBSS.

Typist's note: We were impressed with our new members from Dallas and Wichita Falls. Kenneth is an industrial engineer, and has made descending and ascending equipment from scratch. His chest roller beats anything on the market.

As pointed out by James, you need every bit of a 300 foot rope to reach the bottom of this cave.

LAKE CAVE

Several PBSS members visited Lake Cave on Saturday, March 28. Bill reports the cave is beautiful - well decorated, and larger than he had expected. The lake within the cave was also larger than expected. Access is difficult, however, requiring a long walk up the canyon, or a long drive and a short walk from the top of the ridge. Chuck reports the drive is very difficult on vehicles. Walter suffered substantial damage to his Toyota truck.

Several members of PBSS were picked up just south of Parks Ranch on Sunday, March 29 while hunting for caves, on suspicion of drug trafficking. The Eddy County Sheriff's Department, DEA, FBI, and Border Patrol descended on them from ground and sky, thinking they were picking up contraband from a plane.

Someone may want to write a trip report on the above (i.e., Lake Cave and the drug bust), for publication here and/or in the Southwest Region newsletter.



need to add another bar. In fact, as soon as you feel the need for more control, add another bar. Remember, it is better to add one too soon than too late.

Right handed people should be using their left hand to push or pull the last engaged bar. In fact, usually your thumb and fore finger will suffice. Your right hand, the strongest and most skilled, should be the hand that holds the rope below the rack. Left handers would have their hand positions just the opposite.

My wife, Mirian, has made four effortless rappels into Golondrinas using this technique. I am left handed and my best rappels there have been made mainly using right hand thumb and fore finger on the last engaged bar for incremental control most of the way.

Spacers:

Spacers are seen on many racks now. Some people don't really need them. They are used to distribute the heat among the top bars and on very long racks for smooth rappels on long drops. When spacers are used, usually less control is realized and 1 or even 2 more bars must be put on the rack to get optimum control back. I have a special long rack with many spacer containing 9 bars. I named it "The Lane Monster" as it was designed by Buddy Lane. This is a great rack for tremendous drops and for use in belaying the rope in the rope climbing contests. I don't let beginning rappellers use these types of rack with spacers.

Brake Bars:

There are hollow steel bars and aluminum bars available. Hollow steel (SMC now makes a U shaped bar instead of the hollow steel) are faster so an extra bar

is needed for control. Many beginners feel more comfortable with aluminum. In our classes, we start everyone on steel with belay protection on their first rappels. This way, they "break in" on steel and really have less qualms about the bars from then on. I and many others feel that hollow steel is the best.

Special Racks:

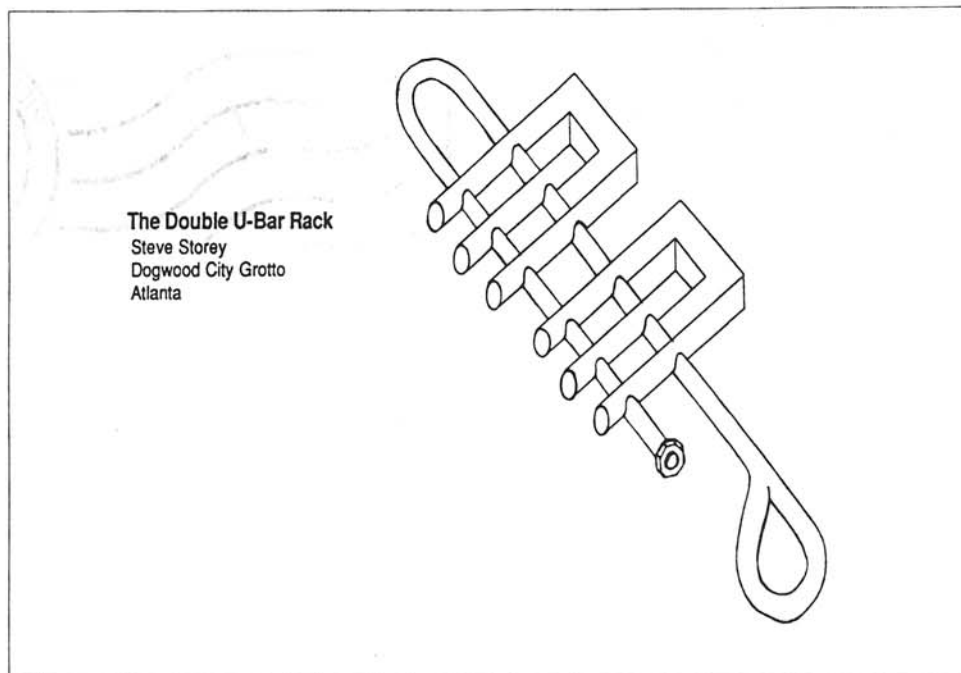
A standard six bar rack is best for beginners, as mentioned earlier. There are 5 bar racks which are lighter and a little more compact, but only experienced people should use these.

Long racks for long drops have a nice advantage in that 6 or more bars may be used during the entire drip. At the top of the drop, the bars may be spread out; then near the bottom, pushed together for excellent control on the entire drop.

I have done this on an 1100 foot drop several times. Of course, a clean rope was being used. A standard 6 bar rack may be used on an 1100 foot drop, but you may have to begin with 4 or 5 bars and add a bar or two on the way down. Remember, If you are going to do this, you must rappel at a moderate speed. The rope weight is a factor to considered on a long drop when using any rack, particularly a standard rack

Conclusion:

Over the years, I have noticed many people rappelling the "hard way". Perhaps this article will help them plus present instructors and even future instructors, to teach the use of the rack more efficiently. Always be safe. Be just as careful on your 10,000th rappel as you were on your first.



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	683-3305	35245
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	-----
McPherson	Kim		699-6135	-----
Nance	Jim		563-5208	27723
Pando	Noel		523-9294	-----
Scott	Melissa		694-4381	-----
Seefeld	Cheryl	570-3421 699-0396	687-5042	570-1124
Showalter	Ernie	563-1663	682-1700	-----
Wall	Denise	(214) 373-3755	691-0105	-----

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