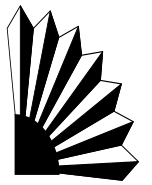


# THE HOLE NEWS



April 1994

Volume 10 number 4

The monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society

## FROM THE EDITOR:

Its time for another months newsletter and hopefully it will be a lot shorter than the last issue as we approached the postage limit . I haven't recieved any trip reports yet so I will probably just write my own. See the Amazing Maze cave trip report later in this issue. I am looking forward to the club trip in April and can't wait to go and enjoy the NSS convention in June. As some of you might have heard I spent 10 days of precious vacation time playing Mr. MOM staying at home watching my two kids while my dear wife toured Ireland and I think most of Europe. What a Husband! What a Husband!

Bill Bentley

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The Hole News is the monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons maybe reproduced by publications that exchange newsletters with PBSS, as long as proper credit is given to the author. Items for this newsletter should be sent to Chief Editor, The Hole News c/o Bill Bentley, 400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Texas 79703-5308.

Membership dues are still only \$ 5.00 and should be sent to the treasurer c/o Don Carlton, 1301 Daventry, Midland, Texas 79705. If you'r interested in caving or even think you might like to try contact Chuck Anderle at (915)-685-3119. or if you not from this area and some how through circumstances beyond your 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.

## Happy Caving.



## OUR NEXT MEETING:

Our Next meeting will be at our favorite pub Murry's Delicatessen, which is located at 3211 West Wadley. It's easy to find because Murry's is located on the South side of the Wadley River, in the strip shopping center, East of Midkiff Rd. and Texas Burger. Don't be an A.S.S. and be late. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM, Caver gossip and food consumption starts at 6:30 PM and is optional, however if your not there or are late then you will be the topic of discussion. So on April 12th, 1994 you are expected to be there and be informed.



## PBSS TEN YEARS AGO:

*The PBSS held their April 84' meeting at the home of Bill Bentley. They were excited that the NSS had, after months of waiting allowed them to be chartered as the 300th grotto. They were busy making plans for the Bat Cave Blowout and Skipper Roast. This was a busy time for the PBSS as they had 2 trips to Amazing Maze cave and other trips to Wizards Well, Lake, Helen's, Wen caves, and the Terlingua Sinkhole. There was a big stink raised over which regional affiliation the PBSS should go with the TSA or the SWR. The cover art for the PBSS "SPYLUNK" later won an award at the 1986 NSS convention at Tularosa N.M.*

## Future Cave Trips: And other events from PBSS and other Grottos.

April 1st-3rd, 1994 Three mile Hill Easter trip. One vertical and one horizontal cave trip per day contact Martha Mc Arthur @ 817-723-9890. Families welcome. This sounds like a good one!

April 1st-3rd, 1994 Carlsbat Cavers. Rope climbing demonstration and interpretation. contact the Westons @ 505-887-6790.

April 9th-10th, 1994 Colorado Bend State Park TSA Project. Contact Ed Young @ 214-262-8188

April 16th, 1994 Ogle cave work trip. This will be a ranger lead trip and the \$10.00 fee will be waived for those who are working. Contact Noel Pando @ 915-523-9294. More details at the next meeting.

April 23rd-24th, 1994 CRF mid Spring expedition. Guadalupe Mountains contact Tony Grieco @ 505-393-5604 or Fritz Hardy @ 505-345-1709. Ed. note: I plan on making this one.

April 23rd-24th, 1994 TSA Meeting at Bracketville, Tx.

April 23rd-24th, 1994 GYPKAP Survey. Contact Steve Peerman @ 505-523-2167

April 30th, 1994 CRF Dry cave expedition. Contact Pat Helton in writing @ 3517 77th Dr., Lubbock, TX. 79423

May 28th, 1994 Spider cave work trip. This will be a ranger lead trip. And \$10.00 fee waived for workers.

May 29th, 1994 Chimney cave work trip. Contact Noel Pando @ 915-523-9294.

June 20th-24th, 1994 NSS Convention Bracketville at Ft. Clark Springs. Contact Ron Ralph @ 512-441-0050 or Jay Jorden @ 214-398-9272.

### Cavers DO'S and DON'TS:

If your crossing Public or Private land, if a gate is closed leave it closed and if it is open then leave it open. A good rule is leave everything the way you found it.

If you have to go, then crap far enough away from camp that your not offensive to others and by all means cover it up.

Do not spit your chew or smoke in the caves. Tobacco has no place underground.

Do not make ground fires on ranching land unless permission has been granted.

No dogs on sheep ranch land.

When you leave your campsite make sure it is clean.

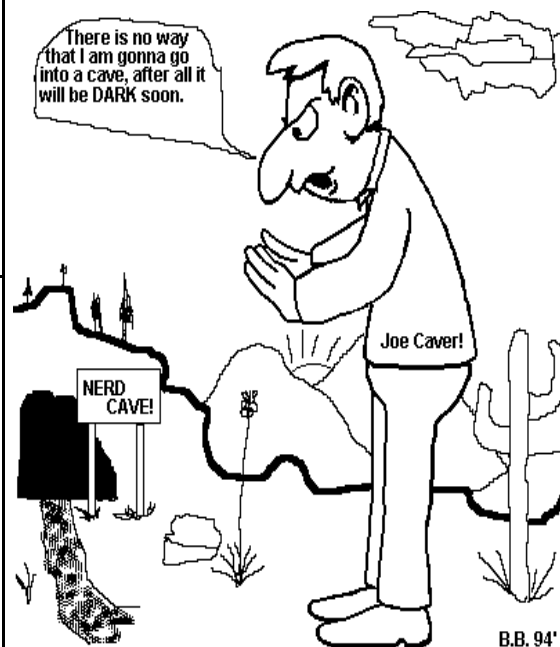
We all know these rule and they are real easy to follow and might keep us from getting run off from one of our favorite caving areas.



Noel is putting together a hand-guide book for new cavers who want to join and for old timers who need to brush up. So corner him at the next meeting and let him know about any ideas concerning safety, proper conduct, and general caver type stuff. This will help out the new guys so that they won't feel so out of place and might prevent some terrible disaster.

Ken Kamon reports that on Saturday March 19th, 1994, Rose, Allen and Shawn Laman went to Frank's cave and had a wonderful time and remarked on how this kind of caving was sure not a waste of time. Sunday did not offer them the same pleasures as they experienced vehicle troubles and missed out on a fun trip to Gunsight and Sentinel Caves. They also missed Susan Herpin from Houston whom they were to meet.

### Caving Humor:



# Trip Reports: And other lies and stories...

## Amazing Maze Cave by Bill Bentley

It had been since November since I had been underground and I was about to get the fever bad and was really looking forward to getting underground again. I left on Friday March 4th, 1994 about 6:30 PM and was loaded with the usual cave and radio stuff that I am known to carry. One hundred and five miles later I arrived at the Gate to the parking area around 8:30 PM and guess what I forgot? The combination to the lock. Actually I failed to get it from Gralin or Walter before I left. Wait a minute I just happened to have at my disposal a VHF amateur transceiver and the highest class of amateur radio licence that took me 4 years and 8 months to achieve. I could just call into Ft. Stockton, TX. and talk thru a series of linked repeaters to Midland, TX. and have someone call Gralin and get the combination. All of this is worth DUNG if no one in Midland is monitoring. After waiting 30 minutes the old thinker suffering from a lapse of the Alzheimer's suddenly remembered the combination. I went in and realized I was the first to arrive. This excited me as I could pick the best camping spot. Now if you have never been to the Amazing Maze cave parking/camping area, it is a lush tree covered place with soft green grass and a big change from the surrounding desert landscape. I am not sure why it is so nice there. It is only surpassed in its beauty by the Parks Ranch camping area. I set up my camp and after straining my brain earlier I decide to sit and wait. Along came Walter in a few minutes, I could tell it was him by the way he missed one of the crucial turns and ended up in a thorn bush patch just outside of the plush camping area. We sat and talked a while and Orin and crew arrived from San Antonio.

It was a little bit cool this night and I had put on my jacket. It wasn't long before the Mc Arthur gang from Wichita Falls arrived having taken the scenic tour by way of Ft. Stockton. This group was many in number and I think they had some people who were just picked up along the way, oh well who was counting? After visiting a while I turned in and was oblivious to all the stirring at 2:30 AM. I slept like a baby.

The next morning everyone was slowly coming to life and breakfast was being cooked and served at the various campsites. I had a MRE, omelets and ham I think or else I eat my elbow pad. I'm still not sure. I was poorboying this trip so it was MRE's all the way. For those of you who don't know what a MRE is well too bad I'm not going to tell you...

After breakfast and some world renown Walter coffee (better known as roofing tar) we saddled up our caving gear and started for the cave and I was the first to arrive with key and rope. It took a little while to get my mouth in the right position to coerce the magic "Warton" lock into opening. Ten minutes later it was open and the entire group arrived and one by one they entered the small opening and I was last to enter as I was to lead about half of the group into the newer Northern section of the maze. Once I entered the small entrance room and climbed over the bodies we followed Walter's half of the group to the DH spray painted on the wall and departed. This was great, a group of mostly cavers of the opposite sex and they were all following me. The best part was that I really had no idea where we was most of the time. No one ever caught on so who was I to dispel this. This comes from telling one lie too many.

After about two hours of touring the same 5 passages some of the group began to get suspicious, but I told them that we had been blazing a new trail all of the way. Suckers! After only my expert cave guide instructions were we able to find the Walter Expedition and what does a good leader do? I abandoned them to head for the surface.

Arriving on the surface in a few minutes I realized that others had arrive while we were in the cave. It was Bill Steel and family so I offered to take them into the cave and lose them too. They were delighted that I would go out of my way to take them in the cave and get them hopelessly lost. What fools! While they readied themselves I eat lunch. As soon as the gear was back on and the Steel's had their gear on we left for the cave. It was around 12:30 PM I think when I entered the cave for the last time. Bill's wife had the good sense to stay on the surface. Once inside we made a mad dash for the older section of the maze and there we met some of the other group. They thought we were some sort of rescue as they were laying around exhausted and having given up all hope of ever seeing daylight again. After the excitement and a sudden burst of enthusiasm and energy we headed deeper into the cave. I traveled in a parrallel passage to the main group and monitored their progress closely. Finding myself being the last of the group and in a tight passage I could hear ahead we had found the Walter Expedition and I knew they were in good hands so keeping in with tradition I abandoned them and 9 minutes later was out of Amazing Maze cave.

Back at camp we waited and rested and about 5:30 PM the rest of the group came out of the cave and the evening was spent hiking the mesa tops and cooking suppers and drinking or in Orin's case drinking and drinking and drinking. Was that supper at the end of Orin's trailer on the ground the next morning? I didn't hear a thing. The Evening went well and the salad I was offered from the Cavers from Wichita Falls was delicious. They offered Walter dog food and he thought it was lasagna so he thanked them and eat it. Martha's jokes kept most of the crowd in stitches. Everyone would sober up and listen when a Mexico cave story interrupted the laughing.

I turned in Early and don't remember a whole lot of what went on after that. I slowly drifted off to sleep with distant dreams of caving trips of long ago and the fun we had exploring for the first time..... the excitement of seeing the nether world..... the listening of the cave tales from the old timers..... wondering what happened to .....

## Seat Harness

**REI IS RECALLING TWO MODELS OF SEAT HARNESSES SOLD BETWEEN 1990 AND 1993 DUE TO A DESIGN ERROR. THIS ERROR ALLOWS THE WEARER TO IMPROPERLY ASSEMBLE THE HARNESS POSSIBLY ALLOWING IT TO COME UNDONE. NO INJURIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED SO FAR BUT REI IS NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES. THE RECALL ONLY AFFECTS THE “ALPINIST” AND “ON-SIGHT” MODEL HARNESSES. ABOUT 21,000 OF THESE \$30-\$40 UNITS WERE SOLD, MOSTLY THROUGH MAIL ORDER. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL REI STORE FOR FURTHER DEATILS.**

## OTHER CLUB TRIPS:

**The Permian Basin Outing Club will have a nmeeting April 5th, 1994 in Midland at Murry's at 7:00pm and there club trip is to the South Llano River for canoeing... fun...**

## PBSS

### OFFICERS 1994

**PRESIDENT: CHUCK ANDERLE  
VICE-PRESIDENT: NOEL PANDO  
SECRETARY: DON CARLTON  
TREASURER: DON CARLTON  
NEWSLETTER: BILL BENTLEY**

VISIT THE CAVES OF DEATH AT CARLSBAD, NM.



## BELIEVE IT OR NOT ! OR THE HOWLING AT THE MOON COLUMN

### Caver Products Testing Report

Recently I completed testing of a three cell flashlight made by Maglite. The test started by letting the flashlight roll around in the toolbox of a 4X4 pickup for a couple of months to prepare it for going caving. Next, while caving, I let the flashlight slide out of a backpack, roll down a quano covered slope, fly off a 20 foot drop, ricochet of a couple bolders, and land in a pool of water. Checking the flashlight revealed an output equal to approximately two fireflies.

As a result of this killer test, I can testify that Maglite makes an excellent, almost indestructable, watertight, heavyweight container in which to carry dead batteries.

CAVE SOFTLY  
{with light}

Submitted By Chuck Anderle NSS 31477



## Fatality in Cabello Cave, Sierra County, New Mexico

The following report was stolen from the "Bear Facts"

Cabello Cave, located on the rugged Western face of the Cabello Mountains, Southeast of Truth or Consequences (TorC), New Mexico, has been regularly visited by cavers for many years. Many people caving with the Mesilla Valley Grotto (MVG) of Las Cruces, NM have done Cabello as their first wild cave. On Saturday February 5, 1994 the Wilderness club from Las Cruces High School was touring the cave. The group consisted of six students and eight adult volunteers. Steve Peerman from MVG is a teacher at Las Cruces High School. Although not the club's sponsor, Steve helps when the club wants to do a cave, and was leading this trip. MVG also had a separate trip to Cabello Cave that day and was in the cave at the same time as the high school group, but the two trips were unconnected. The high school group had arrived at the parking area (very primitive road) about 12:00, and headed up to the cave. The high school group arrived before the MVG group and was in the second room while the MVG was in the cave. Peerman became aware of the high school group when he escorted one of the adult sponsor out of the cave who did not feel comfortable with some of the tight passages. The MVG cavers did not enter the second room because of the number of people already in it, and consequently finished their trip and exited the cave before the high school group. At one point, Leland Smith, one of the adult sponsor, was helping a student to the top of a rock slab at the top of a breakdown area in the cave. This slab was perched on a slope above a funnel up through which cavers had to come to enter the small breakdown room. The slab's estimated weight was 2.5 tons, and it was held in place by a flowstone "glue". After Smith boosted the student to the top of the slab, a sizeable piece of the rock broke off and came down on Smith. He rode the slab down into the funnel. Smith and the slab (estimated weight: 750 lbs) landed like chockstones, wedging each other like chockstones, wedging each other in the funnel. Smith was severely folded over, face to crotch, head to chest upright. The back of his head and upper back were against the slab, his tailbone against the side of the funnel. A second slab (estimated weight: 250 lbs) landed on top of Smith, in the forehead/chest area. Further collapse of material down the crevice was blocked by Smith and the large slab. Fortunately, no other students were below where the rocks or "slab" fell. Russ Richards, an EMT and sponsor of the Wilderness Club, was the only adult close to Smith when the accident happened. Above Peerman heard the double thump and thought it was a sonic boom. Screams from below sent him swiftly back down to the disaster site where Peerman told the others to check for a pulse. Richards did so, and found none. He noted perhaps three breaths from Smith, then nothing. They check three times over the next fifteen minutes, and detected neither pulse nor further breathing. There was no doubt in Peerman's or Richard's mind that Smith was dead. The rocks were too large to move safely, and Peerman still had the cavers below to consider. He concluded that it would be safe enough for the others to squeeze up past the body and the rocks, although it was quite tight.

Evacuating the students took priority, and all personnel below the funnel exited with out further incident. After the group exited the cave, they found that the MVG group had already gone. Arriving at the cars, the group immediately proceeded off the mountain. The group had a police-band radio, but one of the other adult sponsor, Rubin Jacquez, said that Smith's wife was a State Police (SP) dispatcher but was not on duty that day; however, she would be a part of the grapevine that surrounds the police department, and as such needed to be protected from finding out what happened from the wrong sources. Because of this factor, it was decided not to put the news out on the air. All Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in New Mexico are coordinated through State Police, so the cavers went to SP headquarters in TorC, made a report there, and called the various parents to assure them their kids were ok, and that there had been an accident. No details were given out. The decision was made to recover That body the following day. The group returned to Las Cruces. Jacquez and a policeman broke the news to Mrs. Smith. Students in the high school group were taken home, and the situation was explained to each family. School officials were contacted, and counseling sessions took place Monday morning. (Needless to say, everyone, including the adults were several traumatized by the events.) Around 8:00pm Saturday, MVG was notified and the SAR call out began. MVG has done a fair amount of cave/mine rescue, and is set up to handle this sort of problem. The call out was finished by 9:30 Saturday night. Sunday, the team left the Peerman home about 7:30. They gathered at the SP office in TorC at 9:00, along with people from the NM Mounted Patrol (a SP auxiliary), U.S. Border Patrol (BP), Bureau of land Management (BLM) and the New Mexico SP. Following a quick briefing, all left about 9:45, arriving at the cave parking area around 11:15. MVG cavers headed up the hill to reassess the situation, with Jeff Lory heading into the cave to direct in-cave operations. Initially, Lory escorted a SP officer into the cave to examine the accident site and ascertain that there was nothing suspicious about the death. Lory said that the place where the rock broke, etc. were obvious, and were pointed out to the officer, who took pictures, made notes, and did other police related things. After the officer exited the cave, Lory and two other MVG cavers reassessed the scene and noted that a big section of unfallen slab was potentially unstable. It was decide that extrification without shoring would be risky. Some timbers lying in the cave had been observed the previous day by other MVG members. The materials were available, but the team had not come equipped for shoring operations, so a call was sent out and about 3:00pm a chopper brought in chainsaws, webbing, jumars, and other equipment for shoring. (Note: The New Mexico SAR Plan is set up to make this sort of support almost routine.) Lory and Mike Lorimer (MVG) installed three shoring members, finishing about 5:00pm. The rock

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6....



Fatality continued from page 5.

was pronounced Stabilized, and Lory began the assessment of how best to remove the body. He concluded that the 750 lb. slab could be shored insitu, and he and Lorimer did so, squeezing underneath the body. At about 5:30 PM, Lory started removing rock and debris off the victim. a problem arose in the body recovery because Smith had been carrying a concealed semiautomatic pistol in a shoulder holster. This was quite legal since Smith had been a police officer but was currently unemployed. not being familiar with hand guns, Lory was uncertain if the pistol might discharge if disturbed. Unable to see the gun, (only the holster and straps), Lory climbed above the body and rolled the 250 lb. boulder off, and removed dirt, rock, and bloody clothing until he could clearly see the pistol. A BP officer climbed down to a point above Lory and coached him on safely retrieving the handgun. Lory then carefully climbed up to the BP officer who took the gun, removed the magazine and cleared the chamber. Extrication continued, with more dirt being cleared away until Lory decided that the body could be lifted out of the crevice. A rope was lowered, and a harness of loops tied around the body. MVG cavers Robert Foster and Larry Apodaca hoisted from above as Lory pushed, lifted, and guided Smith's body out of the constriction. As the body was lifted clear, the rest of the material in the crevice slumped. Lory had moved clear, and only caught some dirt and rocks on his feet. He was unhurt. ( Apodaca was deputized as an agent for the County Medical Examiner, and photographed the accident site and initial recovery procedures.) Lifting continued and various agency people appeared and began relieving cavers. Lory, exhausted, was relieved by a BP SAR officer. A Mounted Patrol officer relieved Apodaca, and Foster stayed with the operation until the body was out of the cave. As the body was lifted to the top of this drop, another slab came loose, higher than the first. On the way down it bumped a BP officer, but no injury beyond a minor bruise was received. Due to extensive fractures (more than 30, including shoulder blades) and rigor mortis, the the usual lifting harnesses did not work. The body was finally tied in with a good deal of extra rope and webbing, and this provided sufficient for transporting to the top of the breakdown area, with a good deal of careful guiding. It was determined that all personnel were present and uninjured. The body was placed in a body bag, and the eventual extraction from the accident site was accomplished by tying Smith's body to an aluminum open-frame backboard to give the team "something to hang on to." All hands were out of the cave by 8:15 PM. Equipment was gathered, and the group returned to the cars, leaving the body in a protected area near the entrance, and eat cold cheeseburgers donated by the Mc Donald's. Mc Donald's has always been ready to help with feeding volunteers during SAR missions. They returned to TorC SP office about 9:45 and received a "psych treatment" (counseling) from the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team, a SP group that tries pre-emptively to prevent shellshock to personnel on major accidents, ect. The MVG folks left about 11:00 PM and made it back to Las Cruces at about 12:30am Monday morning(February 7,1994). The body was recovered by helicopter from the cave entrance Monday morning, starting about 9:00 am, as well as the equipment. The grotto took their personal stuff with them; their rescue casch was recovered by helicopter. This was the third body recovery for MVG, the first in a cave. The grotto has also had five live victim rescues (one in a cave) and one search mission. Most of the other missions have involved situations in mines. BLM is planning to tighten their management policy on this cave. They have already contacted Jim Goodbar (BLM Carlsbad), asking him to come over and do initial assessment with them for a gate installation. Lory has volunteered to help them and show them the accident area in the cave. The whole breakdown area of Cabello cave needs to be examined carefully. MVG used to consider Cabello a good, safe cave, excellent for novices. This opinion has now changed.

## **CLOSED UNTILL FURTHER NOTICE: OUT TO LUNCH**

Reported by Chuck Anderle

I recently spent several weeks remodeling a ranch house in Brewster County and am sad to report that another cave is closed to visitation. The new owner of the ranch that includes Out To Lunch cave has had unpleasant experiences with lawsuites and untill further notice will not allow visitation of the cave.

At least this closure is not due to thoughtless or stupid actions of sportsman or cavers, but does give me another reason to question the need for more than one small law school in our great country. Will other newsletter editors please note and pass along this information so the owner will not be bothered.

Does anyone know for certain details of a Texas law I have been told was passed last year which protects landowners from lawsuites by persons engaged in sporting activities? Please send details to: Chuck Anderle, Permin Basin Speleological Society, 5707 E Co. Rd. 57, Midland, Texas 79705.