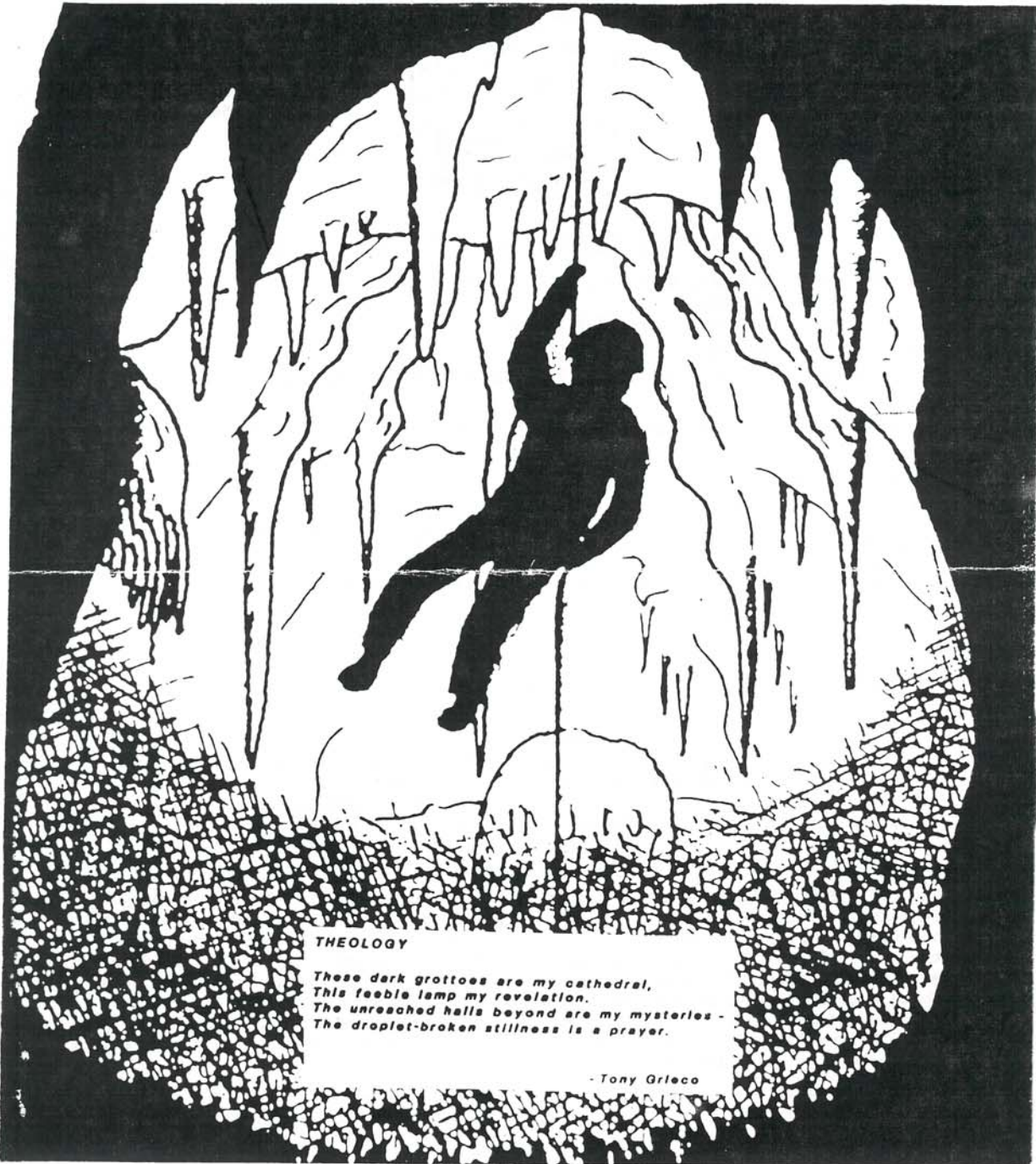


# P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK



## THEOLOGY

*These dark grottoes are my cathedral,  
This feeble lamp my revelation.  
The unreached halls beyond are my mysteries -  
The droplet-broken stillness is a prayer.*

*- Tony Grieco*

Volume IV, No. 3

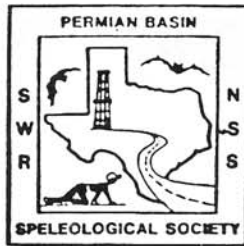
MAY/JUNE

MAY-JUNE 1987

# P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3

PAT KAMBESIS - PRESIDENT  
3313 FANNIN  
MIDLAND, TX 79707  
(915) 697-3807



JIM NANCE - EDITOR  
P.O. Box 30824  
MIDLAND, TX 79712  
(915) 563-5208

## PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 1987 CALANDER

MAY 2 & 3 ... BAT CAVE BLOWOUT & ANNUAL SKIPPER ROAST  
14 ... MEETING  
16 & 17 ... SENTINEL & BIG DOOR CAVES  
JUN 18 ..... MEETING  
20 & 21 ... SOUTHWEST REGIONAL, FORT STANTON CAVE IN NEW MEXICO  
JUL 16 ..... MEETING  
18 & 19 ... PINK PANTHER, PINK DRAGON, PINK PALLETE, & DAMN CAVES  
AUG 13 ..... MEETING  
15 & 16 ... MYSTERY TRIP \*  
SEP 17 ..... MEETING  
19 & 20 ... OGLE, LAKE, CHRISTMAS TREE, WEN, HELENS, CORKSCREW CAVES \*\*  
OCT 8 ..... MEETING  
10 & 11 ... PBSS HOSTS THE PBOC (OUTING CLUB) AT GYPSUM CAVES & NEW CAVE  
NOV 19 ..... MEETING  
21 & 22 ... OPEN  
DEC 17 ..... MEETING  
19 & 20 ... OPEN

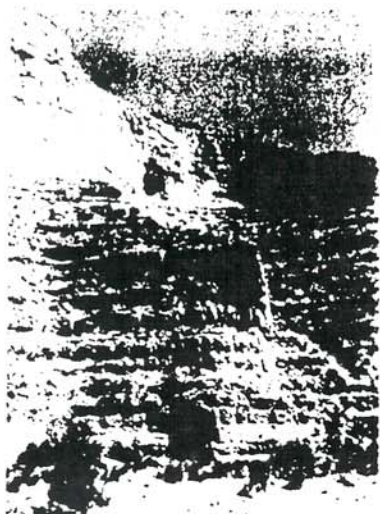
## MONTHLY MEETING

The P.B.S.S. meets once a month in the assembly room of the Texas Department of Public Safety at 7:00 PM. The meeting, usually on the 3rd Thursday, is open to the public and involves any topics of interest, slide presentations if available, and plans for upcoming trips. Please call the editor if you need directions.

## P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK NEWSLETTER

The P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK is the official publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society, a grotto (chapter) of the National Speleological Society. Membership, which includes the bimonthly newsletter, is \$4.00 a year paid to the editor. Make your check payable to Jim Nance. Material for publication is encouraged and should be sent to the editor. Items need to be original so as not to violate copyright laws. Those articles arriving after the date of publication will be printed in the following issue. Republication of material included in the P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK by other NSS publications is encouraged, others may do so with permission of the editor. Please call or write the editor concerning any changes of address.

NOTE: Membership expirations are noted on the address labels.



Entrance to "Big Mudgetts Cave."  
photo by editor

#### P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK EDITOR CHANGE

Former editor Bill Bentley has asked me to assume the duty of editing the bimonthly Spylunk. Bill, and others before him, have done a great job in the past issues. I hope to be able to continue the tradition. As in any successful newsletter, it must have the support of those that read it. Several agencies and personnel from other parts of the nation receive our newsletter. For most, what they read in the Spylunk is their only contact with our society. Any trip reports, cartoons, or anything else of caving interest should be brought to my attention so as to share it with other cavers. Send your material to: P.O. Box 30824, Midland, TX 79712.

Enjoyable/Safe Caving To All ... Jim Nance

#### CAVING, THROUGH THE EYES OF A NOVICE by Jim Nance

A longtime dream of mine came to past on March 21, 1987 when I made my first wild cave trip to Big Mudgetts Cave near Carlsbad, NM. Up until this time, my cave explorations had been confined to the public trails of Sonora and Carlsbad Caverns. Don't get me wrong. The commercial caves are really great, but I yearned for the opportunity to get away from those areas of asphalt, handrails, and artificial lighting. Along with six other cavers from the P.B.S.S., we made our way to the cave. Since my job, for the past 12 years, is handled from a chair, my lack of physical activity took its toll. Once I made it to the entrance the odor, that only a cave can emit, brought new life into my body. There's something about that fresh smell which brings about a feeling of well-being. Turning on my electric headlamp was the beginning of what would no longer be a dream, but the start of an adventure I would never forget. All the months of reading and studying caving books were finally being put to practical use. The cave environment very obligingly saw to it that my new helmet, coveralls, and boots were quickly broke in. My trusty helmet was constantly sacrificing itself, so that I would not suffer, as I negotiated the initial low ceiling and crawlways. Getting away from the main trail, into the side passages, was making me feel more and more like a true explorer. The excitement of entering a passage that "went," caused me to forget the basic caving rule of turning around to see where I'd been. When the passage finally pinched out, I turned around to find several exits, only one of which led back out. Finding the right one, without getting further lost, proved to be interesting. Trying to keep a level head, with your mind independently thinking about the amount of food and water you brought and the name Floyd Collins, is not easy for a first-timer. Through the process of elimination, my two companions and I found our way back into the main portion of the cave. Reflecting back, that small chamber where the passage ended, was one of the more beautiful areas I saw. It had a little of most everything, but in miniature. The bright "stars" I noticed overhead on the roof turned out to be reflected light from individual droplets of water clinging to several small stalactites. Have you ever had the sensation that, regardless of how many other people have visited the cave before you, one certain area was created especially for your enjoyment, and that it had been waiting and developing for ages till you finally arrived? (con't)

I've never before felt such a strong sense of peace as I did in that small chamber. As we entered the deeper regions of the cave system, the formations became more numerous along the walls where water was present. After regrouping, we slowly made our way back out into the bright sunlight. In the years of cave exploring to come, I hope that each one rejuvenates the feeling of wonder and amazement that I felt on this, my first wild cave adventure.



CHRISTMAS TREE CAVE by Suzy Noldan March 1, 1987

Kathy Schwehr, Lori Vian, Will & Eve Feltman, Jim Siegmann, and Suzy Noldan.

This trip report is mainly written to thank Will & Eve Feltman for sharing their knowledge of cave photography with us. Will & Eve were able to arrange a trip to Christmas Tree Cave for us. When we were there, we worked on cave photography and vertical techniques at the small entrance drop. We all met Eve & Will on a tour of New Cave the weekend before this trip. Will & Eve are from Wisconsin and are photographing various parts of the cave for the Park Service. Christmas Tree Cave is a pretty, little cave in Slaughter Canyon on National Park Service land. The cave consist of an upper and lower room, with beautiful formations in the upper section. The cave is named after a formation which looks like a Christmas tree. We spent many hours setting up photographic shots and trying various lighting techniques. Kathy, Jim, and Will were the photographers; Lori, Eve, and I were the grunt laborers and muddy models. We also spent quite a bit of time at the entrance drop. Though only 25' deep, we were able to rig two lines. Since Will & Eve had never done any vertical work, we worked on various descending and ascending techniques. Everyone agreed that the body rappel is Okay for short drops, but would be very painful and dangerous for long drops. Lori must have climbed up and down the drop 5 or 6 times; trying the inch-worm, rope-walker, and climbing with a self belay. Kathy was intrigued by that useful little knot called the prusik. All in all it was a fun trip.

## CAVING ADVENTURE by Ira Sasowsky

Most of you reading this probably don't know me. I'm a caver from Pennsylvania who use to live in Andrews, and that's how I became a member of the PBSS. Anyway, last Summer I was in Arizona to do some caving, and thought I'd tell you about a trip I took which had the highest effort-to-cave-length-ratio I've ever experienced. Everyone knows that there are no caves in Arizona except the ones spotted on USGS 15 minute quads. It was two of these which caught my attention: Tapeats and Thunder River Caves in Grand Canyon National Park. I caught a ride to Las Vegas, New Mexico with a friend, and at 5pm one Summer day I found myself with my thumb sticking out as the sun was setting. By 3:30 am on Friday I was at Tucumcari, AZ where I slept by the side of the road for 3 hours, and started hitching again. Noon found me at Grand Canyon Village, 30 miles from Desert View where I was supposed to meet my friend Ellen, who had the permits. I called her and she said: "Oh great, you're in G.C. Village; could you pick up the rafts we are going to borrow for the trip?" I walked around till I got the rafts and then started hitching to Desert View. At this point, my pack weighed 85 pounds according to a bathroom scale. Hitching in a National Park is the worst! Tourists are scared that you may ruin their AAA-approved-plastic-KOA-Winnebago-adventure-trip. I arrived in Desert View, and then we drove 200 miles to our trailhead on the north rim. In the morning, we hiked to Thunder Cave, a descent of 3400 feet over 11 miles. In our packs we had rafts, helmets, lamps, etc. We stashed water along the way for the trip back (our hike was to be "P" shaped, with the bottom of the "P" being the trailhead). The cave was flowing too much water to enter, so we gave up on it and after sleeping, hiked to the confluence with Tapeats Creek to try and do Tapeats Cave. Tapeats Creek was so high, though, that it was risky to go up the canyon, and we gave up again. Caving gear never seems so heavy as when it's useless, and 4000 feet below your trailhead. We hiked down to the Colorado River, and the next morning hitched a ride on some rafts (commercial trip) down river. Along the way the rafts stopped at Christmas Tree Cave, which is a large room formed in the Pre-Cambrian Base Limestone at river level. This was to be the only cave we visited. The rafts let us off at Deer Creek, and we hiked back to our car in 1½ days. So...to see 100 feet of Grand Canyon, I drove 2000 miles (PA to NM), hitchhiked 600 miles, drove another 200 miles, hiked 28 miles (ascent and descent of 4800 feet), rafted 3 miles on the Colorado River, drove 250 miles, took a bus 137 miles, and flew 2000 miles (HOME)! The funny thing is, I enjoyed it.

## 2 explorers die in flooding of Iowa cave

Associated Press

LUANA, Iowa — Storm waters flooded a cave that seven people from a college recreation program were exploring, trapping two spelunkers who died of exposure before they could be reached Sunday.

Three of the explorers escaped on their own, and two others were rescued after spending the night in the cave. All were students or staff members at Grinnell College in Grinnell, east of Des Moines.

"The cave is in a dry creek bed, and when it began raining, sleet and snowing, water began pouring in there," said sheriff's Deputy Gary Darling.

Police reached the cave 30 minutes after the first three spelunkers called the school, but none of the officers was equipped to descend into the deep cavern, which drops off 107 feet before branching out in long tunnels.

Darling said the college then called the Iowa Grotto Exploration group, which sent two members

and a helper to the scene.

Darling said the two who died were brought to the surface about 2 a.m. They were identified as Cathy McClusky, an assistant professor of physical education and geology who also was leader of the Grinnell Outdoor Recreation Program, and Mike Price, a staff member in computer services.

Darling said the two other explorers were brought out about an hour later. He said they apparently escaped the rushing water by getting into a side cavern.

SEVERE WEATHER SEASON IS HERE by Jim Nance

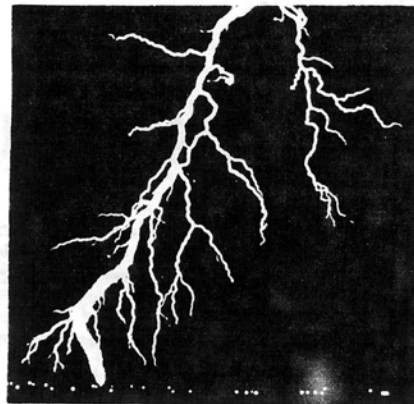
Cavers, being natural outdoor enthusiasts, are probably more prone than most to being caught outdoors in a severe thunderstorm, especially during the Spring and Summer months when we are more active in our caving. Caving itself has its own hazards, but getting to and from the cave safely is just as important. All of us are basically aware of the dangers of sudden cave flooding and hypothermia, but I would like to offer a few basic pointers concerning those sudden thunderstorms that pop up out of nowhere during your hike to or from the cave.



TORNADOES - Most frequent during the months of April, May, and June. Tornadoes should not be confused with rain shafts or other low hanging clouds as they often are. Their act of rotation distinguishes them from other cloud features. Dust devils are a common sight in this part of the country, but they are seldom associated with thunderstorms. Tornadoes, in the early stages, are often invisible till it picks up enough debris to form the common dark shape we are familiar with. Rotating debris down the road may be the first signs of a developing tornado. Unless you are very close to the shelter of a cave, one should quickly find a low area such as a ditch or ravine and lay

face down as flat as possible to minimize exposed areas. Keeping your helmet on will help to protect your head from flying, or falling, debris. If you should decide to run for it, do so at a right angle. The majority of tornadoes move from the southwest to the northeast at various speeds. During the tornado in 1979 at Wichita Falls, many people were killed trying to run or drive away from the storm. Later investigations revealed many of the homes they were running away from were untouched. Tornadoes are just too unpredictable and fast to safely run from.

LIGHTNING - Lightning kills or injuries more people each year than hurricanes or tornadoes. Unless you are in the shelter of a cave or your automobile (not touching any metal objects inside), the following precautions are worth mentioning. Obviously, don't head out on a trip if lightning is already occurring. If you should get caught outdoors; keep away from fences or any other metal objects, avoid the temptation of seeking shelter under trees, and get off hills or anything that makes you the tallest object for lightning to strike. It may be wise to crouch or lie flat till safe to move on. If you should get that tingling sensation, or if your hair starts to stand on end, drop to the ground immediately! This usually means a lightning strike is imminent and you are the target.



SUMMARY - The main problem with caving is that severe weather can often develop while we are inside, isolated from our environment. The very nature of a cave offers excellent soundproofing. If you can safely wait out a severe storm in a cave, do so by all means. It could save your life. If the cave is prone to severe flooding you may want to wait close to the entrance in case a fast exit is necessary. If, however, the cave entrance and exit is strictly vertical, I would suggest getting out quickly and seeking shelter elsewhere. The overall best method of avoiding these dangers is to keep up with the latest NOAA weather broadcast concerning your area prior to taking off on a trip.

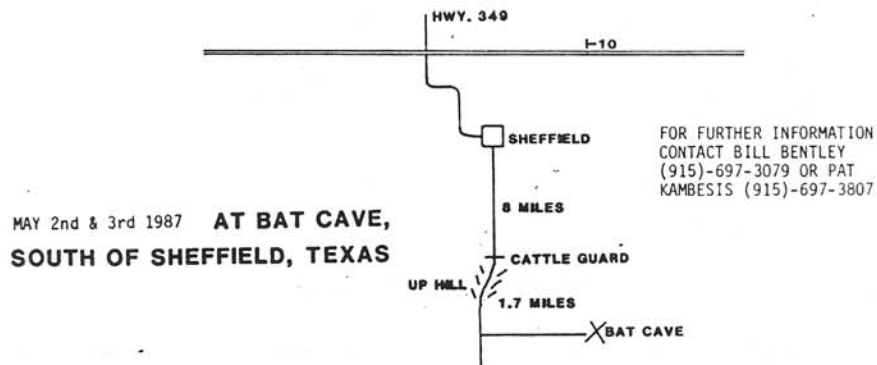
P.B.S.S. MEETING HELD 4-16-87

A fairly good turn out of members showed up for the monthly meeting, especially since this was the first time we began meeting at the Midland office of the Texas Department of Public Safety. Hopefully, this will become a permanent location. A special Thank You goes to Terry Bolger from Lubbock. Once again he made the meeting worthwhile by bringing several of his caving slides. Anyone who hasn't seen them is really missing a good show. If you have any more Terry ... bring them! If anyone else has something to bring or anything they want to share with the rest of the group, your more than welcome to do so. We need something to help make our meetings more interesting in hopes of bringing in new members or bringing those back who have quit coming. If you need access to a movie or slide projector please call Jim Nance at 563-5208 prior to the meeting. If caving brings you pleasure, introduce one of your friends to the P.B.S.S.

*The Permian Basin Speleological Society*

PRESENTS  
THE 4TH ANNUAL

## BAT CAVE BLOW OUT AND SKIPPER ROAST



**PLENTY OF EATING, DRINKING, SOCIALIZING, AND EVEN CAVING! BRING  
YOURSELF, SOME FIREWOOD, AND YOUR FAVORITE FOOD AND  
BEVERAGE- AND DON'T FORGET YOUR SKIPPER! \***

\* FOR THE UNINITIATED, "SKIPPER" IS A COLLECTIVE TERM WHICH REFERS TO ANY  
USELESS OR WORTHLESS PLASTIC FLASHLIGHT...

# Anniversary Celebration 25th Year

SUMMER  
REGIONAL

JUNE 20,21

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION SUMMER REGIONAL, JUNE 20th AND 21st. MEET THE REGION AT ITS BIRTHPLACE - FT. STANTON CAVE, LINCOLN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO.



RENEW OLD FRIENDSHIPS AND MEET NEW CAVERS AT THE 25TH BIRTHDAY PARTY OF SWR. SHARE STORIES WITH US AROUND THE CAMPFIRES. EXPLORE RECENTLY DISCOVERED BLOWHOLES AND DIG LEADS. REVISIT KNOWN CAVES. SEE THE INDIAN SITES. SHARE THE KEG WITH US AND PIG OUT AT THE SAT. NIGHT BAR-B-QUE. COMPETE WITH OTHER CAVERS IN THE SEXTATHALON.

## FORT STANTON, NEW MEXICO

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR SUMMER REGIONAL, FT. STANTON, N.M.

- FRIDAY, JUNE 19th.  
Early Bird Social and campfire lighting ceremony.  
B.Y.O.B. Special Entertainment.
- SATURDAY, JUNE 20th.  
8:30 AM till finished. Region Business meeting.  
Balance of morning free for caving or side trips.  
1:00 PM. Sextathalon.  
5:30PM. Keg Party Starts.  
6:30 PM. Bar-B-Que.  
10.00 PM. Bring your slides for showing.
- SUNDAY, JUNE 21st.  
8:30AM. Your wake-up coffee.  
Balance of day free for caving or side trips.

.....(clip and mail).....

### TASTEFULLY DESIGNED PRE-REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE FOR SWR BAR-B-QUE

Yes, I would not miss the Bar-B-Que to be held Saturday, June 20th at Ft. Stanton Cave at about 6:30 PM or whenever the taters get done. Reserve me a steak(s) for \_\_\_\_\_ people at \$5.00 per person. I fully understand that if I do not pre-register before JUNE 1st that I will have to cook my Saturday night meal for myself and will look funny away from the crowd.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ meals x's \$5.00/person= \_\_\_\_\_ . TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_  
Make checks payable to Bill Bennett, Treas. Plastic no good  
Mail to Lubbock Area Grotto, P.O. Box 1094, Lubbock, Texas 79408