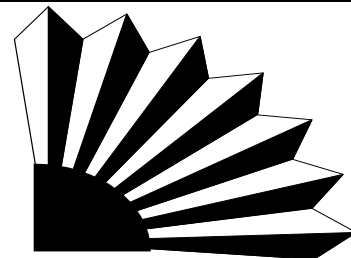
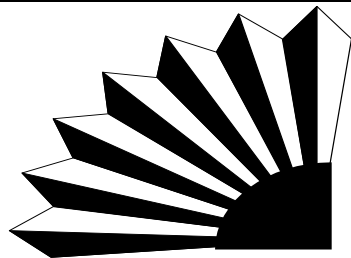


THE HOLE NEWS

MAY 1995





May 1995

Volume 11

The monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society

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bmp, .pcx, and cdr formats for graphics. However type or handwritten submissions are also welcome. All are greatly appreciated.

"The Hole News" is the monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons maybe reproduced by cave oriented publications that exchange newsletters with PBSS, as long as proper credit is given to the author. Items for this newsletter can be sent to the Chief Editor, "The Hole News", c/o Bill Bentley, 400 Eastwood Drive, Midland, Texas 79703-5308. Regular membership dues are only \$10.00 and includes one voting right, associate membership is \$ 5.00 and does not include a newsletter. Dues should be sent to PBSS Treasurer /Secretary c/o Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard, Midland, Texas 79703. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, the contact Noel Pando at (915)-523-9294. Or 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 Alabama, 35810-4431.

From the Editor:

Well I want to thank Pat Copeland for the trip report and Chuck for downloading the Internet stuff from the Cavers Forum and Cavers Digest. Without the contributions and trip reports there wouldn't be a newsletter, because after it is your newsletter and it is what you make it...I am looking for a replacement to take my job and do this for a while before I burn out!!!

Thanks all

Bill Bentley



Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the National Speleological Society chartered as the 300th grotto better known as the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be on May 9th, 1995 at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room at Murry's Delicatessen which is located at 3211 West Wadley in Midland, Texas. If you need directions or more information then call our official contact person Walter Feaster @ 915-699-7049. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM or there about and eating and caver style socializing usually begins at 6:30 PM and is optional. Topic of discussion will be the upcoming PBSS and CCCP trips. See ya there!



Food for Thought...or surfing the internet! by Chuck Anderle

The following was faxed from Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico and received April 9 It was sent by Gill Ediger, one of the participants, and is available for publication.

Bandits Attack Rafters in Chiapas from Texas Caver staff reports: According to reliable sources in Mexico, two American men and a Swiss woman were shot Thursday by automatic rifle fire while on a private rafting trip on the Usumacinta River, which forms the border between Guatemala and the Mexican state of Chiapas. The three, part of a group of 20 friends from three countries -- See Attack continued on Page 3....



Future Cave Trips: Also other events from PBSS and other grottos.

May 20th-21st, 1995 PBSS CCCP trip contact: Chuck Anderle @ 915-685-3119.*****

May 19th-21st, 1995 TSA Convention @ Kendalia Contact: Doug Allen @ 512-476-9031

May 27th-29th, 1995 CACA CRF Expedition contact: Bryan Holcomb @ 505-842-5156.

June 3rd- 4th, 1995 Government Canyon Karst Project, Contact: George Veni @ 210-558-4403

July 17th-21st, 1995 NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia, contact: Carol Tideman @ 410-727-2497.

September 2nd-4th, 1995 CRF Labor Day Expedition. Contact: Brian Holcomb @505-266-8485

October 20th-22nd, 1995 Texas Caver's Reunion, Contact: Gil Ediger @ 512-441-0050

November 23rd-26th, 1995 CRF Thanksgiving Day Expedition, Contact: Brian Holcomb @ 505-266-8485

Most all of this material was stolen from various and sometimes reliable caving newsletters in the Southwestern Region and surrounding area, including the TSA's "Activities Newsletter"

***** Denotes a PBSS club Trip...

Madonna Survey Trips, contact: Mike Huber @ 505-887-6065

Carlsbat Cavers, contact Phyllis Weston @ 505-887-6790 for restoration educational programs, off trail trips.

Honey Creek, contact: Mark Minton @ 512-847-3829

IF YOU HAVE ANY CAVING TRIPS PLANNED, PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW AND HE WILL PUBLISH THEM HERE IN THIS SPACE!.....

Trapdoor and Salamander Caves Rescue Reports

by The Masked Avenger! <amirza@silver.ucs.indiana.edu>
4/9/95

Trapdoor Cave

At appr 5:45pm Saturday afternoon, Amanda Clark and I got the call at my cabin in Lawrence County (one county south of Monroe) for cavers trapped by high water in both Salamander Cave and Trapdoor Cave. It had been a clear day there, but we could clearly see thunderstorms to the north. The report included the fact that there was someone trapped in the entrance of Trapdoor cave, unable to move due to the water. We immediately packed up and headed north, where we ran into extremely heavy rain and marble sized hail, heavy enough to cause us to slow to 30mph on the four-lane. This cell was fairly narrow, within 5 miles we were out of it, but continued light rain. Dwight Hazen was on scene at Salamander Cave where State Police divers were attempting to secure permission from their superiors to try to enter the cave, there was no one in command at Trapdoor where the Monroe County Dive rescue team was attempting to enter Trapdoor. I asked Dwight which situation he considered more critical, he told me to head to Trapdoor. All this took place via amateur radio while we were heading to the scene.

I heard the request for sand and gravel to be brought to Trapdoor in an effort to impound the water entering the cave. Trapdoor is a fairly safe cave as far as flooding, the entrance climbdown is about 10' and the body sized crawl is about 12' long. The rest of the cave does not flood to any significant degree. I got on the radio to cavers on scene to have them to stop this attempt, and contacted Monroe Co. Sheriff to get them to stop this. The problems we'd have would be twofold, not only would there be a huge pulse when the impoundment broke, but it would also wash sediment and gravel into the entrance, possibly blocking the

crawlway, compounding the problem. To divert the actions of the personnel on scene, I called for pumper trucks to be brought in to attempt to pump the water over the hill to slow down the flow entering the cave. In my opinion, this would not make a significant difference, the main course of action is to wait for the water to go down, but it gives the responding agencies something to do in order to fulfill their responsibility to take action. National weather reported one more cell that was heading our way, small but intense. Trapdoor would go down fairly quickly, but it's difficult to convey that to people who are demanding action now, particularly when you have parents and the media on scene. Further compounding the problem was rain, hard at times.

When I arrived on scene, at Trapdoor, there was some confusion as to who was in charge, there were Highway Dept. trucks and equipment beginning to try to create an impoundment, the stopping of which I made my first priority. There were also cavers and Monroe County Dive team at the entrance of the cave trying to enter the cave, talking with them I made the very next priority. I placed Willie Lunsford, an ISSA caver who has had some rescue training, and who I consider a strong caver in charge of the cavers and crew at the entrance, with the priority to not try to enter the cave until we deemed it safe. I also drafted some cavers to clear personnel away from the entrance, the cave is a swallowhole with steep slippery sides, leading right into the water washing into the cave, and there were at least 30 people standing around. Heading back up to the road, I encountered Officer Chambers(? names are difficult, the evening was a blur) of the Monroe County Sheriffs Dept who placed me in charge of the cave operations and

Continued on Page 3 see Rescue...

Rescue Continued from Page 2...

assumed command of coordination of the overall operations. I told him the game-plan, get the water pumped over the hillside and wait for the water to go down. Took a bit of coordination, but eventually operations started shaping up enough to leave me confident enough to go back to the entrance. By 8:40pm the water had gone down enough for Willie to try to do the crawlway, he had a full wetsuit on and was willing. I had Amanda and Tom Bertolicini rig a haul system so we could haul Willie out if need be, a simple Georgia haul (straight line pull) and a capture cam was used, since we had ample bystanders to run the haul system. He entered with a care package consisting of trash bags, candles, lighters, heat packs. 10 minutes later he was out and reporting that everyone in the cave was ok. By 9:10 we had several pumps running and the flow into the cave was a fraction of the amount it was an hour earlier, mainly due to the fact the the rain was holding off. We were due for another cell to hit at 9:30 and I figure we had about 10 or 15 minutes lag time before the flow would pick up again. I made the decision to go for it and Willie entered the cave to start escorting them out. By 9:30 all four kids were out of the cave. Just as the rain hit Willie went back in to bring out the dogs (2), when he handed up the first one, the flow had started increasing. When we do NCRC weekend seminars, we frequently tell the students "the water is rising" to instill a sense of urgency, Willie had heard me tell him this before in trainings, this time it was for real. By the time Willie had made

the last trip out to bring out gear, the water flow had picked up again, almost to dangerous levels.

Salamander Cave

Despite a successful operation at Trapdoor, we still had an operation underway at Salamander. This one was being run under the authority of the State Police. At that time, the entrance of Salamander, which is a high-flow bypass for Turtle Cave, was putting out a very high flow. Topside off Spicer Lane we had Dwight Hazen, Terry Hudson and Officer Cleveland of the State Police. At the entrance of the cave we had Tony Emmons and Jim Johnson as well as two members of the State Police diving team. Dwight, myself, and Officer Cleveland headed down to the cave entrance. I left Amanda at the staging area to organize a search of Coons and Grotto caves. At this point we had 1 vehicle located with a pretty good description that the two people had headed for Salamander, but I figured to cover all bases since it was the only thing we could do. We also had a report that there may be as many as 5 additional people in the cave, but were unable to locate a vehicle. The two we had a vehicle for were Ezra Erb, and a female.

At the entrance, Officer Cleveland decided to pull his people out of the operations until we needed them, the only thing at this point was to wait until the water receded, which could be as much as two days. It had been fairly dry recently, so we were hopeful that the water would recede more quickly. I headed back up to the staging area to run incident command from there. I established control of the entrance to Spicer Lane, and had radio link to the caver there on **See Rescue continued on Page 7....**

Real stories of cavers



Incident; August, 1984

Bill Bentley (24), While at his home attempting to unravel the mysteries of his Butterfly carbide light, unknowingly allowed some of the carbide to fall into the drain of his kitchen sink. Moments later, while trying to start the lamp, a spark from the lighter ignited the gas that had accumulated in the drain, causing a small explosion. No one was injured. Property damage was minimal, consisting mainly of drain-crap being splattered all over the kitchen. Bill is presently exploring the commercial possibilities of his new drain cleaning technique, and is planning to apply for a patent.

Analysis:

Carbide lights, like any tool, can be dangerous in the wrong hands (especially those of a fanatical electric caver like Bill). Only experts with hours of a training in carbide safety should be allowed to use them without parental guidance. (Ed. note: This gives new meaning to Do Not

Attack continued from Page 1...the United States, Switzerland and Poland -- were fired upon and ordered to land on the Guatemalan side of the river by four bandits. The three persons injured were Ursiline Sommer, a 37-year-old woman from Basel, Switzerland; Carlin Meyers, 34, from Long Island, N.Y.; and Gill Ediger, 47, of Austin, Texas. Sommer was shot in the arm and back, a bullet passing through her right lung. She underwent emergency surgery at a private clinic in Palenque early Friday morning and was flown by air ambulance to the U.S. Friday afternoon. She underwent further surgery there and is in good condition. The two men received minor flesh wounds, Meyers in the right elbow and Ediger in the right leg. Both were treated at a private clinic in Palenque early Friday morning and released. Over 20 rafting trips of a similar nature have taken place during the previous four months without incident. The area was considered safe. The attack occurred at 3 p.m. Thursday, the fourth day of a planned six-day trip. The two lead rafts were fired upon and ordered to shore by four gunmen hiding in the rocks on the Guatemalan river bank.

The bandits then went through the waterproof river bags, taking **See Attack continued on Page 5....**

Rock Split continued from last month in "The Hole News"

Another instance of a breakthrough was when John Fichtel, Bruce Warthman, and I made it through the Lewd Lou's Nude Scoop Connection in Sloan's. We were able to crack a large segment off one side of the narrow canyon. There was a slight crack, but it was a foot away from the canyon wall, so it didn't seem likely that so much rock could be removed that easily. How can you tell what is a good spot to hit? Obviously, thinner places and places where there is more leverage are preferable. The worst cases for chiseling or hammering are those in which there is no loose material at all. A very hard, vadose narrow canyon offers little prospect of enlargement. I'm thinking about a canyon whose walls are not cracked and the rock is of fairly smooth texture, offering little in the way of surface for the caver's glancing blows. Another dismal prospect is one in which there is not much room to swing the hammer. Also, sometimes there is enough room, but the angle is such that you must extend your arm painfully away from or above your body. Visibility is also a problem in tight places, and we know that hammer projects are more often than not in very tight places. Since chiseling requires both hands, access is even more important. Sometimes it is impossible to do the job right-handed and a left-handed person is needed. A notable hammer project was the penetration of the flowstone curtain which used to block the canyon in Smith Recluse cave, a fragment of the Cave Creek system that is not yet connected. After removing several thin curtains from the lower foot of the brown flowstone mass, it became apparent that the dripstone choke was thicker than we'd realized. Bill Walden tapped on the center of the obstacle and thought it sounded more hollow in one place in the center. He suggested we attempt to penetrate the rock at that point by hammering against it with the chisel. The thickness turned out to be about two inches. We were able to make a hole to see through, then to get an arm through, and, finally, our entire bodies. We discovered two very nice waterfalls and a quarter mile of rimstone canyon beyond the penetrated flowstone. Some might wonder at the callous attitude toward the sacred flowstone and dripstone that happens to be in the "wrong place". Does the brown color of the flowstone in Smith Recluse justify its intentional vandalism in the name of exploration? Would the caver who attempts to extend a cave by destroying some formations, and fails, be more open to censure than one who succeeds? Are there situations in which no exploration objective justifies compromising conservation principles? Is it all right to break a formation that is small but not one which is large? Is the principle of doing the least damage necessary better than no principle at all? I think we delude ourselves if we think our impact on a cave is negligible, even if all we do is go through it. For example, any cave in which bats hibernate probably ought to be avoided during the hibernation season because waking hibernating bats is harmful to the bats. It doesn't matter whether they are an endangered species or not. It is realistic to want to extend a cave by some means. Whether the means is justifiable depends on who you talk to. Anyway,

formations which choke a passage shouldn't be there in the first place. They are blocking the cave. I need to say a word or two about the dangers of passage modification by rock-breaking. There is obviously danger from falling rocks. A caver was temporarily trapped by a section of wall which came off during the Firestone-Humongous connection dig. Fortunately, the other two were able to free him. Not so benign is the prospect of falling rocks in the Rotten Fork blasting project. That one has been, I trust, abandoned. Maybe there are people who know more about that sort of thing. Let them try. I would prefer not to lose my friends (or myself) under the loose boulders of Rotten Fork. Another danger of hammering is injury due to poor aim. Some people prefer to get it over with and hit their thumb right away. I usually wait until it happens naturally. Part of the macho of hammering is the mashed hand you get in the line of duty. Wearing gloves is a good idea. This can prevent the lacerations obtained from scraping the wall as you hammer. It is also possible to hit yourself in the head when the hammer bounces back from the rock. Flying rock chips can get in your eye or ruin your glasses. (I used to wear glasses.) I replace my glasses annually; no doubt their lifespan is considerably shortened by flying rock chips. Also, when the rock dust gets on them, I tend to want to wipe them on a hanky, which is also coated with rock dust. Why do I like to hammer in a cave? There are a number of side benefits, but the real reason is that it usually leads to unexpected discoveries. Side benefits include getting to carry the hammer (which builds muscles and makes the other cavers' bitching about being tired easy to counter with "I'm not tired and I have this hammer. Why don't you carry it for a while?" That usually shuts them up.), getting to pick your own project because you are a specialist, getting credit for many neat discoveries, and getting out of worse projects, such as muddy digs, wetsuit nosejobs, and leading nurd tours. Then there are the emotional benefits. When I hit the rocks and break them I feel powerful. "Take that! Arghh!" It also makes you tired and you sleep better. And it keeps you warm. Yes, hammering is where it's at.

PBSS Officers 1995

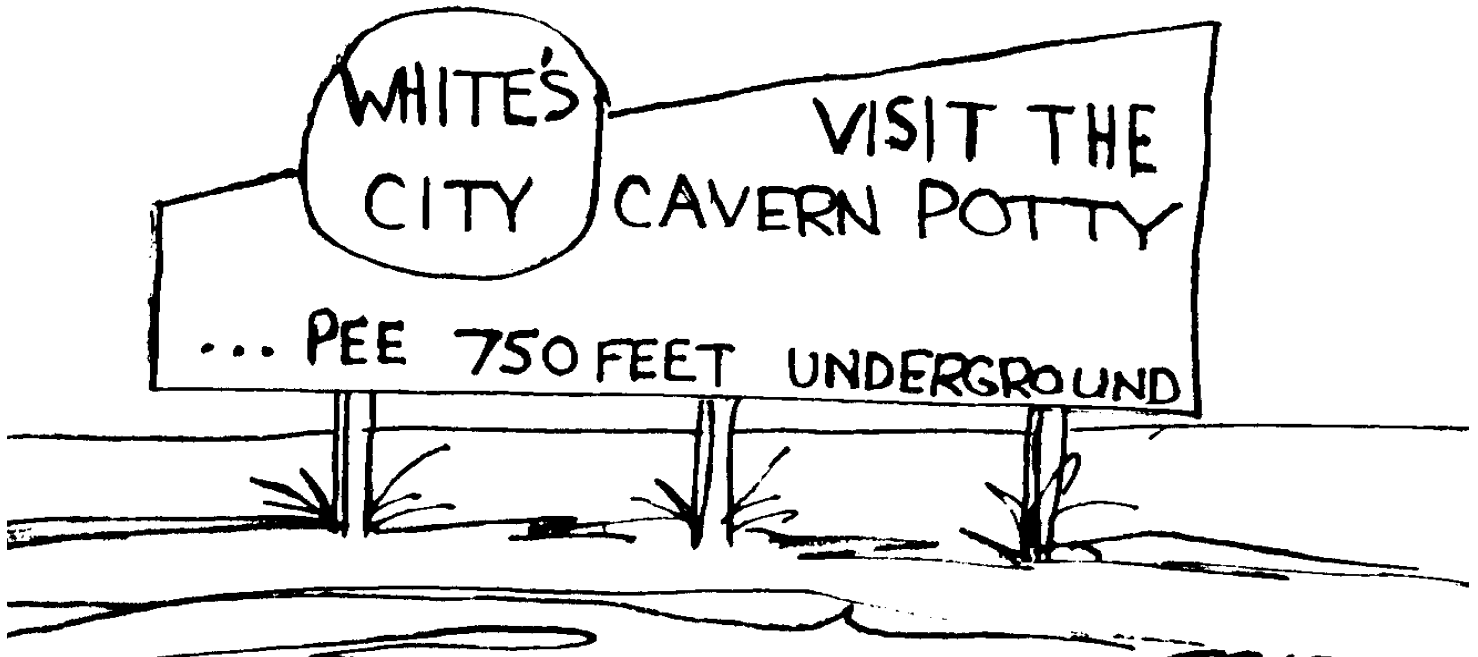
President: *Noel Pando*

Vice-president: *Gralin Coffin*

Secretary/Treasurer: *Walter Feaster*

Newsletter: *Bill Bentley*

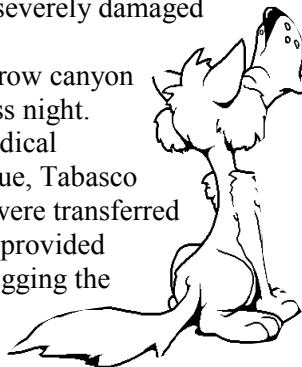
Cave Humor by Tony Grieco



Sweet Memories of U.S. Highway 62-180

GRIECO
6/90

Attack continued from Page 3....money, cameras and watches. Their activities were interrupted by the chance appearance of a Mexican Army helicopter which sent them scurrying into the thick tropical jungle. The rafts, partially deflated by bullet holes, were quickly reloaded and rowed downstream to a spot where physical assessments could be made of the injured and the rafts temporarily repaired. Due to the nature of Sommer's wounds, it was decided to make a forced evacuation to the nearest town, some 30 miles downstream. That required hard rowing for over five hours, nearly constant pumping to keep air in the more severely damaged raft, and the negotiating of several unfamiliar rapids in a narrow canyon in the total darkness of a moonless night. Police reports were made and medical attention was received at Tenicque, Tabasco before the three injured persons were transferred to Palenque. The Mexican Army provided assistance Friday morning in derigging the rafts and carrying equipment up



PBSS Treasurer reports that we have \$419.00 in the treasury! Also PBSS left a \$6.00 tip at Murry's last meeting to cover the tip that everyone forgot to give to our most effecient and courtous waitress. Chuck Anderle is still looking for someone to take the job as coordinator of the CACA Restoration Project. The CCCP is coming along nicely according to Chuck and another 4 to 5 feet of rock was removed and still blowing air! Remember the next trip is scheduled for May 20th and the 21st of 1995. If you are interested then contact Chuck at 915-685-3119. Also don't forget about the upcoming TSA Convention on May 19th - 21st 1995 at Kendelia...If you didn't get or lost the flyer enclosed in the last newsletter then there will be some at the next meeting....What ever happened to Alan and Rose Laman? and where is Tom



TRIP REPORTS: and other lies and stories



Whiteface Cave, 1-7-95, San Saba County

Cavers: Bill Tucker, Todd Tucker, Scott Sirkel, and Pat Copeland...

Bill had called about a possible trip into a cave that he had talked to Ray Mathews about. Boll told me that he and his son, Todd were cave divers, but the caves they had been into were caves they just walked up to and entered from the surface. He has a dive shop in Grand Prairie where they train and sell diving equipment. I told him that this would not be the case for this particular cave and advised him that he should come down and see the cave before he made plans to do any diving in the cave. After talking to the rancher, the trip was arranged for Saturday. Bill, Todd, and Scott arrived at the Dairy Queen in San Saba (Ed. note: I have been there the Dairy Queen that is!) and then we all drove to the ranch. The dirt roads were in pretty good shape after all the rain and moisture from the snow they had during the week. Arriving at the cave Bill was amazed at the unusual location of the cave. Most people think of a sink hole or maybe in the side of a hill or mountain, but the entrance to White Face is located in a group of small trees with a circular 10 inch diameter hole located almost on top of the hill.

Bill secured the rope for our descent down into the 20 foot sink. From there I went down another 20 feet to a safe spot and waited on the others so I could inform them of the safe route down the 100 foot slope tat consisted of clay, guano, and loose rock conglomerate. Huge boulders on top of the 45 degree slope are perched on clay and small rocks and on one trip a caver received a broken rib from loose rocks falling. They sit very still till I reach the bottom. Bill was next, followed by Scott and Todd.

After getting through the Bone Hole they followed me down holes and through the breakdown. The Saddle Rock makes everyone slow down going around it, finally we reached the Guardian (big stalagmite)and headed down the rocks covered with guano. The cave was unusually dripping. We finally reached the water and it looked like a mirror. The water was turquoise colored where it was the deepest. It is hard to describe how beautiful the water is at this depth of the cave. I was checking the water for the right hole while Bill put his bathing suit on and his mask and slowly eased his way into the water. Ray had told him about his two previous dives and said the best area was the first one, but when Ray made his dive the water was about fifteen to twenty feet lower than it was now, but I found the spot where he first dove.

Bill was not disappointed for he had high hopes of exploring this underwater cave, for this is what he does best. After Bill scooped it out Todd wanted to look for himself. Todd is Bill's 23 year old son and has been diving with his dad and mother since he was five years old, so he was well

qualified. He also was excited about exploring the underwater part of this cave. Scott and I sat and watched while they checked it out. Todd said he saw lots of small white cave shrimp and isopods, more than had been seen in other trips. Finally they were satisfied and stared thinking about how they would be able to get their tanks and gear down to this level. Many options were discussed and one was to head back up.

When we arrived at the bottom of the slope, Scott decided he would wait on us while I took Bill and Todd to check out Stalactite Hall. The huge mountain of bat guano seems to grow about a foot or more every year. The rocks were really wet with the damp guano but carefully we made our way up and over and down to the Hall. I could quickly see the Greeter was cleansed of most of the guano that had been there the previous trip. The water was not just dripping it was running off the ceiling and down into the rimstone dams. It was exciting to see the formations with so much water dripping from them. Near the Shell formation we could hear this gurgling sound of water trying to come out of the rocks above our heads. The Hall was just beautiful. All the rimstone dams and pools were full of water and running down the edge. I went down further to check out the dry cave coral lake but it was still

**The water was not just dripping,
it was running off the ceiling and
down into the rimstone dams.**

the same, dry! The water seems to stop dripping before it reaches this part of the room. We all started the crawl back to the Greeter and the guano covered rocks and up the Guano Hill to Scott. The time had come for the trip up!!! Todd was sent up first followed by Scott. There are two spots that are a little difficult and Scott found them. I had put my foot Gibbs safety in my back pack just in case.....and it's a good thing I did for Scott used it going up. When all had reached the top, Bill pulled up the rope while I coiled it. We found my spare light that was left in the sink part of the cave . It was rusted and corroded but at least it was still there. Everyone quickly put on dry clothes! It always feels so good to get on clean dry clothes even though your body is a little dirty. We discussed a possible date for a return trip to dive the waters below and see just what they will yield. Bill suggested that we drive back into San Saba and get something to eat. The Poor Boys Cafe has the best brisket I have ever eaten (sorry Hickory Steak). The TV was on and the San Francisco 49's were beating up on the Chicago Bears 30 to 3. We talked awhile about what was in store for the diving trip. Bill was leaving for a trip to Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, and the Amazon Basin for two weeks, so it was decided to try for the last of February or the first of March. I bide them farewell and headed back to Brownwood. Really had a great time taking them to their first dry caving trip, and made three new friends. Look forward to our next trip.

Rescue Continued from Page 3...
 a private simplex frequency we established as a command channel. It seems I blocked off Spicer just in time, minutes after I did, the media arrived. This kept the staging area from becoming a circus, and allowed us room to interview people and pass information without having to worry about the confusion large crowds can generate.

At various times, we received conflicting information as to the number of people we were looking for. I established a 99% probability that at least the two people were in the cave, and a 50% probability that there were an additional 5, the lack of vehicle leading me to the latter. By 1am, Dwight was reporting the water was receding at a rate of about a foot an hour. Terry Hudson was doing a marvelous job of dealing simultaneously with running the communications net, interfacing with the State Police, and interviewing people. Mark Brown, myself, and Jim Johnson suited up to head to the cave. Mark and I donned wetsuits and had Wendy and Amanda get geared up to head down later.

The three of us reached the entrance of the cave at appr 2am, Dwight headed back up to the staging area. We sent Nate Baynes back up to get a wetsuit and get prepared to go, the water indeed was well down. By 3am, the water had almost stopped flowing from the entrance and there was a siphon at the entrance crawl. We were also informed that family members were on scene. The entrance to Salamander is a low stoop for about 20', leading to a downward angled tube appr 10' to a small canyon passage appr 4' wide by 7' high, for about 300'. This is the part that floods completely. Turtle cave, a very small cave takes off at the base of the entrance tube and goes for several hundred feet, with many tight squeezes and bathtubs in dry weather. The end of the canyon passage opens into huge borehole

passage, often 30-40' high by 50' wide for several hundred yards.

By 4am there was a foot of air space showing. And a nasty looking whirlpool going into Turtle. At this point we could have entered, but I deemed it more prudent to wait another hour, given the rate of drop in water level. I reported back to the staging area the plan. 5am, we evaluated the water level, by this time there was 4 feet of airspace. The water looked swift, but it looked possible to chimney across the top, avoiding the downdraft into Turtle. We went back outside and reported to the staging area to standby.

At 5:05 am Sunday morning, myself, Mark Brown, and Nate Baynes entered the cave, with two backup teams consisting of Jim Johnson, Amanda Clark, Wendy Wentz, Willie Lunsford, and Tony Emmons, waiting at the entrance. We had a 150' line rigged, and the plan was for me to enter first with a sit harness being belayed, in case I slipped and started to be swept into Turtle. The water was about 3' deep, and the current swift, but negotiable. When I reached a safe spot, I anchored the rope to allow it to be used as a hand line and Nate and Mark came on in.

At appr 5:23 Nate Baynes made first contact with the two at the top of the breakdown pile, Mark Brown and I quickly made our way up. Both Mark and I are Emergency Medical Technicians, familiar with cave medicine. We evaluated their fitness to travel. Both were unhurt, though cold. The female was Elizabeth ?, and Ezra. Both looked to be around 19, Ezra was showing more signs of hypothermia, despite Elizabeth being of slight build (appr 90lbs). They were not properly equipped to be in the cave environment, no helmets, one flashlight each. Mark and I gave them several heatpacks and light. Mark headed out to tell topside they were ok, while Nate and I lead them out. By 5:37am they were outside and had warmed back up. We packed up the assorted gear around the entrance and headed to the staging area. By 5:47am we reached the staging area (ever climb a 250' hill, lugging 30lbs of gear while wearing a quarter inch wetsuit?), where family was reunited.

This series of events taxed the response

capability of the responding personnel. Not from the standpoint of difficulty of rescue, but because of the myriad of compounding problems, rain, poor coordination between agencies and responders, multiple scenarios, and the fact that in high-water situations, often the best response it to wait. Rescuers have come very near to dying in similar situations because they tried to act before it was prudent, primarily due to the pressure to do something. It is difficult to have the patience required to just sit tight and wait, but in almost all cases, either the persons will survive the time it takes for the water to recede, or they will be already dead. It is not prudent to risk the lives of rescuers in this situation, as is taught in the National Cave Rescue Commission curriculum, and has been the experience of local cavers in previous high-water situations. This is also outlined in the cave rescue protocols that the local cavers prepared for and presented to the various agencies. This can be difficult when you have family members and the media calling for you to take action, and who cannot understand why you do not.

Both operations went much more smoothly once coordination was established among the agencies and responders, it doesn't matter who is in charge, so long as someone is. The local cavers recognize the authority of the County Sheriff and the State police, and have good working relationships with both agencies. Past negotiations with these agencies has smoothed these relationships, as has the many successful operations performed by the cavers.

From the standpoint of the cavers, it is also difficult to have the patience to just sit tight when you see the opportunity to do something, despite the risk. I recognized this and set quantifiable limits on what we did, that I would not hesitate to defend in any arena. We also had to deal with the very real possibility that we were looking at deaths, Salamander Cave claimed 3 lives in 1975 under similar circumstances. Most cavers are civilians with little preparation for experiencing the deaths of fellow cavers partaking our activity, it is up to those of us who assume command of these situations to be sensitive to this and to do our best to prepare our people for this, and to provide the followup and support after such an incident. In this case, unlike 1975, it had a happy ending.

MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Abernathy, Tony	4415 Parkdale, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-694-7919	38776
Anderle, Chuck	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-685-3119	31477
Anderle, Jan	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-685-3119	31478
Benson Mr & Mrs.	P.O. Drawer 553, Midland, Texas 79702-0553	915-684-5886	Applied For
Bentley, Bill	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	21977
Bentley, Donnie	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	37549
Carlton, Don	1301 Daventry, Midland, Tx 79705	915-687-4352	30417
Carouth, Dutch	6300 East County Rd. 55, Midland, Texas 79705	none	Applied For
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701	915-682-1904	33471
Coffin, Kari	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701	915-682-1904	33472
Copeland, Pat	103 Lori Lane, Brownwood, Tx. 76801	915-643-2952	22361
Day, Kevin	2100 Grayson Drive, Grapevine, Tx. 76051	817-421-2925	Applied For
Day, Rick *	114 N.W. Ave. "F" Street, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9665	Applied For
Feaster, Walter	4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7049	31624
Fincher, J.D.	P. O. Box 472, Crane, Tx. 79731	915-558-7248	31859
Fincher, Richard	P. O. Box 472, Crane, Tx. 79731	915-558-7248	Applied For
Franks, Steve	422 W. Pecan Apt D, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-683-3305	35245
Glasson, Larry	1101 N. W. 7th Street, Andrews, Texas 79714	915-523-9772	Applied For
Gray, Larry	31 East 33rd Street, San Angelo, Tx. 76903	915-653-3823	19588
Gray, Steve	106 Canyon, Big Spring 79720	915-264-7619	Applied For
Grieco, Tony	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Expired
Hill, Tom	P.O. Box 60633, Midland, Tx. 79711	none	27888
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-524-6327	Applied For
Kamon, Ken	4400 Andrews Hwy # 801, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7192	34637
Kirby, Chris	P.O. Box 1177, Van Horn, Texas 79855	915-828-3211	Applied For
Lowery, Kerry	P.O. Box 39, Coahoma, Texas 79511	915-394-4230	Applied For
Mahan, Sheree	5230 Woodhaven, Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-723-8910	Applied For
McArthur, Martha	5209 Stillwood, Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-723-9890	35327
Montgomery, Bob	P.O.Box 2102, Casper, Wyoming 82602-2102	307-266-6929	15643
Nance, Jim	P.O.Box 30824, Midland, Tx. 79712	915-563-5208	27723
Pando, Noel D.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	39037
Pando, Noel M.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	Applied For
Parent, Larence	P.O. Box 849, Manchaca, Tx. 78652	512-280-2843	Applied For
Selman, Tom	P.O.Box 50304, Midland, Texas 79710	915-561-9413	14778
Slut, Guad	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Denied
Terrett, Tiffeny	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-685-3119	32792

* denotes new members

Please send all exchanges, corrections and updates for this list to Bill Bentley 400 Eastwood Drive , Midland, Tx., 79703-5308 , 915-697-3079, E- Mail is PBSS1Bill@AOL. COM. I will try to update and reprint with every issue depending on space available. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes.

Texas and Mexico Cave Rescue Call Collect 210-686-0234

This is Kriedler Funeral Home's 24 Hour number
Ask for "Cave Rescue" and "John Kriedler"

In New Mexico Dial 911

PBSS Club News! from the last meeting!

PBSS would like to welcome new members Tom Selman and Bob Montgomery as well as some Old Time members who decided to rejoin; Rick WHO? Day and Jim Nance. Bill Bentley sold all of the PBSS Patches and donated all of the proceeds to the PBSS treasury.....