

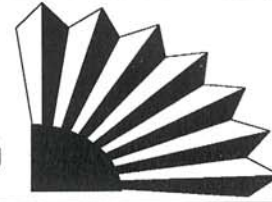
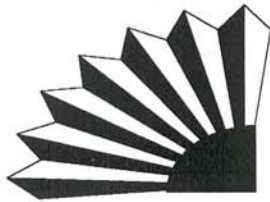
THE HOLE NEWS

May

1997



I GUESS WALLY FOUND ANOTHER
WAY IN.....



May 1997

Chartered 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the National Speleological Society

Volume 12 Number 5

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"The Hole News" is edited on Pentium P5 -133 MHz IBM compatible personal computer utilizing Microsoft Publisher 97 desktop publishing program. The editor will accept modem transfer (28.8kb N81) or 3 1/2 floppy disks with *.txt, .pub, .rtf, .doc, .wps, and .wri formats for trip reports and *.bmp, .pcx, .tif, .pcd, .gif, .tga, .clp, .cut, .dib, .iff, .img, .jas, .jif, .jpg, .lbm, .mac, .msp, .pic, .rle, .wmf, .wpg, and .cdr formats for graphics. However typed or handwritten submissions as well as hand drawn graphics are also welcome. All are greatly appreciated.

Contact the editor @ (915)559-3297 after 8 p.m. Fax line and voice mail @ (915)694-1824, any time. E-mail: <waltfeast@marshall.com>.



"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 Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. 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 Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then 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.

Next Meeting: PBSS

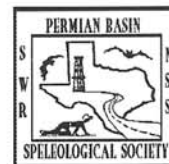
The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 1997 at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 west Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda:

PBSS Trip to Montgomery's Cave

Rock Hauling @ CACA June 14, 1997

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ (915)559-3297, or (915)694-1824. E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshall.com>.



PBSS Home Page

http://www.apex2000.net/personal/bb2145/pbss.htm

Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley and Apex 2000 ISP.



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

- *** May 10, *PBSS Trip To Hicks & Doc Brito*: Contact Bill Bentley @ (915)679-3079 or e-mail: <bb2145@apex2000.net>*****
 May 10-11, *TSA Colorado Bend SP Project*: Contact Terry Holsinger @ (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.
 May 24-26, *SWR Summer Regional*: Location to be announced.
 May 30-June 1, *0-9 Well*: Wet suite and vertical experience required. Contact Walter Feaster @ (915)559-3297 or 694-1824
 24-26 <waltfeast@marshall.com>.
 May 31-June 1, *CRF Memorial Day Expedition*: Contact Barbe Barker @ (972)594-1183 or <cavers@gte.net>.
 June 15-20, *CRF Carlsbad Restoration*: Contact Barbe Barker (see above).
 June 23-27, *The 1997 NSS Convention*: In Sullivan, Missouri. Contact Pam Saberton @ (314)772-6956 or
 <pams107326@aol.com>. Read all about it on the web page at <http://www.umsi.edu/~joellaws/nss>.
 June 28-29, *Powell's Cave Project*: Surveying and resurveying, plus cave digging. Contact Terry Holsinger @ (512)443-4241
 e-mail: <trhli@sprynet.com>.
 August 10-17, *The International Congress of Speleology*: Will be held in Switzerland. Contact Urs Widmer, Therwilerstrasse43,
 CH-4054, Basel, Switzerland, or <congress.uis97@chyn.unine.ch> or check the web page @ <http://
 www.unie.ch/uis97/> or (in USA) call Martina Golden in Michigan at (810)666-1683. There will be caving
 camps before and after the congress plus a special symposia.
 October 17-19, *Texas Cavers' Reunion*: Location to be announced.

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

From Wed. 2/26/97 Yakima Herald-Republic The HOLE Truth?

"Mel's hole" along Manastash Ridge is 9 feet wide & 15 miles deep - if you believe everything you hear on the radio.

By Wendy Harris of the Herald-Republic

Radio audiences nationwide were puzzled last weekend by the mystery of "Mel's hole," an alleged bottomless pit, somewhere near Ellensburg, WA, that can swallow refrigerators without a sound & resurrect dead dogs.

When radio talk show personality Art Bell received a fax last week from a man purporting to have the world's deepest hole on his property, Bell took it to the airwaves.

"I have no idea whether his story is true or baloney," said Bell during a telephone interview Tuesday.

Bell, who hosts the nationally syndicated "Coast to Coast" program, that airs on 328 radio stations across North America, is no stranger to the bizarre. His program regularly features topics that delve into the fringe, whether it's alien abductions, asteroids or crop circles.

During Bell's Friday night show, a man identifying himself as "Mel Waters" recounted the story of a seemingly bottomless pit on his private property along Manastash Ridge, which runs south of Ellensburg.

He claimed that he, like previous property owners, had been dumping trash into the 9-foot-wide hole for years.

"People have been throwing their trash in the well for decades: furniture, household trash, dead cows, building debris, you name it," Mel told Bell. "The hole never filled up, so I got curious, actually obsessed, & began trying to measure the depth of the hole."

Using fishing line & a 1-pound weight, Mel claimed to have fed 80,000 feet of line - or 15 miles worth - into the hole & said he still didn't hit bottom. Because the fishing line only had the strength to hold 20 pounds, he said he couldn't go any deeper for fear of snapping the line, since its cumulative weight was at 17 pounds.

On Monday, Mel returned to Art Bell's program with an update: The military had seized his property Saturday, moved heavy equipment onto it & surrounded it with cement barriers.

"There were armed soldiers," he said.

Mel then wondered if he'd be able to fulfill his wish of having his body tossed into the well after he died. He said he had decided that's how he wanted to go after hearing the legend of the dead hunting dog that was dropped into the pit.

"The guy was out hunting one day & saw his old, departed dog," he said. "The story is the dog came back somehow."

Listeners called in with ideas to help explain Mel's anomaly. But perhaps the greater mystery is: "Who's Mel?"

Soap Lake resident Richard Dawe, who heard the broadcast, tried to track down Mel & his property. And, as the Yakima Herald-Republic confirmed, there is no telephone listing for a Mel Waters, nor do Kittitas County records show any such person owning property along Manastash Ridge or elsewhere in the county.

County emergency officials said they knew nothing about Mel's hole, except from what they'd learned from reporter's questions.

"If you're calling about a big hole in the Manastash Ridge & the big military takeover, we have absolutely no information about that," a nonchalant Kittitas County Sheriff's Office dispatcher said.

Even if Mel's hole does exist, it can't be as deep as he claims, said Steve Reidel, a Richland geologist who teaches at Yakima Valley Community College.

"Technologically, it's a feat beyond humans," he said. "No one has ever drilled a bore hole that deep. Geologically, it wouldn't stay open. The horizontal forces of the Earth are very strong & they would close it off."

Bell said he, too, may never know the truth about Mel's hole, but such is the nature of talk radio.

"You can view it as a whale of a tale or maybe it's true," he said. "That's what happens when you do spontaneous radio. It's fun stuff. What I'm trying to do with the program is something different than normal talk radio fare that is offered everywhere else."

South West Caves Conservation Task Force

March 24, 1997

Dear Grotto Chair (or other contact):

As you may be aware, the USDA Forest Service, Southwest Region, is working on a plan to implement a "Fee Demonstration Project" on many of the managed caves on the Lincoln National Forest of New Mexico and the Coronado National Forest of Arizona. This is in accordance with a nationwide effort in many Federal agencies to recoup the costs of managing resources by imposing fees on the users of the resources. There have been meetings of Forest Service representatives with various Grottos in the area to explain the plan. However, there remains a good deal of skepticism amongst the organized caving community as to the advisability of the plan.

In an effort to better understand the concerns of the cavers, Roger Deaver, the Southwest Region Director of Recreation and Wilderness arranged a meeting with a select group of cavers on March 7, 1997, in Albuquerque, NM. Cavers in attendance were:

Jim Evatt (Sandia Grotto)
Steve Fleming (Southwestern Region)
Jeff Forbes (Sandia Grotto)
Val Hildrith-Werker (NSS Conservation Committee)
Dave Jagnow (NSS Conservation Chairman)
Ray Keeler (NSS BOG Member, Arizona Regional Assoc.)
Steve Peerman (Mesilla Valley Grotto)
D. Bruce Thompson (Arizona Regional Assoc.)
William Wadsworth (Sandia Grotto)
Jim Werker (NSS Conservation Committee)

The Forest Service was represented by:

Brent Botts (Assistant Director of Recreation and Wilderness, Southwest Region)
Roger Deaver (Director of Recreation and Wilderness, Southwest Region)
Jose Martinez (Supervisor, Lincoln National Forest)
Johnny Wilson (Recreation Staff, Lincoln National Forest)

The cavers present at this meeting were of a single mind regarding the Forest Service's plan - 1) They, and most of the organized caving community they represented WOULD NOT pay a fee for caving on the forest. 2) They would seek a nationwide boycott of all caving activities (recreational, conservation, and research) on the forest if such a plan were implemented. 3) A fee would be detrimental to the spirit of partnership in managing the cave resources that the organized caving community has enjoyed with the Forest Service for a number of years. 4) At best, the fee would not result in any significant revenue gains for the Forest Service.

However, the cavers also recognized the lack of funding the Forest Service has for cave management and the need for research and conservation projects on the forest to continue. To this end, they have envisioned an alternative to the Cave Fee Demo Project. This alternative should benefit both the caving community and the Forest Service, but most of all, it should benefit the cave resource itself. The alternative is the establishment of the South West Caves Conservation Task Force (SWCGTF).

The cavers on this committee, along with a few others (Dave Belski, BOG member, Jay Jorden, NSS Public Relations Chair, John Lyles, Pajarito Grotto, and Chris Lee, past SWR Chairman) have made a decision to develop a proposal for the SWCCTF. The written proposal, being developed by Ray Keeler with the assistance of the rest of the organizing team, will be presented to the Forest Service by April 7, 1997. Following are some of things that this proposal should entail:

- * The SWCCTF will be responsible for documenting and promoting research and conservation efforts involving caves on the National Forests of New Mexico and Arizona. It will not be involved directly in the management of these activities.
- * Grottos that have an interest in these activities will be invited to have a representative on the management committee of the SWCCTF.
- * The management committee will be led by a managing director who will oversee the operations of the SWCCTF (This office is currently being filled by Jim Werker, subject to the decision of the management committee when it is officially in place.)
- * The SWCCTF will seek to have non-profit status either in conjunction with the NSS, or separate from it.
- * The SWCCTF will seek funding in the form of donations from individuals and from other entities who may have an interest in the conservation of cave resources on the National Forests. These funds will support the activities of the SWCCTF and will be provided to the Forest Service, as needed and available, to support cave management objectives.
- * The SWCCTF will have a goal of documenting at least \$100,000 worth of support for Forest Service Cave management activities by the organized caving community each year for the next 3 years. (This support could be in the form of caver hours working on cave conservation and research activities at \$10.00 per hour, or in the form of actual revenue from donations.)
- * The SWCCTF seeks to establish an electronic newsletter to inform the caving community of research and conservation activities on the Forests. This will facilitate the promotion of projects that are in need of support.
- * The SWCCTF will print an annual report that will document all the work done on the Forests for the year previous.
- * The possibility of extending this same relationship with other cave resource management agencies (BLM, NPS) will not be ignored.

(Continued next page)

Obviously, this organization will only work if it enjoys the support of the organized caving community in the area. We believe that the development of this organization is a step in the right direction in the relationship of the users of the cave resources and the managers of those same resources. This letter is an effort to notify you and your grotto of what is going on and to allow you to get involved with the process.

If you wish to get involved in this project, provide comments or write a letter of support, please feel free to contact anyone on the organizing team. We are most especially interested in comments from persons or Groups who are presently conducting research or conservation projects on the Forest or are anticipating such projects.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Peerman
1757 Defiance St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(505) 523-2167

E-mail <sspeerm@tesuque.cs.sandia.gov>

Up Date From the Editor:

I have been in touch with Steve Peerman and most all of the caving community objects to the NFS fee demo plan (printed in the March issue of the "Hole News"). At the time I mailed out this publication the NFS has not made a decision on the above proposal. I will keep everyone informed.



Summer Special !!!

In celebration of PMI's 20th Anniversary, and a little price war

GGG can offer PMI caving rope at \$.45/ft!

\$.40/ft-600 foot spool-\$240

\$.35/ft-1200 foot spool-\$420

All orders MUST be placed by July 31, 1997.

On Aug.1, the price goes back up to \$.62/ft!

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See us at this summer's caving events or call for a free catalogue.

TRIP REPORTS: and other lies and stories

**Earth Day Project at Colorado Bend State Park, April 19, 1997**

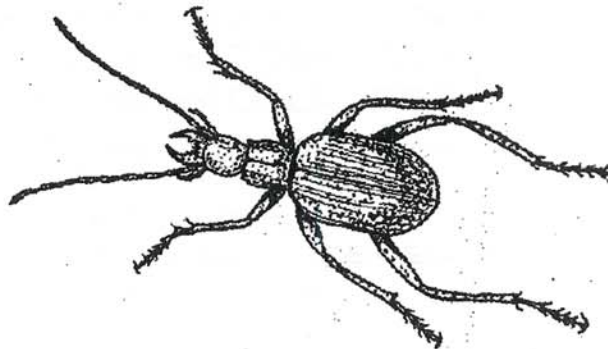
The Earth Day Project is an event sponsored by the Central Texas Grotto where members with the help of the State Park give tours of Gorman Cave and Gorman Falls to park visitors. The tour fee goes to the park. This year grotto members hung from the trees in a demonstration of vertical caving techniques and the visitors loved it. Clean up of Icebox Cave was also scheduled. But, the Earth Day Project took on a particularly wild air for those of us camped at the T.S.A. campground. After gathering around the fire Friday night, our camaraderie quickly strengthened as the intoxication of the starry night took over or should I just say the intoxication took over. But this stay up until 2:00 AM night was nothing compared Saturday night, more on that later.

Saturday morning, Tom Kale and I drove to Icebox Cave where we were to work on the removal of trash from this former trash dump cave. This was my second time to work in this cave and I don't think there will be a third. It seems this project is stale. With last year's late start due to rattlesnake and lack of help and tools, this year's effort was sadly worse. Tom and I were disappointed to learn that we were the only ones to work the cave. Alvis Hill helped in the morning but was in charge of the project this year and had to tend to the other activities. So, Tom and I spent the rest of the day attempting to make a difference in this cave. Tom dug up the trash and put it in the five gallon buckets for me to pull up with the use of a bipod and pulley. Then I dumped the trash in the bed of a truck. We removed broken glass, cans, batteries, plastic bottles, and other trashy things. It was slow and almost senseless. We wished we could have done more. However, Saturday night we quickly forgot about our day's disaster.

The fire once again lured the T.S.A. campers to it and gathered an interesting group including Pat Copeland, Dale Barnard and a man named Brian from R.E.I. strolled up with guitars on their backs and with the flow of Gary Mahan's margarita's the festivities began. Soon everyone was singing, laughing, and even howling at the moon. Some even howled at Hale-Bop. But, the highlight of the night was the rowdy rock bowling contest. This throw anything at a row of empty beer cans-game brought out some crazy behavior. Mary Anne Bauknecht didn't hesitate to toss Melienc Davis' lawn chair and actually managed to miss. After that, a few weary people slipped off to bed at the conference center. Bill Sawyer came up with the idea for the rest of us to sneak to the conference center and scare the you-know-what out of the sleepers. So we did. No one was hurt and it was all in "good" fun.

The overall project was a success and many comments were made about how cooperative the visitors were this year. This was a fun trip and even though not much caving was done just being with cavers made up for it.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee-Kaler NSS# 42075



MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:	PNONE #:	NSS #:
Bandy, Michael W.	15209 Country Ridge DR., Chesterfield, Mo. 63017	314-519-9081	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 C. R. 55 E. , Midland, Tx 79705	915-685-5094	Applied For
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701 6124	915-682-1904	33471
Cullen, James R.	8330 Endicott Lane, Dallas, Tx. 75227	214-412-1632	Applied for
Day, Rick	114 N. W. Ave. "F" Street, Andrews Tx. 79714	915-523-9665	Applied for
Feaster, Walter	4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703-4847-71	915-559-3297	31624
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
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tex 79714	915-524-6327	41068
Kaler, Tom	4709 Nursery St., Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-766-1255	27372
Kamon, Ken	4400 Andrews Hwy # 801, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7192	34637
Lee-Kaler, Rebecca	4709 Nursery St., Wichita Falls, Tx. 76302	817-766-1255	42075
Lowery, Kerry	P.O. Box 39, Coahoma, Texas 79511	915-394-4230	41518
Metcalf, Ruel	1410 E. 4th, Big Spring, Tx. 79720	915-267-7330	42854
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
Wallace III, Warren	P.O. Box 382, Coahoma, Tx 79511-0832	915-394-4310	Applied For

* denotes new members

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Don Carlton: <donc@basinlink.com>

Ken Kamon: <kenkamon@apex2000.com>

Please send all exchanges, correction, and updates to Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard, Midland, Texas 79703-4847-71. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes.

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