



May 1998

Chartered 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the National Speleological Society Volume 13 Number 5

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 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: ?

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ (915)694-1824 or (915)559-3297 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 Kerry Lowery @ (915)394-4230. 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.

'PBSS Home Page'

http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.htm Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley and Apex 2000 ISP.



Future Cave Trips and Events:

1-3 May- PBSS Restoration at ESS Cave: Contact Mike Gray @ (915)550-2395 or Arlon Carroll @ (915)550-5042 or <arlonc@aol.com>.

1-3 May- Tentative Amistad Cave Project: Del Rio. Friday night camping & meeting spot at San Pedro tent area. Contact Cathy Winfrey (512)444-0170.

8-10 May--Colorado Bend Project, Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

8-10 May-GYPKAP Project New Mexico: Contact Joli or Chris Lee @ (505)585-8406 or <jclee@wazoo.com>

16-17 May- PBSS Restoration to Hell Below & Pink Panther: Contact Allen Laman (915)550-0910 or <cave2live@aol.com>.

23-25 May- Carlsbad Cavern CRF: Contact Barbe Barker @ (972)594-1183 or <cavers@gte.net>.

23-25 May- SWR Regional: Hermosa, New Mexico. Contact Steve Peerman (505)523-2167 <speerman@chilidog.lascruces.nmhs.edu>.

27-28 June- GYPKAP: New Mexico-Contact: Joli or Chris Lee (505)585-8406 or <jelee@wazoo.com>.

August 3-7, NSS Convention: Sewanee, Tennessee. Contact William Shrewsbury, (432)886-3296 or <nss98@caves.org>.

22-23 August- GYPKAP: New Mexico-Contact Joli or Chris Lee (505)585-8406 or <jclee@wazoo.com>.

5-7 September- Southwestern Regional: Details Later.

*** 26 September- PBSS Trip to Ft. Stanton, N.M.: Details later.*

16-18 October-21st Annual Texas Cavers' Reunion: Always held the weekend immediately following Columbus Day. Site to be announced.

July 12-16, 1999-NSS Convention. Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer, Idaho. Contact: David W. Kesner, PO Box 1334, Boise, ID 83701; (208)939-0979; e-mail <drdave@micron.net>.

*****Denotes a PBSS Grotto Trip*****

Fort Stanton Cave:

As requested at our last meeting, we now have a grotto trip to Fort Stanton Cave. Our cave trip will be September 26. Fort Stanton Cave is located close to the Ruoso area of New Mexico. It is about a 5 1/2 to 6 hour drive to the cave. There is a good camping area right next to the cave. We have time until the trip, so keep this one in mind.

PBSS CAVE TRIP(S)

Mr. Allen Lamen has a permit to Hell Below in the National Forest in the Guads. This will be a restoration work trip, because the cave is closed to recreational caving. For all you vertical cavers this is a neat cave, and it is pretty. This will be well worth the restoration efforts to see this cave. The date for this for this trip is May 16. Allen has a permit for Pink Panther (also vertical) for Sunday May 17. Both caves are in the National Forest. Contact Allen Laman at (915)550-0910 or <cave2live@aol.com>.

1997 Speleo Digest Availavle in June

Over 300 articles written by nearly 200 authors from across the United States are included in this Speleo Digest. With topics like aerial ridgewalking, caving for bones in Jamaica, or wondering what it's like caving with Stephen King, this book won't cure your addiction to cracks - it will only make it worse. The 1997 Speleo Digest even provides revealing social commentary: If you have friends who have toured the country and stayed at a caver's home every night, or who sift the good carbide from what others have left after changing carbide, you probably know a Tight-Assed Caver. You know the ones - they dig the used tires out of sinkholes and take them home to put on their cars.

From the earliest cave maps in the United States to the latest, for tips on terminology, for the lowdown on caving in other countries, for the best caving cartoons, for the latest theories on the genesis of formations, and for the best scoop on what is going on in the caving world today, get one before they're all gone.

Order yours today for only \$19.00 plus \$4.50 shipping from the NSS Office, 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama, 35810, (256) 852-1300, nss@caves.org.

The 1996 Speleo Digest is also Available



Trip Reports:

Cleaning Up CACA (2-28-98) by Lori Hales

Participants: Lori Hales, Mike Gray, Arelia Gray, Starr and Anthony Sarabia, Arlon and Valerie Carroll, Ruel Metcalf, Walter Feaster, Kerry Lowery, Mike Snelson, and Tom Florer.

Originally, our volunteer cleanup mission inside Carlsbad Caverns was to be hauling rock and debris out of the lunchroom area for disposal outside the cave. During our morning briefing, Dale Pate told us that since the freight elevators were shut down for modifications, this job would have to be postponed. Instead, we were to pick up asphalt chips from alongside the main trail areas. These bits of asphalt had been scattered off the trail on both sides when the trail was resurfaced.

This was, at first, good news. At least we wouldn't be doing backbreaking labor.

When the rangers said "asphalt chips", I envisioned the marble sized rock that road workers flung about with their shovels when rebuilding a highway. When we started working the biggest piece of asphalt I saw was one quarter the size of navel lint. You had to tweeze them out of the rock cracks with your fingernails. By the end of the day my nails looked like the teeth on a hacksaw blade. Ruel Metcalf, Mike Gray, Arelia Gray, Arlon and Valerie Carroll and Starr and Anthony Sarabia made up of one team, and I went with Walter Feaster, Mike Snelson, and Tom Florer. We were to start at the main cavern entrance and work down trail, while Ruel and his team started inside the lunchroom and worked their way upward. Our team took along five-gallon buckets and I had great visions of filling them up with rocks in no time. Reality has a way of shattering delusions.

I didn't count how many tourists passed us that day. We tried to stay off the main trail and out of the way; nevertheless, I got to view every type of footwear known to modern man as countless feet shuffled by while we worked.

Walter was our spokesperson and he would explain to the tourists, whenever they asked, that we were Park Service volunteers and that we were on trail cleanup. The tourists were friendly enough and fun to talk to, if a bit monotonous. I now know how to say "What are you doing--looking for gold?" in (1) Spanish, (2) Japanese, (3) Norwegian, and (4) some unidentifiable language that sounded Himalayan.

Then there was the fellow that was trying to impress the girls he was with by belching resoundingly against the cavern walls. The cave's acoustics are good, and the result was grossly resonant. We could still hear him belching two stones below. I looked around for a rock big enough to drop on his head, but couldn't find one.

After about 3:00 the tourist traffic got slow, then stopped altogether. A ranger ambled past and told us that he was going to turn out the lights--we would either have to leave or we could work by headlamp light. Walter told him it would be no problem. After he left we would hear a faint clacking noise after which part of the lights would wink out. In a little while we were working by lamp-light in total darkness, which felt more natural.

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TRIP REPORTS CONTINUED:

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The silence was overwhelming. You could hear water dripping and the heartbeats of your teammates. Occasionally, a bucket would slide along the asphalt or a small handful of rocks would hit the inside of one. We worked silently, not talking.

At last Walter said it was time to go. We picked up our buckets and started down trail toward the lunchroom and the elevators. Formations I had seen a hundred times looked strange and different under headlamp light. Every once in a while you'd see a hole never noticed when the lights were on, and there would be an overwhelming desire to crawl inside and see where it went.

Tom's headlamp went out and I loaned him my flashlight. Walter's went out on the way down. In a few minutes we had come into the lunchroom, still brightly lit and filled with the noise of many people. It made me want to walk back up trail to the dark and quiet places. The last hour was the only time all day we felt like we were working inside a cave instead of a New York City subway station.

(Editor's note: I transported 50+, 5 gallon buckets to CACA for hauling rocks. Our total amount of asphalt chips and trash filled 2 buckets.)

ESS CAVE CLEAN UP TRIP

by Bill Bentley

Tom Florer and myself left Midland about 10:00 AM Saturday March 21st, 1998 and arrived at the ESS Cave Entrance about 11:45 AM.

It had been about 15+ years since I had been to ESS Cave but had absolutely no trouble finding the cave at all. When we pulled up it was obvious that more cavers from our group were there. We talked with Barry Hayes wife and she said we had just missed them about an hour earlier. Tom and myself went up to the cave entrance and looked in and soon decided that without vertical gear we had better not attempt to enter. I guess you do get smarter with age... who knows?...

We looked around and I showed him the drill hole on top of the hill, but someone decided it was best to fill it in with dirt. After all the world doesn't need any more rescues! I can't believe that I had actually attempted to go down that 17" shaft....It was an optical delusion and it got smaller as it went down...Lost Terry Hill's Duracell flashlight too! Appeased the "Skipper Cave Gods" maybe but that's another story.

So we sat around and waited and it wasn't long before we heard the familiar voices of the others including Mike Gray, Arlon Carrol, Barry Hayes, Mike Snelson, and Lori Hales. They were glad to see us as they had been cleaning all the larger debris from the cave and had stashed all of it along the main entrance corridor and now they had more bodies to aid in the removal of this 50 years of trash.

The group exited the cave and eat a quick lunch and we all started back in after about 20 minutes or so. I used a borrowed seat harness and rack on the dynamic rope and was soon at the bottom of the pit and was followed by Mike Gray, I realized that I could have climbed in and out without the gear, but who needs to take

chances... (and if I had to be rescued from ESS Cave then how could I face the caving world?). Once inside I was surprised at the amount of garbage and trash that was in there...A whole lot more than I remembered... There is broken glass that it would take a life time to remove. This cave had once been a jewel and I could only remotely imagine that image as I gazed at the graffiti and broken formations that are abundant in ESS Cave.

Mike G. showed me all the way back to a passage that had a small formation that looked like a Hercules and he was what appeared to be holding up the entire cave and somehow hadn't been destroyed. After a brief tour of the entire cave and a clean up of a few beer bottles from a small alcove we started the unpopular task of removing 50 some odd years of trash. This included 1250 beer cans, 1 truck and 4 car tires, 275 intact beer bottles, 427,000 pull tabs, 11 separate pieces of wire, 14 boards in various lengths and sizes, 3 sections of drill pipe, 1 fifty-five gallon drum, a busted ladder and a broken chair!

We had to remove the smaller trash with the use of trash bags and let me tell you HEFTY 2 Ply did not hold up! The rest of it was moved out of the cave in the popular prison style chain gang method. We used an electric winch to get the old drill pipe out of the cave. This project of cleaning this cave and soon to gate it is what has been referred to as a "Nobel Effort" but will maybe discourage the future destruction of this cave and maybe educate others about conservation. It is the intentions of the PBSS to use this cave as a training cave for new members and also teach some conservation along the way.

Many more trips are planned to ESS Cave and anyone who is willing to help is more than welcome to join in...Contact Arlon Carol <arlonc@aol.com> for more information.

