

P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

VOLUME 3

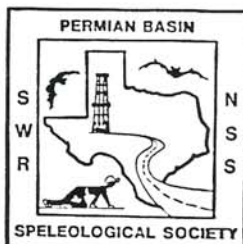
NUMBER 6



MAY-JUNE 1986

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VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6

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MEETING

The June meeting of the PBSS will be held THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 7:30 PM at the home of Suzy Noldan and Bill Bentley, address above. Call Suzy (689-7218) or Bill for further information or directions. Topics to be discussed include the upcoming convention trips, so be there! Suzy has also promised to show us the slides from her recent climb of Mt. McKinley. Should be interesting...

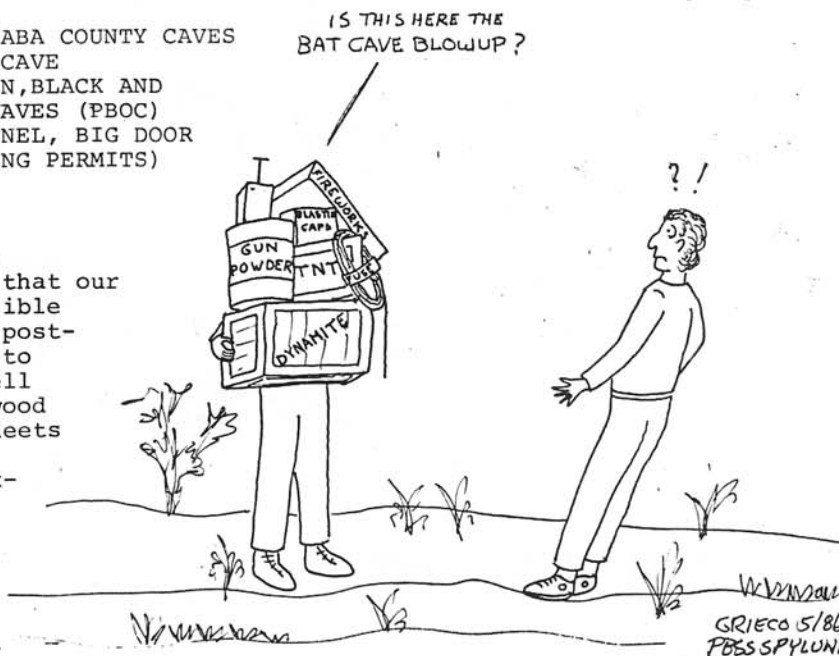
NEWS OF NOTE

PBSS SCHEDULE

JUN. 17-20: CARLSBAD CAVERNS RESTORATION FIELD CAMP
JUN. 20-22: NSS PRE-CONVENTION TRIPS
JUN. 23-28: NSS CONVENTION
JUN. 28-30: NSS POST-CONVENTION TRIPS
JUL. 12-13: OPEN
AUG. 9-10 : SAN SABA COUNTY CAVES
SEP. 13-14: DEEP CAVE
OCT. 18-19: HIDDEN, BLACK AND COTTONWOOD CAVES (PBOC)
NOV. 8-9 : SENTINEL, BIG DOOR CAVES (PENDING PERMITS)

CAVE TRIPS

JUNE 20-22, 28-30:
Remember, folks, that our grotto is responsible for the pre- and post-convention trips to Hidden, Black, Hell Below and Cottonwood Caves. Sign up sheets are full, so we should have an excellent crowd. Needless to say, all help will be appreciated, so



if you would like to play guide for one or both weekends, call Bill Greenlee at (915) 523-9550 to volunteer. You need not be a member of the PBSS to help out, but it would be nice if you had a reasonable idea of where the caves are!

TRIP REPORTS

3RD ANNUAL BAT CAVE BLOWOUT AND SKIPPER ROAST, BAT CAVE, Terrell Co., Tx. May 2-3, 1986.

Participants: Bill Bentley, Coy Costen, Tony Grieco, Vicki Grieco, Andrew Grieco, Richard Galle, Rick Gray, Terry Bolger, Noble Stidham, Ed ----, Pat Hill and Sandra ---- (Report by Tony).

Although the crowd at this year's Skipper Roast was considerably thinner than at last year's (which was a SWR regional), no one at all was disappointed.

Vicki, Andrew and I arrived late Friday afternoon to find Bill and Coy already set up. We were getting a little concerned at around midnight, because no one else had shown up, but at about 1 AM the Lubbock bunch pulled in (Terry, Noble and Ed). Everyone talked for awhile but soon all had bedded down.

Saturday morning saw the Lubbock gang go off to explore Montgomery Cave



AFTER TWO HOURS OF BEING LOST, I WAS FORCED TO TAKE
DRASTIC MEASURES TO ENSURE MY SURVIVAL...

(it was the first vertical cave for Noble and Ed), while the rest of us enjoyed a leisurly afternoon and just kind of hung around. Then we decided to take a tour of Bat Cave, and watch to see how Andrew (21 months old) would take to his very first caving trip. Even though there is a relatively good trail to the entrance of Bat Cave, carrying a little kid through desert-style brush isn't any fun. Everyone was impressed by Andrew's enthusiasm for spelunking- we all kind of followed him around and kept our lights in front of him (we had enough trouble keeping a hardhat on him- no way could we have mounted a light). At one point we all turned out our lights to see his reaction- just like a true caver, the kid just froze and stood still until the lights came back on a minute later. He didn't panic or cry at all. The next group in that cave is really going to wonder about all those tiny footprints!

Later that afternoon an important archaeological find was made by Coy and Bill as they dug out the fire pit. There, amid the ashes were clear and undeniable remnants of the original Skipper Roast, held in June, 1984. Of course, being very conservation minded (no pot hunters in this group) we returned these valuable artifacts to their original location. Later in the afternoon, Pat and Sandra came driving in, and as night was falling Richard and Rick pulled up, hoping they were not too late to view the mysteries of an actual Skipper Roast. They were not to be disappointed.

At around 11 PM, the festivities were beginning to get into high gear. Coy began to prepare the mysterious elixir we call Skipper Water, while Terry scattered a few Tecate cans around in honor of Bill Greenlee, who was unable to attend. The fire was fueled and stoked to bonfire proportions. The Skippers (five in all), previously impaled and left to suffer for hours in the hot sun, were retrieved. Then, after the ritual chants were chanted, the signal was given and the Skippers were thrust into the flames where they died a horrible (and fitting) death, melting and oozing into the fire.

After all the Skipper flashlights had been consumed in the flames, the Skipper Water was brought out and all who desired to indulged. Things went rapidly downhill after that.

Plans are already being made for the 4th annual Blowout, tentatively planned for May 2-3, 1987, again at Bat Cave. Be on the lookout for a new crop of Skipper-type flashlights!

VIRGIN CAVE, Eddy Co., N.M. May 17-18, 1986.
Participants: Bill Bentley, Terry Bolger, Bill Greenlee, Tony Grieco
(report by Tony).

The trip to the upper reaches of Virgin Cave was an interesting and pleasant outing. We all met and camped Friday night at the base of Three-Mile Hill. The night was cool, but not unpleasant- though a fire would have been nice (due to fire danger, no open fires were permitted). Saturday morning Bill G., the only one of us who had ever been to this cave, found the parking area easily and showed us a beautiful sheltered camping area. After the usual sorting of gear, the four of us headed for the cave entrance, and, finding it easily, were ready to go caving.

Well, not quite ready. It seems that I had forgotten the key. Its hard to get into the cave without the key... so, after a suitable amount of

cussing and swearing, Terry and I walked back to the truck to retrieve the silly thing. Fortunately, the walk wasn't that far (if it had been Madonna...). Once back at the entrance, the gate was opened and we all began to explore.

Virgin is a truly magnificent cave, and a cave that, in one way or another, reminded all of us of many of the other caves in the area. Bill G., using that uncanny sense of direction he has, was able to guide us with little difficulty to the Lake Room. Many photos were taken of this room, as well as of the Snake Dancers and all of the other seemingly endless pretties we could see. Because we lacked a hand line, we were unable to visit Grunge Hall and the Mud Room, but we managed to do a considerable amount of poking around in spite of that. As a finale to the trip, Bill let the three of us find our way out- it took awhile (and we had a little help from a few well placed reflectors) but we finally made it out. I wish I had Bill's sense of direction.

When we left the cave we found that it had turned cold, and with the approaching darkness was turning rapidly colder. Neither Bill B. nor I were prepared for weather like that, so we decided to head back to Carlsbad where we spent the night. Bill G. and Terry claim that it wasn't so bad in their sheltered nook, but still in all I'm glad we made the decision to go.

LECHUGUILLA CAVE, Eddy Co., N.M., May 24-25, 1986.

Bill Bentley joined a dig into Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Bill says he got incredibly filthy but nonetheless had a good time (except when he backed into a pole with his truck, but that's another story...). Although no breakthrough had occurred by the time he left Sunday, rumor has it that the dig did indeed break through to something, which isn't too surprising given Bill's description of the volume of air coming from the crack they were digging.

CARLSBAD CAVERNS, Eddy Co., N.M., May 24-25, 1986.

Terry Bolger and Bill Greenlee got invited to join the CRF in their after-hours exploration of the wild parts of the Caverns. Bill has asked that I not publish any details of where exactly they explored or what they found, but he did say that one of the highlights of the trip was watching several cavers (including Jim Goodbar) climb up the rope that was previously rigged at the cross in the Big Room.

CORRESPONDENCE

Reproduced below (and I do mean reproduced- I'm too lazy to re-type it) is a letter that the grotto received from the USFS asking for comments on some proposed rule changes for obtaining permits. Also reproduced is Bill Bentley's reply on our behalf. If any of you out there have anything to add to what Bill has already said, don't be shy, write and let the USFS know how you feel! And be sure to send a copy to the SPYLUNK- then I can publish it so we all can ridicule you... Just kidding, honest.

Cavers,

During the last several years the Guadalupe Ranger District has observed a steady increase in the number of cavers requesting permits and permits issued. Those of you requesting cave permits and enjoying wildland caving have experienced this situation and the problems associated with increased demand of the cave resource. Among these many problems facing the Forest Service for managing caves is the percentage of permits issued yet never used. Failure to use permits can basically be tied back to two reasons: 1) Large blocks of caves reserved for grotto's and a poor show of cavers hence not all permits are used; 2) People requesting a large number of caves while knowing all caves cannot be visited. Occasionally weather or an emergency keeps caves from being visited by permit but we believe these very incidental.

While non-use of permits may seem a small problem to some, if you are the one without a permit to Madonna or Hell Below and you find out those caves weren't visited, its a big deal, especially if you come from Colorado once a year to cave in the Guadalupe. As the caving community very well realizes, caves and the opportunity to visit this unique resource is a very limited experience. Each time a cave is visited it will never be the same for you again. It's not like sitting under a pine tree or visiting Sitting Bull Falls. Caves are a non-renewable resource in our lifetime and should be treated as such.

The Guadalupe Ranger District is considering some small changes in its current permit policy to: 1) Reduce the number of caves permitted but not visited; 2) Improve trip planning; 3) increase, cave resource responsibility; 4) Reduce confusion on cave permit issuance, particularly with gated caves.

The basic proposed changes are:

- 1). All permit requests are to go through the Forest Service receptionist at the Guadalupe Ranger District office in Carlsbad.
- 2). Limit the number of cave permits per group leader to three (3).
- 3). When requesting permits have the names and addresses of people in the group to present to the receptionist to place on the permit.

We wish to stress again the primary reason for limiting the number of cave permits an individual may request is that many of the cave permits are not being utilized. In an effort to give the public a greater opportunity for cave visitation the maximum number of cave permits any group leader may request will be three (3). If a group wishes to visit more than three caves in a week, an additional group leader will have to request those additional cave permits. For instance, if a party of cavers wishes to visit 7, 8, or 9 caves in a week, there would have to be a minimum of three group leaders in the party.

The District is soliciting for your comments on these changes (pro or con) and or ideas as to how to deal with the particular problem of permitted caves not being visited. We hope to implement these changes by July 15, 1986 and request that you submit comments by May 15, 1986. Please contact Don Byers, Jerry Trout, or Frank Hayes if you have any questions.

Due to increased damage to Hell-Below cave we are considering it for inclusion into our tour cave system. The cave needs some significant restoration work to return its beauty and quality as a wildland cave and we would like ideas on how to retain its beauty without extensive restrictions. A suggestion is to promote the cave as a "supervisor" cave where an approved agency caver accompanies each group into the cave. What do you think? What grotto's would be interested in volunteering for restoration work after July? Please let us know your thoughts and interests in setting up a volunteer schedule for Hell-Bleow or another favorite cave you feel needs restoration work or gating to reduce general access.

Please submit comments in writing to:

District Ranger
Guadalupe Ranger District
Federal Building, Room 159
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220

To: District Ranger
Guadalupe Ranger District
Federal Building, Room 159
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220

May 5, 1986

Dear Gentlemen:

I have been asked as Grotto Chairman of the P.B.S.S. to address the letter of "Forest Service Cave Policy Change" which appeared in the March-April '86 publication of the "Southwestern Cavers". I agree that the non-use of permits is a problem and I believe that most of the permits that were issued to the P.B.S.S. cavers were used and most all of us in time have learned to not get more cave permits than can be visited in a given time period. I thought that all permits that have been issued in the past had went through the receptionist at the Guadalupe Ranger District in Carlsbad. I am at a confusion as to where else they could go. I can not understand a policy proposal of limiting the number of cave permits to three per group leader and then telling one how to defeat the policy by having all of the people (minimum 3 cavers per permit) become trip leaders themselves to therefore get their 3 permits. I think some other form of policy is due here.

Then there is the question of how strictly a list of cavers and addresses should be followed that would be submitted to the receptionist prior to the permit being issued. If this is a strict policy similar to the National Park Service, then I have no problems with it. It simply makes for sure that those who sign up go on the trips, therefore eliminating any doubt barring sickness, accidents, or deaths. Since we are on the subject of changes, I would like to remark about a reason that some caves are never visited but permits are issued. I could never understand a policy (which is still in use) of no directions to the cave. Nobody mentioned the fact that some caves are not visited because the cavers can not find them. While I'm sure this is not problem to

some. What if a group of cavers entered the wrong cave and were seriously injured, this alone would be bad enough but the rescuers would be searching in the cave listed on the permit. A funny thought? Not where life is involved.

I am not pointing the finger at any one person, but I do believe that a change is necessary. I recommend that the Forestry Service takes a good look at what is working for the other related Cave agencies such as the B.L.M. and N.P.S. and share some ideas. And as asked in the letter, "Yes" the P.B.S.S. would be glad to help in the restoration work after July.

Sincerely,
Bill Bentley
Permian Basin
Speleological Society

The PBSS SPYLUNK is the official publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society, a grotto (chapter) of the National Speleological Society. Membership, which includes the newsletter, is \$4.00/yr., paid to the editor (address on masthead). Material for publication should be sent to same. Republication of material contained herein by NSS publications is encouraged, others may do so with permission of the editor.