

June 2000

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

Volume 15 Number 6

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Read This! Meeting Change for PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on **Saturday, June 10**, around **noon**, at the Big Spring State Park, Big Spring, Texas. More details and map in this newsletter.

Our Agenda:

Food Consumption

Meeting

Go Caving!

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

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"PBSS Home Page"

<http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.htm>

Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley & Caprok.net ISP.



Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects:

~~5 June - Possible PBSS Rock Hauling @ CACA. This has been canceled.~~

12-16 June--CRF Restoration Field Camp @ Carlsbad Caverns:

The Cave Research Foundation in association with the National Park Service and the NSS, is sponsoring a week long restoration field camp at Carlsbad Caverns. If you are interested contact Bill Bentley at (915) 697-3079 or <caver@caver.net>.

26-30 June--NSS Convention: This year's convention is to be held in Elkins, West Virginia. If you register before May 1st, you can save \$15 off your registration fee! Registration information can be found online at <<http://www.caves.org/events/nss2000>>. You can contact Kim Kehs at (215)563-8153 or e-mail <edandkim@easy-pages.com>.

21-22 October--Texas Caver Reunion: Place to be announced.

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

Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority.

On Going Projects:

CRF- -Carlsbad Caverns: Expeditions usually occur on holiday weekends. Contact Barbe Barker (972)594-1183 or <cavers@gte.net>. Or possibly CRF website -www.cave-research.org.

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP): Upcoming events will take place the last weekend of each month. For more info contact Dave Yagnow at <djagnow@cybermesa.com>.

Lincoln National Forest-Capitan Peak Study Area (LNF-CPSA):

April 29- May 5 and October 7-13. Ridge walking and cave survey. Contact Dick Venters at <rventers@aol.com>. Everyone welcome.

Fort Stanton Bat Cave Dig (FSBCD):

Do you dig caves? Here is your chance to find new passages. Tentative dates: March 24-26, May 26-29, June 30- July 5, August 4-6, and September 1-4. Contact John Corcoran III at <john_j_corcoran_iii@msn.com> or Dick Venters at <rventers@aol.com>.

*****PBSS Rock Hauling At Carlsbad Caverns:** PBSS on going restoration in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. Lots of fun. Tentative dates are: March 11, June 3, September 9, and December 2. Reserve a spot now, they are going fast. Contact Ruel Metcalf at (915)263-4890 or <rue1gto@webtv.net>. *****



Caves Large and Small ©

By Laurence Parent

I figure that someone's got to give Rebecca Lee a break and write something for the newsletter. She probably deserves some sort of medal. My caving has been limited as of late. A while back my wife and I heard a rumor about a cave in the dry creek behind our subdivision (we live in the Austin area, which has lots of caves). Because it was so close, I didn't have an excuse not to check it out. So, we bashed through the brush for a while, collecting ticks, chiggers, and fire ants, and finally found a small sinkhole entrance. Unfortunately, there was only a short crawlway off the bottom, not exactly the find of the century. However, when we told several neighborhood kids about it, they had to go see it. So, we hiked back to the cave, kids in tow. While my wife and I had been underwhelmed, the kids thought it was the best thing since Nintendo. A couple of skinks and some daddy longlegs spiders livened up their adventure.

Moving up in the world of caves, my wife and I were in northern California last summer doing my usual photographic thing. I noticed that Lava Beds National Monument was near our route. When I discovered that it had caves, our choice was clear--go! We arrived at the visitor center and found that the park was a veritable paradise of lava tubes. One tube, Mushpot Cave, even had an improved trail and electric lights. We started with that, thinking we'd ease into the caving stuff. After that, we borrowed some lights from the park--they lend them out to everybody--and headed out to some other tubes. We didn't have a lot of time, so we headed for what seemed to be two of the more interesting ones, Skull and Valentine caves. We went to Skull first. It had huge passages and permanent ice formations down in it. After getting quite chilled (even though it was summer outside, lava makes a great insulator), we bailed out and headed for Valentine Cave. It had a smoothly-floored, gently sloping passage that split and re-joined several times and, if I remember correctly, extended for almost a mile. I took a few photos with the small flash I had with me, but it was an uphill task. That black lava rock really sucks up the light, kind of like Monica...never mind. Anyhow, after Valentine, we were out of time, but we'd like to go back sometime. Other caves with intriguing names include Labyrinth, Thunderbolt, Hopkins Chocolate, Catacombs, and Hercules Leg. Who named these anyway? Warped cavers?

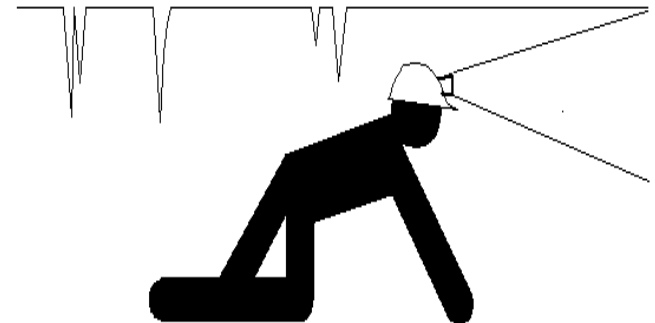
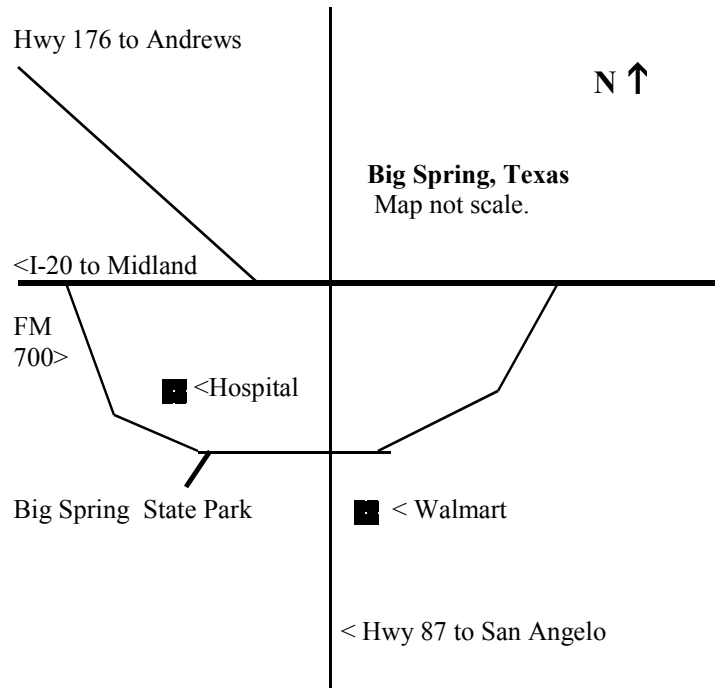
Anyhow, my last cave adventure was just two weeks ago at a very large cave, mammoth-sized even. In fact, they even call it Mammoth Cave. The good part is I got to see parts of Mammoth Cave. The bad part is, I was there to photograph it for the National Park Service. Which meant work. Some of you with little sense have helped me photograph caves before, so you know what I mean. I spent some of the daytime photographing the surface because of tours. We would go in and shoot by working around tours and especially at night. Very little of the cave is decorated, but it makes up for it in size--lots and lots of big passages. The big passages are fun to see, but a pain to light enough to photograph. One big passage required 82 big flashes for one single frame of film. There are about 12 miles of cave open to tours for the public, which seems like a lot until you realize that there are more than 350 miles of known cave. Unfortunately I didn't get to see even all the tourist section in the eight days I was there. Mostly I hung out in various spots and flashed flashes. A highlight was going down to see the River Styx, one of a number of underground rivers. There was also a lot of historical stuff in the cave, such as the old saltpeter works and the ruined huts from an old tuberculosis hospital (it failed; the patients all died, no surprise). Anyhow, there's a lot of cave there; go if you get the chance. It beats the cave in our neighborhood.

PBSS News and Stuff:

Our next **official meeting of PBSS** will be held at the Big Spring State Park, Big Spring, Texas, on Saturday, June 10. Look for the very large stone pavilion. The meeting will be held around noon or so, and there will be food provided, hamburgers or something. B.Y.O.B., but keep it low profile. In other words don't walk around with beer cans or bottles in your hand. Put it in a cup or koozie. Also bring cave gear. There is a small cave near by, and Ruel has the key this time. A map is included below, so show up hungry and **bring your cave gear**.

For all of you signed up to go to **the Summer Mummies** July 15, you need to **bring money** (\$15 a head) to the next meeting or send me a check before July 15. Fifteen was the minimum seats that we could reserve, so there is four spots open yet. It is not to late to go.

We have a **rubble removal project** in Lech scheduled for the weekend of July 29. If you want to go contact Walter Feaster. This should be the last rubble removal before the new culvert is installed. You need to be vertically competent, have minimal IQ and/or be a member of the PBSS. See you there.



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* denotes new members

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. This includes e-mail addresses.

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