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THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting of the PBSS:

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held **Tuesday, June 12**, around **7:00 PM**, in the back meeting room of Murray's Delicatessen. Murray's is located at 3211 West Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda:

Meeting

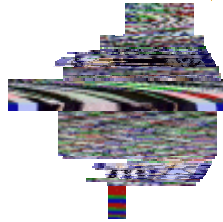
If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster (915)559-3297, or E-Mail: <wfeaster@home.com> or <wfeaster@texascavers.com>.

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"PBSS Home Page"

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

Built and Maintained by *Bill Bentley*



Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects:

*****June 16?**- PBSS Trip to Montgomery Gypsum Cave: Contact Noel Pando <npando@andrews.esc18.net>.

*****June 30**- PBSS Rock Haul @ CACA: Contact Walter Feaster at (915)559-3297 or <wfeaster@texascavers.com>.*****

July 23-27-2001 NSS Convention: Mount Vernon, KY. For info visit www.nss2001.com or contact Bill Carr, PO Box 1406, Mount Vernon, KY 40456. Phone: (606)256-0205 or <chairman@nss2001.com>. Register online; registration fees fully refundable until May 1, 2001.

October 19, 20, 21-Texas Cavers Reunion : Location 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 <cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net> or (505) 687-4270. 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 Susan Herpin (505)785-2423 or <sherpin@caverns.com>.

PBSS Rock Hauling At Carlsbad Caverns: PBSS on going restoration in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. Tentative dates for 2001 are (as you know this can change): **June 30, Sept. 15, and Dec. 8**. Contact Walter Feaster at <wfeaster@home.com>.

PBSS & Midland Summer MuMmers

We have 24 seats reserved, up front and in the middle, for Saturday, July 28. It is \$15 ahead and you can bring whoever you want. I need the money by the July grotto meeting. Summer MuMmers is an old fashion melodrama where you boo the villain and cheer the hero. They have beer and mixed drinks and you can thro popcorn. It is a really good show. I know this is not a caving trip, it is a get together and party. We had a great time last year. So come join us.



New Members and Grotto Stuff

PBSS would like to welcome back **Rick Day, Annmarie Mikelski, and Mary King and family** to our membership, after a long absence. Welcome back.

There is a web sit containing an article on prolonged time hanging in a seat harness. The article is at <www.cancaver.ca/int/mexico/zotz/harness-death.htm>. I would highly recommend reading this. It has some very interesting facts for the next time you are hanging around on rope.

Trip Report

My Weekend

(Continued from last issue of the "Hole News")

To refresh our memories, in the last installment of my story, it is March 28, 1992 and I am stranded out side of White City, and I have no idea why my pick-up came to a sudden halt. Soon after my sudden stoppage, Chuck comes rolling up and stops to see what happened. Then we where joined by several other PBSS members. It ended up with about five of us under my truck trying to find the problem. On closer examination of my rear axle differential housing I noticed, to my horror, the drain plug was missing. Meaning all the gear oil had drained out, all the gears got hot, and everything seized up. (**The lock up**). "Oh crap"! Here again my keen skill of observation soon told me that my vehicle would not be moving under its own power for sometime. After several beers and a long debate we decided to call a tow truck and have my truck towed into Carlsbad, and leave it at a friends house until I could make arrangements to get it back to Odessa. By this time it was dark. We divided my camping gear and provisions amongst two or three other vehicles and I rode with the tow truck driver into Carlsbad. Chuck followed in his truck.

By the time we dropped off my truck and got back to Parks Ranch, it was close to midnight, Texas time. What transpired next can be best described as a wake for my demised pick-up. Here my memory fails me. I don't what time all of us went to bed, but it was in the wee hours of Sunday morning.

. **The almost lock-up for real !**

Previously I mentioned Murphy's Law. Have you ever heard of Kelso's Law? Kelso's Law states that Murphy was an optimist!

The sun was climbing high over the Gypsum plain when the members of PBSS where aroused from their slumber. This morning, unlike the previous morning, no one was bright eyed and bushy tailed and wanted to go caving, at least not right away. The previous night's festivities had taken there toll, and my truck was still broke!

For this day we had a permit for Chimney Cave. Since we had to go by the Visitor Center at Carlsbad Caverns, most of us decided to eat breakfast there. No one was in the mood to make breakfast. So we chose up sides and headed to the Caverns. After several cups of coffee and an under-whelming breakfast our plans further deteriorated. Chimney Cave could wait, it wasn't going anywhere. We would save the conquest of that cave for another time. After eating, Gralin and myself where standing in front of the Visitor Center waiting for the rest of our group to finish, when we noticed a single engine airplane fly very low over the caverns. This single event would make more cense later in the day.

After breakfast some of our group decided to take the cavern tour. The rest of us headed back to Park's Ranch and do some exploring. Arriving at Park's Ranch we meet up with a couple of our members

who stayed behind. We went to an area about 1/2 mile away and parked our vehicles. After a while of hiking around looking for caves and arrow heads, one person in our group, who had a pair of binoculars, says that someone is watching us. I look, I don't see anyone. He says again, yes someone is watching us. About this time a very large twin engine aircraft flies very low over our position. It comes around again. Of course we wave at it. Now we are feeling very self-conscious that we are being watched, so what do we do? We split up, of course. Most of the group wanders back to the vehicles, while Chuck and myself head down one of the shallow canyons or dry washes. We find a small flowing spring and a cave opening below the springs. I am on my hands and knees looking into the cave opening when I hear someone yell get your hands up. I look over and Chuck has his hands in the air and then the voice says where is your buddy? Here again my keen skill of observation tells me this person is talking about me. I walk around the corner to where Chuck is and I am told to get my hands in the air and both of us to walk towards them. The first thing that goes through my mind is we can't be trespassing, this is BLM land! As we get closer (with our hands up) I see a Eddy County deputy sheriff pointing a M-16 at us. Now for all you gun aficionados, I don't know if it was a M-16 or a AR-15. I didn't think it was a good time to ask. Any way from my perspective it looked like a 16 inch Naval gun! (I never had a gun pointed at me in such a manner). As we got closer we saw two Border Patrol agents in flack jacks holding pistols on us. Now my mind is racing. I am half begging, half praying, "please Lord, don't let these idiots shot me!" (**The almost Lock-up for real!**) After an ID check and interrogation things calmed down and they where not pointing guns at us any more. Our fellow members back at the vehicles where under going the same interrogation. To make a long story short, we (PBSS), walked into a drug bust out in the middle of no where! The twin engine airplane we saw earlier was the DEA. The law enforcement personal on the ground thought the airplane was the drug runners making a drop, and then we showed up. All these officers where up tight and trigger happy. In the past if the drug runners in the airplane saw a bust going on they would spray the ground with machine gun fire, so this is why they where so nervous. The single engine airplane we saw right after breakfast was more than likely the person they where looking for. In hind site, we should have gone to Chimney Cave.

(three of three)

The rest of the day went uneventful. Unless you include helping Chuck capture rattle snakes, but that is another story. Everyone headed home to get ready for another work week, but with one heck of a story to tell. As for me, the bare walls of my apartment never looked so good.

Epilogue

It is so funny how rumors get started and finish. This event is no exception. The rumor spread throughout the caving community of Texas and New Mexico, and several months later we heard that we (PBSS) had been arrested by the CIA, taken by helicopter to El Paso, and then released. That sounds better than what really happened.

As for my truck. I still have it. A few weeks later and a fist full of dollars I was on the road again, to paraphrase a movie and a song. The rear axle has leaked oil ever since. I attribute this to old age. You get old, you leak a lot!

Ironically, in the chronicles of the PBSS this was not the first time we came under the gun. In fact it was with in 20 miles of this same area. But then again, that is another story.

Walter Feaster