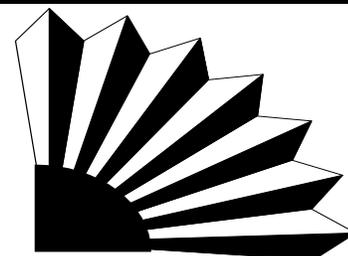
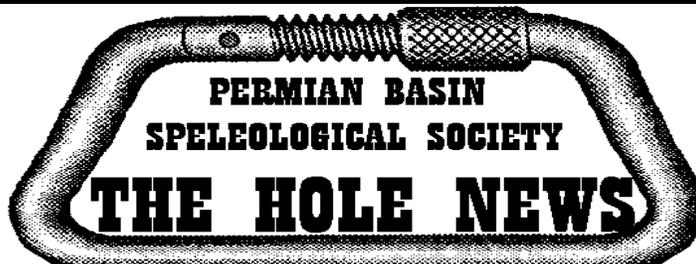
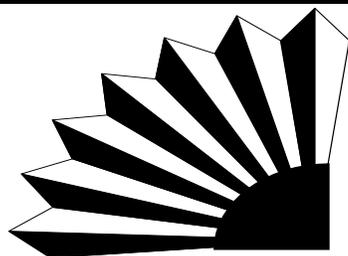


THE HOLE NEWS

JUNE 1995





June 1995

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

Volume 11 Number 6

The monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society

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Next Meeting: PBSS

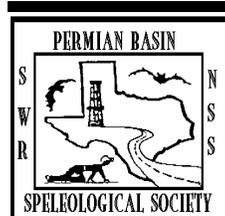
The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be on Tuesday June 13th, 1995 at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room at Murry's Delicatessen which is located at 3211 West Wadley in Midland, Texas. If you need directions or more information then call our official contact person Walter Feaster @ 915-699-7049. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM or thereabouts and eating and caver style socializing usually begins at 6:30 PM and is optional. Topic of discussion will be the upcoming PBSS and CCCP trips, as well as the goat roast planned for July.

See ya there!



"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 Bill Bentley, 400 Eastwood Drive, Midland, Texas 79703-5308. 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, Midland, Texas 79703. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, the 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.

Happy Caving,



Surfing the internet! "Earthquakes & Caves" Provided courtesy of Chuck Anderle

The discussion of the earthquake in Texas reminded me of an incident I read about some years ago. I think it was around 1985 when an earthquake struck the north central Arkansas, USA area near Blanchard Springs Caverns. Blanchard Springs was developed as a show cave by the U.S. Forest Service during the 1970's. It is similar to Carlsbad Caverns in respect to the entrance/office building and elevator ride into the cave. Most of the tourist portion of the cave lies about 250-300 ft (75-90 m) below the entrance building. When the earthquake struck, a large group was in the cave on a tour. Employees and visitors ran outside into the parking lot, fearing the building would collapse. When the tour returned from the cave, they were totally unaware that anything had happened. Another incident that I have heard about, but cannot completely confirm, also occurred in northern Arkansas. See Earthquakes continued on Page 3

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

June 3rd- 4th, 1995 Government Canyon Karst Project, Contact: George Veni @ 210-558-4403

June 13th, 1995 PBSS Meeting @ Murry's, Midland. Contact: Walter Feaster @ 915-699-7049 for more information.

June 17th, 1995 Rescue Training in San Angelo (Date tentative!) Contact: Noel Pando @ 915-523-9294*****

June 24th-25th, 1995 PBSS CCCP trip contact: Chuck Anderle @ 915-685-3119.

July 11th, 1995 PBSS Meeting @ Murry's, Midland. Contact: Walter Feaster @ 915-699-7049 for more information.

July 15th-16th, 1995 PBSS CCCP trip contact: Chuck Anderle @ 915-685-3119.*****

July 17th-21st, 1995 NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia, contact: Carol Tiderman @ 410-727-2497.

September 2nd-4th, 1995 CRF Labor Day Expedition. Contact: Brian Holcomb @ 505-266-8485

October 20th-22nd, 1995 Texas Caver's Reunion, Contact: Gil Ediger @ 512-441-0050

November 23rd-26th, 1995 CRF Thanksgiving Day Expedition, Contact: Brian Holcomb @ 505-266-8485

~~Most all of this material was stolen from various and sometimes reliable caving newsletters in the Southwestern Region and surrounding area, including the TSA's "Activities Newsletter"~~

Madonna Survey Trips, contact: Mike Huber @ 505-887-6065 Carlsbat Cavers, contact Phyllis Weston @ 505-887-6790 for restoration educational programs, off trail trips. Honey Creek, contact: Mark Minton @ 512-847-3829

IF YOU HAVE ANY CAVING TRIPS PLANNED, PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW AND HE WILL PUBLISH THEM HERE IN THIS SPACE!..... *** Denotes a PBSS club Trip...**

Tandem Rappelling on Mt. Thor ...by Ian Drummond

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 95 16:40:00 UTC From: i.drummond@genie.geis.com To: cavers Subject: Tandem rappelling on Mt. Thor Message-ID: 199504281704.AA250878660@relay1.geis.com

With the interest in tandem rappelling, I thought I should send in the following article which appeared in The Canadian Caver, 15 (2), 1983. ----- Rappelling the West Face of Thor (Note from a report by Steve Holmes to Parks Canada) An American team of Kathy Williams, Alan Johnson, Peter Uberto, Bill Clem, Russ Anderson, Steve Holmes, and one Canadian Kirk MacGregor, had decided to attempt the world's longest rappel off the west face of Mt. Thor on Baffin Island. For this a special rope was manufactured by PMI, 7/16" nylon kernmantle with an extra strand added to offset the weight of one mile of rope (370 lb.). Two teams were assembled. The summit team spent several days reaching the top of Thor mainly due to white-out conditions on the Fork Beard Glacier. They dragged 84 ft of canvas padding, 5,000' of 3/16 polyester hoist line (35 lb.) an amazing assemblage of top rope anchoring paraphernalia and stocked a summit camp for for 10 days.

The 3/16" hoist line was lowered from the summit with a stone filled red bag attached, but so vast was the scale of Thor that there was considerable difficulty in locating it by the base party. Meanwhile the base team linked in the aforementioned 350 lb. (sic) of PMI to the 2,000 foot 5/16 rope. Communication ensued by radio and telescope. Once the bag was found and the three ropes joined, the summit team then pulled up the 5/16 rope, followed at 2,000' by the PMI and eventually everything was elaborately secured at the top. Two bulges on the face were padded and a vertical kilometer was ready for rappelling. In order to get the descender onto the rope, an ingenious 8:1 mechanical advantage system was designed and employed to lift

the now 200 lb. of rope. Spectacular rappells then ensued, uneventfully, taking from 6 to 30 minutes with racks twice the normal length and holding 8 brake bars which were cooled by splashing water on them. One tandem rappel was achieved using

They dragged 84 ft. of canvas padding, 5,000' of 3/16 polyester hoist line (35 lb.), an amazing assemblage of top rope anchoring paraphernalia and stocked a summit for 10 days.

Kirk's squeeze plate device that functioned independently of the rope weight. This device was composed of two plates between which the rope is squeezed by a nutcracker mechanism controlled by the rappeller. It was cooled effectively by towel material attached to the plate and soaked in water. Ascents were made without incident taking from 2 hours to 5 hours (the longest being for the tandem ascent). The Mitchell box, foot and knee Gibbs arrangement was found to work best over the 3230 +/-20 foot vertical distance. After successfully completing the world's longest rappel, the rope was allowed to slide off the mountain top to land in festoons at the bottom.

If any one is interested in more details of the "MacGregor Nutcrackers", Kirk is still an NSS member and is living in Toronto. By the way, this is the same person who appeared on the caving scene in the late 1960s, cutting the record times for prussiking 100' and 300' just about in half. ---Ian Drummond



Earthquakes Continued from Page 1

Apparently, a group of cavers was exploring and mapping in Fitton Cave and camped in a relatively remote part of the cave. During the trip the explorers heard loud rumbling and strange noises. As they started out of the cave, they encountered fresh breakdown in several areas. When they reached the entrance room (a chamber 750 ft long) they found the entrance partially blocked by a house sized boulder that had not been there when they entered the cave. This was 1964, and they soon learned that during their trip the "Great Alaska Earthquake" had destroyed Anchorage over 3,000 miles away!

I found it hard to believe that an earthquake, even one of the most powerful ever recorded, could have this effect on a cave over 3,000 miles away. I had heard this story many times and assumed it was total bullshit. But then I chanced upon an old NSS News from the late 50's (maybe 1959?). On the cover was a picture of the entrance room in Fitton Cave showing a large beam of sunlight streaming far into the cave. I have been to this cave many times and it is not physically possible for the sunlight to penetrate into the entrance room because of a large, house sized boulder in the way! By Hal Love
<LOVEHD @ctrvax.Vanderbilt.Edu>

Editors Note: I realized many years ago that when Mt. St. Helens blew it's top that not only did a picture fall off the wall in my house but the sinkhole full of water at Wink, Texas opened up. Is this a coincidence? Maybe or Maybe not!

Cave Rescue on TV

Date: Sun, 30 Apr 1995 From: minton@mail.utexas.edu (Mark A. Minton) To: cavers Subject: Cave Rescue on TV.

Yesterday I switched on the tube and what should I see but a bunch of people standing around looking down a 1 m by 6 m pit with a small kid slumped at the bottom. Intrigued, I watched to see what would happen. There proceeded to be a "rescue" in which two search and rescue sort of guys donned enormous climbing harnesses and one of them tied in at the waist. The other guy then lowered him down the pit FACE FIRST. When he reached the victim he ascertained that the kid was okay by simply talking to him, then they proceeded to lock wrists and be hauled up by the guy topside. Of course part way up they almost lose their grip on each other and the kid dangles perilously by one arm for a while before they recover and continue to be hauled to the top to great applause from the crowd.

Finally at a station break I saw that the name of the show was "Baywatch" (probably a rerun). Never heard of it, but I presume it must be one of the many search and rescue type shows that have become so popular in the US lately. I sure hope they didn't have any cavers as consultants on this one! It was REALLY hokey, and even paints cave rescue in a bad light.

Mark Minton

Easy Campfire Cobbler

1 stick margarine
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup milk
1 cup flour
6-pack of favorite beer (wiskey can be substituted in emergencies)
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt (may be omitted for salt free diets)
2 cup fruit (canned, frozen or fresh) * be sure sugar is added in fresh or frozen.

Instructions:

Have yourself a beer. Melt margarine in pan in oven. Have another beer. Mix together all other ingredients (except fruit). Go ahead and have another beer. Pour batter into melted margarine in pan. At this point you should have another beer, after all you probably need it by now. Add fruit, spreading evenly over batter. Have another beer. Do not stir batter before baking if desired. Bake for about 45 minutes or until done. Enjoy with plenty of beer.

Walter Feaster

From the Editor:

This months cover photo is from a October 1985 trip into the Terlingua Sinkhole and entering the pit is Bill Bentley about to rappell the 110 foot entrance drop.

Looks like Noel Pando is busy setting up a rescue training seminar for June 17th, 1995 and I hope he can pull it off. More discussion about that and the upcoming goat roast will be discussed at the next meeting. I will not be able to make it as I will be out of town on a well deserved vacation. I hope to visit Mammoth Caves and some in Arkansas and Missouri too, if the rains and flooding will allow this. In my absence Walter has agreed to take good notes! See most of you in July!

Bill Bentley Editor

Lonesome Caver

Date: Sat, 29 Apr 95 From: ttruluck@zamnet.zm

To: cavers

Subject: Lonesome Caver

Dear Fellow Speleans,

Wow, all you guys (generic gender sensitive meaning) debating whether to keep cave locations secret. Wot Luxury. Here I am in Zambia and I'm the ONLY caver in the country. It is no problem in keeping locations a secret - there is nobody to tell. There are lots of caves here (including 4 crater lakes like those in Namibia - undived by cave divers) and I have only convinced a couple of locals to regularly (well fairly - and as long as I wash their clothes in my machine) come exploring, surveying and photographing with me. Only problem is, one is a zoologist, the other a botanist, so I have to spend time helping them collect plants and animal life on a quid pro quo basis. The others I have taken down suffered severe sense of humor and enthusiasm failure when they came down with histo. "Don't worry you'll get better, as long as you don't have aids" doesn't seem to comfort them as they scurry off for a blood test. Still, anyone want a caving holiday that could include caving (yuk), game viewing, safaris, witch-doctors, Victoria Falls (including the highest commercial bungee jump in the world and a spectacular day white-water rafting), lots of bats (and I mean lots), REAL Africa, and caving (do we really have to - yes). You are most welcome to come to Zambia (I also have been on 3 expeditions to Zimbabwe and KNOW there are caves there). Only problem, I am on the sick list with a torn achilles tendon until October 1995 (no it wasn't caving).

Timoth Truluc

Those Darned Ropes: Remember the greater the length of rope the more likely it is to become a hopelessly tangled unusable knarled mass of twisted knots.



Don't Eat The Carbide!

Date: Fri., 5 May 1995 From: Phil OKunewick
pokunew@lookout.ecte.uswc.uswest.com

To: cavers

Subject: Re: Disposal of Spent Carbide

Just a note: Spent carbide is toxic to livestock, but they are attracted to it because it tastes salty. It also has traces of arsenic in it (this is the source of the carbide smell--traces of arsine in the acetylene).

Trace arsenic is actually common in many plant products, which would include the charcoal used to make calcium carbide. We consume trace arsenic when we eat almonds; I've heard that the really bitter ones have higher-than-normal arsenic levels. I've also heard that apple seeds are so high in arsenic that if we could digest them they'd be poisonous to us. Fortunately they pass right through intact, and most people don't chew apple seeds intentionally more than once. There's also plenty of arsenic in leaf piles - I don't think I'd drink out of a spring pool that's full of fallen leaves. I'm not saying it's safe to dump spent carbide into a cow pasture; I'm just trying to put things into a little perspective. As long as animals aren't likely to eat it, I don't think the toxins in spent carbide are going to do any significant environmental damage. BTW, does anybody actually know of a cow that got sick from carbide waste?

I have also put it in outhouses (or kybos, latrines...), as Calcium Hydroxide is the lime that is put in an outhouse to kill the smell. However--don't drop a match down there afterwards--Sh** can happen from the resulting BOOM I question the common sense of anybody who would drop a match down an outhouse pit, even without carbide down there. Methane gas is produced by the bacteria that break down the waste products. Every know and then we hear about a sewer explosion; several blocks of manhole covers blew off in Pittsburgh a few years ago. ---Phil



OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK!

Date: Thu, 4 May 1995 From: jtml@lanl.gov (John Lyles)

To: cavers Subject: New BLM issue in New Mexico
Cavers of the world,

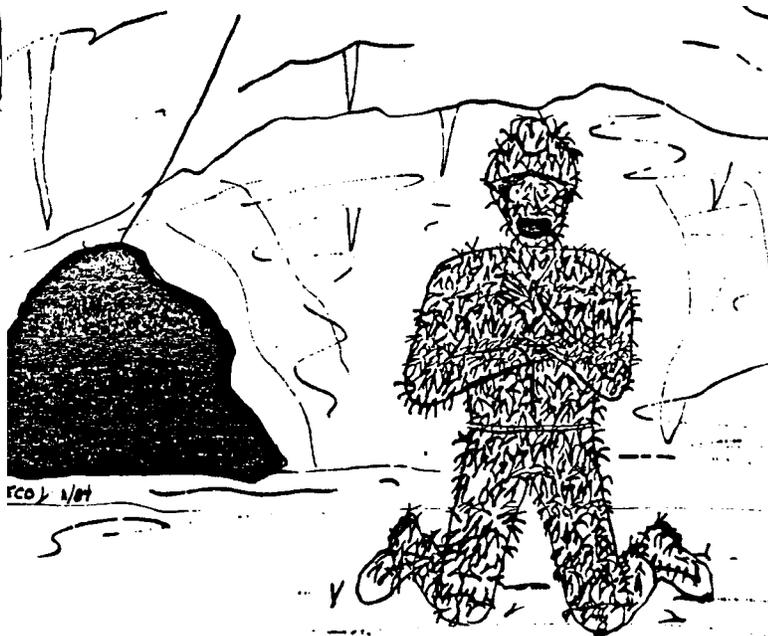
I realize that many of you don't give a guano about what the US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is doing about caves on the public lands in East central and southeast New Mexico. But then again, it was surprising how much comment rolled by on the CD in December when the BLM raised our awareness to their Pay-For-Caving idea. That, by the way, has passed the deadline for comments, and I believe that they got some significant ones from cavers, both individuals and groups. From New Mexico, thank you to those of you who did care and submitted comments last month! Now, the BLM, Roswell (NM) Resource Area, has opened comments on yet another proposal, this one called environmental assessment NM-066-95-051. The title is COMMERCIAL CAVE USE IN THE ROSWELL RESOURCE AREA. There is only a 30 day period for the public to submit written comments,

Cave Humor by Tony Grieco



Lost? Don't be silly. According to this map we're here and here and here.....

Hurry up, will ya? A couple of cave crickets never hurt anyone.



See BLM continued on Page 5.....

BLM....continued from Page 4.... due by May 30. Instead of enclosing the entire EA here, I'll summarize with the decision that a BLM outdoor recreation planner would like to make:

Decision:

The decision is to accept the proposal allowing limited commercial caving operations on public lands within the Roswell District.

Rationale:

Commercial guides for outdoor recreation adventures are common throughout federal land management agencies. Commercially guided trips to caves or any other recreational resource is a legitimate form of recreation use, as long as the activity is closely monitored and controlled. Commercially guided cave trips would offer the general public a safe avenue to view this underground resource. By allowing commercial guided trips to the public, the general public will become better informed and more aware of the fragile resource. Cave visitors would have the opportunity to view and use cave equipment and would gain the knowledge or desire to learn more about the resource. Commercially guided visitors would be better equipped and gain knowledge on safe, low impact use of cave resources prior to entering a cave. Most first-time cavers with any organized caving group usually are not orientated or do not have the proper equipment prior to entering a cave. This commercial caving environment assessment has been developed to analyze impacts of commercial caving activities. Finding of No Significant Impact Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in this EA, it has been determined that the adverse impacts caused by the proposed action would not be significant. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is not required and the proposed action is approved. my comments and analysis as I read it....

The area of concern is a gypsum karst area, with an estimated 150 to 300 caves [from EA]. 99 caves were submitted as significant, per the 1988 Federal Cave Resource Protection Act. Some caves are well known, and already receive numerous permitted visitations. The largest, Ft. Stanton Cave, received 1170 people in 1994, a total of 20,891 person-hours. Underground Adventures, Inc. and Fort Lone Tree have submitted requests to the BLM to run trips in this area. The EA covers the need, conformance with land use plan, relationship to the Roswell Resource Area management framework, the no action alternative to the proposal, the description of the affected environment (soils, vegetation, geologic, bats, other biota, etc), and the environmental impact. There are mitigating measures which outline which types are caves are to be allowed for commercial trips, and the % of trips that can be commercial. There are only a fixed number of permits to many of these caves, so the % of NON-COMMERCIAL trips (most of us) will be reduced accordingly. There will be a requirement for an hour orientation (specific topics covered) to all clients. There will be requirements for the operator to haul human wastes out, to have 1 guide for every 5 clients, to prevent tobacco consumption in the caves, to adhere to closures, to use only electric lights for main source, and to carry certain minimum equipment. Each trip shall have a leader who has first-aid, CPR, search and rescue training (8 hrs cave) and caving experience. This EA is still a proposal as of today, so if you think or know you have any comments, post them here, and contact the BLM in Roswell. Jerry Ballard is the contact at (505) 624-1790. Call him if you'd like to examine the entire EA. Help us guide the local BLM in their decisions which affect the future of caves. Thanks for your time. John Lyles
Pajarito Grotto
- Santa Fe, NM

MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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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
Selman, Tom	P.O.Box 50304, Midland, Texas 79710	915-561-9413	14778
Slut, Guad	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, NM. 88240	505-393-5604	Denied
Terrett, Tiffeny	5707 County Road 57 East, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-685-3119	32792

* denotes new members

Please send all exchanges, corrections and updates for this list to Bill Bentley 400 Eastwood Drive , Midland, Tx., 79703-5308 , 915-697-3079, E- Mail is PBSS1Bill@AOL. COM. I will try to update and reprint with every issue depending on space available. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes.

Texas and Mexico Cave Rescue

Call Collect 210-686-0234

This is Kriedler Funeral Home's 24 Hour number
Ask for "Cave Rescue" and "John Kriedler"

In New Mexico Dial 911

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