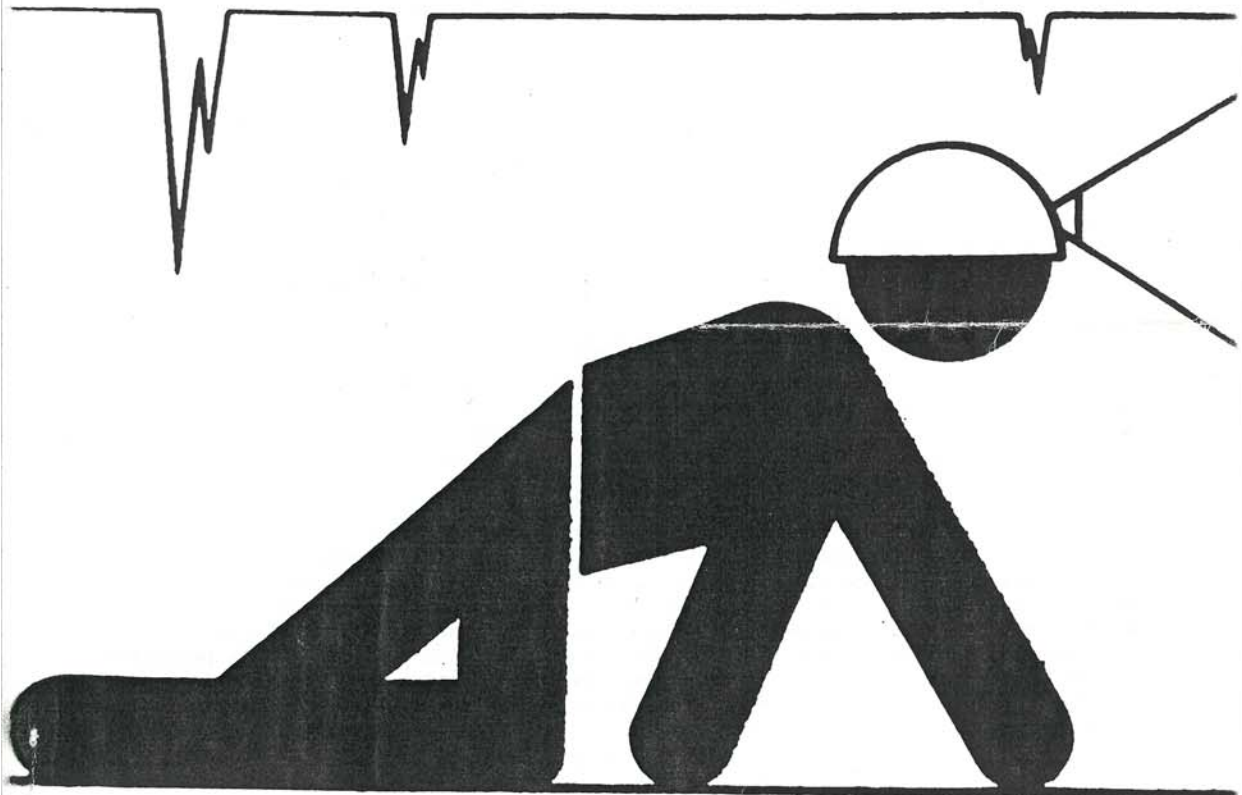


P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK



Volume IV, No. 4

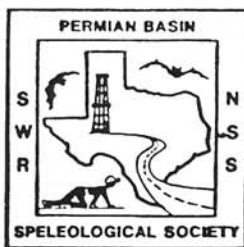
JULY/AUGUST

JULY-AUGUST 1987

P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4

PAT KAMBESIS - PRESIDENT
3313 FANNIN
MIDLAND, TEXAS 79707
(915) 697-3807



JIM NANCE - EDITOR
P.O. BOX 30824
MIDLAND, TEXAS 79712
(915) 563-5208

PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 1987 CALANDER

JUL 16 MEETING
18 & 19 ... PINK PANTHER, PINK DRAGON, PINK PALLETE, & DAMN CAVES
AUG 13 MEETING
15 & 16 ... MYSTERY TRIP
SEP 17 MEETING
19 & 20 ... OGLE, LAKE, CHRISTMAS TREE, WEN, HELENS, CORKSCREW CAVES (Pending Permits)
OCT 8 MEETING
10 & 11 ... PBSS HOSTS THE PBOC (OUTING CLUB) @ GYPSUM & NEW CAVE
NOV 19 MEETING
21 & 22 ... OPEN
DEC 17 MEETING
19 & 20 ... OPEN

MONTHLY MEETING

The P.B.S.S. meets once a month in the assembly room of the Texas Department of Public Safety at 7:00 pm. The meeting, usually on the 3rd Thursday, is open to the public and involves any topics of interest, slide presentations if available, and plans for upcoming trips. Please call if you need directions.

P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK

The P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK is the official publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society, a non-profit chapter of the National Speleological Society. Membership, which includes the bimonthly newsletter, is \$4.00 a year paid to the editor. Make your check payable to Jim Nance. Original material for publication is encouraged and should be sent to the editor as soon after a trip as possible. Republication of material included in the P.B.S.S. SPYLUNK by other NSS publications is permitted providing that proper credit is given and that notification to the editor is sent in the form of a letter or copy of the chapters newsletter. Please notify the editor concerning any changes of address.

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATIONS

The date of your membership & newsletter expiration is located in the upper right hand corner of your address label. Every attempt will be made to retain those that have allowed their memberships to expire but, just so many "free" newsletters can be budgeted. Back issues are very hard to come by so, please renew your membership prior to the date of expiration so you won't miss out on any of the current events involving the P.B.S.S.

This months cover: "International Caver Symbol"

Virgin Cave Trip

by Patricia Kambesis

I organized a trip to the Cavernacle in Virgin Cave for the weekend of April 4th. Our permit of eight consisted of a contingent of Colorado cavers - Donald G. Davis, Roy Glaser and Lisa and Steve Shertz and the "Texans": Suzy Noldan, Terry Bolger, Jerry Atkinson and myself. We came equipped with several coils of rope totalling almost 300 meters. The plan was to split into two groups; the Texans (sans Bolger) would rig the drops and negotiate the lead climb. Donald G., who had been in on the original exploration of the cave in the early seventies would act as route finder (and exploration history consultant). We also planned to flag any major junctions or confusing areas for the other group. The remaining Coloradans (plus Bolger) would give us two hour lee-way before they started in and would meet up with us before we made it to the Cavernacle. They would take care of the de-rig on the way out. We hoped that with this set-up the overall rig and de-rig process could be done faster and more efficiently. Unfortunately it did not quite work out as we planned.

The rig team, consisting of Jerry, Suzy, Donald G. and I made it underground late in the morning. The route to the first drop in Virgin is very scenic though made slightly less enjoyable because of having to haul in all that rope. We passed through a nicely decorated small room festooned with stalactites, sodastraws and floored with flowstone. The first pit is located in the floor of a breakdown room. The pit can be bypassed via the Root Room route but this can be confusing due to the maze-nature of the passage. The pit is an easy 22 meter free rappel and drops into a large room at the foot a tan-colored flowstone cascade. The room is at least 24 meters long by 15-18 meters wide and 18 meters high in places. Large breakdown blocks topped with stalagmites litter the floor. Major collapse terminates the northwestern end of the room. The major trend appears to continue in this direction and promises more passage if the collapse could be breached.

Following the flowstone slope and ducking down a small hole we found ourselves in a breakdown corridor. We threaded our way through and over large slabs, ducked into an obscure hole, scrambling over breakdown blocks and passing several small ponds and a series of phreatic ceiling pendants along the way. Donald's memory of the cave is impeccable and we lost no time in route finding.

We reached the Four O'clock Staircase in just over two hours and proceeded to rig. We had placed the two 150 meter ropes in backpacks in order to minimize rockfall in the Staircase. The first part of the drop is about 82 meters partly against the slope and the rest free in the fissure. The rope is rigged to a breakdown block in the entrance of the fissure. The next rigging point is on the Thermometer Ledge. There are two bolts here to assure safety in rigging and to maximize the use of the full length of rope. One still continues in the same fissure but the rappel is more on the slope than free. Medium to small sized breakdown and soft sediment are common and one needs to exercise extreme care so as not to dislodge any rockfall both for the safety of those below and to preserve the rope. At the base of the fissure there is a place to sit out of the range of rockfall.

After 12 meters of walkway over rubble and up another slope, we are at the Midterm. Donald and I waited at the bottom while Suzy (belayed by Jerry) did the free climb and rigged a handline. The Midterm is basically a steep slope that can be negotiated with a safety jummar.

We regrouped at the top for a short rest. Donald pointed out the original discovery route which is a climbup just above the slope. Years ago he had dug out the route that is presently used. The passage is a continuation of the main fissure trend; the bottom floored with breakdown and the walls coated with gypsum crust. At the end of this passage we entered the Thanksgiving Room. (Named so because it was discovered on that holiday). As with the rest of the cave, this room contains a lot of breakdown and here it is coated with aragonite and gypsum. Red flagging delineates a "path" to walk on so one does not disturb the crystalline formations. On the right as we entered the room is a large mud "lake". We had expected the other group to apprehend us at this point but as yet they did not appear. We lunched and waited giving them the opportunity to catch us before we made it to the Cavernacle.

After a half hour wait, we continued up the slope, in a spiralling fashion, climbing over rock slabs and entering another large breakdown room. Massive gypsum littered the slope and coated the breakdown. We continued corkscrewing up and up, through a small hole, another short climbup and into a large domeroom. The floor of the dome is covered with flowstone cascades and large popcorn. We scrambled up the flowstone to a flat spot. Behind us is another passage - The Fifth Trip as it was named by the discoverers.

Donald pointed out the "entrance" to the Cavernacle - an exposed 8 meter ascent up a formation cascade to a crack. The climb (at least to me) looked intimidating, not so much because of the exposure but because of the fact that it was wet.

Once in the crack and up a short climb we entered the Cavernacle - a large, nicely decorated chamber. Donald gave us the "grand tour" of the room, and we admired the many shields and other pretties. There were dead bat carcasses smattered about indicative of the fact that even they get lost trying to find their way out. We noticed a peculiar green clay-like material on the floor in one area that Jerry speculates is endallite. As time passed, we were puzzled and worried by the fact that the other group was no where in site. So with that in mind we headed out.

Once at the Midterm, we heard them preparing to climb up. At this time I decided to split from my group and join the Coloradans. I felt that leading them directly to their destination and helping with the de-rig would save time and shorten their trip. Once again I headed for the Cavernacle.

Terry and Roy went up first in order to take pictures and Steve soon followed. Lisa and I elected to stay at the bottom of the climb. In all they spent two hours touring and photographing the room and by 10 p.m. that evening we headed out. I speculated that we could be out of the cave in five hours (wrong!). As it happened we all went into a kind of time warp - moving in slow motion to the Staircase. The ascent was slow and tedious and packing up rope and some extra equipment took its toll on me as I climbed. The small breakdown which

was merely inconvenient on the way down now took on new dimensions. It looked downright menacing - having to stare straight up at it while climbing. As I ascended, a piece of breakdown that had been migrating downslope while everyone else climbed up, finally cut loose as I stepped close to it, tumbling down the slope and crashing to the floor below. At the bottom it had hit the rope and damaged it exposing the core. Fortunately this occurred on the last meter of rope and did not cause us any problems during the ascent.

When Terry finally made it to the top he found four tired cavers strewn over the breakdown - napping and feeling the effects of the long trip. Since I didn't expect to be in so long I did not take enough food and was feeling weak because of it. We all moved slowly and cautiously very much aware that in our present physical condition it would be easy to slip on even the easiest of climbs. When we finally made it to the last drop, we could hear Suzy waiting at the top. She had been worried about us and came in to see what caused our delay. She hauled up ropes and packs and headed out to inform the others that we were OK. When we made it to the entrance it was 8:30 a.m. and we were greeted by a wintry scene - snow covered the ground and frost coated the trees - seems it had been snowing all night. We took care of the gear and hiked back to camp - food and sleep being everyone's first priority of the day.



Ultra-Tourista Trip to Three Fingers Cave
May 9, 1987

by Patricia Kambesis

"Do you see it yet?", I called to Suzy Noldan as we hiked down Three Fingers Ridge looking for a cave by the same name. "I think its close to the bottom of the canyon" she replied, and I agreed - having perused the topo before we headed down. Such is the typical scene when caving in the Guads. We have the cave locations spotted on topo maps, have even been there before and still the caves elude us if for only a short time. The rest of our caving entourage (Jim Seigmund, Kathy Schwere and Wild Bill Greenlee) followed close behind - Jim being slightly amazed that these supposedly experienced cavers don't walk directly to the entrance on the first try.

Suzy gives her "I found it" yodell and we all hike to the entrance. As I rig, everyone prepares to make the descent. For Jim and Kathy, this would be their first time in a "major" vertical cave. One by one we make our way down Boomers Drop - a fun little vertical entrance which takes a few jogs and is broken by a ledge before bottoming out in a small alcove off the main chamber. I'm surprised to see so many big formations. Jim consults his map and informs us that we are in the Bell Canopy Room and as I look across the chamber I see the room's namesake.

After a quick rendition of "California Boys" Suzy leads the way to the Meador Pincher; Jim is slightly dismayed that he decided to take pictures on the way out; Kathy just says "Oh Wow!" and Wild Bill is smiling to himself as he hums a few bars from his David Allen Coe tape. I am the epitome of self control as I ignore those inviting little black voids which seem to be everywhere. After all, the plan for this trip is to find the Temple of the Firey Cave God, locate the way to Three Fingers Hall, and make note of the surveys that we hope to encounter along the way.

The Meador Pincher, a sporting little chimney-squeeze-climbdowndrop, drops us into a small junction area. We chose a narrow flowstone fissure which leads to a short climbdowndrop and lower level passage. I also find a survey marker noting the B survey.

There are holes taking off in several directions from the main passage trend and Jim sits down to consult the map. Suzy and I smile, knowing that this is an act in futility. "Forget the map" I say, "it won't help". With the voice of concern Jim pleads "But how are we going to find our way without out it - what if we get lost?" Suzy tries to reassure him, "we'll play it by ear". "Better yet" I add, "we'll just stay on the main survey". But Jim is mortified with our blatant disregard for the sacred map. He sits down to locate our present position - ponders the map for a while - turns it upside down, then sideways; then he folds it up never to consult it again.

With Suzy in the lead we follow the B survey and encounter a junction. The "Volcano" heralds us in the right direction and in a few minutes we encounter the Guads caver's nightmare - breakdown maze AND boneyard; a good place to get lost. Suzy and I pan out to find a promising looking route. I find a crystal-lined alcove and insist that everyone take a look-see. We find some carins and a BA survey. As we make progress on the route, Bill leaves tiny reflecting tape markers to aid us on the way out. While Jim nervously waits at a junction, Suzy takes off in search of the Cave God. Bill and I just take off and Kathy is bewildered but ready to go anywhere. We follow the BA survey and pop into a major trend leading into a large breakdown room. Displaying the ultimate in self control and restraint Bill and I don't run off into the breakdown or climb down the several holes along the floor. Instead we head back to the others.

Suzy has found the Temple of FCG and we stroll in to check it out. The "Temple" is located in (can you guess?) a breakdown room. The "Cave God" is a beautiful 7 meter tall butress which sits on an alter of breakdown. Red and white flowstone runs down the front and several small delicately decorated alcoves lie underneath. Off to the left of the formation is a long narrow "game-show" fissure (Come on down!, it shouts). I oblige and soon find myself 22 meters below on a balcony overlooking a room - no doubt the route to Three Fingers Hall. Suzy climbs down and we discuss creative ways to tie our webbing and slings together in order to get into the Hall. We spent a little time looking around for an alternative way into the room but decide to blow it off. After all there are so many other things to see in this cave. We climb up, regroup and take off for the BA survey and the other breakdown room that Bill and I were in just an hour before.

I find another survey marker - the Z survey. It goes down a steep flowstone lined hole into a lower passage. After lunch, I rig a handline and we all "get down" so to speak. This passage parallels the room and contains a lot of decoration. We go right and climb up again. I see a fissure and climb into it finding that it is exquisitely decorated with live white, orange and buff flowstone. Up and down stals abound and there is a small pool of water. I believe this is the Zen Room. The fissure trend continues and one can enter a lower level room. There is a lot of mushy red mud on the floor indicative of the lower levels of the cave. I consult my map for a name - the CaCa Roha room.

We ooh-aahed for a while, found another way into the breakdown room and zoomed back to the Bell Canopy Room. Bill's reflective tape markers were a real help in our exit route finding. Jim and Suzy set up to take some pics, Bill and Kathy take the grand tour of the BC Room and I charge up the breakdown to see whats on top. I'm surprised to find that I can climb up for a long way over very large breakdown blocks. Big dried out stalagmites sit on the blocks and old flowstone cascades cover some of the breakdown. As I get higher up, soft sediment mixed with small rocks blankets the "floor". I continue on up until I can see what appears to be the ceiling about 3 meters above. I get the impression that I am very

close to the surface. Heading down, I can see the flashes from Jim's pictures and hear he and Suzy set up for the next shot. Kathy and Bill are playing light games with the formations and I walk over to the breakdown-floored section of the room. I find a pit (no rope - forget it) and see many holes in the breakdown and dark spots at ceiling level (save it for next time.)

Three Fingers is an unusual and interesting cave. It seems that the entrances to most of the other major Guads caves are located up on the ridges. Three Fingers entrance is almost at the level of the canyon floor (less than 100 feet above it). Most of the cave appears to be formed under the canyon in the Capitan Formation. From the general layout of the cave, (no distinct passage trends, lots of breakdown and breakdown maze and the position of rooms and passages with respect to each other) Three Fingers appears to be a large room that collapsed in on itself.

Panel buys cavesite in Kinney, Edwards

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in November 1986 approved the purchase of the 6,400-acre Seargeant Ranch in Kinney and Edwards Counties, an area known for its caves and other geographic features. The Parks and Wildlife Department officially purchased the property from its longtime owners Tommy and Jean Seargeant on Dec. 19.

The department paid \$2,230,000 for the ranch. Officials said as a result of the generosity of the owners, the property was acquired at significantly less than market value.

There are 10 known caves on the property, the two largest being Kickapoo and Green caves. Kickapoo Cave is considered one of the outstanding caverns in Texas, and 1,700-foot-long Green Cave features a large bat colony.

Another outstanding feature of the site is a large stand of pinyon pine, remainders of a once more widespread pinyon pine/juniper woodland.

The size and diversity of the site provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, turkey, white-winged doves, Mearns' quail, golden-cheeked warblers and black-capped vireos.

The park is closed until improvements can be provided for public use.

INSECT BITES & STINGS

BLACK WIDOW SPIDER - The black widow spider is approx 1 inch long with its legs extended. It is glossy black in color with a distinct red or yellow-orange hourglass marking on its belly. There are no markings on its back. The bite mark, if present at all, may consist of two tiny red dots. The victim may not even know they were bitten or where. The venom attacks the central nervous system, resulting in severe muscle cramps and rigidity of the abdominal muscles, tightness in the chest, and difficulty in breathing. Sweating, nausea, and vomiting will also occur. The emergency treatment consist of basic life support. Antivenin is available which must be administered by a physician. It is very important to identify the spider and bring it in, if possible, so that proper treatment can be administered. Transport the victim to the nearest hospital as soon as possible.



BROWN RECLUSE SPIDER - The brown recluse spider is a little smaller than the black widow spider and is dull brown in color with a violin-shaped mark on its back. The spider gets its name because it tends to live in dark areas and corners. The bite may, or may not, be felt; however, the bitten area becomes red, swollen, and tender. Chills, fever, nausea, and vomiting may occur. A small blister often appears with severe local tissue damage leading to an ulcer and/or gangrene. Several days later a scab develops and drops off in one or two days. Usually, this keeps occurring, sometimes for weeks, as it enlarges. Initial on site treatment also involves basic life support, if necessary, and immediate transport to the nearest hospital. Surgical treatment of the infected site is required. Again, identification of the spider will help the physician in providing the proper treatment.



SCORPIONS - Scorpion stings, except for the sting of a specific scorpion in the Southwest around Arizona, are painful but not usually dangerous. Localized swelling, pain, and skin discoloration may occur. The sting of the Arizona scorpion can cause circulatory collapse, severe muscle contractions, excessive salivation, hypertension, convulsions, and cardiac failure. For this particular type of scorpion, emergency life support and transportation to a hospital is required. Throughout most of the country, this scorpion does not exist.



BEEES, WASPS, & ANTS - Wasps, hornets, and ants can bite or sting repeatedly; however, the honey bee leaves its stinger and abdomen behind when it stings which will cause it to later die. Sudden pain, swelling, heat, and sometimes a firm white elevation of the affected area will occur. The stinger and abdomen of a honey bee should be gently scraped off. Do not use tweezers as squeezing the stinger will only inject more venom. Approx 5% of the population are allergic to the venoms of the bee, wasp, and ant. Generalized itching, weakness, difficulty in breathing, abdominal cramps, and shock are symptoms of an allergic reaction. Death may occur within one hour on some victims. Basic life support and prompt transportation to a hospital is vital on those that show these symptoms.



BASIC LIFE SUPPORT - Defined as an emergency lifesaving procedure of recognizing and correcting respiratory or cardiovascular system failure. Simply put, this means providing mouth-to-mouth ventilation and/or CPR if necessary.

P.B.S.S. ANNUAL BAT CAVE BLOW OUT TRIP REPORT May 2-3, 1987 by Jim Nance

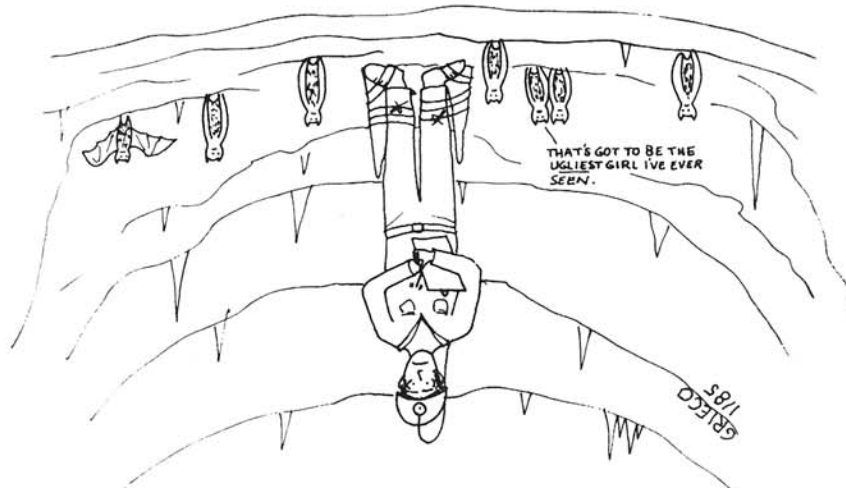
The fourth annual Bat Cave blow out more or less fell through when only myself and Tom Hill with his family showed up. I had never been to the cave before so it wasn't a total loss. I arrived the day before on Friday to set up camp and check out the cave. The area was really beautiful with hills, dense trees, and brush. Several paths led away from the campsite, but none to the cave as I later discovered. After about 3 hours Friday and 4 hours Saturday of steady walking and climbing over hill and dale, I was still wondering where in the heck the cave was. I had heard that the cave was heavily vandalized with graffiti. Although I detest such destruction in a cave, I was reaching a point of wishing that one of the culprits would come along to show me the way. Finally while heading back to town around noon Saturday for better directions, I passed Tom Hill on the highway. Tom thought that he could locate the cave, although it had been five years since he had been there. After about 30 minutes, we located the elusive cave at the bottom of a draw hidden behind some trees. The entrance was impressive with a cool breeze flowing out. We put on our gear and walked down the steep breakdown rubble into the cave. The smooth dirt floor made for easy walking. About six or so leads were found, but most pinched out in just a few feet. The only significant challenge was a passage at the top of some breakdown near the ceiling which one had to negotiate on their belly, crawling through the small entrance, then sliding downhill headfirst into the next room. The ceiling was covered with brown softball size coral type formations which were very sharp. What little formations the cave had were very small, dry, and hard to find. Later that afternoon, Tom decided to leave when it became apparent that no one else was coming. Acting on a promise that I had made to the property owner for the courtesy extended in allowing us to see the cave and camp on his property, I headed back to camp for some trash bags. Gathering trash in a cave is a strange feeling. Due to the slow pace, I was seeing things I hadn't noticed before which was nice, but I couldn't shake that strange feeling of isolation. On the way out, I came across a passage that I had previously overlooked. Climbing on top of a rock so I could see in, the narrow lead appeared to go back \pm 12 feet before it branched off into darkness. Knowing that this would be a bad time to risk getting stuck, I decided to wait till another day. Besides, hundreds of cave crickets that didn't appreciate my bright light caused me to reconsider. Bat Cave is larger than I had expected, but it has just been visited by one to many vandals. It would be a good training ground for novices though. Many thanks to Mr. David Slaughter for his permission to see the cave, and to Tom Hill for helping me find it.

HOLY GUANO, BATMAN - THE PBSS HAS LOCKED
US OUT AGAIN!



CARLSBAD CAVERENS RESTORATION FIELD CAMP * June 15-19, 1987 * by Jim Nance

The week spent in Carlsbad Caverens was a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience for the more than 20 persons who attended the event sponsored by the NSS, NPS, and CRF. An energetic group of dedicated persons worked several hours each day restoring designated areas back to their original condition. Areas included; a dirt fill by the visitors elevator in the lunch room, and approx four areas at the opposite end of the big room. Several areas mainly consisted of removing the old dirt paths constructed back in the 1930's and 1940's. Due to the delicate formations, small hand tools and toothbrushes were mainly used, as well as the hands, in removing anywhere from several inches to several feet of dirt and clay. I personally went through 3 pairs of gloves. Everyone took turns in answering the visitors questions about what was taking place. Responses ranged from wanting to know if we had struck gold yet to wanting to buy everyone dinner. The majority could not believe that we were using vacation time and paying to attend such an event. Personally speaking, this was the best vacation I had ever had; even better than the expensive cruise I took to Alaska several years ago. After dinner, and when the cave had been closed, we were treated to areas not open to the public. Areas ventured into included: The Lower Room, the New Mexico Room, the Talcom Passage, the Lake of the Clouds, and off trail areas in the New Cave. With the beautiful weather present during the entire week, early morning and late night times spent in the CRF cabins were especially pleasant and allowed everyone a chance to get to know their co-workers better. The evening bat flight occurred after dark so I have yet to see them swarm from the cave. Four of us did get buzzed by one in a narrow passage one evening on our way back from the Lake of the Clouds. I think we startled her as much as she did us. The formations in Carlsbad Caverens were really dripping which was nice to see. Some of the nicer times were quietly spent sitting with lights out listening to the bats squeak overhead and the sound of dripping water somewhere off in the distance. It was the type of vacation that few, if any, will ever forget.



IN THEIR NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR SUBTERRANEAN TRUTH, P.B.S.S.
SPELEO-RESEARCHERS WILL GO TO ANY LENGTHS...