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**Next Meeting: PBSS**

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 1996 at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 west Wadley, Midland, Texas. If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ 915-559-3297.

Cave Safely



Our World Wide Web Site Address is:

<http://www.apex2000.net/personal/bb2145/pbss.htm>

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

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August 3-9, 1996-NSS Convention, Salida, Colorado. NSS Convention Committee, c/o Skip Withrow, 5404 South Walden, St. Aurora, CO. 80015, (303)693-0997.

August 11 GYPKAP (SWR post-convention). Carcass area?? Contact Steve Peerman @ (505)523-2167.

August 31-September 2 SWR Labor Day Regional. Gallinas Cave (NW of Espanola, NM). Contact John Lyles @ (505)455-2565.

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"

\*\*\*\*\* Denotes a PBSS club Trip...

Carlsbat Cavers, contact Phyllis Weston @ 505-887-6790 for restoration educational programs, off trail trips.

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




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### Lechuguilla

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As most of the free world knows by now, we (PBSS), had a rescue in Lech. I am not going to talk about the incident, enough has all ready been said. The purpose of this article is hopefully to inform and not to criticize. Any criticism should be directed at my self

I was at the entrance to Lech when the word was passed up that there was a problem. So I started heading for my truck. I did not have a cell phone at the cave entrance, but there was one in my truck. Upon arriving at my vehicle I chose not to use my cell phone. If you have ever called the NPS at Carlsbad Caverns you get a recording. In this recording it says "If this is an emergency, dial 911." The only thing I could remember was the "cluster" that happened at Endless Cave several years ago, where the state police and the local fire department were doing a cave rescue. Plus going on the premise that only cavers can rescue cavers, I drove to the Park head quarters. I knew who I needed to contact. I was wrong.

The next day after everyone was safe and sound, I found out the Park Service at Carlsbad Caverns does

not have a radio dispatcher. Instead the Park Service uses the Eddy county sheriff department radio dispatch system. So if I would have went ahead and called 911, the Park Service security would have been notified and then they would have been in touch with the proper personal.

So in conclusion, if I would have had my cell phone at the cave entrance, we could have saved an hour in the time it took to get help. Now that cell phones are getting smaller and lighter, this could become a new and valuable piece of cave gear.

Cave Safely Walter Feaster NSS#31624

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### **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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## TRIP REPORTS: and other lies and stories

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### C.R.F./N.S.S. /N.P.S. Carlsbad Caverns Restoration Field Camp June 16-21, 1996

This was my first year at the camp and I didn't know what to expect even though I was told what we would be doing. I arrived Sunday and while waiting for our 8:30 PM meeting watched the bats flee from the entrance for their nightly feast. At the meeting, Mike Mansur filled us in on the rules of conduct and released us to prepare for our week 750 feet underground.

Monday- We were assigned to groups with one leader. I was in group E and we started work at the Crystal Springs Dome in the Big Room. Here, we picked up asphalt chips that decided they would rather be off trail and in formations than where they belonged. Since I had water shoes, I was privileged to go into the pool below the Dome to rid it of chips and coins.

After dinner, Mike led 18 of us to Bottomless Pit and one by one we descended 140 feet. The loose breakdown we rappelled over made it more dangerous than expected. Several people were almost hit by large, falling rocks. In the pit, we found transformers, coins, and some graffiti. We didn't get out of the cave until early the next morning.

Tuesday- We did more of the same kind of cleaning. That night, we went to Lower Cave to do some work on the mesh over a pool in the National Geographic Pit. Someone had thrown a rock through the mesh and Melynn Conway sewed it back together while Donna Mosesmann, Meliense Davis and I retrieved coins from atop it and in the pool below it.

Wednesday- More cleaning. The chips never end. Some people including Martha McArthur rappelled in to the Texas Pit that night. Others went to Spider Cave with Jason Richards.

Thursday- Even more cleaning but in a different area. Now I hate those chips. Our reward that night was a trip led by Dale Pate to Slaughter Canyon Cave. We went to some areas the regular tour doesn't go but most importantly we saw the pictographs in the dark zone. I had really wanted to see those and it made my day. We hiked down from the cave at 10:00 PM.

Friday- The cave cleanup was over and the cabin and bucket cleanup began. Afterwards, we were given free passes to go through the natural entrance to the Big Room. We weren't sure if we were being rewarded or not since the hike is calf burning and we had already spent several days in the Big Room. But, we were able to talk a ranger in to letting us join his King's Palace tour. Cavers have little shame. Slowly the exodus began with some people staying to go to Lucy's that night and leave Saturday morning.

I spent 50 hours in Carlsbad Caverns and came home a little tired. But, I had a lot of fun, met a lot of people and got a lot of experience. I hope to do it again next year. By then, I will have forgotten all about those annoying, black chips.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee NSS# 42075

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### Big Spring State Park Cave Trip June 22, 1996

Cavers: Ruel Metcalf, Andrea Paul, and Rebecca Lee.

Friday evening, Ruel and I were talking in front of his radiator shop when Ron Alton, the park superintendent drove up to leave his Blazer for repair. For six months we bugged Ron to take us to the mysterious cave in the Big Spring State Park. He finally asked us if we wanted to go on Saturday. I don't know if he was just being nice or if he was afraid he wouldn't get his truck back. In any case, we jumped at the offer.

The entrance is a 35 foot drop that could be chimneyed but we used a ladder Ron placed on a boulder inside the cave. It took us down most of the way. Once in the cave, we had the choice of two, crawly passages. I took one passage while Ruel and Andrea took the other. At the end of my passage was a squeeze that just fit my shoulders. I squeezed through and was able to stand up but the chimney above me was too tight. With great pains, I squeezed out and made my way to the others. Ruel had gone up another chimney at the end of their passage. At the top, he found hundreds of crickets clinging to the walls. There is also some boneyard like formations in the walls. After Ruel came down, one at a time Andrea and I chimneyed the passage.

In an impassable passage (Is that possible?), Ruel and I took turns fishing with some wire and a pole for an old, Coke can but we couldn't get it. I guess the cave will keep it forever. I was able to dig up a metal, cooking pan. We gathered trash and artifacts and hauled it out of the cave. There still was a lot we didn't get which will have to wait until later to see the light of day. We however were ready to see the light but not feel the heat. Nonetheless, we left the coolness of the cave-of-three-chimneys. It is a small cave with little to see but we were more interested in the fact that it is a cave right here in our own backyard. And, we finally got to see it.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee NSS# ~42075

## More Trip Reports:

### CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK TRIP JULY 13, 1996

**Cave:** Ogle Cave

**Cavers:** Harry Burgess, Ken Kamon, Noel Pando, Felder Hogan,  
Kerry Lowery, Ruel Metcalf, and Rebecca Lee.

We met Harry our run-up-the-mountain, totally in shape leader at the Slaughter Canyon parking lot at 8:00 AM. Half of the canyon was shaded from the sun. Fortunately it was the half we climbed. A slight breeze blew over us occasionally and a collective sigh could be heard among the chirping of the swallows. Unfortunately we lost our cherished shade from the sun at the entrance of the cave.

Harry and Ken rigged the rope then Harry swiftly lowered himself 180 feet into the cave and set up rope pads along the way. There was some dissatisfaction with passing these Velcro fastened pads except of course by the rope owner. As each descended the rope, the coolness of the cave once again set off sighs of relief from the heat.

We gathered at the end of the drop and Harry quickly led us down a guano covered slope then on to the flagged trail. As we ventured in, we saw piles of broken formations. Some were naturally broken by time, some were historically broken by miners, and some were stupidly broken by vandals. Farther in, we encountered many artifacts from the guano mining days like hand tools as well as the wooden table covered with items found in the cave like newspapers and Prince Albert cans. Conspicuously hanging from this table was the tube containing the sign in sheet. After everyone promptly signed the sheet, Harry led us to the Bicentennial Column (the second tallest in the world) and we ooo-ed and ah-ed. Continuing on, we found ourselves at the end of this trail which is where the historic graffiti and the fissure to Rainbow Cave are located. We read the names and admired the Indian head image marked on the wall before sitting down for lunch. Some noted the smell of Ken's can of tuna while others just munched on-odor free granola bars.

Back on the trail, we passed more magnificent "stuff" before reaching the hand line that leads to the shaft the miners were digging in hopes of making an easier way into the cave. It was off set from the shaft being dug from the outside so the effort was abandoned. Now, one inch statites have been forming on the shaft. After strolling to the end of the shaft and back, we started our trek to the entrance.

While Ken was making his way up the rope, Kerry, Ruel, and I slid down a different guano covered slope to another small area of the cave to pass the time. There was very little to see. We climbed up the slope and met with the waiting others. One by one we ascended the rope into the shocking heat of a New Mexico day. Harry was the last one out and he took all of eleven minutes. He would have been quicker had he not had to remove the rope pads on the way up.

Ruel and Ken pulled up the 300 foot rope then Ken wound it for transport. The hike down the mountain was easy thanks to gravity and before long we were in the parking lot thanking Harry and grabbing drinks. It was 2:00 PM. We had a little picnic at the appropriately named table before Noel and Felder decided to go home. The rest of us moseyed to Guadalupe Mountain Outfitters where some purchases were made before going home ourselves. Everything went well. It was worth the \$12 per person fee.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee #42075

### Caving with Clive and Ian

**Caves:** Chimney, Christmas Tree, Helens and Wen Caves, Eddy County, New Mexico

**Cavers:** Don Carlton, Mike Huber, Ken Kamon, Chris Wright, April, Clive, Ian/Will, Katie, Michael, Quigley the Great, Phil, Stewart the Older, Stewart the Younger, Tim

**When:** June 15 and 16, 1996

**By:** Ken Kamon

I arrived at the East Essex American Expedition campsite in Whites City, New Mexico about 10:00 PM TDT, after having stopped in Carlsbad to eat dinner with Mike. The campsite was flooded with water, which was ironic, considering these British cavers had prayed for rain for a solid week. The best caves in the National Forest were closed because of dry weather and the possibility of forest fires. If the cavers had arrived a few days later, after additional rainfall, they might have seen the best Lincoln National Forest has to offer, instead of the leftovers in the National Park. (Actually, everyone was grateful the NPS supplied us with permits, or there would have been nothing to see.)

The next morning, Mike, Clive, Quigley the Great, the Stewart twins and Tim headed for Chimney Cave. Don lead several of the remainin cavers to Christmas Tree, while Chris and I split off from Don's group to rig Helens Cave. Ian/Will and Katie were to join us at Helens after they saw Christmas Tree, while April and Michael would stick with Don.

After rigging Helens, Chris and I waited several hours for Katie and Ian/Will. It had been over 6 years since I had been to any of these caves, and I didn't realize how far it was to Christmas Tree. Don's group returned tired and frightened from the hike through the desert and the ascent out of the cave. We saw Helens, and it's a good bit more extensive than I remembered.

After returning to the vehicle, Chris, Ian/Will, Katie and I headed for Wen Cave, starting out about 3:30 P.M. I forgot where the cave was located, so we spent about 1-1/2 hours hiking up and down the mountainside looking for the entrance. (Continued next page)



## More Trip Reports:

Continued from last page:

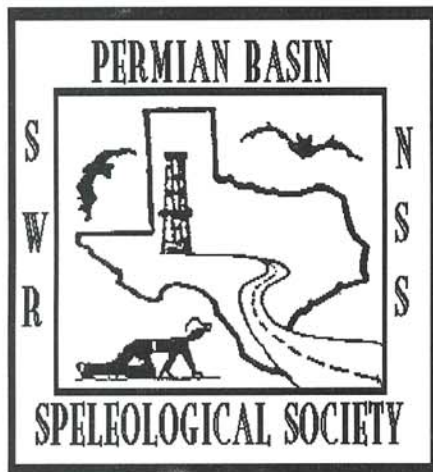
When we finally found it, I realized I left the combination to the lock in the truck, so I ran back to the truck, while everyone else headed to the mouth of the cave. About 30 minutes later, I spotted Ian/Will and Katie across the canyon and yelled out the combination to them, hopeful they would have the drop rigged and be down by the time I got there. When I arrived, the gate was open, but Chris (Mr. Eiger, Scottish and Alpine mountain climber) Wright was stuck on a cliff about 20 feet above the cave. He couldn't climb up or down, and proceeded to rappel down using the rope. Once he got down, we couldn't get the rope down. We pulled hard, up to the point where we thought we might damage the rope (fortunately, it was Steve's rope, not mine), with no luck. Finally thirty minutes later, Chris and I succeeded in flipping it down, after Chris climbed back up to get the rope unstuck.

By now it was 7:00 PM. Chris and I wanted to drop the cave. Ian/Will was undecided, and Katie was ready to go back. Katie won. We went back to the trucks. At first I was mad. Then I remembered how we won the war back in 1776, thanks to quitters like Katie, and I calmed down. When we exited the Slaughter Canyon parking lot and I noticed the gate, I began to respect Katie's judgment. (We could have been locked in the parking lot all night, with only 6 beers, a loaf of bread and a jar of low-fat peanut butter, if we had dropped into the cave.) I primarily regret that Ian/Will and Katie only saw minimal use of their "SRT kits", as they called them.

We returned to camp, and several of the British cavers invited me to go caving in England. They described their caves with phrases like "small, wet, cold; crawl on your belly through mud for hours to see a single formation; you can relieve yourself in the cave and it gets flushed right out with the water; you never cave in the summer because of the radon gas, but it's safe in winter as long as you're not planning on having any more children; you step out of your car in freezing cold weather, slip into a freezing cold wet suit, paddle around through freezing cold water, get out of the cave, freeze some more..." The part about the pub a few hundred meters from the cave sounded all right, though.

Everything was going well as the evening progressed, until Don dragged out some Old Crow Bourbon whiskey. The cheap stuff. I drank some and went over the edge. At Mike's urging, I told a joke, Melvin the Puss-Sucker. I questioned Clive's manhood, because he has a funny sounding name. I know a landman in Oklahoma named Gordon Brown, and as a result could remember that there's an obscure British politician with the same name. I asked everyone there if they'd ever heard of Gordon Brown, and accused those that hadn't of being stupid. I taunted them, saying the 11 of them couldn't whip me and 250 million other Americans. At this point one of the Brits asked me if I had ever seen the movie Zulu (Movie in which small band of British soldiers fights off 20,000 Zulu warriors.) I knew I had gone too far. Up to now, I figured their attitude was, "Chris, I ain't going caving with your friend no more, cause he's an (word which is officially banned from PBSS vocabulary). But I will be polite, because I'm in America." Now I was scared, and decided it was time to leave. I missed a few turns on the way back, and zig-zagged back through southeastern New Mexico, finally arriving in Midland 4-1/2 hours later, tired, but happy to be alive. I had a great time, and hope these cavers will return sometime when we have an opportunity to show them better caves.

Thanks to Steve Franks for the rope and help with wording.



July 10, 1996

Guadalupe Mountain Outfitters  
PO Box 97 / 8 Mesa Verde Dr.  
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Thanks again for your support. We hope you take advantage of what we've got for you!

Harry & Jackie Burgess  
Guadalupe Mountain Outfitters - Owners

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Our shop is located in White's City near the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Our store hours are 10am - 7pm daily March 1 - August 30 and 10am Wed - Sun September 1 - February 28.

206