



September 2001

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

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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, September 11**, 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: <wdfeast@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:

*****November 17,18-PBSS Trip to McKittrick Hill:** Barry Hays will have permits for McKittrick and Endless Caves Nov. 17-18. Contact Barry at <barrdonn@prodigy.net> or (915)333-8856 if you would like to go.*****

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): **Dec. 8**. Contact Walter Feaster at <wdfeast@home.com>.

PBSS T-Shirts:

Barry Hays and his new caver supply company, "Caver Stuff", has copious amounts of PBSS t-shirts and ball caps for sale. The t-shirts come in a beautiful shade of gray with the PBSS logo on the front and the optional "Cave Safely" on the back. Sizes in stock are M, L, and XL. The price is \$17.00 and the caps are \$10.00. Barry has a wide assortment of other t-shirts and caving stickers. Barry will have his product line at the next PBSS meeting or you can contact him at <barrdonn@prodigy.net> or (915)333-8856. Now is your chance to look good for the up coming caving season!

New Members:

The PBSS has two new members, **Mike Garant**, and **Michael Anderson** both residing in Odessa, Texas. Both joined more than a month ago, but the July newsletter didn't make it to the news stands. Any way welcome to our grotto and hopefully we can do some caving.

Medicine Cave, May 9, 2001**By Rebecca Lee**

There are only a few known caves in the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area of southeastern California. Other than the famed Mitchell Caverns, Cave of the Winding Stair attracts attention from the more adventurous park visitors, those who can rappel and climb ropes that is. But a little known, little visited cave called Medicine Cave is a jewel the park unfortunately restricts access. In fact, Medicine Cave is legally only visited by park staff for purposes of monitoring usage or documenting archeological interests.

On May 9 th, Tom Kaler and I received the opportunity to visit this backcountry cave for purposes of taking photos for the park's photo archives. The hike to the cave is short but on a day when outside temperatures are in the 90's it seems much longer. We had been to the entrances before this day so finding the cave was not difficult. The cave seemingly follows a fissure in the limestone. A cave with two openings, we entered through its north entrance. Rattlesnakes frequent both of the cave's man-sized entrances so we squeezed through with extreme caution. In fact, we brought along a snake stick to battle any inhospitable inhabitants.

Once inside the first small room, we crawled through a tiny passage that opened into another small room. Crawling again, we found yet another small room. (Are you getting the picture?) However, this room named the Nervous Breakdown Room contained many soda straws and box work, and was highlighted by a 6' long stalactite dangling in the room's center a mere foot from creating a column. A short climb over a false floor and we found ourselves in the Oval Office. We signed the register and returned to the first small room.

From the first small room, we slithered through the other passage that leads to the cave's south entrance but not before taking you passed an array of soda straws, stalactites, stalagmites, shields, columns, and a 15" X 15" squeeze. A mouse braved the squeeze with us and a bat awaited us in the cave's largest room ironically called the Big Room. It's a room of mostly breakdown with one 20' pit and the Crystal Chamber. Climbing down through a vertical crack in the floor leads to the main corridor of the south entrance.

Not a particularly long cave at 374', Medicine Cave has a lot to offer. At an elevation of 4,280', the view of the Mojave Desert from the entrances is spectacular. It was good trip and Tom and I are grateful for receiving the opportunity to explore the secret passages of Medicine Cave.

Petroglyph Cave, April 30, 2001**By Rebecca Lee****Cavers:** Ruel Metcalf, Tom Kaler, and Rebecca Lee

Native American life in the East Mojave Desert of Southern California displays itself proudly in the many walls of rock art etched in the varnished boulders scattered about the land. But, something of more interest is found when this rock art is placed inside a cave. In these places, a caver can stand in a chamber of blackened ceilings and carefully drawn figures to bask in a time when life was more primitive, simple, and carefree.

The Providence Mountains is not without such an enchanting cave. Petroglyph Cave, only a stone's throw from Cave of the Winding Stair, beckons to weary cavers fresh from the clutches of Cave of the Winding Stair to explore its secrets and find its treasures. Merely a corridor of 30', a few faint petroglyphs cling to the east wall of the cave's entrance and a sooty ceiling hovers overhead. Too hard to decipher now, these petroglyphs must have been impressive in their day when a Mojave or Chemehuevi Indian sat in the mouth of the yawning chasm and watched for bighorn sheep and chuckwallas. Far from our life of today, these caves remind us that life was not always about money and possessions. I think we all felt the power of the cave's lore and listened to its amazing story as we too sat at the entrance watching for bighorn sheep and chuckwallas. A cave of such small proportions, Petroglyph Cave is a cave for huge imaginations.