

September 2004

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

Volume 19 Number 8

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting of the PBSS

The next meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held October 12th at Murray's Deli located at 3211 W. Wadley in Midland at 7:00 PM.

Our Agenda

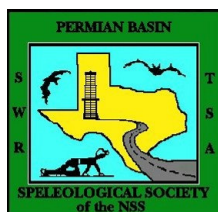
NOMINATIONS

FOR 2005 OFFICERS

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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 made out to and sent to: Michael Anderson. If you are interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then contact Barry Hayes at 432-333-8856 or <cavelizard@yahoo.com>. If you are not from this area and some how through circumstances beyond your control or ours found a copy of "The Hole News" then you should contact the National Speleological Society at 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL. 35810-4431, or go to <www.caves.org>.

The "PBSS" Home Page
www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.html
built and maintained by
Bill Bentley



President:
Barry Hayes
Vice-President:
Lori Hales
Secretary/Treasurer:
Michael Anderson

On Going Projects:

CRF Carlsbad Caverns: Expeditions usually occur on holiday weekends. Contact Barbe Barker <cloudcaver@pvtnetworks.net> or 505-687-4270. Or the CRF website www.cave-research.org

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP): Upcoming events usually take place the last weekend of each month. For more information contact Susan Herpin at 505-457-2253 or <highguads@yahoo.com>.

PBSS Rock Haul at Carlsbad Caverns: PBSS on going restoration in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. For more information contact Walter Feaster <wdfaster@cox.net> or 432-559-3297.

Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects:

October 16-17 Texas Cavers Reunion
Flat Creek Ranch www.oztotl.com/tcr

*****October 23-24 ESS Cave*****
contact Barry Hayes, cavelizard@yahoo.com

*****November 13-14 McKittrick Hill*****
McKittrick, Endless and Sand Caves
contact Barry Hayes, cavelizard@yahoo.com

*****Denotes a PBSS Grotto Trip*****
Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority

Retailers & Bulletin Boards

PBSS: http://caver.net/mailman/listinfo/pbss_caver.net
CaveTex: www.cavetex.net



Nominations for 2005 Grotto Officers

will be taken at the October meeting. If you have a nomination or if you are interested in serving as an officer and can't attend the meeting let me know.

Ballots will be mailed out with the October newsletter after the meeting. Ballots will be counted at the November meeting. If you can't attend that meeting please mail your ballots back to me in time to take to the meeting.

2005 Grotto Dues

Grotto dues will be due for all members at the end of the year. We are going in the hole (pun) because it costs more than ten dollars a year to print and mail out the newsletter, per member. We had a discussion at the meeting, and we have two choices. We can raise the dues to cover the cost of the newsletter or everybody with internet access can download and print their own copy. By the end of the year the newsletter will have cost about 12-13 dollars per member. If we add that cost plus a little extra for trips, donations, etc. the amount of the dues could double. This year we donated \$150.00 to the TCMA for the purchase of Deep and Punkin caves. **This is your choice.** If you can't attend the next meeting please e-mail me and let me know which way you want to go. I will print out all the e-mails and take them to the meeting. Michael <michael@ms-anderson.com>

New Members

We have two new members **Stephen** and **Cindy Ditullio** to welcome.

and

One that was lost, but now is found - **Jon Hancock.**

PBSS Remailer

Only 7 members have signed up on the PBSS remailer.

If you would like to receive info on upcoming events the address is still on the first page.

OUTLAW CAVING- SOME THOUGHTS

By Rebecca Lee

Disclaimer: This subject is in no way condoned or an ideology of any caver, grotto, or association I am connected to. These are just thoughts.

Outlaw caving. What is it? Does it exist? You bet it does. Caves are illegally explored by cavers all of the time. I'm sure you know someone who has done it. Maybe you've done it yourself but why?

Is it a discontent with bureaucracy? Is it a distrust or dislike of those in power? Is it ignorance? Or, is it the idea that caves on government lands should be open to a tax-paying public? I've heard all of these questions mumbled by one caver or another over many a campfire. It's amazing how many disgruntled cavers there are and once again I ask why?

I've heard cavers ask why only certain cavers are allowed privileges that other cavers are not? You've heard about it. Only so and so cavers from so and so grotto can go to so and so cave. That means all of you other so and so cavers must resort to outlaw caving if so inclined. Is this justified?

I've heard certain cavers and those in power insist that some caves must be restricted for scientific or safety reasons. But of course. Few can dispute that though they may want to dispute who can make those determinations.

Where the argument starts for some cavers is with the hundreds of other known caves that are simply hidden from cavers. Cavers have squirreled away cave locations for an eternity. It's the way some are. I can imagine a cave man thousands of years ago sneaking off to a secret cave where he kept the bounty of a hard day's work safe from other cave men. However, what about when government agencies keep cave names and locations from the public? How do you feel about that?

I've heard some say that caves should be protected for future generations but who gets to decide which generations are the lucky ones? And, should this decision be made by only an elite few?

Unfortunately, there are too many people out there that are oh so willing to ruin a good thing. That's likely the main reason why caves are gated or kept secret. That's something sad about caving in the twenty-first century. But, the people who are breaking locks or destroying gates are not true cavers. I believe true cavers have more respect for caves than that. Of course caves are vandalized but not usually by cavers. And there aren't a lot of hunters or hikers in the backcountry that happen upon an ungated cave and decide to vandalize it. I believe that most caves that are vandalized have been known about for years and are victims of the irresponsible. Most likely these are caves that were sacrificed by government agencies years ago.

It's not right to break rules but I can see why some cavers do. Can you? A person I know once told me that if you question rules and authority, you're dangerously close to creating anarchy. If you relate these thoughts to caving, you're saying that if all nonscientific and nondangerous caves on government lands were open to any and all cavers caves would be disastrously vandalized and robbed. Is this true? Do you believe this? Isn't that like saying cavers can't be trusted? Unfortunately, some can't and that's why we suffer. However, it wasn't vandalism that caused cavers to be mistrusted it was outlaw caving. So, doesn't that create a catch 22 for outlaw cavers?

But what about those ungated, unlocked caves? What if you're hiking one day on government land and you find a cave with only a sign that says it's illegal to enter this cave without a permit? What do you do? What if you are honest and call the appropriate agency to ask for a permit? And what if that agency says, "No. You can't have a permit?" What do you think then? A lot of cavers are wondering what to think. Isn't it human nature to do something you know is wrong whether you justify it with the thrill of being sneaky or the righteousness of doing something you believe is owed to you?

I've been to many caves legally that required a permit to enter and I've scratched my head and asked why. I've been to caves legally that are closed to recreational caving and I've scratched my head and asked why. I've heard the argument that some caves that probably shouldn't require a permit to enter do because an agency wants to keep track of visitation. They want to know who and how many are going in to the cave. Sounds like a big brother argument. Perhaps that's why few caves are open? It's too much work for only a few

thumbs.

If cavers stick to the usual permitted caves, a caver can exhaust his local opportunities in a year or two. Few caves are open for permits. Should there be more? Would opening more caves only temporarily satisfy lazy cavers or help cavers without a lot of time?

Old timers talk about the difference between cave collectors and ridge walkers. Cave collectors seek to explore as many caves as they can as if to add notches to a belt. They rarely look for new caves. Ridge walkers commit entire weekends or more to look for caves with no guarantee of finding any. Who's the better caver? Is the emergence of more cave collectors than ridge walkers responsible for lack of caving opportunities?

I'm not making an argument for or against outlaw caving. I don't have answers. I only have questions. I hear from a lot of cavers who are bitter about the secrecy and favoritism in caving so I grow more and more curious about why cavers are forced to outlaw cave. I would love to hear your thoughts about this subject and share them with others so please send your thoughts to the editor of the "Hole News" for publication in the next newsletter.

While you're thinking about outlaw caving, just remember that the next time you see a gaping hole in a limestone cliff be sure to check your map for ownership, look for "off limits" signs, and think before you leave only your footprint. Outlaw caving is still illegal no matter how ridiculous the reason.

If you would like to respond

or

Start a dialogue on another caving subject

Please send it in a .txt or .doc file

Thanks, Michael