

THE HOLE NEWS

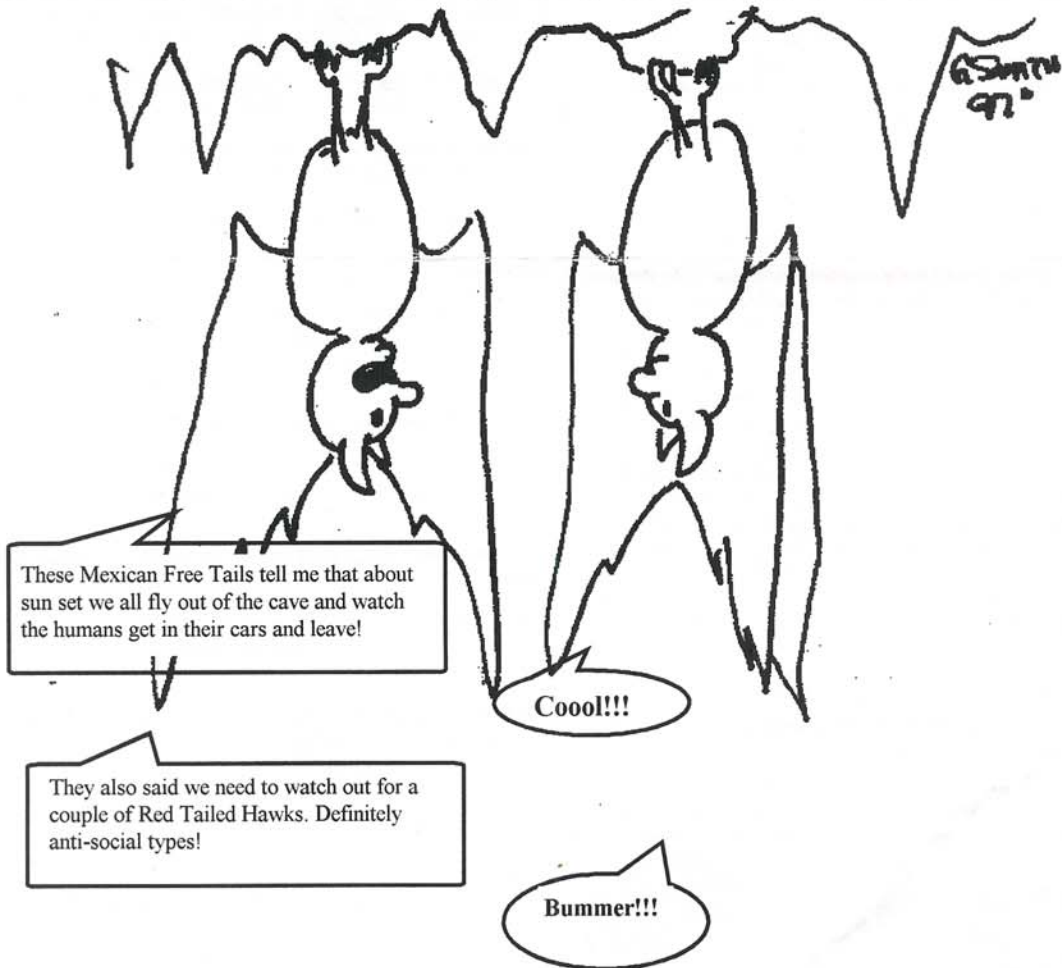
September

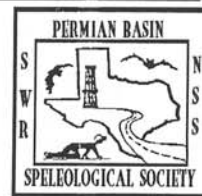
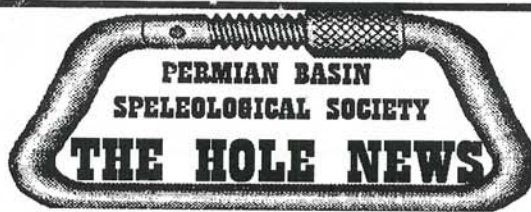
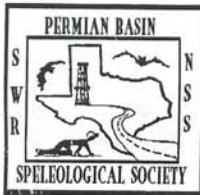
1998

Flip & Flop

The Two Bats

At Carlsbad Caverns





September 1998

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

Volume 13 Number 9

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on **Tuesday, September 8**, at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 West Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda:

PBSS trip to Ft. Stanton Cave, NM, Sept. 26. If you want to know what, when, where, and how, be at the meeting!

Mr. Bill has a couple of cave videos to show!

If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ (915)694-1824 or (915)559-3297, or E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshall.com>.

"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 Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. 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 Ave., Midland, Texas 79703-4847. If you're interested in caving or even if you think you might like to try it, then contact Kerry Lowery @ (915)394-4230 or <lowery4@crcom.net>. 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.

"PBSS Home Page"

<http://www.caver.net/pbss/pbss.htm>

Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley and Apex 2000 ISP.



Future Cave Trips and Events:

4-7 September-- Bustamante/Gruta del Palamito TSA Labor Day Project. Last years Project was a great success. Contact: Gill Edigar @512-441-0050 or gille@worldnet.att.net

4-7 September-- CRF Labor Day Expedition Carlsbad, NM. Contact: Barbe Barker @972-255-7127 or cavers@gte.net

5-7 September-- Southwestern Regional Landron Cave. Contact: Steve Fleming @505-899-2167 orswcaver@earthlink.net

11-13 September-- Colorado Bend SP Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger @512-443-4241 or trhli@sprynet.com

19 September-- NCRC Basic in Socorro, NM. Please request application: contact ahicks@rt66.com or call: (505) 835-5882 (W)

19 September-- Honey Creek Trip. Contact: Mark Minton(minton@mail.utexas.edu)
Contact: Kurt Menking(gimgr@bcad.org)

***** 26 September- PBSS Trip to Ft. Stanton, N.M.**: Every thing you need to know about Ft. Stanton Cave will be presented at our next meeting. If you can't be at the meeting, let me know and I will get this info to you. Walter , 694-1824<waltfeast@marshall.com>**

25-27 September-- International Bat Festival @Carlsbad Caverns. Contact: Rick Lobello rick_lobello@nps.gov--

23-25 September-- International Geological Correlation Program Project 379: "Karst Processes and the Global Carbon Cycle"-- Mammoth Cave, Kentucky.

1-3 October-- El Malpais National Monument, Resource Stewardship Symposium, New Mexico. Contact: Ken Mabery (Ken_mabery@nps.gov)

3-4 October-- GYPKAP, New Mexico. Contact: Joli or Chris Lee (jcleee@wazoo.com)

8-11 October-- Colorado Bend SP Project. Contact: Terry Holsinger @512-443-4241 or trhli@sprynet.com

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Cave Trips & Events Continued:

16-18 October--21st Annual Texas Cavers' Reunion: Chalk Bluff Campground, located on Texas Highway 55 about 15 miles north of the railroad overpass in Uvalde will be the site of the 21st annual Texas Cavers' Reunion. Contact: G. Willikers @512-441-0050 or gille@worldnet.att.net

18 October-- TSA Business Meeting Election of 1999 Officers; at TCR site. If you care be there.

23-25 October--Powells Cave Project
Contact: Terry Holsinger @512-443-4241 or trhli@sprynet.com

13-15 November--Colorado Bend SP Project
Contact: Terry Holsinger @512-443-4241 or trhli@sprynet.com

21-29 November--(all or Part) --UT Grotto Training Trip-- Cueva del Brinco, Conrado, Castillo, Tamps, Mexico. Other trainees welcome. High clearance 4WD & good tires required. Horizontal & vertical caves & campground available. See announcement in TSA Activities Newsletter
Contact: Aimee Beveridge 512-444-4881
aimee.beveridge@rrc.state.tx.us

25-29 November--CRF Thanksgiving Day Project Carlsbad, NM.
Contact: Barbe Barker @972-255-7127 or cavers@gte.net

5-6? December--SWR Winter Technical Regional, New Mexico
TBA (Hosted by the Sandia Grotto)

11-13 December--Colorado Bend SP Project
Contact: Terry Holsinger @512-443-4241 or trhli@sprynet.com

19 December -3 January--Holiday Trips to Mexico
Time to start planning where and when you'll go. The tradition of spending the best 3 weeks of the year in the best caving area in the world goes back 40 years. The world of international caving -- Mexico-now, family- any old time.

July 12-16, 1999--NSS Convention. Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer, Idaho. Contact: David W. Kesner, PO Box 1334, Boise, ID 83701; (208)939-0979; e-mail <drdave@micron.net>.

*****Denotes a PBSS Grotto Trip*****

Welcome New Members

PBSS welcomes three new members to our grotto. First we would like to welcome Annmarie Mikelski from Del Rio, Texas. Annmarie works for the NPS there in Del Rio. They have caves down there and she has extended an invitation to us to check some of them out.

Next we would like to welcome Lou Ann Moore. Lou Ann is the better half of Dwaine Moore. As I understand she has already done some caving. Welcome.

Last but not least, PBSS welcomes Teri Wheeler. Teri is from Odessa, Tx. and wants to go caving. Welcome everyone.

Cave Long and Prosper!

Trip Reports:

Caving In New Mexico: Jurnigan #2

Once in a while during a caving career, a caver will fatefully end up exploring a "sucker cave." This would be a cave that contains absolutely nothing of interest but the caver doesn't know that until he has sweated, bruised, and crawled through piles of bat guano. Jurnigan #2 could fit this category. Tom Kaler obtained the permit for us to visit this B.L.M. Cave on August 11. Prior to this trip, we had made two separate trips to scout the location of the cave because the "step log" to this cave is, well, not good. After two attempts to find the cave via the "step log" we were dismayed. It seemed this was the best hidden cave in the world.

"Surely, it must be a gem of a cave," we thought.

The day of the trip we made one last attempt to find this elusive cave. We agreed that if we didn't find it that day, we would try no more. To aid in our search, we purchased a topographic map of the area and tried to pinpoint this thing. The search was almost a mission now. I felt we had to find this cave called Jurnigan #2.

We narrowed the area of our search and scoured the ridge for any signs of a cave. Time went on, we couldn't find it, and disappointment began to set in. Our trip looked doomed. Before we called off the search, Tom took a few more steps in one direction when he saw something shining in the sunlight. "A beer can," he thought. He went to pick it up when suddenly it was clear to him that it was the metal seal of Jurnigan #2 beaming in the sun like a beacon.

"Here I am you idiots!" it seemed to say. From a distance, I could hear words of profanity and excitement from Tom's lips. Atlas we found the cave.

Tom opened the gate and soon we rappelled into the short, circular 12 foot pit. I was first to enter the cave. At the bottom of the drop, a 4 foot passage headed in one direction. As I followed the passage, I checked for critters and noticed the tunnel getting shorter and shorter. Soon, I was on my belly wallowing in silt and guano. Occasionally, the passage was just tall enough that I could stoop. For those of you who do not know, I am 5'2" on a good day. I was quickly getting a bad feeling about this cave. So far, there was no sign of any cave formations.

We continued crawling, hoping to see something of which we could talk about to cavers. Near the end of this one passage cave, we saw them. Finally, pay dirt, treasure, booty, grandeur. Our eyes widened as we scanned the room while lying on our bellies and bumping our heads. There they were, cave formations! Draperies, soda straws, popcorn, stalactites, stalagmites and columns, they all were there. These could be called some of the greatest cave formations in the world. In the world of the crickets that is for the tallest formation spanned a whole 10" in length. (That's inches not feet.) I'm sure that this is Lechuguilla Cave to the cave crickets.

The cave explored. We contorted our bodies in order to turn around and crawl out of the cave. I've always believed every cave is worth seeing at least once and Jurnigan #2 is no exception. If anything, this cave is a great exercise in crawling. Sadly, it seems that when telling our story of Jurnigan #2 the finding of the cave is more of a story than the cave itself.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee-Kaler

TRIP REPORTS CONTINUED:

**Recent Exploration in the Upstream Portion of 0-9 Well
Crockett County, Texas by R. D. Milhollin NSS 29962**

The weekend of August 8 marked the last of the summer vacation public school teachers enjoy in the district I work for, and in a last-ditch attempt to cram some more adventure into the waning season I accepted the invitation to meet at 0-9 Well for some caving. For those who have not been there, the well sits under a steel windmill, securely gated, amidst the monotonous backdrop of northern Chihuahuan Desert / southern Edward's Plateau environment of widely scattered mesquite trees and apparently thriving stands of a variety of cacti.

The descent of approximately 130 feet (90m) is interrupted by a single rebelay, but most of the way one just follows the well casing down into a tall, narrow room bisected by a running stream. From here the caver has the option of turning upstream into hours of deep mud and tight squeezes, or going downstream into a series of pools lying in narrow-walled canyon passage, and terminating in an alternating series of vertical drops into large (for Texas) dome rooms.

The previous trip I was involved in was highly structured, and supervised by the ubiquitous Terry Holsinger. On Saturday, Terry directed the several survey teams upstream and through a leap-frog system obtained several hundred feet of good detailed survey. Sunday was reserved for those who still had some stamina remaining from the previous day who wanted to see the beautiful rooms that lay downstream. The upstream passage changed to wet, low stream passage after about 2 hours of muddy, obstructed canyon caving, and then the survey ended at a sump. Since the teams were already cold from several hours of lying about in the water while the sketchers did their work, the teams were glad when they began the exit to the entrance climb.

The team I was on entered the cave about 11.00 a.m. and exited about 1:00 am the following day, about 12 hours underground. We were all starving and grumpy when we arrived back at the surface, and consequently ate our Beeny-Weenies (or approximations thereof) and headed to the tents, which had cooled somewhat by the early hours of the morning.

The trip of August 8-9 began with a call from Brian Pate of Dallas, who had been advised by Walter of an open date for a trip. I agreed to attend and share a ride out to the remote site, expecting a light turnout due to the concurrent NSS Convention being held in Sewanee Tennessee. The turnout was a little lighter than I expected, with Brian and I being the only attendees other than Walter. We discussed the possibilities, and even though aware of the dangers of a two-person team quite a ways into an often difficult passage, we proposed keeping the plan I had developed the previous week. Since his vertical gear had not made the trip with him, Walter would stay on the surface and deal with the heat and the gnats, which proliferated, most likely due to the effects of rain which had muddied the roads a few days prior to our arrival. We only had to rig the initial 20 or so feet, as the primary drop had been previously rigged, and like the downstream section drops, has ropes fixed in the cave which are deployed when needed and pulled up and secured out of the water upon exit. I descended first, secured the initial rope to the rebelay point, and allowed the looped rope to drop down into the pit. As I finished my descent and de-rigged, Brian was lowering two bags of gear we would have to

carry back to the sump, this in addition to our own personal cave packs. We agreed to be extra careful and to travel slowly to minimize the possibility of mishap, any of which would be difficult to recover from in a reasonable time.

Brian had only been downstream before this trip, and was probably not prepared for the very different conditions upstream. I had initially estimated the trip to last about 10 hours, but as we discussed the logistics together we lowered the expectations to 8 hours, although Walter later admitted he mentally allowed us an additional 2 or 3 hours to account for unknowns. Brian was dressed in a medium thickness wetsuit, and I opted for a full layer of polypropylene layered with cotton, and covered with a set of polyester / cotton coveralls.

Entering the well at 11:00 am we were expected to return around 7:00 PM, or thereafter. The pace we set initially was not demanding in itself, but as the stream meanders in and out of the passage for the first hour, then transits through a lower level not accessible to cavers, Brian was happy to delay a few minutes to sit in a pool to cool off. When the water passage played out, and just the knee-deep mud was left to contend with, he was pretty miserable, especially in the hour of crawl space. This was easy-going for me, but about 3 hours into the trip the tables were reversed. When we entered the water passage continuation past the crawl spaces, the wetsuit Brian wore was perfect. He was able to float and just pull himself along, ragging his Pelican camera case behind with a lanyard. I was forced to knuckle-walk along the mud banks, avoiding immersion as much as possible, although this was necessitated occasionally in the 1 to 4 foot (.3 to 1.3 m) water depths. This procedure puts considerable pressure on the lower back, and performing it was the least pleasant part of the experience for me. My frustration and pain was made no less bearable seeing Brian happily floating along like an otter. After an hour of this, we were chest-deep in the water and facing the end of the survey, the upstream sump.

One of the objectives we had set was to photograph some of the cave for the benefit of those who are vertically challenged, or have accidentally overheard veterans of the upstream passage describing the rigors. We carefully positioned the Pelican case so it would not be prone to falling in the water, and I secured the "waterproof" dry-bag my dive gear was carried in so it would be easy to kit up. Brian set up the camera, a Canon OEM with 21 mm lens, and I positioned and set the strobes, a Vivitar 283 and Sunpak 383, both equipped with Firefly slave triggers. I carried the aluminum 13 cf tank and Poseidon Odin (Jetstream) brand regulator assembled to minimize the possibility of an air loss in the event the valve was bumped during transport. This system was attached to a waist belt, and the only other dive gear I used was a single Pelican Super SabreLite, a small facemask, and a small DiveRite reel with braided nylon line. The helmet was replaced once the mask was in place and the dive was ready to commence. My plan was very limited: I was only interested in knowing if there was caver-usable air space a breath-hold distance on the other side so the survey could be extended without too much fuss and bother. If it was found to continue as air filled passage, I would tie off the line and return to Brian, and he would decide whether he wanted to breath-hold through, but he had already voiced some reluctance in doing this at this time, this trip.

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If no space was found, I would return and report this as well. We would then stow the camera and dive gear, and return to the entrance for the climb out.

The dive itself was relatively uneventful, and although the objective was achieved, I was disappointed that I failed to find the desired air-filled passage on the other side. In order to allow for contingencies while in the zero-visibility water, I computed the approximate amount of time that one-third of my on-board air supply would last, about 4 minutes with several conservative factors built in. Unfortunately, as I turned the air on, a free-flow from the regulator wasted much of the air. The safety factor had to be refugure, this time allowing only about 2.5 minutes of bottom time. I waited in the neck-deep water for a few minutes while Brian took a few photo exposures. During this wait I felt the first physical symptoms of body heat loss, shivering. I had to get busy with the dive and then get out of the water passage as soon as possible in order to avoid the effects of hypothermia, which even in mild cases can cause poor judgment which might result in an accident, something we felt we could not afford to risk. As I submerged, the light I held became quickly useless, the beam could not be seen at all until held about 6 inches from the mask. The water stayed about the same depth, and the ceiling stayed smooth. I felt the passage contours and determined that it held approximately the same size and shape as before it sumped, except that I did not find the eccentric erosional remnants that decorated the air-exposed walls behind me. I stayed along the ceiling, feeling with extended hand for tell-tale splashing that would indicate air above. I found none in the time allotted for the dive. As I turned to begin the exit the hip-mounted tank briefly became entangled in the thin guideline, but I had anticipated this and had kept the attachment point clear of any other line-entanglement hazards, so the problem was only an inconvenience, although it did absorb some of the time allotted for the exit. The visibility prohibited a reliance on the attached tank pressure gauge to determine how much air was used, so I had to count to myself as I conducted the search for air passage. In doing this I inadvertently overstayed the time my air supply allowed. Soon after surfacing in front of Brian, the tank ran dry! I will need to get a slightly larger bottle for future explorations of this kind.

The trip back to the rope was eventful only because the building fatigue slowed us down. We stopped more frequently for rest than on the way in. Once I was moving again, the chilling effect of the water was not really felt, although I knew that this was a temporary effect. Upon leaving the water passage and emerging into a chamber where we could stand up, we promptly lay down and with lights off, rested for around 30 to 40 minutes. After this refreshing break, we continued the exit, and emerged to Walter's relief only 2 hours later than original planned.

The next day Brian and I went downstream and photographed the waterfall (second) drop. All in all the trip was exciting and ended up being counted as time well spent. There is still going passage upstream that needs surveying, and we know now that for the time being the upstream sump must remain impassable, at least, until, a more comprehensive exploration of the underwater passage can be made.

From the Editor:

Due to lack of space I will print a completely revised membership list next month. Below is a list of e-mail address. As you can see our President has become multi-media. If all of you had e-mail, I wouldn't have to print this newsletter. I could Just e-mail it to you.

I will take this opportunity to remind you that our grotto elections are this November. We will be taking nominations for grotto officers at the October meeting, or by mail, phone, or e-mail. Send them to me (Walter Feaster) or be at the meeting.

Also November/December the grotto membership dues are due. Save up to keep receiving this highly acclaimed news letter.

Cave Softly and Carry A Long Rope

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 Kerry Lowery: <lowery4@crcom.net>



Texas Cave Rescue

The TSA Cave Rescue emergency number is still:

1-800-692-0234

This number will work in the U.S.. But the

Mexico Cave Rescue

number has changed Area Codes. again.

001-956-686-0234

From Mexico dial direct or call collect (*Por Cobrar*-in Spanish)! These are the 24-hour numbers for Kreidler Funeral Home in McAllen, Tx. Ask for **Cave Rescue** and John Kreidler. Be persistent!

In the Carlsbad, New Mexico area try:

911