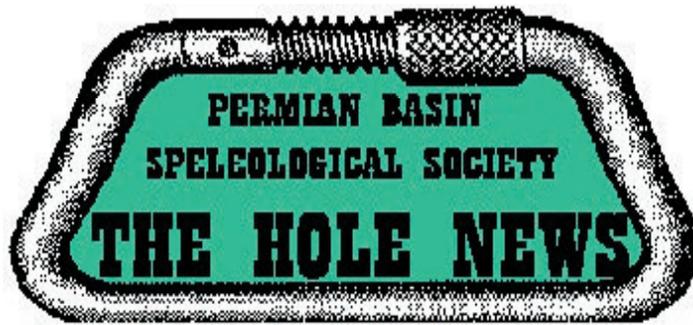


The Hole News

Volume 24 Number 12

December 2009





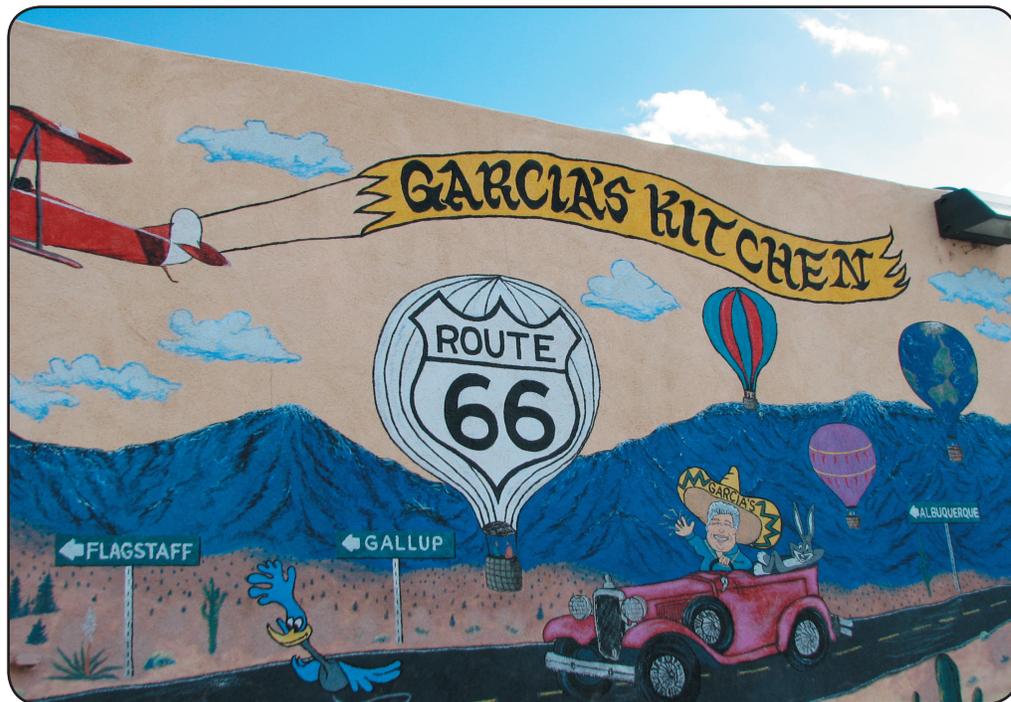
December, 2009

Chartered in 1984 as the 300th Grotto of the NSS

Volume 24 Number 12

Southwest Region's 2009 Winter Technical Conference

December 5th in Albuquerque, NM



By Jacqui Thomas

The 2009 SWR Winter Tech was held at Blake Jordan's offices and started Saturday morning with registration, coffee, homemade kolaches, and a lot of visiting. There were about 75 members registered.

First after registration was the Region's business meeting. After the reports of officers, business went pretty much as usual with two exceptions: First, we voted to award a grant to Jason (whose last name escapes me) to

fund nitrogen cycle studies in Spider and Lechuguilla Caves. In this context the membership was reminded that we can use more funds for scholarships. Second was the presentation by Sandia Grotto people of Socorro as the site of the 2013 NSS Convention and a request for a vote on whether or not to pitch the idea to the NSS. After several questions about camping facilities and the presence of draws and arroyos and the possibility of heavy rain, and some discussion of Socorro's weather

in July, the membership voted 19 to 12 to bring the proposal to the NSS.

We also presented Jennifer Foote with an honorary SWR membership for her service to the region and to caving. Kathy Peerman was presented with the Wuss Walker, the cane with a carbide lamp attached that was previously presented to Dave Belski. It can only go to someone over 50 who has a place to display it and has done "something" to deserve it. The something that was

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Scheduled Upcoming Events

- *Jan 11, 2010*
PBSS Monthly meeting
Murray's Deli, Midland
- *Feb. 27, 2010*
5-Mouth Cave dig
- April 17-18*
SWR Spring Regional
Ft. Stanton, NM
- May 1-9*
Ft. Stanton Cave Project

** indicates PBSS club activity*

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done was not elaborated upon. Spring Regional will be at Fort Stanton the weekend of the 17th and 18th of April, 2010. We will be working on the Don Sawyer Memorial Hall construction project.

After the business meeting, the morning was taken up with project reports: Lechuguilla, High Guads and Snowy River Restoration, Gypsum Karst Project (GypKAP), Fort Stanton and Snowy River .

Lunch was wherever we wanted to go and there were lots of choices, as we were on the edge of a WalMart-anchored group of stores and restaurants. I had my first Boston Market meal, which Martha and I took back to Blake's offices. After lunch and all the way until dinner break we had presentations on Cave Science and Exploration. Resistivity Measurements told us there really is big cave at Big Manhole. We heard that the age of the Grand Canyon is being scientifically pursued through studies of gravels, isotopes, and karst, we know now that Conrad's boat in Fort Stanton Cave could very well be the remains of a boat and we know more than we did before Carol Belski did her study during the last Fort Stanton Project. Ideas were presented on how to learn more and how to protect what's left. NICKRI is progressing on its building, Alexander Kendrick continues to pursue his underground radio designs, and we went to Eddy County, Tanzania, the Sandia Mountains, and points around and between.

Debbie Buecher brought with her two rescued bats and fed them mealworms and carried them about under her blazer. Lee Skinner posted a video of a hungry rescuee chowing down on a forceps-held mealworm. Mmmmm.



Linda Starr and Mike Bilbo with the 2013 NSS convention bid banner

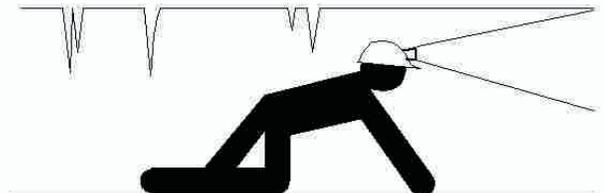


A local invites us to lunch.

Our dinner was a bit more human-friendly, as it consisted of catered brisket, sausage, tenderloin and chicken, four or five different types of barbecue sauce and the usual sides. We were on our own for the during dinner entertainment, a visiting, catching up and watching the bats. The after dinner "entertainment" was provided by Dwight Deal, who showed video and described to us what's happening in the Wulong Karst. This area of enormous holes in the earth and gorges is the newest UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site and the Chinese are preparing for the influx of tourists they believe will be the result of this designation. I was not aware of how difficult (impossible) it is to go caving in China, but Dwight and his wife Mary lead educational tours to this region of China and now I want to go on one.

The day was full and there was no time to slip away and explore Albuquerque. Since it's close to 10 hours away and I had never been there before Martha McArthur and Jim McLean (many of you will remember them from the Rock Haul or TCR) kindly encouraged me to stay another day and showed me the sights on Sunday. What a lovely area, and a fun and informative weekend:

Thanks to all the planners, presenters and hosts for a great time!



PBSS Holiday Gathering - 2009*Barry, Bill and Kel chewing the....something**Walter makes a good fire**By Kel Thomas*

The 2009 PBSS Holiday gathering at Ess Cave was a very sparsely attended affair. The annual event was held 12 Dec.

Barry Hayes arrived in his travel trailer Friday evening, bringing along with him a healthy supply of firewood and of course Donna's amazing pecan pie.

Bill Bentley arrived Saturday with a very large pot of Debbie's extraordinary chili.

Soon afterward, Walter Feaster followed by Jacqui and Kel Thomas arrived.

Other obligations kept our numbers low. Actually the above mentioned were the only end of year revelers. College graduations, jobs etc. kept some away. Where are these people's priorities, anyway?

So as a result, the upper end of the PBSS age range - read old coots - sat around the campfire eating and drinking, telling and re-telling tales of former and future glories and trying our best not to doze off after our delicious shared meals.

Since we were at the location of an actual cave, I suppose we need a cave trip report. Right?

Okay, here goes.

We unlocked the gate to make sure the lock was in working order. It was, we looked in, did the Chevy Chase head and neck nod (Grand Canyon trip in the movie "Vacation") and locked the gate. End of report. If others would have joined us we would have gone in and caved. We had our gear.

Seriously though, we genuinely hope that 2010 will see a strong, active and growing PBSS. To accomplish this we need all members to stay as active and supporting of PBSS as possible.

Cave softly and oftly!

A Letter (Plea) from Brad

Editor's Note:

When the Hole News began publishing the "Saga of Brad and Janet", it was done so as a memoir of a couple's introduction to and immersion in the world of recreational caving. Since then it has degraded into a soap opera complete with innuendo, spousal abandonment, tattoo abuse and possible extra-marital dalliances. Occasional-

ly however, snippets of real caving activity are forwarded to me by either Doug or Janet. Unfortunately the following letter is not one of those.

Unless I start receiving some actual cave related reports or commentary, this will be the last time the Hole News will publish Brad and Janet. All other correspondence will be forwarded to Jerry Springer, where it belongs.

To the editor of Hole News,

I have nowhere else to turn. It's funny but I can't help but think you are the reason Janet has run off with those weirdo cavers and left me holding the bag and this damn yappy little dog, which I'm stuck with again. I miss Janet. Believe me, she could be real pain in the butt, and that mother of her's is no prize either. I've always heard that coming to Texas ruins good people. I firmly believe that now. What a mistake for us to come here. We would have done better staying in New Orleans and been washed away

or if not that, helping clean up.

The fact is I don't even know where she is. She has gotten into the habit of spending days on end in the cave we found, or she is going off to somewhere in Georgia or Alabama or God knows where with her new friends. I even heard that this past summer she was up in Kerrville for some international shindig. That's only an hour or so away. You'd think she would've called.

I guess I blame you because you are really the only caver person besides that &#%@^!\$ (*editor's censor*)

Doug or Karsten or whatever the hell his name is that I know how to get in touch with. You though, saw fit to splatter our lives out there for all the world to see. After all you did have permission. So yeah, put this letter in your newsletter if you have the nerve. Why not? Everybody already knows what a no count jerk and coward I am anyway.

I hope though that somehow Janet or someone who knows her will see this and talk her into coming home where she belongs.

Brad

PBSS December 2009 Meeting Minutes

The PBSS meeting of the 8th of December was opened by a rap of the new gavel (courtesy of Walter Feaster and replacing the plastic catsup bottle) at precisely 1900 hours.

The meeting was attended by Tony Abernathy, Bill Bentley, Walter Feaster, Kel Thomas, and Jacqui Thomas.

The treasurer reported that we have \$716.40. We have had two renewals and have a new member, Jamie Lankford.

We decided that we will drop off the member list anyone who is not paid up, and the I/O report January 2010 will include only paid members (this is a change from our practice of keeping folks on the list in hopes that they will eventually re-up).

We discussed the upcoming Christmas Party at Ess Cave, and who was

bringing what and when. The tentative date for the next Five Mouth Cave dig at the end of February has been confirmed by the Fields, and we will dig the weekend of the 27th of February. Dust masks are recommended.

Dustin Gashette was one of the recipients of Chuck Steuhm award for promising new caver. The award brings with it a one year membership to the TSA. We decided to hold off on publishing this until Dustin acknowledged that he had received word of the award, so we wouldn't be sneaking up on him. Dustin now knows.

Bill Bentley reported that there were 16 people at the Carlsbad Rock Haul, and that we filled the dump truck to overflowing. Stan Allison reported to Bill that the 2 helmets and lights we borrowed were not returned to him

and we voted that if they do not turn up PBSS will replace them. (Since the meeting Stan reported that the helmets and lights were at the interpretation desk).

Our next Carlsbad Rock Haul is tentatively set for the 8th of May. The folks who worked the last one will have first dibs on the one in May.

The next Southwest Regional will be at Fort Stanton May 29-30-31 (Memorial Day weekend). As part of the Regional we will haul more concrete and shaft wall replacement supplies back to Don Sawyer Memorial Hall.

The meeting was closed at 1950, again with the most excellent new gavel.

Respectfully submitted,
Jacqui Thomas, President



John McLean explains resistivity results from Big Manhole during the recent SWR Winter Tech Conference in Albuquerque. Yes Virginia, there is (probably) more cave.

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