



February 2000

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

Volume 15 Number 2

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, February 8, around 7:00 P.M. in the back meeting room of Murray's Delicatessen. Murray's is located at 3211 West Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda: Meeting

"Z" Rig Demonstration

Future Cave Expeditions

We now have Mass Quantities of Texas Bat Stickers!



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> or <wfeaster@caver.net>.

"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. Please observe copy righted © articles. Items for this newsletter can be sent to the Editor, "The Hole News", c/o Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard Ave., Midland, TX. 79703. 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 Secretary/ Treasurer, c/o Walter Feaster, (address above). 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@rcrom.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 AL, 35810-4431, or <www.caves.org/defaultjs.htm>.

"PBSS Home Page"

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

Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley & Caprok.net ISP.

Future Cave Trips, Events, and Projects:

11-13 February-- Colorado Bend State Park Project: For info contact Terry Holsinger at (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

19-21 February- GypKaP: Owl Cave dig, Triple Engle Pit, Diamond Cave, Orange Feather Cave, etc. For Details contact Dave Belski at <belski@caverns.com> or (505)885-6168.

20 February- Government Canyon Karst Survey: Project at Government Canyon State Natural Area. Contact Marvin Miller at (830)885-5631 or <mlmiller@gvty.com>.

25-27 February- Powells Cave Project: Come to the second longest cave in Texas. Contact Terry Holsinger at (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

11 March- PBSS Rock Hauling @ CACA: Tentative date for PBSS restoration at Carlsbad Caverns. More info contact Ruel Metcalf at (915)263-4890 or <ruelgto@webtv.net>. **

10-12 March- Colorado Bend State Park Project: Contact Terry Holsinger at (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

7-9 April- Colorado Bend State Park Project: Contact Terry Holsinger at (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.

Mid - April- TSA Convention: Details at a later date.

27-29 May- SWR Memorial Day Regional: Details later.

12-16 June--CRF Restoration Field Camp @ Carlsbad Caverns: The Cave Research Foundation in association with the National Park Service and the NSS, is sponsoring a week long restoration field camp at Carlsbad Caverns. If you are interested contact Bill Bentley at (915) 697-3079 or <caver@caver.net>.

26-30 June-- NSS Convention: This year's convention is to be held in Elkins, West Virginia. If you register before May 1st, you can save \$15 off your registration fee! Registration information can be found online at <http://www.caves.org/events/nss2000>. You can contact Kim Kehs at (215)563-8153 or e-mail <edandkim@easy-pages.com>.

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

Due to permit restrictions or other limitations Grotto members have priority.

(Continued page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

On Going Projects:

CRF- -Carlsbad Caverns: Expeditions usually occur on holiday weekends. Contact Barbe Barker (972)594-1183 or <cavers@gte.net>. 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 Dave Yagnow at <djagnow@cybermesa.com>.

Lincoln National Forest-Capitan Peak Study Area (LNF-CPSA): April 29- May 5 and October 7-13. Ridge walking and cave survey. Contact Dick Venters at <rventers@aol.com>. Everyone welcome.

Fort Stanton Bat Cave Dig (FSBCD): Do you dig caves? Here is your chance to find new passages. Tentative dates: March 24-26, May 26-29, June 30- July 5, August 4-6, and September 1-4. Contact John Corcoran III at <john_j_corcoran_iii@msn.com> or Dick Venters at <rventers@aol.com>.

*****PBSS Rock Hauling At Carlsbad Caverns:** PBSS on going restoration in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. Lots of fun. Tentative dates are: March 11, June 3, September 9, and December 2. Reserve a spot now, they are going fast. Contact Ruel Metcalf at (915)263-4890 or <rue1gto@webtv.net>. *****

PBSS News and Stuff

For those of you that may have missed it, we (the PBSS), accomplish the removal of the culvert to the entrance of **Lechuguilla Cave** in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. This was part of the National Park Service project to improve the entrance to Lechuguilla with a better air tight culvert system. On Saturday, January 29, after eight days of hard work, PBSS members and Park Service representatives removed the last section (the so called half culvert) from the entrance to Lechuguilla. Pictures plus story (I hope some one writes a trip report) in next month's issue of "The Hole News".

At our week long ordeal at Lechuguilla, the members of the PBSS that were present, decided on a first for our grotto. We have made **Susan Herpin** an honorary member of the PBSS. Susan was a volunteer with the Cave Resource Office and assisted the PBSS in the Culvert Removal Project. Susan received a membership to the PBSS and a Texas Bat Sticker. Welcome to the **geriatric grotto!**

In this issue of the newsletter is the **membership list** for the new year. Please check and make sure everything is correct. As you can see we have lost some members and gained some. Please note that there has been some e-mail changes. **Save this** for future reference.

We have some **new members** in the grotto. Don and Tamara King joined at our Christmas party, Larence Parent has rejoined our ranks, and Dwaine Moore's two sons, Dwaine G. II and John R., have joined. Welcome all.

At our **next meeting** Bill Martin will be demonstrating the **"Z" rig** and other haul systems for cave rescue. We may set up a date to do this at a cave in the near future.

High Guads Restoration Project: 1999 Summary

by David Jagnow, NSS #8177 NSS Conservation Chairman

The Guadalupe Mountains of southeastern New Mexico contain some of the most beautiful caves in the world. Carlsbad Caverns and Lechuguilla Cave are the two that capture most of the attention. But there are approximately 300 known caves within this ancient Capitan Reef complex, with the oldest caves being nearly 11 or 12 million years old. These caves are unique because of their sulfuric-acid origin as a result of hydrogen sulfide leaking from the underlying oil and gas fields within the Permian Basin. These caves are beautiful and delicate, but have suffered as a result of more than 100 years of human exploration and visitation.

In January, 1996, Lincoln National Forest (LNF) closed most of the caves in the Guadalupe Mountains to recreational caving. Cave of the Madonna had been closed a couple years earlier because of severe damage to the cave. The Forest Service took a critical look at the cumulative damage within the caves and decided that each cave needed to be restored, and a cave management plan drawn up for every Guadalupe cave. Restoration began on some of the caves, but it was fairly scattered and disorganized.

In 1997, Region 3 of the USFS (New Mexico and Arizona) proposed a Cave Fee Demonstration Program. This program would have charged cavers a cave entrance fee. The USFS also planned to advertise the cave resources and run "Adventure Tours" (charging high dollar amounts to provide the hard hats, lights, vertical gear, ropes, and training to novices who would take Ranger-guided tours of the vertical caves). The cavers of the Southwest Region and Arizona Regional Association banded together to oppose this ill-conceived plan. By January 1998, the Forest Service agreed to drop their Cave Fee plans in exchange for the cavers providing enough volunteer work to get the caves restored.

By January 1999, it appeared the cavers had provided about \$85,000 of caver volunteer value toward the cave resources of LNF during 1998. We had gotten off to a late start as the first large work trip wasn't until July 4th weekend, under the direction of SWR Chairman, Steve Fleming.

The High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) was formed in January, 1999. Susan Herpin, USFS volunteer, convinced me to form this project to provide a regular source of manpower to help restore the cave resources. The HGRP is not an official "NSS Project," but could easily evolve into one. We currently meet the last weekend of every month at Texas Camp, located about 1/2 mile east of the Dark Canyon Lookout Tower.

The purposes of the HGRP are: 1) to regularly provide restoration teams to restore all of the High Guads caves over the next few years, and 2) to systematically provide more than \$100,000 of caver volunteer value per year to the LNF cave resources, and 3) to get as many caves as possible (where appropriate) reopened to recreational caving.

The Forest Service (Cave Specialist Ransom Turner and District Ranger Mike Baca) determine the priority of the restoration work; the HGRP provides the manpower and gets the work accomplished. The work involves recording of historical signatures, establishing and repairing flagged trails where necessary, simple scrubbing and cleaning of speleothems, speleothem repair, surveying, mineralogical inventory, impact mapping, photo monitoring, and continual monitoring and maintenance of each cave. I believe that once the caves are restored, the rate of deterioration of the cave resources will be much slower in the future.

(Continued page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

During 1999, the HGRP completed trail layout and restoration of Black Cave, which was reopened to recreational caving in March. We continued ongoing restoration in Hidden Cave, which was also reopened to recreational caving in March. In Hidden Cave, we removed up to an inch of black dirt, revealing beautiful pale-orange lily pads surrounding large dry pool in the south end of the cave. Each month, we try to accomplish more restoration work in Hidden Cave, along with monitoring the entire cave. In October, we epoxied together the pieces of a broken rimstone dam that had been stepped on sometime during the previous 30 days. Horizontal cavers and kids under the age of 18 often worked in the main (entrance) passage of Cottonwood Cave, laying out stone and flagged trails, scrubbing down walls and speleothems, and cleaning out dirt-filled rimstone dams.

In June, 1999, under the direction of the Forest Service, we provided 18 cavers for a mock rescue practice in Hell Below Cave. Two new bolts were added at the top of the 70' drop, and the rescue plan for the cave was finalized.

In September, 1999, we started restoration work in Three Fingers Cave (under Project Leaders Allen Laman and Mike Huber) and continued restoration in Pink Dragon Cave (under Project Leaders Dave Jagnow and Phil Cunningham). Three Fingers Cave is a seriously steep hike, with a 120' entrance drop. Restoration, trail building, and photo documentation will continue in this large cave for several years. Pink Dragon Cave is an easier hike, with an easy horizontal cave. After laying out trails in Pink Dragon, we started epoxying back together dozens of stalagmites that were kicked over many years ago. In October and November we epoxied at least 24 major stalagmites, the tallest being about 4' high in 6 pieces. Other small stalagmites and stalactites have been epoxied together while we wait to find their proper point of attachment. This is especially gratifying work - seeing these clusters of stalagmites again rising from the floor. Work continues on stabilizing a dusty trail that leads down from the entrance room to the first interior room.

There are a number of cave projects in the Guadalupe Mountains that function independently of the HGRP, although we are often able to provide manpower for these projects. Ed Goff is now Project Leader for the resurvey and restoration of Cave of the Madonna. John Lyles is Project Leader for the resurvey and restoration of the Wonderland portion of Cottonwood Cave. John is also Project Leader for installing permanent survey markers at various locations throughout several caves. Mike Mansur is Project Leader for the impact mapping in Hell Below Cave. Dr. Michael Queen is Project Leader for the resurvey of Virgin Cave.

During 1999, we averaged 25 cavers per month, with a maximum of 40 in June (for the mock rescue). We have had more than 100 participants from eleven states, Germany, and Australia. The Pajarito Grotto has consistently provided the highest number of participants. For the year, the High Guads Restoration Project totaled approximately \$80,000 of volunteer value for Lincoln National Forest. The other independent project contributed an additional estimated \$40,000 of volunteer value, for a total of approximately \$120,000 for the year at essentially no cost to Lincoln National Forest. This dollar amount includes the mileage, travel time of volunteers, the cost of restoration supplies, the hours spent doing restoration, plus project preparation and documentation time and expense.

If you are interested in helping with any aspect of the restoration work in the Guadalupe caves, please contact me or any of the listed

Project Leaders. Please notify us at least a week in advance so we can coordinate plans with the Forest Service. We need to know if you are vertically competent or limited to horizontal caves. Each caver needs to keep track of roundtrip mileage, total travel time, and any special equipment expenses specific to that trip (excluding food). The Project Leaders will keep track of the incave hours. Please bring buckets, water jugs, sponges, nylon brushes, tooth brushes, scrapers, high-pressure spray bottles, and any other restoration equipment you feel would be appropriate. Let us know if you are a qualified surveyor, sketcher, impact mapper, or have other special abilities. From April through September we also conduct non-obtrusive bat exit counts at Cottonwood, Hidden, Gunsight, Sentinel, and Dust caves. It is a pleasant way to enjoy a quiet sunset in the Guadalupe Mountains.

The High Guads Restoration Project has had a very successful year. The Forest Service is pleased with our work and the reports. I hope that similar projects will begin tracking their volunteer value throughout the country. Please contact me if you have any questions. I hope to see you on one of our trips in the future.

Cave Softly, and Leave No Trace!

David Jagnow, NSS #8177
NSS Conservation Chairman
PO Box 93398
Albuquerque, NM 87199-3398
505-332-4889 (Office & Manual Fax)
djagnow@cybermesa.com OR
David@Jagnow.com (Permanent)



Caving in Southern California

On November 24, 1999 Tom and I embarked on a remarkable caving adventure. Our journey started in the coastal region of Southern California. We heard about these five, famous caves from many different sources but had no idea of what to expect. All we knew was that the adrenaline pumping adventure ahead of us would be thrilling and exciting.

As we motored down the treacherous road bobbing and weaving to our destination, we found it difficult to negotiate. We finally reached the trailhead for the caves and noticed many footprints as a mouse scurried away. We were definitely not the first to visit. "The visitation to these caves must be enormous," we thought and wondered if we would see any other wide-eyed cavers. Sure enough, we did. We followed the line of fun seekers along the trail and before we knew it a gargantuan mountain rose before us. It is a huge peak riddled with slick, slippery passages like slides and seemingly covered with snow. I heard eerie screams coming from within. "What could those be?" we asked ourselves. The geology of the mountain was a mystery to all who cautiously approached it. It was like nothing we had ever seen and it was called the Matterhorn. As we slid through the mountain's passageways, we too screamed from within. It was a short trip but not devoid of a spelean experience.

The next cave we bravely entered was totally unlike the spooky corridors of the Matterhorn. Unnamed, this cave is only a short hike away from the Matterhorn but enters a completely different geologic realm. The rocks of this cave are ocher and saturated with fossils which appeared to be those of dinosaurs. The formations in the cave are predominately stalactites. Mining artifacts litter the cave and remnants of a mine train remain. We were unsure of what was being mined in this cave as we rushed passed the cave walls. We could not linger too long in any of the caves as we had to be back to our truck by 10:00 PM as requested by the landowner.

As we searched for the third of the five caves, we noticed other cavers milling around and followed them to a secretive river cave we learned was named Caribbean. The passages are flooded and a small boat is required to venture inside. The entrance to the cave begins from under a bridge where a boat awaits its passengers. Rumors of treasure in the cave are circulated among the cavers. Legends of outlaws and gunfights are told as the cave grows darker while you float into the abyss. Of course, we survived the ride but were left unsure of the underworld that we had just seen. It reminded me of a place where ghosts could roam or a place where pirates could have been.

While we moved on to our next caving escapade, we lost our companions in the trees. The area became overgrown with vines and leafy canopies. We bushwhacked our way through the jungle feeling our cause was lost when suddenly we were entombed. The walls of this cave contained writing not unlike hieroglyphics. Certainly Egyptians never came this way but what natives would leave such art? Puzzled, we continued through the maze. Shiny formations of every kind surrounded us and someone posted a sign that read, "Warning! Do not disturb bats." Tom snapped a photo of me before we heard a hissing sound. We wondered, "Snakes this far in a cave?"

Tom looked at his watch. It was 6:30 so we hurried through the passages unsure of where we were going. Deeper into the cave we went, the more signs we found like the one that read, "Archeologists at work." Curiosity pulled us in farther and farther though we were running out of time and still had not seen the last of the five caves. The tunnel grew longer and darker as I dreamed of an ark and of raiders at the tunnel's end. I questioned Tom, "Who placed the signs and what were they looking for?" and he shrugged in uncertainty.

We found nothing more passed the last sign so we quickly exited the cave. However, in our confusion, we exited at a point unknown and came upon another mountain. One with water rushing from a cave's entrance. It was the last of the five caves and it would be our greatest challenge.

The water pouring from the cave's mouth held huge logs that dropped fifty feet before plunging to a pool below. It looked dangerous and we did not know how to enter. If we climbed to the top somehow, maybe we could rappel in but without our gear that was not an option. So, we scaled the edges of the mountain and realized that to see this cave we were going to have to get wet. The creek that fed the cave was high that day, so we entertained a hair brained idea and jumped onto a massive log as it floated by. Our only worry at the time was to avoid the fifty foot water fall.

The log ride was gentle and we saw stalactites and stalagmites as we bobbed along through darkness and light. It was as though we were Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. But before we could fully relish our newest adventure, we heard the sound of rapids. It was the fifty foot waterfall pulling us in. Tom searched for a way for us to jump from the log but our speed quickened. It was inevitable. We were going over. We clutched the log tightly. Tom began to scream. I began to scream. We held each other closely and just as we approached the sunlight, we dove into the pool below making a splash from the mountain.

Luckily, we were uninjured and giggled with excitement as our log docked itself at the shore. We had done it. We had seen all five caves and still had time to return to our truck. The day was a complete success and we were now experts in these caves of Southern California. But if our adventures seem to be too good to be true then let me tell you this. An imaginative caver can find adventure in any cave no matter what the size or where the location even if those caves are nestled in the small world of Disneyland.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee

Note: The cave containing rides at Disneyland mentioned in this trip report are the *Matterhorn*, *Big Thunder Mountain Railroad*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *the Indiana Jones Adventure*, and *Splash Mountain*.



PBSS Editor Spotted at Splash Mountain



MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:	PHONE #:	NSS #:
Alton, Ron	1 Scenic Dr. Big Spring, Tx. 79720	915-263-4931	None
Bentley, Bill	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	21977
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701 6124	915-682-1904	33471
Feaster, Walter	4307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703-4847-71	915-694-1824	31624
Florer, Tom	11501 Braesview # 1901, San Antonio, Tx. 78213	210-479-5612	47639
Gray, Larry	31 East 33rd Street, San Angelo, Tx. 76903	915-653-3823	19588
Gray, Steve	106 Canyon, Big Spring 79720	915-264-7619	None
Grieco, Tony	1221 East Llano, Hobbs, N.M. 88240	505-393-5604	Expired (GDI)
Hales, Lori A.	3509 N. Greer Ave., Odessa, Tx. 79764	915-381-3408	45354
Hayes, Barry	1912 Santa Rosa, Odessa, Tx. 79763	915-333-8856	None
Herpin, Susan *	P.O. Box 612, Carlsbad, N.M. 88221-0612	505-785-2423	34557
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-524-6327	41068
Kaler, Tom	P.O. Box 53, Essex, Ca. 92332	Not Yet	27372
Kamon, Ken	4400 Andrews Hwy # 801, Midland, Tx. 79703	915-699-7192	34637
Kettle, Cheryl	4741 Devonian Ave., Odessa, Tx. 79762-4410	915-550-8102	None
King, Don & Mary *	1907 Centerview, Midland, Tx. 79707	915-520-7193	None
Jones, Tamara *	1907 Centerview, Midland, Tx. 79707	915-520-7193	None
Lee-Kaler, Rebecca	P.O. Box 53, Essex, Ca. 92332	Not Yet	42075
Lowery, Kerry & Sonceia	P.O. Box 39, Coahoma, Tx. 79511	915-394-4230	41518
Metcalf, Ruel	804 N. Bell, Big Spring, Tx. 79720	915-263-4890	42854
Mikelski, Annmarie	118 Paloma Dr. Del Rio, Tx, 78840	830-768-1615	46101
Moore, Dwaine & Lou Ann	10011 S. County Rd. 1213, Midland, Tx. 79706	915-683-7016	46102
Moore, Dwaine G. II *	10011 S. County Rd. 1213, Midland, Tx. 79706	915-683-7016	None
Moore, John R. *	10011 S. County Rd. 1213, Midland, Tx. 79706	915-683-7016	None
Pando, Noel D.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	39037
Pando, Noel M.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	None
Parent, Larence *	2803 Robin Rd., Manchaca, Tx. 78652-4176	512-280-2843	None
Ross, Don & Elizabeth	1720 Catalina Dr. San Angelo, Tx. 76901	915-949-6771	None
Russell, Charles	5721 E. CR 98, Midland, Tx. 79706	915-683-4314	13740
Sedbrook, Greg E.	P.O. Box 421212, Del Rio, Tx. 78842	830-775-4068	26754
Snelson, Mike	P.O. Box 2252, Odessa, Tx. 79760	915-580-5218	None
Wallace III, Warren	P.O. Box 382, Coahoma, Tx. 79511-0832	915-394-4310	43891
Wheeler, Teri	3012 Mackland N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87106	505-268-8294	46467
Wolff, Sean *	170 Quail Run, Odessa, Tx. 79761	915-550-3323	None

* denotes new members

Please send all exchanges, correction, and updates to Walter Feaster, 4307 Harvard, Midland, Texas 79703-4847-71. Use of this list is for members and cave related functions only and should not be used for commercial purposes. This includes e-mail addresses.

E-Mail Address:

Walter Feaster: <waltfeast@marshill.com> or <wfeaster@caver.net>

Bill Bentley: <caver@caver.net>

Gralin Coffin: <glcoff@agesys.com>

Ken Kamon: <kenkamon@apex2000.net>

Tom Florer: <tflorer@onr.com>

Barry Hayes: <barrdonn@cableone.net>

Greg E. Sedbrook: <walrus@delrio.com>

Annmarie Mikelski: <anniegreg@earthlink.net>

Teri Wheeler: <twheler@access1.net>

Kerry Lowery: <lowery4@crcom.net>

Felder Hogan: <fhogan@andrews.esc18.net>

Noel D. Pando: <npando@andrews.esc18.net>

Noel M. Pando: <noelpando@hotmail.com>

Tom & Rebecca Kaler: <? Not yet.>

Ruel Metcalf : <ruelgto@webtv.net>

Lori Hales: <lahales@excite.com>

Don & Elizabeth Ross: <donandlizross@juno.com>

Charles Russell: <charlieruss@msn.com>

Cheryl Kettle: <ckettle@apex2000.net>

Mike Snelson: <kmsnell2@prodigy.net>

Dwaine Moore: <dliaviation@aol.com>

Sean Wolff: <sean_wolff@hotmail.com>

Don & Mary King: <kingmg@ecisd.esc18.net>

Tony Grieco: <griecotony@hotmail.com>

Susan Herpin: <sherpin@caverns.com>