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## 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, April 14**, 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:

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If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster

@

(915)559-3297, or (915)694-1824

E-Mail: <waltfeast@marshall.com>

"The Hole News" is the monthly publication of the Permian Basin Speleological Society. Articles and cartoons may be 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 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:

**10-12 April--Colorado Bend Project:** Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

**18-19 April--Government Canyon Karst Project:** There is still many caves that need survey and many to be found. Contact Marvin Miller (210)654-4752 or <marvm66@juno.com>.

**22-26 April--Guadalupe Mountains Symposium.** In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, NPS will hold a symposium which will focus on contributions to Research and Resource management within the park and contiguous areas. Contact: Jan Wobbenhorst (jan\_wobbenhorst@nps.gov)

**24-26 April--TSA Spring Convention:** Blanco Community Center, Blanco, TX. Camping on site, \$20 for Saturday night banquet. More details later. Contact Jim Kennedy @ <jkennedy@batcon.org>. (If anyone in the PBSS needs more info, I will have it at the next meeting)

**24-26 April--Amistad Cave Project:** Cancelled due to the TSA Convention.

**1-3 May--Tentative Amistad Cave Project:** Del Rio. Friday night camping & meeting spot at San Pedro tent area. Contact Cathy Winfrey (512)444-0170.

**8-10 May--Colorado Bend Project,** Contact: Terry Holsinger (trhli@sprynet.com)

**8-10 May--GYPKAP Project New Mexico:** Contact Joli or Chris Lee @ (505)585-8406 or <jclec@wazoo.com>

**23-25 May--Carlsbad Cavern CRF:** Contact Barbe Barker @ (972)594-1183 or <cavers@gte.net>.

**23-25 May--SWR Regional:** Hermosa, New Mexico. Contact Steve Peerman (505)523-2167 <speerman@chilidog.lasruces.nmhs.edu>.

**27-28 June--GYPKAP:** New Mexico-Contact: Joli or Chris Lee (505)585-8406 or <jclec@wazoo.com>.

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**(Cave Events Continued)**

**August 3-7, *NSS Convention*:** Sewanee, Tennessee. Contact William Shrewsbury, (432)886-3296 or <nss98@caves.org>.

**22-23 August- *GYPKAP*:** New Mexico-Contact Joli or Chris Lee (505)585-8406 or <jclee@wazoo.com>.

**5-7 September- *Southwestern Regional*:** Details Later.

**16-18 October- *21st Annual Texas Cavers' Reunion*:** Always held the weekend immediately following Columbus Day. Site to be announced.

**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\*\*\*\*\*

CRF is the Cave Research Foundation. Contact the Project Manager/Director for more information about joining a CRF Project.

**PBSS CAVE TRIP(S)**

Mr. Allen Lamen has a permit to Hell Below in the National Forest in the Guads. This will be a restoration work trip, because the cave is closed to recreational caving. For all you vertical cavers this is a neat cave, and it is pretty. This will be well worth the restoration efforts to see this cave. The date for this for this trip is May 16. Allen has a permit for Pink Panther (also vertical) for Sunday May 17. Both caves are in the National Forest.

Allen has permits for Lake Cave (located in the National Park) for April 25, Wind (Hicks) and Doc Burito (on BLM land) for April 26. If you are interested in any of these caves contact Allen Laman at (915)550-0910 or <cave2live@aol.com>.

**New Member:**

PBSS would like to welcome Christie Rogers our newest member. Christie has moved here from Austin, we hope this has not been to much of a culture shock! We are looking forward to doing some caving.

Welcome to Midland and the PBSS

**Permian Basin Speleological Society Officers**

**President:** Kerry Lowery

**Vice-President:** Ruel Metcalf

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Walter Feaster

**Newsletter Editor:** Walter Feaster

**Trip Reports:****THE WOMEN OF CARLSBAD CAVERNS: 1920-1940**

by Rebecca R. Lee

Every visitor to Carlsbad Caverns National Park hears the name Jim White, Abijah Long, or Robert Nymeyer at some point during his visit. The stories of these men are widely publicized throughout the park. Although these men and others were instrumental in the development and success of Carlsbad Cavern, there was another group of pioneers who have been overshadowed by the legends of these men.

The women of Carlsbad Cavern have for years been overlooked as participants of the cavern's glorious history. The role of the cave woman has advanced far beyond being knocked over the head with a club and dragged in to a cave. However, historical references still show women entering caves with parasols and frilly skirts as if they are on a picnic. So, what have these adventurous women done?

In 1923 while in the Carlsbad area checking out an irrigation dam site, Willis T. Lee, a geologist, came to the cavern to see the great wonder about which people had been talking. His eyes widened, his heart opened, and he knew he was in a place like no other. He pushed for the cavern to become a national monument and it soon did. Lee took leave from the U.S. Geological Survey and took a position as temporary custodian of Carlsbad Cave National Monument bringing his family with him. Lee's wife showed little interest in the big cavern and stepped inside only once. But Lee's daughter Elizabeth took to cave exploration like her father and found herself being one of the premiere female cavers of Carlsbad Cavern.

Elizabeth Lee was only twenty-one when she began getting paid \$100 a month to work in the cavern. Her duties included photographic assistance from holding flares to artistic input, guiding tours, exploring the cave, and doing anything else she could physically do. Her mastery of the cavern had her leading geology students through the depths that would help ignite even more interest in the cavern. Her brother Dana worked along side her and the two were said to be able to do most of what Jim White had done.

With photography as one of his many talents, Willis T. Lee quickly learned the art of cave photography but it was his reliance on Elizabeth's keen artistic eye that helped him improve the photos that are so revered today. Elizabeth was included in many of his photos and even aided Willis T. in his 1923 and 1924 "National Geographic" expeditions.

A photo from 1924 shows Elizabeth in pants wedged in a guano bucket with Dana and another explorer as they were being lowered into the cavern. She would ride the bucket elevator so much that it became part of her regular day. The 173-foot entrance ladders and shaky bridge failed to scare her anymore. One photo shows Elizabeth holding a lantern and tiptoeing on a ledge from a wire ladder while another photo shows her climbing a trail made of bagged guano called the "Golden Stairs." This was an unusual living for a woman in those days but it seemed made for Elizabeth.

During a Lower Cave project in April of 1924, Elizabeth found herself tottering on the edge of a 90-foot drop off after slipping when trying to get to the ladder that descended into the lower section. It was a maneuver that at least one of the men of the project refused to try. Surefooted enough, Elizabeth kept on caving

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## TRIP REPORTS CONTINUED:

undaunted by her experience. On June 1 she became the first woman to enter Lower Cave by climbing down a ladder that hung precariously from the Jumping Off Place. A strong explorer and significant to Carlsbad Cavern, Elizabeth Lee could be called the female equivalent to Jim White though her notoriety is unfortunately lost within the pages of history.

If notoriety in caving was all that is important then Amelia Earhart, Trans-Atlantic pilot, brought that to the cavern on September 9, 1928. When Earhart visited the cavern, she had exploration on her mind. Superintendent Boles led her to Lower Cave, put a lantern in her hand, pointed her to a dark, brooding hole, and encouraged her to see what was there. Twenty minutes later she returned with the caving bug and signed up as a cavern guide. Fascinated and excited, Earhart planned future explorations possibly to Bottomless Pit with Jim White and Boles. Even a woman who had tempted fate so many times in an airplane could find the exhilaration of caving. Amelia Earhart never made it back to the cavern having disappeared on a flight across the Pacific Ocean. Had history not made a fateful turn for Earhart, she could have been one of the cavern's exceptional female explorers.

Exploration was not the only role women played at the cavern. During the 1920's, Fannie White, Jim White's hospitable wife found herself catering to the visitors. Feeding them and offering a bed to them in their cabins, she created an unofficial bed and breakfast at the cavern and was occasionally paid two dollars per visitor. With the terrain so hard, visitors were overjoyed to find good food and a warm bed and this in turn increased visitation to the cavern. She even cooked for Willis T. Lee and others during his 1924 "National Geographic" expedition. In 1927, Fannie bragged about her cooking and attempted to contract the lunch concessions in the cavern only to lose out to the Cavern Supply Company co-created by Ray V. Davis.

Other notable women include Blanche Grant who in 1927 wrote the "Cavern Guide Book" which chronicled the cavern's history. She enjoyed visiting the cavern often. In 1927 the Secretary of State for New Mexico, Jennie Fortune, worked as a Park Ranger during her stay which was rare for a sophisticated woman of the day. In 1929, Helen Kennicott became the Voucher Clerk in charge of accounting at the cavern. Her duties were more like the Chief Clerk as she took on more work when the acting Chief Clerks' persistent illnesses kept him out of the office. She did this for many years. Also in 1929, Isabelle Story, Editor for the National Park Service, inspected the cavern visiting Left Hand Tunnel and Lower Cave and was touted by Superintendent Boles as, "A real hiker on our underground trails." Later in 1936, she also wrote a cavern guide book.

In the 1930's, the jobs women took at the cavern went in the direction of babysitters and nurses dealing primarily with the softer side of the cavern. A nursery was opened in 1930 for parents to place their children in while they toured the cavern. And in 1932, Ranger Nurses Julia Dean and Nora Hemler were hired seasonally to treat sprains, bruises, and cuts. There was some ambiguity in the official title of these nurses. The uncertainty of their exact role suggested that they were extremely versatile. They were described as ranger nurses, guide nurses, and lady guides. Superintendent Boles commented that accidents and illnesses, usually by female visitors, and the fact that the nearest doctor was thirty miles away warranted

having trained nurses at the cavern. He consistently noted his appreciation for the ranger nurses in the "Superintendent's Monthly Reports." But when funds were not available to keep the ranger nurses employed, some were promptly released despite the usual praise and hard work. This was the case with Ranger Nurse Willis.

Corresponding with the rise of women's rights, women slowly began to penetrate the male dominated ranger staff at the cavern. Ranger Nurse Alvey is the only female pictured in the 1936 ranger staff photo and Ranger Nurses Lucille White and Rita Walker are the only ladies in the 1937 picture. But when the 1940's arrived, women began to obtain Seasonal Park Ranger positions having generally been promoted from ranger nurse. A 1940 ranger staff photo picturing Myra Appell, Neta Armstrong, Alva Daniels, and Rita Walker shows an increase from two female rangers to four over the years and the numbers would continue to escalate.

The women of Carlsbad Cavern have come a long way since Elizabeth Lee stepped her booted foot on a dusty cavern floor. Every job a woman at the cavern held was another opportunity for women to be included in the cavern's history. The diligence and persistence of these pioneering women has placed them in a category all their own as the women of Carlsbad Cavern. So, what have these adventurous women done? It could be said that they have done nothing more than help create one of America's most outstanding national parks.



## MEMBERS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NAME:	ADDRESS:	PHONE #:	NSS #:
Alton, Ron	1 Scenic Dr., Big Spring, Tx. 79720	Unknown	Applied For
Bentley, Bill	400 Eastwood Dr., Midland, Tx. 79703-5308	915-697-3079	21977
Carroll, Arlon&Valarie	1600 E. 53, Odessa, Tx. 79762	915-550-5042	Applied For
Coffin, Gralin	910 W. Kansas, Midland, Tx. 79701 6124	915-682-1904	33471
Cullen, James R.	8330 Endicott Lane, Dallas, Tx. 75227	214-412-1632	Applied for
Feaster, Walter	14307 Harvard, Midland, Tx. 79703-4847-71	915-694-1824	31624
Florer, Tom	3609 Caldera # 112, Midland, Tx, 79707	915-697-5959	Applied for
Gray, Larry	31 East 33rd Street, San Angelo, Tx. 76903	915-653-3823	19588
Gray, Mike & Aurelia	3501 Boulder, Odessa, Tx. 79762	915-550-2395	Applied For
Gray, Steve	106 Canyon, Big Spring 79720	915-264-7619	Applied For
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	Applied For
Hayes, Barry	1912 Santa Rosa, Odessa, Tx. 79763	915-333-8856	Applied For
Hogan, Felder	P.O. Box 341, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-524-6327	41068
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Pando, Noel M.	1204 Alpine, Andrews, Tx. 79714	915-523-9294	Applied For
Parent, Larence	P.O. Box 849, Manchaca, Tx. 78652	512-280-2843	Applied For
Rogers, Christie M *	4700 Polo Parkway # 170, Midland, Tx. 79705	915-570-1192	Applied For
Snelson, Mike	P.O. Box 2252, Odessa, Tx. 79701	915-580-5218	Applied For
Wallace III, Warren	P.O. Box 382, Coahoma, Tx. 79511-0832	915-394-4310	43891

\* 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.

### 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**

### E-Mail Address:

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