



# Trails

The Newsletter of the Permian Basin Outing Club

## Let me tell you about Big Bend!

I'm writing this on a day that the temperature won't get out of the single digits so it's nothing but my memory of last weekend brings to mind shorts and t-shirts! Even a blind squirrel finds an acorn once in a while and 12 of us found spring-like weather in the Big Bend. We couldn't believe our good luck. It was well after sundown before we had to slip on warmer clothing and the winter sleeping bag that I took along was actually a little warm for the nights!

Pat Dearen, Andy Price and I traveled down to the Park at around 9 a.m. Friday morning and after some

meandering and stopping at Park Headquarters to take care of paperwork, we found our PBOC partners at the trailhead of Mule Ears Peaks. Bill and his son Donnie had already gone down the trail but we joined Steven Schafersman, Gae Kovalic, Diane Post, Sean and Zach Patty, and Alan and Beverly Parsons to make the 4 mile trek to base camp. For the uninitiated, the Mule Ears hike is moderate with a rolling trail and only a 250 foot or so drop to the basin floor at the end of the trail to our camping site. We have taken this trail in freezing conditions and I want to tell you, this was great weather

for a hike!

Bill and Donnie had already set up their tents in the streambed (not a good idea in rainy weather but a nice soft spot this time of year). Several others in our party followed suit while others opted to camp up on the desert floor. Pat and I, both being curmudgeons, found campsites a ways away from the main body of camp and everyone got together to "plan" our activities....which is to say, whatever you wanted to do. A few short hikes by members were taken followed by a general gathering to prepare our

(continued on page 2)

### Inside this issue:

<i>Mule Ears trip report</i>	1-2
<i>February event</i>	1-2
<i>Cutsey quote</i>	2
<i>Trip pics</i>	3
<i>Another cutesy quote!</i>	3
<i>Contact info and inane content</i>	4
	6

### Special points of interest:

- *Warm weather in January?!  
A perfect weekend in the Big Bend!*
- *February get together planned*

## February "trip"/meeting

If you'll check your PBOC calendar, you'll see that we're not actually going to have a conventional trip or meeting in February. We decided last year while formulating the calendar, that we would take a break at mid-winter and do an

in-town event, that being a cookout and movie at the Sibley Nature Center. The date for this event is Saturday, February 12th (next weekend). I have been talking to our club Prez, Brandon Hawkins, about how we want to pull this off.

I can tell you that the Main Feature will be *Young Frankenstein*. This is a movie that can be watched over and over!...(though we'll only watch in once). Details of this event can be found later in the newsletter. Be here!

## Mule Ears trip report continued.....

evening meals....which, for me, was a handful of gorp and a little beef jerky. I'm not a minimalist...just wanted a lighter pack... When we finished our meal, everyone found a soft spot in the creek bed to sit in the dark and listen to Pat regale us with spooky stories of the Old West. This went on for some time until people started to yawn and wander off to their individual campsites for a good night's rest....well, most of us had a good night's rest. I was carrying a new one man (or woman, I guess) North Face tent. I've always been a little of a North Face snob because they make such fine equipment, but I found that I was swimming in condensation the next morning and everything in my tent was soaking wet. (This was repeated on Saturday night even after some adjustments.) I'll be in the market for another tent with a little more circulation and save the solo tent for warmer climes. Anyway, I *think* that everyone else had a good night's sleep because on Saturday morning, everyone was bright-eyed and bushy tailed and ready for some adventure. Most of the crowd day hiked to a canyon that, with a little traversing, gets you up a canyon wall and a short hike to a massive overhang that you kind of duck walk through and emerge on the other side to a waterfall and pool! We got reports that the stream was running but not as much as it does in the spring and summer....still....water in the desert is a wonderful thing!

As people arrived back at camp, we noticed clouds building in the southeast and speculated, what with the warm weather, if we might receive a little shower. We even spotted part of a rainbow in the east! The weather held out, however, but we were treated to lightning and thunder....in January, no less!....but, fortunately, no rain directly on us. It rained west of Mule Ears and I swear one lightning bolt hit near the Mule's forehead! Pat continued his series on scary happenings in the trans-Pecos after supper (gorp again for me...but no dishes to clean up) and he actually had a few folks a little jumpy. For our after hours get-together this time, Pat brought a couple of small candles for us to "warm" ourselves around. No heat but great ambiance for spooky stories.

On Sunday morning we started the "un-fun" part of every camping trip: packing up and heading out. As is often the case, folks started out at differing times and at their own pace. Pat, being the trip leader, made sure that he was the last one out of camp. I took off a little early so that I could take time to look for photographic opportunities. I waited at Mule Ear Springs, about half-way out, for the rest of the group. Mule Ears Springs is another desert oasis that we've never found not running. It's amazing to see green ferns and fish in the middle of a desert but, there you

are! It's a wonderful place to stop for a few minutes or for the entire trip. In the spring, the water coming from the springs and from Smokey Creek sometimes actually has to be forded! Or at least jumped over. The nice thing about the desert is that you never know what you'll see.

Everyone finally got back to their vehicles and, reluctantly, started heading back home. Pat, Andy, and I opted to stop at the DQ in Ft. Stockton to get some hot food. We weren't there 10 minutes when Steven and his crew drove up for ice cream. This is a common occurrence with our group and it was good to share a few "exit" stories. All in all, this was a GREAT trip!

*"When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other."*

## Movie Night! Saturday, February 12th

Okay, here da' deal. After talking to Brandon (who seems to be willing to head this thing up), we are going to cook a brisket (size to be determined by attendance). Brandon has volunteered to be the cook and wants everyone to bring a side dish. We don't want this to be complicated in any way so....just bring a side dish...if we have 20 desserts, so be it. We do need to know how many of you plan to attend so we

can purchase enough brisket...so....if you'll email me with your intentions by Friday, February 11th (by or before 5 p.m.) we can buy the appropriate goodies. We'll set out an "alms box" to recoup what Brandon spends his hard earned dollars on the brisket. (If you're a vegetarian....bring a carrot to munch on). Let's make it 5:30 Saturday until we're done. Bring your own drinks and a side dish...entrance into the movie is

free! Let me know! Be here...or else!



Mule Ears trip pics—All contributed by Steven Schafersman



Pat in foreground with 2 fat guys looking on



Staring up the trail from the cars



“.....and for tonight’s salad menu?.....”

*“Diversity: Because every person deserves an equal chance to prove their incompetence.”*



Gae looks like she knows something Steven doesn't



The entire salad bar!

## **The Newsletter of the Permian Basin Outing Club**

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