

Peppersauce

Our first Caving experience, by Jim Dawson

I couldn't ask for anything more...

Our first family caving experience was in Peppersauce cave on Father's Day, June 18. People attending were The Doty's, Taran, Brian, and Sue, Sandra Luz Reyes, and the Dawson's, Dan, Sue and I. Taran was our guide. We left at about 9:00 am on a 2 hour road trip until finally we pulled over. We are there. We geared up, checked our equipment and headed off on a short hike.

We came upon a small opening in the mountain and crawled inside to enter a room. Once inside, we adjusted our head lamps then rechecked our gear and we were on our way. At the end of the room we came upon another small opening, again, we crawled inside. We entered another room with a thin layer of mud on the floor which made it slick and hard to walk. We saw broken formations, spray painted names on the wall, spray painted formations, and beer cans along the way. We also saw several other cavers in groups of 3 to 15, with flashlights but without helmets. Clunking my helmet a couple of times was proof that it was an important piece of equipment to me. We met up with someone from the Escabrosa Grotto that had a helmet but he was alone.

When we got deeper into the cave human traffic was apparently reduced because we saw unbroken soda straws, helictites, flow stones, bacon, stalactites, stalagmites and a couple of shields. We mutually decided to rest so I suggested that we shut off our lights. To just sit there and listen to the size of a room you can't see is an experience. We went through several rooms and passages until we came into a room which contained a ladder.

After a reported injury due to the poor condition of one of the ladders Taran and Brian decided to pack up the ladders and take them out with us to reduce future injuries. This was the Dawson family's first cave cleanup. We crawled out of the cave and met Bob Zimering just outside the entrance.

I understand why cave management, preservation, protection and restoration is so important and I want to do at least my part to help because once this resource is abused and destroyed, it will never come back and the spray paint won't fade away with the people they represent.

