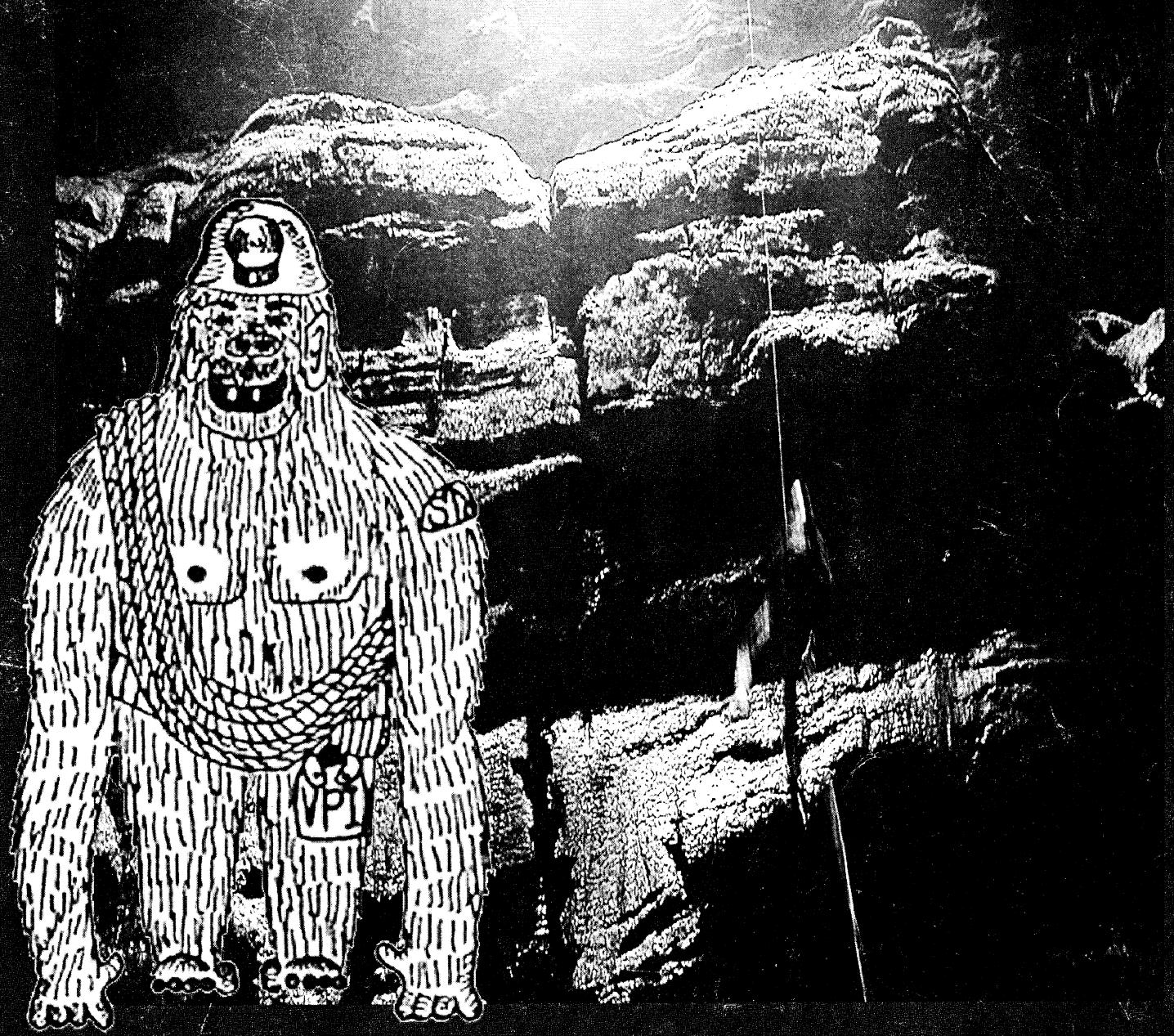


Tech Troglodyte

Fall & Spring 2006-2007



The Tech Troglyte

2006-2007

A Journal of the Virginia Tech Grotto of the
National Speleopogical Society

Fall 06-Spring 07 Officers:

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Volume XXXI

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by Ben Townsend

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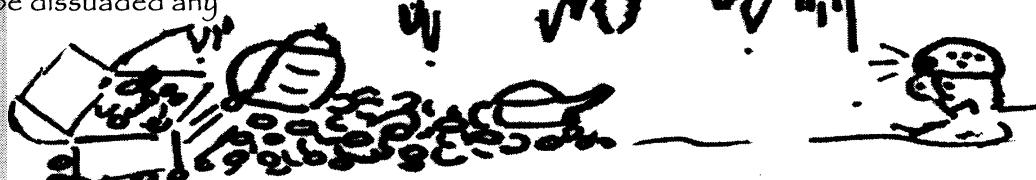
The further I progress into the pastime that is caving, the more I find myself faced with one repeating question. Why? The answer to this question I find is quite simple, as I believe it is for any sane person. Because that's where they hide all the treasure, dumbass!! It is shown repeatedly again and again in up-standing Hollywood films, usually based on true events I take it. Anyone who's seen *The Goonies* knows this fact. Also, because of that movie I bring a funny little Asian kid with a bunch of hysterical gizmos EVERY time I cave. In another example, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, where was that treasure? In a bigass cave!

Not only are we faced with this undeniable truth in movies, but also in video games. I distinctly remember playing *King's Quest* (something between I and VII) and finding treasure in a cave. Why? Because that is where they put all the treasure. I mean seriously, don't you wonder why you don't see any treasure when you're walking down the street? THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S ALL IN THE CAVES! Seriously people, how much clearer could it be?

We can even look to ancient times for examples. Remember when Aladdin found his treasure when he said "open sesame". Not to mention biblical references to the Cave Of Treasures in the book of the New Testament apocrypha, which was distinctly left out and declared heretical. Hmm, coincidence? I submit that it is not; I smell a Vatican cover-up. Let's get Dan Brown on this and let these Papal fat cats know we mean business! That treasure is there for the taking, and we won't be dissuaded any longer!!

Why I Cave

by Professor Brian Wolford





The Elusive Cave Beavers

by Stewart Scales

On my first vertical trip with the VPI Cave Club, I went into Clover Hollow. After arriving at midday and unloading and prepping all the gear, Geoff went down the entrance pit first by himself so he could belay us trainees on the two ropes we had set up. I decided to go down first, hooked into the rope, and began the descent. On my way down, which was a little tricky at first, I heard words from Geoff that made me stop everything I was doing: "There's something alive down here."

My first thought was it was time to change over to ascending and give up on Geoff. After a few cautious seconds, Geoff spoke again, "I think it's a beaver!"

Seeing that he was alive and probably was going to remain alive (provided it wasn't a Monty Python killer rabbit-like beaver), I decided to continue the rappel. After getting off rope, Geoff proclaimed to me that he thought it was a beaver. I looked down into the cave a little bit and saw a very disgruntled groundhog that had fallen down the seventy foot pit and survived with several broken bones. After a closer look at the poor animal, I clarified that it wasn't the elusive cave beaver as Geoff had thought. It was just a groundhog that wanted to be a lemming.

A few moments later from up top, I heard Deighan's voice echo down the drop, "Did you bring a gun?" Then I became worried, thinking to myself, "If we're carrying guns into caves these days..." Thankfully, Geoff replied that he did not have a firearm on him, and we would have to dispose of our injured friend in a different manner. After everyone completed the first drop, we decided that we were going to hit him in the head with a large rock on the way back out and then remove what was left.

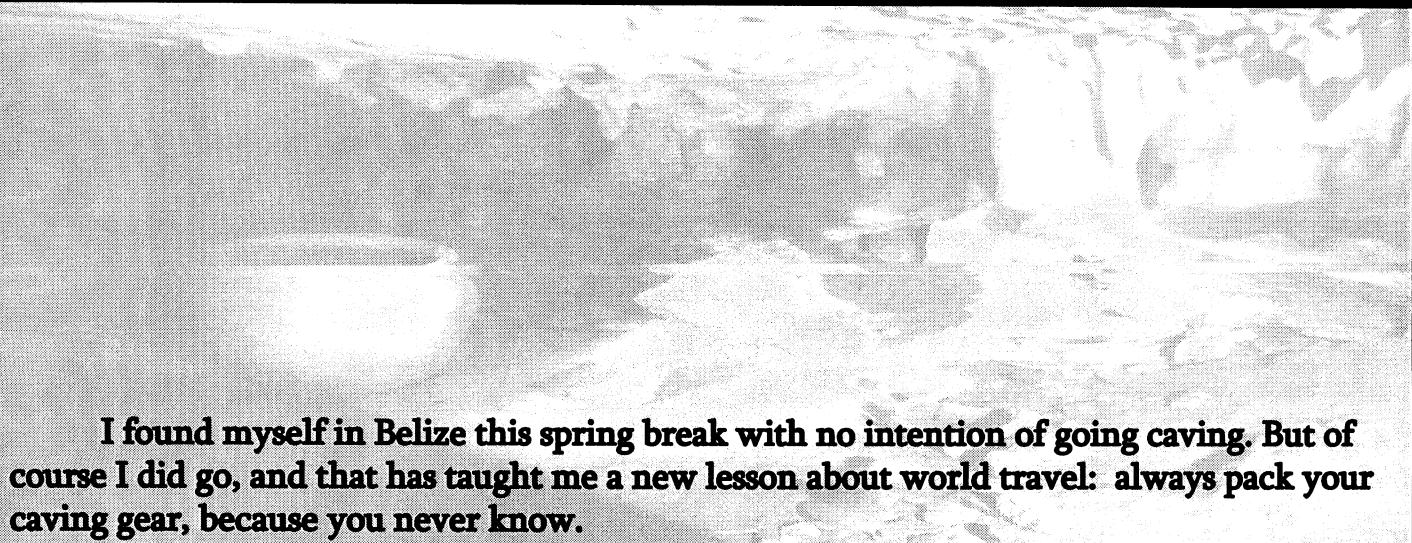
We were underground for around six hours, and surely enough when we came back out to the entrance there was no groundhog-beaver to be found. I had contemplated leaving him my chest ascender, but I forgot he probably wouldn't even be able to tie a harness with a broken arm.





CAVING BELIZE STYLE

BY BEN TOWNSEND,



I found myself in Belize this spring break with no intention of going caving. But of course I did go, and that has taught me a new lesson about world travel: always pack your caving gear, because you never know.

I didn't know it beforehand, but Belize (just south of Mexico, on the Yucatan peninsula) is riddled with limestone caves. On the van ride out to the jungle, I kept pointing at promising-looking holes and asking the guide if they led to caves, and the answer was always "probably." The guy grew up exploring the caves of the area, but there were still holes everywhere that nobody had ventured into. Our destination cave, however, was supposedly used by the Mayans for various ceremonies, and had the pots and fire pits to prove it. I am a little skeptical. It would seem like if you had a cave with authentic priceless Mayan artifacts inside, you would close it off and keep random people from tromping through it. However, this is Belize, a very poor country, and tourists are serious money. Either way, I'd like to hold on to the illusion that these pots are authentic.

The big one wouldn't fit through the entrance so it was cast inside the cave, according to the guide.

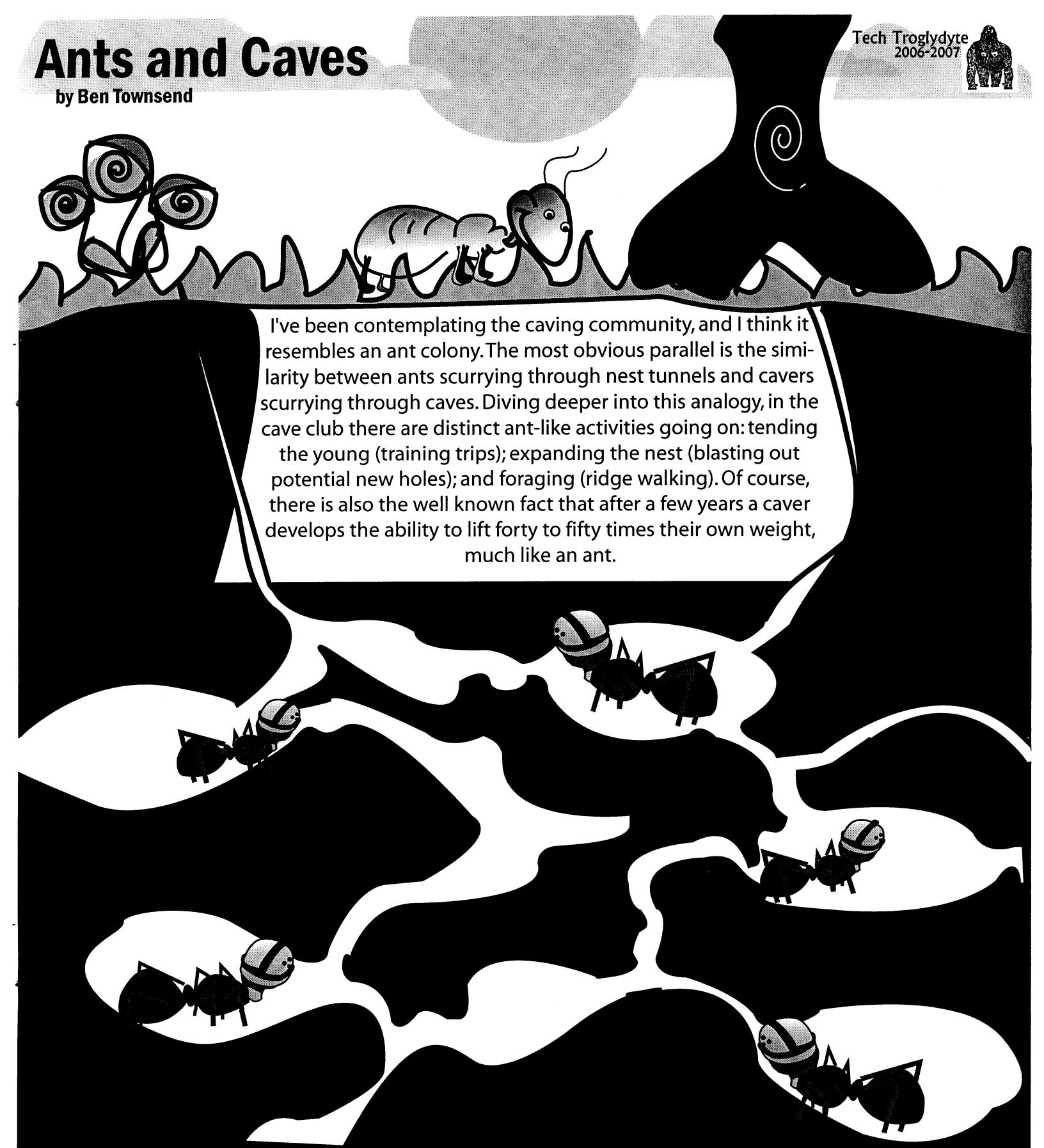
At the very narrow entrance we were given a tiny, underpowered LED headlamp and no helmet. The lack of helmets was a little unsettling. While there was no crawling involved except for the entrance, there was a lot of crouching and avoiding low-hanging stalactites. I'm one of those people who bash their helmets on a regular basis, but I've discovered that when it's your unprotected head at stake, you watch the ceiling a little more carefully.

At the end of the easily-traveled portion of the cave, about 1,000 feet in, the guide had us all turn off our lamps. Then he said to us, "Now I would like everyone to hand anything you have with an LED or screen to me and my brothers, and we will leave the cave. If any of you make it out, you can have one of the ATVs outside that you rode here on." There were a few vertical pits here and there, and if he had been serious then that would have been the end of the road for us. I think I like Belize humor.

Ants and Caves

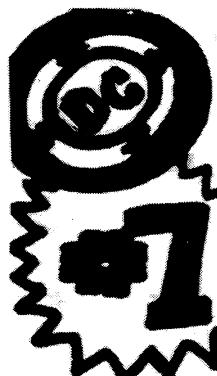
by Ben Townsend

Tech Troglydyte
2006-2007



I've been contemplating the caving community, and I think it resembles an ant colony. The most obvious parallel is the similarity between ants scurrying through nest tunnels and cavers scurrying through caves. Diving deeper into this analogy, in the cave club there are distinct ant-like activities going on: tending the young (training trips); expanding the nest (blasting out potential new holes); and foraging (ridge walking). Of course, there is also the well known fact that after a few years a caver develops the ability to lift forty to fifty times their own weight, much like an ant.

There are a few inconsistencies. Cavers have no queen, not that I've seen, although maybe I haven't been around long enough. They also don't leave pheromone scent trails to mark out paths (at least not intentionally); however, I see this as an excellent idea which merits further research. The smell centers of the brain are placed right next to the memory centers, which is why smells evoke memories so well. We should carry scent-dispensing devices. That way, if you get lost and loop around on yourself, you can be like, "Hey, this passage smells like chocolate, I've been here." As a bonus, everyone will smell great.



HUGE AND CONFUSED

BATMAN & ROBIN

ADVENTURES



by Kaitlyn Hart

How to Waterproof that Cheap Wal-Mart LED Lamp

in 8 Easy Steps

by Paul Healy

Materials Needed

Pill Bottle
Wires
Solder
Toilet Paper Tube
plus whatever other random stuff that might be useful or add that "homemade" look

Skill Level: 2.5/5
Luck Level: 5/5

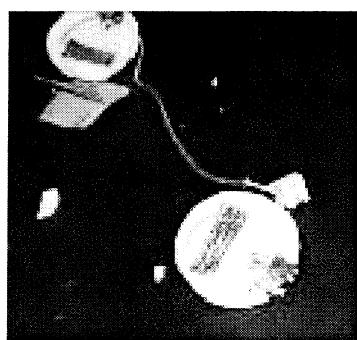
Step 1 Make a Mess

This is probably the most critical step of this process. Find as much random electronics junk and as many related tools (like soldering irons and hammers) as possible. Dump everything on the floor and put a few tools on your work space. By making a mess, it will look to other people like you know what you're doing, and before you even begin you will feel as if you accomplished something.



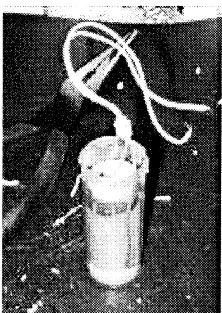
Step 3 Stuff It

Stuff the jumper assembly with some foam and bits of toilet paper roll into the pill bottle to complete the battery box.



Step 2 Build Battery Connectors

Using bottle caps indexed to hold the batteries, figure out how to connect the batteries in series and fashion a jumper system to accomplish this. Make the ugliest solder globs you have ever seen to wire the jumpers, then heat press them into the bottle caps.*



Step 4 Make a Connector

Solder on a connector from an old SCSI hard drive controller card



Step 5 Break the Connector

Light some plastic on fire and let it drip on the connector to insulate the wires, then realize you're probably making toxic smoke in your bathroom. Just after this realization, make sure a flaming piece of plastic breaks the solder on the connector and spend the next hour trying to reattach it.

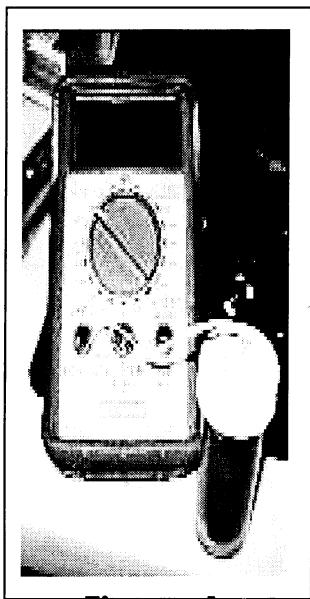


Figure A

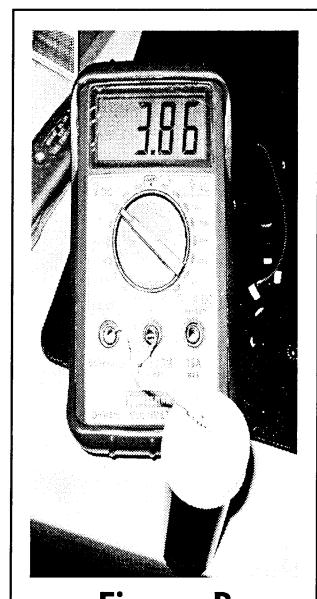


Figure B

Step 6 Test the Connection

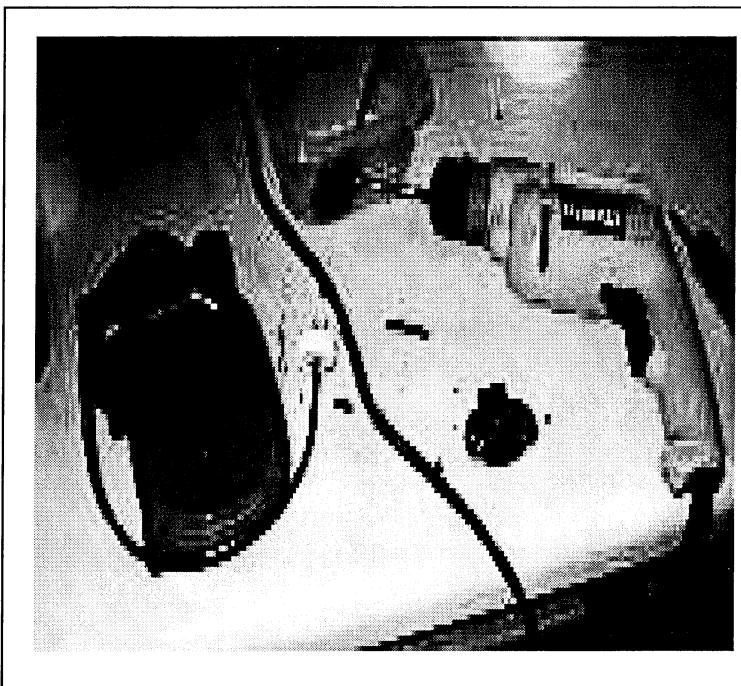
Test the battery box

Figure A: something screwed up

Figure B: good

Step 7 Modify the LED Lamp

Using precision tools, void any possible warranty on the lamp. Then epoxy every possible entrance into the lamp (including the new wire holes in the back). Hook up the battery box, and you're done!**



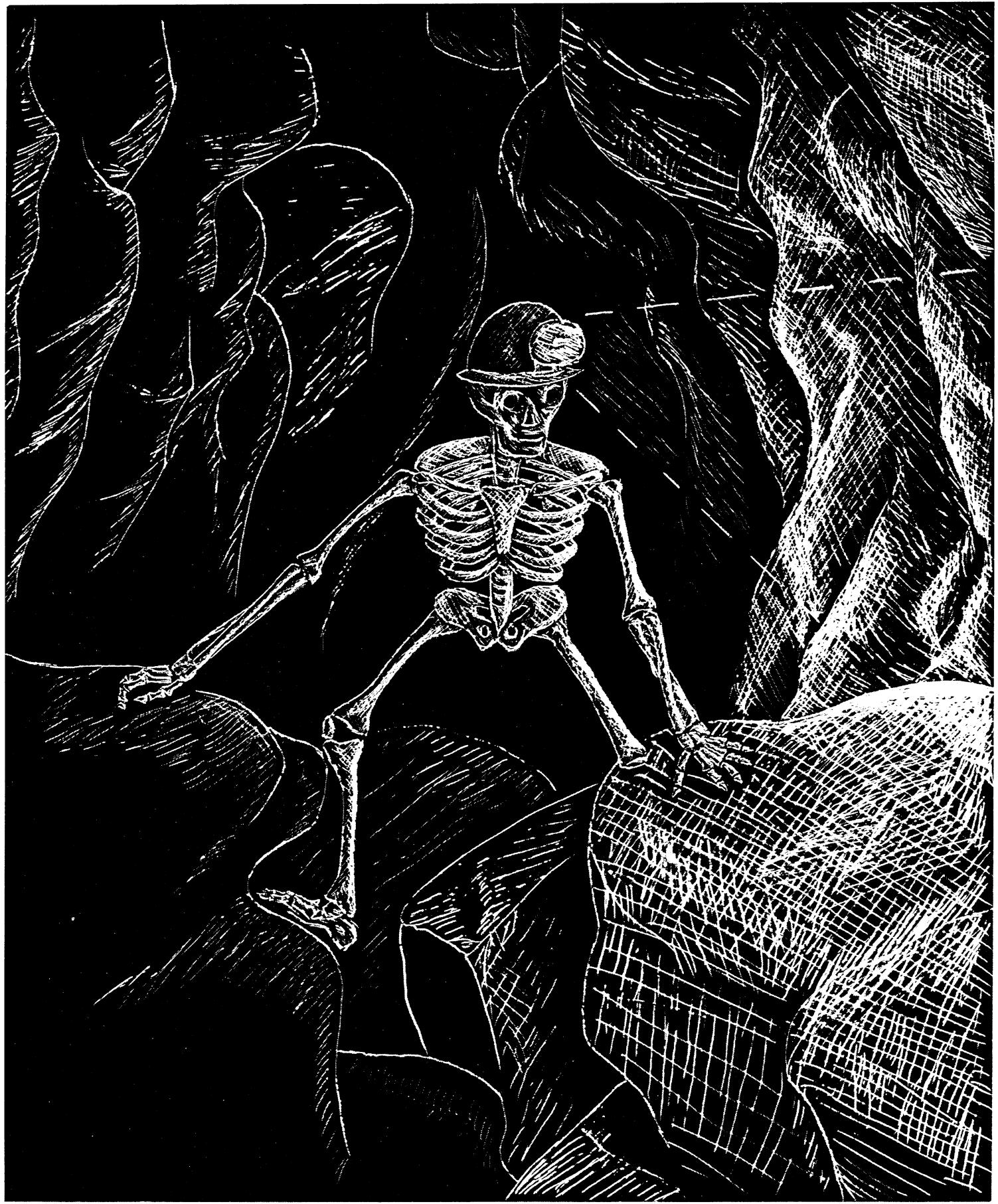
Step 8 Buy a New Light

Just remember you actually did accomplish something (see step 1), despite the complete unreliability of the retrofitted lamp.***

*If wired incorrectly, this can still serve as a good backup heat source.

**None of this has actually been tested. At the time of this article, the author was contemplating whether his personal safety outweighs curiosity.

***Patents may be pending if the author tests the lamp and doesn't die.



by Alice Jaworski
₉

TRIPLE TANDEM RAPPEL OF EL SOTANO DE LAS GOLINDRINAS

DECEMBER 28TH, 2006

BY NIKKY "PRINCESS BUTTERFLY" LABRANCHE

Tech Troglydyte
2006-2007



We got up early to head to up the road to Golindrinas from Mike Walsh's house where we were staying. We had originally planned to head up the night before to save us some time in the morning, but things didn't work out that way. When we got up to Golindrinas we found Santos and contracted with him to carry our rope to the pit and he took off on the trail with it. They always beat us to the pit with the rope, even if all we are carrying is a water bottle. The group that day consisted of TinY, Ben Kim, and Lance and Robin Mitchell and myself. We rigged the 1150' high side with a pulley redirect off a large tree limb that overhung the pit and a progress capture for a Georgia haul on the line. This way the pit is prerigged for a rescue and we can enlist the aid of the locals for a Georgia haul, as well as prerigged for the hauling at the end of the day.



Nikky and Tiny tandem rappeling Cepillos (413')

Photo Credit: Ben Kim

The first rappel that day was our world record setting triple rappel performed by Mike "TinY" Manke, myself and Lance Mitchell. TinY and I had over 8000' of tandem rappel experience leading up to this rappel. The 8000' included the first tandem rappels by a male-female team of Golindrinas (1150'), Guaguas (~700') and Bridge Day (876'). We had also rappelled Whitesides with simulated rope weight in preparation for our trip to El Capitan in June. Several days earlier we had tandem rappelled Cepillos with me as the top tandemmer just to make sure our methods and procedures were sound.



TinY's rack on the Golindrinas triple tandem rappel.



Photo Credit: Ben Kim

Lance got on rope first and hung out below the lip so I could rig in. Rigging in gets to be much tougher when you're dealing with those amounts of rope weight. I am not strong enough to bend the rope around the rack and now have to bend the rack around the rope. After I had rigged in I rappelled down a little ways so TinY could rig in above us, TinY's rigging in was more challenging because he now had Lance and myself below him, but he seemed to manage with little effort. And that's how we performed the world record triple rappel at Golindrinas, with TinY on the top, me in the middle and Lance on the bottom. There were many subsequent Nikky sandwich jokes for the rest of the trip.

The dynamics of the triple rappel require that the bottom rappeller deal only with the 91 pound rope weight of the 1150' drop. My position as the middle rappeller forced me to rappel with an effective rope weight of Lance with 200

of 290 pounds below me. This meant that TinY had to rig in and rappel the weight of me, Lance and the rope approxiamtly 460 pounds of weight below him. Thsi is what that type of weight does to a 3/8" diameter frame 24" long rappelling rack.

TinY's initial work on the long drop tandem rappelling was to expand the envelope of this technique as a rescue technique to come to the aid of rappeller or climbers on long drops where traditionally only one rope would be available. The triple tandem rappel is a natural extension of this desire which permits coming to the aid of a pair of distressed climbers, since tandem climbing on long drops is the norm. The weights and physics of our triple rappel at Golindrinas are also similar to the weight and physics experienced on TinY's world record tandem rappel of El Capitan and similar conditions to what was expected for his planned trip to Mount Thor in 2008 when rappelling access to the mountain was recently closed.

Previously when discussing triple tandem rappelling with Lance, he had voiced concerns about the deflection of the rack frame and its potential of negatively impacting the control of the rappel. Having practiced with these extremes while working with a tree and progressively working up to Whitesides, even though we could see the distortion it had not had a negative impact on the rappel to date. This was the case and his body weight of 4 bars and still had difficulty beginning his rappel. Once again, the window of controllability had narrowed to an almost full stop or free fall condition. I performed the rappel on 5 bars and it was a challenge at times to keep the speed慢 for a smooth ride. All three of us are highly trained and experienced in the use of the French wrap self belay rappel technique. On a previous tandem rappel with Robin, I was able to effectively stop both of us using my French wrap so we knew we had maximum control.

TinY, Nikky and Lance on the triple tandem rappel at Golindrinhas



Photo Credit: Ben Kim

Twice during the triple tandem rappel I experienced a fall speeds greater than he was comfortable with and due to the rack frame distortion was unable to quickly slow the rappel down a minimum of four bars. But after calling to me to stop and slow him as a backup, he was able to correct the rate of decent by applying his own french wrap.

Please note that this extreme rappel technique and is not able to successfully complete the range of years of development and practice and no attempt should be made to duplicate these efforts. TinY feels that with the current rappelling equipment and technology that this rappel has defined the outer limits of rope loads and rack loads that can be safely controlled, therefore giving us an idea of the maximum safe single rappel distance possible based on physics.

Robin was the next to rappel down, having a great ride and anxious to visit a world she had not seen in over a year. This was her third visit to Golindrinhas with good friends and the previous year her and her husband had left kind loving words in the log book for someone they had no idea would be reading them until this year.

Ben was the last into the pit after doing an excellent job photographing and documenting this world record triple tandem rappel. I made sure to capture a few good shots of him rappelling at the bottom of the pit since he so many good pictures of us through.



the rest of the trip.

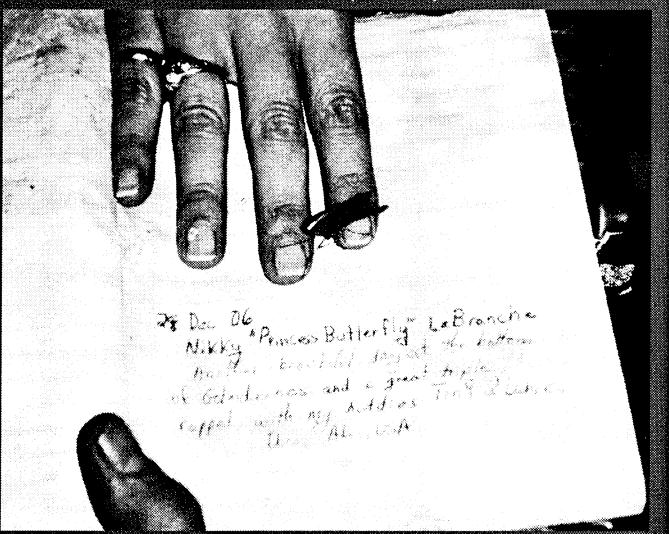
I picked up a butterfly at the bottom of the pit who hung out on my hand for a while. I've had butterfly's land on me at Stevens Gap, Neversink, Sinking Cove, and in Colombia. I'm not sure why they land on me, but once they do they stay for a while.

He landed on me while I was at the bottom of the rope and stayed with me through the walk over to the register and the signing of it. The register is a book that's kept in a Tupperware tub on a rock that everyone who visits the cave can sign. There are messages, notes and signatures from cavers from all over the world. So we got some pictures of him with the book. I guess they don't call me "Princess Butterfly" for nothing. This was the first one I actually had land on me IN the cave and I'd never seen this type before. His wings were clear except for around the edges, notice how you can see my fingers through him in the closeup. We took another look through the book to see some of the other entries that had been written since we had been there last. More pages were used than last time since the book is wet now and you can only write on the bottom third of the pages.

Lance, Robin and Ben climbed out first on a triple climb so TinY and I had to keep ourselves occupied at the bottom of the pit for an hour and a half. Watching these three climb together and listening to their

and singing helped pass the time and I photographed many of the formations at the bottom of the pit. Paul and I climbed out tandem and him underneath. We took about 15 minutes to climb out that time, him complaining his knees were sore after a few cycles. So I actually beat him down and square. When we got to the hut who owns the cooking hut gives us fresh coffee to sell to us and bread (sweet bread). We are always excited when she shows up and says hello. Golindrinas has to be one of my favorite pits.

Nikky and her Butterfly at the bottom of Golindrinas (1150')



28 Dec 06 "Princess Butterfly" LaBranche
Nikky brought her butterfly to the bottom of Golindrinas and a great time was had by all.

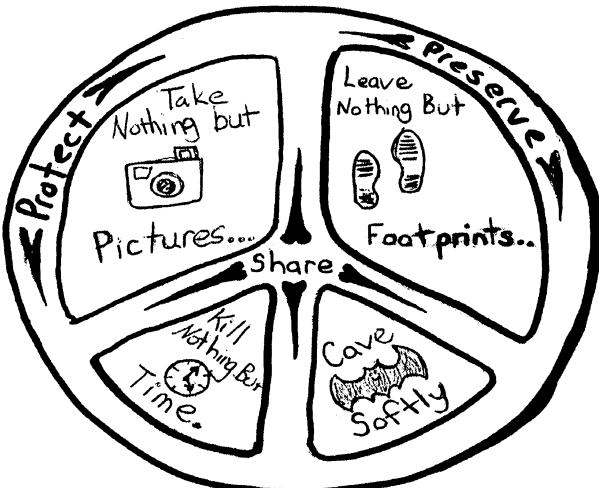
Photo Credit: Mike "TinY" Manke



Banquet 2007 by Carrie Blankenship

Fellow Cave Club Members - Bob and I truly appreciate the invitation to join you for your 65th celebration. We regret that we won't be able to join you. We look forward to seeing you here on our farm in Bland County soon.

-Betty Munsey Munsey Twins



Thank you for the invitation. Sorry I cannot attend.

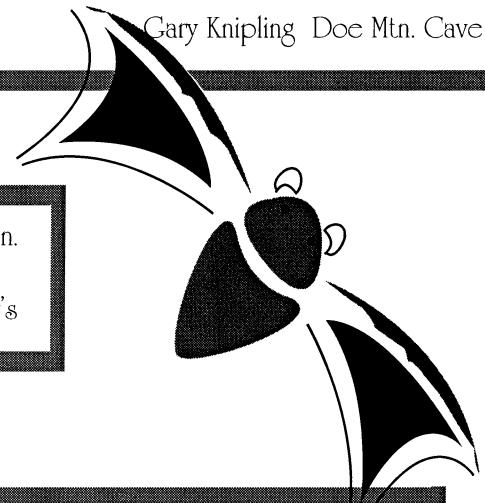
-Scott Gellar Smokehole

Thank you for the kind invitation and interest shown for cave landowners.

-Gary Knipling Doe Mtn. Cave

Thank you for the invitation. We're sorry we had to miss banquet. Hope you all had fun. Thanks for your efforts.

-The Richardsons Buddy Penley's



Please extend our thanks to the entire club for Banquet. I really enjoyed seeing everyone. PS I am really looking forward to April 14th and 21st.

-Molly Thompson Newberry's

Thank you for once again hosting your Cave Club Landowners Banquet here at the Club. It was a pleasure to work with you all and taking care of all your guests. We appreciate your business and look forward to seeing you again next year.

-Natalie Smith Blacksburg County Club

I volunteered to organize Banquet this year because I believe it is one of the most important events the club does each year, and it is my favorite club event. Banquet is one way we show our appreciation to our landowners as well as recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our members.



I tried to take on a different approach this year and cater more towards the landowners. It all began with Samantha Garguilo being kind enough to design and help send out over 30 invitations to our landowners. While we waited to hear from them, a decision on the presentation topic had to be made. My first thought was what would be of interest to the landowners. After pondering this for a bit, I decided if I were a landowner and had the same strange people showing up on my doorstep week after week to go in a hole in the ground, I'd want to know why they get so excited when they visit, what they are really doing when they go down there, and what my cave looks like. In addition to this, I thought it would be interesting to everyone else to see how we did things in the past and how they have changed over the years. So, I started researching the club files for old pictures and was surprised to see we had a very well organized photo album and scrapbook with information from the 1940's through 1980. I was also able to collect photos from Chip Clark, Richard Cobb, Craig Ferguson, Kevin Rock, and Ray Sira (I apologize if I forgot anyone). Now that I had a topic and a bunch of pictures, I needed a speaker. This proved to be more challenging than expected. After several failed attempts at getting a speaker, Ray Sira felt sorry for me and stepped up to the plate. When Banquet day arrived, Ray did not disappoint and gave a great presentation. Landowners were amazed, the old farts reminisced, and the newest members saw a lot of the great caves to visit and continue to explore.

Banquet was a great success and everyone seemed to enjoy the time together visiting with the landowners and old friends they hadn't seen in awhile. It would not have been possible without the help of others. I would like to send a very special thank you to all of those who helped and to recognize a few people that put in some extra effort.

Samanha Garguilo for her awesome design on the invitation and listening to me stree about getting everything done

Mark Eisenbies for awards

Ray Sira for stepping up as the speakr and giving an AWESOME presentation

Pam Mohr for making the beautiful table cards for the landowners and cave club officers and committee chairs

Geoff Lewis and Philip Schuhardt for past information and support

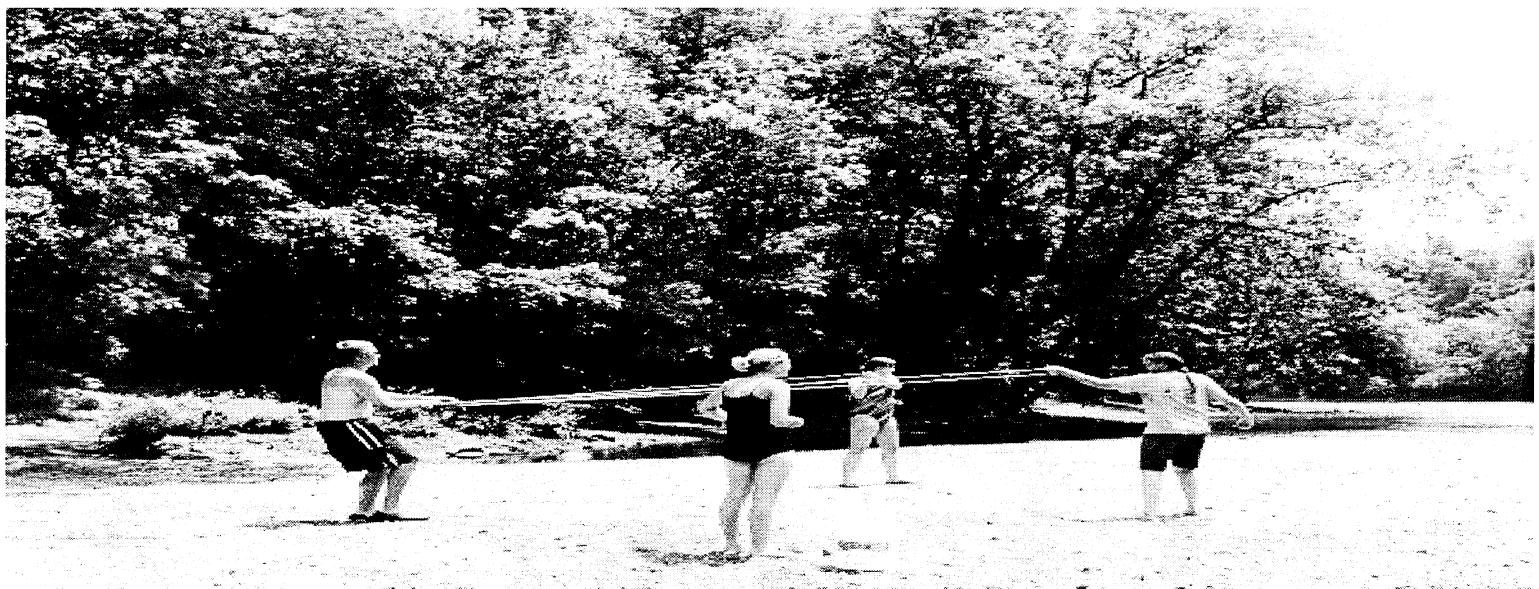
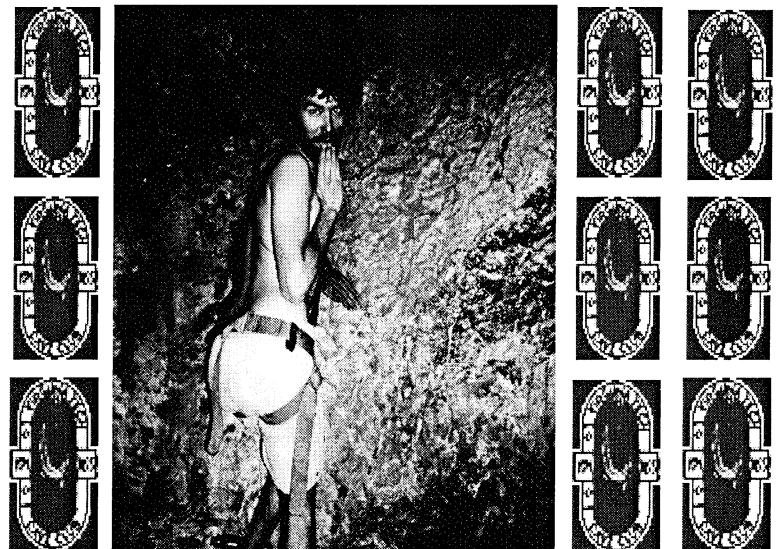
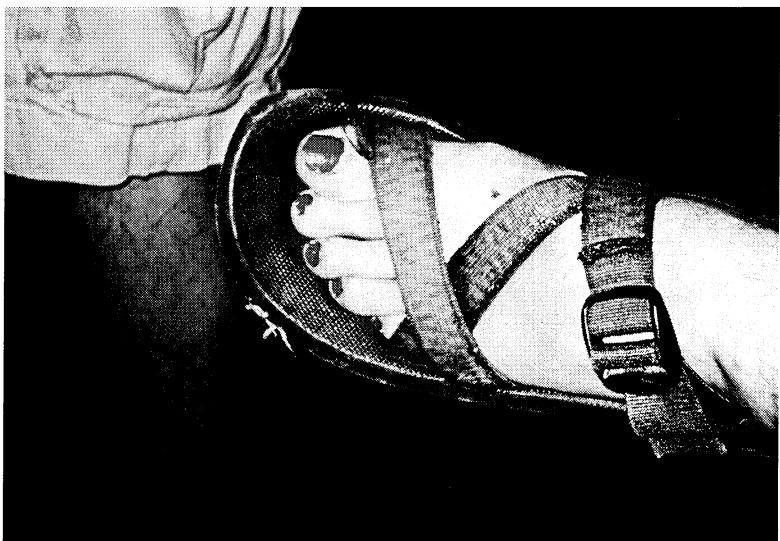
Richard Cobb, Chip Clark, Ray Sira, Kevin Rock, Craig Ferguson , and the Club files for the many great photos in the presentation

Joe and carol Zokaits for volunteering to host the Pre-Banquet celebration

Dave and Patricia Colatosti for again hosting a great post- Banquet party

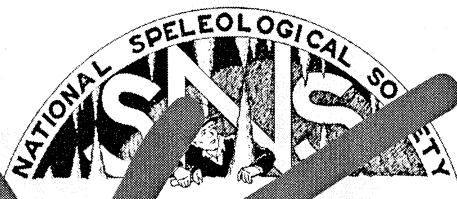


Club Quotable Photos





THE



Volume 6

January, 1948

VPI Grotto Interested in Pig Hole Cave Markings; No Work on Higginbotham End at Crab Orchard

PIG HOLE MARKINGS BELIEVED GENUINE BY THIERRY.
MORE FINDS OF BONES AND ARTIFACTS AT CRAB ORCHARD INDIAN CAVE.

(By Earl Thierry, VPI Grotto)

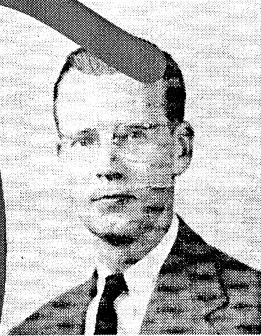
"I'm very glad to hear that others are interested in the markings on the wall in Pig Hole. I don't know much about ancient inscriptions but I just can't believe that those markings were made by nature. On our last trip to Pig Hole, Bob Barnes, Brooks Gilmer, myself and several N.S.S. members from Roanoke College ran an accurate transit survey from the far end of Pig Hole out to the entrance to find out just where the far end of the cave lies under the surface. We haven't had time to plot the notes so and go back and check them on the surface of the ground. While we were on this trip, Philip Karp made a search in the bat guano under the floor. The floor at this point was found to a depth of about four feet. He didn't find any artifacts or any evidence of human habitation. If we find that the floor lies below the surface, we could open up an early entrance and go in to do a little excavating without so much rope work. We tried some time ago to survey the outside terrain on the

(Please turn to page 3)

Ageron Reports on Cuban Visit Invites U. S. Members to Big French Cave Meet in July

Pierre Ageron, our famed French N.S.S. member, has been in Mexico recently on business. On the trip over, he stopped off in Cuba, met some of our Cuban members and reports that there are at least 500 active speleologists on our neighboring Isle. Pierre says he enjoyed leading 15 French cavers to England last August, spending a week in the field with Glennie, Platten and other English cavers well known in these columns.

M. Ageron's biggest news is that a big and important cave meet will be held in France's famous cavern country sometime in July. The meet will take in some of France's caves of medium depth (which means over 100 meters deep) and a group of English cavers is already making plans to attend. Pierre urges that the U. S. be represented by a party of N.S.S. members. He states that living expenses are low and food plentiful in the caving areas.



CHARLES E. MOHR

At introduction to N.S.S. Vice-President, Charles Mohr

Born in Reading, June 3, 1907, Charles Mohr attended Bucknell University, receiving his A.B. from that Pennsylvania institution in 1930 and his A.M. in 1931. During his college days, he made his first trip to a cave (Woodward) in 1930. A few months after his first visit he made a return trip and captured a rare Leib's Bat. Thus began a study of cave fauna which included 5000 miles of travel in Pennsylvania, alone, during his first winter out of college.

Some of his achievements in the field of Speleology are: contributed to Dr. Ralph Stone's second edition of "Pennsylvania Caves" (1932) by giving the locations of 30 new caves and wrote a chapter on cave fauna for this book; pioneered with Don Griffin on large scale bat banding, publishing numerous papers on this subject and on cave fauna, in general; has written and illustrated articles

(Please turn to page 3)

Erftenbeck and California Group Visit Mercers Cavern

We are pleased to get the news that our farthest west Grotto is continuing active in cave field work. Chuck Erftenbeck, the organizer of our (first) California Grotto, and several members spent the Thanksgiving holiday at Mercers Caverns. This is a commercial cave having seven rooms now open to the public. The group spent three days exploring five new channels for the management.

Trip to Schoolhouse Cave February 14-15

A field trip to the famed Schoolhouse Cave has been announced for February 14-15. Contact John Meenahan for particulars at 1222 Euclid Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

NEWS

VPI Grotto Interests in Pig Hole Cave Markings; No Work on Higginbotham End at Crab Orchard

PLANS FOR THE 1948 FIELD SEASON
PIG HOLE MARKINGS BELIEVED GENUINE BY THIERRY.
MORE FINDS OF BONES AND ARTIFACTS AT CRAB ORCHARD INDIAN CAVE.

By Earl Thierry, VPI Grotto

"I'm very glad to hear that others are interested in the markings on the wall in Pig Hole. I don't know much about ancient inscriptions but I just can't believe that those markings are made by nature. On our last trip to Pig Hole, Bob Barnes, Brooks Gilmer, myself and several N.S.S. members ran an accurate transit survey from the far end of Pig Hole out to the entrance to find out just where the far end of the cave lies under the surface. We haven't had time to plot the notes so and go back and check them on the surface of the ground. While we were

on this trip, Philip Karp made a search in the bat guano under the floor. The floor at this point was found to a depth of about four feet. He didn't find any artifacts or any evidence of human habitation. If we find that the floor lies below the surface, we could open up an early entrance and go in to do a little excavating without so much rope work. We tried some time ago to survey the outside terrain on the

(Please turn to page 3)

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The N.S.S. NEWS, February 1938

Robertson Gives Talk to Charlottesville Group

G. Alexander Robertson, well-known caver and photographer of Richmond Grotto, gave a fine, instructive talk to members of Charlottesville Grotto before the public on Friday evening, January 4. The talk was given in Monroe Hall at the University of Virginia, and refreshments were served.

After the lecture meeting, Mr. Robertson was the guest of Carl Henize at the Lester McCormick Observatory where an informal gathering was held and many of Mr. Robertson's

VPI GROTTO

(Cont. from page 1)

barns of that rough map of Pig Hole which came out in one of the Bulletins last according to that, the far end of the hole stuck 15 feet out in the air!

On November 8, 28 members of the VPI Grotto left for Tazewell by truck. Bob Wheeler of Life magazine joined us as did Mr. and Mrs. Stabler with two friends. We arrived at the cave just before dark, so, while two parties proceeded to identify the bones on the ledge and start excavating, the remaining four parties set up camp. We marked the bottom of the cave off in sections and then dug down in successive layers, taking several inches of mud and loose rock with each layer. Three other parties relieved us about 8:30 P. M. and proceeded to work till midnight. Wheeler, the Life photographer, was taking pictures the whole two days we were there so I imagine he has some very good shots.

The next morning two parties took the truck and went on a hunt for other caves in the region while Dr. Jackson and the rest of the group returned to the cave. We had meant to wet-sieve some of the mud but the weather was so cold it had all frozen in one stiff hunk when we brought it up out of the cave. We left most of the mud in cloth sacks which Mr. Higginbotham had furnished

MYSTERY VICTIM FOUND IN GAPING GHYLL HOLE

By G. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, British N.S.S. member, who relates the following first chapter of his mystery thriller:

"You may be interested to know (together with my wife) I have made a trip to Gaping Ghyl Hole during the summer and we much enjoyed exploring a passage system, though well known, was at least 15 feet deep. We did not know it at the time, but while we were here, a human skull was lying on a boulder at one of the main chambers. The bones, which evidently been in the cave some time, were found to be of human origin. Following a trip made into the cave a month after our visit. But when I got into the cave again it still seemed to be a mystery whether it was an accident or it could have been a murder! The skull was still there, but one would, in any case, consider a 340-foot fall—whether it was caused by a fall or a jump, it is hard to say how the body entered the hole in the first place! There was a report in the newspapers following the discovery, but I do not think it has solved the mystery."

CHARLES MOHR

(Cont. from page 1)

on caves and numerous publications, including *SCIENCE*, *ILLUSTRATED SCIENCE*, *NATURAL HISTORY*, *FRONTIERS*.

Mr. Mohr's caves are the basis of extensive exploration and observation, and ground photographs in caverns throughout the United States and Mexico.

Besides his strictly speleological activities, Mr. Mohr was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1937-38 and served as Director of Education of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. He is now Director

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when we brought it up out of the cave.

We left most of the mud in cloth sacks which Mr. Higginbotham had furnished

and he sieved it for us. The bones we

packed in the cardboard boxes and brought

back to Tech to wash, catalogue and pic-

ture. Dr. Jackson and any Grotto mem-

bers with free time are still working on

that. I think about half are finished.

We didn't dig out all the bones in that

cave, I believe they got down to solid

We returned to VPI late Sunday

night. Mr. Higginbotham called on Monday

day and said he had sieved out a ver-

tebra with an arrowhead embedded in it.

He mailed it to Dr. Jackson and it's a

funny looking thing. The arrowhead

is of black flint chipped to a fine edge.

It looks as though the person shooting

the arrowhead they sent a photo-

grapher down from Washington.

"We have also found quite a few shell

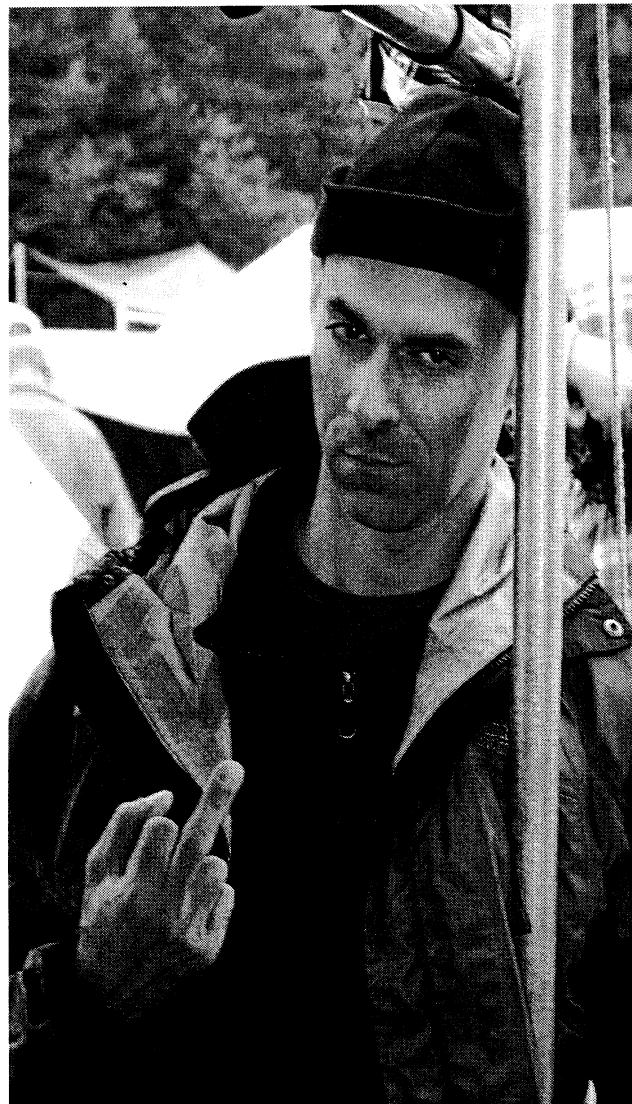
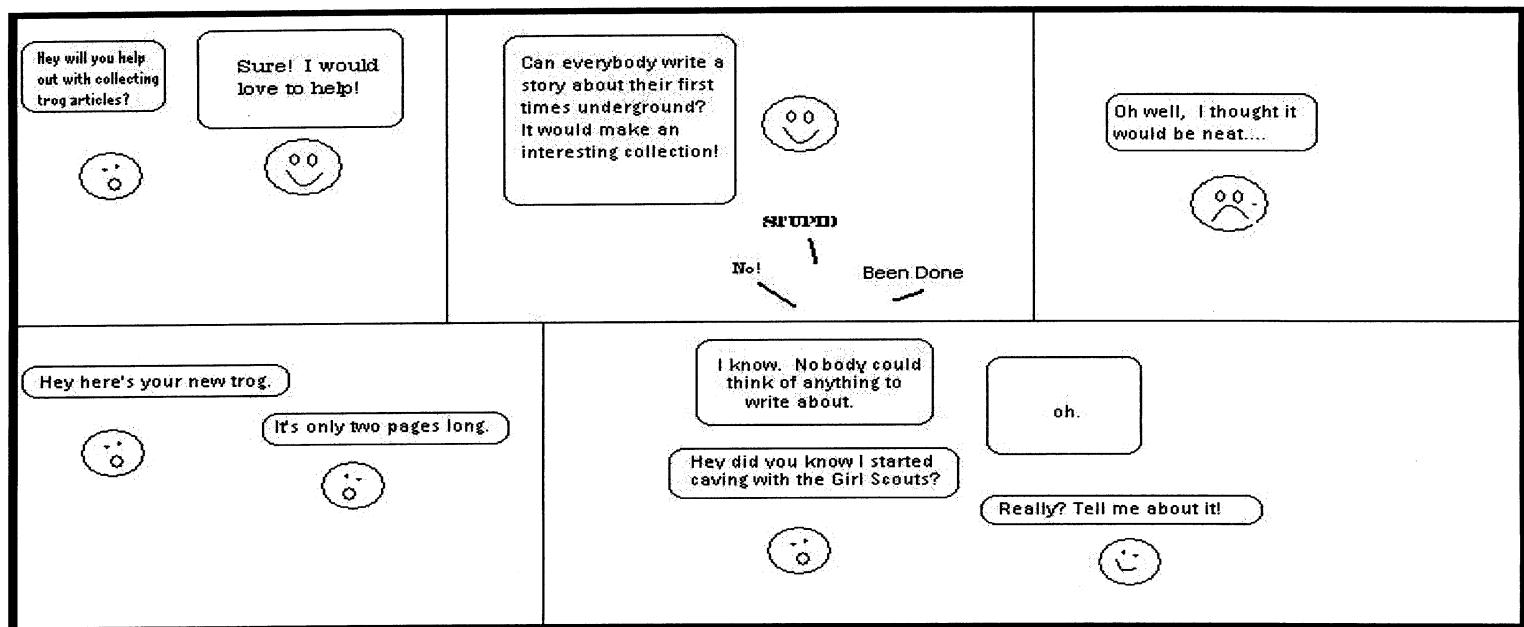
beads, one stone pipe bowl, one additional

arrowhead and several animal teeth

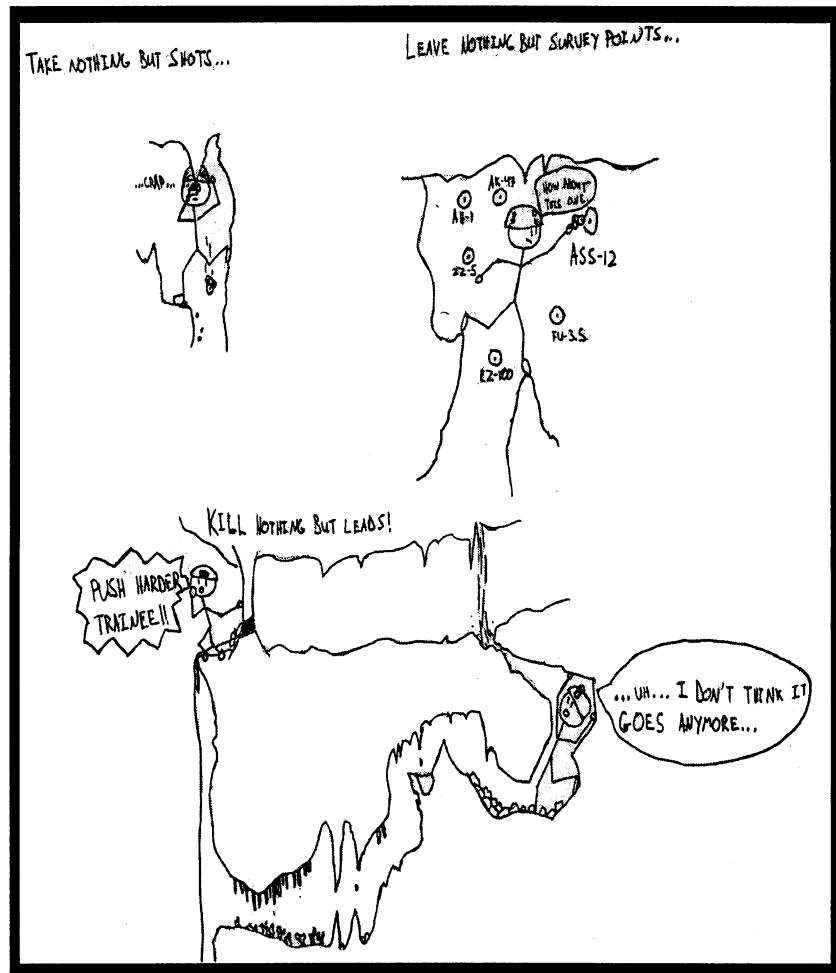
which have holes bored to be strung

on necklaces."

KILLER OF THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT



Survey Motto





Match Up



1

- a. **Sugar Glider**, name given during picnic



2

- b. **Beer Lady**, given to her at Easter Beer by an 8 year old girl in a game of kick ball



3

- c. **Poop Bag**, put her bag down in a fresh pile of dog poop in



4

- d. **Once Was Important** according to one meeting where he made that quite clear to everyone



THE VPI GRAPEVINE

BY AL CARTWRIGHT

OTR

AT OTR VPI WON OVERALL FOR PARTICIPATION

- PHILIP BALISTER WON THE SURVEY CONTEST
- DAVE C. WON THE CABLE LADDER CLIMB.

MEN'S FROG

- 2ND PHILIP STEELWOOL
- 3RD DUSTIN

WOMENS FROG

- 1ST SAM
- 2ND SANDY

ROPEWALKER

- 1ST STEVE LEPIERA

HALLOWEEN

HALLOWEEN WAS A HIT THIS YEAR. THERE WAS A LOT OF PREP WORK THAT A FEW REALLY DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO. THERE WERE DISPLAYS OF DEAD RATS AND TORTURED TEDDY BEARS. THE HIT OF THE NIGHT WAS THE HEATED JELL-O WRESTLING RING, WITH THE INFAMOUS NON BIODEGRADABLE JELL-O, WHOSE REMNANTS STILL CAN BE FOUND TODAY.

WE HAD SOME GREAT COSTUMES THIS PAST HALLOWEEN, INCLUDING FUTRELL AS A CAVE, BRIAN WOLFORD AS A FREUDIAN SLIP, AND RAY SIRA AS A MAN FROM THE BLUE MAN GROUP.

OUR ALWAYS LOVED CAVE CLUB BANDS, SEPTAPUS AND THE BAND FORMALLY KNOWN AS WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT, ROUNDED OUT THE EVENING

MEXICO

THE TRIP THIS YEAR WAS SPLIT UP BETWEEN THE VOLCANO CLIMBING MOUNTAINEERS, AND THE CAVING, PARTY IN MEXICO GROUP. MEMBERS PHILIP SCHUCHARDT AND BRIAN WOLFORD WERE TWO OF MOUNTAINEERS, ALONG WITH DAN ZOE, PETE, JON, AND JIM. THE CREW WENT FOR JUST ABOUT THE MOST INTRIGUING CLIMB IN MEXICO, ORIZABA. THEY REACHED THE SUMMIT THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, WITH STILL TIME TO SPARE AND DROP SOME PITS.

AFTER COMING BACK FROM THE CLIMB THEY RANDOMLY RAN INTO THE OTHER GROUP IN A QUAINTE MEXICAN CITY. AFTER THAT THEY SPLIT UP AGAIN, AND THE MOUNTAINEERS WENT ON TO DROP GOLONDRINAS AND RIO CHOY.



THE DANCING TRANSSEXUAL





GRAPEVINE CONT.

THE OTHER MEXICO TRIP BROUGHT OUT A LOT OF FIRST TIMERS, INCLUDING FRESHMAN ALICE JAWORSKI AND KAITLYN HART, SUSAN HAGY, SEAN FLORIN, AND CAITLIN DEIGHAN. THE REST OF THE TRIP WAS FILLED OUT WITH SANDY, DUSTIN, AARON AND HIS BROTHER, TSULAMA, AND THE DEIGHAN. THE GROUP DROPPED MOST OF THE PLANNED PITS, BUT WERE UNFORTUNATELY NOT ALLOWED TO GO INTO RIO CHOY ACCORDING TO THE MEXICO MILITARY, WHEN THE CREW THE DAY BEFORE DID IT NO PROBLEM.

THE TRIP ENCOUNTERED A BIT OF CAR TROUBLE. ALICES BIG VAN DECIDED THAT IT WANTED TO STOP ALL POWER STEERING AND POWER BRAKES WHILE RIDING DOWN A NARROW MEXICO CITY STREET, WHERE YOU HAD PEOPLE WALKING AROUND FROM ALL SIDES. FORTUNATELY FOR ALICE, AFTER INFORMING HER FATHER OF THE SITUATION, HE FELT BAD AND PROMISED TO GET HER A NEW CAR WHEN SHE GOT BACK. WELL AFTER A TUNE UP THE CAR WAS BACK ON THE ROAD, AND WAS EVENTUALLY ABLE TO GET HOME.

RELATIONSHIPS

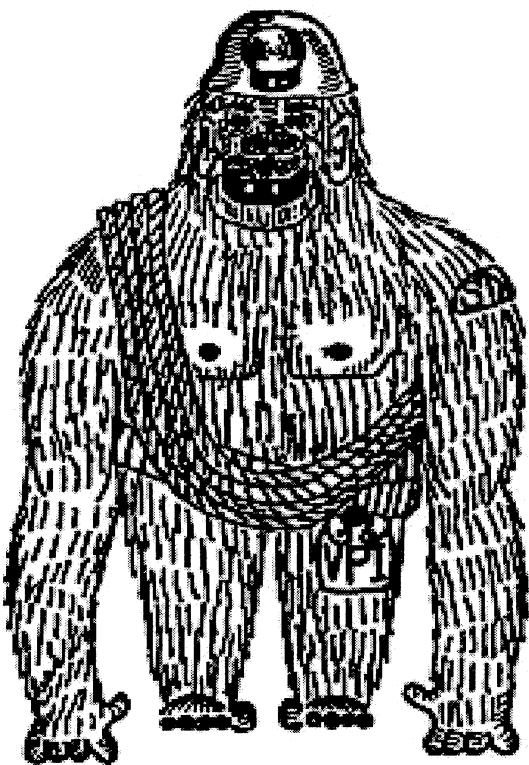
THE SEMESTER WAS KICKED OFF BY ERIKA AND DAVID GETTING MARRIED AT MOUNTAIN LAKE. ONCE THE SEMESTER BEGAN WE HAD SOME BREAKS-UPS, ONE BETWEEN JOHN BOOKER & JESS AND ANOTHER BETWEEN TRAVIS AND ALLIE. STEELWOOL WAS ALSO ABLE TO THROW HIMSELF IT A FEW INTERESTING SITUATIONS. BEGINNING WITH A HOOK UP BETWEEN HIM AND SUSAN ON A COLD WINTER NIGHT. HE THEN WENT ON TO PURSUE A RELATIONSHIP WITH ALICE. THEY GAVE IT A GO, BUT THE RELATIONSHIP HIT A DROUGHT, YET THEY NEVER OFFICIALLY ENDED THE RELATIONSHIP.

BANQUET

THIS YEAR BANQUET WAS ORGANIZED BY CARRIE BLANKENSHIP AT THE BLACKSBURG COUNTRY CLUB. THERE WAS A LOT OF TROUBLE TRYING TO FIND A SPEAKER THIS YEAR, BUT OUT OF PITIY RAY SIRA VOLUNTEERED. THE EVENING BEGAN WITH THE USUAL MINGLING AND WAS FOLLOWED BY A SLIDE SHOW THAT INCLUDED JUST ABOUT ALL THE CAVES IN THE AREA, DATING BACK AT LEAST 40 YEARS. THE TRAINEE OF THE YEAR WAS AWARDED TO BRIAN WOLFORD, WHO WAS ALSO THE RECIPIENT OF A PREGNANCY TEST AND SPARKLY BOXERS DUE TO HIS BABE MAGNET OF A VAN. THE FLAME OUT AWARD WAS GIVEN TO RAY FOR HIS INCIDENT AT OTR, WHEN HE WOKE UP IN THE BED OF A RANDOM PICK UP TRUCK. THE BRAIN BUCKET WAS SADLY BUT LUCKILY UNFULFILLED. SOME DRINKING AND DANCING AT DAVE CS FINISHED THE NIGHT.



GRAPEVINE CONT.



EASTER BEER

WE WERE WELCOMED THIS YEAR BY SOME GREAT WEATHER, THAT USHERED A DAYS FULL OF HIDING SOME BEERS AND DRINKING THEM TOO. THERE WERE A FEW SURPRISES, INCLUDING SOME INFLAMED BEERS HANGING IN TREES, AND SOME CLEVER HIDDEN COOL AID BOTTLES.



PICNIC

AFTER THE EVENTS OF APRIL 16TH, MANY STAYED AROUND AND CAME OUT TO PICNIC. BACK, BRINGING ALONG WITH THEM THE CLASSICS, BOOMBAS, BOOZE, AND A BABY PUPPY.

IT ENDED UP BEING ONE OF THE BEST PICNICS YET. THE WEATHER WAS PERFECT FROM BEGINNING TO END. THE TRADITION OF THE MARSH MELLOW WARS HELD STRONG, THE POTLUCK DINNER AND GRILL WAS DELICIOUS, AND OF COURSE PROVIDED FOR ALL OF YOUR VEGETARIAN NEEDS, AND A WEEKENDS WORTH OF CAVING HAD NO OBJECTIONS. ROUNDED OUT WITH PARTY WITH ALL YOUR FRIENDS OUT IN A COW FIELD, THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYWHERE ELSE BETTER TO BE.



FLOAT TRIP

THIS YEAR THERE WAS SOME DRAMA BETWEEN THE NEW JERSEY AND VPI FLOAT, WHEN SOME NEW JERSEY FLOATERS CAME ONTO THE VPI RAFT AS IT WAS DISASSEMBLING ITSELF, AND THEY SAT THERE, ATE OUR FOOD AND WATCHED. IN THE END, IT WAS VOTED THAT THEY WERE TO WALK THE PLANK!

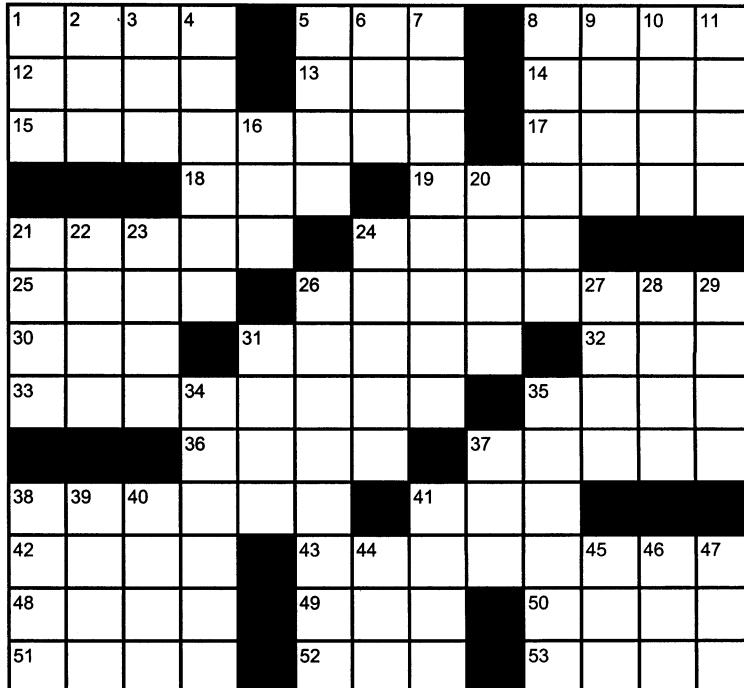
The Tech Crocodile Crossword

Tech Troglydyte
2006-2007



Across

1. Head honcho
5. Lawyer organization
8. Dove rival
12. Nevada's 51
13. Public transport org.
14. Grammy winner Thomas
15. Caver's illumination
17. Rice-A-_____
18. German article
19. Breaker of the ten commandments
21. Hot water accident
24. Hefty rival
25. Cornmeal cake
26. Common caving activity
30. Consume
31. Serengeti regular
32. Illegal substance org.
33. Common caving activity
35. Outdo
36. Suffers from
37. The ideal fuel of the future
38. Pious king of France
41. Not against
42. _____ blow you away!
43. Caver's blanket
48. Type of skirt
49. Bull ring call
50. French composer Satie
51. South Korea City
52. Receive
53. UFO org.



by Chris Fox

Down

1. Part of a scrooge setiment
2. Raw material
3. Red or Black, e.g.
4. Mountain range feature
5. Parts of bikinis
6. 24 hr. bank
7. Shizzle my nizzle, e.g.
8. Dress type with a tight waist
9. Steam press
10. Beginning of a Chinese mountain range
11. Lion's den
16. Young'n
20. Plain state, to a dyslexic
21. Eng. value of interest
22. Anthracite or bituminous, e.g.
23. Opposite prefix
24. Knowing smiles
26. Fair fare
27. Wary day in March
28. For some, it's empty once college starts
29. Porticullus, e.g.
31. Baseball stats
34. Some rebates
35. Nobles partner
37. Stir fry must, for some
38. Peruvian capital
39. Milo's companion
40. Elbow bone
41. Worry
44. Pub order
45. Poetic beginning
46. Command to Rover
47. Water or winter activity

Trip Reports

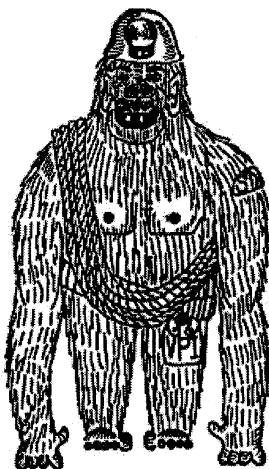
from Sign Out

VPI Cavers and guest logged in 659.5 hours underground from 7/11/06-88/25/07

9-16-06	Smokehole	Philip Schuchardt, Brian Wolford, Travis Coad	"I found a dig...It blow a slippery mud...fell out of the ceiling twice"
10-1-06	DMC	Steve Wells, Steve LePera, Philip Schuchardt	"Classified Rope Sucks"
10-10-06	Tawney's	Sam Lambert, Carrie Blankenship, Tony Airigha, Daniel Burton	"Is that the noise you make suring sex?"
11-12-06	Pig Hole	John Deighan, Caleb Magruder, Alice Jaworski, Brian Wolford, Geoff Lewis, Chris Fox	"Geoff ran away from the passage after the Empire Ledge"
1-27-07	Clover Hollow	Philip Schuchardt, Dustin Schleifer, Brian Wolford, Alice Jamorski, Kaitlyn Hart	"Wells, I'm not going caving with you tomorrow! It is currently 4:30am. -Philip"
1-27-07	Bone Norman	Mike Hutchison, Paul Healy, Steve Vito, Ben Townsend, Dave Coltosti, Judi Wasilewski	"It is a MAN cave purse"
2-3-07	DMC	Steve LePera, Dan Zoe, Steve Wells, Charles Wolford	"Dan Snuggles like a queer"
4-14-07	Clover Hollow	John Deighan, Geoff Lewis, Beth Mutchler, Ben Townsend, Paul Healy	"It's all Geoff's fault"
7-17-07	Williams Dig	Steve LePera, Philip Balister, Ray Sira	"20 bags filled...200+ to go"

Tech Troglydyte

2006-2007



Your 2007-2008 Officers

President: Brian Wolford

Vice President: Dustin Schleiter

Secretary: Stewart Scales

Treasurer: Rob Story

