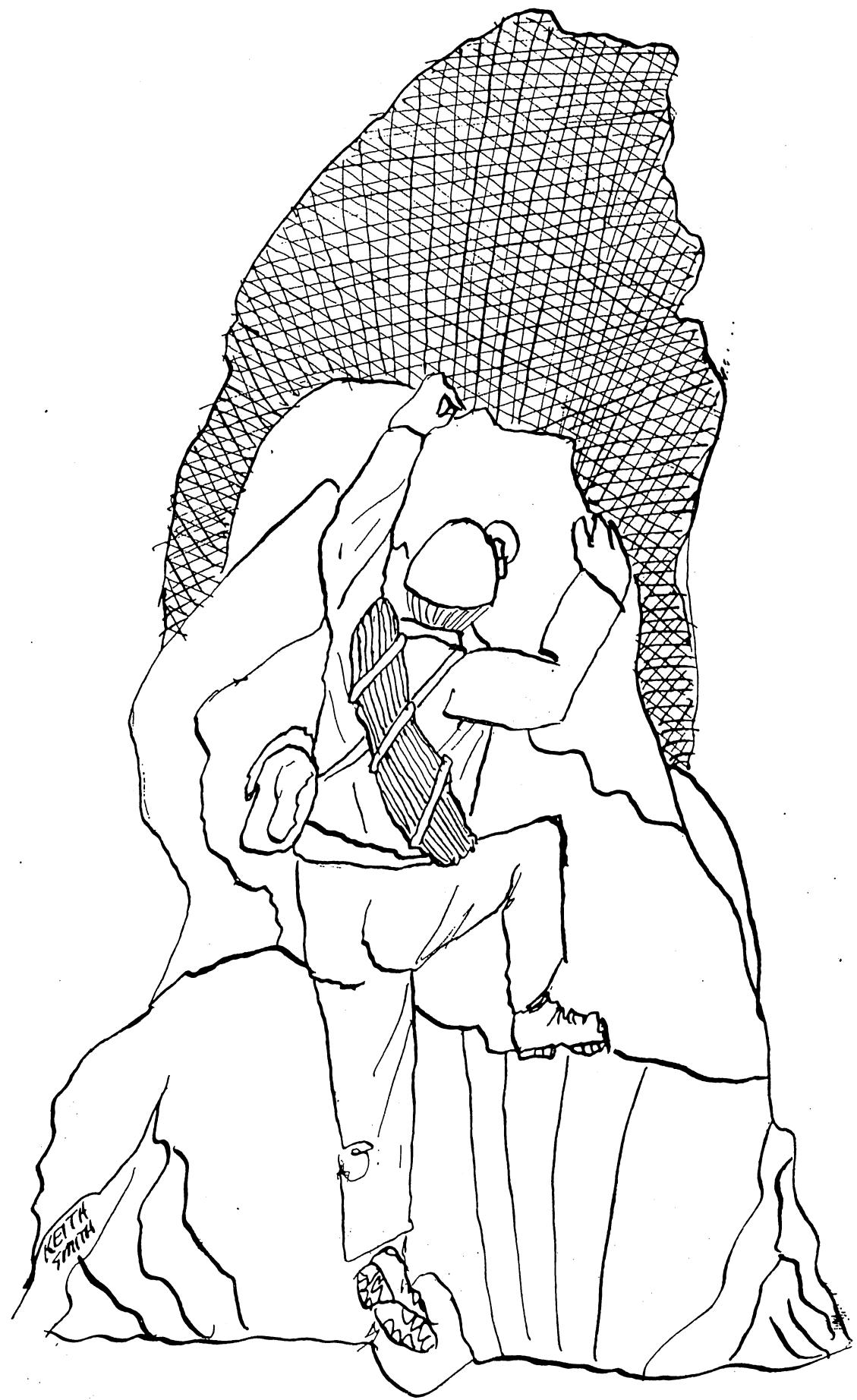


THE TECH TROGLODYTE

FALL 1981





THE TECH TROGLODYTE

A Journal of the VPI Grotto of the National
Speleological Society



President.....Boo Croft
Vice-President...John Lohner
Secretary.....Rich Neiser
Treasurer.....John Mummary

Chief Editor.....Ken Bonenberger
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Sauvigne

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Well, here we are, on our way into the eighties, and the club lives on -- despite the predictions of a few pessimists in years past. This year's crop of new members has seemed promising, even given the amount of time spent on above ground activities by those members who normally lead trainee...er, prospective member trips. Instead, it seems that these introductory trips are being lead by such hardcores as Bill Koerschner.

The above-ground activities are worth mentioning, too. The efforts of Joe Zokaites, Chuck Shorten and others (forgive me for not recalling all the names) have resulted in a new and improved back entrance to Pighole. A number of our associates made the first legal rappel/ascend trip to the New River Gorge Bridge on 17 October, Bridge Day. The Miller campaign, a big profit-maker in years past, was given less attention this year -- to our detriment, unfortunately. Rather than \$1500, we won only \$500. The club owes thanks to Carol Trexler, Philip Balister, Binnie Ballou, Rich Neisser and others responsible for the points we had.

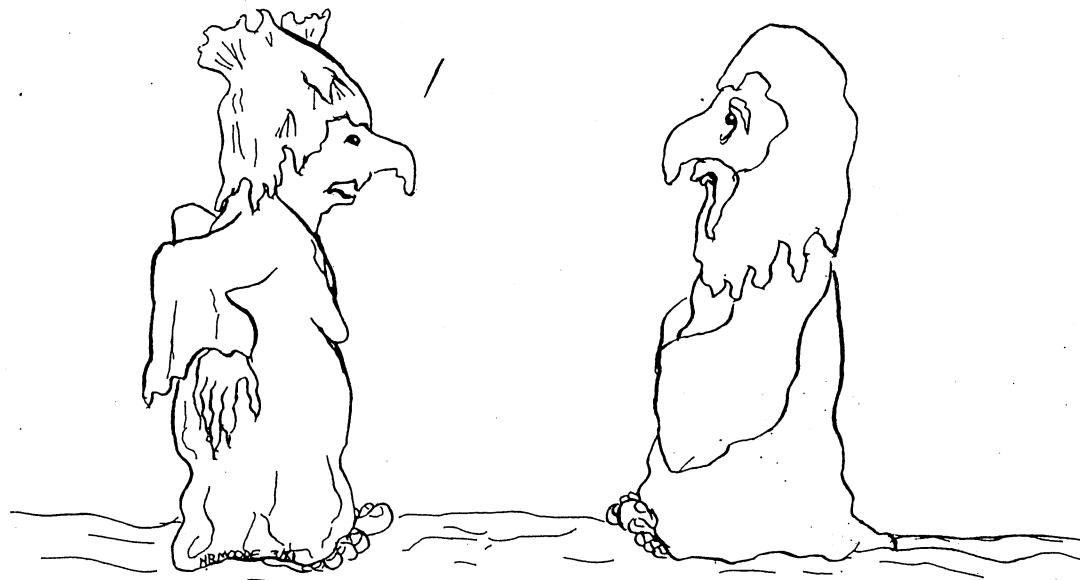
In general, I suppose club business proceeds as normal. If this column seems unnecessary, don't blame me -- I only wrote it, I didn't edit it.



The Phantom Werewolf

Boo Croft

HOW RUDE!
THEY TOOK FIVE PICTURES OF MAUD BATSBY AND NOT
ONE OF ME!



Editor's Corner

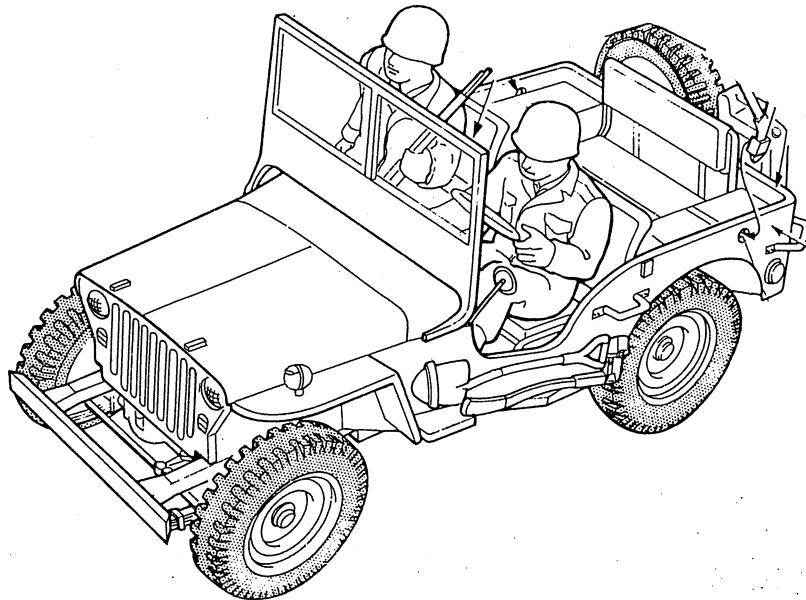
Many people thought that I was crazy, or at least masochistic when I volunteered for Trog editor at the beginning of this quarter. I heard horror stories of how much of a pain in the butt this job would be; trying to get articles, artwork and other contributing paraphernalia from members. Looking back on that (while sitting here trying to meet a deadline and watching the typist accidentally knocking over his spit cup with the typewriter carriage) I have realized they were correct. However, I have enjoyed this job and don't regret it. My three goals this quarter were to cave my ass off, graduate, and produce a Fall Trog. So far I've only produced a Trog.

I would highly recommend to anyone in the club to get involved with the Trog at least once in their time with the club. One of the important things to keep the club active is passing along to new members caving experiences and techniques, as well as a reputation for hard core partying. Trog articles are one way of doing this.

I'm done squacking... read on and enjoy.



Ken Bonenberger



Once again, coming to you from the wilderness of Southwest Virginia, the most feared piece of literature since Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority Report, from the "Mouth of the South", stirring up shit too deep to dance in, is the ...

GROTTO GRAPEVINE

A lot has happened in the grotto since we talked to you last. Last spring the long rope committee organized a 1100 ft. tyrolean across the New River at McCoy rapids.

Picnic last spring was again held on Buddy Penley's farm, where Buddy showed off his "A Model". Two pigs were barbequed in an open pit, and quickly consumed. Knox Ward made an unorthodox entrance by parachuting into the picnic area, almost landing in the barbecue pit in the process. The great frisbee fly ensued, followed by the cowshit-covered-frisbee fly.

Float Trip saw the usual flotilla of VPI cavers in rafts of all sorts, only to receive high level bombing of ketchup and chocolate syrup from a bridge by Bill Stringfellow.

Spring project was fence building at Newcastle Murder Hole where the Beer Fairy was born and two kegs consumed. Little wonder why no one went caving the next day.

Banquet was at Squires with the party at the VFW Hall in Radford. Many out-of-town guests showed up-Jim Denton hitchhiked in from Oregon, Mike and Suzanne Frame arrived from Alaska. Fran Wistoff and Dave Shantz both won purple heart awards for injuries suffered in the line of duty-can collecting.

VPI hosted the spring VAR at the McCoy campground, and the election question of the year was answered: Who is Evelyn Bradshaw? A feast of barbequed chicken was followed by a party in the rafters of the picnic shelter.

Members of the grotto led caving trips to Newberry's, Buddy's, New River, and Fool's Face to a gathering of VCOAEBFD members. In addition to some caving instruction, Jerry Redder showed them how to eat a spider.

Much activity went on during the summer. Chuck Shorten finished mapping Pig Hole, and Bill Koerschner brought the length of Spring Hollow over 5 miles. Lawrence Britt and John Lohner started mapping Starnes Cave. There were several moonlight swims in Mountain Lake, and John Lohner tried to wash his '72 Caprice dinosaur in the New River (it took 60 feet of Goldline and a case of beer to pull the car out). Richard and Pat Cobb tied the knot in August, and made the "marriage swing" popular. Their wedding cake was aptly decorated with A. I. Cartwright clutching a bride and groom in his hand.

Russ Peterson had a successful August ^{even} though there was an aborted Rocky Horror Show. Pete Sauvigne's annual 4th of July party was as good as ever with skyrockets and a large flaming "4" in the yard. Sadly, Glen Davis and company were forced to move out of the Main Street house, which was remodelled and an asphalt backyard was installed.

The grotto had much success in the Speleo-Olympics at OTR this year. Pete Sauvigne won 2nd prize in the overall. Chuck Shorten won the PRP and

burned his foot while walking through a fire. Lawrence Britt beat out Bob Liebman's van for first place in cave pack. Sue Heazel and Carol Trexler went one-two in the women's 100 ft. mechanical, and Win Wright won the cable ladder contest. Ed Devine unfortunately attempted to get another brain bucket award. By the end of the weekend there were 40 dead wine bottles and a dead Doug Yeatts, candidate for a flame out award. Marilynn listened the whole time to Bill Douty stories (yes, they're all true). Ed Loud clubbed a new woman and dragged her to his cave which left John Lohner out in the cold.¹ John Boy was adopted by the Redders. Hugh Boy was adopted by the Richardsons.

Elsewhere in the caving world, Bill Douty won awards for his cave maps at the International Congress in Bowling Green this past July. Chip Clark won many awards in the Photo Salon, including two Medal Awards, one of which was of the Canyon Room in Clover Hollow, speaking of Phantom, he gave a private tour through the Smithsonian and someone almost fell through the dome over the elephant.

Pam and Lor Windle were wed in September. Paul Kirchman and Roberta Desrochers are to be wed on December 19. Ken Bonenberger and Brenda Coulling are getting hitched next April. Rich Neiser and Binnie Ballou are to be married in '83. Karl and Nancy Hamm had a third son this Halloween. Mike and Cathy Slusarski moved out of the armpit of Texas to Ohio, Leaving Tuna Johnson the lone survivor in the Lone Star State. Bob and Laura Alderson had a baby girl.

Boo Croft and Lawrence Britt have both been seen with new flames this quarter. Jim Jones has been dating a BMW motorcycle. Five future doctors: Joe Zokaites, Jean Simonds, Fran Wistoff, Carol Godla, and Lawrence Britt are taking EMT (or is that ELMT?) from Jackie Redder this quarter. The Redders received an emergency rescue telephone call this past Halloween weekend from Don and Cheryl in Oman asking for suspensions for hard hats.

This was a bad year for vehicles. Ruth Montgomery invented the "Orange Crush" proving that seat belts are safe. Chuck Shorten bought a '48 Willys Jeep and Ken Bonenberger sold a 33 year old headache. Dave Cinsavich and Lawrence Britt have a Jeep graveyard in their living room, kitchen, bedrooms, and parking lot.

Halloween party this fall was held in Pearisburg and had some good costumes. Carolann Wimbley won a prize for her female Nazi sex vixen costume. Keith Smith and Bev Wilson came as a tip cleaner and a tip. Fran Wistoff came as a shower and Bernie came as a toilet (which Paul Kirchman took a squat in). Bill Koerschner came as a bag of aluminum cans; Ed Devine came in his cast. Boo Croft was a werewolf; Jay Kennedy was his victim.

Lawrence Britt and Dave Cinsavich hosted an Octoberfest party which included German music, beer, pretzels, potato salad, kielbasi, saurkraut, knockwurst, and grits on the floor. Pat and Chuck's moving party resulted in broken bamboo plants, a broken shower curtain, broken crystal and two dead kegs.

The club's pet project, the Skydusky Hollow Cave Survey is one step closer to completion now. Joe Zokaites is mapping Newberry-Banes cave.

NOW... FROM PAST GRAPEVINES

February 4, 1944

The Editor's Think --

That Religious Services should be held on Sunday Trips... This has been mentioned before and seems to meet with genuine approval... Some definite steps should be taken in this direction, delegating the responsibility for planning, and seeing these plans carried through, wither: (1) to the Program Committee, (2) to a Sunday Service Committee, or (3) to the Vice-President... Well presented services would add greatly to the value of our trips and would allow those persons to accompany us who feel that they would lose more in neglecting their religious services than they would gain, esthetically, in the spirit of spelunking. Perhaps this is so, and bringing the two together seems an excellent, and proper, action.

PAY YOUR DUES

* B U Y W A R B O N D S *

February 18, 1944

ACCURATE FACTS & CORRODED FIGURES

The grotto's usual way of measuring the depth of a vertical drop is to let fall a rock and time its descent. I have calculated a table of values, allowing for the air resistance and the time for sound to travel back.

Assuming that the rock is two inches in diameter, the ballistics coefficient is 0.08, the acceleration due to gravity is 32.160 ft/sec^2 , the temperature is 50 F, the velocity of sound at that temperature is 1107 ft/sec, the barometric pressure is 710 mm of mercury, the density of the rock is 2.7, and the price of eggs in China is beside the point; I derived the following equation:

$$s = 16.080 t^2 - 0.4880 t^3 - 0.2739 t^4 + 0.02413 t^5 + 0.00454 t^6 \\ - 0.000527 t^7 - 0.000067 t^8$$

(I dare you to check my calculations)

Time	Depth
$\frac{1}{2}$ second.....	3.959 feet
1 second.....	15.346 feet
$1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds.....	33.381 feet
2 seconds.....	57.312 feet
$2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds.....	84.936 feet
3 seconds.....	115.838 feet
4 seconds.....	186.351 feet
5 seconds.....	248.018 feet
7 seconds.....	you're exaggerating - use a watch.
9 seconds.....	you're lying - use a watch

- - - Old Corroded

March 17, 1944

CARTWRIGHT'S BIOGRAPHY- CHAPTER I

Aloysius Ignatz Cartwright was born at a very early age, and he was so surprised to see the light of day that he was speechless for about two years. Cartwright was one of the Neanderthal men (who were the original speleos). He began his caving career in Europe, and about five hundred years ago he went into a very large cave in Italy. He stayed in this cave for many years, exploring the millions of miles of passages, going down hundred-mile vertical drops, and following streams as big as the Mississippi (when he tells lies they're really the big ones).

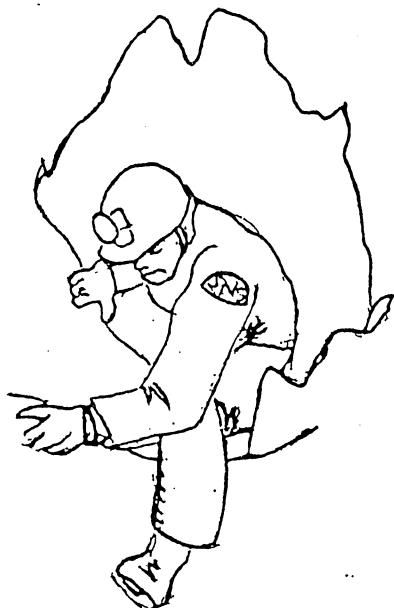
It was while he was in this cave that he began keeping a diary, so after this part we won't have to trust just his memory. His diary starts in 1491, at which time he was several thousand miles from the entrance to the cave, so he was greatly surprised to see daylight. When he came out of the new entrance he had found he was at the entrance of Clover Hollow Cave (which to our knowledge has no end). This was the way Cartwright discovered America on February 29, 1491 (1491 wasn't a leap year, but Cartwright doesn't know that).

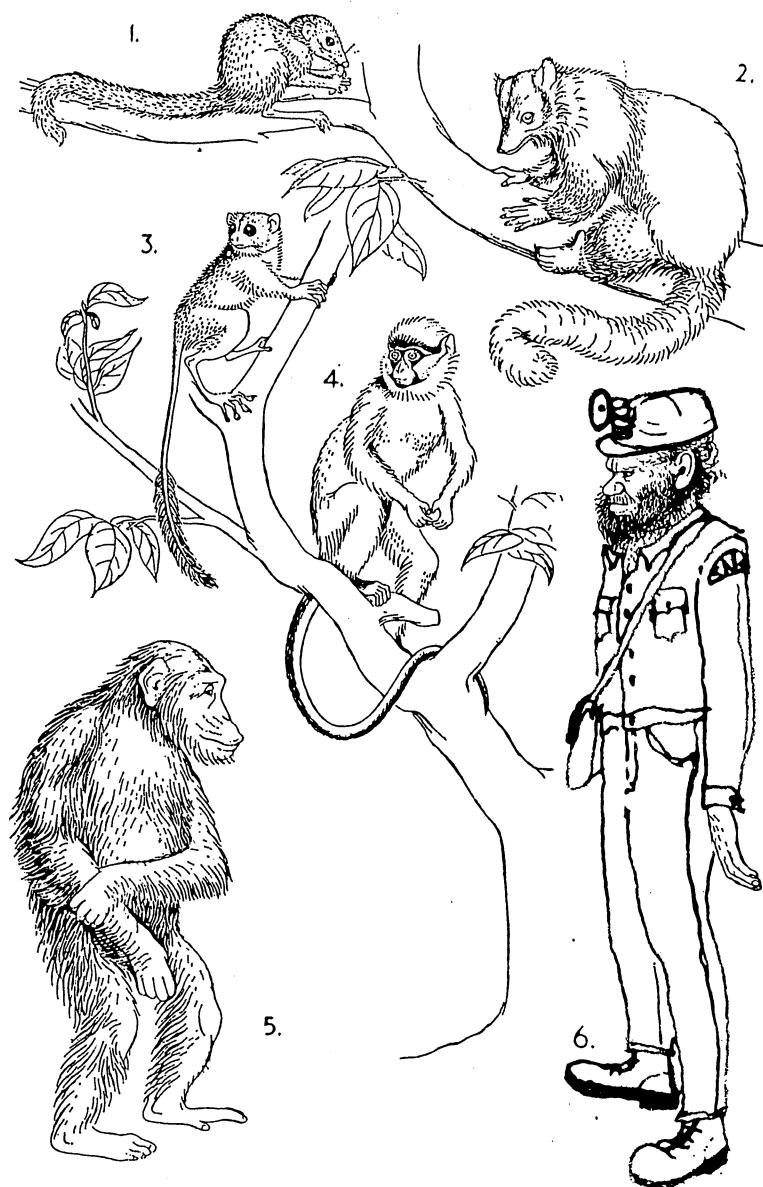
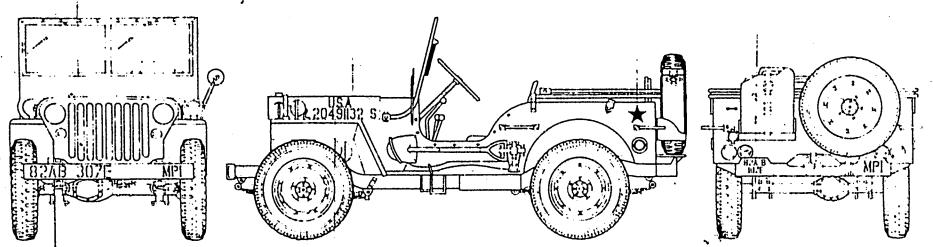
Thus Cartwright beat Columbus by over a year, but he never bothered to go back to Europe and tell people about America.

September 1, 1944

Special!

We hear that -- A. I. Cartwright even registered in a Physics class last quarter and was doing pretty well but owing to a rule of this college limiting the number of absences he had to be dropped from the role. That's a real caveman for you. -- When he can't even stay above ground long enough to attend classes.





Figures 1 - 6:
Evolution of the Caver

Summer Caving in B'burg

This is for all of you who for some reason don't stay arround Blacksburg during the summer. Many cavers who do stay arround get a chance to do more caving than during the school year. I am one of these people. What follows will perhaps give you an idea what a Blacksburg summer of caving can be like.

June 6 - McClungs Cave

Fran Wistoff and I threw our gear in her car and took off for West Virginia. After finding Bob Amundson we went to survey in McClung's Cave. Once in the cave we travelled two hours to where we started surveying. After a few hours the passage had gotten smaller, and smaller, until it was just a belly crawl. Then it got big again and stayed big for a while until we had to go down a small chute. Once again it was a belly crawl, but as we were burning out I heard an echo ahead. I thumped on to see if we could finish quickly; just ten feet ahead was a big room. Bob decided to go on to the room and then decide what to do.

This room lead into another that had a stream that bubbled in and flowed out the other end. This was the end unless we wanted to hold our breath and swim a little. The crawls were longer than I remembered from before but I survived them. We made it out fine except for being soaked by a waterfall we couldn't avoid. The trip took us eleven hours, once again a half a day was taken from us by Ol' man McClung. After eating we settled down to bed in the WVACS field house.

June 20 - Haynes and Laurel Creek

This weekend I took a rest; I went caving on a short trip in West virginia with Bill Sydor. We went to Haynes and Laurel Creek caves, and I got in an easy eight hours. The last trip I had been on that was lees than ten hours was the day after picnic, and before that it was in February. So it was nice to do something short.

June 27 - Banes Spring

The next weekend I went to Banes Spring with Bill Koerschner and Bill Shipman. The purpose of this trip was to teach me how to sketch. I did okay... but it's a good thing Koerschner took notes also.

July 3 - Spruce Run Mountain Cave

I went with Walt Pirie, Lawrence Britt, and Sue Heazel into Spruce Run for a nice long trip of an hour and a half.

July 4 - Newberry-Banes

The next day I was underground in Skydusky, with Ed Devine, Bill Koerschner, and a damn heavy but short "Diddley Pole".

This scaling pole was only about twenty feet long. It was made up of four inch aluminum angle in several lengths. Certain areas were milled so that they would mate with another piece. The pieces were numbered so that they could be bolted together in order. They are also doubled in the middle for extra strength, which means they are heavy as hell.

Ed and I had the angle pieces split between us; he got the heaviest and I got the lightest. Bill carried the hardware, which was in two packs.

We finally arrived at the North Subway and left the pole there.

We then went to derig the rope on a climb that Bill Stephens had started at picnic. Ed cammed up the rope and cleaned the climb of all the gear. We then pulled the rope back down and went back to the scaling pole.

We carried the pole to the leads we were going to check, and put it together. We checked several leads which crapped out; finally we came to the last lead. This was a two-step job. We had to prop it up once, climb up, and raise it up again. At the top of the second pitch was a huge boulder that was about to fall. We carefully raised the pole and placed it out from the boulder on the wall. We moved it around to satisfy Ed, who was to climb up, almost letting it fall on the boulder. Our hearts leaped as Ed and I grabbed it so it wouldn't move. Ed got the nerve to climb up. Bill and I looked for ways to get out of the boulder's path if it fell. The reason was we were 12 feet off the main floor in a four foot wide canyon, right in the potential trajectory.

When Ed came back down he told us about a dome with a lead about 70 feet up the wall. He also told us that the boulder was just barely chocked. We decided to call the boulder "God" because if it decided to fall it would have killed us off. We pulled down the pole and left the lead for a future trip.

After ten and a half hours caving we had proved that three men could do a scaling pole trip and not kill themselves.

July 18 - Spring Hollow

Bill Koerschner, Robyn Lafon and I went to Spring Hollow Cave to log rocks. We did this so Bill would have something else to do besides cave maps to keep him from his thesis. We spent eight and a half hours following him through the cave while he looked at the walls and drew funny looking symbols in his notebook.

SUUSI

Every year toward the end of July there is a convention (at Radford University) of Unitarian Universalists of all ages. It is called the South-eastern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI). The participants can choose from many workshops and nature trips. Among the nature trips are a vertical caving workshop, a vertical cave trip, and three horizontal trips. Don Anderson has lead these trips for the past six years or so, and for the last three I have helped him. The following are the ones we took this year:

July 28 - Clover Hollow

Don Anderson, Jerry Redder, Pete Bosch and myself took a host of others from SUUSI into Clover Hollow. Jerry got us thoroughly lost and found again. This is a great trust-building tactic.

July 29 - Tawney's

Don, Fran Wistoff, myself and about 20 Unitarians descended upon Tawney's for 2 hours. They enjoyed it, but I forgot something and went tennis shoe caving.

July 30- New River

Don, Sue Heazel and I took a group into New River for seven hours. This time I got lost and walked right into a dead end.

July 31- Smokehole

Ah, Friday! Don and I took another group into Smokehole for a wonderfully wet two hours.

September 12- McClung's Cave

This weekend Koerschner, Bob Amundson and I were in West Virginia for a trip in McClung's. Bill and I rushed Bob back to Third Breakdown in less than two hours (it usually takes two hours to get to Second Breakdown). I read Sunntos instead of Brunton and found it to be a pain to have to hold my lamp in my hand all the time so I could see the numbers. We surveyed for six hours and sixty-five stations, closing the biggest loop I'd ever seen. We then completed our trip by going on out the other side of the loop. I enjoyed it, but Bob seemed like he would have preferred the other way.

The first part of the passage was a bedrock crawl, which was rather long. When we came out of the crawl we came into a highly fractured walk-crouch passage. The walls here were so fractured that if you felt like it, you could take chunks of rock out of the wall. This wonderful condition was caused by the formation of gypsum crystals inside the rock. As the crystals grew they shattered the rock into millions of pieces. Needles to say, we didn't touch the walls much. I still don't quite understand why Bob didn't like it.

Well that is what caving I did this summer, except my two Roppel trips. All in all I raked in 132 hours in 14 trips. This is just a sample of what can be done during the summer. There are enough caves in the area that if you have the time, (money, and car) you can go every weekend.

Ben Keller



"After his first hour underground, Nicholai knew this was the sport for him. His body, lithe and wiry, seemed designed for slithering through tight spots... And the fascination of danger was seductive to him... But the moments of risk and daring in the caves were personal, silent, and unobserved; and they had the special spice of involving primitive animal fears. In vertical work down a shaft, there was the thrill and fear of falling, native to all animals and honed keener by the knowledge that the fall would be into a black void below, rather than into the decorative landscape beneath the mountain climber. In the caves, there was the constant presence of cold and damp, primordial fears for man, and real ones for the caver, as most grave accidents and deaths result from hypothermia. There was also the animal dread of the dark, of endless blackness and the ever-present thought of getting lost in mazes of slits and belly crawls so tight that retreat was impossible because of the jointing of the human body... And there was the constant mental pressure of knowing that just above him, often scraping against his back as he wiggled through a tight cave, were thousands of tons of rock that must inevitably one day obey gravity and fill in the passage."

from Shibumi, by Trevanian

Crown Publishers, Inc., NY, 1979



The Shorten Seat

INTRODUCTION

This seat design is similar to that used by many, but it differs in that it is fully adjustable in both the legs and waist. I have used a more complex version for several years, and this design represents the culmination of many modifications. Its advantages and disadvantages are listed below:

ADVANTAGES

-The seat is held together with three perfectly flat, straight stitches. There are no complex angles to measure or sideways stitch loads. Two of these three stitches are backups only.

-There is at least a two-way redundancy. Should the seat fail at the waist strap or buckle, the wearer will still be secure in the leg loops. A broken leg loop leaves the waist and alternate leg loop intact, and a broken carabiner loop leaves the other still attached.

-When assembled, the seat is as uncomplicated as a non-adjustable one.

-The adjusters serve only to adjust; they take no actual load. Should they fail, the seat remains intact, although somewhat constricting. Webbing does not slip in these adjusters when woven through in triplicate, as in this seat design.

-Only 11ft. of 2" webbing is required.

DISADVANTAGES

-The seat applies pressure to the insides of the thighs (points A, figure 3). This is apparently common in this type of seat, but the pressure is not extreme.

-This seat is slightly less compact than an all-sewn, non-adjustable seat.

-The adjusters do not work well with thin seat belt-type 2" webbing; the thicker type must be used. This increases both the bulk and the strength of the harness.

-Greatest points of wear occur at the carabiner loops (points B, figure 3). These may be protected by sewing a backup piece of webbing to the inside of the loop, if desired.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SEAT

The disassembled, sewn components of the seat are shown in figure 1. Two pieces of webbing, one 74" long and the other 56" long, are folded over 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from one end of each and sewn for a length of 4", leaving a 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " loop. On the unlooped end of the short piece the buckle is attached with an

overlap of 5". This stitch takes a fair amount of the load, so stitch accordingly. On the unlooped end of the long piece, roll a short overlap and stitch. This serves as a stopper to keep the waist strap from sliding through the buckle when the seat is slack, or folded up.

Assembly of the seat begins as in figure 2. (Ladies: please note that you are well represented in these illustrations!) First, slide the adjusters on to both halves of the seat as shown. With the buckle on the left hip, pass the looped end first in front, then around the back of the leg. Do the same with the other piece.

Next, pass the two loops through their respective adjusters and set to the desired length (figure 3). The loop stitches will be behind the adjusters, and the adjuster-webbing combination should be quite snug and non-sliding. Bring the waist strap behind the back and through the buckle. Attach a carabiner and start adjusting the leg loops. It will seem awkward at first, but by snugging one side to generate slack at the other, the fit can be custom-made.

When rigging for a shoulder cam, the cheek straps shown in figure 4 prevent the waist strap from riding up. Because the adjusters are placed in the front of the pelvis, this is a necessary piece, 9/16" tubular webbing is adequate here; the idea is to position the load, not bear it.

SOME NOTES ABOUT STITCHING

Four patterns commonly observed on caver's stitched harnesses are shown in figure 5. Patterns A and B are not as good as those in C and D because there is stitching running perpendicular to the load. When this happens the stitches are unevenly loaded and the full benefit across the length of the stitched piece is not realized. Conversely, stitches placed parallel to the load all contribute evenly to the strength of the piece. Incidentally, the pattern shown in D is used by parachute harness makers.

FIGURE 1. THE DISASSEMBLED SEAT.

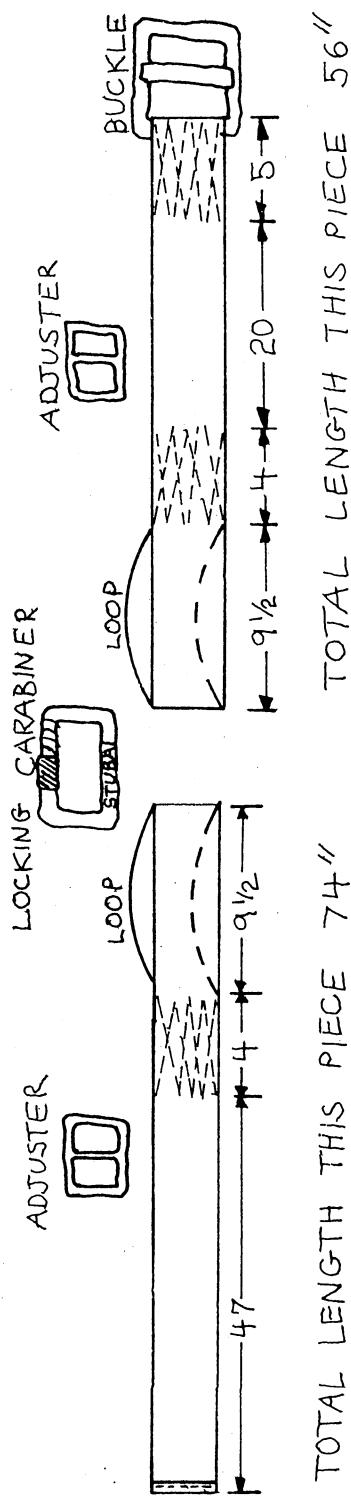


Figure 2. The seat before passing the loops through the shoulder straps.

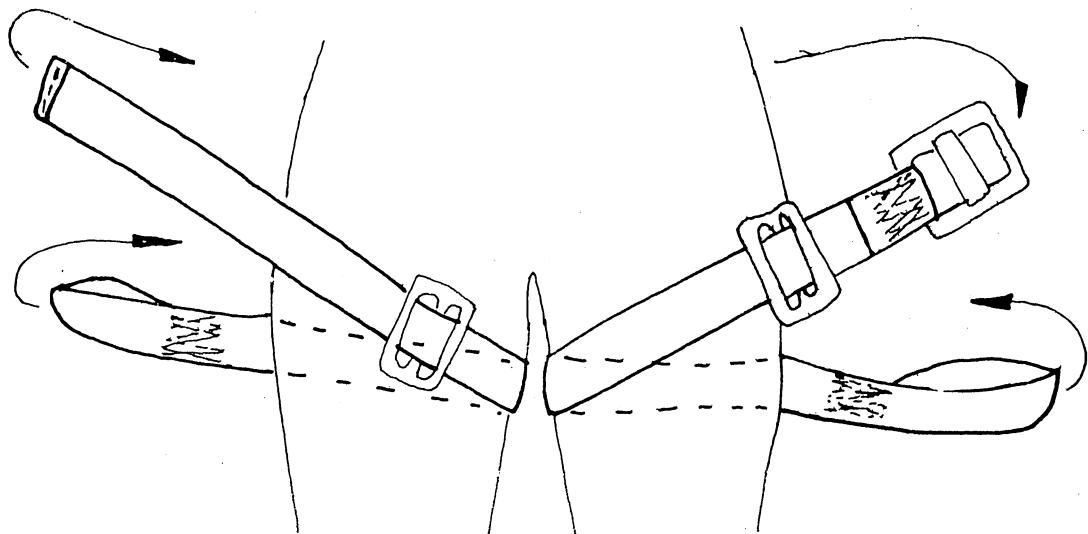


Figure 3. Front view of the assembled seat

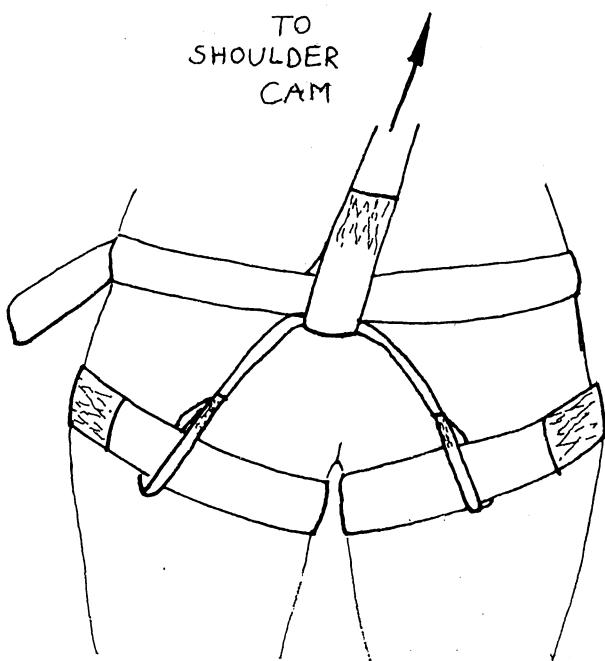
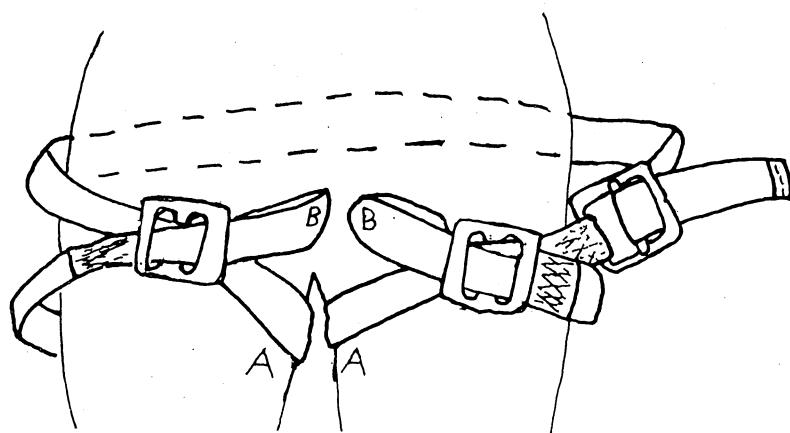


Figure 4. Rear view of the assembled seat, including shoulder cam strap and cheek straps.

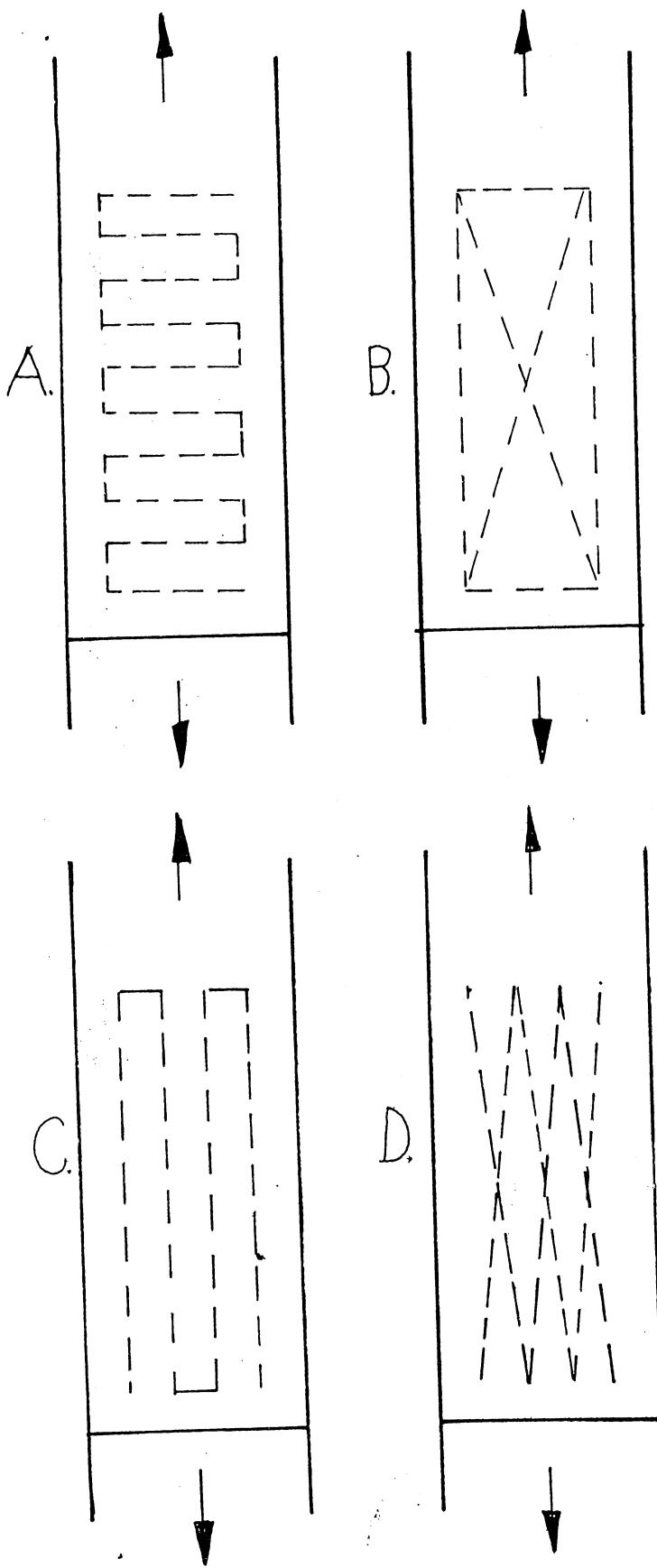


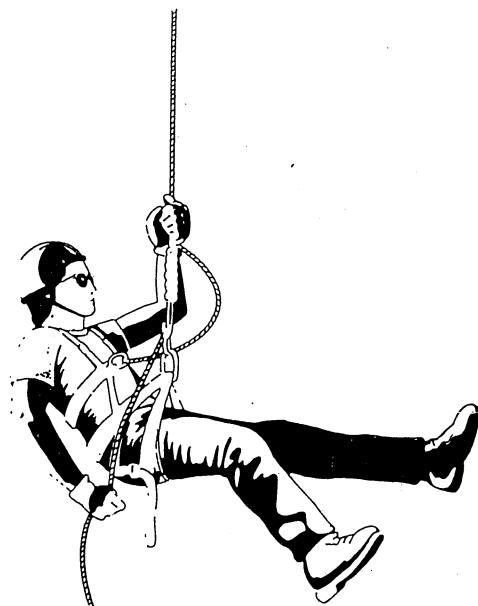
Figure 5. Some commonly observed stitch patterns. Arrows indicate direction of load.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I am quite pleased with this seat design, and I feel that its adjustability makes it widely applicable for many caving situations and cavers. I have received many favorable comments on it, and a few cavers have already produced copies for themselves. The dimensions provided are not absolute, but they leave room for a moderate amount of adjustment up or down from a person of medium build.

Chuck Shorten

Thanks to Pat Shorten
for illustrations 2
through 5.



Pole-ish Caving in Paul's

Nine suckers in all were recruited for the Paul Penley's Scaling Pole-Photo Trip (I was to be the photo part). There was of course, Ed Devine (designer and builder of the incredible 'Didly Pole'), also Win, Jozo, Lawrence, Fran, Sue, Rich Neiser, Dave Mangus, and myself. Jozo, Lawrence, Dave and Rich were first into the entrance, to rig a cable ladder at the Big Room drop. The rest of us followed about 15 minutes later, entering the cave around 11 AM and leaving behind an uncommonly beautiful January day - sunny, high predicted in the 60's.

A damp mud entrance hidden under a boulder was the usual welcome to Paul's, followed by alternating walking-crawling-tight squeeze passage, and today was no different, except it felt worse leaving that beautiful day behind. The passage at the beginning was well traveled, and we proceeded through the Breakdown Connection, following the stream down the breakdown pile. The dry year had reduced water levels some, and it was easier going in to stay dry than usual, but still unpleasant, especially at one point. Passing through the connection is mostly crawling/climbing down through a large boulder pile, and you wonder what would happen if just one of those boulders were to shift... Jozo almost found out one time. As he was coming back up through one small hole he grabbed a boulder above him...and felt it shift! Ever since then we've all been glad to get past that boulder, and no one uses it for a hand hold any more!

Once past the connection we entered booming trunk passage, very uncharacteristic of Paul's, and followed that to a huge mud and boulder filled room. At the lower part of the room was about a 20 foot ladder climb down to a lower level. The first party was descending as we arrived. I went down the ladder next to photograph people on the ladder, after which the rest of the first group came down and continued on their way.

The rest of my group descended, after which we did a few climbs and crawls and arrived at the Bong Room. It wasn't very big as rooms go, most places I couldn't stand straight, but it was huge compared to what was coming. We were a little over 2 hours into the cave. After enjoying the relative spaciousness for a few minutes we entered the Jozo crawls, a series of insane crawlways we were to follow for the next 4 hours. They're not even respectable crawlways really, more like capillary tubes in rock.

I was second in line in our group, behind Ed. Almost immediately the crawl got tight. Ed's lamp went out, and since the passage was too tight to do anything about it, he had to crawl on in darkness for a while. While waiting for Ed to get his lamp lit in a larger area, I found myself in the tight spot, and waiting.

One arm ahead of me, one behind, I lay on my side, the only way I could fit, unable even to turn my head because of my hardhat. After that I learned to shove my hat ahead of me, it was more gear to shove, but the peace of mind I gained from having some freedom of head movement was worth it. After Ed's lamp was relit we continued on, coming to the "end" of the first crawl about 75 feet from the Bong Room. The "end" was merely an alcove that 3 or 4 (crowded) people could barely sit in. Of course the continuing passage was more crawlway. The rest of the trip was all crawlway with an occasional alcove and a very rare tiny room now and then.

Ed had done a fantastic job of designing the scaling pole. The gleaming, solid, 30 foot long truss structure was packed into a mere 6 bundles, none longer than 3 feet, and a combined weight of 55 pounds. The bundles were only 4 inches or so in diameter and fairly easy to handle, but even so they slowed us down tremendously. You'd have to shove the gear (packs, bundles, etc) ahead of you to arm's length, crawl ahead a foot or so, shove the gear, crawl, ad nauseum.

In some passages a pack or bundle could be attached to an ankle with a piece of sling and dragged behind. But you had to be sure that the gear would not snag, or that there was someone behind you to free it if it did.

Jozo and I were the largest people on the trip. Every one kept telling me how much trouble I'd have at two notorious crawls coming up: the Crimper and the Fender Bender. I was continually reminded that Joe (who's about my size) made it only by "sheer determination", that it was going to be rough, etc. Needless to say, I was not filled with eager anticipation, but the inevitable always happens, and so we arrived at the Crimper.

The crimper is an extremely narrow curved passage. I was told that in order to make it I'd have to strip to my T-shirt and pants, even my boots had to come off. They were right. I felt my chest being squeezed front and back and I wedged myself through the vertical slot on my right side. It was short, 6 or 8 feet, but curved. My shoulders, then chest emerged into a tiny room. Someone behind asked how I was doing. Ed replied, "He thinks he's through, he's getting ready to find out that he's not." Huh? He was right. The passage curves to the left, I was on my right side, knees do no bend backwards. Finally, by spreading and bending my legs frog-style I was able to drag them through. I lost a little skin on the way, but all in all it hadn't been as bad as I'd been led to believe. Feeling a little more optimistic I (we) continued on. I was told that if I could make it through the Crimper I could do the Fender Bender also, even if it was slightly tighter.

It was not long before I found out. Once again I had to strip, but this time I could at least keep my boots on! The F.B. is a small crawlway which gets very tight just as it makes a sharp

right angle turn, then continues upward while remaining tight, for about 10 feet. The method had been perfected before, so I had little real trouble with the F.B. itself (the tight right angle turn), though if I hadn't known the method I may have never made it. Following instructions, I crawled in on my left side, one arm ahead, as my shoulder wedged through a slight depression in the ceiling. This was getting my waist to the turn, after which the turn and a change in passage demanded that I roll onto my back. I continued this corkscrew manauver until I was finally on my right side as my knees reached the right angle turn. It's one thing to fit your body through a coat hanger at a party, and quite another to pass through a hole in solid rock not much larger.

That ended the tight part of this obstacle, now came the hard part. For the next 10 feet the passage angled upwards, just barely body sized. I struggled upwards, head on my right arm as it lay stretched out in front of me, left arm pinned to my side by the ceiling, and heartily cursing Paul Penley, his ghost, and caves in general. It took 10 minutes or so to travel that lousy 10 feet - sharp rock digging into bare skin and sticky mud on the floor trying to prevent any movement. Using toes, hands and elbows I struggled, clawed, and panted my way up the slope, inch by inch.

No large rooms on the other side this time (or even tiny ones!), but the crawlway opened up a fair amount, and there was one place you could actually stand up, though there was not much room to move once you did. But it was good to be through, and the return trip would be easier, since it would at least be downhill.

After that there were, of course, more crawls. The next one of note was a wide one, but with a very low ceiling. It was maybe 40 or 50 feet long, but the middle 10 or 15 feet got very tight. Even with my helmet off I couldn't turn my head freely. With my lungs full I would be wedged between floor and ceiling. In order to move I would have to completely exhale, shove myself forward a foot or so, catch my breath, repeat... One of the bummers was that the exertion combined with a lack of breathing space caused some heavy breathing - and every exhalation would raise a cloud of dust in front of my nose and into my eyes. Every time I exhaled I had to shut my eyes. Finally got through that - not far from our destination now. Another 50 feet or so of crawls and small alcoves and we'd be there.

The first group had already arrived at the big room which was our destination, and were busy rigging the 2 cable ladders we'd need to descend into the room. The rigging was time consuming, so we waited, strung out in various alcoves between tight spots. By this time we'd gotten rearranged so that I was almost last in line. As one by one people descended the ladders the line moved up. Some pretty tight spots between alcoves here, especially one spot that had been a dig. I wedged through that slowly, inch by inch as I lay on my back. I became very tired of having my

body constricted, I just wanted to be able to move freely - the hell with these tiny holes! I fought the anxiety back and continued inch by inch until I finally got my shoulders far enough to be able to move my arms freely - at last!

Now there was only a chimney across a deep slot and a steep slope to the first cable ladder, which was rigged through a mud-ringed hole. You had to back out the hole with your legs hanging in empty space, supporting yourself by your arms until you were out far enough to place your feet on the rungs. This was only about a 10 foot climb down into an alcove, which was high up in the wall of a huge room. From the alcove there was a second ladder climb, this one about 40 feet and muddy and sleazy, and then our destination! By the time the last person descended the ladder around 6 PM we had been in the cave around 7 hours, about 4 of that in crawls.

Ed laid out and unwrapped all the bundles, and with plenty of help assembled the scaling pole as I took pictures. The pole was an ingenious design, looking much like one of those radio towers you see, supported by nothing but wires and hundreds of feet high. It was built entirely of high strength aluminum angle, assembled in a truss structure with bolts and wingnuts in just shortly over an hour. Triangular in shape, about a foot and a half on a side, and over 30 feet long, the gleaming structure looked totally out of place in a muddy cave where nothing was bright. We all stood back, impressed by not only the apparent strength of it (it had previously been tested to a 600 lb load), but by the fact that we could have transported that through what we had just come through!

I could detect a bit of nervousness in Ed as the time came close for him to actually try it in its first real test. The cable ladder, a belay rope, and some guy lines were attached to the upper end, and after much discussion the pole was raised into place, with the top just under what appeared to be a large passage (compared to the crawls we'd come through). Ed and Lawrence hung from the ladder, testing, it seemed solid. Finally, Ed was ready to go. Three belayers held everything steady, two on guy lines off to the sides, and one belaying Ed as he climbed. He continued to the top, paused for a few, and then crawled/climbed above the ladder and into the passage. In a minute or so he happily reported that the lead ended in a short distance. Happily, because if there had been something up there he would have had to map it, and all he wanted to really do was completely kill this section of cave so he wouldn't have to come back there ever again!

Ed sat in the passage for a few minutes, gathering his nerve for the climb back down. While waiting he kicked down a lot of loose rock as we hid, since there had been a lot of falling rock on the climb up. It was very strange, hearing the metallic twang of rocks hitting aluminum back in that cave. Loose rocks cleared away, Ed climbed back down to the top of the pole and back onto the ladder, and then down. That was it for Ed! He wasn't going back up that thing today, thankyou.

There was one more lead down in the big room that needed to be checked, a channel in the ceiling. Win volunteered to check it out, and was on his way up after we repositioned the pole. At the top of the pole there was still about a 5 or 10 foot chimney through a narrow slot to the passage we could see above it. The only belay either Ed or Win had was through a biner at the top of the pole, and any time they were above the pole they were also above their belay. We all held our breaths as Win chimneied, until someone brightly reminded Win that "a broken bone this far back would be fatal" (no names, but he hates to be called Larry). Some very unkind remarks were directed at this person, not the least of which came from Win! - and he quickly shut up.

Finally, Win made it into the passage above. "It goes!" he called down, and left to follow it. After what seemed like a long time we heard him return. The passage went about 150 feet and then ended - did Ed want to map it? "Hell No!" The climb down seemed even harier than the climb up, and everyone felt relieved when Win finally joined us on solid mud again.

It was now around midnite, and people were getting ragged out. There was one more scaling pole lead to be checked, but it was high up in the ceiling of the alcove we'd climbed down from, and the pole would have to be partially disassembled to get it up there. It was decided to just get the pole up into the alcove, and then leave it there for the next trip to check the lead out. It was after 1 AM by the time the pole had been hoisted into the alcove in 2 sections, and Fran, Lawrence, Dave and Jozo started heading out. Sue was already up in the alcove with me as the others left, and we belayed Win, Ed and Rich up the ladder and derigged the 40 foot ladder. As the cable ladders and ropes were being coiled I belayed Sue up the 10 foot ladder and then followed. There were some tight spots ahead that I just wanted to have behind me, especially the "dig", besides which I knew I'd not get through them quickly. In order to speed the trip out Sue and I started off as the other three were coming up the second ladder. At this point we were all exhausted, and still faced with all that nasty crawling before we could rest. We just wanted to be able to go to sleep.

Sue and I finally made it through the dig and other tight spots and arrived at the alcove before the long, wide, "breath out" crawl. Sue of course had no trouble, even at the dig, and I gave her hell for having it so easy. Thinking Win, Ed and Rich would be along shortly we waited ... and waited. We grew tireder, and sleepier, not to mention chilly. We finally lay down in the passage, on our sides and back-to-back to conserve heat. My carbide lamp supplied some heat to my front, but the floor on my side was like a vacuum, sucking heat out of me. Never the less we both drifted in and out of light sleep.

When we finally heard the others coming, we were amazed to find we'd been waiting for over an hour. Ed, Win and Rich were so tired their efficiency was practically non-existent. I was

still beat, but the nap had refreshed me a little bit. The most of the hour we'd waited was the time it had taken them to derig the short cable ladder - they were nearly zombies. It was around 3 AM by now, and I couldn't even bear to think about what we had to go through yet to get out. We forced our minds to just think about the immediate task at hand, and not ahead to what was yet to come.

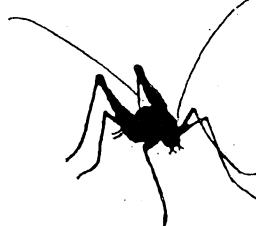
Crawl by crawl, they went grimly by. Then we were through the Fender Bender, more crawls, a tense time for me at the Crimper, moving on again. When we finally reached the Bong Room we felt almost as good as if we'd reached the entrance - we were out of the Jozo crawls! But nothing about Paul's is easy for long, and we soon realized that, especially in our exhausted conditions, it was still a long way to the entrance.

Some climbs, some crawls, we arrived at the ladder in the Big Room. Climbing and derigging were slow, then the long walking passage in booming trunk, a sigh of relief at being past the loose boulder in the Breakdown Connection; it all began to merge more and more into a blurry haze. More traveling, and at long, long last, looking up to see light that did not come from a carbide lamp!

Climbing up that muddy hole and out from under that boulder was just as good as being in heaven - we emerged at 7:15 AM, after over 20 hours in the cave! We went from depressed exhaustion to sheer joy at being out of that God-forsaken hole in the ground! It was about 20°, and we could see the sun on the mountain tops across the valley, promising another beautiful day like the one we'd already missed.

It's strange how the elation you feel after a trip like that almost makes it worth what you've gone through. With the camera on self-timer we got a couple of group shots before rapidly changing clothes in the brisk early morning cold. The beer I'd brought along was well received - and in all of our tiredness we felt so good. Well, maybe except for Ed. When Ed took this cave on three years ago it was thought that there was only about a year of mapping needed to finish it. The cave was huge beyond all expectations, and every time Ed has thought he was done, an "insignificant" little hole has led to another mile or so of cave. Having to come all the way from D.C. now, Ed just wants to be able to finish the cave, so he can move on to other things. And while the rest of us could go back to Blacksburg and bed, Ed still had to be back in D.C. by the following morning.

Finally and happily arriving home I soaked in a long hot shower and then collapsed in bed. I awoke just in time to see the sunset, tried to get myself together, gave up, and went back to bed. Awoke to find Monday morning, and the whole weekend would have seemed unreal if it hadn't been for the aches and pains that were still there.



Richard Cobb

Richard Cobb

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A cave is a crypt,
So dark and so deep,
Only a chasm,
Beside a rock heep.

But enter within,
And you will see
Another kind
Of fantasy.

A world without laws
Of up and of down,
Just cold and dark stone
For sky and for ground.

Skies that can cry
Without a cloud,
And trees that grow
From ceiling to ground.

Flowers that bloom
No life of their own,
Grow on the walls
Their beauty in stone.

Paths that go on
All angles and turns,
Giving no clues
To secrets it's earned.

No sunlight, no wind,
No stars or sound,
Just blackness and damp,
That knows no bounds.

A cave is a world
With mind of its own,
A rebel of norm
Deep under the loam.

So enter within
Its awesome arcades,
But be forewarned,
You'll exit quite changed.



Carolann Wimbley

ROPPEL CAVE

Central Kentucky has the largest known cave system in the world. Mammoth-Flint Ridge is the best known cave in the area, but others exist such as Roppel and Fisher Ridge caves. Due to the combined efforts of many different groups of people, these caves should all be connected within the next ten years. One of these groups is the Central Kentucky Karst Coalition (CKKC) which is mapping Roppel Cave.

The CKKC is perhaps one of the most receptive groups; it allows any group to go caving in Roppel. One of the groups that has become involved with mapping there is the VPI Cave Club. In the past year we've had three trips there. Two of these trips I went on.

I found Roppel to be different than what I thought a 30 mile cave with one entrance would be like. I think that if you put all of Skydusky Hollow together it would be twice as difficult as Roppel. Other than a rather long tight canyon passage (the S-Canyon) with a nice little drop in the middle, and a long hands and knees crawl, this cave is pretty wimpy. I must say that Roppel is a lot more fun because of its length. Because of its length it requires endurance. Over-all, Roppel is like a sweet and sour Chinese dish: it is both easy and hard.

June 12, Bill Koerschner and I left Blacksburg at noon for Nashville where we were to pick up Ed Devine at the airport. We got Ed in the car, and he drove us to Cave City, Kentucky, and on to the field house to get ourselves some sleep before the trip the next day.

About two hours after we got to bed, Keith Ortiz and his Michigan crew (they were mapping Fisher Ridge Cave) arrived. Bill saw it was Keith, and not only kept him up all night telling him about goings on at VPI, but he ended up sleeping on his glasses.

In the morning Bill molested a black snake that was crawling in the rafters. By the time we were in our caving clothes, several people had arrived, most of them were to work on a second entrance. We then headed out across the field to the entrance. Three others were going along with us: Bill Walker, who was active in opening up most of the cave, Dave Black, who has taken most of the pictures in Roppel, and a Tennessee caver whose name we never learned. After a quarter mile hike we reached the entrance.

Roppel has a vertical 30 foot manhole entrance which requires a ladder; then there is a 70 foot pit. After that it flattens out as you go through the S-Canyon. Out of the canyon you get to a hands and knees crawl called the Hobbit Trail, which comes into the side of a nice big trunk passage called the Arlee Way (it takes two hours to get there). After the Arlee Way you travel through miles of canyons, crawls, and a passage called the Lower Black River. We left Walker's party back in Lower Black River and headed off towards our lead.

Our lead was on the other side of a part of the cave called the B.W.O.B. (Blue, White, Orange and Black). It was named because of the various different colors in the passage: the walls, the deep clean pools of water, the mud, the flowstone, and your knees. All through the BWOB you must either traverse deep pools or wade thigh-deep in thick mud and water, all the time dodging formations.

The mud is so thick that it eats boots; imagine yourself thrashing around in thigh-deep water trying to get your boot out of the mud and falling face first into the water and you can feel the frustration of going through there.

Another part of the BWOB called Muckwater Canyon has deep footprints in the sand where people have stepped. You can't see the holes because they are full of loose sand which kindly allows your foot in so it can flow into your boots.

Finally after eight hours of travel we reached our lead. It was a nice wide tube that was constantly changing character. It seemed to take hours to survey what they explored, but we got into a tall 4 foot wide canyon. At one point while looking up I noticed a high lead, just what I was looking for, a nice black hole that was easy to climb into. We surveyed up and I climbed into a huge trunk passage. We diddled around hooting and hollering for a while and then got down to the task of surveying it. I took a couple shots up one way, and then back the other way because it was heading away from known cave.

After a while we all started feeling the hours and burning out. I would forget to tell Ed when the lamp was on station, and he would read off of it while I was marking the station. Bill was really getting burned out because of the passage size. I stopped our surveying at a large boulder just before the passage turned and thousands of leads came in at the same place. Ed went exploring while we ate, and when we had finished, we explored also.

After the major junction we avoided surveying, the passage got smaller till it became a stoopwalk. We went through and it got big again; this was virgin passage because Ed hadn't gone through it. The floor was nice and soft and your feet sank into it. Everywhere we went we saw the evenly dusted floor. Virgin floors are different from anything else and you can tell when you are on one. When we reached a mud fill we turned around and left extremely happy and satisfied.

When Ed finished ingesting massive quantities of food, we started for the entrance. While travelling towards the entrance we had set points to stop in the cave. These were the Arlee Way, the entrance to the BWOB, a dome near our lead where there was water, and where we started our surveying. These provided us adequate rests along with recarb stops. At the Arlee Way on the way out we had trouble getting into the mood to go for the entrance.

It took us ten hours to get out because we had to climb the rope and coil it. Ed got extra caving in because he had all three of his packs and the rope too. Finally we were out at 2:30 pm Sunday. We stumbled back to the field house; thoroughly exhausted I fell into bed ignorant of the rest of the day. I didn't get up until the next morning so Ed catch his plane. Bill and I spent the rest of the day looking at rock outcrops and driving home.

August 15, Bill Koerschner, Sue Heazel and I took off for Kentucky with Philip Balister and Win Wright behind us in Philip's truck. We took the route through Nashville again because Ed Devine was flying down.

We immediately met Ed who had to take an earlier flight, he drove the car to Cave City. On the way he got Philip and Win totally lost with his city driving habits. Philip followed what he thought was Bill's car into the heart of Nashville and then got back to the Interstate and got a speeding ticket. We got back together in Cave City and went on to the field house.

About 5 am in walked Keith Ortiz and his gang along with Joe Saunders. Koerschner, who was sleeping on the porch didn't get bothered this time, but all of us inside had the lights turned on on us and had to put up with Joe Saunders snoring like a freight train. Somehow we all got some sleep.

In the morning we woke and went into town for breakfast. When we came back everyone was gone, but the refrigerator was full of food. We got dressed slowly and eventually got around to walking to the cave after a short rainfall.

Afetr we got to the cave it only took us 6 hours to back to the dome near the Red Tag Special (the huge trunk) but this time we went through the Brucker Connection. The Brucker Connection was found as a shortcut to get to the Lower Black River; the trip in June we had taken the bypass to the Connection. We didn't think the bypass was any better so we took the Connection this time. The Brucker Connection involves wading in water that at times almost reaches your crotch (if you are 6 feet tall). We didn't think this was as bad as climbing up sandstone boulder piles so we took it. This cut the time some and we made it back in two hours less than before.

When we got to the Red Tag Special we looked around and decided what lead to do. We decided that our two crews should map in a canyon lead that was heading south. Part of this lead had been mapped but the survey was not any good.

Ed, Win and Sue started surveying about 500 feet in. Bill, Philip and I did the resurvey. Neither crew even reached virgin passage because of the group that had done the original survey. Their survey gear malfunctioned and couldn't do much so they raped the lead for humanity and the hell of it. We weren't too happy with this so we sat around and cussed alot. The size wasn't too good either; it was only two feet wide at most places and smaller at others.

Although it was fun, we did survey a bit with the two crews. After surveying for eight hours we started out. Most of us were in for 27 hours. When we got out we found a note from Pete Crecelius on a cooler chest full of beer, soft drinks, and candy bars. We waited there for Ed, who was the last again because he had dropped his three packs down a thin slot and had to dive in after them.

After we finished dressing, Pete took off for home, and we went into town to eat. In the morning we got up and talked to Ortiz for awhile. After that, we visited Mammoth Cave and thought of going on a tourista, but we didn't have time. When we got through buying some maps we started off for Cumberland Gap. About nine o'clock that night we were back in Blacksburg.

The last weekend of October, Roppel aquired a new entrance. An entrance dig that people had been working on for the whole summer opened to where they thought it would. Now three to four hours of travelling time has been taken off a trip. Apparently the passage to the main drag is small and wet. We'll see in December when we go there again.

Our three trips to Roppel have helped push its total length to over 30 miles with our find of the Red Tag Special. Hopefully we will be able to find more cave in our future trips and raise the mileage some more. There is a good chance for this because there are many good leads throughout the cave.

Ben Keller

SPITS & SPUTTERS

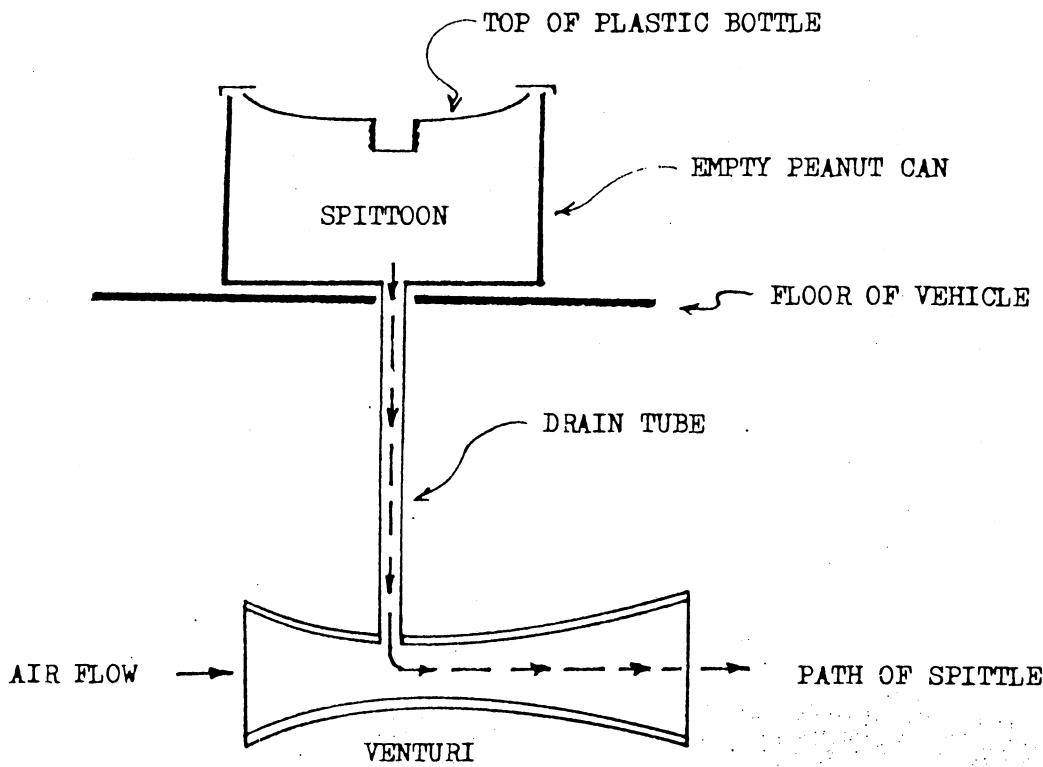
So you want to drive down the road and chew tobacco at the same time, eh? Chewing tobacco in a car creates several problems, especially at highway speeds. It is difficult to spit out the window without leaving tobacco stains all along the side of the car. When it's raining or when the air conditioner is on, it becomes a hassle to keep opening and closing the window. If a spit cup is used you have to worry about spillage or emptying it periodically.

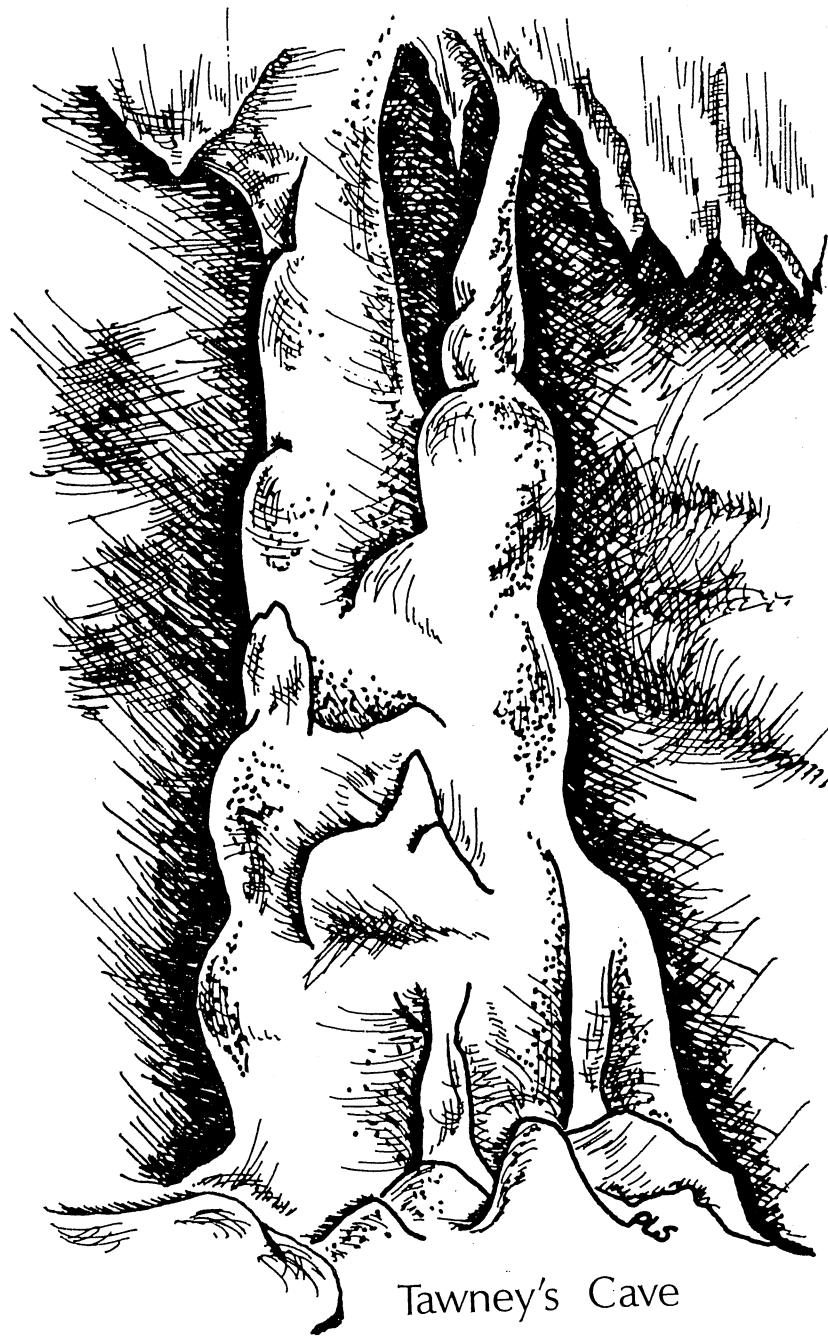
A Self-emptying Automobile Cuspidor solves all these problems with a drain tube and an integral high-energy venturi. The spittoon is made from an empty Planters peanut can that is firmly attached to the car floor. The top is cut from a plastic bottle and inverted to serve as a funnel. A section of copper tubing is attached to the bottom of the spittoon and goes through the floor to a venturi (See drawing). Air flowing under the car enters the venturi, increases in velocity and atomizes the liquid tobacco stream making it invisible to passing motorists.

This cuspidor system is designed without moving parts for long term service and little or no maintenance. Material costs are cheap; the venturi can be fabricated from beer cans held together with Super Glue or Canvas-Grip. Cleaning is accomplished by merely dumping a glass of water into the spittoon. Tough cleaning problems can be solved with some Liquid Plumber.

Ken Bonenberger

SELF-EMPTYING AUTOMOBILE CUSPIDOR





Tawney's Cave

STARNE'S CAVE

My first trip into Starnes Caverns (the historically correct name) was several years ago. I had remarked in my logbook how huge the main trunk passage was and what a neat cave it would be to map. Well, 3 years later I'm doing just that.

It all started with Ed Divine taking a 20 foot scaling pole in and scooping the upper waterfall lead. That trip mapped about 700 feet of dry passage a level above the waterfall supply stream. It eventually came back down into the stream and this is where my first survey with John Lohner as sketch started. We went from there about halfway back to the falls before exhaustion and cold sent us home. I read brunton and Walt Pirie was lead tape.

The third trip in saw me in my permanent capacity as sketch with Ken Bonenberger as brunton reader and Jim Jones as lead tape. We tied in the stream passage from the falls to the end of the last survey trip and then finished all upstream passage.

The fourth trip I took in John Lohner as brunton reader and Walt Pirie as lead tape. We ascended the falls and resurveyed the first nine stations of John's sketch because of some discrepancies. A sport trip tailed us consisting of Pete Sauvigne and five others. They had wanted to see the upper passage before we derigged it. The entire section above the falls came to about 1300 feet and almost none of it was virgin. A group of VPI cavers used pitons to ascend the falls in 1958 and left one piton at the top as well as their names.

When we finished, we then permanently derigged the falls because of its potential danger to novices and started mapping out toward the entrance. In the pool at the base of the falls we discovered an enormous bullfrog peering at us. We surmised that he had washed in or hopped in and would soon croak. We left him alone and mapped out into the main trunk passage a ways and then turned left to where the water dumps down a 50 foot canyon. I had always wanted to get to the other side of the canyon but only a nut would chimney across it. The only other way we found was to climb the slope on the right and traverse across the top along the ceiling channel for about 60 feet. A blank wall in front and a slick 60° down-slope on the left stopped us. I was peering around when I realized I was hearing another stream separate from the known falls. Also, I could see where the canyon appeared to continue. I vowed to return with suitable gear and see where this new stream came from.

We returned to the main trunk and continued mapping. Halfway to the entrance we turned into another left hand passage. Two leads choked in breakdown and a third is where Vanishing Stream enters the cave. This lead is low, wet, and muddy—the perfect lead! Two different tight places are possibilities for future trips.

Once again in the main trunk we made it to the entrance, mapped to the surface, and went home after 13 hours underground.

The fifth survey was more of a push trip than a mapping trip. John Lohner as brunton reader and Jim Morrisett and Rich Neiser as lead tapes accompanied me back to where I had heard the new stream. John had his bolt

kit in case we needed it as well as 150 feet of Goldline. I threw 30 feet of rope down to the lip of the visible slope (with a knot in the end) and John put his back on the wall, his feet on a ceiling channel, and belayed the rope. The complete lack of any natural anchor made things difficult. I rappelled down to the lip and looked down a sheer 60 foot drop while slipping around on the mud. I was peering downwards for several minutes before I remembered to turn around to see if the canyon did indeed continue. Bingo! A tunnel about 10' by 10' disappeared into blackness. I left the rope and said I would be back in ten minutes. I needed to see if there was enough passage to warrant setting a bolt and mapping it. Ten minutes later I was back and yelled, "John, set the bolt!" The only thing that upset me was that none of it was virgin. The first writing I saw was "NSS 2177." Bill Cuddington strikes again. Above that was "Tom Starnes" and "W. C. Gelispie". At the end of one passage was "Carts". Undoubtedly Stan.

Fifty feet from the drop the passage forked. The left fork narrowed down quickly and was lost in breakdown about 70 feet further on. One mid-get stream lead remains. The right fork opened up after 50 feet into an upsloping breakdown passage which we named Avalanche Alley. Immediately afterwards we hit a breakdown choke. Apparently there was a large room above us which both forks entered but which has collapsed. Hopefully that stream lead will go under the breakdown and bypass it to more passage beyond. Total passage amounted to only about 250 feet, but at least that is one less time consuming corner of the cave.

One good thing about that trip was the discovery of a large chock-stone which can be used as an anchor for the canyon drop. This is much better than rappelling in the falls as is usually done.

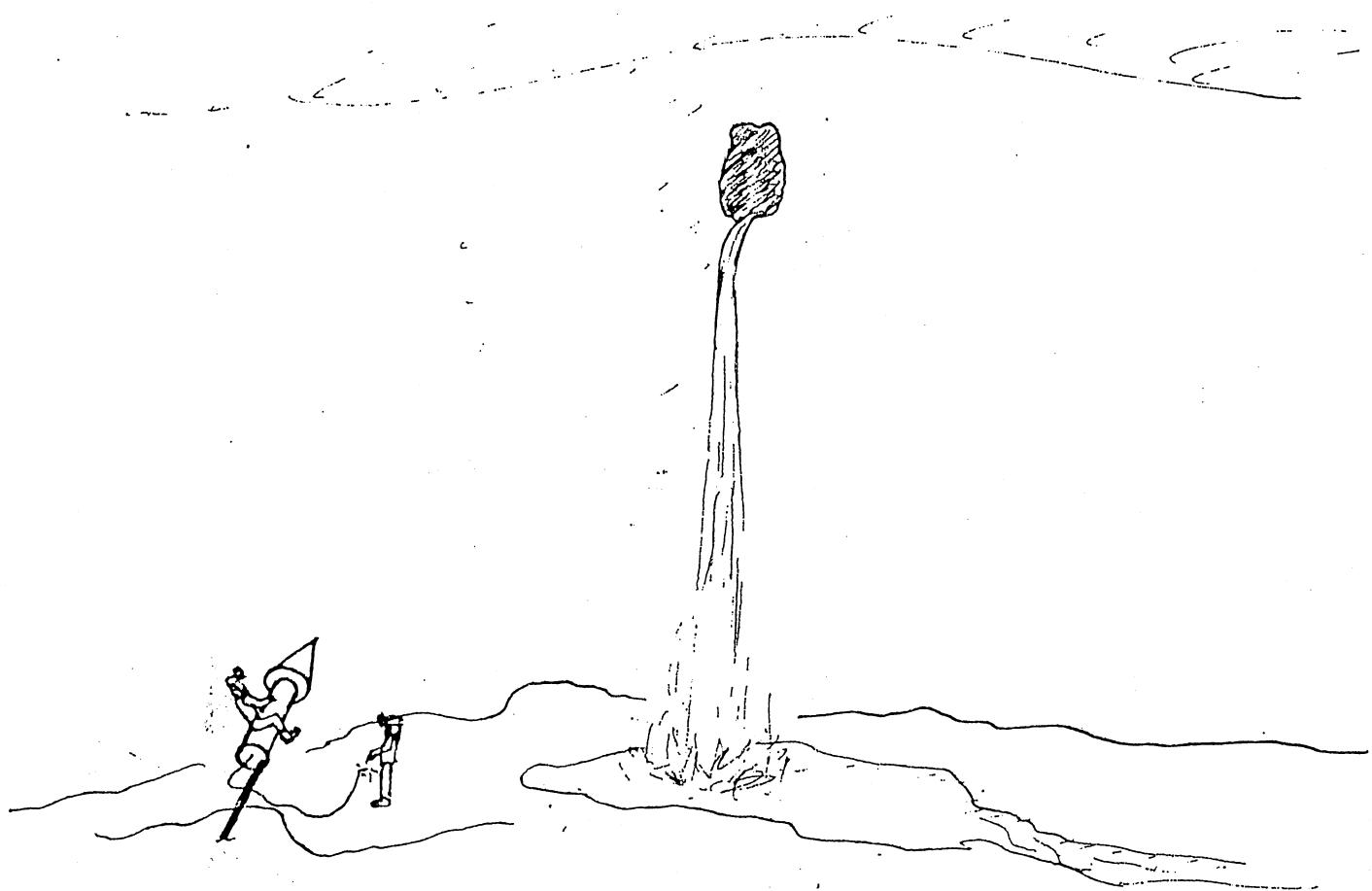
We removed the hanger and covered the bolt with mud so no one else could be tempted to use it. I had my camera so we fairly well documented that trip. The large bullfrog, still alive and kicking and fat, was kind enough to pose for a picture or two with John. He must be living off of the salamanders.

We got back to the entrance and started sorting gear. I had Jim pushing leads on the other side of the entrance but nothing looked promising. One very unlikely crack remained and he popped in and disappeared. He came back and said, "it goes!", but he wouldn't push further until we gave him a rat bat. He was afraid of getting bitten by something. Apparently there are two passages extending in opposite directions; Good, juicy leads for the next trip. We then trudged back to the car, got some apples, and headed back to Blacksburg and the Hokie House.

The next few trips we'll map the left side of the cave (which I haven't touched), all the stream crawls and entrance area, and most of the seven known high leads. My next trip I will take a 40 foot extension ladder (taken down in 20 foot sections) and climb into four of the high leads. Out of the seven, only one is known to have been explored. Total passage surveyed so far is 3000 feet. The 1948 Earl Thierry map had a total of 3300 feet, so I will far surpass that mark and probably go over a mile.

Lawrence Britt





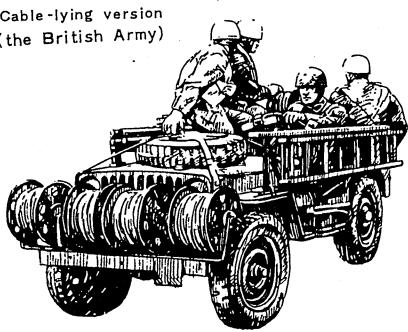
"I'M ASKING YOU TO RECONSIDER THIS, ED"

Variations of the Jeep

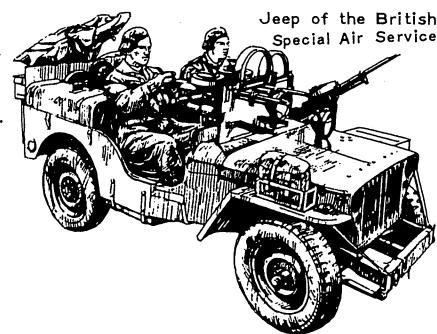


Bantam's first
vehicle (1940)

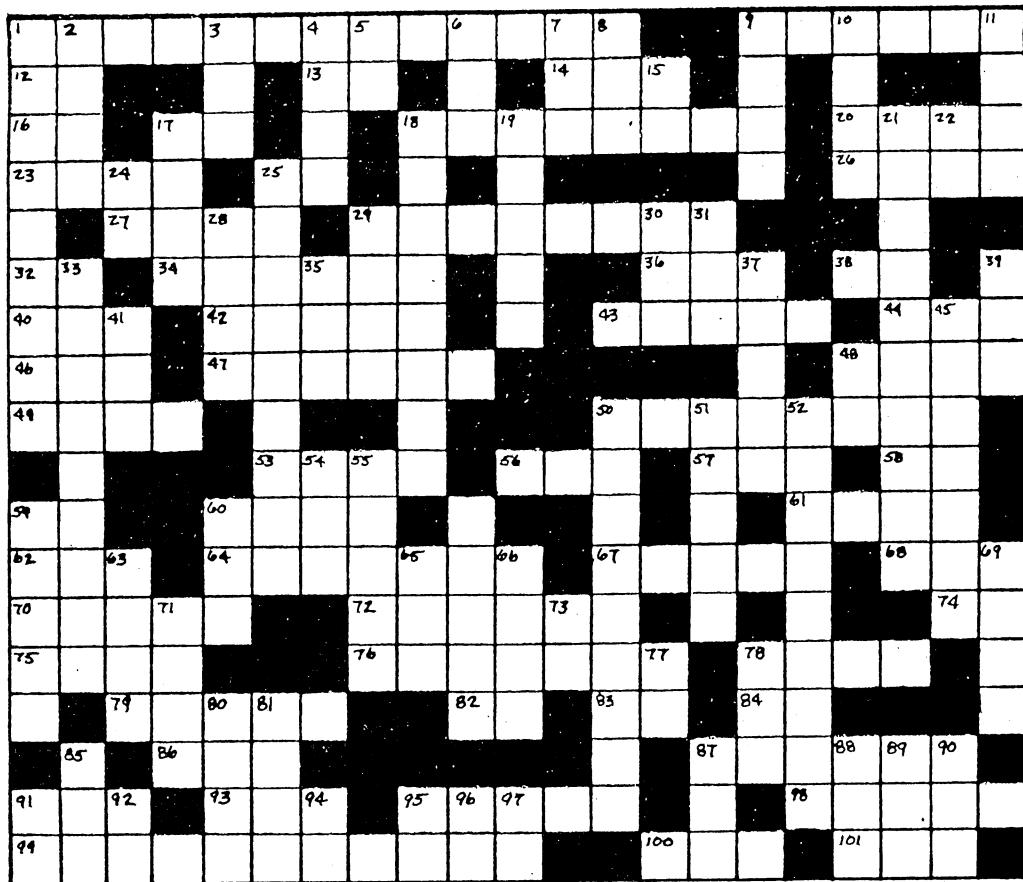
Cable-lying version
(the British Army)



Jeep of the British
Special Air Service



CAVING CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Official name for Friday night parties
 9 Number of beers in a Stay-Cold Pack
 12 Tits and ass (abbrev)
 13 Overdose
 14 Charged particle
 16 Cartwright
 17 South America (abbrev)
 18 Crash and burn at a party
 20 Consume mass quantities of beer
 23 Initial (abbrev)
 25 Pronoun
 26 Beer ingredient
 27 Half
 29 Rugged condition on Saturday morning
 32 Left hand
 34 Brand of beer
 36 Drinking utensil
 38 See 16 across
 40 Snake-like fish
 42 Favorite Trogledyte food
- 43 Trumpet
 44 Environmental Protection Agency
 46 Society of Automotive Engineers
 47 Keg accessory
 48 Avoid
 49 Slide away
 50 Bar accessory
 53 Large beer containers
 56 Stronger than beer
 57 Remains from a campfire
 58 Underwriter's Laboratories
 59 Backhand (abbrev)
 60 Favorite Trogledyte drink
 61 Compass direction
 62 To put into action
 64 Type of ascending knot
 67 Puke
 68 VPI Cavers _____ virgin passage
 70 Upchuck and _____
 72 Type of tax

ACROSS (continued)

- 74 Verb
 75 24 beers
 76 Handkerchief
 78 Beer
 79 Wear away
 82 French article
 84 American League (abbrev)
 86 Labor Day event
 87 One does this before puking
 91 Female deer
 93 Beverage
 95 _____ on the mountain
 98 Pronoun
 99 Symptom of 29 across
 100 Type of whiskey
 101 Goes with drugs and rock'n'roll
- 17 Stalk of a plant
 18 Without fear
 19 Acute or obtuse
 21 Favorite watering hole of cavers
 22 Opposite of down
 24 Verb
 25 Famous for breweries
 26 Canadian _____ Whiskey
 29 Aide
 30 Flightless bird
 31 Small carpet
 33 Contains universal gyms, saunas and raquetball courts
 35 Edge of a pit
 37 Drinking utensil
 39 Small beer container
 41 Flower wreath
 45 Convenient way to open a beer can
 48 _____ what?
 50 Had the picnic jug at Newcastle fence party
 51 Catch a second wind
 52 Charlotte _____
 54 See 40 across
 55 Pass out and blow _____
 59 Brand of beer
 60 Food preservative
 63 Or _____
 65 See 39 down
 66 Brand of beer
 69 Rip
 71 Pertaining to flight
 77 _____ for it
 78 Drinking establishment
 80 Sgt. Snorkel's dog
 85 Place of caged animal's (also see Friday night meetings)
 87 Out of beer
 88 Sounds Mr. Bill makes
 89 Robert E. _____
 90 _____ pack
 91 Grotto in No. Va.
 92 _____ cetera
 94 Verb
 96 Sergeant _____ Arms
 97 Opposite of 32 across

DOWN

- 1 Type of steel used for a keg
 2 Ache
 3 Estimated time of arrival
 4 Not all
 5 Man's name
 6 Sick
 7 Point a weapon
 8 Fish eggs
 9 Goes with ass
 10 Every one
 11 Scrambled, fried or boiled
 15 Negative



Banes Spring -- The Most Vertical Cave in Virginia

The location of Skydusky Hollow in relation to Blacksburg has given the area the reputation of being a center of VPI grotto activities. Of the six caves comprising the system, four have been mapped to completion by up-to-date standards and plans are in the making for the completion of the survey.

Banes Spring Cave was initially explored by Earl Thierry and company, as evident by the historic initials "E.T." scratched at one of the resting spots following the gruelling entrance crawls. R.E. Whittemore furthered Thierry's penetration into the cave by removing a few rocks and discovering the main section of the cave consisting of parallel, joint controlled mazes with little vertical change. Whitt produced a map in the early seventies of about 1.5 miles of passage.

Following exploration consisted of an attempt to widen a crawl through breakdown slabs using a hydraulic jack. Whether it worked or not, the passage was limited beyond "the jack".

In 1980, Bill Stephens and a handful of willing laborers dug a bypass around the downstream siphon and discovered a cave very much unlike the main section. As the stream cut through the loose shale layer and hit clean limestone, a receding waterfall formed a series of pits with depths varying from 90 feet to 200 feet in the upstream direction. The most horizontal cave in Skydusky quickly became the most vertical as successive trips went in to explore the virgin pits. Bill Koerschner began mapping the upper levels of the pits.

Last winter, a project was undertaken to map the main section of the cave. Four crews operated productively and mapped over 5000 feet of passage in one day (and almost froze our nads off upon exiting).

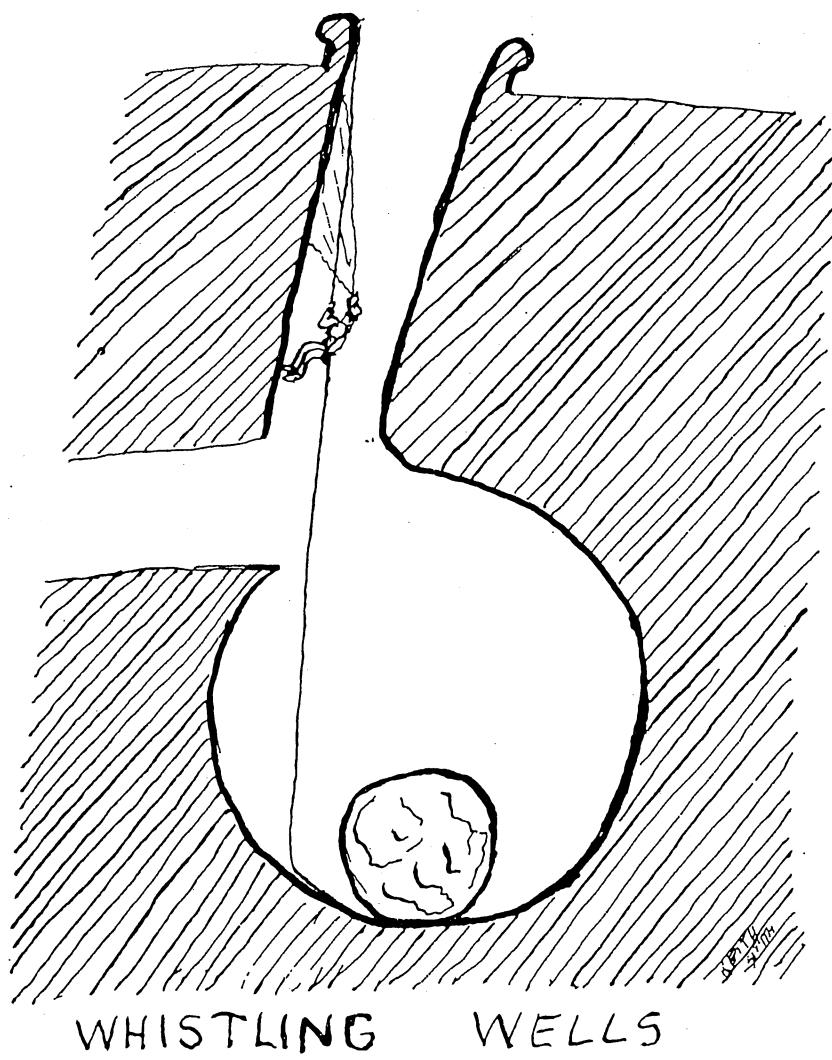
A recent trip consisting of Philip Balister, Bill Koerschner, Ben Keller, John Mummery, and myself went in to answer the long awaited question Did we have the biggest pit in Virginia? The intention was to plumb the big pit, called Whistling Wells, and survey the lower levels where the stream connects the bottoms of the pits.

Triple Wells, in Newberrys, has the acclaimed deepest pit in Virginia at 204 feet. That is from the top of the dome. Now, from the lip of Whistling Wells the drop was measured at 195 feet. The rig point is ten feet higher than the lip and the top of the dome is probably fifteen feet higher. So, Whistling Wells isn't the deepest with respect to rappel distance but depending on how you compare, one can say that Whistling Wells is the biggest pit in Virginia.

The series of pits are (from downstream to upstream): Pete's Pit at 90 feet, Secret Pit at 140 feet, Premonition Pit at 160 feet, Clatter Pit (unexplored), Whistling Wells at 195 feet, and Waterfall pit (unexplored). The survey project nears completion with 2.7 miles of passage.

Win Wright





Hole Hunting in Ellett Valley

12:15 P.M. November 10, 1981. Jim Washington and Garrie Rouse were about to begin an afternoon of locating and exploring "unusual holes". Tireless and intrepid prospective Tech Cave Club members Jim and Garrie had separately spent many hours in Derring Hall perusing the literature on local caves, most notably Douglas's Caves of Virginia and had gained considerable curiosity about the little known and, as far as they knew, rarely visited caves in the area. Based upon the sketchy information in that magnum opus, Garrie had pinpointed the locations of the published caves in Ellett Valley on $7\frac{1}{2}$ minute topoes, and had persuaded Jim to assist him in search and exploration that Tuesday.

As they left the sign-out sheet, prepared for all possibilities including extreme disappointment, they reflected back on their last expedition to Old Mill Cave when Garrie had broken into unmapped passage in the back:

"Think we'll find anything worthwhile in Old Mill?"

"I don't know"; Garrie replied. By said time, our inquisitive travelers had arrived at the top of Harding Avenue on the verge of the descent into Ellett Valley.

"There's a cave over there," Jim remarked, pointing in the direction of an apartment complex on the right.

"Oh, yeah. Professor Davidson's number one. I looked for it a couple of months ago and couldn't find it." Jim, who had earlier spoken with a local at Mr. Fooz about the cave, made the decision. The mudmobile, Jim's babyshit-yellow '74 pinto, pulled into a parking space at the end of the Windsor Hills Apartments parking lot. The trunk opened, and a single flashlight was brought out. They didn't expect much from a "For the Record" cave. Five minutes later, up a little path in the woods above the swing sets Garrie found the cave.

"I told you it was here," Jim said. The entrance was about five feet wide and a foot and a half high. Garrie went first.

"This flashlight doesn't work."

"Bang it once."

America's premier nerd cavers clambered on knees and elbows into the beginning of Professor Davidson's number one.

"Watch out for the broken glass," Garrie said. Ten feet in, the cave opened up into easy walking passage, about five feet wide and seven feet high. After about fifty feet, they decided to go back for helmets and lamps.

While retuning to the same place in the cave with proper equipment, Garrie counted the Wiedemann's bottles. Nine. Upon arriving, Jim exclaimed, "Shit!"

"The bottles?"

"No, shit. Look." Garrie looked, and it soon dawned upon our intrepid pair that they were standing in no other than the local teen weekend hangout.

"Shit." The main passage pinched out in another fifteen feet. Garrie investigated a shit-laden crawl which also pinched out.

"The local I talked to said something about a thirty foot pit in this cave. I don't see it," Jim said. "Maybe he said thirty feet of shit; I was pretty drunk at the time." Garrie, who had always had a proclivity for nasty little crawls, noted that at their feet was an obvious little passage which was blocked with a corroded steel bucket, a few rocks, and an enormous turd.

"Be my guest," Jim said. A few moments of bucket brigade revealed an obviously nasty little crawl leading horizontally at a right angle to the main trend of the cave. Garrie negotiated the passage with little difficulty.

"Jim, I found the pit," came a somewhat muffled voice at the other end. "Hey, this is pretty neat. Come on through."

Jim donned his pack and within a few moments was hopelessly stuck.

"Garrie, you didn't tell me I had to take off my helmet."

"Yeah, Jim, you've got to take off your helmet."

"Garrie, I can't. My arms are wedged under me." Garrie climbed back into the little crawl. Halfway in there was Jim, or rather, Jim's orange helmet, brim down in the dirt floor, its oval shape nearly filling the passage.

"Is that you, Jim?"

"Go to hell. See if you can get my helmet off." Garrie reached over, got a hold on the helmet with both hands and pulled.

"Claggk!" Chinstrap. A few more expletives followed as Jim did a neck arabesque to get his chin within reach of his fingers. The strap finally undid; the helmet came off, and Jim, for the first time in a while, could see. The passage was oval and narrow from side to side where he was. After two feet of adjustment space it changed to narrow from top to bottom. As Garrie backed out, Jim moved forward and got his arms in front of him. Three good exhale moves later his head popped out of the crawl about halfway up a fifteen foot dome pit six feet in diameter. Some careful maneuvering was required to get his butt through the last tight spot without launching himself headfirst into the pit, but having accomplished this, he complimented Garrie on finding the only pretty part of the cave.

They spent a few minutes verifying that the few possible leads went nowhere, and after a few more episodes of the no-footholds, stuck, and face-first-in-shit variety, they left the cave, ensuring that everything was ostensibly the same as they found it. The motion to find and explore Professor Davidson's number two was killed without debate.

Back in the mudmobile, Jim and Garrie at last reached the part of Ellett Valley where their day's objectives were to be found: Johnson's and Cat Trap Caves. They arrived at the Johnson's entrance as the dusk twilight was at its final ebb. Fording the river on foot, Jim and Garrie found the hole with little difficulty.

After an easy clamber down to stream level they found themselves once again in nice walking passage. Two hundred fifty feet or thereabouts upstream, a large flowstone formation obstructed the passage. Garrie chimneyed up and over it. Jim slithered under, in the stream. He was in no mood for tight crawls in light of his prior experience that day.

Our adventurous pair continued on, sometimes sinking ankle deep in quicksand-like mud. Many formations were noted: flowstone, dripstone, bacon rind, and some soda straws over a foot long. A couple of hundred feet further they wandered until headroom failed. Jim again allowed Garrie the privilege of tight space exploration. Back further and further Garrie went.

"It still goes," came periodic reports, but finally, "I'm coming back." The cave had sumped out as expected. The ceiling gradually reached the water some fifty feet past where Jim had stopped.

Cold and wet, they decided to make it a day. Slogging back through the stream, they stopped momentarily for Garrie to catch his breath.

"What's that?" Garrie asked.

"What?"

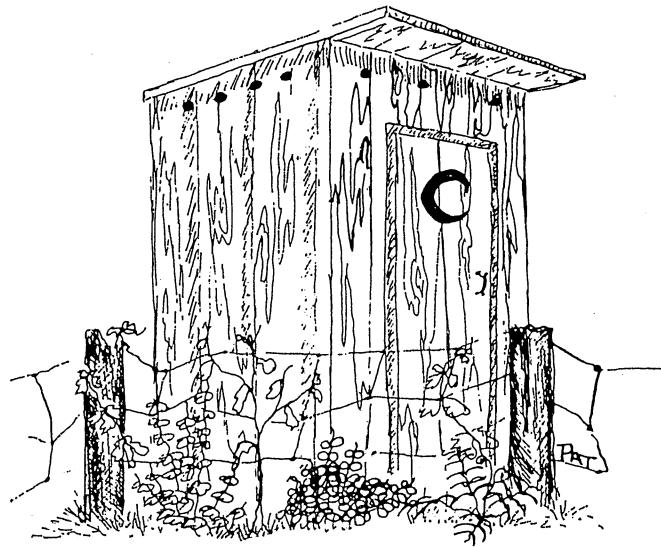
"There." Garrie indicated a ledge about seven feet off the floor. On the ledge was a bottle. Jim took it down and looked at it. "Time Capsule" was written on it. They opened it and found it contained two pieces of 3 X 5 card, neither of which they could get out with wet fingers. Rather than allow whatever was in it to mold from the newly introduced dampness, our explorers brought the time capsule out with them.

They went back to the car, genuinely cold and wet, and signed back in. After several beers and a generous helping of spaghetti a la carbonara, Jim and Garrie dried the time capsule in the oven and the card within was revealed.

"Time placed: 22 May 1959, Members of 'Company E', V.T.C.C., Class of 1961."

Final disposition of the said Corps of Cadets time capsule remains to be debated at the time of this writing.

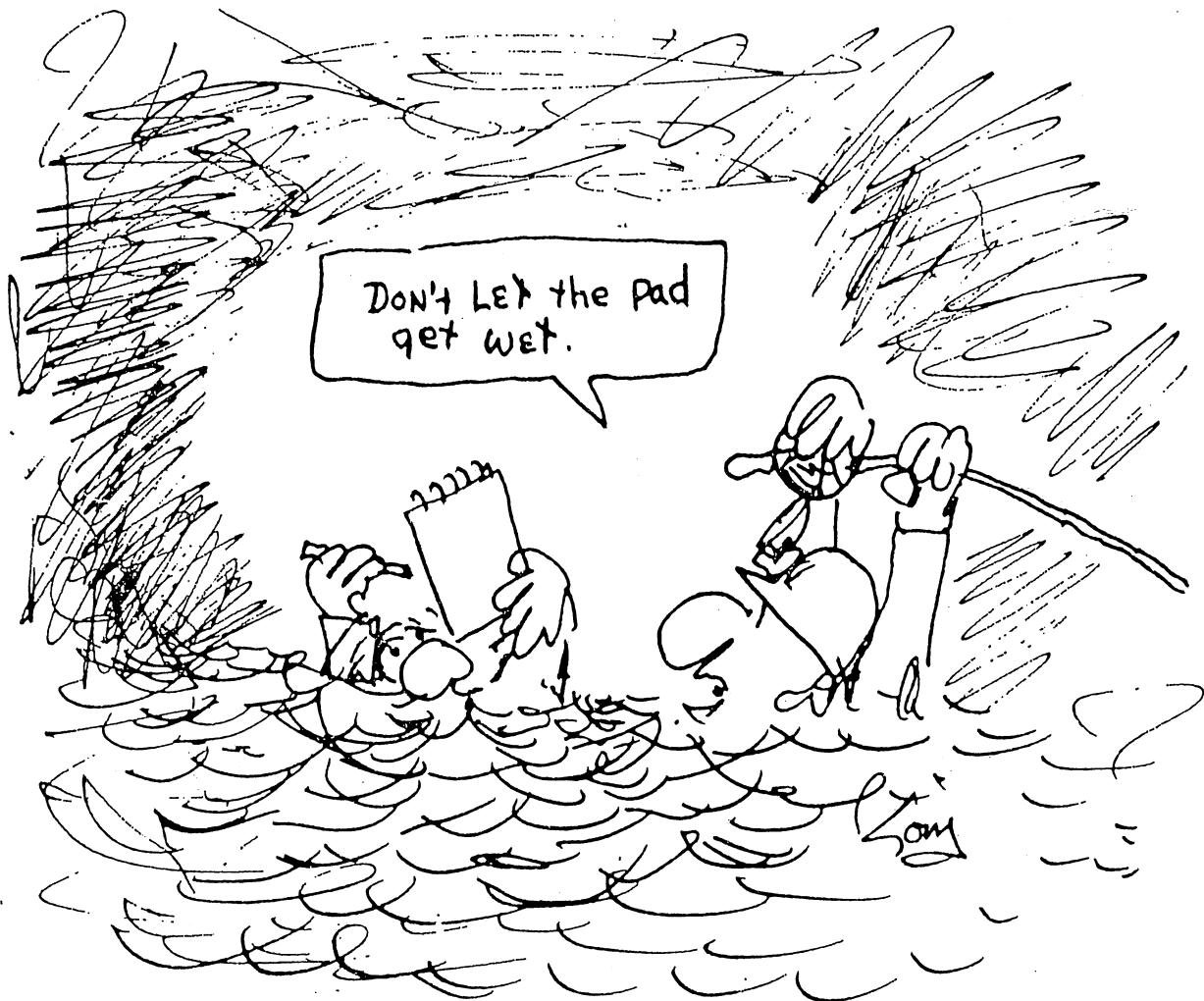
Jim Washington



From the Sign-out Sheets ...

This quarter the club had amassed a total of 1430 person-hours caving over a 12 week period. Of the 56 trips taken out, here are some highlights:

9-19-81	Coon Cave	Nancy Moore, Carolann Wimbley, Boo Croft	Bottom of cave haunted by evil spirits!!! 0000!
9-21-81	Banes Spring	Win Wright, Philip Balister Sue Heazel	Did not connect I-survey to entrance—system real dry! Morale Problems Me and 4 women(yes 4) Wow! Talk about cold women
9-21-81	Smokehole	Joe Zokaites, Fran Wistoff, Carol Gotla, Roberta Desrochers Sharon Brickman	I'll never wear my tenni's caving again!
9-22-81	Links	Carol Gotla, Berta Desrochers, Boo Croft	
9-25-81	Banes Spring	Win Wright, Ben Keller, Philip Balister, John Mummery, WFK	All done-drop 210 or 190 depending on how scared of height you are—huge volumewise PS-Our asses got kicked bad!!!
10- 3-81	Stearnes	John Lohner, Fran Wistoff, John Updike, Mike Lowe, Rebel Baver	We were in the bowels of the earth, so that makes us bowel movement!
10- 3-81	Links	Boo Croft, Donnie Carter, John Mummery, Bill Kelly, Paul Trianosky, Mike Douglas	3 PM's broken in
10- 4-81	Pig Hole	Keith Smith, Bev Wilson	Bouncy
10-10-81	Salamander	Roberta Desrochers, Don Anderson	Daddy Don sweats alot (it can't be me!!)
10-17-81	Miller's Cove	Carol Godla, Joe Zokaites, Steve Lancaster, Jim Washinton, Rob Edwards, John Davidson	Well it was great after we found it.
10-17-81	Tony's	Janet Queisser, Keith Smith, Bev Wilson, Ed Fortney, Dave Cinsavich, Bill Newman, Joel Siebentritt	Nice cave? Made successful dumpster raid! No Survivors!
10-25-81	Kimbleton Mine Cave	John Lohner, Lawrence Britt, Pete Sauvigne, Kent Thompson, Mike Gaydosh, Steve Lancaster, Lee Little, Keith Smith, Captain Ed, Paul Norris	Holy Shit!!! People go caving because it feels so good to get out!
11- 8-81	Pig Hole	Steve Lancaster, Steve Uzmann	Nice job on the rear entrance





THISTLE
TUBE

