

# THE TECH TROGLODYTE

A JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA TECH GROTTO OF THE  
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

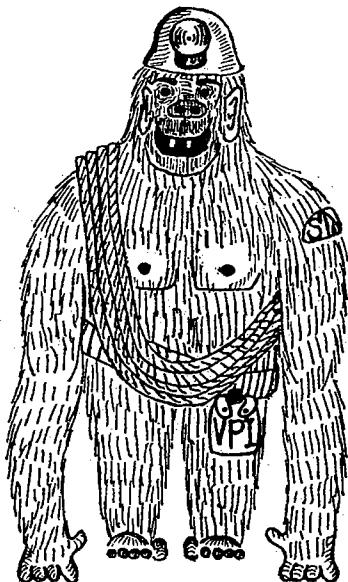
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WINTER QUARTER, 1968



## 25th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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## SILVER ANNIVERSARY TROGLODYTE

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## The TECH TROGLODYTE

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

The VPI Grotto has gone into the black more than any other caving organization in the world. This is not a financial report but the proud boast of two and a half decades of Cave Club members at Virginia Tech. Located in the heart of Virginia's prime caving country and near to the large systems of West Virginia, VPI has been able to offer more than ample opportunity for the scores of enthusiastic spelunkers who have passed through its hallowed halls. Since the granting of our charter by the National Speleological Society on January 8, 1943, the Grotto has continually worked towards the aims and goals set forth by the national organization and contributed greatly in making caving the great sport that it is today.

This year we celebrate our Silver Anniversary, a mark in the short history of organized caving attained by only one other grotto. In order to help celebrate the event this special Silver Troglodyte was conceived. For the reader who has not been acquainted with the compiling of this journal, a short introduction and explanation of its format follows.

The first article is the history of the Grotto as compiled by two present members. Many long and late hours were put in to try and create a coherent saga from the voluminous files of the VPI Cave Club but many discrepancies may be noticed between facts in this history and later articles. But VPI cavers being more prone to caving than journalism have left unfortunate holes in our early records which we have yet to fully explore.

Two of the Grotto's former faculty sponsors have supplied our next two articles followed by two letters written in 1964 by former active members when thoughts of compiling a Club history were young.

Next, one will find a few trip reports written in "the old days" in the section we call the "Karstophagus". The last two sections should give an idea of the impressions that caving made in years past.

From the subterranean archives a dusty copy of the first minutes has been included in which the reader may see the Grotto conceived, its first president elected, and a constitution drawn up and adopted. The first page of this constitution has been included while the complete document rests in the files for any interested persons.

The Grotto Grapevine, first publication of any grotto, furnishes material in the next section. January 1944 saw the first issue go to press and it has been recreated in vivid black and white for the benefit of the viewer. Selected articles from later issues seek to acquaint the reader with the sense of humor of the VPI caver.

Throughout this issue are spaced other small items which we hope will be of interest.

A. I. Cartwright  
Guest Editor

A TRUE HISTORIE  
of  
"YE WORLDE'S MOST ACTIVE UNDERGROUNDE ORGANIZATION"

Perpetrated by  
Mike Frieders, V.P.I. no. 73  
and  
Bob Barlow, N.S.S. 9401, V.P.I. no. 89

The large concentration of caves in the Blacksburg area, as well as in the rest of southwest Virginia, makes Blacksburg a natural area for cavers. No doubt, ever since the creation of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1872, students have visited the caves in the area. No attempt was made, however, to form a caving group on the campus until 70 years later, in 1942.

It all began then, when Tommy Watts, already an N.S.S. member, and Ralph Hess, another student caver, drummed up interest among a few others to affiliate V.T.I.'s cavers with the National Speleological Society. Watts and Hess, along with George Crabb, acted through Dr. Holden and N.S.S. members to bring V.T.I. to the attention of the National Speleological Society. As a result, a national meeting of the N.S.S. was held at V.T.I. on 5 and 6 September, 1942. At this meeting, the V.P.I. cavers were affiliated with the N.S.S., and became the first Student Grotto of the Society.

The first meetings of the new Grotto were, no doubt, organizational, and the members were concerned with drawing up a constitution to be presented to the officials of the N.S.S. for approval. Officers were selected, and Tommy Watts was chosen president, F.L. Gaddy, Vice President, and Dawn Owens, Secretary-Treasurer. Under these leaders, the new constitution was drawn, and adopted 8 January, 1943. Membership in the new Grotto was open to undergraduate students of V.P.I. who had an interest in speleology. The first efforts of the Grotto were concerned with mapping of area caves. Many of the maps drawn between 1943 and 1945 still reside in the club files.

In January of 1944, the Grotto began publication of a newsletter, the Grotto Grapevine. This contained articles on speleo-science, trip reports, personality sketches of various members, and good-natured "mud slinging" at members. G.L. Jones perpetrated this newsletter, assisted by M.L. Miller.

It was during this period of the club's growth that the mythical A.I. Cartwright was adopted into full membership of the Grotto, (out of a Bob Hope movie.) Cartwright received the blame for all of the unexplained incidents that occurred. Numerous references to A.I. Cartwright in the Grotto Grapevine, and on cave maps, has caused confusion to recent members.

In 1945, the constitution was revised to include a section concerning a contradiction of the N.S.S. constitution. It was submitted to the N.S.S. meeting at Silver Spring, Maryland, where it was approved, with minor changes, and Marion Wormald, the representative of the club, reported her mission accomplished. The Grotto Grapevine #29, of 19 August, 1945, gave full details

of the changes, which called for standing committees to be created, in the areas of transportation, records, equipment, mapping and exploration, programs, and photography. Many of the pictures in the files today probably are the result of the rule requiring all members to make copies of their prints available to the club. Nineteen forty-seven brought another constitutional change by the Constitution Committee. Adopted in April, the new constitution admitted N.S.S. members from only the Blacksburg area to membership.

Between 1946 and 1950, the Grotto participated in many projects. Among these were the exploration of Clover Hollow Cave, discovered by V.P.I. in 1943, excavation of Indian remains in Tazwell Cave, and the digging of a new entrance to Pig Hole. Many pictures now in the club files from this era were taken by Bob Barnes, the president of 1947.

The membership restriction in the 1947 Grotto constitution probably led to the formation of the V.P.I. Cave Club on campus in 1948. Throughout 1949 and 1950 the Grotto held program meetings in conjunction with the Cave Club. N.S.S. members lectured the club on safe caving practices, and oriented the club members toward the N.S.S. Sometime in this period, the V.P.I. Grotto of the N.S.S. and the V.P.I. Cave Club became one organization, known on the national level as the V.P.I. Grotto, and as the Cave Club on the campus. This probably was the result of nearly identical membership rosters. The constitutions also were almost identical in many respects, also, for the January, 1947 constitution of the Grotto uses the term "club" throughout, and contains the same amendments that the Cave Club constitution held; the Cave Club constitution of the same date permits Grotto members to join without payment of dues.

By 1951 the unified organization published ten different training bulletins, dealing with caving fundamentals, rigging, and leadership practices. These bulletins were made available to all N.S.S. Grottos. In 1950 the Grotto began to expand its activities from a purely local to a nationwide scope. Jim Gosney and eight other grotto members began a two month expedition to cover 7,000 miles in the course of caving and mountain climbing, starting with Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. In the late 40's and early 50's the Grotto ran full page ads in the "Guidon" advertising meetings, and inviting new members.

The Grotto Grepavine continued into the early 50's. Earl Thierry, Bill Cudington, A.J. Wagner, and Larry Sabatinos were frequent contributors. It still featured speleo-science articles and trip reports, plus a schedule of trips for the quarter. The biggest project at this time was the exploration and mapping of the Newberry-Bands system in Big Walker Mountain, discovered in the early 1950's.

The Virginia Region of the N.S.S. met at V.P.I. in 1951, with more than 100 attending. A talk was featured on the program on the subject of ropework safety, given by Dr. John W. Murray of V.P.I., a member of the V.P.I. Grotto.

The Grotto approved a new constitution in October of 1955, with the

additional rules of disposal of club property in the case of dissolution of the club. A number of new projects were pursued through 1958. In 1954 a new cave was explored west of Tawny's, Links, and an underground drainage system was being studied in the Radford area. Larry Sabatinos led a major project in 1955 and 1956 with the exploration of the Newberry-Banes-Penleys complex. The 1958-59 season saw projects in Pig Hole, New River, and Clover Hollow.

The V.P.I. Grotto swung into the swinging sixties with a new constitution, adopted in May 1961, which contained the controversial amendments dealing with a trip leader classification system. The new constitution divided all club members into groups of horizontal or vertical cavers, and leaders into groups "A" or "B" according to their abilities.

Two opposing viewpoints later developed in the club over the leadership system. The two factions supporting these viewpoints threatened to destroy the club. One faction, led by George Fairor, was in favor of the leadership system. The other faction, led by Gregg Harland, was against the leadership system because they felt that the code was too stringent and did not allow the new members to learn the basics of caving and caving safety. The leadership code restricted the amount of caving done by the club. Many meetings were the scene of heated debate over the code, and prospective members were disgusted by the endless debates.

In February of 1962 the V.P.I. Grotto again published a newsletter called the Tech Troglodyte which was to be published each quarter, but like all other caving journals was published when there was enough to put in it. The first "Trots" were practically written, edited and published Gregg Harland alone, but as the "Trot" became a more accepted publication more grotto members contributed to them.

The year 1962 also saw a great rise in the prestige of the V.P.I. Grotto on a national and local scale. This was due to the club's ever expanding activities and the publication of the Troglodyte.

Another split in the ranks of the club almost occurred in 1962 when a part of the membership wanted the grotto to become an outing club associated with I.O.C.A., but a careful analysis of the situation showed that the grotto's best interests were served by remaining an individual caving organization with occasional participation in I.O.C.A. activities.

V.P.I.'s rise in national prestige was confirmed in 1963 when the V.P.I. Grotto hosted the annual convention of the N.S.S. at Mountain Lake, near Tech. Gregg Harland was elected assistant convention chairman under John Holsinger. In 1963 the V.P.I. Grotto established itself as the undisputed "World's most active caving organization" with an average of four trips per week and between two and three thousand hours underground per quarter. Most of the growth and added caving was probably a direct result of the training system incorporated into the club in 1961 to teach prospective members the basics of caving, safety, and conservation.

Also in 1963 was another new constitution which included more qualifications for leaders and safety requirements for caving parties.

Many of the activities begun by Gregg Marland were kept up by R.E. Whittemore after Gregg left. "Whitt" kept up the Troglodyte and founded the quarterly club project. With the help of Ed Bauer, he organized the fifteenth annual Virginia Region meeting at Blacksburg. At the same time the grotto's interest in regional and national functions increased tremendously through the efforts of Ed Bauer who was instrumental in establishing contacts between V.P.I. and other groups.

Probably the most significant event in the grotto's history took place in 1965 when the constitution was again revised to do away with the leadership code. This was followed by an overall increase in the caving activities of the Grotto, due to the fact that "qualified" trip leaders had been few, and as a result, the trips had been limited. It was found that the added experience gained by the members in the course of increased caving more than outweighed the benefits of the leadership system in making all the members more safety conscious.

Today the Grotto is stronger than it has ever been in its twenty-five year career. In 1965 the club became symbolized by a troglodyte framed in a carabiner and brake bar. The jaunty patch describes the attitude taken by the club members toward life above and below ground.

The meetings of the Grotto are held, as has been usual for most of its history, at 7:00 P.M. on each Friday night, followed by a program of slides or informative talks on cave science, safety, or related topics. Dues have been raised to \$2.00 per quarter. The added funds have enabled the Grotto to purchase such needed equipment as three Bruntons, tapes, rope, and over three hundred feet of cable ladder. During warm clear weather, Friday nights are livened by speleo-seminars held on the top of Brush Mountain following the meeting. These orgies are marked by much singing, playing upon stringed instruments, and libations in honor of the cave gods.

Many projects are now being carried out, such as mapping in the West Virginian Greenbrier System by V.P.I.'s own ST. L.A.N. Other maps forthcoming are of Slusser's Chapel by A.J. Whittemore, and Buddy Polley's by Ed Morgan. The age-old search for the legendary back entrance to New River Cave is still alive.

Most of today's members are "hung up" on vertical caving. This lust for pits was shown by the purchase of over 3,600 feet of new Goldline by the club members in the fall quarter of 1967. This quarter has also shown the training system at its best. Many prospective members were "seen the ropes" in practice sessions at Jaybrook Sinkhole. Equipment was made available to the new members at reduced rates by the club.

The Grotto is in high hopes of hosting the 1969 P.S.S. Convention and much hard work is being done to make V.P.I. attractive to prospective convention goers.

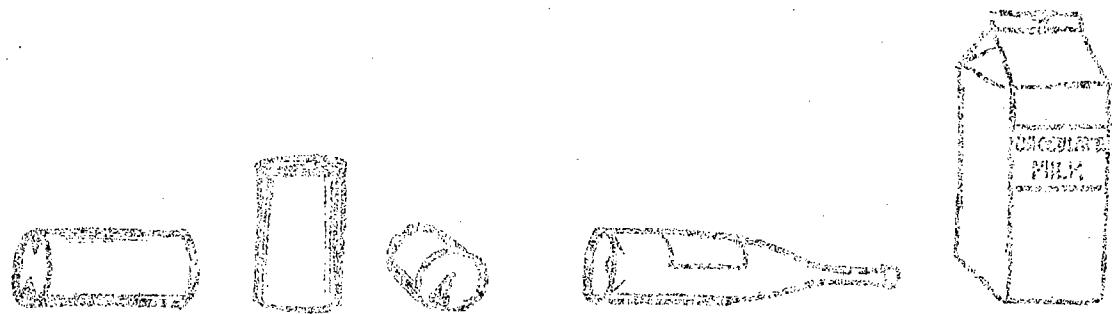
The N.S.S. Board of Governors meeting will be held at V.P.I. on April 20, 1968. The Virginia Region of the N.S.S. will hold its Council meeting at V.P.I. on March 2 and 3, 1968.

The V.P.I. Grotto is enjoying the glow of an era of success. It is the best and most active fraternal organization on the Tech campus, and is recognized throughout the world as "The World's Most Active Underground Organization".

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#### EVOLUTION OF NAMES

- 1933- VPI Grotto, Student branch of the National Speleological Society
- 1945- VPI Student Grotto of the National Speleological Society
- 1947- VPI Grotto of the National Speleological Society
- 1949- VPI Grotto of the National Speleological Society  
and  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute Cave Club
- 1961- Virginia Polytechnic Institute Grotto of the National Speleological Society  
and  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute Cave Club



The first Cave Club Orgy was held in August, 1949. Activities included badminton, croquet, bridge, other card games, and dancing.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE CAVE CLUB

Early Days of VPI Cave Club

by Henry H. Wiss

It was about 1943 when the Cave Club, as it was known then, got its start. VPI was under wartime conditions with a rather small cadet corps and some 4F's and a rather large group of ASTP men. The ASTP was the Army Specialized Training Program in which soldiers with the ability to pass certain exams were sent to colleges for advanced study. It was a sort of brain "cold storage" till they could be used more advantageously in the armed services. I must not fail to mention that there were interested coed cavees at this time also.

Caving was rather primitive in those days as to the roping techniques used today but there was just as much adventure. It was also an excellent excuse for the cadets, the coeds, and the soldiers to get off the campus and out of the military clutches.

The gear was rope ladders, fopes, lamps, and a variety of soft and hard hats including converted helmet liners. Clothes were generally army fatigues and anything else you could get hold of. The girls were definitely not glamorous in their borrowed men's clothes.

I went on the second trip to Clover Hollow and it still very much unexplored. The first party had tried to improvise ladders and other means to get over some of the most difficult places but it was still explored with misgivings. The most exciting part was the way down to the creek and to the waterfall. Now I understand there is a trail which you can take. In those days we approached it by means of a hole in the ceiling of the canyon where the creek flows. You looked down through the hole to the creek 90 or so feet below you. A log was placed across the hole and a block and tackle was fastened to it and then we let each person down the 90 feet in a breeches bouy. As you dangled there in space in almost pitch darkness it was terrible! One person stayed on top to be sure that we all got out. After exploring that cathedral like canyon we started back to the surface. As Jean was being hoisted we were horrified to suddenly see the rope catch on fire from her lamp. It flared up above her head for about fifty feet and then went out — we all breathed a sigh of relief. When we had all gotten up but Jack we all helped to pull on the rope. It became harder and harder to pull and we all wondered what was causing it. Finally someone looked at the pulley and found that the rope had slipped off and was tearing to pieces. Jack was just below so we all grabbed the ropes and pulled him up bodily/ I still wonder how we had the strength to do it but our strength didn't last long — we all collapsed — we just didn't have enough strength to stand up.

I believe our group was the inventor of the outstanding caving technique which we named the "Fanny Foot Technique". We were exploring Catawba Murder Hole and going through a narrow passage when we came to

a part where there was no floor to the passage. The floor just didn't exist for some distance though we could see where it started again. We couldn't see the bottom and we wanted to continue our exploration so we used the Fanny Foot Technique. We placed our feet on one side of the passage and our fannies on the other. Then by first moving our fanny, then our feet and bracing with our hands we inched across the abyss. The thought of returning the same way was truly traumatic.

There must be a technique in climbing a rope ladder but I never really learned it. Every time I would start up a free-hanging ladder the ladder just wouldn't be where my foot hunted for it. When I did get my foot on the rung the rungs would go out horizontally so that it was like climbing a ladder placed on the ceiling while your body curved up and around the vertical wall. It was one of the most frustrating experiences I have ever had.

There were some very thrilling adventures we had in caving in the early days. I was fortunate in visiting the Forest Room of New River Cave the week after it had been discovered. At that time no vandalism had been done to it and it was truly like going into a forest. It was so heavily "wooded" with stalactites and stalagmites that there was little space to move around in it. Its unspoiled beauty was something that I have never seen since. The last time I was there I found many of the formations broken, several beer cans scattered about and innumerable names written in carbide smoke on the walls and formations.

When I returned after the War I became one of the faculty advisors of the Cave Club and enjoyed the experiences very much. I found that most of the cavers are those who are interested in adventure in the broader sense and many of them had that rare gift of an "intellectual curiosity" not only in exploring caves but ideas.

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An Early Visit to Big Hole

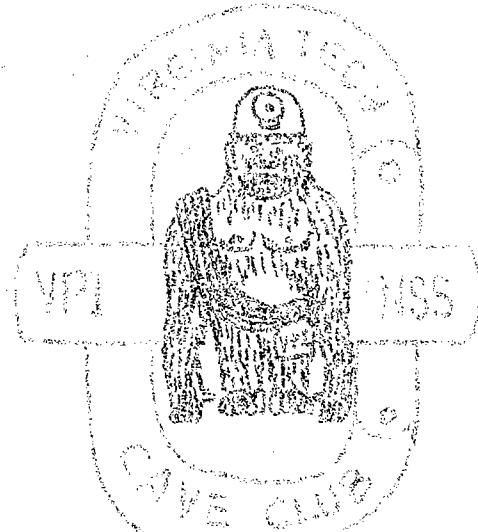
by Dr. John J. Murray

A tall blonde co-ed called "Texas" in my freshman Chem Lab class came to me with a most unusual request. "Would you mind holding my pet lizard? He doesn't like the smell of hydrogen sulfide and I have to precipitate Group 2". It developed that she had caught her pet-a fence swift- near the mouth of a cave. That led to an invitation to accompany the Cave Club on its trip to Big Hole that Saturday which was in May, 1943.

The newly formed group of cave enthusiasts under the leadership of George Grebb, who taught agriculture during, gathered at 1 p.m. at the S.A.B. - later named Squires Hall. The assembled gear and about twenty people were packed into Mr. Miller's truck (few students had cars then and gas was rationed) and we took off for Big Hole. After stopping to see Mr. Porterfield, who owns the cave, we carried all the gear to the top of the sinkhole which was then the only entrance to the cave. The main

item of equipment was a block and tackle, with several hundred feet of 3/4" rope, to which was attached a bosun's chair. One of the pulleys was attached to a stout tree at the top of the drop. The belay point was a little to one side to avoid twisting of the ropes. One by one, the cavers were tied into the bosun's chair and lowered to the bottom of the pit. For the first few yards, you could assist the process by pushing off from the walls with your feet. Then came the long ride down in the dark toward a group of lights on the hats of those who had gone before. It was a slow process by current standards but we never lost anyone. Several smaller parties were formed and each in turn took off to explore various parts of the cave. First the route led down through a maze of boulders and past the odoriferous remains of the unfortunate animal for which the cave was named. Our party headed for the Empire State Room, named for a large stalagmite on a ledge with a smaller one on top reminiscent of the tower built at the top of the Empire State Building as a mooring mast for dirigibles (a fine idea that didn't work). After reaching and photographing that objective, we descended to and crossed the deep creek which divides the cave and then climbed up into the passage which contains the large deposits of bat guano that yielded, in later years, exciting mineral discoveries. When a survey subsequently showed that the upper end of that passage was ten feet above the surface of the ground, a new entrance to the cave was dug at that point. We then went to see a small pool called the Queen's Bath which had recently been discovered. At that point, our time had run out as we had an appointment with a bosun's chair so we returned to the sinkhole and began the long job of hauling everyone to the surface again. At first we hauled from the bottom and then, when there was enough manpower at the top, six or more cavers grasped the rope and walked with it to pull the rest of the party up. It was an arduous trial and a muddy one but there must have been something good about it for we went back again and again.

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A Letter from Albrecht C. Mueller

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In October, 1943, I began caving with the Club. At that time we were entering caves in the immediate area such as Smoke Hole, Fancy's - or Tony's as we called it, New Castle Murder Hole, Big Hole, Canoe, Hellie's Hole and once a trip to Dixie Caverns - a new section.

On October 31, we had a large expedition to Murder Hole. The V.P.I. Grotto and Richmond Grotto came to Blacksburg, to form a group of about 50 cavers. Some were novices and Murder Hole was not an easy beginning. We completed most of the known sections, including the Medicine's Eye and the elevator. Here one of the girls began to suffer from claustrophobia and we had to carry her out to the surface. This was a 3-1/2 hour job that exhausted the "reccuers" of which I was one. (We missed EC) that night)

In those days we would go to the cave in a rented farmer's truck loaded with hay and carry a lunch from the mess hall. This consisted of unvacuumed sandwiches in a pasteboard carton and plenty of fruit. We would carry the box of sandwiches into the "lunch room" (every cave has one) and eat sandwiches literally sprinkled with cave sand. I recall a trip to "Canoe" early in 1944 when we held Sunday morning church in the "Wings of God" room. This was, of course, very impressive with the "Angel" formation and the "Shrine" nearby. Some cave rats were present also that day.

In April, 1944 we had our first major trip to "Clever Hollow". A group that included Mr. John Murray started Saturday afternoon to rig the entrance and other drops. It was after midnight when we finished and put two men at the bottom of the waterfall. At noon on Sunday, the main party arrived and we all went to the bottom. We found more holes but did not descend until the next trip, a month later. On this occasion we worked our way down to what was then the fourth and lowest level. Most of this was one with rope ladders - heavy rope risers with wooden rungs. Carrying these into a cave was not the simple job of carrying a cable ladder as we do it now.

During this period, VPI was a student grotto and according to the rules of the N.C.C. at that time, three students paid \$1.00 each and combined to get a National membership at the rate of \$3.00. The National Bulletin was sent to the grotto in the same ratio. I left VPI in September, 1944 for Army service. Just before my return in April, 1946, I became a Life member - the 32nd to do so.

VPI had changed from a school of single fellows or girls to a school of married people. The Cave Club followed the same pattern. In the early days, only a few girls went on trips, but now the females numbered almost as high as the males. Gradually the trips were made in private cars instead of the farmer's truck - this lost something of the fellowship we once had.

Our biggest project in 1946 was a monograph on New River Cave. One of the projects included continuous reading of temperature and relative humidity. We installed a recording hygro-thermograph that had to be serviced weekly. Since I had an auto, I was one who made the climb to New River Cave a couple of Sundays a month.

We built a winch for use at Pig Hole. The power was supplied by the rear wheel of an old jeep that we also used for transportation, to and from the cave. We had several close calls before the winch worked safely.

Sterns Cave was first entered about this time and although it was not completely explored, it was felt to be a large cave. Since we now used private cars almost exclusively, we began to do more scouting for new caves. In 1947 we found quite a few small ones like Willards, Orsby's, Agnew's, and Lowburn.

In April, 1947, the Grotto voted to change from student grotto to regular grotto of the US.

Thornberry's Cave and Raspberry Hollow cave were discovered or at least became known in the spring of 1947. We also made a weekend trip to Shupe-vine and Carters Cave.

In October, we received a call from Jeff Biggenbotham in Tazewell about Indian bones in a cave. This resulted in many trips and our first experience with national news coverage including Life photographer, Bob Heider.

Peggy, my wife, had become a very enthusiastic caver during the post war period and I served as secretary to the Grotto. I served on the executive committee during this period. In December, 1947, I completed my courses at VPI and we moved back to New Jersey.

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Letter from Joe Lawrence, Jr.

It has been a long time since I was active in the VPI Grotto and I am afraid I don't remember many of the details, but here is a sketchy history of the 1948 to 1951 period.

To begin with the grotto was never "half-dead" during this period. It was strong and active.

I joined the grotto in 1948. William Forchard was chairman then. Dr. Jackson of the Biology Dept. was faculty advisor. In 1947 and 1948 the grotto's most significant field accomplishment was the removal of Indian bones from a burial cave in Tazewell County. During this period we also maintained a continuously recording hygro-thermograph in New River Cave collecting data for a monograph that was never written.

Exploration during the Spring of 1948 included the first visit to the lower level of Starnes Cave. This was before the introduction of cable ladders. We used rope ladders with wooden rungs. They were quite heavy when dry. When wet and muddy it was quite an ordeal to carry them out of a cave.

During 1948 a large number of new caves were discovered and explored. This work was spearheaded by Earl Thierry.

Also in 1948 we dug a new entrance to Pig Hole. We had only the measurements of the grotto's surveyors to tell us where to dig. Bob Barnes, a mining engineering student who had made the survey, told us where to dig. Eight feet from the point indicated the ground looked softer. (It really wasn't soft.) It's a good thing we dug where we did. Our shaft struck the edge of the cave. We would have missed it if we had followed Bob's advice.

Hard hats were just beginning to be used by the grotto in 1948. Many of us, including myself, wore the cloth miner's hat. At a time when the Pig Hole shaft had reached a depth of about ten feet, I stood on the Locust log shoring to remove a rock that hung dangerously in the side of the shaft. The shoring gave way and I tumbled to the bottom. The rock arrived shortly after striking me in the head. Three stitches received at the VPI infirmary closed the wound. The hard hat became more popular after this.

Digging at Pig Hole started in the Spring of 1948 and progressed through summer and fall. We used dynamite liberally to break up boulders. One Saturday afternoon when we had reached a depth of about 15 feet and were beginning to wonder if we would ever reach the cave, Earl Thierry took his turn at the bottom of the shaft digging out dirt and rock. He lifted up a rock that released a blast of air -- he had broken into the cave. The work then moved rapidly as we enlarged the hole to admit us.

When we broke into Pig Hole we had twelve sticks of dynamite left over. You can't keep this stuff in your dormitory room. You can't throw the stuff away. Some child might find it and be injured. You can't even give it away. There is only one thing to do and that is to blow it up. Now we had used charges varying from half a stick up to three sticks in Pig Hole. Twelve sticks would make quite a noise. Mr. Proterfield, owner of Pig Hole, had been quite nice to us so we didn't want to shake up his farm with all that unnecessary noise. We didn't think the Blacksburg police force would let us set it off in town; so we looked for another cave. Someone remembered Miller's Cave in western Giles County. This was a hole ten feet deep from which ~~at~~ currents issued.

We headed for Miller's carrying the dynamite in one car and the blasting caps in another - a standard precaution in transporting this stuff. When we reached Miller's a couple of us dropped down into the hole and began stuffing the dynamite into a crack in the rock from which the air came. One stick slipped all the way through the crack and tumbled into the void below.

The remaining eleven were put in place and fused. Someone held a carbide lamp close to the fuse until it began to sputter. He yelled, "Fire in the hole." Then casually climbed to the surface. We had long since learned not to run when a fuse is lit. It is much safer to use an adequate length of fuse, be sure it is properly lighted, then walk away. We all strolled down the hill and waited for the explosion. When it came it was a big one that sent us all running (after the blast we always ran) back to the hole to see what we had done. We reached the hole just after the last of the earth and rock shower hit the ground. But, alas, we could not enter. The hole was so filled with dynamite fumes that it was unsafe. So we returned to Blacksburg still wondering what we had accomplished.

A week or two later we returned to explore the cave. The dynamite had opened the crack sufficiently for us to enter. Seventy feet down, at the bottom of the entrance drop, we found the one stick of dynamite unexploded. It is still there for all I know.

During my stay at V.P.I. the Grotto explored and surveyed quite a number of caves. Here are a few random notes on this activity.

August, 1949 Lowmoor Cave in Alleghany County surveyed; no new exploration.

In October 1948 we explored a very small cave in Giles County called School Cave. It is at Lat. 37° 17' 11" Long. 0° 37' 29". We climbed down a rope. The last man in inadvertently and without noticing set fire to the end of the rope at the top of the drop with his carbide lamp. While we explored below, the flame burned toward the knot. Fortunately, the first man out reached the surface before the flames reached the knot.

During the 1948-1951 era about two trips were made into Clover Hollow Cave. The original exploration had been done before this era.

In 1950 new passages were discovered beyond the waterfall in New River Cave. Roy Charlton and Adam Chou pushed this exploration.

In October 1948, Old Mill Cave was discovered, explored, and mapped.

In April, 1950, Buck Hill Cave on property owned by Natural Bridge Inc. in Rockbridge County, was explored and mapped.

Numerous caves were discovered, explored, and mapped in Tazewell County.

The above covers a small, but representative, fraction of the Grotto activities during this period.

During the 1949-50 school year I was chairman of the Grotto. Hank Wiss was faculty advisor.

Harry Webb was chairman during the 1950-51 school year.

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE KARSTOPHAGUS

Initiated in the last issue of this journal, the "Karstophagus" seeks to remove the shrouds of time and peer into the dark of popular Blacksburg area caves along with our ancestors. The editors claim no responsibility for any cases of nostalgia contracted while reading the following reports.

## Tawney's Cave - R.J. Wagner (1953)

Our reasons for going to Tawney's were the rumors that had been spread about as to the uniqueness of three entrances, the large number of formations, the ease of taking a camera, and various other things like the dryness and cleanliness of the cave in general. Before going any further, let me venture the combined observations of the whole party: The rumors were by no means an accurate representation of the facts. There was no end of slippery, wet mud; water was in abundance; the formations, while very pretty, are confined to but a part of one end of the cave; and no one with a decent respect for a camera would take one into this cave.

The exploration of Tawney's was not without value; it taught us that a small pick or axe could have prevented one of the party from slipping off a muddy bank into about four feet of icy water, and made the upper stream passage much easier to traverse by using it to cut steps. The trip also taught that a cave map can be very misleading. The map of this cave lead us to believe that the passages are clear and easily traversed. This is not generally the case, due to the large amount of mud and water. The cave, however, despite its difficulties which were due to a wet spell, is fairly interesting, and somewhat of a challenge. The cave was followed from the third entrance to the sinkhole entrance. This was fortunate, as the hardest part of the cave was saved for last; we had no idea that the going would be harder ahead than behind, and so we plunged blindly ahead.

We emerged from the cave at dusk, covered with mud and bruises and with only enough strength left to get back to the car and the food. Tawney's again proved the saying: It is a lot of fun to go into a cave, because it always feels so good to get out.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. John R. Holsinger, present director of the Virginia Cave Survey, was voted "least likely to succeed" VPI '55 . . . possibly because he was not associated with the Cave Club at that time.

Trip to Newberry Cave  
The Editor (Grotto Grapevine-1953)

On April 25, Larry and Betty Sabatinos, and Bill Cuddington, along with Basil Hritsco and Dave Bowen went to Mr. Penley's where Jean Lowry was waiting for us; then the six of us went to Newberry's Cave.

The party entered the cave at 6:30 PM and went to the Funnel Room. Here we split the group, leaving Basil to take pictures of Bill in the 175' Rappel Well, while Dave led the rest of us to the bottom of the cave by way of the (ha,ha!) "easy way". We all got to the bottom of the well, where we took positions around the room and lighted magnesium ribbon in order to give Basil even illumination for a picture of Bill's rappel. After this we waited while Bill went up the easy way to bring Basil down. Five hours after our group left the Funnel Room for the bottom, Bill returned with Basil, and the frozen group headed for the Vault Room. From here, all but Dave and I went to see the very impressive "Triple Wells".

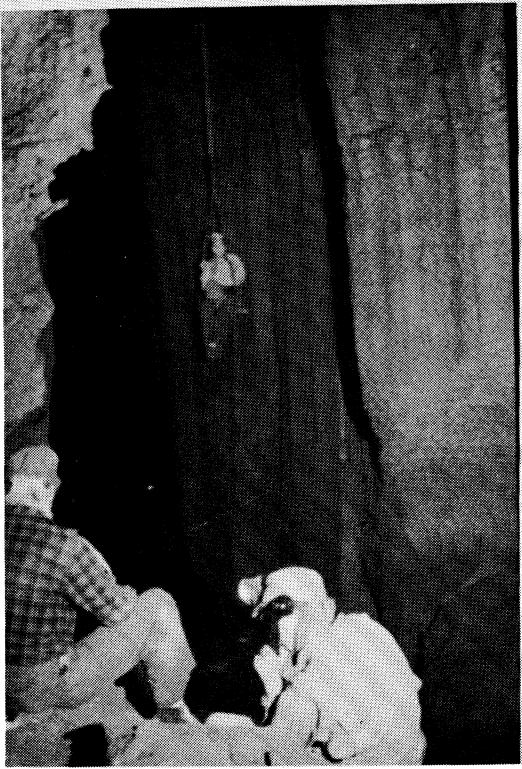
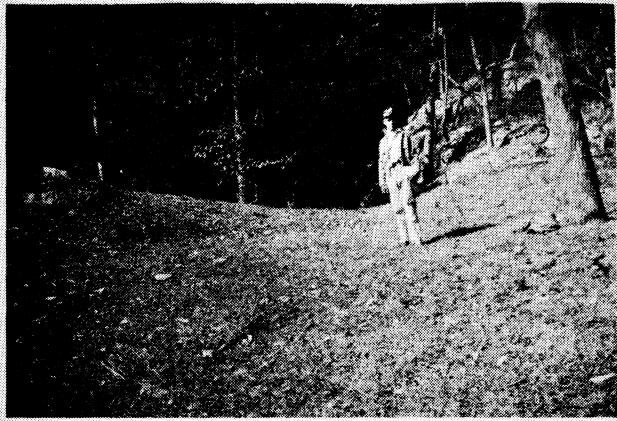
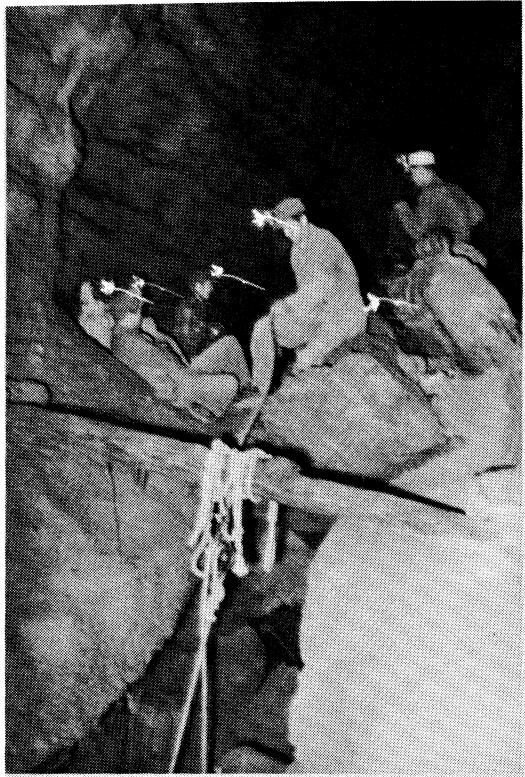
After this the entire party started out for the unexplored, with Dave leading the way to his goal--an unexplored lead 110' to its end. It is a very interesting passage in that it has beautifully decorated walls of mud that resemble flowstone formation and in some places, like cave coral.

The group started back out after this passage was explored. We stopped in the Funnel Room where we collected all of our equipment and cooked a hot meal (5:00 AM) of coffee and a "chicken-noodle, vegetable, beans and frankfurters" concoction. With renewed energy, we were all out of the cave at 9:00 AM.

\*\*\*\*\*

The VPI Grotto receives about fifty publications in exchange for the TECH TROGLODYIE.

The Grotto averages about 150 trips per year and over 8000 hours underground.



Gas rationing made the use of private vehicles impractical for caving trips in the early 40's, so a truck was rented.

November 10, 1946: Crew at the top of "Grand Canyon" in Clover Hollow Cave is ready to man the ropes.....

Sam Rainey poses for a photograph at entrance to Saltpeter Cave, near Starnes, in Giles County. 1946.

....as Ann White begins the 80-foot trip up through free space.

Betty Loyd watches while Marian Wormwald directs the hauling crew via field phone.

January 3, 1953: Wild Man Burke's Cave is located and explored. Another "FRO" for Bland County.

Entrance drop to Clover Hollow Cave:

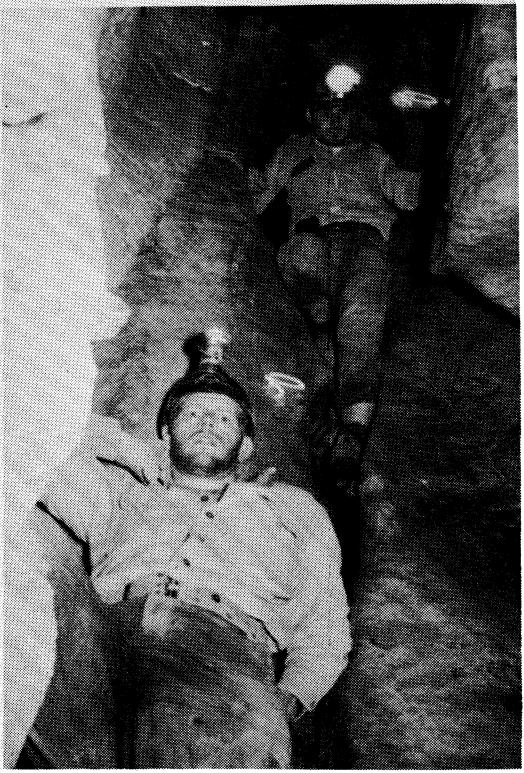
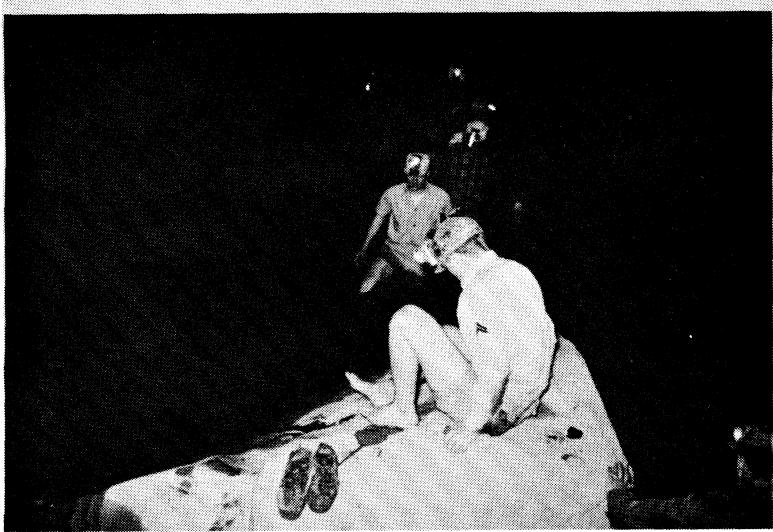
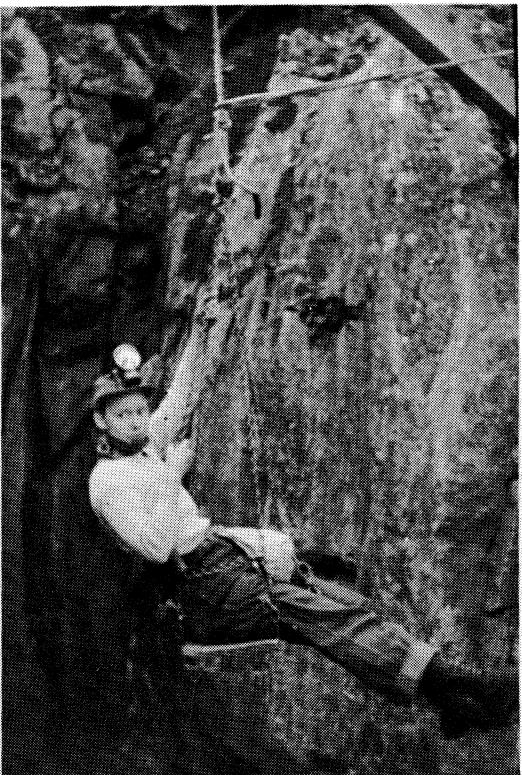
A winch setup with Tommy Watts

Handling the capstain.....as Mary Ellen Smith is lowered in the bosun's seat. "It was a slow process, but we never lost anyone."

March 1947: On a survey trip in Craig County; Earl Thierry samples the soup.

April 1949: Dick Southworth and Joe Lawrence in Clover Hollow Cave.

April, 1947: The crowd goes wading in Piercey's Mill Cave (West Virginia).



## Early Minutes (as edited by Father Time)

Wednesday Nov. 4, 1942

Tommy Watts- Mr. Stephenson said we can start student branch. Explained society and how it could give info. and directions on caves. Main objective was to explore these caves.

Al Fischer- Read the Constitution, and discussed the dues and bylaws.

F.L. Gaddy- Talked of caves and discussed both scientific and pleasurable aspects of caving.

Dr. Holden- Spoke on origin of caves and his experiences in some caves. Curiosity takes you into caves. Discussed precautions and said geology wasn't necessary. Discussed phases of caves, - ichthyology, and entomology. Will back us up. Is attempting to obtain cooperation from the faculty for us. Can get "B" card on basis of scientific observations.

Tommy Watts- Equipment

F.L. Gaddy- Club in future hopes to buy its own equipment.

Tommy Watts- Clothes Respect private property. Don't go in with less than 3 members.

George Crabb- Speleology is beginning to be recognized as a science-pleasurable, scientific, and recreational. Cave first for fun and secondly for material gathering. Can't get hurt if you use common sense. Will give any help or tell of his experiences.

Asp. Submitted  
Dawn Owens- Acting Secretary

November 18, 1942

Gaddy opened the meeting and announced that officers to be elected would need a caving background. Officers won't officially take office until 11/22/42. The Council to be organized and made up of 6 students and faculty advisor.

Mr. Fischer is faculty sponsor.

Mr. Crabb spoke on Constitution- mentioned that grotto runs itself. Suggested that the club keep the number of officers down. The Council will act as an advisory board.

Mr. Fischer took over meeting for election of officers. Club must have officers O.K'd by faculty.

## Nominations for president

Tom Watts \*  
Frank L. Gaddy

## Nominees for Vice-president

Frank L. Gaddy

## Nominees for Sec.-treasurer

Dawn L. Owens \*  
Ralph Hess

## Council

Ralph Hess

\*\*\*\*\*

January 8, 1963 (ed. note: date of charter)

Tommy Watts opened the meeting and read letter of O.I. by the President (Bill Stephenson).

## Nominations for Vice-president:

Ralph Hess  
D.O. Rhodes (Father Tim doesn't understand the significance of two elections for vice-president this year)

## Nominations for council members

Bill Alienel  
Robert Barnes  
A.F. Bumor

Ralph read the Constitution and by-laws. A vote was taken on adopting Constitution. It was passed.

The by-laws were read and discussed. It was voted in unanimously. An amount of \$.50 per person for grotto equipment was OK'd.

Meeting next Friday night.

\*\*\*\*\*

Watts' Corset: the bosun's chair used for pit diving in the early days of the V.I. Cave Club.

CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
V.P.I.Grotto  
of the  
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

- 
- I. The name of this organization shall be the V.P.I. Grotto, Student Branch of the National Speleological Society.
  - II. The purpose of this Society shall be to promote interest in and to advance in any and all ways the study and science of Speleology and to promote fellowship among those interested therein.
  - III. The government of this Grotto shall consist of a president, a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, and a council, all of whom shall be selected by the members of the Grotto at the end of every school year. It shall be the duty of the governing body to determine the policy of the grotto, to conduct meetings, and to perform other such actions necessary to the proper functioning of the Grotto.
  - IV. The life of the Grotto shall be perpetual or until terminated by a majority vote of the members.
  - V. Membership in this Grotto shall be open to any persons who are interested in Speleology and have complied with conditions of membership set forth in the By-Laws.
  - VI. Charter members of this Grotto shall be all members of the V.P.I. Student Branch as of February 1, 1943.
  - VII. Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by two-thirds favorable vote of the members of the Grotto.

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BY-LAWS

of the

Student Branch  
of the  
V.P.I. Grotto  
of  
THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

~~Proposed Constitution  
1443 1968~~

### I. Membership

- (a) Only undergraduate students of Virginia Polytechnic Institute shall be eligible for membership.
- (b) All applications for membership must in writing or in person, and must be accompanied by an accurately filled application blank.
- (c) Honorary membership shall be extended only to members of the V.P.I. faculty and graduate students who are members of the National Society. Nominations for Honorary membership shall be made by the governing body and approved by the Grotto.
- (d) All members shall have equal rights, including the right of voting; shall have equal use of all facilities of the society, unless restricted to rights as under Section VIII.

### II. Dues -- Assessments

- (a) Dues for membership for the National Society shall be \$1.00 per year, payable by February 1.
- (b) Assessments to defray expenses of the Grotto shall be made only by a majority vote of approval by members of the Grotto. Such expenses such as those incurred on trips need not be voted on.

### III. Governing Body -- Council

- (a) The governing board shall be a council made up of the officers, the faculty sponsor, and three persons elected by the Grotto.
- (b) It shall be the duties of this council to appoint committee heads, to see that all records are complete and straight, to see that all required reports are made to the National Society, and to plan meetings. The council shall determine the policies of the Grotto in the ways that it sees fit for the betterment of the Grotto.

### IV. Meetings

- (a) During a school year meetings shall be held once every two weeks or oftener. The time and place for the meetings shall be announced by the council.
- (b) Meetings shall consist of lectures, pictures, and/or reports on caves, trips, and related subjects.
- (c) A quorum of a majority of the enrolled membership shall be necessary in order to conduct a meeting.

From an early Grotto Grapevine: The hardest thing learned in college was how to open beer bottles with a quarter.

## V. Committees

- (a) Permanent Committees shall be appointed to deal with the various phases of work of the Grotto. The Committees shall be as follows:
1. Equipment and Safety
  2. Exploration and Location
  3. Maps and Mapping
  4. Photography
  5. Program and Activity
  6. Records
- (b) The Council shall have the right to create new committees and abolish others as conditions from time to time may dictate.
- (c) The duties of each Committee shall be to study and promote interest in all matters pertaining to their fields of activity. Any question of conflicting jurisdiction of committees shall be decided by the President of the Grotto.
- (d) The Chairman of each Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Grotto and ratified by the Council. Each Chairman shall be responsible for the personnel and functioning of his Committee.

## VI. Properties

- (a) The Grotto may purchase equipment, literature, and other property for use of the membership.
- (b) All data collected on any trip sponsored by the Grotto shall become the property of the Grotto and thus of the National Society. The term data shall include; recorded observations, records of specimens collected and any other related items not here above specifically covered that may be judged by the Board of Governors of the National Society as falling within this definition.
- (c) Photographs shall be taken on all grotto sponsored trips only on condition that they shall be made available to the Society without charge for use in any publication which the Society may issue. Members are requested to furnish the records committee with one print of each picture made on trips.

## VII. Expulsion of Members

- (a) Members may be expelled from the Grotto for the following reasons:
1. Non-payment of dues
  2. Wilful failure to turn in data collected on any Society or Grotto sponsored trip.
  3. Wilful misuse of the Grotto's property.
  4. Wilful disregard of his own or the safety of others on Grotto sponsored trips.
  5. Conduct detrimental to the Society.

- (b) Any member subject to expulsion may demand a personal hearing before the Council.

#### VIII. Rejection of Rights and Privileges

- (a) Members may lose certain rights and privileges as determined by the Council for the following reasons:
1. Negligence in care of equipment.
  2. Continuous neglect of safety precautions.

#### IX. Amendment of the By-Laws

- (a) Amendments to these By-Laws shall be made only by a two-thirds vote of the Grotto.

Adopted January 8, 1943

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(The editors, after much thought and debate, decided to include the following article in this position.)

#### THE LOST BATS OF PIG HOLE CAVE by

ROBERT M. WILTT

My first contact with Pig Hole came just after the survey was made to determine if it would be practical to dig a new entrance. As I recall, Earl Thierry, Bob Barnes, Joe Lawrence, Dick Southworth and others made the survey. As you know the survey did show that a new entrance would be practical and work was started. I am sorry that I do not recall all of the people who took part in this project, but the above named people with Marion Normand and myself did work on it. After much digging and blasting, I had the honor of breaking through to the cave. However, being a little on the fat side, I gave way to a smaller person who was the first to enter the cave by this new entrance.

So now we come to the bats of Pig Hole Cave. There are a few things that I can state as facts. First, there must have been a very large colony of bats in this cave at one time. Second, there were very few bats in the cave at the time the new entrance was dug. What few bats there were in the cave were found near the natural entrance. Third, the deposit is not in the main part guano, but is a mixture of guano, dirt, hair, and other bat remains.

The VPI Grotto endorsed the brake bar as a rappelling device in January of 1961

In the fall of 1958, I had Mr. Houlton and Mr. Quinlan make a survey of the extent of the so called guano deposit in Pig Hole. This was done at the request of Mr. A.R. Porterfield of Seaboard Brokerage Co., who had purchased an option to buy the contents of the cave from the owner. Mr. A.R. Porterfield and I took samples of the deposit which were sent to the State Department of Agriculture and Immigration for analysis. Another sample along with the above analysis reports was sent to the United States Guano Corp. in Kingman, Arizona. The above reports and the reply from the United States Guano Corp. are included here through the kind permission of Mr. A.R. Porterfield.

The present owner of the cave reportedly told one of the members of the Cave Club, some twenty years ago, that his grandfather told of a time when bats came out of this cave in such large numbers that they blackened the sky over a large area. Note that no mention was made of the owner or his father seeing these bats. Thus, if the above statement is true, this dates the bats around one hundred years ago.

I do not feel that the new entrance has materially affected the bat population. What I do think is that some time in the past this large colony of bats ran out of food. If this was the case large numbers of bats may have starved and died in the cave. This supposition - and it is only a supposition - would account for the nature of the deposit in Pig Hole Cave.

The problem of the lost bats of Pig Hole Cave is still open to question. Perhaps someone will come forth with more and/or better information on this subject.

(editors note: Mr. Wiatt is a former member of the Cave Club and is currently Assistant Director of Housing at VPI)

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The editors of this Silver Anniversary issue wish to thank the past members of the VPI Cave Club without whose existence this occasion would not have been possible.

(Published Since 1944)

\* \* \* \* \*

Jan. 21, 1944

## STAFF

Chief Editor-In-Chief-A.I. Cartwright  
 Assistant Editor-In-Chief-G.L.Jones  
 Vice Editor-In-Chief--R.C.Caldwell  
 Old Corodded Editor-----H.F. Moore  
 Poet Laureate-----R.H. Southworth  
 Business Manager-----N.W. Hopkins

## Caving Raving

For our first caving trip of the quarter, we went to New River Cave, mainly with the idea of exploring the surroundings of the Forest Room more thoroughly, and to show the beautiful formations there to those who had not seen them. On this particularly cold and snowy day about twenty hearty individuals braved the ride to Goodwin's Ferry and the ruff climb up the mountain side to the entrance of the cave.

George Crabb, G. L. Jones, and Harry Andrews were selected as leaders, and the parties made a batline for the Forest Room. Herc Andrews found a crack into which Moore was lowered with much wiggling and groaning on his part. Herbie selected a party to go look for Moore on the lower level. Finally, they met and half an hour was spent making Moore remember from which way he had come. Pushed on by Herbie's patience we at last arrived at the place after looking up ten passages which Moore knew to be the right one. Other passages in this vicinity were explored.

Returning to the Lunch Room we had a late lunch before going out. Much to our surprise our food did not do its usual vanishing act. (Hun-- who wasn't along this trip?) Naturally a bit of sponging was done-(Couldn't break tradition). Parties headed for Sunlite and took the easiest way down the mountain-as George expresses it, "We simply slid and steered for a prominent tree". Home on time.

## The Coal Mine Trip

For the first time in the history of the Cave Club we are planning a trip that is not a cave trip. Some time in the next week or so we plan to go to the "Great Valley" coal mine, situated at McCoy, 12 miles from Blacksburg. The trip will last from about 5:30 to 11:00 P.M.

It contains enough gas to make it impossible to use carbide lamps, but electric lamps will be supplied at the mine. A demonstration test for gas will be arranged by Mr. Martin, the mine superintendent, thru whose courtesy we are making the trip.

Your dues are due:

\$1.00 National dues (annual)  
 \$0.50 Grotto dues (quarter)

## First Scratch

ADVICE TO A MOPHYTI: SP. LUNKAR

So you're going caving?

I'll tell you Hun,  
 You ought to get yourself prepared  
 To have a lot of fun. (pair  
 But I guess you'd better wear a  
 Of old blue denim jeans,  
 And a little extra padding  
 Will help around the knees.

On top I'd wear a sweatshirt  
 Or some ol' duds-  
 For you never can tell when  
 You'll see a lot of mud.  
 I'd wear a pair of real old shoes  
 And heavy woolen socks, (when  
 'Cause it helps to have protection  
 You're walking on rough rocks.  
 Does it sound like pure insanity  
 Of some moronic brand?

All the gals, dress that way, too  
 If they don't look grand!  
 And I think you'll find we Spcl's  
 Will do our very best  
 To make the day a happy one  
 If not a day of rest.

--M.H.S.

## \* \* Cave Pearls \* \*

"Like a good human father, God will not do for us anything that we can learn to do for ourselves.

Religious Emphasis Week, next week every one attends those services!

## Mud Slinging

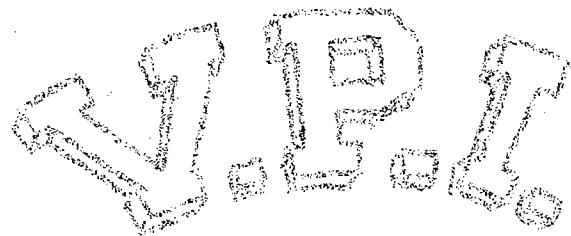
Despite the fact that a large percentage of my raw material has been so affected by the work of Cupid as to make it unavailable for this column, I have found a few choice morsels of mud dug from the bottom of "Bottomless Pit", Clover Hollow.

Usually a competent party leader Jones became lost from his party (most of it anyway) in the Forest Room of New River Cave last trip. Perhaps his companion could be the

reason, Eh Chris?... "No Woman in My Heart"-Moore has succeeded in shaking off his latest threat! Too bad a certain Coed had to loose a bet...Say, Paul, how does it feel to be left out, especially when the lights go out?-Don't worry he's shipping out soon....Southworth: She must really be a peach to inspire such poetry from a Bachelor like you, or are you a Bachelor?. We notice "Rock Climber"-Andrews showing off his Corporal stripes.. .Vargas Calendars must be proper now, even "Crabby" George keeps one on his desk!...I almost forgot to mention our Old Standby, Galloway, we hear she's been distributing nickels to Cadets to make sure she gets phone calls.....

More dirt next time, provided something happens.

\* \* \* \* \*



## ACCURATE FACTS AND CORRODED FIGURES

Grotto Grapevine Vol. 1, No.3

The grotto's usual way of measuring the depth of a vertical drop is to let a rock fall 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 .08, the acceleration due to gravity is  $32.160 \text{ ft/sec}^2$ , temperature is 50° F, the velocity of sound at that temperature is 1107 ft/sec, the barometric pressure is 710 mm. of mercury, the humidity is 100%, the density of the rock is 2.7, and the price of eggs in China is beside the point; I derived the following equation:

$$s = 16.080t^2 - .4880t^3 - .2739t^4 + .02413t^5 - .00454t^6 - .00052t^7 \\ - .000067t^8$$

(I dare you to check my calculations)

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

\*\*\*\*\*

A.I. Cartwright

R. C. Caldwell  
Grotto Grapevine Sep 1, 1944

The Cartwright mystery has at last been solved; certain facts about him are about to be disclosed. Hold on to your hats, folks, here it comes!

This mythical character was adopted as an active member into our club almost two years ago, from a picture showing Bob Hope. Perhaps some of us can still remember this movie, in which one of the characters "just wasn't there". Cartwright is often erroneously referred to as Yohudi's first cousin; to my knowledge he is absolutely no relation to Yohudi.

There were so many happenings that could not be attributed to any of the other members of the club, that it was found necessary to get someone who wasn't to blame these things on. The loss of food, rain storms, hot-seats -- all these and innumerable more incidents were accredited to Cartwright's long list of accomplishments. The adoption of this beloved character into the club can be attributed to one Crouch who has long since departed from our midst.

storms , hot-seats -- all these and innumerable more incidents were accredited to Cartwright's long list of accomplishments. The adoption of this beloved character into the club can be attributed to one Crouch, who has long since been departed from our midst. The idea spread rapidly and Cartwright was readily accepted as a member by everyone. Later he was given the name Aloysius Ignats by R. H. Southworth, ex-poet laureate of this paper, while J.H.O.H. ( Jarvis H.O. Hoffman for short) had name tags made and really pushed his popularity.

As time went on Cartwright became more and more infamous, causing flat tires, light gremlins, tight squeezes, etc; as new members came into the club, his real identity was kept a secret. He often signed Pledgee's cards and did other things that flash-n-blood members did. He became Chief-Editor-in Chief of our paper at the first staff meeting and has retained that position ever since.

At one time a continued article on Cartwright's life was begun by E.F. Moore, but was abandoned after two issues. He is supposed to have discovered America in 1491 by way of his present abode, Clover Hollow Cave, which to our knowledge has no end. He often comes from his home to play practical jokes on the other cavers. and to help us in our seemingly impossible tasks. Always he is the life of the party and he loves to play hide and seek- mostly hide. By him the possible is done easily; the impossible takes more time.

Cartwright is an inspiration to all cavers and is the propelling factor that forces us on when the going gets tough - you know, the get going- or - I - get- free- with- rocks,- carbide- flames- etc., method of encouragement. He has high ideals and is the originator of our definition that " a speleo is the only creature that can get lower than anything else on earth, yet have his mind as high as heaven."

\*\*\*\*\*

Excerpt from Smoke Hole trip report

Grotto Grapevine number 8

Now Smoke Hole would be just like any other cave except for one reason: it's different.

Smoke Hole's claim to distinction is it's high humidity, so high that the moisture in the air has condensed to form a film-- three feet deep-- on the floor of the cave.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Grotto Grapevine advertised War Bonds throughout World War II

Projection-Golden Anniversary 1993

Caving has progressed to a sophistication which would have been difficult to conceive when our Grotto was a mere 25 years young. The advent of the electric prusik in the late 60's opened vertical caves to nearly every person so inclined. Though frowned upon at first, the "Karras Wheel" as it was derogatorily called by early cynics, saved many an exhausted spelunker before the GPE came into common use.

Surprisingly enough as late as 1984 the metallic "brake bar" and carabiner was still in use as descending devices by a certain faction of cavers on the Christiansburg Quadrangle of the campus. Most of the Club had adopted the water cooled rappel spool invented by Mike Hartlton in 1964 with the addition of electronic speed controling option which automatically put on extra turns of rope as needed.

Union Carbide's discovery of a new isotope of CaC<sub>2</sub> in '75 gave a ten hour run for a single charge and made the conservationists extremely happy due to the decreased frequency of spent carbide dumping. The atomic "Justrite" has now eliminated the dangerous flare and the problem of sufficient illumination.

Perhaps the GPE, gravitational potential equilizers, or force fields, as the romantics still insist on calling them, have made the most radical change in the sport. The editors find it hard to believe that man would actually allow himself to venture beneath the earth protected only by a flimsy shell of fiberglass on his head and primitive cloth covering the rest of his body. Without the GPE they ran the risk of becoming scraped and bruised by protrusions in the cave passages but we must say, although this thought repulses most, that there is a certain thrill in turning off the power pack and actually feeling the dirt and mud as early subterranean explorers once did.

Editor-Troy Glaudight

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The field trip to Carlsbad this afternoon will be leaving at noon in order to get back for the Grotto meeting at 7:00 PM in Room 107, Hahn Hall, better known as the S. of A.B. R.E. Whittemore Jr. will speak on caving in the Arcturus Crator this summer. There will be a "speloc-seminar" immediately following at the Grotto Presidents on Brush Mountain.