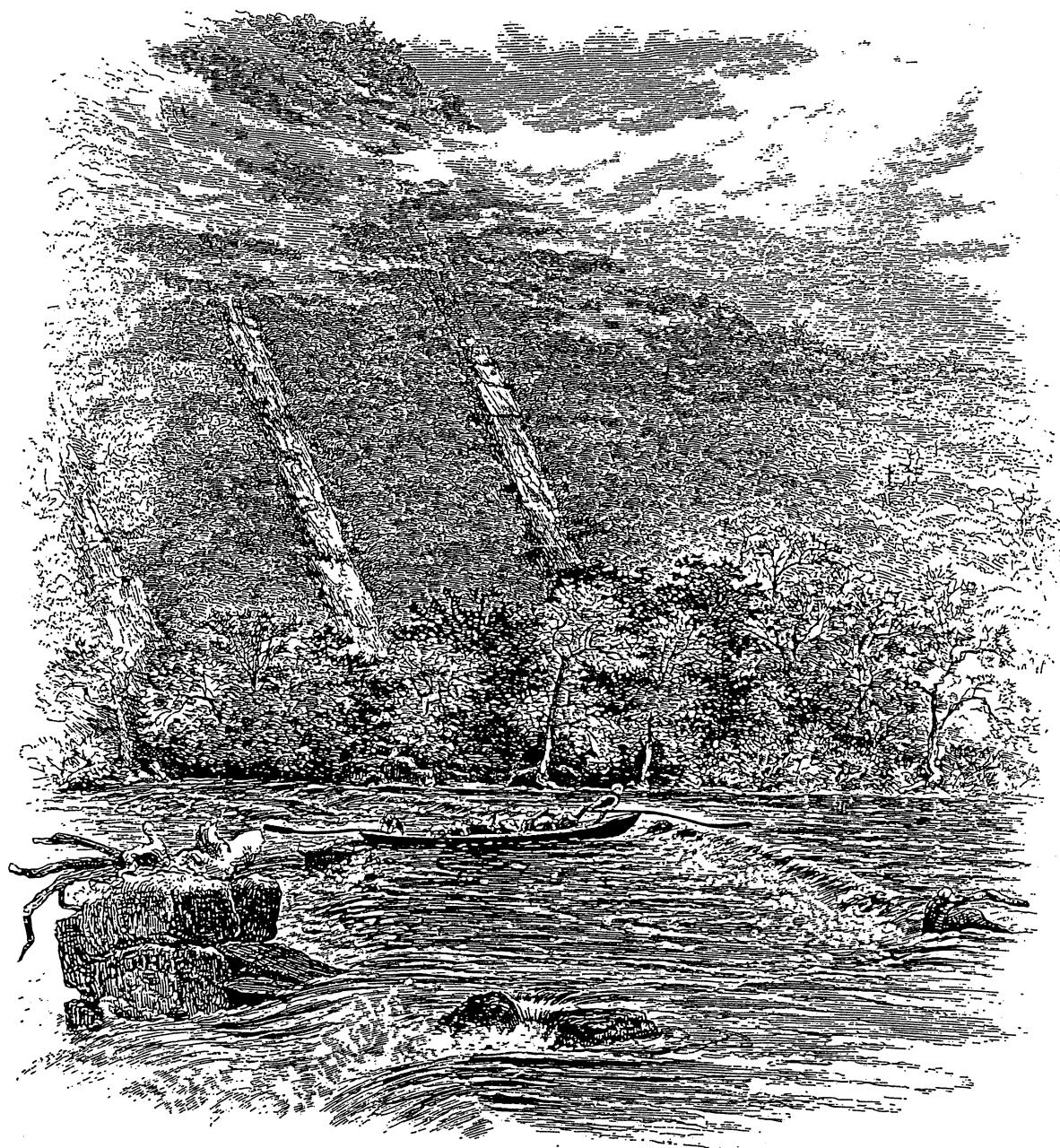


the TECH
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Great Falls, New River.

winter 1987

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

WINTER QUARTER 1987

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President's Column.....	Joan Johnson	1
Editor's Column.....	Bob Simonds	2
Grotto Grapevine.....		3
On the Motivations of Caving.....	Dave McClurg	6
Unnamed.....	Anonynous	7
Something Could Be Better.....	Doug Abernathy	7
DTC Report.....	Doug Perkins	8
Search and Rescue Operation in McClung Cave...	Chris Amundson	9
The Balister Bag.....	Jackie Redder	18
Tricks of the Trade.....	Jim Washington	20
Mexico Trip Journal.....	Richard Cobb	23
Mexico Fever.....	Craig Roberts	27
Christmas Bug.....	Cecile James	29
Qoutable Quotes.....		30
You Know You're a Trainee When You.....	Craig Roberts	31
From the Signout Sheet.....		32

The cover is a copy of a drawing that appeared in a book called Scenes of Virginia and is thanks to Ed Devine.

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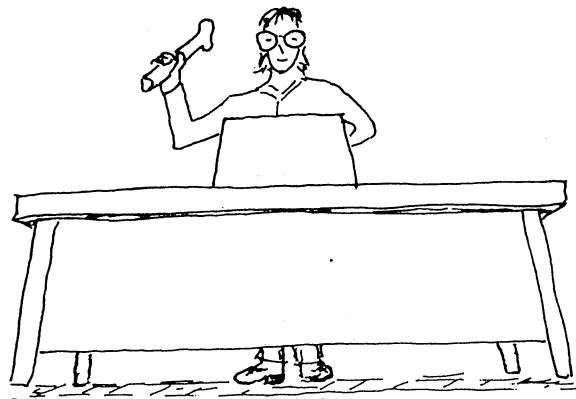
The President's Column

The club has gained some new members this quarter. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who helped them and to the new members themselves. We still need to increase our membership more. If you'd like to help, consider running for an office or chairing a committee.

Caving's been good this quarter. Club trips have gone to Mexico and members are planning to bounce Alabama pits over spring break. After these chances to see caves in other parts of the country, in 1991 we may have a chance to show the country our caves. The West Virginia/Virginia region submitted a bid that the 50th anniversary convention be held here at VPI! Have a fun spring - go caving, climbing and hiking, but don't forget to come to the practice rescue this April. We need you there.

Cave lots and cave safely,

Joan Johnson



The Editor's Column

I would like to thank everyone who helped make this the best, or at least the fattest Trog of my budding editorial career. Beth Wichterman did a bunch of writing and typing as well as cutting and pasting. Jean Simonds and Glen Davis cut and pasted and supplied generous amounts of editorial advice. Thanks also to Chris Amundson and Richard Cobb whose writings were not intended for the Trog, but who allowed me to include them anyway. Jim Washington taught me a thing or two with his Tricks of the Trade, and Jackie Redder enlightened me about the Balister Bag. Cecile James, Dave McClurg, and perhaps Doug Abernathy too came through with Trainee articles. Mike Futrell did some artwork and Craig Roberts allowed me to twist his arm to write a couple of articles. Thanks Dudes.

Where to I go from here? Right now I'm little burned out but I'll recover in a few weeks. I have some ideas that I'd like to try. For one thing, I'd like to see the publication moved up to an earlier part of the quarter. An ideal time might be the first week classes. As things are now, I always seem to end up trying to recruit help when everyone is desperately trying to last minute save their QCA. That will mean that everyone will have to turn in your fine articles earlier, though. What do you think?

Of course there's another possibility: there may actually be someone out there who is desperately waiting for this job but is afraid come forward and take Trog away from me. Fear not, the editorship is yours for the asking. Furthermore, I will even be glad to help. But I don't know if you're there unless you tell me.

There are still two areas in which the Trog is lacking, in my opinion: artwork and plain old trip reports. There are some good artists out there, I've seen your work. And I'm sure everyone has a certain caving trip that they can't forget (even though they may want to) which we'd all like to read about. If you're really embarrassed about it I'll promise total anonymity. And we can always resort to the old cliches such as "names can be changed to protect the guilty," or "any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental." How about it guys?

Finally, since elections are coming up in a few weeks, that sort of makes this the end of the year. I think all the officers have done a fine job and each of you ought to consider running for reelection. That's not to mean that I think you should run unopposed. What would election night be without several hours of good mud slinging?

In the meanwhile, have a good Spring Break. Hope to see you in Alabama!

Bo B

GROTTO GRAPEVINE

Two trips went to Mexico over Christmas from VPI. The grapevine noticed that Mexican girls are attracted to blond American guys (like Paul Hess) that wear bandanas and chucks. He was also photographed breaking into a mini-bar in a hotel in Mexico City. Alejandro lost a bet that he could do 50 pushups in the middle of the road without getting run over. Thank God he's "just chicken." Garrie Rouse tried to corrupt the minds of innocent Mexican children with plants.

Dave McClurg and Marvin Fuqua came up for membership. Cecile Pirie and Doug Abernathy are expected to do so before spring break so that they can accompany the cast of thousands going to Alabama. Romance is in the air for Rob Hills.

Sue Setzler is eloping with Dave McClurg to Washington State to raise a family. Or is it Australia to raise sheep?

Jenny Ford took Linda Oxenreider's job as a campus information operator. You only have a few more days to call her and waste her time; she quit.

Jean and Bob Simonds have rediscovered caving. They tagged along as chaperones when Ed Fortney took a group of Hollin's College girls to New River. They were there for 5 1/2 hours ...?

Rumor has it that Ko is a great cook and even does the dishes. But, Joan doesn't like his food.

Mike Futrell is back in school again...

Richard Cobb won \$1 or so in a student-faculty engineering talent show. He was himself.

Glenn Davis went hiking in California.

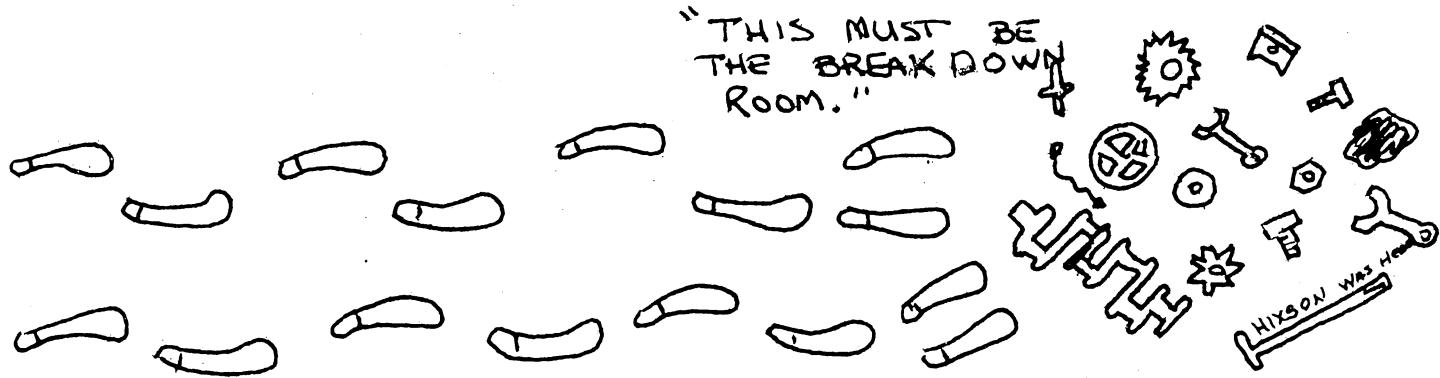
Banquet was a success, with the illustrious Ron Simmons giving an excellent audio-visual presentation on the exploration of Bobcat Cave. Many positive comments were overheard by the Grapevine about the "stunning" photography and "reasonably groovy" New Age musical accompaniment. Also complimented were the awards, where a lot of people got what was coming to them: Jim Washington was honored in the presence of his father with Flame Out for his many displays of slovenliness. Ko Takamizawa received a fig leaf for the next time he passes out nude at OTR. He was also awarded Brain Bucket for being unlucky enough to have a huge rock fall on his foot. Sue Setzler and Dave McClurg received 2 jars of saltpeter in hopes that they will be able to calm their raging hormones (especially caving). Gabi Roth and Suzanne Danielson received leases to keep Paul Hess and Tom Foster under control. Ed Fortney was given an award for just being "Captain Ed." Garrie Rouse was given a new stupid hat since his old stupid hat flew out the window while he was driving in Mexico. The American

Leather Industry chose Craig Ferguson as this year's recipient of their Appreciation Certificate. Mike Futrell was the only recipient this year of a guano cluster for mapping Wilburn Valley. Glen Davis was given a plaque certifying him as the OTR Shit House Engineer. Dave Cinsavich received a 6'x3' card saying "Just Say No!", since he finally graduated from substance abuse class. Another victim of substance abuse who found herself in jail, Sue Setzler, was given a 3'x3' "Get Out of Jail Free Card," so no one has to come bail her out when she's going mapping to Stomppbottom. Trainee of the Year was Marvin Fuqua. The "Perpetual" Trainee of the Year was Cecile Pirie. A Timothy Watson was the Most Obnoxious Trainee. Cecile was also given a muzzle for her dog, Suki, since she's been a noticeable element of the wildlife sanctuary, aka the meetings. Suzanne Danielson's dog, Cory, was eliminated from the competition due to its resemblance to a rodent. It seems that no one took the hint, since we've added some new animals to our meetings on Fridays. Last, but not least our best drinking cohort and land owner, Buddy Penley was given a bottle of JD.

It is the consensus of the Grapevine that the Club's favorite Girl Scout Cookie is Thin Mints. Speaking of which, Joan, where's your daughter and her cookies.

Dave Shantz will marry Nancy Gibson on the 18th of March. Doormatt (son of Splat and Upchuck) is cutting a tooth. Linda Oxenreider is dealing drugs in Pennsylvania.

The Grapevine wants to remind everyone that can to come to practice sessions Friday afternoons at the Ag-E bridge.



BS



...on the motivations of caving

by David McClurg

Since I started caving at the beginning of this year, I have heard various theories about the motivations of caving. For example,

To go where no man has gone before,
To get away from "normal" life and pursue excitement and danger,
To prove one's strength, prowess, guts, and masculinity,
To get back to the womb, viz: mother earth or gaea,

are some of the more common. Yet these are naught but sophisms. Each appeals to mere abstractions, which when critically analyzed in the most scientific fashion, are easily disposed of. I can watch Star Trek on T.V. and there are a lot of places man hasn't gone before, such as the Marianas Trench, which I don't particularly have any desire to go to. We are all trying to be different and unique. I also strive for existence beyond my social security number, but I see my own mortality and I don't think there is any other thing I can prove. If you want to test your limits, try running a marathon. Caves are real and cavers must be realistic. The last theory has some merit, I think. The allegory of mother earth, and holes in the ground which symbolize sexual orifices that lead inevitably to the womb, is an attractive idea. Somewhat askew of this is my own theory. Upon it, I will explain my insights and understandings.

In each of us, is a heinous, slavering, gollum-like creature crying out for expression. Once in a cave, I eat vienna sausages that are surrounded by a clear gelatinous substance. Once in a cave, I creep, squirm, and crawl through the slimy dark. Why? To get away from the others, to get away from the healthy living world. In caves I can find dead rotting animals and a plethora of thriving bacteria. I can find mountains of bat shit, lakes and rivers of putrescent mud, empty passages that end in cold silt filled polls that reflect my depravity.

I am stimulated and excited by the thought of crawling and sliding down slopes and pits where it is doubtful to ascend back up. I just want to get to the bottom of a breakdown pile or a wet hole and sit there giggling in the dark. I do not find you there, merely my own source of evil. Only there can I quiver ecstatically over my precious perversions.

Perhaps this is counter-intuitive? No, it is not! In your self-satisfied over-indulged life have you once experienced the pain of exquisite and creative torture or the decaying and wasting away of your body in a concentration camp? That is the definition of real pain. It cleanses your mind and soul. You ache for this. Thus also, is your hideous nature truly revealed.

Roses twelve were all red
Then you got my head
 Out with the brains
 Out with the brains
Shibumi muse, Chatterly dream
Rock & roll, and coital scream
 Against your actions a moral law
 But the mirrors reflected all they saw
Ice on the pond, sleeping bag on fire
Climbs of ecstasy, ways to go higher
 Us, a sloosh, a pleasure greed?
 Where's the want stop and start the need
Cave...Cave? What's that you say
I'd tomorrow too, but just not today.

Something could be better...

by Doug Abernathy

It was a great day for chills and thrills! Back at the Organ for another four hour splurge we entered through the Lipps and past attentive crawly antenna nasties that infest all entrances. Ever so gently moving onward we tickled the interior. Quietly passing winged guards, stopping only momentarily we pay our respects for granting entry beyond. Pushing further into wet corridors black-spotted-orange creepies pave our way.

Dive,
 dive,
 dive,
 deeper, harder,
faster... bopping to and fro. Energies yearning for excitement; sweating, searching, penetrating the maze of twisted tubulars. More, more. Don't stop!

Down,
 down,
 down,
 in and out
of darkened holes we find our true love and climax in unearthly amazement. As the last pretty passes out of bounds and the final rousal-squeeze becomes unbearable our goals are met with joy. Lights fading fast we scramble outward to recline in peace and comfort by the heat. Dreams of the event and plans for the next affair begin to take shape and fill our heads.

Nothing could be finer.

DTC Report

by Doug Perkins

A year long project, involving experiments at the Banquet, Float Trip, Nags Head, and the Old Timers Reunion has reestablished the validity of the old drinking axiom that states:

Whiskey and Beer, Never Fear;
But Beer and Whiskey is Awful Risky!

Participants at these experiments (ok, some would say parties or even week long binges) all experienced significantly worse hangovers when drinking hard liquor or upon switching to mixed drinks midway through the evening. Regular beer drinkers are particularly at risk when consuming hard liquors as they drink mixed drinks in the same quantities as beer, but ingest considerably more alcohol - up to 3 times more per 12 oz. serving. Want proof? Here 'tis.

Let's use rum, my personal experimental favorite. Rum is normally 80 proof, or 40% alcohol. If rum constitutes 1/3 of your mixed drink (and it will likely be more in later hours) then you cut this 40% by 1/3 and have a drink with 13.3% alcohol. Most beers barely clear 4%. Obviously, then, beer can be drunk in larger quantities than mixed drinks (and drinking clearly implies consumption, not standing around holding a glass and melting ice-cubes).

The DTC has recognized the need for a railroad siding at the OTR site in order that we may receive the world's largest beer kegs. Coors is building railroad tank cars to ship beer to its Virginia Packaging Plant. These cars are super insulated, allowing them to make the trip from Colorado to Virginia and only have the brew warm a degree or two. No refrigeration needed. The exact figures escape me, but we once estimated that one of these cars could allow every man, woman and child at the OTR to drink 3 beers an hour for a 16 hour day for the entire week-end. An even better idea would be to mate one of these to some sleeping cars and go tour the country.

The DTC would also like to recommend that those of you interested in drinking obtain a copy of "The Alcoholic Republic" by W.J. Rorbaugh. This book details the drinking habits of Americans during the Revolutionary War period up to about 1840. This was a time of impressive drinking, the rate frequently being 3 times today's levels. An unintended result is that it also exposes the hysteria about today's levels of alcohol consumption for what is really is - pure propaganda. Drinking has not increased or decreased markedly since the Civil War, except for the Prohibition period, when all the police power the nation could muster managed to reduce consumption by 2/3, and literally created organized crime at the same time. Rorbaugh also gives his theories as to why drinking decreased in the 1840's, when Americans began to industrialize. Read it. It'll give you more to argue over at those late night gatherings.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATION IN McCLUNG CAVE

by Chris Amundson
Blue Ridge Grotto

INTRODUCTION

On the weekend of September 13-14, 1986 a group of nine men in their early twenties traveled from Columbus, Ohio to West Virginia to go caving. The general experience levels of the group members amounted to three or four cave trips each. Two members of the group were climbers who were on their first and second cave trips ever. None of the group belonged to a grotto, although one of them is an NSS member.

They planned to split into two parties and enter McClung Cave in Greenbrier County. One party of five was to go through the horizontal McClung entrance and travel as far as First Breakdown and wait for the other group. The second group was to go in the newly-discovered vertical Lightner entrance and rendezvous with the first group.

Some of the Ohio group had been in McClung's before -- as far as First Breakdown. None had ever seen a map of the cave. None had been in the Lightner entrance or knew the route between the two entrances. Because their trip plans did not include exiting through the Lightner entrance, they did not have enough vertical ascending gear for the whole party. In fact, of the five entering through Lightner, only two (the climbers) had any ropework experience at all. Jeff Dersch, the individual who left his party and was lost, had an electric light, a flashlight, and some spare batteries. He was dressed in jeans, a long-john shirt with a short-sleeved canvas shirt over it, and his hard hat. He had no food, water, or cave pack. The best estimate was that he would have light until about 6AM Sunday.

CAVE DESCRIPTION

The size and nature of McClung Cave was an important factor in this search operation. It has over 16 miles of passage, two major trunk passages, several mazy sections, lots of massive breakdown, sections of unstable or rotten rock, several short drops, canyons, and wet areas.

The McClung entrance leads to a room which gives onto the Entrance Passage: a southwest-trending, 30-foot deep canyon best negotiated by going above the drop and traversing steep mud banks. This leads, after about a half a mile, to First Breakdown. From First Breakdown to Second Breakdown (still in the Entrance Passage), a caver must scramble over large blocks of breakdown in a large passage for nearly three-quarters of a mile. First and Second Breakdown are both large junction rooms partially filled with breakdown blocks.

To the southeast, Freeman Avenue parallels the Entrance Passage. The two passages are very similar in that they are southwest-trending stream-carrying trunk passages. Freeman Avenue has more massive breakdown, and many holes in the floor which drop down about ten feet to the narrow stream channel underneath. Freeman Avenue eventually empties into Echo Chamber, a complete siphon.

These two main trunk passages are connected by two routes. Batbone Crawl, located a short way past First Breakdown, is a long crawlway entered up high along the wall at either end. Because of the climbs required to reach it, Batbone Crawl is easily missed even by those who know what to look for. The other interconnection route, The Spur, is a northeast-to-southwest trending passage of moderate size with some crawling. It is reached after Second Breakdown and is the obvious route to take from there. The stream disappears at this point and heads northeast toward Chocolate Avenue.

The northern part of the cave is reached either by Chocolate Avenue (a hard-to-spot lead which takes off from The Spur) or by the Wind Tunnel (a major feeder which trends northeast from the top of First Breakdown). This northern section has extremely dangerous sections due to the presence of rotten rock.

At the northeast end of Freeman Avenue near Batbone Crawl, a loop is formed by two passages which meander from North Freeman. Part of this loop, the Jeb Stuart Area, is hazardous because of unstable rock in the ceiling and walls. The Seven Fingers near-loop extends south of this Jeb Stuart Loop, and the "Fingers" head off from here. This near-loop is either wet canyon or collapsing and unstable crawlway depending on which end is traveled.

The Lightner entrance consists of a ten-foot climb-down, followed by two offset pits of 40 and 35 feet. In order to travel from the bottom of these entrance pitches, a caver must maneuver through a short mud-wallow squeeze, get past a mud bank with a 12-foot drop at the bottom (an easy scramble down which requires a rope to get back up), and then make it through the Champagne Squeeze to Tufa Trail with its many pools of cold water which are up to two-and-a-half feet deep. Tufa Trail eventually connects with the southwestern end of Freeman Avenue.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

At about 6PM the McClung entrance party entered the cave. They got to First Breakdown and waited for about an hour or two. They left a lit candle to show that they had been there, and exited the cave through the McClung entrance.

At about 6:45PM, the Lightner entrance party reached the bottom of the first pitch and began the descent of the second drop. At the bottom, two members of the group explored a little way ahead

-- to the mud banks with the 12-foot drop. Jeff Dersch clambered down the drop and went off on his own. The other Ohio man waited for the rest of the group to get to the bottom of the entrance drops. The two climbers in the party rigged the 12-foot drop and went down to look for Dersch. They checked three possible leads, and found no sign of him. At this point they decided that they needed help.

While two members of the original party stayed in the cave and patrolled between the point at which Dersch had last been seen and the bottom of the Lightner entrance, the two climbers ascended to the surface. They contacted the owner of the McClung entrance who called Ed Slepston, a WVACS member who is also president of the Northern Greenbrier County Emergency Ambulance Squad. Ed notified NCRC (which was holding a rescue seminar in Pennsylvania) and called Roanoke, Virginia to reach Bob Amundson, another WVACS member who has been mapping McClung Cave for 15 years. Unfortunately, Bob was in Richmond. Chris Amundson called Bob, and at Slepston's request, called out Blue Ridge and VPI Grottos.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Blue Ridge arrived at the Lightner entrance at about 2AM and four cavers (Bob Alderson, Doug Feller, Dave Socky, and Bobby Voorhees) immediately rigged the drop and descended. They taught the two Ohio men how to use Jumars and Gibbs to ascend the pits. When the first VPI group arrived at about 3:30AM, two VPI cavers (Ed Fortney and Walt Pirie) joined the four from Blue Ridge and the six of them split up in order to conduct a three-pronged sweep to cover:

- 1) Tufa Trail,
- 2) southwest in Freeman Avenue to the Spur and then northwest to Second Breakdown,
- 3) northwest in Freeman Avenue to Batbone Crawl and then around the Jeb Stuart Loop.

Jackie Redder (VPI) determined that only VPI and Blue Ridge had been called out, while NCRC had been placed on standby. She compiled a list of further callouts and put them into effect. More cavers from VPI, a group from CAVES Region, another group who had been caving at the Friar's Hole Preserve, and the NCRC rescue seminar left for McClung's. Cavers from Lynchburg and Greenbrier were not reached, but calls to them were continued.

At about 7:30AM Bob Amundson arrived from Richmond and took over coordination of the underground search effort. Jackie Redder assisted him, while Ed Slepston maintained control of the surface. The first three sweep teams exited through Lightner's and reported no signs of Dersch.

The team led by Charlie Maus (WVACS) went into the cave through the McClung entrance in order to check the Entrance Passage to First Breakdown and the leads around the breakdown pile there, and then to proceed to Second Breakdown, where the sweep team from the other direction had stopped.

A crew of four led by Jerry Redder (VPI) entered Lightner's to check southwest from the end of Freeman Avenue to the Echo Chamber Siphon.

The NCRC people arrived at about 10AM. A Command Post consisting of a Communications Center, a Staging Area, A Map and Strategy Area, and a Food Area were immediately set up. Their arrival brought the number of cavers on site to approximately 75 with more on the way, making it necessary to organize the operation personnel in some way. Responsibilities were assigned as follows:

Surface	-- Ed Slepston
Underground	-- Bob Amundson
Assistant Underground	-- Jackie Redder
Personnel	-- Chuck Hempel
Communications	-- Gene Harrison
Assistant Communications	-- Bob Barlow
Staging Area	-- Bob Elrond
Records	-- Chris Amundson

Since the search operation now covered two cave entrances, a Staging Area located across a couple of fields and a road, and a sizeable Command Center, radios were issued to key personnel while field phone lines were strung from the Communications Center to the outside world, across the fields to the McClung entrance, from this entrance in to First Breakdown, and between all major points of the central area.

Bob Amundson, with the assistance of Jackie Redder, set up search patterns that would do two things:

- 1) divide the cave into "searchable" sections, and
- 2) devise levels of search starting with fast sweep searches of the most likely areas where Dersch could be, progressing to slow "look-under-every-rock" searches, and finally, simply filling the cave with cavers standing elbow-to-elbow if necessary.

Ed Slepston functioned as liaison with local fire departments, emergency squads and the State Police. Ed arranged for medical and ambulance support, site security, and food for the searchers. As a result of Ed's work, all supportive site security was excellent, and the two local CB clubs which overheard our radio traffic arrived prepared to provide us with hot food donated by local businesses for the duration of the search. Due to Ed's effort (combined with the fact that the Command Post was out of sight of the road), we were able to maintain an extremely low profile regarding the press and general public throughout the

search operation.

The NCRC people, under the direction of Chuck Hempel, set up the physical layout of the search operations site and provided internal organization and support in every aspect of the operation beyond what was covered by Bob and Ed. Because NCRC had been conducting a rescue seminar, they fully prepared to handle any medical eventuality, so they were also prepared for the time when we would find Dersch. The NCRC people had to be ready for a wide range of possibilities -- Dersch could be in any condition ranging from being able to exit under his own power to dead, with the most likely case being that he was extremely hypothermic and unable to move on his own. NCRC also arranged for us to be assigned a mission number by the national emergency agency. This status has been used in the past to fly much-needed cavers to rescue sites.

At this point, Dersch had been underground for over 18 hours, had probably been out of light for at least four, and was without food, water, or adequate clothing. The chances of his becoming dangerously hypothermic were growing rapidly. If, indeed, he became severely hypothermic, extricating him from the cave would present major problems. Getting Dersch to First Breakdown from pretty much anywhere in the cave would be a major operation due to the various crawls and climbs involved in negotiating this cave. The half-mile of canyon passage between First Breakdown and the McClung entrance would have to be rigged with a high line (tricky due to the nature of this passage) in order to get a stretcher out above the canyon and its steep mud banks.

Before any of this was to become a problem, another question plagued everyone who was at all involved in the strategies: Where was he? Searchers had been in all passages considered reachable by Dersch before his light went out -- why hadn't we found him? The best possibilities remaining were that Dersch:

- 1) was injured and disabled in a small side lead or down a pit,
- 2) was somehow still moving around the cave and eluding the searchers,
- 3) had somehow gotten into the northern portion of the cave and was in grave danger due to the rotten and unstable rock there.

Another major problem of the operation arose at about 3PM when Bob and Jackie realized that at the rate at which they were sending in sweep parties, the crew leaders on site (those who know McClung Cave well: Bob Alderson (Blue Ridge), Charlie Maus (WVACS) and Jerry Redder (VPI) would soon be burned out and unable to lead any more trips. They drew up a list of additional potential leaders to be contacted and brought to the site. There were only four -- of which, two (Cliff Lindsay and Bill Balfour, both WVACS) were already on the road, and the other two were not reachable. There was a real possibility that there were simply not enough people who know this complex system well enough to

lead the necessary slow search trips. It was decided that if we were not successful in finding Dersch in the next few hours, we would have to bring in many more cavers and implement the elbow-to-elbow approach. This would need fewer leaders of larger crews and thus reduce the burn-out problem among the leaders.

Because the Lightner entrance is both vertical and tight, it functioned as a bottleneck and took a lot out of the searchers entering the cave that way. Not finding Dersch in the most likely places widened the search area in the cave. Both of these factors led to the decision to route all search efforts through the horizontal McClung entrance from this point on. The only exception to this was that Walt Pirie led a crew of two down Lightner's to look under every rock as far as the Tufa Room.

A large crew made up of CAVES Region medical personnel and led by Bob Alderson was formed and sent in to conduct a slow search of Freeman Avenue in both directions from Batbone Crawl, particularly checking the numerous short drops along Freeman Avenue in case Dersch had fallen and was disabled there.

Redder's crew exited the cave and reported no signs of Dersch in the Echo Siphon area. They also conveyed the information from Maus' party that the Chocolate Avenue route to the northern part of the cave could be eliminated from the search area. The entrance to Chocolate Avenue is a sand bank which clearly shows footprints -- and is wiped clean after any flooding. There were no footprints at all at the southwestern end of the Avenue. This was an important piece of information -- the northern end of Chocolate Avenue is composed of rotten rock and would be a danger not only to Dersch if he were there, but also to any searchers who would have had to go into that section.

Bill Balfour lead a group of three to check the room at the end of Batbone Crawl and the crawlway off of it to the WVACS Room on the chance that Dersch had taken that way, thinking it was Batbone. They would also check the JK Maze near First Breakdown and from there go through the Wind Tunnel in case he had somehow managed to get into the dangerous northern portion of the cave.

At about 4:30PM Bob, Jackie, and Chuck decided to call more cavers in. The rationale was that by midnight there would have been 80-90 exhausted cavers on site and more bodies would be needed--especially if the elbow-to-elbow phase had to be put into effect. In order to get enough cavers on site by midnight, they had to be called out now. At about 5:15PM Chuck contacted cavers in Baltimore, MD, the D.C. area, Bloomington, IN, and TAG country. They mobilized and were coming in on government air transport. GROSS, Parkersburg and other West Virginia and Virginia grottos were reached and called out.

Maus' party exited through McClungs's and reported no signs of Dersch.

A very large crew led by Cliff Lindsay was formed to go into the Seven Fingers area of the cave and drop pairs of cavers at each

of the numerous intersections where passages take off from the near-loop. This was the beginning of the elbow-to-elbow phase. These cavers were to stay near enough to the intersection to keep track of any movement through it, while searching any and all nooks, crannies, corners, or small holes near their posts. At this point, because there had been no sign of Dersch on any of the searches, it was concluded that either he was disabled somewhere in an obscure side passage or a pit, or that he had somehow managed to stay fit enough to be moving around and thus eluding the search teams. In either case, placing cavers throughout the cave, and especially at all key intersections, was the best method of either finding or intercepting him.

In order to accommodate the incoming cavers (estimated to be about 100 in the air and on the road) additional staging and camping areas were established at a short distance across the fields from the Command Post. At about 8PM some of the cavers who had been working since the night before left for home but remained on standby for a possible callback Monday night.

Pirie's crew exited through Lightner's and reported no signs of Dersch.

Balfour's party exited through McClung's and reported no signs of Dersch.

At 8:58PM Alderson's group reported from First Breakdown that they were on their way out and had found no signs of Dersch.

At 9:05PM members of Lindsay's party found Jeff Dersch in the Seven Fingers near-loop. He was conscious, alert, and moving under his own power. They led him out through the McClung entrance, where he was checked by the medical personnel there and was found to be hungry and cold, but otherwise in good health. Dersch had been underground for just under 28 hours. He was brought back to the Communications Center to be debriefed. He was also fed and his family called back to let them know that he was all right.

During the debriefing we were able to reconstruct what had happened from Dersch's point of view. After he left the main group, he apparently thrashed around the cave for awhile, mostly in Freeman Avenue. When he finally realized that he was in serious trouble, he started to do things right. He looked for a room to hole up in, and, so that he could be found easily, he chose one with several passages coming into it -- the room off of the Freeman Avenue end of Batbone Crawl (although he didn't know where he was). He turned off his lamp to conserve light, and slept. He knew that hypothermia was a major and dangerous possibility, so he chose his Hole-Up Room for its lack of airflow and he slept in a position that would ensure that he fall over and wake up when he got cold. When this happened, he would traverse the loop formed by North Freeman and the Jeb Stuart passage. When he was warm, he would return to the Hole-Up Room and sleep some more.

As soon as Dersch had been found, all cavers were recalled from the cave, and dismantling the operation began. The air transport was an estimated 15 minutes out of Greenbrier Airport when Dersch was found. They were turned around in the air and sent home. Some cavers who had been on the road called in and were told to turn around. A few more cavers showed up at the site to help. The various areas of the operations center were dismantled, wire was pulled from all over the fields and from the cave, gear found, mostly identified, sorted, distributed to owners or friends, and packed up. The site was cleared and all gear accounted for by about 2AM Sunday, September 15.

ANALYSIS

Several things can be said about this search operation. The Ohio men's trip was poorly planned -- a minimally experienced group went into a vertical entrance without the gear or skills needed to climb out of it if necessary, and planned to traverse a complex cave system of which they had seen only a small portion (and had never seen a map of the section they planned to travel). One member of this group had what his companions called "a cocky, macho attitude" and pushed ahead without waiting for the rest of the group. They were poorly equipped for anything other than a "creampuff" trip -- no water, food, or warm clothing.

It must be said that once the people of the original group, Dersch as well as his companions, realized that there was trouble, they did everything right. The group he left immediately sent their vertically experienced people out for help while the others stayed in case Dersch came back. Dersch himself, after thrashing about for awhile, conserved his light as much as possible, did what he could to avoid hypothermia, and even made an intelligent choice of a hole-up site. Unfortunately, his methods of staving off hypothermia were the root cause of the extreme length and high frustration factor of this search operation. If he had been able to stay put, the first sweep team into the cave would have found him at about 6AM Sunday, or later teams would have found him when they went through the area where he was holed up or through the loop he traversed to keep warm. If, however, he had stayed in one place, he would most likely have been seriously hypothermic when found, and the extrication procedure would have been extremely difficult and dangerous due to the nature of the cave. As it happened, when a team went through his hole-up room, Dersch was traversing the loop; when teams went through the loop, he was holed up.

As for the performance of cavers and local and national emergency services, and even local residents, there could not have been a better response. The roster of cavers on site came to over 160 people. There were 70-100 more cavers on the road or in the air at the time Dersch was found and the callout terminated. In addition to this number, there were at least eight fire departments and rescue squads involved throughout the rescue providing hot packs, lights, and other equipment, traffic control, and medical backup. The local National Guard lent

equipment. Two local CB clubs fed everyone on site through donations of hot food and drink from many local businesses. Neighbors allowed us to tap into their home line to establish communication with the outside world.

It might be expected that there would have been some jockeying for position or jurisdiction among all of these groups -- a major factor of the smoothness of the operation was that there was none.

One thing that would have made the entire operation easier and faster would have been a method of rapid communication between the people devising strategy and the groups of searchers underground. Because of current technology, the only communication possible from underground was a phone line from First Breakdown, the installation of which took several hours of hard work on the part of a large crew. Because of the size and complexity of the cave, crews would search and then would not be able to tell anyone about what they had done for (sometimes) a matter of hours. This situation was one that would have benefited greatly from a working voice-transmitting cave radio.

Additional communications problems in callout procedures came to light during this search operation; particularly in metropolitan areas which have several caving organizations. It seems that some cavers were called out as many as eight times, while others were never called at all. Subsequent reports from those areas are that the problems are being ironed out.

A consequence of this rescue -- a 'last straw' from the owners point of view -- is that:

- 1) the Lightner entrance is CLOSED, and
- 2) the owner of the McClung entrance is going to be MUCH more cautious about who she gives permission to enter her cave. Bob Amundson is working closely with her to work out a reasonable method to ensure that this type of situation does not occur again.

The amount of effort, money, time, energy, and equipment expended by everyone -- cavers, local organizations, cave owners, neighbors, and even the government -- was phenomenal and had the best of all possible endings. We saved someone's life.

THE BALISTER BAG

by Jackie Redder

Shortly after the McClungs's rescue in September of 1986, Philip Balister made a suggestion that could have turned a long search into a much shorter, easier one.

The idea was surprisingly simple and probably has been used by other caving groups, but I had never heard of it. I'll call it "The Balister Bag". It is to be used in searches where there are too many side passages in the cave to be manned or not enough cavers to man the cave junctions.

BALISTER BAG (minimum contents):

- 1) Ziplock baggie (pint or quart size)
- 2) Cyalume light stick, activated
- 3) trash bag
- 4) note to the lost caver (instructions to stay put and wear the trash bag)

BALISTER BAG (additional items):

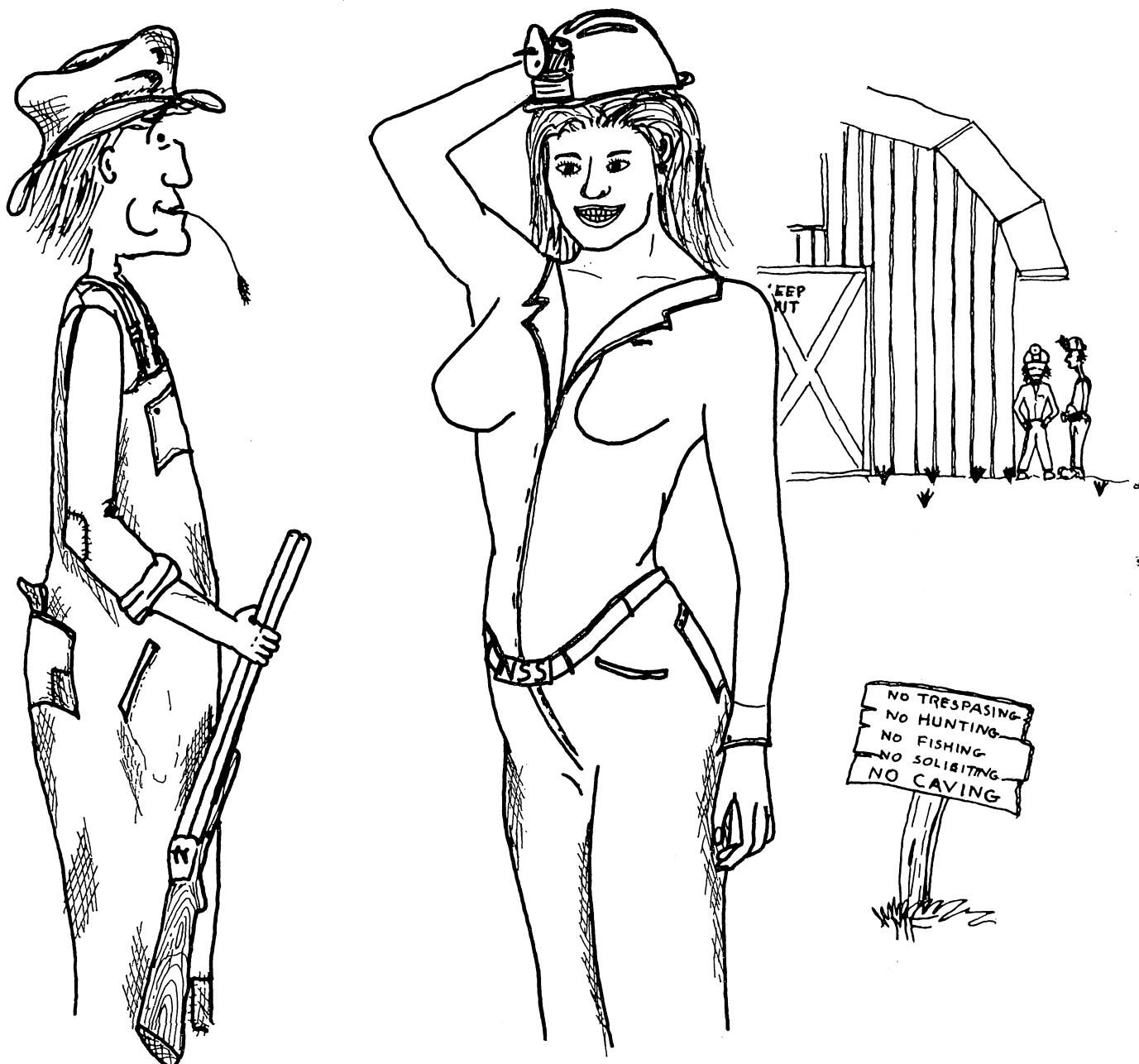
- 1) light source (i.e.- penlight, carbide and water, candle and matches, etc.)
- 2) food
- 3) specific cave-determined items

The items should all be placed in the Ziplock baggie and the light stick activated. One Balister Bag should be made up for each major intersection in the cave. If time or money permits, more could be made up for side passages or minor intersections. The search teams would take these in and leave them at the designated places.

It is hoped that the Cyalume would attract the lost caver and confine him to one area, making him easier to find. At the McClung's rescue, it was very possible that we missed the lost caver more than once. Quite possibly he was down a side passage looking for the way out and did not hear our voices. With the Balister bag, he would have been instructed to stay in one place, making him easier to find than if he was moving about.

The Balister Bags could be made up ahead of time and kept with the rescue gear.

Why sure you and your
friends can go in the
cave.



"The Landowner Game" (Variation III)

TRICKS of the TRADE

by Jim Washington

In five years of caving, I have experimented with caving equipment on most of my trips. Here, I will enlighten a few of you with some new stuff, and a few of you with stuff you already know and perhaps have forgotten. Some of these things are quite intuitive, and others really needed a good tryout for me to decide whether they were any good.

The first category of "experimental" stuff is stuff you might need in your cave pack.

1. The Dead Bic Lighter, Tip Cleaner, and Silva on a Shoestring Trick:

Drill a hole in the Bic and feed the shoestring through it. To one end, tie on your tip cleaner, and to the other, tie your Silva Compass. The Bic will provide a spark when you need it. The Silva is a wonderful aid to sketching; dial in the azimuth, align the big arrow with north on your sketch, use the millimeter scale for distance, and your sketch comes out in 25.4 feet to the inch! Keep this entire assembly in your pack when you are moving, and hang it around your neck when you stop to survey. You can always find all three in the dark by feeling around in your pack for a shoestring. What could be simpler?

2. The Bottle Trick:

Keep different sizes and shapes of bottles in your pack for different things. You need a bigger bottle for dump than for carbide, and still bigger for water if you cannot rely on cave streams for lamp water. I have found that there is one size of Nalgene bottle that has a neck opening just a little bigger than the neck of a carbide lamp bottom. This size bottle helps keep dump out of the cave environment if you place the neck of the lamp base inverted in the bottle, then knock the bottle bottom on a rock. The dump will come out nicely most of the time, and it saves wear and tear on the lamp base since the bottle will distribute the shock directly to the sides of the base without point trauma to one side or the other. For the worst stuck carbide problems, a toothbrush cleverly stashed in the dump bottle will work wonders; the handle will remove the carbide, and the brush can be used to clean the water drip. The best grocery store-bought bottles for water originally have something edible in them, for example chocolate syrup, not shampoo. You never get the soap taste out of a plastic bottle. Glass bottles and plastic bags are of course out of the question, because they break or melt (have you ever seen what a hot rack will do to a ziplock bag?), spilling all contents, creating a moldy mess in the bottom of your pack, aside from the obvious hazard of broken glass. If you have to use baby bottles, consider using animal or cartoon shapes. They are easy to identify without looking. I always keep "special treats" in my Fred Flintstone. Hip flasks for water work quite well, although you will need two or more for a long, dry trip.

3. The Old Duct Tape Trick:

It has been said that engineers put stuff together with chicken wire and duct tape. I have found no useful caving purpose for chicken wire, but duct tape has found its way onto my list of necessities. Several times, I have had to do immediate repairs on lamps with the stuff, or tape a spare light source to a helmet. I suppose it also would have practical use in medical emergencies, for taping down a bandanna over a wound, or maybe for securing a splint. Besides, a roll of duct tape fits nicely around my dump bottle and takes up very little room in the pack.

4. The Ever-popular Food Trick:

Beanee-Weenie, Spaghettios, Lasagna, Vienna Sausages, Roller Coasters, Chicken Soup, and many, many more gourmet delights are available in pop-top cans. Sometimes, the label comes off and you get a surprise in addition to the promise of a welcome change from gorp and candy bars. "Boxed" drinks also cave well. I have only had one of those explode in my pack, and that was when I was still carrying bent needle-nose pliers. Consider buying a stainless steel baby spoon at the grocery store; they are inexpensive, small enough to throw in the pack, and nearly indestructible. Use rocks and the can lid for a stove if you have to use hexamine tabs. The food is good enough cold, and the hexamine stoves I have seen are not worth the effort. If you want a hot sandwich, try carrying it in your helmet. It will get soggy, but should taste fine if you haven't been swimming. Don't carry unprotected pop-tarts in your pack unless you particularly enjoy eating a spherical mass of jelly surrounded by an enormous amount of dry, inedible crumbs. The only fresh fruits larger than raisins that cave well are firm and have tough skins. Oranges cave well, and I suppose that pomegranates would, too. Bananas, pears, and other mushy fruits do not.

5. A few other Essentials:

No discussion of what to put in your pack is complete without a list of sorts of the other essentials. Aside from the above and the three sources of light, you need spare parts for your lamp, pliers, tip cleaner, tip reamer (keep it in your spare felt), a plastic garbage bag (Miller bags are the best ; Lawn and Leaf Bags come a close second), a 30-foot piece of webbing, a bandanna or two, some sort of first-aid equipment, and a Swiss Army knife (keep it in a container, or it will be rusted shut when you need it.)

The last thing about packs I will say here is about waist straps. Most of you have shoulder packs that dangle about waist level, waiting for an opportune moment to throw you off -balance, get in the way on a climb, or trip you up while duckwalking. Waist straps are a partial solution to this. With a waist strap, you can position the pack in any position you want, and it will stay close to your body, lessening the chances of throwing you off

balance. The main problem with the waist strap is that if the pack gets turned around in a position that is bad, for instance under you in a belly crawl, it is quite difficult to reposition. Additionally, it makes taking your pack off a lot slower in an emergency. Suit yourself on this suggestion. Well, enough of pack stuff;

What do you really need in your car?

1. The TP Roll:

Keep a roll of toilet paper handy in your car. You can blow your nose on it (I have heard of cavers having "ugly snot" contests on the way back from Bone-Norman.) You can even use it for toilet paper, or to clear the fog from the windshield while you are driving. This stuff is an absolute necessity if you are going to be away from the house for any time at all.

2. The Stuff You Have at Home When You Need It Now:

Face it, there are many things you need to have in the car that haven't managed to get put there. For instance, a can opener comes in handy when you buy bottles of Molson or Grizzly, which do not have twist-off tops. And how about the change of socks and underwear that you always forget? Put those things in the car now, along with a cooler so you won't have to put up with tepid beer this Summer. A cork-screw has also come in handy.

I have adopted a philosophy that the car trunk is the ultimate place to store everything that "might come in handy." Of course, my car trunk is not a pretty sight. Moderation in car storage is preferable, as it is with many things. Despite this, a note of caution: Never, never forget to bring beer for after the cave trip. Beer is isotonic and replaces many of the fluids and salts that you lose while caving. Besides, you might get written up by the Drinking Techniques Committee for untraditional methods.

The last group of helpful hints in this article will deal with carbide lamps:

1. Put your spare gasket behind your reflector on your lamp. Intuitively, it will always be there if your primary gasket falls through a crack in breakdown.
2. Replace the felt in your lamp with a felt-shaped piece of dishwashing scrubber (a "scrunge pad".) These do not rot, thus last practically forever. They even work when wet.
3. Polish your reflector with car wax. You would be surprised how much brighter your lamp will seem, and it will also protect the finish so you won't have to buy new reflectors so often.

Well, that's all for this article. Let me know if you have any new ideas that I should try. I would be happy to review them in a future article.

MEXICO TRIP JOURNAL

by Richard Cobb

(Editor's note: the following is excerpted from Richard Cobb's journal that he kept on his recent trip south of the border.)

12/28/86 - 2:30 PM: Cueva del Abra - We're finishing up our first pit, a 380 foot "warmup" drop. Small by Mexican standards, it's the third deepest cave drop I've ever done. The cave has two entrances - a horizontal walk-in entrance on the side of the mountain and a vertical pit entrance on the top.

After the rappel, there is about a hundred foot climb up to reach the walking passage, which most of us used to exit. A bunch of locals appeared in the passage to watch the show, which they apparently see fairly often. I'm waiting at the top of the climb to guard the rope while writing.

The entrance to the walk-in part is visible from down on the road as a huge hole in the side of the mountain. The hike up was steep, much of it a nearly vertical climb up a rock face (which was not particularly dangerous nor difficult). The rocks were filled with solution holes and dotted with cactus, some flowers, and thousands of little bromeliads. The character of the vegetation was a curious mix of thorny, dry desert plants combined with viny, semi-jungle lushness and thickness.

We had to spread out to search the top of the mountain to find the pit entrance - which didn't take too long. We got hot enough on this cloudy day in winter to appreciate that we weren't here on a sunny day in the summer.

Just looking down the nearly 400 foot drop was enough to remind us what we were doing here. We're going to "do" pits 3 or 4 times this deep - Yeow! The two Canadians (Mike and Mark) hadn't much experience in climbing long drops and were pretty nervous. We sent them back up the rope to get some experience climbing a big pit before getting to the gigantic ones.

Monday, 12/29/86 - Hoya de las Guaguas - It sounded like a waterfall had started down in the pit. Then they started swirling out of the top - a spinning tornado of swifts or swallows. Parakeets had come out earlier, in small groups of 5 to 20, bright green and circling in tight formation as they squawked their way out. But these birds were not as brilliantly colored as the parakeets had been, more like the gray chimney swifts we see at home.

They came out of a cave about halfway down one of the sides of the pit and rose out in a swirling vortex in about a turn and a half. They continued at full force for about 10 minutes, then slowed and tapered off for another 10 minutes or so.

Everyone is getting settled down after the first gut-wrenching glimpses of the pit - an awesome hole that made you wonder why in the world you wanted to do this - especially when the cave tomorrow promised to be twice as deep. The day is cloudy, though it appears that the sun is trying to appear. Fog hangs in patches around us, sometimes actually flowing into the hole from the peak above, and periodically obscuring the view across the pit.

12/29/86 - 4 PM - The pit has been "done", and we're back at the vehicles preparing to head to the next camping spot.

We rigged 4 ropes in the pit - 2 on the high side (780 feet), and 2 on the low side (480 feet). Most people were waiting to rappel the high side, so I grabbed one of the barely used short ropes and went down without a wait.

After my early apprehension during the rigging, I felt amazingly calm going down the rope. The bottom of the pit was several acres in size. The large opening at the top admitted a fair amount of light, and much of the bottom was covered with knee to waist deep broad leafed plants, ferns, and moss. On one side, a huge hall with an entrance several hundred feet in diameter sloped steeply downwards. According to maps, we were at less than half of the total depth of the cave.

Periodically we'd hear disconcerting rushing sounds, like a large rock or rocks plummeting into the pit at terminal velocity. The first time I heard it I headed for shelter from rock fall. After it had happened several times we finally found out that it was groups of swifts diving into the pit. With wings pulled in they'd dive into the entrance at high speed - the noise we were hearing was them braking their descent as they neared the bottom.

I went for speed on the climb out - doing the short side in 19 minutes and a great deal of sweat.

(The group had planned on doing El Sotano de las Golondrinas on December 30, but a hard rain forced them to change their plans.)

Wednesday 12/31/86 - The sunrise was one of the most breath taking I've ever seen - over range after range of jagged peaks with fog filled valleys. The rain has stopped, and there isn't a cloud in the sky - the pit is on!

11 AM - Sotano de las Golondrinas - We had a hearty breakfast with yours truly as El Chefo, then packed our gear and made an hour and a half hike to the pit. An hour of that was on the road, with a vehicle carrying the gear. The last half hour was with the gear on our backs (the 2 ropes being carried by 2 porters), down a steep trail through fields, jungle, and dense bamboo thickets.

Start with a day's rest, a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast. Top that with an invigorating walk along the top of

the world in some of the most beautiful scenery and weather that God ever made - and you have one of those rare moments in life that make your heart sing with the joy of living!

We're at the top of the pit now, a hole so deep that it takes several minutes of peering into the gloom with shaded eyes before you can see the bottom (1,100 feet straight down!). Two flocks of parakeets have already risen from the pit. Since they are unable to fly directly out, they rise by circling - their squawks alerting us that they're coming well before we see them. Their electric green is brilliant in the sunlight, and in the right direction for photos.

My heart still sings, but that cold knife is also pressing itself into my belly at the thought of what we're about to do.

3:45 PM - bottom of Sotano de las Golondrinas - It's a magic, brilliant emerald green, twilight world. The dim light alters perception - distances are hard to judge. The bottom does not appear terribly large, until you see a person as a mere speck at the other side.

The opening at the top is an oval about 150 by 200 feet. I had rigged into the rope and lowered myself over the lip, all the while very purposefully looking anywhere but down, until I was thoroughly committed! A few feet down the rope, the walls of the cone shaped pit had receded, leaving me suspended in the midst of vastness. Dangling in that open space, I felt about as significant as a dust speck in a concert hall.

My rappel had been a rapid one - many people were still behind me in line. I timed my descent at 6 minutes, some people had taken a half hour. Four of my six brake bars were hot enough to sizzle water when I reached the end of the rappel.

At the bottom, the dimensions of the oval are about 500 by 1000 feet. You need to pick landmarks before walking away from the rope touch-down point or laying down any gear - it can be hard to find again in the twilight. Most of the bottom and one side of the hole are covered in emerald green moss - at times in the summer, sunlight briefly lights the floor. Parakeets squabble in their roosts on the walk far above us. Several small waterfalls trickle down one side. Periodically a white cloud will drift across the sky in such a way that the sunlight reflected from it doubles or triples the light level in here, making the green even more brilliant before twilight returns.

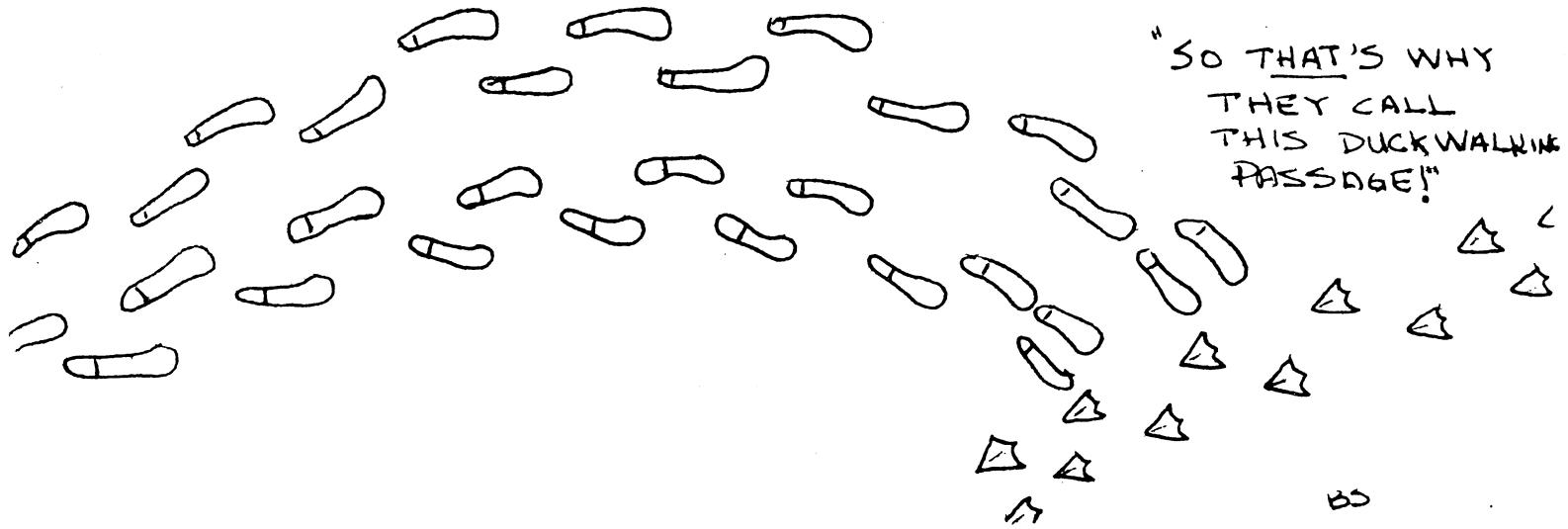
This magical realm, in existence for untold thousands of years, was seen by a human for the first time a mere 20 years ago. Bamboo spears, thrown by the locals, stand upright in the soil in great numbers - with even more scattered about. I grabbed one, to test how deeply it had been impaled in the soil. To my surprise, it nearly disintegrated in my hand when I tugged at it. How long had it been there? A year? 10? 100? Longer? An answer I'll never know.

9 PM - back in Tomapatz - Paul and I had been the third climbing team to leave the pit. He was above me and looking to do the climb as fast as he could. I stayed with him for awhile, but then he started getting away from me. I did the climb in under 43 minutes, and he was probably 5 minutes ahead.

We got another treat near the top - the swifts returning. They were coming home in a steady stream as the sun set - circling at the top and then diving in past us at high speed. The sounds of all the flapping wings and slowed descents echoed from the walls. (Note: Like Guaguas, this pit houses both parakeets and swifts. The translation of the name, Sotano de las Golondrinas, means "pit of the swallows". According to the Time-Life book on the Sierra Madre, it is misnamed, since the birds are actually black swifts).

I wondered how many of the birds have misjudged and crashed into the walls, or tried to brake a descent too rapidly - only to break a wing and plummet to their deaths. There had certainly been a plentiful supply of bird remains on the floor.

When I reached the top I was given the offer of returning to Tomapatz early to start dinner for the rest. Since this involved getting a ride back along the road instead of walking, I jumped at the chance. So the sweat from the climb had barely dried when we were off at nearly a run back up the steep trail to the road, trying to beat the darkness. Darkness fell while we were still on the trail, but we were in the open fields by then and able to find our way without lights.



MEXICO FEVER

by Craig Roberts

On a trip that lasted fifteen days and covered over 5,000 miles, it would be impossible to describe all the trials and errors or all the excitement and growth we all experienced. Although the book might be quite enjoyable to read, it would be just that, a book. Instead, I would just like to relate what the Mexico trip was for me.

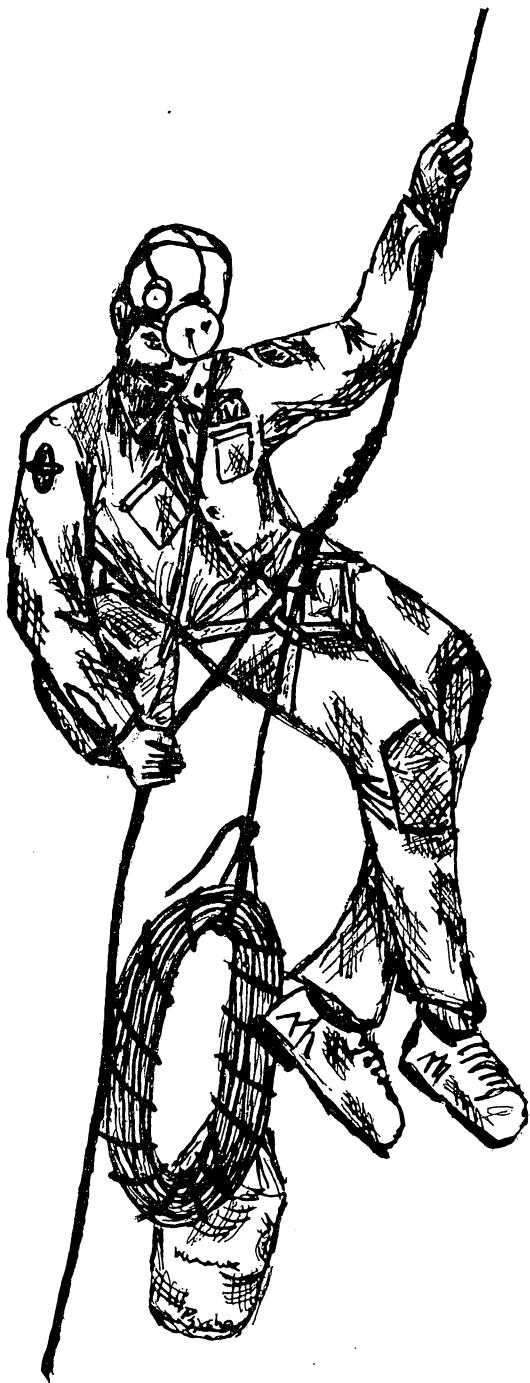
I started planning this years' trip somewhere between Houston and Texarkana, in the back of my mind, while driving home from last years trip with Maureen Handler. At the time, I was transportation-less, penniless, and unprepared to lead any sort of "expedition;" but then again, some of the best caving trips of my life have started out worse.

Although I could do nothing immediately about my dream, I kept the thought well guarded in the back of my mind. I feverishly worked last summer and eventually sank most of my savings into the ugly, brick of a Chevy I lovingly call "Sow". When I returned to campus this fall, I began spreading my disease of "Mexico Fever" to my friends, and soon they were all infected with the idea themselves. There is no vaccination against young, brash ideas except the wisdom of age, and being all students, except for Garrie Rouse, we were all a bit short on that. Of course, everyone knows that Garrie is a kid at heart. Thus, we were all caught up in the idea wholeheartedly, and soon we all set to work planning and preparing to face the awesome "vacation" we all desired for ourselves.

The enthusiasm of actually pulling the trip off drove us on, and our plan looked like it was going well. We tackled all the major obstacles of securing reliable transportation (ha, ha) and clearing the idea with our parents with relative ease. The rope purchase went smoothly too, as did convincing Alejandro Villagomez that our expedition would definitely be a blast. In fact, we did such a good job convincing him, that he quit his job in order to come with us!

The trip itself, although not without its problems, really did go quite smoothly. As with any expedition, all of the members play an integral part in pulling off the trip's goals. No one must feel left out or be overburdened in order for things to run smoothly. I know now that without the cooperation and understanding we all expressed, the trip would have been a disaster. On our trip, each and every person, in their own special way, pulled their load. Even though everyone had to make sacrifices, we managed to swallow our problems to the greater extent and have a really good time. Everyone grew a little bit wiser, too.

As I look back now, I will remember the rewards that I found in that vacation for the rest of my life. I recall looking at everyone's face in my lounge just before we left Blacksburg, and thinking to myself how innocent we all looked about the journey ahead. I also remember seeing everyone fifteen days later in the same room. Worn and haggard on the outside, they slowly trudged in and sat down, yet inside of each person I could see the good effects of the trip, and the growth we all shared. I think we are all a bit closer because of it.



Christmas Bug

by Cecile James

Since the recurrent virulent strain of speleo-travel shows no signs of retreating, this article is written to promote the survival of future victims. The specific strain of which I am speaking is the "Let's go do the big ones in Mexico over Christmas break" virus. You've all possibly read about seminars to turn stress into a positive force in your life? Well, I'm proposing that through proper commitment, planning and treatment you can turn your encounter with the LGDTBOIMOXB virus into a positive growth experience.

This bug is for real and should not be discounted. Once you catch it, it is better to let it run its course. Those who find their case arrested prematurely need to give other more committed individuals early warning or they will find their future credibility threatened. They may find themselves forever ranked among the uncommitted.

Planning is all important for this:

E xperience of a

L ifetime

S upplies - wisely chosen, never enough and always too much

O mph-somehow days of travel, nights of partying and hours of sloshing through mud can undue hours of practice on rope

T erritory - includes who's in charge and sharing makes the trip go easier

A ttitude-for adaptation to various situations, a bit of Spanish and a lot of gall in using it and whatever else to get along

N uts and bolts - enough gear all checked and double-checked for condition

O rganization - a place for everything, a travel plan, road maps, division of labor and a spirit of cooperation

TREATMENT:

The only proven treatment for the LGDTBOIMOXB virus is to GO. (Research has proven that the cure is only 10% effective, however, since most of the victims are heard planning the next episode shortly after their return.)

I hope that by now you will realize that the virus is not to be taken lightly. Do all you can to prevent exposure but if, despite all measures, you find you are bitten -

TAKE HEED OF EL SOTANO!

Quotable Quotes:

Wow, this is vegetatively beautiful! GR

Joan, you've got a big ass. KT

We could make beautiful slides together because cavers don't make music. PH

God knows where all the virgin passage is. CF
God knows where all the virgins are. PB

Me and Craig don't do that kind of stuff in public. It's more like pinch your rear end kind of stuff. BW

Just put that thing in your mouth. PH to BW

I can't remember who I slept with last night. PH

I can screw people really good, but I don't like to. AV

Is your thing salty? JF to KT

I don't like small balls. SS

What does O.F. stand for? Original Fuck-up? BW

No, Old Fart. BS

Same difference. BW

Imagine a million bats hitting you with sonar all at the same time. BF

Ko man, get up. CF

Look's like Ko's not coming, I think I'll go home and take a nap. JJ

You Know You're a Trainee When You:

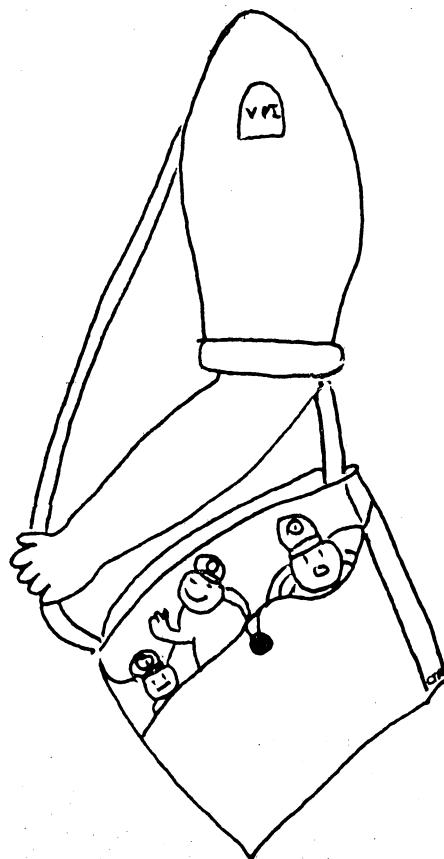
by Craig Roberts

1. Don't own a carbide lamp
2. Know less than 10 people at the party
3. Never flamed out
4. Try caving as an excuse to make up an exam
5. Can still wear your cave clothes to the cave
6. Are told to carry the rope
7. Think your 5-cell "maxi-mag" will be a revolutionary new idea in caving
8. Are constantly threatened with having your mouth duct-taped on long trips
9. Climbing rope excites you
10. Wash your cave clothes
11. Pack weighs less than 20 lbs
12. Are too tired to party after a trip
13. Don't know what OTR stands for
14. Don't see why this article is funny

Your Score:

If you can relate to:

- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| >12 | Is this the cave club meeting? |
| 10-12 | Occasional caver |
| 8-10 | Ambitious Trainee |
| 4-8 | Voting Trainee |
| <4 | Caver |



From the Signout Sheet:

This quarter, VPI logged 882.25 man hours on only 32 trips! A lot of people went caving and on long trips. There were only 4 mapping trips (2 to Stompbottom and 2 to Paul Penley's). 15 trips were longer than 5 hours with 5 of these longer than 9 hours. KO TAKAMIZAWA again logged the most hours underground with 37. There was one minor injury. Cave Safely!!

1/10/87	Capes	Monroe Co. Gang	MY CAVE HAS BEEN SOLD!
1/24/87	Paul Penley's	Ed Devine, J. Johnson Ko Takamizawa, J. Washington, M. Futrell	Buddy Penley 1, Datsun Tail Gate 0 Futrell & Washington are wimps. When can we call this thing <u>done?</u>
2/14/87	Tony's	Ed Fortney, J. Hartman & 8 boy sprouts	My head hurts so Bad; Get away from me you little Brat!
2/21/87	Tony's	C. Roberts, B. Fizer	Mud wars. Tim W.-first time went to same cave 2x. See Jane Cave.
2/14/87	Stompbottom	G. Rouse, D. McClurg, M. Fiore, J. Washington, K. Takamizawa, J. Ford, D. Abernathy, J. Johnson	The farthest reaches of the cave are now a bit farther. It's getting to be a rough cave.
2/28/87	New River	J. Simonds, B. Simonds C. Roberts, J. Uknalis B. Wichterman, S. Kudlass	Almost only counts in horse shoes. Cool "death before dishonor" climb. We tried.