

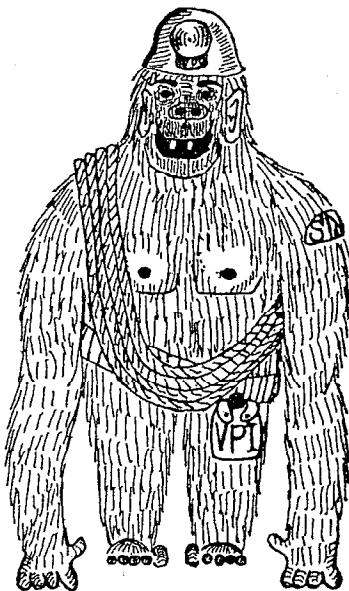
# THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

Box B-5  
Va. Tech Station A  
Blacksburg, Va.

Vol. III, No. 3

Spring Quarter, 1965



## Grotto Officers

President.....Paul Helbert  
Vice-president...R.E. Whittemore  
Secretary.....Craig Peters  
Treasurer.....Ed Morgan

## Troglodyte Staff

Associate Editor...Anne Braithwaite  
Copy Editor.....Cary McCutchen  
Managing Editor....R.E. Whittemore

- COVER: Studio portrait of "Teddy Bear" Bauer.
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## EDITOR'S COLUMN

Every grotto wants status. When we discovered that none of the big-name grottos publish on time, we couldn't bear to be different. We therefore delayed publication of the Spring Troglydyte for this reason. This is just another step in the improvement of the status of student grottos.

New officers have been elected, and this presents us a problem. Our grotto elects officers each spring, near the end of the school year. The reasons for this are both obvious and good. However, the NSS News publishes new grotto officers at almost the same time -- each spring. Result - our old officers are listed for the entire year and our new slate of officers appears on the News just before elections which thusly makes that listing obsolete. We never catch up.

Anyway, Paul Helbert is our new president; R. E. Whittemore, among his many other duties, remains vice-president; Craig Peters decided to stay on as secretary; and Ed Morgan is our new treasurer.

VPI finally has a patch. It sells for \$1.00 to members and \$1.75 to non-members. The design is a full-length likeness of John Veitch inside a carabiner. John is wearing a hard hat and light, has a rope over his shoulder, a canteen at his side, and his hands dragging the ground. His looks are Oriental, but this is understandable, since the patches were ordered from Japan. With six different colors, VPI can truthfully boast a "colorful" patch.

Ed Bauer gave a report on VPI's trainee system at the '65 Convention. This is our answer to the problem of conservation. The convention was the best-attended so far; congratulations, Indiana cavers.

PSC's loss is our gain. Anne Braithwaite, former editor of the Potomac Caver, has moved to Blacksburg and is now Associate Editor of the Tech Troglydyte. Annie is a welcome edition to our staff. Now, only the "World's Most Active Caving Organization" can boast of having a gremlin on their newsletter staff. Thank you, PSC!

Copy Editor  
(Gary McCuthchen)

## NEW METHOD OF DIVINING

As many of our more or less regular readers have noticed, the opening pages of the Troglodyte are usually reserved for new technical information. This time we are re-printing a letter that comes to us by way of Paul Helbert, who worked for the State Geological Survey last summer. The original letter was sent to the Soil Conservation Service Department of the United States Department of Agriculture, and typed copies were sent to engineering geologists, EMF units. An introduction to the letter reads:

"The attached procedure for locating water wells was recently referred to me. I have not evaluated the procedure but on the surface it appears to surpass the use of a peach bough and it appears to be founded on sounder physical principles."

We are re-printing the letter here due to a recent article in the NSS NEWS which explained how divining could be used to locate caves. Perhaps the method described herein could be applied in the same manner. (Of course, we don't believe that there is any such thing as an entranceless cave. It's just that some caves have entrances that are underground.) No attempt has been made to correct spelling errors in the letter.

Managing Editor

Dear Mr. Culp:

I knoe you cant admit the fact publickly since that research program probably cost a pile of money but I am sure by now you have given up the idea of ever finding much water with the truck lode of elecktrick junk you been sending all over the country. Stands to reason since as far as I knoe nobody every found any alecktricity in any water fit to drink and whats more if there wus do you think them elecktrickal engineers wood send all that water thru a helluva big waterwoeel and a elecktricity generator? you knoe they woodnt. They wood squeeze it right out of the water without any foolishness. Despite the fact that they been on the rong track for years them felloes working for you are a reel nice bunch of felloes and I wood like to help them outa the hole there in. About two years ago I discovered a breed of lizzards in a spring-house in Wisconsin that has an unuzal talent for lowcating under-ground water. They get all there food outa the water there in and if you keep them in rain water with no food in it for about two weeks they get so hungry they can here water runnin under-ground even if its two hunderd feet down. All you have to do is to set one of these hungry lizzards in a round glass dish full of rain water on the ground close to where you are looking for water then wen he settles down you drive two stakes in the ground so they line up with the directshun that lizzards looking.

Then move him about twenty feet an wen he settles down you drive two more stakes so they line up with the new directshun that lizzard is lookin. Then you streh a string between the secund two stakes and another string between the first two stakes. Wear them two strings cross you boer youre well and you dont have to get worked up in a swet worring about wether youre goin to hit water-- you can bet youre bottom you will and lay back and smoke cigars wile the dam drell rig hammers on the hole.

There are sum tecknikal questicns about these lizards that I wood like to call to youre attention at this point. I went up to a university in Pencilvainia an talked to Doctor Otto Van Zander in the Bylolgie Department there to get this informytion an he sent me a bill for 100 bucks--therefore I hope you note the following with reverence and care.

(1) Sum of these lizards needs callibration. They got a miner rite or left hand airor that cumns from the fact that the distance from there branes to one eer aint ezactly the saim as the distance from there branes to the other eer. Doc Van Zander says this fowls up his audyo perspecktive and that kind of a lizard dont look square in the direcyshun of water. But I knoe how to callibrate one like that.

(2) You got to put thease lizards in a round jar big enouf for him to turn around easy. Doc Van Zander says that if the jar has corners the lizard heers refleckted sound waives off the flat sides and gets confuzed. You caint callibrate even a good lizard in a square jar.

(3) For hi sensetivity you got to let theese lizards get hungry. Its a kind of a delikate art knowing wen theese lizards are at there peek sensetivity. One day you got a reel sensetive lizard and the next day you got a dead lizard from starvation. For that reason you shud by at least 4 of theese lizards for a start

In conclushun I wood like to send you 10 good lizards. They bin checked for reel low audyo prespecktive airor-les than the dyemeter of the hole at two hundred feet. All 10 are picked for sensetivity--if a lizard dont look down the road toward the Gulf station shortly after somebody goes in the rest room down there we knoe he cant here water run at 4 hunderd feet and we reject him-- we do allow him to miss one time out of 3 becaus you never knoe what sum people go in a rest room for. Advyse me by return male an I will ship you 10 by express. Try all 10 an if they dont tell you exactly where the water is you dont owe me a dam cent. After proper trile you will owe me 50 bucks. If it wasnt for that 100 bucks Doc Van Zander charged me I would give you the first ten.

I aint so good a speller but I know about lizards. I gotta dickshunary but its no good--if you dont knoe how to spell a word it takes a helluva wile to find where it is in the book and if you knoe how to spell it you dont need the dam book.

## WHAT IS A TROGLODYTE?

Have you ever noticed the evolution of technical language these past few years? It seems that every group has a new jargon all their own, which to the outsider may seem quite odd. For instance a shift, which to most people is a style of women's dress which resembles a maternity garb (and for several serves the same purpose), is a knife to the average punk.

Cavers also have their own language which tends to astound and confuse the average non-caver. The idea occurred to me to ask the average "man on the street" what a few caving terms were. Although the vast majority answered that they didn't know, a few stalwarts (who evidently didn't want to profess any lack of knowledge on any unknown subject) gave the following answers.

Question: What is a troglodyte?

Replies:

"It's one of those religious monk orders out in the west, I think."

"That's some kind of a new material that they're using for nose cones on missiles."

"I heard the term once in phys. ed., but I can't remember it now."

"Isn't that what they call the freshmen at Roanoke College?"

"I don't know what the hell it is, but this guy I know is always talking about them and his damned cave club."

Question: What are prusiks?

Replies:

"Aren't they those Russian guys the czar tried to cut the whiskers off?"

"They're some kind of shell fish we get served in the mess hall."

Question: What are speleothems?

Replies:

"They're some gals who got some kind of sexual abnormalities, ain't they?"

"Are they edible?"

"I think that that's what the vet said made my dog sick after he was scrounging around in the garbage can."

## VIRGINIA'S BIG CAVES

I knew before I wrote this article that it would cause no end of strife, mainly because true facts are harder to find than I thought they would be, and many of these are disputed. However, I decided to publish it anyway in hopes that a few angry and/or informative letters would clear up some of the mystery surrounding several of the caves involved, and I could re-publish the article in a future issue applying fresh information.

The purpose of this article is to set forth a list ranking all major Virginia caves according to length of passage. Only caves of at least one mile are represented, for obvious reasons. Most of the information used came from the sometimes questionable accounts in Douglas, even more questionable notes in the V.P.I. files, and highly questionable discussions with other cavers. Since there is such a great amount of vagueness in these sources, I will make no apologies if I am incorrect in these classifications, and simply state that errors are due to pure ignorance. Here they are, in descending order:

(1) Butler's Cave (Bath County) 10+ miles mapped, possible 13 miles known to exist. Not many people will argue with this. Information via Mike Hamilton.

(2) Breathing Cave (Bath County) Estimates have run as high as 8 miles, but the Nittany Grotto map only shows a little over 4 miles.

(3) Newberry-Bane's System (Bland County) Now the fun begins. A note in the V.P.I. files, under the name Tom Bunker, says "4 miles". A note by Earl Thierry says "Over 2 mi. of passages". His map only shows about two miles, but a great deal more exists in the area below the straddle pit, etc. If we only had Earl's original survey notes, we could add another few miles to his map and retain #3 status. Also, there are 3 distinct possibilities of blasting open more passages. Some people will disagree, but Newberry's is third for the time being.

(4) Gilley's Cave (Lee County) Easily fourth, if not third. In Douglas, Earl Geil is quoted in the description; "Over 16,000 feet...has been mapped, and close to 20,000 feet...has been explored." This cave just goes to show the possibilities offered by Southwestern Virginia.

(5) Miller's Cove Cave (Roanoke County) I may be sticking my neck out again, but I've seen the cave and believe that at least 3 miles exist, possibly more. A note in the V.P.I. files says, "9,000 feet on preliminary survey, 18,000 feet explored."

(6) Buchanan Salt peter Cave (Smyth County) Here is a real surprise, but Douglas quotes W. Stephenson, (1948) in the description; "about 2.5 miles of passage." The map doesn't quite bear this out, however.

(7) Crossroads Cave (Bath County) "The total length of mapped passage is approx. 2 miles" quotes Douglas. The map seems to confirm this.

(8) Luray Caverns (Page County) There is always a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the actual extent of a commercial cave. A quote in Douglas says; "The total length of all passages will not exceed 2 miles." -- L. H. Durloo. How's that for vagueness? That statement could be applied to quite a few caves smaller than the ones listed below.

(9) Porter's Cave (Bath County) Douglas says "There are 8,500 feet of passage..." An accurate map by Holsinger & others seems to verify this.

(10) Clark's Cave (Bath County) Douglas quotes: "more than 8,000 feet of passage." -- J. Holsinger and R. Detterman.

(11) Endless Caverns (Rockingham County) The actual length is not publicly known, but the commercial tour is 7,000 feet in length. Since the tour doesn't cover nearly all of the cave, the cave may possibly rank higher. Does anyone have any higher estimates?

(12) New River Cave (Giles County) Over 6000 feet have been mapped by Bill Grenoble and others of the VPI Grotto. More remains, but nothing significant.

(13) Stonley's Cave (Tazewell County) This cave was a real problem to classify. Approximately 6000 feet was mapped by the VPI Grotto in 1960, but it was mapped by brunton and pacing. I shall rank it thirteenth, since I ranked Newberry's and Miller's Cove fairly high.

(14) Clover Hollow Cave (Giles County) This one just barely makes it as a mile-long cave.

That's about it for caves of over a mile long in this state. Does anyone have any new information? It would be interesting to compile a list of Virginia's largest caves based on accurate surveys, but one can easily see the lack of standards that would be involved, such as accuracy of survey, reliability of source, etc.

A list such as the one published here could never be accepted as a final ranking until all caves were completely and accurately surveyed. Even then, a complete map of each cave wouldn't provide the final information. The actual footage must be computed directly from the survey notes. Meanwhile, this seems like a good question to argue about. Write us if you have more information.

A RÉSUMÉ OF THE INFORMATION COLLECTED ON VIRGINIA CAVES SINCE 1962

(Editor's note: This article is intended to bring VPI Grotto members up-to-date on new and/or little-known caves in Virginia. It is hoped that this grotto will take an active part by both finding new caves and collecting more data on known caves.)

The Caves of Virginia contained all available information recorded in the Virginia Cave Survey files through July, 1962. Subsequent to that time, however, a certain amount of new and pertinent data have been compiled. A summary of this additional material is presented in the following report.

Files of the Virginia Cave Survey contains information on the following new caves:

LEE COUNTY: Back Valley Quad, Glass, Water; Middlesboro South Quad, Bridge, Cliff, Lewis Branch, Quarry, Turtle, Upper Lewis Hollow; Rose Hill Quad, Engle's, Smith's Milk; Varilla Quad, Branch, Grassy Springs, Station Creek; Wheeler Quad, Barnes Hollow, Unnamed, Wheeler (#2).

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY: Harrisonburg Quad, Deer Drop, Ryman's Hole.

RUSSELL COUNTY: Carbo Quad, Unnamed; Lebanon Quad, Sykes; Holl Creek Quad, Castle Run Church, Marion, Meade's #1 and #2, Hinton, Wolf.

SCOTT COUNTY: Clinchport Quad, Cox Run Pump, Franklin, Norton, Mortons Dry, Torts Pump, Kitchen; East Stone Gap Quad, Cox Ridge, Roadside Shelter.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY: Strasburg Quad, Suters.

SKYTH COUNTY: Atkins Quad, Little Roberts.

TAZEWELL COUNTY: Burkes Garden Quad, Lawson, Moss #1, #2, and #3; Pounding Hill Quad, Bowens, Thompson's Sewer; Richlands Quad, Blasted, Sheep.

Additional information has been collected on new caves in Bland County by the VPI Grotto, and a revision of the caves of Giles County is being prepared by Gregg Marland. To date, however, reports of these projects have not been deposited with the Virginia Cave Survey and details were not available for this report.

New information has been recorded on the following caves previously reported in Caves of Virginia:

LEE COUNTY: Back Valley Quad, Bacon; Ewing Quad, Burial, Fry, Long's; Middlesboro South Quad, Cumberland Gap Saltpeter, Indian, Little Saltpeter, Skylight; Rose Hill Quad, Gregory, Lucy Beatty, Seal; Wheeler Quad, Fugate-Young (originally reported as two caves

but recently connected by exploration), Wheeler Pit.

RUSSELL COUNTY: Holl Creek Quad -- Banners Corner.

SCOTT COUNTY: Clinchport Quad -- Alley, Flannery (Fannery).  
Looney's Gap Quad -- Redcat.

TAZEWELL COUNTY: Burkes Garden Quad -- Cassel Farm.  
Pounding Mill Quad -- Hugh Young (apparently the same as Thompsons #1  
and Cove School)

Recent exploration and mapping have also been carried out by  
the U.VA. Grotto in Paxton's Cave (Allegheny Co.) and Gilley Cave  
(Lee Co.), by the Holston Valley Grotto in Unthank's Cave (Lee Co.),  
and by a number of persons in Butler-Sinking Creek Cave (Bath Co.).  
Results of these projects are not yet known to the Virginia Cave  
Survey.

Maps have been recently completed or are now being prepared of  
the following caves: Lee Co. -- Fugate-Young (Fugate entrance  
section only), Smiths Milk, Indian (Middlesboro South Quad), Little  
Salt peter, Unthanks, and Gallohan #1 (addition to the map made in  
1961); Scott Co. -- Cox Ridge, Flannery, Alley (Clinchport Quad);  
and Hortons; Russell Co. -- Banners Corner (Revised sketch map)  
and Wolf.

Much work remains to be done in the caves of Virginia and it  
goes without saying that there are many opportunities for individual  
cavers as well as entire caving groups to make substantial con-  
tributions to the files of the Virginia Cave Survey.

Sometime during the fall of 1965 a meeting of all cavers  
seriously interested in working on the Virginia Cave Survey will be  
held on the V.P.I. Campus in Blacksburg. This will be in conjunction  
with the annual meeting of the Virginia Region which is now tent-  
atively scheduled to take place in October. Details on this meeting  
will be available at a later date.

John R. Holsinger  
Institute of Speleology, University of Kentucky, Lexington

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DON'T READ THIS

...if you know that Gregg Marland is no longer editor of the  
Tech Trogolodyte, and that exchange publications should be sent to  
Box B-5 insted of 4707.

## COIPLAINT DEPARTMENT

We did receive one other letter commenting on our last issue, and it was really unusual. It seems that someone actually found fault with it. This really amazed us, because we have worked very hard to make the "Tech Troglodyte" the best speleological journal printed by any Grotto, and we believe we have attained this goal.

Nonetheless, a letter from a Mr. "C" criticized us heavily for a certain comment which was meant to be humorous. Evidently, we milked one of Mr. C's sacred cows. We here at V.P.I., evidently being more broad-minded than some people, have no sacred cows, nor do we shudder before the caterwalls of those who do.

Since complaints seem to be the order of the day, perhaps this is the place for a few that we here at V.P.I. have. It is a shame that the last Virginia Region meeting had to be held the weekend before exams here at Tech. This seriously hampered our attendance, but we were represented. But it is a shame that our representatives had to go to Endless Caverns for almost no reason. You see, except for the election of officers, no business was discussed or voted upon. Perhaps the inconvenient date is the price we have to pay for being a student grotto, but who's fault was it that the meeting only accomplished 50 per cent of its intended purpose? The official business was eventually conducted -- 280-odd miles from V.P.I. in Washington, D. C. At least New Market was centrally located. How long can we afford to be part of the Virginia Region at this rate?

But I've gotten off the subject a bit. There is something I forgot to say about Mr. C's letter. He said that our last issue would hurt us as a student grotto. Now it really seems odd that he would say this. Best I remember, a letter signed "Virginia" appeared in a certain newsletter last summer and the answer started out by saying, "Yes, Lew, there is a Virginia."

How can someone criticize us for hurting student grottoes when they seem to be directing many efforts in the same direction.

R. E. Whittemore -- Managing Editor

submitted for publication: Jan. 8, 1965

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## SPELEOTHOUGHT OF THE MONTH:

In light of all the sit-ins and lie-ins going on around the country, why doesn't the V.P.I. Grotto invite the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee down for a cave-in.

## VIRGINIA REGION SOCIAL, DECEMBER 5 &amp; 6, ENDLESS CAVERNS, VA.

The supposed yearly business meeting of the Va. Region barely qualified as yearly and certainly didn't qualify as a business meeting. A fall social might have been a better name for it--re-election of heroes, slide shows of the desert, commercial caving, etc., etc.

I guess I'm just bitter because, after each grotto was given the choice of two dates for the proposed meeting (either of which was suitable to V.P.I.), a third date was chosen by the hierarchy, placing the big day on the weekend before exams. (This is one way to cripple those sophmorish student grottoes.) In spite of this poor planning, nine of us arrived at the Endless Caverns Lodge early Saturday afternoon.

After a quick tour through Endless Caverns, led by Bob Blackburn we met above ground in the chilly meeting hall and listened to the presentation of several papers. The first dissertation was one by Roy Charlton on the use of magnetic induction devices for the purpose of communication and location in caving. Much time and expense had evidently gone into Roy's research, judging by the large coils and electrical equipment which he has used to successfully locate underground passages from the surface.

Sara Corrie, from West Virginia, gave a talk on "Relationships of Geological Structure to the Origins and Development of Caves in Folded Limestone Regions." This illustrated lecture was made that much more interesting when Sara used examples of caves in our area with which most of us were familiar.

After a short talk by Bill Stephenson on a summer trip to the Rio Camoy system with Russ Gurnee and families, we were treated to one of Lovable John Cooper's slide shows, called "Further Adventures of a Misplaced Dud."

Directly after this came the business meeting at which each grotto is represented by two representatives; WVACS had one, and the region at large had one. The business consisted solely of the re-election of John Cooper as chairman and Betty Lloyd as secretary, and the election of Bill Karras as vice-chairman. Although it was clearly evident that many topics of regional interest demanded solutions, dinner was served and the business meeting was promised to be resumed in January. (The date was finally set for March 6th.)

After a leisurely chicken dinner was served to most of us in the lodge restaurant, we adjourned to the meeting room for the evening session.

Lyle Conrad gave a very alarming and interesting report on caves which have been closed in the Va. Region. Several other names of closed caves were added from those in the audience and it was certainly made evident that we have a serious regional problem. A list of the closed caves is forthcoming. The problem seems to be primarily the usual one--discourtesies to the land owner.

George Titcomb and Liason Sproul then proceeded to show slides on the Texas-Mexican trips of the past year, after which people headed for parties and such.

After we (V.P.I. cavers) spent a comfortable night at Alan Armstrong's in nearby Gaheysville we arose early and headed for 3-D Haze Cave.

There we met a rather large group of cavers from American University and several others from Friendship Heights, all seemingly in a state of confusion. (They seemed to think we were in a state of intoxication). We stumbled through the cave, descending the drops and amusing ourselves in listening to the comments of several of the flashlight-toting neophytes. After this sobering experience we piled into our cars and arrived back at Tech by 8p.m. on Sunday.

Ed Bauer

submitted for publication: February 22, 1965

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#### VIRGINIA REGION COUNCIL MEETING, MARCH 6, 1965

A meeting of the officers and two representatives of each grotto in the Va. Region was held on the American University Campus. Also present were a representative at large and a WVACS representative, plus about 15 other interested cavers. Chairman John Cooper opened what I think will prove to be one of the most successful ventures the region has ever attempted.

Discussed at the 3½ hour, well-run meeting were:

1. Decided that the fall Va. Region meeting would be held in Blacksburg tentatively on October 9 & 10, 1965.
2. The spring project will be held in Greenbrier County, West Va., the first weekend in May. Work will be done in Fuller's and many of the other caves in the area.
3. Discussed proposal to pay V.P.I. for phone calls made during the recent Snedegar's incident. V.P.I. refused, saying that the \$11+ bill was their own fault and not that of the region. We feared that somewhat of a precedent might be set in the financing of future rescue efforts.
4. Discussed and set record straight on Snedegar's incident.
5. U.Va. presented list of telephone numbers and people who would participate in cave rescue communications network. They also explained how the system was to work.

6. A suggestion was made for each grotto to take their master copy of Caves of Virginia and include, next to the description of particular caves, the name(s) of those grotto members most familiar with that cave.
7. Discussed and decided that there was no specific plan to be decided beforehand on who would take charge once a rescue group got to a cave. Each instance is different and would be worked out when it come up.
8. Made known that National Capital Grotto Rescue Squad is a seperate entity from NCG and the NSS, and that neither is responsible for the Rescue Squad's actions.
9. Decided that efforts to contribute to the Propsts, owners of Propst's Cave, W.Va., would be referred to as NSS rather than Virginia Region.
10. A Region Publication was discussed, and a committee set up to see if the idea is feasable and/or workable.
11. Henry Douglas made known that his policy on the sale of Caves of Virginia was to not sell it to libraries and to limit and discourage large orders to dealers. He said that about 99% of sales were to NSS members.
12. It was decided that a joint Mid-Appalachian Region (MAR)-Va. Region get-together--fun caving weekend would be held in Bath County, Va., on July 10-11, 1965.
13. V.P.I. made known that they are working on cave legislation in Virginia and West Virginia. A committee was set up to look into it.
14. A proposal to hold somewhat of an "extra" convention in the east in 1966 for those who might not be able to go to the 25th anniversary convention in California was discussed. It would be held at a time different from the Sequoia Convention.
15. Regional policy was established on the NSS Bulletin. We are in favor of integrating the highly scientific atricles with those of more universal appeal; that is, to more than 10% of the NSS membership, as is now the case.
16. A short discussion of the closing of caves in the Va. Region was held. People are looking into the possibility that the entrances to many caves, including Schoolhouse, are under long-time lease to the NSS.

A second Council meeting will be held at the spring project in May. I think everyone present felt that through closer unity of the various grottoes, as was seen at this meeting, the Region will grow in strength and influence, and as a result serve its members better. The Region became further unified at a party following the meeting, where all the representatives revelled and scraped together.

Ed Bauer

submitted for publication; March 10, 1965

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#### MORE REMARKS ON THE SINGLE BRAKE BAR

I read, with a great deal of interest, two recent articles by Dick Sanford which appeared in the Potomac Caver. The articles dealt with rappeling hardware, and particularly the single brake bar. (refer to Vol. viii, issues no. 8, 10-11) They were well written and accurate, and they showed a clear understanding of the physical principals involved in the operation of a mechanical rappelling device. Also they were objective, giving both the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods of descent. Dick explains their operation and points out the possible hazards.

Therefore, I am puzzled by the point by point attack these articles received from Peter Grant (Jan. '65). Pete's remarks were, for the most part, unconstructive and unnecessarily sarcastic. He brought out several valid points, but discredited them by filling the rest of his essay with poorly-founded personal opinions and vague generalities, a sharp contrast to Dick's more scientific approach.

Pete opens by stating that he is against the single brake bar because he wants to "keep hospitals and graveyards empty of cavers", implying that the single brake bar is suicidal. His motive is admirable; we all want to prevent caving accidents. He then mentions two accidents in which the caver involved was using a single brake bar, concluding that the accidents occurred because the single brake bar was used. With all due respect to Pete, this is a very poor line of reasoning. The first accident he mentioned occurred last spring in Newberry-Bane's Cave near V.P.I. This resulted not from the use of the SBB, but from the use of poor judgement on the part of the leaders of the trip. From all I have determined from talking with people involved, the victim was completely unqualified, by virtue of her inexperience, to take the 180' rappel. By having been permitted to enter the cave by those who should have known better, she should certainly have had a belay from above, which she did not.

I personally know of one fatal accident where the victim was using a body rappel. I have seen or heard of accidents involving

carabiner rappels, single brake bars, and every other type of rappeling device. These accidents were caused by inexperience, errors in judgement, or violation of simple safety practices, and not by the inherent characteristics of the rappeling method. None of them could reasonably be used as a reason for condemning a particular method. We have all seen close friends killed in auto accidents. Are we about to condemn the automobile for the human misuse of it? In his efforts to keep cavers out of hospitals and graveyards, Pete is badly missing the point when he attacks a single rappeling method.

Most of the more rewarding human activities can be dangerous in the hands of foolish or inexperienced persons. This includes rappeling, caving itself, skiing, automobile driving, canoeing, mountain climbing, swimming and many others. All of these activities involve the use of judgement and skills which must be patiently taught and carefully practiced. Only then can these activities be entered in safety. During my early months of caving I received the best instruction available. Older and wiser cavers prevented me from attempting the too difficult too soon. I have rappelled with the single brake bar for over four years, having tried all the popular methods and picking this one as my favorite. I have never had an accident with this device, nor have any of the cavers to whom I have taught it.\* This does not mean that the SBB is, by its nature, danger free. It simply means that it is quite safe in the proper hands.

It must be said of Dick Sanford's articles that they are incomplete. Surely Dick would admit this himself. A complete treatment of the broad subject of rappeling would require volumes. He skipped lightly over the subject of belays, both overhead and prusik, without which there can be no safety on long rappels. But his subject was rappeling hardware, not the safety assessories which are used with them. Also, some of Dick's statements are his opinions and could be subject to debate. For instance, I would not consider rappeling without gloves. Also, in my own opinion, the SBB should always be performed with the rope behind the caver, across his seat, for the very reason given by Dick. And I would never recommend the use of a belay from below because of the danger of falling debris. But these are all matters of personal opinion and it is senseless to extol one's own methods and attack everyone else. In short, Dick's articals, though very good, bear room for some discussion and differing opinions. But I think Peter Grant's remarks are overly critical and one-sided.

\*Note to Pete Grant: I am not especially strong and hardly possess the "Herculian strength" which you describe as necessary to operate the SBB rappel.

Edward Day

reprinted from the Potomac Caver, March 1965.

## SINGLE BRAKE BAR RAPPEL IS SAFE

It seems that Pete Grant has become highly critical of something about which he knows very little. When used properly the single brake bar rappel is one of the safest and most comfortable methods known.

Several years ago I would have probably been in agreement with him, for at that time I had not seen it used properly and had had no instruction in its use. So I tried what I imagined to be the method used by others. I fastened the carabiner with brake bar to my swiss seat and ran the rope through the rig properly. Since I was used to the Army's hasty rappel I placed my right hand (brakeing hand) on the rope behind my right side and began the descent. The trip down was terrifying. I found that it took a great deal of strength to even slow down, and that it was almost impossible to stop. I gave this method up as foolhardy. This is not the correct execution of the single brake bar rappel, and points up the value of first-hand instruction.

Here, for those who haven't seen it, is a brief description of the method. The rope from above passes through the single brake bar which is clipped by a second carabiner to the swiss seat. It then (for a right-handed person) passes around the left hip and across the buttocks where the right hand acts as the brake. The right arm must be extended somewhat for the descent, and the brakeing action is an easy forward move. This method is so efficient that a rappeler is able to hold himself comfortably for a considerable length of time. He may also descend at a moderate rate, and stop without gloves. There is virtually no discomfort due to frictional heat, even when speed rappeling.

Pete Grant has apparently heard of this method, but personal prejudice has kept him from trying it. I am sure that if he and the method's other critics will give it a fair trial, they will see that it is not inherently dangerous. I would hope that they might even come to prefer it, as so many of our members have done.

Paul Helbert

submitted for publication; February 22, 1965

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## SINGLE BRAKE BAR IS BEST

A preceding article by Ed Day (pages 78-79), a former and respected member of this grotto, also appeared in the March issue of a non-NSS caving publication known as the Potomac Caver. When it appeared in the "caver", it was followed by a rebuttal which somehow failed to successfully refute anything Ed said. In fact, it caused me to appreciate the essays by Ed and Dick Sanford even more.

Dick Sanford used physical principles and mathematical formulas to justify the single brake bar. Ed Day used his own first-hand experiences. Other than false premises, one cannot be sure what Pete Grant used. Inasmuch as I lack Dick's knowledge and Ed's great experience, I have found yet another way in which to prove that the single brake bar is the most practical means of executing a rope descent. Being a business student myself, I consider cost and practicality synonymous, as long as safety isn't sacrificed. The preceding articles by Ed Day and Paul Helbert prove, I believe, that there is no sacrifice of safety.

First, let's look at the equipment required for the two advocated types of rappel: the single brake bar (SBB), and the three carabiner rig (TCR). Since a swiss seat and a carabiner are required by both to attach either rig to the rappeller, they will be omitted in this consideration.

When a brake bar is in closed position, the carabiner is automatically locked, so, to keep the odds even, only locking carabiners will be considered when not used with a brake bar. Therefore, 3 locking carabiners must be used with the TCR, and a plain carabiner and brake bar with the SBB.

We shall first add up the cost (via Co-Op) of components necessary for a SBB:

Carabiner	(1)	\$ .89
Brake Bar	(1)	1.25
Total		\$2.14

Now let's see what a TCR will cost:

Locking Carabiners	(3) @ \$1.50	\$4.50
Total		\$4.50

Now, subtracting one from the other, we get:

TCR	\$4.50
SBB	2.14
Difference:	\$2.36

It is evident from these figures that one could purchase two SBB rigs for the price of one TCR, and have enough left over for a draft. So far, I haven't mentioned such things as the weight of 3 locking 'biners, or the extra postage when ordering, and I won't, because I don't believe any further argument is necessary.

## WANTED: A LITTLE COOPERATION

Recently a group from our grotto decided to take a short evening caving trip to a local cave for the purpose of getting some photos. We all left campus with the hopes of getting some good action shots to show the folks over the Christmas holiday.

However, these hopes quickly disintegrated when the land owner told us, "No soap." This decision was not the result of him not knowing us, for the leader of our group had met him several times previously.

The reasons for closing the cave, as he said, was that a group of cavers from another college had entered his cave last summer without permission. After this intrusion, his drinking water was muddy for two weeks.

Although it is the opinion of all those who have seen this cave that the pools at the extreme end have absolutely no linkage to his water supply, the owner could not, or would not be convinced. Even the promise of a set of prints from the pictures taken would not sway him. Therefore, this scenic cave remains closed until the owner once again tastes the milk of human kindness, if ever.

This type of occurrence happens only too often to members of all grottoes, but the entire blame cannot be placed on the shoulders of the owner. The members of the group who visited the cave without permission were definitely in the wrong. Although it is highly unlikely that their visit had anything to do with the muddy water, it did provide a scapegoat for a man who was, and still is, too stubborn to listen to any reasoning except his own.

It is wonderful that we don't come in contact with this type of owner all of the time, or caving would not be the flourishing sport it is today. However, since it is our misfortune to meet them occasionally, we must bend over backward to convince them that they are right in everything they say or do, while at the same time try to persuade them to let us in their cave. All it takes is a little mistake (like not asking permission) to close a cave for a long time. Cooperation, no matter how one-sided it may be, will go a long way to combat ignorant pride and stubbornness, and it may even open up some caves for us.

Dave Strope

submitted for publication: December 7, 1964

## THE CASE AGAINST BELAYS

First, let me say that this is a difficult article to write so that it will be understood by the very people who will oppose it. These will probably be people who have no faith in human judgement, and believe that only a strict set of rules will counteract innate fallibility. So they set forth a list of safety rules which must be adhered to strictly or else. Then along comes a guy who wants to "see" a cave rather than "do" a cave. Immediately he is labeled as "unsafe", because he ignores the ironbound rules and applies his own mature judgement and experience to each particular situation. Actually, he could be just as much if not more safety-minded than the next guy. This brings us to what seems to be the hottest area of dispute over "safe" vs. "unsafe" caving practices: to belay or not to belay.

I have read several lists of safety rules for vertical caving, and they all seem to include some specific cases in which a belay must be used. A typical example may read: "An overhead belay shall always be used on the first person down a rope and by people with limited experience in vertical caving." I will refrain from divulging the source of this statement, and will cast no aspersions thereon. However, I will cite several eye-witness accounts of its brilliant application.

#1--Several years ago a group of three experienced vertical cavers and two with limited experience were preparing to rappel into Hell Hole (Pendleton County, West Virginia). They were informed by a person who had been in the cave before that the pit was 160' deep, so E.P.D., the trip leader, decided to use a 170' length of rope as a belay line. R.E.W., an experienced vertical caver, was selected to make the first descent, so he was given a belay. Always one to enjoy a long, free drop, R.E.W. was descending rather rapidly until about 20 feet off the floor, he was brought to a rib-crushing stop. His helmet flew off, and he lost his grip on the rappel rope. He spun helplessly like a run-down yo-yo. Obviously, the belay rope was too short. Only by a maximum effort was E.P.W. able to loosen the rope and allow R.E.W. to continue his descent. However, Mr. W's bruised ribs and sore neck lasted for days to come.

#2--On this same trip were two cavers with minor experience, so they were given a belay in accordance to the rules. The overly-cautious neophyte descended so slowly that the belay rope wound itself around the rappel rope as he spiraled down into free space. About half way down, the friction between the two ropes became so great that he was unable to continue his descent. Fortunately, R.E.W. was at the bottom and was able to correct the situation by running in a large circle with the end of the rappel rope, thus unwinding the two so the neophyte could finish his descent.

These are the two most potentially serious occurrences which I have witnessed. I also heard of a case in Higgenbotham's #1 in Tazewell County, Virginia, where a belay rope dislodged a shower of rocks on a rappeler. When I was there, we had enough sense not to use a belay.

Now let's go back and look at another safety rule. A typical rule may state that "when taking deep-drop caves and a belay is not used, a chest prusik safety should be used." Without enumerating the obvious flaws, I shall again cite a typical case.

#3--Two years ago, a group of experienced vertical cavers gathered at Aunt Nellie's Hole to witness a prusik race. The vertical side of the hole has a nasty breakover, but it was necessary to rig this side for the race. Before the action began, A.L.W. decided to rappel into the hole for kicks. As he inchad over the edge, his prusik safety jammed between the rope and the rock face. A.L.W. managed to free his hand by relinquishing his glove and his grip on the knot. His feet were in free space, so he couldn't kick out from the wall to free the knot. As his strength ebbed, he slid down, the knot went under tension, and he was hung for sure. In order to free him without rigging a hoist, G.H.M. took a carbide lamp and, leaning far out over the drop, burned the manilla sling in two. A.L.W. was then able to finish the rappel.

This is one instance off a chest prusik causing trouble on a rappel. Similar incidents occur quite often at Maybrook Sinkhole, the Cascades, and on many caving trips. It is my sincere opinion that when a so-called safety device, be it a belay or a prusik, causes situations such as I have mentioned above to occur, then it ceases to be a safety device. If, in a particular case, my refusal to use one makes me unsafe, then so I am. Maybe I'll live longer this way.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I am not altogether condemning the use of belays, but I am trying to point out that true safety should be decided by an individual's common sense, not by rules.

R. E. Whittmore

submitted for publication: March 29, 1965

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#### THE CASE FOR BELAYS

A belay is the most independent and reliable of the many available safety devices.

Its superiority can be shown by examining the two serious accidents that have occurred in the VPI Student Grotto.

The first accident took place at Catawba Murder Hole near Salem. The cave is entered by descending a 130 ft. deep sinkhole. Most parties rappel into the sinkhole and climb back up one of the less vertical sides.

After rigging the drop, the cavers prepared to descend. The first man on the rope was approximately ten feet past the breakover when the rappel rope broke. He fell 120 feet and was dead when the others reached him.

Besides pointing out the need to carefully test ropes, this accident also defines the type of accident in which a prusik safety, or any other safety device depending upon the rappel rope for support, is useless.

A belay, however, is independent of the rappel rope. Should the rappel rope break (possibly by wearing on a sharp edge), come untied, or pull its anchor (tree, boulder, stalagmite, or piton) loose, the belay rope is unaffected and is still capable of catching and holding the rappeler.

The second accident, at the 180 foot drop in Newberry-Banes system in Bland County, involved a person who was not a member of the VPI Grotto. Ellen Witherite, the nonmember, lost control and began to fall. She grabbed the rope in panic and pulled her chest safety knot down with her, instead of allowing it to catch her. Ellen struck a ledge and lost her grip on the rope, allowing the safety to work. It caught ten feet above the floor, saving her life.

A belayer, safe at the top of the drop would not have been handicapped by the fear and/or panic that besets the falling rappeler. A chest safety, by its very nature, works (except after special training) only when the rappeler is unconscious. The belay is much more flexible. Not only would a belayer stop a fall almost as soon as it occurs, but, with vocal communication and time to think, the rappeler could leisurely decide upon the best course of action. He may either ask to be lowered to the bottom or may resume rappel position. Other advantages are that the rappeler may stop at any time and, by asking the belayer to hold him, have both hands free to fix a troublesome lamp, tighten a loose knot, shift his rappel position, or study a high lead.

Belays are practical on any drop that is not free space. As long as the rappeler has a wall to keep him from spinning, the two ropes will not tangle. Despite the possibility of tangling the rappel and belay ropes, a belay should always be used by a caver inexperienced in vertical techniques. Novices should descend only after a more experienced caver, so that competent help is available at both ends of the rope.

The first man to descend should always have a belay, as pointed out by the Catawba Murder Hole accident. If the drop is unexplored and of undetermined depth, the belay is even more important as a safety device.

So far, we have dealt only with descents. The two most popular forms of ascent are ladder and prusik.

Prusiking, with three points of support, needs no extra safety device. The main rope has been tested by rappeling and has therefore stood up under forces much greater than prusiking will produce. Careful attention to the condition of the chest prusik and the foot prusiks will eliminate the possibility of a prusik breaking, making this method of ascent one of the safest.

Ladders increase in usefulness as the size of the caving group grows. Ladders are faster for most groups, since the time required to rig in for the climb is much less. Their major fault is that it is easy to slip off. Belaying, therefore, are a near necessity when using ladders.

Cavers also use belays on climbs and on difficult traverses.

The reliability of the belay depends upon the belayer. He must have enough experience to correctly choose an anchor post, belay position, and rope that are reliable. He must be able to catch a falling person on both a static and dynamic belay quickly and gently. As has been pointed out, the belayer has the advantage of being able to calmly plan and act in the event of a fall, a feat that the falling caver will find impossible to do.

I am not, nor will I ever be, a hidebound follower of rules. There will always be situations for which general rules should not apply and the same is true in the use of belays.

Belaying, though they are independent, reliable, versatile, and efficient, may easily become nuisances in many situations. There are places where it is impossible to rig a belay; there are other places where belays are unnecessary. Their use at any time is, and should always be, left to the judgement of the individual cavers.

Used correctly and sensibly, belays will add to the safety and enjoyment of caving.

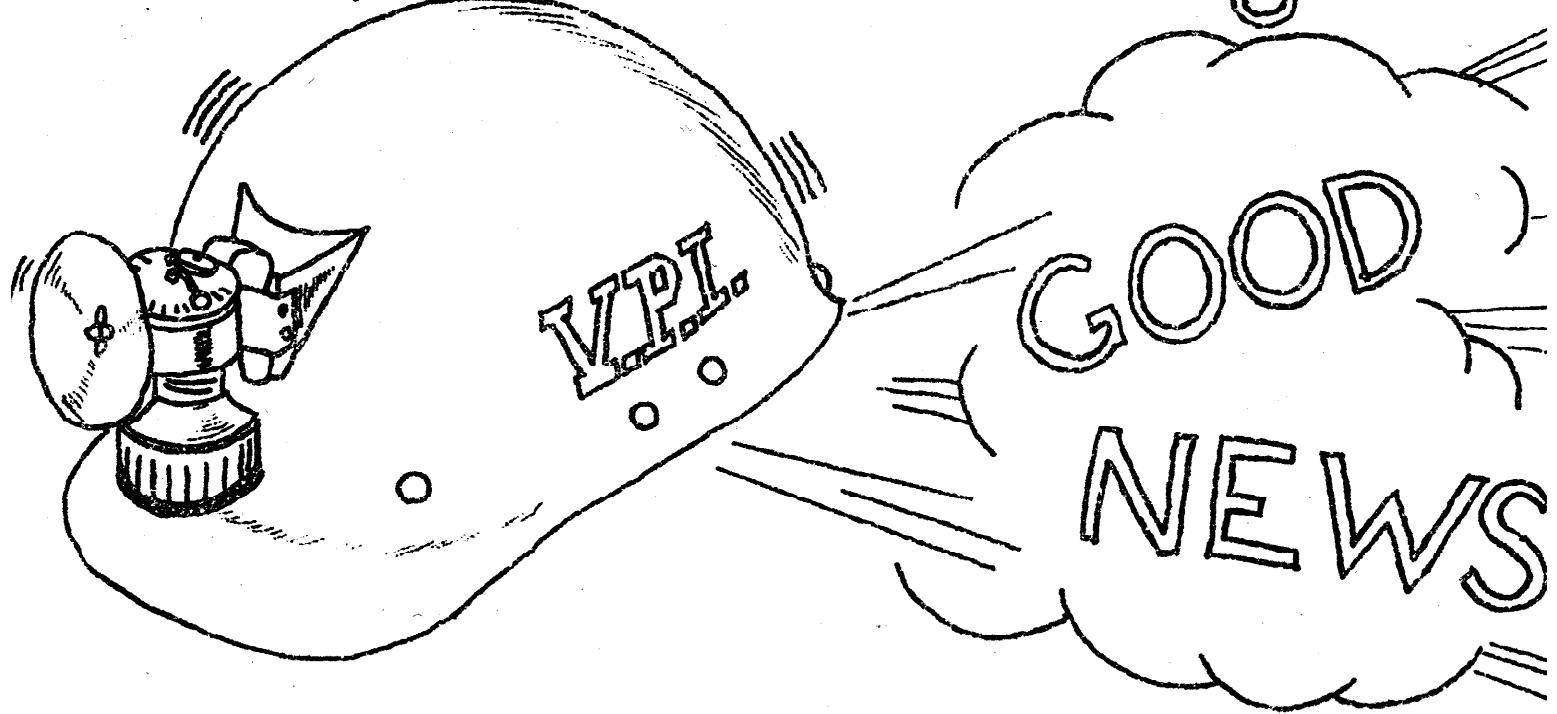
Gary McCutchen

submitted for publication: March 29, 1965

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(Editor's Note: The two preceding articles were written by Whitt and I to point out, as the titles stated, the cases for and against belays. We did not collaborate while writing them; in fact, we did not even read each other's articles until after they had been stenciled. This kept us from wasting time and space in debating each other's arguments and made it easier for us to stick to the main purpose of the articles: Presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of belays from two different viewpoints.

We Couldn't keep  
it under  
our hats  
any  
longer!



NEXT VA. REGION:

Blacksburg

## TRIP REPORTS

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## 3-D MAZE CAVE

12/6/64

by Addison Wilkins

Personnel: Ed Bauer, Dixon Hoyle

About noon on Sunday, December 6, Ed Bauer, Dick Hoyle, and I arrived in high spirits at 3-D Maze, a small cave near Harrisonburg.

There to greet us were ten boys and six girls (!) from the American University Grotto. Not far from a farmhouse, we found the entrance to the cave, a medium-sized hole in the bottom of a small sink.

We chimneied down a narrow, sloping fissure whose rough sides provided plenty of foot-holds, sore elbows, and rips in the pants. At the bottom of this estimated 100 foot deep crack we discovered nothing but one glove and two or three meager soda straws, so we ascended to the top to explore the horizontal extents of the maze.

There we found the American U. group rappelling down another, 20 foot deep passage (ropes weren't really necessary, but two of the young virgins in the group had never been caving before).

Quite fed up with this tri-dimensional rathole, we ascended to the entrance just in time to be pleasantly trampled by the American University ladies coming out of the other end of the passage they had explored.

Though we were only in the cave from 1 to 3 p.m., we decided to head back to Tech and study for exams.

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## 3-D MAZE CAVE and SALLY STEPHENS CAVE 1/24/65

by A. Armstrong

Personnel: Bill Armstrong, Ken Hosaflock

Bill and I met Ken at a service station at 8:30 and proceeded to the 3-D Maze Cave, arriving about 9. The main purpose in making the trip to 3-D Maze was to find the 80' fissure pit mentioned in Caves of Virginia.

We located what appeared to be the pit, as it matched the location of the pit on the map, then continued through the cave as the others had not seen the cave before. After two hours of this "grueling" exploration we left the cave and headed to Sally Stephens Cave located north of Harrisonburg just off the bypass (Rt. 81). After a 20 minute walk we arrived at the cave. This cave is entered through an entrance arch about 30 ft high and 20 ft wide. There was little to see in this cave, and the complete exploration (including knocking down all the icicles in the entrance) took only an hour.

We hiked back to the car and descended on Ken's mother for lunch. After lunch we located, but did not explore, several other caves in the area.

## TRIP TO TAZEWELL

by Byron McCutchen

Personnel: Craig Peters, Gary McCutchen, Addison Wilkins,  
E.B. Baker, and J.E. Waid

A group of six cavers left Va. Toch about 2:30 p.m., on a cold, windy afternoon and headed southwest for Tazewell, Va. Our objective on this trip was an expedition to Stonely's Cave and the checking-out of a previously found sinkhole.

The entrance to Stonely's is quite impressive, and consists of a 20-25 ft. rock entrance, with a slanting entrance. There are trees surrounding the sink, but they provide no difficulty in entering. Several water entrances to the cave are visible on the surface, and one has a possibility of entrance, with some digging. There is no stream in the entrance passage, however. We decided to head for Tazewell and get some food before returning to tackle Stonely's.

At Tazewell, we enjoyed the many-splendored pleasures of cafe eating. Much to our joy, the cafe we chose had several cute (?) waitresses who provided great enjoyment for all. Ed. Note: Write today for rules to VPI Grotto newest game, "Waitress Baiting!" It should be mentioned, however, that Craig Peters was the object of fascination for them, and it was his attractive forces that continually forced them to approach us. We all ordered King hamburgers and french fries or onion rings. After completely gorging ourselves, it was time to do some caving.

We piled into the car, and rode to the farmer's house that had been visited on a previous expedition. Here we were entertained and enjoyed talking with the farmer, as well as his daughters, who were also attracted to Craig Peters. It must be that pipe. (Or perhaps his red tie?)

We changed clothes in his basement, and spend 15 chilling minutes in five-degree weather searching for a sinkhole. We finally located it, and found it filled with trees and brush, which made rappeling quite difficult. We back-rapped in, and found it to be more than we expected - nothing. It was actually forty feet of nothing. Disgusted and cold, we emerged, and found our way to the warm basement of our friendly farmer. After resting, eating, and changing, we pushed onward.

We arrived at Stonely's about an hour later, and entered the cave about midnight. We took the right passage, and wired a ladder in the slope that fell on a slant for twenty feet. It was an easy ladder climb, and we were soon viewing the large number of bats located in the entrance passage. We pushed on back, finding many streams, a couple of waterfalls, and many sinking siphons. The cave requires a great deal of crawling, and if one desires to get wet, it holds a great deal of passage. We, however, elected to remain dry, so saw very little of the cave. There are a number of formations and two levels, with a number of leads. There are some excellent

examples of previous beer parties, and some striking photos on the "non-conservationist." We were all pretty tired and quite cold, so we split our party in half and, as one group checked a lead, the other group ascended the ladder. It was a short climb, and within 20 minutes all of our party was out.

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#### DEAD AIR CAVE

by Jim Cooper

Personnel: John Eads, Paul Helbert, Mike Youso, Rick Nolting

One afternoon about one o'clock, we gathered behind the SAB carrying camera boxes, ropes, candy bars, and the usual gear. Several of our group, mainly John Eads and Paul Helbert, were intent on photographing the formations of Dead Air Cave. We got underway an hour late (average timing) and started down Rt. 11 to Smyth County, where the cave is located. Entering the cave with ropes, we met John Eads inside. He had gone in through another smaller entrance excavated on a previous trip by Joe Smyth. The photography trip was reasonably successful except for the flash bulbs wasted trying to photograph the entire cave. The main room, which is, in fact, the only room, is about 700 feet long, 300 feet wide, and about 200 feet high.

I was quite interested in the crystal mushroom formations in the center of the cave. The cave also has nice rimstone and soda straw formations.

About 9 p.m., we crawled out the second entrance and headed for the nearest restaurant for food. One of the waitresses was snowed by Youso's board. He managed to fight her off, however, and we made our way back to campus, arriving about midnight.

After reaching Tech, we made an excursion through the commercial cave beneath the campus and called it a night.

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#### BEACON CAVE

1/9/65

by Tony Graham

Personnel: Gary McCutchen, Ed Morgan, E.B. Baker, John Peduzzi, Alan Armstrong

Gary had organized the trip with the intention of spending a few leisurely hours of horizontal caving (Laurel Creek style). Our destination was unknown, until at the suggestion of Ed Morgan, we decided to go to Beacon Cave near Bluefield, W. Va.

Ed was the only one of us who had been to Beacon, but he assured us that it was exactly the type of cave that we had been looking for. Having finally settled upon our destination, we left the campus about one o'clock and headed for Bluefield.

We located the cave on a hill directly behind the Beacon Drive-In, had no trouble finding the cave and at three o'clock started

into the cave. We soon found out that the cave was not the leisurely walk that Ed had led us to expect.

The cave is reported to have over two miles of passage, and I'm sure we covered most of it on our knees. It has an upper passage and a lower stream passage. We worked our way down through some tortuous crawlways to the stream passage and explored both up and down stream. The beginning of the cave was rather void of formations, but they became more abundant as we progressed. There was one especially beautiful room, about 150 x 60 feet, containing, among other things, a large rimstone pool. The walls of this room were quite marked up, and we spent half an hour covering up the names with rocks and mud.

The way back was uneventful and tight. There was a great amount of crawling, and my knees and arms took quite a battering. We left the cave about nine o'clock and went down to the Drive-in where we changed in the men's room and then had something to eat. The trip back was uneventful except for a thirty-minute delay because of car failure. Bruised and battered, we returned to the campus about 1:15 the next morning.

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#### MILLER'S COVE CAVE: SAGA OF AN AMATURE PALEONTOLOGIST

2/17/65 by R. E. Whittemore

Personnel: Sam Dunaway, Henry Stevens, Ed Brown, Tom Vigour

Like most of the Miller's Cove survey trips, this one was organized with confused spontaneity. As usual, Sam organized the trip, and, after the normal comic opera of everyone looking for everyone else at the last minute, we headed up the Roanoke Valley.

The object of this trip was to see the very lowest level of what may be Virginia's deepest cave, but all I could think about was the test I had taken that day, and how funny my alarm clock sounded going off before I had even gone to bed the night before. So, as we roared on up the valley in Sam's station wagon, I slid slowly into the arms of Morpheus.

I was awakened sometime latter by the hideous odor of burning sulfur, and I knew Sam was at it again; setting off dynamite caps to get his jollies. I managed to clear away a few cobwebs before the first report woke me up completely. Sam was trying to tell me something about how I'd better get changed and pointing to the group of rope-laden cavers already starting up the hill. I knew that if I was going caving I had better get on the stick.

Pretty soon I had changed into my caving gear, so I began the one-mile hike up to the cave. My next contact with humanity came when I heard, then saw, Ed Brown sitting by the entrance.

"Where's Sam?" I asked.

"Lost," Ed informed me.

After an orientating exchange of shouts, Sam emerged from the underbrush looking bewildered. Darkness was approaching, and Sam wanted to be back by midnight, so we wasted no more time descending into the cave.

The entrance itself is a small, round, vertical shaft at the base of a tree. It is three feet in diameter and 15 feet deep. At the bottom is a ledge overlooking a 30 foot drop to the bottom of a fissure three feet wide. From the bottom of this fissure, the passage trends downward through muddy slots and downclimbs to a large room known as the Ante Room. There are many flowstone formations, helictites, and cave corals in this area, but they seem to be dissolving rather than depositing.

At the lower end of the Ante Room is a deep canyon with a chockstone floor in places. The south, or left-hand, lead ends abruptly at a 70 foot drop into the "Grand Chasm" on the Lower stream level.

While Ed Brown was rappeling (SBB style) into the chasm, Sam thought it would be a good idea for Ed to swing over and kick loose a large chockstone, the removal of which would make the climb out of the cave less precarious. Ed managed to kick it loose, but it wedged in again on a lower level, this time to stay.

Once we were all on the bottom, we gathered up our ropes and headed down to the first waterfall drop, where the lower stream comes tumbling down the dynamite passage and plunges over three spectacular waterfalls in quick succession. Rigging these drops free of the water required a bit of ingenuity. In fact, Sam would not let us look at the first tie-in for fear we would all turn back in disgust.

After several hours of chimneying to semi-imaginary belay loops, struggling past nasty breakovers, and landing in plunge pools, we found ourselves simultaneously out of rope and at the bottom of the cave. We continued along the stream, alternately crawling and using four-letter words until the ceiling came into close proximity with the surface of the water. Beyond this we could see the size of the passage diminish steadily until it became too small for humans. Here we paused in silent reverence because we knew that we were "on the bottom."

For a moment, I sat staring in amazement at "it." Then Sam, pointing wildly, shouted, "Whitt, look at this!"

My palms grew sweaty as I groped to get a closer look. There, imbedded in a rock in the stream bed was the carefully preserved impression of some long-extinct prehistoric organism.

"What is it, Whitt?"

"Damm, I'm not sure. What do you think?"

"Maybe it's some sort of crinoid, Whitt."

"No, Sam, it looks more like a segmented worm."

"Maybe we can try to get it out of here one of these days."

"I'll carry it out and show it to Dr. Tilamn tomorrow."

I then appropriated Sam's pack, put the 25-pound cobble into it, and headed out.

Negotiating the ascents was, of course, a time consuming process. After hauling the rock up the first two waterfall drops, I decided to go ahead of the rest of the group so I wouldn't get left behind.

The third waterfall drop gave us some problems. Muddy water was running down the rope, and, about 20 feet off the floor, my prusiks all slipped at once. After an elevator-ride view of the walls, I found myself sitting in the plunge pool at the bottom. I contrived several makeshift rigs, and finally hit upon one that held. I inched my way up the third drop. At this point, I left the party and headed for the Grand Chasm with the prized "fossil." The 25-pound boulder presented a few problems in crossing various small chasms, and many problems on the ropeless climbs.

Negotiating the last three rigged pitches was a nightmare of hauling the pack up, getting it jammed, climbing back down, and shoving it ahead. At the bottom and top of each drop I would wait and listen hopefully for the others' approach, but, alas, my ears were greeted by silence. Changing carbide in the dark was fun, as I had neglected to bring a spare light source. My rule on lights which I always follow is, "when caving alone, carry a spare light source," but I hadn't anticipated such a long stretch of solo caving.

An especially long wait inside the entrance was not rewarded. Still no Sam. I hadn't seen anyone for three or four hours now, so I began to conjecture on their delay. I then noticed that I was running short on carbide. A close inspection of Sam's pack revealed his carbide flask. Someone had forgotten to bring any and someone else had dropped his into a crevasse. Maybe they had run out altogether--but so had I, leaving me unable to help them. I only had about 20 minutes worth in my lamp, so I headed back to the car along bear-infested Cove Mountain. About half way back, my lamp gave out and every bush became a bear. I couldn't even see well enough to avoid the rabid foxes.

After groping my way to the car and changing clothes, I curled up in the back seat for some long-overdue shuteye. I awoke two hours later, still alone. Dawn was beginning to well up behind the menacing silhouette of Dragon's Tooth. I sat for several minutes unconsciously formulating a rescue procedure when a speck of

light appeared on the black bulk of the mountain and began to zig-zag toward the car. It was soon joined by three others, and in no time Sam, Henry, Tom, and Ed were at the car. Their trip had been plagued by wet, slick ropes and a shortage of carbide. They flashed a few testy glances at me as I sat there stroking the fossil.

The next day I carried the treasured boulder to the Geology Department and presented it to the head paleontologist. He studied it closely for several minutes and pronounced his indisputable verdict, "It's not a fossil."

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#### ANOTHER "FORM FOR CAVERS"

As NSS membership increases, the Society will eventually become more selective in its choice of members. The first step toward improving membership quality will undoubtedly consist of prunning certain Baltimore and Huntsville Grotto members from the NSS ranks. The second step will see the present membership application form replaced by a more thorough questionnaire, such as the following:

##### NSS Membership Application Form (check one)

I like parties.

I like to pay dues.

I want to join the NSS because  it's sexy.

I'm a status seeker.

as a speleologist.

as a cave vandel.

I have had previous caving experience  on a tour of Dixie Caverns.  
 at Radford College.

unprintable.

inexpressable.

My feelings concerning the sport of caving are  incomparable.  
 Gee!

Liz Taylor.

"Solo Lew".

My favorite caving partner is  Floyd Collins. I enjoy caving  
 John Cooper (chuckle).

my mother never let me get muddy when I was young.

caves symbolize a return to the womb.

because  carbide tastes good.

I can add to my mineral collection.

I tolerate the use of caves as fallout shelters only because.

- I the stockpiled food tastes good.
- I the signs make locating the cave easier.
- I get a laugh out of the capacity ratings.
- I enjoy filling out those neat forms the government sends us.

My favorite caving organization, excluding the NSS, is the

- VPI Grotto.
- Virginia Tech Grotto.
- VPI Student Grotto. Bats have failed to fill me with primitive
- VPI Cave Club.

I ate one.  
I became a vampire.  
 fear and loathing since the day I stepped on one. The official  
got a crew cut.

"Go down, young man, go down."  
 NSS motto is "Hitch your wagon to a stalagmite."  
 "Sir, I precieve thou art a vile Whig." If ever  
 "Don't let your insurance lapse."

I involved in a caving accident, I promise  
to die quietly.  
not to blame the NSS.  
never to reveal the cave  
location.  
to blame Plummer's  
equations.

I in Japan.  
I to be broken.  
 Formations are made by the cave gods.  
by pale little gnomes who live in caves and  
eat careless cavers.

I for driving tent stakes.  
I for boiling water.  
 Other cavers' hart hats are useful for determining the depth of  
drops.  
as chamber pots.

Should I be allowed to join the NSS, I swear that I will

- I kiss Russ Gurnee's toenails.
- I give everything I own to Gary McCutchen.
- I enjoy caving whether I like it or not.
- I join the VPI Student Grotto.

Signed:

(sucker's full name)

As a gesture of good will, the VPI Student Grotto will allow the NSS free and complete use of this valuable, copywrited form, provided that the NSS does not change anything that benefits us. If they do, we'll sue 'em and set our blood money anyway.

## ORDEAL IN CROOKSHANKS'

Whitt: It all began when three members of the VPI Grotto decided to go caving with the Baltimore Grotto, otherwise known as "Lew Bicking." As a result of this trip, we decided to bestow some honor upon Solo Lew, and we could think of nothing more appropriate than to make him an honorary real person. In fact, we have drawn a conclusion (implied in the opening sentence) that Lew is the only person in the Baltimore Grotto; everyone else is fictitious.

The cave we decided upon was the notorious Snedegar's-Staircase system. Lew would show us as much of Snedegar's and Crookshank's as we wanted to see if we would help him map Staircase. So Saturday, January 9, saw Ed Bauer, Dixon Hoyle, and I leave campus late in Ed's VW. Before we got to Pearisburg, Ed couldn't stand it any longer, so we stopped and took on a supply of suds before continuing on to Lewisburg. We arrived in Lewisburg in a drizzle, parked it, and quickly located Solo Lew, eating alone, as we had expected, in the Court Restaurant. We, however, preferred hamburgers, and, with no further delay, left for Friar's Hole.

When we arrived in that vicinity, the rain had nearly stopped, but the road was too muddy for us to drive any closer than Snedegar's water entrance. We took a few minutes to smooth out some of our ruts before walking around to the dry entrance.

The dry entrance to Snedegar's is quite picturesque; a large, rectangular opening in a flat limestone escarpment. Inside, we deposited a supply of dry clothing.

The entrance to Staircase is not quite so picturesque, nor is it pleasant. The sinkhole slopes gently down over rolls of discarded fencing on one side, and a small stream cascades down over flat-lying slabs on the other. Several horizontal cracks open in the upper parts of the sink, but the real opening into the cave is a slimy crack in the very bottom which leads immediately to a 30 foot drop. Here we began our survey. The trip progressed smoothly and as rapidly as is possible in that cave. The passage is mostly a high, narrow, sinuous fissure with a stream occupying the entire floor. Most of our surveying was done along the top of the fissure where it is wider and drier. Of course, anything dropped into the stream was immediately swept away.

When we reached the end of the fissure and surveyed down to where the two streams join, we had a choice: we could survey "Uncle Earl's Domepits," or we could survey on through the "expressway" to tie in with Crookshank's, then survey a 1000 foot side passage in Crookshank's. For some inexplicable reason, we decided to survey in Crookshank's, a decision which probably saved our lives.

As we made our way downstream along the Crookshank's trunk channel, we stopped to rest in a small, sand-floored side room. There, before my very eyes, Ed and Dick did something that graveled my speleological senses. They produced several cans of food and

began to heat it over carbide flames. Such wanton time consumption! A few candy bars wouldn't have been so disgusting, but we only get to go caving once or twice a week, and then they waste valuable time eating. Lew and I didn't refuse a few handouts, though, but only because it would get rid of the food quicker so we could continue mapping.

Mapping on the upper level progressed more rapidly and with much less effort than mapping in the Staircase. The passage was large and flat-floored, so in no time we had surveyed a distance almost equal to the entire length of Staircase. We finally reached a point where the passage seemed to be blocked by breakdown, so we terminated the survey and entertained thoughts of breakfast in Lewisburg.

As we made our way along the low, wet crawl into the main trunk channel, an ominous roar reverberated down the passage. When I could finally get a full view of the stream, I remarked, or, rather shouted, to Dick something to the effect that I could swear the creek was 20 times louder than before.

"We've been in quiet passage for a long time," he said.

"Perhaps you're right," I said, "but the stream looks bigger, too." And with this, I headed toward the siphon. Instinct told me that, though I would get wet going through the siphon, I'd better stay dry now. About 500 feet along the passage, Lew ran by me, dry-suited, up the middle of the stream.

"What's up, Lew?" I shouted.

"The water is up! Can't you see?" and he sped on past us. In a matter of minutes, we were at the siphon. "The water is four feet above the siphon," Lew shouted. "We're trapped, damnit! We're trapped! This cave will let you in, but it won't let you out!"

"How long do you think we're in for?" I asked.

"Twenty-four to 48 hours," Lew said. "We might as well go back to the dry place."

Pretty soon, we were back at the place where we had eaten the canned food. Lew had set up a stick to gauge the rise or, more hopefully, the fall of the water level. Then we huddled together like canned sardines to try and get some much-needed sleep.

The first 12 hours went by comparatively fast because we didn't do much besides sleep. This was not unusual after 11 or so hours of mapping. By now, we were getting rather tired of lying on those particular lumps, so we hunted around and found a flatter place to nap. Meanwhile, Solo Lew soloed up to the siphon and

returned with the observation that it had become apparent that we would be here longer than 24 hours. Lew calculated that the water was falling at a steady rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch per hour where we were bivouaced, which meant about a two inch per hour drop at the siphon where the passage was much more narrow. By now, it was 6 Sunday afternoon and the fact that we had missed breakfast was becoming harder and harder to ignore.

For the next 12 hours, we slept in fits and dozes. Dick and I decided that since Ed was the largest in circumference, he should sleep between us for the same reason a small child would use a teddy bear. Sunday night wore on into Monday. Lew checked the siphon again and figured at least another 12 hours before we could effect an escape through the lowest point.

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Gary: As a safety precaution, the VPI Grotto maintains a sign-out sheet for caving trips. This list gives the driver, destination, and expected time of return.

Ed Bauer had put down 6 p.m. Sunday as time of return, but none of the trio were really missed that night. One or two cavers who came by their rooms just assumed they were elsewhere.

By Monday morning, word began to spread among the cavers that no one had seen Ed, Whitt, or Dixon since Saturday. Whitt was to give the trainee test that afternoon, and, when the trainees were unable to find him, rescue organization was begun in earnest. Two groups of cavers were organized independently by Rick Nolting and Mike Hamilton. By 5 p.m. Monday, those two groups had contacted each other and combined forces.

While a first-aid kit, caving gear, and other essentials were rounded up, Mike Hamilton kept C&P solvent with phone calls to Baltimore, D.C., Charlottesville, etc. His job was to find cavers familiar with the Snedegar system, since the only VPI Grotto members who had even been in the system were still in it. The UVa Rescue Network, unfortunately, was of little help. After three attempts to explain the situation to the Security operator, Mike finally contacted Mason Sproul, via a person-to-person call.

Still not sure whether or not a rescue party was needed, three carloads of VPI cavers headed toward Lewisburg at 6 p.m. Monday.

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Whitt: With a great deal of effort, we had managed to build a fire, using scraps of driftwood lying about the cave. It felt good, but it required constant nursing, and the resulting smoke made it hard to see and breathe, so we let it go out. Nonetheless, we decided to try again Monday morning. It had been about 40 hours since that meal in Lewisburg, so we were running short of any internal heat. Our second fire was even smokier than the first, and we were finally forced to extinguish it for fear that we

wouldn't be able to see our way up to the siphon.

Time and patience; patience and time.

We dozed for another six hours. Ed's contacts started to irritate him. Dick's Boots were bothering him. I felt a bit nauseated and the thought of food revolted me. Lew started to apologize for the inconvenience, but we shrugged it off and made jokes about it. What else could we do? We speculated and conjectured upon what rescue procedures would be taken, if any.

"What time is it?" someone would say.

"One o'clock," I would answer.

"Day or night?"

So it went. Raduim dial watches are nice in total darkness. We joked about missing our Monday classes.

On Lew's next-to-the-last visit to the siphon, he decided the 6 p.m. Monday would be the very earliest we could expect the siphon to open up. The rate at which the water was falling had decreased due to reduced water head.

About 7 p.m., we gathered up our equipment and started for the siphon. We were all astounded by the great effort required to walk. It is surprising how much energy it takes just to keep warm for 50-odd hours.

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Gary: The rescue was finally underway. Three cavers had remained at my apartment in town to maintain communications between the rescue groups and also to bring more help or equipment, if needed.

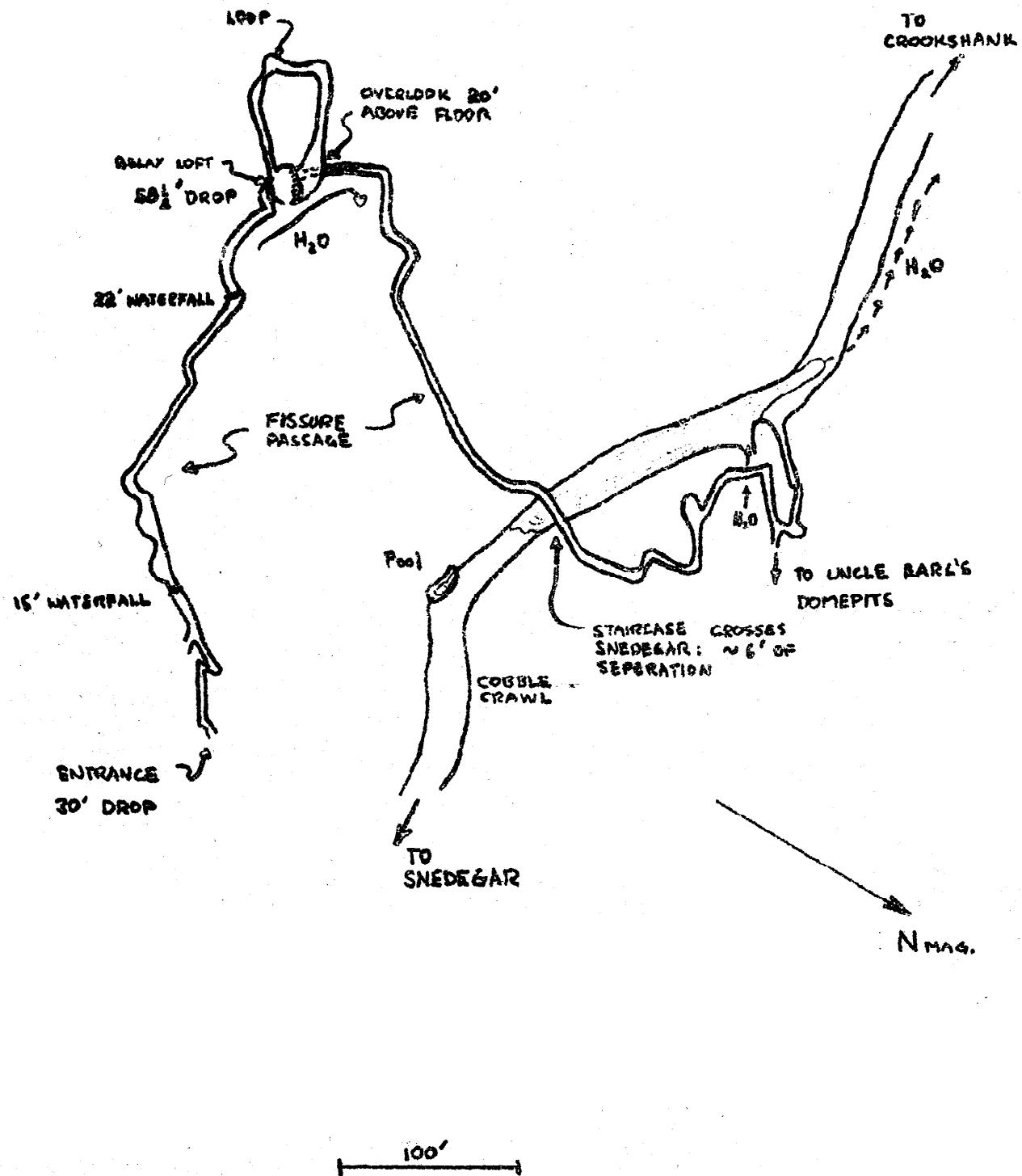
A brief stop was made by the three-car caravan at Rich Creek for supper, contacting the West Virginia State Police, and a call back to VPI (in hopes that the missing cavers had returned). We were told that the missing cavers had not returned, that UVa and D.C. cavers were on their way, and that the campus radio station (WUVT) wanted a statement. Rick gave a brief outline of what little we knew about the situation. This information was broadcast to the students and placed on the AP wire by WUVT, from which a garbled account appeared in next morning's Roanoke Times.

A West Virginia patrol car met us just across the state line. Rick explained the situation to the trooper, who radioed ahead, instigating a search for Ed's VW in the vicinity of the Snedenar-Crookshank caves.

Our trio of cars pushed on, stopping only in Lewisburg for a quick call back to Blacksburg. The cavers still hadn't returned.

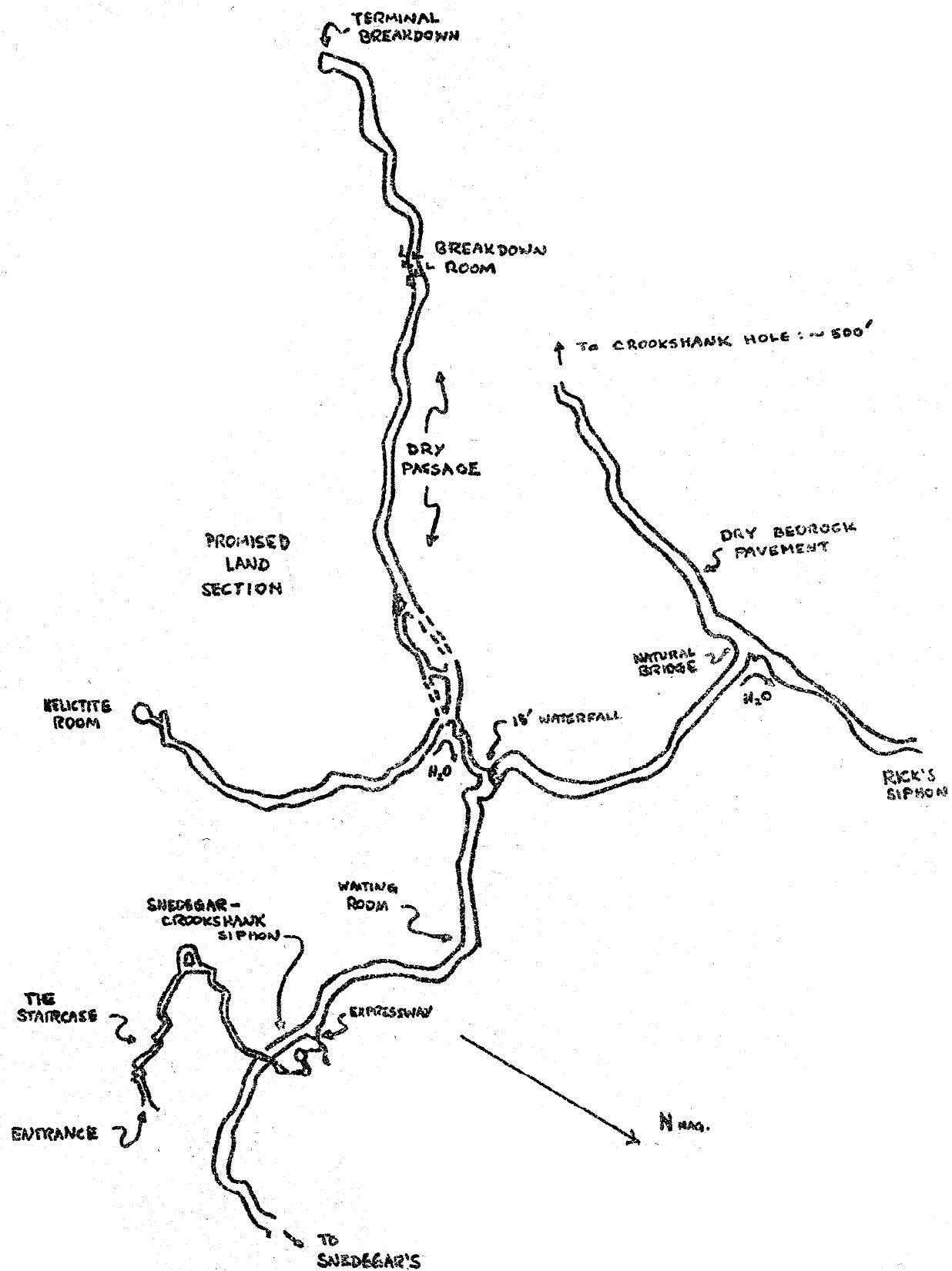
# SNEDEGAR'S STAIRCASE

MAP BY "LOW BICKHURST"



# SNEDEGAR - CROOKSHANK SYSTEM

MAP BY "LEW BICKING"



500'

Whitt: When we reached the siphon, our hopes and spirits suffered a slight lapse, as the siphon appeared to be closed. Not to be outdone, Lew went to work with his trenching shovel and dug a small channel in the stream bed to hasten the flow of water out of the siphon. Three more hours of waiting in the mud was rewarded with four inches of air space at the lowest point. Lew crawled down into the siphon for a final check.

"if we wait two more hours, we'll have two more inches," he informed us. After a quick conference, we decided to compromise ideal conditions and the demands of our stomachs, and proceed immediately through the siphon. Lew took one end of a 50-foot length of rope and crawled into the cold waters; and then, one by one, the rest of us slid in alligator style and moved swiftly through the low parts. I was without a flashlight, so I had to follow the seemingly aimless meanderings of Dixon's light. In a matter of seconds, he exclaimed that dry land was in sight, then proceeded to recite an imaginative list of four-letter words. I was a bit confused until I found that the last ten feet of the siphon consisted of several seasons' accumulation of backwash to a depth of two feet. I then found some of Dick's descriptive adjectives quite handy.

A few moments later, Ed and Lew were with us and we began to make our way toward the entrance. A welcome disc of light appeared in the passage ahead--then two--then a dozen. The next thing I knew, we were surrounded by cavers from VPI and UVa. They took it from there.

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Gary: Another patrol car met us north of Lewisburg and guided us to the road that leads to the Snedegar's entrances. The troopers told us that another patrol car was already searching along the road for Ed's car and would radio back immediately if they found it. Our group decided to take one car on in and leave two at the intersection to await UVa's group. After getting directions from one of the officers, five cavers and one extremely low-slung Buick Special started out.

Snow had fallen since Saturday and still covered most of the back roads. The one we faced a few minutes later was no exception. One lone set of tire tracks showed that the patrol car had preceeded us.

A slow approach didn't work--the rear wheels lost traction on the first upgrade. I backed off and headed as fast as possible for the dirt road and somehow kept going--sliding, skidding, spinning down that winding, narrow excuse for a road.

We spotted Ed's and Lew's cars at almost the same instant that we spotted the patrol car. One of the patrolmen was radioing the discovery to the group waiting at the intersection. The other was talking to one of the locals who knew where the entrances were.

Tom Bell and several others checked the dry Snedegar entrance while we waited for the other cars to arrive. Tom soon returned with the information that dry clothes had been found near the entrance and we assumed, wrongly, that the four cavers had entered Snedegar's and gone through the siphon.

By this time, the two other carloads of VPI cavers and a station wagon full of U.Va. cavers and equipment had arrived. The majority of this group quickly assembled inside Snedegar's, where it was warm, and organized.

Several members of the UVA group were familiar with parts of the system, and they took a large party and headed toward the siphon at the end of Snedegar's to see if it could be passed. Shortly after they left, another party departed with the local to check the Crookshank entrance for signs of the missing group.

Lew, Whitt, Ed, and Dixon were met by the main body of rescuers before the rescuers reached the siphon. Word was relayed to the troopers, who were asked to get hold of Betty Lloyd and stop the rescue group from D.C. They were also asked to notify Blacksburg that the students were safe.

Mason Sproul tried to get me to help remove the ropes from Staircase, but I remembered Cooper's article in the BGN and begged off by pleading fear of heights and lack of proper caving attire, both reasons perfectly true and very handy. I promised to send someone else and hiked from the Staircase entrance back to the cars.

The police had arranged for a road grader to plow the road, but a problem developed in turning the grader around. Those inside the cave tending to the tired, hungry, cold foursome missed a marvelous game of musical chairs that our jolly crew played with the cars.

By the time we got the grader turned around, my feet felt frozen, so I idled my car, despite the fact that the gauge was hovering near the empty mark. Rescuers and rescued began to emerge from the cave, and both praised my generous usage of gasoline to warm the frozen bodies of Lew Bickling and Dixon Hoyle. I demurred from stating the truth about my own numb feet, preferring the heroic image given me by my companions. Besides, I could always steal a little from the club treasury to cover the extra gas.

The cars belonging to Lew Bickling, Ed Bauer, and Whitey Tubank left. Rick had been conned into helping Mason gather the ropes, so I left with Mike Hamilton, Mallory Tighttower, and Dixon Hoyle, hoping that Rick could get a ride with Bob Head, driver of the last VPI car to leave.

N Naturally, since it was 3 a.m. and we were on a lonely highway in the most uninhabited part of West Virginia, I ran out of gas while still 20 miles from Lewisburg.

Dixon, after 56 hours in the cave, got to shiver some more while we waited for Bob Mead's car to come along. After nearly an hour, with a truck heading north the sole traffic the entire time, Bob arrived and drove to and from Lewisburg for gas.

Bob's car was developing trouble, so he stopped in Lewisburg to get it checked. We stopped for gas and breakfast. Dixon had his first meal in 56 hours at the Court Restaurant in Lewisburg at 5:30 a.m. Tuesday morning.

Back in Blacksburg, by 8 a.m., I picked up the Roanoke Times and read with interest about a trio of cavers lost in an underground cave.

Later that day, Whitt and Ed were interviewed by John W. Hall, an AP correspondent. The interview had been set up by the VPI Public Relations Department at the request of the AP, and gave Whitt and Ed an opportunity to clear up a great deal of the misinformation present in the first story.

The value of this leisurely conference showed in Hall's story, one of the most factual and non-sensational "cave rescue" newspaper stories to appear.

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Bill Karras, chief of the National Capital Grotto Rescue Squad, has written an interesting piece of fiction about this rescue operation. Unfortunately, the article has been reprinted and accepted as true by a number of grottos across the nation.

Everyone makes mistakes, but Bill Karras did not seem to consult the facts at all. There are ten major mistakes in his article. Besides naming the wrong cave (Crookshank-Snedegar "system", not Crossbones), he stated that he arrived at the scene and talked with VPI students (he did not get to the cave, and talked only with U.Va. students, who met his group as they were returning from the rescue).

This sloppy, completely misleading, incorrect piece of fiction being passed off as a true account of a rescue operation galls the editors of this publication. There is no reason for one article to have so many serious errors.

As a result of that article, this publication finds itself wondering if other rescue accounts have been similarly "embroidered". We cannot, therefore, as a protection to our readers and our grotto, reprint or quote from such articles as the Schroeder's Pants Cave Accident Report until assured by a second source that the report is at least partially accurate.

There may be errors in the articles which appear in this publication, but most of them are minor. We fail to see how anyone can make as many errors in a single article as were made in the Snedegar's accident report (Trapped in Crossbones Cave) by Bill Karras.

Hail to a new low in accurate speleoliterature.

## GREENBRIER SYSTEM AREA CLOSED

The entire cave-riddled area surrounding Organ Cave in West Virginia, including the Greenbrier System, is now closed to all cavers.

The closing of Schoolhouse Cave was bad enough, yet cave after cave has been closed as angry landowners finally react to vandal who call themselves cavers.

This, the latest closing, is a portent of events to come. It is the first time that an entire caving area has been placed off-limits.

One thing is clear: we cannot blame the landowners. They have been patient and forgiving for years. Their wheat fields have been trampled, camped in, driven through, and burned. "Cavers" have trespassed on their property and entered their caves without permission. Farmers have been awakened late at night by noisy "cavers" who arrived "too late" to ask permission, so didn't. Cattle and sheep have died from carelessly dumped carbide.

And that's not all. Mrs. Sivley, owner of Organ Cave (One of the entrances to and the only commercialized part of the Greenbrier System) reports that a part of the electrical system in the cave has been torn down by a group of "cavers" who entered the cave without permission. Friendly and still spry at an age when many can hardly walk, Mrs. Sivley is dependent upon revenue from the cave for a living. She still conducts tours of the cave herself, but has neither the energy or know-how to repair the lighting system. Without outside help, Mrs. Sivley would have to close the cave.

If the "cavers" who pulled down the lighting system read this, I hope they feel very proud of their "daring" exploit. Does it give one a sense of accomplishment to try to put a widow out of business? Why not just drive up to her house and rob her?

This type of action in the past has lead to the permanent closing of several entrances in the area. Now, a crowning incident has occurred which has lead to the closing of the area to all cavers. This began when a group of the same breed of "cavers" opened a blocked cave entrance without the owner's permission and didn't even have the decency to close the cave back up. A calf wandered into the cave and fell down a drop. The farmer, 70 years old, fell while trying to rescue the calf. He is still bedridden, three weeks after the accident. His wife, an excellent shot, seriously intends to shoot any trespasser. Other land-owners in the area are, at present, content to prosecute trespassers to the full extent of the law.

While caving in the Greenbrier area has been limited for several years, responsible groups and/or cavers have been allowed in many of the restricted caves. But now the situation is critical. Responsible cavers, who first worked the area, are currently trying to establish a caving policy in the area. They believe that if all caving groups adhere to a non-caving policy in this area, that the area may be opened in the future.

We are not only complying with this request, but are urging all other grottos to do the same. While this publication reaches few independent cavers and Boy Scout troops (whom we believe responsible for the majority of the vandalism), we hope that all NSS and Grotto members will heed this plead. Otherwise, a great caving area will be lost.

Must cavers wait until the entire eastern United States is off-limits to them before they realize that their sport is being destroyed by careless, unheeding "cavers," or will they begin taking some kind of action before it's too late?

Gary McCutchen

submitted for publication; April 8, 1965

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(Editor's Note: Due to large volumes of carbide being removed from the club storeroom shortly before the end of spring quarter by thoughtless persons stockpiling carbide for their personal use over the summer, caving this session has been seriously impeded. It has been suggested, therefore, that these persons be required to pay regular summer dues. In the future, removal of personal supplies from the Club's stock will not be permitted by the equipment committee.)