

THE TECH TROGLODYTE



SPRING 2010

The *Tech Troglodyte* is published each semester (assuming that people bother to submit articles, which they often don't) by the VPI Cave Club, a student grotto of the NSS. All submissions, subscriptions, inquiries, donations, and comments should be sent to: Trog Editor, VPI Cave Club, P.O. Box 558, Blacksburg, VA 24060-0558.



Pictures courtesy of :

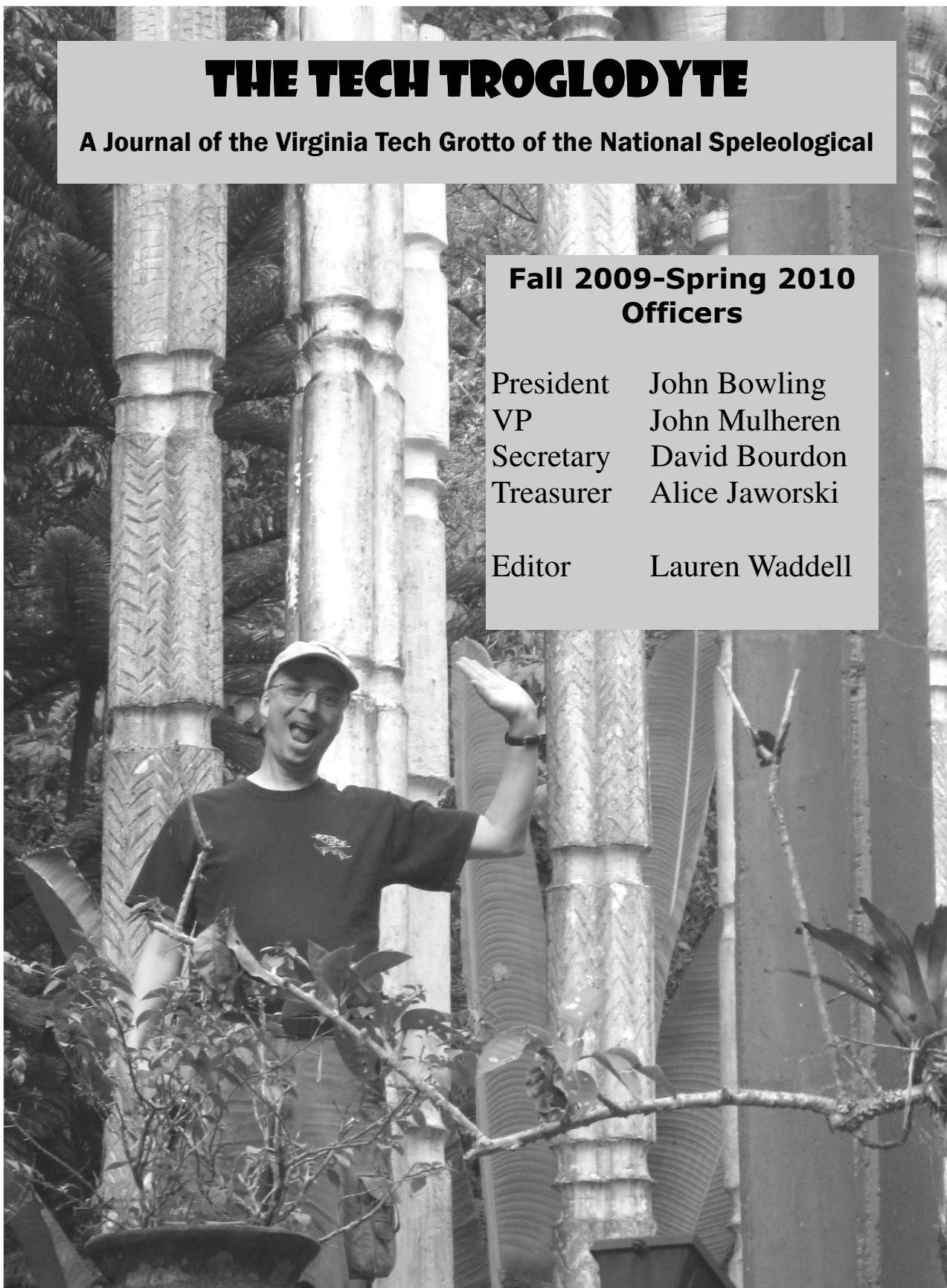
John Bowling
Deborah Barnes
Brian McCarter
Ray Sira
Mike Newsome
Travis Coad
Lauren Waddell
Philip Schuchardt
Mike Futrell
Brian Burke
Phil Fansler
Ethan Bramble

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

A Journal of the Virginia Tech Grotto of the National Speleological

Fall 2009-Spring 2010 Officers

President	John Bowling
VP	John Mulheren
Secretary	David Bourdon
Treasurer	Alice Jaworski
Editor	Lauren Waddell



CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor.....	6
Lauren Waddell	
Letter from the President.....	7
John Bowling	
History	
Joining the VTCC (Again).....	8
Luke Golladay	
Knots	
Dual Fixed Looped Knots.....	14
Jessie Sakach	
One-Handed Bowline.....	37
Philip Schuchardt	
Surveying.....	51
Philip Schuchardt	
White Nose	
White Nose: The Beginning of the End?.....	16
Lauren Waddell	
Reflections on White Nose.....	39
Wil Orndorff	
Events	
Mexico Trip 2009 Diary.....	20
John Bowling	
When VPI Haunts Dixie Caverns.....	32
John Mulheren	
Surviving the Reign/Rain of Kim Jon Julie.....	42
Lauren Waddell	

CONTENTS

Cave Club Life

How to Be a Cave Club Groupie.....	33
Julie Booker	
Party Log.....	57
Lauren Waddell	

Horror Stories

Trainee Trying to Escape Double Punishment.....	11
Matt Switick	
The Exodus.....	30
Phil Fansler	
Know Your Gear: Or Perish.....	34
Lauren Waddell	
Practice for the Real Thing.....	55
Mike Futrell	

Songs

Limestone Air (The Caving Song).....	62
Beth Mutchler	
The Little Brown White-Nosed Cocaine-Sniffin' Bat Blues.	63
Beth Mutchler	

Poems

Jessica Chesnakas.....	64
Lauren Waddell.....	65

Quotes

2009-2010 VPI Cave Club Mexico Trip Quotes.....	66
Beth Mutchler	
Other Quotes.....	67
Signout Quotes.....	69

Grapevine.....	73
-----------------------	-----------

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hi! I want to thank everyone for the contributions. This Trog ended up longer than I thought, but I consider that a good thing and hope you'll look through all the articles because we really have some good ones. It's been a long while since we've had a Trog so in a way you can think of this as a culmination of all those Trog-less years. And of course, I'd like to thank everyone for all the work they've put in. Props to John Bowling for the longest article (as well as getting me Microsoft Publisher and other software) and Beth for the quickest response.



Lauren
“Pan Tostada”
Waddell

I hope people will continue to send stuff in. It's interesting to see old Trogs and I think we have a lot of interesting stories to tell. I hope for the future more people will send in quotes as well as things for the grapevine. Try to keep track of those things. Pictures and comics are always encouraged too. I'd also like to recommend to older cavers to share their stories since they have a wealth of experience and I've heard older cavers brag about how awesome the cave club was when they were young. So keep up the good work and keep sending articles!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello VPI Cavers,

This year has been a difficult year for cavers and caving and especially for our bats. WNS has been the highlight of the year- most of the grotto's favorite vertical caves have been closed and decon procedures have slowed down caving or made it too much hassle to go caving often or at all. Skydusky Hollow and Clover Hollow were WNS-positive going into the academic year and Tawneys, Pig Hole, Newcastle Murder Hole and many other Virginia caves were added to that list over the winter. The training program has been going slowly, especially without being able to take our usual vertical training trips in Clover Hollow. There were few student members which meant not a lot of caving opportunity for new folks, only complicating the WNS limitations. Worse of all, things look grim for our fellow part-time cave-dwellers: the bats are suffering and we're still confused about how best to help.

On the positive side, we've seen a few long-time trainees finish up their membership and welcomed into the club as full members since the last edition of the Trog- bringing us to a current total of 420 VPI members. We had our usual Mexico trip with 16 participants and we visited some new caves this year (see my trip diary, in this edition). We've been involved in landowner and conservation projects including cleaning up Zells Mill Road, cleaning out sinkholes on Dr. Wallace's farm in Pearisburg, repairing the Tawney's gate and helping out the Thompsons at the Picnic work weekend. The old (and really not so old) folks are giving to the club when they can. This year Dave Colatosti was recognized with the A.I. Cartwright Honorarium for his years of service and friendship to the club. For many the best part of the club- the camaraderie, is prospering. Banquet was a wonderful event again and the club's usual dinners, Speleoseminars, and Bat Ranch parties have continued and entertained many cavers and friends. The theme for the year seems to be "if we can't go caving we might as well still hang out, right?"

Finally I'd like to recognize everyone who has helped the club be the organization we love. Thanks for helping teach trainees, helping with all the organization, set-up, tear-down, and cleanup the club needs for its events, leading cave trips, and for your continued dedication to the success of the club.

Cave softly (only around here and decon your gear afterwards!),



John Bowling,
President 2009-2010



R. N. SOUTHWORTH
President

Mrs. NANCY LEE WELLS
Sponsor

Cave Club

The V. P. I. Student Grotto of the National Speleological Society, better known as the Cave Club, was organized here in 1942. The purpose of this organization is to further the exploration and scientific study of caves and to provide recreation and adventure for its members. New caves have been discovered, explored, and mapped by this Grotto. Technical researches are being conducted by the club in this hitherto undeveloped field.

OFFICERS

R. N. SOUTHWORTH	President
R. W. BARNES	Vice-President
F. B. GILMER	Secretary
EUSIE BRUBAKER	Treasurer
DR. H. W. JACKSON	Faculty Advisor

MEMBERS

J. A. BAUER	S. W. GILMER	F. D. PORTNER	E. M. THIBERT
C. C. BEARD	J. F. GRIFFIN	S. C. RAINET	MARY WALDO
A. V. BENNETT	R. S. HOPKINS	G. W. KING	M. L. WALLERSTEIN
W. A. BOOGS	J. J. JEFFERSON	R. L. ROBERTS	R. T. WATTS
M. M. BRUBAKER	W. E. JEFFERSON	MRS. R. L. ROBERTS	MRS. R. T. WATTS
A. F. BURNER	P. L. KARP	E. O. RODIS, JR.	ANN WHITE
G. BURTON	E. F. MOORE	MARTHA ROSS	R. J. WHITMAN
JACQUELYN CURTIS	A. C. MUELLER	MARY ELLEN SMITH	MARION WORMAULD
D. E. EAMINY	Mrs. A. C. MUELLER	T. D. SMITH, JR.	T. J. WRIGHT
H. G. GILLESPY	J. P. MUZLER	I. R. TANNENBAUM	H. V. YARUS



JOINING THE VTCC (AGAIN)

LUKE COLLADAY

Beginning the process of joining the Virginia Tech Cave Club has been both a fun and rewarding process. Much more fun the second time around no doubt about that. The best part about caving is that I get to reuse all of my old Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets (VTCC) sweatshirts and they all ready have the right acronym. Instead of hollering for a FRESHMAN to come “learn” how to clean the old 1903 springfield drill rifles or polish brass, it’s TRAINEE, time for you to learn how to decontaminate gear and coil rope. The training program and it’s similarity to Corps generated training programs got me thinking, I wonder if any of the founding members were cadets? And thus I started my research into the history of the cave club.

There is an excellent article about how the VPI Student grotto was established as a part of the NSS by Tommy Watts, Ralph Hess and George Crabb and how there was a national meeting of the NSS at VPI on September 5-6 , 1942 however the Cave club was not a student organization listed in the 1942 or 1943 yearbook known as the Bugle. “*Bugles* were not published during 1944-1946 because of the limited number of students on campus during those years. World War II called many VPI students away from their studies and into service to their country.” [1] The bugle was published again in 1947 and in this issue of the Bugle a full page is given to the Cave Club. In this issue there are 40 reported members and 4 officers. Of these 44 students I wondered how many of them were ever cadets. For this I would have to find a timeline of the history of VPI [2]

- * 1924 – Participation in the Corps of Cadets becomes optional for juniors and seniors
- * 1936-40 – The completion of massive new construction (of what would later be named Burruss Hall, Squires, Eggleston, Owens, Smyth, Hutcheson, Hillcrest, Holden, and other buildings), financed in large part by New Deal programs, transforms the VPI campus
- * 1942 – Organization of VPI grotto of National Speleological society
- * 1947 – Cave club officially in the Bugle
- * 1949 – Total degrees granted in one year first top 1,000
- * 1964 – Corps of cadets becomes optional for all male freshmen and sophomores.
- * 1973 – Corps admits its first female cadets

This means that all of the male members of the VPI cave club would have been members of the Corps of Cadets for at least 2 years. This would explain the similarity of the training program in that the XO Executive Officer (Vice President) is in charge of training and signs off

on a training card similar to the ones used for freshmen and sophomore training cards in the Corps of cadets.

Things Learned

Carbide lamps do depend on which hand you use to light them. Using the wrong hand in the wrong direction will cause your hand to pass directly in front of the flame and burn it.

Boots are great in a cave but sometimes get stuck or wedged in cracks. When this happens its perfectly ok to dislodge the boot by kicking David in the head. Even though he isn't wearing shoes, he is wearing a helmet.

References

- [1] <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/bugle/1940.html>
- [1] <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/arc/125th/timeline.htm>



TRAINEE TRYING TO ESCAPE DOUBLE PUNISHMENT

MATT SWITICK

There aren't many times when you can act like an idiot and feel fulfilled for it. I was afforded one of those chances one quiet weekend when I had nothing to do but be stupid. I went to Starnes. We all know Starnes horizontal, the boring, almost forgotten, thirty minute through trip that is frequented by the weak, the enfeebled and the boy scouts. However little do those travelers know that next to the quiet and short horizontal passage is the wet, long, and nuisance pit ridden, vertical Starnes. It has therefore become my duty to make ready those who would seek the treasure of hypothermia that is Starnes.

The tip will begin one night at a meeting. A short man wearing a baseball cap will come up to you. Being the trainee you are, you will approach; beware, for this man is the harbinger of misery. The conversation will soon turn to "You going caving this weekend"? "Well, maybe if anyone is interested-I'll go-where would you think?" you'll say. This is where it comes: "How about vertical Starnes"? "Sure," you'll say. That is until the VP says "oh I went to Starnes and once was enough for me". He is right! Keep in mind that as you hear this your ego is likely to kick in and dispel his comment for a bout of pussy-ism, after all this man in the cap (who will remain nameless; I'll just give him the initials D.A.V.E C. for short) has done the trip before. Therefore you set the time and drink the night away.

Pointers for setting this trip:

Because it is inevitable that you will lose your senses and go to Starnes there are some key things to remember and follow when planning:

- 1..Don't go
- 2.Make the group as small as possible, in fact if you can do it by yourself, by dreaming about it during the night, you would be better off
- 3.Ensure warm weather and no wind for when you come out. Consider what you are wearing at the time of the meeting; if a sweater and hat is included in the ensemble, best to wait for warmer days
4. Use carbide, you won't, but I feel better saying it
5. Have a spare shirt/pants to change into (while in the Cave)
6. Don't use knots (yes, people will say they have done it on knots, remember, these people are Deighan), have a frog
7. Have food and water and bring your trash bag and heat; you will likely need them all as you never have before.

The day of the trip is upon you and you have your stuff: thrift store shirts, Wal-Mart boots, maybe you even own your own pack, and as you walk to the cave you feel competent, like a caver (despite the actual lack of experience). Once in the cave and having let your eyes adjust you notice that D.A.V.E C. is wearing no shoes, you suddenly realize that this man is much more of a hard ass than yourself and you wonder what you've just done to yourself. This is a good time to point out that the trip is long, even with three people; be nice, respectful, and in good spirits, because if you piss people off you'll find yourself with hypothermia and a long three hours to enjoy it.

The trip will start off pleasant; you will soon lose your name and have it replaced with a name of similar lettering, for example Matt to Mike. See the resemblance? Neither do I. Be patient with the other people calling you Mike. Realize that they are on this trip as well and are empirically showing that they lack all form of intelligence. You reach the first waterfall. Not bad. You have spirited images of yourself rappelling down a gushing torrent of white water enough to snap the spine of a small animal or small man, but guess what, instead you get to take a semi-sketchy walk over the falls and rappel a good twenty feet from it. But if you make a whoosh sound as you rappel it may seem cool. While you're at this place make sure to ask D.A.V.E. C. how they first rigged this drop; it's a good story. At the bottom of the drop you take a nice little trip around some passage and then get to choose up or down. Do not go up (D.A.V.E. C will), but go down, it's much better. Don't lose your light on the crawl through. It's not good m'kay. You than get to another fun rappel... After some pleasant mud the consistency of shit it looks like you get another little waterfall drop. This time you actually get into the waterfall! Exciting, right? No. It's not. This is a trickle, (I would suggest the whoosh noise again for dramatic affect) but it's also a good time to have not pissed off anyone. But I dare you to piss D.A.V.E. C. off early and see the great results when you get there. After stepping gingerly across the river to avoid the water, you take a steep ascent up to a little hole in the wall. There is no pizza here but a sump of muddy water. A little digging and it will seem that your trip is over as you go do everything you just did but in reverse! Yes, up the "pits" and all. As it turns out, you are going to do the same thing twice more.

You go down another pit, (the crap end goes down the pit) and you have a pleasant walk to your destination. The belly flop. You will be given the chance to wuss out. Don't, if you do than you lose all credibility and it means you never read the rest of my paper (Jerk). So you agree. Besides that's what you came here for. And in you go. You find yourself in a small passage where you slip like an eel to the sump. Dave will go first (thank god). Tip: make sure the spare light on your helmet is secure (if anyone finds a Wal-Mart LED at the bottom, it's mine and I want it back. I believe Rob has an Apex there as well). The water here is cold, just remember that you are the bigger piece of matter (you have disposable thumbs) and take it like a man. Don't go rushing in, it's not good, but stay calm for more fun is ahead. Once thru the twenty foot swim/crawl, you slither down to another sump. This one is a few feet long, but only two or three feet tall, with barley enough air above. If you need to be pulled thorough don't do it fast. Your head will go under the water and you'll be several shades browner than you were before. Now starts the fun part of the trip.

If you brought a spare change of clothes you want to have left them at the river, before the time that you went back up. Change, and do everything you did before the crawl. Up the "pits" through the passage and up the long agonizingly long borehole. Pray that it's warm outside, because your body is drained and near hypothermia. Why, you ask, would anyone go on this trip? Even more pressing, why would D.A.V.E. C. lead this trip multiple times?! What psycho did you get to take you into the mountains! But you'll soon realize why it's worth it. I can tell you with a straight face that Starnes was a great trip, it offers challenges that you don't get from the frequented sport caves. It is painful only because of the cold, while many places are painful due to the actual pain that a sharp rock can give you. The trip is rewarding, it is fun, it is long and I would do it again. Peeps for my peeps. Peeps and beer, that's all you will remember about Starnes, and that is all you need to. Let me end by saying, if you don't agree that the trip was in fact awesome, and worth your time, than you should stop caving. You can complain and bitch all you want (when you're out) but at the end of the day you can only say that you had fun.



Ben & Mike adapt the
common midget launcher for
use in Corkscrew Care

Mike Futrell

DUAL FIXED LOOP KNOTS

JESSIE SAKACH

Fixed loop knots are often used when rigging to multiple anchors. This can be important if there is no suitable single anchor point available, for optimal rope placement, or as an extra safety precaution. A major advantage is that if one anchor fails, and the remaining anchor can withstand the force of the load, the system will still work. An example of this is rigging into two bolts in a wall, or to two smaller trees near a drop, rather than just one.

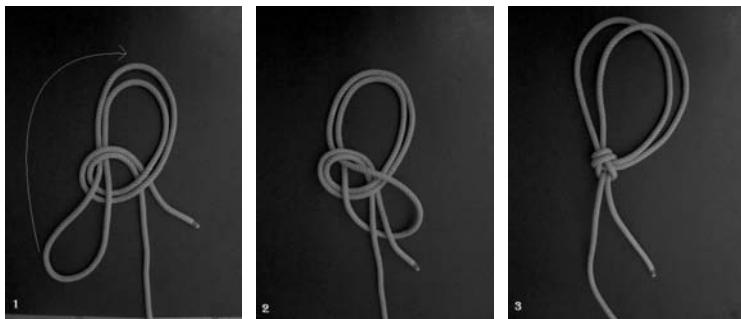
Self-equalizing rig allows the load to be distributed evenly between multiple anchors. Dual fixed loop knots like the bowline on a bight or double figure eight are common choices for this. A Y-hang is another way of rigging to more than one anchor. It can be helpful if you need to position the rope away from a wall or other obstacle. In addition to the bowline on a bight and double figure eight, the double alpine butterfly can also be used in a Y-hang. Although the first two knots mentioned are admittedly quicker and easier to tie, the double alpine butterfly has the advantage of being multi-directional. A specific case where a multi-directional knot is beneficial is if you have a cable ladder rigged into a belay line.

	Bowline on a Bight	Double Figure Eight	Double Alpine Butterfly
Complexity	Moderate	Easy	Difficult
Difficulty to Untie (After Load)	Easy	Difficult	Moderate
Directionality	Uni-directional*	Uni-directional*	Multi-directional

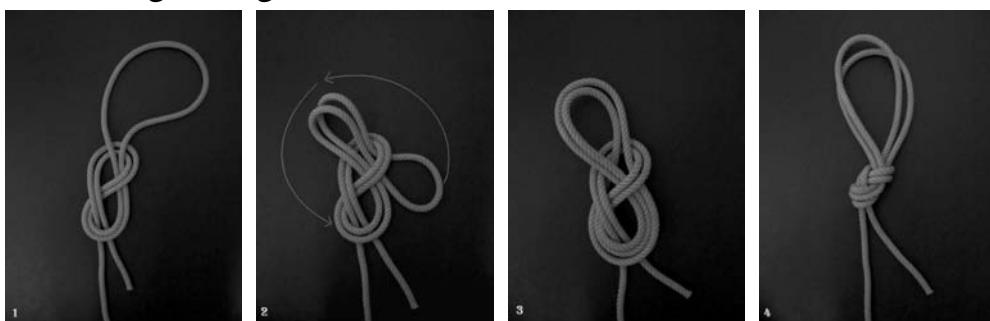
*The tail ends of the knot must be parallel to prevent the knot from capsizing.

Each of these knots has its own advantages and disadvantages, some of which were covered in the chart. Other factors may include rope strength and personal preference. You should pick the knot that best suits your specific needs.

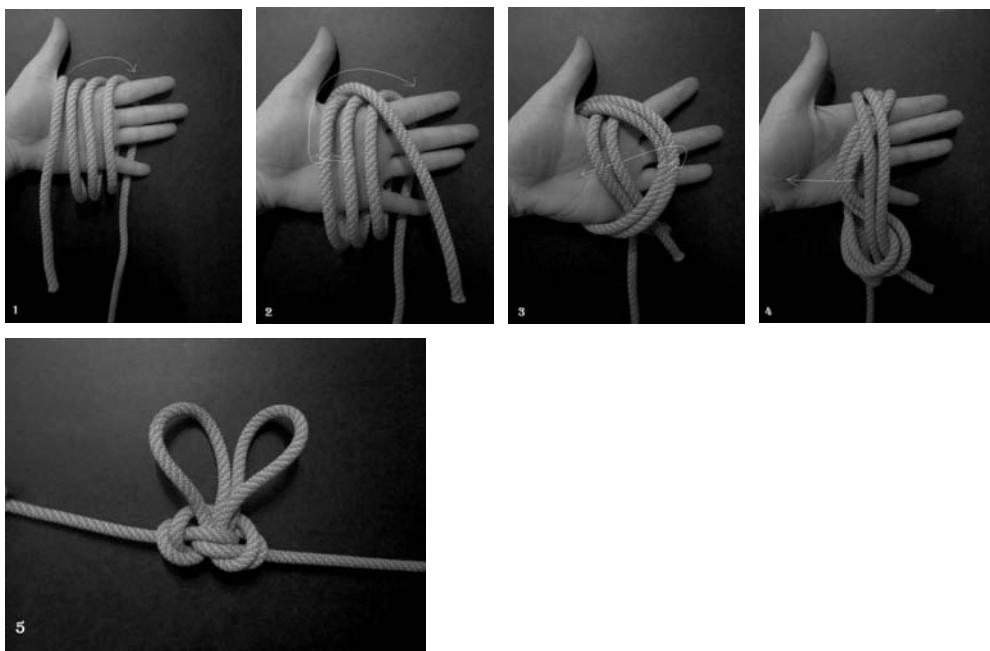
Bowline on a Bight



Double Figure Eight



Double Alpine Butterfly



WHITE NOSE: BEGINNING OF THE END?

LAUREN WADDELL

Spring 2008 Semester:

Recently a deadly disease has exploded amongst the bat population. Known as White Nose Bat Syndrome, or WNS for short, it has killed hundred of thousands of bats along the east coast recently and has caused alarm for biologists as well as cavers.



Normally cavers, when in a cave, are careful of the hibernating bats. Bats are not uncommon cave-life and often times cavers will run into them when caving. Brown bats, in particular, they find the most of, sometimes alone, sometimes huddled together, the number varying across caves. Generally the policy when dealing with bats in caves involves keeping in mind where they are when maneuvering around in a cave and pointing them out to cavers behind to make sure those cavers don't knock them down. When a bat does get knocked down, the cavers carefully pick it up and hold it close to the cave wall and try to get it to hook its claws back in. So when cavers heard about White Nose Syndrome they were concerned.

White Nose Syndrome first appeared in Schoharie County, New York, in February 2006. In re-

spouse to this the New York Department of Environmental Conservation sent biologists to document the outbreak in January 2007. Since then the syndrome has spread, killing hundreds of thousands of bats. Around a half million bats have died in that time in caves throughout 7 states ranging from New England to West Virginia. The syndrome has affected at least 55 caves and in some of those caves has killed 90 to 100 percent of the bat population.

Biologists and cavers have been able to identify its outset by the white appearance of a bat's nose and other similar white spots on the bats. These markings signify a fungal growth on them. Another distinguishing feature of the bats appears in their low body weight. Some postulate that the emaciation of the bats correlates to the fungus, believing that it disturbs the bats' sleeping patterns. As a result of the fungus the bats awaken more often and when they do they burn more fat just to stay warm. They therefore go thorough their winter fat storage faster and run out before their hibernation ends in the spring. This ends up with White Nose bats starving to death. Also, biologists found that White Nose bats appear more often towards the entrances of caves, indicating a migration from the deeper depths of the cave they normally rest in.

One response to this was Willis (a biology professor at the University of Winnepeg) and Boyles' (a graduate student in biology at Indiana State University) proposal to use heaters in caves. They state that when bats do wake up they will look for warmer parts of the cave. Willis and Boris propose having heaters ready for them when they do and plan to test them in a cave in Manitoba, Canada with the \$28,000 funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This experiment, although not used in a white nose infected cave, will see if at least healthy bats

will use the heaters.

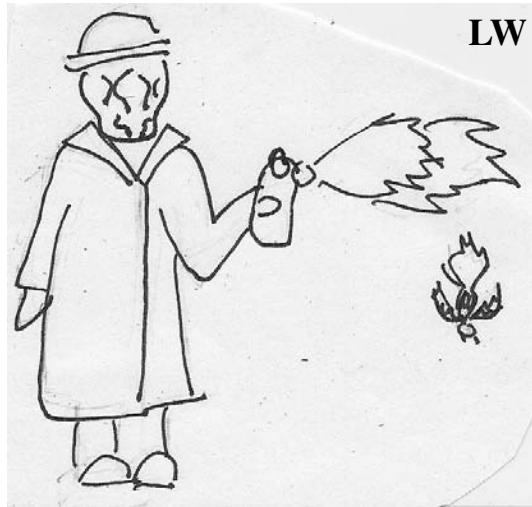
These heaters may make it easier for the bats to sleep and save them from losing energy searching for a warmer spot to sleep. The energy they use looking for one burns much needed fat storage which results in the emaciated bats.

Willis does bring up the concern over whether white nose is spread in the summer and how the heaters would affect the outcome in such a case. He believes that the heaters could potentially prolong the lives of infected bats and allow them to pass it on in the summer. However, the fungus has been found to be a cold loving fungus so this worry is not a concern.

What does concern people is the impact White Nose Syndrome could have on the ecosystem. Naturally, many worry about the fate of the bats, particularly already endangered bats like the Indiana and Virginia and Ozark big-eared and gray bats. However, the fate of bats affects the food chain they are in and people worry about how the death of so many bats will affect the insect population. Without the bats to eat certain insects, these insects can proliferate, some of which will destroy dozens of crops like apples and wheat. So not only does White Nose Syndrome concern biologists and cavers, but also farmers whose living depends on the conditions of the crops they grow that are threatened by bats' absence.

Because of these concerns cavers and any others concerned have been focusing on what they can do to stop and prevent WNS. Cavers as a result have been cautious about where they cave, believing that they may have something to do with the spread of the syndrome.

The fact that the outbreak jumped from New York all the way down to Virginia supports this view. This happened suddenly and surpassed many miles from one outbreak to the next. That distance covers hundreds of miles which makes it hard to believe that bats could have spread it flying that far. Breathing Cave and Clover Hollow in Giles County are two such caves that Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation biologists Chris Hobson and Wil Orndorf on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 discovered to be infected. Also, the fact that White Nose appears first in caves that cavers most often visit further supports the inference that cavers may be spreading it.



In response to this The Virginia Cave Board and Natural Heritage Karst Program asked for a moratorium, a voluntary ban, on caving until April 15, 2009, a request also purported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who proposed in March 2009 that cavers should stay out of caves within 17 states. The U.S. Forest Service also closed caves and mines on the National Forests Eastern Region ranging over a span of 33 states. This moratorium they set for April 24th 2009 to cover a span of a year, possibly ending in April 24th 2010, and hope that in this time scientists will be able study white nose to learn more about it and how to deal with it.

It has been found that White Nose Syndrome is genetically similar to a strain of symbiotic fungus on bats in alpine caves in Europe. This leads to implications that WNS was introduced to America's ecosystem from Europe. This would help explain how quickly and deadly it has taken affect since bats in America would not have been able to build up an immunity to an unfamiliar disease.

Although it is now past the April 15 moratorium and cavers have begun to cave again they still have been taking precautions. They have been asked to stick to a particular caving area in order to avoid spreading WNS. Also, they were requested to have a particular set of caving clothes and equipment for the area that they wash and disinfect after each caving trip, preferably with a bleach or alcohol solution for the gear, especially if they intend to go out of the area.

Although the situation has improved for cavers with the resumption of caving, things look grim for the fate of the bats with the rate they are dying and may not bode well for farmers with an increase in the insect population. Still, cavers will do their best to take the recommended precautions when caving so that they can still enjoy caving and be respectful of the bat population as well.



Within the last year:

White Nose has spread even further. It now stretches from Ontario to Western Tennessee, and hundreds of caves are affected.

Local caves have continued to become infected and include:

Clover Hollow,	dy Penley,	Starnes,
Newberry-Bane,	Coon,	Shires,
Tawneys, Bud-	Newcastle Murderhole,	Stonley(Tazewe11).

WNS signs have also been observed at:

Pighole,	Repass Saltpetre
Beer Can Chasm,	Higgenbotham.

Throughout this the VPI Cave Club has continued to cave while following decontamination and regionalization protocols.

For more information you can check out:

<http://www.caves.org/WNS/index.htm>
http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html

Works Cited

Hill, Michael. "Heaters may stave off doom for bats." Associated Press. 5 March 2009. May 2009 <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29534877/>>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Recommended procedures to prevent the possible spread of white-nose syndrome." 27 Feb. 2009. 9 May 2009 <<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html#containment>>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "White Nose Syndrome in bats: Something is killing our bats." 29 April 2009. 9 May 2009 <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html>

White Nose Syndrome Page. 15 March 2009. Liaison on White Nose Syndrome National Speleological Society. 9 May 2009 <<http://www.caves.org/WNS/>>

MEXICO TRIP 2009 DIARY

JOHN BOWLING

12/26

Left Christiansburg. Drove through the night.

12/27

Drove through the US. Ate breakfast at Cafe de Mond in New Orleans. Climbed on the big star at the Texas welcome center.

12/28

Crossed the border around midnight; border crossing took till about 2 am. Drove to Sabinas Hidalgo, where we stayed 8 each in 2 hotels across the road from one another. Had breakfast at the Rancho Hotel (the fancier one). Went to Grutas de Garcia, a show cave in the mountains above Garcia. We took the cable car up to the entrance

and took the hour-long tour. The cave was awesome- beats Luray Caverns easily. The view from the top was awesome too- really cool geology. Headed back to Saltillo to get gas and beer, then headed toward Real de Catorce following the GPS... We followed the "road" as it got progressively rougher next to a railroad track until it became impassible and we were forced to stopped. We cracked beers to combat the frustration and then turned around. We then drove back to Saltillo and drove through to Real de Catorce. We got there around 2 am and the lights were off in the first half of the tunnel and no one was up to monitor traffic through the tunnel. We walked into all of the hotels downtown and luckily found a lady at a hotel on the road with the Municipal building about a block from the big church.



Courtesy John Bowling

12/29

Woke up in Real de Catorce in very cold weather. Ate breakfast at Restaurant Real and then arranged to ride horses up to the ghost town at noon. Looked around in the church full of creepy zombie Jesus and then went shopping while waiting for the horses. Had to wait on Lauren, Mulheren, and Phil. Rode the horses up to the ghost town- was incredibly cold. Mike went exploring in the tunnel, which the tour guide didn't appreciate. It drizzled some on the way back.



We got a snack at the Restaurant el Minero and put our stuff in the room (Julie and I got our own room- room 10 on the top floor). Mike and I went shopping for rocks at a place uphill from the main square away from the main shopping venues. Mike bought a huge piece of quartz (easily 70 lbs) and I bought two pieces of hydrothermal dolomite mixed with other minerals. Mike and I talked with Jesus Tabor, who used to work in the mine. We got his phone number and address so we can arrange for him to take us to the caves or mines where he found the minerals he was selling. We hope to keep in touch to go on an expedition him with him next year. We met up and had dinner as a group at our hotel, the Hotel de Abundancia. We had some beers and Sandy ended up sick after drinking most of a bottle of rum and a beer in our

room.



12/30

Woke up at 7:30, had breakfast at our hotel, then packed to drive to the city of San Luis Potosi. We called Miguel, the president of the SLP cave club, with whom Deighan had been corresponding. He said he would meet us in an hour, so we went to get lunch at the Hotel Concordia. Miguel

met up with us there and we got directions to Resumidiero del Borbollon and Los Lobos. On the way back to the cars, several of us bought some fireworks (pyrotechnica or "bumbas") We then went to the Mercado Tangamanga and got food for our next two days, beer, and water. We drove to the Rancho del Borbollon and set up camp there.

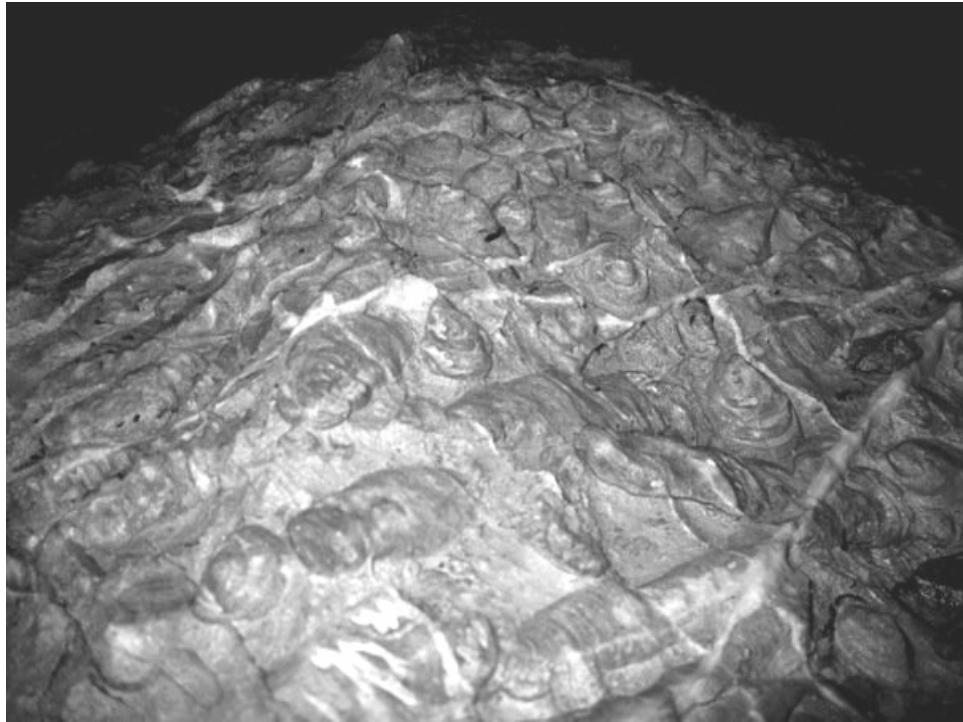
12/31/09

After breakfast, the group split up. Travis's truck had some issues, so he drove it to SLP to be repaired. Some people went to the Valle de los Fantasmos to rappel some short pits. I went into Borbollon with Deighan, Beth, Aaron, Julie, Brian and Mike. Carrying the rope through the cave was a huge hassle- like carrying two 50-lb duffel bags through Links for about 40 minutes. We rigged a handline near the top of the pit and rigged the pit and a pigtail. After Deighan rappelled the pit, I rappelled, then Julie did. The rappel was great- I had my StenLight on turbo and I could see a lot, but I still couldn't see the bottom of the pit. Julie and I looked around the bottom of the pit- it was awesome. There were tons and tons of fossils- whole refrigerator-sized pieces of breakdown full of cemented fossils in outstanding condition. The echo in the cave was amazing too- any sound echoed for at least 30 seconds. After Beth and Aaron rappelled, Julie and I climbed tandem out of the pit, in about an hour and a half. We waited while Brian rappelled and Mike decided it would be too late by the time he made it back out of the pit, so Mike and Julie left the cave while I waited for Aaron and Beth to climb out. Aaron and Beth made it up and I was already wearing a trashbag and cold. Mike made it back into the cave with a sweatshirt for me (wet from being dropped in a puddle in the cave) and a

Courtesy John Bowling



plastic bottle filled with beer (he and Julie had broken two glass bottles trying to pack them in the sweatshirt). I caved out with Mike, which was tiring enough before being very cold. The distance to the pit is only about 300 feet, but it was a fairly strenuous 300 feet. We celebrated New Year's by lighting off tons of Mexican fireworks and drinking beer and margaritas (not frozen since the ice isn't safe) and went to bed late.



1/1/10

I slept in a bit and had breakfast and did dishes. We had breakfast and cleaned up fireworks-the ground looked like it had snowed. It turned out that Travis's truck had to be left until the afternoon of the 2nd, so we would have to spend an extra day and a half in the area. Most of the group decided to go back to San Luis Potosi to stay there and left me, Julie, Mike, Sandy, Travis, Aaron and Beth to stay at the ranch another night. Julie, Beth and I drove to SLP to buy more food and beer. When we got back, a few of us decided to look into a cave we heard about from the ranch's owner. Some cavers had gone to see the cave entrance, a stone well not far off the road to the ranch. Travis, Sandy, Mike, Aaron, Beth and I went to go check out the cave, which supposedly had an 800-foot pit inside. We took a rope to self belay on the downclimb to the cave, which was fairly easy with the footholds inside the well (it was obviously made to be climbable). I went down first and told the others at the top that it was easily downclimbable and it opened up at the bottom. Sandy came down next followed by Travis and Aaron. Mike came down last, barefoot and with no equipment but a headlamp. Beth decided to go back to camp. We explored maybe another 100 feet before it came to a 15-20-foot well with water at the bottom. On the way out I spotted two awesomely beautiful blue and white centipedes. We figured we would come back after dinner with another rope and better equipment- I especially wanted kneepads and long sleeves, since we had already gone through two rocky belly-crawls. When we got back to the ranch, Julie had almost finished making chiles rellenos, which we ate with some guacamole and some cervezas. Most of us didn't feel like going back to the cave that night to rig, so we went just set up our sleeping stuff inside. We had to spend a while trying to get the chimney to vent the smoke from the fire. We all went to bed after hanging out and talking for a while.



1/2/10

We woke up before 7 to make breakfast since we heard from Sr. Alvarez (the ranch owner) that he would send someone to lead us to the Pit of the Bull at 8. We packed up almost everything at the ranch and finally someone came between 11 and noon. The man told us that the pit, which Mike described as similar to Neversink, was about 35 minutes away and that there was no path- we should take machetes and be ready to use them. We decided that it was too late and too far and just went to the Valle de los Fantasmos- a huge park off of the side of the highway with karst pillars. The valley was filled with pits from a few feet to over 200 feet deep and several tall limestone spires. We looked around first and found a pit near the truck and much further back found a pit we dropped rocks into and estimated to be around 400 feet deep. We came back

with a 450(?)-foot rope and spent an hour and a half debating the rig. I wanted to rappel from the higher side of the pit rigged to a rock and redirected off a nearly foot-diameter tree hanging over the pit. Aaron didn't want to rig in over the pit, so insisted on rigging off of a rock further away on the low side, in which the rope went down a gentle slope to a lip and laid against the wall for the first 30-40 feet. We finally rigged it and padded it extensively the way Aaron wanted. When Aaron let down the rope he swore the whole rope was at the bottom, though the others thought it was only about 200 feet at most. Aaron dropped into the pit, followed by Beth, Sandy and Mike. It was starting to rain and I had loaned out two lights, my rack and gloves, so I went back to the truck with Julie to start repacking while Travis stayed at the top of the pit. Mike, Travis, and Julie all said they would've rigged it the way I suggested, which would've been easier on a ropewalker and probably not required padding at all. Once everyone was back, we went back to the Rancho Borbollon and found the group there with Travis's 4Runner fixed. The CRV and Pathfinder were packed and we finished packing the 4Runners in the rain in the dark and left for Xilitla. We made it to Ciudad Valles by 1 am, so we stayed in the Hotel Piña near the city's Centro.

1/3/10

We got up at 8 and had breakfast in the hotel restaurant, then set off to drive to Huichihuayan on the way to Xilitla. We stopped at Zulema's family's home after driving up and down the road because Aaron "knew exactly where we were going". We stopped to drop off the load of stuff Aaron's mom gave us to bring to Zulema and we moved Travis's roof rack to the forward two of the three roof rack mounts since the load bouncing had dented the roof and broken the rear roof rack mounts. We took off again just after that to head towards Xilitla and Las Pozas. We got into Las Pozas and had lunch at the restaurant across from the entrance and then we looked around in Las Pozas until it closed. We drove to Xilitla and had a difficult time parking since it was market day. We checked into Hotel Ziyaquetzas on the square and Deighan, Julie and I talked about what to do over the next two days. Deighan had earlier planned for a man to meet us to talk about



showing us the top and bottom entrances to a wet, vertical cave in which we could do a through trip. We met another man downstairs, Jose, who was the hotel owner's ex-husband. Jose told us that he could take us through the caves or he could arrange for someone to show us them or take us through them. He said he would check tonight with his coworkers from the tourism office and leave us a message at the hotel in the morning. We went to get dinner at a restaurant across the square from our hotel and tried a lot of their mixed drinks, including Sangria (not like ours), Vampiro (not good) and Cucaracha (coffee liquor and 151 served flaming). Several people stayed up late but I went to bed earlier, planning to go caving the next day.

1/4/10

We woke up to the sound of the birds on the square before 7 and when we finally got up we brought our laundry to the lavanderia.

Courtesy John Bowling



On the way back to the hotel, we had breakfast at Deighan's favorite restaurant about a block off the square. We checked into the 5-story hotel, the tallest and probably brightest building in town, the pink and yellow hotel Puente del Cielo. We reserved the master suite, the comfort suite, and a king suite, three of the four nicest rooms on the 5th floor and put our stuff in the rooms. Mike, Julie and I went shopping for beer and bought 4 cases and brought them back to the hotel. I then went shopping for blankets in town and grabbed some tacos before we met up to go caving. Julie, Sandy, Aaron, Beth and I drove Mike's 4Runner to the Cueva del Salitre, a huge cave outside Xilitla. Just down the hill is the cave entrance- viewable from the road on the other side of the valley. The cave entrance was probably 200 feet high and 500 feet across, though we spent about 20 minutes looking for it since we took the wrong path. We looked in the bottom first, where there was a dark hole, but the obvious cave was not the entrance. We found the actual cave entrance after about 15 minutes and climbed into it. We explored briefly and on our way out we saw five very large spiders and several large moths which we didn't see on the way in. The spiders had about 1.5" bodies and 3-4" legs- in all they were larger than our hands and since we also noticed the ground was littered with small bones, we decided to leave in a hurry. When we got back into town, the rest of the group was grilling on the rooftop with the hotel owner cooking the meat they bought. We grilled out and drank on the rooftop and later that evening started lighting our leftover fireworks and throwing them from the balcony and the roof. We stopped after midnight, after we lost our tin can we launched off the roof (the paper label was left behind though).

1/5/10

We had breakfast at the hotel's breakfast buffet and then sat around or did a little shopping or surfed the internet using the hotel's wi-fi. We drove out of town to Huichihuayan to the campground for lunch. We looked at the local cave for 10 pesos, which was essentially a canyon into a pit. We walked through the canyon and the guide told us the pit was about 35 m deep. Aaron asked if we could rappel it next year and the guide said we could. We went to Zulema's family's house and had chicken and tamales and punch and camped in the neighbor's yard by the road.

1/6/10

We woke up early and set off for Aquismon to get some breakfast before going to Guaguas. We ate breakfast at a 24-hour restaurant by the Pemex in Aquismon and then went up to Guaguas. Travis, Sandy, Ray, Aaron, Brian, Julie and I went to Guaguas and rappelled the high side and climbed the low side. Sandy and Aaron climbed out first, followed by Ray and Brian, then Julie, Travis and I climbed out tandem. We were actually well out of the pit by 7 pm, when we told the Mexicans who carried our rope to come back to carry it back to the trucks. While packing the ropes, they noticed that Deighan's rope had become damaged in the center (the area between the two bags), likely while taking the rope out of Borbollon. We also intentionally knocked a loose rock off of the lip of the low side, which damaged the 700' rope about 10 feet from the bottom. After getting back to the trucks, we drove to Aquismon for dinner and then drove up to Golondrinas. The road was partially paved, only in the top and bottom sections, and we got lost at one point by following the nicer paved road to the left when the road to Golondrinas went straight and became dirt. We had to drive to the upper parking lot since the lower lot is now closed and Deighan met us there. We had to carry a lot of camping equipment down the path to the campground, which was very muddy and tiresome at night. We set up camp and slept near the pit in the thatch cabanas where we have camped in the past.

1/7/10

After a cold and short night's sleep, we got up and had to

Golondrias



Courtesy John Bowling



make decisions about who was doing what pit. Sandy, Travis, and Deighan went off to do Cepillo and I helped set up Golondrinas for Julie, Ray, Mike, Aaron and Beth to do. My ankles and calves hurt two much from all the hiking that I decided not to do Golondrinas, but I carried my gear down in case I felt better or needed to perform a rescue on rope. Ray descended first and then I took pictures of Beth, Julie, Aaron and Mike as they rappelled. I then waited while they walked around and climbed out. The first group made it out just by 4 pm and the land manager told us

we had to pull up the rope. We pulled up the rope and left Aaron and Beth at the bottom for a few hours. In the meantime, Mike, Julie and I went up to the cars to repack and Mike and I fixed Alex's window. We met up with Deighan, Travis, and Sandy on their way back from Tamapatz and packed some more until it started pouring down rain. Mike, Julie and I drove to Tamapatz and had dinner in the Restaurant de las Golondrinas, right on the square, where we had eaten before. We drove back and climbed down the treacherous stairs on the path back to the pit, which now were muddier than before and had water running down them. When we reached the pit, the group was still hauling up rope. I helped by de-rigging the rope and then we went to bed.

1/8/10

After waking up several times due to the cold, we finally got up around 8 am. We didn't hear the big bird flight- it may have been too cold and rainy for the birds to come out early or tourists to gather. We packed up and climbed out the path, which in the rain had become even muddier and had so much water running down it that it was practically a streambed. We spent a while repacking the cars in the rain and decided that we'd get breakfast where the Guaguas group had eaten two nights before while Deighan went to Huichihuayan to see if Zulema was going to come back with them to the US. After driving down the crappy wet road listening to death metal, we pulled into the restaurant and had breakfast. Deighan showed up shortly thereafter and told us that Zulema wasn't going back to the US. We parted ways and set off for Tani-nul while Deighan, Sandy, and Paige left for the US via Victoria. When we got to Tani-nul we checked in and started drinking cane liquor and beer. The power went out, so we grabbed headlamps and changed into swimsuits and went down to the hot spring, where we hung out until it was dark. We watched some of the bats fly out of the cave around dusk. We came back up to the rooms in the dark and eventually had dinner as a group by candlelight. When we came back up to the rooms and I was tired and passed out but others continued having fun, including using some of the 4-foot bottle rockets before we crossed the border.

1/9/10

Got out of bed around 9 and had breakfast with the early risers: Ray, Travis, and Alex. Julie and I looked around the grounds for a while and went into the cave, saw the zipline, and looked through the small zoo with iguanas, geese and an ocelot. We went back inside, showered and

packed. Travis had hurt his back in the meantime and Aaron was helping him stretch to see what was wrong. We got a late start from the hotel and went to go see some old Huastecan ruins. We had lunch at a pizzeria near Valles where the front door was broken and only held on by a pair of pliers and the waitstaff told us they only had pizza and burgers and they had no pepperoni, so we ordered salchichas, which turned out to be a pizza with hot dog slices on it. They had finished cooking the pizza before they brought out our drinks. We stopped at the supermercado Soriana in Valles where we all bought the liquor we planned to take back to the US. We started off for Victoria and finally got there around 11 pm. We checked into the Hotel Sierra Gorda downtown and finished drinking the beers while playing a game Ray had brought. We got to bed late, around 2 am.

1/10/10

Woke up late, around 10 am Julie and I had breakfast with Travis in the hotel restaurant and then she and I went shopping for some stuff to bring back. Julie bought some mortars and pestles and I didn't find any of the woven tunic-type shirts I wanted. We had planned to leave at noon but finally left just after 2 pm. We crossed the border around 8 or 9 pm and we all three got pulled aside to run some of our bags through the portable x-ray machine. Customs also found a bag of oranges and some leftover fresh-squeezed orange juice from Mexico and told the CR-V that they would owe a \$300 fine but that they would waive it. Then we had to dig through the truck again to get out all of the liquor bottles. Apparently we also would have owed duty on the bottles but Customs never told us, so we just paid the Texas ABC fees. After that ordeal, we went to Whataburger for dinner and drove through the night.

1/11/10

We drove across the US, finding weird stuff in the gas stations of Louisiana and Mississippi. I bought Julie some Drank: Extreme Relaxation Beverage (like an anti-energy drink) in hopes



that she would sleep in the car on the way home. We stopped for dinner at Cracker Barrel outside Chattanooga. We drove on through the night.

1/12/10

We got back to Ray's at around 3:15 am. After unpacking and sorting out stuff, I got back to my apartment around 4 am. Mexico trip done!

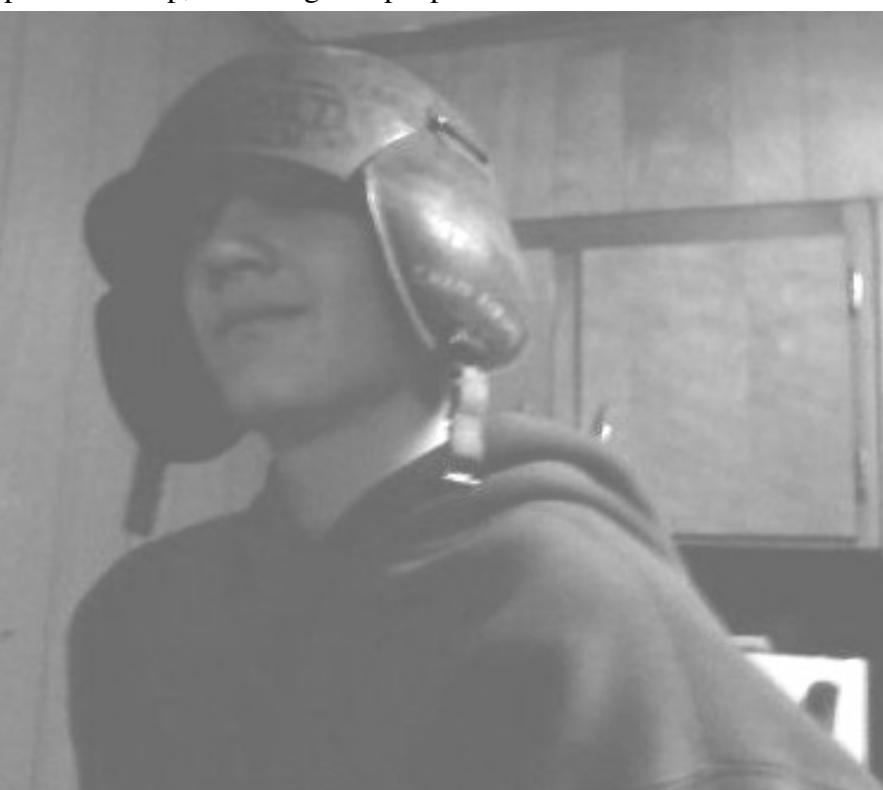
- * John Bowling,
- * President and
- * Mexico caver

THE EXODUS

PHILLIP FANSLER

It was pretty much a normal Saturday morning. Eight hours of general debauchery, including, but not limited to, cross-dressing, wanton destruction, and pissing off neighbors, followed by four hours of sleep the night before preceded the usual cave trip. Miller's Cove was the name of the game today, forty-five minutes driving and another forty-five minutes hiking to a hole in the ground on US Forest Service property. I had been looking forward to this trip for weeks and the haze of a four-hour sleep deficit didn't bother me. I wasn't even troubled about the disturbing images of the night before, somehow the thought of college-age males running through an apartment complex wearing my roommate's Disney princess dresses didn't affect me. Today was going to be great.

There were nine people on the trip, including two people I didn't know. The leader of the trip was grizzled veteran of the cave club, Joe Zokaites. He graduated from Tech sometime before my father was born, and never left. He was a decorated caver, had surveyed more passage than I had ever been in, and was also a sort of fatherly figure if you got to know him. He'd been through the worst trips, the best ones, and was prepared for either scenario at all times. Some other cavers that were on the trip included the current vice president (John Bowling), the future secretary (David Bourdon), the future vice president (John Mulheren), and the previous president of the Cave Club (Brian Wolford). Two that I didn't know were a grad student and his fiancée. They were a bit prissy, like most grad students are. They were also *rock climbers*.



As a result of this experience, Phillip Fansler was awarded that prestigious Brain Bucket Award. He also was awarded the not-so-prestigious crutches.

Our caravan of three cars pulled onto the side of the road next to a cow field. The winter wind stung my face as I stepped out of the car and changed into my caving gear. Mud stained blue jeans, a ripped t-shirt, a belt that surely could be used as some form of macabre torture

device after what caves it had been through, and a new, dull, leather pair of boots was my outfit for the day. I completed the setup with my 1955 vintage Guy's Dropper carbide lamp, we locked up the cars, and began the long hike to the cave.

The two mile hike to the entrance was cold and uneventful. After climbing down the cable ladder into the entrance and navigating the first hour-and-a-half of the cave, we came to the first major obstacle: a thirty foot, extremely exposed, wet, muddy downclimb (or, par for the course when caving). I volunteered to go first, shrugging off offers of a belay. I climbed down, no problems. I took a few minutes at the bottom to inspect my carbide lamp; it was almost out of fuel. No big deal. I shut it off, threw it in my pack, grabbed my spare electric, and attached it to my helmet. Not wanting to waste any more valuable time, I rounded up the next two cavers down and we made our way to lower sections of the cave.

I'd been in this cave before, I knew the way. Or did I? *Meh*. There was really only one way to go anyways, and it's not like we'd get lost. This is a cave, not a Jim Henson movie. After more downclimbing and looking about – There it was! A ledge that played across a canyon wall and eventually petered out about fifty feet away from where I was. No problem. I'd be able to climb down from the end of the ledge. I started to make my way across into the canyon by way of the ledge. I looked over the edge, and saw, to my delight, that another ledge lay underneath the one I was currently on by about seven feet. That would be my next target. Reaching the extent of the ledge, I scouted out my climbing path. The wall below me was okay, it seemed like there were plenty of good holds. Fearlessly, I grabbed an outcrop on the wall and went to pull myself over the edge to feel for footholds when *snap!* Startled, I pulled my hand off of the wall, with the handhold still in it. Goddamn chert. (For those not in the know, chert is a flint-like rock that is more brittle than the limestone surrounding it, but more resistant to the carbonic acid that eats away the limestone, unfortunately. So what you end up with are outcrops that look like good holds, but break off with little to no warning.) I'd have to be careful here to avoid any bad spills.

I grabbed another hold further down, found one foothold and began to search for the next. I was fully vertical at this point, suspended by three points of contact over a thirty foot canyon. I pushed myself off of the wall so I could see the lower ledge I was climbing to, and to scout out my next hold... *Snap! Snap!* No thoughts had time to enter my mind as I felt my stomach jump into my throat when thirty-two point two feet per second squared accelerated my body towards the ground. I blinked, then saw the lower ledge rush past my face.

As I crashed into the ground, for a split second, Life became a movie that was put on pause. It was like a cold, windless winter day in the mountains. Like the light snow that falls in a forest of trees without leaves. Like the morning sun that shines over a ridge, casting the folds of the mountain in a cold, pale glow.

WHEN VPI HAUNTS DIXIE CAVERNS

JOHN MULHEREN

Every year our beloved club takes part in the Dixie Caverns Haunted Cave. Not only does this event make money for the club, it allows timid cavers the opportunity to scare to poop out of terrified tourists. Cavers from other grottos in the area also participated. The cavers are usually given smaller roles like “vampire 3”, “deceased”, or my personal favorite, “flesh meat”. Our instructions were pretty simple: 1. Hide 2. Scare people. Even though these roles are pretty minor, they put a lot of detail into the make up. Everyone had fake cuts and blood oozing all over their faces. Real actors were given more important parts. Like every Halloween scary thing, this one had the obligatory giant chainsaw guy. This guy was a total pro at terrifying people. In fact, he was scary before he got into his costume. Most of the other actors were placed around the cavern to distract the guests so that they would be easier for us to scare.

The most satisfying part of being a haunter was the reactions. There is definitely something strangely satisfying about making a little girl scream, or making some fat kid cry for his mommy. But these were the easiest scares, in fact, too easy. After a while making a little girl scream wasn’t enough; you had to make her mother scream too. Everyone developed their own scare tactics throughout the night. Some grabbed a passing shoulder or arm, others touched tourists with fake severed limbs. Others stuck to the more traditional, yet still effective, method of popping out and screaming.

Mary Sue Socky of the Blue Ridge Grotto organized much of this event. She really made sure that the atmosphere was perfect for scaring. In place of the usual bright lights that light up Dixie Caverns, red tinted lights gave the cave a much darker mood. Fog machines were sprinkled throughout the cave, ensuring that the guests couldn’t see the hidden caver who was waiting right around the corner. Not everyone enjoyed the spooky atmosphere. Some young kids and their parents acted like they were in total agony throughout the whole cave. But we were reminded that all the guests had paid to be scared.

Overall, the Haunted Cave was a pretty awesome time. We had lots of people come out on several different nights to make some money for the club. So if you want to support the club and have a great time, come out next Halloween and be a haunter at the Dixie Caverns Haunted Cave.



HOW TO BE A CAVE CLUB GROUPIE

JULIE BOOKER

How To Be a Cave Club Groupie:

- * Go to the before Cave Club meeting - stay until you are late for the meeting or just stay.
- * Go to the Cave Club meeting just in time to find out where people are going for dinner and where the spelioseminar will be held that night.
- * Take a trip down to Mexico without going into Golindrinas; it's way too deep and you have some shopping to do.
- * Cave only when family or friends visit.
- * Attend OTR, Picnic, and TAG, but don't cave - you are there to socialize with cavers.
- * Buy gear or get your parents to buy you gear - don't get it too dirty or worn.
- * Plan to cave on a Saturday, but cancel because you had too much fun at the spelioseminar the night before.
- * Date a member of the club, you can cave vicariously though them.

Or you could just get it all over with after six years and become a Cave Club member (you other groupies know who you are).

-Julie Booker (former long time groupie)



KNOW YOUR GEAR: OR PERISH

LAUREN WADDELL

My leg wouldn't stop shaking. It was like Thumper in Bambi, that uncontrollable vibrating. What the hell, leg? And then it occurred to me: my body had realized something before my mind really could. It realized I had nearly died.

At that point, it had been my second year in the cave club. I, being cheap, didn't buy much gear my first year, instead mooching it off cavers like Deighan who had a ton of stuff and were always willing to lead trips with new trainees. When I finally did, I was proud to finally lay claim to my own stuff, ready to mark it in duct tape with my new colors.

In fact, when I did buy things, it was all at once. I was ready to own gear and I wanted everything. I was also at TAG and what better time for someone too lazy to even order it off the internet? Since John Bowling and Phil Fansler were with me at the time, I was hoping they could help me pick things out. Unfortunately, they had wandered off by the time I bought my harness.

Well, no problem, I thought, then proceeding to buy a harness I found to be comfortable. Only problem was, comfort wasn't the only thing I should have taken into account as I discovered later when the three of us were caving. Having difficulty frogging up, John explained to me that I had bought a rock climbing harness which did not work well with a frog, which needed a harness fitted lower and closer towards the crotch. Not only that, my frog needed adjustment and all over it was just a mess.

You think I would have learned from that to be more mindful of gear and how it should be adjusted and used. Nope.

I found myself atop Guaguas eager to repel the high, 700 foot, side. I had experience repelling but I had only done roughly 200 feet at most. I wrongly assumed this qualified me for a 700 foot pit.

As I said, I was wrong. I got myself on rope and I couldn't move. People told me to try spreading and removing the bars. I tried and was further frustrated at the difficulty I was having moving them apart. I removed some bars and then, in this frustration, I took my hand off the rope to use both hands to spread the bars. I shot down immediately.

Too quickly. I was in shock. I had forgotten to keep a hand on the rope when removing the bars and not only that, I lost consciousness of anything else I should be doing. I didn't mess with the bars. I just fell. And screamed and screamed the whole way down.

I repelled those roughly 700 feet in 11 seconds. If it wasn't for John Bowling belaying me, I would have died.

Of course, as was to be expected, everyone was dubious about me repelling Golondrias. But I learned my lesson. I practiced for it and learned how to use my rack. I tried to be patient and careful of how I was spreading the bars, alternating between spreading and clamping them together. I did Cepillo twice and my successful descents was able to convince the others that I was ready.

I'm proud to say I've done Golondrias. The descent and ascent were, in my opinion, pretty well done. I can't say that I am completely free of misunderstanding my gear. I must admit that this year in Mexico I had had a pretty uncomfortable ascent up Las Fantamas in my



Me doing a “hero” pose before the death repel—the only reason I didn’t get Brain Bucket? - Phil. I did end up with “On Rope” at banquet (as well as a compass, but that’s another story)

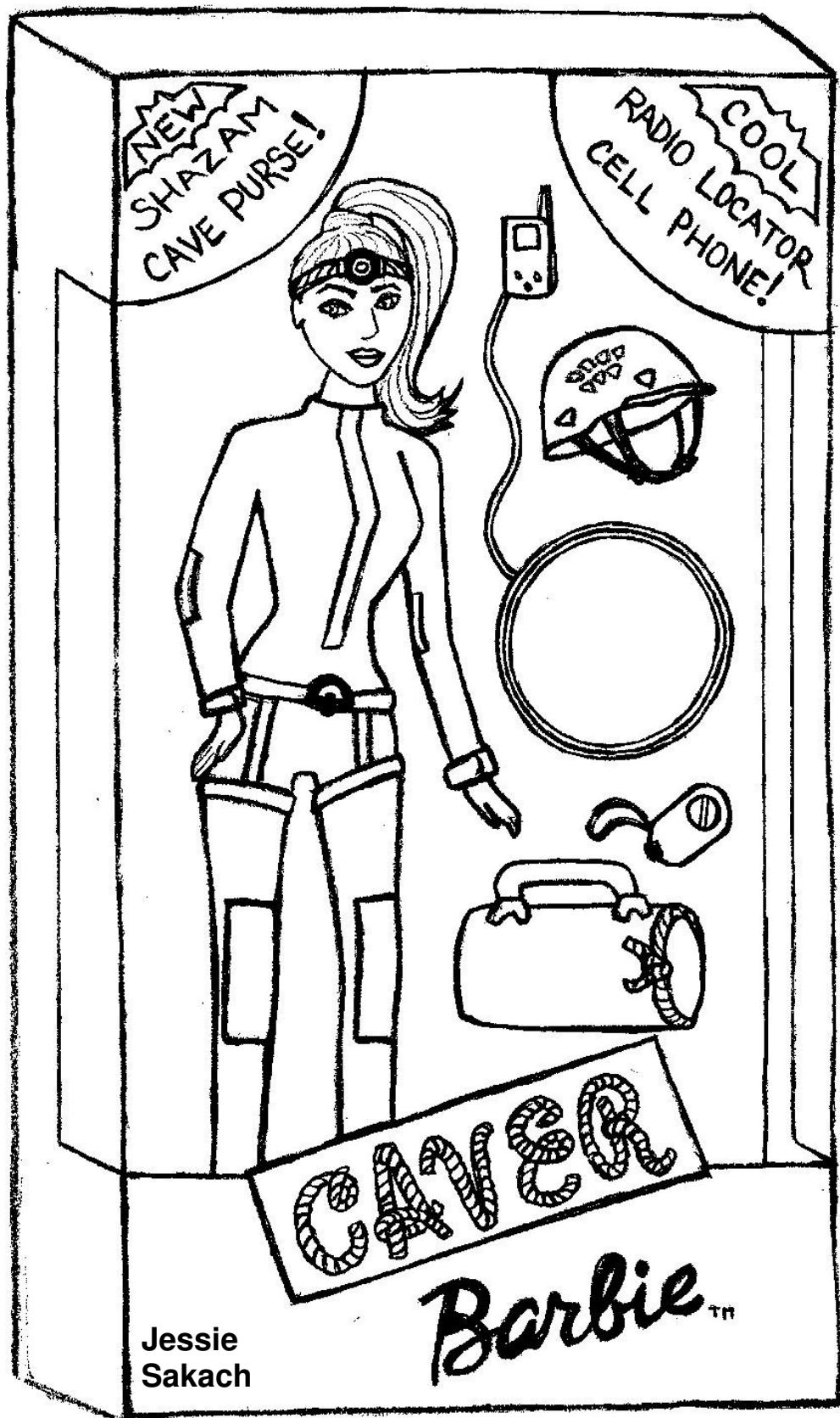
But probably the most important thing is to not rush into things. As impatient as you may be it may be best to learn about your gear so you don’t regret it later. Caving is not as fun when you’re dead or in pain. (Although who knows, maybe zombies get a kick out of caving?)

new leg strap harness.

I had thought because I had gotten it from Deborah and gotten the chance to try it on and use it on a rope set up in Mike’s garage that I was good. Obviously, not. I realized that I still had a ways to go before being comfortable with my gear.

Recently, I nearly went on a vertical trip but then it occurred to me that I had yet to adjust my gear. I didn’t want to face another experience like Fantasma so I opted out. Instead, I went to a vertical session. There I was able to get on rope and try out my gear and see if I could make my harness comfortable.

I learned a lot by doing this. I learned that maybe what would be best for me was to have rope sown from the leg loops to the rope around the waist. I also learned that there were other things I should adjust. For example, I really didn’t like the unnecessary quicklink on my ascender.





HOW TO TIE A ONE HANDED BOWLINE

PHILIP SCHUCHARDT

Step 1: Put the tail-end of a piece of rope behind your back.



Step 2: Place the tail over the standing line. The tail should be over top of the standing line.



Step 3: This is the hardest step! Twist your hand underneath the standing line. This should create a small loop in the standing line (the rope that isn't in your hand), NOT the tail (the rope in your hand).



Step 4: The result of the step 3.



Step 5: Pass the tail round the standing line and pull the tail through the loop shown in Step 4.



Step 6: The finished product.

REFLECTIONS ON WHITE NOSE SYNDROME

WIL ORNDORFF, VPI CAVE CLUB OLD FART

The editor asked me to write this since I am very involved in the “official” response to the horrible scourge that is decimating our cave bat populations. I’ll not comment on the bat to bat versus caver transmission debate except to say that anyone who thinks that the transmission vector must be one or the other has an agenda other than the truth.

There are volumes of information available on the web regarding WNS that cover the history of its spread and the theories of the disease itself. So instead of doing a poor job rehashing that information, I’d just like to share some of my thoughts on the subject.

The spread of and devastation wreaked by WNS leave those trying to respond to it with a profound sense of helplessness, which in turn breeds frustration. So far, WNS has always been at least one step ahead and one step harsher than predicted. In Newberry-Bane Cave last week, where there should have been thousands of bats there were but dozens, and carcasses littered the floors of some rooms filling them with the smell of death. We had hoped that perhaps the shorter, milder winters in the central Appalachians would afford bats a better chance. If so, it doesn’t appear to be significantly better. One of the things we did at Newberry-Bane was to band a couple of hundred bats in 2009 in the hopes of tracking the progress of WNS and finding resistant individuals, and to track movements of bats from WNS positive caves. On our trip last week, we found but a single Little brown bat alive with one of our bands – BCI 0925.



**Another Caver Response to White Nose:
It makes a great costume**

For the banding study, Stonley’s Cave in Tazewell was to be a control since WNS wasn’t there yet. But when we stopped there in February, dozens of bats staged in twilight showed it was just another infected site.

We had hoped to slow the spread and keep WNS out of the range of Gray bats. But this winter, the rapidly expanding front of WNS overran the northeastern part of the Gray bat range. A Gray bat infected with White Nose Syndrome has yet to be found, but since they are so closely related to Little browns and Indiana bats, both very susceptible, it would be surprising if Gray bats aren't vulnerable.

Ecosystem changes resulting from the disappearance of some bats species and vast reductions in the populations of others are difficult to predict. Will insect populations boom? Will tree bats and birds take up the slack? And how will populations of cave invertebrates in caves with large numbers of bats fair without the input of guano into the system?

One of the many painful ironies of WNS is that prior to its arrival, bats were actually faring quite well. Indiana bats were thriving in New York and New England, and Gray bat populations were exploding throughout the southeast. Bat counts at most Virginia sites were either stable or on the rise.

Personally, I feel the WNS tragedy fits nicely in the mold of exotic organisms transported around the world as a result of globalization. I suspect *Geomycetes destructans* evolved to do exactly what it is doing, infect the skin of hibernating bats. No one ever paid much attention to the white fungus on European bats, which seem to tolerate it, until it made the jump across the pond on a stowaway bat in a shipping container, on a caver or biologists gear, or perhaps some other way. *Geomycetes* found a home in bats hibernating in the caves near Albany, New York, a deep water port city, and spread rapidly in all directions leaving few survivors among susceptible species. Cavers must do all they can to see that its spread is limited by climatic conditions and bat migration patterns.

Prospects for treatment are encouraging. If only we could only teach bats to take pills, receive vaccines, apply salves. Or at least to avoid bats already infected. It seems to me the best hope for treatment lies for highly colonial species such as Gray bats and Indiana bats which concentrate a very large proportion of their populations in very small areas to hibernate. Should a safe and effective fungicidal treatment be developed, these hibernacula are prime candidates to receive it. Many creative and talented scientists are developing a wide variety of treatment schemes, ranging from “hot spots” in caves where affected bats can congregate to feeding areas for bats prematurely awakened from hibernation by WNS. As more is understood about how WNS kills, treatment schemes will be improved and refined. But the clock is ticking and *Geomycetes* is always one step ahead, perhaps well before physical or behavioral signs appear in a newly infected population.

From an evolutionary point of view, extinctions are common. *Homo sapiens* appears to have increased extinction rates to be on par with those caused by asteroid impacts and massive volcanic activity. Globalization, industrialization, deforestation working in step. Hopefully the mass extinction currently underway, of which several bat species may ultimately be a part, will not be the only imprint left by the human race in a fossil record examined by sentient cockroaches a hundred million years from now. I would vote for a political candidate whose platform was something like “Vote for Lepera and help keep our place in the fossil record secure”.

One of the many puzzling elements of the WNS pandemic (plague, scourge, mess???) is its fungal nature. Biologists and paleontologists alike are scratching their heads at both WNS and the Chytrid fungus, which is devastating amphibian populations around the globe. In general, animals are attacked by bacterial while plants are attacked by fungal pathogens. In particular, communicable fungal pathogens capable of rapid transmission are very rare. Because of this, when they do occur their victims find it difficult to mount an appropriate immune response. This rarity of communicable fungal pathogens caused many investigators early on to suspect that the *Geomyces* infections were secondary symptoms of disease caused by the spread of a primary bacterial or viral pathogen. However, no one has been able to identify any pathogen associated with WNS other than *Geomyces*, suggesting that it is the primary causal agent of WNS.

Hope refuses to die, though, and silver may line parts of even this darkest of clouds. I was at a meeting of mammalogists recently, and a speaker reviewing the ecology of Little brown bats in the northeast made an intriguing point: prior to human population growth and deforestation, bat diversity in the northeast had been much higher compared to the present day with tree bats comprising a much larger portion of the total bat population. Before the arrival of WNS, Little brown bats with their tolerance for disturbance and fondness for roosting in human structures had come in the northeast to vastly outnumber nearly all other bat species combined. Perhaps WNS will help to restore greater balance between cave and tree bat species. And some cave bat species appear to be less affected by WNS than others. Virginia big-eared bats have shown no sign of WNS infections, even in Hellhole this winter where tens of thousands of pipistrelles and Little browns lay dead or dying all around them. And in Newberry-Bane Cave on April 9, there were still some survivors: a few dozen pips and a handful of Little browns appears to be healthy. Maybe they'll make it and over time their descendants will replenish bat stocks so that VPI cavers in the 22nd century can see things the way they were back in the 20th. I sure will feel better about this if BCI-0925 turns up alive and well in the North Subway a year from now.



SURVIVING THE REIGN/RAIN OF KIM JON JULIE

LAUREN WADDELL

Pelted by rain, packing up the cars once again by Golondrias, one couldn't help but wonder what had happened to Mexico. This year Mexico was unprecedently cold. A problem if you thought "I won't need a winter coat" and decided shorts and t-shirt were the way to go. Fortunately, I packed enough layers to survive the cold and, with John's hobo jacket on top of them all, was just trashy looking enough to insure against any robberies. I also discovered that having a boyfriend your size gave new meaning to getting into someone's pants (if only it was that hot).

But looking back on it, trying to determine the source of Mexico's wrath, I came to one conclusion; all the forces of nature were rebelling against the ascension of Kim Jong Julie.

We should have expected this earlier. While in the Golden Era of the Reign of Deighan we could just be like "Hell ya I want to go to Mexico!", this reaction was now met by "Requirements, bitch!" (loose translation). We actually had to do WORK to meet them. And this was around finals too. Of course, there were those that didn't even try to meet them. Take Phil, for example, who would go on to become one of the shinning leaders of the resistance.

Surprisingly, this resistance even found support in the non-living elements of this world. Travis's truck, the Karstmobile, aware of the impending doom, tried playing dead before we even left off. It was a brave attempt but later he would found himself dying on the campground



Even the Mexicans were laughing at our pain



Fortunately we made sure to have a medic in our party

of Mexico, no option left but to be groped by Mexican hands, having been punchered by hard bags bouncing on his head.

You can bet he was laughing his ass off (or his carburetor) when Travis threw out his back at Hotel Tanuil. Gladly he accepted doodles in his dirt film portraying “Travis the gimp cat”.

Julie tried to pass off the trip as being normal and joyous. Look, let's climb the giant star of Texas! Knowing there was nothing cavers loved more than climbing all over things and confusing nearby, non-caving, pedestrians. Who, for that matter,

only wanted a picture of their diapered Chihuahua with flashy Texas landmarks. Who were these crazy people who wanted a picture with their beloved dog?

Of course, when we hit Mexico, we did everything backwards and as everyone knows, backwards is the way of the devil. After all, playing music backwards gets you Satanic lyrics. We cavers just get confused because sometimes those songs are better. After all what would you rather listen to: dying bats or “it's a small world after all” (which is what you would hear if you play the white nose song backwards)? Hmm.. maybe this is a bad argument.....



But anyway, the point being, we went to Real De Catorce towards the beginning of our trip rather than the end as Deighan did in his Golden Era. How he started off the trip last year was taking us to Victoria where we expressed our freedom to the Mexican night in the way cavers do best: by climbing sketchy shit. Yes, the roof of the Mexican hotel was great for this. Julie, by taking us first to a commercial cave, Grutas de Garcia, high up in the mountains,



Yes, a diaper.

tried to waylay the doubts of the public. Yes, it was a beautiful cave, but it also was a cave of signs. Oh, lights were draped on a formation labeled Christmas tree with light shinning down from a hole from above, but this was a ruse. We saw the “mano de muerte” and fortunately we knew enough Spanish to realize this meant “the hand of death”. Only what was labeled “the face of god”, which we recognized as the face of the beardless Mike, gave us hope. We came out alive but nearly lost Brian, dangerously close to “the inferno”.

This type of near-death encounter was common on this trip. Besides the sketchy road system where passing cars involved going into a two way lane (yes, I mean cars going both directions in the same lane) there was the evil demon that is a GPS system. We found ourselves, by following this masochist demon, going right next to some railroad tracks. This doesn't look like a road... No shit, Sherlock. It probably was the GPS's goal to be on the tracks, but, well, this was pretty close. And we did get to experience the loveliness of Mexico that is, probably, it's ghetto.



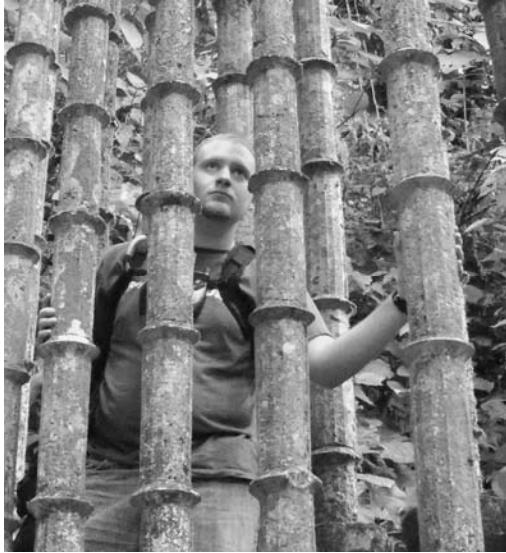
“Mano de Muerte”

And yet, somehow we still managed to get where we were going. But even then we found ourselves limited. Rather than make a V for victory with our arms atop abandoned mining villages which we were free to do last year, we found ourselves only hearing about possible ways to entertain ourselves. For instance:

the existence of mescal a few hours away. Key word here though: only. Despite Mike's desperation for drugs, we came back empty-handed. Mike would have to wait until a Mexican, recognizing in Mike's eye's a similar need to his own, would hand over some drugs free of charge. On the plus side, we had our first instance of rebellion. John M.'s horse on the way back down the mountain to Real De Catorce tried his best to poop on Julie. I can only say, poor Julie's horse. It was an innocent victim.



Freedom!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Look at poor John Bowling,
trapped by the wiles of Julie.

campgrounds. But where were the times of good bondage? I mean the not-getting-whipped-by Julie but tying-drunk-since-3-in-the-afternoon-Mike-to-a-chair at Golondrias? What other fun than running away from a liberated Mike that thought chasing a be-lighted Alice was like chasing a firefly? The only one asleep there was David atop the cooler, who, god knows how he slept with Phil and Mike singing “The KKK Took My Baby Away” so many times and at the top of their lungs until the next morning when you’re climbing up Golondrias it’s the only thing you can think. Damn, those were the days, when you actually went caving and made it up Golondrias in an hour. Those parties would spring up and you’d come back from Cepillo with Beth putting a beer in your mouth until Mike nearly toppled on top of her guitar sending her into the tent for the night. But did we party at Golondrias in the Reign of Kim Jon Julie? No. We got rained on.

I am sad to say that the horse wasn’t the only victim. We lost John Bowling early in the trip. He was forced to be Julie’s spreadsheet slave and do spreadsheets for her at 6 in the morning. (No joke). And as much as he loved death metal, apparently he wasn’t hard core enough to enjoy her whip. Yes, she had an actual whip. Slavemaster Julie kept it on her at all times until Phil triumphantly stole it away. Unfortuanetly, John M. sold him out for 20 pesos which is roughly worth less than two dollars. Oh, John, you know you were an Uncle Tom. But at least you participated in outing her at the hot springs at Hotel Tanuil. And she thought she could disguise herself as one of us with mud all over her face. Ha. Many were the tricks of Kim Jong Julie, but we were on to her.

Oh yes, we had copious amounts of beer. We had



This is the happiest picture of John I've ever seen
and yes that's a fridge .full of beer.

One thing we can say for Mexico though, was though the forces were against us, the Mexicans were not. Even at Golondrias they offered us copious amounts of coffee. Very useful. We used it to fuel our Mike so that he could continue driving the entire time at optimum capacity. Asking directions got us invited into a house for coffee. You knew they were amazing people for many reasons: for giving us directions, giving us coffee, making us food, having an adorable kitty named Tigre (Tiger in Spanish!), and being cool with a random American man taking pictures with their kids with a machete in this

hands. (Of course, for all we know Mike could be an alien). Then again, their kids were a little more dubious. Follow us to a cave. Okay, sweet. Wow this is a really long hike... well the view of the mountains is great... wait, we're in a valley now?.... hey, kid, where is the cave?

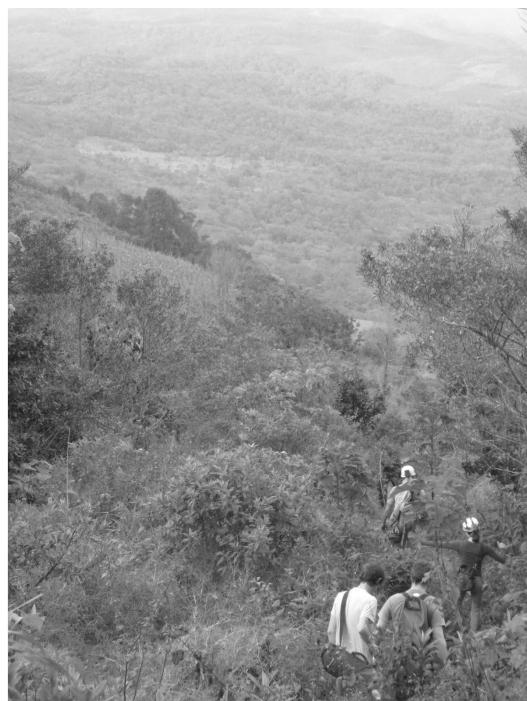


Back there? Shit. Julie wasn't even there and her influence spread to the next generation of Mexicans. Maybe they recognized Alex as her brother? I nearly throttled Beth in frustration.



Last year when we were lost we could get assistance from Mexicans. They'd see you lost on the campground and approach. You'd yelp, but realizing that you were

fucking smashed, they would still put a hand on your shoulder and guide you to the bathroom which they tried to point out to you a few moments before. They wouldn't be the ones to throw you in the river and play posable drunk. They would, when you, brave soul, went foraging for firewood, give it to you instead of bourbon (although the bourbon was good, in fact, too good). And for the record, you were wearing pants then. You put them back on after crossing back over the river. If I was going for falsehood here I would say I took out John Bowling by body-slam instead of bouncing back and falling on my ass ten times. But at



High ho, high ho, it's off to a cave we ... don't go.

least I called him a pussy. And threw his light in the river when I was being carried of into it. I don't go down without a fight.

And we were strong-willed people. Whatever was thrown out at us we decided we would make the most of Mexico. Charge us last year for nudity and fireworks? (Hey, Mike was only trying to find me and what's the best way to be found then, "Hey fireworks are coming over the ocean above my head- hey wait, those are mine..."). Well guess what coppers? We're doing it again. We shot them high into the sky (or on the ground) at Tanuil and ran away. And hid. And hid. And slunk back to the hotel. Saw a red light. Oh shit. Hide. Hide. "We saw a red light. We thought 'oh, shit' these guys are serious". John M.: "That was me. I thought by shinning the red light you would know it was me." "Oh." Apparently some people were mildly confused. Mike took off Beth's bra (which he was wearing) and we woke up next morning to people in suits and dresses baptizing themselves in the hot springs. We released the ocelots and tigrillo shaking from cold and fear in their cages. No, but I wish.

But apparently religion was everywhere to give hope to the masses, from flashes of LED Mary to creepy Jesus babies to Jesus DYING FOR YOUR SINS! to churches with light displays across the front. Which were pretty awesome, flashing a jungle, a brick house, and many beautiful images across the church front. Jesus still died on the cross though; the church became covered with crimson. Mexicans have a strange way of expressing their religion.

We still found ourselves, although not lost spiritually, lost physically again. Sometimes this

Don't go towards the light?
....Mexico is confusing....





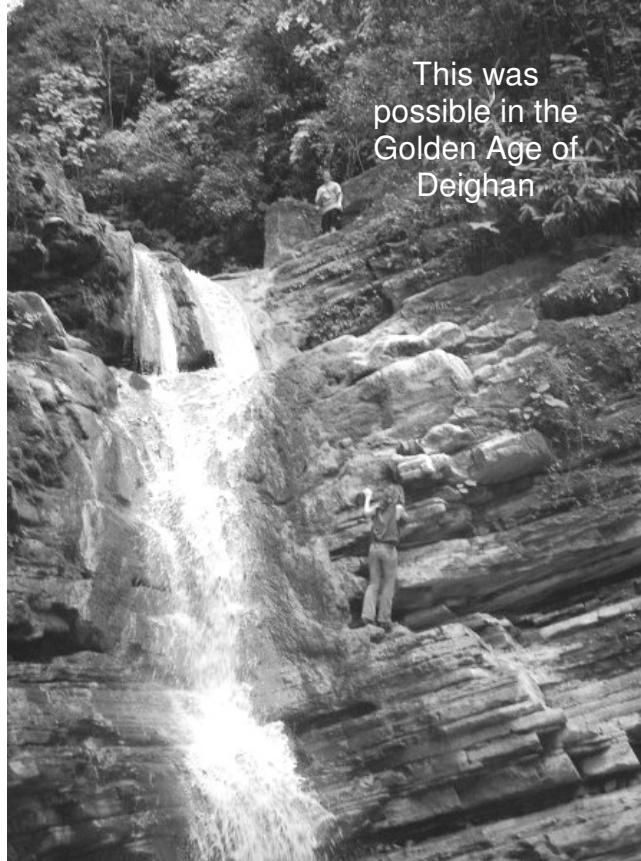
Come on baby, don't fear the reaper

Some places, by the way, encouraged getting lost. For example Las Posas, a beautiful maze of constructed cement, artistically crafted for all those who love exploring the jungle and climbing. Surprisingly, we were still allowed to go there, but the guards had orders from Julie. No climbing the waterfall. You had to find your way around if you wanted a sketchy hike.

But these beautiful views, these moments of beauty, happened despite the tyranny of Julie. We'd lie out on the grass at the campsite at Borbollon, the cave freeing us from Julie's presence, relaxing and enjoying the one day of good weather. We'd go to The Fantasma on a different day, looking for caves and experiencing their beauty even if they had been contaminated just like Mexico had been contaminated by Julie. We tried not to think

wasn't a problem. "Where is Phil?" "If he's not here in ten minutes we're leaving for lunch without him." "Oh here he is." "Wait, he's at an ATM, should we wait?" "No." Then upon leaving Phil we saw some cool stuff. Or, I saw some cool stuff. Mexican Jenga! I love Jenga! And it's colorful! Upon purchasing it I found myself lost. Rather than stand around looking hopeless I walked back to the hotel to see if any of the others were there, like Deighan and Paige. I left a note on the car in the dirt film saying "Got lost. Went inside to pee. Lauren," so people would know where I was. Seeing that the hotel was locked and for some reason I didn't have a radio, I decided to find Phil who did. We went back to where I had got lost and found the others who had apparently split up in groups to find me. Apparently Phil lost: no problem. Lauren lost: oh shit. I then proceeded to nearly get lost trying to find a bathroom.

Some people, by the way, encouraged giving me a radio. Some people, in the age of Deighan, liked when Alice held the radio, I played the cowbell, and Mike turned on "Don't Fear the Reaper" in the car.



about this connection as we stepped in dirty diapers. Deborah, Phil, and I, got out to play Our Verison of Scrabble. Dirty words accepted.

“Gangbanging”? Of course.

We made the most mundane things awesome. So “Van Helsing” is a terrible movie? Make it a drinking game! Drink to cleavage, corniness, and Van Helsing looking emo. Make Jenga a drinking game. Too bad Beth doesn’t understand when to go and when not to go. And, of course, the cane liquor. And the Jumex. And the cane liquor.



“Gangbanging” is how many points?

Yes, there were disappointments. No waking up with John Bowling, Phil, and Mike, to get on top of elevators. No Mike pushing the red buttons on top of said elevators. No people confused in the morning when said elevators didn’t work. Those were things for last year. No Cuban cigar either. Matt had to make due with a cigar from John M. that said “Te amo”. At least he could feel loved. And, sure, Mike had to clean up some human poop next to our tents at the campsite at Borbollon, but he’s probably stepped in worse in all his years going shoeless.



Yep, you guessed it; this was a pyramid we saw LAST year. This year the pyramids were just barely twice as tall as we were

And on the other hand, Beth didn’t get sick on rope. No one had to drag her up the last hundred feet with no one waiting in Huahuas considering eating bats. Of course because of this there was also no granola bars thrown down the cave and thus no scavenger hunt. But, even better yet, no one repelled

700 feet in 11 seconds down Huahuas and experienced the body's terrible realization that they nearly died. (Why is my leg shaking? Oh yeah, I could have died). Of course, this means John Bowling didn't get to save anyone's life via belay. So, Mexico was awesome



because.. well it's Mexico! And we're glad we got to go and that someone arranged it other than, well, us.



JULIE ARRESTED!

In recent news:
Kim Jong Julie
was arrested today
on charges of be-
ing an evil dictator.
She is now safely
behind bars until
further notice.

THE LEAD CHECK, FALL 2009 AND SPRING 2010

PHILIP SCHUCHARDT

***** Cave,

- A.I Cartwright and friends

Standing at a unimpressive 49.6 feet of survey passage, it takes an impressive amount of water and has a good bit of air. This cave's passage is mostly breakdown and the blowing lead is a 6 inch crack between 2 large breakdown boulders. There are multiple dig spot lining the large sinkhole that ***** Cave sits in. It's definitely an interesting spot.

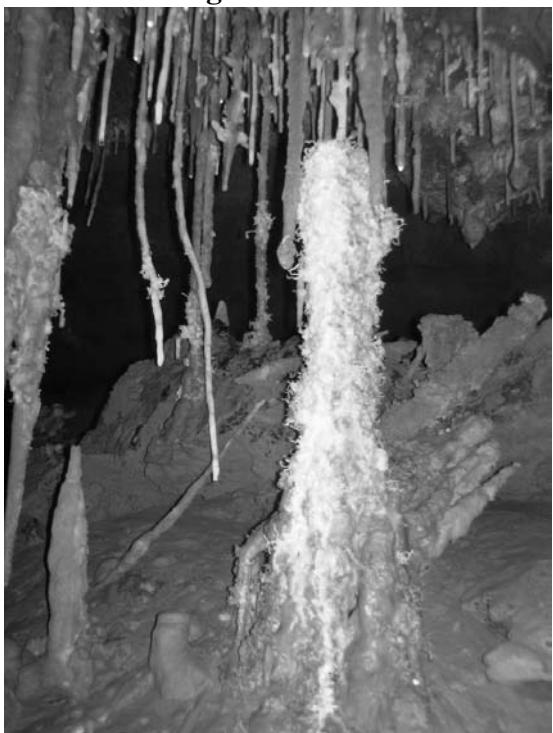
Bat Castle Farm – FRO,

- Steve Wells, Molly, John Mulheren, Philip Schuchardt, Lepy Bramble

Other then curious llamas and a little digging, this little putt hole at 24.5 feet should be added for-the-record-only. Although being in a great spot, +400 feet of depth potential, it didn't go, and had no air. Map on the right.

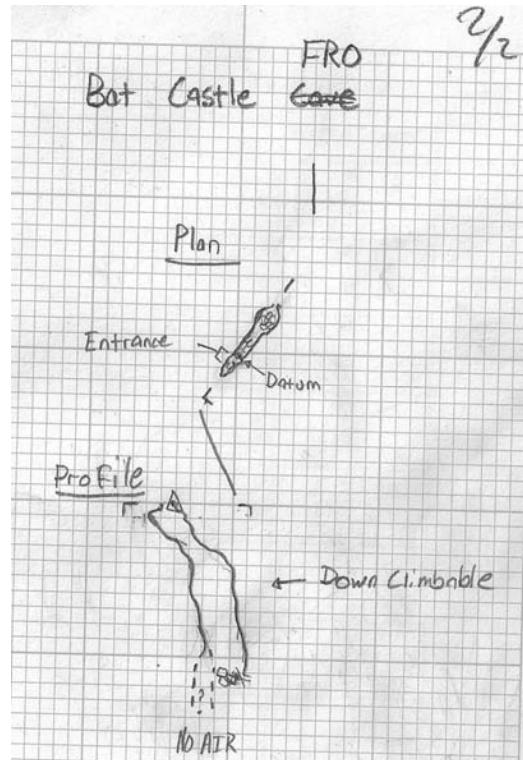
Beer Can Chasm Cave

- A.I Cartwright and friends



Beer Can Chasm cave, named after a large amount of beer cans found at the entrance, was discovered by Steve Wells and Steve Lepera a few years ago. It was forgot because we had better leads... Anyways, sitting at a reasonable 863.9 feet long and 57.3 feet deep (and going), Beer Can Chasm Cave may be one of the more decorated caves in Virginia. It features several clean +6 foot long soda straws, white flowstone, crystallized rimstone dams, and an ass-ton helictite.

Although never dye traced, the cave's water is probably feeding into Blankenship Blowhole. Beer Can Chasm Cave is only about 500 feet from known passage in Blankenship Blowhole. The end of the surveyed passage in Blankenship Blowhole can be describe as squirrely, slimy, sharp, and strips the cloths and the pride of some (really I make it sound worse then it really is, divide by 4 for real difficultly). The



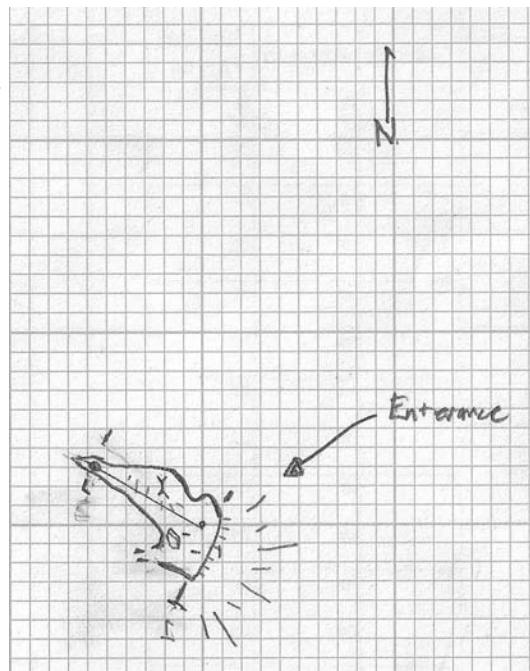
last survey trip in Beer Can Chasm Cave ended in a wet, 8 foot wide by 2.5 to 3 foot tail passage. Plastic suits, wet suits, and rubber duckies many be required to continue down the passage. There's excellent airflow in both caves and suggests a possible connection.

Another interesting but debatable fact is the geology of Blankenship Blowhole and Beer Can Chasm Cave. They both sit in the footwall of the Narrows Fault. According to the Geologic Map of Giles County, Virginia, both caves are formed in the Honaker Formation, a predominantly dolostone with subordinate limestone based Cambrian aged rock. The Honaker Formation sits below the Knox group and Middle Ordovician limestone which most of our caves around Blacksburg are formed in. If Blankenship Blowhole and Beer Can Chasm caves do exist in the Honaker Formation, it may make them the longest dolomite caves in Virginia.

Sun Glasses Cave – FRO

- Lepy Bramble, John Mulheren, Jessie Sakach, Philip Schuchardt

This 17.5 foot FRO was unexpectedly surveyed in a failed attempt to go to Blankenship Blowhole. Blankenship Blowhole's entrance was completely sealed off by solid ice. Sunglasses Caves is located directly above Blankenship Blowhole's entrance. It was named after Lepy exploring the whole cave with his sunglasses on. The cave was sketched from outside the cave making the whole experience fairly entertaining. Map to the right.



Blankenship Blowhole

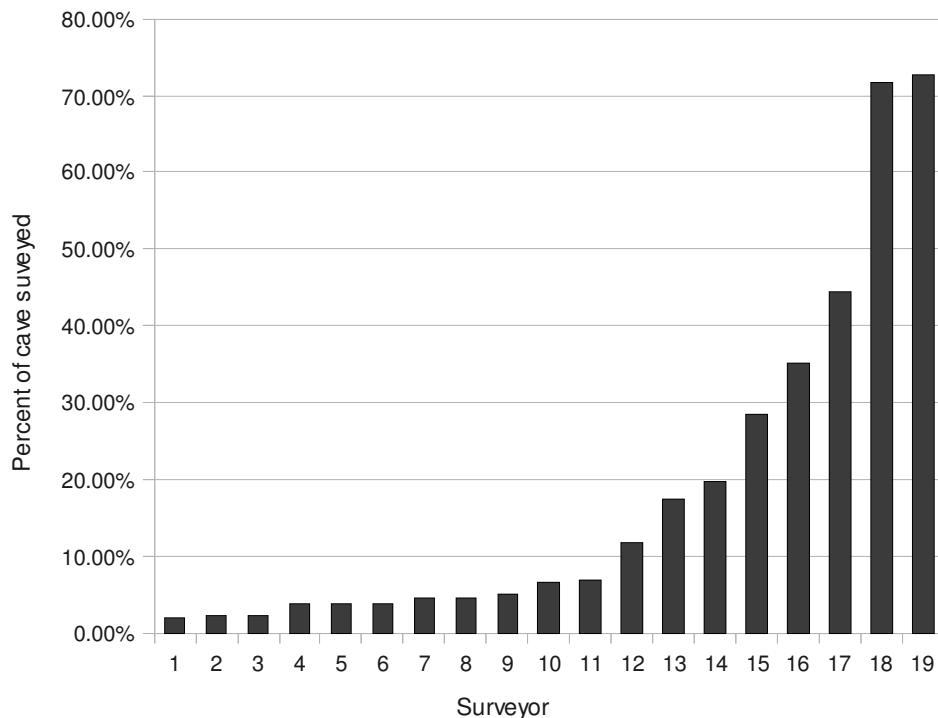


- A.I Cartwright and friends

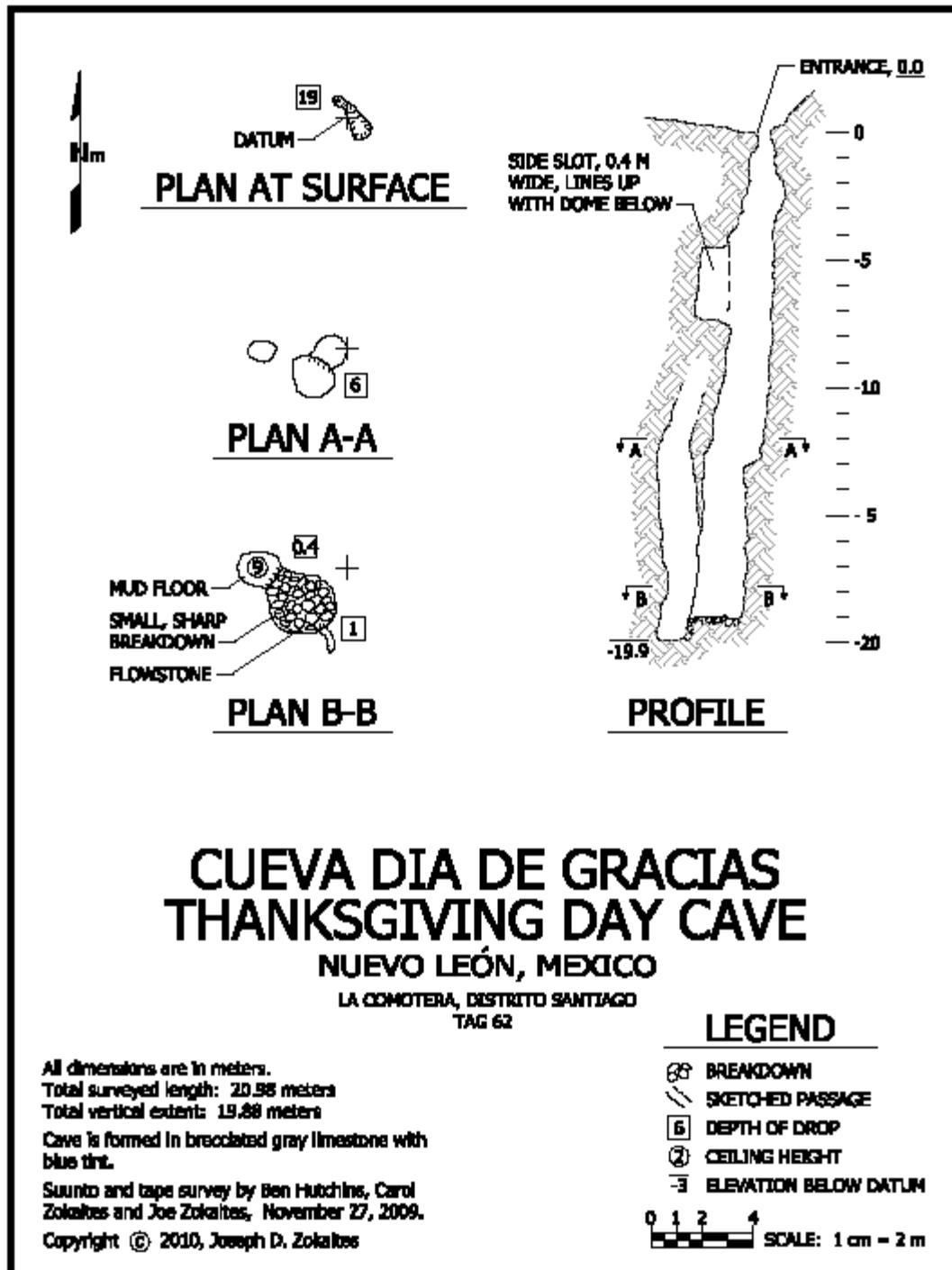
Currently standing at a nice 1.27 miles and at 138.3 deep, the Blankenship Blowhole's survey has definitely slowed down. There are still many mop up leads and one breakdown pile to push. Jessie Sakach, Philip Schuchardt, and John Mulheren made up the last survey trip. We systematically started to survey the leads from the entrance and were able to finish off 3 leads and got 235 feet in the book. We were able to name a hidden upper level room the Straw Pour-ee-um. We only added

one lead and a breakdown pile to the lead list. Although having a few entertaining issues with breakdown boulder and crumbly rock, the trip was a success and much fun was had by all. Left, Jessie Sakach with a handful of tape spaghetti.

Percentage of Blackenship Blowhole surveyed by surveyor



Surveyor Number	Name	Footage (feet)
1	Eileen O'Malley	124.99
2	Flightsuit Dave	127.35
3	Tubby Phil	127.35
4	Paul Heily	231.48
5	Jessie Sakach	235.4
6	John Mulheren	235.4
7	Alice Jaworsky	272.7
8	Chris Fox	272.7
9	Matt S	304.6
10	Chris Langager	411.9
11	David Colatosti	418.52
12	Kaitlyn Hart	723.6
13	Brian Wolford	1078.2
14	Joe Zokaites	1215.01
15	Matthew Burnett	1753.27
16	Dustin Schleifer	2173.21
17	Steve Lepera	2739.69
18	Philip Schuchardt	4423.82
19	Steve Wells	4485.78



Joe Zokates

PRACTICE FOR THE REAL THING

MIKE FUTRELL

“How did you do that?”

“Just smear on that slope, imagine that handhold on the wall, and step gingerly but quickly.”

“What slope?!?! And there are no handholds!”

“Just step where it’s not quite vertical. Don’t lean in. Pressure your fingers on the wall to take a few pounds of weight off your feet. Balance. And come on, we got some raucous survey to do.”

“You’re kidding!!!!!!”

“We’re going to laugh if you fall in. You’re going to be wet anyway.”

On previous trips into the ‘dry side’ of Quan Kou Dong (Spring Mouth Cave) we had swum a few strokes along the pool’s edge at this spot. But this year someone had found that you could tip-toe across the rock face a couple meters above the pool. Of course it allowed you to zip through this bit faster, but it also had entertainment value. Falling in causes a big splash and your friend’s laughter, as at least one of us found out.

In base camp there was discussion about a traverse line or setting a handhold loop on a bolt. But, you know, we didn’t want to deface the cave unnecessarily,*wink*. And then, this was good practice, not quite practice for the real thing though, but practice.



‘Practice for the real thing’ is an old Mexico expedition phrase. It’s usually followed by, ‘Yeah, but if the real thing ever came, you’d be dead’. The rejoinder to which is either, “Aaaarghh” because a waterfall is pummeling you to death at a belay, or “Aaaarghh” followed by that universal gesture just before downing another beer.

So we ended up leaving the little traverse to fun and games or nuisance, as you prefer, and

talking about it a lot.

On the expedition's last big trip, using the new upper entrance, around 4 am we found to our great dismay a rather large amount of water crashing down what a few hours before had been children's wading pools. After bobbing for boulders neck deep in brown water, and finding new ways to climb new waterfalls, we came to the sluiceways. Our sensuous channels and tiny stream were now an amusement park's water flume on steroids.

A bold jump ensued after which a rope got everyone to a shelf on the wall. A narrow bulge in the face was the path down to..... to see if there were any more obstacles. No handholds. The ginger traverse wasn't too unlike the 'practice' one down near the lower entrance. Remember that part of the water flume where it goes through a saw mill? Well, that could be imagined about ten meters below.

We continued up past the in-feeder passage pumping out the water. Climbing up into Cloud Ladder Hall we were reasonably confident dry ground was ahead. During a pause, taking in the vast nothingness of the room, someone said, "Ok, maybe that was practice for the real thing".

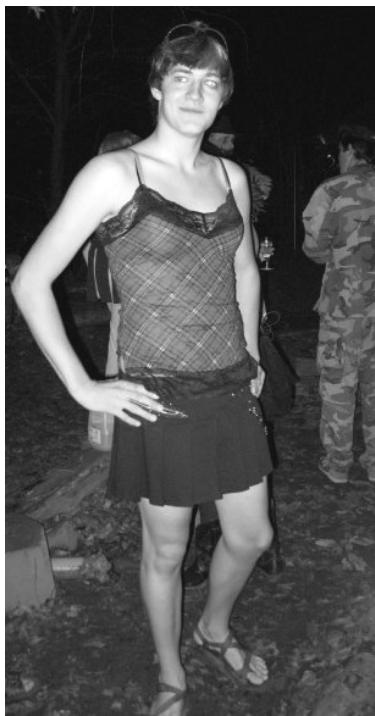


PARTY LOG, OR HOW TO (OR NOT TO) PARTY THE CAVE CLUB WAY

LAUREN WADDELL

Get dirty.

We're the cave club, we go dirty places. So what's better than oatmeal and ramen wrestling? As a plus, now's the time to really show up the William & Mary and James Madison cavers.



Damn! Who's that hottie?

not to get anything stuck in Links guys).

And maybe if you beat them you'll have an easier time convincing them to use the creek to wash off instead of the hot tub. Or not. Which is another reason to wrestle: it probably doesn't matter as much if you're swimming in cooked caver (with a hint of ramen and oatmeal!) later.

The dress code is lax.

Or pretty much nonexistent. You could be like Mike or "Phyllis". Who says men can't wear bras, skirts, and dresses? You may even look better than Beth in her pink leopard spotted bra. (Although try to remember to take it off before setting off illegal fireworks- It's not the most comfortable thing for a dude to wear when supposedly hiding from the cops). Or why wear anything at all? You can even take the party into a nearby cave! Although, nude caving is probably easiest when you're a girl. (Try



Even sexier than Beth.

Bring your pets.

Only be wary of fireworks: some will bolt away, some will bolt towards. And some will bolt away from you as you confess your love for them (maybe they didn't like being called a kitty?). And some will get thrown at you by Brian Wolford from across the room. In this case "Wtf? Was that a rat that just hit me?!" is an appropriate reaction.

Fireworks!

And if you should burn yourself, put your finger in water. Wait awhile. Time for fireworks again. Careful to throw the fireworks far away so they don't explode by your ear and give everyone hearing damage. Also be wary of location. Fireworks are loud. If you set them off at picnic when everyone's asleep you may hear the sound of a motor driving away. That's Kirk leaving at three in the morning. If you are lighting them off the roof of a fancy hotel in Mexico you may be waking some people up. You also may have a hard time coming back next year. And if you launch them slightly farther away from a fancy hotel/spa in Mexico and they're the big ones.... Well, no one really cares but the friend that came looking for you and, P.S., they're not the cops.

You can make new friends

if your loud partying wakes the neighbor who should happen to come over in his boxers. You may find yourself wondering where your friend

went. Don't worry, you'll find him returned just before he starts being obnoxious and hating life.



The Originator of the Chalice who bequeath it to us on the Float Trip of 2009. Notice the outstretched hand ready to receive.



TAG fire: now with fireworks!

Creek run!

Hot tub- sauna – creek- sauna- creek- hot tub – creek- and it goes on and on and on. Loud cursing is expected. Make sure to keep track of your alcohol (unless it's Easter beer, in which case, there's beer in the river). It's good for drunk singing in the sauna. Not so helpful if you're passed out in the sauna.

Have a Chalice.

The Chalice is composed of a cooler full of alcohol. The Chalice is the gift of Francois (see the French aren't so bad, or maybe the French Canadians, or maybe just the people who like French names). The Chalice has disciples such as Mini-'sois, also christened M-sois and M-sois dog. The Chalice could always use more disciples. The rule of the Chalice is that it is always filled and always passed around

You don't have to sing well.

That's what alcohol is for.

You can turn anything into a song:

from a massive epidemic killing all the bats to goat sex to Lepara sucking. Next: Gay Freebird.

When picking up girls:

Put on your pimp face. This is best when done with a pimp hat, preferably something resembling a leprechaun hat. There is a reason Lucky the leprechaun is called "Lucky" (and those lucky charms....well..). Also, keep in mind to remember their names. One time forgotten, oops, two times, slightly irritated chick, three times, you might want to go back to the girl you were previously making out with (though she's not as hot). And if that doesn't work, at least you made someone's night. But hey, at least it wasn't Phyllis (or maybe too bad- those legs were smooth). For any more advice be sure to ask Lucky the Leprechaun.



Being drunk is great, being drunk on crutches...

well at least try not to pee and, especially, pee down a hill when you're in this state. You may find yourself rolling down it later.

Be wary of Phil.

If you see him swimming towards you in a tub on Dave C.'s lake, he's not coming by to say hi. No, he's going to sink your ass into a swamp almost as dirty as the duck pond. And he doesn't care if he goes down in the process. Advice for the future, Phil: never be a commander in the navy. Kamikaze is

a Japanese thing
(of course, if you move to Japan....)

Of course this
doesn't always apply to the sea.

Even in friendly situations, beware of elbows, hugs, and general flailing. But, most importantly, be wary of Phil.



Don't give anything to Brian Walford.

In fact, don't let him anywhere near your stuff. If you're thinking of showing off your weird Mexican finds, announcing "hey look what weird shit they were selling in a Mexican gas station", don't. Particularly if it happens to be "Energy Sex Plus". He will snort it. If you should happen to do this and he should happen to snort it (as the usual chain of events with Brian goes) try to avoid him. You may try to hide behind Alice but not even impregnable Alice will suffice. Nor will boob guard globe halves. But most importantly don't give him your coat. He may take off his pants. And then, so long as he's cross dressing, he'll put on a Disney princess dress way over two sizes too small which you will somehow feel the likelihood to emulate until you rip free like the hulk (if the hulk happened to be Snow White). It's like "If You Gave A Mouse A Cookie" on crack. If you happen to find you razor in the microwave and Dustin's chair and fan out the window next morning, just remember where it all started and remember: Brian likes his Pokemon. You fuck with his Pokemon puzzle you fuck with him. As a last reminder make sure to keep your cows away from him. He'll chase them with his pants down. Last thing you want is to have to hire a counselor for your cow. (They're already traumatized enough with picnic and all)



**He's taking over the world
(as symbolized by that globe)!**

John Bowling is fairly stocky;

It's hard to knock him down. You could try 10 times and still end up on the ground every time, or even, in a river. You can call him a pussy as you do so. It won't necessarily help. Then again, it may help if you're bigger than a rather small sized girl.

Alice is drunk.

You just don't know it.

Be inspirational! Use random shit to give life to the party!

Just because a party is once again at the cave club suite doesn't mean it's the same old party. If random packages from Hawaii come for Kaitlyn Hart and those packages happen to contain a neon Taz the Tasmanian Devil hat, even that wtf item can be put to use. Now you have a conductor hat! Put on, pull off a dance move, and the crowd will follow. The robot or, better yet, The Ethan or, especially, The Ray, are recommended dances. The tackling dance is not.

SMASH!!!!!!

(Super Smash makes a great drinking game; eventually you'll be able to win this way.)

When faced with an orgy in the kitchen,

or in other words, the Dante dilemma, you may find yourself thinking;

1. What the fuck?
2. "I want to", that chick is hot!
3. "but something feels wrong..."

And find yourself like Dante standing at the edge confused and indecisive. However, there is one more option you could be thinking;

4. Alright, time for bromance!

When going out to get soda for mixes and crashing other parties:

if these parties should happen to be a birthday party, and if they should be a Harry Potter themed birthday party, Hasselhoff is an appropriate answer for what house you are in. Be like Ethan and not like everyone else and don't lick the blue Kool-aid off the random dude's fingers. And if you should get glow stick gel everywhere in the kitchen (what, it's hard to clean up and that guy realized he doesn't actually know you?), leave before you're kicked out. If your friend leaves to go back (was it for the girl he was talking to?) then make sure to call him to come back sometime because you're caving tomorrow.

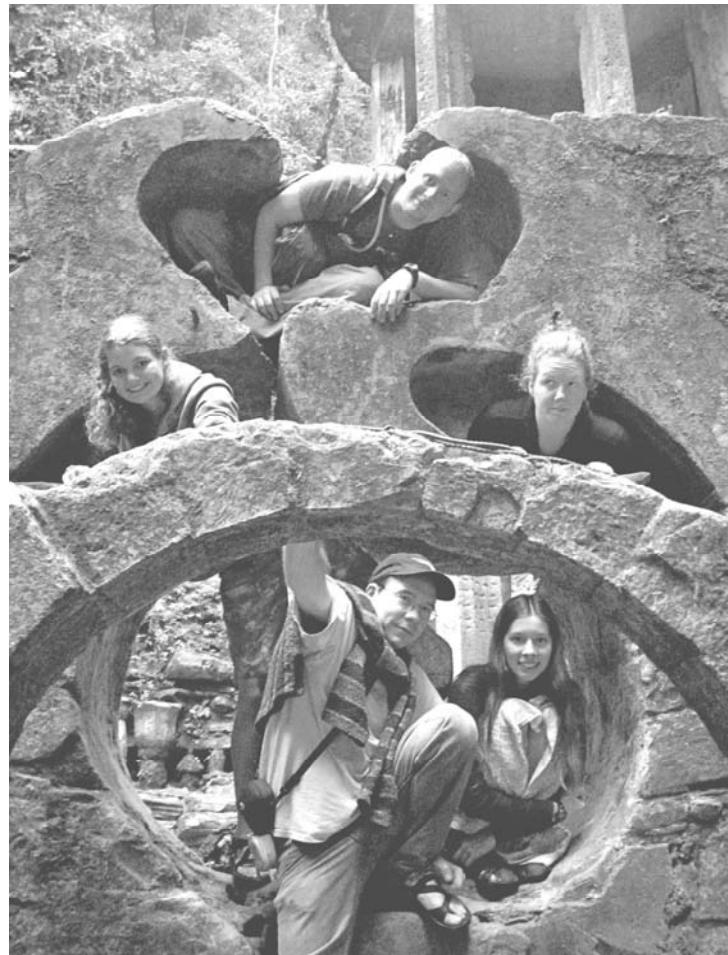
But, most importantly,

in the words of Ethan Bramble beneath the giant fire tower at Tag, you should "love life".

And that's the Cave Club way.



Noo!!!!!! Pikachu!!!!!!!



Cavers loving life

Limestone Air (The Caving Song)

by Beth Mutchler

I'm leavin' this lonesome town (x2)
I'm leavin' this town 'cause I'd rather be underground
I'm leavin' this lonesome town

I'm goin' to the mountainside (x3)
Goin' to where the rock divides
I'm goin' to the mountain side

I'm goin' to smell that limestone air (x3)
'Cause nothin' else can quite compare
I'm goin' to smell that limestone air

I'm goin' deep down in that hole (x3)
I really hope this rope will hold
I'm goin' deep down in that hole

I'm crawlin' around with the bats (x3)
I hope I don't get eaten by a big cave rat
I'm crawlin' around with the bats

I'm headed back to the bat ranch (x2)
I'm headed back to the ranch and if you're lucky I'll lose my pants
I'm headed back to the bat ranch

I'm headed back to lonesome town (x3)
But I left my heart down underground
I'm headed back to lonesome town

The Little Brown White-Nosed Cocaine-Sniffin' Bat Blues

by Beth Mutchler

Inside a little cave where I want to go
 There's a colony of bats sayin' no, no, no
 Yeah, those little bats don't know where I've been
 And they don't want to catch a spreading bat problem

In New York we all know there's a problem with drugs
 The bats up there, well they forgot about bugs
 They've found something better but it causes them pain
 They've all fallen victim to the smell of cocaine

Chorus: I got the little brown white-nosed cocaine-sniffin' bat blues
 All I want to do is jump in a cave or two
 But for all I know there might be cocaine on my shoes
 I got the little brown white-nosed cocaine-sniffin' bat blues
 The little brown white-nosed cocaine-sniffin' bat blues

Forget about the border of Mexico
 Just below the earth's surface is where it all goes
 And in the winter when the bats don't travel up here
 They just have to hope that we forget to disinfect our gear

But you and I know it's bad for their health
 So reluctantly we put all our gear on the shelf
 The cavers don't want all the bats to be dead
 So the bats will have to finish hibernatin' to spread

[chorus]

I tried to go to sleep but I wake up and scream
 'Cause caving's slowly taking over all of my dreams
 The sleep that I'm missin', well you know it's hell
 But the cocaine, it surely keeps those bats awake as well

I'm not sure how much longer I can go on like this
 Itchin' to be underground like every caver is
 Withdrawal from caves is hard to go through
 But without their cocaine you know it's hard for bats too
 [chorus]

POEMS

JESSICA CHESNAKAS

Bats Bats flew around
Bats Bats on the ground

the bats used to be alright
but now they are all covered in white

now the caves are closed
and the cavers are so hosed

with nothing to do
cavers cry boo-hoo

so now all cavers have to do is party
and to others who want to cave, we say sorry.

White Nose Bat Apocalypse

With noses “pure as snow”
 we lie within these living
 coffins, twitching at near-
 sneezing holes, shaking
 out a last confession to..
 god knows? “Here lie we,
 (an epitaph), the angels

Of __ certain death”

(we look of demons).

We,
 who ravish flies, sung
 tempos dulled upon
 your pouted lobes (vi-
 brations!) eyes blinded
 by (turn off the light!)
 what you carry on your
 head, sunlight shot deep
 as lead and caverns stand
 in revelation! And this is?
 What? Here and here
 and here a bat, dead? Oh,
 prince, come with kiss
 of turpentine (Echo,
 Echo), come a-lifting
 this too transparent lid

but no, it is all white.
 Like rims around the
 pupil, all white. Wide
 eyed future dic-
 tator, perplexed upon
 the steed, stand back to
 see the subject fungal,
 festering you peace
 lilies, poppies (what
 a lady!),

we fairies live in grottos,
 you’ll find us in the mud.
 And with it the smell

(we smell of demons)

And watch (Narcissus,
 Narcissus! Do, you hear?)
 as demons die by angel
 swoop, sword swinging
 with fire in the eye?, yet
 (And have you come, come-)
 How can this be when
 (at last?) the angels are
 a-dying? When the angels
 are a-crying? What tears
 devils weep all aflame;
 you see, we’re (who?)
 “the ones to blame”

(is who?)

Lauren Waddell

2009-2010 VPI CAVE CLUB MEXICO TRIP

OFFICIAL LIST OF QUOTES

Beth: Deborah, you can be on the itty bitty titty committee with me!

Lauren: How did you get in there?

Beth: Thanks... I think? [to group]: was that an insult or a compliment?

Julie: They can't tell their ass from a hand grenade

Beth: That pit was NOT 200 feet!

Julie: Does Aaron overestimate other measurements as well?

Beth: Mmmm... tastes like vanilla, smells like rubbing alcohol!

Alex: Y'know what? You know it's been too long since you showered when your moustache tastes like pubic hair!

Ray: Getting into my sleeping bag at Golondrinas was like crawling inside a used condom.

Beth: Awww f@&% no. Shut your fowl mouth you dirty cock!

Brian: Don't hit me if I did nothing to deserve it. But if I do deserve it, then hit me and hit me hard.

Lauren (upon seeing Julie with Hotel Tainul mud all over her face):
Get to the back of the waterfall!

Mike: Ooooh I want to wiggle my butt at Aaron too!

Aaron: Beth wants to know who's jealous that we're in the 1000 foot under club.

Julie: The guys and girls want her help getting in.



Mike (while wearing a pink leopard print bra):
 Who wants to dance with the transvestite?

Travis: I was taking a piss! When you put beer in, you gotta let beer out. I'm magical- I can turn any beer into corona.

Beth: What's the weirdest thing you've seen someone try to smuggle across?

Border Guard 1: Well we've had people trying to smuggle meat across in the engine compartment...

Border Guard 2: Midgets in speaker boxes...

Aaron: Really officer, I ran over a cow... and that speaker was sounding kinda funny- I guess it was the Mexican comedian in there.

Ray: Lauren is out of the vehicle

Travis: Lauren should never be out of the vehicle!

Radio conversation before rope gets pulled out of Golondrinas, leaving Aaron and Beth in the pit during the bird flight

Paige: How much will you bribe us to put the rope back down after the birds fly?

Beth: I'll pay you back in tacos.

Paige: No meat?

Beth: Veggie and refried bean tacos

Paige: You've got yourself a deal

Aaron: Ask her how much *she* is willing to bribe *us* not to put rocks on the rope

Paige: Touché

Alex: You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him f@&% the donkey



QUOTABLE QUOTES

KD to AT: "Last time you went to Via Ferrata, Beth was 10!"

BM: "I wonder if I could use that 200 proof stuff for mouthwash."

KD: "Even jet fuel wouldn't clean that filth."

Kids: "I need more beer."

"Get me that beer!"

PF: "Where did you find that? The only beer I can find is the stuff I've hidden."

JM: "You're fucking retarded as shit."

JM: "Phil's our douchebag."

(Watching people play with a horse whip):

?: "Phil's going to hit himself in the face."

?: "Wow, Phil's better than Julie."

?: "Ouch!"

?: "Nevermind."

EB: "Barf that shit!"

JC: "Luke, try this."

LG: "What's in it?"

JC: "Vodka."

LG: "Vodka and..."

JC: "Just Vodka."

LG: "Oh..."

Everyone: "That's what she said."

WO: "Lepera sucks, Lepara sucks, Lepara sucks."

BM: "And I think one poked me in the butt."

DA: "I walk into the strangest things."

JM or BB: "What does two plus two equal?"

JM or BB: "Poop."

EB: *Hysterical laughter*

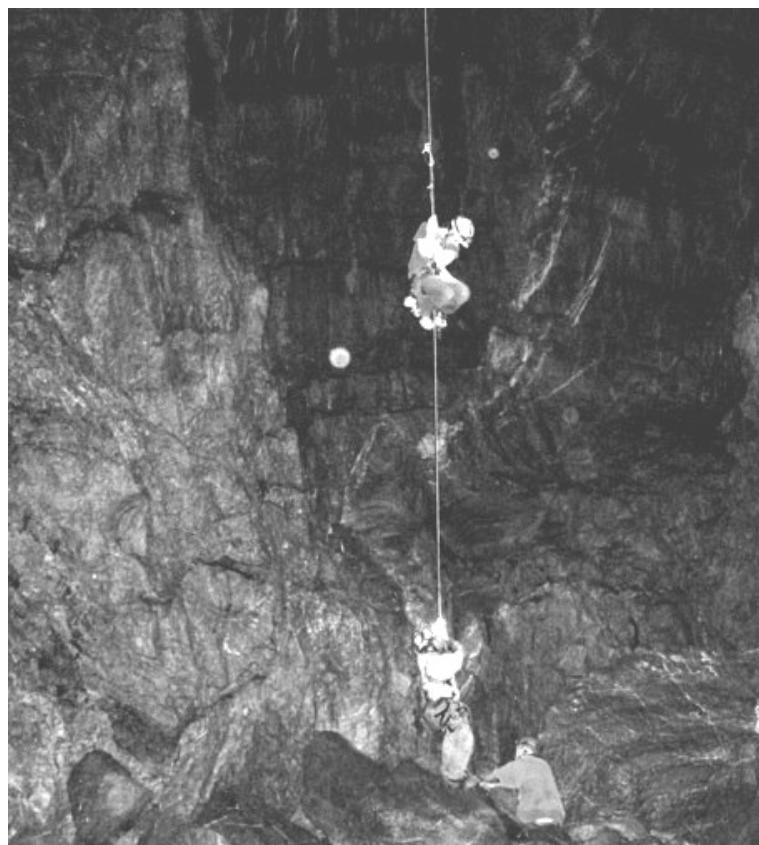
- BM: "I'm spanking your girlfriend with a Bible."
- WO: "I think that would be the funniest thing: gay Freebird."
- ?: "Freebird!"
- ?: "Gay Freebird!"
- RS: "I've got a Freebird for you right here."
- WO: "That's not a bird, that's a stork."
- LW: "Gingers combine!"
- EB: *cool sound effect?*
- AB: "We're not transformers, we just have no soul."
- JD: "I drank myself to a higher state of being."
- BM: "My brain imploded."
- JD: "It's alright; it hasn't served you much so far."
- ?: "What her brain or her pussy?"
- TP: "I slept with Joe Dunford and a 15 year old last night."

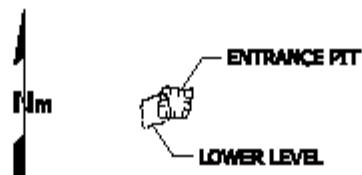


SIGNOUT QUOTES 2009-2010

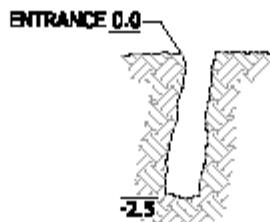
8/22	Tawneys	Julie Booker, Jessica Chesnakas, Bob Cohon, John Bowling, Mike Newsome, Birch, Cypress, and Linden	“Kids get away from John’s butt while he is working.”
8/30	Links	Matt Switick, Lauren Waddell, Alex Barker, Brian Burke, John Mulheren, Christine Beauchene, Stephanie Ball, Jordan Mullins, Andrew Baker	“I thought I was going to make it through the trip without my crotch getting wet but I’ve already accomplished that.”
9/5	Smokehole	David Bourdon, Tommy Phannaneth, Curtis Dahn, Hunter Hartley, Heather Calhoon, John McElmurray, Hanna Isuhara	“Hunter Hartley, you’re my hero.” “Beware of bad air.” “Hunter knows how to motivate a team to get out.”
9/13	Smokehole	John Mulheren, Ethan Bramble, Brian Burke, Stephen Frye, Jessica Vallianos, Johnny Goldhammar, Stephen Wingater, Shane McCabe	“It was masculating and demasculating at the same time.”
9/27	Starnes	John Deighan, Mark Carrier, David Bourdon, Jessica Chesnakas, John Bowling, Julie Booker,	“I like to swaddle rocks today.” “This feels good, warming up the throat as it goes down.”
10/4	Tawneys	Tommy Phannenth, Lauren Waddell, Hanna Tsuhara, Curtis Dahn, John Mulheren, Ethan Bramble, Alex Barker, Stephanie Ball	“Are you wearing a condom?!”
10/8	Links	Jessica Chesnakas, David Bourdon, Tori Deal, Mike Yankaskas, Hunter Hartley	“How wide can you spread your legs?”
10/18	Wilburn Valley	Julie Booker, John Bowling, Chris Rock	“The Buddha is a real man now!”
11/7	Smokehole	Melissa Curtis, Jennifer Sayne, John Mulheren, Phillip Sayne, Owen Perkins, Nicole Sandenlin, Tod Whilehurst	“derp”
11/8	Wilburn Valley	John Bowling, David Bourdon, Chad Freeland, John McElmurray	“It’s like climbing up a diarhetic asshole!”

12/17	Tawneys	David Bourdon, Shelley Pruitt, Matt Switick	"Hurry up so he can take his hands off my ass." "Take your time."
2/27	Starnes	Philip Schuchardt, Lepy (Ethan) Bramble, Jessie Sakack, Matt Switick, Tim Nguyen, Shelly Pruitt, John Mulheren	"I like having 5 guys in my mouth."
3/27	Links	David Bourdon, Jonathan Bonilla, Luke Galladay, Rebecca Stewart	"That's not supposed to feel like that."
3/20	Smokehole	John Bowling and William and Mary Outdoor Club (10)	"I got 8 women wet at once."
3/20	Wilburn Valley	John Deighan, Caitlin Deighan, Julie Booker, Philip Schuchardt, John Mulheren, Ethan Bramble	"I didn't know you were looking for someone skinny, I thought you were looking for someone stupid."
4/12	Smokehole	Julie Booker, Alex Booker, Aaron Thomas, Meghan Ithfield	"I don't know but I think this is the way to go but don't quote me on that." "I'm going to quote the fucking shit out of that."





PLAN



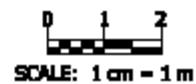
PROFILE

CUEVA ORUGA ESPINOSA SPINY CATERPILLAR CAVE

NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO

LA COMOTERA, DISTRITO SANTIAGO
TAG 56

Total surveyed length: 2.5 meters
Total vertical extent: 2.5 meters
Cave drains a 10m x 15m shallow sink.
All dimensions are in meters.
Suunto and tape survey by Ben Tobin
and Joe Zokates, November 27, 2009.
Copyright © 2010, Joseph D. Zokates



Joe Zokates

GRAPEVINE



John Bowling and Julie Booker



Brian McCarter and
Deborah Barnes



Lauren Waddell and John Mulheren



Jessica Chesnakas and
Travis Coad

Cave Club Events



Major Events:

- * Had to pay off cops for illegal fireworks and nudity at beach
- * Lauren sacrificed at pyramids
- * Difficulties at Guaguas:
- * Lauren had repelling problems
- * Some stranded in the cave for awhile because Beth had to be pulled out of the cave
- * Group split up for New Years
- * The Ramones the theme music
- * Elevator mysteriously not working in Xilitla

Mexico 2008-2009

Members:

John Deighan
Caitlin Deighan
Anna Radcliffe
Brian Wolford
Lauren Waddell
John Bowling

Phil Fansler
Deborah Barnes
David Bourdon
Jessica Chesnakas
Beth Mutchler
Mike Newsome
Alice Jaworski

Major Caves: Other places visited:

Guaguas
Cepillo
Golondrias

New Orleans
(briefly)
Victoria
Xilitla
Beach
Pyramids
Real de Catorce





Tyrolean



Fire!



Four-wheeling!

Picnic 2009

- * We knew it was going to be good when they strung up a **tyrolean** across the site.
- * Everyone had their own campsite set up and some had a little stove made out of a heinken can.
- * Of course, there was an awesome **fire** and with that an awesome marshmallow fight: marshmallows were being pelted all around the fire.
- * There were also glow sticks including a glowing sombrero.
- * During the day we got to dynamite into potential caves.
- * We got to go **four-wheeling** day and night (although some got in trouble for a night expedition)
- * By night we could chase cows to our heart's content.
- * We also got to roll kegs down the hill.
- * And of course all this beer was courtesy a couple huge kegs.
- * Shenanigans abound! And cheese!

TAG 2009



- * This year the fire was done with firework accompaniment. It was a slow burning fire so when Ethan and Mark were leaning against it later they found a couple fireworks go off around their heads.
- * There was an awesome dance floor which had laser lights and tables that we danced on until we literally broke them. Surprisingly we were still allowed to dance.
- * We did “The Ray” dance. (Last year he had a flashing bat light necklace)
- * We were well looked after- A random group of men woke Lauren and John asleep by the fire to tell them the risk they faced of hypothermia adding to John to “take care of his woman”.
- * No Kirk this year to play guitar unfortunately :(
- * We learned what 2 plus two equals.



Caves:
Guaguas
Borbollion
Cepillo
Golondrias
Gratas de Grucia

Places:
Real de Catorce
San Luis Potosi
Victoria
Xilitla
Acusci
Hotel Tanuil
Las Posas

Mexico 2009– 2010

Members:

Phil Fansler
Mike Newsome
Julie Booker
John Bowling
Alex Booker
John Deighan
Paige Baldassaro
Lauren Waddell
John Mulheren

Deborah Barnes
Brian McCarter
Sandy
Beth Mutchler
Aaron Thomas
Ray Sira
Travis Coad

Events:

Illegal Fireworks launched at Hotel Tanuil. Phil, Lauren, and Mike hide from .. the cops?

(Not so illegal) fireworks lit off roof off fancy hotel

For more read the articles!



At the bottom of Golondrias



YMCA!



Float Trip/Summer 2009



- * Rope Spring was passed so Deighan and few others canoed over to it. Wasn't there. Had to climb tree and toss over a rope for a new one. Lauren's glasses were sacrificed to the river god in the process.
- * Random guy hopped on the float with his dog. He was drunk at ten in the morning and had left his wife behind asleep in the tent.
- * Floated around in innertubes
- * Had music and group danced— YWCA!
- * Had the Chalice— it provided everyone with alcohol for a fun day and long night of creek runs between creek, sauna, fire, and hot tub as well as “frolicking”

Also that summer:
Mini Float trip and Fourth of July,
Times of fireworks, creek runs, creek floats, and
four-wheeling



Halloween 2009



In addition to the usual oatmeal wrestling, hot tub-sauna-creek run, and the band with dance floor under tarp, there was the addition of the newly transformed garage into a dance floor complete with awesome sound system, laser lights, fog machine, and a bubble machine.



1st place:
Hal (Ray Sira)
2nd place:
Swine Flu (Aaron)





Phil Fansler, recipient of the Flame Out for outstanding performance at cave club sanctioned events.

Awards:

A.I. Cartwright:
Dave C.

Brian McCarter won the head of the ceramic chicken from the suite

And Ethan Bramble won a rubber chicken that squawks

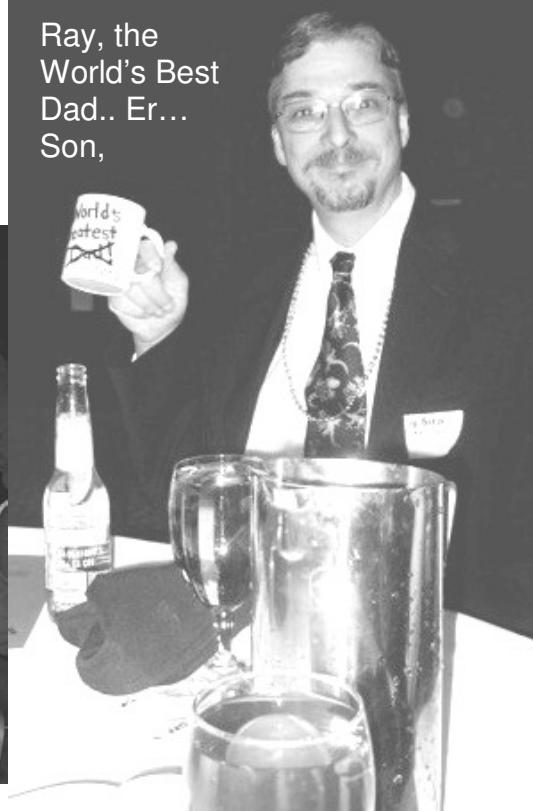
(These last two came as a result of how you can injure yourself in non-caving ways)



Tommy Phannareth, Trainee of the Year, seems to be enjoying this...



This is a warning to chickens everywhere. You can't get away with sending our friends to the hospital even if it's our fault after all. Here, John strangles Ethan's award.



We're very classy people.

Easter Beer

- * Lauren's beer challenge went well again this year with people climbing trees and diving into the creek for beer, yelling something akin to "Fuck, it's cold!"
- * No mini-kegs were pulled out of trees (and then the river they were dropped in). Instead a couple kool-aids were found. These however, could be traded to the kids for beer.
- * People love the hot tub; is there water in there or just bodies?



Work Weekend

Work weekend has had a good showing over the last two years. The one before those two had only one undergrad go. In fact, the showing is so good that, as was determined last year by observing the working habits of cavers, just watching someone work counts as work.

Vertical Sessions

Cave Club members are always helpful, willing to start vertical sessions for those that need them.

To make this experience all the more enjoyable they may even get up in a tree and play the guitar. John Mulheren followed this by putting John Bowling's actions to song. This was not always appreciated, particularly by John Bowling.



2010 A.I. Cartwright Recipient Dave Colatosi



**Thanks, Dave C. for all you've
done for VPI Cave Club!**

Thanks for reading and
keep on caving!



