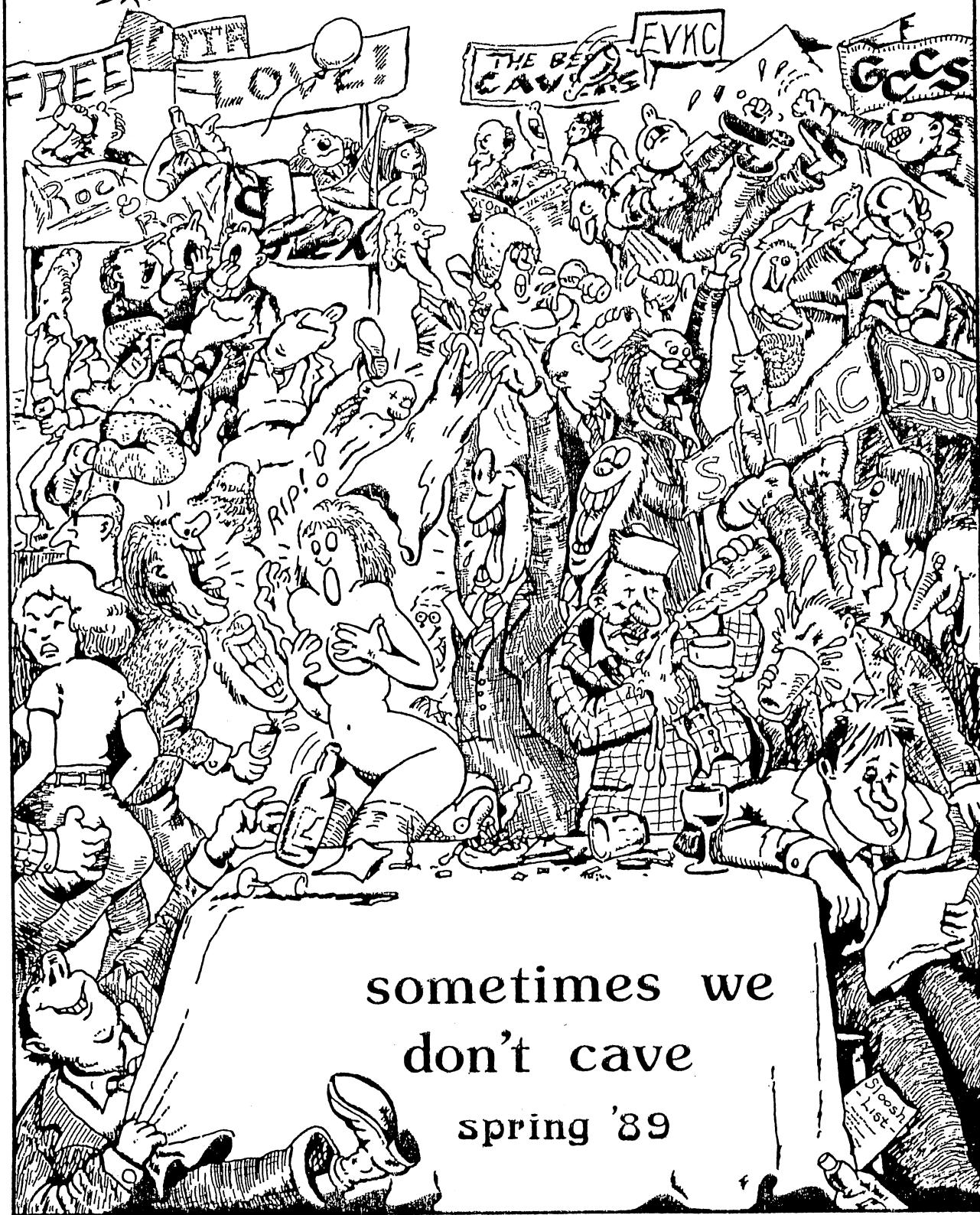


THE TECH TROGLODYTE



sometimes we
don't cave

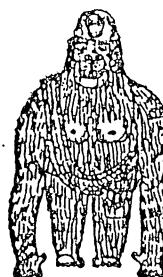
spring '89

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

A Journal of the Cave Club of VPI Grotto of
The National Speleological Society

Spring Semester, 1989

President....Ko Takamizawa
Vice President..Doug Bruce
Treasurer.....Lesley Colby
Secretary.....Mike Sziede



Volume XXVIII, No. 2

Editor...Michael Fiore
Technical Support.....
Brian Cruikshank, Doug
Bruce & Jim Washington

Presidents' Column.....	Ben Keller and Ko Takamizawa	1
Editor's Column.....	Michael Fiore	2
Grotto Grapevine.....	???????????????	3
GCCS Update (The Wizard's Column).....	Jim Washington	5
Jinxed in Links.....	Laine Buckwalter	6
You're Going to Do <u>What</u> ?.....	Mike "Elwood" Sziede	8
Doing the Unthinkable.....	Gabbie Roth	9
La Borbollion: Trip Report.....	Cecile James	12
Tips on Caving.....	Dave Warren	17
My Experience as a Trainee.....	Wendy Wickham	18
The Rules.....	Cave Club Safety Committee	19
Dr. Cavespeed.....	Rob French	21
When <u>Men</u> Caved.....	Craig Roberts	22
A Bedtime Story for Budding Cavers.....	Adam Hungerford	24
Some Thoughts on Landowner Relations.....	Keith Goggin	26
The Belay (A Caver Fiction).....	Mike Horn	27
Caving...Why?.....	Lesley Colby	29
Thoughts on Caving.....	Dave Warren	30
Quoteable Quotes.....	Various Artists	31
From the Signout Sheet.....	compiled by Ko Takamizawa	32

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Presidents' Column (both of them)

We'd just like to mention that we were both too lazy to write our own columns, so we took the hard way out and wrote this together.

This has been quite a semester for changes. First of all, there was the normal change of "administrations," but there have been many others as well. First, the VPI Cave Club doesn't exist anymore. That is, by that name. We are now officially referred to as the Cave Club of VPI (or Student Grotto of VPI of the NSS -notice how VPI is now affiliated with the NSS!). We had to change our name because of another (pending) change, partially due to a new VPI&SU policy. This change is to incorporate the club, and the VPI&SU policy is that no other incorporated organization may have the name "VPI something." But enough of the boring changes.

The club has finally recovered from its people shortage. As evidence, there was a little more choice in this years elections than in the last few years. Paul Hess and Ed Fortney put in a great effort to train the people who were crazy enough to stick around. It looks like most are developing the obnoxiousness it takes to be a VPI caver, so Paul and Ed have done a good job.

A number of these new members went to TAG with us (led by Ko -Ben couldn't lead #@*%&). They survived the dump at Stephen's Gap, as well as the cold waterfall (which Ed sat in for at least an hour). They also survived not taking showers for a couple days until we hit the Sequoia Caverns KOA where moaning was heard from the shower stalls. Over all, everyone had fun, and learned quite a bit about pit bouncing that can't be learned in Virginia.

Now that Ko is president this is the last time I (Ben) and you (the reader) have to be encumbered with my writing this column. Thanks.

Ben & Ko



Editor's Column

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaggghhhhhh!!!!!!

I'm giving up.

I have mixed feelings about this.
Really.

On one hand it's a relief.

Real Editors

you see,

don't get copy in five page
one paragraph
unpunctuated
clots.

They don't wake up at night
with nightmares about
The Syntax From Hell.

(I'm going to get you, Cecile.)
But then again,

Real Editors

don't usually get away
with Editor's Columns like this
or hiding

snotty comments
in other people's articles.

I feel good about this.

Really.

Even though I always ended up
putting in an extra 40 - 60 hours
during the last week of classes.

I feel great about this.

Really.

It was an experience.

I learned a lot

and now I can

word process

cut 'n paste

bribe typists

and get a buzz from White Out
with the best.

This is wonderful.

Really.

I'm glad I could serve the Club
as Editor.

Thanks for your support
and compliments.

This support can take many forms
Brian Cruikshank, for example
wasted more than five
of his employer's hours
printing this issue.

Be nice to him
when he asks you for a handout
in the future.

I'm estatic.

Really.

But I really can't do this again
Not even if you
strapped dynamite
to my face.

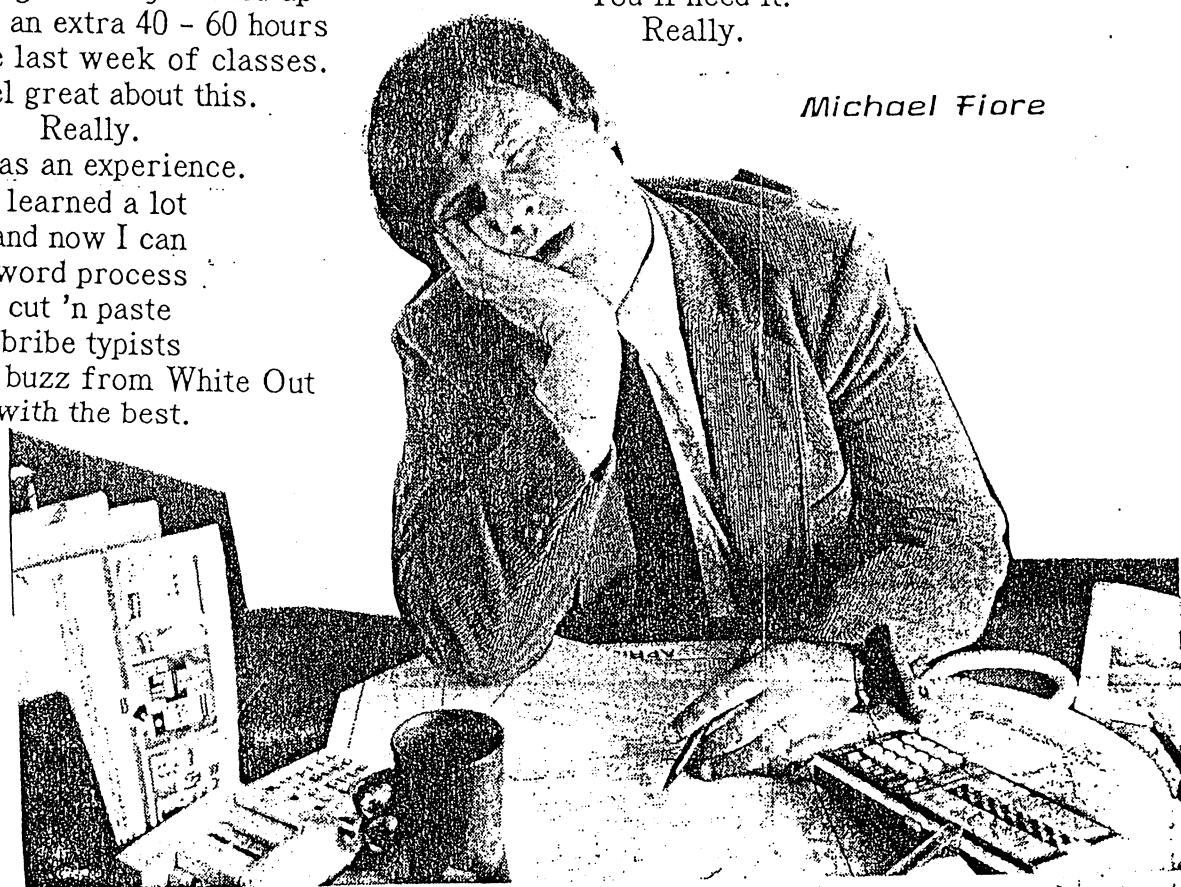
One final note
to Joe and Kay

(The kindly Editors to be)

Good luck with the upcoming Trogs
You'll need it.

Really.

Michael Fiore



GROTTO GRAPEVINE

Heeeeewack! Time for another dose of the low-down on the Cave Club membership. The last grapevine was printed only four months ago, so while there is not as much material to go into THIS grapevine, none of that material has been lost because of the solvent effects of beer on memory!

We start on a sad note--our friend and former secretary , Dougo Bohn, has retired from student life. His disorganized style in performing the duties of secretary, his antics during club meetings, his esprit de caving, and his hair grease will live in the memories of all who knew him. He will be missed by us VPI cavers, and especially by the special friends he made in a Montgomery County jail cell.

The now-annual Christmas trip to Mexico took place again this year with Cecile James and Doug Abernathy representing VPI. Besides exploring a few known caves, the group went ridgewalking and discovered some other promising holes. Before Cecile returned to the U. S., she sold her vertical rig to one of the Mexican cavers. She then left Mexico in such a hurry that she forgot to fill her truck with gas. They crossed the border under human power. In March, Cecile, Maureen Handler, and several non-VPI cavers returned to Mexico to follow-up on the leads that were discovered over Christmas, and to sell more vertical equipment to the Mexicans.

With the new year, The VPI Cave Club changed its name. It is now VPI Chapstick er, ah, oops ... (drum roll) ... The Cave Club of VPI. Since the last Grapevine, we have seven new members: Brian Cruikshank, Dave Warren, Mike Sziede, Kat Teten, Lesley Colby, Mark Eisenbies, and David McElroy. We were especially pleased to vote Kat in, since she had been a trainee-scum for 17 months. Dave Warren calebrated his new status by drinking himself comatose and spent most of his membership party unconscious on the couch.

Joe Uknalis, (another long-time trainee) chaired the banquet committee this year, and deserves much credit for a job well-done. 115 people attended the banquet, socialized, ate, listened to Horton "Bugs" Hobbs III talk about caving in Costa Rica, and cringed lest they be recognized at the infamous awards ceremony.

And the awards follow: Philip Balister got the "Rim of the Ancient Mariner" award in which the toilet he blew up with a bottle rocket was chained around his neck for all eternity. Glen Davis was designated the club's PW, for spending his time with Alice Lane when he should have been at club meetings. Ed Devine was presented with a loaf of bread so that he would have some use for the seven toasters he and Linda got for their wedding. Mike Futrell, Paul Kirchman, Dave Schantz, Dave Cinsavich, Richard "Dick" Cobb, and Philip Balister all received fig leaves for real or imagined acts of public nudity. A special thanks to Beth Wichterman for helping to get the fig-leaf sizes right. The feminists were given a chance to prove that they could be as brave as any man when a spare fig leaf was found, but none did. Let the record show that they had the opportunity.

Ben Keller was recognized for his ability to inarticulate under pressure with a public speaking award. Doug Bruce received a plastic compass and whistle set--disposable survey gear to replace the equipment he left on the side of the road following a mapping trip to Stay High Cave. Kay Johnson was awarded Armchair Caver of the Year, and although she might protest that she DID go caving once this year, that was as the plastic victim at the practice rescue, so most of the time she was being carried around by trainees. Richard "Boo" Croft received a special academy lifetime achievement award: the wheelchair caver award, for being an armchair caver for so many years. Jim

Washington got a special caver extraction kit in honor of the many times he had gotten stuck in the past year or so. The kit included a girdle, a plunger, and a jar of vaseline. Craig Roberts was recognized for his breathtakingly foul cave clothes with a box of "No Bullshit" laundry detergent. Paul Hess and Ed Fortney received slide flutes as the club's Pied Pipers, for taking an endless number of trainee trips, bringing together one of the best trainee classes we have seen in years.

Several trainees received awards this year. Brian Cruikshank was named Trainee of the Year. Mark Eisenbies was selected from a large field as Most Obnoxious. Mike Sziede walked away with the Flame-Out award, a true achievement for a novice, though we suspect he had prior training. Runner-up for Flame-Out went to Kevin Matera for a truly inspired performance at one of Ed Fortney's parties; he received a custom puke bucket with head harness. Lesley Colby was named the club sweetheart, and got a big kiss (8 oz. of chocolate.) Lastly, Paul Donahue was recognized for the speed with which he can cut himself free from a belay with a special plastic belay knife.

This year, special recognition went to Jerry Redder for donating the services of his van and house to the club. Our "Favorite Landowner" award went to Buddy Penley, who received a gift membership to the NSS, a bunch of lottery tickets, a certificate of appreciation, and a standing ovation from all the cavers assembled. The last official award, the A. I. Cartwright Honorarium, went to Cecile James for long-standing support of the club through the use of her house for parties, organization of trips to Mexico and Alabama, and the many trainee trips she has taken through the years (many as a trainee herself.) Cecile then took advantage of her position near the microphone to present a special, unannounced award. To Jim Gamble she gave a red, heart-shaped, fur-lined G-string so that he could tell the babes that "his heart is in the right place." Obviously, Cecile is jealous of Jim's 99 44/100 % purity rating, because she does not normally play cruel, spiteful jokes on people who don't deserve them. (Guess who wrote this semester's Grapevine --Eds. note)

The party after Banquet was an exceptional bash. A small sub-group of partiers exploded a carbide bomb to begin the festivities, ignorant of the cops parked just around the corner. The usual carousing was well evidenced: dancing, piano-playing, joking, lusting, etc., and there was plenty of food and beer to keep the speleopoliticians' mouths occupied with worthwhile activity. Paul somehow managed to piss-off Gabbie again. Cecile's latest flame, Gerald Moni, came all the way from Tennessee to visit. Beth and Craig came to banquet from their respective far-away places, and officially ended their relationship once again. The party remained alive through the night as the grizzled and haggard poker players pelted the pathetic persons trying to sleep with reams of crumpled newspaper. Bacon-eyed and shaking, the poker players ended their contest at 8 AM on Sunday. Ben so impressed the club sweetheart with his pancake-cooking ability that she kept coming back for more (pancakes, not Ben.) Jim Gamble noted that most women aren't getting enough iron. Mike Fiore noted that, while he is still not dating Sallie, a viewing of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" proves that marriage is not out of the question.

VPI cavers celebrated spring in several traditional ways. Philip tried to best his toilet-killing stunt by firing a bottle rocket at Ed Fortney's bathtub through the plumbing access panel. Speaking of Balister, he recently moved from Newport to Pembroke. Every move seems to take him closer to West Virginia. Hmm, is that where he really belongs? Several very cold and wet cavers from one Clover Hollow Cave trip think that maybe even that far would not be far enough. Mike Fiore, it must be noted, is celebrating this spring in a very untraditional way (untraditional for cavers, anyway) -- by graduating.

A large number of VPI personnel went on the annual Alabama trip over Spring Break. Those new to Alabama couldn't believe that their first campsite was REALLY a dump. At least there was a panty rock. The annual JMU Spring Fling took place in 20-degree weather and snow. As usual, VPI outnumbered JMU, but the weather kept us from asserting ourselves in the fashion that has kept us infamous there. Jim Washington's annual Easter Beer Hunt was well attended, and was great fun for the kids (who got to hide and find the beers) and the adults (who got to drink them.)

That's it for this edition of the Grapevine. Remember, mention in the Grapevine is an honor that must be EARNED. Don't wait until the last minute to screw-up. Do it before midnight tonight! (But cave softly and safely.)



GCCS Update: All the GCCS That Fits, We Print

The caves of Giles continue to astonish and amaze. We are still finding new ones, and even the old ones that are still there are kind of neat.

The Stay High Cave survey is stalled until warmer weather. All that seems to be left is upstream infeeders best left until the summer. But it is the state's newest mile-long cave, with 5748 ft. of passage as of the last survey trip in January.

Mike Futrell has been back to Yer Cave recently and is still finding more stuff. As of this writing, the survey has 13,200 ft., tying it with Miller's Cove as the 18th longest cave in the state.

Ridgewalking has turned up several known and unknown caves:

Cecile James, Lesley Colby, and Jim Washington started a resurvey of Virginia Cliff Cave #3, which has over 500 ft. of mostly dry, walking passage. Jim, Joe Uknalis, and Richard Hunter went to complete the survey, couldn't because someone forgot the sketching equipment, but found #2 and #1.

Cecile and Jim resurveyed Daisy Williams Caves #1 and #2. These are mostly dry crawlways with evidence of recently being a fox den.

Barry "Pyro" Fizer, Barbara Graham, Rob French, and Jim Washington opened up two new caves in the Clover Hollow area. One of them has a 25-30 ft. pit entrance 8 inches wide and has some air. Further exploration will have to be done by the GCCS Munchkin Squad. The other cave has a larger, horizontal entrance that leads to 20-30 ft. of passage ending in a dig.

Doug Bruce, Mike Horne, and Frank Kadel went to look for Phlegar's Cave. It wasn't there; instead, there is a new quarry. Add yet another cave to the list of missing caves.

Since the last Trog, GCCS has added nearly another mile of surveyed passage to the survey, mostly in Yer Cave (thanks, Mike!) And there is still a lot to do.

JINXED IN LINKS

The sun poured in through Jim Washington's kitchen window. Wrapped in my bathrobe, I was having a good cup of tea in my favorite sunny yellow mug of Jim's. It said, in red letters, "I'M GOING TO HAVE A GOOD DAY." And I was. I was going caving in Links. Going with me were club members Jim Gamble, Mark Eisenbie, several assorted trainees and a friend of Jim's, Kathy. Kathy had never been in a cave before. Jim had seemed relieved the night before when I had agreed to go. He didn't want Kathy to be uncomfortable, being the only woman. I smiled. Kathy had nothing to worry about. I would be there for her. She would probably be a little nervous and scared, but I would soon put her fears to rest. I saw myself explaining how stalactites are formed while Kathy looked on in awe.

"Aren't you ready yet?" It was the Babe Magnet. I was late. Fortunately, I was already wearing my lucky cave underwear. I rushed upstairs and wormed into my specially-ordered lavender Arctic-weight long-john set. I'd be ready in no time. I struggled into my pink plastic jumpsuit. Next came the red hirt, the hideous purple popcorn-knit wool vest, and joint pads for knees and elbows. I tend to get cold easily. I looked out on the porch. Everyone was standing there waiting on me. They weren't sitting around comfortably, and they weren't cracking jokes. They were just standing there.

I applied several layers of socks and a painter's coveralls. After I tied a florescent puke-green sweater around my neck, stuffed quilt batting into my chest, and forced my inflated feet into cave boots, I was off. Six people stood on the porch and watched as I scrabbled through my gym bag.

"Do I need this? Do I need that?" They all began walking up the hill while I frantically tried to locate gloves, gear, lights. Everyone seemed so... together. Even Kathy. I began to feel out of control as I gasped for breath ascending the hill by Jim's barn. Little did I know that even my lucky underwear was not going to save me.

We entered the cave, and everything went fine for awhile. I frolicked, innocent of the horror to come. And then we arrived at the canyon. My turn came quickly, and I crawled to the edge of an enormous crevice. The far wall was miles away. The sides were like freshly windexed glass. It was the edge of the world. The first two trainees had apparently grown wings and flown across.

"I need a belay," squeaked a tiny voice from the back of my throat. There was a too-brief pause while a belay was arranged and I crawled out again to the starting point. My shaking legs began to shrink. The canyon walls expanded and I saw Hell below. I was no longer human.

I was a gnome.

"No way," squeaked the gnome as it retreated, feeling slightly foolish in its cheery matching puke-green belay line and sweater. The gnome felt as cheery as laundry lint.

Kathy stepped up to the ledge.

"I'll go on ahead," she asserted confidently. She turned into a gazelle and leapt across with a perky flash of her little white tail. "Piece o' ca-aaake," she bleated.

I slunk down to the bottom of the impasse and struggled across in disgust. I had a long chimney back up; meanwhile everyone in the party flew across the top and had to wait for me again. By the time I joined the demons, a small waterfall of sweat was erupting down the side of my face. I had more skins than an onion, and I was just as slippery.

We chimneied for several years. I could see Hell every time I looked down. We

came to another impasse, and another. I was coaxed and bribed where no mortal had gone before. Finally, I had no will to go on. I perched on an indentation made in the canyon wall by someone's claw and refused to budge. Mark Eisenbie was dispatched to babysit while the party continued to the end of the canyon, doubtless to chant and make human sacrifices of other poor slobs they had enticed there. Mark was a considerate kind of guy. He changed into human form so we could converse for the several decades they were gone. He hmmmed sympathetically and I tried to recover as the sweat congealed all over my puny, wasted, gnome-like body.

"I've been sick all winter," I offered, when my legs had stopped vibrating.

"Hmmm-hmmm."

"I haven't been caving since last fall. And I have no aerobic capacity," I continued. Suddenly the cave temperature dropped 1000 degrees. Hell had frozen over. Goose bumps began chasing each other under my damp clothes.

Fortunately or unfortunately, I wasn't sure, they came back before I died, and we set about making a return. I promptly succumbed to terror when forced to re-negotiate the macabre chasm of death.

"She's stuck again, Jim," the call went out.

"I'm coming; I'm coming," relayed the Babe Magnet with just a touch of incredulousness in his voice. Obviously no previous victim had survived this long. As he approached I noticed the wonderful length of his limbs. His legs went on forever, and his arms were just as long. He was as graceful as a spider. In fact, he was a spider. A good-looking spider.

The arachnid spoke. It proposed I use it for a stepping stool.

"Go ahead, I'm firmly wedged," it assured me from underneath. I scrambled over Jim/The Spider, with all the glamour of a limp dishrag. My wrinkled little gnome limbs trembled as I cheated Hell again. And again. And again.

Let us draw the curtain of oblivion over the rest of our story. Suffice to say, at long last, I blinked in the brightness of day. My body was my own. We made our way back to the farm where my companions began to dress by the side of their car. I trekked after them and brandished my trip sheet.

"Do you mind if I get dressed first?" Jim asked. He bore no likeness to a spider. He was just an ordinary college guy in plaid boxer shorts, struggling to get his jeans on quickly in the cold air.

"Oh, let me do it, let me," squealed Mark, "I've never signed anyone off before! Oh, goody!" He began to write, crossed something out and wrote again. As I took my notebook and started back, Kathy was overcome with curiosity.

"Did he write all kinds of stuff, about what a good caver you are, and all?" Kathy obviously didn't think I deserved any praise.

"Nooooo," I said slowly, "He didn't take that route."

I thought I heard a cackle as I walked away. Mark had written, tactfully, "She swore she would never cave again at every hairy spot in the canyon, but quickly took it back when she got out."

My body was the worse for having been inhabited by a gnome. I longed for a hot bath, and would have had one if Doug Dodd had not been thawing dead rats in the bathtub. Well, actually, they were in an industrial-size bucket in the bathtub, so I shouldn't have minded, really. Call me prissy. I settled for a shower.

"You really should go back and do that thing again," Doug Bruce said later, "It will be much easier."

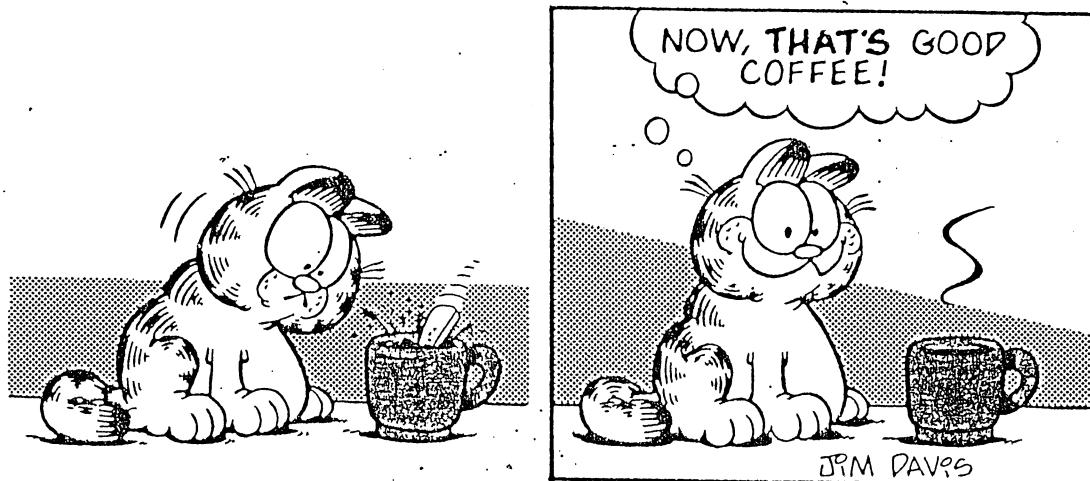
"That will be the day," I declined with a polite snort.

I wasn't ready to admit it yet. But I had already stood under a twinkley, winkley sky

and looked up at the dark hill that held Links. I was Napeolean, re-living Waterloo. Custer after Big Horn. I was Scarlett, shaking her fist at Tara while Atlanta burned.

"I'll never be poor again," vowed Scarlett. I shook my fist at Links.
I'd be back.

Laine Buckwalter



You're Going to Do What?

It's 4 am, so what the bloody hell am I doing awake? I just got back from a largish trainee trip to Newberries. My body is beginning to thaw, and I have regained enough motor control to sit in my room without falling out of my chair.

Inside, Newberries was a great cave. Outside was an accurate simulation of hell freezing over. Frank, the official tall person on the trip, said, "This is the kind of weather that you couldn't get paid enough to go out in." Wendy Wickham was more to the point: "Fuck this shit." But -- despite the icicles in our hair, the freezing rain, the hail, mud, exhaustion, threat of hypothermia, and all that other nice stuff common to winter caving -- we pushed on, determined to have a good time even if it kills us.

I began to wonder why we subject ourselves to this kind of abuse. Have you ever tried to explain to a non-caver what is so appealing about getting completely covered with mud? (The similarity to mud wrestling doesn't count.) If you have, you probably didn't more coherent than Ben Keller did in his moment of glory on T.V. My best attempt sounded something like:

"Well, there's mud, well... a LOT of mud. And climbing rocks and rappeling, and lots of really, really big holes that you could fall down. And water, cold water, in the wet caves, and sometimes even in the dry ones, depending on who you ask. And bats and formations and lots of stuff. It's a lot of fun; you wanna try it?"

I don't usually get any takers on that one. But if I could figure out why this sort of self abuse is so enjoyable, and explain it, maybe there would be more women cavers. (I don't try to recruit guys, there's enough of us already.) After enough contemplation to make my brain hurt (about 2 1/2 minutes), I figure -- Why should I have a reason to cave? Sure, it's hard, but it's fun, and hey, Why not?

Mike "Elwood" Sziede
4:00 AM

Doing the Unthinkable...

Even though I'm not a member of the VPI Cave Club/Cave Club of Va. Tech/VPI Grotto/Club Mud, most of you know me due to the fact that I have been semi-permanently attached at the hip to the previous vice president for the past three years. [However, I would like to clarify something--Paul often ditched me to go caving and his receipt of the PW award two years ago was completely unfounded.] Being rather new on the caving scene, I was rather grossed out by the state Paul's cave threads were in. I've always believed that it was best just to leave men to their own devices--everything either turns out ok in the end or rots. So I only asked Paul once if I could wash his cave clothes. He told me NO WAY in no uncertain terms, and I couldn't understand why. This was, of course, before I found out that I had committed a major faux pas. One day I was discussing what had happened with a past president (no names will be given) and she informed me that cavers were proud of how dirty the clothes they wore caving got (and stayed, I might add). Coming as I do from a house ruled by a woman who is absolutely fanatical about how clean everything has to be, this certainly was a novel idea. As a matter of fact, I didn't truly believe it until I heard the story about Craig Robert's coveralls on the practice rescue last fall.

Well, this was all well and good, until one day following several weekends of not seeing Paul due to long and muddy caving trips. I walked up on his porch, where he'd left his clothes (right next to his motorcycle) and they ATTACKED me. Now, having clothes that will stand up by themselves is one thing--even some of my Levi's have been in that state, away from the influence of my mother--but clothes that will attempt Greatest Bodily Harm on innocent passersby is a totally different dog. A sharp kick to the left sleeve gave me enough time to slip into the house, whereupon I informed Paul that his cave clothes were going to be washed, whether they wanted to be or not. Luckily, we were planning on doing laundry that night. Who knows what would have happened to me if those coveralls had been allowed to run rampant any longer?

And now, a few pointers for those of you who are going to take the plunge:

1. Never try to wash your cave clothes in the same load with other clothes. This may seem like common sense for not getting that good ol' Virginia dirt rinsed into your whites, but there is another reason. Cave clothes don't like to be around the rest of your wardrobe, and have a tendency to eat anything that hasn't been in a cave.

2. Do not be alarmed if they struggle when you put them in the car. Your dog always knows when it's time to go to the vet; your cave clothes will know when it's time to go to the laundromat. Tie them up if you have to (your old tied seat comes in real handy for this). It will be even more difficult when you try to put them in the washer.

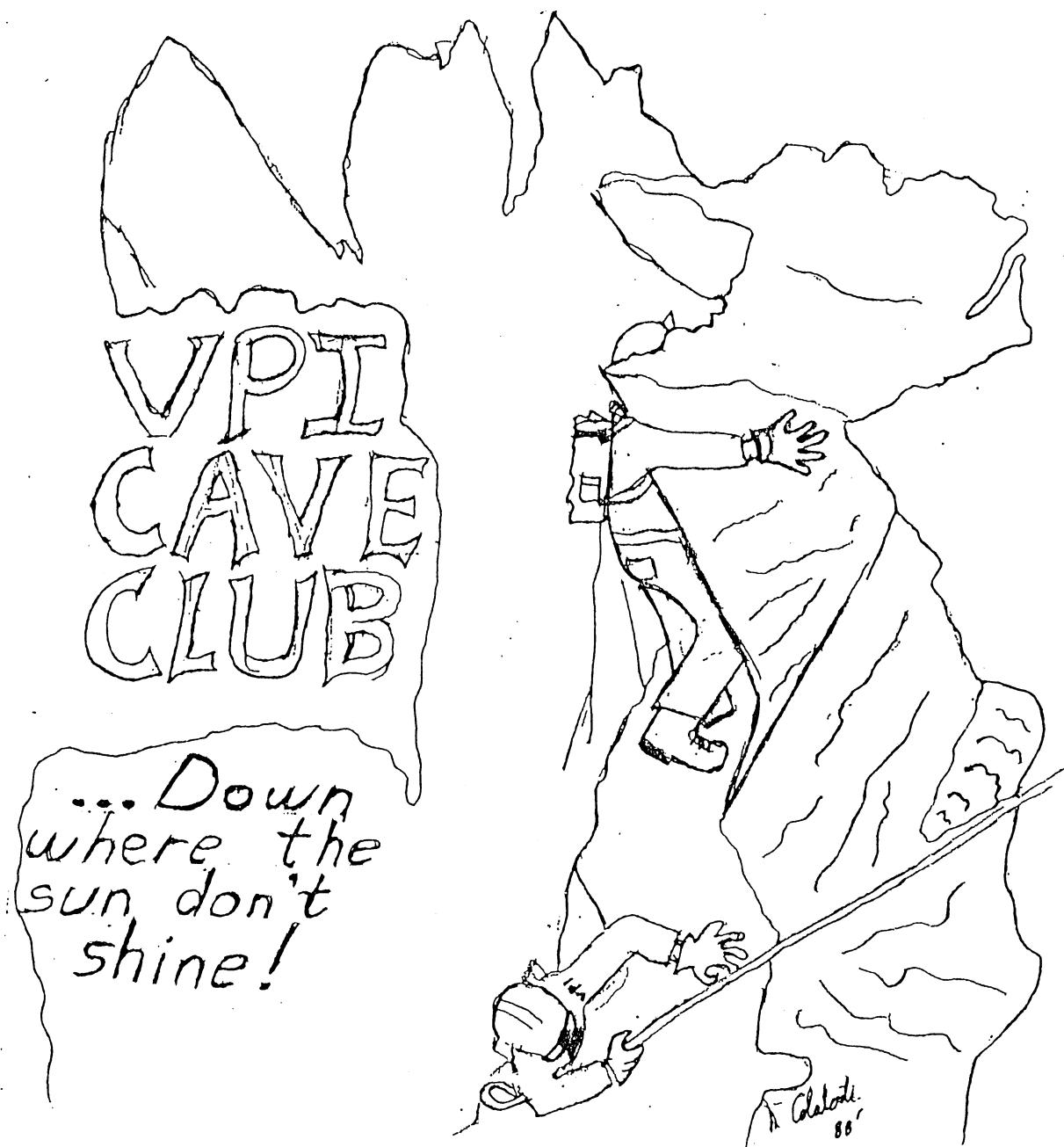
3. Tide is for America's dirt. Lots and lots of Tide. For lots and lots of America's dirt.

4. You may have to wash them twice. Or three times. Or maybe even more, depending on how ornery they are. And then run them through the washer without any detergent. Cave dirt is a very interesting substance--upon contact with water, it forms into a thick paste not unlike brown Superglue that immediately adheres to anything it comes into contact with. This needs to be rinsed out so that the next time you go caving your coveralls don't feel like they're made out of plywood, and also so the person using that washer after you doesn't sue Cook's because all of their clothes turned a uniform shade of brown.

When you take your cave clothes out of the dryer, you may be worried that someone switched laundry with you. The likelihood of this actually happening is very slim, and

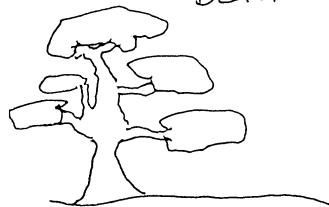
this feeling just results from the fact that you haven't seen them in their unnatural state for so long. (Paul said, "I didn't know they were blue!!!") Your unease will soon go away though, and your cave clothes will be ready for another year or so of caving.

Gabbie Roth



Grow yer Own Sinkhole!

BEFORE:



AFTER!



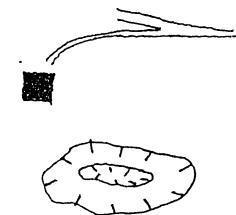
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- "More intriguing than Rutabega Crop Rotation in the Honduras!"
- "Funnier than 'Dentist's Quarterly'!"

La Borbollon: **Trip report—March 16–26, 1989**

The La Borbollon (pro-nounsed Boar-bee-yone') expedition was planned in early January, 1989, while we were finishing up our two week Xmas-New Year holiday cave and pit tour. We had just driven 2 1/2 hours (14 miles) from La Puente, stopping in San Francisco, S.L.P. to do and find more pits when a group of Mexican cavers passed by on their way to La Puente. They stopped and one member, Carlos Javier Zermenio P., stayed behind with us to set up a meeting for the next day to do La Borbollon -- a multi-drop system with a deep drop several minutes from the entrance that two Mexican caving groups had found the previous Spring and hadn't been able to explore fully. When we met the next day we were asked to come back in the Spring so that those involved in the find could join us. We planned to meet again in March, Holy Week, Le Semana de la Santa, when most of the Mexicans have a week's vacation. We also exchanged gear for pesos in the name of good-will and affirmation of intent and many of us came home needing to set up new vertical systems.

The intervening time sped by, with missals from Maureen Handler, the expedition leader of us U.S. and Canadian cavers. Carlos acted as the organizer for the Mexicans. Word spread of the cave, attracting cavers from Colorado, New Jersey, Texas, Tennessee, Toronto, and Virginia, 24 of us Northern types and more than 26 Mexicans.

John Sullivan of Richmond, Chris Stine of New Jersey and I left Blacksburg, Thursday, March 16 at 1:00 p.m. with the Batrnnr so fully packed and topped off that we had to remove the groceries (for 10 people for a week) from boxes to get them in. We arrived in Chattanooga in the evening where we regrouped with Maureen Handler, Bruce Smith and Gerald Moni and caravanned through the Southern states, getting to Nuevo Laredo border crossing by late Friday afternoon. Everything went smoothly till the chief Hefe's decision that the BATRNNR should be totally emptied of contents, and subsequently repacked -- apparently he wanted to watch our frustration, since there was no inspection of the contents once removed. Everything was replaced, of course gaining more bulk while out of the truck. We kicked the back door shut again and stuffed items in as the window was slowly raised (only two eggs were broken as the groceries were tossed around).

We drove on to Monterrey to a motel that evening (we could not get to our camping gear), and, the next morning, onto Cuidad San Luis Potosi, a city of 800,000, in the state of the same name, carefully monitoring our gas tanks, and filling up with unleaded (extra -- the silver pump) whenever possible. Being Holy week, EVERYONE was going somewhere -- and the traffic was more than double that we usually see at Xmas time. Luckily the road was wide so the average situation of 3 lane traffic on two lane highways was actually relatively safe. We all convened at the Posada Motel outside of S.L.P. with the other groups, ate together in the hotel dining room and stayed on and partied, then went on to each other's rooms and partied. Finally, the decision was made to sleep a few hours since we were to head for the cave and camping area at 9:00 a.m. Sunday morning. At departure time Sunday, the mob was growing, the scene becoming

more and more confusing, so Gerald decided to lead a group out to the area to do some other pits to cut down on the chaos.

We headed out with 4 or 5 vehicles behind us, having to pass big trucks and very slow cars on long steep grades, but in a short time we arrived back in San Francisco, just a few miles from La Borbollon, and parked near the quaint paper-cut-out church. (It was Palm Sunday and we observed continuous pageantry in the village as the natives attended mass and made pilgrimages out of town carrying intricately woven fronds.) We discovered that there is a water pumping station being set up at El Sotano San Francisco #I. Innumerable members of our group dropped the pit almost to the lumpy water at the bottom -- about 300', changed over, and climbed out, as we introduced others to the Tiende behind the church for sodas and pastries and looked for San Francisco II. We also reconnoitered El Truene -- a magnificent 300"+ pit at a quarry nearby that had been made unsafe by recreational dynamite drops. Quizzing two young boys (with the usual problem one has in asking for other sotanos when you are near a major pit, and the language problem). Trying to get across the idea that you like variety is hell. One goes through, "Yo quiero entender los sotanos." "Si -- aquella." "No, aqui." "No, aquella -- profundo sotano!" "Si, yo sabio; yo quiero entender un otros sotano aqui." In my basic Spanish this probably begins to sound like 'Who's on first?' But we did get led to San Francisco II -- I guess it was worth the effort.

It was getting later so we gathered up half of the crew and drove off to La Borbollon -- we found the obscure entrance to the road and headed back down into the valley, past the quarry and on to the campsite where out crew had set up out camp. Gerald headed back to San Francisco to see if the rest of the pit-boppers were ready while I bartered and bargained with gear I had made to satisfy basic needs of a few cavers (trying to get across that I was charging only for the materials). Selling is a poor word for the exchange -- the deal was not to lose too much, since money exchange rates, etc., get confusing and one has to rebuy personal gear when one gets back to the states. Away went all the chicken loops (chicken loopees -- as the Spanish defamation went -- they thought it was funny too and included it in some of their silly songs around the fire), my new Petzel jammer, my new steel D, my pretty slings, my "Paul Smith" seat, my extra quicklinks, and my new never-used rack with the SMC steel bars -- but the deal was "I get to use it till Saturday, OK?" "OK, what else do you have?"

Meanwhile, Maureen and Carlos were seeing to it that two crews were sent into the cave to begin the rigging. First rigged was the chute -- an exciting back-up into a small passage where one attaches to the rope with a biner, then moves backwards and down and around out through the chute over a flowstone traverse -- all the while trying not to fall back too far as one reaches across with the right foot into a small rimstone pool for security. The second thing rigged was the 715' pit using an 850' rope, setting up a tail for tandem climbs. As soon as this was done, one crew went on down as a push crew and another was sent in to survey. This process was continued throughout the expedition as some of us surveyed above the pit and others (who weren't going down to the bottom) did the big pit during the time that none of the teams from the bottom needed the rope. I never pushed to do the bottom since there were quite a few very strong cavers for the push trips (up until Wednesday when the evening Mescal parties began to take their toll and the ranks of gung-ho cavers began to thin down) and my survey skills were not adequate to the vertical nature of the cave. (I have served notice since I've gotten back that I will no longer act as ever-ready lead tape, but will learn to do instrument and sketching.)

As time went on, more and more crews came and went, more and more rope was called for -- bad riggings were replaced, every bolt that could be scraped up was used,

as the expedition went lower and lower. The final estimate was between 2100 and 2400 feet with a potential lead still at the bottom -- a near-sump would have to be drained. As the water had been splashed away, passage was seen on the other side, but the crew was tired and time was short. Twenty to thirty hour trips were the norm, with the long climb near the top and several climb-ups above that, the reversing of the chute, a tall, tight chimney, and finally "the squeeze" before the nice open cave passage up and around to the entrance. It was quite a sight to watch the underground stragglers drag themselves up the long, long climb up and out of the sinkhole and into camp. In addition, most of the Americans were from lowlands in comparison to the 7500' altitude and our bodies didn't let us forget it as we found ourselves gasping for breath after short climbs.

Each day, as the big rope was booked up for long periods of time with crews coming or going from the bottom, those left on top found myriads of fruitful ways to spend their time. Bruce Smith put into practice much of the theory in On Rope, encouraging less experienced cavers to try out all kinds of equipment in the trees he had rigged and gave them practice in setting up hauling systems. Others headed out of camp to drop pits in the area. One popular one was Los Lobos, which was 650' deep, but then there were many others ranging all the way down to the 40' Dead Dog pit where Maureen had stopped short of a stinking carcass on our trip three Xmas's ago. Another popular pit was beautiful Caclaterra, a twenty minute walk past the school and the village, 250', open and green, filled with breakdown, ferns and the ubiquitous little burning nettle (called chichi-chichi in Indian, which sounds very much like itchy-itchy). There was a red bud in bloom above the pit, trees full of Spanish moss, and blooming bromeliads, giant-sized, everywhere.

I also had a couple of opportunities to visit the neighboring village where I was fed whether I was hungry or not, and helped to wash my hair. Water is very scarce in this area -- the village had a small reservoir for their drinking and cooking water and a rather murky pond from which to get wash water (and water the animals). As I would arrive, the children would run down the hill with a bucket and can, dip the bucket into the least murky spot in the pond and I would use one small can to wet my hair and two to rinse it as the true meaning of conservation was made clear. The children learned about American shampoo and conditioners and a few other things as they taught me some Spanish and cooperation.

One evening at dusk, after we had been out onto the main road to do other pits, we arrived within a mile or so of camp on the one-lane road to find ourselves behind a line of stopped cars and trucks and a gathering of people ahead. After considerable confusion, we discovered that a disgruntled landowner in the area had decided to lock her gate at the entrance of her part of the road and block the gate with a couple of vehicles. A small group of those stopped had pulled out their guitars and were singing up a storm while we Norte Americanos were running around fussing and muttering things like "Let's bash it down," but word got back to camp and our head Hefes talked to the owner, got the key and let us in. Another great war story to tell the troops.

Our food supply was plentiful since two of our planned group were unable to come and because so often members would be in the cave, come out exhausted, grab a sandwich, and fall into their tents despite loud parties around the fire. The Mexican members of the expedition kept the fire going along with a huge bowl full of refried beans, tortillas cooked on the hot rocks and mescal liquor brought in a four gallon jug. Their group had several good guitarists, and on occasion would burst into Beatles songs so that we could join in.

During one of the times that the rope was free, I joined the group of in-cave pit boppers, enjoying a superb rappel and climb-out except for the very noticeable effect of the altitude. Each time I climbed, I would end up gasping for air, seemingly never to get

my breath back -- till I learned to relax as many muscles as I could short of not being able to climb. At that point, my Mexican rope-mate began to fall behind because of exhaustion; though he lived at S.L.P., 6500', he had considerably less experience on rope than I, so was expending much more energy. I enjoyed the resting time which also allowed me a better look at my surroundings. (To the Norte Americanos, the cave was warm, even the water, while the Mexicans came out cold and dry, avoiding all the water they could even though they had to expend considerably more energy to do so. Since I had been in the cave before, I knew how warm it could be, so I had worn a long-sleeved cotton t-shirt rather than my nylon suit. As I neared the top of the pit, the air became fresher, cooler, and even gave me the illusion, at least, of containing more oxygen).

Finally, we arrived at the tail and I switched my safety (Petzel Expedition) over and took off my chest harness. There was no need to do a complete change-over since the friendly ledge was an easy long reach from where the main rope went up and over a large boulder. I then discovered that my foot jammer had come off the rope as we had been climbing against the wall. Juan understood English and soon moved up to re-attach it. At this point, I should have checked the rest of my gear, but I was almost at the top and people were waiting at the bottom to come up. Since there was not enough tension on the tail to hold me upright, I would grab the tail, slide my safety up as far as I as I could then hold onto the main rope as I climbed. With 20 feet to go, I grabbed the tail and gave my safety a push, and it kept on going out of reach as the quicklink (maillon-rapide) went tinkling down the rock face. (The group below heard it land, but could not find anything).

So there I was, 700 feet up, ready to do a heel-hang against the wall, and my rope-mate was probably too tired to help me out of it! I looked for ways to one-handedly attach myself back to the rope. Twenty feet was not far to go, but I couldn't help thinking of where I had come from. I worked myself up within a couple feet of the ledge. Juan had to push away from the wall because I could only afford one hand to move my knee and foot ascenders. Luckily, I had put my pack on a longer tether than I usually do and was able to throw it up over the ledge (it stayed!) I removed a biner from the tether, (we had all gone in light; after all, we were only going into the pit and so had little extra gear with us), hooked it onto something as I fumbled for the safety rope, finally getting myself safely engaged to the tail. A couple more steps and I was able to disengage my foot ascender, step out and over onto the ledge while hanging tightly onto that safety line I had worked so hard for. A couple more moves and it was time for Juan to make his uneventful exit from the rope. (There were two Mexican cavers sitting a couple of hairy climbs above the rigging. When we called earlier to ask them for help, they could not come because they were both without lights. Apparently, because of their lack of equipment in general, the policy (followed too often even in the States, that is, counting on your companions as your other two sources of light) is common with these cavers because it was easy to walk or climb through the cave, meeting up with someone who was waiting for "another source of light" -- possibly you -- to arrive).

The last push crew and survey crew were sent in Wednesday evening with the expectation that they wouldn't be back up for 24 hours or so. They were both to bottom the cave if possible, survey and bring up the ropes from all the shorter drops -- over 3000 feet of rope -- to the bottom of the big drop where they would be tied, together, pulled up the 715', and snaked out of the cave. Some of us tried to get a nap Thursday evening since the word was out that 10:00 p.m. was worktime. Speleo Babe came loping up the hill at just about that time, after climbing the 715 in less than 30 minutes (he claimed 13 minutes and no one will dispute him) after 24 hours in-time and announced that the cave was ready for rope removal. He then removed himself to bed.

We all dragged ourselves out, dressed for a long cold spell -- I already planned to take the nearly unavoidable water, since I didn't want to go down the chute (or rather, to come up the chute again) that day so I figured I should take another dirty job. (Later, I was glad to be only wet and cold as I listened to the more than considerable grunting and groaning as one after another tired body was dragged up the chute.). It was two hours before someone indicated from the bottom that all ropes were up and it was time to pull. We all took stations and with ease the rope was snaked through. The two pull crews at the top of the big drop called for relief, and were replaced while the two rope watchers climbed the 715'. Then, with great verve, the pit was cleared, the rope snaked past with a beer can tied to its tail, and we all began our last climb out of La Borbollon -- at least for a long time. I think all the cuevadoras and cuevadors had some sense of nostalgia as they climbed out of that giant sinkhole to camp. It was 5:00 a.m. and the sky was beginning to lighten around its edges as we fell back into our sleeping bags, this time for an uninterrupted rest.

Friday a.m. we began the inevitable job of packing, organizing, and planning for our exit, trying not to act too grumpy. Gerald and I, along with Alan Crestler, Marion Smith, John Sullivan, Sherry Lydy, Speleo Babe and Baybette (okay, you spell it) snuck in another outing to look and do more pits, and still get to S.L.P.d at 5:00 to meet at the Motel for dinner. Carlos took us to Nicole's, a Mexican Pizza Parlor. The salad bar with its uniquely Mexican vegetables was superb, the Vegetarian Pizza turned out to be a vegetable pizza; all in all the pizzas were very good with a definitely unique Mexican flavor. Back at the hotel, we all gave up partying for sleep with visions (or better yet, a haunting feeling) of the straight through drive home and back to work.

The alarm went off at 5:00 a.m. and we were up and off, our only tourista shopping of the trip at the rather nice hotel store after we ate breakfast. We enjoyed the magnificent mountains on either side of the highway once again, were stopped for inspection by a crew in heavy jackets with machine guns under their arms. In the desert roadsides sat many natives selling anything that someone would buy, under small thatched shelters -- snakeskins, birds, small animals, etc. We were slowed down at one point by elaborately costumed Easter week revelers, bobbing and weaving, looking for pesos. And not least of the sights were the flat bed trailers parked along the highway, supporting seriously crashed cars splashed with "blood" and carrying great banners cautioning us, "Don't let the Grim Reaper win again!" And then the border where we did the usual beer and liquor stops often as the vehicles moved slowly outside the Tiendes in the line of traffic to the bridge.

At last, we had a very friendly border guard who thought we were funny and moved us through. We found a place to sell our pesos so we can again buy vertical gear, of course losing in the exchange. We went to a good place to eat cafeteria style (where Craig R. deserted us four Xmas's ago to satisfy his Wendy's craving). The Canadians were dropped off at the bus stop to find their way home however they could, and we entered the Texas Wilderness. After several rotations of drivers, we pulled into a restaurant in Mississippi for breakfast. I took the backseat, missed several rest stops and could not be moved until we pulled into Chattanooga that afternoon. John and I decided to stay over -- we all cleaned up and went to Bruce's new house for a delicious dinner, Gerald left for Nashville and we turned in early. This time, the alarm didn't ring until 6:00 a.m. Seven more hours of driving for me, eleven for John. On arrival we unpacked the truck and I discovered I had a client to see at my office in forty-five minutes, not even time to shower..... And that's how that adventure ended!

Cecile James

Tips on Caving

Caving, as we all know, is a wonderful sport, hobby, way of life, or whatever you want to call it. It must be done right, however, or a cave trip could turn out to be a big pain in the ass! Actually, even when done right, a cave trip can turn out to be a big pain in the ass, just like a long movie in an uncomfortable theater. Even though we are at the mercy of the cave gods every time we go underground, or attempt to go underground, we must still try to make the cave trip as enjoyable as possible. So here are some 'expert' suggestions from a trainee.

The first thing you have to do is select a cave. To do this with ease, merely consider the cave's name, which can tell you a lot about that particular cave. For example:

Good Cave: Clover Hollow

Bad Cave: Bat Shit Sucker Hole

Here are some other important points, which can easily be derived from the particular cave's name:

New River Cave: Bring some spray paint (just kidding)

Golandrinas: Not a day trip

Echol's Cave: Don't go if you're fat

Mammoth Cave: Use only the designated restrooms

Murder Hole: Bring some vertical gear

Other important points:

Ridgewalking -- a sadistic form of punishment invented by the ancient Chinese when they needed something more agonizing than water torture. Avoid it at all costs! Some extremely sick GCCS people might tell you that it will be fun, and that you might actually find a cave. HA!! DON'T BELIEVE THEM, or you might end up in an experience closely resembling the Battan Death March.

Surveying -- a very fun part of caving. To better understand this concept, it is necessary to introduce Newton's Fourth Law of Caving: The size of a vertical drop is inversely proportional to the amount of gear you have, AND is directly proportional to the distance between you and the gear. 1st Corollary: The time elapsed before you discover this drop is directly proportional to the weight of gear you carry with you.

In other words, if you don't bring any gear, you will discover a pit so deep that it actually leads to hell. And, if you bring more gear than a mid-size army because of rumors of virgin vertical passage, you will be engaged in a constant, tight crawl that goes on literally forever, and is uphill both going in and coming out.

There is also Newton's Fifth Law of Caving: The distance (horizontal and vertical) from your car to the cave is directly proportional to the severity of the weather. If the weather is brutally hot, cold enough to freeze nitrogen, or if there is a rainstorm the size of a class 5 hurricane, you will not be able to get your car within ten miles of the cave entrance. Thus, you will never wear the right amount of clothes into the cave. This is why layering is important. That way, you can tie cumbersome, unused layers of clothing around your waist, and they will snag, grab, and tear on every single jut or nick in the entire cave. You don't even have to come close to these spots, either. Your unused

shirt will go out of its way to find a rock on which to grab onto.

To avoid this, you can stuff any unused clothing into your pack. At this time, your water bottle will suddenly explode, drenching your stored clothing. The odds of this happening are increased tenfold if the temperature is below 32 degrees outside, and an additional ten times if the article of clothing was necessary to keep you halfway warm on the expedition back to the car.

Finally, Newton's Sixth Law of Caving: If you bring any thing worth more than \$50 into a cave, it will soon become the property of A.I. Cartwright.

No how-to article on caving would be complete without a mention of a light source. Namely, the "trusty," "dependable" carbide lamp. The normal working pattern of the lamp has been discovered by numerous scientific experiments. The lamp will work fine for the first five minutes into the cave. Then, as if commanded by some force of god, the lamp will suddenly emit less light than the average match. No much how much you fiddle with the lamp, this will not change. Then, upon leaving, the lamp will work fine as soon as you get within ten feet of the entrance. (Unless, of course, it is dark outside -- Eds. note) As for electric lamps, the same cycle applies, with the batteries suddenly kicking in as you are about to leave the cave. Lamps are manufactured so they wait until they can sense daylight before they start to work.

With all this said, you are now ready to start caving. You should now have a great appreciation of the thrills, excitement, and underground spirit that makes caving the INCREDIBLY AWESOME sport that it is.

Dave Warren

My Experience as a Trainee

Blame Jake and Elwood for gracing you all with my presence; it was their idea. Where else can we young, underage trainee types find such a ready source of beer? The first meeting was an experience. Things like the news clip are a lot funnier after you get to know the members. I still haven't figured out what Ben meant. Some analogy about animals causing pollution or something.

Bridge sessions are one of my favorite parts of the Cave Club, even though after three to four lessons on how to tie a helical I still can't get it right. Caving is a lot of fun, but I never seem to be around when all of the good trips go out. However, the trips I have been on were great, such as Links, especially in retrospect. There seems to be more reward in it after you get out. I appreciate rocks more. I've also found it fun to watch the old folks get trashed -- especially sweet, innocent Jim Gamble. You're a 75 and you know it!

I guess I should give fair warning to new trainees at this point. Cavers are not weird; weirdness is relative. If Jim Washington asks you whether you want to go surveying or ridgewalking, GO SURVEYING!!! Also, go to at least one major Cave Club party at Jim Washington's if you are female. There are some interesting sights there.

Do not join a frat while in the Cave Club. My only excuse is that these guys will help me with my engineering homework. Finally, always ask for a belay when you think you want one. Capt. Ed was belaying me and saved my butt in the canyon section of Links. For this, I am forever grateful. Hopefully, by the time I graduate from here, I will have figured out that damned helical knot.

Wendy Wickham

Cave Club of VPI Safety Committee

Hey you CRAZY CAVE Dudes and Dudettes. Have you ever wondered what, like, are the rules of the Cave Club? Well here they be. These are taken from the Cave Club Constitution Standard Operating Procedures. Some of these rules may change, but in general, you should always follow these guidelines. If you have any ideas or questions, let the Safety Committee know. Party hardy and lets be careful down there!

Equipment:

- * A. Helmet with chin strap -- non-negotiable. A **MUST!**
- * B. 3 Sources of light. A carbide lamp is recommended as it gives off heat. If you use electric, your carbide lamp can be a secondary light. A flashlight is a good third source. Make sure you can hold it in you mouth or strap it to your helmet so your hands are free. Candles, cyalume sticks and matches are good backups.
- C. A pack is recommended to carry all your junk.
- D. Carbide, dump bottle or bag, water and carbide lamp parts.
- * E. Trash bag in helmet. If you have to wait, or you get lost, hurt, whatever, take your trash bag out, punch a hole in the top, put it over your body and place your carbide lamp or candle between your legs. You'll be toasty! Don't burn anything though. Remember: that's a large trash bag, like for leaves and stuff. Lawn bags are great. Sit on your pack for insulation. Leave your helmet on for head warmth.
- F. 20-30 ft. of 1 in. tubular sling. For belays, handlines, arm rappels etc.
- G. Food--candybars, gorp, Beanie-weenies etc.
- * H. Boots with lug soles and ankle support. Tennis shoes are frowned upon. Warm clothes. (Maybe a spare dry T-shirt in your pack?)
- I. Certain trip specific EQ. For a vertical trip you'd need all this plus your vertical gear. (Seat, gloves, rap. device, ascenders, ropes and pads.)
- J. Don't forget your plastic ice cube trays.

*Sign-out sheet:

All Cave Club of VPI trips must be signed out. The sign-out sheet is posted at a local caver's house and includes date, cave location, participants, time out, estimated time of arrival (ETA), time back and comments. This is probably the most important safety aspect of the club. These guidelines should be followed.

- A. Full names (First, last) of everyone on the trip. Nicknames are cute, but leave 'em at home.
- B. Phone number of trip leader (if new to club) and of any new cavers. This helps in tracking down a trip if it forgets to sign in.
- C. Cave location. Most caves we go to are well known and there is little question about where they are. New or obscure caves present a problem in rapid mobilization in case of injury or missed sign-out. Leave a map at the sign-out if possible. If you don't want your new cave scooped, leave the map in an envelope.
- D. ETA--This is the time you expect to be back by, with everything you do thrown in. If you're not back by this time, we assume the worst. This includes leaving the sign-out, breakfast, going to the bathroom, getting gear, driving, caving, getting cleaned up, drinking a beer, driving home, drinking a beer, getting lost, drinking a beer, and signing back in.

Once your sign-out time is reached, a search party is sent out to find you. They'll try to call you, but if you can't be reached there's no choice but to drag the cave for you. Be liberal in your time allotment. Give yourself plenty of time to do everything and a little extra. Remember though, help won't start coming until the time you list as ETA, so don't be too liberal.

E. Don't forget to sign back in! It is the first thing you do when you get back. Calling in a sign-in should only be done if everyone is out of the cave. Missing sign-out ETA without injury is punishable by one keg.

F. Sign-out & Sign-in times. Sign-out times are when you expect to be leaving town. A.M. and P.M. are O.K. for ETA, but use noon or midnight instead of 12:00 P.M. or 12:00 A.M. There's less confusion that way. Military (24 hr.) time is fine also. (i.e. 1:00 A.M. = 01:00). Don't sign-out for a sign-in that is in the middle of the night. It's not fair to the sign-out dwellers

to get up and see if you're back at 3:00 A.M. Midnight to 8:00 A.M. should be avoided if possible.

G. Once you are back and everyone is safe and sound, a simple check in the "Back" column is sufficient. You can leave a time if you want.

H. Leave a comment. Let us know how your trip went. Be creative.

Trips (Far Out)

A. #1 rule in caving: **NEVER CAVE ALONE!**

B. Always let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back (sign-out sheet).

C. 3 people constitute a safe trip. (4 is even better so that no one caves alone)

D. Everyone going on the trip should be up to it physically and mentally. Here's a judgement call. If you think someone isn't ready for a particular trip, tell them. Let people know how hard you think a trip might be so they can decide for themselves. They can practice techniques outside or gain experience in easier caves.

E. There is no max. # of people on a trip. Try taking 10 people to "Armchair Cave", and then to the "Grim, Gross Pit of Death", and you'll get an idea of how many people you want on your trips. Fitness and skill levels will differ. A trip is only as fast as its slowest member. (My, that's profound!) You can always carry an extra duffel bag.

Techniques:

These here procedures should be followed down in 'da Earth.

A. Inspect ropes for glitches & frays.

B. Test all ropes and ladders using five people. Note: Some people who should know advise that testing the new synthetic ropes has little effect. It can't hurt though.

C. Pad all rope rub points. Trees can usually be used as a change of direction with no problem.

D. Tie a figure 8 on a bight at the end of the rope before lowering it down the drop. This keeps you from rappelling off the end of the rope.

E. Friction wraps should be used when rigging so that the knot is not loaded.

F. Rigging should be inspected by all on trip when practical.

G. First person down should be an experienced member since no belay is available. A rack should be considered.

H. Every subsequent rappeller should have a bottom belay.

I. Anyone who wants a belay, gets a belay.

J. Everyone climbing a ladder has to be belayed.

K. If your light fails, wait in place.

L. Avoid jumping.

M. Never leave a novice alone.

Addendum: The Safety Committee eagerly awaits similar guidelines as outlined by the Drinking Techniques Committee.

* AREN'T THESE LITTLE THINGS CUTE?



Dr. Cavespeed or How I learned to Stop Worrying and Cave With Phillip and Mike

Saturday, Mar. 4, Mike Fiore, Phillip Balister, and I went to Bane's (and a little bit of Newberry's). I must say that this trip was one of my more, well... interesting cave trips. Let Uncle Rob tell you the story.

The day started out something like this: I woke up at 8:30 to meet Mike at Newport around 10:00. When I arrived, I found Mike gathering up his cave attire. "I'll be only a few minutes; I've just got to patch up my cave clothes," he said.

We met Phillip at his house at 1:30.

We got to the cave and proceeded to rig the pit and descend. As I gathered up my stuff and tried to fit it in my pack, Phillip says "When I was a trainee, we were trained by men. If you weren't ready when they were, you were left behind," and proceeds to walk off.

No problem, I thought. I can always catch up. Right.

The rest of the trip went something like this: Phillip and Mike speed down a passage, stop, wait for me to catch up, when I try to rest, they head down the passage again, and yes, the cycle continues.

We arrived at the Newberry's side and met up with Ed Fortney and his numerous group of happy campers. When we left the group, we ran (literally) through the passage that leads back into Bane's. Upon my asking the reason for our little sprint, Phillip replied, "You must run to impress the other group. When we get out of sight, we can slow down." I didn't see any difference between the two paces.

Now this is where the fun really began. Mike and I refused to go back through the dusties, so, much to Phillip's dismay (because he is a water PANSY -- Eds. note) we went through the chilly, but refreshing, water crawlway. Phillip made me go on ahead so I could soak up all the water. After much intentional and revengeful misleading by a certain grouchy member (Phillip), we arrived back at the pit. Mike proceeded to assemble his ropewalker, get on rope, and nearly strangle himself. (Never, never, never test out a bunch of modifications to your ropewalker for the first time at the bottom of a 70' pit with no alternative way out -- Eds. note) While waiting for him to untangle himself, I wasn't too cold, and felt pretty amused by the fact that a member could actually screw up.

I shouldn't have laughed.

My turn. I proceeded to tie my knots and start up rope. I got about three feet up when a certain part of my body (my left nut) got caught in an unopportunite part of my seat. After my life finished passing before my eyes, after Phillip stopped laughing, and after much adjustment, I made my way up the rope. Phillip climbed out quickly, and we were (basically) out. An interesting trip, I must say.

Rob French

When Men Caved

My worst cave experience happened in a local cave while caving with my best friend, and Rob Hills. My trusted Petzl Lamp (my best friend) was burning brightly in the passage before us. We had already descended three pits to place us at the bottom of this cave we had recently discovered. As we trudged along in the mud, our boots made a burping sound as the water created a vacuum around our Vibram soles. Rob followed quite behind me carrying only the bare essentials of cave gear, as we always packed lightly. I too had come rather unprepared to explore the cave we had uncovered, but we trudged on regardless. After several hours of walking through tight canyon passage we noticed burnt embers and footprints at our feet. Had there been others here before us? Was there another entrance? We had been in the cave only 36 hours and Rob and I were both still full of energy, so we continued on in search of another way out. After another hour of jogging the canyon closed to a mere hallway passage. In fact, it resembled a hallway in many ways for the walls were smooth with well defined edges. We continued on with minor trepidation, for a strange feeling had started to overcome us. The passage no longer resembled a cave, but rather something creature made. Our unease grew as the passage continued. The burned torches we had previously seen now hung from the walls as if the passage had once been lit. We turned a corner and stopped dead in our tracks as a towering oak door appeared in front of us. The door was at least twenty feet high and eight feet wide with huge wrought iron studs protruding from its surface. There were no visible hinges or handles to be tampered with. Fearing the trip back more than what lay on the other side of the door, Rob and I attempted to open it. The door was smooth and solid to our touch. Seemingly, as we pushed upon it, there would be no way for us to move it. We tried for several minutes to find a secret lever, but to no avail. I sat down in exhaustion, fearing the long trek out of the cave. Rob's temper grew until he slammed the door with his fist and yelled, "Damn, I wish I had a beer!" Instantaneously the door slid open to reveal blackness beyond. Rob gasped and stepped back in amazement. We both moved closer as if drawn from something beyond the darkness, but our lights would not penetrate it. I stepped back afraid of the darkness that my Petzl would not cut, for I had never before experienced such a technical problem. Rob stared at me blankly, perhaps wondering what to do. He was a tough caver and didn't back down lightly from such challenges. Unlike most men, the fear of perpetual darkness did not deter him, for he was a true caver at heart. Stepping into the black void he disappeared in front of me. Fearing the loneliness without his presence, I grabbed our cave packs and jumped in after him. Suddenly I was cast into an eternal spin. I could not free myself from -- Aaaarrrrgggghhh...

I awoke lying in the dry bat guano next to Rob's feet. Rob looked down upon me as I opened my eyes. "What happened?" I asked.

"Oh nothing, just another one of those teleports again. I hate when that happens."

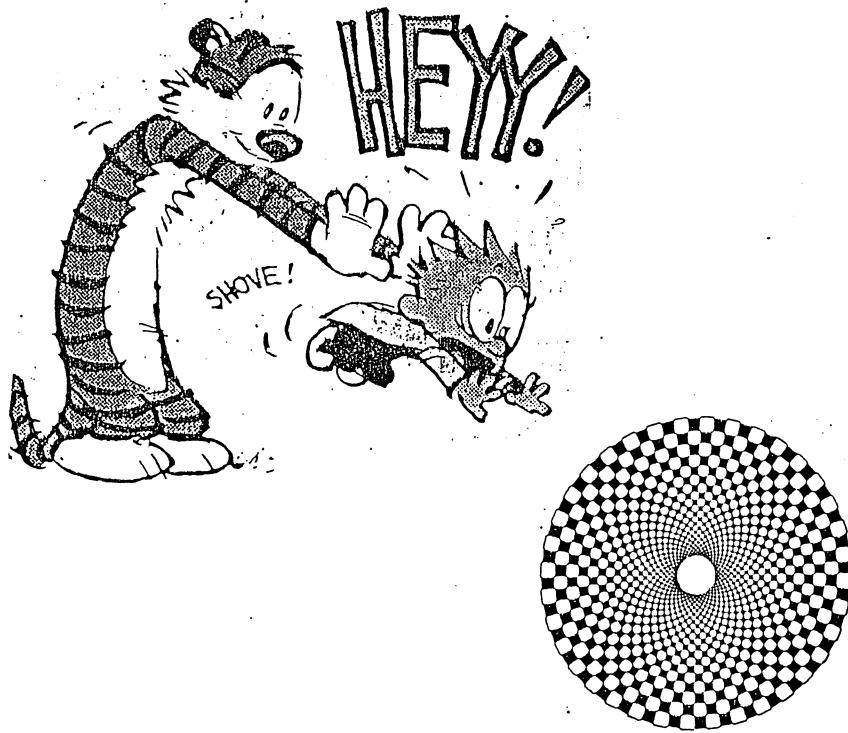
"Yeah, me too," I sat and ruminated over our predicament. "Well where the hell are we now?"

"Well, we are obviously at the bottom of a local cave. Yes, I reconize it immediately. It's going to take us a while to get out though, because we are at the bottom of this pit." Searching through our cave gear we managed to come up with 30 feet of webbing, 3 carabiner gates and 2 chocolate bars. Picking up a solid rock from the floor we headed for the wall. We began our ascent by using the carabiner gates as bolts and

simultaneously standing on each other's shoulders to drive the next one in. The work was slow, however, as we had to use the rock as a hammer. Soon our lights grew dim for we were out of carbide and other light sources. In the dark we tied ourselves together and continued our blind bolt climb. Each time Rob pounded in the third bolt, I would remove the first so that we would have enough to reach the top. As we drew near to the top of the pit, (judged by our dropping screeching bats tied to rocks down the pit and counting the seconds) one of our bolts broke and we were forced to carry on, both of us hanging from one bolt as we pounded in the other. The climb was not difficult as compared to the rest of our journey to escape from the local cave, however. Eating a diet of cold bat meat and Vibram shoe leather, we managed to crawl for many days until we reached the entrance of the cave. Breaking out into the bright January sunlight, we were met with the cold weather of a Virginia blizzard. Since we had not planned to be teleported to this cave on our trip, we were forced to walk for two days back to campus. The only casualties of the cold were our bare feet, for we had eaten our shoes in the cave. Rob and I have learned many things in our cave trip experiences, but none so valuable a lesson as this trip afforded us. From now on, Rob and I will be sure to pack more than 2 candy bars in our cave packs, for neither of us like the taste of bat meat.

...don't miss the next edition entitled "Expedition to King Solomon's mines" or "How to test pit depth with tribal baggage carriers"

Craig T. Roberts



A Bedtime Story for Budding Cavers

Let me introduce you to Mike and Tom. They were brothers in the Stalagtite family. Yes, that's correct -- those cave formations we take for granted as just hanging off the ceiling. They had a large family, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Mike and Tom were only a few hundred years old -- young for a stalagtite. Their grandparents, however, were much older and larger. The family lived in a fairly small room with 20 - 25 other stalagmites.

After waking up, Tom and Mike decided to have some fun. They went to climb the wall in their yard. They were up it in seconds, and afterwards they joked about how clumsily the disruptive giants climbed the wall.

Mike and Tom then ventured to neighboring lands where they could relax in a pool of refreshing water. You see, they could build up and grow both from the nutrients in the soil, and also from the minerals in the water. They found the small pools gleaming in the darkness, and after relaxing for a while, they had a splashing free for all.

They got up and walked around for a while and met a new friend. His name was Brian. Brian complained that he was aroused from his sleep by a blinding light. The giants came in after the light and took him from his resting place and dropped him on the ground. He was now in the process of fleeing to a new room to sleep. Mike and Tom wished him good luck and went their way.

After a few more hours they heard an alarming crash that shattered the placid cave atmosphere. Giants! They ran for their lives. They hoped to make it back to their home. Stalagmites, you see, have a built in defense mechanism from giants. If they can make it home, they hang on their ceiling and stay very still. They hope this will keep the giants from damaging them.

Well, Mike and Tom ran as fast as they ever have. Mike had just reached his spot to play possum when a glare of light pierced the darkness. Tom realized that he would not make it and played dead on the floor. The giants entered the room and jabbered on in some strange language. Eventually, they became bored, and moved on.

Very soon, though, Mike and Tom heard a harrowing scream from a giant. Curious to see what had happened, they moved closer. They discovered that the giant had been drinking and had just started a fire. Realizing how dangerous a fire was in a cave, Mike and Tom went to work.

Tom quickly scaled the wall and jumped into the middle of the gathered giants. As he crashed to the floor, the giants got scared and fled from the room. Mike and Tom were happy they saved the cave, but this feeling did not last for long.

On their trip home, they noticed shocking scenes. Some of their stalagmite friends lay dead on the floor after being maliciously knocked off the ceiling. Not only had the smoke from the fire stunned bats, but the soot created much damage. Paint ruined the natural beauty of the walls. And the refreshing rimstone pools were muddy and dying from the crushing footsteps of the giants.

The End.

The moral of this story is that you should treat a cave like someone else's home. Even if you don't mean to, careless actions often destroy valuable things. Remember,

Don't Be Like the Giants!

Adam Hungerford

Some Thoughts on Landowner Relations

Things happen. Usually all in fun, with results no more harmful than a ragged hangover and an empty wallet from too much pizza. During the underground portion of the trip there were perhaps mud fights, raunchy jokes, and other assorted debauchery. Fun? Of course. Harmful? Assuming the cave was left pretty much as it was found, surely not. Cavers are a wild breed, and I can think of no other group as inventive in their merry-making! But we must ask ourselves: where will we draw the line?

Whenever we find ourselves out and about in cave country --be it in Mexico, out west, T.A.G., West Virginia, or just in our own "backyard" -- we have to remember that we represent all cavers. While it is easy to assume that we can anonymously act as we please no matter where we are, this simply isn't true. Our bat stickers, helmets in the car window, not to mention the places we "hang out" all act as a very visible means of identification for the cave owners and other locals. A group of cavers on the side of the road kitting up for a cave trip tends to be a memorable sight for those non-cavers driving by. We need to try to visualize things from the local resident's perspective. Even if those folks driving by don't own the cave, in rural areas it's a good bet that they know the owner. To accidentally offend or otherwise annoy anyone while being recognized as cavers is simply inexcusable. Period.

It is essential to note that no matter where we choose to cave, we are the visitors, not the guests. Just because we put our feet on the kitchen table at home doesn't mean that it's O.K. to act the same in someone else's kitchen. Several recent incidents seem to indicate that perhaps some cavers need to give their attitudes towards landowner relations a bit of a re-think. There are some things that, no matter how fun or "cool" they may seem at the time suddenly become a lot less so when reports of cave closures are heard. No, I'm not going to name names, or even specific details -- and let me be the first to admit that I'm certainly not without my own "history", but let's try to perhaps think things through a bit before we do something everyone will regret. As far as landowners are concerned, caving is a privilege -- not a right as some seem to think. We must start recognizing landowner rights and wishes, and the effects of our actions on future trips... both ours and those of other cavers.

As I write this it occurs to me that perhaps some of us simply don't know any better. This is, I suppose, certainly possible, and perhaps even forgivable -- IF THOSE INDIVIDUALS TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN. Of course, every caver has his or her own idea of what is acceptable, but allow me to make some suggestions:

- 1: ALWAYS obtain landowner permission before entering his cave, or ridgewalking, etc. An open gate is not, repeat, is not an open invitation to enter someone's property. Failure to get permission is at the least trespassing, and even more importantly, a sure way to permanently destroy any chance of returning to finish work on whatever project you or other cavers have going. The only exception to this rule is when it is a well-known fact that the owner in question has given "blanket" permission, and doesn't want to be bothered. Even if the owner always gives permission, cavers should set up some mutually agreed upon form of communication with him. This could take on several forms: a phone call the week before the trip, a note on his door or your vehicle or whatever. Sure this takes extra time and can be a pain with a long-winded owner, but as a way of building up his confidence in you, not to mention cementing your access to the property, nothing beats it.

If you have any desire to ever return to a cave owner's property, "sneak-trips" are

obviously out of the question. When considering such a trip, remember that other cavers may one day want to return. If you go, DON'T GET CAUGHT.

2: Treat your landowner right. Don't make a liar out of yourself by never getting around to sending him that map or those photos. While he may not expect these things, try not to make promises you can't keep. A nice touch is to supply him with a copy of the map symbols used, and in some cases a copy of the topo map showing his land and the cave locations. This is probably the most often abused rule of landowner relations.

3: Again, communicate. Know any rules the owner wants you to follow. Where to park, when and if it is O.K. to drive to the cave entrance(s), how to leave gates (generally you should leave them as you find them), etc. NEVER camp or build fires without specific permission, and don't mess with his animals or farm equipment. In general, use common sense (even though for some of us this is rather uncommon!), if you see things such as an injured animal, or perhaps a newborn calf, make it a point to let the owner know. Leaving trash, even a single cigarette butt or pop-top, can leave a bad taste in the owner's mouth.

4: Until you get to know the landowner, never act too crazy, drink, or do anything illegal if there is any chance he might not approve; even if he's not around. Try to act as if cavers are a responsible lot and the owner will be more likely to allow you to return. Quite often once you get to know him he'll offer you a beer, or even turn out to be as deranged as most cavers... but never assume this to be the case until he makes the "first move." Unless he starts it, fireworks, naked women, and bestiality are definitely out. Even way back in a mine.

5: As stated above, we represent cavers as a group no matter where we are. Be considerate of the rest of the group! Pissing off landowners is not a good way to win friends and influence people in the caving world. This also holds true in general --not just with individual landowners. Show respect for all residents in karst areas. Like I said, if they don't own a cave they probably know someone who does. And who knows... one day we might find a cave on their land.

So, there it is. Any comments? Like I said, I've made mistakes too, but I think the time has come for some of us to grow up a little. Or find another sport... some of us would like to keep on caving in the years to come.

*Keith Goggin
N.S.S. 23572*

VPI CAVE CLUB - RESCUE ROSTER

September, 1988 - September, 1989

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Don Anderson Dublin	(w) 639-7321.....	674-5460
Cecile James Blacksburg		552-5305
Ben Keller Blacksburg		951-7437
Jim Washington Newport		626-3386
Ken Bonnenberger Blacksburg	(w) 552-3011	951-3449
Giles County Sheriff's Dept	(703) 921-3842	
Cave Rescue Communications Network	(804) 674-2400	

If a person named here is not in, ask for another caver. Your message will be handled appropriately. Avoid publicity of any kind.

THE BELAY (A Caver Fiction)

One morning group of cavers approached a fairly popular cave, known and traveled by a large number of people, and having a fair amount of trash inside. The group contained four people: Jeff, who was an experienced caver, Alex, with only a few prior trips, and Raymond and Bill, both beginners. The entrance was obvious due to spray paint and a heavily eroded path. Upon entering, the leader, Jeff, began to quickly summarize the do's and dont's of caving, and gave helpful advice on starting the lamps. Proceeding past the sunlight into the darkness, Jeff pointed out formations and passageways and some of the history of the cave.

For Raymond, the beauty of the cave did not hold as much awe as did the challenges of caving. To him, it was an adventure, risking the darkness with naught but a flashlight. The idea of all the precautions seemed to somewhat dampen the sense of adventure. Alex, on the other hand, had had a very difficult first trip, one fraught with the constant danger of falling down several climbs that he found difficult. For Alex, the beauty of the natural formations was as powerful a draw to caving as the difficulties of getting to them.

As it happened, Raymond went down a difficult climb before Alex. He was instructed to wait until the person behind him was down from the climb before proceeding. Alex was being extremely careful, executing a well controlled descent and taking more time than Raymond wanted to spend. Raymond waited impatiently, and then left with Alex to continue following the passage. The passage started to form a canyon. At the end of the floor, Jeff was braced between the two walls, a technique called chimneying, he explained to Raymond and Alex.

Raymond was to go next. Bill had gone ahead earlier and was at the other side of the passage twenty feet away, where walking was once again possible. Jeff asked Raymond if he wanted a belay.

"A what?"

Jeff explained that a belay was a safety method using a rope to prevent falling, and that if it was asked for it would not be refused. Then he asked once more. Raymond was confident that he could do the section without problem, and began across. If he had any problems, or fears, he did not show them after he had finished the climb. Alex, on the other hand, wanted the belay. After Jeff rigged one up, Alex passed the canyon with no problems. Afterward, Raymond expressed a few sarcastic comments to Alex. Jeff immediately responded by saying that the small inconvenience of being safe is well worth the luxury of remaining healthy. (Are we talking about caving or comdoms here? -- Eds. note) Alex didn't say much, obviously the harsh words had affected him. Jeff noticed that Bill didn't seem to be enjoying himself, and wondered how he could smooth things over.

Deciding to rest, the group munched on snacks in silence. Later, passing the area in which they rested, a series of crawls had to be negotiated. For the most part, there was enough space to move on hands and knees; however, there was a small stretch which was tight enough not to allow passage with one's pack on. To the rear, Jeff heard Bill struggling along, and asked, "how are you doing back there?"

Bill replied, "I'm a little stuck, I'm having trouble fitting through." Coaching Bill through, Jeff realized that Bill was controlling claustrophobia, and definitely didn't enjoy the crawl.

In a small room immediately after the crawl, Bill asked, "do we absolutely have to go

back through that crawl to get out of here?"

"The end of the cave isn't far now, there's a point where the cave becomes vertical and we turn back anyway. If you want, we can turn back here," Jeff said, intentionally looking at Bill in order to get a response. Bill wanted to leave, Raymond wanted to go on, and Alex didn't care either way; therefore, the group headed out by the alternate route. Pulling a trashbag from his helmet, Jeff started to pick up some of the beer cans, old batteries, and other assorted unpleasantness. Alex followed suit, striking up a conversation with Jeff about cave conservation. Bill followed along with a blank look on his face, while Raymond trailed at the rear not bothering to pick up anything at all.

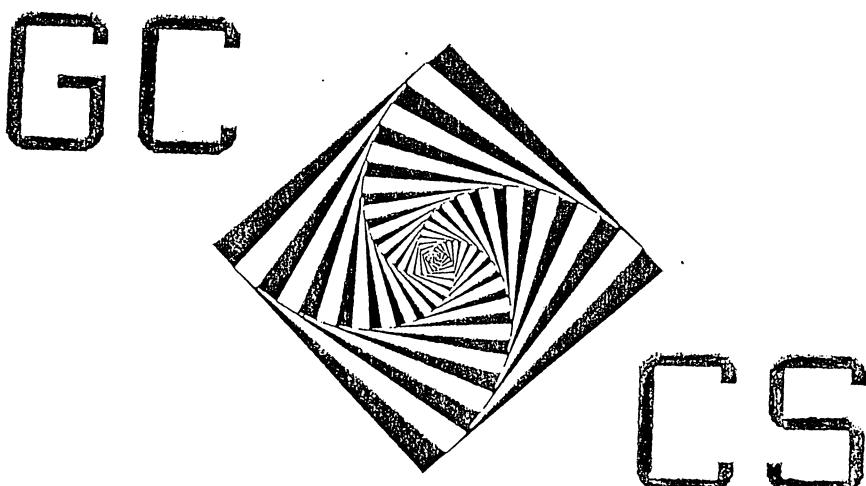
The group then came to a room whose floor slanted sharply down to a drop of thirty feet. At the far end there was a crawl which went to the entrance. Bill immediately protested. "You said no more crawling, I want to go a different way!"

Jeff calmed Bill down, and then they left to cross the room and enter the crawl. In case of difficulty, Jeff instructed Alex and Raymond to wait until he and Bill cleared the crawl. After the signal came, Raymond started to cross the room, but slipped on the smooth flowstone surface, stopping just inches away from the drop. Frantically, he searched for something, anything to grab. Alex did not hesitate, immediately grabbing a section of webbing and tying loops at each end. He shouted for Jeff's help, then told Raymond to hold on.

He realized the webbing would not reach. Frantically, he searched for a solution. Part of the way down the flowstone was a small stump, a stalagmite, and a place where the ceiling almost touched the flowstone, where he could place a foot and stop himself. Sliding to the stalagmite, Alex found the foothold above him and put one of the loops around the stalagmite. Raymond grabbed the other loop with a grateful exclamation, and hung there as Jeff returned and took control of the situation.

Jeff secured a new line to Raymond. With two people hauling him up, it wasn't difficult for him to get back to safety. Mumbling a few words of thanks, Raymond began to think differently of the person who he had earlier made fun of. The enormity of how much each person depended upon the others finally struck him; no matter how many differences there are between people, these differences must not appear while caving. Also, the belay was not something to be taken lightly, here just walking through this room, a slip could have cost him his life. A passage or climb might seem simple enough, but what if there were a slip? Deep in thought, Raymond hardly noticed the passing of time. The group was now at the entrance. They exited into warm daylight once more. After a while Bill said that he enjoyed everyone's company but he was too claustrophobic to continue caving. And, except for apologizing to Alex, Raymond was mostly silent, pondering the lesson of the trip.

Mike Horn



Caving... Why?

From the home office in Huntsville, Alabama, we have this issue's Top Ten List: The Top Ten Reasons Why Cavers Cave.

10. Weather -- nice and warm in the winter, cool in the summer. Who says the cave stays 54 degrees year-round?
9. Climbing a waterfall is an innovative way to take a shower.
8. A light coating of dust enhances the flavoring and texture of most foods.
7. "It's really cool... everybody's doing it" -- Jake and Elwood to a prospective trainee.
6. You get an opportunity to learn various knots which can be used for ALL SORTS OF THINGS...
5. The feeling of wet, mouldy cave clothes is sooo good, and as Craig Roberts knows, the smell can be nothing short of stunning.
4. You can annoy your roommate.
 - a. make and explode carbide bombs.
 - b. redecorate your room with gnarly equipment and a fine coating of dust.
 - c. let your clothes ferment for weeks in a plastic bag.
"Huh? I don't smell anything."
3. Where else can you traverse a 50' chasm, 2' wider than your legs, just to find out that it is a dead end?
2. It's a good way to keep your parents on edge.
Sample conversation between caver and caver parent:
Parent: So, what did you do this weekend?
Caver: Well, Friday night I went to the Cave Club meeting and the party afterwards. The party broke up kind of early, so a bunch of us jumped into the back of Brian's truck and drove to the New River and tried to squash pennies on the railroad tracks as the trains went by. By then, it was 4 AM so we figured we might as well stay up all night. So we all drove to Phillip's house for a little visit, but he was asleep upstairs and we couldn't wake him up even though we woke up a neighbor or two. So we broke into his house and announced ourselves. Good thing he didn't have a shotgun, or we would have been really surprised. We ended spending the rest of the night in the 'ice box' room. It was cold. After eating all of Phillip's food and burning all of his wood and paper, we finally left at... Oh, around 8 AM. Dave and I had promised to bring a bunch of people from Pritchard caving, so we picked up the five of them and headed out to New River Cave. Overall, it was a pretty average weekend. How about you?
Parent: (silence...dead silence.)
1. It's an excuse to drink alcohol. What else can I say?

Lesley Colby

Thoughts on Caving

Caving: It's not just a sport -- IT'S A WAY OF LIFE!! Such is the philosophy of various people who choose to roam around underground in their free time (me included). Above-grounders might call us idiots, but we know that we are smarter than they are. Heck, it takes an enormous amount of intelligence to decide to shove one's body into tight, deep, muddy holes, where god intended only vermin, bats, insects, and diseases to live. We cavers can get just a little bit closer to hell than anyone else. Non-cavers don't even know what they are missing.

People who are truly enjoying their lives (such as cavers, of course) have a strange and persistent desire to go where they're not supposed to. Just take a look at the sort of things these people do with their spare time:

Skydiving -- hurling one's body towards the ground at incredible speeds. Enthusiasts often resemble large birds who have suddenly died in mid-flight.

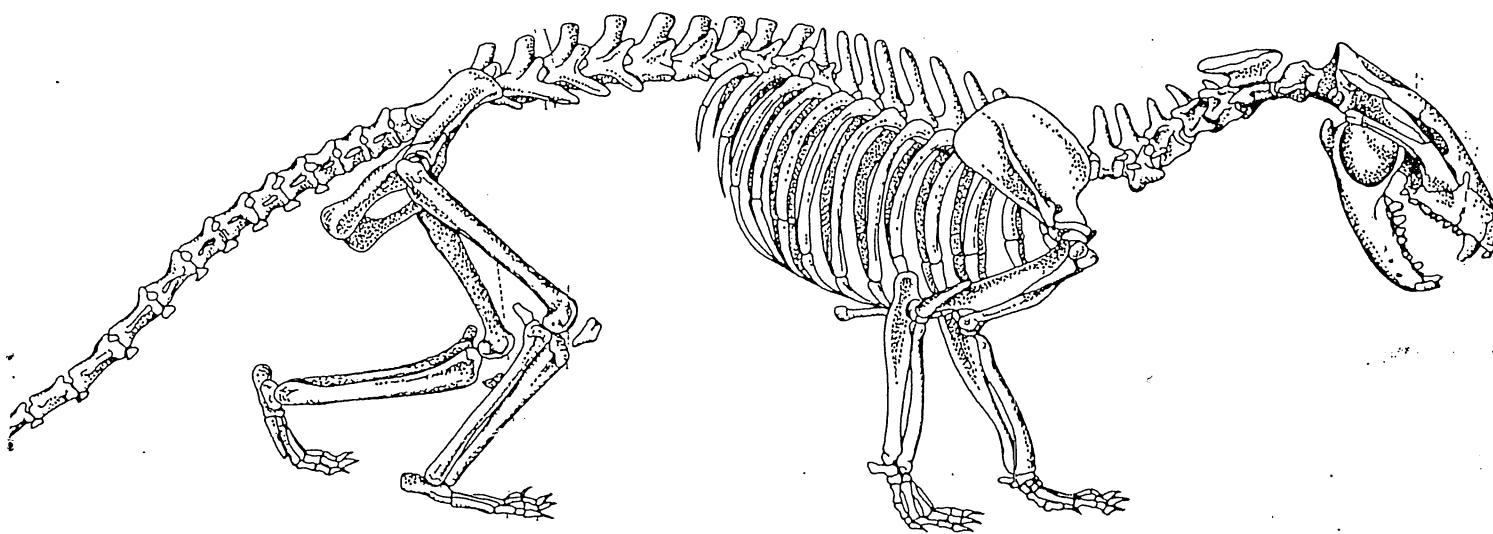
Mountain Climbing -- destroying most of one's appendages from frostbite and entering the latter stages of hypothermia. This is done in an attempt to reach the summit, where nothing lives, and the air has the same oxygen concentration as the atmosphere of the moon.

Rock Climbing -- needlessly risking life and limb, and straining every muscle in one's body to get to a perch that can be reached by walking up the side of the mountain or by taking a helicopter.

The list of activities like this is quite long, and of course, caving is near the top of it.

"The greatest fun seems like the greatest stupidity to those who can't appreciate it," someone once said. But, of course, people who can't appreciate caving are pathetic. Caving is a smart thing to do. Everyone must do something that makes no sense, for no apparent logical reason at all, or we would all go crazy. So now I think it is time to have a beer.

Dave Warren



Quotable Quotes or Overheard, Underthought, and Out of Context

J.G.: You know you're too pure when Kay offers to help corrupt you.

M.E.: I don't have trouble with the ball crusher'-- I'm not that big.

J.F., to L.C.: Ya know, if you keep being so nice to him, you're only going to encourage that kind of behavior.

M.F.: Well, had I been caught eating Aunt Fannie's Bogie, I'd never admit it.

J.R.: If you stick you tongue out at me one more time, you're going to have to use it.

One pseudo-caver to another at a non-caver party: Oh, yeah, he's an experienced caver. The first time he did LSD was in a cave. (contributed by Richard Cobb.)

M.F.: Sallie and I had a complementary relationship, kind of like dehydration and drowning.

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 - D. other _____

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From the Signout Sheet...

VPI Grotto (our real name) logged 1172.5 hours from 1/9/89 to 4/16/89 on 43 reported trips. Three NEW members have logged over 50 hours: D. Colatosti, D. Warren, and B. Cruickshank. Way to go!

<u>Cave</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Yer Cave	M. Futrell, P. Kirchman, J. Kehoe	If you're in the cave, you can survey booty.
Bone Norman	M. Fiore, K. Takimizawa, B. Cruickshank, A. Randall	Cough, cough, cough, ahem. Cough, cough, <spit>, Ahem, cough ooh, ahh, cough, cough...
James	J. Washington, C. James, M. List, G. List	Ask Suki. Suki knows everything.
Newberries	B. Cruickshank, E. Fortney, D. Warren, W. McMorris, S. Pearson, K. Carlson	He didn't tell me he hadn't tried his climbing rig. Good thing he didn't try the whole way.
Banes	P. Balister, M. Fiore, R. French.	Between current members and trainees, I'm taking up solo caving.
Links	J. Uknalis, S. Kudles, Mr. Kudles.	"Gravity is holding me up."
Stay High	E. Fortney, D. Bruce, K. Teten	Kats don't like to get wet, but Dougs and Eds don't know any better.

Compiled by Ko Takimizawa

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VPI CAVE CLUB



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