

# THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

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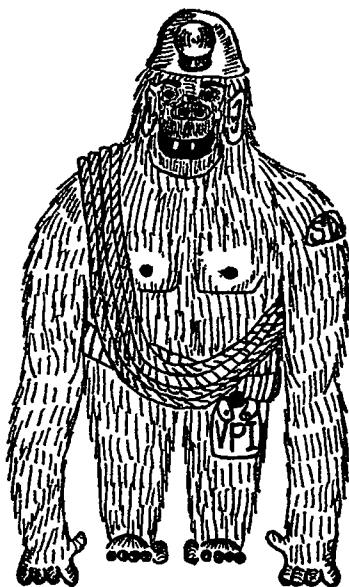
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SPRING QUARTER 1969

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NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
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PLEASE NOTE: Karl Berge will take over as Managing Editor as of Fall Quarter 1969. His address will be 6038 Ambler - Johnston Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

Here I sit in two inches of mud and water in a passageway so low that I can't straighten my neck. Kneecaps have been replaced by indistinguishable masses of bruises and cuts. I shiver, not only from the chill which has penetrated my bones but experience tells me that it will be several hours of crawling, agonizing climbs over slippery breakdown, and a final 100 foot prusik before I am safely out and sitting in some hamburger joint. It is times like these that we all ask ourselves the enigmatic question, "Why do I go caving?"

Of course there can be no single answer for spelunkers as a whole. Some of the more apparent excuses we like to come up with are that it is fun, it is good exercise, it is a test of endurance, and the ever popular, "Because it's there". As evidenced by the invalidity of the first entry on this list excuses such as these are employed by the neophyte caver or by the older spelunker who finds it necessary to rationalize his behavior in mixed company. Camera buffs and scientists get off of the hook rather easily since they seem to have a socially acceptable reason for venturing underground.

When in the fellowship of other cavers our explanations tend to become more complex. Phrases such as, "adventure and excitement" and "the quest to go where no man has gone before" pervade our reasoning. The difficulty arises in the fact that our fellows need the reinforcement of a more explicit excuse to keep them underground. We continually try to tease out an answer from each other in hopes that we will be rewarded with a tidy little quantity which will dispell the feelings of insecurity associated with our seemingly irrational behavior.

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis who liked to attribute behavior patterns to childhood experiences, would probably come up with a term for cavers such as an Edimuck Complex or someone who, in his youth, had a frustrated desire to obtain a sexual relationship with a mud pie. Other psychologists may argue, quite understandably, that some cavers have masochistic or self-torture tendencies and people who organize trips are basically sadists.

Regardless of what excuses we give I believe that the secret to a cavers true constitution is nonconformity. The population of the world is so large that it is hard for a person to distinguish himself as an individual and achieve the personal status associated with his individuality. The forming of an identity and a strong self-concept have long been realized by psychologists such as Curt Lewin and Dr. John C. Armstrong as as major steps in the road to being "well

adjusted" or at peace with onesmenvironment.

The underground world has been called one of the last frontiers and it is in the exploration of these frontiers that we have chosen to establish our identities, to set ourselves just far enough away from the crowds so as to feel important. Caving may not be our vocation but at least on weekends and meeting nights we can experience that type of superiority, whether false or not, which reinforces our self-concepts. Isn't nonconformity fun. Aren't you glad you tried it. Don't you wish everybody did? No, you don't! Without such a thing as a normal person there would be nothing on which to base the percept of nonconformity and all that juicy derived status would never materialize.

My poor head is getting tired trying to think up these five dollar sentences while cramped in this crawlway so I'll try to get to the point. We have to live with the conformed society and there is nothing really drastic we can do about it except antagonize its members. These include cave owners and the people we bump into on our way to and from caves and while we are in our groups, even school employees. It may surprise some of the readers to know that these people are occasionally interesting to talk to and in many instances quite beneficial to be on good terms with. In any case it is better to have a person on your side than against you. So, to whom it may concern, let's keep our cool and act civilized so that spelunking can remain an open sport and we can be proud to call ourselves cavers and keep our easy excuse for caving.

Tom Roehr

\* \* \* \* \*

#### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The annual Spring elections have passed without too much turmoil; a new set of officers have been duly elected and have assumed their positions. The officers were chosen by the Cave Club members, who think the officers will do the best job in the positions to which they were elected. Any of the other candidates could probably have done just as well as the people now in office, but one must remember that it is not only the capability of the person elected, but also the organization that makes a good officer.

The responsibilities that go along with each job, naturally are quite different. Together, however, they all help in the running of the Club. To run an organization effectively,

every officer needs the support of his fellow Club members (which I think we have). Now, to have this cooperation is all fine and good, but one more thing is needed to have a well organized club. This other requirement is adherence, by the Club, to some set of guidelines for its effective running.

This set of guidelines is usually manifest in some sort of constitution, and the Cave Club does have a constitution. The slight deviations from the constitution in the past are no reflection on any one, but are actually a reflection on the Club. Granted, there have been certain complications which have really loused things up, but now is as good a time as any to start anew.

At a recent meeting, a motion was brought up pertaining to voting regulations. If you look at the motion clearly you will see that the voting regulations were not the main issue. The fact of the matter was that we had a constitution and were not following it completely. As I said before, we more or less got screwed, but now that the "complications" have passed there is no reason for us not to use our constitution the way it is now set up.

The past year has had its ups and downs for the Cave Club. Troubles have come and gone with the overall picture looking pretty good. A new set of officers is in control now and it will take awhile for things to get settled down, (we'll have to "learn the ropes", as it were).

The interworking between the officers and the Club, along with following our constitution, should make the next as prosperous and hopefully a little bit better than the preceeding one.

Jim "Moose" Dawson

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## CAVE MAPS IN THE VPI GROTTO FILES

compiled by Michael Frieders  
and Craig Ellenfield

Allegheny Springs Cave	Montgomery Co.	1946
Aunt Nellie's Hole	Montgomery Co.	1943
Ballards Cave	Giles Co.	1948
Beacon Cave	Bluefield, W.Va.	1958
Charlie Bane's Cave	Bland Co.	1952
(Perry's Saltpeter on back)		1956
Barger Saltpeter Cave	Bland Co.	
Big Sink Cave	Smyth Co.	1965
Blair Cave	Scott Co.	1966
Blow Hole	Blunt Co., Tenn.	1950
Breathing Cave	Bath Co.	
Buckhill Cave	Rockbridge Co.	1950
Bundy's Cave	Russell Co.	1966
Caine's Cave	Scott Co.	1966
Canoe Cave	Giles Co.	1943
Carter Cave	Lee Co.	1969
Cass Cave	Pocohantas Co., W.Va.	1955
Cassell Farm Cave	Tazewell Co.	1967
Cat Hole	Scott Co.	1967
Catawba Murder Hole	Roanoke Co.	1943
Cemetery Pit	Dade Co., Ga.	1967
Clark's Cave	Bath Co.	
Clover Hollow Cave	Giles Co.	1943
Curve Saltpeter Cave	Giles Co.	1967
Dead Air Cave	Smyth Co.	1965
Divides (Stonley's) Cave	Tazewell Co.	1960
Dixie Caverns	Roanoke Co.	1945
Ferguson's Cave	Russell Co.	1968
Flemings Cave	Shenandoah Co.	1959
Fox Cave	Page Co.	1946
Gerry Self Cave	Jackson Co., Ala.	1968
Glenwood Church & Cauliflower	Tazewell Co.	1968
Gray's Cave	Russell Co.	1950
Gully Cave	Tazewell Co.	1968
Harris Cave	Giles Co.	1957
Head of Mill Pond Cave	Monroe Co., W.Va.	1948
Higginbotham's Cave #1	Tazewell Co.	1965
Hoot Owl Cave	Giles Co.	1969
Horse Skull Cave	Radford	1946
Hostermans Pit	Centre Co., Penn.	1962
Indian Cave	Russell Co.	1965
Interstate 81 Cave	Smyth Co.	1966
Jackson Cave	Bath Co.	1964
Klotz Quarry Cave	Giles Co.	1969
Lawson's Caves #1&2	Tazewell Co.	1969

Loneys Cave	Craig Co.	1947
Lowmoor Cave	Allegheny Co.	1949
Luddington's Cave	Greenbrier Co., W.Va.	1963
Madden's Cave	Shenandoah Co.	1939
Marble Cave	Smyth Co.	1965
Miller's Cave	Giles Co.	1951
Millers Cove Cave	Roanoke Co.	1966
Mrs. Link's Caves #1&2	Giles Co.	1951
Newberry-Banes Cave	Bland Co.	1953
Newcastle Murder Hole	Roanoke Co.	1945
New Dixie Caverns	Roanoke Co.	1945
New River (2)	Giles Co.	1942, 1966
Old Mill Cave	Montgomery Co.	1948
Parsell's Cave	Giles Co.	1952
Penn Aqua	Hofflin Co., Penn.	1965
Porter's Cave	Allegheny Co.	
Pig Hole (2)	Giles Co.	1942, 1966
Raspberry Hollow	Giles Co.	1961
Rockhouse Cave	Clark Co.	1940
Rufe Caldwells Cave	Craig Co.	1952
Ruffners Cave	Page Co.	1956
Saltpeter Cave	Craig Co.	1962
Saltpeter Cave	Page Co.	1956
Saltville Quarry Cave	Smyth Co.	1965
Schoolhouse Cave	Pendleton Co., W.Va.	
Spence Cave (Seabolt)	Smyth Co.	1951
Shires Cave	Craig Co.	1968
Slussers Chapel Cave	Montgomery Co.	1967
Smoke Hole	Giles Co.	1945
Southerns Cave	Pulaski Co.	
Starnes Cave	Giles Co.	1948
Steeles Cave	Greenbrier Co., W.Va.	1948
Swinks Pit Cave	Rockbridge Co.	1957
Tawney's Cave (Ponys)	Giles Co.	1945
Terrapin Spring Cave	Rockbridge Co.	1943
Thornhill Cave	Montgomery Co.	1943
Turkey Hill Cave	Rockbridge Co.	1942
Vicker Road Cave	Giles Co.	1969
Walt Allen Cave	Pocohantas Co., W.Va.	1966
Warren Millers Cave	Montgomery Co.	1943
Water Cave (Gillospies)	Hazewell Co.	1968
Whitt's Cave	Russell Co.	1968
Wildcat Caverns	Wise Co.	1969
Windy Mouth Cave	Greenbrier Co., W.Va.	1960
Withero's Cave	Bath Co.	

All caves listed above are in Virginia unless otherwise noted.

## FROM UNDER THE CARBIDE DUMP

Who owns caves? A down-to-earth question with a down-to-earth answer, CAVERS, of course. Land owners only "own" the caves if they will not let us into them. If this is true and what caver would argue(?), then it follows that as owners of the caves we should do all we can to protect our ownership.

So we must keep the land owners happy. Before leaving for your cave find out as much as you can about the land owner and the status of your cave. If it is not necessary to ask permission, check occasionally to make sure that there has been no change in status. If there is any doubt, ask!

After years of study in the greatest caving area in the world, a well known research center has come to the conclusion that there is no one way of asking for permission. However it did come up with some guidelines for handling the pseudo-cave owner, the land owner;

1. When around the land owner pretend that he really does own the cave.
2. Be informal and friendly. Shows of intelligence were found to be looked down upon by many land owners. Use layman terms when talking "cave". Most land owners like to hear about caves under their land (especially if there is a possibility for the capitalistic owner to exploit them). Try to maximize the esthetic value and minimize any possible physical value.
3. If the land owner appears to want to talk don't rush off. It may be just another delay to you but it may be the highlight of the week to him. Be polite even if he says "no". Even if you can't change his mind at least you can leave a good impression of cavers. Next time he might say "yes".
4. Be sure to let the land owner know when you expect to be out (the very latest possible time) and ask if he wants you to let him know when you are out. If so, be sure to do so. If you make any promises (such as sending pictures) be sure to follow up on them. The fewer promises you make the better.
5. Ask where to park and what route to take to the cave and then follow his directions closely. Be very cautious not to harm crops and livestock (carry your carbide away). Leave all gates as you found them, either open or closed.



6. Never ask or accept favors from land owners who have caves under their land unless absolutely necessary. If you need help or a place to camp try first to find a land owner who does not have a cave under his property, or, better yet, find public facilities.

For the most part (93.2%), land owners rely on their land and the structures on it for their livelihood. Care must be taken to convince them that you realize this and will take every precaution not to cause any damage to crop, fields, fences, or buildings, no matter how small it may seem to you at the time.

So there you have it cavers. Remember, while you own the caves you must cross the land owner's property to get to them. While it is an absolute must for you, you have little to offer the land owner in return except consideration and company.

Fellow cave owners of the world unite! Now that you know who really owns the caves be as good a cave owner as you are a cave explorer! Let's keep those land owners happy and keep our caves open. It's for your own good!

Ed Morgan

\* \* \* \* \*

### BLUE, BLUE, MY KNEES ARE BLUE

During the early weeks of Fall Quarter, 1968, Sarah Critzer, observing the amazing number of females who had begun to attend the weekly VPI Grotto meetings, laid plans for the soon-to-be organized, Ladies Auxiliary. Sarah felt that many of the young ladies would feel more "in" if such a group was formed. The auxiliary would not be a formal organization, but more of a service group, doing things for the entertainment of the menfolk, and for furthering the enjoyment of the famed group spirit of the World's Most Active Caving Organization.

The first official function of the Ladies Auxiliary was the Halloween Party held at Apt. 44 Northview Drive after a Grotto meeting. Janet Nelson, T. Huttlinger, Boots Good, Janet Queisser, and Sarah transformed the living room into a jack-o-lantern lit bat room. The highlight of the party was the apple bob. Unlike other bobs wherein the apples bob about in water, our apples bobbed in beer. This enabled the bobber to receive a face-full of foam, a long slurp of beer, and an apple. Naturally, much of the beer was drunk while pretending

to bite an apple, but the ladies were prepared and frequently replenished the tub. All persons, men, women, kids, and dogs got their turn at the tub. Many of the ladies were grossed out by hair from beards, spittal, and grease in the tub and were wont to submerge their faces, even for an apple.

Early Winter Quarter the Ladies Auxiliary presented a variety show entitled "Speleological Super-Spoofs!". All of the females in the club participated, and with the increasing number of whispered conversations and secret meetings two weeks prior to the happening, the suspense mounted. The plan was that each girl would dress as a special type of caver, cave feature, or piece of cave gear, and would make an appropriate speech. Three days before the program was to be given, we were sure we couldn't do it. A walk-through rehearsal was finally held an hour before the Grotto meeting. We found that we were forgetting our lines, not talking clearly, wondering what sort of costume to wear, and in general, the whole rehearsal was a failure, and the prospects for a successful show were indeed dismal.

Tom Vigour, then chairman of the Grotto, kindly agreed to reverse the order of business to enable the Ladies to retire to the next room for changing clothes, and a final rehearsal. Just as the meeting started, one of the girls became ill, and a last-minute substitution was made.

At last the show begins. Tom raps thrice on our stage door, the signal for Sandy Weber, our announcer and co-ordinator to make her entry. Sandy, the Armchair Caver, was dressed in caving gear to the hilt. She wore a traditional denim outfit, helmet and carbide lamp, strings of carabiners, pitons and hammers, an ice ax, a rappelling spool, a can opener, and several pairs of gloves. She introduced our program, and ushered in Janet Nelson as the Cave Woman of Yesteryear. Janet wore a small fur piece, and proceeded to show how cave women cooked in the early years after the last Ice Age. Janet Queisser skipped into the room singing: "a-caving we will go, a-caving we will go", representing the Female Novice Caver of Today. She wore tenny-pumps, flowered bermudas, a long-sleeve white blouse, a big hat, and sun glasses. Janet told the group the fears and trials of a female's first caving trip, and the many items one feels it necessary to bring along in one's cavepack. Thereupon, she began to display the contents of her own pack: perfume, comb, wash-and-dry packs, clothes brush, lipstick, washcloth, soap, toilet paper, sardines, a lace hanky, PILLS, and the ever-popular Reece cups, for those who need a sex substitute. Janet was unable to complete her tale, for a Mud-Slide suddenly swooped into the room, spraying her with mud.

From there, the variety show turned to Cave Creatures. First to enter was Eurycea lucifuga Rafinesque, alias Sarah', dressed in a black-spotted orange suit from head to toe. Fondly called "Spot", the salamander amused the audience by lifting one leg near a then-dry chair, and later by standing up to show the two dorsal black spots which identify the female of the species. Next of the cave creatures was Lynn Thorne. Dressed as a bat, she flitted lightly into the room, stopped, glared at the crowd, and gnashed out savagely: "Touch my little bod, and I'll bite!"

While not a creature, but nonetheless part of every cave, the Mud-Slide, known offstage as Karen "Boots" Good, stopped up to decry the use of golf spikes on her delicate hide and the presence of those awful carbide dumps which litter and smell her slopes. At this, Lynn Kendall, our very own Carbide Dump, entered. Dressed in a burlap sack covered with flour, she wailed that she was always being dumped everywhere, much to the chagrin of her red-faced current flame, Danny Wright. At her last remark, "Now, here's the smelly thing I was dumped from", Anne Whittemore tripped through the doorway dressed as a carbide lamp. Anne wore a two-piece gold-painted cardboard lamp, complete with spade attachment, water valve, and a large silver reflector. In order that the wearer could be heard while speaking, the tip of the lamp was missing. As many of us know, carbide lamps have a disgusting tendency, when not immediately cleaned and emptied of inner contents after a trip, to remain tightly screwed shut. It was known by the Carbide Lamp that many brutal techniques are employed for opening lamps in this condition, and this she plaintively related to the assembled group. Such methods as the use of vaseline on the gasket, hammering, and vice grips are effected, and with the latter it is difficult for a carbide lamp to remain screwed shut. More often than not, a lamp is not only unscrewed, but is also screwed by having its threads stripped.

Often accompanying a carbide lamp is the versatile Tip Cleaner, played by Libby Hecker. Dressed in black tights and leotards, with her hair heavily sprayed and bunched up to resemble wires, Libby told of her cousin from England. While a cleaner of tips like herself, her cousin is referred to as a Tip Fricker. This comment, too subtle for the average VPI Grotto man, was met with small scattered titters.

Not to be left out of one's necessary caving equipment, is Mother's helper away from home, The First Aid Kit, better known as the ever-popular Linda Heitz. Whereas first aid kits are frequently left at the cave entrance, Linda pointed out that she preferred to be taken all the way.

As far as the VFI Grotto is concerned, a party is never complete without Pabst Blue Ribbon, and the ladies auxiliary did not lack in this respect. Lynn Vinzant brought cheer to all as she paraded in, in her PBR can. "Just pop my little top," she said, "and down I go!" And last, but never to be said the least, was our own A.I. Cartwright, famed "old" member who has been with the Grotto since 1943. A.I. was accompanied by his current girl, Carol Jo Rushin, who showed the ladies, and then led them in a chorus line of those popular cave dances, the Jumar, the Rappel, the Prusik, and the Belay. As the final step was danced the Ladies Auxiliary bowed adieu and the applause which thundered through the hall was such that the graduate students studying in the basement of the building thought that a bomb had exploded in the Duck Pond.

In February, Lynn Vinzant led the ladies in grand style as she organized the V.D. Party at the Airport Road Young Men's Chowder and Marching Society. Featured at the party were paper hearts strewn around bearing such endearments as: "You're Justrite in my book", "Light my lamp", "Lape me", and "Breakdown my defences". Refreshments, admittedly not enough, consisted of grain flavored cherry kool-aid.

As the school year ends, the Ladies Auxiliary can look back on a full and entertaining year packed with fun and frolic. Tune in again next year when the Ladies will bring you more of those fantastic shows and parties designed to take you to the world beyond. As in the past, none of our future plans can be discussed with "outsiders", so just stay in the groove. Good caving to all.

Sarah Critzer & Anne Whittemore

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### HEIGH HO, HEIGH HO, A-CAVING WE WILL GO

No school year is complete without a ladies-only caving trip. The second annual ladies trip left Eggleston Dorm at 1:30, April 26 with six females, Boots Good, Suzanne Olson, Ann Waybright, Sarah Critzer, Janet Queisser, and Anne Whittemore, in one Bronco.

Our original intention was to go to Canoe Cave which offers much photogenic scenery. Unfortunately the owner was not home so we drew straws and decided in favor of Starnes Cave over Smoke Hole and Slusser's Chapel Caves.

Starne's is located on the southeastern flank of Pearis Mountain, several miles southeast of Pearisburg, Virginia. With our four-wheel drive vehicle we were able to drive fairly close to the entrance. We were fortunate in having a beautiful day for our expedition. It was warm and sunny and a red bud blazed across the hillsides. May apples and galax could be seen poking their short heads above the grass. Birds sang and soft white clouds scudded across the blue.

The down-climb just inside the entrance presented difficulty to the short-legged members, but we were soon down and bouncing through the big passage. Pictures were snapped at several points of interest along the way. Of great delight was the Lane Stadium waterfall and pool. So refreshing appeared the falling water that someone remarked that a shower would surely be nice. I looked at Sarah, Sarah looked at me, and together we exclaimed, "Why not?". Without further ado we stripped off our clothes and took a "quickie" shower. Our plan backfired, for over-ready Janet snapped our picture. Grrr!

Back at the entrance, after shooing away unwanted spiders and crickets, I requested that we push a load nearby. Sarah and Boots were immediately repulsed by daddy-long-legs. Undaunted, I crawled into a likely nook and was flabbergasted when the many-legged creatures began crawling in my hair, down my shirt, in my shoes, and elsewhere.

Out of the cave, we changed clothes, washed, perfumed our bods, and joyously headed towards VPI. A short way down the road, we noticed a swiftly flowing stream disappearing into a hill side. "A cave!" cried we, "Let's check it out". There was Sarah in her pink straw hat and shoeless feet, Ann in her shorts and sockless shoes, and I clutching a carbide lamp in a sleeveless shirt venturing underground. The entrance room was at least thirty feet long covered with breakdown and moss. The gurgling stream flowed in one end and through a stoopway at the far end. Laughingly we made our way down a small black-walled waterfall. From there the passage became quite low with a muddy breakdown floor. Intrepid explorers though we were, we wisely decided that further advances would dirty our fresh street clothes, so we turned back.

We ate dinner at the Tasteo Freeze in Pearisburg and were entertained by the local youth who appear to spend their time driving through the parking lot of the Rainbow Drive-in. Needless to say, a good time was had by all, and we are looking forward to next year's third annual ladies trip.

Anne Whittemore

## CLUB EQUIPMENT - EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The basic idea behind the VPI Crotto Equipment Committee is that each member in the Club should have access to the club equipment which would be impractical for him to buy for himself. The system for signing out equipment has worked fairly well in the past, but a great many shortcomings still exist. Most of these problems can be effectively remedied by only one group of people; we who check out equipment. Most of us, the author included, have misused our equipment privileges at one time or another. What then are the major problem areas and what can be done about them?

The Key: One of the difficulties often encountered is finding a key for the storeroom. At present there are two keys on campus, one of which is usually available, unless it takes a trip. Yes, storeroom keys have gone caving before leaving the people who want to get into the equipment room at the mercy of the janitor, if they can find one. The solution here is to return the key as soon as possible to wherever it came from, and also for the keepers of the key to make arrangements to have the key available when they are not going to be in their rooms for some time. This is especially important during the weekend period when most of our trips go out.

Equipment: The second difficulty, and probably the most serious, is that of keeping equipment available in the storeroom. As the equipment chairman cannot possibly track down every piece of gear, it falls upon the individual member to get the goods he checked out either back to the storeroom or to the chairman in a reasonable amount of time after using it. Allowing time for clean-up, Wednesday would appear to be a good day to shoot for in returning equipment, with all equipment back in the storeroom by no later than Friday afternoon, unless, of course, other arrangements have been made with the equipment chairman. These measures are necessary for several reasons, the first being that the Club does not have the necessary surplus of equipment to afford the extravagance of letting it lay idle for long periods of time. Secondly, it is much less trouble for a person to bring equipment back than for others to try to track him down when they need the equipment he has.

The third problem is that of damage to equipment. Here we have had very few problems, for most people are very cooperative about reporting lost or damaged equipment to the chairman. However, the faster we know about it the better. Then we run less risk of someone discovering the defect during a caving trip and thus possibly spoiling the trip or even injuring someone. Also, the sooner we know about a

defect, the faster it can be remedied. The responsibility of paying for damage depends, of course, on the circumstances under which it occurred.

In conclusion, it must be said that the sign-out system has worked very well. However, by bringing to the attention of the Club the reasons why we must try to keep equipment readily available, it is hoped that all members will be more inclined to think of others when they check out equipment. If everyone, old and new members alike, will keep these things in mind, we will be able to get a lot of use out of the limited amount of equipment that we have, and hopefully to keep inconvenience to anyone at a minimum.

Doug Perkins

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#### CLIMBING CAM FORCE ANALYSIS

Much controversy has arisen in the last year concerning the safety of using a VPI Grotto type climbing cam on goldline rope. Many members of the Grotto have gone as far as to ban the devices from their ropes, because of supposedly damaging pressures resulting from the cam's contact with the rope.

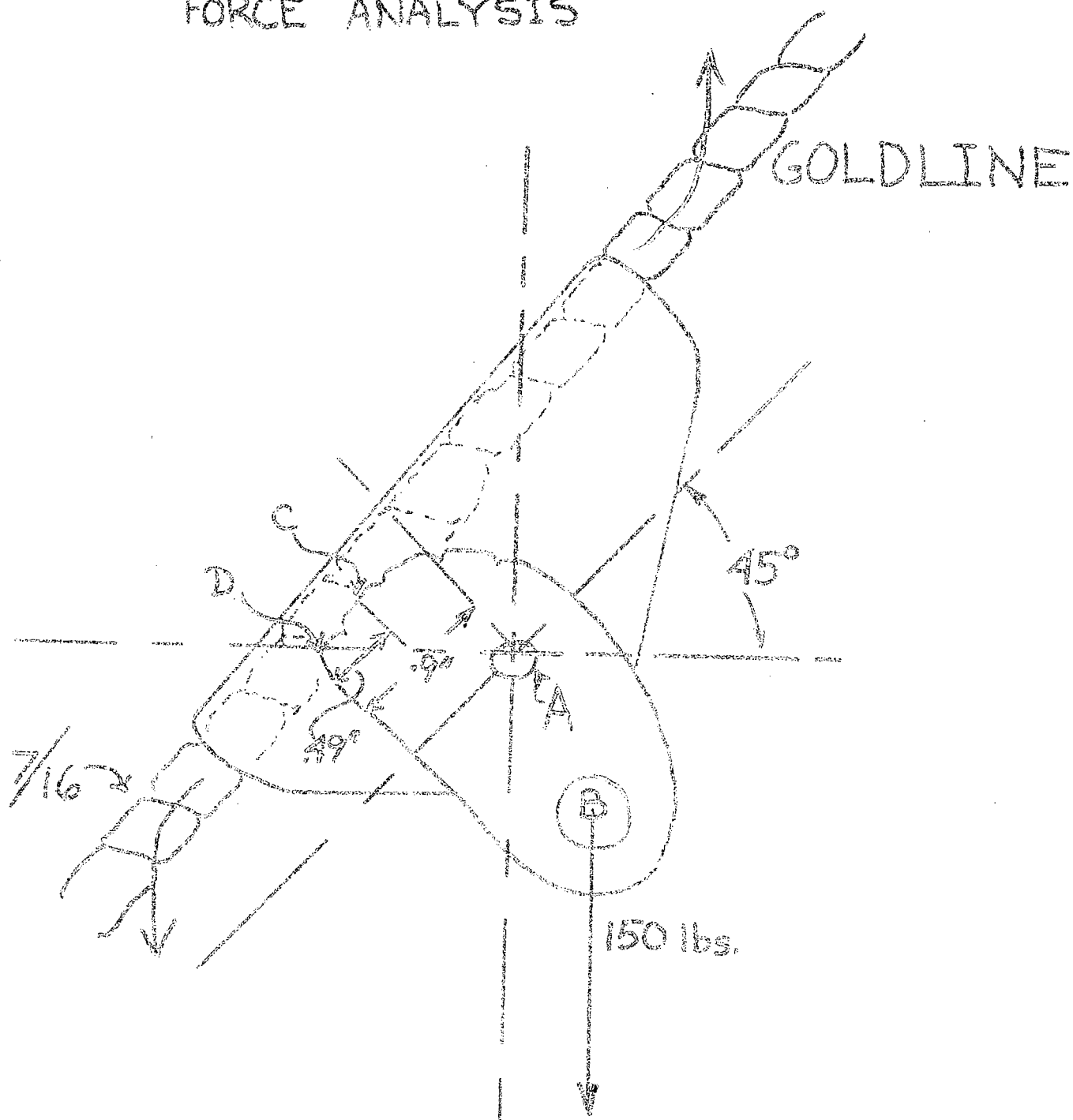
Because of the controversy over the cam, a model of which (see NSS NEWS November 1965), was built by Tom Roehr and John Katon, Russel Peterson and myself decided to put the little machine to the test.

To analyze the forces encountered in a cam's normal use we put a 150 pound load on a cam and let it hang from a short piece of goldline. Angular measurements were taken immediately to avoid any errors due to creep. It was found that the cam would sit at an angle of 45 degrees to the verticle when under loading. Using the 45 degree angle and summing moments around the cam pivot, point "A", the forces on the goldline and the pin were computed. In doing this it was assumed that the rope would make contact along the bottom half inch of the cam. Referring to the diagram, the force at point "D" was found to be 116.80 pounds. The forces increase as the points move closer to the pivot, "A", until a force of 262.50 pounds is found at the point of final contact, point "C". Forces on the pin, point "A", were found to be 81.2 pounds in both the horizontal and vertical directions.

The most interesting result, of course, was the total pressure delivered to the rope by the cam. To compute the pressure of an area one half inch by one half inch

# CLIMBING CAM

## FORCE ANALYSIS





The most interesting result, of course, was the total pressure delivered to the rope by the can. To compute the pressure an area one half inch by one half inch was used and the force was averaged to 189 pounds over the area of contact. This yields an average pressure of 756 pounds per square inch with the maximum being 1048 pounds per square inch and the minimum being 464 pounds per square inch.

Since the maximum pressure that nylon can withstand under pure compression is approximately 35,000 pounds per square inch\*, it is seen that the can is safe since its pressure will rarely exceed 1,300 pounds (depending on your weight).

Thus, damage to goldline rope from a can would probably result only from the can slipping under a load and creating damaging heat. Damage would probably also occur to the sisal fibers found in the outer lays of goldline, since the sisal does not have the compressive strength of nylon.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the can is a safe device when used with care (as is the case with most good caving devices). Like junars, knots, and hieblars, the can will be abrasive to your rope, but this is all in the use, so MAY YOUR FEARS BE LAID TO REST but not your cans!

\*Source: Dr. A. L. Fricke, chemical engineer specializing in polymers, VPI Dept. of Chemical Engineering.

Mike C. Frieders

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE SAGA OF WILDCAT CAVERNS

The regular Friday night Grotto meeting being over, my wife Annie and I, along with Cletus Lee and Sarah Critzer loaded up the Bronco and were out of town before sundown. About 2:00 a.m., we arrived in Pennington Gap, Virginia; scene of the annual Virginia Region Spring Project. After a brief snooze at the nearby Fairgrounds, we met Dr. Holsinger at the Shelbourne Hotel, where he was busy assigning various jobs to the assembled groups. Our prime objective was to get away with doing as little work as possible, stay dry, and socialize as much as we could.

The cave Dr. Holsinger had in mind for us to do sounded like just the ticket; "...nearby, has three entrances, large walking passages, dry, and you can finish it in one

afternoon." Armed with these misconceptions, we headed down the primrose path to Wildcat Caverns in nearby Wise County, Virginia. Besides the four of us were four others. There were two members of the Holston Valley Grotto; Jim Groseclose (chairman), and Clyde Moore. Also along were Jin Hixson with his ubiquitous dog Linda; and Art Ringwalt, then from Richmond, now living in Denver. We were fortunate to have Art along, as he was the only one of us who had been in the cave before.

After a stop so I could buy gas, a stop so Hixson could buy gas, a stop so Jim and Clyde could buy groceries, a stop at a souvenir stand, a stop so Cletus and I could stock up on cigars, and several brief stops so Art could remember where he left the cave, we finally parked the rigs and changed into caving duds.

In order to reach the easiest of the three entrances, we walked several hundred yards along a narrow railroad cut to where we were greeted by a large opening in a limestone bluff. Art informed us that the cave followed a curious pattern, and that we should take 20 minutes for a grand tour. I asked about the small opening to the left of the main entrance. "It doesn't go," Art said.

We followed a voluminous corridor for several hundred feet to the base of a mountain of rubbish. Random sampling disclosed the contents to be roughly 50% refrigerators by volume, and 50% car parts, chiefly hub caps. The second entrance could be viewed from here as an inaccessible skylight above the garbage heap. Continuing along the passage for several minutes, we reached the lower end of the cave which was marked by two elongate pools occupying the floors of two adjacent canyons. "The water is waist deep," Art remarked, "we can wade to the other side."

We viewed the pool with trepidation.

"Let's test the depth," said Hixson. So a ten-pound rock was tied onto the zero end of a survey tape. Jim Groseclose climbed to a ledge above the pool and lowered the rock. Twenty feet of tape whizzed rapidly through his hands as the rock sank -- 30 feet -- 40 feet -- "my god!" -- the rock plummeted downward into the dark depths, carrying yard after yard of white, glistening tape.

"Sixty foot mark coming up!" shouted Jim. Finally the tape went slack and stopped as the rock settled, presumably on the bottom. A few tugs reassured us that the rock was still attached. The depth was noted and rock and tape

were withdrawn intact -- no tangles -- it was an honest reading. Folks, that pool is sixty-nine feet deep!

Subsequent soundings were comparable. "Waist deep, huh!" said Jim, "we can wade across, huh!"

"That's what a local boy told me," Art confessed.

Finally the mapping began. Hixson, Ringwalt, Groseclose, and Moore would begin at the pool and work toward the entrance. Annie, Sarah, Cletus, and I would return to the entrance and survey in.

Back at the entrance, we decided to explore the small "no-go" lead to the left of the main entrance. It appeared to continue as a low crawl for at least a short distance, so we decided to "run a few shots" into it. Several hundred feet of mapping later, we were standing in large virgin passage. But the large part didn't last long. We spent six hours mapping 1400 exasperating feet of mud-choaked crawlways. The distance a passage went seemed to vary inversely with its cross-sectional area.

At one point, Annie refused to go any further due to the presence of a "dead, partially-eaten something-or-other" in the passage.

"It's bloody, and all covered with maggots!" she shrieked. "Look, Sarah!"

"Yes, I see it -- oh, gross me out! It has one big eye looking up at us!"

"I'm going to be sick."

"Let's leave."

After a cursory investigation of the object, Cletus proclaimed it to be a can which had washed into the cave. But the ladies were not convinced, and refused to approach it any closer. Finally I threw a rock at it. It fell over with a clatter. It was nothing more than a horribly mutilated paint can. The ladies carried their respective ends of the tape on past the can, still eyeing it with suspicion.

Our "no-go" section did not connect with the rest of the cave, so we returned to the surface. Since the cars were handy, I raided them for lunch makings while Cletus paid a visit to the other group to compare notes on what progress had been made so far.

"Tie in at this station!" they shouted as Cletus approached.

"We haven't gotten this far yet," he said.

"Have you gotten to the big room yet?"

"No."

"Have you gotten to the trash heap yet?"

"No."

"Then how far have you gotten?"

"We've just started into the entrance." Cletus told them about what we had found in the "no-go" section, and returned to join us for lunch by the railroad tracks. Hixson's crew had encountered similar mud-choked crawls that never quite seem to pinch out.

We resumed mapping in the main section of the cave and, three hours later, tied into Hixson's survey. Adding up the survey shots, we found that our combined efforts had amounted to 4,800 feet of mapped passage that day. Both teams had left many side passages untouched, but we were determined not to miss any socializing, so we headed back to Pennington Gap in a blinding rainstorm. Hixson and I decided to meet at the cave again in two weeks to finish it up.

Two weeks later saw Annie and I, along with Dale Parrott and Bob Amundson make a 3:00 a.m. departure from Blacksburg. Five hours later we were standing at the entrance to the cave. Jin Hixson was not there yet, but arrived shortly with the legendary "Beasty" and his sex-maniac dog, Linda.

On our previous visit, we had not investigated the third entrance. While mapping it on the second trip, we found the third entrance to be unique among entrances. At one time it had been the only drainage exit for a large intermittent stream valley. Then the railroad was constructed, and a fill for the roadbed threatened to block the entrance. The railroad company foresaw the creation of a 300-acre mudhole, however, and laid two 7-foot-diameter concrete sewer lines beneath the fill so water could flow under the tracks and into the cave. The junction between pipes and cave was sealed to prevent the fill from sloughing into the cave. So in order to use this entrance, one must negotiate several hundred feet of concrete sewer. THAT AIN'T ALL. For some reason (to keep cows out of the cave, perhaps?), a grating made of discarded steel rails was built across

the opening. Needless to say, a large log jam has accumulated just outside the entrance, all but blocking it entirely.

We were honored on this particular trip by a surprise visit from the distinguished Dr. Holsinger. Arriving just in time for lunch, he had come hoping to collect beetles. Earlier in the day, we were nearly eaten alive by pest cave beetles. Evidently, these bugs can smell pickling alcohol a long way off, for when the professor arrived with his collecting gear, they had all migrated north for the summer. Not one beetle could be found.

Jim Hixson employed the use of an air mattress float to take some additional soundings in the terminal lakes and explore some hidden nooks. Everything went o.k. until he fell off the float and nearly drowned, but he managed to escape, losing nothing more than gobs of body heat.

After mapping for eleven hours, we stumbled back to the cars, having reached a total of over 6,000 feet of mapped passage.

But that wasn't the end. Upon drafting his portion of the map, Jim realized that one measly lead had been overlooked on the second trip. Three months later, he was back at Wildcat Caverns. Outstanding among his crew members (besides the infamous Linda) was Sammy Taylor. This was his annual caving trip.

The unsurveyed lead proved to be just a little over a hundred feet long. It was mapped, and one survey shot which had somehow been omitted in the notes was re-taken, closing out the survey at 6,195 total feet. Jim was appalled to discover that enough garbage had been dumped into the cave in three months to completely block the skylight entrance!

And so the mapping of Wildcat Caverns was completed. It is the largest cave in Wise County, and one of the Commonwealth's major systems. Southwestern Virginia is full of surprises, but Wildcat Caverns seemed to have more than its share-- fortunately, it lived up to its name virtually and not literally.

R.E. Whittemore

## BANQUET '69

The fourth annual Banquet of the VPI Cave Club was held in the basement of Lendys Restaurant on February 22 of this year with about 110 people present. Following dinner, Don Cournoyer discussed the history of the NSS, illustrated with slides, and answered questions on the Society. The festivities started with a bang as master of ceremonies, Tom Vigour, presented Don with a VPI Guano Cluster for his evenings work. Jack Keat and Jim Dawson then commenced to make a shambles of the evening, and people's egos, as they passed out the annual awards and Guano Clusters to deserving (?) individuals.

The Richard M. Nixon two-headed coin for making decisions Award (or The Trickle Dickie Flippie) went to Steve Hall for his unceasing capacity for making snap decisions (usually not over a week).

Bob Barlow received a library card to the Clover Hollow Cave Library, symbolizing the Ed Bauer Speleo-pornography Award for his recent additions to the third floor Pritchard Dorm smut collection.

The Tom Vigour Grubby Caver Award finally found another home this year in the personage of Lynn Vinzant. She received the traditional bar of soap and a token shower for her trouble, but no razor blade.

The Henry Marshall Best-Dressed Caver Award went to Phil Moritz, who received one of his own sports coats (smuggled out by Mike Kayes), but not before it had been altered to fit right in with current fashion, double breasted (36-C). Phil's better half, Karen "Boots" Good received a Ladies Lunger Bucket (or a Portable Oyster Bed, if you like) for the Dick Gerling Gross Caver Award, which she received for being able to stomach eating at the caver's table in Owens.

Danny Wright, that suave, debonaire man-about-town, received the Doug Yeatts Sex Award and a jug of "Colgate 69, mouthwash for lovers" for finally screwing up enough courage to hold hands with Lynn Radford.

The J. Craig Peters Trip Report Award went to Mike Clifford for his contributions to the science of peat caves; Mike received a pair of cypress kneepads and a peat cave formation for his literary talents.

The Jim Cooper Safe Driving Award also found a new home this year. For wrecking a ski trip, smashing a Bronco, and breaking Jean Peak's back, Jack O'Meara received a "chrome-plated, non-tarnishable, magnetic" token to ride on the dashboard of his new Bronco (and he doesn't care if it rains or freezes).

In a surprise move, Tom Roehr presented R.E. Whittemore with the Con Man of the Year Award and a "Watch for Fallen Rock" sign in recognition for his continued duping of unsuspecting persons into mapping trips in that cave.

The last, and least, of the awards went to Dale Parrot, Hero of the year, awarded on general principles.

Notable persons who didn't goof badly enough to warrant an award were recognized with Guano Clusters, those coveted symbols of excellence manufactured in an underground water closet.

The Whitey Eubank Dedicated Caver Award went to Phil Lucas for taking his wife to the Cave Club Banquet on their fifth wedding anniversary. Phoebe Willis received a Cluster for coming all the way from Macon, Georgia, just to attend the Banquet. Henry Stevens received a Cluster symbolizing the Mallory C. Hightower Dropout of the Year Award; Mallory C. Hightower received the George Titcomb Armchair Cavers Award for his strenuous caving activities of the past year.

Jack Keat surprised Jim Dawson with the John R. Holsinger Vertical Leadership Award, and a Cluster, in recognition for his tremendous ability as leader on a certain Pig Hole trip last fall.

Lynn Thorne received a G.C. for not only putting up with, but also marrying, the biggest cynic since W.C. Fields. And Carol Jo Rushin received one for playing second fiddle to a 12-string guitar. Last, and this time certainly not least, Tom Roehr and Lynn Vinzant each received a Cluster for producing the best banquet yet.

On a more serious note, the A.I. Cartwright Honorarium, given in recognition of "continuing interest in, support of, and fellowship with the VPI Cave Club" was given to John R. Holsinger, Jack Stellmack, and Don Cournoyer.

On anything but a serious note, Bill Douty received the Trainee of the Year Award; and Ted Saunders won the door prize, a pair of portable handholds developed by Bill Douty and Guy Turenne. The "Booze for Shelta" drawing was won by Sarah Critzer.

A party (would you believe a real orgy) followed at the Airport Road Home for Wayward Dogs and Lost Women, and as best as anyone can remember, a great time was had by all, even Pigpen and Cindy.

Tom Vigour

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### 'MAZING, SIMPLY 'MAZING

After signing the register at the owner's house (who is, incidentally, aware of the values of cave concervation and vandalism in the cave, we, Tom Roehr, Craig Ellenfield, Anne Whittemore, Linda Heitz, "Boots" Good, and myself, entered the wet entrance of Paxton's. There are two openings both of which have water flowing down over them, but with only a little bit of coordination, one can manage to get down into the cave and stay reasonably dry. The stream, spilling in from the outside, goes off in some other direction than the way we went. Tom lead us through the maze section which consisted of masses of breakdown which looked as though it could lead off almost anywhere. Fearless Leader assured us that this was the way to the Christmas Room, but some of us wondered if Tom was carrying out some forgotten grudge on us by getting lost. But, at least it seemed that he knew where he was going.

After a little stooping, crawling, chimneying, and other antics associated with a somewhat muddy horizontal cave, we came to our first section of formations. Several of the larger and thicker stalagmites were pure white, and one could see the light from a carbide lamp through the formation. Intricate white helectites decorated the stalactited ceiling in some places. There was also an abundance of flowstone and very long, thin soda straws. Since three of us had brought cameras, everyone took off in different directions to seek out the most photogenic of the formations. After a lot of hey-look-at-thises, did-you-get-a-picture-of-thats, and do-you-have-enough-flashcubes, we moved on.

As we traveled, we came across some interesting examples of the cave's artwork, (Its very own). In the part of the cave where the limestone bed was in contact with a layer of sandstone the ceiling was made of this material. No one was very thrilled at the existance of thesandstone until we stopped for a carbide change and for Tom to make sure that we were still going the right direction. While staring blankly at the ceiling someone casually observed that there were shell



imprints in the sandstone. Looking around a little, we could see that the ceiling was literally covered with fossils. Linda got rather excited in her efforts to find good, whole specimens. The shells, I am told, were Brachiopods and what we saw were the replaced remains of the upper valves. To be more specific, they were the wing-like Spiriferids dating from the Devonian. (Wow?) In addition to the shell imprints, there were lots of fossils, which the less educated of us called Cheerios, but which were, of course, Crinoid stems. Also, there were examples of boxwork, minerals that had been deposited in cracks of rock that was less soluble than the surrounding material and left a very delicate lattice work when the rock had been worn away. We came across gypsum needles that were perfectly clear and most were between five and seven inches in length. Several pools, which were dry at the time, were filled with calcium carbonate crystals, that is, dogtooth spar, looking rather ominous and doing absolute wonders for the knees.

The Christmas Room was basically similar to the first formation section, but these formations were whiter and more extensive, the soda straws thinner and taller, helictites more intricate, and the flowstone more impressive. As soon as one enters the room winter and Christmas come to mind; the crystals strikingly resemble snow (well, maybe, to those that have an imagination). The picture taking really got going and just about every formation of interest (and some not) were flashed at. Tom even got camera happy and had us point at a bat or something while we posed, which is really going to look great. After polishing off a can of sardines and one of kippered herring, we got direction straight and started out.

With strains of "A Mighty Fortress is our God" led by Linda and Anne alternating with cries of "Hamburgers!", we made very good time going out. We spent about five hours in the cave and it was a very enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Janet Queisser

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## SENECA

Under the pretense of attending the annual Whitewater Canoe Races at Mouth of Seneca, West Virginia on April 12-13, the entire VPI Grotto lit out for the area, with the exception of a few die-hards.

First to leave were George Neall, Danny-and-Lynn, and String Bean Peterson. They were so apprehensive as to the outcome of the evening's Club elections that they left in the early afternoon so as not to be around for the after-meeting muggings. After the meeting, Tom Roehr filled his weak-sprung Land Rover with seven bodies and headed north. Included in the melee were Sarah Critzer and R.E. Whittemore, known for their cravings for a good smoke and loads of fresh air; Karl Berge, our very own leprechaun; Doug Draves, Steve Hall, and the ever-fainting Tricia Botticelli. Their trip was livened by numerous stops to buy poisonous hamburgers, to buy gas, to whiz, to barf, and to let Tricia faint. Nonetheless, they arrived at Seneca Campground and racked out. Also leaving Friday night were Phil Moritz, Boots Good, Libby Hecker, and Jim Heard, complete with Whitt's gear, a phonograph, and a complete selection of Gordon Lightfoot's albums.

The first two carloads proceeded to climb about on Seneca Saturday morning after locating missing climbing gear. Lynn and Tricia decided they could better spend their time by exploring the Dolly Sods with Gary Moss, and Sarah traipsed faithfully along the river bank watching the canoe races.

Early Saturday morning, Jack O'Meara packed Jan Queisser, The Hitch Hiker, and two drunks, later discovered to be Bill Corley and Pablo, into his Bronco, and also headed north. They arrived in time to do some four-wheeling amongst the nearby hills, in the Potomac River just as the canoe races started, and to help Sarah watch the races.

Later Saturday morning, Rocky Raccoon, Swamp Fox, and the Gremlin left VPI for Seneca. Our progress was slowed considerably because Swamp Fox insisted on sampling every dead 'possum on the roadway. Once we stopped to catch a few catfish for his dinner, another time to pick persimmons, and again to gather watercress at Falling Springs. Finally we arrived at the parking area below Seneca Rocks and grabbed Rocky's spyglass to spy on all our friends on the rocks.

When joined by Phil's group, we sat down for lunch on the rocks. On a dare from Phil that a Volkswagen would never make it across the ford, Rocky Raccoon revved up his engine. Into the water we splashed, the swift current pushing us

downstream. Valiantly advanced the VW, water sloshing to and fro inside, and Swamp Fox waving his head and paws out of the upstream side. At last we gained the bank and shook our fingers at Phil. We proceeded up the road towards the Rocks and were greeted fondly by our friends.

Coming back across the river was even more fun because we were almost swept downstream as we chanced near a bottomless pit in the river bed. Had it not been for Swamp Fox leaping boldly into Rocky's lap, thereby tipping the car upstream, we might have been a late entry in the canoe races. And Phil would have had the last laugh.

Back in the campground we stood around waiting while climbers ate lunch and/or supper. We were wishing to go to Spruce Knob, famed as the highest point in the Mountain State. The mealtime became so extended that Swamp Fox considered frying up his catfish, but settled for a few 'possum ears instead.

Finally we were off with Tom, Sarah, Doug, and Whitt in the Rover, and Swamp Fox, Janet, and I accompanied Rocky in the VW. On the way to the Knob we passed several squashed frogs in the road. Swamp Fox, always alert for choice morsels of food, stomped on the brakes just as Rocky was accelerating to pass the Rover and we nearly missed an earsplitting tragedy. A most traumatic experience!

Swamp Fox carefully picked the frogs up and carried them to the car. Janet, a biology major, was of course intrigued as to his intentions. Swamp Fox entertained us with various recipes for preparing frogs. His favorite is to cut them into thin wafers and fry them in catfish grease; to swamper, this delicacy is known as "frog chips".

Just below the summit of Spruce Knob, we came upon two horrendous snow drifts completely covering the road. Before the drifts stood a flat-bed truck and a Jeep. We lent them our handy-dandy shovels and after a great deal of slipping, ramming, spinning, and cursing, the Jeep and the truck were through both drifts. Tom, with his mighty Land Rover, plowed through with no trouble, and we all watched apprehensively as the one-armed Raccoon skillfully maneuvered the VW through the snow. A very splendid job.

A look-out pavilion was newly erected on Spruce Knob. We clambered up the conglomerate-cemented steps to gaze with rapture at the surrounding countryside. Next on the agenda was a visit to the Sinks of Gandy Creek, a creek fabled to flow under an entire mountain with human openings at both ends. Just imagine!

On the way we stopped at Spruce Knob Lake and a fire tower. Then we drove and drove; the twilight flowed and the sunlight ebbed, and still there seemed no stopping Tom. Once I remarked that I thought the cave was over a far hill, having been there six years earlier, but still Tom drove on. Finally the Rover stopped and Whitt jumped out.

"We're having a disagreement. Doug and I think that we've already passed the cave, and Tom thinks that we have to go beyond the main highway."

"Well," says I, "I believe it was back near the last big hill where that car was parked."

"A-hah!" Whitt ejaculates, and bounces back into the Rover.

We all turned around and proceeded back up the hill. Unfortunately, the passengers in the VW had brought no caving gear, so we pointed the way to the others, and journeyed back to Mouth of Seneca. At the snow drifts we found some dummy with a convertible sports car stuck in the first drift. Since he was in the way of our passage, we generously offered to push him out. We had no trouble ourselves and gaily roared down the mountainside.

Arriving at the campground we found a blazing campfire where beer flowed freely and couples snuggled close to keep warm. In fact, some couples snuggled so close that there was barely enough room around the campfire for the rest of us. About 10:30 Pablo decided that he had had enough of this bungling and that a four-wheel drive would be groovy. Since the Rover crew had not returned, Pablo felt it logical that a rescue was in order. Jack, however, could not be persuaded to fluff his duff, and before long the Rover returned and Pablo returned to his highly perfected hobby of mooching. A loveable mooch, that one.

In the morning we were greeted by streaming sun rays, the tromping of hooved feet through our campsite, the smell of George's bacon, and strains of "The Canadian Railroad Trilogy" on Phil's phonograph. Gross me out! Can't the landed gentry get away from records and phonographs for even 48 hours?

On Sunday, Rocky Raccoon and I walked up the dirt slope behind Seneca Rocks for a spectacular view and sore feet. The Landed Gentry convinced Jack that his Bronco couldn't make it to the Dolly Sods; Jack, Sarah, Pablo, Doug, and Bill accompanied the Gentry to Blackwater Falls. Swamp Fox stayed in camp to study. Whoopee! Tom, Karl, and Steve took Tricia up the Old Ladies Route; George, String Bean,

and Danny-and-Lynn went back to VPI. Mike Kayes and Gary took Janet up the Old Ladies, and Whitt directed operations to recover a brand new Volkswagen bus from the bottomless pit in the river bed.

Since everyone came home at varied hours, this writer has no knowledge of the happenings. However our trip was outstanding for we stopped to reinspect every dead 'possum that we had seen the day before. Most were not as tasty as they had been, but there was still some good eating to be had, as Swamp Fox will attest. As the sun sunk behind Brush Mountain, Rocky pulled up in front of my doorsill. I lugged all twenty pounds of my equipment up two flights of stairs, and waved good-bye. So ends another trip to Mouth of Seneca to watch the annual canoe races.

Anne Whittmore

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#### FOUR WHEEL GO A CAVING

The full moon rose and watched the all but silent caravan as it threaded its way to the predetermined destination deep in the mountains of southwestern Virginia. Through the night vehicles converged on this spot from as far away as southern Tennessee transporting their passengers towards an adventure, the possible outcome of which, no one could predict. The understandable anxiousness of the first night was subdued by a warm fire and cool brews as all bedded down (or dacron) anticipating the activities which the dawn would bring. While Flower Pot and Meadow Muffin grazed silently on the gravel shoulder, the gurgling brook which flows behind John Douglas Wayside Picnic Area lulled all into peaceful slumber.

Morning. Bright sun. Mack trucks. Chaos! Beastly (the Hixsonmobile) disgorged the voracious Linda, who, feebly aided by Zachary and Gretchen, went about her predestined task of arousing all somnolent procrastinators. Following breakfast the work for the Cave Club Spring Project got underway. Four wheel drive was the order of the day as attested by the Land Rover and two Broncos and all who could squeezed into these vehicles for the days activities of cave hunting leaving a few poor souls relegated to Craig Ellenfield's air-conditioned Chrysler. He and his intrepid crew took off for the Brumley quadrangle. Procuring a barefoot guide from the local urchins, the group forded the waist-deep river and headed into the unknown. Although

struggling to keep up with the guide who apparently had a grudge against cavers. Paul Broughton, geologist and herpetologist on the expedition, found time to make the startling observation that the adjacent rock outcroppings were not large enough to hold the sun-seeking population of reptiles as two blacksnakes slithered from beneath his feet in the knee-high grass. The overwhelming energy of this group was evidenced in the fact that they were able to locate and completely explore six of the major cave systems in the area; Cox Fissure Caves # 1&2- 26 and 15 feet respectively, Green Bottom Cave - 12 feet, Larges Cave - eight feet, Falls Cave - a twenty foot water crawl, not to mention the hundred feet of bicycle passage in Wildcat Cave.

Hopes looked bright as O'Meara and Roehr approached McFadden Cave near Mendota. Reported to be large, the cave promised a possible rear entrance to the 10,000 foot Vickers system. The Holston River succumbed to the amphibious machines and mud spewed from four, then eight wheel wells as the two emerged from the currents. The party fanned out over the cliff face seeking the cave when tragedy struck! To cut the melodramatics short, Guy Turenne fell fifteen feet off of the cliff. Perhaps he had been feeling inferior to Jim Hixson and Doug Perkins who had been getting all the attention with their casted forearms (or maybe he wanted an excuse to go to lunch) so he utilized this opportunity to snap his own radius and ulna. In Bristol a Dr. McFadden got Guy plastered and turned out to be the owner of the cave (permission had been gained from a tenant farmer). The discovery and subsequent exploration of the four hundred foot rats nest was anticlimactic.

A pleasant hour was spent by Roehr's crew at Benfield's Grocery in Mendota learning local history and getting a few cave locations. The afternoon was spent combing Cunningham's cliffs for caves with a three hundred foot crawl the only major find. A larger cave is still reported but is nearer to the top of the cliffs than was ventured at this time.

Meanwhile Flower Pot and Whitt were searching out more small caves on the Wallace quadrangle. The afternoon for them turned into a four wheel adventure over a mountain, across a swamp, and down a creek bed on a mapped but non-existent road. At one point fence posts had to be pulled out by Moose and a bridge built over barbed wire to advance the journey back towards "civilization". A yawning abyss was straddled for several hundred feet which threatened to widen and set the Bronco on its frame but the only damage occurred later in a stream bed where a vicious rock tried to take a bite out of the hubcap.



Rehr

All assembled at John Douglas for the night and various "swill" recipes were compared. (Gourmet's note #376 - peaches make an interesting addition. J.Hixson)

The next day proved more productive for Ellenfield's group as they ventured towards home territory and mapped 500 feet in Coon Cave near Newberry-Banes.

Three four-by-fours climbed a sinkhole pocketed mountain to no avail as far as caves were concerned. The days activities included a mile and a half nature walk to a cave whose eighty foot entrance drop had been filled with mud since our guide had last been there. Digging was ineffective.

Although there were no major finds for the weekend, a good portion of the Brumley, Wallace, and Mendota quadrangles were covered. It is assumed that all had a great time as usual for a Club project whether or not anything constructive gets done.

At this time, I was still a "cave" and I was still a "cave" Tom Roehr was the first to introduce me to the cave world. I was still a "cave" and I was still a "cave".

WINDY MOUTH CAVE

After being filled with the spirit of a Cave Club party, when my resistance was low, I was introduced to Jim Hixson and the voluptuous Linda Hixson. Now Jim was planning a trip to Windy Mouth Cave in West Virginia and needed some more fools to go along. The trip already had the notable "Easter Pig" on its roster and a Tennessee volunteer, John Powers. "Of course I'll go," I found myself saying in a stupefied voice, "any time, just let me know".

Thus, early next morning I found myself being whisked away in a strange car (the inside was mohair seat covers) with strange looking cavers, as if all cavers aren't weird looking, and a funny looking kid named Linda (whose measurements incidentally are 24-18-15).

We arrived in Lewisburg, West Virginia, around one o'clock, ate at the Court Restaurant, and zapped out to Windy Mouth. Along the way our little party picked up two more foolhearted cavers. After driving to the farthest stretches of the road and then some, we changed into our caving duds.



Looking around I noticed a glove here, a pair of pants there and other assorted goodies. Questioning Jim (I thought the sly old fox might have brought a bunch of girls up on a earlier trip), he gave a quick and crisp reply. "Most cavers who get out of Windy Mouth are usually so tired that they don't give a damn about their equipment and just throw it down on the ground, stomp on it, and grind it into the dirt. I knew that the trips into Windy Mouth were credited as being rather long and tedious but this seemed ridiculous.

After being given knee pads, a most essential piece of gear, we headed off towards the cave which is located on a cliff overlooking the Greenbrier River. The river was high that day and the path around was submerged. We had to climb the cliff and while up there, "Easter Pig" gave a full detailed account of how he fell off a similar cliff face and plummeted into a river below. We, of course, weren't the least bit nervous because we knew that we were only one hundred feet above this river.

Meanwhile the funny-looking kid was taking all this in great form. She was doing some of her own strange maneuvers as we climbed, she even tried to play a real nasty trick on me but I told her I just wasn't old enough for that sort of thing.

Into the crawlway we squirmed. Our carbide lamps dimly lit the passage as we struggled over the broken rock floor. But, will wonders never cease, the passage became large enough so that we could walk in ape-like manner (true troglodytic manner if I ever saw one). The passageway continued to grow and soon we came to First Canyon. After crossing this narrow drop we came to Second Canyon and rested for a few minutes. Linda began to develop a passionate look in her eyes but we started to go down the passage before she had time to do anything.

After a few of us went down to the second level of the cave we remembered poor Linda still panting with desire in the upper passage. She sure changed her tune when we brought her down and became very passive until we brought her up out of the canyon after mapping.

The lower passage was filled with a lot of breakdown through which a stream meandered. We proceeded to the last survey station and split up into two mapping parties. The mapping party that I was on consisted of Jim, John, and myself. Of course the shy Linda was in our party too. The other group consisted of "Easter Pig" and the two other cavers we had found wandering around Lewisburg.

After mapping for about seven hours we returned to the canyon which was our meeting place. The other cavers soon arrived and we compared notes. Each party had mapped around fifteen hundred feet of the designated passages. While we were talking I also learned that the other passage was a wide and spacious one; ours narrowed down into a crawl (that sure is my luck).

We departed from Windy Mouth around three o'clock in the morning. After a hasty and not very appetizing meal in some dump called The Bone or some other God foresaken name, we slept in the WVACS field house.

That noon we left for good old VPI Cave Club country and I returned to the dull everyday routine of doing my homework. (Isn't this a great ending).

Karl Berge

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#### CAVING IN NORTHERN ALABAMA AND GEORGIA

A grubby bunch of cavers couldn't have asked for better weather after a cloudburst trip from Blacksburg, Virginia to Trenton, Georgia. Arriving in Trenton on Thanksgiving Day our two car parade spotted a huge, black, pointed-head troglodyte standing on the road. After making the most of the paper maché troglodyte, we made a decision to make Byers Cave the target for the day, since our directions to Cemetery Pit were very poor.

Directions to Byers Cave were not much better and we searched a good bit of Dean's Gulf on Fox Mountain before finding the cave entrance. From the entrance varied walking, crawling, and climbing passage leads back to a fissure crawlway about two hundred feet long. The fissure finally drops out over a large, shale, canyon passage. The seventeen foot drop was rigged with a ladder and our fearless crew set out in search of the formation that Byers Cave is famous for.

As we started out through the U-shaped canyon passage we thought we were wasting our time, but then eight minds blew at once as we suddenly happened onto beautiful columns, spires, and flowstone formations. Out came the cameras and everything of merit was photographed.

Thursday night was spent in a churchyard just over the Alabama line, and Friday morning the whole crew was off for Neversink Pit near Scottsboro, Alabama. Neversink offers a very impressive entrance, about fifty by seventy feet. The pit is very easy to find since all one has to do is follow a water pipe a quarter mile up the hill to the entrance. Neversink consists of nothing but 165 free fall feet of nothingness. There are no leads at the bottom, but the pit is a photographer's dream with water falling in sheets over green moss on the sides. Most everyone was surprised to look up and see a long log jammed between two walls over sixty feet in the air, indicating that water gets rather high in the pit.

After seeing and photographing all of Neversink that we could, we took off down Ala. Route 65 to the Gerry Self Pits on Bingham Mountain. This was an ambitious assault, since we would have to find the pits in the dark, but this proved to be no problem. A long path leads up Bingham Mountain about three quarters of a mile to the double sixty foot pit entrance. We rigged the entire cave, drops of sixty, forty, then sixty feet consecutively, with one 345 foot hunk of virgin goldline. After signing the register on the third level we headed for the crawl out entrance which by the map was supposed to be eighty feet away, but turned out to be about 1,500 feet away by our estimation.

Not being ambitious enough to try to find the pits again from the crawl out entrance, we headed for the car (meaning food and sleep!). Saturday morning we all made the trip to the pits again to recover the rope, but it wouldn't budge. So, as I stood there in full caving regalia fully prepared to go in for the rope, Paul Broughton, in street clothes and sneakers, volunteered to go in. I quickly offered Paul all of my vertical gear, and off he went to recover the rope. Volunteers first!

Off to Huntsville by 9:30 a.m., and on our way to Monte Sano Mountain we stopped to get Rusty a new pair of glasses at a Huntsville optometrist, making it to Natural Well on Monte Sano by noon.

Once a commercial attraction with a glass bottomed elevator, Natural Well is now fenced on all sides and offers cavers a beautiful 186 foot free fall which appears to be much deeper.

Soon after we arrived Darwin Moss of Huntsville Grotto showed up with a 300 foot length of half-inch sampson rope which a number of us used instead of our kinky goldline.

Darwin's inchworm method of ascending was very interesting. Most of us agreed that the prusik out of Natural Well was one of the best we had ever done.

With Shelta the only cave left on the agenda we had plenty of time to throw a banquet-type dinner in Monte Sano State Park, and take in a Huntsville museum.

After acquiring the Shelta key from Chuck Kincaid we stopped for a pizza and a beer about two blocks from Shelta. We were definitely impressed with the gated entrance to Shelta, supplied by the Huntsville Grotto, but the only saving factor of Shelta Cave as far as we tourist cavers were concerned was the large rooms. Otherwise, we thought Shelta was rather drab, warm and muddy.

Following a wet nights sleep on the Shelta grounds, we started back to Tech early Sunday morning. On the way we stopped off on Chattanooga's Lookout Mountain to kick the leaves from Mystery Hole's cement plug (oh, for some dynamite!).

All in all the Georgia-Alabama trip was a fabulous time. Total mileage (including a lot of goofing around) was only 1,150 miles. The cost was \$10 (\$5 for gas, \$2 for a car top carrier, and \$3 for food) each.

Michael C. Frieders

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#### LOWER PENLEY'S OR A STUDY IN SUCCESSFUL SUICIDE

Many long weeks ago, my good friend Bobby Lewis, alias NRVCC, was organizing a mapping expedition to the deep inner sanctum of Buddy Penley's Cave, and he wanted to know whether I'd come along. Being a rather innocent young trainee, I made no hesitation whatsoever in volunteering. I'd been to Upper Penley's with Bobby at the beginning of fall quarter for my first cave trip, and, since that section was really quite easy, I figured Lower Penley's could be no worse. Ho-ho-ho. Little did I know that there were nasty little orcs and man-eating bats around every corner, not to mention a scattered Lemurian or two.

Included in our little adventure were Doug Perkins and Bill Park, gentlemen of doubtless respect and unimpeachable credentials as cavers. So off we rambled into the dark and deadly pits, pits full of danger, not to mention guano.

At the bottom of the hundred foot drop which separates Upper from Lower, we saw the first signs of the evil power lurking in Penley's. Four cavers from East Carolina had rappelled down the other end of the pit into Lower Penley's and through a hole in the floor for another fifty feet. It wasn't until all four of them were down that they realized it was a dead end; they knew that because they could see all four blank walls (bright boys). When we arrived they were trying in vain to prusik out on their web rope; needless to say they were happy to see us lower a couple of ladders and belay them out.

We took leave of them after a while and NRVCC led the way through a hole in the wall, down into an amazingly warm, dry pit, and through a dusty belly crawl. We were approaching the fabled Penley's Crossover inhabited by all sorts of roving demons and wicked spirits, not to mention the bodies of cavers who didn't make it. Only the night before, the Club heard Gary Moss describe very graphically the horrors of that narrow pass and the somewhat unorthodox but very effective method that Bobby Lewis employed in traversing it. The exhibition that Bill, Doug, and I witnessed was no less hair-raising: NRVCC, after squeaking around a corner on a very tight belay by Bill, stood up very shakily on one side of the thirty foot gorge and suddenly lunged at the blank wall four feet away, apparently finding handholds on the differences of color in the rock. In any event, after straddling the crevice for a while, he edged along the landing at the other end and proceeded to belay the rest of us across in similar style.

That crossover marked the approach to Lowest Penley's a dungeon so deep and forboding that one would have to ascend in order to go to Hades. On we forged, through leads ever tighter and crawls ever wetter. After a refreshing swim in a glistening pool of gobbledy-gook, we re-carbided and continued; we finally reached the last borders of civilization (?) - through a crack made by Russ Peterson. Gazing wistfully into one last pit and wondering how to get into it besides jumping, I stumbled accidentally into a side lead and decided to explore it. Bobby was right behind me shouting "Virgin, virgin!" When I turned around to see where she was, he zipped by me. Up and up it went, getting bigger and bigger; NRVCC was going crazy hoping for a new entrance, but he quieted down when he finally hit his head on the ceiling.

When we finally started to map, the first thing we surveyed was an insignificant lead about 100 feet long: in this passage was the palace of the lord of all mud. The crawl itself was only four inches high, but the mud gave way

to make room. It was so wet that if you set your lamp down it would sink. This made everyone so wet and miserable that at last we heard NRVCC's famous last words: "I quit! I'm never comin' to this @&#¢\* cave again! I'm never goin' to caving again in my life! Ever! I quit!"

With that we packed up and escaped from the bowels of the earth without being attacked by giant spiders or anything. Being the first one back to the bottom of the 100 foot pit, I began searching for the rope. It was gone! I thought some thieving troll had stolen it when I saw the end hanging in a bundle twenty feet from the ground. Apparently it had slowly twisted while we were gone. Anyhow, with Doug holding me steady, I mounted a ten foot rock and swung my prusik to lasso the rope and pulled it down.

After that we fled with 100 feet mapped, never to return. Tomorrow we're going back.

Pete Schnaars

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#### VPI CAVE CLUB PICNIC

On Saturday night, May 17, somewhere between the hours of eight and twelve, Steve Hall completely lost three hours of his wild young life. Steve does not stand alone here by a long shot. There were several other cavers to help Steve finish off the three and a half kegs, and they were more or less lost too! This all occurred, of course, at the Annual Cave Club Picnic--- what a picnic!

Various and assorted cars packed up climbing gear, sleeping gear, musical instruments, food, and the people to whom all this belonged to and took off down Roanoke Street in a wild frenzy. There were short stops at the famous Moorels Cheese Factory, then a push towards Dragon's Tooth.

About three ropes and twenty people swarmed up and down the sides of the Tooth for four hours. There were several fantastic displays of climbing ability, particularly by Jack Keat.

Along about five o'clock the parched throats of the climbers demanded something cold so they took off for the picnic site and its inviting liquid refreshment.

The site was the well known and popular Trout Creek Shelter which, by some miracle, is still standing. Here people were confronted with about twenty gallons of spaghetti and two and a half kegs. So, with many improvisations on utensils, the group dug in. There followed the traditional sing on the roof, drink on the roof, and fall off of the roof. By midnight all but a few hardy, rather stupid souls had left, gone to sleep, or passed out.

Early next morning began the race to see who could get out first and not have to clean up. Finally all the odds and ends of the night before were collected and stashed. Some of these items included: two mugs, four cups, two forks, one spoon, one body, one half keg of beer, a vat of leftover spaghetti, and one marshmallow. After the table was scrubbed off with assorted leaves and vines, the farewells were said and the place left in peace until next year.

"Kia ja"

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#### A TROGLODYTIC SPECIE YOU MAY NOT KNOW OF

In the summer of 1939 in a small cave called the Cave of the Bashful Lady, in Connecticut, a new subterranean creature was killed. The entire affair was carried in the Millerton (New York) News.

After crawling 612 feet on hands and knees through the Cave of the Bashful Lady members of the local spelunking club found and killed the dreaded glawackus. The animal had first been found while out on one of its raids of the surrounding countryside. It is reported to have killed several dogs in Western Connecticut. It had sought shelter in the Cave of the Bashful Lady after having been trapped and almost killed in Indian Oven Cave, Boston Corner.

The mission began on Sunday morning with many spelunkers gathered for the hunt. A girl named Helen Price was used for bait. After the spelunkers had trapped the glawackus in the recesses of the cave it was killed with a second shot from a horse pistol, the first shot having missed.

Examination of the beast showed it to be a cross between a bear and a linx and that both its eyes and fangs glowed in the dark. It was three feet long and weighed ninety pounds. Further examination revealed tiny suction cups on the paws by means of which the animal had traversed cave walls, ceilings,

and floors.

The glawackus has been stuffed and mounted and is on display in a private museum in Massachusetts.

There have been reports of another glawackus coming from the hills, but these have died out over the years. Yet the glawackus shall live in memory and if you should hear the popping of tiny suction cups on the ceiling while on your next trip, beware, it is probably the glawackus.

Guy Turenne

(Source: New England's Buried Treasure by Clay Perry, Stephen Daye Press, New York, 1946)

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