

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

EDITOR:
GREGG MARLAND
Box 4707 V. P. I.
BLACKSBURG, VA.

Vol. I, No. 2
April, 1962
75¢ per year
20¢ per copy

STAFF: BONNIE STEPHENSON
BETTY NUCKOLS
GARY McCUTCHEON
JOHN DANNER

EDITORIAL

In opening the second issue of the TECH TROGLODYTE we would like to thank the many people from whom we have received kind comments and words of encouragement concerning our initial issue. We would also like to thank those groups who have responded with exchange subscriptions to their respective publications. These publications will be kept on file in the editorial offices of the TROGLODYTE (Room 128 Femoyer dormitory) where they will be accessible to members of the Cave Club and other interested parties.

Believing, as we do, that encouraging better conservation practices is one of the primary goals of organized cavers, a large portion of the second issue is being devoted to articles on conservation, both original and reprints. It is felt that these articles give a wide, yet fairly comprehensive view of the necessity for and principles of cave conservation with which all cavers should be familiar. In a group such as ours, where the membership is constantly changing with the graduation of the experienced and the influx of freshmen, it is felt that a constant educational process on conservation is essential; and in no group can it be overly stressed. It is hoped that several of the articles in this issue, along with others of a similar nature, some on cave safety, and other pertinent information can be assembled into a booklet which will be distributed among and made required reading for incoming members, as a part of the "trainee" program.

PLANS FOR THE 1963 NATIONAL ARE DEVELOPING

Data released recently by John R. Holsinger, chairman of the 1963 N.S.S. National Convention to be held at Mountain Lake in Giles County includes some information on the organization of the convention program.

The Virginia Region, which includes grottoes in Washington D.C., Richmond, University of Virginia, and V.P.I., will serve as sponsor. V.P.I. will serve as host chapter and will administer pre-convention caving.

Gregg Marland has been named as assistant convention chairman. Three session chairman are: John E. Cooper - biology, William E. Davies - geology, and William Cuddington - vertical techniques display. Henry H. Douglas will be in charge of printing publicity brochures and program schedules. Arrangements with Virginia's commercial caves will be made by Robert Blackburn.

NSS POLICY FOR CAVE CONSERVATION

The National Speleological Society believes: That caves have unique scientific, recreational, and scenic values; That these values are endangered by both carelessness and intentional vandalism; That these values once gone, cannot be recovered; and that the responsibility for protecting caves must be assumed by those who study and enjoy them.

Accordingly, the intention of the Society is to work for the preservation of caves with a realistic policy supported by effective programs for: the encouragement of self-discipline among cavers; education and research concerning the causes and prevention of cave damage; and special projects, including co-operation with other groups similarly dedicated to the conservation of natural areas. Specifically:

All contents of a cave--formations, life, and loose deposits-- are significant for its enjoyment and interpretation. Therefore, caving parties should leave a cave as they find it. They should provide means for the removal of waste; limit marking to as few, small and removable signs as are needed for surveys; and, especially, exercise extreme care not to accidentally break or scil formations, disturb life forms or unnecessarily increase the number of disfiguring paths through an area.

Scientific collection is professional, selective and minimal. The collecting of mineral or biological material for display purposes; including previously broken or dead specimens, is never justified, as it encourages others to collect and destroys the interest of the cave.

The Society encourages projects such as: establishing cave preserves; placing entrance-gates where appropriate; opposing the sale of speleothems; supporting effective protective measures; cleaning and restoring over-used caves; co-operating with private cave owners by providing knowledge about their cave and assisting them in protecting their cave and property from damage during cave visits; and encouraging commercial cave owners to make use of their opportunity to aid the public in understanding caves and the importance of their conservation.

Where there is reason to believe that publication of cave locations will lead to vandalism before adequate protection can be established, the Society will oppose such publication.

It is the duty of every Society member to take personal responsibility for spreading a consciousness of the cave conservation problem to each potential user of caves. Without this, the beauty and value of our caves will not long remain with us.

CONSERVATION OF CAVE ORGANISMS

by John R. Holsinger

The following article is based, in part, on a similar treatment of this subject by Brother G. Nicholas in the January, 1956 issue of the D. C. Speleograph. Much of the following information is not original but rather it is an attempt to reiterate many important concepts which must continually be brought to the public's as well as to the speleologist's attention.

Much emphasis has been placed on the conservation and preservation of speleothems, but little attention has been focused on the preservation of our cavern-dwelling organisms. True cave species, or troglobites, have probably taken millions of years to "so completely" adapt to their unique habitat, but their extermination can take place in a few weeks under alteration of environmental conditions or through

wanton collecting. It should be pointed out that while some cave formations may be replaced in a relatively short period of time, a species that has become extinct is gone from the earth forever!

Among the greatest threats to cavernicolous organisms are the large number of people who pass through the more accessible caves in the winter months. The winter season is the time of hibernation for many of our cave-dwelling animals such as insects and bats. When these animals are disturbed or awakened from hibernation few, if any, can find enough available food for the maintenance of their life processes. Most of the troglobites have adapted their bodies to the relatively constant cave temperature. This leads to a delicate balance between their metabolic rate and the environmental temperature. When this balance is disturbed by an increase in temperature, a subsequent increase in their rate of metabolism also occurs and as a consequence an upset occurs between the food required by these organisms and the food available. This is a very realistic problem when takes into account the meager food supply that normally exists in a cave habitat.

Another menace to cave life is the careless dumping of carbide in wet areas, pools, and cave streams. Calcium carbide produces acetylene gas and calcium hydroxide when it is combined with water. Calcium hydroxide can increase the alkalinity of water to such a degree that the pH value will rise enough to kill any aquatic species present. The solid particles of carbide in water can also pollute the stream, notwithstanding the pH factor. Many of the non-aquatic cave forms, such as insects, feed on decaying organic material. When carbide is mixed with organic material, this material then becomes a poison rather than a valuable food supply. When left in a cave, carbide should be covered or buried in a dry spot well away from running water.

The fact that our cave life is rare and unusual has made it a prime target for collectors in the past few years. Many such collectors are amateurs and laymen who merely desire specimens for "show" rather than for scientific study. A certain amount of the blame must also be borne by the well-meaning scientist, who often takes more specimens than would be absolutely necessary. This situation has unfortunately caused the decimation of whole colonies of rare animals and, in some instances, practically complete extinction of rare species. As several bio-speleologists have pointed out, it is much more desirable to study these rare animals in their natural surroundings than to place them in alcohol on some museum shelf. Little-understood habits of these unique organisms such as breeding, larval stages, feeding, reaction to stimuli, and longevity can be more accurately observed and studied in the native habitat than in a laboratory. This is not to say that there are not certain instances when collection is desirable, but such decisions should be left to a competent cave biologist.

One of the chief sources of the scarce food supply in caves is bat guano. In some instances guano may be the only available food for certain cavernicolous species. In addition to this, guano may also serve as the organic nutrient for the growth of various types of fungi. Fungi, in turn, is an important food source for insects. Consideration must be given, then, to the idea of blocking up or sealing off a cave entrance, even if only to preserve the remaining cave life inside. This will obviously lead to more harm than good if such animals as those whose droppings are an important food source are kept from entering the cave.

The conservation of subterranean wildlife, like surface wildlife, is an ever increasing problem in this time of a rapidly increasing population. Many societies and institutions exist today for the preservation of rare species of surface dwellers. However, few have considered the preservation of sub-surface dwellers which, by the same

token, are just as important as the epigean forms. If we are to save these organisms from total destruction, interested people must join forces immediately to achieve such ends before it is too late.

reprinted without permission
D. C. Spelæograph
Vol. 17, No. 2
Feb. 1961

CAVE LOCATIONS: TO PUBLISH OR NOT TO PUBLISH by Gregg Marland

The questionability of publishing cave locations was again brought to mind by a recent incident in the VPI library. Upon approaching the drawer where cave maps are kept, I found two others, who I had not previously met through Cave Club activities, looking through the maps. Assuming them to be interested cavers and possible recruits for the Cave Club, I offered to help them if there was anything in particular that they were searching for.

I was informed by one that he was looking for bats and was in turn asked if I knew where any large numbers of bats could be found. Questioning him further, I found that he was interested in a particular bat parasite. Why? "Just Curiosity". Further questioning revealed that in order to locate this parasite he grabbed bats at random, stuffed them into a jar of cyanide, and later picked over the dead bats to find the parasites. He informed me that on a previous trip to Tazewell County he had failed to turn up any of the parasites which he wanted for "JUST CURIOSITY", but failed to mention how many bats he had destroyed in the process. He was presently looking through the maps at such places as "Bat Room", or "Bat Section" for places where he might be able to find many bats. His definition of many bats, "Oh, more than a dozen." He apparently just grabbed any bat that he could lay his hands on.

After learning all of the above details, I immediately entered into a discussion of the importance of bats, the need for their conservation, and the possibilities of entering into properly conducted scientific studies through corresponding with those more educated in the field of bats, if he was really interested in their study.

It turned out that he was "not interested in the bats" but just curious about the parasite which he hoped to collect in as large a quantity as possible, and my pleas fell on deaf ears.

Controlling my emotions marvelously, maybe too well, I left wondering what could actually be done. While turning the ideas over in my mind, I came to the conclusion that it was probably through the availability of this file of maps (which numbers about 40) that many people learned of the existence and location of New River C^re and others in this area that have been so commonly visited and so badly vandalized by unorganized groups of cavers. New River has felt the brunt of the attack, but other caves--primarily those that are nearby, easily accessible, and have their maps on file in the library--have been plastered with the initials "VPI", and an abundance of names of daring individuals who want the world to know of their heroic efforts in having visited this place or that. WUVT (the campus radio station) and the names of various ROTC companies on campus are also frequently found.

Although a number of these names are those of Cave Club members, in fact an alarmingly large number of them, these inscriptions are in a very definite minority and have suffered a tremendous decline in the last two years. There has been a tremendous and most encouraging growth in interest in conservation among Cave Club members and it is felt that incidents of vandalism among grotto members are rapidly approaching non-existence. However, this conservation consciousness is

difficult to inspire in non-Cave Club members who continue, as always, to have a desire to make known their masculine prowess and leave evidence of having visited such-and-such a place.

It is my conclusion that if cave maps were not available to the student body through the library; but rather kept solely in the club files for access of club members, that incidents of vandalism in nearby caves would, if not decline, certainly not increase. It is also felt that those individuals in the college who are sincerely interested in caving will take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Cave Club, be properly instructed in the necessity of cave conservation, and thereby have access to information on cave locations (thus none who is conscientiously interested in caving would be deprived of information on caves by the omission of that information from the school library).

In conclusion, this publication will officially go on record as opposing the placing of additional cave maps in the VPI Library. Also, as it is intended that this publication be kept on file in the library in hopes that some non-Cave Club members may become acquainted with the policies advocated herein; wherever it is felt advisable, cave locations will be stricken from those copies filed in the library.

TROGLODYTE ARTIST RECOGNIZED

We have just realized that at no place in our initial issue did we recognize the creator of the troglodyte which adorns our masthead. John Danner did the artwork and, as much as we hate to admit it, yours truly posed to get the correct proportions. Any resemblance is purely coincidental.

Also, our thanks to Ed Bauer for the aid rendered in all aspects of the publication of this issue. Our masthead was originally printed in such quantity so as to last for three issues. At that time it will be changed so as to not include the staff which may then be changed as necessity requires.

CLUB ELECTION RESULTS

At a recent meeting of the V.P.I. Grotto of the N.S.S. the following officers were elected to serve for the coming year.

President - Gregg Marland
Box 4707

Vice President - Tom Bell
Box 2779

Secretary - Bonnie Stephenson
Box 5819

Treasurer - Bill Grenoble
Box 3897

General Correspondance should be addressed to:
V.P.I. Cave Club
Box B-5, VPI
Blacksburg
Virginia

PROJECT POOP

ED BAUER

Now that I'm back from my "extended vacation", I hope to set the wheels into motion and get a few of our projects closer to completion.

John "Zeke" Fuller has agreed to undertake the enormous task of writing up a history of the VPI Grotto. While the completion of this history by the May contest deadline is quite out of the question, it is hoped that it will be completed before the end of the summer. Due to the facts that the VPI Grotto is one of the Society's oldest and that the membership and leadership are continually changing, it looks as if Zeke has quite a job on his hands. Any of the founders or older members of the grotto are asked to send helpful information to Zeke at Box 3695.

Another plea goes out, this time by the group working on the slide-lecture series on conservation, to anyone who might have slides depicting good or poor conservation policies. We will copy the slides and return them as soon as possible. Please send any slides or inquiries to me at box 2723.

Little work has been done on the Higgenbotham Caves (Virginia) Project lately other than the correlation of some of the notes taken on the last survey trip. With the warmer and dryer weather on its way, it is hoped that a few trips will be going to that immediate area soon.

A newcomer to the evergrowing list of grotto projects relates directly to conservation and cave beauty. The National Convention in 1963, for which we will be host grotto, presents a good excuse to begin work on the restoration of caves in this area. Caves to be cleaned first will be those most probably visited by pre-convention cavers: Tawney's, New River, Pig Hole, and Giant Caverns. When work on these is completed, work will begin on other vandalized caves in the area. Buckets, brushes, and everything but soap will be carried into the affected caves in the hope of removing any foreign material. As soon as possible, cave registers will be placed in these and other caves in the area.

VA. REGION PROJECT DATE CHANGED

According to a recent announcement by the chairman of the Virginia Region of the NSS, the date of the Virginia Region Project at McClung's Cave, Greenbriar County, West Virginia, has been changed to May 12&13. Although originally scheduled for the preceding weekend, the weekend of the 12 & 13 seems to be more convenient to more people.

This trip will formally initiate a long-range study which has been planned for McClung's and the surrounding area. Exploration, mapping, and hydro-geological studies will be conducted and will include several nearby caves.

Camping facilities will be available approximately four miles from the cave, on the Greenbriar River near the town of Anthony. Participating cavers will assemble at the cave entrance at 9:00 AM Saturday. All persons are asked to park on the road near the cave but not in the driveway or lane of the owner, and sign a log book which is maintained by the owner, Mr. Freeman.

Notices regarding the project will be sent to all NSS members in the Virginia Region and details on the aims and organization thereof will appear in the April Issue of the D.C. Speleograph.

Those interested in participating in the project are asked to get in touch with Dr. J.R. Karst, (sometimes referred to as John R. Holsinger), Chairman of the Virginia Region. His address: Dr. Karst, % John R. Holsinger, 626 S. Washington St., Falls Church, Virginia.

THE FALL OF A CAVER ..

Chris Schieck

Hello cave,
you old hole in the ground;
To explore you I crave,
to look around;
Away from the world,
you're down there alone.
Because your beauty's unspoiled,
it's into your depths I'm goan.
I've got my hardhat,
and I've got my light.
With the agility of a cat,
I'll search with all my might
for cave yet unexplored,
where all the formations are stored.
I'll search for portions to vandals unknown,
where the seeds of destruction have not yet been sown.
And when at last I find this freak,
it will be my turn destruction to wreak,
I'll clash and I'll batter,
the formations to shatter.
They'll come down with a bang,
and at last I'll be one of the gang.
I hope this little poem
has really hit home.
And to all those that say "Aw g'wan",
If the shoe fits, put it on.

NEW CAVING PUBLICATION

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute Cave Club is once again publishing a Newsletter. It is called The Tech Troglodyte, is mimeographed, and has a picture of Gregg Marland on the masthead. Subscription rates: 75 cents per year - 20 cents per copy. "It is hoped that it will be possible to put out a copy twice quarterly." Available through: Gregg Marland, Box 4707, VPI, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Reprinted without permission from the
Baltimore Grotto News, Vol. 5, No. 3,
March, 1962.

TRIP REPORT: THE GROTTO

Ed Bauer

At first I hesitate to write up a trip report on this particular cave for fear that I will be criticized for violating a basic rule of cave safety: a minimum of three cavers shall explore together. To make matters worse, the neophyte who was accompanying me was not dressed in the proper caver's attire; that is to say she was wearing a straight skirt and heels.

The reason that I was originally attracted to this particular was that I saw it advertised somewhere as "New York City's only cave restaurant". About the only feature of this place which at all reminded me of a natural cave was the chill in the air. (New York was experiencing a cold spell at the time and the furnace was on the blink)

Once seated I had the feeling that I was eating an Italian dinner while sitting in the middle of a coal mine. The black walls and ceiling were indeed interesting, geologically speaking, as were the numerous chianti bottles which seemed to grow from them. As I paid the tab, I came to the realization that the "Grotto" was actually a high priced after theatre restaurant, using the cavern novelty, and certainly not the type of eating establishment in which cavers are usually found. While I can not recommend the "Grotto", its locating coordinates follow for all those interested: 224 West 46th St., New York City, New York.

HAYNES & LAUREL CREEK CAVES

Gregg Marland

After becoming one of those rare trips that actually gets off at the standard departure time of 1:00 PM (we were scheduled to leave at 12:30) our group of nine headed for Monroe County, West Virginia to spend the March 31 - April 1 weekend seeing some of those big horizontal caves we had heard so much about. Charlie Bladen, Dave Rice, Bonnie Stephenson and myself rode with Cart Warfield while Ed Bauer, Bill Lipscomb, and Rob Mallis risked their lives in Ed Day's yellow bomb.

Heading first for Haynes Cave, which none of us knew quite how to find, with yours truly handling the maps, we twice missed our turn and had to turn arround, but eventually arrived on one of those roads that just wasn't built for Valiants with five passengers and camping gear. Finally it got to the point where our noble pilot, Mr. Warfield, announced that whether or not the map agreed, we were there. Briefly eyeing the country side knowladgably, as someone is lost but won't admit it, I soon headed toward the nearest house with Dave and Charlie. Since none of the ghosts there knew the cave's location, we headed for the next house, which, as is usually the case, was two hills away.

The woman there did know about the cave and turned out to be one of those rare individuals who is able to give directions that can actually be followed. Haynes Cave does, it seems, have another name by which it is known to the local people. So, following her directions, we headed for Nickell Cave.

Heading down behind the first house where Bauer took time to admire the lightning rods and comment on the advantages of owning such items while telling certain types of jokes, we followed the fence along the back of the house, through the orchard, and soon found the entrance. Descending the wooden stairs we by-stepped a dead fox amid a flurry of cracks about rabies and automobile ornaments.

The first portion of the cave was very wet and we soon passed a wooden trough which had been covered with dripstone. Soon afterward we passed into dry dusty cave and like this it remained for the rest of the trip.

Extensive and elaborate wooden bridges span shallow pits, and troughs and other relics which have been marvolously preserved for these one hundred years since the cave was mined for saltpeter are everywhere in evidence. Inscriptions on the walls, both scratched and burned, were seen dating back into the twenties and a guest register at the back of the cave contained equally old notations. The earliest

notes were on envelopes and scraps of paper, apparently left well before a notebook was left. While the others were signing in, I searched through the assemblage of papers, Boy Scout cards, calling cards, pictures, and other reminiscences. One member of our club was represented by a calling which, apparently altered by subsequent cavers, read George "Rocky" Fairer.

On the way out we spent considerable time admiring the profusion of gypsum flowers which adorn portions of the ceiling and at the same time, condemning the warped idiots who have damaged numerous specimens. Nevertheless, specimens up to eight inches in length and of considerable beauty were found in some of the more remote sections.

We also visited the "wench" which was used by the saltpeter miners and has been perfectly preserved to this day.

Another notable find was a first aid kit in a plastic bag which had been left in the cave for the emergency use of visiting cavers. The kit contained essential first aid supplies along with flashlight batteries and other items.

Leaving the cave, we headed toward Union and the grocery store, noticing that Court's car had a hole in the muffler as a result of the journey. If you have never seen nine people in a small grocery store, all trying to decide what we were going to eat and picking this and that, you cannot imagine the scene that followed. Believe it or not, we did eventually come up with a resonable menu and enough groceries to feed an army; then came the fun of dividing the cost by nine and fighting it out.

The next stop was an AMOCO gas station where Court became quite embarrassed when he bought 9¢ worth of gas for our Colman stove and had to wait for his change from a quarter. I'll bet that tha attendant is still scratching his head, and I'll admit that I've never seen a facial expression quite like his.

Arriving at the home of the owner of Laurel Creek Cave just after dark, Dave and I tried to get to the house and fought with the gate latch for several minutes before getting in and obtaining permission to camp near the entrance. Leaving, we realized that we had unlatched the gate chain from the wrong end and subsequently spent five more minutes getting it back together.

Setting up camp on the far side of the creek from the cave mouth, things were just getting going and the stew stewing when the rains came. Quickly covering everything wuth a tarp, Bauer and Lipscomb went around by the road bridge and, being the only one wearing Bermuda shorts, guess who was elected to ferry the gear across the stream which was knee deep and roaring into the cave entrance. From sleeping bags to stove with stew stil bubbling, we soon passed everything across and set up camp inside the large cavern entrance on the left bank of the stream and put our chef, Bonnie, to work again. After devouring the results of her culinary genius, we set about the task of pushing aside enough cow piles to roll out our damp sleeping bags.

After a comparitively sleepless night we enjoyed another excellent meal prepared jointly by Bonnie and Dave, and were joined by Jim Saunders and Chris Schieck. After wrapping Lipscomb's hand (he had a row of stitches across the right palm) we headed back into the dark reaches of the cave.

When Saunders first jumped knee-deep into water we all shuddered and followed, not knowing what lay ahead. Following tremendous sand floored passegues and marvelling at the vast unpressive tunnels, we soon exhausted the lower level and began a search for the upne level. Following an inconspicuous small passage which

left the main passage near where signs advertise "Bear's Tooth", we headed back into a long single passage which was not included on the map and seemed virtually endless. Closing down to a wiggly it would soon expand to walking passages again and again. We eventually passed a sign, written by someone who had been impressed about the same as we, which read, "Laurel Creek 1 mile". Shortly thereafter a long vertical line had inscriptions on opposite sides indicating Laurel Creek Cave and Greenville Saltpeter Cave, all of which had been added to by a more realistic individual (his conservation techniques were not more realistic, however) who added "ridiculous". Eventually it did end in a pile of breakdown and a profusion of NSS numbers, estimated to be well over 1,000 feet off of the map, published in Davies, Caverns of West Virginia.

Returning to the main upper level we literally ran down sandy floored passages about five feet high and stretching further than a person could see. Climbing down to one side we again reached water and the nearest thing to quicksand I ever hope to see. Court, Bauer, Lipscomb, and I waded into the muck until, while in six inches of water, we were half way up our thighs in mud. Grinning nodules on the ceiling it was possible to raise one leg and move forward, but as the ceiling became lower we had to turn back. Trying another area we went until Bauer was chin deep in water and Court was gasping for breath and screaming something about ice and soggy cigarettes. As for Lipscomb, well...the bandage didn't quite stay dry.

With the party whittled down to six drowned rats we headed into the last remaining major lead, which headed to the left from the entrance passage, and was a little damp. In knee deep water more often than not and despite Bonnie's muttering about idiots we splashed and slid back to a point where water rushing into the cave entrance had deposited tree branches and telephone poles.

Coming out we passed a section of a road bridge which had likewise been carried well into the cave by flood waters, and Bonnie, who had somehow managed to stay dry above the waist this far, slipped and fell in. Soaking wet and extremely cold we emerged from the cave with the feeling that no one has ever been caving who has not been to Laurel Creek. This cave will certainly have to be included in the pre-convention caving program for the 1963 NSS National Convention.

After thoroughly cleaning our campground and thanking the farmer for letting us sleep on his property, we decided to look at the entrance to nearby Greenville Saltpeter. Watching the stream rushing into the immense entrance and disappearing into the blackness, we vowed to return in the very near future (before the water level goes down).

Returning home the inevitable cleaning up and resting up began. I understand that at 11:30 Monday morning Lipscomb's father just happened to drop by and find Bill still in bed. It was a dull lecture anyhow...they tell me.

An immature salamander, probably Pseudotriton porphyriticus, and an epigean millipede were collected in Laurel Creek.

SCHOOLHOUSE CAVE AND THIEVERY

By Ed Day

The snow was two inches deep when we took off from Vienna, Va. at 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 9. We were warned not to take the trip, especially as I had no snow tires, but in true caver's spirit we were undaunted. Our party of three consisted of Doug Dolan and Jeff Pollard, of Vienna, and myself. We arrived at the Pittsburg Grotto

fieldhouse at 1 a.m. Saturday, got a bite to eat, and hit the sack.

Cooking breakfast the next morning was made impossible by the lack of gas and firewood, so we ate a cold meal. When we had almost finished this we were interrupted by a God-sent call from Mrs. Smith, asking if we wanted breakfast. Naturally we couldn't resist. After our second breakfast we set out to gather firewood. We filled most of the car.

At noon we entered Schoolhouse. I was the first to go down the grand rappel. I overshot the "Nick-of-Time" slightly but recovered with very little trouble, and tied in the bottom of the rope. Jeff came next. As he came over the "Nick-of-Time", he slipped and fell into the North Well, hitting against the far wall and dropping his lamp to the bottom of the well. Instead of yelling "falling" he merely screamed. Of course, Doug, who was belaying him, caught him instantly and held him while I proceeded to pull him to safety with the bottom end of the rope.

After Doug got down, we rigged a rope down the well, and I went down to get Jeff's lamp. It was somewhat damaged but I got it working again. I then came around under the "Nick-of-Time" and found several hundred feet of rope and ladder in good condition. I recalled hearing of such equipment being abandoned there several months ago and decided to salvage two of the ropes. They were water-logged and very heavy, but we hauled them up to the "Nick". Then we continued into the cave. Since we had lost a lot of time, we did not go all of the way to the back of the cave this time, but turned around at the top of the Thunderbolt Room.

We returned to the big room without incident, but we were starting to get pretty tired. We ate a can of fruit and rested awhile. Doug and Jeff prussikked up to the mud Grotto, but couldn't get over the next breakover, so they waited there. I tied all of the equipment to the belay rope and started to prussik up the main rope, unsnagging the equipment as Doug and Jeff hauled from above. It was very exhausting to all three of us due to the weight of the ropes we had found.

We finally dragged ourselves out of the Grotto to below the Jumping Off Place. There, due to our fatigue, we decided to leave most of our equipment, while we returned to the fieldhouse.

We slept quite late Sunday morning and Mrs. Smith was kind enough to fix us breakfast. After that, we headed back to the cave, stopping to look at Hell Hole on the way. When we reached the Jumping Off Place, we could see immediately that something was wrong. We had left some of our equipment all of the way at the top. This was gone. Looking over the breakover, we could see that only a couple of the items were still there. But most significant was the fact that the rope we had pulled up but left rigged was down over both breakovers again and that it was taut as if someone were on it! No one answered our calls and we could not budge the rope, so we left in a hurry and returned with a West Virginia state trooper. We took him to the jumping Off Place, and he, incidentally, was quite thrilled. Again we could not budge the rope.

Doug and I went down to the second breakover and found the rope merely snagged. We freed it, but the rope, formerly 200 feet long and brand new, had had 90 feet cut from it. We salvaged what was left of our equipment and left. Our total loss, shared by Doug and I, amounted to about \$70. Needless to say we are offering a reward for the apprehension of the thieves. Evidence indicates that the thieves (or thief) were experienced climbers.

We returned to the fieldhouse at 7 p.m. It had just started to snow. We ate dinner at Mrs. Smith's, cleaned the fieldhouse and left by 9. Already there was almost two inches of snow and my gas gauge read empty! The plows had not been through yet and the first mountain

we hit stopped us dead, but after much sliding and pushing we finally made the crest. Two other cars didn't make that hill. An hour and a half later we dragged the car into Petersburg, thirty miles from the fieldhouse, and found our first gas station. Where all of that extra gas came from, I don't know. We arrived home at 5 a.m. Monday, having averaged twenty miles per hour for the trip. I would say that it was a weekend to remember.

[Editor's Note: The theft of caving equipment mentioned above is certainly a deplorable situation. Individuals who are capable of such acts are certainly not the type we want to have participating in a sport where the safety and freedom of movement of all depends on the behavior of each individual. It is staggering to think of the possible consequences of one group tampering with the equipment of others (e.g. if Mr. Day's party had still been in the cave when their ropes were tampered with.)]

It is hoped that, for the good of every individual who ever journeys into a cave, the individuals responsible for this theft can be apprehended.]

LET'S TAKE THE BABY BOTTLES AWAY FROM THE BABIES (CARRY OUT THAT SPENT CARBIDE!!)

By Gregg Marland
and Ed Bauer

The problem of disposing of spent carbide in a cave has become an ever increasing one. It had previously been urged that an effort be made to bury carbide in inconspicuous areas well away from flowing water. However, this has proved quite inadequate as this is not always possible and in many cases sheer laziness will result in carbide being dumped most anywhere.

Everyone who has ever been caving can testify to the quantities of spent carbide which mar the walls and floors in nearly all caves, and can visualize how much more attractive a cave would appear if this mess were eliminated. Carbide deposits can also prove fatal to cave organisms.

Recently many conservationists have suggested that cavers remove their spent carbide from the cave with them, but no completely satisfactory has as yet been discovered for transporting this spent carbide.

After several experiments and extensive usage for a period of over six months, we offer what seems to be a completely adequate method for carrying spent carbide from a cave.

A plastic baby bottle which can be purchased in any five and ten for about thirty cents makes removing carbide a minimum of effort and the only addition to the caver's burden is a third container joining the ones in which carbide and water are carried. (The BALTIMORE GROTTO NEWS claims that most Virginia cavers already carry three flasks, so for those people we recommend a fourth).

This plastic baby bottle has a mouth which is almost identical in size to that of the carbide containing half of a carbide lamp, making the transfer a simple task. These bottles are indestructible and the transfer of spent carbide can be accomplished in any situation.

A warning against the use of glass bottles seems appropriate at this time. Under no circumstance is the use of glass containers in caves to be advocated as the great possibility of breakage is ever present.

Because spent carbide is usually still reacting to some degree, tests using fresh carbide and water were conducted to find the best way of relieving the pressure.

It was found that the nipple alone will not allow the escape of sufficient pressure. However, merely leaving the top partially loosened does allow enough gas to escape. This is important, for the cap should

NEVER BE TIGHTENED, and if it is, we offer our condolences to the caver who was carrying this in his back pocket. It has been shown that one half turn short of fully tightened is sufficient, but it is suggested that each person should periodically check his bottle to make sure that pressure is not building up, for the first time that he tries this method.

In use by several members of the VPI Cave Club for over six months this procedure has yet to prove inadequate for any situation in over 300 hours of application.

In conclusion; we feel that this is a proven and effective way for removing spent carbide, that it would help preserve the natural beauty of all caves if strictly adhered to, and that it should be advocated in all caving circles.

THE NSS NEWS AND MORE

By Ed Bauer

I recently heard, while accompanying a group of neophytes through a cave, one of them ask one of my fellow grotto members what the NSS was and what it had to offer. Not being a society member himself, my friend could come up with no good answer other than the NSS put out a monthly publication called the NEWS. The neophyte could not believe that for \$5 or \$7 per year he would receive only twelve issues of a thin journal. But how could he think differently? My friend certainly knew of no other benefits of the NSS and probably for this reason is not a member himself. It is regrettable that so many cavers are not acquainted with the benefits of a NSS membership.

The other day, having nothing better to do in English class than to take notes on the life of Shakespeare, I jotted down the following items which I think that membership in the NSS has provided and will continue to provide to its members.

Publications: The NSS NEWS - a monthly publication appealing mainly to society members and containing articles of general caving interest. The Bulletin - more appealing to the speleologist but very educational to the spelunker; semi-yearly.

Organization: Without national, regional, and grotto organization, cavers from one area would have very little opportunity to become acquainted with the activities of others. Grottoes are set up and a stable area program is insured for the years to come.

Regional Activities: projects and conferences are held where items of regional interest are discussed and carried out.

National Convention: a vacation holiday in good cave country; lectures, demonstrations, photo salon, caving, Congress of Grottoes, banquet, etc.

Cave Files: information from all locations stored systematically in one central location.

Cave Library: contains almost all of the literature ever published on spelunking, speleology, and other related subjects; literature lent out at a very minimal fee.

Safety Practices are stimulated by Safety Chairman and his committee. Cave search and rescue programs set up.

Organized intelligent group: A group of this size and containing such a variety of educated people is taken as an authority on many cave related subjects by governments and other large groups. Only a well informed organized group can expect to be recognized in such matters as cave conservation and commercial exploitation. Exploration, such as in National Parks and on government land is usually available only to organized groups such as the NSS.

Correspondance and publications exchange between grottoes made possible.

Lecturers are made available for grotto programs.

Discounts as high as 40% are awarded by supply houses to NSS members.

Cave registers and other conservation materials are supplied to grottoes to institute good conservation practices by other area, non-grotto members.

Slide-lecture programs available for grotto program intrest.

Entrance to locked caves: many locked caves are open only to groups made up of or including NSS members.

Education: surely every member can learn from the host of other members who are highly trained and experienced in their various speleo-related fields.

Good fellowship among cavers.

Membership number: where would many of us be without this valuable hardhat decoration.

Surely there is no other underworld organization which provides so much for so little (the Mafia's rates are terrifically high). One must realize, however, that he must contribute his share if he is to continue to receive.

An agile young caver named Jode,
Rappelled in his campus abode.
He slipped from the ceiling,
With a sickening feeling
Fall headfirst into the commode.

by Omar Khasm

Reprinted without permission from The Florida Speleologist,
Dec., 1959

JAMES CAVE ARTICLE ATTACKED

Dear Editor:

It is with a deep sense of regret that I feel compelled to write this letter. It is intended as a clarification as well as a protest. As it is because of an article in the very first of your new publication series, it is especially unfortunate.

James Cave, Kentucky has already received more than its share of poor publicity, distorted accounts, miscellaneous exaggerations and other undesirable notoriety. The remarks here deal with the James Cave portion of the article "A Dream Come True", by Larry Griffin, TECH TROGLODYTE, v. 1, n. 1, Feb., 1962.

In reference to the commercialization of James, I can't recall that any responsible person ever said that it was "impossible", a term wh ch had already had erroneous and unfortunate use in the cave, but many of us felt that it would be impractical, and only time and tourists will decide the practicality of it as a commercial venture. I'm sure that everyone involved wishes the owners the best of sucess in this, despite our doubts.

There are several misconceptions in Larry's article which require comment. The use of the editorial "we" is common practice, and not in itself particularly objectionable, as long as it comes somewhere near the true facts. Many people who have done much in the development of

of our knowledge of the cave were not mentioned. Others, whose contributions have been slight, were mentioned in detail. A part of this can be explained by the natural desire to mention VPI and other caves known to his readers. For example, Bill Cuddington's contribution on that one trip, while impressive in the face of the difficulties he encountered, did little to aid the overall project. Bill would be the first to admit this. The entrance to Cuddington Canyon that he first forced, is in fact, so difficult and potentially dangerous, that an alternative, still quite difficult entrance was blasted open.

The third entrance was constructed by a combination of digging and blasting from the surface by Mr. Cutliff (based on surveys), and from below by Key, Sonnott and Merrill. The total expenditure of dynamite, surface and subsurface was 75 sticks, of which the 36 were subsurface.

Several of the features so dramatically described have had to be redone (Ten Second Canyon, VPI Traverse etc.) simply because of the refusal of the initial party to add these valuable areas to the map. While the accomplishment of the VPI team in crossing the Traverse (which, thank God abounds in hand-holds), was impressive, many other equally difficult and challenging technical problems were not mentioned. Some of these might include: Sonnott's crossing of Forty-Fathom Pit, crossing the Virgin Pit, the descent of Moe Domenit and the crossing of Mud Domenit.

Many of Larry's facts and figures are "removed" from our correspondence, in fact several features shown on the map reflect this to a high degree - to my knowledge Larry has not seen several of them. It is in regard to this map however that my most severe protest lies. I began the James mapping project in early 1959, and it has been largely through my efforts that the project has been kept alive. Although a great many people have made valuable contributions, large and small to the map, at no time was Larry one of them. On one occasion he assisted me for about 400 feet of taping, his only contribution to the map, at all other times he categorically refused to give any assistance. The map which he reproduced is a tracing of the crude, scale sketch that I prepared two years ago, with the addition of supplementary information on new surveys that I sent him as they were completed. A certain amount of twisting and compression was necessary to get the map to "fit" an eight by ten page.

Larry and I have had frequent disagreements on matters of policy and ethics. This latest tactic, taking the work of others and publishing it under his name without permission, and with, at best the inference that it is largely his, is certainly a case of very poor judgement indeed. In some circles a far less complimentary term is applied to such poor judgement.

This letter did not stem from any great desire to see my name in print. Quite the contrary, I would rather not have seen James Cave mentioned at all, and especially not in this rather distorted light. Representing the people to whom this work rightfully belongs, I must protest this treatment of our cave and us.

/s/ Glen K. Merrill

Editor's Note: A letter addressed to George Fairer from Saro Corrie expressed similar but somewhat less detailed criticism of this same article. Mrs. Corrie's comments were extremely harsh and indicated that Mr. Griffin had intentionally attempted to discredit others who were significant in the exploration of James Cave. She said in part "it is full of lies...his map is a mess and we have the real map to _____ I have been in Key Canyon myself, so you know it cannot be

to difficult."

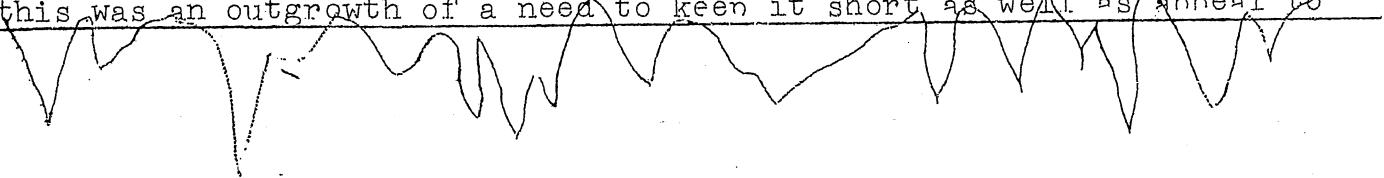
Mr. Merrill included with his letter two copies of the map to the cave which, after careful study, proved to be nearly identical to the one reproduced in THE TROGLODYTE except for a small area south of Key Canyon where Mr. Griffin had made a few small additions.

Mrs. Corrie's letter was sent to Larry for his comments. His reply was lengthy and much of it was of a personal nature so only pertinent remarks are included below.

"To my knowledge, this article has no outright lies...Secondly, I did write it to appeal to the VPI Cave Club. Flavoring it with a little color certainly, to me, was not undesirable. I find no exaggerations whatever about Key Canyon...The map you have made such a fuss over also needs defending. It is essentially one of Merrill's own early base maps. I have made additions through his own notes and from what I could remember in the absence of other info. Detail and accuracy were impossible (as I stated in the article) due to the difficulty in scaling down a complex system like James to one typewriter page..

"In effect, it was intended as a "popular article" to appeal to and interest fellow cavers at Tech, not as a scientific report.

"It was necessary for me to shorten the article and I left out people who should have been mentioned, at the very least. For this I am sorry and if you wish we can have an addition printed in a future edition of this publication to credit those deserving individuals. I mentioned others from VPI merely because these fellows are known here by many of the readers, and you, Merrill, and Sennott are not. Again, this was an outgrowth of a need to keep it short as well as appeal to



No, its a
Plecotus townsendii
virginianus

Wow! it's a
Gyrinophilus
porphyriticus
porphyriticus

It looks like a
moldy vienna sausage
to me

- Bauer -

fellow cavers.

"In closing my defense, I wish to state that no harm or glory was intended or expected. It was with great disappointment that I received your letter through the VPI Cave Club today.

Editor's Note: Mr. Merrill included with his letter the following Errata Sheet of Griffin's article. Comments in brackets and underlining are mine.

PAGE PARA

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| 6 | 1 | Mr. Robert Carrier, Louisville, now owns both Coach and James Caves. |
| 7 | 2 | Moonshiner's Muderhole is not that deep. There is some disagreement about the exact depth, but no estimates exceed 150'. |
| 7 | 2 | Moonshining was carried on there during prohibition - their privacy is questionable as the owner of the cave at that time wrecked their still! |
| 7 | 3 | The crawlway is 207' long. Larry referred to it as "the infamous hundred-yard belly-crawl". |
| 7 | 4 | Exploration had gained momentum before Forty-Fathom was crossed. It is safe to estimate that the far side would have been reached in a month or two anyway. |
| 7 | 4 | The five or six levels are open to serious question. It is hard to select just what constitutes a level in this area as there is at least 250' of absolutely honeycombed limestone. One could select two levels or ten, as his philosophy dictated. |
| 7 | 7 | The Gledila Route and Key Canyon were not and are not, the only promising areas for exploration. |
| 8 | map | Griffins Dome is not the one indicated. It is a smaller one just South of the letter "I". The one indicated is "Y" Dome. The passages shown West of Key Canyon bear little resemblance to the ones actually there. |
| 9 | 2 | The Key Canyon drop is 80'. [Editor's Note: the 150' was a typographical error. The original manuscript read 100'.] total height 180, more than the 17 or 18 people have been there now - but the warning is especially appropriate. This is a difficult and potentially very dangerous area, not to be entered without considerable preparation and caution. Even the attackers don't seem to agree here.] |

Editor's Note: It appears that the article in question was written as a brief report on one of the country's better known caves and to show the part that some of the people better know to us here at Tech have played in its development. As Larry states in his opening paragraph, "I am honored to have had some small part in helping him realize his ambition."

It appears to us that Larry in no way asked for credit for work done by others but merely mentioned the accomplishments in the cave in which he and others well known in this area played an important role. He did not take credit for the map but reproduced it as an aid to understanding his article.

The complaints raised seem to originate from the fact that Larry continually uses the term "we" and fails to identify "we". This is regrettable. Also, he probably have mentioned the individuals responsible for the map, but other than this we find little objection to the article, and no objection whatsoever to its intent or its author. To take another sentence from Mrs. Corrie's letter, "The article is about Larry, not about the cave." This is true to a large degree.

On the map sent to us by Mr. Merrill the following credit appeared.

Survey by C.O.G. N.S.S. 1954
 " " K.I.S.S. N.S.S. 1955
 " " Merrill and others 1959
 Cartography by Merrill 1959-1960

Possibly publication on this issue should have been restricted to mentioning those individuals who should have been mentioned in the original article, but Mr. Griffin is a fine individual and an outstanding caver and we would hate to see this matter widely discussed by individuals not acquainted with the entire situation, as it apparently has been,

Also, we will be glad to accept any write-up on this cave by anyone who feels that he can give a more accurate picture of the cave without being influenced by personal prejudices.

CAVE CLUB OR OUTING CLUB?

editorial

"Your outing club certainly seems to do a lot of caving". With this statement a boy from the University of Massachusetts who was attending the I.O.C.A. caving program to which we were host brought to a head a question which has been smoldering within the club for several months. We've always been under the impression that we were a member of the VPI Cave Club but all of a sudden it seems that actually it is the VPI Outing Club. It seems that a small portion of our membership has suddenly decided and impressed upon others that we are in reality an outing club.

Certainly the club cannot go on as it now exists, the name, constitution, and some of its members a cave club, and the rest of the membership an outing club.

One of three things must surely happen. First, the club could split into a cave club and an outing club. This would seem to be a very unwise move for both would lose strength and one would undoubtedly die within a very few years.

Second, the club could change its name to the VPI Outing Club, write a constitution, etc. to correspond and establish specialized committees, one of which would be a caving committee. This committee alone would then function as a grotto of the N.S.S. The membership of the club could then be expanded to include all of those people in this school who are interested in other outings, rather than being restricted to those interested in caving.

Or third, and far preferred in this quarter, the club could do as it seemed it was going to do when the I.O.C.A. business was originally introduced and remain a cave club, a grotto of the N.S.S. and establish a committee which would maintain contact and relations with I.O.C.A.

and coordinate trips other than caving for the cavers who wanted an occasional diversification. In this case the club would remain exclusively for cavers but would offer a diversity of activities for those who were interested.

In the third case the club's primary affiliation should be with the N.S.S., which seems to us to be a more profitable relationship, offering something beyond the college level, mature and educated leadership, an opportunity to learn and participate in scientific studies, and nationwide fellowship. (see "THE N.S.S. NEWS AND MORE" in this issue)

In brief, we should either remain primarily a cave club and hold the I.O.C.A. activities as secondary, or change to an outing club and make our activities available to those on campus who are interested in some outings but not caving.

It is up to the membership what will be done, but it is evident that something must be done. (it is noted that the results of the election held since this article was written and read have been indicative of the desires of the membership on this matter.)

(See the following article for more editorial comment on this topic.)

OUR ROLE IN I.O.C.A.

by Mike Rosenheimer

A recent rhubarb concerning the role of VPI in I.O.C.A. needs some clarification. The following one will be extremely biased.¹

In this remote corner of the world, the clubs that VPI will be most able to work with are those within no more than six or eight hours drive. This does not mean that we cannot gain from the friendship of those who are more distant, but rather that we are able to do our caving and climbing, etc., chiefly with those within our own neighborhood.²

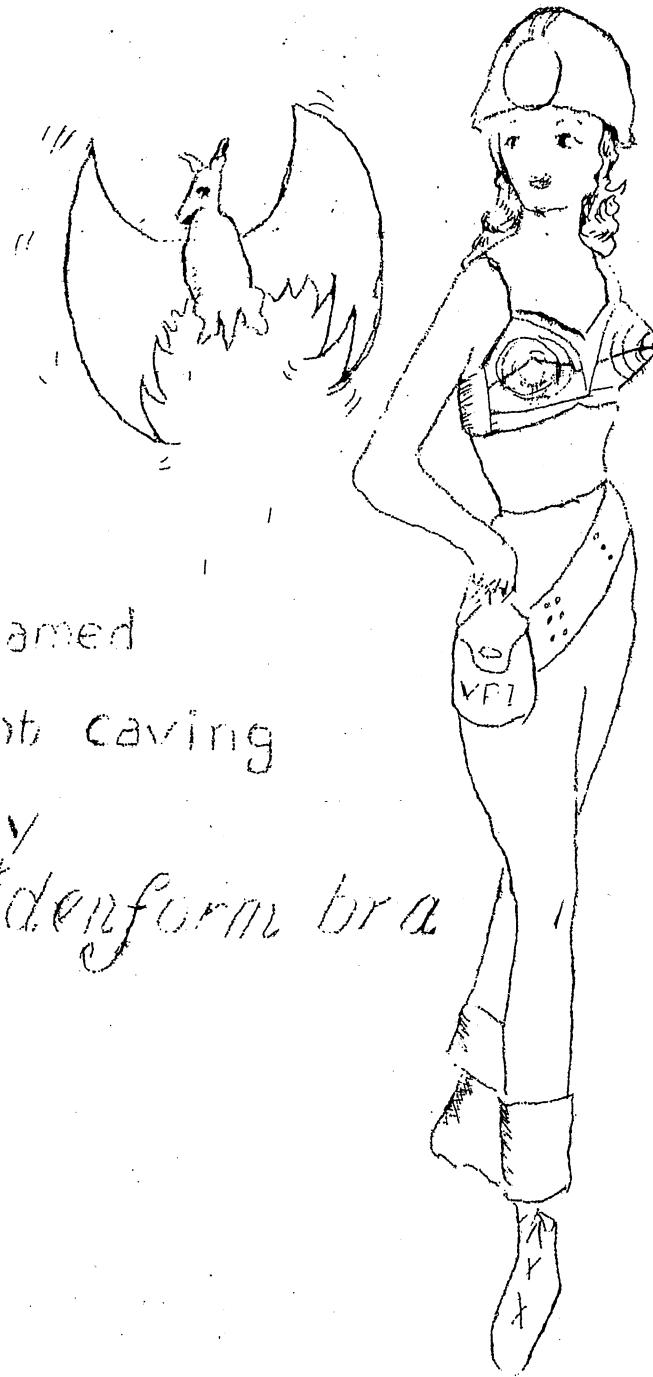
At the last Virginia region (N.S.S.) conference held at Charlottesville last November, we, the student grottoes, were expressly charged (by Bill Stephenson) with the "spreading of the pursuit of caving" (not a direct quote) to college-aged people. Two student grottoes were present-- U.Va. and VPI. The contrast between the two, both in outlook and in individual success, was extreme. The U.Va. Cave Club, host of the affair, turned out two or three people. I am told that their club numbers less than a dozen cavers. In competition is a similarly anemic Outing Club. VPI was represented by approximately 15 people. The club could then report that it was definitely growing. Not mentioned, but still true was the fact that we included under one banner all the outing activities desired by the membership. Still true and still growing.

An examination of the I.O.C.A. Southern Region is similarly revealing. Of the seven clubs in the region (American, Mary Washington, U. Va. Outing Club, VPI, U.N.C., Duke, N.C.State), two (American and N.C. State) may be considered of only minor size. This is no insult to them; it just happens to be true. According to its own members, U.Va. O.C. is getting yet weaker.

Duke rarely gets far enough out of their shell to be of much influence, though I am told that their potential is large. This leaves three strong clubs whose total membership is about 120 people. Two of the three clubs have shown that while they intend to remain diversified, their main interest is underground. The girls from Mary Washington are quite frankly, willing to try it too.

In combination, these two analyses appear to demonstrate that
1. There is some correlation between the diversity of such a club

I dreamed
I went caving
in my
maddenform bra



C. SAILNDERS

*2. Rather than a conflict, our own dual role in the N.S.S. and in I.O.C.A. ideally serves the purpose for which we are recognized by each of these organizations.⁴

I would appreciate the opportunity to hear another viewpoint on this subject.

Editor's Notes:

1.) It was Mr. Rosenheimer who, after attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and holding membership in the outing club there, originally introduced the I.O.C.A. program within our club.

2.) It seems that we should remember that we are first an individual club and the majority of our activities should be for our club members without having to invite the rest of the world to join us, or travel halfway around the globe to join them.

3.) It appears that Mr. Rosenheimer is saying that the size and influence of our club is a result of its diversity. He should take note of the fact that prior to this year very few activities other than caving were engaged in, and even now only a very few of the individuals are interested in large organized outings other than caving. Most other activities are on a small scale and within our own membership.

The strength and interest in the club seems to us a direct outgrowth of the fact that the Cave Club offers not only an opportunity for socializing, but a chance to learn and accomplish worthwhile objectives in the fields of exploration and scientific study. If we were to become, as he suggests, a club which is dancing at Mary Washington one weekend, rock-climbing in New York the next, and playing host to an assortment of would-be cavers the next, our worthwhile objectives would suffer and the club would become merely an expensive social organization.

It is staying as a separate club, engaging on occasion in activities with other groups, that we have been able to make worthwhile contributions to the knowledge of caves and maintain an interested membership.

4.) Granted that we should join in activities with both groups, but the major portion of our activities should be within our own club. It also seems that within the N.S.S. we have the opportunity to learn while in I.O.C.A. we spend our time teaching while most of those being taught do not want to learn. We should learn during our encounters with the N.S.S. and by reading its literature so that we can apply this knowledge to our own activities and studies, and on occasion communicate, via joint activities and our publication, our knowledge gained to others.

"Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals not having had time to acquire any new value for each other...We live thick and are in each other's way, and stumble over one another...Certainly less frequency would suffice for all important and hearty communications." Henry David Thoreau, "On Solitude"

I.O.C.A. vs. THE N.S.S.

by George Fairer
(secretary- Blue Ridge
Region, I.O.C.A.)

Actually the title of this article is misleading. There are no grounds of any kind for any differences between the IOCA and the NSS; especially in this region, the BROCA region.

The National Speleological Society is an organization which gathers together and coordinates people who are interested in all aspects of caving whether it is intended just as a sport or as a science.

The people who engage in caving are usually interested in the fields

hiking, climbing, and nature in general because of the close correlation between these fields. If one enters a cave, he naturally has to call upon the skills and techniques of these diversified fields to accomplish the exploration of the cave in an efficient, practical, and safe manor. True, techniques may be modified when carried from one field to another as in the case of vertical or pit caving and rock climbing. The aspect is somewhat different, for in caving you start at the top, go down and then climb up, whereas in rock climbing you start at the bottom, climb up, and then return to the bottom. The aspects are different but, the techniques are basically the same.

A belay, whether used in the field of climbing or caving, is correct in its use by the means of only one method. To participate in both fields safely, the technique must be mastered in the same manner and must be applied in the same way.

The Inter-Collegiate Outing Club Association, Like the NSS, is an organization of coordination. IOCA's rules are simpler and it has no constitution. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities of college clubs which deal with any activity of the great outdoors. These activities include: climbing, hiking, skiing, caving, etc., etc, etc. This list could go on forever.

Through diversification and its large size, IOCA has developed many fields of outing into a series of techniques of proven worth. These techniques are not stringently, except in the realm of safety, because IOCA is an organization of fun and not of science.

The N.S.S. on the other hand is a semi-scientific organization which functions only in the field of caving. This specialization has led to proven techniques in this field which are unsurpassed by any others. Yes, the N.S.S. is the unquestioned leader in the field of caving. It has pioneered exploration, conservation, and scientific studies of all kinds, as well as made the sport of caving into a relatively safe and very rewarding hobby.

It has been shown that both of these organizations are very worthwhile and are leaders in their fields. But the fields are not and cannot be separated. Each organization has much to offer the other one. Both are mainly, to student members, a means of enjoying life in a manner which they like. Therefore, there is no reason that I can see that a person cannot belong to both groups or a club, for that matter, and benefit from the opportunities offered by each.

As chairman of the B.R.O.C.A. region of I.O.C.A. and the outgoing president of the VPI Grotto of the N.S.S., I surely hope that all people in both organizations will get together and mutually gain from knowledge and enjoyment of the great world of nature.

THE CORRECT METHOD OF BELAYING

by George Fairer

A belay is to a climber as a parachute is to a pilot. Both are to be used in the event of an emergency and both must be used correctly to be effective.

To function properly you, as a belayer, must first be tied into the rock or cave wall. There is a very good reason for this. You will do the climber absolutely no good by rapidly following him down the cliff or pit. Nothing is accomplished by both of you climbing together. Therefore, you must be anchored to be effective.

The best method of tying in is to tie a bowline on a coil of at least three turns around your waist, the free end of the coil is then tied to a piton, bolt, or handy tree. This keeps you in place in spite of any forces which you may be subjected to.

Now, after you have tied in, you may concentrate on stopping your leader in case he falls. He is tied to the end of the belay rope which goes back to you. The rope goes from him, around your seat and under your tie in, after passing through a carabiner attached to your waist coil on the climbers side of you, (the reason why will be explained later) and hence into your hand on the on-site side of your body from the carabiner. In the event the climber falls, the rope will pull tight and run around you very rapidly. It is up to you to stop him safely and dynamically. This is done by using the friction of the rope on your body, not by gripping tightly with your hands. The rope is low on your seat because when the rope is running, the heat generated by friction will surely burn you if it is concentrated in one small area. The rope, when pulled tight, will tend to ride up to the small of the back. This riding up of the rope tends to spread the frictional heat over a large area and keeps you from getting burned.

The carabiner on the climbers side is to stop the rope from under you in case the pull is from below. In lead climbing, the pull will normally be from above, hence the rope below the tie in line; but if he falls below you, in the event his safety niton pulls out, the pull will first from above and then from below. Therefore you must always be prepared for a pull from either direction.

There are rules which must always be obeyed when belaying.

1. Always tie in.
2. Always expect a fall with a resulting pull from either above or below.
3. Always wear gloves.
4. Always be alert.
5. Never take your breaking hand off of the rope.

Editor's Note: This article reflects the policy of the author and does not necessarily state the opinions of this publication or of the VFI Cave Club.

FIRST ANNUAL BROCA SPRING TRIP

by Ed Bauer

Torrential rains, poor "highways" and beer in the spaghetti sauce failed to block the success of the first B.R.O.C.A. Spring Trip at the Trout Creek Shelter on the Appalachian Trail on April 6-8. Between forty and fifty "outers" sloshed up to the Adirondak type shelter sometime between Friday evening and Sunday afternoon. Those colleges represented included Mary Washington, American University, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, and our own Virginia Tech. At the business meeting on Sunday morning George Fairer(VFI) was almost unanimously elected secretary of the Blue Ridge Region of IOCA. He also willingly(or was it unwillingly, George) agreed to act as coordinator of transport to Conference. Polly Hopkins(MWC) agreed to make the necessary arrangements for an IOCA-wide fall trip to the Senaca Rocks area. Charlotte Brunner(MWC) agreed to coordinate transportation to College Week this fall.

Caves visited over the weekend were Tawney's, New River, Craig County Saltpeter, and a cave near where Craig County Saltpeter Cave should be. Climbers visiting nearby Dragon's Tooth found that the wasps were there first that they were very effective in retaining thier positions. A midnight hike prooved to one G.F. that it would have been easier to climb over a certain fence than to bust into it at full tilt. We feel it our duty to mention here (gamewarden take note) that Mike Rosenheimer caught his first trout, 15 minutes before the season opened, by running over it in his VW while fording the creek.

Other activities engaged in over the wet weekend include folk song

singing, GO, getting across the stream without getting wet, and stuffing the shelter.

At a drying out, coffee drinking conference held at Mike's and George's place on Sunday afternoon it was agreed that we all had a good time and are looking forward to our next meeting.

I.O.C.A. COLLEGE WEEK

by Mike Rosenheimer

Briefly, I would like to explain this trip which, so far as I know, is unique.

Every autumn for the past sixteen or so years miscellaneous IOCA members have congregated in the mountains for one last fling before school starts. The site that is chosen is from three to five miles from the nearest road and is at some famous mountain area. The affair lasts for up to two weeks, with participants coming and leaving as suits them.

Consider, if you will, a retreat at which:

1. Time is of no importance.
2. The draft board would have to hike in to find you.
3. You can do essentially as you please.
4. Attendance of girls' schools is high.

I intend to try to get there this year and will have to rush back from England to make it. I seriously hope to see all of you there; after one such trip, I hope you'll be back. Transportation is being co-ordinated by Charlotte Brunner of Mary Washington College.

BLACK LIST TO BE PUBLISHED

It has been decided that as a measure to help eliminate the few remaining acts of vandalism which occur among our membership and to encourage our members to remove not only their own but other names from cave walls that in each issue of this publication a list shall be included of all those occurrences of the names of our members which are found in caves and where they were found. It is hoped that members will note the location and authors of the signatures, remove them if possible, and send the information to the Editor.

If public embarrassment is the only way of halting such acts of vandalism, then we shall resort to this method which we hope will result in a short and evershrinking list.

Since the idea was originated on March 27, the following inscriptions have been noted by the editor.

Tom Lamons - Pig Hole Cave, near the lower entrance.
Tom Lamons 1961 - Pig Hole Cave, near the Queens Bath

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue of THE TECH TROGLODYTE, look for a write-up and map of Craig County Saltpeter Cave, a report on the Virginia Region Project, a progress report on the Higgenbotham Cave Project, trip reports to Butler's and Warm River Caves and Southwest Virginia, extensive comment on the local situation concerning the use of caves as fallout shelters, and much more. Articles for publication should be submitted to the Editor at the earliest possible date.