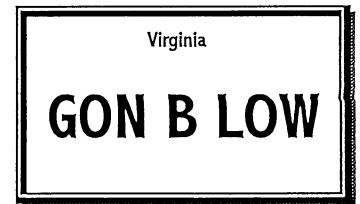
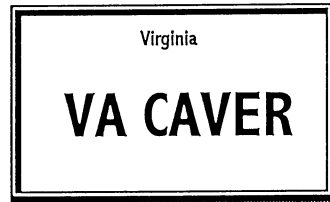
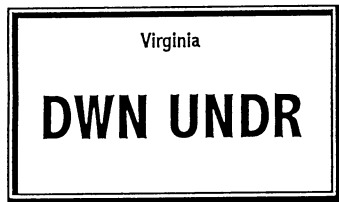
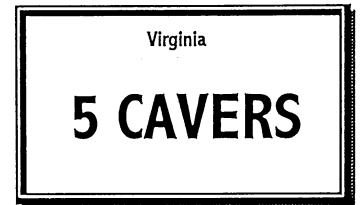
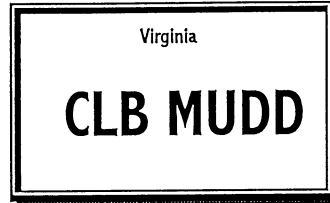
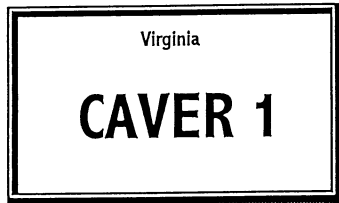
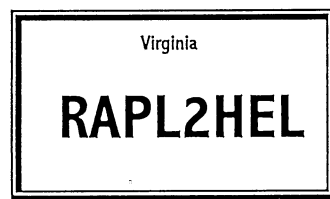
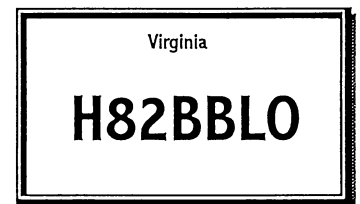


The Tech Troglodyte

Caver Plates We've Seen:



Caver Plates We'd Like to See:



Spring 1994

The Tech Troglodyte

A Journal of the Virginia Tech Grotto of the
National Speleological Society



Spring Semester, 1994

Volume XXXIII, No. 2

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special thanks to Laine Buckwalter

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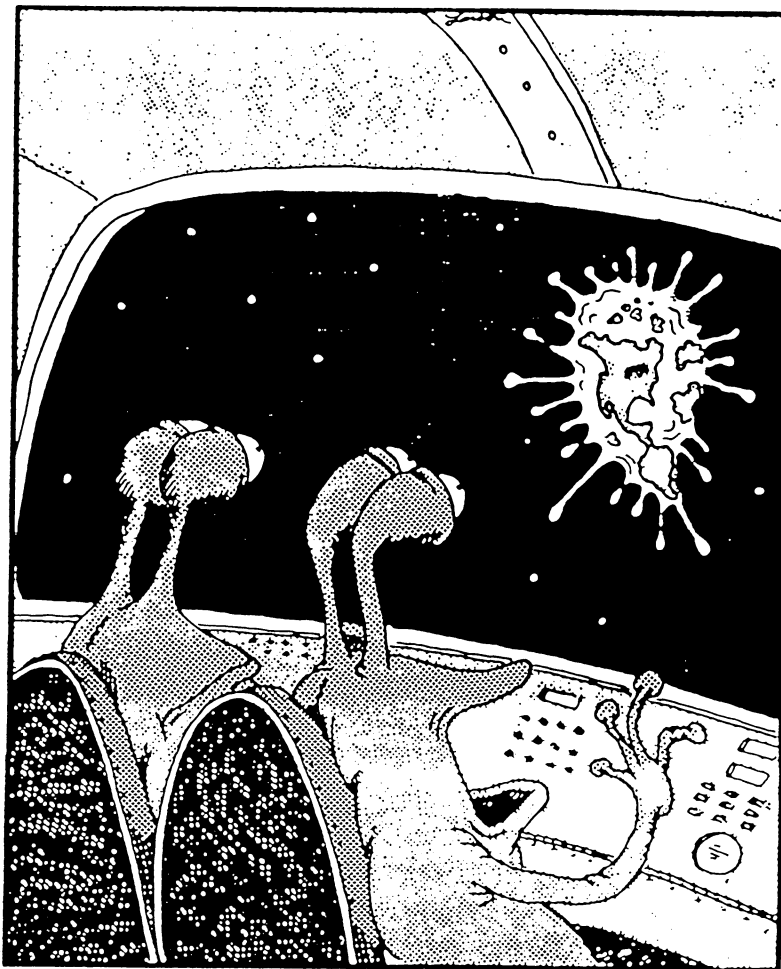
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Editor's Last Word

Well, another Trog has come and gone with all the usual screw-ups, confusion, and last-minute madness. Thanks to everyone who helped by contributing articles, trip reports, and even ideas to make this process go more smoothly.

I'd also like to offer a special thanks to all those who promised me articles and bailed out at the last minute (you know who you are).

Anyway, here's the Trog. Hope you like it. Feel free to compliment me on what a fine job I've done. You can also offer constructive criticism for the future. Any outright complaints, however, might just make me angry, and you wouldn't like me when I'm angry . . .



"Oh, gross!"

A Little Bit of History

This year marks the 51st year the VPI Cave Club has existed. In honor of this most auspicious occasion, we stole some interesting tidbits from the Tech Troglodyte's 25th Anniversary Issue. The article "A True Historie" was submitted by Mike Frieders and Bob Barlow in 1968. Be warned, however, that "many discrepancies may be noticed between facts in this history and later articles. But VPI cavers being more prone to caving than journalism have left unfortunate holes in our early records which we have yet to fully explore." I would guess that 26 years later, there is still much to discover about the early years of the club.

"It all began then, when Tommy Watts, already an NSS member, and Ralph Hoss, another student caver, drummed up interest among a few others to affiliate VPI's cavers with the National Speleological Society. Watts and Hoss, along with George Crabb, acted through Dr. Holden and NSS members to bring VPI to the attention of the National Speleological Society. As a result, a national meeting of the NSS was held at VPI on 5 and 5 September, 1942. At this meeting, the VPI cavers were affiliated with the NSS, and became the first Student Grotto of the Society."

"The VPI Grotto swung into the swinging sixties with a new constitution, adopted in May 1961, which contained the controversial amendments dealing with a trip leader classification system. The new constitution divided all club members into groups of horizontal or vertical cavers, and leaders into groups "A" or "B" according to their abilities."

"In February of 1962 the VPI Grotto again published a newsletter called the Tech Troglodyte which was to be published each quarter, but like all other caving journals was published when there was enough to put in it. The first "Troggs" were practically written, edited, and published by Gregg Harland alone."

"VPI's rise in national prestige was confirmed in 1963 when the VPI Grotto hosted the annual convention of the NSS at Mountain Lake, near Tech."

"In 1963 the VPI Grotto established itself as the undisputed "World's Most Active Caving Organization" with an average of four trips per week and between two and three thousand hours underground per quarter. Most of the growth and added caving was probably a direct result of the trainee system incorporated into the club in 1961 to teach prospective members the basics of caving, safety, and conservation."

"Probably the most significant event in the grotto's history took place in 1965 when the constitution was again revised to do away with the leadership code. This was followed by an overall increase in the caving activities of the grotto, due to the fact that "qualified" trip leaders had been few, and as a result, the trips had been limited. It was found that the added experience gained by the members in the course of increased caving more than outweighed the benefits of the leadership in making all the members more safety conscious."

Caving Trivia

VPI cavers have been exploring such familiar caves as Smokehole, Tawney's, Newcastle Murder Hole, and Pig Hole for over 50 years!

In order to conserve gas, cavers would ride together to the cave standing in the back of a farmer's truck.

Many early cavers wore cloth miner's hats while underground. Hard hats were becoming more popular around 1948, but jumped in popularity in the club when one of the members required three stitches after a rock fell ten feet onto his head in Pig Hole.

Early "rappels" into Clover Hollow consisted of each caver being lowered on a bosun seat while one person remained at the top manning the winch. "It was a slow process, but we never lost anyone" (author of quote unknown).

In the first few years that the club was part of the NSS, National dues were \$1.00 annually and grotto dues were \$.50 per quarter.

An Early Caver's Attempt at Poetry

Advice to [?] Spelunker by R.N.S.

So you're going caving?
I'll tell you Bun,
You ought to get yourself prepared
To have a lot of fun.
But I guess you'd better wear a pair
Of old blue dungarees,
And a little extra padding
Will help around the knees.
On top I'd wear a sweatshirt
Or some old dud -
For you never can tell when
You'll see a lot of mud.
I'd wear a pair of real old shoes
And heavy woolen socks,
'Cause it helps to have protection when
You're walking on rough rocks.
Does it sound like pure insanity
Of some Moronic brand?
All the gals, dress that way, too
If they don't look grand!
And I think you'll find we Speleos
Will do our very best
To make the day a happy one
If not a day of rest.

Adventures in Non-Caving

You see, caving is fun. This is why so many times I have entered a Friday night meeting (exhausted) with no intention of plunging underground in the next couple of days, but have left (excited) committed to a Sunday trip. On these occasions I burst out of the stuffy Smyth lecture room with only two events between me and the cave trip: a work-filled Saturday AND . . . an adventure-filled route getting *to* the cave.

You are about to embark on my very first expedition *on the way* to New River Cave, and maybe some other particularly memorable pre-caving fiascos.

The journey starts in the Derring parking lot early last fall. "It's so late! They must have left us."

"No, we haven't even approached caver-standard time. We have about fifteen more minutes yet."

So, there are ten brand new trainees sitting sleepy-eyed, bags packed, and anxious. Slowly, yawning people whom none of us know drive up and begin planning who goes where first. One hungry party goes to Kroger, one hungry party goes to Hardee's, another drives to "sign-out" and another bolts to 7-11 for batteries they've meant to buy for weeks now. Now we have four task-forces loose in Blacksburg.

The sign-out team arrives at their destination and begins to attack task #1 - dumping all the spent carbide out of the lamps and figuring out how many lamps and helmets we need. This sort of high math with a hangover can baffle even the most skilled caver. Task #2 - who is on the trip, what are their names and phone numbers, and oh yeah, where are we going again?

Meanwhile, the eaters become fed and at least one person remembers what it was they forgot at home. Then someone in their Hardee's biscuit-bliss wonders, "Aren't we supposed to wait for the others at Kroger before we head out to the river?" This constitutes the need to stand in the Kroger parking lot for at least 25 minutes just in case the others come to find them there.

As the 7-11 crew reaffirms their belief that batteries can be a rip-off at a convenience store, one of the club members remembers, "Hey, don't all these 16 trainees need to sign the New River waivers?" Great, another mission is at hand. Of course, first a gasoline fill-up, then comes the search for the waivers

Time lapsed from Derring: Two hours, thirty minutes. Finally! We are parked at the river and the cave area is in sight! The horde of trainees are already scooting up the hill -- but wait, the members still need to get suited up. That will only take a minute, right?

This high adventure morning was that of my first cave trip. It took three hours to begin the ascent to the cave and three hours to get to the waterfall inside. I hope everyone else had as much fun on the Blacksburg tour as I did!

But wait! There's more:

Mike³'s Bug Experiment at Tawneys Just After Some Minor Winter Flooding:

Somehow, after Mike put off an experiment until the last minute, he found four people who felt sorry enough for him to help him out. "You'll get to learn how to make a dry-suit," he offered. I don't think any of us realized that this venture was to mean one of the most interesting pre-caving experiences ever.

Our first destination was a "quick" stop at Kroger for some trash bags. Well, then the shopping list lengthened to rubber gloves, a Kroger sub sandwich, cheese bread, caramels, duct tape, and trash bags. Of course we wanted the cheapest, most durable dry suit material! So we each grabbed a different brand, compared non-comparable measurements and bag strengths, and ultimately decided on whichever brand had the best picture on the box. This method was repeated for the gloves - are two hundred grippers all that much better than one hundred or none at all? We were a marketer's dream.

Next, the most challenging part of the trip was accomplished in the comfort of Jim's warm house - the dry-suit construction. We jumped into and out of trash bags for the next hour and a half.

"Can you snip this piece here?"

"Only if you tape me here."

"No, you'll have to tape *yourself* there."

"Where the hell did the scissors go? I just had them"

And on and on. It should be noted here that my dry suit is the only one that didn't and still hasn't leaked (of course, my suit never touched the water, either).

Pshew, there have really been some extended pre-caving trips. Tired yet? Me neither, but I do have a point. I am learning about many prided VPI Club traditions that are favorable and essential for the caving I'd like to do. Some of these include high safety standards, in- and around-cave conservation, positive landowner relations, training new cavers, being on-call for rescues, enjoying caves, and many others. On the other hand, there are some prided club traditions I can't figure out. One of these, of course, is the caver-standard time/waste-the-whole-day-assing-around phenomenon. Next time you find that you've spent the whole day *planning* to go caving, maybe you'll reflect and find that the pre-cave experience is actually one of your favorite parts of caving. Or maybe you'll resolve to dump your lamp tonight and fill your car up the day before your next trip.

Angie Felty

President (or is it Vice) Column

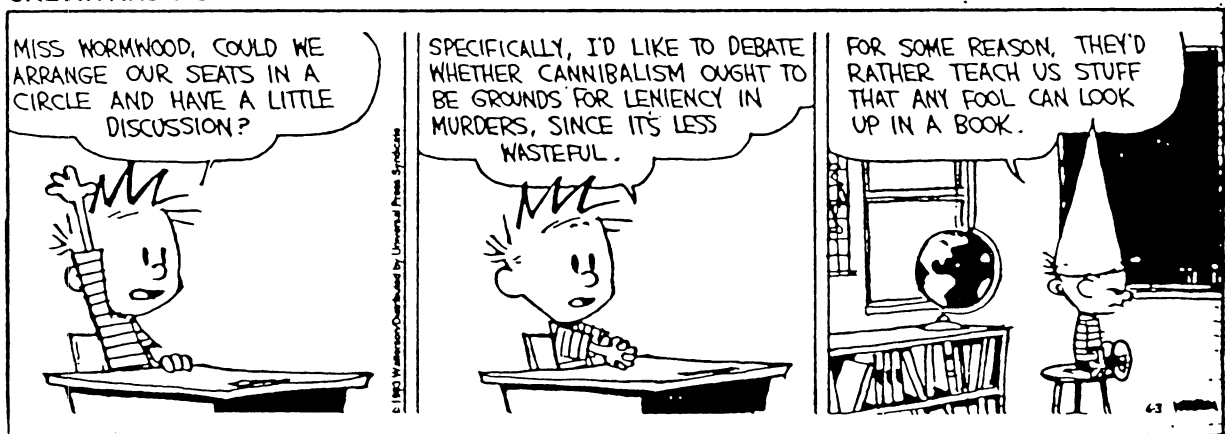
Well this semester has been pretty good as far as new members coming up. Congrats to all the new people these last couple of weeks. The quarry out at Jim's has been going pretty good for a temporary replacement for the bridge, but hopefully we will talk to the university soon about getting the bridge back.

Not very much caving going on this semester it seems. We need a few more people to go more often. All you new members will hopefully be able to help out next year to get lots of people underground. We still need people to help out on different committees. Road clean-up, Programs, and Publicity to name a few. Need more people to help out on conservation trips and landowner work days.

Banquet was pretty good this year although few trainees were there; hopefully I will see all of you out at Picnic and OTR next year. Remember, things happen in Blacksburg all summer also. I expect to see some of you at Float Trip on Memorial Day Weekend. Hope everyone's exams go well and enjoy caving and parting!!!

Bob "Don't Expect me to Write Too Much because my Brain Size is Limited" Cosby

CALVIN AND HOBBS BILL WATTERSON



Upcoming Events

Float Trip -- Saturday, May 28 (Memorial Day weekend)

Alan and Shannon's "Post-Hitched Bash", featuring the world-renowned band VLK -- mid to late July

First meeting of Fall Semester -- Friday, August 26

Old Timer's Reunion -- Friday, September 2 thru Monday 5th (or whenever you want to come and go) (Labor Day weekend)

How Not to Transport A Bike

To further explain what happened when Steve Wells helped me transport my motorcycle from Golfview to Mr. Zion

It was a rainy, cold Blacksburg evening (surprise). Since my bike wouldn't start, Steve offered to assist me by loading the Kawasaki into his less-than-reliable Dodge van. My chromed beauty is equipped with an engine guard which had to be removed before the bike would fit. Of course, we didn't realize this until I was on the bike, on a ramp, unable to safely go backward. After about an hour of balancing the motorcycle and propping the door of the van open, we managed to squeeze my baby into the luxury mobile. Steve did a great job of disassembling all of the necessary parts, with the help of Spot's tools.

Once we embarked on our journey, some readjusting of the bike was necessary as it was pushing on the back doors, and I had little faith that they would hold. In order to scooch the bike forward, Steve slammed on the brakes. By the way, we didn't tie it down because it seemed pretty balanced with me on it. It was a bit more stable lying on top of me, but I thought it would be a neat idea for Steve to lift the #@*ing monstrosity off of me. Finally, we drove past Kroger and really felt we would be at Nancy's in no time. I had a take-home final still to do that evening, and was getting a little concerned about time.

Needless to say, when I heard a strange sound I asked Steve if it was the transmission. "No," he reassured me, "we're running out of gas." As he performed a quick u-ey in the middle of Glade, our attempt to reach the gas station proved to truly be in vain. The gears locked. Steve pounded and banged for a good while (on Jen or the bike? -- Eds), but they were more stuck than ever before. He fixed them after 20 minutes or so, and decided we should walk to the gas station down the road. The gas Steve bought would have benefitted us if it had been poured into the carburetor; however, neither of us thought of that. We had blocked someone's driveway during these events, so I insisted on drifting the van back. We even managed to screw this up. With one side-view mirror less, an injured tree and a brief time of severely obstructed traffic, we moved the Dodge. I am still amazed that no one helped us push the white beast. We tried a variety of methods to get it off of the curb it was stuck on, pushing separately and together. The together was quite a sight. Steve and I would push then Steve would race to the driver seat, jump in, and steer.

Finally, some good ol' boys stopped and gave us a lift back to the gas station. Steve called Spot (Mr. Rescue) and Ali to come help us. Naturally, even the phone was screwed up, so really he phoned twice. We made it to Mt. Zion in a cool 4 and a half hours.

Steve and I had a fun time since neither of us got mad at our uncanny bad luck. He has helped me with my bike since day one, including purchasing it. So, thank you pal for your time, muscle, and good-nature. Also, thank you Spot and Ali for heading out to lend us a hand!

Jen Savage

We'll Know Where to Find Your Body

It was the first really beautiful day of spring, and I had just finished practicing top belay at the quarry. Laden with rope, backpack, and cable ladder, I prepared to rappel. Allison, Steve Wells, Bob Cosby, and Sarah Ludeke were all going to have to take the sucker's way down (on foot), since none of them had carried up their rappelling device. There wasn't anyone down at the bottom to give a belay, but I decided to go anyway. "Just don't do a speed rappel," advised Steve. "If you go down slowly, you shouldn't have any problem. And if you do screw-up, we'll know where to find your body . . . at the bottom of the rope!" He smiled, checked my eight and seat, and away I went.

Just fifteen or so feet down was a little ledge, over which a pad had been rigged. As I approached the ledge, I noticed that the rope was tangled with the cord securing the rope pad. I slowly descended the next two feet, until my feet were on the lip of the ledge, whereupon I discovered that the rope was under the pad. With my butt hanging over forty feet of air, I was going to have to untangle this mess. The tangle was to my right, on the side of my brake hand, and I couldn't reach it with my left. My first thought was to get some legs wraps, so that I could let go of the rope with my right hand, but (duh) since the rope was under the pad, that was not an option. The ol' adrenal gland kicked in as I remembered Steve's parting words.

Fortunately, I had decided to imitate the practice I had observed in more experienced cavers of descending with climbing gear in place. I had the cord for my top knot girth hitched around my seat, with the end tucked into my pants. I pulled the end out, and only then realized that I was going to have to tie on with one hand, my left. "We'll know where to find your body . . ." echoed again through my mind; the adrenaline rate kicked up a few more notches.

The end of the story is uneventful. I was able to tie a Prussik with my left hand, while my brake hand remained on the rope. Once I had sat down on the Prussik, untangling the rope, untying the Prussik left handed (pushed it down once I was on the eight), and resuming my descent took only a couple of seconds. It was about an hour, though, before the adrenaline jitters subsided.

Like any experience, what doesn't kill you makes you smarter (or so they claim, though I can name a few cavers who's very lives prove the exceptions -- Eds). What did I learn from this?

1) Always have your ascending gear attached to your seat when rappelling. You might not be able to fish it from your pack when you need it, and even if you can, you may not have the time.

2) You must be able to attach your ascender with your off hand only. Easy if you have a mechanical ascender. Very do-able with a Prussik. Can you tie a helical one handed? Maybe, but whatever your method, practice at a rope session before your life is at risk.

Jerry Shapiro

A Day at the Fenceposts

This is a trip report. This particular trip was not to a cave, but to the Newberry's clean-up on April 9. As most everyone knows, every year we go out to the Penley farm and help out with some work.

Last Saturday was one of several of these work days this year. At around ten-thirty in the morning, Bob Cosby and I arrived at the Newberry's field and were greeted by Dave Shantz, Dave Cinsavich, Doug Perkins, and Walt Pirie. Our job for the day: fences. Everyone got to work (amazingly enough, with little piddle time) pulling down a section of old fence, digging new holes, and then replacing rotten posts with spanking new ones. Lawrence Britt and Bob and Jean Simonds also arrived for the festivities. A good time was had by all as we worked and the "old farts" exchanged stories.

One particular favorite was when someone brought up, "Remember when we *built* this fence?" (Pretty scary, huh?). Everyone laughed a little and remembered how Buddy out-worked, out-hollered, out-dug, and basically out-did everyone, yet never pushed anyone over their limit and everyone had a good time. I also recall something of a quote about using honeylocust beams to build the fence instead of the stronger black locust, to which Buddy replied, "As long as it lasts longer than I do then it's just what I want."

All in all it was a good day and we replaced fourteen fence posts.

A note to the younger generation who was highly in the minority at the event. I think it would be a good thing if the participation was a little better. Not only is it a good cause (especially if you will be attending picnic), but it is a lot of fun too. Who knows, if you are willing to work and listen too, you may just learn something about fixing fences or about life itself. See you at the fence line!



Sarah Ludeke

"Would you look at that? ... By thunder, you couldn't do that in *our* day — yessiree, the rocks were just a lot heavier back then."

Heard it through the *Grapevine*

Picture if you will a friendly college town. It's winter, a time for romping in the snow, skiing, and other seasonal fun.

Now look closer. Winter ice hangs heavily on trees, branches are down and scattered everywhere. The town is dark. Some women are washing their hair with bottled water in a sink by candlelight. Others are calling friends frantically to see who has power, or water, or maybe both. Smelly people dressing in fancy clothes

You have just entered the *Blacksburg Zone*

And so it was for Banquet this year. Winter tried to get the best of the cave club, but we persevered. Aren't we used to being dirty and gross? Though weather conditions kept a few out-of-towners away, most locals managed to show up. I'm sure there were some disappointed males when Natalie Serbu didn't arrive.

Where there's banquet, there's awards. Mike Moore received the Brain Bucket award for his hand-rappel at the Gorge, and Glen Davis was elected "Armchair Caver" complete with a flashlight-laden lawn chair. Cecile James won't have any more excuses for missing a Mexico trip -- she received jumper cables to keep the ol' kicker in action. Sandy Knapp proved her worth as an International Traveler, and the toilet paper and bucket should assist her next time she's looking for "puppies." Let's not forget "Our Favorite Couple" (and an odd one, at that): Richard Cobb, Pete Sauvigne, and Jim Denton. Trainee of the Year was shared by Mike Mirro and Angie Felty, neither of whom bothered to show up.

Despite non-operational bathrooms in Squires (though some of us used them anyway), it was a nice evening. The bar was stocked and nobody got food poisoning. Thanks to Alison Williams for making all the arrangements.

This winter Alan Schick offered to "buy the cow" as he slipped a diamond ring on Shannon Burcham's finger. Is this guy a romantic or what? See **Upcoming Events** for the post-nuptial party.

Once again, Ko Takamizawa and his lovely wife Joan Johnson are living in separate states. Ko started a new job in Boston, and Joan stayed in New York. Perhaps abstinence makes the heart grow fonder

The club added a some new voting trainees to the collection. Jen Savage, Mike Mirro, Bill Penhallegon, Sara Ludeke, and Jerry Shapiro joined the ranks of members, which they may or may not admit to later in life. Congrats to all five for passing Bob Cosby's grueling tests which included drinking beer and straddling his staircase.

Election time came and went with minimal fuss. Some say it was the fastest election they'd witnessed. Bob Cosby is now President/Vice President (which seems like twice as much work, but he promises to work half as hard), Alison Williams is Secretary, and Leroy Burch is (still) Treasurer until Bill Steier returns to take over. Fond farewell to former officers Dave Warren and Steve Wells.

There were two work weekends this April at the Penley farm. See **A Day at the Fenceposts** for more details.

Mike Fiore escaped from Chapel Hill for a brief weekend visit to Blacksburg and was seen around town with "old friends".

The Easter Beer Hunt and its ensuing sauna party broke the monotony of daily living for some. While the rest of us searched for beers the old-fashioned way, Craig Ferguson foraged with a rented metal detector. Cheating? Perhaps, but most of us found the silly-assed, pleased-with-himself grin on his face amusing enough to let the issue slide. A few trainees even took the plunge (literally!) and did the sauna/river/fire routine.

For the first time in a few years picnic took place in the upper field. The weather was nicer than it had been for years, so naturally more people than usual went caving.

Dave Colatosti, Sandy Knapp, and Bob Simonds biked out this year. For her efforts, Sandy came down with an unpleasant virus and went to bed early Saturday night. Nathan Sharp tried to bike back to B'burg on Saturday, but returned to the Penley farm after realizing he'd biked for an hour in the wrong direction.

Molly Thompson appeared Saturday morning with coffee and coffeecakes for those milling about the fire. She also provided some lunch for very grateful people on the work crews (one crew demolished cherry trees while the other mended fences).

The fire roared Saturday night with the fruits of one of the work crew's labor. Unfortunately, erratic winds made standing near the fire difficult. Many of us have the burn holes in our sweatshirts to prove it. And of course, what would picnic be without firecrackers, carbide bombs and potato launchers?

Joey Fagan showed up at 2:00 Sunday morning. I'm told he's always late, but this is ridiculous! Eight hours later folks started trickling home, leaving the old farts to finish a keg. Why is it that they always out-party the younger crowd?

Thanks to Jen Savage for her efforts towards picnic and t-shirts.

That's the news from Blacksburg, where all the women are muddy, all the men are obscene, and all the children are raving maniacs.

Our Roving Reporter, Mr. A.I. Cartwright

Clover Hollow 10/09/94

Last October I was present on a trip to Clover Hollow led by Mike³ and Hoss for some rigging practice. Before the trip, we of course stopped at Kroger where I proceeded to get a Snapple® brand beverage and Mike purchased his traditional six-pack of Mountain Dew for the impending trip. I do know enough not to bring glass underground (will wonders never cease! --Eds) so after Mike finished a bottle, I filled it with Snapple so that I could enjoy this delicious beverage in the inviting comfort of the cave. I was, however, using a smaller-than-average pack so along with my vertical gear, the bottle would not fit. I suppose I was the "senior trainee" on the trip, so naturally I delegated it to one of the green trainees with an immense pack. Unbeknownst to me, however, Mike gave the same trainee an empty bottle for extra water which he proceeded to fill once we were underground.

It was for the most part a standard tourist trip, where we went down the nuisance drops and the canyon and slid down the Dragon's Tail in pursuit of the famed Library Room. However, coming off the tail, one of the trainees (not the one I gave the bottle to) decided to jump the last five feet and before anyone could stop him, he managed to twist his ankle. It wasn't extremely serious but nevertheless we decided to scratch seeing the Library Room and went to exit the cave through a couple of crawls so the trainee would put as little weight on his ankle as possible. Mike and Hoss rigged a special cam system out of a ropewalker which allowed the trainee to ascent up the canyon (in what other direction would you ascend? --Eds) and beyond without the use of his injured ankle.

Halfway through the trip, near the beautiful black gypsum flowers, the uninjured trainee's lamp was not working correctly and it was quickly deduced that the cause was the muddy cave-water he used to fill the lamp. So he then emptied the bottle because the water wasn't doing anybody any good; can't drink it and it won't work in the lamp. A little while later we hit the second nuisance drop and I was quite thirsty. I asked the trainee for my Snapple (I'm sure you can guess where I'm going with this) and after taking a large swig, I immediately noticed a certain grittiness on my teeth. After pondering this for about three milliseconds, the realization of what I'd actually done hit me like a Peterbilt. He'd emptied the wrong bottle! I spewed out a mouthful of dirty, cow-pie runoff, pesticide-ridden, field-drainage, giardia-infested, and full of all kinds of other nasty things that I don't even want to start guessing as to their origin, cave-water in the closest direction where nobody was standing.

To everyone else it was quite humorous but from then on, I always carry my own stuff (so it *can* learn! --Eds). I just wish I could have learned it without enduring a mouth full of silt. By the time we reached the entrance pit at five o'clock in the morning we were all dog-tired for we did 14 hours of caving and didn't even get to see Old Man Cartwright.

"Cave Water Bill" Penhallegon

Trip to Warm River

It all started one Saturday morning as do many cave trips. A small group of us gathered together at signout to decide where to go. The group consisted of Dave Colatosti, Amy Stirgwolt, Jerry Shapiro, Mike Lang, Eileen O'Malley, and myself. There was a debate as to whether to go vertical or horizontal. Eventually we decided Murder Hole was the place to go.

We piled into the cars and drove to towards the cave. We arrived at the house to ask permission and an interesting event happened. We pulled up and watched Mr. Sizer run into the house (wouldn't *you* run if you saw this group? -- Eds). When we got to the door there was a sign saying to be quiet because some was sleeping. We waited a little bit and decided then to go to Jim's to figure out what to do next.

At arrival to Jim's, Amy related to us her idea to go to Warm River Cave. It was agreed upon. After all the land owner relations and pre-trip necessities were taken care of we drove off to the cave.

After an hour or so of driving we came to the driveway of the farm of the cave. Dave lead the way in his probe and Jerry and I followed in his pickup. Unfortunately Jerry and I got stuck on the ice in the driveway and started sliding back. It took the combined effort of everybody pushing and adding weight to the truck in order to get it up the hill. But at last a cave.

We changed in to our caving clothes and prepared ourselves for the underworld. The entrance to the pit was a decent sized crack-like pit. We rigged a hand line and arm rapelled down. The entrance room was very interesting. It was full of these odd shaped ice formations. They were shaped kind of like baseball bats with the thin end down. The room itself was fairly large. It was apparently the top of a large breakdown pile.

So down we went, through all sorts of breakdown nasties. There was a twenty foot drop and some neat little holes and a real lot of bats. Eventually we came to a point where we couldn't go down anymore. We began poking around trying all sorts of little holes. Jerry found a small hole in the floor and checked it out. It went down and turned into a crawl way and then dropped. So Amy and Dave checked it out and it was determined that this was the way to go. The crawl was kind of interesting because you had to go feet first and blindly feed yourself down over a small drop.

Once every one was through we followed the most obvious way down. A little climbing led to a room with a muddy floor. Dave told us that the river was right below this room so we have to find a way down. A little searching and this was accomplished quite easily. We went through the hole and came to river. We were excited because we thought it would be easy from here but when we touched the water it really wasn't that warm, but it was warmer than cave water.

A search for the way began. We tried to follow the stream up and down but to no avail. I started going up the breakdown thinking maybe we could go over something. I pushed myself up through a hole in the ceiling and came into a room.

Looking around I discovered some elephant tracks. I followed them and they took me for quite a little ride through some crawls and finally onto a path leading down. Thinking that this was the way I went back and got Dave.

We came back and followed the path and it led straight to the river. Going upstream a little bit we discovered that it was warm. We found it! After a few moments of joy we had to travel back to get the others. Going back we apparently took the wrong way but we followed it and came out into the breakdown right near the entrance. That was annoying to find out that it could have taken fifteen minutes to get to the river instead of an hour and a half but no use crying over spilled milk.

We went down through the familiar breakdown and gathered the others and took them back to the river. We changed our clothes since it was nice and in the eighties. I wore boots, knee pads, shorts, shirt, and a helmet. Most others wore the same. Jerry wore some fashionable Hanes underwear. From here we set off up the stream to discover its wonders.

A little climbing and we cleared the breakdown and started up stream passage. Most of it was duck walking or belly swimming. A little ways up the stream we stopped for a rest and played in the mud. Dave and I built the roaring city of mudtropolis and Jerry and Mike experimented with mud farting noises (that's right, don't let the crushing grip of maturity get a hold of you -- Eds). These were created by sticking your arm up to your shoulder in the mud wall and the suction created some interesting sounds. We had a real good time here.

After growing tired of mud, we went down the tunnel. There was one little duck where we had to hold our carbides in a little crack and duck under but otherwise the passage was mainly walking from here on. Eventually the water started getting a little deeper and we had to swim. After a while the water swallowed out and a few boulders blocked the passage. We climbed over them and other side was something kind of interesting. There was a rope dangling from a hole in the ceiling. It was horribly annoying not being able to see what wonders lie above us but we had no choice.

Just past the rope was a little room. Here the river made a ninety degree turn. There were some real interesting rimstone waterfalls. Some of there rimstone was at least twenty feet long.

Just past this room the river extended straight for sometime until it ended. There were a couple of rooms but not many points of interest except the last hundred feet or so of tunnel. The passage was almost perfectly rectangular and uniform. There also was a thermometer placed in the mud which read eighty-three degrees.

The end of the river sumped out and this ended our fantastic journey. We went back changed our clothes and climbed to the surface. I do believe that this cave was one of the most interesting caves that I have been to. From what I have read about it and seen there is still so much more to explore.

Mike Mirro

CAVING THE INTERNET

If you've been above ground much at all in the last few years, you've heard the buzzwords: cyberspace; information superhighway; the Internet. So why should cavers care to read more about this in the *Trog*? Well, how would you like to have a daily conversation with cavers from around the world? At any time of day or night. To have hundreds of caver-lives worth of experience to draw on, or just to share some pleasant time with. The world of electronic communication can make this possible, and you don't need to know much about computers, or even own one, to make it happen.

First off, what is the Internet (or cyberspace)? It is a group of computers connected by phone, satellite, and dedicated transmission lines so that they can pass information to one another. There are thousands of computers on the Internet, in every corner of the world, including computers at VT that you can access! The information superhighway is a project to provide better lines connecting these computers in the U.S. You don't need to know a thing about how the computers are connected, or how they find one another. It's been done for you.

So, how do you "talk" to other cavers using the Internet? One of the easiest features of the Internet to use is electronic mail, or e-mail. Much like postal service mail, electronic mail allows you to send a message to someone if you know their address. The difference is that electronic mail can be anywhere in the world in a matter of seconds. And the addresses look different. Mine, for example, is gshapiro@vt.edu . Bob Cosby is bob@vt.edu . The part after the @ is the computer that handles our mail. Everyone on the same computer has the same thing after the @ , just like everyone in a family has the same last name. The part before the @ is a personal identification, or PID. Everyone at vt.edu has a unique PID. Later I'll tell you how you can get a PID and an e-mail account.

At least initially, you will not communicate directly with other cavers, but indirectly via an electronic mailing list. E-mail lists work like this: You send your message(s), if you have any, to the home address for the list. The computer at the home address then forwards your message to every other member of the list. When they read your message they can either send a reply to the list's home address, in which case the reply will also be forwarded to every member of the list, including you, or they can send a private reply directly to your e-mail address. Similarly, once you join a list, you can reply to forwarded messages either directly (privately) to the sender, or to the list address, in which case every other list member will see your reply.

For example, as an experiment I posted to the Caver's Digest list a question about belay technique. There were 13 replies to the list, and one person replied to me privately, (shy, I guess). Eight of the respondents were in the USA, two each from Australia and the UK, one from Canada, and one from Brazil. Since my dad was going to Australia, I sent a private mail to one of the Aussie respondents, asking about restaurants in Melbourne. He gave some advice, and asked me to have my dad give him a call. Tons of info, and a new friend Down Under!

It is not uncommon for list members to identify kindred spirits based on their public (to the list) postings, and to begin a private, off-list, correspondence. Eventually you will get to meet your electronic friend in the flesh, but let me warn you, they never look like your mental image of them. Nonetheless, when I meet e-mail friends, there is a closeness that you would never have in meeting a stranger.

There are three electronic mailing lists for cavers that I know of. The Caver's Digest is by far the largest. Although 85% of the list members are in the U.S., the remainder come from around the globe. There are many NSS big shots that post to this list. TAG-NET focuses on caving in TAG. OVR-CAVE focuses on the Ohio Valley region, primarily Kentucky. Later I will give details on how to join each list.

Caver's Digest and TAG-NET actually work slightly differently than my initial description of e-mail lists. They are distributed in digest format. What this means is that instead of forwarding each individual message as it arrives, groups of messages are collected, and forwarded as one long message to all list members every couple of days. This does not, however, prevent private mail from being sent as often as you like. Digesting serves two purposes. First, it cuts down on the number of silly messages that get posted. Someone could type in a multi-page message about a cave rescue, and someone else could reply to the list with a message like, "Gee. That was a good report." This would be a very nice message to send privately, but it certainly does not need to be sent to thousands of cavers around the world. People tend not to send silly, short messages to a digest. The second reason for digesting is so that the list moderator, a human, can scan the messages before adding them to the digest. There is not much censorship, but short, silly messages that are sent can be thrown away by the moderator, and not be put into the digest that gets sent out. Even more importantly, the moderators of both Caver's Digest and TAG-NET will delete any descriptions of how to get to a cave from the version put in the digest. This keeps nerd cavers (as opposed to caving nerds) from finding our favorite spots. If you do want to get to a cave that you read about, you can send a private message to the poster to arrange a trip, if that person is willing. The person's e-mail address will be in the digest, at the top of their message.

OVR-CAVE is not digested, and does have a lot of silly, short messages. OVR-CAVE has another interesting feature. The maintainer of that list has set up a procedure to copy messages between the local CAVE-NET bulletin board systems (BBS's) and the Internet OVR-CAVE list. BBS's work much like e-mail lists, except that they run on PC's in people's homes, and the phone line is used to send messages to and from the host machine. CAVE-NET is a cooperative arrangement among many BBS's where they send the messages collected at each local BBS to each of the other BBS's. People can then read the messages generated at other sites, reply to their local machine, and their reply will be forwarded when the message exchange between BBS's takes place. The Internet OVR-CAVE list gives people with Internet access a way to hook into CAVE-NET.

In addition to exchanging messages, both Caver's Digest and TAG-NET have a number of informational files that you can get sent to you by e-mail. Details of what files are available, and how to get them sent to you by e-mail will be (electronically)

sent to you when you join these lists, but to give you an idea of what's available, here's a partial list: equipment vendors, prices, and phone numbers; Caving Online, an electronic caver's magazine; cave descriptions; grotto addresses; and rescue reports.

What will this cost? You can try it out for free! Application for a PID costs nothing, and the Blacksburg Public Library, as part of the Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV) project, has four computers that you can use for free to read and send e-mail.

If you want to do this at home, the cost depends upon where you are and your relationship to VT.

If you are a student, faculty, or staff on-campus, your connection will usually be easy. Most simply need a cable that runs from the computer to the ROLM phone. (For faculty and staff there is also a \$5 monthly data fee, billable to your phone account. Talk to your department's network coordinator.) You access the Internet through the same network that processes your phone calls. The bookstore has the cable that you'll need. I'm not sure of the price, but it's not much. You do not need a modem.

Some campus offices and East Payne residence hall have Ethernet wiring installed. Ethernet is a high speed local network that connects to the campus computers. You will need a special card and cable, (see the description for apartments with Ethernet below). Students in East Payne will need to get an IP address (Internet address) and request activation of the Ethernet port from the Telecommunications office in 128 Burruss. Students must have a PID before requesting these services. An application for a PID form is reproduced at the end of this article. There is no additional fee. Faculty and staff should contact their departmental network coordinator.

If you are off campus you will probably need to access the campus computer network over the phone line. To do this, you need a device, a modem, that allows your computer to communicate over the phone line. Modems can be either boxes that you connect to your computer and phone, or cards that go inside your computer, and are connected to the phone. The cost depends upon how fast the modem can transmit information, called the baud rate. A reasonably fast modem, 9600 baud, can be purchased for \$40 to \$70 dollars. Slower modems, 2400 baud, do not cost much less, but if you are not affiliated with the university, your cost of connection will be less. For best results, the BEV recommends spending \$125-\$200 for a V.32bis modem that runs at 14,400 baud. The BEV technical folks strongly recommend against purchasing internal modems of any kind, despite the lower cost. They encounter many problems getting internal modems to work properly.

Off campus students, faculty, or staff using a modem can use the Eris software to send and receive e-mail and access a limited set of other services without paying a network access fee. Those not affiliated with VT will need to subscribe to the Blacksburg Electronic Village (details later). Your access fee will be \$5 per month for a modem at 2400 baud, \$8.60 a month for faster modems. Of course you could use

the public terminals in the Blacksburg Library for free. Your PID can be obtained from BEV, or at the B'burg library, without paying the modem access charges.

A few people may live in places that access the Internet via a local network, called an Ethernet. Ethernet access is available from Tech Terrace, Jefferson Apartments, parts of Foxridge, and The Chase. Ethernet provides a much faster connection than a modem, but you will need a 10-BaseT Ethernet card for your computer, which costs more than a modem: at least \$60, typically \$100; check at the bookstore. You will also need a cable from your computer to the Ethernet jack, another \$15. In addition, there is a \$5 a month Ethernet fee to the university. Bell Atlantic owns the Ethernet off campus, and are currently waiving charges, but if they do decide to charge, it will likely be \$15-20 per month. You will need to call Bell Atlantic to activate your Ethernet wall plug.

OK, are you interested? Well then, here's what you need to do. I advise finding someone who has set up a system like you'll be using, and getting them to help you. There are also phone numbers to call for assistance in the documentation that you'll get with your software.

STEP 1: GET A PID

There is no difference between a VT PID and a BEV PID. If you have one, you don't need the other. If you already have a computer account with Internet access, you don't need a PID; skip to step 5: join a list.

Everyone must read and agree to the "Acceptable Use of Information Systems at Virginia Tech" statement before a PID will be issued. This document is reproduced at the end of this article.

A. VT students, faculty, staff: Students will need to go to one of the computer labs on campus, and hand in the APPLICATION FOR A PID, reproduced at the end of this article. Faculty and staff can mail their PID application to PID Registration, Campus Box 0214.

B. Not affiliated with VT: You will need to apply for a PID at the Blacksburg Electronic Village office. The form is reproduced at the end of this article. The BEV office is located in the lobby of the Information Systems Building, 1700 Pratt Drive (in the Corporate Research Center, near the entrance to the Virginia Tech Airport). The office is open from 8 a.m.-1:00 p.m. every Tuesday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. every Thursday, and from 3-5:00 p.m. every Wednesday. The phone is 231-4786. You will need to bring a picture ID with you. Allow two weeks for processing if you are getting accounts set up to access the Internet from at home.

STEP 2: GET HARDWARE (OPTIONAL!)

As part of the Blacksburg Electronic Village project, the Blacksburg Public Library has four computers that you can use to read and send e-mail. Once

you have a PID, you can use those machines. This would provide a free way to see if you like e-mail. Otherwise, you will need the appropriate hardware for your location, as discussed previously.

STEP 3: GET SOFTWARE (OPTIONAL!)

If you decide to use the Blacksburg Public Library terminals, the software that you will need is already there, installed on those machines. If you decided to work at home, read on.

A. BEV software If you are not a VT student, faculty or staff, or if you use the Ethernet, this is what you will need. You may want it anyway, even if you don't need it, due to the gopher feature, (next paragraph). BEV software is available from the BEV office; get it when you apply for a PID. You will need to install it on your computer, and customize some settings. The BEV office has instructions. If you have installed software before, it shouldn't be too bad, but don't hold me to that.

In addition to e-mail, the BEV software has a feature called gopher which allows you to search for and access information from any other computer in the world which also has gopher. It is not necessary to use this for e-mail lists, so I will only say two words about it: is cool.

B. Eris software This software allows VT students, faculty and staff to access e-mail from home, via a modem, at no charge. It does not work with Ethernet. Unlike access to most university network services from off campus, which requires a modem pool account (not free), Eris has a separate phone number for access and does not require a modem pool account.

On-campus cavers can also use Eris. It is easier to use than the BEV software, but does not have gopher. You can get both types of software, if you wish, as Eris has a couple of things that BEV does not (later).

Eris software is available from either the AJ or Hillcrest computer labs. Bring in a formatted, hi-density, 3.5" diskette. You will get a diskette with the Eris software and some documentation.

Eris services, in addition to e-mail, include an on-line version of *USA Today*, and a calendar of university events.

STEP 4: LOG ON THE FIRST TIME

Everybody will need to set up the software on their computer. The documentation should help; an experienced friend would really help.

You will also need to change the password that you gave when you signed up. (You will get a message that your password is expired.) The information packet that you receive will tell you how to do this.

A note about passwords. To maintain privacy on your account, and prevent unauthorized access, the password should be something that others cannot guess. Your name or PID are particularly bad choices. Computer security people even recommend against anything that is a word in a dictionary.

STEP 5: JOIN A LIST!

In all cases, a list is joined by sending an e-mail message to a special account that manages the list. This is not the account to which you will send messages destined for list distribution. I'll give you that account, too.

Exactly how you send and receive mail depends upon the software that you are using. Get someone with experience to help you, or go to the Blacksburg Public Library, where the staff can give assistance.

A. Caver's Digest Send a message to **listproc@speleology.cs.yale.edu**
The message should be only one line: **subscribe cavers-digest *your name***

For instance, I sent the message **subscribe cavers-digest jerry shapiro**

You will get a message back asking you to send a brief introduction of yourself to the list, along with information about the files associated with the list and how to get them, and general information about the list. You will also get a series of messages that list every topic ever posted to Caver's Digest. This can be a useful reference, as you can have the old messages sent to you.

If you want to post a message to the list, send it to
cavers@speleology.cs.yale.edu If you have any problems with the list, send a message to Robert Hubley at **cavers-request@speleology.cs.yale.edu**

B. TAG-NET Send a message to **tag-net-request@netcom.com** The message should be two lines:

**subscribe tag-net
help**

You will get back an informational message about the list and associated files and how to get them. You will need to post an introduction of yourself to the list before you are fully joined.

Messages for list distribution are sent to **tag-net@netcom.com**
Problems? Send e-mail to Jeff Dilcher at **owner-tag-net@netcom.com**

C. OVR-CAVE Send a message to **listserv@ukcc.uky.edu**
The message should be one line: **sub ovr-cave *your name***
For instance, I sent the message **sub ovr-cave jerry shapiro**

You will get back a message, to which you must reply within 48 hours in order to be joined to the list. Wait at your computer; that message should arrive pretty soon after you send your subscription request. After your confirmation is received, you will get a message describing the list.

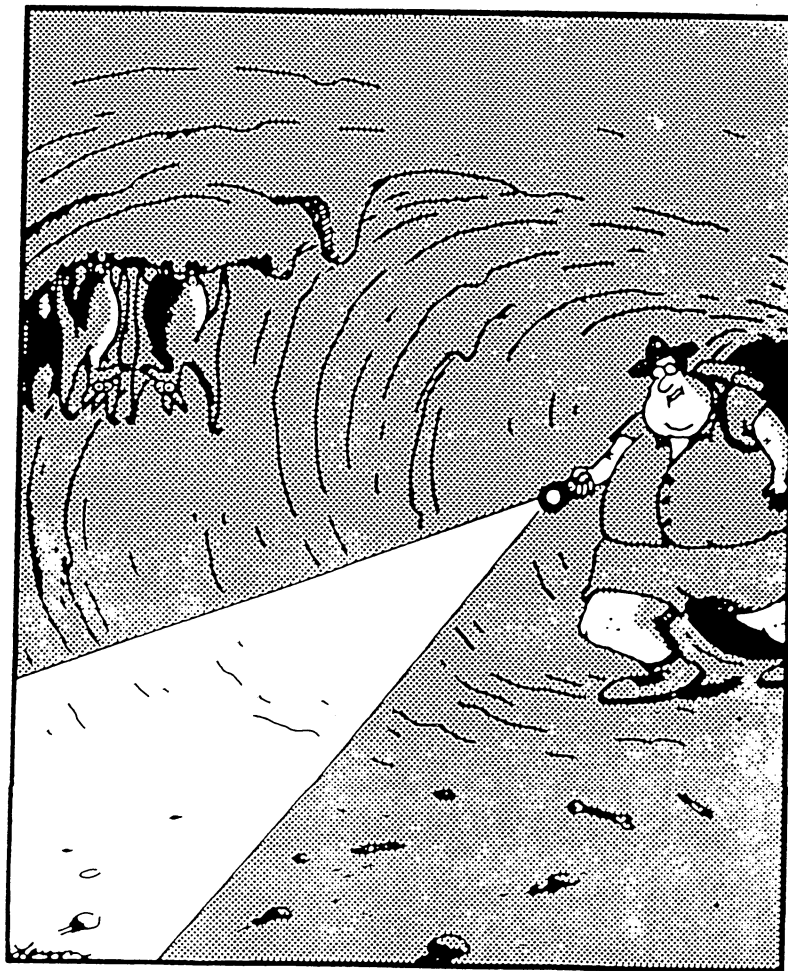
Messages that you send to the ovr-cave list should be addressed to ovr-cave@ukcc.uky.edu

Problems? Send mail to Jon Hagee at mclhagee@ukcc.uky.edu

STEP 6: HAVE FUN CAVING THE INTERNET!!!!!!

You will begin to receive cave list mail in a few days.

Jerry Shapiro



"My sonar's got it at 12 feet away and closing
... 11 feet ... 10 feet ... God, it's enormous! ...
Nine feet..."

Quotable Quotes

BB to DC: "It's to my benefit that I date."
DC to BB: "It's to *our* benefit that you date!"

CF at Timberline: "I'm no rocket scientist . . . but there's ice in the hottub."

DC to JB: "I blow and suck on both ends."

JZ to EOM: "You think *his* is big"

JW to RS: "Certain breakfast things are better when shot with a gun."

BB to DC: "You know, everyone likes me; it's just a matter of them having to realize it."

Men w/ explosives
to CZ: "Okay, we won't set off any more carbide bombs."

JZ to JS: "Two men, look at that."
JS to JZ: "I had two more, but I don't know what happened to them."

AW in sauna: "It's nice and warm in here, but it's awfully hot."

DC to EOM: "Don't worry, I'll be in and out quickly."

JS to DW: "I just love the smell of my armpits."

DW to DC: "This is not what it looks like. You should have seen me five minutes ago!"

DS to JZ: "You've been known in the past for having a propensity for taking shortcuts."

Deep in the Caverns of my Nostrils

A Trip Report to Condom Cave

It's late, I should be asleep. Even the radio is telling me so - If you listen to 96.3 FM late enough, a show called "Metal Shop" comes on, which sounds like what would happen were you to stick your ear next to a large Harley-Davidson motorcycle with significant muffler problems, owned by a guy named Rex, and rev it up to the operating speed of most military aircraft. If anything, this is an understatement.

So since my brain is currently resonating, and I can't sleep, I thought I'd tell y'all about what Steve Wells and myself did one day during spring break, while attempting to alleviate boredom, as well as any chance of using spring break to catch up in our studies. Namely, we surveyed "Condom Cave", in Pearisburg, VA.

"Condom Cave" was affectionately named by Bryce Bolton and Allison Dineen, when they came across this cave while hiking, a little over a year ago. Were they, or were they not using one at the time? -- We don't know. The official GCCS name of Condom Cave is something like "Virginia Roadside Cliff Cave #317,269", but Condom Cave sounds better, don't you think?

Anyway, the name's not important - the cave is. And that leads to our trip. This started out smoothly. Getting up somewhere slightly before the "crack of noon", I got my things together, signed us out (noting that the cave was in Pembroke - per Steve's instructions), and got Steve. About 40 minutes later, as we rolled into Pearisburg, Steve realized that the cave was really in Pearisburg (incredible leap of intellect on Steve's part -- Eds).

This turned out to be one of the very minor mistakes on the trip, because this trip was also my first time reading Brunton underground. I thought I would not have too hard a time reading Brunton. I practiced in my apartment, even with the lights off. So, reading Brunton underground couldn't be much different, right?

Well, those of you who know the answer to this question can skip this paragraph. Those of you who don't should glance at the typical dialogue Steve and myself kept going during the trip:

Dave: "Umm.....Uhh....Err...." (find station in compass mirror)....(hold breath)....(align compass)....(gasp for air like a potential drowning victim)....(lose station in compass mirror)..."Umm...Uhh..." (get wonderful view of inside of nostrils in compass mirror)....(realize nostrils are blocking view of station in compass mirror)....(attempt to move head to view station)....(get frustrated) "AARRRGGGHHHH!!!!!" (have now fogged-up compass mirror) ..."AAARRRGGGHHHH!!!!!" (wait for compass mirror to clear)....(align compass)"Aha! I got it! Inclination : -45 degrees."

Steve: "Uh, Dave, that can't be right. This is a flat shot."

Dave: "*&^%\$#@()&^%\$#*&^%!!!!!"

To summarize things, in less time than it took the cave to form (but not by much -- Eds), we surveyed the cave with me reading Brunton. I almost did a decent job of it. I say "almost" in the sense that when we were done and Steve fed the data into SMAPS, the accuracy of my survey had the cave *almost* on the correct planet. Nevertheless, I must say that I definitely learned a lot about reading Brunton on this trip. I feel that reading Brunton would have been quite easy if:

- I could float in air
- My head were 2 inches thick
- I did not need light to see
- I did not need to ever breathe

Bad Brunton experiences aside, "Condom Cave" is worth mentioning because it is a really nice little cave. The cave entrance is just a few feet off a side road of Route 100 in Pearisburg. The first part of the cave is a little canyon. After going through this, a down climb to the left leads to a small passage with some real nice formations. A down climb to the right leads to a larger room, which can also be accessed through a crawl in the middle. The real beauty of this cave lies up a lead on the left side of this large room. Going up this lead requires climbing up a narrow, awkward chimney climb. However, at the top of this climb are several rooms full of beautiful formations. In fact, one of the neat things about this cave is that much of it is located behind effective "nerd filters", that aren't too challenging for most cavers. As this cave is just off a roadside in Pearisburg, the cave would probably not be nearly as pretty without these "filters".

That's a brief description of the cave. The cave's really pretty, and the average person could likely see it all in less than a half hour. More importantly, the cave is really clean. Therefore, "Condom Cave" would be a really nice diversion to stop at the next time you're passing through Pearisburg. It's quick to see, quite pretty, and you don't even need to change into your cave clothes. If you're interested in seeing the cave, Steve Wells, Bryce Bolton, Allison Dineen, or myself can provide directions.

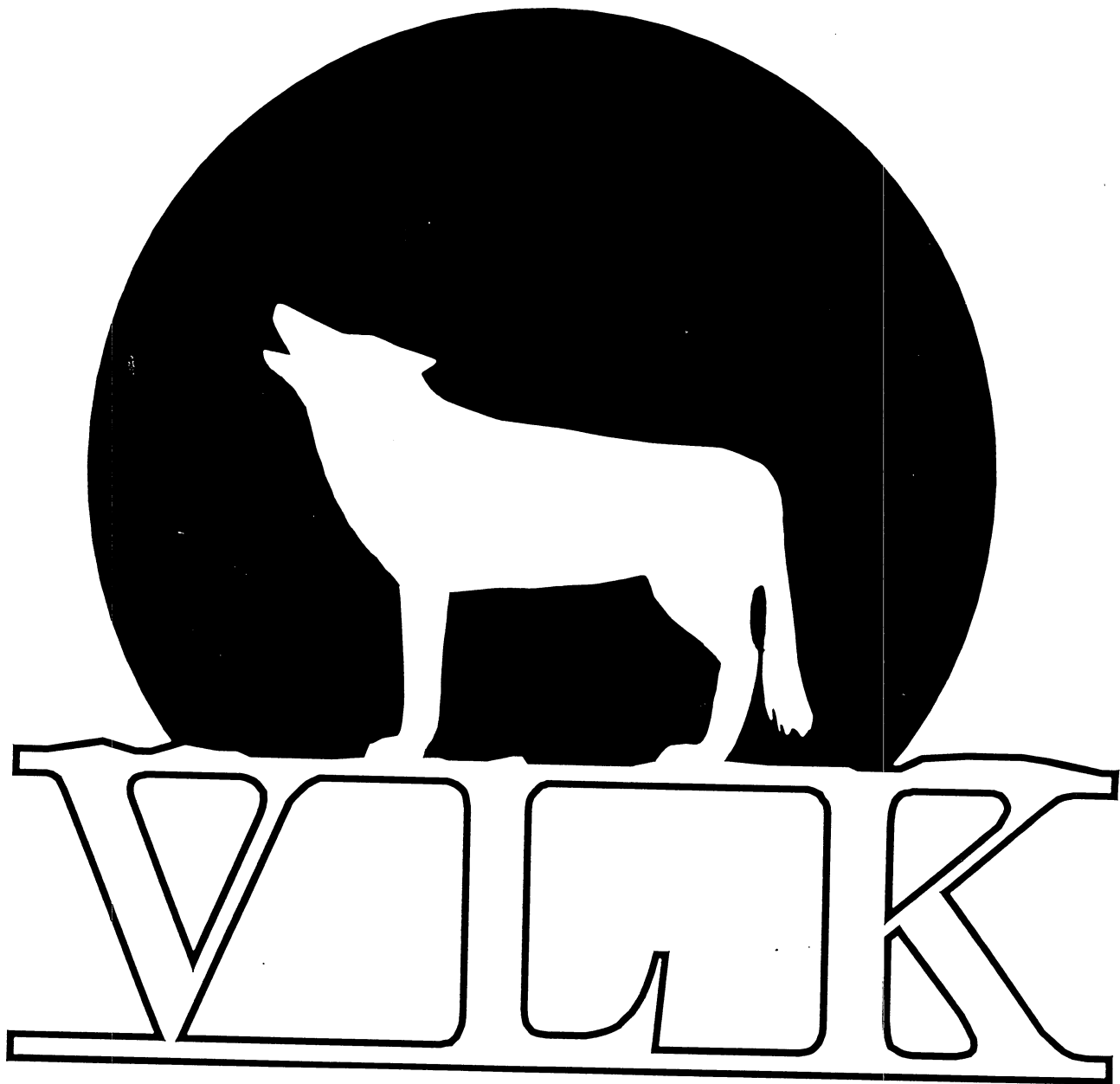
Dave Warren

From the Sign-Out

VPI Cave Club logged 1975 caver-hours between 11/06/94 to 4/23/94.

Links	J. Savage, A. Williams, S. Rapier	Hey! What's that "thud" noise? Jen?
Starnes	D. Colatosti, D. Warren, W. Orndorff	One cave trip, two saunas, one bowl of chili, and bikini magazine! Ahh, vacation!
Warm River	S. Rapier, A. Williams, D. Colatosti, M. Mirro, M. Lang, C. Herron, S. LePera	What time is it? Where are we? Why are we caving in boxer shorts?
Newberries	B. Cosby, S. Vermeulen, C. Bern, G. Frohn, A. Felty, S. Askew, M. Horne, N. Sharp	Please get the entrance removed; too much communication trouble.
New River	D. Warren, E. O'Malley, M. Horne, B. Herman, B. Moose, Lots o' Squires People	17 people and club lamps. Thanks, Dave, thanks a lot. Now I remember how I hate these trips.
Murder Hole	S. Wells, W. Orndorff, D. Warren	Surveyed Double Wells (i.e. I can sorta see the next station with the compass a foot below this station!)
Pighole	B. Cosby, A. Felty, D. Warren	Angie found a new formation: "The Queen's Butt"!

VPI Cave Club
P.O. Box 558
Blacksburg, VA 24060-0558



Band Members:

Tomas Hudlicky, *lead guitar*
Alan Schick, *keyboards, vocals*
Mike Nachus, *bass guitar, vocals*

Curtis Jones, *drums, vocals*
Dave Colatosti, *rhythm guitar, sax, vocals*
Eileen O'Malley, *vocals*