

The Tech Troglodyte



Spring '06

The Tech Troglodyte

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



~~Fall 2005~~ Officers:

President	Philip Schuchardt
Vice President	Geoff Lewis
Treasurer	Rob Story
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Editor Samantha Garguilo

Front Cover Ray Sira

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**** By working with Ray Sira we were able to bring you this special cover****



Getting To Know You!

2006-2007 Club Officers

President: Geoffrey Freeland Lewis

Major: Chemistry

After Graduation plans to go to grad school and hopefully get a PHD and make lots of money.

First Caving Experience was when I was a wee little lad I went caving with my Boy Scouts troop and there were like 50 of us on the trip.

Vice President: Sandra Ramsey

Major: Natural Resources Conservation (Education option 6-12)

After Graduation I am going to be a professional student. Just kidding. I am planning on going to grad school for education and then get into teaching high school educational education.

First Caving Experience was Tawney's Cave. I had so much fun I went to Links Cave right afterwards. Then I was hooked.

Treasurer: "Spotty" Rob Story

Major: Ocean Engineering

After Graduation plans to stay for Grad School

First Caving Experience was caving with Philip, Mark, Spotydog and Carrie on the all-LED extravaganza to Buddy Penley's. There were a combined 6 million LEDs on that trip including Spotydog's million candlepower LED flood lamp.

Secretary: Sara Kleinsteuber

Major: Biology

After Graduation plan to go to grad school for education or possibly veterinary medicine. Of course its still open but something science.

First Caving Experience was Starnes with a girl that was foolish enough to wear make-up in a cave. But other than that I enjoyed the waterfall and exploring dark holes underground. And then I went vertical and I got addicted its a hard habit to break.



Winter Break Caving

By: Philip Schuchardt

Over winter break Dustin Schleifer, Sara Kleinsteuber, and I decided to come back to Blacksburg a week early and go caving. I got into Blacksburg on the fifth of January, Dustin and I went to Clover Hollow the next day. The main goal of the Clover Hollow trip was to check out the Cigar Room which is pretty much the bottom of the cave. Before we went on this trip we had to steal a bunch of John Deighan's ropes since I don't own any. Dustin and I did 5 pits in Clover Hollow, including Andrews Drop. We saw the domes that have never been bolt climbed but I could not see the top because there was a fair amount of fog in Andrews Room. Once we were at the bottom of the pit we made our way to the Cigar Room. There are two types of passage while going to the Cigar Room. At first, the passage is more vadose passage but once we got into the Cigar room it changes into phreatic passage. The difference between vadose and phreatic passage is how water creates the passage. Vadose passage water is driven by gravity and creates wells, waterfalls and canyons. Unlike vadose passage, phreatic passage is created by water under high pressure. Phreatic passage is always created under the water table. You will never see active phreatic passage nor do you want to. Phreatic passage forms in the path of less resistance and creates smooth and very interesting passage. At the end of the Cigar Room there is a little crawl. The crawl leads to a 30 degree up-sloping crawl followed by a boulder pinch. While we were in the crawlway there was a significant amount of air flow being sucked back toward the boulder pinch. Looking through the pinch we saw more passage. Enthusiastic digging is needed to get through though. After looking at the Cigar Room, we went back to the domes and played around there. Overall, the

trip went really well. We came back during Spring Break and dug in this lead in the Cigar Room. I was able to get in the next room to find another pitch that needs to be dug out. The air was still sucking. We ~~well~~ probably head back out there in Fall 2006.

Friday 2006-01-07 Dustin and I took a break and hung out at the Hokie House and planned our next trip to Pig Hole. We also talked John Deighan into coming with us. On this trip to Pig Hole we went to the back of the cave to the "impenetrable" breakdown. I wanted to see how impenetrable it was... We repelled down Dope's drop which is a bad rappel, you bounce off the mud walls and bottom of the pit is full of bat shit and mud. Once we where all safely at the bottom of the pit we saw lots of old graffiti. Most of the messages were very depressing like "Why would you came down here? I wish I know. Steve 66" or "I can't sink any more ... Yes you can" some one added.

At the end of the pit is a small passage ~~with~~ turns into a slot canyon. It is very important to stay high in this canyon. The canyon eventually leads to a small flowstone pinch. The pinch is small and awkward, it is up sloping and the wet flowstone grabs and rips your clothes. On the map this pinch is referred to as the Eliminator...luckily it didn't eliminate any one [^] but John had a hard time getting through it. We had to rig webbing to pull him through and it ripped a major part of his shirt taking him about 30 minutes to get through.

Once on the other side of the Eliminator, there is large walking passage. The passage is about 40 feet high and varies in width from 15 feet to 5 feet. There is a small stream that comes out of a dome and makes its way to the "impenetrable breakdown".



Winter Break Caving Cont.

By: Philip Schuchardt

We made it to the breakdown and I found a small hole that looked promising. We removed rocks to get closer to the hole. I got Dustin to try to enlarge the hole by bashing rock on the rock around the hole. But Dustin got pissed off at me and found easy way around my small but promising hole. He slipped into a virgin room of Pig Hole which is decent size, 20 ft long, 20-15 ft wide and 10ft high. Unfortunately, the passage ends with both streams merging and going under the wall. This would be very unpromising dig.

After finding the virgin passage we came out of the breakdown and looked at other high leads. One right before the breakdown, a black hole 15-20ft off the floor, had me curious. Dustin decided to try to climb a very sketchy route to get this hole. Basically, he ran out of wall to hold on to. While coming back down a thick ledge that he was sitting on it broke and he fell 10 ft to a soft mud and cobble floor. It was decided that to climb it we need a pole or bolts. We also look at another high lead coming off of some formations which also requires a pole climb or bolts. All in all it was a great trip and we need to go back and bolt those climbs. That night Sara arrived in Blacksburg. I called Don Anderson and made arrangements for us to stay out in his cabin and map caves in the area.

On Monday 2006-01-09, we meet Don at the Wades in Dublin and headed out to his cabin. Sara got a new Frog System for Christmas and we tried in out in Don's rope running tree. By the afternoon we were sick of rope running and wanted to go map something. Our first cave on the list was Second Beer Pit, which is Don's new cave. It has a small vertical entrance which opens up about 10 feet down. The pit is about 30 feet in depth. It has two in feeding mud slides ending in a

mud choke. There is a small hole that blows some air near the bottom of the cave. It looks like someone could dig out this small hole and there my be more cave there. Dustin and I surveyed the cave leaving a very pissed off Sara at the top. Then, Sara came down and explored it in 15 minutes. The cave was so muddy that climbing rope became a real ass ache. Ascenders don't like sticking to the rope and everyone did the little hip dance to get their chest ascenders to catch.

Plan View of Second Beer Pit

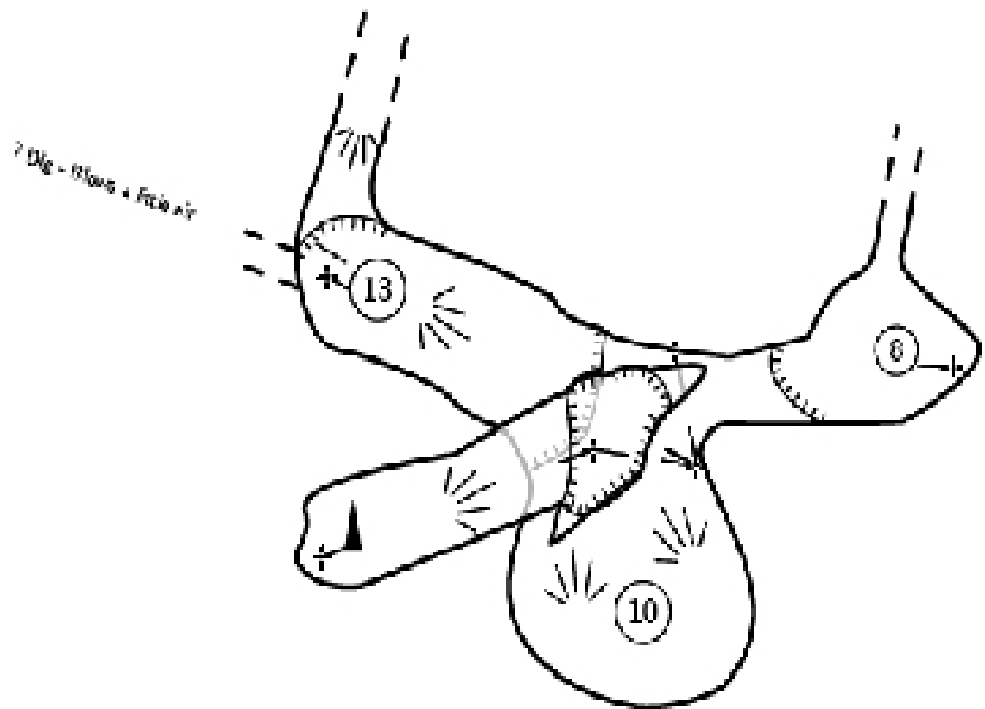
The next day 2006-01-10 we ventured on to Amish Property to go map two caves. The first cave that we mapped was Phone Line Cave as it was discovered after the phone company was installing a phone line. The phone line can be seen from the entrance of the cave. Phone Line Cave was actually the same cave that Michie and I mapped before but he lost the notes. The hole is only 14ft long. I drew the sketch from outside of the cave while Sara was the only one that went in. The ceiling is still very scary. There are no good digs/leads off of this little hole.

Plan View of Phone Line Cave

After mapping Phone Line Cave we went to something much more promising. This cave is located at the contact and is in a sink hole that takes a sinking stream. The cave was named Gros Schtien which stands for large rock in High German. The entrance is a small hole that bells out into a 17 foot pit which is immediately in breakdown. In the back of the breakdown room there is a crack that needs enthusiastic digging. We could throw rocks down into the crack and hear larger passage. We did not have time to finish mapping up to the crack because we wanted to check out the New River Grotto Meeting.

Winter Break Caving Cont.

By: Philip Schuchardt



Second Beer Pit

10 ft

Cartography By: Philip Schuchardt ©2006 VPI Cave Club

Length: 57 ft

Depth: 35 ft

Surveyed by: Don Andrewson, Sara Kleinsteuber, Dustin Schleifer, Philip Schuchardt 2006




Winter Break Caving Cont.

By: Philip Schuchardt

Phone Line Cave

5 ft

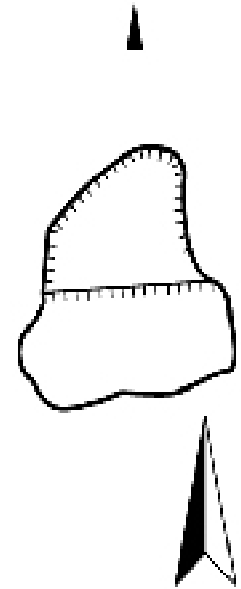


Cartography by Philip Schuchardt

Length: 14 ft

Depth: 6 ft

Surveyed by: Don Andrewson, Sara Kleinsteuber, Dustin Schleifer, Philip Schuchardt 2006



Plan View of Gros Schtien

On Wednesday we did some surveying in Stink Horn Cave. The walls move in this cave. There are mats of crickets and daddy long legs everywhere. There is a nice bolt in the entrance in the cave that gives a nice rappel down the entrance pit. The pit is about 30 feet down to the floor. Then there is a decent canyon passage that still goes. We surveyed 154 feet.

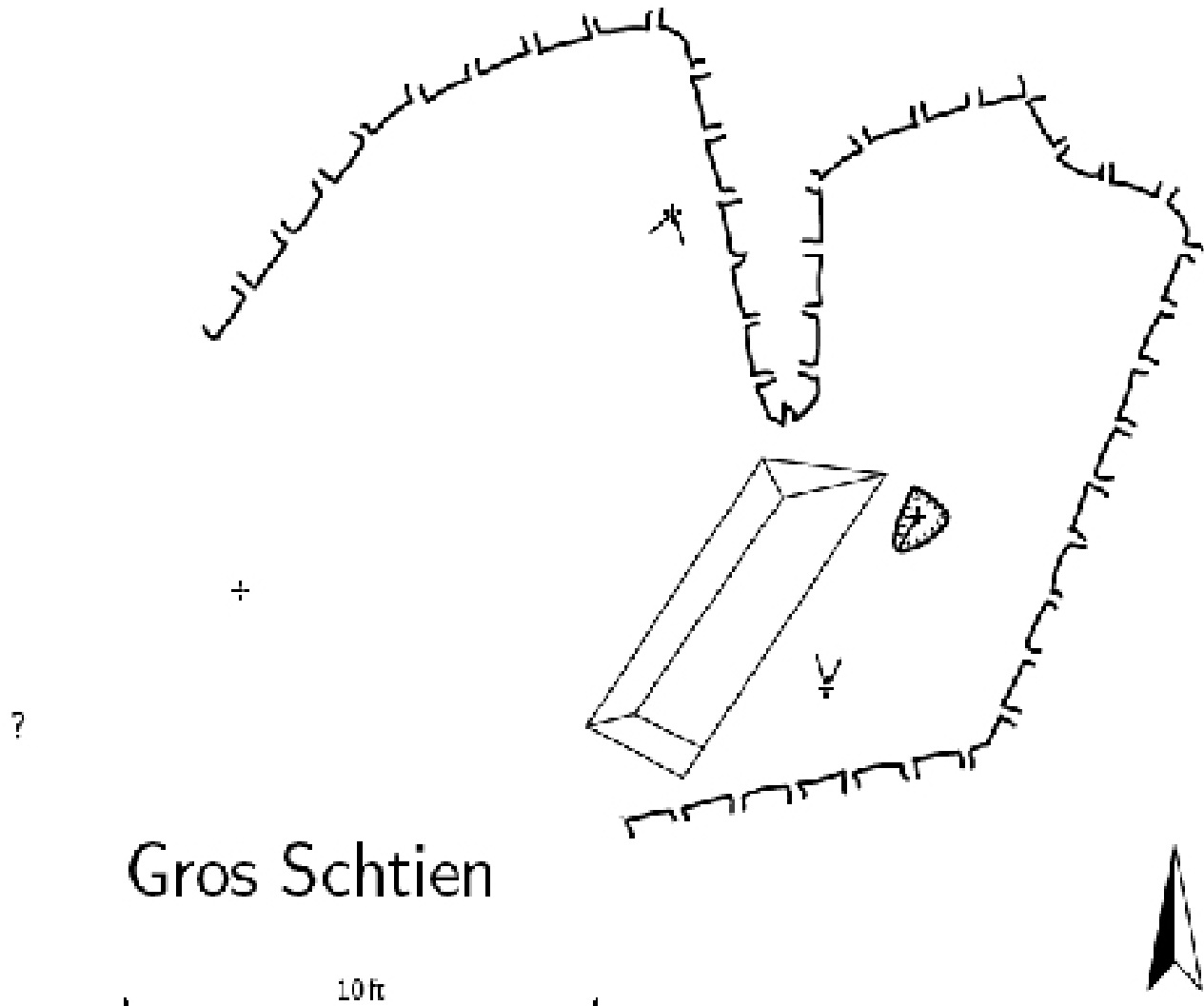
Plan View of Stink Horn Cave

The last cave we went to during our stay with

Don Anderson was to Pitzers Pit. This cave has a sinking stream entrance. Right after the entrance there is a 12 foot Pit/Down climb. Then there is nice walking canyon passage for 100 ft and then the main pit. We did not have time to go down the pit but Sara canyoned a cross to put a survey station on the other side of the pit. We need to go back and place some bolts and survey the bottom of the pit because the jug handle used for rigging does not look very comforting. There is a lot more cave to survey and much more work to do in the area.

Winter Break Caving Cont.

By: Philip Schuchardt



Cartography by Philip Schuchardt

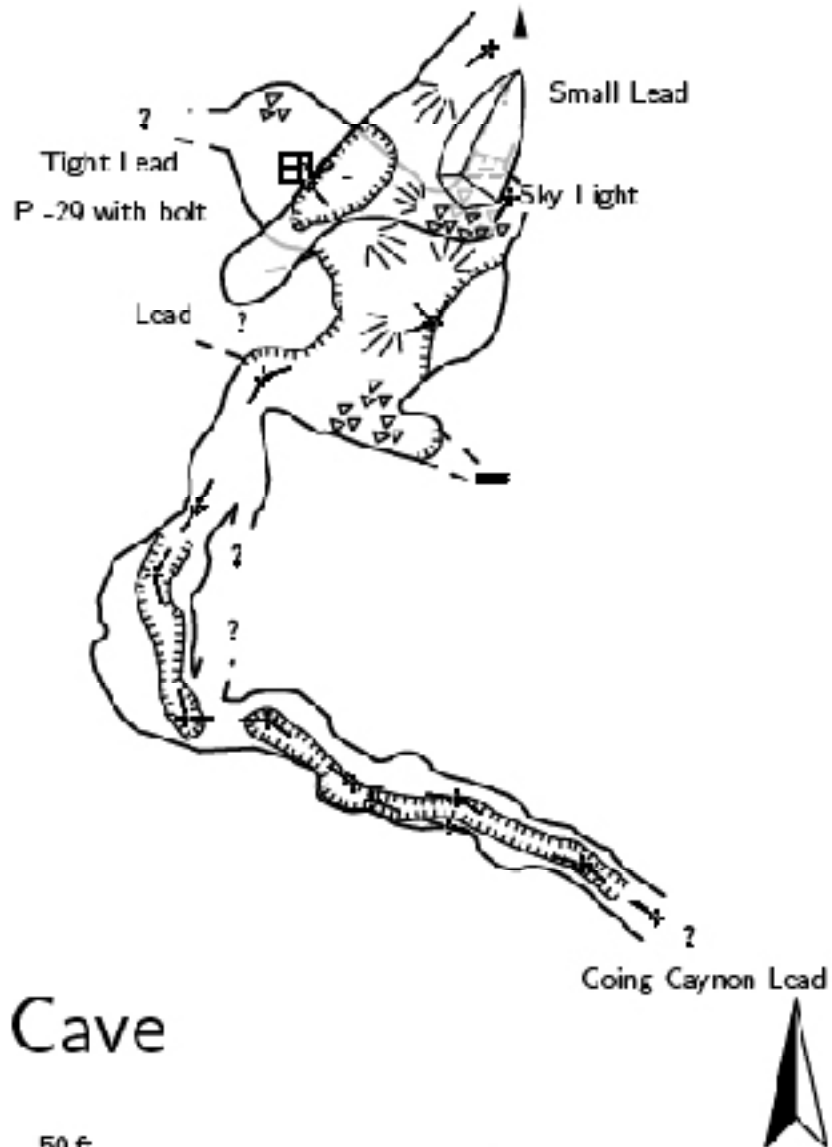
Length: 46 ft

Depth: 27 ft

Surveyed by: Don Anderson, Sara Kleinsteuber, Dustin Schleifer, Philip Schuchardt 2006

Winter Break Caving Cont.

By: Philip Schuchardt



Stink Horn Cave

Cartography By: Philip Schuchardt ©2006 VPI Cave Club

Length: 154 ft

Depth: 64 ft

Surveyed by: Don Andrewson, Sara Kleinsteuber, Dustin Schleifer, Philip Schuchardt 2006

Quotable Quotes

Submitted by Your Friends

CB to KG: Don't poke me there I might explode

BE to SG: How do you like your eggs in the morning, scrambled or fertilized?

EF to CB: Ya know, we're getting married

PP to EF: You could do worse

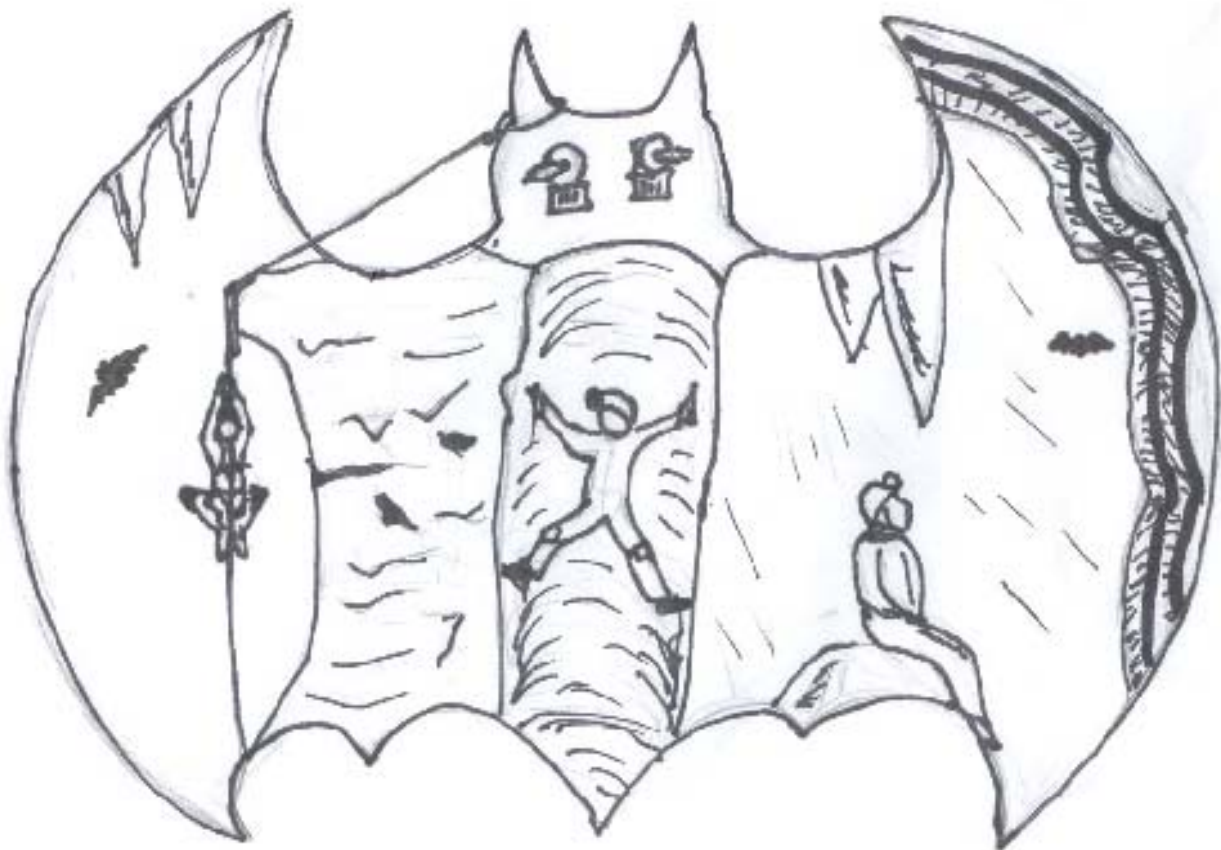
EF to PP: You will...

BS to Group: It is cold out here, we should go to the store and pick up some hot sticky buns.

RS to Group: I have hot sticky buns.

Bat

By Sandy Ramsey





William's Mine

By Dave Colatosti

Sung to Folsom Prison by Johnny Cash

I hear that drill a runnin', runnin' round the bend.
And I ain't been in a real cave since I don't know when.
Well I'm stuck in William's mine, I know I can't be free.
But that breeze keeps a blowin', and that's what tortures me.

When I was just a trainee, the old farts told me "Son,
Don't ever mess with dynamite, that's just not how it's done."
Well I popped some rocks in other caves, just to see how it goes.
Now that William's mine has got me and it really blows.

I wish I were in a virgin pit, rappellin' on four bars
Scoopin up the booty, and goin real far.
But I knew I had it comin' in Ben's promisin' dig
Though that air keeps a movin, I wish the cave would get big.

If we only got some booty, if there only was sign.
I'd dig on through the whole day, never would I whine
But I'm stuck in William's mine, that's where I have to stay
And I let that breeze keep blowin' those minin' blues away.



Connect Your Way

Submitted By Your Friends

Find your way through the club by connecting the names.

Start

Mark
 Amanda
 Sam
 Craig
 Joe
 Chris
 Judi
 Mandy
 Ray
 Christina
 Brad

Steve
 Penelope
 Philip
 Katherine
 Scott
 Mandy
 Kevin
 Nikky
 Mike
 Dustin

Joe
 Geoff
 Sarah
 Nikki
 Sandy
 Jess
 Matt
 Eileen
 Carrie
 Dave
 Sarah
 Stephiane
 David
 John
 Dustin

Debbie
 Philip
 Kirk
 Pam
 Beth
 Rob
 Sam
 Chris
 Amanda
 Julie
 Sandy
 Jess

John
 Steve
 Alison
 Travis
 Christina

Finish



There is Eventually a Joke in This Science Article

By Zak Sawyer

Can the club use some of these new geology softwares and various dangling pieces for finding good dig sites? There are many very interesting ways for finding holes in the ground these days, and very few ways for determining whether they are dig-able or cave-able. The methods for finding holes in the ground are: electromagnetic surveys, 2-D velocity-based tomography, 3-D seismic super-tomography, thermal tomography, micro-gravity, and geology. But whether any of them are feasible and useful is doubtful.

Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, vol. 66 #2, 04' had an article about resistivity and magnetometry surveys. The whole study took only 20 minutes and some moderately high-tech equipment. The resistivity study used two source electrodes, two wireless electrodes for measuring, a RES2DINV program, (which is free at <http://www.geoelectrical.com/>) and a resistivity device. A cheap resistivity device, the MiniRes, is \$17 a day with a \$65 pre-charge [Expins.com]. So, this is one of the few techniques that most people could afford. Theoretically, someone so inclined could build a half-decent resistivity device. The result of the resistivity study is a 2-D cross-section of limestone, with resistivity indicated by color-bands. Hollow caves are easy to tell apart from limestone and sediment-filled caves on the readings [Gibson 37]. There are complexities involved in resistivity studies, however. The soil can't be too wet or too dry because of the surface conductivity, and this might be a problem with some water-retaining clay soils. Interfering currents are also a problem. The study would be easy and fast compared to digging, so the only issue is learning how to do the study, and the information is not hard to find. In the Karst article, the magnetometer study, using a proton precession magnetometer (\$20 a day, \$100 surcharge at expins.com), they could determine whether an area was sediment filled, but couldn't distinguish between limestone and air, as neither of them are magnetic in Ireland [36]. This could be useful

in some situations, but not greatly useful. In Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, they used magnetometry studies to greater effect. They could distinguish between limestone and air. The effectiveness of magnetometry studies is dependant on the magnetic-ness of the limestone, and any interfering currents. Also problematic are any conductive soil-bed, metals and especially wires buried in the area. The cost and time required to make a magnetometry study are very similar to a resistivity study, but the general feeling of most authors is that they are less reliable. So, for someone who is interested in geophysical surveying this might be a good secondary.

2-D velocity-based seismic tomography is a fairly cheap method, but time consuming and ridiculously finicky. It is possible to rent the software for something like \$20 a day with a \$50 pre-charge from places like expins.com. The wave-generating equipment can be rented from GISCOgeo.com and places like that, and theoretically there are people at tech who know how to do this sort of thing. The EPA made a public data sheet rating this as a very time-consuming method for finding voids with any accuracy. The cheaper, velocity-based software is inaccurate enough that to get a good reading, you would need to get a lot of cave in-between the seismographs and the generators.

"Conventional seismic refraction analyses (e.g. delay-time or generalized reciprocal method) generally perform poorly for imaging many Karst-related features because first-arriving seismic waves can generally circumvent the low-velocity target of interest without a major impact on travel time, particularly where the target is three-dimensional" [EPA III-12]. And most caves are three-dimensional. So, there is the possibility that you could completely miss a good sinkhole using this technology. The more accurate seisclass mapping programs and tomography are so new that finding the equipment is hard and renting or buying it would very expensive.



There is Eventually a Joke in This Science Article Cont.

By Zak Sawyer

Micro-gravity is a relatively new technique, in use since the late seventies. It's somewhat more dependable than resistivity studies, and equally fast, but also 4 times as expensive. In 1986 in Loudon County, some geologists used the microgravity detector to locate caves releasing toxic gasses into a suburb. It worked where resistivity failed, but the equipment they used was of one micro-gal precision. [Gibson 11]. To get good results, White reports that only a one micro-gal detector would be completely reliable. The Lacoste and Rhomberg model G, at 10 micro-gals of precision can be rented for 70\$ a day with a \$250 pre-charge [expins.com]. So, the 1 micro-gal detectors are probably really expensive.

Thermography is not a new technology, but it now can be used on bigger scale than traditionally done. You see steam rising from a hole and you are an official NSS-approved thermal tomographer. One study of karst used thermal technology and decent seismic tomography to study the area. The pits were found by strapping some sort of thermal thingy to a plane and taking pictures [Gibson 18]: With luck, thermal maps of the area might be obtainable, perhaps through consulting companies or USGS. One such company did a thermal map of the silver creek system in Idaho: http://savesilvercreek.com/aerial_thermal_map_system.htm The Phoenix Forest Service uses this sort of thing for detecting fires, and they claim that while 3,048 m above ground, they can see a 15-20 cm hot spot, at 40.5 sq km per minute [J1G.3]. Somebody might even have done some thermal-maps of the Blacksburg karst-area. The only concern here would be false positives, like a system of drainage faults, a deep-buried shaft or a still active cave, and it probably would not work anywhere near a building. Outside of thermal-maps, you probably could just stick a thermometer in the ground in a possible dig, and compare it with the surrounding ground temperature. The downside of temperature cave-

indicator is that it is dependant on the weather. The greater the difference from the yearly average, the more well defined the evidence will be. So this might not be a good approach when it's 50 degrees outside, but would be excellent when there's a couple inches of snow on the ground.

Another method is to consult your friendly local hydrologist. This is a method that is cheap, doesn't require a whole lot of talent, and has a long history of vague effectiveness. Deighan was and is looking for a lead in Pighole a couple years ago to explain why the area was missing some water. Though probably a good topic for research, the hydrological method would at best give you a good idea where to look for a hole. For more specific analysis, you could collect data on individual springs and creeks, but this is under-researched and vagueish science [18 White].

So, the older approach of geology and hydrology are probably as good as it gets on a regional scale. On a much smaller scale, electromagnetic surveys could be useful, though possibly time-consuming on days when most people would rather be in a cave. However, digging in the wrong place would probably be even more time consuming. Also of interest, the Virginia Mining and Minerals Department sells a speleological survey map of SW Virginia for four dollars.

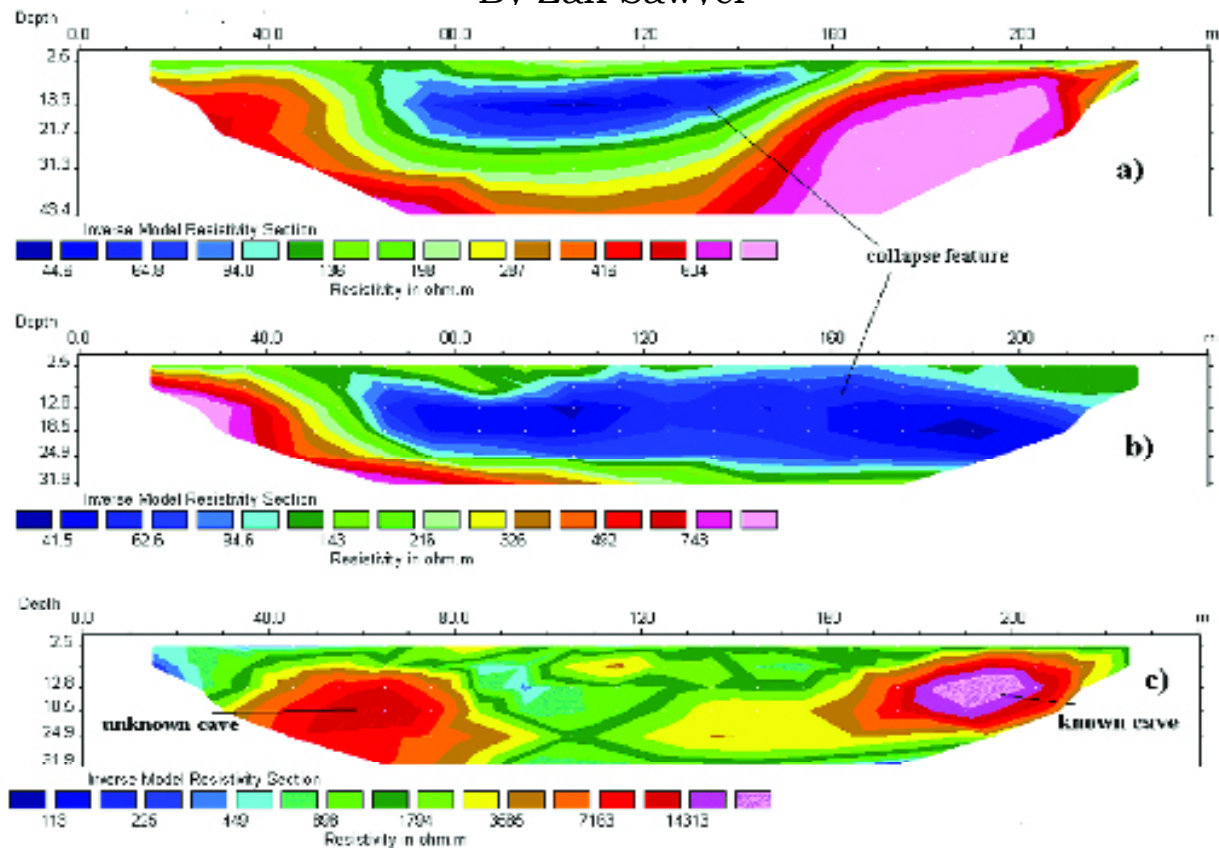
If all else fails, remember blast, destroy, more wood!

Surface	Geophysical	Methods.	Ch
3. EPA.	US: EPA,	March	1997.

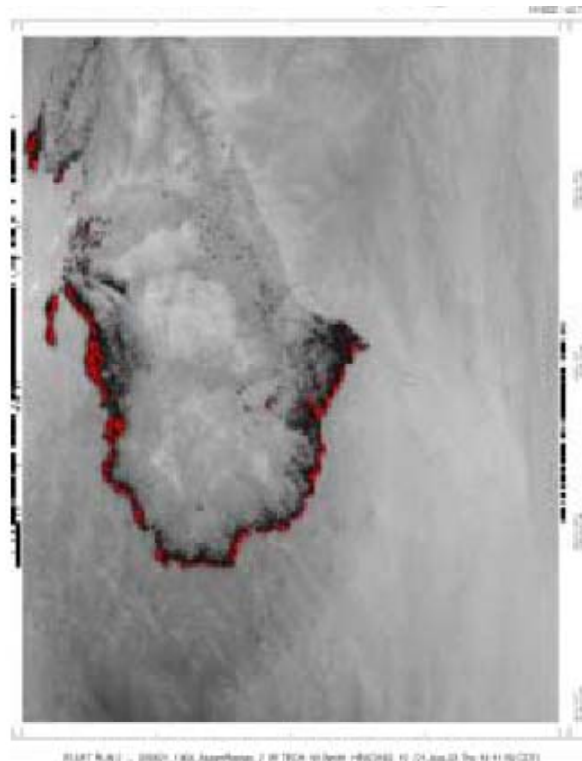
P.J. Gibson, P. Lyle, and D.M. George - Application of resistivity and magnetometry geophysical techniques for near-surface investigations in karstic terrains in Ireland. Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, v. 66, no. 2, p. 35-38. 2004.

There is Eventually a Joke in This Science Article Cont.

By Zak Sawver



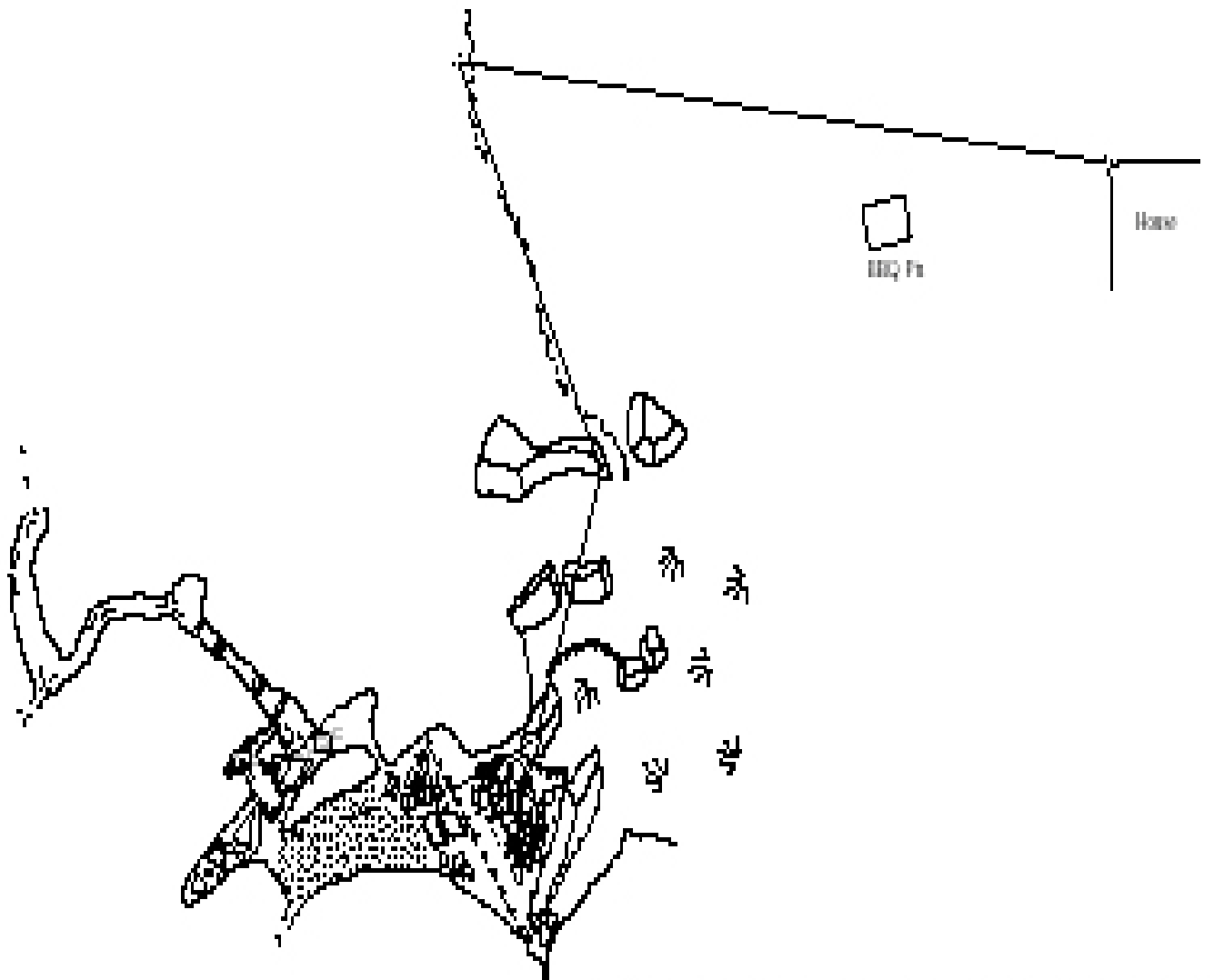
Results of a 20 minute resistivity study [Karst Studies]





Williams Map

By Philip Schuchardt



Williams Cave (WORKING COPY)

100 ft

Cartography By: Philip Schuchardt and Philip Balsier ©2006 VPI Cave Club

Length: 125 ft

Depth: 71 ft



What is Caving?

By Dustin Schleifer

When I first started caving with the club, caving was caving and that was that, but after being with the club for about a year and a half now, the whole spectrum of cavers and types of caving has been growing extensively. All I knew my freshman year was not to call caving spelunking and that was about it. After a few meetings I discovered the idea of “nerd caving” and quickly formed a concrete idea of “real caving.”

The first real big branch off of caving I learned was “sport caving,” which in my mind describes the action of caving for the pure sport/fun of it as the name describes. Those trips were all fun and good, but that just scratches the surface of all the different types of caving. From there you can further separate the group into horizontal and vertical caving. Vertical caving was defiantly a lot more interesting in most cases due to the new added aspect of being on rope and having a lot more access to caves. However, this method of caving was fairly hindered by the process of climbing on knots and using a webbing harness. Soon after that, I got on a few digging trips, which tended to turn out pretty miserable since I was unprepared for snow, ice, and stream crawling in cotton. Yet I kept it up because the whole idea of possibly finding the next big cave is good motivation to work through the pain. That was about the extent of my freshman year unfortunately. I had a lot of fun but from my new perspective, it wasn't much.

My next revelation was cave surveying, which was actually fairly interesting. At OTR I observed the competition and the idea got planted into my head. Of course my first few trips were mainly tag-along trips where for some reason I would be consistently 10 degrees off (I blame the glasses), but it helped drive me to pursue more surveying. Soon I was on a three man (well two men, one woman) team and was surveying virgin passage which I quickly learned was very dynamic and dangerous. Soon enough I was reading accurate

front and back sights while maintaining an ok pace. Being the one responsible for mapping a cave gave me a sort of importance it seemed and I felt like I was able to give back to the club by doing so. It was then that caving became a big priority in my life. I would come back from breaks early just to cave, survey, and dig some more. It was also about this time that I went on the annual trip to Mexico which I viewed as a milestone in the whole cave club life, along with going to “The Beach,” which I had also been able to accomplish a couple months prior.

The final and most recent jump that I have made was from basic cave surveying to cave modification, “enthusiastic digging,” and the oh-so-favorite bolt climbing. It is in this realm that the caving has taken on a different stance and is pushing forth with great effort in order to find that lost section through the “impossible” passage that no one wanted to even think about doing. It has gotten to the point where I would go caving one weekend to dig out a lead and on the way find another, which we bolt climbed a following weekend, which was probably the most dangerous thing I think I have done. Sure you are being belayed and at some points are directly hooked into a bolt, but then again when it's your first time placing bolts you just hope to some higher-being that you put them in right. Also, the fact that all your safety depends on your actions because your support and stability is all unnatural and put together by yourself; it can be a bit unnerving. But now, after doing such a climb, I do have more confidence in my skills. So what is there after bolt climbing; what other types of caving are there. Well I could always go on a few “over night” cave trips, I could start my own mining mission, or maybe some more biology related trips and go count bats. The possibilities are endless. Either way, I'm sure I'll be caving in some way for many years to come, in giant new borehole, to my armchair around the fire.

The Real Mexico Experience

By Sandy Ramsey

If you are among the faint of heart, do not continue to read this for it is a tale of adventure, excitement and drama. Everyone knows cavers go to Mexico to experience the “big-pits”, but our Mexico trip was not another “trip report”. This story is focused on the run in with la policia de mexico. Future stories may have varied foci since there was such diversity among the group.

Our Cast and set-up:

Vehicle #1 (Deighan's Nissan Pathfinder)

-John Deighan-our leader and Mac Daddy

-Paige Baldassaro: dating John for a long time

-Lori Deighan- John's offspring

-Justin- dating Lori

Vehicle #2 (Geoff's parents Chevy, Tahoe)

-Geoff Lewis-VP of club, AXE frat boy-

-dating outside the club, no past/

present relationships to anyone on trip

-Steve- AXE frat boy-no past/present

relationships to anyone on trip

-David Klorig-had past affair w/ person

on trip, single on this trip- later to

rekindle a long-term relationship. AXE boy

-Julie Booker-”

“,no current relationships to anyone on the trip.

Vehicle #3 (Aaron's Chevy Blazer)

-Aaron Thomas-married Selma after

meeting her on past Mexico trip

-Selma Thomas- married to Aaron

-Dustin Schleifer-had girlfriend, not on

trip- later to date the writer of this tale

-Sandy Ramsey-writer, was in long-distance

friend w/out benefit relationship w/ ex

President of Club

We began our adventure on Dec. 16th 2005. 12 people; 3 vehicles; 17 days. Surprisingly, we almost made it 12



hours before we had our first vehicle problems. No biggie, just a loose belt which Deighan thought “may” give him a problem. We were back on the road to New Orleans to enjoy some good ol’ home cooking from Paige’s family.

Act 1:

There wasn't too much excitement in New Orleans. Cavers crashed at Paige's parents home. Then we headed to Bourbon street. Geoff and We lost Lori and Justin to the street. Knowing their twisted nature, we seized the opportunity to search all the places we thought they may have gone. Oh yes, we took a tour of the nudy bars to “look” for them. After finding them at the last location we chose to look-the cars- we headed back to base camp at the ripe time of 10:30PM. The next morning Paige's mom was surprised to find out that New Orleans there was plenty of staffing for the stripper bars. Everywhere else, outside of Bourbon Street, is short staffed. It is always good, from a political view, to know where your priorities are.

Act 2, scene 1: south of the boarder

Driving, driving driving, we cross into Mexico. Let the fun and caving begin! As tradition, we must see how many people we can get on the Tropic of Cancer. Despite wet conditions, we got 9 people on top.



Our first caving experience was El Abra. It was damp and rainy, but despite a late start and a long time in the confinement of the vehicles, everyone made down the pit ok.

The Real Mexico Experience Cont.

By Sandy Ramsey

There was a few times where it didn't look like we would, but in the end everyone made it down the pit. Justin learned the importance of not having loose straps when repelling. It was getting down the mountain, where the first bit of excitement began. The trail was lost, people were cut up, but everyone survived. We continue on 12 people strong but tired.

Act 1, scene 3: la policia

(This is a drama story so I am only providing the highlights by skipping parts). As a group, we decided to go and see the pyramids. We took a wrong turn. We wound up in some piss ant city. If you ever have the luxury of driving in a Mexican city make sure you pay attention to these: ← they are painted on a nearby wall and generally about 6" by 12" in size. They mean one way down this road, do not enter. While playing follow the leader and tried to escape the city, our caravan crossed the path of la policia (going the wrong way down a one-way road). We were trying to get out of the city, but everyone Selma asked said there wasn't a way to get to the route we were looking for. The police pulled us over in front of a local car wash. In vehicle 1, the Pathfinder, Deighan gets out to speak spanglish to the policia. They did not communicate well and requested that someone else translate. This may have been because of what the last vehicle had written on the back window.

Being good Americans we

were prepared to do whatever the law officers wanted. At first, they seemed like they were writing down directions to help us out. They took Deighan's driver's license, said they wanted \$800 American dollars for the 3 vehicles' violation. The bank was closed so we would have to follow them. Deighan went to relay the message to the other vehicles. It seemed like an eternity. There were people yelling in Spanish in the back of the caravan, and tensions were rising among the travelers. Selma was conversing with the officer and another man who was having his car washed. From Geoff's vehicle," man, that guy looks like the guy on banners across the road." Meanwhile the police drives, off and Deighan follows, because he thought that was what was required. As far as he knew, the policeman still had his driver's license. Selma was still conversing with the man from the car wash. She yells from the back of the caravan "don't follow!!, bad cop!!" we proceed to begin yelling over the walkies to tell the 1st vehicle to turn around. Between the static of the walkies and the nervous yelling we were able to get across, "turn around and Selma has your license."

In, steps fate. The police were able to get the entire caravan pulled over coincidently at the place where the mayor of the town was getting his car washed. The mayor and his wife saw what was going on and confronted the police officer. While Deighan was relaying the situation to the other vehicles, the mayor made the policeman give Zulema the license back. The policeman was apparently really mad and drove off. The mayor suspected he might sit up the road and wait for us, because the policeman was mad he didn't get his money. Tensions in the group were through the roof. The police carry big guns in Mexico.



The Real Mexico Experience Cont.

By Sandy Ramsey

The mayor offered to lead us out of town with strict instructions to not stop for **ANYONE OR ANYTHING** on the road we were about to go on. It was a “lonely” road, occasionally inhabited by pirates. How are we supposed to believe this random guy. Was he part of the scandal? Were we going to be guided into some kind of trap? He didn’t, after filling each of our vehicles up with a tourist publication of the town, things went well. We made it Tuxpan late at night.



Some stress relief was in order and Dustin and Steve took having their nails painted as a solution. So after 8+ hours of scariness

and driving we made it to the pyramids. My advice to you: If you want to see the pyramids, here they are.

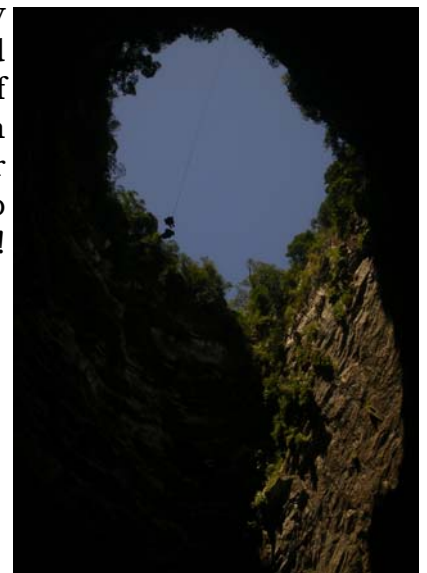


It was cool to see all the vendors, and the area was very well maintained. After we saw the pyramids we went back to Tuxpan and camped on the beach. The policia kept driving through down the beach. They had intimidating men with large guns in the bed of a pickup.

They didn’t bother us though. I believe they thought it was odd to camp on the beach.

Act 2: scene 5

Christmas came and the sun finally showed itself. We spent the day repelling into the clear blue water at Rio Choi on a 80° sunny day. The policia once again visited us for the 3rd time. They confirmed that we were not doing anything bad, and left us. That was the final run in with the police in Mexico. The rest of the drama will be left to fireside tales and conversations at the Hokie House and maybe future trog articles. In summary, Mexico this year was absolutely fabulous. We DID actually go caving. We did El Abra, Rio Choi, Hua Huas, and of course Golindrinas. We stayed in Hotel Tananul, which is well worth it. The Tanul waterfalls are absolutely gorgeous. We spent New Years Eve at huitchiehuyan (I have no idea how to spell “Witchy-why-an”). Now that is a whole other story. I highly recommend taking a journey to Mexico and creating your own adventure to write about. Sam needs more trog articles. Many thanks to everyone on the trip especially Deighan and my other half of “the flesh conglomerate” for making Mexico the rock!!!!

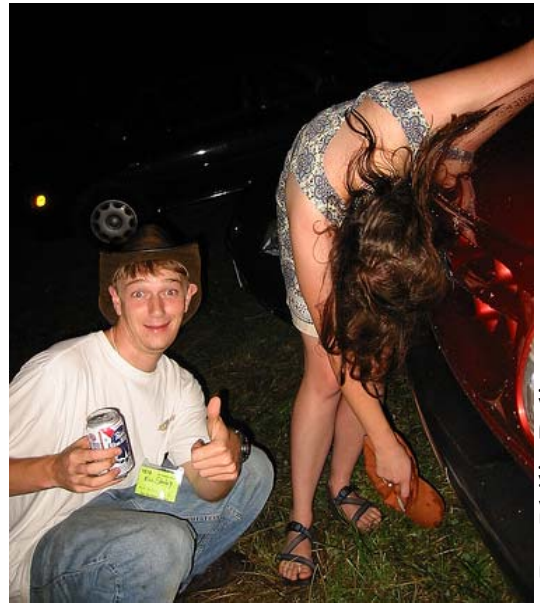


Club Quotable Photos

Submitted by your friends



By Katherine Ferguson



By: Philip Balister

Feb 15, 2006 Drunk of the Day



By: Ray Sira



By Ray Sira

By: Hong Meigui Nandan 2006 Expedition



Grotto Grapevine

By AI Cartwright

One Birthing EG:

Kristen and Dan Chaddock on Jan 17th
gave birth to Edith Mimi Chaddock

Matt Siegler and Erika Freiburger
gave birth to Gray Daniel

Paul and Aubrey Hess on Dec 20th
gave birth to Charles Carder Hess

Jeff and Ginger Jablonski on Dec 27th
gave birth to Micheal Garner Jablonski

Banquet:

The little black dress theme at banquet this year was a big hit between the cave women and men.

After a few years of entertaining us at OTR, Craig Ferguson along with Geoff Lewis won the Age and Treachery Youth and Enthusiasm

award for their great display of love for each other. Kevin Rock took home the flame out award this year and is in the running for it next year after his brilliant performance at the banquet after party. Joan Redder received the "Pimp my ride" award for decorating her car after Chris Michie and Jen Albanse wedding. Philip Balister took home the book Redneck Nation for his "Life Changing" award to help him earn is citizenship. The Feng Shui award went to Philip Schuchardt and

Dustin Schleifer for their candle decorating at a wedding they were not even at. Jen Albanse was the top winner for the night receiving the "Good Driver"

award for her sense to follow literal directions and a mouthpiece for fighting bouncers at her wedding. AI Cartwright award was given to John Deighan for years of club service; despite his great rigging technical award he received last year at banquet. Brain Bucket went to Ray Sira for his broken ribs and Erika Bechtold for dislocating her shoulder. Recognition was also given to Julie Booker for being inducted into the Drinking and Techniques Committee (which requires an overnight stay in C h r i s t i a n s b u r g) .

Jerry Redder ended banquet with an entertaining slideshow of photos taken over the years of club members dressing up.

For Rent:

John Deighan had some renter issues this semester when he found that his tenant was put behind bars for growing a few plants.

The club is once again in search of a new party pad for Geoff Lewis is moving out of the beer pone house. While David Klorig bought a house with Erika Bechtold in Winston-Salem.

Kevin Rock will be joining the list of homeowners at the end of May when he closes on his townhouse in Christiansburg.

Renters, are you looking to be a homeowner? Then we have the prefect house for you, for a cheap \$500K you can own this. This house comes with a great location to tech and the bars.

By Sam Garguilo

Relationships:

Sandy Ramsey has given up on her Denver love and has recently found herself spending more nights in Dustin Schleifer's dorm room.



By: Bill Stringfellow



By: Dave Colatosti

Grotto Grapevine Cont.

By AI Cartwright

Kevin Rock, like many other caver men, has crashed and burned in his recent relationship with Judi Wasilewski. She allowed a former, non-caver friend, to step in and show Kevin how to properly treat a woman, resulting in a faster crash.

Despite the fact that they hate each other rumor has it that Nikky LaBranche will travel ½ way across the US to Denver to make house calls.

how dangerous mining /digging can be. Williams Dig/Mine is the project that has taken up many caver weekends this semester. The group that keeps returning to the project every weekend has mined their way into a cave.

YTR

The 70-degree weather kept a lot of VPIers in town this year instead of venturing out to Lewisburg, WV for YTR. A total of 5 people from the club attending the small event this year.

Judi Wasilewski put her life in Dave Colatosti hands when she hitched a ride in the magic bus.

Work Weekend

Due to bad weather work weekend was canceled.

Easter Beer

With great weather many people ventured out to Easter beer at the ranch. Along with them came many beers to hide, many Frisbee to throw, and a few more women to hit on.



By: Bill Stringfellow

Ladies back off, even though you might not be able to tell from the look of it, Steve LePera is off the market and dating Alison Williams again.

Relationship differences did not keep Erika Bechtold and David Klorig apart long.

Brad Atkinson, in his short but recent trip to Blacksburg, made a desperate attempt to get Jen Albanes to move to Denver, during a game of catch the beer bottle with Chris Michie.

Former Trainee Sara Kleinsteuber has picked up the new title of first lady in her short career in the club.

Caver Projects

After all the mining accidents that have taken place over this past year, you think the club would realize



By Steve LePera

By: Sam Garguilo

Nandan 2006

By Steve Wells

My China adventure all started in the spring of 2005 when Mike Ficco mentioned that he and the Futrells were planning a trip to China during Christmas. The second I got off the phone with Ficco I called Mike to get the scoop on the trip. He said that they were planning but nothing was for sure and he would keep me in the loop. The next call was to LePera to see if he was interested, of course he was. I have always wanted to go to China, but for the last 15 years (since I started caving) I've REALLY wanted to go to China. My head was already spinning with the idea of 50 meter wide by 50 meter tall passage that goes on forever. Of course there was still about 9 months to go before the trip would happen, if it happened at all.

Nothing more than a little talking took place until around October of 2005. Somewhere in here Mike Ficco decided that he would do a March expedition to China instead of December. The rest of us decided to go ahead and make the December trip happen. Now all the work began. First order was to get tickets, visas, and shots. Just for the records, you should get your tickets at least three months in advance for China. It's amazing how high the prices get as the departure date gets closer. Visas are fairly quick to obtain. We received ours in about three weeks after mailing in our paper work and passport photos. The shots probably take the longest depending on what you need. I still haven't gotten the final shot of one of the series of three. You should probably go to the health clinic six months before heading to a remote location just to make sure you have time for all they want to stick in you.

Erin Lynch, who lives in China, was organizing the expedition to Nandan. She was the next thing we had to deal with. It seemed like once or twice a week we would get an e-mail from her requesting that we bring some item or check the pricing on something else. All her requests were relatively small but stacked on top of our own preparations, well they were just another thing to deal with.

The last two things to deal with before China were figuring out where we were going and how to speak the language. The first I never got

right. Even while sitting on the plane heading to Hong Kong, I still had no idea where we were going. All I knew was somewhere in southernish China. Luckily Mike and LePera were more on top of things and knew where we were going, so I figured I was just along for the ride until some one pointed me at a cave and said start surveying. The second thing to deal with, the language, was a little more difficult. I pretty much decided that I'm no good with languages so why bother trying to hard. There are three very important words that I did learn however. The first was piju (beer) obviously a very important word. The next word I learned was bijiu, this is a very scary liquor that they love and you'll hate. While in China it becomes the B word, you don't even say it or someone will want to sit down and drink about a gallon with you and feed you some very interesting food items, be warned. The last word I learned before going was almost as important to me a piju, it was dong (cave), and yes as every one says, make your own jokes.

Enough of all the background, China caving is awesome. The whole trip was filled with way too many stories to even begin to tell in one article. Just for a snap shot, our luggage didn't show up with us, we had a crazy 36 hour bus swapping trip through China, many members of the expedition were very ill, we found tons of huge cave, drank lots of beer, ate some strange things, and met a lot of good people.



Instead of giving a day by day account, which you can get simply by getting me drunk and asking, I'll try and tell the story of two days of big cave.

As always towards the end of an expedition you tend to find the big cave. This trip was no different than any other. Close to the end of our stay, we were running out of really big stuff to survey and the trips to the going caves were getting to long for the scope of our trip.

Nandan 2006 Cont.

By Steve Wells

One cave involve an hour swim and total travel time of about 5 hours just to go to the last survey station. Given this we knew we had to find something new and big. It turned out to be a cave called Bai Dong.

One evening a couple days before we were scheduled to leave the country, one of the locals told us of a very large cave out near a school in a neighboring town. We were very excited to be given a good lead so we immediately went in search of our driver. The driver is a whole new story. Let's



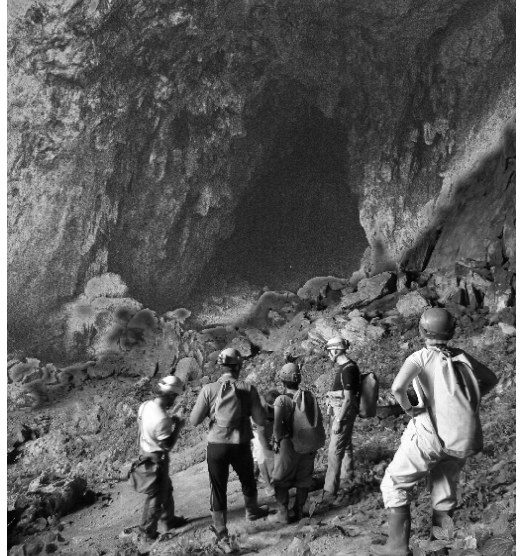
just say that we called him DJ Mao and he drove the Techno bus. Imagine an hour ride in a van that looks similar to a VW bus but is half the size. Now place yourself in it, going down roads that my bronco would flinch at and then add in a good dose of ultra loud techno that made your ears bleed. Well that's the techno bus in a nutshell.

We awoke early one morning to board the techno bus and off we went in search of new cave. When we arrived at the town there was a little bit of confusion as to where the cave actually was. We first popped in a little hole about 4 meters in diameter and found the cave to only go about 250 m. Although this was nice enough and right next to the road, this was not our cave, at least we hoped it wasn't. While LePera and I were checking out the first cave the others found a few locals to talk to. They told us that right around the corner was a cave that you could walk in for two hours. This sounded much better. We loaded back in the techno bus and were off to find the path to the cave and a good place to park.

We were told by a few more locals which path to take, but we couldn't see an entrance anywhere so we were still a little skeptical, but we hiked

uphill anyway to where they pointed to see what might be there. What did we find at the top of the path, an amazing entrance.

The mouth of the cave was about 50 m tall and 60 wide with an aqueduct flowing right through the middle. We couldn't believe it. From the road you couldn't



see any sign of an entrance and from the entrance you couldn't see anything but entrance and giant cave passage leading away. Maybe we had found something.

After the initial ooohhhs and aaaahhaaas, we started the survey. Mike Futrell, Andrea Futrell and Erin Lynch would start at the entrance and LePera and myself would go into the cave a ways and then we would leap frog from there. LePera and I took off and hiked through the cave for 10 to 15 minutes and then decided we had gone far enough so we broke out the survey gear and set up for our first station. It was about here the we realized we hadn't gone near far enough away from the entrance, the other crew had already caught up to us. Basically what happened is we didn't factor in China scale. First of all you are using a 50m tape and second the passage is huge. If you just think of all the normal survey shots we take in feet and then change the number to meters you'll get the right idea, a 34 foot shot here is a 34 meter shot there. What we had figure would take them 20 survey stations to reach us had actually taken only a couple. They were reeling the 50 meter tape out as fast as they could and running down the passage taking readings.

Nandan 2006 Cont.

By Steve Wells

After some laughter they passed us and disappeared from sight to leave LePera and I trying to figure out how to survey 60 meter wide by 60 meter tall passage.

Since we had gotten a little later start then we had wanted, we ended up surveying only about 4 hours that day. By then LePera had sketched about 500m of passage and Futrell's crew had run out about 800m. The cave was left with each crew having one lead on their sketch and the end of the cave was still going strong. We all went back to town full of hope and stories of the big new find. We also had many photos to look through since while we surveyed, Jonathan and DJ Mao were running around taking pictures and breaking formations (yes-another story). Obviously we were heading back the next day to try and see what we could find. It was most likely going to be that last day of big survey before we had to pack up and go home and we still hadn't reached the goal of surveying 10km for the Nandan Expedition.

Next day we were off again. Another ride in the techno bus and we were there. This time we had recruited Duncan to come on the trip and DJ Mao had some other fare to catch so he wasn't coming in at all. Jonathan took more photos and sort of floated between groups. It was decided that Mike, Andrea and Erin would go survey their one lead (darkness goes) and LePera, Duncan and myself would check our lead. The plan was that the first crew to finish their lead would head into the new stuff and then the other crew would start leap frogging when they caught up. Our lead went now where. It was just a side bulge in the passage that was about 200 m sideways and 70 m tall, hardly worth the time to sketch. We then headed to the end figuring that the other crew would already be there if their lead died out. When we got there we were the first so we started up the survey.

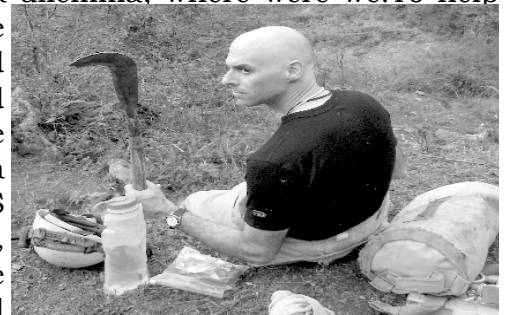
The day went really well. Duncan was running instruments and I had the lead tape. This left LePera as sketch. I'm not sure how he did it, but he pretty much kept up with us. I was rolling the 50m tape to it's fullest which turns out to be 50.65m and I wanted more. We could have

used a 100m tape and still not had enough. Of course this may have totally fried the sketch, I certainly know I wouldn't have kept up. About 4 hour into the survey we had reach 1000m, what a trip, and still no sign of the other crew. We just kept pushing forward and started to think that we would get a solid mile of cave surveyed if the other crew just stayed behind for awhile. Sorry for the switch from meters to miles but a 1 kilometer day was one thing, a 1 mile day was something all together different.

As we were heading into the 1300m range things started to seem a little different. The air changed direction on us. Oh, and yes even in monster passage we could still follow the air. We found a moth hanging out by one of the stations, what was he doing here. Then I started to notice that the water droplets on the walls had that funny greenish color that shows up with the LED lights near an entrance. Could it be? No way had we come through the mountain. Just as we were debating this, the other crew finally caught up. We told them we thought we were out. Sure enough a couple hundred more meter, and there it was, a 250m tall by 30m wide entrance. Unbelievable. Neither LePera nor myself had ever surveyed in one entrance and out another, never been in something that huge and never survey a mile of cave. What a day, what a feeling. In all the survey had only lasted about 6 hours, if you survey at all then you can imagine the passage dimensions to make that possible. The tally from both days brought the cave 3.3 km of surveyed passage.

After much rejoicing at managing to actually survey through the mountain, we found ourselves with a bit of a dilemma, where were we. To help

answer this we first surveyed out to a field where we could get a good GPS location, yes, people actually had brought their GPS through the cave.



Nandan 2006 Cont.

By Steve Wells

Soon we had the bad news. We knew where we were on the planet but had no idea which road to take to go back to town. Plus our driver was supposed to meet us on the other side very soon. What to do? We walked into the closest village and asked for help. They told us that no vehicles would be leaving the village so we could either walk around the mountain and hope we picked the right roads or we could go back 2 hours through the cave. It was getting late and starting to rain, so what did we decide, let's walk and see if we can't get lost. After a couple hours we actually managed to get to a large enough town that we could call our landlord and ask for help, he sent out a van to recover the lost foreigners. We all sat down at a local store, drank beer, took pictures, and laughed at the highs (the cave) and the lows (the hike in the rain) of our day.

Well there you have it. Just a small snippet of what we did in China for the Nandan 2006 expedition. If you would like more information



or stories, get me drunk and ask, or visit their website at <http://www.hongmeigui.net/>. They have thousands of pictures and lots of interesting things about China, each expedition, and the members involved. Oh and if your curious if I'll go back, someday yes, but who knows what other expeditions will be offered up next.

Los Gringos Locos: VPI Cave Club in Mexico

By Steven Davis

Just after classes let out for winter break, a group of twelve left the cold weather of Blacksburg and headed for the Warm sunshine of Mexico. We gathered are gear, grabbed some money, and made a "trip plan." Led by John Deighan, we rode down in three cars. In John's "Can it make another trip?" Pathfinder was John, Paige Baldassaro, Laurie Deighan, and Justin Grimes. In the "my car is the only one that didn't break" Blazer was Aaron Thomas, Zulema, Dustin Schleifer, and Julie Booker. In the "We have every electronic device ever" Tahoe was Geoff Lewis, Dave Klorig, Sandy Ramsey, and me.

Let's start with the drive down. We had planned to load up all the gear and leave for Mexico around 7ish. We were all surprised that we actually left before midnight. With a plan to drive to New Orleans, stay with Paige's



parents for a night and head for Mexico the next morning. As we arrived we saw a sea of blue tarps and debris all over the sides of the road. Most of us were able to get a shower before sitting down to an awesome gumbo dinner by Paige's parents. Even though the weather was crappy we decided to head down to the French quarter. About ten seconds after stepping onto Bourbon Street, this random drunk girl walking past decides to kiss me. That pretty much set the tone for the night that included lots of drinks, live music, and a transvestite strip club. Then back to Paige's parents to sleep it off and head out in the morning.

Once in Mexico we started caving as soon as possible. First we hit El Abra. To get to this cave you had to climb the side of a steep mountain that was covered with sharp things and bugs that like to live in your skin. Then you wonder around the top of a mountain trying to find the pit without falling into it. The rappel was about 400 ft with a 100 ft climb out. This cave left us all sore, tired, and for a few, infected with bugs.

Los Gringos Locos: VPI Cave Club in Mexico Cont.

By Steven Davis

After that we took a little time off from caving to see the sights. We decide to see Las Pozas, Which



in short is this big unfinished maze of concrete structures made by some crazy, rich English guy. We got to climb

around see some crazy concrete things. We spent the better part of a day there just exploring and having fun. There are a lot of cool things to see and play around with. I think one of the coolest parts was the waterfall and river that ran through the middle of it. We ended up making a return trip later when the weather was better to see the shops and play in the river. Someone gave me the bright idea to climb a wall and jump off of this structure into the shallow water below. As I Climbed up I drew a small crowd of onlookers. It was fun and the only injury I got was a cut on my foot.

Next we decided to drive to the pyramids of El Tajin and camp on the beach. The big story here isn't

seeing the pyramids, the fire on the beach, or even swimming in the ocean in December. No the big story is the four hour drive out



there. To this day I'm not sure of the entire story as no one in our car spoke Spanish, but as far as I can tell this is what happened. It all started when we got lost in this town and the lead car, driven by John, decided to go the wrong way down a one way. John decides to ask the closest police

for directions. He says he'll give us directions but is going to have to fine us eight hundred American dollars for going the wrong way. He then proceeds to tell us that we need to pay at the bank, but that the bank is closed and we should just follow him. So the cop takes John's license and we start to follow him. Well, it seems keeping four cars together on a busy Mexican street is not easy and our car is separated. So we radio ahead for them to wait up for us, and they pull over in front of a car wash. While they are waiting John and Zulema continue to talk to the cop. A guy in the car wash comes over to help. We pull up and wait while they continue to talk. At this point, no one in our car has any idea what's going on. All we know is we are following this cop and the guy helping kind of looks like the guy in the poster on the light pole. After some discussion, the cop gets back into his truck and leaves; John follows while we wait at the car wash. A few seconds later we heard this short conversation over the radio.

Aaron: John don't follow the cop, this guy says he's a bad cop

John: But the cop still has my license.

Aaron: Zulema has your license in her hand. Don't follow him. He's a bad cop.

A few minutes later John returns and the guy offers to guide us out of the town. We accept and at this point are all a little freaked out. Again we end up losing the guy in traffic and decide to pull into the gas station to figure out what the hell is going on. It turns out the guy who helped us was actually the mayor of the town, which explains how he got the license back, and had offered to guide us out of town in order to make sure the cops weren't waiting for us on the edge of town. Finally we made it out of the town and back on the road. Needless to say we took a different route back from El Tajin.

Once we got back, we decided to rappel Rio Choy. The road to the cave had been gated for some time, but we found a way to drive around it.

Los Gringos Locos: VPI Cave Club in Mexico Cont.

By Steven Davis

Rio Choy is an aqua blue spring upwelling that feeds a river running for 100 yards in a cave with multiple skylights. We rigged the 200 foot rappel

having the rope end 10-15 feet above the water. This rappel was also the most exciting rappel of the trip for me. You start in a traditional cave type



rappel. It's dark and cold with just the light from your headlamp. However, when you cross the last lip and can see the river below, that's when you know this rappel is unique. You look down and see the sunlight and blue water, but nothing can prepare you for the end of the drop. As you go down the rope you see that the water is far below the end of the rope. You look down and it looks as though you are going to drop right on the rocks. Nothing can prepare you for the feeling of rappelling off the end of the rope. As the end of the rope slides out of your control hand, you get this sudden feeling of "Oh crap I just rappelled off the end of the rope." Your stomach jumps into your throat and there is nothing but silence as you fall. Then, Splash! You hit the water. Now you just lay back and watch the skylights go by as you float out of the cave.

That night we spent the night at the Cascadas de Tomasopo, which has two beautiful waterfalls



and a swimming area with a rope swing and diving board. We arrived at night so we had to wait till the next day to play in the water. We started out playing on the rope swing and the diving

board (It turns out that Mexicans are a lot better at the rope swing thing than we were). Then we decided to move on to the waterfall. Apparently

a group of white people jumping off of a waterfall will draw a crowd. We got everyone on our trip to make the jump.



Next we rappelled the Cascadas de Tamul. We had to take this long dirt road to get out there. So Geoff, in true Geoff fashion, decides to pass Aaron while going over a mud puddle. Geoff manages to cover the side of Aaron's blazer, half the inside of his car, and half the people in it with mud. Anyways back to the waterfall, we had to walk along the river with all of our gear for about a mile. As you get close you begin to hear this roaring sound. Then you get to the top and see this huge drop with a massive amount of water flowing over it. It was defiantly the most impressive water fall I've ever seen. We rigged the rope and started to rappel. The rappel itself was crappy as you had to fight the weeds and bushes growing on the wall, but the view was amazing and well worth the rappel. As you drop you see a green canyon with a crystal blue river at the bottom with this amazing waterfall dropping to join with the river. To get back up we had to climb back up the side of the canyon using rickety old ladders made from sticks that were nailed together.

After Tamul, we went to Hoya de las Guaguas. When we arrived, we were able to find some local kids to wash the mud off of Aaron's car and carry the rope up the mountain. We rigged the rope and started sending people down. Just before I started to rig in, I started to feel sick to my stomach. . I don't know if it was something I ate or if I accidentally drank some bad water. Either way it made me throw up. However, I decided to rappel the 400 feet anyways. When we got down to the bottom, we ran into Mike "Tiny" Manke from the BAT grotto and Nikky LeBranche. Only when caving can you drive 30 hours, rappel 400 feet into a hole, and run into someone you know. Dave and I were the last two to climb out (I was on the bottom due to feeling sick before).

Los Gringos Locos: VPI Cave Club in Mexico Cont.

By Steven Davis

About half way up, the birds started to return. You could hear the swoosh as the birds began their dive and see the flashes as they flew by your head. It was defiantly an eerie feeling. When I reached the top I realized that my quick link had opened and bent, and that duct tape was the only thing holding it on.

That night we drove to Golondrinas to camp. We set up in a cabana with another group of cavers and some huge spiders. That night, the sickness I was feeling got worse. I was drained of all my energy. I could barely hike to the camp. The next day we sent four people down into the pit; Dave, Justin, Laurie, and Aaron. Dave decided to go down in record time. He rappelled 1200 feet in about a minute and a half. Yikes! I was still feeling sick and couldn't keep down and food. All I could do was sleep. Just when I was beginning to fear I wasn't going to be able to rappel the pit, I started to regain some energy. Whatever I had left my system and I was able to eat again. The next day we sent six people down; John, Dustin, Paige, Sandy, Geoff, and me. The ride down was awesome. The rope seemed to go on forever. The bottom of the pit was huge. It was big enough for me to spend three hours in and not get bored. We ran into Tiny and Nikky here as well, seem the two of them were doing a similar tour as us. I was the last to climb out again; this time with Geoff. It took us about an hour and a half to climb out. We sang the 100 bottles of beer on the wall song until we realized we'd go through it about five times before we hit the top. About half way up we realized the giant echo and decided to play the penis game where you see who can yell the word penis the loudest. I'm not to sure who won but they could hear us well beyond the campsite. We got out of the pit just before the bird flight started.

After that, we headed to the small town of Huichihuayan for a new years celebration.

We started out with dinner and a birthday celebration for Aaron at Zulema's parent's house. There was a lot of good food and a number of piñatas. After that, we walked into town to join the party. On the way, John decided to try to blow up someone's house. We followed the parade for a while, watched the cross dresser dance with a bunch of guys, and had some weird conversations with a random Mexican guy who spoke English. We were chased around by a drunk Mexican guy with a bamboo bull that shot off fire works. Then they set a coffin on fire that had 2005 written on it, and people were throwing fireworks everywhere. I got hit in the chest with a piece of concrete that was kicked up by an explosion, but I was having too much fun to care. Later after things died down, people started dancing and I was grabbed and thrown into a Mexican conga line (that's one thing I can check off my list of things to do before I die). At about 2AM we stumbled back and slept for the night.

After two weeks, we started to head back home. Crossing the border in the middle of the night, they didn't even ask for our IDs. They just asked if we were citizens and waved us through. With just our memories, a few pictures, and the porn on Geoff's computer to entertain us, we headed home. This time, we didn't stop in New Orleans (except when Geoff's battery disconnected and cut off the engine on the interstate). We just drove straight through to Blacksburg. There are so many more stories that I couldn't fit into this article. I'm sure if you ask anyone on the trip they will be glad to tell you a few. A great time was had by all and I highly recommend this trip to anyone who can go.

Things I learned in Mexico:

Sometimes cops will try to rob you. If you park near the shops at night, they will set up their shop on your car in the morning. Jumping off of things draws a crowd. Don't pet the dogs. If you can't break a piñata with a stick, a carefully placed firework will. Don't pass other cars in mud puddles. Geoff likes the "dirt box" The phrase "uno mas cerveza por favor."

Easter Weekend Road Clean Up and Sinkhole Brush Removal

By Steve LePera

The club traditionally does a road clean-up in front of the Bat Ranch along Zell's Mill and 601 on the Saturday morning before the Easter party at the Bat Ranch, and this year was no exception. Sixteen members turned out, some half an hour earlier than usual to get started on the road, and due to the excellent turnout we completed the entire adopted highway by 11am, taking just over an hour including dropping the 17 filled trash bags off at the county dumpsters. As usual, a few interesting things were found including a near-perfect pair of sunglasses, a weird 80 lb reel of wire from MOOG, and some steel lockers. A number of members took advantage of the quick cleanup and went caving afterwards.

Dave Colatosti and Justin Matous couldn't be bothered to delay their trip though. They left

for Clover Hollow from the Bat Ranch at 10am, driving shamefully past the group of cleanup volunteers. We noted they were able to return in time to start partying at 4:30pm. Apparently to them, that extra hour of Easter Beer was worth more than supporting their friends and the club in one of the club's more visible public services. Thanks, guys, we love you too.

In addition to the adopted road cleanup, a handful of us also drove up the mountain to the William's sinkhole and removed some of the fallen timber and brush. By the end of about 4 hours of hauling, we'd tripled the size of the Bat Ranch woodpile. There is still a significant amount of wood in the sinkhole, so another cleanup day there is planned later in the spring.



Cleaning up along Zell's Mill and 601



Dave Colatosti signing out for Clover Hollow instead of taking an hour to help his friends with the road cleanup.



<Steve Wells and Mike Ficco get professional as they prepare to cut up the fallen timber in the William's sinkhole.



Trip Reports

From Sign Out

VPI Cavers and their guest logged in over 1249 hours underground between
12/03/05 and 04/07/06

Date	Cave	Names	Comments
12/3/05	Clover Hollow	Dustin Schleifer, Sara Kleinsteinuber, Philip Schuchardt Zak Sawyer, John Deighan	Hey, Zak can I get a finger here?
1/14/06	Pig Hole	Dave Colatosti, Kevin Rock Philip Schuchardt, Dustin Schleifer Sara Kleinsteinuber, Sam Garguilo	Let her go first so I can check out my crack
2/01/06	Williams	Kevin Rock, Philip Schuchardt, S. LePera, Zak Sawyer, S. Wells	26 straws used =26 straws worth of "cave" found
2/10/06	Memorial Day Cave	Philip Balister, Philip Schuchardt	I though I would never use the chapter in Alpin Cave Tech. about the rubber raft!
3/04/06	NC Murder Hole	Geoff Lewis, Steven Davis, John Deighan	Deighan is a trainee, dropped his pack down the butt ledge
3/04/06	Smoke Hole	Ray Sira, Dave Colatosti	Dave's ass Stinks
4/01/06	Tawneys	John Booker & Boy Scouts	7am! The things I do for little boys
April Fools	Pighole	John Deighan, Geoff Lewis, Stephanie Everd, Julie Booker	I like it bent better than straight

VPI CAVE CLUB

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