

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

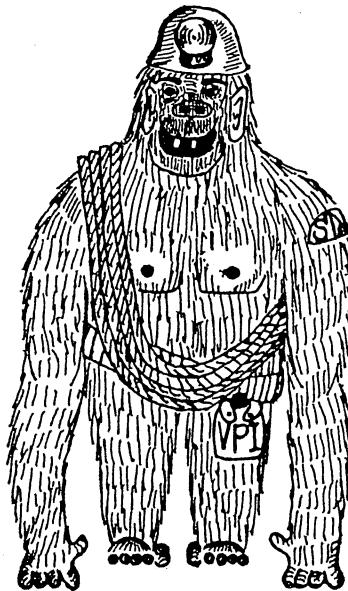
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NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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EDITORS COLUMN

During the five years that I have been at VPI, I have seen the VPI Grotto change from a stagnant group of cavers to an active expanding Grotto. There are three people, in my opinion, who were - and are - responsible for this improvement: Gregg Marland, R.E. Whittemore, and Ed Bauer.

Student grottos have an inherent danger due to the fact that membership usually changes completely every four years. This makes it easy for members to fall into the rut of learning where a number of caves are during their first two years and then spending their last two years taking new members back to the very same caves. This cycle, once begun, is difficult to break; few new caves are discovered and many of the known caves in the area remain unvisited for decades. All the group does is visit the same parts of the same caves over and over again.

This, then, was the plight of the VPI Grotto when I first joined.

In that first year, Gregg Marland began to break this cycle. He took trips to different caves, helped update surveys, mapped caves, and brought VPI in contact with other NSS cavers and Grottos. He planned collecting trips with, and introduced members to, outstanding cavers and speleologists such as John Holsinger. With little help from the rest of the Grotto, he and his wife Bonnie (daughter of Bill Stephenson, founder of the NSS) wrote, edited, and printed the first VPI Grotto publication since the "Grotto Grapevine": The Tech Troglodyte. It was mainly his initiative and organization that resulted in the successful 1963 NSS Convention at Mountain Lake, with VPI Grotto as host.

Unfortunately, this period was marred by a debate over policy that threatened to split or destroy the club. One group of members wanted rigid rules governing trips and a leadership code; the other members preferred fewer rules and more reliance on the judgement of the members. The spokesmen of these respective groups were George Farrier and Gregg Marland.

This "era of bad feelings" resulted in long, boring, debate-filled meetings, that disgusted potential members and was climaxed by a vote on whether or not to remove Gregg Marland from the club for an infraction of the leadership code. Although the club voted to keep Gregg as a member, he elected to remove himself from most of the Grotto activities.

Gregg continued to work with individual cavers until he graduated, but the Grotto might have reverted to the same vicious cycle had not R.E. Whittemore continued many of the

activities begun by Gregg. Whitt has worked to keep the Troglo-dyte publishing, done a tremendous amount of original work in southwestern Virginia and other caving areas, founded the quarterly club projects, held the office of vice-president, and organized the 15th Annual Regional Meeting at Blacksburg, along with Ed Bauer.

Ed, absent during part of this time, came back to VPI with information and contacts that has expanded the Grotto's knowledge of other cavers. Through Ed, VPI members have met other cavers and interest in regional and national functions has increased tremendously. From these contacts, VPI has acquired a growing reputation among other grottos.

In the past two years, VPI has removed the leadership code from the constitution, devoted meetings more toward caving, revived the program after each meeting (thanks to Whitt), and has grown at an exponential rate (see Ed Morgan's article in this issue).

Just last year, the VPI Grotto acquired a new member "recruited" by (again) Whitt from the Potomac Speleological Club (PSC). Anne Braithwaite was editor of the PSC publication and moved to Blacksburg just in time to keep the Tech Troglodite from dying out for lack of support. It has been Annie's thankless task to type each and every stencil used in this publication.

There are many, many other members who contributed to the upgrading this, one of the oldest Grottos, but space does not permit me to mention all of them. The people named above were key figures, but would have accomplished nothing without the support of others.

VPI is expanding (15,000 students by 1974), the Grotto is working closely with Charlie Maus (WVACS) in West Virginia, there is a large body of active members, the club is doing a great deal of exploration and location work, and there are many good potential leaders with the ability and initiative to continue the expansion of VPI's influence in the Virginia Region. In fact, two of our members are new Regional officers.

The future looks bright.

Gary McCutchen

CALCIUM CARBIDE

Although a large majority of cavers in the United States use calcium carbide lights, few of them know anything about the chemical they pour in the base of the lamp. This article, hopefully, will provide a fairly complete picture of the history, manufacture, uses, and producers of calcium carbide.

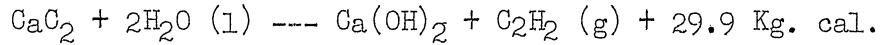
Description. Calcium carbide (CaC_2) has a formula weight of 64.10 and has four known crystalline modifications: one with cubic, one with tetragonal, and two with lower symmetry. The tetragonal form is prevalent in ordinary industrial carbide and is stable between 44°C and 25°C .

Pure calcium carbide is transparent and colorless. It can be produced, with difficulty, but is not manufactured commercially. It has no commercial use; none of its properties have been determined definitely.

Commercial calcium carbide (which will from now on be referred to as "carbide") is a mixture of several chemical compounds. It is composed of calcium carbide (CaC_2), excess lime (CaO), and small amounts of impurities. The nature and properties of carbide depend upon the proportions of these materials in the carbide. Its color varies from steel gray to reddish brown.

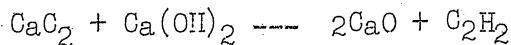
History. Although carbide was definitely made in the laboratory and accidentally in side reactions in existing industrial reactions long before 1890, it was either not isolated or not recognized. Commercial production began in 1892 when a Frenchman and an American independently developed an economic process using an electric furnace. The industry expanded rapidly, anticipating the general adoption of acetylene lighting. When this failed to materialize, the new industry suffered from overproduction, leading to a crisis in France in 1899. Since then, the industry has developed steadily.

Reactions. The most important chemical property of carbide is its reaction with water. This is a violent, exothermic reaction, and is the source of most of the acetylene used in industry. It is the same reaction that occurs in a carbide lamp:



The heat produced in the base of the carbide lamp, as can be seen from the above equation comes from the heat-producing reaction of carbide with water.

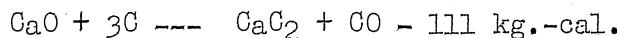
If there is a deficiency of water, the carbide may react with the hydroxide present:



This reaction may be the reason why carbide lights continue to produce acetylene long after the water has been turned off.

Carbide also reacts with nitrogen to produce cyanamide. The only other industrially important reactions of carbide are those in which its reducing properties are utilized.

Manufacture. Simple in principle, carbide manufacture has changed little since it was first developed in 1892. A mixture of lime and carbon is heated in the intense heat of an electric arc and the lime is reduced by the carbon according to the equation:



The carbide is formed in a liquid state and contains both excess lime and most of the impurities that were present in the raw materials. For this reason, the raw materials are purified as much as possible before being charged (placed) in the furnace. The carbon monoxide escapes through the furnace charge.

Impurities in the lime consist of silica, iron and aluminum oxides, magnesia, sulfur, and phosphorus; these impurities should make up no more than 5% of the lime, the remaining 95% being CaO.

The most commonly used source of carbon for this reaction in the United States is coke. The moisture content must be less than 2% in order to prevent slaking of the lime (and therefore formation of dust) when the lime and coke are mixed.

Most of the impurities merely make the cost of production greater, but sulfur and phosphorus enter the acetylene gas generated by the carbide in the form of hydrogen sulfide and phosphine, respectively.

The two main types of carbide furnaces, which are not true arc furnaces, are: (1) the open furnace, where the carbon monoxide formed in the reaction burns to carbon dioxide when it comes in contact with air on top of the furnace charge and is therefore lost up the stack, and (2) the closed furnace, where as much of the carbon monoxide as possible is prevented from burning by excluding air from the top of the charge and is collected, where it may be used as a fuel, as a source of CO₂ for dry ice or for chemical synthesis.

During operations, the furnaces are charged, theoretically, with 56 parts of calcium oxide and 36 parts of carbon. The carbide is formed in the reaction zone around its electrodes; the

reaction is usually 80-85% complete. The level of the charge in the furnace is maintained by feed pipes from storage bins; the product is tapped intermittently. The molten product is run into cast-iron chill pots of various sizes at a temperature of 1000 to 2000° C, where it is allowed to cool for a few hours. The solid is then removed from the pots and set aside for several days until the interior is cool enough for the block to be crushed.

Ferrosilicon metal impurities in the carbide are removed during crushing operations. The size varies from .1.5 to .0165 inch lumps, packed in 10, 25, 100, 110, and 220 pound thin-gage sheet steel drums with a waterproof screw tip and dummy cover. According to U.S. government specifications, the carbide must yield at least 4.5 or 4.3 cubic feet of acetylene per pound; there are six different sizes specified. The acetylene yield is measured at 60°F and 30 inches barometric pressure. The evolved gas must not contain more than 0.05% by volume of phosphoreted hydrogen.

Uses. The largest use of carbide is acetylene production. Nearly all of this acetylene is used for oxyacetylene cutting and welding, the production of synthetic organic chemicals (such as acetaldehyde, acetic acid, acetone, vinyl acetate, butanol, and many other compounds and derivatives), and acetylene black (a unique form of carbon black). A small portion is used for lighting purposes, making cameras a very small part of the total market.

The second major tonnage of carbide goes into the manufacture of cyanamide by fixation of nitrogen in the atmosphere. This is used as a fertilizer and a starting material for producing a family of resins.

A small amount of carbide is also used as either a reducing or a drying agent in some processes.

Producers. United States production of carbide increased from 167,592 short tons in 1939 to 775,673 short tons in 1944. The market has continued to increase. Air Reduction Chemical and Carbide Company produces carbide at Ivanhoe, Virginia, and at Keokuk, Iowa. It uses the registered trademark "National Carbide" for its product. The price, as of October 18, 1965, was \$171.40 per ton, delivered, packaged in 600 pound drums.

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"Cleanliness is next
to godliness."

—William Shakespeare

"Go to Hell."

—Tennessee Williams

THE HIGGINBOTHAM PROJECT

PART I

Several miles south of the town of Tazewell, in Tazewell County, Virginia, are located the entrances to two of Virginia's most interesting and rugged vertical caves.

Higginbotham # 1 (also called the Devils Slide) and Higginbotham # 2 lie on the east flank of Knob Mountain, in the shadow of a rocky sandstone escarpment over 1000 feet above.

At this time, more exploration has been accomplished in #1, with about 3000 feet of passage explored and mapped. Entrance to #1 is gained through a wooded sink. One then travels west for about 100 feet down a smoothly sloping watercourse which ends in a 12 foot drop. At the bottom of this drop are wedged logs and fill which is actually the jumping-off place for the 140 foot drop. The drop is clean, starting out in a fissure and close to a wall most of the way. In the spring, water enters about half way down.

At the bottom of the drop are several small rooms, one with a sand floor. The cave then trends south along a high narrow fissure. Several climbs and drops are encountered along this fissure.

After a tight crawl for about 100 feet, the large main passage is encountered. To the right (south), the cave continues for only several hundred feet. To the north, the passage meanders up and over dried mud banks and deep guano deposits. The ceiling is between 8 and 30 feet high and the walls are sometimes 60 feet apart. A domepit to the right and a stream passage on the left - which later connects with the main passage - are also of interest.

After walking 1500 feet in a northeasterly direction in large passage, one passes through the formation section and into the Bowl Room. From the Bowl Room, it is a matter of only several hundred feet to the termination of the cave.

The natives of the surrounding area have mentioned more than once the great flood of 1901 which completely filled this cave. This is evidenced by the two-foot diameter logs found both above and below the 140 foot drop. It is doubtful that the cave has flooded since then.

Interest in this cave was rather sporadic until some cavers from VPI joined some from Roanoke in the winter of 1961. Several months later, the cave was made an official project of the VPI Grotto. The object of the project was to explore, map, and further investigate the Higginbotham cave system.

Subsequent trips discovered more passage. One mapping trip ended in the hauling up the big drop of one member, "pooped" by the rigors of this cave. Another trip spent the entire time trying to dislodge the log and gravel fill at the top of the 140 foot drop with the use of dynamite. Another trip, cavers spent several tense moments using a 30 foot log scaling pole to investigate several high leads near the entrance. There were several other mapping trips which finally finished the work in August 1965.

Higginbotham #2 is now the subject of our interest. This cave lies at about the same elevation and less than 1000 feet south of #1. It is no longer believed to tie in with #1 due to the northeasterly direction of #1.

In the late 50's, #2 was the scene of the rescue of a caver from the bottom of the 90 foot entrance drop. He had become miserably cold from the great amount of water flowing in through the top of the narrow crack.

Several trips to #2 in the last five years have revealed a 30 foot drop at the bottom of the entrance drop. A large room and interconnecting passageways contain many holes in the floor, most of which lead down 100-200 feet more. One of these was explored in 1962 with the use of a ladder and a rope. At the bottom was a stream passage close to 1000 feet long. In addition to updating the sketch map of #2 (by Earl Thierry), there is much exploration to be done in this cave. It is not a cave to explore in wet weather.

It is indeed unfortunate that these two caves are visited so infrequently by cavers from other areas. I have personally never physically expended myself in any other cave in Virginia-West Virginia to the extent that is possible in either of these caves. We, at VPI, certainly would welcome a joint trip by any other group wishing to help explore #2.

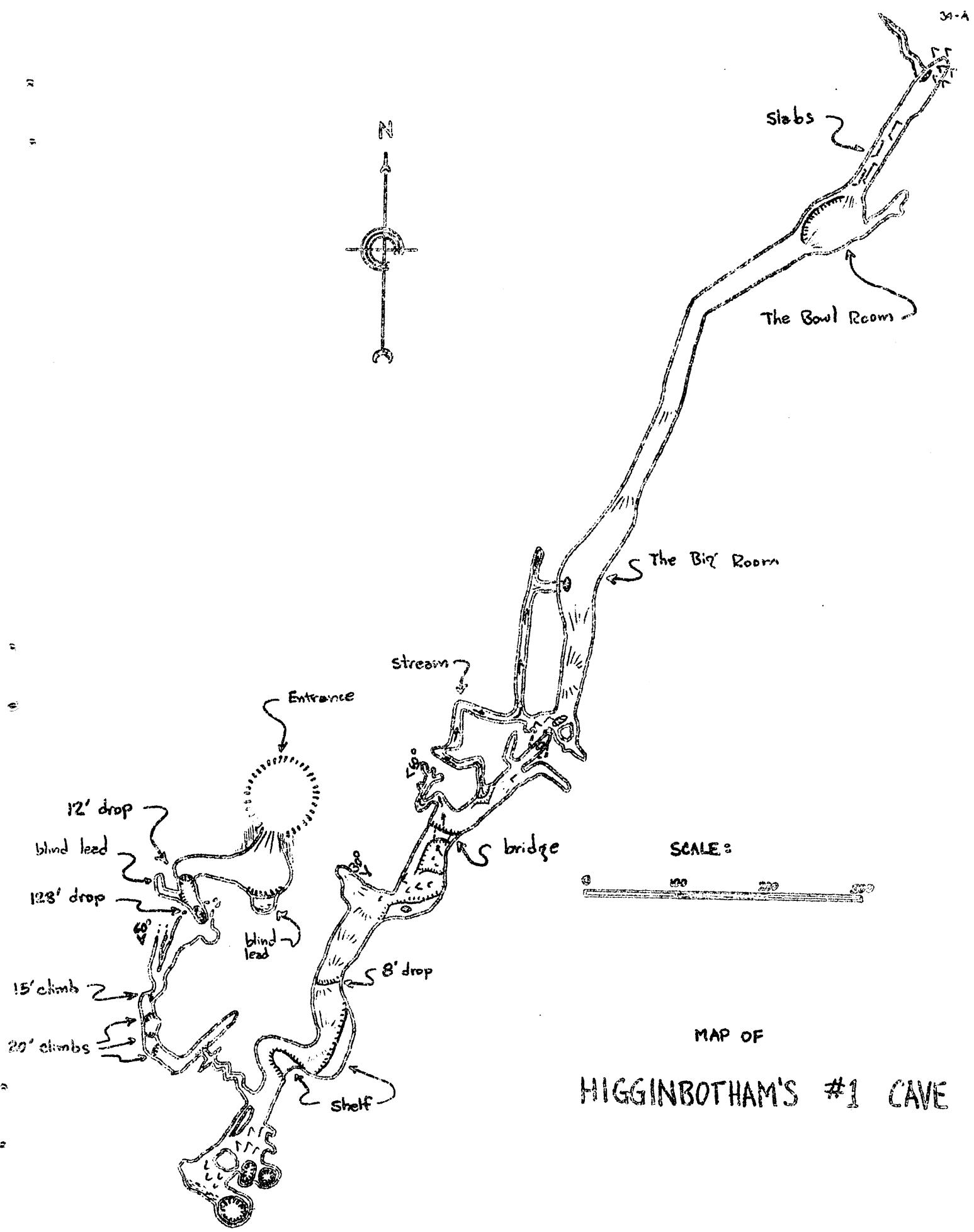
We have recently secured the use of a nearby house (known as the VPI Outhouse) for sleeping facilities when caving in the area.

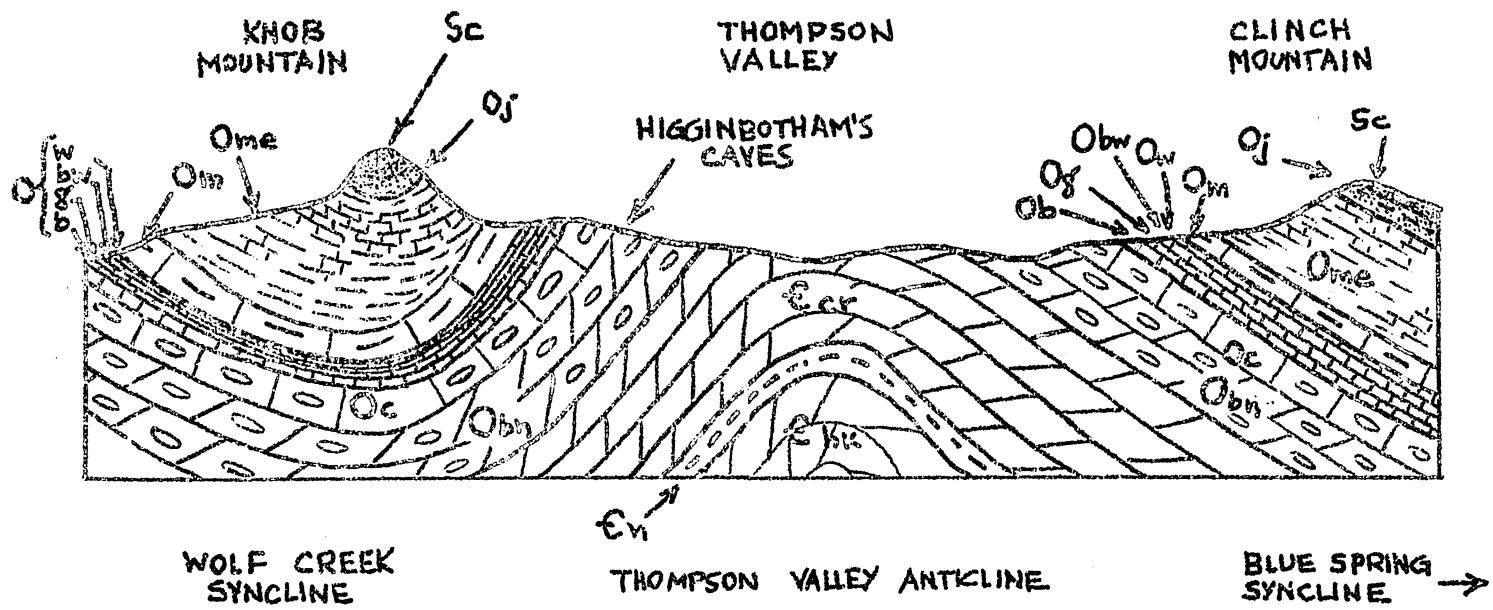
by Ed Bauer

PART II

GEOLOGY OF HIGGINBOTHAM'S CAVES

The geological setting of Higginbotham's caves is most auspicious. These caves are located in Thompson Valley, eight miles southwest of Tazewell, Virginia.





Silurian : Sc - Clinch Sandstone

Ordovician : Oj - Juniata Sandstone

Ome - Martinsburg Limestone & Shale

Orm - Moccasin Formation (mudrock)

Ow - Witten Limestone (very thin)

Obw - Bowen Mudrock & Wardell Limestone

Og - Grattan Limestone (pure, fine-grain)

Ob - Benbolt Limestone (Cross-bedded & Argillaceous)

Oc - Various limestones (Chert Cong. & Cherty limestone)

MAJOR DISCONFORMITY

Obn - Beekmantown Formation

Cambrian : Ecr - Copper Ridge Dolomite

En - Nolichucky Shale

Ehk - Honaker Formation

Beekmantown formation is 900 feet thick, somewhat cherty.

Chiefly dolomite, intercalations of limestone

Strike, N40E ; Dip, $\sim 30^\circ$ NW

Joints (near entrance)

major - N50E, minor - N40W
(Near Bowl room)

major - N60E, minor - N50W

Information from field notes and

"Geology of Burkes Garden Quadrangle", by Byron Cooper

Thompson Valley, a long limestone valley devoid of any significant surface drainage, is sitting astraddle a large anticline, forming outcrop slopes (and caves) on both sides of the valley. On the south side is Clinch Mountain, forming the south limb of the Thompson Valley Anticline and the north limb of the Blue Spring Syncline. To the north is Knob Mountain, resting on the axis of Wolf Creek Syncline. The entrances to Higginbotham's Caves are situated here on the south slopes of Knob Mountain.

The stratigraphy of this mountain, and its relation to the caves, is quite interesting. The mountain is capped by a protective layer of resistant Clinch Sandstone, of Silurian age. This layer forms the portentous cliffs and crags that overlook the valley some 2000 feet below. Beneath this sandstone cap is a thin layer of Juniata sandstone, then a thick layer of Ordovician-aged, Martinsburg shale. This limy shale forms the greater part of the slopes of Knob Mountain. Beneath this is a layer of Moccasin mudrock. The formation is named after Moccasin Ridge in southwestern Virginia. Beneath the mudrock are four layers of thinly-bedded limestone and limy mudrock. An interesting cross-section of the Martinsburg, Moccasin, and these lower limestone beds can be seen along the west side of Plum Creek Gap, on Route 16 south of Tazewell.

Underlying these limestones are various middle Ordovician limestones, including a cherty conglomerate and cherty limestone forming a row of low hills at the base of Knob Mountain. Between these strata and the next lowest member is a major disconformity. It is partly along this zone of contact that Higginbotham's caves occur. Below this disconformity is the lowest member of the Ordovician-aged formations - the 900-foot thick Beekmantown formation. This layer of predominantly fine-grained dolomite is noted for its large cave systems such as Gilley's, Buchanan Saltpeter, Clover Hollow, The Murder Holes, Luray Caverns and others. In Tazewell County, the Beekmantown formation contains many layers of chert which can be seen along the walls of Higginbotham's voluminous corridors. Intercalations of limestone occur in this vicinity.

Underlying the Beekmantown formation is the Cambrian-aged Copper Ridge dolomite, which forms the lowest part of Thompson Valley. Perhaps the formation is named after Copper Ridge in southwestern Virginia.

The Beekmantown formation is the chief cave-forming stratum in Thompson Valley. In the vicinity of Higginbotham's caves, it strikes N 40° E and dips approximately 30° to the northwest. The caves are formed along major joints running N 60° E and minor joints running N 50° W, and trend along the strike. A number of other caves in the valley occur in the Beekmantown formation. Of particular interest are Glenwood Church Cave and Cauliflower Cave, on

the other side of the Valley. Both have large passages and many speleothems. East of Plum Creek Gap, on the flanks of Rich Mountain, is Crockett's Cave, a 600-foot water cave.

At the lower end of Thompson Valley, north of Wards Cove, is a large, interesting area lying between the ends of Knob Mountain and Short Mountain. Here about ten square miles of Beekmantown limestone is exposed in a large area characterized by low, rolling hills and sinkholes. There are a number of small caves containing large stream channels that have not been completely explored, and would require the use of rubber rafts. The streams in some of these caves are apparently the same, with at least one of them resurging at Maiden Spring.

Also in this area are the Lost Mill caves and the Cove School caves, both systems containing large streams. Northeast of this area, near the Clinch River, is Crab Orchard Indian Cave, excavated by the VPI Grotto in 1947 for Indian relics. Some of these can be seen today in a small museum owned by Jeff Higginbotham. Besides these known caves, there are a number of un-checked leads in the area, some of which should yield interesting results.

Thompson Valley, Wards Cove, and Plum Creek Gap, surrounding the dominating bulk of Knob Mountain, present an area that is both strikingly scenic to the casual observer, and interesting to the more geologically- and historically-inclined visitor. And to the speleologist, the caves beneath are far from disappointing.

R.E. Whittemore

submitted for publication September 17, 1965

THE TELEPHONE CAPER

The reason for including the following useless information is to point out a few weaknesses in communications during a cave rescue. The rescue took place last January when Ed Bauer, Dick Hoyle, "Whitt" Whittemore, and Lew Bicking were trapped for two days beyond a siphon in Snedegar Cave. (For details see the spring 1965 Troglodyte, p. 95.) The problem of finding someone who was familiar with the Snedegar-Crookshanks system was the most important and time consuming obstacle that we had to concern ourselves with before we left Blacksburg. For obvious reasons, more of the significant, hazardous caves and the people familiar with them should be included in later publications of the Cave Rescue Communications Network (CRCN) list.

When it became apparent that Whitt, Ed, and Dick had not returned, I make the following calls from Gary's house:

1. Operator (information), Marlinton, West Virginia.--We were trying to reach the McKeever farm to find out if anyone was at the Sugar House. After several long delays and loud noises, the operator informed me that there was no telephone service on Swago Creek Road.
2. Lew Bicking's residence, Baltimore, Maryland (for obvious reasons) --No answer.
3. John Cooper's residence (chuckle)--to find out if Lew Bicking had returned.--No answer.
4. Bill Plummer's residence.--No answer.
5. Ron Burnette, Weyer's Cave, Virginia.--We were trying to find someone who knew the exact location of Snedegar-Crookshank System and could assist us if a rescue was necessary. No one at VPI had ever visited the cave. Ron informed me that Mason Sproul at U.Va. and Bob Blackburn, Bethesda, Maryland, were familiar with the system. He gave me Bob Blackburn's mother's telephone number and also the number of the operator at U.Va.
6. Bob Blackburn's mother.--She told me how to reach Bob.
7. Bob Blackburn, Bethesda, Maryland.--Bob told me to call Mason Sproul; he also prepared to join us at the cave.
8. U.Va. operator.--I did not realize that the number I had called was the operator at U.Va. and not the Security Office. After a brief (but confusing) question and answer discussion with the operator, I gave up trying to argue with her and asked her to connect me with the Office of Student Affairs. (I should have asked for the Security Office but I didn't understand this at the time.) I was supposedly given Mason Sproul's telephone number. The U.Va. operator couldn't connect me with this number, so I had to place another long distance call to Charlottesville.
9. An attorney somewhere in Charlottesville.--I had been given the wrong number.
10. U.Va. operator (again).--This time I succeeded in reaching the Security Office and for the first time in a long while I was able to talk with someone of intelligence. (I was beginning to wonder if there were any such people in Charlottesville. Later, I reached Mason Sproul and he confirmed my suspicions.)

My intelligent conversation with a very nice lady in the Security Office soon deteriorated into an entangling attempt to describe our situation. I don't really blame her for not knowing what a siphon was. (Higher educational institutions in Charlottesville have probably not concerned themselves with the teaching of such useful definitions.) She attempted to write down the details and apparently planned to contact the "cavers" on the U.Va. campus.

We were obviously wasting valuable time and in order to avoid turning confusion into chaos, (this would have been the end result if she would have attempted to repeat the information I had given her.) I asked her to let me talk to Mason Sproul. This would eliminate an obviously non-essential and confusing link in communications.

11. (Finally) Mason Sproul, U.Va.--I explained briefly what had happened and Mason agreed to meet us at the cave about 8pm. It had been a long time since Mason had been in Staircase (chuckle), so I had to give him directions on how to reach the cave. (Gary had a topo. map with Snedegars plotted.)
12. Bill Karras, NCG--no answer at first.
Bill was finally contacted in the evening by Byron McCutchen.

It is not necessary to say any more about the UVa Security Office except that it is an unfortunate, but sometimes necessary, link in communications. Recent mass distribution of Mason Sproul's propaganda sheets has helped to straighten out most of the details about the C.R.C.N.

The C.R.C.N. may not be the best answer but at least it is a step in the right direction. There is no magic formula for cave rescue organization. If there was one, Bill Plummer would have already derived it. Bill Karras seems to have an answer for everything but the solution to nothing. As long as both of these people just sit around and think and don't go caving the C.R.C.N. will have a peaceful year. If they ever decide to go caving together, please call the VPI Grotto More Discreet, Most Successful Cave Rescue Team.

Mike Hamilton

Submitted for publication March ??, 1965



I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY THEY CALL IT THE
TRUNK CHANNEL

ON LEADERSHIP

Recent events have indicated that there is a semantic problem in the word "leadership." To me, this word describes the ability and desire of a person to accept a certain responsibility for a group of people in order to attain certain achievements collectively. No matter how formal or informal the group, these barterings of responsibility for unison are tacitly understood. Every person in this group should know his own capabilities to the degree that he may accept or reject his position in this group before embarkment.

Some say; "The leadership system of the Cave Club is dead!"; but I say that leadership will always live whether you paint it green and name it or not! This is a natural course of human events until the coming of the monolithic classless myth. The true test of degree of a leader is this: who is the least capable person that he can successfully take through a given mission by his own ability to train and supply vicarious confidence. The man who will "lead" only his peers in a given situation is a manager, not a leader. This is the maximum degree of responsibility which some, who claim to be leaders, will accept. This situation is perfectly adequate if all concerned understand the implications, but let's not misrepresent ourselves. Each of us must decide what degree of responsibility he will accept.

There is always a shortage in the supply of leaders, not because people lack the ability, but for lack of desire.

I invite those, with ability, who might feel that there is something more important or valuable than their own immediate convenience to become leaders. I think many might find it as rewarding (or more so) to watch another's development- to which they have contributed their time, patience, and ability- as to always be concerned only with their own development.

Henry D. Stearns

Submitted for publication December 3, 1965

75 MEMBERS BY 1970?

With the increase in enrollment at VPI, and with the growing popularity of caving, we find the number of VPI Grotto members growing at an ever-increasing rate. There are several factors which affect the growth of the club, some which are controllable.

These factors include:

1. Enrollment of the University.
2. Popularity of caving.
3. Amount of publicity from Publicity Committee and individuals.
4. Effectiveness of trainee program in maintaining interest.
5. Amount of transportation available for caving.
6. Advantages of being a member of the club.
7. Size of the club.
8. Popularity of other sports such as climbing and hiking.

Before looking ahead, we should first look back. The figures listed in Table I were taken from receipt records and should be correct in most cases. The figures were chosen from Spring quarter in order to eliminate those trainees who flunk out or give up caving. Thus we are dealing with minimum membership for the year. Membership during Fall quarter is generally 125% to 150% of that of Spring quarter. Trainees, generally 10% to 20% of total, were included in the figures since they are active cavers.

Table I
Yearly VPI Grotto Membership

Year		Number of Members
Spring	1953	8
"	1955	7
"	1956	7
"	1957	9
"	1958	16
"	1959	incomplete
"	1960	17
"	1961	21
"	1962	22
"	1963	27
"	1964	34
"	1965	

See Figure I—next page

In plotting these figures, we can see a general trend in membership curving upward. If this trend continues as projected, membership should reach 75 by spring 1970. Actually, this may be a conservative (the only way to be) estimate because of the rapid growth predicted for VPI over the next few years. By 1970, the club may be experiencing growing pains, the slight twinges of which we are beginning to feel now.

For the VPI Grotto, the future is indeed bright. There will be problems, but there always have been. We are still the World's Most Active Caving Organization!

Edward Morgan

Submitted for publication October 31, 1965

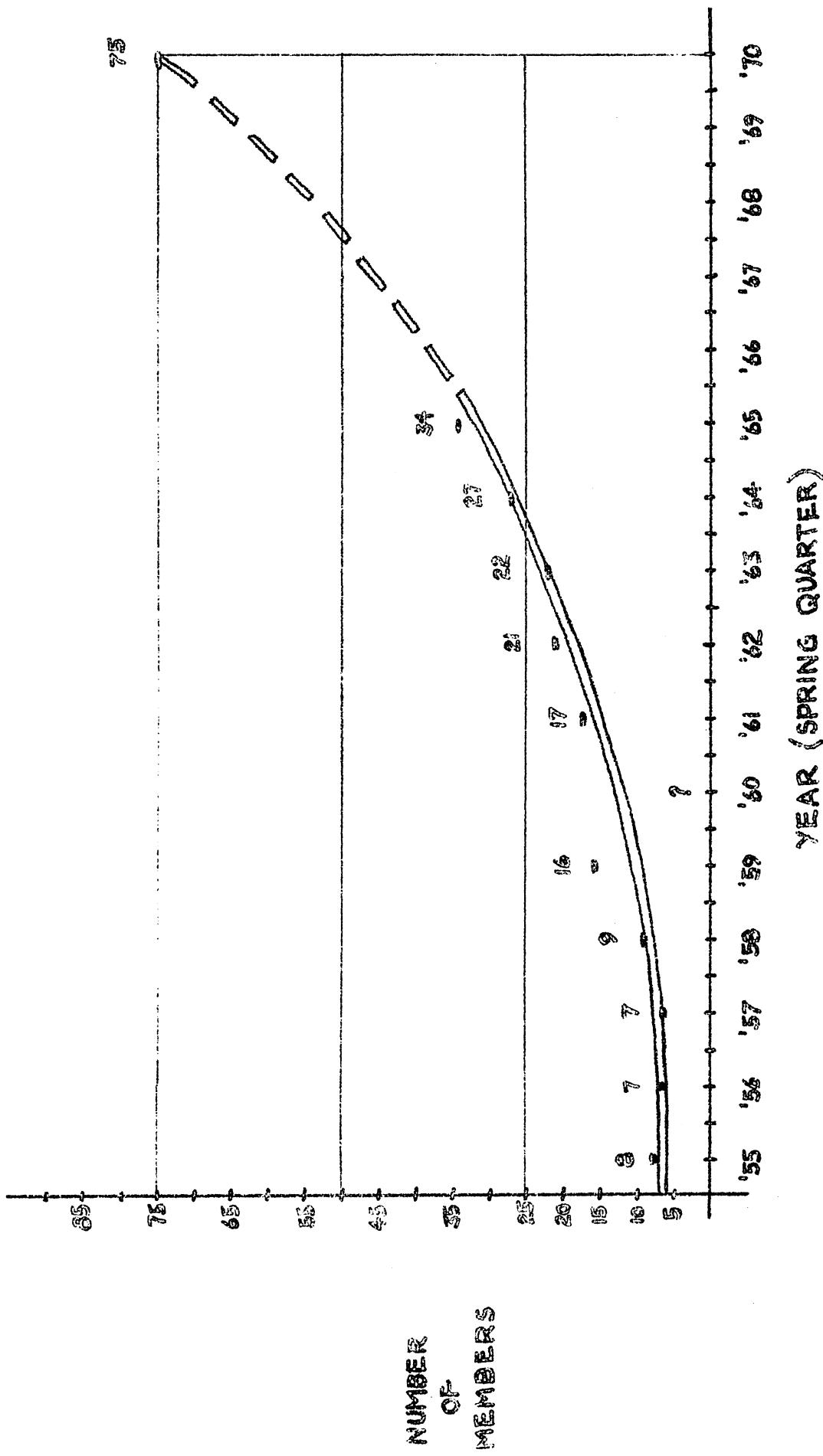


FIGURE I. GRAPH OF GROTTO GROWTH FROM 1955 THROUGH 1965
AND PROBABLE FUTURE GROWTH

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL VIRGINIA REGION MEETING

On October 9, cavers from Maryland, D.C., West Virginia, and Virginia descended on Blacksburg where the VPI Grotto was hosting the Fifteenth Annual Regional Convention.

Some were fortunate enough to arrive Friday night, in time for the weekly Grotto meeting, but most arrived around noon on Saturday at the Wesley Foundation. Here a registration desk (108 registered) was set up; Jerry Fredrick also set up an NSS publications desk; an activities and directions board was also present.

About 1:30 p.m., John Cooper, Regional Chairman, opened the meeting in the Wesley Auditorium. Papers presented included:

1. Status of the Virginia Cave Survey -- John Holsinger
2. The Friar's Hole System -- Lew Bickling
3. A closer look at WVACS -- Charlie Maus
4. Fuller's - Culverson Creek System -- Mason Sprout and Mike Hamilton.
5. Comments on the white cave crayfishes of the Eastern United States -- Martha Cooper

Most of these papers were presented with the accompaniment of slides. Grotto reports were then given. Although D.C. Grotto was much in evidence, their lack of a Grotto report indicates that they either don't go caving any longer, or have no one capable of presenting a report.

Grotto representatives and interested people then retired to an adjoining room for the regional business meeting.

Committee reports included: Cave Legislation Committee, Mason Sprout and Ed Bauer; Schoolhouse Cave Committee, Charlie Maus (this committee was changed to one with the purpose of negotiating the reopening of all closed caves in the region); Propst Fund Committee, Rick Wiker reported that a sizable balance resulted in the fund mistakenly solicited for Elmer Propst. It was decided to incorporate this sum of money (less than \$100) into the regional treasury. Any claims against this money should be made within one year.

At this time all but officers and grotto representatives left the room and the election of new officers took place. John Cooper presided, Martha Cooper represented Secretary-Treasurer Betty Loyd, and Doug Bradford represented Bill Karras, Vice Chairman, who was resting up in D.C. between rescues.

Those grottoes represented were D.C., Monongahela, U.Va., National Capital, and VPI. In addition Charlie Maus represented WVACS and Roy Charlton acted as the region representative at large.

Elected for the following year were:
 Roger Broody.....Chairman
 Ed Bauer.....Vice-Chairman
 Anne Braithwaite.....Secretary-Treasurer

After a leisurely meal of steak with "all the trimmings" at the nearby Hardie House, everyone returned to the Wesley Auditorium where the evening program was presented. Bill Stephenson humorously commented on his many slides taken at the '65 convention in Indiana. Porter Echoes demonstrated new medical devices, such as, inflatable splints, applicable to cave rescue.

Various other slide collections were shown while John Holsinger held a private discussion with all those seriously interested in furthering the Southwestern Virginia work on the Virginia Cave Survey.

Now everyone knows that a regional function would not be complete without some attempt at a party. Bob Robins was very generous in providing "Robin's Ranch" for the song festing, beer-swizzeling, cave-talking orgy that followed the evening session. The VPI Grotto really must apologize for the lack of girls, fellas. The party officially broke up when VPI Chairman Paul Helbert wrecked John Eads' motorcycle and "Dr." Stearns took him to the hospital.

By next morning, however, most of the partiers were ready for what most had travelled all the way to Blacksburg for: a chance to go caving in the cave-rich VPI Grotto area.

All things considered, the Fifteenth Annual Virginia Region meeting was the most successful yet.

Ed Bauer

Submitted for publication November 30, 1965

Editor's Note: The following article was written by one of the most active "old-timers" in the NSS, J. S. Petrie, recently elected to the Board of Governors.

AN OLD TIMER SPEAKS

"If you drink, don't drive!" is "old hat." Statistically, liquor is involved in more than a mere majority of highway accidents, which now kill more than 40,000 annually — not to mention many times that number injured in varying degrees. So far, luck has been good in NSS circles.

Since more and more young people are becoming NSS members, let's curb our public drinking at NSS functions, and set them a good example of responsible behavior rather than otherwise. Remember, some objecting parents have a real point.

To many, a meeting can be stimulating and not dry without being "wet" and too noisy. To others, let them become "happy" more privately than on recent convention and grotto occasions.

"Selphic Denial" is a recommended "drug." "Adam's Ale" variously flavored is still a good thirst quencher, with no regrettable results requiring apologizing for.

Drinkers have their rights, granted; but so do non-drinkers.

Pete #30
(J. S. Petrie,
NSS Board of Governors)

Submitted for publication December, 1965

FALL PROJECT

The VPI Grotto's annual Fall Quarter Project was held this year at Newberry's Cave in Bland County, Virginia.

Four caves in this area had been discovered and mapped by the VPI and Wytheville Grottos in the early 1950's. Newberry's and Bane's caves were connected at this time and together comprised the third largest known cave system in Virginia until the discovery of Gilley's Cave in Lee County.

After the mapping of Newberry-Bane's and two other nearby caves (Penley's and Bane's Spring), the system fell into inattention, even though it was a known fact that there was a chance of a connection between Newberry's and Penley's. This was partially due to difficulties of exploration, so tourist trips prevailed for a number of years.

Why this cave should suddenly rise to attention is explained by two simultaneous events. A letter from Earl Thierry (printed in the previous Troglodyte) contained a map of a little-known section of Newberry's Cave. Added to the big ($7' \times 3' @ 1^{\circ}=50'$) map, it ran the total passage up to two miles and 1900 feet (or, 12,460 feet). At the same time, Mike Hamilton received some directions from Bill Cudington for the location of a virgin passage in Penley's Cave which he had explored for a short distance about ten years ago. Some months before this, a VPI group descended into what was believed to be a blind pit in Newberry's, and found a small opening into about 1000 feet of passage, not on the map, which connected into the area on the small map sent to us by Earl Thierry.

In choosing this project, the objectives were many. One surface survey would be made from Bane's to Bane's Spring and another would be made from Newberry's to Penley's. The lead in Penley's would be checked out and, if possible, surveyed. The unsurveyed portions of Newberry's would be mapped and further exploration

attempted. Bane's Spring would be checked out for any possible connection with the system. Upper level passages in Penley's omitted on the original map would be added. A nearby sinkhole, supposedly the filled-in entrance of an old saltpeter cave, would be checked for possible opening. Some blasting would be attempted in several air holes.

Camping facilities had been arranged in advance by this writer; although there was some disagreement as to the quality of the accommodations. The club ended up camping in a nearby field, preferring the company of cows to that provided by the long-abandoned Newberry House.

The first party arrived at the camping area just before noon Saturday morning. This group, comprised of Jim Cooper, Ed Morgan, and Mike Hamilton, would attempt to explore and survey as much of the alleged virgin section in Penley's as possible. They found the passage just as Bill Cuddington had described it and explored approximately 2100 feet beyond, nearly doubling the already-known footage in Penley's. The large amount of time consumed in crossing some of the trickier pits, and, of course, in negotiating the 180 foot drop, prevented the trio from making a detailed survey of the new area. However, an excellent pace-compass survey was taken. The resulting sketch map was sufficient to destroy any hopes of a connection with Newberry's by that route. Jim, Ed, and Mike spent 14 hours underground, and returned to the campus immediately upon leaving the cave.

Meanwhile, another surveying trio of Rick Nolting, Henry Stevens, and Tom Vigour, entered the Newberry's entrance and began surveying the area below the Straddle Pit. They added over 1000 feet of previously unsurveyed passage to the map.

A blasting team, under the supervision of Mallory Hightower, decided to abort an attempt to blast a connection between Newberry's and Penley's.

John (ficklefingers) Eads and Mike (garbagemouth) Youso spent many hours exploring sundry leads in the Bane's connection. They managed to turn up some virgin passage, but nearly got hosed in the process.

Two surface surveys were conducted in the fleeting daylight hours. The Penley's-to-Newberry's survey was directed by Paul Hebert and Whitey Eubank, along with an army of assistants. The short Bane's Spring-to-Bane's survey was conducted by Barry Whittemore, Anne Braithwaite, and the author. This trio later returned with Tom Roehr, Doug Draves, Jack Keat, and Rick Keener to do some further exploration in Bane's Spring. (See "Trip Reports", elsewhere in this issue.)

The activities of Sunday deteriorated into sleeping late, a tourist trip into Newberry's, surface "work", etc. One useful trip was taken; however. Ed Bauer led a mob into Penley's

(upper level) for the purpose of sketching onto the old map some minor passages that had been omitted in the original survey.

As with most projects that the VPI Grotto undertakes, this one was a huge success. Although the somewhat optimistic goal of finishing up the entire system was not quite achieved, a vast amount of new knowledge was gathered. A composite map of all four caves is planned, and should be completed in the next few months. The remaining piecework will be completed by interested individuals. Meanwhile, the VPI Student Grotto rolls on to new projects.

Some Acknowledgement must be given to the friendly, helpful cave owners in this area. Mr. Penley, a VPI graduate, is probably the "ideal" cave owner, with Mr. Bane a close second. Of course, this project would have been impossible without the information passed down to us by the pioneers of this system, such as Earl Thierry and Jean Lowery. The greatest factors of success in this and all other projects are the individuals of the VPI Grotto, who were able to handle this complex project with skill, initiative, and a minimum of organization effort. On to the annual Winter Quarter Project!

R. E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication January 13, 1966

AN OPEN LETTER TO BILL KARRAS

Dear Bill,

An article in the "Baltimore Sun", concerning your cave rescue team's accomplishments was recently brought to our attention. This aroused considerable interest among us, as we had no previous concept of the extent of your operations.

Due to the continued increase of injuries and deaths associated with caving activities, we would like to do a statistical study on caving accidents as the basis for an article in the next issue of the Tech Troglydite.

Please send us the names of the 40-odd "caving enthusiasts" whose lives your group has saved, along with a few pertinent details (cave, how trapped, etc.). We feel that this information will be invaluable to our study.

In order to give our readers a preview of an article which we believe will be of tremendous interest, and in hopes that we will receive information from sources unknown to us, we are publishing this Letter in our Winter Quarter Tech Troglydite. Enclosed is a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Thank you.

/s/ G. McCutchen, A. Braithwaite, R. Whittemore

...and now, faithful Readers, we once again journey back in time to the golden age when knights were cavers and castles were caves.

FROM THE BOOK: FINK FAIRY TALES, COMES UNCLE GARY'S BEDTIME STORY #16, THE VASSAL

Once upon a time, in the days when the Land of Caverns was mighty and feared throughout the world, there dwelt in the western regions of this realm a certain vassal.

As even the lowliest of peasants knows, vassals are a treacherous lot, attaching themselves to knights and pretending to learn from the knights the art of their craft. In reality, the vassals learn naught but the passages of the castles that the knights venture to visit. They find the rooms where the richest and most beautiful of the jewels, pearls, draperies, and other decorations in the castle are to be found, and, instead of merely gazing in rapture at these wonderous sights, they steal them. But there are some vassals who steal not. They desire only to display their name, alas, on the fairest of the decorations or upon inaccessible parts of the castle walls.

Also in those days there thrived a mighty guild, the National Society of Sorcerors, dedicated to the protection and preservation of all castles, both king-size and regular. This guild was made up of many small groups of knights who held their B.S. (Bachelor of Sorcery) degrees, and these groups, behold, were called Round Tables, named so in honor of the noble writer of this tale, King Author.

The NSS attempted to keep castle locations secret from vassals, or it built an immense portcullis at the entrance to the castle and kept it locked, or it guarded the doorways of the castle to prevent the vassals from entering.

This, then, is the story of a vassal known for his quick mind, strong body, and secretive ways.

* * *

And so it was; that on the 23rd day of the 24th year of the Land of Caverns, a vassal gazed with awe upon the treasures left within the Castle of Flowers by generations of gypsies.

The vassal, whose greedy eyes glowed with avarice, had followed his master through dark, wet passages until they had found this treasure. Now his eyes were hooded as he plotted the theft of the radiant, frail stone flowers, made by gypsy magic so that they grew, though not alive. And as the two exited the castle, he memorized the path they took.

A fortnight later, the clever vassal neared the forbidden castle. He left his ox-cart at the entrance and quietly began to retrace his steps back to the treasure room with a single torch for light. Daringly, he traversed the Pit of Peril, 50 furlongs deep, a slimy path to the intermost reaches of the earth. Silently did he pass by the entrance to the Room of Vampires, glimping their velvet bodies dangling from ceiling beams. And ever so carefully didst he pick his way through the Passage of 10,000 Horrors, when bloated, mud-colored spiders, large poisonous lizards, and furtive crawling things awaited their victims in the soft blackness of the windowless hallways.

Yet so favorably did the gods smile down upon him, that even without the protection of a knight, he once again found the room of treasure, and the pure white magical flowers, luxurious draperies, pillars of precious stone, and pockets of pearls glittered and gleamed in the feeble light of the torch.

Quickly then did he work, cutting, breaking, chipping, and smashing, until all save the most perfect were destroyed, but the best he saved, storing them carefully in his pouch.

And so it came to pass, that when he left the once fascinating chamber, he took everything, including a portrait of the king, and left nothing, not even his footprints.

But, alas, as the vassal began the return journey, his torch burned out, and the usually intelligent servant had neglected to bring along a spare. The hapless vassal wandered hopelessly through the dark galleries, groping his way inch by inch until the knights, who had discovered the destruction of the room and begun a search, found him.

So it came to pass that the vassal became a prisoner of the knights, and they gathered in a great hall and feasted upon many kinds of meat and drank much wine and debated as to what to do with the loathsome vassal. And there were in the Land of Caverns at that time two very opinionated cliques of knights. One group, called the Knighthood of Castle Keepers, wanted to tie the vassal to one of the strange pillars growing from the castle floor and pile wood about him and set fire to the wood. But the other group of knights, known as the Society for the Unveiling of Castle Knowledge to Erstwhile Rehabilitated Servants, wanted to talk gently and reasonably with the vassal until he saw the error of his ways, and then release him unharmed.

Yea, and great was the bitterness between these two groups, and the Society taunted the Knighthood, saying they had cavities under their plumed crests, instead of brains. And the Knighthood sneered at the Society with the fishy initials and dubbed them the Vassal Defenders and considered them a social disease.

Thus, the arguments were heated and loud, and weapons flashed, and challenges were hurled, but the Society -- which claimed to be in the main stream of the land, and which caused the stream to be named the Muddy River, after the reasoning of this huge society -- won over many of the moderate knights. And the moderates had reasonably wanted only to punish the vassal for stealing and destroying the treasures; but they were swayed by the glib tongues of the society leaders, and thus they voted to free the vassal.

So it was, that the errant vassal was brought forth from the foul dungeon, and he was dressed in rich robes and given a place of honor at the knight's table. And, behold, the leaders of the Society spoke to him, and he fell down among them with tears in his eyes and begged forgiveness for his deeds.

And then the rehabilitated vassal left the banquet hall and returned home and never again did he plot to rob castles. Which is why this is called a fairy tale.

Gary McCutchen

Associate Editor's note: The following, a list of caves in West Virginia that are a mile or more in mapped length, was compiled by Earl Thierry. As evidenced by the Question marks, the list is by no means a final one. The Troglodyte will accept any further comments on the subject.

WEST VIRGINIA CAVES WHICH ARE ONE MILE OR OVER IN LENGTH

I. Caves which have been mapped (listed in order of mapped length)

Cave name (County)	Mapped Length (Explored Length, est.)	Source or Comments
Orgam System (Greenbrier)	15.2 mi. (30 mi.)	WVACS
Windy Mouth (Greenbrier)	3.8 mi. (7 mi.)	Compass and pace map by Thierry and Charltons
Cassell (Pocahontas)	3.2 miles	
Cave Hollow-Arbogast (Tucker)	3 miles (? exp.)	March '63 NSS News
Overholts-Blowing (Pocahontas)	2.9 mi. ($3\frac{1}{2}$ mi.)	'62 Speleo Digest
Head-of-Mill-Pond (Monroe)	2.5 miles	Map in NSS Blt. 19
Beacon (Mercer)	2.5 miles	Vol. III, No. 2, Tech Troglodyte (VPI)
Carpenters-Swago (Pocahontas)	2.3 mi. (? exp.)	Map in '62 Speleo Digest
McCullung (Greenbrier)	2 mi. (8 mi.?)	

Ludington (Greenbrier)	2 plus mi. (? exp.)	WVACS
Hunt (Monroe)	1.8 mi.	Thierry and Charltons
Higginbotham #4 (Greenbrier)	1.6 mi.	Cleveland Grotto, '59 Speleo Digest with map
Fuller-SSS (Greenbrier)	1.5 mi. (2+ mi.)	Aug. '65 NSS News
Cass (Pocahontas)	1.5 mi. (1.5 mi.)	Report and map in NSS Blt.
Acme Quarry (Greenbrier)	1.3 mi. (4.1 mi.)	21. Part 1, by Ingalls Compass and pace map by Thierry and Charltons. Sketch map of 4 plus mi. by Peters and Davis
Pattons (Monroe)	1 plus	NSS Blt. 19

II. Caves not mapped (or no mapped length known), over a mile in length is dubious in some cases. Listed in alphabetical order.

Bone-Norman (Greenbrier)	?	WVACS
Buckeye Creek (Greenbrier)	?	4800 ft. mapped, May '62 -- John Cooper
Cornwell (Preston)	?	A maze of interlacing passages.
Crookshank, Snedegars, and Staircase (Greenbrier)	?	3500 ft. mapped Dec. '64 -- D.C. Speleograph
Gullverson Creek (Greenbrier)	?	About 10,000 ft. explored 1954 -- Earl Thierry
Friars Hole	?	Sept. and Nov. '64 D.C. Speleograph. Partial mapped, 3 - 4 miles explored.
Hamilton (Pendleton)	?	
Haynes (Monroe)	?	
The Hole (Greenbrier)	?	WVACS
Jewel (Greenbrier)	?	Partial map in Davies <u>Caverns of West Virginia</u> .
Laurel Creek (Monroe) and Saddle	?	
Mystic (Pendleton)	?	Davies sounds like about 4000 ft.
Poor Farm (Pocahontas)	?	Davies, about 3500 ft.
Rapps (Greenbrier)	?	Mapped 2200 ft. May '62, largest part left to be mapped (John Cooper)
Simmons of Mongo (Randolph)	?	

Sinnit - (Pendleton)	?	62 Speleo Digest
Thorn Mt.		
Smokehole (Pendleton)	?	
Steam (Pocahontas)	?	60 Soeleo Digest, estimated to be 1 mile

Earl M. Thierry

Submitted for publication November 24, 1965

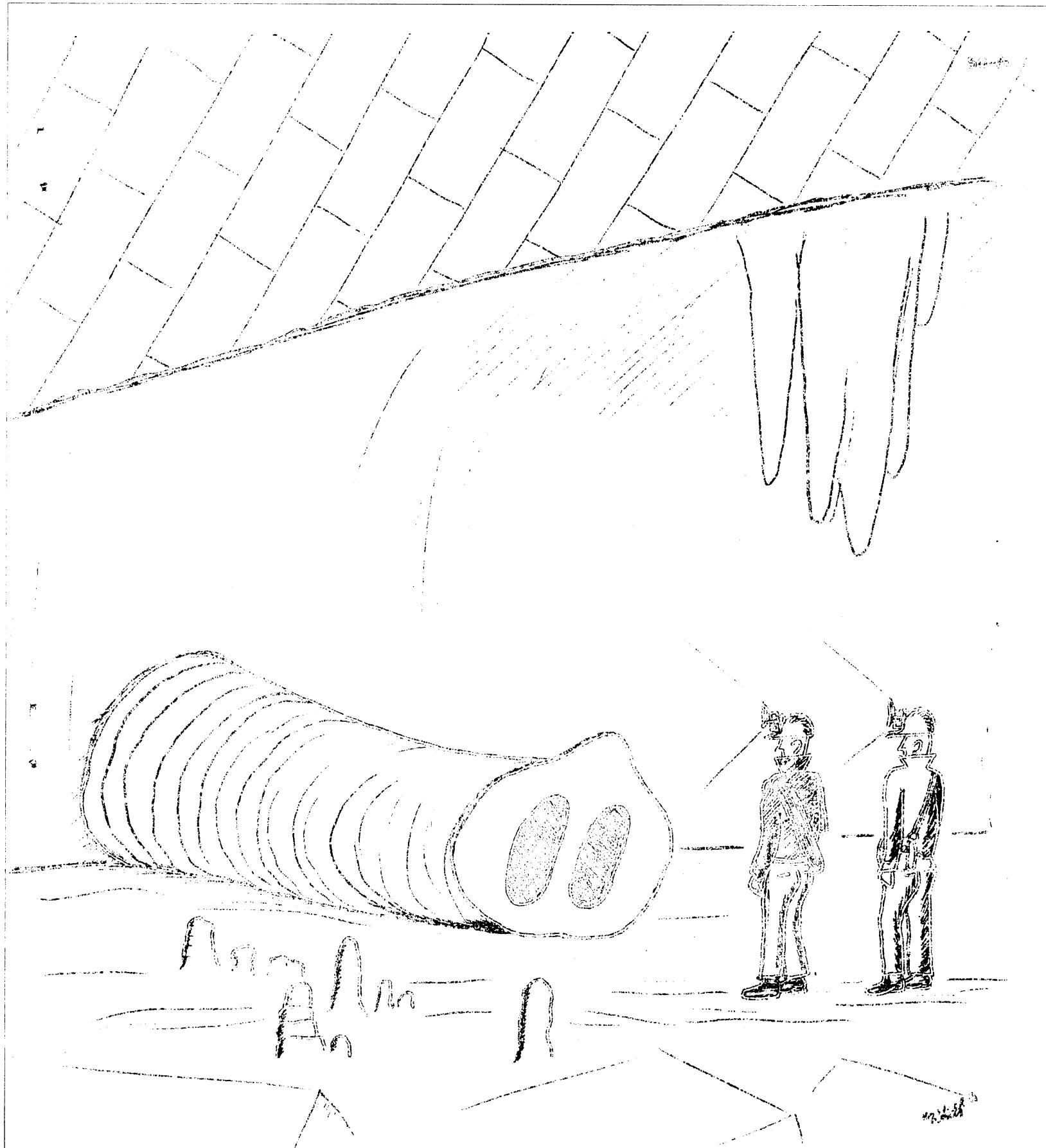
LIST OF COLOR CODES

Requirements for color codes: Must be a dues-paying member (i.e. - regular member or trainee - not inactive). Number of colors in combination should be kept to a minimum. Only the eight colors listed below should be used.

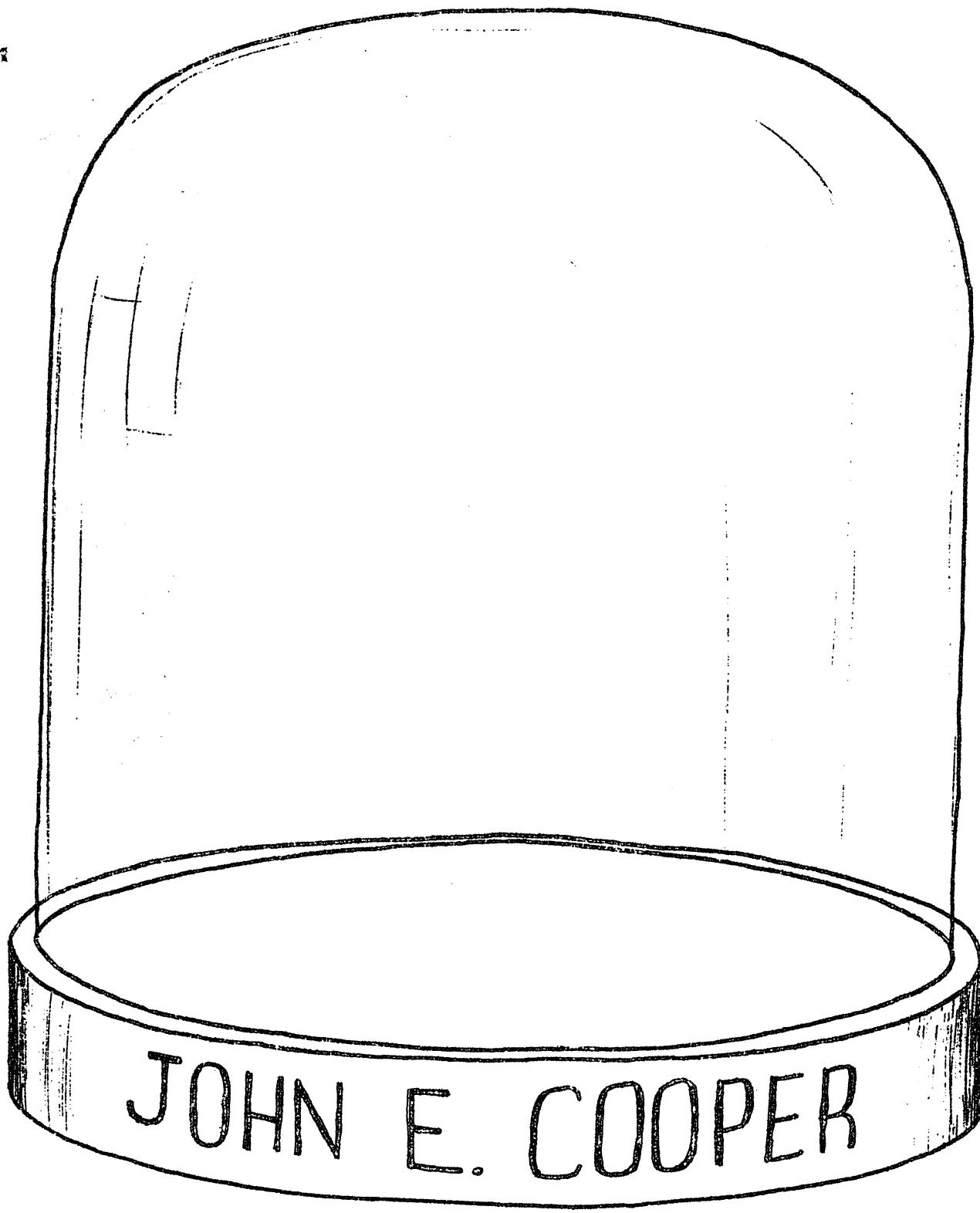
COLOR KEY:	G - GREEN	R - RED
	Y - YELLOW	W - WHITE
	B - BLUE	Bk - BLACK
	O - ORANGE	Br - BROWN

Anderson, Carl	Y-Bk-Y	Keat, Jack	Y-Bk
Armstrong, Allan	Bk-Br	Keener, Rick	Y-B-Y
Baker, E.B.	R-W	McCutchens, Byron	B-Y-B
Bauer, Ed	Y	McCutchens, Gary	G-B
Beck, Richard	B-W-B	Morgan, Ed	G
Bell, Tom *	R-B	Noble, Carole	R-W-B
Bohn, Mike *	Bk-O-Bk	Nolting, Rick	Y-Br
Braithwaite, Anne	R-G	Peduzzi, John	B-W
Brumfield, Gary	R-Y-R	Peters, J. Craig	R
Cooper, Jim	B	Rochr, Tom	R-O-R
Davis, Glen E. Jr.	Bk-G-Bk	Skaggs, Gary	W-Bk-R
Eads, John	B-Y	Smyth, Joe *	Bk-Gray
Eubank, Whitey	R-Bk	Stevens, Henry	R-Br
Evans, Stove	B-Bk-B	Strope, Dave	Bk-R-Bk
Garber, Steve *	G-W-G	Vigour, Tom	G-W-G-W-G
Goodall, Lane	G-Bk-G	Washington, Dick	O-B-O
Hamilton, Mike	Y-O-Y	Whittemore, Barry	W
Harjes, Henry	O-G	Whittemore, R.E.	W-Bk-W
Helbert, Paul	R-Y	Williams, Robert	W-Br-W
Hightower, Mallory	R-Bk-R	Youso, Mike	O

* will be dropped next quarter
if dues aren't paid.



YOU SAY THAT CRAWLWAY LEADS TO
THE TRUNK CRADLE?



"Whiff"

HOO-HA DEPT.

We never thought it would happen in the world of caving, but Vol. 2, Nos. 8&9 (one issue) of HONDO RESCUE contains an article clearly showing that those "fellows" are really HURTING. Reprinted in full below, the article is titled:

FEMALE CAVERS

Two female cavers have fulfilled the proper requirements qualifying them for training with the grotto. They are:

Sallie Pritchard

Kathy Murch

Our requirements for female participants are simple and the following:

- 1) They must possess all necessary equipment.
- 2) They shiculd not be overly demanding.
- 3) They must be able to cave with no more help than a man requires.
- 4) They must not cause any commotion in the ranks.

We wish to welcome all interested females to the sport of cavo exploring.

Now, we aren't sure, but in our way of thinking the only females who wculdn't cause any commotion in our ranks are either uglier than Tom Vigour or older than Joan Crawford. Furthermore, the VPI Grotto encourages females who cause commotion in our ranks to join the Grotto, so all of you good-looking Missouri girls know where to come for a real welcome and some first-class caving. And girls, if you possess all the necessary equipment, we don't even mind if you are overly demanding. After all, our school motto, "Ut Prosim", translates: "That I might serve."

But that's not all. On the same page they wax even more humorous. Unfortunately, they were serious as they gave their:

EXPLANATION OF H. G.'s EMBLEM

The following is an explanation of Hondo Grotto's emblem, which appears at the top of the first page. The flame, which is the light of the lost caver, shows that the caver is lost and cannot see the way out. The arm patch is placed on the right shoulder so that the arrow points forward, to the cave's entrance. The bottom half of the arrow-shaped object is blue in color, signifying the condition of the lost caver. The top half, which is red, signifies the first aid training that all grotto members must have. The shape of the figure stands for the speed and quick thinking of Hondo Grotto's cavers and cave rescue team.

Most of this tripe is so ridiculous that it is impossible to poke fun at. However, we would like to point out that the arrcw will not "point forward, to the cave's cntrance" while HURT members are entering the cave. Unless, of course, they entered backwards; and, in view of the above "Explanation . . .", this procedure seems somewhat logical. We might also add that the "lost caver", has only to look around to "see the way out" with his light; a lost caver's problem is that, although he can see passages leading out as long as he has light, he has no idea which passage to take. How's that for "speed and quick thinking?"

Which leads us to conclude that The Underground is right--in story, song, and poem, no less--about Hondo. Why, even John Cooper, the sage of feudists, never made a Grotte or individual look as ridiculous as Hondo has done all by itself.

But don't feel blue, Hondo, just because you made somebody see red due to your kindergarten-level journalism. You still have Bill Karras.

Gary McCutchen

Submitted for publication January 20, 1966.

WANTED: INTELLIGENT CAVE OWNERS.

The first of these "Wanted" articles appeared last spring in Vol. III, No. 3, p.82, of this journal and was entitled "Wanted: A Little Cooperation." In it, the author, Dave Strope, made a desperate appeal for all cavers to appease cave owners, regardless of how unreasonable they may seem at the time. (I quote, "...we must bend over backwards to convince them they are right.... Cooperation, no matter how one-sided....may even open up some caves for us." I further quote, "...blame cannot be placed on the shculders of the cave owner.") The general opinion of this writer is that the article showed a good understanding of the problems that arise with cave owners, and that Mr. Strope advanced his plea for better relations in a manner fitting the circumstances. However, this strongly conservation-oriented article has since fallen under heavy criticism by, of all persons, our conservation chairman, Ed Bauer. Obviously Mr. Bauer misinterpreted the article. The point most sharply criticized by Bauer was that, somehow, Mr. Strope managed to insert an adjective or two that, when closely scrutinized, may somehow be interpreted to intimate that perhaps an occasional cave owner is not infallible (i.e. "stubborn" "ignorant"etc.). Ed Bauer's rebuttal appeared in Vol. IV, No.1, if anyone cares to read it.

It is my personal opinion that they are both wrong, but to varying degrees. Mr. Strope was on the right track, but he euphemized his true feelings, I believe, too much. On the other hand, Mr. Bauer has a down-right unhealthy attitude toward cave owners. He seems to think that just because a man happens to own a farm with a worthless hole on it, we must kiss his toenails everytime we pass his dcor. This is indeed a negative

approach, and, once put into practice, will be demanded by all cave owners, perhaps to a progressively larger degree with each visit (why, the last time I went to Grapevine, the owner actually had the nerve to ask me for the negatives of any pictures I took!). Before long, it will be the farmer who is riding the free horse to death, not the caver. Once again (I use "again" because some misguided persons seem to think there was a first time), the sport of caving will be threatened, but not for lack of tolerant land-owners. There will, instead, be a lack of tolerant cavers. Can you imagine a more ridiculous situation? Take, for example, the average caver: intelligent, educated, reasonable, and willing to do a fair amount of apple-polishing. He's not infallible, to be sure, but certainly more so than the average cave owner: ignorant, unreasonable, demanding, belligerent, and possessing a high tendency to confuse cause and effect. Now that we have put the parties in a proper perspective, let me pose this question: which had you rather be, the rider or the ridden? Don't think that being ridden will stop with sending prints of photographs and tacking up those "private property" signs. Imagine yourself spending your weekends re-pairing gates, mending fences, filling in deeply-rutted roads, etc. Seems a bit far-fetched? Well, all three experiences have occurred among members of this club!

The simple solution to this whole impending disaster is to adopt a more realistic attitude toward cave owners. Let them know subtly that the cavers are still riding the free horse. I am not condoning disrespect by any means. Show the poor peasant normal courtesies, reasonable civility and a due amount of consideration for his property, but don't bring sugar cubes for his mule. We must adopt the attitude that not all cave owners are fountains of good sense, and it is not incumbent upon us as cavers to fulfill their demands.

Now comes the big question: what happens when some obstinate cave owner closes his cave? I use the word "obstinate" without reservation, because he will not see that the fence wouldn't have fallen down if it had been built right in the first place, that his field wouldn't have been torn up if he had built a decent access road to the cave, that his cattle wouldn't have been wiped out by carbide poisoning if he had put out enough salt blocks for them, or that the gate collapsed from normal wear and tear, etc., etc. Here is where the intelligent cavers can take positive action. First, mail him (if he can read), in place of a letter of apology, a set of figures showing him how the economy of certain poverty-stricken areas (such as his) have been helped by tourist trade with cavers. Frequent his neighbors caves so he will see what he's missing. A resourceful caver will be able to think of many more schemes to fit each situation.

If these simple schemes all fail, then it will be time for the whole grotto to swing into action with the "master plan," which I shall now describe. First, a number of wildcats must be captured and placed in a kennel. When it is discovered that an irate farmer has closed his cave for some selfish purpose, a pair of these wildcats will be placed in the cave under cover of darkness. Along with the cats will be enough food to

last them several days. By the time this food is consumed, the cats will have become accustomed to living in the cave, and will use it as an operating base to forage for food in the surrounding pastures. After finding the mangled carcasses of his sheep, cattle, pigs and sons near the cave, the farmer will realize that cavers never did anything like that. Now that his cave is no longer traveled, it has become a suitable abode for less desirable inhabitants. After several weeks of this, he will gladly welcome the return of the cavers. The cats will then be removed, again under cover of darkness and returned to the kennel.

Everyone would then be happy -- the cavers, the cats, and the farmer! But the time for action is now! Once an uneducated cave owner discovers he can exploit the intelligent caver, he will do so to the fullest extent possible! Cavers unite! All we have to lose is our chains.

R.E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication January 18, 1966

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

November 27, 1965

Dear Bob,

I stopped by Saltville recently to see Ed des Rochers and he told me that Mike Hamilton had all the New River Cave notes and was going to draw it up. If the whole thing has been drawn up, I would appreciate a copy of it. I enclose a \$5 check to cover the cost; if any is left over, you can apply it on extending my Tech Troglodyte subscription.

I worked up a preliminary list of West Virginia caves over a mile long; some of them are pretty vague, however. I just bought the supplement to Davies' Caverns of West Virginia (\$1.10 - West Virginia Geological Survey). It had quite a bit of information about the caves which I didn't know about.

I am also enclosing some extra copies of miscellaneous maps which I thought the VPI Grotto could use.

Sincerely,

/s/ Earl Thierry

* * * * *

November 17, 1965

Dear Anne,

In reading the Fall Quarter, 1965 edition of the Tech Troglodyte, I noticed your reference to the possible correlation between vandalism in Breathing Cave and the publication of Caves of Virginia.

Regarding the Caves of Virginia, do you feel that it is the cause for vandalism in other caves throughout Virginia, or in your evaluation is Breathing Cave an isolated incident?

We in Arizona have adopted secrecy regarding cave locations and, as our Arizona Caver publications will illustrate, we are violently opposed to the publication of cave locations. We suspect that publications containing cave locations will be a detriment to cave conservation. For the caves' sake, we hope that we are wrong.

I would appreciate your opinions in this matter, and your evaluation of secrecy as a weapon against vandalism.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Larry Marts

Conservation Chm.

UAAC Grotto NSS

BACK ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

During Fall quarter another cave-location trip was taken into southwestern Virginia. The area visited was near Lebanon in Russell County.

After much hunting, three caves were located and explored by Anne Braithwaite, Jack Keat, John Oldenburg, Jack O'Meara, and R. E. Whittemore. These are described below.

Flat Spur Hole, Russell County, Va. ($36^{\circ}53'54''$ x $81^{\circ}55'18''$) Elev. 2530' Elk Garden Quad. Two miles east of Route 80, at Stewarts' Commissary, Flat Spur road turns right - through a gate - and crosses a bridge on Loop Creek. At a point where the road curves right in a saddle, the cave is 50 feet uphill between the road and the woods. A small fissure about five feet deep leads downward to a T intersection with another fissure. There is about 50 feet of passage in each direction.

Three more caves, downhill and NE of this one, have been filled. A fifth, in dense woods about 400 yards east of this one, was not located. It is reportedly large. Another one, in the vicinity of Rich Mountain Gap, was not located because precise instructions could not be obtained. It is said to have a deep vertical entrance.

Big Spring, Russell County, Va. ($36^{\circ}54'08''$ x $81^{\circ}55'25''$) Elev. 2400' Elk Garden Quad. In Corn Valley, two miles east of Route 80, is a red house north of the road. About 100 yards downhill behind this house is a cave entrance partially blocked by an old dam. The entrance is roughly triangular, about four feet high and three feet wide, and at the base of an escarpment of thin-bedded limestone. A well-defined joint rises from the apex of the triangle, and a parallel, but somewhat less-defined joint, is visible six feet to the left. The passage, maintaining a triangular cross-section, follows the first joint straight for 400 feet, then makes

a jog over to the second joint and follows it for another 350 feet. These joints trend eastward along the strike. Near the end, the ceiling becomes quite low, and the passage is finally blocked by a chockstone. A large stream enters the cave at this point and flows its entire length, usually occupying the whole floor. Emerging from the entrance, the stream is directed through metal troughs into several catchment barrels which, in turn, supply two hydraulic rams. The water now flows under the old dam, but a deep mud fill behind it and a consequent stream cut give evidence of a long impoundment before it gave way. Salamanders, crayfish, and frogs were found in the cave.

Coons' Den, Russell County, Va. ($36^{\circ}53'20''$ x $82^{\circ}09'37''$) Elev. 2280' Carbo Quad. The Coons' Den could be difficult to find, being located in flat woods 0.5 mile north of Fincastle road, 500 yards west of a county road, 150 yards NE of a power line, and 50 feet south of an old logging road. A narrow gully in a wide, shallow sinkhole leads to an opening six feet wide and four feet high. The passage inside enlarges to a tunnel ten feet wide by eight feet high and slopes downward, curving to the right, about 400 feet to a large room. A right-hand passage goes upward at a steep angle back to the entrance room. A left-hand passage goes another 100 feet to a room with a pit in the floor which has some gravelly sewer passage at the bottom. A passage above the pit leads 200 feet to another pit. No ropes are needed for any of the pits. Altogether, there are about 800-1000 feet of passage, counting a number of side leads.

R.E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication January 13, 1966.

A typographical error was made in the location of Pope's Drop; Russell County, Virginia in the Fall, 1965 Tech Troglodyte (Vol. IV, No. 1, page 20). The corrected coordinates are: $36^{\circ}51'16''$ x $82^{\circ}12'15''$. -- Assoc. Ed.

TRIP REPORTS

VIRGINIA CAVE SURVEY

11/24-28/65

by Ed Bauer

Bob Simonds and I left from Tech on our journey to Pennington Gap, Lee County, Virginia, for what is becoming an annual pilgrimage by cavers from all over the region to work with John Holsinger on the Virginia Cave Survey.

That night, we convinced a man who lives near Dickinsonville (Russell County) that we were not running from the law and - after we watched the end of the Virginian on TV with him - he showed us the entrance to Roten's Cave. This small cave, about 50 feet above the road, has a small entrance with a broken wooden door on it, and gradually slopes downward for about 100-150 feet to its end, a mud fill. The stoopway passage is dry and provided a good place to cook dinner, sleep, and eat breakfast the following morning. There is evidence to substantiate the tale that a family lived

in there for six months in the 1940's.

Early Thanksgiving morning, we checked with Charlie Gray in Castlewood and were given permission to map Indian Cave. Charlie leases the land above the cave. He was somewhat impressed with our NSS literature, Caves of Virginia, and other caving literature. He requested a map of Indian Cave and has been sent a copy.

The entrance to Indian Cave lies in a shallow trash-filled sink several miles west of Banner's Corner. Mapping as we went, we chimneyed down the 15 foot entrance drop, crawled for about 50 feet, and then traversed along the top of a very muddy 45 degree slope. The slope forms one side of the fault along which the entire cave lies. There are about 500 feet of passage in this upper section, all of it being quite steep and muddy.

We then found our way through a hole at the bottom of the slope and followed the slope down another 100 feet until we reached the level of the stream. The stream was higher than I had ever seen it. We followed it upstream in the direction of S70°W for about 500-600 feet where the passage appears to terminate in deep water among breakdown.

We then retraced our steps and went downstream through the water, which often got waist deep in the passage, 15-30 feet wide and up to 30 feet high. The passage trended in a N70°E direction for over 1000 feet and very few survey shots were less than 100 feet long. After climbing down a roaring four foot high waterfall, we continued to the end of the passage, a siphon pool more than 5½ feet deep. Returning upstream, we followed a broad sloping ledge on the north side of the passage and about 20 feet above water level. I believe that unspoiled beauty of the whites, reds, and browns of the columns and flowstone; the cave coral; and popcorn make this one of the prettiest areas in any Virginia cave.

That night, we drove on to Pennington Gap and met Holsinger and others from the University of Kentucky, D.C. Grotto, PSC, University of Virginia, and Monongahela Grotto (none other than Bill Biggers and his magic coat).

On Friday Holsinger, Finley, Milligan (all from UK), Bob and I went to Spangler's Cave. We back-rappelled about 70 feet through brush into the bottom of a sink and followed a small watercourse about 500 feet downstream to a ten foot high waterfall. This was as far as John had been, so the rest of the cave was new to all of us. Although there were several areas of duckwalking, most of the cave was traversed at the bottom or top of a narrow canyon, or along a big trunk channel 20 feet wide. We mapped as much as we could find - about 3000 feet - the passage ending in an impossible low wet crawl.

After emerging, we checked out several sinks and a newly opened pit, but found nothing of interest. This area was on the flank of the mountain behind and above the Powell River and above Surgener's Cave.

Bob and I spent the night sleeping under an automatic car-wash after being swept from our camping spot on a nearby mountain by a violent thunderstorm. The morning dawned clear and, after breakfast at the hotel, we grouped up and headed south. Bob, George "Wheelchair" Titcomb, John Schellling, and others headed for extensive Ewing Saltpeter Cave. Keith Evans, Roger Baroody and the others from U.Va. were beat from an extensive trip into Gilley's the day before, so they fooled around with some leads and did some surface work.

Holsinger, Finley, Milligan and I teamed up with Stan Carts, Steve Logan (PSC), and Jerry Fredrick (D.C.) setting forth for Surgener's Cave. After squeezing all of Stan's rolls into a dry suit, we followed an abandoned path several thousand feet downhill through scrub cedar-covered karst and eventually found ourselves above the entrance to the cave. A rain-swollen stream emerged from the 30 foot wide, 15 foot high hole in the limestone cliff. Between the seven of us, we had two 2-man boats and two air mattresses. The drysuit-clad exploration party pushed on upstream with one boat and one mattress, leaving Holsinger, Milligan and I to follow with Brunton and tape.

For the first two thousand feet, the mapping went quickly - all 100 foot shots, except for one 538 foot shot. We pulled the boat along with us in the thigh-deep water. After a bit of stooping, the water got progressively deeper as the ceiling got lower until we were forced to board the rubber boat and paddle as best we could. The passage meandered for about 500-600 feet in this low, deep way before we could get out of the boats again.

Another 1000 feet, and we found the other party's boat tied to a stalagmite on a sand bar. We did likewise and alternately waded and walked down passage which remained about 15 feet wide and 10 feet high. Soon we had to face a 300+ foot crawl, from which we emerged into a flowstone-decorated room containing a deep siphon on one side.

Our friends were not to be found, so we guessed they had ducked under the drapery and continued exploring. As it turned out, we waited on the sand bar close to an hour before we saw a beam of light under the drapery.. Their voices floated under and soon four dripping bodies emerged, all telling tales of lots more passage (2500 feet) and plenty of crawls.

Since we had mapped about a mile and were quite cold, we elected to head for the entrance. Almost racing, we splashed our way toward daylight, the boats hanging up on many places where on the way into the cave they had cleared by a foot; the water was quickly receding from the previous night's storm.

After an attempt at a party back at the hotel, it was discovered that we were drinking 3.2 beer and were wasting our time. This time Bob and I spent a peaceful night on the summit of a nearby mountain.

After a goodbye to all at the hotel, we headed for East Stone Gap. Hairy Hole is referred to in Caves of Virginia as a 150 foot drop, so we decided to look it up and check it over. After three hours of hiking among limestone cliffs and steep slopes, we had to stop without ever finding it.

We returned to Tech about 7 p.m. Sunday.

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BANE'S SPRING CAVE

11/13/65

by Tom Roehr

Personnel: Barry Whittemore, R.E. Whittemore, Doug Draves, Anne Braithwaite, Jack Keat and Rick Keener.

Bane's Spring Cave is located about 1000 feet east of the well-known Bane's entrance to Newberry-Bane's Cave. This cave was explored during the recent Club Fall Quarter Project on November 13 and 14.

The entrance is through either of two holes on opposite sides of a large piece of breakdown. The entrance room is filled with much breakdown, with small passages to the right and the main cave going down through a pit near the left end of the room and paralleling the first passages on a lower level.

After easily negotiating the pit and 50 feet of crawlway through a flat room, we emerged over a stream channel which underlies most of the passage in the cave. Very little water was in this channel at the time of our visit. We continued along the passage, which ran sometimes above and sometimes in the stream channel. Several side passages branch off of this main one, giving the cave maze characteristics.

About one half of the cave is crawling and the other half is walking or climbing over breakdown. Unlike most caves, yards of crawling are rewarded near the end by a large walking passage. This passage finally narrows down to a crawlway with the stream flowing in the bottom. It is possible, though uncomfortable, to stay out of the water by wedging between the walls but none of us attempted to stay dry. This crawl finally opens into a spherical room with the stream siphoning out through a hole in the floor. It was commented that even Siphon-Go (see ad) would be of no use in this situation. This siphon killed any of our hopes of finding a natural connection between Bane's Spring and Newberry-Bane's caves.

The cave has few formations but is full of wildlife. Daddy-longlegs spiders were found in large numbers near the entrance. Bats, crickets, and mice were found, or evidence was found throughout the cave. Some of the crawlways were covered by a foot of this evidence which had disintegrated into humus. It was definitely superior to sharp gravel as a crawlway paving material as far as our knees and elbows were concerned.

Much of the limestone in the cave is very rotten and made chimneying in one place very difficult and handholds were impossible to find.

There is supposedly about two thousand feet of passage in this cave, although those in our group felt that we had crawled at least that far.

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LIPPS CAVE or Whitt Ventures into West Virginia Again; Believe It or Not.

12/4-5/65

by H.H. Stevens

Personnel: Ed Bauer, Robert E. Whittemore(!), "Lew Bickling"

Ed, Whitt and I drove up to Organ Cave, Unincorporated and there met "Lew Bickling." Upon entering the cave my thoughts turned back to a similar foursome in Snedegars last January. But Ed gave me the reassurance, "Don't worry, you're not as fat as Dick Hoyle, so somebody else can be teddy bear." Yeah, sure thing.

We rapidly progressed to the ladder climb (Harjes' Horror) after passing THE CRAWLWAY. As I tied myself on belay, I found that by so doing, Whitt considered me as having passed my trainee knot test. What a con-job.

From there we went through the Dressing Room, down Lipps Stream and past Erwing Stream junction to a right hand lead about 800 feet past the junction. This lead had not been previously entered except by Ed to leave some bait for animal life on the last trip. Though we detected no fauna on the bait, the lead did open up and we explored and surveyed 2609 feet there. We terminated our survey in a large room about 40 by 40 feet and 30 feet high. The reason we stopped was because the passage we were in intersected the room at the ceiling with a sheer, undercut drop to the floor of about 25 feet. We threw in one of Lew's empty cans of Kippers and left. So, if anyone sees an empty Kipper can in a cave you know (1) who has been there, i.e. "Lew Bickling" or "The Shadow" and/or (2) where you are. If you don't know what a Kipper can looks like, T.S. I suggest that all cavers carry at all times, in their hard hats, a sketch comparing and identifying the following: kipper cans, sardine cans, boned turkey cans, fruit cocktail cans, etc. Of course, no caver needs a diagram to identify a brew can, so it may be omitted.

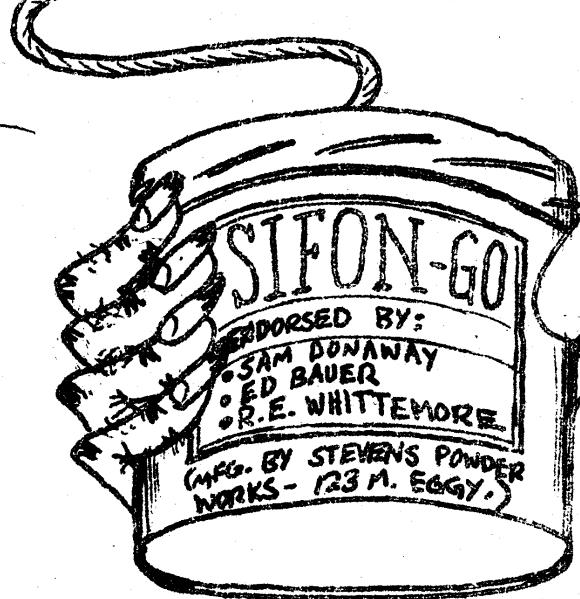
After 14 hours, we left the cave at 4 a.m. Sunday. We changed clothes, pushed Lew's car, known as "the Gray Goose," down the hill to start it, and departed.

An interesting note: Did you know that Ed Bauer's "Arrumph!!"; which he learned from "Lew, the Shadow, Bickling" in the Snedegar's fiasco, is actually much louder and much more startling than the original "Lew Bickling Arrumph?!"

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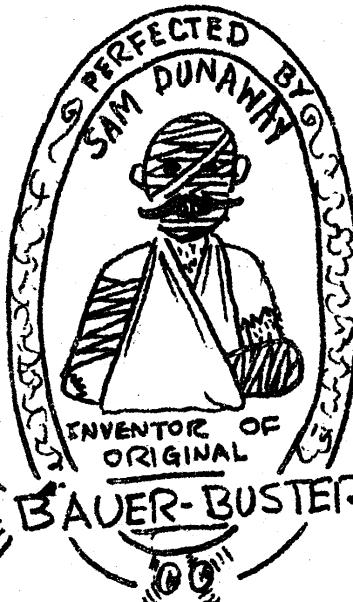
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SIFON-GO

- INSTRUCTIONS —
1. PLACE BOMB IN SIPHON
 2. LIGHT FUSE
 3. RUN LIKE HELL FOR A STABLE AREA
 4. WAIT 15 MINUTES - REPEAT STEPS 2 & 3
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- 100-LB CARBIDE DRUM SIZE FOR WEST VIRGINIA SIPHONS
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[FOR EXPERT DEMOLITIONS PLACING CONTACT DOUG BRADFORD]



WHAT DO YOU SAY WE CALL THIS THE
BAT ROOM?

NEWCASTLE MURDER HOLE

10/10/65

By R.E. Whittemore

Personnel: Anne Braithwaite (VPI), Barry Whittemore (VPI), George Titcomb (D.C.), Doc Brown (U.Va.), Dave Wood (U.Va.), Hugh Smith (Friendship Heights), Linda Gardner (Friendship Heights), John Tichenor (Roanoke), Tom Beaman (Roanoke), Gordon Hamilton (Roanoke).

* * *

We left the VPI Campus about 10 a.m., the time we had decided upon to meet Gordon, Tom, and John at the cave. We finally arrived at the appointed place about 10:45, only to find that we couldn't enter the cave yet because Mr. Sizer was not at home. To kill time, we made a quick trip over to Walk-Through Cave (See Tech Troglodyte, Vol. III, No. 4, page 132). After a quick walk through the cave, we went back to Mr. Sizer's house. He was not at home yet, but was expected any minute, so we decided to wait.

After a short wait, Mr. Sizer, one of the youngest cave owners I know, came roaring up in his red Thunderbird and immediately gave us permission to go into his cave. We all signed the register and headed on up to the pit.

After testing the ropes, several of us walked up to the top of the hill above the hole for a view of Newcastle and the James River Valley. The Sinking Creek Anticline could be clearly seen stretching away to the west, and plunging to the east. The entire valley, only a mile and a half wide at this point, is bound on the south by Sinking Creek Mountain, which curves around to form Johns Creek Mountain.

Sinking Creek, flowing about 30 miles to the New River, probably used to rise at the point. Today, Meadow Creek has pirated several miles of the valley and drains through a deep, narrow gap at the head of the valley, descending to the basin below over a series of cascades known as Butter-milk Falls. This stream piracy has created a drainage divide in the valley of rolling Beckmantown limestone hills containing a number of caves, some of particular interest. Rufe Caldwell's Cave is the largest in Craig County, having 3000 feet of mostly large, rectangular corridors. Fish Hatchery Cave, now flooded by a concrete dam, conjecturally drains both the south side of the valley and the runoff from Sinking Creek Mountain, which disappears in several sinks a mile or more west of the cave. A small hydraulic ram pumps water to part of the fish hatchery.

On the north side of the valley is Meadow Creek, which sinks and flows underground for about a half a mile. Unfortunately, the only cave entrances in that vicinity lead to very short caves. One of the real mysteries of this area is a large cave entrance at the head of Meadow Creek, known as Two-Mile Cave. It has only been visited once and is reported as being two miles long, the outer half mile being a rubble crawl. The owner closed the cave the next day because his drinking water became muddy. That was 20 years ago. No one has been in it since. (Copy Ed: note: The owner also claims that rocks taken out of the cave disappear,

possibly by evaporation or the effect of sunlight.) The structure of the local hills do not seem to indicate a system quite that large; however, the area as a whole is quite auspicious. If Craig County ever puts in a municipal water supply system, then maybe we'll know.

To digress no further, the pit was rigged and we prepared to descend. The actual vertical descent is only 50 feet or less, but the descent is usually made from the top of the sinkhole, making the total drop 80 or 90 feet. The upper part of the drop is in a wooded, funnel-shaped sinkhole. The vertical part is in a wide, smooth-walled shaft.

One would think that on such a short, simple drop as this, no problem would occur. But here, as 11 people from five different caving organizations prepared to descend, there occurred a classic example. Of what, I don't know, but it's bound to be a classic example of something. The party from U.Va. wanted to use manila because nylon is too fast. The people from Roanoke wanted to use nylon because jumars work better on it. The VPI cavers were afraid that the 7/8 inch manila python wouldn't be fast enough with a single brake bar.

In an attempt to solve everyone's problems, both ropes were rigged and Tom Beaman made the first descent, only to find that the two ropes were hopelessly entangled. After struggling with this gnarled, knotted mess while hanging three feet off the floor, he finally solved the problem by cutting off the tangled ends and burning them, along with a bloated sheep carcass, in one huge conflagration. The nylon "greenline" was then hauled up so a similar incident would not occur. Then Annie, attempting to descend on the manila rope, soon discovered that one 97-pound Gremlin wasn't enough to make a single brake bar work on 7/8 inch manila, but she made it somehow (probably jumped). Gordon Hamilton found that his pint-sized rappeling spool hopelessly jammed. Hugh and Linda abandoned their usual method for a one-scarybiner, over-the-shoulder rappel. Of course, there were three camera boxes to be lowered. Anyhow, to make a long story short, everyone got down in about an hour and a half.

We then entered the narrow passageway to the rest of the cave en masse, but our progress was soon checked by the first traverse. Several short-legged people wanted a belay, so one was set up across the "triple well." The first two holes are easily crossed by straddling, but the third one requires a bit of imagination. Most people make use of a crawl slot around to the right, but if you're too fat, then you gotta jump across.

At the third (and last) traverse, most people abandoned their camera boxes, but Doc Brown elected to bring his across, being lured on by tales of a formation section at the back of the cave. When he arrived at the back of the cave, the formations were not readily apparent.

"Where is the formation section?" he asked.

"Right here."

"Where?"

"Excuse me. I must be standing in the way. See."

"Oh."

After close scrutiny of the formations, the good doctor decided to save his flashbulbs and return to the surface. We all joined him and left the cave about nightfall.

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HOSTERMAN'S PIT
Centre County, Pennsylvania

September 1965

by Ed Bauer

Personnel: Charlie Maus, Pete Tryon, Maddy Tryon.

On our way to Mammoth Cave, Charlie and I just couldn't resist the temptation of stopping off in State College (500 miles out of the way) and visiting the famed and fabled Hosterman's Pit.

After a short bit of rest at Pete and Maddy's, the four of us headed for Nevin Davis' home to pick up the key and sign the release form. The subsoil rights to the property on which the cave is located are owned by Bethlehem Steel. A very close working arrangement between the Nittany Grotto and Bethlehem Steel has resulted in an elaborate, locked manhole type entrance drop, plus a very "clean", unvandalized cave.

After rigging the drop, we rappelled on down and explored and poked around in the better part of the mile of known passage. As Lew Bicking has said of Hosterman's: "It is a West Virginia cave that got lost." Meter for meter, this is one of the best decorated caves I have ever been in. A series of pits, climbs, traverses, and chimneys follow such interesting sections as Nevin's Heaven, The Pipe Pit, Carol's Section, the Crystal Section, and the Loop. Another short rappel is encountered in the cave if one is to keep from retracing his steps.

Not wishing to prusik, I proved that the entrance pit can "almost" be climbed. Soon all of us were on the surface, thinking of the warm food and cool suds awaiting us at Pete's.

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