

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

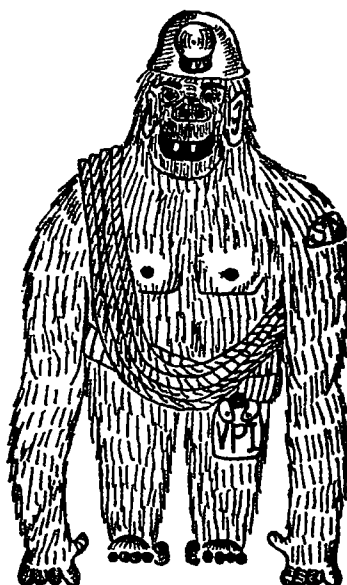
ADDRESS:

Box 471

BLACKSBURG, VA. 24060

VOL. IX No. 1

FALL QUARTER 1970



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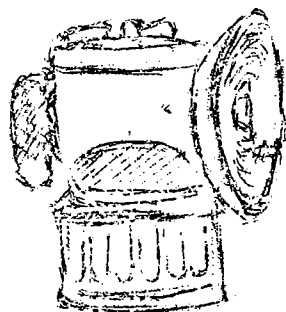
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The TECHNO

TROGLODYTE



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CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Bob Amundson	2
EDITOR'S COLUMN - Boots Good	4
WHAT IS A GOOD CAVER? - Janet Queisser	5
SOME NOTES ON CAVE-OWNER RELATIONS - Steve Hall	7
VIRGINIA REGION SPRING PROJECT - Anne Whittemore	8
ACCIDENT AT NEWBERRYS - Dale Parrott	10
THE SAGA OF CLOVER HOLLOW - Mike Frame	11
UNDER THE CARBIDE DUMP - Ed Morgan	14
COLD WATER - J.R. Stoutenburgh	16
THE MANUFACTURE OF SALTPETER - Tuna Johnson	16
SELECTIONS FROM PETE'S LOG - Boots Good	18
A VISIT TO THE CAVERNS OF SONORA - Michael C. Frieders	20
DRAIN DROP CAVE: HARBORER OF EVIL INTENT - Guy Turenne	21
THE BORN LOSER #2 - Ned Coleman	24
A TRIP TO SPENCE CAVE - Cheryl Jones	25
THE COMMITTEE SPEAKS - Doug Perkins	27
CAVE MAPPING - THE OLD IMMORALITY - Rev. D.S. Fox	29
GEMS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF GRANNY ANNIE - Anne Whittemore	30
THE BIOGRAPHY OF A.I. CARTWRIGHT - 1944 <u>Grotto Grapevine</u>	32
WHO DONE IT? - 1944 <u>Grotto Grapevine</u>	33
THE SAGA OF B-C CAVERNS - Tom Vigour	34
THE BALLAD OF NEW RIVER - Steve Kark	36

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THE TECH TROGLODYTE is published by the VPI Grotto on a quarterly basis pending the availability of material. All submitting of material and subscriptions should be sent to Box 471, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060. Subscription rate is presently one cent per page or by exchange. Individual copy price is \$.50.

ART WORK	by	Larry Cooke
&		Steve Hall
CARTOONS		Bob Page
		Robyn Wick

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Due to the oncoming VPI Convention, I think it fitting to devote this column to a progress report on the Convention. The Convention plans are proceeding quite well, and I feel that the 1971 NSS Convention will indeed be the best yet.

Dates: Pre-Convention--June 12-14
Convention week--June 15-19

Facilities: Convention Headquarters--VPI Squires Student Center. Most sessions will be held in Squires Theater (capacity 511). Numerous smaller meeting rooms will be available for Convention use. Other Squires Center facilities such as Snack Bar, Cafeteria, Bowling Alley and Pool Room will also be available for the Convention goers.

Motel and Hotel Accommodations--A list of the motels and hotels in the Blacksburg area and their respective prices will be included in several issues of the NSS NEWS.

Dormitory Rooms-- A dormitory has been reserved for people attending the Convention. The dorm is approximately a 5 to 10 minute walk from the Convention center.

Campground--The campground will be located on the VPI campus. It is a wooded, fenced-in area about 15 to 20 minutes walking time from the Convention center. Facilities at the campground will include portable johnnies, registration booth with telephone, drinking and cooking water supplied by water trucks. Although there will be no showers at the campground, there will be free showers available at the dormitory 24 hours a day.

Activities: Besides the normal pre-convention caving trips and the Convention sessions, there will be many other events such as: caving skills contest, 4-wheel drive rally race, get acquainted party, night time caving trips, climbing, hiking, swimming, etc.

Registration: Pre-registration costs:
Regular-\$4.50
Family Dependent-\$3.25
Children(12-15)-\$1.00
Non-NSS-\$6.00
At the Convention:
Regular-\$5.00
Family Dependent-\$3.75
Children-\$1.00
Non-NSS-\$6.00

Dormitory Cost:

\$2.00/person/night (subject to change)

Campground:

\$4.00/person for the Convention period
(June 12-19)

\$.50/person/night

There will probably be a children's fee
of around \$2.00 for the entire Convention
period.

Banquet: (a buffet)

Adult--\$3.00

Child--\$1.50

Description of Registration Classes:

Regular--Applies to all NSS members, no matter what type of NSS membership they hold. The registrant has the privilege of attending all meetings and activities at the Convention. He receives all registration material and the guidebook.

Family Dependent--Applies to anyone above the age of 15 who is attending the Convention with their family whose head is a NSS member. The registrant has all the privileges of a Regular registrant, and receives all registration material, but does not receive a guidebook. Guidebooks will be sold separately at \$1.50.

Children--(between the ages of 12 and 15) This person has all the privileges of a Regular registrant but receives no registration material. There is no charge for children under 12.

Non-NSS--Applies to anyone who is not an NSS member of any type, and does not qualify for any of the above classes of registration. This registrant has all the privileges of a Regular registrant and receives all registration material, including the guidebook.

Bob Amundson and
Convention Committees

* * * * *

"Where in the hell have I seen you before?"
"I don't know. What part of hell are you from?"

EDITOR'S COLUMN

In regard to the Editor's Column and other articles of the Spring '70 Tech Troglodyte:

I have received word from various grapevine enthusiasts that several readers didn't approve of some of my ideas or the taste of some of the articles I published. Now, considering that I've been "Trog" editor for a grand total of two issues (this being the second), I feel I'm entitled to a few mistakes. Naturally, VPI cavers do not make mistakes! I guess you can chalk it up to my sex!

But what I'm getting at is this. I want The Tech Troglodyte to be one of the best, if not the best, publication going. As everyone knows, (but doesn't like to admit) this means everybody, not just the "best writers" or the "most artistic", getting involved. And this means straight forward criticism comments. (I'm thankful for every bit of help) It's not an easy job for Janet, Guy, and I to have a "feel" for format, layout, and quality. We need help in the form of ideas and suggestions. We may be overlooking something that's completely obvious to some of you, and we'd like to know about it. This means letting us know after we've made the mistakes, as well as before, so we'll know better the next time.

This brings me back to my gripe about grapevine information. It's OK and even constructive to a point, but wouldn't it be better for those with helpful suggestions to tell one of the editors rather than someone else, who just might get the complaint messed-up before it ever even makes it to an editor? This doesn't have to be something personal. For fear of appearing unfriendly, you can easily write your comment and send it to the Trog Editor, care of the VPI Cave Club address shown on the cover. Signed or not, legitimate gripes will be thoroughly discussed, and probably published with an editor's comment in the next issue of The Trog.

I hope that you cavers (active and armchair) will appreciate this problem. This publication needs an understanding between its article submitters and publishers. In order that we have a Trog published, we must have articles submitted. And in order that the publication be quality stuff, it must have the interest of all. The more ideas that come out of you readers, the more chance there will be of finding just the right ones for this publication. The only way we're going to learn anything is to have our mistakes corrected.

There's no way we can ever hope to thank enough those who come out and help this publication, whether by writing articles, thinking up and drawing cartoons, or even helping to run the mimeo machine in the last desperate week before distribution. To those, our hearts go out in really sincere gratitude. You're wonderful!! It's to you who haven't shown

much interest in your Cave Club other than caving that we make our appeal.

So how about some of you taking an interest in the making of a good "Trog", rather than in only the reading of a poor one? And if you don't like this Editor's Column-for heaven's sake, tell me!!

"Boots"

* * * * *

WHAT IS A GOOD CAVER?

Every once in a while I've had people come up to me and ask, "Is he (or she) a good caver?" At this inquiry I will usually grit my teeth, look skyward, and mutter a couple of "Hail Marys" and proceed to go into a rather lengthy discussion. Maybe this is because I just like to complicate matters, but I really think it is very difficult to answer such a question simply.

First of all, let's face it gang, there just isn't that much to knowing how to cave. Sure, your first rappel was maybe a little bit scary, your first prussik was probably a real pain and your first encounter with a carbide lamp was most likely one of amazement. But, after a little practice, you mastered the techniques, conquered the equipment, and maybe even have done a pretty hairy vertical cave. Undoubtedly, you felt a fine sense of accomplishment. Right here is where I say "Big deal, so what!" Now before you go off with your speleo-pride hurt, you must realize that just about anyone can be taught successfully how to rappel, prussik, and the like. It takes more to be a caver, a lot more to be a good caver.

In efforts to look at things positively, I shall explain what I feel is a good caver, rather than a bad one. Before I do that, I must admit that I do have high and lofty admiration for those accomplished cavers who know no fear, climb unclimbable climbs, and have caves like Ellison's and Golondrinas to their credit. The point I'm trying to make is that while physical capabilities are to be admired, this is not the only criterion for a good caver. In other words, not all super-cavers are good cavers and not all good cavers are super cavers.

All of us are afraid of something, maybe not physical afraid, but at least apprehensive. Fear is as much a part of the human animal as is eating, sleeping, making love, and laughing. Having fear is nothing to be ashamed of, but being able to cope with that fear is what counts. You must admit your fear and know your limits. Also, if you are set on

overcoming your fear, do it for personal satisfaction, and not for impressing people and trying to make them think you're a super-caver. Besides, the people you're trying to impress probably wouldn't be impressed anyway.

Anyone who has ever observed a flock of trainees has noticed that occasionally there happens a novice who just catches on to everything right away. This in itself is rather admirable, but what is important is whether he or she has the capacity to become a good caver and not just a super-caver. Does he have the ability to listen to others and learn from more experienced people, or just plain ability? Remember, if you are good and deserve recognition, you shall be recognized. Sit back and let yourself be complimented; don't do it yourself.

A good caver not only knows what himself is about, but he knows how to get along with fellow cavers. This doesn't mean that he's just a great guy at parties. But rather he's willing to help anyone who's in trouble and he also lets himself be helped, aboveground, as well as underground. There are very few of us (hopefully) who would not give a hand to someone hanging by one hand over a hundred foot drop. The kind of help I'm talking about is a little more subtle. It's unreal what an encouraging word or two will do to someone who's a little uptight, when they're having trouble. In most cases a little confidence is all that is needed to get somebody over a grim spot. Incidents that were potentially disastrous and would have ended up rescue status have turned out OK because of the encouragement that was given and the cooperation that followed.

My final word to new cavers as well as old - don't look so much at cavers as cavers, but rather, look at cavers as people.

Janet Queisser

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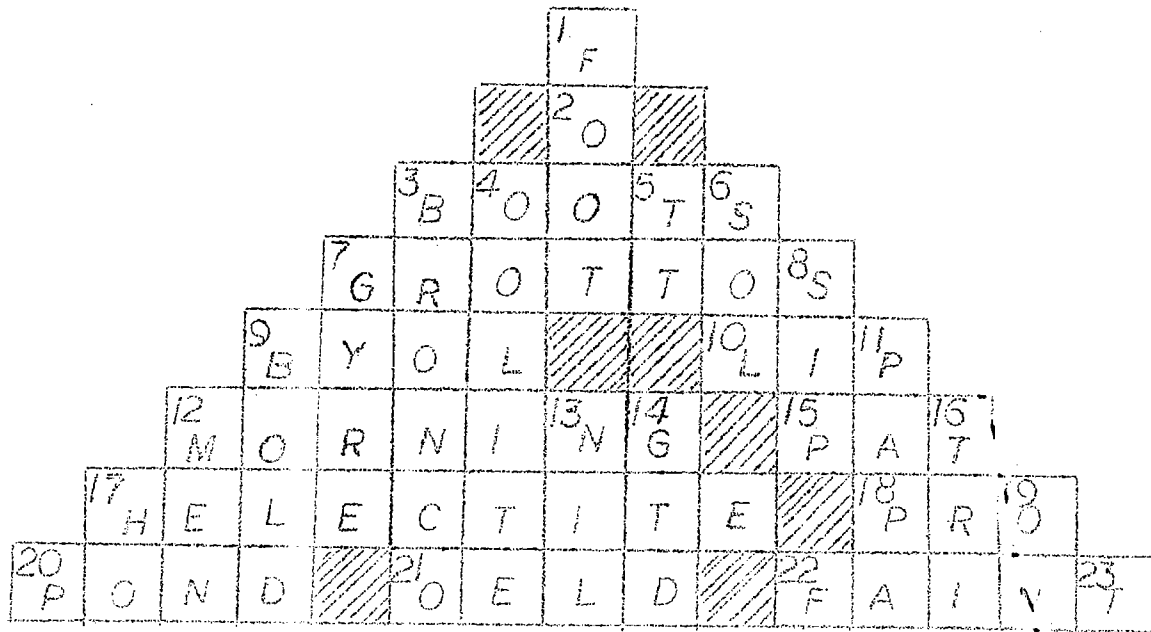
DO YA WANNA BE A BIRD?

* * * * *

"What are you dressed up for Rick?"

"I was in church asking God for a belay from above."

ANSWER TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE FROM SPRING 1970 "TROG"



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SOME NOTES ON CAVE-OWNER RELATIONS

The importance of good cave-owner relations can never be over-emphasized. We all realize the basic practices of asking permission and avoiding the obvious destruction of property but how many people really conscientiously consider and practice the full spectrum of cave-owner diplomacy and property respect? Some cavers do not realize the tactics and problems involved in a screwed up relationship between the owner and himself, while others seem to have a somewhat careless attitude toward the owner's property due to either negligence or just plain apathy. The importance of these two areas should be understood by all cavers in order to avoid the closing of any cave or the bad opinion of any owner due to the actions of one or two careless people.

In the first place, a man's land is solely and completely his own, and he is under no obligation to allow anyone else on his land. Moreover, man is still a territorial animal who is very cautious about protecting his private domain from "intruders". And, like it or not, you as a funky caver are an intruder in the eyes of some land-owners, especially if you differ in appearance or any other way from him, because of man's basic difficulty in accepting anything alien or strange. Although some owners are aware of various modes of life, others have had very limited associations with the "outside world" and may consequently be very opinionated against the "rebellious" college student, due partly to the image projected by the news media, or his own personal resentment of an education. This type of person will tend to associate characteristics such as personal appearance, dress, and speech with his picture of the "campus rebel".

I would like to point out that I am not justifying narrow-mindedness. I am merely saying that it does occur and that we occasionally must cope with it if we wish to be allowed in certain caves. However, extreme cases of land-owner resentment or contempt toward student cavers is rare. So I am not suggesting that we don the appearance of a farmer to bridge the social gap, but rather become aware of the cave-owner's position. Try to dispel any barriers by friendly and tactful conversation so that he will accept you on a personal basis for just what you are - a caver.

The problem of cavers simply not thinking about all the details of property respect can produce unwanted results and should be an area of major concern. It is much easier to climb over a fence rather than walk around to a gate; discard your garbage rather than go to the trouble of taking it home; and it's easier to drive over the cave-owner's fields rather than park the car and walk all the way to the cave. You, as a caver, may not consider these neglects very important, but you may be very conscientious about removing writing or spent carbide from the cave. The farmer, however, couldn't

usually care less what you do to the inside of his cave, but the way you treat his property is of the utmost concern to him. He will probably think twice about letting anyone on his land again if a previous caver litters his woods, destroys his fence, or is otherwise detrimental to his property. After all, he is doing the caver a favor by allowing him on his land, for the land-owner reaps no benefits from the caver. Therefore, we should treat the cave-owner's courtesy and land with the respect and consideration they deserve. No matter how trivial or unimportant you think your actions may be, never hesitate to be overly cautious about the possible ill effects to the property before you act.

Steve Hall

* * * * *

VIRGINIA REGION SPRING PROJECT
May 29-31, 1970
Moncove Lake, West Virginia

When I woke up late Friday night (the 29th), it was dark. And I couldn't figure out where the drunken voices were coming from. Then I realized that I was lying on the floor board of our Bronco next to John Powers. John and I were blanketed with beer cans, tossed heedlessly upon us by Whitt and Easter Pig. I also realized we were close to Moncove Lake when our weaving vehicle treaded water. I began to get excited. The only parking place left was a 30° angle spot amidst thorny bushes and perpendicular to Bill Douty's jolly green van. We almost hit it, too, but fortunately Vig stuck his big toe out and we missed it by a hair.

It was mighty cold up there, a lot colder than in Tennessee, but luckily I found Russ Peterson and managed to stay fairly warm. Lynn and Danny Wright and Russ had stopped by to socialize on their way to Seneca Rocks. Among the other personages who somehow manage to associate themselves with VPI were to be found the Dawsons, Tom Vigour, Janet Queisser, Bill Royster, Jim Hixson, Linda, Gary Moss, Lynn Vinzant, Linda Heitz, and Bob Amundson. Well, that's all I remember....

We finally bedded down quite late, and as Douty dozed off on his straw mat, he said, "Good night, Jim."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Annie."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Whitt."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Gary."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Linda."

"ARF!!"

If that wasn't enough, Gary told each of us good night in turn. Hixson, realizing that Linda was restive because she was too hot, got up to get her another blanket. I had to get up to get the blanket out of our car, as Jim remembered that he had flushed Linda's usual blanket down a convenient commode. Jim said, "Thank you, Annie."

I said, "Your intuitively welcome, Jim."

"Good night, Annie."

"Good night, Jim."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Jim."

"Good night, Whitt."

"Bllllleeeaaahhhhh."

"Whatsamatter, Whitt?"

"Goonigsh, Jim."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Annie."

"Good night, Whitt."

"Goonighhhh, An...."

"Good night, Bill."

"DAMN IT, GOOD! NIGHT! Annie!"

"Good night, Russ. RUSS!!!"

"Yeah?"

"Good night."

"Good night, Annie."

"Good night, son."

"Good night, dad."

"Good night, Lynn."

"Good night, Annie."

"Don't you ever sleep of a night, Annie?"

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Jim."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Gary."

"Good night, Jim."

"Good night, Whitt."

"Will you all shut the h... up?!"

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Danny."

"Good night, Bill."

"Good night, Jim."

"Goood nigh zzzz....."

Having slept on a slope, I found myself the next morning under a bird-dripping tree. It was damned cold! I had to sit on my hands. Douy pulled a bright move and sheared a bearing or something on his van. So Hixson, Whitt and I accompanied him to many junk yards which were open on Memorial Day. Surprise. Surprise. Bill found what he needed at the last place we went to. Of course, by then, it was time for lunch. We journeyed to Ronceverte and ate in a hole in the wall. It was P.D.A.! A lot of dirty old men just staring. Staring at Hixson, too - that's really P.D.A.!

After lunch we turned down the side of a side road and hopped out. Looking for the back entrance to Windy Mouth Cave took the rest of the afternoon, with no promising leads at all. Since we didn't want to be late for the party, we quit looking at 3:30 and went back to Moncove Lake. We arrived about 6:30 in time to watch Tom Vigour brew up his famous beebileberry swill. Bleah.

Janet Pickens (now McCormick) said that 80 people had registered! Linda Heitz and I allowed that if 80 people were there, they must be asleep in the trees. Among the important regional bigwigs present were Charlie Maus, Roger Baroody, Phil Lucas, Bud Rutherford, Captain Karst, John Reich, Rick Banning, Mike Houpt, Carol Hybner, Ken Free, the Mikesells, and R.E. Whittemore. You know, there's a song going around about Captain Karst. Have y'all heard it? Easter Pig and I sang it to the Captain Sunday morning to help him get over his hangover. It goes like this:

"C-A-P-T-I-N K-A-R-S-T. Captain Karst, Captain Karst, forever let us hold your banner high (high, high) Who's the leader of the band that's made for you and me? C-A-P-T-I-N K-A-R-S-T." Isn't it cute? So catchy.

I really don't remember much about that party. Woodland parties are weird. I remember looking for Phil Lucas who wasn't anywhere to be found. And trying to help Linda declodge John Powers so that he might sleep better inside his stuffy tent. Then I said a tearful goodbye to Russ, Danny, and Lynn and landed in my sleeping bag. All of a sudden the Great Speckled Bird decided to drip a drop upon me. Quick as a wink, I caterpillared to the car (have you ever tried to walk in a sleeping bag?) and spent the night on the floor board.

On Sunday Pig, Powers, Whitt, Hixson, and I went off to help Linda find a back entrance to Windy Mouth. Linda found three and we went our separate ways, happy, but drunk.

Anne Whittemore

* * * * *

ACCIDENT AT NEWBERRYS

The following account of a minor (but potentially major) accident is reported here in the hope that other cavers may benefit from one's mistake. The accident occurred on August 30, 1970, near the Newberry-Bane Cave System, Bland County, Virginia.

Jette Feduska and I were outside the Newberry entrance just after completing a pre-rigged traverse of the system. I was preparing to re-enter Newberry's to derig and bring out the

ropes and ladder. I decided to change carbide beforehand. I carry a "carbide dump", a tin can of about one gallon capacity, in the back of "Trog" (my car), and was going to dump the carbide residue in it. I had set my lighted lamp about two feet away on the ground and was sitting down as the lid to the can was pried off. A six-foot flame leaped from the can and knocked me back. The explosion extinguished the flame. I was very fortunate in only suffering second-degree burns on the back of my right hand and wrist. I could have easily sustained third-degree burns of the face and whole arm.

Jette immediately applied first aid in treating the burn (a first aid kit was just ten feet away). I was then able to descend into the cave and retrieve the rigging. I was out again in a half-hour. The affected area was thoroughly washed later that night and examined and treated at the VPI Infirmary the next day. The doctor commented that the efficient and prompt first aid attention received would greatly aid in the healing and had prevented infection thus far.

Analysis:

Apparently, acetylene gas had accumulated in the dump from existing used carbide. The proximity of the lighted carbide lamp (which had ignited the gas) was due to the need for light as it was dark. The obvious fault was the lack of air vents in the carbide dump lid to prevent accumulation of acetylene. However, a first aid kit was readily available and Jette had a working knowledge of first aid techniques. Hence, three important benefits should be derived from the accident. 1) A carbide dump should be constructed such that acetylene gas will not build up under pressure, 2) A good first aid kit should be readily available, and 3) Personnel should be familiar with first aid practices.

In closing let it be sufficient to say that "Trog" still carries the same carbide dump but it has been modified slightly, there are several small air vents in the lid.

Dale Parrott

* * * * *

THE SAGA OF CLOVER HOLLOW

It was a dark and stormy 4th of July. But four fearless cavers of the VPI Grotto of the NSS weren't bothered by this grim situation, because they were attending the annual 4th of July BYOL mapping and happiness party deep in the entrails of Clover Hollow, the Vertical Cave of vertical caves. (Giles County, Virginia)

It all started out as a harmless endeavor. Bill Douty had decided to remap Clover Hollow due to the complexities

involved in reading the 1943 edition. All he needed was experienced personnel and through diligent searching and careful screening he chose a crew, from the three volunteers. Dale Parrott was the first chosen of the three. He was a fearless vertical caver of Fantastic Pit renown who was truly interested in the glory and fame that would be attained from being on the endeavor. Then Ed Loud and I (Mike Frame), the Sleazy Riders known in Pizza Huts all over the USA rounded out the crew.

Loading the equipment (three tons) in Douty's van, we proceeded to the cave. After getting permission from the land owner, we started our two day trip. We rigged the 65 foot entrance drop and began lowering equipment (three tons). Among the equipment on this trip, uncommon to mapping parties, were five 6-packs of PBR and one bottle of Cold Duck, and last, but by all means the most important, a big green watermelon. The most anxious moment of our entrance occurred when Dale was rappeling down the entrance drop with the watermelon under his arm. I was at the bottom belaying as he started down. About 30 feet down it happened. The wall was slick from dripping water and Dale lost his footing and balance. And did he let go of the watermelon and grab the rope? Not Dale. Knowing the importance of watermelon on the 4th of July and of the splattering qualities of watermelon, he let go of the rope and grabbed the watermelon, depending on my belay to stop him. And this confidence in my belaying ability was not ill founded. I stopped his fall and rappelled him to the bottom. After plumbing the drop, we started to map into the cave, lugging the equipment (three tons) with us. Over the haystack, down the 20 foot flowstone and 17 foot drop we proceeded. And then we were at the Canyon Room Drop. I rappeled down first and then came Loud. Parrott and Douty began lowering equipment (three tons). First down was the PBR. I have been on many caving trips, (sporting and work), but I have never seen anything more impressive than five 6-packs of PBR being lowered 75 feet. As a salute to this grand occasion Loud and I asked for silence as we popped the first two cans. But the fun was not over. Loud and I were then the witnesses to what we believe to have been a first in vertical caving....the nude rappel. Dale, using a rack, can be accredited with this first. After getting everything and everyone down, we proceeded. Then I led the party to the room that we used to camp in the two days we were there. We set up camp, had dinner, and retired for the duration. Arising before sunrise (no sun in cave), we had a hearty breakfast. Then began the endless hours of magnificent mapping. Ah, what stations, reliable readings and noteworthy notes we turned out. After 12 hours and 3000 feet of passage mapped, we headed back to camp, ready to celebrate the fourth. We had mapped through the Garbage Room to the Gypsum Room, down to the Library and Mud River.

While mapping in the Gypsum Room we met Janet Queisser and Mike Kayes, who had come in to celebrate with us. Knowing the party was BYOL, they had brought one 6-pack of Coors and a baby

bottle of rum. We all went back to the campsite and as Loud, Douty, and I began on the beer, Dale began to prepare the spaghetti dinner.

I have a little trouble remembering the rest, but this is kind of how it went.

Before the spaghetti was done we had finished a couple of 6-packs, and the rum. Janet and Mike left before dinner and missed the best part of the party.

The spaghetti was delicious. I couldn't believe how good it tasted, and the soup and vienna sausage were equally tasty. It was a tribute to Dale's cooking abilities and the condition of our minds.

Then came the watermelon. We went to the back of the camp room (later named the Fourth of July Room), split it into nine pieces, and devoured it.

It was as ripe as we were. The situation was almost at a peak when Dale broke out the bottle of Cold Duck.

I don't remember what it tasted like going down, but on the return trip (accompanying spaghetti, beer, and watermelon) it tasted terrible. Dale was impressed by the volume of my regurgitation and wanted a picture, so I took another drink and did my thing. After recuperating for a few minutes, Douty asked if I felt like going to the Canyon Room to light it up with a flare Mike Kayes had left with us.

"Hell! Puking is part of drinking", I replied as we headed toward the Canyon Room. We lit up the room, signed in the register, sang a few bars of The Star Spangled Banner, went back to the Fourth of July Room, and passed out.

The next morning, slightly hungover, we had breakfast and headed out of the cave. It was a long, hard drag, but uneventful. We got out about 3:00 on Sunday, and sat in the sunshine drinking the two cans of PBR Loud and I had carried out.

Mike Frame

* * * * *

"Kim Smiths' a great guy, but he drinks too much." - Ed Loud
at Old Timer's

* * * * *

Goliath got stoned

UNDER THE CARBIDE DUMP

Speaking of carbide dumps, spent carbide is one of the disadvantages of carbide lamps.

Carbide lamps have long been the guiding light of the old world, or eastern, cavers. Many argue of the superiority of other light sources. While vertical techniques, mapping, techniques, and even clothing have undergone many improvements, the carbide lamp remains relatively unchanged. Their continued use and wide acceptance attest to their utility.

The carbide lamp has provided cavers with many thousands of hours of dependable service. They have also provided cavers with a continuing nuisance - spent carbide.

There are two basic choices in the disposal of spent carbide. 1) Leave it in the cave, or 2) carry it out. If care is not taken when leaving it in the cave, spent carbide can result in unsightly dumps, and as the speleo-ecologists point out, may harm cave life. Yet to carry it out can be a nuisance and sometimes impractical. It is bulky since carbide doubles in volume as it is used. Carbide which is still reacting is hot and can cause a rather explosive situation, especially in a baby bottle with a tight lid.

Most ecologists argue not that we should not pollute at all, but rather that our pollution should not be extreme enough to effect the relations between living organisms and their environment. The conservationist objects, not about spent carbide in a cave, but rather about being able to see it. The speleo-ecologist objects not about spent carbide in a cave, but rather about its effect on the cave environment. The efficient speleologist objects not about the spent carbide, but about having to carry in, and through the cave enough containers to carry out twice the volume of carbide that he carries in. If he uses baby bottles to carry out the spent carbide, it would be necessary to carry in two bottles to handle one bottle of carbide. If plastic bags are used, they must somehow be protected, either in a pack, or in a pocket and with some luck they will make it out in one piece.

So, what is the point of all of this? Two reasons.

The first is to offer a couple of suggestions if you need to change carbide and you have no means of carrying it out and must dispose of it. It is important to dispose of it in such a manner that it can not be seen and so that it will not disturb the environment of the cave.

The first suggestion, then, pertains to where the spent carbide is dumped. The prime medium by which the spent carbide is distributed through the cave environment is water. As with industry, the problem is not so much the waste products, but

rather that it gets into the air or water and is distributed into large areas of the environment. So when you have to dump spent carbide, it is important to chose a place that is sheltered from flowing water year round. Spent carbide dumped in a dry water course or beside a stream in summer may be washed into the stream during wet weather conditions. Even then, caves change and a safe place today may not be such in ten years.

How spent carbide is dumped is also important, especially from the conservationist's point of view. Spent carbide dumped on the surface and covered may be out of sight but it may still be rather obvious that it is there. Covering a junked car with burlap may hide the car, but it creates a new eye sore. A pile of rocks, mud, or dirt that is obviously out of place can look almost as unnatural as spent carbide left uncovered. This problem can be eliminated by making a hole, dumping the spent carbide, and then filling the hole with the same or similar material as was taken out.

Obviously, the best alternative is to carry out all spent carbide. But the best alternative is often not practical. This introduces the second reason for this discussion - an alternative between dumping spent carbide with every change and carrying out all spent carbide.

Many cavers carry some means, usually a baby bottle, for carrying out their spent carbide. But a problem arises if everyone on the trip doesn't or if the trip runs over ten hours or so. The spent carbide containers become full and everyone is forced to dump their spent carbide for the duration of the trip. Unless everyone changes carbide at the same time, this can result, unpremeditatedly, in many small carbide dumps.

So as an alternative I would suggest that one or more plastic bags be carried in a baby bottle. If the baby bottle becomes full before the trip is concluded, the spent carbide can then be emptied into a plastic bag, a knot tied in the top, and either carried out, left at a permanent dump, or buried in the manner indicated previously.

First of all, for those already carrying a spent carbide baby bottle, it requires no additional bulk to carry a plastic bag since it can be kept in the bottle until needed. It eliminates the problems of heat and gas collecting in the plastic bag since the spent carbide would have been stored in the baby bottle long enough to stop reacting. If the decision were made not to carry out the bag of spent carbide, but rather to bury it, the bag would confine the spent carbide and prevent its spread or possible pollution of the cave environment. The empty baby bottle would then continue to serve as a dump.

The intent of these suggestions is to provide an alternative to the preferred practise of removing carbide completely from cave. The important thing is to be aware of the problem whose the best alternative considering the circumstance.

Ed Morgan

COLD WATER

Oh Smoke Hole, oh Smoke Hole,
My feet are all wet,
It's over by boots,
It hasn't stopped yet.

It's rising, it's rising,
It's up to my knees,
I'm getting all soggy,
I'm starting to freeze.

To deeper, to deepest,
And on with the quest,
On up to my waist,
Then up to my chest.

The exit, the exit,
Is filled near the top,
It's up to my chin,
It's finally stopped.

Oh Smoke Hole, oh Smoke Hole,
I made it somehow,
I'm wet and I'm tired,
I'm satisfied now.

J.R. Stoutenburgh

* * * * *

THE MANUFACTURE OF SALTPETER

Saltpeter, chemically known as potassium nitrate (KNO_3), is a mineral which resembles common salt crystals and is formed when decaying animal and plant matter oxidizes. Its uses vary considerably, ranging from gunpowder and other explosives (most common use) to meat preservatives and dyes.

During the War of 1812 and the Civil War, caves proved to be a major source for saltpeter for explosives. Reclamation of saltpeter from cave earth is a relatively simple process. The theory is based on differential solution and the utilization of different solubility factors of different salts at different temperatures.

The first step involved placing some twigs in the tubs, barrels, or vat, and then, on top of this, hay or straw, which would be about a half a foot thick when pressed down. The barrels were then filled with the dirt, and then with water. The next day the water would be drained off and poured into a second barrel. This went on anywhere from one to three days,

after which it was drained and placed in a tub or similar vessel. This step allowed the water to leach the calcium nitrate or to dissolve the calcium nitrate as it permeated through the dirt.

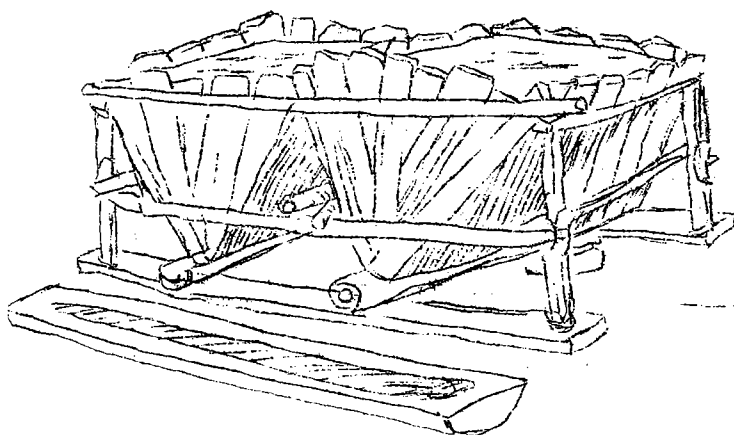
In the tub along with the water, or "liquor" as it was called, was poured strong lye (potash obtained by leaching wood ashes in a similar manner to the calcium nitrate). As long as the lye continued to curdle or cloud the liquor, more was added. The liquor was then strained through a cloth and placed in another vessel. This step converted the calcium nitrate to potash nitrate with calcium precipitating as an hydroxide.

After the liquor was strained, it was boiled. This caused the solution of potash nitrate to increase in concentration by evaporation of some of the water. The liquor was then strained and allowed to cool. During this step crystals began to form. When cold, the liquor that had not crystallized (called mother liquor) was poured back into the pot of fresh liquor, as it still had considerable saltpeter in it.

The crystals left were saltpeter crystals, but they had to undergo further refining in order to be suitable for gunpowder manufacture. The saltpeter was boiled in water again and dipped onto a straining cloth. It ran from there into a cooling trough where it was agitated by raking back and forth. The crystals that formed here were taken out and placed in a draining trough. By this time the crystals were white and after draining for a day, they were taken to a washing board where they were washed in cold water for an hour. The water was drained off and as it had dissolved some of the nitrate, was added to the mother liquor. The remaining crystals were dried, the result being pure saltpeter, ready to be shipped to the factory for the manufacture of gunpowder.

The information for this paper and the drawing were taken from "Saltpetre Mining Tools Used in Caves" by Burton Faust. This article was printed in the NSS Bulletin #17, December 1955.

Larry (Tuna) Johnson



Double
Leaching
Vat

SELECTIONS FROM PETE'S LOG

- 11/12/66 Went to Spruce Run Mountain Cave. Fantastic formations but 300⁺ feet of good ole West Virginia type crawlway *\$@#*!! Easy to find, it's right under the Hickory Tree - Wes Thorne (Ass. editor's note: HAR)
- 11/20/66 Paxton's - to Xmas Room and AU Pike - would you believe lost? - Mary E. Jones
Map didn't help one damn bit. - Wes Thorne
Maybe you had the wrong map, Wes!
There is no right map! - Barlow
- 12/4/66 Tourist trip through Pig's hole (Editor's note: -10 for spelling) Recovered top to register that some *\$%*!#! trainee dropped near the mud bridge. Getting pretty tired of cave, would you believe last trip there? - WHT
- 1/7/67 Spruce Run Mountain - Took us an hour to find the place.....we walked circles around the entrance for a long time within 300 feet of it, gave up, and started down for the road when we stumbled on it.
- 1/21/67 Hereyee, Hereyee
Hess' Hollow is 89 feet deep. The entrance drop is exactly, without question, and definitely, without doubt, 116 feet deep. - Vig
....Stay tuned for the future map of this *\$@#*!! cave. - WHT (editor's note: see 12/4/66 entry by Wes)
- 2/67 Today the VPI Cave Club was represented by a large contingent of members and dates at the Annual Day After the Night Before of the Orgy Following the VPI Cave Club Annual Banquet and Awards Presentation Cave Trip. We honored Greenville Saltpeter with our attendance and confusion! - "Stony" and Barbara Stonikinis various comments:
What a Lousy, Rottin', Wasteful, Stinkin', Low-down, Scrapin', Crummy, Scuzzy, Filthy, Expensive, Cold, trip. - Vig and Dianne
22 hungover people in one tiny W.Va. Cave - God!! - J.O'M. (Jack O'Meara)
Happy New Year! - Whitt
We went too - we think - T.S.R. (Roehr)
- 4/15/67 CAUTION: two dead sheep at the bottom of Maybrook Sink.- Bruce Patterson
They were delicious - J.O'M.
- 5/13/67 Slusser's Chapel -I went thru the siphon! WHEE, BOUNCE, WOW, LEAP, SPLASH. My mom better finish my down-filled athletic supporter before the next trip.
- Cooper
- 6/17/67 *\$%*!#!*# - Virginia State Police *\$@&*! - "Keatski (Jack Keat)
(10/68 Police Brutality!!! Join the wipe Pembroke off the map with a firecracker society. - Gary (the speeder) Moss)
- 10/22/67 Today is my Birthday. I went to Miller's Cove. That proves that wisdom does not come with age. - Danny Wright, 19 years old today, *!@#*#!

- 6/8/68 Finally got our house almost clean. Harrison will be there this summer; he has the equipment and files. First orgy next Fall at 1300 Airport Road, The Airport Road Young Men's Chowder and Marching Society. See you next Fall - Vig
(September - Come on out and work on the House
Free Beer - Free Women)
- 1/11/69 Once again we forged into black uncertainty of the earth. - Wes Thorne
.....Yes, 55 minutes of rigorous, grueling, endurance-breaking CRAWLING in the Paxton's of Giles Co., yes, NANANANA - SPRUCE RUN MOUNTAIN CAVERNS!!! - Vig
- 2/11/69 Me went to Saltpeter Cave 'mit Ed Morgan! We went in, ate a cookie, got sick, and came home. - Steve Kark
- R.E. WHITEMORE IS UBIQUITOUS
- 11/29/69 Brrrrr Brush Mountain gets mighty damn cold after Thanksgiving - my vehicle helped provide warmth. - Pete Schnaars PS Just ask walkie-talkie. Don't look at me!!! I'm Innocent?!??? - Liz Leach
- 12/7/69 New River - Ed Loud conquers another tough cave! - Ed Loud
- 9/19/70 Steve Kark officially welcomes the new year, may the club ruin many more decent reputations in the coming year. - Steve Kark
- 9/20/70 Oh woe, another Fall and another bunch of *!#\$\$*! trainees! You know, I see them come and I see them go - each one different, but yet all the same - bums. But has Clover Hollow been conquered?, has Pighole given up its deep, dark, mystical secrets? Smokehole still holds firm to its virgin passage (Bat guano on you Russ Peterson). Is there a good map of Pig Hole (may cave crickets crawl up your nose, Thomas Vigour)? Has anyone re-discovered the seven-second drop in Newcastle Murderhole (poor Paul)? And how about the Forest (Farst?) Room in New River? (Tell us about how it periodically closes up, eh Whitt?) - The Ol' Man, VPI #19
- 9/20/70 Whatever happened to the little yellow flowers that used to grow up on Brush Mountain? - Steve Kark

Well gang, that's about it for all the "funnies". There has been a large drop in the use of Pete's Restaurant, and consequently, Pete's Log over the past few years. As proof, in '67 there were 24 filled pages in the Log, in '68 there were 17, and in '69 there were only 6. When I last checked for this year, 1970, there were only three (3) pages filled.

I feel this Log says a lot about Club History and I think it's sad to witness such a decline. Aren't groovy, ridiculous, nutty, and insane things happening anymore? (or doesn't anyone eat anymore?) Here's a last entry that states best what I'm trying to say:

6/19/70 Finally found a place to eat breakfast. The Hardie House eats.... People should start coming to Pete's more often, it's one of the best places in town. That's about all. - Moose

A VISIT TO THE CAVERNS OF SONORA

I don't remember where or when I first heard of the Caverns of Sonora, but when I did it stuck in my memory as a place I would have to visit someday. My impression was that it was the most beautiful cavern in the world.

Riding through Texas one would expect to see some advertising for a cave purported to be so beautiful, but no advertising was seen until we got within a few miles of the cave. Sure enough, the signs claimed that Sonora was the world's most beautiful cavern.

The fact that Sonora is not widely known for its beauty is probably due to its location, tucked away in the hills near Sonora, Texas. When Fred Hines, Rick Weber, Winston Harmon, and I arrived we were the only visitors and therefore had a somewhat "private" tour through the cave. Our guide through the caverns was a former Texas Speleological Association president, Jack Burch (NSS 2175), who gave us an excellent insight into the nature and history of the cave.

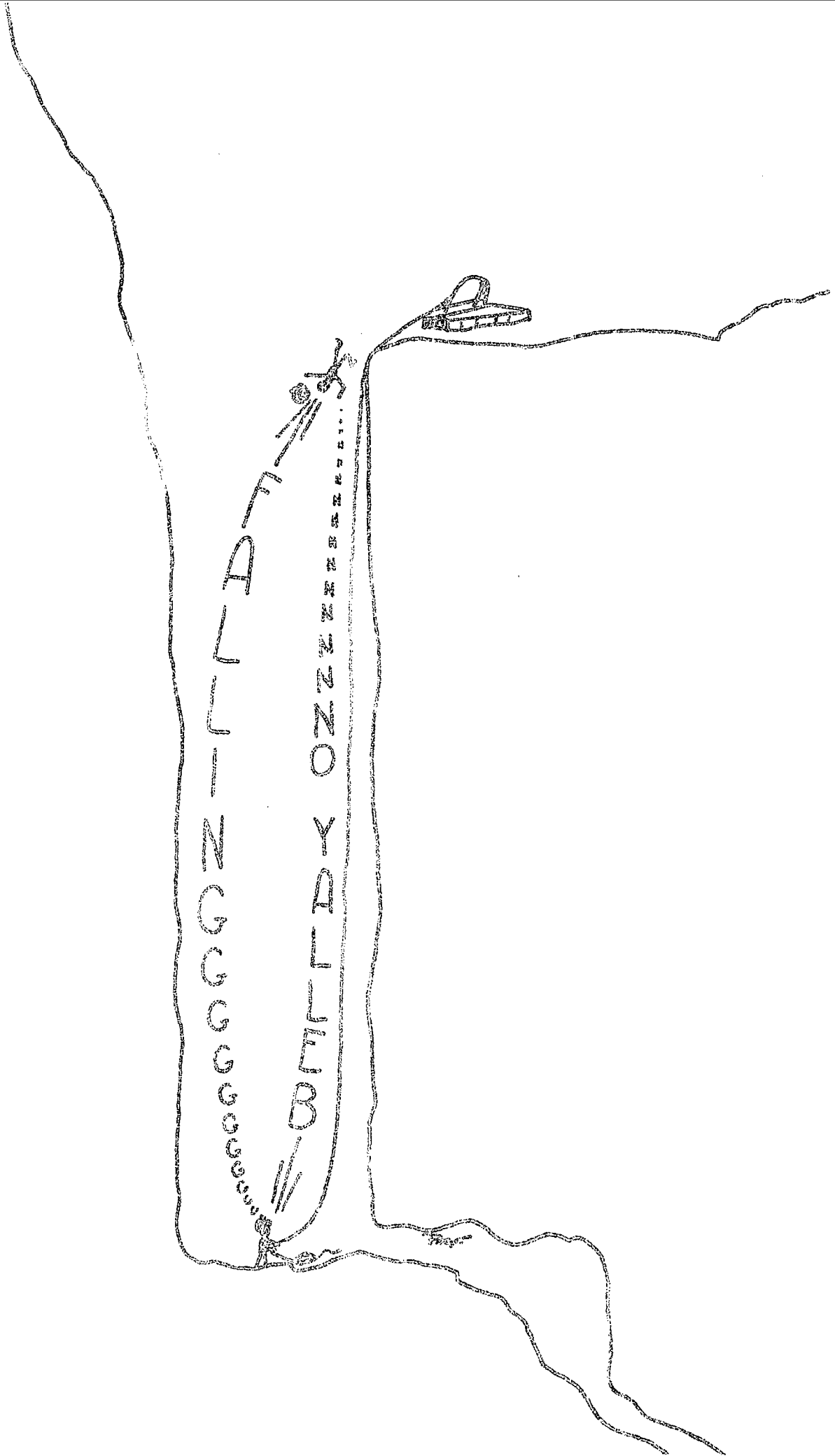
Caverns of Sonora, once known to cavers as Mayfield Cave, was formed in a unique manner. Throughout its formation it was an entirely sealed chamber filled partly with water. The entrance came much later, and being very small, did not allow any mud to enter the cave. The result is an immaculate cave, having none of the all too familiar mud covered walls and floors (and formations) so common in eastern caves. In our tour of an hour and a half I don't remember seeing one dirty spot in the entire cave.

All four of us found it rather hard to believe that any one cave could have such a tremendous monopoly on beautiful formations. The formations are so profuse throughout the cave that in places the cavern's floors, walls, and ceiling are completely adorned. It was a wonder to us that they were able to run tour paths through the cave. Some of the more famous formations are the "War Clubs" and the "Butterfly", both beautiful and unique. Literally billions of helectites occupy every square inch of portions of the cavern.

Jack assured us that we were seeing only a small portion of the explored cave and made us all envious as he told us about his off duty hours of exploring in parts of the cave that would rival the toured section in splendor.

When someone tells you that the Caverns of Sonora are the most beautiful in the world - you can believe it!

Michael C. Frieders



DRAIN DROP CAVE HARBORER OF EVIL INTENT

Everyone has mapped a cave which didn't really deserve to be mapped. Well I have just joined the crowd. Drain Drop is a cave, although after two trips there I feel that the term cave is too lofty for this hole.

The first trip there was in the Spring of 1969. The sufferers were Karen Good, hereafter known as Boots, Tom Roehr, trip leader who has since graduated, Don Laffoon who stands on his own merits, and myself.

After a ride of some two hours we arrived at the "cave". After obtaining permission to enter the "cave", we changed behind the barn.

"You stepped in what, Don?"

We then loaded up with our gear and backpacked the 200 feet to the entrance. The Drain Drop entrance is not very imposing, in fact it is decomposing. It was roughly the size of a human body (in size, but not in shape). It also had this funny looking black tube hanging down into it. As we climbed down the ladder to the main passage, some 20 feet, it became apparent where the cave's name originated. The tube was a drain from the farmer's cow trough higher up the hill. (Hence, the name Drain Drop)

Hanging up my clothes to drip dry, I looked down the main drag, little realizing that this passage, four feet by ten, was the largest in the entire system. But, surveying 120 feet down the passage soon brought me to the truth.

The "cave" presented us with an old stream channel-type fissure that varied in width from seven to eight inches. This idiocy continued for 120 feet.

We paid reverence to the great Cartwright, who, in his magnificent benevolence, granted us more walking passage. The fissure opened into a T-intersection. We went right, which was our third mistake of the day, the first and second having been to have gotten this far at all.

This right hand passage was interesting. For part of the way the floor was only three inches thick, with a savage four foot drop below. Further on down the passage there were high water marks from recent flooding. That was rather unnerving, but what really sent me running were the funny looking plants growing out of the walls, clinging and tearing at our hapless bodies. Turning around (because we had reached the end), we turned up our lamps and burned our way back through the jungle to the intersection.

Proceeding to the left this time, we soon reached the shores of a massive body of water, in the liquid form. Here we paused to ponder our fate. Gathering up the remains of our courage, Tom and I went down stream. Eighty feet later we noticed those funny looking plants growing out of the ceiling and we beat a hasty retreat.

For various reasons I could not return for a year and a half. During this time my memory of Drain Drop was dulled, and I was persuaded to return and finish the map. This time the trip consisted of Boots, Pam Mohr, Leni Leonard, and myself.

On November 11, 1970 we departed. Three hours later we pulled up to what at one time passed for a barn. On obtaining permission to enter the "cave" we changed clothes. While preparing for this final assault, an older type gentleman walked up to us. He turned out to be the owner; I had obtained permission from his mother.

"You going to try an git into the cave?" - he asked

"Yes, why?" - I answered

"Waall, this big ol' piece o' rock slid down the hill an' covered it up"

"Hmmm, that's interesting" - I replied, recalling my first impression of the entrance.

"Waall, y'all can try an' git in, good luck"

So Pam and I walked on up to the "entrance" and sure enough, it was gone, or rather it was now about six inches square. We looked around and found a few logs to try to pry the rock off. Of course, they promptly broke. Several attempts later we decided to dig a new entrance two feet away. Great, but in so doing we removed a portion of the dirt supporting the rock which was blocking our entry.

In the following debate it was decided that I should go down first to test the rock. Well, it held and we all went down. I wanted to check out the bottom of the drop so I continued on down the ladder. Upon reaching the last rung I noticed the floor ten feet below me. Shouting various appropriate obscenities about having been told the drop was only 40 feet deep (we were using a 48 foot ladder), I climbed back up to the main passage.

Then as a true leader, I said "abort", but to no avail. We headed for the stream. Cartwright again smiled upon us as this time there was no stream. So we made preparations to start mapping.

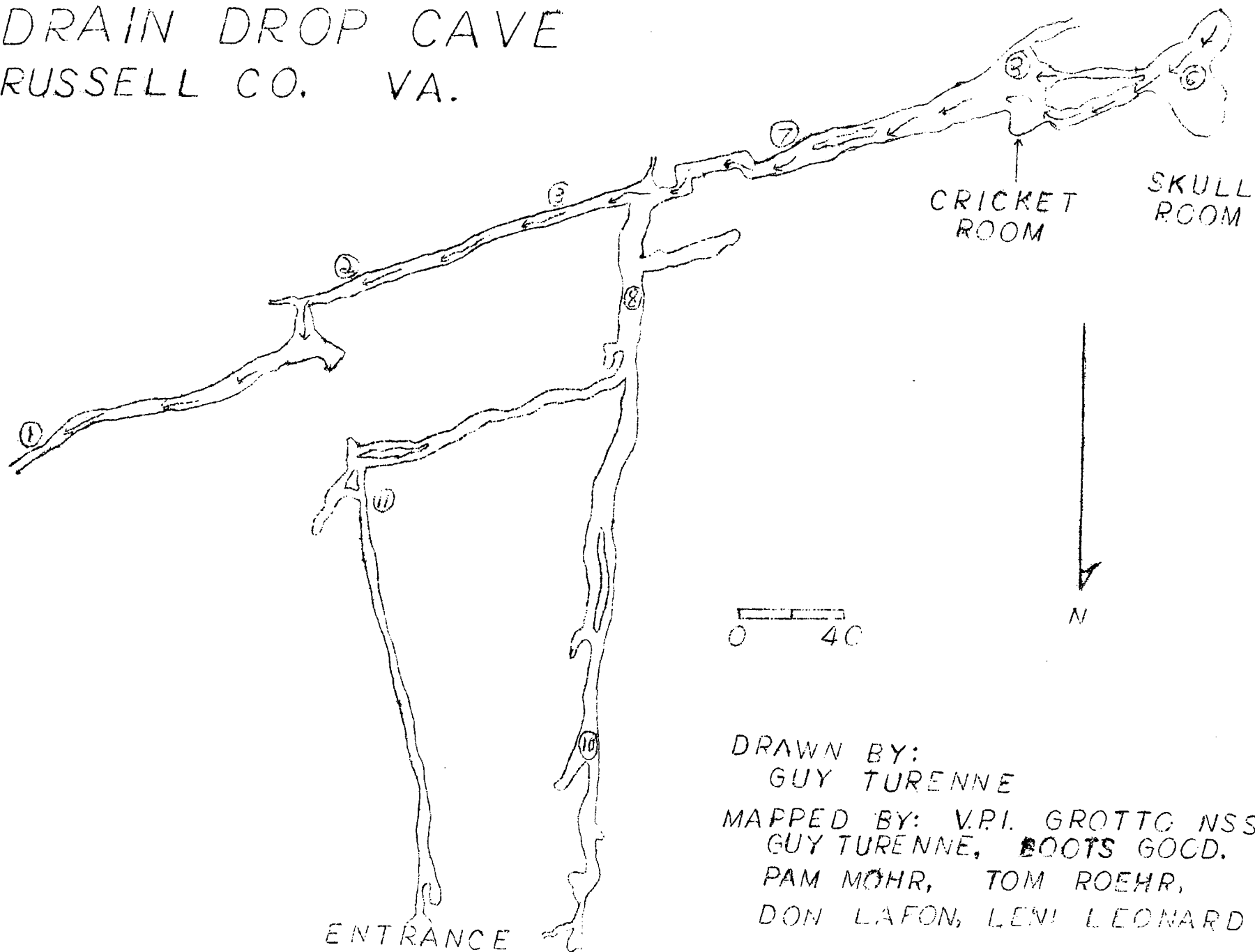
"Who has the notebook?" - I queried

"I do" - answered Boots

That was logical since I had handed it to her at the entrance.

"I've got the brunton, now who has the tape? - I asked

DRAIN DROP CAVE
RUSSELL CO. VA.



DRAWN BY:
GUY TURENNE
MAPPED BY: V.P.I. GROTTG NSS
GUY TURENNE, BOOTS GOOD.
PAM MOHR, TOM ROEHR,
DON LAFON, LENI LEONARD

Now the amazing thoughtfulness of my crew showed through.

"I don't have it, do you Boots?" - asked Pam

"No, how 'bout you Leni?" - Boots replied

"What???" - said Leni

Fortunately, I had brought it. I gave the end to Pam and ordered authoritatively,

"Alright let's go. Pam, you're lead tape and that's the way - Go"

At which point Boots mumbled something about having lost the pencils.

"Great, then we can abort!!!" - I joyously declared.

"Just stay here and I'll go back and find them" - said Boots, helpfully.

Now according to Murphy's Law, the pencils should have fallen in the most inaccessible point of the fissure. But they hadn't. Five minutes later a voice came back,

"I found 'em!!"

"Damn, now we've got to map it"

So off we went. The passage proceeded to go from 3 x 3 to 2 x 2 until finally Pam could go no further. That proved to be 260 feet of crawling over cobbles. We then turned around.

Returning to our origin, I decided to head upstream for 40 feet and make it an even 300 feet mapped for the day. Forty feet later we broke into walking passage. Better still, we found the only two "rooms" in the "cave". In the last of the two rooms we found the skull of a late Pliocene wolf which we guessed was attacked and killed by the crayfish we found in one pool. Fearing further outbreaks of violence from the crayfish, we left.

Returning to the entrance, I was again chosen to test the rock first. I got up with no problem, as did Leni and Boots. But then came Pam.

When Pam appeared at the top of the ladder we received an accurate measurement of the volume of the entrance: It is one Pam-width minus one inch. And so, she was stuck. For half an hour we battled, trying desperately to pull her out while that crayfish tried to pull her in. Finally, with a mighty burst of energy and a tremendous groan, Pam broke free and we all ran for cover, as the skies darkened and wind howled - for we, exalted members of the renowned VPI Cave Club, had once again conquered another wild Virginia cave.

All told, Drain Drop is 1200 feet long. As the map attests, it is not complicated. So if you must visit the cave, be sure you take enough weapons to defeat its numerous denizens of the deep.

Guy Turenne

* * * * *

THE BORN LOSER #2

On April 25, 1970, a small band of three set forth at 12:30 pm for the sole purpose of exploring and mapping what had recently been entitled the "North Subway Passage" of Newberry's Cave. (Bland Co., Va.) In our group were Pete Schnaars, all around know-it-all, who made the trip possible, Liz Leach, number one note-taker, and me, a "damn trainee" who knew nothing, or maybe less, when the trip started.

I was eager to get to the cave, since I had been promised a chance to read the brunton. Pete and Liz, I suppose, were shuddering at the thought of teaching me.

One-thirty found us outside the entrance having made the discovery that Liz had left her gloves in the car. A short stroll over the hill soon corrected this and we quickly chimneyed the entrance to find three orange and spotted salamanders at the bottom.

Some few minutes later we were at the Devil's Staircase. All of us having been in the cave before made things move quickly until we got to where we wanted to start mapping.

It took me quite a while to catch on to brunton reading. It's a wonder Pete and Liz put up with me.

Finally it seemed that I caught on. Nevertheless, I was still slow and we only mapped about half of what had been previously explored. We discovered that what we had thought to be about 500 feet was more like 1150 feet.

Due to coldness on the part of two of us, and a headache on the part of the third party, a unanimous decision was reached to abort the trip. We retreated to the vault room for a vienna sausage snack and signed the register.

The trip out took a little longer than usual because some of us, me for instance, wanted to try some climbs on the Devil's Staircase a little differently. On one climb, I leaped twelve feet into the air to reach the top! Would you believe maybe I just stretched like hell to reach about three handholds in the distance?

We emerged from the cave at about two am, to find it raining. After a quick change of clothes, one good bump coming out of the field, and a fast trip to Dublin, the truckstop and the thought of food looked great.

Hamburgers, Pepsis, and french-fries later, we found ourselves on the road to home. I was tired enough to not remember how we got back, and from the contented snores of Pete and Liz, I doubt that they remember either.

Once back and thinking of how nice it was that we were back early at 3:30 am, we discovered that the United States of America had pulled a trick on us and enacted Daylight Saving Time. Instead of 3:30, it was 4:30. With this in mind, all of us headed for bed in the fastest manner possible.

Several days later, while playing with the brunton, I discovered that the watch I was wearing during the trip affected brunton readings. Now there is a trip to Newberry's this weekend to re-map that section of cave. What I want to know is:

Am I Really a Born Loser?

or

Did It Rub Off From Ed Loud?

Edmund M. Coleman Jr.

* * * * *

A TRIP TO SPENCE CAVE (Smyth County)

"You're going WHERE???"..."Can you fit through a coat hanger?"..."You know if you're over five feet tall, you can't do that cave"..."One detail - can you prussik with 15 pounds of mud on your head?"..."But in spite of all the warnings, my curiosity was aroused and Don Davison, Ed Richardson, Jim Bracken and I headed off to Spence Cave.

After a stop at the Dollar Store for Don's socks and then to the hardware store for tapes (this was to be a mapping trip) and a charming hat (?) for Don, we parked and began to unload the car. "If anyone forgot anything this time, that's too bad - we're not going back", a voice booms out. Three minutes later that same voice - although not quite so booming - squeaked, "%*!, my socks! Hey, anyone see my socks?" The previous law suddenly repealed, we chuckled as Don drove off across the mountains to retrieve his socks. An hour and a half later we started the climb to Spence.

Although the entrance was small, once inside I found out that I could have been 15 feet tall and 20 coat hangers around

to go through the cave. The passage way was large with quite a few formations. After mapping 150 feet, we came to a drop. Figuring we had put in a good day of mapping, we rigged the drop. I kept thinking, "Well, so far their warnings were wrong, so perhaps there isn't any mud either." Ha. I was welcomed at the bottom of the 180 foot drop with mud, mud. and more mud. Curse you Frieders! My boots grew 13 sizes and I had to scrape the mud off my legs to bend my knees. After slushing around awhile, we came to a 200 foot drop, and Don decided to play Daniel Boone and go down, in spite of all the words of warning marked in the mud walls. An hour later we heard a mouthful of choice words echoing up the drop and we knew he was all right - and so were the warnings. Eventually Don appeared - or rather a walking, talking mud creature appeared. "Let's go home!"

At 7:00, Ed started up the mud caked rope and at 8:00 a faint, exhausted voice mumbled "off rope". Don, who had been pacing around the room like an expectant father, decided to go up next. Forty-five minutes later he reached the top. Following directions, Jim and I then tied the 150 foot rope to the two ladders and the 300 foot rope onto them. "Sure it will work - everything on the walls point up." But evidently, only 99% of the things pointed up, and in accordance with Murphy's Laws*, the ladders jammed. They wouldn't go up and they wouldn't fall down. At about 10:30 Don mumbled something about rescue status. Jim and I looked at each other and chuckled. "Know any Pollock jokes? But they just didn't seem funny, it was too cold to laugh - our mud coated lungs were freezing fast. Using one lamp, we searched for the warmest corner, collecting firewood on the way (one half a broom stick), and built a giant 2 x 3 inch campfire. We sent up orders for hamburgers and marshmallows, but the service was terrible. The fuel ran out and we began to look for an elevator. Carlsbad and Luray have one, so we figured Spence must too. No such luck and it was getting colder. My blood cells were even shivering. Then at about midnight, after a verse of "Auld Lang Syne", dinner and a dry coat and shirt were dropped from heaven - or somewhere. Two freezing hours later the rescue crew arrived. I could just picture Mike Frieders and Ned Coleman standing at the top laughing and yelling down "I told you so!" But instead, like a spider tangled in its web, Bill Douty came slowly down to the pit. Ages later, after much hassle and fighting with the mud caked ascending gear, Jim made his escape. To keep up the suspense and excitement of some present rumors, the next hour or so is rated X. Finally I found the elevator and took the scenic view up to the top. Fresh air never smelled so good. Two days later I stopped shivering and last night's shower removed the last of the mud.

Actually, it was a very relaxing cave, and if you hurry and sign up now, I'm sure Don will take you there. Be the first on your block to go to hell and come back!

*Murphy's Laws

1. In any field of scientific endeavor, anything that can go

- wrong, will go wrong.
2. Left to themselves, things always go from bad to worse.
 3. If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will go wrong is the one that will do the most damage.
 4. Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.
 5. Mother nature is a bitch.
 6. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Cheryl Jones

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THE COMMITTEE SPEAKS

Because of the rapid increase in the number of times the club has been called on to extract one or more of its members from a cave lately, it seems that an article on the subject of why this is occurring may be in order. We will look at the incidents that have happened since Spring quarter and try to draw some conclusions from them.

Case one:

Early in the Spring quarter of 1970, the club was called upon to pull one of its girl trainees out of Clover Hollow. The girl, Pam Mohr, had reached the entrance drop, but was apparently suffering from exhaustion. The "rescue" was carried out without incident. Pam recovered by the next morning with no lasting ill effects.

This type of problem is perhaps one of the most difficult to prevent. Pam looked as healthy and strong as anyone on the trip and apparently felt so. An injury received on an earlier caving trip - a torn ligament - was not bothering her enough to make her think she could not do the cave. My own personal belief is that this incident occurred because the cave itself has been underrated. Clover Hollow has been visited so often successfully that many of us tend to forget that it can be a tiring trip, particularly if there are more than three or four people and one has to wait at drops. Also, because many of us have been through the cave several times, we are able to do it with less effort. Hence, a person going through the cave for the first time, with any kind of weakness, may be destined for trouble. The solution, of course, is to show more respect for the cave, but if a person says that he feels good, then what are we to do? I and several other people in the club go caving with latent physical problems that could cause trouble. We must simply use judgement and care to keep out of potentially bad situations.

Case two:

On November 7 Don Davison led a four-man trip to Spence

Cave, a trip that is usually considered fairly rugged and extremely messy. Don was the only member along, and no one had been in the cave before (at least down the drops). All went fairly well until Don decided to pull the equipment up. At that point he apparently decided to save time and instead of coiling the two 30-foot cable ladders, to pull them up unrolled, with rope tied to the end, also uncoiled. The final rope would be re-rigged in when it reached the top and the remaining two people at the bottom would prussik up it. This would have been a good idea on a short, smooth-walled drop, but here the drop was 180 feet, with many protrusions. The ladders, of course, hung and could not be moved up or down. The rescue consisted of untangling the resulting rope and ladder mess and re-rigging another rope so the remaining people could get out. Again, no one suffered any ill effects.

How can incidents like this be prevented? Having at least two members along would help. Don had expressed belief on this trip that he wished he had more members than just himself. This is not so much because trainees cannot rig themselves in - on the contrary, many trainees get to know their equipment very well in a short time. The other experienced member would act as a check on the leaders judgement, for a person often overlooks important details when he alone must make a decision. This was the case in Spence, and it can easily happen in other caves involving a different set of circumstances. No doubt we now have several more people in the club who have now picked up some good vertical techniques. It is sad that they had to learn under the conditions of Spence, but no doubt anyone who was involved in the trip or the rescue will remember the lessons that were learned.

This year we seem to have another generally good group of trainees. The people are willing to learn and quite eager to cave (2000 man hours in six weeks). The club's rescue system has worked quite effectively in getting people out of difficulties, with a minimum of trouble and publicity, in the shortest possible time. We have had to correct an instructor or two in the teaching and use of a single brake-bar (he was saying it could be braked like a double, which is only true for a piece of cable like my rope), but in all, things have worked out very well.

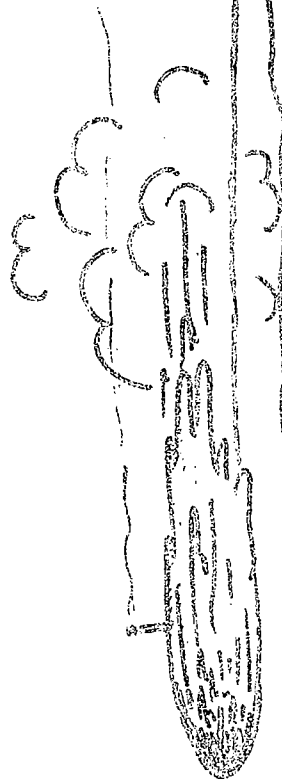
But what I like about these trainees is that they seem to enjoy caving, and I think this is important. When caving, whether for sport, mapping, conservation, or scientific work, ceases to be fun and becomes a duty or a job, then the caver is losing a great deal of the true value of caving, that of being able to get away from the unpleasant realities of many phases of life and just have a good time. HAR!!

Doug Perkins

* * * * *

"Bee-bop-a-Jesus, he's my sayiour" - Jim Hixson

RE-ENTRY



HEY TUNA,
YA' COMING

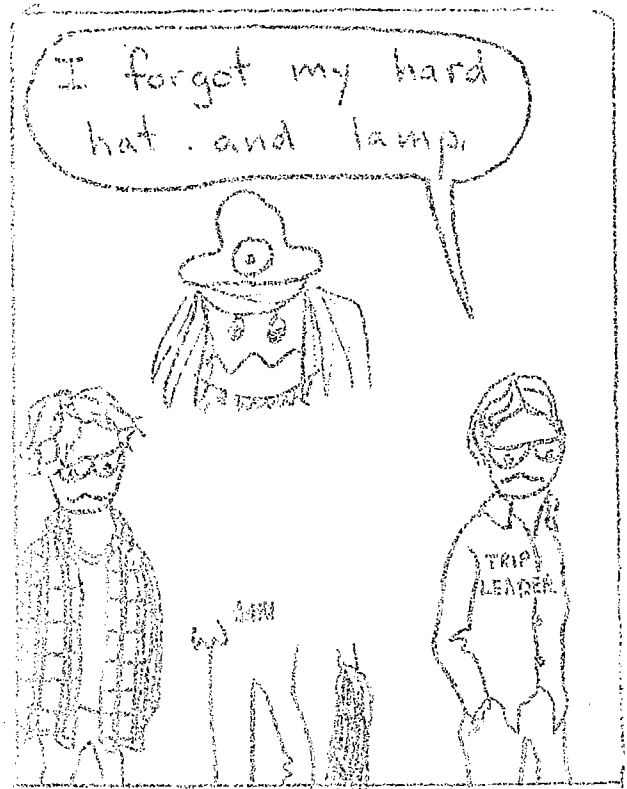
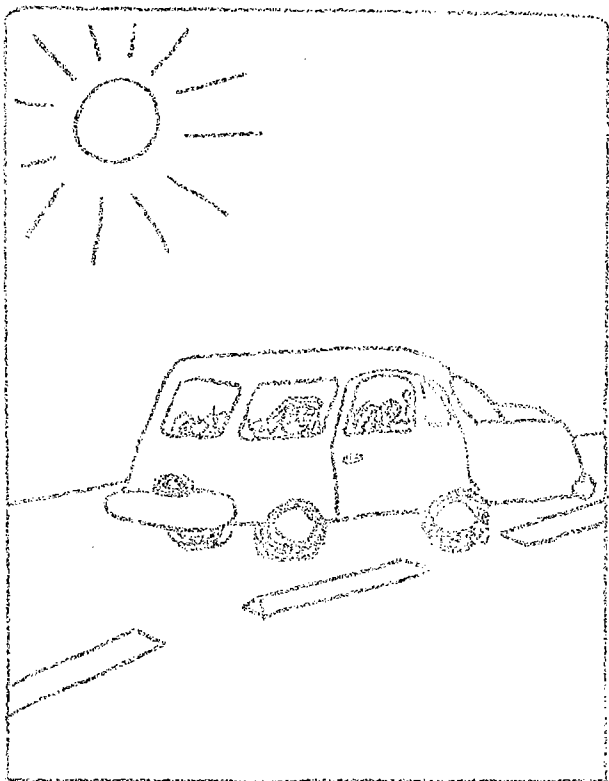
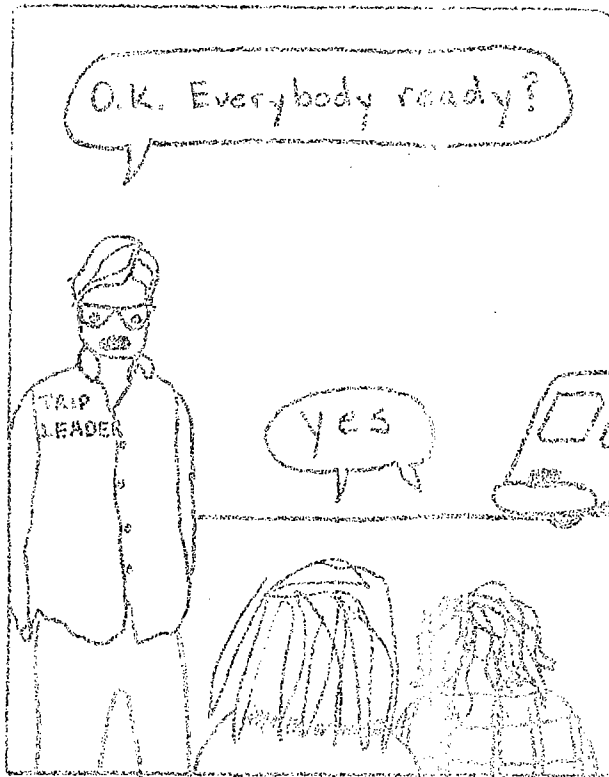


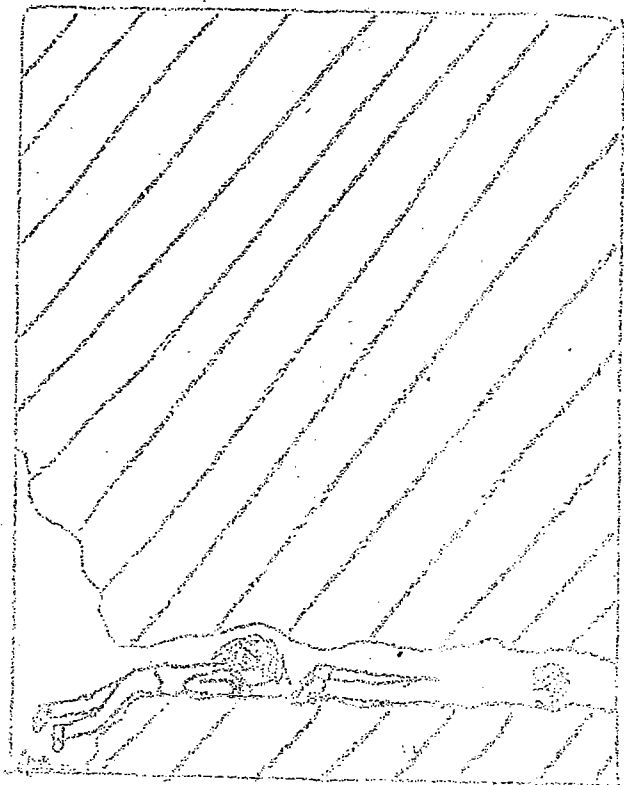
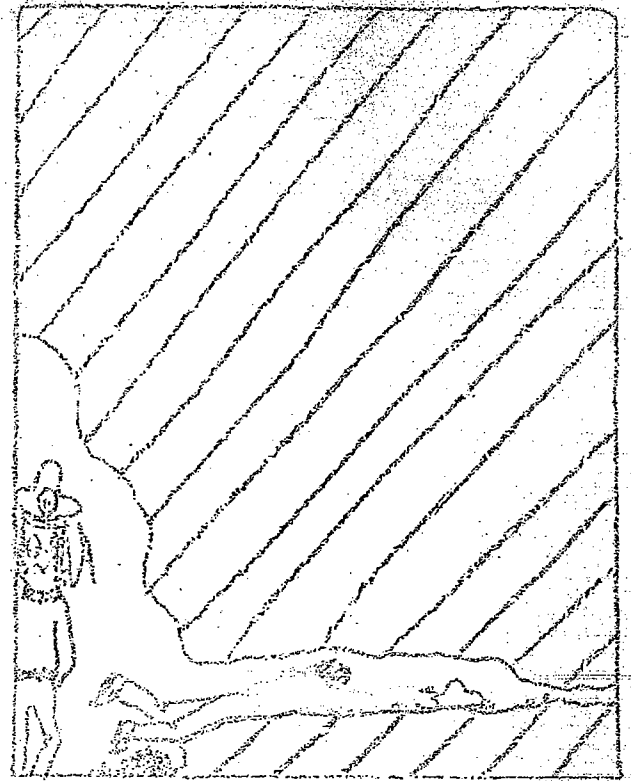
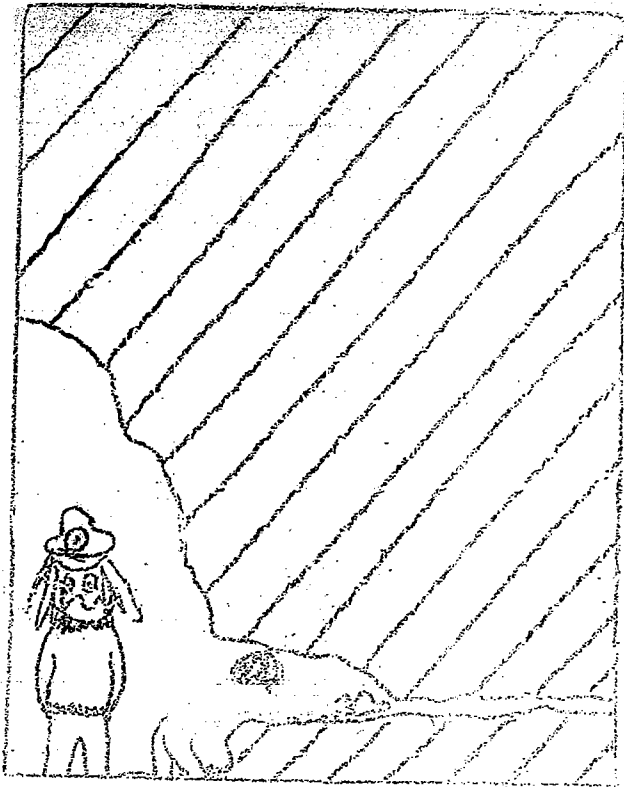
... introducing the adventures of

nybor

(alias the dumb trainee)







CAVE MAPPING - THE OLD IMMORALITY

By 1891 the buffalo, that symbol of frontier America, was exterminated as a wild species. Since the time when white man first blessed these shores, forty species of birds and mammals have become extinct, the virgin forests have been cruelly raped, and our wild, cascading rivers have been dammed into silt-laden cesspools. Our verdant prairies, our towering mountains, our deep, quiet woodlands today are nothing but island remnants of the old frontier, now awaiting execution. But wait! There is a last frontier for the pioneer - the underground!

Male bovine excrement.

Our cave frontiers are being ravished as surely as the American buffalo was ravished. The weapons are not dramatic. Bruntons and tapes are quiet and unimposing - but they are as relentless and vicious as the buffalo rifle. The last frontier is being measured, and taped, and sketched at a rate that will soon leave no frontiers and no pioneers.

A cave mapped is a frontier lost. Would Daniel Boone have felt the same tinge of adventure, the same thrill of the unknown if he had been presented with a detailed map of Kentucky's rivers and forests? Would Lewis and Clark have even bothered to take their trip across America if the "unknown territories" were not a blank on their crude map? A mapped cave is just another piece of ravished America. It is a little muddier than the next suburb down the highway, but it has about the same wilderness quality. Where is the thrill of an unknown frontier if the caver can read about the hundred foot drop down this or that passage? What incentive would drive the caver through a tight mud crawlway if the map shows that it just dead ends. What challenge is there in searching for that next mile of virgin passage if it is known not to exist?

Some claim there are enough unmapped and unknown caves to last forever. The same was said for our "endless" forests and "uncountable" buffalo. They are gone. Our last frontier is on its last legs and it too, soon will be gone!

Now is the time to reject your immorality, brothers and sisters; now is the time to cast away your bruntons and tapes. Repent and destroy the devil's maps. Repent and save our underground frontier.

Rev. D.S. Fox

* * * * *

"Beastie's always been very loose - I can't understand why she's up tight all of a sudden." - Bobaloo, trying to slam Beastie out of gear.

GEMS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF GRANNY ANNIE

- "Come on; let's go." Tom Speers
- "I came to VPI because of the Forestry Dept." Shelley Cinkay
- "Someone should keep a list of quotable quotes." Paul Broughton
- "You all stay there while I dig a little trench and let the water down." R.E. Whittemore
- "Now that I'm a sophomore, my name is no longer Pig Pen." Pig Pen
- "I LOVE Miller's Cove Cave." Lynn Wright
- "Next week I'll try Pepsi. Scuppernong and beer give me a triple 8610001 Excedrin headache." Steve Kark
- "Mother bear!" Russ Peterson
- "My Bauer bag let me down." Paul Broughton
- "Nic, nic, nic!" Steve Kark
- "Oh, no! I'm stuck in the Narrs!" Anne Whittemore
- "Annie, are you sure Whitt went fishing?" Bill Douty
- "Pop my little top, and down I go." Lynn Vinzant
- "For breakfast this morning I had two peanut butter sandwiches, two sardines with mustard, two cups of tea, a donut, kipper-snacks, three chocolate cookies, and four fig nuggets." Nancy Wick
- "Tennessee volunteers never throw up!!!" Sammy Taylor
- "Hixson, I'm not going to Windy Mouth." Ed Loud
- "Where's Moose?" Carla Dawson
- "I move we buy this Stokes litter which I have already paid \$20.00 for." Doug Perkins
- "Now, now." Russ Peterson
- "Need your pop-top opened?" Mike Frame, and in response: *!@# @\$\$%*!!" Craig Ellenfield.
- "Hey, Russ found a narr Narrs." Tom Speers
- "My tip flew out of my lamp. Let's all crawl around the grass and look for it." Guy Turenne
- "Did you hear what Moose and Vig did to me when I got back from swimming?" Tuna
- "I love being a bar maid!" Pam Mohr
- "What are you going to sell this year, Vig?" Bill Douty
- "I just love marshmallows!" Boots
- "Guess what! I've been to Flusher's Chapel! Steve Hall
- "ARGO yourself!" Easter Pig
- "I AM NOT DRUNK!" Paul Broughton
- "This is absolutely the last Old Timers I'm coming to!" Wes Thorne
- "Of course you can't find the tent poles; I forgot to bring them, smarty!" Anne Whittemore
- "I'd like to encourage all cavers to play the venereal game." Bud Rutherford
- "Crawlways are my favorite passages." Robin Lafon
- "Have a peach!" Ned Coleman
- "I need a wheel for my truck." Jim Hixson
- "Framrod! Pooooorrrrrr baby!" Carla Dawson
- "My springs are in great shape." Karl Hamm
- "My way is the only way." Don Davison
- "This is absolutely the LAST deadline!!!!!" John R. Holsinger

"Marcus won't bite." Charlie Maus
"I'll sleep in this half of the trailer, and Liz will sleep in the other." Pete Schnaars
"Now that I'm 21, my name is no longer Pig Pen." Pig Pen
"I'm going to dance you into the ground, Annie!" Steve Kark
"What does Strongback mean?" Nancy Wick
"Something for everyone and a little for me." Stanley Leo Carts, Jr.
"Where's Carla?" Jim Dawson
"Need a trash bag?" Bill Douty
"P.D.A.? Why, Pretty Damn Awful, of course!" Rocky Raccoon
"This here is a prriiiiiimmme brew!" Anne Whittimore
"Hixson, I just want to let you know I'm not going to Windy Mouth tomorrow." Ed Loud
"Mincemeat, anyone?" Boots
"C'mere Max; c'mere Harold; c'mere Framrod; c'mere Bill; c'mere Marcus; c'mere Max; c'mere Framrod; c'mere Harold; MAX!! HAROLD!! FRAMROD!!" the Dawsons
"My mother bought me a clean pair of drawers for the convention" Bill Douty
"You only get ankle deep in the river going to Marshall's Cave." Mike Frieders
"HOOT!! HOOT!! HOOT!!" Bill Corley
"Tell us a bedtime story, Grannie-Annie." Bill Douty and Doug Perkins
"The VPI Grotto better get over to the GGG Party, or they'll think y'all are snobs." Jim Hixson
"We are." Jack O'Meara
"Frog Chips are best when fried in catfish grease." Mike Clifford
"Going to Warm River with Hixson was the best trip of the convention." Nancy Wick
"Have some swill. It's got coffee grounds in it for better flavor." Pablo
"Have you seen Twila?" Mike Frieders
"All girls should wear bras." Peter Hauer
"This is my last beer." Ed Loud
"VPI Grotto is a bunch of degenerates." Some cob
"This tent looks like the best place to piss." Easter Pig
"The pig fell in the fire." Bill Biggers
"Nic, nic, nic, nic!" Slezzy Rider
"Yeow! My boobs are stuck!" Anne Whittimore
"400 people will be at Old Timers this year." Mike Frieders
"Now that I'm married, my name will no longer be Pig Pen." Pig Pen
"PIG PEN!!!! IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!!!!!!" Booze Byrd
"I had to pay the judge in Monterey \$30.00" Dale Parrott
"See you at the D.O.M.!" Dee Snell
"Have you seen the beer flowing over my Grandmother's Paisley shawl?" Anne Whittimore
"I found my hardhat in the bottom of Parrott hole!" Dale Parrott
"Found new virgin passage in Perkins." Tom Roehr
"The tree pushed me to the ground." Winston Harmon

"I can drink my weight in beer." Liz Leach
"Reece cups are soul food." Janet Queisser
"My truck is sick." Tom Vigour

"As you journey along life's mysterious road, keep your eyes
upon the doughnut and not upon the hole." The Dunganon
Monster

Anne Whitemore

NEW, HOT OFF THE PRESSES!!!!

"Hey, I hear Annie has written some quotes for the Trog
using "Pig Pen". I'd appreciate it if you'd change that
to Steve." Pig Pen

* * * * *

THE VPI GROTTO OF THE NSS
HAS LOGGED
2800 HOURS UNDERGROUND
THIS PAST FALL QUARTER
YEH US!!

* * * * *

A.I. Cartwright has been a much discussed and controversial figure of the VPI Cave Club. Here, for your reading enrichment and edification, dug from the annals of Cave Club History, from the Grotto Grapevine of March 17, 1944, we present to you,

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A.I. CARTWRIGHT

Aloysius Ignatz Cartwright was born at a very early age, and he was so surprised to see the light of day that he was speechless for about two years.

Cartwright was one of the Neanderthal men (who were the original speleos*). He began his caving in Europe, and about five hundred years ago he went into a very large cave in Italy. He stayed in this cave for many years, exploring the millions of miles of passages, going down hundred-mile vertical drops, and following streams as big as the Mississippi (when he tells lies, they're really big ones).

It was while he was in this cave that he began keeping a diary, so after this part we won't have to trust just to his memory. His diary starts in 1491, at which time he was several thousand miles from the entrance to the cave, so he was greatly surprised to see daylight. When he came out of the new entrance he found he was at the entrance to Clover Hollow Cave. This

was the way Cartwright discovered America on February 29, 1491 (1491 wasn't a leap year, but Cartwright doesn't know that).

Thus Cartwright beat Columbus by a year, but he never got any recognition for this, because he never bothered to go back to Europe and tell people about America.

(*Years ago "cavers" called themselves "speleos")

For the further harrowing adventures of our beloved founder, see the Winter 1971 Trog. (Provided we have a Winter 1971 Trog) ((Also provided we find the rest of the early editions of the Grotto Grapevine))

* * * * *

WHO DONE IT?

When you're flat upon your back,
Crawling thru some devilish crack,
And your canteen pulls and jerks,
Which is one of its queer quirks,
Who done it?
Every caver knows!

When you're climbing down a ladder,
Swinging freely, getting madder,
And an avalanche of dirt
Comes right down inside your shirt,
Who done it?
Every caver knows!

When you're chimneying - knees and elbows,
Going up where - only God knows,
If you slip and fall below,
Just ahundred feet or so,
Who done it?
Every caver knows -
-It's Cartwright! A.I.!

R.N.S.
(from Feb. 18,
1944 Grotto
Grapevine)

* * * * *

Officer: "Is he sober?"

D.J. Young: "He must be....he's driving."

FURTHER ADVENTURES ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE
or
THE SAGA OF B-C CAVERNS

The Tech Troglodyte, Spring, 1968, Vol. VI, No. 2, carried an article by H.H. Stevens, entitled "B.C. Caverns." This article claims no connection to that, although this author did room with H.H. Stevens.)

During the Dirty Old Man's Convention of 1967, John Hol-singer asked Tom Vigour, Phil Lucas, John Tichenor, Bob Barlow, Ollie and Wayne Fordham to check out a small cave near Gate City, Virginia, known as Collin's Cave. A quick scramble down a steep, sliny entrance and across a large room brought the cavers to a drop of about 30 feet, with big cave beyond. With no vertical gear along, they left.

With this insignificant start, begins the Saga of B-C Caverns.

Two days later, Tichenor, Barlow, and Vigour were back with ladders. This time they negotiated the drop, bothered only by the many trees, boards, and wire placed by locals attempting to explore the cave. This was also the first confrontation made with B-C MUD; a mixture of epoxy glue and orange peel, and having the consistency of Crisco and Gleen toothpaste mixed with dirt. Six hours of surveying in cold November water resulted in about 2000 feet mapped downstream and Tichenor suffering from exposure.

The first weekend in May, 1968, saw Vigour return with Sharon Priest, Jim Dawson, and Russ Peterson. Ten hours of surveying and poking around ended with most of upstream Collin's mapped, and an apparent connection made with neighboring Blair's Cave, a small cave mapped some years before by Lucas, Bauer, and Biggers.

Memorial Day weekend, 1968, saw many, many cavers convene at the Pennington Gap Fairgrounds for three days of Virginia Region caving. Peterson, Vigour, Dawson, and Tink Williams entered Collin's early in the morning of the 30th and surveyed several hundred feet of maze to the left of the entrance. Although this portion of the cave is dry, multi-levels and not knowing which end of the needle points north resulted in ten hours of surveying. Suppertime came and since the entrance was not far, the group decided to adjourn to Gate City for a meal. And who shows up in Gate City, but Doug Yeatts with Sharon in tow. After a hasty meal, the group headed back into Collin's and began surveying the upper level, including several drops.

This section of the cave was once a huge room, but has been half filled with sand and mud, and wherever water flows out of the ceiling, a hole is bored in the floor. This presented no

trouble until a vertically sided hole the width of the room and 20 feet deep was encountered. Vigour and Dawson tumbled down one side and began surveying the situation from the bottom. After several futile, embarrassing attempts, they were still on the bottom. Suddenly Dawson let out a horrible yell and attacked a small jam brack.

Two minutes later, he and Vigour were out and looking down a 60 foot drop, swearing; but Yeatts appeared with rope and things started to move. Finally, after a total of 17 hours underground, the group left the cave and looked for a place to sleep. Thanks to a light rain, a building was desired. Suddenly somebody mentioned the Moccasin Hills Country Club, and after a brief session with the night watchman, everyone was bedded down in the bath-house, complete with electricity and hot water.

Next morning disaster struck. The book with the maze notes was gone. After questioning half the people in Gate City, and looking through garbage cans and gutters, the group sadly headed towards Pennington Gap and a rainy drunk.

Blair-Collins (now called B-C Caverns) sat untouched all summer and into the fall. Then on Columbus Day, 1968, the Blue Box pulled into the tobacco field above the cave. Vigour and Peterson, sad at heart to be back, climbed out, accompanied by the hottest surveying crew to hit the Trail of the Lonesome Pine in many a day; Ed Loud, Paul Davis, Wes Thorne, and the funniest comic team ever to appear in Southwestern Virginia, trainees Bill Douty and Steve Kark. Thorne, Vigour, and Douty attacked the maze again, while Peterson, Kark, and Loud, with an air mattress, hiked off to check Mill Springs Cave, thought by Holsinger to be the resurgence of B-C. Meanwhile, Davis hit the sack. Ten hours later, Collin's was mapped, the resurgence had been pushed several hundred wet feet to a siphon, and Davis had awakened and was ready to party.

A rough map was drawn, and everyone breathed easy. No more long trips from Blacksburg to Gate City, up the muddy trail past the Country Club, down the lane, and into the tobacco field. No more busted knees and clothes ruined by B-C MUD, no more camping on wet cow-shit.

Dirty Old Man's 1969 and Tichenor, Vigour, and Paul Broughton (who had inherited the unfinished map from Vigour) were back in Pennington Gap. Holsinger announced that Blair's would be surveyed by Broughton, and Mill Creek Cave by Vigour and Tichenor, since they had wet suits. So one more day was spent fighting with B-C Caverns.

The finished map finally appeared at Speleo 1970 with one big question. Was the map of Mill Creek correct? Did the resurgence indeed flow backwards, or had Tichenor and Vigour read the south end of the needle? The next day, Holsinger finally entered the system and confirmed that, yes, the resurgence did,

in fact, flow backwards. A misplaced fault is blamed for altering the natural flow of water.

So, after approximately 220 man-hours of labor, B-C Caverns had 8100 feet of surveyed passage making it eligible for Long Cave status (over two km. in length) and ranking it 18th longest cave in Virginia.

Tom Vigour

* * * * *

THE BALLAD OF NEW RIVER

Am C Am Em
Where green misty mountains darken the sun,
Am C Am E
Where the hell and the fury are second to none,
G7 C Am Em
The New River cuts through the Fool's Face divide,
Am C Em Am
And her currents run deep and her waters run wide.

Your rapids have slashed us and drawn out our blood,
Oh, damn you, New River, we curse your thick mud,
Oh River, Oh River, the fight had begun,
There was no turning back till the battle was won.

We gathered together on the eastern shore,
With cases of beer and tubes by the score,
Said Vig to his ship mates, "We're in a fine state,
The damn raft's not built and now we're running late."

Well we pushed on out til water reached our knees,
And like New World explorers, we challenged unknown seas,
The rafts were beat and tossed about, paper ships on the ocean,
Still we popped a few more beers and splattered suntan lotion.

Yes, the sun was hot and the beer was cold,
The women were brave and the men were bold,
But a drunk's a drunk and it's plain to see,
That drunken bunch on New River made history.

We conquered New River that fateful day of May,
But the tale's not ended there's one thing more to say,
Though the raft's all have vanished, and the caver's they are
gone,
In the hills west of Blacksburg - New River is flowing on.

Steve Kark
(will score for
full orchestra
and choir)