

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

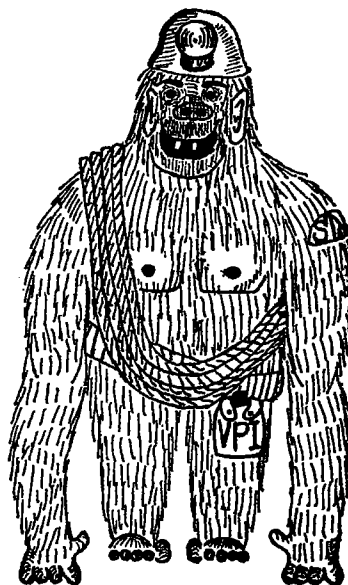
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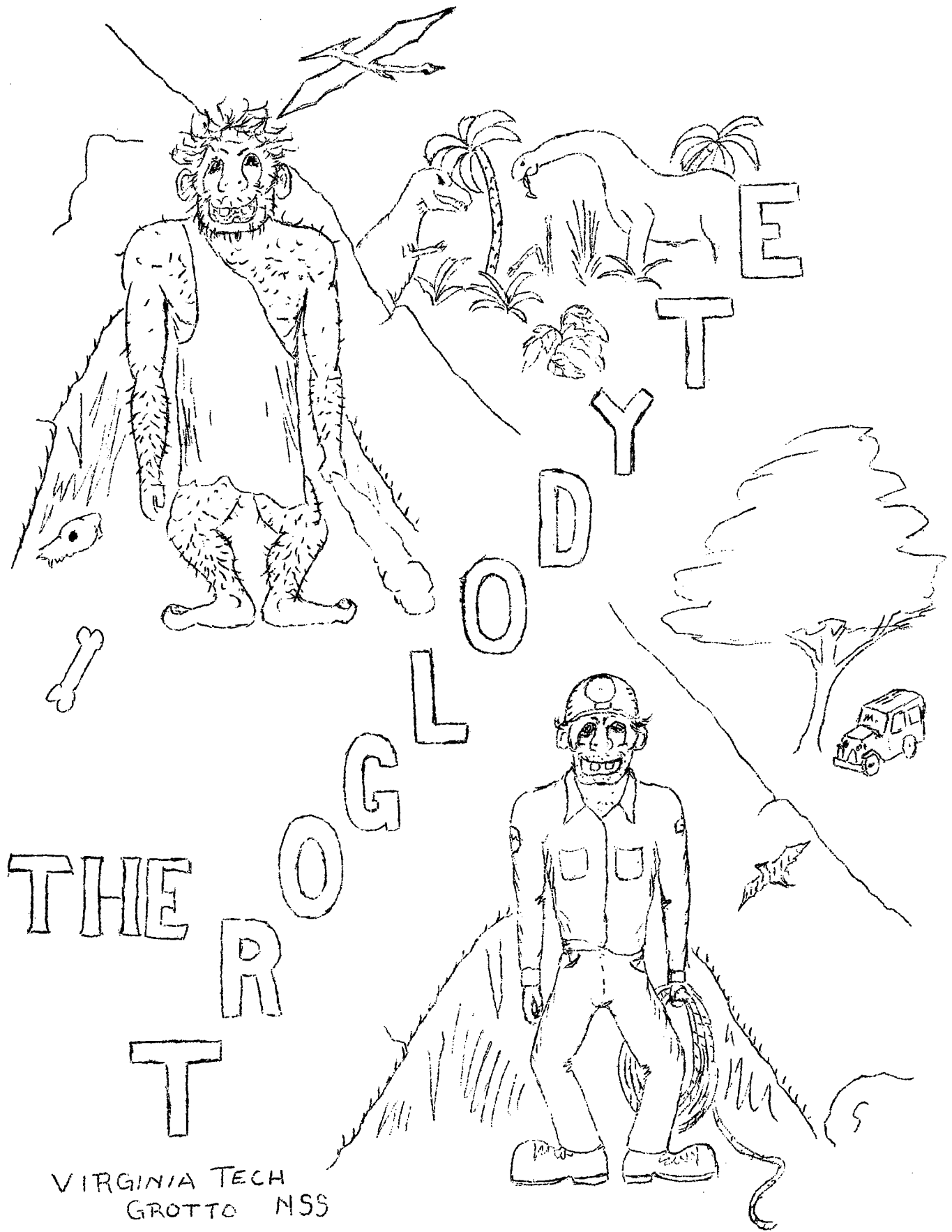


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SECRETARY Kathy Cronau
TREASURER Randy Wood

TROGLODYTE STAFF:

Tom Calhoun
Lor Windle
Janice Goad
Carol Godla
Don Anderson
Mike Wolf
Cheryl Jones



VIRGINIA TECH
GROTTO NSS

WINTER QUARTER, 1974

TOM CALHOUN

THE TECH TROGLODYTE
JOURNAL OF THE VPI GROTTTO OF THE
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WINTER QUARTER 1974

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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, Va. 24060. Subscription rate is presently one cent per page or by exchange. Individual copy price is \$.50. The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor--he could really give a shit.

THE PRESIDENT CELEBRATES:



The year is almost over and this is the last column that I get to write. I'm sort of at a loss at what to say because I seem to have mixed feelings about everything. However, as I sit and think about the past year, I will say one thing--it has been different. About the past year though...

The VPI Grotto, of the NSS has a constitution. On the first page in the second paragraph, the purpose of the club is stated. It is "to promote interest in, and to advance the science of speleology; to encourage fellowship among cavers and to promote conservation of caves and safety in their exploration." At this point I ask myself "Have we as a club done our part in fulfilling the original purpose of the club?" Sometimes I wonder when searching back through all of the various happenings during the past year. The trainee sessions and programs--did we really help the trainees? Could we have made a more concentrated effort to get in contact with those society members and free lance cavers on campus who are genuinely interested in caving? Did we inherit the caliber of people that we want to lead the club tomorrow? The project-- did we help the science of speleology or did we retard the idea of conservation? The banquet-- did we really bring out the idea of fellowship?

To the sophomores and juniors all I can say is -- whatever your answers are, you're the one's who will be guiding the club in the near future. This club has weathered a lot in the last thirty years, and I think that there isn't too much that will bring it to its knees. However, to those who lead the club and to those who think they have the answers, my one suggestion is to listen to the opinions of people outside the club, in the region and the country. You might be surprised at what they have to say about the Grotto. Then ask yourself, honestly, do they have good reason for saying what they do? Again, you might be surprised. Think about your relationship with the club and how you might help or hinder the club's relationships, impressions, and progress with the society. Then go forward from there--not backward.

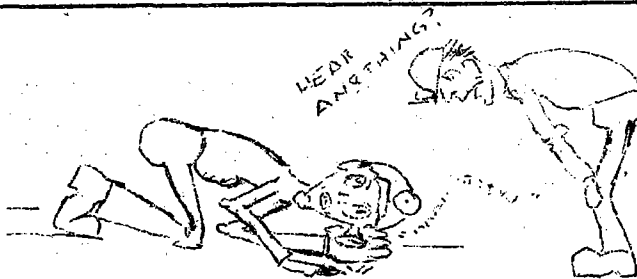
Good luck,

TUNA



GROTTO GRAPEVINE

COMPILED BY MIKE WOLF



MADAME VICE: The club got what it voted for last spring when it elected Cheryl Jones as Vice President. "Madame Vice" has been doing a first class job handling the responsibilities of her office. Not only has she been seeing to the training of the large number of trainees we have had this year, but with help from Herb Safford Safety Committee Chairman, Cheryl has been working on various projects for the club as a whole. Early in the fall a rescue roster and procedure was prepared and distributed to the club as well as other caving organizations through-out the eastern U.S. Clever negotiations on the part of Cheryl has obtained a stokes litter for the grotto. But it does not sit around waiting to be used in a rescue. Cheryl has spent many of her free Sundays out at Maybrook sinkhole with the stokes, instructing interested trainees and members in vertical techniques, rigging, rescue procedures and pulley systems. Not a week goes by without some sort of handout on valuable caving information from the desk of our hard working vice president. A few weeks ago Cheryl received a letter from Donna Mrcozkowski, Chairwoman of the N.S.S. Safety and Techniques Committee, praising Cheryl and the grotto for the work done in the interest of safe caving. Keep up the good work, Cheryl.

CAVING ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS: Over Thanksgiving, Bob Alderson, Bob Barlow, Tom Calhoun, Doug Perkins, Cheryl Jones and Don Davison hit Neversink, Natural Well and Ellisons. Tom, Don, Cheryl and Rolf McQueary returned to Ellisons over Christmas, and Cheryl and Don again over New Years.

Bob Barlow, Robyn Loud, Rolf McQueary and Doug Perkins placed bolts over the Canyon Room drop in Clover Hollow to by-pass a loose rock when rigging a rope.

Tuna Johnson conducted a mapping seminar for interested trainees and members in Tawneys.

On January 22 and 23, the grotto hosted another group from Wake Forest. The 30 students and faculty were taken in groups to Links and Tawneys by Lynn Richardson and Randy Stoutenburgh, New River by Carol Godla and Ed Richardson, and Slushers Chapel by Cheryl Jones and Mike Wolf.

Rolf McQueary is now mapping Salamander, and has just finished the upper levels.

Dale Parrot is still working on New River, and has mapped to the Gypsum Room. The total length now is rumored to surpass 20,000 feet.

Keith Ortiz is mapping in Robyns Rift, at times using a piece of sling marked off in feet.

Jerry Redder is mapping S'not Fox.....now and then.

Bob Alderson, Tom Calhoun, Mike Conefrey, Jim Denton, Rolf McQueary, Cheryl Jones and Janet Queisser participated in the Simmons-Mingo Project.

The Fall Project was again held in Smyth County on November 10. Tom Calhoun organized the undertaking. A night of camping at Hungry Mother State Park in sub-freezing weather was followed by a day of hard work. A party that night was welcomed by the tired, grungie mob at the Morgan's.

In the way of above the ground activity we have the following;

Jim Denton, Carol Godla and Mike Wolf trucked ("Toy"ed?) to Florida before Thanksgiving to view the Skylab launch.

Mike Frame, Cheryl Jones, Jean McCarthy, Ed Richardson and Pete Schnaars traveled cross country over the Summer, leaving from the N.S.S. Convention. Mike, Ed and Pete continued on to Alaska, dropping Jean and Cheryl off in Seattle to hitchhike home.

Pete Schnaars went out looking for someplace to go to school and ended up at the University of Alaska. He now enjoys the sun rise over Mt. McKinley from his dorm room and eggs made to order for breakfast. We here at VPI upon receipt of this news feel that we will be having a hard time keeping Ed Richardson (who is finally back in school) from skulking around mumbling things about wanting to go north and sitting for days at a time in the library staring at maps of Alaska.

Jerry Redder, Ed Richardson and Doug Yeatts made a beer run to Lawrence, Kansas before Banquet and returned with 38 cases of Coors. What class!

Speaking of Banquet, we blessed Squires this year on February 9. After the event, a party roared till it was light enough outside to find our way home the next day. Be sure to read the details in this Trog.

Dale Parrott and Ken Sanford visited Mexico over Christmas.

Tom Calhoun attended the International Speleological Congress in Czechoslovakia this past summer and discovered that the Trog was well known over there. Communication? No problem--Tom learned all the words he needed; beer, wine and coffee.

NEW CLUB POLICY: In the way of new club policy we have the following;

A change in Bylaw 5, section 1, which now reads; "The President shall appoint a person to keep and maintain the club files."

A suggestion was made to have trainees present their own ideas for conservation projects in completing their trainee requirements.

The club has gone on record as to being opposed to the publication of the new Caves of Virginia.

New policy from the equipment committee concerning unreturned equipment is as follows:

1. The person who checked out the equipment and all others on the trip will not be allowed to check out club equipment until equipment is replaced or returned.
2. The person who checked out the equipment that is turned in late will not be allowed to check out club equipment for 30 days after the equipment is returned.
3. All equipment will be checked in by 7:00 PM of the following Friday.

Also, in the event of negligence or blatant destruction in the use of club equipment, these conditions to be determined by the equipment committee, the full cost of repair or replacement will be

placed on the person responsible.

All Associate members who do not pay dues and do not cave with the grotto once per quarter will not have their color code recognized by the grotto.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS: Bob Barlow gave a standard first aid course to interested trainees and members during fall quarter. The 10 hour course was spread over 5 weeks with 2 hours given after each Friday meeting.

Mike Frieders and Doug Yeatts are making new cable ladders to replace the old ones now in the club equipment box. Using 3/32 galvanized steel cable and commercial crimps, they are now testing sample ladders in the E.S.M. lab.

Janet Queisser is now editor of the Region Newsletter. Anyone wanting to spread information, questions and ideas region-wide should contact her.

Tom Calhoun and Jerry Redder represented the grotto at the Fall Virginia Regional Meeting.

Steve Kark, Bob Simonds and Barry Whittemore represented the grotto at the Baltimore Grotto Banquet.

The grotto has convinced local stores to remove Caves of Virginia and Maryland from their shelves to be sold on request only and with a note on safe caving and conservation techniques. This step is to help stop unsafe caving and cave vandalism.

The grotto has donated 3 bricks to the N.S.S. Brick Fund to match the 3 donated by the Ladies Auxiliary.

The Halloween Party was held November 2 at Deerwood Farm, see the Fall '73 Trog for details.

Sad news for all you hardcore party goers. The Drapers Ghetto West Auxillary Carbide Dump is out of business. But keep the faith, another party place is due to rise soon.

NEW MEMBERS: Welcome to the club to Don Anderson VPI 175(A), Joe Saunders VPI176(A), Lor Windle VPI 177, Carol Godla VPI 178, Doug Olsen VPI 179, Jim Bearden VPI 180, and Dave Coombs VPI 181. Don started caving when some of these new members were born, but don't let that fool you--he'll match any one in hell raising! Joe has been active down under Kentucky in such caves as Crumps and Grady's. His talks to the club on these areas have been very interesting, and we're beginning to appreciate the walking passages in our caves!

--Mike Wolf

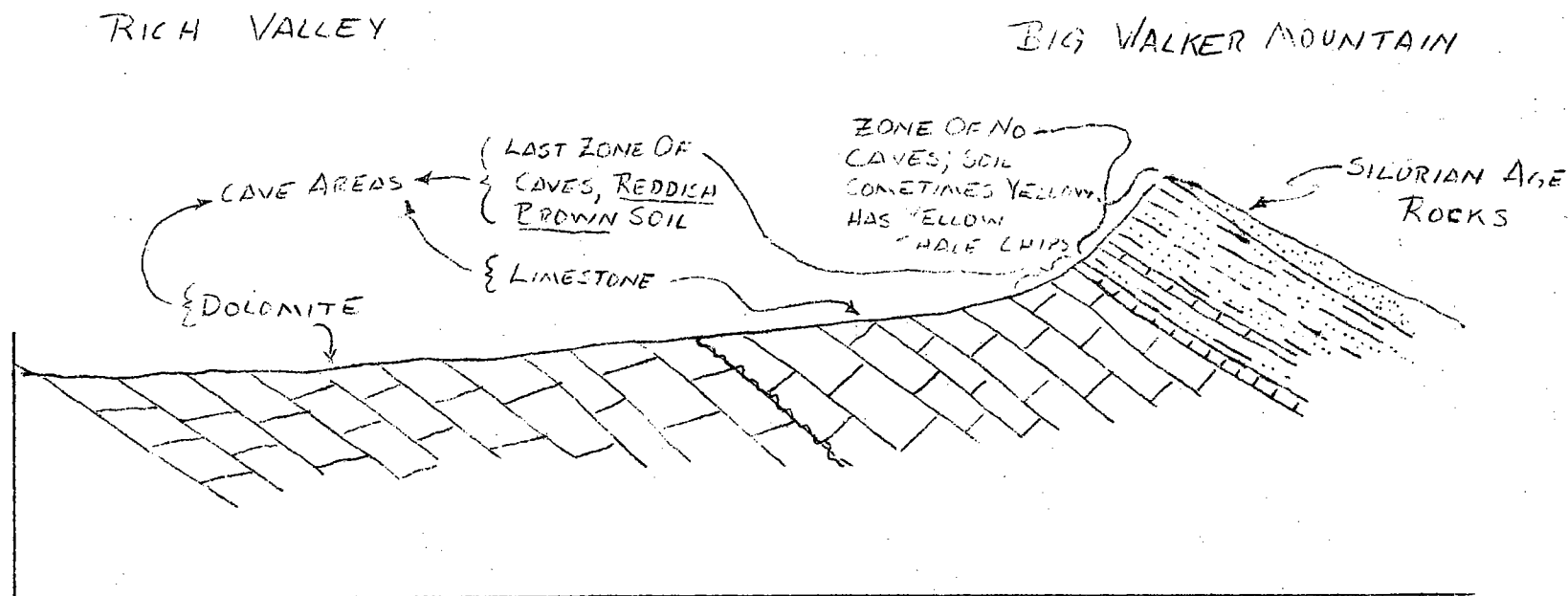
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NOTE:

Opinions concerning this publication may be voiced through the form given on page 39. Forms may be returned to The VPI Cave Club, Box. 471, Blacksburg. Hurry now; remember, your number may win.

GENERAL ROCK ZONES FOR VPI VICINITY

THIS SKETCH IS FROM FALL PROJECT AREA NEAR HUNGRAY MOTHER STATE PARK



SCALE → VERY ROUGH; GENERALLY IN PROPORTION

NOTE: THE CAVE PRODUCING ROCKS DON'T EXTEND VERY FAR UP THE MOUNTAIN

LOOKING FOR CAVES IN THIS AREA

By Tom Calhoun

When checking out a new area for the possibility of caves, a caver naturally does not want to waste time in an area that could not possibly contain caverns. Knowing exactly where one can look can save time and energy for better things like studying or partying instead of wrestling the mountain laurels or kicking the cows in an area where the only subterranean caverns that can exist are groundhog holes. This article may help the non-geologically oriented members of our group who have found asking the local geologist only gets them more confused with a geological history starting with the Algonian orogeny.

Topo-maps can be very useful for finding potential areas. Such features as springs, disappearing streams, sinkholes or the absence of surface drainage indicate a karst region as everyone knows. Names on topo-maps given by locals also give hints to cave regions, names like "Sinking Creek" and "Cave Spring". Valleys named like "Rich Valley" has limestone, where as "Poor Valley" or "Poverty Hollow" have non-cave forming rock. Limestone and dolomite valleys got named by the farmers "Rich Valley" because good, rich soil is formed, as opposed to "Poor Valley" which has shale and sandstone and produces poor soil.

In this vicinity, there are two kinds of ridges, the difference being which of two kinds of weather resistant rocks form them, Mississippian, or Silurian age. On the ridges held up by Silurian age rocks, such as Walker Mountain, the steeper side of these ridges and the valley adjacent contain most of our caves.

How far to walk up the ridge is a good question to ask since the slopes often get quite steep and covered with bramble and the crest in the clouds. As it turns out the cave producing formations generally don't get very close to the top at all, usually they end a little way above the base of the mountain. There is an easy way to tell where the cave producing formations end and that is by looking at the soil. As one climbs up the base of the mountain the soil will change color depending on which formation underlies it. The last cave forming formation produces a distinct reddish brown soil, the formation itself appears as a maroon-gray to light pink. Right above the red band of soil one will find a yellow to tan color, representing the next formation which is a non-cave producing formation. So when the soil changes from a reddish brown to yellow the chance of finding a cave decreases greatly. Look just a little higher up the ridge in case a collapse in a cave producing formation causes an opening in the non-cave zone. This change almost always is close to the base, not near the top.

Maybe this information will help one become more efficient in finding caves, such as during projects. Before going tramping in the boonies, look for any previous record of existing caves and if any ridge walking has been done in the area, it may not need to be looked over anymore. When out on the ridge Saturday morning with a Friday night hangover, you don't want to go stumbling over the rugged terrain, fighting the rattlesnakes or the snow in an area of no caves if you can help it.

Biospeleology at V.F.I.S.U. :

(The Work of Perry C. Holt) by ROBYN L. LOUD

Note: Perry C. Holt is a Professor of Zoology at V.F.I.S.U. Interviews for this article were held with him as well as with Lynn Ferguson, a graduate student under Dr. Holt.

As a graduate student Dr. Holt's interest in the study of invertebrates led him to specialized researching of the Branchioldellids (Phylum Annelida). He has, since then, set his goals to classify these animals as well as define their geographic range and elucidate their evolutionary significance. Included in this research Dr. Holt has studied cave related species and has written a paper concerning those of Eastern North America.

Branchioldellids are segmented, leech-like worms which live on crayfish and other crustaceans. Most are harmless commensals, being carried "piggy back," but a few are parasitic. They can live either inside or out of caves, but a few troglotitic species do exist.

Dr. Holt does not collect his own specimens but receives research specimens from other biospeleologists in such states as Tennessee, Virginia, Florida, Kentucky and Indiana. Specimens received are prepared by Dr. Holt and technicians as whole mounts. In this way they may be viewed and studied from either side.

A few biospeleologists who have worked with Dr. Holt and who have their own projects include Dr. John R. Holsinger, John and Martha Cooper, Dr. Laurence E. Fleming, Dr. Morton W. Hobbs, Barry Mansell, Dr. Kenneth Relyea and Dr. Harrison R. Steeves. Dr. Holsinger is, at this time, working with Dr. Holt to have a list of cave invertebrates published by V.F.I.S.U. Lynn Ferguson, as well as other graduate students here at Tech. also have work that directly or indirectly involves that of Dr. Holt's and other cave studies.

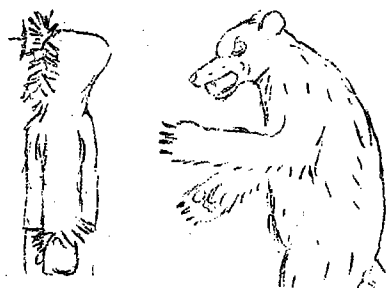
On Conservation:

As a side note Lynn was asked, concerning cave conservation, if he thought cave collecting of biological specimens constituted cave vandalism. He replied that it does if an area is over-collected or does not need collecting. His advice to fellow cavers is to report sightings of interesting cave life to someone who is studying it. This person should try to determine whether the organism is required for research and in what numbers. If fauna or flora are taken out of a cave when the numbers of the species is small, extinction of that species is the probable result.

ALASKA:

CAVER'S

PARADISE



Mon., Jan. 14, 1974

Dear VPI Grotto,

| DATE | DESTINATION | PARTY | ETD | ETA | M.H. |
|---------|-------------|----------|---------|---------|------|
| 1/12/74 | Fairbanks | Schnaars | 9am edt | 2am edt | 17 |

COMMENTS:

Pretty good trip, though a bit long. Covered about 4,000 miles of main passage. As yet I have found nothing virgin, but then I haven't checked any side leads yet... Emerged from second entrance in Fairbanks. Noticed considerable temperature drop during the course of the trip; from 40° in D.C. to -24° here. Carbide lamps have a tendency to freeze up quickly!

The cave formations are quite curious and defy standard explanation. There are millions of beautiful stalactites, but virtually no stalagmites. Flowstones are also numerous, but can be treacherously slippery.

Extremely vandalized... Estimate an average depth of two to three feet of spent carbide... Good conservation trip for trainees. Extreme caution must be exercised, however, in removing spent carbide, due to the presence of a local troglobytic species; Ursus arctos. Usually dormant at this time of year, they can be quite nasty when disturbed.

By the way, I soloed this trip. Anybody who doesn't like it can see me about it.

A.M.F.,

Pete

* * *



A VIEW FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM: by Mike Conefrey

When I first came to the cave club, I was a typical frat man. And after caving every weekend for a month and a half, I was a typical frat man with some caving experience. But by the end of fall quarter I was that familiar sight, a dedicated V.P.I. caver. This rapid metamorphosis was not due solely to caving; that by itself was insufficient. It required that spark of fellowship provided by that often-abused Cave Club tradition, the party.

Now, don't get me wrong. My premise is not that partying is or should be the main activity of the grottoe. Nor do I speak from the stance of the non-caving party goer. I'll stack my fall quarter hours against anyone. But the time has come for a defense of the partying tradition of the V.P.I. grottoe.

How many cavers do you know? On a region-wide or national basis, I know a hell of a lot of cavers, most of whom I met at one form of party or another. Since then, I've been caving with many of them, but by no means all. But even those I haven't been caving with I count as friends. And in many of my years as a caver, I have noticed a rule of behavior that seems to apply to other cavers as well as myself. The rule is "YOU ARE MOST LIKELY TO GO CAVING WITH CAVERS YOU ENJOY OTHER SOCIAL CONTACTS WITH." I modestly call this rule CONEFREY'S CONCEPT. Now if I'm correct about this, (and I think I am), then I think it's safe to state that the opposite is also true: "YOU ARE LEAST LIKELY TO CAVE WITH CAVERS YOU DO NOT ENJOY OTHER SOCIAL CONTACTS WITH." This I modestly call CONEFREY'S COROLLARY(?). And both CONEFREY'S CONCEPT and CONEFREY'S COROLLARY can be simplified in the following statement; "The cavers that party together, cave together."

By this time you may have noticed that I consider the party to be an important part of the Cave club life. Why is this?, you ask. Simple. The V.P.I. Grottoe is a social organization. That's right. We're just as much a social organization as any of the social frats. It may be hard for some people to face, but the V.P.I. Grottoe is not The Cave Research Foundation. We are not a scientific organization of speleologists, but a social organization of spelunkers.

But this is a good thing. In the college environment we function in, the only organizations that are able to attract and hold totally dedicated members are those organizations with a complete and all inclusive social life. This has worked for the Grottoe in the past, and I believe the Region and the N.S.S. have done well by us, too. We may not be the C.R.F., but we're the kind of organization which produces the dedicated speleologists they and others need. And I maintain that our tradition of partying is a major part of the socializing which is so important to our Grottoe.

Now to get to the point. This past fall, two cliques developed in the club, and they could be roughly separated by noticing who sat where at meetings. Thus we have what I call the "Front-of-the-Room" clique and the "Back-of-the-Room" clique. Now the cave Club has always had cliques but what disturbs me about these

cliques is that they are not divided over caving techniques or Region politics, but rather over the fact that the "Front-of-the-Room" clique does not want to party with the "Back-of-the-Room" clique. This was made very clear at a party at Hall's, where the "Front-of-the-Room" clique split the party and the club in half. I later heard that the excuse of lack of space was used, but I've seen 15 cavers hold a party in a van. And it's strange that these people didn't think of this when Hall offered his residence as a party place.

This may sound petty to some, but if you agree with my foregoing remarks about partying, you may sense something serious here.

When a new trainee comes to our meetings, he just might see almost anything. But even if his first meeting is a bitter fight over a constitutional amendment, if he goes to a party afterward and sees the whole grottoe raising hell together, he just might decide that we're a pretty togethergroup of people. But if after a meeting, no matter how pleasant, he finds that the club has split into two groups that have no desire to socialize with each other, what the hell is he going to think of us then?

Maybe things aren't quite that bad yet, and maybe they never will be. I certainly hope not. But remember this. The number of people on this campus who go caving is larger than our own membership and they're increasing every year. That new trainee doesn't have to come to us, but we do need him. And it is my opinion that if we don't present him with a unified club with good fellowship as well as good caving, we're not going to get that trainee.

Think about it.

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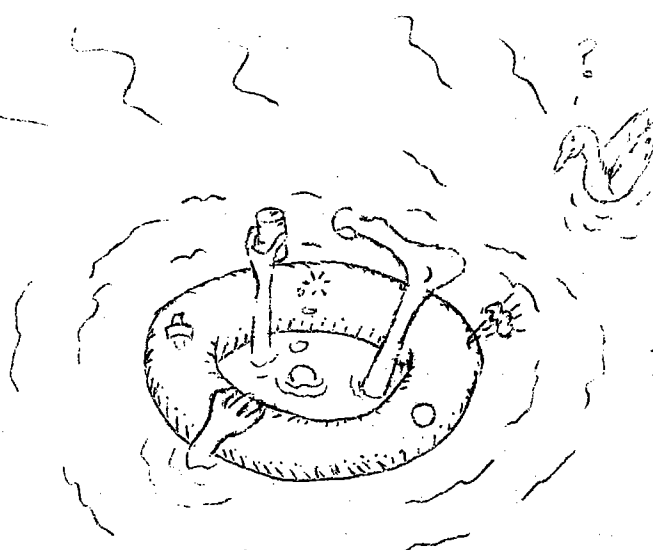
FLOAT TRIP

EFUOL LBUB

MAY 25, 1974--

E.Y.O.T.

(BRING YOUR OWN
TUBE)



DOOBY PARTY
THAT
NIGHT!

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DOOBY WOULD
BE MODESTLY ACCEPTED

The Truth About 30 Foot Salamanders

by Rolf McQueary

It has come to my attention throught the past six months that many grave misconceptions and rumors have developed concerning the alleged thirty foot salamander which abides in Salamander Cave on Big Walker Mountain. I will, therefor attempt to piece the facts together and clear up any unconformities which may exist to date.

First of all the salamander is not thirty feet long. That indeed would be absurd. It has, instead, been measured to be exactly 28.4 feet as of it's last molt on March 19, 1974. It molts approximately six times a year and on Tuesdays. This, however varies as to season and when new fashion necessitates the change.

As for sex, this amphibian is female or male and, therefore, will be refered to as "it" throught the remainder of this article. Reproduction is assumed to be parthenogenic as this single specimen appears to be unique. Sexual behavior has been displayed, however, toward cavers. Few eggs ,as yet, have been found, but one should keep a lookout in such moist areas as the top of dome pits, rim-stone pools, old discarded garbage bags and the like. The eggs should be about a foot in diameter and encased in a gellatenous hammock-like structure as illustrated bellow. (Figure 1)

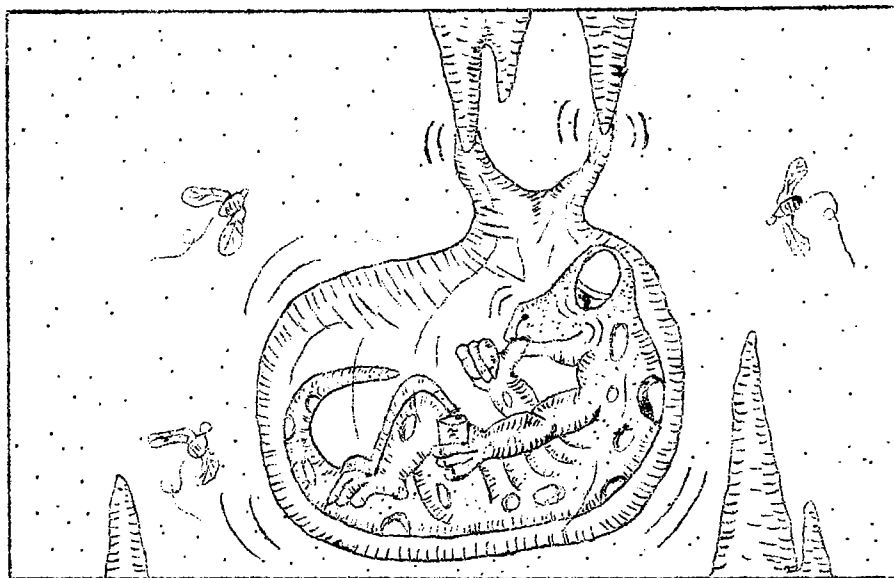


FIGURE 1

One excellent location for egg attachment would be between rungs on a cable ladder. Keeping this in mind one should always be on the alert when returning up drops. Giant salamander eggs are very slippery and trecherous. They should, therefore, be removed before any attempts are made to climb. Danger also exists for those bel

the climber. A falling egg hitting the lamp of an unwary caver can quickly coagulate around the victim's head resulting in shock, a suppressed ego and, in more serious cases, suffocation.

As for morphology this salamander seems, at first glance, to hold closely the exterior appearance of Eurycea lucifuga, (the Cave Salamander). It is the typical orange-red color with black spots and long tail. As many as two costal grooves are found between oppressed limbs and the usual barbles can be seen toward the end of the naso-labial groove. Differences, however, become quite apparent as one views this creature more closely. It is seen, for instance, to wear a monocle in it's right eye. Also apparent are hairy nuckles and digital discs which it is quite fond of tapping on rocks in times of stress. Other features include the ability to change color in exact shades with that of the Chatham Hill formation and a prehensile tail with which it likes to hang and swing from formations while whistling it's favorite tunes.

Local rumor has it that this beast holds a nasty habit of riding Walker Valley periodically for the, seemingly, sole purpose of slurping peoples windows. This has been confirmed by Mr. Zeff Whittaker, Mr. Frank Vest, and Mrs. Eugene Carr, local residents of the valley. They report all of their storm windows totally ripped up and destroyed. (Figure 2) Mrs. Carr reported also of hearing a "low pitched giggle" and "squeaky crunching sounds like someone chewing rubber bands."

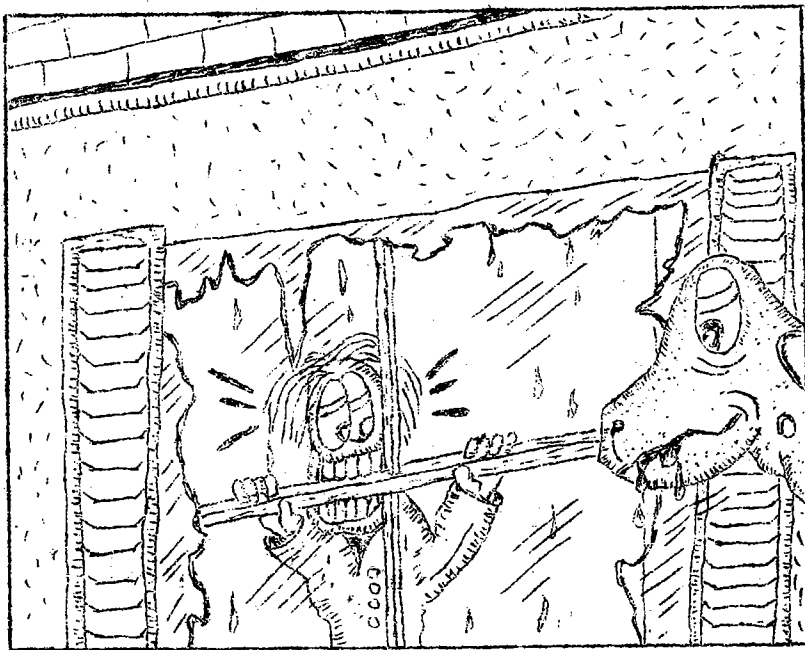


FIGURE 2

It was also mentioned that the slimy residue left on the windows was very difficult to remove. Whether this salamander has the capability to digest such polyvinyl material is unknown at this time.

I would now like to conclude with a few additional precautions concerning those who plan to explore within this creatures domane. First of all, do not be frightened by any peculiar sounds which you may hear. It is most likely only a 28.4 foot salamander froliccing about in it's labyrinthine passageways, boxing with it's make-believe shadow.

Secondly, it should be noted that Rice Crispies are among it's favorite foods. Offerings should thus be carried at all times. Milk, however, should not be added as the snap, crackle and pop could frighten it and cause irrational behavior.

Finally, if you do happen to confront this beast, do not be alarmed by the peculiar foot dance it may display. It is only attempting to court you. If you should be frightened and try to run it will step on you and beat you with it's tail until you are delirious. It is, therefore, best to observe the following procedure: Get down on your hands and knees and stare the oversized amphibian straight in the eyes. (Figure 3) Now knod your head

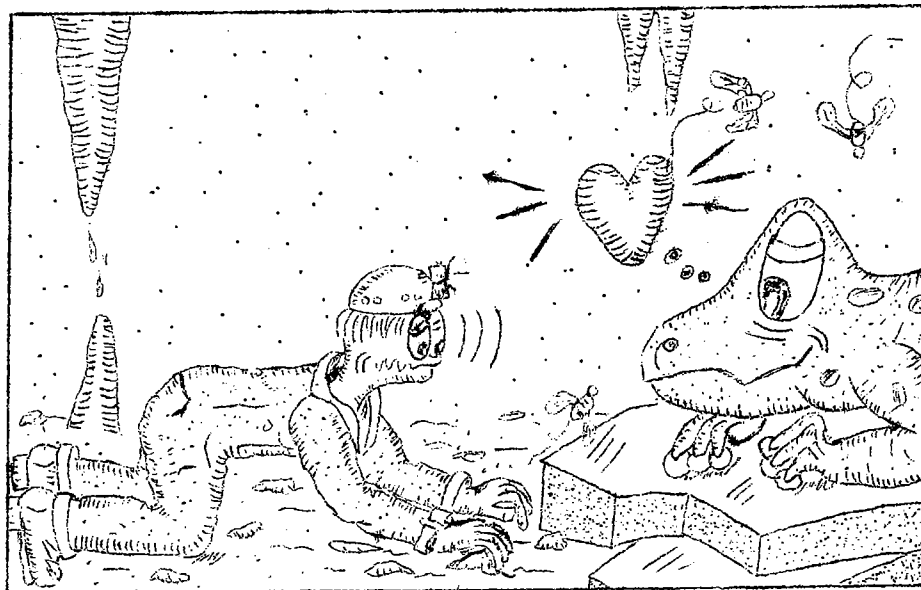


FIGURE 3

up and down seven times. It should return your knod with four stomps of it's left front foot, three with it's right, nine thumps of it's tail and a snort. You now knod twice, stick out your tongue, do a summersault, landing on your back and play dead. The beast should now depart in order to mourn the loss of it's lover. If not, well,... thats life now, isn't it?

* * *

A BIT OF HISTORY: (Nov. 1, 1949.... Techgram)

Homecoming Float Parade;

"Most Monsterous" title went to the Cave Club's entry, a worm or dragon, some 150 ft long. It took nearly 30 men to move the monster along as its tail swept menacingly about the streets. Third place and \$20 was the take home pay...

An Observer's Trip To

THE GREENBRIER SYSTEM:

by Joe Saunders

As a caver interested in the nature of large cave systems, I recently arranged with the D.C. Grotto to go with them on a survey trip into the Greenbrier System. A preliminary chat with Ray Cole and my trip leader, Paul Stevens, informed me that the system as presently known really appears to be two hydrosystems connected in one area. We were to remap some passages formerly surveyed inaccurately by WVACS. Our party of two three man teams entered the Humphrey entrance, and stayed together except for the surveying in adjacent passages. The Humphrey entrance led two hundred feet through a 3'x3' gravel and pool floored passage to the French Connection, which is a dry bypass of a wet, often debris-choked tight crawlway. The Humphrey entrance takes part of the wet weather drainage of a surface area of several acres or more. The cave for several hundred feet inside the entrance displays many alternate routes for water flow, most of these being enlarged joints too small for passage. This complex pattern of small holes and fissures probably can be attributed to the solutional ability of aggressive surface runoff backing up in flood times behind inadequate conduits near the entrance: the input exceeds the output and in this perched situation, where water which gets past the bottlenecks can descend fairly quickly to base level, the small holes are responses of backed up water to a bottleneck. This situation is similar in ways to complex passage patterns formed by water diverted by breakdown in Blue Spring Cave in Indiana and Grady's Cave in Kentucky, although in these two cases the development occurred at base level.

In the French Connection is one of these enlarged joints in the Humphreys entrance route, which has been further enlarged to body dimensions by chiseling. Two of us had to remove our coveralls, which left me going through in my bare skin, and I still took fifteen minutes to go three feet.

After the Connection, we proceeded through several hundred feet of crawl and canyon, picked up a stream, dropped twenty feet alongside a waterfall, and after additional hundreds of feet of canyon and stoopway, descended the 35 foot drop where the entrance stream had found the large 20'x25' trunk of Humphrey's.

There followed several thousand feet of large breakdown stream passage, occasional narrow canyon sections. On the way we passed the upstream Lipps trunk. This Lipps-Humphrey junction of two major streams, probably at base level, is the major passage of the western hydrosystem of the cave. I estimated the stream flow at the junction to be 0.3-0.5 cubic feet per second, low for this time of year, I'm told. The terminal siphon of the stream lay several thousand feet downstream.

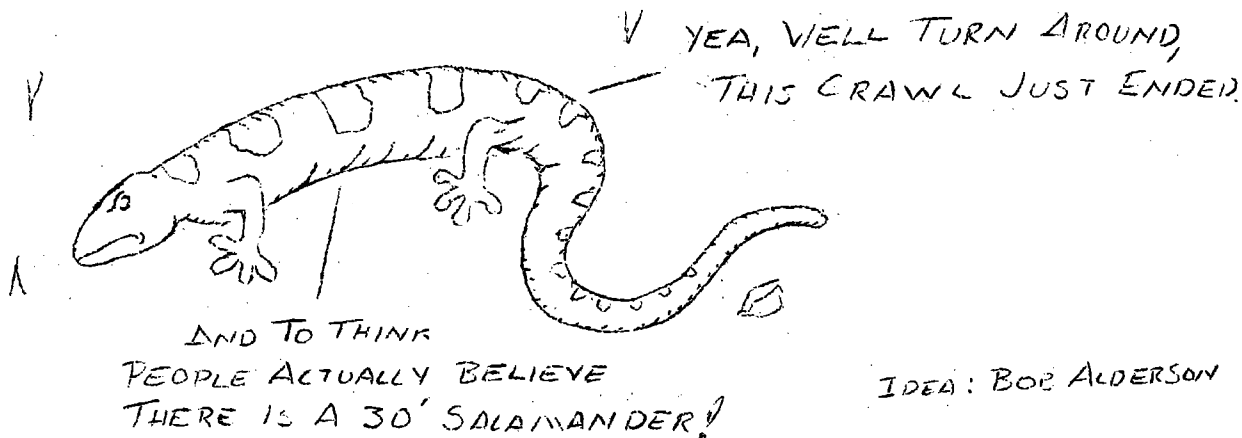
After proceeding another thousand feet downstream through breakdown and over gravel banks, we turned right into a rimstone

can be followed several hundred feet horizontally and 70-80 feet vertically through a large breakdown room into a 40 foot wide wall to wall rimstone walkway, undoubtedly the most extensive rimstone area I've ever seen. After mapping what we found at the end to be a loop created by breakdown, and therefore not a "true" passage, we pushed through breakdown into the Stadium Room, a large breakdown room. This room appears to be similar to the Big Room (it's really big) in Sloan's Valley Cave, Kentucky in its mode of formation. Two or three overlying passages collapsed, leaving a room with mucho breakdown and several passages going off from it. We chose a passage at ceiling level and proceeded to survey a canyon passage developed in a ten foot thick bed of dense chert and limestone. The walls had a "bricked" appearance. The survey ended because the lead man didn't want to break any formations in a crawlway 8'x 1½'. Retreating to a side loop, we mapped into a dry crawlway ten feet wide and two feet high. It was the first thing I'd seen all day which reminded me of my beloved Crumps Cave in Kentucky. Psyched by this crawlway, I crawled ahead at breakneck speed to find the next station, snapping the new \$12.00 Leitz fiberglass tape with my sudden start.

We tied the loop in, then headed back to the rimstone area for a food break. Paul Stevens, the trip leader, expressed a desire to take a picture of someone in the four foot deep rimstone pool. Always up to a challenge, I volunteered. Since we had a trip of several hours plus two ladder climbs between us and the entrance, I decided that in order to stay warm, I would strip to my tattered shorts and helmet for the dip in the pool. I went through several poses, then was joined by another member of the party, wearing nothing. We couldn't persuade Cady Soukup to join us in the tub.

Dressing for the return trip, we went and poked around a large breakdown room, discovering an unclimbable twenty foot pit before starting out.

My impression of Organ Cave (or the Greenbrier System) was one of passage so modified by breakdown and flowstone that the original nature of the passage is lost. I like to groove on ceiling channels, but I saw few in Organ. Leads were everywhere, but in unpredictable locations. It is one of those caves where the passage size is huge, and the outside world a remote possibility, where one can get lost, literally, in the underground wilderness.



TAL

THE TRAINEE SYSTEM AS A WAY OF LIFE

BY LOR WINDLE



I am sure that you Grotto'ers know what the trainee system is. For you this article will let you know my basic experiences with it while I was entrapped as a neophyte.

For any readers who do not know what the trainee system is, either in general or in specific points, this article will give you a (hopefully) better impression and understanding of what, precisely, it is.

It all starts out, as all things must, with a first: the first meeting, in this case. I had seen an advertisement for the Cave Club in Squires Student Center and was convinced by an acquaintance that attending the meeting would be better than doing nothing on Friday night. Upon opening the door at the meeting place, one is (at least I was) assailed by both apprehension and wonder. In all the chairs are multitudes of laughing, grinning people while elsewhere people are running across the stage and jumping up and down. In the middle of the aisle, this big, hulking, brute with long hair and baggy pants is passing out papers. It turns and approaches. As I stand there too terrified to move, this person hands me some papers, tell me her name is Cheryl and that it is good to see me. Numbed by all this, I sit down and fill out a questionnaire and read over the other papers. The meeting is called to order and things quiet down, comparatively. Nothing extraordinary occurs and following the meeting I and my companions attempt to try to find someone to take us caving. We succeed at cornering someone and arrange to go caving the next day.

So I went to my first cave. Some little hole in the ground called Old Mill. Slime. Wet and slimy. Water up to the neck. All in all, quite an experience...and very exhilarating.

Thus was formed the beginning of a beautiful friendship. My subterranean brothers sending me their voiceless summons; driving me deeper and deeper (actually, as was once pointed out to me, it is a logical step from the sewers of Arlington to the Caverns of the Blacksburg region). Quickly then the weeks past. Trip by trip I became a little more adept at caving. Finally, near the end of January, the dream of every trainee came true: I was voted in as a member of the grotto. How did this come about? How was I able to turn myself from a mild, meek (Clark Kent) skill-less novice into a bold, brazen (you know the analogy) caver? For that matter, how does anyone become a caver?

That is the article, then; The how (and perhaps the why) of becoming a member. It all starts at that first meeting when you have the courage and two dollars simultaneously agreeing to pay for dues for the quarter. Dues are payed and, in exchange, you receive a three page collection of papers with your name at the top. Somewhere along the way you are informed that this is the trainee sheet and in order to qualify for membership you have to accomplish everything that is listed on those pages. So I immediately sat down, looked over the sheet and passed out from shock.

Passed out? Well, not really; just a minor heart attack as my inexperienced brain told me that the things that I would have to do would take (if even possible) forever. This is what was required of me (paraphrased):

- 1). Spend forty hours underground on at least six trips over a period of at least one quarter and write a trip report about one of the trips.
- 2). Have a working knowledge of carbide lamps.
- 3). Demonstrate certain climbing abilities.
- 4). Demonstrate correct belaying techniques.
- 5). Demonstrate rappelling and prussiking.
- 6). Be able to tie an array of knots and know what they are good for.
- 7). Take a general comprehensive test concerning cave-related subject matter.
- 8). Go on a conservation trip.

I also had to be endorsed by a member in good standing and then be approved by a two-thirds majority of the club. Starting from zero, and without having had any real previous experience in caving of this manner, it seemed like a lot to do.

But I preserved. I was sufficiently enthused with the caving experience that I went on. Week by week I mounted up the hours and accomplishments. On my third trip I went on an eight and a half hour trip to Miller's Cove where I was able to fulfill the climbing requirement. As time flew by I did little in the way of requirements; I just caved.

It was the beginning of the second quarter when it became apparent that I was nearing the required number of hours and would have to get moving on those other requirements. So I did, in a manner not unlike a chicken with its head cut off, I scrambled around conning or cornering members into teaching me something of importance or taking me to do something.

I had accomplished my rappelling on my fourth trip when I went to Newberry's, but had not yet gotten my prussiking done so I convinced Cheryl to go to Pig Hole with me two weeks before I would come up for membership. At Pig Hole Cheryl and I rappelled in, I prussiked out, rappelled back in, and then went out on her cam rig. A nice, quick trip.

One week before the date I wished to come up for membership, I went to Newberry's and covered my conservation trip requirement. It was a fun trip cleaning up carbide, scraping walls and trying to pull all the spent carbide up the 165 foot pit.

Next on my agenda was the knot requirement. Hesitant at first, I approached a member and asked to be shown the knots. I went to several people and got a fair briefing of what was expected of me and, four days before my scheduled date, I confronted a member in his room and preceeded to show him everything I knew about knots. I did a fair job of it, managing to show him a few knots that he did not know and baffling him with a thieves knot. To those who are not familiar with this system, I had to know the Following knots: Bowline, Boline on a Coil, Prussik, Fisherman's knot, Clove Hitch, Sheet Bend, Butterfly, Square Knot, Figure of Eight, and Figure of Eight Loop. None of this was too difficult.

One of the easier parts of the trainee requirements was getting endorsed by a member in good standing. With two days to go before the meeting, I accomplished this task. I was engaged in conversation with the president and two other officers that night. I had just recieved a war-game in the mail that afternoon and the president (being hard up for entertainment that night) wanted me to go out to his apartment with him and "play the game". It was the best offer I had had all day, but I decided against it. Seeing the kind of mood he was in, I flourished my trainee sheet before him and got his signiture.

On Thursday night, now a mere day away from my culmination of hopes, I visited the residence of the vice-president to take the comprehensive test and the carbide lamp test. These were administered with much skill and foresight (and a damn sight more patience than I would have for a clod like me). The comprehensive test was, as stated before, general information concerning everything. This was given in fill in the blank, short answer, essay, and discussion form. The carbide test involved putting a disassembled lamp together, answering questions about trouble shooting, and being able to reload the lamp in the dark.

My final requirement was passed off the afternoon before the meeting. I went out to Maybrook Sink Hole with two other trainees and a member. This member showed us how to belay properly and then proceeded to show us what it is like to catch a falling body by pushing a hundred pound dummy over the edge while we tried to belay it with the rope around our backs. We then were allowed to belay him on a cable ladder with the rope passing through two beners behind us. The lesson was very good and I learned much from it.

The meeting, then, became the crescendo of the symphony that was my neophyte stage. I was voted in as a member.

This, then, was the experience I went through to become a member of the club. I whole-heartedly approve of such a system. I feel that a system such as this one makes a person into a better caver by forcing him to know and do things which he might not otherwise. I think it is just good sense to have a base-line of minimal caving expertise for members because it creates a standard of abilities which is generally enough to make a person trustworthy in his caving.

A quick scan at the things that were required shows that although the requirements are not too much, they cover a wide field of abilities. Knowing your lamp, general knowledge, and climbing skills are basic for all cavers. Rappelling, prussiking, belaying and knot tying are necessary skills for any caver doing vertical work. The hours required give experience and the conservation trip makes it mandatory to help-a-cave at least once in your subterranean exploits. All in all, a good system; and one I am proud to have gone through.



IDEA: DOUG PERKINS

DRAWN: MIKE WOLF

CAVE LEGENDS OF THE ²³ CENTRAL APPALACHAINS

BY JANICE GOAD

Caves have apparently always had an unsettling affect on Man's imagination; they have been explored, lived in, painted on, and written about. Their mystique has had an active influence on American folklore. Almost every cave is reputed to possess a "bottomless pit" in which rocks never hit bottom. About equally as common is the "Tom Sawyer" type legend that involves someone becoming lost and wandering for days before they eventually re-emerge miles from their original entrance. Cavelegends are most often found in areas that are geologically blessed with caves, and also among spelologists and other members of the caving fraternity.

Essentially, in the legends involving caves of the central Appalachians, there appears to be five reoccurring motifs: the "Murder Hole", disappearance and miraculous re-emergence, the supernatural element, hiding places, and the Indian burial pit.

The "murder hole" motif is one of the most common local legends. In stories of this type, either someone supposedly has used the cave as a convenient body disposal, or the cave itself has murdered someone. For example, Goochland Cave, Kentucky, is said to be the last resting place of a traveling salesman that made himself unpopular with the local community. Rumor has it that human bones were later found by spelunkers.¹ Newcastle Murder Hole (Craig Co.) has a similar reputation. In the 1800's, an entire stagecoach, with passengers, was thrown into the cave by robbers.² Catawba Murder Hole, in Botetout County, became famous through poor road construction and over-indulgence in alcohol. The cave entrance is at the bottom of a 150 foot sinkhole. The road split into two lanes and went around the depression. One night an inebriated farmer driving back from Roanoke maneuvered his wagon too close to the edge and horses, wagon, and farmer fell in and were killed.³ Greenbrier Saltpeter Cave, West Virginia, developed its entrance when a farmer and his four horse team plowed over top of it. The horses were killed, but because the farmer fell on top of them he was uninjured.⁴

One of the more interesting "Tom Sawyer" type stories involves Crabtree Cave, in Smyth County. During the Depression, a man vanished into the cave and was never found again. This disappearance was doubly distressing, as he had eight hundred dollars in his pocket (his relatives even had the F.B.I. looking for him.)⁵ This same cave had goose heads put into it and they resurged on the other side of Big Walker Mountain.⁶ A dog that fell into Maxie Knob Pit, Kentucky, emerged at Lawson's Spring Entrance, two miles and five hundred feet lower. Legend doesn't mention whether the dog was still alive or not.⁷ An old hat thrown into Higginbottom Cave, Tazewell County, came out eighteen miles away.⁸ Local legend tells of a girl who became lost in New River Cave, Giles County, and wandered for days until she came out an entrance near Newport, approximately eight miles away. As a result of this legend, cavers have been looking for the lost back entrance to New River for years.

Another motif involves that of the supernatural: "haunted" caves or fabulous creatures. Devil's Slide (Higgingbottom #1) in Tazewell County, is avoided by the local residents because they are convinced that some loathsome creature lives at the bottom. Periodically, strange noises come out of it.⁹ Stoven's Cave, Kentucky is also avoided because of "Screaming Willie's Entrance" from which it is possible to hear screams, moans, and other weird noises.¹⁰

Caves have traditionally been the hiding place of outlaws and treasure. Buzzard's Roost (or Devil's Den) at Fancy Gap, Virginia was reputedly the hide out of the notorious Allen Clan after they "shot up" the Hillsville Courthouse in 1912. Supposedly, Sidna Allen hid a considerable amount of money there, but most people don't look for it because of the "bottomless pits" and the rattlesnakes.¹¹ An interesting local story involves one of the small numerous caves near Mountain Lake, in Montgomery County. A Union general was given a gold plated cannon by his men. While he was retreating before the Confederate army, the cannon, either too large to transport quickly, or the general fearing capture, was hidden in a cave and is still there.¹²

The Indian Burial Cave is also a popular story. For instance, last year I was told of a cave in Russell County with a 250 foot entrance drop, and with a floor that was covered with pink Indian skulls and artifacts, that had been there so long that they were coated with calcite.¹³

Other miscellaneous interesting stories are told about caves. New River Cave, according to local legend, was used as a church during pioneer days. If one knows where to look, they might possibly find bits of wood that were once pews.¹⁴ Pighole, in Giles county, is supposed to be the tomb of Earl Potterfield's wandering pig.¹⁵

Essentially, the folklore involving caves is very interesting and apparently unexplored. The roster of known Virginia caves contains names (such as Bear's Den, Better Forgotten, Bottomless Pit, Brass Kettle Hole, Cemetery, Dead Cow, Devil's Hole, Ely's Moonshine, Kagey Skull and Bones and Soldier's) that imply a potentially rich source of folklore.

SOURCES

¹Joe Saunders. HE was told by a gentleman he met in Kentucky.

²Rolf McQueary. He can't remember who told him.

³Barry Whittemore. He can't remember either.

⁴Thor Brecht. He and Dennis Webb were told by an unidentified West Virginia caver they met in the Hokie House.

⁵Randy Wood, Cheryl Jones, Rolf McQueary. The narrators disagree as to whether goose heads or a live goose was put into the cave. The story originated from a Mr. Moore in Smyth County.

⁷Joe Saunders. Told by the dog owner.

⁸Rolf McQueary. He had forgotten where he had heard the story.

⁹Cheryl Jones. Story from Janet Queisser.

¹⁰Joe Saunders. Heard the story somewhere in Kentucky.

¹¹Elwood "Peanut" Weddle. He had the legend from his father.

¹²Tom Calhoun. Was told by a store keeper on Rt. 100.

¹³Myself. From Mr. Danny Bush, Mew, Va. He was told by his father.

¹⁴Janet Queisser. Don't know where she heard it.

¹⁵Tom Calhoun. From the Porterfield's, who own the cave.

74 BANQUET 74

Certainly an event to remember, the Ninth annual Banquet of the V.P.I. Cave Club of the N.S.S. was held in Squires Student Center on February 9, 1974, in the monstrous Old Dominion Ballroom. Members from such grottoes as Holston Valley, Smokey Mountain, D.C., Carta Valley S.W.C.K.S., Huntsville and Greenbriar, as well as from A.M.C.S., P.S.C., and the New Orleans Speleological Society attended...who could ask for more? Tuna Johnson was our man with the words of guidance for those gathered.

Bill Deane, the guest speaker, gave an excellent presentation on the caves in the Guadalupe and near Carlsbad. With the magnificent slides topped off with a very good talk, we were constantly spellbound. Some of the cave systems in our area could probably fit into just one of the colossal formations found in the caves of that area.

After Bill Deane's paramount slide show, awards were presented to distinguished individuals and groups. The first being to Lynn Richardson, honored with the Heat Award. She received a Hornometer letting any male bystanders know of her present state of horniness. About this time, Ken Sanford decided to take a rest and promptly passed out on the floor to the snapping of camera shutters. Jim Hixon soon did likewise. Dale parrott was another victim of the Awards Committee and for his ever continuing effort to map New River Cave, Dale received the Slowly But Surely Award. This award consisted of a small shovel (more like a spoon) to that unfound, booming passage.

Mike Wolf, to follow up Robyn Loud and her Flame ward, received the Glowing Ember of the Year for his many spectacular drunks. Since he usually sits in the corner quite drunk or sober, he received a meter to inform his friends as to his condition ranging anywhere from alcohol free to dead drunk.

To the man who loves to map the most miserable cave possible, Robins Rift, Keith Ortiz received the Die Hard Caver Award. With this he got a poster to draw his map on, two spinners, one to tell the direction of the passage, the other tells the distance of his passage. This device will save untold misery from people who might be conned into going to Robin's Rift.

Tuna didn't escape the awards committee this year, either; he received the Almost But Not Quite Award. For his attempts in many areas he was given computer printouts of his not quite so successful adventures.

For keeping the V.P.I. "rescue team" on its toes with his late arrivals from cave trips, Bob Alderson accepted the Better Late Than Never Award. His habit of returning after his time due back got him a telephone (two beer cans connected by a string) to take with him to let the cavers on campus know his status.

In a time when oil is truly "liquid gold", Jerry Redder likes leaving an oil trail everywhere he goes. He liked to drive his car over manhole covers that were one inch higher than his oilpan.

This gave rise to another new award entitled "You Can't Push Willy Where Willy Won't Go".

To the people who have dedicated their time and often more to the grotto, the Committee showed their appreciation by giving out Guano Clusters. Bob Barlow received a cluster for instructing members in Red Cross First Aid, Tom Calhoun for his work in organizing the club's fall project and editing the Tech Troglodyte, and Ed and Liz Morgan for hosting Fall project (supplying food, beer and hospitality). Doug Yeatts received only one half of a cluster for his work on building new ladders for the club. He'll get the other half when he completes the ladders!

V.P.I. cavers do honor the senior citizens of their group. Herb Safford was honored with the Old Man Caver Award, a staff to help him on his way and a tube of Mesterol to ease those aching bones.

Bruce Byrd and his devious way of using carbon paper, managed to convince Tuna to sign his resignation as president of the grotto. This was more of an award to the club than to Tuna!

This year's new member to the honored society of armchair cavers went to Bob Page. Rolf McQueary welded a fantastic sculpture of a caver in a chair with a glass of beer in hand.

Dubious Achievement Awards were presented to various individuals and groups for some deserving act. D.C. Speleograph an award their cover calling themselves the "real cavers" and dropping a two ton hint that we were "frat cavers". Paul Broughton (VPI 119) was recognized for his dubious achievement that appeared in the Mineralogical Record. Paul advertised for speleothems to be sent to him to study. P.S.C. received an award for organizing the Virginia Region Project at Simmons-Mingo cave into a grand folley. Cheryl Jones earned her dubious achievement award at the edge of Fantastic Pit when she ignited the highly flammable three day old bag of shit. Bobbi Nagy received the award for relieving her Self into Tom Williams' lap. For hosting a New Years party from his death bed (almost), Tom Roehr was duly awarded. And last, but by all means not least, Greenbrier Grotto fell fate to Jim Hixon and thus also to the appropriate award.

The Brainbucket, given to an individual to protect what little is left between the ears, was presented to Cheryl Jones for falling 30 feet to the lip of a 160 foot pit in Newberry's Cave.

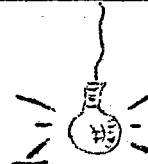
The trainees of the club finished off the awards with the traditional door prize, and then some. The door prize was a giant repair kit for that giant carbide lamp, consisting of a 1.5 foot diameter felt, 8 inch diameter tip, and a 1.5 diameter gasket. To Cheryl Jones they gave a bra with two balloons to add body. This was to help her flirting techniques. The members of the grotto were given two gallons of water from Pig Hole to put the caving spirit back into their bodies on those mornings after a party.

The Trainee of the Year award was given to Lor Windle. This is awarded to an outstanding trainee; one who not only proves to be an enthusiastic caver, but who also shows to be a great potential asset to the club. Lor definately falls into this category.

Everyone ajourned to party for the rest of the night and morning, trying hard to forget the atrocious meal we were served.

Wait Until Dark:

an extrapolation by Keith Ortiz...



No caver who has experienced the darkness of a lamp explosion or similar extinguished experiences, cannot repudiate the value of light. The effects shown by persons deprived of light, illuminate its importance to man. It is the external stimulus to the retina of the eye caused by an assemblage of energy waves resulting from collapsing electron rings. However, the stimulus is more than a random bombardment, it is subject to human interpretation and reaction. It provides the most important of the 5 (maybe 6) receptors of external stimulus and without light a person is seriously handicapped. Fortunately, even on the most overcast, moonless nights, nature still provides enough light for essential perception and artificial light fills the gap for extraordinary perception. In places where natural light is not enough for essential lighting, artificial means, fill this need to such an extent that when it is lost, such as in a blackout or lamp explosion, man behaves in irrational physical and psychological manners. His mind's eye can take a limited reign. This interpret-reaction effect is accentuated among cavers because of their fetal attachment to their lamps and the plutonian fear of their surroundings. Visual perception, the ability to interpret visual inputs as common objects is proportional to the amount of light available. For instance, A larger reflector will allow a caver to see more detail. An upper limit obviously exists since we can observe the effect of a bright flash gun. As light intensity drops off, we reach a point where the mind instead of accepting the limited information, attempts to extrapolate more than is there. Using guesstimates combined with fears and expectation, we see people staring in our bedrooms through the dark windows or movement in a dark corner of a building. In total darkness our mind is still receiving inputs from the retina. Called phosphenes, these are the squiggles and spots one sees when he closes his eyes. Caused by fluid pressures, moving blood and the like, they cause a visual display in the absence of light, (A mechanical manipulation of the retina similar to those caused by probe inserts.) It is with the semi-dark and the total dark that I recently became interested.

The above explanation of perception, artificial light ect. is a sort of explanation/description of a recent caving incident in Salamander Cave located in Giles County. Mike Wolf, Tom Calhoun, Bob Mead and I were an exploration team in the "pit area" of the cave, a 40' high 50' by 50' room with 3-4 coalesced dome pits, each 20' to 30' high. A high lead off of one pit leads to a "typical" 6' walkway and a 1' crawlway combination which traverses a 20' to 30' (?) pit equipped with a stainless steel traverse cable. It is called appropriately "Traverse Pit" (I suppose by earlier explorers). It is within 20' of Shovel Pit which is a 60' high canyon. After some preliminary exploration which uncovered working of earlier explorers, (carved out footholds in a mudfill and a bolt-carabiner combination) and more leads, I duly volunteered to descend Shovel Pit. After rigging a tenuous combination of 4 swiss seats, 1 length of pyrlon and and a 70' length of goldlon, I care-

fully descended. The descent was uneventfull. The canyon is 60' to 80' long with a few noted high leads and a high gradient stream (7.01cfs) coming in from the right, flowing along the canyon floor and disappearing in a mud lined drain of basketball size. Just before the drain there is an overflow route crawlway with another yet smaller (hardhats off) overflow route off of it. This second overflow route joins a second stream in a crawlway of decent proportions. Since I was alone, this would be the last crawlway I would explore before needing moral assistance.

The crawlway is a two to three foot high, mud lined drain with the small stream cutting a groove on one side of the floor. Twenty feet in, one encounters a recently demised bat with his intestines exposed, laying in the middle of the crawl way. I wouldn't guess as to its fate; perhaps a victim of a cave rat (suck-in technique #5; expectation). The crawlway narrows down on the other side of the bat, necessitating a careful negotiation over it.

Cavers, in general, take a special glee in finding something disgusting and uninviting in order to 1) push ahead and bask in the personal glory of another Mammoth-Flint Ridge connection or, 2) entice someone else in to pushing ahead since you'd still get part of the glory. However, since I was alone in this uninviting drain, I pushed ahead. I carefully worked my way over the bat, looking down to see where to put my knee. The fetal association I had with my Justrite intensified when it became extinguished. I decided to back up out of the stream and over the bat in order to sit at a dry spot to fix my lamp. Unfortunately, my lamp was not on my hard hat, so I had to crawl back over the bat, with vivid images of kneeling on it, and grope in the stream for my lamp. Finally finding it, I crawled back over the bat again. Since my other 3 light sources were at the top of the drop, I decided to relight my Justrite.

Judging from the boiling sound issuing from the water compartment, I knew that I had to ream the tip in the dark. After wiping dry the reflector, my hands, and the flint, I was ready to start. After 4 unsuccessful attempts, I decided to rest. I sat staring into the darkness, watching the phosphores dance in front of my eyes, when I suddenly realized that I could see my hands and helmet! I looked around for a rescue, but all I saw were faint, barely perceptible blue streaks on the walls of the crawlway. To make sure it wasn't my imagination, I decided to experiment.

I reached out with my right hand, waving it in front of the wall, following it with my eyes. Positioning my right hand in front of me, I took aim with my left hand and reached out, touching my right hand exactly. After trying this experiment a few times I decided it was not my imagination, but rather some material on the wall.

Since all attempts to unclog my lamp had failed, I decided it would be better if I left. Behind me I heard a percolating sound like a cup of water being poured into the stream. Turning around, I noticed a bright blue "eye" on the left hand wall. With the cave horror stories of Rolf McQuery's running through my head, I decided to let out a subtle blood curdling cry of "HELP!"

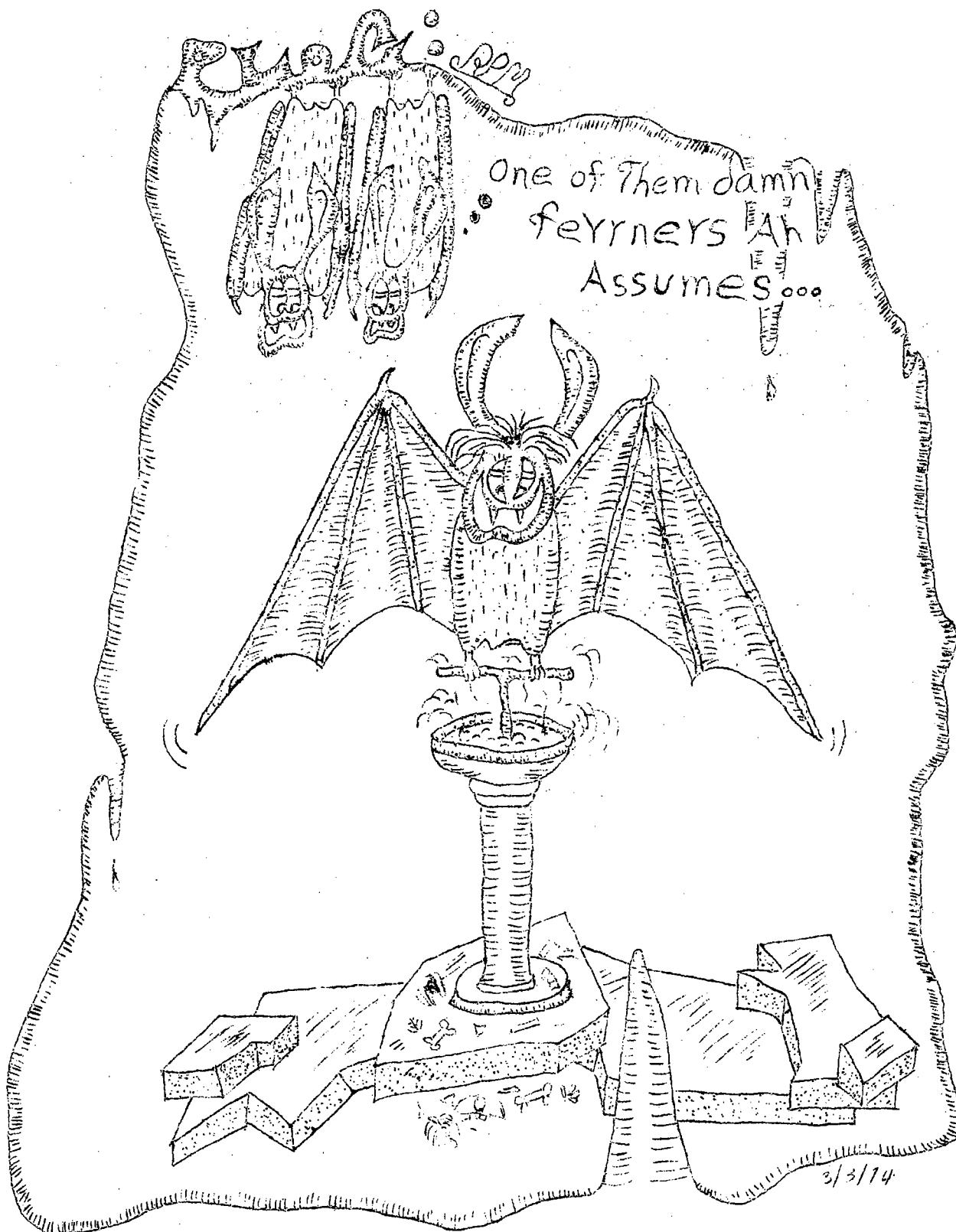
Bob Mead hurriedly scrambled down the drop, loaded down with all the gear deemed necessary to rescue me from my predicament. He then went into the drain to retrieve my gloves, which I had lost in my haste to save myself. He didn't bother to check for luminescence since I was already back at the rope preparing to climb.

I've now had time to sit back and reflect on the incident, wondering whether there was bioluminescence. At the time, I would have sworn to it--if just to save face for my suprised reaction. The phosphenes were very prominent and I had to mentally screen them out to observe the bioluminescence. Were the spots phosphenes? Was it an extrapolation effect of my brain or an actual phenomena? A future trip to the bottom of Shovel Pit may resolve these questions.

Editor's note: Although this article was heavily edited to facilitate comprehension, certain portions were left intact to reflect the author's personality and character. We are curious, however, as to the manner that Mr. Ortiz extrapolates his brain. Perhaps he will demonstrate this ability to us sometime.

...AND TO THINK
THAT I WAS SCARED
SHITLESS BY SOME DUMB
BIOLUMINESCENCE ON THE
CAVE WALL.... HEY BOB
WHERE YOU
GOIN?





AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fear releived
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come
T'was grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace shall lead me on.

When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright Shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

AHHHHHHHHHH.....SHIT!!

(As told to us by Doug Perkins)

CAVE MAPPING TRILOGY
(To the tune of the "Canadian
Railroad Trilogy")

There was a time in this fair land when the sinkholes were not
plumbed

When wild, unbanded bats flew alone against the sun,
Long before manila rope and boots with nails of steel,
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be real.

But time has no beginning and history has no bounds,
As to this limestone country they came from all around,
They probed into her sinkholes, and they walked the ridges tall,
Made friends with cave owners for the good of us all.

And when the young man's fancy was turning in the spring,
The caving men grew restless for to hear the brakebars sing
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day,
And many a passage was found and lost, and stations marked the way.

For they looked to the future and what did they see,
They saw cavers mapping from the fore to the lee,
Bringing the news to the hard workin' crew,
Drawing with care all that was new.
Look away, said they, across this karst-filled land,
At the caves that dot the Eastern limestone band.

Bring in the mappers and set up base camp,
Set a hundred stations with a carbide lamp,
Open your heart, let the lifeblood flow,
We gotta get on our way 'cause we're mapping too slow,
We gotta get on our way 'cause we're mapping too slow.

Behind the wide Blue Ridge, the sun in declining,
Stars, they come stealing at the close of the day,
Across the wide valleys, our loved ones lie sleeping,
Beyond the cold rock, in a place far away.

We are the cavers who survey the passage.
Reading our bruntons, never seeing the sun
Living on jerky and drinking cheap wine,
Cracking our heads till the big map is done,

We are the cavers who survey the passage,
Reading our bruntons, never seeing the sun,
Setting belay bolts and wading the pools,
Cracking our heads till the big map is done.

So it's over the breakdown and crawl through batshit
Into the siphon and into the pit,
Up the main drag and around all the bends,
Reading and taping all the way to the end.

Cave Mapping Trilogy, con't

Reading 'em out and writing 'em down,
Away to the dorm and into the town
Some oil for my boots and a shot for my head,
A drink to the living, a toast to the dead.

Oh, the song of the future has been sung,
All the battles have been won,
In the deepest pits we stand,
All of hell at our command,
We have mapped beneath the soil,
With our teardrops and our toil.

Oh, there was a time in this fair land when the sinkholes were
not plumbed,
When wild, unbanned bats flew alone against the sun,
Long before manila rope and boots with nails of steel,
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be real,
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be real,
But still there's many a passageway, too distant to be real.

Mike Conefrey

(Reprinted with A.I.'s
permission from the "TROG",
Spring, 1970.)

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS
(Caver's Version)

Last verse:

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me: | |
| 12 calcite crystals | 11 miner's hard hats |
| 10 pounds of guano | 9 piton hammers |
| 8 carabiners | 7 monkey's waiting |
| 6 bats a winging | 5 cans of beer |
| 4 carbide lamps | 3 meat balls |
| 2 rubber bands and a cougar in a pine tree. | |

(Reprinted from the "TROG",
I(4): 67
who got it from
The Baltimore Grotto News
V(5): 176
who got it from
The Potomac Caver V(7): 45.)

whew!

THE DEVIL AT AIRPORT ROAD
(To the tune of "Thunder Road")

I can tell a story, I can tell it right,
About the VP Cave Club, and their meeting Friday night,
Moose he chaired the business, Lynn she took the notes,
Doug inducted trainees, and Mike helped to count the votes.
Owners got their valentines, so they wouldn't get up tight,
Trip reports were given, as they told about some pit,
Sometimes when they were lucky, then the LA gave a skit.

CHORUS:

And there was singing, singing, over Airport Road,
Caving was their pastime, they were adventurous and bold,
And there was caving, caving, it worked up quite a thirst
The Lord he swore he'd get them, but the devil got them first.

8:30 in the evening, it was on a Friday night,
The business was all finished, and a party was in sight,
The cavers grabbed their guitars, harmonicas and booze,
And hit YMCANS, with no time left to lose.
Starting out with "Rider", and right on down the list,
They sang out every song they knew, and then the few they'd missed.
They finally came to "Falcon", and "Charlotte" sounded swell
The "Friggin' Wheel" burst into flames, they were singing bent for
Hell.

CHORUS

Roaring out of Blacksburg, out on 81
They headed for the underground, when Friday fun was done,
In Broncos and VW's, wherever caving led,
Those cavers took some roads, that even angels fear to tread.
Now I have told my story, I haven't told it all,
About the VP Cave Club, who drank lots of alcohol
They left the town at sunrise, that's all there is to say,
Hangover explorations were in store for Saturday.

CHORUS

"Boots"

(Reprinted from the "TROG"
Spring, 1970 with A.I.'s
permission)

It's a Colorado Rocky Mountain high
I've seen it raining fire in the sky
Friends around the campfire and everybody's high
Rocky Mountain high in Colorado
Rocky Mountain high in Colorado
Rocky Mountain high.

REDNECKS, WHITE SOX AND
BLUE RIBBON BEER.

There's no place that I'd rather be then right here
With my redneck, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

Barmaid is mad cause some guy made a pass
Jukebox is playin there stands a glass
And the cigarette smoke kinda hangs in the air
My redneck, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

A cowboy is cussin the pinball machine
A drunk at the bar gettin noisy and mean
Some guy on the phone says "I'll be home soon dear".
My redneck, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

*No we don't fit in with that white collar crowd
We're a little too rowdy and a little too Loud
There's no place that I'd rather be then right here
My rednecks, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

Semi's a passin on the highway outside
The 4:30 crowd is about to arrive
The sun's goin down and we'll all soon be here
My rednecks, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

*

There's no place that I'd rather be then right here
My rednecks, white sox and blue ribbon beer.

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR ^{By MIKE WOLF}

LEARN HOW TO DRIVE!!!!

LET THE ED RICHARDSON DRIVER TRAINING INSTITUTE TEACH YOU ALL THE TRICKS OF GOOD DRIVING.

LEARN:

- how to talk your way out of a ticket.
- how to fall asleep at the wheel
- how to bluff the insurance man.
- how to blame it on the other guy.

HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR HIGHLY QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS:

Ed Loud
Dennis Webb
Bobby Lewis
Thor Brecht

NOW SHOWING AT THE LYRIC THEATER

STEVE HALL
in
"THE RITES OF PUBERTY"
rated XXXXX

The Critics acclaim it!!!
HUMPF.....Polly Wick
GREAT COMEDY, I
COULDN'T STOP
LAUGHING.....Betty Hall
RAPE AND OTHER SEX CRIMES
HAVE GONE UP 300% IN THE
DORMS SINCE THIS FILM HAS
BEEN SHOWN.....V.P.I. Admin.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...Jerry Redder

THE NEXT TIME YOU HAVE TO GO,
GO IN STYLE
in an
E.L.M.T.

The Ed Loud Memorial Toilets Inc.
have for years meant quality.
9 out of 10 assholes prefer an
E.L.M.T. to all other brands.
So the next time you have to go,
Remember what Mark Slusarski,
well known patron of the E.L.M.T
says: "BE PROUD, SHIT IN A LOUD."

LITTLE ED LOUD
WILL GO TO BED SOBER TONIGHT



Ed Loud did not have his first beer until he was a freshman in college. While his friends were drinking Bud and Coors, Ed was drinking Schmidts. He never had the advantages of other alcoholics yet his body required up to 3 gallons of the precious liquid each day to function properly. And so tonight, little Ed Loud will go to bed sober ----- unless----YOU HELP! The next time you are thinking of buying that loaf of bread or bottle of milk, think twice and instead send a check to "SAVE THE CAVERS FUND". Just 99¢ will buy Ed a six pack of Schmidts, (its on sale at Krogers). So give so that others may drink. I thank you and I'm sure Ed does too..

FOR SALE: SLIGHTLY
USED OIL PANS.
CONTACT: JERRY
REDDER, 3072
PRITCHARD

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Having a hard time getting people for those 47 hour trips with the 3½ mile crawlways? learn all the best suck-in techniques: WRITE: THE JOE SAUNDERS AND KEITH ORTIZ ACADEMY OF CONVINCING TALKING

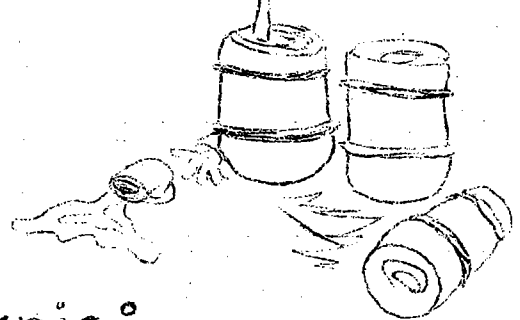
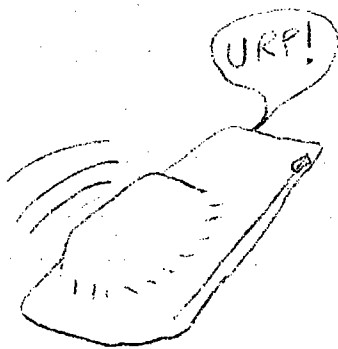
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ARE YOU

READY

FOR

IT?



V.P.I. Picnic:

May 11, 1974

rain date → May 18



MIKE
WOLF