

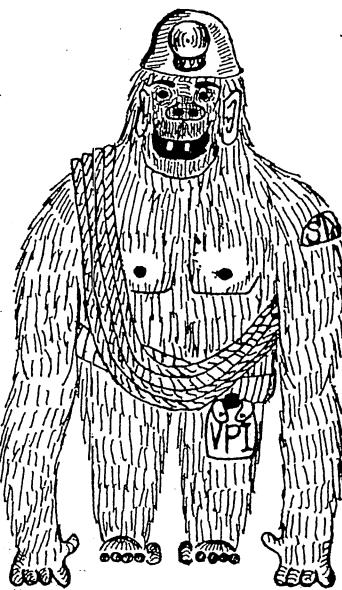
THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

Box B-5
Va Tech Station A
Blacksburg, Va.

Vol. III, No. 2

Winter Quarter, 1965



Grotto Officers

President.....Rick Molting
Vice-président.....John Eads
Secretary.....Craig Peters
Treasurer.....Gary McGutchan

Troglodyte Staff

Editor-in-Chief....Gary McGutchan
Managing Editor.....R. E. Whittemore
Office Boys:
Bauer
Hoyle
Brown

World's Best Active Caving Organization

- COVER: Official portrait of the patron saint of the V.P.I. Grotto.
29. TABLE OF CONTENTS: The biggest joke in the whole issue.
30. EDITOR'S COLUMN: Since we publish on time now, those are the excuses for being so poor. (Whittemore)
31. THE THREE-ROPE RIG: A dissertation on how to hang yourself without really trying. (Heier)
34. COMPRESSED NEWS ITEMS FROM EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS: Those space-consuming reprints. (Whittemore)
35. LABOR DAY IN FRANKLIN: Our verson of what happened on the last night. (Bauer)
36. IF YOU CAN'T LIVE IN A CAVE: Perhaps you can exploit one. (Marland)
37. SCHOOLHOUSE CAVE -- CLOSED: Another one bites the mud. (Whittemore)
38. LIST OF COLOR CODES
38. FALLOUT SHELTERS: It was good enough for our not-so-distant ancestors. (Bauer)
39. A TRIP TO THE LORE STAR STATE: The 1964 NSS convention (Bauer)
41. OBSCENE CARTOON: In case it isn't readily obvious. (Bauer)
42. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Shorter contributions. (People)
43. NOTES: On some little known caves in Mercer County, West Virginia, a reprint. (Holsinger)
46. MILLER'S COVE SURVEY: Progress report on Virginia's deepest cave. (Whittemore)
47. PROSPECTUS OF CONSERVATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES: Or, how to successfully market speleothems. (Bauer)
48. TOPOGRAPHIC CAMPING IN VIRGINIA: $7\frac{1}{2}$ minute quads. (Marland)
49. ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE: Report on Virginia's most promising caving frontier. (Whittemore)
51. CAVING ALONG THE ST. CLAIR FAULT: New discoveries in West Virginia. (Whittemore)
55. TRIP REPORTS: War stories, and a few fairy tales.
Grapevine Cave (Stevens)
New River Cave (Youso)
Straley's Cave (Teigland)
General Davis Cave (Strope)
Catawba Murder Hole (Garber)
Butler Cave (Hamilton)
Cass Cave (Hightower)
63. THE GROTTO GATEVILLE: Gossip, scandal, news, and all manner of debauchery. (Whittemore)

BACK COVER: Group photograph of the Baltimore Grotto.

SELECTED QUOTES: From the book How To Collect Mountains, by Charles R. Hunt -- interspersed throughout this issue.

SPELEOTHOUGHTS FOR THE MONTHS: Since we publish more or less quarterly, there are 3 speleothoughts in this issue.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

It looks as though it's Gary's turn to take it easy and let me write the Trog...er, the Editors Column. This year, the V.P.I. Grotto has received a flood of new members. In fact the newcomers far outnumber the remaining old members. Also, as you may have noticed on the cover, one of the Grotto offices has changed hands. Craig Peters is now the Grotto secretary. Craig has also taken it upon himself to head up the old Patch Committee.. This committee has been around so long it is almost a standing committee. But with Peters on the job, the club can look for a patch before, say, next June. The patch will feature the hairy ape pictured on the Cover.

So much for news within the Grotto. Now I would like to say a few words about the Trogolodyte. You may have noticed somewhat of a difference between Vol.III and the preceeding two volumes. The biggest difference was a lowering of standards. We do not claim to be what we used to be. However, if it is found that Gary and I are somewhat highly opinionated or critical of ours or any other Grotto, we will welcome any criticism.

We will, of course, continue to print accounts of trips made by the club, whether they be club or contraband trips. The articles, for the most part, will be poorly written and contain profuse grammatical and typographical errors. Gary and I do not intend to extend any apologies for this, nor do we expect to win any awards for our journalism. Now that we have established this understanding, we will open our pages to articles written by Grotto members. Having thus lowered our standards to the point of obscurity if not oblivion, we will base whether or not an article is published solely upon whether or not Gary and I agree with it. Unless, of course, it comes to the point of having to fill up space. (And we've got plenty of that!)

It is highly improbable that any of the articles found herein will contain anything of scientific intrest, even though scientific intelligence was used in writing a few of them. Any outlandish or invalid statements made herein are due to ignorance on the part of the author, not the Grotto or any of its members. Bear in mind that we still hold the undisputed title of "World's Most Active Caving Organization!" Any dissenters or disbelievers? Unless you know of another Grotto that averages at least three trips per week, then don't bother.

(Managing Editor)

THE THREE-ROPE RIG

The three-rope rig is a method of training in the use of the chest prusikas a safety when rappelling.

Its development was prompted by the accident of May 1 in the Newberry-Banes system.

Stripped of all nonessential details, the accident occurred as follows: A caver (not from this club) was descending the 180 foot drop in Newberry and lost control approximately 120 feet from the bottom. She panicked and did not let go of her chest prusik, but instead rode it hard and fast for about 100 feet, when her head struck a glancing blow on a ledge. Her hard hat saved her from serious head injury, even though it was splintered at the point of contact, knocked off with the chin strap broken.

This blow stunned her enough to cause her to release her chest prusik. This jammed on the rope. However, rope stretch carried her to the floor hard enough to break her right leg and left ankle.

The accident was due entirely to human error. As soon as the human quit erring, the safety equipment (chest prusik) took over and saved her life.

The nylon prusik was essentially undamaged by its fast, hard ride down the rope, as shown by the fact that it subsequently held fast under an impact stress, computed by two different methods to be about 1500 pounds, and was still in a safe and usable condition. A manila prusik would almost certainly have broken, especially if it were at all used. Had the climbing rope been manila instead of the half-inch nylon that was used, it would definitely have broken.

The manner in which this accident happened prompted the development of a method of training a person to stop an uncontrolled fall by means of his chest prusik. A vertical (free space is best) drop of 60-100 feet is necessary. One rope is rigged to reach down only about 20 feet, then end. The second rope reaches all the way to the bottom. These two ropes should use the same anchor, since they should be alongside each other. The third rope is used for belay.

The belayer's anchor must be separate from the first two ropes. In use, the trainee attaches his brake bar (or other repelling device) to the short rope and his chest prusik to the long rope. The belayer leaves enough slack, laid out between trainee and belayer, to allow the trainee to fall freely a distance equal to slightly more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance of the rope. (A convenient method is to tie a small loop in the end of the belay rope, lower it halfway down, and tie a piece of cord tightly around the rope a foot or so below the break-over. The trainee then clips this loop to his chest sling

with a locking karabiner.) The belayer grips the rope firmly and brings his braking hand across in front of him, so that there will be no delay in catching the trainee. Actually, the trainee is already caught. The only remaining variable is whether or not he reaches the end of the belay rope.

The trainee then begins to rappel in the usual manner, the only difference being that his chest prusik is on another rope. He will then reach the end of the rappel rope, and go into an uncontrolled free fall, which he must stop by means of his chest prusik. If he doesn't, the belay rope will take over, stopping him a safe distance from the bottom. He then rigs into rappel on the long rope; and either releases himself from the hung chest prusik, or is hauled with the belay rope (by 2 or more people at the top) for enough to release his chest prusik.

The belayer should be in an excellent position, well braced and anchored, and should use plenty of padding. He must be experienced and dependable at the dynamic belay, since he will probably get frequent, regular, and hard use in this rig.

The instinct to grab onto something when falling is very strong. During the only use of this rig, five experienced caver's tried it out. Only two let go of their chest prusik on the first drop. The other three panicked in various degrees, freezing on the rope.

If this can be taken as a valid sample, it means that there has been a better than even chance that the same type of accident would have occurred had an unbelayed rappel gone out of control and the caver had to stop on his chest prusik.

This is NOT the fault of the chest prusik; rather, it is to be blamed on inadequate training. The trainee has, in effect, been told "This is a chest prusik. It is used to stop a rappel that gets out of control. Do not let go of it; for if you do, it will immediately jam (which is what it is made for), and you must then go through an inconvenient procedure to loosen it."

No training in the actual use of the chest prusik to stop a fall is given. Consequently the trainee has no idea of what his reactions will be, or just how hard it can be to let go. And the chest prusik is obviously (as this accident so plainly shows) useless unless let go of at the right time.

Training on this rig should be required for any caver or climber who rappels using a chest prusik as a safety--training until the reaction of letting go of a chest prusik in a fall becomes just as instinctive as the normal reaction to grab on.

A good preliminary exercise is, while using a chest prusik, to let go with both hands simultaneously. This is not difficult to do, and gets the trainee used to the idea of letting go of the chest prusik. When the trainee first drops on the three-rope rig, he will probably watch for the end of the rope so he can let go of his chest prusik as soon as he reaches the end. However, this is to be discouraged. As soon as he is able, the trainee should ignore the end of the rope, so that the fall is as unexpected as possible.

A good exercise for a free-space drop would be for the trainee to shut his eyes as soon as he is in free space and can't bump into anything. He then has no idea of how far he has rappelled or when the fall will occur. This becomes especially effective if the short (rappel) rope is left about ten feet longer than usual.

This rig also presses home several other points, such as: tying a big knot in the bottom end of any rappel rope; not gripping hard with the guiding or balance (upper) hand, since the separate chest prusik rope is slack rather than under tension and affords very little support; and getting offse from a hung chest prusik.

The reason for the knot in the end of the rappel rope is presented especially vividly: there is no possible chance for a person to stop himself with his chest prusik if he rappels off the end of a rope. Rope stretch will snatch the end up through the brake bar and prusik so fast that reaction is impossible. Any trainee who doubts this should try it for himself: instruct your belayer to leave only enough slack for a five foot fall past the end of the short rope. Rig both brake bar and chest prusik on the short rope. Rappel off the end and attempt to stop with the chest prusik. Unless the trainee "cheats" and watches for the end, he will not stop with his chest prusik. Reaction time will be too slow.

After falling and being caught by your belayer, rig your brake bar on the long rope and complete a belayed rappel to the bottom, without the chest prusik. This should quickly convince the trainee of the value of the knot in the end of the rappel rope.

Sufficient and proper training on the three-rope rig described above will go a long way in preventing any more accidents like the one in Newberry, which would not have happened if the injured caver had had experience in stopping an uncontrolled fall with a chest prusik, and had therefore known what to expect and been able to release the chest prusik so it could function as intended---which it finally did (although a little late) when she struck her head and was stunned into letting go.

CONDENSED NEWS ITEMS FROM EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS

Vol. 1, No. 1 of the NEOG LOG claims on page five that whipping nylon ropes with small twine is about as unsatisfactory as taping the ends with friction tape. Somehow, we have been phenomenally fortunate that none of our ropes have come unwhipped, since we have been using twine for about 20 years. However, the LOG states that melting about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of the end of the rope and twisting it into a solid conical piece is the best method.

Vol. 7, No. 7 of the BGN (Baltimore Grotto News to you new members) has an article by Bill Plummer (p. 198) offering constructive suggestions for making the NSS more attractive to non-members. They are (a) an improved monthly newsletter, (b) an improved journal, (c) an improved series of slide-lectures, (d) expeditions, (e) lower rates for associate members, and (f) creation of more realistic caving literature. Sounds good to us.

Vol. 7, No. 8 of the POTOMAC CAVER contains a semi-fictitious article by Pete Grant on the Newberry accident. (For an accurate account, see Vol. 3, No. 1 of the TECH TROGLODYTE). VPI cavers continue to be amused by the inaccurate articles printed about this incident. Mr. Grant's article claims that Ellen's fall was a result of having too little friction on her single brake bar rig, and uses this false premise as a basis to attack the use of them. As a user of the "SBB" for the last two years, I have no burns, blisters, worn gloves, or broken bones. All I have is a deeply-grooved, single brake bar

We finally found a factual account of the incident on page 169 of Vol. 12, No. 8 of the NITTANY GROTTO NEWS. Congratulations, Bill Russell and Nick Lambert!

Vol. 5, No. 8 of the HUNTSVILLE GROTTO NEWSLETTER bemoans the failure of grotto publications to convey a true impression of a grotto, mainly because many of the people influential in grotto affairs are never mentioned, and many grotto activities never find their way into the newsletter.

(Managing Editor)

SPELEOTHOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Safety practices and devices were designed with the thought in mind that caving is more enjoyable when practised over a normal lifetime.

LABOR DAY IN FRANKLIN

The evening of September 4 saw Vince Kappler, a Northern New Jersey caver, and I leave home, pick up a couple of cases (not enough) of beer and head for the Old Timers Reunion.

We reached the Franklin area about 4 a.m. and the party at the American Legion Hall--the headquarters-- was still in progress. As I swung my VW into a parking place, who was standing in the glare of the headlights without any pants on? None other than Ed Day. We greeted him and noticed a few others still awake. Bobbi Nagy (where was Donna?) from Nittany was there along with Bob Thren and Charlie Lewis from Reading. Fictitious Lew Bicking was there too, I think.

I was awakened in the morning, not by the warm rays of the sun, but by the continuous flow of words from a familiar mouth. Should I turn over and find out who it was or not? There, in all his resplendent glory was surely the greatest climber of them all; he wore a smart beret, a new suede jacket, a new pair of Lederhosen and never scuffed climbing boots. Across his chest was slung a dagger (later we were told it is used for cutting belay lines, if necessary). Well, there he was, member of all the firsts, Rappel Pad Joe--need I say more? (Obviously a displaced member of Baltimore Grotto since he likes to cut belay ropes.)

That morning we also met up with Whitt and his brother Barry, Jay Murray, and Gary McCutchen, all from V.P.I. Soon Bob Robbins and his crew from P.S.C. arrived on the scene. Sarah Corrie in her truck was there too, along with many others.

After breakfast it was off to the Sinnitt-Thorne Mountain complex. We entered the Sinnitt entrance, traversed back through the cave, up the silo passage and into the 800' long "big room". Down through a side passage and through a blowhole we went, pulling and pushing Gary all the way. After realizing we had made the connection with Thorne mountain we lost our way and returned the way we came--almost.

That afternoon the cave olympics were held--ladder climbing, prussicking, cave crawling, and cave packing, but we went swimming instead.

The next day we were up early and soon had climbed the steep hill and found ourselves at the entrance of Minor Rexrode Cave. We spent a couple of hours in there and walked, climbed and crawled over breakdown and through passages for about 1000 feet. The maze features of certain

parts of this cave make it very interesting.

After lunch we were off to Propst Cave. After battling our way through herds of thousands of turkeys, we arrived at the entrance to find three other car loads of people.

Bill Mauck (and his new wife) led us to the top of the drop looking into the Far Room, but we did not have enough rope to rig it so we headed out, passing all the others on their way in.

The banquet that night came off very well and much credit has to be given "Ham" Hamilton and his crew from P.S.C. who ran the whole weekend quite well. Awards were made (I didn't realize P.S.C. members were such great cavers) and everyone adjourned to the dance floor, parties, or the bar. After the night got late the parties got better and Ed Day put on quite a good show of alternately passing out and awakening to drink some more. I would be glad to give a talk sometime on the finer points of sleeping in the ladies lounge.

The next morning-not so early, we ate and got an early start for home. Whitt tells me that his group first saw Kenny-Simmon's Cave. Vince and I stopped at the quarry at Judy Springs and then tiredly proceeded on our way.

Ed Bauer

Submitted for publication September 21, 1964

\$

IF YOU CAN'T LIVE IN A CAVE...

The August 16, 1964, Roanoke Times carried an interesting, though promotionally intended, article on the Caverns of Luray.

The Article describes how T. C. Northcott, in 1901, built his home on a hill above Luray Caverns. A five foot wide shaft was sunk from his back yard to the cave 35' below. A 42" fan was mounted above it and a 150' long enclosed passage lead to the house from where smaller ducts circulated throughout the house. A method was devised for heating air in the passageway or drawing pure, cold cave air directly into the house. The humidity was regulated in a large chamber in the basement. "In addition to remaining at a constant dust and pollen free 54-degrees the underground air contained fewer bacteria than a hospital operating room."

Gregg Marland

Submitted for publication October 28, 1964

SCHOOLHOUSE CAVE -- CLOSED?

It looks as though another one of Germany Valley's famous caverns is closed to cavers. I imagine most cavers are aware of the fact that Mystic cave has recently been closed to visitors. And now, what may very well be West Virginia's most well-known cave, is also closed.

During the recent Old-Timer's reunion in Franklin, I had the opportunity to speak with Gerald J. Kimble, owner of Schoolhouse cave. He informed me at that time of his plans to close the cave permanently. His reasons included trash left outside by visitors, people camping in his field, people being trapped in the cave, and other such incidents. He also complained about people not asking permission to enter his cave. His biggest complaint, however, was the frequent accidents requiring action by local police.

There is an outside possibility that Kimble will allow people into the cave if they ask his permission, but anyone ignoring the "No Trespassing" signs around the sinkhole may end up visiting with the local law agents.

Once it is closed, the re-opening of this cave to frequent visitors may present quite a problem. Perhaps the best solution would be to stay away from the cave for a year or so. The owner is undoubtably aware of the reputation of his cave and has probably become quite swell-headed over the years. He has something that we want. If cavers avoid Schoolhouse cave perhaps he would forget after a while, become more congenial toward cavers, and re-open the cave. Of course, it would be a good idea if future explorers observe a few of the basic rules regarding cave owner relations that deal with such things as permission, gates, spent carbide, trash, noise, etc.

These rules have been stated over and over and there is no valid reason for not observing them.

Of course, Pendleton County caves are subject to many visits by inexperienced and uninformed persons, inasmuch as it is the scene of two yearly IOCA functions, not to mention the crowds that flock weekly to Seneca Rocks and go sight-seeing after it is too dark or too cold to climb.

A large portion of these people are non NSS members and are not versed in how to handle cave owners. If we, as cavers, are to continue to enjoy the freedom of visiting these caves; then we must seek these people out and educate them. Also, sell subscriptions to the Tech Troglodyte

R. E. Whittemore

submitted for publication September 10, 1964

LIST OF COLOR CODES

Below is a list of color codes of members of the V.P.I. Grotto. This is by no means a complete membership list. It will be revised and published several times each year for the benefit of Grotto members.

Color key:	G-green	R-red
	Y-yellow	W-white
	B-blue	Bk.-black
	O-orange	Br.-brown

Armstrong, Alan	Bk.-Br.	Hoyle, Dixon	Br.-O.
Baker, E. B.	R-W.	Hudkins, Terry	R.-O.-R.
Bauer, Ed	Y.	Keat, Jack	Y.-W.
Bell, Tom	R.-W.	McCutchen, Byron	B.-Y.-B.
Bohn, Mike	Bk.-O.-Bk.	McCutchen, Gary	G.-B.
Brown, Ed	B.-W.-B.	Morgan, Ed	G.
Brownrigg, Phil	B.-R.-B.	Morse, E.	O.-W.
Carlson, Sally	Y.-B.-Y.	Nolting, Rick	Y.-Br.
Cooper, Jim	B.	O'Meara, Patrick	G.-W.-R.
Day, Ed	R.-G.	Peduzzi, John	B.-W.
Eads, John	B.-Y.	Peters, J. Craig	R.
Eubank, Whitey	R.-Bk.	Smyth, Joe	Bk.-Gray
Fuller, Zeke	Y.-Bk.	Stevens, Henry	R.-Br.
Garber, Steve	G.-W.-G.	Strope, Dave	Bk.
Graham, Tony	G.-Y.	Vigour, Tom	G.-W.-G.-W.-G.
Hamilton, Mike	Y.-O.-Y.	Wadsworth, Art	W.
Helbert, Paul	R.-Y.	Whittemore, R. E.	W.-Bk.-W.
Hightower, M. C.	R.-B.-R.	Youso, Mike	O.
Holman, Mark	R.-W.-R.		

FALLOUT SHELTERS - HA!

The following 11 caves are the ones which the N.S.S. Fallout Shelter Committee feel warrant our investigation. Anyone visiting these caves can help the project by making a detailed survey of the cave, photographs if possible, measure of temprature and humidity, and check for floodings. Check also to see if the ceiling is stable, the type and area of the floor in the larger rooms, and in general, its livability. More details are available from Rick Nolting.

Greenville Saltpeter	W.Va.	Perkin's	Va.
General Davis	W.Va.	Henderson	Va.
Rapps	W.Va.	New River	Va.
Lowmeadow	Va.	Southern's	Va.
Mathews	Va.	Chimney Rock	Va.
Paxtons	Va.		

A TRIP TO THE LONE STAR STATE

Late one afternoon in mid June, Carl Light, a tall, lanky New Jersey Caver, and I piled our gear in my black VW and headed south.

After spending the first night at Ed Day's (now Private Day) home in northern Virginia, we headed for Indian cave, near the town of Castlewood in southwest Virginia. The three of us waited two hours for Gregg Marland, who was supposed to meet us there, and finally, just as we headed for the cave the official VPI cave club car appeared on the scene containing Gregg, Whitt, and Bob Mallis.

We spent several hours exploring Indian Cave. The cave is entered by going through the windshield of an old junk car at the bottom of a sink, down a tight, steep drop about ten feet, and then through a muddy passage for about 100 feet more. Once the right hole is located, you must descend for about 150 feet to the main stream level of the cave.

To the right, the small stream goes several hundred feet and peters out. To the left, the stream gets wider and deeper, sometimes to a depth of neck deep and 20 feet in width. We followed it for about 1500 feet to a place where it siphons out in a still pool. This last section of passage is extremely pretty, with large flowstone draperies, delicate soda straws, and other unvandalized beauty.

After saying goodby to the other three cavers, we had several peaceful hours of sleep before the rains came. One thing can be said for them, they got us up early-- 5:30-ish. Off we went.

Two nights and many stops later, we arrived at New Braunfels, and then Senora, to find a party in progress. Since we had missed the official NSS trip, we got a special trip of our own on Monday morning--for free. The Caverns of Senora is probably the prettiest cave I have ever been in. The first several hundred feet of this cave are rather void of formations. All of a sudden, the passage is transformed into a gallery of indescribable beauty. Popcorn and helictites, white, brown, and red, completely cover the walls, ceiling, and floor. The famous Butterfly was there in its glistening beauty. A cave well worth visiting.

Later that morning, after bumping through many barbed gates, we caught up with the many other cavers at the Devil's Sinkhole. This impressive cavern lies several miles from the nearest road in the middle of the waselandic on the Whitworth ranch. The cave is entered through a seventy foot diameter hole which belches out to several hundred feet by the time you reach the top of the "underground mountains" about 130 feet below the entrance. From here, you may descend

close to two hundred feet more down the slippery slopes to the lakes and bat colonies below. The University of Texas grotto had rigged an elaborate setup of auto and crane to facilitate quick entry.

Late that afternoon, we headed for the next of the pre-convention field trip caves. This cave, Indian Creek Cave, contains over 18,000 feet of passage and was one of the most interesting of the caves we visited. The entrance is located upstream from a dam and is covered by an elaborate protective iron grating. In the case of a sudden rain, it is very likely to fill up with water. The entrance pit is about 120 feet deep and is descended via several strong metal ladders. Reaching the bottom, we followed the upstream passage about 800 feet, where Carl somehow lost his boot—while it was on his foot, no less. Returning to the surface, we fitted Carl out in a set of sneakers, returned to the cave and sought out the helectite Patty's. Pretty Passage. Then we headed several thousand feet down the stream passage, where it was necessary to swim (70° F water temp.) and, after emerging from the stream, we climbed up to the beautiful Alice's wonderland. This flowstone section of the cave almost matches some of Virginia's better caves.

Another cave worth mentioning was Bracken Bat Cave. This cave supposedly contains about 20 million mexican free-tailed bats during the summer season. Arriving just before dusk, we were treated to an informative talk by Jim Baker on this bat and its habits. Soon, slowly at first, the bats started spiraling from the cave. A sight I will never forget was the tremendous number of bats emerging in a steady column and, swayed by the soft wind, flying into the night.

After a Texas style barbecue, we were admitted "en masse" to the soon-to-be-commercialized Natural Bridge Caverns. Guided by a pretty woman, we padded along softly lit trails and view such wonderous and imaginative-sounding sights as Sherwood Forest, Furry Castles, Castles of the White Giants, the Hall of the Mountain Kings, and the Valley of the fallen Lords.

The days of the formal convention proceedings were spent at Howdy parties, swimming at Landa park, and attending Congress of Grottoes meetings. We listened to talks on the mapping of Mammoth Cave, cave divining in Pennsylvania, Russ Gurnee's talk on the Rio Camoy expedition, and caving in Mexico; there were many others. Friday night was the photo salon; Saturday a geology field trip led by Porter Montgomery.

The convention was terminated at the banquet where, after awards and door prizes were distributed, Barry Bishop gave a tremendous slide-lecture on the American conquest of

Mount Everest.

After a short stop in New Orleans and a long drive up through the Southern states, we stopped to see two caves in northern Alabama. First was Goat Cave, which has been designated as a fallout shelter and is made up essentially of three long, low ceilinged rooms and several smaller passages. The helectites in the area behind the third room are very photogenic and well worth the trip.

Next was Banana Cave, which has approximately three miles of passages and in which we observed cave rats, crickets, bats, two species of salamander, flatworms, and a crayfish. Helectites, gypsum crystals, and large stalagmites make this cave very photogenic and well worth the trip.

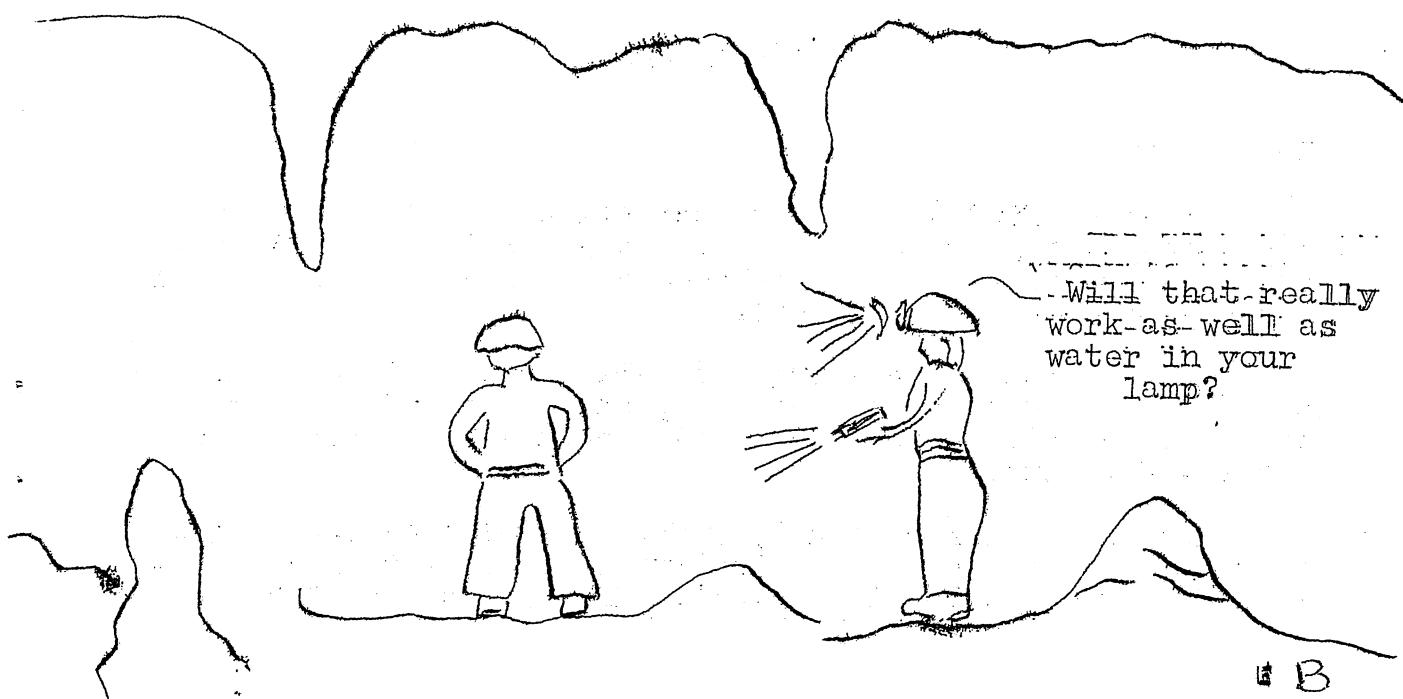
Case Cave, Georgia, was next on the agenda, but a nasty female landowner wouldn't let us cross her land because the locals had thrown beer cans in her garden, so we went swimming instead.

The next day, after about 30 minutes of arguing with the manager of Shenandoah Caverns, we realized he was not about to let us into the wild cave on the property. We conceded for a free trip through the commercial cave, however. Somehow, beautiful as it was, Shenandoah was a letdown after Senora.

Don't miss Bloomington, Indiana in '65.

Ed Eauer

Submitted for publication September 21, 1964



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dr. Karst:
(alias Greg Marland)

How are things in the old Southland? I hope that the caves are still as good as they used to be. The caves in New England are terrible. The largest cave in New England (Twin Lakes) is like taking a trip to Link's. Bob Ralph and I have joined the Central Connecticut Grotto, so we do a little caving now and then.

What are you doing these days? Have you entered the working world or are you still going to school? Say hello to Bonnie for me. Did you go to the convention? Several people from here came back very excited about Sonora.

I will be leaving here on August 29 and heading south for two weeks. Will there be anyone in Blacksburg during that time to go caving with? Also is the Old Timers' Reunion in Franklin on Labor Day worth going to? If it is I will make the scene. I am glad that Caves of Virginia was finally published, although I was disappointed with the contents. Too much space devoted to caves just for the record and not enough to descriptions of the good caves.

Take care of yourself and write if you get a chance.

Jim Saunders
266 Plain Drive
East Hartford,
Connecticut
August 16, 1964

//////////

Dear Gary,

Enclosed find \$1 for a subscription to 6 issues of the Tech Trogolodyte. This is actually a renewal of my old subscription which runs out this summer. You can't lose at only 1 cent per page (or can you?).

I just finished reading the Fall Quarter, 1964 issue and would like to make a few comments, one in regard to your West Va. article (Mercer Co.) and the other in connection with the Va. Cave Survey.

Re: A New Mercer County (West Virginia) Cave--I think your new Cave Rat Cave is actually the same as Davies' Caldwell Cave (see p. 157 in Davies). In the October 1962 issue

of the Speleograph, p. 70-72 (Editor's Note: the article referred to is reproduced without John Holsinger's consent immediately after this letter), I discussed both Caldwell and Honacker Caves and tried to clarify some of the confusion created in this area both by Davies and Cooper. Apparently you didn't see this article when you wrote your recent one. My article was entitled "Notes on some little known caves in Mercer County, West Virginia." It also contains information on some other caves relatively close to your area so you might find it worthwhile to consult. If you don't have back issues of the Speleograph, you can write to Henry Douglas or Lyle Conrad and request this particular one. If it's out of print maybe you can get Henry to send you a xerox copy.

Re: Virginia Cave Survey--I will soon put an article in the NSS NEWS stressing the need for continued data on Virginia caves. We are planning a supplement to follow the new book in about 5 to 6 years. We already have a good file started on caves in the far reaches of SW Va. (e.g. Lee, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, etc.). The Bland Co. area, which you referred to in your recent issue, is another area which needs much work. I'm glad to see that some of you are doing something about it. The Newberry-Bane area is especially promising as you are undoubtedly aware. To save time later, copies of all information on new caves, old caves, cave maps, and locations should be sent to Henry Douglas so that they can be placed in the supplement files. Another area that needs some further work is Craig County. In addition, many of the caves reported in the Cave of Virginia need mapping; many of the leads reported there should be followed--some, I imagine, will yield new and interesting results. We now have around 175 caves in Lee Co. and still have leads to check out. Good luck in Bland County.

Give Gregg my regards if he is still around.

John Holsinger
August 30, 1964

(Editor's Note: The following is taken from the October, 1962, Speleograph)

NOTES ON SOME LITTLE KNOWN CAVES IN MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA. By John R. Holsinger.

On Labor Day weekend, September 1-2, 1962, the writer and Kitty Flick visited several Virginia (Tazewell County) and West Virginia (Monroe and Mercer Counties) in search of cavernicolous fauna. With the exception of the well known Greenville Saltpeter Cave in Monroe County, the other West Virginia caves encountered on the trip are believed to be only vaguely known and probably inadequately explored. In spite of the fact that this was principally a biological

trip, other information was collected and is hereby presented in hopes that it will stimulate further investigation of this rather limited but potentially interesting limestone area.

Davis (1958) presented a short discussion of the restricted limestones of Mercer County and made a brief mention of ten caves. Bunker (1960) reported the exploration and mapping of Beacon Cave, located two miles from Bluefield, West Virginia, and 1000 feet behind the "Beacon Drive-In". This is the largest known cave in Mercer County with approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of surveyed passages.

The following data was obtained in Mercer County during the aforementioned September trip. All locations are from Davies (loc. cit.).

ABBS VALLEY CAVE $37^{\circ}17'56''$ N.; $81^{\circ}19'04''$ W. Bramwell Quad.

A 1 hour search in Abbs Valley on both sides of the Virginia-West Virginia state line failed to reveal this cave. Several persons who have lived in this area all of their lives and who also live practically next to where the cave should exist knew nothing about it. They did, however, continually refer to several caves supposedly one to two miles west of the state line in Tazewell County, Virginia. These were checked out and found to be the Rosenbaum Caves which have been known to the Virginia Cave Survey for a number of years.

INGLESIDE CAVE $37^{\circ}18'40''$ N.; $81^{\circ}03'23''$ W. Bluefield Quad.

The entrance is a window-like hole (five feet by five feet) located near the base of a limestone outcrop. About 20 feet from the entrance, the cave stream resurges as a spring from which the owner obtains his water supply. A single stream passage (approximately ten feet wide and eight feet high) was followed for over 500 feet. The passage continues on from this point at about the same dimensions. According to Davies (loc. cit.) the passages extend for 2000 feet to the southwest.

HONACKER AND CALDWELL CAVES. Narrows Quad.

In the past some doubt has existed as to which one of these two caves is actually supposed to be Honacker's. Perhaps the following information will help to clarify this situation. Davies listed Honacker Cave as being 1.3 miles southeast of Pigeon Creek School ($37^{\circ}18'48''$ N.; $80^{\circ}55'42''$ W.) and Caldwell Cave as located 1.6 miles southeast of the same school ($37^{\circ}18'54''$ N.; $80^{\circ}55'38''$ W.) Causey (1960), in giving locations for the cave milliped (Zygonopus packardi) from data supplied her by Dr. Carl Krekeler, listed Honaker (Honacker) Cave as being five miles southwest of Glenlyn, Virginia. This could have been

either cave, since both are approximately that distance from Glenlyn. According to the locations given by Davies, Honacker Cave should be just south of the old Honacker house, which is exactly $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of Pigeon Creek School. Caldwell Cave, then, should be the second cave located in a gap about 1200 feet SSE of the Honacker house. Cooper (1960) partially explored what he believed to be Honacker Cave, located near the farm buildings on the Honacker place and presumably the same one as that listed by Davies. Their descriptions (Cooper's and Davies'), however, do not coincide.

On September 2, the writer looked at the entrance to Honacker Cave, but passed it up in favor of a cave rumored by the local residents as being much larger and just up the hollow in back of the farm house. Assuming Davies' locations to be correct, this latter cave should be Caldwell Cave. The entrance to Caldwell is a large opening in a shallow sink on the east side of a hollow which extends $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the northern base of East River Mountain to a valley just east of the Honacker house. A small stream coming from the mountain flows into the entrance, and after a series of several small drops it sinks into the floor about 100 feet inside of the cave. From here the passage continues for less than 200 feet to a Y intersection. The right fork is very short and ends in a small room. The left fork is a crawlway which continues low for about 50 feet and then gets very tight. Penetration beyond this point could be effected with a certain amount of effort. The floor is littered with washed-in debris for 100 feet beyond where the stream disappears indicating temporary flood conditions during extremely wet weather.

According to the local people, there is a third cave located somewhere further up the same hollow that contains the Caldwell Cave. This lead was also reported by Cooper in 1960. To the writer's knowledge, this cave has never been recorded or described in the literature.

"To all mountain climbers, my advice is: go slowly and don't cross the yellow line if it is on your side of the highway."

(From the book How To Collect Mountains)

MILLER'S COVE SURVEY

Somewhere on the densely-wooded slopes below Dragon's Tooth is a small inconspicuous opening into the nether world. If you happen to be one of the elite few who can find the hole, then you know that it requires a mile or so of walking and/or a sturdy automobile. Inside the cave, one encounters muddy down-climbs, exposed traverses, low crawlways, and, if you choose to go as deep as possible in this state, there are long rappells.

But whatever one may encounter on the way down, when one reaches the bottom, everything that has gone before suddenly becomes worth it. For at the bottom is one of Virginia's dozen or-so caves that have over a mile of passage.

When this cave was first discovered by the VPI Cave Club, it aroused considerable interest, but, due to the difficulties involved in making an accurate survey, only a preliminary map was prepared. This fall, however, has seen renewed interest in this large and beautiful cave, and a number of survey trips have entered the cave with Brunton and tape.

It took three survey trips and a total of 14 hours of work to reach the first stream level several hundred feet below the entrance. Now that this part of the cave has been mapped, the survey should go considerably faster. Nonetheless, it will be quite some time before this grotto publishes a map of this cave. It is known that over a mile of passage exists; possibly two miles. How much is beyond this, only time, patience, and the steel tape will tell.

Another interesting aspect of this cave, which this survey will settle, is its depth. The actual depth will not be known until after the survey is complete, but estimates run so high as 500 feet, making it a candidate for Virginia's deepest cave.

The lion's share of credit for this survey goes to Sam Dunaway. Thus far, he has organized all the survey parties, computed all of the horizontal distances, and has drawn several preliminary maps. Some credit is also due to his lovely wife for participating in the survey, and, of course, for putting up with Sam.

If this survey continues at its present rate, a map should be ready in about six months--almost 10 years after the discovery of the cave.

R. E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication November 4, 1964

PROSPECTUS OF CONSERVATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

It is my hope, as Conservation Committee chairman, that this year will witness extensive activity in the field of cave conservation and preservation. I hope that the grotto conservation committee can influence the grotto into adapting a policy which would make it necessary for new member-trainees to actively show some interest in conservation. Among projects to which they might contribute would be:

- 1) The placing of NSS cave registers--such caves as Tawney's, Link's, Southern's, and Giant might be considered.
- 2) The participation in a cave clean-up project, such as was accomplished in Giant Cave several years ago.
- 3) Participation in a fallout shelter survey trip.
- 4) Participation in any project in which conservation practices are carried out. Butler's Cave might fit into this category.
- 5) Participation in a conservation slide show,

Neophytes who learn early the reasons for cave conservation and who appreciate the untouched beauty of well-preserved caves, those who realize that caves are actually laboratories to some, and those who realize that wanton damage cannot be easily undone, those are the ones who need not burden themselves with the rules of conservation. These people should have common sense enough to know right from wrong. It is hoped that this plan will have its good effects and will guide individuals toward their own personal conservation aims.

Of the fallout shelter survey caves allotted to our grotto, three have been surveyed--General Davis, New River, and Lowmoore. Possibly Paxton's, Southern's, and Greenville Saltpeter will be done by the end of the quarter.

It is hoped that the other five will be completed during the winter quarter.

Ed Bauer

Submitted for publication November 6, 1964

"Each spring just as sap goes to the top of trees, saps go to the tops of mountains. The biggest saps go to the top of the high mountains that have no roads."

From the Book How to Collect Mountains

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPPING IN VIRGINIA

The February, 1963, issue of Virginia Minerals (Vol. 9, No. 1) published by the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, outlines in detail proposed topographic mapping projects in Virginia, and Vol. 10, No. 2 of that same publication can be consulted to obtain a progress report through May, 1964.

This article is to inform interested persons where new maps are, or soon will be, available in the caving areas around Blacksburg. Persons interested in other portions of Virginia should consult the above listed publications.

The program is designed to provide "adequate" topographic maps of Virginia. An "adequate" map has a scale of 1:24,000 (i.e. $\frac{7}{2}$ min. maps), has 90 percent of the well-defined planimetric points plotted in correct position on the map within $\frac{1}{50}$ th inch, and has 90 percent of the contours accurate within half a contour interval.

Some 12.3 percent of Virginia was adequately mapped as of February, 1963. Most of this is the extreme southwest portion of the state, which was included in Tennessee Valley Authority mapping.

The status of mapping will be described with respect to the popularly-known 15 minute quadrangles, which will be divided into fourths when mapped at a scale of 1:24,000. Advance prints can be obtained for 50¢, but do not contain all of the information and coloring of final copies.

It is apparent that mapping is progressing in areas of interest and that, within a few years, there will be available a set of $\frac{7}{2}$ minute maps for most of Virginia's cave areas. Persons contemplating purchasing topo maps should consult this list and future additions of Virginia Minerals so that they can take advantage of the new maps where they are available.

15 min. quad.	Quarters	Name of $\frac{1}{4}$	status	as of:
Bramwell	SE	Bramwell	published	2/64
Bluefield	SE	Princeton	published	2/64
	SW		advance prints	4/64
Narrows	all		authorized	2/63
Pearisburg	all		authorized	2/63
Waiterville	all		authorized	2/63
Pulaski	all		authorized	2/63
Radford	all		authorized	2/63
Blacksburg	all		authorized	2/63
Salem	all		advance prints	4/64
Elliston	all		advance prints	4/64
Roanoke	all		advance prints	4/64
Newcastle	all		authorized	2/63
Eagle Rock	NE	Eagle Rock	published	2/64
	NW	Strom	published	5/64
	SE & SW		advance prints	5/64
Natural Bridge	All		published	5/64
Clifton Forge	SE & SW		advance prints	5/64

ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

Since the last issue of this informative journal of speleology was published, several trips have been made into Southwestern Virginia by this Grotto. Here is a description of some of the caves visited on these trips.

Indian Cave, Banner's Corner, Russell County, Va. ($36^{\circ}52'46'' \times 82^{\circ}19'59''$) See Douglas, p. 428. The entrance is in a trash-filled sink containing the remains of an old truck. The passage descends steeply over trash and loose rocks, turning to the left and down over large hunks of breakdown, and into a long room with a steeply slanting mud floor. The passage from here is a rather obvious tunnel leading from the bottom of this room down over slick mud to the top of a good-sized room. A large stream flows through this room and passage leads in both directions. After several hundred feet, the passage upstream encounters large slabs of breakdown and is reduced to narrow crawlways.

The downstream passage, however, can be traversed for perhaps 1600 feet before terminating in a quiet pool. The main stream passage is practically void of side passages. The stream becomes quite deep in places, and it is necessary to wade to see the cave. The cave is subject to flooding, proof being given by the particles of organic matter found throughout the cave.

The cave contains a fair amount of beautiful speleothems. There are several areas of long, slender soda straws and one area of massive flowstone mounds.

Saltville Quarry Cave, Smyth County, Va. (NW 4/7/6) See Douglas, p. 503. Near Saltville are several old water-filled limestone quarries. The upper quarry lake is fed by a small waterfall at one end. Near this spot, opposite the cliff wall, is a large cave entrance, partially obscured by brush. Immediately inside, the passage divides into an obvious water passage, and a not-so-obvious dry route. The dry route, to the left, extends about 100 feet to a small crawlway which pinches off. The wet route, deep in places, ends in a scum-covered pool. Several areas of formations are encountered. The stream passage is abundant in cave life. One large crayfish and a number of salamanders were observed.

Higgenbotham's #1, Tazewell County, Va. ($37^{\circ}02'51'' \times 81^{\circ}35'34''$) See Douglas, p. 520. On the south slope of Knob Mountain, near Tazewell, are two large sinkhole entrances about 1000 feet apart. The easternmost entrance is "#1", and takes the form of 3 large openings into a single room which slopes downward through bare limestone 100 feet to a 10 foot drop. This room is known as "Devil's slide". Below the 10 foot drop is a small rubble-floored room with a fissure in the far end which opens into the top of a 128 foot drop.

From the bottom of the drop, a high, narrow passage trends SW over 4 climbs: 20 feet up, 20 feet down (handline needed), 20 feet up, and 20 feet down. A single 100 foot rope can be rigged and used on the last three climbs. About 30 feet from where this passage ends, there is a fissure in the ceiling which leads to a sinuous canyon passage. This canyon tees to the main cave passage. To the right, the passage ends in a number of shallow wells in the floor. There is a network of sewer passages leading from the bottom. To the left of the intersection, the main cave trends NE for about 3000 feet as a large, rectangular corridor, 50 feet by 50 feet in some places. Deep piles of guano cover most of the floor. Several drainage canyons lead off from under breakdown, and several pits about 50 feet deep open in the floor. The main cave ends in an area of large, fallen slabs. There are a few formations near the end.

Crockett's Cave, Tazewell County, Va. ($37^{\circ}05'05''$ x $81^{\circ}31'35''$) See Douglas, p. 515. In a large valley sink is a trash-filled sinkhole with limestone escarpments on three sides. At one end, under the brush, is a large entrance leading into a big room. About 100 feet from the entrance, a good-sized stream is encountered. The downstream passage goes about 300 feet as a wide cherty tunnel, ending in a still siphon pool. There are several rooms on an upper level.

The upstream passage goes about 80 feet to a narrow hole where the stream enters. The water is over five feet deep in places, and the passage is narrow and cherty.

We hope that, by publishing these descriptions, we will perform several functions. One is to supplement Caves of Virginia, and aid in publishing the first revision, whenever that might be. Also, we hope these descriptions will create an interest in the possibilities of this area.

R. E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication: Nov. 12, 1964

* * * * *

"A mountain is a hill that had ambition; it is a big mass of SIAC and SIMA and it has rocks."

"Keep your mountains in a cool place; they become soft at temperatures over $1,200^{\circ}$ C."

(from the book How To Collect Mountains)

CAVING ALONG THE ST. CLAIR FAULT

The St. Clair fault is an immense overthrust running to the west of and parallel to Peters Mountain, in Monroe County, West Virginia. Between the mountain and the fault zone is an area of limestone hills and valleys, with large areas lacking in surface drainage. Two kinds of limestone outcrop here; the Stones River, of early Ordovician age, (nearest the mountain), and the Beckmantown of Late Canadian age, (nearest the fault). West of the limestone, of Late Canadian age, (nearest the fault). West of the fault zone is mostly Beckmantown, with a few hills of Stones River lying immediately to the west of the fault.

Having visited Patton's Cave, which is large and well-decorated and discovering that the other caves of the area were vaguely described in Caverns of West Virginia, we decided that this area warranted closer study. One cave was never entered, and another was simply rumored to exist, and the rest were described as "encountering breakdown" or "becoming quite low" or "extending a considerable distance beyond." In view of this area's close proximity to Blacksburg, this situation just couldn't be allowed to exist. So we drew a circle around the drainage area forming the headwaters of Second Creek, and set out on the first expedition.

Our original intention was to visit Fletcher's and Chamber's (now known locally as Lusk's) Caves, but the party I was "commanding" had other ideas, so it was another trip to Patton's, and an abbreviated trip to Fletcher's. When Fletcher's turned out to be a wet cave, I became quite unpopular, and the trip could be termed a failure, as we had not had time to find the other entrance to Patton's; and, though we had gone beyond the published description of Fletcher's, we had to quit before we found the final siphon. Female cavers -- Bah! Here are the descriptions.

Patton's Cave, Gap Mills, Monroe County. ($37^{\circ}32'36''$ x $80^{\circ}23'56''$) Ronceverte Quad. The entrance is in the bottom of a steep-sided sinkhole, and opens into nearly a mile of large, walking passage. The first 3000 feet is floored with breakdown, clay, and pools, until the main passage intersects a stream at right angles in the "Big Room". The upstream passage is several hundred feet long, and has many deep pools in the floor. The downstream passage is low and gravelly, and after several hundred feet, intersects the main passage nearer the entrance. The stream flowing through this passage forms the stream which occupies the first 2,500 feet of the cave. Directly across the Big Room is a large hole about 6' off the floor that leads into the last 2000 feet of the cave. This back section is different in character, being muddy and angular rather than clean and arched. Many large formations and rimstone pools are found here. Beyond this section, lots of loose breakdown is encountered.

Somewhere in this section is a narrow crawl through loose rocks to an opening to the surface. The cave ends in a myriad of muddy breakdown rooms.

About 100 yards west of the entrance is a large resurgence which may or may not be the cave stream, as it seems to flow even when the cave stream is not. Patton's Cave is in the lower stratas of the Stones River limestone.

Fletcher's Cave, Gap Mills, Monroe County ($37^{\circ}33'24''$ x $80^{\circ}23'30''$) is in the west end of a valley sink, with a stream flowing into the entrance. Beyond the first low, wet spot is another opening to the surface. The passage parallels the SW strike of Peter's Mountain, and takes the form of a zig-zag stream passage, low in places. In a number of places, the stream cuts across joints in the limestone and minor rooms about 10' high, 3' wide, and 30 or 40 feet long are developed skew to the stream, but on an upper level. About 500 feet in, a good-sized room is developed on a higher level and contains many large, white formations. Along the stream level, many small formations may be observed. A fantastic rock mushroom is on the stream level about 1000' from the entrance. After 2000' the passage is reduced to a narrow crawl through breakdown, and ends shortly afterward in a siphon pool. This cave is apparently in the Beekmantown limestone.

After we had visited these two caves on February 1, 1964, I had the nerve to suggest that we see Lusk's Cave. This brought on a chorus of protests, so we returned to Tech having accomplished almost nothing. Why is it that some people have this thing about sleeping at night?

After this sad trip, I took my project to a fellow who is somewhat less of a spelunker, but more of a speleologist; Gary McCutchen. He became immediately interested in the area, so March 7 saw Gary, Doug Cochran, Jay Murray, and I set out for Gap Mills. In the meanwhile, I had become interested in a few caves just over the hill in the next drainage system which looked inviting.

We first checked out Fulton's Cave and the cave which, "repuditally of large size, lies across the valley." We took the liberty of naming this second cave "Turkey Creek Cave" only to find out later that this is really its name. After we had spent the daylight hours beating the bushes, chasing skunks, and crawling into resurgences, we set out for Lusk's (Chamber's) Cave. As we were proceeding to look for the cave, we came upon 3 gentlemen who first agreed to show us the entrance, then decided to show us the entire cave. The oldest of the bunch was Joe Lusk, who had been in the cave quite a few times. So we fired up our lamps and took a guided tour of Lusk's Cave, which proved to be quite a spectacular cavern. Joe Lusk mentioned something about a group from "up nawth" (probably D.C. or Baltimore) that comes down to that cave a few times every year. I wonder who they are, and if they have a map of this cave. If so, V.P.I. would like to borrow it to make a tracing sometime. Since this initial visit to Lusk's Cave, at least 3 more groups from V.P.I. have been there.

Lusk's Cave, Gap Mills, Monroe County, ($37^{\circ}32'04''$ x $80^{\circ}25'00''$) Roncovorte Quad. The entrance is at the west end of a long valley sink about a mile south of the road to Zenith. A northward flowing branch flows into the entrance under a limestone escarpment. The first 50' of passage is a forced crawl over large cobbles through a creek, which is sometimes dry. Beyond here, the passage opens up into a large stream corridor, with several large rooms. The floor is mostly fine sand with some mud and breakdown. Several gravel fills about 2 feet thick are also found. In a few places, the ceiling is covered with pendants.

The inward-flowing stream departs from the main passage a short distance in, and an outward-flowing stream is encountered in the first big room.

Two sections of upper level are developed: one above the first big room, and one above the last big room. Profuse formations are found in both upper levels, and many deep crevasses open in the floor leading back to the stream level. Near the back of the cave are several domes. It is in the lower Stones River limestone.

Fulton's Cave, Zenith, Monroe County, ($37^{\circ}31'42''$ x $80^{\circ}28'15''$) Roncovorte Quad. The cave is about $\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Gap Mills, and is formed in a rocky hill of Stones River limestone on the west side of the St. Clair Fault, which runs just east of and parallel to the road. The entrance is just above the point where two branches of Turkey Creek join, and is at the end of a long, sheer canyon about 30 feet deep and open at one end. The cave entrance is a large opening at the other end. It is essentially a single, zig-zag canyon passage about 100 yards long, or less. It averages 10' wide and 20 or 30 feet high. A few formations are found on the walls, and many rimstone pools cover the floor.

Turkey Creek Cave, Zenith, Monroe Co., ($37^{\circ}31'25''$ x $80^{\circ}28'20''$) Roncovorte Quad. Across the valley from Fulton's Cave and about 500 yards south of the road where 2 branches of Turkey Creek join, a fence row runs up the hill in a saddle. The entrance is near the crest of the hill, at an elevation of 2400 feet, in the bottom of a small sinkhole to the right of the fence. It takes the form of a small hole sloping down at a steep angle, at the bottom of which is a trash-filled room. The cave is developed as a series of small rooms, or pockets, with a mud floor and considerable surface wash. The greater part of the cave lies to the south and is probably 300 to 400 feet in length. A number of domes are encountered near the end. The cave is in the Bookmantown limestone.

This trip proved to be a success, so for the next venture, a group that was interested in caves rather than caving went. Unfortunately, Gary couldn't make it this time, so the trip boiled down to Jay Murray, Steve Garber, Barry Whittemore, and myself. Our goal was to check out Crosier's (mislocated by Davics) and a few caves near the head of Kitchen Creek; and this we would have done, if it had not been for that virgin cave we ran across.

Arriving in the area rather late, in the afternoon, we decided to look first for Crosier's Cave, not described in Davies. Inasmuch as it was also mislocated, we ended up, by a happy accident, at the home of Joe Neel. As it turned out, Joe is a caver with the Concord Cave Club, and knows quite a bit about the caves of the area. He was unable to go caving with us, but he did show us the entrances of two caves; Crosier's and Miller's. We checked out Crosier's first, which did not prove to be very extensive. We went next to Miller's, .3 mile west of Crosier's. Inasmuch as there is another cave known as Miller's in the area, we dubbed this one Evelyn Miller's, to avoid confusion.

We explored the known part of Evelyn Miller's, which wasn't too much, but on the way out, Jay spotted a hole in the breakdown that had apparently been overlooked before. Through this hole, we found about 1000 feet of virgin cave.

Crosier's Cave, Zenith, Monroe County, ($37^{\circ}30'17''$ x $80^{\circ}29'20''$) Roncoverte Quad. Elevation 2550. The entrance is in a sink about 50 feet south of the road to Zenith, and takes the form of several holes at the base of a limestone escarpment. On the left is a vegetable cellar built of limestone blocks. In the middle are several small slots blocked up by sticks and surface soil. On the right is a low crawl roughly paralleling the strike of the rocks with several leads down to the left, coinciding with the dip, which is about 20° . These leads open into a small maze of zig-zag sewer passages, all draining toward a central room. This room has a hole in the bottom through which water exits, but becomes too tight for humans. This hole shows signs of flooding. This room also contains an unusual limestone arch. Gravel and cobble floors are found throughout the cave, and many passages are blocked by mud fill. No formations of any significance are found in the cave.

Evelyn Miller's Cave, ($37^{\circ}30'13''$ x $80^{\circ}29'39''$) Roncoverte Quad. Elevation 2550. A narrow cleft in the side of a small, wooded sink leads southward about 20 feet and makes a right-angle turn to the right. A hole opens in the floor at this point.

The right-hand lead remains as a narrow fissure and zig-zags about 100 feet to an area of domes and breakdown. There are many loose rocks.

The hole in the floor goes down as a chimney and a traverse about 30 feet to a breakdown-filled room. A passage at the lower end leads down to the "Big Room".

Beyond the big room, the passage takes the form of an intermittent stream bed in a high canyon. There are many crawl-ways and side rooms, similar in character to Crosier's. There is an upper level maze of dry sewer passages. Many leads have not been checked out.

The discovery of this cave was enough to make the trip a success. When we returned to the surface, we received an invitation to sleep in Joc's back yard, and we were treated to hot coffee that night and again at breakfast. Joc told us of a McClung's Cave, at Zenith, but was afraid the owner would object to us entering it on Sunday. So we rounded out the weekend by a return trip to Lusk's and did some more exploring on the upper levels.

Having pushed every cave we entered beyond published descriptions, and having stumbled upon two previously unreported caves, one of which was virgin in part, we like to think that there is more to do in this area. But we are publishing this much of our efforts in hopes that perhaps someone who has further information on this area would enlighten us to some of their findings. Meanwhile, look for a future issue of the Troglodyte to carry more information on the Gap Mills-Zenith area.

R. E. Whittmore

Submitted for publication: Sept. 30, 1964

TRIP REPORTS

GRAPEVINE CAVE Oct. 17, 1964 Henry H. Stevens

Personnel: Art Wadsworth (fearless leader), Paul Halbert, Craig Peters, Steve Garber, and R. E. Whittmore

We headed up for Grapevine at 1:30p.m. When we got there, we tested the ropes, and then descended into the cave. The entrance is a drop of 120 feet. When we got down, we were greeted by the disagreeable odor of decomposing skunk flesh. Soon we became accustomed to the stench as could be expected.

The cave is essentially a very large room about 600 feet long. The entire floor is covered with very massive breakdown, which in turn is covered with a layer of pucky mud. Consequently, climbing was precarious, even with boots.

The whole party headed to the left end (left when facing across the cave from the entrance drop) of the cave and photographed several of the large white formations. There were many of the usual formations and many beautiful bacon rinds and soda straws. We reached the end pool and turned back. Paul and I decided to split off down a passage to the left going back. We followed that about 100 feet passing a lot of soda straws and bacon rind. The passage had a small stream and we came to a place where the passage narrowed suddenly to a very tight crawlway with the stream flowing into it. Paul decided to try to push it. He got about five feet into the inchway and the water and then his light was doused by the stream. He backed out, relit and decided against trying again. We then went back to the entrance and from there to the other end of the large room. Then began the long prusik out.

Whitt, who was complaining about a bad hangover all day long, was making all kinds of dark predictions of not being able to make the prusik out under his own power, and of how we may have to pull him up, plus all sorts of other dark suggestions. Well, he managed to make it out, but still it took him all of twelve minutes. After all, Whitt, most of us only took 20 or 30 minutes. What happened, boy?

After about four hours in the cave we emerged and made it back to the W.P.I. holes at 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

NEW RIVER CAVE March 22, 1964

Mike Youso

Personnel: Joe Smyth, Dick (Daddy) Hughes, Bill Grenoble*

Bill had organized the trip with the purpose of pushing the back of New River Cave. Consequently we didn't spend much time in the cave's more scenic areas. We pushed straight to the back of the cave carrying rope, bolt driving equipment and carabiners. This extra gear made the crawlways past the waterfall rather interesting. In spite of this we made it to the back in about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Dick rigged a belay and Bill began to ascend the face along a small ledge until he had to drive bolts. While Bill attacked the face, I went down the mud chimney to the stream level to obtain water. In climbing out, I had one hell of a time chimneying up the muddy walls in a shower of mud from Bill above. Joe finally had to tie a couple of slings together and pull me out. By this time we realized that Bill was having no luck with the bolts due to a bent star drill, so we went back out, leaving the equipment at the back for a later attempt. Total time inside the cave: $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

STRALEY'S CAVE (Trainee report by Douglas Tsigland)

Zelke Fuller led a trip to Straley's Cave. Mostly trainees went along. It's a completely horizontal cave with some pretty formations. It's a good cave for inexperienced cavers who like to see a lot of cave with a minimum amount of effort. There is a considerable amount of climbing fences to reach the entrance of the cave. There is an abundance of farm animals to look at which make the trip even more interesting. The cave is in a complete absence of mud excepting that which is thoroughly packed. There are two entrances to the cave, one of which is quite large, and takes no effort at all to get into it.

-*****-

SPELEOTHOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

There are old caves
And there are bold caves
But no old, bold caves

GENERAL DAVIS CAVE Oct. 31, 1964

Dave Strope

Personnel: R. E. Whittmore (leader?), Jim Cooper, Steve Judy
John Peduzzi, Tony Graham, Paul Holbert, Mike Falak, Steve Garber

We left campus for the cave about 1:30 in the afternoon in two groups. Our group, headed by R. E. Whittmore, was to go directly to General Davis Cave, while the second group, under Ed Baucr, was to meet us there after first visiting another small cave.

The majority of the trip was uneventful until we reached the general area of the cave. Whitt lead us up one road and down another just as if he had traveled them a hundred times. However, we soon found out, after stopping at a house filled with very helpful and beautiful girls, that there was no General Davis Cave nearby. It is interesting to note that because we had no member of the Sex Committee along, Whitt took the burden of responsibility upon himself and personally asked the girls for directions while the rest of us fumed in the cars. After a quick supper of sandwiches, we got under way again and came to the cave entrance at 5 p.m.

The cave entrance was located about halfway up a small hill. Immediately upon entering we had to crawl for twenty or thirty feet under the low entrance ceiling. It then opened up into a large room, about 225 feet by 80 feet, almost completely bare of formations.

The back of the room narrowed into a passage which followed a stream bed back into the cave. This part of the cave offered the greatest abundance of formations, although they were by no means extraordinarily profuse or beautiful. This passage maintained fairly constant dimensions its entire length; 25-30 ft. high by about 15-20 ft. wide.

We followed the stream for nearly 1600 foot until it came to a large breakdown. Getting through this obstacle required some crawling through very tight and muddy places. Once beyond the breakdown it was only a short distance to the siphon.

Since this siphon is completely filled with water most of the time, we thought the passage beyond might still possibly be virgin. This time there was about two feet of air space. Whitt crawled through it first to see if there was enough passage beyond to make it worth while getting wet. It turned out there was.

This passage was similar to the one we had previously come through except that it was a bit smaller in places. Again there was a general absence of formations with the exception of some small spots of brown flowstone. We followed this passage for nearly 800 feet until it came to a "T". The main passage then passed into the stream and under a large and impressive white flowstone. The water deepened to over six foot, which stopped us from using this passage.

There were two small upper passages leading into this one, one from the left and the other from the right. Steve Judy and I tried the left one first. It quickly narrowed to about five feet wide and six feet high. After about 300 feet we came to a dead end where the stream went through a small submerged hole. In this passage we did find a carbide dump which ruled out the possibility of a virgin passage.

After this, Whitt, John, Tony, and I returned to the front part of the cave to get some photos and survey the large room as a possible fallout shelter. The others decided to explore the right passage which was similar to the left one except that it ended in a deep pool with very strong air currents blowing through. They also found evidence of previous explorations through a 1943 marking on the wall.

While returning through the main passage we met Ed Bauer's group who had just entered the cave a few minutes earlier. We finally left the cave about 9:30 p.m., got some dry clothes on, and returned to campus. This cave still offers some possible virgin passages beyond the back two siphons, but to explore them takes either cold blood or a wet suit.

CATANIBA MURDER HOLE July, 1964

Stephen Garber

Personnel: Dick Richman, Alex Pope, Jay Murray, R. E. Whittemore and Barry Whittemore

This trip, like most, was organized at supper about half an hour before we left for the cave. Actually, the trip started with a bang. Several of the ropes had been checked out "several" weeks before and had not been returned. We were thus forced to belay over a knot and use the belay rope to back-rappel into the funnel room. Also, because Whitt failed to check his pack, we ended up down in the Big Room with only two partial sets of vertical gear.

Well, we finally got away from Blacksburg, but not before we stopped at the "Greek's" for much-needed "supplies". I was very impressed with the size of the hole as were the other members of the group who had never seen it before. Everybody was down the big drop by 10 p.m. and with ropes collected, we started into the cave proper. I might add that the entrance drop is quite exciting, especially for those of us who had never rappelled before.

We back-rappelled into the funnel room and began to rig the final "fifty (?) foot drop" into the Big Room. We all had to marvel at how Jay was getting along. He had injured his ankle a few days before and could barely walk, much less go caving. In spite of the fact that he had also forgotten to bring a shirt, he was doing real well. He was the last one into the Big Room, so before he came down he rolled down the ladder. Thanks to Whitt's calculations, it was 20 feet short of the bottom. As we all gazed in horror at the end of the ladder dangling far above our heads, Whitt stepped forward, and with an air of snug confidence that

reassured us that all was well, said, "Roll it back up, Jay, we'll all prusik out."

Since none of had ever been here before, we looked around the Big Room for about an hour, checking out all possible leads to our satisfaction, and inspecting the different types of rocks.

Upon starting out of the cave our troubles really came to a head. We soon discovered that we had no foot prusiks and there was 70 feet of yawning darkness between us and the "supplies" cooling on the surface. We started to just wait for a rescue party, but Alex, who is part ape, decided that he had a better idea, so he climbed the whole 70 feet hand-over-hand on half-inch nylon without a belay and was out before we could blink an eye. Alex, who had never done any rigging before, re-tied the ladder so it would be closer to the floor. Iitt improvised a foot prusik and went up to the first ledge. There he made a short ladder with butterfly knots out of 3/16" Goldline and tied it on the end of the cable ladder. I was the first to go up the ladder using a prusik on the rappel rope for a safety. (We didn't have enough rope for a belay on this drop.) The rappel rope was re-rigged to make a belay from above, which worked better.

We got out of the cave about 3:30 that morning. The moon was big and the beer was ice cold. We went on in to Salem and had breakfast at a truck stop, and arrived back in Blacksburg about 5 a.m. Thus ended another average V.P.I. caving trip.

BUTLER CAVE Oct. 3, 1964

Mike Hamilton

Personnel: Gary McCutchen, Rick Holting, Tom Vigour

In keeping with the traditions of the V.P.I. Cave Club, we left Blacksburg about an hour behind schedule and didn't arrive at the cave entrance until late Saturday afternoon. We entered the cave and went first to Sand Canyon Camp. We followed the Trunk Channel downstream along Sinking Creek and Sneaky Creek. After splashing through Xⁿ lakes and after an icy bath in David's Lake, we arrived at the airhole near Last Hope Siphon. At this point Butler Cave approaches Virginia's second largest cave, Breathing Cave by only about 800 feet. The Butler Cave-Sinking Creek System is the largest in the state and has about nine miles of passage mapped.

When the Butler entrance is breathing in, air passes from the main part of the cave into the airhole. This observation was made on several previous trips; however, this time air was blowing out of the Butler entrance but at the same time air was still passing into the airhole. There is no apparent explanation for this.

The airhole is merely a small opening between two giant breakdown blocks. Rick and I worked for about an hour with a rock hammer before I managed to squeeze through and climb up through some more very large sandstone breakdown. This is probably the same sandstone that marks the floor of Breathing Cave.

Judging from the size of the breakdown I believe that we were in the bottom of a very large room; however, blasting will be required before we can go any further. The air filters between some small chockstones wedged in the ceiling of a small alcove beneath two breakdown blocks.

There must be "big cave" beyond. At the present time only about one-third of the predicted cave system has been found. The missing two-thirds should be beyond the airhole and Last Hope Siphon.

Since further progress was stopped we began the trip out and reached the entrance about two hours later. Mr. Kennedy "Ike" Nicholson, who is coordinating the exploration of the cave, invited us to stay at his cabin on the Bullpasture River. We enjoyed a good night's sleep and returned to Blacksburg Sunday afternoon.

CASS CAVE Oct 31, 1964 Mallory C. Rightower
Personnel: Douglas Bradford, Mike Hamilton, Dick Hoyle,
Tom Vigour

After lunch on Friday we left Blacksburg for Cass, W. Va. We were going to have a go at Cass Cave. We had planned to meet five members of my grotto, the National Capitol Grotto, at Cass at 4:00 p.m. Friday. However, when we arrived at the cave we learned, from a party leaving the cave, that they had entered and were already starting out. So we proceeded to enter the cave, following the instructions of the previous expedition. Getting to the drop can be considered a "walk through", as there was only one difficult spot -- a 40 foot crawl through rocks, gravel, and water -- but even that wasn't bad. From previous reports, we had expected the cave to be very wet, but on this day the water in some of the passages was only one foot deep, at the most. Getting to the drop took approximately 20 minutes.

When we arrived at the Baley Loft, we met two of the eight members. Three more people, from the Potomac Speleological Club, had joined the NCG. The remaining members of the party were prusiking up. We had a brief session on the Loft for about one hour, and then the NCG departed. They left us their rigging into the drop, consisting of 250 feet of 3/4 inch manilla and 250 feet of 5/8 inch nylon.

Mike Hamilton was the first to make the drop, followed by Vig, Doug, Dick, and lastly, me. The weight of the minilla prevented a fast rappel, as you had to force the rope through the karabiner and single brake bar. The first 20 feet of rappel is through a two-foot wide crevice, but when you leave this and look down to see carbide lights miles away Tremendous! That one rappel down was worth three prusiks up -- well, almost.

There is a waterfall about 30 feet away from the Belay Loft which tumbles down the 200 foot drop to become a mass of droplets at the end of its fall. On this particular day, the volume of water in the waterfall was far below the average.

After everyone was down we set off in the Big Room to find the register and record our names for posterity. One word can easily describe the size of the Big Room Unbelievable. We estimated that the Washington Monument could easily be shoved in sideways with room to spare.

After signing the register, we proceeded to the Cat Crawl, which, as it turned out, was impossible to reach because of the depth of the water leading to it. However, the small rooms leading to it are a cave photographer's heaven. The formations are numerous, large, and beautiful. Soda straws a foot long, helictites four inches long, and the Jolly Green Giant's bubble gum were some of the formations to be found. They put the Forest Room in New River to shame.

The prusik out was executed with relative ease in 2¹/₂ hours for the five of us. We stayed on the Belay Loft approximately one more hour to eat and talk; then we left the cave. We had entered at 4:50 p.m. Saturday, and left at 3:00 for a total of ten hours or fifty man-hours.

We headed for the Fieldhouse at Franklin, W. Va., at 3:30, where we spent the night. We ate one of Mrs. Smith's marvelous breakfasts, took a half-price tour through Seneca Caverns with the members of the ICG and FSC, took a look at Hell Hole and Schoolhouse caves, and left for Blacksburg to arrive at 6:15 p.m. Sunday.

"A peak is a high place between two passes."

(from the book How To Collect Mountains)

SPELEOTHOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Support civil rights; take a nigger caving.

HILLER'S COVE CAVE Oct. 12, 1964
Personnel: Sam Dunaway

Dixon Hoyle

I was checking my mail after dinner at the SAB with a couple of other cavers, when we were accosted by Sam Dunaway. It seems that this Monday night was his "weekend" and he wanted to get started on his survey of Hiller's Cove Cave. We all politely refused his offer, so he decided to offer an alternate -- Tuesday afternoon. After a bit of self-debate, I decided to go. Then, like an auctioneer, he said, "How about this afternoon right now? I'll promise to get back before midnight." Since I had already compromised my study schedule to go Tuesday afternoon, it didn't take much to compromise the rest of my study schedule and go that night -- especially listening to the comment that the cave was relatively new and not too accessible, hence fairly virgin and unvandalized. He promised to meet me at 7:00 p.m., but in true cavers style, he didn't show up until 8:15.

After the 1.2 mile hike to the cave from the car, we arrived at about 9:30 and rigged the entrance drop. We decided to start the survey from the bottom of the drop. Because the cave lies in a crack at about an 80° angle, our shots were short and tedious. At midnight we got to survey point 16 in the Ante Room, only about 200 feet inside the cave.

At this time, we decided to quit, but Sam wanted to show me the canyon, which was only a few yards away. On the way over, he saw a side passage where he wanted to show me some formations. At the end of the passage, I saw a hole about 8" x 18" and saw it get wider on the other side. Taking off my helmet and gear bag, I wiggled through in true Columbus (notice the date) exploratory fashion and Sam followed. We went about 150 feet horizontally, crawling and stooping, and the slot opened up and began to go down. We descended about 150 feet in this mud-covered crevasse until the ceiling almost touched the floor, with a few holes smaller than the first one I came through, and then opening up on the other side. A stone thrown down indicated that it went down for at least another hundred feet.

Looking up we saw a hole up and to the side about fifteen feet from where we stood which we scrambled up. When we came out of the hole, we found ourselves in a slanting room about 150' by 300' with a twenty foot ceiling. We began to descend again, and from the foot-tracks, decided that only one person had been there before us. We got to the point where this person had turned back and decided to turn back also as we had left our carbide behind and our lights were giving us problems.

We finally got to the Ante Room and gathered up our gear to go out, and decided to survey the entrance, so we finally emerged at 3:00. I got back to the dorm at 4:00 -- typical cavers -- always late!

THE GROTTO GRAVEVILLE

Programs

The program chairman of this Grotto would like to acknowledge several people who have been of great assistance in helping to present a weekly program. Thanks goes first to Dr. J. W. Murray of the Chemistry Department for his fine slide-lecture on speleothems, emphasizing the research that he did as a grotto member. Thanks also goes to Tom Bell for his slide-lecture on vertical caving techniques; to Bob Kallis for his slide-lecture on speleogenesis; to Ed Bauer for his slide-lectures on the NSS, the Texas convention, and Conservation; to John Eads for his fine slide-lecture on cave photography; to Mike Falck for his slide-lecture on mountaineering in Ecuador; to Tom Bell and Paul Helbert for their slide show on Paxton's Cave; and to everyone who contributed slides to the many slide shows this quarter, especially the "worst" show.

A special note of thanks goes to the majority of the Geology Department and the Mining Engineering Department for making it possible for the club to view the film, "The Eruption of Kilauea". However, it will not be possible for the club to obtain any more of these films, due to a narrow-minded point of view taken by the head of the Geology Department. This department is, for the most part, composed of neat guys, but it has one trouble. It has an ass where its head should be. (Thanks also for the free press.)

Ropes

A "loss" of about 400 feet of nylon ropes sometime during the summer placed the club in dire financial straits. The cost of replacing these ropes would have emptied the club treasury. However, due to the danger involved in using old ropes, the Office of Student Affairs granted the club \$50.00 to aid in replacing the "lost" ropes. The club would like to publicly thank Dr. Dean for this generous action.

Caves

Killer's Cove Cave continues to turn up surprises for lucky cavers. On a recent routine survey trip, Sam Dunaway and R. E. Whittemore decided to "go Swimming" in a pool at the bottom of the upper stream level. After pushing a long, low, wet duck-under, large passage was found. It was followed for an estimated 600 feet before a total siphon was encountered. No side passages were explored.

Ropes and Caves

It has recently been called to our attention that there is a way to rig a vertical drop without getting the rope hopelessly tangled. Instead of tossing down a coil that is likely to get caught on the first ledge or projection, or, at best, end up in a snarled mess ten feet off the floor, simply wind the rope into a large ball, like a ball of twine, and roll it down. This way,

it bounces off ledges and projections, unrolling as it goes. There are no loose loops to snag, and it invariably goes all the way to the bottom. Anyone who has ever been "first man down" into the Andrew's Room in Clover Hollow Cave knows the miseries of stopping at every muddy ledge to kick the rope down, and finally having to stop somewhere near the bottom to straighten out a "rope salad". On a recent trip into that cave, the above mentioned method was applied, and, believe it or not, the ball went clear to the bottom without a single kink. Whoever thought this up was really "on the ball".

Keys

Due to the "loss" of various pieces of club equipment this summer, the equipment committee decided that it was necessary to change the lock on the club storeroom. In ages past, all officers and committee chairmen were assigned a key, but no strict regulations were imposed upon the return and duplication of these keys. As a result of this, inactive members and former members held keys. This led to a free appropriation of club equipment by irresponsible persons, which, in turn, resulted in a loss of ropes. After the lock was changed, only four keys were assigned and only two of them were held by members living on campus, and one of them could not be loaned out. This resulted in people not returning equipment because of the difficulties in obtaining it. After several months of this ridiculous situation, the club officers decided to have two more keys made, and re-distribute them so that there are now five keys on campus. Perhaps this isn't the ideal situation, but so far it's the lesser of the three evils.

Managing Editor

Submitted for publication: December 1, 1964