

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

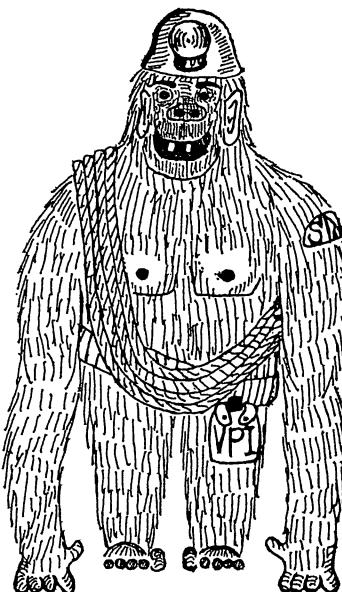
A JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA TECH GROTTO OF THE
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

Here's another issue of the Troglodyte and this is the editor's column. Instead of wasting time telling you stuff you already know, like we're the "World's Most Active Caving Organization", that we're doing all the work in southwestern Virginia, excluding Holsinger's beat, that we have the greatest parties and average three trips a weekend, I'll just kind of collect all the little bits of gossip, scandle and news that might be of interest and put them here. Maybe this should be called the "Filler Column", but anyhow, here it is.

The Fieldhouse New Year's party was pretty good although I thought that were too many differently-oriented factions there, mainly Us and the yankees. Nagy did a good job of getting everybody together and making them sing, but when you don't know the "Falcon", you can only do so much. Our sincere congratulations to Hester Miles for her tremendous job of resurrecting the Germany Valley for cavers.

Have y'all seen Dr. Halliday's new book, Depths of the Earth? It's fairly good, talks about a lot of the lesser known caves, and just about anybody who is anybody has his name in it at least once. Lyle Conrad has a couple of good pictures of Schoolhouse in it, and there's a good, but somewhat spectacular, chapter on the Butler-Sinking Creek System. The Life of the Cave by Charlie Mohr and Tom Poulton is well worth your time and \$4.50. It contains many fine pictures, and an excellent text.

If anybody has any "quality" magazines available for the Clover Hollow library, give them to the Equipment Chairman. Mike will see that they get to the library. After reading the register on a recent trip there, I think the Club should purchase a couple of Donald Duck comic books for Massachusetts cavers to read; it seems they don't appreciate our epidermal tastes. Oh yes, Bob Jullian got conned down the "Thistle Tube"; all those tiny little helictites at the bottom, huh, Bob?

In closing, my CONGRATULATIONS to our new officers (April 1967 to April 1968): Stoney, Ed, Mike and Bob. I think we're in for a good year.

Tom Vigour

PLEASE NOTE: New Grotto address, effective July 1967.

VPI Student Grotto
P.O. Box 471
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

A TALE OF TWO RESCUES

Once again, dear readers, we find ourselves in the throes of a Blacksburg winter; a little patch of Siberia in the Sunny South. To a caver, this could mean a number of things, among them are the possibility of flash floods (if you're a West Virginia Caver), or wet, icy ropes in those well-known Virginia entrance drops. This last hazard should bring to the VPI caver's mind two incidents that occurred last winter, and the lessons learned (and unlearned) from chilly experience. For new or non-VPI cavers, perhaps a brief recapitulation of these two "rescues" is in order. First, however, it is interesting to note that both rescues occurred only one week apart, with the "successful" one occurring before the "unsuccessful" one.

The first occurrence took place at Clover Hollow Cave, in Giles County, Va. Alan Armstrong, Gary Skaggs, Dave Strope, and John Peduzzi had entered the cave about three o'clock Saturday afternoon, rigging the 70-foot entrance drop with a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch goldline rope. They returned to the bottom of the drop around midnight and began the prusik out. Though no appreciable amount of water was entering the pit, enough had accumulated on the rope to freeze it into a solid icicle. Armstrong rigged in and made the ascent with some difficulty. Gary Skaggs, a novice, started up next. After considerable difficulty and backsliding, he made it up and over the breakover. The rope was getting worse. Dave Strope began his attempt. He made the first 20 feet by moving two feet up and sliding one foot back. The dampness in the rope had been compressed into solid ice. His knots began to slip, then slide uncontrollably. He made a rapid, jerky descent and landed in the pile of decaying humus at the bottom. Undaunted, he made a second attempt, only to experience a second terrifying elevator ride into the wet leaves. Not wishing to exhaust himself, he decided to rest and let John Peduzzi try his luck. Peduzzi would not give up without a fight, so he also made two attempts, with results all too similar to Dave's. There was little doubt in their minds that they were trapped. Any further attempts at prusiking would only result in exhaustion. There were no ladders on hand long enough for the pit, and too few persons topside to do any hauling. A thick layer of snow prevented hauling with the car. So they did the next best thing - they threw in the towel and went for help. Al and Gary arrived back in Blacksburg about 2:00 a.m. and found Ed Morgan and me just returning from another trip. Gene Harrison was still up studying and was ready to go immediately. Barry Whittemore was notified and was standing by with a car close at hand in case the rescue party had to phone for more help. He was the only person left on campus who knew a rescue was in progress, thus no unnecessary hysteria was created.

The five of us then returned to the pit. The morale of the two gentlemen at the bottom had not been dampened by their chilly vigil. A hoist system was rigged whereby a rope was affixed to a tree above the pit and ran down, through a carabiner on the "victim's" chest harness,

back up through a nylon pully suspended from another tree above the pit, thence down the hill to the four people who would do the bulk of the hauling. A fifth person, stationed near the pit, helped with the hauling and relayed signals.

John and Dave were on the surface in a matter of minutes. They were in as good a condition as the rest of us. They had done the wisest thing.

When the snow had covered our footprints, the world and the Roanoke Times were oblivious to anything unusual that had occurred that night.

The second incident took place at Catawba Murder Hole, in Botetourt County, Va. Many tales of fiction based on the incidents surrounding this "rescue" have been publicized in the various news media. It is perhaps unnecessary, therefore, to relate such a detailed account, but, for the record, here are a few of the undistorted facts.

Catawba Murder Hole has a small entrance in the side of a large, steep-sided sink. The entrance room is shaped like an oblong funnel with a 60 foot pit in the center. A handline is usually rigged from the top of the sink to the entrance, and another rigged from inside the entrance down to a flat-floored area adjacent to the pit. When five cavers from Blacksburg entered the cave late Saturday afternoon, there was an appreciable amount of water pouring into the pit.

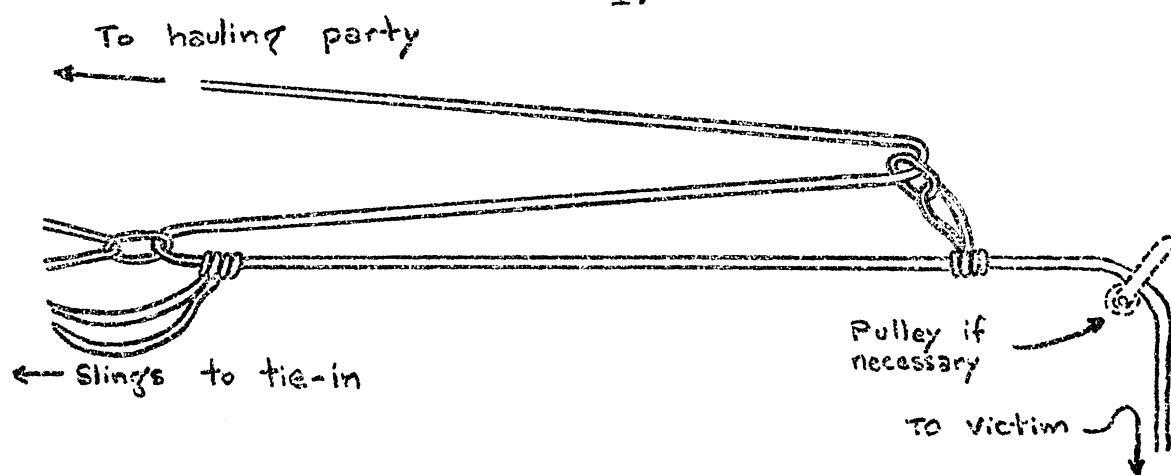
Of the five persons in the party, only one, Carole Noble, was a member of the VPI Grotto. She had very limited vertical experience at the time. Rick Keener, a non-member at the time, had some vertical experience. The other three (Bob Williams, Glen Davis, and Joe Kreck) were novices, but had done some limited vertical work.

The party deemed the water not to be a hazard, and, using a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch nylon rope, proceeded to the lower level of the cave. They spent several hours on the lower level, then began the prusik out. Joe Kreck started our first, but experience lamp trouble ten feet off the floor. The water entering the pit was fresh snow-melt, so his hands were too numb to make any repairs. He finally made it up with some difficulty, but was completely drenched and, needless to say, quite cold. Keener ascended next with no difficulty. Kreck then informed Keener that he would return to the car to change into some dry clothes, then summon the local rescue squad. Keener tried to dissuade Kreck, and Kreck appeared to agree with him, but would return to the car for dry clothes, nonetheless. It was a quarter-mile walk to the car and several nearby houses. When Kreck got there, he called the Troutville Rescue Squad while a dozen experienced VPI Cavers sat in their rooms back at school.

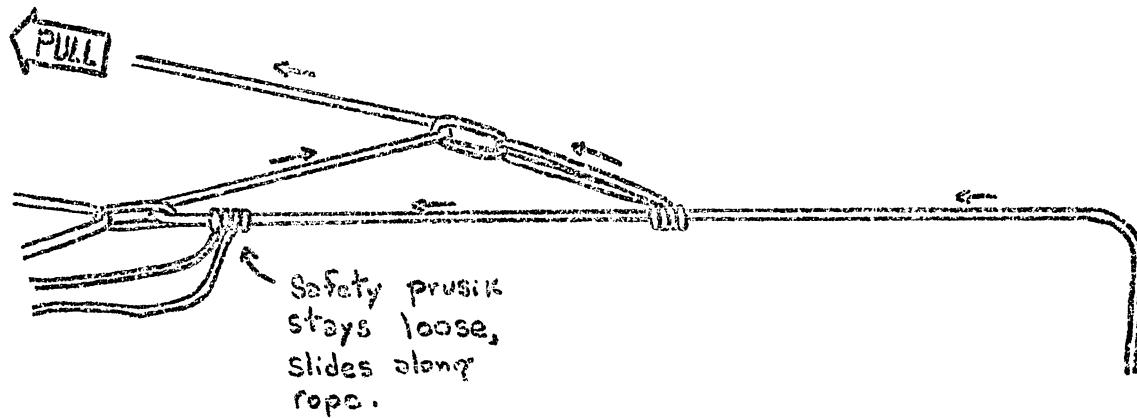
Meanwhile, back at the pit, the three remaining novices made the ascent without serious incident. As they were preparing to leave the cave, however, they were greeted by a glare of spotlights and the shouts of the rescue squad. The County Sheriff was on hand to harangue

THE TWO-CARABINER, TWO-PRUSIK HOIST

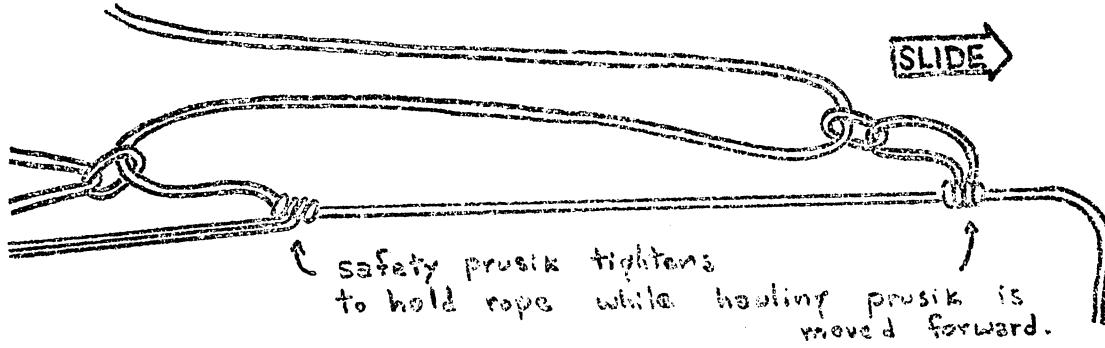
I.



II.



III.



the students, along with a reporter and several T.V. cameras from Roanoke. Since the whole rescue was in effect a false alarm, the reporter composed a sensational piece of fiction to justify being called out into the snow.

In a trip report, later, Joe Kreck made a statement to the effect that it was better to be embarrassed than nothing happened, than to be sorry later that something did and no help was available. By comparing this incident with the one a week earlier at Clover Hollow, one may easily see that this reasoning is fallacious.

First; at Clover Hollow, something did happen. Two men were actually trapped and rescued, but no one was embarrassed nor sorry later. At Catawba Murder Hole, no one was trapped, but people were both embarrassed and sorry later. The cavers were embarrassed, the members of the VPI Grotto were sorry.

Second; the people at Clover Hollow knew how to handle an emergency situation and did so quite efficiently. The people at Catawba Murder Hole did not know how to handle even a potential emergency, and blundered their way into enough bad publicity to last the VPI Grotto for years to come.

The point is this: use good judgement. If and when that fails, then know something about how to handle the results. One helpful piece of information is knowing whom to call. Use your CRCN list, (or call the U.Va. Security Office at 1-295-2166), also, "Harrison's Handy Handout" may be most helpful for a local rescue. Nat Cap is about as good as the Roanoke Times as far as bad publicity is concerned, but this is up to the individual.

Another bit of knowledge that is often overlooked is the various self-rescue techniques. Although their application is somewhat limited, they can be real life-savers in, say, a Tazewell County pit where help would be long in arriving. Two such techniques will be presented here.

The first is a method of eliminating waterfall problems. Many times, when prusiking in a direct waterfall becomes difficult, a person at the bottom of the drop can hold the rope aside, thus keeping the prusiker away from the water. But, one may ask, what happens to the last man? This requires some ingenuity. Two ropes are rigged for the drop, the prusik rope being passed around a stationary object and attached end-to-end with the second rope. The second rope is held taut from above. The last man may now prusik free from the direct force of the water. This method was used effectively in Cassell's Cave (Pocahontas County, West Virginia) a few years ago. This method may also be employed when spin becomes a problem. As long as the prusiker's center of gravity is not under the tie-in, his weight will prevent him from spinning. The ropes are retrieved by untying the main rope and letting it fall into the pit. The second rope is hauled up with the main rope

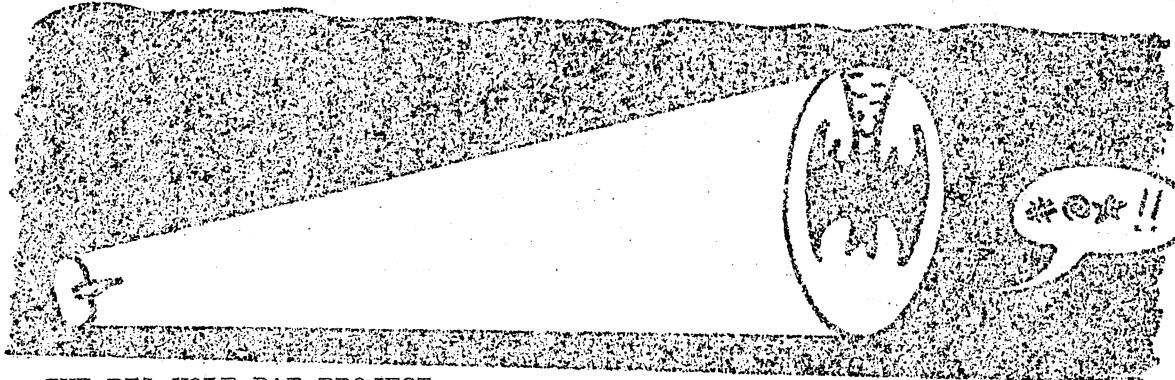
hopefully still attached. This method would be useless in, say, Newberry's, but there are an infinite number of variations. Ingenuity and common sense are closely related.

The second technique is known as the two-carabiner, two-prusik hoist. Its rigging and operation are best described by the diagram. With this method, two, or even one person can haul another person up a drop. In its elementary form, the hauler has a 3-to-1 mechanical advantage (theoretical), but an extra turn may be added for a slower but easier 5-to-1 advantage. The rig is not too complex, once its operation is understood, but practice is recommended.

Of course, no rescue technique will ever replace good, sound judgement (regardless of what Billy Gus says). With winter caving upon us, the use of good judgement becomes even more acute. After all, you wouldn't want to miss the Spring Picnic, would you?

R. E. Whittemore

Submitted for publication February 7, 1967.



THE PIG HOLE BAT PROJECT

In the early days of the VPI Cave Club, back in the early 1940's, many of the club expeditions went to Pig Hole Cave. At that time the only entrance to the cave was down the 120 foot free-fall drop. However, a survey indicated that a point far in the back section of the cave was fourteen feet above ground; consequently, a new back entrance was dug. Wood and drain tiles have since been used to keep the fifteen-inch square hole open.

As one approaches the last hundred feet of this back section, he becomes aware of large deposits of bat guano, sometimes six feet deep, on the floor. There has, in fact, been talk by several cavers about mining these guano deposits. However, there are very, very few bats in this area, or in the rest of the cave.

It is the theory of several of us that at one time there were terrific colonies of bats in this area, but the opening of the new entrance caused the passage to dry out, thus forcing the bats to leave. Or perhaps it was the draft of varying temperature that did it.

Regardless, two years ago, several of us built a wooden cover for the new entrance which cuts down considerably on the amount of draft. Since that time we have noticed that there seem to be more bats in this back area now. If we are to draw any conclusions whatsoever, I believe that now is the time to begin counting the bats in this area so that we may note whether there is any significant change in the years to come.

Due to the low ceiling of the passage in this area, I think that it would be possible to mark off boundaries, about 200 feet from each other and about the width of the passage. Then possibly four times a year, someone could go through that section and make a physical count of the bats. Of course, the season and time of day will be important factors, but these are not major problems if enough counts are made, assuming that the counts are accurate and they are carried out over a long period of time.

I would appreciate any ideas, comments, or suggestions on this proposal.

On February 26, I made the first counting trip. I found 37 bats in the section between the Mud Bridge and the back entrance. Included in this group were two types of bats: small brown bats and social bats. There was slight snow cover and the temperature was in the low 20's.

Edward Bauer

Submitted for publication January 1967

AROUND THE REGION

The 13th annual meeting of the Virginia Region was held at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, Saturday, November 22, 1966. Seventy-five people, representing eight area grottos and the West Virginia Association of Cave Studies, attended.

The main program, consisting of three informative talks, was held in the afternoon. Dr. John R. Holsinger discussed the Surgenor's-Gallahan System in Lee County, Virginia. John M. Rutherford explained the purposes and aims of the West Virginia Association of Cave Studies, and then discussed the Great Savannah Project which the group is now engaged with. R.E. Whittemore presented a very enlightening program on the work being done in southwestern Virginia by the VPI Student Grotto.

A rather expensive, but nonetheless enjoyable dinner was followed by somewhat disjointed speech given by an old caver and professor at VMI.

Dinner was followed by a business meeting; among items discussed was a Region publication. The "D.C. Speleograph" was suggested, but no positive action was taken. The Spring business meeting will be held in Harrisonburg next March.

Dr. John Holsinger conducted the Virginia Cave Survey meeting, and interested persons were assigned specific areas of the state to work in.

Bill Karras, formerly of the NSS, presented a very interesting film taken during the rescue in Rowland Cave, Arkansas in 1965.

A small party was held at Roger Baroody's home after the various sessions were over. Things quieted down somewhat after the gendarmes arrived.

The Officers of the Virginia Region for 1967 are: Chairman - Roger Baroody; Vice Chairman - Ed Bauer; and Secretary-Treasurer - Anne Whittemore.

Tom Vigour

Submitted for publication November 4, 1966

66

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“ ”

- "I'm 6 ft. 9 in and never played basketball, so don't ask." - Dr. West.
"Hi gang." - Jim Cooper.
"We were attacked by bats." - Danny Wright.
"Yahooo!" - Uncle Phil.
"Crunch!" - Uncle Phil's Mustang.
"Tiny little spaghettis." - Ed Morgan.
"I cleaned out my basement." - Hank Harjes.
"Damn gross cavers." - T.C. Jones (Doug Yeatt's roommate).
"I don't care if you're going to COW cave, get outta' here!" - Lane Goodall.
"Who wants to go to Cecil's?" - Barb Sonikinis.
"Anyone interested in going to Miller's Cove?" (said Tuesday afternoon) - Sam Dunaway.
"Will someone please take me to Clover Hollow?" - Carole Noble.
"Are you sure about that?" - Bob Swensson.
"Whoopie!" - Wes Thorne.
"I have here a product of SPACE technology." - Tom Vigour.
"We went to Pigshole." - Bob Amundson.
"Hey, I missed another class." - Rick Keener.
"Flush" - Water Closet.



G.M.C.
REVIEW

"How's it goin', fellas?" - Ray Womack.
"Na Na Na Na Na Na Na" - Mal Hightower.
"Hey Vig, can I borrow your truck?" - Paul Helbert.
"Are you kiddin' sic me?" - Doug Yeatts.
"It's going to be a boy." - Barb Stonikinis.
"It's going to be a girl." - Wes Thorne.
(Boy, February 18, 1967, 7 lbs., 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz., George III)
"I don't believe that!" - George Stonikinis.
"Hey Wes, will you buy my beer?" - Dave Yolton.
"Hi, Tommy." - Pati Gillock.
"Forget it." - Carole Noble.
"Blow into it." - Gene Harrison.
"Hawoo, Annie." - Gwen Davis.
"Don't mess with the Rocket." - Henry Stevens (Gasp, Wheeze, Shudder,
Pant STEELMAN)
"How would you like to pay your dues" - Tom Roehr.
"I move that the club buy the usual four copies." - R.E. Whittemore.
"He's really a good guy." - Anne Whittemore.
"#\$%#@*&%\$*#%" - Mike Youso.
"Well, I don't know" - Ed Morgan.
" " - Jack O'Meara.
"You're doing better, Stoney." - Tom Harris.
"GEORGE! Did you hear what he said?!" - Barb Stonikinis.
"I prusik too much." - Mike Keenan.
"The usual, please." - Jack Keat.
"STROKE!" - Mary Jones.
"I'd like to read y'all something." - George Stonikinis.
"I know her!" - Cletus D. Lee, Inc.
"You cavers are crazy!" - Monica Marshall.
"Wrap it with tape." - Pete Taylor.
"Well, I went to West Virginia again." - Henry Stevens.
"I have two more lamps for sale." - J. Craig Peters, ENTREPRENEUR
"Can I bum a cigarette? I forgot my pipe." - Alan Armstrong.
"It's an eggie sic, dammit!" - Henry Marshall.
"Now, we're not going to be nasty tonight." - Mary Anne Farnell.
"Oh yeah?" - Mal Hightower.
"I'm going to do a complete survey of Giles County." - Cletus Lee.
"But, Cletus, you already know everybody." - Doug Yeatts.
"Hey Craig, where did you get that tie?" - Everyone.

BANES' SPRING CAVE
BLAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Banes' Spring Cave is one of four caves located in the northern flank of Walker Mountain, immediately below and northwest of the prominent High Rock, on which stands a fire tower and which the Appalachian Trail passes by. The other three caves in this group are Banes', Newberry's, and Buddy Penley's.

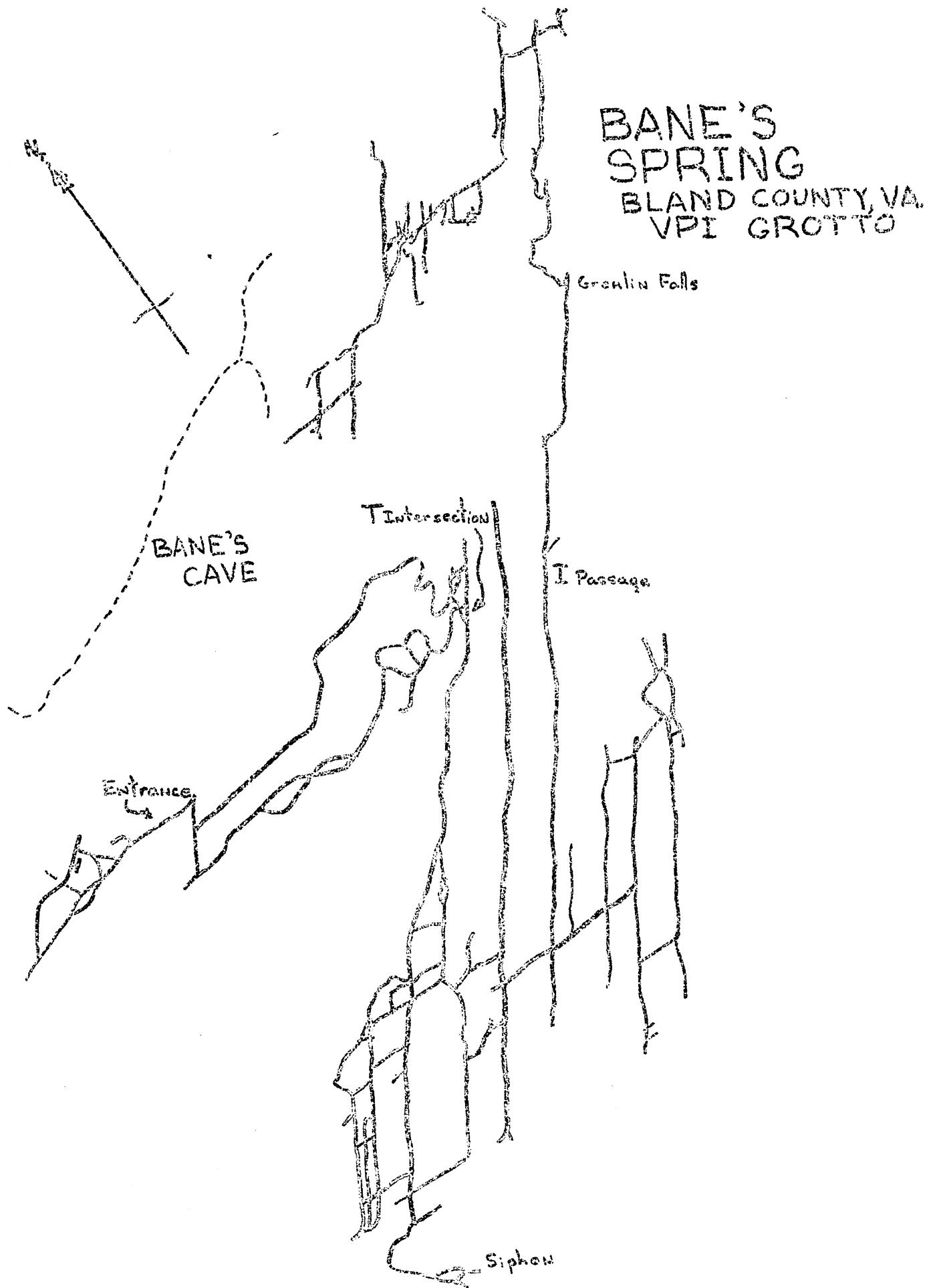
A very short description of the cave is given in Douglas' Caves of Virginia. It notes that the cave is a maze, more or less on two levels, and that the length is 1750 feet. Through the survey completed by members of the VPI Grotto in 1966, we found that the cave is developed on two levels and is not really a maze, but rather a system of parallel passages. These passages have developed in two directions, mainly northeast-southwest and almost due east-west. Our completed survey encompassed 9,000 feet!

The limestone beds into which the cave has developed, dip into the mountain. The entrance is in a streambed at a point where the bottom of a layer of sandstone is in contact with the top of a layer of limestone into which the cave is developed. A concrete box sets above the entrance to collect water from the stream during heavy rainfall and to keep water from falling into the cave. This box was used at one time as the water source for Mr. Banes' house; the water being transported down the valley by a system of small pipes.

Recent work in Banes' Spring Cave by the VPI Grotto began during our Fall Project in 1965. We had proposed to do surveying in Buddy Penley's Cave to see if it could be connected to Newberry's Cave, to check several leads in Newberry's, and to explore Banes' Spring Cave more thoroughly, since the description in Caves of Virginia seemed inadequate in comparison with the nearby caves.

On the evening of November 13, 1965, Barry Whittemore, Doug Draves, Tom Wehr, Jack Keat, Rick Keener, R.E. Whittemore, and I explored the cave. We entered by a slot on the right and dropped into a medium-sized room. Exploring several crawlways, we were stumped as to where Thierry got 1750 feet. Doug was not to be daunted. By lowering himself down a series of pits on the left side of the entrance, he came to a crawlway which looked impossible for anyone but himself. We all got through, however, and immediately had to manipulate our bodies around a huge rock slab which all but fills the passage. Once past this barrier the going is easy. We followed a sinucus passage for about 500 feet, dropping down at one point ten feet to a stream. This stream enters this passage near the huge slab and winds under and in the passage for the entire 500 feet. At times, one can either drop down to the stream level or take the higher, drier route and at other times one is forced to be in the stream. Movement in this passage consists of crawling, walking, and climbing, but one feels that he has done a good deal of crawling once he is able to stand again.

BANE'S
SPRING
BLAND COUNTY, VA.
VPI GROTTO



At the end of this 500 feet, we came to a "T" intersection with walking passage which extended to the left just 50 feet but was a good deal more extensive to the right. We followed this passage, which also has a small running stream in it, about 800 feet to a siphon pool in the bottom of a spherical room. The siphon looks and sounds exactly like a sink trap. There is absolutely no hope of pushing it.

No one returned to the cave until midsummer of 1966, when Whitt, Glen Davis, and I decided to get the survey underway. We mapped all of the section that we had explored the past fall, and then began to survey the numerous side passages, starting on the east side of the main passage. Our first lead was interesting in that coon tracks adorned the floor, but it became too small for humans. The next passage was very rewarding for it lead across seven passages, parallel to each other and to the main passage. We left a station at every intersection and surveyed the southwestern extensions of the parallel passages, none of which went very far.

The next weekend we three returned with John Peduzzi to survey the remainder of the parallel passages, and, we hoped, the rest of the cave. Ed Morgan and Bob Lewis were to join us later. "M" passage, the furthest from the main one is about 300 feet long. On the eastern side there is a ten foot pit into which a stream flows and coon tracks appear on the silt floor. Passages "J", "K", and "L" are not extensive.

We started into "I" passage with the hopes of finishing the parallel passages in a couple of hours. As we started off, Whitt was first with the Brunton, John next with the tape, I held the red flashlight, and Glen, bringing up the rear, took the notes. The first 400 feet is straight, although much of it is crawling. We had gone through a tight place, which Morgan later refrained from pushing because it "looked as if it didn't go." Just past Gremlin Falls, we were forced to begin belly-crawling. Often Glen was so far behind that John scratched the reading in the dirt beside the survey station. Whitt kept saying at each station that the passage went only ten feet more. Finally, we came to a high slot which we chimneyed up and found ourselves in a large room. There were many formations, the first we had seen, and water could be heard gurgling. We found one section of the room which was decidedly warmer than that which we had already come through, and determined that both the water and the warm air currents were from the surface. We all huddled around this warm blast as if it were a radiator.

From this room, we followed a passage which doubled back on us. It is a flat crawlway with a hard mud floor which gradually descends and the passage ends with a small hole on the right side. Whitt said he couldn't get through, but when he stuck his head through and found that he could; we all groaned. Whitt and John went through to explore beyond. This is the one tight place in the cave. At one instance, one is pinned by the ceiling and the floor. However, the floor is of soft dirt and a way can be dug.

Deciding that there was probably too much to survey beyond the tight place on this trip, we turned back, and on second thought, surveyed "H" passage. It is not as extensive as "I" and was completed at that time. We ended our survey and returned to the surface. Meeting Ed on our way to Mr. Banes' house, he told us that they had tried to find us, and had checked all the parallel passages. If they had only poked a little more in "I" passage, they would have found us. Tsk.

In the latter part of September, Morgan, George Stonikinis and I mapped part of a small maze section on the western side of the main passage near the siphon pool. We also finished the tail ends of the parallel passage survey and found a few more formations.

On the first weekend of the fall quarter, two carloads of cavers descended into the cave. Among the group were Tom Roehr, Bob Simonds, and Jack O'Meara who went with Whitt to survey the portion at the end of "I" passage beyond the tight place. My group consisted of Bob Lewis, Cletus Lee, Glen Davis, and Ed Morgan. We finished up the maze section near the siphon pool and then went back to the "T" intersection.

Beyond this intersection, to the northwest is a crawlway leading to sand-floored rooms. We mapped this, and rather than making closures that would make us backtrack, we continued in the passage which seemed to keep going. It did, indeed, keep going and we mapped about 700 feet of passage. This passage parallels the first 500 foot section we surveyed, and for the most part is hands-and-knees crawling with intervals of walking. The termination of this passage is just below the entrance pits down which Doug climbed to lead us on our first exploration. The passage had been somehow overlooked on earlier trips because one has to crawl almost immediately.

Back at the drawing board we decided that Thierry's map had consisted of our 500 foot and 700 foot sections, and the entrance room.

Our last trip in November 1966 finished the survey. Morgan and Dave McCloy went to the back of "I" passage to finish up Whitt's survey of the previous trip and to check some pits through which we hoped to get into Banes' Cave. The two pits found in this section are 125 feet and 250 feet away from the lower level of Banes' Cave. However, mud fill discouraged this hope. Also on this trip, Glen, Whitt and I surveyed the entrance room and made several needed closures in the vicinity of the "T" intersection.

The streams in the cave are running, and do not seem to change markedly with the surface changes. We wonder at the position of the siphon pool in relation to the surface and where the water goes. We wonder if there is a trunk channel somewhere which takes water from the other three

caves as well. Now that the mapping is completed, other studies can be made. In this respect the cave has potential. As far as caving goes, the cave provides a variety of physical exertions, but is not as impressive as nearby caves.

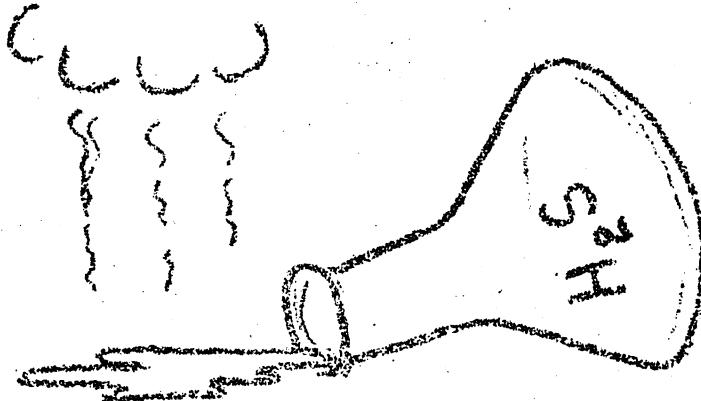
Anne Whittemore

Submitted for publication February 12, 1967.

TRIP REPORTS

NEWCASTLE MURDER HOLE
by Doug Yeatts
April 10, 1966

On Sunday, Steve Evans, H₂S, Henry Ferguson, Chuck Spitzner, and myself left Blacksburg to go to Newcastle Murder Hole. After trying to find H₂S a pair of gloves and signing our lives away at the cave owner's house, we rappelled into the cave at about two o'clock in the afternoon. After we did the 50 foot entrance drop, we followed a walking, downhill passage. In this passage were several small pits which could be traversed. We did the traverses and followed the passage into a room. It was a rather large room, mostly filled with breakdown.



We climbed around the breakdown for a while and then climbed down into a canyon which ran along the outside of the room. There was a waterfall in the canyon and a stream. We followed the stream until we came to a siphon. H₂S climbed behind the waterfall but could not go very far. We then climbed out of the canyon and continued down the passage. We came to another pit which could be traversed. We all looked at the hairy traverse and decided we all had homework to do so we left the cave at six o'clock that same afternoon.

Note: The cave owner does not want cavers to drive up to the cave because it will kill the grass in his pasture. However, he will let you park your car just inside the gate of the pasture.

CLOVER HOLLOW CAVE
by Don Laffoon

October 30, 1966

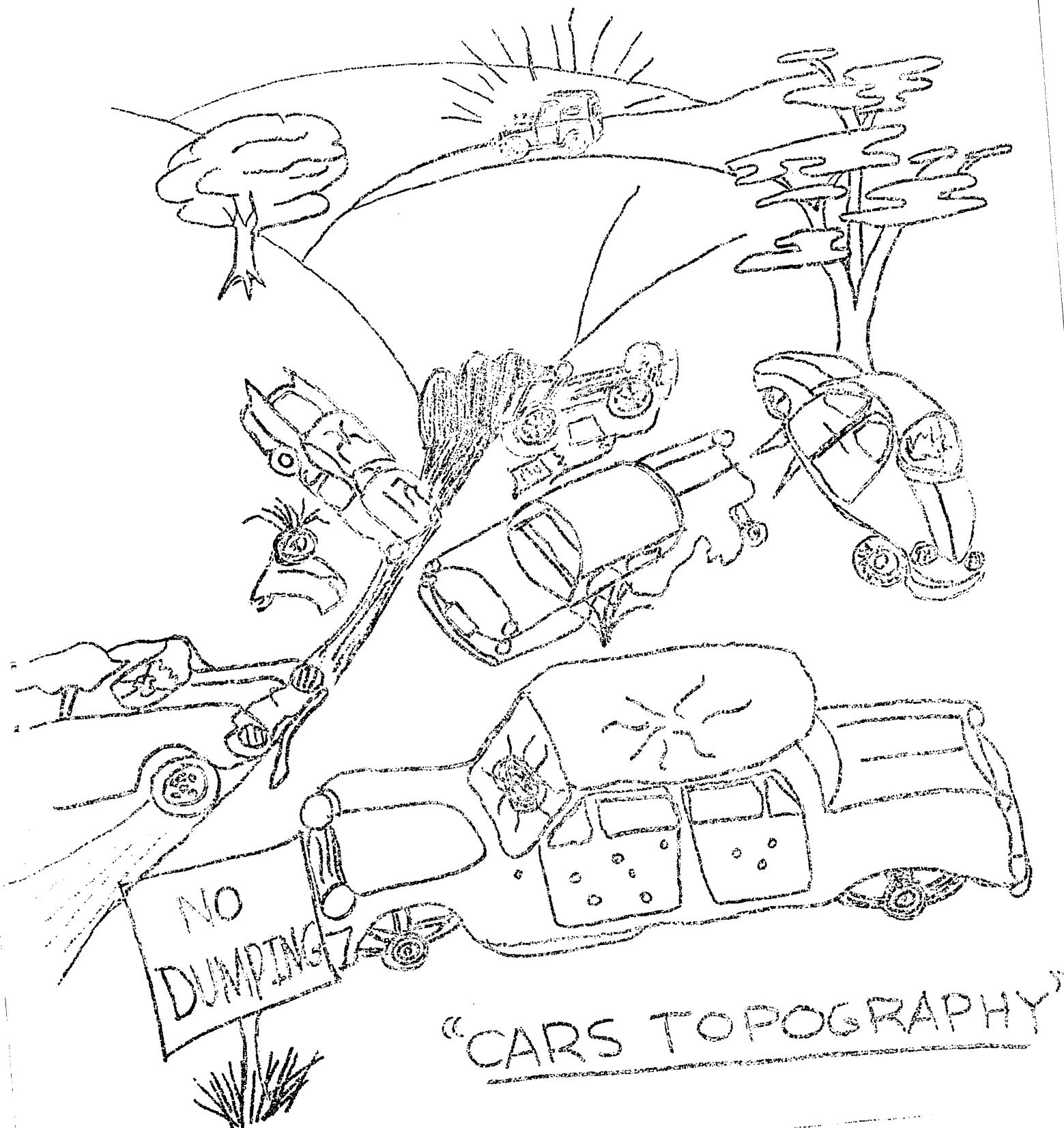
Personnel: Wes Thorne, Henry Marshall, Rick Keener, Don Laffoon

Saturday at 1:00 P.M. our group left to begin our eight hour trip. Soon we were struggling to get the car up the extremely rocky road to the cave when our first injury was received. Henry was hit in the leg by a rock that the car spun out. While changing clothes, Keener remembered that he had left his boots on campus and had to go back to get them while the rest of us rigged the drops to the Canyon Room.

The first hundred feet of passageway is a good workout for any vertical caver. First of all there was a seventy foot entrance drop followed by a high squeeze through a narrow V shaped slit in two rock slabs. The log which we used to stand on was broken in two at the time. Next we had to bridge a five and a half foot gap for a distance of about fifteen feet. Then we descended a ten foot drop that was kind of hurtin' for handholds. After a fifteen foot back rappel over flowstone we were at the tie in spot for the Grand Canyon Room. The ceiling of this room was about 125 feet above us. Below there was nothing but 100 feet of darkness. At the bottom of the Grand Canyon Room we rested until we saw a star far above us which turned out to be Rick Keener with his carbide lamp. He came down by means of a carabiner. At twenty feet from the floor the carabiner popped open and he hit the floor rather hard.

At the side of the room there was a stream which came from a high waterfall about fifty feet upstream. With the exception of a trip to the bottom of the Andrew's Room, ours was not a sightseeing trip. While Wes and Keener rested, Henry and I went down the crawl to the bottom of the two 150 foot waterfalls which form the huge Andrew's Room. We lit a small piece of magnesium ribbon and the sight of the waterfalls was even more impressive when lit up. If it can be said that getting to the bottom of this room is half the fun; then getting out is at best the other seven eighths.

After the detour we proceeded to explore parts of the cave which are less frequently visited. Keener wanted to see Idiot's Delight so we allowed him 45 minutes for the round trip. At the end of this time he had not returned but Wes generously decided to allow



"CARS TOPOGRAPHY"

him another ten minutes rather than follow through that one and a half foot narrow crawlway with all those nice comfortable jagged rocks and a stream flowing through them. After still another ten minutes, Keener came out.

The rest of the cave was relatively dry, had numerous bats, and several formations. These were a few columns, and at one spot ther@ was some eight inch rimstone. Just beyond the Gypsum Room there was a three and a half foot soda straw reaching from the floor to the ceiling. Getting a little hungry we started the long trip upward. Just as we were all on the surface and pulling up the rope, one of Henry's equipment bags broke loose and fell. Since Wes was still in his Jumar gear, we nominated him unanimously to go down and get the bag. After a long rest and a few choice words, he did. Our eight hour trip turned out to be twelve and a half hours underground and we were not back on campus again until 5:30 Sunday morning.

* * * * *

CASSELL FARM CAVE

November 13, 1966 by Marie-Christine Noble

Personnel: Anne and "Whitt" Whittemore, ED Morgan, Glen Davis, Carolle Noble, and Marie-Christine Noble

Cassell Farm Cave is actually a series of closely connected caves in Burke's Garden, Tazewell County. The caves' entrances are in a field honeycombed with sinkholes. Carole Noble surveyed these entrances. She found that there are at least seven entrances: two of which are stream fed, all the others having dry openings. These entrances are located in a radius of several hundred yards.

The portion of the cave that we surveyed is about one hundred yards from a dirt road and over a hill. The first room is easily accessible; it divides into three passages. The main passage enters a roofless room with a small waterfall. This room opens directly to the surface, however, entrance to the cave would only be possible by a fifteen foot vertical descent.

After a walking passage and several rooms, the main course divided into two passages. The right passage seemed to have been explored before, the left seemed unexplored.

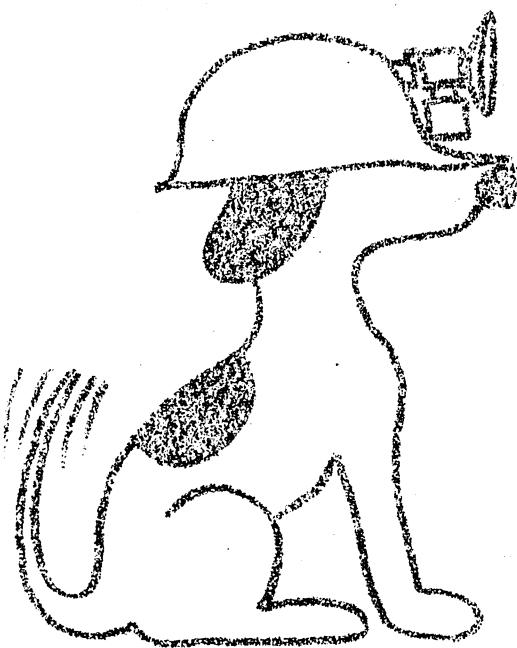
This virgin system is a series of about three or four fairly large rooms. Running along the floor of these rooms is a foot wide fissure, from which can be heard an underground stream.

One notable investigation led up a steep, muddy climb and down into a underground pond. A successful attempt was made to link this passage with a crawlway on the other side of a rock wall.

The last and largest room of the system held the surprising climax to our surveying trip. Several small crawlways led from this room. One led to a maze of small stream courseways which branched and often dead-ended, or looped back to the last large room. Another portion of this crawlway made a U-shaped detour from the passage into a room with a vertical shelf and a corkscrew walkway about fifteen feet long. Another crawlway on the side led under and around the last, large room. Also, it is possible to connect this large room with the one that precedes it by a circular crawlway and a passage through some tight formations.

This trip took place on November 13, 1966. Only 1400feet of virgin cave were surveyed; however, the cave has the potential for more investigation of its system of entrances and passageways."

* * * * *



HAPPINESS IS THANKSGIVING WEEKEND IN PENNINGTON GAP
by Ed Bauer

Would you believe Ackie Loyd and George Titcomb as starter and flagman for the local drag races over the mountain in Harlin, Kentucky? Would you believe hotel rooms for \$1.00 a night and steak dinners going for \$1.50? Would you believe a cave only 50 feet from the hotel?

On the Wednesday night preceding Thanksgiving, Phil Lucas (formerly of VPI) and I met Bill Biggers in Blacksburg and headed southwest for the weekend. On arriving in Pennington Gap, we checked in at the Shelburne "Tourist" Hotel where many other cavers were already assembled. Holsinger's and Baroody's voices led us to the room of activity.

Our gracious accommodations were a central room (with central 95°F heating) which didn't include any windows, only an eerie skylight. Phil complained the following morning of awakening in his sleep and seeing the moonlight filtering down through the skylight shaft, foggily thinking he

was trapped at the bottom of a pit with no rope to the surface. So, on the following nights, we hung a rope down from the skylight.

Early on Turkey Day, Bill, Phil and I set out to find Hairy Hole, near East Stone Gap in Wise County. We spent some time searching the brambles and cedars on the steep, limestone-outcropped hillside, but, after locating an entrance to Powell River Cave and another entrance to an unreported cave, Phil spotted the awesome pit.

We returned to the car for our gear. Upon reaching the cave again, a young boy, out hunting, joined us. He seemed quite harmless, inspite of his careless gun handling, until I was over the edge of the pit and the others at the bottom. He wondered aloud, quite matter-of-factly what would happen if someone cut our ropes.

The pit itself was a clean 120 feet, with many leads from top to bottom. After initial exploration, we followed an old stream passage upstream and found ourselves in virgin passage. Going back into the mountain (sw), we found a series of crawls, canyons and climbable pits. Circling around, we hit the stream passage again and followed it northeast, possibly very close to Powell River Cave, where a wet crawl dampened our spirits. In this area we found several other crawls leading to larger rooms and another stream. After finding 4000 feet of cave, 3000 feet of it virgin, we prusiked out and headed for the hotel.

After exchanging tales with the fifteen or so others, we hit the sack in anticipation of the morn.

On Friday, we drove to Gate City, met two young boys from Kingsport and headed for Blair Cave. We mapped our way through the entrance section which was quite steep and very muddy. We soon found ourselves in a stream passage about fifteen feet wide and twenty to thirty feet in height. Occasionally, we went up to our knees. The entire cave was decorated heavily with flowstone draperies. After mapping about 900 feet downstream to a siphon, we found the same end about 400 feet upstream. In total, we mapped about 2000 feet leaving only two unchecked leads.

This particular trip was very interesting, as the two boys had a dialect all their own. One, Sam Taylor, entertained us with his story of being one of three boys to find the largest ground sloth ever discovered. It was about 11 feet long, and he had kept it in his garage until it started deteriorating. When he finally got around to telling the Smithsonian about it, they just about went crazy.

Again we returned to the Shelburne to swap stories with Jerry Frederick, Stan Carts, Dick Sanford and others. They had spent the past two days in Crackerneck Saltpeter, Big and Little Kelley and others.

Saturday was the trip Phil and I had looked forward to - Rocky Hollow Cave. While our car was being filled with gas, the attendant pointed out the entrance to an unreported cave, only 150 feet from us. It was located in the parking lot of a laundromat. Entrance was gained through a cement and steel tunnel. Bill Biggers climbed on down, but reported it was filled with gravel and silt.

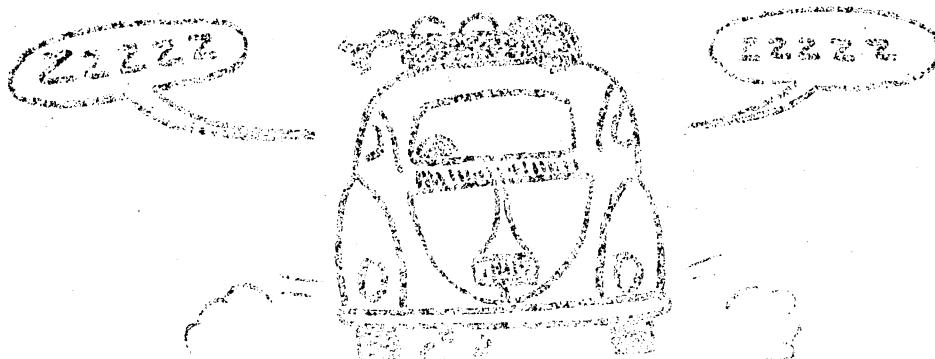
Following Don Finley and Rick Shultetus of the University of Kentucky we sped toward Big Stone Gap. Also on the trip were John Davis, Charlie Maus, and John Holsinger.

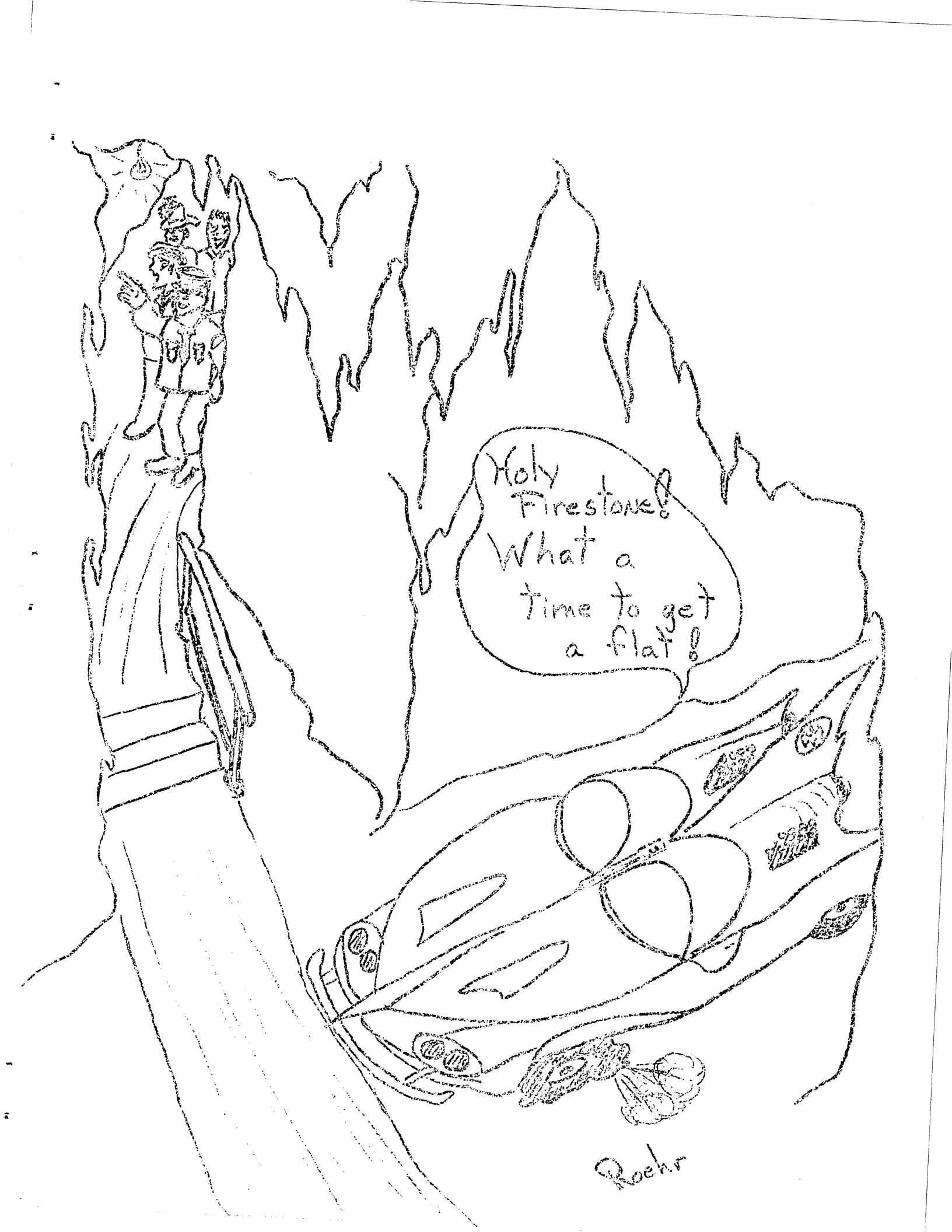
Arriving far up the mountain road, at the site where we parked the cars, Finley's first action was to remove his hubcaps. "Yes," confirmed one of the local boys standing nearby, "If you don't, them fellas up the holler will steal 'em. I reckon I ought to know, I lived here all my life." This local boy decided he would guide us the two miles up the mountain to the cave. Delmar, a candidate for the Redskin's line, was only in the 7th grade, but he stood six feet, one inch and weighed 240 pounds. He literally ran up the steep trail as we dragged after him, lugging 180 feet of ladders and about 600 feet of rope. For one who has never been to this area, they must imagine a completely different caving area. Gone are the long valleys and gently rising ridges. Instead, continuous river gorges, exceptionally steep and sometimes very high are found. The entrance to Rocky Hollow Cave is at 2900 feet.

While several of us began mapping, Phil and Don checked out an entrance farther down the limestone bluff. However, they did not have enough rope to reach the entrance.

Rocky Hollow is a large passaged, vertical cave in which we explored about 3000 feet of passage. Although there are several pits over 75 feet deep, the bottom (stream) level can be reached with a 45 foot ladder and a 30 foot ladder. There are many short homemade wooden ladders for shorter drops and ample quantities of logs and telephone cable - used by the local explorers. As Holsinger said, "If those guys are wild enough to climb 60 feet on telephone cable and logs, then they're wild enough to steal my hubcaps." As with the other two caves we had visited this weekend, Rocky Hollow will demand a return trip.

Sunday, after saying our goodbye's, we headed for Blacksburg and home, stopping only briefly for a short trip through Natural Tunnel.





Holy
Firestone!

What a
time to get
a flat!

Rock

BUTLER CAVE

November 19, 1966

by David Yolton

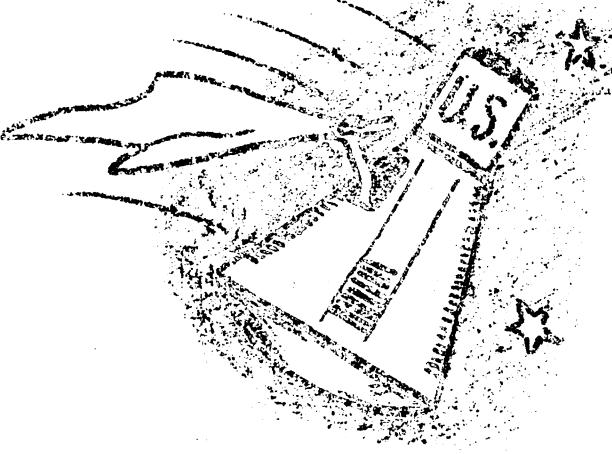
Personnel: Tom Vigour, Jack O'Meara, John Atthowe, David Yelton.

We entered the cave at about 4:30 p.m. and reached Sand Canyon, the main passageway of the cave, with little trouble. The purpose of our trip was to carry in equipment such as the New-V bars and "space blankets" to be used the following week for the Butler mapping trip in Marlboro Country.

We left our equipment in the canyon and proceeded to the Penn State Lake area where Jack O'Meara wanted to do some general reconnaissance, and to see what the possibilities for draining the lake were. After wandering around a few wrong passages for a while, we arrived at the lake. Jack crawled through the water to get a better look at the situation and decided that the lake couldn't be drained. This accomplished, we headed back to our equipment in Sand Canyon, and proceeded from there toward the top of the Crisco Way. We found it after a few hours of walking through the water and deposited our equipment. On our way back to Sand Canyon and the entrance, we stopped and had a nice hot dinner in the Trunk Channel. Before we reached the turnoff to the entrance, we made one last stop to see the Moon Room which although it has been muddied up, is still quite an impressive sight. We got out of the cave at approximately 1:00 p.m. and were met with the coldest night of the season to sleep out in.

For one that doesn't mind a little water, the cave is quite nice because it is possible to see a lot of main portions of it by using almost all walking passage. It is quite nice in some places because there is a lot of dry sandy walking passage although it is somewhat lacking in formations.

* * * * *



BUTLER CAVE--MARLBORO COUNTRY
by Tom Vigour

Personnel: Rick Keener, Richard Beck,
Bill Royster, Tom Vigour.

As for the past two Thanksgivings, I again wanted to spend the break working in Butler. With Mike Hamilton retiring from caving and ascending to mountaincoring in Colorado, Butler fell into my lap. The one part of the cave that needed attention, and had not received any since Thanksgiving of 1964, was Marlboro Country, the present "bottom" of the system.

There were several things that had to be done and I thought that the best

way to accomplish everything was to spend an extended length of time in the cave. The notoriety of the "Crisco Way", a 500 foot crawlway carrying a stream and coated with grease-like mud, plus the lure of Greenbrier County, made recruiting a problem. However, with a few letters, I had three other fools that agreed to go. Rick Kerner and I from VPI, Bill Royster from the Shenandoah Valley Grotto, and Richard Beck from Petersburg, a former VPI caver.

Our next problem was sleeping gear, sleeping bags of any kind would be impossible to drag down the "Crisco Way" and keep dry. I became familiar with the National Research Corporation's "Space" Blanket at Holubar's in Boulder this summer, and they seemed our best bet. A letter to the company explaining our problem resulted in six "Space" Blankets, at no cost, in exchange for a report on their capabilities. Nu-V Bars supplemented with candy bars, boned chicken, fruit cocktail, and bouillon would hopefully keep us alive.

We entered the cave at noon, Thanksgiving Day, and were at the "Crisco Way" in three hours. Dry clothes are essential for an extended trip; consequently, we carried fairly large packs into the cave. They were a real problem in the "Crisco Way" as they absorbed water; and mud just loves packs. The thirty-five foot pit into Marlboro Country adds another pack with rope and ladder. Aside from a short belay line and a small water-fall, the drop was negotiated with no problems.

Amidst such comments as "they're probably carving the turkey at home now", and "what the hell am I doing here?", we "enjoyed" our Thanksgiving dinner of boned turkey, fruit cocktail, and a somewhat battered can of brew that Rick had somehow hauled down the "Crisco Way".

The evening was spent getting to and looking over the Candle Room and trying to decide what had to be surveyed and checked. After checking three question marks, we went into a crawlway, changed into dry long-johns and settled down with our "Space" Blankets.

If enough insulation is used between you and the ground, and if you wear perfectly dry clothes (lotta' luck), you can stay fairly comfortable in the blankets. In order to retain body heat, the metallic liner cannot breath, and consequently the moisture builds up ... and gets COLD. Two hours of sleep at a stretch was it. I've never shivered for five minutes straight before. With all the problems, though, we did manage ten hours of fairly sound sleep. Hot bouillon and a Nu-V Bar (BARF) lessened the agony of wet clothes and we were off again Friday. Rick and I mapped the last big unsurveyed passage in Marlboro Country, and Richard and Bill spent the day checking question marks. Another cool, damp night in our "Space" Blankets (livened up a little when I rolled over on a burning candle) and more hot bouillon got us more or less ready for the trip out. A losing battle up the "Crisco Way" and a three hour hike to the entrance did us in. Fortunately, we met Jack O'Meara and Mel Hightower at the entrance. They helped us out, and had a beautiful six-pack for us. After

the inevitable picture taking, we changed clothes and headed for the nearest store to gorge ourselves on anything that was not a Nu-V Bar.

From my previous experience, despite Plummer's article in the Bulletin, plus what we learned on this trip, camping trips in caves usually result in more sleeping than work. We left two notable question marks and a virgin pit unchecked, plus one passage unsurveyed. A twenty hour trip would have accomplished as much if not more.

The "Space" Blankets worked very well for their size (4"x2"x6" folded) and weight (10oz.), and nothing else would have been easier to carry in and keep dry. The Nu-V Bars kept us alive, I guess, although they tasted like Ivory Soap and contained only 200 calories. A hot drink is a must on a long trip and bouillon is good although it does not contain much food value. The dry clothes kept our morale high, although they were a royal pain in the "Crisco Way". In closing, I repeat, a twenty hour trip can get as much done as a fifty hour expedition.

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JOHN BROWN'S AND MOLER'S CAVES

MICHAEL FRIEDERS

DECEMBER 18, 1966

Personnel: Terry Pick, Gary Cooney, Flora Wells, Michael Frieders.

John Brown's is a cave whose entrance is a hole cut out of a railroad by-way in Harpers Ferry. On arriving at the cave in about a foot of snow we met a group of cavers from the D.C. Grotto that informed us that the cave was flooded and there was no use going in, but we did anyway. The cave has quite large passage until you take one of the side passages which narrows it out a little. It was in one of these passages that we found about six feet of water so we turned back.

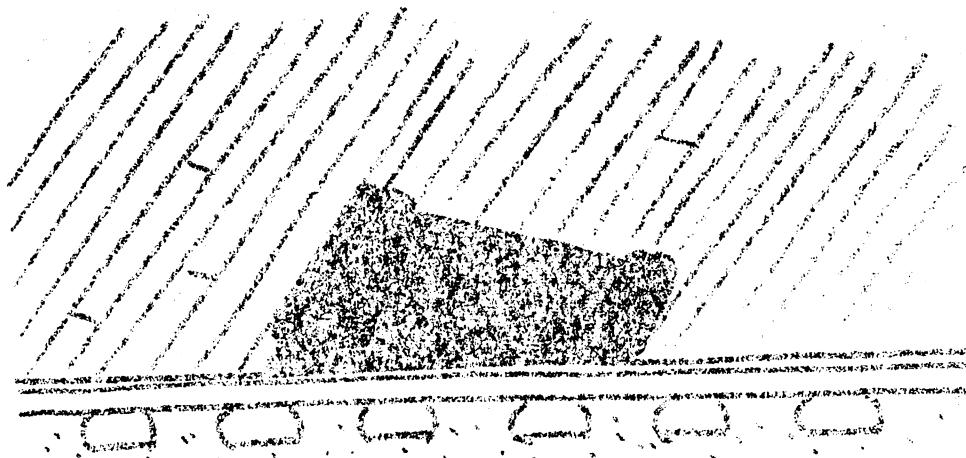
After a long snow battle on the hill over the crve we decided to move on down the road about three miles to Moler's Cave on Cave Hill Farm. The farmer there has a log book which he likes to have everyone sign before entering the cave. To get to the entrance you have to walk through a cow pasture (watching where you step and humoring cows). The entrance is very large with a lot of break-down in the initial passage. Most of the passage is very large and can be walked through. On this trip we went b ck to the sign saying "stream pas'age" and went down through a series of holes to the stream passage.

We followed the passage for a while before meeting up with a group of cavers from Northern Virginia Toch which was making its way through

the cave with a minimum of equipment. Later on at the end of the passage, we met the D. C. Grotto group again and followed them out of the stream passage the same way we came into it. All in all there were about nineteen cavers in the cave.

A second trip was made a week later on December 26, 1966, With Gary Cooney, Bob Amundson, myself, my sister Lorraine and another girl, Chris Casto. This trip was mainly to show the girls what caving was like.

These two caves are great caves if you happen to live in the D.C. area because it only takes about an hour to get to them from D.C.



FLUTE CAVE

January 1, 1967

by Anne Whittemore

Personnel: Tom Vigour, R. E. Whittemore, Barry Whittemore, Dave Newson, Anne Whittemore.

Vig and Whitt contracted to survey Flute Cave in Pendleton County, West Virginia during the ole New Year's party at the Fieldhouse. Sunday morning dawned and we were still sacked out. About 11:00 Barry stumbled over our tent and woke us up. After breakfast we sat around the wood stove trying to get up nerve to go to Flute. Newson got interested in our lack of effort and joined the team. Vig lent Barry one of his smelly shirts and Royster's hat and lamp so that he could go too.

About 3:00 Vig said that he felt kind of sleepy. Whitt said, "Let's go." Vig stumbled to the car and started getting his gear together: "Well, I don't think I can go; can't get my lamp apart." "Keep trying, Vig." "I can't go; I don't have any carbide." "Don't worry, we've got extra." "Geez, I can't go; my boots are frozen shut." "Whitt, give Vig your old tenny pumps." "My clean clothes are dirty; don't guess I'll be able to go." "We'll put a poncho on the seat, Vig." "Guess I'll have to go."

Newson found the cave after five tries. Whitt broke a trail through the snow; Barry slid back down to the road. We surveyed several hundred feet; Newson helped by watching and making helpful comments. Vig set stations, Barry explored ahead, Whitt read the Brunton, and I took notes.

After we got to the first fossil room, Barry lost interest in surveying. We left the cave at 7:30 so Newson could make dinner at Mrs. Smith's. He was a little late. Newson's really a good guy, but he's hard to wake up when he's drunk a lot.



NEWBERRY'S CAVE

January 14, 1967

by Danny O. Wright

My most interesting vertical caving trip while a trainee was to Newberry's Cave. The trip leader was Tom Roehr, Treasurer of the VPI Grotto. Other members on the trip included Jim Cooper, Cletus Lee, Bob Simonds, Bob Amundson, Gary Moss, and Nancy DeJarnette.

It had snowed hard about a week prior to our trip and the melting of this snow had made the entrance drop to the cave dripping wet. The entrance was a 50 foot deep crevice. A short distance from the entrance we encountered a 12 foot drop with a breakover. Before making this small drop, we rigged a cable ladder and belay line for the return trip. The next drop was what we had all been waiting for, the 180 foot drop. Bob Simonds and Cletus were the first to rappel down because they wanted to get hero shots of the rest of us with their cameras. To our surprise, they found the rappel was extremely slow with the double brake bar rigs we had all planned on using. Therefore, Jim Cooper decided to make his drop on a single brake bar. I guess that most of us thought that Cop had the sense of a Mongolian Idiot, but it turned out that he had the only decent rappel of our group.

After about an hour of exploring, we started the climb out. The ascent up the 180 was made on a passage called the Devil's Staircase. It wasn't exactly a good place to go for a Sunday stroll. The Staircase opened up some 40 or 50 feet above where we had rigged the 180 foot drop. I now got the chance to learn another new caving

skill, a back rappel. After collecting all the gear, we made our way back to the entrance. This final stage was made by chimneying (on belay) up the crevice. Getting everyone out was a long, wet, cold process. My total time in the cave was nine and one half hours, enough to complete 20 hours with a club member on at least three trips.

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BRASS KETTLE HOLE AND JOHNSON'S CAVE

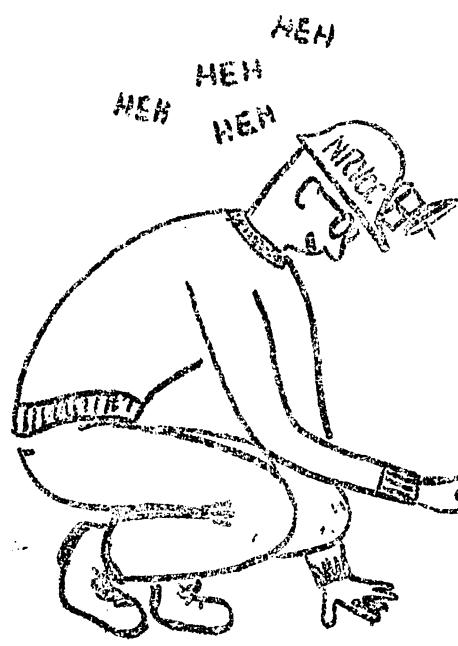
by David McCloy

Personnel: Ed Morgan, Linda Heitz, Tom Vigour, David McCloy.

Over the first weekend of 1967, Ed decided to go on one of his specialties, a weekend caving trip. We reached our first objective; Brass Kettle Hole, located in Tazewell County on Saturday afternoon, and we gave the farmer who had directed us to the cave a treat by letting him see VPI cavers in action as we body rappelled down the sloping entrance drop. This slope was only about 60 degrees and extended downward for about 70 feet, however, the mud made it hazardous without a rope. In this cave we mapped and surveyed approximately 1300 feet and we enjoyed a mud fight at the end of the cave. On the way out, Vig and Ed climbed up the entrance drop unassisted; however, Linda and I climbed out on belay.

The next morning after a refreshing night's sleep in Ed's station wagon--it had been raining too hard to find a place elsewhere to sleep--we were ready to explore the next cave on our itinerary, Johnson's Cave in Russell County. The night before we had already driven to within the approximate location of this cave. The cave had a big, booming entrance and about 100 feet in the cave we cooked breakfast and, later, dinner. After breakfast, while Ed and Linda were exploring outside for another entrance, Vig and I went back in the cave for 200 feet for a little look-see excursion and we were amused to see a fox. As Vig and I went back out of the cave we met Ed and Linda and also the farmer who lived across the road. Without any light of his own, he gave us a guided tour of the front portion of the cave. After he had left we got down to some serious mapping and surveying. After squeezing through a tight eight foot crawlway, we got into some interesting passageways. At one point the cave had tri-level passageways. After we had mapped 1000 feet we explored the remaining accessible cave in the back which probably totaled about 500 feet. We found one or two possible leads to more cave which could be acted upon by a later trip.

Got
that
bacon
fried
yet
?



CRACKLE
SIZZLE
FRY

G.MG
&
R.E.W.

SLUSSER'S CHAPEL CAVE

January 21, 1967

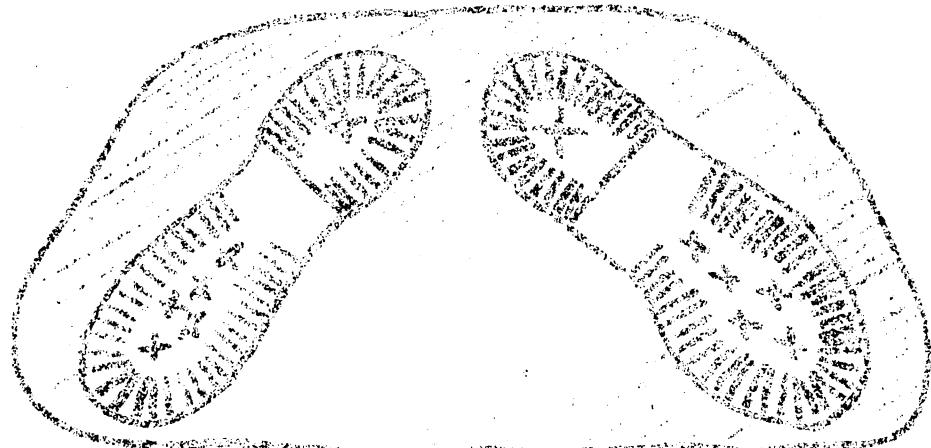
by Bob Amundson

Personnel: Whitt and Anne Whittemore, Cletus Lee, Gary Moss, Bob Amundson

Slusser's Chapel Cave is located about five miles northeast of Blacksburg. The entrance narrows down quickly to a small crawlway. The crawlway continues on for a hundred feet or so and drops into a channel about ten feet high and six feet wide. Chert was rather abundant in this passage along with many formations (mostly stalagmites) growing on each side. There were also many pools of which many were several feet deep and wide enough to make a good splash. We followed this passage for quite a ways until we came to the place where Whitt had stopped on his last mapping trip in Slusser's Chapel.

We proceeded to map. Anne set stations, Whitt read the Brunton, Cletus took notes, and Gary and I looked on ahead. Shortly the passage had a branch off to the right which we mapped. Gary and I continued on for about five hundred feet and reached a Y junction. We took the left branch and followed another 200 feet to a point where the passage ends. In this section of the cave there was much large breakdown.

On the left near the top of the dead-end passage I noticed a place between a large breakdown rock and the ceiling large enough for me to crawl through. After crawling ten feet I found myself in another passageway parallel to the dead-end channel. This passage was full of stalactites. A twenty-five foot walk took me to a fair-sized room. I went back to the mapping party and we mapped up to the dead end. We then went on out and back to Blacksburg. We had spent four hours in the cave and had mapped 700 feet, some of it virgin passage. We were surprised to find the weather nice when we came out but not too happy to learn the outcome of the Clemson game.



Whellan Auf Cave February 30, 1967 by Troy Glaudight
Eternal Quadrangle NS 2/10/5

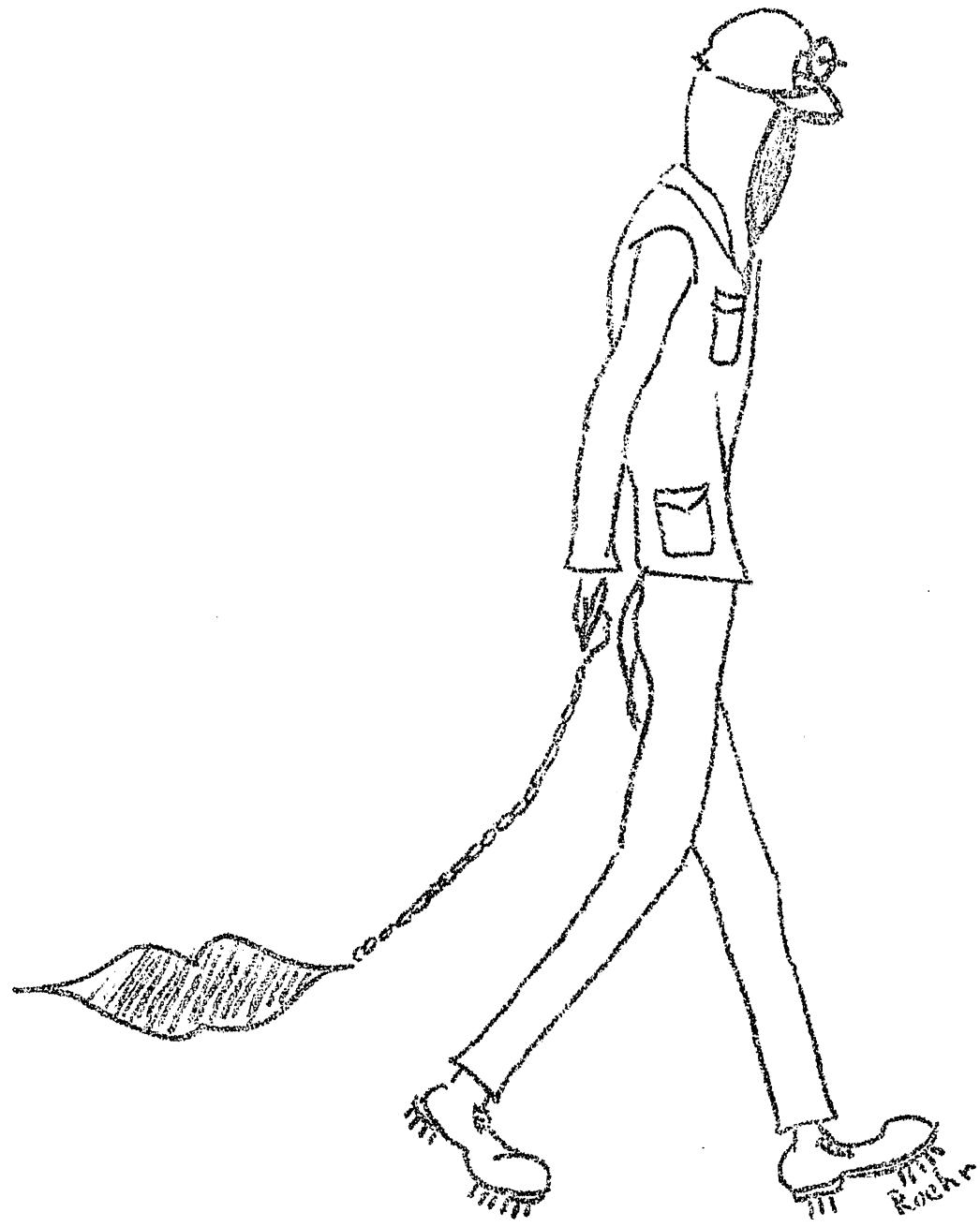
About a week ago the three of us, Harry Travers, Troy Glaudight, and Rhimston Poole (no ~~pond~~ intended) were sitting down in the snack bar looking through Caves of Virginia for a cave to explore when we came across Whellan Auf CAve listed in the "for the record only" section. Although it would probably turn out to be nothing but a twenty-five foot mud crawl, it was close to school so we decided to check it out anyway.

Stopping at a little country store to get candy bars, we asked the man if he had ever heard of the cave. He said that he had and reluctantly gave us directions to find the owner, but advised that we not go into the cave as it was very dangerous. He would not elaborate on this danger so we thanked him and left for the cave.

Arriving at the owner's house, we found that he was not at home but we got to talk to his wife, aunt, uncle, and three cousins. We imagined that these were the cave owner relations we had heard about at Grotto meetings. The wife gave us permission to enter the cave but none of the people wanted us to go in due to "the danger" which we then found out to be a supposed maze section which was laid out like a crossword puzzle with only one solution passage.

With some misgivings we entered the cave which we thought had been formed in limestone although Harry took it for granite. Rhimston thought that we were in "marble country" but I told him that he was confused with some other cave system.

While exploring the cavern we found one room which was so full of little brown bats that we aptly named it "The Little Room". In other sections of the cave we became covered with mud, completely soaked with cold water, and finding the maze section to be non-existent, we emerged thoroughly disgusted with the whole hundred plus feet of passage. We wish now that we had followed the owner's advice and left Whellan Auf alone.



EDITOR'S NOTE

No other grotto has the long proud history that the VPI Grotto Club has. Some of this history has been preserved in the Grotto files which have been kept since the Club began back in the early Forties.

Since the Club has not always had a medium of publication, many of the adventures filed away in this voluminous subterranean crypt have enjoyed but little attention. Beginning with this issue, however, the editorial staff has decided to put some of this history into print.

To find some historic trip reports for this quarter's issue, we grope our way back into the dusty corridors of this huge limestone vault to a door marked -- let's see -- how about 1943? (We're nearly to the end of the corridor!) Now if we can just get this door open-- ceeeeeeeek...groan...squeak! -- there we are. There are lots of drawers here; wonder what we can find in the one marked "G"? Hmm-- county maps, carbide prices, campus regulations, Clover Hollow... here's a thick one; "Catawba Murder Hole"... sounds exciting...here's another; "Canoe Cave"... that should be enough for this issue.

So here they are, dedicated to Old Timers, armchair cavers, and other alumni of the VPI Grotto; our trip reports from...

THE KARSTOPHAGUS

Canoe Cave

After awakening in the middle of the night (8 a.m.) and eating a good wholesome breakfast in the mess hall, the Grotto (accompanied by yours truly) made its sojourn to Canoe Cave. This is indeed a cavern resplendent in its cleanliness-- mud galore.

The entire group of cavers gathered at the Finger of God for religious services, after which the party pushed on to their various missions; the party to which I was assigned had as its mission general sightseeing. Nothing exciting happened after the first hour, then Cartwright found a new passageway which we went down. Crawling down a forty-five degree slope, at times sliding on the omnipresent mud, we went through a narrow "coin slot" and down a drop on a slimy slippery rope to a room which had as its main attraction, a lake. We later found this lake to be quite deep; for proof see Sharp. Caldwell almost went for a swim, but in spite of all we could do to prevent it, he managed to catch himself.

It then felt like dinner time to me, but we ate about two hours later. Everything was perfect except that I found part of my food

missing. (Ed. note- this is usually the case.) Dr. Jackson said that a pack rat had carried it away. I have my own ideas.

Our party then went to the blast furnace and tried to build a fire. Quarterman must have thought that he was the missing link or something for he immediately climbed up the side of the furnace and had the time of his life calling "Gung Ho" and then tossing bricks, boards, logs, etc. at us.

After the smoke came the rest of the parties and ran us out into the cold. Luckily our spacious limosine soon arrived and brought us back.

And thus it was that I became a caveman (some people doubt this fact); and after coming out into the light, I reached the conclusion that some people looked better in the dark.

I.R. Tannenbaum

Catawba Murder Hole

A party of fourteen cavers plus the driver and a friend left the M.I. Building at 10 a.m. August 22, bound for the Murder Hole north of Catawba. For the most part, the trip consisted of one bump after another coupled with an ample supply of dust well mixed with a fine collection af exhaust gasses. This mixture proved to be a little too potent for one member of the party but soon recovered under the expert care of "Dr." Crabb.

Upon arriving at the destination, we lost four members of the party to a nice car and a good dinner. In other words Miss Hopkins took Yarrus, Phillips, and Miss Shepard off for the rest of the day. However, in their place we were joined by Mr. Hopkins, Sr. and Hopkins, Jr., age eleven, who incidentally supplied his own rope, smart boy.

A short climb up the mountain led us to the entrance of said cave. Here we were all given a good laugh by the get-up Mr. Hopkins had, old corroded clothes from various members of the group. Of course, since Andrews was with the party, the first job was to partake of the growley, or is that spelled right? This proved to be too painful a process for as usual Loyd was in great need of food and, true to form, had none with him. However that good old "share the growley" attitude that the club has, came to his rescue.

At just about noon the parties squared away and started in--- Crabb served as chief of party on the exploring and took along with him the two Hops, Loyd, Moore, and Elson who was a newcomer to the gang. Elson, being a soils technologist, decided to see what was

beneath the soil--after the pressure from Crabb and Edminster made the trip the only way to ease the pain. For a few minutes Graves, the driver, and his friend Miss, Miss, Oh, shucks I can't remember--can you?, were also in that exploring party. However, the lack of radiators and other means of keeping warm soon drove these two up to the warmer climes. Close on the heels of this first party a survey party composed of Jones (for the sake of accuracy in mapping), Southworth (for the sake of getting into tight places), and Andrew (for the sake of a measuring stick in the tight squeezes), and Edminster (just for the fun of it) came along shouting angles, lengths, walls and ceilings and making black spots on the walls and blacker spots in a note book. While the exploring party went on to rig the rope ladder down the hole to the little lake that wasn't there, this party doubled back under the exit or the entrance, however you want to look at it, and found, after much grunting and groaning, a place where light entered the cave. It was apparently a cleft in the rocks in the open chasm at the entrance. It was impossible to go clear to the opening but the map shows its general location. Down this same passage a bug trap was found--three guesses are too many as to what that means--that's it--Doc Jackson had come and gone from that same spot.

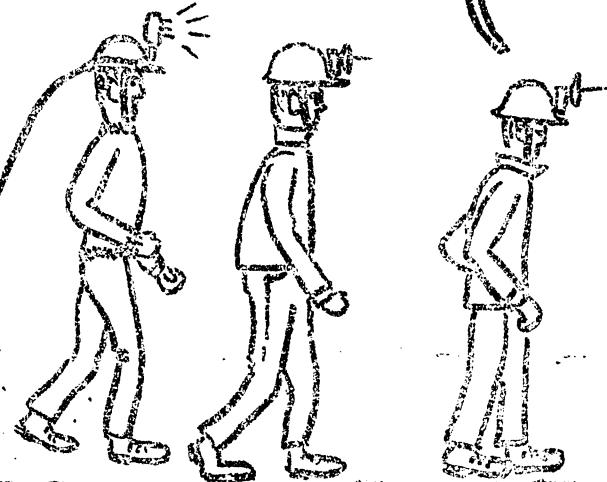
Crabb elected to descend the ladder to the great unknown first, great were the grunts thereof as he descended that tilted bit of something called a ladder. Finally, word came that it was muddy, at least it wasn't lakey as we had expected it to be. After a few rather casual remarks concerning the way the mud let one slip, there was a more genteel report that there were initials in the mud. The report that 1890 was one of the dates was the signal for the rest of the party to start its descent just so that there would be some one there to look after George in case he started to get violent. Well, it wasn't long before the whole party had checked the fact that the date was just what it had been reported. The whole center of the room consisted of a low lying mud hill on which these letters and dates had been scratched with fingers and other sharp tools. This was particularly significant for there was evidence of a high water mark at least thirty feet from the floor. Good evidence of the slowness of the sedimentation in this particular cave.

We returned to campus having brought back no more people than we took in. Indications for success - good indications.

Author Unknown

G.M.G.
S.
R.E.W.

It's not exactly what I
had in mind.



THIS MUST BE THE
"TRIPLE WELLS"

G.M.G.
S.
R.E.W.

Well, well, well!

