586

let's go tubin' with the

TECH TROGLODYTE

THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

SPRING QUARTER 1986 VOL. XXV, No. 2 & 3

President's Column.....Joan Johnson 1
Editor's Column.....Bob Simonds 2
Letter to the Editor..... 3
Modifications to the Sauvigne Rope Walker.....Walt Pirie 4
The Bond of Trust.....Craig Roberts 6
Suggestions for Building Bat Houses
and Attracting Bats.....courtesy of Ginny Tipton 8
Trainee Tips.....Sue Setzler 10
'Dumpster Diving' Proves Hazardous..... 11
Two Computer Programs for Cave Mapping...Koichiro Takamizawa 12
The Grotto Grapevine.....Kay Jacobsen 14
Caving on Cole Mountain, West Virginia.....Maureen Handler 17
An Overview of the Wilburn Valley Project.....Mike Futrell 18
Stories from Beyond.....Craig Roberts 20
From the Sign-out Sheet..... 22
Connect the Dots.....Maureen Handler and Chris Amundson 23

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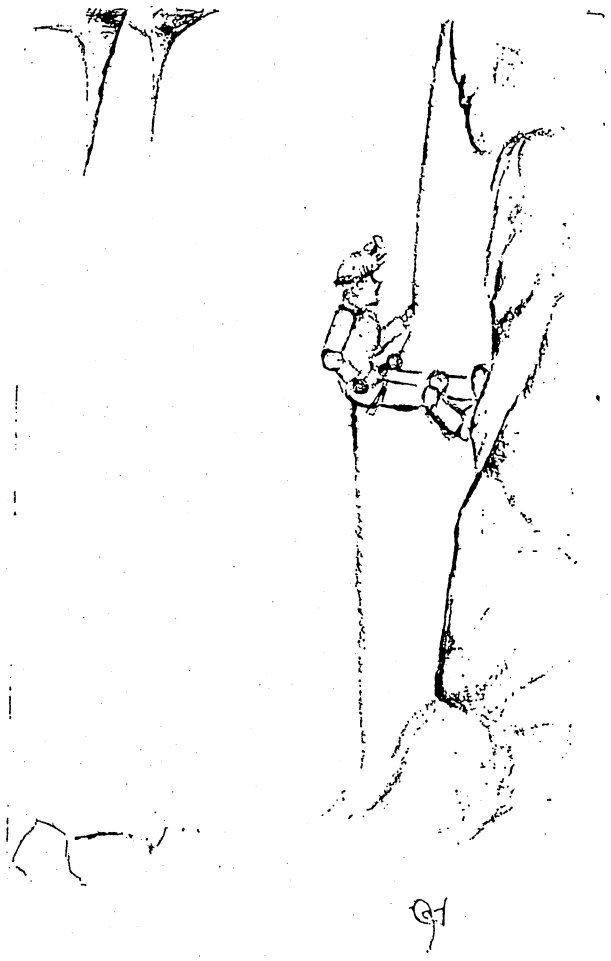
FROM THE PREZ:

The club has been doing a lot of caving in the past few months. Thousands of feet of virgin passage have been mapped and a successful practice rescue was held in Starnes. Unfortunately there was a small turnout for the practice rescue.

I think this small turnout was caused by one of the club's two major problems. We have a lot of interest in caving, but very few new members. Hopefully we can recruit a lot of new members next fall. As our record shows, we don't have trouble getting them to come to meetings, but finding someone to take them caving is another story. If everyone takes one trainee on a real trip it should help solve this problem.

Besides increasing our membership, I'd like to see a new fence around Pig Hole soon. Seems like this project has been put off for a long time and the club hasn't done much conservation work lately. But until the fall, we might as well take it easy, go climbing and hiking and most of all, have fun caving!

Joan Johnson



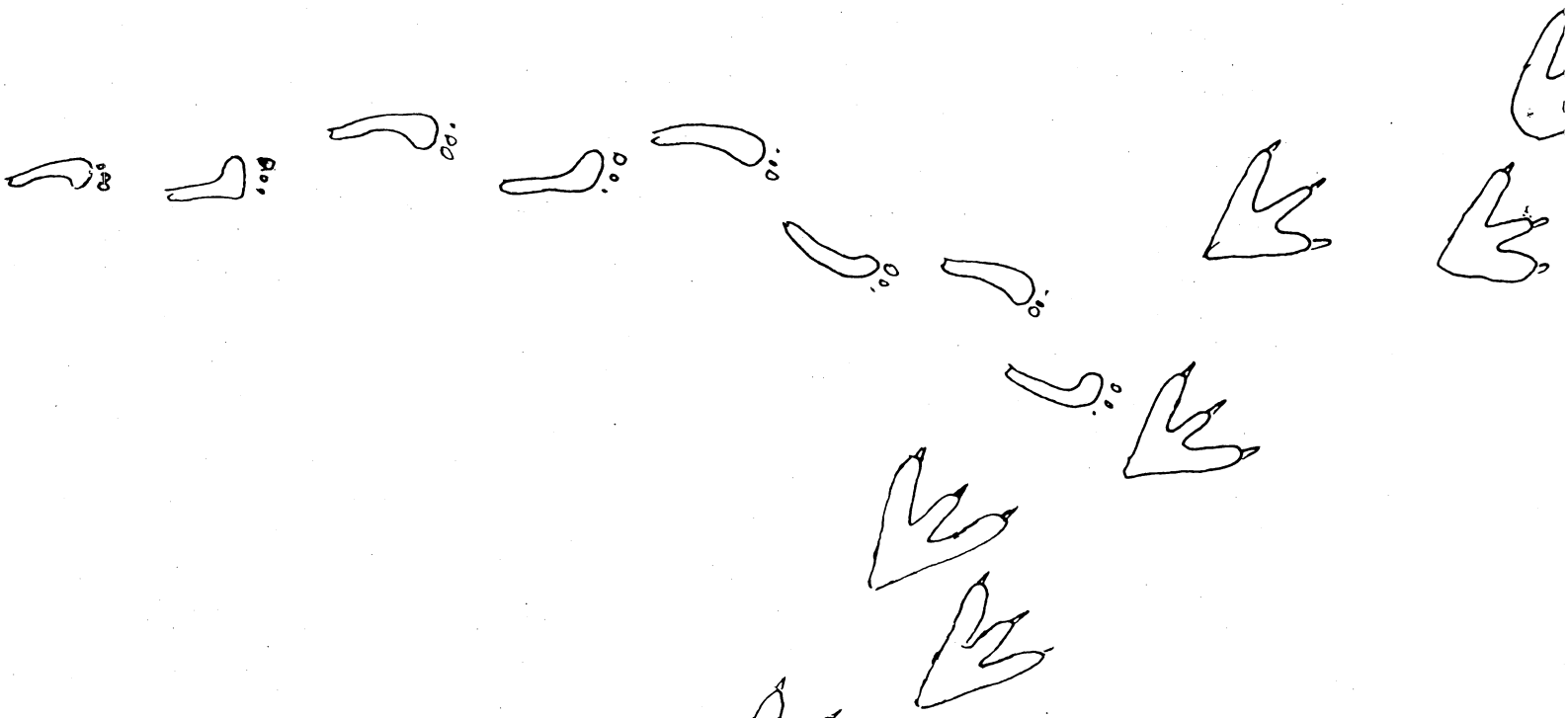
The Editor's Column:

First of all, I'd like to apologize to all of you who were dissappointed at not receiving a Trog during Winter Quarter. I inherited this job about the last week of classes and didn't feel that there was enough time to put anything out that was worthy of the name. There are some excellent articles in this issue, and I hope that will make up for our absence last winter.

Right after I was nominated to be the editor, I moved that the Cave Club reinstate its former policy of requiring an article for the Trog as a prerequisite for membership. Somewhat to my surprise, the motion passed with little opposition. The article requirement had been a part of the VPI Grotto for years, and was eliminated in an era of weakening trainee requirements about ten years ago. At the time, the club was having difficulty recruiting new people and the membership requirements were slashed in an effort to keep from turning away new prospects. This may also have been the time when efforts to strike the word "trainee" originated. All of the requirements except the Trog article had been reinstated when I made my motion.

My intent is not to scare prospective members off. On the contrary, I feel that once a trainee passes all the membership requirements, including the writing of an article, he or she will feel that they are more a part of the club. I believe that the Trog is every bit as essential to the club as officers and committees and that contributing to the publication should be among the most painless of all the tasks required of those who wish to join us.

Bob Simonds



Letter to the editor:

DEAR TROG

VIRGIN WET SPOT

I am a student at a conservative Southern university. While enrolled, I have been an avid fan of the Tech Trog and an active caver. I have read of many caving escapades but never thought I would have one worthy Trog publication. Little did I know of the delights that I would one day find.

Recently I was assisting a friend who was leading a trainee trip. We were doing the routine route through a heavily traveled local cave. I was quickly getting bored while my friend was aweing the newcomers with his vast knowledge of speleology (such as: how stalagmites form, and why bats don't have udders).

Feeling like I should be doing more than acting as a babysitter, I started picking up trash. The long train of cavers passed me as I was slowing down to pick up the occasional battery or gum wrapper. After accumulating almost more trash than I could carry, I noticed a beer can carelessly tossed into a breakdown pile.

I removed my pack and squirmed down to it. It was akward but I soon found out it was worth it. Upon reaching the can I noticed a slight breeze blowing across my face. I immediately jumped to attention. Reaching out one arm I found a small passage. My arm came out dripping with mud. I was getting excited. The passage looked pretty tight so I removed all of my clothes in the blink of an eye to avoid becoming stuck. Wearing nothing but a helmet and a lamp I slowly eased my way in. It was tighter than I imagined, but the muddy wetness urged me on. The mud acted as a lubricant making it easier to penetrate the slick channel. Not very deep in I encountered a small mud block which I quickly tore through. This allowed me to enter deeper.

All this activity shook up my Premier and my normally 2 inch flame sprang up to 6 inches. It didn't stop there but increased to 9 inches. I'd never seen it that long before and didn't know that length was possible. I redoubled my efforts and plunged further and faster and faster and further. I wanted to reach the end before my lamp blew itself out.

Finally the passage exploded into a room. It wasn't a large room but it was infinitely better than the passage I was in. I groaned in ecstacy as I spilled into the chamber. Mud oozed off of me as I collapsed in exhaustion.

I have been there several times but I will never forget the first time.--Name and address witheld.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE SAUVIGNE ROPE WALKER

Probably the most dynamic situation in caving equipment in recent years has been in single rope techniques and equipment.

The accompanying crude drawings attempt to show some of the evolution in the Sauvigne Rope Walking System, so popular in the VPI Cave Club for the past ten years.

The shoulder Gibbs Cam has been replaced by a chest harness with a roller (Simmons or Landau). The result is a much smoother climb and a more comfortable position, especially at a lip or against a wall. The ascender shown in the right hand should be considered essential for safety as well as comfort. Clipped on the rope above the roller, it provides a third point of contact and prevents being upended. It also makes resting more comfortable and facilitates getting over those bitchy lips; just unclip it, reach over the lip and clip it back onto the rope, then disconnect the roller. What a difference.

Probably the most important reason for the safety ascender was demonstrated during "The Great 1985 International Mexico Caving Trip." On Christmas day I climbed up the 700 foot drop at Haya de Guaguas. My ascending rig worked well on the clean but well used PMI. Three days later we were at Golandrinas for the 1100 foot drop. About 100 feet off the floor I realized something was not working. It turned out that the teeth on my knee cam had accumulated enough wear that they would no longer grab on brand new, slick PMI. At every step the cam would just slide back down the rope. If I had not used a safety ascender, my only point of contact with the rope, and my only working ascender, would have been the Gibbs on my right foot. As it was I was faced with a lot harder climb than I had bargained for. But without the safety ascender? Think about it.

Many chest harness designs are used, the one shown is one of the simplest. I don't know its designer.

Chest rollers represent a major improvement to the rope walker, some others are more minor but still worth considering. Probably the next most useful is replacing the floating knee cam with a Petzl Jammer. It works as well but is a lot easier to rig and derig.

The final modifications are quite minor, but some use and like them. They are (not shown) a shock cord from the foot cam to the seat 'biner, which might help the cam ride and grab more reliably, and a 1" sling from the floating knee ascender, also to the seat 'biner. Presumeably the last one is useful for hand operation if the over-the-shoulder shock cord fails.

Try them, you may like them.

Walt Pirie
VPI 219
NSS 19778

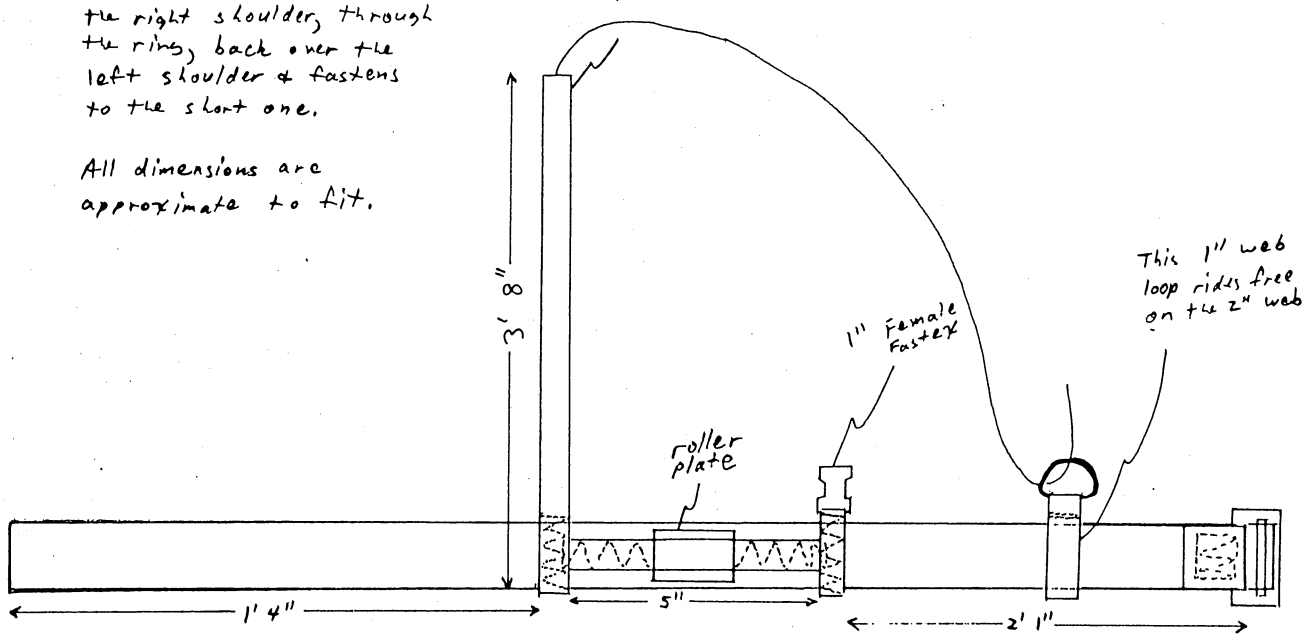
CHEST HARNESS FOR SIMMONS OR LANDAU ROLLER

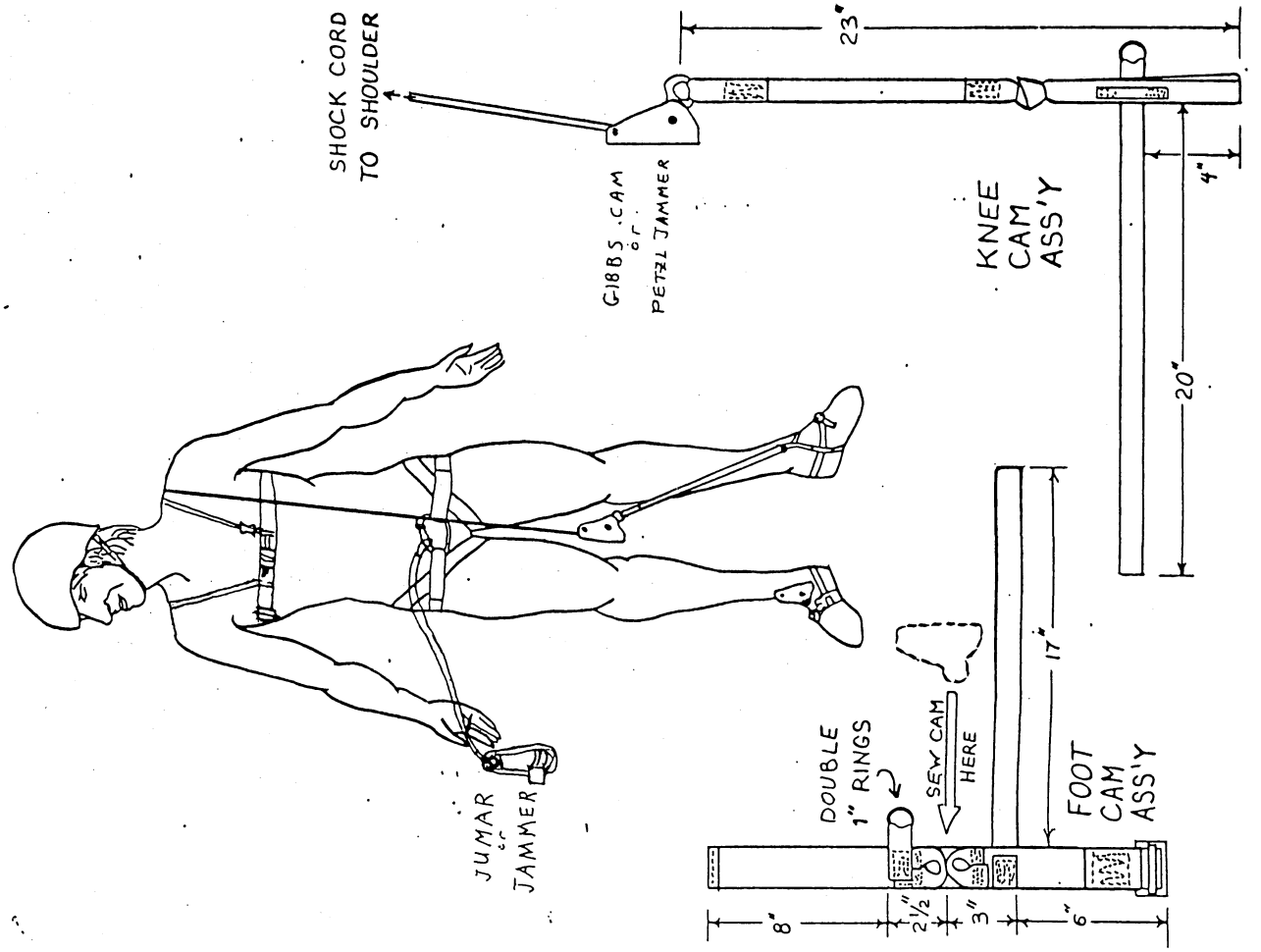
The two 1" webbing pieces are folded around the 2" & then stitched.

The long one goes over the right shoulder, through the ring, back over the left shoulder & fastens to the short one.

All dimensions are approximate to fit.

The 1" web loop with ring will ride in the center of the back.





THE BOND OF TRUST

One of the most important concepts I have learned through caving is trust. In all of my underground adventures, I have found it necessary to place complete trust in, not only other members of the trip, but gear as well. Although to some this may not be difficult, I found it hard, at first, to place my trust in people and techniques that were totally foreign to me.

I started caving in mid September of 1984 when I decided to check out an advertisement for the VPI Cave Club. The meeting was very interesting, but it was the mention of a training session which really sparked my interest. I was excited about learning all kinds of new outdoor activities, especially something as exciting and thought provoking as the deep black frontier. Thus, forgetting my fear of heights, I eagerly dashed off to the bridge session the following Friday. From a distance the bridge did not look very tall, as I approached, however, my fear of heights began to grip me. I was going to jump off that thing? Terrible visions of breaking my neck forced me to grip the railings tightly as I watched others rappel the 20 feet to safety. During the session, I was taught all about the strength of the ropes and the reliability of the gear. These people certainly seemed to know what they were talking about. Finally my turn came, and with great effort I rigged myself to the death line! Listlessly I gave my calls, fearing the positive reply of the belayer. When I finally stepped over the side, I could not let go of the railing, nor could I face the ground below me. After a few minutes, more out of embarrassment than confidence, I let go of the railing and faced certain peril. The rope held. Since that time I have been involved in many caving and above ground vertical experiences, and have learned to trust my gear completely. In fact, I found that the more one knows his/her equipment, through usage and reading, the more one will trust the gear which his/her life depends upon. In fact, in order to do any vertical work, it is imperative that one believes in the gear, or the experience will probably not be an enjoyable one.

Similar trust in cavers was at first hard to give. These people were strange, and where they took me was even worse. I soon learned, however, to trust in these knowledgeable people, for in a cave environment it is not always possible to survive on one's own skill and knowledge. One must learn to trust in other members of the party, completely, if the trip is to flow smoothly. This is especially important for trainees, for experience is an invaluable aid to caving. Although there are many examples of why someone should trust others in their caving party, I feel the most obvious example centers on belaying. When a situation arises that a belay is required, the situation is in all probability life threatening. In this instance, it is imperative for the climber to trust his belayer, or the trip will soon come to a halt! One such example I can remember was climbing a lead in Clover Hollow. Myself and two friends, one inexperienced, were attempting to find our way out of the Andrew's drop without climbing rope. At one point in our journey I found a thirty foot, rather smooth, chimney climb which subsequently led to the top of the drop. Although I quickly

scrambled up the lead, my inexperienced friend was hesitant to follow. When he finally attempted the climb, without belay, he soon became very nervous, and had to be helped down to the floor. The situation could have become critical, for he was very afraid of the climb. However, my inexperienced friend happened to be my roommate, and after watching me come in and out of the room weekend after weekend from caving trips, he had built up the idea that I was a good, and consequently trustworthy, caver. He agreed readily to my idea of a belay, and with his trust solely in me, for he had no real concept of the trustworthiness of the belay, Jud managed to climb the drop successfully. Thus, just as I had felt a need to trust cavers in my trainee days, so Jud, my roommate, demonstrated his trust in me and completed the exciting trip without difficulty. It he had not trusted me in this situation we would probably have run into great difficulty in getting out of the cave in a reasonable amount of time. Consequently, it is important to the survival of the individual, as well as the group, for everyone to have faith in each other.

Through my experiences with people and techniques, I have learned that caving is a sport which requires, more than most other sports, a high degree of faith in others abilities and in gear reliability. Now, as I pass on my knowledge of gear and techniques to trainees, I can relate to their novice understanding and fears. Each time I try and help someone, I make it a point to not only answer their questions, but to also extend my answers so that the person will have a better understanding of what they are doing. In this way, I hope to build up a trainee's trust, not only in his gear, but also in me. To a passerby, one may notice a certain bond between cavers, from any area of the world, that links them together, perhaps a bit closer than other friends. It is this bond formed by trust which eminates from cavers, for when one's life is on the line, one can count on a fellow caver to help you out.

by Craig T. Roberts

SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING BAT HOUSES AND ATTRACTING BATS

Bat houses of the designs illustrated for models 1 and 2 (see plans) have been used successfully for a variety of bat species in Europe. Their exact size and shape probably are not important except for the width of the entry space. This should not exceed one inch, with the ideal being only 3/4 of an inch. Regardless of the kind of house built, all inner surfaces of the of the house must be rough enough to permit the bats to climb on them with ease, and rough outer surfaces are prefered.

Young bats grow best where daytime temperatures are in the 80-90F range. For this reason maternity colonies are most likely to use bat houses that provide temperatures in this range or are so well insulated that body warmth is easily trapped. Europeans often cover their bat houses on top and for an inch or two down the sides with two or more pieces of tar paper. The dark covering absorbs heat from the sun by day and provides added insulation at night, in addition to protecting the bats from rain.

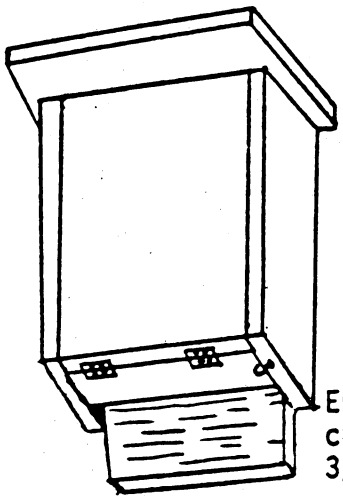
Several means of insulating or providing a range of temperatures in bat houses are available but as yet largely untested. One involves covering the bat houses with styrofoam on top and on all four sides. An additional covering of dark colored shingles or tar paper might prove helpful, especially in northern areas where the bats may need higher temperatures. Also making bat house model 1 two feet tall, with only the upper six inches and top covered with dark material might provide a better range of temperature. By moving up and down and from front to back bats could find roost temperatures more continuously to their liking. Paint or varnish reportedly is somewhat reppelent to bats, at least until well cured.

Bat houses should be fastened securely to a tree trunk or the side of a building roughly 12-15 feet above the ground, preferably where they will receive morning sun but will be shaded in the afternoon. Inside temperatures above 90F generally are intolerable. For this reason a well insulated bat house that receives only morning sun should prove most suitable. Male bats do not live with the females while young are being reared, and these bachelor colonies may be attracted to sheltered, cooler locations. Additionally, most bats seem to prefer sites that are relatively protected from the wind.

It is important to note that bats can live only where local food supplies are adequate. For this reason most colonial bats are found near places such as rivers, lakes, bogs, or marshes where insect populations are high. The closer bat houses are to such places the greater the probability of being used. Those located more than a half a mile from these habitats have greatly reduced probability of being occupied unless alternate food sources are available.

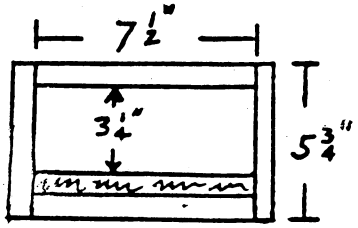
Sometimes bats occupy a bat house within a few weeks. Often, however, bats require a year or two to find a new house. Chances of early occupancy probably are increased if houses are hung before or by early April and also if bats already live in barns or attics in adjacent areas.

Since use of bat houses is very new in the United States, we have much to learn about local bat preferences. Your reporting of successes and failures could contribute measurably to our knowledge of how to attract bats. Write to Bat Conservation International, c/o Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, WI 53233.



Entry scored or scratched to roughen.

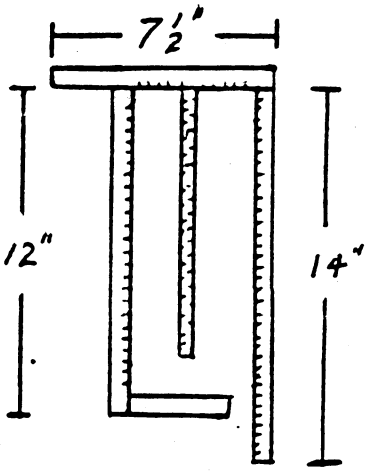
View as mounted on side of tree or building.



Bottom view.

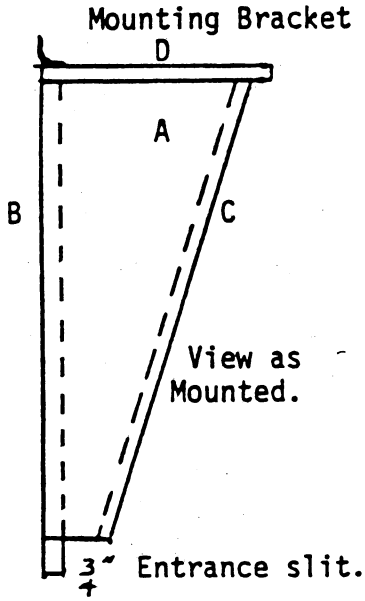
(MODEL 1)

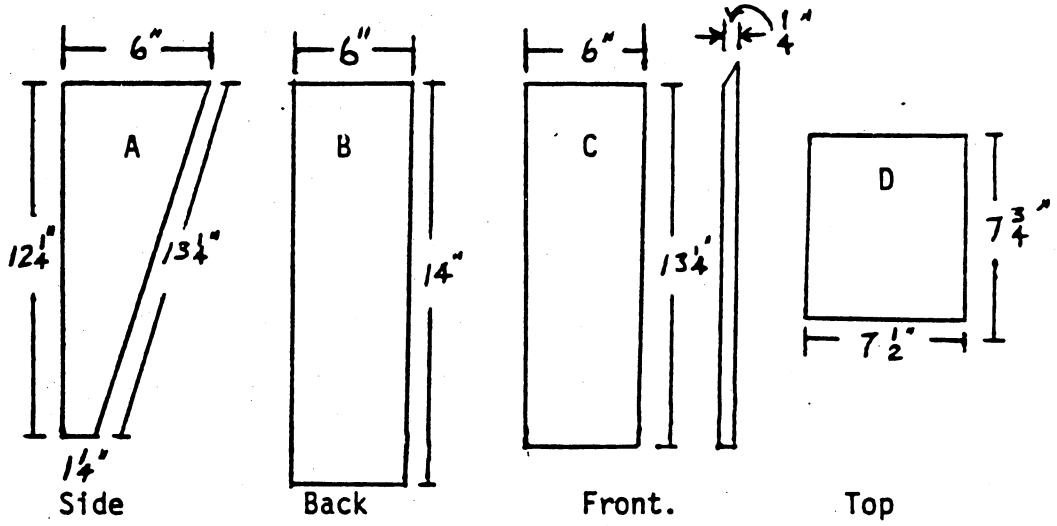
All inner surfaces scratched or scored to roughen.



Cut-Away
Side view.

Interior Divider 7½ x 9"





(Model 2) View of four pieces needed.

Bat House Plans courtesy of Bat Conservation International c/o the Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233 USA

TRAINEE TIPS

by

Sue Setzler

1) What they always forgot to tell the trainee:

-Go to the bathroom before you get there.
-Don't forget to bring $$$ for a food stop on the way home.
-Watch trip leaders - the comments they make to each other are often at least as informative as what they tell you. ("Look at that idiot trying to . . ")
-Cans of Coke aren't the best drink to take. You have to haul the cans out.
-Knee pads are very helpful in some caves.

2) Good ideas:

-The pathway down the middle with all the tracks on it isn't always the way to go.
-When in doubt watch how members do things, fellow trainees are often just as ingnorant as you so don't follow their example unless you know how good they are.
-Bats are extremely sensitive. Both light and loud noises disturb them so try to not do either. They also don't like to be leaned upon. Remember, bats are people too.
-Don't shine your light in peoples' eyes.
-Lamps are tempermental. Like them, they're nicer to you that way.
-Don't jump down anything because you may not be able to get back up.
-Don't do anything you're not comfortable with.
-Don't complain about wimpy things. Nobody will like you.
-Even if you're scared of bugs, remember they're scared of you too and they live there.
-Bring a change of clothes. Most people won't let you in their car if you don't.
-When caving stay as dry as possible. Cold feet are no fun.
-Watch for arrows on the wall. They usually point the way out.
-Don't touch fragile of white formations. They break or get dirty easily.
-Don't ever go solo caving (caving by yourself).
-Don't play around in any unsafe fashion:
  a) Don't throw dirt at people. It could get in their eyes.
  b) Don't ever push people.

`DUMPSTER-DIVING' PROVES HAZARDOUS
(Stolen without permission, thanks to Chuck and Pat Shorten)

In the comic strip Doonesbury it was whimsically called "dumpster-diving." But a group of Minneapolis doctors, writing in the New England Journal of Medicine, reports an increased number of real injuries to homeless people falling into or out of trash dumpsters.

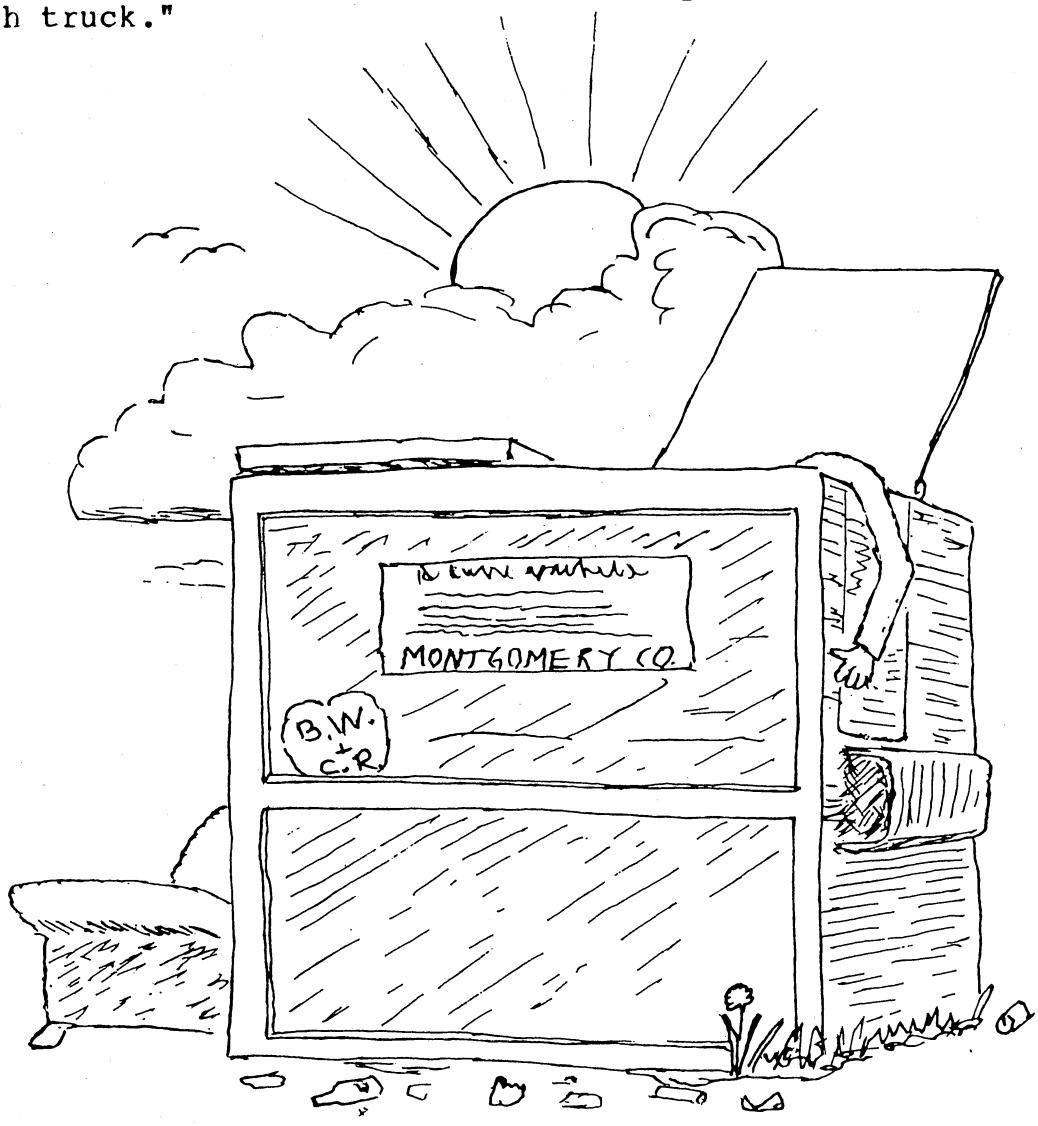
Dr. Richard T. Zera and several colleagues at the Hennepin County Medical Center said these three cases occurred in a three-month period last year:

- A 31-year-old man suffered a deep cut to his right hand while trying to pull himself into a dumpster. Although he could not bend his right index finger, suggesting a cut tendon, he left the hospital, refusing further treatment.

- A 53-year-old woman scavenging through a dumpster fell into the street, damaging her right knee. After six months, she is still recovering from treatment, which included surgery.

- Emergency room doctors found two pieces of glass in the back of a 36-year-old man who fell backwards into a dumpster. The glass was removed and he recovered.

One other homeless person was less fortunate, they report. In St. Paul, a 30-year-old man apparently fell asleep in a dumpster "and was killed when it was emptied into the back of a trash truck."



TWO COMPUTER PROGRAMS FOR CAVE MAPPING

By
Koichiro Takamizawa

In the process of mapping caves, plotting the map takes as much time as surveying. Some of the plotting time is spent on calculating the survey data. In general, this calculation involves only simple trigonometry, and it can be done quite easily with a hand calculator. However, it becomes a bit tiresome after a while. Instead, the calculation can be done on a micro-computer to reduce some redundant calculations.

Here are two simple examples on the use of micro-computers in number crunching the survey data. The first one calculates two-dimensional projections of survey stations and their scaled coordinates on the map. See Listing 1.

The second program calculates the closure error and its accuracy. Then it tries to adjust (fudge) data to make closure on the map. Listing 2.

These are very simple programs, and should be applicable to to any computers available to you. I am also writing a more sophisticated program to handle other tasks. If you have any questions or suggestions to my programs please talk to me.

Listing 1.

```
10 ' program to calculate 2 dimensional projection of survey data
20 '
30 PI=3.1415926#
40 INPUT "scale 1 inch =",SCALE
50 INPUT "initial coordinate [x,y] ",XI,YI
60 X=XI : Y=YI
70 PRINT : PRINT
80 INPUT "distance   ",DIST
90 IF DISTANCE = 0 THEN 160
100 INPUT "azimuth      ",AZM
110 INPUT "declInation  ",DEC
120 X=X+1/SCALE*DIST*COS(AZM*PI/180)*COS(DEC*PI/180)
130 Y=Y+1/SCALE*DIST*SIN(AZM*PI/180)*COS(DEC*PI/180)
140 PRINT "x = ";X,  "y = ";Y
150 GOTO 80
160 END
```

Listing 2

```
10 ' program to calculate closure error, and to adjust closure
error
20 '
30 DIM XI(200),YI(200),XN(200),YN(200),XD(200),YD(200)
40 PI=3.1415926#
50 INPUT "scale 1 inch = ",SCALE
60 INPUT "initial coordinate [x,y] ",XI,YI
70 PRINT "input distance=0 to calculate closure error"
80 XI(1)=XI : YI(1)=YI : CT=1
90 PRINT : PRINT
100 INPUT "distance    ", DIST
110 IF DIST = 0 THEN 250
120 CT=CT+1
130 INPUT "azimuth     ", AZ
140 INPUT "declination ", DC
150 XD(CT)=1/SCALE*DIST*COS(AZ*PI/180)*COS(DC*PI/180)
160 XI(CT)=XI(CT-1)+XD(CT)
170 YD(CT)=1/SCALE*DIST*SIN(AZ*PI/180)*COS(DC*PI/180)
180 YI(CT)=YI(CT-1)+YD(CT)
190 DS=SQR(XD(CT)^2+YD(CT)^2)
200 TDIST=TDIST+DS
210 XT=XT+XD(CT)
220 YT=YT+YD(CT)
230 PRINT "x = ";XI(CT), "y = ";YI(CT)
240 GOTO 100
250 PRINT : PRINT : PRINT
260 PRINT "closure error =";
270 PRINT USING
"###.##";SQRT((XI(CT)-XI(1))^2+(YI(CT)-YI(1))^2)/TDIST*100
280 PRINT
290 PRINT "adjusting closure error"
300 XE=XI(CT)-XI(1)
310 YE=YI(CT)-YI(1)
320 FOR I=2 TO CT
330  XN(I)=XI(I)+XD(I)*XE/XT
340  YN(I)=YI(I)+YD(I)*YE/YT
350 NEXT I
360 PRINT : PRINT
370 PRINT "original x original y       adjusted x adjusted y
380 FOR I=1 TO CT
390  PRINT USING"  ###.##     ###.## ";XI(I),YI(I);
400  PRINT USING"      ###.##     ###.## ";XN(I),YN(I)
410 NEXT I
420 END
```

Here's what you've been waiting for . .

THE GROTTO GRAPEVINE
by
Kay Jacobsen

The sleepy little town of Blacksburg was rocked last February by a major disturbance - - the Cave Club held its Annual Banquet in Squires. Rob Hills, Tom Foster, and Kay Jacobsen were among the victims. The alumni fought back with leftovers. In case of future problems, Rob Hills was given a "tight-squeeze survival kit". Included were such items as vaseline, a shoehorn, Valium, and a Bible - - everything Rob needs in case he gets stuck in a cave again or has a not-so-hot date.

To his dismay, Tom Foster gained the title "Most Obnoxious Trainee". Kay Jacobsen was given a battery powered cucumber for emergencies such as her boyfriend leaving town.

Many heroes appeared during the banquet. Bob Simonds won the prestigious A. I. Cartwright Award, and Sue Setzler came off with Trainee of the Year. Carol Zokaites was given the Exponential Population Growth Award, but rumor has it that the Zokaites having perfected the model are shutting down production.

Commerative medals were given to all cavers who have contributed to international relations and have escaped with their lives. Maureen Handler, renowned for her international "relationship" with Alec Villagomez, went to Mexico with Alec, Alex Sproul, Walt and Cecile Pirie, and Craig Roberts. Mike Futrell, Ed Devine, and Linda Baker brought American dollars to Jamaica. Jim Washington apparently went somewhere international, but we're not sure whether Giles County is on foreign soil, or whether he went someplace else.

Some other awards: Reggie Reid won the Pig Hole Squeeler for earning most of his hours in Pig Hole. Garrie Rouse got an Honorable mention for his brave and dauntless mapping activities. Josephine Lunny and Kay Jacobsen picked up the VPI Barf Mop for cleaning above and beyond the call of duty. Becky Himmelmann won the Armchair Caver Award, and Dave "Fatito" Bennett won the Best Brewmaster Award.

Brain Bucket and Flame-out Awards were not given this year. Lack of interest in Flame-out has been blamed on Reagan, Falwell, and conservatism in general. Luckily, there are some candidates for next year's Flame-out Award. Craig Roberts is one of the prime candidates due to puking all over campus. Philip Ballister, famous Flame-out recipient, is back in the running to defend his title. He barfed in Mike Futrell's fireplace. Dave Cinsavich apparently puked in the Ton-80 Club, breaking it in as a new caver hangout. The Hokie House Committee has been dissolved.

Sadly, Guano Clusters and Landowner of the Year were not given. Glen Davis and Don Anderson arranged to have a special banquet at the Fortune Restaurant for our favorite landowner - - Buddy Penley. He was given a certificate signed by everyone in the club inviting him to every banquet the Cave Club will have. It was our way of saying "We love you, Buddy!" Glen and Jean Hartman hosted the Buddy Penley Banquet Party.

The regular banquet party was held at Turner Beach. Carol Zokaites decided it was time to give birth while she was dancing. Russel and Robert Zokaites came into the world on February 16th, and have been promptly nicknamed Russ-zo and Bo-zo. Not to be outdone, Pat Shorten is planning to have her baby on Float Trip. It could be really interesting on the nude raft this year!

Despite all the partying, people are still going caving. Garrie Rouse has mapped 3 1/2 miles of Stompbottom along with Joan Johnson, Mike Fiore, Mike Futrell, Jim Washington, and anyone else he can convince to go with him. The search for new cave passage is continual. Craig Roberts, Rob Hills, Ko Takamizawa, and Reggie Reid have plans to explore the siphon at the bottom of Double Wells in Newcastle Murder Hole. Jim Washington is looking for new passage in Link's (where else?). Surprisingly, Ed Devine has given up scaling poles in favor of bicycling. Perhaps he's getting more intelligent.

Pig Hole has been declared boring, and many new cavers (alias "trainee scum") have never been to New River except to float down it. Link's may soon become the favorite place to take trainees caving due to Jim Washington's status as landowner. Beer is flowing like never before at the old Link place, and it looks like Jim may become one of the more frequent party-givers. John Lohner and Keith Smith aren't happy with their reputation as party hosts. It has been suggested that a benefit concert be held for the River Rats to help them recover from their benefit concert for the South Main Cafe.

Don Anderson traded in the legendary Big Blue and now owns Big Red. John Lohner has a new white truck. Jerry Redder bought a house on Patrick Henry Drive in Blacksburg. Jackie Redder's been seen driving the B. T. She's going to China over the summer with money earned driving the bus.

We won't have Chicken Wing to kick around much longer. Yes, Mark Honosky is graduating this spring. Steve Conner and Kay Jacobsen will be receiving degrees at the end of summer.

There have been quite a few parties and caving-related activities this spring. Many poeple went to the OTR tree-planting weekend during the weekend of elections. There wasn't much mud-slinging at elections. No one wanted to run. Joan Johnson became the Cave Club's first female president, Craig Roberts was elected president of vice, Mike Fiore can now abscond with the club's funds, and Jenny Ford got suckered into being secretary.

About ten people went up to JMU's Spring Fling at Aqua Campground after elections. Rob Hills and Craig Roberts decided it was much better to sleep on the suspension bridge instead of in a tent.

Jenny Ford, Ko Takamizawa, and Sue Setzler are the newest members of the Cave Club. The membership count is up to 294.

Jerry Redder and Glen Davis celebrated their birthdays at Jerry's place. Glen provided unlimited punch and hot-dogs.

The practice rescue was held at Starnes this year. Philip played victim in the old Stokes. The biggest criticism was that Philip's mouth should have been gagged.

Richard Cobb bought a new hang glider. He's teaching Steve Conner and Bob Simonds the fine art of hang gliding.

This is a big year for weddings and engagements. Susan Reece Little married Kevin Edward Murray on April 26th. Her brother, Lee, is in town working as president of vice for Snyder-Hunt Corporation. Will miracles never cease?

Steve Conner and Ann Marie Little are getting married August 2nd. Dave Shantz is engaged to Nancy Gibson, and Carol Trexler and Ray (not Hagwood) have to get married. Kay Jacobsen is marrying Neil Johnson after she lives in the Mojave Desert for several weeks next fall. Philip Ballister is pregnant, but Jean refuses to marry him.

Picnic was the weekend of May 10th. Saturday began with caving and hacky sack. After the hot-dog dinner, the evening turned into a more wood party. Everyone slowly recovered on Sunday.

And now to catch up on what some of the cavers from outside Blacksburg are doing:

Lawrence Britt is in San Diego, and is really doing well at classes. He will have the Starnes map ready at convention.

Eric Anderson is living in San Francisco with a rabbit. He's working as a street magician. He's going to try and make it to OTR.

Alec Villagomez is working as a waiter in Austin.

Dave "so-am-I" Jett is working for Gould Electronics in Glen Burnie, Maryland. He says, "It's cold out there."

Winfield Wright are living together in Richmond. Win finished his thesis.

Paul and Berta Kirchman have moved to P.O. Box 208, Oaks, Pennsylvania.

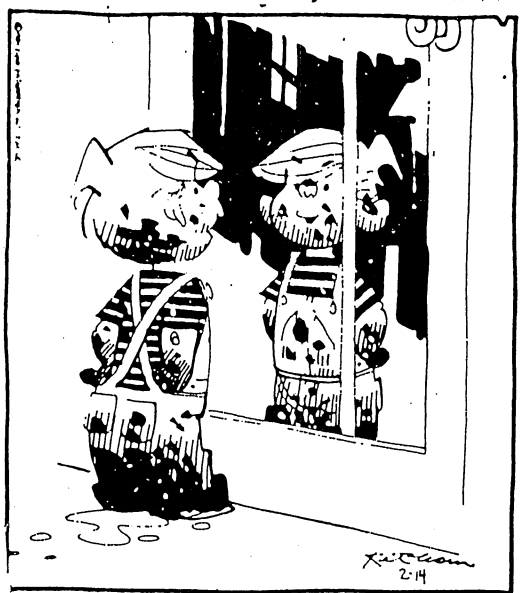
Pam Neiser is getting her masters and PHd at the same time at the University of Kentucky. Yes, she's still into the reproductive physiology of sheep.

Sue LaCourse is going off to Georgia with seven guys to an Air Force base for several weeks next fall. She claims she's "working". Right, Sue!

Float Trip will be Memorial Day weekend. Jim Washington is admiral, and he'll be holding the party at his house. It will be the last time anyone will get truly smashed before summer break.

That's all for the grapevine this time. Have a good break and do plenty of safe caving.

DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketchum



"I THINK DIRTY IS A PRETTY COLOR!"

CAVING ON COLE MOUNTAIN WEST VIRGINIA

By
Maureen Handler

Last August I went up to up to the WVACS work weekend and while trying to decide what to do on Saturday, Phil Lucas told me about an unexplored pit on top of hill near Anthony Creek. Now all I have to hear is "virgin pit" and I'll hike anywhere to check it out. Alex Sproul and I drove to Anthony Creek to look for the pit on top of Cole Mountain. The directions by the landowner, Mr. Ramsey, were fairly explicit, so off we went with the rope and all our gear. Well, we spent five hourscombing the east side of the mountain, in 90 degree heat, fighting the stinging nettles without finding any sign of the pit entrance. Hot and tired, we retreated back to the van for a beer. I swore I would never ridge in West Virginia in the summer again.

At the WVACS weekend this past February, Bob Amundson, Alex Sproul and I were sitting at Shoney's getting ready for a bustass survey trip into McClungs when the subject of sunshine and beer came up. Well, it didn't take long before we decided not to go caving. Alex suggested we go back to Cole Mountain. We drank a few more beers and drove off to Anthony Creek. This time we started hiking from the north instead of from the east and of course we carried no gear what so ever. As prescribed by the law of perversity in looking for caves, within 1 1/2 hours were looking down the pit. Now we knew that we had to clomb that damn mountain again to check out what we had found. We made plans for the three of us to come back again on the first weekend in May.

On May 3, Alex Sproul, Doug Abernathy and myself once again attacked Cole Mountain. We had named the cave Saddleback Pit because we had to hike to a saddle on top of the mountain to get to the cave. The three of us started hiking up the mountain. About a third of the way up, I found out that Alex had left the Suuntos in the van, so with a lot of swearing, I threw off my gear and went back down to get them. The hike is close to a 40 degree angle for nearly an hour and by the time we got to the pit, we were already tired. The entrance was still blowing lots of air. We could feel it 5 feet away. With expectations of a major system, we rigged a 110 ft. rope and I was the first one down. We measured the pit at 78.5 feet. It is one of the most beautiful pits I have seen in West Virginia: a double well with scalloped walls. Doug rappelled down followed by alex. We immediately started surveying, only to be dissappointed fifteen minutes later when we came to the end of the cave. The rest of the passage consisted of two more short pits and and about 30 feet of passage. The bottom of the last pit contained quite a number of bones including a deer and what looked like a groundhog. There was a very small hole at the bottom of this pit but we couldn't fit into it and there was no more air blowing. We surveyed what we had found and looked for high leads going off the main pit, however, we couldn't find any. We were unable to find out where all the air was coming from. Dissappointed, we left the cave saying good bye to Saddleback Suckhole. Now I'm glad that I never have to climb that damn mountain again and next WVACS it will be back to McClungs.

An Overview of the Wilburn Valley Project

Wilburn Valley is located in Giles County on the south side of Pearis Mountain. There are a dozen or so known entrances. I first developed an interest in the area in 1982 while helping Lawrence Britt with the survey of Starne's Cavern.

Lawrence has supposedly completed the survey of Starnes. However, he has joined the Navy and there is great speculation that a large Parrott is riding around on his shoulder. At any rate no one is holding their breath for the map. I'm just ranting and raving a little on behalf of myself, who wasted 64 hours, and others who wasted more or less. Hey Lawrence...

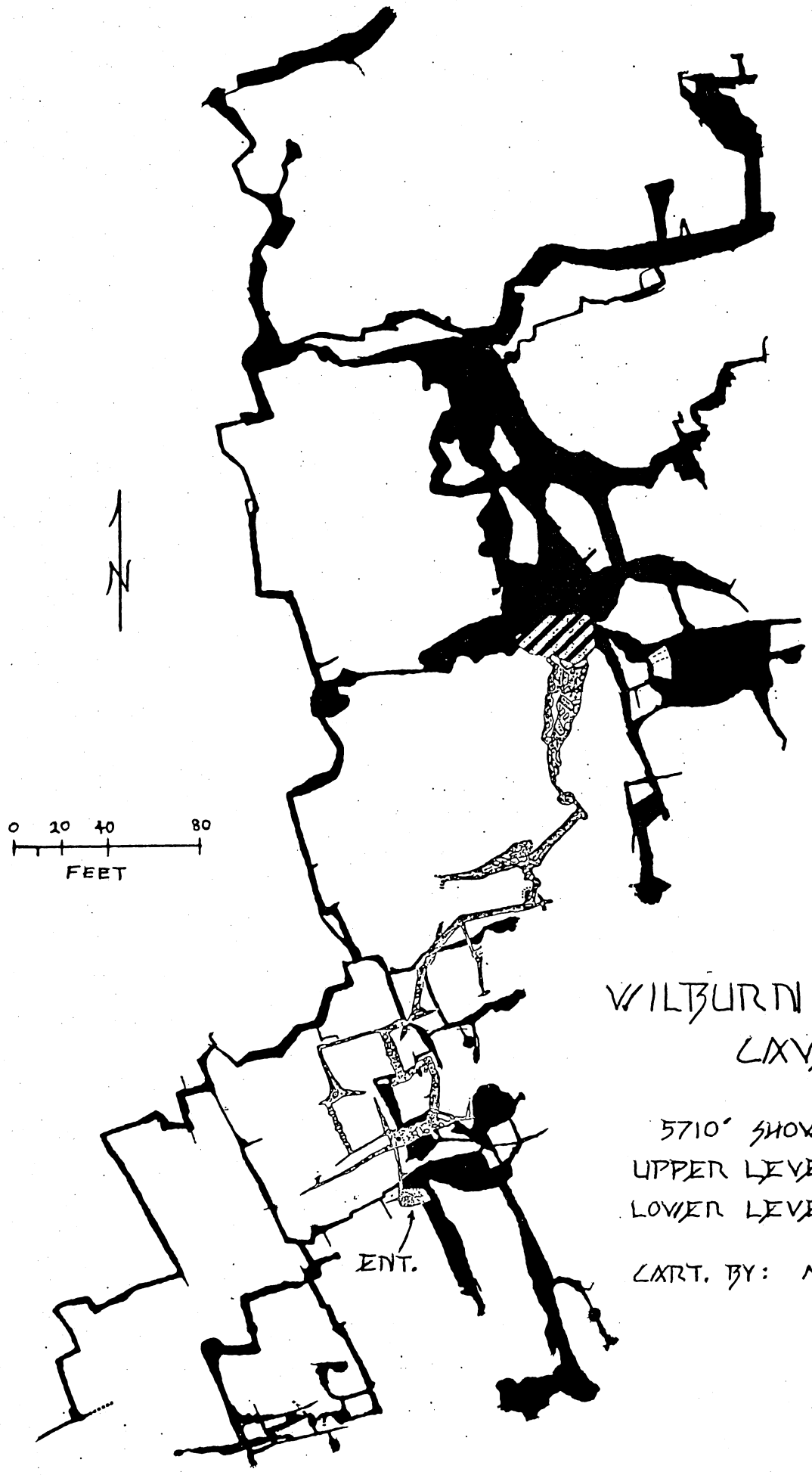
By the fall of 1984 I was ready to undertake my own project in the area. On Sept. 29, Craig Ferguson, DeeAnn Peterson and myself took the first shot from sunlight to darkness in Wilburn Valley Cave. This was to be the third and final survey of the cave. Though "attempted" twice before I believed the cave had not been "pushed" and still held grand possibilities.

Well, I've been steadily plodding along in Wilburn for 2 years now. After 11 miserable trips I've netted 5710 feet of surveyed passage on 1.08 miles. All that remains are a few high leads which are scheduled to meet the scaling pole in the next couple months. Everyone can look for a completed map and full write up at that time.

During the past couple years I've also managed to slip out to the valley and map two smaller caves with the aid of Joan Johnson and Frank Gibson. These are Dead Doe and Hodges, both small insurgent caves. They will also be appearing in publication soon.

As it stands now there is much to do in Wilburn Valley, survey and resurvey. So if you are one who likes to push hard and doesn't mind the inherent sleaze slop squeeze caving encountered in the valley's caves grab your gear and we'll go stretch some tape.

Mike Futrell



WILBURN VALLEY CAVE

5710' SHOWN
UPPER LEVEL - GRAY
LOWER LEVEL - BLACK

CART. BY: M. FUTRELL

Stories From Beyond
...names have been changed to enhance the storyline.

My worst cave experience happened in a local cave while caving with my best friend, and Rob Hills. My trusted Petzl Lamp (my best friend) was burning brightly in the passage before us. We had already descended three pits to place us at the bottom of this cave we had recently discovered. As we trudged along in the mud, our boots made a burping sound as the water created a vacuum around our Vibram soles. Rob followed quitely behind me carrying only the bare essentials of cave gear, as we always packed lightly. I too had come rather unprepared to explore the cave we had uncovered, but we trudged on regardless. After several hours of walking through tight canyon passage we noticed burnt embers and footprints at our feet. Had there been others here before us? Was there another entrance? We had been in the cave only 36 hours and Rob and I were both still full of energy, so we continued on in search of another way out. After another hour of jogging the canyon closed to a mere hallway passage. In fact, it resembled a hallway in many ways for the walls were smooth with well defined edges. We continued on with minor trepidation, for a strange feeling had started to overcome us. The passage no longer resembled a cave, but rather something creature made. Our unease grew as the passage continued. The burned torches we had previously seen now hung from the walls as if the passage had once been lit. We turned a corner and stopped dead in our tracks as a towering oak door appeard in front of us. The door was at least twenty feet high and eight feet wide with huge wrought iron studs protruding from its surface. There were no visible hinges or handles to be tampered with. Fearing the trip back more than what lay on the other side of the door, Rob and I attempted to open it. The door was smooth and solid to our touch. Seemingly, as we pushed upon it, there would be no way for us to move it. We tried for several minutes to find a secret lever, but to no avail. I sat down in exhaustion, fearing the long trek out of the cave. Rob's temper grew until he slammed the door with his fist and yelled, "Damn, I wish I had a beer!" Instantaneously the door slid open to reveal blackness beyond. Rob gasped and stepped back in amazement. We both moved closer as if drawn from something beyond the darkness, but our lights would not penetrate it. I stepped back afraid of the darkness that my Petzl would not cut, for I had never before experienced such a technical problem. Rob stared at me blankly, perhaps wondering what to do. He was a tough caver and didn't back down lightly from such challenges. Unlike most men, the fear of perpetual darkness did not deter him, for he was a true caver at heart. Stepping into the black void he disappeared in front of me. Fearing the loneliness without his presence, I grabbed our cave packs and jumped in after him. Suddenly I was cast into an eternal spin. I could not free myself from -- Aaaarrrrgggghhhh...

I awoke lying in the dry bat guano next to Rob's feet. Rob looked down upon me as I opened my eyes. "What happened?" I asked.

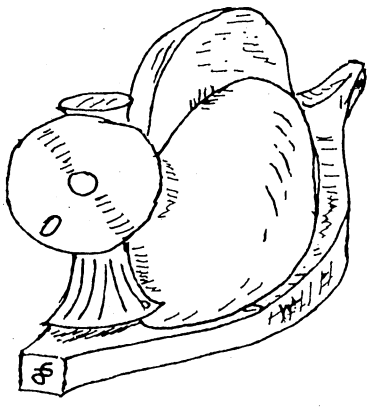
"Oh nothing, just another one of those teleports again. I hate when that happens."

"Yeah, me too," I sat and ruminated over our predicament. "Well where the hell are we now?"

"Well, we are obviously at the bottom of a local cave. Yes, I reconize it immediately. It's going to take us a while to get out though, because we are at the bottom of this pit." Searching through our cave gear we managed to come up with 30 feet of webbing, 3 carabiner gates and 2 chocolate bars. Picking up a solid rock from the floor we headed for the wall. We began our ascent by using the carabiner gates as bolts and simultaneously standing on each other's shoulders to drive the next one in. The work was slow, however, as we had to use the rock as a hammer. Soon our lights grew dim for we were out of carbide and other light sources. In the dark we tied ourselves together and continued our blind bolt climb. Each time Rob pounded in the third bolt, I would remove the first so that we would have enough to reach the top. As we drew near to the top of the pit, (judged by our dropping screeching bats tied to rocks down the pit and counting the seconds) one of our bolts broke and we were forced to carry on, both of us hanging from one bolt as we pounded in the other. The climb was not difficult as compared to the rest of our journey to escape from the local cave, however. Eating a diet of cold bat meat and Vibram shoe leather, we managed to crawl for many days until we reached the entrance of the cave. Breaking out into the bright January sunlight, we were met with the cold weather of a Virginia blizzard. Since we had not planned to be teleported to this cave on our trip, we were forced to walk for two days back to campus. The only casualties of the cold were our bare feet, for we had eaten our shoes in the cave. Rob and I have learned many things in our cave trip experiences, but none so valuable a lesson as this trip afforded us. From now on, Rob and I will be sure to pack more than 2 candy bars in our cave packs, for neither of us like the taste of bat meat.

...don't miss the next edition entitled "Expedition to King Solomon's mines" or "How to test pit depth with tribal baggage carriers"

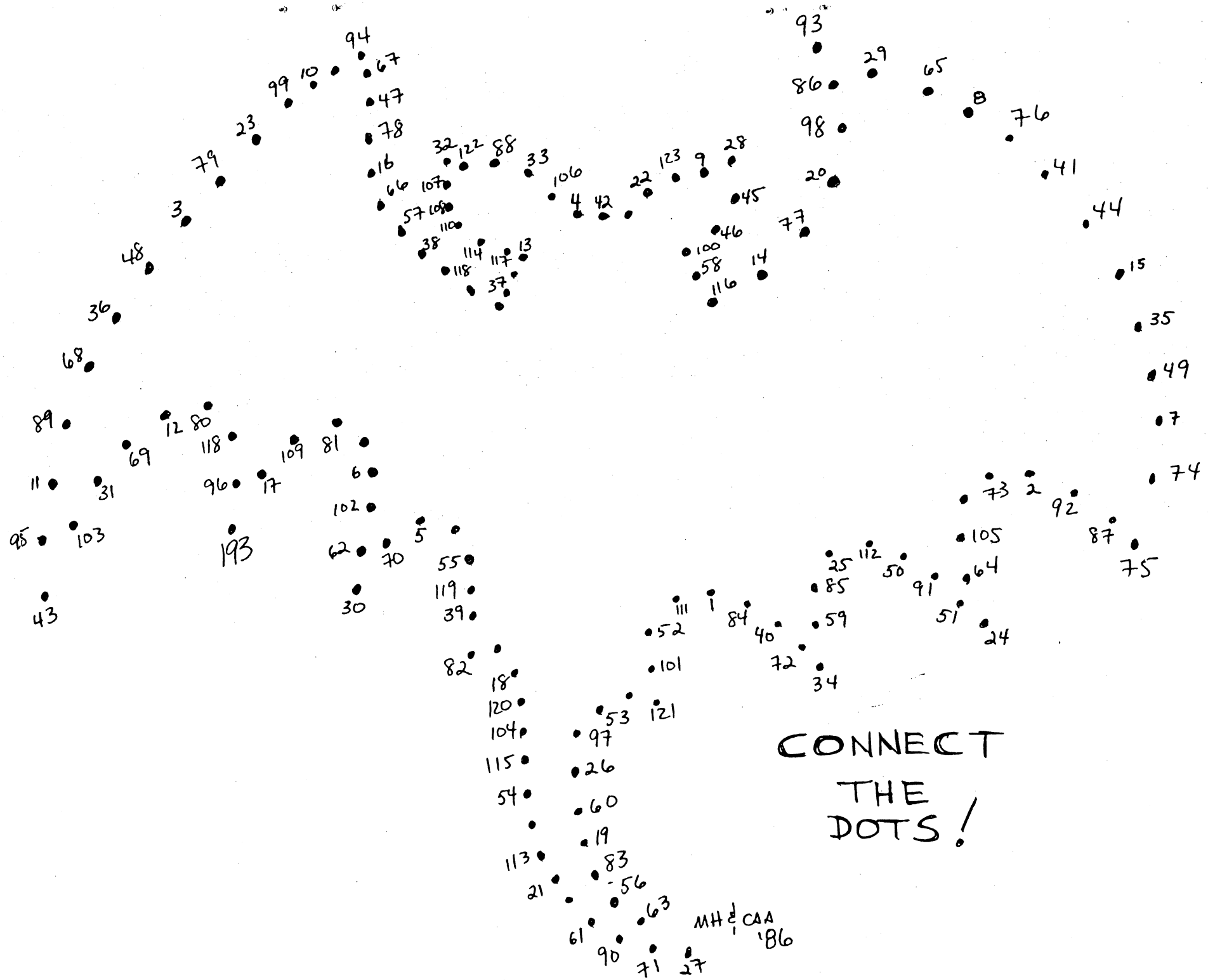
by
Craig T. Roberts



FROM THE SIGNOUT SHEET...

From 2/23/86 to 5/15/86 VPI Grotto logged over 809.5 hours in 42 trips. Some of the highlights were:

Date	Cave	Party	Comments
2/23/86	Newcastle Murder Hole	Walt & Cecile Pirie, Mike Dale Thorpe	Mike left his Cannon Snappy in the cave-if found please return to Walt. Good bounce trip
2/23/86	Stompbottom	Mike Futrell, Susan Setzler, Tammie Heazlit	Opted for sunshine & post party recovery.
3/1/86	Newcastle Murder Hole	Paul Hess, Craig Roberts, Beth Wichterman	Done found the camera. What a silly name for a camera. What'll the Japanese think of next! Cool trip!
3/8/86	New River	Mark Hanosky, Barry Fizer, Drew Porter, Reggie Reid, Susan Setzler	Bats on the ceiling Pink champagne on ice...
3/9/86	Wilburn Valley	Mike Futrell, Reggie Reid, Craig Ferguson	The hot lead - Didn't The bad lead - Did
3/22/86	Newberry's	Carol-Joe Zo, Jean Hartman, John Lohner, Barbara Goodreau	Surveyed around the vault room. Old ladies (mommas) really can cave!
3/31/86	Queensberry	Joe Saunders, Hugh Beard	Just wanted it on record that I mapped with the infamous Joe Saunders.
4/6/86	Newberry	Don Anderson, Craig Roberts, Joan Johnson, Beth Wichterman, Sue Setzler, Jenny Ford, Barry Fizer, Margaret	Cool connection trip!! Lake
4/6/86	Hog Hole	Ed Devine, Linda Baker	Finished cave survey. Another one bites the dust!
4/10/86	New River (how embarrassing)	Don Oswald, Mike Fiore, C. Ferguson	priced some tennis shoes
5/3/86	Old Mill	Lisa Merolla, Rob Hills	"Don't want to be washed away by the flood"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