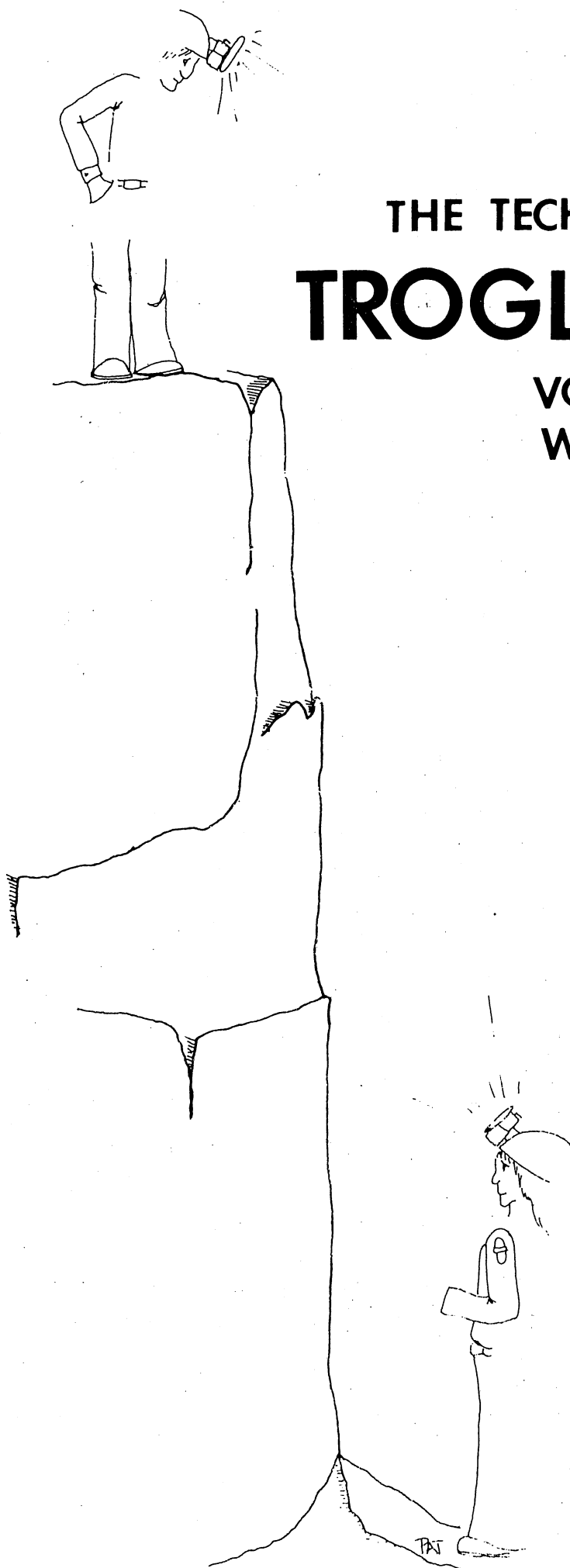


THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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Editor	Patricia Shorten
Exchange Editor	Joe Zokaite

STATE OF THE GROTTO

As winter quarter gets under way, VPI Grotto is alive and well. Attendance at meetings has been high and there are a lot of prospective members. For this we can thank Richard Cobb's dedication to his work as Vice-President and Win Wright's work as publicity chairman. Both vertical sessions went well with a good turn out of interested people. Special thanks to all those who helped.

November's ridge walk at East River Mountain helped locate some potential caves and set records straight. A few small mapping projects were spurred by this and hopefully there are more to come. Much thanks to Bill Koerschner for organizing the walk and finishing Spring Hollow (thank goodness for that).

The Halloween party had a good mixture of old and new people. The party was good as far as I can remember. Thanks to Doug Perkins, Hugh Beard, Joe Zokaite, Pat Shorten, Win Wright, and Mr. Hylton of the Prices Fork Grange.

With these things behind us we must keep our goals in mind. Since last spring's elections three members have been added to our roster. A number of people are quite close to becoming members and the membership goal of twelve new members should be met. But let's not stop there, it's everyone's responsibility to make sure there are as many trips going out as possible. Ideas, techniques, and other acquired information must be passed on. Mapping and locating caves should remain an integral part of our activities. Vertical work must be learned and practiced by all. Knowing how to go up and down a rope is only the beginning. The hazards are many and knowledge in every area, from rigging to changing over, should be second nature to everyone. An advanced vertical session is in the planning for the spring.

In early September, the Old Timers Reunion and Speleo-Olympics will be held. VPI Grotto has had a very strong showing for many years. Here, vertical techniques can be used to win both personal gain (prizes) and club honor. As we cave throughout the year, let's keep OTR in mind and plan to kick a-- next September.

Practice rescues were promised and the first one will be on January 19th. This will be an excellent opportunity for prospective and regular members alike to be exposed to problems which may arise. As a large grotto, it is our job to be ready for rescues.

As a grotto within the NSS, we encourage members to join the NSS. This increases our voting power at BOG meetings and helps the NSS by providing funds for projects and keeping a more accurate tally on the number of active cavers. Most of all, it benefits the individual caver by giving access to a wider variety of NSS publications plus a free subscription to the NSS News and Bulletin. It may also increase one's ability to meet and confer with other active cavers.

In closing, I want to encourage both prospective and regular members to be active in all club activities. Help keep our grotto the best in the NSS.

Bill Stephens

Bill Stephens, President

VICE-PRESIDENTS COLUMN

While at the Hokie House the other night, our editor assaulted me with physical violence for not having written a VP column yet. Pat promised even further violence and a nasty note in the TROG if I didn't have something in by the following Friday. I pointed out to Pat that it would be difficult for me to write anything while she had me locked in a Full Nelson. (Ed. note-I don't even know what a Full Nelson is!) After much persuasion and many promises on my part, she finally (and reluctantly) agreed that I had a point and released me. Having a profound respect for my well being, I decided not to put this off any longer. So here, with no further ado, are my eagerly awaited words of wisdom.

Uh,...Well,...That is...

Actually (and seriously), there are things I would like to discuss. The training program seems to be going well. It is important now that we get some good new members who are going to be around awhile. The club is in a transition period. There are only a few members at present who have been around for more than a year or two, and most of those people are getting ready to leave. Traditionally, most of our new members have been freshmen or sophomores who were able to pass on their knowledge in the two or three years they had remaining at Va. Tech. In the past year or so, many of our new members have come in as upper classmen or grad students, and as a result, they are only with us a short while. With this kind of rapid turnover, many club practices and traditions could be easily lost.

As an example, how many people presently in the club know how to modify the foot cam on a Gibbs ascender so that it will be easier to break loose on the rope? Or how many people know the reasons for using shock cord instead of surgical tubing for the elastic in a "ropewalker"? These concepts and many more have been worked out by VPI members, but this knowledge is in danger of being lost through turnover.

So, for those of us who are leaving in the near future, do what you can to pass on the tricks of the trade! Things like rappelling and prussiking will be passed on through the training program. What is important is the little things you learn along the way. Things like a system you may have worked out for reading the brunton faster or how to place stations for greater reading ease. The list is endless. Remember, if you don't pass on the knowledge, it could be lost when you leave.

Now for all you up and coming new members, keep in mind that in a year or so you will be the VPI Cave Club. Take every opportunity to learn all you can. Something you learn now may save your life someday, or someone else's.

The VPI Cave Club has been and is a great organization. Whatever else anyone may say about us, none can deny that a VPI caver is a first class caver. While much of the proficiency of the VPI caver can be attributed to our training program, it is not just proficient cavers that make VPI great. Our strength lies in the fact that we believe in the club and ourselves. Despite personal differences that may arise from time to time, in times of personal or club crisis we are a family ready to pull together to do what must be done.

So let's keep our club great. If you're new, you can look forward to many happy and rewarding times with the club, as well as finding lifelong friends. But it is also your responsibility, as future members and officers, to insure that the club is even greater when you leave it. If you're leaving, pass on your knowledge. It's the little things that make the difference between a good caver and a VPI caver.

Richard Cobb, Vice-President

319 Kilbourne Ave.
Appalachia, VA 24216
Sept. 6, 1979

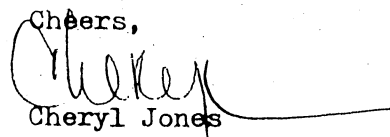
VPI Grotto
P.O. Box 471
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Dear OTR Survivors,

Many thanks for your help Labor Day weekend! Your enthusiasm for involvement was appreciated -- whether it was in competing in the contests, manning the nametag gathering post, helping with security, judging the contests or picking up trash in the pavillion.

The success of OTR was due in a large part to the involvement of current and past VPI grotto members; we couldn't have done it without you! Thanks again, and see you next year...or at ~~at~~ least at banquet!

Cheers,


Cheryl Jones
Chairman
OTR 79

X (To be printed in the next trog, as well as read aloud for mailbag....)

EDITORIAL

I never thought getting articles for a TROG could be so difficult. . . once I got all those articles I never expected all the help I got! I'd like to thank Clark Kent (alias Jay Kennedy), Lois Lane (alias Robyn LeFon), and Pete Sauvigne for all their help typing. Special thanks go to Hugh Beard for his typing and helping me edit. All artwork and articles are very much appreciated; they helped make this a TROG come true!

And now for the editorial part of the editorial. . . .

I realize that most of our regular members have not been with us very long. Does this excuse them from serving on committees, helping with club activities and sharing club responsibilities? Months ago a visiting associate member said that associate members who regularly attend meetings should step aside and allow regular members to run the club. Since then I've been wondering exactly what our committees are and who chairs these committees. . . . Does anyone really know? From what I've been able to uncover most of the committees are chaired by associate members. Is this due to increasing apathy or lack of information?

Having associate members chair committees is in itself not bad except that VPI Grotto is a student organization. Also, many of our chairpeople live out of town and don't regularly attend meetings. This means that 1) they are not current with the club and 2) whatever their committee is supposed to be doing takes too long to get done. Certainly many associate members enjoy the jobs they do and should keep their position but even they should be showing new people how to handle those jobs. There are obviously certain committees or jobs that can be handled better by associate members due to their interest, time limitations, etc. But should all the thankless jobs fall on associate members' shoulders? Perhaps more regular and prospective members should get involved in behind-the-scene activities.

Granted, caving is our priority but to be a caving organization voting members must support club activities and help make them possible. Certainly I have not been with the club long enough to criticize the chairing that's been done. I'd just like to see more students doing the work, sharing the responsibilities and getting involved. How else will you know what to do when older members leave?



Patricia L. Shorten

Pat Shorten
Editor



A WEEKEND AT HUGH AND JOE'S

(Editors Note: these statements could be misconstrued.)

Hugh to Joe; "I'm ill equiped."

Jeanne to Hugh; "Get up!"

Jeanne to Dave; "I'm ready when you are."

Fran to crowd; "I can find my thing with one hand but it takes both hands to get it in."

Jeanne to Dave; "Dave it's rather stimulating in here."

Sue to Paul; "Paul, pull down my pants please."

Fran to Joe; "Hey Joe, I've got something still cold and wet for you."

Paul to Fran; "How can you stand Joe?"

Fran to Paul; "It's not easy..."

Pat to Dave; "Can we go play?"

Hugh to Pat and Dave; "I'm coming"

Pat to Hugh and Dave; "Can I watch?"

Hugh to Dave about Jeanne; "Upright Dave, Upright!!"

Carol to crowd; "I was dancing last night? When?"

Hugh to Crowd; "There's a lot of things I remember. There's a lot of things I wish I didn't remember."

Pat to crowd; "It's about three dollars a piece."

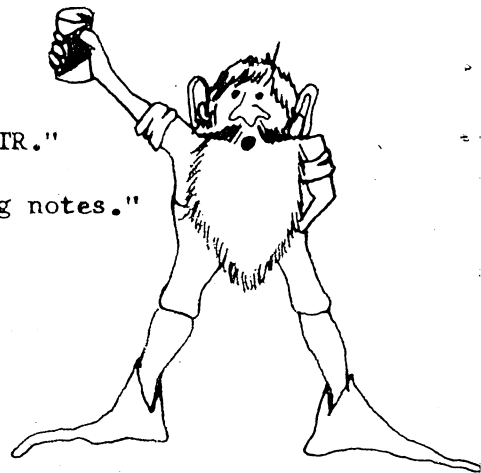
Pat to crowd; "SUPERMAN is showing this weekend and I'm free any night."

Paul to crowd; "I just realized what I'd done."

Paul and Sue to Hugh; "We're coming!"

Pat to crowd; "I have'nt been able to drink wine since OTR."

Paul to Pat and Dave; "This is so fascinating I'm taking notes."



THE TELLTALE PASSAGE

It was yet another hungover Saturday morning last spring. Ed Devine, Bill Koerschner, and I started another Paul(bahl) Penley trip, planning to clean up some leads. Trips of this type into Paul's end up pretty grim but they have also pushed Paul's to almost 4.2 miles.

The leads to be pushed were at the dry northernmost end of the cave, and Ed had some high hopes of breaking into some new passage. We had made it well into the cave before we realized that the ladder had been forgotten. We were forced into taking the longer route to bypass the ladder climb. In the process, more energy was expended and I found myself drinking too much water.

All the leads choked with no difficulties except the last lead. Sometimes you just know when a crawl is going to be bad. Well, this gypsum slot with a slight z let us know how bad it was when Koerschner, on lead tape, tried to push it. The passage literally boomed to the beat of his heart. I was waiting for Rod Steiger to walk up and tell us that the chicken heart had eaten Paul Penley's cave. Bill couldn't make it, so I gave it a try. Grunts and groans and heartbeats but no way. However, Ed Devine made it through with a cry of pain, then a whoop of joy. After trying again Koerschner made it but I still could not. Laying stuck in a narrow slot with piss dripping from your lamp, because you ran out of water, is not helped by the amplified heartthrobs. I finally made it through using the incredible new caving technique called the "backward-bending knee." Works wonders for arthritis.

There wasn't really very much back there. We mapped about sixty feet, leaving one lead gushing air. We called it quits, making it a fourteen hour trip.

Later, in the summer, I summoned upon the two crawling kids, Bill Stephens and Bill Shipman, to go on a Wednesday night to Pauls. This time I brought the heavy artillery: the three pound sledge and a chisel. Now I am not into damaging the cave but when it comes to getting stuck, I'm desperate.

First, I went down into "the Crimper", as the slot was named by Ed Devine, and I knocked off a few knobs. Then foolishly I sent Shipman down to widen it some. He said something like, "no problem", then breezed right on through. This is what I get for not being as small as him. Oh, well. I figured attempting the Crimper on my side opposite from the side I had used before might work better. It didn't and I got stuck. The heartthrobs were going a mile a minute and echoing throughout the cave as I got pulled through by Stephens.

Now, pushing out this windy lead proved to be an impossible task, as Stephens got himself incredibly stuck in the "z" shaped little mother. I had to chisel him out of his fate and cut the rock that was inhibiting his movement.

I learned several lessons on these trips. Most of all, I learned that when you hear the chicken heart coming, you'd better run. 'Cause the chicken heart's out to get you.

Win Wright

CAVING IN THAILAND

Far away in the tropical jungles of Thailand, the Thai-Am caving grotto once thrived. There were caves to be discovered and explored including that of the fire cave.

Our party arrived at a Buddhist Wat on one sunny Saturday morning back in early 1974. We were there to stage our assault on a 90 foot pit which Thai locals had mentioned on a previous P.R. trip. Hiking up the mountain and traversing its side, we passed potential entrances. Pushing apart the undergrowth, we narrowly escaped the almost instant death of a green pit viper. Off to the side I pulled back a tree branch and looked down a seemingly bottomless pit. After dropping a few rocks in I let go of the branch only to have my helmet knocked off. Down it fell bouncing till it could no longer be heard; not to be retrieved until some months later.

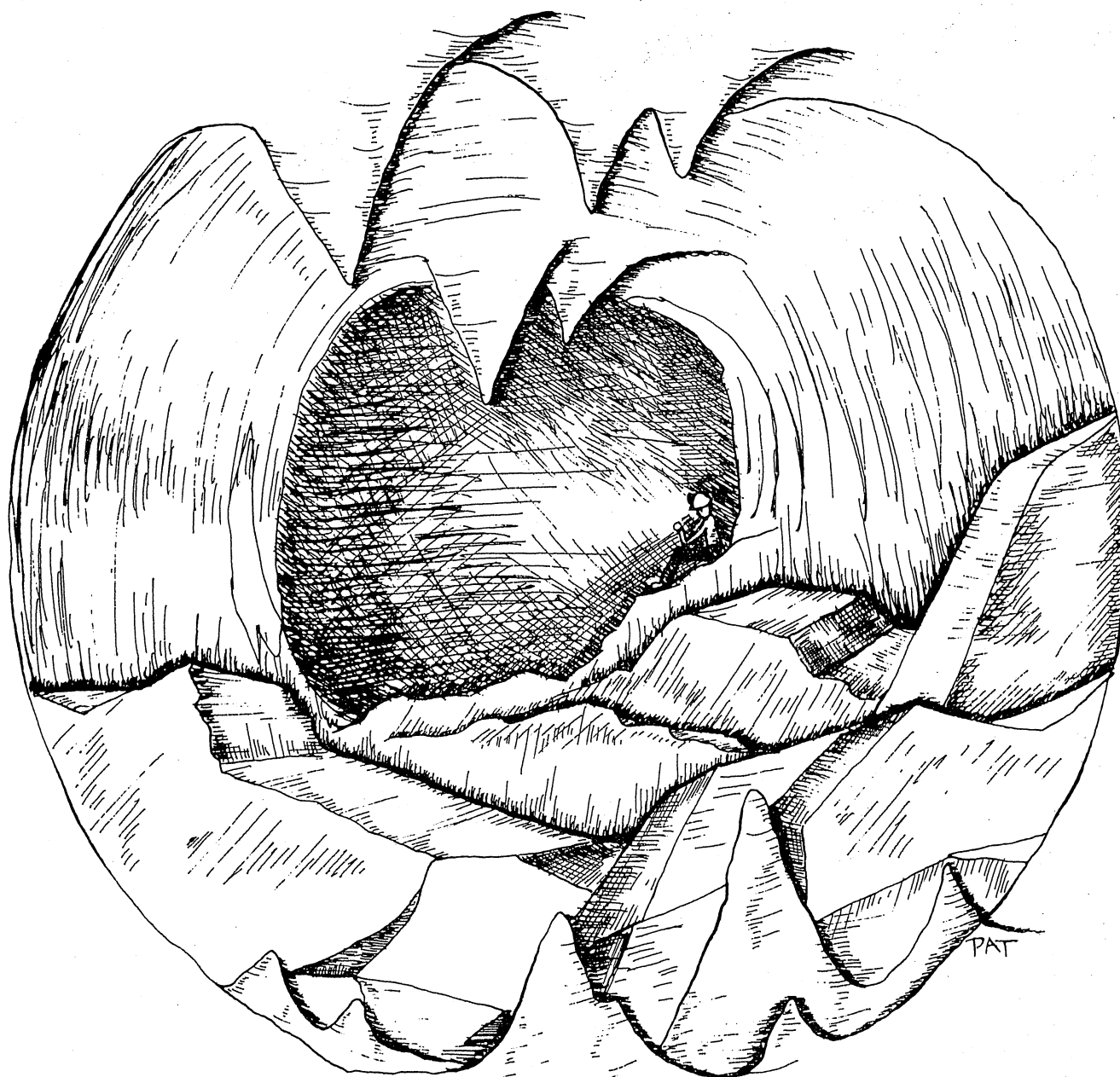
As we climbed higher, we could look out to the North & West inabling us to see the eerie looking mountains of this Asian karst which often had large inaccessible black holes in their faces.

Finially we turned a corner and there was the entrance, about 15 feet by 10 feet. Inside was a flat floored entrance room with a 20 foot ceiling. About 30 feet into the cave was a 10 foot high wall. From the top of the wall one could look down 90 feet to the bottom and up about 150 feet to a skylight in the ceiling.

The rope had to be rigged to a large boulder outside the entrance. We began to drop the pit, approximately nine of us in all. Earl & Peggy Geil, Jim Brewer & son (Pumpkin), Greg & Jeff Lett, Steve Egan, Kurt Hollier and myself. It was obvious that we hadn't been the first ones in the cave. There was a ladder leaning against the wall made of pieces of bamboo lashed together end to end. We joked about the ladder daring one another to try it on the way out.

At the bottom we went on to explore the cave, The passage was large, but not very extensive. We finially began to climb out. Peggy, Pumpkin and Kurt were at the top when they began to complain about a brush fire out on the mountain. Jeff climbed out and the complaints continued with the added difficulty of smoke in the entrance room, Then I climbed out. As I got to the top the others were coughing from the smoke building up and it appeared that very little was flowing up and out of the skylight above the pit.

Greg began to climb out; we noticed that flames were beginning to engulf the boulder to which the rope was rigged. By this time Greg was about 30 to 40 feet off the bottom. His brother Jeff yelled down to him that we would have to derig the rope with him still on it. Greg screamed back with all kinds of death threats, but it was no use. We told him to leave his cams on the rope and to start climbing the bamboo ladder. Meanwhile, the rope was derigged and we all held on to it as a belay. The smoke was worse than ever now and the flames were shooting into the entrance room. The rope jerked again and again as Greg swayed back and forth on the unstable ladder. It finially seemed that we were near the point of smoke asphyxiation. Being assured by the others that the rope could be held securely without me, I jumped through the flames and out onto the smokey mountainside. I got a few breaths of air and went back inside to relieve someone else. This continued until Greg was out of the pit. By this time the flames had died down and those of us at the top of the pit all staggered out of the cave gasping and



choking, but relieved. When it was safe again, we rerigged the rope and the others climbed out safely. As we came off the mountain, night was setting in. We were all perplexed and angry over the fire which had apparently been purposely set.

Later we learned that this was the case. It seems that every year the local Thais burn off the side of the mountain in order to kill off the cobra population. Unfortunately their burning had coincided with our caving and could have been fatal.

What could have been done to prevent this hazard?

1. Better communication and understanding between us and the Thais. This was difficult with the language barrier.
2. Once the smoke and fire had begun to pose a threat, people should have remained on the bottom and the rope derigged. However, at the bottom it was hard to accept the true threat of the fire outside and communication had become very poor with the noise of the fire crackling outside and the constant coughing of those at the top.
3. Don't cave where cobras dare. We had only seen green pit vipers.

DRINKING FOR EFFECT
THE DTC REPORT

The DTC was privileged this past New Years to objectively survey a typical drinking accident. Here are the facts:

On January 1, 1980 it was discovered that large quantities of alcohol had not been consumed during the previous evening's party. In an attempt to rectify the situation, a number of people began "drinking for effect" by passing the remaining intoxicants around. Consumed were several bottles of rum, bourbon, brandy, and wine. Included was a bottle of the infamous "Red Rocket", which is thought to be a by-product of the Soviet space program. The results were spectacular. We observed a complete party scene taking place in the space of two hours-- drinking, singing, rowdiness and finally, complete pass-out. Of particular interest to the DTC were two hard-drinking fellows. These men gave excellent examples of how to correctly and incorrectly "drink for effect". Here's our analysis:

Drinker number one prepared for the party in several ways, most importantly by eating a hearty meal of spaghetti beforehand. We know this to be true by an analysis of the contents of his stomach, which were graciously provided to us. He also showed excellent training by passing out in the face-down position, long recognized as the optimum position for long-term stupors. We can only find fault in his actual drinking technique. The man obviously missed his target effect-- in fact, it was a disastrous overshoot. But only time and practice can solve that. We are happy to report that this man was back in action the next night.

Drinker number two did nothing to prepare for the party. The alcohol hit an empty stomach-- a stomach that had seen action at the previous night's party-- and went immediately into his blood. The result was almost instant drunkenness which rapidly developed into heaving. Since only the liquor could be thrown up dry heaves quickly developed and, due to the shock of so much booze so quickly, the man rapidly passed into a state of near shock. DTC technicians were concerned enough that they complied with the man's request for medical attention. No complications developed, but it is expected that this unit will not see action again for several weeks.

The lessons of this accident are quite obvious. Drink on a full stomach. It will give you more control over the alcohol and also makes puking more tolerable. Use extreme caution when "drinking for effect". This is a technique that should only be used by experienced personnel and even they often find the proper "effect range" hard to judge.

NOTICE

The DTC will be sponsoring several field trips on Feb. 15 & 16, 1980. Inquire if interested. A demonstration of "effect drinking" will also be given on the 16th.

REPAIRING YOUR WATER VALVE

Through long use (or by being overly enthusiastic in making sure your water is turned off) your water valve does not shut off completely, or its normal range of adjustment is past the indentations so that it's hard to control. Do not despair, throw away your lamp or use it as an excuse to stop caving. Repair is as easy as finding someone with a propane torch and then investing about five minutes of work.

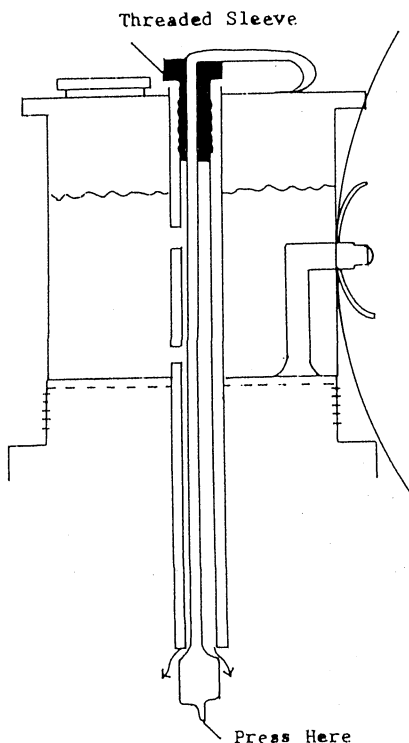
First, a little about how the valve works. A tapered plug in the end of the valve tube controls the flow rate. The plug is held in place by a rod which runs up through the water tube and through a threaded sleeve at the tip. At the end of the sleeve it is bent into the hook you control your water with. The threads on the sleeve are of relatively fine pitch, so that over a half-rotation (the normal range of the valve) there is very little vertical movement of the plug. This movement is sufficient to control the approximately drip-a-second rate required, however.

The problem arises when the half a circle the control handle turns in is not "synchronized" with the half of rotation that controls the flow. The lamp is easily "synchronized" by melting the solder in the sleeve and repositioning the rod relative to the sleeve. The procedure is as follows:

Set the water valve at approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way to full open. Remove the lamp bottom and, holding the body firmly, press the tapered plug end firmly down on the workbench. While maintaining this pressure heat the top of the sleeve (with a sideways flame) until the solder melts and you feel the rod "click" up into a new position. Remove heat and keep pressing down till the solder cools.

That's it! You just repaired your lamp. Fill it with water and make sure it adjusts properly. If not, reposition the valve and repeat the procedure. Fill lamp bottom with carbide and screw onto lamp. Attach lamp to hardhat. Go caving. This procedure works equally well for Premier or Justrite lamps.

Richard Cobb



ELLISON'S CAVE

After months of planning, we finally got the rope, transportation and people together one Saturday in March of 1978. The group included Kent Seavers and Gregg Clemmer of the Shenandoah Valley Grotto, Bob Alderson, Bill Arney, Ben Johnson and myself. We pointed Gregg's van towards Lafayette and contemplated doing the deepest cave pit in the country.

After an 8 hour drive we rolled into Lafayette, Georgia and met Larry "Smokey" Caldwell at the Pigeon Mountain Industries rope factory. Besides making some fine rope and fighting fires with the Georgia Forestry Commission, Smokey has adopted Ellison's Cave. He usually leaves one of his ropes permanently rigged in 510' Fantastic Pit and yo-yo's the drop as often as twice a week. He wasn't sure if he could come with us that Sunday morning, so Alderson, who had done the drop before, planned to lead the trip. Smokey gave us a tour of the PMI operation and lead us to the Blue Hole at the base of Pigeon Mountain, where we camped.

Sunday morning we ate breakfast and packed our gear for the 2 mile hike up the mountain to the cave entrance. As we left camp Smokey pulled in ready to go caving. We had ourselves an expert guide! The trek uphill with 600' of rope was no fun. Without packframes it would have been unbearable. Finally we made it up to the "New" Entrance. This route avoids the Agony, a passage that sounds worth avoiding. After pulling a large rock out of the entrance we all dropped into the Ecstasy. This large walking passage carried about six inches of water for a few hundred feet to the Warm-up Pit. There we rigged a piece of Smokey's PMI off of several bolts and rappelled 125 feet to the bottom.

From there a couple short drops lead down to the Balcony, where Smokey's rope was rigged for a 510' drop in Fantastic Pit. We all chose instead to climb up to the Attic where we could rig Fantastic as a 586' freefall. When we got to the rigging point Smokey found a thirty pound rock to drop down the pit. After a long seven second whistling fall, it finally hit with an eerie deep thud that echoed several times. We were all impressed, and at least a little scared. Everyone sat around saying "Oh, wow!", except Greg who giggled like a kid who'd just discovered lollypops. After we got our wits together we rigged Gregg's new Bluewater and began rappelling, everyone using a rack. Smokey went first. After a few minutes we heard OFF--OFF--OFF--OFF ROPE--ROPE--ROPE--ROPE. Damn! It sounded like Smokey had crossed over to the twilight zone. A few more oh-wows from the chorus and giggles from Gregg and Ben was rigged in. He was psyched enough to forget to take his ascending gear down with him.

Then it was my turn. I too got past the lip without my ascending gear. At this point I was pretty nervous. I had never been so high. Gradually the fear left me. About seventy feet down I passed the balcony where I could see Smokey's rope rigged and where a large stream fell into the pit about twenty feet from me. The stream roared as it crossed the lip, but down a couple hundred feet it was stone silent. The experience was no longer fearful, just awesome. The mist obscured vision so that all I could see looking up was about thirty feet of rope disappearing into darkness. Down looked the same; no contact with the real world. To the sides I could see the sides of the dome pit, but they were so smooth that only the rope sliding through my rack told me that I was moving. As the bottom approached, the stream again roared

as it kicked up a spray. Finally, I could see my belayer pulling me clear of the water where I touched down.

The bottom of the pit was level with a cobble floor. Everything was soaked from the spray. The rest of the group rappelled with Bob pulling up the rear --at least we thought he was last. Upon touching down he informed us that another caver was behind him. It turned out to be Marion "Baggy" Smith, the author of The Exploration and Survey of Ellison's Cave, Georgia, and a friend of Smokey's. He was going solo, but stayed with us for a few hundred feet of passage to the Gypsum Room, where we all ate dinner. After eating, Marion took off for parts unknown and Smokey took us on a tourist trip.

I knew that there was a lot of passage at the bottom of the pit, but I wasn't expecting anything special. Boy, was I wrong. At a rapid pace Smokey lead us to one outstanding sight after another. First we came to Snowball Dome, about a 200' unexplored pit going up with a neat "Snowball" formation at the bottom. Then through the Slickensides, where you could see clearly how the rock faces on a fault had skid and worn grooves in each other. More passage and on to the North Pole, a clear stalactite of epsomite salt. This formation was not translucent, but clear as glass. Past huge accumulations of moonmilk at the Gnome Creamery, we came to our final destination, Angel's Paradise. This area's walls were completely covered with pure white formations of epsomite--needles and flowers. Some of these fragile formations are over a foot long and they comprise a truly spectacular sight. All of the Virginians were duly impressed and I declared Ellison's the prettiest as well as the deepest cave I had ever done.

After backtracking we arrived at the bottom of Fantastic. To speed things up we decided to climb two at a time on each rope. I had heard of tandem, but this was more like quadrophonic. Bob and I climbed together on the 586' to the Attic. The way up wasn't really scary at all. Maybe I was too tired to be scared. After 45 minutes on the rope we reached the top and blew a whistle to inform the guys below that we were off rope. The whistle proved unsatisfactory because they never heard it below. After much confusion we finally noticed the rope tense up, indicating that someone was climbing. After a while Ben approached the lip, informing us that he could feel from the rope movement that Bill was climbing below, but that he had not seen him for several hundred feet. A half hour later Bill reached the lip soaking wet and with his lamp out. Being the last climber, he had nobody to hold him clear of the spray at the bottom. The water had attacked his lamp, forcing him to climb the entire drop in the dark.

Fatigue and a rig malfunction caused Kent to spend even more time climbing the Warm-up Pit than he'd spent in Fantastic. We were all fading fast as we hauled our gear and weary bodies out into the warm Georgia night. Smokey again demonstrated his superior experience by being the only one with a cold beer at the entrance. The rest of us had to wait until we reached the camp where hot food and strong drink finished us off for the night.

The next morning Smokey entertained us with an Ellison's slide show and we headed back north. The trip had put us all on a natural high that lasted for months. It was easily the best trip I have ever had. FANTASTIC!

Pete Sauvigne

THE RAPPEL

I had only a small amount of caving and rappelling experience. I signed up for a trip to Pig Hole along with ten other people. Pig Hole has an eighty foot rappel into the entrance, and a hundred sixty foot rappel after the cave has been entered.

I was a prospective member of the cave club, so I approached the leader of the trip, Richard. He talked about the procedure and then started discussing the euphoria he felt when he made the rappels. I didn't understand what he meant by euphoria, but he told me I would realize exactly what he meant when I made the rappels the next day.

We reached the cave entrance and prepared for the trip. The ropes were tested and rigged; we were finally ready to enter the cave. I had anticipated the trip, and when I was finally rigged to the rope, I began to realize why. I stood over the edge of the drop, and realized the only thing that kept me from falling was a single rope, a few carabiners, and the friction I applied with my own strength. As I started down the cliff, I was choked by a fear that something was going to fail. The further I descended though the more that feeling faded to one of confidence and excitement. I felt a high, and realized what Richard had meant when he talked about euphoria.

I had heard people experienced highs from drugs, but I knew that what I was experiencing wouldn't compare to that. I had complete control of all my senses, but I felt unattached to my physical being. I felt like shouting and screaming with joy. I had never experienced that feeling before. It was a mixture of all the emotions I had ever felt and the combination was overwhelming. I was soaring emotionally. I felt like a bird free from the earth.

When I reached the bottom of the rappel and my feet touched the ground, the euphoria faded. I felt a feeling of pleasure, but nowhere near as intense as it had been only a few seconds earlier.

We made the second rappel, and the same feeling returned. I knew from that point on that the only time I would experience that feeling was when I was rappelling.

I've rappelled every chance I've gotten since that day and experienced the same euphoria. It can be explained, but the words lack the intensity of that feeling.

Carol Trexler



PIG HOLE CAVE RESCUE

On Saturday, December 1st, two VPI students rappelled into the 120 foot entrance pit of Pig Hole. They had no ascending devices with which to climb back up the rope. They did not know the cave at all but expected to be able to exit through the back drainpipe opening. Moving by guesswork, they made it as far as the Mud Bridge before one of them dropped his flashlight and it rolled into Hess' Hollow. With one flashlight and two spare batteries as their sole light source and not having any idea of how to get to the back exit, they decided to return to the entrance pit and hope for a rescue.

It is not clear exactly how the report that initiated the rescue originated. It appears that a more experienced (yet unaffiliated) caver had left his gloves in the cave on an earlier trip that same day. Our understanding is that he returned that night to the field in which Pig Hole lies and heard them from the pit. He apparently phoned in the report. In any event, the message that reached the Giles County Rescue Squad said nothing about Pig Hole (or any cave at all) but described the general area in sufficient detail that it was presumed to be Pig Hole.

When the radio tones went off, announcing the rescue, I was two miles from Pig Hole conversing with my uncle J. C. "Jake" Link. Simultaneous to alerting rescue squad members, calls were being made to notify VPI grotto. Very soon I found myself paying the price for not keeping my gear ready to go at all times; changing carbide while riding up Mountain Lake Road in a Bronco with no dome light. At that time it was unknown whether or not there were any injuries. Several of us arrived at the scene in private vehicles followed by an ambulance. I stepped over the fence that surrounds the pit and saw a small amount of light trickling out of the cave. We called down to them and discovered that there were two of them, uninjured and not yet hypothermic. At this point VPI Grotto was again contacted and told that a major rescue would not be needed.

A piece of PMI rope had been rigged in a very poor spot with no padding even though the overhang was rough. The quickest way to reach them would have been to rig with the Goldline we carry in the ambulance. Trusting the rescues' rope was out of the question. The simplest method was to go in the back way and lead them out. We decided on the later course so I proceeded to the back entrance and dropped through the drainpipes.

After I reached them, the guy who (presumably) called in the rescue decided to rappel down and look for his gloves. He wanted to exit by himself, but I requested that he stay with us. On the way out, I heard one of the rescues remark to the other that they never would have found their way out.

Climbing out the drainpipes I was greeted by Bill Stevens, Rich Cobb and Pete Sauvigne. Representing the rescue squad were J. C. Link, Captain Steve Davis, Avery Dolinger and Larry Reynolds. I hope that those rescues can learn from this experience and become good cavers.

This is probably a good opportunity for me to get on a soapbox about inexperienced "freelance" caving. An experienced caver would never have gone into a cave that he could not reasonably expect to get out of. If this had happened to a well-trained caver, he would have fashioned helical knots from the end of the climbing rope and prusiked to safety. If anyone is ever seriously injured in Pig Hole, a major rescue involving hauling a Stokes litter out of the entrance pit will be needed. Trained cavers are not immune to injury, but they are more conscious of safety and their own limits. I only hope that such incidents as this one do not damage landowner relations or give caving a bad name.

THE '79 NEWBERRY'S EXPEDITION
"Two Fingers Are Best"

Joey Fagan and I had planned a camping trip in Newberry's over Thanksgiving break, but we both got colds and decided to postpone the trip till Christmas break. Joey was considering taking over the Newberry's project and wanted to familiarize himself with some more of the cave, and we both wanted to take pictures and experiment with cave camping techniques. The original trip had been planned for one night. By the time the trip came around after finals week, the "expedition" had grown by the addition of Pete Sauvigne and Lawrence Britt, and we even had a support team to "bring in supplies".

Joey, Lawrence and I were going to go in Monday and set up camp. Pete would come in with the support team after work and stay with us when the support team left. After last minute packing and arrangements and haggling at John's Camera for flash equipment we were on our way. The weather teased us with snow flurries, the wind was blowing and the air was cold.

We finially (and eagerly) descended into the warmth of the cave about 3 pm. I rappelled into the entrance with my duffle bag hanging about 10 feet below me on a piece of sling. I wanted to try the technique out before I used it on Bill's Rappel. By clipping the sling into the end of the rack all of the bag weight was transferred to the rack, leaving me free of the load. The technique worked well. I unrigged on the flat area half way down so I could relay the bags lowered to me over to the remaining drop. Once at the bottom we struggled and grunted and sweated getting all of our equipment thru the passage to the top of Bill's. We had 3 duffel bags, a rucksack, plus ropes, a ladder, our vertical gear and our cave packs to haul. We kept shuttling gear along the passage till we neared the Straddle Pit. Lawrence and I passed the equipment over the pit, and then it took just a short time to rig the Nusiance Drop above Bill's.

After rigging Bill's we had lightened our load by the ropes, a ladder and some sling. We divided the remaining gear up so that we would all rappel with part of the load. Joey was first over the lip with duffel bags and pack tied on while I took pictures of him descending the 160'.

We had previously thought that the bottom of Bill's would be a big milestone in our trip on the way in, and we congratulated ourselves on how soon we'd arrived there. It seems like we were a little premature though, since there's where the trip started getting hard. I had never considered the passage from the bottom of Bill's to the Vault room to be difficult, but I'd never tried to haul a fully packed heavy duffel bag through there either! We were almost wiped out by the time we reached the Vault room. Once in the Vault room we stopped to rest and fill out the register, being as quiet as we could so as not to disturb the bats there. Finially we reluctantly coerced our aching bodies into moving on. We headed towards the Main Subway, dragging our duffel bags with us. We crawled, stooped and duckwalked for several hundred feet of passage. Every possible camping area we looked at had some flaw, not enough room, not level, etc. Finially, just before we dropped from exhaustion we found an ideal location. It was an inverted "T" shaped passage. You could walk along the center of the passage and each side was high enough to roll out a sleeping bag and sit on it without hitting your head.

With great relief we set up camp. We unrolled our sleeping bags, changed into clean clothes we'd brought along to sleep in, and made

ourselves at home. Joey set up our "Christmas Tree"; the last few inches of the top of his tree at home. We decorated it with little bits of colored paper. A little "speleo-engineering" created a clothesline out of avalanche cord, a Gibbs and some biners.

We laid out all of our food so we'd know what we had to eat. As it turned out, we had brought enough food to eat very well for the whole trip. I looked over at Lawrence's "pantry". All of the cans were lined up in lines of military precision. It was laid out so neatly it seemed a shame to ruin the order by removing something to eat, but that didn't stop him. I unpacked a dozen eggs I'd brought along with some trepidation, but only one was cracked! (I destroyed another by poking my finger through it when I picked it up though.)

A little after 9 pm we heard sounds down the passage. Our support team was coming. We quickly took off all of our clothes and turned out our lights. Shortly thereafter the support team came upon 3 naked gurus, sitting on sleeping bags in full lotus positions and chanting. As it was chilly, the gurus did not stay naked long.

Pete, JoZo, Fran, Billy the Kid, and Jerry Redder had brought in about 2 cases of beer (our survival equipment). Since Joe, Fran, the Kid and Jerry were to be leaving again soon, they stuck mostly to Cokes. Pete, Joey, Lawrence and I were not so inhibited. We cooked a scrumptious dinner. I had a broken egg sandwich and a hamburger for dinner. Joey broke out a freeze dried meal, and Jerry shared a 2½ lb. can of beef stew with Pete.

After eating a poker game was started, with chips of carbide for stakes. Joey and I annoyed everyone with our flashes as we took pictures of everything. A good time was had by all. Our support team eventually (and reluctantly) decided it was time to leave, since they all had obligations the next day. As they crawled down the passage Joey and I chased them with our cameras, taking pictures of a bunch of butts disappearing into the darkness.

Left all alone, Pete, Joey, Lawrence and myself partied till late before we turned in. Sleeping in total darkness was an experience. Your eyes would begin to play tricks on you. You'd open your eyes and could swear you faintly saw the passage outline. But when you used a light source you'd find out that nothing was where you had "seen" it.

Pete was first to arise around 8, and the rest of us followed soon after. After much stumbling and fumbling with carbide lamps we cooked a royal breakfast and discussed our plans for the day. We had originally planned to dig out and explore the new passage Stephens had found. Being faced with the actual prospect changed our minds however. It's one thing to get all muddy and grungy and then leave the cave. But we didn't relish the idea of climbing into our sleeping bags that night any sleazier than was necessary. We could already tell by this point that even with care we were still going to be pretty gross by the time we left the cave. With the grosser parts rules out, we decided to poke around over towards the Banes entrance.

Our progress would have been fairly rapid if it had not been for Joey and I with our camera equipment. Just as everyone would get moving, Joey and I would stop everything and take a picture or two. Mutterings of "Damn Photographers" became louder as the day wore on. After seeing a lot of passage and taking a lot of pictures we returned to camp for lunch and a B.S. session.

Pete had to return home that evening so we went with him up the Devils Staircase to the bottom of the Nuisance Drop. We watched him climb the

ladder and waited for him to let us know he had made it across the Straddle Pit. We put on our vertical gear and prepared to descend Bill's Rappel. Joey and I had gotten some of the huge "photon-torpedo" flashbulbs from John's Camera. Joey and Lawrence (with my camera) hung on the lip as I rappelled down with the flashgun. About 30 feet down I locked off my rack and Joey and Lawrence opened the camera shutters. I pointed the flashgun below me and closed my eyes. The first bulb didn't work but the second one made me see red through my eyelids, leaving me little doubt that it had worked.

After returning to camp we had a few beers as it was evening by then. We decided we didn't want to sit in camp the rest of the evening, but we also knew we shouldn't do anything serious with a few beers in us. We finally took a stroll down walking passage to the end of the Main Subway, noting locations for pictures the next day. While on our stroll we discussed the philosophy of life and caving and finally arrived at a very important realization. We determined that this one insight made the whole expedition worthwhile, and that we must never allow ourselves to forget it. Unfortunately, it is not the sort of insight one can explain, one either immediately and intuitively realizes the great truth inherent in the statement, or they are forever doomed to go through life without experiencing this great flash of inspiration. For those of you with the enlightenment to understand this basic tenet of caving then, here it is: "Two fingers are best." I realize this will not make sense to most people. All I can say is that there are still many other pleasures and experiences that life has to offer to those so deprived.

Returning to camp we assessed our supplies and realized that unless we ate a lot of food and drank a lot of beer that night, we were going to have a lot to carry out the next day. So we ate and drank and partied till late before we turned in.

We didn't get up till almost 10 the next morning because we knew we'd need some rest to get our gear out. After breakfast we packed up our gear and cleaned up the campsite. Wanting to leave some mark of the '79 expedition, we concealed 2 beers near the camping area as a challenge for future trips to find. Also, wanting to leave a more visible mark, we decided to dedicate the "'79 Expedition Memorial Carbide Dump" which was placed near the camp spot.

After some multiple flash photography in the Main Subway we began the grueling trip out. Once again we considered reaching the bottom of Bill's to be a major milestone on the way out, but this time a little more realistically.

I was the first up the rope with another "torpedo". This time I had the flash pointing up the drop with the cameras on the bottom. After Lawrence had reached the top we hauled the 3 duffel bags up in 3 hauls while Joey tied the equipment on at the bottom. By the time the third haul was done we had jelly for arms and were rapidly reaching an exhausted state. The remainder of the trip, especially once past the Straddle Pit, was almost unbearable in our tired state.

We finally dragged our weary bodies out of the entrance around 7 pm. We had had no idea of what sort of weather to expect when we left, whether it would be clear or under several feet of snow. As it turned out the stars were shining and the temperature was much milder than when we had gone in 2 days before. We gratefully stumbled down the hill with our gear to the car and opened the 3 beers we'd brought back out with us for just that moment.

The "'79 Expedition" was over. We learned a lot. A few things we

discussed that should be kept in mind for anyone planning a similar venture: We brought many candles for use around camp, but they didn't see much use. The skinny candles burn too fast and the flame goes down into the thick candles, causing shadows just where you need the light. We ended up using carbide almost exclusively as our light source. A major consideration on a trip or this sort is whether or not to use cook stoves. On the plus side, cave water can be heated for sterilization and freeze-dried foods can be used instead of canned to save some weight. On the negative side, the fumes are not natural to the cave environment, and could be dangerous without good air movement. For our trip we had a small group and strong air flow, so we decided the effects would not be that great. We had taken great care to situate ourselves well away from any large groups of hibernating bats that might be disturbed. But whether or not to cook on a camping trip should be given serious consideration for each case, and ruled out for a large number of people or bad air flow. A certain amount of cooking can be done over carbide lamps if the stoves are not a good idea.

One of our great pleasures was being able to change from our caving clothes to "clean" clothes when back in camp. If camping you should have at least one change of clothes that are to be used for nothing but sleeping and sitting in camp.

Finally, one should never lose sight of the ecological aspects of a camping trip. Regardless of the care taken, a group of people in an area for several days is going to have an effect. For this reason camping trips should not become popular as a regular activity, especially not when bats are hibernating. Although we took every precaution possible, it was still obvious that we had disturbed at least a few bats. We on the trip have decided that we won't go on another camping trip until the bats have come out of hibernation and the impact of a camping trip is minimized.



VAN LUIK'S CRAWDADS

On November 11, 1979, Janet Queisser and I drove to Greenbrier County, West Virginia to go caving with Sandy Van Luik. Sandy is working on a master's degree in biology at Old Dominion University. Her thesis topic is the life cycle of the crayfish found in Bransfords and McLaughlin-Unus Caves. Both caves are in the Cullverson Creek Cave System which is currently being surveyed by the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies (WVACS).

Before I describe Sandy's work, I would like to give a brief introduction to cave biology. Three terms (troglobite, troglophile, and troglaxene) are used to classify the various life forms found in caves. A troglobite is a permanent cave dweller. A troglophile is an animal that prefers a cave environment but is able to live in similar habitats aboveground. Finally, a troglaxene is an animal that occasionally visits caves - a VPI caver is a good example (Mohr and Poulson, 1966, p.118). In Bransford's Cave Sandy is studying the crayfish Cambarus bartonii which is a troglophile, while in McLaughlin-Unus she is working with Cambarus nerterius (Hobbs) which is a troglobite.

In Bransford's Cave Sandy has set several stream stations which range from the entrance to the siphon several hundred feet back into the cave. At each station, crayfish traps are placed in the water. To entice the crayfish into the traps, Sandy has found canned cat food to be most alluring. The traps are checked approximately every two weeks. Each time the air and water temperatures of the stations are recorded. The crayfish observations are then made.

First, each crayfish is sexed. How does one tell a boy crayfish from a girl crayfish? Easy enough, the tail is broader in the female. Also, in the female the first pleopods or abdominal appendages are small while these appendages in the male are large (Huxley, 1974, p. 8). The males are classified into two morphological forms. Form I is the adult breeding form while form II represents the juvenile. In the form I males the first pleopods have terminal projections which are lacking in the juvenile form (Hobbs, 1972, p. 7). A count of missing appendages is made on both sexes, and the claw or chela of the male is measured. When females are captured, they are examined for the presence of eggs.

Each crayfish that is captured is given a number which is painted on the animal's back with red, non-toxic nail polish. A non-toxic dye is also injected under the abdomen. When a crayfish is recaptured, it is injected with a different color of dye. Because the crayfish population inside a cave is limited in size and distribution, Sandy is able to capture the same animal several times. By studying the various recorded changes, Sandy hopes to make conclusions concerning the life cycle of the two species under study.

Although the study of cave crayfish or any other cave animal is very interesting, many precautions must be taken to protect these very delicate life forms. Sandy Van Luik is performing a controlled study with the help of an experienced cave biospeleologist, Dr. John Holsinger. A great deal of research has been done to determine that no observation or material used by Sandy will harm the crayfish pop-

ulation. Before any cave life, plant or animal, is handled, a person with expertise in cave biology should be consulted. An untrained caver could do irreparable harm to a rare life form or be eaten by an angry crawdad.

Hobbs, Horton H., Jr. 1972. Section I Identification, p. 7. In Horton H. Hobbs, Jr., Crayfishes (Astacidae) of North and Middle America. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC.

Huxley, T. H. 1974. The natural history of the common crayfish, p. 7-8. In T.H. Huxley, The Crayfish. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Robyn LeFon



What was that measurement again?

NEWBERRY-BANE CAVE

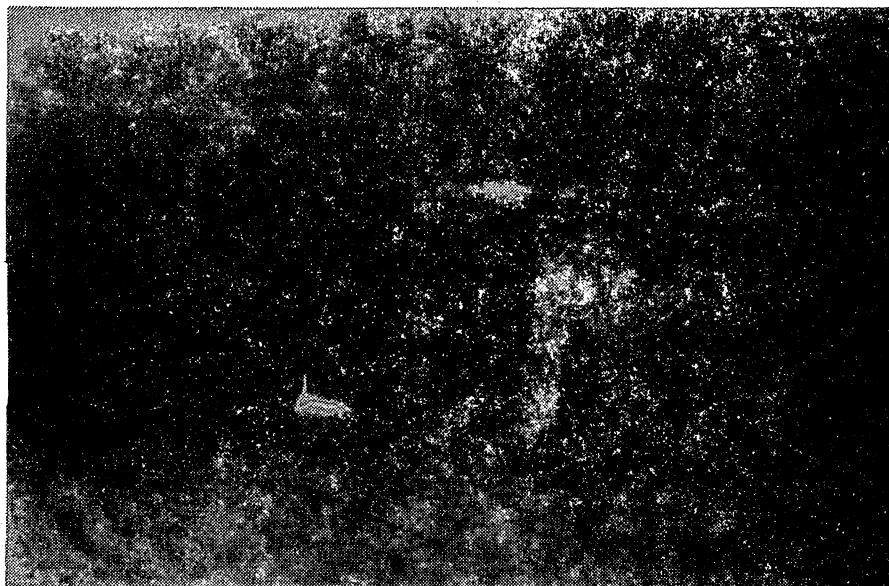
On October 27, 1979 Richard Cobb, Hugh Beard, Jim Richards, Ron McEwen, Karl Koon, and Joey Fagan went to Newberry-bane Cave. The primary purpose for the trip was to install a new gate for the cave owner, Buddy Penley, but we could not go to Skydusky Hollow and not go caving. The gate in question provided the primary access across Buddy's land to Newberry's. Vandals had stolen the original gate, which was later recovered, but that's another story.

After checking by Buddy's house, we all headed for Newberry's. The usual pre-trip duties were taken care of and the 60' drop at the entrance was rigged; all rappelled in without incident. Richard and Jim proceeded ahead to rig the 15' nuisance drop just beyond the Straddle Pit traverse. Eventually everyone crossed the Straddle Pit and negotiated the short drop to reach to top of Bill's Rappel canyon, an impressive 160' deep pit. Richard's PMI rope was quickly rigged in preparation for the descent. All members of the group then rappelled down to the cave's lower level.

Once on the bottom of the rappel, we stashed our vertical equipment and headed for the Vault Room. After a brief stop for a carbide change, a side trip was made to the base of Triple Wells, a 200' domepit which is the deepest known drop in any Virginia cave. We then proceeded to the Main Subway. The subway appears to be an abandoned phreatic conduit; the abundance of pendants, potholes, and spongework indicate that this passage probably was formed beneath the water table. Many bats were observed throughout the lower section of the cave. Visitors to Newberry-Bane, or other caves containing bats should exercise extreme care to avoid disturbing the bats.

After a few hours of poking around the lower level, we started out of the cave. Richard, Hugh, Ron, and Karl climbed out by way of the Devil's Staircase. Jim and I opted for a rope ascent of Bill's Rappel. I climbed out first, using my Gibbs ascenders, while Jim decided to follow using prusik knots. Upon arriving at the top of the drop, we coiled the rope and headed for the entrance. The entrance drop was free-climbed by all using a self belay. Six satisfied cavers finally emerged from Newberry's after spending six hours underground.

Joey Fagan



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SIGN-OUT SHEETS

10-28	Clover Hollow	Jay and 4 others.	God, what a hangover.
10-27	Pighole	Joe Zo, Paul K., and nine others.	In the back and out the back- the great trainee drive! git along little trainee!!
10-20	Smokehole	Updike, Beard, and four others.	Good trip! Bopped around the Big Room and other places, hope everyone enjoyed water as much as I did!
10-14	Clover Hollow	Mark & Mark, Walt, Jerry, Pete, Jim, Phillip.	Fantastic variety, super cave, super trip, Stroh's reflector and all.
10-13	Coon	WFK, Win.	<u>Amazing</u> cave, scooped again but went nowhere.
10-7	Smokehole	Kennedy, Anderson, Arnold(Jay's pig).	to Big Room and out Arnold hated mud but loved the water.
8-25	Paul Penley	Devine, Shipman, WFK	Connection! Paul's to Harmon's Avalanche Pit.
8-18	Coon	Doug, Nancy, WFK.	Cave hardened mercenary troops swept the field-an excellent trip-excellent cave!
8-13	Tony's	Pat, Chuck, Joe Zo, Richard.	Excellent photo, sketch trip and drinking marathon!!
8-11	Tall bridge in a nearby state	Pete, Richard, Dave, Jack, Lee, Jay.	It never fails to be a real thriller!!
7-21	Paul Penley	Devine, Richard, Joe Zo.	Welcome back my friends to the cave that never ends....
7-19	New River (then maybe Pighole)	Lawrence, Richard.	pushed new passage in N.R. Did a few yo-yo's in P.H. for rich's camera.
7-17	Paul Penley	Stephens, Win, Shipman.	The crimper crimped the passage pooped, ran out of gas...
6-24	Buddy Penley	Richard, Pete, Jack, Robyn, Joe Zo.	Robyn's first trip in two years Did crossover pit.
5-6	Pighole	Joe Zo, Dave, Hugh	Found the Empire Ledge, mud and Hugh's farts!!