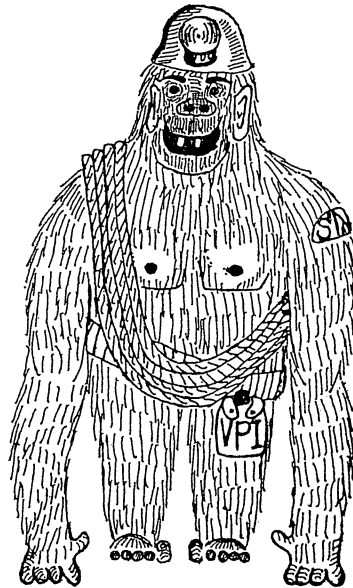


THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

FALL 62 VI #4



a publication of the VPI Grotto of the NSS
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In keeping with the tradition of caving publications, we have delayed publication of this, the fall quarter issue, until the beginning of the winter quarter in order that it might not be considered unusual in appearing on schedule

It is appropriate that we open this issue by extending sincere thanks to those people whose help was responsible for the appearance of the summer issue: to my mother who typed most of the stencils (there is a noticeable drop in quality on the two that I did); to Mr. Collin E. Smither, principal of the Robert E. Lee High School in Staunton, Va. and his secretary Miss Cook for their assistance in mimeographing that issue; and to Bonnie Stephenson who did the addressing and mailing.

Articles on the local situation pertaining to the use of caves as fallout shelters and a description of Craig County Saltpetre Cave to accompany the map, which were promised for the summer issue, are contained in this issue.

The Congress of Grottoes

As a result of the somewhat farcical meeting of the Congress of Grottoes of the NSS which was held in South Dakota in June, it seems time for a re-evaluation of the duties and goals of the Congress and of how nearly they are being realized. The August NSS News carries a column in which NSS president Gurnee very politely points to the waste-of-time which will go down in history as the 1962 meeting of the Congress of Grottoes. Even at the meeting a representative from the Pittsburgh Grotto very boldly criticized the agenda offered and the general attitude, making several noteworthy points which will be brought out in the remainder of this text.

The Grottoes Congress is not a legislative body; it is merely a suggestive body. It is to test society opinion and make suggestions to the Board of Governors. Resolutions sent to the Congress represent an area or group and the Congress is to deliberate on these, test opinion from various areas and points of view, and make recommendations to the Board. Recently many resolutions have dealt with matters that could be dealt with merely by sending a letter to the appropriate person, or with matters which are of general agreement but budgetarily impossible. These resolutions do not belong before the Congress, nor do resolutions hastily submitted by groups who have not given adequate thought to the possible consequences thereof.

Also, at the past two meetings which I have attended, it is not uncommon for an individual to step forward during a discussion and remark, "The Board of Governors discussed that yesterday and decided" If the Congress is to discuss society feeling why does the Board discuss matters, it knows are to be brought before the Congress shortly? Why not obtain the opinion of the entire society's representatives as a guide before disposing of the matter. The NSS Constitution states, "resolutions (that are passed) must be considered by the Board of Governors at its next regular meeting."

In South Dakota one of the Board members spoke on the floor of the Congress openly mocking a resolution of the Congress. It certainly did not indicate any high regard held for the Congress' proceedings, but it did serve to point out the pettiness and absurdity of the discussion in progress.

Aside from the agenda offered it seems that in a body with the size and subsequent disorganization of the Congress that the presiding officer should be well acquainted with parliamentary procedure and able to maintain order. Also, the rules of the Congress should be more strictly adhered to, particularly those in regard to representatives of grottoes not submitting their list of delegates, etc. Perhaps there should be present at all proceedings a parliamentarian who is familiar with not only the rules but also the proceedings of the last several years to prevent duplication of effort.

President Gurnee said in his column, "During the next year, careful preparation by each Grotto can make the contributions to this agenda more accurately speak for them; and significant results can be obtained from the Congress of Grottoes"

This coming year lets have resolutions worthy of discussion, and discussion worthy of being heeded. If these don't exist, then let's forget the whole thing until next year and all go caving.

gkm

DON'T GATE THAT CAVE!

At the NSS National convention in Custer, South Dakota, a round table discussion of conservation problems was held. Moderated by Vic Schmidt, the Board of Governors, with some comments from the membership at large, discussed several topics in the conservation problem, but the most enlightening and thought provoking was the discussion of gating caves to limit the freedom of access. This discussion and a subsequent article appearing both in the NSS News and the Baltimore Grotto News, written by Bill Plummer, have prompted this article.

At the discussion in South Dakota, I was amazed to find the difference in the conservation problems in different sectors of the United States. Out West, in particular, the number of caves is small, and the numbers of rock collectors is immense. The rock hounds apparently think nothing of looting a cave of every attractive speleothem they can find. Some have been known to accompany competent caving groups for the sole purpose of locating caves to which they can return later and wreak their havoc. For this reason the book The Caves of California declines to give the locations of many caves, or gives them in such vague terms that they cannot be found solely from possession of the book. Also, many caves have been locked to prevent these vandals from destroying every trace of natural beauty. It seems to me that under these conditions it is proper to secure the entrance of caves against the ravaging hordes, but - there are limitations.

As was pointed out in the convention discussion, many well meaning people are also limited by gates, and many people destroy gates, simply because they know of no other way of gaining entrance. It was suggested, and I strongly agree, that every gate placed on a cave entrance should bear a certain amount of information. This information should be plainly evident and should include by whom the gate was placed, why it was built, and what procedure a person might follow to gain entrance. If this were done the builders of the gate could screen out those they felt undesirable, and yet the well meaning person could be admitted. A locked gate might introduce a feeling of either defiance or curiosity in its finder, both of which could be appeased by a proper explanation and procedure for admittance.

However, I feel that in this area, and in the other dense cave regions of the United States, that gating caves is largely unnecessary. It is not the answer. The number of caves is large and the rock collectors pose no great threat. I feel that little of the vandalism in this area is of a purely malicious nature. The answer to our conservation problems would seem to be education and example. Both of these must begin within ourselves and the cavers we are associated with. Cave owners should be impressed with the need for conservation measures and then in turn they can convey it to their visitors.

The NSS cave register program is excellent. The explorer has a place to leave his mark without damaging the cave's beauty; also he is introduced to the existence and location of the nearest caving group. Instead of gates we should have plaques encouraging conservation and telling the visitor about the local grotto. Instead of building gates we should spend our time and money restoring howell traveled caves. The temptation to write your name is much stronger if there are already dozens of others; or what is one more flashbulb if a pile has already accumulated. A person can be impressed by the unmarred beauty of a cave. If his first one is like that he may have more respect for the second and the third, also. A new caver will also have more respect for conservation if his teachers do likewise; and even an unorganized group will be more tempted to practice good conservation if the cave is clean and they feel that previous visitors have respected the natural beauty of their environment.

We should not lock out the numerous cavers unknown to us; we should make an effort to search them out, teach them correct procedures, encourage them to continue, but in a proper manner. The upcoming NSS Convention in Virginia could be an excellent opportunity to gain considerable publicity and lead these free lance cavers to us; and a properly directed approach to cave owners could be effective all of the time. Why not leave enough information so that when John Doakes goes into his cave the former can suggest, "You guys ought to get together with some of those fellows in the Podunk Grotto."

When I read Plummer's article indicating that the Baltimore Grotto intended to put a second lock on every gated cave they found, I assumed that it was written in a jocular tone, but it did have a point. I build a gate and then only I can get in. John Q. finds the gate, has no idea where, who, or why, so one of two things happens - either he breaks the gate and goes in, or he is limited in his freedom to explore our underground, however conscientious he may be.

It is interesting to note that while visiting the first Baltimore Grotto meeting to follow publication of Plummer's article, I listened to their plans to place a gate on a nearby cave.

Gating caves for scientific study is another point in question. It seems to me that the caves needed for studies where the omission of human travel was essential would be comparatively small. It also seems that caves essentially lacking in beautiful adornment or athletic challenge would serve equally well, and that the gates could be constructed to indicate by whom and why they were built.

In conclusion, I feel that, at present, an area such as this, where the caves are numerous and the danger from purely malicious factions is small, that there are few cases where the construction and maintenance of gates to restrict the flow of spelunkers can be justified. Let us teach and set good examples instead.

And only if an honest effort in this direction proves unsuccessful; then let us build our gates bigger and stronger.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS FOR VARIOUS CAVERS

1. Practice prussiking at Niagara Falls. (John Holsinger)
2. Try to remember where I put that ring of keys to 79 gated caves. (Bill Plummer)
3. Remember to get stronger feces bags. (John Cooper)
4. Study instead of going caving every weekend. (Ed Bauer)
5. Take driving lessons from Ed Day. (anybody?)
6. Memorize ten new big words to use in field trip reports. (Gary McCutchen)
7. Open a stand to sell speleothems. (Vic Schmidt)
8. Prepare my private cave fallout shelter. (Bill V. medoe)
9. Go caving again. (Gail Marland)
10. Wash my caving clothes. (Wayne Elliott)
11. Charter extensions to the grotto in Washington, Baltimore, Richmond, and pittsburgh. (U. Va. Grotto)
12. Mass produce two feet dable ladders for use in New Jersey caves? (Montana Speleological Society)
13. Visit Windy Mouth Cave. (Mike Rosenheimer)
14. Become a grotto of theNSS. (Potomac Speleological Club)
15. Buy a new car. (Ed Day)
16. Take more slides to loan out. (Chris Schick)
17. Learn how to rappell. (Bob Mallis)
18. Change the last name on the back of my hard hat. (Bonnie Stephenson)
19. Go swimming in the Bull Pasture River. (Fran Kuhn)
20. Blast shut the entrance to New River Cave. (Bill Grenoble)
21. Get more colored ducks to trace the stream in New River Cave and find the back entrance. (John Eads)
22. Become an ABC leader (George Fairer)
23. Build a bigger and flatter puddle. (Jim Charlton)
24. Find a cave near Norfolk, Va. (Sam Dunaway)
25. Get my picture taken for the Bugle with the Cave Club (Jim Saunders)
26. Take my wife on a quick trip through Higgenbotham #1, Va. (Court Warfield)
27. Wait one more year to publish the Virginia Cave Survey (James Calvert)
28. Sell my ropes and take up horizontal caving. (Bill Cuddington)
29. Join the Potomac Speleological Club. (John Holsinger)
30. Get the Tech Prosloodyte out on time. (Gregg Marland)
31. Subscribe to the Tech Prosloodyte. (Everybody)

NO LOCAL CAVES AS FALLOUT SHELTERS

Last winter the VPI Cave Club was contacted by an engineering and architecture firm in Roanoke conducting a survey of possible fallout shelter facilities. On a visit by one of their representatives, the grotto files were made accessible to them and Bob Ralph and myself systematically explained detriments, sometimes cave by cave as he selected random samples from the files. Copies of an article on that topic appearing in the D. C. Speleograph and the NSS policy on using caves for fallout shelters were furnished to them, as was a three page document of our own writing. It was thought at that time that that document would be published in these pages, but because of the appearance of an excellent and very similar document by Bill Varnedoe appearing in the NSS News, it is felt unnecessary. The letter is in the grotto files.

Suffice it to say that the arguments presented and a visit to commercial Dixie Cave, a particularly wet, mucky cave, were apparently effective in convincing those people that it would be impractical to use caves as fallout shelters.

ghm

SMOKE HOLE

An unusual "formation" was recently noted in Smoke Hole Cave, Giles County, Va. A block of breakdown about four feet on a side apparently fell into the shallow stream and somehow lodged standing on a corner. Subsequent deposition of dripstone on the top and solution at the base have resulted in a mushroom-like feature about four feet high.

Also noted well back in Smoke Hole were a crayfish and a small (3"-4") pale fish - possibly a catfish. Both were a considerable distance from where the cave stream emerges through an impassible (to humans) spring entrance.

A series of beautiful rhyolite dams, along with the abundance of other speleothems and the caves proximity to Mountain Lake (about 8 miles) should make it an excellent field trip cave for the 1968 NSS National Convention.

ghm

CANOE CAVE

Canoe Cave, Giles County, Va., is an interesting cave geologically. It is the only cave I know of that is developed in vertical strata. This creates an unusual pattern of passages, some being off set just a few feet from each other with only a single small connection, or some on opposite sides of a single bed of rock with no apparent connection. It was surprising to find in the back a room with an unsupported ceiling span of perhaps 100 feet.

The cave contains several lakes of clear and very deep water. Any possibility of determining the depth of the lakes would have to be cleared with the owner who obtains all of his water from the cave and requests cavers not to disturb the lakes.

ghm

Craig County Saltpetre Cave

Craig County Saltpetre Cave, $80^{\circ} 13' 23''$ W; $37^{\circ} 33' 25''$ N, is developed in the Helderberg Limestone of Devonian age. Just over Potts Mountain from Newcastle, Va., it is reached by following state route 311 north from Newcastle. On the descent of Potts Mountain a right turn is made at a U.S. Government fish hatchery, 13-14 miles from Newcastle, onto route 603. The road terminates after approximately two miles at a Y intersection with two private roads. The right hand road leads to the house of Mr. Sizer, the cave's owner, and the cave is about 300 yards to the west of the house, in the first ravine, and at the base of a fifty foot escarpment.

The strata is striking $N 70^{\circ} E$ and dips 23° to the Northwest. The entrance is thirty feet wide and ten feet high.

Descending a slope of breakdown, the cave becomes a narrow fissure winding, at a shallow grade, past the bodies of numerous animals (mostly goats and most without heads) in various stages of decay. Neither the owner, who has lived on the land for over half a century, nor the cave yield any evidence of saltpetre mining. One hundred fifty feet into the cave a narrow side passage leads down and to the left, opening shortly into a high ceilinged chamber. The main passage continues on its sinuous, narrow way to the edge of a $25'$ drop.

From the bottom of the drop, the passage branches in both directions. The right hand passage continues to wind downward carrying a slight trickle in places and with large rocks wedged overhead. The drainage leaves through a small, impassable hole after 250 feet, and in another $75'$ the lead terminates.

Returning to the $25'$ drop, the left hand passage leads upward, with two small crawlways leading up to the right and intersecting the right-hand passage at various heights above the floor.

Several other side passages lead from this main passage, but only one is of any consequence. It leads to the right, down through a jumble of breakdown into a small lower room which is at about the same level as the other main passage. A single cluster of bats was found in this section, and a few individuals were found in other parts of the cave.

The main passage continues steeply upward, with a $24'$ climb and steep, slick mud slopes. At the top of the mud slopes a circular chimney climbs vertically and seems to be the entrance for most of the water in the cave.

Descending again, 90° to the left, the mud slopes lead to a balcony overlooking the high ceilinged chamber

mentioned earlier, and 60' above the floor.

The survey closed within 5' at this point when the 1,300' of passage was drawn. This description is intended to accompany the map which appeared in Vol. I, No. 3 of this publication.

AN UNFORTUNATE CONFLICT

Recently, the Cavalier Caver, publication of the U. Va. Grotto of the NSS carried an article by Joe Overman reading, "While at Virginia Polytechnic Institute this summer, I had an opportunity to do some caving in Southwest Virginia. Due to the inactivity of the VPI Grotto, I formed a small club of my own. It has now been organized into the VPI extension and is seeking recognition from the U. Va. Grotto...If recognized by the U. Va. Grotto, the VPI extension will act as an official outpost in furthering U. Va's. work in the southwest Va. area."

Editorial comment continues to explain that "the VPI Extension's desire to gain affiliation with the University of Virginia Grotto prompted a meeting of the Grotto's Executive committee [which] ...proposed [an] amendment to the Grotto's By laws." The Amendment proceeds to explain "that the University of Virginia Grotto has the right to recognize various independent caving groups outside the University Community as extensions of the University of Virginia Grotto..."

Upon reading this we corresponded with Earl Geil, editor of the Cavalier Caver explaining our viewpoint. Among other things, we stated, "The NSS is a national organization with local chapters to unite interested cavers in a given area. There should be no reason for these areas ever to overlap, and grottoes, it would seem, should encourage their friends and affiliates in other localities to join with the groups prominent in those localities and to promote the purposes of the NSS...[We] feel that it would be indeed unfortunate for two grottoes to be organized in such a manner that they operated in direct competition with each other.

"It is hoped that the [U.Va. Grotto] will pay heed to this discussion and act accordingly when considering legislation which may not be in the best interest of the NSS and its various chapters."

In a subsequent letter Mr. Geil charged that "They have refused to join the VPI Grotto because they disagree with some of the practices of your group. This group agrees whole-heartedly with your stated by-laws and codes, but finds a disagreeable divergence between theory and actual practice. They have asked for U.V. Grotto membership because they wish to affiliate themselves with a Grotto that

practices what it preaches, "and they" were unable to discover any official VPI Grotto activities."

Since to my knowledge none of the people mentioned as participants in this group have ever attended a function of the VPI Grotto I do not see how they are qualified to evaluate any "divergence between theory and actual practice" which they have failed to enumerate and I am not familiar with.

A grotto is not an entity in itself. It is a group of individuals, and the activities of those individuals constitutes the activities of the Grotto. During the months September through June the individuals of the VPI Grotto are able to act jointly and constitute what is probably the most active single caving organization in this country. During this past summer grotto members returned to their homes and "official grotto activities" ranged over no less than six states, including at least three members who stayed on campus. Had the group in question chosen to affiliate with the grotto, the on-campus "official activities" would have been substantially increased. In addition, any member of the VPI Grotto is free to propose any alteration in either theory or practice, and if it has merit, there is no reason to doubt that it would be adopted.

In conclusion, we emphasize the unfortunate conflict that could result from such a move on the part of the U. Va. Grotto. We do not feel that any action along this line would be consistent with the best interest of the NSS and the purposes of the grottoes thereof. We express hope that the U. Va. Grotto will not continue on its present course; and we invite Mr. Overman and his companions to give the VPI Grotto an honest chance.

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE MOUNTAIN LAKE CONVENTION, 1963.

By John R. Holsinger, Chairman, 1963 NSS Convention.

The site of the 1963 NSS Convention will be the Mountain Lake Hotel, Giles County, Virginia. Convention dates will run from Sunday, June 9 to Saturday, June 15, 1963. Pre-caving activities will take place from Sunday through Wednesday with the formal meetings officially beginning on Wednesday.

All hotel facilities at Mountain Lake will be available for the Society's use, including a ballroom, two lounges, a dining room, card room, lobby, and two large, covered porches.

Hotel rates have been substantially reduced for the Convention and are as follows: \$8.50 per person per day (includes all rooms and cottages) and \$0.25 per person per day for camping privileges on the hotel golf course. All meals will be included with the price of the room. For non-registered guests the following rates will be effective: breakfast-\$1.00, lunch-\$1.25, and dinner-\$2.00.

Recreational facilities at the hotel and surrounding area consist of tennis courts, horseback riding, boating, swimming, fishing, badminton, croquet, archery, horseshoes, golf, and many indoor sports.

Hotel taxi service will be available at a minimum charge upon notification of arrival at these points: Norfolk and Western Railway at Pembroke, Pearisburg, and Christiansburg, Virginia. Commercial airlines come into Roanoke, Virginia and Bluefield, West Virginia.

A guide book to the area caves is being prepared. Giles County alone has 158 recorded caves, several of which are large. Other nearby counties (Craig, Montgomery, Bland, Mercer, Monroe) also have a large number of caves, some of which are very impressive.

Several interesting events are being planned and include:

- a) Appalachian geological field trip.
- b) Chicken or Virginia ham dinner at Dixie Caverns.
- c) Cocktail party and get-acquainted session.
- d) Commercial cave owners and operators meeting
- e) Mutual-interest dinners and luncheon sessions (for geologists, biologists, and possible for photographers and vertical cavers).
- f) Nationally prominent speaker for the Saturday night banquet.

Registration for the Convention will be held in the main lobby of the hotel. No person will be allowed to participate in any convention-sponsored event unless they are registered and display the proper identification tag. Fees are as follows: non-NSS members - \$3.00, Nss members and families - \$2.50, children under 12 - \$0.50. Banquet tickets will be \$3.25.

All session chairmen have been assigned and other key jobs have been delegated to responsible members.

Publicity will consist of a series of pictures and articles which will appear intermittently in the NSS News from October until June. The Mountain Lake Hotel management will mail out hotel registration and room rate information in late December or early January. The Giles County Chamber of Commerce will probably make another mailing to members sometime in the spring.

REPRINTED FROM THE D.C. SPELEOGRAPH
Volume 18, Number 10.

A NEW CAVE ENDURANCE RECORD

The Associated Press has recently carried a report of an Australian who claims a record for the longest constant stay in a cave. Bill Penman spent nearly 64 days underground. He reported that during the last three days he could not see at all. There were apparently no other ill effects.

WORTH THINKING ABOUT

The area due south of the 204-205 [survey] line may remain blank because most of those passages have such profuse formations that we can't get into the area without breaking them. It ain't worth it.

from the Huntsville Grotto News
by Bill Varnedoe

VIRGINIA REGION MEETING

On the weekend of Nov. 3-4 the Annual Meeting of the Virginia Region of the NSS was held in Commerce Hall Auditorium on the VPI campus. With a record attendance of 68, the initiation of a banquet, and the usual collection of excellent talks, it was undoubtedly the most successful meeting yet recorded.

The Tech Troglodyte offers its congratulations to the outgoing officers and its best wishes and support to the incoming officers: chairman John Cooper, vice-chairman Bill Nelson, and secretary-treasurer Betty Lloyd. The officers were chosen, for a change, according to the constitution, which provides for a regional council consisting of two representatives from each grotto and two representatives-at-large. This council is to provide a tie between the cavers of the region, elect regional officers, and to plan regional activities.

It was decided to consider the preparation for and execution of the 1963 NSS National Convention at Mountain Lake to be the annual spring project.

A history of the Virginia Region was published in the D.C. Speleograph, Vol. 18, No. 6.

Caving trips on Sunday included visits to New River, Pig Hole, Tawney's, and Miller's Cove Caves.

GIANT CAVE RENOVATED

Giant Cave has been completed as the first cave in the VPI Grotto's renovation project. The ex-commercial cave still contains remnants of its wooden walks which abound in cavernicolous fauna, but most of the other debris has been removed. Spent carbide deposits were removed or buried and writing on the walls was erased in all but a few cases where it was felt that the cure would be worse than the disease.

Fauna observed in the cave included millipedes, springtails, and spiders (all troglobitic), earthworms, a frog, and strong traces of a skunk.

two extensive trips were required to restore the cave to what is probably the best condition it has been in since the 1930's.

VIRGINIA CAVE SURVEY

by Henry H. Douglas

During the past few months we have, with the assistance of John Holsinger, Kitty Flick, and Felix Peckham, succeeded in incorporating all the new cave data accumulated since November 1960 into the Survey manuscript. All the material is now in the hands of Dr. James L. Calver, State Geologist, Division of Mineral Resources, Charlottesville, Virginia. It will doubtless be placed in the hands of a printer sometime this fall and should appear in book form early in 1963.

from the D.C.SPELEOGRAPH, Vol. 18, No. 8.(August)

THE MASSACHUSETTS CAVER

Our congratulations to the Boston and Berkshire Hills Grottoes on their successful joint venture in publishing The Massachusetts Caver. Edited by Arthur Palmer of the Berkshire Hills Grotto, the publication will offer a more adequate outlet for the reports of both grottoes than they would be able to support individually. Also, our sympathy for having to live so far from the caves.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS (caver's version)

Last verse:

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

from THE Baltimore Grotto News v(5); 176
 who got it from
The Potomac Caver v(7); 45

Notable Quote

Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. You will be certain to find something that you have never seen before. (Alexander Graham Bell)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Geology of Luray Caverns Virginia by John T. Mack and Leslie Durlot, Jr., Report of Investigations 3, Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Charlottesville, Virginia, including map, 9 photographs 6 diagrams, 43 pp. Price-\$.50

Geology of the Williamsville Quadrangle Virginia by Kenneth F. Dick, Report of Investigations 2, Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Charlottesville, Virginia. 40 pp. plus detailed geologic map. Contains primarily a description of lithologies for the quadrangle which contains over 60 known caves. Price-\$2.50

Bats by G. M. Allen, published in for the first time in paper back form by Dover Publications. Price-\$2.00. Written in 1939 the book has been called the best general information book on bats. It discusses all of the information known about bats at the time on a variety of topics ranging from bats as pets to hibernation.

Exploring American Caves by Franklin Folson. Published in paperback form by Collier Books, it is reported to be a new edition and not merely a reprint. Price-\$.95

DEFINITIONS

Cave Conservation: Keeping ev rybody out of a cave but you and your friends.
 Cave Preservation: Accomplishes the above. Keeps scurvy spolunkers out of your laboratory so you can have fun in it all by yourself.
 Cave Science:.. He collecting formations.
 Cave Vandalism: Y ou collecting formations.

From The Metherworld News Vol. X, pp. 162;

NEW CAVS

Bald Rock Cave, 38-18-59; 79-00-17, is a small cave but is full of pure white speleothems.. Forty feet deep and 60 feet long, it is entered through a tight "S-curve" crawlway. The cave is in unstable, very-sandy limestone.

Lane-Hill Cave, 37-14-35; 30-47-08, consists of a 30' entrance drop and 1'0' of passage containing considerable amounts of crystalline flowstone.

Another previously unreported but worthless "cave?", for the record only, to be listed for Giles County is a 20' solutional crawlway full of cave spiders, 37-19-57; 30-31-07.

TRIP REPORT: SMOKE HOLE CAVE

During the middle of exam week (Dec. 11) I decided I needed a mental break and that a short cave trip was in order. Despite the wisecracks, "Whit" Whitmore, "Whitey" Subank, and "gracefull Wayne" Schooley decided the idea had merit and we set out over the icy mountain roads through temperatures in the teens, to Smoke Hole Cave.

We had climbed the hill and located the entrance, and two of us were already inside looking for a rat-proof place to stash our dry clothes, as the cave has a stream and we did not relish the thought of walking back to the car in this weather would soaked nearly to the waist, when Schooley suddenly realized that he had enough clothes to outfit 14 people, but had left his hard hat and lamp in the car.

Upon returning, with illumination, Schooley and the rest of us descended the steep muddy spiral climb down into the cave. After about 200 feet the steeply descending entrance passage intersects at right angles to the stream passage. The stream comes from out of the hill; and, before the road just outside of the cave was graded, it used to be possible to enter at the spring entrance, just a short distance to the left of where we now stood.

Looking at the stream was some what discouraging. On my first trip into the cave it had been just over waist deep at this point and one low spot in the cave was flooded, prohibiting entrance to the major portion of the cave. On my second trip it was ankle deep and we had a long, dry enjoyable trip. On this trip it was just about waist deep again and I figured we were at the end of the line. Arriving at the first low spot, about 50 feet farther, we found 3 inch clearance. Cowardly we searched for an alternate route and found one, with 6 inch clearance. With visions of the weather outside and doubts about my better judgement, I wrote in my note book a reminder to buy a bottle of cold pills and plunged ignorantly on. On my previous trip I never realized how low much of the cave was, but after several low spots in the ceiling and neck deep water we made it to the first decent sized room, the room we were to stop in on the way out for a "puckey-ball mud" battle.

We hustled through more ice water-filled passages to the large dry passage in the back. The main stream enters the cave through a rubble filled, impassable passage just a little over 1,000 feet from where it is first encountered. At one steep bank of slippery mud we left Schooley behind scratching and clawing his way up, but by the time we had reached the end of the 2000 foot cave, he had come puffing along behind. On the way back it was Whitey who fell on his derriere in the mud. While Schooley fought his way through the only tight in the cave we headed toward the entrance and dry clothes.

After changing clothes in the small room at the base of the entrance climb, Whitey and Whit climbed out with my cautions about the slick mud and the possibility of a long fall. "Graceful Wayne" was just at the top and I was half way up when Wayne took a dive like a swan with a broken neck and came tumbling towards me. I hung on tight and tried to either stop him, break his fall, or at least keep him from making the first turn in to spiral descent, but not Wayne. My efforts almost resulted in my joining his descent and good ole Schooley make the turn anyhow, bouncing a total of almost 40 feet. He was wearing his heavy winter clothes

and has a little more padding than most of us anyhow, so after the blue smoke cleared he was able to climb on out. And then back to the studies.

MORE BLACKLIST

In connection with the Tech Troglodyte's policy for publishing a blacklist of recent or still active members whose signatures are found written in caves, several additions are necessary. It is hoped that this public exposure of known acts of vandalism will encourage the demise of this practice and the growth of the practice of removing objectionable objects. A noticeable improvement has already been observed in the attitude of new members, upon whom it is most important to impress immediately the principles of cave conservation.

Names found in Beacon Cave, W. Va., were Bob Ralph, Ed Day, Ed Bauer and Bill Baugher.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

The VPI Cave Club has recently celebrated its 20th birthday. According to recent research, the club's first meeting was held Nov. 4, 1942. "Zeke" Fuller is presently engaged in the tremendous task of trying to filter through the mountains of literature and the great voids therein and produce a history of one of the NSS' oldest Grottoes.

GROTTO BRIEFS

The constitution and safety code of the VPI Grotto are presently undergoing revision. Under the direction of Hon. Bell the committee should soon be able to submit a more concise, more usable document. A qualified leader program is also under consideration and any suggestions are welcome.

The Cave Club now has a new bulletin board. The board, in the main post office lobby, provides a place to post announcements for club members plus a means of contacting and making activities known to the student body. A means is being devised so that all trip leaders may post trip destinations, participants, and times of return, to be checked periodically, to make sure that all trips return safely.

RABIES IN BATS

A September 15th publication of the Department of Health of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Bureau of Epidemiology on "Bat Rabies" read as follows:

"There is strongly suggestive evidence that some species of insectivorous bats may become symptomless carriers and during 1961 it was established that under proper environmental conditions (caves), bats may transmit rabies by other than the bite route.

For these reasons persons should be warned not to handle any bat.

FIVE DAYS IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

by Gary McCutchen

On August 20, Bob Stoller, my brother Byron, and I set out for Abingdon, Va. to do some caving. Bob is Pete Stoller's twin brother, and therefore both Byron and I called him Pete half of the time. By the end of the trip Bob answered to either name.

After an hour's delay (Bob's alarm didn't go off) we set out. About 6 p.m. Abingdon came into view. We looked up Bob McCrady, a Techman and part-time caver, and he told us about a cave 5 or 6 miles out of town.

We had no trouble finding the cave which we were told was called Thompson's Cave. Mr. Anderson told us that we were welcome to visit the cave and also gave us permission to camp in his field. After eating supper, we set up camp above a spring which we were told came from inside the cave.

Just as we were dozing off a group of cows became curious about us. When one tried to lick Bob's face, he decided to sit outside for awhile. Finally both the cows and Bob settled down and we all slept.

We woke all "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed" about 8 a.m. Mr. Anderson dropped by and asked us to stop back if we had time and tell him what the cave was like, and this we gladly did.

The entrance was in a sink and led steeply downward. The passage then went both directions. The left side ended after 40 feet so we tried the right. A 30' slope brought us to a pit. Bob and Byron checked the pit and I continued in the passage which went off at a 90 degree angle. Mr. Anderson told us later that when he had been in the cave 30 years ago the pit was 70 feet deep and was impossible to enter without a rope. He also said that there was no mud at all. We found mud everywhere. I found two other pits, and then the upper passage ended, so I descended the first of the two pits. I had just begun when Byron and Bob emerged from a crawlway that connected the two pits. After looking around, we climbed out and tried the last pit, which was also 20 feet deep.

We were trying to head toward the spring, so we chose a right-hand passage first. It showed signs of periodic flooding. A trickle of water led along this passage into a small room that gave us several crawl leads. The floor of the room was covered with dirt filled rimstone pools, and the trickle disappeared into a tiny opening. The opening was all that was left of a fair-sized passage, now filled with hard-packed mud.

We returned to the pit and connected it to the second one by means of a ridiculously nasty crawlway through breakdown. It took me five minutes to go five feet.

Emerging from the cave, we went to town for ice and a county

MAP. Returning to the Anderson's we told them about the cave. They told us about some other caves near Maiden Creek, and we started out with five tomatoes and some good instructions, compliments of a wonderful family.

We stopped at the house indicated by Mr. Anderson and two boys about 10 told us of three caves. Two had been well explored but the other had had few visitors because of a 50' drop. We were immediately interested and asked if we could camp there for the night. One of the boys asked his aunt and we suddenly found ourselves invited to sleep inside.

That settled, we began to explore Hopkin's Cave. The entrance was similar to Butler's Cave, but wider. The drop was located about five feet inside and turned out to be an easy 10' chimney. After 20', we hit a T intersection. The left side was smaller, and had a loop in it. Bob discovered this loop when he descended to the bottom of a 40' pit and followed the passage back almost to the entrance, where it hooked back into the main passage.

The cave was still full of surprises, for the right-hand passage consisted of a series of pits and was like a miniature Schoolhouse. We scrambled up a wall, down into a pit, up the other side, and down again. The ceiling was high above us and slippery mud was everywhere. The fifth pit was different. At the bottom of it were two holes that made a sheer drop of 25' into another pit. I managed to plant myself on a crumbling ledge and nearly slid down into the holes before Bob rescued me.

Agreeing to tackle the drop with a rope the next day, we emerged from the cave and ate supper. We were interrupted by a hard rain, and in the rush we discovered that we had tossed all of our muddy gear into the back seat of our car.

As we were preparing for bed Byron made the delightful observation that the house looked like the one in Psyche. I was the closest to the door, but the rain outside more than made up for the unpleasant thoughts.

After breakfast one of the boys asked to go with us and I was nominated to serve as his bodyguard. After rigging the ropes, Byron descended into the pit, which was dead-end. There was a pool of water near one wall that extended far under the wall. Both Bob and Byron attempted to climb up the other side, but could not reach the top.

The young boy with us mentioned a cave with a 100' drop. He guided us there and we decided to return the next day.

There were a number of caves in the Lebanon area, so we went there. We checked out two caves that have impressive entrances but do not go very far.

By 10 on Thursday, we were on our way back to the "100' pit". We left all side passages unchecked and arrived at the drop in 15 minutes. Believe it or not, we had a real 70' pit. There were three ledges; the first was easy to reach so we all slid down to it. The rope had been rigged up above and Bob wanted an opportunity to find virgin passage, so he went down first. It was all virgin and there were a number of big rooms.

After 45 minutes Bob returned to the rope and began to prussik out. He soon discovered that an against-the-wall prussik with a stream of water running over him was no picnic, especially when his light went out about one third of the way up.

We had intended to explore the rest of the cave in hopes of other pits and another route to the lower level stream Bob had discovered, but when he looked around and dazedly asked which way to go (the only route was right in front of him), we agreed to call a halt for lunch.

We were told of two other caves, which also sounded good, but we decided to explore Dougherty's Cave (near Lebanon) since several people had mentioned it.

Dougherty's had the best formations of any of the caves we had seen. It was an easy walk-through cave, and can be completely explored in thirty minutes. There were a number of bones in the cave, and at least one cave salamander.

After a hearty breakfast on Friday, we packed up and headed toward D. C. with the radio blaring, bob talking, and cold air blowing through the windows to be sure that I wouldn't fall asleep.

[Editor's Note: Coordinates of these caves are still being computed and compared with existing records for possible correlation with previously reported caves. Exact locations and possible other names will be reported in a future issue of the Troglodyte.]

TRIP REPORT POLICY

Because of the tremendous number of trips that go out during a quarter and the amount of space that would be required to carry trip reports for thirty some trips; it is the policy of this publication to carry trip reports only on trips to new caves, trips to very seldom visited (by us) caves, trips of unusual size or accomplishment, or trips on which significant or unusual studies or observations are made. Is it that our members are not making any trips of this nature, or are they just too lazy to write them up?

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