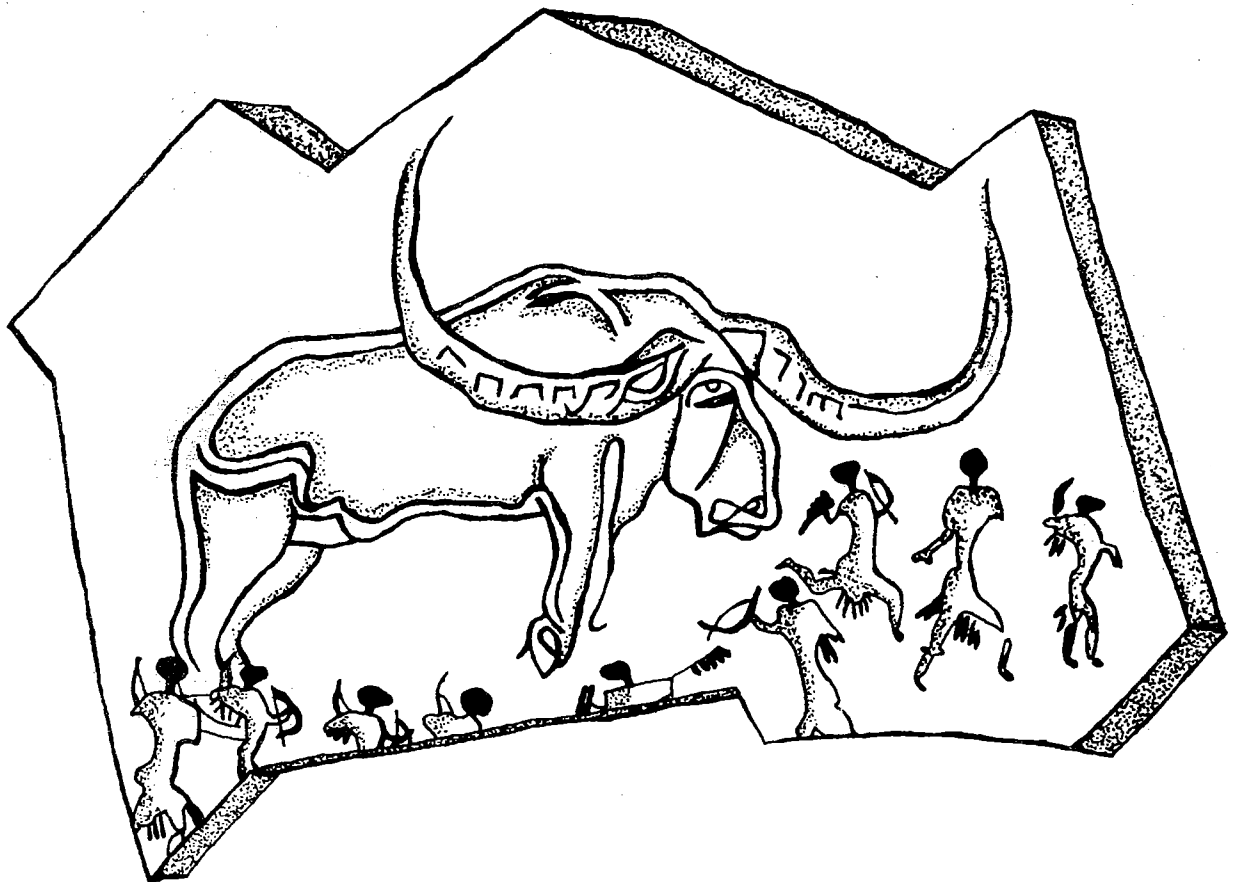


# **THE TECH TROGLODYTE**

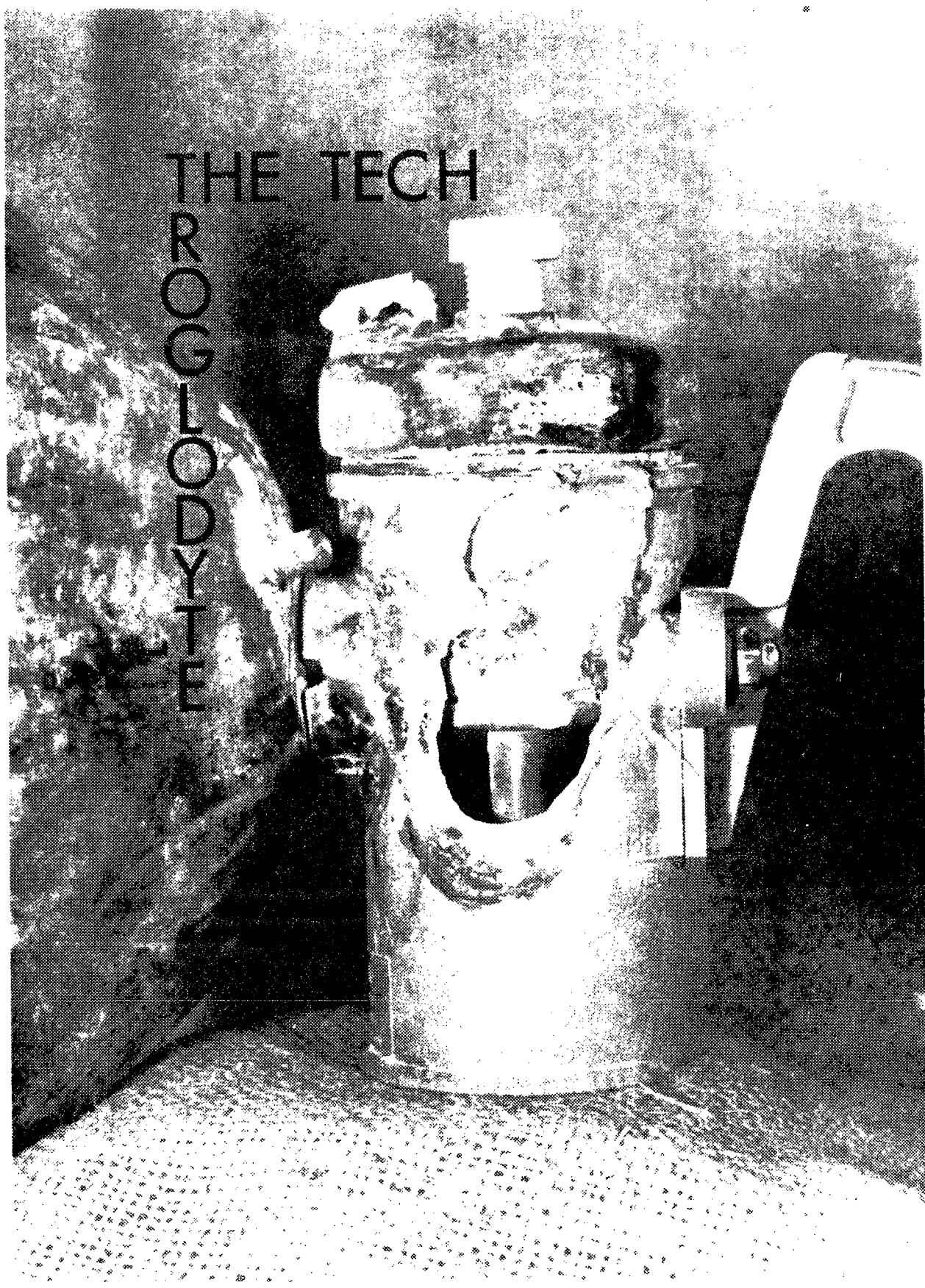
**VOL. XII, NO. 3**

**SPRING, 1974**




**A JOURNAL OF THE V.P.I. GROTTA OF THE  
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**


THE TECH  
ROGLODYTE



# grotto officers:



PRESIDENT:	Doug Yeatts
VICE PRESIDENT:	Tom Calhoun
SECRETARY:	Carol Godla
TREASURER:	Mike Wolf



\*\*\*\*\*

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The Grotto's mascot, the Trog, is a fictional creature, and any resemblance to anyone dead or alive is purely coincidental.

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cover



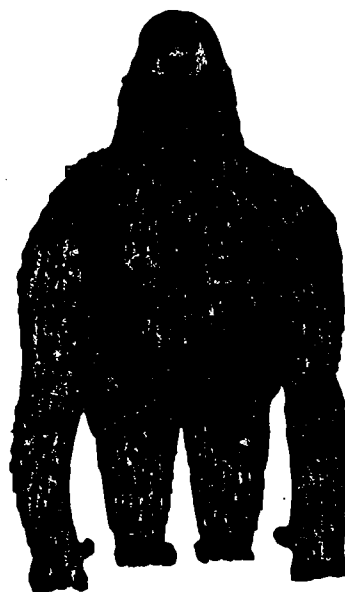
Rolf's handiwork combines the talent of two prehistoric cave dwellers in Northern Africa. We were unable to locate the the artists to give them appropriate credit.

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\*NSS file material

hey!  
remember  
him?



# A PIECE OF PRESIDENT:

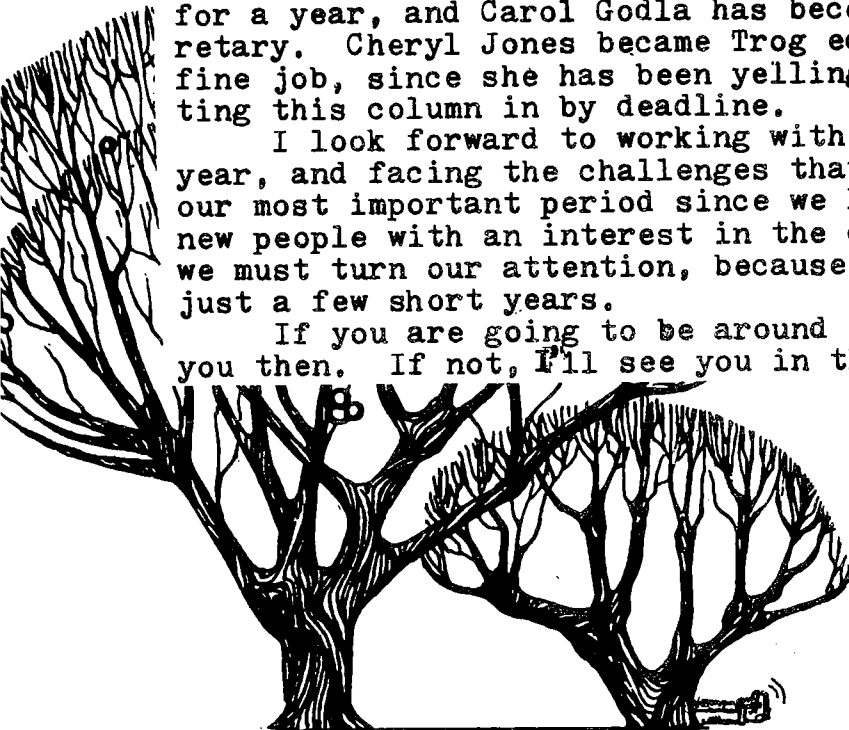
Our three events of spring quarter are now history. The club's sixth annual New River Float Trip was a success on May 24, with good weather, slow water, and much beer. The only people who drowned were those who tried to find the bottom of the doobie pot at the party that followed the trip.

One party leads us back to another -- the picnic. Held May 11 at the farm of Steve Kark, Bob Page, and Joe Yates, the picnic began Saturday afternoon and was finally over Sunday night when the die-hard drinkers finished the sixth keg. Do I hear seven for next year?

Now we get to the third happening of spring quarter which really happened first, but is told last because I'm still feeling the effects of looking for the bottom of some damn pot. The happening was, of course, the elections. Tom Calhoun was elected our Vice President, Mike Wolf gets to fondle the club's money for a year, and Carol Godla has become our first giggling secretary. Cheryl Jones became Trog editor and must be doing a fine job, since she has been yelling at me already for not getting this column in by deadline.

I look forward to working with this staff in the coming year, and facing the challenges that will come up. The fall is our most important period since we have the highest number of new people with an interest in the club. It's to these people we must turn our attention, because they will be the club in just a few short years.

If you are going to be around this summer, I'll be seeing you then. If not, I'll see you in the fall.



Peace,  
 doug yeatts®

# NOTICE ANYTHING?

I SURE HOPE SO!! If not, then stop here and come back when you're awake or sober. Yes, many things have changed, and I hope the steps taken away from TRIDITION won't stop here.

I'd like to see the TROG make the most out of the great potential that has been overlooked for years...and this issue is a good start. But I need sugestions, ideas, and of course, material to publish. I'd like to see more articles from sources outside the club, especially if the ideas presented are contrary to those generally accepted by our Grotto.

Let's work to take the ho-hum morning mouth feeling out of the TROG! This issue can be just a beginning, and an experiment. I need your help, though. After all, Last quarTer i couldn't even spel editor, and nOw I are one!



# '74 picnic!



# GROTTO GRAPEVINE:

by mike wolf

## A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER, or THE SINKING OF SPRING PICNIC.

There was only the slightest hint of rain on the morning of May 11. The event; Spring Picnic 1974.....the place; Deerwood Farm.....the participants; The V.P.I. Grotto of the N.S.S. and friends. Cavers flocked to the site, they all remembered it as the scene of the pagan orgy of the past Halloween. They were about to not only equal the Halloween Party but to far surpass it. Bill Douty's dining "kanape" was set up on a hilltop in the lush clover field near the house. Ed Loud soon arrived and set up his tarp alongside. Steve Kark had his stereo blasting music over the countryside. Karl Hamm drove in with the hotdogs, potato chips and 4 kegs of beer. Bill Stringfellow and Thor Brecht set to work on the fire. Everyone was prepared to raise hell; the kegs would be tapped at 3. 3 o'clock came but the tappers didn't. Doug Yeatts, who had the tappers, had not yet arrived. People started to get impatient, banging empty beer mugs on the sides of vehicles; the crowd was getting ugly. Just in time though, Doug showed up and with a great rejoicing, the beer flowed and flowed and flowed and then flowed some more.

The Picnic had begun! Once again the Picnic Chairman was Ed Richardson aided by Jerry Redder. There was volleyball playin', guitar pickin', banjo pickin', and drinkin' singin'. Dale Parrott and Wes Thorne set out on motorcycles across the fields followed by Dennis McClevey in his TLC and Bob Page in his orange rollerskate. As some sat around and shot the bull, others shot frisbees. Bill Stringfellow had the hotdogs ready just in time to feed the band of hungry cavers. As the night fell, the fire was built up and everyone began to gather around it. Sometime later people began to notice something strange, it was Don Davison and Ed Richardson streaking with sparklers in hand. Still later Cheryl Jones and Gill Ediger were found sitting by the fire.....naked. This inspired a larger group of people, reputedly led by Bill Douty, to streak the fire. Meanwhile, Robyn Loud, Liz Morgan and Nancy Coleman conducted a streak of the house. Along about that time, Lor Windle gave a show with the fireworks he had been saving for this occasion. At midnight a group of people went up to the barn to frighten each other in the dark and hear ghost stories by Mike Wolf, Dale Parrott and other bizarre voices in the dark. The original 4 kegs were killed early in the evening and a 5th keg was sent for. In the early morning hours people started to look for convenient places to crash, then the rain began. Most people stayed fairly dry, Rick Cooper however decided that he could use the bath and by morning he was soaked to the skin, right through his sleeping bag.



Sunday morning the rain continued and so did the drinking. The storm grew worse. Everyone began to congregate under the two tarps to drink and stay dry. The wind began to pick up and soon it looked like a scene from Moby Dick. The wind lashed and tore at the canvas tarp; the guy lines were straining and slowly the tent pegs began to pull out. People began to grab at tent poles and canvas to prevent their shelter from being blown away. Mark Slusarski acting as a human tentpole, (the preceding pun was fully intentional), helped in saving the shelter. Just as everybody's spirits were at the lowest, Doug Perkins led us out of the valley of the shadow of death with a rousing chorus of Amazing Grace.

Around noon the weather began to improve and the 5th keg was going fast. The Trout Creek Shelter roof was soon replaced by the porch roof on the house as one by one, naked bodies began to crawl up there to enjoy the slowly emerging sun and warm shingles. As everyone knows, after a rain storm there are many worms slithering about. It seems that one of these creatures found its way into the possession of Gill Ediger, then to cries of "How Gross!" and "do it, do it!", Gill threatened to eat it. This resulted in Franny Gryl and Debbie Marshall crawling into the kitchen looking kind of green. However Ediger kept on playing with the worm. Bill Douty finally grabbed it out of Ediger's hand in disgust and started to eat it himself. Ediger grabbed it back and continued to suck it in and out of his mouth, where upon Robyn Loud got ahold of the abused worm, tore it in half and giving one half to Liz Morgan they both swallowed what was left of it, (it's nice to see old roomies share and share alike). Out in the field, Ed Loud, Bob Page, Doug Perkins and Jim Denton took to their respective vehicles and started to tear around the field performing intricate maneuvers, surpassed only by the Air Force Blue Angels. A 6th keg was now in the process of being drunk. Along about evening Jim Denton of the Imperial Toyota Land Cruiser Fleet made a tactical error and attempted to push Willy where Willy wouldn't go. The TLC ended up bumper deep in mud at the bottom of the ravine. In a vain attempt, he tried to get it out himself, but was forced to seek aid from an American 4x4 Jeep, Big Blue, commanded by Don Anderson. However that didn't work either, and at the time of this writing Jim is considering calling in Jim Hixson to come to his aid with Henry and is seriously contemplating hari-kari in order to save face, being confronted with this defeat.

And so that was Spring Picnic 1974, 6 kegs and several cases of beer had been killed, a TLC was slowly being fossilized, dozens of cavers were dead drunk and the sun was setting on Deerwood Farm.

ELECTIONS '74: The new grotto officers for '74-'75 are, President - Doug Yeatts VPI 59 NSS 8987, Vice President - Tom Calhoun VPI 163 NSS 13750, Treasurer - Mike Wolf VPI 174 NSS 14644, Secretary - Carol Godla VPI 178. The editorship of the Trog has been left by Tom Calhoun to former VP Cheryl Jones, depending on how long after the end of Spring Quarter you are reading this, will determine how good a job she is doing.

CAVING ACTIVITY: Rolf McQueary, Cheryl Jones, Tom Calhoun, Bob Alderson and Margie Lewter visited legendary Miller's Cave. This was the first grotto trip to the cave in many years. Rolf has been doing extensive work all over the rest of Big Walker Mt. Not only has he been continuing to survey Salamander, but at times ridge walking with Lor Windle, Mike Frame and Doug Olsen. He has been checking out various holes, and has hit upon a couple good caves waiting to be fully explored.

On a recent trip to Newberry-Bane's, Mike Wolf, Jerry Redder, Robyn Loud, Lor Windle, and Carol Godla were sitting in the Vault Room recarbiding. They had just descended Triple Wells with Cheryl Jones, Bob Alderson, and John Lilly, and these three were supposedly ascending the rope. As the first group continued filling their lamps, a sound was heard from the passage leading off to Triple Wells. Suddenly three naked bodies streaked out of the darkness. Cheryl, Bob and John tore around the Vault Room with nothing but boots and hardhats on. They went around the register and dump, then back out. Unwittingly, they had given the first group enough time to climb up the Devil's Staircase and beat them to the intersection with the passage leading to the entrance. Once there, Lor Windle was able to claim a mushy bag of jelly beans as reward for arriving first and not having to haul the rope out the remaining distance.

Joe Saunders and Keith Ortiz are doing something, but we are not quite sure what it is, with what they call the Tawneys, Links and Smoke Hole "System". Keith has yet to extrapolate his brain for us.

Don Davison is still working on Ellison's. Don and Cheryl Jones have opened up at least a mile of virgin passage at the top of Fantastic Pit, as well as discovered five new deep drops: Davison's Drop (596'), Fantastic pit rigged from Assault Ledge (586'), Smokey I Pit (500'), N.O.S.S. #5 (488') and Smokey II Pit (284'). For detailed information, check the Huntsville Grotto Newsletter and The Region Record.

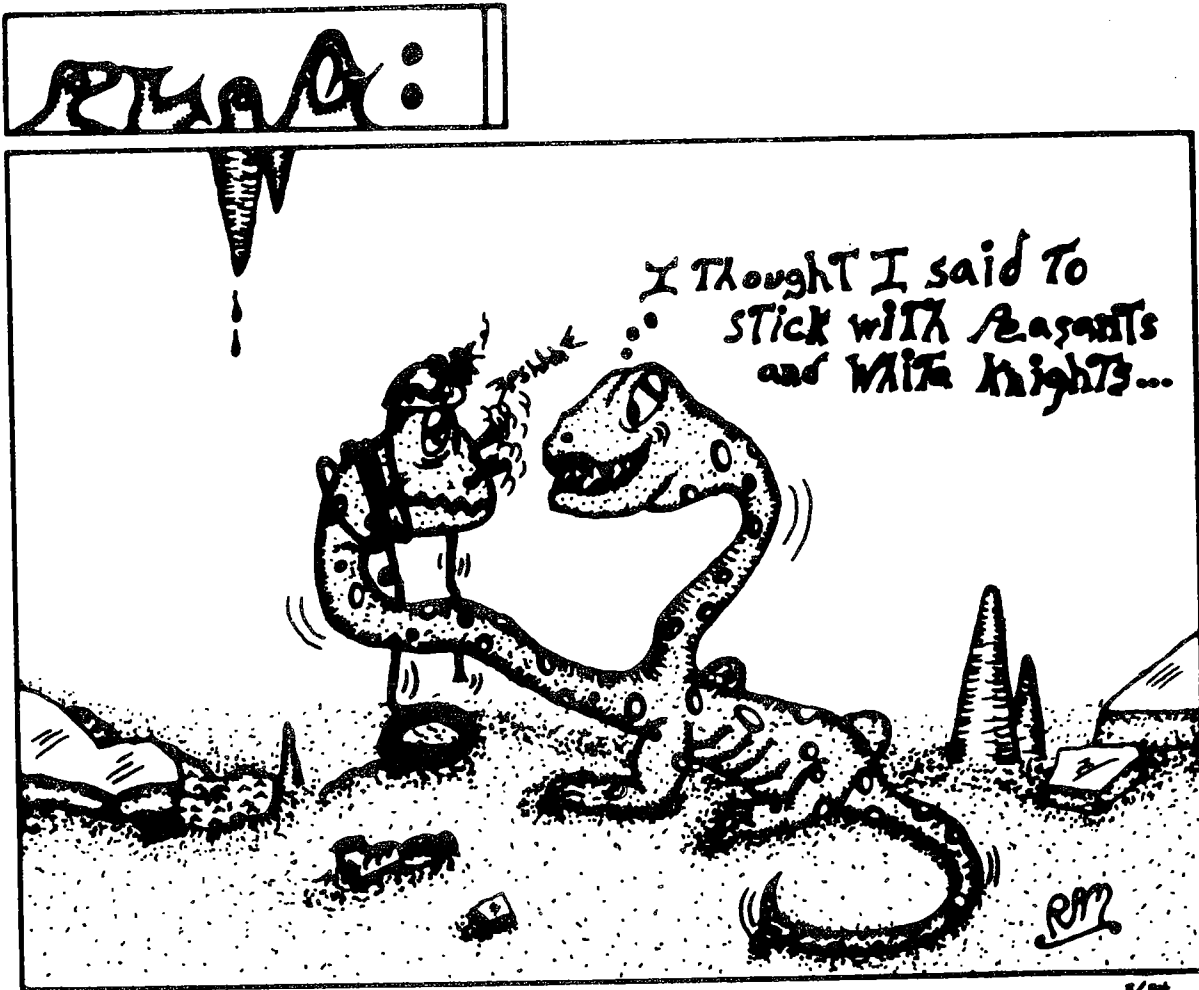
ABOVE THE GROUND ACTIVITY: Bill Biggers gave a party in D.C. back in early April, and Ed Loud, Jim Denton, and Mike Wolf represented the grotto. On the return trip to Blacksburg, they decided to take a slight detour and about 11 hours later, rolled up in Ed's V.W. at Canadian Customs in Niagara Falls asking to be let into Canada. After much deliberation, the customs officials decided that they were not migrant workers or undesirable aliens, and let them into the country for an hour or so to view the falls.

The Spring VAR meeting at Anthony Correctional Center near White Sulfur Springs, West Virginia, was attended by a large group of VPI cavers. Tom Calhoun and Tuna Johnson represented the grotto at the business meeting. Later, D.C. Grotto tapped a number of kegs of beer. Somewhere along the line someone claimed that VPI could not finish the kegs. The challenge of course was soon regretted, but not by VPI, who was still thirsty.

Doug Yeatts and Mike Frieders have finished making the new cable ladders and they are now in use by Grotto personnel.


Congratulations to newlyweds Lance and Janice (Goad) Hudnall. Congratulations also to the newly engaged couples, Bruce Byrd and Polly Wick, Jim Altman and Lynn Richardson, Phil Moritz and Nancy Moore.

FLUNK OUTS, ESCAPES AND GRADUATIONS: Congratulations to the following people receiving degrees in June: Bill Stringfellow, Janice Hudnall, Tuna Johnson, Jim Altman, Thoralf Brecht, Rolf McQueary, Bruce Byrd and Mike Conefrey. Bruce Byrd and Mike Conefrey have landed jobs with Texas Instruments in Houston and Dallas respectively. Bill Stringfellow has found a job with Singer.



# CAVE RESCUE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK:

## from the inside out

 Editors note: The following was compiled from a brain-picking session with Steve Gates (NSS 12212), who is actively involved with the CRCN, based at University of Virginia.

"The purpose (of CRCN) is to provide competent, experienced and level headed cavers at the scene of and accident or emergency to assist in clearing the situation up and getting people out.... The actual rescue personnel might well be the local emergency crew. As it's set up, if we have a bad injury that will require medical equipment, they're going to be the ones who will have to provide it.

If some one were to call the CRCN, the call would come to the University Police here in Charlottesville. We ask the police to get the name of the caller, the number where he can be reached, information such as the name and location of the cave, the nature of the incident, the number of people involved and what kind of special equipment, if any, will be needed for the rescue. The University Police would then call me or one of several other people around town who have a call down list...of cavers from all over the region. It's arranged so we're not out of town at the same time--someone is always here. We would then call the person who called the police in the first place, and find out more details and make sure things are as the police had told us. The idea here is to have a fail safe system, because in an emergency situation people often get confused. If the information the police relates to us...is the same as we hear when we call back five minutes later, then we have a pretty good idea that it is correct.

We would then call the people from the list which are the closest to the cave, tell them the situation, and try to arrange for a rescue. Ideally, no cave in Virginia or West Virginia (within the Virginia Region) is more than an hour and a half from help.

The system has been used satisfactorily. I've had three calls, I believe, since the fall region meeting. We were able to get people on the scene within half an hour and help get the cavers out...although one group had rescued themselves before we left Charlottesville.

....There are some grottos who have not cooperated (with efforts to compile a complete call down list) at all.

....Fortunately, these grottos are not in critical areas. One group though, has sole access to a cave system which has had to have a rescue...once before. In a situation like that, we might have problems, but it's possible that we may be able to call other groups in the area and find someone to help.

So far, I've publicized (the CRCN number) to all the grottos (in the region), passed out cards at region functions, as well as send a supply of the cards to some of the different outfitters in the area selling caving equipment....Some of the grotto newsletters have been very helpful and published the number. We had talked about taking out a small classified ad in the NSS News for the CRCN number. I think our region News correspondent is going to take care of that.

I've tried (to distribute the CRCN number) to police stations, fire department and all, but I've had limited success in getting a list of places to send it....The ideal thing to do would be to have someone go to each county sheriff's office and talk to them a bit about the CRCN, and explain exactly what we can do and how we are set up. As I understand it, the University Police have inserted notices in police journals about CRCN; at least they told me they would look into this. I don't know whether they've done anything or not.

....I wish I knew to what point I could rely on local grottos to take care of some of this for me. Because rather than writing a lot of letters which will get thrown away, and won't make a whole lot of an impression, I think the best thing would be to have someone go and talk to...the sheriffs involved, and talk to the landowners of some of the prominent caves around.... and be sure they're aware of the cave rescue network, and give them a card. This is something that needs to be done locally, and I would like to see more local involvement by grottos.

....In the direction the CRCN is moving now, and as far as it is set up now, I don't see a real good way to improve it. I think it works now; I think it is adequate for the use we give it. Now the alternative would be to go to a system with an entirely different philosophy of cave rescues. In England, which has a much higher caving population than the U.S, they have well organized rescue teams. If a rescue is needed, a regular rescue team is called out. The teams have training sessions,...a lot of equipment,...(and) first aid practice. They can coordinate and move as a team and do the entire rescue themselves. This would be really good, but in the Virginia Region, I think we would have a problem setting up a system of this sort. It would be really difficult if a team based in the D.C. area was called down to Lee County, for example, because they have 8 or 10 hours before they can get there....Just in talking around, I have gotten some bad vibrations about setting up and formalizing CRCN as a training situation. It's hard enough for me to get people to volunteer to be on the list, and I think if I required rescuers to come to training sessions very few people, if any, would show up.

And a team has the problem of transporting equipment, too, unless the region wants to spend an awful lot of money to put a cache in every county containing caves in Virginia and West Virginia; otherwise equipment is too far away from the scene of the accident to do you a whole lot of good. This is the alternative.

Now I will admit that a well organized, trained, efficient rescue team would be the ideal situation; or at least better than what we have now. But I don't think the number of calls we get warrants the expense and time of setting up such a team. I think the CRCN is well off as it is now.

There are people who would not agree with this at all. I'm thinking specifically of the people who are organizing the Blue Ridge Rescue Group....Plans are for the group to get into cave rescue; I know they're holding a cave rescue practice next month. This is fine, but I wonder if this will obviate CRCN, if we'll still be needed. I think for the moment, at least, we are. We can cover a much larger part of the region....My own sympathies lie more with the CRCN as it is set up now. I think it is important that cave rescues be as local a thing as possible, and I don't think you should have to get people from extremely far away. ....For one thing, this makes it hard to avoid publicity. From the point of land owner relationships, this is something we really don't need.

.... I think what's necessary first, (before a nation-wide communications network) is for each region to have their own, which is not the present situation, I understand....I wonder if it's going to be worth the trouble (to organize nation-wide). There are very few people who cave so much in such a diffuse manner that they cover the entire country and very rarely go to the same place twice, so that they couldn't find out what the rescue number is for a given area.

....I think this (nation-wide network) would run into a fair amount of expense, and a fair amount of liability for the central people, depending on how it's run. I assume you'd want to set up a toll free number. Otherwise, if someone gets hurt up here in Breathing Cave in Bath County, is he going to call Texas, or is he just going to call the local police? It's going to be much more difficult for him to call Texas from a local resident's telephone.

Right now, I think it should be kept on a regional basis, because I can foresee a lot of problems. Who is the dispatcher going to be for this number? What kind of number are you going to set up?...Someone is going to have to be there 24 hours a day. Are you going to pick up a police department there similar to the set up we have here?

....Also, the number must be a permanent one. You can't change it every six months.

I think a better set up would be for each region to have a rescue network....The volume of calls on a regional level will be fairly low and it'll be easy to get people like the University Police here to cooperate."

\* \* \* \*



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Address them to CRCN, 600 Brandon Ave.  
Apt. 36, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903.

# GOOD NEWS IS BAT NEWS



Hellhole Cave of Pendleton County, West Virginia, has become the focal point of the struggle to give two rare species of bats a fighting chance for survival. Hellhole Cave contains the largest known hibernating colony of the Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis) east of Kentucky and the easternmost known nursery colony of the long-eared bat (Plecotus townsendii). It also contains a significantly large hibernating colony of the little brown bat (Myotis lucifugus). The Indiana bat and the long-eared bat have been recognized by scientists and conservationists as being in danger of extinction. The Indiana bat is already included on the U.S. Department of the Interior's Rare and Endangered Species list.

In recognition of the gravity of the situation, the NSS Board of Governors, at their November 3, 1973, meeting in Los Angeles, passed a resolution supporting and encouraging a "voluntary year-round moratorium on NSS caving trips into Hellhole Cave, ...until such time as alternative beneficial action can be taken; and...requests all cavers, regardless of affiliation, to honor this moratorium."

We sincerely hope that all cavers, regardless of affiliation, will carefully consider the importance and necessity of this decision. Hellhole Cave is to be assumed bat-sensitive year-round, not merely during the hibernating season as was once thought. This assumption is based on scientific evidence, not on hysteria or sentimentality. It has been found that for summer nursery colonies, visitation appears to increase perceptibly the number of accidents to young bats, and also higher first-year mortality rates have been noted among young bats. This results from the inability of many of them to accumulate enough fat reserves to last until spring. Perhaps after appropriate study, it will be found that at certain times of the year (for example, during the first two weeks of October), caver disturbance may do little or no harm to the bat colonies. However, until such study is made, we must assume (for the sake of the bats) that caver disturbance is highly detrimental.

Dr. John S. Hall of Albright College, Reading, Pa., will attempt to assess the situation at Hellhole Cave as quickly as possible and will report to the National Speleological Society membership, and the caving world at large, at the earliest opportunity (via and NSS Bulletin article), but in the meantime we ask all cavers to cooperate fully with this important resolution. Thank you for your cooperation and concern.

**bobbi nagy**

(The figure portrays the Bat God of the Central American Indians, slaying his victim.)

# THE SINKING CREEK PROJECT:

## by joe saunders

Sinking Creek Valley is a limestone and dolomite floored valley in southwestern Virginia, stretching thirty miles from its base on the New River in western Giles County, east, to its head in central Craig County. The valley is generally two to three miles wide with Ordovician limestones and dolomites and upper Cambrian dolomites outcropping along its length. The drainage of Sinking Creek is actually composed of two valley units; a downstream, western section and an upstream, eastern section. These two are joined where Sinking Creek flows through the gap between Spruce Run Mountain and Clover Hollow Mountain. Each of these valley units is headed by anticlinal structures which plunge to the east.

Many of the larger caves known in the Blacksburg area are located in the valley of Sinking Creek. Pig Hole is located several miles from the base of the Creek. Tawney's Cave, about half a mile long and Smoke Hole, one half to one mile long (survey in progress) are located at the foot of Clover Hollow and feed water into Sinking Creek. Four miles to the northeast is Clover Hollow Cave, over two miles long and located on the plunging anticline at the head of the hollow. Far to the east in the valley lie Newcastle Murder Hole (8,000 ft.+) and Rufe Caldwell Cave. (3,000ft.+)

Little has been done in the past to relate the caves of the valley to one another, or to investigate the hydrology of the valley. I am in the process of trying to piece together a history of the work done in the valley, by writing to former Tech Cave Club members and to John Holsinger and Phil Lucas of the Virginia Cave Survey. At this point, however, I doubt if I am aware of all the work done in this area. For instance, Earl Thierry hasn't been contacted yet.

The study of the caves and karst hydrology of the valley can be divided into five parts. The status and prospects for each are discussed below.

### I. THE SINKING AND REAPPEARANCE OF SINKING CREEK:

In low water Sinking Creek is said to "sink" completely at a location about two miles from the New River. Greg Marland, a Tech caver from the early sixties, reports walking along the creek near the "sink" area. He concluded that the stream sank into its own gravel and flowed under the high water stream bed to the New River. In high water a continuous stream flows to the river. Apparently no dye tracing has been done. Where the sinking water reappears is still unknown.

### II. SUBTERRANEAN CREEK MEANDER CUTOFFS:

Link's Cave is located high in a hill in a meander of Sinking Creek. The main part of the cave stretches 300 feet along the strike,



and is mainly a canyon type of passage. Its location way out in the meander suggests that it was not formed by ground water in the usual sense, but probably was formed as the creek took a short cut underground through the bend. Another cave at the neck of the same bend is just above creek level and goes as a crawlway for eighty-six feet before becoming too narrow. It too follows the strike and probably was a cutoff through the meander. A small spring on the other side of the meander may be the downstream end of a presently active cutoff. Using a very sensitive thermometer, the temperature of the water from this spring was found to be intermediate between the temperature of water from three nearby springs and that of water from Sinking Creek at locations both upstream and down from the possible cutoff spring. This temperature difference could be explained if stream water from the creek changed as it passed through the cutoff. Flow through the meander may be slow; no obvious intake point can be seen. I plan to run dye through the bend in the future to confirm the cutoff.

### III. UNDERGROUND DRAINAGE FROM CLOVER HOLLOW:

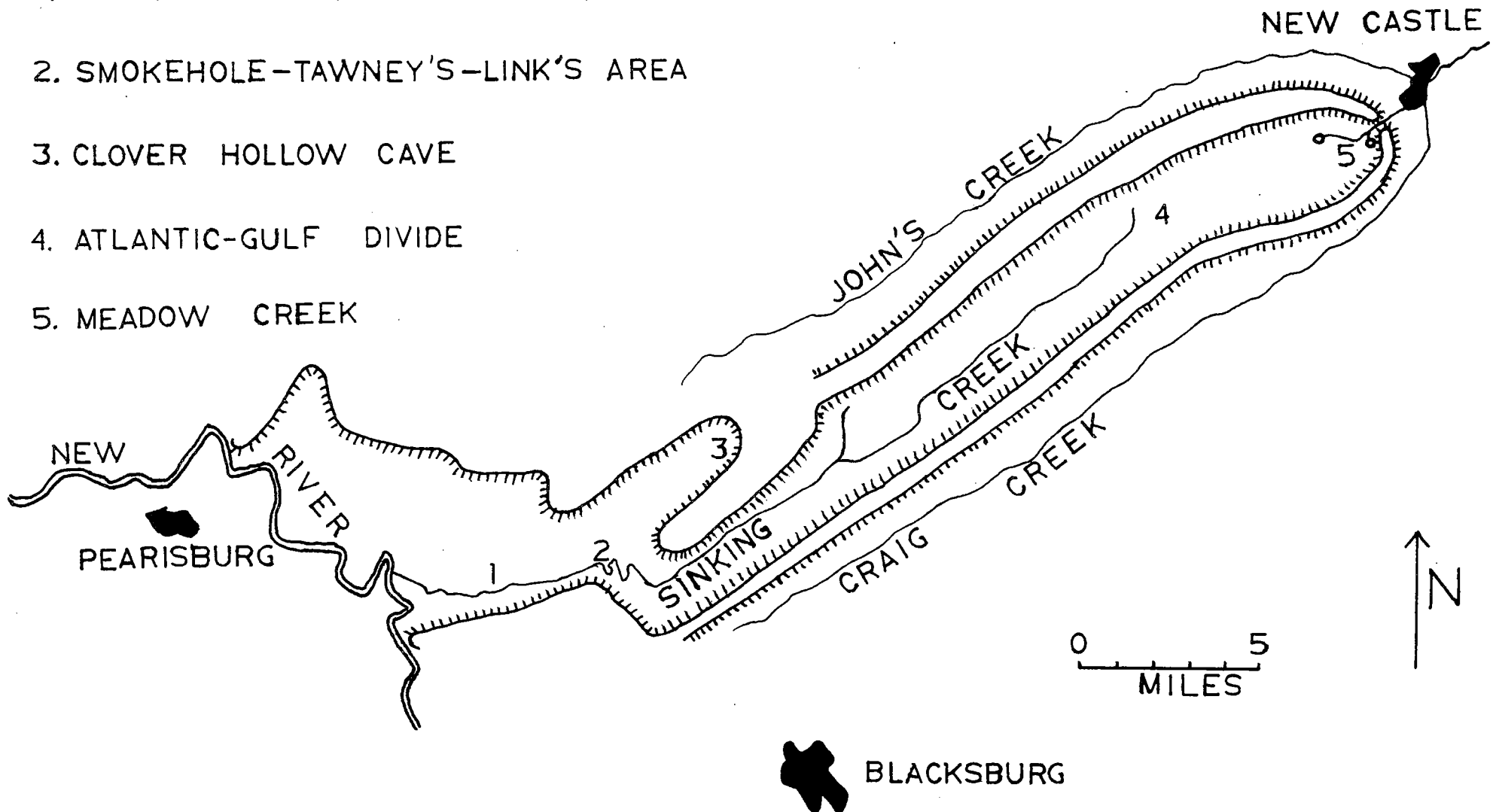
Just where the streams in Clover Hollow Cave resurge has puzzled cavers for over twenty-five years. Apparently Earl Thierry dropped half a pound of fluorescein in a stream in the cave and didn't see it come out four miles to the southwest at Smoke Hole Spring. If he just looked for green water to appear at the spring, that little dye over a four mile distance probably wouldn't have been visible. Smoke Hole is the most likely place for the cave water to resurge. It lies downstrike from the cave, is the largest spring known in the area (ca. one cubic foot per second in low water), and lies at a low enough elevation (1,820 feet) to drain the cave, which, to my present knowledge, bottoms out at about 2,000 feet elevation. A spring in Happy Hollow, four miles to the east of the cave, may be large enough to account for the volume of the cave streams, but lies at elevation 2,200. A search for large springs is needed two to three miles to the south on Sinking Creek (elevation 2,000'), and on John's Creek four to five miles to the northeast. A resurgence on John's Creek is considered unlikely, as the rocks there are of Silurian and Devonian age. A profile of Clover Hollow Cave, however, shows a gentle slope to the northeast, and the active streams in the cave flow in that same direction. This puzzling problem should be solved in the future after a spring inventory and dye tracing are completed.

The relationship of Smoke Hole Spring and the major cave behind it, to Tawney's Cave and the spring which it feeds, is another puzzle. Tawney's spring has about one fifth the discharge of Smoke Hole and lies 1,500 feet downstream from it, on the same side of the Sinking Creek. Tawney's Cave's stream can be followed about 850 feet up the strike to the northeast before it disappears into breakdown. At this point it is about 600 feet due south of a large passage in Smoke Hole. This large passage is the westernmost passage in Smoke Hole and appears to be an abandoned strike-oriented route

# SINKING CREEK VALLEY

GILES, CRAIG COUNTIES, VA.

1. STREAM "SINKS" IN LOW WATER
2. SMOKEHOLE-TAWNEY'S-LINK'S AREA
3. CLOVER HOLLOW CAVE
4. ATLANTIC-GULF DIVIDE
5. MEADOW CREEK



for the main stream in Smoke Hole. The main stream now has broken the strike orientation and flows due south for 1,000 feet to the spring on Sinking Creek. The abandoned passage is at or just above base level then, and ends in breakdown. A small stream in it disappears to the southwest. Plans have been made to dye trace this small stream. If the overland entrance to entrance survey and the two cave surveys are accurate, then it appears that the Tawney's Cave stream comes out of the middle of Smoke Hole Cave! Then again, perhaps it wiggles in the gap which separates the two caves, coming updip from the northwest. Either way, something interesting is afoot.

#### IV. HEADWATER PIRACY AT THE ATLANTIC-GULF DIVIDE:

The headwaters of Sinking Creek, interestingly, are not at the head of the Sinking Creek Valley, but rather five miles down the valley. From the headwaters to the end of Sinking Creek on the New River, which flows via the Ohio and Mississippi River to the Gulf, the Creek drops 1,000 feet in elevation in twenty-five miles, for a gradient of about forty feet per mile. Drainage in the eastern five miles of Sinking Creek Valley, in contrast, flows to Craig Creek, and then to the Atlantic, dropping 1,300 feet in eight miles from the headwaters, or 160 feet per mile. Drainage of the first four miles of the five for which Atlantic drainage flows in Sinking Creek Valley is predominantly underground, reappearing at two large springs to form Meadow Creek. An unknown group dye-traced a sinking stream about a mile to one of these springs.

It appears that drainage at the head of Sinking Creek Valley once flowed west to New River. Helped by a steeper gradient to Craig Creek to the east, and by the anticlinal plunge to the east, drainage at the head of Sinking Creek Valley was pirated to the east. The divide between Gulf and Atlantic drainage, called "the Alleghany" by local residents, has thus probably moved westward as more drainage was captured by Meadow Creek. The two drainage basins, Sinking Creek and Meadow Creek, show different cave densities. Although cave hunting in the eastern end of the Sinking Creek Valley has not been thorough, the known cave passage density is several times lower here than in the Meadow Creek drainage directly across the divide. The lithology is similar, but the drainage gradient is fourfold higher to the east than to the west and fractures due to the plunge of the anticline may be more numerous. This high gradient apparently confers the same advantage for cave development as an entrenched river does in other locales. A thorough search for caves is needed on both sides of the divide. More dye tracing there is also intended.

#### V. THE STRENGTH OF STRIKE ORIENTATION:

One of the foremost questions unresolved in my mind about cave development in folded rocks as in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia is the stringency of strike control of passage (drainage) orientation.

Certainly in areas with synclinal or anticlinal structural features dip orientation will increase in prominence. Lithology will often force a strike orientation, particularly if the carbonate beds are not very thick. But under what conditions will the passage orientation be independent of dip or strike in rocks with a significant dip? Sinking Creek Valley is not the best place to answer this question, but a characterization of the underground drainage there should aid in answering the question. Will streams in Pig Hole Cave and small caves on the north slope of Spruce Run Mountain drain along the strike to the New River 4-5 miles away, or to Sinking Creek a mile or less away? A series of dye tracings are planned to answer these questions.

The Sinking Creek Valley contains interesting examples of phenomena of karst hydrology and geomorphology. The project that Keith Ortiz and I have planned has much work to be done in cave discovery, survey, and water tracing. Offers of assistance from interested persons will be appreciated.

## the virginia spring survey:

A major advantage of an organized Cave Survey is that discovery and description are made more efficient by the recording, storage, and dissemination of cave information. This efficiency is further increased if cave biologists, hydrologists, and geologists work together, forwarding information which is of interest not only to themselves, but to each other. It is only with this type of cooperation and cross feeding that projects which encompass areas larger than a single cave are possible, because the independent effort required to locate and describe the caves and springs of an area, and then formulate hypotheses about the cave development and hydrology in that region, may be beyond the resources of any group contemplating the project.

After discussions with Phil Lucas, the current head of the Virginia Cave Survey, I wish to propose a Virginia Spring Survey. Actually, this survey will be part of the Virginia Cave Survey, and will be part of a more integrated approach to karst research in Virginia.

Why should the caver concern himself with springs? Any experienced caver knows that when looking for new caves, one should always inquire about the presence of caves, holes, pits, and springs in an area. A cave to many locals is an opening big enough to comfortably crawl or walk into. But to a caver, a cave is any opening which can be entered in any way, even uncomfortably. Many springs can be pushed during low water, and lead to caves. Low water periods, usually July to November, are the best times to check out for possible entry.

If the spring itself is not enterable, often a seasonal overflow route is. Again, the overflow route will be flooded during high water, but may be dry or damp in times of low water, as exemplified by Old Mill Cave in Montgomery County. In some

places entry can be gained to a cave through an old resurgence, which now lies somewhat above the spring, but often connected to the cave stream which resurges at the spring. Thus, the presence of a spring, especially a large spring, should prompt a search for a cave associated with it.

A knowledge of the springs in a cave area is essential if water tracing from caves is to be done. Cave stream tracing usually comes after the mapping of the cave or caves, and is used together with cave maps to draw conclusions about cave development and water flow in the area. It is particularly useful in areas where known caves are small and represent just fragments of former flow systems. This is the situation in many parts of Virginia.

It is important to make the location of springs a normal part of ridgewalking and cave survey. While some springs are marked on topo maps, most are not. The volume of water issuing from a spring has little to do with its being marked on the topo. More important is the proximity of the spring to a road. I know of two springs in Kentucky which are not marked on the topo, and which were not known by the U.S. Geological Survey, yet both were discharging 1-2 cubic feet per second in low water, twice as much as the nearest spring marked on the topo. The unmarked ones were half a mile from the road, the marked on 500 feet.

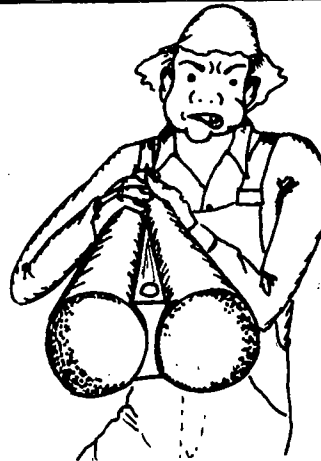
Report Spring locations to Phil Lucas (Rt. 3, Box 131, Staunton, Va. 24401) just as you would cave locations. Include a description containing an estimate of discharge (or a comparison with another spring), potential as a cave entrance, whether or not it is used as a domestic water supply, and the date. The date is important because someone else may want to revisit the spring if the original visit was in a month which usually has high water.

\* \* \*

## elmt tours?

In a recent (?) issue of Descent magazine (the "good laugh" reply to Ascent), it was suggested that anyone traveling through our area should stop by and ask the VPI Cave Club about Ed Loud Memorial Toilets...and be sure to be shown one! (Anyone who could render the TROG staff a copy of this issue for the exact wording, will be immortalized in the original E.L.M.T.)

# THE NEW BEACON CAVE SURVEY



YOU HIPPIES  
WANNA  
STEP OUTTA  
MY CAVE ?!

Beacon Cave is located in Middle Ordovician limestone on the north side of East River Mountain, West Virginia. The new survey, headed by Guy turenne, was undertaken to remedy the glaring flaws in the old map (Bunker, Janke, and Eaton, 1958), which failed to show much of the well known passage.

The mapping began in 1971 and was "completed" in 1974. As a result, Beacon Cave now stands at 15,000+ feet, with passage still not mapped. The existence of an entrance at the far upstream end now looks very improbable, but still has not been disproven. An entrance in the far downstream section, beyond the large pool, has been inferred, but not proven, as it seems passable only to air, leaves and cave rats; not to light or cavers. A concentrated effort to find access to the passage above the large waterfall proved a failure, and it seems the only way up is to bolt 40-45 feet on an overhang of badly weathered limestone.

The down stream formation section, with its massive stalagmites and bacon rinds, has been heavily vandalized, many formations evidently having been smashed just for the "fun" of it.

If the above news is not bad enough, Beacon should now be considered a "closed" cave. The last mapping crew came very close to being arrested. The initial effort by the landowner to bulldoze the Beacon entrance shut failed, so as of this writing, it is still possible to get in. This may not be true for long. The Haynes' entrance has been permanently and thoroughly closed.

All prior efforts to prevent the total and permanent loss of this cave have failed, but Bob Alderson has now agreed to try once more. If his efforts fail, then we will have lost one of the finest horizontal caves in this area.

mike conefrey

o / / / o

CRCN: 804-924-7166







# PENDULUM

The first time that he saw the pit, the water fall was pourin'.  
Mist hung heavy in the air, but the pit was callin'.  
Rigged in on a seven-trip through fog and wind and rain;  
Seven sixteenths perlon tryin' to take the strain...  
Seven sixteenths perlon tryin' to take the strain.

Rigging in on bottom, near the water's roar;  
He's taking up the slack and now he's clear off the floor.  
Water slams his body; his helmet's driven down,  
Light's gone out, cold sets in, and darkness all around...  
Light's gone out, cold sets in, and darkness all around.

Five hundred feet above him that he cannot see;  
Creeping slowly up the rope--now foot, now chest, now knee.  
From drowning in the fury to freezing in the rain,  
Though slow and steady wins the race, he cannot feel the pain...  
Though slow and steady wins the race, he cannot feel the pain.

He cannot count his steps now, his concentration's gone.  
Fatigue has robbed his body of the will to carry on.  
His legs and arms hang leaden as his temperature goes down;  
His mind it wanders freely 'round about the town...  
His mind it wanders freely 'round about some town.

They tried to shout on down to him, but he could not hear.  
The hole was small. The load was large. They could not use their  
gear.

He died there in the silence of the trickle and the roar;  
You will not see him caving in your underground no more...  
You will not see him caving in your underground no more.

## ...don davisson

# NOTES ON BIG WALKER :

## by rolf mcqueary

March 30, 1947:

"Bennet, Griffin and I (Bob Barnes)... went over to Poplar Hill, which is about two miles off route from Pearisburg, between Pearisburg and Dublin. A man by the name of J.C. Carr had written us about a big spring (Carr's #1) he had on his place. We found him with no trouble and took a look at it. It was a big one all right, but offered no method of entrance. I walked back up the mountain and found where a good sized stream went underground. We tried to get under here, but it was too wet for this time of year, but it looked as though one could get down when the water went...

Mr. Carr told us of (another) cave up the hill that he didn't know much about. We found this after considerable hiking. It was a small hole which was about fifteen feet deep and eight feet in diameter, which in itself didn't go anywhere, but there was a narrow crack over at one side which I could not see down no matter how much I tried. A rock thrown down this hole brought back memories of Clover Hollow. Griffin, Bennet and I plan to go back with a small charge and build a cave of caves..."

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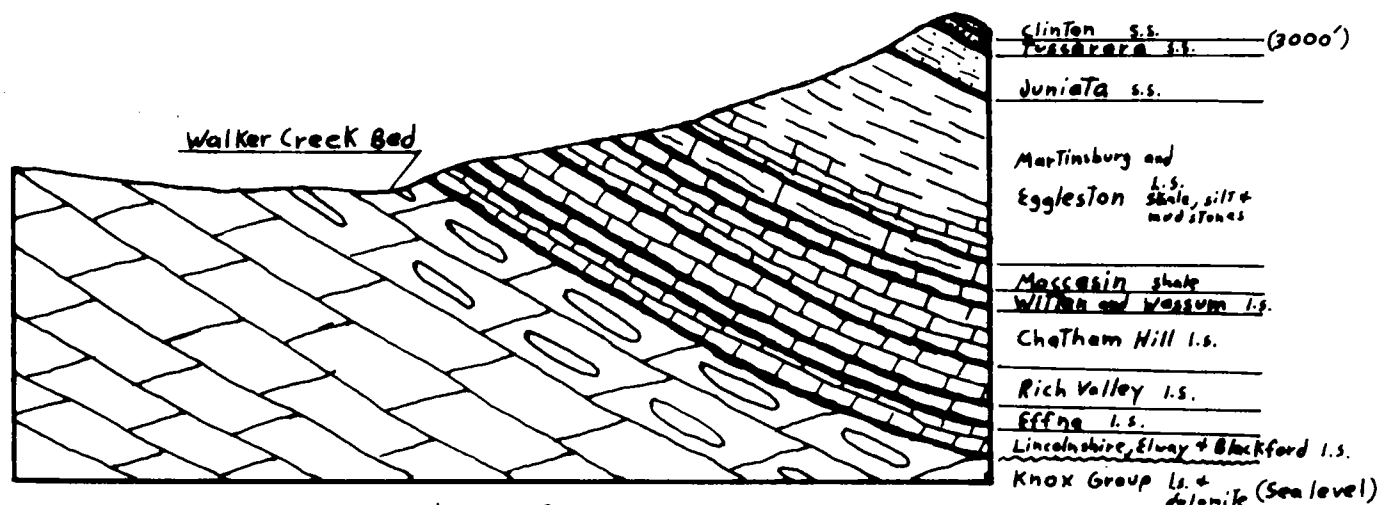
In July of 1948 Bob Barnes did, indeed, return to this seemingly insignificant hole in the side of Big Walker Mountain. With him also came left over dynamite from the blasting of Pig Hole's rear entrance. In a series of two blasts and a total of sixteen sticks of dynamite, Barnes succeeded in opening his "cave of caves" i.e.- Millers Cave. This was only the first of several long, challenging caves to appear on Big Walker...

This article concerns Big Walker Mountain, that mist enshrouded ridge which has delivered us such beauties as Newberry's, Bane's, Bane's Spring, Buddy Penley's, Salamander, and Miller's caves. Although much work has been done on this mountain, it is my belief that Walker is still holding back on some of its prime secrets. Because of steep slopes and intermittent wooded areas, it is obvious why exploration has neither been intense nor comprehensive. Work thus far has been lightly scattered over a period of about twenty-five years. It has been dissociated, taking into account only small locales on the ridge and leaving many areas untouched. Most of the work has been on random weekend ventures with little focus in mind, usually unrecorded and soon forgotten.

Since the existence of Salamander became known to me last spring my interest in Big Walker has grown considerably. Although the entire ridge warrants great attention, I have chosen to concentrate my efforts on that region which lies in Giles Co. and includes both Salamander and Miller's. This area specifically is the northwest slope of Big Walker, bordered on the west by Bland Co., on the east by route 100 and to the north by Big Walker Creek. References can be made to the 7.5 minute White Gate Quad.

#### A GENERAL GEOLOGY:

All of the rocks exposed in this region are of a marine sedimentary nature with a total thickness of about 5,300 feet. Maximum relief of the ridge is 1669 feet at an elevation of 3353 feet. This section of the ridge consists basically of fifteen rock formations striking northeast with the mountain and dipping southeast into the mountain. The ridge is capped with shale and sandstone units which also run down the southeast slope, thus accounting for the lack of caves in that area. The various formations are diagrammed below in ascending order.



Big Walker Mountain \* Typical \* Cross Section

Scale: 1 cm = 500 ft

The following is an excerpt from William A. Moon Jr.'s masters thesis, "Geology of the Poplar Hill Area" (1961) pp. 6-7, describing the general construction of the ridge:

"The lowest Ordovician unit present (makes up most of the lower valley), is the limestone and cherty dolomite sequence of the Knox dolomite group. The thickness of the entire Knox group is approximately 2,250 feet thick. At the top of the Knox group is a profound erosional unconformity. The surface is highly

irregular and its outcrop trace reflects these irregularities rather strikingly. The overlying Middle Ordovician Series is well represented by various gray limestone units totaling about 800 feet. These limestones are overlain by approximately 50 to 200 feet of red Moccasin shale."

Moon continues to further describe beds of Ordovician and Silurian shales and sandstones which cap the mountain.

#### SO WHAT ABOUT CAVES:

It is the 800 feet of limestones that concern us. Beginning with the Wassum and Chatham Hill formations (coming down the ridge) we enter prime cave forming rock as testified by the presence of both Miller's and Salamander. These caves enter at the contact between the Wassum and Chatham Hill. Their entrances vary in altitude by only about twenty feet, according to the preliminary data, and the distance between the two is approximately five miles. Both are long vertical mazes.

In observing cave locations plotted out on a Geologic map of the area, it becomes quite apparent that a pattern exists. Almost all of the larger caves are found to lie in a narrow band between 2,300 and 2,400 feet, coinciding with the Chatham Hill formation. These caves also seem to occur primarily at the bottom or on the sides of erosional gulleys. Included here are Salamander, Millers, Newberry's, Bane's, and Buddy Penly's.

This area of the mountain is a bit higher and steeper than the casual roamer really cares to bother with. Being often wooded, covered with brambles and cut through by deep gulleys, it is indeed and in essence, "a pain in the ass" to walk. This is however, in my opinion, precisely where the pay off shall be had.

#### EARLIER KNOWN AND PLOTTED CAVES:

Previous to current studies, only nine caves had been positively located and explored within the boundaries described earlier. These include (east to west) Carr's #2, Miller's, Francis' #1, Bill Bane's, Sam Francis', Vest's #1, Vest's #2, Bretcherd's and Salamander. At least two other cave locations had been described by land owners, (on J.J. Vest's and R. Francis' property) but these had not been explored prior to this study.

Of these known caves, only two, aside from Miller's and Salamander, seem to have any possible potential. These are Francis' #1 and Carr's #2. The remaining caves are all F.R.O.'s as designated in Caves of Virginia, and most are confirmed by my field work in the area. These F.R.O.'s all lie low within the valley (most within the Knox Group) and again add evidence of a lacking knowledge of the structure of the mountain and a lacking energy to explore above, "where the good stuff is".-

Carr's #2, although not as high up as the others, (elev. 2160) is described as seeming to be filled at one end with a mud flow. The cave's total length is only about 175 feet however, and offers only little potential. The cave was explored and described fully in the late forties. I have not yet visited this one, but it's probably safe to scratch it off the list.

Francis' #1 is the only one left to offer hope. The cave is located at almost the exact elevation as Salamander and Miller's, and also along the same contact. The cave has a large fifteen foot diameter moss covered entrance lying within a wooded gulley. It appears that runoff flowing through the gulley sinks here as it reaches the permeable limestone layers.

Mike Frame, Lor Windle and myself visited Francis' #1 in late April, being interested in its "un-rat holish" appearance on a sketch map and description given by Earl Thierry in 1948. He describes the cave as follows:

"The entrance consisted of a sink hole covered over with heavy logs, the hole being about fifteen feet in diameter and twenty feet deep. The length of the cave was about 220 feet with a total difference in elevation of about sixty feet. The passages were narrow with several vertical drops and the cave terminated in a small drain hole right at the bottom which could not be investigated because of its small size. Water was dripping down and stones could be tossed down for about twenty feet further."

Upon examining this drain hole, we came to the same conclusion; although tossing stones down reminded one of the Miller's discovery. The hole is being slowly closed off by flowstone, and seems to drain the entire cave. Looking through the hole, it appears to bell out over a small drop to a room below. A very thin person may be able to squeeze through, but due to water and the nature of the hole upon returning, severe difficulties may be encountered. Dynamite and/or picks seem to be the only solution, and a rather poor one at that.

#### WHERE THE GOOD STUFF IS:

Salamander Cave was discovered only four years ago by a small group from Radford and Dublin. With exploration and mapping efforts still in progress, it has long since proven to be a very long and challenging cave. Its characteristics show it very similar in nature to Miller's and Newberry's as well as to others mentioned previously. It plunges along dip, deep into the mountain and then sprawls outward along strike in a complex maze network.

#### Roaring Spring Cave:

Salamander and Miller's lie almost exactly five miles apart. In the center lies Francis' #1. Could it be possible that a system between these three exists, or perhaps in the other direction, toward Bane's Spring and Newberry's (also five miles southwest of

Salamander)? Well, that's a bit far fetched, but none the less, a remote possibility. In any case, many other separate caves could exist between, and with this in mind, Mike, Lor and myself (during the Francis' #1 trip) set out to ridge walk along Robert Francis' property. We set out following a shallow gourd with a stream in its base. In no more than half an hour it led us up to a steep wooded outcropping, beneath which the stream originated as a large gushing spring. This was neither noted on the topo, nor in Caves of Virginia. Working our way up to a promising looking slit in the rocks, we found a good amount of air flow, but no access due to breakdown blocking the way. With further searching and poking about in loose rocks, we finally found a small fist-sized opening just above the outcropping's face. With our faces in the dirt, and a bit of frantic mole digging, we managed to open the hole just large enough to cram Lor through head first. After about ten minutes and amidst curses and shrieks, Lor surfaced to describe a small room with many stalactites hanging over a large pool and flowing water. The stream appeared to siphon just beyond. So, with broken hearts, we headed to Francis' #1, and finally, home.

In early May, however, Lor and I returned, along with Don Anderson, Herb Safford and Doug Olson. I descended the rat hole this time and found the water to be a bit lower and worth pushing. Returning to the surface to sucker someone into the job and to change into some more water durable boots, Lor quickly volunteered and popped down the hole, followed by Doug. Being 85 degrees outside, I could hardly withstand the scream which I knew was to follow. Finally, from amidst a cloud of steam which rose from the entrance, a purple, shivering lipped Lor made his way out and uttered "IT GOES".

With these lines and a trip back down to the jeep to retrieve some fishnet underwear and boots, Herb, Doug and I descended into what is now dubbed Roaring Spring Cave. With a series of deep breaths, we closed our minds to all rational thought and plunged into the flooded passage. There ~~were~~ were about three to four inches of air space as we made our way, crawling like deranged crayfish through a forest of formations, but before long, a flash of ecstasy greeted us as the cave opened into walking passage. Formations hung everywhere and the stream roared ahead of us. We made our way for about 300 feet to a thundering water shoot. Above this lay tighter passage blocked partially by loose breakdown. The wind and noise were tremendous. Being very wet and cold, and not really equipped for such passage, we returned, leaving several high leads unchecked. We plan to return during drier weather and perhaps with wet suits. There was one other cave reported on this property by Mr. Francis. We will also check this out.

The presence of this spring and cave poses several questions. First of all, it appears to be the only major resurgence of its kind on this section of Big Walker. Could it be possible that this is the resurgence of Salamander and/or Miller's? No large

stream has yet been found in Salamander. Miller's has a stream, but it appears to be flowing in the wrong direction. Water in the valley generally runs southwest to north east. Salamander is about two miles southwest of Roaring Spring.

#### Vest's Regret and Yahoo:

The Vest's property lies about one and a fourth miles southwest of Robert Francis' place. Don Anderson, while caving in the Salamander area about a year before, had received a lead and letter of permission from Mr. J.J. Vest to visit an unlisted cave on his property. (Now dubbed Vest's #3.)

The weekend following the Roaring Spring Trip, Don, Mike, Doug and myself decided to go and check this out and perhaps also walk some more of the ridge above. After checking several F.R.O.'s already listed in the area, we sought out and quickly found Vest's #3. Again being low in the valley, this turned out also to be an F.R.O.; and a trash filled F.R.O. at that.

Returning to the mountainside after much contemplation and a milk shake dinner, we again began our trek, our goal being a sink hole just at the shale-limestone contact. We reached the contact soon enough and began walking parallel with it around the wooded ridge. Again within an hour Mike had found a cave; this one, also in a gulley, was a small, two foot diameter hole draining a small stream coming off the sandstone and shale above. Instead of getting totally drenched in the waterfall which entered, we moved on.

Over the next two knolls, Mike came across another entrance. Entering the 3 x 1.5 foot hole under a slab covered bluff on the side of the wooded gulley, it became obvious that we could not proceed further. Down the shoot and straight ahead about five feet was a smooth walled pit about thirty feet deep. We happily retreated on back down the mountain and home to gather rope and people for the next day's assault.

Conning Don Anderson into taking his jeep, we also gathered up Robyn Loud, Lor, and Doug's roommate, and returned that Sunday. Going first to the water sink hole, Mike descended part way on belay. As he squeezed through the tree roots and the waterfall closed in over his face, an exclamation rang out: "YAAAAHOOOOO!" The cave had been named!

Returning quickly to the surface, Mike said he could go no further without a ladder as the water gushed out over a 15-20 foot Newberry's-like fissure. Since we weren't all too delighted with the aspect of getting totally soaked right then, we decided to visit the other cave, now dubbed Vest's Regret.

After rigging the very promising 30 foot entrance drop, we all descended and spread out to find our cave. This one turned out not to be virgin, but it might as well have been, for we spent four hours crawling through the sharpest, narrowest, flesh ripping passage I've seen in a long time. The fissures keep going, but there ain't nobody who is gonna fit through! So we not so hastily retreated along with torn pants, jackets, shredded knees and elbows.

This cave appears to be located in the Witten formation--a very shaley limestone lying above the Wassum and Chatham Hill. This probably accounts for its sharp, razor blade texture. The cave was very dip orientated, falling off sharply into the mountain in a series of parallel and branching fissures leading off the entrance dome pit. Total passage seen was about 400 feet.

After pulling up the rope and ladder, we returned northeast across the ridge to Yahoo Cave. Since we were already wet, Doug and I decided to enter. After securing the ladder in, I squeezed under the tree roots and waterfall. Doug proceeded hastily behind me and relit my lamp which I had extinguished by falling flat on my face. We then quickly descended the ladder for it hung within the limits of the waterfall, and it did not seem very refreshing to linger about. We found ourselves in a large fissure passage looking down as the stream cascaded down across the breakdown covered floor. The ceiling was very high and reminded me of the entrance passage in Newberry's or Clover Hollow.

Following the passage for about 200-300 feet, it remained large in front of us. We could not proceed further, however. In front of us lay a slit, or canyon, the water sinking and rushing out over a 50 foot drop. We were impressed! After searching awhile for a dry rigging point up and to the right of the canyon, we again returned to the surface. As before, there were also high leads, and as before, we must return.

#### CONCLUSION:

I believe that it is obvious that there is more to Big Walker than meets the eye. If three short weekend ventures can turn up two completely virgin caves with every reason in the world to keep going, then what limits other possibilities along the entire ridge? One simply needs to look in the right places, and be masochistic enough to enjoy walking up steep slopes, swatting gnats, and fighting off blackberry bushes. Who knows, perhaps another Miller's is just around the next knoll. But then again, this is Giles County, "THE CAVED OUT COUNTY" of Virginia.....

HARR!!



next?!

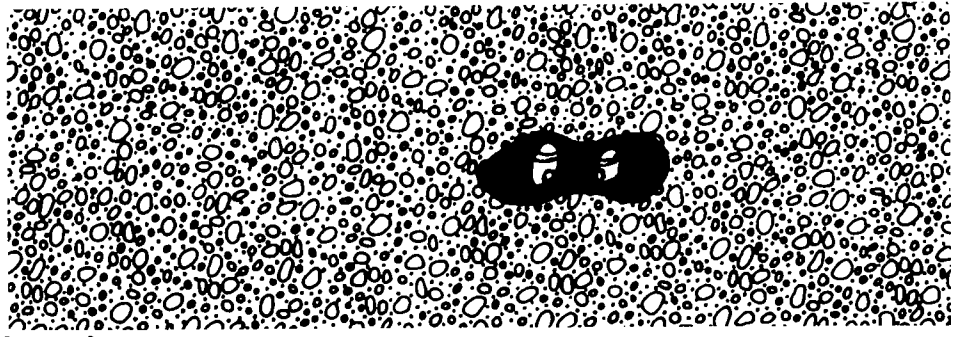
Rolf -- Broken Finger\*  
Wolf -- Sliced Finger  
Thor -- Broken and Sliced Finger  
Carolyn -- Sprained Wrist

"Jock" -- Broken Collar Bone  
Cheryl -- Pulled Shoulder\*  
Conefrey -- Smashed Foot  
Lor -- Messed Up Back

\*Denotes caving accident



# NO SHIT GUYS



Following the stormy and vicious in-fighting of the elections, Rolf McQueary, Cheryl Jones and I went to Clover Hollow, ostensibly to replace the soggy register which had long since been removed. Although a mere trickle of water plunged into the entrance drop, we found that one never knows what surprises lurk in the shadows for unsuspecting cavers.

Descending for the first time ever on a length of genuine Doug Yeatts cable ladder rigged at the 17 foot flowstone, I discovered a pool at the bottom. Fortunately, it was a 13 foot ladder. Almost all hope was lost for the carabiner which Rolf had just dropped while rigging the ladder, but to our mild surprise, it had landed on a dry part of the cave floor. Proceeding to the twelve foot climb, we emerged with wet butts.

Having completed our mission at the bottom of the Canyon Room, we pushed on to the Andrew's Room. Peering down into the murky depths, we regretted not having more time. Moving right along, we checked out the Dragon's Tail and other points of interest.

Cheryl found a cache of old Pepsi bottles and, quite fittingly, a Clover brand milk bottle. One doesn't see milk bottles much any more; perhaps they are all buried deep in caves. Anyway, Cheryl said something about "needing jugs" and apportioning the bottles among us, we repaired to the Canyon Room -- prussiked, climbed and squeezed our way out of the cave.

Having emerged from the entrance drop, we assessed the damage: one lost steel locking "D", one lost pair of gloves, one broken finger for Rolf, and one twisted shoulder for Cheryl. But look what we had gained: Three Pepsi bottles, one milk bottle, the first combat-situation test of the club's new cable ladder, and a warm fuzzy feeling inside from having replaced the sorely needed register. Cheryl, having twisted her shoulder, maintained her reputation as the Evil Knieval of caving. We got out about 7:30 p.m., giving Cheryl plenty of time to make her 7:00 p.m. meeting.



bob mead-donaldson

# MAN THE BRUNTONS AND FULL SPEED AHEAD... again?

It is 1984. Deep inside the Austin Bunker, in Flint Ridge, the C.R.F. directors huddle; beyond the range of sound of picks, shovels, and explosives, trying to figure out how to counter the latest escalatory move by the opposition. One of their guards has been literally blinded by the latest model of plastic carbide lamp, wielded by an intruder. Always responsive to their caving market, Justite had recently developed a lamp for just this sort of conflict: A lamp with a quick release extra high flame. The unfortunate Joint Venturer must have ventured too far, for he had been found stuffed into an enlarged joint, apparently after having been clubbed over the head repeatedly with either a sledge hammer or a speleothem-like object. He must not have had time to thunder-pop his lamp and bring down the ceiling on his invaders.

The directors are discussing the offer of the Sport Caver's Federation to form an alliance. Since the river rose in January, the first connection with Mammoth has been flooded shut. Crews were working on enlarging the Second Connection, but were usually needed either on guard duty or to sneak supplies through the several small secret entrances on Flint Ridge. All the entrances to the system that the caving public knew about had been necessarily blasted shut from the inside. Supplies were getting dangerously low, and manpower was in short supply. The enemy's long siege of the C.R.F. in Flint Ridge must be ended! The recent alliance of the hard ass cavers in MAP (Map All Passages) with SMASH (Society for the Marketing of Anthodites, Stalagmites, and Helectites) had tightened the noose around the neck of the Foundation. The MAPers wanted CRF to share the only virgin passage left in North America with them, to stop hoarding it. The vandals and flowstone miners of SMASH wanted access to the only unvandalized caves left in North America. It was a marriage of convenience, but not something strongly against either's principles.

The Sport Caver's Federation had offered to bring in supplies in return for seeing parts of the Flint Ridge System. The natural hostility of the sport caver for the mappers and vice-versa, plus the chance to see some of the famed Flint Ridge System, had caused the offer to be made, even if it did mean hauling stuff in through distant burned out caves like Crumps. Maybe C.R.F. would open up their secret book and tell them of a

few entrances closer to the park. Hope so. How were the mappers and vandals getting inside the system? Some C.R.F. member must have violated his vow of secrecy under pressure.

After accepting the alliance offer, the directors discussed the new regulations rationing survey stations. Mapping parties would be allowed no more than fifty now, instead of the hundred plus they were used to. They would try a new even-odd caving rationing plan: Calendar date and the last digit on the old NSS membership cards (NSS folded years before due to a split between sport cavers and mappers.)

I wake up. It was a dream. Was it a good dream or a bad dream? Well, I suppose it was worse than it was good. Better rush out and get me my virgin passage and new survey data before it is all gone. Don't want to be scooped any more than I am already.

What is your solution to this problem? Do you consider it a problem? The possibility that I'll run out of things to discover and map in my own caves, let alone undiscovered caves, is very disturbing. Can C.R.F. see the end in sight? If so, what are they doing about it?

Some say slow down, don't map so fast. You can do this when you have your cave "staked out," closed to all but your group.. But can you restrain your partner? It is the Tragedy of the Commons again. If I voluntarily slow down my rate of mapping and discovery, someone else will get what I give up. Virgin Passage is a natural resource. We are rapidly depleting it. Pretty soon all ceiling leads will be bolted, all digs dug, all crevices chiseled open. Look at the East Coast cavers: Partying has replaced gung-ho mapping. Maybe they got this from the West Coast cavers. Bone-Norman Cave in West Virginia is being mapped for the 5th time. Will it be the last? Some people are satisfied with remapping. Perhaps if we made all remapping seem like mapping the first time over, it would be better. Here's where a policy of secrecy and non-publication would help. Then everything could be independently rediscovered repeatedly.



joe saunders

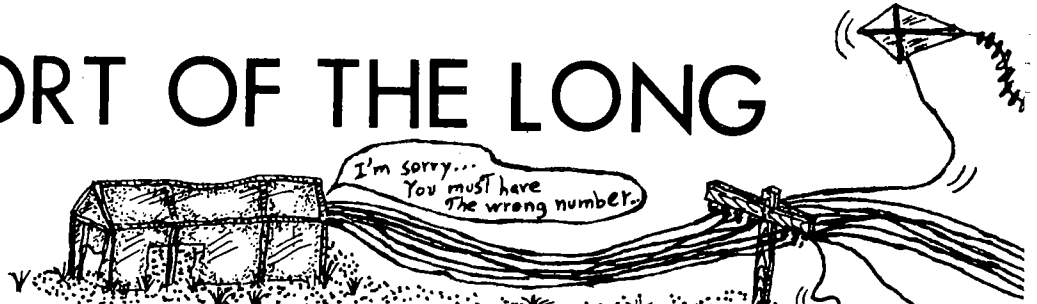
\* \* \*

Don Anderson: "How's your pet doing?"

"He died."

Don Anderson: "Yeah, that happens to a lot of animals in captivity. I know...it almost happened to me, once."

# SIMMER: THE SHORT OF THE LONG OF IT



Friday, October 6, 1973; 10:30 p.m.

We're sitting in the Mud River Express in front of a gas station watching the owner, shirtless, but with his gun in hand, leave his nearby house and approach the car. The man was looking for an explanation.

So began a weekend that rolled my sense of time up into a little clay ball and hid it from me. Mike Conefrey, Keith Ortiz, and I were heading for Mingo, West Virginia, to take part in the Virginia Region's project, SIMMER (Simmon's-Mingo, Elk River), sponsored by the Potomac Speleological Club at Simmon's-Mingo Cave. Mike and I were to meet Dale Parrott at the expedition site to link up and form the photography team. My car had died in front of the gas station, one hundred miles from Mingo.

The station owner accepted our explanation, and some of our beer. He brought out a little of his wine and took us on a two hour tour of the local color while he tried to find us a fuel pump we didn't need.

The remainder of the trip went smoothly; the car died once more, the starter drive destroyed itself, and we ran out of gas just past the last gate to the camp ground at 4:30 a.m. Saturday morning.

After pushing the car down the side of the hill, we continued to the large tent. Maybe three people were up in the entire camp site. We had warned them of our coming by use of the field phone at the first gate on the dirt road.

We got to pay our registration fee at the "operations" tent. This was a structure framed by two by two's which were covered with clear plastic. Inside, there was a row of tables, an operations flow chart, and a modest pile of phone equipment.

We shuffled through the papers on the table, signing registration forms, information forms, and release forms. After suffering through the taking of identification pictures, we climbed into the back of the car and slept.

We slept soundly until Dale found us at 7:30 a.m. We pulled ourselves together enough to complain ineffectively for about five minutes before getting up.

The kitchen complex was downhill from the operations tent and built the same. It had a well outfitted kitchen that provided us with a good breakfast. We met Grayson Harding, who was lining up the recording of the expedition, and were briefed on what was expected of us.



Dale and Mike were carrying cameras in addition to their regular gear. Dale had a small camera pack tucked effeciently under his arm. Mike looked like he was carrying supplies to the Israeli Army. I had a couple of notebooks and a mechanical pencil to record photographs.

After a final briefing at Operations, we headed to the entrance, our progress recorded by photographers. At the entrance, I began a log which I kept throughout the entire trip. The log has enough material in it for a short book, and this article is a relatively incomplete story.

At 9:45 a.m., we climbed past the goat skull on the fence around the entrance. To make a long story short, it took us twelve hours to get to base camp.

Telephones were notable; there were about twelve or so in the cave. It was impossible to get away from ~~these~~ and the several miles of wire that serviced them. We were required to call in at check points on the way in, and Base Camp was always calling in to chat with people about what was or wasn't happening, and what was supposed to happen. Many scenes of confusion were centered around the communication centers.

We didn't have to do twelve hours of straight caving, there were a couple of established rest points on the way in, Relay Point 1 (RP-1), and RP-2. RP-1 was designated by a telephone, a roll of toilet paper, a trowel, and a can of Lysol. RP-2 was designated by a telephone, a Gene Harrison, a Tom Williams, another P.S.C. member, sleeping equipment and cooking facilities. We stayed in RP-2 until we were fed, and the camp accumulated more people than it could handle. Twelve people were in camp when we decided to leave.

We kept running into people during the entire trip. There were two supply teams of three people each that we kept meeting on the way in. Supply Team #2 was in front of us; Bill Bigger's self-proclaimed mule team acting like a bunch of asses (they tried to sound like it anyway!). Supply Team #1 was behind us; they were overburdened and temporarily disappeared, much to the dismay of operations and RP-2. There were a couple of biological teams running around, but they were only in the front portion of the cave. Base Camp had two permanent residents, Stan Carts and Janet Queissar. There were two exploration teams, ET-1 and ET-2, and a mapping crew stationed at Base Camp.

A few hours, out of the twelve hour trip in, were spent on photographic work. This was our part in the expedition, and there was no lack of objects for photography. The cave provided quite a few good scenes for Mike and Dale to work on, and P.S.C. provided about twenty-three. Along the way, we developed some good techniques for action photographs of climbs and drops. Mike or Dale would stop action with: "Hold it right there...OK, let me focus...How about a little lower...Alright, put your light out please. On the count of three. One, two (click), three (flash, click). Thank you."

When we got to Base Camp, it was empty. Gear was haphazardly distributed up and down a passage that was about eight feet wide, and fifty feet long. The telephone was in the middle. Carts and Queissar had just seen ET-2 and "Mapping" across the lake. The mapping crew was all VPI: Bill Douty, Tom Roeher, and Cheryl Jones. ET-2 included Jim Denton from VPI.

Base Camp had been established early Saturday morning. The first crews carried most of their own supplies in, the rest were coming with Supply Teams #1 and #2. There had been a shortage of sleeping bags and Stan had spent the night sitting on the ground.

A tired and drippy group of cavers who called themselves ET-1, returned to camp with tales of rubber rafts, drops, and skinny dips in sumps. After all was told, we crawled into our warm sleeping bags and slept soundly for about an hour. When enough of our initial exhaustion had been sucked off by sleep, and enough of our body heat had been sucked off by the dampness and breeze in the passage, everyone went through phases of shivering, fitful dozing and wakefulness.

About 4:30 a.m., ET-2 returned. "Mapping" returned about 6:00 a.m. They were pretty demanding about their rights to sleeping bags!

Exploration beyond the lake was one of the major objectives of the whole expedition. An estimated three thousand feet of passage had been discovered, along with the previous discovery of a stream passage. ET-1 (Kirk MacGregor, Bob Vogue and Al Krause) plus Stan Carts and the photo team set out to cross the lake on the third expedition across.

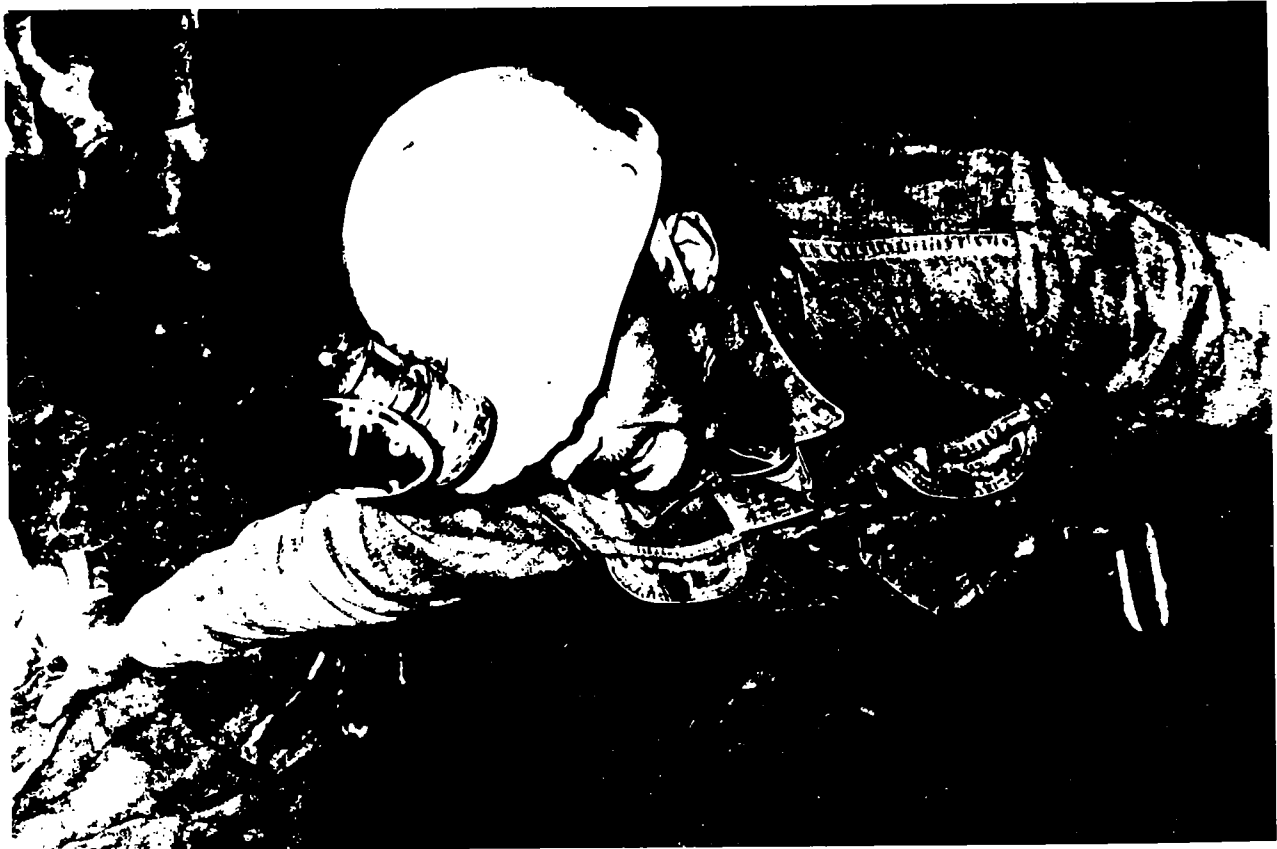
The lake was entered through a low stream passage that opened out to water passage about forty-five feet long and fifteen feet wide. The depth was unknown. The entrance crossing was managed on a two man rubber raft, one man at a time. We had to jump into the raft, carefully, at the Base Camp side, and step out backwards into knee deep mud on the far side. The raft was great; it leaked air, had two inches of water in the bottom, and the air valve tended to jam. We had the reassurance of hearing air rush out as we crossed the lake. After unjamming the valve then dropping it (fortunately to the bottom of the raft), and reassembling the air pump after it had come apart, we were confident about getting back across the lake.

Returning to Base Camp and looking forward to another comfortable sleep, we threatened to throw ET-2 and "Mapping" out of bed, physically. Everyone was a little ornery by now and were freely venting their feelings about the operation and taking out aggressions on the phone. The phone had been a constant pestilence, and was symbolic of the misunderstandings between Operations and the crews underground. Stan finally put an end to two way communications.

"Hello, Hello? Are you pushing the button? You're coming in garbled. (aside) Gee I hope they fix this phone. Hello, Hello? If anyone can hear me, the photo group is moving out. If you can hear me, ring the phone." The phone rings.

To make a long story short, it took us fifteen hours to get out of the cave. We took a lot of time for photography once again. Our trip ended at 12:33 Monday afternoon, after fifty hours, forty minutes underground. Once on the surface, someone handed me a can of Tuborg beer, and I waited to catch Gene Harrison (who had threatened combat if he wasn't last man out) get a cold Dr. Pepper dumped on him. Squinting in the unfamiliar light, I found that the camp, and even my car, were still out there.

We were treated to a debriefing, meal, and shower we felt we deserved. When I ascertained that Keith had abandoned us, I was able to get the Mud River Express started with help from a chain and a pickup truck. Mike and I had an uneventful trip back to Blacksburg, which might have been compared to a clock unwinding.



 bob alderson

# WAR

# AT THE GATES OF HELL

...with lor windle

or

How the final irreparation was reconciled,  
and the mortal overlords stricken with  
fear and dread at their folly.



Editor's note: The story you are about to read is an extrapolation of the author's brain. Such events are considered theoretically possible and could conceptually occur in the not-too-distant future in his view point. Any relation between persons, places, or thingies, living or deadsy, is just a shame because I ain't changin' nothin'!

No shit guys, once upon a time these events really occurred. I should know, I was one of the major participants (barring the immortals and non-mortals involved) in the events which I am about to relate to you (if I ever stop jabbering and get on with it).

I suppose I should start the tale where it began, at the beginning. The beginning was a blah cave trip to which I had committed myself. We were going to Toidy Cave for an easy three hour trip. Had we had any inkling of the changes we would bring about or the consternation we would cause, we might have thought twice, yea--three times, before entering. But we did not think at all.

Even as we entered the sinkhole in which Toidy was located, everything seemed normal. Here it was Saturday, just six days before a week from Friday: The sun was high in the sky as it tends to do in the middle of the day, and the leaves were green as their electrons absorbed light from the red, or low, energy spectra. We dropped down the sixty foot pit and ambled along the stream. It was not until we entered a shit crawl near the end of the cave that we first noticed some unusual things. Most apparent was the fact that none of us were suffering from hangovers anymore. Actually, if one hangs around Beak Ropeguy and that coke drinking crowd one does not get hangovers (one tends to rot out one's teeth and become obese, though). However, we did notice several things that were strikingly curious. The acrid smell of brimstone (and, of course, brimstone pools) and fire were titillating our nasal cavities and the heat was starting to make our sweat (excuse me; perspiration) glands sit up and take notice. Our party was becoming increasingly wary due to these factors and it was only through a superhuman effort on my part that I managed to kick the more cowardly members back into line (I was



taking up the rear, you understand). We reached the end of the cave and were ready to make a dash for the exit when I noticed a crevice descending down into the bowels of the earth. I had been in this cave before and immediately recognized the fact that the newly formed crevice must have occurred because of a bowel movement.

Ever bold and adventurous, I coaxed the nearest trainee to take a peek over the edge of the drop within the crevice. He could see nothing below and suggested that we drop five pounds of computer chips down the drop and see what happens. This was a reasonable suggestion and I hastily led the party out to return at a later date to conquer this drop.

It was seven days later (and by an amazing coincidence, also a Saturday) when I returned with a new batch of trainees and three super-cavers (excluding myself, of course). We hauled our tails through the regular section of the cave and returned to the crack. It was still there. Impressed as I was by this fact, I remained undaunted in my desire to plunge on. We rigged the drop and rappelled in (it was actually in the down direction, of course). I never found out the exact depth of that drop, but there was enough of our rope left at the bottom of the drop to lynch a basketball star, tie up Houdini, and still trip over it. So our brave band continued playing into the mountain. The path dropped and dropped and, with the rigours of the trip, our mob started to drop. Eventually, we became a group of three: myself, a trainee, and a supercaver intent on digging out a siphon.

We came to see some pretty strange territory sown there. The cave opened up into a huge vault room whose side walls extended out beyond the light of our carbide lamps. As we were crossing this room, we came upon a sight that froze our blood (circa -7°C). The cave was inhabited!!

An old man was down there, leaning upon a long pole. He stood beside a wide stream holding a small punt-like boat. Too stunned even to think, we asked him for passage across the stream (we had to be real cool about it). He mumbled something about "sticks" or something like that, and then took us over the stream. He again mumbled something about not returning, but I did not catch his meaning. On the other side we were confronted by a more horrible sight that allowed me to realize where we were. The sight we saw was a huge three headed dog. I immediately realized that the dog was Cerberus, and we were approaching the Gates of Hell. I then knew that escape was futile and we could never recross the River Styx. I decided to press on. Actually, I fully intended to throw myself on the mercy of the courts and offer my companions as compensation for being freed myself. For this reason I strove ahead to talk to Satan before my friends had a chance to shaft me.

Thus it was that we were met at the Gates of Hell by none other than Satanachia, the commander of the satanic forces and the influencer of women (convenient reference fact #17). I knew that something was happening immediately we entered into Hell by the fact that all the devils were mustering their forces

and looking, for all intents and purposes, as if they intended to attack the surface world. I was wrong, though.

It was several hours later, after I had conferred with the great Lucifer himself, that I realized exactly how much my guess had been off. I was brought up to the great one's abode and looked upon him with awe. He condescendingly spoke to me. We conversed for a while upon the topic I was most interested in: the purpose for the grand armies forming in Hell. As he talked it all became clear to me--the reason for the world situation, the lack of kindness in the world, and the price of tea in China.

As it turned out, Lucifer was not going to attack the surface world; he was going to attack heaven (again). As you all remember, Lucifer was the number two seraphim and tried to take over the place. The son of God, however, led the loyalist forces and God cast them (the fascisti) into the netherworld. Several millennia had past and the devilish host had grown. For every angel, five had come to Hell. The time to strike had come. Lucifer informed me that he was going to lead his forces back to heaven to reclaim, at least, the territory they had forfeited at the last encounter. He bade me farewell and my friends and I were escorted back to the mouth of the cave.

I returned back into the regular world while in a daze. I would never have believed the story myself except for the fact that about three days later there was a thunder and lightening and a rending of the clouds unlike anything ever seen before. It occurred to me that this must be the heavenly battle that Lucifer had sworn to fight. I feared for the worse and then, suddenly, came upon a mighty plan.

I was right in fearing the worst. Even with the quantitative superiority, the devils were far overwhelmed. Cast again into Hell, the devils were still beset by various cherubim; for God had decided to inflict great damage upon them. The dark forces were forced across the River Styx and slowly beaten back through the Gates of Hell. Everything looked finished for the satanic minions when a final surge of holy power swept them into the very courtyard of Lucifer's palace. Then it happened.

From every pit and from behind every rock a caver sprang. Dozens more rappelled down from above. With a mighty YAHOO they popped their beer cans and belched in the angels faces.

Awed by this display of might, the heavenly forces fell back. The cavers still advanced and the retreat became a rout. Soon devils were hacking away and the high army was destroyed. As consequences, God was cast out of his house and Lucifer began a new reign as Lord of the Earth, bringing peace and entertainment to the entire world.

THE STORY'S MORAL--  
PLAIN TO TELL:  
IT TAKES A CAVER  
TO RAISE HELL!

# THE POLISH DOG BARKS!

It ain't no use in fooling with your lamp, friend;  
Your tip blew out with a pow!  
And it ain't no use in reaching for your candle,  
You didn't bring it anyhow.  
It wouldn't be so bad if the entrance was in view,  
But its a thousand feet to daylight and I trusted in you,  
Don't look to me for help 'cause I'm in trouble too.  
No more light! It's a fright.

I wonder why I took you caving with me?  
They all told me you're no good.  
I've always thought that trainees should be trusted,  
(We don't know all that we should.)  
But when you hit me on the head and pushed me off the drop,  
And drove a piton through my back and caused my eyes to  
pop,  
I wanted to do something, but my conscience made me stop.  
It's alright, an oversight.

I thought we ought to go and split my food up,  
We might be here for awhile.  
I was going to go and eat it myself, friend;  
But you know that's not my style.  
But when I reached into my pack to get the Milky Way,  
You said you found a candy bar back in the last crawlway.  
And you just couldn't stand to see it rot away.  
It's a fright! Dark as night.

Well for days I've had to battle with my hunger,  
If only there was something I could eat.  
But I knew I never really had to worry,  
I was on the sign-out sheet.  
Well rescue came, I knew it would, after a week's delay;  
To lead my tortured body back into the light of day,  
They couldn't understand why I went solo anyway.  
Don't think twice, it's alright.

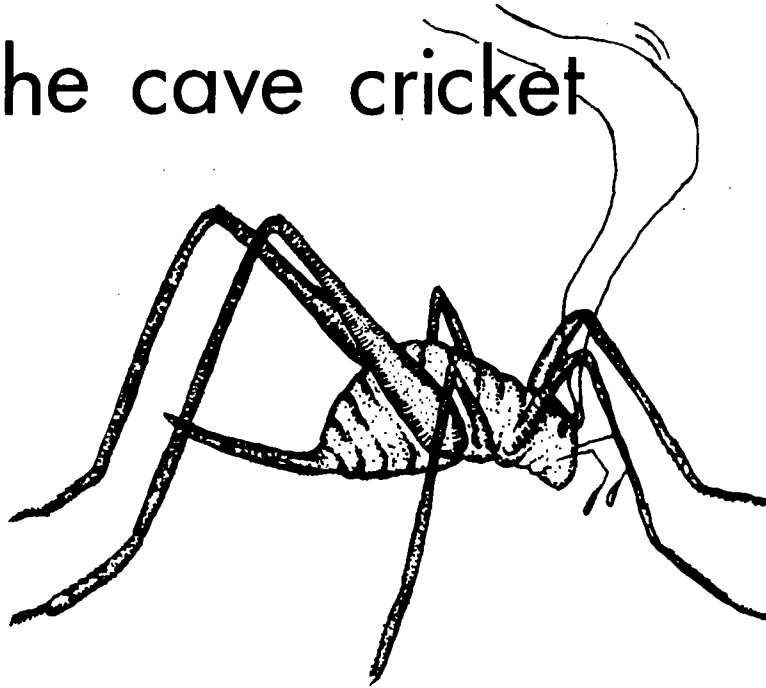
(To the tune of "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright")



mark slusarski

# CRITTER CORNER:

## the cave cricket



The fauna of the world are adapted to many different environments. The environment of the cave harbors a large host of creatures that are adapted to it. One such creature is Hadenoeecus subterraneus or cave cricket. Another species of cricket, Ceuthophilus stygius, is not as adapted to cave life as Hadenoeecus.

Hadenoeecus has a body about 2 inches long, but it has an overall length of 6 inches. This measurement is from the tip of the antennae to the end of the hind legs. The antennae of the cave cricket are continuously twitching, feeling out food and obstacles. The appendages are quite elongated in comparison to the appendages of its outdoor relatives. The cave cricket is wingless and therefore must depend on these long legs for moving from place to place. They are specially adapted for clinging to cave walls and for walking and hopping great distances during migratory trips outside the cave to look for food. The color of Hadenoeecus is a very pale brown except for its small, almost non-functional eyes, which are black. Ceuthophilus has very prominent markings, yellowish brown in color with black bands across its abdomen, and larger eyes.

After mating, the female cave cricket crawls into a mud-covered crevice and deposits her eggs there one at a time. The structure used for this purpose, called an ovipositor, is located at the posterior end of the body. Embryonic development takes about 6 weeks. When hatched, the nymphs, or young cave crickets, are usually seen separated from the adults as a means of self-preservation. The adults will eat the nymphs if they come too near.

How does Hadenoeus know when it is the right time and right atmospheric conditions to venture outside after twilight and look for food? All cave crickets are very sensitive to changes in moisture, so they can probably sense the changes in the weather conditions outside by the rate at which water evaporates in the cave. Ceuthophilus, living much nearer to the entrance than Hadenoeus, does not have migratory food habits.

Cave cricket droppings which stick to the walls and floor of the cave are a source of food for beetles, flies, and larvae. Predators of the crickets are large cave spiders, salamanders, and frogs occasionally found near the cave entrance. The cave crickets, therefore, are at the base of the food pyramid in a cave. Without them, many of the other cave fauna would starve.

Hadenoeus and Ceuthophilus play a very important role in keeping caves in an ecological balance. All speleologists and sport cavers should work together to conserve these fascinating insects. Their presence in the cave has a great effect on all cave life.

j. randall stoutenburgh

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# Who are these Jokers?



Identify these 5 Jokers and win the Steve Kark lookalike contest. Decision of the judges is final. Prizes will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

-----tear along this line-----

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

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SUMMER-1974

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Don Anderson.....951-9190  
Mike Frieders.....951-2941  
Bob Mead.....951-1971  
Robyn Loud.....951-2567  
Bob Barlow.....(W)688-3841 or (H)688-3512  
CRCN.....804-924-7166

\* \* \* \* \*

Much thanks to those contributing to help  
make this issue less of a financial bomb  
to the editors. Remember....this was  
only an experiment, and we'll see what  
we can come up with fall quarter!