

# THE TECH TROGLODYTE

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

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BLACKSBURG, VA. 24060

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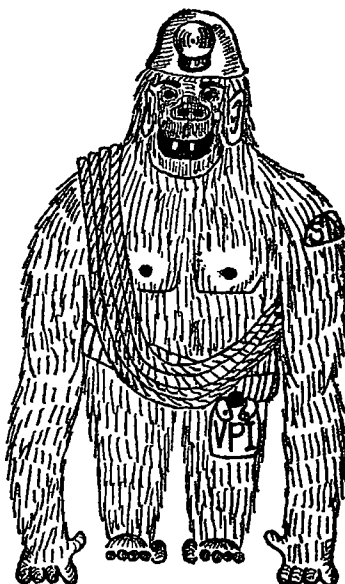
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SPRING QUARTER 1970

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## GROTTO OFFICERS:

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ART WORK by Larry Cooke

Please Note: As of April 10, our newly elected Grotto officers are:

President .....	Bob Amundson
Vice President ...	Doug Perkins
Secretary .....	Liz Leach
Treasurer .....	Howard Dame

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Each year, along with the Spring monsoons, the Cave Club goes through a period of stormy weather. The club's rough seas seem to threaten the water-tightness of our little match-box, but somehow the storm settles and we come up a little wet but still intact and maybe better for the whole deal. The Constitution, by-laws, and club policies are strained, if not broken. The outcome of this period is usually a re-formulation of these governing criteria, all in the club's best interests.

Our Constitution was written with the explicit purpose of giving us some guidelines and at the same time, giving the club the lee-way it has always wanted in the past. A Constitution that is too strict is detrimental to the organization, while one that is too lax can have the same effect. A Constitutional Committee has been revived with its purpose being to dissect and then revitalize this document. Proposed changes, that are intended to improve our Constitution, should be coming up for approval in the next few weeks. I want to urge every member of this organization to take a good look at these proposed changes, with a couple of thoughts in mind: (1) Are they absolutely necessary? and (2) Will these changes restrict our organization too much?

The Cave Club has been run with a pretty loose hand in the past years. The Constitution that we've had does have some tremendous loopholes, but also permits some very liberal interpretations. In this past election a controversy was raised over the eligibility of a candidate for office, i.e. - was he a legitimate candidate if he was an inactive member? The Constitution mentions nothing about this type of situation which I think is a terrible mistake, but after all, the authors were only human. There are several places in the Constitution similar to this one; some were left open by mistake and others were not explicitly defined because an organization like ours needs some lee-way in its parliamentary procedures.

The Constitution has been broken on previous occasions - maybe it should have occurred, maybe not, depending on what was best for the club at the time or the infraction. The Constitution's purpose is to provide us with a guideline, not an ultimatum. Remember this when you consider Constitutional revisions, for once you have set a precedent, it becomes increasingly easier to break the foundation of our organization. If your Constitution is too strict you will end up breaking it over and over again; if you don't continually break it, then at best you will continually revise it to meet the situations that arise, and that is just as bad.

I would like to recall a story that I heard that is very similar to this one. It concerns two cavers; one caver went caving with essentials: carbide, water, spare parts, and a few necessities. The other caver was a one man expedition:

ten pounds of carbide, two gallons of water, a sleeping bag, Coleman stove, 200 feet of rope, etc. The first caver, (carrying about three pounds of equipment) went running up a particularly steep hill to a well known cave, stayed in for eight hours, came back to town, and partied for another four hours. The second caver, (carrying 100 pounds of equipment) with great perseverance started up the hill to the same cave that the first explorer went to. However, the second caver did not cave for eight hours, nor did he party for four hours. He had heart failure before he even reached the entrance. Remember that when you vote on constitutional changes.

"Moose"

\* \* \* \* \*

#### EDITOR'S COLUMN

What are the female's reasons for being a caver? I'll admit, this will be a slightly prejudiced answer - afterall, I am a female caver, but I'm willing to bet that the largest percentage of female cavers have the same reasons for going through what they go through. Sometimes there could possibly be just one major reason, but the answer in general is plural -

MEN!!

How many members of the fair sex do you know who, upon reaching maturity and all the sexy manifestations thereof, proceed to delight in crawling through two feet of mud of their own free will? It is most people's solidly formed idea that a girl is a girl and a boy is a boy, and often the twain shall meet. Girls are supposed to groove on clothes, boys, makeup, boys, gossip, boys, dances, boys, etc. and boys are supposed to survive on a rugged, idealistic, "me-prove-myself" style of life. So where does a girl fit into the scheme of caving?

Since not all girls are alike (thank goodness), there are a few adventurous spirits who "want to try everything once". When a girl of this type hears about caving she immediately decides it sounds like fun. So she attends a Cave Club meeting and party and finds herself surrounded by - (are you ready for this?) - MEN!! But these aren't any ordinary men. These are men with straggly beards, long sideburns, blue denim jackets, and muddy Viet Nam boots. Her mind is completely boggled by their coarse language and obscene gestures. Most girls would be completely grossed out by these "immature and immoral deviants". But what does a future female caver do? She mixes right in, oozes all over with affection (as a direct consequence of their attentions to her) and gets on a caving trip scheduled for the very next morning.

So the very next morning finds her in some nearby cave of basic "my first cave" reputation with a ratio of at least

five to one, in her favor. She struggles over breakdown in her muddy tennis shoes and tears her one and only VPI sweat-shirt on an unseen formation, thus activating a loud response from the leader for cave vandalism. She finally pants back out the entrance after three long, exhausting hours only to find rain or 25° or both. A quick glance at her legs and arms tells her she'll be wearing jeans or tights for a week. So what is her first response? "Gee, that was really neat! when are we going caving again?"

In general, girl cavers enjoy proving to themselves, more than anybody, just how much they are capable of. If they can do something that even some guys have trouble with, such as a hairy climb or a long endurance type trip, then they will tend to have more confidence in themselves and their abilities. Most male cavers, unlike many other males, appreciate seeing a girl who can take care of herself. (this has been my observation - granted, there are probably some who would rather see a girl in an apron than in coveralls.) However, I can see where this "proving of oneself" can be carried to extreme and again, in general, most female cavers don't go to extremes. They are content to become one solid bruise simply for the heartwarming companionship and fulfilling experience of associating themselves and their disasterously mangled bodies with the perverted, sex-crazed, male descendents of Neanderthal Man. (drip. drip)

Ahhhhh.....MEN

"Boots"

\* \* \* \* \*

# CLOSED CAVE LIST

The following caves are closed in the Virginia Region. If you have any additions or corrections, please send them to me.

VIRGINIA		
CAVE	PERSON OR GROUPS WORKING TO REOPEN	REASONS FOR CLOSING
Allens	(Needed)	Owned by commercial cave, does not want liability
Andersons	(Needed)	Information needed
Beetle	(Needed)	Liability
Blacksburg	(Eddie Morgan)	Discourtesy, property damage
Blue Hole	Permanently closed	Municipal water supply
Buchanan Saltpeter	(Eddie Morgan)	gates left open
Butler	Open for working trips only	

Carpers	(Needed)	Water supply?
Catawaba Murder Hole	(VPI)	Rescue
Cave Spring	(John Holsinger)	Gated by National Forest
Fountain	(Needed)	Information needed
Front Royal		
Caverns	(Needed)	Information needed
Jones Saltpeter	(John Holsinger)	Vandalism
Jones Quarry	(Needed)	Information needed
Gilley	(John Holsinger)	New ownership- status pending
Lane	(John Holsinger)	Discourtesy and vandalism
Lynn	(Phil Lucas)	Accident
Madison	(Phil Lucas)	Accident
Natural Tunnel	(John Holsinger)	State Park
Newcastle Murder Hole	(VPI)	Property damage
Perkins	(Eddie Morgan)	Extreme discourtesy
Pig Hole	(VPI)	$\frac{1}{2}$ ton of garbage
Reasor	(John Holsinger)	Water supply
Rogers-Belmont	(Needed)	Sealed
Ruffners	(Needed)	Owned by commercial cave
Rusts	(Needed)	Information needed
Showalters	(John Holsinger)	Liability
Van Deventers	(John Holsinger)	Sealed due to property damage
Will Mauck	(John Holsinger)	Vandalism and liability

## WEST VIRGINIA

Benders	Filled permanently	
Coffmans	(Needed)	Liability
Cricket	(WVACS)	Surface Vandalism
Hellems	(WVACS)	Surface Vandalism
Hourglass	(Needed)	Livestock threatened
Nameless	(Needed)	Owned by commercial cave
Organ-Hedricks	(WVACS)	Vandalism and discourtesy
Pattons	(Phil Lucas)	Elderly owners, do not wish to be disturbed
Pierceys Mill		
and Pierceys	(WVACS)	Open for organized scientific work- prior approval and liability waiver required
Poor Farm	(Needed)	Information needed
Rapps	(WVACS)	Vandalism
Sherrif Pit	(Needed)	Information needed
Stratosphere		
Balloon	(Needed)	Owned by commercial cave
Warners Broken		
Dome	(Needed)	Information needed
Warren Harpers		
Drops	(Needed)	Information needed

Reopened or threatened caves: Use Extra Care

Kenny Simmons  
Schoolhouse  
Breathing

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Lynn Vinzant  
1422 Ironwood Drive  
McLean, Virginia 22101

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE CAVER'S DILEMMA

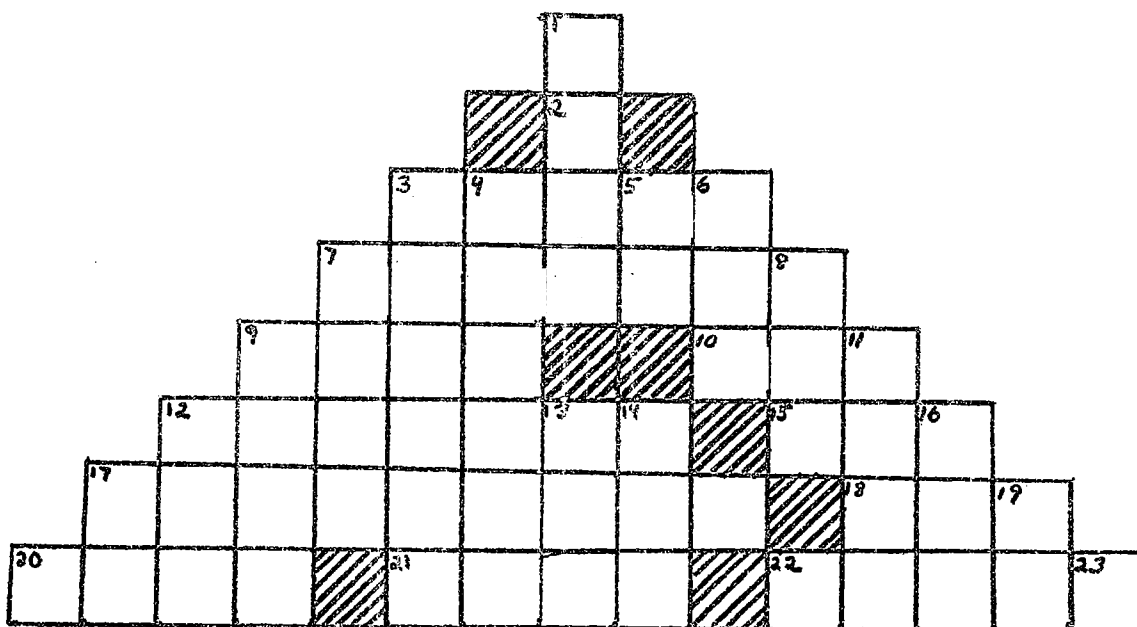
The yawning, black cavern beckons the brave,  
The foolish, the curious, to the depths of  
the cave  
Away from the traffic and the canine's bark,  
Adventure is lurking, crouched in the dark.  
Down crystalline passages wonderlust calls,  
Through tortuous crawlways and breakdown  
strewn halls.  
Across silent rivers to the bottomless pit,  
I'd like it much more if I'd taken a camera.

#### WHY?

The mud tries to claim the soles of your shoes,  
The rock leaves the scrape, the scar, and the  
bruise,  
And small consolation is the dim carbide light  
As the black overwhelms you, darker than night.  
The chill penetrates to the marrow of bone,  
And the silence won't let you forget you're  
alone.  
You're wet and you're tired, your muscles are  
sore,  
And you wish you were outside in bed with some  
book.

Tom Roehr





# ACROSS

1. Usual grade received by cavers
2. Type of ring sometimes used in verticle work
3. Editor of the "Trog"
7. Member organizations of the NSS
9. Type of party that an orgy is (abbr)
10. Edge of a pit
12. The time one always wants to leave on a cave trip, but never does
15. John Keyton's wife
17. Cave formation
18. An old timer
20. The "Queen's Bath"
21. Barry Bishop and Willie Uns\_\_\_\_\_ climbed Mt. Everest in 1963
22. Typical (stereotype) girl does this when she sees a bat.

# DOWN

1. \_\_\_\_\_ hold
3. Four wheeling vehicle
4. Geologic formation
5. Type of person not usually found at an orgy (Abbr.)
6. Situation one is in when rope breaks in Newberry's
7. Motion on a free rappell
8. How one does not drink PBR
9. One who has the balls to do something is \_\_\_\_\_
11. Charlie Maus or Cletus Lee
12. The real cavers are \_\_\_\_\_ (at least some think so!)
13. Nothing
14. A release form is a \_\_\_\_\_ against suit (abbr. past tense)
16. HVG is in the \_\_\_\_\_ state region
17. "Cave-\_\_\_\_\_" (license plate)
19. Water lever position on lamp
20. What one has to do after drinking beer
22. Usual grade of cavers
23. Person who received Guano Cluster for coming the farthest to the Banquet.

YEAH, WE GOT CAVES  
AROUND HERE. WE  
EVEN GOT SOME IN  
LIMESTONE



## NEWCASTLE "NEW SECTION"

Remember Fall Club Project? Fond memories are brought forth merely by the mention of Newcastle Murder Hole. Those who didn't make it that time missed Doug Draves crank-starting his car and also that wonderful wait outside the sinkhole while Moose and Paul Broughton debated on how to rig the drop (while the water in our lamps froze). But most of all, they missed the God-awful confusion that resulted when a bunch of fools tried to map a cave they'd never been in before.

In order to remedy the situation, the next weekend Doug Draves, Steve Hall, Don Davison, and myself set out to explore Newcastle Murder Hole.

We got to the cave shortly before noon, greatly aided by having permission to drive to the sinkhole. After changing clothes we rigged in, zipped down the rope and entered the cave, delayed only by the fact that I had to push every inch of that damn rope through my brakebars. (Steve arm-rappelled it)

We proceeded through the cave until we came to the room just before the crossover. On the existing map you'll note that there is no passage indicated on the left side of this room. Well, passage there is, and plenty of it. This is the "new section" of Newcastle Murder Hole.

We climbed down breakdown to get to where the "new section" really starts. Here, there are a few small, but deep pools and a helluva lot of mud. Steve and Doug immediately crawled through a small hole while Don and I sat and watched for forming formations.

Steve and Doug were gone a good half hour and Don, in the meantime, had climbed this small cliff with portable handholds and reported the passage above us. Steve and Doug then returned, telling us of the passage they had pushed. We all executed the little climb and found ourselves in a room with a roof like an inverted bowl, and yet another of these bitchy climbs with mud for handholds. Eventually we found ourselves in passageway that had been travelled possibly only once before. I would estimate 500 feet or more of passage in this upper section, some of which was virgin beyond a doubt. We pushed all the leads and found that several ended in small, high rooms, strewn with surface rubble, with cold air blowing in from the ceilings. I am convinced that these rooms are located under some of those sinkholes that dot the fields around the cave.

The only other interesting event occurred while we were resting from our labors. I noticed this plunk! plunk! plunk! on my hardhat, so, logically, I looked around (and up) to see where the water was coming from. Looking up at the slope above me, I espied Steve standing there, giggling to himself, and tossing tiny balls of mud with which my hat was now liber-

ally studded.

And so, after an elapsed time of six hours in the cave, we left, reassured that with our newly acquired knowledge, the next mapping trip to Newcastle would be smoothly run, efficiently organized, and absolutely without confusion (HA HA HA ). (Also, see author for the story of the Winter Quarter Newcastle Murder Hole Mapping Expedition and Massacre with four-part harmony).

Michael Conefrey

\* \* \* \* \*

Commentary on the VPI Cave Club: "Jesus Christ, look at all the people coming and going. It's just like a toilet flushing and refilling."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CAVING IN ARIZONA'S HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS

While on a recent caving trip through the southwest, I had the opportunity to go caving in the Huachuca Mountains of Arizona, just to our side of the Mexican border.

The Huachucas are typical of Arizona mountains. The plant life is mostly small, tree-like shrubs, and bare rock juts out in many places. The two major claimants to the Huachucas are the Fort Huachuca Military Reservation and the Coronado National Forest. It is in the National Forest that the best known caves are found.

Although I had been caving in Arizona before, I had heard nothing about the caves in the Huachucas. My sources of reference for this trip were a few USGS Topos and a few words of advise from Ron Bridgemon and Tom Strong.

So, armed with Topos and advise, Winston Harmon, Fred Hines, Rick Weber, and I left Sierra Vista destined to travel over Montezuma Pass to the junction of Ida and Cave Canyons in the Huachucas. Here we would have to leave the car, and go on foot. The main objectives of the trip to the Huachucas were Sutherland Peak Cave, Ida Canyon Cave, and Happy Jacks Cave.

Sutherland Peak Cave is at the base of Sutherland Peak near the entrance to Ida Canyon. The entrance is a climbable vertical shaft, approximately 40 feet deep and leading into a small room. A small hole leads from this room down through some not-to-obvious passage. Once in the main part of the cave, we were

very impressed with many beautiful formations which seem to be ordinary decor in most western caves. This cave had more than its share of helectites. One particularly beautiful stalagmite was reminiscent of a candle holder and candle.

A rather crude wooden sign indicated that part of the cave had been explored only recently. Behind the sign we found rather large, beautifully decorated rooms. I'm sure there is more to Sutherland Peak Cave than is immediately obvious; a good Virginia mapping crew could probably turn up a good bit of passage there.

Farther up Ida Canyon is Ida Canyon Cave with a moderate sized entrance, not too easily found. The entrance room slopes down perhaps 30 feet at about a 30° angle. After searching over an hour for a passage to the rest of the cave, we finally found a very tight, winding passage leading off a room adjoining the entrance. This tight passage led to a room full of white formations, one of which was a beautiful white bacon rind curtain one and a half feet wide and about five feet long. This room appeared to be the extent of the cave. With daylight hours dwindling, and still another cave to find, we didn't attempt to uncover more passage in Ida Canyon Cave.

Once out of Ida Canyon Cave, we began the long walk back down Ida Canyon and most of the way up Cave Canyon to Happy Jacks Cave. Happy Jacks Cave is one of the worst and most tragic cases of vandalism I have ever seen. The cave consists of one big room 300 feet long and 100 feet wide. The height probably ranged from 20 to 50 feet. The major feature, among many other formations, is a 50 feet long, 30 feet high flowstone wall which I'm sure at one time rivaled any sight in Arizona. However, the wall is now covered with vandalism, and black soot deposited by fires started in the cave. The four of us were amazed that people would go so far (literally) to vandalize a beautiful cave. I'm sure Happy Jacks is a prime example of why western cavers keep cave locations confidential. With three Arizona caves looked at, we headed back to Sierra Vista to keep an appointment with a few six-packs of Coors.

While back in Sierra Vista, Rick Weber and I were pouring over the Miller Peak Quad. and decided that there had to be a cave at the head of Cave Creek in Garden Canyon. In order to prove ourselves correct we drove out to Garden Canyon, and proceeded to follow the dry bed of Cave Creek. The creek appeared to go a lot farther than indicated on the Topo. About a half hour of vertical hiking put us right in the entrance of a cave, just as suspected. Upon entering the small crawlway entrance we were immediately chased out by what sounded like a swarm of wasps-we didn't stick around to be sure.

It would be hard to believe that Arizona cavers don't know about this cave, but when I told Tom Strong of our find he said he hadn't heard of it. Possibly we found a virgin cave-although not likely.

As I have said, caves in this area are very well decorated and for this reason locations are kept in confidence. An old prospector-caretaker at the D'Albini Ranch in Ida Canyon is a most valuable source of directions to the caves in the nearby canyons. Unless you own a 4x4, all the caves require a good deal of hiking in rough terrain, rather uncommon to Virginia cavers. Hiking around at night can be dangerous in some areas due to open mine shafts ~~such~~ close to the paths. Likewise, during the day in temperatures above 75°F one would do well to watch for the unfriendly rattler, especially near cave entrances. With the number of caves (some vertical) that the old prospector described, it seems that a few cavers with some time on their hands could have a real blast in the Huachucas - We did.

Michael Frieders

\* \* \* \* \*

THE DEVIL AT AIRPORT ROAD  
(To the tune of "Thunder Road")

I can tell a story, I can tell it right,  
About the VP Cave Club, and their meeting Friday night,  
Moose he chaired the business, Lynn she took the notes,  
Doug inducted trainees, and Mike helped to count the votes.  
Sometimes they would argue, sometimes they would fight,  
Owners got their valentines, so they wouldn't get up tight,  
Trip reports were given, as they told about some pit,  
Sometimes when they were lucky, then the LA gave a skit.

CHORUS:

And there was singing, singing, over Airport Road,  
Caving was their pastime, they were adventurous and bold,  
And there was caving, caving, it worked up quite a thirst,  
The Lord he swore he'd get them, but the devil got them first.

8:30 in the evening, it was on a Friday night,  
The business was all finished, and a party was in sight,  
The cavers grabbed their guitars, harmonicas and booze,  
And hit YMCAMS, with no time left to lose.  
Starting out with "Rider", and right on down the list,  
They sang out every song they knew, and then the few they'd missed,  
They finally came to "Falcon", and "Charlotte" sounded swell,  
The "Friggin' Wheel" burst into flames, they were singing bent for Hall.

CHORUS

Roaring out of Blacksburg, out on 81  
They headed for the underground, when Friday fun was done,  
In Broncos and VW's, wherever caving led,  
Those cavers took some roads, that even angels fear to tread.  
Now I have told my story, I haven't told it all,  
About the VP Cave Club, who drank lots of alcohol,  
They left the town at sunrise, that's all there is to say,  
Hungover explorations were in store for Saturday.

CHORUS

"Boots"

\* \* \* \* \*

VICKER'S CAVE  
(Washington Co., Va.)

On January 30, 1970 "Whitt" Whittemore, Annie Whittemore, Paul Broughton, Russ Peterson, Tom Speers, Pete Schnarrs, Bill Coreley, and I went mapping in Vicker's Cave, Washington County, Virginia.

Vicker's Cave has three entrances. Two are dry entrances in a sinkhole across the mountain from the parking lot. (One of these was dug open on an earlier trip) The other has water running out of it but is located on the face of the mountain overlooking the parking place.

After getting permission to enter, we walked over the mountain and crawled into one of the dry entrances. The passage was small and dusty for a short distance. Then at a junction it became a slanting fissure with water running in the bottom. We followed this for a while and then took a side passage into the section we were going to map.

We were planning to map a couple thousand feet and leave. This included a main passage with about a thousand foot upper level loop starting a few hundred feet up the main passage. We then split up. Whitt, Russ, Pete and I went ahead to the beginning of the loop and left the others the lower main passage. We were to map until the two parties met.

After getting to the beginning of the loop we made a startling discovery. The tape case Russ had been carrying had no tape in it. So Russ and Whitt went back to get the extra tape the other crew had. In a few minutes they returned and told us of another startling discovery. The other crew had no extra tape.

Then we sat down and decided what to do. Pete and I thought sleeping was a pretty good idea; it was a nice soft,

sandy floor. Whitt thought telling dirty jokes was a good idea. After much deliberation we decided to map without a tape.

After mapping about six hundred feet we came to a connection between the upper and lower passages. Russ chimneyed down the fissure in the floor and set a permanent station for them to tie into. While down there Russ heard the other crew coming.

Whitt decided this trip needed some humor, so he sent a message down for Russ to place on the station. The message said that we had quit mapping and would meet them at some restaurant in Bristol. Russ chimneyed back up and we turned our lights away from the crack. There was a loud stream on the lower level so we could hear them without them hearing us.

While quietly waiting for them, we heard a sudden loud crash. "Must be Broughton falling", remarked Russ and I. In about two seconds Paul's voice rang loud and clear. After Paul recovered they continued mapping to the note.

Upon discovering and reading the note Broughton became rather upset. "Those bastards," he shouted, "they left and now we'll have to tape their passage. Boy! am I pissed!" It was five minutes before he discovered us and the message on the other side of the note. I don't think he'll ever forgive us.

After this episode we finished mapping the loop and checked out a couple of leads. They went but we decided to leave. We mapped a total of twenty-two hundred feet and Vicker's Cave is now around eight thousand feet long.

Whitt, Annie, Paul, and Tom went out the way we came in, but Russ, Pete, Bill, and I went out the water entrance. The few thousand feet we went through was practically all high fissure with the stream in the bottom. There was a lot of chimneying and climbing and we got out of the cave in seven and one half hours after entering.

Micheal Frame

\* \* \* \* \*

Weber: I'll sell you a can of Sterno and a stove for 15¢.  
Dame: OK, but does it work?

The test of a true caver is one who  
watches the eclipse from underground.



# The Complete Caver

CAVE RESCUE & COMMUNICATIONS

STEEL REINFORCED  
HARD HAT

24 HOUR CARBIDE LAMP  
(IN CASE OF POWER  
FAILURE OR FOR THOSE  
WITH HINDSIGHT)

100,000 CANDLE POWER  
LUCKY LAMP  
(POWERED BY CEREBRAL ENERGY)

ULTRA-SONIC  
HEARING

INFRA-RED VISION

HAIR

HAIRY WART

SPRE-HENSILE NOSE

CAMEL

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2 BOTTLES SLYDOL 1qt.  
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2. PRUSIKS
3. BRAKE ARCS & CARABINERS
4. PITONS
5. SWISS (FOR AUSTRIAN SEAT)
6. 150' 7/16" GALVINE
7. ETC.

AINSWORTH  
POCKET TRANSMIT  
SURVIVAL  
KIT

JET PROPULSION

PEACE MEDAL AND FU-FU DUST

SN9

LOW NUMBER

"TROC"

INDestructible/  
WATER PROOF / IN-  
DESCRIBABLE / UNDEAT-  
ABLE LOW UNDERWEAR

BEER CAN  
(NEARLY EMPTY)

THIRD HAND

INTERCHANGABLE  
FINGER NAILS

THE A.I. SARTWRIGHT  
GREAT SEAL OF  
APPROVAL

HEAVILY CALLOUSED KNEES

CAVE MUD FOR  
CLAUSTRAPHOBIC  
CAIERS

200' STEEL TAC

BRANCH

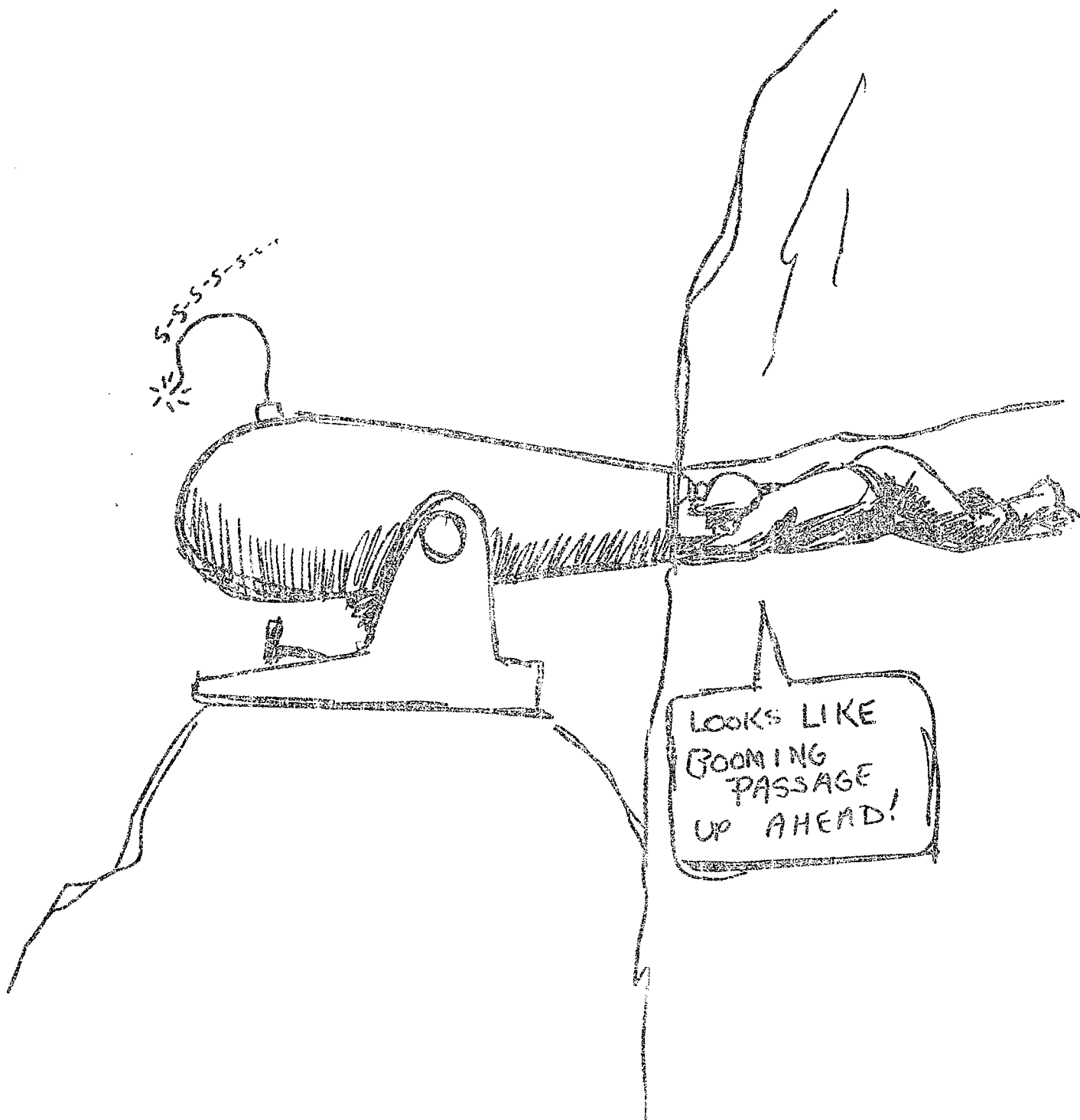
50-60-HIGH BOOTS

WITH RETRACTABLE SPIKES AND OPTIONAL SUCTION  
CUP TOES

SUPER-TRAINEE

LOW-SLUNG, POWERFULLY STOKY BODY

CENSORED



ALONE IN PENLEY'S PIT  
or  
AN INTERESTING WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING

Away, the five of us happily rode to the infamous Paul Penley's cave on a cold February day. Everyone was telling everyone else how crazy he was to actually want to come on a trip to Penley's, a cave known for its mud misery, dangerous pits and climbs; a cave whose end has not yet been found.

Ed Morgan, the trip leader, Mike Hogan, Pam Mohr, Robyn Lefon and myself arrived at the cave entrance about 3:00 in the afternoon. The small opening in the ground was icy, but still had running water rushing into it.

After making it through the entrance, we shortly found ourselves in the "shower room", which is blessed with continual "rainfall" from the ceiling of the subterranean chamber.

Soon, we came to the first drop of consequence and climbed down a cable ladder that we had brought along. After more climbing, we found ourselves in the rather spacious chamber near Hogan's Horror. Mike Hogan, for whom the Hogan's Horror drop was named, showed me the drop. I peered down into the haunting depths and tried to imagine what it was like when Mike had been rappeling down the drop of then unknown depth, and lost control for about 70 feet before regaining control of the rope.

About two hours after we entered the cave, we came upon the 118 foot pit that was our destination. Here, the last group of V.P.I. cavers to come here, had left their rope, cable ladder, hand line and cams. Somehow, the rope had gotten caught and would not come up. Our mission, then, was to retrieve the equipment.

Ed unsuccessfully tried knocking the rope loose with a cable ladder, but he did manage to retrieve the cams that were tied a few feet from the top of the rope.

Then, he decided that one of us was going to have to descend into the pit. I volunteered.

Soon, I was crawling through the small tunnel that ended at the edge of the pit. I rigged in while standing on a cable ladder, and began the brake-bar rappel, on the rope we were to retrieve from the pit. Down-down-down into the dark and mysterious pit, I went, with many jagged rock forms projecting outward beneath me. After awhile, I found the rope was caught around three different rock projections. After unhooking the rope and continuing the descent, I soon

came to a mass of entangled white line balled around the main rope. Ed and the others, waiting above the drop, managed to lower the main rope so that I could stand on a small ledge and remove my brake-bar to allow the white mass to pass through my carabiner. After swapping my brake-bar back in place, I pulled on the main rope to see if the end was unhooked. It wasn't. Somehow, as I again began my rappel, I lost control of the rope for about 10 to 15 feet and ripped the back end out of my pants on a projecting rock. At last, I landed in the bottom of the drop, in the "squishy" oozing mud. At the end of the rope, I found the worse entangled mess of ladder, rope, hand line and twine that I have ever seen. The cable ladder, at the end of the rope had been caught under a ledge at the very bottom of the pit. After unsuccessfully attempting to unravel the mess, I bundled it together in as compact a mess as I could.

Ed then tried to pull up the rope with me and the gear attached to it. This failed. Ed tried again. This time, I held much of the rope and cable ladder wrapped around my right arm, tied myself to the main rope, and began a tedious climb up the side of the pit, as Ed pulled up the rope. I made it about 35 feet up from the bottom when, as I was running out of hand holds, suddenly the ones I was grasping broke away and I fell about four feet, dangling in the air. Ed managed to lower the rope a couple feet so I could rest on a ledge barely large enough for me to stand on. However, he could not pull me and the equipment up at one time. So, Ed decided to leave me down in the pit while he pulled up the equipment. After several attempts, the entangled equipment was finally brought to the top of the drop. It seemed like many hours before they managed to untangle the ropes and ladder. I was alone and shivering from the cold on a narrow, slippery ledge, overlooking jagged formations for a very long time. At last! After failing to reach me with an extended cable ladder, Ed sent the rope down to me. I tied on my prusik knots and started to climb up the rope, when, all at once, my lamp light went out. As much as I tried I could not bring down the upper, muddy prusik knot to enable me to return to the ledge. Ed again lowered the rope so I could stand on the ledge. I groped blindly into my pack and somehow managed to recarbide in the blackness of the eternal night. Soon, my lamp was working again and I began to prusik up the rope. Cold and tired, I worked my way up the drop; yet each time I put my weight on my chest prusik (in order to raise my foot prusik) I felt a terrible pain, as the chest safety pulled tight around my body and cut off my breath. Somehow, I made it to the top of the drop after unrelinquishing effort. (I found out later that the chest prusik I had borrowed for this caving trip, was too long and I should not have pushed up so far with it; and I should have connected my chest safety to my swiss seat to prevent

to much pressure on my chest. What a painful way to learn!) Boy! I was glad to be out of the pit. It had been about three and a half to four hours since I had first entered the pit.

Ed began to pull up the rope, when to our dismay, the rope refused to budge any further! Since I was to tired to go back down, Ed descended a rope and ladder rig and found that a knot on the end of the rope had caught between a small crevice in a rock. After considerable effort, Ed returned to the top and we gloriously pulled up the rope, gathered all the equipment and headed back out of the cave. It was about 12:30 A.M. before we exited the cave into the cold, dark night. After changing clothes, we returned from one of the most memorable trips I have been on, mission accomplished.

DENNIS WEBB

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ONE DAY WHILE MAPPING ??

Tawney's (Tony's) cave in Giles County, Va., was formed by the erosive action of the stream that flows through the entire upper passage and a second stream that flows through the lower section. The joint near entrance number one was once worked for nitrate. All that remains of this operation are mounds of dirt.

The club files have an old map of Tony's, done years ago. Since many know passages were not on the map, Bill Park decided to remap it. A second reason for mapping it was to check out a computer technique for cave mapping that Bill had developed. Enlisting my help we departed from the tomb-like confines of B-burg and headed west on 460. April 15, 1969 was a beautiful day, the sun was shining in a clear sky and the temperature read 65°.

We entered Tony's by entrance number two which is on the slope on the opposite side of the road from Sinking Creek. We started mapping with Bill on brunton and myself on lead tape and notes. We proceeded down the main passage and mapped 1800 feet. It was a leisurely sort of trip as we took nine hours to do the mapping. We emerged into a clear night and jumped into the car as our clothes were still clean.

The next day the weather was an exact duplicate of the day before, which is a real rarity in our area. Again entering number two we mapped out entrance number three which is 120 feet away on the hillside. From there we tied in the stream's resurgence in the creek. However, in the process we managed to get ourselves dirty. After resigning ourselves to this

fact we went back in and tied in the sinkhole entrance. In the room with the petre dirt mounds we climbed up and mapped a small maze section. Chimneying up 10 feet we found another passage and mapped it. Back in this area several small domepits were found. In one the walls were found to be coated with fossilized shells most of which were pure white. These fossils are only connected by slivers of limestone and any movement is apt to knock them off.

We then decided that we had better leave the lower section and the basement room for the next mapping trip. We emerged after eight hours with 1400 feet mapped.

On October 4, 1969 I finally departed again, this time with Dennis McClevey, Mike Conefrey and Jim Talmadge. Having been in the lower section once before I knew of the several hundred feet of water crawls that awaited us. At the cave entrance the hapless victims of my folly were informed of this fact.

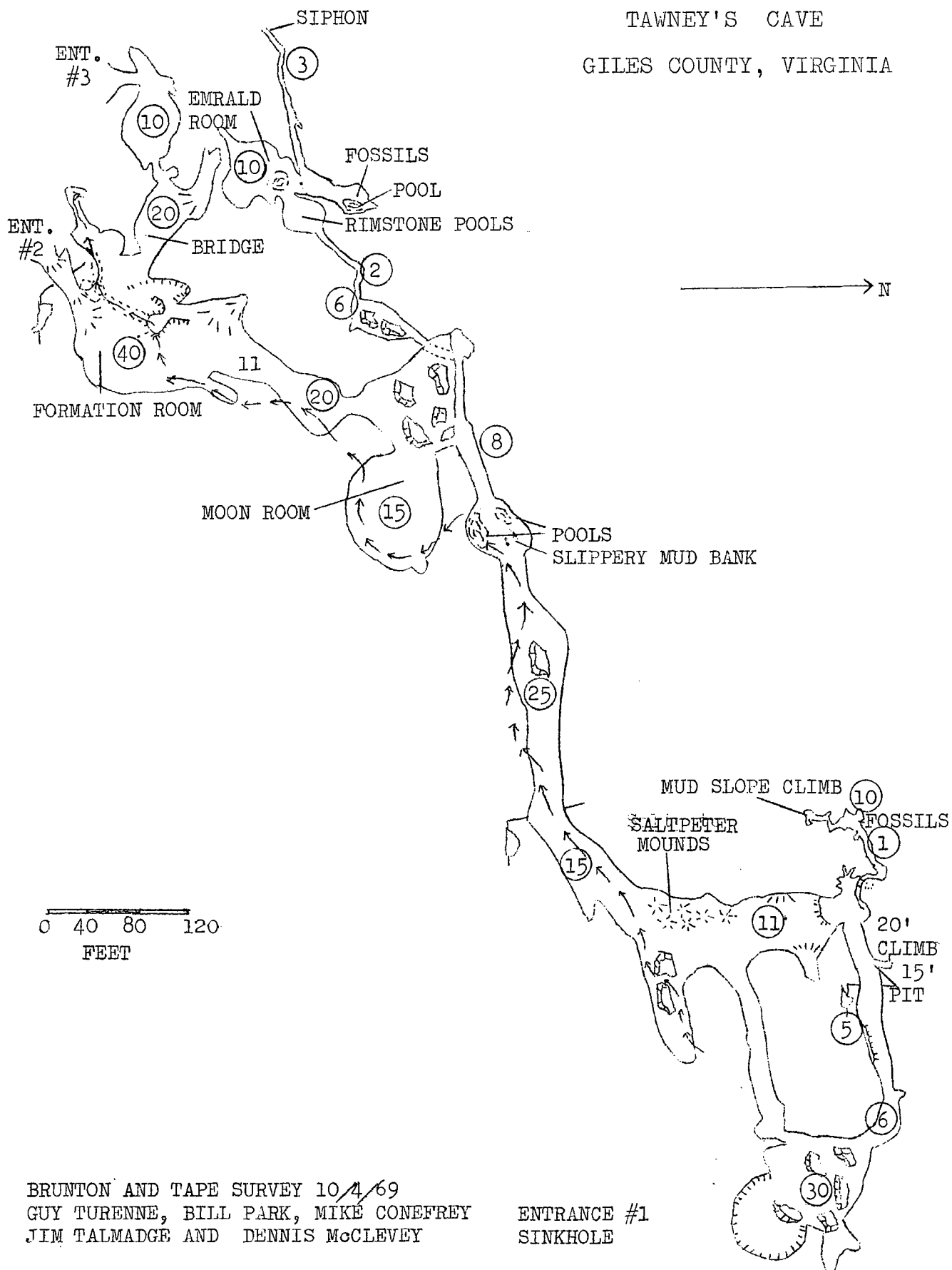
Entering by entrance two we were getting ready to start mapping the basement room which is midway between entrance two and entrance three, when we heard voices outside the cave getting ready to come in. So we decided to wait around and see who it was. Three rugged males and three females of the species, from Tech and Radford respectively, then appeared. Each was magnificently equiped for caving. They were dressed in street clothes and there were five flashlights between them.

As they stood watching us, one of them ventured a cautious hello not knowing exactly what we were. They were quite relieved to find us, human??? First they complimented us on our unique light sources, carbide lamps. Eventually we decided to get on with the mapping. Thinking we were guides the girls started to follow us. They soon stopped with a shriek asking if they had to go through THAT. I couldn't see why not, the passage down to the basement room must be at least two feet wide and a foot high.

Probably thinking we were not really human they departed to the dryer sections of the cave. We mapped the basement room and back out the stream. Hearing their voices at the other end of the stream we hurridly mapped out of it emerging through a passage with nine inches of air space. When some of the water on us began to drip off onto them they became convinced we were not human after all and hurridly left the cave.

My crew then headed toward the lower section. Upon reaching the entrance to it I explained to my fellow mappers That prior to 1959 this had been a fairly roomy passage but that an earthquake had reduced it's size to a nine by twenty-four inch crawl through unstable breakdown. Upon hearing this there was some grumbling in the ranks and a few threats of mutiny, which were dealt with accordingly.

TAWNEY'S CAVE  
GILES COUNTY, VIRGINIA



BRUNTON AND TAPE SURVEY 10/4/69  
GUY TURENNE, BILL PARK, MIKE CONEFREY  
JIM TALMADGE AND DENNIS McCLEVEY

ENTRANCE #1  
SINKHOLE

We started mapping here and were soon in a passage three feet high. We soon reached the stream in the lower section, this one requiring us to become totally wet. Soon after entering the water one of the more intelligent of the group mentioned that the family jewels were wet. Realizing that he was a novice caver, I informed the poor soul that these were living formations as opposed to dead ones. With this straightened out we continued mapping.

Next we entered the Emerald Room. Under several bright carbide lamps the room is beautiful. In the center of the room is a three foot deep crystal clear pool that continues under the floor. To the left are formations and crystal clear soda straws. Off to the right is a little room with a deeper pool. Here the walls are profusely lined with fossils;

After admiring the room for several minutes we mapped out the 200 foot crawl and upon reaching its end Jim yelled back "the damn thing ends" upon which we hurriedly moved our posteriors toward the entrance in remarkable time. The total time in the cave was five and a half hours and we mapped 800 feet.

The map is now completed. There was a total of 110 stations set and the distance was 3980 feet. And so endeth my tale .

GUY TURENNE

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 1970 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

The Virginia Tech Grotto held its fifth annual banquet at Lendy's Raw Steak House last February 21. The steaks were swallowed savagely.

Mr. Bud Rutherford gave an interesting and nostalgic account of the old days of caving at VPI. Mike Clifford and Doug Perkins then took over as Masters of Ceremony and presented the year's awards.

Winston Harmon committed the sin of generally substituting establishment clothes for denim jacket and blue jeans and so received the Henry Marshall Best Dressed Caver Award.

The J. Craig Peters Trip Reporting Award went to George Neal for his verbal recount of the exploration of Lynneville Gorge. Lynneville George's Gorge Gab lasted longer than his trip.



Doug Draves received the Mallory C. Hightower Drop-out of the Year Award. He just needed a little money.

The Ed Bauer Speleo-pornography Award went to our Eunuch in Residence - Paul Broughton. He is presently a peddler for the Trojan Rubber Company.

The Yarmouth Castle Con-man of the Year Trophy was awarded to Tom Vigour for the greatest aquatic float trip since the Titanic.

Tuna Johnson was stuck with the Floyd Collins Tight Crawlway Award. Tuna creates holes with his head and fills them up with his derriere.

The George Titcomb Arm-chair Caver Award went to Wes Thorne for undying enthusiasm outside of caves.

Jim Hixon and his odd assortment of vehicles received the Jim Cooper Safe Driving Award for general principles, including the Big Frog Mountain disaster.

The Rick Nolting Co-Piloting Award went to Crazy Gordon for astonishing road map work in the wrong direction.

Ed Loud of course won the Richard M. Nixon Indecisive Decision Device. Loud is still making at least one decision per week.

The Tom Vigour Grubby Caver Award was won by Nancy Wick, the Blue Denim Kid.

Heroes of the Year was awarded to our men of highest principles - Charlie Maus and John Keatan.

The Whitey Eubank Most Dedicated Caver Award went to Guy Turenne for driving from Attleboro, Mass. to Old Timers just to get drunk.

Bob Barlow received the Gene Harrison Equipment Award for the defensive hardware he always carries in a shoulder holster.

The Erma La Douce Cave Club Heart Throb Award went to Boots Good for capturing so many male members.

Bob Amundson was awarded the Jack O'Mera Delinquent Flower-Child Award for delighting in the companionship of the Union Jail.

Bill Douty deserved two awards. For his skill on the ski slope he received the Brain Bucket and for his unquenchable virility he won the Jack Keat Sex Award.

Additional Guano Clusters were awarded to Bud Rutherford for such an entertaining talk, to Carla Dawson "because she needs one", and to Linda Hixon for being able to disrupt so many people in such a short time.

Our serious awards were saved until last. The A.I. Cartwright Honorarium for "continuing interest in, support of, and fellowship with the VPI Cave Club" was given to John E. Cooper and Jim Hixon.

The Trainee of the Year Award, which includes associate membership in the NSS, was presented to Howard Dame.

Finally Jim Dawson was given a set a moose antlers in thanks for being a hell of a president.

Mike Clifford

\* \* \* \* \*

#### BUILD YOUR OWN SHORTY WET SUIT

This article is not meant to give a step by step method of building a shorty wet suit, but rather the way I did mine, and some things I found out.

There are two kinds of wet suits: one a complete suit which covers the whole body, consisting of pants, top, boots, gloves, and hood; the other is a "shorty" or tunic. Wet suits are made of foam neoprene and they keep one warm with the initial water leakage.

I built a shorty because it was easier; it required less work and material. Also building ones own wet suit is more economical. A store bought shorty costs around \$30. and mine cost only about \$14. Cost can vary depending on the cost of neoprene. Besides these reasons, I wanted a shorty because it is less cumbersome, it does not retard body movement while climbing.

The building of a wet suit requires basically the use of a razor blade and cement and a few basic patterns. Material for the suit is a half sheet of neoprene. Sheets of neoprene can be hard to get unless you order. If you order you will pay for it. Contact some SCUBA Divers and they should be able to help you get it elsewhere. Of the three choices of thickness (1/8", 3/16", 1/4") I chose the 3/16". Other materials used included: neoprene cement, new single edge razor blades, and a two inch strip of velcro to substitute for a zipper. Velcro works fine, mud will not get on it because it is inside the suit. Also all zippers must be put in very accurately.

To begin: Take a T-shirt that fits snug (be careful not to stretch it), cut the sleeves off and cut from the neck along the top shoulder seams to the sleeves. Then cut down the front where you want the opening. Lay the pattern down on the inside of the sheet and mark off the three inches from the right side and at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the top of the neck. (SEE FIGURE #1)

With chalk mark off the boundaries and remove the pattern, cut along the marked lines. Lay on the sheet with own arm-pits where the armpits are on the sheet and mark off the crotch and also mark just above the knees and cut.

Important cutting note: For finish cuts like the legs, cut perpendicular to the sheet; for cuts that are to be glued, cut at an acute angle for more gluing surface. Be sure that the cut surfaces match.

Now glue the shoulders together. Put on three thin, even coats on each side, wait until tacky, and then press firm and knead the edges.

Proceed to the bottom, cut a narrow "V" in the crotch and measure the circumference of your legs. Lay on the material, check the measurement by the material to make sure it is large enough. (SEE FIGURE #2)

Make a point of opening (SEE FIGURE #2) about 18 inches from the neck on the front and cut the front center lines from the bottom to this point. The front center line seam should be a good fit, but remember that side alterations will be needed later.

Put the suit on and do some deep knee bends. The crotch (SEE FIGURE #3) will rip some, so be careful. On my suit I cut out a 2" x 6" rectangle and glued it in the crotch.

Next, the legs need to be taken in.. Do this by pinching the material in the loose parts with one hand and mark with chalk with the other. Then draw in a "V" and cut and glue. (DOUBLE CHECK BEFORE GLUING)

The chest area may be too large, so glue the pile side of the velcro on the left and the hook side on the right. (So the hooks don't touch you)

With this done, repeat the procedure of final adjustment of the shoulders. (SEE FIGURE #3) The shoulders, legs, and velcro should now be fixed.

Now pinch in both sides at the same time and mark, (this requires a second person). cut and glue. Repeat until tight enough. (SEE FIGURE #4)

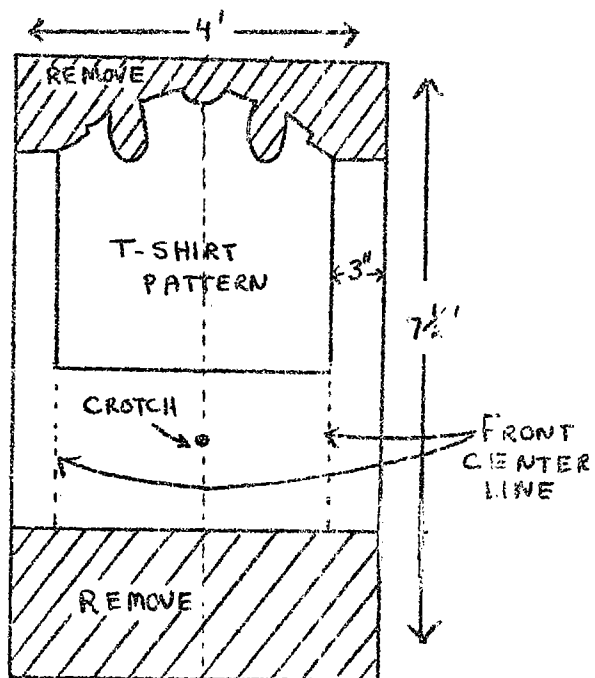


FIGURE #1

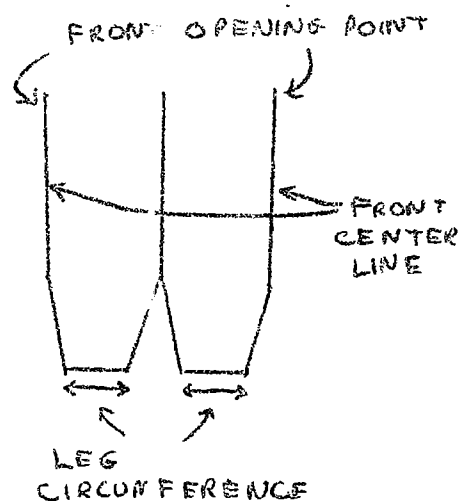


FIGURE #2

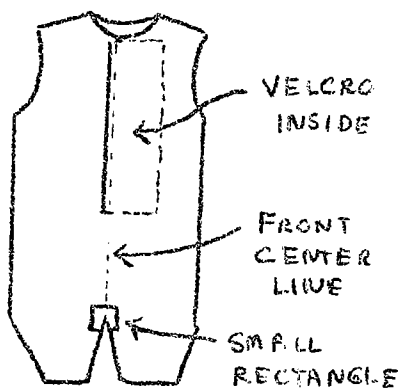


FIGURE #3

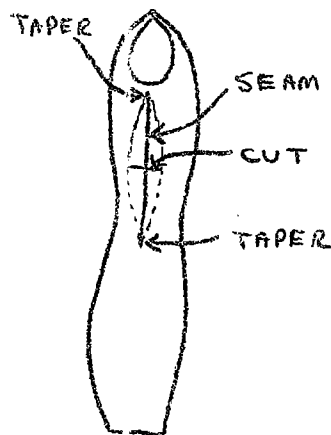


FIGURE #4



FIGURE #5

HALF SHEET NEOPRENE	\$7.50
SINGLE EDGERAZOR BLADES	2.00
NEOPRENE CEMENT	3.00
2" WIDE VELCRO	0.05
APPROXIMATE TOTAL COST	<u>\$12.55</u>

Next, trim the neck. If you wish to add sleeves, you will have to put in armpits. Extend your arm upward and trace the armpit tendons on a piece of paper, and cut out on neoprene and glue in place. Be sure they don't pinch. Some inch wide, 1/8" thick neoprene strips are good for reinforcement, especially along the shoulders.

To make boots: Take a sock that fits (SEE FIGURE #5), use it as a pattern, and cut out.

Patches can be added by marking the area where you wish to put the patch, then coat in a thin layer of glue. For patches (especially NSS patch) the glue will seep through and stain. So, apply the glue very thin and allow to dry and repeat until properly coated. Then put the patch in place and you are ready to go wet caving.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is always easier to take in than it is to add on!

Care of the suit: Hang it on a wooden hanger. Patch all holes and rips immediately. Wash after each wearing to avoid fungus growth.

William "Crip" Douty

\* \* \* \* \*

#### VARIOUS DESCENDING RIGS THEIR ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Since I have been associated with the V.P.I. Grotto I have noticed that the majority of members rely on one or two methods of rappelling. New trainees are then taught these methods. This article is being written to introduce the newer members to other methods of rappelling which they might find more to their liking. Due to the many methods of rappelling brought to my attention, this article will be presented in two parts. Part II will appear in the Fall issue.

#### BLOCK

The Block is designed for use on manila rope. It was developed by the U.Va. Grotto and was one of the first mechanical descenders. It is constructed on the same principle as the spool, being made of a round piece of wood and two strips of metal.

Advantages: Being made of wood it is inexpensive to construct, and has high friction capacity. It is easily controlled by both hands between the legs and it can be rigged only one way. It is good for beginners due to the ease of operation, also its being reassuring to grab onto.

Disadvantages: Being made of wood heat is not readily

dissipated so it's use is restricted to manila rope. It is also heavy and bulky and a single use item.

#### SLIDE LOCK (the handy dandy 4 speed rappel device)

It is being made by the Rose Manufacturing Co., N.J., but it is not as yet commercially available. It is a combination carabiner wrap and breaking device. The rope is wrapped around the carabiner then passed between two plates. The person's weight forces the plates closed, thus stopping him. The gate opening is controlled by a lever.

Advantages: It is a foolproof method of rappelling. It can be rigged only one way. If you should lose control of the rope you automatically stop due to your weight. It can be used on any length pit. No belay is needed. In the event of an emergency two can be used to go up a rope.

Disadvantages: As of the present time it is expensive, \$14.50. It is quite bulky being almost 12" long. Because it is a carabiner wrap device there will be fiber damage to the rope. On layed rope there will be spinning and kinking. It unlays rope more than the cylinder but less than a straight carabiner wrap.

#### CYLINDER

This is a super carabiner wrap. It is controlled by both hands between the legs. The amount of friction is varied by the number of wraps. It is constructed by welding two carabiners into a hollow steel pipe.

Advantages: It is inexpensive to build. It gives greater friction than a double break-bar rig. The amount of friction can be varied over a considerable range. It can be belayed from the bottom. It minimizes damage typical of biner wraps and can be rigged only one way.

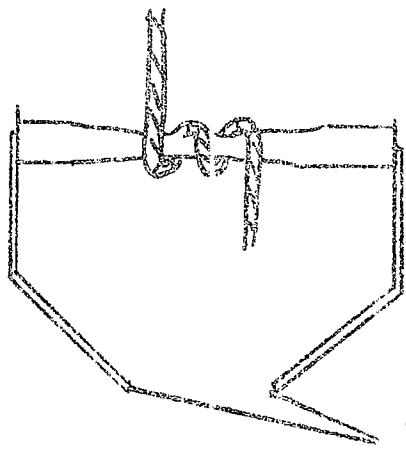
Disadvantages: On a layed rope it will follow the lay thereby causing excessive spinning. It is bulky, being almost a foot long. Beyond drops of 300 feet rope weight will cause difficulties.

#### HAMMER

This is another modified spool device. It can be constructed by welding a two inch pipe in a "T" fashion; phlanges can be welded on the ends to aid in keeping the rope on. It is controlled on the leg in double break-bar fashion.

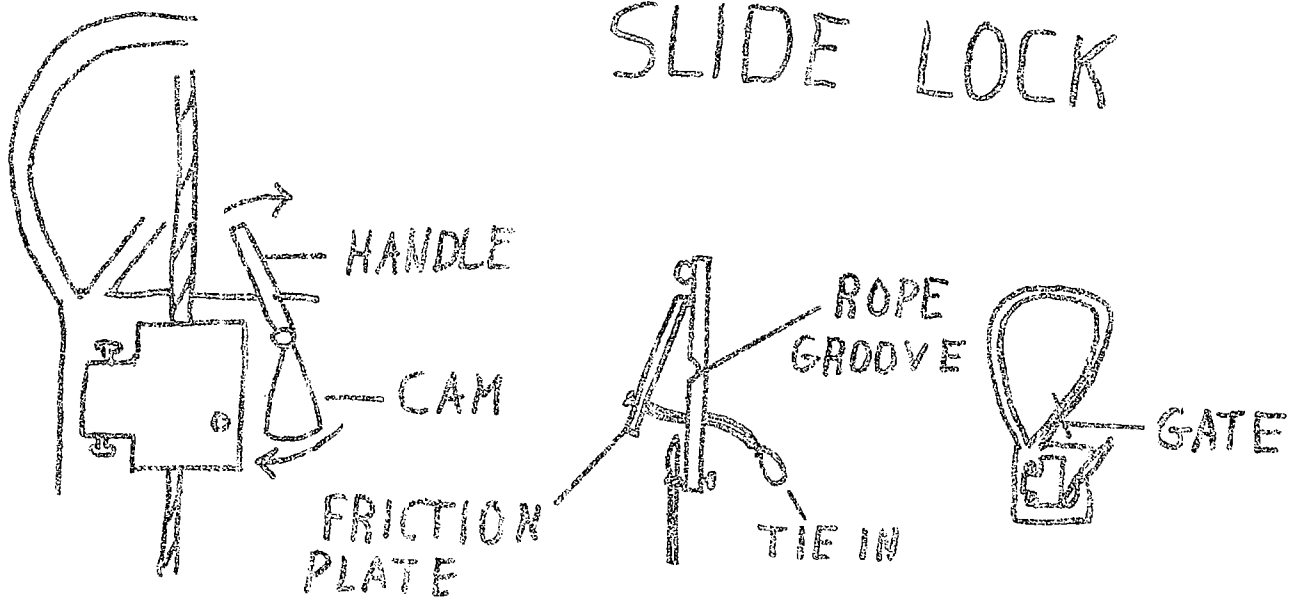
Advantages: It is relatively inexpensive to build. The rappel is smooth, quiet and easily controlled. There is little or no spin and it can be rigged only one way.

Disadvantages: It is bulky and the weight of the steel is excessive. Being made of steel heat loss is slow. On drops of more than 300 feet rope weight causes difficulties. It is possible to become derigged on rappel if one is not careful. It is a single use device.



BLOCK

TIE IN



SLIDE LOCK

HANDLE

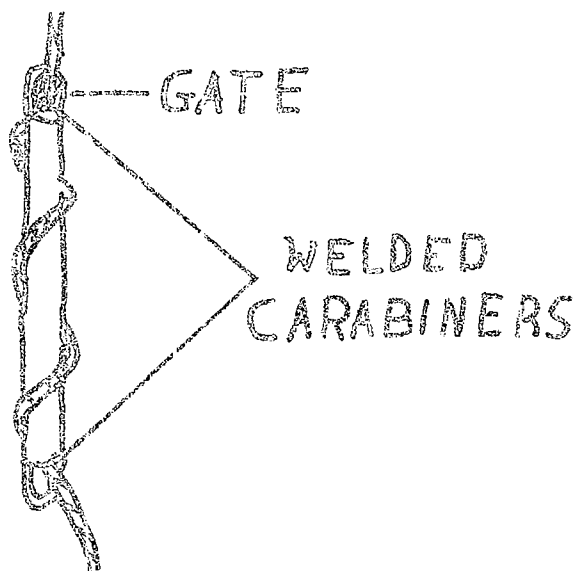
CAM

FRICTION  
PLATE

ROPE  
GROOVE

TIE IN

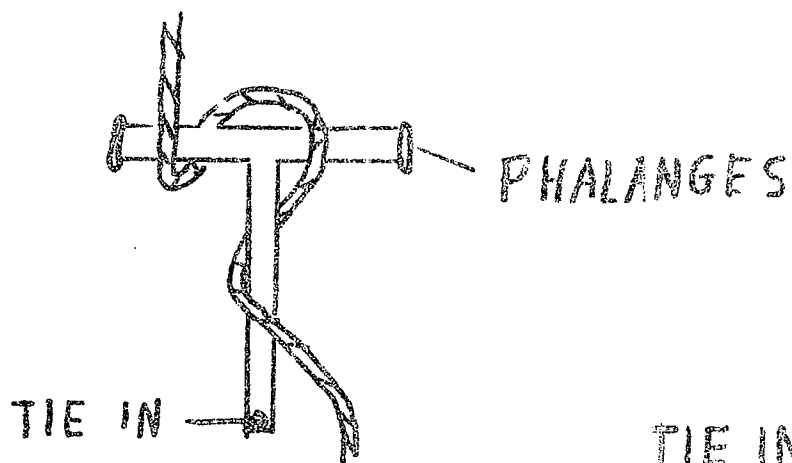
GATE



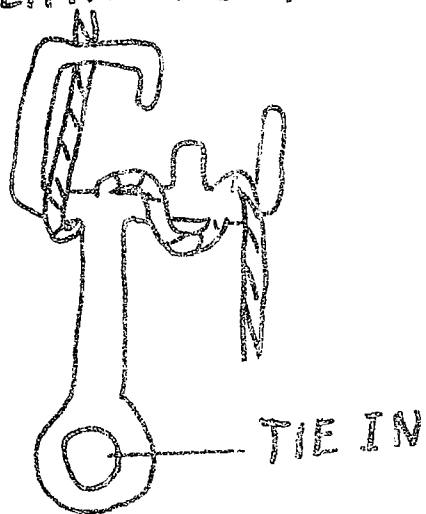
GATE

WELDED  
CARABINERS

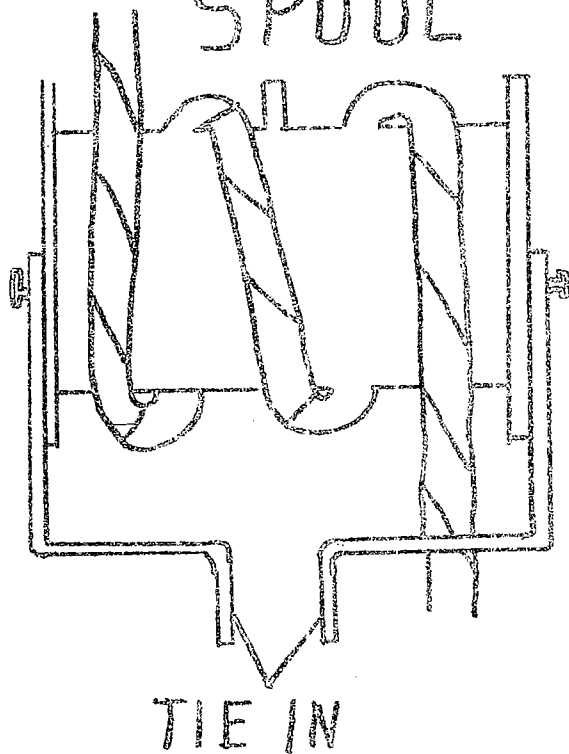
CYLINDER



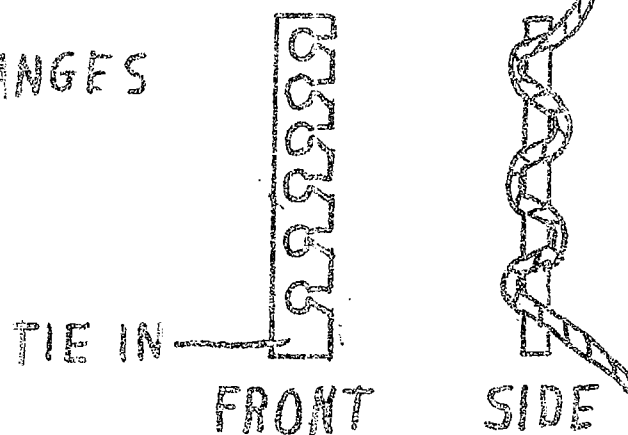
ALLAIN HOOK



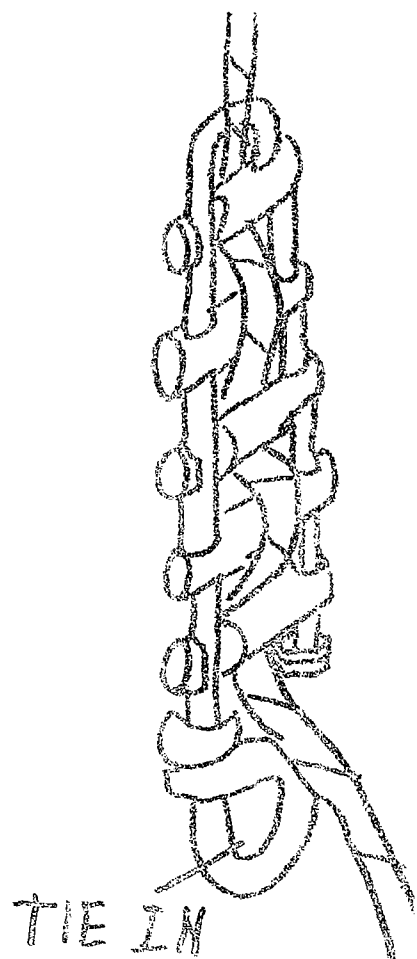
SPOOL



WHALE TAIL



RACK





#### WHALE TAIL

This is an adjustable friction device made from a block of aluminum 2" x 1" x 10". Notches in the side are designed to keep the rope in.

Advantages: Friction can be varied by adding or subtracting notches. It is compact and keeps the rope straight. It has high heat sink capabilities. There is no way of becoming derigged while on the rope. Can be used on any length drop.

Disadvantages: No disadvantages have been brought to my attention.

#### ALLAIN DESCENDING HOOK (death hook)

Sold by Matterhorn, manufactured by Pierre Allain. It is a specially bent piece of metal in principle like a spool.

Advantages: It is shaped so that the rope wraps are kept separate. It is lightweight easily rigged and controlled on the leg or with both hands between the legs. It can be rigged in only one way.

Disadvantages: Exaggerates rope kinking on layed rope. On braided it twists the inner cord which can cause bumps on the inside. Tension is required to keep the rope rigged. It is possible to become derigged while rappeling. It can be used on drops of up to 300 feet and is a one use item.

#### SPOOL

This is the original spool type device. It can be used on any type of rope. It is for use on drops of less than 400 feet.

Advantages: It has a high friction capacity. It does not unlay the rope so it shows no spinning. It is controlled with both hands between the legs. Being made of steel it shows no wear.

Disadvantages: It is bulky and heavy. It is difficult and expensive to make. The steel dissipates the heat slowly. Beyond 400 feet rope weight is a friction factor.

#### RACK

Designed by the Huntsville grotto. It can be used on any type of rope. Friction is controlled by the adding or subtracting of brake-bars.

Advantages: Can be used on drops of up to 1000 feet. It will not spin or put kinks in the rope. It is relatively inexpensive. The aluminum brake-bars dissipate the heat easily. Can be belayed from the bottom. Worn parts are easily replaced.

Disadvantages: Care must be taken not to rig in backwards. It is heavy and bulky.

Sources of the above information included Robert D. Barlow, V.P.I. Grotto, and On Belay, published by the Huntsville Grotto.

Guy Turenne

## STANDARDIZED BELAY CALLS

There has been much argument among the members of the club as to the calls to be used while belaying. Therefore, a temporary committee was set up to discuss and standardize a set of belay calls for use by the grotto. The calls were presented to the club and brought up for approval. The following belay calls stand approved by the grotto for use by the grotto.

When tossing a rope down a drop:

"Rope" (wait for answer)

"Clear" (people below are out of the way and rope may be tossed)

Rappelling:

"On Rappel" (rappeler ready to start rappel)

"Belay on" (belayer is ready for rappeler to start)

"Rappelling" (rappeler is starting rappel)

"Down" (rappeler is at bottom)

"Off rope" (rappeler is no longer on rope, next person may rig in)

Prussiking:

"Off rope" (prussiker has reached top and is no longer rigged into rope)

Climbing: (this includes ladders and other climbs)

"Ready" (climber is ready to start ascent or descent)

"Belay on" (belayer is ready to belay the climber)

"Climbing" (climber has started the climb)

"Climb away" (final confirmation by the belayer)

"Tension" (climber wants support of rope for a maneuver where he might possibly fall)

"Slack" (climber wants some slack in the rope)

"Up rope" (climber wants slack to be taken up by the belayer)

"Falling" (climber has fallen)

"Off belay" (climber is in a safe position and no longer needs belay)

"Belay off" (belayer no longer assumes responsibility for the climber)

"Off rope" (climber is no longer rigged into rope)

Others:

"Rock" (a rock or other object has been accidentally dropped down the drop - look out!!!)

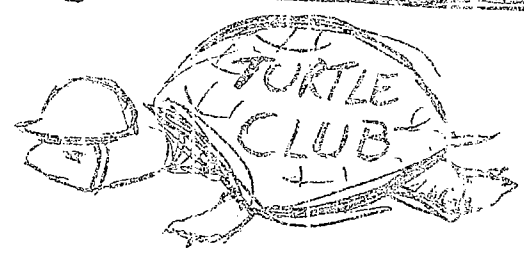
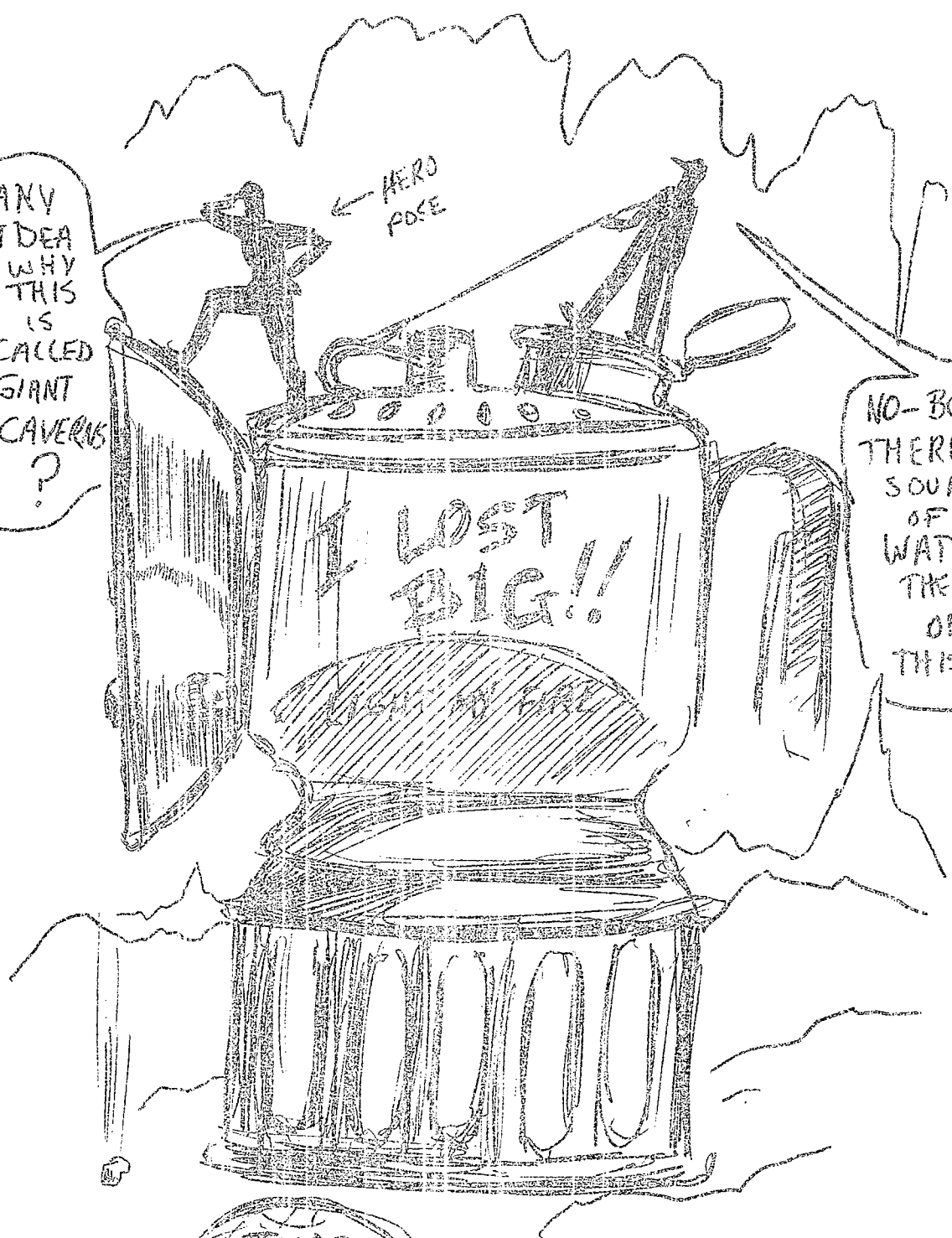
"Equipment" (equipment will be sent down the drop. One should wait for reply of "Clear")

Howard Dame

ANY  
IDEA  
WHY  
THIS  
IS  
CALLED  
GIANT  
CAVERIS  
?

← HERO  
POSE

NO-BOT  
THERE ARE  
SOUNDS  
OF  
WATER AT  
THE BOTTOM  
OF  
THIS PIT



## A SAFETY HINT

When rappelling there is the inherent danger that one may lose control. When this regrettable event occurs one often finds the section of rope used to brake oneself out of sight and wildly dancing about. It is very difficult to regrip the rope and reassume the proper rappelling posture. Provided one remains relatively cool-headed and doesn't attempt to grab the rope above the brake-bars, there is a way to easily avoid the problem of regaining control.

If one were to simply place a carabiner (a climbing carabiner is most convenient) on the Swiss seat so that it is situated just below the braking hand it will restrict the rope's movement. If one loses control all that one has to do is reach for one's inner thigh and the rope will be there. Light is not needed.

If one would place the carabiner just above the braking hand on the Swiss seat much the same effect will be achieved and the carabiner can also be used as an additional brake if so desired. When using this method, one must realize that the area of minimum rope movement is reduced.

To fasten the carabiner to the Swiss seat just twist the sling material around it as if taking up slack.

Also note that if needed that one can make an extra brake by using the carabiner for a 'biner wrap.

Steve Riordan

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## BAT BANDING IN PIG HOLE

One weekend last January I was most fortunate to have been able to get in on a trip to Pig Hole. On the Trip were Frank Garrett, the leader, a friend of his, and a few trainees. This caving expedition to Pig Hole was much different than most for our main purpose was to band bats. making it a most interesting and informative trip.

After the rope was rigged in, we all rappelled the 116' to the bottom with essentially no problems. While Frank and his friend banded the bats in the entrance room, myself and the others did a bit of exploration to find the section where the most bats were located. Frank and his friend finished within a reasonable amount of time, then tied the vertical gear to the bottom of the rope and joined the rest of us.

At first Frank demonstrated the banding of bats, describing to us what he was doing as he went along. Next, we were each given a chance individually so that Frank could be sure we were doing it correctly.

Banding bats is done best with ungloved hands. First of all you reach up for a bat on the wall, take him off carefully, then set him on a rock. Depending on how sleepy the bat is, he will sooner or later begin squealing and flapping around, trying to escape, though he can not fly on account of his body being too cold. As well as squealing and flapping, he is continually attempting to bite a chunk out of your hand, which, if he succeeded could possibly lead to your getting rabies. Thus, after having put the bat on the rock it is best to cover his mouth and head with one of your gloves. Anyway, after you have set the bat on the rock you get a band, the specific type depending on the species of the bat. Next, you spread open one of the bat's wings carefully with one hand. With the other hand you take the band and gently set it over the main wing bone. Next you squeeze the band carefully, so as not to puncture the membrane of the wing, yet just enough to keep the band loosely on the wing. The number on the band, and the species are recorded. Next you check to find the sex of the bat. This is then also recorded.

After having banded a few bats individually, we gathered several bats together and had a mass banding with one person giving out the bands and doing the recording. After having banded two and a half dozen bats, we headed out the back exit with no difficulty. After climbing up to the main entrance, the rope was being pulled up when, at about the time the rope reached the ledge, a sudden clanking thud was heard. In other words, the gear which had been tied onto the rope had fallen. The rope was then pulled up the rest of the way and soon thrown back down again. However, Frank, his friend, and the other trainees had all left their vertical gear tied onto the rope. I was the only one with my vertical gear. With my only being a trainee, Frank didn't like the idea of my rappelling down and running through the cave alone. Yet no one else could use my gear for I only had a single brake-bar. The final decision was soon made. I rappelled down, then tied Frank's vertical gear to the rope which was then pulled up. Frank soon rappelled down, the remaining gear was tied to the rope, then we quickly went through the cave, my opening the back exit and going out first. In the meantime, those remaining outside the cave had pulled up the rope and gear, gone back to the car, and begun changing. Though it was only four hours long, it was a most worthwhile trip.

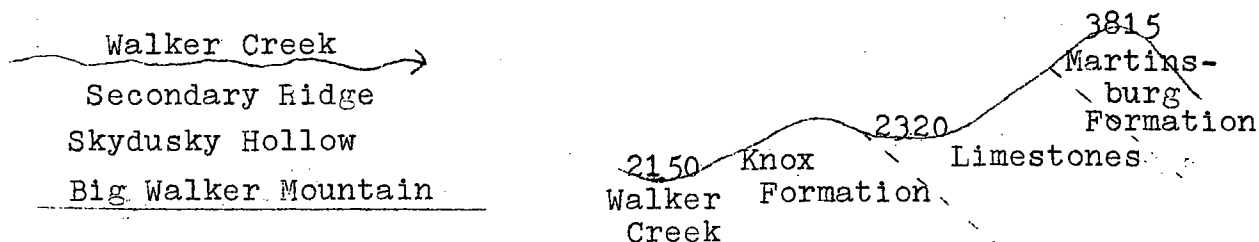
Liz Leach



### SKYDUSKY HOLLOW SYSTEM PRELIMINARY REPORT

It seems odd to be writing a preliminary report on a system which has been known of for as long as the Skydusky Hollow System. Yet this system is conceptually quite new. Old timers would better recognize it as the Newberry Banes system. Continual exploration and survey however has proved that in all probability Newberry Banes is just part of a much larger system which has become known as the Skydusky Hollow System.

Skydusky Hollow is located in Bland County, a rather rugged county in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. The hollow is bounded to the south by Big Walker Mountain and to the north by a secondary ridge of Big Walker. While there is no surface drainage in the hollow, Big Walker Creek flows parallel to it, to the north of the secondary ridge.



The major caves of Skydusky Hollow occur at the base of Big Walker Mountain with the entrances at the base of the Martinsburg formation; shale and sandstone sedimentary rocks of the Middle Ordovician age. This formation acts as a cover for the caves to protect them from sediment and erosion.

The upper sections of the caves are complicated mazes with little sedimentary deposits. In all cases the upper sections are connected with the lower sections by drops ranging from 73 to 190 feet. The lower sections are quite diffuse in character with large rooms, running passages, high domes, wet grimy crawls, and muddy canyons

In the 1700's these caves attracted little attention. The cool, dependable streams flowing down out of the mountain attracted the settlers. These streams reached the contact between the shale and sandstone and the limestone and "disappeared" into the ground. The settlers located near the contact to capitalize on both the fertile limestone soil and the

mountain streams. The fact that one could follow these streams as they disappeared into caves meant little.

Increased requirements for the nitrates from saltpetre resulted in the exploration of the easily accessible upper sections of local caves. However, the caves in the Skydusky Hollow System contained little saltpetre and were passed by for the more productive caves further west in the valley such as Tilson Saltpetre, Repass Saltpetre, and Buchanan Saltpetre caves.

One cave in Skydusky Hollow, now closed, was used during the Civil War to hide valuables from federal troops, and later for storage.

But, except for curious locals, there was little interest in those "holes in the ground" until the first part of the 1950's. Then a group of VPI and Wytheville extension cavers began exploration of what was considered by locals as two caves: Banes Cave and Newberry Cave. Their exploration and subsequent connection of these two caves resulted in the Newberry-Banes System, with over two miles of passage, making it, at the time, the third largest cave in Virginia. Search of the surrounding area turned up three other caves: Bane's Spring Cave to the east and Buddy Penley Cave and Paul Penley Cave to the west.

Bane's Spring was mapped to a total of 1750 feet and Buddy Penley's to a length of about 2000 feet. Paul Penley's was explored for about 300 feet.

Interest in the area apparently gave way to exploration of other prominent caves further west. The primary interest in the system became the sport value of the vertical nature of the Newberry-Banes System. Bill's Rappel Canyon and the Triple Wells offered drops of 160' and 200' respectively. These were especially attractive since it was possible to climb out rather than prusik. The cave attracted cavers from Penn., Md., and N.Car.

In the mid-sixties interest was rekindled. Bill Cuddington told Mike Hamilton of a lead in lower Buddy Penley's which potentially might lead to a connection with Newberry-Banes. A subsequent trip found that while the new section did not trend toward Newberry-Banes, the cave was much more extensive than was thought.

Interest was also re-established by John Holsinger through his work with the Virginia Cave Survey for a supplement to Caves of Virginia. Thus the VPI Grotto again turned its interest back to the Newberry-Banes area.

Work by R.E. Whittemore in Bane's Cave during 1966 in Bane's Spring revealed that it too was more extensive than was



thought. Pushing through a small crawl, a dry maze area was discovered. Disappointingly though, it was moving further away from, not closer to Newberry-Banes. However, one rather insignificant crawl opened into a passage that eventually looped around the maze and headed directly toward the extreme eastern end of Banes. Hopes for a connection rose then ended just 120 feet short of Banes! But a third extensive cave, now having grown to 8000 feet, had been added to the area.

It had become obvious that Newberry-Banes was just part of a much larger system, the Banes Spring-Banes-Newberry-Penley System. Thus was born the concept of the Skydusky Hollow System.

Efforts were again turned toward Penley's Cave. Lead by the dauntless author of this report, the upper maze section of Penley's was mapped. The maze, on three interconnecting levels, contained half a mile of passage in an area of approximately one acre! Exploration of the lower level, reached by a 100 foot drop and a 30 foot drop, revealed another half mile of cave; but still we were unable to get closer than 500 feet from Newberry's. Pushing a very unlikely lead at the bottom of a supposedly blind pit however produced a muddy, wet crawl, heading straight for the western end of Newberry's! Again hope for a connection soared, only to be stopped 250 feet short of Newberry's!

With hope dim for a connection with Newberry-Banes from Buddy Penley's Cave, we decided to check Paul Penley's Cave. Although Caves of Virginia gave a rather brief description of a cave of about 300 feet and although it was at least 1500 feet from the western extreme of Newberry Cave, we apparently had nowhere else to look.

While the main passage was a large canyon stream, it terminated after 150 feet. However, a high lead in wet, unstable breakdown near the entrance yielded a wet, unstable maze section in the general direction of Newberry's Cave. While total length of the maze approaches 2000 feet, actual straight line distance toward Newberry's probably does not exceed 400 feet. A lead of the maze section yielded another 1000 feet of large passage but not in the direction of Newberry's. At the end of this passage we found a 160 foot pit and a twin 118 foot pit.

We were also able to reach the 160 foot pit at the 110 foot level. We could see an opening on the other side of the pit 20 feet over and 15 feet lower. In desperation and foolhardiness we lugged in a grappelling hook. With good ole VPI ingenuity and skill (and mostly luck) we were able to reach the other side! A 30 foot drop of that passage yielded the largest room in the system - an estimated 150 feet wide, 300 feet long, and up to 75 feet high. Leads at the bottom of the pits and off of the big room have not yet been checked, but

they are not promising. Total length now is somewhere around 4000 feet.

Pete Schnaars, also of VPI, has started remapping Newberry-Banes Cave. New passage and previously unmapped passage promises to yield at least three miles.

By now, if you are still with me (yawn), you must be wondering why I chose to call this a preliminary report. Very roughly, this is the present status of the system:

Paul Penley's

Cave



Big Room

1000+ft.

Buddy Penley's Cave

Newberry's Cave

Banes Cave



West to East

Paul Penley's Cave - 4000+feet and going

Buddy Penley's Cave- 5000+feet

Newberry-Banes Cave- 3+miles

Banes Spring - 9000 feet

Total 32000+feet

Great! Six miles of cave! But spread out over four caves! Four caves that are obviously one system, the Skydusky Hollow System. It is my confidence in the system that prompts me to call it a preliminary report. While no connections have been found, I do feel confident that if someone is willing to push hard enough and long enough the connections can be found. It very well may be that blasting or digging will be needed.

Ridge walking both to the east and west should also be productive if you consider the opportunities that were missed the first go round. Obviously, there are caves in them there hills, boys, just waiting for the caver who is eager and determined enough to take them away from ole father Walker Mountain. But it'll take hard work. He don't give 'em up easy like, but wow, what a daughter!

Ed Morgan

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At recent induction into club:

"We might as well get Liz Leach while we're at it"-

Doug Perkins

"I went with a trip on her"-Winston Harmon

"Pete wrote about a paragraph on her climbing ability, but we won't go into that"-Doug

## LONG DISTANCE CAVING

Within the few thousand American cavers there are basically two groups. One group caves to further the knowledge of a particular cave or system by mapping or studying the various scientific aspects of the cave. The other group consists of what are called "sport cavers" whose chief reason for caving lies in the adventure of seeing the cave at their leisure. A sport caver will quite frequently pick out the more popular caves to visit just to say he's been there. The sport caver is usually not content to cave in just one area for caves of one type can become boring. Hence the desire to spread out and see caves in other areas quite often governs the behavior of sport cavers.

Since popular caves are found in many different places and usually satisfy the need to see caves in other areas, it's not unusual to find the sport caver on the road. This brings us to the subject of long distance caving, which for purposes of this article will be defined as caving in areas requiring a trip time of two or more days. (Not a single over-nighter)

Besides the reasons for long distance caving already mentioned, there are other reasons immediately obvious:

1. Opportunity to meet other cavers.
2. Flexibility offered in a long trip - not having to be out of a cave by a particular time in order to "get back".
3. Fulfillment of the camping urge that most cavers have.
4. Very inexpensive compared to other vacations.

There are a number of different ways to go on a long distance caving trip. One way probably chosen by most sport cavers is to arrange some kind of rough itinerary ahead of time indicating which caves will be visited and a rough idea of when. This should be done well in advance of the trip. With the itinerary in mind a number of things can then be done to make the trip flow smoother:

1. Write or phone cavers in the areas of the caves you wish to visit to find out what the present status of the cave is. These people will also be able to give you some tips on the equipment you may need to explore the cave. Probably one of the most valuable aids from the local cavers is their tips on the idiosyncrasies of the cave owner - the right and wrong ways to ask his permission, etc.
2. Directions to a cave in a foreign area may be long and drawn out (especially out west). What may seem obvious to the local caver may not be so obvious to you, and may result in a wrong turn placing you on the wrong ridge.

These problems can be avoided by obtaining topographic maps of the intended areas and plotting the cave location from reliable coordinates. Experienced long distance cavers will be the first to attest to the tremendous amount of saved time afforded by this method.

3. Now that you have the cave plotted on an up to date topo map, look closely at the map to see what kind of roads (if there are any!) go near the cave. You may find that your low slung American car is only going to get within three miles of the cave. How far and how high you have to haul yourselves and all that equipment may be a determining factor in whether or not you want to see the cave. Quite often more time is spent getting to the cave than is spent inside. Needless to say, much can be told from a topo map.
4. Make a complete list of necessary equipment for all the caves you plan on visiting. There is nothing so disconcerting on a long distance cave trip than arriving at the cave entrance (after a three mile uphill hike?) and finding that you can't find that one necessary piece of equipment. Of course, the list is no good unless you make sure the listed equipment gets into the car.
5. Make sure the equipment is in good shape. A few VPI long distance cavers can recall a certain bolt driver missing its stud. Spare lamp parts, swiss seats, batteries, are always a good idea.

Now that you are fairly sure of what caves are on the schedule, and the necessary equipment as well as the hiking and time involved, you are prepared to tackle the human logistics. These, of course, are eating, sleeping, and keeping clean enough to ride in the same car with two or three other people. One of the major concerns will be keeping the cost of the logistics to a minimum.

From the cost viewpoint eating can be of the most concern. It is the opinion of the author that a trip should not be started without a good idea of the menu to be followed. From the standpoint of money and time, it's very advantageous to have the members of the trip go together on the food. The advantages inherent in this method are many:

1. Use of usually only one stove, as compared to two or three stoves.
2. Saving on stove fuel.
3. One person will not be taking two hours to fix a meal while another takes an hour - everyone will eat at the same time.

4. Not as many dirty dishes and pots, therefore saving cleaning time.
5. Wider variety of meals.
6. Opportunity to spread the cooking and cleaning chores among the group.
7. Less space will be needed to store stoves, utensils, and food between meals.

Another time and space saving idea is use of paper plates and cups at each meal. The menu for the trip will probably vary a great deal with the time of the year. A good winter-time breakfast that is also very quick in preparing is oatmeal. This dish requires only boiling water, oats, and about ten minutes time to cook. A breakfast during warmer times of the year might be the old standby of eggs and bacon, or plain old cold cereal. Generally speaking, a group of long distance cavers will not want to spend a great deal of time everyday just preparing and eating meals, therefore the only meals that are usually cooked are breakfast and dinner; dinner being the greater time consumer of the two. Lunch can be very simple and fast. A couple of sandwiches and a coke will usually suffice, therefore requiring no clean-up and a minimum of time for preparation.

For most cavers dinner will probably be the most important meal of the day. When buying the food before the trip, dinner will take the most thought with respect to what you want to eat and how much it will cost. Some good items to buy for dinner are:

1. Instant mashed potatoes: cheap and very easy to prepare, also quite filling.
2. Beef stew: the old standby when you can't think of anything else.
3. Macaroni and cheese: cheap and also easy to prepare, goes well mixed with chili or barbecue.
4. Applesauce (in jars): an excellent dessert, and easy to keep cold when bought in jars.
5. One of the many varieties of Rice-a-Roni: a little more trouble to prepare, but well worth it.
6. Chili, or barbecue: neither have to be kept frozen.
7. Hot dogs and beans: What list would be complete without these, only problem here is keeping the hot dogs in good shape.

Practically any of the above will be very filling, satisfying the hungriest caver. Since keeping things cold is always a problem (especially in warmer climes) you should shy away from food requiring some form of refrigeration. When food is bought initially it would be wise to buy a limited amount of things like bread which are crushable and can go stale quickly. A number of stops will probably be needed to replenish supplies of cokes, bread, peanut butter, and jelly. Cokes can offer a major economic problem. If four people are on the trip, each wanting a cold drink for lunch and dinner, this can run into as much as two six-packs per day or about \$1.70 worth of cold drinks (of good size). Additional drinks at other times can run the cost to \$2.50 per day easily. This can all be avoided by preparing a jug of kool-aid at each meal. The reduction in cost is immediately obvious. This will afford another reduction in cost when one considers the ice that has to be bought to keep two six-packs cold.

All in all, a group of four should be able to eat on about \$21. per week. Equipment should include a small ice chest to keep applesauce, hot dogs, etc. cold, a stove (a two burner Coleman will usually do well), a number of utensils, including one large pot and one large frying pan. Unless a number of cars are going, the "community food" plan is a must on the basis of space alone.

Another problem might be where to eat. If you happen to find yourself on an interstate highway around dinner time, then it's a safe bet that you are coming up on a "rest area" sometime in the next 20 minutes. Rest areas are an excellent place to prepare a meal. Some rest areas out west are equipped especially for this purpose. They have covered picnic benches, trash bins, electricity, and running water. Some even have heated restrooms, offering a warm refuge to the cold caver. In the southwest comparable rest areas may even be found on some secondary roads.

When rest areas are not available, the side of the road will have to do. At these times it is probably not possible to get rid of trash or clean dirty utensils, and a number of plastic bags will become indispensable for gathering trash and dirty dishes. A later stop at a service station can eliminate both problems.

This brings us to the problem of sleeping. Whenever entering a state one should stop at the always present information booth and pick up a brochure on the state parks. The trip through that state can usually be planned so that you arrive in the vicinity of a state park around each midnight. State parks are never the same two places, so one would do well to pick out the better facilities such as showers and campgrounds. Unless you are sleeping in a tent, moisture can present a big problem. Dew soaked sleeping bags will have to be dried out in the morning before they can be stuffed, delaying

the trip by as much as an hour (when the sun is shining). Therefore something should be found to sleep under; trees will sometimes work. Sheltered rest areas are another alternative, although a state trooper may interrupt your sleep. Air mattresses are imperative. Knowing the location of various caving field houses (or cavers?) can also be a great help. One should keep in mind that state parks and fieldhouses will charge a fee. When all else fails, a church yard, the side of the road, or a cave will do.

Packing of all of this stuff into your vehicle is due tremendous consideration. If you are using the standard American automobile (sedan) it would be good to rent or build a cartop carrier. The optimum carrier will have a large volume, and will have doors opening on either side of the car. Locks are imperative for obvious reasons. Sufficient water-proofing is also a must since there is almost no way to keep a tarp tied down to a carrier moving at 75 mph.

Most of the equipment is readily segregated into groups used at different times. One side of the cartop carrier can be used solely for sleeping gear: sleeping bags, blankets, air mattresses, ground cloths. Once this side of the carrier is filled in the morning it doesn't have to be bothered with again until evening when the gear is once again needed. On the other side of the carrier the group can store individual clothing packs and toiletry items. Any room in between sleeping and personal gear can be used to store gear which will not be used often enough to warrant ready access.

Caving gear and cooking gear, as well as food will fit nicely into the trunk. Cardboard boxes are most useful here. Cooking gear in one box, food in another and caving hardware (biners, etc.) in yet another box is the best way to go. Ropes should be put in a duffle bag and kept out of the way of other gear. Boots, hard hats, lamps, etc. should be arranged around the perimeter of the trunk, surrounding the food and cooking gear (including ice chest and stove). In this manner cooking gear doesn't have to be moved to get at caving gear and vice-versa. A large amount of the camera gear (if present) can also be accommodated in the trunk.

Two small, cardboard boxes inside the car are a big help. One can serve as a file for caving literature, maps, state park guides, letters concerning the trip, etc. Being inside the car insures ready access. The other box can keep cameras handy and in winter can keep battery run items warm. Severe cold can spell death to batteries stored in the cartop carrier or trunk. At night when the inside of the car is no longer warm a hand warmer placed in the box will usually keep the batteries alive.

The complement of gear can be finished off with an adequate supply of kitchen matches, wash and dry towlettes, and paper towels.

Most of the major concerns of a long distance caving trip have been covered in this article. Of course, many more tips could be added, but the length of the article would be formidable. This article should give the beginning long distance caver some idea of what is involved in a long distance caving trip.

M.C. Frieders

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### CAVE MAPPING TRILOGY

There was a time in this fair land when the sinkholes  
were not plumbed,  
When wild, unbanded bats flew alone against the sun,  
Long before manila rope and boots with nails of steel,  
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be  
real.

But time has no beginning and history has no bounds,  
As to this limestone country they came from all around,  
They probed into her sinkholes, and they walked the ridges  
tall,  
Made friends with cave owners for the good of us all.

And when the young man's fancy was turning in the spring,  
The caving men grew restless for to hear the brakebars  
sing,  
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day,  
And many a passage was found and lost, and stations marked  
the way.

For they looked to the future and what did they see,  
They saw cavers mapping from the fore to the lee,  
Bringing the news to the hard workin' crew,  
Drawing with care all that was new.  
Look away, said they, across this karst-filled land,  
At the caves that dot the Eastern limestone band.

Bring in the mappers and set up base camp,  
Set a hundred stations with a carbide lamp,  
Open your heart, let the lifeblood flow,  
We gotta get on our way 'cause we're mapping too slow,  
We gotta get on our way 'cause we're mapping too slow.

Behind the wide Blue Ridge, the sun is declining,  
Stars, they come stealing at the close of the day,  
Across the wide valleys, our loved ones lie sleeping,  
Beyond the cold rock, in a place far away.



We are the cavers who survey the passage,  
Reading our bruntons, never seeing the sun,  
Living on jerky and drinking cheap wine,  
Cracking our heads till the big map is done.

We are the cavers who survey the passage,  
Reading our bruntons, never seeing the sun,  
Setting belay bolts and wading the pools,  
Cracking our heads till the big map is done.

So it's over the breakdown and crawl through batshit,  
Into the siphon and into the pit,  
Up the main drag and around all the bends,  
Reading and taping all the way to the end.

Reading 'em out and writing 'em down,  
Away to the dorm and into the town,  
Some oil for my boots and a shot for my head,  
A drink to the living, a toast to the dead.

Oh, the song of the future has been sung,  
All the battles have been won,  
In the deepest pits we stand,  
All of hell at our command,  
We have mapped beneath the soil,  
With our teardrops and our toil.

Oh, there was a time in this fair land when the sinkholes  
were not plumbed,  
When wild, unbanded bats flew alone against the sun,  
Long before manila rope and boots with nails of steel,  
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be  
real,  
When the dark stalagmite forests were too distant to be  
real,  
But still there's many a passageway, too distant to be  
real.

Michael E. Conefrey  
(Compliments of Gordon Lightfoot's  
Canadian Railroad Trilogy)

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Women are one of nature's more beneficial blunders - Anonymous

