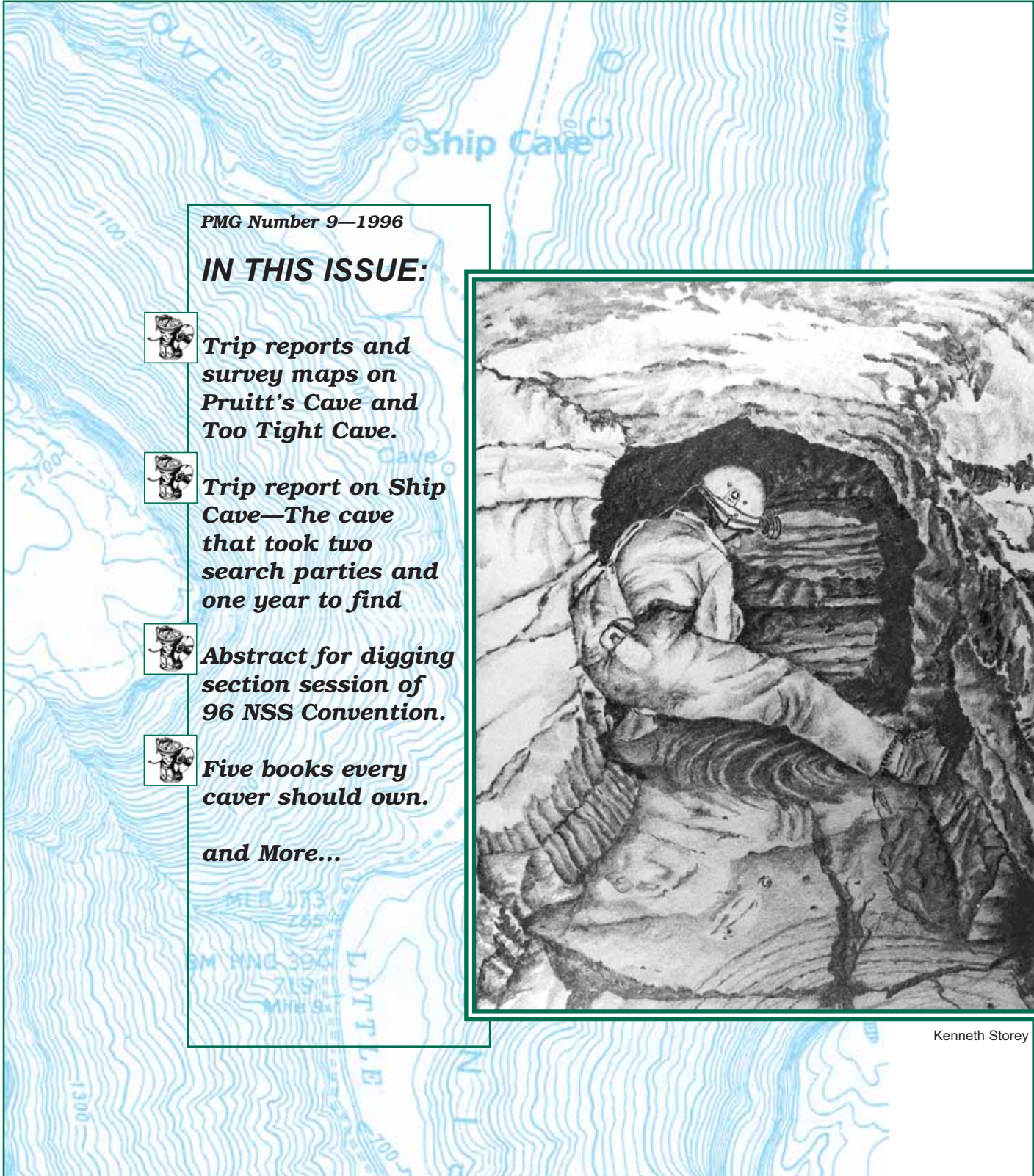


Pine Mountain Fault

Newsletter of the Pine Mountain Grotto



PMG Number 9—1996

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Trip report on Ship Cave—The cave that took two search parties and one year to find

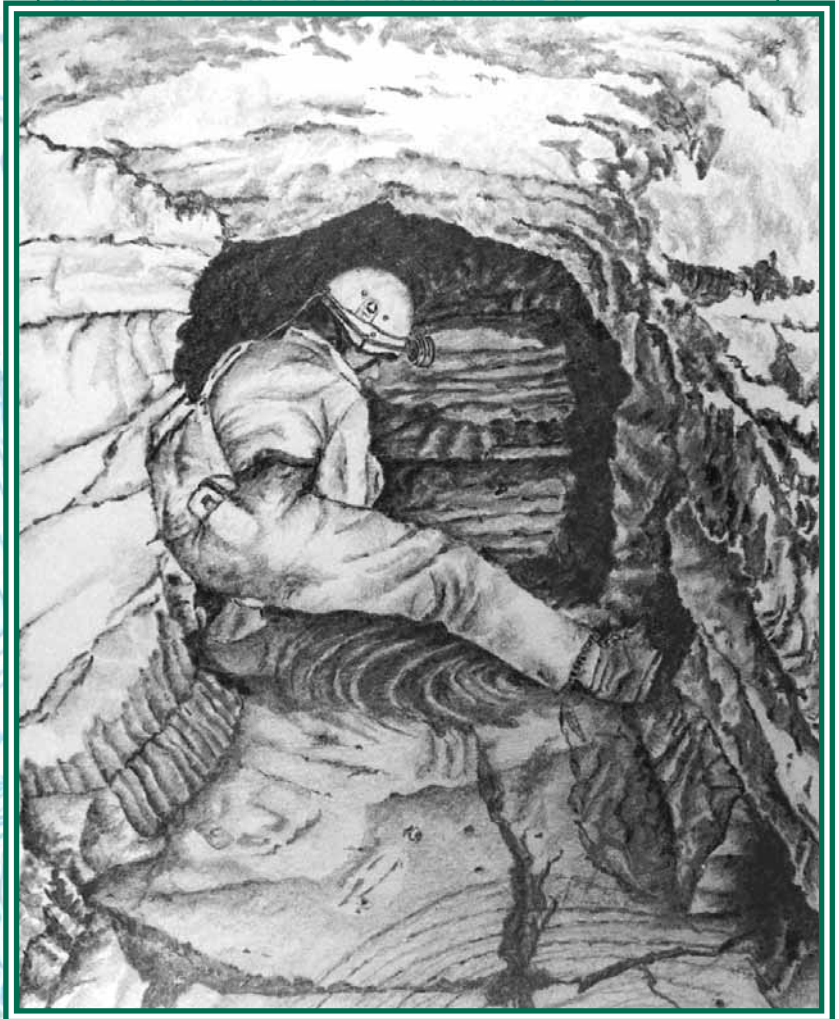


Abstract for digging section session of 96 NSS Convention.



Five books every caver should own.

and More...



Kenneth Storey

The Pine Mountain Fault

Newsletter of the Pine Mountain Grotto

Number 9

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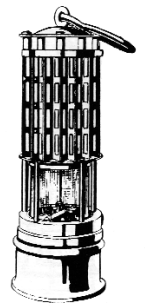
Design and Layout: Kenneth Storey

PMG Officers: Jim West-*Chair*; Jimbo Helton-*Vice Chair*; Jim Williams-*Secretary/Treasurer/Librarian*; John Taylor-*Conservation*;
Jeannie Wilson-*Safety*

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Troglo-Bites



The PMG welcomes the following new members: Jeannie Wilson, Sue Jackson, Susan Williams, Scott Payne, and Mack Roberts (all of Kentucky); Regina Short, Tennessee, and Richard Hollinger, New Jersey.

Farewell to the following members: Mike Warner, Michigan; Gordon Muse, Heidi Muse, and Sherman Young, Kentucky.

Our Pennsylvania member, Mike List, is moving to Florida.

New member Scott Payne is working toward PADI open-water scuba certification.

John Taylor requests the return of all Union College Wilderness Club carbide lamps, several of which are AWOL. Check your closets, folks.

PMG members have been busy spreading propaganda to the caving community and the larger population of late. To wit:

- Doug Hufziger's photo of Paul Jones in Short Creek Cave recently won best-of-show in the Mountain Laurel Festival photo contest. His shot of Chris Williams in Pine Hill Cave came in second in the black and white print category. Both photos won their divisions in last year's Cumberland Valley National Bank photo contest, held during the Laurel County Homecoming.
- Jim West and Andy Messer both had letters published in the *NSS News* "Saver's Forum" in October 1995.
- Jim's letter encouraged cavers to send thank-you postcards to accommodating landowners. Andy's responded to the controversy over the *News's* subtitle, "America's Caving Magazine." Jim subsequently received a congratulatory letter from a New Zealand caver.
- Ken Storey's drawing of Lisa Storey (yes, the same drawing gracing the cover of this *Fault*) appeared in the January 1996 issue of the *NSS News*.
- DOM regular and Friend-of-the-PMG Guy Powers published a computer graphic in the December 1995 issue of the *NSS News*.
- Jim West's map of Pendleton County, West Virginia's Hedrick's Fossil Cave graced the cover of the most recent issue of the *West Virginia Caver*. Andy Messer's trip report and description of the cave were also included. The cave was surveyed by the aforementioned, plus John Taylor.
- Jim West gave a caving slide show at Boone Elementary School.
- Doug Hufziger gave two slide shows at Oak Grove Elementary School.

- John Taylor presented slide shows at both the Cumberland Falls Geology Weekend and the May Bluegrass Grotto meeting.
- Doug Hufziger, Jim Williams, John Taylor, and Andy Messer led a trip in the Minton Hollow area of Sloan's Valley Cave for the Cumberland Falls Geology weekend.
- Doug Hufziger and Andy Messer both served as backup guides on cave trips during Speleofest.
- John Taylor recently presented a faculty lecture on Appalachian caves and karst at Union College, and is preparing a history of caves and caving in Pendleton County, West Virginia, for the WVASS bulletin on that county.
- Lou Simpson was the banquet speaker at Speleofest, where he also signed copies of his book, *Sex, Lies, and Survey Tape* (Buy a few copies if you haven't already).
- Andy Messer published a commentary piece, "A New Standard," in the February/March 1996 *NSS News* (adapted from the first issue of the *Fault*) and has an article awaiting publication in the Louisville Grotto's *Karst Window*.
- Doug Hufziger was a contributor to the "In the Media" column in the February/March 1996 issue of the *NSS News*.
- Ken Storey designed and produced the beautiful new PMG tee-shirt, complete with a graphic of Doug Hufziger climbing out of Rusty's Cave. Ken is also preparing several other drawings for publication. Shirts are available from Ken for a measly 12 bucks, (13 for the XXL).

Notes from the Underground

Spring is finally here. The trees are budding, the flowers blooming and yes, caving festivals are starting. Spring VAR Speleofest and SEKCI have already come and gone.

The Pine Mountain Grotto, has had a very successful year. Starting an adopt- a-highway cleanup in Pulaski County, Kentucky. Mapping a virgin cave that has certainly exceeded our expectations, extending over a mile and becoming Virginia's 48th longest cave. We have done more than can be written. As a small grotto it would seem that we are limited, but not with the PMG. We keep on caving and exploring just like the large grottos. We have produced many different maps of caves in the region, just like any other large grotto would do. We have members in ten different states and growing. What can I say? Except that we can kick some \$%@\$.

Here's to another successful year.

Douglas Hufziger



SPECIAL TRIP REPORTS

THE SHREVE-HOWELL EXPERIENCE

By
Andy Messer

Jimbo Helton
Jim West

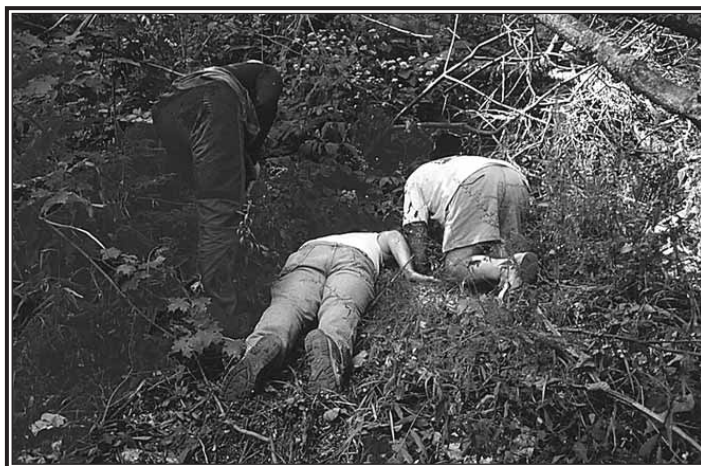
Ken Storey
Lisa Storey

The immortal (at least so far) Jim West wrote in one of his classic trip reports, "Don't you love it when a good plan goes off without a hitch?" Well, yes, I think I would love that, and if I ever experience such a thing I'll let you know. In the meantime, let's talk about Shreve-Howell Pit.

At 120 feet, Shreve-Howell is the deepest pit in Randolph County, West Virginia, which is sort of like being the tallest building in Corbin, Kentucky. Randolph County is not especially known for deep pits. Still, it is a pit, and it does boast triple-digit depth, so Jim West, Jimbo Helton and I decided to have a go at it during the 1995 Old Timers' Reunion. Then-neophyte vertical cavers Ken and Lisa Storey decided to go along to watch the action (They've since become hard-core ropewalkers, but that's another story (pun not intended but dutifully noted). So we loaded up Jimbo's Blazer (better known as the Goochland Submarine, but that's still another tale) and headed for the top of Rich Mountain to find the pit.

About the time we reached the end of the asphalt and started up what the guidebook optimistically called "a badly rutted road," we got behind a pickup truck which was apparently attempting to set a new world overland slowness record. Jimbo frequently had to stop the

Blazer for several minutes to let the truck get a hundred feet or so ahead. Once, when the truck came to a complete stop, Jim got out and asked the vehicle's three occupants whether they too were on their way to the cave. Turned out they were just joyriding, and at a speed that would have made a tree sloth impatient. Jimbo eventually managed to pull ahead when they stopped at a turnout. In the meantime, Jim had had plenty of time to think. What he thought of was the fact that he had forgotten his vertical gear.



Jim West and others inspecting the opening to Shreve-Howell cave.

We soon reached the parking area at the top of the mountain, but our journey was far from over. To reach the cave, we would have to walk partway down the other side of the mountain on a gravel road closed to vehicular traffic. We headed down the hill, accompanied by two other groups of cavers, but not before I managed

to bang my head soundly on the metal gate spanning the road. Good Caver Tip: Just because you're on the surface doesn't mean you shouldn't wear a helmet.

Finding the pit turned out to be an adventure in itself. We looked for the gray metal culvert mentioned in the directions, only to discover a gray metal culvert at every switchback of the steep, winding road. Eventually we descended far enough to find the outcrop of Greenbrier limestone we had been searching

for. Not long after that, a shout from one of the other cavers indicated the entrance had been located.

It wasn't much to look at: a small dirt-lined sink with two dark holes at the bottom, the larger of which looked just big enough to squeeze through. After some discussion of who would rig what rope where, it was agreed that everyone would use a brand new piece of PMI Maxi-Wear belonging to a young man and woman. It was soon rigged and ready. The young man who was providing the rope descended first. Once he yelled "Off rope!" I rigged my rack and started



Lisa flashes Andy as he ascends from the cave. (The only brave soul to go into the cave.)

down. Before I reached the hole in the bottom of the sink, I heard a loud crashing noise and yelled, "Rock!" The culprit turned out to be a five-foot-long piece of a dead log which had somehow dislodged itself from the surrounding brush and fallen into the sink, narrowly missing my head (Remember that Good Caver Tip?). I locked off, we hoisted the log out of the sink, and then I began descending again. Just through the tight squeeze was a mud slope, followed by intermittent ledges. I seemed to be kicking down dirt and pebbles constantly until I finally passed the last of the ledges 30 feet or so off the floor.

As we waited for the next rappeller, both of us at the bottom were careful to stay out of the rockfall zone. The sound of debris raining down on the breakdown-covered floor was unnerving. Eventually, the young woman and three men from the third group made it to the bottom, bringing with them the news that a fourth group had arrived and that Jimbo had decided not to make the drop, what with how crowded it was getting. Thus did we answer the nagging question, "How many Pine Mountain Grotto

members does it take to get one Pine Mountain Grotto member down a pit?" Five. Three of the other cavers and I went down the cave's single passage a little ways to where a low crawl led into a pretty dome with lots of flowstone. Then we climbed out in the same order we had come in.

The ascenders on my ropewalking rig just wouldn't seem to kick in, and I had to self-start almost all the way to the top. I later determined that the bungee cord was excessively stretched, as was my patience. One of the cavers from the third party had quite a time climbing out of the sink, and we all

had a moment of fright when we realized that the young woman, a novice vertical caver, had detached all but one ascender on her Mitchell system as she negotiated her way up the steep, crumbly wall of the sink.

Once we had derigged, we started the long, uphill walk back to the cars. I was in the back with the three cavers from the third party. When we were perhaps two-thirds of the way up, two teenagers roared up to us on a four-wheeler and told us to hop on. They said someone at the top of the hill had told them to come get us. We found that the four-wheeler, made for one person, would accommodate the driver and two other people, albeit in a precarious fashion that got me to thinking seriously about a certain ill-fated trip to Straight Creek (See Jimbo Helton's article, "ATV's and Caving Don't Always Mix" in Fault #4 or ask Lloyd Bunch for details). Amazingly, we made it to the top safely, and the driver headed back after the others. It turned out Jimbo had suggested only that the teenagers haul our gear up, but they had taken it upon themselves to give us a ride, as well. We took up a collection to pay for some gas for the four-

wheeler. The young men reluctantly accepted the money and told us they had just left a keg party and had decided to ride around for awhile. They then fishtailed down the mountain at high speed and in high spirits.

We changed clothes and started back down the mountain, too. Partway down, the Blazer swung a bit too wide on a switchback, skidded briefly on gravel, and bounced off a utility pole standing at the edge of an embankment. All of us agreed later it happened so fast we never even got an adrenaline rush. Unpleasant as the thought of hitting a utility pole might be, the collision had probably saved us from rolling over the embankment. Unfortunately, it had also bent the right front fender and bumper of

Jimbo's truck all the way down against the tire, effectively halting further progress toward the showers, food, and beer awaiting us back at the campsite. It was lucky for us that the second party of cavers, the young man and woman, soon came along with - what else - a come-along. With that, Jimbo was able to pull the mangled fender away from the tire and straighten the bumper some. The Blazer would require extensive and expensive repairs, but it was in good enough shape to travel.

Soon we were back in camp digging into Jim's most excellent grilled hamburgers, which, as he remarked, sure beat hospital food.

IS A PICTURE WORTH DYING FOR? TRIP REPORT BY DOUG HUFZIGER

I was on a photo hunt that Saturday morning, April 20, 1996. Cumberland Falls was having a photo contest that weekend, and we had a 30 mile radius from the park in which to take pictures. Knowing that the other photographers would be taking pictures of pretty little flowers and beautiful waterfalls, I decided to be a real man and take pictures of caves in Pulaski County.

Around 6:15 that morning we had a hell of a storm with tornadoes, hail, and very heavy rain. By the time I made it to my first cave of the day, Dyche's Bridge, I figured I was reasonably safe, being that it was noon and it hadn't rained in two hours. Besides, I wasn't going all the way in, just about 50 feet into the cave between the two entrances on the cave's eastern side. As I reached the lower entrance, I saw that there was water coming out of the cave: more than I had seen before in this normally dry cave, but not enough to worry about. I went in, rounded the curve, and had to cross a stream about two feet wide and an inch deep. I walked another 20 feet and noticed that the sound of the water was getting louder. That's when I looked down and noticed the water rising rapidly. "Holy shit!" were the only words I said aloud. I turned and started running. When I came to the point in the stream where I had crossed only seconds ago, it was now a

five-foot-wide torrent. "Die or get wet," I thought aloud. I took a step back, both my hands full of camera equipment, and jumped as far as I could, landing in water up to my knees where 30 seconds earlier the water had been only an inch deep. I ran another 20 feet to exit the cave, climbed to higher ground, and watched as the cave became totally submerged within about 30 minutes.

This was my first experience with flash flooding. I wasn't hurt, but my ego was bruised and my shoes wet. As many times as I have gone caving, my sense was that caving isn't that dangerous. This episode brought me back to reality, and, yes, caving can be dangerous. Was there a lesson learned from this little episode? **OH YES. MOST DEFINITELY. YOU BET. BUT OF COURSE.** First, a picture isn't worth dying for. Second, I shouldn't have gone into the cave by myself. Third, never go into a cave after a severe thunderstorm. Having learned these lessons, I will continue caving, but with a little more caution.

Incidentally, if you're wondering if some of my cave photos were chosen for an award, nope. Just pretty little flowers and beautiful waterfalls.

A 1903 Visit To Letcher county's Great Pine Mountain Caves

☞ *Little Known Caves Yield Much Evidence Of Pioneer Days* ☞

By Clifford Smyth-1903

(Editor's note: The following article is taken from a recent issue of *Kentucky Explorer*. Its original source was not noted there. Pine Mountain Grotto members Mike Crockett, Bob Taylor, and Andy Messer, and former PMG member Mike Warner participated in the survey of the Linefork Cave System.)

Out of the bowels of the earth in the wildest part of the Kentucky mountains, a vivid side-light has been flashed on the American Revolution, revealing some of the vicissitudes that surrounded the first patriots who followed the trail of Daniel Boone in the search of homes in the unknown regions of the great West. The story forms a chapter in some thrilling cave explorations that have just been made in the Cumberland mountain and adds one more adventurous incident to the picturesque region made famous by the coming together of the three state lines of Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee.

For years the existence of a series of caves in the limestone that caps Pine Mountain near line Fork, Letcher County, Kentucky, has been known to a few mountaineers. A number of these caves have been entered and explored for a short distance, but either the difficulty encountered was too great or the supplies for a prolonged exploration were inadequate, and so the mysterious depths beyond remained unpierced by the ray of torch or lantern. Once, ten years ago, a small party of mountaineers entered the largest cave—"Independence Cave" it is now called—determined to trace its winding halls and huge chambers to the end. For a time the progress of these explorers was successful. Then they came to a labyrinth of passages, their pine torches gave out, and when they managed to reach daylight again it was found that one of their numbers was missing.

Returning to the village, two miles below, at the foot of the mountain, a party of twenty-five men was collected and set out to search the cave. For a long time there was no trace of the missing man, and from the irresolute, appalled by the perils of the place, there was a strong movement to turn back. Finally, at what appeared to be the bottom of the cave, the lost man was found, half frozen and delirious from his terrible experience. His pine torch had gone out and for twenty-four hours he had been compelled to sit in the darkness, clinging to the hope that some of his companions would find him there. He could hear the river rushing at his feet, and knowing that he was in a part of the cave that had never been entered before, he was ignorant of what possible chasm might be yawning beneath him.

☞ **Found Ghostly Hammer In Cave Depths** ☞

While in this predicament he happened to feel along the rocks upon which he was seated, and by one of those chances that seem almost incredible, afterwards he found a large sledge hammer. Believing that he was the first to enter this part of the cave, nothing could have been more mystifying than this discovery. The impenetrable darkness, the oppressive silence broken only by the faraway murmurs of the subterranean river, and then this strange hammer thrust into his hand, as it seemed to him, by some supernatural; being, bereft him of his reason, and for years after his rescue the man



hovered on the border line of insanity. When the hammer was carried into the outer air by the rescuing party the wooden handle to which it was attached crumbled into dust, exciting still further wonder in the minds of the explorers and testifying conclusively to the great age of the find.

☞ Viewed With Dread By The Superstitious ☞

After this adventure with its nearly fatal termination, the Line Fork caves were given a wide berth. The finding of the sledge hammer remained a mystery, although numerous conjectures as to its origin were advanced, and the superstitious, of whom there are a plenty in the Kentucky mountains, shook their heads over the whole matter, declaring it the better part of wisdom to leave the problem of the caves unsolved—and so, indeed, it has remained for ten years. Hearing the strange story, however, I determined to take a peep at the interior of the mysterious mountain, all ghosts, hobgoblins and genii to the contrary, if they chose to be contrary, and in carrying out my plan I was fortunate enough to enlist the services of the young fellow who was lost in the cave ten years ago, Paris Holcombe, and, his father, Ol Holcombe.

☞ A Final Exploration Is Made ☞

It was early morning when we reached the mouth of Independence Cave, opening on a narrow ledge of sandstone in the topmost cliff of Pine Mountain. Had it not been for the strong current of cold air that came from it, keeping the surrounding foliage in perpetual motion, one would never have suspected this narrow fissure in the rock marked the entrance to a subterranean world whose labyrinths would take days and even weeks to explore. For a distance of a hundred yards, lying flat on the ground in complete darkness, we worked our way slowly along the rough floor of this entering passage into the first chamber of the cave. Here the roof rose abruptly some fifty feet above us, and it

was a relief, after the coffin-like contraction of the cave's first passage-way, to stand up, to light our miner's lamps and find space enough about us for a regiment to perform its evolutions. The boulders that strewed the floor of this first room, however, would have broken the ranks of the best soldiery, and our first progress was by no means on the double quick.

☞ Underground River ☞

Two miles from the entrance we reached what appeared to be the lowest level of the cave. Here, for the first time, we came in contact with the architect of all this dark wilderness, the subterranean river that ages ago hollowed out the chambers through which we had been groping our way 500 feet above its present channel. Here sparkling white walls, with nodules of iron projecting from their smooth surface, gave place to the black rock to which we had been accustomed. For a time we were compelled to wade in the river, which, thanks to the dryness of the season, was not more than waist deep, but of the same wintry temperature that was maintained through-out the cave.

For a distance of three miles, we followed one passageway along this lower level to a point where the river disappeared, and our path wound up abruptly into a queer little "Ghost Chamber," studded with stalactites, where each miner's lamp, for some occult reason, appeared to give a double flame. The scenery along this last three miles of our journey was far more varied and majestic than the two miles of roughs that led to it. Travel was comparatively easy, taking us over a level ground of soft gravel from one spacious chamber to another, whose glittering walls and magnificent heights defy description.

☞ An Immense Gave Of Five Storics ☞

At last we reached Lost Hill, the spot where Paris had spent a melancholy twenty-four hours in darkness and picked up the mysterious sledge-hammer ten years ago. No one had ventured thither since then, and the problem of the sledge-hammer was still unsolved. Lost Hill is in the largest chamber of the cave, and as we found out by an exploration made the next day, is connected by means of a well measuring 200 yards with another cave called The Dungeon, lying above Independence Cave. As a matter of fact, the latter is in the main and lowest cave of a series of five, all of which are undoubtedly connected, although having separate openings in the limestone cliff overhanging Pine Mountain. Three of these caves, besides Independence Cave, were known before the present exploration was made, i.e., the Dungeon Cave, the Buckeye Cave and the Water Cave, from which Peter Creek finally leaves its dark workhouse and greets the daylight. The fourth, Patriot's Cave, was discovered and explored immediately after our exploration of Independence Cave. It is next to the latter in size and superior to it in beauty, culminating in a vast dome hung with stalactites, beneath which yawns a pit like the crater of a volcano, into which the explorer descends by a giant's stairway flanked by huge stalagmites, the whole forming one of the most magnificent scenes in cave history. But to return to Lost Hill and the sledge-hammer.

☞ The Cluc To The Mystery ☞

In the lofty ceiling of the chamber containing Lost Hill is the well opening into Dungeon Cave. In a corner of the same chamber is a pile of loose rock reaching up to and joining a low part of the ceiling and suggesting that here was at one time a passageway that probably gave practicable means of communication between the two caves. In the Dungeon Cave itself, not far from the well, are the remains of some huge "hoppers" of drying furnaces. What they were

used for and when and by whom they were built no one of this generation can tell. Nor did the mountaineers connect the sledge hammer found in Independence Cave with these old works in the Dungeon, since the two were supposed to be distinct and miles apart until the present exploration proved the contrary. But with the finding of the well and the broken up passages between caves, the hoppers above and the sledge-hammer below, the connection was evident and we set about looking for further "signs" in the chamber adjoining Lost Hill.

Fortunately for the interests of history, a mark once made thousands of feet under the ground will remain undisturbed for centuries, and it was not long before we found a bank of brown and white earth showing plentiful marks of pick and spade. Examining and tasting this earth we found it to be almost pure saltpeter. Here, then, was the connection, the clue we were looking for. Independence Cave had been entered from the Dungeon at some former period and used as a saltpeter mine in the making of gunpowder. The saltpeter had been drawn up through the well connecting the two caves and dried in the hoppers above. But when and by whom?

☞ In The Days Of Washington and Boone ☞

"I knows who made that thar hammer 'at Paris foun' hyah," declared old man Holcombe. "Hit wore my great-great-gran'ther, Sol Cornet.. He kem fum Car'lina somers night th' yeah 1780 atter Da'l Boone passed th'ought hyah. Sol Cornet wore th' fust settler en these hyah parts, an' he wore a blacksmith, an'the' on'y blacksmith'at ever lived en Line Fork. Hit were his hammer, shore, They ain't no other hammer like hit made in this hyah day an' time. I've heerd my gran'pap say as heow they was no eend o'fightin'wi'th' Injuns en them days, an'heow powder were sca'ce. Yo'see, when th'Rev'lution broke out an' Wasin'ton were a fightin' fer the'kentry over yonder, th'English in Ohio sent th'red devil'd down hyah ter smoke out th'settlers'at had jest diskivered th'mountaings o' Kaintuck. I've heerd gran'pap yarnin'bout hit,

an' hit are writ in hist'ry books, too. They fit hard, yo' bet, en thet thar war, an' they warnt much gun-powder an' no place ter buy hit like they are now. An' thet's heow my great-great-gran'ther, th' black-smith, an'

t'other settlers, kem perspectin'fer this hyah 'peter. Hyah be their marks. Up yander's th' hoppers en th' dungeon, an' en my house yo' kin see th' old hammer o' his'n plain as daylight. My gran'daddy plum fergot ter tell o' this hyah cave, I reckon, en' hit hev been shut up a powerful spell, an' folkses have said 'at hit were hanted by th' devil. But thar's th'writen' en th'-ground' an'th'rocks, an' they kaint lie; an' whar we stan' ter day, Sol Cornett en' t'other settlers stud makin' powder en th' days when th'Injuns en' th' English was a aggeravatin' them an' th' hul kentry."

How much of the cave those old patriots explored in their fight for liberty there is no telling. Probably the finding of the saltpeter mine, as it was the means of preserving their settlements from extermination, satisfied their thirst for cave discovery.

⚔ Greater Than The Mammoth Cave? ⚔

We spent nine hours exploring five miles of Independence Cave, and although we went three miles further than anyone else



Bob Taylor, Jeff Josefoski, and Bob Deveis prepare to rappel into the pit in the Dungeon, Linefork Cave.

since the days of the Revolution, we know that we saw only a small portion of the vast network of passages and chambers through which Peter Creek has hewn its way in the limestone of Pine Mountain. Thirty miles from the entrance of Independence Cave are the

headwaters of Cumberland River in Pine Mountain. It has been noticed, time and again, that any rise or fall in the Cumberland is immediately duplicated in Peter Creek, and this to such an extent that the origin of the latter from the source of the Cumberland seems well established. The limestone formation of Pine Mountain extends continuously from the Cumberland's source to the mouth of Independence Cave, and as Peter Creek is nowhere seen above ground until it tumbles out of this limestone cliff into the Line Fork, there is every reason to believe that it has hollowed out a great subterranean passage for itself thirty miles in extent. When the complete clue to the under-ground wilderness is discovered, Independence Cave, the place where the Revolutionary patriots of Kentucky made their powder, might eclipse the Mammoth Cave.

TRIP REPORT ON SHIP CAVE

by Kenneth and Lisa Storey

1st trip: 1993

John Taylor
Debbie Smith
Lisa Storey
Ken Storey

2nd trip: 1994

John Taylor David Jackson
Jim West Ken Storey
Tina McKay Lisa Storey
Andy Messer

This trip report is more about the events which took place just to find this cave than it is about the actual cave. Also, this is my first attempt at writing a trip report, so bear with me. (With a lot of help from Lisa, the rewrite flows a lot better.)

The search for Ship Cave actually started at the annual TAG meet in 1993 (this was Lisa's and my first TAG). Not really knowing anyone, Lisa and I were very glad to finally find John Taylor. John was a good friend of my father's and we had gone on a few caving trips before with him. He had told us he would be at TAG, so we kept a lookout for him (we found him the next morning sleeping in his car). Over breakfast we discussed which cave to do. John suggested a cave that he remembered having a very photogenic stream entrance, Ship Cave. He knew the area and had the maps, so it was decided - we journey to Ship Cave. Joining us was a recently made cave friend, Debbie Smith of the Huntsville Grotto.

The four of us set out for Tennessee in two cars. Riding north of Chattanooga, we found ourselves on the wrong state road. After some study of several of John's endless supply of maps, John determined that the state rerouted the state road since the directions he had were written. With that figured out, we back tracked and found the old state road and followed the cave directions (as with all cave directions, accuracy is not the rule). We found our road turning into a "logging road" which seemed more like a dry stream bed (which it also probably was). Since we were in cars with low clearance, we were reduced to a slow crawl. We stopped at one point to put out a camp fire that someone had left smoldering. By now, we were wondering if we were going to run out of time (It seems that most cave trips are 90% just getting to the cave, and 10% actually caving.). On the road again, we drove until we came to a wide stream which we could ford if we had 4WD vehicles. We parked and geared up. John was sure that we were within short walking range to the

cave. We crossed the stream and began walking... and walking... and walking. It was a nice walk, but we couldn't find the right turn off. We started up a smaller stream bed, thinking that it led to the cave. After more walking and climbing over boulders, we found a cave but it wasn't Ship Cave. This cave was very small and had no stream coming out. Well a cave is a cave is a cave and it was beginning to rain. To add to all of our troubles, as I was preparing to take a picture of the entrance, I dropped my camera, jamming the shutter. The cave was small with hands and knees crawling through smooth tunnels that appeared to have been heavily influenced by flooding. We explored the cave for about a half an hour. We then resumed the search for Ship cave. It had stopped raining, thank goodness for small favors. After another half hour of stop and go hiking along the dry stream bed, we decided to give up and start back to the campsite. Ship Cave would have to wait till another time.

The weekend was not a total loss. Sunday we went to a cave west of Sequoia Caverns that we actually knew where it was. Sauta Cave was once quarried for guano but is now a protected cave for bats. This was also our first cave with Jim West, Jimbo and Andy. Afterwards, it was dinner at the Olive Garden (without benefit of a wash up and where the tables were turned on a joke played on the waitress - Ask Jim West). So ended our first attempt to find Ship Cave.

Later on, John found more current directions for Ship Cave along with a topo map showing Ship Cave. This only made us even more determined to find the elusive cave.

1994 would prove to be a good caving year for us. We met up again with members of PMG, went to our first OTR (didn't cave but had a great time), and returned to TAG we had one more try at finding the Mystical Ship Cave. This time we had reinforcements. Joining John Taylor, Lisa and myself would be other PMG members: Andy Messer, Tina McKay, David Jackson, and Old Yellow Hat - Jim West.

Just as before, we drove north of Chattanooga on an old state road until we met the logging road (I think someone had laid new rock down because it seemed a little smoother. Still no 4WD vehicles.). Stopping at that same wide stream, we suited up and started walking, this time with more determination to find this cave. Also, we had a true trail blazer in Jim West. We returned to the general area where we got lost last year. Jim, after studying the more current directions, started off through the woods with David Jackson right behind him. The rest of us decided to just stay put and wait... and wait. For a while we thought we had failed again. Then we heard Jim shout that he had found the cave. The rest of us went in the direction of Jim's shouts, and sure enough, we came out of the woods to a high cliff face with a cave entrance about a third of the way up. A stream came out at a lower level from the base of the cliff face. It was a beautiful sight. Definitely photo worthy.

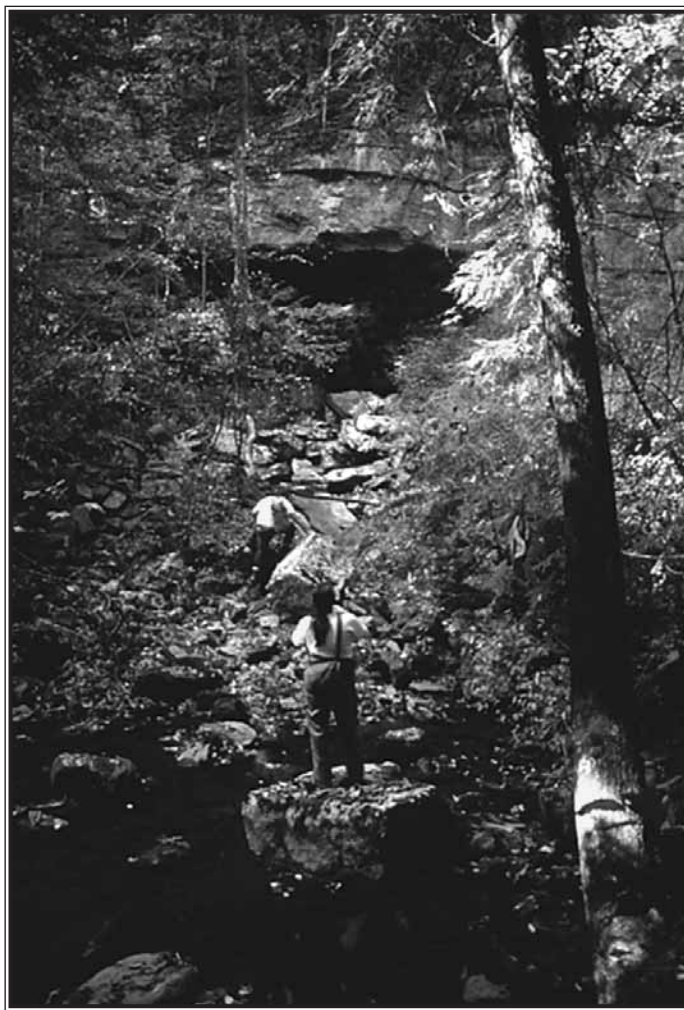
We made our way up the breakdown to the cave entrance and we prepared to go in. By the by, this would be Tina's first cave trip, but she was well prepared with a brand new wheat lamp (which came in handy later on the trip). Jim West and David Jackson were the first to go in. The rest of us followed, after taking some more photographs. The cave entrance was wide and sloped steeply down. After about 10ft. of stooping passage, the cave opened up into a larger passage with some breakdown. This was a year and a half ago, so the details are fuzzy. Off towards the left, the passage continued, sloping upwards. It was an easy walking passage. To the right was a crevice showing a lower stream passage. The stream was running against the cave wall. I remember the stream passage not looking easily accessible. So, we followed the easy walking passage.

We continued along the passage with no difficulty for a while until it opened up into a very large and impressive room with breakdown. There was a lot of breakdown, some bats, and very few formations. Here's where Tina's new lamp came in handy. Jim West, wanting a better view of a far off formation maneuvered Tina's lamp (along with her head) in that direction. Tina literally became the spotlight of attention. At this point, those with cameras (most of us including myself) began to set up some photo shots. Unfortunately, Jim's camera's battery gave out. Off to one side of this large room was a very steep slope which led back down to the lower stream passage. However, because of unstable breakdown, the stream could not be reached. But with a little back

tracking, an easier access the stream level was found.

Of our group, Jim, John, Lisa, and I decided to follow the stream passage. We followed it to a point where we had to stoop and wade (only ankle deep) through a very short passage (see cover drawing). It immediately opened up to an even larger breakdown room. We climbed to the top of a huge mound of breakdown. On the other side of this breakdown mound, we could see the stream below continuing into a massive wall of breakdown off in the distance (even without Tina's lamp, we could see the wall). Lisa and I climbed down to the stream and followed the stream into this breakdown wall. The stream was flanked on one side by the cave wall and by breakdown on the other side and above. Shell fossils covered the cave wall. This small pas-

sage constricted even more till we could go no further. We returned back to Jim and John who were patiently waiting for us at the top of the breakdown. Together we met back up with the rest of the group, who were also patiently waiting.

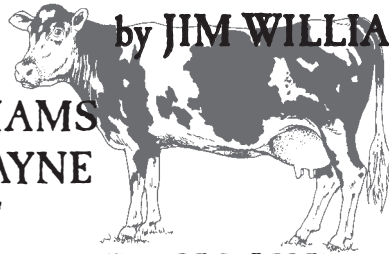


Entrance to Ship Cave

"DEAD COWS AND THEY ARE NOT WALKING"

by JIM WILLIAMS

JIM WILLIAMS
SCOTT PAYNE
JIM WEST



DOUG HUFZIGER

LONNIE WILSON
ANDY MESSER
JIMBO HELTON

COWS, COWS, COWS, Well that seems to be a hot topic in the news lately; with "Mad-Cow" disease In Britain, and with Cavin Cave In Lee Co., Va. The entrance to this cave is in a cow pasture in the bottom of a 40ft sinkhole. To get into the cave, you have to climb down into the sinkhole to the entrance (the sinkhole is so steep you almost need a belay), then you have to get down on your hands and knees and crawl under a ledge six to seven feet to a drop-off and then rappel down 23 feet, all while a small water fall rains down on you. (I bet you can see where this story is going).

On December 11, 1994, there was a surveying trip to Cavin Cave. I did not make this trip, but I talked to Lonnie Wilson the next day and was asking him how the surveying went. He said the trip went really well and that they surveyed so many feet - bla, bla, bla - and that there was a dead calf down inside the cave and it was really nasty and stunk really bad. Well, by not being there myself, I didn't think much about this dead calf. Then on January 14, 1995, I finally made a trip to Cavin Cave.



Entrance to Cavin Cave at the bottom of a 40ft sinkhole.

As we drove to the cave, everybody was wondering if the calf would still be there. Still, I didn't think much about it. At least until I was actually in the cave and had to step over this carcass of a dead calf. This was a bad thing. Lonnie was correct in saying the smell was bad. I coughed and gagged all the way up Bone Alley. I Just knew I was going to lose it. That

was the only bad thing about the trip, except of course the trip back over it, which was just as bad as the trip in. I'm the type of person who doesn't like to eat driving down the Interstate because I lose my appetite at the sight of road kill, so you could say I have a very weak stomach.

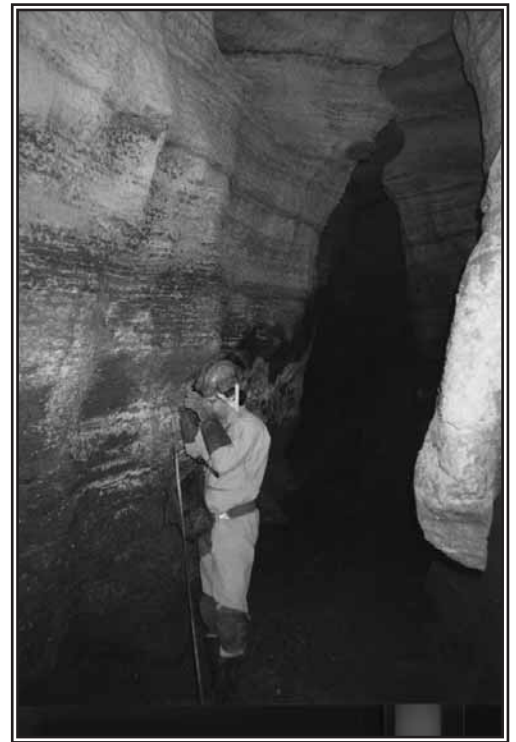
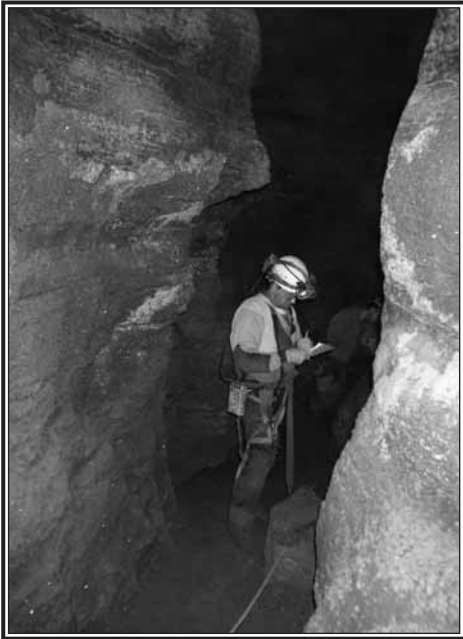
CABBAGE ? Now there was another trip to Cavin on March 16, 1996. Jim West and I were rigging the drop. I was laying down the padding for the lip and then ran the rope over the edge while Jim tied off the rope. Then I yelled out to Jim, " Hey Jim, Can I rappel down?" to which he answered "HUH? " (of course) and I had to repeat myself. "No, I'm

not finished yet !" he finally answered. So I just kind of hung out under the lip, waiting patiently to rappel. While I sat there waiting, I started looking around. I noticed this round thing with what looked like cabbage on top. I investigated this item more closely and discovered that it was a bone.

Well then I got to looking around and saw all kinds of bones with fur ! I was sitting on top of a dead cow I It didn't smell bad because it was cool outside. But I was out of

there I could not believe it, of all the people it had to happen to -ME !it just figures. So to get in to the cave you had to crawl over the top of the dead cow. Jim West, Andy Messer, and Doug Hufziger were this trip. They just laughed.

It didn't seem to bother them at all, so I let them go first.



Top: Andy inspecting a formation; Right: Jim Willams using a tape measure to get the distance of a passage. Bottom: Jim West kissing up to a section of wall known as the Tunnel of Love; Left: Jim West writing down vital information on this section of cave passage.

Then it was my turn. I was not looking forward to this. But I did manage to get through it although it wasn't very enjoyable. We surveyed for eleven hours that day. And at the end of the trip I had the dead cow to look forward to again. I think I would have rather crawled back up Lost Caver's Crawl than to go through this again !

DAMMIT DOUG Poor Doug. It seems he always has a rough way to go. Let me explain. As I said before, I did not look forward to climbing out of the cave over the dead cow, so I prolonged the inevitable and decided to let Doug go first. Doug was climbing out and about 14 feet up his gear jammed. He was in the area I call the stink zone. This is where you could really smell the dead cow. While dangling there in the stink zone, poor Doug was also taking a shower under the water that runs off the dead cow. While I felt sorry for Doug, I was also laughing to myself and thankful it was not me.

I don't think that I was the only one the dead cow got to, because Jim West proposed that on the next trip we put up a fence around the sinkhole. So on March 30, 1996, there was another trip. I didn't make this trip but Jim West, Andy Messer, Jimbo Helton and Scott Payne started fencing and got it half-way finished. A couple of weeks later, on April 13, 1996, Jim West, Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, and myself went back to Cavin Cave. We finished the fencing job. Jim West even put this fancy gate up. This fence was a very good

idea for a couple reasons. One - It keeps the cows from falling in and, Two - it was good for landowner relations. Mr. Cavin sure did appreciate the fencing job. And I'm sure that the cows did, too. I know I did !

By the way, as of April 27, 1996, the cow was still there.

THE END



Jim Williams, NSS 39063

NOTE: Cavin Cave is now up to 6,500 feet in length and nearly 200 feet in depth.



HAIL CAVE, STYKES CAVE, PULASKI COUNTY, KENTUCKY



March 23, 24, 1996
Greg Cotterman
Harry Goepel
Lou Simpson
Bruce Warthman



SCOOP FEVER

With visions of a big scoop in our heads, the four of us planned to return again to the Googol section of Hail Cave. We planned to dig in both ends of the passage beyond the Jail Bars, map more of the area, and try a sound connection with the Googol Room by placing my 108 decibel personal alarm in the dig at the left end of the Beyond the Jail Bars (Prison?) passage. Harry wanted to work on the short-term dig at the right end of the passage. I was motivated to start digging on the more difficult lead to the left, where the airflow goes. Harry said something about not wanting to disturb the breakdown there because it looked like it could come down on you, but I hadn't seen what he was referring to. We considered camping at Bee Rock, a nearby Daniel Boone National Forest campground, near to the cave area, but Bruce had a cold so we reserved a room at the Best Western in London, KY. It has an indoor heated pool and jacuzzi and there are nearby restaurants. The campground has pit toilets, I recall.

Saturday, March 23 dawned cold and sunny. We traveled in two vehicles and stopped at Jean's Restaurant in Mt Vernon, KY for a second breakfast. In the parking lot we encountered Scott Sweet, whose group of Pathfinder teens had just emerged from a cave down the hill from the restaurant. Scott gave me a digging tool that was a knife with a hooked end. It looked like something to stab and disembowel with. It was razor sharp. "This is the best digging tool, Lou! You can have this one for your dig in Hail."

Inside Jean's, cavers outnumbered normal people. Craig Ham was there with about ten from his outdoor club. Jim Odom, and Bill Carr

and a lady were there too. Jim and Scott's group were planning to look for entrances in a hanging valley. It sounded so nice, I was tempted to go along, but didn't want to delay the big scoop in Hail. Craig's large group planned to tour Teamer's and other Rockcastle County classics. We finished our eggs, biscuits, gravy, sausage, grits, juice, and coffee and continued down the four-lane. At Bee Rock we turned to check out the campground. It was closed. Good thing we weren't staying there. But it was sunny, the birds were singing, and there were cave cars at Wells Cave and at Farmer Cave. Would we be alone at Hail? Cavers were everywhere and all seemed well with the world and we were gonna scoop.

"BUT THERE'S A DARKER SIDE, NOT SO BRIGHTLY LIT"

At the crossroad called Hail, we were shocked to see that the familiar old one-room church had burned to the ground since our previous trip on March 3. Now the directions to the cave will be to turn just past where the church used to be. We parked near the cave and got ready. Pointing at the right rear tire of my car, Harry said, "Your tire's low, Lou." I wasn't too concerned, but then, this was only the second bad omen. I brought a 50-foot rope to try to rig a handline so we could stay dry getting into the cave. We gathered our gear and walked merrily toward the huge main entrance, since Greg hadn't seen it. We toured the series of karst windows, trying to keep as dry as we could. When we reached the Googol entrance, really a separate cave, I started in with the rope. Then my Wheat lamp, which had worked thus far, stubbornly refused to light. I took it off the belt and got out my second source, a TAG light. I attempted to rig a hand line in a

couple places, but didn't do it with much thought. People don't like it when I rig vertical caves either. I managed to stay dry until the last climb down to rocks in the stream, then I slipped in with my left leg up to the crotch. Everybody else succeeded in staying drier than I did.

Now I realized that I had not brought my personal alarm for the sound connection. Bruce was still at the entrance and returned to my car to get it. While waiting on him to return, my TAG light suddenly seemed dimmer. I took it off and fooled with it, but the light was definitely much dimmer than usual. "When TAG lights get dim they go out soon," Harry commented. OK, I got out my third source of light, a MegaPetzl. Although I didn't have an extra set of batteries, Harry had plenty. The Petzl worked pretty well except whenever I bumped the battery case, which was every other step. Harry suggested that I should not keep batteries in the lamp between trips so the springs stay springy and file the corrosion off the contacts. I'm thinking a strong rubber band around the battery case might help.

I gave Harry and Greg my hammer and chisel and one of the two trowels so they could proceed to the right side dig. I noticed that the hammer was one that had a short handle. Harry said he had my real hammer at home from last trip. Evidently he carried it out three weeks earlier. When Bruce returned, we entered the side lead and started mapping a couple shots from before the Jail Bars, tying in the previous survey to known stations. When I reached in my pack for the survey gear, my hand came out bloody. I had stabbed myself with the "scalpel," as Scott's gift digging tool became known. I smeared one side of a survey card with blood and contemplated using it to take notes, but then I became concerned about the blood loss and applied pressure to stop the bleeding. I did note the blood type of B positive on the note card.

After tying in the survey beyond the Jail Bars, Bruce and I quickly crawled the remaining five stations to the dig and mapped the last two shots. Bruce started digging in the sandy trench on the left side and below the floor slab. To keep warm, I excavated a path to the right wall to investigate a ceiling crack. It didn't open up. My Petzl

was continuing to blink on and off a lot, so I fired up my white cyalume. It didn't seem to work. When Bruce tired of digging, I took a turn. After a while I asked Bruce to see if Harry and Greg would let us use the hammer. He got it and I entered the upper level of the dig, sandwiched between the floor and ceiling slabs. I could only advance one of the two body lengths to the frontier, so I started trying to dislodge small breakdown blocks on the right side. I took the hammer and swung it forcefully against a key rock on the right, smashing the SHIT out of my right thumb against the rock.

Soon I had excavated some room there, but one persistent rock refused to budge. Hammering on it repeatedly, I did break part of it off, but the rest was strangely tight between the ceiling and the floor. You know, you don't always think clearly when you're hot and sweaty and crammed into a tight space. I continued to hammer on this rock. Suddenly, two vertical slabs of rock peeled off the opposite wall beyond my feet. "What caused that?" I wondered, and then the thought started to form in my feeble brain, "THE CEILING IS MOVING!" I grabbed the tools and scooted out of the sandwich. The two fallen slabs were surprisingly large!

We set the alarm and returned to the Jail Bar junction. I returned the hammer to Greg. Harry said, "Next time, bring your own hammer." Bruce and I descended into the lower level and sloshed through the cold water to the Googol Room, listening for the alarm. We couldn't hear it after we passed the Jail Bars, and not after that either. We went all the way to the dig at the far right end of the Googol Room, which is 600 feet long, not 300 feet at I previously reported. The map is plotted at 100 feet to the inch. Even so, the Hail System map is eight feet long.

SCOOP

Bruce's cold was getting worse, so he left the cave, giving me his flashlight. I joined Harry and Greg and helped hammer on the ceiling rock at their dig. Harry had retrieved the alarm, but didn't know how to turn it off, so he was leaving it there when I returned and explained to him how to insert the plug. I thought I had lost the

scalpel, but Harry didn't see it in the dig and nobody wanted to risk crawling under the unstable ceiling slab. In their dig, Harry and Greg had excavated mud from the floor until they hit rock. I helped hammer on the bottom edge of a ceiling slab lodged vertically in a crack. The hammering paid off, and Harry eventually wiggled through feet first. He scooped about 60 feet of passage, including a room he could sit up in. He said it would take maybe seven survey stations to map what he saw. Harry said it seemed like he was near the surface.

We left the cave. Since I was already wet, I helped Harry and Greg stay dry since they hadn't brought a second pair of boots for a Sunday trip. I offered piggy back rides, but they settled for an occasional hand hold on my shoulder. After a while I couldn't feel the pain of the cold water. My car's tire was flatter. Greg saved the day by having an electric pump. It was too late to go ridge walking, although I'd like to climb to the saddle south of Googol to see what must be a spectacular overlook of Lake Cumberland. With the tire restored to plump roundness and the feeling restored in my feet, we motored to London, noting that the cave cars at Farmer and Wells were gone. We checked into our accommodations, took showers, ate spaghetti and the salad bar at the motel restaurant fifty feet from our room, and luxuriated in the pool and hot tub. Leaning back in the jacuzzi, Greg said, "You DUG cavers sure know how to camp." By 10:30, we were in bed with lights out. I guess we were real tired. In fact, we thought we might not go caving on Sunday, but instead visit cave owners. I didn't even bother to charge my lights. Harry kept bumping into my feet during the night (I was sleeping on the floor) and waking me. "Sleep on your side. You're snoring." I was wearing a Breathe Right, but it was more like a Snore Right tonight. I didn't sleep well. My arms hurt and I kept imagining being trapped between the ceiling and floor slabs, like the peanut butter and jelly in a sandwich. Perhaps I would have been the first to be rescued in pieces, with body parts removed and reassembled later. In my despair, I might have contemplated opening my veins with the scalpel.

"YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WALK ALL THE WAY"

Things looked more hopeful on Sunday. After a good breakfast, I found that my Wheat lamp now worked perfectly. I even took apart the battery cover to check for a loose wire, borrowing a screw driver from Greg's well-equipped truck. I found the scalpel in the bottom of my pack, where I'd probably placed it so I would be less likely to get sliced again. We thought we'd like to go caving after all, and the plan had been to go to Stykes, the cave I write fiction about, but it really exists, trust me. The fictional Uncle Seymour is lost in another dimension beyond the Disappearing Canyon, the narrow crack at the junction of Main St. and 25th Ave that mysteriously gets bigger only during a full moon. Today it was probably just the tight crack that threatened to trap me in 1974 when I was "Stuck in Stykes." Reaching the cave after a scenic drive and a couple miles of hiking, our plan was to visit the right end of 25th, a 675 foot straight joint two feet wide, and try to extend it. Harry was interested in returning to Stykes, since he hadn't gotten to see much of it last year because the soaking rain made him too cold to stay very long.

When we reached 25th, I told of being able to see a light all the way from the end and said, "I don't remember what it's like to go through it, but I think you won't be able to walk all the way. I'll stay here at Disappearing Canyon so we can see how far away we can still see each others' lights." Bruce said the passage also has interesting acoustical properties. He was right. I could hear the other three crawling all the way to the end and even hear them talking. I could understand an occasional word. I could hear hammering. For entertainment, I crawled to the other end of the passage, 170 feet the other direction. It ended in breakdown fill, but the breakdown was coming from a higher level than I had seen on the way to the end. This end probably is near the surface of the valley where the entrance is located. The other end, where the other cavers were hammering, is far along the ridge, just 200 feet from a 27-foot pit entrance named Pot o'Gold.

I found it difficult to catch my breath in the shorter end of 25th, and when I returned to the junction at Disappearing Canyon (a tight crack, sure enough), I started getting nervous when I thought I heard periodic sighs, as if someone were stuck. After a while, I heard rhythmic tapping, probably Bruce, and that calmed me down. If somebody were stuck, he wouldn't be playing. It didn't sound like SOS. More like TAP TAP tap-tap TAP. When the three started back I turned out my light and watched for their lights. Soon I saw a point of light, appearing not to move, like a star. I turned my light on so they could see it too. Many minutes later, I saw two lights, then three, and they did move around a small amount. I was relieved to not be alone any more in this creepy place. Harry laughed and said, "Now I understand what you meant when you told us 'You won't be able to walk all the way.' It was all crawling."

THE SUCK-INS KEEP ON COMIN'

We toured the more spacious lower-numbered avenues, stopping briefly where Fred Zuck and I had started digging at the end of 6th Ave., another point in the cave that is only 200 feet from Pot o'Gold. We came out of the cave into the glorious early afternoon. "I'd like to check an entrance I found last spring when I was looking for Stykes," I told the others. I think I can find it. They agreed to follow, and I led them down the side valley, reaching a place where water comes out of an apparently artificial wall and sinks soon after. This wasn't the cave I had in mind, but a bit later, fighting our way through the brambles and fallen trees, nasty already even though the leaves weren't out yet, Harry spotted an orange ribbon I had tied to a tree. This was indeed my entrance. "It's a stoopwalk at first," I told Harry. Harry entered and soon called for Bruce to follow. Greg decided to enter as well. I told Greg I would remain on the surface and ridgewalk for half an hour. "Somebody should stay topside since nobody knows where this entrance is," I explained.

I raced on down the valley and located two more possibilities. By the time I finally got back 45 minutes later, the others were out. I was hot from the hike. Harry was standing outside the

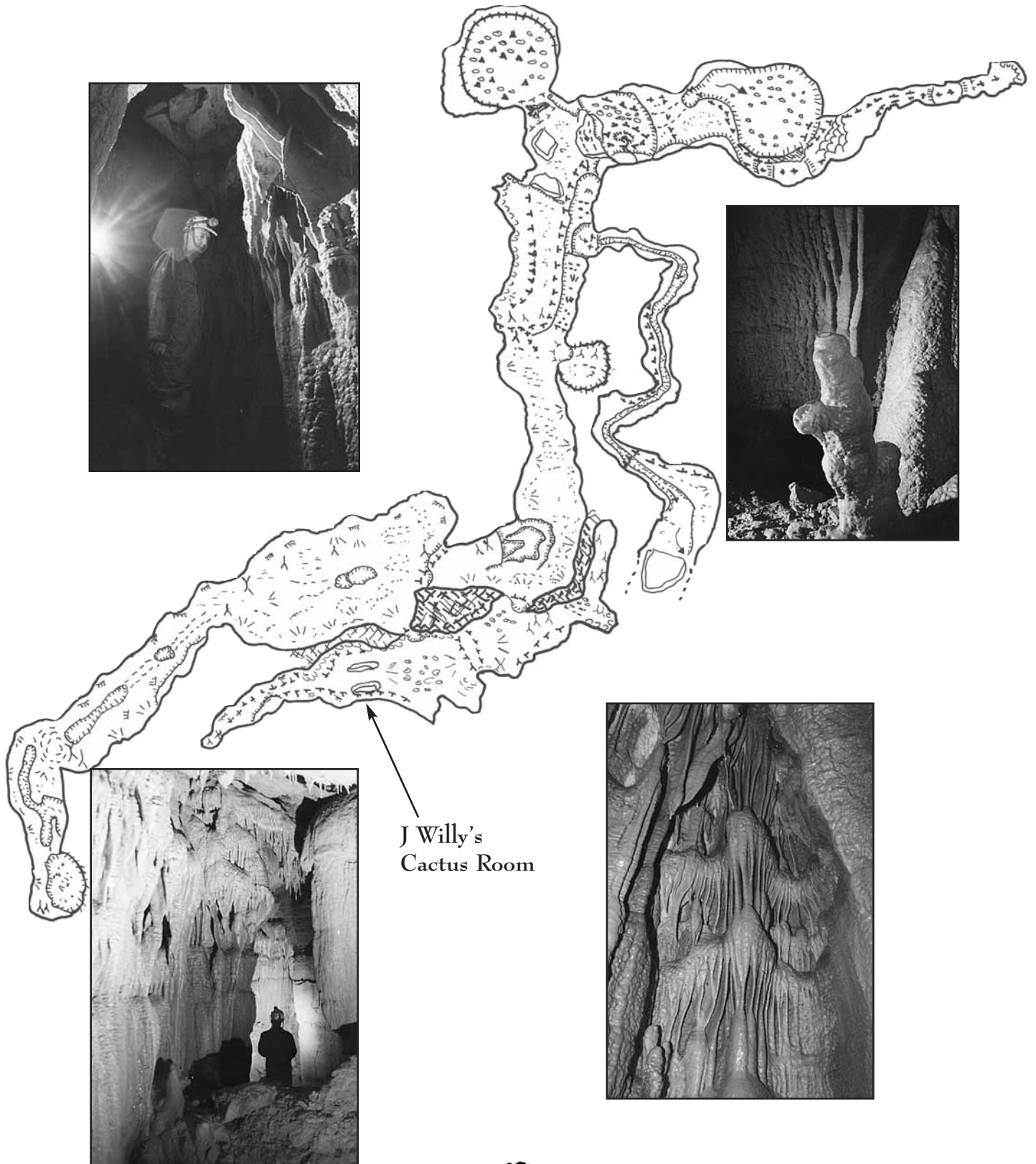
entrance with his shirt off. He said, "The cave was real wet and low. It wasn't stoopwalk. It seemed to go straight into the ridge, but it got too low."

I enticed Bruce and Greg to follow me to the two additional entrances. One was a blowing hole in a limestone cliff about 40 feet above the valley floor. Bruce said it was blocked by breakdown, but confirmed that it blew cold air. Bruce checked the other lead also, an eight-foot climb down into a steep sinkhole on the bottom of the valley at the edge. There was a sump under a limestone ledge. We packed up and headed out of the gorge, a miniature version of the Obey Gorge in Tennessee. After wandering around in some dense briars, we found the water coming out of an artificial wall and soon, the Stykes entrance. We followed our ribbon-marked trail back to the jeep trail at the arched tree and finally walked the last mile on the trail to our cars. The puddles looked fairly intimidating and I was glad we hadn't tried to drive the trail today. The unreliable tire on my car was still OK.

We met on the way home at Hardees in Renfro Valley and again at my home in Cincinnati. When everybody departed, I decided not to clean my gear. I was too tired. I found a tick on my wrist. Spring must be here. My thumb continues to bleed. There's a big black clot under it. Found a few splinters from the brambles. I've got a cough that I might have picked up from one of the others. It was a rough trip. I think the stress at work predisposed me to self-destructive behavior. Caving meets that need, it seems.

Maybe we can get back into the Cedar Creek gorge before the season gets too advanced. There's potential there for more entrances, who knows? I plotted the Hail survey data and realized that the Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich (Solitary Confinement?) is headed back toward and over the stream passage. Perhaps the airflow goes to the upper entrance. The map shows a lead heading toward it from that entrance. Now I'm curious about the maze of lower level passages that aren't mapped in the area. A good place to scoop is the first side lead you come to, since everybody ignores it and plunges deeper into the cave.

(Editor's note: A draft map of Pruitt's Pit Cave by Jim West, a trip report by Jim Jackson, and a description by Andy Messer appeared in *Fault #4*. Jim West, Jim Williams, Lonnie and Jeannie Wilson, Doug Hufziger, Tina McKay, and Andy Messer recently returned to the cave to finish the survey, and Jim West completed a final draft of the map. Photos of J. Willy's Cactus Room were taken by Doug Hufziger and Jim West.



Stykes Cave Goes Underground

By Lou Simpson

February 24, 1996

When Cherie Shroyer returned to work in mid-March last year, two weeks later than I expected, I wasn't the only one who was confused. She told me that when she and Kara Newfield had gone back to Stykes Cave to recover her lost adapter for her laptop computer, they failed to find it at the top of the Pit of No Return and returned to her car. The battery was dead, so they waited until light and called Triple-A. Then they went on to the computer conference in Atlanta, as they had planned, but they must have gotten the dates mixed up, because they were told it was the previous month--in February. "But this is February," Kara said, "I don't understand." "No, it's March 15," the snooty receptionist at the convention center said. "Where have you been, in a cave or something?" Bewildered, they returned to Ohio, where relatives and friends were relieved that they had returned.

"Maybe you were abducted by aliens," I joked. "I'm not kidding, Lou," Cherie insisted, "we came out the next day and can't account for the lost time." We eventually got permission for her to use sick leave for the extra time off, but we were all uneasy about the situation. Cherie seemed distracted and tended to keep to herself, with her office door closed.

I was eager to return to Stykes to continue our exploration. This cave obsessed me last year, with the possibility of finding out what happened to my uncle, Martin Seymour Lewis, whose pack I had found at the entrance. But each time I tried to go

there in the spring of 1995, I couldn't find the entrance. A dense jungle had grown up and on one of my solo attempts to relocate the cave, I got very scratched up and dehydrated. I did find a pit, however. Finally, Jim West was able to show Bruce Warthman and me the entrance and I marked the way with orange flagging tape. On that trip, Jim Williams climbed down the new pit, which I named Pot o'Gold, and he said it appeared to continue. Strangely, when I returned a week later, many of the markers were lying on the ground, apparently chewed off by deer. Each time I located Disappearing Canyon in Stykes Cave, it was the usual impassable narrow crack. In mid-June I took a group to explore Pot o'Gold. This marked the beginning of a series of bizarre injuries that distracted me and my colleagues from attempting another full moon trip to



Disappearing Canyon. While exploring the bottom of Pot o'Gold, Jim Odom fell head-first and suffered a deep cut on his buttocks. Harry Goepel and I injured our wrists while digging in Enchanted Forest, trying to extend Wolf River Cave. I still experience numbness in my right wrist. In November I tripped in the same cave and fell headlong into a breakdown hole, lacerating my shins but otherwise unin-

jured. In January, 1996 Scott Sweet suffered the most bizarre injury of all, when he apparently fainted after taking a leak and fell, cutting his upper lip bad enough to require plastic surgery. One is reminded of Jim Odom's similar experience in 1994 when he fell through a hole in the floor in the Sloan's Valley fieldhouse barn after relieving himself.

Nevertheless, a party did finally return to the Pit of No Return (aptly named, it turns out!) on February 3, 1996. The moon was full, according to my calendar. I heard about this trip only after the fact when Jim Landram called me and said Jim Odom had gone there and was in the hospital. "He's pretty messed up," Landram told me. I drove up to Springfield to see what happened to him.

Odom seemed exhausted and was apparently traumatized, because he wasn't making much sense. He told me he went there with Clay Abernathy and Vic Ayers to do the Pit of No Return, arriving at the top of the pit around 10 PM on February third. "We found a way down that didn't require rigging the pit," Jim said. "Your traverse around the pit led to a way down by a series of climbs. We lowered the boat down the pit and retrieved it and inflated it. Then we got in the river. After a long time, we came to a big room and got out of the boat. There were people there."

"What! Somebody else was in the cave?"

"Little guys. Dwarfs. Lot of 'em. Couldn't understand what they were saying. I guess they were real. I was pretty confused. They took us to where they lived."

Jim's tale then got so fantastic that I didn't really try to follow it that well. He said something about how they weren't in the cave any more but outside and there was a little town where the people were small, and they ended up in the cave again and finally, after a long time, reached the room at the top of the pit again and the canyon was starting to pinch down, or maybe it wasn't the same place, and Jim, being very thin, was able to get through, but Vic and Clay were having trouble. Jim said he then fell asleep, didn't hear the others any more, and wandered around until he was back outside.

Humoring Jim, I asked, "So all the people were these dwarves?" "Yeh," Jim said, "Except an old man who was in a coma. I didn't see him, but apparently the little people thought he'd eventually come out of it."

Jim was having trouble staying awake. I told him to get some rest and turned to leave. Jim said something else, it sounded like "See more." "I'll see you more, too," I told him.

As I was starting my car, it hit me. Did Jim say "Seymour?"

Ridgewalking Ridgewalking Ridgewalking

Trip Report by Jeannie Wilson

It was a beautiful Thursday morning in mid January. My husband Lonnie and I decided to go look for the infamous Reclining Buddha Cave in Cave Springs Valley, Pulaski County, Ky. For a couple of years now I have heard talk of finding this cave.

We drove down the road to Cave Springs Valley and parked as soon as we reached bottom. Due to the immense mud, we could not continue on the road. As we began walking we noticed a dark spot on the side of the hill to the left of us. We walked over to check it out. It was not Buddha, but it was a virgin cave. We could not explore because we were not truly prepared for caving.

We decided to walk the ridge above the entrance and found a sink directly above the crawlway at the entrance of the cave. This would be a good cave for the grotto to survey and map.

We kept searching. We spent two or three hours walking and searching each hollow in the valley. We found a stream and followed it to where it flowed from the mountain. The flow was large, so we figured this would probably be a fair-sized cave, but to enter you would have to go in under water. Bonnie climbed on up the hillside where he found another opening. Another possible virgin cave for the PMG to survey.

After walking for hours and checking out every possible opening and dark spot we had seen, we still had not located Reclining Buddha. But at least we had found two virgin caves in Cave Springs Valley. Maybe by January 1997 we will locate Reclining Buddha Cave and lead a trip there. We can always dream.

Seven Caves in a Day

Trip Report by Lonnie Wilson

Doug Hufziger
Andy Messer

Jim Willians
Jim West

As I patiently awaited the arrival of Jim Williams and Doug Hufziger, I was gathering some last-minute things. Once they showed up, we took off to meet the others at McDonald's in Corbin.

It was after 9 o'clock when we got there. Jim West was the only other grotto member there. Since we were late, he was preparing to go meet Andy Messer at Jean's Restaurant in Mt. Vernon. I rode in Jim West's truck since J Willi's was crowded (J Willi is short for Jim Williams).

Once we were at Jean's, we ordered breakfast and talked about Speleofest 1996. As we began to leave, Jim and I caught a ride with Andy. Off we went to Crooked Creek Ice Cave. We couldn't get to the cave for a locked gate on the road, so we decided to stop at Mullins Spring Cave, which had a large amount of garbage around the entrance. We decided to clean up the area.

After taking pictures of the beautiful ice formations and picking up four bags full of garbage, Doug, J Willi and I went over the hill to what Andy called Double Dig Cave.

After many suggestions as to what to do next, we decided to go to Pulaski County. On our way, Doug wanted to stop in Somerset to show us Waitsboro Cave. Upon arriving at the cave, someone asked if this was private land. Doug did not know, so we didn't have permission. After a very, very short visit to this cave, we proceeded to Cave Springs Valley.

The road to C.S.V. was snow and ice covered, but we slowly made our way to the valley, as we were dedicated to caving that day. We parked once we reached the valley floor. After changing into our caving gear, we started up the valley. We soon came upon a virgin cave. My wife Jeannie and I were down in this valley the previous Thursday looking for Reclining Buddha Cave, but the only thing we found were two virgin caves. Doug started to enter the crawlway and tried to remove a rock that was in the way. He couldn't remove it, so Andy wanted to try squeezing through past the rock. But he couldn't make it, so he backed up to try removing the rock. He finally broke it loose from the frozen ground. He proceeded to squeeze through the

very rugged crawl until he got almost stuck by another protruding rock.

Since I was the smallest, I decided to give it a go. My shoulders would barely fit through the crawl to a little dome. Once I sat up, we started mapping. J Willi was reading the instruments. After surveying to where I was, I tried to go on up through the stream which came out of the cave, but it was too tight and curvy. When we finished the last possible survey shot we came out.

Even if we could have gone on, the passage probably would have ended with fill from a sink that Doug and Jim found just above us on the hill. We named the cave Slim Fit (AKA Thight Fit) Cave.

We headed up the valley and went into a very interesting cave which was all walking passage. We found some nice formations inside this short cave.

After looking into "Walking Cave," so-called because of its "Walking Passages we decided to go to Sliding Cave, which was very close by. No questions about the name: You have to slide into the cave. We looked around for a few minutes and decided to go over to Cave Springs Cemetery Cave (actually a different entrance to the same system). Once in the entrance to the stream, everyone was amazed by the massive water flow and huge waterfall. We went up the high lead that stayed above the water. We made it to a large room with huge flowstone and formations. It also had some beautiful rimstone pools. We decided to go back out to map some of the other virgin cave.

When we arrived, there was a large stream flowing out of the cave. But the opening up above was too tight for human passage. The only way, if there is a way, is to go through the water, a tight belly crawl through a near sump. This was too extreme since it was below freezing out and the cars were about a half a mile away. So we slowly made our way back to the cars as it was getting dark.

We stopped at Arby's in Corbin to eat and talk. All in all, it was a good day. We visited seven caves, mapped one cave, and did a cave cleanup, all within a 12-hour period. Let's keep up the good work!

TIGHT FIT CAVE

Pulaski County, Kentucky

Surveyed 1/20/96 by:

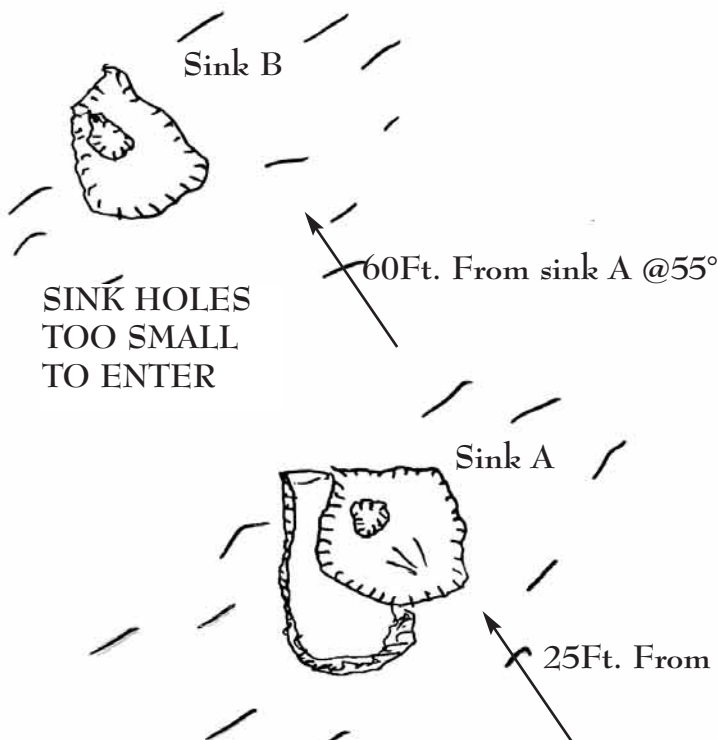
Lonnie Wilson

Jim Williams

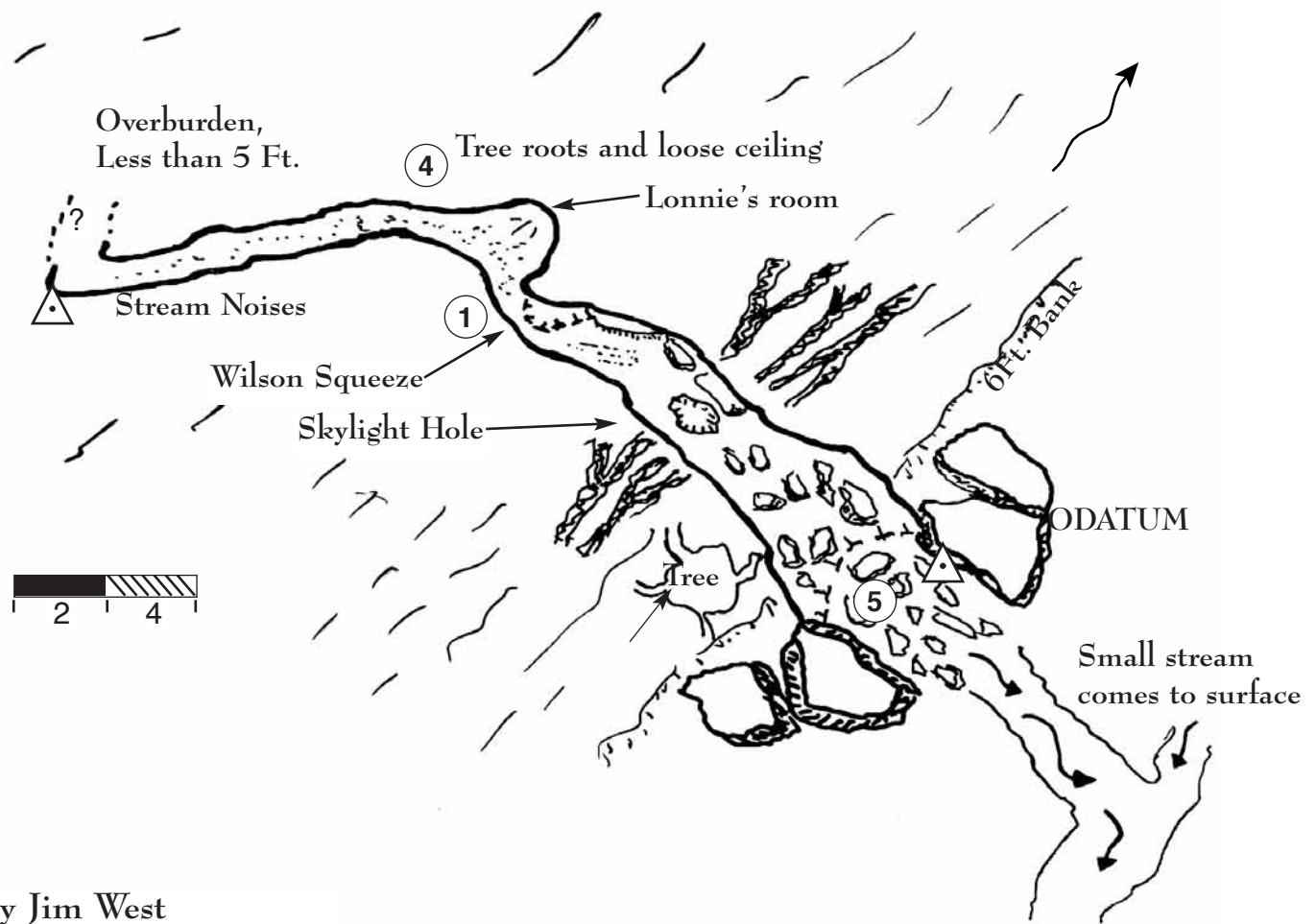
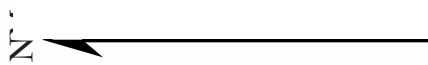
Andy Messer

Doug Hufziger

Jim West



A sisteco and fiberglass survey
Total traversable Cave: 21.7 feet



Drawn by Jim West
Lettering by Kenneth Storey

Yahoo Falls Trip

by Erica Williams

On a sunny day of Sun. May 5 Jim, Susan, Candi, Pat, Jim, Jenie, Lawnie, Amber, Doug, and me Went on a repeling trip.

First on the drive up there there had such curving roads it made me sick!

When we got there we ate and then hiked to yahoo falls. I went exploring as soon as we got there.

In about, 25 minutes later daddy came down. I tried to meet him down there but he was too fast!

In about 15 minutes Doug came down. Daddy belayed him right in the middle of the rope!

After a while of exploring, Daddy told me to go with Doug on the trail up to the mountain, So I did, it was tiring! I looked down at the bottom when I came to the top. Then I met Daddy at the bottom.

After a while Doug took My ball up. I was standing there daydreaming waiting for Daddy to come down. Then I heard Mommy say, "Look Erical" Then suddenly BOOMO The ball landed right under the water fall! In about 5 minutes it came loose.

We all hiked up to the mountain, but I stayed a little later to belay daddy, it was cool!

When we got back to the cars we talked and ate chips, and drunk pop.

Jennie was reapeping that a women waching Doug repel on his knees could'nt repel! In my opinion just because he was praying dos'nt mean he can't repel! Any way she said she goes down head first spinnig! STU-PID shows how much she knows!

I had a good time, and I hope to go back soon.

YAHOO FALLS TRIP POEM

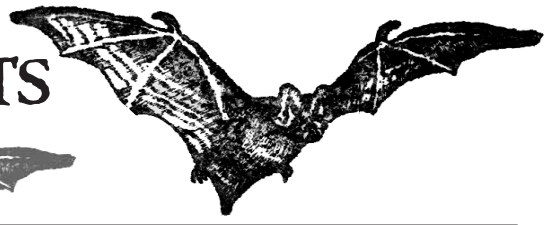
High, high, high in the sky where all the birds fly by. So high I ca'nt see the waterfall, so high I ca'nt hear my mom call.

When I'm on the ground, I give my Dad a delay, by pulling the rope and putting him on belay.



KENTUCKY BATS

by Doug Hufziger



Those flying creatures of the nights that find their prey and suck every last drop of blood from their victims. This is what Hollywood would like you to believe, ever since the very first horror movie that was made. Bats are made to be evil, blood-thirsty and feared more than any other animal. The myths and folklore that surround the bat have caused them to be persecuted wherever they are found.

In fact, fear is probably more dangerous than the bats themselves. One hears stories of people breaking their arms and legs just trying to escape. In my family, my uncle hit my aunt over the head with a broom just because a bat was flying inside their old farmhouse. My aunt the next day had a bad headache and kept seeing stars. Is there any way to calm the unwarranted fears of this species? Yes, through education by organizations, from local grottos, your county extension offices, and schools.

In this wonderful world of ours, bats have a place in the natural order of things. They should not be killed because of the myths and the unwarranted fears. In the state of Kentucky it is against the law to kill this wildlife species.

We as humans, fail to realize the importance of these flying creatures of the night. There are many benefits from these creatures that help animals and humans. The big benefit is that they eat over 600 insects an hour, mostly mosquitoes. Next time you're sitting outside at night and notice that the bats are flying around, notice how the mosquito biting is not as bad as when there are no bats. All of the bats in Kentucky eat insects and plants. Which brings up the another benefit provided by bats: the pollination and dispersal of seeds for many plants. Bats have also contributed to medical research in birth control and artificial insemination techniques, navigational aids for the blind, vaccines and drugs. Without the bat, we would suffer from everything more mosquito bites to a lesser quality of life.

Bats are not rodents. They belong to their own special group of mammals called Chiroptera, which means "hand wing." Bats are the only mammals that exhibit true flight. One myth about bats is that they are blind. This myth is far from the truth. They are not blind, and like dolphins, they navigate, avoid obstacles and detect food using a very sophisticated system called echolocation. Echolocation works when bats emit a high-

frequency sound that bounces off objects. The bat then hears that rebounding echo and reacts accordingly. Their system is so precise that they can detect a human hair in total darkness.

Kentucky bats live in a variety of habitats. Some species like the red bat and the hoary bat spend their summers roosting among tree leaves and migrate south for the winter. Others, especially endangered bats like the Indiana and gray bats, are cave dwelling animals in the winter. Another endangered bat, the Virginia big-eared bat, hibernates in caves and spends the summer along the sandstone cliffs and rock shelters. The big brown and the little brown bat usually are found in buildings and in hollow trees or rock crevices.

How do we deal with living with the creatures of the night? There are many ways to evict bats from your house without killing them. In caves where bats are hibernating, there are ways to avoid disturbing them. With bats in your building the county extension office will have many ideas how to rid your house of flying mammals, without hurting the bat. In Kentucky most of the bats will be found in caves, especially during winter while they are hibernating. As you have noticed, some caves are being closed to protect the endangered species. Some caves are too big to close, a certain part of the cave may be gated to help the bats hibernate. For instance, in Sloans Valley Cave, inside the Minton Hollow entrance, there is a passage entrance gated so you will not enter during the winter months. This gate is there for a reason and yes, some inexperienced naive cavers have crossed the gate because they feel that the gate is unwarranted and the cave belongs to them. Thank goodness that these people are a very small minority. Talking to Ranger James Bennett from the Berea office, I found that in the Daniel Boone National Forest there are about five gated caves with several more closing in the coming years. For instance, the right side of Goochland Cave may possibly be gated in the near future. These caves will not be totally closed, only during the hibernation period. There are many ways to protect the bat. As cavers and a member of the Pine Mountain Grotto, when people react about your caving, the first question is about the blood sucking vampires. Let them know what type of bats you encounter and how they are helpful to the human race.

Don't be afraid to express the beauty of the bats.

We as humans have become the number one enemy to the bat. We should try in every way to protect these species. They can help us.

KENTUCKY BATS

Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

A small brown bat weighting about 10 grams. Common throughout Kentucky, it can some times be found in attics of buildings or roosting on boat docks. One of bats most commonly encountered by humans. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Southeastern Bat (*Myotis austroriparius*)

May be confused with little brown bats because of numerous similarities. Found in western Kentucky. State endangered species and candidate for federal endangered species. Found in buildings, caves, culverts, or tree cavities. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Gray Bat (*Myotis grisescens*)

Similar to other myotis bats but larger. It can be identified by the wing membrane attached to the ankle instead of base of toes. Found in inner Bluegrass and cave region of south-central Kentucky. Federal endangered species. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

Similar to little brown bat except for its longer ears and a long pointed tragus (inner ear membrane). Rare. This is a state special concern species. Found in caves, rockhouses, or shelters, old mines, and buildings. Lives singly or in small colonies, hibernates.

Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)

Difficult to distinguish from other myotis. Federal endangered species. Found in winter throughout Kentucky cave regions. Lives in forested areas during the summer, roosting in snags and under tree bark. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Small-Footed Bat (*Myotis leibii*)

Very tiny bat identified by small size, small forearm and foot, and keeled calcar (a long bone spur on one of the ankle bone). Found in eastern and central cave regions of Kentucky. State endangered species and candidate for federal endangered species list. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

Abundant statewide resident. The bat most commonly found in buildings. A large bat about twice the size of the little brown bat. In Kentucky, this

species is by far the most commonly encountered by people. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Silver-haired Bat (*Lasiorycteris noctivagans*)

Medium-sized black bat with white-tipped fur. Usually found during spring migration. Seasonally solitary, migrates. Some hibernate in caves, mines, and rock crevices in Kentucky.

Eastern Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus subflavus*)

Tiny bat with tricolored fur. Abundant statewide resident. Prefers caves in winter and trees and buildings in the summer. Hibernates, singly scattered through caves and mines.

Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*)

Abundant statewide resident. Fur is rusty red, washed with white. Cannot be confused with any other species. Seeks daytime refuge in trees. Solitary, migrates. In June, females laden with young (up to four) often fall onto lawns.

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)

Rare, but found throughout Kentucky. Larger than Big Brown Bat. Color is grayish yellow-brown, overcast with grayish white. Spends summer days in tree foliage. Solitary, migrates.

Evening Bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*)

Found in western and southern Kentucky. State threatened species. Found in trees and buildings; avoids caves. Lives in colonies, migrates.

Virginia Big-Eared Bat (*Plecotus townsendii virginianus*)

Known only from eastern Kentucky cave region. Federal endangered species. Largest known winter colony occurs in one eastern Kentucky cave. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

Rafinesque's Big-Eared Bat (*Plecotus rafinesquii*)

Uncommon but scattered throughout the state. Occurs in caves, mines, wells, and abandoned buildings. Very similar in appearance to Virginia big-eared bat. State threatened species and candidate for federal endangered species list. Lives in colonies, hibernates.

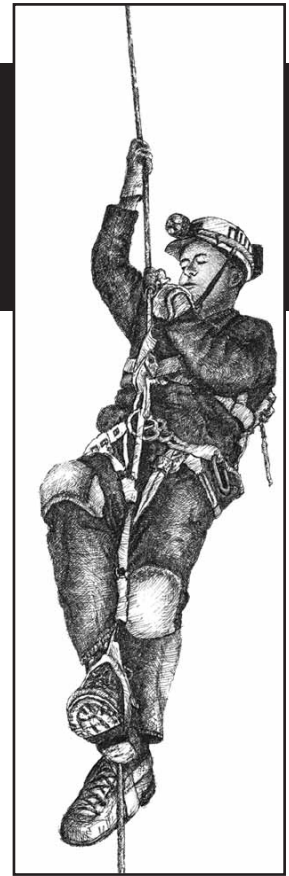
Brazilian Free-Tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)

Accidental. Autumn wanderer from the south.

Look back at the list of Kentucky bats. How many of the bats are on the endangered list? Of the 15 different species, six are on the endangered list, with more species waiting to join.

Mistakes, Lessons, and Random Ruminations: Some Thoughts on Vertical Technique

By
Andy Messer



If it's true that we learn from our mistakes, then I ought to be the most educated person on earth. I seem to make more mistakes than anybody I know. And if anyone wonders why I write on vertical techniques so often, it's because I make so many mistakes that I'm constantly rethinking my approach.

My latest fit of rethinking occurred as the result of a trying day at Sinks of the Roundstone Pit. First, while climbing tandem with Jim Williams, I screwed up my changeover onto the pigtail. Jim had to climb up to me and help me undo my foot ascender. The fact that my back had been tormenting me for a month and wouldn't allow me to bend over made going caving at all a foolhardy endeavor and certainly complicated the procedure, as did the fact that I simply did things out of sequence. Good Caver Tips (Yes, I know I owe Mike Crockett a royalty each time I use that phrase) Numbers One and Two: Pay attention to your physical limitations, and, as they say in the scouts, be prepared.

On my second trip out of the pit that day, I fought with my ropewalking rig all the way from the floor to the lip. Good Caver Tip Number Three: Don't assume the way you've done things in the past is always the best way.

And that brings us to the primary subject of this article, namely, single-rope-technique climbing systems. I started out climbing on knots and went through several variations of three-knot and Texas prussik systems before switching to a Gibbs ropewalking rig of the old shoulder-cam variety. From that, I went to the frog system, and from the frog system to a double-bungie ropewalking rig with a Simmons Roller. The double-bungie ropewalker has been my main rig now for nearly three years.

When the ropewalker works perfectly, it's wonderful. But it rarely does, and so it rarely is. I left the Sinks that day determined to return to the frog system for most of my climbing. Let's think of some of the problems ropewalking devotees typically face and then relate them to the frog system.

* Ropewalking systems tend to go "out of tune" unpredictably as the result of such variables as the position of the foot ascender, the condition of the bungie cord, the adjustment of the various slings, and the condition of the rope being climbed. The performance of the frog system is much more consistent: seldom as good as a perfectly-tuned ropewalker, but almost never as bad as a slightly out-of-tune ropewalker.

* Ropewalking systems depend on a free pull by the bungie cord. The pull is almost invariably interrupted by even the easiest of lips, slopes, and ledges. The frog system doesn't depend on bungie cord at all, and allows easy passage over these obstacles.

* The presence of the bungee cord and the positioning of the ascenders make changeovers complicated with the ropewalker. The frog system makes changeovers much simpler and easier.

* In every ropewalking system I've used, the foot ascender bruised my leg, requiring careful placement of a kneepad to prevent a black-and-blue calf. Jim Williams still carries a scar from where a foot ascender took a piece out of his leg on a climb out of Neversink a few years back. This problem doesn't exist with the frog system.

* Being top-heavy, I have to crank my chest roller harness extremely tight to stay adequately upright for ropewalking. More bruises usually result. The chest harness also creates problems in tight spots and at difficult lips, and I never seem to pick an opportune moment to pop the roller off. And even though the chest harness isn't really supporting my weight, I find that it constricts my breathing and causes discomfort during rest stops. None of these problems come into play with the simple webbing harness used with the frog system.

* Ropewalking systems are difficult to fabricate and expensive to buy. The few slings that comprise the frog system may be assembled in a few minutes by anyone with a basic understanding of the system and a working knowledge of standard caving knots, or the whole thing may be purchased ready-made for about half the cost of a ropewalking system.

* Ropewalking systems take up lots of pack space, particularly if they include chest harnesses with rigid plates, and take a long time to put on. On short drops, the time saved by climbing on a ropewalker is lost in putting it on. The frog system is more compact (so compact, in fact, that it may be worn comfortably throughout a caving trip, provided no tight squeezes are present. Actually, I once wore a complete frog system all the way through the extremely tight spot near the upper entrance to Across the Road Cave, but that's another story.) and goes on quickly and easily.

But what if you've already invested in a ropewalker and you don't want to fabricate a whole new system? The fact that you have a ropewalker doesn't necessarily mean you'll want to take the whole thing on every vertical trip. With two slight modifications, your ropewalker can be converted into a caving rig every bit as stripped-down and simple as the frog system.

As you probably realize, the knee ascender and safety Jumar from your ropewalker can serve perfectly well as a Texas rig, a flexible, versatile, easy-to-carry sit-stand rig with many of the same advantages as the frog. To make it equally safe, you need to adopt two precautionary measures familiar to frog users: an extra safety Jumar to make up for the fact that only two ascenders are actually being used for climbing (If your ropewalking foot ascender is a springloaded type such as a Petzl or CMI, just place it on a sling and you're in business.) and a tether from the knee ascender to your seat harness (Without the tether, a failure of the upper Jumar would result in a one-footed heel hang, the worst possible scenario short of coming off the rope entirely. With the tether, an upper ascender failure simply necessitates putting the extra safety on rope.).

After some thought and reading, I reconfigured my gear so that I have three different systems ready to go without having to switch equipment around. I can go caving with the Croll, the pair of Expedition ascenders, and the two slings that make up my frog system; I can bounce pits with my ropewalking system, consisting of two free-running Gibbs, a Petzl Jammer, a Simmons Roller, and the requisite slings and bungee cord; or I can climb Texas-style on the knee Gibbs and safety tether, the Jammer, and an Expedition safety.

I'm sure I'll make enough mistakes before the next issue comes out to be ready to endorse an entirely different plan, though.

P. S. Good Caver Tips Numbers Four, Five, Six, and Seven: Never assume that your rope is the right length, always wear your ascending gear or keep it in an easy-to-reach place while rappelling, always tie a figure eight on a bight at the bottom of the rope to serve as both a stopper and a foot loop, and know how to do a changeover. A rough measurement made on the day discussed above showed the entrance drop to the Sinks to be approximately forty feet shallower than the map indicates. What if it had turned out to be forty feet deeper, instead, and we had taken for granted that our rope was the correct length?



FALL VAR MEETING



October 18-20, 1996

Franklin, WV

The Potomac Speleological Club (PSC) is hosting the Fall 1996 VAR meeting at Thorn Spring Park in Pendleton County, West Virginia. Thorn Spring was the home of the Old Timers Reunion in the 1970's and is located in the middle of Pendleton County's many popular caves. This VAR meeting should be an outstanding event with lots of interesting cave trips and other activities. PSC has requested a rainfree weekend, and there may be some fall color left in the leaves.

Camping and cabins: Camping at Thorn Spring Park costs \$4.00 per person per night and is not included in the \$12 VAR registration fee. Cabins are also available for groups, but they will be in limited supply and must be reserved in advance. They have 8, 10, 16, or 24 bunks and cost approximately \$14 per bunk for the weekend. Contact the Park at (304) 358-7737 for cabin or camping information. The Park prohibits the public consumption of alcohol, but the VAR has permission to provide beer in the pavilion. For those who don't wish to camp, Thompson's Motel in Franklin is inexpensive and caver friendly. Their phone number is (304)358-2331.

Activities: In addition to the Friday and Saturday evening social events, and the Sunday morning Business Meeting, there are numerous other activities planned:

- Sinnett /Thorn Mountain Cave cleanup trips (inside and outside the cave) and fence repair
- A tour of the multiple levels of Cave Mountain Cave (2.5 miles of passage)
- A "sporting" trip beyond the famous Air Blower in Hamilton Cave (for the thin folks)
- A tour to the Formation Room in Hamilton Cave (for normal size folks)
- A tour to the Square Room and the recently discovered extension in Trout Cave
- A tour of the infamous maze in New Trout Cave (site of a very famous rescue a few years ago)
- A vertical trip to Sites Cave (and its 175 foot almost-free drop)
- An introductory class in cave survey sketching will be held in a local cave
- An intermediate cave surveying techniques workshop will be held in a local cave
- Additional cave trips will be available as interest dictates
- A fascinating slide show will follow dinner on Saturday night (before the party starts)

Food: A gourmet spaghetti feast will be served on Saturday evening.

Schedule: Registration will open at 7 PM on Friday, October 18. Cave trip schedules will be posted at Registration. Saturday dinner will be served from 6 to 6:30 PM. The VAR Business meeting will start at 10:00 AM on Sunday in the Thorn Spring pavilion

Directions: Thorn Spring Park is south of Franklin, West Virginia. To reach the campground from Franklin take US 220 South out of town for about 3 miles. Turn left at the Hanover Shoe factory onto Route 23. Thorn Spring is on the right in about 0.7 mile.

Contact: Contact Leecee Molina for additional information at (301)949-1417 in the evening or (202)275-7620 during the day. Contact Bill Bussey for registration information at (919)460-8968.

PINE MOUNTAIN GROTTO

1995 ACTIVITY LOG (plus one trip from 1994)

by Jim Williams

DECEMBER 11, 1994: Cavin Cave Lee Co., VA.—Survey trip.

ATTENDED: Lonnie Wilson, Jim West, Ray Short and Andy Messer.

(In at 11:30am out at 11:30 pm)

JANUARY 1, 1995: Looking for Stykes cave in Pulaski Co., KY.

ATTENDED: Lonnie Wilson and Jim Williams.

(Did not find. Searched from 11am to 4pm. Afterwards went over to cave creek to Rufus Hyden's farm. Met up with Lou Simpson and Jarry Goepel and hiked a mile and half up to Pumpkin Cave. Worked a couple of hours on digging out a 15ft vertical entrance. Then went in entrance and went caving for about an hour or so. Came out the original entrance. Hiked back to Rufus's house where he had homemade pies and nice warm heat waiting on us.)

JANUARY 14, 1995: Cavin Cave Lee Co., VA.—Survey Trip

ATTENDED: Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, David Joughlin, Lloyd Bunch, Johny Check, Bob Taylor, Mike Jackson, Jim West, Ray Short and Jim Williams.

(In at 12:30pm out at 7:30pm.)

JANUARY 21, 1995: In search of Stykes Cave found Cedar Creek Cave.—Sport trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Lonnie Wilson and Jim Williams.

(Took photos of entrance. Ridge walked from 10:30am. Found Stykes at 3:30pm came out of cave at 6:30.)

JANUARY 29, 1995: Mike Jackson, Jim West and Jim Williams met at McDonald's in Corbin at 5pm to go investigate a possible new cave which turned out to be nothing. Back in Corbin by 7pm to start out monthly grotto meeting for January. The meeting was held at Doug Hufziger's home.

ATTENDED: Jim Williams, Lonnie Wilson, Jim West, Mike Jackson, Andy Messer, Tina McKay, Sherman Young and Doug Hufziger.

(Meeting was called to order at 7:27pm and was adjourned at 9:06pm.)

FEBRUARY 11, 1995: Wells Cave in Pulaski Co.—Sport trip.

ATTENDED: Michael Jackson, Lonnie Wilson, Doug Hufziger, Sherman Young, Lou Simpson, Brent Melyer, Harry Goepel and Jim Williams.

(In at 1:30pm out at 8:00.)

FEBRUARY 25, 1995: Monthly Grotto Meeting for Feb. held at Lonnie Wilson's home in Corbin.

ATTENDED: Jim Williams, John Taylor, Jim West, Doug Hufziger and Lonnie Wilson.

(Meeting called to order at 12:38pm adjourned at 2:25pm. Afterwards Jim West, Lonnie and John went to Pulaski Co. to do some sight seeing. Then went to Cave Creek entered the Hyden entrance at 6:20pm, exited at 6:55pm, tried to make it to the Sahara Room but the water was too high.)

MARCH 11, 1995: Bailey's Cave, Lee Co., VA.—Vertical photography trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, John Taylor, Ray Short and Jim Williams.

(Entered 2pm, out at 7:45pm.)

March 25, 1995: Monthly Grotto meeting for march was held at Mike Crockett's home.

ATTENDED: Jim Williams, Doug Hufziger, Mike Jackson, Lonnie Wilson, Jason Crockett and Mike Crockett.

(Meeting was called to order at 7:22pm and was adjourned at 8:24pm.)

APRIL 15, 1995: Sloan's Valley Cave in Pulaski Co. KY.—Sport Trip.

ATTENDED: Bob Taylor, Tracy Taylor, Jim Helton, Irene Brock, Melinda Brock, Patrick Burchett, Benji Burchett, Shannon Hawk, Don Franklin, Hannah Franklin, Doug Hufziger, Mike Jackson and Jim Williams.

(In at 3:20pm, out at 7:15pm.)

APRIL 15, 1995: Wyandotte Cave Cleanup.

ATTENDED: Andy Messer.

MAY 6, 1995: NCRC Class Mammoth Cave National Park.

ATTENDED: Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, Mike Jackson and Jim Williams.

MAY 7, 1995: NCRC mock rescue Potato Cave in Barren Co. KY.

ATTENDED: Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, Mike Jackson and Jim Williams.

(The rescue took about eight hours).

MAY 13, 1995 (VAR) Bob White Cave, Tucker Co., W.VA.—Sport trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor, Mike List, Andy Messer.

MAY 14, 1995 (VAR) Big Spring Cave, Tucker Co., W. VA.—Sport trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor, Andy Messer.

MAY 29, 1995: Monthly grotto meeting for May held at Jim Jackson's place down next to Grove Marina. Practiced rappelling and had a cook out.

ATTENDED: Don Franklin, Hannah Franklin, Trish Franklin, Jessie Franklin, Rebecca Rranklin, Patric Burchett, Jim Helton, John Taylor, Jim West, Jim Jackson, Terry Jackson, Lonnie Wilson, Jim Williams, Mike Jackson, Melinda Brock, Irene Brock and Andy Messer.

(Meeting was called to order at 8:48pm and was adjourned at 9:14pm.)

JUNE 3, 1995: Cavin Cave Lee Co., VA.—Mapping trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, Mike Jackson, David Joughlin, Bob Taylor, Tracy Taylor, Mike Crockett, Jason Crockett and Jim Williams.

(In at noon, out at 8pm.)

JUNE 18, 1995: Stykes Cave and Pot O' Gold Cave in Pulaski Co., KY.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Lonnie Wilson, Jeannie Wilson, John Taylor, Bruce Warthman, Lou Simpson, and Jim Williams.

(Went sport caving in Stykes Cave. Then Jim Williams went into Pot O' Gold Cave to investigate.)

JUNE 24, 1995: Monthly Grotto meeting for June. Meeting was held at Ray Short's home.

ATTENDED: Jim Williams, Andy Messer, Jim West, John Taylor, Doug Hufziger and Ray Short.

(Meeting called to order at 8pm and adjourned at 9:35pm.)

JULY 28, 1995: Monthly grotto trip Wolf River Cave Fentress Co., TN.

ATTENDED: Jim Jackson, Chicken, Ben Larrabee, Bruce Warthman, Jim West, Jeannie Wilson, Lonnie Wilson, Lou Simpson, Andy Messer and Tina McKay.

AUGUST 18, 1995: (NSS Convention), Vistited Paxton Cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor, Ken and Lisa Storey, Tom Spina, Anne Bosted, Hal and Lu Smith.

AUGUST 19, 1995: (NSS Convention), Stay High Cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer.

(Andy was too big to make it into the entrance. Jim and Andy proceeded to Clover Hollow Cave.)

AUGUST 19, 1995: (NSS Convention), Tour of local commerical caves.

ATTENDED: Ken and Lisa Storey, Hal and Lu Smith

(These included: Luray Caverns, Grand Caverns, and Endless Cave.)

AUGUST 20, 1995: (NSS Convention), James Cave.

ATTENDED: John Taylor, Mike Cullinan and Andy Messer.

PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED NSS CONVENTION: Jim West, John Taylor, Andy Messer, Mike and Linda Cullinan, Ken and Lisa Storey, Doug Hufziger, Hal and Lu Smith, Lou Simpson and Cheryl Hilton.

AUGUST 27, 1995: Monthly grotto trip and meeting were held same day trip was to Deweys Drop in cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Jim Jackson, Andy Messer, Chicken, Lonnie Wilson, and Jim Williams.

(After the trip the grotto meeting was held at Jean's cafeteria. Everyone who made the trip attended the meeting except for Jim Jackson. Meeting was called to order at 5:50 pm and adjourned at 6:25.)

SEPTEMBER 1, 1995: (OTR), Stillhouse Cave and Sinks of Gandy Cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Jimbo Helton, and Ken and Lisa Storey went with Frank Filz and the Triangle Trogodytes.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1995: (OTR), Shreve-Howell Pit.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Jimbo Helton, Andy Messer, Ken and Lisa Storey.

PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED OTR: Jim West, Jimbo Helton, Andy Messer, Ken and Lisa Storey, David Jackson, Mike and Linda Cullinan, John Taylor, and Mike List.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1995: 3rd Annual PMG Picnic.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor, Andy Messer, Doug Hufziger, Lonnie and Jeannie wilson and their little girl, Amber, Chicken and Sue Jackson and their daughter, Tabatha, and son, Michael, Ray and Gina Short, Jim and Susan Williams and their daughters, Candace and Erica.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1995: Cavin Cave Survey trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor, Andy Messer, Ray Short, Lonnie Wilson, Chicken Jackson and Jim Williams.

(In at 1:30pm, out at 7:30pm.)

SEPTEMBER 29, 1995: (VAR)

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer and John Taylor.

(Went to Senaca rocks campground for fall VAR)

SEPTEMBER 30, 1995: (VAR), Hedrick Fossil Cave—Mapping trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer and John Taylor.

(Mapped entire cave)

OCTOBER 1, 1995: (VAR), PMG Became a member of VAR.

OCTOBER 6, 1995: (TAG), Cemetery Pit (150ft)

ATTENDED: Jim West, Jimbo Helton and Chicken

OCTOBER 6, 1995: (TAG), Rusty's Cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Jim Williams, Doug Hufziger, Chicken and Lonnie Wilson.

OCTOBER 7, 1995: (TAG), Keith Cave.

ATTENDED: Jim West, John Taylor and Mike and Linda Cullinan.

OCTOBER 7, 1995: (TAG), Rusty's Cave.

ATTENDED: Andy Messer, Jimbo Helton, Ken and Lisa Storey, Doug Hufziger, Tina McKay, Irene and Melinda Brock.

(This would be Ken and Lisa's first vertical cave.)

OCTOBER 7, 1995: (TAG), Cemetery Pit.

ATTENDED: Jim Williams and Lonnie Wilson.

PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED TAG: PMG MEMBERS: Jim Williams, Andy Messer, Jim West, Tina McKay, Chicken Jackson, Jimbo Helton, John Taylor, Ken and Lisa Storey, Lonnie Wilson, Jeannie Wilson, Doug Hufziger, Mike and Linda Cullinan. GUESTS OF PMG MEMBERS: Irene Brock, Melinda Brock, Susan Williams, Pat Williams and Jim Rogers.

NOVEMBER 11, 1995: ADOPT-A-HWY Clean up from mile markers 2 thru 4 on Hwy 27 in Pulaski Co., KY.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, Tina McKay, Doug Hufziger and Jim Williams.

(We picked up 48 bags of trash, one tire, two mufflers, one tail pipe, and one thing?)

NOVEMBER 18, 1995: Monthly Grotto Meeting. Held at Union College Lakeside Center.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Lonnie Wilson, Jeanie Wilson, Doug Hufziger, John Taylor, Mike Huges and Mack Roberts.

NOVEMBER 23, 1995: Fisher's Cave, Lee Co., VA.—Survey Trip.

ATTENDED: John Taylor, Amy Fisher, Andy Messer, Bill Royster and son, Charlie Lucas and Beth.

NOVEMBER 24, 1995: Wildcat Saltpeter Cave, Lee Co., VA.—Survey Trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, Bill Balfour and Marcus, Clay Stowers, Russ "Caveboy" Carter, Guy Powers.

NOVEMBER 25, 1995: Cavin Cave, Lee Co., VA.—Survey Trip.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, Guy Powers, Billy Mays.

DECEMBER 2, 1995: Monthly grotto trip was cave clean up in Dyches Bridge Cave, Pulaski Co., KY., and Fletcher Cave in Rockcastle Co., KY.

ATTENDED: Jim West, Andy Messer, Lonnie Wilson, Jeannie Wilson, Mike Hughes, Mack Roberts and Jim Williams.

DECEMBER 30, 1995: Monthly grotto meeting. Held at Mike Jackson's house.

ATTENDED: Doug Hufziger, Jim West, Mike Hughes, Mack Roberts, Jim Williams and Mike Jackson.

(Meeting was called to order at 8:20pm and was adjourned at 9:30pm.)

Any one who would like to write a trip report about any of the mentioned trips—feel free to do so. I would like everyone to try to write down every time they go on a trip and who attended. Please mail this information to:

Jim Williams 302 Valley View Apt's, Corbin, KY. 40701

This would help to keep a history of the PMG.

Cave Quote:

"Bats aren't rodents, Dr. Meridian. "

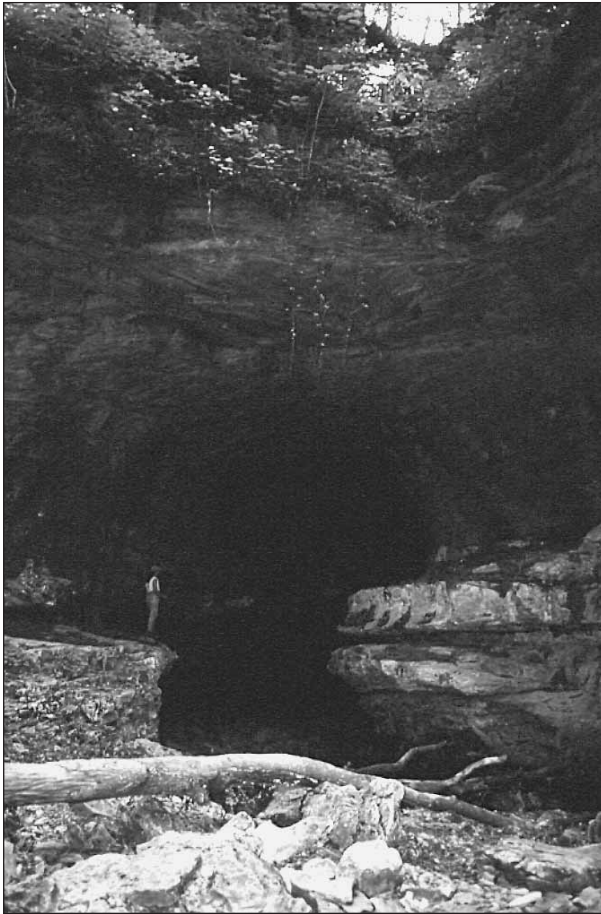
-Val Kilmer in Batman Forever



Rebecca: Woody, have you ever had your whole life cave in on you all of a sudden?

Woody: No, but I have had a cave cave in on me all of a sudden.

--from *Cheers*



FIRST ANNUAL SEKCI MEET

Here are just a few photos taken at the first annual South-East Kentucky Caver Invitational (SEKCI) held at John Taylor's house. The weekend consisted of a road rally which led participants to several cave entrances while you drive through the wonderful Kentucky countryside. There was also a cave cleanup Saturday with several members of the grotto helping out and that night was the official deck party complete with fireworks and a 6 person Jacuzzi. There was a good turnout and everyone enjoyed themselves. We hope this is the beginning of a new caving tradition.





It has been recently discovered that a member of the PMG Grotto has been secretly practicing in a cult who worships dead cow parts. Other PMG members are now referring to him as pelvis boy.



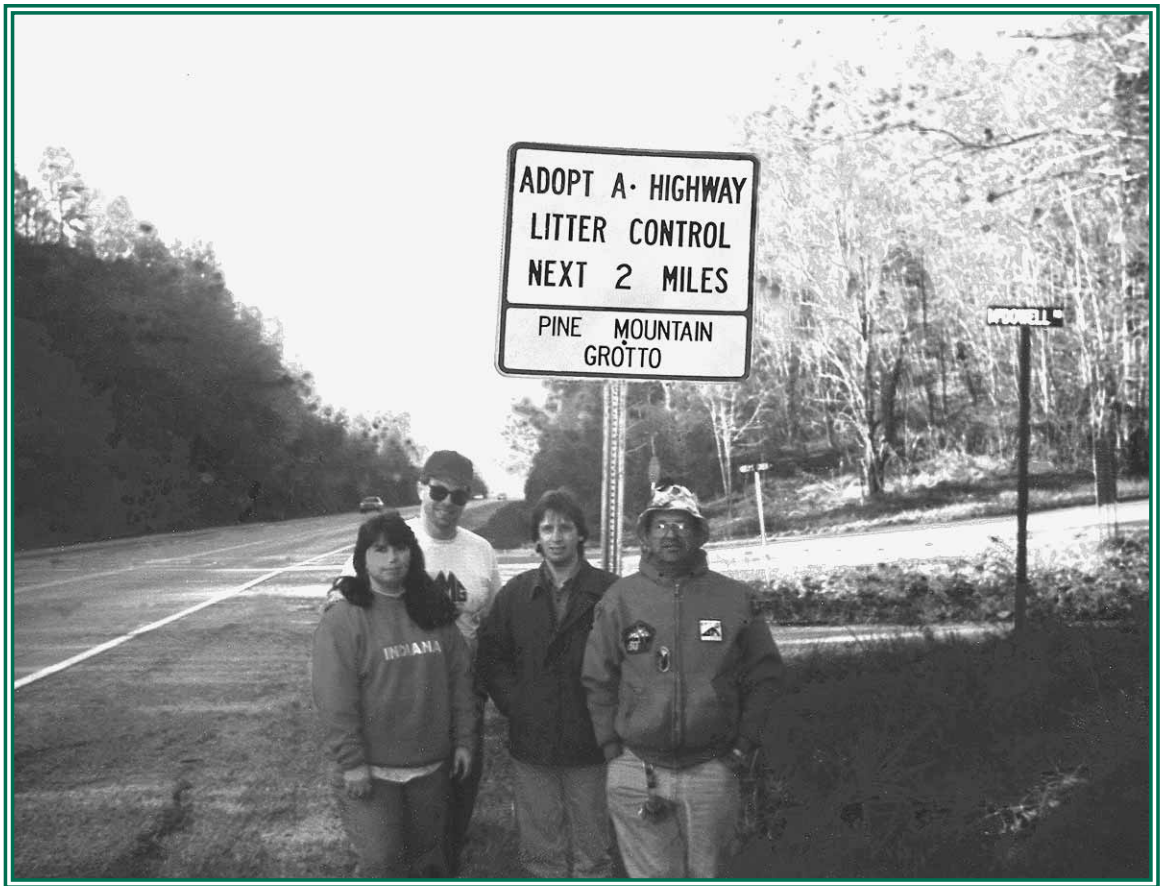


Photo of Tina McKay, Andy Messer, Jim Williams, and Jim West standing in front of a DOT Litter Control sign showing the section of highway U.S. 27 in Pulaski County Kentucky that the Pine Mountain Grotto has volunteered to patrol.

