

# the month's

# GUANO



## July 1994

<i>KCAG Minutes June 8, 1994</i>	2
<i>Wondering as I Wander in Arkansas</i>	3
<i>Small Dose of Caving Good Medicine</i>	4
<i>Survey Workshop Yields Map of Toby Cave</i>	4
<i>Eyes That Stop a Heart Beat</i>	6
<i>Fall MVOR Committees</i>	8
<i>June Photo/Art Contest</i>	8
<i>Mysterious Glowing Roots/Vines</i>	8
<i>Membership &amp; Friends List</i>	9

The Month's Guano  
 Kate L. Johnson  
 1705 Safari Drive  
 St. Joseph, MO 64506

**Kansas City Area Grotto  
Minutes  
June 8, 1994**

The meeting was called to order by President Richard Cindric at 7:05 pm in the M.A.G. Hall. About 28 cavers were in attendance.

**Trip Reports:**

- ◆ Ron Lather joined 35 other cavers in Arkansas over Memorial Weekend. They split into groups and went to Warren Cave, Ennis, Janis and others.
- ◆ Randy Bruegger took a college recreation management class to Lowell, Little Smittle, Mayfield Springs to cave and also to do some vertical work and canoeing.
- ◆ A trip to Smittle ended in campfire caving due to heavy rain. The creek below the cave was running too high to cross. Cavers stayed at Feakes Peak and enjoyed the company of some St. Louis cavers, Doug's slides of Guatamaula and the sauna.
- ◆ Dave Foran and Peddgie Heinz took Boy Scouts to Tunnel, Tunnel Too, Bat and Berry. They met kids without gear that were accidents waiting to happen.
- ◆ Kate Johnson went to Berry Cave after the MSS meeting in Rolla with Bill Linn from MSM grotto.
- ◆ Mary Willey, Terry de Fraties and his son, Jim Fowler, Tracy and Cindy Hawkins went to Indian, Bat, Tunnel, and Perkins. Kate Johnson spent the weekend trying to find them without success.
- ◆ Cavers on the yoyo trip to Arkansas included Jerry and Richard Cindric, Richard Keith, Richard Pyles, Mike McKinney, Tom Howell, Brett Jarrett and Kate Johnson as a tagalong.

**Future Trips:**

- ◆ June 16—Kate Johnson caving with Mark Twain Grotto south of Hannibal.
- ◆ June 25—Cindrics continue survey of Ozark Virgin Cave/Spring. Wet suit required.
- ◆ Tom Howell and Brett Jarrett going to Wind Cave in South Dakota.
- ◆ July 16—Carbide only trip, 8-10 hours. Contact Randy Bruegger.
- ◆ July 22-24—Southern Plains Regional hosted by Central Oklahoma Grotto. Contact Ron Lather.
- ◆ Sept. 1 (after work) to Sept. 5—Randy Bruegger organizing trip to OTR in Pennsylvania.
- ◆ Sign-up for Devil's Ice Box passed around. Spots on trips to be filled as they are available. Contact Mary Willey.

**Old Business:**

- ◆ Treasurer Report \$509.31
- ◆ MVOR Committee Report—Bob Younger passed out list of tentative committee chairpersons.

**New Business:**

Mary Willey and Richard Pyles nominated and voted in as full members. Welcome aboard!

**Meeting Program Schedule:**

- ◆ August 10 Geologist Bob Younger (who now has a real geology job) talks on hydrology.
- ◆ Sept. 14 Tentative vertical session at Cliff Drive.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kate L. Johnson, Secretary

**July 1994**

The Month's Guano published monthly on second Wednesday.  
**Articles due:** Submit to editor 10 days prior to meetings.  
**President:** Richard Cindric, 913-262-2006  
**Vice President:** Bob Younger, 913-583-3902 (DeSoto, KS)  
**Editor/Secretary/Treasurer:** Kate L. Johnson, 1705 Safari Dr., St. Joseph, MO 64506, 816-233-5494  
**Equipment Chair:** Richard Crabb, 816-483-2831  
**Membership Chair:** Randy Bruegger, 913-829-3943

Kansas City Area Grotto is affiliated with the National Speleological Society, The Missouri Speleological Survey, and a Founding Member of Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy.

Meetings held every second Wednesday at 7 p.m. (alternate site in May), M.A.G. Hall behind Midwest Research Institute, Volker Blvd, Kansas City, Missouri.  
 Annual dues: \$10 for full members

## Wondering as I Wander in Arkansas

By Kate L. Johnson NSS 35076

Hiking through last year's leaves underfoot with their replacements fluttering overhead, I had a sense of the old and new, beginnings and endings, life and death.

Ahead of me were several KCAGers with the goal of dropping pits with a combined total of 1,000 feet in three days. The clanking of racks, jumars, and beaners was quite a contrast to hundreds of years ago when Indians would steal through these forests of northwest Arkansas like living ghosts in search of prey.

While Richard and Jerry Cindric, Tom Howell, Brett Jarrett, Richard Pyles, Mike McKinney, Mary Willie, and Richard Keith were vertically yo-yoing pits, I was ping-ponging horizontally from pit to pit in hopes of getting some good photos and enjoying the wild woods. The forecast for the May 13-15, 1994, trip was for scattered thunderstorms. So while others were risking their lives on rope, I was risking a long trip with little opportunity to photograph.

The first major decision I faced was whether to leave my '93 Nissan 4x4 parked in McKinney's drive and ride in his terminal '83 van with 161,000 miles on it. I chose the old over the new, a tent instead of a truck bed.

At 1 a.m. on Thursday night, some of us unrolled sleeping bags under a tin-roofed shelter with open sides and a gravel bed near Mountain View, Ark. Unfortunately, a new tarp funneled rain water under the bags instead of the rain flowing through and under the floor of old rocks. My nose felt like a living stalagmite as water seeped through a hole in the roof and plopped on it. Despite the constant rain, the sky was a dark gray and not black. Strangely, I felt alone. No snores, no slow, deep breathing, no movement—dead in sleep!

The beginning of my ping-pong experience almost ended with falling in a pit. Leaf litter and twigs covered a hole on my approach to Flitterin. Fortunately, Tom grabbed my arm as I slid past him and helped me to my perch on a finger of rock within the horse shoe shaped pit. Having decided to go on this trip 14 hours prior to departure, I

failed to think about the importance of having a safety line. Now I was unable to get in the best position for photos angles. It was torture sitting high and dry while hearing oohs and aahs as the others rappelled through the waterfall and explored the bottom out of my sight.

The next pit, Janis, was close by. It's opening was at the end of a narrow draw. I was bemoaning the fact that my seat harness was back at camp when Mary pulled out her extra webbing and tied a harness. R. Keith remarked that the water knot was not tied correctly, but Mary felt it was. I was so intent on getting to the edge and shooting that I dismissed the observation of an experienced rock climber and trusted a greenhorn. When the knot fell apart at the end of the session, I realized my foolishness could have cost me my life or serious injury and vowed not to take a vertical trip again until I could safely tie my own knots.

Although I did not get to yo-yo on this trip, I still learned a great deal hanging around topside—the most important lesson is that I should not get into vertical work other than having gear to tie off safely around pits and managing short drops or ascents in a cave.

As a child, I bemoaned living in this age. I wanted to be a pioneer, an outdoor person living off the land—a hunter and forager. Unfortunately, I have little experience in the wilds. My father died a few months before he was to start my outdoor education. He loved this area of Arkansas and I imagined his excitement if he could have been there. I think he would have enjoyed being along in the woods with us when we lost our way at 1 a.m. after the guys dropped Gum Drop and Double Pit. We slept out in the open waiting for daylight where upon we found the trail a short way from our bivouac. He would have been pleased that my caving buddies are great guys—not given to panic, complaining or blaming.

And Mike's van ended the trip on all cylinders after coughing and sputtering through the Arkansas mountains!

## Small Dose of Caving Good Medicine

By K ate L. Johnson NSS 35076

After four caving trips with KCAG and not getting underground, I was hoping my *MCKC Digest* assignment in the Hannibal area on June 16, 1994 did not become #5. Would I find the strangers from the Mark Twain Grotto, and would I *want* to be underground with them? The answer to that question after meeting Dave Mahon, Loren Fear and Mike Goodwin was absolutely!

In the July issue of the *MCKC Digest*, Dave has an article about the proposed expansion of Highway 61 between Bowling Green and New London. MTG is concerned about the impact the route will have on nearby caves and springs.

One in particular is Holliday Spring Cave owned by Dick Holliday. It discharges 46,1000 gallons of water per day and provides several homes with drinking water. I was to get a photo of Dick in front of his spring. First though, we gladly left the 90° noon heat and crawled into the chilly stream. Dave took the lead to sketch more detail for the nearly completed map.

The passage was through solid white rock about 3 feet wide and 3 to 4 feet tall in spots. Razor-like shelves extended into the passage on both sides about a third of the way up preventing standing mobilization. I had to turn sideways in many spots and the rough shelves grabbed my coveralls especially the pockets. Crawling through the stream did not stir up much silt and it cleared in 10 minutes.

Part of the passage looked like the inside of a giant eel snaking through the hillside. Small stalactites in the ceiling formed vertebrae and miniature draperies evenly spaced gave the illusion of ribs.

Over the years, periodic water testing revealed that the water is safe to drink despite the presence of frogs, isopods, crayfish, salamanders and even a muskrat. Dave took a picture of it before it zoomed through the stream so fast that I didn't see it go between my legs! Loren who was behind me didn't see it either, but Mike verified that the muskrat had bolted for daylight.

About 160 feet inside the floor changed from solid rock to large rough stones. There is one large black rectangular bar about 9 inches long, 3 inches deep and 1 inch wide on one side angling to 3/4 inch on the other side. It is very smooth while the gravel has sharp edges to it. I found no other rocks like it.

Flowstone and little scalloped ridges were interesting. At one point the ceiling lowers requiring an uncomfortable belly crawl on the rocks although the sides widen out to about 5 feet. Dave was hoping to gain entrance into a side room about 6 feet high but the hole into it need to stretch about 2 inches for him to crawl in. He can see that it goes so they will try to dig it out. The main passage gradually squeezes down to be impassable.

Not only did I get the necessary photos and finally get underground this trip, but I also gained three new friends who have invited me to go caving with them. (They know how to get to Hunter's Cave and regularly go *into* Smittle twice a year, even in the rainy season.)

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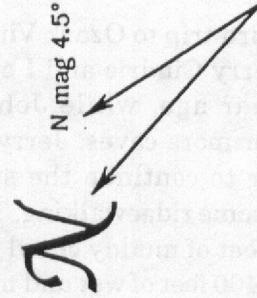
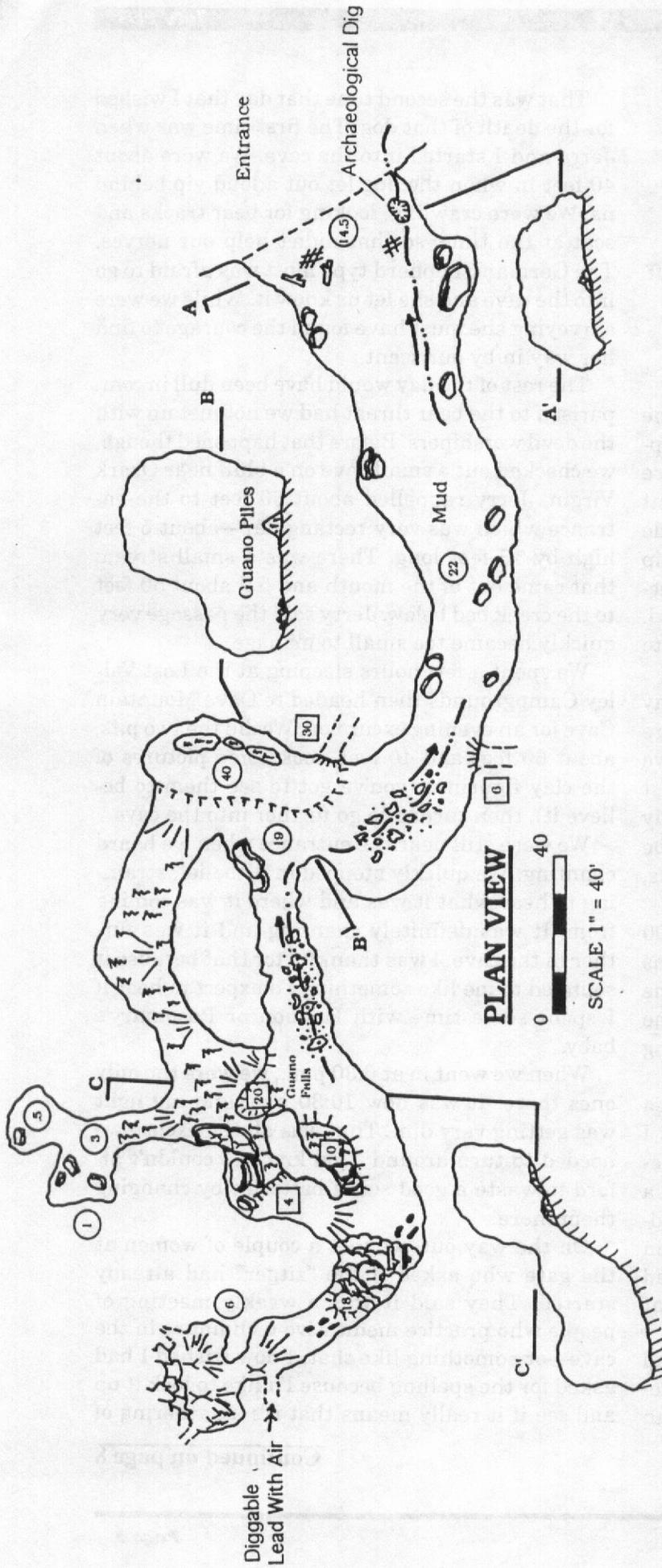
## Survey Workshop Yields Map of Toby Cave

In February Randy Bruegger and Richard Cindric held a survey workshop in the Lake of the Ozarks region. (See April Guano for Randy's trip report.)

While the goal of the workshop is to teach all aspects of surveying including sketching, reading instruments and running tape, Randy had hopes of finding a caver with the "eye" for recording a three-dimensional image as a two-dimensional picture. It is an innate ability. A sketcher doesn't

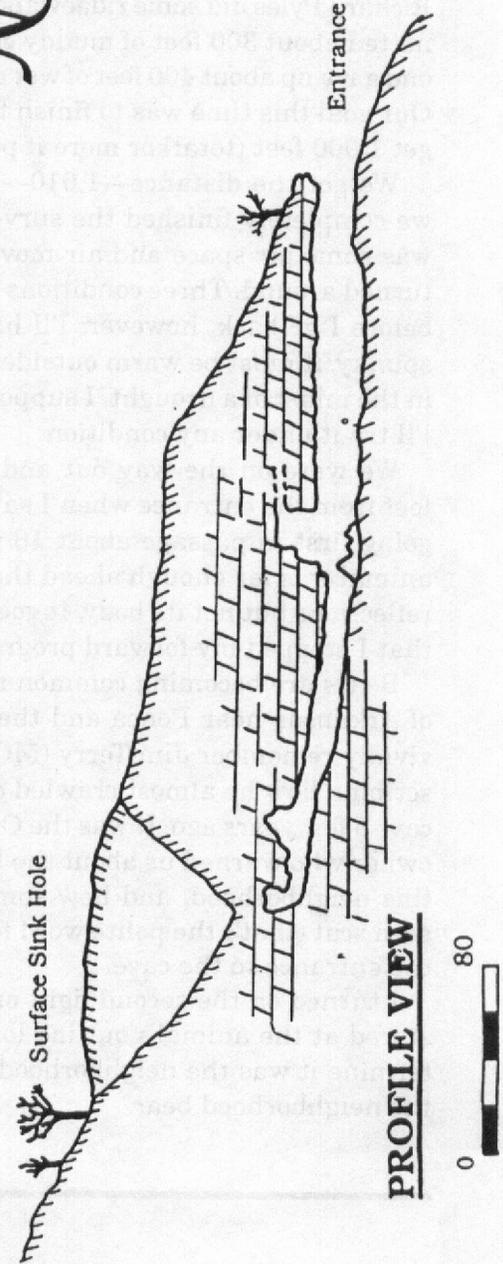
have to be an artist but rather have good spatial visual perception.

Early in the workshop, it was evident that Bob Younger had the "eye." This was his first exposure to surveying and he wasn't sure it was something he cared to repeat. But by the time he combined the data gathered by the team into his final draft of Toby Cave, he became more enthusiastic. It is a good skill to add to his geology degree!



# TOBY CAVE

CAMDEN COUNTY, MISSOURI  
 MAPPED BY: H. MERRIS, R. YOUNGER, P. JOHNSON,  
 P. HEINZ, K. JOHNSON, R. CINDRIC, M. MCKINNEY,  
 M. KIRCH, T. HOWELL, B. JARRET, R. BRUEGGER.  
 2/19/94  
 SUUNTO COMPASS AND CLINOMETER, FIBER. TAPE



## Eyes That Stop a Heart Beat

By Richard Cindric NSS 22600

"Oh ----- Jerry There are eyes ahead of us." I don't recall the exact words, but that's about what I meant to say. I do remember that the reflections off those eyes seemed as big as the headlights on a Buick. Well, we were warned to watch out for the bear in Ozark Virgin Cave, so we only had ourselves to blame.

This was our third trip to Ozark Virgin on June 25. Ray Keeler, Jerry Cindric and I started mapping it over a year ago, while John McQuire checked around for more caves. Jerry and I went back months later to continue the survey while Richard Pyles did some ridgewalking. The first trip netted about 300 feet of muddy crawl and the second gave up about 400 feet of wet and muddy crawl. Our goal this time was to finish the survey and to get 1,000 feet (total) or more if possible.

We got the distance—1,010—but we can't say we completely finished the survey because there was some air space and air movement where we turned around. Three conditions will have to exist before I go back, however: I'll have to feel really spunky, it must be warm outside, and we must be in the midst of a drought. I suppose, if I grow gills, I'll try it under any condition.

We were on the way out and were about 400 feet from the entrance when I saw the eyes. I was going first in passage about 16 inches high. The animal was far enough ahead that I could see the reflections but not its body. It goes without saying that I stopped my forward progress.

Bears are becoming common around that area of Arkansas near Ponca and the Buffalo River. I vividly remember Jim Terry (MOLES Grotto) describing how he almost crawled on top of one in a cave a few years ago. It was the Ozark Virgin landowner who warned us about the bear who lived in this neighborhood, and how some local kids had seen scat (that's the polite word for bear guano) at the entrance to the cave.

I turned on the second light on my helmet and stared at the animal's outline long enough to determine it was the neighborhood dog rather than the neighborhood bear.

That was the second time that day that I wished for the death of that dog. The first time was when Jerry and I started into the cave. We were about 40 feet in when the dog let out a loud yip behind us. We were crawling, looking for bear tracks and scat at the time, so that didn't help our nerves. The German Shepherd type mutt was afraid to go into the cave and she let us know it. While we were surveying she must have found the courage to find her way in by our scent.

The rest of the day would have been dull in comparison to the bear threat had we not met up with the devil worshipers. Before that happened though, we checked out a small cave on a bluff near Ozark Virgin. Jerry rappelled about 30 feet to the entrance which was very rectangular—about 5 feet high by 15 feet long. There was a small stream that came out of the mouth and fell about 50 feet to the creek bed below. Jerry said the passage very quickly became too small to manage.

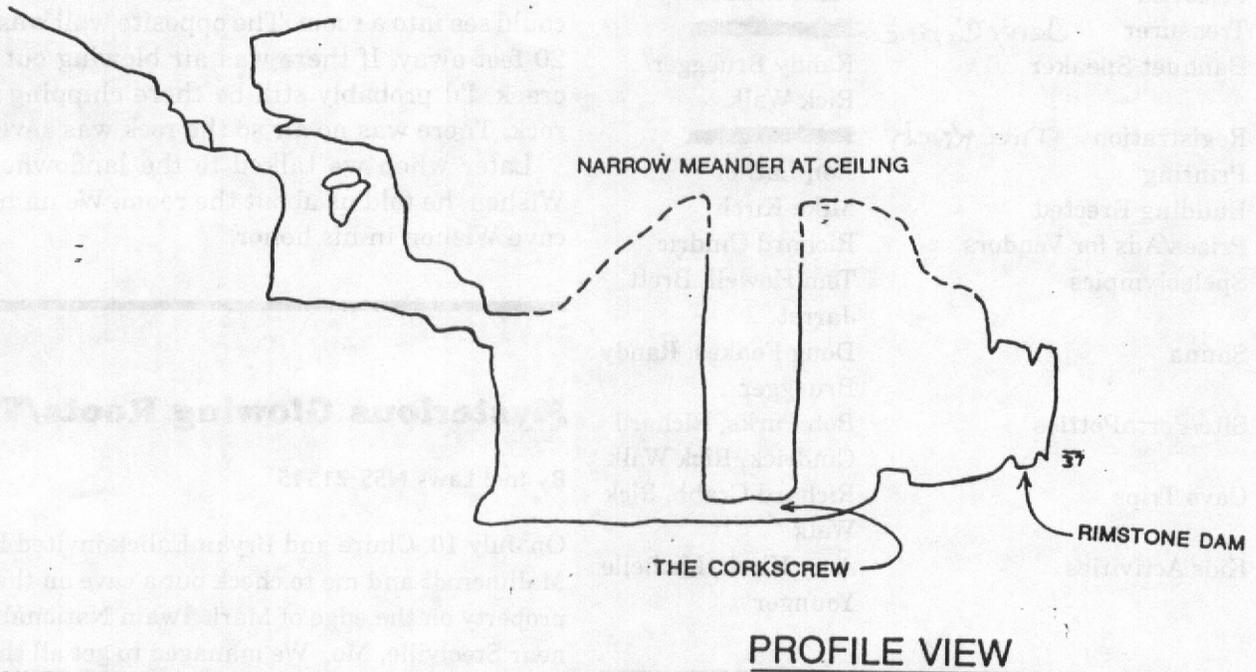
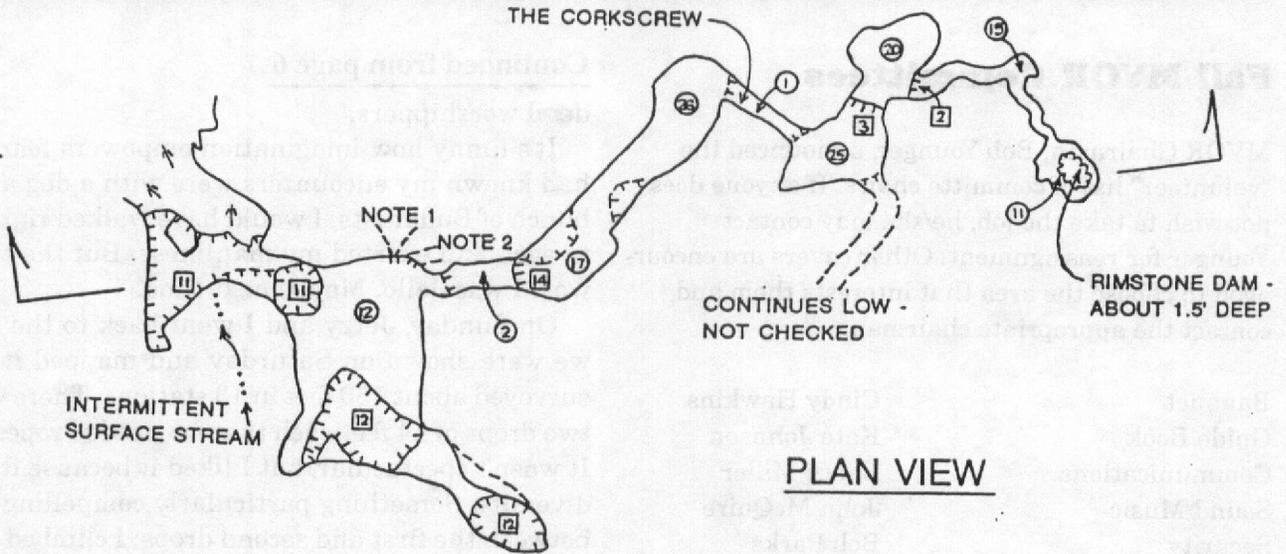
We spent a few hours sleeping at the Lost Valley Campgrounds then headed to Cave Mountain Cave for an evening excursion. We did the two pits, about 60 feet and 40 feet, took some pictures of the clay figurines (you've got to see them to believe it), then turned to go further into the cave.

We were still near the entrance when we heard chanting. We quickly stopped in disbelief, straining to hear what it was and where it was coming from. It was definitely chanting and it was further in the cave. I was thankful for that because it sounded to me like something I'd expect to hear if I spent some time with Damion or Rosemary's baby.

When we went in at 6:30 p.m., we were the only ones there. It was now 10:30 p.m. and my light was getting very dim. That was all the excuse we needed to turn around: God knows I couldn't afford to waste a good set of batteries by changing them there.

On the way out, we met a couple of women at the gate who asked if the "zitger" had already started. They said it was a weekly meeting of people who practice meditative techniques in the cave—or something like that. I now wished I had asked for the spelling because I'd like to look it up and see if it really means that it's a gathering of

**Continued on page 8**



NOTE 1 - 6" WIDE CRACK HIGH ON THE WALL; A ROOM IS VISIBLE, ABOUT 20' ACROSS

NOTE 2 - 1' BY 2' LEAD HIGH ON THE WALL; BLOCKED BY FLOWSTONE; NO AIR MOVEMENT

NORTH



**WISHON CAVE**

NEWTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

15' 0' 15'



Mapped by: Jerry Cindric, Richard Cindric

Drawn by: Richard Cindric

Length - 146'

## Fall MVOR Committees

MVOR Chairman, Bob Younger, announced the "volunteer" list of committee chairs. If anyone does not wish to take the job, he/she may contact Younger for reassignment. Other cavers are encouraged to choose the area that interests them and contact the appropriate chairman.

Banquet	Cindy Hawkins
Guide Book	Kate Johnson
Communications	Lance Miller
Sound/Music	John McQuire
Security	Bob Parks
First Aid	Mike McKinney
Treasurer	Jerry Cindric
Banquet Speaker	Randy Bruegger/ Rick Walk
Registration	Mike Kirch
Printing	Ron Lather
Building Erected	Mike Kirch
Prizes/Ads for Vendors	Richard Cindric
Speleolympics	Tom Howell, Brett Jarret
Sauna	Doug Feakes, Randy Bruegger
Site/PortaPotties	Bob Parks, Richard Cindrick, Rick Walk
Cave Trips	Richard Crabb, Rick Walk
Kids Activities	Amy Kirch, Michelle Younger

## June Photo/Art Contest

Winners in the photo contest are:

### Cave Division: Non-Cave Division:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| #1 Mike Schmidt | #1 Kate Johnson |
| #2 Rick Hines   | #2 Rick Hines   |

### Humor:

- #1 Mike Schmidt  
#2 Kate Johnson

### Graphic Art:

- #1 Mike McKinney's van  
#2 John McQuire t-shirt

## Continued from page 6

devil worshippers.

It's funny how imagination empowers fear. If I had known my encounters were with a dog and a bunch of Buddhists, I would have walked right up to each and exerted my manliness. But the truth was, I was Jello. Maybe next time.

On Sunday, Jerry and I went back to the cave we were shown on Saturday and mapped it. We surveyed about 150 feet in 13 stations. There were two drops of 14 feet each that we needed ropes for. It wasn't spectacular, but I liked it because it had diversity. Something particularly compelling was between the first and second drops: I climbed up a wall to look in a crack of about 6 inches width and could see into a room. The opposite wall was about 20 feet away. If there was air blowing out of the crack, I'd probably still be there chipping at the rock. There was no air so the rock was saved.

Later when we talked to the landowner, Roy Wishon, he told us about the room. We named the cave Wishon in his honor.

## Mysterious Glowing Roots/Vines

By Joel Laws NSS 21515

On July 10, Claire and Bryan Ealick invited Ray Mallincrodt and me to check out a cave on their property on the edge of Mark Twain National Forest near Steelville, Mo. We managed to get all the way to the Huzza River where we had to walk about 100 yards to the spring entrance of the cave about 30 ft. above the river. The entrance was a vertical slot in a pile of boulders which slipped into a rocky belly crawl for about 20 feet. From there it got up to a typical muddy slimy hands and knees crawl. Claire wanted to show Ray and I some root-like growths that she said glowed. She found some and told us to turn out our lights. We waited and waited, and started to make jokes about her hallucinations. It took several minutes, but a faint greenish glow started to appear.

There were these roots about an 1/8 of an inch in diameter and 8 to 12 inches long growing out of

semi-dry soft clay/sand mix floor. We debated if they were roots or vines. They looked like a root but each occurrence was a single branch and 10 or more feet away from each other. They were scattered all over a low room. We figured that if they were roots they would be in a cluster on the wall or coming out of the ceiling. Neither was the case. One exception was one growing out of the stream bank and laying in 4 inches of water. This one was about 10 feet long. The branches were dark red except for the last 1/4 to 1/2 inch of the tip which was a whitish green/yellow. This was the part that glowed. They looked very much like the glowing portion of a lightning bug.

We experimented with our lights to see if they were affected. But there didn't seem to be any charge/discharge characteristics. The glow was constant and bright enough to look directly at them, but not

as bright as a lightning bug. We considered digging one up to see if it was from a seed and had roots, or was a root, but we figured we would try to find out if these were well known or a rare find before we did that. I've been caving for about 15 years, but have never seen anything like this before. Have I possibly encountered these before and never took the time to turn off all the lights and wait the several minutes it took for our eyes to adjust? Are these common, or rare? Does anybody know? We continued to explore the cave. It got up to a nice walking/stooping passage which meandered for about a 1/2 mile, before it got down to a crawl again. The MSS map showed it went that way for another 1/2 mile or so. We weren't that adventure-some, so we headed out. But not before checking the glowing roots again.

(Reprinted from Missouri Caving Discussion)

