



the month's

guano



August 1994

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The Month's Guano
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Kansas City Area Grotto Minutes July 13, 1994

The meeting was called to order by President Richard Cindric at 7:05 pm in the M.A.G. Hall with 27 cavers in attendance.

Trip Reports:

- ◆ Jerry and Richard Cindric went to four caves in the Ponca area of Arkansas. Finished mapping Ozark Virgin, mapped Wishon Cave and went to Cave Mountain Cave. Another cave was just a hole in the cliff.
- ◆ Dave Porter, cave diver, conducted a cavefish count in The Gulf near Poplar Bluff at the request of the Missouri Department of Conservation. The University of Missouri is doing a study of some sort. The cavefish population has remained stable since the last count.
- ◆ Bob Younger hiked the Branson area with his brother and Michelle looking for caves. They found lots of sinks 5 to 6 feet deep.
- ◆ Kate Johnson went to Hannibal area to take pictures for MCKC Digest. Met with three Mark Twain Grotto members and spent about an hour in a small cave containing a spring.

Future Trips:

- ◆ July 16—Peddie Heinz and Dave Foran take Bonner Scout Troop on the last of three trips. The boys have been well behaved and fun to work with. Mary Williams will work with them on vertical skills in the fall.
- ◆ July 16—Randy Bruegger leads a carbide only trip in Skaggs
- ◆ August 13—Association of Arkansas Cave Study. 15-25 people will be mapping Elm Cave near Yellville. Cavers need to have survey skills. Exceedingly muddy. Contact the Cindric brothers.
- ◆ Judy Mennis Oetting, charter member of KCAG, attended hoping to find leaders for a Girl Scout cave trip. Randy Bruegger will either lead it or find someone who can.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Future trips to Columbia area prior to MVOR to become familiar with caves.

Old Business:

- ◆ Treasurer Report \$540.75
- ◆ MVOR Committee Report—Bob Younger reported that Boone County Fair Grounds will be the site of the MVOR on Sept. 30, Oct. 1-2. This is one of the best sites ever for an MVOR. The grandstand is available for speleolympics. There will be two saunas with one reserved for those who prefer to wear clothing.

New Business:

- ◆ MCKC membership expires August 1. It was moved and seconded to renew for \$10.
- ◆ MCKC would like to have a booth at the MVOR registration area. Vote passed.

MCKC Report:

Director Randy Bruegger reported that cave acquisitions are being explored. Carroll Cave may have new owners. There is hope that it will be possible to reconstruct the entrance gate and put an additional gate at the neck breakers.

Program:

Paul Johnson presented an excellent program on "The World's Greatest Caver" and his relative by marriage, "Skeets" ^{Miller} Johnson, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the incident. Skeets was the only person who was able to reach Floyd Collins. He went beyond the call of a journalist and made several trips in to help in the rescue effort. Paul had the video from the National Geographic program on caves and several newspapers containing Skeets' stories.

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

The socialization of KCAGers continued after the meeting at Godfathers on Main.

CAVERS IN WONDERLAND

Tumbling down a hole, photographers have a flashing good time

by Mike Schmidt

The best thing about a photo trip is that you're not always apologizing (or suppressing the urge) every time you stop to set up. Not only that, but you've even have people that are willing to help.

Nine of us made the descent into Mystery Cave near Perryville, Mo. at about 10:30 a.m. on 23 July through a tight vertical entrance which, 9 hours later, transformed into a considerably tighter vertical exit. But never mind that now.

From the KC group, Kate Johnson, Rick Hines and I were the photographers, while Paul Johnson, Mary Willey and Harold Maris were there with extra hands and patience for anyone who asked. We were led by Richard and Pat Young from Cape Girardeau who were accompanied by Brad Blackburn.

This was the most photogenic cave I've seen in some time. Without exaggerating, I can honestly say that each stop we made was better than the previous one. From the first room on, we were shooting everything in sight; often with two or three people standing in line for the same shot. Unofficially, I think we estimated somewhere near 250 pictures were taken all together.

One of our early stops was a short break to the left of the stream we were following. The large formation, named Stage Curtain, could have easily diverted our attention from two caches of cave

pearls had they not been pointed out by Richard. There were probably about 20 pearls total, the largest of which were nearly a centimeter in diameter.

At this point, we broke into two groups for a while. My group moved on and made a stop in the Lily Pad Room; an upper room with a low ceiling connected to the floor by hundreds of columns. It was a bit tricky getting up there, especially since I, in my wisdom, decided not to bring my camera with me. Of course, after seeing the room, I had to go back and get it, thereby making the trip twice.

As we came down from there, the rest of the group caught up and we proceeded onward through the mire. At one point, I impressed Rick so much with a failed attempt at jumping across a small depression that he had to try it himself. His jump was precisely as effective as mine...albeit somewhat more dramatic.

As we neared the turn-around point (about 6 hours into the trip), Richard and Pat pointed out a low opening; the beginning of a 400-foot crawl to the 'Coon Room. Paul, Brad and Pat decided to go for it, but by now, 800 feet on my elbows to see bones was rapidly losing its appeal. Instead, I opted to duck-walk about 100 feet to the Mud Devil Room...only after being convinced that it was worth

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July 1994

The Month's Guano published monthly on second Wednesday.

Articles due: Submit to editor 10 days prior to meetings.

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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

Rescue in Floyd Collins Crystal Cave— A First Hand Report

by John R. Marquart NSS 16577

(This article is reprinted as a follow-up to Paul Johnson's presentation at the July meeting of the account of the rescue of Floyd Collins. Skeets Miller Johnson won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage. Randy Bruegger mentioned that with today's technology and rescue techniques, Floyd would have been extracted alive. Here is proof that it can be done!)

It was August 19, 1993 and I was working with 30 some other cavers on the annual NSS-Mammoth Cave National Park Cave Restoration Field Camp in Kentucky. We had been working throughout the week bleaching the stains from the gypsum ceiling of the "Snowball Dining Room" and hauling waterlogged wood from collapsed trails at the "Echo River." I am a 60 year old caver with over 40 years of caving experience and in relatively good shape.

This was to be a fun day to do a wild cave trip. At 2 p.m. a group of 14 of us entered Floyd Collins Crystal Cave to go to Floyd's Lost Passage, where we would see artifacts left there by Floyd in the 1920s. The first mile was easy enough through the old tourist trails, now very run down, of the big canyon passages.

At "Scotsman's Trap" that all changed. Presumably the name comes from the idea that the Scots are tight and so is the passage. The next mile had steadily lower crawlways through powdered gypsum. The belly crawl was easy on the knees, but hard on the eyes and lungs. As the passage got tighter, it routed through two "selectors" or "limit-

ers" which tested your ability to go on.

The first was the "S-Curve" where you had to crawl on your side and bend around the s-shaped passage to make the curves. The second was even more difficult, the "Keyhole," a hole barely 10 inches at its highest point and shaped like a triangle. There my clothing hung up on the rock and by the time I squeezed through the cave had partially undressed me.

Next came fissure canyons that we chimneyed high above the floor. We passed "Ebb and Flow Falls," a trickle of water where Floyd had filled his jugs, and entered "Straddle Canyon." We were again chimneying about 30 feet off the canyon floor.

At this point, it happened! The limestone ledge that had held the 11 people ahead of me gave way under me. The sickening sound of crack/crash still sticks in my mind as the ledge fell 30 feet

to the floor below. As I dropped, I made every effort to break my fall by getting a better hold on the walls. With no foothold, I fell about 7 feet before my outstretched arms jammed across the narrowing walls and stopped my fall. I thought that I had made it all right until I tried to use my right arm and found that it would no longer move. My shoulder was totally dislocated. Dangling precariously in space, I was in a predicament.

Steve Gentry was the first to my aid. He climbed down below me and was able to jam his body in well enough to take most of my weight off my arms. Jim Jacobs and others were able to reach down to me and pull me back to what remained of the ledge and help me back to an area where a floor arched

THE LIMESTONE LEDGE THAT HAD HELD THE 11 PEOPLE AHEAD OF ME GAVE WAY UNDER ME. THE SICKENING SOUND OF CRACK/CRASH STILL STICKS IN MY MIND

over the lower canyon. It was now 4:00 p.m. and this was to be my home for the next 14 hours.

Fortunately for me our NSS group was well equipped and knowledgeable in what to do. Within a half hour a plan was made. My arm was seriously dislocated and staying that way until medical help could be obtained and I was in severe pain, to say the least. The tight crawls and selectors on the way out would preclude the use of any kind of litter and the vertical canyons added the problem of vertical exposure. It was clearly a job for a well organized rescue.

While the rest of my party headed out at the maximum speed this cave allowed to alert the Park Service rangers, Steve Gentry, Larry Matiz, Matt Reece, and Jim Jacobs stayed to keep me stable. Steve and Larry have cave rescue experience and all were invaluable at keeping me from hy-

pothemia and as comfortable as possible. I had taken an NCRC short course in cave rescue a couple years before which helped my moral considerably. I knew that it was going to be a long go, but that I was in the best of hands and knew it.

Ranger Henry Holman, who was to coordinate operations at the cave, arrived at about 9:30 p.m. with Park EMTs. His assessment of the situation was that it was paramount that my shoulder be reduced so that I could be reasonably mobile since litters or skids would be nearly useless. He informed me that a doctor was being sought to treat me and they would find one wherever he had to be brought from. This was going to be one rescue when a doctor's attendance was very critical. I ask the EMTs if they couldn't reduce the dislocation. Answer was, "No". I also ask for some kind of pain killer. The answer was again "No, have a Tylenol. Only a doctor can give anything stronger."

The EMTs and others who tended to me were invaluable in keeping me from hypothermia and reasonably comfortable through out the long hours to come, and to them I am deeply grateful. Space

blankets, heat packs, heat from carbide lamps, and clothing left by my NSS colleagues were essential as I was to remain immobile on the cold limestone floor for over 14 hours.

To make a long story short, I was overjoyed to see Dr. Gary Howerton of Bowling Green, Kentucky arrive at about 5:30 a.m. His first effort to reduce the dislocation without giving me any painkiller failed. He then gave a shot of Valium and successfully repositioned my shoulder. I recall this procedure, but do not recall having passed out afterward. I am told that Dr. Howerton let me sleep for a while to regain my ability to be self mobile. A shot of some counteractant brought me back to full consciousness. My right arm was securely strapped across my chest and was no where near as painful as before.

THE TIGHT CRAWLS AND SELECTORS ON THE WAY OUT WOULD PRECLUDE THE USE OF ANY KIND OF LITTER AND THE VERTICAL CANYONS ADDED THE PROBLEM OF VERTICAL EXPOSURE.

Rick Olsen, who had recently become full time with the Park Service, was to guide my exit. He did a bang up job of it too. He would put himself in my predicament with his arm immobile across his chest and try to do some maneuver. He would then come back to me and say, "John, I think that it will work if you try it this way."

At first it involved doing one armed climbs with Rick and his colleagues supplying protection from a fall. Later in the crawlways, I had to make do with one-armed crawls. The going was slow, but always positive. The "Keyhole" was the one time when we had to get a bit violent. My arm had to come out of the sling and after stripping off my shirt, I was pulled feet first through this tight hole.

The "S-Curve" worked only because I could lie on my left side with my right arm elevated and bend the right way to make the turns. It wouldn't have worked on my right side, but then I couldn't have crawled with my injured arm under me anyway.

The crawlways were done with a combination of

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it. It was!

It was a fairly small room, about 30 feet in diameter and maybe 12 feet high, but it was absolutely packed with formations. Most of them hung from the ceiling in the form of stalactites and those little, squiggly things whose name I can never remember; but there were several man-made formations as well. The room was named for more than a dozen sculpted images of Lucifer himself; ranging from large faces to full figures. Some were perched on small formations while others were lying on a sort-of-shelf that went around most of the room.

After a break in the Mud Devil Room, we began the trek home. I began noticing a marked decrease in the amount of picture taking by the 7th and 8th hours and now that I think of it, the conversation seemed to dwindle a bit too. What talking there was centered around what time it was, how far to the exit, and how bad some of us (all right...ME) had to tinkle.

As I mentioned earlier, the exit was much harder than the entrance. You couldn't really use your feet and it was about the same width as your body...Oh, did I mention the "Bladder Stone" that didn't seem to be there on the way down? As tricky as it was, the basic philosophy, "Do it or stay in the cave," was with me, and I was the first one out at 7:30 p.m. It took 30 or 40 minutes for everyone to get out, whereupon we posed for one last group shot and then debated whether to go dancing 'till dawn or just maybe collapse for the night instead. It was a short debate.

Mystery Cave is a beautiful cave and we only

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a one-armed crawl and a sideways snake motion, very time consuming and pretty strenuous, but it worked. I popped up through "Scotchman's Trap" at 11:00 a.m.

Once on the tourist trails, Ranger Henry Holman wanted me to climb into a litter for transport for the last mile. I objected that the tourist trails would be a piece of cake after the previous mile and

The Good Sherpa Award

Harold Maris

**Mystery and Mertz Caves
Perryville County**

July 23 & 24, 1994

Without *ONE* whimper, whine, or impatient remark willingly dogged after four photogs as a living light stand, providing hand hold & toe holds on long muddy slopes, and Mystery's crack of an entrance. Hauled photo and video gear through mud, water, down & up steep slopes.

In grateful appreciation

Rick Hines

Mike Schmidt

Kate Johnson

Richard Young

saw a small fraction of it. It would take several visits to see it all, and I hope one day to see more.

In summary, there are many levels of cavers, ranging from casual to hard-core. I like to think I'm somewhere between. With that said, my lasting impression of Mystery Cave is as follows: It Hurt!

wanted to walk out the rest of the way. He was insistent and said that he was worried that I'd hurry the last part to get out and get careless. After the excellent effort that had gone into rescuing me, I wasn't about to argue and obediently climbed into the litter. They did let me out before the cave entrance to walk out under my own power, 22 hours after entering for a "seven hour tour."

Every part of this successful rescue was important: the immediate attention of my NSS col-

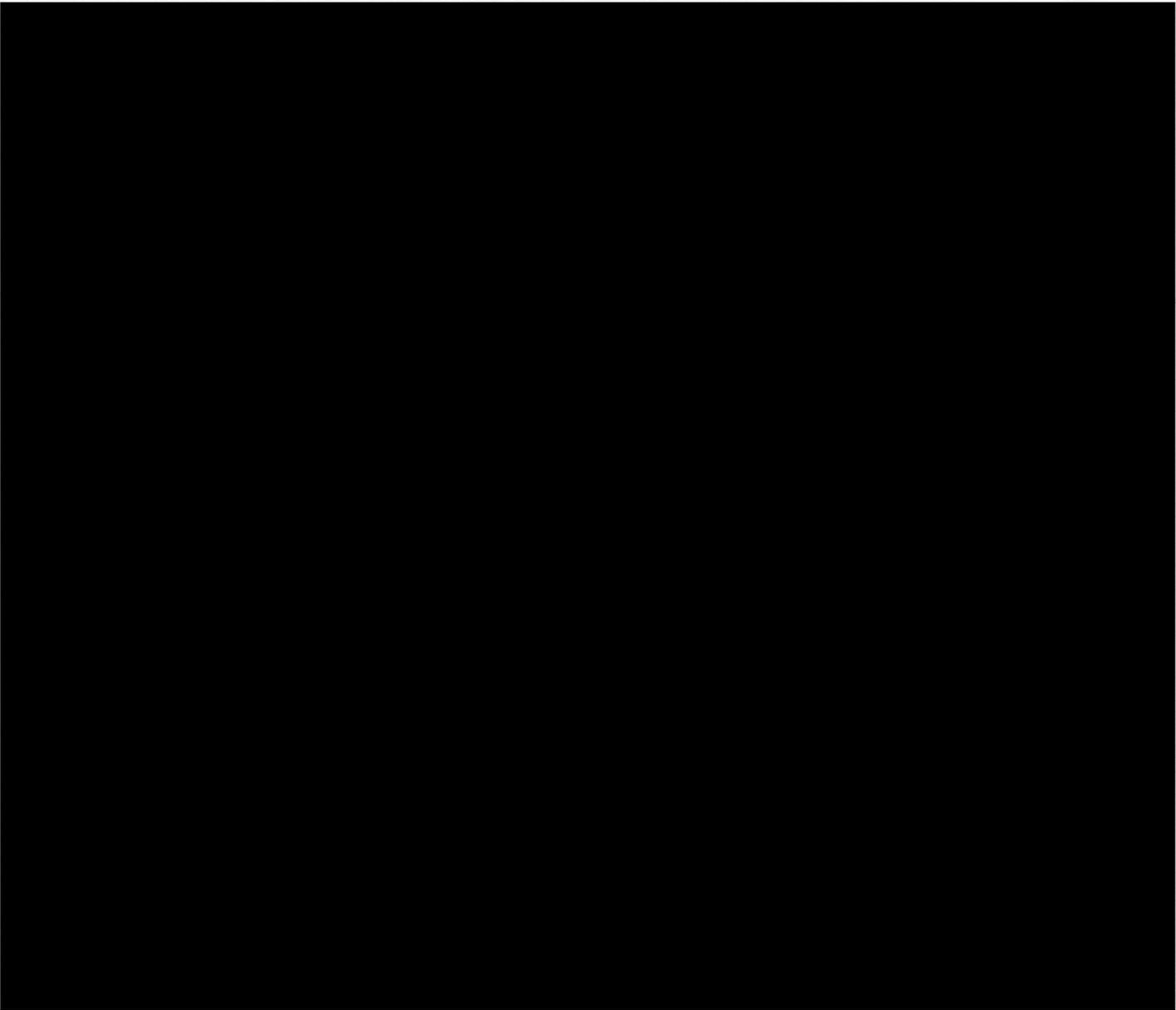
leagues, the treatment by EMTs and rangers, Dr. Howerton's treatment, and Rick Olsens excellent planning for evacuation.

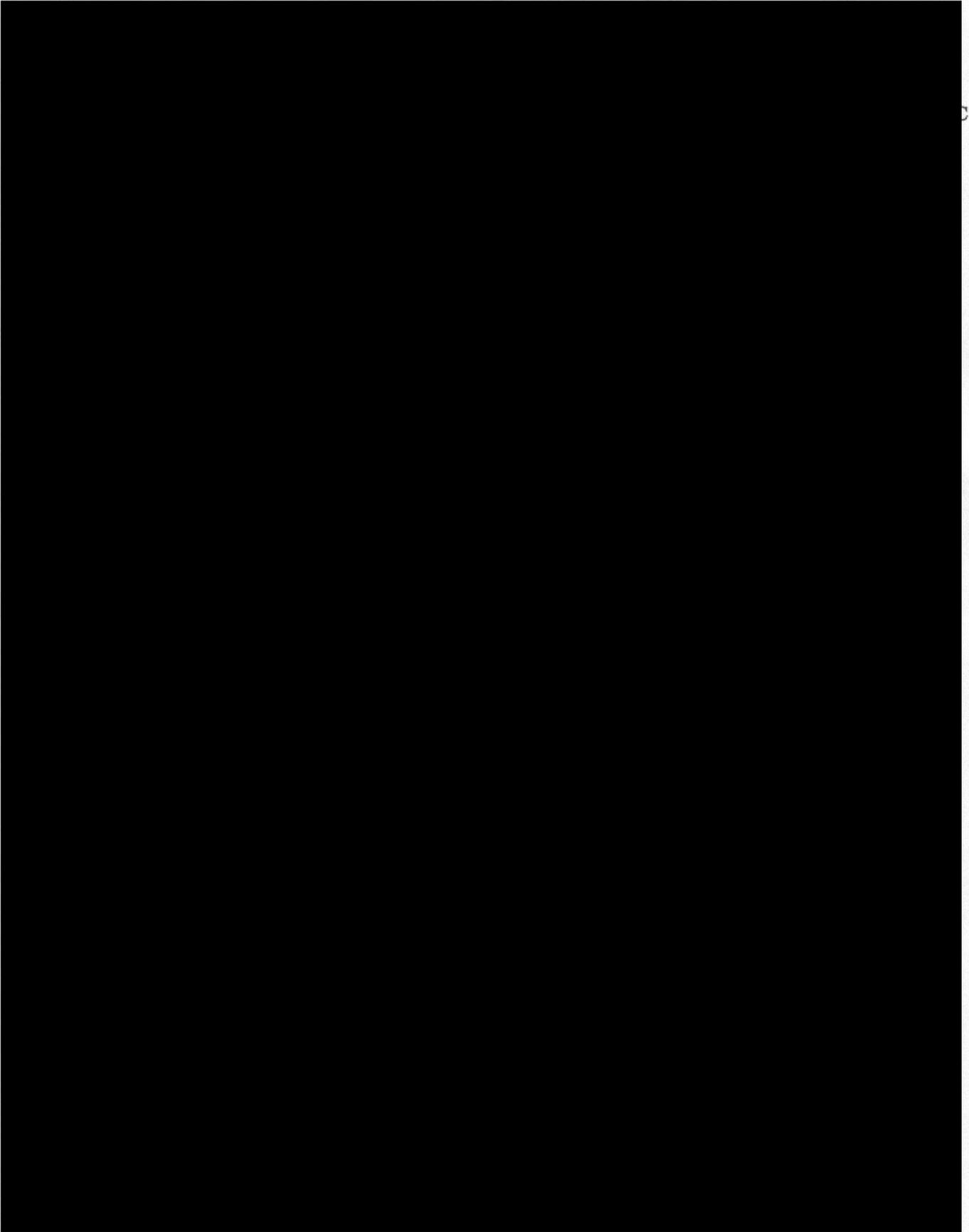
The following day the Park Service had a critique of the rescue investigated the goods and not so goods of each step taken. It was clear that the ability to get a caving physician to reduce my injury so that I was mobile made a deciding impact on the duration of the rescue. Without his attendance, it would have been very much more difficult and very time consuming. I will certainly put in a word in favor of having a good caving doctor

like Dr. Howerton around.

By the way, the injury was much more severe than any of us realized throughout the rescue. There was some bone fracturing in my shoulder joint and my rotator cuff was very severely torn. It is now (February) six months later and I after an operation and months of physical therapy, I am just getting some use back in my arm. This has put a major dent in my caving for now, but I look forward to being able to get back into it.

Reprinted from The Caver's Mailing List, Internet





Just a Little Bit...

On the weekend of July 23rd and 24th, several KCAG members and friends converged in the Waynesville area for a special CARBIDE ONLY trip arranged by Randy Bruegger. The cave of interest is a long-time favorite of KCAG but relatively untraveled in recent years... Skaggs Cave. Randy and M&M (Mike Kirch and Mike McKinney) left early in the afternoon on Friday for the drive down. It was a short drive for them. After a six hour tour... a six hour tour... The weather started getting rough, the tiny cars were rocked. If not for the courage of the fearless crew...the trip would be lost, the trip would be lost. Anyway, a four hour drive took six for some reason, ask Randy. Tom, Brett, and I left around six thirty and arrived at the big entrance of Tunnel cave at ten p.m. (a new land speed record I believe). The drive down was somewhat intense for Tom, and Brett and I. I lead the group in my car while Tom and Brett followed in their truck. At some point in the journey at approximately 70 m.p.h and in complete darkness on 7 highway, Tom thought it ingenious to turn off all lights on his truck and use his mini-mag for his source of light. His favorite trick was to fall back about half a mile and turn off his lights, accelerate at a high rate of speed and turn his lights back on... about three feet behind my bumper. This was great fun for all.

The party at the camp below Tunnel was in full swing when the lightless group arrived. Later, Terry DeFraitas arrived to find the group mostly inebriated and completely goofy. Mike Kirch, Brett Jarret, and I got the brainy idea to take what fishing gear we had and travel to the entrance of Tunnel to fish for incredibly large bass (yeah right). Mike Kirch lead the way with Brett and I bringing up the rear. Once inside the large entrance, Mike said "Shhh...there's something in here!". Brett and I waited listening when a definitively large loud sound was heard... possibly a bear or a moose. When I turned to say "Let's leave", Mike had hightailed it down the path with Brett not far behind. Thinking the worst was seen by Kirch and Brett, I also ran like a drunken chimpanzee holding a fishing pole in one hand and a beer in the other.

Convinced there was something REALLY big in the cave, we seeked the advice and leadership of our elder, Randy. "Randy!!! get your butt up here, there's something big in the cave and Brett and Mike are scared s--tless of it!! (me too!)". Randy didn't budge. We convinced others to follow and went fearlessly back to the cave with Mike McKinney leading. There was definitely something there. After several minutes of listening, someone in the group, we won't mention names Kirch, began to howl and squeal. Everyone started to make farm animal noises. Mike McKinney became disgusted and left. The sounds were returned from *inside* the cave. In a few minutes, two local teenage spelunkers came around the bend,

obviously hiding their fear. They carried flashlights and a gun. A real good combination. It was a BB gun and they were "only shootin fish". Who were we to confront them. After the basic conservation message we left.

The next day came early, about two or three hours later. We proceeded to the gated cave entrance of Skaggs. A wonderful trip followed with mud, friends, and a few really small holes. I lead the group through a hole about 12-14 inches in size that dropped down into a small meandering passage. The hole was about four and a half feet above the floor and required lots of squirming and arms outstretched in front of you. Of course, I didn't bother to tell anyone the passage went no where until they all had either fit or attempted to fit through the hole (except Randy who knew I was leading them on a journey that had no purpose). After a few hours messing around Skaggs, it was time to leave for Doug Feakes Peak Resort for Incurrigible Cavers. Saturday afternoon was spent discussing the night before and Brett's tendency to be "just a little bit faggy". Evening brought good conversation, flint knapping, and some gulping of the Ale. Poor Tom had an allergic reaction to something (beer, bug spray?) and became very swollen allover. We had a vigil for Tom's recovery while some left for town to get beer, food, and... and... oh yeah, some medicine for Tom. Night was enjoyable. Boy Scouts, Pedgy and Dave Foran were onsite from a previous cave trip that day. Pedgy's Puffy Pr-ck Patrol kept tabs on Tom's recovery most of the night.

Sunday was there too soon and the group dispersed to head home. Thanks for the good time all... let's do it again. By the way, I went to bed last on Saturday night you guys.

Bob G.