



The Month's Guano

September 2002

Kansas City Area Grotto

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President: Terry DeFrates

Vice President/Treasurer: Jeff Page

Secretary: Peggie Hines

Editor: Bryon Carmony 3512 N 63rd Terrace, Kansas City, KS 66104

Web Master: Sam Clippinger samc@lookandfeel.com
Jeff Andrews zandj@swbell.net

E-Mail Address: Bryon Carmony Packratt@aol.com
Jeff Page jpage2@kc.rr.com
Terry DeFrates theerustbuckett@aol.com

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**), Magg Hall, behind Spencer Laboratories, Volker Blvd. & Cherry, Kansas City, Missouri. Annual Dues: \$ 15 for Full Members (3 caving trips with KCAG, nomination and vote of membership required.)

NCRC Callout number Emergency use only

Central Region 502-564-7815. This number may be used for cave rescue emergencies in the states of, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, **Missouri**, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Subject: CaveTex: Ediger at Carroll Cave

The recent postings about Missouri's Carroll Cave remind me of the first time I was privileged to share cave air with emissaries from "The Center of the Known Caving Universe".

The year was 1968 and I was an impressionable Missouri high school kid in awe of the Mexican caving exploits I read about in the NSS News. For months I had been looking forward to attending my first NSS Convention--at Springfield Missouri that year--and getting a chance to meet such god-like AMCS luminaries as Bill Russell, TR Evans and Terry Raines.

Early the first morning of the convention I reverently approached the campsite of the Texas contingent, hoping for a glimpse of one of my idols. Just then, some ghastly-looking disheveled guy crawls out from one of the tents and, still on his hands and knees, starts puking his guts out into the tall grass. This was my first encounter with the famous Terry Raines.

Later during the convention, I and some of my Kansas City Area Grotto friends volunteered to take the AMCS contingent on a trip into Carroll Cave, our "project cave" at the time. When we pulled up in front of the low, water-filled entrance, the Texans piled out of their caravan of psychedelically painted speleovehicles and walked over to feel the temperature of the water. One of them--a big, well-muscled, macho-looking guy in a Hoss Cartwright cowboy hat--bends over, sticks his finger in the 55 degree water, straightens back up, and--in a perfect South Texas drawl--says, "Nope." Then he sits down right there and watches as the rest of us strip off our clothes, hoist them over our heads and begin shivering our way into the long, low water passage that comprises the first section of the cave. This was my first encounter with the famous Gil Ediger.

I'm sure TR Evans, Bill Russell and other Texans also equally impressed me during the convention, but all memories of those encounters were wiped out by a shocking experience later in the week. That was the night my adolescent mind was blown from witnessing a horde of drunken Texans paint TR's truck with the nubile body of a quite attractive camp follower named Tinkerbell.

Yours for armchair caving and old-time memories,

Frank Binney

NSS 10816F

UPCOMING EVENTS

REMEMBER OHG HAS AGGREGED TO LETS US CAVE WITH THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TRIP YOU MUST CONTACT THE TRIP LEADER.

- August 4-10, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project** See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information.
- August 14, 2002 **Grotto Meeting.** Magg Hall on the UMKC campus.
- September 11, 2002 **Grotto Meeting.** Magg Hall on the UMKC campus.
- September 14-15, 2002 **NCRC Weekend Orientation.** Sponsored by Carroll Cave Conservancy Inc. GOTO www.carrollcave.org for more details.
- September 20-22, 2002 **Annual Beaver Lake Trip.** There will be a novice trip as well this weekend to Whippoorwill.
- October 9, 2002 **Grotto Meeting.** Magg Hall on the UMKC campus.
- October 19-20, 2002 **Fall MVOR.** MCKC is the sponsor for this one. More details as they become available.
- November 2-3, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project** See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information.
- November 13, 2002 **Grotto Meeting.** Magg Hall on the UMKC campus.

Our Grotto Website has changed to www.kcgrotto.com

Beauty Then The Beast

by Richard Cindric

Four Mile Cave doesn't live up to its name; under a mile is my guess. But, it is one of the most beautiful caves in Arkansas or any other land blessed with karst features.

You wouldn't presume that beauty lies ahead by the way it starts out; a mud tube that's featureless except for an on-your-side crawl through 3" of water. The entrance tube intersects a stream passage where there are some nice formations, though they are only a promise of things to come because it was back to nondescript crawling and duck walking in the shallow stream.

Once the passage opens up, things heat up quickly. That is, it gets spectacular in a hurry. We could see a well-decorated side passage to the left that we would later ascend to find a tall room with equally tall formations. The heart of the cave isn't that way, so we pushed on.

A short easy walk took us to the beginning of the rimstone dams and speleothem heaven. Our agenda was to not dawdle on the way in because we would get to the end (or, as far as we wanted to go) then take photos on the way out. It was about 30 minutes in and 5 hours coming out. That doesn't include the time spent on the gate (more on that later).

Four Mile Cave has the most awesome rimstone dams, cave pearls, and stalactites that I've seen. Actually, I've been in caves with stalactites that equal or exceed Four Mile, but Four Mile's 'tites are beautifully colored, untouched, large in quantity, and accessible (close enough that you can see them well).

There is a 500' long section where the rimstone dams are continuous. They range from 4" to 4' in depth. My only disappointment in this cave is that I've never had the pleasure of being in there when the dams are full of water. Some of them were partially filled, but when I dream of Four Mile Cave, I think of what it would be like with aquamarine water cascading over the edges of the dams. The Four Mile entrance is prone to sump closed, so seeing the dams full of water requires good timing.

I used my digital camera. I was very happy with the results though it would be hard to not come away with something grand from there. However, one odd thing kept happening that made me wonder if a poltergeist wanders the place. Several photos had narrow, curvy streaks of light in them. I knew nobody was moving when the shutter was open so I was confused about what was happening. Another oddity: The streaks were only present when someone had an LED light turned on.

For 90% of the photos, I set the shutter to stay open for two seconds. When it was open, I would say, "Go" to someone operating a separate flash unit, and they would manually trigger the flash. When the light was out, I would move the camera down so I could look at the built-in screen to see how the photo turned out. The camera rotation was the problem. After the light from the flash was out, the shutter would still be open for some time as I was rotating the camera and it picked up the light from the LEDs. Quite oddly, this didn't happen with other sources of light. The solution was for everyone in or near a photo to turn their lights off.

The gate. It's impregnable. It's a piece of speleo-engineering the likes of which I've never seen. If the US didn't have Fort Knox, our gold would be equally safe in back of this leviathan. The stationary parts are ½" steel plate separated by 6", with the guts filled with concrete. I was told there's no point in trying to dig under it because of the 2' of concrete down there. The top and sides are well fastened into bedrock. The sliding part of the gate is a chunky assembly of 2" tubular steel. Once we finally got the lock off, the gate slid with surprising ease. I was amazed because I thought rust would be a problem. I looked more closely and saw it was sliding on lubricated rollers. Excellent!

The lock. Finding the lock, inserting the key, getting it to open, and removing it from the hasp was all done by feel and took roughly 20 minutes. That's not a bad time considering we didn't know where the lock was or how it worked, and our arms were just barely long enough to reach it. On our way out, it was a 10 minute operation to lock it back up.

The MOLES Grotto built the gate and administers access. I feel like it's a cave that won't bear much traffic so I intend to ask to borrow the key very infrequently.

Who went? Barry Godsey, Regan Youngman, John Tucker (Regan's 13 year old nephew), Mary Williams, Jeff Page, Richard Keith and myself.

We cleansed ourselves in the Buffalo River on the way to Jasper, where we ate in the Dairy Diner and frolicked with Coco. The latter is 600 pounds of blubberous, declawed black bear, owned by the same guy who owns the Diner.

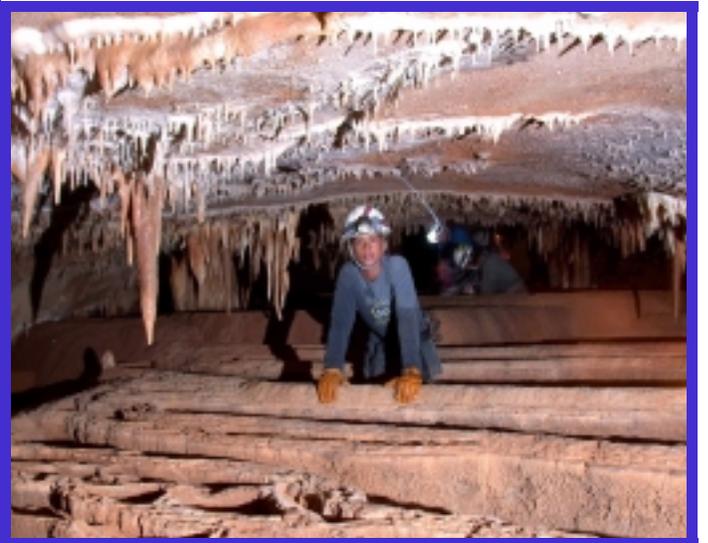
We had a permit for Fitton Cave the next day. It would be just a few days before the section of the cave from the Round Room to the Wet Entrance is closed for bats (closed mid-August to mid-May), so we did an entrance-to-entrance. We went in the Dry and came out the Wet.

Many years ago, I would visit this cave once or twice a year. After about a dozen trips, I decided it wasn't in my best interest or the cave's interest to continue with that. It had been a long time since I'd been from the Dry Entrance to the T-Junction and it was scary how much I had forgotten. The Manhole seems even slicker, if that's possible.

Fitton is a fantastic cave in a much different way than Four Mile. I've always been a fan of large passage, and Fitton has that in abundance: It's the largest and longest cave in Arkansas. It may not be packed with speleothems, but it does have some awesome gypsum. I was fortunate enough to see the gypsum needles and angel hair before that part of the cave was closed. This cave also has the capacity to get someone seriously lost because it can be vertically confusing; a rarity in the Ozarks. That's why Fitton is "The Beast" to Four Mile's "Beauty".

I took a few photos in the water passage from the Round Room to the Wet Entrance. A crawfish had washed in from the surface and was trying to make a living in a seemingly lifeless pool. I made its life a little more difficult by blinding it with multiple camera flashes.

There's a large waterfall room near the Wet Entrance that's about 50' wide and 70' tall. The floor is a continuous pool that seemed to be a foot or two deep (I didn't test that assumption). The other six cavers lined up opposite from me for group photos, the last one being a moon shot. In her defense, Mary declined to even be in view and, in John's defense, he kept his young tushy covered. You can see the photo of the four bare butts on my website. Only \$5 for my good friends. Actually, anyone who pays me \$5 is my good friend. Actually, I don't have a website but I would get one if I thought people would pay me \$5 to visit it.





Subject: Come to the Fall MVOR
From: Mark Andrich <elvisio@juno.com>

Hi everybody, Mark Andrich here, Chairdude of the Fall 2002 MVOR, hosted by the Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy, at the Sinks of Sinking Creek, in beautiful Shannon County, MO. This is the place of the picture on the back cover of the "Geologic Wonders of Missouri". The dates are October 18, 19, & 20. The Sinks property is private land, having been in the same family for over 50 years. There has been no active caving permitted in this area for nearly 30 years, so this is a rare and unique opportunity to visit and see how the land and the caves have been well managed by a responsible and concerned private landowner. We have an abundance of activities planned, something for everyone. Floating on the Current River, a National Scenic Riverway, a self led Road Trip to several of the interesting geologic and karst sites in the area, numerous displays and "seminars" at the campground, ranging from survey to spring geology to cave sediments to first aid, and of course, CAVES. There are numerous caves on the property, and several more in the nearby Mark Twain National Forest, the privately managed Pioneer Forest, and along the River, as well as on other private land. Most of these trips will be guided, but many will be self led. We also have tours available to Round Spring Cavern on the Current River. Of course, all of the things you expect at an MVOR will be there too. A bonfire, sauna (in one of the nicest settings you have ever experienced), door prizes, tee shirts, Saturday night banquet, guest speaker, and a band. And Vendors too. The Tee Shirt we have is one of the nicest and most colorful you have ever seen at a caving event, with artwork on both sides, and a very unique design. And don't bother bringing dinner on Saturday night! Play, float, and cave all day and let Matt Marciano cook your grub in a way only he can. If you have eaten Matt's feasts before, you know this is not one to be missed. We may also have breakfast available on Sunday morning. The flyers will be mailed out soon, and more information can be found at <www.mvor.org> by the end of the week. We also need more help with the event, especially in the areas of cave trips, security, registration, and things like the sauna and set-up. The more you help for just awhile, the more we can all enjoy ourselves. And all of the proceeds go to support the MCKC in their continuing efforts to purchase, manage, and educate about Missouri caves. This is YOUR organization, so make it a point to join us October 18, 19, & 20 at The Sinks. So please contact me at <elvisio@juno.com> if you are willing to assist in our efforts. I am planning some pre-MVOR work trips, with cave trips probably not offered, or at least limited, during the MVOR weekend. And a few other incentives, so if you have some area or talent you wish to contribute, let me know.

See ya later
Mark Andrich

Permission granted to post this to other newsgroups. All Cavers welcome!

My novice experience to Mystery Cave in upstate New York (August 25, 2002) By Carl Carmoney

Arrival

I awoke to the sound of a crow outside my bedroom window – a little refreshed from my slumber – in need of more sleep. However, the anxiousness toward my trip ahead made me bubble with anticipation and ready to outfit myself for the day.

I packed my caving boots, my thick cotton Velcro™ coveralls, a jacket, a pair of sweat pants, my helmet with Black Diamond “Gemini” lamp, an extra flashlight, leather gloves, two packages of trail mix with M&Ms, and a bottle of Poland Spring’s water in the original container. Remember this water bottle as you will see this material again. I was dressed in a pair of old khaki shorts, Hiking boots with boot socks, an old t-shirt and a red bandana.

My neighbor, Jansen Cardy, and I meet Steve Janeski at 7:30am, we headed out to New York State from Hartford, CT, and about two uneventful hours later, we arrived at our destination at 9:30am.

Being the first group to arrive at the Mystery Cave parking area I decided to do a little exploring of the woods before the rest of the group arrived at 10:00am. I immediately found a bridge and proceeded toward it. Looking out at me with two innocent eyes was a cute little kitten of about 6 weeks of age. It was a little skittish at first but not too quick, so I easily grabbed the critter and had it purring in no time. A few bad jokes later, we left the cat to its own devices and awaited the arrival of the old timers – literally.

Pete is about 67 years old but as fit as a young buck. He is also a biologist. In his spare time, he collects soil samples from the caves he has visited all through his years and has made some remarkable discoveries about the biological importance of the cave environment. One thing I learned from him struck me profoundly. He advises all cavers to wash their equipment between expeditions to avoid cross-contaminating caves with different kinds of bacteria. He says that certain caves’ bacteria will kill off other bacteria in another cave, which can affect the rest of the creatures inhabiting the caves. It can even kill off the bats that reside in the cave.

When everyone arrived, eight in all, we equipped ourselves and headed up hill toward the cave. I noticed that I was the only one not carrying a cave bag. All I had was a cylindrical bottle of water and one bag of trail mix. I found that the bottle of water fit nicely into one of my rear pockets leaving my hands free – for now. On the climb up we had to be very careful – not only because the hill was so steep but because of the bright orange newts crawling on the pathway. Newts were everywhere. Animal Planets’ Jeff Corwin would have a field day up on this hill. Not to mention what we found in the cave. (Hint: Story to follow.)

Into The Light-Sucker

The cave entrance was small and had a steel gate with a broken lock blocking the entrance. The senior members of the team made various comments about the dilapidated status of the gate as well as how to fix it. A loose timeline was devised to avoid any state agencies getting involved that would potentially close the cave off altogether if the grottoes did not take positive action before the state did.

Before we entered the cave, we had a small meeting to introduce everyone (there were two novice cavers – Henry and myself) and to give a brief about the cave structure and some history on the cave itself. At the meeting were Bob and Tom Simmons (Bob’s an environmental engineer), Amy (another active biologist), Henry (a thinly built mountaineer – think, almost-as-“Bryon Carmoney-thin”-but-not-quite), Pete (hugely knowledgeable active biologist running experiments in his basement), Jansen Cardy (Our gear man – every grotto has one. He is ours; get your own!), Steve Janeski (a quite, mild mannered fellow) and myself. We all belong to the Central Connecticut Grotto, or, the CCG. Our website for, those that care, is: <http://www.caves.org/grotto/ccg/>

There is only one way into this cave but after a short distance there are two passages that can be taken to get into the ‘meat’ of the cave. One passage is a vertical drop of about 20 feet and the other is a ‘corkscrew.’ Considering that both passages lead to the same central location in the cave, we divided ourselves into two groups: those that would take the corkscrew and those that would take the vertical drop. We agreed that once inside the meeting room we would wait for the drop team to arrive, as it would take them longer to descend twenty feet than it would take us to crawl, pinch and twist our bodies the five-hundred feet or so to the meeting room.

Not having any vertical gear of my own, Pete (leading the way), Henry, Steve and I took the corkscrew. The others, obviously,

took the drop. Pete, having surveyed the cave in the late sixties or seventies was first in. He showed us newbies the landmarks and other passages on our way through to the meeting room. This first section was very precarious because the cave had, as recently as 10 years, caved in some – setting the stage for some very unstable rocks.

We found our first chamber and the four of us assembled here to devise a plan to descend the crevice before us. It was about 20 feet long, 14 inches across and 8 feet deep. On my trip through the crack, my chest pressed against the rock. When I got a little nervous about the pressure, I looked to my left and noticed a better location of descent. Oh well, I was in to my neck and I was not about to climb back out just to start over – I had already gone too far.

When we were all through, we met at the bottom of another small passage where there was a lot of shale on the track and it made for some loose footing. Pete told us, “This was the area that had the cave in.” and “There used to be two passages through this portion.” We found one rock where some kids had written the words CHUD. Placing your back against it revealed a white line that almost pointed to the exit route.

After pointing this out, Pete took us down to the meeting room. It was a climb down of about fifteen to twenty feet in an ‘L’ shaped pattern. Upon exiting the ‘shimmy’, I found myself in a huge room measuring, uh, measuring...well, far beyond the extent of my light. Actually, it was about 100 feet long, twenty to forty feet high and fifty or so feet wide – with a stream running through it! Gorgeous!

It was here that we had to wait for the other four members to arrive; and, wait we did. It was another thirty minutes before the other four members began to descend. Once they started descending, though, they came rather quickly. We sat in the darkness to preserve our batteries and talked about cave exploration and this cave in particular. We explored this cavern before the others arrived and found that the stream broke in two in a small antechamber before it reached the meeting room. From the sound of it, one would think that there was a raging torrent of water coursing through the passage; but alas, it was just the acoustics that echoed through the narrow corridor that gave it its booming sound.

There are numerous formations forming from the ceiling at the narrow locations of the room. The river that once ran through here obviously stripped all the other formations from the walls, ceilings and floor. Further downstream, the passage was almost cylindrical for the length of the chamber.

When everyone assembled, we once again had a little meeting discussing the state of the cave, everyone’s condition thus far and setting the stage for what was to come. Also of note was a review on how everyone came to stand where they were in the cave and how to get out. This was a very gratifying feeling that the leaders of the trip took the extra precaution to ensure everyone’s enjoyment and safety while in the cave. Once again, we took note of the exit points and how to extract ourselves should something happen.

Trail of Lights

Following the stream further into the cave, I noticed that the cave rocks in the stream were very easy to stand upon; unlike their surface dwelling brethren – all slick with moss. Soon we had to climb the walls and traverse a shelf cut from the rock by the stream as it disappeared into the floor. The climb was a little slick and not bereft of fear. One wrong step and I would have plummeted to the rock-strewn floor five to twelve feet below.

After following the shelf for about thirty feet, we had to clamber over a few mud boulders and through a passage about four feet high and twenty feet long. On the other side of it was “The Round Room.”

The Round Room was probably constructed by a torrent of water circling the area for eons. A passage in the lower portion of the room probably drained the room. This room was approximately fifteen feet in diameter and twenty-five feet high – give or take. It took a few minutes for everyone to arrive in the room so we chatted among ourselves. Pete also told us about the first time he explored the cave and told us to look for survey markings laid by using the flame from a carbide lamp. Bob has also been in this cave a number of times and told us of Heaven and Hell – Heaven obviously being above this chamber and Hell below.

Before we visited these areas, we would visit “The Beach.”

The Beach

Getting to The Beach from The Round Room is no easy task. I watched Pete go in first, then Amy. Let me put this passage into the proper perspective for the reader. Picture a mountain climber using his ropes to ascend a cliff face while in a wedge pitched at a 40°. Now, picture a climber ascending that same wedge without ropes. Add mud, water and darkness and you will get the

idea of the psychological trouble I was having getting through. Oh, did I mention a round water bottle? Worst...idea...ever. It was at this point I realized why everyone had either a cave bag or hipster bag.

Watching Pete and Amy traverse the cliff made it no less easy for me. I eventually swallowed my fear, tucked my round water bottle into my suit and lay on my back. Using the handholds on the ceiling, I shimmied the thirty odd feet to the other side. I was very scared because there was a drop off, into complete blackness, at the bottom of the wedge – it opened up to swallow any unwary adventurers. I never did find out how deep that hole was and I was not too eager to find out!

Getting through the slide was a little easier than it looked, I must admit; but it sure is imposing. On our way through, I could hear Pete herald that he had found a glove he had lost twenty years earlier on one of his survey's. True or not, it was a lighthearted moment.

Once past the slide we entered a small chamber that dropped twenty-five feet or so to another circular pit. At the bottom of the pit was a level standing spot that could contain our party but not too many more. To the South of the platform (I think) the stream once ran through here. Another wedge went nowhere but was obviously cut by water. On the other side of the pit we had to climb up another twenty-five feet.

Once over the top of the last climb we found ourselves in another vast room with huge slabs of rock that had fallen from the ceiling eons ago. It made for some tough climbing.

At the end of this was another rock face that we had to ascend. Once again, we found ourselves in another round-ish chamber. Getting over it was not too hard; but, you have to be sure not to shoot yourself over too hard – there is a good slide on the other side of it. In the bottom, there is a shaft that leads almost straight down to the other side of the slope. On this slope, we took a short break to wait for everyone to catch up. Either passage, up and over or under, deposited me into what Pete called The Spout.

Pete has seen water cones six feet high come shooting out from the floor. If you placed your flashlight in the barrel of it, you could see the sump. It was also very sandy in this area.

On the other side of the rock-fallen ceiling, another room was present and it has a mostly clay floor. This was the beach. Well, almost. Further into the room was a sandy floor and it is obvious that the room does, on occasion, flood to the ceiling.

In the furthest portion of the cave and down the slope, there was a small body of water. A frog sat quietly staring into our cave lamps. He was rather large and considering that he never moved even though we were only a few feet from him, I'd have to venture a guess that he's been down here for quite a while – eating the insects that float in from the stream – and therefore not afraid of any predators. Pete quipped that it is quite possible that this hefty frog has probably eaten a bat or two for lunch. I have no reason to doubt his observation.

Lunch Time

Speaking of lunch, that is exactly what we did in this room. I ate the rest of what trail mix I had remaining and downed some cave-soil-contaminated water. Considering I am still standing, I am not too worried about having had to drink it, right now.

It is about this time that I choose to reflect on my caving experience thus far. First, I need to get a cave bag to hold the extra goodies one needs while exploring. Secondly, I did not bring enough batteries. I did not need them, as my Gemini uses an LED, but it would have been comforting to know that I had extras if I needed them. Thirdly, a Nalgene bottle is a better choice for storing the trail mix than my pocket on my pant leg. Forth, acquire good quality kneepads. The kneepads I had on pinched the back of my legs and by the time I reached The Beach I was ready to float-test the damned things in Froggie's pond.

I am also considering a length of 6mm cord for assisting others up and down climbs like Bob did for most of us on our way back out of The Beach.

We lay on the beach for a good thirty minutes chatting about various cave features and adventures – not to mention good 'ol Froggie. I also took the extra time to take a little nap to refresh my muscles. Caving is a lot more work than I remembered from my childhood – the last time I went caving.

After everyone was adequately refreshed, we decided to move on. Since we took the 'low road' to the beach on the way in, we decided to take the 'high road' out. The first section of the High Road was a slick steep incline for about fifty feet, which, ended in a chamber that had three large cylindrical holes in the floor. Each hole was about five feet in diameter and about twelve feet deep. No one climbed down.

To the northern end of the room was our exit route. The exit route consisted of large rocks that had fallen from the ceiling some time ago. We crawled on our bellies to get over the rocks. At the end of our short crawl, we had another decision to make – whether to go up and over or down and out. It did not matter which way we went as the two diverging passages met back up at the same point some time later. Three members of the group took the lower, less challenging, route. Four others and I took the more challenging route; I should have taken the other one. It really was not that hard of a route, it was just very steep and at one point, I had to straddle a pit that fell away about thirty feet. I asked for assistance from Henry who had straddled the pit just before me. He gave me the helping hand I needed and I returned the favor to the person behind me, Jansen. The rest of the team did the same as they proceeded through this area.

Just beyond this area, we all met up and made the decent down the slope we climbed to reach the Beach. Bob produced a coil of rope from his medium sized pack and took a turn of the rope around his body to act as an anchor-assist for us gravitationally-challenged individuals. It was a great aide for descending this 75-85° drop of twelve feet, or so. Our success was short-lived because after descending this drop, we had to climb twenty or so feet back up the other side of the ravine.

We could have traversed a sheer cliff wall that joined the descent and climb, but it was very steep, high from the bottom of the pit and very muddy. We asked Bob how he intended to climb down and he indicated that he would take the wall over. We were incredulous. We were even more amazed that he made it all the way over without slipping once – a real testament that Bob is a very agile man despite his age (he is a father of a teenager) and his size.

The Exit

The troupe found ourselves back in The Round Room thirty minutes later and we divided ourselves into two teams: Those that would stay and explore Heaven and Hell, and those that would leave the cave. I was exhausted so I decided to leave the nether regions of the underworld.

As Pete, Steve and I headed out Pete suggested that I take the lead. I thought to myself, “Sure, why not? This is great training!” I agreed and they followed me out, correcting me after I had made a mistake – probably to drive the point home that I had made an error. I took it all in stride and had an enjoyable effort ‘leading’ the three of us out of the cave. Everyone made it out safely even though the remaining troupe stayed for another two hours to explore Heaven and Hell.

How anyone could call this underworld Hell is beyond me; of course, I have never had to rescue anyone, either.

Kansas City Area Grotto
KCAG
c/o Bryon Carmoney
3512 N. 63rd Terrace
Kansas City, Kansas 66104-1009



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