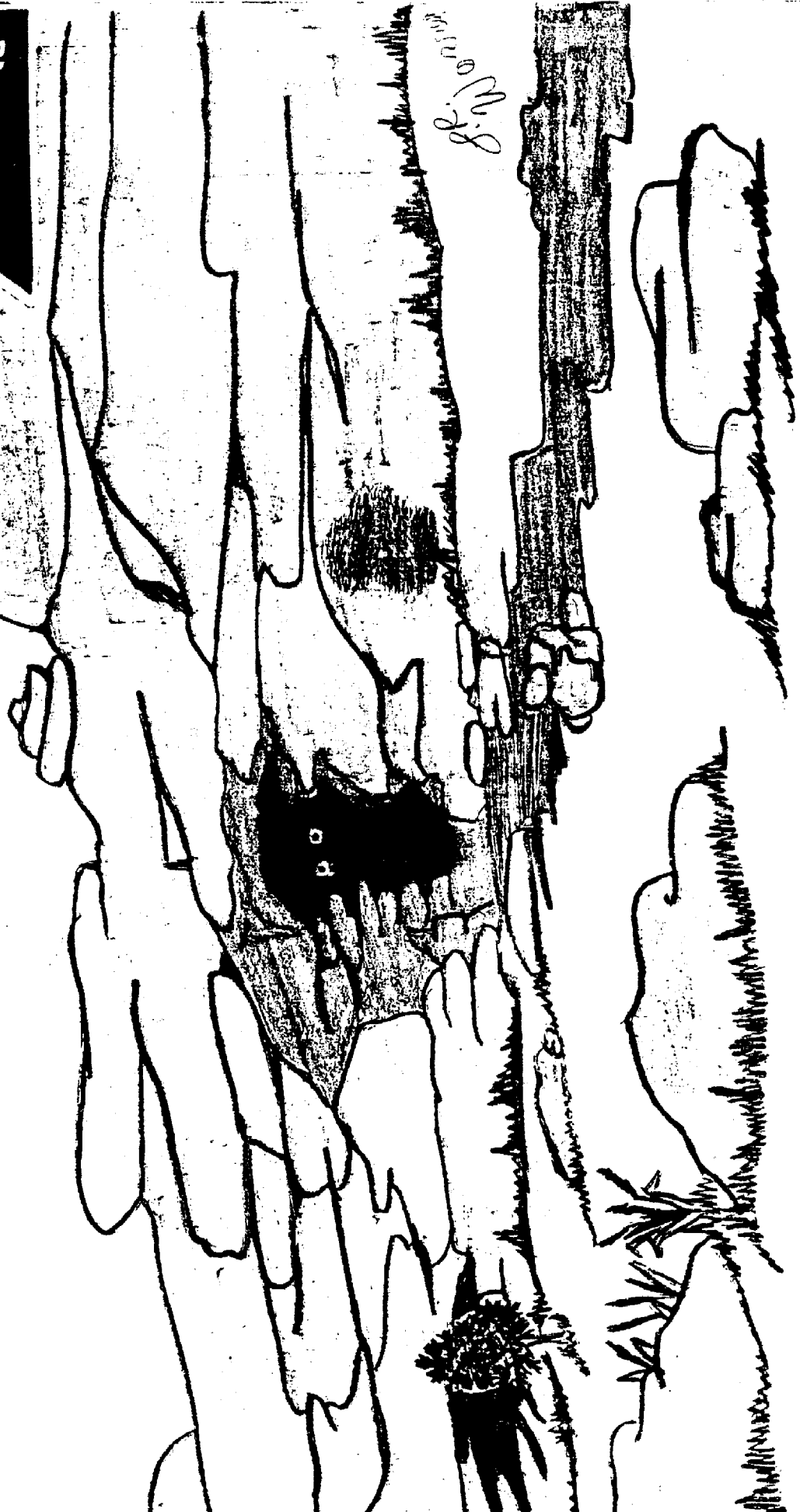
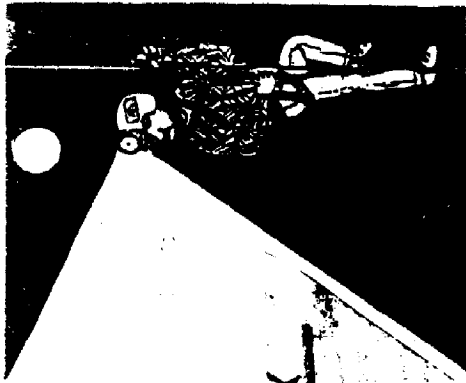


JUNE 1982

BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



The Birmingham Grotto Newsletter is published approximately twelve times a year by the Birmingham Grotto of the National Speleological Society.

Subscription and Membership fees are now due. Annual subscription rates are included in the \$4 membership fee. Outside the Birmingham area, the subscription rate is only \$2. All are prorated from October.

Editors: Lynn McGill & Nancy Boice
5279 Paramount Drive
Birmingham, AL 35210

Submit materials for publication directly to the Editors. Deadline is the 20th day of the month preceding the month of issue.

ALL OFFICIAL GROTTO MAIL (INCLUDING EXCHANGES) ADDRESSED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE EDITORS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE GROTTO PO BOX. THIS ASSURES THAT THE MESSAGE WILL GET THROUGH.

P. O. Box 3302
Birmingham, AL 35255

Officers for the 1981-82 year are:

CHAIRMAN - Greg McGill 956-1267

VICE-CHAIRMAN- Mike McEachern

SECRETARY - Dottie Alexander

TREASURER - Joe Domnanovich

TRIP COORDINATOR - Steve Hall

MINUTES OF MAY 3, 1982

The May meeting of the Birmingham Grotto was called to order by Greg McGill and minutes of the previous month's meeting read.

Old Business

The decision was made to screen more TAG t-shirts to sell at SERA. Donna Matthews volunteered her place for the screening and June 12 was the date set to do it. The t-shirt colors to be screened will be black and burgundy.

New Business

The 1982 Speleofest, to be held in Brandenburg, Kentucky, was discussed. The date is Memorial Day Weekend and the \$5.50 registration fee must be in by May 15.

Greg mentioned that the Huntsville Grotto will be having a picnic May 15. He also discussed a recent article in the Huntsville Grotto Newsletter asking that all cavers visiting Fern Cave put an NSS emblem on their cars. This is so that they will not be mistaken for hunters.

Trips

Greg reported on a mapping trip to Catona Bridge Cave. The cave has 3 entrances, one extremely small, and is 543 feet long. The outstanding feature of the cave seems to be a telephone pole coming through the roof of the cave. Greg noted that the cave is silting up.

Mark Poulster gave a report on the April Grotto trip to Devils Dungeon. He and Walter Plunkett did some ridgewalking around the hillside and then did the cave.

Mark also reported on a trip with Larry Moore and Dave Howell which started out to Falling Springs Cave. They went into Jeffrey's Hollow and decided from the amount of water flowing in the stream not to do the cave. They then did some ridgewalking, finding some small holes.

Mike McEachern told of a recent trip to Graves Cave where the stream in the cave sumped out. There was also a stream in the "dry" formation passage.

The program was a slide show presented by Mike McEachern on the cave rescue of Cris Curve in Brinco Cave in Mexico. Cris fell about 35 feet and broke a leg.

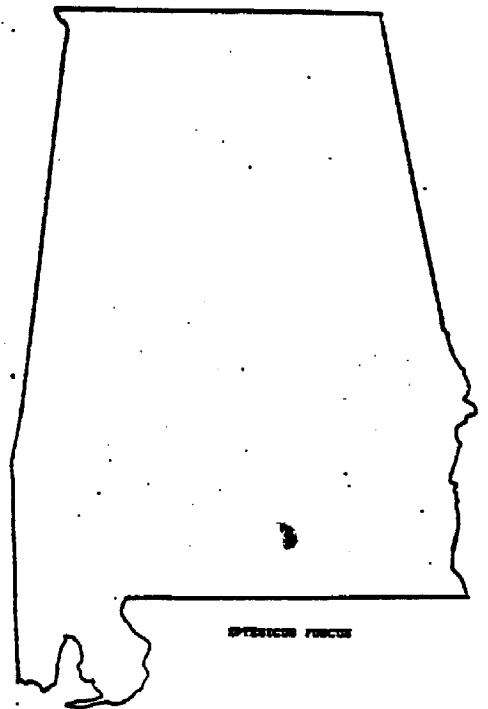
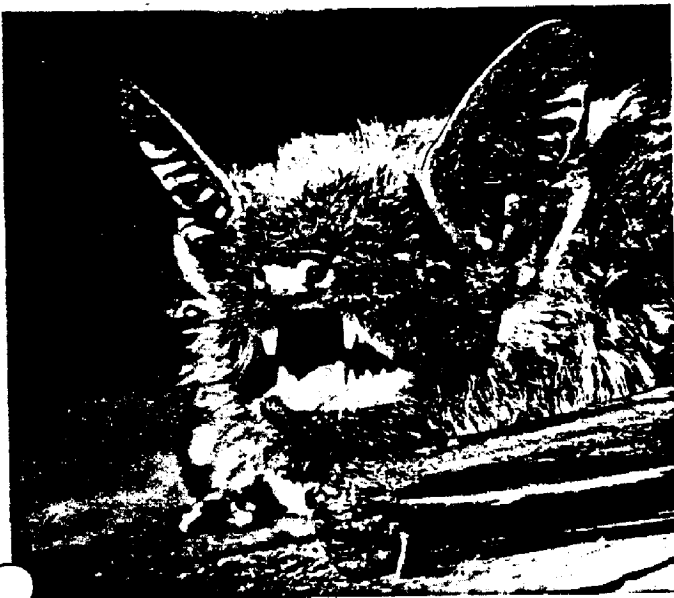
BAT OF THE MONTH By John Marshall

E P T E S I C U S F U S C U S Big Brown Bat

Description: Forearm, 42-51 mm; wingspread, 325-350 mm (Barbour and Davis 1969). The color varies from rust to dark brown. The calcar is keeled, and the tragus is broad and rounded.

Distribution: All sources show this bat to be found statewide. It is also present all year.

Habitat: In the winter, big brown bats roost in caves, mines, storm sewers, and buildings. In the summer, these bats are found in attics, barns, and under bridges in colonies. Barhalow (1939) collected them in a crevice between the walls of a brick building on the campus of Auburn University. They prefer summer roosts where the temperature does not rise above 92-95 degrees F (Barbour and Davis 1969).



OTR '82 PRE-REGISTRATION

Again this year there is a slight discount for TRA members who pre-register (\$1 per person). Please pre-register, as this provides the treasurer with funds for required advance payments and also expedites registration on site. Registration begins at one o'clock on Thursday, September 2, 1982, at Camp Alpine Shores, Rt. 33 east of Elkins WV. Pre-registrants need on arrival only get their TRA cards validated and provide a description of the vehicle in which they arrive--and pick up OTR name tag, programs, etc.

Deadline for pre-registration: August 21, 1982. Send forms and checks (payable to OTR '82) to: Evelyn W. Bradshaw, OTR Registrar
1732 Byron Street, Alexandria VA 22303

Fees include campground facilities, door prizes, accident insurance, soda & beer at Sat/Sun parties, contests with prizes.

Instructions:

1. Use one form per person. If necessary, photocopy the form, or make a facsimile.
2. Only TRA guests may pre-register at the discount rates listed. TRA members may bring 2 guests but must add a flat surcharge of \$2 per guest over full registration cost.
3. Please PRINT information requested on the pre-registration form.
4. Remember our pet policy. OTR management urges that pets be left at home if at all feasible (*can you imagine what it would be like if everyone brought dogs!*). The charge this year for pets is \$1 per day per pet. Camp ground policy requires that pets be kept under control--i.e. on a leash or in a vehicle--and owners must clean up after pets.

OTR 1982 FEE SCHEDULE Figures in boldface pre-registration charge
(Figures in italics charges at the gate)

Cost, TRA Members	Arriving Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Single age 18 and over	\$14 <i>(15)</i>	\$12 <i>(13)</i>	\$10* <i>(11)</i>	\$7* <i>(8)</i>
Couple age 18 and over (same family, same address)	24 <i>(26)</i>	20 <i>(22)</i>	16* <i>(18)</i>	10* <i>(12)</i>
Children in family, each, age 6 and over#	10 <i>(11)</i>	8 <i>(9)</i>	6 <i>(7)</i>	3 <i>(4)</i>
Children in family, each, age 3-5 #	6 <i>(7)</i>	5 <i>(6)</i>	4 <i>(5)</i>	2 <i>(3)</i>
Infants, age under 3	no charge			

If one family member arrive 1-3 days early pay family rate when all here & add \$2/day for extra day individual he

All registrants must pay through Monday; refunds can be arranged if you must leave early

*Please note that most of the special costs for parties, refreshments, prizes, contests are incurred on Saturday and Sunday. Therefore the cost does not drop by half when one arrives Saturday instead of Thursday.

#One major fee change in 1982 is a ceiling for families of one or two adults and several children under 18. This ceiling is as follows:

Arriving: Thursday \$55 Friday \$45 Saturday \$35 Sunday \$20

However, because the fee schedule this year has been set up especially to keep family costs reasonable, few families will probably find it necessary to apply this rate ceiling. This is only for TRA-headed families.

Day Passes

Persons wishing to visit OTR during the day, view ongoing activities, shop with the vendors etc. will be expected to buy day passes for \$2 per person per day. This is refundable if the person leaves and surrenders the pass within an hour. It is only good until 8 p.m. and does not entitle the holder to participate in contests or other privileges of full registrants. \$2 can be applied toward full registration.

Joining TRA: All NSS members and members of recognized caving organizations (grottos &c) are eligible to join The Robertson Association (TRA). For information and application material, write the TRA Registrar, Anne Whittemore, 4107 Ranch Rd., Johnson City TN 37601. It costs a dollar for a lifetime membership.

If your pre-registration is mailed so late it is not received before OTR, you must pay full charges at the gate and appropriate refund will be made later when pre-registration received August 21 also deadline for cancellations (payment refunded less \$1 handling fee). Registration suspended during slack pre-dawn hours; very late (i.e. "early") arrivals should be

ACANTHUS SINKS CAVE By Bill Putnam

It had been six weeks since I had been caving when Steve Attaway suggested that I go mapping with him in Acanthus Cave's spring entrance. Out of desperation, I jumped at the chance to go on what sounded like a good hard caving trip. I was told of multiple swims and wades requiring wetsuits, of a 30' pit entrance, and of many possible virgin leads to be surveyed. None of it was exaggeration. It turned out, rather, to be understatement. In fact, I nearly became a permanent feature of the cave.

Steve Attaway, Chris Langston, and I piled in with Steve Conner and left Atlanta Friday night after dinner. It was necessary to stop in Rome to purchase beer, since the cave is in a dry county in Alabama. We decided on 3 six-packs, since we were low on funds. That was an underestimate as it turned out. The next stop was the parking area for the cave, which is at the location of Mr Hayden's (the landowner) ex-house. It was a very nice house till it burned down. Greg McGill and the Birmingham Grotto have established a good relationship with Mr. Hayden, and he allows cavers to camp on the site provided that they call him the week before the visit. The site is conveniently located about one hundred yards from the spring entrance (resurgence) for the Acanthus System.

We arrived at around eleven pm. Steve Attaway wanted to do some caving, but was out-voted in favor of some beer drinking. The next morning we had breakfast and waited for Greg and Lynn McGill to arrive. At ten o'clock the cave won and we donned our wetsuits and got out the tape and compass. The plan was to resurvey an area which had a closure error and then proceed into an unmapped area, exiting for lunch at about one o'clock.

As we climbed down into the entrance the others voiced various cries of joy at the water temperature. I quelled my second thoughts and waded it. Arghhh! "Colder than a witch's tits!" The wading immediately became a swim with a comfortable 3' of airspace. Exertion began to warm me up in my suit, which appeared

to be working well. After several minutes of wading and swimming we arrived at the survey area and began work.

I was reading the compass, a new Sunto. The previous weekend we'd had problems with the lens foggin up, so it was necessary to keep it very dry and safe. This necessitated occasional interesting contortions to get readings. Nevertheless, we progressed and eventually located the closure error source, a transposed reading. We then proceeded to map several hundred feet of previously explored but unmapped passage. After that, we could distinctly hear the beer back at the car calling our names, so we exited for lunch. When I came to the entrance the water had been muddied up and I didn't see a large, very sharp rock just under water. The result was a small tear in my wetsuit and a large bloody tear in my skin. Oh well, some beer and a bandaid will fix that right up....

Back at the campsite we found Greg's car. We figured he must have gone to the upper entrance and would return soon. Beer and food were consumed. Sure enough, Greg and Lynn and their daughter Tama and one of her friends soon arrived. Much conversation was had and beer and other substances were necessary. Eventually we decided to go back and map some more cave.

The area to be mapped was referred to as "the place where the Devil lives" due to the intense tribulations suffered by the group on the previous visit. Chris kept sliding uncontrollably into a deep pool and says that the devil snatched his glove and tried to drag him in. I was skeptical at the time.

Donning our clammy sweatsuits, we reentered the cold dark, wet cavern. Quickly we traversed the area which we had mapped earlier and came to a junction I was paddling along behind Steve and Chris when suddenly there was a yell: "Jesus Christ, a snake!" (or words to that effect). There was a confused pileup of cavers as everyone strained to spot the snake and avoid being bitten. I peered into the gloom and suddenly spied a 3' long undulating creature with a pointed head held out of the water. The snake looked about as confused as we were.

Indecision reigned as we argued the merits of continuing or leaving. Eventually we decided to go on by an alternate route than the one coveted by the snake. We were still concerned, since the passages

interconnected after a short swim. I was elected to go first by default (no one else wanted to) and went slowly, reminding my self that most snakebites are not fatal. I passed the junction and there was no sign of the snake, thank God.

We proceeded uneventfully, to a small pool which ended at a very nasty, muddy, tight crawl, through which another pool was visible. This, I was told, was where the devil lives. We went through and began looking for the last survey point. While looking, I noticed rather quickly that the sloping, humus covered sides of the pool were impossible to grip. I kept sliding down towards the center of the pool. I struggled manfully to hang on but to no avail. As I slid out I suddenly remembered that I would float due to my wetsuit. I relaxed and floated out to the center of the pool. "Hey, this is fun!" Reflexively, I felt for the bottom and was amazed to find that I could stand with my head just above water. "Hah, this isn't bad at all. The Devil must have moved." We surveyed one last shot down a crawl which almost immediately got too low to pass through. Emph! It ends! Oh well, there are other leads left.

On the way back we decided to do a side trip through the "Grim Swim". This was described as a 50' swim with varying airspace, the lowest being a 20' long region with only about 4 to 5' of air over water of unknown (probably about 10') depth. The problem was that it was in a passage that connected directly to the area where the snake had been seen. Greg insisted that we must all do the "Grim Swim" or hang our heads in shame. Naturally he was elected to lead the way.

Greg made it through the swim with little effort and reported no sign of the snake. The rest of us started through. I was last and had just entered the 4' airspace area, head tilted, sucking in the precious air, when a wave from somewhere splashed over my face and put out my carbide lamp. Instinctively, I straightened up and tried to raise my head. Of course, I hit the ceiling which forced me under water. I knew that all I needed to do was back up a couple of feet to the area with about 12' of air and I'd be OK. I paddled backwards vigorously and was able to get to the desired spot and fill my lungs. My heart felt like it was going

to pound it's way up my throat and swim away.

Meanwhile, the result of my "vigorous" backpaddling was a series of waves which swamped Chris at the other end of the low airspace. He got dunked, but was immediately grabbed by the others and was OK. While Steve provided light, I carefully and slowly came through the swim. Talk about your adrenalin rushes!

After some conversation we started back through the swim. This time we went one at a time. Chris went first and appeared to be OK until he approached the end of the swim. He got too close to the right wall, where the ceiling comes down to meet the water, and snagged his lamp reflector on a projection in the ceiling. This leverage forced him under water. We saw his lamp go out and heard him splashing around. Steve yelled "Chris is in trouble!" We all began swimming toward him. Greg was preparing to take some pictures and was closest. He dropped all his equipment and plunged through the swim. Chris had gone under and was out of sight. Suddenly we heard his helmet banging on the ceiling as he swam around in the 4" airspace and tried to surface. He had turned completely around and was coming back through the swim underwater! As he emerged, Steve and Steve grabbed him and hauled him out of the water. There was a huge "whoosh" followed by much coughing as he sucked in air. He was OK. All of us (esp. Chris) were scared s___less.

After recovering we went very cautiously through the swim and headed out of the cave. I began to feel the cold as the excitement wore off. I now knew where the Devil had moved to, the Grim Swim.

We exited quickly, stopping only to change carbide once and to take a couple of pictures. Greg took a picture as we came through the entrance swim.

The temperature outside was about 77° and we opened up our suits and sat in the stream to discuss the events. Soon the beer called us back to camp. Steve and I were still jittery about the close calls and weren't ready to eat, so we walked up to the pit entrance to survey into the stream level. The first pit turned out to be 26' and the second was 16'. We surveyed some old leads and a couple of new ones and climbed out. Then we surveyed overland uphill to another cave entrance and explored into its end in a mud fill. When we got back to camp we were ravenous. The beer, however, was gone. Just when we needed it most, we had run out. A through search yielded

one solitary can of Bud, which was worshipfully consumed. And so ended the first day.

The next day we decided to do something safe and comfy. We drove up the road to a truckstop and had a big breakfast, and then proceeded to Devil's Dungeon, just up the road. Vertical caving, we decided, is much safer than that nasty wetsuit stuff. Steve Attaway's knee was hurting from a previous caving injury so he went into the cave with us and waited at the top while Steve Conner, Chris, and I bounced the 147' pit. There was very little water coming down.

We exited the cave about one o'clock and drove to Grant for lunch at a little place that serves BIG hamburgers. The drive back to Atlanta was uneventful and we had plenty of time to talk and reflect on the weekend's events.

Safely back in Atlanta, we discussed the close calls over pizza and beer at the Mellow Mushroom. The snake was a warning, we decided. It was a manifestation of the Devil, who now resides in the Grim Swim. Yes sir, I liked the Grim Reaper right in the eye and said, "Hi, my name is Ed Strausser!"

---CAVE TRIPS---

July 17- SERA

Aug. 7 - Grotto trip to Gross Skelton Cave

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM OTR 82

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

IF YOUR NAME IS DIFFERENT ON YOUR TRA CARD, WHAT IS NAME ON YOUR TRA CARD? _____

DATE YOUR TRA MEMBERSHIP CARD ISSUED _____

WHO SIGNED IT? _____

NUMBER OTR'S ATTENDED PRIOR 1981 _____

ARE YOU A "CERTIFIED" OLDTIMER? _____

DEFINITION: MUST BE ONE OR MORE OF FOLLOWING:

1. HAVE NSS NUMBER UNDER 1000.
2. HAVE ATTENDED 20 OR MORE OTR'S.
3. HAVE ATTENDED AN OTR BEFORE 1960.
4. CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO CAVING BEFORE 1960.

NSS STATUS: ACTIVE
 NSS # _____ NOW? _____

Date of arrival: Thurs Fri Sat Sun
 (Circle one)

PAYMENT SECTION

For family pre-registration, complete this section for only one registrant. Make checks payable to OTR '82.

Payment is:

Single age 18+ \$ _____

OR Couple age 18+ OR \$ _____

PLUS:

Offspring, 6+yrs @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

PLUS:

Offspring, 3-5yrs @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL FOR FAMILY \$ _____*

PLUS: Extra days 1 adult if applicable @ \$2/day \$ _____

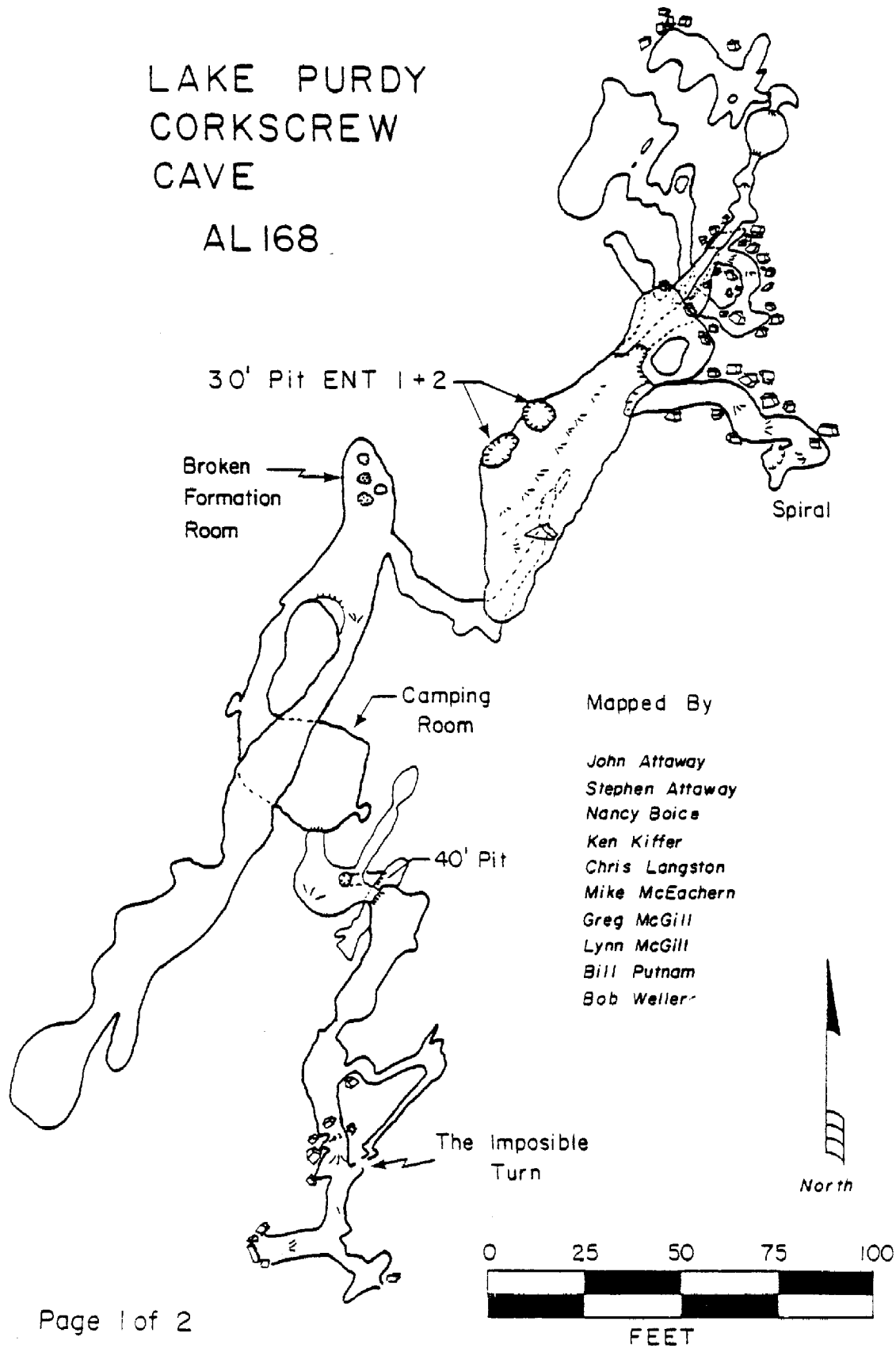
PLUS: Pet charge @ \$1/day \$ _____

TOTAL ATTACHED \$ _____

*Ceiling may apply (see instructions). Please complete 1 form for each pre-registrant. Others covered by this payment are (list below or on back).

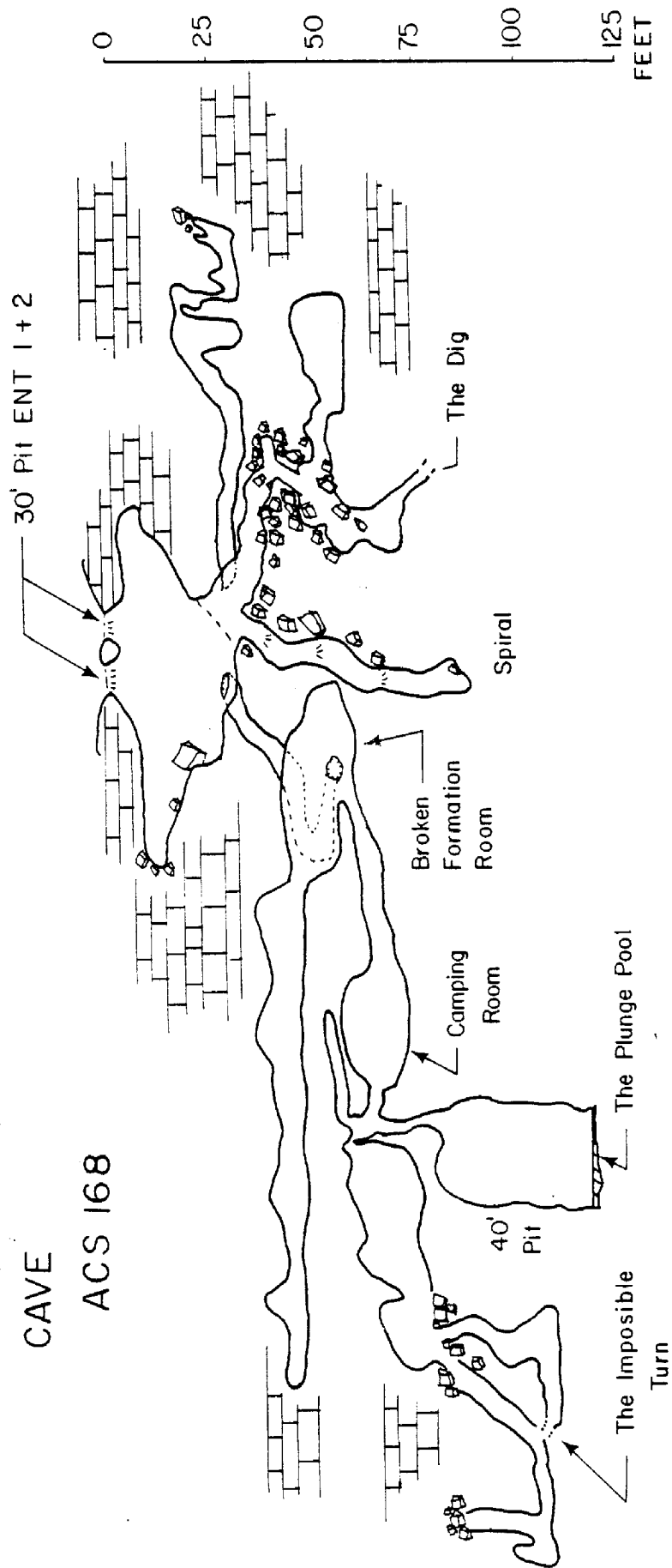
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