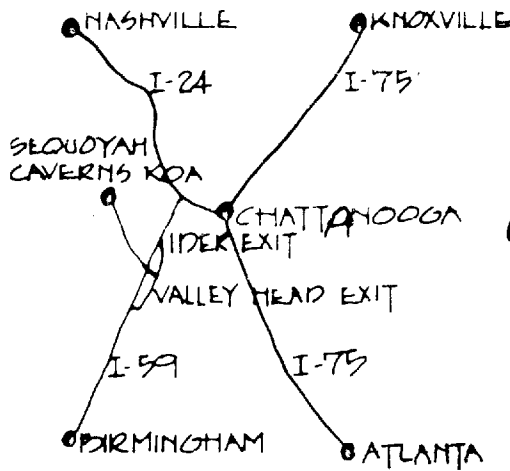


**OCTOBER 1977**

AN OPEN INVITATION TO ALL CAVERS TO:

# SLK A

## CAVE CARNIVAL

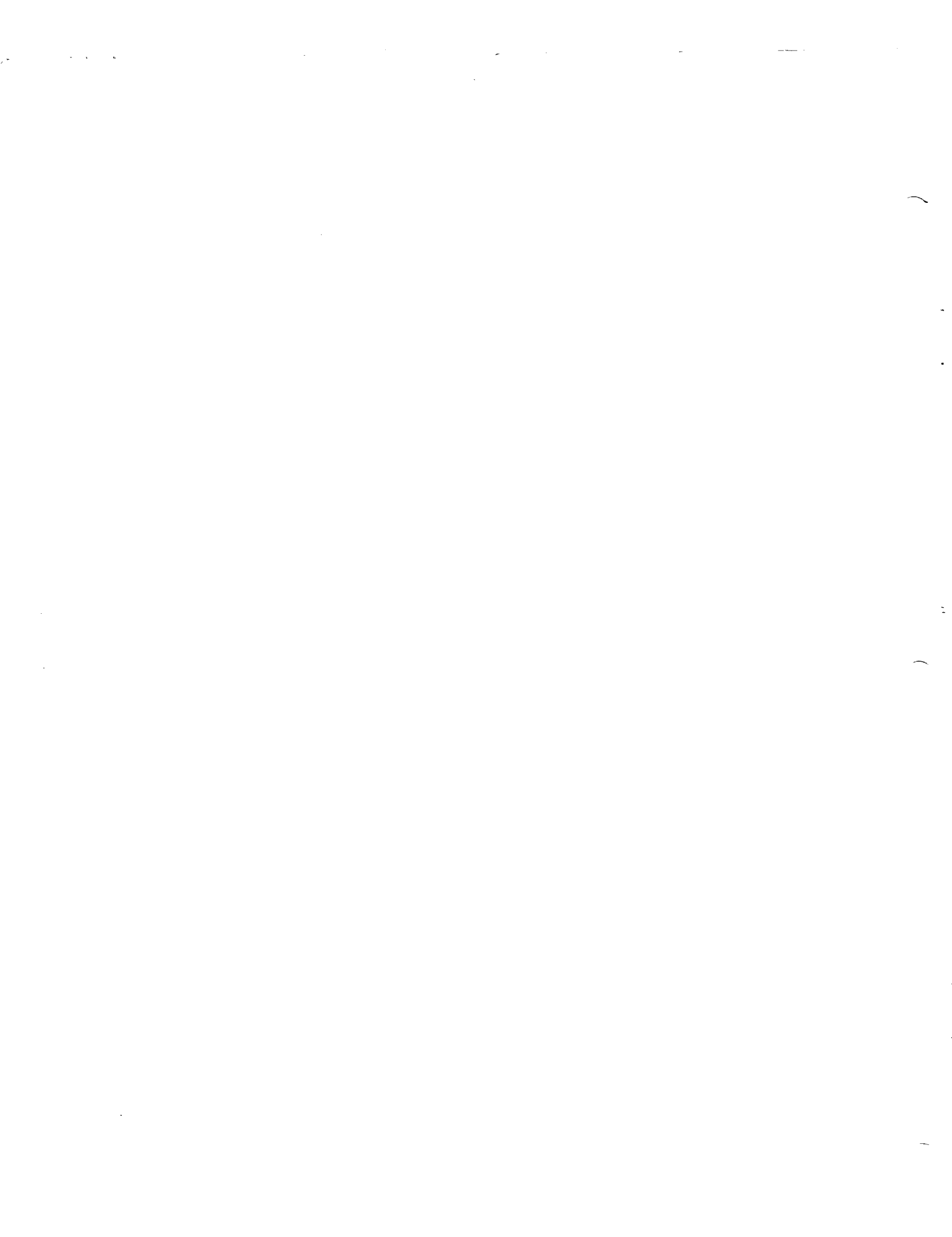


FOLLOW SIGNS TO SEQUOYAH CAVERNS



**OCT. 14, 15, 16** - SEQUOYAH CAVERNS KOA  
VALLEY HEAD, ALA.

SPONSORED BY: DOGWOOD CITY GROTTO  
CATERED BY: OLD HICKORY HOUSE OF ATLANTA



## EDITOR'S PAGE

This issue of the Birmingham Grotto Newsletter marks the first issue of the Grotto's fiscal year, and the first issue produced entirely by the new Newsletter editors, i.e. without the aid and assistance of the previous Editor, Kathy Spencer. (Although she has promised moral support, consultant services and several articles - which we await expectantly, Kathy!)

Under Kathy's guidance, the Birmingham Grotto Newsletter grew from a single mimeographed sheet into one of the best Grotto publications in the South. Kathy's act is indeed a hard one to follow; however, follow it we will, not only to continue Kathy's excellent work, but to strive for constant improvement in the BGN's appearance and content. This will be accomplished only with the continued support of the Grotto itself, in the contribution of material: articles, trip reports, letters, essays, opinions - whatever you'd like to say to the Grotto. Keep 'em coming, folks!

- DAVE & VALERIE HOWELL

Thanks to JIM McDOWELL for writing the editor of the Birmingham News about their article on the teenagers lost in Anderson. Jim straightened out the editor, the mentioned teenagers and the News' readership on what are right and wrong caving techniques. We should all make an effort to encourage safe and considerate caving techniques in all new cavers.



## DATES TO WATCH

- Oct. 14-16 - 'Summer' SERA Cave Carnival sponsored by Dogwood City Grotto. Sequoyah Caverns KOA, Valley Head, Alabama. (See ad for details.) Grotto trip.
- Oct. 22 - Grotto Family Outing  
At the Attaway's, starting from after 10 am til. Meat furnished cooked to order for nominal fee. Bring along side dish and be prepared for fun. Get there by going out Hwy. 280 South, and start looking for the turnoff on your right just as you start up Double Oak Mtn. If these directions don't work, call 967-2509 for expert interpretation.

NOVEMBER GROTTTO MEETING: November 7  
7:30 pm Auditorium of  
Red Mtn. Museum  
2230 15th Ave. So.

## ACCIDENT REPORT

On Labor Day Weekend, Birmingham Grotto member Bill Siler was involved in an accident in Valhalla Pit in Jackson County. After rigging the pit, Bill rappelled down first. At some point in the descent his hair became tangled in the rack; he rappelled off the unknotted end of the rope and fell 8 feet to the floor, fracturing his wrist and pelvis.

A detailed report and analysis of the accident, written by Kent Burchfield, who was present throughout the accident and rescue, will appear in the November issue of the Newsletter.

The Grotto's sympathy and wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Bill.

THE CARBIDE FLAME OF LOVE STRIKES AGAIN

Yes, it's true --- one of our most confirmed bachelors has been smitten by the carbide flame of love.

JOE DOMNANOVICH and JOAN DOUGLAS have announced their plunge into the guano pile of matrimony. Wedding is set for December 17 and all Grotto members will be invited, according to Joan. Watch the next Newsletter for time, place and other pertinent data.

That strange look in Joe's eye lately hasn't been the aftereffects of the Oldtimers Convention after all.

CONGRATULATIONS JOE AND JOAN. WE WISH  
YOU ALL THE HAPPINESS AND LUCK IN THE  
WORLD.

BIRMINGHAM GROTTTO

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The meeting of October 3rd was called to order by Joe Domnanovich, Chairman. The treasurer reported \$102.62 in the grotto checking account and \$325 in savings. Four visitors were recognized. Joe announced that a letter has been sent to the IRS asking about the progress of our request for tax exempt status.

Elections:

Chairman: Joe Domnanovich  
Vice-Chairman: Greg McGill  
Treasurer: Steve Spencer  
Secretary: John Moore  
Newsletter Editor(s): Dave & Valerie  
Howell

Trip reports included Gate City and Anderson Caves, Catfish, Lamons and Bloodstone. Greg McGill announced that Mrs. Dolberry is now charging \$2.50 a head at Tumbling Rock.

SERA will be the October Grotto Trip. The Grotto Family Outing will be at the Attaways' on October 22.

Program consisted of slide presentation of Old Timers and Walls of Jericho by Joe D.

- John R. Moore

The Birmingham Grotto Newsletter is published approximately twelve times a year by the Birmingham Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Subscription rate: \$4.00 per year, prorated from October.

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3129 Old Ivy Road  
Birmingham, Alabama 35210

Submit materials for publication directly to the Editors. Deadline for receiving material is the 20th day of the month preceding the month of issue. Material received after this date will be published the following issue.

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Secretary: John R. Moore  
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Birmingham 35214  
Treasurer: Steve Spencer  
938 South 80th Place

## A Few Words on Cave Locations

by John R. Moore

This is the first in a series of four articles about the method of locating caves currently used in Caves of Alabama.)

I think most of us are familiar with the use of ranges and townships in locating land. Briefly, however:

**Range:** Any of various 6-mile-wide strips of land running north to south. In Alabama, these are numbered east and west of the "Huntsville Meridian" - about  $86^{\circ}30'W$  longitude; the higher the number, the more distant from the Meridian.

**Township:** Any of various 6-mile-wide strips of land running east to west. In Alabama, these are numbered south from the Alabama-Tennessee state line. (Note: South of approximate latitude  $30^{\circ}5'N$ , a different numbering system is used; ACS lists 57 caves south of this line. These townships are numbered northward from the 31st Parallel.) North Alabama townships are numbered, e.g. 1S, 3S, 15S. A township and range intersect in and identify a 36-square-mile area (6 miles on a side); example: T10 R5e.

**Section:** One of 36 one-square-mile areas in the intersection of a range and a township. See Figure 1.

	R3W	R4W				R5W	
T5S		6	5	4	3	2	1
		7	8	9	10	11	12
T6S		18	17	16	15	14	13
		19	20	21	22	23	24
		30	29	28	27	26	25
		31	32	33	34	35	36
T7S							

Fig. 1

Dark line encloses Township 6S, Range 4W, Section 15.

ACS (Alabama Cave Survey - properly called Caves of Alabama) further divides the section into 16 quarter-sections, labelling them as shown in Figure 2.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

Fig. 2

Rarely, only a quarter-section is used. In this case, A,B,E and F are collectively known as Q; C,D,G and H become R; I,J,M and N are replaced by S; and T denotes K,L,O and P.

Each quarter-section may be divided into 16 parts, named by following the larger area designation with that of the smaller area. For example, the dot in Figure 2 may be coded as KC. These areas may again be divided into 16 (or only 4) parts, adding the smallest area designation to the end of the code letters.

You may have noticed that these letters do not represent a point, but rather an area, roughly a square mile. The more letters used to locate the area where a cave lies (i.e., the more subdivisions), the smaller the area of the square (See Figure 3).

# of letters	length of side	area in sq.ft.
1	1,320	1,742,400
2	330	108,900
3	82.5	6,806.25
4	20.625	425.390625

Fig. 3

The use of a 3-letter code divides each section into 4,096 uniquely identified squares. One method used to locate these squares is to overlay the map with a transparent grid drawn on polyethylene or scratched into plexiglas - but this requires "guess-timating" the location of the correct square. A much more accurate method - useable even in irregularly shaped

## VOICES FROM UNDERGROUND

ACANTHUS SINK CAVE #2  
ALA 1724

July 8, 1977

Steve Durham - Reporter  
Greg Durham  
Sally Durham  
Don Durham

\*\*\*\*\*  
Being Florida cave divers, I felt sure they would not mind a little wet caving.

We entered the 15-foot climbdown sink, and suited up in the cave's cool breath. My folks and I wore full wet suits, but my younger brother Greg had only jeans, a sweatshirt and a dilapidated wet suit jacket that would not zip up.

Acanthus Sink has two cave entrances on opposite sides of the sink. In the wet season a stream runs into the sink, draining the surface water of Bryant Mill Hollow. 100 feet within, the passage "T's", causing an almost complete blockage of inwashed tree limbs (some as much as 15 feet long and 3 feet in diameter). We stopped at the pop-down to clear the stoppage of debris, and then entered the "Tired Room". This is a convenient waiting room before the 150-foot crawl, so named because of a tire wedged in the low ceiling.

We met some difficulties wriggling through the Zig-Zag Crawl with wet suits. Upon entering the wet lead, Sally immediately noticed the difference between semidry caving and diving. Here we could not swim effortlessly but had to squirm an inch at a time. After removing a previously unencountered sandbar, we finally emerged into walking passage. We decided against the route that leads to the "Liberty Bell," a large flowstone formation, because Greg was suffering from the cold water already encountered.

A few hundred feet later we entered a large room where branches were wedged in the 20-foot ceiling. Here we ducked under the wall and continued in stoopwalk passage with an occasional crawl. When we reached the "River of Fire" area, so named for the many methane pools, we doused the carbides and continued with two Wheat lamps. It seems that most of the methane in the main passage has bled off since the previous two times this passage has been

\* Because of a  
\* heat wave and  
\* extreme drought  
\* conditions  
\* plaguing Alabama  
\* during my parents'  
\* annual vacation, I  
\* chose to lead them  
\* through Acanthus  
\* Sink Cave #2 (ASC).

showed great displeasure at the combination of neck deep water and limited air space. This area seems to be a naturally dammed reservoir, unaffected by the low rainfall, apparently never having more than 6 - 8 inches of air space.

When we reached wading passage again, we were through the connection and half-way into our journey. From here to the Haden's Dilemma (22' pit) entrance there is mostly stoopwalk passage, knee deep in water. The route is laced with bright red formations and occasional domes. The stream passage abounds with catfish, crayfish and salamanders. Apparently a great feeding area for raccoons also, since tracks and several large droppings were observed.

We pushed past the turn-off to Haden's, bypassing yet unexplored stream passage. After a few hundred feet of dry passage we passed the "Tap Room" and were once again entering the frigid water, now with 12 inches of air space and 2 feet of water. We floated past a few unexplored leads I had not noticed the last trip when Greg McGill, Lynn Wright and I had connected Haden's Dilemma to Negro Mtn. Springs (see last issue). This area and one further upstream have great potential for connecting with ASC-1 (ALA 1723).

The Negro Mtn. Springs entrance is rather sudden, from swimming passage with a fast air flow to a small room with a short climb up to the outside. At this point the water siphons and reemerges at the spring 20 feet away.

ASC-2 has close to one mile of passage with many leads not yet explored. 2400 feet upstream (north) from the ASC-2 entrance is another wet entrance cave that may connect with the intricate Acanthus System.

Visitors to Bryant Mill Hollow should be cautioned on two points: in wet weather, the Acanthus system and most of the other nearby caves flood; also, some logging is going on in the hollow, so cavers should park well out of the road, out of the way of the logging trucks.

THREE SISTERS PIT  
ALA 1725

July 9, 1977

Steve Durham - Reporter  
Greg Durham

- \* We woke early
- \* after spending
- \* the night near
- \* Acanthus' re-
- \* surgence. Uphill
- \* from Acanthus Sink
- \* is a recently dis-
- \* covered 70 foot

\*\*\*\*\* pit named Three Sisters. The pit is somewhat trident-shaped, with the 3 crevice entrances representing the prongs and intersecting halfway down to form one free drop. The pit offers a small lead (as yet unexplored) 30 feet down, and an adjoining dome room at the bottom.

This brief yo-yo was Greg's (age 14) first pit, something unique to a flatland Florida boy.

LAMONS CAVE  
ACS 214

Steve Attaway - Reporter

- \* On Sept. 24,
- \* 1977, Steve Hall,
- \* Kent Banasiewicz
- \* Juan Navia
- \* Myrna Attaway

\*\*\*\*\* and myself went to Lamons Cave. Lamons Cave is located one mile to the west of Newsome Sinks. I did not worry too much about getting lost on the way to the cave because I had been there twice before. I did not know that the roads into the lower portions of Newsome Sinks had been totally rebuilt. We were momentarily confused as I tried to remember the way. Everyone gave up on my trying to remember my way and we stopped and asked directions. After getting on the right road we had a flat tire. Despite all our trouble we made it to the cave by about 10:30.

We had a slow start because of problems with lights, but our group moved at a nice pace and we stopped to eat lunch about halfway through the 13,551-foot cave. It took us about three hours to reach the spring entrance. We had planned to swim out the lower entrance and we had brought an air mattress for flotation. I had been told that the water was not over 5-6 feet deep and that we would be able to walk on the bottom. After about 50 feet in the ice cold water, the water started getting over our heads. Steve and John got out of the water and waited to see if we would make it, and Kent waited where the water was not over his head. After about 25 feet, the air mattress got a hole in it. I tried to blow it up, but the air was going out the

almost unable to fight our way back to shallow water. After getting back on dry land, Myrna, Kent and I got under a space blanket with several carbide lamps. Because of our coldness, we decided to exit the cave by the upper entrance. We were out in 45 minutes.

ANDERSON CAVE

Steve Attaway - Reporter

\*\*\*\*\*

I received a phone call on Wednesday, September 28, 1977, from a group called Campus Life asking me to take a small group of high school students to Anderson Cave. I agreed to take them as they said they would meet me at the cave parking lot at 9 o'clock on Saturday, ready to go caving. I talked to several other people before Saturday and was able to persuade Steve Hall, Kent Banasiewicz, Rick and Letitia Seese to go caving at Anderson. I did not tell them the Campus Life group would be coming.

At the cave Saturday 33 people showed up to go caving. There were five experienced cavers and 27 novices, about half the novices being girls. We led the large group back to the area known as Cotton Valley. They had mud everywhere when they got out. After we led the group out, Steve, Kent, Rick, Letitia and I made the connection between Anderson and Polecat.



\*A Few Words on Cave Locations - cont'd:

sections, sections on the edge of the map, and in the "reservation" - is easily learned and used. This method will be outlined in Part 2 of this series.

Part 3 will deal with the exact opposite - taking a point on the map and converting it to the correct 3-letter code. Part 4 will deal with sections on the edge of the map, and will include a brief description of why it works.

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