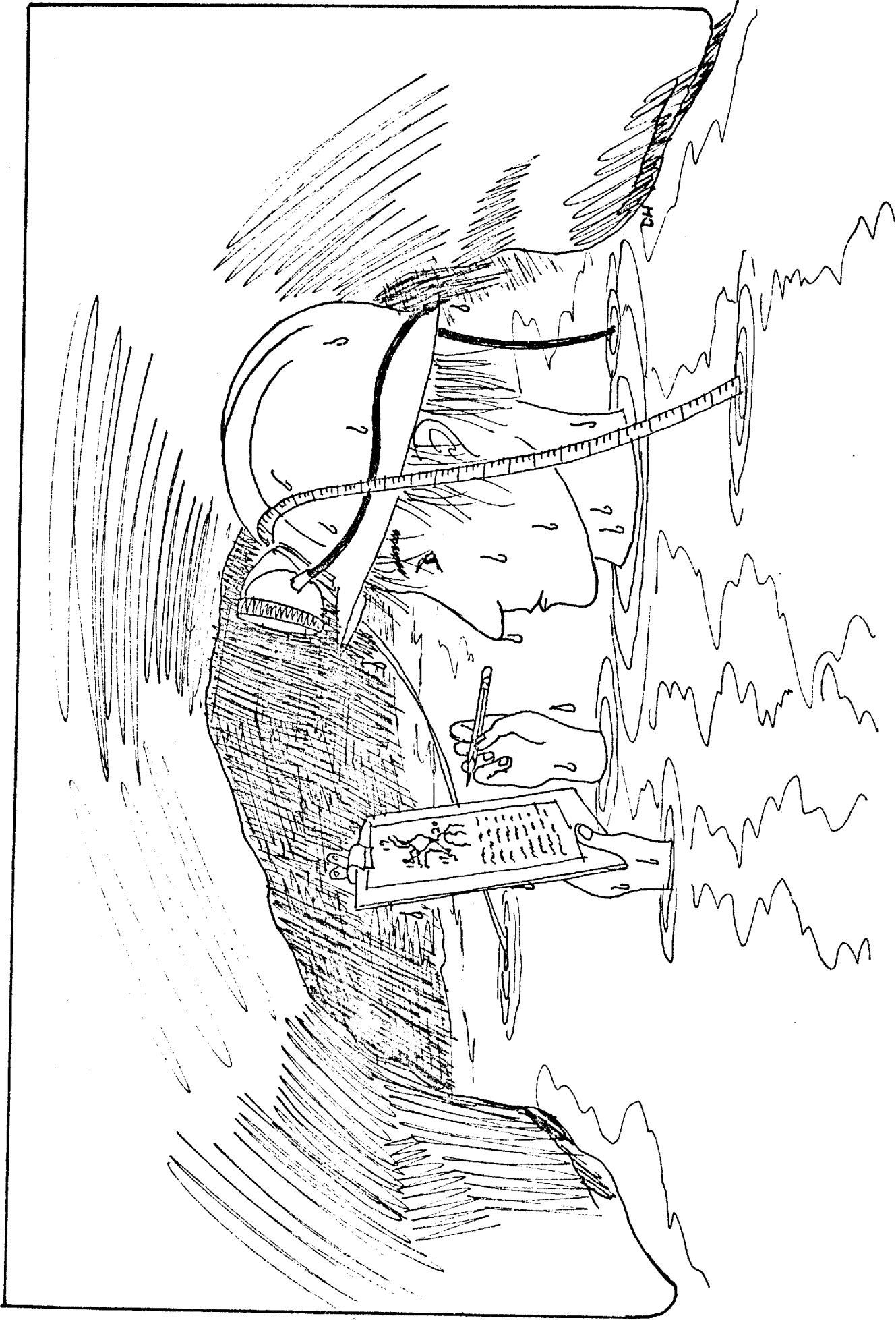


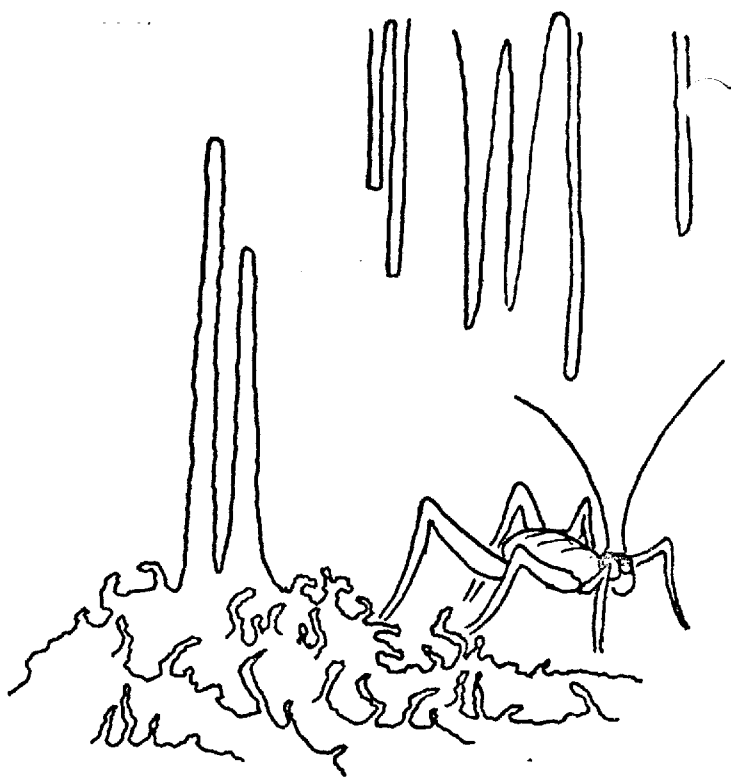
BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 1978



We'll begin this month with congratulations - MYRNA ATTAWAY and GREG JORDAN will become permanent caving partners April 8. In words presented us by a certain former editor and passed along here, they are "two cavers who deserve each other." Best wishes, and may you live cavingly ever after.

Many thanks for all the articles that have been sent in the past few months. We've been getting several compliments on the newsletter and want to pass them on to those who have helped. JIM SMITH covers all phases of caving - discovery, exploration and mapping - in his article on TEDDY BEAR WELL this month. Especially appreciate the map, Jim. TOM CHAMBLEE has been good about sharing his journeys as well as knowledge of geology with us... LES BURYN has provided some very interesting and at times provocative reports... the world awaits another masterpiece, MILO...JOHN MOORE (R.) has promised a new series of articles soon, and we look forward to hearing from those who have been reporting trips verbally...what's the latest in vertical caving, JAY?... ¿Como pasa el viaje al Mexico GREG, LYNN, STEVE? We look forward to hearing from you.



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

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Editors: Dave & Valerie Howell
1429 17th Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

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

GROTTO OFFICERS:

- Chairman: Joe Domnanovich
4949 Nottingham Lane
Birmingham
- V.Chairman: Greg McGill
5185 Scenic View Drive
Birmingham 35210
- Secretary: John R. Moore
2340 Forestdale Blvd.
Birmingham 35214
- Treasurer: Steve Spencer
938 South 80th Place
Birmingham 35206

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MEETING OF MARCH 7, 1978

Five visitors were recognized. It was announced that Birmingham Grotto will host the next SERA Winter Business Meeting. Joe read two letters requesting information on the grotto, which were passed on to two members for followup. Seven people reported on 14 trips. John and Steve Attaway and Jay Clark showed some slides for the program.

- John R. Moore

DATES TO WATCH

NEXT GROTTO MEETING:

MONDAY, April 3, 1978 7:30 p.m.

RED MOUNTAIN MUSEUM AUDITORIUM
2230 15th Avenue South

VOICES FROM UNDERGROUND

2

***** On December 18,
TEDDY BEAR WELL * 1974, Jim Youmans,
* Lin Guy, Tommy
Jim Young - Reporter * (Teddy Bear) Thur-
***** man, Tom Pogue
and I began ridgewalking the west side
of Little Coon Valley. The temperature
was a cool 20° and it was a bright,
cloudless day.

We started up the ridge between Boston
Hollow and Elliot Hollow. Our team
stayed together until we reached the
break of the 1100 ft. elevation. This
elevation is a pretty good place to
start looking for pit development, as it
is usually top of the Bangor limestone
formation. This is the most soluble
limestone layer and usually the highest
formation on the mountain rendering the
greatest depth potential.

Once at the 1100' to 1200' elevation,
enthusiasm exploded, sending Pogue and I
towards Boston Hollow. The others con-
tinued in their direction towards Elliot
Hollow.

Tom and I found a few dud holes. Once
we entered Boston Hollow, we discovered
a 41' pit on the right hand side. The
pit was descended and a second drop of
56' was found. It was later bottomed.

Meanwhile, Lin, Tommy (Teddy Bear) and
Youmans discovered a 48' pit between the
two hollows. Towards the end of the day
I backtracked, following the breakline
towards Elliot Hollow. I came upon the
48' pit and taped it. I continued the
trek, following the ruffled leaves turned
up by my companions. Eventually, I came
across another pit and taped its depth.
The 5'x4' opening plunged 106' to unex-
plored regions.

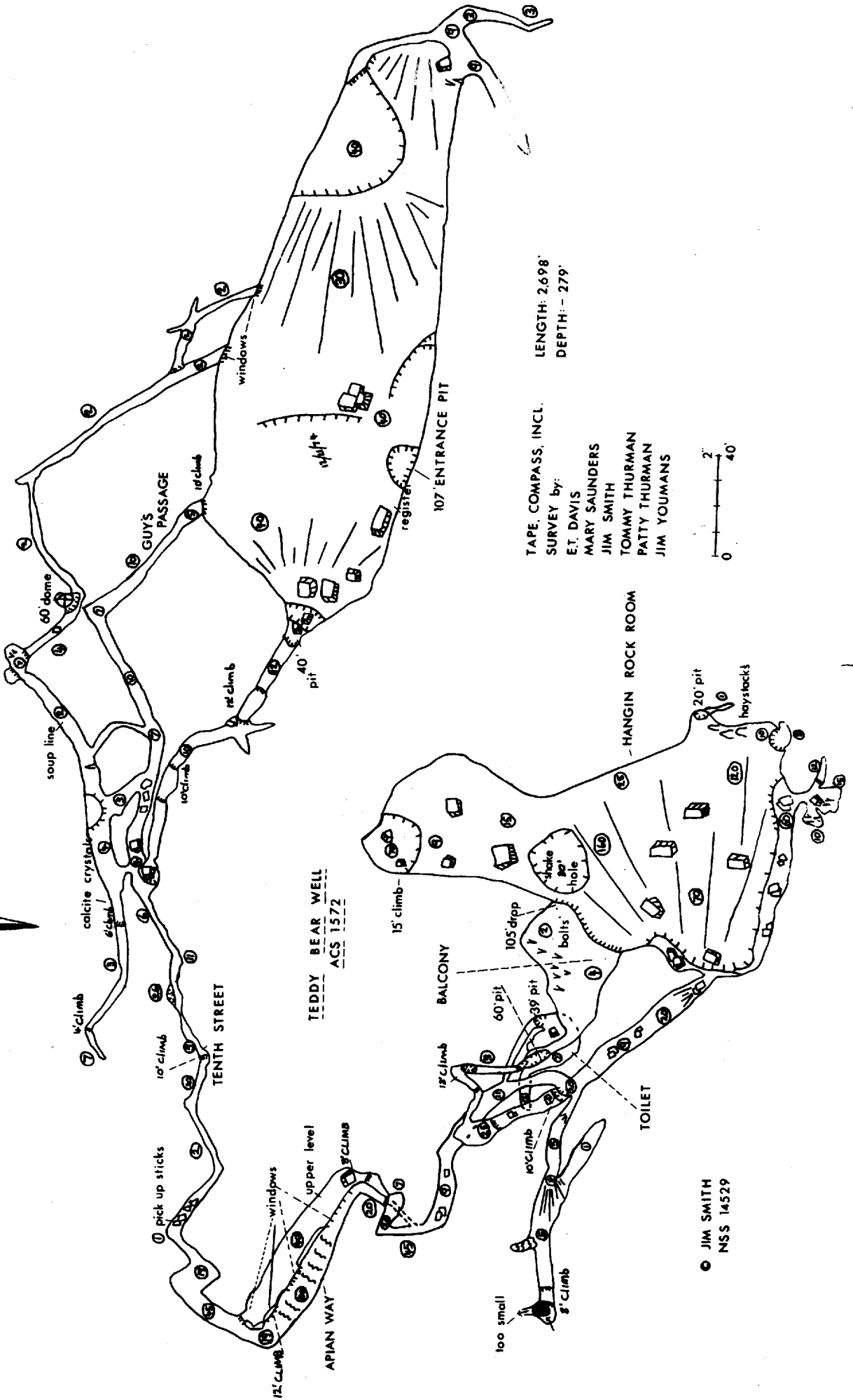
I yelled into the valley, hoping to
get a response. Seeming miles away, a
response was forwarded but totally in-
audible. The day was closing as the sun
slowly dipped below the treeline. At
dusk I met two old farmers on the road.
They asked if I had found any. I replied
enthusiastically that I had seen six
holes in the ground! One responded,
"Yesss, they come down to eat the beans
at this time of night." I blankly stared
at the two as their blue pickup ambled
down the road. Teddy Bear met the same
two as he was walking on the road back
to the car. He asked them how far it
was to Stevenson. One of them chuckled,
"You can't get there from here!" Bear
became excited - What!? Oh No! You've
got to be able to get there from here!

The incident passed and our team assem-
bled with tales of dark chasms.

The 106' pit I taped was claimed by Bear
as his discovery and was later confirmed.
The team henceforth dubbed the new dis-
covery TEDDY BEAR WELL.

The next trip to TEDDY BEAR WELL was to
descend the virgin pit. Lin Guy, E.T. Davis,
Marion O. Smith, Teddy Bear, myself and
others stormed up the steep stream bed just
below the pit. The day was foggy and driz-
zling rain. Bear was the first to descend
as it was his honor. Sixty feet down the
10'x15' diameter shaft 3 walls suddenly
disappeared into infinite blackness. From
below came a yell filled with excitement.
The excitement resounded with deep hollow-
ness. Far below, its dimension was a
question in all our minds. One by one we
descended enthusiastically to find we had
rappelled into a large chamber.

The floor of the chamber measured 89'
wide by 280' long with a 30' high ceiling.
At first appearance, the chamber's leads
all seem to piddle out. Then Lin Guy
spotted a passage 10' up the wall. He was
able to climb the wall and announced
going cave. We followed him down 10'x5'
passage for several hundred feet. The
virgin cavern seemed to branch out with
many intersections of joint-formed pas-
sages. Several upper leads exposed more
possible hidden secrets. There seemed to
be a lot of promise for a possible route
to obtain even greater depths. Down a
crawl 1.5' high and 10' wide, we slogged
on a muddy paste ground. We intersected
another joint 7' high. Up a climb we could
hear falling water. We left a slime-cover-
ed crack to a dark grey clean-washed domi-
cile. A heavy sprinkle showered a sand-
stone cobbled floor. The dome was 8' in
diameter and upward we could only peer 60
feet. The joint passage continued as damp
and mud-caked. It narrowed and wandered
off course along another intersection.
Forty feet further, I could see blackness
beyond hands and knees crawl. Upon inspec-
tion, I could see we had intersected the
entrance chamber 25' off its floor. We
retraced our steps to more virgin cave.
Lin Guy and E.T. Davis explored a differ-
ent lead from Bear and I. We found a room
20' in diameter with a 7' high ceiling.
We scrambled over strewn ceiling collapse
down into the funnel shaped chamber. A
crack in the jumbled breakdown led
steeply to a fossil stream canyon. A
slight breeze faced us as we climbed down
into more voluminous passage. The dimen-



LENGTH: 2,698'
DEPTH: - 279'

TAPE, COMPASS, INCL.
SURVEY by:
E.T. DAVIS
MARY SAUNDERS
JIM SMITH
TOMMY THURMAN
PATTY THURMAN
JIM YOUNG



TEDDY BEAR WELL
ACS 1572

© JIM SMITH
NSS 14529

sions were 10 feet wide and 15 feet high. Abruptly, the walls closed down to a narrow vertical crack where effort was necessary to keep our bodies from wedging while we crawled on our sides. From the narrow crawl it is necessary to climb into a straddling chimney, then climb down 10'. A crawl led to a chamber filled with very precariously stacked slabs, known as the "Pick Up Sticks." A sand crawl underneath them led to a 40' high, 15' wide corridor. Flowstone paved the passage floor. We dubbed this passage the "Appian Way." Bear and I turned around in this going borehole to rejoin the others, proclaiming "Going cave!" We left knowing we would return surveying into virgin cave.

Jim Youmans, Teddy Bear and I returned several months later to begin surveying and continue exploration. Our survey team mapped 620'. This length included the entrance chamber and the passage from the entrance chamber to the funnel-shaped chamber. This chamber leads to the Appian Way through a breakdown passage in the floor. We set up a permanent station in the funnel-shaped room and explored another lead that eventually ended. This added another several hundred feet of cave that was mostly hands and knees traveling. We concluded our stay underground as we had only planned to stay 4 hours.

We made two more trips in the space of a couple of months. The total time spent surveying was 7 hours, with 955 feet of mapped passage.

The first of these two trips resumed surveying from the funnel-shaped room to the Appian Way. From the Appian Way, we mapped into virgin passage. The ceiling lowered and the walls shrank to a smaller but somewhat comfortable dimension. The 10'x15' passage led to a junction where the passage split. Straight ahead from the split, the passage fell away from our feet precipitously - the walls narrowed to several feet in width and were covered by a slimy film of mud. This drop had no tie-offs and a return trip would be necessary to bolt and descend the pit. We resumed surveying at the right-hand fork and noted two more leads. One lead descended down a mud slide to an 8' climbdown where a stream sank into an impenetrable crack. The other lead was left for another time. This side lead was left and surveying continued down the main passage. The passage dimension exists as 15'x15' over breakdown. Teddy Bear was

front point and in a sense was raping virgin passage. When he proceeded ahead, his route led up a breakdown pile. There he stood before awesome darkness. His adrenalin jumped and ours rushed when he exclaimed, "Vastness!" Simultaneously, he dropped the tape and we scrambled up the breakdown to behold awesome night. Our carbides revealed nothing straight out in front of us. The breakdown at our feet sloped downhill out of sight. It took a while for our eyes to adjust to the dark void. Before we resumed surveying, we descended the tremendous talus slope. Above our heads we could make out a ceiling at least 120' above our heads. We walked around the circumference of the vast chamber to find that there were at least 4 leads. Two large dripstone haystacks stood as sentinels to a 20' pit in the floor. The pit was showered by a small waterfall and swallowed by unknown depths. We left this pit for another time, noting its existence in a room with easier, more accessible leads. Needless to say, we were enthralled with excitement! The chamber measured 116' wide by 200' long by 160' high, from the bottom of the slope. At least two of the leads were fully pushed with little yield. From where we entered the newly named "Hangin' Rock Room", a breakdown ramp climbed off the floor to a joint passage. The cleft-like passage we had climbed led to a small but nicely decorated chamber.

Several leads were also pushed, yielding only a hundred more feet of cavern. When our adrenalin seemed to dry up, we finished a few more stations and left the cavern.

Our next trip involved the exploration of the virgin pit we discovered before the Hangin' Rock Room. At the pit, two bolting sites were selected. The wall had to be scraped of the thick, slimy mud in order to get at the limestone. I set two bolts and rigged a 100' rope. The virgin pit sounded like it was about 30' deep from the fractional time lapse of dropping rocks. We brought the survey to the edge of the pit and taped it once I had rappelled to its sleazy bottom. The walls of the pit are coated with vaseline-like mud that was impossible to avoid. Jim Youmans kept notes, Bear was front point and I operated the instruments. Keeping the notes clean was quite some problem. All functions of the survey crew were somewhat hindered due to the sleaziness of the mud. At the

bottom of the taped 37' pit, a small chamber was measured and several blind leads pushed. The chamber has an unstable breakdown floor coated with thick slime. This room gave all the appearance of a septic tank. The sleazy pit, our exit, was named "The Toilet." After we pushed all leads in the Septic Tank, we left by way of The Toilet.

An upper lead above The Toilet led to an upper extension of the old stream route. It was obvious that the dry upper level was reachable by an 18' climb with overhanging loose stream cobbles. The attempt in climbing up to the upper level was successful and I cleared all the loose cobbles so the traverse of the climb would be safer. Hands and knees crawl led along the joint route of the fossil passage for about 30'. The passage widened and the floor fell away before our hands. I tossed a rock and it fell for about 2 seconds, or about 68 feet. I attached a carabiner to the end of the tape and plumbed the virgin chasm to 60' of depth. We figured the pit led into The Toilet, as the passage surveyed directly over The Toilet. We crawled around the top of the pit to continue along the old stream level. I rendered a shout ahead to listen for echoes, hoping to get a clue to possible voluninous passage. To our amazement, an echo indicated we were about to enter passage of exciting dimensions. I entered the echo chamber which started out as a bedding plane crawl. The flat ceiling loomed ahead of us into perpetual infinity. Thirty feet ahead, the floor fell away into massive depth as we had entered the top of the "Hangin Rock Room." Our group left the Hangin Rock Room's balcony and exited the cavern with the idea of setting up a rig point.

The last trip to finish the survey of TEDDY BEAR WELL was participated in by Tommy Thurman, Patty Thurman, Mary Saunder and I.

We surveyed the route above the Toilet to the balcony of the Hangin Rock Room. Two bolt positions were selected and I set the anchors to rig a 105' free fall pit. The rope hung halfway down the breakdown slope of the Hangin Rock Room. We traversed across the immense chamber to the two haystack sentinels guarding the unexplored pit. Bear and I rigged the pit which captured a small shower of water. Once on rope and into the chasm we became soaked in our cotton clothes. We rappelled quickly on the impulse of the cold water. A lead existed beyond the shower. A tortuous-

looking crawlway with its confined perimeter directed the flow of the small stream. I wiggled into the jagged, tight neverspace suffering intense pain as I felt my flesh slowly tear and warm blood trickle down my legs and side. The crawl space was only a body length and led to a small chamber 10' wide, 10' long and 10' high. This was the terminus of what human size could penetrate. The stream sank into a small crack at my feet. We plumbed the 20' drop to reach the lowest point in the cave at a depth of -279 feet.

On the way out of the cave we passed the "Pick Up Sticks" and climbed through the "Tenth Street District." This is named for the tight squeeze district of the '60's in Atlanta. Instead of climbing out of the dry fossil stream canyon to the funnel-shaped room, we explored beyond a breakdown squeeze to a 10' climb down. Shortly, beyond the climb down a series of climbs led to a dry wide stream passage. Its dimensions were 10'x12'. Ahead, I could see a blackness beyond the reaches of illumination. I gave a yell which yielded an impressive echo. At the end of the passage, our progress was barred by a 40' drop. We had intersected a solution dome 40' off its floor. From our vantage point we could see the rope that hung down the entrance shaft into the entrance chamber. We had discovered another loop of passage into the entrance chamber. From that point we tied in our survey to the funnel-shaped room.

This ended the survey and exploration of TEDDY BEAR WELL with a length of 2,698'.



 FALL CREEK FALLS YO-YO Huntsville Grot
 APRIL 21, 22, 23 FALL CREEK FALLS STATE
 PARK, TENN.

***** It was a cold
ANDERSON CAVE * Saturday evening
February 18, 1978 * and we eight
***** Explorer Scouts
didn't want to be anywhere except
ANDERSON CAVE.

Our group consisted on five guys,
two tough females, one Terry Ray (our
Post advisor), and the most important
person, our guide, Mr. John Attaway.

Armed with flashlights, carbide
lamps, candles and matches, plenty of
M&M's and water, we entered the cave.
It was nighttime, so it didn't take
long to adjust to the darkness of the
cave. The temperature was so much
colder outside than in the cave that
we were glad to get into the deeper
part of the cave.

Going through the cave was, of course,

the highlight of the evening. Mr. Atta-
way told us the names of some of the
formations and how they were formed.
We signed the register and said "hello"
to Fred the ghost. While slowly being
covered with mud, we saw some bats and
squeezed through a few tight passages.
When we got out, we hurriedly changed
our wet clothes and tried to get warm.

We would like to thank our advisor,
Terry E. Ray, for planning this outing
and spending his time with us and a
very special thanks to Mr. Attaway for
taking his time to be with us and guide
us through the cave.

We thoroughly enjoyed the trip and,
in the words of one of our members,
"I'd like to come back and see what it
looks like in the daytime."

- Post 504

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Attaway, Jr.
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Myrna Kay

to

Mr. Clifford Gregory Jordan
on Saturday, the eighth of April
nineteen hundred and seventy-eight
at eight o'clock in the evening
Mount Heborn Baptist Church

Highway 119
Leeds, Alabama

Reception
following the ceremony
at the church

BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER
1429 17th Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

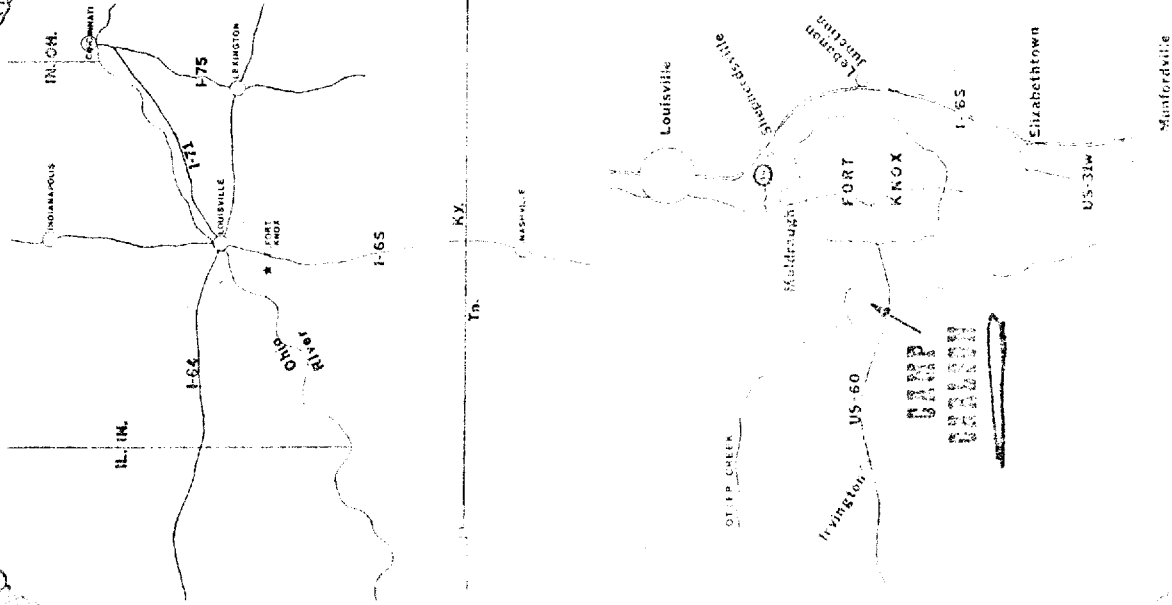
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MAPS



MAY 26, 27, 28 29

KY. SPELEOFEST

Many new caves

Group cabins

Hot showers

Bluegrass band

Much more



Major prizes awarded

at

SPELEO - OLYMPICS



REGISTRATION OPENS

FRIDAY the 26th - 5:PM

FOR INFORMATION CALL (502)

367-6292

please use one form for each registration - copy if necessary

Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 4.75	PRE
Banquet	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.50	DOOR
Beer Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.00	
Extra Guidebooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.50	
TOTAL		\$	

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____

Zip _____

NSS No. _____

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THE LOUISVILLE GROTTOS
* Mail by May 12, 1978

THE LOUISVILLE GROTTOS