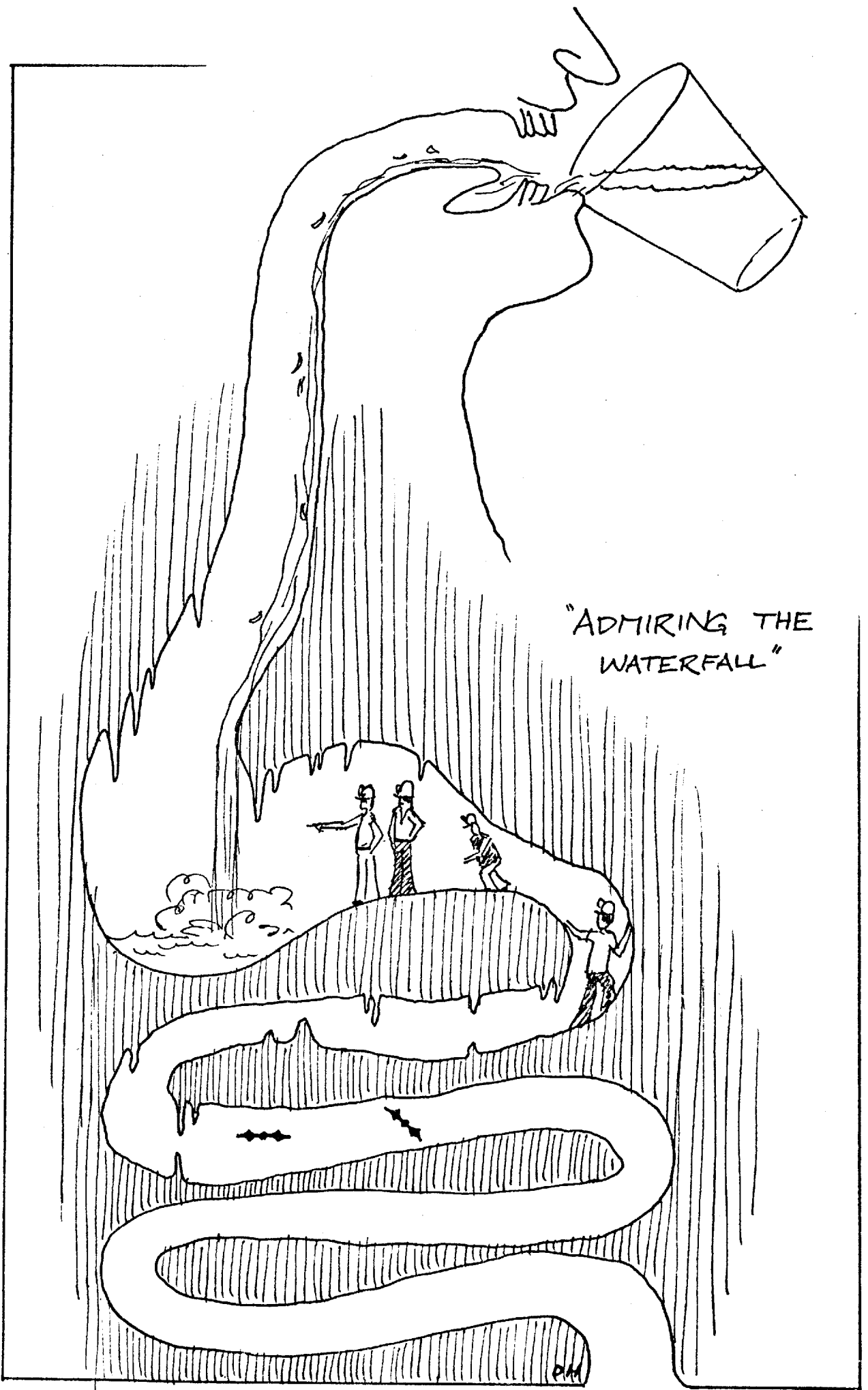


**BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER**  
**NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**JUNE 1978**



"ADMIRING THE WATERFALL"



\*\*\*\*\*

THE UPPER ENTRANCE TO McBRIDE CAVE, ALA. \*

Marion O. Smith - Reporter \*

\*\*\*\*\*

McBRIDE CAVE is an infrequently visited horizontal about a half mile south of the Tennessee line just west of Crow Creek Valley at the base of the Cumberland Plateau. It has been known to cavers at least since the mid sixties, judging by the 1964 and 1965 dates carbided on the walls. NSS 7023 (?) explored it in 1965.

On May 21, 1972, Alabama cavers Lin Guy, Bill McIntosh, Henry Steigerwaldt and David Teal "relocated" McBRIDE CAVE in the process of searching for a rumored pit. That same day, high on the mountain above McBRIDE, they "accidentally found" four holes, including a "25 foot deep climb-down pit located near a small natural bridge."

Lin described McBRIDE as "a rather low crawl and stoop cave in water with a large ...blast of air...." His group mapped about 800 feet and "turned around at a point where things were beginning to widen and open up."

Returning September 10, 1972, with Stu Clifton, Lin continued the map to a fifteen foot waterfall at the "end" (Lin's quotations) of the cave, bringing the total footage to 2,482.

Years passed and the era of actively seeking wet, multi-drop caves dawned upon TAG. Spurred by Lin's story of McBRIDE ending in a waterfall and holes being found several hundred feet vertically above, Gerald Moni led Will Chamberlin and Richard Hewatt on a walk to re-find the holes on March 12, 1978. The search was successful with an 80 foot horizontal cave, two dry holes, including Lin's 25 foot chimney, and an extremely wet 17 foot pit being found.

Impressed by the amount of water going in the wet hole, Gerald "knew" it had to "go." Consequently, on March 25, he returned with Will Chamberlin and Marion Smith. The wet hole was surprisingly dry, except for a very few drops. A handline was rigged and Marion descended. A body length climbdown led...to nothing! There was no hole of any kind, just a sand floor with leaves and sticks. Water apparently had just filtered through.

Discouraged, Gerald poked in the next dry hole but soon exclaimed, "It don't do nothing!" Then showing Marion the last possibility, the 25 foot chimney, Gerald

said the crack at the bottom was too small for anyone to fit through.

Reaching the crack, it appeared that Gerald was correct. A fissure five to six inches wide at its greatest dimension, went for a body length or more before it seemed to open up. There was air flow inward, however, which was an encouraging sign. Marion started to move cobbles from the floor of the crack which would frequently fall five to ten feet below. Calling Will down to help, the dig continued. Observing that back toward the entrance the limestone walls seemed to be wider straight down, below two feet or more of gravel and rock fill, it was decided to dig downward and backward to route under the narrow part of the fissure.

After two and a half hours or more of clawing, gouging and hammering, Will managed to squeeze through, by a particularly stubborn protruding rock. Just beyond he found a 13 foot pit.

Marion went outside to get his and Will's vertical gear, two ropes, and to tell Gerald about the progress being made. The gear was passed to Will and Marion was able, with difficulty, to squeeze by the rock. Observing a fracture in the rock's underside, he tapped it with the hammer but nothing happened. A few minutes later, however, after about six licks, Gerald broke the rock enough to allow even him to get through.

Will rigged a rope to a solid limestone pillar and rappelled the 13 foot drop, followed by Marion after some dangerous sandstone boulders had been cleared out of the way. Beyond, Will and Marion descended additional 13.5 (actually a freeclimb) and 23.4 foot drops to walking sized, flushed clean, scallop-walled obvious "going" passage. Five and ten foot climbs led immediately to a deep crack.

Returning to the surface, everyone donned their wetsuits, grabbed the four additional ropes, and re-entered the cave. Deciding that the deep crack was really a rope drop (34 feet), Will rigged it and descended, followed by Gerald and Marion. Beyond was 250-300 feet of easy crawl, stoop and walking passage to another short drop of about 25 feet.

Descending (order: Will, Marion and Gerald), they quickly saw about a hundred feet of walking passage. Will discovered a room with a large three foot deep pool beneath a seven foot waterfall. This was the main water of the cave. Not bothering to climb the falls they continued their search for the "going" way. About half way

back toward the 25 foot drop the stream was seen under a low shelf, but nobody at the moment was inclined to really believe this was the way and looked elsewhere.

Everyone went back to the base of the 25 footer. Gerald climbed up twenty or more feet and explored several hundred feet of dry, upper level passages and eventually climbed down into a large walking stream passage. Will and Marion poked in holes near the base of the 25 footer and got nowhere.

Announcing that he had found the way, Gerald tried to lead the others through his bypass but only succeeded in making a loop and coming back down where he had started! Getting overly hot in their wetsuits in the dry passage, the group then decided to try to follow the water route under the shelf. With Marion digging aside rocks and gravel for a few feet, the main water passage was reached with airspace no lower than eight inches and followed 150+ feet until it opened to walking passage.

Gerald recognized where he had climbed down and soon all three moved to virgin territory. A thirty foot crawl led to a breakdown passage ten feet high and thirty feet wide. Then suddenly Gerald, who was in the lead, announced that it ended.

With no one double checking to see if Gerald's observation was correct, everyone backtracked to the stream. There, Marion spent the better part of an hour contorting his way through breakdown to a low streamway beyond which, unfortunately, did not carry the main water. Finally getting about fifty feet past the breakdown, he was stopped by insufficient ceiling-floor height. A body length ahead the passage was two feet high with a waterfall roaring in the distance.

Describing to the others what he had encountered and guessing that he had gone only about a hundred horizontal feet, Marion suggested that Gerald recheck the "end" of the big passage for a bypass to the stream.

Gerald was gone about twenty minutes and returned to report that he had moved some rocks and had indeed found a route, albeit grungy, down to the water and walking passage. He stopped at an eight-to-ten foot waterfall he wasn't sure he could climb back up, with another dropoff just beyond.

Soon all three were in Gerald's new passage. Gerald and Will freeclimbed the ten foot waterfall and determined that the drop beyond definitely required a rope and, if rigged in the water, would assuredly be sporting.

Meanwhile, searching for rig points, Marion climbed above the ten foot falls and went horizontally about twenty feet on an upper level to where it was possible to rig a dry rappel. When Gerald and Will joined him a parley was held. It seemed reasonable to believe that they would connect to McBRIDE CAVE, but since their longest rope (137 feet) had been rigged in the 34 foot crack they would have to tie two ropes together to do this drop and, assuming a hundred feet of limestone was left before the 15 foot drop into McBRIDE, probably other drops would be encountered. So, these factors plus the lateness of the hour (they had started exploring the cave at 4:15 pm EST) caused them to abort and de-rig the cave, which they accomplished by 11:45 pm.

#### CONNECTION TRIP

The return trip was conducted April 8. Gerald, Will, and Marion plus Buddy Lane and Jim Coffroth comprised the crew. An insignificant decision before leaving the vehicles later had a great bearing on the success of the trip. Gerald suggested taking six ropes while Marion insisted on seven. Marion's view prevailed.

Buddy and Gerald were the riggers and pushers while Jim and Marion helped Will take pictures. Buddy, while going over the lip of the 25 foot drop cut one of his fingers, necessitating him to have to bind it with surveyor's tape. Deciding he could continue, he and Gerald proceeded to the deep virgin pit to bolt it.

The photographers detoured to the upstream waterfall, climbed it, and explored about 300 feet of double levelled passage before the water route syphoned and the dry route ended. Returning to the stream crawl toward the virgin pit, they photographed through it and met Gerald on the other side, who had returned for the 200 foot rope.

Gerald rushed back to the virgin drop and he and Buddy rigged it to natural tieoffs and rappelled the beautiful 90 foot freefall shaft (order: Gerald, Buddy). Just beyond was a 28 foot drop (order: Gerald, Buddy) and a few feet further a

climbdown to a 9 and 29.5 foot staircase drop (order: Buddy, Gerald), which was followed by a stream crawl 150 feet to an awkward-to-rig 23 foot drop, for which they had no rope. Knowing that the photographers had one more rope, they went back for it. Buddy prussiked the 9 and 29 footer and got the others to throw the rope down the 28 foot drop (Gerald climbed the 29 footer only) and returned to try to rig the 23 footer.

Attempting a number of pictures in the series of drops below the 90 (until Will's camera jammed), the photographers progressed slowly. The order down the 28 and 9 and 29 foot drops was Jim, Will, and Marion, and down the 23, Jim, Marion, and Will.

The 23 footer proved to be quite challenging. A wet crawl led to the chert ledge lined lip, and the only rig points found were a wedged rock sort of cemented to the ceiling and floor to form a column, for the primary tie, backed up in the crawl by tying around a chert-like blade of rock jutting horizontally from the wall. Getting on rope required a contortion move, forcing a person to crawl out onto the chert ledge head first over the pit, grab the rope, and clip in the rack while lying down, then work the legs into rappel position while facing a waterfall. A wide ledge was 10 feet below, followed by a 13 foot rappel into a plunge pool up to 4.5 feet in depth.

The rope in the 23 footer was about 3.5 feet short, and though he had been warned by Buddy, Marion forgot and rappelled off the end into the pool!

While Jim and Will descended, Buddy and Gerald explored the water crawl 200 feet or more ahead. Soon Buddy returned with the news that another short drop had been found. Out of rope, they discussed what to do, and at length Marion returned to the base of the 28 footer to cut the excess rope. But finding only fifteen feet on bottom, he prussiked the pit and ended up stretching the end of the 200 foot rope across the room and down the 28, thus entirely freeing an 85 foot rope. Will arrived at the bottom of the 28 in time to coil the freed rope.

The rope was carried to the others and Buddy and Gerald rigged their 15 foot drop. Gerald descended while the rest were crawling to the drop and they could hear him yell, "This is it! This is it!" meaning of course, that the connection to McBRIDE CAVE had officially been made. Approximately 2,300 feet of upper cave had been

CAVE had officially been made. Approximately 2,399 feet of upper cave had been seen.

This last drop was a real gusher with a pool at the bottom. Buddy, in order to miss most of the water and get down fast, kicked out using only three bars. He was quite surprised when he went under water in a 5.5 foot deep pool! Gerald roared with laughter. Marion, Jim and Will followed, and the long, somewhat more crawl-like-than-expected passage (2,432 feet) to the entrance took about an hour to negotiate.

Arriving at the entrance about 7:40 pm, only Marion was interested in de-rigging. After getting a snack at his Blazer, Gerald joined him and they started back through. But after 300 feet Gerald (too much cave talk to the wee hours the night before) convinced Marion to postpone the de-rigging trip.

The next day, after a good night's sleep, Gerald and Marion de-rigged the cave in a 4:23 hour trip, while Jim and Will did an overland survey from the bottom to the upper entrance which showed the vertical difference to be 434.8 feet. One more sporting Alabama multi-drop cave had been explored, and this wasn't even the best discovery of the weekend!

POST SCRIPT

A couple of weeks later, during the night of April 22-23, Don Brown, Jim Coffroth, Jim Smith, and Pat Sullivan conducted a six hour pull-down rappel through McBRIDE, when the water flow was nearly triple of that encountered the connection trip. This was the first instance of such a trip ever being conducted in a TAG multi-drop 400 plus foot deep cave.

*Don't Forget*  
**SERA**  
**'78** July 1-3 —  
Coon Holler  
Campground,  
Crossville,  
Tennessee

\*\*\*\*\*  
 RIDGEWALKING IN THE GUESS CREEK AREA \*  
 \*  
 David Howell - Reporter \*  
 Stu Clifton \*  
 Lin Guy \*  
 Valerie Howell \*  
 Bill Witherow \*  
 Kathy Witherow \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

On March 19, acting on the advice of a local farmer who described an entrance he had seen "up the holler", Stu Clifton, Lin Guy, Bill and Kathy Witherow, and Valerie and I set out to search for whatever was there, in the large hollow north of GUESS CREEK CAVE. Our first walk turned up several entrances, the most interesting of which we named MIRKWOOD CAVERNS.

An old still stands in the large shelter entrance of MIRKWOOD; it is the only still I've ever run across which had not been raided. (Raids show in such subtle signs as <sup>Ax</sup> and bullet holes in the vats and barrels.) This still, it appeared, had simply been shut down one day years ago and left: the mash barrels, fireplace and cooker were still in place; only the coil was missing. The explanation for this phenomenon was apparent: the still had never been raided due to its excellent location. MIRKWOOD's entrance is in a large shelter midway up a limestone cliff approximately 100 feet high; to reach it one must either climb up from below or traverse across the ledges. While these are not exactly technical climbs, they are steep enough to require some care and a bit of time. It would be impossible to sneak up on the entrance (i.e. on the still). Furthermore, the still, tucked back in the cave entrance out of sight but not out of daylight, cannot be seen from the hollow below, nor from the top of the opposite side of the hollow, nor from the air -- an ideal situation for a manufacturer of illicit spirits!

While there, several of us entered MIRKWOOD and explored a few hundred feet. It begins as a single passage, alternately stoopway and duckwalk, with an inch or two of water on the floor. After about 200-300 feet, the ceiling drops down to render the passage a messy belly crawl. Only Stu ventured beyond this point. Upon returning (soaked), he informed us that the crawl only extended a few yards, then the passage opened again to its former dimensions; an indeterminate distance fur-

ther in, a room was reached and several different passage leads were noted. Definitely an interesting find, and one which merits further investigation.

In order to reach MIRKWOOD and the other entrances we found while walking the area, it was necessary to park on the edge of a paved road on top of the mountain and hike down a particular stream bed. After the second and third trips to the area (on March 26 and April 2) to investigate several pit entrances we'd found and to walk the area further, it became desirable to find, if possible, an alternate parking place/way in. Accordingly, I set out with Stu, Valerie and the Witherows to attempt to do this on May 14: in my International we followed the road into the hollow past GUESS CREEK CAVE and the parking place for WINDY RIVER CAVE. After the pavement ends, the road becomes increasingly cruder and more difficult. After negotiating a couple of monster mudholes and driving 150 feet up a 30-inch-deep creek (an action which drowned out a Blazer in which Valerie and I were riding last December, gloat, gloat!), we actually encountered easy jeep road. Finally even that ran out, unfortunately quite a distance short of what would have been convenient for MIRKWOOD. By that time it was rather late in the afternoon and the sky threatened rain, a disaster if it caused the creek to rise even slightly, so we elected to explore the immediate area on foot instead of making for MIRKWOOD.

Though the jeep roads in that hollow no longer resemble those shown on the topo map, we knew we were close to GUESS CAVE, so we decided to walk over and eyeball its entrance. On the way to GUESS, we stumbled onto two fair-sized sinks, one with an entrance in its bottom. This find amazed Stu, who had never seen either sink in spite of numerous trips to the same area to help map GUESS CAVE. Stu and I went in; the cave consisted of a 7-foot climbdown to a hands-and-knees crawl over smooth, rounded stream cobbles. The crawl opened after about 50 feet into a small room, in which we found ourselves at the edge of a stream or pool. On the other side of the room the ceiling dipped to within 5 inches of the water's surface, but it appeared from our "head-at-water-level" peering that the passage opened up immediately on the other side of the near-siphon. The most exciting thing, though, was the very strong breeze blowing through the near-siphon, and the distant sound of

rushing or falling water. Stu and I exited the cave feeling pleased and excited, looking forward to returning on a drier day when the water level (hopefully) would be down.

The question arises: is this new entrance another entrance to GUESS CAVE? It lies less than 1000 feet away from the GUESS entrance. Or, as in the case of PERKINS-DUBAK, has there been a mistake in entrance identification? (If this were the case, the entrance we found would be the original entrance turned in to the Alabama Cave Survey as GUESS CAVE, while the entrance mapped out as GUESS CAVE would be something else, presumably not noticed by the finder of GUESS. An intriguing chicken-egg problem, possibly without a solution.)

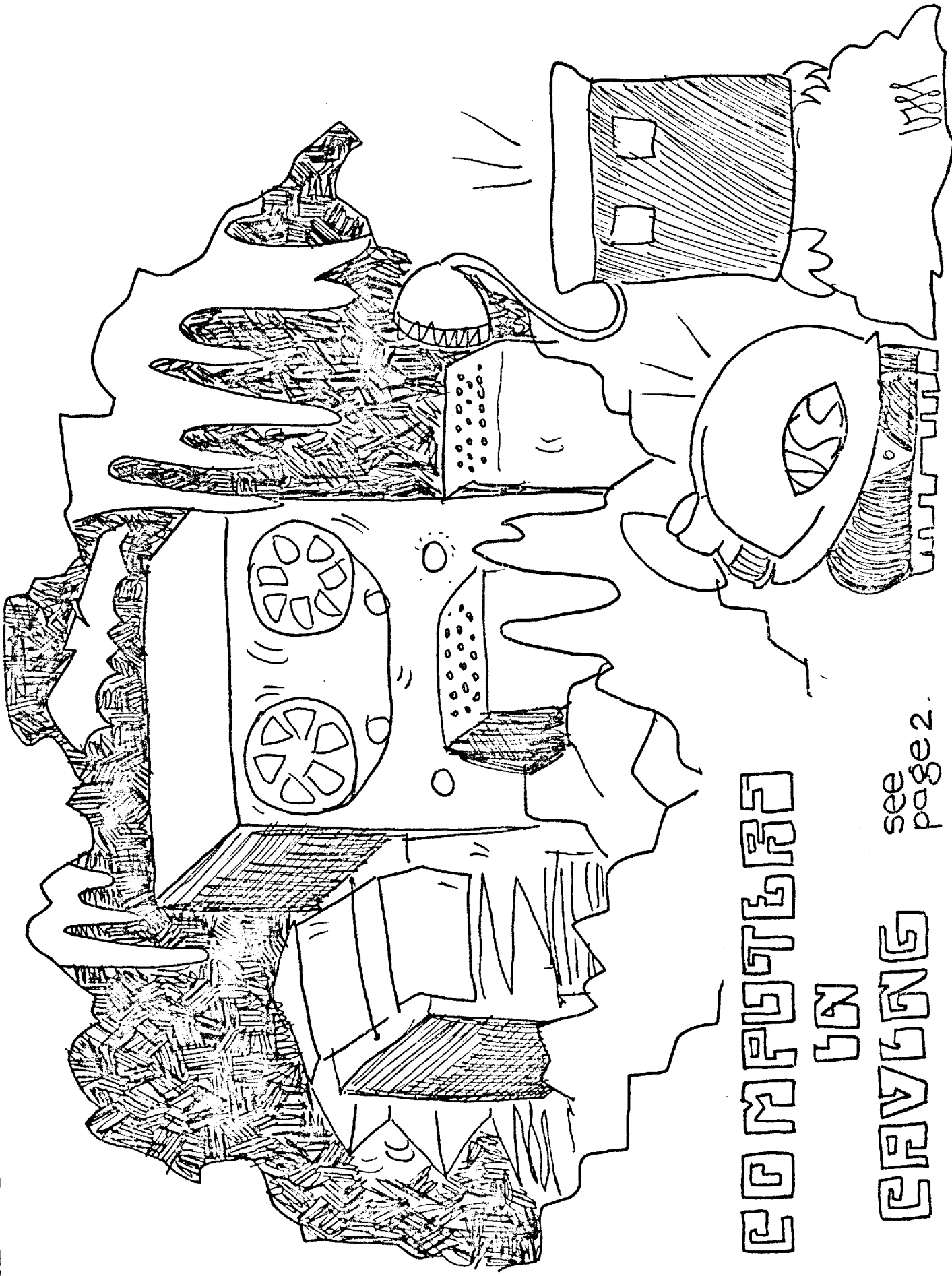
Anxious to get back across the creek before the rain (which never came that day), we headed out, on the way giving wide berth to a 3-foot-long timber rattler we found in the remains of an old house or shed. Plans are now afoot to return to the area to further investigate GUESS CAVE and/or MIRKWOOD CAVERNS. I am hopeful that a report on "our big discovery trip" will appear in the next BGN.

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

*Fls. Speleo. Societs  
P.O. Box 12581  
Univ. St.  
Gainesville, FL 32601*

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 3907  
BIRMINGHAM, AL

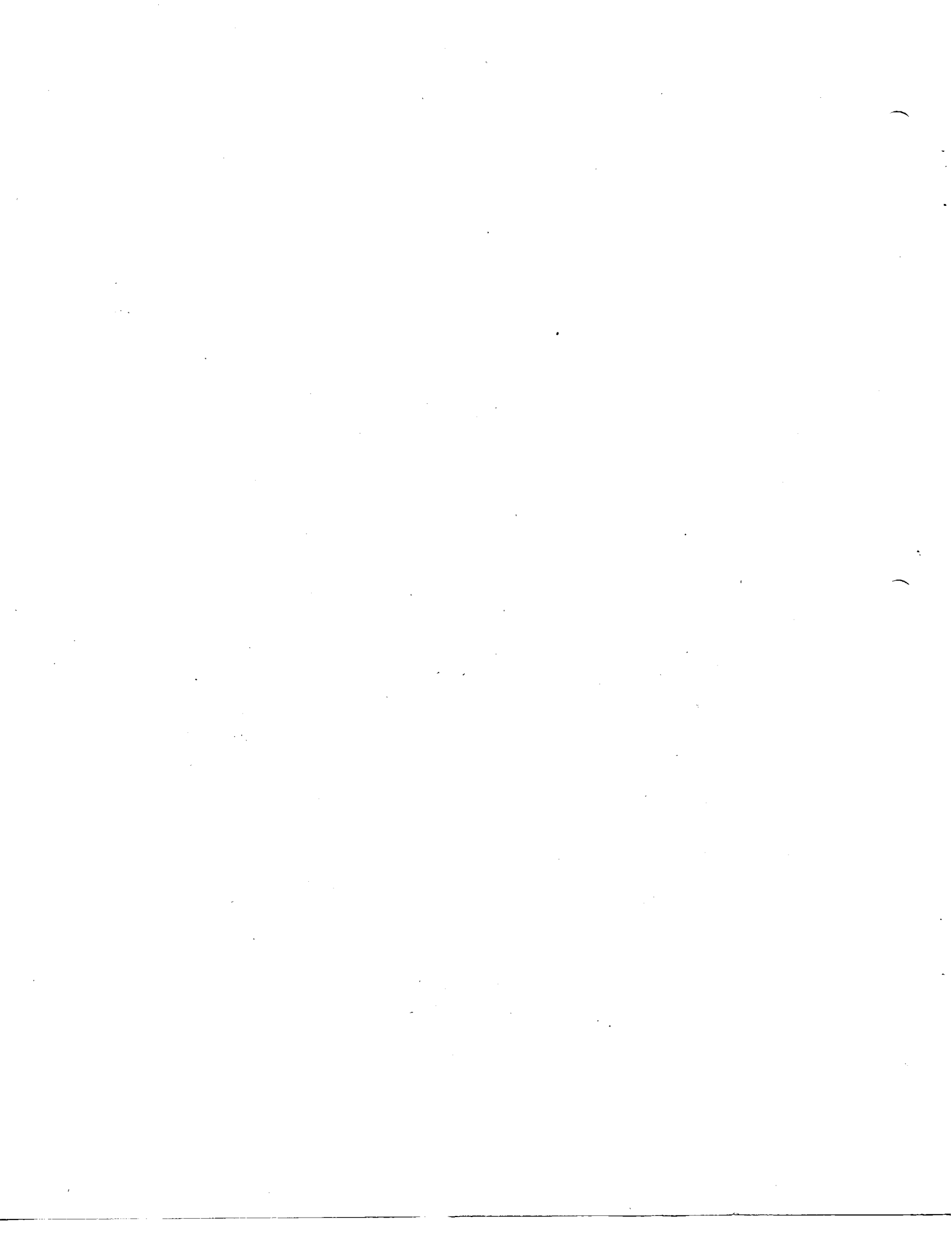
**BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER**  
**NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**JULY 1978**



**COMPTON**  
**ON**  
**SAVING**

see  
page 2.

1888



I can't get over what a fantastic Newsletter we're bringing you this month! We have received a wide variety of first class material this month and can't resist publishing it all. Thanks to RIC KOLSETH for the excellent artwork that can be found not only within these pages but also in an equally excellent print, "Subterrne", which is for sale to cavers everywhere; GREG MCGILL for providing a new improved ACS Cave Report Form; GERALD MONI for the report on and map of CROWNOVER SALPETER CAVE; JOHN R. MOORE for the beginning of his new series on computers in caving; MILO WASHINGTON for another of his literary masterpieces; and BILL WITHEROW, long distance grotto member and sometimes dungeon master, for the first of what will hopefully be a regular series of puzzles to exercise the old grey cells. (Note that this was in alphabetical order; our appreciation is equally great - hope you'll let these people know their efforts were appreciated by you as well).

Anybody interested in scheduling grotto trips in advance? That way we could get them in here and maybe get a better turnout. Bring it up at the next meeting if you have any trips you're willing to lead.

NEXT GROTTTO MEETING:

Monday, July 10, 1978  
7:30 pm

Red Mountain Museum Auditorium  
(Across the street from the address on 15th Avenue we've been giving out)  
This meeting is not on the regular first Monday due to the holiday.

=====

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

Subscription rates: \$4.00 per year, prorated from October.

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.

GROTTTO OFFICERS:

- Chairman: Joe Domnanovich  
4949 Nottingham Lane  
Birmingham, ~~35210~~ (967-9783)
- V.Chairman: Greg McGill **35223**  
5185 Scenic View Drive  
Birmingham 35210 (956-1267)
- Secretary: John R. Moore  
2340 Forestdale Blvd.  
Birmingham 35214 (798-2728)
- Treasurer: Steve Spencer  
938 South 80th Place  
Birmingham 35206 (833-4773)



## A BRIEF LOOK AT COMPUTERS

First in a 4-part series by John R. Moore

---

Q. Just what CAN a computer do?

A. Just what you tell it to do. This varies a bit from system to system, but all computers can perform 3 basic operations: math (addition), comparison, and movement of data.

Q. What about their math abilities?

A. Some computers are quite limited in their mathematical capabilities. Many of the so-called mini- and micro-computers can only add; the programmer must write his own routines for subtraction, multiplication and division. Some early machines couldn't even add; they had to look up answers on a digit-by-digit basis. At the other extreme, some large machines can perform all four operations listed.

Q. Do computers do math like humans?

A. Yes - and no. The principles of math computations are the same for man and machine. Computers may not use the same number system, though. We humans use the decimal, or base 10, number system; we have ten symbols (0-9) and place value increases tenfold as you move left from the decimal point. Some computers use base 10, but many do not. Many use binary (base 2) or a related system, hexadecimal (base 16).

Q. How does a computer "make" a decision?

A. Now you're talking about comparisons. A computer has the ability to determine whether two quantities are equal or if one is greater than another.

Q. Even characters?

A. Strange as it may seem, yes. When a computer compares "A" and "B," it finds "B" to be greater than "A." Remember, though, the machine reads "A" as a pattern of electrical pulses equated to ones and zeroes, not a pattern of lines as we see it.

Q. Now tell me about moving data.

A. Okay. Data must be entered into the computer before it can be used. It can be read from cards, typed in from a teletype device, or read from a magnetic storage device such as a tape, a disk, or data cells. Once "in" the computer, it is in core storage and is immediate

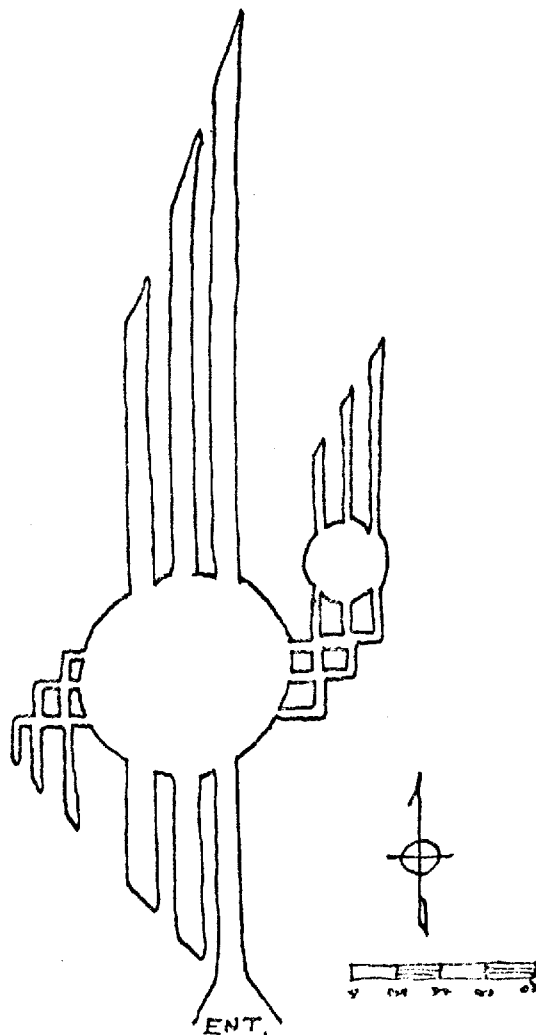
immediately accessible to a program. Data may be moved around to different storage locations in core. Data can also be stored or output to cards, tape, disk, line printers, or a typewriter-like terminal.

Q. Now that we know what a computer can do, how can it be used?

A. By combining the operations in a program, virtually any task may be performed: anything from adding two numbers to statistical analyses to playing chess. A program is just a series of instructions designed to perform one specific task.

Q. Thank you very much. Can you tell us what your next article will be about?

A. Yes. Part 2 of this series will cover techniques involved in plotting cave survey points with the computer.



ART DECO CAVE  
SURVEYED JUNE 29, 1978  
BY D. HOWELL

SOTANO DE LA CUESTA \* Bill had mentioned  
 Tamaulipas, Mexico \* CUESTA to Lynn and  
 December 29-30, 1977 \* me back in October

Greg McGill - Reporter \* and we all agreed  
 Bill Bauman \* that it sounded  
 Lynn Wright \* good but no defi-  
 Steve Durham \* nite plans were  
 \*\*\*\*\* \* made. As Christmas

loomed ever closer  
 we began to have a curious urge to travel  
 south. I found out what I could about  
 CUESTA and we got in touch with Bill. Even  
 though Bill had come back from Mexico only  
 three weeks before, he was eager to get  
 things underway. We asked Steve Durham to  
 go and decided to leave on Christmas night.

CUESTA is one of the deepest pits in the  
 Western Hemisphere. The entrance sink is an  
 awesome 200 x 300 feet. There is a smaller  
 connecting pit to the north side and this  
 pit is normally rigged, since it offers the  
 deepest drop; 572' down to a breakdown  
 floor with the walls belling out to nearly  
 800 feet in diameter.

We stopped at the Los Sabinos Campground  
 on the way down and found out that Gill  
 Ediger and friends were also going to

CUESTA. We figured that we would let them  
 go first so that we would not have to re-  
 chop the trail. On the morning of the 29th  
 we went to the mining village to get per-  
 mission to use the access road. We had  
 some trouble describing what we wanted  
 until we mentioned the word "permission"  
 and that did it. We got our papers and left.

The dirt access road is cut through  
 chapparal and we began to be discouraged by  
 the constant scenery of cactus, sand and  
 more cactus. The road is reputed to be  
 30km long. We were nearly there when we met  
 March Minton, Marion Smith and others  
 returning from DIAMONTE.

We knew Marion has to be at Los Sabinos  
 by 6:00 pm to catch his ride back to TAG  
 and it was already afternoon, so we gave  
 them a ride almost back to the highway.  
 During this ride Bill's van suffered  
 quite a bit from the added weight and  
 bumpy road.

We did get to the campground near CUESTA  
 about 1:30, noticed the vehicles, talked  
 to the people there, and were on the trail  
 by 2:00. The trail is actually a path  
 through the jungle, jumping from one karst  
 formation to another. It is for the most  
 part denoted by orange or faded red flag-  
 ging tape and it two-to-three feet wide.

A wrong step (or leap in this case) could  
 almost guarantee a twisted or broken ankle.

The trail is only 4 kilometres long but  
 it seemed much longer. We all had trouble  
 at first balancing the packs. It was not  
 advisable to grab at vines or small bran-  
 ches because of the thorns. The good  
 footsteps were spotted by the green stains  
 left on the limestone where someone's boot  
 had crushed a leaf before.

We passed by a 100' and a 30' pit as well  
 as a 750' pit that looked very uninviting.  
 These pits were within 20' of the trail and  
 we all got the impression that if we  
 chopped a few feet off the trail we would  
 find more pits. The trail descended and  
 ascended two large sinks and we were near  
 the third such sink when we heard a voice.

The voice said to stay put and "it"  
 would chop toward us. A few minutes later  
 Gill Ediger appeared from the greenery and  
 told us about his new trail. He had cut  
 due north from CUESTA in hopes of inter-  
 secting the old trail farther up. Unfor-  
 tunately, he had run out of tape and had to  
 use lime green tape to mark the new trail.  
 His crew caught up and after a brief rest  
 they pushed on, hoping to reach their truck  
 before dark.

We charged down the trail expecting to  
 reach the pit in about 15 minutes. Gill  
 had miscalculated, to our advantage, be-  
 cause we got there about 5 minutes later.

Our first view of the pit was rather  
 anticlimactic since it was getting dark.  
 Due to the insect problem we had brought a  
 tent which we barely found room to pitch.  
 We built a small fire, heated a can of  
 something (some labels were missing) and  
 crashed. Bill thought he would sleep out  
 but he soon came in with Lynn, Steve and I.  
 That made four people in the three-person  
 tent. The ground was very rough, and the  
 tent was very hot but it did beat the  
 mosquitoes outside.

During the night I think our clothes  
 mildewed because they smelled worse than  
 we did. The tent may never be the same. We  
 unpacked the climbing gear while our  
 canned breakfast was warming up.

While we were rigging someone hailed us  
 from the far side of the pit. It was one  
 of Ediger's party who had stopped on the  
 trail (because of a respiratory problem)  
 and gotten turned around. When it got dark  
 the only choice she had was to stop right  
 there and try to sleep. In the morning  
 she kept walking on the old trail toward  
 CUESTA and saw us. We listened to her

story, offered her some water and off she went. My apologies for not remembering her name.

We had to use two ropes and that meant hassling with the knot. We decided to keep the knot close to the top and use the excess rope for a "tail." Steve wasted no time in rigging in and starting down. I started down soon after he reached bottom.

We didn't want to spend another night in that tent, so Steve started up soon after I reached bottom. I started looking around the bottom but I did not carry a light down and the sun wasn't high enough to illuminate the entire pit. I went toward the north wall where I noticed the floor was composed of breakdown blocks covered with smaller rocks and debris. Steve reached the top and Lynn started down. I killed some more time looking for the two lost Gibbs shells from Ediger's party. I found one and Lynn found the other.

As soon as Lynn descended I started up. Before I was halfway up my pantslegs were dripping wet and interfering with my climbing so I rolled them up above my knees and continued. I reached the knot and, rather than cross the knot, switched over to the short rope. Without the 500' of rope weight beneath me, I actually enjoyed the last 30 feet.

As Lynn was searching for the other Gibbs, she suddenly fell through the floor. Both legs were hanging in the void when she caught a large boulder and pulled herself out.

Bill was using knots and expected to have a 90 minute climb. Lynn started out while Steve and I broke camp and packed up. Bill estimated his climb about right and we pulled the rope up.

We were able to make it back to the truck before dark with only about half an hour to spare. Just enough time for group pictures and a good hot Superior.

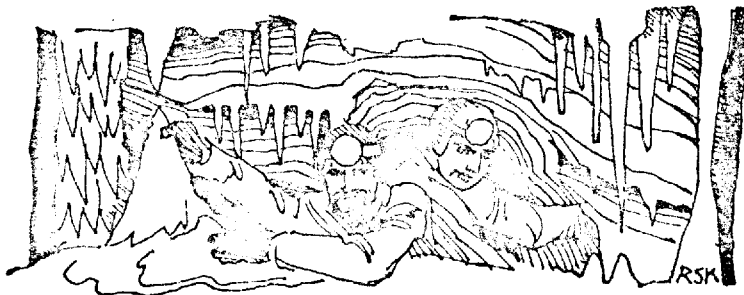
CROWNOVER SALTPETER CAVE \* On a cold,  
\* raining day,  
Gerald Moni - Reporter \* January 26, 1974,  
\*\*\*\*\* Lin Guy and  
Gerald Moni were discussing what to do that day. Gerald pulled out Barr's "Caves of Tennessee" and read Barr's description of CROWNOVER SALTPETER CAVE. Barr said that it was dry and 1300' long. The cave was dry but they mapped 14,255 feet in ten mapping trips in ten months.

The cave is basically a large borehole passage going due north for 4000 feet. On our third mapping trip they found the first of two connections which lead into the main cave. At that time only some members of the West Georgia Grotto had seen this section. They said they had about one mile of virgin passage; Lin and Gerald found another mile of virgin cave.

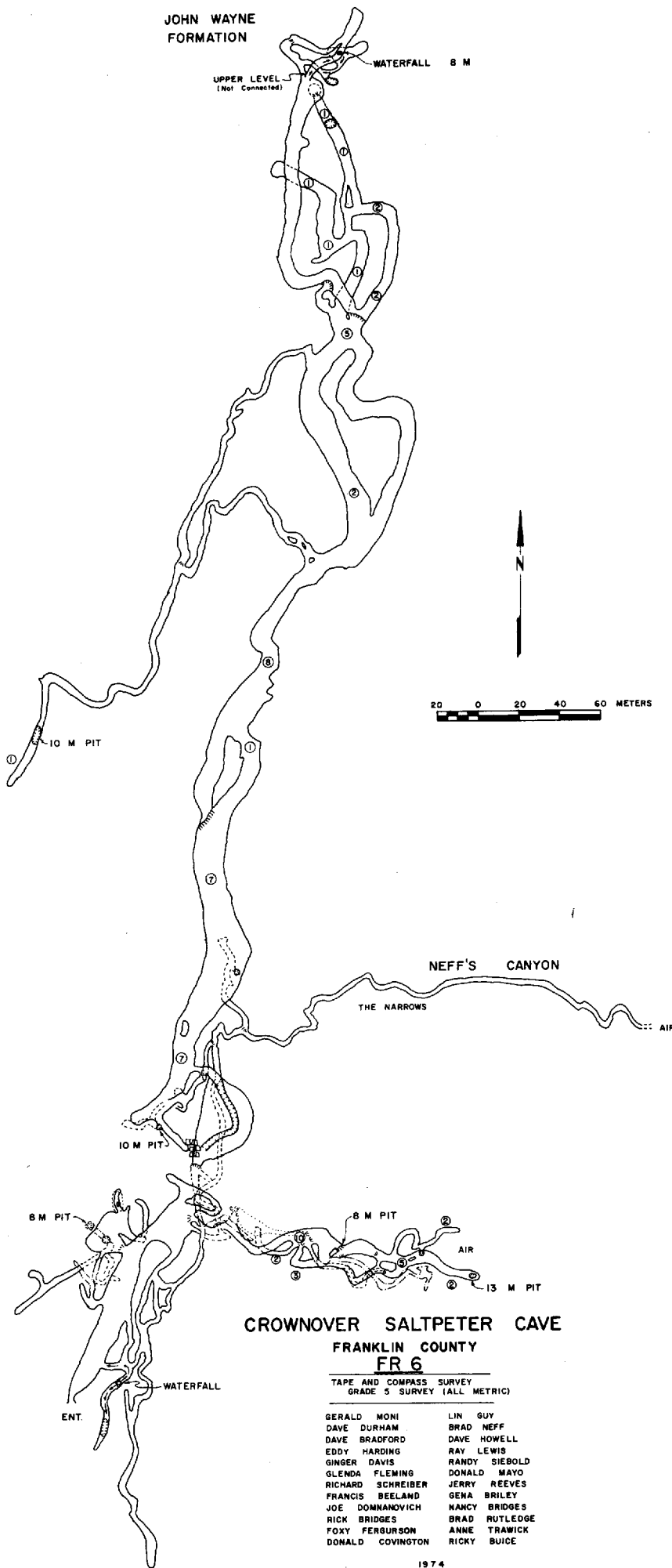
The map shows two main joint control passages heading straight into the mountain. Since these passages blew air, Gerald ridgewalked above the cave. The ridgewalk found no caves or pits above the cave, but  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile further north WILKINSON HOLLOW HORROR HOLE was found. This cave is two miles long and over 500 feet deep.

While there is no known lead in CROWNOVER and the mountain above has been ridge-walked, the possibility of more cave, particularly above the cave in the Bangor limestone is very good.

TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES  
LEAVE NOTHING BUT FOOTPRINTS  
KILL NOTHING BUT TIME



JOHN WAYNE  
FORMATION



CROWNOVER SALTPETER CAVE  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
FR 6

TAPE AND COMPASS SURVEY  
GRADE 5 SURVEY (ALL METRIC)

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| GERALD MONI       | LIN GUY       |
| DAVE DURHAM       | BRAD NEFF     |
| DAVE BRADFORD     | DAVE HOWELL   |
| EDDY HARDING      | RAY LEWIS     |
| GINGER DAVIS      | RANDY SIEBOLD |
| GLENDA FLEMING    | DONALD MAYO   |
| RICHARD SCHREIBER | JERRY REEVES  |
| FRANCIS BEELAND   | GENA BRILEY   |
| JOE DOMNANOVICH   | NANCY BRIDGES |
| RICK BRIDGES      | BRAD RUTLEDGE |
| FOXY FERBURSON    | ANNE TRAWICK  |
| DONALD COVINGTON  | RICKY BUICE   |

1974  
LENGTH: 4345 METERS T.H.C.

A PROPOSAL FOR A SIMPLIFIED METHOD OF DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN THE BASIC SPELLOTHEMS

by E. Murray Kidd

"As the mites go up, the tites go down."

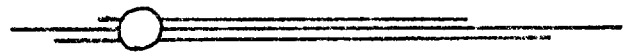
x CAVING CROSTIC +
+ x
x devised by Bill Witherow +
+ x
x Find the caves listed in the letter +
+ block. The names may be horizontal, x
x vertical, or diagonal. ANVIL is shown +
+ as an example. (There are 13 caves x
x hidden in there - solution will be +
+ published next newsletter.) +
-----+
+ x
x A K E E R C S S E U G +
+ R Z Y N S N O M A L U x
x B L B C N O T E E K F +
+ F L N D T S S X P T F x
x Q E I A A R L Y J S E +
+ U S R G L E F D A I Y x
x D S R N U D R U U R N +
+ O U E L C N T E D W G x
x B R H S A A N V I L S +
+ E V T R H S V C H O D x
x M H L W E T L E K I B +
+ x
x +

"By disabling the time-alarm system, the thief entered the museum unnoticed. Two hours later the thief had removed every single painting from this vast museum but curiously he left behind a valuable collection of prints - the complete works of the 18th century chiropodist - Renee Foote."

"Naturally this pattern led me to the National Speleological Society, where I apprehended the criminal."

"Ah so...the motto," said Moto.

"Quite so," said Mr. Holmes.



\*\*\*\*\*
WANTED: Someone interested in collecting Cave Coleoptera or other insects; if interested, contact Tim King 956-9150. Need to learn what to look for, how to collect and how not to destroy the ecology of cave environments.

CAVING PRINTS FOR SALE

Our new artist-in-residence has for sale signed and numbered prints of a cavers world titled "Subterrne." Look for them at the next grotto meeting or get in touch with Ric Kolseth. The prints are going for \$5 and are a bargain.

"Quite so," said Mr. Holmes

- Milo Washington

"Ah yess, Mr. Moto, my most interesting case...let me think...that would be the daring burglary of the Gonce, Alabama art museum....in 1963, I believe."

The famous detective - Jim Walter Holmes paused to light his pipe while the sage of the East - Toyoto Moto listened with rapt, but inscrutable, ears.

Mr. Holmes continued.

\*\*\*\*\*
On the opposite page is a revised Alabama Cave Survey report form, proposed by Greg McGill. This revision renders the report form more concise, complete, and faster to fill out. All cavers involved in finding and reporting new caves to the ACS are urged to adopt this form. You will note it's been printed on the inside back cover to make it easier to remove from the Newsletter for Xeroxing or use, courtesy of your friendly Newsletter Editors.

ALABAMA CAVE SURVEY

CAVE REPORTING PROCEDURE  
COMPLETE ITEMS 1-12 ON A SEPARATE SHEET FOR EACH ENTRANCE.  
ITEMS 1,3,4,5,11,12,20,21 & 22 ARE REQUIRED FOR ACS # ASSIGNMENT.  
EXPLAIN ALL 'OTHER' ENTRIES IN ITEM 23.

NEW \_\_\_\_\_, CORRECTION \_\_\_\_\_, ADDITION \_\_\_\_\_  
SEND TO:  
M.W. VARNEDOE, JR.  
RT 4 - BOX 1853  
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35803

1. COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_ TWO-LETTER ABBREVIATION \_\_\_\_\_

2. ACS NUMBER (IF KNOWN) \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_ ENTRANCES.

3. ENTRANCE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

4. CAVE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ (TRY TO HAVE 20 CHAR. OR LESS)

5. LOCATION: TOWNSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ RANGE \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 SECTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

6. USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ACS TOPO CODE \_\_\_\_\_

7. INDICATION ON TOPO MAP: MARKED AS CAVE <>> SPRING <>>  
INFLOWING STREAM <>> SINK <>>  
CONTOUR DISTORTION <>> NONE <>> OTHER <>>

8. ELEVATION OF ENTRANCE ABOVE SEA LEVEL (IN FEET) \_\_\_\_\_

9. OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE \_\_\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT \_\_\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

10. PRIMARY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS: NORMAL <>> ROPE <>>  
HANDLINE <>> BOAT <>>  
FLOATATION <>> SCUBA <>>  
KNEEPADS <>> OTHER <>>

11. ENTRANCE TYPE: VERY LARGE HORIZ. <>> SMALL BUT BELLS OUT <>>  
STODPMAY <>> WIDE PIT <>>  
WALK-IN <>> CHIMNEY <>>  
CRAWL <>> PIT <>> OTHER <>>

12. ENTRANCE IS: EASY TO FIND <>> OBSOLETE <>>  
INFLOWING STREAM <>> IN BLUFF <>>  
LARGE SINK <>> SPRING <>> OTHER <>>

13. CAVE MAP IS: ATTACHED \_\_\_\_\_ ON BACK \_\_\_\_\_ UNMAPPED \_\_\_\_\_ IN PROGRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
AND MAP TYPE IS: SKETCH \_\_\_\_\_ PACE & COMPASS \_\_\_\_\_ TAPE & COMPASS \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

14. GEOLOGIC FORMATION IS: \_\_\_\_\_ ACS CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
AND IS: LS \_\_\_\_\_ SS \_\_\_\_\_ DO \_\_\_\_\_ MB \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

15. TOPOGRAPHIC PROVINCE IS: RIDGE & VALLEY \_\_\_\_\_ COSTAL PLAIN \_\_\_\_\_ CUMBERLAND PLATEAU \_\_\_\_\_ HIGHLAND RIM \_\_\_\_\_

16. LENGTH OF CAVE (IN FEET) \_\_\_\_\_  
17. TOTAL DEPTH OF CAVE (IN FEET) \_\_\_\_\_  
18. DEEPEST SINGLE PITCH (IN FEET) \_\_\_\_\_  
19. NUMBER OF SUCCESSIVE PITCHES REQUIRING RIGGING \_\_\_\_\_

20. REPORTED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
21. AFFILIATION (CLUB, GROUP, OR GROTTTO) \_\_\_\_\_  
22. DATE OF DISCOVERY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF REPORT \_\_\_\_\_  
23. TESTS AND OBSERVATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ LAND OWNER PROBLEMS, SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS ?

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

DAVE & ERNA CROTTI  
ROUTE 1 - 714 ALLEPOPEK RD. 35173  
WARRIOR

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 3907  
BIRMINGHAM, AL