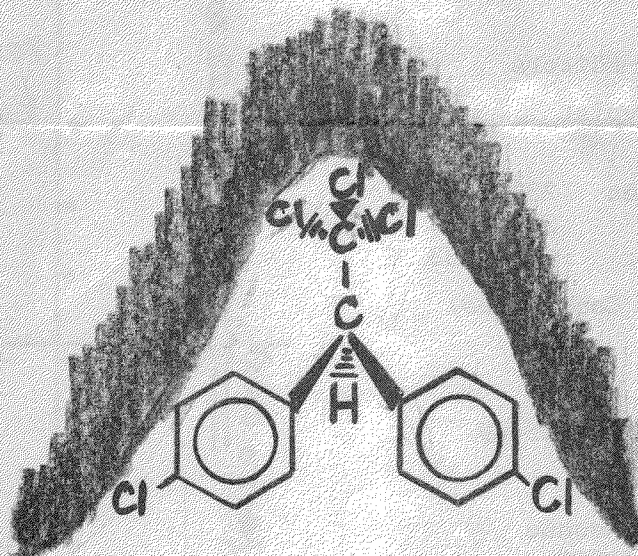


COG Squeaks

VOLUME 19, NO. 9

SEPTEMBER, 1976



THE VERY LATEST IN CAVE
GATE DESIGN

** MEETING **
** NOTICE **

TALES FROM THE FIELDHOUSE

by Barb and Lou Simpson

Wolf River Cave

We've made three more trips to this big cave since those described in the August Squeaks. On August 23 Barb and I went with Greg and Mary Kalmbach, Mike and Susie Warshauer, Tom Patterson, and Roger Sperka to survey the new formation area found in late July. Mary and Barb mapped the hands-and-knees crawl by which we first discovered the area. Warshauers and I mapped the beginning of the larger passages, including the Treasure Chamber, which features large transparent gypsum crystals. Roger, Tom, and Greg mapped the main formation area, the Enchanted Forest passage, which ends in fill. Bill Deane and Kris Kerr, from Knoxville, pushed leads off the Enchanted Forest and found only a tortuous lower parallel level that offered only a couple of difficult possibilities. There was considerable airflow, however. It is hoped that this lead will open up and reconnect with a section of trunk beyond the breakdown that terminated the main passage of the cave. Mike and I tried to push this passage also, but failed to get through a tight comearound that didn't stop Bill and Kris. Total survey for the day was 3452 feet, making the cave length 16,150 feet (just over three miles). The crock-pot full of Swiss steak waiting back at the fieldhouse was most appreciated.

As is customary the day after a long trip to Wolf River, nobody went caving Tuesday. Mike and Susie, gourmet cooks, prepared a feast of Chinese delicacies, with tree fungus and yam noodles featured in the soup. The former looked like dried bat wings, and the noodles were so rubbery you had to swallow them whole. Mike offered his special hot sauce that came out of the bottle in red, glistening droplets, to season the soup. The main course was Lion's Head, a meatball and rice dish. Dessert was almond gel, served with fruit cocktail. This was primarily an eating day.

Tom Patterson and Barb and I returned on August 27 to dig out a tunnel to get past the tight place in the lead in the back of Wolf River. Barb and Tom

began mapping the miserable passage while I excavated. Plagued with diarrhea since Tuesday, I returned from an errand to discover Barb and Tom trying to find the lost clinometer. Tom had dropped it from his pocket while crawling under a loose piece of breakdown that had fallen on him. I had to smash several large rocks and remove first one and then both shoes and socks before I could get the instrument back. I went ahead beyond my 15-foot tunnel to see what further rigors the passage held, and the others resumed the survey. When I turned back at three rather gross and/or potentially get-stuck leads, Barb was coming to meet me. Tom had aborted the survey. In all fairness, it was extremely tight.

Returning September 4 with a party of thirteen, we knew this would be our lucky day. Dave Socky, Phyllis Redshaw, Chris Cornell, John Barnes, Ray Gram, and Barb Gram devoted their time to taking pictures. Barb surveyed north in the big passage (Tremendous Trunk) with Dan Hickman and Carolyn Herel. They found several routes back to the route we had followed on the way in. These may prove to be useful shortcuts. My party, including Tom Ramsey and Joe Martin, began mapping beyond Barb's party, surveying mostly a huge room two hundred feet in diameter. As we were finishing up our loop around the room, we found a virgin walking passage hidden in a breakdown hole along the wall. This went to a breakdown room with a deep pool in a hole and the sound of running water beyond. By the time we mapped two stations past the pool, it was apparent that a major waterfall was responsible for the now roaring torrent we heard. Excited, we abandoned our survey and rushed forward. The passage dimensions grew larger. We found ourselves chimneying along a clean, gray rock-floored channel. There we saw the falls. Five feet high and eight feet wide, its thunder filled the air and echoed in the mammoth virgin room beyond!

Dazzled by the beautiful waterfall, we entered a dry-floored trunk a hundred feet wide and thirty feet high. Our feet crunched through the virgin crust. We walked, passing side leads fifty feet wide

and ten feet high. Some were larger. Climbing a small breakdown hill, we searched for a continuation. Along the right corner was a dark hole leading down into a pool of water. We were back to the river. We followed the edges and finally decided to get wet. After another seven hundred feet or so, we decided we'd seen enough for one day. More big, attractive leads were left unexplored. The stream passage continued.

The current survey length is 3.59 miles. The new extension has much potential, to put it mildly. There remains much to survey that is already known, probably over two miles, not including the new passage.

Bill Deane and Ron Wilson, the latter from Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, removed the bones of what Ron believes to be an extinct subspecies of jaguar (*Panthera onca*).* Eight skeletons have been found in six other Tennessee caves, but the specimen from Wolf River is the northernmost. The site of the remains is remote from the entrances known. It is near the breakdown collapse that terminates two levels of the cave. There is a large sinkhole on the surface above the breakdown area. See map on opposite page for orientation.

Cave Creek

Barb and I took Mike and Susie Warshauer, visiting from Springfield, MO, to Cave Creek on August 26. We entered Humongous Pit just as a big thunderstorm descended, rigging the thirty foot pit and climbing down the narrow canyon route to the Great Dig area at the bottom. Large amount of white mold is present on the wooden rails and ties left there since 1974. We dumped half a foot of water out of the dirt cart and managed to take some rides on the 110-foot railway. Red mold also occurs in a couple of places. The entire area smells pretty bad. Suggestions of what to do about it might

include sawing up at least the excess lumber and carrying it out piecemeal via South Firestone entrance. At least this could be accomplished over a period of time with whatever personnel are available. I favor leaving the rails in the crawlway in place, as well as the cart and winch. There isn't any interest in continuing to dig, is there? I certainly don't have any.

After a tour of the southern part of Humongous, we followed the Firestone connection route to the Cloaca, including Hernia Bypass, named in honor of the co-editor of the *Squeaks*, Paul Rowley, whose hernia operations immediately followed his participation in this dig. Warshauers, far from put off by this gross place, exclaimed, "This is just like the entrance to Ennis Cave in Arkansas!" We rigged the twelve foot chimney near the connection to the Cloaca with a rope we had brought along for that purpose.

In the north end of the Cloaca we looked to see whether the lake level was low enough to explore the echoing watery trunk that intersects. The level allows four feet of airspace, with 12 feet of water still in the unexplored canyon. Somebody should go explore this place soon. Perhaps the lake will go lower than last year, but I'm not counting on it. A virgin pit, about 15 feet deep, also exists in the general area. I'll try to describe where it is: Leaving the Cloaca going out of North Firestone Entrance, if one proceeds along the crawl past the little left turn-off, it's just fifty feet beyond. A rope will be needed.

When we got to the series of waterfalls near the North Firestone Entrance, it was apparent that the falls had increased in volume above what we expected. Barb and I, both Sulfur Mountain Survivors in good standing, were, of course, terrified, despite two years of therapy. But Mike and Susie considered the roaring cascades the highlight of their trip. We exited into the drizzle and made our wary way back to Hyden's farm. watching dutifully for the copperheads we know lurk under each blade of grass.

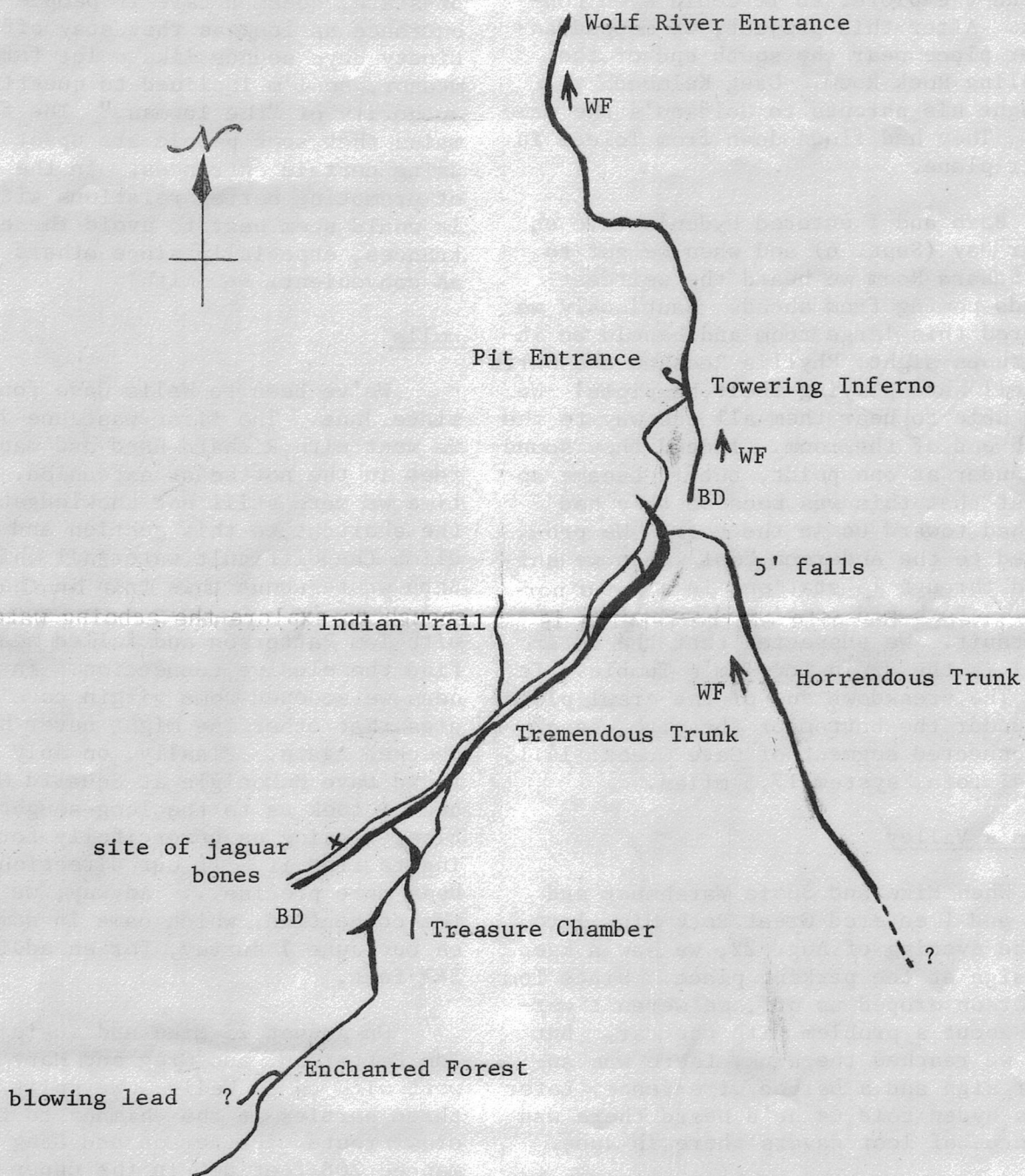
On August 28, Mary Kalmbach and Barb helped me explore and map the 33-foot pit

-(continued on page 74)

* Guilday and McGinnis, Jaguar Remains from Big Bone Cave, Tennessee and East Central North America, *Bulletin of the NSS*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Jan. 1972, p. 1. *P. onca* existed from 35,000 to 10,000 years before the present.

WOLF RIVER CAVE

1 in = approx. 500 ft



in Goldson's beyond the hairpin turn near the Big Room. A gross canyon at the bottom went 97 feet, which brings it pretty close to a lower level reached by a 25-foot pit. A tight lead continued which I didn't explore, so it could even connect. After this project, we mapped another place near the south end of the Tumbling Rock Room. Greg Kalmbach brought his parents to Goldson's the same day. They had flown down from Toledo in their plane.

Barb and I entered Hyden's Cave on Labor Day (Sept. 6) and when we got to the Sahara Room we heard the weirdest sounds coming from ahead. Cautiously we entered this large room and beheld an incongruous sight: Phyllis Redshaw and Chris Cornell were playing their bagpipes! We were able to hear them all the way to the north end of the room. Indeed they sounded louder at one point, but it became apparent that this was because they had marched toward us in the room. We proceeded to the Anderson Pool where we shivered through 15 stations in a water crawl. Barb had convinced me not to wear a wetsuit. We suspected that the water crawl is the drain for Tim's Tumble. It is. The breakdown end of the crawl plots out under the bottom of the pit. Length of connected segment of Cave Creek: 14.15 miles; total system 17.3 miles.

Sloan's Valley

When Mike and Susie Warshauer and Barb and I entered Great Rock Sink late in the evening of Aug. 22, we saw a keep out sign at the parking place. Since Tom Patterson dropped us off, we weren't worried about a problem with the car. But when we reached the sink, there was another sign and a barbed wire fence. Later Rufus Hyden told us he'd heard there was a rescue of lost cavers there in June.

(Some cavers from Toledo, who were staying at the barn Labor Day Weekend, told me that they had been run off by a person identifying himself as "the owner" and that someone had stopped them near the church in Sloan's Valley to tell them that they should get in their car and clear out. "People around here don't like cavers," he added. Two cavers from Indiana reported being run off the Garbage

Pit entrance area by a person they referred to as "the law." He told them they'd get 90 days if they were caught there again. Unger says the person who watches that land for the owner, who lives out-of-state, doesn't care if people use the entrance as long as they stay off his crops. Ninety days sounds like a lot for a misdemeanor, so I'm inclined to question the authority of "the lawman." The fact remains that some people are upset by our using certain entrances. In the interest of promoting better relations with locals it would seem best to avoid these two entrances, especially since others are nearly as convenient. -- Smith)

Wells

We've been to Wells Cave four times since June. The first was June 7, when we went with Richard Hand and mapped 480 feet in the northeast extension. At that time we were still not knowledgeable about the shortcut to this section and had to climb the difficult waterfall chimney. Barb wrote about this trip in the June-July *Squeaks*. On July 2 we went back with Tom Patterson and failed again to find the elusive connection. In the process we scooped some virgin cave in an area that otherwise might never have been checked again. Finally, on July 6 we found Dave McMonigle at Squalid Manor, and he took us to the long-sought connection, teasing us unmercifully for failing to find it. If our directions had been more precise... Anyway, we mapped the connection, which came in somewhere on our June 7 survey, for an additional 341 feet.

On August 25 Mike and Susie Warshauer, Tom Patterson, and Greg and Mary Kalmbach went with us to Wells. We split up into three parties at the chimney to the tight crawl route. Patterson and Greg Kalmbach mapped 208 feet new in the upper level and then mistakenly resurveyed the tight crawl as Tom improved it by digging a little. The rest of us surveyed the lower level route, the Serpentine Passage, for a total of 1039 feet. After scooping some more on the high levels northeast of the Donkey Dicks Room, we headed out by the River Entrance. The pool in this entrance was only crotch deep (Yodeling depth, as Ramsey puts it), instead of the

..(continued on page 70)

TRIP REPORT

August 28 and 29, 1976

Personnel: P. Unger, B. Walden, D. Wilson
Report by Bill Walden

Paul Unger obtained the location of several caves previously unknown to members of the COG. One is a salt petre cave reported by its owner to be a pit 210 feet deep. Another is a cave reported by its owner to be large enough to require an overnight trip to follow it to its end. Both cave owners strongly urged us not to tell others of the location as they do not want hordes of people coming to visit these caves. We are respecting their request.

Saturday we started out early for the pit cave. The pit opening is approximately one hundred twenty feet in diameter. It narrows to an opening about eight feet by forty feet part way down. We began by surveying from the top to the first ledge where we rigged the drop.

Rappelling down into the cavern, one drops past the ceiling, which is sixty-five feet above the talus slope. The cave opens at that point to a large room measuring sixty-six feet wide and two hundred feet long. The drop measures one hundred twenty-four feet from the surface to the top of the talus slope. This must be one of the longest free drops discovered by a COG member in a Kentucky cave. Surveying on into the cave we placed our first horizontal station on what must have been the tallying location for the salt petre and guano miners. At this station are located benches, a water trough, an old bottle (we could not determine what its contents might have been), and many tally marks on vertical blocks of breakdown. At our second station are charcoal sketches of horses and mules, apparently drawn by the miners. Along our survey route we located poles probably used by the miners to loosen rocks. Literally every square inch of the cave had been worked by the miners. Small passages and rooms had been dug out from around breakdown blocks to remove the petre soil. At the end of our survey we found more tools, including a sifter.

We found this cave to be incredibly dry and dusty. Never have I encountered

such a dry cave. Except for under the entrance there is no dripping water and no problem of fogging lenses.

An old timer in the area said the cave had been mined for petre soil and bat guano for a period of thirty years. The leaching of petre soil was done outside, probably because there is no water in the cave. A crane is said to have been rigged over the entrance to lift the soil from the cave. Miners used a system of ladders inside a crevice which leads to the surface. The rotted remains of the ladders may still be seen in that crevice. According to the old timer, we were the first visitors to the cave since 1939.

We surveyed nearly 700 feet of the cave which consists of three rooms, two large and one relatively small, low room (40' x 90' x 8'). Much work remains to be done, but we do not intend to return for at least a month so as not to upset delicate owner relations.

Sunday Phil Erisman and his two boys joined us for a 7 a.m. start. Paul had only a verbal description of the cave location which sounded easy enough; however, the entrance is also said to be barely large enough for a thin man to enter. We searched three and a half hours without success. Finally Paul Unger went to see the owner. He returned with the owner's son who had been in the cave six years ago. Another hour and a half of searching failed to locate the entrance. Finally the owner and his father came to our assistance. They immediately directed us to the elusive entrance. We had passed within ten to fifteen feet several times in our earlier searching! Since it was rather late in the day, we chose to make only a quick reconnaissance of the cave. Cable ladders are required. I rigged the first 30 foot drop, which is about 100 feet into the cave. Paul, Doug and I looked at about two thousand feet of walking passage without going down the second drop, which is about 500 feet past the first drop into the cave. We were told that the cave really opens up at the bottom of the second drop. This cave will receive immediate attention on the next trip.

CAVE PHOTOGRAPHY (PART II)

by Ken Smith

LIGHTING

Even if you have the world's best suited cavera for cave use, you'll still get nowhere unless you have a decent light source. There are two primary types of lighting commonly used in caves, and each has its strong points and weaknesses. The strobe is much more economical to use than flashbulbs, but it lacks the power of larger bulbs. The power of larger bulbs, on the other hand, is often a handicap rather than a benefit. What it boils down to then is a need for at least two light sources. One of these, the strobe, is used for close and medium range shots (5-8 feet); the other is used for longer shots.

I have used several different types of strobes, most of which could be loosely classified as "El Cheapos." I am currently using a Braun F34, for which, in a moment of weakness, I paid \$25. I'm sure you won't get to look at one for less than \$30 now. Anyway, this unit has served me well for the last few years. I've had to tear it down in the cave on at least two occasions (a Swiss Army knife was sufficient), but in each case the trouble proved to be nothing more than dirty connections. For those of you who may be less affluent (or stupid, depending on how you look at it), I should mention that I also got several years out of the El Cheapo I started with. When it finally did break (and you can't use electronic equipment under cave conditions and not expect them to), Woody fixed it for me at a reasonable price -- nothing; all it needed was a new on-off switch.

When it comes to big room and passage shots, there is nothing that can replace flashbulbs. There are strobes available that will equal the light output of the M3B's that I normally use, but they are large and, more significantly, expensive. I normally use them at about 20 feet from walls, but they can be used closer. However, I'd avoid distances less than 10 feet. Exposure calculations will be discussed later.

With flashbulbs one will, of course, find it necessary to use a flashgun. There are many available, and most will work equally well. Some do offer certain luxuries, to which I have become accustomed. It is

nice to have an open-flash button (i.e., a means of setting off the flash without having it attached to the camera). Not many have this (I have an Acura that does; I picked it up for \$2 in a sale bin at a camera shop), and it's a shame, since most flashgun shots are not synced to the camera. Lacking this, one must short out the PC cord with a knife blade or some other pointed piece of metal. This can be a problem, since it is most often done in total darkness. In addition, if you've managed to suck someone else into running all over the room to set off the flashes while you direct the scene from the camera(s), you'll have to give them a crash course in all the peculiarities of this technique (viz. how to set the flash off in total darkness by feel, without setting it off at the wrong time and in the wrong direction). It's also a pleasure to have the capability of setting the reflector in a ~~spherical or parabolic configuration~~. I usually carry two flash guns. That way, assuming I have enough people, I can get two flashes in position before uncovering the camera lens; this not only speeds up the procedure but it also means I have only half the opportunities to jar the camera.

Flashbulbs can be very expensive, but there are ways to get around this. When the price for M3B's went up to about \$1.60/dozen (I hear it's well over \$2 now), I made a deal with a local camera shop. I agreed to buy at least a dozen boxes of 12 bulbs at a time; they agreed to charge me only \$1/dozen. I haven't bought any in over a year, so I don't know whether I can get them to continue to honor this agreement, but you can bet I'll try. Barring this, you might try getting together with some other photographers and ordering a gross at a time from the manufacturer.

While we're on the subject of lighting, there are two other gadgets that I have found very useful. For pictures requiring only two or three flashes, whether all bulbs, all strobes,

or a combination of them, electronic "slaves" are helpful. Their use enables you to hand-hold a shot that normally would have required a tripod. The units are small, about the size of two pieces of bubblegum (unchewed), although they are somewhat expensive. I have two kinds, one made by Vivitar that used to sell for about \$12 and the other made by Optalux that I assume sold for about the same price (it was given to me). I prefer the Vivitar, since I have had fewer misfires with it. One flash is synced to the camera and the others are slave-activated. The units are fairly simple in design. Basically they consist of a photosensitive material, which, when hit by a strong impulse of light, sends out an electric current that closes a relay, which in turn closes the circuit within the flash unit to which it is attached (there's a sentence that Cicero would be proud of). I have used the devices to take solo pictures of passages, something that usually requires two people. Another gadget, this time almost a necessity, is a PC extension cord. I use one that's 5 feet long and which cost me about \$2.50 at Penney's. One cannot expect to take decent pictures using only on-camera flash; the results, as has been stated earlier, are usually flat (i.e., depthless) pictures. The last gadget, and perhaps the best since its cost is usually nil, is a diffuser for a strobe unit when it is used for close-up photography. I made mine from a piece of an old slide sorter, but any piece of matt acetate will do. All you have to do is cut a rectangle big enough to cover the window of the unit with a little to spare so that it can be held on with rubber bands. The piece is so small that I carry mine inside the battery compartment of the strobe. A variation on this that was suggested to me but which I haven't yet tried, is to have a window cut out down the middle of the diffuser so that a full-strength beam passes through the center, while a diffused (i.e., of less intensity) beam is transmitted toward the edges. One place in which this would be of particular value is in narrow canyons, where one has a tendency to burn the nearby walls in order to get enough light down the passage to expose a more distant object.

SOME FINAL NECESSITIES

Most of these things fall into the "of course" category, but I'll mention them in order to be complete. A lens brush and lens

tissues. The brush is the means of cleaning the lens most often, since it is generally sand and dust that dirty it. By "it" I don't mean the lens itself but rather the 1A ("Skylight") filter that should be on it at all times, with the exception of when it is replaced by close-up lenses. The filter, even a \$6, is cheaper to replace than a lens. The lens tissues are more often used to eliminate fogging. By rubbing the filter with the tissues for a few seconds enough heat is generated to clear the lens. There are some who use a hand cupped over but not touching the lens to accomplish this, but I prefer the more active approach. DON'T grind any dirt present into the filter; remove it first. There are even those who use the heat from a carbide lamp to clear lens fog, but I consider it too uncontrollable a heat source. This is especially true if you're using it directly on a coated lens. Last of the of-course's is a cable release. Any will do as long as it's a LOCKING cable release. I prefer the kind that lock automatically rather than those on which you must screw down a locking device. This may be laziness on my part, but it enables me to carry out the operation with one hand and without the possibility of letting the shutter reclose while I'm fiddling around trying to lock it open.

A tripod and a black cloth are necessary only if you're going to do multiple flash shots, but if you are, you can't get by without them. I have used both full-sized and miniature tripods, but I prefer the full-sized ones. Larger tripods are obviously more hassle to carry, but the additional stability is worth it. Don't get too fancy; the more doodads there are sticking out, the more things there are to get caught or broken. I personally use a Lentar, which I carry in a bag made from the leg of a pair of jeans I cut off and to which I attached two O-rings so I could put a strap on it. The end is designed to close like a stuff sack with a draw-string. The black cloth I carry is simply a black wash cloth. Any dark cloth will do as long as it's not so heavy it moves the camera.

CARRYING CASE

What in the world will hold all this material? I prefer an ammo can, although some people use padded pigs. If you still don't believe it, I'll list what I usually carry for a photography trip:

Tripod in its bag

50 cal. ammo can containing:

Canon FTb in ever-ready case with

50 mm lens

28mm lens

2 flashguns

2 doz. M3B's

Braun F34 strobe with diffuser

3 Vivitar close-up lenses (1,2,3x)

2 slaves

lens brush and tissues

cable release

black cloth

2 or 4 extra batteries for strobe

5' PC extension

2 - 5 rolls of film

Even with this much there's still a little room left. The secret is how you pack it so that you both get it in and provide protection for more delicate pieces. I don't go in for a lot of padding; I prefer to make use of the principle that it is not likely to be damaged if it can't shift. I use a cut-down version of the styrofoam

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packing the camera came in to keep the camera itself in place. The strobe is packed in half its original styrofoam, and everything else is packed in as tightly as possible. The black cloth is used to protect the 28mm lens. The flashbulbs go on top. I'm sure there are those who disdain such a devil-may-care attitude, but I've never had anything break even though on one occasion the box was dropped 20 feet down into a shallow river. Army snap-on carrying straps work well to provide the over-the-shoulder carrying capability, but you may want to replace the snaps, since they do have a tendency to come open -- usually at the top of a bad climb. Some people like to pack their gear in plastic bags inside the ammo can, but I've yet to have anything get wet inside a properly sealed can. I suppose if I planned to drag the whole thing through standing water I might take a few extra precautions, but normally it simply hasn't proved necessary.

(Continued next month)

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