

COG SQUEAKS FEB 1980 V23 N2

HORSE CAVE
WAYNE CT
KENTUCKY WDW

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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T H E

CHAIRMAN'S MESS

(desk)



DH
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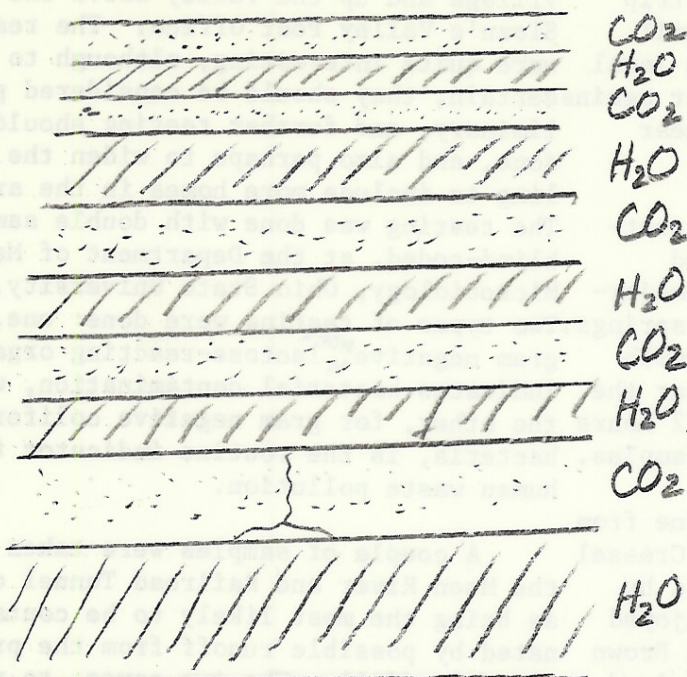
* MEETING NOTICE *

The March 14 meeting will be held at the home of Dale Harmon, our illustrious Chairman, 1338 Republic Avenue. This will be an unsurpassed opportunity to see if the Chairman's Mess is really as bad as he says it is.

Evolution of a hypothetical Martian ice cave.

A

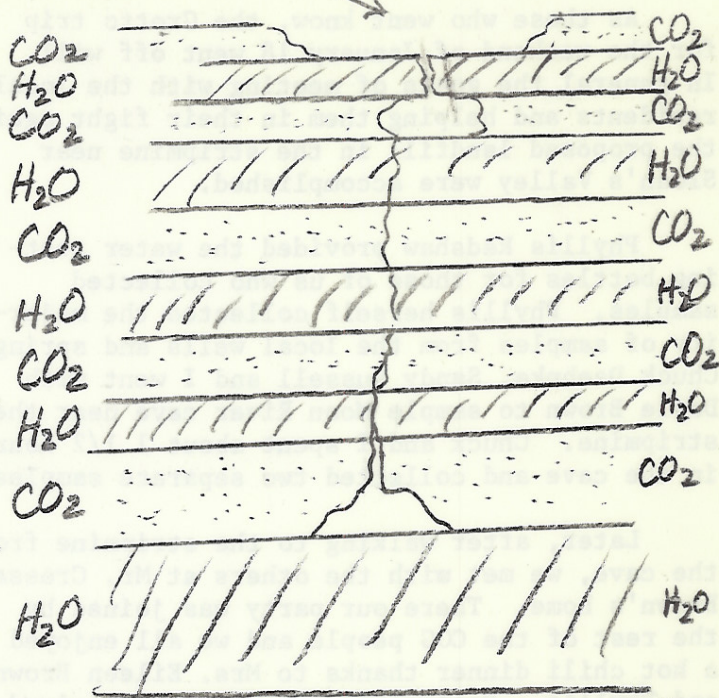
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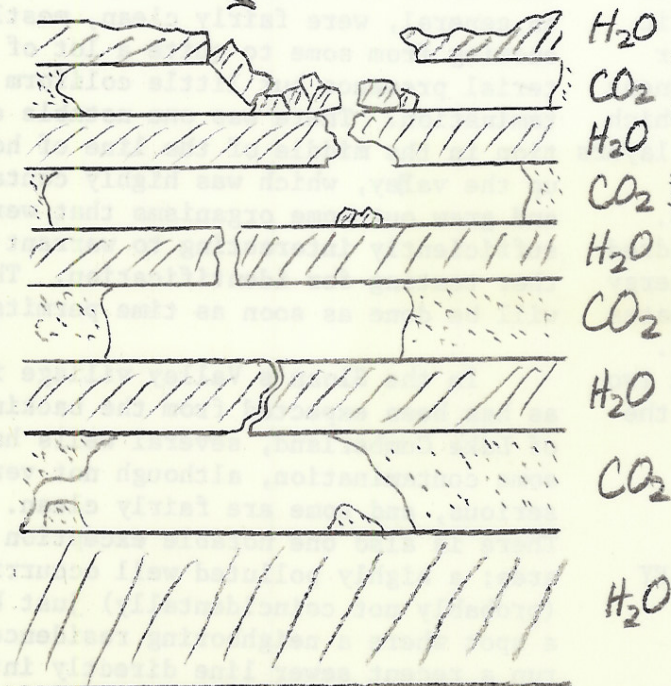
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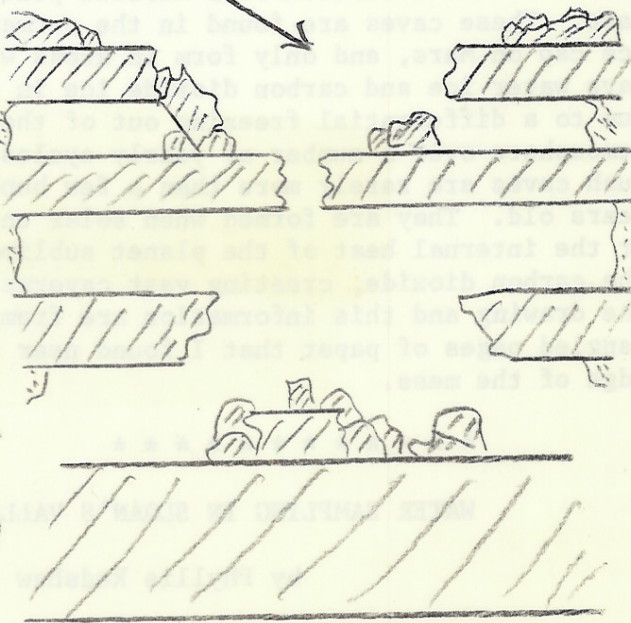
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01/18/80

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S MESS

by Dale Harmon

As those who went know, the Grotto trip for the weekend of January 18 went off well. In general the goals of meeting with the local residents and helping them in their fight against the proposed landfill in the stripmine near Sloan's Valley were accomplished.

Phyllis Redshaw provided the water testing bottles for those of us who collected samples. Phyllis herself collected the majority of samples from the local wells and springs. Chuck Daehnke, Sandy Russell and I went with Doyle Brown to sample Moon River cave near the stripmine. Chuck and I spent about 1 1/2 hours in the cave and collected two separate samples.

Later, after walking to the stripmine from the cave, we met with the others at Mr. Cressel Brown's home. There our party was joined by the rest of the COG people and we all enjoyed a hot chili dinner thanks to Mrs. Eileen Brown and Phyllis. Following dinner we were joined by a few other local people for a discussion of the situation and a sharing of ideas which the local citizens might use in their campaign.

On a lighter side, I have a couple of drawings this month. One is from the "Chairman's Mess," and the other is of it. The Martian ice cave drawing appears to be a diagrammatic sketch of the formation of a Martian polar cave. These caves are found in the permanent ice cap on Mars, and only form in areas which have water ice and carbon dioxide ice in layers due to a differential freezing out of the atmosphere over a number of yearly cycles. Such caves are rarely more than a few hundred years old. They are formed when solar energy or the internal heat of the planet sublimates the carbon dioxide, creating vast caverns. The drawing and this information are from two mangled pages of paper that I found near the edge of the mess.

* * * * *

WATER SAMPLING IN SLOAN'S VALLEY

by Phyllis Redshaw

As part of the recent COG trip to Sloan's Valley, water sampling was done from the wells and springs at various residences both in the

village and up the valley above the Sloan's Valley Post Office. The results were quite interesting, although to be certain, they should be considered preliminary, and further testing should be done, and also perhaps to widen the sampling to include more homes in the area. The testing was done with double samples blind-coded, at the Department of Medical Microbiology, Ohio State University. Two types of testing were done: one, for gram negative ^{non}lactose-reacting organisms, indicates bacterial contamination, while the other, for gram negative coliform bacteria, is the routine indicator for human waste pollution.

A couple of samples were taken in the Moon River and Railroad Tunnel caves, as being the most likely to be contaminated by possible runoff from the proposed landfill. The two caves, to no one's surprise, did show considerable bacterial contamination, and some coliform contamination, although not exceptionally heavy.

The water supplies along the valley side above the Sloan's Valley village, in general, were fairly clean, mostly showing from some to quite a lot of bacterial presence but little coliform contamination. There was one notable exception in the middle of the line of homes up the valley, which was highly contaminated and grew out some organisms that were sufficiently interesting to warrant further testing for identification. This will be done as soon as time permits.

In the Sloan's Valley village itself, as has been expected from the backing up of Lake Cumberland, several wells have some contamination, although not very serious, and some are fairly clean. There is also one notable exception in this area; a highly polluted well occurring (probably not coincidentally) just below a spot where a neighboring residence has run a recent sewer line directly into a sinkhole.

It would appear that although some

WATER, continued

contamination does occur rather widely in the entire area, the water supplies are at the present time generally fairly good, especially above the village. A landfill on a hill above this area would inevitably cause eventual further pollution in this area, no matter what the precautions. We were taken around by some of the local residents and shown various springs and seeps which they are convinced come directly from the area in question, and some of the water supplies from up the valley do come directly off the stripmine area. The very least these tests show is the high vulnerability of the water sources in this area to pollution from any source.

* * * * *

SLOAN'S VALLEY UPDATE An Editorial

As cavers in the Sloan's Valley area, our biases and sympathies are obvious when it comes to threats to the area's caves, and we can certainly make common cause with the local residents in trying to protect the area from being spoiled any further by pollution or other threats to the integrity and beauty of the location. Thus, when we were informed of the current fight of the local citizens to keep a landfill dump from being bestowed upon their community, a bunch of COG cavers went galumphing down there to see what we could do to help. If nothing else at all had been accomplished, we certainly met some nice people in the community, as several of them made themselves available to accompany various of the COG members to pertinent places and show us their particular areas of concern. Mr. Cressel Brown is the community's leader in this controversy, and we were impressed by the amount of work he and his wife, Eileen, have been doing in gathering information, contacting people, and trying to disseminate information to the press, the officials, and the public. In hearing of their difficulties, we can see that they need all the help they can get, to penetrate the maze of bureaucratic denseness, the biases and political interests of officials, and trying to present their case in a manner that will make an impression upon an uninformed public.

This proposal certainly has nothing to commend it, and bears a great potential for

damage to the area. One can't help but wonder aloud why such a can of worms is being foisted upon this area, unless someone expects to make a bundle on it at the expense of the local population. According to the facts that Mr. Brown has gathered, even the cost of transporting the garbage to this location will be far more expensive to the townspeople of Somerset and the northern part of the county than for any of a number of other more convenient sites. A delightful picture of roadside trash spilled from passing garbage trucks on a road near Somerset was sent to the mayor of Burnside as an example of what Burnside can expect as the trucks make countless trips through that town on the way to this location.

The principal bone of contention regarding this proposal is that the proponents claim pollution can be contained in the stripmine area by the presence of the underlying shale layer, and by restriction dams in the surrounding runoff hollows. The residents make a very good case in opposition to this view, pointing to the fact that deep mining was done beneath the shale layer in the 1930's, which would be expected to cause breakage of the layer, the blasting during the stripmining operations which could be expected to do the same, and the local well-driller maintains that there is no shale layer anywhere around that is as thick as it has been claimed to be. They also point to numerous springs which emerge from around the shale layer, which indicate that there is indeed runoff and seepage through the shale layer from the stripmine already.

The dams that have been built to contain runoff from the existing stripmine have been inadequate to prevent it in the past, and it is unrealistic to expect any better results from further efforts along these lines.

We, as cavers, don't even have to dwell especially on the horrendous effect such an establishment would have on Sloan's Valley Cave; it would obviously have an obnoxious and dangerous effect on the area even if there wasn't a cave under there for us to be concerned about.

In my admittedly cynical opinion, the excellent arguments and information that the local citizens have amassed might

UPDATE (continued)

have a greater effect on the powers-that-be if this same information was expressed by some experts with the appropriate letters after their names. As might be expected, the proponents of this issue have trotted out a number of official opinions about the circumstances of this location, many of which the local residents can refute with convincing evidence. There are many cavers familiar with the Sloan's Valley area who have the expertise to speak authoritatively on this subject, and I would urge anyone who could, to offer their assistance to the local citizens. Mr. Cressel Brown is ready at any time to show the area to interested persons who want to see the situation for themselves, and he has done a great deal of information-gathering about it.

Lou Simpson has provided them with a lot of information and presentations of pictures, etc. We hope our water testing will be of assistance. In a recent letter from Lou, he mentioned that they were hoping for an injunction to be granted soon against the landfill, and that the judge would like to hear from sources with expertise on the subject. If anyone has anything to offer, contact Mr. Cressel Brown, P.O. Box 312, Burnside, KY 42519

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Trip Report (In Brief)

As a side-light of the same trip to Sloan's Valley, there was even some caving done. A cryptic report from Paul tells us that after we left, Ron Erisman found 4 caves, spent about 3 hours exploring and found no end! Paul comments: "Time to survey!" With this little tantalizing morsel, we hope some action will get underway and we'll maybe have a scoop or two to report soon.

* * * * *

Mr. Cressel Brown comments in a letter to Paul Unger that they were recently visited by state officials, including 2 geologists, 3 landfill inspectors, and also by the lease-holder of the stripmine and a newspaper reporter from the Somerset Commonwealth-Journal. He comments that the paper article that resulted showed at least a small victory for the local citizens, in that at least it

didn't include a statement refuting their facts, as previous issues had done, and stated that the site would require further study, showing a picture of one of the old mine shafts, collapsed. The state officials apparently were at least impressed enough to return, and stated that the land needed some cleanup in regard to the water entering the lake.

It sounds like the local citizens are beginning to make their voices heard.

* * * * *

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ohio Valley Region Executive Committee meeting will take place for the purpose of organization on Saturday, March 15, in Room 104 Swift Hall (Geography Building) University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Oh. All grottos should be represented and it is hoped that some of the members of COG will plan to attend. The meeting will start at 9:00 a.m., continue through the day with lunch and dinner, and end with a party at Doc Dougherty's house at 8:00 p.m. COG is supposed to have a regional representative - if we don't have one, the Chairman should appoint one.

Since this is an organizational meeting, including acceptance of the Constitution and By-Laws for the new region, and other important business, including election of officers for the coming year, this should be well attended. Doc Dougherty requests being informed as to who our representative will be, and also how many are planning to attend, so as to be able to plan for refreshments, etc. Crash space will be available, for those bringing sleeping bags. Maps will be printed in the OHIO VALLEY CAVER, which should be coming out shortly. It is suggested that those intending to go should contact Donna Weisenberger or Karen Walden.

Membership forms are also available for those wishing to pay their \$2 dues and become a member of the Ohio Valley Region.

* * * * *

DUES ARE DUE FOR THE SQUEAKS ALSO.

Donna Weisenberger is the new Secretary, and Karen Walden is Treasurer.

EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SPELEOLOGY

The announcement has just been received of the Eighth International Congress of Speleology, which is to be held July 18-21, 1981, at Bowling Green, Kentucky. It is held every four years, and this is the first time it will be held in the United States. A number of pre- and post-congress excursions are planned, as well as meetings, lectures, papers, trips and exhibitions during the Congress. This is a unique opportunity for most of us rather "stay-at-home" cavers to see what the rest of the world is doing in caving. More information and registration information will be forthcoming later.

It might also be pointed out, as Lou Simpson already has, that the current Sloan's Valley situation would be most unfortunate at such a time as world-wide attendees at the Congress may want to visit as important a cave as Sloan's Valley Cave. It is certainly to be hoped that the officials considering this proposal will also be cognizant of the adverse effect the proposed landfill dump would have on the tourism which is so important in that area, and the adverse impression such a dump will make for this area in the minds of the international organizations attending this Congress.

* * * * *

SLOAN's VALLEY SCOUTING

by Donna Weisenberger

On Feb. 15, about 3:30, Anda and Jean Franklin from Springfield, and Jim and I left Fairborn for the fieldhouse. It started raining when we reached Cincinnati and rained rather consistently all the way to Burnside. We were on our way to a weekend of "fun" - introducing about 30 Boy Scouts to Sloan's Valley, or so we thought. To our surprise when we arrived, we found not 30 boys, but 51 boy scouts and leaders.

It was decided that the first groups of eager cave explorers were to leave for the entrance at 8:00 the next morning. The rest were to go in groups in the afternoon. We left the troops in the barn while we went to the warm and cozy cabin. The next morning about 9:00 a.m., there was a sight to behold: coming down the hill from the barn there was a line of yellow hardhats all marching in step

behind the troop leaders, carrying their equipment, and ready for inspection by "a general."

While Jim and Andy were gone (they went to Minton Hollow), two of the remaining scouts, ages 10 or 11, came to the cabin. After hearing a gentle knock on the door, I opened it to see two little boys with toilet paper in their hands. One said in a real sweet voice, "May we use your restroom?" Apparently a few of the older boys had come to see the fieldhouse and having seen the sign "restroom" above the back door, told the other boys about the cabin. I took them through the cabin to the back door, opened it and told them how to get to our "restroom". The looks on their faces were precious.

Later, two more came down for the same reason. When told to come in, one chickened out and went back to the barn; the other welcomed the invitation. It was funny.

Weather was nice but cold on Saturday. In the evening, we enjoyed the warmth of the cabin, exchanging stories of the day's events and other happenings. The weekend was without incident or worry and everyone enjoyed themselves enormously. I know I had fun. Leaving on Sunday was welcomed, though; we all longed for a nice long hot bath at home.

* * * * *

TRIP REPORT - WOLF RIVER

2/23/80

Trip Leader: Greg Erisman
Members of party: Ron Erisman, Jake Elberfeld, Jim Gorski, Bill Walden and Jim Weisenberger

The group was led through the cave to the Astrodome room. From there, Bill and Jake continued touring the cave upstream nearly to the sump. After rejoining the main group, Jim W. and Ron departed while the remainder toured the other major branch of Wolf River cave to its terminal breakdown.

Those of us who had not previously toured Wolf River were duly impressed and would like to return. Total time spent in the cave was 10 hours.

Jim Gorski, an NSS member from

Youngstown, was enticed by Jim Weisenberger to join the COG.

- by Bill Walden

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c/o/ Paul Rowley
990 Francis Avenue
Bexley, Ohio 43209

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TRIP REPORT - WOLF RIVER
2/21/80

Trip Leader: Greg Erlman
Members of party: Ron Erlman, Jake
Eberfeld, Jim Gorski, Bill Walden and
Jim Weisenberger

A group was led through the cave to
the kitchen room. From there, Bill and
Jake continued touring the cave upstream
upstream to the end. After returning
the main group, Jim and Ron departed
while the rest of the group covered the other
major branch of Wolf River cave to its
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