



YUM-CHEESIE POTATOES



GOLDSON'S CAVE



BLIND CAVE CRAYFISH

The COG had a good turn out for the NSS Convention in Frankfort, Kentucky. I'll admit I'd hoped that even more COGer's would show up considering how close this convention was. Well, next year---

For those who missed the convention and for those who want to be reminded of it, this issue is the POST CONVENTION SPECIAL. (Bill Walden - editor)

NEXT MONTH BAT SPECIAL

For the September issue of the Squeaks I'm planning a bat special issue. During the convention I was able to obtain permission to reprint some articles about bats and information to help us identify these helpful flying mammals. As usual, I welcome any articles any readers have to offer on bats. (BEG!) (Bill Walden - editor)

OCTOBER SLOANS REMEMBERED

I would like to do a special squeaks on the Sloan's Valley Cave. COGer's along with the Bluegrass grotto and GCG were responsible for today's map. I need the support of those cavers who took part in the mapping project to write articles recalling the project, in retrospect. Please help make the October issue a success.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Paul Unger has been spearheading a project to involve cavers with the Danial Boone National Forest. The Forest people would like to have a survey of the caves in the Danial Boone National Forest. This will be a tremendous project.

During the weekend of August 24, 1985 interested individuals from several grottos who cave in the Danial Boone National Forest are planning a trial Forest trip. No details yet. If you are interested please contact Paul Unger or myself, Bill Walden.

MARENGO CAVERNS TRIP: The weekend of September 28, we plan to camp at Marengo Caverns. The Cave is a commercial cave owned by Gorden Smith, an active NSS member.

Camping fees are cheap, \$2 per night. Gorden will open up the cave for the cavers Saturday night. No guides, but Gorden asks that we stay in the lighted portion of the cave. For those who wish to explore, Gorden will open up the wild caves on his land to us. There will be a Banquet Saturday evening. We hope to obtain a speaker for this.

Why this trip? 1) We want to get the active cavers who cave in the Danial Boone National Forest together. This will afford us a chance to discuss the proposed cave survey/inventory and get to know each other. 2) Have a good time. We've been considering this as a grotto trip for three years. It's about time we do it! 3) Marengo Caverns is reasonably central to the grottos caving in the DBNF area.

Grottos invited include: Michigan Interlakes, Central Ohio, Whittenburg, Dayton, Miami Valley, Greater Cincinnati, Bluegrass, Louisville and Somerset. If I have missed any grotto which caves in the DBNF area, please bring it to my attention so I can invite them.

I must notify Gorden Smith by mid August as to how many people he should expect. PLEASE LET ME KNOW AS SOON AS YOU CAN IF YOU ARE COMING. I will be calling key individuals in the grottos listed.

Activities planned include:

- Caving
- Canoeing
- Banquet
- Unger's introduction to the DBNF project
- Speaker
- Open self tour of Marengo Caverns

MEETING NOTICES

The August meeting will be hosted by Jim Blankenship at his home August 9, 1985, 8:00 PM. Please plan to attend this meeting. Bill Walden and others will have pictures of the 1985 NSS Convention.

Hopefully the Rakowskis will bring some of their excellent slides.

We will be discussing the upcoming trips.

Jim's address is : 2777 Shelly Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43207
Phone: 614-497-0402

September 21, Paul Unger will host an informal grotto meeting at his home in West Alexandria, Ohio. Please note that the 21st is a SATURDAY. This is the weekend of the Preble County Pig Roast. Come early to enjoy the festivities. Members from other Grottos are welcome. Watch for more details in the September Squeaks.

1985 NSS CONVENTION

Jim Blankenship's Report

The NSS Convention left me with quite an impression. I'm sure a convention can only be as good as the people in charge, and the staff of this year's convention should be commended for an outstanding job. Thanks should also go to Paul Unger for going down early and securing an excellent camp site for us. We had electricity for lights (and an electric skillet!), plenty of space for camping, and restrooms and hot showers less than 25 yards away. (How's that for roughing it in the great outdoors!).

Jake Elberfeld and I drove his VW camper down to Frankfort, KY on Saturday 6-22-85. We spent most of the weekend just touring the town. The weather was favorable with mostly warm sunny days, and cool comfortable nights. We went swimming in the pool located near the campsite if it became too hot.

Most of the sessions and workshops were held at the KSU campus. They were both interesting and informative. The Howdy Party on Monday lived up to it's name. It was fun and the food was delicious. We did manage to get in a day of caving. Bill agreed to lead a group of 20 (that somehow ended up 34!) on a trip through the Minton Hollow section of the Sloan's Valley Cave System. Although I remember the Big Passage as being "big", to look up and see 33 lights snaking its way through the mountains of breakdown gave the passage even greater depth. We also went

past dread pool (and saw some blindfish), the Caramel Passage, Helectite Passage, and the Corkscrew. Everyone I talked to was very impressed.

One of the highlights of the convention was the Mammoth Cave excursion. We got to visit Floyd Collin's Crystal Cave which is closed to the public. We got to see Floyd Collin's coffin, and were taken on a short tour of the cave.

This year's convention was a unique experience. This was my first convention and I look forward to future conventions. I am planning to go to next year's in Carlsbad. If it is as good as this year's I will not be disappointed.

Mark Rakowski's Report

ON THE TUESDAY OF CONVENTION WEEK SALLY WISE AND I STARTED OUT FOR FRANKFORT AT ABOUT 3:30 IN THE AFTERNOON. AFTER A LEISURELY DRIVE DOWN WE ARRIVED ABOUT 10:30. HAVING NEVER BEEN TO AN NSS CONVENTION BEFORE, I WAS EXPECTING TO FIND A CAMPSITE WAITING. MUCH TO MY SURPRISE I COULDN'T FIND A PLACE TO PARK MY VAN, MUCH LESS CAMP. AFTER 4 OR 5 DRIVES AROUND I FINALLY FOUND A PLACE TO SQUEEZE IN FOR THE NIGHT.

THE NEXT MORNING WE FINALLY FOUND THE REST OF THE COG AND WERE JUST IN TIME TO LEAVE WITH JAKE ELBERFELD AND JIM BLANKENSHIP FOR THE TRIP OVER TO MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK.

OUR FIRST STOP WAS AT FLOYD COLLIN'S CRYSTAL CAVE. THE ROOM WHERE FLOYD'S COFFIN RESTS IS VERY IMPRESSIVE. IT IS A LARGE CRESCENT SHAPED CHAMBER OF GREAT VERTICAL RELIEF, THE CEILING BEING 90 TO 100 FT. HIGH. YOU ENTER FROM HIGH ON THE WALL AT ONE END OF THE CRESCENT TO FIND A GENTLY CURVING PATH MAKING A LONG GRACEFUL DESCENT TO THE FLOOR OF THE GREAT CAVITY, FLOYD'S PLACE OF FINAL REST. AFTER ALLOWING AMPLE TIME FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, WE WENT JUST A LITTLE WAYS DOWN THE PASSAGE, THEN LEFT THE CAVE TO EAT LUNCH.

THE AFTERNOON WAS SPENT TAKING A WALK DOWN TO ECHO RIVER IN MAMMOTH CAVE. THIS SECTION

OF THE CAVE HAS SEVERAL HUGE PITS THAT I FOUND QUITE BEAUTIFUL, ESPECIALLY THE MAMMOTH DOME AREA AND SEVERAL BROAD, DEEP, VERY MUDDY PIT DROPPING TO ECHO RIVER. THE PARK SERVICE GUIDE FOR OUR TRIP, GEROG CORRIE, DID A NICE JOB OF SHOWING THE CAVE. HE ALSO TALKED IN SOME DETAIL ABOUT THE PARKS EFFORTS TO LIMIT POLLUTION FROM ENTERING THE CAVE. THEIR EFFORTS THUS FAR HAVE CENTERED ON TWO AREAS. ONE, THEY HAVE BEEN IN FAVOR OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL SEWER SYSTEM ENCOMPASSING THE COMMUNITIES OF HORSE CAVE, CAVE CITY, AND PARK CITY. TWO, THEY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING QUICK RESPONSE METHODS TO DEAL WITH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILLS IN THE PARK AREA. BOTH OF THE AREAS ARE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF THE THE CAVE'S UNIQUE BIOLOGY.

ON RETURNING TO ELKHORN CAMPGROUND THAT NIGHT, I WAS AGAIN SURPRISED BY FINDING THE ONLY SHOWERS WITH WATER TO BE COED.

THE MAIN REASON I WENT TO THE CONVENTION WAS TO ATTEND THE PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS AND TO SEE THE PHOTO SALON. THIS I DID THE NEXT DAY. THE HIGH POINT OF THE SESSIONS WAS SEEING SOME OF THE WORK DONE BY CHIP CLARK WHO HAD BEEN PHOTOGRAPHING AT MAMMOTH CAVE FOR SEVEN WEEKS WHILE WORKING ON A STORY FOR NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. HE HAD SEVERAL GOOD SUGGESTIONS FOR EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES; RICK DAY ALSO HAD SOME HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY. AT THE PHOTO SALON THAT NIGHT MANY VERY IMPRESSIVE IMAGES WERE SHOWN, ALTHOUGH THE QUALITY OF THE SHOW LEFT A LITTLE TO BE DESIRED, DUE TO THE SLIDES BEING PROJECTED WAY TOO SMALL.

ON FRIDAY NIGHT EVERYONE HAD A GOOD TIME AT THE BANQUET, ESPECIALLY DURING AN IMPROMPTU BEACHBALL WAR AT DINNER TIME. AFTER DINNER AWARDS WERE PRESENTED AND DR. MERLIN TUTTLE GAVE A SHORT TALK ON THE OBJECTIVES OF BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL (LATER THAT EVENING HE WAS A BIG HIT FOR ALLOWING PEOPLE TO PET A FLYING FOX THAT HE HAD BROUGHT FROM AFRICA). THE GUEST SPEAKER WAS ROGER BRUCKER WHO SPOKE ON THE TOPIC OF CONNECTING CAVES IN GENERAL, AND SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE VARIOUS CONNECTIONS THAT HAVE MADE MAMMOTH THE LONGEST CAVE IN THE WORLD. HE ALSO OUTLINED CURRENT EXPLORATION IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE AREA AND TOLD WHY HE EXPECTS THE CAVE

TO REACH A LENGTH OF 500 MILES BY THE YEAR 2000.

SATURDAY, BILL WALDEN LED A TRIP TO BLOWING CAVE IN WAYNE COUNTY KY. BLOWING IS HIGHLY DECORATED WITH VERY CLEAN MOSTLY TRANSLUCENT FORMATIONS. IT IS AMONG THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SIGHTS I HAVE SEEN WHILE CAVING AND WAS A BIG HIGHLIGHT OF CONVENTION WEEK FOR ME.

1985 NSS Convention Mammoth Cave Tour

By Lou Simpson

As soon as we read about the special convention Mammoth Cave tour, Sheryl Hilton and I called Gary Bush to make sure we would get to go. Although we had waited until late May to sign up for the convention because there had been too few details about convention events, this tour was added late and we were the first to respond, Gary said. It was hard to get up early and be on the bus by 7:30 a.m., but we made it. At least we were able to sleep on the bus and leave the driving to Greyhound. After a two-hour nap, we arrived at the Collins place near Floyd Collins Crystal Cave. Although I had attended one CRF trip based there, I had never seen the Crystal entrance. Sheryl had been to Crystal in the fifties with her father, when the cave was still privately owned and commercialized. Her father had taken her there rather than wait for the next Mammoth Cave tour to start. When we got off the bus, Ron Wilson greeted us. He has moved to Iowa and must now spend 12 hours traveling to Mammoth. He and two Park Service employees were our cave guides. An older man named Red did the talking and story-telling. Our two busloads of cavers streamed through the woods and down into the gated Crystal entrance in a small sink on the side of a steep hill. Immediately we were in comfortable walking passage, illuminated by small gas lanterns provided by the Park Service and carried by every fourth or fifth caver. No cave gear was allowed, but most had flashlights. We noticed that some had their Wheat lamps and wished that we had brought ours rather than our small flashlights. Climbing down a steep breakdown slope into a deep canyon, we arrived at Floyd's coffin. I had heard so

much about this place! A tombstone at the head of the chain-wrapped shiny brown coffin proclaimed Floyd to be the world's greatest caver. After much picture-taking, Red had everybody extinguish their lights. He lit one small candle and told the story of Floyd's entrapment. Finally, he sang the ballad of Floyd Collins in that echoey chamber. It was quite a moving experience.



Floyd Collins Coffin
Picture by Louis Simpson

We briefly toured a side passage in which many cairns had been built along the sides and on top of large breakdown blocks. The names of various cities, colleges, and organizations were smoked throughout this passage, seemingly identifying the builders of these cairns. After a filling box lunch eaten in a picnic shelter during a rainstorm, we were taken to the main entrance of Mammoth Cave. Sheryl had been in this entrance, but this was my first time. I had been the cave through another

entrance on the four-hour tour that features the Snowball Dining Room and underground restrooms. It was cool in the large rectangular entrance. The level entrance passage continued with the same rectangular cross-section. Hollow-log pipes and large saltpeter vats lined both sides of the passage. A little later, we passed exhibits with Indian artifacts. Red explained that the mummified body of Lost John is no longer displayed because of a general Park Service ruling that prohibits display of human remains in national parks. The ruling was more applicable to certain western parks where people objected to the display of more recent burials. Our tour wound through a narrow Fat Man's Misery and even some low places and descended many levels until we were walking along metal bridges above Styx River. I tried not to feel too uncomfortable while Ron Wilson explained that this section of the cave was richer in fauna due to flooding. Our route terminated at Echo River, where two smaller tour groups were being floated along the river in boats. One of these groups serenaded us with "Old Man River." Red pointed onward around the corner of the flooded river passage and said that the Flint-Mammoth connection was not far beyond. Where we left the floodable level, there were calibrated posts used to gauge the flood level. Red pointed high above our heads and said the spring 1984 flood reached that level. We entered a high dome complex from the bottom and climbed a high stairwell in the middle. I wondered whether I would be able to stand the exposure. So did a young girl behind us, so I decided that I I could do it if she could. The trip out the same main entrance was a joy. We enjoyed the air conditioning as we watched a movie about the cave. We boarded the bus and, after another two-hour nap, we arrived, refreshed, back at Kentucky State University. My compliments to the convention staff for a very well-planned, spectacular cave tour.

Mike Johnson
Fellow of the NSS

by Paul Unger

At the 1985 NSS Convention Awards Banquet, Mike Johnson was made a fellow of the NSS.

He joins a select group of dedicated cavers whose contributions toward the goals of the NSS deserves special recognition.

Mike's efforts have centered around conservation and exploration. His theories of conservation have won him plaudits from his peers--"don't tell nothing" and "shoot intruders" (vandals or other cavers). He was successful in keeping Coral Cave (26 miles mapped) from convention literature. Mike felt so strong about conservation, that he even attended the convention this year, thus assuring his views proper consideration by the Curl's and Dysas's.

Throughout the convention, Mike was seen huddled with other speleopoliticians, lobbying for their support. To insure their recognition, he even gave up camping with cavers, and instead took a room with the brass at the dorms.

Mike and Doc Cougherty were seen frequently together discussing Cave Creek Wilderness Proposal and other conservation matters. Now that he has joined that elite group of speleopoliticians, he will have less or no time to go caving with us minions. He will spend his time with the Hissongs and Dougherty's discussing important topics such as paragenesis, rescues, and expeditions for the masses!

But all kidding aside, Mike worked long and hard for this recognition, and without his last ditch personal lobbying at the convention, they would have probably given it again to Doc!!!

In Conclusion

by Bill Walden

All of us who attended the 1985 Convention had a good time, learned a great deal, made new friends, and renewed old friendships. One of the highlights for me was seeing Paul Unger and Louis Simpson shaking hands.

GREAT CAVING MYSTERIES

(Simpson's Suck-ins)

Part 1 - Pulaski County, KY.

I. Cave Creek

1. Fred's cave goes as a belly crawl, possibly all the way to Barnett's Cave. Unfortunately, both caves are closed by the owner, Mrs. Barnett. I recall once talking with her daughter, whose husband seemed interested in going into the cave, so maybe there's hope some day.

2. Many of the caves have leads which were eventually sumped: Campground caves, Smith Recluse, Barnett's, and Firestone. I recall a good going crawl lead at the west end of Firestone when the lake was in the 680's. We await the ultimate drought. None of us have seen the submerged river entrance. It is said to be very large.

3. Walter's Folly connects to Barnett's by a ninety-foot drop. A precarious ceiling channel traverse might lead to more cave on this high level. Bob Wood once planned to use bolts for safety, but he wanted to enter by Barnett's and have somebody who came through the 800-foot Walter's Folly low crawl lower a string for pulling up a rope.

4. Aromatic Pit is unmapped and I have not personally descended it.

5. DASS Pit is said to be blind, but it lies over the downstream end of Barnett's.

6. A sinkhole in a deep hollow southwest of DASS Pit might someday be enterable. This could provide access to a missing segment of the system.

II. Hail Cavel.

1. It seems like there ought to be an underground connection between Hail and Main Drain, to the north of the gorge. Perhaps Deathtrap Drain is the best prospect. Wild Turkey Pit overlies the area of interest. It had only a narrow drain, as I recall.

2. There is a going lead, a muddy crawl, in Main Drain that I explored and had to back out of and didn't map. It heads toward Rabid Fish, possibly.

3. The sump in main drain is probably the upstream end of a rimstone pool draining into Drowned Rat. Who has been beyond the deep water in Drowned Rat?

III. Newell's Cave

There are several leads in this wet cave, especially a persistent crawl that never ended. The main passage ends in a breakdown block. There is probably a continuation beyond the breakdown, perhaps accessible through an insurgence upstream.

IV. Sloan's Valley

1. There was mention in Jillson's book that the cave connects to a cave to the north, toward Moon River or Marie Hollow cave. While this is probably apocryphal, there is the strange Little Army Corps of Engineers passage that goes that direction, at a right angle to the trend of the main part of the cave.

2. We have never seen any part of the cave below about 684 feet elevation, including the river entrance. The lowest the lake ever got since I started caving was 682 in 1980.

3. It seems reasonable to expect that Smilin' John's Children's Cave heads toward a missing fragment of passage that would connect at the Bedroom along the trend of the Big Room.

4. Nobody has been to the top of the second waterfall dome in Railroad Tunnel. Perhaps the water comes from across the road, under the strip mine.

5. It is believed that much water has been observed to sink behind the fieldhouse. Does the cave extend under the fieldhouse? Certainly, the surface stream sinks above the house under normal runoff conditions.

6. The new sinkhole (Doug's Dig) that has opened up near the railroad fill across the fieldhouse valley probably connects to the cave. Also, don't forget the entrance digs on the north side of the railroad fill. Green leaves have been seen near the top of Insanity Dome and there are numerous crickets there.

7. How did deer bones get into the narrow bitter end of Piss-Poor canyon beyond Rocky

Horror Crawl?

8. Tom Crockett's attempted well hit several feet of cave at ninety feet, but we haven't found the well casing in the cave.

9. Tom's sinkhole dig east of his house opened up an entrance that apparently connects to the cave above the Fountain.

10. Another sinkhole, in the southeast corner of Crockett's greenhouse field might be another interesting prospect.

11. A wet, low crawl (diggable though) could extend Crawling Paul's cave toward Sloan's.

12. Jillson's map shows the lower level Great Rock Sink trunk reconnecting beyond Great Rock Sink. Where is this?

13. What happened to the extension of the upper level near the west Great Rock Sink entrance. It could extend toward the Big Room Extension. Beiter once pushed a miserable crawl at the east end of the Big Room Extension.

(Parts 2 and 3 will be in the September issue. Other people may wish to add to this series. Please submit your cave mysteries to Bill Walden, COG editor.)

TRIP REPORTS

Firelies and Dinosaurs Ultima Thule in Zarathustra's Cave

By Lou Simpson

Since our trip to Zarathustra's Cave, Fentress Co., Tennessee in 1984, Peter Kupferman dreamed about going farther into the cave, perhaps to the most remote point, called Ultima Thule. (Ultima Thule was the northernmost region of the habitable world as thought of by ancient geographers.) I had given Peter my map fragment of the cave, which he overlaid on an enlarged copy of the topographic map. Ultima Thule was off my map, indicated by the intriguing phrase "to miles more." I had told Peter about going into that region of the cave, which is a desert, totally devoid of even a drop of

water. This is the kind of cave in which the two of us, being survivors of various cave floods, feel most comfortable.

Since Peter lives in Pasadena, California, he has to plan his business trips around his caving expeditions, so I picked Peter up at the Greater Cincinnati Airport on May 31, 1985, on his way to a meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Virginia. Sheryl and Heather, Becky Hain, and I had been to the cave overnight in early April because early June for Sheryl was too late in the spring with its insects and poison ivy. So it was just the two of us. Or was it? When we arrived at the Jordan Motel in Jamestown, Tennessee, we were surprised to be greeted by Tom Patterson. Tom and Peter used to both live in Michigan and went caving together, but they hadn't seen each other for eight years. Tom stayed with us that night as we reminisced about the good old days. When we were young we drank whiskey, stayed up all night, and caved in difficult caves like Crump Spring. When we were somewhat older, we drank beer, stayed up until two or three, and caved in less demanding caves like Sloan's Valley and Cave Creek. Those were the days. Tonight, we each had a beer, crashed at midnight, and the next day Tom departed for home. Some things haven't changed, though. Tom still snores.

I parked my car at the first bad puddle, the one that had held the car hostage in 1984. Peter and I shouldered our backpacks, filled with caving and camping gear and light-weight foods like cheese, lunchmeat, chips, dried fruit, and cookies. At the edge of the Obey River gorge, we were greeted by the bearded, barrel-chested "mountain man" who owns the church-bus camper parked there. His wife and dog stayed in the background while he told us that many cavers had recently been caving in the gorge, primarily in Xanadu cave. "I might even build some shelter houses at the bottom," he said, "and sell cold beer. A fella's gotta make a living." He told us that he and his wife live in the cabin on the other side of the river and sometimes stay in the bus too. He said he owns the 14-wheel drive truck we had just passed along the road and has been logging on his property.

Peter and I descended into the gorge in the beautiful morning. The river was so low that we were able to cross it four times without getting wet at all! I have never seen the water this low. When we were there in 1984 shortly after Kentucky and eastern Tennessee had record floods, we had to avoid the river completely and bushwack down the side of the gorge. I considered cooling off in the pool below the cave, but the cave-water temperature was too brisk. Peter filled our two plastic jugs with water from the rimstone pool just inside one of the lower entrances. When we signed the register. I was surprised to learn that several groups of cavers had visited the cave since Heather, Becky, Sheryl, and I had been there in early April.

We left our backpacks at our campsite in the cave and quickly made our way down the Elephant Walk. The waterfall in the dome pit named Woody's New Years Project was a mere trickle. We would have to conserve our water because we were soon going to enter a dry part of the cave. I seemed to recall someone telling me at a grotto meeting that they were unable to reach the upper level, called Heaven, because of a collapse. Indeed the route I thought was the correct way was collapsed. However, a nearby route was open. I went back to the first route while Peter approached a depression in the Heaven level in order to investigate the collapse. Suddenly Peter's leg appeared through my ceiling as his floor collapsed! His leg had penetrated as far as his knee! There is no problem getting through to Heaven by the other way, at least.

We squirmed for several body-lengths through Martha's Crawl, climbing up flowstone into the part of the cave marked on the map as "to miles more." I noted that this crawl was excavated out of a rimstone depression and wondered if it would make Peter nervous. If this were to flood to the waterline on the wall, it would be a sump or nearly so. Beyond the crawl, the passage continued as a series of dry rooms and low crawls. I had no problem crawling, since I had brought my "rock-crushers," but Peter had no kneepads. Several levels of passages had coalesced to form the rooms. One of the low crawls was so constricted that the airflow roared in our

ears. We were glad we both had our Wheat lamps. I had recently gotten a new battery for mine.

I had been beyond Martha's Crawl once or twice previously. I remember mapping a side passage to the right. I found this passage but wasn't sure that it ended. After considerable crawling, we reached a room with station U57. I explored a crawlway that I thought was Corn Flakes Crawl (Frosted Flakes on Bill Deane's map), but it got so low and narrow that it looked like an unexplored dig. We continued following the cave to the northeast because I vaguely remembered that northeast was the direction toward Ultima Thule. We took our time and Peter made cairns to mark the way back. We frequently had to change levels to find the best way.

Finally, we crawled out of a canyon into the side of a large room, a canyon seventy feet high. The floor sloped up toward each end. The place reminded me of the Treasure Chamber in Wolf River Cave. I explored the top of the left end while Peter followed a canyon at the top of the right end of the room. My passage became narrow and low, but had been explored further. Peter turned back in a stoopwalk in his passage. We were satisfied that we had reached a worthwhile place that deserved the name Ultima Thule, so we decided to not explore further on this trip. We were eager to see Bill Deane's map.

We returned to our camp, which took two hours even though we moved quickly. We went outside to watch the sun set. We saw several bats flying above the river as they came out for their nocturnal feeding. At Twilight we briefly visited the lower level. Peter wanted to see the bottom of the "saltpeter overlook". I located the beginning of Cleveland Canyon, a 1400-foot long narrow stoopwalk that leads to a part of the cave that is even drier than Ultima Thule, where places have names like Cough Drop, Respirator Room, and Black Lung Boulevard. We decided not to visit these dusty rooms without respirators. We peered down into the inky depths of the cave stream, which exits the cave at the Dragon's Breath entrance, just upstream from the other three entrances.

Sitting at the lower level entrance in the cool cave breeze, Peter was delighted to see fireflies punctuating the now deep twilight. "There don't seem to be any fireflies in Los Angeles," Peter moaned. Frogs began to croak, first only a few individuals, then a few more, and finally the entire chorus. On the western rim of the gorge, a tree bending down nearly to the ground almost looked like a gigantic Brontosaurus feeding on the treetops. We imagined that we were somehow transported back through the eons, sitting now not tens of feet above the river, but on its very banks, the lowest cavern levels not yet exposed to dryness because the valley had not yet deepened. We entered the main cave entrance, returned to our camp within, and had a few snacks before retreating to the warmth of our sleeping bags.

In what seemed like a few minutes, it was 7 a.m. We got up, ate some pop tarts and oranges, and left the cave. It had rained, apparently quite a bit. We were still able to keep dry crossing the river, but the flow had increased. The mountain man hailed us from his cabin, shushed his dog, and asked if we had had breakfast. We said we did and had to leave the gorge to get Peter to his plane. The climb up the 800 foot gorge was relatively easy compared to our bushwack in 1984, but the rain had converted the dust to slick mud. We slipped back an two inches for every ten inches climbed, so we actually climbed a thousand feet that morning.

When we reached the car, there were other cavers preparing to enter the gorge. They were from Knoxville, although several appeared to be German, probably the same people whose names we have seen on the Wolf River register. Driving down the rest of the road toward the highway was exciting, since the mud had made steering impossible. The car was almost as dirty as it had been after our escape from the puddle in 1984, except that the mess was confined to the outside of the car.

We stopped briefly in Knoxville to visit Bill and Cricket! Deane. Bill showed us the cave map, which is still the only copy and not finished because he wants to remap some of the lower levels. We had reached the

largest room in the Ultima Thule area. The passage Peter turned around in continues to the southeast another thousand feet or so. The narrow northwest direction I had decided not to push continues but eventually would need to be extended by digging. Bill said that he feels he has pushed the cave hard and that it would take quite a bit of effort to find more. A fault may be responsible for terminating the passages which trend northeast. I feel challenged to try to extend this cave. It is such a pleasant cave because it is dry and so isolated from civilization. Maybe there's some decent caving in these old bones yet.

CAMPING IN ZARATHUSTRA'S CAVE

By Lou Simpson

Sheryl missed going to Zarathustra's with Peter Kupferman and me in May, 1984. She wanted to go a little earlier in the year to avoid insects and poison ivy. So we planned a trip for early April, 1985. We bought backpacks for her and Heather, stocked up on light-weight food for the trip, and arranged to take off April 3 and 4, when

Heather was off school. Heather's friend, Becky Hain, also agreed to go on the overnight cave trip.

We drove down through hilly country on US 127 from Lexington, crossing the Wolf Creek Dam, which impounds Lake Cumberland. We stopped at the last house on the gravel road leading to the gorge and I asked permission to park there, remembering how Peter and I got stuck in a puddle last year. However, because it was dry and they didn't want to walk the extra distance, the others convinced me to try to drive to the rim of the gorge. We circumvented several evil-looking puddles. The one that got me in 1984 was far less menacing this year. Since the weather forecast was favorable, I wasn't too concerned about the drive back to the highway. At the gorge rim there was a church bus that had been made into a camper, but nobody was around. It had Florida plates. Two boys emerged from the gorge just as we were about to descend, huffing

and puffing. They said they were very tired from the hike up the trail and wondered how we would feel with our heavy backpacks.

The view on the hike down was spectacular, as usual. After a few turns down the steep trail, we could see the misty valley below and the opposite rim a mile away. Heather's boots were too loose and things fell out of her pack occasionally. Sheryl and Heather traded boots. We reached the shady Obey River gorge bottom in the cool evening and enjoyed the trail along the bottom, with its four river crossings that involved wading up to knee-deep. The water was refreshing after the steep descent.

At the only reasonably flat place in this part of the gorge we saw the windowless wooden building which is apparently inhabited by a couple that I met last year at the puddle. They have no utilities and have to walk from the rim of the gorge to their place. When the river is up they have to cross it in a boat. A little farther along the trail we saw the abandoned wreckage of a car. The trail looked considerably better than usual, due to recent logging activity.

Finally, we could see the cave through the trees, on the opposite side of the river. The climb up a steep bank and the traverse along the cliff were a bit strenuous, but we all made it to the cave entrance just as one or two bats started flying around, preparing to exit the cave to feed. We signed the register and noticed that only a handful of caving groups had signed it since my last trip. I filled two plastic gallon jugs from the rimstone pool just inside the lower entrance. Sheryl later added iodine purification tablets.

A traverse across a fifteen-foot pit on an old log caused Heather considerable concern, but we all got across safely and reached our desired campsite in the Elephant Walk. Soon the girls were happily making their camp in the comfortable, clay-floored walking passage.

As predicted, amount of food we brought would have fed a much larger group. After a brief tour of the immediate area, we

snuggled into our warm sleeping bags for an indefinite time. A cave is so quiet and changeless, that it is difficult, once you start sleeping, to become motivated to get up. Although Sheryl and I planned to go look at the gorge illuminated by the full moon, we never felt like getting out of the warm bags to do it. I went out of the cave at dawn and watched the sun rise. The shadows made the gorge even more beautiful.

When Heather got up she said "Becky, I'll repair your sleeping bag. I don't think I was dreaming. I think I got turned around in the sleeping bags and ripped my way out of the bottom trying to get out." Sure enough, there was a Heather-sized tear in the zipper of Becky's sleeping bag where it was zipped to Heather's.

Our little group of four made it to the entrance around noon and proceeded to hike back out of the gorge. It had become quite windy, but it was still reasonably warm. We made steady progress out of the gorge and reached the car in mid-afternoon. On our return drive by way of I-40, Knoxville, and I-75, we saw several forest fires. The one along I-40 had apparently crossed the highway a short time earlier.

Hail Cave

By Lou Simpson

Sheryl and I visited Hail Cave on Sunday, March 24, 1985. Although there was going to be a storm, the part of Hail that we planned to briefly visit does not normally flood. A muddy spot in the road concerned me as the car slid down the hill. It reminded me of the time I drove my Ford down a steep hill on the way to a cave many years ago and had to be towed by a tractor. (Not to mention having to be towed by a truck last year near Zarathustra's Cave in Tennessee.) The little wooden bridge looked like it might be safe if you were careful to avoid the holes. We hastened to get ready in a drizzle that threatened to increase into a downpour. In our haste we forgot all our flashlights.

We entered the large, rectangular main entrance, following a ledge along the left to the major side passage that leads to two other entrances and the nicest part of the

cave. Sheryl had been to the Googol Room section upstream and through the series of karst windows, but had not been aware of the major branch we were now visiting.

With our wheat lamps turned off, we could see the light from the next karst window upstream. We slipped between the wall and a breakdown pile and turned left, away from the small stream that runs through this side passage. After briefly exploring a side canyon, we entered the main section of Hail Cave, a nice, wide canyon with a soft, sandy floor. Unfortunately, we found several beer cans and a little later, some more. We also found a flashlight that even worked. This increased our light sources to four, counting our two wheat lamps and a spare, once-used carbide lamp. Sheryl noticed Marvin Hail's name on the wall several places. I told her he was the owner. Dates associated with this name were mostly in the 1940's.

We sat in the Rotunda Room, where there were more beer cans. The cave was very quiet, except for an occasional water drip. I found some delicate gypsum needles on a ledge in a dead-end side passage. Sheryl liked the five-pointed cross-section of a crinoid fossil on the ceiling. After picking up 'll the aluminum beer cans, we looked at a few other side passages, including the breakdown junction room where you can proceed toward two other entrances and Jacob's well, a thirteen-foot deep shaft filled with crystal-clear water. I offered to show Sheryl the Formation Room, but she preferred not to go through the low, muddy crawl where the route to that room begins.

The rains had gone away when we came out. Back at the car we heard the approach of another vehicle. It turned out to be Marvin Hail. He was pleased that we had removed the cans. I showed him the maps in the 1980 Speleofest Guidebook and offered to send him a copy. He gave us his address. When I told him that we were uncertain about being able to get our car past a muddy place in the road, he said he'd be back soon and would help us if we needed help. Sheryl drove the car out the rough road and had no trouble getting past the mud. She said "We country girls are used to driving on bad

roads."

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Please feel free to contact any of the above for information about the COG, cave trips, information on up coming activities, or meetings.

KARST ENCOUNTERS

Marengo Caverns

by Paul Unger

Location: Marengo Caverns Campground
and Canoe Livery

Date: September 27, 28, and 29

Activities: Caving, canoeing, hiking,
banquet, socializing.

Who: Regional grotto members

Cost: Estimated \$12.00 per person,
includes banquet, camping
fees and commercial cave fee. Other
activities at participant's
own expense

Registration: In advance by mail to:

William D. Walden
223 Fallis Road
Columbus, Ohio 43214
614-268-5865

Registration must be received
by August 25th to assure

faci-

ilities are reserved.

Please call Bill Walden or
Paul Unger for additional
information or should you
have any questions.

Paul Unger
513-839-4258

Marengo Caverns Campground and Canoe Livery is located in Southern Indiana west of Louisville on SR 64. The facility has many good camp sites, with shelters, bunk houses, camp fires and a canoe livery. In addition to the commercial cave which will be open after regular hours for self guided tours, wild caves in the area will be available for exploration (Gorden Smith, owner, requests that we do NOT explore past the commercial parts in Marengo itself). Also, nearby is Wyandotte Caverns, which is a spectacular State operated cave.

Activities will commence late Friday with an informal socializer. Saturday is a day of caving, canoeing, etc. The banquet will be held at the campground, with some organized events planned.

Be advised that this is out in the country and you should bring necessary food and beverages with you.