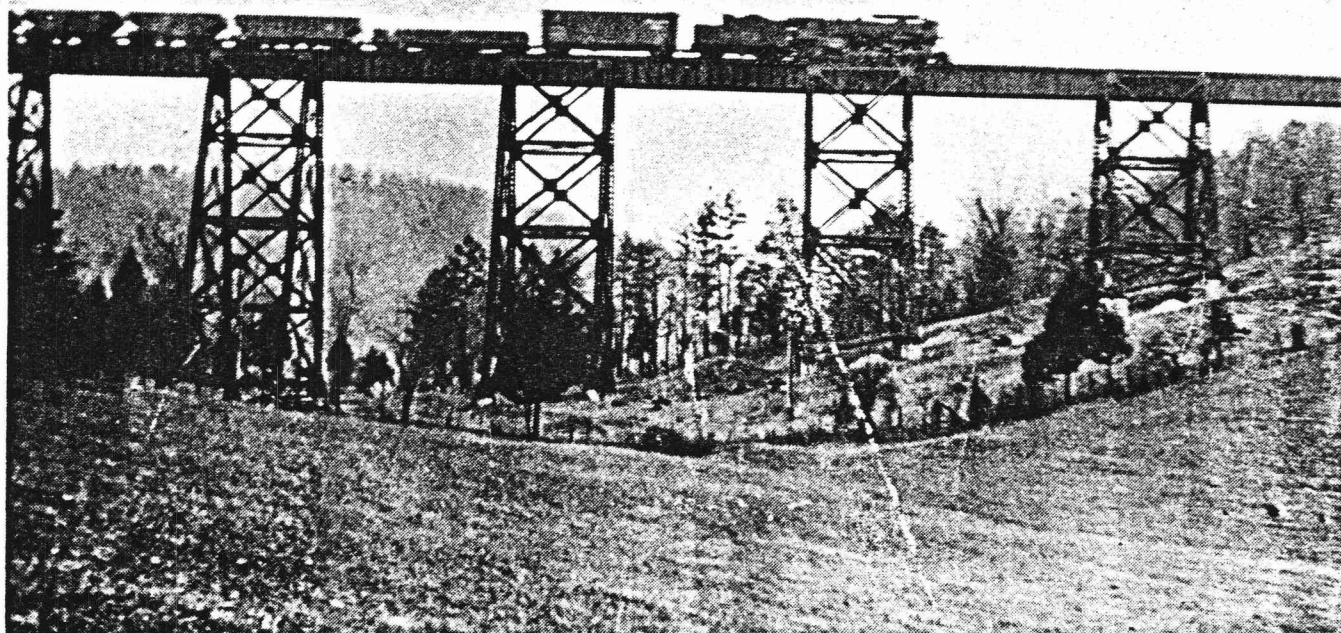


CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO
SQUEAKS

MYSTERY PICTURE



ALMOST ALL OF YOU COG MEMBERS HAVE BEEN TO THE
LOCATION WHERE THIS OLD TRAIN TRESTLE STOOD.
WHERE DID IT STAND ?

FEBRUARY 1985 COG SQUEAKS

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Meeting Notices

FEBRUARY The February meeting will be held at the farm of Chuck Daehnke SATURDAY February 9. The meeting will begin at 8:00 PM. Chuck says to come early for outdoor activities. Last year we had several hikes up Mill Creek on the ice and had fun sled riding down the hill. For those outdoor types bring your tents for a winter camp out.

Chuck tells me that they have built a barn and much of the stuff in the old house has been moved to the barn so we'll have more room. For those who have not been there, the house does have a wood stove.

MARCH Mike Gray is planning to host this meeting. Andy Franklin and Mike Gray are hoping to plan a vertical training session of some type. Come prepared with your questions.

LAST MEETING

Please note the new slate of officers. Congratulations to our new Chairman, Dr. Jake Elberfeld. Jake holds the distinction of being the longest continuously active member of the COG. I think this is the first time Jake has been Chairman. Please correct me if I am wrong.

Clovis and Carol Dawson hosted the January meeting which was one of our best attended meetings. Joe Voight brought his slides of the COG in action during the 1950's. Only three COG'ers of that era remain on our membership today.

Carol and Clovis put out an excellent spread for all to enjoy. No one left hungry.

Trip reports

SLONES VALLEY

by Len Gibler

On the weekend of December 8, Bob Francini, Marcia Getz, Joe Harvey and I set out for Sloan's Valley. We got a decently early start and planned to start caving soon after we arrived. We were aiming for an "Oh, about 7 or 8 hours" portal-to-portal trip from the Railroad Entrance to Scowling Tom's. Sure, that'd be plenty after a five hour drive. Mice. Men. Plans. Yeah!

We popped into the Railroad Entrance corkscrew with a solid wind following wind. Without a compass I wouldn't have been able to say which way we were headed after going 15 or 20 feet! Clearly, this was going to be a challenge. We went straight off through crawlways which showed signs of tube-full-of water flow, and I got the eire chill of common sense that no caver should be without. We would be OK. I assured myself. Reaching the Scowling Tom Junction was simple, and the walking passages and fun climbs along the way were very enjoyable. We successfully by-passed Erisman's ledge, and made the wonderfully exciting waterfall climb. A beautiful fall, through the most spectacularly sculptured bedding-planes!

Soon, however, the fun was over. We knew the connection passage was a hard one to find, and as we neared the area where Murra's Squeeze probably took off, we put all our attention to finding insignificant little holes. And we found two! Mercifully, the first one pinched out quickly. The second one was a different matter. Beginning with a low belly crawl through a couple inches of goop and sharp chert, it turned into a nasty and sinuous, sharp-edged canyon crawl. You know the kind-they quickly get names like "meatgrinder" and "potato-puller" or "the blinder". Well, it shredded Francini's coveralls, and Marcia got painfully stuck for several spooky minutes, we all got wet and and cold, and after about an hour and a half, we popped out into some walking passage. Then Bob said those chilling words "Hev! This looks familiar." You guessed it, we had come clear 'round the compass, back to square one.

There was some discussion which might have been heated if we hadn't gotten so wet and cold: should we turn back, or make another try to find Murrary's Squeeze? Since we had passed a lead just before getting back to the main passage, and since we were probably closer to Scowling Tom's than the Railroad Tunnel Entrance, and since, by-God we had come to do a portal-to-portal trip, we decided to press on.

The passage lead eventually got us back on course. We found Obsecenity Dome, checked it out minutely before finding the little canyon (with a following wind) out of it, heading roughly in the right direction. Once again, we took heart, but this cavern was not done with us yet. The canyon narrowed, and at survey station 8, it became impassable. Since I was at this moment last in line, I found the low, sharp crawly lead out to be N.W. It

quickly opened up, and led to a climb to an upper level. The climb called on unbelievable upper-body maneuvers, but we all eventually got up, minus a little skin. Again, hope. The upper level headed up on 315 degrees!

We traveled some distance, on course, though that was by now hard to believe. We knew that the entrance broke into this passage, and that it would be easy to miss. We came to a place where the passage opened a little, and while we were looking, Joe spotted an "out" arrow. Big boys aren't supposed to believe in "out" arrows, right. (Besides when the COG and Blue Grass Grottos were mapping and exploring this section in the "early days", this editor, while mapping the area being described, observed Dave Beiter remarking arrows to point in the opposite direction! -- Ed.) Well, we took a lot of heart, and the rush of excitement cleared away some of the cobwebs of fatigue and cold. We noted that the debris washed in was much intact, and couldn't have been transported far. Then we spotted some good sized logs. Hey, entrance debris! I found an upward-sloping lead and pushed into it, into a small room. I must have gotten warm again, 'cause my glasses were steamed up. Now some black formation on the far side of the room. I pushed my glasses up, and peered through thick fog, trees? I tried to keep from getting my hopes up. Ice stalagmites. I jumped back down the passage and yelled to the group. Hey! Welcome to the great outdoors!

It was icy and black outside as we changed into clean clothes. Long after I forgot my chill, though, I'll remember Francini's aphorism, after 14.5 hours in the cave: "You know what they say," he said brightly. We all looked back at him. "Ignorance is the mother of adventure."

XANADU AND ZARATHUSTRA'S by Len Gibler

On the long New Year's weekend my daughter Emily and I joined one of those big AYH trips, this time to the big caves of Tennessee. We started out on Saturday morning on the long trip to Fentress County, where the East Fork of the Obey River incises the Cumberland Plateau with a 1000-foot deep gorge.

Xanadu was discovered by a pair of guys who were scouting the Obey for whitewater kyacking. When they came to reconnoiter, they found their thundering river had no water in it. The water went somewhere. These guys were cavers, so the implications didn't escape them.

To get to Xanadu, you come down off the plateau on a very steep road that drops an average of 800 feet per mile. It is a bear, going up or down, if you're carrying a heavy pack. Getting to the cave is by far harder than the caving itself, and the caving isn't all that easy.

After negotiating the road nearly down to the river level, one begins a climb up a dry stream bed, back up a draw. After a few hundred yards, one hears the rumble of a waterfall. Another good pitch and the falls come into view. Some 15 to 20 feet wide, they plunge 30 feet to a wide pool, and disappear underground. A large, impressive entrance on the right is Alph. On the left, a smaller and insignificant opening is Xanadu. These caves are now interconnected, and form one of the greater cave systems of the United States.

The Cave features an incredible trunk passage, called the Monster Trunk. This passage has a wildly undulating floor, consisting of 13 or so sand mountains pitching steeply from a couple of dozen feet, to perhaps 250 feet in height. They definitely will wear you down, partly because of the poor purchase in the sand. Especially with a large party lighting the cave, each vista is grander than the next.

This passage ends, only to be followed later on by Port Sanders, an immense room, one of the fabled Tennessee Big Rooms. Off this is a magnificent, grand trunk named after Nashville's Cumberland Avenue. The cave is, never-the-less, so complex that I doubt I

could retrace our steps. The Xanadu-Alph-Zoroaster system was 16.5 miles long in February of 1981. After an enjoyable tour, we returned to our pleasant, dry, and warm camp in the cave.

ZARATHUSTRA'S

by Len Gibler

The next day we labored back up the hill in 70 degree temperatures to clear the river bluffs between us and the entrances to Zarathustra's. It was some chore in wool long underwear. Emiley and I were both at the limit, and I was, I must confess, paternally proud at that kid's gallant second effort.

Zarathustra's was much easier going and a lot of fun. We stayed in the middle levels, and were treated to a number of views of the mazy lower levels. We chose to ascend into Heaven (upper level passage) where interesting mineralization and mud sculphuring are to be found. Our bed of limestone contains numerous round chert nodules. The meandering phreatic passages there consequently look like the inside of a giant chocolate-chip cookie. Yum! The fun trip there disguises the serious nature of this cave. It is another giant. A caver's paradise.

The next day we labored up out of Xanadu over the 20% grade back to the cars. All of us had had enough caving for awhile, after lugging heavy packs up that hill.

Any one interested in a return trip? (Yes. --ED.)

The following is an article from Mark Rakowski describing his first cave trip. Mark made the trip even though he had a broken hand. My daughter, Katie, also made the trip. Katie had broken her arm one month earlier. Thus, both Katie and Mark went on this cave trip with partly healed broken bones.

Mark transmitted this report via telephone. For some reason, all the letters came out capitalized. We couldn't figure out why. Too much work to change, so it stays as is. - Ed.

MY FIRST CAVE TRIP.

by Mark Rakowski

ON SATURDAY, NOV 24, 1984 BILL WALDEN, HIS DAUGHTER KATIE, JAKE ELBERFELD, AND I TOOK A TRIP THROUGH THE MINTON SECTION OF SLOAN'S VALLEY CAVE. I WAS PRETTY GLAD TO FINALLY BE GOING. ALTHOUGH I HAD BEEN PLANNING THE TRIP FOR QUITE A WHILE, I HAD BROKEN MY HAND 1 MONTH BEFORE. I WAS HOPING IT WOULD FEEL GOOD ENOUGH TO MAKE THE TRIP. ALTHOUGH THE HAND WAS STILL IN A CAST, IT FELT OK SO I WENT.

WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE ENTRANCE, I WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT IT WAS QUITE LARGE. MUCH THE WAY I THOUGHT CAVE ENTRANCES "SHOULD" BE. (I HAD BEEN TO THE CAVE CREEK AREA THE DAY BEFORE TO LOOK AT ENTRANCES WITH BILL AND HIS FAMILY. MOST WERE EITHER MUDDY CRAWLS OR DEEP PITS.) COMPARED TO THESE MINTON LOOKED VERY GOOD INDEED.

ONCE INSIDE JAKE AND I STOPPED TO GET OUR CARBIDE LAMPS GOING. BILL AND KATIE, WHO WERE USING ELECTRIC, HEADED DOWN A SMALL SIDE PASSAGE TO CHECK ON A PACK RAT THAT LIVES THERE. THEY WERE UNABLE TO COAX HIM OUT BUT LEFT A LITTLE FOOD ANYWAY. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE GONE WHEN WE CAME OUT.

LAMPS LIT AND RAT ROOM VISITED, WE STARTED IN AT LAST. OUR GOAL WAS TO SEE SOME OF THE BEST CAVE THAT MINTON HAD TO OFFER. BILL PLANNED TO GO TO THE BIG PASSAGE AND FOLLOW THAT TO ITS END; ON THE WAY TAKING MANY SIDE TRIPS TO INTERESTING SECTIONS OF THE CAVE. INCLUDED IN THE PLACES WE WOULD TRY TO SEE WERE THE HELICTITE PASSAGE, THE CARMEL PASSAGE AND THE FOUNTAIN ROOM.

AS WE WALKED THROUGH THE ENTRANCE PASSAGES I WAS HAVING THE TIME OF MY LIFE LOOKING EVERYWHERE AND TRYING NOT TO MISS A THING. SOON THOUGH WE CAME TO A SMALL MUD DOWNSLOPE AND NOT REALIZING HOW SLIPPERY MUD IN THE CAVE CAN BE I PROCEEDED DOWN AT FULL SPEED. A MOMENT LATER I FOUND MYSELF IN THE AIR. THEN A POPPING SOUND IN MY KNEE, A SHARP PAIN, AND I WAS ON MY BUTT IN THE MUD AT THE BOTTOM.

I WAS LUCKY THOUGH; AS I GOT UP I FOUND MY KNEE DIDN'T HURT AS BAD AS I THOUGHT IT MIGHT SO I WENT ON, MAKING MENTAL NOTE TO BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE MUD FROM NOW ON. OUR FIRST STOP WAS THE STILL ROOM WHERE BILL POINTED OUT THE HOLES IN THE FLOOR WHERE THE STILL HAD BEEN AND THE SOOT FROM THE FIRE. I WONDERED HOW FAR THE OLD MOONSHINERS HAD VENTURED INTO THIS CAVE.

AS WE WALKED ON WE STARTED TO SEE A FEW BATS HERE AND THERE. SOME WERE IN DEEP HIBERNATION BUT MOST WERE NOT; A COUPLE OF TIMES THEY MOVED AS WE PAST. WE PASSED THEM QUICKLY SO AS NOT TO DISTURB ANY THAT MIGHT BE IN DEEP HIBERNATION ALREADY. THE PASSAGE KEPT GOING ON AND ON AS A LONG SINUOUS CANYON. JUST AS I WAS BEGINNING TO TAKE THE EASY WALKING PASSAGE A LITTLE FOR GRANTED, WE CAME TO A SLIGHT OBSTACLE. SUDDENLY WE FOUND OURSELVES ON THE SHORE OF A POOL; OR LAKE? IT WAS OF UNKNOWN DEPTH AND STRETCHED OUT OF SIGHT AROUND THE NEXT BEND OF THE PASSAGE.

A CONFERENCE WAS IN ORDER TO DECIDE IF WE REALLY WANTED TO GET WET OR NOT. SINCE WE REALLY HAD NOT SEEN MUCH CAVE YET, WE DECIDED TO GO ON IF THE WATER DIDN'T GET TOO DEEP. BILL WENT AHEAD TO CHECK THIS OUT, FINDING THE WATER TO BE ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN KNEE DEEP BY HIS ROUTE.

IN WE WENT BILL, JAKE, AND I SLOSHING THROUGH AND KATIE GETTING A RIDE ON BILL'S SHOULDERS. THE COLD WATER MADE MY KNEE FEEL GOOD. BILL COMMENTED THAT THIS SECTION MUST HAVE FLOODED QUITE RECENTLY. HE HAD BEEN THROUGH HERE LESS THAN ONE MONTH AGO AND SAID THERE WASN'T ANY WATER HERE THEN.

BACK ON DRY LAND AGAIN WE WALKED ALONG AT A BRISK PACE, TRYING TO SHAKE OFF SOME OF THE WATER. LITTLE GOOD THIS DID; SHORTLY WE CAME TO ANOTHER FLOODED PLACE THAT LOOKED EVEN BIGGER THAN THE FIRST. WE PLUNGED IN DETERMINED NOW TO GO ON UNLESS IT GOT REALLY DEEP. I REFLECTED ON THE CAREFUL WATERPROOFING JOB I HAD DONE ON MY BOOTS. IT TURNED OUT THAT THIS POOL WAS ABOUT THE SAME IN DEPTH AND LENGTH AS THE FIRST. BILL POINTED OUT THOUGH THAT THE WATER AT DREAD POOL MAY INDEED BE TOO DEEP TO CROSS. WE MAY BE TURNED BACK THERE IF IT IS.

SOON THE CHARACTER OF THE CAVE BEGAN TO CHANGE. THE HIGH CEILING KEPT GETTING LOWER AND LOWER UNTIL WE WERE STOOPING ABOUT AS LOW AS WE COULD. I FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE SET BY BILL AND JAKE OF FINDING TRENCHES IN THE FLOOR AND CRACKS IN THE CEILING WHICH ALLOWED YOU TO HOLD YOUR HEAD A LITTLE HIGHER WHILE TRAVELING ALONG. SOON WE REACHED LOST AND FOUND CORNERS, WHERE WE HAD TO CRAWL. BILL SAID IT USED TO BE A LOT TIGHTER BUT HAD RECENTLY BEEN WASHED OUT. I NOTICED LEAVES STUCK TO THE CEILING; CRAWLING IN THAT WIDE PASSAGE (50-60 FT.) VERY DISORIENTING. WHEN WE COULD STAND AGAIN WE TRAVELED ALONG MOSTLY STOOPING AND FINALLY REACHED DREAD POOL.

AFTER THINKING THAT WE MAY BE TURNED BACK HERE, WE WERE RELIEVED TO SEE WE COULD EASILY CLIMB AROUND ONE SIDE IF NECESSARY. THE WATER HOWEVER AT ONE EDGE TURNED OUT TO BE ONLY ANKLE DEEP. THIS WAS OF SMALL CONSEQUENCE SINCE WE WERE ALREADY WET SO WE WADED THROUGH. I DECIDED THE WATERPROOFING ON MY BOOTS WAS WORKING VERY WELL INDEED, SINCE THE WATER THAT GOT IN THEM DID NOT COME OUT. PAST THE POOL IT SEEMS THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF TRAVEL CHANGES SO THAT WE HEADED BACK IN THE SAME GENERAL DIRECTION WE HAD COME FROM. THE PASSAGES ALSO CHANGED THEY STARTED GETTING BIGGER AGAIN, A LOT BIGGER.

WE ENTERED THE JIGSAW ROOM WITH ITS BEWILDERING FLOOR. NEXT CAME THE SAND ROOM, VERY COMFORTABLE WALKING, HUGE. BILL SAID, "THIS IS BIG BUT ITS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHERE WE'RE GOING NEXT". HE LEAD US DOWN SOME BREAKDOWN INTO THE BIG PASSAGE.

I WAS UNPREPARED FOR A CAVE THIS BIG. OUR LIGHTS ILLUMINATED ONLY A SMALL CIRCLE IN A HUGE SWEEPING EXPANSE THAT WENT ON AND ON. THE PASSAGE IS FILLED ITS ENTIRE LENGTH OF 8,000FT. WITH A HUGE BREAKDOWN PILE 20 TO 30FT. HIGH; WE DECIDED TO TRAVEL ALONG ITS TOP. AS WE MOVED AMONG THE GREAT MUD ENCRUSTED BLOCKS I WAS IN AWE AT THE IMMENSITY OF THE PASSAGE. THE CLIMBING WAS BEGINNING TO MAKE MY KNEE ACHE THOUGH AND I WISHED MORE THAN ONCE THAT I HAD TWO GOOD HANDS. I WAS FALLING BEHIND EVEN THOUGH THE OTHERS WERE GOING PRETTY SLOW. I DON'T REMEMBER A WHOLE LOT EXCEPT TRYING TO WATCH MY FOOTING AND PICK OUT A GOOD ROUTE AHEAD.

AFTER WALKING THE BREAKDOWN FOR A LONG TIME WE STOPPED AT A PLACE NEAR THE RIGHT HAND WALL. FROM HERE WE COULD CLIMB UP INTO A SIDE PASSAGE THAT WAS ONE OF OUR OBJECTIVES. IT WAS THE TRICKIEST CLIMBING WE HAD DONE SO FAR, SO JAKE AND BILL TOOK A LOT OF TIME MAKING SURE KATIE AND I GOT UP OK. WE THEN ENTERED THE HELICTITE PASSAGE. IT WAS A LOW DRY STOOP WALK. SOON WE REACHED A POINT WHERE HELICTITES GREW FROM THE CEILING IN PROFUSION; MANY WERE MASSIVE AND OVER A FOOT LONG. WE CRAWLED LOW TO AVOID TOUCHING THEM. ON REACHING ONE PARTICULARLY BEAUTIFUL PLACE I TOLD THE OTHERS TO GO ON AHEAD, I WOULD WAIT FOR THEIR RETURN; MY KNEE REALLY HURT FROM THE CLIMB. AS I LAID THERE IN THE COOL DRY SAND I FELT A FINE PEACEFUL FEELING THAT WAS IN ITSELF WORTH THE TRIP. I WOULD LIKED TO HAVE PUT OUT MY LIGHT FOR A WHILE BUT DID NOT HAVE ANY FLINT IN MY STRIKER. (I DID HAVE A BUTANE LIGHTER BUT SOMETHING IN MY PACK PUSHED ON THE SWITCH AND DRAINED IT.)

SOON THE OTHERS RETURNED AND WE EXITED THE PASSAGE. BILL SAID THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID THE CLIMB BACK DOWN, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND A CRAWLWAY THAT WOULD TAKE US NEAR THE START OF THE CARMEL PASSAGE, OUR NEXT GOAL.

THE AREA WE WERE IN WAS VERY CONFUSING WITH CRAWLS LEADING OFF EVERYWHERE ON SEVERAL LEVELS. WE STARTED OFF DOWN ONE WE THOUGHT TO BE RIGHT, IT WAS GOING THE RIGHT DIRECTION. SOMEHOW I FOUND MYSELF IN THE LEAD. THE PASSAGE WAS BIG AT THE START, ALMOST A STOOP WALK BUT SOON IT WAS HANDS AND KNEES. SOON THE PASSAGE WAS ABOUT 15FT. WIDE AND 2FT. HIGH. I WAS ON MY BELLY. I CALLED BACK TO BILL "ITS GETTING SMALLER", REPLY,"KEEP GOING IT SHOULDN'T LAST TOO LONG". I KEPT GOING...FOR A LONG TIME. I TOOK MY PACK OFF AND MOVED IT ALONG IN FRONT OF ME. I COULD NO LONGER TURN MY HEAD FROM SIDE TO SIDE AND THIS BOTHERED ME A LITTLE. THE PASSAGE THEN NARROWED TO 6 TO 8IN. HIGH EXCEPT FOR A 1 1/2 X 1 1/2FT. SLOT TO ONE SIDE. I YELL BACK,"BILL, LOOK AT THIS, IT GETS PRETTY TIGHT". BILL SAYS WE ARE NOT ON THE RIGHT CRAWL SO WE GO BACK.

THE CRAWLING WAS FUN BUT WE HAD HAD ENOUGH SO WE CLIMBED BACK DOWN INTO THE BIG PASSAGE. MORE BREAKDOWN, I DEFINITELY DON'T LIKE THIS WITH ONE HAND. MERCIFULLY SOON THOUGH WE ARRIVED AT THE CARMEL PASSAGE. THE CAVE HAS AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT LEVELS HERE. I CAN HEAR A RIVER DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE. THERE IS A BIG DROP TO ONE SIDE; BILL CAUTIONS KATIE AND I TO STAY CLEAR.

THE CARMEL PASSAGE IS A FRIENDLY SIZE (YOUR LAMP ILLUMINATES IT WELL). I HAD BEEN WONDERING WHAT THE CARMEL PASSAGE WAS ALL ALONG, NOW I FOUND OUT. LONG TRANSLUCENT STALAGMITES GREW IN DELICATE FORMS. THEY WERE THE EXACT COLOR OF CARMEL. AN OPAQUE SUBSTANCE OF THE PUREST WHITE CLUNG TO THERE BASES. A REAL VISUAL TREAT; I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING QUITE LIKE THEM.

AFTER EXITING THE PASSAGE WE TOOK A LONG BREAK AT THE PLACE WHERE THE RIVER RUNS BELOW. EVERYONE HAD SOMETHING TO EAT AND RELAXED. ALL OF A SUDDEN WE HEARD A RATHER STRANGE NOISE, SNORING. JAKE HAD FALLEN ASLEEP! JAKE SNORED AS WE RESTED THEN WE WOKE HIM UP AND STARTED BACK. WE HAD DECIDED NOT TO SEE THE FOUNTAIN ROOM THIS TRIP. WE HAD ALREADY BEEN IN THE CAVE A LONG TIME AND MY KNEE WAS SORE.

GOING BACK, BILL SAID WE COULD PASS SOME OF THE BREAKDOWN BY TAKING A SIDE PASSAGE AND THEN GOING DOWN THROUGH THE CORKSCREW. THIS WE DID.

THE CORKSCREW WAS INTERESTING, A CRAWL-DECENT-TURN,FUN. DURING ALL THIS FUN THOUGH, MY

LIGHT WENT OUT. JAKE AND BILL WERE THE ONLY ONES WITH MATCHES. IT SOUNDED LIKE THEY WERE FAR AHEAD. NOT WANTING THEM TO HAVE TO CRAWL ALL THE WAY BACK I YELLED FOR KATIE, WHO WAS NEAR, TO WAIT. SHE SHARED HER ELECTRIC LIGHT UNTIL WE CAUGHT UP. WE CAME OUT ON THE WALL, HIGH ABOVE THE BIG PASSAGE.

THE CLIMB DOWN IS FAIRLY TOUGH BECAUSE THERE AREN'T MANY GOOD HOLDS. FOR SAFETY KATIE AND I WERE PUT ON BELAY GOING DOWN. WHEN WE WERE DOWN IT WAS BACK TO BREAKDOWN WALKING AGAIN. BY THIS TIME I WAS NOT ENJOYING IT AT ALL. I JUST DID NOT FEEL SECURE WITH ONE HAND AND A HURT LEG. THE TRIP BACK TO THE SAND ROOM THOUGH WAS UNEVENTFUL EXCEPT FOR ONE INCIDENT.

WHILE I WAS WALKING ALONG I NOTICED I WAS HAVING A LITTLE DIFFICULTY FINDING A GOOD ROUTE THROUGH THE BREAKDOWN. THIS SEEMED STRANGE FOR I DIDN'T REMEMBER NEARLY THIS MUCH TROUBLE ON THE WAY IN. SOON I ALSO BEGAN TO FEEL KIND OF WOBBLY. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS TO THE OTHERS. WE STOPPED AND THEY GAVE ME A BUNCH OF CANDY TO EAT. JAKE SAID I MUST BE LOW IN SUGAR. IT WAS A VERY STRANGE FEELING. IN A SHORT TIME I FELT MUCH BETTER AND WE CONTINUED ON.

SOON WE SAW THE CLIMB TO THE SAND ROOM COME UP ON THE LEFT. I GLADLY CLIMBED UP, HAPPY TO HAVE EASIER GOING AHEAD. ONE PARTICULARLY FINE MOMENT OCCURED ON THE WAY BACK. THERE IS A BLOCK THAT IS POSITIONED IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU COULD SLIDE DOWN IT FOR 10 OR 12 FEET. THIS WE ALL DID. I REMARKED THAT THIS WAS THE MOST FUN I HAD, HAD SO FAR. KATIE SAID SHE WANTED TO CLIMB BACK UP AND SLIDE DOWN AGAIN.

FROM THIS POINT ON WE MOVED TOWARD THE ENTRANCE RATHER RAPIDLY. AT MANY PLACES ON THE WAY BACK I NOTICED THAT I COULD ACTUALLY HOLD MY HEAD MUCH HIGHER THAN I THOUGHT I COULD GOING IN. WE PASSED THE DUCK UNDER, THE REST OF THE WAY WAS FAIRLY EASY GOING. BACK NEAR THE ENTRANCE WE EXAMINED THE SIGN THAT WAS PLACED BY C.O.G. MANY YEARS AGO, NOTING THAT IT COULD USE REPLACING. IT WAS NOW UNREADABLE IN SEVERAL PLACES. BEFORE LEAVING THE RAT ROOM WAS CHECKED. THE FOOD WAS GONE.

THEN AFTER 10 HOURS IN THE CAVE WE STEPED OUT INTO THE CRYSTAL CLEAR STARLIGHT. I HAD COMPLETED AN ADVENTURE I NOW COUNT AS A HIGHPOINT IN MY LIFE. I SHALL NEVER FORGET MY FIRST CAVE TRIP.

My thanks to Len and Mark for submitting their trip reports. Editor

Letters

The following letter is exerpted from a letter to me from Marlana Wall of MIG.

Michigan Interlakes Grotto
Marlana Wall
48770 Shelby Rd. #10
Utica, MI 48087

January 25, 1985

Dear Bill,

We were really sorry that you people could not join us for our Christmas pary, but understand that it really is a long distance and the weather id bad that time of year. How about thinking about a summertime picnic get together somewhere midway between Ohio and Michigan? Our July meeting is open at the present. (July 13) Anyway, it is time for our elections, and I am not running for re-election as MIG secretary. I am running for president. ...

...Let me know what you think of the picnic idea. We could go caving (of course we would go caving!). MIG is open to suggestions. The spring NCR meeting is going to be hosted by MIG

in the Grand Rapids area May 11. (Now that I've typed that, I think COG belongs to a different region-?) ...

Cave Safely and Softly,
Marlana Wall, Secretary, MIG

Most of Marlana's letter dealt with membership recruitment. Remember, I'm also on the NSS membership committee.

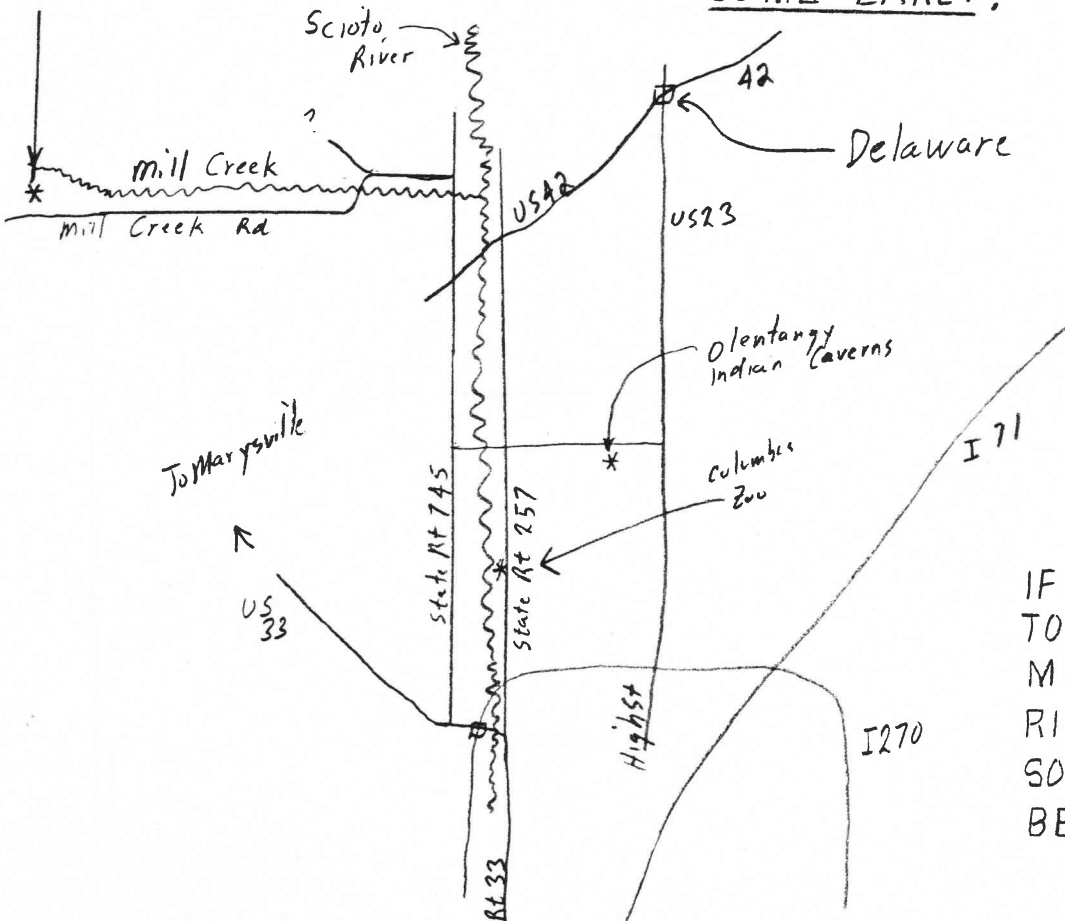
The idea of a COG - MIG picnic in July sounds like a great one. As for caving in Ohio or Michigan I think our prospects are few. However, we might want to try a camp out at a commercial cave. I believe that Zane's Cavern's has a campground. While it's far from the halfway point between our grottos, it might be fun to take a grand tour of some of the best comercial caves in Ohio. An alternative might be meeting in Indiana.

Lets discuss this at the February meeting and send our proposal to MIG or at least let them know that we are interested and let them pick a site.

Bill Walden.

FEBRUARY MEETING
CHUCK DAEHNKE'S FARM
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9, 1985
8:00 PM BUT COME EARLY!

Red brick old farm House



IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TO CHUCK'S FARM YOU MIGHT WISH GET A RIDE OR FOLLOW SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE.