



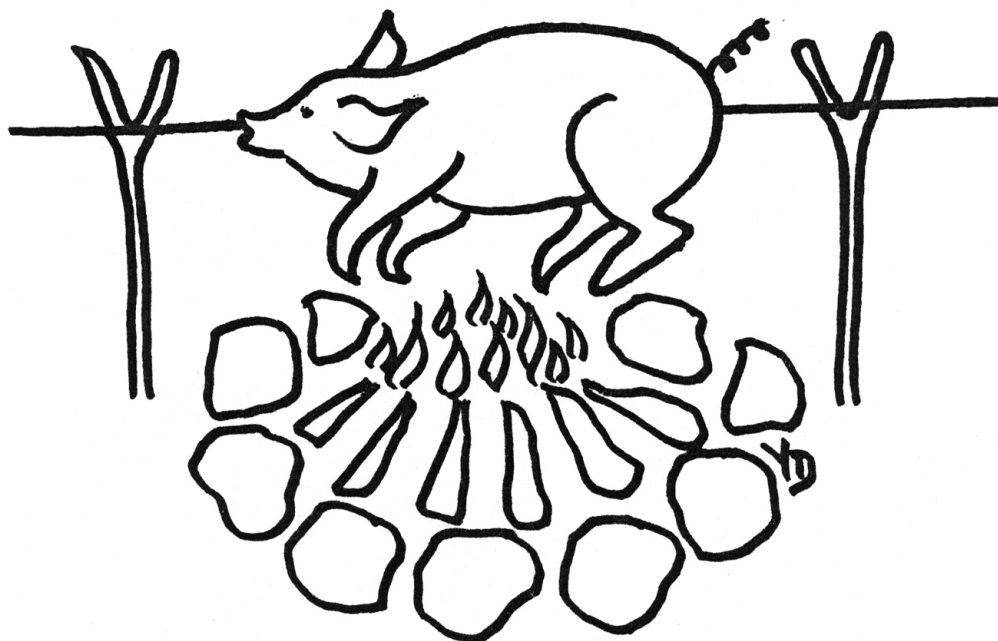
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QUARTERLY JOURNAL

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MADISON UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROTTO



Pig Roast 1984

STATE OF THE GROTTO ADDRESS

Greetings All:

Finally the somewhat belated July issue! This issue not really includes all of our fun-filled events during the summer, but also throughout the fall semester. After finishing the Glade Survey, we've been working on 3D Maze and Better Forgotten surveys. Also covered in this issue are such highlights as the first "Summer Fling", Pig Roast, Fall Ball and Banquet. I look forward to doing some caving with y'all!

Kelley Price
MUSG President 1984
MUSG #21 Nss# 23896

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Cover by Yvonne Droms

Upcoming Activities

Pig Roast
Fall Ball
elections
Banquet
caving

2nd weekend in September
sometime in the Fall
first Thursday in Spring Semester
January 19, 1985
whenever



Robins Rift Update

Recently, several MUSGers went to Robins Rift to assist Dick Sanford and Robbie Robbins in an attempt to stabilize and reopen the entrance to Robins Rift. A week earlier, Jason Burkhardt, Dave Shantz and I had visited the cave to check the status of the entrance only to find it completely filled with tons of rock and dirt. A quick call to Ed Ricketts provided the answer---DYNAMITE!!!!!!

Ed, Dick, and Robbie had used several hundred pounds of explosives to stabilize the sides of the sinkhole and create a safe entrance to the cave. We were invited to help.

After picking up 210 pounds of explosives, six of us, Jason, Dave, Alan, Claudette, Dan and I drove over to Aqua campground and had a Spring Fling type weekend. Upon waking up we drove to the Rift, ate breakfast and relaxed in the sun. Dick and Robbie soon arrived and we proceeded to dig a hole for the explosives. Soon we were standing by the road amidst rock and mud splattering all around us. We ran back up to the sink just in time to watch several tons of rock and dirt firmly interconnected by three tree trunks slide down into our prospective walk-in entrance. The next 3 charges we set off were used to remove than tangled mess.

In one day we succeeded in blowing up \$100 worth of explosives (literally). Fortunately the banks of the sink immediately surrounding the onld entrance appear to be stabilized enough to begin blasting down into the cave. It will take much digging and explosives to reopen the cave. There is potential for this cave to open into a large system that could rival Butler. Anyone interested in helping contact Mike Artz or Dave Shantz

Mike Artz
MUSG 10 NSS 19309

Our apoligies to Jim Washington for the credits in the last issue for "Speleorata", Jim Washington is the author of this superb work of art and Pat Shorten did the calligraphy for the poster size reproduction of it. Sorry we put your name last, Jim. You can have our first born child.

The editors of V4,#1

The Cave Raven

Once upon a cavern dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over a many curious volume of register room lore,
While I nodded, nearly freezing, suddenly there came a wheezing,
As if someone gently sneezing, sneezing by the chamber door
"Tis some caver", I muttered, "Wheezing at the chamber door"
Only this and nothing more.

Presently my soul grew stronger, hesitating then no longer;
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore."
"But the fact is I was freezing and so gently you came
a-wheezing, sneezing at the chamber door
That scarce I was sure I heard you"- here I shed light upon
the door:

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing
Reloading carbide swiftly as not mortal did before,
Curses I did start to mutter, then with dirt and flirt
and flutter
In flew a cave raven, the type I do Abhor!
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore!
Screw That, Thought I, Breaking for the door

Making tracks with head lamp burning, through the mazes,
twisting, turning
Beating feet like I never had before
Suddenly, an intersection, took the left without inspection.
And beheld the register room once more
It watched upon stalagmite perching, while my map I was
a'searching, searching for a passage without the circle tour
Quoth the Cave Raven, "Never more."

Is this some mad game It's playing, or, worse yet, a trap
it's laying
Ain't no way that I am staying, to find out what's in store
Heedless of a major bruising from the passage I was chooseing
It was time for serious cruising. Again I bolted for the door
Quoth the Cave Raven, "Never more."

Into a tube with cave pack dragging, eating dust and chokeing,
gagging
With the hope that it was lagging, lagging far back by the door.
Again another intersection, took what seemed the right direction.
And again beheld the muddy register room floor
"Wretch", said I, "Thing of evil! Prophet still if bat or devil"
"When shall I leave this room and behold the sun once more?"
Quoth the Cave Raven, "Never more."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bat or fiend!"

I shrieked, upstarting:

"Get thee back into the cavern and to the backrooms
blackest there.

Leave no sign of your calling, least you wish a major
mauling be history now and no more stalling;

Quit your perch next to the door."

Quoth the Cave Raven, "Never more."

Passages I try still, without number, each one returns me
here to wonder, with all my hopes and dreams a-sunder

Oh, will I ever bogey in the sun once more?

Here I sit with carbide all out, waiting for the final
call out

When my soul may be lifted from the register room floor.

And that may happen- Nevermore.

Lance Smith

(with apologies to Edgar Allen Poe)

Caving country, Simmons Mingo, West Virginia,

Beautiful land abounds for the land lubber,

Country roads full of pits for the Honda,

that lead to glorious avenues for the caver.

Over the moss ridden fence, and

into the cavernous mysteries that await.

Breakdown upon breakdown, searching for

the immense ecstasy of the underground.

Stopping to appreciate the wonder of

life under the trapped surface and realizing

the wondrous pleasures of caving, but how

much better to share the experience with friends.

Janice S. Scurry

Surveying in Better Forgotten

On October seventh, Dave Shantz, Jason Burkhardt and I, returned to Better Forgotten to begin the survey of this miserably difficult but fun cave. This was Dave and Jason's first trip to the cave and they were eager to check it out.

We rigged the 35 foot entrance pit and rappelled down into a steeply sloping canyon. After six stations we came to a T-junction and continued surveying left, into the cave. After 50 feet we dropped down the 17 foot nuisance pit into a nice sized room. Here the difficulties began.

At the far end of this room is a nasty, sinuous canyon that we had to survey. Dave was reading compass and had to get so contorted to get a reading that Jason and I laughed for quite a while.

After this crawlway is a fairly nice sized room. We surveyed to the end of this room and wrapped it up for the day.

A tight narrow canyon leads to a room before the 100 pound mans misery. This room is where I stashed 150 feet of Bluewater over 18 months earlier in anticipation of a return trip that never occurred. We all went and looked at the 100 foot pit and then returned to get my rope which was still there. It's beyond me why Kelley couldn't find it the last time she went in the cave.

We moved quickly back to the entrance and within 15 minutes we were all enjoying what was left of a beautiful Fall day.

Although we only succeeded in setting 17 stations for a total of 300 feet (128 feet vertically), we did enjoy ourselves and we will be back. Much remains to be done and we can use your help.

Mike Artz
MUSG 10 NSS 19309

FROM THE SIGN-OUT SHEET

CAVE	DATE	HOURS	PEOPLE AND COMMENTS
Glade	9/8	2¼	Carl & Yvonne Droms, Jeremy Dick, John Bauserman, Scott Martz, Scott Smith, Bonnie, Jean and Steve. Mud room is dry. (ha)
Breathing	9/9	4	Dave & Dave, Yvonne & Carl, alan Eric, Tom, Lance, Bill, Dean,
3D Maze	9/9	1½	Meredith, Tom, Vicki. At least Meredith and I got underground

CAVE	DATE	HOURS	PEOPLE AND COMMENTS
Lyle's Pit	9/22	4½	Kelley, Gretchen, Gretchen, Nancy, Claudette, Lisa, Paula, Jason, Dave S., Hugh Beard, Yvonne & Carl. Lots of people learned that it's easier then it looks- same goes for vertical caving.
Glade	9/23	3	Hugh Beard, Dave S., Vicki. Comperitively dry- no water, saw most of the cave. The cave is boggerly!
Breathing	9/29	5½	Craig Snyder, Jason Burkhardt, Ron Fulcher, Tom Siner, Gretchen Blair. Great, wonderful, good one. Slightly wet, Went all the way!
Harper's (Fieldhouse)	10/5	0	Ron Fulcher, Gretchen Blair, Kelley Price. Ended up stone-hopping at Blackwater Falls. What a bunch of gumbys!
B. Forgotten	10/7	5½	M. Artz, D. Shantz, J. Burkhardt, Grody F----- Cave! Found Mike's rope. 17 stations surveyed.
Robbins Rift	10/13	0	M. Artz, D. Shantz, J. Burkhardt, Alan Staiman, Claudette McGough. Blew a lot of money, dirt also, damn good weekend! We didn't even get into a cave. Another gumby trip!
B. Forgotten	10/14	0	
Glade	10/14	3½	Gretchen Blair, Mike Blair, Lance Smith. Strategic mud fights in back room,
Breathing	10/21	2½	D. Shantz, Anna (never goes caving) Weimer, Nancy Gibson, Tried to find Crossroads but missed! Good trip- Historical section, some nice climbs, crawls, & pits! (P.S. They got ragged on!)

CAVE	DATE	HOURS	PEOPLE & COMMENTS
3-D Maze	10/28	2½	M. Artz, J. Burkhardt, Y. Droms. Surveyed a bit and explored a bit.
B. Forgotten	11/4	6	M. Artz, J. Burkhardt, Par York, Lance Smith. Surveyed 10 stations. Too early a start!
3-D Maze	11/6	3½	Kelley Price, J. Burkhardt, Yvonne Droms. Surveyed a bit, broke Mike's car!
B. Forgotten	11/11	9	Kelley Price, J. Burkhardt, Janice Scurry. Surveyed upper level. SNOWED!
3-D Maze	11/14	3½	M. Artz, D. Shantz, Brian Burton, Dana Messerly, Yvonne Droms. Surveyed 12 stations. One more trip will finish the cave!
B. Forgotten	11/24	5½	M. Artz, D. Shantz. 10 stations, tired!
3-D Maze	11/29	2½	D. DeLand, Alan Staiman, Tod Hirsch, J. Burkhardt & Wench, Lance Smith, Carl, Yvonne, & Junior. Photo trip! Next time we'll leave Yvonne home,
Nutt	12/2	3	D. Shantz, Nancy Gibson, Lance Smith. Good trip, pretty cave. "Where's the entrance?", "Under the rock!"

Editor's Note: In case you're wondering a "Gumby Trip" is my way of saying that the people on the trip are bigger Gumbys than they are cavers!

NEWBERRY REVISITED

One of the larger cave systems in Skydusky Hollow of Giles County, Virginia is the Newberry-Banes Cave System. As the name indicates, the system consists of two caves; Newberry and Bane's, both of them being large systems in their own right but together they total over five miles of passage. A tremendous amount of work has been done in these two caves by the VPI Grotto. Sometime in the past cavers wiggled through the Dusty Crawls and popped out into known cave in Newberry's. Soon the big craze was to do a crossover trip involving two groups of cavers with one group entering either entrance, rigging ropes, exploring to the other entrance, and derigging the other groups ropes before exiting.

In 1978, the Fallopian Tubes were discovered and the largest stream in Skydusky Hollow was soon thereafter first looked upon by human eyes. Much time and effort was concentrated in this system and it was found (after dye tracing) that many of the caves in the Hollow were hydrologically connected. In fact many Master's theses were written about these caves. Unfortunately, many of the remaining good leads have petered out and all that's left are nasty ones. Some brave soul (or is the correct work "stupid") will one day enter these leads and might find much new passage. It's possible! For me, I'll stick to exploring the rest of the cave first so during Spring VAR a couple of years ago, plans were made to do just that.

After the business meeting Saturday, Bob Carts, Eric Anderson, Bill Shipman, Richard (?), and I threw our gear in the infamous Cartsmobile and began the drive to Skydusky Hollow while Fred Holmes and Roseann Normandy, both PSC'ers, followed us.

It seemed the further we traveled from New River Junction Park, the sunnier it became and the more our minds wandered to sipping cold beer while basking in the hot sun on the banks of the New River with music in the background. Back to reality, we soon entered Skydusky Hollow and arrived at Buddy Penley's house. Along came Buddy, he said "Hi, have a good trip", and then he was gone. Bill Shipman was the first to remark that it was the shortest time he had ever talked with Buddy. Everyone else agreed and we hopped in our vehicles before he changed his mind and came back. Upon our arrival at the campfire below the entrance to Newberry, we all dressed and forged a path towards Bane's. I must comment that I had neglected to wash my overalls after a wet trip to Sinnit two weeks earlier and they didn't smell like a rose patch. So while I trekked through the forest, everyone else stayed downwind of me.

Soon we arrived at the entrance to Banes and we all entered after lighting our lamps. For some reason my lamp refused to work properly and it took me awhile to catch up with the group. That was alright through because we soon bottlenecked at a 90 foot pit. Because this particular weekend was VAR, another trip had been scheduled to enter Newberry and their presence was evident. Dropping off into the darkness was a section of PMI rope. Taking advantage of the situation, Eric rigged our rope, padded it and instructed us to rappel double in order to conserve time. Near the bottom of the pit, Bob decided he wanted to show everyone what it was like to belay a person rappelling, have him lose control, and then stop him. Needless to say I was the victim ("dummy" may be a better word) and as Bob yelled "let loose of the rope!" I begrudgingly released my lifeline and after a few feet of free-falling, I was suddenly stopped and slowly lowered to the bottom. After Eric and I derigged (we had descended together), we all decided to carry our vertical gear to Newberry in hopes that one of the pits had been rigged by the other group.

Unknown to us, Eric and Bill were scheming. Somewhere in their insidious little minds they agreed upon dragging us through the Dusty Crawlways. Unknown to the rest of us, there is a tight 90 degree turn that must be negotiated in order to continue. Unfortunately for Fred, his 6 foot 7 inch frame coupled with a touch of claustrophobia prevented him from negotiating the turn. So after a long conversation with him (Dammit! I almost talked him through it.), and rather than leaving him behind, Roseann and he exited through Bane.

Somewhere during this extended break, the "Romulacs" were born and throughout the rest of the trip, the entire group (with the exception of Richard who thought we were crazy) spoke in monotone voices and lamented about the socioeconomical situation of the economy in relation to the adverse effects of the foreign policy of the Southeastern Republic of France. If you believe that, I've got some nice land for sale in Virginia Beach . . . but that's another story. By the way, you hear the "Romulacs" sometime- they can be very entertaining. As we continued, Bob kept on talking about how we should all have nose-blowing contests when we exited. Methinks Stan should ask his son about his peculiar fetishes! In the back of my mind all I could see were visions of dancing face masks. Seriously, a good addition to your cave pack if you are planning a connection trip would be a face mask. I noticed that I had some trouble breathing later during the trip and I wasn't the only one.

Soon after leaving the Dusty Crawls, we entered a semi-maze and after a few wrong turns we were officially in Newberry. After a change of carbide at the Vault Room,

we headed to Bill's Rappel to see if a rope was still rigged. It was, and after some conversation, we decided to exit. My main reason for caving in Newberry-Bane was to see the Fallopian Tubes, but after ripping the inseam of my mildewed coveralls (Could it be because they sat in a garbage bag for two weeks?), I decided against getting lots of gooey mud up my pants. My decision was all for the better when I talked to some of the members of the other group who had just returned from the tubes. It seems there had been some water in them.

While we were talking to the other group, Bill had prusiked out of sight, and near the top where nobody could see him, he made some rather interesting Romulacian comments which drew comments of "Who the hell is that?". Once we had informed them who it was, they all understood! Shortly the signal "Off Rope!" came and I began my ascent. Bill's Rappel is a friendly 160 foot drop and I cruised up in no time flat with my 3 cam system. Richard came directly after me with his helical knot system. It seems that both Bill and Richard had had trouble with their knots. Bill's prussik knots kept on slipping and Richard had too many wraps around his carabiner. Bob and Eric took the easy way up and climbed Devil's Staircase. It took them a little longer than I to reach the Nuisance Drop which is at the top of Bill's Rappel. As we waited for Richard, Eric and Bob to come up, I belayed Bill up the Nuisance Drop (so aptly named) with what appears to be VPI's normal means of climbing this drop. There's no way you can free climb safely up this drop so therefore a cable ladder with a belay line is rigged each time a group enters the Bill's Rappel area. Bob and Eric soon joined me at the top and Bill belayed them up the Nuisance Drop while I waited for Richard to come over the lip of the drop. Shortly thereafter we joined everyone else, crossed the Straddle Pit, and instead of going out to the bottom of the entrance drop, we took the left hand passage that leads to about halfway up the entrance drop. In this area is a high lead that Eric, Bob and I had attempted to free climb on our last trip to Newberry. It was our intention to complete this short climb but according to Eric, less than 30 people have ever been in this high passage and nobody has ever free-climbed up to it. Bob tried and almost made it then I tried and made it. It was accomplished by one decent foothold, one decent handhold and one helluva pull up. This was very physically draining for all of us so we exited. Eric, Bill, and I freeclimbed the entrance and Bob and Richard came out with a belay.

Once Bill and I had exited we sped over to Bane, quickly and efficiently packed up our gear and headed out. Back at the car were everyone including Fred and Roseann. It seems that they had eaten in the cave and taken their time ascending the pit. After everybody had changed, we all played frisbee and then packed up and headed back to VAR for the Saturday night party. What an interesting 5 hours!

Mike Artz
MUSG 10 NSS 19309

WANTED:

ALAN STAIMAN

— FOR BEING A GUMBY

JASON BURKHARDT

FOR BEING HIMSELF

(NO REWARD)

